

NEWSAGENTS & READERS

should kindly note that the next issue of "The Gem" will be a Grand **DOUBLE NUMBER.**

# THE GEM LIBRARY

**1<sup>d</sup>**  
**PRICE**  
**2**

## D'ARCY'S ROMANCE.

A GRAND TALE OF TOM MERRY'S SCHOOLDAYS.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



D'ARCY'S

LOVE LETTER.

NO. 36.

VOL. 2.

G

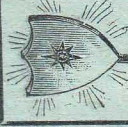




# ABSOLUTELY FREE



We are anxious to get our Special 1907 Sale Price List of Jewellery, etc., into every home in the United Kingdom, and we make the following remarkable offer to all readers of this paper.



**FREE! FREE!! FREE!!!**

You Can Choose from the following:—A Ladies' or Gent's **REAL DIAMOND RING**, a Ladies' **FASHIONABLE BROOCH** set with a **REAL DIAMOND**, a Gent's **REAL DIAMOND PIN** (all as illustrated), or a Beautifully Carved **WALNUT** stained Wooden **CLOCK**, suitable for Dining Room, Drawing Room, or Hall, will be given **ABSOLUTELY FREE** to every **FIFTH** Person who sends for our Special Sale Price List, and to **EVERYONE** who sends for a Price List, but who is not entitled to a Clock, Brooch, Pin, or Ring, we will send with Price List, and **ABSOLUTELY FREE**, a beautiful Gold-cased Gem Set **BROOCH** if the applicant is a Lady, or a Handsome and Useful **FOUNTAIN PEN** if a Gentleman. If you are entitled to a **FREE DIAMOND RING, PIN, BROOCH, or CLOCK**, our only condition is that you purchase goods from our Price List (either for Cash or Weekly Payments of 6d. or upwards) to the value of not less than 4/6. **REMEMBER**, even if you do not get a Diamond Ring, Pin, Brooch, or a Clock you are sure of getting a Gem Set Brooch or Fountain Pen for your **Halfpenny** (the cost of sending) **Even if You Buy Nothing.**

We are making this remarkable offer, as we know once you have seen our Bargain List we shall sell you something, and secure your further orders.

**DON'T DELAY. SEND TO-DAY,**

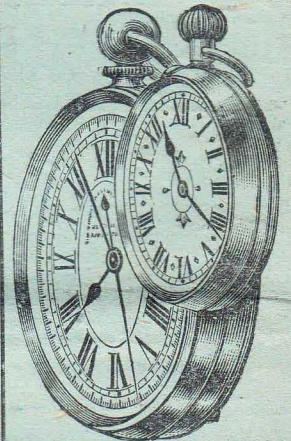
**As this offer may not be repeated. Anyone sending more than ONE application will be disqualified.**

The following are a few of the Wonderful Bargains contained in our List, and will be sent for Cash or on **EASY PAYMENTS.**

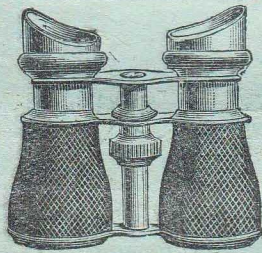
## 6D. DEPOSIT

AND UPWARDS.

- AIR RIFLES, 6/-. BOOTS, 6/6. FOOTBALLS, 6/6.
- SILVER-MOUNTED UMBRELLAS, 6/6.
- 18-ct. GOLD-CASED WATCHES, 6/3 & 7/9. REAL SILVER WATCHES, 6/6. GOLD COMPASS PENDANTS, 4/6. FIELD, RACE, or THEATRE GLASSES, 3/6. ELECTRO-SILVER CRUETS, 8/6. TEAPOTS, 8/6. GOLD GEM RINGS, 4/6. ACCORDEONS, 5/6. WEDDING RINGS, 3/3. KEEPERS, 8/6. STERLING SILVER LEVERS, 15/6. 18-ct. GOLD-FILLED DOUBLE ALBERTS, 7/-. Ditto Long GUARDS, 6/6. GOLD and DIAMOND RINGS, 7/-. CAMERAS and OUTFITS, 7/-.



13-ct. Gold-cased Ladies' or Gentlemen's Watches (as illustration), beautifully finished. Ten years' Warranty. Our Sale Price, **7/9.**



Very powerful 30-mile range, covered with Imperial Russia Leather. Leather Slings Case to match. Our Sale Price, **3/6.**



Hall-marked 18-ct. Gold, set with Six Real Diamonds & Ruby. Our Sale Price, **15/6.**

Lodge Farm, Chicheley, Newport Pagnell. Dear Sirs,—I received my Long Guard Chain, and am delighted with it. The Free Ring is lovely—such a good pattern. A gentleman friend has a ring like it which cost pounds. (Mrs.) A. CLARKE.

Cheshunt Locks, River Lee, Cheshunt, Herts, Jan. 3, 1903. Dear Sir,—I received the Field Glasses, Clock, and Studs, for which I am pleased. They are good value for the money. I have shown them to several friends, who say they are good and cheap. You can make what use you like of this testimonial. I have had Glasses at sea, costing about £6, no better than the ones you sent me.—I remain, yours truly, THOMAS B. HOLDSWORTH.



Very Massive Real Gold (Stamped), Our Sale Price, **8/6.**

4, Kirk Gate Street, Old Walsoken, Walsoken, June 9, 1904.

Dear Sir,—I received the Watch and Clock in good order. I sold the Watch next day for 14/—more than double I gave for it. I have bought a good many Watches in my time, both at wholesale and retail prices, but I have never received such astounding value as you have sent. I have shown the Free Clock to several people, and they say it is first-class. Hoping to send another order before long, I remain, yours truly, G. HILTON.



Real Gold (Stamped). Our Sale Price, **6/-.**

**OVER 7,000 SIMILAR TESTIMONIALS** have been received, and are open for inspection at our offices. Surely this is sufficient evidence of the wonderful value we offer. Please read the following extracts:—

Marine Station Hotel, Bray, Co. Wicklow. Gentlemen,—I received your parcel last night, and was delighted when I saw those articles. The Free Ring is very pretty. I have been offered 6/ for it already. The Watch is splendid, and I cannot make out how you can sell them for such a low price. I shall recommend you wherever I can. Wishing you every success. H. DISSE.

84, Bury Road, Wood Green, N. Dear Sir,—I thank you for your prompt attention to my order for the three Brooches, which arrived safely, and are quite beyond my expectations. The Free Ring which you kindly sent me is a very handsome present, and my friends whom I have shown it to are as much surprised as I was when I first saw it myself. L. TURKINGTON.

### FREE GIFT COUPON.

Please send me your Special Sale Price List as per offer above. It is understood that this application does not bind me to purchase from you either now or at any future date.

Name .....

Address .....

Write plainly, giving full name and address. Cut out and enclose Coupon in unsealed envelope and stamp with 1d. stamp. If envelope is sealed or anything besides your name and address is written, 1d. stamp must be used. **POST TO-NIGHT to KEW TRADING ASSOCIATION, LTD., Dept. A, KEW, LONDON.**

The Grammar School, Wortley, near Leeds. Dear Sir,—Thanks very much for Ring and Clock, which arrived quite safe. The present is splendid, and fit for any dining-room. Wishing you every success in your business. Yours truly, E. ARUNDEL

12, School Street, Warrington, near Per th, S. Wales, June 5th, 1907.

Sirs,—Having received six of your Watches previous to now, I wish you to forward me another Watch—one of the same description—as soon as possible. We will use our best endeavours to further the sale of your Watches. Yours truly, WILLIAM EVANS.

**KEW TRADING ASSOCIATION, LTD.**  
(Dept. A),  
**KEW, LONDON.**

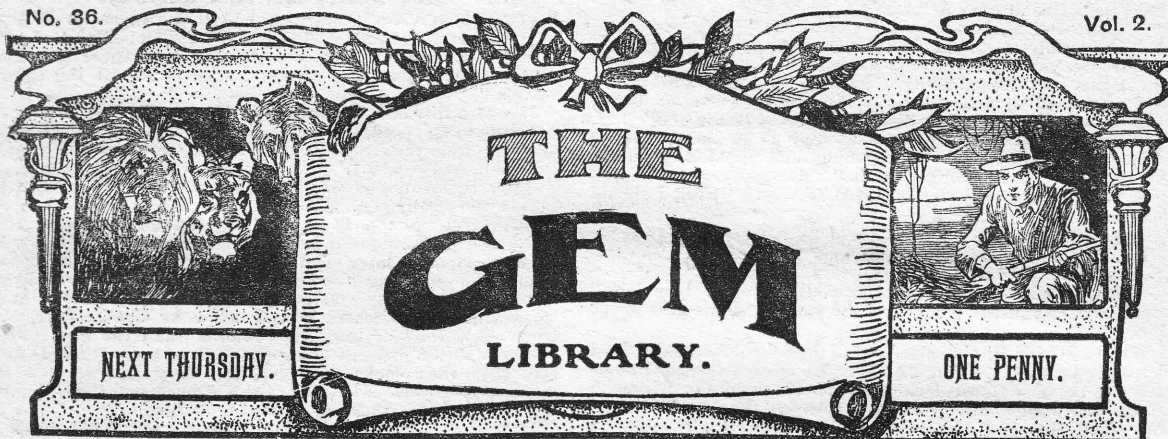


NEXT THURSDAY: "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS." By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order the GRAND DOUBLE NUMBER of the "GEM" Now.

No. 36.

Vol. 2.



A COMPLETE STORY FOR EVERYONE, AND EVERY STORY A GEM!

# D'ARCY'S ROMANCE.

A Tale of Tom Merry's Schooldays.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### D'Arcy Does the Polite Thing.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into Tom Merry's study in the School House at St. Jim's; and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther laid down their pens and looked at him. They knew at once that something unusual was on the tapis.

D'Arcy was the swell of the School House. He was always elegantly dressed. Even fellows in the Sixth, who fancied themselves in a dressy way, never quite equalled the style of Arthur Augustus.

But on the present occasion Gussy had surpassed himself. The Terrible Three simply gasped as they looked at him. Never had his trousers been so beautifully creased, his patent leathers so remarkably shiny, his coat so well-fitting, his collar so high and spotless, his necktie so elegantly tied. From the summit of his high hat to the tips of his lavender kid gloves, Arthur Augustus looked a picture.

"My word!" said Tom Merry.

"My hat!" said Manners.

"My only maiden aunt Mary Matilda!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus gave an elegant bow and a languid smile. His beautiful coat was open to show the really remarkable colours of his waistcoat, as well as a gold watchchain, and he carried a gold-headed cane in his hand.

"What's the game?" Tom Merry asked. "What are you doing this afternoon, Gussy? Is that nobby get-up going to be wasted on us common people at St. Jim's?"

"Hardly, deah boy!"

"Are you going down to mash Mary the housemaid?" demanded Lowther.

D'Arcy gave him a withering look.

"No, it's the girl in the confectionery shop in Rylcombe," said Manners. "I've seen D'Arcy making sheep's eyes over a pile of penny buns, and—"

"Weally, deah boys, you are remarkably frivolous this aftahnoon!" said Arthur Augustus, screwing his monocle into his right eye and surveying the Terrible Three. "I weally do not approve of these remarks. I have come to pwopose to you—"

"To which of us?" asked Tom Merry, innocently. "You know you're irresistible in that get-up. We might have guessed that he was going to pwopose to somebody."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy! I've come to pwopose to you to go to Wylcombe to meet the aftahnoon twain. I have asked Blake and Hewwies, and they said I was an ass, you know."



"Well, they were quite right, as a matter of fact; but what do you want to meet the afternoon train for? Is your governor coming down, or what?"

"You haven't heard then?"

"Heard what?" demanded the Terrible Three with one voice.

"Any news?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, get it off your chest, Gussy."

"Doctah Holmes's niece is coming down to St. Jim's," explained D'Arcy. "You wemembah her, of course, She came down once last term."

"I think so. She was a nice girl. She used to come down and see the cricket."

"Yaas. Well, she is coming down to St. Jim's to stay a time here, so I hear, and she is coming by the aftahnoon twain."

"What has that to do with any of us?" asked Lowther, puzzled.

"Why, you see, deah boys, I had an ideah. I thought it would only be polite for us to make up a party to meet the lady at the station, and escort her to St. Jim's," explained D'Arcy.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, of all the nerve."

"I weally fail to see where the nerve comes in," said D'Arcy. "In my opinion we are called upon to be polite. She was a wippin' girl, and took a gweat intwest in cwicket, and I think we ought to do the wight thing."

The chums of the Shell grinned at one another.

"I think," said Tom Merry, "that we'll follow the example of Blake and Herries, especially as we've got an impot to write out. Doesn't it occur to your mighty brain, Augustus, that the Head will send the trap to meet the train, and that an escort of lower-form boys will be superfluous?"

"That is vevy pwob; but it is no weason why we shouldn't be there to meet the twain. The gwoom will go in the twap, but we—"

Next Thursday.

SPECIAL DOUBLE NUMBER.

One Penny.



NEXT  
THURSDAY:

## "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

### CHAPTER 2.

#### How D'Arcy Met Miss Courtney.

"You'd better go over to the New House and get Figgins & Co. to take a hand," said Tom Merry. "We're not giving any receptions this afternoon."

"That's so," said Manners. "Good-bye!"

"But weally——" said Arthur Augustus.

"Gussy, you're interrupting the work."

"Blake and Hewwies have wufused to come, and if you wufuse I shall have to ask those New House wastahs; but it will be an infwaaction of the dig. of the School House——"

"Never mind that. Why don't you go it alone, Gussy? You look killing enough for anything, and you'd only put us commonplace persons in the shade."

"Yaas, I suppose I should," said D'Arcy. "Still, I should like——"

"You'll be late for the train," said Tom Merry, looking at his watch. "Better cut across and rope in Figgins & Co. while there's time."

"Vewy well. I considah that you are wude boundahs," said Arthur Augustus, and he left the study with his nose in the air.

The swell of St. Jim's walked out of the School House, followed by a good many admiring glances. He crossed the quadrangle towards the New House, looking out for Figgins & Co. Although there was usually deadly warfare between the two houses at St. Jim's, they had been known to unite on friendly terms on sufficiently important occasions. And to D'Arcy's mind the present occasion was more important than any other that had ever arisen in the history of St. Jim's, and so he had no hesitation in approaching Figgins & Co.

He spotted the great Figgins under the leafless elms on the New House side, laying down the law to the Co. on the subject of football. Figgins was in football garb, and had an exceedingly muddy bell under his arm, and had evidently just come off the playing field. Kerr and Wynn, the famous Co., were also looking muddy and rumped after a rough game.

"They can't play for toffee," Figgins was saying. "Look at that fellow Green, for instance. I had to charge him, and he blubbed. You hear me? Blubbed!"

"I say, Figgins——"

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn turned round and looked at D'Arcy. They looked him over and round about, and up and down.

"Hallo," said Figgins, "what is it?"

"Just got out of the Zoo, I expect," said Kerr.

"I wonder what they call it," Fatty Wynn remarked. "It's one of the queer specimens they keep in the School House."

D'Arcy screwed his monocle into his eye.

"You are decidedly wude," he said; "But I have not come to quawwel with you. I have come to wpose to you to meet the aftalnoon twain——"

"The one Miss Courtney is in?" asked Figgins.

"Yaas, wathah! I consider that we ought to do the polite thing and greet the Doctor's niece on her awwival," explained D'Arcy.

Figgins & Co. chuckled.

"Think she would be pleased?" asked Kerr.

"She would be bound to be pleased, deah boy. It would be only a wpropah mark of esteem and wespect."

"Why don't you take Blake and Hewwies?"

"They have wufused to come. They're going to play football."

"The Terrible Three then?"

"They won't come eithah. They're doin' impositions."

"Well you can put us on the same list," said Figgins. "We won't come either. You can go and make a giddy ass of yourself all on your lonesome, Gussy."

"I weally cannot see the asinine aspect of the case," said D'Arcy frigidly. "It will be only polite to greet the lady——"

"Rats!"

"Vewy well, I shall go alone. I wegard you as wude boundahs."

And Arthur Augustus walked away.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Figgins & Co.

D'Arcy heard them laugh, but it made no difference to him. When the swell of St. Jim's got an idea into his head, wild horses would not have dragged it out again. D'Arcy was always the quintessence of politeness. He had the idea firmly rooted in his mind now that he was called upon to do the "wight thing," as he put it, and so the matter was past discussion.

Leaving Figgins & Co. still cackling, the swell of St. Jim's walked down to the gates, and stepped out into the lane leading to Rylcombe.

Tom Merry, looking out of the study window in the School House, watched him go. The hero of the Shell was laughing.

"He's off," he remarked. "Figgins & Co. apparently haven't come up to the scratch. Gussy is going it alone."

Lowther chuckled.

"I say," Manners remarked thoughtfully, "you know Gussy was awfully struck with Miss Courtney last term. Is it possible that our Adonis is in love?"

And at the suggestion the Terrible Three were unfeeling enough to burst into a roar of laughter.

"BAI JOVE!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, looking at his gold watch. "I shall be late! I have wasted too much beastly time ovah those boundahs, as a mattah of fact. I'm afwaid I shall belate at the beastly station."

It was a discouraging thought. The swell of St. Jim's was not dressed for speed, and the walk was a long one to Rylcombe. The trap from the school, evidently going to Rylcombe to meet the train, had passed D'Arcy some time back.

"Beastly wotten!" said D'Arcy, restoring his watch to his pocket and striding on. "I would wun, only it is so extwemely undig.; and besides, I am not dwessed for wunning. How extwemely unfortunat it is that I should be late!"

But a moment later even the disagreeableness of being late to greet the charming Miss Courtney was banished from D'Arcy's mind. Three youths were coming up the lane from the village, three village boys whom D'Arcy knew by sight. There had been many rows between the "Saints" and the boys of the village, and the moment he caught sight of these three, D'Arcy saw that their looks were hostile. They had spotted the exquisitely-dressed swell of St. Jim's at once, and their grinning faces showed that they anticipated some fun.

D'Arcy was dismayed for the moment. He wasn't afraid of them by any means. The swell of the School House had boundless pluck; but they were three to one, and a combat was the last thing in the world he desired just then. His clothes would be spoiled, and his last chance of meeting Miss Courtney at the station would be gone.

"Bai jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "This is weally most unfortunat. I am afwaid that the young wuffians mean to attack me. Bai jove!"

They were advancing upon him rapidly, and there was not much doubt as to their intentions. Pilcher, the butcher's boy, Grimes, the son of the host of the Green Dragon, and Craggs, who honoured the local barber with his assistance, were the three. They evidently regarded the swell of St. Jim's as fair game.

D'Arcy had heard of the power of the human eye to quell the ferocity of wild animals. He had never heard of its effect being tried upon a butcher's boy before, but he thought he might as well try it. Unless he could overawe the enemy, he was in a bad fix.

So he strode on haughtily, his nose in the air, apparently too lofty to notice the existence of the three village youths. Pilcher stopped directly in his path.

"Wot cher!" he said cheerfully.

D'Arcy gave him a freezing stare.

"Pway stand aside," he said. "You are stoppin' me!"

Pilcher grinned at Grimes and Craggs.

"Get off the earth, you common persons," he directed. "You are a beastly nuisance to this great person."

"He, he, he!" said Grimes and Craggs.

"Pway stand aside," said D'Arcy. "I am in a gweat huwwy. I weally do not want to be put to the twouble of thwashin' you now——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When I explain to you," said Arthur Augustus with dignity, "that I am goin' to meet a lady who is comin' by twain, and that I am alweady late, I am suah that as gentlemen, you will immediately allow me to pass."

Pilcher shook his head solemnly.

"Can't be done," he replied. "You see, as gentlemen, we must punish you for being late when you're going to meet a lady. Ain't that so, mates?"

"It are," said Grimes and Craggs together.

"Then besides, we mustn't let you burst upon her vision all at once like this," said Pilcher, who had a local reputation as a wit, and was always trying to live up to it. "You might startle her into a fit, you know."

"I wegard that wemark as impertinent. Pway let me pass, or I shall have to use violence."

"Let's see you do it," said Pilcher, with interest.

"Vewy well."

And D'Arcy hit out so good a blow that Pilcher sat down in the muddy lane. The next moment, however, Grimes had D'Arcy round the neck, and they were reeling to and fro. They went down together, and rolled into the ditch.

"Ow!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

There were six inches of muddy water in the ditch, and slime and mud galore. Grimes let go the swell of St. Jim's and scrambled out, puffing and gasping. D'Arcy followed him, and the village three yelled with laughter.

The swell of St. Jim's presented a terrible appearance.

His silk hat was still in the ditch, and so was his gold-headed cane. His clothes were muddy from head to foot, his nice white collar wet and crumpled, his hair ruffled, his gloves caked with mud.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Pilcher. "My aunt! Look at him!"

"Look at him!" shrieked Craggs, doubled up with merriment.

ORDER  
NOW

THE GRAND DOUBLE NUMBER OF  
THE GEM.

NEXT THURSDAY.  
PRICE 1d.



D'Arcy glanced down at himself, and could have wept with mortification at the sight of his shocking state. But instead of weeping he became angry.

"You howwid, howwid wuffians!" he gasped. "You have completely spoiled my clothes. I will thwash you feahfully. Look out!"

And, reckless of the odds, D'Arcy went for the three village jokers.

Grimes went flying under his attack, but Pilcher and Craggs seized him, and ran him towards the ditch again.

"Let him go in and fetch his hat," suggested Craggs.

"Good," said Pilcher. "Good dog! Fetch it!"

"Pway do not be such wuffianly bwutes!" gasped D'Arcy. "I wufuse to go in and fetch my hat. My hat is quite useless now, and I do not desire to wewcover it. Pway——"

"One, two, three!" shouted Pilcher.

"Now, then!" said Craggs.

They swung the swell of St. Jim's to and fro, to give him a good send-off. D'Arcy struggled frantically.

"Off—hallo!"

There was a rattle of wheels in the lane. The village lads stopped for a moment and looked round. D'Arcy looked round, too, and could have whooped for joy when he recognised the St. Jim's trap, with James the groom in it.

"James!" he shouted. "Pway assist me, James!"

A young lady was driving. A charming girl with flaxen hair and blue eyes, and the sweetest smile in the world. She drew the trap to a halt instantly, and spoke to the groom, who jumped down at once.

"Bunk!" said Pilcher tersely.

The village boys cut off across a field, shrieking with laughter. D'Arcy stood alone, and for the first time became aware that Miss Courtney was looking at him from the trap.

"Bai jove!" murmured D'Arcy, in utter dismay.

For the moment he sincerely wished that the trap had not come along at that moment, even if he had to be left in the hands of Pilcher & Co. To be seen by Ethel Courtney in his present plight was too fearfully humiliating.

The girl tried hard not to smile at the ridiculous appearance of the swell of St. Jim's, but suspicious dimples were showing round the corners of her mouth.

"Do you belong to St. Jim's, my poor boy?" she asked sympathetically.

"Yaas, wathah, Miss Courtney," said D'Arcy, with his best bow. "I must apologise from my heart for appearin' before you in such a feahful state, but it was weally not my fault. Those howwid wuffians——"

"Ha, ha! I mean, I am very sorry. It was too bad of them."

"Yaas, wathah. I shall give them a feahful thwashin' when I meet them again. They actually had the feahful impertinence to fling me in the ditch, Miss Courtney."

"You must get into the trap," said the girl. "Come, I will drive you to the school."

"Oh, weally, Miss Courtney, you are vewy kind, but I could not think of takin' advantage of your offah," said D'Arcy. "I am such a disgwaceful-lookin' object——"

"Never mind. Jump in!"

"Vewy well, since you are so kind," said D'Arcy. "I am vewy grateful to you, Miss Courtney. I weally do not feel up to walkin' aftah my feahful expewience."

The girl made room for the muddy swell of St. Jim's beside her. James the groom grinned to himself as he resumed his place. The trap drove on.

"What about your hat?" asked Miss Courtney. "Are you going to leave it there?"

"Yaas, wathah. It is no use aftah what has happened to it," said Arthur Augustus. "Fortunately, I have several others at St. Jim's. You do not wecognise me, Miss Courtney."

The girl looked at him dubiously.

"There is so much mud on your face," she said demurely. "Is it Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, much gratified at being recognised in spite of the mud that plastered his classic features.

"Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, don't you know. I had the pleasuah last term of bwingin' you a glass of lemonade durin' a cwicket match, Miss Courtney."

"Yes, I remember perfectly."

"As a mattah of fact," pursued D'Arcy, "I was comin' to Wylcombe to meet the twain, Miss Courtney, when those howwid wuffians attacked me."

"That was very kind of you," said the girl, smiling.

"But, weally, I am ashamed of appearing like this," D'Arcy said, scraping a patch of mud from his nose. "I am aware that I look most disweputable, and it is vewy kind of you to give me a lift. I weally hope that none of the fellahs will notice me go in."

D'Arcy's hopes were ill-founded.

Figgins & Co. were at the gate, and they chuckled as the trap drove in, with the muddy swell sitting beside the fair driver. D'Arcy turned crimson.

The Terrible Three had just come out of the School House

when the trap drove up. They, too, stared at the swell of St. Jim's as he alighted. D'Arcy's complexion assumed the rich hue of a beetroot.

The doctor came out to greet Miss Courtney. He glanced curiously at D'Arcy.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "It is D'Arcy. How did you get into this terrible state, D'Arcy?"

"I have been attacked by howwid wuffians, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I have been wolloed in an extwemely muddy ditch. Miss Courtney was kind enough to give me a lift home."

"Indeed!" said the Head. "You had better go and get yourself clean, I think, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, sir."

The doctor entered the house with his niece. D'Arcy, affecting not to see the curious looks of Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, marched into the School House. Blake and Herries, his study-mates in No. 6, met him in the doorway.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Blake. "What have you been doing, Gussy?"

"I've had a most howwid expewience."

"You don't mean to say that you went to meet a lady like that!"

"Weally, I have no time for talk. I must go and change my clothes," said D'Arcy. "I shall not be more than an hour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy was rather under the hour. He came into Study No. 6 in time for tea. The chums stared at him. He was exquisitely dressed, and wore a flower in his beautifully-fitting Eton jacket.

"My hat!" said Blake. "You're going it lately! What's the game, Gussy?"

"Why this gorgeoussness?" Herries wanted to know.

D'Arcy affected not to hear. He strolled to the window and stood looking out.

"Aren't you going to have tea, Gussy?" said Blake, looking at him in astonishment. "There's some ripping sardines, and a jolly good cake I've just got from home——"

"Thanks, no," said Arthur Augustus languidly. "I am not hungry."

"What rot! It's tea-time."

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

Blake and Herries stared at one another. Arthur Augustus stood looking out of the window. Suddenly the sound of a deep sigh was heard. It proceeded from D'Arcy. Blake gave a jump.

"I say, D'Arcy, old chap, are you ill?" he asked, with real concern.

"No."

"What's the matter, then?"

"Nothing."

Blake and Herries were puzzled. They went on with their tea. The sound of a deep sigh was heard again. They looked at D'Arcy, but he did not notice it. His gaze was fixed upon the sky, where the stars were coming out. The stars appeared to have a great attraction for Arthur Augustus. He gazed at them, and sighed again.

Blake and Herries began to look alarmed. It was evident that there was something wrong with Arthur Augustus, but they hadn't the faintest idea what it was.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### D'Arcy is Mysterious.

"KILDARE!"

Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, looked up as Arthur Augustus came in at the open door of his study.

"Yes, what do you want?" he said, eyeing D'Arcy with some curiosity. There was an expression upon D'Arcy's face which told of some inward nervousness.

"Pway pardon me for disturbin' you, Kildare," said D'Arcy with his usual politeness, "but I should like you to give me a pass, if you have no objection."

"You want to go out?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You can't go out this evening," said Kildare. "It's too late. You can have a pass to-morrow if you like. Where do you want to go to?"

"To Rylcombe, please, Kildare."

"Well, you can't go to-night. For one thing, it's going to pour with rain. You can have a pass to-morrow."

"To-morrow won't be any good, Kildare, please."

The captain of St. Jim's smiled.

"Some awfully important business?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm afraid it will have to wait. You can't have a pass to-night. You can go and ask your form-master, if you like."

Kildare spoke in a tone of finality.

"Thank you," said Arthur Augustus. "I suppose I shall have to approach Mr. Lathom on the subject."

NEXT  
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.



NEXT  
THURSDAY:

## "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

He left the captain's study, and proceeded to that of the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Lathom was there, and he asked the swell of St. Jim's what he wanted. He raised his eyebrows when Arthur Augustus preferred his modest request.

"A pass this evening to go down to the village? Certainly not."

"But, sir, I weally——"

"You may go, D'Arcy."

D'Arcy went, rather disconsolately. He passed Mr. Railton's door, and, as a last chance, he tapped there.

The house-master's voice bade him enter.

"What can I do for you, D'Arcy?" asked the master of the School House, laying down his pen.

"Can I have a pass to go to Wylcombe this evening, sir?"

Mr. Railton stared at him.

"A pass to go down to Rylcombe, after locking up, and rain coming on? Certainly not!"

"If you please, sir——"

"You may go, D'Arcy."

D'Arcy retired, but the eye of the School House swell was gleaming behind his eyeglass now. He was in a determined humour.

"They are all weally beastly wude!" he murmured. "It's no good explainin' what I want to go for, as that would only make them more wesolute on the point. But if I can't get a pass I shall have to go without one, that's all."

"Hallo! What are you muttering about?" asked the voice of Blake at his elbow.

D'Arcy started, and turned round.

"I have been twyin' to get a pass out," he replied. "Kildare won't give me one, and Mr. Lathom and Mr. Wailton have also wefused."

"I should think so," said Blake. "You must be off your dot. What do you want to go out for?"

"I'm going down to the village."

"But what do you want there? Are you thinking of standing a feed?"

"No, I'm not thinkin' of standin' a feed," said Arthur Augustus, with withering scorn. "I'm not thinkin' of anythin' so beastly common and vulgar."

"My hat!" said Herries, "Gussie is getting funnier every day. First we catch him blowing off like a pair of old bellows while he gazes at the giddy stars, and then he calls a feed common and vulgar. What's the matter with you, Gussie? Is it your liver?"

"Indigestion, I suppose," said Blake sympathetically. "That boiled beef at dinner-time was tough, and I noticed that Gussy shoved away a second helping."

"You are a pair of wude boundahs!" said D'Arcy. "I should wefuse to wegard you as fwends fwom this moment, but I stand in need of your assistance."

"Ha, ha, ha! Glad we're still of some use!"

"I want you to help me, deah boys. I simply must get down to the village to-night."

"Why?" asked Blake and Herries together.

The swell of St. Jim's hesitated and coloured. D'Arcy was not usually secretive, nor was he given to blushing, and the chums of Study No. 6 gazed and wondered.

"I can't tell you," said D'Arcy, at length. "It's weally a pwivate mattah. But I weally must go, and, as I can't get a pass, I must bwreak bounds. I am extremely sowwy to do that, as I had made up my mind never to bwreak a wule of the coll. again."

"Had you? When, and why?"

"Nevah mind that, deah boy. I have turned ovah a new leaf. No more foolish twicks and pwanks for me," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, "but I simply must go down to the village this evening. Will you help me out?"

"Of course we will," said Blake instantly. "I can see you've got something on your mind, or else on your chest. But you can keep your giddy secrets if you like. We'll stand by you, eh, Herries?"

"Righto!" said Herries. "But, I say, it's going to rain, you know."

"Let it wain," said Arthur Augustus.

"The rain may spoil your waistcoat," said Blake, appealing to the swell of the School House upon what was usually his tenderest point.

"Let it," said D'Arcy absently.

The other two could only stare. They could not understand Arthur Augustus at all. What had come over the swell of St. Jim's? He was totally unlike himself.

"Come along, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "My coat is in the study. I will put on the one I had this aftahnoon, as it is already soiled, and does not mattah. I shall have to get ovah the wall. Buck up!"

They went into Study No. 6. Blake helped D'Arcy on with his coat. The School House page had been tipped to brush it, but it still showed signs of the rough handling of the afternoon.

D'Arcy wound a scarf round his neck, and then went to his desk, and the chums saw him take a five-pound note from a drawer and slip it into his pocket.

Arthur Augustus was always rolling in pocket-money. He was the son of an earl, and he was kept well supplied. Fivers were less to him than five-shilling pieces to most boys. Blake wondered what he was going to "blue" that banknote upon in Rylcombe.

When he was ready to start D'Arcy turned to the door. Then he turned back, and looked at the chums. He looked as if he were on the verge of imparting to them some deep and weighty secret, and Blake and Herries waited curiously to hear it.

But the swell of St. Jim's did not speak after all. He only sighed deeply, and turned away again.

Blake and Herries exchanged a look of alarm.

"I say, Gussy," said Blake, "if you're ill, old chap, don't mind telling us. Was it the boiled beef to-day?"

"I am quite well, I thank you," said D'Arcy frigidly. "I wegard that wemark as fwivolous. Are you coming to help me out?"

"But, I say, I don't like to let you go out like that. You may not be fit to take care of yourself, and——"

"You are insultin'. I wefuse to——"

"Oh, don't get ratty, Gus! But I wish you'd tell us what's the matter, old son. Surely you can confide in us," said Blake seriously. "If there's anything wrong, you know we'd stand by you, and help you out like a shot."

Again D'Arcy seemed on the verge of imparting the dread secret. But he only shook his head and sighed.

"Pewwaps anothah time, deah boys," he said. "Not now. Not now. Pway come along. I should like to be back before bedtime if possible."

"There's a fearful row in store for you if you're not, Gussy," said Blake, as they went down the stairs.

They crossed the quadrangle, where the rain was beginning to fall.

"I am not afwaid of a fearful wow," said D'Arcy. "I shall twy to be back to pwevent inqwiy. This is the place."

"Would you like either of us to come with you?" asked Blake, who was really a little anxious.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"No, thank you. Pway give me a bunk up."

"It's raining, you know," said Herries.

"Is it?" said D'Arcy absently. "Yaas. Bai jove! so it is!"

It was evidently hopeless to argue with D'Arcy. They helped him up over the wall, and promised to be there to help him back at eight o'clock.

D'Arcy disappeared. They heard him drop into the road and then they turned back towards the School House.

As they departed, three youthful figures loomed up from the shadows, and gathered on the spot. Blake and Herries walked on, little dreaming that Figgins & Co. had been witnesses of the whole proceeding.

"Well, this is a stroke of luck," said Figgins. "Gussy has gone over the wall. He's going to the tuck-shop, of course. No doubt about that."

"Not a bit of it," said Kerr. "I suppose he couldn't be going anywhere else. Some of the chaps have been breaking bounds, and going down to the Golden Pig. But D'Arcy's not that sort."

"Oh, no! It's the tuck-shop, and that means a feed in the School House after lights out," said Figgins. "A feed—if we don't interfere."

"Which we're going to do," said Fatty Wynn, smacking his lips.

"Well, rather! It's a shocking thing that those youngsters should gorge themselves of a night," said Figgins. "We ought to look after their health, you know. We can't allow these surreptitious feeds——"

"Well, that's a good word, anyhow," said Kerr.

"These surreptitious feeds," repeated Figgins, with emphasis. "We can't allow them, I say. Blake said he'd be back here to help D'Arcy in at eight o'clock. I think we shall be back here, too, kids."

"Good idea," said the Co. at once.

"Blake can help D'Arcy over the wall, and we'll help ourselves to what he brings back with him from Rylcombe," said Figgins complacently. "I think there is going to be a feed in the New House to-night, kids. Come along!"

And Figgins & Co., with a chuckle, melted away into the darkness.

# ANSWERS

ORDER  
NOW

THE GRAND DOUBLE NUMBER OF THE GEM.

NEXT THURSDAY.  
PRICE 1d.



## CHAPTER 4.

## A Raid and a Surprise for Figgins &amp; Co.

TOM MERRY looked curiously at Blake and Herries as he met them in the common room a little later. Both the chums of Study No. 6 were looking unusually serious.

"Anything up?" asked Tom.

"Have you lost ninepence and found a threepenny bit?" asked Monty Lowther, with much solicitude, "or has your form-master insisted upon the Fourth wearing clean collars on other days besides Sundays—"

"Or upon washing their necks in the morning?" asked Manners anxiously. "Don't worry, kids. It will come as a bit of a shock at first, but—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Blake. "There's nothing the matter, only—well, the fact is, we're a little bit worried about Gussy."

The Terrible Three looked serious at once.

"Nothing wrong with him, is there?" asked Tom Merry.

"N-no, I suppose not," said Blake. "But he's queer in his manner. He's got something on his mind, I believe. Haven't you fellows noticed anything?"

"Yes. Come to think of it, I've noticed that he's been going about in a sort of a dream."

"That's it! He wouldn't have any tea this evening!"

"That's serious!"

"And he was sighing like a pair of bellows. Of course, it might be dyspepsia. But he swears it wasn't."

"Where is he now?"

"He's gone out," said Blake, looking worried. "I really hardly liked to let him go alone. He's gone down in the village. We helped him over the wall. He put a five-pound note in his pocket, but he wouldn't tell us a word of where he was going."

"That looks queer," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully. "Perhaps he's going to stand a feed, and is keeping it back as a sort of surprise."

Blake shook his head.

"No, it's not that. He alluded to feeds as common and vulgar. Now, there must be something wrong in a chap when he doesn't like the idea of a feed."

"I should say so."

"I'm worried," said Blake. "He's an awful ass in some things, but a better fellow never breathed. I wish I could get on to the mystery."

Tom Merry could not help him. Blake and Herries waited rather anxiously for the hour to strike when they were to meet Arthur Augustus at the wall. They whiled away the time in the gym, but at last eight strokes boomed out from the school tower.

"Come on, Herries," said Blake, with a sigh of relief, "let's get down to the rendezvous! We don't want to keep Gussy waiting."

Rain was falling in a steady drizzle. They reached the wall, in the dim November mists. Herries hoisted Blake up to the top of it, and Blake stared down into the road.

"Are you there, Gussy?"

There was no reply. Blake could hardly see into the road for the rain and mist, but it was evident that Arthur Augustus was late.

"He's not here," growled Blake. "Crumbs! I wish I had thought of bringing an umbrella! No good sticking up here to get soaked."

He slid from the wall again. The chums crouched close to the ivy-clad wall to escape the rain as much as possible. But in five minutes or so came a well-known whistle from the road. Jack Blake gave a grunt.

"That's Gussy! He's still alive, at all events."

Again Herries hoisted his chum to the top of the wall. Blake dimly discerned the figure of the swell of St. Jim's standing in the rain, a large box under one arm.

"Oho! So Tom Merry was right!" murmured Blake. "It's a feed after all. Hand up the box first, D'Arcy, and then I'll give you a hand."

"Here you are, deah boy! Take gweat care of it."

"That's all right," said Blake, reaching up the box. "I say, this is awfully light. There can't be much in it."

"I assuah you it is full, and of the best that money could buy," said D'Arcy. "You shall see for yourself when we get into the study."

"Oh, all right! Take it, Herries!" Blake handed the cardboard box down to Herries, who received it, and then turned to help D'Arcy up the wall from above.

There was a sudden scamper of footsteps in the gloom, and a yell from Herries. Blake let go D'Arcy, who dropped back into the road in a sitting posture.

"What's up?" shouted Blake, peering down at Herries.

The latter staggered to his feet.

"They've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The grub."

"Who've got it?"

"Figgins & Co."

"My hat! After them! We might have suspected this!"

Blake jumped down from the wall. D'Arcy, on the outer side, picked himself up from a puddle, and shouted and whistled, and whistled and shouted, but in vain. Blake and Herries were hot on the track of the raiders.

They caught a dim glimpse of three running forms in the misty gloom, making for the New House. They ran after them with desperate speed.

"Stop, thieves!" howled Blake. "Give us our grub!"

"Hand over that tommy!" yelled Herries.

A mocking laugh floated back from the darkness. Figgins & Co. were running hard, and they had a good start. Figgins had the box under his arm, and its weight did not incommode him much. They dashed into the porch of the New House while Blake and Herries were still a dozen feet in the rear.

Figgins looked round as the pursuers came dashing up. He kissed his hand to Blake, and then disappeared into the house. The chums of Study No. 6 halted wrathfully.

It was impossible to pursue Figgins & Co. into their own stronghold. It was a victory to the New House. Slowly and disconsolately the chums retraced their steps to the wall.

"A rotten sell, and no mistake!" growled Blake. "Give us a bunk up!" He drew himself up on the wall. "Hallo, are you there, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!" came a voice from the gloom. "What do you mean by dwoppin' me in the mud in that beastly way, Blake?"

"Couldn't be helped. Give us your fin!"

Blake grasped D'Arcy's hand, and helped him up the wall. D'Arcy came across the top of it on his chest, with a gasp. Then he scrambled over and dropped into the quadrangle. Blake followed him.

"Where is the box?"

"The box! Didn't you know! Figgins & Co. have collared it."

Arthur Augustus gave a yell.

"You've let them collar my box!"

"You don't think we did it on purpose, do you?" said Blake. "We couldn't help it. I was on top of the wall, and they rushed Herries. We tried to get it back, but it was no go. Where are you going?"

"I'm goin' to the New House to get that beastly box."

"Don't be an ass! You'll get scalped!"

"I'm goin'!" exclaimed D'Arcy excitedly. "I tell you I'm goin'! I—"

"No, you're not," said Blake. "Give him a run to the School House, Herries!"

"Righto!" grinned Herries.

And, taking the swell of St. Jim's by either arm, Blake and Herries ran him towards the School House, and into the house, and upstairs to the study, in spite of his frantic protests. Meanwhile, Figgins & Co. had carried their prize into the New House, in gleeful mood.

The news spread in record time that a capture had been made from the enemy, and a crowd of New House juniors followed Figgins & Co. into the common room.

Figgins set down the box upon a chair. The juniors gathered round in an admiring circle, and Pratt offered Figgins his knife to cut the string. Figgins regarded the box, now that it was in the light, with something like uneasiness.

"I say, it weighed remarkably little for a box of grub," he said, as he slowly cut the string, "and, curiously enough, it's got the name of Flowerdew, the florist, on the outside!"

"The florist!" ejaculated Kerr.

"Yes, look. I say, we—we haven't made a mistake, have we?"

"Look and see," said Fatty Wynn, with deep anxiety.

"If you've found a mare's nest, Figgy, and there's not going to be a feed after all, I don't know how I can ever forgive you."

"Oh, rats, don't blame me! We couldn't do more than we've done. I thought it was a feed."

Figgins removed the lid from the box, and a score of necks were craned forward to look. There was a general howl of disappointment.

A sweet odour came from the box, but the New House juniors were not on the look-out for the scent of flowers. They wanted something a little more solid.

"Flowers!" said Figgins, in amazement.

The box contained a bouquet—a really magnificent bouquet, which must have cost the swell of St. Jim's a goodly sum. But any fellow there would willingly have changed it for a dozen tarts.

"Flowers!" ejaculated the Co.

The juniors stared at the bouquet in amazement and chagrin. Flowers! What on earth had D'Arcy broken bounds for, just to get a box of flowers to the school?

"Off his rocker, I suppose!" said Figgins.

It was generally agreed by the New House juniors that the swell of the School House was off his rocker. But that didn't lessen their disappointment. Fatty Wynn was almost in tears. He had counted with such absolute certainty on that feed. And now it had gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

NEXT  
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.



NEXT  
THURSDAY:

## "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

### CHAPTER 5.

#### Gussy's Secret.

"WRELEASE me! I insist upon your weleasin' me at once!"

Blake and Herries had plumped D'Arcy down in the easy-chair in Study No. 6. He jumped up again like a jack-in-a-box. Blake shoved him into the chair again with a playful push on the chest.

"Now, Gussy, don't be a howling ass!" he remonstrated. "You must be off your silly onion to think of tackling Figgins & Co. in their own quarters. Why, the New House kids would simply wipe the floor up with you."

"I insist upon weclamin' my pwoperty. If it was a feed I wouldn't mind—"

"Well, what is it, then?" exclaimed Blake, in astonishment.

"Did you think it was a feed, Blake?"

"Of course I did, and so did Figgy, or he wouldn't have collared it. What the dickens was it, then?" demanded Blake.

The swell of the School House could not help grinning.

"Then it will be a disappointment for Figgins," he remarked.

"Do you think I should be thinkin' of anythin' so common and vulgah as a feed? The box contained a bouquet."

"A-a-a-a-a what?"

"A bouquet," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "Flowers, you know."

"Do you mean to say," said Blake, in measured accents, "that you've been and gone and broken bounds, and taken us out in the rain, to fetch a box of rotten flowers from Rylcombe?"

"They are not wotten flowahs. They are the vewy best that money can buy. Now, pewwaps, you will let me go and weclain my pwoperty."

"You—you ass! What did you get them for?"

"To pwesent to Miss Courtney."

Blake and Herries stared at him, and at one another.

"You went to Rylcombe for a bouquet to present to Miss Courtney?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Why?"

The direct question seemed to take Arthur Augustus rather aback. To the surprise of the chums, he coloured deeply, and dropped his eyes.

Herries looked at Blake and tapped his forehead inquiringly. Blake shook his head. He did not think that the swell of the School House was mad. A stranger suspicion than that had come into his mind.

"You haven't answered my question yet, Gussy!" he remarked.

"I—I weally do not know what to say," said D'Arcy, colouring still more deeply. "But I say, chaps, ain't Miss Courtney a weally wipping girl!"

"Yes, rather," said Herries. "If she wasn't four or five years older than I am, I should lose my giddy heart. But—"

"She's not so old as that," said D'Arcy hastily. "She's only eighteen."

Herries stared at him.

"How do you know?"

"I—I do know. I—I say, Blake, old chap, do you—do you—" D'Arcy paused, overcome with confusion, and dared not meet Blake's eyes.

"Do I what?" asked Blake calmly.

"Do you—do you—do you think—"

"Yes, sometimes, when my thinking-box is in working order—"

"I—I mean—do you think—do you think that Miss Courtney is so very much older than I am?" said D'Arcy blushing.

Herries stared at the swell of the School House as if transfixed. For the first time a glimmering of the truth dawned upon him.

Blake remained as grave as a judge.

"Certainly not," he said. "Let's see! You're coming on for fifteen, Gussy, aren't you?"

"Yaas," murmured D'Arcy, "vewy nearly fifteen, Blake. Call it fifteen."

"And Miss Courtney is eighteen. That's only three years difference, only it's only the wrong side, you see. If you were eighteen and she were fifteen—"

"Ah, yes!" said D'Arcy, with a deep sigh. "But still, the difference is not so vewy gweat, is it, Blake? Only three years."

"Of course not," said Blake, winking at the astounded Herries. "That's nothing at all. Why, she'll only be fifty when you are forty-seven."

D'Arcy shuddered. It was evidently painful to him to picture his divinity as ever being fifty at all.

"D-don't talk like that, Blake. It's howwid!"

"Well, she will be fifty if she lives long enough," persisted Blake. "You don't want her to die young, do you, D'Arcy? Don't be hard-hearted."

"Of course I don't," said Gussy. "But—but never mind that. Blake, old chap, I—I—"

"I know all about it," said Blake comfortingly. "I've been there myself."

"You—you understand. You see, Blake, she's such a wipping girl," said D'Arcy shyly. "She takes such a deep interest in cwicket and football."

Blake laughed.

"Exactly. She's simply stunning; and I'd punch the head of anybody who said she wasn't."

"And she gave me a lift to-day, when I was lookin' such a feahful object," said D'Arcy. "I weally owe my wescue fwom those feahful wuffians to her, you know."

"I'm not surprised, Gussy," said Blake. "I ought to have guessed this before. I'm not a bit surprised, because—"

"Because she's such a wippin' girl."

"No; because you're such a howling ass," said Blake politely. "My hat, D'Arcy in love! Oh, my only maiden aunt Maria Jane Jemima, I shall never get over this!"

And Blake sat down in a chair and yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries. "So that's the secret, is it? Oh, Gussy, Gussy, you'll be the death of me yet! I know you will."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell at the open doorway, and Figgins looked into the study. "Gussy, how could you? Oh, Gussy!"

The three juniors shrieked in chorus.

D'Arcy looked from one to another. He seemed undecided which one of them to go for.

"Excuse me," said Figgins, wiping away his tears—"excuse me, chaps." He laid a cardboard box on the table. "I was coming in, and I couldn't help hearing. I came to return Gussy his property. He is welcome to it. We thought it was a feed when we raided it; but we've got no use for a bouquet. My hat—ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy jumped up and seized the box. He opened it to assure himself that his treasure was all right, and gave an exclamation of relief at the sight of the undamaged flowers.

"This is vewy decent of you, Figgins," he exclaimed. "I can forgive your wude and beastly wemarks if you will kindly clear out at once."

"I'll clear out," gurgled Figgins. "This is too good to keep. Kerr and Wynn will have a fit when I tell them. My only pyjama hat! Oh, dear, you'll kill me, Gussy!"

And Figgins staggered away almost helplessly.

"Don't you dare to say a word!" shouted D'Arcy, running to the door. "Figgins, I will give you a feahful thwashin'! Figgins—Figgy, old man—Figgy—"

But Figgins was gone. The news, as he said, was too good to keep, and it would probably console the Co. for the loss of the feed. D'Arcy in love was better than a feed any day.

D'Arcy turned back wrathfully into the study. Blake and Herries were still shrieking themselves into hysterics.

"If you chaps can't be quiet," said D'Arcy, "you'd bettah get out of this study. I've got to write a note to send with these flowahs. Get out!"

Blake put his arm round Herries' neck.

"Come along, Herry, old man," he sobbed. "Hold me up, or I know I shall collapse. Come along; and let's explain to Tom Merry that we've discovered the horrible mystery. Oh, my only hat! Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he! Gerrooh!"

Blake and Herries staggered out of No. 6. But Arthur Augustus soon forgot them and their ribald merriment. He was busy with pen and paper composing a note to put with the bouquet when he left it for Miss Courtney.

D'Arcy was in deadly earnest. He was always in earnest when he got an idea firmly into his head; and now he was desperately in love, and no mistake about it.

He wrote a note, and then another, and then another, tearing them up in turn, dissatisfied with all of them, until he made the alarming discovery that he had reached the end of the common stock of notepaper kept in the study. He had only one sheet left, and it was now or never. So he stopped writing and tearing up, and began to gnaw the handle of his pen by way of a change.

"From a humble adorer"—"From one who worships the ground you tread on"—"From one who lives only in your eyes"—these, and many more to the same effect, D'Arcy had written and rejected, dissatisfied with each in turn.

He wanted to show his adoration, yet he had the natural shrinking of a delicate-minded lad from seeming anything like forward. What was he to write? Time was passing, and ere long the Fourth Form would be marshalled into the dormitory, and the chance would be gone. It seemed like impertinence for a form-master to interfere with a lovelorn Romeo, but Mr. Lathom would not understand.

D'Arcy dipped the pen in the ink at last, and wrote "From a humble Friend." That seemed all right, and did not hint of boldness. It was the last sheet of paper, so it had to do. He carefully folded the sheet and concealed it in the bouquet.

The question now arose how to get the gift to the lady of his heart. It was impossible to march up to the Principal's house bouquet in hand. One roar of laughter from all who saw him

NEXT  
THURSDAY:

## "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.



would be the result of any move like that. The bouquet must be conveyed secretly to its destination.

"Ah, I have it!" murmured D'Arcy. "I will place it on the window-sill of her room, and she will find it in the morning."

It was a bright idea. He had already discovered which was Miss Courtney's room in the Principal's house. The window was on the second-floor, and it was an old-fashioned casement, deep-set in the thick stone wall, with ivy hanging clustering round it. The sill was long and broad. It would be easy to climb the ivy and place the bouquet there, and it would be quite sheltered from the rain and weather. Then Miss Courtney would be bound to find it in the morning.

No sooner thought of than done. D'Arcy put a ball of string in his pocket, picked up the cardboard box, and sallied out into the quadrangle. The mists were thicker now, and the rain coming down in a steady drizzle. Little did Arthur Augustus care for that.

He was quickly standing under Miss Courtney's window. To his great relief, it was dark. Had there been a light in the window, indicating the presence of the fair one, D'Arcy's shyness would have overcome him, and he would have fled to devise a new plan. But the window was dark. Miss Courtney was evidently still downstairs with her aunt and uncle.

D'Arcy set down the box, and attached the end of the string to it. Then he climbed the ivy.

The ivy was thick and strong, and the actual climbing was not difficult. But every shake of it brought a shower of water upon Augustus. He was hardy in the cause of love, but the water ran up his sleeves, and down the back of his neck, and soaked through his waistcoat. He was gasping and shivering by the time he lodged a leg on the wide stone sill, but he was still undaunted.

He had brought up the loose end of the string in his teeth. Now he drew the box carefully up by the string, and opened it, and took out the bouquet. He placed it, with that tender note still hidden in it, close to the window, and then dropped the box to the ground again. He followed it more slowly down the ivy.

The wind howled among the leafless elms, and the rain dashed in gusts upon Arthur Augustus. But he did not feel it; he was elated and happy. He picked up the box, and walked away like one treading on air. As he entered the School House he encountered Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, who was speaking to the house-master. Both stared in amazement at D'Arcy, who coloured and tried to slip past, but was instantly called back.

"What does this mean, D'Arcy?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, peering at Arthur Augustus through his spectacles. "Bless me, you are quite wet!"

"You are wet through," said Mr. Railton severely. "It is very foolish of you to go out into the rain, D'Arcy. Go to bed at once! Get those clothes off without delay!"

"Yes, sir," said D'Arcy.

And he scuttled off, glad to escape questioning.

Mr. Railton looked after him, pursing his lips. He had noticed D'Arcy several times that day, and he did not quite understand him.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Joke of the Season.

TOM MERRY gave a sudden jump. He was writing at the time, and his jump scattered an assortment of blots, large and small, over the sheet, and, naturally, Tom was wrathful. It was the sudden entry of Blake and Herries into the study that had made him jump; and Manners and Lowther jumped too. They stared at the chums of the Fourth in amazement and exasperation.

Blake and Herries seemed to have taken sudden leave of their senses. They had staggered into the study clasping each other round the neck, and now they were standing unsteadily, shrieking with hysterical laughter, still supporting each other.

Tom Merry reached for a ruler.

"You howling asses," he exclaimed—"you—you blessed lunatics, look what you've made me do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've spoiled my Latin exercise."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"He, he, he!"

"Fire 'em out!" exclaimed Manners, getting exasperated. "This isn't a place for silly geese to come and cackle in."

"That's it!" said Lowther. "Come on, and wipe up the passage with their hungry bones, as Shakespeare says. I'll—"

"Pax," giggled Blake—"oh, pax—pax, it's the joke of the season!"

"The creamiest joke of the giddy season!" gasped Herries.

"What is it, then?" demanded Tom Merry. "Something up against the New House?"

"Oh, no. Ha, ha, ha! It's Gussy—the one and only, the inimitable Gussy!" And Blake went off into a fresh roar of laughter.

Tom Merry looked interested.

"Have you found out the secret?" he asked. "Do you know what it was that was weighing on his infant mind?"

"Yes—ha, ha, ha!—rather!"

"Then expound!" exclaimed Tom. "Can't you see we're curious? What's the giddy secret? Has Gussy committed a murder, or bigamy, or what?"

"No; worse than that! He's—he's—he's—ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry rushed at Blake, and pinned him against the wall. Blake was too weak with merriment to resist.

"Now, you bouncer," said Tom Merry determinedly, "you'll explain; or I'll bang your silly cocoon against the wall. Now, sharp!"

"Ha, ha! Hold on! Gussy is—is— Ha, ha, ha!"

Biff! Blake's head went against the wall with a bump. Tom Merry was true to his word.

"Hold on!" yelled Blake. "I'll tell you! Gussy is in love!"

Tom Merry released him in sheer astonishment.

"He's in what?"

"Love! L-O-V-E!—love," said Blake. "It's a giddy fact!"

"Didn't I say so?" exclaimed Manners triumphantly. "I knew it! At least, it crossed my mind. I said so this afternoon when he was going to meet the train."

"So you did," said Monty Lowther. "But—but—but is this a joke, Blake?"

"Yes; the biggest joke of the season."

"I mean, is it a fact—honour bright?"

"Yes, honour bright," giggled Blake. "I know Gussy will be the death of me yet! Falling in love is his latest departure. He's got it bad!"

"Fearfully bad!" sobbed Herries. "He's been and broken bounds to fetch a double-sized bouquet from the florist's in the village, and he's going to present it—ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three went into a roar. They laughed till the tears ran down their faces. Fellows came and looked into the study to learn what the laughing was about. Gore was the first to arrive.

"Hallo! Anything funny here?" he asked, putting his head into the study.

"Yes, now you've come," said Tom Merry.

"I say, what's the joke?"

Herries was about to burst out with it, when Blake kicked him. It had occurred to him that it would not be fair on Gussy to let it go too far. Herries understood.

"Oh, come, out with it!" said Gore. "Have you got a new wheeze on, Tom Merry?"

"Yes," said Tom. "I was wondering whether I could catch anybody standing at the door with ink from this squirt. Stand still, and—"

The door slammed, and Gore was gone.

"Time we went," said Blake. "Keep the secret, you chaps. We had to tell somebody, you know; but we mustn't make it the talk of the house, or Gussy will be chipped to death."

Tom Merry nodded.

"No, we'll keep it dark," he said. "Besides, it wouldn't be nice for Miss Courtney to have that rot chattered about connected with her name. Gussy is a good little ass, but really—ha, ha, ha!—he ought to be in a museum."

"Or an asylum," said Monty Lowther.

"Don't let Figgins & Co. get on to it," said Manners. "They'll give Gussy a warm time if they do."

"Unluckily, they know already," said Blake. "Figgins came into the study while we were talking about it. Gussy was asking me whether I thought Miss Courtney very much older than he was. Oh, my hat!" And Blake shrieked again.

"Bed-time," said Herries. "Come along. We must look after Gussy."

And the chums of the Fourth quitted the study. They left the trio of the Shell cackling away as if they would never stop.

"All the same, I'm sorry for Gussy," said Tom Merry, calming down presently. "I was in love once—"

"Eh?" said Manners and Lowther together.

"It's a fact. I was twelve at the time, and I fell in love with the postmistress at Huckleberry Heath. She was twenty-seven. I was awfully in love for two days," said Tom Merry. "Therefore I can sympathise with Gussy. I can't help shrieking when I think of it; but perhaps we'd better not chip him too much. I only hope Figgins won't spread the tale all over the New House."

"He'll tell Kerr and Wynn," grinned Lowther; "but he may not let it go further. I—I wonder what Miss Courtney would say if she knew?"

"My hat! I wonder!"

And the Terrible Three returned to their work, but at intervals chuckles broke from them, showing that the lovelorn condition of Gussy was still uppermost in their minds. Blake and Herries looked in at No. 6 for Gussy, but he was not there. They found him in the dormitory. He was already in bed when they arrived there.

NEXT THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.



"Hallo! what does this mean?" asked Blake, stopping by his bedside to look at him.

D'Arcy was not asleep, for his eyes were wide open, but he seemed to be in a kind of dream. He turned his eyes slowly upon Blake.

"Is that you, Blake? I wish you had not disturbed me, dear boy; I was composin' a sonnet. Can you tell me a rhyme for eighteen?"

Blake wrinkled his brow thoughtfully.

"Skating," suggested Herries.

"Ha, ha! Will skating do, Gussy?"

"No," said D'Arcy scornfully; "skatin' will not do. Pway do not disturb me."

"But what do you mean by sloping off to bed so early?"

"I got wet puttin' the bouquet on Miss Courtney's window-sill," explained D'Arcy. "Mr. Waitton sent me up to bed. He—pway do not make those sounds of vulgah mewwiment, Blake. You offend me; you do, weally."

Blake and Herries went to bed. Blake felt that he would have genuine hysterics if he talked to Arthur Augustus any more that night.

Hysterics seemed the order of the day among the acquaintances of Arthur Augustus. Figgins, after the discovery he had made in No. 6, had returned to the New House in a state bordering on lunacy. He came into the study where Kerr and Wynn were doing their prep., rather late, and sank down in a chair, gasping. The Co. jumped up at once.

"What's the matter, Figgy?" asked Kerr. "Anything happened over in the School House? Why, the beggar's laughing! What's the joke?"

It was some time before Figgins could tell them. When the truth dawned upon the Co., they simply shrieked.

"So that's Gussy's latest," gurgled Kerr. "Oh, dear! And—and he's going to present that bouquet to the doctor's niece?"

"I suppose he'll send it to her, with a little note," said Figgins. "It's too funny for words, but we'll keep the the joke to ourselves, kids. No good making it the talk of the house. Can't be too careful—where there's a lady concerned."

"That's right enough, Figgy," said Kerr thoughtfully. "But there's no reason why we shouldn't screw a little fun out of it for ourselves, is there?"

"None at all," said Figgins. "I'm on, if you've thought of a wheeze."

"Well, if Gussy sends Miss Courtney that bouquet, he won't be surprised to get a little note in return—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Asking him to keep an appointment, say, in the garden—"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"And—and you know I do impersonations pretty well, Figgy," said Kerr, who was the leading light of the New House Amateur Theatrical Society. "It will be after dark, and I don't see why I shouldn't meet Gussy and—"

Figgins and Fatty Wynn laid back in their chairs and yelled. "Is it a go?" grinned Kerr.

"Is it?" said Figgins. "Well, I should say so! Ha, ha, ha!"

And so the plot was plotted by Figgins & Co. Poor Gussy!

## CHAPTER 7.

### "Ich Liebe Dich!"

"DEAR me! What beautiful flowers!" Ethel Courtney was looking out of her window in the sunlight. A bright morning had dawned upon St. Jim's after the rain of the night. The bouquet, reposing on the window-sill, caught the girl's eye at once, and she picked it up in wonder.

"What beautiful flowers! How could they possibly have come there?"

She looked at them in admiration and wonder. Arthur Augustus's taste was good, and the bouquet was really a lovely one, and it had been sheltered from the weather under the stone arch of the window, and had not suffered much. As the girl turned it over in her hands, a note fell from the flowers.

She looked at it quickly. A blush came into her fair cheek for a moment.

"It cannot possibly be from—from Frank!"

Fortunately D'Arcy was not near to hear the name of a rival on those fair lips. The girl read the note, and her amazement increased: "From a Humble Friend!"

"Dear me! I don't understand this at all," Miss Courtney murmured to herself. "I must speak to uncle about it."

She left the window, taking the flowers with her. She did not guess that at a distance, half-hidden by an elm, an eager youth was watching the window. It was Arthur Augustus, and he heaved a deep sigh as the girl took the flowers away. His gift had been accepted!

D'Arcy would have gazed up at the stars had there been any

visible, like a true lover; but unfortunately it was broad daylight. So he sighed, and sighed again, and then went into the School House for breakfast.

Miss Courtney was carrying the bouquet in her hand when she came down to breakfast. Dr. Holmes looked at it in surprise.

"What lovely flowers!" he remarked.

"Are they not?" said Ethel. "And I found them on my window-sill."

"You found them where?" asked the Head of St. Jim's, in amazement.

The girl laughed.

"On my window-sill, with this note attached."

Dr. Holmes adjusted his pince-nez and read the note.

"Dear me! An act of extreme politeness on the part of one of the boys, I suppose," he remarked. "A token of welcome to the school, Ethel."

"And a very graceful one," said Miss Courtney. "I am very pleased."

Those words would have made D'Arcy happy if he could only have heard them. As a matter of fact, he was not very happy at that moment. Blake and Herries and the Terrible Three met him as he came in to breakfast, and Blake slapped him on the shoulder.

"I say, what do you mean by slithering off before any of us were up?" he demanded. "Thought you had taken to sleep-walking, or something?"

"Don't be so extremely wuff, Blake," remonstrated Arthur Augustus. "You administah a shock to my beastly system, you know, with those beastly thumps. I have been out."

"Your nose is very red," said Blake mercilessly. "I heard you sneezing in the night. You've caught cold."

"That is of no consequence."

"Isn't it? You'll spread it through the study," said Blake. "Look here, you'd better go to Study X and chum in with Tom Merry till your cold is gone."

"Not much," said Tom Merry.

"Now, don't be selfish, Merry. You know it would be beastly uncomfortable if I caught Gussy's cold," said Blake.

"I weally haven't a cold," said D'Arcy. "I got wathah wet last night, that was all. I am weally all right."

D'Arcy only nibbled at his breakfast. Tom Merry looked across at him from the Shell table, and noted how little he ate.

"He's got it bad, Monty," Tom Merry remarked. "He's only eaten half a slice, and now he's mooning again. Poor old Gussy!"

"Silly young ass!" said Lowther.

"Oh, I don't know. What's the odds so long as you're happy? I suppose he's happy," said Tom Merry sagely. "I sympathise with Gussy."

Perhaps Arthur Augustus scented out Tom Merry's sympathy. After the first lesson that morning he ran Tom Merry down in the hall, with an expression of earnestness upon his face which showed that he had something serious to say.

"Stop a minute, pway, Tom Mewwy. I should like to speak to you, if you're not in a huwwy," said Arthur Augustus diffidently.

"Certainly," said Tom; "I've five minutes to spare, if you like."

"Thank you, Mewwy—I—I—" D'Arcy coloured and paused. He looked round nervously to make sure that no one was within hearing, as if he were about to impart some secret of fearful importance. Tom Merry suppressed a smile.

"Go on, Gussy! What's the row?" he asked.

"Mewwy, you are a decent chap—I always liked you," said D'Arcy, hesitatingly.

"Thank you," said Tom, demurely; "I'm very lovable, I believe. I am very fond of myself, in fact. Go on."

"Don't wot, Mewwy. This is a sewious mattah. I—I am goin' to tell you a gweat secwet, because—because I want you to help me."

"Command me," said Tom Merry, as grave as a judge.

"I—I—I—I—I—I—" said Arthur Augustus, lucidly.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I'm afraid I don't quite follow," he said. "Say that again, Gussy."

"I—I—I'm in love, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, turning scarlet.

"That's all right," said Tom, comfortingly, "I've been there myself. I had a desperate love affair when I was twelve, and—"

"Oh, pway be sewious. I am confidin' to you," said D'Arcy, "because Blake and Hewwies are so wuff, and lackin' in the finer sensibilities."

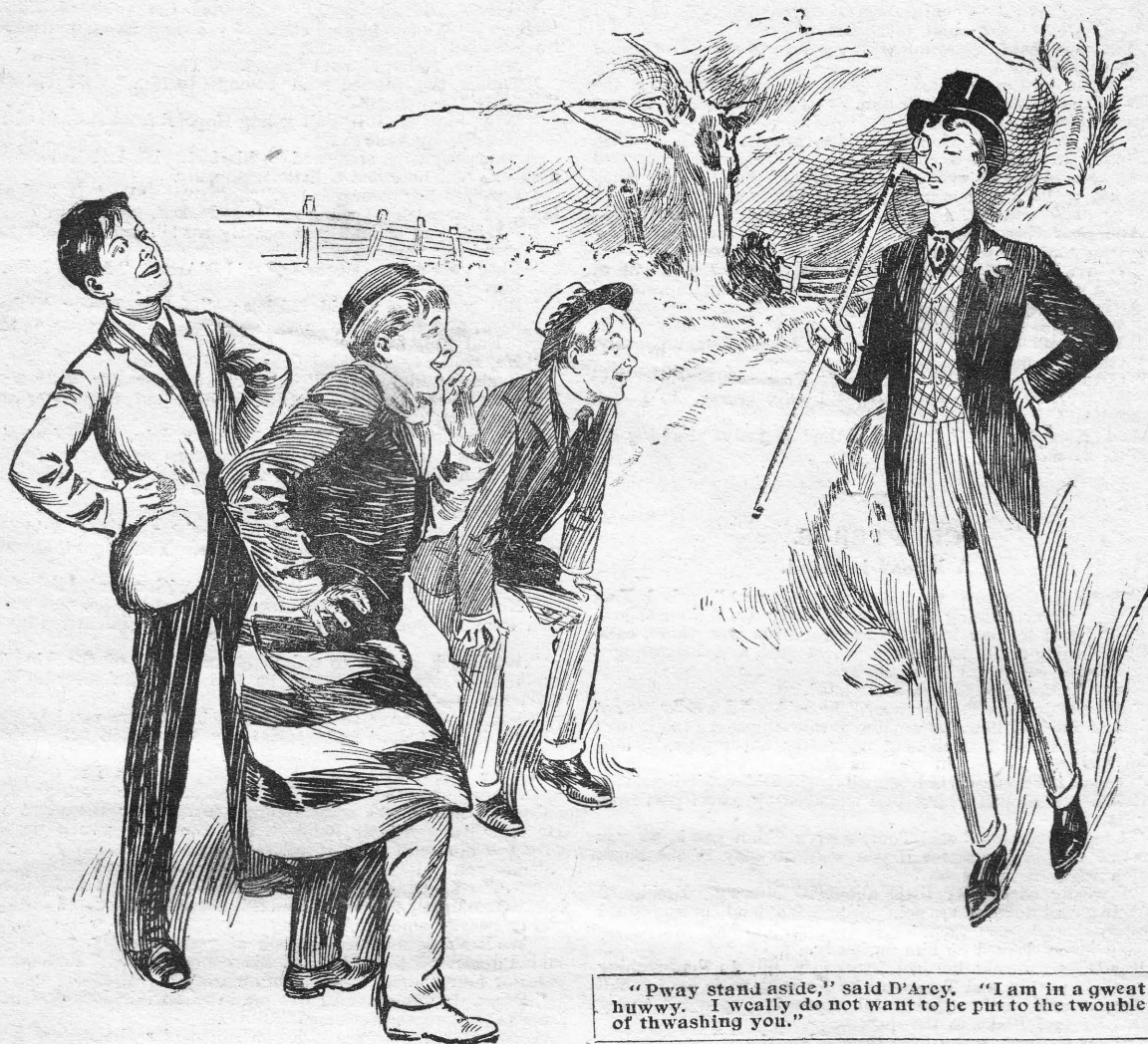
Tom Merry made a profound bow.

"That's nice of you, D'Arcy. I've got lots of the finer sensibilities; I've got 'em by the bushel. You can rely upon me."

"Will you help me, Mewwy?"

"What can I do? You don't want me to help you carry





"Pway stand aside," said D'Arcy. "I am in a gweat huwwy. I wccally do not want to be put to the twouble of thwashing you."

off the fair dame, like young Lochinvar, do you? But first of all, who is it? Mary the housemaid?"

D'Arcy gave him a reproachful look.

Tom Merry's heart softened: it was usually softened very easily. He became grave, and gave D'Arcy a gentle tap on the shoulder.

"Excuse my little jokes, old chap. That's all right. I know whom you mean, and she's a stunning girl, but—but you're a little ass, you know."

"I know I am," said poor D'Arcy, "I know I am, Tom Mewwy, but I—I can't help it. Aftah all, thwee years is not much, and she's not so much oldah than I am."

"That's so," said Tom Merry, trying to keep grave. "But what can I do for you, Gussy?"

"I—I want to send her a note."

"A note! You can't—you mustn't—you——"

"Then you won't take it for me?"

Tom Merry gave a jump.

"Take her a note from you! My hat! You must be off your rocker!"

"I am not off my wockah," said D'Arcy. "If you wufuse to assist me in this mattah, I must do without it, that's all. Oh, Tom Merry, if you only knew——"

"I do know," said Tom Merry: "Kids of your age"—Tom Merry spoke as if he had himself reached the honoured age of Methusaleh—"Kids of your age often suffer like this, and it's been known to last as long as a week——"

"A week! Ah, I shall adore her for ever and a day!" murmured D'Arcy.

"My hat! If you're going to talk poetry I'm done," said Tom Merry. "About that note; I think you're an ass, but if you've made up your mind——"

"I have made up my mind," said Arthur Augustus. "I am not the fellah to chop and change, Tom Mewwy. My fate is fixed for the west of my life——"

"Rats! I mean I'll speak to you about it after lessons. I must buzz off now, or Linton will be on my track."

And Tom Merry buzzed off. He left Arthur Augustus dreaming and sighing, and he continued to do so until Blake, who had been searching for him, seized him and marched him off to the class-room. Herr Schneider was taking the Fourth Form in German, and he looked at the two as they came in last, but made no remark.

D'Arcy was very inattentive during the lesson. That was undeniable, and the German master, who did not know the cause of it, was annoyed. He was down upon the swell of the School House several times, but D'Arcy hardly noticed it. Presently the class were told to write out the conjugation of a difficult verb, and there was a silence and a scratching of pens and wrinkling of youthful brows. D'Arcy was busy writing, and the German master's eye was upon him.

"Gif me your baper, ain't it, Blake," said Herr Schneider. Blake handed in his paper, and the German master glanced over it.

"Ich werde gelobt, I am praised, du wirst gelobt, er wird gelobt. Tat is goot. Gif me your baper, D'Arcy."

D'Arcy seemed to wake up out of a dream.

"I beg your pardon, sir, did you speak to me?"

"Ja, mein poy," exclaimed Herr Schneider, angrily, "I did speak to you, ain't it. I say gif me your exercise after."

"I—I—I——"

"Gif me tat baber, at vunce, after."

Arthur Augustus, blushing crimson, handed over the sheet. The German master looked at it, and adjusted his spectacles, and looked at it again.

"Mein Gott!" he ejaculated. "Vat is all tat after pefore?"

For this is what the absent-minded Gussy had written:

"Ich liebe dich (I love you), Ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich, ich liebe dich," and so on to the end of the page.

"Ich liebe dich," said Herr Schneider aloud, glaring at

**NEXT THURSDAY:**

**"TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."**

**Special Extra Long, Complete Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



D'Arcy. "Is tat te conjugation of te passive verb tat I gif you, D'Arcy? Vat does tat mean pefore?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Figgins to Kerr, "Gussy has done it this time."

"If you please, sir," said D'Arcy, as red as fire, with the eyes of the whole class upon him. "If you please, I—I—was absent-minded, and I—I—"

"Fery goot," said Herr Schneider, grimly, "Den you vill write out te whole of te conjugations of six German verbs and bring tem to me tis evening, D'Arcy, vich vill perhaps teach you not to be absent-minded in class pefore again after. Ve vill go on."

And poor Gussy, crushed more by the discovery than by the heavy imposition, sat looking flushed and woeful.

"I say, Gussy," exclaimed Kerr, as the class filed out at last, "I've got something to say to you; something important."

Arthur Augustus obligingly stopped.

"What is it?" he asked, as Kerr came mysteriously closer.

"You won't let it go any further?" asked Kerr, anxiously.

"Certainly not, deah boy."

"Come nearer and I'll whisper." Kerr put his lips close to D'Arcy's ear and whispered, "I say, Gussy, I—I—I—Ich liebe dich."

And Kerr darted off, leaving Arthur Augustus standing the picture of wrath.

**CHAPTER 8.**

**A Friend in Need.**

COMING down to the footer, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, passing the door of Study No. 6 after school, and looking in. Arthur Augustus was there, carefully polishing a silk hat with a velvet pad, and bestowing a really loving care upon his headgear.

Gussy looked up and shook his head.

"No, not to-day, Tom Mewwy," he said. "I weally cannot think of football now. I am too busily engaged othahwise."

"Engaged how? Polishing a beasty old topper," said Tom Merry.

"This is not a beasty old toppah," said D'Arcy, indignantly. "It is a new toppah I have just weceived by parcel post from my hattah."

"I beg tis pardon," said Tom Merry; "but you know you mustn't neglect the footer if you want to play in the house match when it comes off."

"I weally care vewy little about it, Mewwy. Besides, I have to go out now. I am goin' ovah to Wayland, on important business."

Tom Merry looked at him curiously.

But D'Arcy's attention had returned wholly to the brushing of the silk topper, and Tom went on his way, with the football under his arm, and a thoughtful expression upon his sunny face. He met Blake in the quad.

"What is Gussy going over to Wayland for?" he asked.

"Blessed if I know," said Blake. "He told me he was going, that's all. Perhaps it's for another bouquet, the young ass. Come down to the footer."

They went down to the footer. A little later they saw D'Arcy wheeling his bicycle down to the gates. He was in a Norfolk jacket and knickers and cap, and looked as neat as a new pin, and there was a rose in his button-hole.

D'Arcy mounted at the gate, and, careless of the eyes upon him, pedalled away up the road, and took the turning which led to Wayland. Wayland was the nearest town to St. Jim's, and offered more facilities for shopping than the village of Rylcombe. The dusk was falling thickly when D'Arcy jumped off his bike outside a large stationer's shop in Wayland, and entered it. He was about half-an-hour in the stationer's shop, and when he came out he had a packet in his hand, which he tied to his handle-bars.

It was dark now, and D'Arcy lighted up before he mounted his machine. Then he rode out of Wayland, and took the dusky road home to St. Jim's.

It was a dull November night, with a gathering mist over the fields. Arthur Augustus, satisfied with his purchase, whatever it was, pedalled on cheerfully enough. Naturally, as he rode through the gloom he was thinking more about a certain pair of blue eyes than about the road he was travelling, and, equally naturally, he came to grief.

There was a sudden yell in advance of him. D'Arcy, dreaming in the saddle, had not noticed that there were pedestrians on the road before him, and they, having their backs to him, had not observed his light. He overtook them and ran right into three walkers, and a chorus of angry exclamations followed.

D'Arcy's machine twisted round, and the swell of St. Jim's tumbled off, and sat in a puddle. The bicycle lay down beside him, with the front wheel turned inwards. Three wrathful forms picked themselves up from the mud and surrounded D'Arcy, and, to his horror, he recognised their voices.

"What's all this 'ere?" demanded the voice of Master Pilcher. "What a blessed cheek to run right into a gentleman from behind without ringing a blessed bell."

"My eye, rather!" said Craggs. "The cheek of it!"

"Thinks the blessed road belongs to him," said Grimes.

"Who is the josser?"

"Why, bless me if it ain't young Hopeful from the school!"

"D'Arcy, by George!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet. He had had rather a shock, and he stood a little unsteadily.

"I weally beg your pardon," he exclaimed. "It was my fault. I should have wung my beasty bell, you know."

"I think you should, you beasty ass!" was Pilcher's uncompromising reply.

"I beg your pardon sincerely," said D'Arcy. "I hope I have not hurt you."

"But you have," said Pilcher; "You've nearly broken my back, and spoiled my coat, which cost five guineas at my West End tailor's."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Craggs and Grimes.

"I am weally sowwy," said D'Arcy, greatly distressed. "It was all my fault. I shall be quite willin' to pay for any damage done."

"Who wants your tin?" said Pilcher rudely. "We're goin' to give you a lesson. Mates, it's dangerous for a cyclist to ride about with his eyes shut, and run into harmless pedestrians, ain't it?"

"Shocking!" said Grimes.

"For his own sake he must be taught a lesson," said the generous Pilcher. "We'll teach him one. You've got that cord, ain't you, Craggy?"

"Yes. What the dickens do you want with a cord, Pilcher?"

"Nothing, only to tie this merchant to his bike, and leave him here till somebody comes along," said Pilcher, with a chuckle.

"Weally, I wufuse to submit to anythin' of the kind!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I shall be late for callin' over at the coll., and—"

"You should have thought of that before you ran into me, dislocated my spine and spoiled my five-guinea coat," said Pilcher. "Shove him on the jigger, kids."

Arthur Augustus struggled in vain. He was forced to sit upon the overturned bicycle in the bank by the roadside, and his wrists and ankles were securely fastened to the machine. He remained perfectly helpless, and the three young rascals surveyed him with grins of satisfaction.

"Are you quite comfortable, Adolphus?" asked Pilcher.

"No," said D'Arcy, "I am not at all comfy. I insist upon bein' immediately released from this absurd position. I weward you as beasty wuffians."

"We'll come and have a look at you presently, perhaps," said Pilcher, with a wink at his companions. "Perhaps in three or four hours. Come along, mates!"

"Pway, do not go and leave me in this widiculous position. I appeal to you as gentlemen."

Apparently they were not gentlemen, for the appeal was wasted. Pilcher & Co. disappeared into the November mist.

"We'll leave him there for ten minutes or so!" murmured Pilcher. "That will be enough to give him a lesson."

And Grimes and Craggs chuckled assent.

D'Arcy, ignorant of the real intentions of the village jokers, fully believed that he was abandoned to the chance of someone passing. It was cold and damp, and the time was passing, and the fear of being locked out at St. Jim's worried him.

"My word!" murmured D'Arcy. "Whatever shall I do? I cannot release myself, and those fearful wuffians are now gone. It is a beasty and weally widiculous position. I wish someone would pass."

He wriggled in his bonds in vain. He hurt himself considerably in the attempt to get loose, and had to give it up. Then he shouted for help. But the road was a lonely one, and no one was likely to hear.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

The sound of hoof-strokes on the hard road was a welcome one to D'Arcy's ears. A horseman was coming along at a trot from the direction of Wayland. D'Arcy shouted again, with renewed energy.

A dim form loomed up in the gloom. A horseman came to a halt in the road, and peered towards the unhappy swell of St. Jim's.

"Hallo! Who's that? Somebody hurt?"

It was a strong and pleasant young voice. The horseman jumped to the ground and came towards D'Arcy.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pway release me, my dear sir! I have been tied up to my bicycle by a set of howwid wuffians."

"By jove!" said the young man, bending over D'Arcy. "You are in a fix, and no mistake. I'll have you out of that in a jiffy."

And he opened a pocket-knife.

"Thank you vewy much," said Arthur Augustus. "You are



weally a fwiend in need. I am vewy gwateful for your assist-  
ance."

He staggered up as the young man severed his bonds. The stranger lent him a helping hand, and then lifted up his bike for him. He looked at D'Arcy curiously in the light of the lamp.

"Haven't I seen you before somewhere?" he asked. "I think you belong to St. Jim's."

"Yaas, wathah! Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, sir."

"Ah, I thought so! I remember seeing you when I called upon Dr. Holmes last night," said the young man. "I dare say you've heard my name—Frank Lorraine."

"Captain Lorraine!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "Yaas, I remember your featuhs now, my dear sir. How vewvy fortunate that you happened to be passin' on this woad, Captain Lorraine."

The young man laughed.  
"Yes, wasn't it? And as I happen to be going to the school, I shall be able to keep with you in case you should fall in with those fearful ruffians again."

"Yaas, wathah! You are weally vewy kind, sir."  
"Not at all. Jump on your machine."

The machine had not been damaged. D'Arcy mounted, and Captain Lorraine jumped into the saddle. A short distance down the road they passed the village trio, who were just thinking of returning.

"Hallo, that merchant's got loose," said Pilcher, as the cyclist and the horseman passed. "Well, he's had his lesson! I hope it will do him good."

"You were goin' to the school, Captain Lorraine?" D'Arcy remarked presently, wondering what the young man was going to St. Jim's for.

"Yes, to see the—the doctor," said Lorraine smiling. "I believe there has been a new arrival at the school, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, wathah! You mean Miss Courtney?"

"Yes. Ah, here we are at St. Jim's."

The school loomed up from the mist. They parted, with a hearty handshake from the captain, and D'Arcy wheeled his bicycle away. He put it up, and took the precious packet from the handle-bars, and went up into Study No. 6.

## CHAPTER 9.

### The Rendezvous!

**T**OM MERRY was in No. 6 having tea with Blake and Herries, when Arthur Augustus came in. The three of them looked round at the swell of St. Jim's, as he laid down the packet he had brought home with him.

"Hallo, what have you got there, Gussy?" asked Tom. "What about that note? I came in to see you about it, and I've stopped to tea."

"I am goin' to write it," said Arthur Augustus. "I have been to Wayland to fetch the necessary matewials."

"The what?" asked Tom Merry.

D'Arcy opened the packet. The juniors looked in amazed admiration at the contents as they were turned out. Beautiful rose-coloured note-paper, with gilt edges and sweetly-scented, and delicate little envelopes that seemed specially designed to enclose billets-doux.

"My aunt!" said Tom Merry. "Gussy is doing this thing in style! Gussy! Gussy! Blake, I forbid you to laugh."

"I've swallowed something!" said Blake, coughing. "Gussy, I commend your taste! Excuse my choking. I really can't help it."

"I regard you as wude," said D'Arcy. "It is weally too bad to be compelled to share my quartahs with you two wuff boundahs. I ought to have a study to myself."

"You ought to have a padded cell to yourself, you mean," said Herries.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Blake. "I forgot. There's a note for you, Gussy."

D'Arcy gave a jump, and turned red and white.

"A note for me!" he exclaimed eagerly. "Where?"

Blake jerked his thumb towards the mantelpiece.

"I put it there. I found it on the table when I came in. It's on the mantelpiece, unless it's fallen into the fire, old fellow."

Arthur Augustus dashed towards the mantelpiece. Sure enough there was the note. It was a small envelope of a pale-blue colour, and D'Arcy knew that it was the stationery used by Mrs. Holmes. His heart beat fast.

The juniors were looking at him curiously. D'Arcy took the letter, and, unconscious of the gaze bent upon him, pressed it to his lips. Then he turned crimson and dashed out of the study with it in his hand.

Tom Merry gave a whistle.

"What's the matter now? Is he off his giddy onion?"

Blake chuckled. He understood.

"That note came from the Principal's house," he explained. "You can tell that by the envelope. I suppose it's an invitation to tea from Mrs. Holmes, but that young ass has jumped to the conclusion that it's from somebody else."

"My hat! Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Gussy!"

Heedless of comments, D'Arcy had rushed off with the precious note, to read it alone, far away from curious eyes and scoffing tongues. He dashed out into the quadrangle, but it was too dark to read the epistle there. He struck a match, and the wind blew it out. Then he got behind a corner of the gymnasium where he was sheltered from the wind, and struck another vesta, which burned this time.

In the glimmer of the match he read the superscription:

"A. A. D'Arcy, Esq."

He thrilled at the sight of it. It was not Mrs. Holmes's writing. The doctor's wife sometimes asked the juniors to tea on state occasions, and D'Arcy had several times been so honoured; but this was not a mere invitation to the doctor's tea-table. It was written upon Mrs. Holmes's stationery, and, therefore, came from the principal's house. From whom, if not from the adored one?

And it was not addressed to Master D'Arcy, either—"A. A. D'Arcy, Esq." Evidently the fair writer regarded him, not as a mere junior, but as a person quite grown up. D'Arcy was inclined to weep with joy, but he didn't. He opened the letter instead.

He struck another match. To his surprise the note inside was not of the same paper as the envelope. It was a line in pencil on ordinary cheap white paper. That was very curious, but, after all, the note might have been written in haste!

D'Arcy's eyes devoured the line. The match burned down to his fingers unnoticed.

"I shall be in the garden at eight o'clock near the fountain, Many thanks for the flowers."

There was no signature; but there was no doubt as to whom the letter had been written by. If the envelope were not enough to prove it, there were the thanks for the flowers.

"Oh, I am so happy!" murmured D'Arcy tremulously. "At eight o'clock! Then I have nearly half an hour to get ready. Dear Miss Courtney! How kind of her! She guessed whom the flowahs were from. She knows—she knows that I adosh her. She knows that I—ow! wow!"

The match had burnt down to his fingers, and D'Arcy gave a yelp of pain as he dropped it. He sucked his finger and thumb ruefully.

"How extwemely howwid!"

He placed the note in his waistcoat pocket, nearest his heart. Then he slowly took his way back to the School House, still sucking his fingers.

Loud voices and a trampling of feet were proceeding from Study No. 6 as the swell of the School House approached it. D'Arcy gave a sniff of disgust as he looked in and saw Tom Merry engaged in fencing with Blake, Herries acting as umpire.

"Got you!" yelled Blake, making a sudden dive at Tom Merry.

Tom darted backwards and parried the lunge, and came with a bump against D'Arcy as he entered the study.

"Hallo!" said Tom, looking round. "I didn't see you, Gussy."

"You are a clumsy ass!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally cannot stand this feahful wow in this study. Will you fellows go along to Tom Mewvy's study?"

"What for?" asked Blake. "Do you want the whole blessed room to yourself?"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway oblige me, deah boys."

"Oh, come along!" said Blake. "It's no good arguing with Gussy when he looks like a dying duck. Let's clear."

And the three juniors marched off to Tom Merry's study, leaving the swell of the School House in sole possession of No. 6.

Left alone, D'Arcy proceeded to cover the study with garments which he pulled out of various receptacles, and dressed himself with great care.

He would probably have spent a couple of hours upon that important matter, but he was afraid of hearing the clock strike, and he dared not. But he was really exquisitely dressed in the space of twenty minutes, with gleaming boots, nicely-creased trousers, polished silk hat, high collar, and gorgeous waistcoat, not forgetting the monocle.

"I weally think I look passable," murmured D'Arcy, surveying himself in the glass. "But oh, I am so unworthy of her! But then, every chap in the world is unworthy of her, as a mattah of fact, so I must not be discouraged."

He left the study, pulling on his gloves. He slipped out of the School House without attracting notice, and hurried towards the Doctor's garden.

The Doctor's garden was private ground. Some of the Sixth Form sometimes walked there, but the lower forms were barred. The place was really awfully select. But D'Arcy did not think of that as he opened the gate and went in.

The hour began to strike from the clock-tower. D'Arcy started and hastened his footsteps. It would be awful to be late for an appointment with a lady! He hurried on towards the fountain, and reached it ere the eighth stroke had boomed out from the tower.

He stopped at the fountain. The water was plashing in the basin. The place was gloomy and lonely. No one was in sight.



NEXT  
THURSDAY:

## "TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS."

Special Extra Long, Complete  
Story by MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Arthur Augustus breathed a sigh of relief. He was first on the spot—first to keep the appointment. That was something to be grateful for.

He waited patiently. There was a footstep on the gravel path. The gloom was thick, and, in spite of his eyeglass, D'Arcy could not see much. But he made out the sound of a skirt swishing on the gravel, and a female form loomed up before him.

"Miss Courtney!"

He murmured the words in a tone of ecstasy. The figure stopped, and a hand appeared from under the cloak, held out to shake. Arthur Augustus was bowing low over his silk hat. D'Arcy had hardly dared to hope for such an honour. He trembled with happiness as he clasped that gentle hand. Then he gave an involuntary start of amazement.

The hand had closed upon his with an iron grip.

Surely no girl, especially a girl like Miss Courtney, ever gripped a hand like that!

Arthur Augustus gave an involuntary wriggle.

There was the sound of a faint chuckle from the darkness. It reached the ears of the swell of the School House, and he gave a jump.

"There is—is—someone—"

"Oh, Gussy, Gussy!" murmured the cloaked figure.

D'Arcy strove to free his hand.

"You—you are not Miss Courtney! Go away at once!"

"Oh, Gussy, Gussy!"

"I beg of you to welease my hand. Pway go at once, who-evah you are! This is a vewy w'ong deception, you wude person. Pway welease me."

"Oh, Gussy, Gussy!"

"I insist upon bein' immediately weleased!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly, as the iron grip on his hand tightened, in spite of his efforts to release it. "Pway welease me, who-evah you are. You must go away at once."

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean, oh, Gussy, ich liebe dich!"

Arthur Augustus started violently.

"Who—who—who are you?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Invisible hands in the darkness laid hold of the swell of St. Jim's. He was lifted off his feet, and plumped down on the stone steps of the fountain. His silk hat was tilted over his eyes, and a wet hand smeared across his classic features. A chuckle floated back from the darkness, with a sound of retreating footsteps.

D'Arcy staggered to his feet.

He gazed wildly round him. Who was it that had met him there by the fountain, who had written that note? Evidently it was not Miss Courtney.

The truth rushed upon D'Arcy's mind that he had been done.

With feelings too deep for words, he set his silk hat straight, and made his way out of the garden. As he left it, three forms loomed indistinctly in the gloom near him. A voice came to his ears.

"You did that jolly well, Kerr!"

D'Arcy comprehended.

"Figgins & Co.," he murmured. "That—that girl was Kerr! The howwid, howwid boundahs! They must have put that note in my study! The beasts! They must have got an envelope from the Pwincipal's house somehow. The bwutes! That accounts for the paper bein' diffewent. The wotters! I will give Figgins a feahful thwashin' for this!"

Figgins & Co. had disappeared into the darkness. Arthur Augustus went on to the School House. He was in a wrathful and indignant mood, and his ruffled temper was not soothed by his reception in the house.

Gore met him as he went in, and stared at him, and uttered a yell of laughter.

D'Arcy gave him an indignant glare, and strode on. In the passage he met Mellish, who shrieked at the sight of him. Walsh looked out of his study and yelled.

Arthur Augustus was amazed.

It was not likely that the School House boys knew the joke Figgins & Co. had played on him. Why they screamed with laughter at the sight of him was past his comprehension.

He hurried into Study No. 6. It was empty, and he went on to Tom Merry's study to find his chums. The Terrible Three were all there, with Blake and Herries. They stared at D'Arcy as he entered, and a yell of laughter went up.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy glared at them in speechless indignation.

"Where have you been?" gasped Tom Merry. "What have you been doing?"

"Where did you get that face?" yelled Lowther.

"My face! What's the mattah with my face?" demanded D'Arcy, remembering the wet hand that had smeared across his features in the darkness of the garden.

"Ha, ha! Don't ask me! Look at it!"

Arthur Augustus rushed to the glass.

He gazed at his reflection with horror. His face presented a brilliant emerald appearance. The hand that had smeared over his countenance had evidently been full of green paint.

"Howwid! Dear me! What a beastly outrage!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed away to get the paint cleaned off, followed by a yell of laughter, and greeted in the same way by everyone he passed.

It was a long time before the green paint all came off his face, and when he was clean once more, his face presented a scrubbed and boiled appearance.

But to all the inquiries of his chums, D'Arcy refused a single word of explanation. He was not likely to tell the story of the rendezvous in the Doctor's garden, and the little joke of Figgins & Co.

### CHAPTER 10.

#### Tom Merry Takes a Message.

TOM MERRY came along the passage to Study No. 6, and looked in. It was the day after the misadventure of Arthur Augustus in the Doctor's garden, and morning lessons were over.

Arthur Augustus was alone in the study. Blake and Herries were out, and Gussy had the place to himself. He was seated at the table, his left elbow resting upon it, his chin supported by his hand.

The pen was in his right hand, and he was thoughtfully chewing the handle. On the table and on the floor were dozens of sheets of spoiled notepaper.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

Arthur Augustus looked up with a start.

"Aw! You startled me, Tom Mewwy," he said. "I—I was thinkin'."

"Have you had your dinner?"

"Dinner!" said D'Arcy vaguely. "N-no, I don't think so. No."

"That's why you're gnawing that pen-handle, I suppose? I'd prefer beef and potatoes myself," Tom Merry remarked. "However, everyone to his taste. Have you finished that note?"

"No, I have not quite finished it yet, Mewwy."

"If you take my advice you won't. It's a mug's idea," said Tom Merry, with his usual frankness. "If you've made up your mind, though, I'll take the note, as I said I would."

"That's vewy good of you, Mewwy. I have made up my mind, as I told you. I shall be extwemely obliged to you if you will take the note."

"Well, get it finished, then," said Tom Merry. "I'll have a go at this punching-ball while I'm waiting."

D'Arcy began to scribble, and Tom Merry began to punish the punching-ball, but in a few minutes the swell of the School House tore up another sheet, and looked at Tom Merry with a troubled expression.

"I say, Mewwy, would you mind keepin' quiet for a few minutes while I wite this lettah?" he asked.

"Oh, certainly!" said Tom, sitting down. "I'll whistle."

"Pway do not whistle. You will distwact my thoughts."

"Oh, go on, kid, and get finished, then!"

Tom resigned himself to his fate. Arthur Augustus went on writing, and Tom shifted from side to side as the minutes crawled by, but he did not speak.

Sheet after sheet joined those already on the floor.

Arthur Augustus had brought a goodly supply of stationery from Wayland, but he bade fair to get through it before he had written a note to his satisfaction.

At last, however, the letter was written, and D'Arcy, with a deep sigh, enclosed it in an envelope and sealed it.

Tom Merry jumped up with an exclamation of relief.

"Done at last! Thank goodness! You won't find me playing Mercury again in a hurry. Hand it over, Adolphus."

D'Arcy handed the letter to Tom Merry, gingerly, as if he were not quite willing to part with it after all.

"You'll take care to place it only in Miss Courtney's hands, Tom Mewwy?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, of course, I will. She always walks in the garden about this time, and I am sure of finding her there."

"Mind that no othah person sees you give her the lettah, won't you?"

"Of course. You can trust me, Gussy."

"Thank you, Mewwy," said Gussy, with a deep sigh. "I know I can. You are a true friend. But—but wait a minute," he added, as Tom Merry was leaving the study.

The hero of the Shell turned back inquiringly.

"Well, what's the trouble now?" he asked resignedly.

"I—I'm not quite satisfied with that lettah, on second thoughts," said D'Arcy hesitatingly. "I—I weally think I had bettah wite it ovah again. Wait while I—"

"Blessed if I do," said Tom Merry. "I've waited long enough, and you've written letters enough, too, I think. I'm off."

And Tom Merry left the study, and went down the stairs in a twinkling, by the simple expedient of sitting on the broad

ORDER  
NOW

THE GRAND DOUBLE NUMBER OF THE GEM.

NEXT THURSDAY.  
PRICE 1d.



banisters and sliding down. Arthur Augustus rushed into the passage after him, but he was gone.

"Tom Mewwy! Tom Mewwy! Pway bwing that back—dear me, he's gone! Well, I—I—suppose I could not weally have impoved upon it vewy much," murmured Arthur Augustus, as he returned into his study, and began to pick up his unsuccessful attempts. "It is so extremely difficult to know exactly what to say in such a case."\*

Tom Merry, with the note in his pocket, crossed the quadrangle. He slipped into the Doctor's garden without being observed, and looked round for Miss Courtney.

He caught sight of the girl's dress in the distance, and walked quickly up to her.

Tom Merry raised his cap.

"Please excuse me, Miss Courtney," he said. "I—I am not really allowed to come here, but I have a note for you."

Miss Courtney looked surprised.

"A note for me?" she said inquiringly. "Indeed!"

"Yes, and I think I am to wait for an answer."

Tom Merry handed the note to the girl, and then turned away his head, and seemed to be deeply interested in watching some pigeons at a distance. But he could not help keeping the corner of his eye, as it were, surreptitiously on Ethel Courtney's face.

The girl opened the letter with an expression of wonder. The delicate, rose-coloured paper and the gilt edges naturally excited her curiosity. But as her eyes dwelt upon the communication, wonder changed to absolute amazement.

The letter of the lovelorn swell of the School House ran as follows:

"Dear and Respected Miss Courtney!

"I feel that you will regard this letter, and the request I am about to make, as fearfully impertinent. Perhaps it is so. But, oh, dear Miss Courtney, if you knew how the writer of this humble letter worships the ground you tread on, you would forgive him for his presumption.

"I know you are older than I am. But since I have been in love I have felt ever so much older, and really, you do not look very old, dear Miss Courtney.

"Of course, I know I have no chance at present. But if you would only wait for me, I should be happy, and in a few years' time I shall be leaving Oxford, and then I can speak to your respected governor on the subject.

"Do not be angry. I cannot tell you how much I adore and respect you, dear Miss Courtney. If you would only consent to see me, I would try to do so. If not, pray forgive your humble worshipper,

"ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY."

Tom Merry, as we said, could not resist the temptation to keep the corner of his eye on Miss Courtney's face. That face was very sweet, but it was a very expressive one. Wonder and amazement gave way to another feeling; the dimples deepened, and the girl, in spite of herself, broke into a little musical laugh.

"Dear me!" murmured Miss Courtney. "How very surprising! I—I am very sorry!" She laughed again a little. "So you are to wait for an answer, Merry?"

"Yes, Miss Courtney," said Tom Merry demurely.

"Will you come back in a few minutes for the answer, Merry?"

"Certainly, Miss Courtney." And Tom raised his cap again and turned away. He had caught a glimpse of Captain Lorraine, and guessed how matters stood in that direction.

The captain came down the garden and joined Miss Courtney. He looked at her curiously, seeing at once that something had happened.

"What is the matter, Ethel?"

She gave him Arthur Augustus's note with a slight smile. The captain read it through with a puzzled look, and smiled too.

"Poor little chap! That note was written in deadly earnest, Ethel, and you must let the young beggar down lightly."

"I am glad you say so, Frank," said Miss Courtney. "That is what I was thinking myself. It is utterly absurd, but I would not hurt his feelings for worlds. I think I had better see him and speak to him."

Captain Lorraine nodded and strolled away. Tom Merry came up the path a few minutes later. The girl had made up her mind.

"Tell D'Arcy that I will see him," she said abruptly. "Tell him to come here, Merry, now. I want to speak to him seriously."

Tom Merry thought he understood, and he nodded.

"I'll give him your message, Miss Courtney."

And the hero of the Shell retired, and hurried back to the School House to deliver his message.

## CHAPTER 11.

### The End of the Romance.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS was waiting in Study No. 6 in feverish impatience.

He walked to and fro, thrusting his hands into his pockets and taking them out again, looking at himself in the glass, sitting down and getting up.

He gave an exclamation of relief as Tom Merry appeared in the doorway.

"Mewwy! What a feahful time you've been! Have you given her the note?"

"Yes, Gussy, I handed it over right enough."

"Vewy many thanks. What did she say? How did she look? Did she think it was a feahful cheek?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"She will see you if you go to the Doctor's garden," replied Tom.

"Honour bwing?" asked D'Arcy, made suspicious by his last night's adventure.

"Of course. You don't think I'd take you in, do you, Gussy? You'd better cut off at once, or you won't have time before lessons."

D'Arcy was feverishly polishing his silk hat.

"Do I—do I look all wight, Tom Mewwy?"

"Look all right? You look simply ripping," said the hero of the Shell, trying to keep grave, but almost failing. "Your necktie might be a little more to the right—just a trifle—that's perfect. There's a speck on your waistcoat—that's right, it's gone now. Gussy, old man, you look a regular cough-drop. Take my advice and cut off before your beauty fades."

"Thank you, Tom Mewwy, I will go at once. Oh, dear, there is no scent on my handkerchief. Give me that bottle—just a little. You—you ass, I didn't say empty the beastly bottle on it. That will do. I'll wun off now."

And Arthur Augustus ran off.

When he reached the gate giving admittance to the sacred domain, he halted, and his heart beat so fast that he could hardly go on. It was sheer nervousness.

To actually face Miss Courtney was a terrible strain on his courage. To write her a note was one thing—but to meet her! To face the clear glance of those calm blue eyes! D'Arcy felt his heart sink and sink, till it seemed to find a resting-place somewhere in the soles of his boots.

He felt strongly inclined to turn and bolt. But the lady was waiting for him—the beautiful Miss Courtney was actually waiting for him, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy! It was impossible not to keep the appointment.

D'Arcy opened the gate, and passed through. He halted in the cover of the evergreens to mop his brow, which was streaming with perspiration. It was a cold winter day, but D'Arcy's brow was wet as with the rain. He mopped it, and drew a deep breath. Then, taking his courage in both hands, as it were, he walked on.

"Master D'Arcy!"

That sweet voice—it went through him like an icicle! He dared not raise his eyes from the ground. His hand went mechanically to his hat, and he raised it and bowed his best bow, but his eyes simply could not rise to Miss Courtney's face. His complexion went red and white and red.

"I have been waiting for you."

D'Arcy stammered something unintelligible. He settled his hat on his head again, and tried to raise his eyes. But it was of no use; they were glued to the ground.

A smile glided over Miss Courtney's face. In his dismay and confusion D'Arcy looked very handsome and boyish, and she was sorry for him. He was so evidently in earnest, and at the same time was so evidently too young to understand.

"Won't you sit down?"

D'Arcy found his voice at last. He sat down limply upon the garden seat among the rhododendrons, and stole a glance at Miss Courtney.

"Th-th-th-thank you, Miss Courtney," he stammered.

The girl's face was very grave and kind now.

"You wrote me a note," she said. "You asked to see me. You had something to tell me."

Poor D'Arcy!

He had had wild ideas of telling Ethel Courtney all—of some romantic sort of a speech he would have made—but now that he was in her presence he could no more have made that speech than he could have flown. He murmured something unintelligible, and then his lips closed again.

"You said in your letter," Miss Courtney went on, "that you were"—she hesitated for a word—"that you were—were fond of me, D'Arcy."

"Oh, Miss Courtney!"

D'Arcy could not say anything but that, but there was a world of woe in his tone.

"My dear boy," said Miss Courtney—the word "boy" came like the blow of a dagger to the unfortunate swell of the School House—"My dear boy, I am very proud to—to have gained your regard. I hope you will always regard me with affection, as if I were your own sister."

D'Arcy seemed to swallow something.

That was not exactly what he wanted Miss Courtney to say.

"But as it is, D'Arcy, I am sure you will listen to what I am going to say, and try to do as I wish—"

"Anythin', Miss Courtney!" murmured D'Arcy.

"Then you will dismiss these foolish ideas completely from your mind—"



"Oh!"

"In a few weeks you will forget all about this matter——"

"I—I—I—promise to twy."

"Very well. That will do," said Miss Courtney. "I know I can rely upon your honour, D'Arcy, and I have your word now."

"Yaas, wathah, Miss Courtney, but—but—but——"

"But what, D'Arcy?"

"But—I sha'n't be a boy always, you know," blurted out D'Arcy, "and—and some day——"

"My dear lad, you must not think of such things. It is foolish, as I have told you; and it is really wrong, as I am engaged to Captain Lorraine."

The unfortunate Gussy gave a jump.

"En—en—en—g—gig—gig—gaged!" he stammered.

"Certainly, to Captain Lorraine, whom you know. You like him, I think."

"Yaas, wathah!" said poor D'Arcy. "He's an awfully decent chap. He got me out of a beastly fix the othah night. He's a vewy decent fellow."

"You will remember your promise, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, Miss Courtney," said D'Arcy humbly. Miss Courtney gave the swell of the School House her hand. He took it carefully, as if it had been some precious and fragile piece of porcelain.

"I—I believe I have been wathah an ass, Miss Courtney," said D'Arcy, in a low voice. "But—but I will wemembah my pwomise, and—and I shall always wegard you with the most pwofound wespect, Miss Courtney."

And D'Arcy went his way. He had had a great shock, but he was already recovering from it. He held his head very erect as he entered the School House. Tom Merry was in the study when he returned.

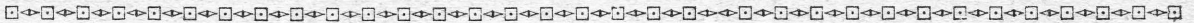
"I say, Mewwy," said D'Arcy nervously, "I—I am afraid my heart is bwoken, but—but isn't Miss Courtney weally a wippin' girl!"

"Righto," said Tom Merry. "She is!"

But D'Arcy's heart was not broken. Like most attacks of love at his age, this one was brief, and Miss Courtney's plain and kind speaking had helped the swell of the School House to see reason. A little later he confided to Tom Merry his intention of sending Miss Courtney a "weally wippin' weddin' pwesent"—which was a very pleasant ending to D'Arcy's romance!

THE END.

(Next week the Grand Christmas Double Number of THE GEM LIBRARY will contain a special extra long tale dealing with Tom Merry & Co. It is entitled "Tom Merry's Christmas," by Martin Clifford. Please order your copy in advance. Price 1d.



The ONLY NEW AND ORIGINAL SCHOOL TALE by this famous author.



# TEMPEST HEADLAND

A SPLENDID NEW SCHOOL TALE.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.

Introducing Venus and other Boys of Tempest Headland College.

Herr Ludvig was trying to teach the Lower Fourth of Tempest Headland College German, and was having a rough time of it. In the first place, a storm was raging from the sea, above which the college stands five hundred feet or more, and so gets the full fury of such storms. There was the howl of the wind to contend with, and the angry roar of the billows, bursting upon Tempest Headland, was distinctly audible in the great college, where silence never reigned by day or night, for there were six hundred odd boys there, and some of them, as will presently be seen, were very odd. You can't get silence amongst such a number of boys as that, even supposing all are asleep, for some of them are bound to snore.

For really odd boys, Billy Barnes wanted some beating. He often got it, too. But all the floggings in the world would never have altered Billy's nature. Cyril Conway was another odd one, and one who gave more trouble to the masters even than Billy, although in a different way, for Cyril was a clever lad, and no one on this earth could have accused Billy of being that.

"Prut! It is terrible!" groaned Herr Ludvig. "Your pronunciation of te German is frightful. You have no ear for te music of te language!"

"Oh, I say, sir, draw it mild!" growled Billy. "Talk about music in German! Besides, you don't pronounce English too jolly prettily!"

"May I speak, sir?" murmured Cyril Conway, turning his meek, blue eyes upwards, and drooping the corners of his mouth, like a little child does before it commences to cry.

"Ach! Here is a boy who asks me if he may speak, and he has being doing it all te morning mitout my leave! No, you shall not speak in class! Do you suppose I need any speaking while I am trying to teach tat Billy Barnes?"

"I would really like to speak, sir. I have an important observation to make."

"Be silent, I command you!"

"I will certainly obey your orders, sir, as I invariably do. It is my rule to obey the masters."

"Prut! Tere are too many exceptions to your rule!"

"I believe, sir, that every rule has an exception."

"You von't find my rule to cane troublesome boys has an exception in tis case, if you do not desist from talking!"

"All right, sir, I will not mention the matter if you prefer my not doing so; but I do not believe that Dr. Buchanan would like a master to smoke in class. You are smoking badly from your tail-coat pocket, and if you were to ask my private opinion, I should say that you were on fire. However, if you prefer my not mentioning the fact——"

"Du mein gute!" howled Herr Ludvig, leaping into the air, and performing a sort of war-dance. "I have sat on my matches und set tem alight!"

"I would advise you, sir, to sit on 'em again, and put 'em out!" murmured Cyril, who was now the only serious boy in the room.

Herr Ludvig most unwisely dived his hand into his burning pocket; then, uttering a yell of pain, he ripped off his coat and danced on the burning tails.

"Prut! You see me on fire und do not tell me!" he hooted, gazing despondently at his damaged garment.

"But you would not let me speak, sir."

"In von vord you could have told me vat vas happening. You use several hundred vords to ask me if you may tell me tat von word, vich is all important to me. Vill you stop tat laughter. I keep te class in for half an hour. Ach! A new coat, too!"

"Pardon, sir, you have had that coat six months to my knowledge!" said Cyril, in his softest tones.

"Do you suppose a coat is not new only vorn such short time?"

"Yours does not look remarkably new just at present, sir. You will have to retail it. Still, clothes won't last for ever. I have ruined three suits this term already—they certainly weren't mine—nevertheless, they were ruined."

Herr Ludvig looked rather dangerous as he fixed his eyes on the meek-looking Cyril. He put on his damaged coat, and kept feeling the hole burnt in the cloth; then he had another try at Billy, but Cyril interrupted him again.

ORDER NOW

THE GRAND DOUBLE NUMBER OF THE GEM.

NEXT THURSDAY. PRICE 1d.



"If you please, sir, may I speak?"

"Donner und blitzen!" howled Herr Ludvig, ripping off his coat once more. "I must be on fire vonce more!"

"No, sir, you are in error," murmured Cyril. "I was merely going to point out to you that yonder vessel will be on the rocks. If you gaze out of the window you will see her rounding the point—at least, that is what she is trying to do. If she ever does it I shall be surprised."

"Und he takes such fearful ting so calmly!" muttered Herr Ludvig, stepping to the window, and gazing at a sailing-vessel, which was perilously near the lee shore. "Ach! She has struck! Te class is dismissed. Every man in tis college must see if aid can be given. Silence, boys! An awful ting is about to happen. I know it!"

At that moment a tall, gentlemanly-looking man in cap and gown, strode through the class-room. His hair was slightly streaked with grey, but his face was not lined. It was a handsome face, and, what is more to the point, it was a very good face, calm and steadfast. He was Dr. Buchanan, the Head of that great college, and respected or dreaded by every boy there, according to such boy's nature. He had seen the wreck, and strode towards the Headland, while Herr Ludvig followed him, so did Cyril and most of the youngsters in the Lower Fourth. They had no permission to do so, but at such a time Dr. Buchanan took no heed of them.

It was not far to the Headland, and the doctor went at a run, but ere he reached it, the vessel had sunk to her death. From where Dr. Buchanan stood he could not see even so much as a floating spar.

"Did you see her, Jim?" inquired the doctor, turning to a splendid built young fellow, who came up at a run. He was the captain of the college, and a more popular one there had never been at Tempest Headland, although he was a terror to the bullies.

"Yes, sir. I saw her go down from the college. She struck, then sank in deep water. I fear no life will be saved, and a vessel of that size would carry a crew of twelve at least. It seemed to me that she had lost her rudder. No attempt appeared to be made to beat out against the storm."

"Another spot on the wreck-chart," sighed the doctor. "It is the second wreck I have seen off this point. May I never see another! I fear no life will be saved. Still, no stone should be left unturned. Race to the gully, Jim. If any should be washed up that is the likeliest spot; at any rate, it is the only one from which we could possibly reach them."

Jim rushed off, and some of the boys followed him, but the greater number remained with the Head, who, with arms folded across his breast, stood at the very brink of the great cliff, which was sheer at that spot, and against the face of which the waves were bursting down below, for the tide was at its height, and Tempest Headland runs far out into the sea; it is only at the neap tides that it can be rounded.

"Stand back, my lad!" commanded the doctor, as Cyril approached the brink. "We can do nothing."

"No, sir," answered Cyril. "It doesn't make much difference, either. We have all got to die some day. I hope I am shot on the battlefield!"

"Silence, boy; you do not know what you are talking about! Well, you are only a child. Consider that the poor creatures aboard that vessel risked their lives for their daily bread. Others go through life without such risk, and—and— Surely that is something floating in the foam. Tell me, lad. Your sight is better than mine. What is it? Quick!"

"Looks like a man—no, it must be a boy. I think he is lashed to a lifebuoy, and I'm absolutely certain that he will be dashed to death against the cliff. Sir, are you mad? But— Here, hold the raving maniac back!"

It was very seldom that Cyril became excited, but he was excited now, as his extraordinary words testified.

Dr. Buchanan strode back, flung off his cap and gown; then, taking a forward run, dived down the awful height, and a cry of horror rang out, while Cyril stood on the very brink of the fearful precipice. He saw his master's form rushing through the air, he saw it strike the waters—it seemed that a minute elapsed—and then he saw that brave man rise to the surface, and strike out for the helpless form being swiftly drifted towards the face of the cliff.

"Two deaths instead of one!" murmured Cyril. "Yet it was a brave action. I would like to be as brave as that; but what will his wife say, and what will his daughter say to this, and what will they say to us? You see, Herr Ludvig, it is all over now."

"Und you speak so calmly! Do you know vat te doctor vas to me, boy?"

"Yes, your employer, sir. You will have another one now, though whether he is as just, and whether you like him

as much I have my doubts. See! He's against the cliff—no, he's not; but if he strikes that cliff it is death. Can't he swim! Look at that. He's getting out. Steady! That's splendid! He's got the boy, and now—well, that man won't leave hold of him. Those two are going to die together, and the only alternative to that is, that they will live together. I say, old chaps, let's see if we can raise a cheer to reach him, and sort of cheer him up. What?"

Then wild cheers rang out, and Herr Ludvig found himself shouting with the boys.

But the doctor's brave deed was not yet completed. He was a strong man, and it needed all his strength to battle with those seas, burdened as he was. Time after time it appeared inevitable that he would be hurled against the face of the cliff; but at last he rounded the point, and now the youngsters raced round to gain the end of the gully just as the doctor landed.

"Phew! You have risked your life for a nigger kid, sir," exclaimed Cyril. "It was splendid, only I wish you had saved a human being!"

"Don't dare to talk like that, boy, even in fun!" exclaimed the doctor, kneeling beside the unconscious negro lad, and trying to restore animation. "He is alive. Lend me a knife, someone, to cut away this lifebelt. Ah, what have we here?"

It was a packet done up in oilskin, and when the doctor opened it he found a thousand pounds in Bank of England notes, and on the back of one of them was hastily scrawled:

"If the lad ever reaches the shore, let this money pay for his bringing up."

There was no signature, and the doctor hesitated for some time.

"Well," he exclaimed at last, "I shall do as requested by one who is now evidently dead. If that lad recovers—and I have not the slightest doubt that he will—I shall invest this sum of money for him. He shall be brought up at Tempest Headland College at my cost, and when he starts in life he shall have that money intact to start with. I look upon this as a sacred trust. It is my wish, and my command, that you lads receive the poor lad as one of you. No doubt we shall learn more concerning the strange affair when he regains consciousness."

The kind-hearted doctor carried the unconscious lad to the college, and a medical man was sent for, but when the lad regained consciousness he appeared to have entirely lost all recollection of the past. He spoke in broken English, but although he evidently understood every question asked him, he could not answer a single word as to who he was or how he came to be aboard the ill-fated vessel.

"I dunno nuffin 'bout de matter, sah," he exclaimed. "Seems to me I woke up in dis bed, but I dunno how I got in de bed, or what happened before I got dere."

"He has received a severe shock to his system," exclaimed the medical man. "It is possible that his memory may return to him in time; meantime, I think it would be advisable not to question him further."

Thus, Dr. Buchanan let the matter drop; and as the lad could not even remember his own name, Cyril got the doctor's permission to let the boys choose one for him.

"You see, sir, the kid will associate with us, and we naturally want him to have a good and appropriate name. Of course, if he ever remembers his own we can change it, but it seems to me he is a bit barmy on the crumpet."

"I wish you would not use that slang in my presence. There is nothing the matter with his brain, except that the shock has caused complete loss of memory. You can introduce him to your comrades, and I hope all will receive him kindly. Let me know what name you select, and it must be one that he agrees to."

"Certainly, sir. This way, N or M. You've got to be named. I think we ought to smash a bottle of wine over your head. What sort of name do you think you would like?"

"Don't seem to care much what de name is."  
"Well, the name we shall give you will be too beautiful for anything. We want something short; but come into the hall, and we will hold a consultation. I shall have to teach you to fight—that's important; then there will be a few other things that I shall teach you. I suppose you are not shamming about not being able to remember anything about your name, or what happened to you before you came here?"

"Nunno!"  
"It's funny you can remember how to talk, and can't remember anything else."

"Seem to recollect how to eat."  
"Trust a nigger for that. Well, here we are! Now, then, you chaps, I have got the doctor's permission to name this child."

"He seems to be an utter idiot," said Snigg, the biggest





**TEMPEST HEADLAND**

The Only New and Original School Tale  
By S. CLARKE COOK.

(Continued.)

boy there, and the second worst bully in the college. "Suppose we name him Billy Barnes Secundus."

"He's not going to have my name," declared Billy. "I won't have him called anything like my name."

"You shut up, you cheeky kid!" cried Snigg, giving him a slap over the head, by way of emphasising his command. "He's going to be called what I like."

"No, he's not," declared Cyril; "he's going to be called what we like. I don't want to insult the chunk of grinning loveliness, else I would suggest calling him Snigg. Or he might be named after that chum of yours—I mean that bloater-faced bully Graft."

"All right, you little worm," snarled Snigg. "I will tell Graft what you say."

"Don't do that, Snigg. Graft can't help having a face like a bloater, any more than he can help his bulging eyes, and you might hurt his feelings."

"He's a jolly lot more likely to hurt your feelings when I tell him. Call the little brute Snowdrop."

"It isn't appropriate," declared Cyril. "Pongo isn't a bad name. I've got a black retriever dog at home named Pongo, and—"

"It's a pity the brute doesn't retrieve you, then," snarled Snigg.

"I hope he won't try to retrieve you," retorted Cyril. "If he happened to bite you he would die of blood-poisoning, and I like the dog."

"Call him White," suggested Billy.

"I want something to suggest his natural beauty," mused Cyril. "Snowy White would not be a bad name."

"It's no good calling him Snigg, then," said Billy, getting out of the young bully's reach. "Why not call him Pompey Pompadour Pom-pom Milkyway."

"Bother it," growled Cyril, "do you think I'm going to call him all that every time I want him?"

"Well, call him Dr. Buchanan," said Billy. "I don't admire his face much, but he's not such a hideous-looking brute as Snigg."

"Here, you shut up, Snigg!" cried Cyril, who, although much smaller than the bully, was an excellent fighter. "I won't have Billy touched. He's an utter idiot, I know, but he has spoken sensibly about you. Have another shot, Billy, only we don't want alliteration."

"No, that would be a rotten name," said Billy, who had not the slightest idea what alliteration meant. "Who was that beautiful chap?"

"I don't know. It wasn't Snigg, and it wasn't Graft," said Cyril.

"I mean that chap without any arms."

"Never met him."

"No, he lived before you were born. Stop a bit; I'll get him directly. It was something like Vulcan. Oh, I know—Venus! What's the matter with that for a name? Venus suits him down to the ground."

"But Venus was a lady!" gasped Cyril. He did not know Billy's ignorance went quite so far as that.

"Was he? I thought he was a man," observed Billy. "But what does it matter? Who's going to remember that Venus was a woman? She was lovely, wasn't she?"

"Yes."

"Well, there you are. Snowy White Venus; or if you think that's too womanish, shove in a man's name after Snowy

White. Look here, who was that other beautiful joker?"

"Adonis."

"That's the chap. Snowy White Adonis Venus. I don't think a nigger could expect a better name than that. How does it suit you, Venus?"

"Sounds mighty fine name dat."

"I should think it did, and it's appropriate to your beauty. Does it suit you, Cyril?"

"It's almost too brilliant," murmured Cyril. "Yes, we will decide on that one. Mind you don't forget your name, Venus. You appear to have a knack of forgetting. Here comes the doctor to see if we have named the child. Hush! I will break the name to him. I don't feel at all sure that he will take kindly to it, but I will point out its appropriateness. Ahem!"

"Have you hit on a name, my lads?" inquired the doctor, entering the hall, "because if not I would suggest—"

"Thank you, sir," interposed Cyril, looking so lamblike that the doctor felt rather alarmed. "We have decided on a most appropriate name. You see, we wanted one that would give some impression of the kid's natural beauties, so we have named him Venus."

"Preposterous! You know perfectly well that Venus was a woman."

"I know, sir; I told Billy so when he chose it, so Billy decided that we could make it more manly by shoving Adonis before it. His full name stands Snowy White Adonis Venus. Billy chose them, and I must say they do him credit. I don't know whether Mrs. Buchanan will be vexed at your having saved Venus from a watery grave, sir, but—"

"That will do!" exclaimed Dr. Buchanan sternly. "I expected you to find a sensible name for the lad."

"Yes, sir, I thought you did, and that's why I got Billy to help me. I knew a smart chap like Billy would drop on an appropriate name, and I must say in Snowy White Adonis Venus he has hit the mark. We wanted a beautiful person, otherwise we were going to have Snigg, but he's such a hideous-looking brute that—"

"Silence, boy! How dare you speak like that in my presence?"

"Sorry, sir, but you always impress on us to tell the truth."

"I shall severely punish you if you speak like that."

"Sorry, sir; I'm not blaming Snigg. He can't help having a face like an underdone suet-pudding."

"Write five hundred lines," ordered the doctor, leaving the hall. He knew that it would be absolutely useless to alter the name. Venus that lad would certainly be called while he remained at that college. He only felt thankful that Billy had not been able to hit on anything more ridiculous. He made his way to Herr Ludvig's study.

"Vat have tey named te boy?" inquired that gentleman, rising and offering the Head his easy-chair; but the study was so full of smoke that the doctor did not care to remain there for long.

"Yes—hough, hough!"

"That's a nasty cough you have caught, doctor. It was from te plunge in te sea," said Herr Ludvig, taking some deep puffs at his pipe. "Vat have tey named him?"

"Snowy White Adonis Venus."

"Prutt! Haw, haw, haw! Vell, I suppose it cannot now be helped."

"No; he will be Venus," sighed the doctor. "Barnes suggested the name, and from what I gather he thought Venus was a man."

"Tat boy is madden-ing mit his stupidity. Vell, I suppose ve must call te lad Venus."

Thus it was that the unknown negro lad came to Tempest Headland, and thus it was he received his extraordinary name.

(Another long instalment of this splendid school story in next Thursday's Christmas Double Number. Please order your copy of the GEM in advance.)

How do you do?



WHOM TO WRITE TO: The Editor,  
"GEM" Library, 2, Carmelite House,  
Carmelite Street, London, who will be  
pleased to hear from you.

GOOD NEWS!

My readers will, I'm sure, be glad to know that

NEXT THURSDAY'S

Issue of this complete book will be a

GRAND CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.

For fun and frolic, genuine good humour, and splendid situations you will find

"TOM MERRY'S CHRISTMAS,"

the title of Martin Clifford's "double-length story, hard to beat. Our old friends Marmy and Digby reappear.

In fact, you'll say when you've read it that it's the best story this popular author has yet written for you.

THE EDITOR.

P.S.—Kindly order the Double Number in advance.



# Next Thursday's Cover— 'Tom Merry's Christmas.'

Grand  
Complete  
Double-  
Length

Tale of  
Tom Merry's  
Schooldays.



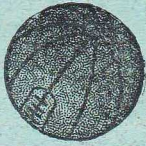
Order Your  
**DOUBLE NUMBER**

OF THE **"GEM"**  **NOW!** 



# FOOTBALL

This splendid large-size Match Football will be sent to any address on receipt of **6d. DEPOSIT**



and upon payment of the last of 16 further weekly instalments of 6d. each. A Reliable Repairing Outfit is given FREE. Note.—Our Cash-with-Order price is only 7/6. Nothing better manufactured. Send 6d., or more, and secure this wonderful bargain.

**BRITISH MANUFACTURING CO.**  
(F 24), GREAT YARMOUTH.

# 6d. DEPOSIT.



This Handsome Phonograph, with large enamelled Flower Horn (Gold lined), and Two Records, complete in case, will be sent to any address on receipt of 6d. DEPOSIT and upon payment of the last of 18 further weekly instalments of 6d. each. Two 1/- Records are given free. Send 6d., or more and secure this wonderful Bargain.

**THE BRITISH MANUFACTURING CO.**  
(P 24), Great Yarmouth.

**FREE.**—As an introduction to other wonderful new novelties, send 4 stamps to defray cost of postage, packing, &c., &c., for which we will send you the greatest, delightful, and most laughable novelty on earth. Thousands already given away. Address, **IRONMONGER, Novelty Emporium (Dept. 25), Ilkeston.**

# A STAMP ALBUM FREE!!!

TO EVERY APPLICANT FOR OUR "PICTURESQUE" PARCEL OF STAMPS.

3d. Post Free. Abroad 6d. Including 115 GENUINE Stamps, Guatemala, Chili, Victoria, Canada, Cape Colony, Egypt, Argentine, FRENCH GUINEA, U.S.A., Columbus, Japan, New Zealand, Set of India, O.H.M.S., &c. A Packet of the "SUPERB" Stamp Mounts and a Perforation Gauge. A GENUINE GIFT. SEND AT ONCE to

**Henry Abel & Co., Walsall.**

## TATTOOING. NO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED.

The "Simplex" Outfit contains complete Tattooing Kit, including Ink, Colours, Solutions, Needles, Transferable Designs, &c., &c., and full Instructions for Artistic Tattooing without previous experience. Post free, 3/6. Every article as used by Professional Tattooists. The Instructions alone are worth the money. Foreign orders 6d. extra.

"NOVELTIES" (H Dept.), 67, Britannia Road, Norwich.

## AN ASTOUNDING OFFER. A 2/6 PARCEL FOR 3d. READ.

The Parcel contains a Packet of Foreign and Colonial Stamps. Fifty, all different (no duplicates), including Cuba (unused), German (80 pt.), Canada (King), Patiala (Indian Native State), Roumania, Ivory Coast, Japanese Empire, Transvaal, Mexico, Russia, France (10c. unpaid), St. Louis, U.S.A. postage due, Newfoundland (Royal Portrait), and many others too numerous to mention. Also a Packet of Stamp Mounts, a Handy Collector's Pocket Book for Notes, Addresses, &c.; a Perforation Gauge (guaranteed correct, with instructions for use); a Packet of Transparent Envelopes (indispensable to Collectors); and in addition to the above we are Presenting Free a Duplicate Folding Pocket Case (fitted with transparent pocket). This Parcel, containing the Packet of Stamps, Duplicate Case, Mounts, Pocket Book, Gauge, Transparent Envelopes, &c., &c., will be sent per Return of Post on receipt of 3d. and 1d. stamp for postage. New Price Lists, containing some barons equal to the above, sent with every parcel. Postage for Colonies, 6d.

**KING BROS. LTD. HILSTON.**

## VENTRILLOQUISM. Learn this Laughable Art. Success certain, never fails. Send 6d. for Book.

**F. R. IRONMONGER, Book Depot, ILKESTON**

Be sure and mention this paper when communicating with advertisers.

# 1,000 STAMPS GIVEN AWAY FREE. No English, all Foreign; many good, and uncommon. Send one 3d. stamp for postage, &c. Stamp Albums with 1,000 Illustrations. 6d.—W. Ainsworth, Bethesda Rd., Blackpool.

# 3

NEW ADDITIONS TO

## "THE BOYS' FRIEND" LIBRARY.

No. 30: TOM MERRY & CO.

A Splendid and Absolutely NEW Tale of School Life and Adventure.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

No. 31: THE RIVAL FORTS.

A Thrilling Tale of Life in the Service of the Hudson Bay Company.

By MURRAY GRAYDON.

No. 32: WOLVES of the DEEP.

A Stirring Story of a Great Conspiracy, introducing Ferrers Lord and Ching-Lung.

By SIDNEY DREW.

PRICE **3<sup>d</sup>.** EACH.

JUST OUT.



HERE  
YOU  
ARE!

LOOK!

