

STICKING IT OUT!



“COME BACK!”

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STICKING IT OUT!

A Magnificent, New, Long,
Complete School Story
of Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's.

By
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CHAPTER 1. A Hot Chase.

"**WARE, Grammar cads!**"
"Bless them!" growled
Tom Merry.

The Terrible Three of St. Jim's—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—were drifting idly down-stream on the silver Rill.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and they had spent it agreeably by pulling up the river, and having tea—a frugal war tea—at the Feathers Inn.

Now they were returning, in a cheery and contented mood, letting the current bear the skiff down to St. Jim's. But "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream," to use the words of the poet, as a big boat pulled round a bend in front of them, directly between them and the school.

The big boat was full of Grammarians. There were eight Grammarians in it, and they sighted the St. Jim's fellows at the same moment.

Gordon Gay, who was steering, waved one hand to them, with a grin.

Tom Merry frowned.

The rival juniors seldom met without a ragging, and the Terrible Three did not need telling that the Grammarians would not let this opportunity slip.

Already Gordon Gay was steering to intercept the St. Jim's skiff.

"Bless them!" repeated Tom Merry.

"We can't dodge past, you chaps?"
"No fear!" said Manners.

"And we can't lick them—three to seven—eight of the rotters!"

"Well, it doesn't look a promising proposition," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Yes, if there were only six—them!"
"We shall have to hook it!"

Gordon Gay stood up in the boat.

"Hallo, St. Jim's bouncers!"
"Go and eat cake!"
"Lay-to and surrender!"
"Rais!"

Tom Merry's skiff was already sweeping round. Gordon Gay rapped out an order to his crew, and they pulled harder.

Tom Merry and Lowther bent to their oars, and the skiff shot away up-stream again.

It was a change from the leisurely drift homeward, but there was no choice about the matter. The only alternative to prompt retreat was falling into the hands of the enemy. Manners sat at the helm, while his chums pulled. The skiff glided swiftly through the shining water.

"Give way, you beggars!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "They won't keep this up long. We'll collar them, and land them at St. Jim's tied up together like turkeys, and take their boat home as a prize of war. They can come and beg for it if they want it—what?"

"Ha, ha!"
"Pull away!"

The Terrible Three were pulling away, too.

But six oars are long odds against two. Hard as Tom Merry and Lowther pulled, the Grammarian Boat was steadily gaining.

The worst of it was that the Terrible Three were pulling farther and farther

away from St. Jim's and from the chance of aid.

"Blake's on the river this afternoon," said Manners. "Gussy and Herries and Dig are with him. We may come across them somewhere. Go it!"

"They're gaining!" panted Lowther. "Gordon Gay's grinning face was quite close behind them now. The Grammarian steersman waved his hand again cheerily.

"Better chuck it!" he shouted. "You St. Jim's chaps can't row, you know."

The St. Jim's juniors did not trouble to reply. They wanted all their breath for pulling.

"Manners drew on the lines.
"The island's just ahead," he said.

The boat neared the bank as Manners steered it into the channel. On the left of the skiff rose the thick, wooded island, almost in the centre of the river. Manners scanned it anxiously. It was possible that Blake & Co. were somewhere near, and reinforcements would have been welcome at that critical moment. But there was no sign of the chums of Study No. 6.

Manners glanced towards the bank, and uttered an exclamation as he spotted a St. Jim's cap on the towing-path.

"Hallo! There's a St. Jim's chap!" he exclaimed. "My hat! It's Cardew of the Fourth! Blow him!"

Manners' face fell.

If it had been any other fellow, the Terrible Three would have called to him to cut off and bring the Saints to the rescue.

But Cardew of the Fourth was the outcast of the school. He was under sentence of Coventry, and for good reason.

The Terrible Three were accustomed to pass him in the quadrangle and the passages with stony, unseeing eyes. And they could not very well call upon him for aid in the present emergency.

It would have been a little too thick to cut a fellow in the quad, and speak to him when their own interests demanded it.

"Rotten luck!" growled Tom Merry.

"Why couldn't it have been Talbot or Julian, or somebody? Bless!"

The skiff glided on.

Cardew, sauntering along the towing-path, with his hands in his pockets, had sighted the chase.

He halted, and stood looking alternately at the skiff and the Grammarian boat in pursuit.

There was a mocking, cynical smile upon his handsome face.

Perhaps he was wondering whether the Terrible Three would forget the rule of Coventry, and call to him.

He was soon satisfied on that point. The Shell fellows took no notice of him as the skiff fled by.

Cardew laughed softly. His aid would have been very useful. It needed only a word at the St. Jim's boathouse to bring any number of Saints to the rescue.

Cardew did not move. If his aid was wanted, it would be asked for. If it was not asked for, there was no reason why he should render it. That was how the outcast of the Fourth looked at the matter.

Gordon Gay & Co. were drawing very close now. They sighted the junior on the bank.

"Hallo! There's a St. Jim's rotter!" growled Frank Monk. "We shall have a crowd of them here soon!"

"That's Cardew," said Gay—"the chap who's in Coventry. Sacked from his last school for theft, so they say. Nice specimen! Blessed if we'd stand such a rotter at the Grammar School! He doesn't mean to chip in, either."

"How far are those bouncers now?" asked Wootton major, gasping over his oar.

"We shall have them before they're past the island! Pull away!" replied Gay.

The Grammarians were coming up hand over hand, Tom Merry, tugging at his oar, watched them as they drew closer.

"Steer round the island, Manners!" he panted. "Better run on the island than let them collar us! We may get round and start for St. Jim's!"

"Right ho!"

The boat coasted the shore of the island. But Tom's faint hope of getting round, and making a fresh start for St. Jim's, was doomed to disappointment.

There was a crash as the nose of the Grammarians' boat bumped on Manners' rudder.

"Got 'em!" grinned Gordon Gay.

But the Grammarians had not quite "got 'em" yet! The St. Jim's skiff swerved towards the island shore, and ran into the thick reeds and rushes, and bumped.

The Terrible Three jumped breathlessly ashore. A minute later the Grammar School boat bumped into the rushes, and Gordon Gay & Co. streamed on shore after them.

CHAPTER 2. Stranded!

"**H**OOK it!" said Tom Merry laconically.

The Terrible Three rushed into the thick wood that covered the island from shore to shore.

They had to abandon the skiff. There was no choice about that.

"Out of the frying-pan into the merry fire!" gasped Monty Lowther. "They'll take our boat."

"Well, they won't eat it, said Tom Merry. "We shall get it back."

"But how shall we get off the island, fathead?"

"Blake's up river somewhere. We can watch for his boat coming home, and get a lift, if we keep away from these bouncers."

Skilled as Boy Scouts, the Terrible Three hoped to dodge the Grammarians in the thick woods.

But Gordon Gay & Co. had also had plenty of experience in scoutcraft, and the task of dodging them was not likely to be easy.

The shouts of the Grammarians were heard on all sides, as they spread through the thickets in search of the three.

The two boats lay unheeded on the shore, in the rushes.

In the thick wood the Terrible Three

swung themselves into the branches of a big beech, half-hidden by the foliage.

From a high branch Tom Merry scanned the river over the trees.

There was no sign of Blako & Co.'s boat on the upper reaches yet. But from the tree-top he spotted the two boats that lay idle in the rushes of the island.

The Grammarians were scattered among the trees, searching for them, and calling to one another.

"My hat!" muttered Tom. "There's a chance, you chaps! They've left their boat, and they're all in the wood. If we could make a break for the boats—"

"They'll spot us."

"Well, there's a chance. It would be a lark to get off and take their boat, and leave them stranded!"

"Ha, ha! Let's try, anyway!"

"They won't be long running us down at this rate," said Manners. "We may as well chance it."

The juniors slid rapidly down the tree. With great caution, and making scarcely a sound, they wound their way through the trees and thickets towards the spot where the boats had been left.

But as they reached the edge of the wood, and came out into the open, there was a yell.

"There they are!"

"Run for it!" shouted Tom.

The Terrible Three dashed towards the shore. But three or four Grammarians burst from the trees, fairly upon them. Tom Merry and Lowther forged ahead, but there was a howl from Manners as he went down in the grass, with Wootton major clinging to him.

His comrades turned back at once. Wootton was seized and dragged off Manners, but at the same moment Gordon Gay and Frank Monk chipped in, and Lane and Carboy came up in another minute.

A terrific struggle went on for a minute or two.

The Terrible Three were surrounded, and the odds were heavy, and the rest of the Grammarians were coming up. But they put up a stout fight.

The combat ended at last, with Tom Merry & Co. on their backs in the grass, and the Grammarians sitting on them.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Gordon Gay, as he dabbed his nose with his handkerchief, which came away very red. "You rotters have given us a lot of trouble on a warm afternoon."

"Groogh! Gerrup!"

"Sit on 'em!" said Gay. "Keep 'em down till we get our wind back! Better give up wriggling, you worms! You're hooked!"

And the Grammarians grinned down triumphantly at the captured juniors.

"Well, it's a fair catch!" said Merry, laughing breathlessly. "Shift a bit off my neck, Carboy, old scout; you're rather bony!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carboy grinned, and shifted a little, still keeping the captain of the Shell firmly pinned down, however.

"What a merry meeting!" smiled Gordon Gay. "You've damaged my nose a bit, Tommy; but, never mind, it's all in the game! Do you mind if I borrow your boat and take it home with us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mind if we keep it till you come, and beg for it?"

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

"Do you mind if we tie you up like turkeys, and hang your boots round your necks, and crayon your noses red, and land you on the St. Jim's raft like that?" went on Gordon Gay politely.

The Terrible Three did not reply.

They were in the hands of the Philistines, and they had to face the music as cheerfully as they could.

"Bring 'em along to the boats!" said Gordon Gay. "We'll take their skiff in tow. We can fix them up while we're rowing back!"

The Terrible Three exchanged a hopeless look. They were fairly in for it, and it was no use objecting.

The victors dragged them to their feet, each with their arms firmly held.

Gordon Gay led the way down to the island shore.

Suddenly he stopped.

"Great pip!"

"My hat!" yelled Lowther. "The boats are gone! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians stared blankly before them.

The Grammarians' boat and Tom Merry's skiff had been left in the rushes, just where they had bumped on shore.

They did not like Ralph Cardew, and were not on speaking terms with him. But it was distinctly gratifying to see the Grammarians dished and stranded by a St. Jim's fellow. Cardew was a St. Jim's fellow, after all, and it was one up for the old school.

"Looks like a sell for you, Gay, old scout!" chortled Monty Lowther. "We're all stranded together! Hurrah!"

"How are you chaps going to get home?" inquired Tom Merry politely.

"We're expecting Blako along later; but I don't think he'll give you a lift."

"Oh, shut up!" grunted Gordon Gay crossly.

The Grammarians, victorious as they might be, were certainly in a fix. They were stranded on the island, with no means of getting off it.



Racke and Co. and the Grammarians.

(See Chapter 4.)

Now they were far out in the river.

The big boat was towing behind the skiff, and in the skiff sat a fellow wearing nothing but his shirt and trousers, gleaming with wet. Evidently he had swum across.

"Cardew!" yelled Manners.

"Cardew!" repeated Tom Merry, in wonder.

"The rotter! He's bagged our boat!" shrieked Gordon Gay.

Careless of their prisoners now, the Grammarians rushed down to the water's edge.

Cardew, in the skiff, was keeping its head against the stream, with the big boat in tow, nearly twenty yards from the island. Gordon Gay shook his fist at him.

"Bring that boat back!" he roared.

Cardew grinned.

"The awful rotter!" gasped Monk. "He must have swum off to the island. Must be a jolly good swimmer, that chap!"

"And bagged our boat, while we were fooling after those rotters in the wood!" growled Wootton major. "What a sell!"

The Terrible Three grinned.

The best swimmers in the party might have swum off, but there was at least half the band who were not equal to such a swim. It was clear that Cardew was a first-class swimmer. He had swum to the island to capture the boats, and he had not had very much time to do it in.

"Bring that boat back!" shouted Monk.

Cardew laughed.

"Will you have it now?" he asked.

"Yes, you rotter!"

"Or when you can get it?" continued Cardew.

"Oh, you worm!"

"Are you going to bring that boat back?" roared Gay.

"Not this evening," smiled Cardew.

"Some other evening!"

"The rotter's only japing us!" growled Wootton minor. "We've got to get that boat back somehow!"

"Can't swim to it!" growled his major. "Whistle for it!"

"Well, what are we going to do?"

"You're not going to do anything—you're going to be done!" chortled

Monty Lowther. "This is where the Grammar School goes left!"

Gordon Gay gave a snort. "Look here, we'll make it pax," he said reluctantly. "We've got you, and your pal there has got us. We'll make it pax."

"He's not our pal," said Tom Merry. "Well, he's St. Jim's, so I suppose he'll give you a lift. Tell him it's pax, and he'll be bringing the boats back."

Tom Merry hesitated. Cardew, across the intervening expanse of water, safe out of reach, regarded the Terrible Three with a mocking smile.

He was in Coventry; but if the chums of the Shell wanted to get off the island they had to speak to him.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged doubtful glances. "Can't be done!" muttered Lowther. "If we ask him to help us now, we can't in common decency cut him in the school afterwards. Let him rip!"

And Tom Merry and Manners nodded assent. "Well, why don't you yell to him?" exclaimed Gay impatiently. "I tell you it's pax!"

Tom Merry shook his head. "That fellow's in Coventry at St. Jim's," he said. "We can't speak to him."

"Oh, rot!" "Well, that's how it is. He's barred, and we're not going to ask any favours of the fellow."

"My hat! He's off!" said Wootton minor.

Cardew was pulling with two oars now. The skiff glided further away, the boat rocking in its wake.

"Come back!" roared Gay. "I'll come back if Merry asks me," drawled Cardew. "I'm only waiting to be asked."

Tom Merry set his lips hard. Cardew looked at him, and shrugged his shoulders. It was evident that the captain of the Shell did not intend to speak. The dandy of the Fourth paid him no further heed. He bent his oars, and the skiff glided away round the island, with the captured boat rocking behind. The intervening trees soon hid Cardew from the sight of the stranded schoolboys.

CHAPTER 3.

Study No. 6 to the Rescue.

"WELL, I'm blowed!" said Gay. Eleven fellows looked at one another grimly.

St. Jim's fellows and Grammarians alike, they were stranded on the island, a good distance from home, with the sun already setting.

If Blake's boat was up the river, and came by on its return, there was rescue. If not—

Gordon Gay glanced at the wide sheet of water separating the island from the mainland, glimmering in the red sunset. "What about swimming it?" he said. "I can't swim it," said Tadpole. "I don't think I could, either," said Wootton minor.

"For I!" remarked Lane. "Somebody will have to swim off, and bring a boat from somewhere," said Wootton major doubtfully.

"My hat! We shall be hours late for locking-up, at that rate!" said Gordon Gay. "It means a row at the school!"

"Same for us!" said Tom Merry. "What the dickens are you on ragging terms with one of your own chaps for?" said Gay crossly. "Nothing of that kind at the Grammar School."

"Oh, rats!" "What was to be done was a big ques-

tion. Some of the fellows could have swum to the bank, and tramped away to fetch a boat. But that meant hours, at least. The stranded party could not have been fetched off before dark. But it was the only resource. Otherwise the stranded juniors had the pleasant prospect of spending the night on the island.

But suddenly there was a joyful chirrup from Lowther.

"Hurrah! There's Blake & Co.!" "Oh, good egg!" exclaimed Gay, in relief.

From the upper reaches of the river a boat came in sight, pulled rapidly by four oars. There were six juniors in the boat—Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy of Study No. 6, and Levison and Clive of the Fourth. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was steering, his eyes gleaming in his eye. Levison and Clive were Cardew's study mates, but evidently they had been giving their former comrade a wide berth that afternoon.

The juniors on the island raised their voices together, and yelled, as the boat came speeding by.

Arthur Augustus's gleaming monocle turned upon them.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "There's Tom Mewroy!"

"And a Grammarian gang," said Levison, who was seated beside D'Arcy, while the rest of the crew were rowing.

"Come and take us off!" roared Tom Merry, waving his arms.

"This way, Gussy!" "Blake rested on his ear, and looked round.

"Stranded!" he said. "What game do they call that? Take 'em off, the asses! We couldn't crowd half that gang into this boat!"

"Washab not?" "Scuse for them, Gussy, and we'll tell 'em."

The boat drew nearer the island. Arthur Augustus stood up, and lifted his straw hat politely to the anxious crowd on the shore.

"Hallo, dear boys! How did you get stranded there?"

"Never mind that! Take us off!" said Manners.

"Fathead!" said Blake. "We might make room for two or three. We've got a full crew already."

"Better leave the Grammarians there," suggested Herries.

"These bounders aren't coming off without us!" said Gordon Gay grimly. "You'll take the lot, or none!"

"They can't take the lot," said Tom. "We're not sardines. They'd better ferry you across to the bank, and come back for us."

"I suppose that's the only way," he said. "Blake, you ass, will you ferry us across?"

"No larks?" said Blake cautiously. "No, fathead!"

"It's pax—honour bright?" "Honour bright!" said all the Grammarians together.

"Right—ho. Pull in, you fellows."

The boat glided into the rushes. Blake's crew came ashore, and the somewhat crestfallen Grammarians embarked. Blake and D'Arcy remained in the boat, giving the Grammarians about room to cram in.

Gordon Gay & Co. did the rowing, and the boat quickly traversed the channel, and reached the towing-path.

"Heah you are, dear boys!" said Arthur Augustus.

The Grammarians landed. They had a long walk before them to reach home, but they were glad enough to get off the island.

"Thanks!" said Gordon Gay. "Tell

Cardew we'll come for our boat to-morrow, and wring his cheeky neck while we're about it!"

"Bai Jove!" Has Cardew got your boat?" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Yes, bless him! Ta-ta!"

The Grammarians tramped away down the towing-path, and Blake and D'Arcy pulled back to the island. The waiting St. Jim's juniors stepped in. The boat was pretty full, with the Terrible Three and the original crew of six. They pulled down the river.

"How on earth did you fellows get into that fix with the Grammarians?" asked Levison curiously.

The Terrible Three explained, amid chuckles from the Fourth-Formers.

"Lucky for you we came along," said Clive. "It was a bit tricky, though, Cardew leaving you stranded there. You might have had to stay there all night. I dare say he never thought of that."

"A lot he cared, if he did!" growled Manners.

"Well, he offered to take us off, if we would ask him," said Tom Merry. "We couldn't, as he's in Coventry."

"Washab not?"

"And the cheeky beggar's taken the Grammarian boat off!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Yes—and ours!"

"My hat! That's a come-down for the Grammarians!" Blake chuckled. "They'll have to come and ask sweetly for their boat. They won't like it."

"They were going to make us do it," grinned Monty Lowther. "It's sauce for the gander, by Jove!"

"The mewby tables are turned on the boundans, and all through Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus. "That chap weally has a lot of push and go in him, you know. He washab a pity he is such a weak outside. He has got the bethah of the Gwammawians, dear boys, when you have been kicked to the wide."

"Oh, rats!" said the Terrible Three together.

Arthur Augustus smiled, and said no more. There was no need to rub it in. But it was right enough. The Terrible Three had met with a defeat at the hands of their old foes, and the tables had been turned by Cardew, the outcast of the school.

Clive and Levison looked very thoughtful as the boat glided homeward.

They had been the last to stand by the outcast junior—he had heard their chum. But they, too, had broken with him at last. The suspicion that Cardew had been expelled from his last school for theft—which he could not or would not disprove—had turned the school against him; but his chums had held true, till even their loyalty had been put to the severest trial. There was a limit, and Ralph Reckness Cardew had passed the limit.

Yet their feeling was ope of regret. Cardew, with all his faults—and they were many—had been their friend, and they felt the breaking of that friendship. He had been left on his own that afternoon. Even Racke & Co., the black sheep, had refused to have anything to do with him.

It was a blow to Cardew's pride to find himself out even by Racke and Crooke and Mellish. But it had come even to that.

The boat reached the St. Jim's landing-raft at last.

"There's the Grammar School boat!" said Manners, as they landed.

Cardew had evidently got home. Tom Merry's skill was necessary, and the captured Grammarian School boat had been pulled up on the raft, and was secured by a padlock and chain. Cardew had made sure of his prize.

Talbot of the Shell met the juniors as they went up the path to the school.

"Heard the news?" he asked.
"Bai Jove! What's the news, dear boy?"

"Cardew's come in with the Grammar School boat," said Talbot, laughing. "Nobody knows how he got hold of it. Nobody asked him, of course; but the chaps are very curious about it. Goodness knows what he's going to do with it. It can't stay here long."

"Tom Mewwy can tell you how Cardew got hold of it," chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Tom Mewwy has been dished by the Grammam cads."
"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry. "I'm going in to tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
But it was not long before the story of the misadventure of the Terrible Three was known all over St. Jim's. Cardew of the Fourth, the barred junior, was an object of much curiosity that evening in the School House.

CHAPTER 4.

A Reform to Order.

"ROTTER!" growled Wootton major.

"Beastly sell!" grumbled Frank Monk.

"What sort of a cheerful idiot do you call yourself, Gay, old chap?"

Those remarks were made by the Grammarians as they tramped wearily homeward along the river.

"They were tired, and they were cross. After a hard pull on the river and a hard chase after the Terrible Three on the island, they did not enjoy the long trudge home."

And their defeat came as a hard blow to them, too. The Grammar School boat had been captured single-handed by a St. Jim's junior; and he not one of the leading spirits at St. Jim's, but a fellow who was sent to Coventry by the rest of the school!

Gordon Gay did not reply to the growling of his comrades. He was thinking more about the captured boat than the long walk home.

The boat belonged to Gay and Wootton major and minor. It was fortunate that it was their own property, for if it had been one of the School boats, it would certainly not have had a night out without inquiry.

Unless the captured craft could be raided and seized, Gordon Gay & Co. had no choice but to ask the St. Jim's fellows meekly to let them have it back—a great come-down for Grammarian Pride.

He cut humble pie, to go cap in hand, as it were, to the grinning Saints, and ask for their boat, was a little too much. It would rub in the fact that the Grammarians had been worsted.

Gordon Gay's prestige as leader was at stake, so he had something more important to think about than the long walk home.

But the tired Grammarians kept it up in a kind of chorus.

They turned from the towing-path at last, to take the short cut through the wood to the Grammar School.

Away from the footpath, a track ran through the wood, scarcely marked, but familiar to the Grammarians.

As the tired heroes of Rylecombe tramped along in the thick grass the sound of a voice came from under the trees near the track.

"Time we were moving, Racke!"
"One more round, Crooke, and then we'll clear. We shall get in by lockin'-up, anyway."

"Right-ho! Your deal, Scrope."

"Shuffle 'em, Mellish!"

Gordon Gay had made a rapid sign to his comrades at the first sound.

The Grammarians halted, grinning. All their ill-temper had vanished now.

The voices came from beyond a thick clump of bushes. They knew the voices and the names. They had chanced upon the black sheep of St. Jim's, evidently enjoying themselves after their own fashion in the seclusion of the shady wood.

"Our game!" murmured Gordon Gay. "This is where we get our own back!"
"Good egg!" grinned Frank Monk.

"Follow your leader, kids!"

Gay pushed his way through the thickets, the Grammarians close behind. There was a startled exclamation as the bushes rustled.

"What the dickens—"
"Look out—"

With a rush Gordon Gay and Co. emerged upon the scene.

Racke and Crooke Scrope and Mellish were seated in the grass round a fallen log. There were cigarettes in their mouths and cards on the log, which was being used as a card-table.

They stared at the Grammarians, and jumped up. But they looked relieved when they saw who their visitors were. For a moment they had feared that a St. Jim's master or prefect might have come upon them. And if that happened, the consequences would have been very serious for the merry sportsmen!

"Oh! Only you chaps!" said Racke.

"Only little us!" smiled Gordon Gay.

"Did you think it was Ralston?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you can move on!" growled Crooke.

Gordon Gay shook his head.

"My dear sportive rotter, we're not going further on just yet! You shock us!" said Gay. "As top school we are bound to look after you St. Jim's chaps a little, and bring you up in our way you should go, and all that. We are conscientious objectors to gambling in war-time."

"We are!" grinned Frank Monk. "We is!"

"Mind your own business!" said Racke savagely. "Look here, we don't want any of your rot! You can keep your ragging for Tom Merry and his gang. They seem to like it. We don't."

"We have appointed ourselves censors of morals in this district," explained Gordon Gay. "We can't have you contaminating the place in this way. You have been playing cards."

"Oh, rats!"

"And not for nuts!" said Gordon Gay severely.

Racke grinned at the idea of playing cards for nuts. Stokes of that kind would not have suited the blackguard of St. Jim's at all.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" he said. "Look here, if you've got enough go in you, you can join in for a round or two! It's nap, a bad time."

"I'm afraid we haven't that kind of go in us," said Gordon Gay. "We have just enough go to make an example of a set of smoky, silly, gambling cads! Collar them!"

"Hands off, you fool!" roared Racke.

"Pin them," grinned Gay.

The four juniors were promptly pinned. Racke resisted savagely, but Mellish and Scrope and Crooke decided that discretion was the better part of valour. And Aubrey Racke's resistance did not last long.

"Now, suppose we tie their hands, and pin their cards all over their jackets, and walk 'em home like that!" suggested Gordon Gay thoughtfully.

The black sheep of St. Jim's turned quite white at the idea.

"You—you wouldn't do that!" gasped

Crooke. "It would mean the sack for us!"

"Well, that would be a jolly good thing for your school, wouldn't it?"

"Don't be a cad, you know!" mumbled Mellish. "I say, let's go, there's a good chap."

"Put them in irons!" commanded Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Racke.

The four juniors were put in irons at once, their hands being pulled behind their backs and tied together with a string.

They waited apprehensively for what was to follow.

Racke & Co. never entered into the rags between the rival schools if they could help it. On the present occasion, unfortunately for them, they could not help it.

The Grammarians picked up the cards from the log, and there was a general searching for pins.

With sickly looks, the four young rascals blinked at one another as their playing-cards were pinned on their jackets in prominent positions.

They were full of dread that the merry Grammarians intended to march them back to St. Jim's in that state.

If they turned up at the school with playing-cards pinned all over them, it was certain that their conduct would be closely inquired into.

And Racke & Co's conduct was not of a kind that would bear much inquiry.

"Now the fags!" said Gay.

With many chuckles, the Grammarians stuck cigarettes behind the ears of their prisoners and into their hair.

"Now, don't they look beauties!" said Gay admiringly.

"Real butes," said Lane. "Come on, as top school to see them to the gates of St. Jim's before we go home!"

"You—you can't!" gasped Scrope.

"Don't be such rotters! We shall get into an awful row!"

"It's for your own good," said Gay seriously. "Suppose you get a flogging. It will teach you a valuable lesson about playing the giddy ox in war-time."

"I—I say, let us off!" pleaded Crooke.

"I—I'll stand you five bob!"

"You measly worm, who wants your money?" growled Wootton major.

"Dry up, unless you want a thick ear to take home with you!"

Gordon Gay winked at his comrades.

"March!" he said.

"I—I say—don't!" yelled Racke, all his insolence gone now.

"Let us off! I—I—I—I'll do anything you like! I say—"

"Will you turn over a new leaf, and reform, and become good little boys like us?" demanded Gordon Gay.

"Yes—yes—Anything you like?"

"Well—what do you say, you fellows?" said Gay, appearing to relent.

"Shall we let them off if they promise to reform, follow our noble example, and become a credit to the empire like us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll give you a chance," said Gay.

"You can look back upon this day in later years, my young friends, and remember that your reformation dated from the day your Uncle Gordon took you in hand. I hope you will be grateful."

Racke & Co. gave him Hunnish looks. Judging by appearances, they were not feeling very grateful.

"No, no, my dear me," said Gay, holding up his hand. "We are sorry that we are a set of mean, measly, mangy rotters—"

"You—you rotter— I walk 'em home, all right!" gasped Racke.

The Gem Library.—No. 488.

And in mumbling tones the four merry blades of St. Jim's, who did not look very merry now, repeated:

"We are sorry that we are a set of mean, measly, mingy rotters—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And we are going to reform, and become as decent as possible, though it will be uphill work."

And the blades mumbled miserably: "We are going to reform, and become as decent as possible, though it will be uphill work—"

"And we beg the young gentlemen of the Grammar School to give us a kick each as a warning for the future," concluded Gordon Gay.

The Grammarians shrieked, and Racke & Co. looked daggers. But there was no help for it, and they mumbled in chorus:

"We beg the young gentlemen of the Grammar School to give us a kick each as a warning for the future."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, as you ask us, we will," said Gordon Gay graciously. "We can't refuse a set of repentant rotters a little service like that—eh, you chaps?"
"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Line up!" said Gay. "As requested by our dear friend Racke, each of you will take a goal-kick. One—two—three—Go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
There was quite a rush for the merry blades.

Racke & Co. fled wildly, with the Grammarian boots urging them on from behind.

They stumbled away through the underwood, shedding cards and cigarettes on all sides as they went.

A yell of laughter from the Grammarians followed them.

Gordon Gay & Co. took their way to the Grammar School in high good-lumour now.

"I rather think we're level with St. Jim's on the afternoon," remarked Gay.

"We are!" grinned Wootton major.
"To say nothing of having saved four merry blades from the downward path."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Racke & Co. had repented to order, but they did not look very repentant as they stumbled away from among the bracken.

They struggled with the string tied round their wrists, and got it off at last, and then tore off the remaining cards and cigarettes. Then, in a mood that would have done credit to a Hun on the warpath, they tramped away savagely for St. Jim's.

"I'll make Gay sorry for this!" said Racke between his teeth.

Racke gave a scornful laugh.
"What could you do? He could kick you with one paw! Bats!"

"If you'd wanted to scrap, he wouldn't have said no!" sneered Mellish. "Why didn't you ask him?"

"I'm not going to scrap with him!" growled Racke. "We may come on him some time when he's alone, and then—"

CHAPTER 5. A Peace Offer Rejected.

LEIVISON and Clive were at work on their prep in Study No. 9 in the Fourth. Cardew, who shared the study, had not come in.

After fastening up the captured boat on the St. Jim's raft, Cardew had disappeared, and he had not come in at calling-over.

His former chums were thinking more about him than about their work, as a matter of fact.

They were not satisfied with the situation.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 488.

Leivison looked up at last, his work done, and his brow thoughtful. He waited till Clive pushed his books away before he spoke.

"This is a rotten state of things, Clive."

"Rotten!" agreed Clive.

"Do you know where Cardew is?"

"No."

"He'll get into a row."

"No doubt about that, Railton looked rather grim when he didn't answer to his name at call-over."

Leivison made a restless gesture.

"The fact is, Clive, I fancy Cardew is getting into pretty shady company outside the school. I've seen him talking to Banks near the Green Man."

"Rotten!"

"Well, he's cut by every fellow in the school—even us. I suppose he doesn't want to lose the use of his tongue," said Leivison, with a faint smile. "The fellows expected him to get out of the school. His grandfather would take him away, he asked him, I know that. But he won't. There was talk about ragging him if he didn't get out in three days, but that's dropped."

"He can't enjoy staying at St. Jim's much, under the eyes," said Clive.

"But—but we had to chuck him, Leivison. After the rotten trick he played on Grundy about the banknote, it was too thick."

Leivison nodded.

"He wanted to show that a chap could be suspected without being guilty," he said. "He made us all believe Grundy was a thief, and owned up to the finish. The fellows can't get over it, and—and it was too rotten! But—but look here, Clive, it was too thick."

"Well?" said the South African junior.

"If Cardew left, it would be all right; but he isn't leaving. The school won't speak to him, but he's really being driven to look for friends outside St. Jim's, and he's got into a shady gang."

Leivison coloured. "I knew that lot well enough at one time, Clive—Jolliffe, Banks, Lodgey, and the rest. He's rotten for Cardew, and will cause him trouble in the long run. Suppose we—suppose we—suppose we start on the old terms with him in this study?"

Clive paused before he answered.
"For his sake, do you mean?" he asked at last.

"Yes; to keep him from going from bad to worse."

The South African junior looked very oddly at his study-mate for a moment.

This came strangely enough from Leivison of the Fourth, once the blackest of black sheep—the one-time associate of Racke and Crooke and Mellish. But there had been a great change in Leivison of the Fourth.

Clive nodded at last.
"Well, if we can help to keep the fellow from going to the dogs, I suppose it's up to us," he said. "I don't say he hasn't his good points, too—heaps of pluck, and he's generous in a way. And I don't believe for a minute that he was really kicked out of Wodehouse for theft before he came here, though why he doesn't choose to explain is a dashed mystery! I'm ready to try it on the old footing, if you are, Leivison."

"Done!" said Leivison.

There was footstep in the passage, and Ralph Reckness Cardew came into No. 9. He looked a little pale and tired, and he was squeezing his hands.

"Licked?" asked Leivison.
"Hallo! Found your voice?" Cardew asked.

Leivison coloured.
"Yes," he said, forcing a smile. "I asked you if you were licked."

"Since you've interested in the matter, yes," drawled Cardew. "Railton was good enough to give me two on each hand for bein' an hour late for callin'-over."

"You were jolly late!" said Clive.
"My hat! Have you found your voice, too?"

"Well, yes."
"You're awfully good!" said Cardew sarcastically.

"I think this has gone on long enough," said Clive.

"Do you? I'm sorry to say that I don't agree with you," said Cardew coolly. "Now you've found your voice, you can bestow the pleasure of hearin' it upon somebody else. I decline!"

"Oh!"
"Cardew's eyes flashed.
"Do you think I'm a fellow to be taken up, or dropped, at your sweet will?" he sneered. "You've chosen to drop me, an' you can stick to it, an' be hanged to you both!"

"All serene! Let it go at that, then," said Clive, and he left the study without another word.

Leivison lingered, flushing under Cardew's cool, mocking look.

"You needn't cut up so rusty, Cardew," said Leivison quietly. "You played a rotten trick on Grundy, and you know it. We stood by you through thick and thin till you did that."

"I gave Grundy what he asked for," said Cardew. "He made out that I was sacked from my last school for theft. I planted a banknote on him, and made all the fellows believe he was a thief, as a warning to him to be a bit more careful. When they'd all got down on him, I told them the truth, to let 'em see what silly fools they were. I'm not sorry I did it."

Leivison was silent. The cunning scheming Cardew had shown on that occasion had been a shock to him. He had some excuse, perhaps; but it was not so much the action itself as the cool, unscrupulous scheming that had shocked all the School House fellows, and finally disgusted Cardew's last friends.

But it was evident that the outcast of the Fourth did not see the matter in the same light, or would not see it.

"And I fancy I know what this new move of yours means," continued Cardew. "You know I've made friends at the Green Man. Did you think I was going through the rest of the term without speakin' to anybody but the Form-master in class, an' the Housemaster at roll-call, an' Toby the page?" He laughed. "And now you are kind enough to feel concerned about me, and you'd like to snatch me like a brand from the burnin'! Ha, ha!"

Leivison did not answer. He had not expected Cardew to read his motives with such ease. He was quite taken aback.

Cardew grinned sarcastically as he watched his face.

"Well, you can let me alone," he went on. "So can Clive! The pair of you can go an' eat coke! As for expectin' me to get out of St. Jim's, I'm not goin' to do it. I've never knuckled under to anybody yet. I'm not goin' to begin now. Old Reckness would take me away like a shot, if I asked him. I'm not goin' to ask him. I'm goin' to stick it out!"

He laughed again.

"They were talkin' about takin' drastic measures if I didn't go. That was last week. They've done nothin' yet. I'm waitin' for them to begin."

"I think that's dropped," said Leivison. "Grundy's had his lesson, anyway," sneered Cardew. "He doesn't seem so jolly keen to take the lead against me now. Let them try it. They'll find me ready. I'm not exactly afraid of a

raggin', or a dozen raggin's. I'm going to stick it out at St. Jim's to the finish. I'm goin' to stick it out on my own, too—without your help."

Cardew sat down to his books, and Levison, after a few moments' hesitation, quitted Study No. 9. There was nothing more to be said.

CHAPTER 6.

Alone in a Crowd.

TOM MERRY & Co. were chatting in the passage when Cardew came out of his study after finishing his prep.

They had been talking about Cardew, as a matter of fact, and of the capture of the Grammarian boat.

But there was an icy silence as the dandy of the Fourth sauntered by, and all eyes gazed unseeing.

Cardew glanced at them, smiled, and walked on. His smile expressed amusement, whatever he felt within. He left the Terrible Three with an uncomfortable feeling.

"It's a pity the chap's such a rotter," said Tom Merry, as the Fourth-Former went downstairs. "He's got his good points."

"But he is a rotter!" said Manners. "He made us all believe that Grundy was a thief, just for an impish trick. It was too thick!"

Tom knitted his brows.

"It's not only that; but a chap who was sacked from Wodehouse for theft isn't good enough for St. Jim's. Why doesn't he go? He could if he liked, I know that."

Careless of what the churns of the Shell might be thinking, Cardew went down the stairs. Racke and Crooke and Scrope were talking on the lower landing, and they looked at the outcast junior with sneering smiles.

Racke & Co. had had a good deal of insolence from the grandson of Lord Reckness, and they were able to repay it with interest now that the dandy of the Fourth was an object of scorn to all the school.

They did not neglect the opportunity. Cardew would have been a welcome recruit at one time to their honourable circle, if he had chosen. He had not chosen, and Racke & Co. were glad to make him suffer for his disdain.

"Mind your pockets!" said Crooke, as Cardew passed them.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cardew spun round. The insult had cut through, like the lash of a whip, the icy coolness which he wore as an armour.

He made a spring like a tiger at Gerald Crooke, and seized him by the throat. Crooke's head came against the staircase wall with a bang.

"Yaroooo!" roared Crooke. "Yow! Oh! Let me go, you beast! Oh!"

Cardew did not let him go.

He proceeded to knock Crooke's head against the wall half a dozen times in succession, and he looked so dangerous that Racke and Scrope hesitated to come to their comrade's aid.

Cardew released the Shell fellow at last, and pitched him down on the landing. Then, without a glance at him, and as cool as ever, he went down the lower stairs.

Gerald Crooke sat up, and rubbed his head, and groaned.

Cardew strolled into the Common-room. Blake & Co. were chatting just within the doorway, but they did not appear to see him. Cardew was a distant connection of Arthur Augustus, but the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was as oblivious of his existence as anyone else.

Cardew walked in, and passed Grundy and Wilkins and Gufin of the Shell.

George Alfred Grundy gave him a dark look, but that was all. Even the truculent Grundy had come to realise somehow that Cardew was a dangerous customer, better left alone.

There was no one in the Common-room with whom Cardew could exchange a word—unless he chose to accept the olive-branch held out by his study-mates. But he had not chosen to accept it. He sat in an armchair, took up a book, and started to read.

Many of the juniors eyed him curiously.

His exploit of the afternoon was in all minds. The fellow who had evum off to the island and captured the boats was a first-class swimmer and a fellow with plenty of nerve; and those were qualities the St. Jim's fellows could admire. They could not help feeling pleased, too, at the defeat of the Grammarians, their old rivals.

It was thought in many minds that it was pity that the fellow was such a rank outsider in other ways.

His coming to the Common-room, where he had no one to speak to, was regarded as sheer bravado.

Trumble giggled to Mellish that he was only pretending to read. But Cardew turned the leaves of the book steadily, his eyes on the pages, apparently oblivious to his surroundings.

At nine o'clock he rose, closed the book, and sauntered out.

He walked down the passage with his hands in his pockets, cool and calm, certainly looking like anything but an outcast.

He left most of the fellows discussing him.

Cardew might be disliked, or disdained, or even hated, but somehow he could not be ignored.

A lag came along the passage, and he paused timidly as he saw Cardew.

It was Levison minor of the Third Form.

"I say, Cardew—" he ventured.

Cardew gave him a smile.

"Hallo, kid!"

"We—we heard about you collaring the Grammarian boat," said Frank eagerly, glad to find the Fourth-Former in a good-humour. "It was ripping, Cardew! What are you going to do with the boat?"

"Keep it till Gay comes and begs for it," said Cardew laughing.

"They'll raid it," said Frank.

"I've put a padlock and chain on it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What do your pals say to your speaking to me young 'un?" said Cardew, looking curiously at the lag.

"Wally doesn't say anything. Pig-gott told me to chuck it, and I punched his head," said Frank.

"Ha, ha!"

Levison major came out of the Common-room.

"Time you went to your dorm, Frank," he said.

"Yes, Ernie."

Frank looked rather wistfully from one to the other. He would have been glad to see his brother on chummy terms with Cardew again. But Cardew walked away whistling.

"Not friends now?" said Frank.

"No."

"You don't mind my speaking to him, Ernie? You know how he got elugged the time he stopped Outie of the Fifth ragging me; I can't forget that."

"I don't want you to," said Levison.

"It's all right, kid—cut off to your dorm!"

At half-past nine, when the Fourth Form went up to their dormitory, Cardew went with the rest, looking as cheery as usual. There was a card stuck

on the coverlet of his bed, with the inscription:

"GO BACK TO WODEHOUSE! WE DON'T WANT THEIVES HERE!"

Cardew picked up the card, glanced round—meeting many grinning looks—and walked up to Mellish.

"Your handiwork, this, I think?" he drawled.

Mellish did not speak, but he looked a little scared.

"Don't speak to him, Mellish!" called out Trumble.

"Silence gives consent," smiled Cardew.

"Here's your little present, dear boy, returned with thanks!"

He gasped Mellish, and jammed the crumpled card down his back, Mellish struggling furiously the while.

"Yow-ow! Rescue!" yelled Mellish.

"Wags!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Pile in and lick him, dear boy! I'll hold your jacket, if you like!"

"Yes, go it, Mellish!" grinned Blake.

But Mellish did not go it. He was sitting on the floor when Cardew left him, gasping, and he showed no desire to carry the matter any further.

Cardew turned in without another glance at him.

CHAPTER 7.

In the Shadow of Death.

BY gad, there's our chance!" muttered Racke.

It was the following day, and lessons were over at St. Jim's.

A drizzle of rain kept most of the fellows indoors, but some few were out.

Cardew had gone out in a macintosh—not having much attraction to keep him indoors, and perhaps having attractions out of doors in the direction of the Green Man.

Racke & Co. were also out. They had gone down to the boat-house. On this rainy afternoon the boat-house and the raft were utterly deserted, and it was an excellent secluded spot for the black sheep of the Schooner.

Crooke, who owned a boat, had a key to the house; and in that deserted quarter the four young rascals were secure to enjoy their game of nap uninterrupted.

But as Racke & Co. came down the wet path to the boat-house through the trees, they spotted a moving figure on the landing-raft.

Racke's eyes gleamed.

"Gordon Gay!" muttered Crooke.

"The rotter!" said Mellish, between his teeth. "What is he doing here?"

Chink!

Racke grinned.

"He's after his boat, of course. He knows there wouldn't be anybody near the boat-house when it's raining. He's raiding the boat."

"This is where we come in!" grinned Scrope. "We'll make him sit up for his little game yesterday—what!"

"Yes, rather! Come on—quiet!"

The four juniors approached the landing-raft on tiptoe.

Gordon Gay was there, and his back was turned to them. He was kneeling by the padlocked boat, and evidently seeking to force the padlock.

Gay had calculated well. The rain had given him the chance of coming unobserved, and he naturally he had not foreseen that the blades of St. Jim's would be going down to the boat-house to smoke and play nap.

But as they stepped on the raft he caught a sound. He sprang up, and spun round to face them.

He did not seem alarmed when he saw who the men-of-concern were.

"Oh, you!" he said coolly.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 438.

"Little us!" smiled Racke. "This is where we get our own back, you rotten ruffian!"

Gay put up his hands, his eyes glinting, as the four advanced upon him.

It was not to be a good-humoured rag, by any means. The blades were four to one, and they intended to punish the Grammar School junior severely. There was little in the way of heroism that they would have stopped short of.

The sturdy, plucky junior would have been a match for two of them, but four made a large order, and he realised that he had a bad time before him.

But he faced them coolly.

"Come on!" he said.

The four came on with a rush.

Gordon Gay hit out from the shoulder. Racke went down, feeling as if a hammer had hit him, and the next moment Mellish rolled on the raft, with a yell.

Then Gay had to meet Scrope and Crooke, who closed with him before he could hit again.

"Back up!" shouted Crooke.

Racke and Mellish scrambled up, and rushed into the fight.

With four foes clinging to him, hitting hard, and dragging him over, the Grammarian junior fought gamely. But it was a losing fight.

He gave ground inch by inch, and in the excitement of the struggle none of the combatants observed that they were getting nearer and nearer to the edge of the raft.

Gay was down at last, his enemies sprawling over him, still pommelling.

"Hold him down!" panted Racke. "Hold him down! I'll lay into him with a boat-stretcher!"

The Grammarian made a desperate effort. He tore himself loose, and jumped up, panting, and almost exhausted. Racke drove at him, hitting out, and his fist crashed in Gordon Gay's face, and the junior staggered back, and fell.

"Look out!" gasped Racke.

But it was too late.

Gay was staggering back on the very edge of the raft, and the next instant he was in the water, with a resounding splash.

"Oh, crumbs!" panted Crooke. "He's in!"

Four horrified pairs of eyes were turned upon the rainy river. Gay had gone under, but he came up again, six or seven yards from the raft. His eyes turned for a moment in that direction, but the black sheep of St. Jim's seemed rooted where they stood.

Not far a world would they have dreamed of plunging into the deep, the swiftly-running water to his aid. The thought never even crossed their minds. They stood staring at him, dumb, utterly fuddled.

Gay was struggling gamely. But he was exhausted by the fight against odds, and his struggles to reach the raft were unavailing.

The current swept him away, and the juniors on the raft, speechless, watched his head vanish down the stream.

He was still swimming feebly, swept out into the river, still fighting for his life, when he disappeared from their terrified eyes.

"He's—he's been drowned!" Mellish stammered, white as a sheet.

"Get a boat out!" stammered Scrope, without making a move, however.

Racke set his teeth.

"You fool! He'll be under the bridge long before we could get a boat out!"

"Oh! He'll be drowned!"

"He should have let us alone!" muttered Racke. "We—we never meant

"You did it!" panted Mellish. "You knocked him in—you know you did, Racke—"

"Hold your tongue, you cowardly fool!" hissed Racke. "We're all in this. He may—may get out. If he doesn't—"

"Oh, good heavens!" groaned Scrope.

"If he doesn't, we've got to keep our mouths shut," muttered Racke. "Let's get off. Nobody knows we've been here—or that he's been here, for that matter. Keep mum, that's all!"

"But—but—"

"Do you want to be arrested, you fool? Keep mum! It can't be helped. We never meant it. It was his own fault! Come away before we're seen here!"

Racke hurried off the raft, and his companions, with white faces, followed him.

The tragedy had utterly unnerved them.

But the instincts to save themselves from the consequences was strong. At least the secret could be kept.

They hurried back to the school, haunted as they ran, by the memory of the white face that had looked at them from the swirling waters.

Far out in the swirling Ryll Gordon Gay was swimming, with failing strength, knowing that it was in vain.

The strong current was sweeping him down towards the bridge, and once under the bridge, he knew that all was lost.

But his efforts to drive shoreward were of no avail.

He was in the grip of the powerful current, and more than once his head had been under, and he was growing confused and dizzy.

Far above him the old stone bridge loomed; he saw it dizzily. He saw a face that looked down on him as his despairing eyes turned upward—a face under a school cap, too far away to be recognised.

He saw a figure leap upon the stone parapet, throw its hands together, and dive.

It was the last that Gordon Gay saw—the last he heard. His senses were fast fleeing.

But as he sank into unconsciousness he felt a strong grip upon him, and his head, which was sinking, came up above the swirling water again. He knew no more.

CHAPTER 8.

After the Rescue!

"FEEL better, zur?"

Gordon Gay's eyes opened and he blinked dazedly round him.

He was lying in wet grass, close by the rushing river—below the bridge. A roughly-dressed man was supporting his head on a strong knee.

Gay had been saved from certain death—he knew that. His last remembrance was of a strong grasp that had saved him from sinking.

A tanned face looked down upon him from under a slouched hat.

"You have saved me?" he gasped.

The labourer shook his head. Gordon Gay noticed, too, the next moment, that the man's clothes were dry. He was not the rescuer.

"No, zur. It was the young gent I pulled you out," the man explained. "I was working in the field yonder, and I came up.—I saw him come through the bridge, holding you. My eye! I never thought he'd get to the bank; but he did."

"Where is he?"

"He's gone," said the labourer. "He asked me to look after you, and he give

me this 'ere money." The labourer showed a couple of half-crowns in his palm. "He said he wanted a change, and he asked me to 'elp you 'ome."

"Thank you!" said Gay. The sturdy junior was already recovering. He rubbed the wet from his eyes. "Do you know who he was?"

"A schoolboy like yourself, zur."

"Grammar School chap!" exclaimed Gay.

"No, zur! He had a red-and-white cap."

"St. Jim's!"

"That's it. I knowed the cap, but I didn't know the young gent."

"Didn't he give his name to you?"

"No, zur."

"My hat! I wonder who it was. A St. Jim's chap, anyway. You're sure you don't know who it was?"

The labourer shook his head.

"No, zur. I knowed the cap well enough—I've seen St. Jim's caps often enough about 'ere—but I don't remember seeing the young gent afore."

Gordon Gay rose with the labourer's help.

"Stand all right, zur?"

"Yes, thanks, I can manage! Gay shivered. "I'll do a trot home, or I shall catch a blessed cold! What's your name, chappy?"

"John Jones, zur—works at Giles' Farm."

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Jones!" Gay pressed a half-crown into the man's hand. It was his last, as a matter of fact. "Thanks awfully! I can manage now."

Gay started across the fields, his wet clothes dripping round him. He knew it was necessary to keep warm, and he brooked no delay, and kept on the run all the way to the Grammar School.

He arrived there in a glow.

Carboy and Wootton major were in the gateway under an umbrella, waiting for him.

"What luck?" asked Wootton.

"Rotten! I'll tell you later. I've got to get changed."

"My hat! You've been in the water."

"Yes, and it was jolly wet!" grinned Gay.

He ran into the house, and up to his dormitory. A brisk rub-down and a change of clothes made him feel himself again.

A crowd of Grammarian juniors followed him to the dormitory, to learn what had happened. All of them were interested in the result of Gay's bold attempt to raid the captured boat.

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank Monk, when Gay had told his story. "And those rotten didn't try to help you?"

"Well, they couldn't," said Gay, contentedly. "I don't suppose they can swim, for one thing—dashed slackers! They must be in a blue funk by this time—must think 'I'm drowned.'"

"Jolly queer you weren't," said Carboy. "It wants a jolly good swimmer to go under Rylcombe Bridge and come out alive! Who the dickens got you out?"

A St. Jim's fellow, that's all I know. That labourer chap was certain of that. I'm going to find out who it was!"

"Queer he didn't wait with you," said Monk. "Rather rotten of him to go off before you came to."

"Well, I'm not likely to think anything he did rotten, when he pulled me out of the river," said Gay. "He risked his life to do it. The marvel is we weren't both drowned together!"

"But didn't you see him?"

"I just saw somebody dive from the bridge, that's all—not to recognise him."

"My word! It wants a nerve to dive from the bridge!" said Carboy. "Must have been Tom Merry or Figgins, or

Blake perhaps, if it was a St. Jim's chap at all.

"Well, I'm going to find out!" said Gay. "As soon as I've had a bit of a rest, I'm going to bike over to St. Jim's and ask. May as well put Racke out of his misery, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They must have given information at the police-station about it already," said Lane.

"More likely keeping it dark, if they thought Gay was drowned," said Frank Monk scornfully. "That's more like that lot!"

"Anyway, it will surprise them to see me," grinned Gay. "I shall enjoy seeing Racke's face."

"I'll come and see it, too," said Wootton major, laughing.

And an hour later, when Gay was feeling quite himself again, he wheeled out his bike, with Wootton major, and the two Grammarians started for St. Jim's, curious to learn which of their old rivals and foes was Gordon Gay's gallant rescuer.

CHAPTER 9.

Unknown!

"**B**OTHAM the wain!"

"Blow it!" agreed Blake.

Disconsolate juniors stood at the hall window, looking out of the School House at the weeping elms. The delightful uncertainty of the British climate was exhibiting itself again. Cricket practice was off—very much off. The few fellows who had been out had come in again, grousing.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake. "Here's a merry visitor—two of 'em! They must have enjoyed wheeling over here." "Gordon Gay?" said Digby.

"Wootton major, too! What do they want? Come to ask for their boat, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! They're not goin' to have it!" smiled Arthur Augustus. "Besides, they will have to ask Cardew, not us."

"We'll direct them to Study No. 9," said Lowther.

The two Grammarians left their bikes at Taggles' lodge, and came across the quad in the dripping rain.

As they came into the School House and shook the rain-drops from them there was a sort of chorus from Tom Merry & Co.:

"Anybody want a boat?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We haven't come over about the boat," said Gordon Gay, with a smile. "I jolly nearly had it this afternoon. But never mind that."

"You've come over for a thick ear, perhaps?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Not even to give you one," said Gay cheerily. "I've come over to see the merry rescuer, and thank him in my prettiest speech."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I suppose you know who it was?" said Wootton major.

"Who—who was?" demanded Blake.

"The chap who pulled Gay out of the river."

"Has Gay been in the river? Nice afternoon for a swim, I must say!"

"Bai Jove! Didn't you get wet, deah bo?"

"Oh, come off it!" said Wootton major. "We're not joking. We should really like to see the chap."

"What chap?" shouted Tom Merry.

"Then he hasn't told you?" exclaimed Gay.

"Surely he's got back to the school before this?"

"Who?" yelled all the juniors together.

"Hallo! Here's Racke!" muttered Wootton major, nudging his chum.

Racke of the Shell was coming downstairs.

The cad of St. Jim's was looking pale and harassed. He had not the slightest doubt that Gordon Gay was drowned, and, hardened as Racke was, it weighed upon his mind. His breast was full of apprehensions, too. The secret of the disaster had been kept, but for how long could it be kept? His friends—Mellich especially—were in deadly fear of what might be the consequences.

It was only by mingled threats and entreaties that Racke had kept Mellich from betraying the whole affair to the Housemaster already.

Gordon Gay grinned at the sight of the Shell fellow.

"Hallo, Racke!" he called out.

frabjous chump! What's up between you and Racke?"

"Lend me your ears, dear boys," said Gay. "I will a tale unfold, whose lightest word will harrow up your soul—"

"Oh, don't be a funny ass! Cut the cackle and give us the goods!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Gordon Gay concisely related the afternoon's startling adventure. The St. Jim's juniors listened in amazement.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "It was a feaful cheek of you to try to wob us of the boat, Gay! But I am verry glad you weren't drowned."

"Thanks, awfully!" grinned Gay.

"You must have had a narrow squeak if you went under the bridge," said Tom Merry soberly, "and the chap who dived



Four to one!
(See Chapter 7.)

Racke gave a violent start. His eyes almost started from his head as they fell on Gordon Gay.

He gazed at the Grammarian as if at a ghost.

Tom Merry & Co. looked from one to the other in utter astonishment.

"You—here?" stuttered Racke.

He clung to the banisters, utterly unnerved. Indeed, for a moment Racke half thought that it was a phantom that had suddenly appeared before him.

"Here I am!" said Gordon Gay. "As large as life, and twice as natural! Not your fault, you rotten!"

"Then you—you weren't—weren't drowned?" gasped Racke, still hardly able to believe his eyes.

"Do I look like it?" grinned Gay.

Racke drew a long, long breath of relief.

He turned, and mounted the stairs again with faltering steps, still in a tremble from the shock, and went to give the good news to his dispirited comrades.

Tom Merry caught Gay by the shoulder and shook him.

"What's the name of this game, you ass?" he exclaimed. "Explain, you

off the bridge for you must have had a nerve as good as any at the Front. But who the dickens was it?"

"I thought you'd know," said Gay, himself surprised. "Do you mean to say that the chap hasn't mentioned it?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Some awfully modest chap," said Arthur Augustus. "He is hidin' his light undah a bushel, you know."

"That's all verry well, but I want to speak to him," said Gay. "He risked his life to pull me out of the Ryll, and I want to say 'Thank you!' at least."

"Sure it was a St. Jim's chap?"

"John Jones said he had a St. Jim's cap. And it was a schoolboy, anyway. I caught a glimpse of him as he dived, and it was a boy, I'm sure—not a man," said Gay. "I was going under then, and I must have lost my senses when he collared me in the water. I don't remember anything till I came to on the bank. The chap Jones saw us come out together from under the bridge, and that fellow, who ever he was, brought me ashore."

"Queer that he didn't wait for you to come to."

"Well, he was soaked, of course, and the labourer chap was there to look after me. I thought he had hiked back here at once to get a change."

"Well, nobody's come in here soaked, or we should have heard of it," said Blake.

"Precious few fellows been out today," said Talbot.

"It wasn't one of you chaps?" asked Gay.

"Not guilty!" said Tom, laughing. "Might have been a New House chap," said Monty Lowther. "You'll have to look in the New House for the noble youth, Gay."

"Well, I thought it might have been Figgins," said Gordon Gay. "I suppose you chaps would know if it was one of your lot?"

"We'll trot over with you to the New House and see," said Tom Merry.

Quite a little crowd of School House fellows crossed the quadrangle with the two Grammarians. The juniors were keenly interested in the matter.

The schoolboy who had dived off the high bridge into a deep and rapid river to rescue Gay was a fellow of uncommon pluck and nerve, and he was a fellow St. Jim's would be proud of when they knew him.

They found Figgins & Co. in the New House, and they were interested in the story, but denied modestly the credit of the heroic act. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn had been doing lines for Mr. Ratcliff that afternoon since lessons. Redfern & Co. were questioned, but they stated that they hadn't been out further than the gym. It was soon clear that the rescuer of Gay was not to be found in the New House.

Gordon Gay was disappointed. "Mighty queer that he hasn't mentioned it, whoever he is," he said. "I don't see why he shouldn't."

"Perhaps it wasn't a St. Jim's chap after all," remarked Tom Merry. "Jones may have been mistaken about the cap."

"Well, it's possible. Anyway, if the fellow turns up, you might mention, from me, that I'm awfully obliged to him, and would be jolly glad if a chance came my way to do him a good turn," said Gay.

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Gay and Wootton, considerably puzzled, wheeled out their muddy bikes again, and pedalled home in the falling dusk.

CHAPTER 10.

The Black Sheep.

A SCENT of tobacco-smoke greeted Levison of the Fourth as he came into Study No. 9.

He knitted his brows, and Cardew was stretched in the armchair, with a cigarette between his lips. He looked coolly at Levison through the haze of smoke.

"I wish you'd keep that for the Green Man!" said Levison tartly.

"I understood you used to smoke in your study when you were in No. 2," yawned Cardew.

"Yes. I used to be what you are now—a silly fool!" said Levison grimly.

"Thanks!"

"Well, will you chuck it?"

"No," said Cardew deliberately. "I won't! I kept off it while we were pals; but we're not pals any longer. I really fall for the see why should show you any special consideration, Levison."

Levison made an angry gesture.

"I was thinkin' of changin' out of the study," resumed Cardew. "But there's a difficulty in the way. I can't have a study to myself, and nobody would take

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 438.

me in. You can settle the matter by gettin' out yourself—you and Clive."

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"Anyway, I'm goin' to smoke in my own study, if I choose!"

"Hallo! Who's turning this study into a dashed tap-room?" growled Clive, coming into No. 9.

Cardew smiled, and blew out a wreath of smoke. The South African junior coughed. The smoke did not agree with his healthy lungs.

"For goodness' sake chuck that silly rot, Cardew!" rapped out Clive.

"Can't you leave that to Racke and Mellish?"

"Oh, rats!"

Sidney Clive's eyes gleamed, and his hands were clenched for a moment. Levison was looking angry, too.

Cardew watched them coolly.

Evidently he was quite prepared for trouble, and did not care to what extent it might go.

But the two juniors were loth to proceed to extremities with their former classmate.

"Well, do as you like," said Clive, after a pause. "I'm not going to row with you, Cardew."

"You're doin' a lot of talkin' to a chap who's in Coventry!" drawled Cardew. "Aren't you afraid of havin' Grundy down on you?"

"Oh, rot!"

Levison and Clive sat down to their prep. Cardew had apparently done his work, for he did not join them at the table. He lighted several cigarettes one after another, and the atmosphere of the study was pretty thick by the time the juniors had finished.

Clive, with an angry snort, left No. 9 as early as possible. Levison could not go, as he was expecting his minor with his books. Cardew watched him with a mocking smile. But his expression changed as the door opened, and Frank Levison came in.

He coloured, and threw his unfinished cigarette into the grate.

Frank gave him a quick look.

"Sorry the study's so smoky, kid," said Cardew. "I didn't know you were comin'. Wag a newspaper about."

"I don't mind," said Frank, coughing as he spoke, however.

"Yes, you do, you little spoofer!"

"I—I say, Cardew, was it you?" said Frank.

"Me smokin'? Yes."

"I don't mean that! About Gordon Gay?"

"Anythin' happened to that cheery youth?" asked Cardew, yawning. "Has he been botherin' about his boat?"

"I never saw him," heard" exclaimed Frank. "He came for the boat, and had a row with Racke, and fell into the river."

"Clumsy ass!"

"Somebody dived in for him from Rylecombe Bridge, and saved his life," said Frank.

"What a giddy heroic deed! Must have been in want of somethin' to do!"

"It was jolly plucky!" exclaimed Levison warmly. "You needn't run the fellow down, whoever he was, Cardew."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, who was the merry merchant?" he asked. "I'm ready to join in the chorus of admiration, if a chap in Coventry's allowed to. Name!"

"Nobody knows," said Frank. "I—I thought perhaps it was you, Cardew, as you were out after lessons, and nobody else seems to have been out of gates."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cardew.

Levison gave his study-mate a very sharp look.

"It kin't have been you, Cardew!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha!"

"I saw you come in, and you weren't wet," said Levison. "The chap who got Gay out of the river must have been soaked to the skin."

"That's the queer part," said Frank.

"D'Arcy and some of the chaps have been asking questions all round, and it seems that nobody came in wet."

"Then it wasn't a St. Jim's chap at all!" said Levison.

"Gay thinks it was. The chap may have got a dry change before coming in," said Frank.

"Where would he get it?" laughed Cardew.

"Well, if it had been you, he might have got it at the Green Man," said Levison, with a curl of the lip.

Cardew laughed.

"So Gay's been after that boat?" he said. "I'll have another look at the padlock. They're not havin' that boat back till they beg for it, and own up they're licked."

And Cardew left the study. Levison major and minor sat down to work.

CHAPTER 11.

Baggy Owms Up!

THE mystery of Gordon Gay's rescuer remained a mystery.

There was any amount of honour ready for a claimant, but no claimant came forward for the present. The next day the undiscovered hero still remained undiscovered.

Many of the fellows concluded that it had not been a St. Jim's fellow at all. Certainly nobody had been seen to come in soaked with water. And if one of the fellows had performed an act of distinguished gallantry, why should he refrain from mentioning it?

Surely the most modest of fellows would not carry in modesty to such an extraordinary length as that!

It was a very interesting question, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was thinking over it very deeply. At tea-time, in Study No. 6, he unbosomed himself to his chums.

"I've been thinkin', dear boys—"

"Is that the reason why you haven't passed the exam, in modesty? I've asked you twice?" inquired Blake.

"Bothah the war-bread! I've asked that heroic wescue—"

"Bother the heroic rescue! Pass the war-bread!"

"I wathah think it was a St. Jim's chap," said D'Arcy, unbecomingly. "Gay is such of it. I wathah consider that the chap is keepin' quiet because he doesn't want to be suspected of swankin'."

It might have been Tom Mewry, or Figgins, or Talbot, or Kerr, all the time, you know."

"Or me!" suggested Blake.

"Bat Jove! Was it you, Blake?"

"Not at all. But it might have been, you know."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Are you going to pass that war-bread, or are you not going to pass that war-bread?"

"Pway don't intewwupt me, Blake! My ideal is that the chap ought to be found out. Honah to whom honah is due, you know. We'll shoudlah him due, you know, and give him three British cheasus, you know. Aftah all, he's a fellow for the school to be proud of. I wathah suspect it was Figgins."

There was a tap at the door, and Baggy Trimble of the Fourth looked in.

"Outside!" rapped out Blake.

"Yaas, wunn away, Twimble! We are not allowed to stand anybody feeds in war-bread, you know."

"I hope you don't think I've come here for a feed!" said Trimble. "I've

decided to tell you the truth, D'Arcy

"My hat!" said Herries. "Then the age of miracles isn't past! But could you tell the truth if you tried, Trimble?"

"Look here, you know, I hope there isn't going to be any jealousy about it in this study," said Trimble.

"Eh? About what?" asked Blake.

"About what I did yesterday?"

"What did you do yesterday?" Raided a study cupboard or sneaked an extra lump of sugar.

"I think you might be decent about it, Blake! I don't fancy you would have risked your life as I did!"

"Risked your life!" yelled Study No. 6, with one voice.

Trimble nodded calmly.

"Yes, in rescuing Gordon Gay, you know."

"Great Scott! Was it you, Trimble?"

"Really, I think you fellows might have guessed it was me!" said Trimble.

"You know what a splendid swimmer I am—"

"Why you can't swim two yards!" said Herries, you at ducker. You swim like a Hun!"

"You don't know much about swimming, Herries—"

"What!" roared Herries.

"You shouldn't be jealous of a chap, Herries, because he's braver than you," said the fat Fourth-Form chidingly.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Herries, quite overcome.

"You weally mean to say, Trimble, that you dived off Wylcombe Bwidge yesterday afternoon, and rescued Gay?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in wonder.

"I'm the man!" said Trimble coolly.

"I felt that I ought to own up, as all the fellows are wondering about it."

"Bai Jove! Trimble, dear boy, I withdrew some of the things I have thought about you. It was wippin' of you, and fearfully pluckay! I congratulate you, Trimble!"

"Don't shove your congrats at Trimble in too big a hurry," said Blake. "We've only got Trimble's word for it so far."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"I hope my word's enough!" said Baggy Trimble loftily.

"Of course, I should decline to allow doubt to be cast upon my word!"

Blake grinned.

"You really rescued Gordon Gay, at the risk of your merry life?" he asked.

"Certainly!"

"You haven't been waiting since yesterday to see whether the chap would defend, and you haven't decided now to claim the honour, as the real chap hasn't come forward?" continued Blake, in a tone of polite inquiry.

"Certainly not!"

"You haven't come to the conclusion that it wasn't a St. Jim's chap at all, so it would be perfectly safe for you to lay claim to it?"

"Not at all! I hope I'm incapable of bragging," said Trimble. "I merely mention the fact."

"The fact!" murmured Digby. "Oh, my hat!"

Blake closed one eye at his study-mate.

"Well, as it seems that Trimble is the giddy hero, Trimble ought to have the credit that's due," he remarked.

"Honour to whom honour is due, as you remarked just now, Gusey."

"Yaas, but—" said Arthur Augustus dubiously.

Arthur Augustus was the most un-suspicious fellow in the school. But even he had some doubts as to Trimble's claim.

"Trimble says he did it, and he ought to know," said Blake.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 468.

"Yaas, he certainly ought to know."

"Honour to whom honour is due. It's jolly kind of Trimble to come and tell us first! We'll spread the glad tidings."

said Blake. "There ought to be a demonstration."

"Just what I was thinking," said Trimble. "If there was a presentation, or anything of that kind, I should prefer it to be in the form of cash."

"Bai Jove!"

"Come on!" said Blake, taking Trimble affectionately by the arm. "You don't mind if I take your arm. Trimble? It's an honour to walk with such a brave chap!"

"Not at all, Blake."

"Come on, you fellows!" said Blake.

"Some of the chaps may doubt Trimble's yarn. But I know a way to convince them."

Herries and Digby and D'Arcy followed Blake, grinning. Baggy Trimble was grinning, too, with satisfaction. He had not expected to convince Study No. 6 quite so easily.

Blake marched Trimble away to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three had just finished tea, and Manners was scanning the jampot, to ascertain whether another scrape would be of any use. He decided that it wouldn't.

"Lead me your ears, you fellows," said Blake. "Behold the hero!"

"The which?" asked Tom Merry.

"The hero who plunged into a raging flood, and rescued Gordon Gay from a wet and watery grave!"

"Trimble?" yelled the Terrible Three.

"He says so!" said Blake, as if that settled it.

"Oh, he says so, does he?" said Tom Merry, catching Blake's wink. "Exactly! That settles it."

"I hope there's not going to be any jealousy in this study," said Trimble loftily. "I'm not bragging about it! I just did it, you know!"

"My dear chap, we know how to admire pluck," said Mony Lowther.

"Would you like me to lend you a quid, Trimble?"

"Yes, rather!" said Trimble eagerly.

"Then I'm sorry I can't," said Lowther politely.

"You—you see—"

"Come on, you fellows!" said Blake.

"We're making up a procession to do honour to the giddy hero. Fall in and follow me!"

The Terrible Three fell in and followed, chucking.

CHAPTER 12.

Too Much for Trimble!

"OYEZ! Oyez! Oyez!"

Jack Blake's voice rang through the passages.

Fellows turned out from their studies on all sides.

"Lovely mother ay Moses! What's the row about?" shouted Reilly.

"What's the game?"

"Oyez! Oyez!" roared Blake. "This way to behold the merry hero! Roll up and gaze! Don't mind his modest blushes—just gaze on him! Gentlemen, Trimble has just informed me that he is the giddy hero who rescued Gordon Gay from a damp grave at the risk of his life!"

"Rot!"

"Rats!"

"Shush!" said Blake. "Trimble says so, and you know what his word is worth!"

"Faith, and we do that intirely!"

"Line up!" said Blake. "This is a procession to do honour to the hero. I hope there are no doubting Thomases present. Trimble is going to prove it beyond the shadow of a doubt."

"Rats!"

"Look here, you know!" said Trimble.

"I don't think you ought to be jealous of a chap braver than yourself, Grundy"

"Eh?" stutered Grundy. "Why, I'll—"

"Yah! Keep him off!"

"Stand back, Grundy! Hands off the hero! Come on, you fellows—join in the procession!"

The crowd of fellows entered into the joke with one voice. Nobody believed for a moment that Trimble was the strong and plucky swimmer who had saved Gordon Gay.

But Trimble marched on ahead with Blake, strutting loftily, with his fat little nose in the air, never doubting that he was accepted as a first-class hero.

There had been no other claimant, at all events, and Baggy Trimble could see no reason why his claim should not be admitted. The other fellows, however, could see a good many reasons—among them the undoubted facts that Baggy Trimble was a very poor swimmer and a first-class fink!

The procession marched out into the quadrangle, more and more fellows joining in it. Kildare was in the quad, and came over to the crowd.

"What's all this about?" he asked.

"We're honouring the hero," explained Blake. "It's come out that Baggy Trimble dived into the river and rescued a Grammar School chap from a watery grave—"

"Trimble did?" yelled Kildare.

"Yes. He says so himself!"

"Spoofing little humbug!" said Kildare. And he walked away laughing.

"Fancy Kildare being jealous of me!" said Baggy Trimble facetiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he'll sing a different tune when you've proved it, Baggy. I don't see what you fellows are grinning at. Baggy dived off the bridge—didn't you, Baggy?"

"Yes, rather!"

"And plunged headlong into the raging flood—"

"Just so!"

"And bore the drowning youth to the shore—"

"That's it!"

"And then you kept your heroism dark out of sheer modesty"

"I'm a modest chap, you know," said Trimble. "Chap oughtn't to brag of his pluck. Some chaps happen to be plucky, and some don't. I'm one of the sort that are, you know. That's all!"

"That's all," agreed Blake. "Fellows who've chorled at the way Trimble swims, will have to ring off now. Only a first-class swimmer could have done what—um—Baggy did yesterday. Don't you think so, Levison, or what are you chalking at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, all of you!" said Blake, resuming the march.

He headed for the gates, with the crowd following. What idea Blake had in his head the juniors did not know; but it was clear to everybody but Trimble that the claimant's fat leg was being pulled.

"I—I say, are we going out?" asked Trimble, in surprise.

"Yes, of course!"

"But—but where are we going?"

"Rylcombe Bridge," said Blake.

"I—I say," stutered Trimble.

"What are we going to Rylcombe Bridge for?"

"For you to dive off!"

"What?"

"With all these fellows to look on and see you do it—"

"Yow-ow!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 468.

"You see, that will prove the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt," explained Blake seriously. "If you did it once, you can do it again; and if you do it again, why, you did it once. See? That's logic."

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "A wippin' ideah, Blake!"

"Hear, hear!" Baggy Trimble's face was a study. He seemed to have lost his voice. "Come on!" said Blake, dragging at his fat arm. "Follow on, you fellows! There's no charge for admission to see Trimble do the high dive."

"I—I say!" gasped Trimble, at last. "I—I can't!"

"Eh? You what?" "I—I mean, I don't want to dive to-day. You see, I—I'm rather off my form!"

"A splendid swimmer like you can't get off your form. It's finer weather to-day, too; the river will be smoother," said Blake. "Come on!"

"I won't!" gasped Trimble. "But you did it yesterday," chuckled Kangaroo. "Help him along, you fellows! He's going to do it, whether he likes it or not! He did it once!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The crowd poured out at the gates, Baggy Trimble struggling desperately in Blake's strong grasp.

"Come on, Trimble! What are you hanging back for?"

"I—I've got to do some lines!"

"Oh, I'll do your lines," said Gore. "After you've done the dive, you know." "I'm not going to do the dive!" shrieked Trimble. "You beasts, I shall be drowned!"

"But you weren't drowned yesterday," said Blake, "and yesterday you had to hold up Gordon Gay. It will be easier this time."

"You—you—Yah! Lemme go!" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, as Baggy Trimble struggled frantically to extricate his arm.

Baggy's terror was well founded, for there was not the slightest doubt that he would have gone to the bottom like a stone if he had dived off Rylcombe Bridge.

The prospect of being made to repeat the daring performance of the unknown hero caused the fat Fourth-Former to shiver like a jelly.

"Bai Jove! You are not so fearfully plucky to-day as you were yesterday!" smiled Arthur Augustus.

"Once a hero, always a hero," said Blake. "Come on, Baggy! You can either dive off the bridge, or we'll drop you off. This way!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme go!" shrieked Trimble.

"I'm not going to be drowned, you rotter! Yah! Let go! I won't dive! I—I can't! Yaroooh!"

"But you did yesterday, didn't you?" gasped Blake, wiping away his tears with his free hand.

"N-n-n-no, I didn't! It was only a j-j-joke!" stuttered Trimble. "Lemme go! Help!"

"Well, you haven't carried the joke far enough yet," said Blake. "You can carry it as far as Rylcombe Bridge—and dive off. Come on!"

"Help!" roared Trimble.

Blake's grasp on his fat arm relaxed, and Trimble tore himself away. He burst through the crowd of yelling juniors, and rushed in at the gates.

"After him!"

"Collar him!"

The yelling crowd rushed in after Trimble. They did not intend to fetch him back; but if they had intended it, it

would not have been easy. Trimble was straining across the quadrangle like a deer. Whatever kind of swimmer he was, there was no doubt that he could run—when occasion demanded it.

"After him! Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble fairly flashed across the quad, and disappeared into the School House. He did not stop, even to take breath, till he had reached his study, locked the door, and piled the table against it. Then he collapsed and gasped.

Baggy Trimble was left in peace at last. Nothing more was heard of his claim to be the gallant rescuer of Gordon Gay.

CHAPTER 13.

A Startling Revelation.

"I AM goin' out, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that announcement on the following afternoon. It was Saturday, and a half-holiday, and the weather having mended its manners, a House match was coming off between School House and New House.

"Eh? What about cricket?" said Blake.

"I have asked Tom Mewey to play Crivie in my place," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not think there will be very much wisk."

"None at all!" agreed Blake.

"Wats!"

"But what are you cutting cricket for?" asked Digby. "Can't your new topper wait till Monday?"

"I am not goin' for a new toppah, Dig. I am limitin' myself to one new toppah a month," said Arthur Augustus. "I feel that I am called upon to share in the general spirit of self-sacrifice. I am goin' out to see a man. I trust I shall be able to bring him heah."

"What the deuce?"

"As I remarked befoah, deah boys, I think the bewoic weucer ought to be known, and propobly honahed," explained Arthur Augustus. "I am suah it was a St. Jim's chap. It was just the thing a St. Jim's chap would do, wasn't it?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gay told us about that labawah chap who looked afteh him—Mr. John Jones, who works on Giles' farm," said Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to bring him heah."

"My hat!"

"You see, he knows the chap by sight who picked Gordon Gay out of the watal," said Arthur Augustus sagely.

"If I bring him heah, he can point out the chap, if it was a St. Jim's chap at all. See?"

"I see," agreed Blake.

"Of course, I shall make the man some compensation for takin' up his time," said D'Arcy. "This aftahnoon will be a favourable time, as most of the fellows will be on the cricket-ground for the match. I shall bring John Jones along, and he will see them all, and point out the giddy bewo. Then we will give honah to whom honah is due."

"Oh, bow-wow!" yawned Blake. "If the chap doesn't want to own up, why not let him have his way?"

"Wats! He is entitled to recognition for his pluck, and it is up to us to show that we appreciate British pluck. So I am goin'."

And when the cricketers went down to Little Side for the House match, Arthur Augustus departed.

Both Levison and Clive were in the School House junior team—the latter being substitute for Arthur Augustus.

The South African junior, at least, was glad that D'Arcy had gone on his self-imposed mission. He was keen to play for his House.

Most of the juniors who were not in the elevens gathered round Little Side to watch the game.

Some of them glanced curiously at Ralph Cardew as he sauntered down to the pavilion.

The ostracized junior was smiling and cheerful.

Any other fellow in Cardew's peculiar position would have been glad to keep out of the public eye. But that was not Cardew's way. He seemed to take a perverse pleasure in forcing himself upon the public notice.

Not a word was spoken to him by any of the juniors crowded round the field and the pavilion, and those who were near him openly turned their backs on him.

But the complacent dandy of the Fourth showed no sign of discomposure.

Whether it was indifference, nerve, or sheer impudence, he found within himself the hardihood to brave, unmoved, the scorn of all St. Jim's.

Levison and Clive did not approach him. They had made overtures once, and he had rejected them. There was nothing more to be said.

Cardew watched the match with apparent interest, though it was not difficult to guess that he was there more out of bravado than from any interest in the House match.

He joined in the cheering of the "hat-trick" by Fatty Wynn of the New House, and cheered Talbot's fine innings for the School House.

The School House were all down for 65, and Figgins & Co. went in for their innings.

Levison bowled well for his side, and Clive caught Figgins in the long field.

"There was a good deal of credit for No. 9 Study in the match."

Last man in had been called when the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in the distant gateway.

The swell of St. Jim's did not come alone. A burly, tanned labouring-man was with him. Arthur Augustus had found John Jones, of Giles' Farm.

"This way, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "The fellows are on the cricket-field."

"Yes, zar," said Mr. Jones.

And the swell of St. Jim's guided his companion towards Little Side.

They were not observed, however, for all eyes were on the last innings. It was a single-innings match, and the last batsmen at the wickets had taken the score to

Redfern and Lawrence were batting.

New House hopes ran high.

But Talbot was bowling, and he proved a little too much for Redfern.

Reddy played too far forward, and there was the clack of a falling wicket.

Redfern drew a long face for a moment. But there was no help for it. He was out, and the School House had won the match by a single run.

"Well bowled, Talbot!"

"School House wins! Bravo!"

The field came off, well satisfied with the result. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his suburnt companion had reached the pavilion. It was a favourable moment for D'Arcy's purpose, for nearly all the juniors of both Houses were on the scene.

John Jones was looking about the crowds of faces from under the rim of his slouched hat. Now that the match was over, a good many inquiring glances were turned on the farmer's man.

"Hallo, there's Gussy and Joney!" grinned Blake. "Now the merry mystery is going to be revealed! Was it you, Figgys?"

"Was it you, Talbot?"

"Perhaps it was Trimble, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bet you it was a School House chap!" said Clive.

Cardew started as his eyes fell on John Jones.

A glance, cynical smile curved his well-cut lips for a moment. He drew back a little, so that several juniors were between him and the farmer's man.

D'Arcy piloted his companion towards the pavilion.

"Heah we are, deah boys!" he announced. "Mr. Jones is goin' to point out the moway hewo. Go it, deah boy!"

"I don't see the young gentleman here, zur," said Mr. Jones, looking round.

"Sure it wasn't me, Mr. Jones?" asked Monty Lowther. "Wasn't it a chap about my size, with a nice, handsome face like mine?"

The juniors grinned, but the stolid Mr. Jones shook his head seriously.

"No, it was a young gent not so tall as you, zur," he replied. "A very good-looking young gent, and a very generous young gent, too. Oh, 'ere he is!"

He had caught sight of Cardew at last. Mr. Jones tensed his slouched hat to the outcast of the Fourth.

"Arternoon, zur!" he said respectfully. "I ope you ain't had any bad effects, zur, from getting so wet."

"Thank you, no!" drawled Cardew calmly, apparently oblivious of the amazed stares on all sides. "What the merry dickens brought you here, my man?"

"This 'ere young gent asked me to come, and point out the young gent what saved Master Gay," explained Mr. Jones.

"No offence, zur, I ope."

"None at all," said Cardew. "G'wat Scott! Do you wery mean to say, Mr. Jones, that Cardew is the chap?" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I don't know the young gent's name, zur," said Mr. Jones. "But that's the young gent what pulled Master Gay out of the river."

And, touching his hat again, Mr. Gilee's man retired, and plodded stolidly away to the gates.

He left the crowd of St. Jim's juniors breathless with amazement.

"Cardew!" muttered Tom Merry. "That rotter!" said Blake.

"That fellow who was sacked from Wodehouse for stealing!" muttered George Alfred Grundy. "Oh, my only hat!"

"Bai Jore!"

"You, Cardew!" said Levison.

Ralph Reckness Cardew gave the juniors a cool, steady stare, swung round on his heel, and walked away.

"Cardew!" called several voices. Cardew did not turn his head. He did not seem to hear.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Herries. "Cardew, after all! Fancy that fellow talking such an awful risk for a chap!"

"Blessed it is, I understand it yet!" said Blake. "Anyway, it was jolly plucky of him, though he's a rotter."

"Yaa, wataiah!"

Arthur Augustus was in a somewhat troubled and perplexed mood. He had laid that astute plan for revealing the hidden hero, never doubting it would turn out to be Figgins or Kay, or Talbot, or Julian, or some other fellow who was well known for his pluck.

The thought of Cardew, the outcast of the school, had never crossed his noble mind for a moment.

The outcast of the Fourth—the fellow who was scorned by the school—the junior who was believed to have been expelled from his last school for theft—he was the heroic rescuer!

The demonstration in recognition of gallantry, which Arthur Augustus had so sagely planned, could not very well come off.

The fellow who had rescued Gay was a fellow any school might have been proud of, but he was in Coventry; and even that example of pluck and generous daring did not affect the reasons for which he had been sent to Coventry. Those reasons still held good.

Arthur Augustus felt as though he had had a cold douche.

"Bai Jore! Who'd have thought it?" he said at last. "Cardew, of all chaps!"

Racke broke in with a sneer. "That's how he came in dry. He must have got his things dried at the Green Man! It was close handy."

"Never mind the Green Man now!" said Tom Merry gruffly. "Whatever Cardew is, he's a good plucked one."

Way, and there's not many fellows who could, or would, have done what he did. And I'm going to speak to him!"

And Tom followed Cardew to the House, leaving the juniors in a buzz over the amazing discovery.

Ralph Reckness Cardew was in his study.

He blew out a little cloud of smoke as Tom Merry looked in.

He did not remove the cigarette from his lips, as he looked at the captain of the Shell.

Tom Merry came in, affecting not to notice the smoke.

"I want a word with you, Cardew!" he said abruptly.

"Forgotten I'm in Coventry?" smiled Cardew.

"Never mind that now. It seems that it was you who pulled Gay out of the river."

"Surprisin', isn't it?" yawned Cardew. "Well, it is rather surprising, yes! It was jolly lucky you happened to be on the spot."

"Yes; I was strollin' down to the Green Man for a smoke and a little game," said Cardew deliberately.

"Luckily I stopped on the bridge to have a look at the river. And I never got the little game, after all; I got nothin' but a dry at the Green Man. Hard cheese, wasn't it?"

"You didn't lose much," said Tom. "Never mind that. Look here, Cardew, what you did was a ripping thing—"

"Thanks!"

The satirical tone, the ironical smile, made Tom Merry colour. But he went on:

"A fellow who would do what you did, Cardew, well, it's hard to believe that he could be mean enough to be a thief! Pluck and sneaking dishonesty don't usually go together. I want to ask you once more—will you explain away what's said about your leaving Wodehouse? You've been accused, and you've said nothing. After all, the fellows would be willing to take your word, if you could give some explanation. Why don't you do it?"

Cardew shrugged his shoulders. "Because I don't choose!" he said coolly.

"You stick to that?"

"I do."

"Then there's nothing more to be said!" said Tom Merry. And he walked out of the study.

And nothing more was said. The hero of St. Jim's was still the outcast of the school!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's —"THE OUTCAST'S LUCK!" by MARTIN CLIFFORD.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"THE OUTCAST'S LUCK!"

By Martin Clifford.

The mystery surrounding Cardew's leaving Wodehouse is cleared up in this story—one of the best that Mr. Clifford has given us for a long time; and he has been giving first-class yarns lately, yarns which will compare favourably with anything he has ever done in the past. All of you are interested in Cardew, I know. The wayward fellow, with his very real courage, his rather less real contempt for public opinion, his generosity, and his fits of revengeful anger, has found a corner in our hearts. There is much in him that is wrong-headed and wilful, but there is much to redeem it. On the whole, the good outweighs the evil, and it will be easy for you to guess that, whatever Cardew did at his old school, he certainly was not guilty of theft there. But I don't mean to tell you more than that. To give any indication of the plot of the story would be to spoil it.

HAIL, COLUMBIA!

I have heard from "Stars and Stripes" again. He does not send me a letter this time, but instead, half a dozen or so newspaper clippings which deal with several subjects more or less connected with the war and the coming in of the United States on the side which has always been the only possible one for her.

Perhaps my friend over there considers this great event in the light of a score over me for him. It is not. I have always maintained that the U.S. must come in sooner or later. Whoever said they were too proud to fight, I never did. The feeling I had about that was rather like what I might have had had one of my own brothers turned Con-scientious Objector! It was the nastiest thing I ever said about that great nation.

Too proud to fight! Why, it was enough to make Grant and Sherman, Lee, and all the gallant leaders on both sides in the Civil War, Washington and his men, the great Indian fighters who brought the West under civilisation, turn in their own graves!

Among the papers "S. and S." sends along is a list of the battle honours of the 19th New Jersey Infantry. I don't wonder that he is proud of them. I am not an American, but

I can thrill at the very name of those hard-fought fields of the past. Bunker's Hill and Valley Forge—terrible, yet glorious, Gettysburg—the long battle of the Wilderness—many another fierce, manhood-proving struggle is told of here—told in one word or two and a date to tell him who knows the history of the U.S.A. Too proud to fight! I think not!

A CADET CORPS.

Readers in the S.E. district of London who want to join a good Cadet Corps should apply any evening, after eight o'clock at Queen's House, 51, Union Street, Southwark, S.E. The advantages are many, and the entrance fee is small, and can be paid by instalments if you like. I hope to have more to say on this subject in next week's "Magnet" Chat.

Your Editor

EXTRACTS FROM

"Tom Merry's Weekly" & "The Greyfriars Herald."

BUNTER'S TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE. THE SPOOK OF GEORGIE WASHINGTON!

By SAMPSON QUINCY IFFLEY FIELD.

By DICK RAKE.

BROWNIE has told you all about how Bunter borrowed Peter Todd's bike, and got Peter held for ransom, and had to change places with Peter, and paid the ransom in the long run out of his postal-order—the one that came, not one of the thousand and one that never did.

But there is another yarn about Bunter and a bike. And the best way to tell it is in Bunter's own words, as far as I can remember them. I may have to add something by way of explanation, because Bunter is a bit apt to colour things to suit his own case—which is putting it very mildly indeed.

"I'm not going to talk about it." That was how Bunter's yarn began. But I took no notice of that.

"Let's see," I said. "Was it five years or ten they gave you?"

"Oh, rot, Field. You know very well it wasn't anything of the sort. I wasn't tried. They had to apologise. If they hadn't, I should have got some of my titled relations to make a fuss about it in the House of Lords, and then—"

"Then we shouldn't have been long," I dropped in. "But never mind about your titled relations. Bunter, tell me about how you really rode the bike."

"Oh, bally, Field, if you go about talking like that you'll find yourself let in for an action for slander. I'm not putting up with it, so I warn you!"

"But there are all sorts of yarns about, you know, Porpoise, and some of the fellows believe that was a very fishy case. You'd better let me have a full account of it to publish in the 'Herald.' That may stop them from talking rot."

"Oh, rot, Field, nothing would. They're always doing it. There never was a chap on this earth who's been libelled and slandered as I've been, Squiff, really!" groaned the Owl.

"Then, it's up to you to be interviewed, and set them right."

He brightened up at that.

"Are you going to interview me, Squiff?" he asked eagerly.

"That's what I'm doing, chump!"

"Oh, I thought you were just talking rot, as usual!"

"I'm not. And you'd better not tell thumpers as usual. It's the truth I want."

"My well-known high principles wouldn't allow of my telling you anything but the truth, Field," said the interviewee loftily.

"That's the style! Keep that up, and I can beat the Le Quex merchant to a frazzle. There's nothing like starting with a good one."

"I refuse to be interviewed at all unless I am treated with the respect due to me!"

"Oh, do you? Turn round, Bunter!"

I did not expect that he would. But I suppose he was taken by surprise. He turned round. I moved my right foot in his direction with a moderate amount of velocity.

"Yaroooooh! Wharrer kicking me for, you cad?"

"Treating you with the respect due to you, Gyner! Now, let's get on with the washing!"

II.

WE got on—after a bit.

"It was like this, Squiff. Of course, you know I haven't a bike.

I could have one if I wanted it.

Any of my titled relations—

"Oh, cauliflowerers!"

"Don't be idiotic! When I want to use a bike—ain't I often—Toddy's always willing to lend me his."

"Great turnip-tops!"

"I can't make out what you mean by saying such petty things!"

"It's only when you overstep the limits of veracity, Bunter. Get on!"

"When I want a bike, I borrow one out of the bike-shed. I don't see why any fellow

should mind lending me one. Nobody ought to mind."

"Proceed, Porpoise!"

"So I borrowed that one. I didn't know whose it was; but then I don't pretend to know all about every blessed bike in the shed. It was a beastly windy day—"

"We'll have the weather remarks in an addendum, please. Then they can be cut out if space runs short."

"It was a beastly windy day," repeated Bunter obstinately, "and before I had got far, my cap blew off. If you don't like the way I tell you this, you can just tell it your own way, Field."

"You wouldn't like the way I told it, Porpoise!"

"Oh, well, of course it's best to have the truth!"

"Then I'd better tell it."

"Rot! It stands to reason you don't know the truth as well as I do."

"P'raps not. But I can tell it better."

"My cap blew off. It went right over a head, and I didn't bother about getting it. A cap more or less isn't of any importance to a fellow in my position."

"Whose cap was it?"

"I don't remember—I mean, it was mine, of course, your forehead!"

"Oh, tomatoes!"

"It may have been Dutton's, or it may not."

I know it wasn't really big enough for me; but then there aren't many chaps here with a head like mine."

"No. Bunter minor's the only one I know of—bunks to."

"It blew off."

"That was Sammy's, of course. I haven't seen him lately, or I should have noticed it."

I should say. Why don't you adopt the fashion yourself?"

"Ass! My cap blew off, I said!"

"Dutton's cap, you mean."

"I don't know that it was Dutton's. Didn't I say I wasn't sure? The thing was too small, anyway."

"Proceed! You scrapped Dutton's cap, and wobbled on."

"I rode on," said the Owl, with ineffable dignity. "There isn't a chap at Greyfriars who can touch me as a cyclist."

"There certainly ain't one who rides at all in the same style."

"I got to Friarale, and I dismounted."

"Usual way?"

"Of course! Really, Field, you are ridiculous!"

"Did it hurt much?"

"Did what hurt?"

"Tumbling off."

"Who said I tumbled off, you fathead?"

"You, you, you!"

"Oh, really, Field, I didn't say anything of the sort!"

"You said you dismounted in your usual way."

"Look here, I'm not going to sit here and stand—"

"—both at once, of course."

"And stand being insulted by you! So if you want to interview me, treat me with proper respect."

"What's that? Turn round again, Bunter!"

"Who?"

"Right-about—face! I am simply yearning to treat you with all the respect due to you."

But he wouldn't. I could not get any more out of him. Still, everyone knows the yarn.

(EDITORIAL NOTE.—Everyone at Greyfriars may know it; but all the world does not. So Tom Brown is going to write it out for publication in an early number of the book.

It is just as well that Bunter cut up rusty when he did, for I don't see how we should ever have got to the end of the story the way it was being told—or not being told—by Squiff—H.W.)

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—This is quite a good notion of Richard's, but I find that the idea of Bunter's and Fishy's telling the truth strains my belief hard, though I can swallow the spook.]

It was the thirty-first of June, And brightly shone the sun, When through the Close there came the

spook
Of Georgie Washington.

And none could doubt that it was George, Because the lad, you see, Clutched in one hand a little axe,

And bore a cherry-tree.

And he beheld a gathering Of fellows, quite a crowd, Who listened while a fat youth there Spoke squeakily and loud.

Now, that fat youth was Bunter, and I grieve to have to own It was with awful whoopers that He tried to raise a loan.

"My relatives," George heard him say, "Are such that at the Front a

particularly gallant hero's sure To bear the name of Bunter.

"They send for Colonel Bunter when 'They're dreading Hun attacks," Said Bunter, and then stopped, as he Saw Georgie's tree and axe.

He blinked, and slowly raised his head To meet the spook's eyes; And something made him add: "Of course, I'm only telling lies!

"Most of my people are like me, "Are such that at the Front a To go out to the front and try

To do their little bit!

"And none of them are colonels, and The major, it appears, Is really but a miper in

A squad of Engineers."

He paused. A voice was heard by all Which said: "That's better than A pack of falsehoods. Keep it up, Bunter, and be a man!"

And then another chap came up— 'Twas Fisher Tarleton Fish,

Just looking round for fellows whom He hoped that he might hiss.

He laughed at Bunter's honesty, Which Fishy did despise (For Georgie is not seen until A chap starts telling lies.)

Then Fishy started, speaking thus: "I don't care where you hunt; I guess you'll find no rival to My latest little stunt.

"I'll just do this," he said—then paused, For he saw Georgie's tree.

And, scarcely knowing why, he said: "You'll then be done by me!

"It's really just the usual do, And you galoofs, if sane, Will have no truck with it, or else You'll all get let again."

The fellows gasped, and Wharton said: "Good, Fishy! That's the way! Upon my word, you're talking like A Britisher to-day!"

Then Fishy felt a curious thing— An honest glow of pride!

And he was glad that he had stood By Truthful Georgie's side!

P.S.

I wish that Georgie Washington Would toddle round again, The little lesson that he gave Has since proved quite in vain.

ON THE SCENT.

An Adventure of Herlock Sholmes. By Peter Todd.

THE case I now deal with was not a triumph for Herlock Sholmes. But this, as I shall show, was entirely due to the incompetence of the official police.

Sholmes had been absent for some days, and I was beginning to wonder what had become of him, when one evening he hurriedly entered our rooms at Shaker Street. He took a hasty swig from the cocaine-cask, and turned to me.

"All goes well, Jotson! I have called for you, my dear fellow—so that you may be in at the death—not a new experience for you, eh, doctor?"

"Not at all," I assented. "But what—"

"I will explain as we go, Jotson. There is no time to lose."

In the old, affectionate manner I knew so well, and which so endeared Herlock Sholmes to those who knew him best, he took me by the ear, and hurried me down the stairs. A taxicab was waiting without, and we entered it. Sholmes rested his boots upon my knees as the cab rolled away, and leaned back thoughtfully.

"A remarkable case, Jotson," he said dreamily. "The case is remarkable! But the villain is hooked—the dastard is already hooked—under lock and key! That is, if the police do not blunder."

"He shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear Sholmes, who—what—"

"You remember I left you somewhat suddenly last week, Jotson. I was called to the aid of the Marine Department, to take up an important case that you may recall as the Cheese Dictator. Since then I have been on the track. You are aware of the latest order of the Cheese Dictator?"

"I looked doubtful.

"I am not sure, Sholmes. I make it a rule to consult every new order, regulation, and precedent to memory, but I confess that since the present case has been going along, and I am liable to forget a hundred or two. To which order do you refer?"

"Jotson, surely you are aware that cheese may now be purchased only in two pennyworths at a time. Anyone purchasing more than two pennyworth is liable to be imprisoned without the option of a fine; while anyone purchasing less than two pennyworth is liable to be fined without the option of imprisonment."

"Well, this order of the Cheese Dictator has been eluded by unpatriotic persons, Jotson, and their heinous conduct has called forth a new order—Number 7157. Unscrupulous persons have been going about from cheesemonger to cheesemonger, purchasing two pennyworth at each place, until in some cases, they have accumulated a secret hoard of nearly a pound of cheese."

"Sholmes!" I exclaimed, in horror.

He smiled sadly.

"I am in war-time, Jotson, and even in our own country, such persons are found. It is incredible, and, therefore, true. You know my methods. Order 7157 forbids any person to buy more than two pennyworth of cheese in his or her possession at any one time. Thus, Jotson, the cheese-boarders are baffled. In short, the Cheese Dictator has compelled them to cheat it."

"I made a mental note of the order and the number."

"A certain person, Jotson, has braved Order 7157. I am on his track. Suspicion fell upon him owing to a peculiar aroma which was noticed to linger about his premises in the Clapham Road. The policeman on the beat noticed it, but was put off by an explanation that Mr. Whiffley—the owner of the house—had been using a large quantity of fertilizer in his potato-patch. It could not, however, be concealed. The aroma spread across the street, and reached the house of a neighbour—a retired cheesemonger. He immediately recognised the familiar scent of gorgonzola and reported the matter to the Cheese Dictator. The suit of Mr. Whiffley was, in fact, manifest."

"But, my dear Sholmes—"

"The fact was established, Jotson, that there was gorgonzola in the house. Two pennyworth could not possibly have spread to such a distance so exceedingly powerful an

aroma. There was not the slightest doubt that the base, unpatriotic Whiffley had at least a pound of gorgonzola on his premises. A pound, Jotson—a pound of gorgonzola in the third year of the war!"

"The police were called in—our old friend Pinkeye," Sholmes smiled. "But you know the police, Jotson. Pinkeye was fobbed off with an explanation that the drains were out of order. Whiffley, with fiendish cunning, had called in the plumbers to keep up appearances."

"Good heavens, Sholmes!"

"Fortunately the matter was reported to me, and at the request of the Cheese Dictator I investigated the matter. A stroll past Mr. Whiffley's house convinced me that it was indeed gorgonzola that was in question, and that it was not a matter of the drains, as Mr. Whiffley pretended. To the trained nose, Jotson, there is a distinct difference between the aroma of gorgonzola cheese and that of a neglected drainage system."

"I have never observed it, Sholmes, but I have no doubt you are right."

"Quite so, Jotson. Without proof, however, the police were loth to stir in the matter. I cannot help suspecting that Inspector Pinkeye was not unwilling to avoid an encounter with the gorgonzola at close quarters. It had not occurred to him to use a gas-mask, the police think of nothing. Proof, however, I obtained. Disguised as a gas-collector, I penetrated into the house."

"Splendid!" I exclaimed. "I presume that the house is lighted by gas, and therefore

Sholmes smiled lightly.

"The house it lighted by electricity, Jotson. There is no gas."

"Yet you—"

"My dear Jotson, is it necessary for me to explain my methods to you at this time of day? As Mr. Whiffley does not use gas, he could not possibly be on his guard against the call of a gas-collector. Had I gone with a bill for electric light, he might have been prepared. As it was, I took him completely by surprise."

"Wonderful!"

"I traced the gorgonzola, Jotson, to the pantry. To the trained nose that was not difficult. I left, convinced that the case was clear, and that nothing remained but to arrest the criminal. There is, however, no time to waste, for it is barely possible that the villain Whiffley suspected that I was not what I appeared, and may have taken the alarm. He might baffle us at the last moment by opening the pantry window, and allowing the gorgonzola to escape. But here we are, Jotson."

The taxi stopped.

II.

INSPECTOR PINKEYE greeted us warily. But Herlock Sholmes was a little more in words. He was unduly little on the sent.

"Your men are here, Pinkeye?"

"The house is surrounded," said the inspector. "Every precaution, of course, has been taken to prevent the villain suspecting that he is being watched. Two of my men are in the front garden, concealed behind a hollyhock. Two are in the backyard, carefully hidden in the sanitary ducts. Three

are on the roof. I confess, Mr. Sholmes, that I should not have known how to place them there without exciting remark, but for your suggestion of dropping them from an aeroplane."

"Good!" said Sholmes. "And the chimneys?"

"According to your instructions, Mr. Sholmes, they are sitting on the chimneys. The gorgonzola cannot escape that way."

"My dear Pinkeye, you are improving," said Herlock Sholmes cordially. "To judge by the aroma, it is in a very arid state, and I suspect that Whiffley keeps it chained in the pantry. You have given your men instructions to use their truncheons if necessary, Inspector?"

"Yes, Mr. Sholmes."

"Good! Follow me."

We reached the door of Mr. Whiffley's residence.

"Although my nose had not been trained to the same extent as Herlock Sholmes', the powerful aroma that hung around the premises would certainly have warned me that considerably more than two pennyworth of gorgonzola was kept captive in the house. I confess, however, that I might have been deceived by Whiffley's cunning assertion that the drains were out of order. Sholmes, however, was not to be deceived."

"We gained admittance."

Mr. Whiffley met us with an ill-assumed air of bravado.

"The game is up!" said Herlock Sholmes sternly. "Here is your prisoner, Pinkeye. And now for the gorgonzola!"

"Crash!"

The pantry door flew open.

Sholmes uttered a cry.

"Gone!"

I rushed to his side.

"Before our eyes lay a huge dish—empty! The walls were a sickle grey. There was no trace of the gorgonzola, save in the scent that hung lovingly about the pantry. Sholmes grunted his teeth, and rushed out of the house."

"Have you seen it?" he shouted.

"The police, as usual, had seen nothing. Sholmes smiled bitterly as he returned."

"You may recall your prisoner, Pinkeye," he said curtly. "The gorgonzola has fled. Your men outside allowed it to pass, apparently. Perhaps they were too carefully concealed in the garden—dustbin," he added sarcastically. "Come, Jotson, we have finished here."

I followed him to the taxi.

Herlock Sholmes' brow was moody as we returned to Shaker Street. I could see that he was disappointed.

"It was ever thus, Jotson," he said bitterly. "As usual, I worked up the case to a triumphant conclusion, and handed it to the police—and the police, as usual, blundered. The house was surrounded by Pinkeye's men, yet the gorgonzola fled unhindered! The miserable escaper; my labour has been in vain. And now—shall I receive my cheque from the Cheese Dictator? That is the question. And I do not, what are we to say, Jotson, to the man when he calls on Saturday for the instalment on the furniture?"

And Sholmes remained plunged in a gloomy reverie, from which I did not venture to arouse him.

THE END.

EXTRACT FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM

By George A. Grundy.

The way was long, the wind was cold;
The shades of night were falling fast,
And the skipper had taken his lirel' darter,
And tide her to the mast.

To Mr., Newsgent.

Please keep for me a copy of the
GEM LIBRARY each week until further
notice.

(Signed),

My Comic Column.

By MONTY LOWTHER.

SELF-DENIAL is catching on. When you get used to it, it is quite pleasant and easy; and we are told that the habit, once formed, is difficult to break. It is a virtue, but it holds you like a vice.

The threatened soap shortage has led to a patriotic meeting in the Third Form-room. We understand that a resolution was proposed by D'Arey minor, expressing the willingness of the Third, in case of necessity, to give up washing their necks for three years or the duration of the war. We understand, further, that the resolution was passed unanimously.

We hear that Farmer Giles has been treating one of his employees with great generosity. The man was discovered stealing from a sack of potatoes. Mr. Giles immediately gave him the sack.

A WARNING TO TIPPLERS!

Reflect, my friend! 'Tis true,
Strange though it may appear,
The beer they bring to you,
May bring you to your bier.

The late reckless indulgence in influenza has led, we hear, to the issue of a new order by the Cough-Drop Controller. After this date, no family may have more than one member down with "flu" at any one time.

A chap named Tennyson once wrote a poem called "Come into the Garden, Maude!" The successes of General Maude in Mesopotamia have led our Tame Poet to improve on Tennyson in this way:

Come into Turkey, Maude!
For the black-jowled Turk has flown.
Come into Turkey, Maude!

Now Bagdad is quite your own:
For the Sultan's thinking of going
abroad,
And shakes on his golden throne!

We shall have to get used to tea without sugar. We may not like it, but we cannot lump it.

Those shopkeepers! Although the old currency notes bore an inscription that "these notes are legal tender for any amount," I never found a shopkeeper who would give me more than a pound's worth of goods for one of them.

The Huns have taxed Belgium so heavily that it was supposed the limit had been reached. We learn, however, that there's going to be attacks on the new German line in Belgium.

"Push and go" on the Western Front. Tommy is pushing, and Fritz is going!

During the Kaiser's recent illness, a report was current in Germany that he was lying on his death-bed. Evidently they knew their Kaiser!

The old gentleman's illness, we understand, was due to khaking care!

In happy anticipation of a more desirable outcome, our Tame Poet composed the following epitaph:

Even death cannot change him! Here lies Kaiser Bill.
He led all his life, and he's now lying still!

"T. M. W." CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN.

"Interested."—Do I believe that a certain famous Russian general is Sir Hector Macdonald, who was reported dead a year ago, and another Lord Kitchener? Of course! Also that B—y T—e is Lord Nelson come to life again, and P—y M—h Julius Caesar! Moreover, I think it is quite possible that the Russians also have some good men of their own. Think it out!

G. F. (New House).—I do not recommend your resigning your present position to literature. I am told that the effect of the war has been to cut out almost entirely the sale of papers of the blood-and-thunder type, while such really high-class productions as the "Gem" and the "Magnet" flourish exceedingly. This is quite as it should be, but it does not exactly improve your chances of earning bread-and-marg by writing about walking the plank, holding up the Arizona express, scalping the settlement, and all that sort of thing, does it? Better take to writing for grown-ups. F—y. The boys are off this stuff in these days.

"Poetisms."—Your verses might be quite good if they scanned and rhymed, and the words used were entirely different. As it is—nuff said!

G. F. (New House).—The Editor-in-Chief desires me to say—in his unavoidable absence from duty as the result of a slight argument—that your stories entitled "Tom Teasdale, the King of the Pacific," "Red Hand; or, the Chief of the Objectionable Ojibways," "Harry Hawkeye, the Happy Highwayman," and "The Smuggler's Bride; or, Once Aboard the Lugger!" are all declined, and will be returned by fag messenger when our next parcel provides or provides us with a sufficiency of covering or them. It is necessary to guard carefully against the danger of contaminating the fag mind, so that they cannot be sent across unwrapped. I trust I have the titles correctly, but I write from memory.

D. W. (New House).—I will have inquiries made at Greyfriars by the truth of the story that that school now possesses a living skeleton named W—m G—e B—r. Do not pin your faith to empty rumours, or even to rumours of emptiness. When B—r is empty grub will be scarce indeed!

"Curious."—Who is the best boxer in the Shell? Well, Tom Merry used to be looked upon as such; but this is a time of change. "Nuff said!"

"Inquisitive."—Another of you! Manners has a certain mathematical bent; but when a really brainy fellow takes up a subject in dead earnest, even though it may not be his special subject, he is likely to go ahead of any mere plodder. For further information as to the best mathematician in the Shell, I must refer you to Mr. Linton. He should know. But he may be wrong. And in order that you should not be led astray, I may indicate Study No. 10 as the appropriate address. (Tom Merry, by the way, is merely so-so at my more plodder.)

"One Who Wants to Know."—I believe it to be true that G—e G—e has forsaken the cult of the card and the study of "Ruff's Guide to the Turf"; but I am not inclined to give credence to the rumour that he has taken up enthusiastically the works of Professor Balmucy.

"Canny Scot."—Yes, I can eat oatmeal all right; but I decline to neck porridge at four meals a day. A scarcity of this delectable food might be the result; and what would the horses and the Scots do then, poor things?

NOTICES.

Cricket.

SMITHDOWN C.C. (average age 15).—Radius 5 miles. Call or write W. Pierce, 70, Underley Street, Sefton Park, Liverpool.

CORONATION C.C. (15).—5 mile radius West Ham, W. A. Smith, 140, Tamarsh Lane, Plaistow, E. 12.

LYDALE C.C. (15).—3 mile radius. Also want four good players.—F. G. Constable, 40, Ingleton Street, Brixton, S.W. 9.

BLACKHEATH INVICTA C.C. (15).—W. E. Chapman, 5, Elmira Street, Lewisham, S.E. 15.

BENJAMIN A.C.C. (16).—W. R. Tanner, 7, Warner Street, Barnsbury, N. 7.

DELWICH ALBION C.C.—6 mile radius. Away matches only.—Hon. Sec., 102, Landcroft Road, Dulwich, S.E. 22.

B.U.C.C. (16).—5 mile radius.—M. P. Lambert, 55, Lichfield Road, Bow, E. 5.

LYDALE C.C. (16-17).—Players also wanted.—R. E. Howell, 75, Silvermere Road, Catford, S.E. 6.

CANTON PARK JUNIORS (16).—R. David, 55, Llandaff Road, Cardiff.

Football.

H. A. Just, 29, Theberton Street, Islington, N. 1, wants to hear from players willing to join team for next season. First match, September 1st.

Correspondence, Leagues, etc.

Members wanted for "M. & G." Social Club. Monthly magazines. Good membership. Many advantages. Exchanges, etc.—Bert Bashford, 265, Barclay Road, Warley, near Birmingham.

R. Sater, P.O. Box 1597, Johannesburg, South Africa, wants to correspond with readers and part of the world interested in stamp collecting or photography.

Jack de Wolfe, 2, Preston Street, Halifax, N.S., Canada, with boy readers.

W. Bray, 12, Upper Phillimore Gardens, Kensington, W., with readers anywhere. Australia preferred.

Miss Doris Vincimbe, 7, Yarra Street, South Melbourne, Australia, with girl readers in Bristol neighbourhood.

Miss Mabelle Cole, 126, Nelson Road, South Melbourne, Australia, with girl reader.

K. H. Teo, jan., 41, Church Road, Singapore, Straits Settlements, with older readers. Exchange postcards.

C. Wykes, c/o P.O. Box 256, Montreal, Canada, with boy reader in England or Ireland.

H. D. Hall, 15, Fishers Reserve, Petersham, Sydney, Australia, with readers in any country interested in stamp collecting.

Miss Ida Mason, Belmore Street, Yarrawonga, Victoria, Australia, and Miss Frances Spencer, of game address, with girl readers in United Kingdom or Canada.

Frank Brodrick, 11, King William Street, W., with boy readers anywhere. Exchange picture postcards.

Back Numbers, &c., Wanted.

By Albert Spiers, 19, Oswald St., Redditch—"Hero of the Hour."

By Eric Dalton, 14, Alma St., Ashfield, Sydney, Australia—G.M. No. 377; "Magnet" 392 and 459; Penny Pop. No. 159 and 215; "B. F." 747 and 697; "B. F." 34, Lib. 317 and 318. Must be clean.

By G. W. Latimer, care of the W. H. Malkin Co., Ltd., 57, Water St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada—GEMS earlier than 455; "Magnets" earlier than 453.

By S. Williams, 534, Parliament St., Toronto, Canada—"G. and M." 1-600.