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TALE BY

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A Tale of the Terrible Three.

by
MARTIN
Clifford.



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CHAPTER 1.

Arthur Augustus Proposes an Expedish.

"I 'VE got wathah a good ideah, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, made that statement, looking round at his chums through his eyeglass.

The swell of the Fourth had been looking very thoughtful for some time, and had been saying nothing. Now that he broke the silence with that sudden remark, he apparently expected a general inquiry from all sides.

But no one answered.

D'Arcy coughed gently, and repeated his observation a little more emphatically.

"I've got wathah a good ideah, deah boys!"

Silence.

Tom Merry & Co. were taking it easy. It was the vacation at St. Jim's. The chums of the Shell and the Fourth had spent the first part of the vac. at Tom Merry's place. They were now spending another portion of it with D'Arcy, at his father's house at Eastwood.

The weather was beautiful, and the juniors of St. Jim's were having a good time. That particular day had been very full.

They had played cricket all the morning, had been on the river most of the afternoon, and now, having had tea, they were taking their ease on the lawn, enjoying the sunset over the woods.

Tom Merry was half buried in a deep garden chair. Monty Lowther occupied another cane chair, drawn out to its full length, to afford a resting-place for Lowther's long legs. Manners was sitting with his back against Tom Merry's chair, with a treatise on colour photography beside him on the grass, where it had dropped from his hand. The Terrible Three were certainly slacking for once.

But the Fourth-Formers were no better. Jack Blake lay in the grass, with his head on his hands, looking up at the blue sky. Digby sat with a book on his knees. Herries was the only one who was standing, and he was leaning against a tree. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on a stool, with one leg

TOM MERRY AND CO. at the EXHIBITION.

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— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

crossed over the other, carefully, so as not to spoil the crease of his trousers.

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass a little tighter into his eye, and gave another glance round at his chums.

The Terrible Three had their eyes closed, but D'Arcy knew perfectly well that they were not asleep. Only a minute before Tom Merry had made some remark to Lowther on the subject of cricket, and Lowther had grunted in reply.

Jack Blake was staring straight before him at the sky, and Herries and Digby had fixed gazes, not turned in the direction of D'Arcy.

"Weally, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, with a slight tone of remonstrance in his voice—"weally, you know—"

Silence.

"Blake!"

No reply.

"Tom Mewwy!"

Dead silence.

"I've got a wathah good idea, you know!"

Arthur Augustus was growing indignant. He reached out and caught Tom Merry by the shoulder, and gave him a shake.

"Tom Mewwy!"

Tom Merry's eyes opened.

"Keep him off!" he murmured.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Cheese it!"

"But—"

"Shut up!"

"But I've got a wathah good ideah!"

"Bury it!"

"Eh?"

"Bury it! Go and eat coke! Shut up!"

"Yes, shut up!" said Monty Lowther, in a lazy, drawing voice. "Can't you see we're busy?"

"Weally, Lowthah, you do not look busay."

"Well, appearances are deceptive," said Lowther. "I'm very busy, trying to get rested. We've had a hard day—"

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No. 132 (New Series).

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cricket in the morning, rowing in the afternoon, and Gussy talking all the time—

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Give us a rest, old son!" said Jack Blake, without looking at D'Arcy. "Give us a five-bar rest!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Curious how some chaps must keep on talking," said Manners reflectively. "I suppose it's in the D'Arcy blood. Young Wally's got it, too."

"Weally, Mammahs—"

"Shut up!"

"I wefuse to shut up. I've got a wathah good ideah!"

"Whose?"

"I wegard that wemark as insultin'. If you will have the kindness to wise, Lowthah, I shall have pleasure in administahin' a feahful thwashin'!"

"Not good enough," murmured Lowther.

"Weally, you ass—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wefuse to cheese it! I've got a wathah good ideah, and I must request your sewious attention!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

Tom Merry groaned.

"Sufocate him, somebody!" he said. "Give it to him in the neck! He won't be happy till he gets it."

"I wegard you as an ass, Tom Mewwy! This is weally a good ideah. Have you fellows thought of anything to do to-morrow?"

Tom Merry gave a resigned sigh, and sat upright in his chair.

"I suppose we've got to stand it," he said. "Go ahead, Gussy!"

"Rats!" said Blake, still without turning his head. "Ideas are out of order on a hot day. I'd rather have a tenor solo."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon his chum.

"Weally, Blake, I should be vewy pleased to sing a tenah solo if you would like it," he remarked.

"I'd like it awfully—"

"Well, Gussy will do it awfully!" said Lowther. "You'll be satisfied, as far as that goes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard that wemark as wude and oppwobwious, Lowthah! Which tenah solo would you pwefer, Blake, deah boy?"

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Digby, in alarm. "Let's have the wathah good ideah. I prefer that to the tenor solo."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Shut up, Dig!" said Blake severely. "I know what I'm talking about. Will you sing the 'Prize Song' from the 'Meistersinger,' Gussy?"

D'Arcy beamed. That exceedingly difficult tenor solo was a favourite of his, though the way he rendered it did not make him a favourite with others.

"Certainly, deah boy!" he exclaimed.

"You can't sing without an accompaniment!" urged Digby, looking daggers at Blake.

"Yaas, I can, deah boy!"

"Oh, no!" said Blake. "Impossible!"

"Just what I said," observed Digby. "And as there's no musical instrument here—"

"Exactly," said Blake. "D'Arcy can sing to the piano, and his brother Conway is a good accompanist."

"But there is no piano here, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, somewhat perplexed.

"There's one indoors."

"Yaas; but we can't get it out here."

"No need. You can sing indoors."

"Weally, Blake, if I sing indoors you will not hear me out here!"

"Exactly. That's just what we want," said Blake affably.

D'Arcy stood petrified, as he realised that his chum had been solemnly "pulling his leg" all the time. The other fellows burst into a roar of laughter. The expression upon the face of Arthur Augustus was too comic.

"You uttah ass, Blake!" D'Arcy exclaimed at length.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I uttably wefuse to sing the tenah solo now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I've made you a fair offer," said Blake. "It's not fair to plant the wathah good ideah on us now, is it? I appeal to the fellows."

"Certainly not!" said the fellows, with one voice.

D'Arcy sniffed.

"I wegard you as a set of asses!" he exclaimed.

"Do you always talk to your guests in this polite way?" drawled Monty Lowther.

D'Arcy coloured. He had forgotten for the moment that

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NEXT THURSDAY: "THE FORM-MASTER'S MISTAKE."

Tom Merry & Co. were guests at Eastwood House, and had spoken out as if they were in the old study at St. Jim's.

"I withdwaw the wemark," he said, after a pause. "Undah the circs., I have no alternative but to withdwaw it. But I wish it to be cleahly undahstood that if you were not guests here I should wegard you as a set of asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any weason for wibald laughtah. Now, to come to my ideah—"

There was a yell of protest.

"Don't come to it!"

"Bury it!"

"Cheese it!"

"To come to my ideah!" said D'Arcy firmly.

"Mercy!"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! I have a wathah good ideah—"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's Gussy for sticking to it," he remarked. "Go ahead, old man, and cut it as short as you can."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Go ahead!"

"Yaas, wathah! I have been thinkin' that we haven't made any awrangements for to-morrow—"

"Make 'em in the morning," said Manners.

"But I have an ideah. Suppose we made an expeditah to-morrow—"

"A what? Oh, an expedition!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Where?"

"To the Exhibish."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I suppose you know that there is a Japanese-British Exhibition in London now, at a place called Shepherd's Bush?" said D'Arcy.

"Yes; I think I've heard of it," grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, we couldn't have a bettah opportunity of goin' there, deah boy. It's the vac now, and we can do as we like. My govannah has given me a tennah to spend, so we shall have plenty of monay. Why not go in a partay to the Exhibish, to-morrow, and make a day of it, and have a weally wippin' time?"

The juniors of St. Jim's rose to their feet.

"Well?" said D'Arcy peering at them through his eyeglass. "What do you say, deah boys?"

"Gorgeous!" said Tom Merry. And he fell upon D'Arcy's neck.

"Ow!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

The rest of the juniors, equally enthusiastic, fell upon D'Arcy's neck also. The swell of St. Jim's, elegant as he was, was no weakling, but he could not support the weight of six juniors falling upon his neck all at once.

He staggered under their weight, and fell into the grass, and the juniors fell on top of him.

From under a heap of legs and arms and heads came a suffocated gasp. D'Arcy had entirely disappeared.

CHAPTER 2.

Pongo Causes Trouble.

"W! Gerrup! Yow!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy struggled under the weight of the collapsed juniors, and after a minute or two a head emerged from the mass of juniors.

It was D'Arcy's head, but it looked very different from its usual appearance.

The eyeglass was gone, and the usually neat and well-brushed hair was a towzled mop, and the high white collar was a limp rag, and the necktie was streaming out.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Well, of all the asses!" panted Blake, extricating himself from the heap. "What on earth did you collapse like that for, you duffer?"

"I wefuse to be called a duffah!"

"Fathead!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Chump!"

"Ass!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"You feahful ass!" said Digby. "The next time I hug you—"

"Weally, Dig—"

The juniors grinned at D'Arcy as he dusted himself down. The swell of St. Jim's flicked every speck from his trousers and jacket with an earnest attention which showed how important he considered the matter.

Then he returned to the matter which had been interrupted by the enthusiastic demonstration of Tom Merry & Co.

"I suppose you are all agweeable to comin' to the Exhibish to-morrow?"

"Yes, rather!"

"What-ho!"



"Ch'r'ng Cr'ss! Ch'r'ng Cr'ss!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped the porter on the shoulder. "Excuse me," he said politely, "but would you mind repeatin' that wemarkable word again?"

"I hear that there are vewy gweat attwactions—Japanese art, you know, and things of that sort. I don't know any thing about Japanese art myself, but I am sure it will all be vewy instwuctive."

"And there's the mountain railway," said Blake.

"And the flip-flap."

"And the wiggle-woggle."

"I wathah think that those amusements are a little too juvenile for me," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Howevah, I shall be vewy glad to see you young fellows enjoyin' yourselves."

The juniors very nearly fell upon him again. As D'Arcy was almost the youngest of the party, his attitude was cool, to say the least of it.

"The fortunate thing is, that we're all in funds," said Tom Merry; "and, in case of need, there's always Gussy's tenner."

"Of course, I shall be vewy happy to place my tennah at the disposal of my fwiends," said the swell of St. Jim's gracefully. "It's settled, then. And now, I wondah if we could get Cousin Ethel to come?"

The juniors all looked interested.

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "That would make the

party complete. Ethel is staying in London at present, I believe."

"Yaas. And I have no doubt that she could get out for a day; and Miss Phyllis, who is stayin' with her, would come too. I'll go down to the village and send a wiah. You fellows can take a stwoll with me, if you like."

"Anything in a good cause," said Monty Lowther.

The juniors were brisk enough now.

"I propose, second, and pass unanimously a vote of thanks to Gussy," said Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "In weturn, I may say that I shall look aftah you, and see that you don't get into any twouble; and I hope you will be careful to keep neah me, you know."

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Bow-wow-wow!"

A ragged-looking cur came leaping over the lawn, scuttling recklessly through the flower-beds, with three juniors in hot pursuit. The three were Wally—D'Arcy minor—and his chums in the Third Form at St. Jim's—Jameson and Gibson. They were in chase of Pongo, the troublesome mongrel who was the apple of Wally's eye.

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"Stop him!" yelled Wally.
 "Bai Jove!"
 "Stop him! He's got my herring!"
 "Gweat Scott!"
 Pongo had a herring in his mouth, and was evidently determined to keep it. He dropped it at a flower-bed and barked, and picked it up again and darted off as Wally and his followers rushed up. Pongo was dashing now straight towards the juniors of St. Jim's.
 "Stop him!" roared Wally.
 "Bai Jove! I wufese to touch the wotten mongwel!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pongo is too much like Hewwies's wotten bulldog. He has no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twouseahs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Pongo! Pongo!"
 Pongo whisked round to escape a group of juniors, and dashed away towards the house. He opened his mouth to bark again, and the herring dropped in the grass. Wally tore up, and Pongo scuttled off without picking up the herring. D'Arcy minor, picked it up.
 "My only Aunt Jane!" he ejaculated.

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and glared at his young brother.
 "Wally, you howwid young wascal—"
 "Eh?"

"Thwow that howwid thing away!"
 Wally snorted.
 "It's my herring!" he exclaimed.
 "You uttah young wascallion—"
 "It's not much good now, Wal," said Jameson, with a chuckle. "Better chuck it away. You couldn't eat it now."
 "Not after Pongo," said Curly Gibson.
 "Eat it!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in horror. "You don't mean to say you were goin' to eat that howwid thing, Wally?"

The youthful hope of the house of D'Arcy snorted again.
 "We've been camping out," he explained. "I was cooking that herring over a wood fire in the park. Pongo snatched it. It was a jolly good herring. It's not much good now, I suppose. You can have it."
 "Weally, Wally—"

"Chuck it away," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You might as well have let Pongo have it, Wally. It's not much good now."
 Wally gave a shrieking whistle, his signal to the ragged mongrel. Pongo came slinking uneasily out of the shrubbery.

"Come here, you beast!" said Wally. "Come on, old boy! You can have the herring."
 Pongo barked.

Wally swung his hand in the air, with the herring in it, to throw it to Pongo. Either by accident or design, the herring slipped from his hand too soon, and flew backwards over his head, and plumped fairly upon the nose of Arthur Augustus.

There was a shriek of horror from the swell of St. Jim's.
 "Ow! Ow! Yah!"
 "My only Aunt Jane!" said Wally. "Where's that herring?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You howwid young wuffian—"
 "Pongo—Pongo, fetch it!"
 The herring had dropped at D'Arcy's feet. Pongo rushed up and caught it in his teeth, and dashed away. Arthur Augustus was rubbing his nose with a cambric handkerchief, vainly striving to waft the scent away.
 "Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "I am convinced that you did that on purpose, you young wascal, and I feel it my dutay to give you a feahful thwashin'. I—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wally, backing away warily.
 "None of your old buck, you know."
 "That is a howwidly vulgah expvession, Wally."
 "Don't you begin, Gus," said Wally imploringly. "We're not at St. Jim's now, you know, and you ought to drop the elder-brother-and-sincere-friend dodge. Come off!"
 "You are a howwid little vulgah person!"

"Hear, hear!" said Wally cheerfully. "I'll tell you what, you fellows. If you like, we'll take you out camping to-morrow, I can cook herrings a treat, and—"
 "Good egg!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "But, as it happens, we're booked for to-morrow, Wally."
 "Oh! What's on?"

"We are goin' to the Japan-Bwitish Exhibish," said D'Arcy, in his stately way.
 Wally whistled.
 "Do you hear that, Jimmy?"
 "What-ho!" said Jameson.
 "It's all serene!" said Wally. "We'll come with you, Gus."

D'Arcy gave his minor a glare through his monocle.
 "I am afraid that would not be poss., Wally. You are such a twoublesome and untiday young vagabond!"
 "Oh, I'll put on a clean collar!" said Wally. "And I'll make Jimmy and Gibby put some bears'-grease on their hair."

"Weally, Wally—"
 "Nuff said. We'll come."
 "You will not come! Wally, I wufese—"
 "Just as you like; we'll come, all the same," said Wally.
 "Come on, you chaps; we can't stay here all day, chattering to these old fogies!"

And the heroes of the Third marched off, leaving Tom Merry & Co. looking after them with very peculiar expressions upon their faces.

CHAPTER 3.

Wally Raises the Wind.

TOM MERRY and his chums walked down to the village, and sent off the telegram to Cousin Ethel in London. Arthur Augustus wrote out the telegram, and it was nearly as long as an ordinary letter. Then they strolled back to Eastwood.

"The weply will come this evening, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "I twust that Ethel will be able to come. I nevah considah a partay complete without a lady in it."

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry heartily.
 "I wish Figgins & Co. could come with us, too," Blake remarked. "I don't know exactly where they are now—somewhere in Surrey, I believe, with a relation of Figgins."

"And Kangaroo, too," said Tom Merry. "He's in the North, so he can't come. It's a pity about Figgy. He'd like to come, especially if Miss Cleveland is there."

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Tom Merry.
 "I fail to see why Ethel's bein' there should make any difference to Figgins, Tom Mewwy," he remarked.

Tom Merry laughed.
 "There are a good many things you fail to see, Gussy," he replied.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 Wally met the chums of St. Jim's as they reached Eastwood again. Wally was looking a little more grubby and untidy than usual, and Jameson and Curly Gibson were good seconds in that respect. It was evident that camping out and cooking herrings over a wood fire did not conduce to personal neatness and cleanliness.

"What time are you chaps starting to-morrow?" asked Wally.

"Weally, Wally—"
 "We don't want to keep you waiting," explained Wally.
 "But you are not comin'."
 "Your mistake; we are!"
 "What-ho!" said Jameson and Gibson.

"I should be glad to take you, Wally, if you would be vewy careful to dwess yourself in weally decent style, and keep vewy clean and ordhally all the time, and not get into any mischief," said D'Arcy, after a pause. "Will you pwomise that?"

Wally grinned.
 "Rather not."
 "Then I wufese to allow you to go to the Exhibish."
 "Good! What time do you start?"

"That is of no intewest to you, undah the circs."
 And D'Arcy walked on. Wally grinned at his comrades.
 "We shall have to watch them, that's all," he said.

"How much money have you chaps got?"
 Jameson and Gibson groped in their pockets. Jameson turned out two shillings, and Curly Gibson fivepence. Wally, after a similar search, discovered three shillings. He sniffed as he looked at the collection.

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"Nice state of funds for a day at the Exhibition!" he exclaimed. "Blessed if I know how you chaps are always getting into this stony state!"

"Well, you're stony yourself."

"Oh, don't argue, Jameson! I never knew such a chap for arguing. Let's get in, and I'll try the governor and Conway. We must make a raise somehow to pay our fares. We'll make Gussy stand the exes at the Exhibition."

"Good bizney!"

And the three young rascals made their way indoors.

Lord Eastwood, the stately master of Eastwood House, was in his private cabinet, and even Wally did not venture to disturb him there. But he had no similar compunction about disturbing Lord Conway, his eldest brother, and the heir of Eastwood. Conway was in the gun-room, talking to a couple of friends there, when Wally ran him to earth.

Lord Conway glanced at his youngest brother, and frowned a little. Wally, a decided contrast to Arthur Augustus, never was tidy or dressy; but just now he was in a state of extraordinary grubbiness. And as Conway's two friends were a dean and a colonel, he was not particularly pleased to see the fag present himself in the gun-room just then. But it would have been all the same to Wally if the two strangers had been an archbishop and a field-marshal.

"Hallo, Con, old chap!" said Wally. "I thought I should find you here. Can you spare me a minute?"

"No, you young scamp!" said Lord Conway. "Where have you been?"

"Camping in the wood."

"Gathering up as much mud as possible, I presume?"

Wally rubbed his cuff across his face, as if to remove any stain that might be there. As his cuff had been covered with wood ashes from the fire, this wipe did not improve the aspect of his countenance.

Lord Conway could not help grinning, and his two visitors walked to a window and looked out, to grin at the trees outside.

"You young rascal!" said the viscount. "What do you want?"

"I'm taking Gussy to the Exhibition to-morrow," said Wally cheerfully. "Would you like to come?"

"No, thanks!" said Conway, laughing.

"Then, perhaps you'll stand me a loan?" suggested Wally.

"Five pounds would do."

"You cheeky young scamp!"

"Well, make it a couple of pounds," said Wally. "I don't know whether I shall be able to get anything from the governor. Jim and Gibby are stony, too. It's most unfortunate, as we're going to the Exhibition to-morrow. I suppose you don't want a D'Arcy to be taken up for riding on the railway without a ticket?"

Lord Conway laughed, and laid a couple of sovereigns on his younger brother's palm.

"Now cut off," he said, "and don't let me see you again till you're a little bit cleaner."

Wally chuckled.

"Right-ho! Thanks! Come on, my sons!"

And the heroes of the Third left the gun-room in a state of great satisfaction. A little later Wally found Lord Eastwood in the library, and he tackled his noble parent on the same subject.

"I'm going to the Exhibition to-morrow, dad," he said.

"Oh, indeed!"

"Yes. You know, it's rotten to be short of tin at an exhibition, dad!" said Wally, in a persuasive tone. "Don't you think so?"

Lord Eastwood smiled.

"I dare say it is, Walter."

"The tin goes like anything," said Wally. "If I had a tenner, I don't suppose I should bring any of it home."

"Then it would be a sheer waste for you to have a tenner," Lord Eastwood remarked.

"Ahem! I didn't mean exactly that. But—"

"I think a couple of sovereigns should pay all your expenses, Walter," said Lord Eastwood, producing the two coins. "You are welcome to them, and be careful with them. You are not going alone?"

"No. I'm taking Gussy and the rest."

Lord Eastwood laughed.

"Very well. Take care of yourself."

"Four quid!" said Wally gleefully, as he left the library with his chums. "That's pretty good. Hallo! Here's Gussy! Gussy, old man!"

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"If you're hard up to-morrow, I could stand you a sov. or two!" said Wally airily. "I'm rather in funds just at present."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Telegram for you, Gussy," said Tom Merry, coming up.

"I took it from the messenger. Here you are."

"Thanks awfully, deah boy!"

D'Arcy took the telegram, and opened it at one of the windows. His face fell a little as he read the message within.

"From Ethel?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Can't she come?"

"Listen, deah boy!" D'Arcy read out the telegram. "Shall be at the Exhibition to-morrow with Phyllis."

"Good!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"But that's not all, deah boy!"

"What more is there?"

"Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn will be there, too.—ETHEL."

"Oh! Then they're going with Figgins & Co.?" exclaimed Tom Merry brightly. "Good enough. I shall be glad to see those New House bounders again."

"Ya-a-as!"

D'Arcy spoke slowly and dubiously. Tom Merry looked at him.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothin', deah boy!"

"Aren't you glad to see Figgins & Co. again?"

"Ya-a-as; but—"

"But what?"

"Well, as a mattah of fact—"

"Go ahead!"

"I twust Figgins will not have the pwesumption to twy to monopolise my cousin," said D'Arcy firmly. "I may have to point out to Figgins that Ethel is my cousin—and not his."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"My dear chap, you mustn't interfere!" said Tom Merry solemnly. "Figgins is in charge of Cousin Ethel, as she's going with him. Any interference from you would be fearfully bad taste."

"But—"

"But I know you'll always do the right and proper thing," said Tom Merry, smacking his elegant friend on the shoulder. "That's all right."

"But—"

"It will be jolly to meet them. Come on!"

"But—"

"The dinner bell's gone."

"But—"

"And I'm hungry."

And D'Arcy was dragged away to dinner before he could give expression to any more of the doubts that were in his mind.

CHAPTER 4.

Wally Does Come.

TOM MERRY & Co. were up early the next morning, and so were Wally and his chums. The St. Jim's party were to catch the ten o'clock train from the village, so they had plenty of time for breakfast and to make their preparations.

There was a letter for D'Arcy from his cousin by the morning's post. It gave some further details of the intended visit to the Exhibition by Figgins & Co. and the girls. It seemed that the New House juniors had met Ethel in London, and the visit to Shepherd's Bush had been arranged there. They were going only for the evening, however; and Ethel arranged a rendezvous where the two parties should meet. Arthur Augustus read the letter out to his chums at the breakfast-table, and Wally winked at Jameson and Gibson as he heard it.

After breakfast, the juniors walked down to the village in easy time to catch the train. Wally and his friends had left the breakfast-table a little earlier. As they left the house, Tom Merry & Co. looked round for Wally, in the expectation of seeing him on the same road, but the heroes of the Third Form were not to be seen.

"Where's Wally, I wonder?" Monty Lowther remarked.

"He must be coming."

"Wats!" said D'Arcy emphatically. "Surely you heard me forbid him to come, Lowthah?"

Monty Lowther chuckled.

"Yes; I heard that, Gussy."

"Surely you do not imagine, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately way, "that Wally would venture to directly disregard the ordahs of his majah?"

Monty Lowther only chuckled again. He had his own opinion about the amount of respect Wally was likely to show for the orders of his major.

The juniors reached the railway-station, still without seeing any sign of Wally. They went on the platform, and waited for the local train.

It came in, and they went aboard it, and still Wally was not to be seen.

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Arthur Augustus smiled serenely as he sat in a corner seat. Tom Merry & Co. were puzzled.

That Wally had given up the idea of joining the party for the Exhibition they did not believe for a moment.

But where was he?

The train puffed out of the station, the juniors watching from the windows to the last, and still Wally did not come in sight.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon his chums.

"I wathah think Wally has made up his mind to submit to pwopah authority," he remarked.

"Rats!" said Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"He's up to some dodge."

"Wats! Of course, he knows he must do as he is told," said D'Arcy.

"I have always twied to impwess upon him the wespetch due to an eldah bwothah. I have weally a most awkward posish. to occupy in the family, with a younghah bwothah to look aftah, and an eldah bwothah who weally does not give me satisfaction in ewery way. Conway has a peculiah ideah, you know, that I ought to do as he thinks best."

"Go hon!"

"I am wathah sowwy Wallay is not with us, though," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "Of course, pwopah authority must be maintained, but the young wascal would have enjoyed the twip vevy much. I am weally sowwy."

Tom Merry grinned.

"Don't worry," he said "I've got an idea that you'll see Wally before long."

"Imposs., deah boy!"

"Nous verrons," said Monty Lowther, in his best French. "We shall see."

The train puffed into the junction, where the juniors were to change into the London express. The local was a little late, and the express was already in the station, snorting on the other side of the platform. Tom Merry jumped out.

"Quick!" he exclaimed. "The train's in!"

"Bai Jove! Wun like anythin', deah boys!"

The juniors dashed across the platform. The express was not likely to wait. They reached the train, and Tom Merry threw open the first carriage door he came to. He plunged in, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy after him, and the rest of the juniors piled in pell-mell.

"My only Aunt Jane!" exclaimed a familiar voice, proceeding from a passenger already in the carriage. "Stop that! It's against the regulations! You're overcrowding!"

"Wally!"

"Bai Jove!"

"My hat!"

The guard slammed the door, and the train began to move. The juniors, crammed in the carriage, some sitting and some standing, gasped breathlessly, and stared at the three cool youths sitting in a row facing the engine. They were Wally, Jameson, and Gibson, cool and cheerful, eating sandwiches from a bag.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped D'Arcy, groping for his eyeglass, which had fallen out in the rush, and was dangling somewhere at the end of its cord. "Is that weally you, Wally?"

"I believe so," said Wally. "Take another look."

"What are you doin' here?"

"Eating sandwiches."

"I mean, where are you going?"

"Same place as the train!" said Wally sarcastically.

"That's London. Did you think I got into the London express to go to Portsmouth or Bristol, by any chance?"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Like your blessed cheek overcrowding the carriage in this way," said Wally. "Look here, don't you shove me, Blake! I'm not having it!"

"Make room for your elders, then, my son!"

"Why couldn't you get into a third-class carriage?" demanded Wally aggressively. "That's more suitable for you blessed excursionists!"

"Wally! You uttah young wascal—"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"How did you come here?" demanded his major.

Wally chuckled.

"We walked from Easthorpe to the town," he explained.

"It was easy enough, starting early. We knew you'd come along in the local. You jolly nearly missed the express, too; we were five minutes early for it, and got good seats—and it's jolly rough to be crowded like this by a gang of excursionists."

"Blessed if I see what fags want to be sitting down at all for," said Lowther. "Suppose we make them stand, as a penance for their cheek in coming at all!"

"Good egg!"

Wally glared.

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"If you want me to pull the communicator and stop the train, you can begin," he said.

"Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's all right, Wally," he said. "You can come—"

"Thank you for nothing!"

"But I shall insist upon your keepin' clean and tidy, Wally," said the swell of St. Jim's severely. "I shall keep an eye on you."

To which Wally's reply was contained in a familiar and monosyllabic expression:

"Rats!"

CHAPTER 5.

In Town.

"CH'R'NG CR'SS!"

"Bai Jove!" What is that chap sayin'?" exclaimed D'Arcy, as the train slackened down. "Is he ill, do you think, Tom Mewwy?"

"I think not. He's saying 'Charing Cross,'" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Gweat Scott! What a wemarkable system of pwonunciation!" said D'Arcy, looking out of the window with great interest at the porter who was shouting out the name of the station, in that curious porter-language which is only understood by porters and old travellers.

"How vevy wemarkable!"

"Tumble out!"

"But it is weally intewestin'—"

"Make way!"

"Oh, we shall be shunted on to a siding, while Gussy's talking," said Wally resignedly. "You know what he is when he begins."

"Weally, Wally—"

Jack Blake opened the carriage door, and gave Arthur Augustus a push. D'Arcy just contrived to land on his feet on the platform. He turned a wrathful look upon his chum.

"Blake! You ass—"

"All right!" said Blake. "Stand aside! Curious thing that Gussy never can get out of the way. My hat! What's he after now?"

D'Arcy was approaching the porter, who was bawling out the name of the station for the last time. D'Arcy tapped the man on the shoulder, and the porter turned and looked at him.

"Excuse me," said D'Arcy politely. "But what was it you were just callin' out?"

"Ch'r'ng Cr'ss!"

"Would you mind wepeatin' it?"

"Ch'r'ng Cr'ss!"

"Wemarkable! It seems to be pwonounced without any vowels whatever! Would you mind sayin' it once more?"

"Ch'r'ng Cr'ss!" bawled the porter.

"Thanks vevy much! If you would say it again I think I could catch it exactly—"

"Ch'r'ng Cr'ss!" shrieked the porter.

"Yaas! Just once more, and I—"

The man pointed to the name of the station on a sign. D'Arcy followed his indication and nodded.

"That's all wight," he said. "I know the name of the station, deah boy. I was only curious to hear exactly how you did it, you know."

The porter gave the elegant junior one look; but that one look was an exceedingly expressive one. Then he turned away. D'Arcy, utterly unconscious of the fact that he had exasperated the man in any way, returned to his chums.

"This is vevy intewestin'," he remarked. "The chap was kind enough to wepeat it several times—weally, Tom Mewwy, I see nothin' whatever to cackle at!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you know—"

"I know you'll be the death of me, some day!" sobbed Blake. "I know there's nothing at the Exhibition to equal you. Come on!"

"Weally, Blake—"

But they dragged him away. Outside the station the juniors looked round them.

"We can get a moter-bus to the Exhibition," said Tom Merry. "That's a good way of travelling, and cheap."

"Here, taxi!" called out Wally.

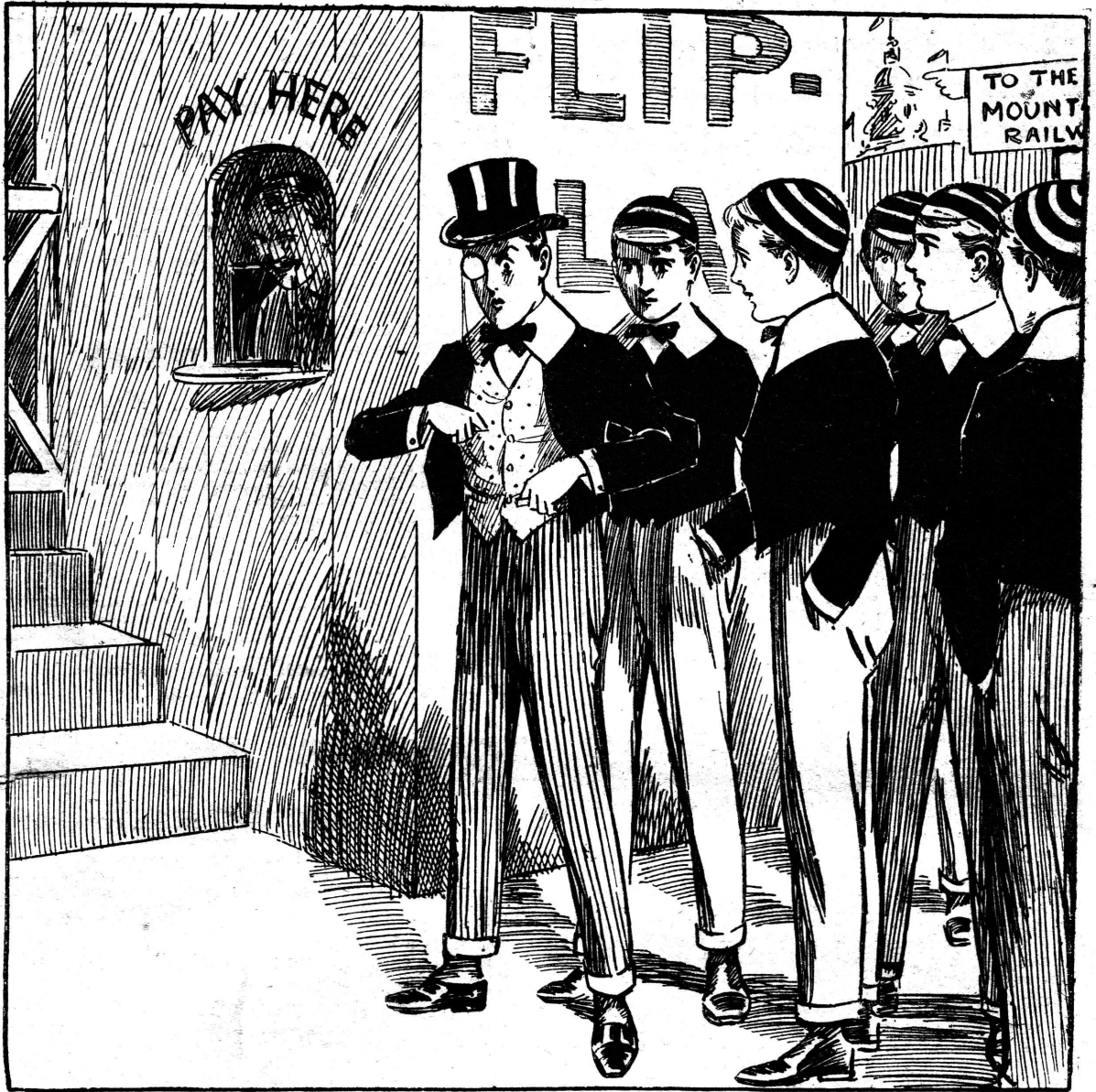
"Bai Jove! You extwvavagant young boundah—"

Wally smiled loftily.

"Oh, we're doing the thing in style!" he remarked. "I dare say we shall see you excursionists at the Exhibition!"

"Wally—"

The taxi came buzzing up, and Wally & Co. tumbled into it. They grinned and waved their hands as the taxicab buzzed off, and was lost in the traffic.



"It's my turn to pay," said Arthur Augustus. "I think I had better change another fivah. I shall want some change." He felt in his waistcoat pocket for the little leather purse. A puzzled look came over his face. The pocket was empty. "Bai jove!" he ejaculated.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "Upon the whole, we may as well go in taxis. It's weally much quickah, and more comfy."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "You're not going to waste your money! This way for the motor-'bus!"

"Weally—"
"Come on!"

Arthur Augustus was helped upon a motor-'bus, and he conceded the point. The seven juniors clambered on top of the 'bus, and filled up most of one side of it. They started off, and looked round them with great interest as the big vehicle, the modern wonder of the London streets, rolled westward, threading through the traffic.

It was a glorious summer's day, and the Park looked very green as they rolled on past the railings, towards the western suburb of Shepherd's Bush.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as Shepherd's Bush Green came in sight ahead. "This way for the Exhibit!"

The juniors descended.

They followed the crowd into the Exhibition building. The fine afternoon had brought a goodly number of visitors there, as well as the juniors of St. Jim's. The juniors went right

on to the grounds, and the famous White City burst upon their gaze.

They had seen it before, having visited the place when the Franco-British Exhibition was held there. But they were very glad to see it again.

"It's wippin'!" said D'Arcy.

And the juniors agreed that it was.

"By George, it's a long way past lunch-time!" said Jack Blake, looking at his watch. "I suggest that we open the proceedings with a lunch."

"Jollay good ideah, deah boy!"

"Hallo, cocky!" said a voice in the crowd.

D'Arcy swung round.

Wally grinned at him.

"Thought we should see you again," he remarked.

"Have you been on anything yet?"

"We've only just arrived," said Tom Merry.

"Slow coaches!" said Wally cheerfully. "Did I just hear you say you were looking for a place to lunch? I can show you a ripping place!"

"You are vevy good, deah boy—"

"Not at all," said Wally, with a wink at his comrades. "We're ready for lunch, and we'll come with you. We'll let you stand the lunch, if you like, Gussy!"

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"Weally, Wally—"

"That's all right; no thanks needed," said Wally affably. "This way. There's a ripping restaurant, and you can get five-bob lunches, you know."

"Better look for something cheaper, I should say," said Blake.

"Rats!" said Wally. "Gussy doesn't like things that are cheap and nasty. This way for the grub department!"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm standin' the lunch, you know, deah boys!"

"Oh, go ahead, then!"

Wally led the way. Jameson and Gibson grinned serenely. They were quite ready for lunch, and they meant to do it full justice. Wally had started from Eastwood that morning with four sovereigns in his pocket. He had taken only single tickets, but that had made a hole in his funds, and the taxis from Charing Cross had made another. Since then he had been spending money right and left, paying for three; and so the hero of the Third Form at St. Jim's was rapidly approaching the state known as "stony."

The meeting with D'Arcy under the circumstances was a windfall.

The party entered the big restaurant and sat down at three little tables in a group, and two or three waiters came up at once.

Wally, who was already showing signs of wear and tear, would probably not have gained much attention himself; but D'Arcy, in his immaculate attire, with his gleaming eyeglass, and equally gleaming silk hat, naturally impressed the waiters. D'Arcy showed by every look that he was the kind of person from whom substantial tips could be easily extracted.

The regulation lunch, which Wally had announced as a "five-bob" one, was served, and the juniors did it full justice. Then Wally, in the serene consciousness of the fact that he would not be called upon to foot the bill, gave orders for further supplies.

"You can get strawberries and cream here," he remarked.

"Could you do with any strawberries and cream, kids?"

"What-ho!" said Jameson.

"Can a duck swim?" murmured Curly Gibson.

"Waiter! Strawberries and cream!"

"Yes, sir!"

"About time we moved on, I think," said Tom Merry, laughing. "If we stay here till those young bounders are finished feeding, we sha'n't have much time to see the sights."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hold on!" said Wally. "Ask for the bill, Gussy—and we'll have another lot of strawberries and cream, and you can have it put down at the same time. And some ices!"

"What-ho!" said Jameson and Gibson.

"Weally, Wally—"

"I suppose you're not going to be mean, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, deah boy; but I am afraid you will do some injury to your inside if you keep on like this."

"Oh, my inside's all right!" grinned Wally. "You foot the bill, and don't bother your head about anything else!"

"Yaas! But— Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy broke off suddenly, his eyes fixed upon a man who had entered the restaurant, and sat down at the next table.

CHAPTER 6.

An Old Acquaintance.

TOM MERRY glanced at D'Arcy, and saw blank astonishment in his face, and then he followed the direction of the elegant junior's gaze. Then he, too, uttered an exclamation of surprise, which was echoed by Blake.

"Captain Punter!"

The man at the next table was a slim fellow with a moustache, and a bearing that seemed to indicate a military training. His face was somewhat thin, and very keen, and his eyes like those of a hawk. He was not bad-looking, but there was the unmistakable stamp of the adventurer upon him.

He heard the exclamation of the juniors, and started, and looked quickly round. For a moment the colour changed in his sallow face.

The next moment he smiled.

Monty Lowther and Manners and Digby and Herries looked perplexed. They did not know the man by sight. As for Wally & Co., they were too busy with the second supply of strawberries and cream to take much note of anything else.

"What's the trouble?" asked Lowther. "Who's the chap?"

"Captain Punter."

"Punter!"

"Don't you remember?" said Tom Merry, in a low, excited voice. "It was the time we went to my uncle's

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place in the United States. Punter was a sharper on the steamer, and tried to take us in, and he kidnapped Gussy in New York afterwards. I told you all about it when we came home to St. Jim's."

Lowther nodded.

"And that's the chap?" he asked.

"That's the rotter!"

"He ought to be arrested," said Manners.

"Sure you're not making a mistake?" asked Digby. "He looks cool enough, and it would be no joke to accuse the wrong man."

Tom Merry shook his head. He had seen enough of the adventurer at one time, and he was not likely to forget his features.

"Bai Jove, I should wemembah him anywhere!" said Arthur Augustus, jamming his monocle into his eye, and regarding the captain. "He was always a vewy cool wascal; but what surprises me is his coolness in sittin' there, when he knows we've recognised him."

"Better let him alone, so long as he lets us alone," said Tom Merry, after a moment's thought. "We don't want a row."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Thanks awfully for the feed, Gussy!" said Wally, rising. "We'll see you again about tea-time. Ta-ta!"

And the chums of the Third chuckled and walked off. D'Arcy hardly noticed them go. All his attention was fixed upon Captain Punter. The captain was looking over the menu with perfect nonchalance. Yet it was evident from his smile that he had recognised the juniors.

"I must speak to him," said D'Arcy.

"Better not."

"Weally, you know—"

"No good having a row here," urged Tom Merry.

"I trust you do not imagine me capable of havin' a wov anywhah, deah boy," said D'Arcy, in a stately way. "I must speak to Puntah, and warn him off. I am sure that he has followed us here."

"My dear chap, he couldn't possibly have known that we were coming—"

"Wats!"

"All sorts of rascals are bound to come here for what they can pick up in the crowd," Lowther remarked. "Punter is only one of them."

"Howevah—"

"Here's the waiter with the bill, Gussy."

"Pway change this five-pound note, deah boy."

D'Arcy laid the five-pound note on the bill, and crossed to Captain Punter's table. There was no stopping the swell of St. Jim's when he had made up his mind. He put his russet-leather purse back into his waistcoat pocket as he stepped towards the captain. Punter's eyes glimmered for a moment.

"Puntah!"

The captain looked up.

"Eh?" he said. "I beg your pardon."

"I know you, Puntah."

"What?"

"I tell you I know you," said D'Arcy angrily.

"Excuse me," said the captain affably, "I fancy there is some mistake. My name is Williams—John Williams."

"Your name may be John Williams now," said D'Arcy scornfully; "but it was Puntah when I met you on the steamah, and when you kidnapped me in New York."

"I am sorry for your friend," said Punter, raising his voice a little and addressing Tom Merry & Co. "I suppose he is harmless? Had you not better get him away?"

The rascal's coolness was amazing.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "If you come to that, we all know you are Punter, and you are liable to be arrested for what you did in New York."

"Never been in New York in my life," said Punter lazily. "Will you take this excited young person away, or shall I ask the waiter to have him removed?"

D'Arcy turned crimson.

"You uttah wascal—"

"Please go away."

"I wegard you—"

"Really—"

"I wegard you as an uttah wottah and feahful rascal!" said D'Arcy, approaching nearer the captain in his excitement. "If it were not for makin' a wov in a public place, I would give you a feahful thwashin'."

Captain Punter gently pushed the swell of St. Jim's away. "I give you one more chance," he said. "If you do not

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clear off, I will send for a policeman. I have never seen you before."

"Bai Jove—"

Jark Blake and Tom Merry pulled the swell of St. Jim's back. He looked as if he were going to rush on the captain.

"Welease me!"

"Cheese it, Gussy! You can't make a row here."

"But—"

"Waiter—waiter!" rapped out the captain.

Two or three waiters were approaching. They placed themselves between D'Arcy and the captain. D'Arcy's waiter brought him his change, and the junior slipped it carelessly into his trousers pocket, leaving a half-crown on the plate for the waiter. The waiters exchanged grins, and edged him towards the door. The juniors aided, and in a couple of minutes D'Arcy was outside the restaurant.

The swell of St. Jim's was looking very excited.

"The uttah wascal!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, but it's no good having a row," said Manners.

"He's not here on our account."

"Yaas, but—"

"Let him alone!"

"Vevy well. At the same time, I feel sure that the uttah wascal is up to some mischief," said D'Arcy. "Howevah, I will let the mattah dwop."

The juniors moved away. Meanwhile, the captain, without eating his lunch, had risen hurriedly, and was leaving the restaurant by another exit. Either the encounter with the St. Jim's juniors had taken his appetite away, or he had reasons of his own for a hurried departure.

"This way for the show!" said Tom Merry, slipping his arm through D'Arcy's. "Keep cool, old chap; if you lose your temper, you never catch any fish, you know."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Here's the scenic railway. Let's get on!"

"Vevy well."

Tom Merry paid the sixpences, and the juniors filed in. They took their seats in the car for the run on the scenic railway.

"Take care of your topper, Gussy," said Monty Lowther, from the seat behind. "It will blow off, as sure as a gun!"

"That's all wight, deah boy. I shall hold it all the time."

"Take your seats!" bawled the attendant.

The juniors had bagged the front seats. The car started, and they rushed away down the incline. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy held his topper on with one hand, and secured his eyeglass with the other. His gold-headed cane was tightly clutched between his knees.

"Bai Jove," he gasped, as the car made the first sudden swoop downward—"bai Jove!"

His topper had suddenly been torn away from his head, despite his protecting grasp on the rim, and the swell of St. Jim's half-rose in his seat. Tom Merry dragged him down again.

"Sit down, you ass!" he shouted.

"My toppah—"

"Blow your topper!"

"It's gone!"

"Let it go."

"But—"

"Sit tight!"

"But weally—"

"Do you want to be killed, ass?"

"I wegard that as a widiculous question, and I wefuse to be called an ass. My toppah—"

"Sit tight!"

And Tom Merry's firm grasp upon the swell of St. Jim's compelled him to sit tight, and he swept on his way in the swooping car, hatless.

CHAPTER 7.

D'Arcy Recovers His Hat.

"Bai Jove!"

"Sit tight!"

"This is ripping!"

"But my hat—"

"Hurray!"

The car swept on, and the second abrupt slope made D'Arcy catch his breath. He clung to his eyeglass, determined that that should not follow his hat. He thought of his beautiful silk topper with dismay.

"My hat will be wuined!" he murmured in Tom Merry's ear.

The Shell fellow nodded cheerfully.

"Very likely," he assented.

"But I have no othah hat with me, deah boy."

"Never mind."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's all right."

"I wefuse to wegard it as all wight. I cannot go about for the west of the day without a hat," said Arthur Augustus

indignantly. "I shall insist upon goin' and buyin' a new hat the moment we get off the cah."

"Rats!"

"Perhaps the hat may be found," said Monty Lowther, from the seat behind.

"That's not likely, deah boy."

"Here we are again," said Blake.

The car stopped.

The juniors scrambled off and moved towards the exit, Monty Lowther keeping behind Arthur Augustus. When they stood in the open again, D'Arcy adjusted his glass in his eye, and looked round.

"Looking for anything?" asked Lowther, who had his hands behind him. And the rest of the juniors chuckled.

D'Arcy looked at them in surprise.

"I weally do not see any cause for laughtah," he said. "Yes; I am lookin' for a hattah's. I think there may pewpaps be a hattah's shop inside the Exhibish."

"But—"

"I must get a new hat at once."

"It might be possible to find the old one," suggested Lowther.

"I should be vevy much obliged to you if you could do so, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "But—"

"Here you are, then."

Monty Lowther brought his hands round from behind him, and held up the hat.

D'Arcy stared at it in astonishment.

"Bai Jove! My hat!"

"Yes, your hat," said Lowther. "Here it is. I've saved it for you."

"Gweat Scott!" said D'Arcy, taking the hat, still in a state of great surprise. "Did you catch it as it blew off, deah boy?"

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

"Weally, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am vevy much obliged to you, Lowthah. I wegard this as a vevy gweat service indeed. As for you fellows, I considah you a set of cacklin' asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther almost doubled up in merriment. D'Arcy gazed at him, and at the others, in surprise. He did not see anything to laugh at. But as he gazed at Lowther, a glimmering of the truth dawned upon his mind.

"Bai Jove! Did you jerk my hat off, you wascal?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then it wasn't the wind blew it off at all, you uttah wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Hold my hat for a minute, Blake, while I give Lowthah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of St. Jim's pressed the hat upon Jack Blake, and squared up to Monty Lowther. Lowther dodged behind Tom Merry, and D'Arcy pursued him wrathfully.

Blake put the hat on the ground, and raised his foot as if to bring it down on the crown, and crush the topper. D'Arcy gave a shout and dashed towards him.

"Blake! Stop! You ass! By Jove!"

He snatched up the topper.

"Keep the peace, then," said Blake severely.

"Weally, Blake—"

"How dare you behave like a hooligan on a holiday?" demanded Blake. "This isn't a beanfeast. I'm ashamed of you!"

"Weally, you know—" murmured D'Arcy feebly.

"A regular hooligan, isn't he?" remarked Manners. "I wonder how you stand him in the Fourth Form, Blake."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Well, it's all right if he apologises to Lowther," said Tom Merry. "Are you prepared to apologise, Gussy?"

"Certainly not. Lowther played a wotten trick on me—"

"Apologise!"

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

"I'm waiting for the apology," said Monty Lowther, with an air of great dignity. "I shall not insist upon it; I leave it to Gussy's own proper feeling."

The swell of St. Jim's looked dazed.

"But I am the offended partay!" he exclaimed. "There is nothin' whatevah to apologise to Lowthah for, but—"

"Oh, Gussy!"

"This is very rotten for us," said Blake sadly. "I've noticed this deterioration in Gussy for some time. I attribute it partly to the influence of his minor."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I will waive the apology, for the sake of peace and quiet," said Lowther magnanimously. "But I think Gussy

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"ought to give some undertaking to behave himself for the rest of the day. That's the least he can do."

"The very least," agreed Manners. "What do you say, Gussy?"

"Wats! I——"
"I'm afraid Gussy's character is deteriorating entirely," said Blake. "This is what comes of reading novels and newspaper serials——"

"You uttah ass! I nevah wead the newspapahs!" shrieked D'Arcy indignantly. "As for apologising to Lowthah, I wegard the apology as bein' due to me, but I am willin' to take the word of you fellows. I am sowwy, Lowthah."

"Very well," said Lowther generously. "I overlook it this once, but don't let it occur again. Mind that."
"Weally, I am not likely to let you jerk my hat off again if I can help it, but——"

"It's all over!" said Blake. "Come on! This way for the flip-flap!"

And the juniors walked off.
"It's my turn to pay," said Arthur Augustus. "I think I had bettah change anoathah fivah. I shall want some change."

He felt in his waistcoat pocket for the little leather purse. A puzzled look came over his face. The pocket was empty!

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"What's the matter?" asked Tom Merry, looking round.

"My purse isn't here."

"You've put it in some other pocket."

"Bai Jove, I never thought of that!"

D'Arcy had four pockets to his waistcoat, and he felt in each of them. But the leather purse was not there. Then he went methodically through the rest of his pockets. The juniors stopped, and stood looking on. It was a serious matter if the purse was lost, for nearly all D'Arcy's money was in it, and he had a considerable sum.

He went through pocket after pocket, his face growing longer and more serious all the time.

At last he ceased. Every pocket had been examined, and his hands were empty. The purse was not to be found.

"Well?" said Tom Merry.

"It's not here, deah boy!"

"Quite sure?"

"I've been through evey pocket!"

"Perhaps it's gone through the lining," suggested Digby. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Digby with a crushing look.

"There are no holes in my linings," he said.

"There might be; feel again."

"Imposs."

"Where did you put the purse?" said Tom Merry. "Let me see the pocket."

D'Arcy indicated the lower right pocket of his waistcoat. Tom Merry inserted his forefinger into it. The pocket was certainly empty.

"Well, it's not there," he remarked.

"Bai Jove, it isn't!"

"Was there much in it, Gussy?" asked Herries.

"I don't know exactly, deah boy. I wemebah there were two fivahs and some gold," said D'Arcy. "It was all I had, beside the change in my twousahs' pocket."

"Too much to lose," said Tom Merry anxiously.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Must have dropped out on the scenic railway," suggested Digby.

"I am sure not, deah boy. It had nevah droppod out of my pocket before."

"When did you use it last?"

"Payin' the waitah at the westauwant."

"Sure you put it back in your pocket?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Looks to me as if his pocket's been picked," said Monty Lowther. "There's bound to be a certain number of pick-pockets at a place like this."

"Bai Jove! I hope this isn't anoathah of your wotten jokes, Lowthah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, turning suddenly upon the humorist of the Shell.

"No, ass," said Lowther, a little taken aback, "of course not. Do you think I should take a purse for a lark, you ass?"

"You took my toppah——"

"That's a different matter, fathead——"

"I wufuse to be called a fathead——"

"His pocket's been picked," said Tom Merry. "The question is, who did it? Did you notice anybody shove against you after leaving the restaurant, Gussy?"

"No. I was walkin' with you fellows, you know."

"In the restaurant, then?" asked Digby.

D'Arcy gave a start.

"Bai Jove!"

"Hallo! Have you thought of something?"

"Yaas, wathah!" ejaculated D'Arcy excitedly. "The wascal!"

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"What?"

"The uttah villain!"

"Who?"

"The feahful boundah!"

"Eh?"

"The awful wottah!"

"Who?" roared the juniors.

Tom Merry shook the swell of St. Jim's by the shoulder.

"Have you guessed who was the thief?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Who, then?"

"The beastly wottah——"

"But who was it?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Ow! Pway don't shake me like that, Tom Mewwy; it thwows me into quite a fluttah!"

"Who was it, then?" bawled Tom Merry.

"That feahful wascal!"

"What fearful rascal?"

"Puntah!"

"Punter!" ejaculated the juniors, in a chorus of surprise.

Arthur Augustus nodded emphatically.

"Yaas, wathah! That awful wottah, Puntah! Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 8.

Stop Thief.

"PUNTER!"
"Yaas!" said Arthur Augustus. "Puntah, of course. I wemebah now that he pushed me with his hand—tapped me on the waistcoat, bai Jove! He must have picked my pocket at that vevy moment, you know—the wottah!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I shouldn't wonder if Gussy's right," he remarked.

"Of course I am wight, deah boy!"

"Punter's captured the purse," said Monty Lowther, with a nod. "But there's no getting it back again now, so——"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"So we may as well go on the flip-flap," said Lowther philosophically.

D'Arcy turned his monocle witheringly upon the Shell fellow.

"I wufuse to go on the flip-flap," he said. "I cannot afford to lose twelve or fourteen pounds, Lowthah, and I should in any case decline to leave my money in the hands of that uttah wottah. I am goin' to have Puntah awwested."

"He'll be gone——"

"We may catch him if we huwwy——"

"But——"

"He won't have finished his lunch yet," said Arthur Augustus. "He hadn't started it when we left the restaurant, you know."

"You ass!" roared Blake. "Do you think he would stop and finish his lunch there, if he had just picked your pocket. He would make himself scarce."

"He would go off at once," said Tom Merry. "If we find him in the restaurant, it's pretty clear proof that he never picked your pocket."

"Yaas, but we can have him awwested and searched. He may not have been able to get away yet. Pway follow me."

"But——"

"Wun like anythin', deah boys!"

"But——"

D'Arcy did not wait to argue. He broke into a run, and dashed off in the direction of the restaurant.

It was some distance from the spot where Arthur Augustus had discovered his loss, and the swell of St. Jim's was in a great hurry.

He dashed along, threading his way through the crowd, holding on his silk hat with one hand as he ran. People turned round on all sides to watch him in surprise.

"The ass!" gasped Tom Merry. "Punter's been gone long enough, if he's got the purse—it's better to look for him anywhere than in the restaurant now."

"Yes, rather!"

"We must go after Gussy, or he'll get into some mischief," exclaimed Blake. "Look there—he's running into somebody already."

Arthur Augustus had dodged out of the way of a stout lady, and ran fairly into the arms of a still stouter gentleman.

The shock was terrific.

The stout gentleman staggered back, and gasped, and almost fell; and D'Arcy, recoiling from the impact, dropped on the ground in a sitting posture.

"Ow!" he gasped.

The stout gentleman gasped painfully.

He gripped his umbrella, and made breathlessly towards Arthur Augustus, with the evident intention of inflicting condign punishment.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

"You young ruffian!" roared the stout gentleman, purple with rage and breathlessness. "You young hooligan! I'll—"

"Bai Jove! Wescue!"
Arthur Augustus sprang to his feet, jammed on his topper, and turned to flee. The umbrella swept down, and there was a loud crack from the topper.

"Oh," roared D'Arcy, "my topper!"
The crowd roared with laughter. The old gentleman made another swipe, and the damaged topper sailed off D'Arcy's head. The swell of St. Jim's rushed in pursuit of the hat, and the stout gentleman rushed in pursuit of D'Arcy, the umbrella in the air again for a third swipe.

"My word," gasped Digby, "that old chap must have got heaps of boundaries in his youth! Poor old Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Augustus grabbed up his hat and fled, without attempting to replace it on his head. The umbrella just missed him as the old gentleman stopped, out of breath. The swell of St. Jim's dashed on.

Tom Merry & Co. ran in pursuit.
"That's right!" exclaimed the stout gentleman, imagining them to be allies. "Stop him! Catch him! Hold him till I come up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
And the stout gentleman dashed after the junior with a crimson face, waving his umbrella. The sight of D'Arcy running at top speed, with the boys and the red-faced old gentleman tearing after him, attracted attention from all sides. Others joined in the pursuit, as people will, without knowing why or how. It was not long before someone raised the cry of "Stop thief!"

Then there was excitement.
"Stop thief!"
"My hat!" muttered Tom Merry, in dismay. "Now, there will be fireworks!"

"Thief!"
"Stop thief!"
D'Arcy heard the cries, and saw people joining in the chase on all sides; but he did not connect the alarm with himself. He was thinking only of running Punter to earth before the rascal had time to escape.

He dashed on at top speed towards the restaurant, with a crowd yelling at his heels. He dashed into the building, and towards the table where he had left Punter.

Captain Punter was not there. But a waiter was—with a laden tray which he was taking to a new diner. D'Arcy dashed right on, and the waiter did not escape in time. As for D'Arcy, he did not even see the man till he was upon him.

There was a terrific collision.
Crash!
The waiter went to the floor, and with him the tray and its contents. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered back, and regarded the wreck with dismay.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

CHAPTER 9.

Almost Arrested.

"STOP thief!"
"There he is!"
"Collar him!"

"Seize him!"
"There's the thief!"
Five or six pairs of hands were laid at once upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's jumped in his astonishment.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.
"Got him!"
"We've got him!"
"Here he is!"
"Call a policeman!"
"Wescue! Help! Welease me!"
"We've got him!"

The waiter sprawled among broken dishes unheeded. D'Arcy struggled in the grasp of his assailants; but the harder he struggled, the more tightly they held him. The chums of St. Jim's came up panting.

"Wescue!" gasped D'Arcy.
"Here's the thief!" bawled the officious person whose grasp was upon the swell of St. Jim's. "Call a policeman!"
"Police! Police!"

"Ere! Wot's all this 'ere?" demanded a deep voice.
And the law, in the person of a stout, red-faced policeman, appeared upon the scene. Tom Merry & Co., who were about to rush to the rescue of the elegant junior, paused. It would not do to rush the man of law.

"Wot's all this?"
"He's a thief."
"We've arrested him."

"Take him in charge, officer."
"Bai Jove, I'm not a thief, you know!" wailed D'Arcy.
"I'm lookin' for a thief! I was wunnin' aftah the wascal who wobbed me!"

There was a burst of mocking laughter.
"Likely story," said a young man with a white waistcoat, who had been foremost in seizing D'Arcy—"likely story! You can't take the officer in with that."

"He, he, he!"
"Tell us another."
"But it is weally the twuth. Officah, I call upon you to ordah these wottahs to take their hands off me, or I will not be wespensible for the consequences. They are wumplin' my clothes and soilin' my collah!"

"You'd better make a clean breast of it, young feller," said the constable, with a portentous frown. "Now; then, who has he robbed?"

"I haven't wobbed anybody!"
"Here's the man," said the youth, in the white waistcoat, indicating the stout gentleman, who had come up gasping, still with a business-like grip upon his umbrella, as if ready to use it again if he had a chance. "This is the gentleman who was after him."

The officer turned to the stout gentleman.
"What has he robbed you of, sir?"
"Eh?"

"What has he robbed you of?"
"He! Who?"
"This young pickpocket, sir."

"Pickpocket! Is he a pickpocket?" exclaimed the stout gentleman. "Well, I am not surprised at it. A person who would run into me in such a way would be quite capable of picking pockets. Quite capable."

"Weally!"
"What has he taken from you, sir?"
"From me?"

"Yes, from you!" said the constable testily. "That's wot I said."

"Nothing, that I know of," said the stout gentleman, looking flurried. "Wait a minute, officer, while I go through my pockets. If you know him to be a thief—"

"But I don't," said the policeman curtly, beginning to see that there was probably some mistake. "These people say he's one, and that he robbed you."

"Not at all, not at all."
"You were running after him," exclaimed the youth in the white waistcoat.

"Yes, yes, but—"
"And shouting stop thief."
"No, I was not shouting. I had no breath for shouting. The young hooligan ran into me, sir, and completely winded me. I was going to punish him for that."

"Who called stop thief, then?" asked the policeman.
"Somebody did," said the hero of the white waistcoat.
"I collared him first, too. He's a thief. You can see for yourself that he looks like a thief. Well-dressed, too—one of the swell mob, of course."

"Bai Jove!"
"Gussy taken for a swell mobsman!" gasped Blake. "Oh, my only hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Weally, you fellows, you might speak up for a fellow, instead of standin' cacklin' there when a chap's chawactah is at stake!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

The constable looked at the juniors. He could see now that they were a party of schoolboys on a visit to the Exhibition. He needed no more to show him that a mistake had been made. The hero of the white waistcoat was already retreating, feeling that he had made himself a little too conspicuous already.

"Do you know this feller, young gentlemen?" asked the constable.

"I wefuse to be called a feller!"
"Shut up, Gussy!"
"But I wefuse—"
"Dry up, you ass!"
"Weally, Blake—"

"Yes, we know him, officer," said Tom Merry hurriedly. "He's one of us—a friend of ours, I mean. He's had his pocket picked, and he was running here to look for the thief, when he biffed the old gentleman—I mean, ran into him. That's all."

"Yaas, wathah!"
The constable took out a notebook.

"Very well," he said. "Must have the names and addresses. Yours first, please," he added, turning to the stout gentleman.

"Nonsense, sir. You don't want my name and address," said the stout individual. "I have nothing whatever to do with the matter."

"Name and address, please," said the constable, unmoved.

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And the stout gentleman, snorting with wrath, gave it, and stamped away in great indignation, evidently with an impression upon his mind that one might as well be living in Russia. Tom Merry grinned, and gave his own name, and D'Arcy gave his in his most stately manner, presenting a card to the surprised constable.

"And now about this robbery?" said the constable, evidently pleased to see that there had really been a robbery after all. "Particulars, please."

Arthur Augustus explained.

"Punter!" said the constable. "Don't know the name! But the rascal might have more than one alias. Lemme see, two five-pound notes. Know the numbers?"

"No, I nevah take the numbahs," said D'Arcy. "My governah may be able to find them out fwom the bankah."

"H'm! Description of purse—russia leather—h'm!" The constable closed his notebook with a snap. "We'll do our best, sir. That's all I can say."

"Thank you very much, officah. Pewwaps you would be kind enough to accept this half-sovereign."

"Thank you, sir."

"That's the last half-sovereign," said D'Arcy, as the policeman departed. "You fellows will have to stand the exes to-day, aftah all, unless my purse turns up. I suppose we are finished here? That wascal Puntah has disapeahed, aftah all. We may as well go."

"You'll pay for the damage first, please," said the damaged waiter, aggressively barring the juniors' path.

"Bai Jove, I had forgotten that! It was weally vey weakless of you to get into my way, you know, waitah."

The waiter snorted.

"If he knew you better he'd have given you a wide berth," grinned Blake. "But it's all right, Gussy! You've got to pay."

"I'm not objectin' to payin', Blake, but—"

"Well, pay, then, and get done."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"How much?" asked Blake.

"Five shillings, sir," said the waiter; "and that's nothing for me, and I've been hurt—cruel hurt, sir."

"Five bob for him, too, Gussy; you can't do less."

"Thank you, sir!"

"Vewy well!" said D'Arcy, feeling in his pocket. "Five shillin's for the bweackages, and five shillin's for the waitah. That's half-a-sovereign."

"Well, pay up!"

"Unfortunately, I have only a few shillings left," said D'Arcy. "But it's all wight; you can pay, Blake!"

"My hat!"

"And pway give the waitah an extwa half-crown. I weally think he deserves it."

Blake handed over twelve shillings and sixpence without a word. Then they left the restaurant.

"I'm stonay now, deah boys," D'Arcy remarked.

"So am I," said Blake grimly.

"Vewy good! Tom Mewwy can do the payin'," said Arthur Augustus. "It's all one, you know. I twust we shall meet Figgins & Co. by the time Tom Mewwy is bwoke."

And the chums of St. Jim's made their way to the flip-flap.

CHAPTER 10.

On the Flip-Flap.

"TOM MEWWY!"

"Hallo!"

"I have been thinkin'—"

"Oh, draw it mild, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, in a tone of remonstrance. "You can't palm off a yarn like that on us!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Well, draw it mild!"

"I have been thinkin'—"

"What with?"

"I wufuse to answah that widiculous question, Lowthah," said D'Arcy. "I wegard you as an ass. I have been thinkin' that, as Tom Mewwy has the funds of the partay now, he had bettah place them in my hands."

"What?"

"It would be a wathah sewious mattah for us to get stonay in a place like this, and it might easily happen if you lost your money," explained D'Arcy. "It will be safer to place it undah my care."

"Well, my hat!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"After havin' his own pocket picked, too!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Well, lightning never strikes twice in the same place, you know," grinned Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That was an extwaordinawy occuwrence," said D'Arcy. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 132.

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"Of course, nothin' of that sort could happen again. I was vewy indignant with Puntah, and that is how I came to be off my guard, you know."

"You might get indignant with somebody else—"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"I think I'll look after the tin," said Tom Merry.

"But it would be vewy sewious if it were lost."

"That's why I'm going to look after it," said Tom Merry blandly.

"Weally, deah—"

"This way for the flip-flap!"

"But—"

"You're blocking up the way, Gussy."

"Yaas, but—"

"I hope," said Blake solemnly, "that you'll apologise to that lady you've just shoved into, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy swung round like lightning, hat in hand.

"My deah madam, I beg your pardon— Bai Jove!"

The swell of St. Jim's stopped abruptly as he saw that it was an automatic sweet machine that he was apologising to.

It was the machine he had pushed against.

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard that as a wotten twick, Blake!"

"Oh, come on, Gussy! This way for the flip-flap."

And the juniors crowded into the entrance of the flip-flap, and found themselves upon the rising platform.

"This way, sir!" said an attendant to D'Arcy. "I'll find you a seat, sir."

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy!"

D'Arcy felt in his pocket as he sat down. There was nothing there.

"Give this chap a shilling for me, Dig."

Dig grunted, and obeyed. The man touched his cap, and disappeared.

"What the dickens did you want to give him a shilling for?" asked Blake.

"For findin' me a seat, deah boy."

Blake glared.

"You utter chump! The seats are here, and they're free to all. And you couldn't possibly miss them, could you?"

"Bai Jove, you know, I nevah thought of that!"

"Ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass."

"Oh, let him drop all his tin here," said Tom Merry resignedly. "That's what an Exhibition is for, anyway."

"But it wasn't my tin; it was Dig's tin."

"Hallo! We're going up!"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass to and fro as the platform of the flip-flap rose in the air. Certainly the flip-flap afforded a wonderful view of the White City and the adjacent neighbourhood of Shepherd's Bush.

But D'Arcy's glance fell upon two girlish figures in the crowd below and three fellows with them, in St. Jim's caps.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter now?"

"There's Cousin Ethel!"

"Where? By George, so it is! And Miss Phyllis, and Figgins & Co.!"

The juniors waved their caps.

Figgins caught sight of them, and waved his cap, and Kerr gave a piercing whistle, and Fatty Wynn grinned all over his plump face.

"By Jove, they might like to come up with us!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "Here, stop the machine! Do you hear, you fellows? I want you to go down again for my fwiends."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway stop that cacklin', deah boys! Where is the man who works this contwivance? I want him to stop for Cousin Ethel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

D'Arcy broke off, and rushed away to get the machine stopped.

Tom Merry caught him by the arm and dragged him back.

"Hold on, Gussy—"

"Pway release me! I—"

"It's too late, you ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry, almost choking with laughter. "They can't stop the machine, and they won't. Stop here!"

"But Cousin Ethel—"

"It's too late, ass!"

"It is nevah too late to be courteous to a lady, Tom Mewwy," said D'Arcy witheringly. "I wegard you as a wank boundah!"

The flip-flap rose higher and higher, and the people became like ants below.

D'Arcy gave up the idea of making the man at the wheel—so to speak—stop for his friends below. It was evidently impossible; but the impossibility ruffled the swell of St. Jim's considerably.

The machine ceased to work, and the elevated platform was stationary, and the juniors saw the vast Exhibition spread before them like a panorama.

"Ripping!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"It was indeed a splendid sight in the fine, clear weather. Then the platform slowly descended.

It became stationary at last, and the people crowded off, and the juniors of St. Jim's went with them. In the fine weather the Exhibition was crowded, and there were long columns of people waiting to get on the flip-flap.

As he came off, D'Arcy looked round for Figgins & Co., but he failed to see them.

"They're here somewhere," said Tom Merry.

"You fellows remain here, and mind you don't wandah away and get lost, and I'll look for them, and bring them here," said Arthur Augustus.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Blake.

He made a grasp at D'Arcy. But he was too late; the swell of St. Jim's had plunged into the crowd, and he had disappeared in a moment.

Blake fairly snorted.

"The ass! I wonder when we shall find him again?" he exclaimed.

"Hallo!" exclaimed a cheerful voice at Blake's elbow.

"Here you are!"

"Figgins!"

"Cousin Ethel!"

The next minute Tom Merry & Co. were shaking hands with Cousin Ethel and Miss Phyllis and their companions.

But Arthur Augustus did not return.

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy is Robbed Again!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was looking for Figgins & Co.

He made his way as well as he could towards the spot where he had seen them—or what he believed was the spot. Doubtless they had moved; still more probably D'Arcy was heading for the wrong spot. At all events, he walked hither and thither, and was carried to and fro by the crowd, without sighting his friends from St. Jim's.

The elegant junior stopped at last in dismay.

"By Jove, I believe I have lost them!" he exclaimed aloud. "It's vevy wotten. And pewpaws when I get back Tom Mewwy may have wandered away, and I shall have to find those boundahs. These careless duffahs are a great twial to a fellow's feelin's."

"Here he is!" exclaimed a voice.

D'Arcy turned round, in the hope that it was one of the St. Jim's juniors who had sighted him. But it was not. It was a young gentleman with a white waistcoat and a pimply face, whom the swell of St. Jim's had seen before. It was the individual who had been so very forward in seizing him when the cry of "Stop thief!" was raised.

The hero of the white waistcoat had two other fellows with him, in resplendent neckties and straw hats with coloured bands to them.

"Oh, that's the mug, is it?" said one of them, staring at D'Arcy.

"That's the chap."

"And you caught him, Archie?"

"Yes, I caught him!" said the youth in the white waistcoat. "He fooled the policeman, and got off; but he can't fool me."

"He ought to be run in!"

"Yes, rather, he ought!"

"Blessed pickpocket! And how swellish we're dressed, too!"

"Very toffy!" said Archie.

D'Arcy jammed his monocle more tightly into his eye, and regarded the three youths with a rapidly crimsoning face.

"You uttah wottahs!" he exclaimed, at last.

"Hallo!" said Archie facetiously. "It can talk!"

"He, he, he!"

D'Arcy clenched his fists and advanced towards his tormentors. The three youths evidently regarded him as an elegant dude whom they could safely chip. But they did not know Arthur D'Arcy.

"You feahful wascals!" he exclaimed. "Pway put up your hands. I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"All at once?" grinned Archie.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He, he, he! Ow!"

Archie's "He, he, he!" was cut short by a tap on the nose. He staggered back, and then he put up his fists and rushed at D'Arcy.

D'Arcy met him with a quick upper-cut that laid him on his back, with a bump that shook the dust out of his clothes.

"Ow!" groaned Archie.

The next instant D'Arcy was attacked by the other two. He defended himself well, and would probably have given a good account of both of them, had not Archie jumped up and joined in again.

The three of them together were too much for the swell of St. Jim's, and, as it happened, the crowd had surged away from the place, and he was alone with them. Two or three passers saw the "row," but judged that it was no business of theirs, and did not interfere.

D'Arcy's eyeglass was swinging at the end of its cord, his silk hat was on the ground, his collar was rumped, and his tie disarranged.

But the swell of St. Jim's recked not of those trifles now.

He hit out and guarded incessantly, and though the three "bounders" were getting the better of it, they did not have an easy tussle.

Archie closed with D'Arcy at last, and got his head into chancery, and as he did so there came a welcome interruption.

A gentleman in a dark beard and moustache, with a French look about his face, came hurrying up.

"Stop at vunce!" he exclaimed.

And without waiting for a reply, he rushed into the conflict with a thick cane, dealing blows right and left at Archie & Co.

The three bounders left D'Arcy at once, and retreated with howls of pain. They looked as if they would attack the gentleman in his turn, but a belated policeman was in sight now, and they decided that discretion was the better part of valour. They retreated from the spot, Archie wiping his nose with a handkerchief that was rapidly growing crimson.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, putting his eyeglass into place. "Thank you vevy much, sir!"

"Not at all, m'sieur!"

The gentleman picked up D'Arcy's hat, and presented it to him with a bow, and then dusted down his jacket. He was so obliging that the swell of St. Jim's was deeply touched.

"You are awfully good, sir," he gasped.

"Not at all, m'sieur!"

"Ah! You are French?"

"Oui, oui! But I speak ze English perfect," said the stranger. "It is zat my name is Dupont—Auguste Dupont."

"I am vevy pleased to make your acquaintance, Monsieur Dupont. My name is D'Arcy. I am vevy much obliged to you."

"Ah, D'Arcy! Zat is ze French name, too."

The swell of St. Jim's smiled.

"Norman, sir," he explained. "My people came over with the Conqueror, you know. I trust I shall meet you again."

"Oh, oui, oui! Ah! Zere is ze speck of dust on ze jacket."

"Thank you vevy much!"

The French gentleman dusted D'Arcy's jacket carefully. Then he raised his hat, and D'Arcy raised his hat, and they parted.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "I wonder where those fellows are. And what is the time, too? Cousin Ethel may be wantin' her dinnah."

He put his hand to his watch-pocket.

Then he started violently.

The pocket was empty.

Watch and chain were gone.

Arthur Augustus simply gasped.

He groped over the waistcoat, and even felt in the other pockets to make sure.

But the watch was gone.

The famous twenty-five guinea ticker, which had accompanied him safely through many travels, had disappeared.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, in dismay.

Where was the watch? Who had taken it? He had had it when he met Archie and his gang. Had they robbed him?

D'Arcy did not think so for a moment.

They had been rough and mischievous, but he was sure they were not thieves. But the only alternative suspicion was troublesome.

Was it the polite French gentleman who had done so?

D'Arcy jumped at the thought.

It seemed ungrateful to think anything of the sort, but the man was a perfect stranger, and he had been so very careful to dust every speck off D'Arcy's jacket and waistcoat, and—in fact—D'Arcy looked round for him.

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As it happened, he had wanted to see the time immediately the French gentleman had left him, and so he had discovered his loss at once. The obliging stranger was still in sight—D'Arcy saw his hat in the crowd at a short distance.

He dashed after him.

"Pway stop!" he called out.

The French gentleman looked round.

Had he brazened it out, and assumed a manner of innocent surprise, it is quite possible that he could have succeeded in fooling the swell of St. Jim's. But the chance was not good enough.

He broke into a run as he saw D'Arcy after him.

That, of course, was the unmistakable sign of a guilty conscience, and D'Arcy had no further doubts.

"Stop him!" he shrieked.

The French gentleman dashed through the crowd, but a burly fellow got in his way, gasping, and D'Arcy, running fleetly, overtook him.

"Bai Jove! Give me my watch, you thief!"

"M'sieur!"

"My watch and chain, you wotten wascal!"

D'Arcy grasped at the man. The stranger strove to elude him, and D'Arcy's grasp closed only on the beard.

It came off in his hand.

The astounded swell of St. Jim's caught a glimpse of a smooth-shaven face now that the false beard was off, and simply gasped as he recognised it.

"Puntah!"

He was so astonished that he remained quite petrified for a few seconds.

Captain Punter did not neglect his opportunity.

He dashed away into the crowd and vanished. D'Arcy rushed after him, but a surge of the crowd separated them, and the chase was hopeless.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, stopping, breathless.

A hand fell upon his shoulder.

"Hallo! Here you are, then?"

It was Tom Merry.

"Yaas; here I am," panted D'Arcy. "I'm looking for Puntah."

"Punter! Have you seen him again?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah; and he's got my watch."

"Your watch!"

"Yaas; the beast was disguised, and he bwashed my coat, and he's got my watch, you know," gasped the swell of St. Jim's.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Lucky I didn't let you have the money to carry," grinned Tom Merry.

"Well, of course, I wasn't expectin' to see the wottah in disguise!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not wegard it as a laughing mattah. I—"

"Well, it isn't, of course," assented Tom Merry; "only—ha, ha, ha! Here, come on, and let's get to the police, and give them information about the watch. You'd better look out for Punter under every hat you see in future."

"Yaas, wathah; bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

CHAPTER 12.

D'Arcy Talks Japanese.

THE loss of D'Arcy's watch, and his recognition of Captain Punter in the disguise of a Frenchman, were duly reported to the Exhibition police. It was the only thing the juniors could do, and few of them had much hope that either the pickpocket or the watch would ever be seen again.

D'Arcy was very silent during dinner. The chums of St.

Jim's had the dinner all together, and they made a large party, with Cousin Ethel and Miss Phyllis.

But the party was larger than they had intended, for it was joined by the three heroes of the Third Form at St. Jim's. Wally & Co. turned up for dinner, and when they heard of D'Arcy's loss they chuckled heartlessly.

"Serves you right for going out without a keeper, Gussy!" said Wally, with a grin. "Now, if you like, we'll look after you for the evening."

"Weally, Wally—"

"You know, you're not safe alone, now don't you?" said Wally argumentatively.

"Weally—"

"We wouldn't mind the trouble," said Jameson. "Gussy is so amusing that it quite pays for all the trouble he gives."

"What-ho!" said Curly Gibson heartily.

D'Arcy turned pink.

"You cheeky young wascals!" he exclaimed. "Weally—"

"Now, don't you begin, Gussy!" said Wally severely. "You alarm Ethel when you put on these ferocious airs."

D'Arcy turned to his cousin at once.

"Bai Jove! I twust I did not alarm you, Ethel."

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Not at all!" she said.

"I twust I did not alarm you, Miss Phyllis?"

"Oh, no!" said Phyllis, smiling.

"Vewy good! Wally, you are a young wascal, and when we are back at Eastwood, I shall make it a point to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Go hon! At present you can make it a point to give me some more potatoes," said Wally imperturbably. "These fried taters are good!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Pass the taters, old chap, and don't jaw!"

"I wefuse to allow you to use such a wotten, vulgah word, Wally! These vegetables are potatoes!"

"Well, chuck 'em over, old cock!"

"You diswespectful young ass—"

"Am I to wait for the taters till Gussy's got through the whole blessed dictionary?" asked Wally resignedly. "What do you mean by treating a chap like this, Gussy, after pressing him to dine with you?"

That was too much for Arthur Augustus. He passed the potatoes without another word.

The little altercation with Wally had had the effect, at all events, of taking D'Arcy's mind from his loss, and he made an effort, too, to recover his cheerfulness.

The swell of St. Jim's was very polite always, and he did not think it fair that a loss he had suffered should be allowed to cast a gloom over the party.

In the effort to entertain, he made himself cheerful, and was soon as gay as any of the others, and the dinner at the Exhibition was a success.

After the dinner was over, and the bill was settled, the party sallied forth to enjoy themselves under the gleaming lights of the White City.

Imposing as the Exhibition certainly was by day, it was nothing to what it was by night, when the lights were all ablaze, and the lakes and the buildings were festooned with gleaming jewels of light.

"It is beautiful!" said Cousin Ethel.

"Yaas, wathah, I must admit that it is," said D'Arcy.

"What do you say to goin' into the Japanese village now, deah boys, and havin' a look at the natives? They are awfully intewestin' people, you know."

"A good idea," said Phyllis.

"This way, then," said Tom Merry.

And they entered the Japanese enclosure.

The sight of the Japanese workmen in the various booths

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"Come along, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "We shall soon be at the Exhibitsh now!" "Right-ho, old son!" laughed Tom Merry; and the seven juniors clambered on the 'bus.

was indeed interesting to the juniors. The artisans would answer cheerfully and kindly in what English they could muster, eeking it out with floods of Japanese.

"Nice people," said Jack Blake.

"They are charming!" said Cousin Ethel. "And what beautiful embroideries this man is making! I wonder if I could buy some?"

The Japanese artisan smiled at the girl.

"No sell," he said.

"He understands that much," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Didn't you tell us you knew some Japanese, Gussy?"

D'Arcy wrinkled his forehead thoughtfully.

"Yaas, wathah!" he said. "I got a chap who knows some Japanese to teach me some words. I have been twyin' to wocollect them."

"Spring them on this chap, and see if he catches on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go it, then!"

"Fire away!"

"Sayonara!" said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the artisan.

The Japanese grinned.

"Good-night!" he said, in English.

"H'm! He wants us to go, evidently. Perhaps we're interrupting the work," said Blake. "Come on, kids!"

They moved on to the next booth. Here a Japanese was weaving baskets, and a girl sat by helping him. D'Arcy raised his hat as they looked up with a flash of teeth.

"Sayonara!" he said.

"Good-bye, sir!" said the Jap.

"More English, and plain English, too," said Tom Merry. "They certainly don't seem to want to prolong the conversation."

"Bai Jove, no!"

"By the way, what does 'Sayonara' mean?" asked Herries, as the juniors strolled on.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I weally do not yemembah, deah boy."

"Why, you ass!" exclaimed Digby. "You may be insulting them for all you know!"

"It's a weal Japanese word, Dig."

"Well, there are some real English words one wouldn't like to hear applied to oneself," said Tom Merry.

"Oh, the word's all right," said D'Arcy. "I'll twy it on this chap, and see how it works."

The juniors stopped at a toy counter. A little old Japanese looked up at them with a wrinkled smile.

"Sayonara!" said D'Arcy affably.

The old man looked surprised.

"Good-bye!" he said.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Lowther. "There's something rocky with your Japanese, Gussy. I suggest that you keep it muzzled."

"Yes, rather!" remarked Figgins. "We shall get passed on all the time if Gussy keeps on with his giddy Jap."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"How do you say 'Something to eat' in Japanese?" asked Fatty Wynn, with a glance towards a large tent marked "Refreshments."

"I weally do not know."

"Well, you must be an ass! Why didn't you learn the useful words first?" demanded the Falstaff of St. Jim's.

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Perhaps this chap speaks English," said Manners. "He may be able to tell us what Gussy's vocabulary means."

The little old Jap grinned. It was evident that he understood the Shell fellow's remark. Tom Merry turned to him.

"You speak English?" he asked, with a smile.

The Jap nodded.

"Verry leeble," he said.

"What does 'sayonara' mean in Japanese?"

"Good-bye!"

"Eh?"

"Farewell!"

"He wants us to buzz off!" exclaimed Blake, looking puzzled.

"No, no!" exclaimed Cousin Ethel quickly. "He means that that is what the word means. Is it not so?"

The old Jap nodded.

"Sayonara farewell," he said. "Same thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Then Gussy has been saying good-bye all the time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy turned pink.

"Well, I told you I forgot what the word meant," he said.

"I knew it meant something—I was weally quite sure on that point, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And having made a purchase of the little old Jap, the juniors went on their way, and as they departed they all said together:

"Sayonara!"

And the Japanese grinned, perhaps at their pronunciation, and said, "Good-night!"

CHAPTER 13.

D'Arcy Carries the Dolls.

"VERY good and pretty dolls," said a soft voice, in lisping English, as the juniors passed a stall laden with them. "Buy some if like?"

"Well, I'd like to buy something of everybody," Tom Merry remarked; "but I don't see what use we could put dolls to."

"Do for Gussy to play with in his leisure moments," Monty Lowther suggested. "Keep him out of mischief, you know."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Nicee good dolls," said the soft voice.

"Ah, you speak English?" said Tom Merry to the Japanese woman.

She smiled, and nodded.

"Some a little," she replied. "Handsome boy buy dolls?"

D'Arcy coloured. He certainly was a handsome boy, but the compliment was very embarrassing. His hand went into his pocket.

"How much are they?" he asked.

"Two shilling each."

"How many shall I buy, Tom Mewwy?"

"The whole blessed stall, if you like!" said Tom Merry resignedly.

"I'll take half a dozen," said D'Arcy. "Of course, I don't want them, and they're no good, but it's wude to wefuse a lady."

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Pway pay for them, Blake."

"Sorry! I'm stony."

"Pway pay for them, Dig."

"Ditto."

"Pay for them, will you, Hewwies?"

"No tin."

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"Bai Jove! Pway pay for them, Tom Mewwy."

"Oh, certainly!"

"I hope some of you fellows will cawwy them," said D'Arcy. "A fellow would look an awful ass cawwyin' dolls about, and I—"

"Well, that wouldn't be a change for you," said Lowther.

"However, you can give me the parcel if you like."

"You are vevy obliging, Lowthah, and I will ovahlook your wude wemark."

"Go hon!"

"Pway give the parcel to this chap, deah gal," said D'Arcy. "Sayonara!" And he raised his topper and walked on.

Monty Lowther stayed behind the rest to receive the parcel. The six little dolls, which were about three inches long, were wrapped up and handed to him. Manners had stayed with him, and he stared at his chum in surprise.

"What's the game?" he demanded abruptly, as Lowther started off with the parcel on the track of Tom Merry & Co.

Monty Lowther chuckled softly.

"You'll see in a minute," he said.

He opened the parcel at a short distance from the stall, and extracted a little pouch of fish-hooks from his pocket. To each of the dolls he attached a hook, and put them all in his pockets. He threw the paper and string away, and hurried after his friends. As he came up with D'Arcy he slapped him on the back.

The swell of St. Jim's started, and turned round.

"Weally, Lowthah, I wish you would not do that!" he exclaimed. "You throw me into quite a futtah."

"Go hon!"

"You are an ass! I—"

"Hallo, here are some metal-workers!" said Manners, grinning, and the party moved on. Arthur Augustus was quite ignorant of the fact that Lowther had left a doll hooked on the back of his jacket between his shoulders.

Manners was almost exploding. Arthur Augustus turned round towards him and gave him a severe glance through his monocle.

"Weally, Mannahs, it is wathah bad form to laugh like this in public," he exclaimed. "And I weally don't see the joke."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, let's look at the metal-workers," exclaimed Lowther, pushing on behind D'Arcy, and affixing a second doll to his left shoulder behind.

"Pway don't push me like that, Lowthah!"

"Rats!" said Lowther, fastening on a third doll.

"Weally—"

D'Arcy turned round. Lowther grinned, and strolled away, passing the other three dolls to Manners. D'Arcy was soon interested in the metal-workers again, and Manners soon had the dolls fastened to his jacket behind.

Cousin Ethel had strolled on with Phyllis and Tom Merry and Figgins. The juniors who were still with D'Arcy did not enlighten him as to the curious state of his jacket. It was no business of theirs to spoil a jape.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy, as he looked round. "They are awful clevah chaps, you know! Gweat Scott! What are they gwinnin' at?"

The Japanese had all grinned as D'Arcy gave them a view of his back.

The swell of St. Jim's was puzzled.

"They are a vevy peculiar wace," he remarked. "Pewwaps their sense of humour diffahs fwom ours, deah boys."

"Perhaps!" grinned Lowther.

"You are gwinnin', too, you ass!"

"Oh, to keep them company, you know."

"What are you cacklin' at, Blake?"

"Was I cackling?" asked Blake, innocently.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, I'll go on, then. Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy turned loftily away, and strode on after Cousin Ethel. There were a good many people in the Japanese village, and most of them glanced at D'Arcy's jacket and smiled. The swell of St. Jim's could not help noticing it, and he began to feel uneasy.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "There is certainly something w'ong somewhere."

"He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mannahs, deah boy, do you think that that laughtah is diwected towards us?" asked the swell of St. Jim's anxiously.

"Not us," said Manners promptly.

"Towards me, then?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"Is there anythin' w'ong?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Manners staggered away with Lowther. D'Arcy looked round at the other juniors, and they were all exploding.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as a set of asses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus strode on loftily. He felt that it was derogatory to his dignity to say more. A yell of laughter followed him, and indeed the aspect of the dolls swinging about behind him, and D'Arcy quite unconscious of it, was funny enough.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was quite crimson by this time, and his temper was beginning to rise.

As it happened, he encountered Archie & Co. just at this time. The three "bounders" were also exploring the Japanese enclosure. They gave a roar.

"Oh, look!" gasped Archie.

D'Arcy strode up to him.

"Bai Jove! I've had enough of your feahful cheek!" he exclaimed. "Put up your hands, you wottah, and I will give you a feahful thwashin'."

"He, he, he!"

Jack Blake rushed up, and dragged the swell of St. Jim's back. Archie and his friends laughed themselves hoarse as the juniors forced D'Arcy away. The swell of St. Jim's struggled in the grasp of his companions.

"Let me go!" he exclaimed. "I insist on givin' those boundahs a feahful thwashin'."

"Cheese it!"

"I wufuse to cheese it."

"They've gone now," said Dig.

Archie & Co. had disappeared in the crowd. D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and gave his chums an indignant glare through it.

"I wegard you as inconsidewate boundahs to westwain me in that wotten mannah. I wanted to give those wottahs a feahful thwashin'. And now I insist upon knowin' what you young wascals are gwinnin' at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Are they for sale, sir?" demanded an urchin in passing.

D'Arcy stared at him.

"Did you address me, my lad?" he asked.

"Yes. Are you selling them dolls?"

"Dolls!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"He, he! Them dolls on your back," giggled the urchin.

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy's hand went round to the back of his jacket, and he felt the dolls there. He whipped the jacket off in a flash. At the sight of the dolls hooked there in array, his feelings were too deep for words.

The chums of St. Jim's simply yelled.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a wotten twick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is why they were starin', then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' whatevah to laugh at," said D'Arcy, with dignity, as he unhooked the dolls and hurled them away. "I wegard you as a set of wottahs, and I doubt whethah I can continue to wegard you as fwinds."

"I don't know whether I can regard as a friend, either, a fellow who takes his jacket off in mixed company," said Blake severely. "I hope you will remember that there are ladies looking on, Gussy, and not let this go any further."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy turned pink, and he had his jacket on again in a moment. Then the party moved on to rejoin Figgins and Cousin Ethel, but there was suppressed indignation for a long time in the countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 14.

D'Arcy Talks English.

FATTY WYNN had been wearing a very thoughtful expression for some time. Figgins and Kerr thought that the sights of the Japanese village, the artisans at work, and so forth, were making a great impression upon their chum.

"These places have a lot of educational value, don't you think so, Fatty?" Kerr remarked. The Scottish junior had missed nothing, and all that he had seen was stored up in his retentive memory.

"Yes," said Fatty absently.

"You learn a lot about foreign manners and customs."

"Ye-es."

"And it's specially useful in the case of Japan," remarked Figgins, "because it's a bit too far off for a fellow to spend a week-end there."

"Eh?"

"I say, Japan's too far off for a week-end."

"Oh," said Fatty Wynn absently, "I'll have a week-end there with pleasure, if you like."

Figgins and Kerr stared at him.

"Off your rocker?" asked Kerr.

"Eh?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Talking about?"

"Yes, you duffer."

"Oh," said Fatty Wynn, with a start, "I was thinking."

"Well?"

"Well, we've seen a lot of Japanese manners and customs," said Fatty Wynn, in a sort of confidential way, "but we haven't had any Japanese grub, you know."

Figgins laughed.

"Oh, I see, that's what you were thinking about."

"Well, we're here for—knowledge, you know," said Fatty Wynn. "We really ought to sample the Japanese grub."

"Yaas, wathah, that's a good ideah!" said D'Arcy, joining them. "I could not eat anythin', but I could manage a cup of Japanese tea."

"Good!"

"Oh, I could eat something!" said Fatty Wynn.

"What-ho!" said Figgins. "We know that, Fatty. Is there ever a time when you couldn't?"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"What do you say, Ethel, deah boy—I mean, deah gal?"

"Certainly!" said Ethel. "You would like some tea, Phyll?"

"Oh, yes!" said Miss Phyllis.

"This way, then," said Tom Merry. "There's a tent here, and we shall get Japanese grub there, if we can get it anywhere."

And the party headed for the refreshment tent. As it was in the native Japanese enclosure, it seemed probable that if Japanese food was to be got anywhere, it was to be got there. The attendants were in Japanese costume, and that was promising, and very pretty girls they were. But Tom Merry at a glance saw that they were English girls, with nothing Japanese about them but the dress.

Fatty Wynn saw it too, and he grunted. But he did not mind much. He wanted to sample the Japanese food; but so long as he had food of some kind, he was not particular. He sat down at one of the tables. D'Arcy was the only one who did not think of looking for anything but what met the eye.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked. "These are wippin' gals for Japanese. Don't you think this one is vewy pwetty, Ethel?" he said, as a waitress came up to the table.

Ethel smiled.

"Yes, Arthur."

The waitress did not speak, but she smiled too.

"There!" said D'Arcy. "Of course she can't understand a word I say, but she smiles just as if she knew I was talkin' about her."

The waitress smiled still more.

"That is a vewy pwetty smile, too," said the swell of St. Jim's. "What beautiful white teeth the Japanese girls have! And how tastefully they do their hair, you know! And I weally think they are vewy graceful."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake suddenly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"What can I get for you, please?" said the waitress, who was trying hard not to follow Blake's example.

D'Arcy's jaw dropped.

"Bai Jove! You speak English?"

"Yes, sir," said the girl, smiling.

"Gweat Scott! Of course, I had not the least ideah!"

"Tea," said Fatty Wynn, "and sandwiches, and cakes."

"I am so sowwy," said D'Arcy. "I twust you did not wegard my wemarks as impertinent."

"Not at all, sir."

"And jam puffs," said Fatty Wynn.

"I am sure I did not mean them in that sense," said D'Arcy. "I did not know that you could speak English, of course."

"And strawberries and cream," said Fatty Wynn. "After all, perhaps it's better to have English tommy. And sugar."

"Where did you learn English, miss?" asked D'Arcy.

The girl smiled.

"In London, sir."

"Bai Jove! Then you have lived here a long time?" said the swell of St. Jim's, still under the impression that the girl was a Japanese.

"Oh, yes, sir, twenty-two years."

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CHAPTER 15.

Arthur Augustus Is Not Taken In.

"Bai Jove! You don't look older than that."
The girl laughed outright.
"That is my age, sir."
"Then you have lived in London all your life?"
"And currant cake," said Fatty Wynn, as an after-thought.
"All my life, sir."
"Then you don't know your own country?"
"I—I think so."
"You have visited Japan, then?"
"Oh, no."
"You were born there?"
"Certainly not!" said the girl, looking puzzled. "I was born in London."
"Ah! Your pawents had settled here, I suppose," said D'Arcy, with a nod. "I suppose you have had a gweat longin' to visit Japan?"
"No, I don't think so. I would rather go to Boulogne."
"Bai Jove! But your native country—"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake again.
"Weally, Blake—"
"But this is my native country, sir," said the girl, laughing. "Did you take me for a Japanese?"
"Gweat Scott!"
"And Welsh rabbits," said Fatty Wynn.
"Then you are English?" ejaculated D'Arcy, in dismay.
"We are all English here, sir," said the girl, laughing; and she hurried off to execute the various orders that had been piled upon her.
D'Arcy looked round the table. The juniors were all laughing, and even Ethel and Phyllis could not restrain their smiles.
"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, "I feel wathah an ass, you know."
"You look one, too," assured Lowther.
"And are one," added Kerr.
"Weally, you know—"
"I wonder how long the grub is going to be?" said Fatty Wynn. "I'm feeling pretty sharp set. It's really not fair for D'Arcy to take up the waitress's time like that, and leave us all famishing."
"Nobody's hungry but you," said Digby, "and how the dickens you can be hungry after dinner, is a giddy mystery to me."
"Well, I always get very hungry about this time of the year," said Fatty Wynn. "Besides, haven't you chaps noticed that you get very hungry shortly after a good dinner?"
"Ha, ha! No."
"Well, I have. It's a curious thing, perhaps, but it's so."
"With you, no doubt."
"How long is she going to be—"
"She hasn't been two minutes."
"Well, two minutes is a jolly long time when you're hungry."
"Gnaw your belt, old man, and hold out!" said Lowther.
"Oh, don't be an ass!"
"I wegard the posish as wotten," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, after a pause.
"Yes, isn't it?" said Wynn. "So you're hungry, too?"
"Hungry? Certainly not!"
"What's the matter with you, then?"
"I am thinking of our being taken in like this."
"Taken in?"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"What do you mean?" asked Tom Merry. "How have we been taken in?"
"Why, all these blessed boundahs pwetendin' to be Japanese, you know."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
"We could all see at a glance that the girls here weren't Japanese," said Lowther. "You are an ass, you know, Gussy!"
"Yaas; but the othahs—"
"What others?"
"Why, those Japanese workmen, and artisans, and so on."
"Ha, ha, ha! They're genuine enough."
D'Arcy sniffed.
"Wats!" he replied.
"Why, you ass—"
"I wefuse to be called an ass, Lowthah. I am not goin' to be taken in again. I shall wefuse to believe in a single Japanese aftah this."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then the refreshments arrived, and Fatty Wynn, at least, discussed them with keen relish. When the St. Jim's party left the refreshment-tent, Arthur Augustus was mentally on his guard. He did not mean to be taken in again.

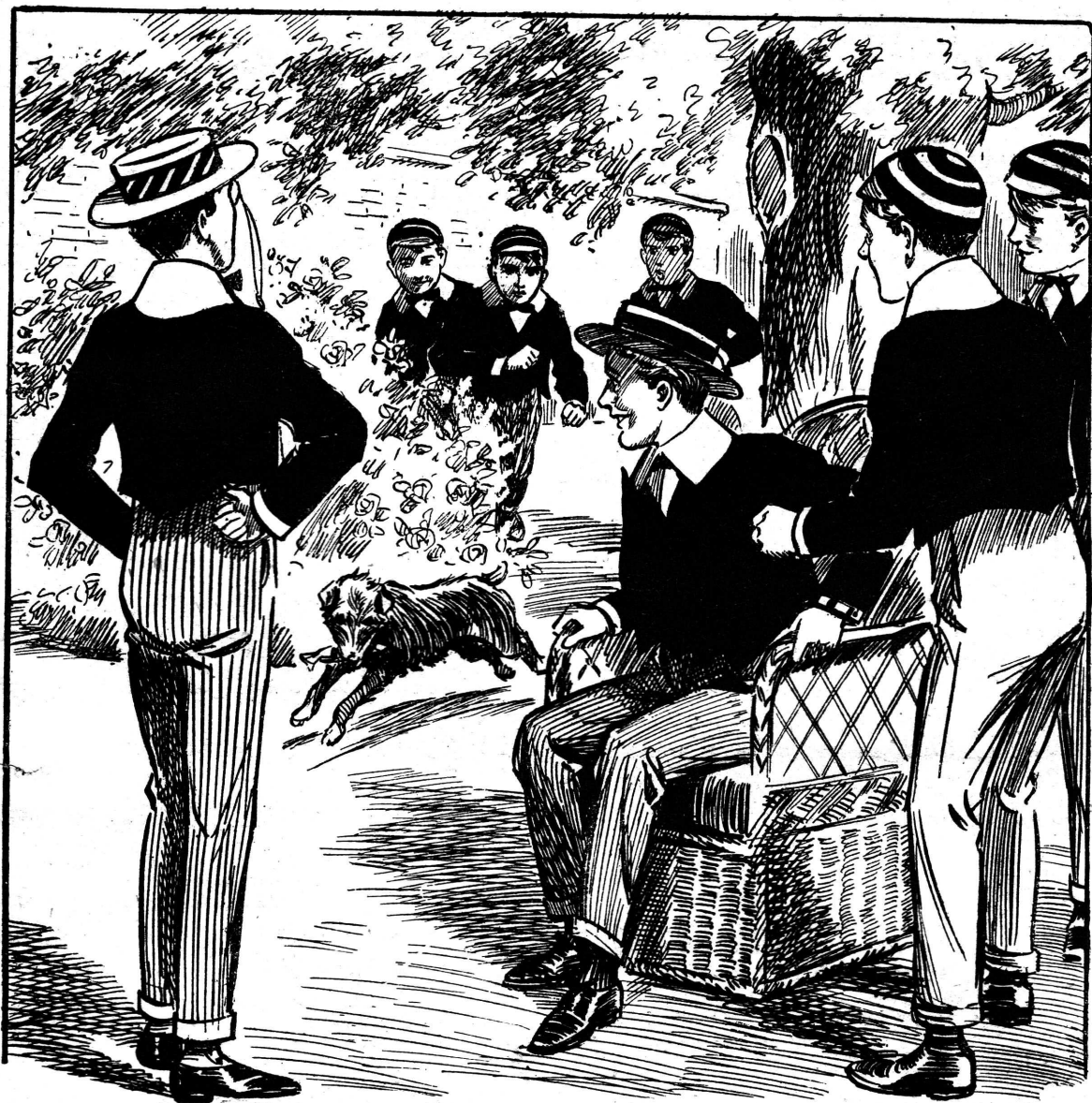
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"PRATTY fans" said a voice, as the juniors passed a brightly lighted stall—"pratty fans! Varry pratty."
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his monocle upon the man who spoke.

He gave the Japanese a very severe glance.
"What did you say?" he demanded.
"Pratty fans."
"They are pretty fans," said Figgins. "Would you like one, Cousin Ethel? Would you like one, Miss Phyll?"
"Pratty fans, five shilling."
"They're quite cheap," urged Figgins.
Cousin Ethel hesitated, and assented. She would never allow the boys to buy her anything; but Figgins was so much in earnest, that she gave way this time, and a couple of fans were purchased for the two girls. They were very pretty indeed. But D'Arcy was regarding the Japanese sternly.
"You speak English?" he said.
The man smiled and shook his head.
"Pewwaps you are English?"
"No speak."
"Pewwaps your complexion would wash off, and then you would own up to the name of Jones or Wobinson?" suggested D'Arcy.
The Japanese smiled politely.
"I wegard you as a humbug!"
A bow was the response.
"A feahful humbug and a spoofah!"
Another bow.
"You see, he admits it and glowies in it," said the swell of St. Jim's indignantly.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Weally, you fellows—"
"You ass!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Can't you see that he doesn't understand a word?"
"Wats!"
"Oh, come on!"
"I wefuse to come on until I have explained to this spoofah what I think of him," said the swell of the Fourth.
"He isn't spoofing."
"Wats!"
"You ass! Can't you see he's a real Jap.?"
"Nothin' of the sort."
"I am sure he is, Arthur," said Ethel gently.
"Yaas, but you know gals are so easily taken in," said D'Arcy. "What is wequired to detect a humbug is a fellow of fact and judgment. I know perfectly well that this chap is spoofing us, and can understand every word I say."
"Bosh!"
"Weally, Blake—"
"Let's get on."
"Wait a minute." D'Arcy shook his forefinger at the Japanese. "I want you to understand, you boundah, that you can't take me in. I wefuse to be imposed upon. Do you undahstand that clearly?"
The Japanese bowed.
"There, he admits it, you see."
"Ass!"
"I wefuse to be called an ass—"
"Fathead, then. Come on!"
D'Arcy was dragged on.
"I think I put it to him pretty plainly, you teltows," he chuckled, as they went towards the exit of the Japanese enclosure.
"Well, it doesn't matter, as he doesn't understand a word of it," said Tom Merry, laughing.
"Oh, he took you in, then?"
"He was genuine, ass!"
"Wubbish!"
They left the enclosure, and crossed over to the next, the home of the Ainus—those interesting inhabitants of Old Japan. Tom Merry paid for admission for the party, and they went in.
The natives here certainly lived up to their name of the "Hairy Ainus." They were hairy with a vengeance.
But D'Arcy smiled superior when Tom Merry remarked upon it.
"All spoof, deah boy!" he said. "That nice gal at the tea-tent gave it away; but the men are more artful, you know."
"You ass!" said Blake. "These are real, genuine Ainus."
"Wats!"
"Do you think that chap's mop would come off if you pulled it?"
"Of course it would," said D'Arcy.
"Chump!"
"I decline to be called a chump. I—"
"I wish you'd decline to be one," said Blake. "But I suppose that's a wild dream."

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"Stop him!" roared Wally.
 "Bal Jove! I wefuse to touch the wotten mongwel, you howwid young wascal!" said Arthur Augustus.
 "He has no wespsect whatever for a fellow's twousahs!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Pull the chap's hair, and see," said Lowther. "If it comes off, he's done in; and if it doesn't, he'll take it as an insult, and chop you up. Try!"

"Vewy well!"

D'Arcy reached out towards the Ainu. Tom Merry dragged him back in time.

"You ass!" he gasped. "Hands off!"

"But Lowthah suggested—"

"Never mind Lowther. Mind you don't touch these people; they might cut up rusty, and you might get badly hurt."

"I twust I could take care of myself, Tom Mewwy."

"Well, I don't trust anything of the sort; and, judging by your adventures to-day, you're the last person in the world to take care of yourself."

"Weally—"

"This way—and hands off!"

They made the round of the enclosure. Tom Merry was somewhat relieved when they emerged again. He was afraid that D'Arcy might cause trouble. The swell of St. Jim's was evidently not convinced. He never discredited any statement till he was forced to, but when once his suspicions were aroused, he could be very obstinate.

"Hallo, here's the Japanese theatre!" said Blake. "Performance just commencing, too. Let's have a look at it."

The juniors screamed into the little theatre. It was pretty well filled, and the stage was lighted, showing that the performance was about to commence.

Tom Merry & Co. sat down, very nearly filling up a row of seats. Arthur Augustus had a most superior expression upon his face. He was not to be taken in.

A troupe of Japanese acrobats proceeded to give a performance. They were very small persons, but wonderfully muscular and active, and the performance they gave was really very clever.

The juniors watched it with keen interest.

"Jolly good!" Blake remarked.

"Yaas, it's clevah. The disguises are weally good."

"Disguises?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What on earth do you mean?"

"My deah chap, you surely don't cwedit that they are weally Japanese?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're spoofin', deah boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

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The performance concluded, and they left the tent. All were satisfied except D'Arcy. He admitted that the performance was a clever one; but that the Japanese were genuine, he declined to believe.

CHAPTER 16.

D'Arcy is Exasperated.

"WHAT price the wiggle-woggle?" asked Digby, as they walked past that peculiar entertainment.

"Sixpence," said D'Arcy, looking at the notice at the entrance.

Digby snorted.

"Weally, Dig—"

"I mean, shall we go in for it?" said Digby. "I can see for myself that the price of admission is sixpence."

D'Arcy looked at the people who were wiggle-woggling with a careful survey through his eyeglass.

"I am afraid it would be wathah undignified for me," he remarked. "I'll stand here and watch you fellows, though."

"Well, of all the cheek—"

"I don't think I should care for it," said Cousin Ethel; "but I should like to see you go, if you like. Why don't you go, Arthur?"

"Wathah infwa dig, deah gal."

"Oh, come on!" said Blake. "I want to try it, and I should feel safer with you next to me, Gussy."

The swell of St. Jim's looked flattered.

"Well, weally, if you put it like that, deah boy—"

"I do put it like that," said Blake solemnly.

"Then I will come, with pleasure."

Digby and Herries and Kerr came too. The juniors entered, and stepped into the contrivance which carried them to the top of the incline, and then they slid off into the "wiggle-woggle."

"Bai Jove," gasped D'Arcy, as they whirled round, "I wogard this as wathah—wathah upsettin'! It thwows me into a fluttah—quite a fluttah, deah boys."

"Go hon!"

"There is a sort of feelin' of bein' on the Channel about it, and I am a little giddy."

"You'll get used to it."

"Ow! What a fearful shock!"

"You next expect to get bumped on the wiggle-woggle," said Blake. "Why don't you hold on with both hands?"

"I am holdin' on my hat."

"Let it take its chance."

"Ow! Don't cwush me!"

"Hold on, then."

They were whirling down the slope. D'Arcy let go his hat, and held on to the side with both hands.

A gust of wind came along and lifted the topper from his head, and it sailed away on the wings of the wind, as a novelist would say.

D'Arcy jumped up.

"Bai Jove, my hat!"

Jack Blake dragged him down. The swell of St. Jim's would probably have fallen out, and he might have been hurt, but for Blake's ready grasp.

"Sit down, you ass!" growled Blake.

"But, my hat!"

"Never mind your hat."

"But it's gone."

"Well, it's gone, then, and it won't come back. When we get out of the wiggle-woggle, you can send a wire to Scotland Yard about it."

"You ass!"

"Hallo, here we are!"

The juniors landed. They were not sorry to get off the wiggle-woggle, and D'Arcy was very pleased: he wanted to look for his topper. It was not the topper's first adventure that day, and he was afraid this might be more serious than the last.

"Bai Jove, have you seen my hat, deah boys?" he exclaimed, as he rejoined the girls and the group of juniors.

"Certainly," said Manners. "You had it on when you went on the wiggle-woggle."

"It has blown off."

"Has it, really?"

"Lowthah, I twust you are not playin' a wotten twick," said Arthur Augustus, who noticed that the humorist of the Shell had his hands behind him.

He remembered the last incident of the topper, and he had no doubt that the Shell fellow was playing the same trick over again.

Monty Lowther stared.

"Eh!" he remarked.

"Pway give me my hat."

"My hat!" ejaculated Lowther.

"No, not your hat—my hat!"

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"Your hat?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Where am I to get it from?"

"I am convinced that you have it in your hands, and that you are holding it behind you for a wotten twick!" said D'Arcy warmly.

"By George!"

"Pway, hand it over."

"But—"

"Lowthah, you are attwactin' attention to us by this wotten conduct. I wogard you as a wank boundah. Pway give me my hat!"

"But—"

"I am convinced that you have it. If you do not immediately hand me my hat, Lowthah, I shall pwoceed to chastise you."

"Rats!"

D'Arcy pushed back his cuffs.

"Ethel and Miss Phyllis," he said, "will you kindly look the othah way while I give Lowthah a fearful thwashin'."

"Certainly not," said Ethel.

"Weally, Ethel—"

"You must not be so ruffianly, Arthur."

"Wuffianly! Oh, weally, Ethel—"

"Let him come on," said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"Pway give me my hat, Lowther. I cannot chastise you, as Ethel objects—"

"I should object, too!" remarked Lowther.

"That would not make any difference. As I cannot chastise you in the pwesence of a lady, I twust you will have the decency to hand ovah my hat without makin' any furthah bother," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity.

"But—"

"Hand it ovah, you ass!"

"But suppose I haven't it?"

"I wefuse to cwedit or to suppose anythin' of the sort. What are you holdin' your hands behind you for?"

Lowther grinned.

"No law against that, is there?" he asked.

"Will you give me my hat?"

"No."

"You wefuse to do so?"

"Certainly."

"Ethel, deah gal, I beg of you to look the other way."

"But I won't," said Ethel.

D'Arcy looked distressed.

"That is weally not the way to speak, Ethel," he said feebly. "You are weally undah my charge, you know, as your cousin. All girls are weally undah the charge of boys, you know, and they ought to do as they are told."

"If I were a boy, I should say rats to that," said Ethel cheerfully.

"Weally, Ethel, you will be wantin' a vote next," said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of pained remonstrance.

"Well," said Ethel, laughing, "I do want a vote!"

"Oh, weally—"

"That's one for you, in the neck," said Blake, with a grin.

"As for your looking after Ethel, I should like to know how you're going to do it, when you're looking for trouble all the time, and trying to get up a fight with a chap because he keeps his hands folded behind him."

"He's got my hat."

"Ass! Look and see."

"Bai Jove, I never thought of that, you know!"

Arthur Augustus walked round Lowther to look. But as he walked round, Lowther backed round, and all the time kept his smiling face turned towards D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's was distinctly exasperated.

"Lowthah, you wottah!"

"Better language, Gussy!"

"What!"

"Remember, there are ladies present," said Lowther severely.

"You uttah ass!"

"Hush!" said Lowther soothingly.

That was too much for Arthur Augustus. Forgetful for the moment of Cousin Ethel and Phyllis, he rushed at the humorist of the Shell.

Monty Lowther's hands promptly came out from behind him now. But there was no sign of a hat in them.

"Skuse me, sir, is this your 'at?"

D'Arcy stopped.

A shabby youth was coming up panting with the missing topper in his hand, and his face glowing with exertion. It was undoubtedly D'Arcy's topper, and it was equally certain that the little lad had had a hot chase after it.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Well, come on," said Lowther, with a grin.

"There is no need to chastise you now, Lowthah. It appears that you did not have my hat, aftah all," said D'Arcy,

taking the topper from the boy. "You have had to wun aftah this, my lad, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir—long way," gasped the youth. "The wind was carrying it away, sir, and I just saved it from going into the water."

"Bai Jove! Thank you vewy much. Here's half-a-crown for you—I mean, Tom Mewwy, deah boy, give him half-a-crown."

"Oh, certainly."

The astonished urchin was presented with a half-crown. He bit it to make sure that it was a good one, and then rushed off, whooping with delight.

D'Arcy put his hat on again with considerable satisfaction.

"Well," said Lowther, "are you going to apologise?"

"Certainly not. You held your hands behind you in a most pwookin' way in ordah to give me a false impression. I wegard you as a wottah!"

And Arthur Augustus walked on with his nose very high in the air.

CHAPTER 17. Done Again!

"Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus stopped as he received a violent poke in the ribs. He gasped for breath, and his monocle fluttered down to the end of its cord. He jammed it into his eye again, and glared at his cheerful minor.

"Wally, you young wascal—"

"I say, Gussy—"

"You have thwown me into a fluttah. I—"

"I want you to lend me some tin."

"I certainly cannot do anything of the sort. I—"

"A sov. will do."

"Wats! I—"

"Well, half a sov., then," urged Wally. "Come, don't be mean, Gus."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Hand it over."

"I wegard your way of askin' as extwemely diswepctful, Wally—"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!"

"Hang it all," said Jameson, "it doesn't matter how you ask, Wally. Ask him in any way he likes, so long as you get the tin."

"What-ho!" said Curly Gibson. "Which way do you prefer to be asked, Gussy?"

"Weally, you young wascal—"

"Please hand me a sov., with kind regards," said Wally.

"I should be vewy pleased to do so, Wally."

"Well, do so, then."

"But I cannot. I am stonay."

D'Arcy minor gave a sniff of disgust.

"Isn't that, just like Gussy, to get stony at the exact time I want to borrow a sov. of him!" he exclaimed. "I call it rotten. It's unbrotherly, that's what it is."

"Bad form," said Curly.

"Quite outside," remarked Jameson.

"Weally, you know—"

"Oh, jaw's no good," said Wally. "It's rotten. Here, we've met an old St. Jim's chap, and we want to treat him, and now you're broke. Beastly."

"Shame!" said Jameson.

"Hallo, what's that?" said Tom Merry. "You've met an old St. Jim's chap? Anybody we know?"

"Can't say. Name's Raymond. He recognised us as St. Jim's fellows by our caps, and spoke to us because he used to go to St. Jim's," explained Wally. "Awfully decent chap. We're meeting him again at the cafe."

"Mind you are not taken in, Wally," said D'Arcy, with an admonishing wag of the finger. "The man may be a boundah."

Wally snorted.

"Well, I like that from you," he exclaimed. "How many times have you been done in to-day, I'd like to know?"

"Pway don't be impertinent. I—"

"He's a very decent chap," said Wally. "You fellows can come along and see him if you like, if you like to stand the coffee."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "If he's an old St. Jim's man we'd like to meet him. Lead on, you young bounders."

The Third-Formers led the way to the cafe. Fatty Wynn kept well ahead of the juniors as they followed. The mention of the word "cafe" was enough for the Falstaff of St. Jim's. He meant to sample the eatables as well as the drinkables there.

They entered the brightly lighted cafe, and Wally walked up to a table where a man was sitting. He looked a man of about thirty-five, with a fair beard and moustache, and somewhat long, curly hair.

He nodded pleasantly enough to the juniors, and then, as he saw the girls, he rose and bowed.

"These are the chaps I mentioned to you, Mr. Raymond," said Wally. "They're doing the Exhibition under my charge."

"Weally, Wally—"

"Chaps, this is Mr. Raymond, formerly of the Sixth Form at St. Jim's."

"I am very pleased to meet you!" said Mr. Raymond affably. "It is a long time since I was at St. Jim's, but I have a very pleasant recollection of my old school. It woke up the pleasantest associations to see the old school caps again, and that is why I introduced myself to these lads. I hope you will all take coffee with me—and I may say that the cakes here are very good, and I shall be honoured if you will let me stand treat, as we used to say at St. Jim's."

Tom Merry's momentary doubt of the stranger vanished.

Tom was no fool, and he knew better than to trust pleasant strangers who had no recommendation but their pleasant manners, especially after Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's adventures that day. But if the man offered to treat the whole party it was pretty clear that he had nothing to get out of them.

Mr. Raymond ordered coffee and cakes in the most princely manner.

The juniors were beginning to feel that a little refreshment would not be out of place, and they discussed coffee and cakes with relish.

They talked about St. Jim's to Mr. Raymond, too; and he let them do most of the talking, which they were quite willing to do.

Presently he looked at his watch.

"Dear me, I must go!" he exclaimed. "I have to meet my mother at the station. I am sorry to leave you, my dear lads. This has been a very pleasant meeting for me."

"And for us, sir," said Tom Merry. "It's very pleasant to meet an old St. Jim's chap."

Mr. Raymond shook hands with the juniors all round, and departed.

Cousin Ethel was very silent.

"Pleasant chap," said Digby, looking at her.

"Yes," said Ethel.

"But you don't like him?"

"No," said the girl frankly, "I don't! There is something about him I don't like. I can't make out what. Perhaps it's unjust to say so."

"I don't know," said Tom Merry doubtfully. "Perhaps you're right. After all, we know nothing of him; and I know girls have a way of jumping to the facts, when boys are taken in. But he's stood treat—"

"Yaas, he's all wight!"

"Oh, he's an awfully decent chap!" said Fatty Wynn. "The cakes were ripping!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The cakes might be ripping without his being an awfully decent chap, Fatty."

"He's all right!" said Wally warmly. "Do you think a chap could take me in? Poof!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Well, we've all got our watches safe, anyway!" said Blake, grinning, as he put his hand to his watch-pocket.

The grin suddenly vanished from his face, and he drew out his hand, with a puzzled look. He glanced round at the juniors.

"I say, any of you fellows been larking?" he exclaimed.

"What do you mean?"

"My watch is gone!"

"Your watch?"

"Yes!"

"Phew!"

There was a general feeling of pockets among the juniors, and a general exclaiming. Several more watches were gone, and two or three purses—fortunately, most of them empty.

Tom Merry was the only one who had not lost something who had anything to lose. Those of the juniors who had little had not been touched. But Blake, Manners, and Herries had lost their watches, Digby and Lowther their purses, and D'Arcy a tiepin.

How the pickpocket had done it was a mystery. But done it he had! He was evidently a master of his craft.

The juniors stared at one another in amazed silence.

The raid almost petrified them.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry at last. "This is—is gorgeous!"

"The man's gone now!"

"It can't have been Raymond!" exclaimed D'Arcy minor. "Ass!" said Tom Merry. "Of course it was Raymond—though I don't suppose his name was Raymond any more than mine is. And I don't suppose he's ever seen St. Jim's either."

"But he seems to know a lot about it," said Blake slowly.

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"He may have met a set of mugs from the school before," said Tom Merry drily.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"He's a jolly clever thief, anyway," said Blake. "He's got our props. I suppose it's no good looking for him now."

"Bai Jove, he said he was goin' to the station to meet his mothah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "We may find him there yet."

"Ass! Do you think he was really going to the station?" growled Digby.

"I see no weason to suppose that he was not."

"He was lying, you chump, to put us off the scent."

"I see no weason to suppose so, Hewwies. I don't see why he should be a liah as well as a thief; and it was speakin' vewy diswespectfully of his mothah to dwag her name into the mattah, if he was lyin'. I wefuse to believe that because a man is a thief he is necessawily diswespectful to his mothah. Ewevy wascal has a limit."

"Good old Gussy!" said Lowther admiringly.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"He's gone," said Tom Merry. "It's no good looking at the station, and not much good looking anywhere else. As for going to the police, I think we've been there enough to-day. We don't want to be grinned at. We shall have to take it lying down."

"Great Scott!"

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, Gussy?"

"I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"I know who the wascal was! Now I come to think of it, there was a familiar sound in his voice, though he disguised it."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"It was Puntah!"

"Punter?"

"Yaas!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's excitedly. "I know it was. It was that awful wascal in anothah disguise."

"Impossible!"

"I am sure of it, deah boys!" said D'Arcy, with conviction.

CHAPTER 18.

D'Arcy Toboggans.

"B Y Jove," said Tom Merry, after a short silence. "I shouldn't wonder if it was the truth! It's just like one of Punter's tricks."

The juniors nodded.

Now that it was too late, they recognised the probability of it. It was a poor satisfaction, when Punter was at a safe distance with his plunder.

"My hat!" said Jack Blake. "I've no doubt it was Punter, when we come to think of it. That's how he knew so much about St. Jim's—and that's how he knew the St. Jim's caps when he saw them."

"My only Aunt Jane!" murmured Wally. "Me taken in! Fancy that!"

"We were all taken in," said Tom Merry ruefully. "We'll be on the watch for strangers after this, but—"

"But he won't try it on again," said Lowther.

"I suppose not."

"This is a regular field day for him," said Herries. "He must have made a lot of hauls, the cunning beggar. And he's made a specially dead set at us on account of old times."

"That's it!"

"I only wish I had Towser here!" said Herries regretfully.

"Towser? What good would Towser be?"

"To track him down."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

"Towser would track him down like a shot," said Herries. "In fact, I have no doubt that Towser would have recognised him the minute he saw him. Towser's a wonderfully intelligent dog. You can't take in Towser."

"Well," said Blake, looking round, "if the choice is between losing our tin and having Towser with us for the day, I must say I prefer to lose the tin."

"You ass!" said Herries. "Why, Towser—"

"I must say I agree with Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with a nod. "Towsah may have his good points, but he has no respect whatever for a fellow's twousahs. Now, are we goin' to look for that wottah or not, you fellows?"

"What's the good of looking for him?" said Monty Lowther. "He has his hair and beard off by this time, or changed for another sort. We might pass him and touch him in the crowd without knowing him."

"Yaas, that's quite poss."

"It's no good!" said Tom Merry ruefully. "Let's get

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out, and see the rest of the show. The rotter has paid for the coffee—"

"With our tin!" grunted Manners.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

The juniors went out into the crowded open. They were feeling very exasperated, and if they had met the ubiquitous Captain Punter just then it would have gone very hard with him. But Captain Punter was not to be seen.

Tom Merry was of opinion that he would not be seen again. The captain had done enough to "get his own back," and he was not likely to run further risks. For Tom Merry was pretty certain that the worthy captain's object was not merely plunder. He wanted to gratify his old grudge against the St. Jim's juniors, too.

The evening was growing old now, and it was getting near time for the juniors to leave the Exhibition. They expected to have to go without their stolen property, and they had little expectation of ever seeing it again.

The police, doubtless, would do their best; but they were not likely to get on the track of a cunning rascal like Punter.

"It isn't so much the money," said D'Arcy. "But my watch was a present from the governor on my birthday, you know, and I hardly like to face him without it. And then it's exaspewatin' to be done."

"Jolly exasperating," said Wally. "I only wish we could get within hitting distance of that rotter, that's all. I'd show him something in upper-cuts!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I expect he'll give us a wide berth after this," said Tom Merry. "No good crying over spilt milk though. Let's see what's left of the Exhibition."

"There's the gallery of Japanese art," said D'Arcy.

"And the toboggan," added Dig.

"Toss up which," said Kerr.

"Which do you fellows say?" asked D'Arcy.

There was a chorus at once:

"The toboggan!"

"But the art will improve your minds, you know."

"Never mind our minds!" said Monty Lowther. "Let's have a run on the toboggan—unless the girls would like to see the pictures."

"I should like to," said Ethel. "There is a famous picture of a tiger here by a Japanese artist, and I should like to see it. But I will wait till you have been on the toboggan."

"I don't care for toboggans," Figgins remarked, in a casual sort of way. "Don't you think they throw you into a—flutter?"

"Pewwaps you're wight, deah boy."

"Upon the whole, I think I'll see the pictures," remarked Figgins. "After all, you come to a place like this to have your mind improved, don't you?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Well, go and see the pictures, then, and we'll tobog," he said. "Come on, Gussy."

But Arthur Augustus stepped back.

"No. I agree with Figgins," he said. "Upon the whole, one ought to think more of the improvement of the mind than the amusement of the body."

"Go hon!"

"You fellows can tobog, and I'll go with Ethel and see the pictures," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I'm weally cuwious to see the tigh."

Figgins smiled in a sickly way. He had been looking forward for hours to having a quiet walk with Cousin Ethel, if it could be managed in an unobtrusive way. He hadn't anything particular to say to her; in fact, he was most likely to walk in silence most of the way, wondering whether he was boring Ethel. But it was enjoyable, all the same, and the swell of St. Jim's, in the innocence of his heart, was putting his foot in it as usual.

But that was where true friendship came in—Kerr and Wynn—the latter nobly forgetting for the moment that he was getting hungry again—seized D'Arcy, each slipping an arm through the arm of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Come on," said Kerr briskly.

"This way, or you'll be late for the toboggan!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn.

"But—"

"We can get in the front seat if you hurry."

"But—"

"Have you taken the tickets, Tom Merry?"

"Paid for the lot; it's all right," said the hero of the Shell, laughing.

"Right!"

"Buck up, there!"

"Bai Jove! I tell you—"

"Hurry up!"

Arthur Augustus was fairly jammed through the turnstile, and hurried into the waiting car. He was pressed into the front seat, with Fatty Wynn beside him; pressed is really the word, for Fatty was quite wide enough to fill the space himself, and D'Arcy was squeezed very close.

The chums of St. Jim's poured into the car behind. D'Arcy tried to rise to his feet, his brain swimming with the rush of his entrance into the car.

"Let me get out!" he gasped. "I tell you——"

"It's all right; we're starting."

"But I don't want to start!" yelled the swell of St. Jim's. "I want to get out! I'm goin' to see the pictures. I insist upon gettin' out!"

"Too late!" said Digby.

"But——"

"Sit down!"

"I wefuse to sit down!"

"Hold on there!" roared the driver.

"But——"

"Sit tight!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"We're off!"

The car rushed away, and Arthur Augustus had no choice but to submit. Miss Phyllis, in the next seat with Kerr, laughed as the rush of the wind blew her hair from its ribbon. D'Arcy settled down at last.

Figgins looked after the car from the turnstile.

"Well, they're gone," he said. "We may as well go and look at the pictures."

Ethel looked round in surprise.

"I thought Arthur was coming," she said. "He said so."

Figgins grinned uneasily.

"He seems to have changed his mind," he remarked.

"He's gone on the toboggan with the others, hasn't he?"

"How curious!"

"Well, Gussy does curious things. Shall we get along and see the pictures?" suggested Figgins. "I'm—I'm awfully interested in—in Japanese art. Kerr has told me a lot of their drawing, you know—Kerr draws a treat."

"I believe Kerr can do everything," said Ethel, smiling, as they moved away towards the Japanese picture-gallery.

Figgins nodded assent.

"He jolly well can!" he exclaimed. "He plays the violin, and plays chess, and draws and paints, and talks French and German like English, you know—and he's not a swot, either, for he sends down a splendid ball at cricket, and you never saw a more reliable half at footer, and he can play forward and back, too, if he likes, and keep goal. A chap never had a chum like Kerr—unless perhaps it was Fatty Wynn. Fatty's as good as gold."

Ethel smiled again. Figgins wasn't half so clever as Kerr, and he never thought of trying to hide that fact. But Figgins had something that was quite as good as cleverness—he had a heart of gold, and that made Figgins very popular wherever he went—though he couldn't "do things," as he expressed it—except at football, for on the football-field Figgins was a great chief. You never could please Figgins so much as by praising his friends; and it was a pleasant trait in his character, and perhaps Cousin Ethel liked him all the better for it.

CHAPTER 19.

Figgins is not Found.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY did not speak during the whirling rush of the Canadian toboggan. The wind took his breath away, for one thing, and he was too full of suppressed indignation, for another. He had been shoved into the toboggan against his will, carried off by force like the heroine of a six-shilling novel or a newspaper serial, and he did not like it. He did not like it at all. He meant to say things to Kerr and Wynn when they were on terra firma again—very plain things, too.

The car came round to the starting-place at last, and the juniors tumbled out, and Tom Merry assisted Miss Phyllis to alight.

"Did you like it?" he asked.

Miss Phyllis tried to recapture her streaming hair.

"Yes, very much," she said breathlessly.

"Bai Jove——"

"Didn't you like it, Gussy?"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"You nearly missed it, you know," said Kerr blandly.

"If we hadn't hurried you in, you wouldn't have got a seat."

"I didn't want a seat."

"Eh?"

"I wepeat that I didn't want a seat!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, in tones of intense exasperation. "I intended to go to the picture-gallery."

"What!"

"I wanted to see the pictures."

"Pictures!"

"The Japanese pictures, ass!"

"Oh, I see! Why didn't you say so, then?" asked Kerr innocently.

"Bai Jove! I did say so."

"Did you? Then you should have kept out of the car," said the Scottish junior. "The fact is, Gussy, you don't know what you want. Will you come round the toboggan again?"

"Certainly not."

"Hallo! Where are you going, Gussy?" exclaimed Jack Blake, catching the elegant junior by the shoulder as he was striding away.

"I'm goin' to look for Ethel."

"Ethel!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ethel's all right."

"Wats!"

"Figgins is lookin' after her."

"Wats!" repeated D'Arcy. "That's why I'm going. You don't know what may happen, with that New House ass lookin' aftah her. My cousin is undah my charge. Besides, Figgins will be bowin' her to death."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Come and try the submarine, Gussy," he said.

"Blow the submarine!"

"It's awfully interesting under the water——"

"Go undah the water, then."

"But you're coming, aren't you?" said Tom Merry persuasively.

"Certainly not. I have my dutay as a cousin to do," said D'Arcy firmly. "I am goin' to look aftah Ethel."

"We may as well all go and see the pictures," said Tom Merry.

And they went.

They entered the Japanese picture-gallery, and many a wonderful work of art they saw there. D'Arcy did not look at the pictures, however. He was looking for Cousin Ethel. But he did not find her.

Up and down, from room to room, he went in quest of the girl, but Cousin Ethel was not to be seen.

He came back at last, looking very flurried.

"Bai Jove! I knew somethin' would happen!" he exclaimed. "I knew that ass Figgins would never be able to look aftah Ethel."

"What's happened now?" demanded Blake.

"They're lost."

"Who are lost?"

"Ethel and Figgins."

"Oh, they'll turn up!" said Tom Merry. "Just look at this tiger. Looks as if he was just going to take a bite, doesn't he?"

"Wats! We shall have to leave the Exhibish. soon, and now Figgins has lost himself and Ethel. It is weally most exaspewatin'."

"Well, in case of losing one another, we arranged to meet at the flip-flap at ten," said Tom Merry. "I wouldn't wonder if we find them there."

"Wats!"

The juniors finished looking at the pictures, and then Tom Merry glanced at his watch, and suggested a move for the flip-flap. D'Arcy cast a last anxious glance round the rooms, and assented.

"I don't suppose we shall find Figgins there," he said. "He's lost, of course. Lwegard that chap as an ass."

They made their way to the flip-flap.

D'Arcy looked up and down through his monocle, which he jammed into his eye for that express purpose.

"I don't see them!" he exclaimed.

The next moment he staggered under a heavy slap on the shoulder.

"Hallo! We've been waiting for you!" exclaimed a cheery voice.

"Yow!"

D'Arcy swung round and looked at Figgins. The chief of the New House juniors looked at him in return, and grinned affably.

"I did not see you, Figgins——"

"You were looking the other way," said Figgins cheerfully. "Possibly that accounts for it. You couldn't expect to, you know."

"I wish you would not be such a wuff beast!"

"Well, I had to attract your attention. We've been waiting here five minutes."

"Five minutes and a half," said Cousin Ethel, with a glance at her little watch.

"Exactly five minutes and a half," said Figgins.

"I've been huntin' for you in the picture-gallery."

"Where?"

"In the gallery of Japanese art."

"My hat!"

"It is vevy singlarah that we missed you."

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"Not at all," said Figgins genially. "You see, we haven't been there."

Arthur Augustus gave a jump.

"You haven't been there!" he ejaculated.

"No."

"But—but—"

"We started to go, but changed our minds, and went on a boat on the lake instead," said Figgins. "It was ripping!"

"It was very nice," said Cousin Ethel brightly. "I am so sorry you looked for us in the picture-gallery, Arthur. I did not know you were going there; I thought you had changed your mind about it when you went on the toboggan."

"Oh, vewy well," said D'Arcy, with an effort. "It's all wight."

CHAPTER 20. Homeward Bound.

"TIME'S up!" said Tom Merry.

And the juniors moved off towards the exit.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were to see the two girls home, and Tom Merry & Co. walked with them part of the way, leaving themselves only just time to get to Charing Cross to catch their own train west.

"I twust you will weach home safely, Ethel," said Arthur Augustus, in a dubious sort of way, as he shook hands with his cousin.

Ethel laughed.

"Why, I shall be all right, Arthur. Figgins is looking after me."

"H'm! That's why I'm wathah doubtful. Figgins is wathah an ass, you know—he'll admit that himself, won't you, Figgay, deah boy?"

"Anything you like, old chap," said Figgins, who felt very friendly towards Ethel's cousin just then. "Pile it on!"

"Well, I don't want to say anythin' personal, but I wegard you as an ass, Figgay!"

"Same here!" said Figgins. "I wouldn't be personal for worlds and solar systems, but I regard you as another."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"If you chaps have done complimenting one another, we'll catch our train," Jack Blake suggested politely.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Good-bye!" said Figgins.

"Pway be careful, Ethel, and don't let Figgins lose himself again."

"Certainly!" said Ethel, laughing.

"Pway be as sensible as poss., Figgay."

"Anything you like."

And they parted.

Tom Merry & Co. rolled away on a motor-bus for Charing Cross Station. Tom Merry had the return halves of the tickets in his pocket, and very little else. The chums of St. Jim's had gone to the Exhibition well supplied with cash, but cash has a way of slipping off in such places.

"Well, we've had a jolly good day," said Tom Merry. "It was really a very good idea of yours to come to the Exhibition, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I think the visit's been a success."

"Especially for Captain Punter," grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, that's the wotten part of it," assented Arthur Augustus. "I don't know what I shall say to the govornah about my watch. But I suppose it can't be helped. It's gone."

"Watches were made to go," suggested Monty Lowther.

And there was a general groan.

The juniors caught the train at Charing Cross—a night express, making few stops. They crowded into it, all of them getting into one first-class carriage for the sake of company. They pretty well filled it, but they did not mind a squeeze, and they wanted to keep together for the journey homeward, and the Shell fellows and the Fourth-Formers did not even object to Wally, Jameson, and Gibson crowding in with them. The more the merrier, Tom Merry observed.

As the train was about to start the door was suddenly opened. A man had rushed across the platform at the last moment, and he reached the train as it was starting, and tore open the door and leaped in.

The door was slammed behind him by an angry porter.

The man stumbled among the many legs of the crowded juniors, evidently not having expected to find himself in such an overcrowded carriage.

"No room here, sir," said Tom Merry. "Sorry—we're over-full."

"No time to change, though," said Kerr.

The train was buzzing out of the station.

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The stranger made a movement as if to throw open the door and leap out again, but Tom Merry and Manners grasped him together.

"What are you going to do?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in amazement. "You'll be killed!"

The man muttered something under his breath.

He was a medium-sized man, with a thick, black beard and heavy eyebrows, and he wore a Homburg hat slouched down over his face.

Tom Merry gave him a curious glance. It was very singular that the man should have thought of jumping out of the carriage after the train had started simply because it was overcrowded. It would have been a risk to life and limb.

But the train was out of the station now, and it was too late, anyway. The juniors crowded up to give the man room. Several of them were standing already, and D'Arcy, who had a corner seat, rose to make room for the stranger.

"Pway take my seat, sir," he said.

The man muttered something.

"It is quite at your disposal, my deah sir. You are oldah than I am, and it is only wight for me to give you my seat."

The man sat down in the corner.

He did not utter a word of thanks.

He took out a newspaper and held it up to read, and sat in the corner screened from the view of the juniors as the train rushed on through the night.

CHAPTER 21.

Captain Punter Once More.

TOM MERRY & CO. glanced at the newspaper, beneath which peeped out the coat and legs of their fellow-passenger—all of him that could be seen. It struck them that the man was an ill-mannered person, to say the least. He had not spoken a word since he entered the carriage, and had not even thanked D'Arcy for the seat. The swell of St. Jim's stood up against the door, and when the train shook he rustled against the paper the man was reading. The passenger several times allowed an impatient grunt to escape him, and the swell of St. Jim's felt called upon to explain.

"I am sowwy to be pushed against your papah in this way, my deah sir," he exclaimed. "You see, I have to stand, as there is no woom for me to sit down, and when the twain bumps I am thwown to and fwo. I am weally sowwy."

No reply.

"I am weally sowwy, sir," repeated Arthur Augustus.

A grunt.

"It is a common custom to weply to a wemark," said Arthur Augustus, his eyes beginning to gleam. "I twust you can hear me?"

Silence.

"Are you deaf, p'w'aps?"

A grunt.

"Are you dumb, then?"

"Hold your tongue!" came a voice from behind the paper, in deep, husky, broken tones. "I have an affection of the larynx, and cannot talk."

"Oh, I am sowwy! I am weally vewy sowwy!" said D'Arcy.

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders.

He did not believe the stranger's explanation for a moment. He wondered why the grumpy individual should have taken the trouble to give it.

The juniors chattered as the train tore on through the darkness. There was no stop for twenty-five minutes. The talk of the juniors naturally ran upon their experiences at the Japan-British Exhibition.

"I twust I shall see Puntah once more, that's all," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He has my watch and my bank-notes. I don't mind the fivahs so much, but the watch was a birthday present, as I believe you chaps were aware—"

"We were!" grinned Lowther. "You've told us fifty times."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"It's a judgment on you, Gussy," said Manners. "It's rather bad form for a kid of your age to wear a gold watch."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"So, upon the whole, it's really lucky you've lost it," said Manners.

"I wegard you as an ass, Mannahs! I— Oh, how this twain wocks!"

"It's getting up speed," said Tom Merry, glancing out as they flashed through a station which showed a glimmer of light.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better hold on!"

D'Arcy held on to the door behind him. But the train

rooked and shook, and suddenly a wilder shake sent D'Arcy staggering.

He strove to save himself, but in vain. Crash he went upon the newspaper of the grumpy passenger.

The newspaper crumpled up at once, and so did the passenger, with D'Arcy clinging wildly round his neck.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Let go!" gurgled the passenger.

"Sowwy—vewy sowwy! I couldn't help—"

Tom Merry grasped D'Arcy and pulled him off. The swell of St. Jim's came off, with the black beard of the passenger in his hands, and one of the man's eyebrows sticking in his hair.

The juniors gave a shout of surprise.

The man caught up the newspaper to his face. But it was too late. He was recognised. From all the juniors at once burst a shout.

"Punter!"

"Captain Punter!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.

The rascal sprang to his feet.

His look was desperate.

But the train was going at terrific speed now, and it would have been instant death to leap from the carriage.

Punter's hand went into his pocket.

"Back, or—"

Before the hand could come out again, Tom Merry had flung himself upon the rascal, and the rest followed suit.

They fairly piled upon Captain Punter.

The rascal struggled furiously.

He was lithe and muscular, and in spite of the heavy odds against him he put up a good fight, and it was only after a struggle that the juniors of St. Jim's got him down upon the floor of the carriage.

But got down he was at last.

Then, with three or four juniors sitting on him, and some more standing on his legs, the rascal had no choice but to give in.

He gasped breathlessly under the weight of his captors.

"It's—it's all right!" he panted. "I give you best! Chuck it! Get off my chest, and let me breathe!"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "I don't see any great necessity for you to breathe, Puntah!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"I regard you as a wotten wascal—"

"Groo!"

"And a feahful villain!"

"Yaroo!"

"And a most disweputable thief!"

"Yowp!"

"And I think you ought to have a feahful thwashin', and then be handed ovah to the police, Puntah!"

"Yow! Gerroff my chest!"

Tom Merry laughed, and pulled the swell of St. Jim's up. D'Arcy was very reluctant to leave the prisoner. Punter had proved himself so elusive that D'Arcy seemed to have a fear that he would vanish through the floor of the carriage if he once let go of him.

"Ow!" gasped Punter. "Let me gerrup! I'm—I'm choking! You!"

"You can't get up," said Jack Blake, keeping a foot on his chest. "You'll stay where you are until we arrive at a station, and then you'll be handed over to the police."

"Hang you!"

Blake grinned.

"I think you're more likely to be hanged," he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My hat, look here!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, picking up a purse that had fallen from the pocket of the prisoner in the desperate struggle. "I've seen this before."

"It's mine!" exclaimed Dig.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy excitedly. "I shouldn't wondah if the wascal has all the stolen pproperty still upon him, you know."

"I'll bet he has!" grinned Tom Merry. "That's why he was leaving London so suddenly. He left it till the last second to dodge into the train, in case he was noticed at the station."

"And he bolted in right among us!" roared Blake. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, Punter! You are a chump, after all, as well as a blessed deep villain!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, we've got him now," said Manners. "Let's go through his pockets, and see if he's got the rest of the property on him. I expect he has."

"Yaas, wathah! And if you wesist, Puntah, you will be hurt," said the swell of St. Jim's warningly. "We shall not stand on cewemony with a feahful wascal like you, I assure you, Puntah."

The captain said things under his breath, but the juniors

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did not mind what he said. They proceeded to turn out their prisoner's pockets.

A varied assortment of articles came into view.

First and foremost, there was a gold watch—no other than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's famous twenty-five-guinea ticker.

The swell of St. Jim's uttered an exclamation of satisfaction as he saw it. He took it from Lowther as the Shell fellow handed it out.

"Bai Jove! My tickah!"

"As large as life!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "And here's your purse, Gussy. See if the cash is in it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus opened his purse, and examined the contents. The banknotes and the gold were there, just as he had left them. Punter did not appear to have taken anything from the purse. Doubtless he had had a "field day" at the Exhibition, and had left examining his plunder till he was in a safe place afterwards.

The rascal had schemed cunningly. To have a long day at his profession at the crowded Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, and then to take the express to the West of England, was a cunning scheme enough. Fortune had favoured him all day, but had failed him at the finish; and he had chosen the carriage in which the juniors of St. Jim's were crowded to make his escape—with disastrous results for himself.

He lay now gritting his teeth as Lowther turned out pocket after pocket, bringing all kinds of plunder to light.

All the things that had been taken from the juniors of St. Jim's were recovered; and besides those there were many more articles, evidently stolen—watches, brooches, purses, and a large sum of money in silver and gold.

After retaking possession of their own property, the juniors piled the rest of the things taken from Punter upon the seat.

Then the rascal was allowed to rise, and sit down. But a junior held him on either side, and the rest were ready to pounce upon him if he made a movement. But the precautions seemed unnecessary. Punter sank back in his seat, breathing hard and stertorously, and his features were contracted, as if in pain.

Arthur Augustus was concerned at once.

"Bai Jove! I hope we haven't hurt him too much!" he exclaimed, scanning the face of the rascal through his eyeglass.

"Can't be helped," said Tom Merry. "I think we're all hurt a bit, as a matter of fact."

There was no doubt upon that point. Punter had fought hard, and most of the juniors bore marks of the conflict—Blake having a swollen nose, and Manners a black eye, and all the others some mark or other.

Punter breathed jerkily.

"Are you ill?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Punter nodded.

"It's—it's all right!" he gasped. "The—the heart—I't will—pass off—I think. Let me alone."

He closed his eyes.

The juniors looked dismayed and distressed. The man looked as if he were in a serious state. Rascal as he was, they didn't want him to be permanently injured, of course. It was for the law to deal with him.

"Well, you shouldn't have struggled so much," said Blake. "You couldn't expect us to let you go, I suppose?"

Punter groaned deeply.

The train slackened speed.

"We're getting to the stop," said Blake, looking out of the window. "We shall have to explain to the station-master, and hand these things to him, and give Punter into his charge."

CHAPTER 22.

The Last Trick.

TOM MERRY threw open the carriage door as the train came to a stop. He shouted down the platform for the station-master, and two or three porters came running up, followed by the station-master himself.

The juniors had released Punter. He did not look as if he needed holding now. He lay back, gasping, on the cushioned seat.

"What is the matter here?" exclaimed the station-master, putting his head in at the door.

Tom Merry hastily explained.

"It's a London pickpocket, who's wanted by the police!" he said quickly. "He's robbed us to-day—and other people—at the Japan-British Exhibition, and we've caught him—we've got him here!"

The official whistled.

"Let's see him."

"Look! We had a struggle, and he's been hurt," said Tom Merry. "We didn't mean to hurt him, but we had to make him give in, you know."

Tom Merry and Blake grasped Punter, and lifted him towards the doorway of the carriage.

He hung heavily upon them, groaning.
"Phew!" said the station-master. "He seems to be hurt. He— Oh!"

He started back in alarm as a sudden change came over the apparently injured and exhausted Punter.

As soon as he was close to the door, with only a relaxing grasp upon him, Punter had thrown off the pretence—for a pretence it was, though Tom Merry & Co. had not suspected it for a moment.

With a desperate spring, he rushed past the station-master, pushing the official so violently aside that he fell to the platform.

Then he raced away with the fleetness of a deer.

The station-master staggered up.

"After him!" he yelled.

The porters had been too petrified to act for a moment, but now they raced down the platform after the fugitive.

But Punter had already reached the end of the train, and had dodged round the guard's-van across the line.

Tom Merry gasped.

"My only hat!" he ejaculated. "He was fooling us all the time!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What a blessed deep rascal!" exclaimed Blake half-admiringly. "Blessed if I thought for a moment that he was playing 'possum."

"Wathah not."

"He's gone!" growled the station-master. "The police will soon have him, I expect. The train's late. Good-night!"

"Here's the stolen property," said Tom Merry. "You'd better take it, and hand it over to the authorities."

"Very well."

And Punter's plunder was handed over to the station-master. Then the door of the carriage was closed, the engine shrieked, and the train resumed its journey through the shadowy night.

"Well, of all the deep bounders, I think Punter takes the cake!" Monty Lowther remarked. "I'm only half sorry that the bounder got away. He deserves to get off, if only for his cheek."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I don't know," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He's a dangerous rascal, and the sooner he's laid by the heels the better, I think. Still, that's the bizney of the police, and we needn't bother our heads about it."

"We've got our things back, anyway," said Digby, with satisfaction.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, I'm glad to have my tickah again, you know! I weally don't know how I should face the governah without it. I wegard us as havin' been wathah lucky, you know, in the long wun; and all's well that ends well. We must send a wiah to Figgins, to let him know it's all wight."

And the juniors finished their journey back to Eastwood in a state of great satisfaction. They arrived at a very late hour, and the wire was sent from the station to Figgins, with instructions to tell Cousin Ethel the good news. Then the party went home.

"Well, it's been a jolly day," Wally remarked, as they reached the house and went up to supper. "I don't know whether I shall take any Shell fellows or Fourth-Formers the next time I go to the Exhibition, though. They're more trouble than they're worth. What?"

"Yes, rather!" said Jameson and Gibson together.

But Tom Merry & Co. only laughed. They were in too good a humour at the fortunate ending of the day's adventures to mind the cheek of the Third-Form fags.

It had been, after all, a very successful day's outing, and the chums of St. Jim's had enjoyed their visit to Shepherd's Bush; and they all agreed that one of the happiest days of the vacation was the one spent by Tom Merry & Co. at the Exhibition.

(Another long complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled: "The St. Jim's Regatta," by Martin Clifford.)

A Splendid New Series

By F. St. MARS.

MR. RAT ON THE WARPATH.

The Beginning.

TWO beady eyes peered out of the tangle of hedge-roots beneath the hedge-bank, just where the old hawthorn that last year's gale blew down lies half in the hedge, half out in the field. It was so close to the farm that you could hear what men were saying over the milking on a still evening, yet secluded and quiet, being in the corner of the orchard where the bull was chained by a long chain to a tree.

An early owl passed on muffled wings, and the beady eyes followed it. Then a young blackbird hopped out among the dark blue-green grass, and the setting sun caught the bird and turned it to ruby and bronze. It was looking for a last worm.

Instantly the beady eyes centred upon it. They added unto themselves whiskers of great length and abnormal whiskerness, and a snout long and pointed which fell away below, where the jaw was, as only the snout of a rat can. The whole of a rat added itself to eyes and whiskers and snout, and hopped out of the hole into the open.

And such a rat, too!

He was a very giant of a rat—an evil, out-at-heels, swash-buckling rat, with a ragged coat, and unseemly scars telling of many fights, and chipped ears telling of many more fights, and a limp in his off-hind foot telling of somebody's trap which didn't hold him quite, and great yellow teeth, exactly like chisels, and hard, muscular limbs tense as steel, and great bristling whiskers which he combed fiercely, and eyes as piercing as stars, and a way of carrying himself that suggested one of the pirates or brigands of old. Indeed, Mr. Rat didn't very much care whether he killed the first creature he met or the next. He was that sort, you understand—an outlaw, a "rogue" rat, which is only not so terrible a beast as a "rogue" elephant because he is so much smaller.

His own folks had turned him out of Ratdom long ago, over the little matter of a murder or two done offhand, but it took

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half the colony to do it. Mr. Rat was not a dicky-bird for gentleness, nor one to be handled without gloves on.

He had seen the young blackbird, and, for the rest, it was the stinging-nettles on the hedge-bank that gave him cover, and the buttercups that hid him, as he crawled flat towards that unsuspecting "blacky."

Now, neither Mr. Rat nor Master Blackbird had seen a nut-brown, long, low snaky body approaching inch by inch from the opposite direction. From the front end of this new feature peered two eyes, beady as Mr. Rat's even, save that as they drew near the blackbird, they turned red like the eyes of a ferret, which you may have seen. Indeed, the first that Mr. Rat knew of this third party was when he sprang at the bird and hit something else, which had chosen that moment to spring from the opposite direction in mid-air. And the first Master Blackbird knew of either of them was when they fell, locked together and struggling, atop of him.

I suppose the blackbird knows how he got out of that mix-up and flew off. I don't.

It was, in fact, a weasel—a little beast like a tiny, brown, miniature ferret, about seven inches long, and brave as seven lions rolled into one. It had hold of Mr. Rat's shoulder—which it had grabbed in the first moment of surprise when the two collided in mid-spring—and Mr. Rat, squealing with pain and rage, wondered whether it was going to leave go next minute or next week. Meanwhile, the weasel did not seem quite to have made up his mind, and held on while he thought about it.

What followed was never clearly defined. Mr. Rat wrapped himself up in knots and unwrapped himself, bucked and jumped and rolled, and bit and tore and scratched, and kicked and wriggled and squealed and raged and pounded like one gone mad, but the weasel hung on. He was half dazed and wholly flattened and sorely battered, also he was marked from head to heel, and red as the setting sun. Nevertheless, he hung on. He had to. Mr. Rat would kill him when he let go. In all his wicked little career the weasel had

Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

never met a rat like unto this one. He had the strength of two rats and the ferocity of a tiger.

It was the squealing which brought the sheep-dog to the spot, for a rat can never help squealing, in which, by the way, he is like the pigs. This was a young dog, one not learned in the hunting of rats. He froze on the weasel promptly, and that brave little ruffian's life went out like the snuffing of a candle. More than that, his jaws opened, and Mr. Rat rolled clean over twice and leapt for safety in one continued motion.

Then the dog put his heavy paw down and pinned Mr. Rat to the ground. It was a silly thing to do, but he did it, because his jaws were just then occupied with the weasel.

Next instant that young sheep-dog removed himself fully a stone's throw in two and nine-sixteenths of a second, to the accompaniment of ear-splitting yells. Nor did he stop till he reached the farmyard. He held up one forepaw as he ran—the forepaw with which he had pinned down Mr. Rat—and there was a wedge-shaped piece of fur and skin and solid flesh cut out of it just in the fleshy part of the forearm. Mr. Rat had done that, and Mr. Rat was at that moment sitting on his haunches at the mouth of his hole, combing his whiskers with his dainty forepaws, which were exactly like little pink hands.

It was in the darkness before the moon came that Mr. Rat sallied out on his second border raid that night. He was going to the farm. Nobody knew the farm better than he, but he was cunning enough not to live there by day. He preferred to pillage by night, and allow the wrath of man to fall upon his tribe who did live there.

Across the orchard he went, past the huge bulk of the bull, snorting voluminously in his sleep, and so over a little brook—which he swam—and up the hedge of the kitchen-garden.

Once, in the hedge, he stopped as dead as if he had been turned to stone. Under his nose, exactly in the "run" or path, that he had made for himself, was a large piece of cheese. It was most tempting, but Mr. Rat's nose and whiskers were working all together, quivering anxiously, sorting out another smell which was oddly mixed up with the cheese smell. Then he turned aside, and stalked on. The smell was that of steel. There was a trap by that cheese, cunningly hidden, but not cunningly enough to deceive him. Anyone would have to get up very early to get topsides with Mr. Rat.

A casual inspection of the chicken-coops revealed the fact that they were all carefully closed. It also revealed a dog.

Mr. Rat removed himself to the pigstye.

Very dark it was inside there. The air was hot and heavy with the smell of pigs, and full of the snores of pigs. There were also scuffings, and the mice were holding a funeral round a fellow who had fallen in the hog-tub.

So dark was it that Mr. Rat, in coming up out of the drain, which was one way of reaching the pigstye, ran full tilt into something furry that was coming into the drain in a most unseemly hurry. Mr. Rat bit savagely and bolted back to the drain, not knowing what manner of foe he was dealing with. The same lack of knowledge afflicted the other, which was also a rat, and he acted exactly in like manner, the result being that they both got stuck in the mouth of the drain, where they struggled like little brown fiends, and where a second rat, hurrying up five seconds later, found them.

He also was in a mad hurry, this second rat, and went for the mouth of that drain like one boring into a Rugby scrimmage. In ten seconds four more rats had added themselves unto that heap of brown fur, all writhing together to get through the drain.

Then Mr. Rat realised his position, and remembered that rats do not act thus, except under powerful persuasion. He drew back forthwith. He turned. He looked full into the large, round, flaming yellow-green eyes of a cat. Then he knew why those rats remembered an urgent appointment up that drain, all together and so suddenly.

One likes to remember what Mr. Rat did then. It was so like him. He sprang, not away, but straight at the cat. It was great—immense! Pussy was preparing to spring forward, and in no sense in a position to meet an attack. And the result—well, you can see it to this day—two neat scars at the base of the throat, where fur, skin, and flesh alike had been cut clean out. Had Mr. Rat struck the mark at which he aimed, the useful jugular vein, not half an inch from the scar, Pussy would have died quickly.

An appalling yell from Pussy followed, a whistling, lightning-like slash of the rending claws followed that, and—Mr. Rat was gone. As an acrobatic feat, it was rather good. One bound had carried him to a tub. Rebounding from that, he landed on the fat side of a sleeping pig; rebounding again, he reached piggy's nose—waking piggy up—and cushioned off the latter out of the door in one flying,

frantic spring, leaving a chaos of snorting, grunting, churned-up confusion behind him.

Ten minutes later Mr. Rat had discovered—or helped to make—an entrance into a nestbox in which a hen was sitting upon exactly thirteen eggs—at least, there were thirteen when the hen was shut up for the night. The housewife found six when she went to look next day. The others were there, too—oh dear, yes, they were there, but they were empty. Mr. Rat had sucked them.

Straight from this last outrage Mr. Rat removed towards home. He was beginning to think he had done enough damage for that night. Besides, it was now moonlight, and—and what was that odd, bulgy shadow against the wall there? It had been there all the time he was engaged with the eggs. Perhaps it was only a heap of straw, or perhaps—

Mr. Rat stopped and sniffed. Yes; undoubtedly there was a smell of man about, and fresh, too. Moreover, a rat that had been at business with a sack of meal in the corner suddenly gave a frightened squeal, and came racing past him.

Then, without warning, there was a flash and a bang. Mr. Rat jumped clean up in the air at the flash. Then he raced for his life. The other rat rolled over twice and lay kicking.

"Hang it!" said the shadow in the corner, which got up and changed into the farmer's son with a 22-cal. rifle under his arm. "I've shot t' varmint all right, only it's th' wrong 'un. He must ha' passed in front o' that old devil as I pulled t' trigger, an' I lost 'im, arter all, an' he's eaten all they aigs, too!"

THE END.

(Another of these wonderful little stories next Thursday.)

A Splendid Old-time Sea Story.

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In the Service of the King.
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By LIEUTENANT LEFEVRE.

Under Arrest.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" said Captain Turnbull quickly. Captain Burgoyne turned white to the lips. He knew well enough what the other meant, for duelling in those days was an everyday method of settling quarrels such as this.

"My card, sir!" said Captain Maher, with a bow. "Mr. Forde"—he glanced at the young lieutenant—"will probably be willing to act as a friend in this matter."

Still Captain Burgoyne made no reply. He did not take the card, which fluttered and fell at his feet.

"If—if I have offended you," he said thickly, "I ask your pardon. I—I was excited. The statements this lying scoundrel has made unnerved me, and made me forget myself. I beg your pardon!"

There was no concealing the fact that the man was half beside himself with fright at the prospect of a duel. The fact was apparent to all, and Captain Maher, with a contemptuous laugh, turned round on his heel without deigning to make a reply.

Captain Turnbull also turned away, as did the two lieutenants, leaving Burgoyne standing there alone, with an expression on his face of mingled fear and passion. Then suddenly he took a stride forward, and gripped Oswald by the shoulder.

"You will repent this!" he said. "Curse you, I'll cut the lying tongue out of your head!" He stooped until his eyes were on a level with Oswald's, and until his hot breath was on the lad's cheek. "You cursed thief! You highwayman! You think you can fool me! You think that your change of name has disguised you from me! You think it will shield you! Wait—wait!" he added, in a voice of triumph. "You know the fate of such as you! You know the death that highway robbers die! You know—"

For an instant a feeling of chill terror shot through Oswald's heart.

The man spoke in a tone of certainty—there was a ring of triumph in his voice. What had he found out? What evidence had he to use against him?

"Captain Burgoyne, I protest against this!" cried Captain Turnbull, swinging round, and advancing towards the two. "This behaviour is unworthy of an officer of your rank. I can understand now why this youngster has shown you disrespect!"

"Gentlemen"—it was the kindly voice of the old admiral, but now sharp and stern—"gentlemen, what does this mean?"

Burgoyne's hand fell from Oswald's shoulder.

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"It means," he said thickly, "that I have been treated with gross disrespect by an inferior, and that this gentleman is encouraging him in his insubordination."

Captain Turnbull's jolly, red face went to a deeper shade of purple.

"Sir, I do not think I need defend myself from this accusation. I am myself an officer of Captain Burgoyne's own rank."

The admiral bowed his head.

"Captain Turnbull's position in the Service and his character are both well-known to me," he said. "Captain Burgoyne, I shall be obliged if you will return on board the Cynthia at once, and there remain until you receive instructions to come on shore to attend the inquiry."

Captain Burgoyne bowed almost to the ground—perhaps it was to conceal the look of fury that swept over his face. Then, without a word, he turned on his heels, and strode out into the sunlight.

"And you, sir, will please accompany him," added the admiral, turning to Brabazon, who had remained the whole time without uttering a word.

Mr. Brabazon bowed. His lips twitched nervously, and his ashen face looked ghastly.

It simply amounted to the fact that Captain Burgoyne and himself were placed under arrest, and he knew it.

The Court of Inquiry—The Matter of the Rattler.

It was three days after the arrival of the Cynthia at Kingston that the inquiry into the loss of the Catapult was held.

The court of inquiry was held in one of the large rooms in Mr. Grimphorne's residence.

It was a big room, bare of carpeting, and almost bare of furniture, except for a large table at one end, round which was ranged a number of chairs; other chairs were placed along the wall to accommodate the witnesses in the inquiry, and at the door a couple of marines from the Cynthia mounted guard.

It was ten o'clock in the morning when Oswald, with Maxwell, Mr. Pringle, Dr. Telford, and Fife entered the courtroom. They were followed immediately by Lieutenant Fife and Dick Davis, for the loss of the Rattler was also going to be made the subject of inquiry to-day.

Captain Garvin and Captain Turnbull were the next to enter the room. They both bowed to Dr. Telford, and took their seats at the table, where presently they were joined by Captain Maher and another officer.

Captain Burgoyne and Mr. Brabazon next entered, and took their seats on the opposite side of the room to that already occupied by their fellow-survivors of the Catapult. Then Mr. Grimphorne himself, with a number of papers under his arm, entered, and bowed to the officers assembled. He also had a number of papers in his hand neatly tied. He took his seat; he was going to act as the clerk in this matter, as he had often done before under similar circumstances.

Again the door opened, to admit this time Mr. Forde, the young lieutenant of the Fireball, who bowed to the officers at the table and then to Dr. Telford, but ignored the two men at the further end of the room. He took his seat beside Oswald, and scarcely had he done so when the admiral entered.

Every man in the room rose, and remained standing while the old gentleman slowly crossed the floor and took his seat at the head of the big table.

For some moments he sat in silence with bowed head, then rose to his feet, and, in a low voice, opened the proceedings.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we are met here to-day to inquire into the circumstances surrounding two serious losses that have been sustained by his gracious Majesty's Government. I allude to the loss of his Majesty's ships Catapult and Rattler. But even more

serious than the loss of the two vessels is the great sacrifice of human life that has taken place.

"I need not urge upon you to give your most careful and undivided attention to the evidence that will be laid before you, and I would ask you to take every fact that is offered in evidence into close consideration, and in delivering judgment to temper justice with mercy for both the dead and the living."

He sat down in silence, and Mr. Grimphorne, clearing his throat, opened the inquiry into the loss of the Rattler.

The inquiry was not a long one. Mr. Fife gave his evidence, which was simple enough, clearly and straightforward. Dicky Davis, overawed by the excellent company in which he found himself, gave his evidence, too. Their evidence simply amounted to this:

Lieutenants Hope and Fife, and Mr. Davis, midshipman of the Rattler, had been invited to dine with Mr. Watson. They had accepted the invitation, their fellow-guests being two men, who were introduced to them as Captain Hutt of the Albatross, and Captain Stephens—who was afterwards proved to be Kester—of the Black Rose.

These two men had retired early, leaving the three officers from the Rattler to spend the night at Mr. Wilson's house. When dawn broke they awoke and found that not one of the three vessels that had been lying at anchor in the bay off the island was in sight. The brig, the Black Rose, had been sunk, and her topmast was still visible above the tide. The other two had totally disappeared. The Rattler's murdered crew were washed ashore during that day and the three succeeding days.

Dr. Telford, Mr. Pringle, Oswald, and Maxwell also gave their evidence regarding the stealing away of the Rattler.

The officers then consulted among themselves, and delivered their verdict.

They found that the Rattler had been stolen away in the dead of night by pirates—namely, the two men Kester and Hunt—and that grave suspicion was attached to Mr. Wilson, the planter of San Andrade.

There was no evidence at all to prove that Lieutenants Hope and Fife, or any officers of the Rattler, had neglected their duty. It was simply a case of black treachery, and they had been the victims.

Lieutenant Fife rose, and, in a voice broken with emotion, thanked the officers for the decision they had arrived at.

"I only wish that my poor friend Hope could have been present to-day, gentlemen, to hear his character vindicated," he said. "He took the loss of the ship and the crew so greatly to heart that I am sure that it turned his brain, otherwise he would never have committed the act that robbed the Service of as good a sailor and as honourable a gentleman as ever breathed."

"We share your regret, Mr. Fife," said the admiral, in a low voice. "I trust that you will make it your duty to convey the finding of this court of inquiry to the ears of any relatives the unfortunate young officer may have left."

"I will do so, sir. It shall be my sacred duty," said Mr. Fife.

The case regarding the Rattler was concluded, having occupied something less than an hour of the court's time.

And now the inquiry into the loss of the Catapult—business of even greater importance—was opened.

"Gentlemen," said the admiral, "I have here a report prepared by Captain Burgoyne, which I, however, do not propose to lay just yet before you. I prefer to take the evidence of all the individuals concerned in this matter, and then, if you think fit, Captain Burgoyne's report may be read. I shall now ask Captain Burgoyne to make a brief statement, leaving out all details and names, and simply sketching out the occurrences that led up to the loss of the Catapult."

Captain Burgoyne rose to his feet, grasping the back of the chair to steady himself. His face was pale, but he was cool and self-possessed.

(To be continued in our next issue.)

How Do You Do?

WHOM TO WRITE TO—The Editor, "GEM" LIBRARY, 23-9, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street, London, who will be pleased to hear from you.

"THE FORM-MASTER'S MISTAKE."

Mr. Selby commits a grave error of judgment, and the juniors are placed in a very awkward position. A position, however, that has its funny side; but then The Terrible Three and their Chums are not given to taking things over seriously.

N.B.—Alonzo is in THE MAGNET.

The Editor

**THIS
IS
THE
CHAP!**

Quite a Sensation!

Alonzo!



**A JUNIOR AT GREYFRIARS
SCHOOL WHO MAKES YOU LAUGH**

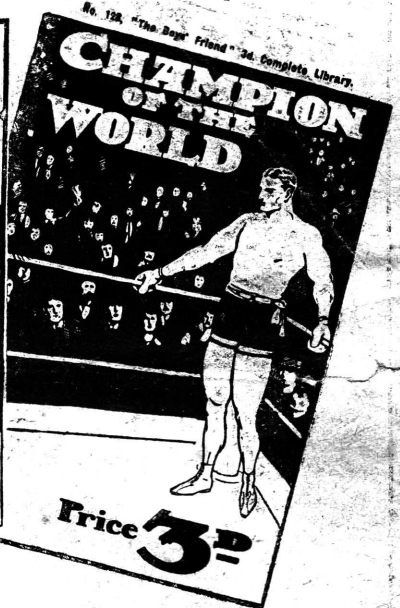
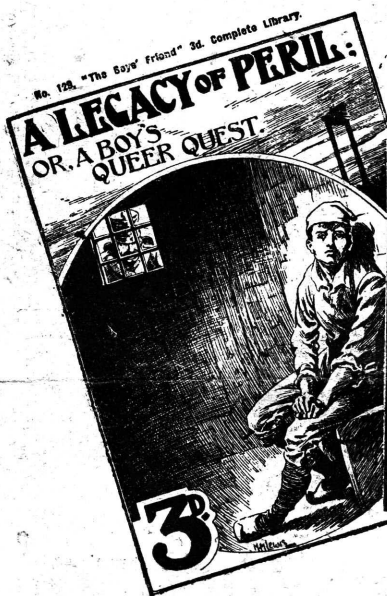
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