

TRIUMPH 2^o
Every Tuesday

★ ST
JIM'S

★ MAD
CAREW

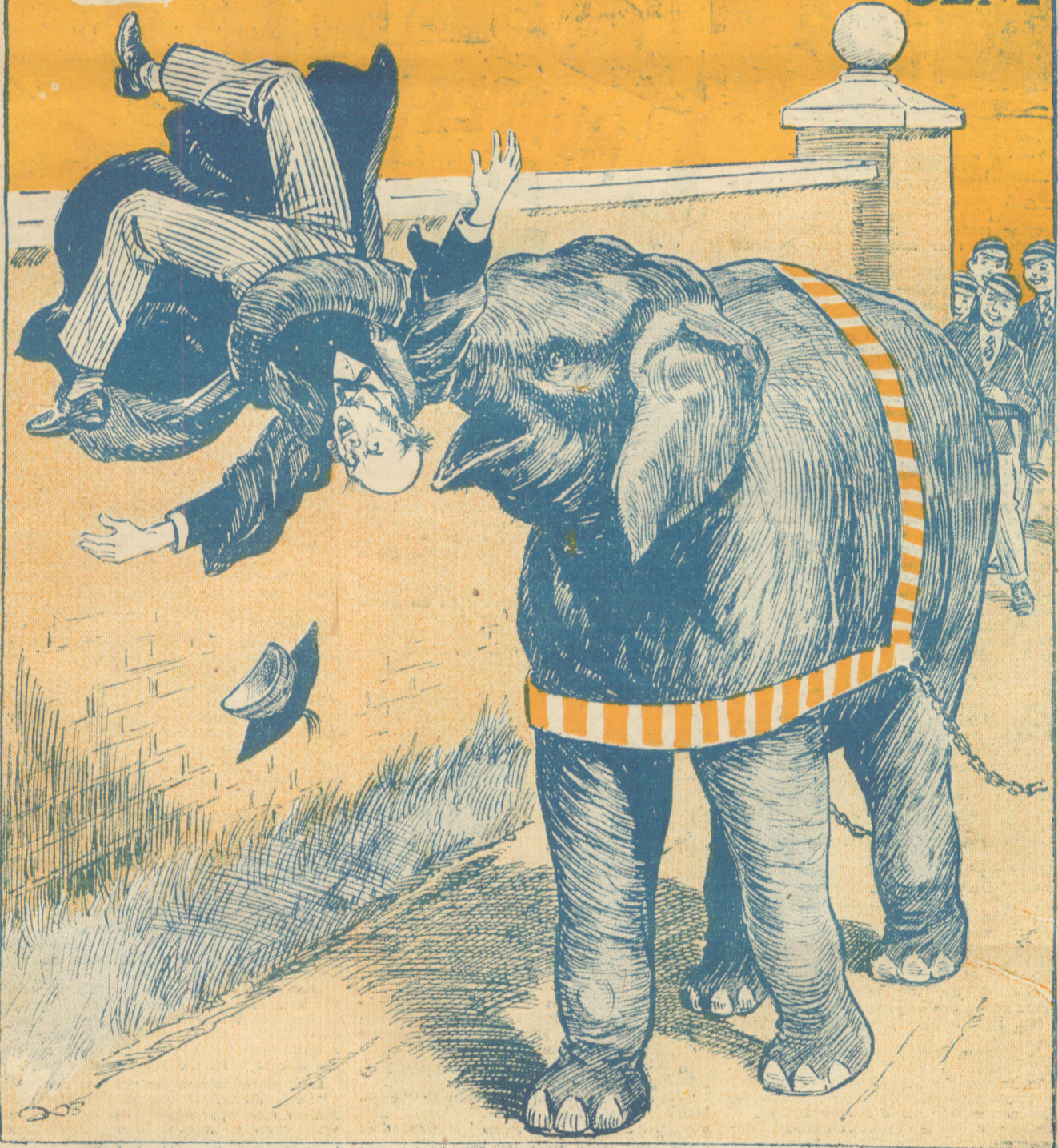
★ PETER
FARRELL

★ FOOTBALL
CRACKSMAN

INSIDE

TRIUMPH

and GEM

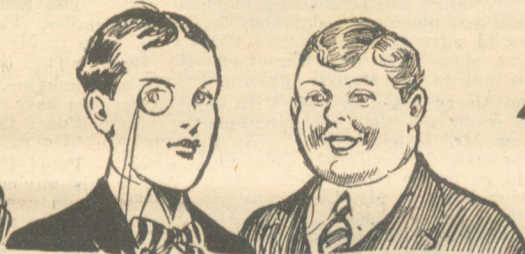


AN ELEPHANT HELPS FIGGINS & CO. TO GET THEIR OWN BACK ON THE HOUSEMASTER NOBODY LIKES

IT'S

ST. JIM'S

AGAIN!



THIS WEEK:
THE SCHOOLBOY CIRCUS STARS

OLD PALS

POM! Pom! Pom!
"Bai Jove! What's that wow?"
Pom! Pom! Pom!

Ta-ra-ra-ra!
Tom Merry & Co. looked towards the gates of St. Jim's.

From the high road that ran past the gates of the old school had come that sudden blare of musical instruments.

Pom! Pom! Pom! Blare!
"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. "It sounds like a dwum, deah boys."

"And it sounds like a cornet, too," said Tom Merry. "Like Herries' cornet—only a little more so!"

"Must be soldiers on the march," said Jack Blake. "Let's go and have a look!"
Pom! Pom! Pom!

The chaps rushed down to the gates at once. Tom Merry was the first to reach them, and he gave a shout.

"My hat! 'Tain't soldiers!"

"What is it, deah boy?"

"A circus!"

"Bai Jove!"

In a minute or less the old gateway was crammed with schoolboys.

Down the road came a gorgeous procession of horsemen and caravans, and weird and wonderful animals.

Seated upon the back of a gigantic elephant was a little clown, who was beating the big drum with great gusto.

Pom! Pom! Pom! Pom!

The clown, who was not much taller than a schoolboy himself, but considerably wider, grinned down at the schoolboys as they crowded at the gates.

He was in the full costume of the ring, with a cocked paper hat, and his face whitened with chalk and adorned with daubs of red.

He gave an extra loud thump as the elephant lumbered up, and called out cheerily: "Hallo, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a startled jump at being addressed by name.

He jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye, and stared in surprise at the little man on the elephant.

Behind the elephant the procession was coming to a halt. The musical instruments blared louder than ever.

"How do you do, Master Merry?"

It was Tom Merry's turn to be surprised now.

"Hallo! You know me, too!" he exclaimed. "Know you like a book, bless your little heart!" said the rider of the elephant cheerfully. "Never forget an old pal."

Tom Merry looked astounded.

"Hallo you, too, Master Lowther!" went on the clown. "Still the same funny merchant?"

Monty Lowther stared.

"Great pip! He knows me, too!"

"And Master Blake—how do you do? Bless my body and boots, and Herries and Digby—all the happy family!" grinned the clown.

"Struth!"

"Who the deuce—"

"Bai Jove!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I know him now! Don't you wemembah, deah boys, one vacation at my place there was a circus, and we played them at cwicket?"

"Why, yes, of course! Chumgum's Circus!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! And that's Tiny Tony!"

The clown grinned down at them. In his striking make-up he had been quite unrecognisable at first.

But now that they looked at him closely the chums of St. Jim's recognised his comical grin, if not his features.

"Tiny Tony, by gosh!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"And this is Chumgum's Circus!" said Manners. "My hat! Are you staying near here, you funny merchant?"

Pom! Pom! Pom! Pom!

"Next village," said Tiny Tony, between the thumps on the drum. "Fancy meeting you young gentlemen! Hadn't the least idea this was St. Jim's. Knew it was a school, that was all, so Mr. Chumgum ordered a halt."

"What for?" asked Blake.

"Advertisement, old lad," said Tiny Tony. "Mr. Chumgum wanted everybody to know there was a circus coming—Chumgum's Celebrated Circus, the best on earth! Six nights only in Rylcombe! Play up, you beggars!"

Pom! Pom! Pom! Blare! Ta-ra-ra-ra!

The noise was terrific. It penetrated to every corner of St. Jim's, and fellows came flocking down to the gates from far and near.

If Mr. Chumgum, the proprietor of Chumgum's Celebrated Circus, wanted the school to know there was a circus in the neighbourhood, he was certainly taking the most effective measures.

From the din, nearly all Sussex might have known they were there.

"To-night's the first night," said Tiny Tony, shouting to make himself heard. "You young gents are coming, of course, as you're old friends. You've seen the show once, but anyone who comes once, comes again every time he gets a chance. After seeing Chumgum's Circus, you never patronise another. New attractions, too—everything first-class and

gilt-edged. You haven't seen the performing elephant Scipio—this giddy elephant. You should see him at his tricks! He's the marvel of the age!"

"Bai Jove, he doesn't look as if he could do any twicks," said Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass upon the big, sleepy-looking elephant.

Tiny Tony chuckled and jabbed the elephant.

The huge elephant turned towards Arthur Augustus, who had stepped out into the road, and in a twinkling his trunk whipped round the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus was whirled into the air, head downwards.

"Gweat Scott! Yawoooooh! Wescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus' elegant silk hat rolled to the road. His eyeglass streamed at the end of its cord. His legs thrashed about wildly.

"Wow-wow! Wescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you satisfied now that Scipio can perform tricks?" demanded Tiny Tony.

"Ow! Yaas! Yawoooooh!"

"Don't-break his blessed neck, you duffer!" gasped Blake.

"Safe as houses," grinned Tiny Tony. "Put the gentleman down, Scipio."

Scipio landed Arthur Augustus safely upon his feet. The swell of St. Jim's stood gasping, and considerably ruffled.

"Oh, bai Jove! Weally, you wottah—where's my topper? Oh, cwumbs!"

"Give the gentleman his topper, Scipio."

The elephant picked the silk hat up with his trunk, knelt before Arthur Augustus, and presented it to him. It was evidently one of Scipio's regular tricks.

The swell of St. Jim's accepted the hat with a gasp.

"Oh cwumbs! I have been thwown into quite a fluttah!"

"Would you like Scipio to show you some more tricks, Mister Gussy?"

"No feah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, backing hastily away.

"Hallo! Here's Mr. Chumgum!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Mr. Charley Chumgum, the proprietor of Chumgum's Celebrated Circus, came along from one of the halted caravans.

He was a very imposing gentleman, with a greater width than Tiny Tony, a white waistcoat, a shining silk hat with a curly brim, and an orchid in his buttonhole.

His diamond pin might have been worth a thousand pounds—if it was worth anything at all, which was doubtful.

There was an expansive smile upon his fat face. He had recognised the St. Jim's juniors.

"Happy meeting, young gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "I did not know this was your school when I ordered a halt to let all the young gents know that Chumgum's Circus was here. We shall see you at the show, I suppose?"

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry. "But not

ROLLICKING YARN
by
MARTIN CLIFFORD

for an evening performance. They're after locking-up. We'll come on Saturday afternoon."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You bet!" said Figgins. "We don't get a circus every day. Hallo! What are you bouncers shoving for?"

"Here comes Ratty!" murmured Kerr.

"Ratty, with his rattiest scowl!" whispered Fatty Wynn.

The crowd of fellows in the big gateway parted to give passage to Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House at St. Jim's; and Figgins & Co., who had the misfortune to belong to Mr. Ratcliff's House, made way for him very quickly. The School House fellows were not quite so obliging, but Mr. Ratcliff shoved through.

There was an angry frown on his thin, acid face. The tremendous noise made by the circus proprietor for the purpose of advertising his presence had disturbed Mr. Ratcliff in his study, and he had come forth like a lion from his den.

"What is all this?" exclaimed the Housemaster, in his sharpest and snappiest tones. "Move on immediately! How dare you make this disturbance outside the school gates!"

Pom! Pom! Pom! Pom!

A RIDE FOR RATTY

POM-POM! Pom-pom!

Mr. Ratcliff put his thin fingers to his ears as Tiny Tony beat the big drum again with renewed energy.

There certainly was a din, but all the St. Jim's fellows eyed Mr. Ratcliff with disgust. There was no reason why the bad-tempered Housemaster should make himself unpleasant in this way; the circus would have moved on in a few minutes.

But it was Mr. Ratcliff's way to make himself disagreeable.

"Stop that noise instantly!" he shouted.

Pom! Pom! Pom!

"Do you hear me?"

Tiny Tony certainly heard him, but perhaps he did not like Mr. Ratcliff's tone; perhaps he wasn't inclined to take orders from the Housemaster.

At all events, he put all his beef into beating the big drum.

Mr. Ratcliff clenched his skinny hands with rage.

In his own House he was monarch of all he surveyed, able to play the tyrant almost as much as he liked, and he sometimes forgot that outside the New House at St. Jim's he had not the same powers to be dictatorial.

"Stop beating that drum at once!" he thundered.

Pom! Pom! Pom!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck it, Tiny!" said Mr. Chungum, who had been making signs that Tiny Tony did not choose to see. "Don't you hear the gentleman?"

Tiny Tony stopped reluctantly.

"Good-afternoon, sir," said Mr. Chungum affably, taking off his hat to the Housemaster. "This is Chungum's Circus—Chungum's Celebrated Circus."

"How dare you make a disturbance outside the school gates?" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff.

"No offence, sir," said Mr. Chungum mildly.

He was as annoyed as the clown, but he had an eye to business. He could see that Mr. Ratcliff was a master in the school, and he did not want the boys to be forbidden to come to the circus. In the neighbourhood of a big school Mr. Chungum expected to do a thriving business.

"No offence, sir," the circus proprietor repeated. "Simply to let the young gentlemen know we are here, sir."

"No boy in my House shall go to such a performance!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"Ahem! First-class show, sir. Performed before all the crowned heads of Europe—lots of crowned heads, and a still large number of uncrowned. If I may suggest it, sir, you yourself would find a very pleasant relaxation

from your scholastic duties in visiting Chungum's Celebrated Circus and seeing Tiny Tony, the funniest man on earth."

"Yours truly," said Tiny Tony.

"And Texas Bill, the bronco buster, and Sapolio, the snake-charmer, and Rab Rabbi, the juggler—"

"Go!"

"And Samsonia, the strongest man on earth," pursued Mr. Chungum calmly, "and Captain Coke, the lion-tamer—"

"Take your ridiculous procession away from these precincts at once!"

"And other attractions too numerous to mention," continued Chungum, unmoved, "including Scipio, the performing elephant—"

"Will you move on?" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff almost in a frenzy.

At a sign from Mr. Chungum, the instrumentalists had started again.

Tom Merry & Co. grinned with enjoyment. They could see that the circus-master was pulling Mr. Ratcliff's leg. As the angry master had declared that none of his boys should go to the circus, there was no use in pleasing him; so Mr. Chungum was getting a little of his own back.

"And, above all, Chungum's latest turn," said the fat gentleman seriously. "You should really not miss that, sir."

"Fellow!"

"It is the chance of a life-time, sir, while we're in the neighbourhood—positively for six nights only. I really hope we shall see you there, sir. Boxes at half-a-guinea—"

"Will you—"

"But you can get in for sixpence—depends on the state of your exchequer personally," said Mr. Chungum, with unmoved calmness.

He was speaking now more to the boys than to the master.

"Don't miss Chungum's latest, whatever you do," said the fat circus proprietor. "Come, and bring all your friends, sir. Chungum's latest is it—simply it! A lifelike representation, sir, of the Nazis doing the Gestapo-pounce, the part of Hitler being taken by myself."

"If you do not move on instantly—"

Mr. Chungum addressed himself to the angry master again.

"The turn—Chungum's latest, sir—is known as 'The Nastiest of the Nazis,' and I really recommend you not to miss it, sir. Bring all the boys. I can see that you are a kind-hearted gentleman, and simply brimming over with philanthropy. I should not suggest it, sir, if you did not look so kind-hearted and good-tempered," said Mr. Chungum. "As for terms—"

"I—I—"

"Ah, that is where you stick, eh?" said Mr. Chungum pleasantly. "Well, sir, I'll meet you in a reasonable spirit. I'll make a reduction of one third."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors, unable to contain themselves any longer.

Mr. Ratcliff's face during the circus-master's friendly address was, as Monty Lowther described it afterwards, "worth a guinea a box."

The Housemaster glared at them.

"Go in at once!" he said harshly. "Do you hear me?"

Figgins & Co. reluctantly went in. They had to, as Mr. Ratcliff was their Housemaster. Tom Merry & Co. stood their ground.

They were School House fellows, and the master of the New House had no right to give them orders.

But Mr. Ratcliff had a little way of overstepping his authority, and being brought up sharp.

"Do you hear me, Merry, Blake, Herries?"

"Thank you, sir. We want to see the procession," said Tom Merry.

"Boy!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir," Arthur Augustus said warmly. "May I point out to you, Mr. Watcliff, that you are not our Housemaster, and have no right to ordah us to go in?"

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Ratcliff bit his lip with rage.

"I shall report this to your Housemaster!" he thundered.

"Very well, sir," said Tom Merry.

Mr. Ratcliff turned his back on them. He

was enraged enough to lick them all round, but that was scarcely feasible.

The two Houses at St. Jim's were quite distinct, and he had no right whatever to interfere with School House boys.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Ratcliff between his teeth, addressing the calm and smiling Chungum, "you are making a disturbance here. I order you to move on!"

Mr. Chungum snorted.

"I should have already moved on, sir, if you hadn't checked me," he replied.

"What!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff.

For his lofty and haughty interference to be described as cheek took his breath away.

The School House juniors smiled beatific smiles. They enjoyed seeing someone standing up to Mr. Ratcliff like this.

"This is a public road, sir," pursued Mr. Chungum. "I have as much right here as you have!"

Pom! Pom! Pom!

"Go it, gov'nor!" said Tiny Tony.

Pom! Pom! Pom! Tiny Tony backed up his gov'nor's remarks with thumps on the drum.

"You are an interfering dictator, sir," said Mr. Chungum, showing some signs of excitement at last. "What are we fighting the Nazis for, if not in the cause of freedom? And do you think, sir, that we shall allow our freedom to be interfered with by a dictating schoolmaster?"

Pom! Pom! Pom!

Mr. Ratcliff turned purple. He had never been slanged like that in his life before. He had brought it entirely upon himself, and it served him right, but that did not make it agreeable.

"How dare you!" he gasped. "I—I will telephone for the police and give you in charge for insolence!"

"Dial 999," suggested Mr. Chungum, not in the least concerned by the threat.

Pom, pom, pom, pom!

In his exuberance Tiny Tony missed the drum and bestowed the last "pom" on the elephant.

Evidently, Scipio took it for the usual signal to perform his trick.

He swung round on Mr. Ratcliff, seized him round the waist with his trunk, and twirled him into the air.

"Ow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

His mortar-board went flying, his gown whisked in the air, his long, thin legs thrashed about frantically.

The St. Jim's chaps almost doubled up with merriment.

They knew that Horace Ratcliff was not going to be hurt, but Horace Ratcliff did not know it, and his thin face was blanched with terror.

"Help! Help! Put me down! I shall be killed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tiny Tony, grinning with glee, started the elephant, and Scipio marched on down the road, bearing the struggling Housemaster aloft in his trunk.

They let Scipio get some distance ahead, and then the circus procession got into motion. Mr. Chungum jumped into his caravan again, chuckling loudly.

The procession wound on down the road, headed by Mr. Ratcliff.

Tom Merry & Co. leaned helplessly against the school walls, doubled up and shrieking.

The sight of Mr. Ratcliff heading the procession in the elephant's trunk was too much for them. They wept with merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold me, somebody!" moaned Jack Blake. "Old Ratty will be the death of me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The circus passed by, and then five minutes later a dusty and dishevelled figure came dashing along the road, with a face purple with rage.

Mr. Ratcliff bestowed a glare upon the howling juniors and rushed in, and sped away to the New House.

He left Tom Merry & Co. weeping with laughter.

FIGGY'S BRIGHT IDEA

"Of course, we're going!"
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Of course we are!" said Kangaroo of the Shell. "We'll back up Chumgum's show, if only for the way he slanged Ratty!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The New House kids won't be able to go," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully. "It's a rotten shame, but Ratty will stop them, you bet. Still, he can't interfere with us!"

The chaps were discussing the matter in the Common-room in the School House.

Those of them who were already acquainted with Chumgum's Circus naturally wanted to go and see their old acquaintances again, while those who hadn't seen the show were still more keen.

Mr. Charley Chumgum was certain to do good business in their neighbourhood of St. Jim's, if the chaps got leave.

But Talbot of the Shell was wearing a very thoughtful expression.

"We shall have to get special leave for Saturday afternoon," he remarked. "The sooner we see our Housemaster about it the better, I think. Ratty may chip in."

"He can't hurt us," said Blake.
 "I fancy he may try to impress on Carrington that the circus ought to be put out of bounds," said Talbot.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's quite poss!"

The juniors looked very thoughtful.
 "Better go and see Carrington at once," said Tom Merry decidedly.

So off the whole party went, and were gratified to receive the ready permission of Mr. Carrington to attend the circus on the Saturday afternoon.

In high feather, the School House chums trooped out of the Housemaster's study into the quad, where they encountered Figgins & Co., who looked in the lowest possible spirits.

"We've got permish to go to the circus on Saturday, Figgay!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jubilantly. "Isn't it wippin'?"

"Oh, grand!" said Figgy, unusual bitterness in his voice. "But what about us? We're dished!"

"Ratty's put the circus out of bounds for the entire New House," explained Kerr.

"The wotter!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry & Co. were quick to offer their sympathy, and after a few minutes Figgins & Co. drifted away dolefully.

ON the Saturday morning the School House chaps came out of classes in high spirits. Almost to a man, they had a visit to Chumgum's celebrated circus to look forward to in the afternoon.

The New House juniors, on the other hand, were looking very grim. Their Housemaster's ban deprived them of that pleasant prospect, and they felt it was unjust.

"It's hard cheese, old man!" said Jack Blake, clapping Figgins on the back as they came out of the Fourth Form Room in company. "We'll tell you all about the circus when we get back. Awfully sorry you can't be there!"

"Don't be too sure of that," said Figgins darkly. "I've a good mind to try it on!"
 "Better not, old man. If you ask me, Ratty will be on the watch for you. He'll probably send that cad Sefton along to report any New House fellow he sees there!"

"No good wiskin' a floggin', Figgay," said Arthur Augustus sagely.

"Oh rats!" growled Figgins, thrusting his hands deep into his trousers' pockets and walking off with his chums.

"Look here, you thumping ass," said Kerr, "you're jolly well not going to break bounds to go to that blessed circus!"

"But think," argued Figgins. "Circuses can't be doing very well in wartime, you know, and we ought to give old Chumgum's show a bit of support."

"You mean you want to go?" growled Kerr.

"Well, I do," said Figgins. "And besides,

all the School House chaps are going; there's no footer on, and we don't want to stay here like a lot of moulting hens. Besides, old Chumgum being so chumgummy—I mean so chummy—he'll let us behind the scenes, and we can see the circus people on their native heath—what?"

"Well, I'd like that all right," admitted Kerr, "but it's too jolly risky. Ratty would jump with joy if he spotted us!"

"How can he spot us? We'll go out in our running kit, see? We'll make it a point to let Ratty see us, and he can't possibly smell a mouse then. He'll think we're going for a cross-country run. You don't suppose he'll go to the circus himself, do you?"

"Of course he won't," said Fatty Wynn, rather taken with the great Figgins' idea.

"I shouldn't wonder if he suspects that we might think of going as this is Saturday afternoon!" growled Kerr.

"Oh, come off it!" said Figgins. "You're suspicious, Kerr! That's the worst of you Scotsmen—you're too canny! Just think of getting behind the scenes and seeing the

a while until they were sure that Mr. Ratcliff had noticed them in their running togs. Then they started off.

"It'll be all serene, you see," said Figgins confidently. "I saw Ratty cocking his eye at us from his window. We're on a cross-country run—see? Ratty simply can't suspect anything. Hallo, here's Tommy!"

Tom Merry & Co. were waiting for them in the lane.

"All serene, Tommy!" said Figgins. "Ratty is deep in exam papers. But, of course, he may have detailed Sefton to watch the circus. Mind you don't forget. After the show's started, you give us one loud whistle if it's all right for us to come in. You'll spot Sefton if he's there. If he is give two whistles, as a danger signal."

"Right-ho!" said Tom Merry, grinning as he wondered what the audience would think when he emitted two loud whistles in the circus tent.

The two parties separated, the School House fellows going on to the circus,



The disguised schoolboy cut and thrust at the Housemaster. Mr. Ratcliff gave a yell as the sword swept off his hat.

circus people making up, and all that. And I'll tell you what. If there are any New House prefects knocking about, we won't go in to the show. I'll speak to Tom Merry, and he'll give us a whistle if there's danger."

"Oh, all right!" said Kerr. "But it's jolly risky. My belief is that Ratty is always suspicious, and therefore will be on the lookout for us to go to the circus this afternoon!"

"Oh rats!" said Figgins carelessly, and rushed back to give Tom Merry the tip.

Early in the afternoon quite an army of chaps marched off to visit the circus. But they were all from School House.

Very few of the New House chaps dared even consider the idea, when their Housemaster had expressively placed the circus out of bounds.

But Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence of New House had discussed the advisability of chancing it, and when Figgins confided his scheme to Reddy, the trio determined to throw in their lot with Figgins & Co.

So there were six New House juniors who turned out that afternoon in running kit.

Before they left the school, Figgins and his companions hung about the quadrangle

Figgins & Co. setting off across country with the intention of working round towards the circus in time for the performance.

When Figgay & Co. did arrive on the circus ground, it was still too early for the performance to start.

Tiny Tony was still outside the "big top" beating the drum; but the tent had been open some time for early comers, and there was no sign of Tom Merry & Co.

Figgins and his companions strolled round the tent until at last, after one final bang on the drum, Tiny Tony disappeared into the tent.

And it was about ten minutes later when from the interior of the tent came a loud, shrill whistle.

"Hurrah!" cried Figgins, and then he stopped.

A second whistle sounded.

Figgay & Co. looked at each other in dismay. It was Tom Merry's signal that the coast was not clear. A master or a prefect from New House was in the big top.

There would be no circus performance that afternoon for Figgins or his companions.

FRIENDS IN NEED

"CHUCK it!" said Kerr.

Figgins was standing with his hands on his hips, and a wrinkle of deep thought on his brow.

Figgins did not like to be beaten, and he felt that it was up to him, as chief of the New House juniors, to "work" it somehow or other for Redfern & Co. to see the circus.

"Come on!" said Figgins at last.

"Look here—" began Kerr.

"Rats!" said Figgins. "Follow your leader, and don't jaw! We've got to take a chance."

And Figgins led the way round behind the big tent to the canvas quarters of the circus company.

Texas Bill was rubbing down his horse outside the dressing-tent. He recognised Figgins at once, and greeted him heartily.

"Mr. Chungum!" he called out.

Mr. Charley Chungum came out of the dressing-tent, already in his gorgeous panoply of the ring. He greeted Figgins & Co. effusively, shaking hands with the juniors all round.

"Glad to see you, Master Figgins!" he exclaimed. "These young gentlemen friends of yours—what? Then you go in on the nod. I'm afraid you'll miss the best bit this afternoon, though. My new turn, known as Chungum's Latest, is knocked sky-high, though we shall do our best. We can't leave out 'The Nastiest of the Nazis'; the audience wouldn't stand for it!"

"Anything wrong, sir?" asked Figgins.

"Well, I don't complain," said Mr. Chungum heroically.

"When the British Empire wants her sons to fight for the old flag, it ain't for Charley Chungum to complain if his 'ands are suddenly called up. No, sir. But it do leave a man in a 'ole when they goes off sudden in a place where he can't get new 'ands for love or money. That's where it is, you see."

"Hard cheese!" said Figgins.

"No, I don't say that," said Mr. Chungum. "Only it's awkward, you see. Here am I, advertising right and left Chungum's Latest—a turn that simply knocks 'em—and eight of my S.S. Guards go and get called up. Not that I complain, as I said. It's their dooty. But it mucks up Chungum's Latest a fair treat."

And Mr. Chungum shook his head.

It was evident that his manly bosom was torn between his patriotism and his concern for that screaming turn, Chungum's Latest.

"It's rough on you, and no mistake!" said Kerr.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Figgins, his eyes suddenly dancing. "I've an idea. Would you like me to suggest where you can get some new S.S. Guards?"

"Wolto!" said Mr. Chungum emphatically. "If you know any coves, Master Figgins, I'd be much obliged to you, I reckon."

"Well, I know 'em," said Figgins—"six of 'em."

"What the dickens—" began Redfern, in astonishment, while Figgins' chums stared at him blankly.

"Leave it to me," said Figgins. "The chaps I speak of, sir, are rather—ahem!—young, and they've never appeared in a circus, but they've had a lot of experience in amateur theatricals."

"Oh!" gasped Kerr.

He understood now the idea that had come to the great Figgins. It made him gasp.

"I desay they'd do," said Mr. Chungum. "There ain't much to do, really; only to do the goose-step and play the giddy goat, you know. But they wouldn't 'ave time to rehearse."

"Don't worry, Mr. Chungum; they'd do it as easy as falling off a form."

"Master Figgins, you're a friend in need!" declared Mr. Chungum. "Where are these fellows?"

"Here," said Figgins.

Mr. Chungum looked round.

"Us," explained Figgins.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

Mr. Chungum jumped.

"You?"

"Yes, us. We've played all sorts of parts in our amateur dramatic society, and we could do it quite easily if you just tell us what to do," said Figgins. "I give you my word."

"But—but you young gents—"

"My hat, we'd be glad of the chance, sir!" said Lawrence. "Oh, rather!"

Mr. Chungum looked very thoughtful. He was "in a hole," as he had said, and the parts that were to be played were simple enough.

He was evidently greatly inclined to accept Figgins' generous offer.

"And the fact is, sir," Figgins went on persuasively, "we want to get into the show, and we can't, because there's someone in there spying to get us into trouble at the school. I was going to ask you if you could fix it up somehow for us to see the show without being seen."

"It's not good business to help schoolboys disobey orders, Master Figgins," said Mr. Chungum hesitatingly.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Figgins. "All the other fellows at the school have come to the show, but our Housemaster bars us because you slanged him the other day. It's just beastly spite, you know. Under the circumstances we feel we—we really ought to come."

"Oh, that worm!" said Mr. Chungum, referring to Mr. Ratcliff. "If it's 'im, I don't mind. Now, if you young gents really mean it—"

"What-ho! We've had heaps of experience in amateur plays," Kerr said eagerly. "We could do it on our heads, sir."

"Done!" said Mr. Chungum, making up his mind. "It's a go! And you shall see the show, too. I'll let the S.S. Guards parade round the ring first thing, and then line 'em up at the entrance and see that you gents are in the front row. Then you'll see the whole show from beginning to end; and as for recognising you, your own Uncle James wouldn't know you when you're got up in peaked 'ats and moustaches. You won't know yourselves!"

"Good egg!"

Mr. Chungum wasted no more time in words. He led the six juniors into the dressing-tent and rapped out instructions to the dresser.

Figgins & Co. soon changed their running kit for the military uniforms. With their faces daubed with grease-paint and adorned with moustaches, it was quite certain that they would not be recognised.

When their make-up was finished they did not know themselves in the glass. Figgins chuckled gleefully as he surveyed the reflection of his daubed face and false moustache.

"I think that would beat Ratty himself," he remarked. "Well, young Redfern, didn't your Uncle Figgins say you should see the show?"

Redfern grinned.

"I'll admit that even you have ideas at times, Figgy—real ideas once in a blue moon," he replied.

"Why, you silly ass—"

"You young gentlemen ready?" asked Mr. Chungum, looking in.

"Ahem! Yes," said Figgins. "Quite ready, Mr. Chungum."

"Then kim on!" said the showman.

And Figgins & Co. joined the rest of the S.S. Guards—there were six others, of a larger size—and marched into the lighted tent.

UNREHEARSED

"WOTTEN!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Horses were galloping round the ring, and Tom Merry & Co. and a crowd of school fellows had settled down to see the show. Tom Merry had given the danger signal to Figgins & Co., causing a good many stares to be turned upon him as he did so.

But the captain of the Shell didn't mind that. What he minded was that the New House juniors were to be excluded, after all.

It was, as Arthur Augustus declared, rotten. Sefton of the Sixth had sat down in the front row, near the School House party.

They knew the bully of the New House was here to spy and to score off Figgins & Co. if he could.

He looked round suspiciously when Tom Merry gave the whistle, and glared at the Shell fellow. Perhaps he guessed that it was a signal to some waiting New House fellows, but he made no move.

"It's a rotten shame," said Jack Blake. "I suppose Ratty gave that cad the tip to come along."

"Heah come the Nastiest of the Nazis, deah boys!"

Into the ring came the S.S. Guards, goose-stepping along in a manner that made the audience yell.

Tom Merry looked at his programme.

"That was to be the last turn," he remarked. "They're putting it on first. And, I say, half those chaps look like kids got up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

But it was not Chungum's Latest yet. The S.S. men stepped round the arena, amid loud laughter, and then lined up at the entrance.

The half-dozen whom Tom Merry had noticed were smaller than the others, and stood in front, getting as good a view of the ring as Tom Merry & Co. themselves.

"Tain't the turn yet," said Blake. "They're going to ornament the landscape during the show, I suppose. Here comes Texas Bill."

The circus went on in its usual course, the Nastiest of the Nazis keeping their place at the tent-entrance.

Under their grease-paint and peaked caps the six amateur circus-performers were grinning.

Across the ring they could see Tom Merry & Co. looking at them, but evidently without recognition.

"They don't know us from Adam," chuckled Figgins. "Look, there's that rotter Sefton! He's seen us, but—"

"He's keeping a place empty beside him," said Fatty Wynn.

"Some other cad coming, I suppose," said Figgins.

"My hat, this is ripping!" said Redfern. "We've got about the best view in the place. It was really a stunning idea of yours, Figgy."

Figgins & Co. were enjoying themselves immensely. To be seeing the circus under the very eyes of the spying New House prefect gave the whole show an added zest.

And the show was very good, too. Chungum's Celebrated Circus was quite a success. Texas Bill led off his bronco amid cheers, and the lion cage was wheeled in. Captain Coke, the lion-tamer, was in great form, and the turn went off amid great applause.

Then came Rab Rabbi, the juggler; and after him Sapolio, the snake-charmer; then Samsonio, the Strongest Man on Earth, and the rest. And while Samsonio was lifting his

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tremendous weights and Tiny Tony was exciting roars of laughter by comical endeavours to lift them after him, Figgins gave Kerr a sudden nudge.

"Look!" he muttered.
"I'm looking," said Kerr.
"I mean, across the ring; next to Sefton." Kerr looked, and started.

The empty place beside Sefton of the Sixth in the front row was occupied now.

"Ratty!" said Kerr, with a deep breath.
"The rotten cad! He's come here, hoping to catch us out!"

"He won't spot us now."
"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

Mr. Ratcliff was sitting bolt upright in his place. He was not looking at Samsonio. Weight-lifting and the hurling of a cannonball did not interest the New House master.

He was there to catch any New House fellows who had dared to defy his orders.

Mr. Ratcliff was scanning the audience with keen eyes. He did not believe for a moment that the six juniors he had seen leaving the school had gone out for a run.

But he had to admit that there was no sign of them in the circus tent, and he was angry and disappointed.

Figgins & Co. observed him scanning every quarter of the tent, and they chuckled silently. He was not likely to recognise them in their guise of S.S. men.

The Housemaster's keen eyes rested upon them for a moment, but only in passing. The uniformed figures had no interest for him.

He was looking for six New House juniors, and he could not find them.

"The uttah wottah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "You see Watty there, deah boys?"

Tom Merry nodded.
"Come to spot Figgins & Co., if they're here," he answered.

"Lucky they're not here," said Blake. "They might have been in the tent but for Sefton. Ratty was too careful this time."

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Here comes the last turn," said Blake.

It was Chumgum's Latest, at last. Mr. Charley Chumgum came in in his guise as Hitler, marching at the head of the S.S. Guards, who had been looking on during the performance.

Hitler and the guards goose-stepped round the ring with great solemnity, every now and then tripping over their swords and coming croppers, amid loud merriment.

The only face that was not smiling was Mr. Ratcliff's. He was scowling.

"Hallo! What are they up to now?" murmured Tom Merry.

One of the S.S. men came goose-stepping away from the others, directly towards the spot where Mr. Ratcliff and Sefton sat side by side.

The schoolboys, who were close behind the Housemaster and the prefect, looked curiously at the performer.

He was one of the six whom Tom Merry had noticed. He had very long legs, and his face was a mass of grease-paint.

One of his companions tried to stop him, but he jerked himself loose and goose-stepped right on to the edge of the arena, to the spot where Mr. Ratcliff sat frowning.

"What on earth is he up to?" muttered Blake.

Figgins—for, of course, it was Figgins—came goose-stepping on, till only the low barrier was between him and the Housemaster and the prefect.

They stared at him without a hint of recognition.

"Ach!" said Figgins, in a deep voice. "Shentlemens, I shows you the sword exercise of to S.S. Guards, ain't it?"

"What? Keep off!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff, as Figgins drew his tremendous sword—which was, fortunately, made only of wood—and made a pass at him across the barrier.

The astonished Housemaster leaped to his feet.
Crash!
Mr. Ratcliff gave a yell as the wooden sword swept off his hat—with ruinous results to the hat.

Crash!
10/2/40

The wooden sword came down on the seat beside Mr. Ratcliff, missing him by about an inch.

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff. "The man is mad—or drunk! Help!"

"Ach! I shows you to sword exercise, ain't it?" growled Figgins.

"Yaroooh! Help!" yelled the Housemaster, as the end of the wooden sword jabbed upon his waistcoat. "Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the chaps behind.
The performer did not look as if he were in his senses. He was cutting and thrusting at the Housemaster over the barrier like a lunatic.

The rest of the performance had stopped, the performers staring at that unrehearsed interlude in amazement. Five of the S.S. Guards were yelling with laughter.

Mr. Chumgum stared at first, and then, as he recognised Mr. Ratcliff, he understood, and collapsed against the centre post in helpless merriment.

"Ow! Help! Take him away! Ow!"
Cut and thrust—jab, jab, jab!

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience, taking it for a prearranged part of the performance, and finding it very funny. "Go it, mister! Stand up to the Nasty!"

Mr. Ratcliff could not get out of reach. The barrier was in front, and the seat behind, and a thick crowd round him.

He tried to defend himself with his umbrella, but the umbrella made a poor show against Figgins' tremendous sword.

Sefton found a stick, and entered into the performance to defend his Housemaster; but the S.S. man turned on him quite ferociously, and Sefton yelled as he received a fearful clump on the head from the wooden sword.

He scrambled away over the back of the seat, yelling. Mr. Ratcliff tried to follow him, but a jab in the waistcoat brought him down on the seat again.

"Help! Help!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. were doubled up with merriment.

What had induced the performer to attack the New House master they could not guess, but they enjoyed the scene thoroughly.

"Bai Jove! Go it, deah boy!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, jumping up and waving his hat wildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Mr. Ratcliff tried to squeeze along the knees of his neighbours to get out, but a terrific thrust in the ribs sent him plump back into his seat.

"Help! Oh!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience.

"Oh dear!" gasped Mr. Chumgum, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "Oh, my 'at! The young rascal! Oh, 'old me, somebody!"

"Villain! Let me alone! How dare you! Police!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Mr. Ratcliff made a wild bound backwards at last, and tumbled over the back of the seat on to the knees of some School House fellows behind.

He scrambled wildly through them, and they helped him—not gently.

Figgins chuckled gleefully, and goose-stepped back to join the rest of the performers amid yells of laughter, and Chumgum's Latest proceeded to a triumphant conclusion.

Mr. Ratcliff, hatless, his umbrella in ruins, found himself outside the circus tent. For ten minutes or so he did nothing but pump breath.

Sefton had cleared off. He didn't want to see Mr. Ratcliff while in that humour. The Housemaster's fury would probably have turned upon him as the nearest victim.

"Infamous!" panted Mr. Ratcliff. "Horrible! I will take out a summons—ow!—for assault—yow—grook!"

Mr. Ratcliff glared almost murderously at some village boys who gathered round him. In his present state he was very liable to attract attention, and he attracted it.

"Go away!" he screamed.
"Yah! Where's your 'at, gov'nor? Wot 'ave you bin doin' with your collar? He, he, he!"

Mr. Ratcliff strode away with as much

dignity as was compatible with a torn collar, a rumpled coat, and a towlsed head uncovered to the winds of heaven.

The village boys followed him merrily, and he increased his pace, and at last fairly took to his heels.

He reached the school breathless, gasping with rage, and Taggles almost fell down as he saw him come in. Mr. Ratcliff bolted into the New House, and was not seen again for some time.

AN hour later Tom Merry & Co. came cheerfully home, and six boys in running kit came in cheerfully, also.

Mr. Chumgum had been very satisfied. Chumgum's Latest had been funnier than ever owing to Figgins' unexpected and unrehearsed turn. And from the way Tom Merry & Co. were chuckling as they came in, it appeared that they had been enlightened as to the true identity of the performer who had that extraordinary sword exercise with Mr. Ratcliff.

"Bai Jove, you know," Arthur Augustus remarked, "Figgay weally takes the cake this time. Poor old Watty! And the vevy best thing is that Watty hasn't a suspish! I should weally neevah have known myself if Figgay hadn't told us. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Ratcliff certainly hadn't a "suspish," which was very fortunate for Figgins & Co. He considered taking out a summons for assault and battery, but thought better of it.

He overheard one or two references by the boys of his own House which made him decide that it would be best if the matter was quickly forgotten.

For example, one morning Figgy, apparently blissfully ignorant of the fact that Mr. Ratcliff was standing just behind him, said to Blake:

"Did you hear about that disgraceful affair at the circus on Saturday afternoon?"

"No," said Blake, playing up to him. "What happened?"

"One of our most respected masters was made to feel— Oh, I beg your pardon, sir!" said Figgy, turning round and pretending to see Mr. Ratcliff for the first time. "I didn't know you were there."

Mr. Ratcliff marched off, red-faced and furious.

Chumgum's Celebrated Circus eventually departed from Rylcombe, but it was likely to be many a day before the chums of St. Jim's forgot it. For a long time they chuckled over the last performance of Chumgum's Latest, and especially over the unrehearsed improvement by Figgins of the Fourth.

Figgins & Co. rejoiced over their triumph, the only drawback being that they could not tell Ratty how they had scored.

But Figgins declared solemnly that when he became an "old boy" he would pay Ratty a special visit to tell him all about it.

Until that time came, Mr. Ratcliff was likely to remain in a state of blissful ignorance of the fact that he owed his discomfiture to Figgins.

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