

871

SIX READERS WIN TUCK HAMPERS IN THIS SPECIAL BUMPER NUMBER!

# The GEM 2<sup>d</sup>

EVERY WEDNESDAY.

No. 871.  
Vol. XXVI.  
October 18th,  
1924.

## LIBRARY OF SCHOOL AND SPORTING STORIES



### D'ARCY'S ADOPTED!

An excited and hilarious crowd of juniors swarmed round the swell of St. Jim's as he pushed the pram into the old quad at St. Jim's. (An amusing scene from the grand long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.)



# Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

**M**Y dear Chums,—A Special Winners' Number! That is a fair description of the new issue of the GEM. Everybody will be delighted with the old and favourite paper. Congratulations go to the six clever victors in the Tuck Hamper Competition. One Tuck Hamper is a goodly sight. Six make as brave a show as anyone could wish. Half a dozen jolly Tuck Hampers filled with the best! That is what the GEM is giving away this time.

### IN EVERY WAY!

This week's yarns in the GEM are first class. They will appeal to both grave and gay. There is always plenty of fun in the GEM. You find as well that the old favourite weekly finds the stories with a grip in them. Look at our programme this week and see if I am not right.

### FOR NEXT WEEK!

Next Wednesday our grand Tuck Hamper feature will resume its long and prosperous run on the old, well established lines. But look out for more surprises!

### "DICK JULIAN'S TRIAL!"

By Martin Clifford.

An extra long story this, for our next issue! Don't miss it! It is a yarn that will be read, and then read again. It has a positively magic appeal. To my thinking it will be voted out of hand as one of the most sympathetic and enthralling tales of the old school the GEM has ever published. I should like you one and all to make a special note of it. There could not possibly be a better time than the present for telling any non-reading chum about the GEM. Let your pals know of this week's attractions, and of the splendid promise for next Wednesday.

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### THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

There is none of the here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow element about this season's magnificent edition of the "Holiday Annual." Everybody who has been in good time and got a copy says it is the best and breeziest book ever printed. It will stand in for months as a cheery and companionable friend. Mind you do not miss such a chance! Get the "Holiday Annual" NOW!

### THE "ST. JIM'S NEWS."

Our extra-long St. Jim's story has made it necessary to hold over the "St. Jim's News" next week, but I may tell you that I have some really ripping numbers to come. Our supplement has won for itself a high place in the estimation of all Gemites, and in my next (that I shall have a particularly interesting announcement to make concerning this feature.

### "CHUMS OF THE IRON WAY!"

By Roland Spencer & Francis Warwick.

A thrilling fight in a tunnel! That is one of the numerous exciting incidents in next week's instalment of our serial. The two authors who are writing this great yarn are well known to all readers of the Companion Papers. Roland Spencer is an old GEM favourite. Francis Warwick took first honours for his "Magnet" story "Sherwood Gold." In the wonderful serial they are contributing to the GEM they show what railway work really means. We are shown the tense rivalry between the workers on the steam lines and those who have to do with the routes where electricity is employed. This is something like! Excitement rises to fever pitch, with results of a highly sensational kind. Jimmy Speed has won his way to the front as a popular fellow with all, and his firm pal, Sam Blundell, also makes the running. The new instalment goes with a bang.

### A "MAGNET" SPECIAL.

There must be a word concerning a coming treat in our Companion Paper, the good old "Magnet." That weekly has a tremendous boom in store. I will refer to the matter again, but for the moment it will serve to say that the "Magnet" is very shortly giving away Twelve Magnificent Photogravure Plates, showing the very latest types of ships on the Active List of the Royal Navy. Each picture is a beautifully finished affair, a real art plate. Readers of the Companion Papers will frame these grand pictures, and be proud of them all their lives.

### AS THE WINTER COMES ON!

Our programme for the months ahead will be found right slap up to the traditions of the GEM. Football will be well to the front. That may be taken for granted. And the new stories of St. Jim's will be full of life and sparkle and pugnacity.

## MY READERS' OWN CORNER.

Six Readers Win  
Delicious Tuck  
Hampers.

### COLLARED FROM THE WRECK!

The officer was a stickler for smartness, and when he saw a middy wearing a very much soiled collar he decided to tackle him about it. "Look here," he said sternly, "are you not ashamed of yourself wearing a filthy collar like that round your neck?" "Filthy, sir?" replied the midddy. "I can assure you this collar was washed ashore only yesterday." "I don't doubt that," was the officer's quiet reply, "but from which wreck?"—Sent in by Daniel Burns, Sidlaw Sanatorium, Auchterhouse, N.B.

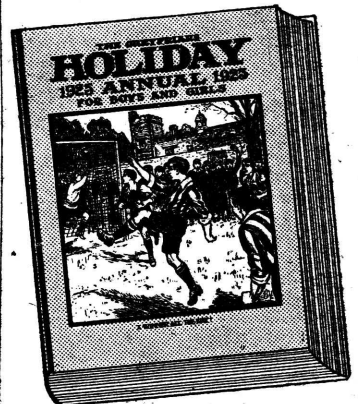
### NOT AP-PARENT!

"Hi, mister!" called out the driver of a large and heavily-laden dray. "Will you kindly hold my hoss' head for me while I get down?" The pedestrian hesitated. "Well, I'll do my best," he observed, as he approached gingerly, "though I don't know much about horses. Er—er—which one shall I hold?" "The off 'un," replied the driver. "My dear sir," replied the pedestrian testily, "as I wasn't at the parents' funeral, how the dickens am I to guess which is the orphan?"—Sent in by A. Chew, 3, Duffryn Bach Terrace, Church Village, nr. Pontypridd, Glam.

### VERY CUNNING!

The motorist touring through Wales had run out of petrol, and was miles away from the nearest garage. Great was his joy when he saw a heavy cart lumbering towards him. "If you'll tow me to the next village," he said to the vanman, "I'll give you a pound. I've run out of petrol." The bargain was gladly struck, and presently the procession started, the motorist travelling on the wagon for the sake of company. Motorist and vanman chatted affably until the village was reached. Then the motor was cut adrift, and the pound (Continued on page 28.)

## THE FINEST ANNUAL ON THE MARKET.



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**A SURPRISE—AND A BABY!** Knowing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as they do, the chums of St. Jim's ought not to have been surprised at anything he did. But it was the "giddy limit" when the swell of St. Jim's brought a baby into the school!



# D'ARCY'S ADOPTED!

The Most Humorous and  
Amazing School Story of  
Tom Merry & Co. Ever  
Told.

By Famous

**Martin Clifford.**

## CHAPTER 1. Gussy Does It!

**CRASH!**  
"Oh!"

Tom Merry of the Shell Form at St. Jim's yelled. Tom had cause to yell.

A football crashing unexpectedly on his chin was enough to make any fellow yell.

A football ought not to have been whizzing about the Fourth Form passage at all. Passage football was strictly prohibited in the School House at St. Jim's. But in the junior quarters things were seldom precisely as they ought to have been.

A football was whizzing along the passage towards the landing, although it ought not to have been doing anything of the kind. And Tom Merry came upstairs just in time to catch it.

He caught it with his chin and sat down.

"Oh! Ow! Wow! What—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth spoke in a tone of remonstrance. "Weally, deah boy, I wish you would not butt in like that at the wong moment. You have spoiled my shot."

Tom Merry sat and gasped.

Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, the heroes of the Fourth, were in the passage. Three of them were grinning at the downfall of the captain of the Shell, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked serious. D'Arcy had been making the shot, and Tom had spoiled it—quite unintentionally.

"You silly owls!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Weally, you know—"

"What are you buzzing a footer about for, you born dummy?" roared Tom, scrambling to his feet and feeling his chin to ascertain that it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't.

"It's all wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus soothingly. "You have spoiled my shot, but I will twy again. Don't apologise."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake & Co.

"You—you—you—" gasped Tom Merry.

"Pway return the ball, deah boy, when you have done wubbin' your chin," said Arthur Augustus politely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see," chuckled Blake, "Gussy thinks he can send the

ball the whole length of the passage and drop it on the lower landing. Of course he can't."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Of course he can't," said Dig. "We're letting him try. Why, I could hardly do it myself."

"Vewy pwob, Dig, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus gently. "But I am wathah a bettah kick at goal than you are, you know."

"Fathead!" said Digby.

"Anyhow, you haven't done it," said Herries.

"I should have done it all wight if Tom Mewwy had not butted in, Hewwies. It was wathah thoughtless and inconsiderate of Tom Mewwy to put his head in the way of the ball. Howevah, I will twy again, so theah is no harm done."

Tom Merry glared. He felt as though considerable harm had been done.

"What about my chin?" he roared.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I am sowwy if your chin is damaged, but you should not poke your sillay chin in the way of the footah when I am takin' a kick. It is wathah a difficult shot to bwing off, without fellows buttin' in and stoppin' the ball with their chins. I twust that no othah sillay ass will come upstairs while I am bwingin' off this shot."

"Send the ball back," called out Blake.

Tom Merry picked up the ball and placed it for a shot. He sent it back along the passage with a really good kick, which landed the ball on the noble nose of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

There was a yell from that aristocratic youth.

"Whooop!"

"Good shot!" chuckled Blake.

"Oh ewumbs! Ow! You uttah ass, Tom Mewwy! You have vewy neahly flattened my nose!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"What about my chin?" demanded Tom.

"Bothah your sillay chin! I am fed-up with heavin' about your chin! Ow!" Arthur Augustus rubbed his nose. "I have a vewy gweat mind, Tom Mewwy, to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"You haven't," said Tom cheerfully. "You haven't any mind at all, ass, or you wouldn't be buzzing a football about the passage, fathead. Suppose your Form master came up and caught it?"

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"That's all wight. Mr. Lathom is entertainin' a visitah in his studey, and he is not likely to come buttin' in," said Arthur Augustus. "If you will get out of the way, Tom Mewwy, I will bwing off my shot, and show these chaps that I am the best shot in the studey."

"Not in your lifetime," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, get going," said Herries. "We don't want to stay here a whole afternoon while Gussy wags his chin."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Chuck it, you duffers!" said Tom Merry. "Anybody might come up the staircase—"

"Wats!"

"Look here, Gussy, you duffer—"

"Wubbish!"

Arthur Augustus placed the ball again. Tom Merry turned into the Shell passage and got out of the line of fire. Blake and Herries and Digby stood behind Arthur Augustus and watched him, grinning. It really was a rather difficult shot, the passage being a lengthy one—and the shot was quite likely to be stopped if any fellow came unexpectedly out of a study. Really, the school authorities were quite right in barring football in the passages. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, dismissing such trifling considerations from his noble mind, prepared to take his shot.

"On the ball!" said Herries.

"Get going, for goodness' sake!" said Dig. "We don't want this to last all through a half-holiday, Gussy."

"Pway don't distwaect my attention by fwivolous wemarks, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I am just goin' to begin."

"Go it!" grunted Blake.

"I am just goin' it."

Arthur Augustus, having placed the ball to his satisfaction, and measured the kick with his noble eye, with the assistance of his celebrated eyeglass, kicked.

The ball rose and flew.

Right along the passage it went whizzing to the stairs. Without a swerve, clear of the walls and doors on either side, the footer flew, and vanished over the landing and the stairs beyond.

Arthur Augustus smiled triumphantly.

"All wight—" he began.

He was interrupted.

From the lower landing, out of sight of the juniors in the passage, there came a sudden and tremendous yell.

It is said that every bullet has its billet. Undoubtedly that football had found a billet. On the lower landing it had crashed on some person or persons unknown! And it was not a junior who had stopped the ball this time; it was a man's deep voice that was yelling under the unexpected assault!

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"You've done it now!" murmured Blake.

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy realised that he had!

## CHAPTER 2.

### Hard Cheese!

"THIS way, my dear Frampton!"

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, had been entertaining a visitor in his study, as Arthur Augustus knew. Arthur Augustus, unfortunately, did not know that, after a chat in his study, Mr. Lathom was showing his visitor over the School House.

The little Form master was ushering Mr. Frampton up the staircase, in the direction of the Fourth Form quarters. Mr. Frampton was Mr. Lathom's brother-in-law, being the husband of Mr. Lathom's youngest sister, and the happy father of Mr. Lathom's smallest nephew.

It was his first visit to St. Jim's, and he was interested in the old school—at all events, he displayed a polite interest. Mr. Lathom was going to show him the Fourth Form passage and the junior studies, and was bringing him upstairs for that purpose. And then the catastrophe happened.

How was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to know that Mr. Lathom was bringing his brother-in-law upstairs just then? He hardly knew that Mr. Lathom had a brother-in-law at all. As Gussy said afterwards to his comrades, how the mewwy dickens was a fellow to know, you know?

Evidently Gussy couldn't know.

Still, it was unfortunate.

For the football, dropping over the staircase, landed precisely on the head of Mr. Frampton, as he stepped on the lower landing—and it landed hard.

Mr. Frampton let out a terrific yell of pained surprise. It was a yell that rang through the School House.

At the same moment he sat down.

He sat down in a state of great astonishment. He did not even know that it was a football that had floored him. He only knew that he had received a terrific smite on his head

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and that it had hurt him. On the latter point he was quite positive.

"Ow! Oh! Wow! Woh! Oh!" gasped Mr. Frampton. "Upon my word, what— Oh! Ah! Ow! What—what—what—"

His remarks were slightly incoherent.

Mr. Lathom blinked at him in consternation. His spectacles almost fell off in his surprise and horror.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.

"Oh! Ow! What— Something struck me on the head!" stuttered Mr. Frampton, still sitting on the landing. He gazed uneasily upward. "Is—is the ceiling falling?"

"It was a football!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

The ball had bounced past the Fourth Form master, and rolled down the lower staircase.

"A—a—a football!"

"Yes. Upon my word— I trust you are not hurt, Frampton."

Mr. Lathom helped his relative to his feet. Mr. Frampton rubbed his head. He was hurt. It was all very well for Mr. Lathom to trust that he was not. He was.

"This is—is—is scandalous!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Some foolish boy has kicked that ball. Such pranks are strictly forbidden. I will ascertain at once—"

The little gentleman almost bounded up the stairs. Blake and Herries and Digby had already vanished into space.

Not so Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He remained to answer for what he had done.

Mr. Lathom fixed a stern eye on the swell of St. Jim's.

"D'Arcy! Did you kick that ball down the stairs?"

"Yaas, sir!"

"It has struck Mr. Frampton—a visitor in this House!"

thundered Mr. Lathom. "How dare you, D'Arcy?"

"I am sowwy, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with proud humility. "On reflection, sir, I realise that my pwoceedin' was a little weckless. I am pwpared to apologise to Mr. Fwampton."

"You had better prepare, also, for a severe caning!" snapped Mr. Lathom. "You deserve to be flogged!"

"Weally, sir—"

"Go to my study at once and wait there for me!" exclaimed the Form master. "I shall cane you most severely!"

"I twust, sir—"

"Go!"

"Certainly, sir; but I twust you will allow me time to apologise to Mr. Fwampton for this vevy unfortunate accident," said Arthur Augustus.

"Boy, go at once!"

"Weally, Mr. Lathom—"

"My dear Lathom!" Mr. Frampton came up from the stairs. He was rubbing his head, but he did not look angry. He was a young man, with a good-humoured face, and he was smiling slightly, though undoubtedly the football had given him a shock. "My dear Lathom, it was a trifling matter; pray do not bother on my account! So far as I am concerned, it is of no moment!"

"Bai Jove! That is vevy sportin' of you, sir!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I twust, sir, that you will accept my vevy pwofound apology."

Mr. Frampton's slight smile became more pronounced.

"Certainly," he said. "I am sure it was only an accident."

"Quite so, sir; but I feel that I have been vevy weckless,"

said Arthur Augustus. "I beg your pardon most sincerely, sir. I must also express my wegwet to you, Mr. Lathom, for havin' bwoken the wules. I will now go to your studey, sir, and will wait till you are disengaged, with pleasuah, sir!"

Arthur Augustus turned to the stairs with dignity.

Mr. Frampton gave Mr. Lathom a glance, which the latter gentleman understood.

"My dear Frampton, if you wish to look over the occurrence—" said the master of the Fourth.

"I should prefer to do so, Lathom; though, of course, I must not interfere in your duties."

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir?"

"Mr. Frampton wishes you to be excused," said Mr. Lathom. "I shall not, therefore, cane you."

"Thank you, sir! I am vevy much obliged to Mr. Fwampton!"

"I cannot, however, pass over such an infraction of the laws of the House. You will be detained for one hour this afternoon, and you will occupy the time in writing out Latin irregular verbs in the Form-room."

"Vevy well, sir."

"And the football will be confiscated," said Mr. Lathom.

"Take it to my study and leave it there."

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus went downstairs. He picked up the footer, and conveyed it to Mr. Lathom's study, and left it on the table there. Then he proceeded rather dismally to the Fourth Form room.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy kicked. Without a swerve, and clear of the walls and doors on either side, the footer flew, to vanish over the landing and down the stairs beyond. A terrific yell of pained surprise rang through the School House, for the football, dropping precisely on the head of Mr. Frampton, Mr. Lathom's visitor. (See page 4.)

It was a sunny afternoon in early winter, and there were endless occupations for a nice afternoon like that. There was footer on Little Skje, there were boats on the river, there were rambles in the woods, and spins on the bicycles—indeed, now that he was detained in the dusky old Form-room, Arthur Augustus could think of at least a dozen ways of spending that afternoon in a pleasant manner.

But he felt that he was getting off cheaply, and so he mustered his fortitude to endure an hour in the Form-room with Latin irregular verbs.

"Well, fathead?"

Blake and Herries and Digby looked into the Form-room a little later. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon them.

"Weally, Blake, I wish you would not chawactewise me as a fathead," he said gently. "It is wathah a wude expwession, and does not apply to me, though pewwaps not inapplicible to othah fellows in my studay."

"You're detained?" demanded Herries.

"Yaas."

"You ought to have been licked," said Digby. "Just like you to biff a football at a visitor's napper!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"That chap Frampton isn't a bad sort," said Blake. "I heard him beg you off."

"He is weally a good sort, Blake. I believe he is some wvelation of our Form mastah's."

"His giddy brother-in-law," said Blake. "They're staying at one of the bungalows on Wayland Common, and, of course, the man had to butt into the School House just in time to capture that footer with his silly head. Form masters ought to give warning before they bring giddy brothers-in-law rooting round the studies."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Still, you're an ass," said Blake. "You've got off cheap. Might have been worse."

"Yaas, wathah! I quite wealise that," said Arthur Augustus.

"Where's the footer?"

"It is confiscated, deah boy."

"Confiscated!" yelled Blake. "My footer confiscated!"

"Yaas, wathah! That is why I was thinkin' that mattahs might have been worse," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

"It might have been my footer."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Herries and Dig.

Jack Blake's face was a study.

"Well, you frabjous ass!" gasped Blake.

"Weally Blake—"

"You burbling dummy!"

"Bai Jove! I considah—"

"If you weren't detained," said Blake ferociously, "I'd come over there and bang your head on the desk!"

"I should wufuse to allow you to bang my head on the desk, Blake," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Oh, come on!" said Herries. "It's time for the footer. Gussy will have to stand out now."

"Yaas, wathah! Play up, deah boys, and don't get beaten if you can help it," said Arthur Augustus. "Don't wowwy about that old footah, Blake. You can easily get another one, you know."

"Ass!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Oh, come on!" said Dig, and the three chums of the Fourth went their way, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to solitude and irregular verbs.

But a few minutes later three cheery faces looked into the Form-room—the faces of Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell. The Terrible Three were in footer things, and Tom had a ball under his arm.

"Detained, what?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus dismally.

"Then you're out of the House match," said Tom. "You must be a silly owl to get detained."

"It was not weally my own choice, Tom Mewwy. I twust you will be able to fill my place."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Easily. I'll give old Wildrake a chance. He's coming on well. We'll beat the New House all right."

"I twust so, Tom Mewwy. I cannot help havin' my doubts, in the circumstances, but I certainly twust so."

"My dear man," said Monty Lowther, "we're safe for a win. You're helping us."

"How's that, deah boy?"

"By standing out," explained Lowther. "A team without you in it, old bean, ought to be a winning team."

"I wegard that wemark as uttably asinine, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Hold on a minute. Pewwaps Figgins & Co. would agwee to puttin' off the match for an hour."

"They might," grinned Manners. "I don't think we'll ask them, though. Get on with the giddy detention, old man."

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"Weally, Mannahs—"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther walked on, leaving Arthur Augustus shaking his head seriously. He could not help thinking that it would have been wiser to postpone the match until his detention was over. On that point, however, it was not likely that any other fellow would agree with him.

There was another visitor a few minutes later. Baggy Trimble put a fat face into the Form-room.

"He, he, he!" Trimble's unmusical cachinnation announced his arrival. "He, he, he! Got detention?"

"Yaas, Twimble."

"Awfully sorry, old chap. I say, can you lend me a bob?"

"No, Twimble."

"Make it a tanner," said Trimble. "I'll settle up when I get a remittance I'm expecting from my uncle—Sir Montague Trimble."

"Wats!"

"Look here, D'Arcy! Will you lend me a tanner?"

"Pway wun away, Twimble! Your face wowwies me."

Trimble gave a snort.

"Yah! Jolly glad you're detained. I've a jolly good mind to come into the Form-room and lick you! Yah!"

Arthur Augustus jumped up.

"Bai Jove! I—"

He made one stride towards the door. But he did not need to make another. Baggy Trimble was gone.

Arthur Augustus returned to his desk and his irregular verbs. He was not interrupted again, though, as a matter of fact, he would have welcomed almost any interruption. Irregular verbs on a pleasant afternoon were not enthralling. From the distant playing-fields he could hear the shouts of the fellows gathered to watch the junior House match. The sun shone in at the tall old windows, a balmy breeze wandered into the dusky old room. Arthur Augustus felt that he was very much up against it indeed.

But he sat resolutely at his irregular verbs till his hour of detention had expired. Then Mr. Latham looked into the Form-room, and told him that he could depart, and Arthur Augustus gladly departed.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### Arthur Augustus is Too Obliging!

"WOTTEN!"

That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's considered opinion.

It was rotten.

After detention, Arthur Augustus put on his hat and sallied forth from the School House. The sun was still shining, and the balmy breeze still wandered in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, and stirred the brightening green of the trees. The sky was blue, dotted with fleecy white clouds. Yet Arthur Augustus pronounced that things generally were rotten.

Arthur Augustus was gregarious. And now he was left on his own. The House match was going on, and but for his unhappy detention Gussy would have been playing footer. Plenty of fellows were gathered round the field to watch, and Arthur Augustus joined them. But he did not want to watch the match in which he ought to have been playing. The occupation was not strenuous enough for him. Still, it was too late to butt into the footer, and Arthur Augustus strolled off the field to look for something else.

Most of his chums were in the junior House team. He looked for Julian and Hammond, but learned that they had gone out on their bikes. He remembered that Cardew of the Fourth had been going out in a boat with Clive, and he decided to join them. But when he walked down to the school raft, he found that Cardew and Clive had already gone. He thought of taking out his own beautiful little skiff, but he did not want to go on the river by himself.

The fact was that it was rotten, and Arthur Augustus was disposed to grouse. He sauntered along the towpath, thinking of ways and means for killing the afternoon till tea-time. Then at last he bethought himself of a resource.

He quickened his steps, taking the path to Rylcombe. Owing to one cause or another, he had not yet bought his "Holiday Annual," and he determined to rectify that omission, and to enjoy the perusal of it under a shady tree on the village green. It was quite a bright idea, and Arthur Augustus felt quite bucked as he trotted away to the village.

There was, fortunately, one copy of the precious volume remaining unsold at the newsagent's. Arthur Augustus secured it, and walked away with it under his arm.

The village green looked very inviting on that sunny afternoon. At one end of the green village boys were playing footer. At the other end there was an ancient wooden seat under a big tree, centuries old. That was a delectable spot for a quiet read. Arthur Augustus headed for that quiet seat.

As he came near it he paused.

Close by the seat stood a large perambulator—a handsome



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rose to his feet and raised his hat, with his own inimitable grace. "Did you do me the honah of addressin' me, madam?" he inquired with calm dignity. The nursemaid blinked at him. "Would you be so kind as to mind this pram?" "Certainly, madam!" said Arthur Augustus. "I will look after the kid—I mean the babay—with pleasuah, while you are gone!" (See this page.)

and expensive limousette baby-carriage. There was a baby in it.

A nursemaid sat on the wooden seat close by the carriage. She was deeply immersed in the perusal of a paper, of which Arthur Augustus could not help seeing the title, "Home Love-Notes." The ruddy, chubby nursemaid was evidently deeply interested in "Home Love-Notes," for she did not glance up as the elegant swell of St. Jim's approached, and did not even observe that the baby in the carriage was making desperate attempts to swallow a tassel.

Arthur Augustus paused, but only for a moment. Then he came on, and sat down at the farther end of the wooden seat, on which there was ample accommodation for half a dozen people, and opened his volume.

The baby in the pram looked at him and smiled. Arthur Augustus caught the smile, and smiled in return. He did not know much about babies, but he liked all children, and they always liked him. This particular baby was a boy, and seemed about eighteen months old, or perhaps less. He was a pretty little fellow, and had a very engaging smile.

Having smiled at the baby, Arthur Augustus gave his attention to the "Holiday Annual."

He was deeply interested in that enchanting volume when four o'clock chimed out.

Then the nursemaid gave a sudden start, and drew her rapt attention from "Home Love-Notes."

"Oh dear!" she ejaculated.

Apparently, in the deep interest excited by the proceedings of Lord Aubrey de Plantagenet and the Lady Gloxiana, in the columns of "Home Love-Notes," the chubby young lady had forgotten some appointment, and had remembered it as the hour chimed.

She jumped up. "Oh dear!" she said again.

The little fellow in the pram, having failed after many attempts to swallow the tassel, fixed large, blue, earnest eyes on the nursemaid.

"Baby wantum walk," he said. The chubby maid did not heed baby. She was glancing

round the village green, and seemed in a state of dismay. She looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and seemed about to speak, and paused, and then looked at him again.

"Little boy!" she said at last.

Arthur Augustus jumped. He was far from being a little boy. But this country girl, who was about twenty-two or three, probably regarded him as one. At all events, that was how she addressed him.

The swell of St. Jim's rose to his feet, and raised his hat with his own inimitable grace.

"Did you do me the honah of addressin' me, madam?" he inquired, with calm dignity.

The nursemaid blinked at him.

"Yes, sir. Would you be so kind—" She paused. "If I can be of any service to you, madam, I am weady," said Arthur Augustus politely.

"I—I have to—go away for a little while to see someone." The nursemaid coloured. "I'd forgotten. Would you be so very kind—as you're staying here—to keep an eye on this baby for a few minutes?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I am late already," said the nursemaid, evidently distressed. "I—I should be so much obliged, sir!"

"Pway do not mention it, madam!" said Arthur Augustus. "I will look aftah the kid—I mean the babay—with pleasuah while you are gone!"

"Oh, thank you!"

"Not at all, madam!"

The nursemaid did not pause any longer. She stood not upon the order of her going, but went at once.

Arthur Augustus shifted along the seat, to get near the baby-carriage, and resumed the perusal of the "Holiday Annual." A still, small voice from the pram interrupted him:

"Baby wantum book."

"Eh?"

"Baby wantum book!" repeated the occupant of the limousette.

Arthur Augustus hesitated, but a chubby little hand was outstretched, and Arthur Augustus rather reluctantly handed over the "Holiday Annual."

Baby received the volume on his knees, and proceeded to turn over the pages. He smiled and crowded at the pictures for a time, and then, like Alexander of old, seeking new worlds to conquer, he began to tear out the pages slowly and methodically.

"Oh, bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy, in dismay. "I say, old chap, chuck that, you know! That's my book, old kid!"

"Baby's book!"

"Nunno! My book, you know!"

"Baby's book!" repeated the youngster, and he went on tearing out page after page.

Arthur Augustus was a generous and accommodating youth. But he felt that this was rather hard, as he had just given six shillings for his "Annual," and had read only a few chapters so far. So he made a gentle attempt to pull away the volume.

The result startled him.

From the chubby little mouth there proceeded a terrific yell, which made the swell of St. Jim's jump.

"Oh cwumbs!" he ejaculated.

"Baby wantum book!" yelled the little one.

"Oh deah! Heah you are, old chap! All wight!"

Arthur Augustus pushed the volume back, and the yelling ceased, and baby grinned at him in the most friendly manner.

Arthur Augustus sat and watched him as he tore out the leaves. The little chubby fingers were quite active, and baby was evidently enjoying himself.

Arthur Augustus liked to see any baby enjoying itself. But he hoped fervently that the nursemaid would return before baby had quite finished the volume.

He glanced about him anxiously.

There was no sign of the ruddy-checked country girl. She had gone down the High Street and disappeared, and did not seem to be returning.

Arthur Augustus began to feel worried.

He was prepared to oblige anybody, being an obliging fellow, and especially to oblige any member of the gentler sex. But he really did not want baby on his hands all the afternoon. Half an hour had elapsed, and surely the ruddy-checked girl ought to have returned by then! But she hadn't.

A dismaying thought came into Gussy's noble mind. Suppose she didn't return?

From the direction of the village football pitch a youth came strolling over. It was Grimes, the grocer's boy, an old acquaintance of Gussy's. Grimes, having spotted Gussy from afar, had come over to speak. He looked rather curiously at the pram and the baby.

"Arternoon, Master D'Arcy!" said Grimes.

"Good-afftaahnoon, Gwimes!" said Arthur Augustus affably.

"Had a good game?"

"Corking good!" said Grimes. "Young brother of your'n, sir?" He nodded toward the baby.

"Oh, no!" said Arthur Augustus. "No wrelation of mine!"

"Just taking him out, what?" said Grimes, puzzled.

"Oh, no! The fact is, I am mindin' him for a young woman who had to go and see somebody," explained Arthur Augustus. "She seems to be gone wathah a long time."

"Oh, my eye!" said Grimes. "Who was it?"

"I have nevah seen her befoah, Gwimes."

"Rather risky, minding a baby for somebody you ain't seen before," said Grimes, shaking his head. "I 'ope she ain't landed it on you!"

"Landed it on me!" repeated Arthur Augustus faintly.

Grimes looked very serious.

"Well, I've 'eard of such tricks," he said. "People sometimes get rid of a kid they don't want, by landing it on a stranger like that."

"Oh cwumbs!"

"P'r'aps she'll come back, though," said Grimes encouragingly; and, with a cheery nod, he walked away.

He left Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sitting in a state of great dismay.

#### CHAPTER 4. No Takers!

"BAI Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked round more anxiously than ever. He had had baby in his charge for a whole hour now, and still there was no sign of the ruddy-checked maid. And Grimes' awful hint sank deeper and deeper into his dismayed mind. Arthur Augustus was an unsuspecting youth. But now that he thought of it, he remembered that he had read of such things—unwanted babies had certainly been got rid of by such devices.

Certainly it was extraordinary that the girl had not returned. To leave a baby for a whole hour in the hands

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of a stranger, and a schoolboy at that, was odd enough. Possibly the girl had been run over—that might be the explanation. Even so, it seemed that baby was landed on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Baby had now finished the "Holiday Annual." The interior of the pram was strewn, like Vallombrosa, with fallen leaves.

"Baby wantum tick-tock!"

"Eh?"

"Tick-tock!"

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "What the mewwy thump does the cweature mean?"

Yell from baby.

"Wantum tick-tock!"

Arthur Augustus' noble brain worked at great pressure. He guessed, fortunately, that tick-tock meant a watch. He grabbed out his watch and held it out to baby.

Baby grinned and accepted the gift. Apparently the little chap was accustomed to playing with the timekeeper of an indulgent father. He held the watch to his ear, and grinned as he heard it tick. Then he held it out to D'Arcy, and the junior guessed that he was to listen to the ticking. Then baby wanted to open the watch. Failing in this, he yelled.

"Open tick-tock!"

"But you'll bweak it, old chap!" gasped Arthur Augustus in distress.

"Open tick-tock!"

"Oh deah!"

How to deal with a baby that yelled was a problem that Arthur Augustus had no means of solving. He opened the watch.

Baby grinned again contentedly.

"Oh cwumbs!" murmured the hapless junior. "It is weally too bad for that sillay gal to leave this dweadful babay heah all this time. I shall have to be gettin' back to school soon, too."

He rose to his feet, and scanned his surroundings. There was no sign of the nursemaid returning.

It was tea-time at St. Jim's now, and D'Arcy wanted his tea. Also he was fed-up with the baby. But he could not entertain the thought of walking away and deserting the little creature. That was impossible. Until its owner returned he was bound to look after it.

"Jane!"

"Oh deah!"

"Jane! Baby wantum Jane!"

Jane, apparently, was the name of the ruddy-cheeked girl. Arthur Augustus had handed over his "Holiday Annual" and his watch; but he could not hand over Jane—Jane was not there.

"All wight, deah boy! Jane comin'!" he gasped. "Jane will be heah soon, old fellow!"

"Baby wantum Jane!"

"Jane isn't heah just now, old chap! All wight!"

Yell!

"Oh cwumbs! It is weally too bad! Pway shut up, old fellow—pway don't howl, you know! Jane will be comin' back soon—at least, I twust so. Oh deah! Dwy up, old chap!"

Instead of drying up, baby yelled with more and more vigour. Almost at his wits' end, Arthur Augustus began to rock the pram to soothe the infant. The yelling ceased again, and baby grinned. Arthur Augustus left off rocking.

"More!"

"Eh?"

"More!" yelled baby.

"Oh deah!"

Arthur Augustus resumed rocking the pram. He was growing breathless and excited and almost desperate now. He thought of calling to Grimes for advice; but the football was over now, and the village footballers were gone—Grimes was not available.

It was borne in upon Gussy's mind that he was, as Grimes had hinted, "landed" with that baby.

Jane, if she intended to return at all, must have returned under two hours; and two hours had passed now. Whether she was staying away by accident or design, obviously she was not coming back. It was time for all St. Jim's fellows to be within gates. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rocked the pram, and wondered what on earth he was going to do. To abandon the helpless little creature was impossible; but what he was going to do with it was a mystery. In spite of his great chivalry and his admiration of the gentler sex Arthur Augustus could really have slapped Jane just then.

"Baby wantum mumma!"

"Oh deah! Mumma isn't heah just now, old chap!"

"Baby wantum mumma!" roared the young gentleman.

"We—we—we'll go and find mumma!" gasped Arthur Augustus. And he wheeled the bimousette.

Evidently it was useless to linger on the village green



any longer. Arthur Augustus felt that he had better go; and as he could not abandon baby, he had to take baby with him. He wheeled the baby-carriage off the green, and into the High Street, scanning the passers-by in the hope of seeing Jane.

But Jane was not to be seen.

Baby gave no trouble now. He was quite busy detaching the hands from D'Arcy's watch.

At Mr. Sands' grocery shop D'Arcy stopped. At that establishment Grimes was employed, and D'Arcy hoped to see Grimes and get some advice from that knowing young gentleman. Grimes was not there, however; but plump and portly Mr. Sands was standing in his shop doorway, and he saluted the swell of St. Jim's with great politeness, and with a surprised glance at the baby.

"Good-afahnoon, Mr. Sands!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Is Gwimes about?"

"He's got the afternoon off, Master D'Arcy. You gettin' a job as a nussmaid?" asked Mr. Sands facetiously.

"I was asked to mind this babay, Mr. Sands, by a young woman who appears to be named Jane," said Arthur Augustus. "She has not returned, and I don't know what to do with it. Bai Jove, what are you laughin' at, Mr. Sands?"

Mr. Sands tried to suppress his merriment.

"How long ago was it?" he asked.

"Ovah two hours."

"And you ain't seen her since?"

"No."

"Then I fancy you won't see her any more," grinned Mr. Sands. "You've been done, Master D'Arcy."

"Weally, Mr. Sands—"

"It's an old trick," said Mr. Sands. "I've heard of such things, and read of 'em in the papers. You've been done, sir. You'd better take the baby to the police-station."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"That's the only thing you can do," said Mr. Sands.

"Of course, the woman wanted to get shut of it, and she landed it on you, thinking you looked soft—excuse me, sir. Run the pram along to the police-station, and tell them how it was."

"Thank you vevy much, Mr. Sands. What will they do with the kid at the police-station? I suppose they will look aftah it all wight?"

"The workus," said Mr. Sands.

"The—the what?"

"It will be sent to the workus."

"The workhouse!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Of course. Where could it be sent?" said Mr. Sands.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus looked at the innocent little creature in the baby-carriage, now quite happy and contented as it disected the watch. To get clear of that baby was D'Arcy's dearest wish. But to be the means of sending the poor little thing to the workhouse was quite another matter. He hesitated.

"How do they tweat babies at the workhouse, Mr. Sands?" he asked at last.

"Oh, they treat 'em all right," said Mr. Sands.

"Do they give them plenty to eat?"

"As much as is good for 'em, I dessay."

"They don't whack them?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously. "I should not like the poor little boundah to be whacked."

Mr. Sands grinned.

"Oh, they don't whack 'em," he said. "They look after them all right, more or less. Anyhow, that's what you'd better do."

"Pewwaps there is a bettah way," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "You are a mawwid man, Mr. Sands. Pewwaps Mrs. Sands would like to adopt this babay."

"Eh!"

"It is a vevy nice babay," said Arthur Augustus. "It has vevy pwetty ways, I think, and it keeps quite quiet so long as you give it books to teah up, and watches to bweak."

"Oh lor!" said Mr. Sands.

"I think pwobably Mrs. Sands would be vevy pleased to adopt it," said Arthur Augustus anxiously, "and when it gwows up, Mr. Sands, it will be vevy fond of you, and will be a pwop to your declinin' yahas, you know."

"I don't think!" gasped Mr. Sands.

And the plump grocer disappeared into his shop, evidently not in the least anxious to have baby landed on him.

"Bai Jove," murmured Arthur Augustus, "I cannot help thinkin' that Mr. Sands is a wathah unfeelin' man. If I were a fat old boundah like Mr. Sands—I feel suah I should like to adopt a nice babay. He ought weally to like it much bettah than a babay of his own, because it doesn't look like him at all. Howevah, I suppose there is nothin' doin'."

Arthur Augustus wheeled the baby-carriage on along the High Street. He kept an eager eye open for Jane, but Jane had vanished away as completely as if Jane were a Boojum. A tall, military-looking gentleman came striding along the High Street, and D'Arcy recognised Major Stringer, one of

the governors of St. Jim's. A happy thought struck him as he raised his hat to the major.

"Pway excuse me, Majah Stwingah—" he began.

"What? What?" said the tall gentleman, pausing.

"Would you like to adopt a babay, sir?"

"What!"

"I am lookin' for a happay home for this babay, sir," said Arthur Augustus, while the major stared at him as if transfixed. "You are a wealthy gentleman, I undahstand, and could afford to give it vevy comfort."

"By gad!" ejaculated the major.

"If you would like to adopt it, sir, I will hand it ovah to you with pleasuah."

Major Stringer looked at D'Arcy. He did not merely look, he glared. His impression was that a Lower boy of St. Jim's was playing some jest on him—and Major Stringer was not a man to be jested with. He took a businesslike grip of the cane he carried, with so obvious an intention of laying it across D'Arcy's shoulders, that the swell of St. Jim's rushed the baby-carriage on at great speed, just escaping in-time.

"Huh! Impertinent young rascal! Huh!" snorted the major as he strode on his way.

"Nothin' doin'!" groaned Arthur Augustus as he trundled the baby-carriage into Rylcombe Lane.

Baby looked up at him and grinned.

"Baby wantum go home," he said.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Baby wantum din-din."

"I suppose that means gwub," murmured Arthur Augustus. "Pwobably it is time for the little beast—I mean the little chewub—to be fed. This is weally gettin' wathah awful!"

"Baby wantum din-din!" roared the cherub.

"All wight, old chap, we'll get baby some din-din! All wight!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

And he trundled on with the pram.

There was no help for it. Two middle-aged gentlemen, who might have been expected to be keen on adopting a nice baby had failed to play up. As for the workhouse, D'Arcy dismissed that horrid thought from his mind without further consideration. The only alternative was to take baby to St. Jim's.

What he was going to do with it when he got it there was a problem. He had a vague idea that perhaps it could be kept in a box-room, or in the study—and Mary Perkins, the housemaid, might be bribed to supply it with food. Anyhow, here it was in Gussy's hands, and he could not desert it.

So he wheeled it on to the school.

Taggles, the porter, was coming down to close the gates when Arthur Augustus arrived with the baby-carriage and the baby.

D'Arcy wheeled it in at the old gateway.

Taggles stared.

He rubbed his eyes and stared again. Taggles' eyes had seen service, and for sixty years they had not deceived him. But, really, he could scarcely believe them now.

"Master D'Arcy!" he stuttered.

"Yaas, Taggles."

"Wot—wot—wot's that?"

"It's a babay, Taggles."

"A—a—a—a baby!" stuttered Taggles.

"Yaas, wathah! I pwesume that you know a babay when you see one, Taggles."

"Oh lor!" gasped Taggles.

"Pway stand out of the way, Taggles. You are in the way of the pwam."

"You ain't bringin' that there baby in 'ere, Master D'Arcy!" roared Taggles.

"I have no choice about the mattah, Taggles. This babay is in my charge at pwesent."

"Mad!" said Taggles. "Mad as a 'atter. You've been and stole somebody's baby!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus crimsoned with indignation. "I wepudiate the suggestion with scorn, Taggles! This baby has been deserted by an unfeelin' person, and I felt bound to look aftah it!"

"You young hass!" howled Taggles. "Do you think you can bring babies into this 'ere school?"

"Yaas."

"What will the 'Ead say?"

"I weally do not know, Taggles. I twust the Head will not disapprove of my actin' in a pwopahly dutiful mannah towards a deserted babay."

"Mad!" repeated Taggles. "Quite orf!"

"Weally, Taggles—"

"You take that there baby away to where you found it," said Taggles.

"Wats! I could not possibly leave this babay on the village gween, with the evenin' comin' on!"

"Look 'ere, Master D'Arcy, I shall report this. If that there kid is deserted, it will 'ave to go to the workus."

"I do not approve of such institutions for babies, Taggles. I feel bound to look aftah this babay. Pway get out of the way."

"I'll report yer!" gasped Taggles.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus wheeled the baby-carriage round Taggles. Baby waved a chubby hand at the crusty old porter.

"Pooty uncle!" it said.

"Eh?" gasped Taggles.

"Baby love uncle."

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Taggles. "I ain't your uncle!"

"Baby love ole uncle."

"Well, my eye!" said Taggles blankly. "It's a nice little critter, Master D'Arcy. I'm sorry for that there baby. But it can't be brought in 'ere, and you know it."

"Pway leave it to me, Taggles. It will be all wight—somehow. Don't weport it to the Head, old chap. I shall be weally vevy much obliged if you will leave the mattah in my hands."

"Well, Master D'Arcy—" Taggles' horny hand closed on a half-crown. "Well, sir, p'raps I ain't bound to report this 'ere. I ain't bound to 'ave seen you wheel in that there baby. You'll get into a row soon enough without my 'elp!"

And Taggles proceeded to lock up, while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wheeled on the baby-carriage into the quad.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Something Like a Surprise!

**T**OM MERRY jumped.

So did Manners and Lowther.

It was the surprise of their lives, and naturally it made them jump. Knowing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as they did, the Terrible Three ought really not to have been surprised at anything in which he was concerned. But they simply couldn't help being surprised, when they saw him wheeling a perambulator up the gravel path towards the School House, with a baby in it. If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had returned to St. Jim's with a hippopotamus or a rhinoceros, the chums of the Shell could not have been much more astonished.

"What—what—what—" stuttered Tom.

"What is it?" howled Lowther.

"What the thump—" gasped Manners.

"It's all wight, deah boys. It's a babay."

"A bib-bib-baby!" stuttered the captain of the Shell.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Rather young for St. Jim's, isn't he?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, he is not a new fellow, of course—he is only about two yahs old. This isn't a jokin' mattah, eithah!"

"Not at all—if the Housemaster spots you wheeling babies round the quad," assented Lowther. "Have you bagged that baby away from his sorrowing parents?"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "This unfortunate babay was deserted on Wylcombe Gween, and I have taken charge of it."

"Oh, my only hat!"

"I feah," went on Arthur Augustus, "that it was planted on me by a designin' female. At least, she asked me to mind it, and then went away and nevah came back any more."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three.

"Weally, you fellows, I do not think it is a laughin' mattah. It seems a wathah nice babay, but it is vevy determined and obstinate. It has taken my watch to pieces, and torn up my 'Holiday Annual.' And I don't weally know what to do with it!"

"Oh, Gussy!" gasped Tom Merry. "You'll be the death of me yet. I know you will!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Tick-tock!" yelled baby suddenly.

"Bai Jove! He wants anothah watch," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway give him your watch, Tom Mewwy!"

"Eh?"

"He only wants to pull the hands off it. It seems to amuse him, somehow."

"My hat! I'd rather keep the hands on my watch!"

"Tick-tock!" yelled baby.

"Give him your watch, Mannahs. He will yell till he gets it," said Arthur Augustus anxiously. "He seems to have a stwain of obstinacy in him."

"Tick-tock! Baby wantum tick-tock!" roared the young gentleman in the limousette.

"Great Scott!" Cardew of the Fourth came up with Levison and Clive. "What have you got there, Gussy?"

"A babay, deah boy!"

"Good gad! I never knew you were a married man!"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You know perfectly well that I am not a mawwied man! How could I be a mawwied man in the Fourth Form, you thumpin' ass?"

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

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"This way, you fellows!" howled Baggy Trimble. "D'Arcy's stolen a baby!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"That is uttahly untwue, Twimble, you wottah! I am lookin' aftah this babay—it has been landed on me—"

"Tick-tock!" yelled the baby.

"Pway give him a watch, one of you fellows. He won't be quiet till he gets a watch. He has finished mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got some choçolates," said Levison. "Perhaps he'd like some choços."

"Choç-choç!" exclaimed the baby, catching the word.

"Baby love choç-choç! Baby wantum choç-choç!"

"Here you are, old top!"

"Ta!" said the baby, taking the choçolates from Ernest Levison. "Baby love uncle."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Cardew. "Is it a nephew of yours, Levison?"

"Of course it isn't, fathead—I've never seen it before. I suppose it's got an uncle that gives it choçolates!"

"More choç-choç!" chimed in baby.

"Here you are, old bean!"

By this time there was an immense concourse round the perambulator. Fortunately, D'Arcy had stopped under the trees, which screened the amazing scene from the windows of the School House. School House and New House fellows, fresh from the footer, gathered round—fellows came up from all directions. All the Lower School seemed interested in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's baby. Blake and Herries and Dig looked like fainting when they saw it.

"Isn't he a gem?" said Blake, in despair. "We can't let him out of our sight for a few minutes without his bagging someone's baby and bringing it to the school! What are you going to do with it, fathead?"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Blake!"

"You ass!" roared Herries. "What the thump—"

"I decline to be chawactewised as an ass, Hewwies!"

"Gussy, old man," gasped Digby, "what will Mr. Railton say when he sees that kid?"

"I weally do not know, Dig. I twust that Mr. Wailton will approve of my action in takin' pwopah care of this babay. Howevah, I am not goin' to mention it to Mr. Wailton. You nevah know how a Housemastah will take anythin'."

"But you can't keep it here!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"There is nothin' else to be done with it, Tom Mewwy. I know it will be wathah difficult for a Fourth Form chap to adopt a babay. But there seems no othah way about it."

"Adopt it!" howled Blake. "Hear him? I can see that young animal rooting about in Study No. 6—I don't think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Gussy," said Tom Merry, "you—you really can't keep that baby in the school, you know. Now you've got it here, you'd better ask the housedame to take charge of it."

"That's right," said Monty Lowther. "Mrs. Mimms can keep it till it can be handed over to the police. They'll find out to whom it belongs!"

"Pwobably not, deah boy, as the babay has been deserted. Deserted babies, I feah, are sent to the workhouse. I could not allow that poor little chap to go to the workhouse. Now that it is landed on me, I am bound in honah to take pwopah care of it!"

"But what are you going to do with it?" shrieked Blake.

"I am goin' to take care of it," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I shall not desert this poor old babay."

"Dear uncle!" said the baby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Baby wantum mumma!"

"Bai Jove! I am sowwy I cannot pwovide you with a mumma just at pwsent, old chap. But I will try to be a nice uncle to you," said Arthur Augustus soothingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you fellows would not cackle ovah a sewious mattah. I have to get this babay up to the studay without the beaks dwoppin' on it. I suppose somebody would notice this pwam if I wheeled it up to the House."

"Ha, ha! Just a few!" roared Lowther.

"Howevah, I will get the babay in at the back door, and you fellows can put the pwam in the woodshed for the pwsent. Do stop cacklin', Blake, and help a fellow who's in wathah a scwape."

"Look here, ass—"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lifted the baby out of the pram. Amid howls of laughter from the juniors, he walked off with it, the baby clinging to his neck with one hand, and grasping a bar of chocolate in the other chubby fist. The baby's hands and face were fairly thick with chocolate by this time, and D'Arcy's collar and tie and chin were daubed with it as he carried off the baby. But even that the swell of St.



A tall military-looking gentleman came striding along the High Street, and D'Arcy recognised Major Stringer, one of the governors of St. Jim's. A happy thought struck him as he raised his hat to the major. "Pway excuse me, Majah Stwingah," he said, "but would you like to adopt a babay, sir?" "What?" snorted the major. "You impertinent young rascal!" (See page 9.)

Jim's bore with heroic fortitude. Arthur Augustus was of the stuff of which heroes are made.

He left the crowd of juniors fairly gasping "This is the limit!" stuttered Blake. "It really is the very outside edge!"

"Good old Gussy!" gasped Tom Merry. "He's a brick, but—but—"

"Let's get this dashed go-cart out of sight, anyhow," said Lowther. And the limousette was wheeled away to the woodshed, and put out of general view. Then the crowd of juniors dispersed, chuckling. In the Lower School of St. Jim's within a quarter of an hour there was only one topic, a breathlessly absorbing topic, and the topic was D'Arcy's baby.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A New Inhabitant in Study No. 6!

"M<sup>A</sup>WY, deah gal!"  
 Mary Perkins almost fell down. She had opened the kitchen door in answer to a knock, and the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy standing there, with a baby on his arm, bereft her of speech.

Arthur Augustus gave her a propitiatory smile.

"Maw—"

"Master D'Arcy!" gasped Mary, recovering her voice. "What—"

"Would you mind takin' charge of this babay for a little while, Mavy? It wants somethin' to eat."

"Something to eat!" said Mary faintly.

"Yaas, and washin', I think. Yaas, I am quite suah that it wequiahsh washin'. I have nevah washed a babay, and do not quite know how to begin. I suppose you know how to wash a babay, Mavy?"

"Oh lor!" stuttered Mary Perkins.

"I do not quite know what it ought to have to eat," went on Arthur Augustus anxiously. "I suppose you know, Mavy?"

"What—who—how—whose is that baby?" exclaimed Mary.

"Mine, deah gal."

"Eh?"

"By adoption, Mavy. I have adopted this babay, as it was left on my hands by an unfeelin' person."

"You have adopted this baby, Master D'Arcy!" murmured Mary Perkins, gazing at Arthur Augustus as if he mesmerised her.

"Yaas, wathah! You see, I could not thwow it on the cwuel world," explained Arthur Augustus. "I was asked to mind this babay, and the howwid female nevah came back for it. I offahed it to Mr. Sands, the gwocer, and to Majah Stwingah, but both of them wefused to adopt it. So I suppose I shall have to adopt it."

"Lord bless us!" gasped Mary.

"Of course, I do not pwopose to keep it permanently at the school," said Arthur Augustus hastily. "It must remain ovah to-night. But I shall ask my patah to awwange for it, and he can send somebody to fetch it away. But at pwesent it needs feedin' and washin', especially washin'. Would you mind washin' it, Mavy?"

"Dear auntie!" said the baby, smiling cheerily at Mary Perkins.

"Poor little mite!" said Mary Perkins, taking the baby from Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I will do anything I can for it, Master D'Arcy. You can leave it with me and cook for the present."

"Thank you vevy much, Mavy!"

"Then you had better tell Mr. Railton, and he will decide what is to be done."

"I will considah about that, Mavy. I am quite wewolved that that babay shall not be sent to the workhouse. Pevwaps you will be kind enough to bwing it to Studay No. 6 when you have fed it and—washed it, especially washed it."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy," said the bewildered Mary.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy heaved a sigh of relief when he walked away, leaving the baby in Mary's kind hands.

He walked round to the great door of the School House, where he found his comrades waiting for him.

"Well, what have you done with it?" demanded Blake.

"Mavy is takin' care of it for the pwesent, Blake. She is goin' to wash it. Aftahwards she will bwing it to the studay."

"Our study!" howled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! I cannot vevy well place my babay in any othah fellow's studay."

"You—you—you—"

"It's all wright, deah boys. My fathah will awwange what is to be done with it. I shall tell him all about it," said Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "We shall only have the babay in the studay for a day or two."

"A baby in the study for a day or two!" said Blake dazedly. "Are you quite off your rocker?"

"I twust not, Blake," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Look here, you ass! We can't have that kid in the study!" howled Herries.

"I do not see any alternative, Hewwies."

"Take it to the housedame or the Housemaster, or to the Head, or—"

"I have already offahed it to two middle-aged persons, who have wefused it," said Arthur Augustus. "It is a vevy nice babay, and I am not goin' to bung it at anybody. The little beggah wergards we as his pwotecah, and I feel bound to play up."

"Do you think you can keep a baby in a study?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yaas."

"Oh, my hat!"

"There'll be a row when it's found in the House, you frabjous ass!" exclaimed Blake.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked in, and went up to Study No. 6 in the Fourth. Fellows in the Fourth Form passage greeted his appearance there with howls of laughter. Arthur Augustus' noble face turned pink, but he did not heed the merriment of the Fourth. He went into his study, whither Blake and Herries and Digby followed him.

Tea was overdue, and the chums of Study No. 6 sat down to tea. Blake & Co. eyed Arthur Augustus, but the swell of St. Jim's was calm and sedate. Having thought the difficult

matter out, and satisfied himself that he was taking the wisest course in the trying circumstances, Arthur Augustus did not allow himself to worry.

Tea was over when there was a knock at the study door, and Mary Perkins entered with the baby. The little fellow held out his arms to Arthur Augustus at once.

"Baby wantum uncle!" he howled.

Evidently the young gentleman had taken a fancy to Arthur Augustus already. Possibly, owing to his tender years, he supposed that all members of the masculine gender were uncles. At all events, it was clear that he had adopted Gussy as an uncle.

"Well, here is is, sir, and a nice pretty baby it is," said Mary Perkins. "I suppose you'll be taking it to Mr. Railton at once, Master D'Arcy, or would you prefer me to carry it to the housekeeper's room?"

"Pway leave it with me, Mavy."

"Very well, sir."

Arthur Augustus took the baby, and Mary Perkins quitted the study. Baby put an arm round Arthur Augustus' neck. He detached it and set it on the floor.

Baby immediately held up both hands and yelled.

"Up! Up! Uncle!"

"Oh deah!"

"Up!" yelled the baby. "Baby wantum uncle!"

Arthur Augustus picked the cherub up again. Baby smiled at him.

"Baby wantum mumma," he said.

"Yaas, old chap."

"Baby wantum papa."

"Bai Jove!"

"Baby love uncle."

"That's wright, old kid," said Arthur Augustus. "I see no weason at all for you fellows to gwim like a lot of hyenas. It is wathah a compliment to a fellow for a babay to take a likin' to him. It is wathah a bore to have to cawwy him, certainly. Pevwaps you would like to nurse this babay for a little while, Blake?"

"Perhaps," agreed Blake. "More likely not."

"Pevwaps you, Hewwies—"

"I don't think," said Herries.

"Dig, deah boy, would you like to nurse this babay?"

"Not half!" grinned Dig.

"Bai Jove! Pevwaps the little beggah will sit in the armchair," said Arthur Augustus. "I can give him your fwetwork to play with, Blake."

"You let my fretwork alone!" roared Blake.

"I twust you are not goin' to be selfish, Blake?"

"Fathead!"

"Can I give him your stamp album, Hewwies?"

"Yes, if you want me to chuck him out of the study, and you after him," answered Herries.

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and placed the baby in the armchair. The cherub sat there for a minute or two, and then rolled to the floor. There was roar in Study No. 6.

"Bai Jove! Babies seem to want a lot of lookin' aftah," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a worried brow. "Keep that door shut, you fellows. He might bweak his poor old neck if he got out on the stairs. Let him woot wound the studay if he likes. We've got our prep to do."

"Do you think we can do our prep with that kid rooting round the study?" demanded Dig.

"I think we shall have to, deah boy, if we are goin' to do any prep at all," replied Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Of all the frabjous asses—"

"Wats!"

Study No. 6 sat down to prep. Prep was not uninterrupted. Fellows kept coming along and looking into Study No. 6 with grinning faces, curious to see the remarkable protege of D'Arcy of the Fourth. Blake locked the door at last.

Then Study No. 6 were able to work. Baby seemed quite happy and satisfied in rooting about the study. He had found a hatbox belonging to Arthur Augustus, and extracted therefrom a handsome silk topper. After he had played with the topper for some time it was not so handsome. But it kept him quiet, and he no longer yelled or demanded his mumma or his papa.

Arthur Augustus looked round at him at last. Gussy's face was a study in itself as he saw the state of his handsome topper.

"Oh, bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

He sprang to the rescue of the silk hat. Blake & Co. burst into a roar. So did the baby, as Gussy fielded his hat.

"Boo! Boo! Baby wantum!" roared the cherub.

"My deah kid, you are wuinin' my toppah—"

"Baby wantum!" yelled the young gentleman.

"Oh cwumbs! I am afwaid that this babay has been wathah spoiled," gasped Arthur Augustus. "It is weally too thick to wuin a fellow's hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway stop cacklin'. This is not a laughin' mattah, you duffahs. Heah, kid, take the hat, for goodness' sake, and



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lifted the baby out of the pram, and, amid howls of laughter from the juniors, walked off with it, the baby clinging to his neck with one hand, and grasping a bar of chocolate in the other chubby fist. But even that the swell of St. Jim's bore with heroic fortitude as he marched away, leaving the crowd of juniors fairly gasping. (See page 10).

dwy up!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, and with a sorrowing heart he relinquished the topper to the tender mercies of the cherub.

There was a knock at the door of Study No. 6.

"Oh, go away, whoever you are!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus impatiently. "This is not a peep-show."

"Is the baby there?" called out Tom Merry from outside.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Mr. Lathom's coming upstairs."

"Oh deah!"

"Better keep the kid out of sight if he looks into the study," warned Tom Merry.

"Thanks for the tip, deah boy. Bettah unlock the door, Blake. Lathom may be suspicious if he finds a door locked.

I weally wondah what he is wootin' about our passage for now? It is weally the last stwaw. The babay is twouble enough, without a Form mastah buttin' in. I wondah if he would sit quietly behind the scween?"

"Lathom?" asked Blake.

"No, you ass! The baby!"

"Look here, Gussy—" began Dig.

"Pway don't wowwy, deah boy, when a fellow's feahfully wowwied already."

Blake opened the door of the study and glanced out.

"Lathom's in the offing," he murmured. "Keep that kid quiet if you can."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Fortunately, the baby allowed himself to be placed behind the screen, and stayed there. He only seemed to want the top-hat to play with, and Arthur Augustus had already given up his hat for lost. And he could only hope that

Mr. Lathom would pass the study, and that the baby would remain quiet if the master of the Fourth looked in.

#### CHAPTER 7. Missing!

"FRAMPTON! My dear fellow!"

Mr. Lathom, master of the St. Jim's Fourth, blinked at his brother-in-law over his glasses.

Only a couple of hours before Mr. Lathom had parted with his relative, and had walked down to the school gates with him and seen him off. Mr. Lathom was due to dine with his relatives, at the Framptons' bungalow at Wayland, on the following Sunday. Until then he had not expected to see Mr. Frampton again. So he was quite astonished when his study door burst open without a knock and the young man came hurriedly in, with a pale, excited face.

"Whatever is the matter?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, springing to his feet. "Is my sister ill?"

"No, no!"

"Thank goodness! The baby—"

"Yes," groaned Mr. Frampton.

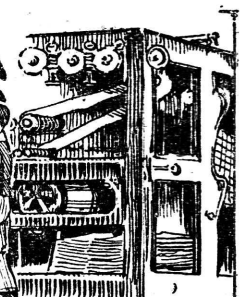
"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom, much distressed. "I am terribly sorry! Why, my nephew was such a sturdy little fellow, I should never have dreamed— It seems a very sudden illness—"

"It is not a case of illness, Lathom!" gasped Mr. Frampton, falling rather than sitting into a chair.

(Continued on page 16.)



# The St. Jim's News



## EDITORIAL.

By Tom Merry.

FOR some time past Blake has been trying to persuade me to publish a Study No. 6 edition of the "News," on the grounds that he and the other members of the well-known thieves' kitchen in the Fourth Form corridor are being kept out of the limelight, and that it's time they had more of a show in these pages.

Personally I don't agree with that contention. I maintain they've always been well to the fore, and if any of my readers will take the trouble to look up their old copies of the "News"—which I'm vain enough to believe they keep by them—and take special notice of the number of contributions signed by Blake, Digby, Herries, and Gussy, I'm quite certain they will confirm my opinion.

However, I'm not going to argue about the matter. If Blake wants a Study No. 6 issue he's welcome to it, and I wish him joy of the job of writing up his share in it, and bringing his fellow-criminals up to the scratch to do theirs.

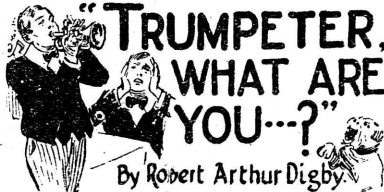
It is certainly saving me a lot of trouble. I haven't to go round hunting up contributors, and nagging at them until they turn in their copy. Blake has made himself responsible for the articles coming to hand in time for their being passed for publication.

I might mention that I am writing this "Editorial" before the copy has been turned in, so I can't make any comments on the contributions. I don't know what sort of a job they're going to make of it, though I have no doubt it will be satisfactory. I have heard, however, that there has already been some trouble in No. 6 concerning it.

Gussy was very keen on having a Fashion Number, and wanted the use of all the columns for the purpose of lecturing the fellows on the subject of the dreadful indifference towards a "wight and popah wegard" for their personal appearance," which he accuses them of displaying. He says that the state of affairs is going from bad to worse, and that it has already reached such a pitch that even Sixth-Formers have been seen with imperfectly creased trousers. Which is very terrible, of course. But whether the expedient of devoting a whole issue of the "News" to a discussion of the subject would have the effect of bringing about a sudden change for the better in this respect is very questionable.

On the other hand, Herries was anxious to have a "Towler" number, full of anecdotes concerning Towser, while Blake was of the opinion that amateur carpentry would provide a theme for a series of very interesting articles. Digby, being a fairly normal sort of chap, with no particular axe to grind, was implored by each of the others to give the casting vote in favour of one of these subjects; but Digby took jolly good care to do nothing of the kind, and I confidently anticipate that therefore the contributions I shall eventually receive will have, at least, the saving merit of variety.

*Tom Merry*



## "TRUMPETER, WHAT ARE YOU...?"

By Robert Arthur Digby.

IF any of you fellows ever happen to be in the neighbourhood of St. Jim's, and hear an uproar which suggests that a particularly lusty bull is vigorously protesting against being poleaxed, you can rest assured that there is really no cause for alarm.

You can take it from me that it's nothing more terrible than Herries practising on his cornet. As far as that goes, I don't believe that there could possibly be anything in the world more truly terrible than that.

Poor old Herries has got a queer notion that he can play the cornet. Where and how he got the idea is more than I can understand. All that I do know about it is that it's a jolly mistaken idea on his part.

Honestly, you've never heard anything like the row he kicks up—unless you happen to have been on board a steam-tug in a crowded channel on a foggy day.

The only living creature who shows the least appreciation of Herries' cornet "playing" is Towser. When Herries is blaring his blarest Towser stands on his hind legs in ecstasy, and howls like an entire Dog's Home demanding an overdue breakfast.

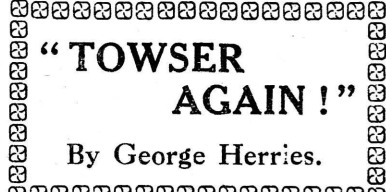
Herries' great ambition—apart from bulldog breeding—is to play in a brass band. It is a truly noble ambition, and one that we encourage in Study No. 6, because as there is no brass band at St. Jim's, nor any prospect of one being formed—thank goodness!—it's evident that he'd have to seek his merry playmates outside the school, and we shouldn't hear quite as much of his cornet.

Of course, we should still hear something, unless he joined a band in the next county, because a mere mile or two is less than nothing to Herries when he's going strong.

On one occasion, when he'd been practising in Rylcombe Woods, Monty Lowther came back from Wayland with an account of how the crowds were lining up along the streets in Wayland to see the procession, which, they declared, could be heard coming along in the distance, with full bands.

But to my mind the really weak part about that little yarn is that I can't for a moment imagine that the Wayland people could possibly mistake Herries' cornet for brass bands. In the matter of sound—yes, they might think it was half a dozen bands. But when it comes to tune, I'm afraid not!

Now, if Monty had said they supposed it to be a fleet of motor lorries approaching, all sounding their Klaxon horns vigorously, I might have believed him. For, at a distance, Herries' cornet performances do sound exactly like that.



## "TOWSER AGAIN!"

By George Herries.

IF I'm going to write anything for the "News," it's going to be something about Towser. There's nothing and nobody else at St. Jim's worth writing about.

It's quite right what Blake says. We don't get fair play in Study No. 6. Why, there's weeks and weeks when there's not a single mention of Towser in the rotten rag. And if I had a chance, I could fill every issue with tales about him, and interesting ones, too.

(Yes, and you could fill page after page talking about the destruction he has wrought. Why, the brute can't even tell who are its friends! Not that I am one of them, I am afraid! It must have been fed on Allenbury's, for if you offer it a bone it will look at you and growl. I really don't know which is the bigger nuisance of the two—Herries' dog or his cornet—for they both kick up an infernal noise.—T. M.)

Now, I expect you've all heard of Towser. Of course, you don't know what a fine dog he is, really. You'd have to see him before you could understand how much better he is than any other dog. But you can take it from me that he just can't be touched.

But these fellows here don't appreciate him. I can't understand it. You'd think they'd be only too pleased to make a fuss of him, wouldn't you? But they don't—none of them! I'm the only pal Towser has got!

He can do heaps of things that no other dog can do. He's a deal cleverer than those mangy brutes that perform in circuses. Why, Towser can even sing!

He's a fine singer. You ought to hear him sing when I play the cornet. How many dogs could do that? Why, there are lots of human beings that couldn't. His favourite song is "Sally in our Alley," and though he doesn't know the words, he's got the tune off by heart, and he sings it so well that you can fancy you almost hear the words as well.

Towler's greatest treat is a few minutes in Study No. 6, and sometimes I smuggle him in, though there's always a silly row about it if Blake or any others are there. Why, if there is any justice in the world, old Towser would have the run of Study No. 6—and of the School House as well, for that matter—while freaks like Gussy would think themselves lucky to have a kennel to crawl into.

And there are such nice playthings for Towser in the study. He can amuse himself for hours with a few of Gussy's toppers, and there's no fear of any damage being done, because the silk and canvas stuff can't possibly hurt his teeth. I had to take Blake's football boots away from him once, in case the studs worked loose and he swallowed one. Afterwards I cut the uppers off, and gave them back to him, and he had quite a fine time with them.

And then that blessed kill-joy, Blake, came in, and started kicking up a row about it. I don't believe he can hear to see Towser happy for a few minutes.

You wouldn't believe there were such selfish people in the world, would you? No wonder they talk about "a dog's life."

The Children's Best Coloured Paper

# JUNGLE JINKS

Out on Thursday—Price 2d



# The ONE and ONLY.

By Jack Blake.

But Gussy doesn't run true to type at all. I can't remember his having a lucid moment since I've known him. And that means, of course, that he needs constant watching, day in and day out.

Of course, it's rough on Gussy, in a way, to be in such a state; but you've got to admit that it's still more rough on us. We have most of the worrying to do.

He's just about enough to turn a Hottentot pink.

He should never have been sent to St. Jim's at all. He ought really to have gone to a training college, for tailors' dummies. He'd have been in his element there. As I've said, it's bad enough to have to put up with him at all, but when it comes to having to put up with his giddy wardrobe as well—brrrrrh!

There are times when the study looks more like a corner of the gents' outfitting department at Shurrups than anything else. When Gussy is taking an inventory of his aids to gorgeousness you can't put your foot down anywhere in the study without doing a few bob's worth of damage. There isn't room for me to stand, so you can bet Herries has a thin time of it.

As a general rule the fellows keep most of their clobber up in the dorm, and spare stuff that they don't use very often, or which they're keeping in reserve, is stored in their trunks in the box-room. But Gussy's stuff fills three hampers in cold storage, uses up his space in the dorm, and overflows into the study.

He never comes back from Rylcombe or Wayland without something new in the way of silk socks, neckties, or fancy vests, and sometimes the blessed stuff is kicking about the study for days, Gussy having forgotten all about it, until something pretty drastic happens. Then there is usually a song of sorrow over the remains.

Last week Gussy brought back half a dozen pairs of silk socks from Wayland, though goodness knows he's got scores of pairs already on hand, and hadn't the slightest need to buy them. Anyway, he put them away in the cupboard, and they were there for a day or two until somebody pitched them out to make room for a pair of footer boots or something.

When Gustavus came into the study last night to do his prep he found Herries was polishing his cornet with them. Of course, there was the usual unpleasantness about it, which ended in Herries gagging Gussy with the brass-paste covered socks—or what was

left of them, which wasn't much, as socks. Herries was rather pleased with the result. I don't mean of the scrap, but of the cornet-polishing operations. He considers that those socks provided the finest polishing-pad he's ever used, and he intends to use nothing but silk socks in future. As Gussy is the only chap in the study who luses out on silk socks, and Herries is particularly careful about keeping a bright polish on his cornet, it looks to me as if the Hon. Arthur Augustus is likely to get up some fine morning, and discover that he's got to put his shoes on over bare feet.

And that, of course, would be, as Gussy would phrase it, "twuly dweadful."

Talking of musical instruments—not that we were, by the way, because Herries' cornet doesn't really come under that category—it is amazing how many of Gussy's toppers end their days as concertinas. I once made an attempt to keep count of how many went west in a month, but I got fed-up with the game, and gave it up after the ninth. I can, however, give the record life for a hat of Gussy's—the longest period he has managed to preserve one intact.

Exactly a week!

He bought this particular tatch-covering on a Saturday, kept it in its box until the following Saturday, put it on after dinner and went down to Rylcombe in it about half-past three, and it was bashed over his head at a few minutes past four by Gordon Gay.

This tile was a specially posh bobby-dazzler, with a beautiful curly brim and a polish like enamel. When the sun shone on it the blessed thing positively winked at you. It heliographed messages all over Sussex.

Gussy gave a couple of quid for it, and it was certainly a thing of beauty, though far from being a joy for ever. When Gordon Gay had finished with it, Gussy would have been lucky to change it for a balloon or a paper windmill.

And it was entirely Gussy's own fault that it went west. We all started off for Rylcombe together, and if the ass hadn't gone back at the last moment to change his tie because it clashed with Digby's socks, or something of the kind, he wouldn't have fallen into the hands of Gay & Co. You see, we hadn't waited for him, and he was hurrying along to catch us up.

Those blessed Grammarians can never resist the temptation to rag Gussy. I can't say I blame them, for that matter, though I wouldn't think of letting them know that. But Gussy does really ask for it. Not that the Grammarians haven't got things even funnier than Gussy among their collection of freaks. They have! But they take jolly good care to keep them out of harm's way.

But that's the very thing you can't do with Gussy. He will be on the front row every time.

Anyway, I hope he's on the front row when that Society for the Suppression of Born Idiots comes along looking for a job of work.

CONSIDERING that England is teeming with societies of all kinds, for the prevention of this and that, and in aid of that and this, it puzzles me that nobody has ever instituted a Society for the Total Suppression of Born Idiots.

Such a society would fill a long-felt want, and wouldn't it just find plenty of work to do? I should shay sho.

I'm certain that it would have a record membership. Anyway, I know three fellows in this study who would join right away.

Yes, I know perfectly well I said three. What's more, I meant three. And I'm not going groggy on my arithmetic, either, thank you.

The fact that there are four members of this study has got nothing whatever to do with the matter. When I said three, I was alluding to Digby, Herries, and myself.

What about Gussy?

Well, you don't for a moment suppose that Gussy would be permitted to join, do you? This society is for the suppression of born idiots, not for the encouragement of hopeless cases.

Isn't it dead certain that if such a society is ever formed Gussy is going to be one of the suppressed.

Why, it's mainly on account of Gussy that I'm hoping to see that society come into being.

You see, we think it's really time somebody or other took Gussy off our hands, so that we could have a chance to take things easy for a while.

He really needs a couple of keepers and a nursemaid, and we're more than a bit fed-up with deputising for them.

It wouldn't be so bad if he was like the general run of lunatics. From what I've read about the majority of johnnies who find themselves on the wrong side of a high wall, they go along pretty normally for most of the time, only breaking out now and then, and working it off in the upholstery department, after which they come out bright and smiling, as right as ninepence for another few weeks or so.



## THE BORN LEADER!

BY

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY.

(Readers will no doubt observe that this article is in ordinary English, as distinct from the peculiar variation of it that they are accustomed to expecting from Gussy. The explanation is, of course, that although Gussy speaks with a quaint accent, he writes quite normally. I discovered, to my amazement, that he can even spell—to a certain extent, that is. So long as there are no more than five letters in the word, he can be relied upon to put down four of the correct ones, though not necessarily in the right order. Gussy is really improving with age, and if he can only keep it up there is every prospect of his becoming a really bright youth in the course of a couple of hundred years or so.—T. M.)

READFUL! Truly terrible!

I am alluding, dear boys and girls—for I have no doubt that these lines will be perused by members of the fair sex as well—to Blake's really reckless disregard of my advice.

Ever since Tom Merry agreed to Study No. 6 having an issue of the "St. Jim's News" to themselves, I have been urging him to let me take charge of the arrangements.

It is surely obvious that as a fellow of tact and judgment the matter ought to have been left in my hands. These thoughtless youngsters need a strong hand at the helm, and I consider that it was a special dispensation of Providence that I should have been appointed to this study as a sort of guide, philosopher and friend to them. I greatly regret to say that up to the present they have not seen things in that light, but being a fellow of considerable strength of mind, I do not despair of even yet bringing them to see reason, and to a realisation of the fact that in all matters requiring tact and judgment it would be the wisest course to rely entirely upon me, and to put themselves into my hands without reserve.

It is against my principles to push myself forward in any way, and I have never been in the habit of talking about myself, but I must say in all modesty that I am convinced, I should be an ideal leader of the study. I cannot in the least understand how any fellow can be so stupid and obstinate as Blake is about the matter, though I

must say, very regretfully, that Digby and Herries are every bit as pig-headed as Blake.

Not that I am saying anything unpleasant about Blake, of course. He is a very decent chap in most ways, even though he is not very bright mentally. And after all he cannot help that. A fellow is more to be pitied than blamed for having been born a bit of an ass, you know.

But he is certainly not the right and proper leader of Study No. 6. For one thing, he has not got a due and proper regard for his dig, and I consider that it is of very great importance that a fellow who aspires to being a leader of other fellows should have a proper regard for his dig. But a fellow who can wear, without a blush of shame, the kind of ties and socks that Blake wears cannot possibly have any regard for his dig.

Of course, Tom Merry is just as distressing. I am sure that the jacket he was wearing last Sunday is quite a month out of date, and when one considers that he is supposed to be the captain of the Middle and Lower School, one cannot help shuddering. But though I have several times suggested to Tom Merry that he resign in my favour, I have been unable to bring him to a reasonable frame of mind.

It is a great pity I am not in the Sixth, and then I could make a bid for the captaincy of the school, which is really the most suitable post for a fellow of real tact and judgment.



"Then what—"

"He is gone!"

"Gone!" ejaculated Mr. Lathom blankly.

"Stolen!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The child has been stolen!" groaned Mr. Frampton. "His mother is terribly upset. So far, no trace of him has been found. Oh dear!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom, blinking in consternation at his brother-in-law. "This is terrible news! You have been to the police-station?"

"Yes, yes."

"And they have heard nothing?"

"Nothing."

"But how—why—what—how did it happen, my dear Frampton? During your visit here this afternoon, I suppose?"

"Yes, yes!"

"I am glad you have come to tell me, but—how can I help you in the matter?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"I think you may be able to help me," said Mr. Frampton, calming himself. "I will explain how it happened, so far as we know. It seems that Jane, the nursemaid, wheeled the baby out in the limousette to take the air this afternoon, as usual. The foolish girl, unknown to anyone, of course, had made an appointment with a young man. She is, of course, very much distressed at what has happened, and has told us all. It seems that she had the baby on the village green, and a schoolboy—she described him as a very pleasant and gentlemanly looking boy, whom she never dreamed of distrusting—was reading a book on the same seat."

"Yes."

"Jane asked him to keep an eye on the baby for a few minutes, while she walked down the High Street. It was reprehensible, it was foolish, it was wickedly careless, but the girl is so distressed that I have not had the heart to tell her what I think of her conduct. She intended to be absent only a few minutes, but she asseverates that the schoolboy was so very kind and gentlemanly looking that she placed implicit trust in him."

"Very, very foolish!" said Mr. Lathom, shaking his head.

"She met the young man in question," went on Mr. Frampton. "He had his motor-bicycle with him, and persuaded her to take a short ride on the pillion. The foolish, flighty girl consented. She felt sure that the baby was safe, even if the schoolboy had left it—it was safe in the baby-carriage. Of course, she was terribly to blame. But, barring accidents, she would have been back very shortly. But several miles away from the village the motor-bicycle broke down. She had to walk back, after waiting some time to see whether the machine could be got going again. She tells me that she ran almost the whole of the way, and arrived on the village green exhausted. The baby was gone."

"Bless my soul!"

"No doubt the schoolboy had tired of watching the baby, and had walked away," said Mr. Frampton. "In that case, the baby was left unguarded. The baby-carriage was wheeled away by someone, with the baby in it. My child has disappeared."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom, with deep empathy. "It is possible, however, that the child was not stolen. The thief may have intended to take only the baby-carriage—a valuable one, I believe. In that case—"

"Yes, yes! But what has become of the baby?" wailed Mr. Frampton. "If the wretched thief only desired to steal the carriage, what has he done with my baby?"

The unfortunate father wiped the perspiration from his brow. Mr. Lathom paced the study in sympathetic agitation.

"And there is no clue?" he asked.

"None."

"You hinted that I might be able to help you, Frampton," said Mr. Lathom. "In what way—"

"Yes, yes! There is the circumstance that the baby was left in charge of a schoolboy," said Mr. Frampton. "It is a half-holiday at this school to-day, I think."

"That is the case."

"It has occurred to me that the boy in question may belong to this school," said Mr. Frampton. "In that case, he may be found, and may be able to give some information. The

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slightest hint may be of use in helping to track down the dastard who has taken away my baby."

"True!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"You could inquire—"

"I will inquire at once!" exclaimed the master of the Fourth. "Remain here, my dear fellow, and compose yourself. If any boy at St. Jim's can give any information on the subject, I shall very soon ascertain the fact."

"Thank you, Lathom, thank you!"

Mr. Lathom quitted his study. Roll-call had been taken, and all the fellows were in their Houses by this time. Mr. Lathom decided to begin with his own Form, and for that purpose he ascended the stairs to the Fourth Form passage.

It was then that Tom Merry spotted him, and thoughtfully conveyed a warning to Study No. 6.

What on earth would happen if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were found with the amazing baby in No. 6, Tom could not even guess.

Mr. Lathom, quite unconscious of the fact that his arrival had been thus heralded, trotted on into the Fourth Form passage. At the open doorway of Study No. 6 Jack Blake watched him with surreptitious interest. He was wondering whether Mr. Lathom had heard of Gussy's protegee. Certainly he was likely to hear of him at any minute, with the whole Lower School talking and chuckling over the subject—and the baby itself liable to give utterance any moment to terrific and ear-splitting yells.

"Ah, Blake!" Mr. Lathom stopped. "Blake! Were you out of gates this afternoon?"

"No, sir," said Blake. "I was in the House match."

"I require to find out whether any boy in the Fourth was in the village, Blake. Perhaps you are aware—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Blake. "I—I—I think—"

"It is an important matter, Blake, and if you can inform me it will save perhaps a long inquiry."

"I—I think D'Arcy walked to Rylcombe, sir!" stammered Blake.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

Arthur Augustus ran to the door. If he was to interview his Form master it was obviously better to interview him in the passage than in the study—with only a flimsy screen hiding the baby. Unluckily, as Arthur Augustus ran to the door Mr. Lathom passed Blake and stepped in.

"Bump!"

"Oh! Oh dear! Oh!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"Oh cwumps!" Arthur Augustus staggered back from the shock.

"D'Arcy! You clumsy boy! What—"

Herries jumped forward just in time. Arthur Augustus was staggering almost on the screen. He grasped the swell of St. Jim's by the shoulder and jerked him forward.

"You ass!" he breathed.

"Ow! Weally, Hewwies—"

"My hat! Here comes the giddy visitor!" murmured Blake, as Mr. Frampton appeared in the passage from the staircase.

The anxious father had been too anxious to remain in Mr. Lathom's study. He had followed the Form master, eager for any trifling hint of information which might lead him on the track of the ruffian—the kidnapper—the unspeakable dastard—who had wheeled away his baby! Such were the names Mr. Frampton applied to the unknown kidnapper—little dreaming who he was or how near at hand he was!

"Mr. Lathom is here?" asked Mr. Frampton, as he came up to Blake.

"In the study, sir."

"My dear Frampton—" Mr. Lathom was still breathing hard from the shock of his collision with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Have you learned anything yet, Lathom?"

"Really, Frampton, I have had no time." Mr. Lathom gasped again. "But I find that this boy, D'Arcy, was in Rylcombe this afternoon, and he may be able to tell us something."

"Ah! The boy who dropped the football on my head this afternoon!" said Mr. Frampton, with a faint smile.

"D'Arcy! You were in the village this afternoon?" said the master of the Fourth.

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus spoke with one eye on Mr. Lathom and the other on the screen. Behind the screen sat the baby, happily scratching away at Gussy's silk hat. Arthur Augustus fervently hoped that the infant would keep quiet.

"Did you go on the village green, by any chance, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Lathom.

"Yaas, sir."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Mr. Frampton eagerly. "Then you may have seen something of the occurrence."

"Bai Jove! What occuwence, sir?"

"My baby has been stolen!"

"Eh?"

"By some unspeakable scoundrel!"



"What?"  
 "Some conscienceless, remorseless villain!" said Mr. Frampton.

"Gweat Scott!"  
 "Some depraved dastard unworthy of the name of human being has taken away my baby!" pursued the excited parent. Arthur Augustus' jaw dropped.

Blake and Herries and Digby exchanged frozen glances. The mystery was growing clear. This man Frampton apparently had lost a baby on the same day that Gussy had found one. It could not be a mere coincidence. Obviously, it was the same baby!

"Some—some what, sir?" articulated Arthur Augustus. "Some dastard who has sunk to the lowest imaginable depths of depravity has stolen my child!" said Mr. Frampton. Evidently the fond father regarded the loss of his baby as the greatest catastrophe that had occurred in the universe since Time began.

"Bai Jove! I—what—you—I——" said Arthur Augustus incoherently.

"A foolish nursemaid left it in charge of a schoolboy," resumed Mr. Frampton. "She was prevented from returning—"

"Oh deah!"  
 "When at last she came back the baby had vanished. Did you by any chance see anything of the occurrence, as you were on the spot?"  
 "Oh cwumbs!"  
 "Papa!"

From behind the screen came a still small voice. Baby had recognised the tones of its parent, and its attention was withdrawn from the remains of Gussy's silk hat.

Mr. Frampton jumped.

"What—where—"  
 "Papa! Baby wantum papa!" yelled the young gentleman behind the screen.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, transfixed. Mr. Frampton stood rooted to the floor for a second. Then he made a frantic lunge towards the screen. He dragged it over and hurled it aside. Baby was revealed!

"My child!" gasped Mr. Frampton.  
 "Oh cwumbs!"

Mr. Frampton dazedly picked up the baby. Blake and Herries and Digby stood dumb. Mr. Lathom blinked over his spectacles, which nearly fell off in his amazement. Arthur Augustus felt as if his noble head were turning round. But he collected himself and rose to the occasion.

"Mr. Frampton! I am vey pleased to vestore to you your lost babay!" said the swell of St. Jim's gracefully.

**CHAPTER 8.**

**Who Stole the Baby?**

**A**RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY felt quite relieved. He had been the means of restoring the lost baby to its fond parents—which was a pleasure to his kind heart. It was also a relief to land the baby on Mr. Frampton. How long the baby could possibly have remained an inmate of Study No. 6 at St. Jim's was a mystery; but, undoubtedly, the sooner it was disposed of, the better. And this was the most satisfactory manner imaginable of disposing of it. Mr. Sands and Major Stringer had declined it without thanks. Mr. Frampton was not in a position to decline it!

The happy father found his voice at last.  
 "Boy! This is my child. How did he come here? Are you the schoolboy with whom the nursemaid left him?"

"Yaas, wathah!"  
 "Then you are the kidnapper!" thundered Mr. Frampton.

"Wha-a-at?"  
 "You are the rascal——"  
 "Bai Jove!"

"You are the scoundrel——"  
 "Weally, Mr. Frampton——"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom. "This is most extraordinary. D'Arcy, explain yourself. Mr. Frampton supposed that the schoolboy had walked away, leaving the baby unguarded, and that someone had then stolen it. Now it appears that it was you who stole it. In the name of all that is absurd, D'Arcy, why did you steal this child?"

"Oh deah! I——"  
 "The law will deal with him!" exclaimed Mr. Frampton. "The young rascal will find that this is a serious matter!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake.  
 "I wefuse to be called a wascal!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I weally considah, sir, that you might thank a chap for takin' charge of your dashed babay."

"What? What?"  
 "I was goin' to adopt it——"

"What?" yelled Mr. Lathom.  
 "I wegardad that as the only wesource, sir, as the babay was abandoned," said Arthur Augustus. "I was undah the impression that it was landed on me, and I wathahly wefused to let it go to the workhouse. I wegardad it as my duty

to take care of it. It is wathah a nice babay, though vevy wuff on a fellow's hat!"

"The boy is insane!" stuttered Mr. Frampton.  
 "D'Arcy!" articulated Mr. Lathom. "If the baby was left on your hands why did you not take it up to the police-station?"

"In that case I should have recovered it long ago," said Mr. Frampton.

"Pewwaps so, sir. But I did not know it was your babay. It does not weseemble you at all. It is quite a good-lookin' babay."

"Wha-at?"  
 "Upon my word!" said Mr. Lathom. "I think I understand. D'Arcy supposed that the baby had been abandoned, and he seems to have supposed that it was his duty to take charge of it!"

"Yaas, wathah!"  
 "Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Frampton. "I—I—I see! Yes, I quite see. I am sorry I spoke angrily, D'Arcy. You seem to have acted in a kind-hearted manner. But, of course, I could not guess that any boy would be so utterly absurd—so incredibly ridiculous!"

"Weally, sir——"  
 "Baby wantum mumma!" yelled the subject of the discussion at this moment.

"Yes, yes. Papa take baby to mummums!" said Mr. Frampton soothingly.

"Baby wantum mumma!"  
 It was a terrific yell. It rang the whole length of the Fourth Form passage. Loud chuckles answered it from various studies up and down the passage. Mr. Lathom coughed.

"My dear Frampton, as you have so fortunately found the baby, it would be best——"

"Mumma! Baby wantum mumma! Ooooooooh!"  
 "Papa takum baby to mummums," said Mr. Frampton, speaking in the mysterious language used by fond parents to their offspring.

And he marched out of the study with baby on his shoulder much to the relief of Study No. 6. Baby's yells died away in the distance.

Mr. Lathom fixed his eyes on Arthur Augustus.

"D'Arcy, you are a most absurd boy!"  
 "Weally, sir——"

"Your motives are good; but if you had displayed even a modicum of common sense——"

"Bai Jove!"  
 "I really think that I ought to cane you severely!"

"Oh!"  
 "But as the matter has ended so fortunately I will pardon you," said Mr. Lathom. "But if ever you should bring another baby into the school——"

Mr. Lathom left the sentence unfinished. The remainder was left to Arthur Augustus' imagination. The master of the Fourth whisked out of the study.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I see nothin' to gwinn at, you gwinnin' asses! I weally considah——"

There was a yell from the passage in the dulcet tones of Baggie Trimble.

"Who stole the baby?"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Bai Jove! I will give that wettah Twimble a feahful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Weally, you fellows——"  
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake & Co.  
 "Oh wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was often in the limelight. But he had never been so prominently in the limelight as he was for some days after the affair of Mr. Frampton's baby.

It was the talk of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus was the cynosure of all eyes. He did not enjoy it.

For days and days fellows could not meet D'Arcy in the quad or the passages without propounding the impertinent query: Who stole the baby?

Arthur Augustus grew quite tired of it; but the other fellows did not tire so soon. And the swell of St. Jim's could only hope that some other topic would come along which would divert the general attention from that tiresome topic of D'Arcy's Adopted!

THE END.

**NOTE!**  
 There will be a double-length story of Tom Merry & Co. in next week's "GEM," entitled:  
**"DICK JULIAN'S TRIAL!"**  
 By MARTIN CLIFFORD.  
 No "GEM-ite" should miss this ripping yarn!  
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Sam Hall, the unscrupulous trainer of Ashdown Stables, finds reason to think that there is some advantage in having a straight "lad" like Sid Morris!



# The HEAD LAD'S REVENGE!

by Cecil Fanshaw.

Another Thrilling Racing Yarn,  
featuring Sid Morris, Stableboy.

## CHAPTER 1.

### Crook v. Crook!

"KEEP back there, Jim!" barked Foster, the "head lad" of the Ashdown Stables. "Get Ironclad's head up. Now then, Sid, bring Kestrel forward."

"Right-ho!" gasped Sid, the new stableboy of that establishment, swinging Kestrel round, and bringing the big chestnut dancing towards the starting-gate on his toes.

Foster, Sam Hall's right-hand man, was trying to dispatch four horses for a trial gallop. The burly trainer himself, mounted on his square-built cob, was watching eagerly from his position by a lone pine-tree away up the track.

A chill wind was sweeping across the wide expanse of rolling downland, for the hour was early, and the climbing sun had hardly dispelled the fleecy mists.

The keen air made the horses plunge, buck, and fly-jump all over the place.

Sid's special pal, Jim, was having the dickens of a time with Ironclad, a slashing bay, who had got his head down to his knees, and was trying to pull the lad out of his saddle.

Foster, none too sweet of temper, quickly lost patience.

"Hey, you boys!" he shouted, "this ain't a circus! Want to fool around all day? Get— Ah, that's better!" seeing a level line for the tenth of a second. "Steady, now!"

The tapes flew up and the four horses shot from under.

Ironclad went off with a rush, setting a cracking pace. But Kestrel jumped into his bridle and was at once at the bay's quarters. The two other horses had also got off well, and the whole four were bunched close till nearly the end of the first mile.

Flinging clods of turf from their pounding hoofs, the horses swept round the bend of the horseshoe shaped track. Now they were racing towards Sam Hall up by the improvised winning-post.

Jim, having orders to win if he could, was driving Ironclad all out, but the bay was beginning to labour in his stride. A furlong from home Kestrel shot by like a yellow streak and took up the lead.

When they flashed past Hall, Kestrel was a couple of lengths to the good. The other three, running neck and neck, were battling for second place.

"A Cesarewitch horse, by jingo!" breathed Hall. "He gave Ironclad 7lbs. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 371.

and won on his head. That boy Sid knows how to handle him."

The trainer rammed in his heels, cantering down to where the horses were pulling up.

Kestrel was hardly blowing enough to put a candle out, but the flanks of the other three were heaving like bellows.

"Come here, Sid!" shouted Hall, reining in and beckoning.

Sid pressed Kestrel towards his burly, red-faced boss, wondering whether he was in for a wiggling. Sam Hall's methods were so queer the lad was never quite certain as to when he was meant to win and when he wasn't.

The next instant Sid's doubts were dispelled, for his boss was actually smiling—a trifle grimly, but a smile all the same.

"You brought Kestrel along nicely, Sid," the trainer rapped out. "Think you could repeat that in the Cesarewitch?"

"Yes, sir!" cried Sid, his face alight.

"I—"

"That's enough!" barked Hall. "Kestrel's owner, Mr. Gartside, has asked me to find him a jockey. I'm going to advise him to put you up. Now get along home with the others."

Hall wheeled and cantered off to overtake Foster. Sid rejoined the other lads, and the racehorses proceeded homewards at a jog trot.

"I heard, Sid," chirped Jim. "Gee, you struck oil all right! Fancy gettin' the mount on a likely winner in a race like the Cesarewitch! You've had good mounts afore this, but nothin' like Kestrel."

Sid nodded thoughtfully, and motioned to Jim to draw away from the other two lads.

"It seems good, Jim," said Sid in a low voice, when they were out of earshot. "But you never know what the boss is up to. I hope the dickens he hasn't got something up his sleeve, and means to tell me to pull at the last moment, like he has done several times. But I won't pull. Sammy Hall knows that jolly well."

"Oh, I guess it's a square deal, Sid," whispered Jim, "or the boss wouldn't put you up. He knows he's got plenty of crooks in his outfit. He can pick any

one of half a dozen when he wants a race faked."

"That's right, Jim," agreed Sid, who had been long enough at Hall's stables to know that the whole outfit except Jim and himself was a gang of crooks. "But what about the owner? That cove Gartside's as bad as any of 'em. Well, anyway, if I ride Kestrel I mean to win, so I hope the deuce it is a square deal for once. I've been up against the boss a sight too often for refusin' to fake, an' I don't want to lose my job."

"Sammy Hall wouldn't sack you, Sid," laughed the younger boy quietly. "Not after all this time. Why, what would he say to Major Grindlay? The major always insists on you riding for him, an' it's mighty lucky for him he does. Hallo!" Jim broke off, his eyes round. "Who's that flashy-lookin' gent up by the stable entrance? The boss don't look exactly bucked to see him. My stars, there's fireworks coming!"

Sid gasped, for strange things were happening up at the entrance to the stable yard. A round little man, arrayed in a check suit of the loudest pattern, and with a grey bowler hat above his florid face, had just shot out of the entrance and was rolling swiftly towards Sam Hall.

Even at the distance of over a hundred yards Sid could see the flash of a huge imitation diamond in the round gentleman's scarlet necktie.

Sid and Jim also saw Hall fling a curt word to Foster, which sent the surly head lad slouching off, shooting backward glances as he went. Then both boys saw their boss grip his riding-crop tightly and spur forward.

"Sullivan!" boomed Hall. "What the blazes d'you want?"

"Shure, an' that's no way to be greetin' an Oirish gintleman," cried Sullivan. "Tis only the favour of a few words I'm wantin' wid ye, an' it is then."

"Spit 'em out sharp!" barked Hall, reining in his cob alongside the gaily-clad Irishman.

The rest of the conversation did not reach the boys on the racehorses, for both Hall and Sullivan dropped their voices.

"Tis about that thousand pounds you'll be owin' me, Mr. Hall," growled Sullivan, thrusting his round, red face up towards the big trainer's own. "I've come about that, no less. It's toime ye squared ut. You know me, Misher Hall. When I say I must have the money, I mane ut."

ANSWERS  
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"Yes, I know you, Sullivan," gritted Hall, rubbing his blue-black chin with the handle of his crop. "I know you for one of the biggest bookmakers in town, and also for one of the biggest rogues I've ever mixed up with."

"An' that's a case o' the pot callin' the kettle black, even though I says ut meself," retorted Sullivan, his dark blue eyes glinting dangerously. "But, settin' aside the compliments, when d'ye mane to pay up?"

"After the Cesarewitch!" snapped Hall.

"Begorra! I must have ut before that. There'll be a deal o' throuble between us if I don't."

"Trouble be hanged!" snarled Hall, gripping his crop till his knuckles showed white. "I can't pay you before. So clear out before you're thrown out!"

"Aisy, now!" said the Irishman, gulping down his wrath. "Don't let two old friends be fallin' out—for we was good friends once. Jest listen to the jool av a shame I'll be unfoldin' to ye."

"Well?"

Hall's sharp query was a threat more than a demand for information. But Sullivan, taking no notice, continued in a low voice.

"Ye owe me a thousand pounds, Mither Hall, which ye admit ye can't pay. Well, if I can persuade ye to adopt my schame I'll wipe out the debt an' pay ye a hundred over. 'Tis a fact that I've laid heavily against Kestrel for the Cesarewitch. Let the horse have an accident an' not run. Thin, as soon as I'm certain, I'll make good me words an' wipe out that debt."

"Guess again, Sullivan!" scoffed Hall. "Kestrel's going to run—and win! Why, man, I stand to pick up two thousand over him! Then I'll pay you off and be well in pocket. It's no business of mine if you've been fool enough to lay odds against a crack like Kestrel. And as for crocking the horse—"

"Well," broke in Sullivan desperately, "I don't ask you to crock him an' knock him out av his other engagements. Persuade the owner to scratch him, an' show me a written guarantee. 'Twill be enough."

"More than enough!" roared Hall, raising his heavy crop. "I tell you I won't listen to you! Get out!"

Hall's bellow came clearly to Sid and the other lads, who, unnoticed, had approached quite close. The boys also heard the stream of insults that poured from Sullivan's lips as the now furious Irishman jumped back out of the trainer's reach.

"Ye vagabond!" he yelled. "Who was ut had Grey Steel pulled in the Ascot Stakes? Who doped Peacock—and squared me to hould me tongue when I found ut out? Who's done a dozen other dirty thricks? Sam Hall, thrainer an' swindler! Ouch! I'll make ye sweat for this!"

Sullivan's last words were uttered in a piercing scream.

Hall then spurred his cob forward, catching the tub-like Irishman amidships and sending him rolling in the dust.

Away went the imitation diamond, flashing in a gleaming arc. But Sullivan didn't seem to miss it. After rolling over and over a dozen times he sprang to his feet and brandished both fists.

"I'll ruin ye!" he raved. "I'll tell the whole world what I know about ye!"

"You won't!" breathed Hall. "For it isn't half as much as I know about you!"

He charged at the fellow full tilt, but the dishevelled Sullivan didn't wait to be knocked down again. He took to his

heels and fled like a hunted hare. After him thundered Hall, swinging his crop round his head.

"Kestrel sha'n't run!" came Sullivan's yelps down the wind. "I'll poison him! I'll kill him! Oh, help! Help!"

Sid, Jim, and the other boys rolled in their saddles, laughing till their sides ached. For now their boss had caught up his man, and was dealing him lusty blows on his shoulder-blades. The Irishman jinked like a pig. But Hall's cob was a handy beast and followed the fugitive close.

"My word, the boss is properly riled!" laughed Jim. "He's a snorter when he's got his dander up! Funniest sight I ever clapped eyes on!"

"I guess so!" chuckled Sid; but added quickly: "'Tain't all a joke. Here's someone goin' to try to get at Kestrel, after all! Some crook's always butting in! Well, thank goodness the trouble'll come from outside this time instead of in. Here's the boss coming back," he broke off. "We'd best hustle into stables before he starts on us!"

With a clatter of hoofs on paving-stones, the lads rode into the stable-yard. A moment later each boy had his horse in its box and was busily rubbing him down.

Hall rode into the yard a couple of minutes afterwards, swung himself out of his saddle, and strode heavily over to Kestrel's loose-box.

"See here, Sid," he snapped suddenly, appearing in the open doorway, "it's not many days to the Cesarewitch, and until the race you'll sleep every night in Kestrel's box. I'm going to run no risks! Got that?"

"Yes, sir! Certainly!" cried Sid, swinging round, brush in hand. "I'll be jolly glad to do anything to prevent Kestrel being got at!"

"But that's not all," went on Hall, who was still breathing heavily after his exercise. "I'm going to lock you in at night, and keep the key myself. Nothing'll happen without my getting

wise to it!" And he stumped off, swearing at all Irishmen—and Sullivan in particular—under his breath.

"A jolly smart idea!" muttered Sid, putting his back into grooming the big, pawing chestnut. "Though it almost looks as if the boss didn't trust me! Well, I suppose he's mixed up with such rum folk he doesn't really trust anyone."

Sid redoubled his efforts to get a shine on to Kestrel's gleaming coat, hissing between his teeth as he worked.

He little guessed that Sam Hall's "smart idea" would very nearly cause his own death as well as that of the horse he was to sleep with.

## CHAPTER 2.

### At Daggers Drawn!

**A** LONG Hall's private gallop on the crest of the green downs close to the stables thundered four straining horses. Their tails streamed out behind them, and their hoof-beats rolled like muffled drums.

It was a week since Sullivan had visited the Ashdown House stables, and Sam Hall was having another trial. He had put an extra seven pounds on Kestrel to see if that would stop him.

All of a sudden there came a startled yell from Sid.

"Look out, fellows!" he screamed. "Pull wide! 'Ware iron!"



With a mighty leap, Kestrel cleared the road, but Sid was only just in time to see the gasping fugitive leap on a motor-cycle to go spinning down the road.

As he shouted Sid yanked Kestrel to the right, cannoning into Ironclad, who was galloping steadily on his off side.

Ironclad staggered a few paces, crossed his legs, and came smashing down, hurling young Jim over his head like a shot from a gun.

In the nick of time the two other lads heard Sid's warning shout. Both pulled hard to their left, then went off down the track, bumping and boring each other all the way.

Jim sprang to his feet, not a penny the worse, then whirled back to Ironclad, who was just scrambling up.

But Kestrel, scared out of his wits, had laid hold of his bit, bolted off at a tangent, and was carting Sid away over the downs full tilt.

"What the deuce?" thundered Hall, and set spurs to his cob and came charging down to the scene of the disaster.

"What happened?" he bawled, as he swept up to Jim. "Has Sid gone stark staring mad?"

"No, sir!" cried Jim, whipping round and pointing. "He was trying to save us from all bein' brought down. Look there, sir—half a dozen iron hoops strewn right across the track!"

Following Jim's pointing finger, Hall glimpsed a number of wicked-looking, rusty iron bands. They had obviously been planted on the course with the intention of crippling the galloping horses.

"I'll horsewhip the scoundrel who did this!" bellowed the furious trainer, spurring forward. "I'll—"

Hall broke off and swung his cob round. From away up the slopes of a rise had come a shout of amazement from Sid.

The boy, unable to stop Kestrel, was still going great guns, his mount racing across the downs with widespread nostrils and bulging eyes. That didn't worry Hall, who knew Sid would soon recover control.

But Sid's shout gave warning of a fresh and astounding development. For, as Kestrel charged blindly at a great clump of gorse, up bounded a little man from behind it like an indiarubber ball.

He raved wildly at Kestrel, letting fly strange-sounding oaths. Then he glimpsed Hall, who was now pounding up to the attack. That finished him. Whipping round, he sought safety in headlong flight.

As he ran, proceeding in wild hops and bounds, frightened yelps and Irish abuse floated back down the wind. Sid wrenched Kestrel round and thundered in pursuit.

Faster and faster went the little man, till his twinkling feet seemed to skim over the ground. But the drumming of Kestrel's hoofs in his ears urged him to even greater efforts.

Swiftly the gap narrowed between pursuer and pursued.

"Got you, you horse-maimer!" yelled Sid, leaning forward in his saddle.

"No, bejabbers, ye ain't!" shrieked the fugitive, swerving smartly to his right.

Darting almost from under Kestrel's nose, he took a flying leap that landed him in the white, sunken road, which had just appeared at their very feet.

Sid felt Kestrel gather to spring. Next he was forced back in his saddle, to find himself sailing through the air.

Thud!

Kestrel landed cleanly on the turf on the far side. Sid swung his mount round. Too late. He was just in time to see the gasping fugitive hurl himself at a motor-bike which he had left in the ditch propped up against the bank.

Chug, chug, whrrrrh! went the bike. Then the engine roared to life, and the plump fugitive bounced into the saddle.

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There came a hoarse yell of defiance, a popping and banging of ironmongery, then the motor-bike went spinning down the road, half hidden in a dust cloud of its own making.

"Beat on the post!" gritted Sid, fighting with his wild-eyed, sweat-lathered mount, the sound of the motor-bike growing rapidly faint.

But Kestrel had had enough exercise. Sid quickly calmed him down, recrossed the road, then cantered off to meet his boss.

All at once, when Hall was still some fifty yards off, Sid's eye was caught by something yellow lying beside a gorse-bush. He reined in and sprang to the ground.

"A leather case!" exclaimed Sid, snatching the object up. "It looks like—yes, it is! It's a pair o' field-glasses dropped by that Irish bouncer! I guess he hoped to see a rare smash-up through these things. But he was darned well disappointed!"

Sid looked up, for Hall had just thudded up and drawn rein.

"It was the Irish fellow who visited the stables t'other day, sir!" cried Sid, holding up his find. "I recognised him plain enough. He got away on a motor-bike. But these glasses should be proof—they've got initials on the case. D'you know 'em, sir—K.N.S.?"

"Hand 'em over!" snapped Hall. "Yes, I know the initials," he added, thrusting the leather case into a capacious side pocket. "It was just the fellow I expected. But buck up and get mounted. Don't stand there jawing!"

Sid vaulted into his saddle and, at a sign from Hall, sent Kestrel striding along at a swinging walk beside his boss' cob.

"You acted smartly, Sid," growled Hall, complimenting the lad for the first time since he had been in his service. "If you hadn't spotted the hoops and pulled out of the way, Kestrel might ha' been crooked for life. It's as plain as a pikestaff that the ruffian you chased chucked the things there—"

"Couldn't one set the police on him, sir?" burst out Sid.

"No!" exploded Hall, and relapsed into stony silence.

Sid also fell silent, but thought a good deal. He had heard some of what the Irishman had screamed out, when he turned up at the stables the previous week. Now he felt certain that the rascal and Sam Hall had once been companion crooks but had fallen out.

"If the boss won't prosecute the bouncer," thought Sid, "I guess Kestrel and myself'll have to watch out for squalls 'tween now and the Cesarewitch. Old iron on the track! That's a sticky start. What's comin' next?"

But a bellow from Hall scattered Sid's thoughts. They had just got back to where the iron hoops had been thrown down. Jim was holding Ironclad and the two other horses. Foster and the other lads were clearing the stuff off the track.

"Foster! Foster!" shouted Hall. "Come here at once!"

Grumbling to himself, the head lad slouched over to the boss.

"You're an idle fellow, Foster," bawled Hall, growing purple in the face. "Why the dickens didn't you see the track was clear? That scrap iron would have maimed all four horses if they'd galloped into it."

"I ain't been over the course with a brush an' comb, guv'nor!" growled the head lad, who considered himself a privileged person. "Consequently I ain't seen it!"

"You impudent ruffian!" shouted

Hall. "Haven't you got any eyes? It's no thanks to you that Kestrel and Ironclad haven't got broken legs. I don't believe you've walked round this course for the last week."

"You're wrong, then! I 'ave! But I've seen nothing."

Foster's truculent manner and tone lashed the burly trainer to fury. But, outwardly icy calm, Hall leant forward in his saddle to grind out:

"Be mighty careful, Foster, or I'll sack you on the spot. Perhaps you saw nothing because you didn't want to!"

"What d'you mean, guv'nor?" cried Foster, starting guiltily, and paling beneath his tan. "You mean I knew about that iron, and was bribed to leave it there?"

"Something of the sort," said Hall, in a dangerously calm voice.

"It's a lie. I knew nothin' about any iron."

"You were paid not to know!" yelled Hall, his rage climbing afresh. "Don't deny it! I can see by your face you were. Now clear out my stables. Get on! I'll give you half an hour's grace to quit! If I find you here then, or ever see your face again, I'll pound you to a jelly."

Foster hesitated, his fists clenched, and his eyes gleaming. He was a well-built man, but knew he was no match for his powerful boss.

"You'll be sorry for this, Sam Hall!" he gritted at last, then spun round on his heel, striding off towards the stables to get his gear.

The boys, meanwhile, working hard and pretending not to see what was happening, had removed all the scrap iron to a safe place. Then they remounted and headed for home.

"Jolly glad to see the back of Foster," whispered Jim, staring after the receding figure of the sacked head lad. "He was a downright cad. He worked up most of the fakes and doping dodges that have been pulled off at our place. Good riddance, I says."

"Same here!" breathed Sid. "I shouldn't wonder if he knew all about that iron, just as the boss said."

Jim looked wise and nodded, then pulled Ironclad back into file behind Kestrel, on hearing the drumming hoof-beats of the cob as the boss came cantering up to join them.

Hall, too, was staring after the vanishing Foster.

"Double-crossing scamp!" muttered the big trainer. "I've suspected him before. Well, I ain't scared of his threats. He knows I could land him in jug if he starts cackling about what he's learnt here. But he won't—he's got too much sense. I reckon I've seen the last of Foster."

But Hall was wrong. Although he had done with Foster, Foster hadn't done with him—as the trainer discovered when they crossed swords again.

## CHAPTER 3.

### Vengeance!

**N**O. 99, RAVEN STREET. Here we are."

Foster, a somewhat dapper figure in a blue suit and grey felt hat, halted at the entrance to a towering building of offices and flats.

The building was situated in the roaring heart of London. But, although the street lamps were already glimmering in the dusk, and people were flocking out of offices and pouring down the street, Foster knew he was not too late, for he was expected.

"K. N. Sullivan. Fifth floor," Foster read aloud, from a brass plate fixed in the wall.

Then he strode along a passage and rang a lift bell.

A moment later the lift door had clanged, and Foster was watching the floors drop away from beneath him.

Emerging from the lift, Sam Hall's late head lad found himself confronted by an oaken door with a glass panel. Black, painted letters announced that Mr. Sullivan dwelt within. Foster knocked.

"Come in, thin," called out a voice in a rich brogue. "There's no entrance fee. Arrh, 'tis Foster! Well, me bhoy, what's the news?"

"You told me to wire if I wanted to see you—eh?" jerked out Foster, lowering himself into a leather armchair.

"I did," rejoined Sullivan, puffing at a cigar nearly a foot long. "What's happened? I hope ye gave that bhoy a thrashin', the imp who chased me across thin downs. Begorra, I'm still stiff from ut, an' ut cost me a foine pair of glasses!"

"Glasses are nothing!" barked Foster. "I've got something a sight worse than that to talk about. I've been fired!"

"Foired!" exclaimed Sullivan, scowling angrily. "Thin I'm thinkin' ye won't be much more use to me."

"It was your fault!" shouted Foster, starting up. "You gave me a tenner to keep clear of the course this morning, but you wouldn't let on what your game was. How could I guess you'd be mad enough to strew scrap-iron about? A blindfolded owl could ha' spotted that heap o' rubbish. I reckoned you meant to put nails. If Kestrel had picked up one 'twould have lamed him sufficient."

"Be aisy now," said Sullivan soothingly. "I was only afther makin' certain. For shure, if Kestrel wins the Cesarewitch, I'll be in the deuce av a hole."

"You've lost me my job," growled Foster. "A mighty good job!"

"I'll make it up to ye," cried Sullivan, whose brain had been working hard behind his inscrutable blue eyes. "Lend me a hand in this matther, an' I'll give ye a jool av a job. Come now, me bhoy, we'll be friends. You know all the workin's av Sam Hall's stables. Suggest how Kestrel can be got at."

For a second the sharp-featured, leather-faced Foster scrutinised the rubicund bookmaker, wondering how much he could demand for his knowledge.

"Phwat's the schame?" broke in Sullivan, flicking casually at a cigar-ash on his startling check coat-sleeve.

"Ain't got one yet," admitted Foster. "I'd do anythin' to get square with Sam Hall, but it's going to be a mighty tough job."

"Thry bribin' the jockey, for a start!" exclaimed Sullivan, leaning forward earnestly.

"Can't be did!" Foster shook his head emphatically, and pounded the arm of his chair with his fist. "That cub Sid Morris is goin' to ride Kestrel!" he spat out. "I know he can't be bribed, or even scared into pulling. How do I know? 'Cause 'alf a dozen people have tried to do it already! He sold 'em all, Sammy Hall included. Think o' somethin' else."

"The ould dope business?" suggested Sullivan blandly. "You know Kestrel's box. 'Twould be an aisy matther for ye to slin in an' do the thrick."

"With young Sid sleeping inside?" scoffed Foster, raising his eyebrows.

"A bhoy!" spluttered Sullivan. "A merc cheild! A conk on—"

"And Sam Hall locking the box every night," ended Foster, "and keepin' the

key in his pocket. No; dope's out of it."

"Thin phwat the blazes do ye suggest?" thundered the Irishman, slamming his podgy fist down on his table. "Fire? Burn the place down! 'Twould finish Kestrel, and I'd reckon meself even wid Hall for that lambastin' he giv me."

"Them stables is built of granite," said Foster. "We gottor think of something better'n that. Also, setting fire to stables is a mighty risky job. I'd want a large sum of money to tackle anything like that, Mr. Sullivan."

"Ye can have anything in reason," was the quick reply, "if ye make certain that Kestrel's a stiff 'un. An' if ye bate up the rascal boy at the same time, I'll pay another tin pounds."

Foster said nothing, but closed his eyes and let his brain whiz.

"I've got it!" he cried at last, sitting up with a jerk. "Your talk of fire gave me the idea. I'll get along down to Hall's stables one dark night—"

"One d'ark night!" echoed Sullivan excitedly.

"With a syringe," continued Foster, slapping his thigh, "and squirt a pint o' paraffin under the door o' Kestrel's loose-box. And then—"



A wild shout burst from Sid's lips as from under the door appeared a vicious red flame spurting along the foot of bare ground towards Kestrel's straw.

"And thin?" shouted the irrepressible Irishman. "What thin, me bhoy?"

"Stick a quick fuse under the door and light it. The paraffin'll soak the straw, and the whole show'll blaze up like a Guy Fawkes' bonfire!"

"'Tis the jool av a schame!" shouted Sullivan, springing up and waving his arms. "'Twould be a Donnybrook Fair night. Och! Hush! I'm afther forgettin' meself!"

He trundled swiftly to the door, opened it, looked out, and shut it quietly again.

"You'll be savin' me a mint o' money, Mister Foster," he chuckled, rubbing his fat hands together, "if Kestrel can't run—"

"I know that," rejoined Foster tartly. "What's my share? Losing a job, an' roasting a horse an' possibly a boy, don't come cheap!"

An animated discussion about £ s. d. followed. But finally the two rogues agreed that Foster was to do the

villainous "job" for a hundred pounds, after which Sullivan would find him another job.

Then they shook hands, and Foster departed, with the Irishman's fervent hopes ringing in his ears that fiends would fly away with Sam Hall and the rascal "bhoy" Sid.

CHAPTER 4.

A Fire—and What Followed!

WITH a prodigious rustling of straw, Kestrel scrambled to his feet. Then he started to walk round and round his ample loose-box.



A wild shout burst from Sid's lips as from under the door appeared a vicious red flame spurting along the foot of bare ground towards Kestrel's straw.

"What's up, old boy?" whispered Sid, who was rolled up in a blanket under the chestnut's manger. "Come, then, Kestrel. Lie down!"

The big horse pawed uneasily, then stretched his head down to snuffle at Sid's face. Seemingly reassured, he gathered his legs under him, then settled slowly into his bedding with a tired sigh.

Some strange sixth sense seemed to have warned the animal of impending danger. But a moment later silence reigned in the dark box, and Sid dozed off.

A couple of hours previously, Sam Hall, in a shocking temper after two days of being without a head lad to assist him, had locked Sid and Kestrel in.

Since the boss' heavy footfalls had tramped away across the yard Sid had heard no sound save the booming of the stable clock, yet, at the moment that Kestrel rose to his feet a dark figure was

creeping stealthily towards the horse's box.

Sid woke up.

"What was that?" he gasped, raising himself on one elbow, for the sound of a faint squish, squish, had roused him, penetrating his sleep-heavy brain.

The sound ceased.

Sid was about to lie down again, when there came a sharp, hissing fizz.

"Snakes!" he gasped, throwing aside his blanket and bounding up. "Keep down, Kestrel. There can't be snakes about!"

One leap carried him half across the box. Then a wild shout burst from his lips, as from under the door a vicious little red flame was spurting along the foot of bare ground towards Kestrel's straw!

The flame gave off a pungent, acrid smoke, and mingled with the smell of the smoke, Sid could trace the obnoxious odour of paraffin.

"A fuse!" yelled Sid, hurling himself forward.

He was too late, however, for a great sheet of fire shot up and sent him staggering back.

With a scream of terror and a wild scuffling Kestrel came to his feet. Then he plunged forward into a corner and lashed out in frenzy with his heels.

Dodging the whizzing kicks, Sid whirled about. In one stooping rush he caught up his blanket, then flung himself, face down, on the leaping flames.

Smothered for an instant, the fire went flat, only to break out again in a fresh place with a devouring roar.

"Help!" bellowed Sid, and jumping at the door latch wrenched it with all his might. "The stable's afire!"

It was no use. The door shook and rattled under Sid's frantic assault, but the stout lock held. Boy and horse were imprisoned in the inferno! The most awful of deaths was close at hand!

Pandemonium broke loose. Already the box was lit up with a ruddy glow. Crimson tongues were licking up the wooden panels, and billows of smoke were swirling round in a choking fog.

Above the crackling roar of the red-hot blaze rose the fearful screams of the terrified horse.

With raw, bursting lungs Sid plunged blindly towards Kestrel, escaping a death-dealing kick by a scant inch. With

his bare hands he beat out sparks that had ignited the horse's clothing, then whipped off his coat, to whirl round and commence a hopeless fight with the spreading flames.

As he flogged with his coat and kicked the straw forward with his feet, Sid yelled with all the strength he possessed.

Hours seemed to have passed since first he sighted the racing fuse, but really everything had happened in under two minutes.

The deafening racket had drawn Hall, who had just been starting a midnight round, to the scene.

As he pounded full speed into the stable yard the trainer almost collided with a crouching figure just darting out.

"Foster!" bellowed Hall, recognising the ruffian in a twinkling flash. "Take that, and that!"

Not yet fully aware of the disaster, the mere sight of Foster lashed Hall to fury. His left shot out like a steel rod, making stunning contact between Foster's eyes. Then his ham-like right crashed to the jaw, and Foster dropped in a quivering heap.

"Fire!" bawled Hall, now seeing wreaths of smoke curling out from under Kestrel's box. "Turn out, you boys up there!"

Leaving Foster where he had dropped, Hall pounded across the yard. But his shouts to the stable boys were unnecessary. The din had reached them, and they came pelting down from their quarters in all sorts of attire.

"Fix the hose!" Hall yelled over his shoulder, even as he reached Kestrel's box and crammed in the key. "And two of you grab that ruffian at the entrance."

"Right you are, sir!" yelled Jim, who was the first to gain the yard.

He tore across to the disused coach-house, where was stored Hall's gig, lengths of hose, and numerous odds and ends.

By now all the boys were in the yard, and while half a dozen joined Jim, pouncing on the hose and unravelling its length as they came running out, two swooped on the sem-cless Foster, to seize him roughly by head and legs, drag him to a loose-box, and fling him in.

Meanwhile Hall had flung open the loose-box door, only to stagger back at the fierce blast that came rushing out. For Sid had confined the fire to the front, hurling the straw forward from the back, and swiping madly at it with his coat.

As the door burst open, and Sid glimpsed the dim figure of his boss looming up through the reddish smoke, the boy reeled back, flinging his coat over Kestrel's head.

Hall plunged forward, but was beaten back by the blaze.

"Water!" he bellowed. "Let it rip!" Swish! Swish!

A powerful stream of water gushed out of the hose pipe, smote into the heart of the fire, and made the piled-up straw hiss. To and fro swept the spouting torrent, the nozzle of the pipe wielded by the frantic Jim.

The flames fell, and again Hall made a rush. But this time he leaped back from before a great, blurred figure that came hurtling out.

It was Kestrel, his head enveloped in Sid's coat, and sweeping the half-suffocated boy along with him.

Hoofs volleying on the pavement, the big horse thundered into the yard. The boys with the hose rushed aside. Then two made at Kestrel's head, the rest redoubled their efforts to extinguish the fire, while Hall stooped swiftly to pick up Sid, who had fallen flat on his face.

Sid's clothes were charred, his hands raw, and his face grimed and blackened. His very hair and eyebrows had been singed.

"How did it start, Sid?" cried Hall. "Can you tell us?"

"Paraffin!" mumbled Sid, half-stupefied and leaning on his boss' arm. "Fuse—fuse—under door!" Then unconsciousness swept across him.

"The black-hearted ruffian!" gritted Hall. "So Foster has turned to arson to get his revenge! I'll cut him to ribbons!"

The flames were well under by now, merely a smouldering mass glowed at the loose-box door. The stoutness of the walls had prevented the whole building from catching fire. So Hall told Jim and another lad to get Sid to bed, after which he strode off to interview Foster.

A violent hammering and pounding on a door indicated in which box Foster had been imprisoned. But the scoundrel staggered back as the door was thrown open and the bulky Sam Hall appeared in the entrance.

"'Twas Sullivan's fault!" screamed the wretch, cowering. "He put me up to it, I'd never ha' thought of it myself!"

"If Kestrel can't run," gritted Hall, his eyes blazing in his big face, "I'll settle with Sullivan in my own way. If the horse runs and wins, I reckon the Irish ruffian'll be about bankrupt, which will be enough. But right here and now I'll deal with you. I warned you not to show up again."

Immediately there followed the sounds of blows and muffled screams. Foster, already shaken, put up a poor fight, and Hall nearly cut him to pieces with a trainer's gut whip. Then he dragged him across the yard and booted him out.

"If you ever come back you'll see the inside of a prison cell, not for a short time, either!" were the last words, roared in a husky bellow, that Foster heard as he staggered blindly off into the night.

Hall was examining Kestrel a few minutes later. The horse had been bedded down in another box, and, to the trainer's astonishment, he seemed unhurt save for a badly singed tail.

"Jove! I'm beginning to change my mind about young Sid," muttered Hall, sucking in his breath. "I thought he was a blighted young nuisance who couldn't be trusted to obey orders. It was only his fight with the flames that saved Kestrel. What a mug I was to lock him in. If the boy's too badly burnt to ride I'm hanged if I know where to look for another jockey. Sullivan could bribe any of the other young rips to sell me."

Hall had at last found reason to think there was some advantage in having a straight lad in his outfit, after all.

"Are you sure you can manage, Sid, with those hands of yours? Kestrel's a hard puller. 'Tain't too late to put Jim up instead. But that would mean Kestrel carrying a stone of lead to make the weight."

Hall's voice, as he stopped Sid on his way to the weighing-room, was mighty anxious.

"I'm all right, sir—got plenty of wadding," laughed Sid, glancing down at his thickly-banded hands. "If I reckoned I might spoil Kestrel's chances I wouldn't press you to let me ride."

"I don't believe you would, boy," rejoined Hall, in a new and hearty voice. "Go on, and good luck to you!"

"There's pluck and grit," said Hall,

(Continued on page 26.)



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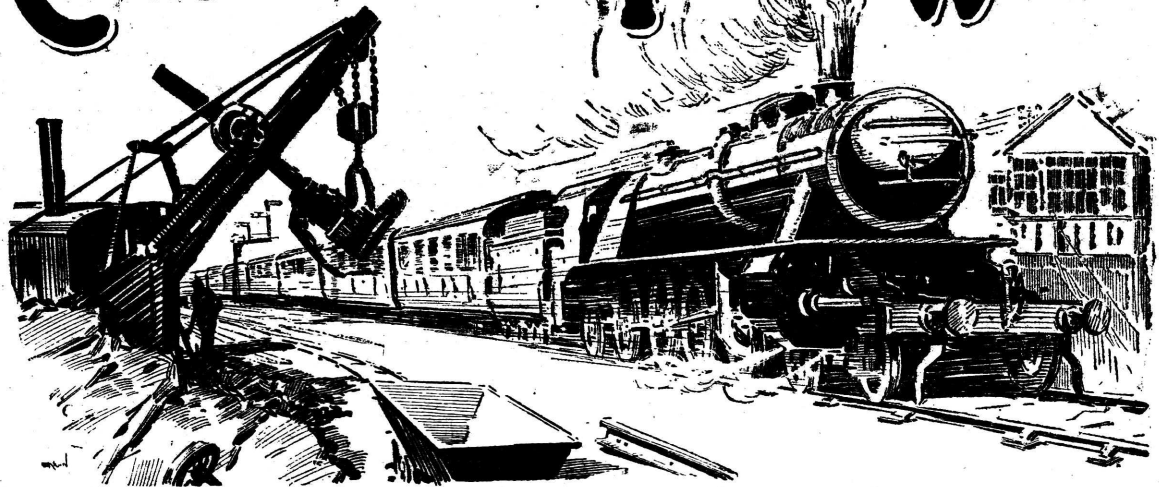
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# CHUMS OF THE IRON WAY!



## A Thrilling Yarn of Exciting Adventure on the Railroad. By ROLAND SPENCER and FRANCIS WARWICK.

### WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

**JIMMY SPEED**, a plucky and cheery young newsboy of Blackhampton.

**SIR RICHARD GRANT**, chief director of the Great Scottish and Central Railway, who has in his employ nearly all the male population of Blackhampton.

**JOHN LANGRISH**—whose heavy and determined features, square-set jaw, and steely eyes earn for him the name of "Granite"—Langrish—chief director of the Great Electric Northern, and a rival of Sir Richard Grant.

**HAROLD SOPER**, a foreman shunter on the G.S.C., and an unscrupulous rascal, working in the pay of John Langrish, and

**SAM BLUNDELL**, a fireman on the G.S.C., and as true as steel.

It was a lucky day for the cheery young newsboy, Jimmy when, at great risk to himself, he rescued Sir Richard Grant from being crushed beneath the wheels of a monster goods-train engine, for it meant the realisation of his long-cherished ambition—to get

a job in the great workshop of the G.S.C. To hear the clanging and the shouting, and to see the great steel locomotives towering around him, sent a thrill through Jimmy Speed.

His anxiety to learn brings him up against Soper, who, in the pay of Granite Langrish, is trying to breed discontent among the workers of the G.S.C. He overhears a dastardly plot to bring about a great railway disaster by manipulating the signals, and at once confides in Sam Blundell.

The two hasten to the scene of operations—the main junction signal-box—and, after a fierce fight against great odds, Jim saves the situation.

Shortly afterwards the two chums are out walking, when they find Soper again busy on Langrish's dirty work—addressing a large crowd of workmen, and endeavouring to poison their minds against the G.S.C. Sam Blundell's anger is aroused, and, forcing his way to the platform, he gains the attention of the crowd and warns them against the rascally Soper.

"What would I give to be able to look into the future," he says to Speed, on their way home—"to know how it'll all end!"

(Now read on.)

### The Engine-Shed Bully!

IT was Monday morning, and Jim gripped his teacan and packet of bread and cheese more tightly as he pushed on with the crowds towards the shrieking siren which summoned Blackhampton to its work.

It was a motley crowd that shuffled along the cobbled streets in the raw darkness of the morning—men, boys, women, and girls, for the great shops of the G.S.C. gave employment to all, from the actual construction of the locomotives and rolling stock to selling things in the canteens, manufacturing artificial limbs for the hospital, work in the tinsmiths' shops turning out oilcans and handlamps. Nearly every trade is represented in a great railway depot's workshops.

Jim was down for first shift, and glad he was of it, for Sam was on early morning duty, too. Thus, they could have the late afternoons and evenings together.

The crowd became thicker as the workers approached the bottle-neck entrance to the works. The siren still shrieked frantically, and Jim quivered with excitement as he approached the great iron gates which had just been thrown open wide to admit the toilers.

Jim knew where to go, for he had already received instructions. But it was some time before he was definitely fixed up with work. He was sent from one place to another, marvelling at all he saw—the imposing office buildings of the works, the stores, the foundry and pattern shops, the forge, plate shop, machine shops, and boiler shop.

The erecting shop, which Jim had to pass on his way to report to the foreman of a repair shop, made the youngster's

heart throb with joy. He peeped inside. There was the huge body of a mighty Pacific type loco slung up to the running bridge crane by huge chains. Great driving-wheels stood alone on rails running down the middle of the shop—a round score of them, two feet taller than the men working near by. Small leading and trailing wheels were there, too. There were locomotives with only the cabs mounted, locomotives whose erection was practically complete, and great rusty monsters in for repair, run up a side track in the great, glass-covered shed. The whir of drills had already sounded, together with the clang of riveters at work, and the roaring of huge blow-lamps.

Much as Jim wanted to linger, he had to hurry on. He drew near the small repair shop, where he was to start work. He entered the shed, spotted the foreman's glass-sided office about half-way down, and hurried up.

The timekeeper had, of course, already opened the shed, but Jim's lateness was accounted for by the fact that he had been delayed in reporting at the office near the entrance. The youngster looked round eagerly when inside the shed, where fitters and boys were busy in examination-pits and on the footplates of the few locos, mostly small tank engines, in for repair. Passing the board on which the workers had hung their numbered checks, Jim walked straight up to the office, outside which, on a slanting desk, was chained a huge book, to which fitters came and referred occasionally. Jim knocked at the door and asked for the foreman.

"Here, lad," said a stern-faced man, who was sitting on a high stool in the office checking a batch of requisition slips from the stores.

"I've come to report for duty, sir," said Jim, handing

the foreman the note which had been given to him from the last office he had been sent to.

Mr. Barr—for such was the foreman's name—took the note and read it with puckered brows.

"All right," he said. "Sign your name here—on that line. Draw overalls from the store at the end of the shed. You can begin with No. 4265, an engine in the cleaning shed t'other side of this one. You'll start with cleaning."

Jim slipped out, got his overalls, slipped into them, and made his way to a small communicating door which, he judged, led to the cleaning shed. He found that such was the case, and the clang of the repair shop at once changed to the shouting and whistling of a cleaning shed—or simply engine shed, as it is called.

No. 4265 was standing over a cleaning pit near the far end of the shed. She was a big four-coupled locomotive of the Atlantic type, and the boys were already at work on her. One connecting-rod was broken, and the broken end had pierced the boiler. The locomotive was in a terrible state. She had to be roughly cleaned before being towed into the repair shop, and part of this duty was Jim's work. But he stood perplexed for a few seconds, not knowing exactly how to start.

"Here," came an unpleasant voice from between the spokes of one of the mighty driving-wheels of the monster, "you can start with a flue brush. Jine them chaps in front o' the enging. 'Ere's a flue brush!"

A shout of laughter rang out from the half-dozen or so boys who were employed on the locomotive as a hot, black, round flue brush pricked into Jim's face, blackening him instantly.

Jim spluttered and spat out the sticky soot that had got into his mouth. Then he turned wrathfully to the fellow who had played the trick on him. He meant at first to pass off the matter as a joke, but when he saw the boy's black face he felt it was not such a joke, after all.

"I'm Bill Webber, I am, an' the cock o' the cleaners, me buck!" said the boy, a big, bony fellow with flabby cheeks and a sneering mouth. "Don't you look at me like that."

"A cat may look at a king, an' Jim Speed can look at Bill Webber!" retorted Jim, his reply instantly stopping the laughter of the other boys. "This is called 'paying my footings,' I s'pose. You know I'm new. Well—"

There was a splotch, and the hand that Bill Webber had behind him flashed forward, clotted with thick, yellow, sticky wheel grease. Jim's face was a picture, and as he spluttered and gasped and spat out the grease the laughter broke out afresh.

Burning with indignation though Jim was, he laughed with the rest. The boy felt that Webber had done the deeds with malice aforethought; but he'd have to take it all as a joke, of course. But if to-morrow—

However, Jim did not have to wait till to-morrow.

Throughout the morning Webber gave him no peace. Jim stood it well. But in the dinner-hour, when they had all stopped at a coffee-stall for a three-halfpenny cup of thin liquid called coffee by the optimistic stall-keeper, the last straw came.

Webber had begun on the burning question of the day—the Yellow Peril from Carnborough. Most of the boys who listened said nothing, though the bully was continually "hear-heard!" by a weedy, thin-faced, snake-like youth with a receding chin and weak blue eyes, named Uriah Snaith, who was Webber's admiring crony.

"If you don't believe in steam, why don't you quit, Webber?" put in Jim suddenly. He was fed-up with Webber's talk.

Bill Webber glared in surprise.

"You shut up," he said, "or I'll close your mouth wi' my fist! What I says I says—"

"Same here!" said Jim cheerfully. "And I've started on a steam railway—a fine one it is, too—and I'm going to stick to it. Steam will win, too."

Webber, furiously indignant at finding himself contradicted, clenched his fist.

"Say that agen!" he snarled.

Jim laughed.

"Consider it said again," he answered coolly, raising his coffee-cup to his lips. Then he reeled back from a terrible blow full on the mouth, the bully's great black fist smashing the cup against his teeth!

Jim, with mouth cut and bleeding, turned like a tiger towards Bill Webber. But he was held back while Webber tugged and strained in the grip of four more youngsters.

"Can't scrap 'ere!" said the coffee-stall keeper severely. "Clear off if you want to fight. And that cup—"

"Grubb's Piece!" cried one of the railway youngsters holding Jimmy. "Fight it out at Grubb's Piece!"

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One of the others moved to Jim's side. Beneath the soot of his face and hair he might have been a pleasant-looking, fair-haired fellow. His name, Jim knew, was Bob Williams.

"He'll eat you," Williams whispered to Jim. "He's a brute, is Webber. Cry off!"

"No fear!" cried Jim savagely. "I'll knock him silly for that! Where's Grubb's Piece?"

Most of the boys looked anxious, for they knew Webber. But Uriah Snaith was rubbing his hands gleefully as Jim was led across to Grubb's Piece—a cinder pitch hard by the sidings of Blackhampton Junction.

Webber grinned as he peeled off his coat and rolled up his sleeves, revealing the huge muscles of his arms.

Bill Webber clearly expected to make mincemeat of Jimmy Speed. But Jim was a fighter himself. And his blood was up as he stepped forward to face his big opponent—the enemy he had made on his very first day in the railway shops of the Great Scottish and Central!

### Hard Hitting!

THE ugly grin was still on Webber's sour, thick-featured face as he raised his fists and came savagely at Jimmy Speed.

The ring of railway youngsters held their breath. They knew only too well the sort of fellow Webber was—that he would not hesitate to smash Jim till he was senseless. That Jimmy might smash Webber they could not hope, much as most of them would have liked to see the bully downed. For Webber was a head taller than Jimmy, bigger-boned and broader, and his reach was longer. Bob Williams, watching anxiously, had only voiced the general opinion as to the result of the fight when he had tried to dissuade Jim from taking on so tough a customer as Bill Webber.

Uriah Snaith, rubbing his hands together with great glee, was the only one among the spectators who seemed to be enjoying thoroughly the prospect of the fight. A coward himself, he never tired of watching his crony "wade in" to some unfortunate youngster who had fallen foul of the bully.

Webber drove hard for Jimmy's face with his great soot-and-oil blackened fist. Jimmy ducked, and Webber followed up with his left. The blow took Jimmy on the ear and staggered him. There was a shrill snigger from Uriah Snaith.

"Bash him, Will!" he called gleefully.

"Will" chuckled, and prepared to bash Jimmy very thoroughly. But Jimmy, his blood up, was not such an easy prey as this early success had led Webber to expect. He slipped aside before the bully's attack, and there came a grunt of anger and surprise from Webber as he felt Jimmy's fist jabbed unpleasantly hard into his ribs. He hit out, rather wildly, and again Jimmy's fist crashed home—this time on Webber's Adam's apple.

Almost sick from the blow, Webber was gurgling as he fell back. There came a shout of delight from Bob Williams.

"Good for you, Speed! That's the stuff!"

Jimmy, his blood still boiling from the cowardly blow that had smashed the cup against his teeth at the coffee-stall, leapt forward, and his left flashed for Webber's chin. But the other's fist came smashing into his face, and he reeled back, blinded, his head swimming dizzily and his nose streaming with blood. But his own fist had found its mark, and Webber was not able at the moment to follow up his success.

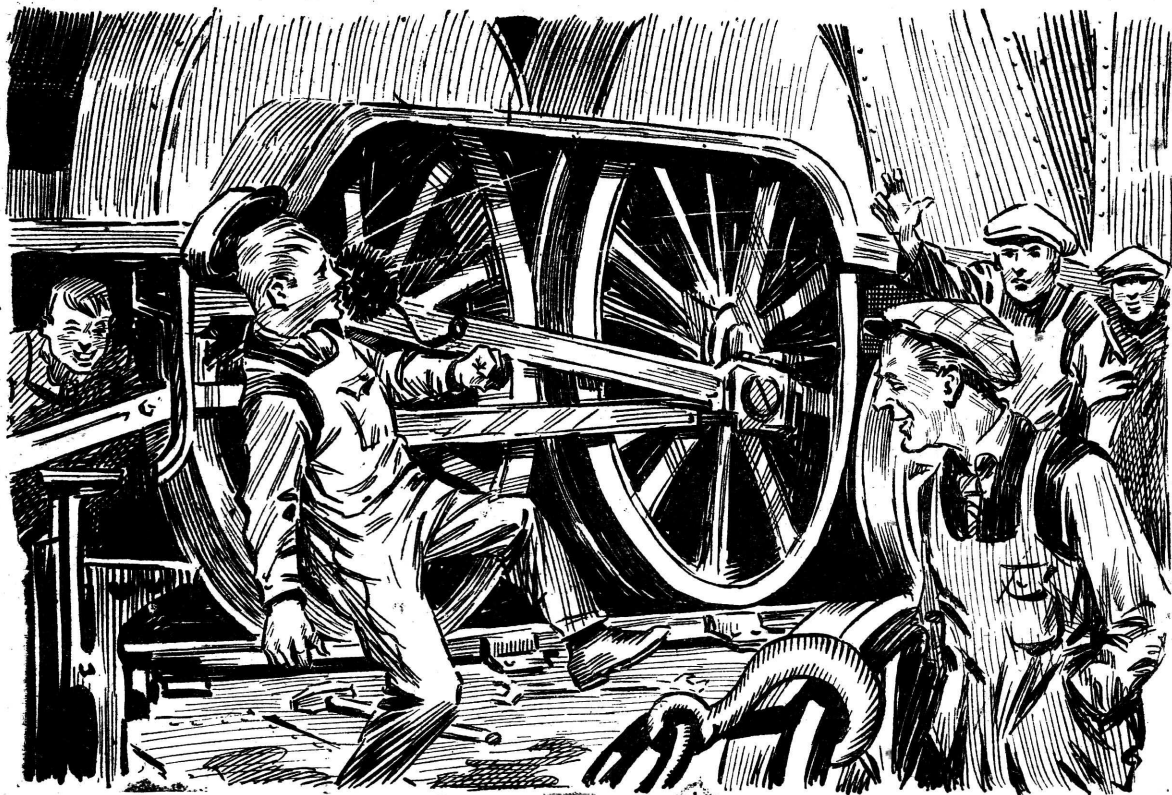
That blow in the face cooled Jimmy a good deal. Till now his temper, red-hot, had urged him on, and he had thrown science to the winds. But now he realised that he needed every ounce of science that was in him if he were to hold his own with this fellow whose punch was like the thrust of a locomotive's connecting-rod, and who had every advantage in the way of size and strength.

Not that Jimmy Speed was a weakling by any means. His strong, stocky frame was as hard as nails, muscled and wiry. He was quicker on his feet than Webber, and Jimmy knew that in his footwork and his science lay his only hope.

He waited cautiously for Webber's attack. The bully rushed in, fists smashing at Jimmy's defence. But somehow Webber found he could not hit the tight-lipped, freckled face he was growing so to hate. Jimmy, dancing nimbly from side to side, warding off the savage blows with lightning fists, seemed as impossible to hit as a ghost.

Webber's ugly temper grew to white-hot pitch. Jimmy, snatching a moment's opportunity, struck in hard for the bully's mouth, and the blood streamed from a broken lip.





"Here," came an unpleasant voice from between the spokes of one of the mighty wheels, "you can start with a flue brush!" A shout of laughter rang out from the crowd of boys looking on as a hot, black, round flue brush pricked into Jim's face, blackening him instantly.

Webber, with a howl of animal rage, forced his way forward. But he could not draw nearer to his enemy, for Jimmy was quite willing to give ground. Round and round in the excited ring of onlookers they circled, their fists flashing.

Jimmy was terribly battered by now—far more so than Webber. But he was as cool as ice, dangerously cool; whereas Webber was in such a blind paroxysm of rage that he scarcely knew what he did.

Bob Williams' face was dark. He was very afraid for Jimmy, whom he had taken a fancy to, apart from his admiration of Jimmy's plucky stand against Webber. And what Bob Williams was afraid of soon happened.

Jimmy, keeping Webber back with difficulty, heard a sudden shout of warning from Bob. Instinctively he leapt back, but not before a terrible pain had shot through his ankle as the bully's boot cracked against it.

With a cry of pain Jimmy dropped. Webber leapt forward in savage triumph, as if to kick the boy at his feet. But in a moment Bob Williams and three others had hold of Webber, dragging him back.

"You scug!" The words were hissed between Bob's tight-clenched teeth. "You dirty coward, Webber! You—"

Webber's face was still aflame with passion. But a sullen look had come into his eyes; though not in the least ashamed he realised that he had gone too far.

"Didn't mean to kick 'im!" he mumbled, wiping his hand across his bleeding mouth. "Young fool stuck his ankle out, an' o' course it got kicked! How could I 'elp it? I—"

Jimmy staggered to his feet and bent down with a white face to rub his ankle. Some of the youngsters crowded round him sympathetically. At last he straightened himself, with a wince of pain.

"All right now," he said quietly. "Come on; let him free. I'm going to hand him back his change now."

Rather reluctantly Bob and the others let go their hold of Webber.

"Look here, don't be an ass, Speed! You can't go on with that hack on the ankle!" Bob began.

But Jimmy laughed—a cold, hard laugh that rather scared Webber.

"Can't I?" was all Jim said.

And, raising his fists, he went slowly towards Webber as the onlookers drew back into a ring once more.

It was clear to everyone that Jimmy was still in pain. His face was white, and he could not keep his weight on his left leg for very long. His lightning footwork was no more. But, for all that, he drove Webber before him, and the amazed onlookers held their breath. They had expected that Webber would be able to smash Jimmy now; but somehow he didn't.

The fact was Bill Webber had lost his confidence in himself; he had lost his nerve.

Something in Jimmy's laugh, something in Jimmy's eyes fixed relentlessly upon his own; something there was that made Webber—the first time for many a day—feel afraid of someone of less than his own weight.

His guard was getting very loose, and very seldom did his wild blows reach their mark. He staggered Jimmy only once again; and then Jimmy, seeing his chance, was on him like a tiger, hitting, hitting—driving Webber before him utterly at his mercy, sending in the smashing blows one after the other, like a machine, remorseless!

And at last Webber dropped. He lay on the trampled cinders of Grubb's Piece, twisting feebly. He rolled over on to his face and lay groaning.

There was a rush of feet, and Jimmy was in the centre of a surging, excited crowd of admiring youngsters. Bob Williams, almost delirious with joy, put out an arm to support Jimmy as he swayed unsteadily, breathing hard and fast. Webber was left alone; for Uriah Snaith felt he could not pluck up courage to approach the defeated "cock o' the cleaners."

Jimmy pulled out a handkerchief and gingerly wiped his battered features. But he was grinning faintly.

"Think I'll hike back to that coffee-stall," he mumbled.

"I want a drink o' something wet!"

And, with the admiring crowd still round him, Jimmy turned his back on Webber and moved off, limping.

Uriah Snaith watched them go. Webber lay very still.

"Will!"

Snaith moved doubtfully towards his pal. His weak face was scared, and he came to an abrupt standstill as Webber rolled over on to his back, groaning, and sat up with heavy eyes.

"He's gone!" muttered Webber. "Curse 'im! But I'll get me own back! Jest see if I don't! I'll get me own back somehow!"

And there was a dangerous gleam in his those unprepossessing features as Webber staggered to his feet.

In Black Hill Ruins!

"HAVE you been arguing with a 4-6-4 loco?" demanded Sam Blundell when he flung open the door of their room and came in, staring hard at Jimmy's black eyes and swollen ear and nose.

Jimmy grinned a lop-sided grin.

"Not exactly. Fact is, I had a row with one of the chaps in the cleaning-shop. We fought it out at Grubb's Piece."

"And you got a licking?"

"Not quite, though I suppose it looks like it, with a face like this. No, I managed to lick him in the end, though he waded into me properly before I did it, as you can see for yourself! Chap called Webber—rather a brute. Only hope this'll teach him a lesson, and be the end of it."

Sam dumped his tea-can and bundle in the corner.

"Hope so, kid. Pity you've had trouble on your first day, though I dare say it'll help you to 'pay your footing,' licking this chap Webber. But you don't want rows with chaps you've got to work with. Let's hope Webber's licking'll end the matter."

Jimmy nodded. Neither he nor Sam Blundell knew Webber yet.

Next morning Jim rather wondered how Webber would greet him on his arrival at the cleaning-shed. He did not want trouble with anyone if he could help it. But he need not have worried. Webber ignored him, and Jimmy hoped that the bully had learnt his lesson.

Half-way through the shift Jim was transferred from No. 4265 to a small goods tank engine on which Bob Williams happened also to be working. Jimmy enjoyed Bob's cheery companionship, glad to be away from Webber's sullen society on No. 4265.

That first week was the most wonderful of Jimmy Speed's life up to the present. Till now he had only been able to watch longingly the locomotives he loved as they stood on sidings or thundered past him or panted by station platforms. Now he was on them, in them, all about them, making the most of every hour.

At the end of that week Jimmy had "paid his footing," and was already very popular with his workmates—excepting Webber and Uriah Snaith. He was still on cleaning work. He began to feel that he had been in the railway shops of the Great Scottish and Central all his life. Only one thing

darkened his horizon—the thought of the Yellow Peril from Carnborough that still hung over Blackhampton, a brooding menace.

During the week Sam Blundell had bought an old V-twin motor-cycle cheap from his friend Tim Parks, at Carnborough. On the Sunday, Sam not having a Sunday shift, the chums set off in high spirits for a long spin in the country to try out the new bike.

It went well despite the fact that it was a noisy, rackety old thing with brakes that one could only hope for the best with. Sam and Jim returned to their lodging in the early evening. Sam wished to spend the evening working at the drawings of his inventions in an attempt to puzzle out some of the snags that still stood in his path. At Sam's suggestion Jimmy, who knew how to drive and was never tired of speed, whether with a motor-bike or locomotive, took out the bike again for a spin on his own.

He chose the wild, rugged moorland that lay between Blackhampton and Carnborough. On those deserted roads he could let the bike all out without fear of trouble.

No one could have had a more suitable name than had Jimmy Speed—the craving for speed was in the marrow of his bones, and he satisfied the craving to the full that evening—or very nearly. For the bike was a "speed-iron," despite its mysterious inward clankings and its valve-clatter, and Jimmy's skilful fingers coaxed well over fifty miles an hour out of Sam's purchase.

It was not till dusk was setting in that Jim turned the machine's front wheel for home.

A moon, nearly full, had already risen, and although the sun had set, it was still very light when Jimmy, rounding a corner of the moorland road, passed a big open aluminium car that was travelling in the opposite direction. As he shot by Jimmy gave a sudden startled exclamation. He glanced round swiftly, but already the car had rounded the corner and was hidden. The youngster jammed on the brakes, and for a wonder the bike drew up promptly.

Jimmy put his feet on the ground, excitedly wiping the water from his eyes.

"My only aunt!" he muttered. "Hanged if one of the two chaps in that car wasn't the man whose face I saw in the signal-cabin—the chap whose muffler I pulled off in the scrap! It's one of the train-wreckers!"

(Continued on next page.)

**"THE HEAD LAD'S REVENGE!"**

(Continued from page 22.)

turning to a tall, dark man who had just joined him, and nodding towards the receding Sid. "That boy's the best lad I've got and the most reliable. You're lucky to have him riding for you, Mr. Gartside."

"From all you've told me, Hall," replied Kestrel's owner, "I'm inclined to agree with you."

Owner and trainer then made their way down to the paddock.

The day was fine and bright, but a biting wind swept the Newmarket course. It was unpleasant for the crowds in the packed stands, and fairly nipped the jockeys in their silk racing jackets.

A humming sound went up from the great throng, all but drowning the raucous shouts of the bookmakers.

Suddenly there went up a deafening cheer. The horses for the Cesarewitch were just going down to the post. Leading them was a slashing chestnut with a gleaming coat but a badly-singed tail; and the hands of his boy jockey were swathed in white bandages.

The story of Sid's fight with the flames had somehow got into the papers, and the crowd roared their enthusiasm. But the origin of the fire had been kept a dead secret, Hall not having wanted all his dealings with Sullivan to come to light.

The horses were clustering down by

the starting gate now, the jackets of their jockeys making a vivid picture of shifting colour.

A hush fell over the grandstand, spreading to the long lanes of spectators pressing at the rails. One of the greatest of the classic races was about to start. Countless eyes and glasses were focused in one direction.

"They're off!"

As the tapes flew up and the horses came forward with a rush, a muffled roar announced that the race had begun.

At first all that could be seen was a confused mass. It grew rapidly nearer and more distinct, resolving into a clump of bobbing horses.

Hammering a wild tattoo, they swept round the bend. A golden chestnut was leading by a length.

"Suffering Mike!" gasped Hall. "Kestrel's made away with Sid. He'll never be able to keep that pace up. There, he's dropping back already. The bay's catching him. By heck, I wished I'd put another lad up, after all. Sid can't hold his mount with those burnt hands of his!"

Certainly Kestrel, who had made the running from the start, seemed to be dropping back. But it was not that he had shot his bolt as Hall supposed. It was that Sid, although fierce pains shot up his arms, had taken a pull, exerting all his strength.

Now Kestrel and Ringmaster—the latter a big bay—were flashing up the straight neck and neck. It had become a two horse affair. The rest of the horses, bunched together, were labouring fully three lengths behind the leaders.

Sid could almost feel the mad pounding of Kestrel's heart, as he held his hands low on each side of his neck. He could feel the galvanic play of mighty muscles. The stands seemed to rush to meet him. The cheering sounded like the thunder of angry seas.

Now the bay forged slightly ahead. Sid called on Kestrel for another burst of his marvellous speed. Inch by inch the chestnut crept up. Again they were running neck and neck.

Then Kestrel got his lean head in front. He went on—to win by half a length. Thunderous cheering rolled up and down the course.

"Done it!" cried Hall, swinging round on Kestrel's owner. "Best race I've seen that boy ride!"

Then, as he pushed through the press towards the paddock, he added to himself:

"Now I'll be quit of Sullivan—and Sullivan's broke! Thank Mike I had a straight lad like Sid about! I've hardly got another that Irish bouncer couldn't have squared!"

That night the battered Foster sought out Sullivan in his London office to beg for a job. He didn't get one.

Sullivan himself was busy packing for a hasty trip to the continent.

THE END.

(Look out for another thrilling yarn of Sid Morris soon. Meanwhile make sure you read the double-length story of Tom Merry & Co., in next week's GEM.)

In another moment Jim had turned the motor-bike, and was going all out in pursuit of the aluminium car.

He was certain that he was not mistaken—he remembered only too well that lean, thick-lipped face. And he gave a shout, as the motor-cycle roared round the bend, to find the car ahead still in view.

But though the bike was a "goer" once it got going, acceleration was not its strong point. Once more Jim lost sight of the car ahead, which was itself travelling very swiftly. But it came into view again, and car and motor-bike fairly flew along the dim moorland roads.

On and on they raced, through dark groups of firs, past huge piles of rock that rose rugged to the sky. The daylight was failing swiftly, the moon growing brighter.

"Where's he off to?" wondered Jimmy. "Lagthorpe—Carnborough? Looks like it. But I'll follow him if he takes me to Jericho! He's an attempted murderer!"

But Jim's quarry was not making for Carnborough. At the first cross-roads the car swung aside into the road leading to Black Hill—the great rugged shoulder of land that rose towering to the east of Blackhampton—the hill pierced by Blackhampton Long Tunnel.

Soon the road took an upward turn, as it would gradually up the great hillside. It was getting quite dark now, but Jimmy had no time to stop to light his acetylene-lamp. The car ahead, he noticed, had not switched on its lights.

"That looks fishy to me!" he told himself as he flew on through the pale moonlight, the wind streaming past his ears in an icy torrent.

And then Jim Speed cut off suddenly and jammed on the doubtful brakes, for he could see that far ahead on the open, straight stretch of road into which he turned the aluminium car had come to a halt. A man jumped down on to the road and disappeared into the shadow of a group of firs. A moment later the car, whose engine had not stopped, turned slowly. Two minutes afterwards Jimmy, from the shelter of the rock by the roadside behind which he had promptly run the bike, saw the car go past him down the hill. There was only one man on board. It was not the man he was after.

"What's the giddy game?" muttered Jimmy. And then, doggedly, "Well, here's to find out!"

He was afraid that if he started up the motor-bike again the exhaust would be heard. So, leaving it in the shadow of the rock, he made his way swiftly but cautiously towards the distant group of trees into which his man had vanished.

It was by a stroke of good luck that he picked up the trail again. From the trees he saw a dark figure pass suddenly through a patch of moonlight a quarter of a mile away, following a rough track over the moor. Jimmy was following in a moment, breathing quickly, excitedly.

His quarry evidently had no suspicion that he was being followed. But Jimmy was cautious, for all that. And at last he saw where the man was making for.

"Black Hill Ruins!" muttered Jimmy in bewilderment.

On the side of the hill away from Blackhampton were the crumbling ruins of an old abbey. Rounding a shoulder of the hill Jimmy saw them, dark and skeleton-like, against the sky. And into the ruins his man hurried!

Utterly mystified, Jimmy cautiously drew near. The sound of low voices came to his ears at last, guiding him.

"We're gettin' on very nice, Cridland." Soper's oily voice came only indistinctly to Jimmy's ears. "Langrish—Granite Langrish they can well call him—"

The voice trailed off into an indistinguishable murmur. "I've not told you all I know, Soper." It was Cridland's voice. "Langrish don't know I know; if he did I shouldn't be safe from him, I tell you! I— But if he tries any games with me, Mr. Granite Langrish'll get a nasty knock to know that I've got him in the hollow of my hand—if I care to use my knowledge, Soper! But I daren't—unless I must! Besides, it ain't hardly to my benefit to, is it? Not unless he tries some crooked game on me. I'd let him know then! It'd scare him stiff to know I knew!"

Cridland's harsh laugh sounded again. Then Soper's voice, a low, excited murmur.

"What do I know, Soper? Ah, I ain't telling anyone that! It ain't safe knowledge for any man! But I'll tell you this about it—Mr. Granite Bloomin' Langrish ain't all he seems! There's a mystery about who Langrish is, if you only knew it—an' I'm the only man that knows his secret! Oh, I could tell you something rum about him, Soper! But I tell you I daren't—"

The voice died away. The two men were moving farther from him, leaving Jimmy's eyes gleaming wildly with excitement.

**(What was this secret about Langrish? And why had these men—both working, as Jimmy knew, for Langrish and the Great Electric Northern against the Great Scottish and Central—met in the lonely ruins of Black Hill? Be sure you don't miss one instalment of this powerful serial. Tell all your friends to begin it now. They are bound to enjoy it!)**

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# A BIG TUCK HAMPER FOR EVERY JOKE THIS WEEK!

## "MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"

(Continued from Page 2.)

changed hands. "By the way, what is your line of business?" asked the motorist, suddenly suspicious at the sight of certain cans in the covered cart. "Oh, I take petrol round to the country gentry, sir!" replied the man, with a knowing smile.—Sent in by L. D. Darrell, Hollywood, Henley-on-Thames.

### WHY THEY SCRATCHED!

It was the Reds' first match, and they were billed to meet the famous Blue Star team. Admission to the match was twopence. Just before the match was due to commence, the captain of the home team appeared with a worried look, and feverishly counted the spectators. He found they consisted of a postman, a soldier, a chimney-sweep, a navvy, and four boys. Both teams took the field, but as no other spectators had arrived, the home captain exclaimed in

despair: "There won't be any match to-day. We scratch." "What's the good of talking like that?" cried the opposing skipper. "But we'll have to," said the other. "You see, we ain't took enough money to get the ball out of pawn!"—Sent in by A. Yelland, 69, Broadfield Road, Sheffield.

### A MISUNDERSTANDING!

Young Steve, unable to get a job, joined the Navy. As in civil life, his slackness threatened to get him into hot water. Several times the ship's corporal, whose duty it is to see that the hands turn out and that the hammocks are cleared off the mess decks, cautioned him about it. At last, after one very bad offence, he took Steve before the commander. "This is a serious case," said the officer, when he had the facts. "What have you to say?" "I shall say nothing at all about it if you don't," replied Steve, to everybody's surprise. "Have you ever been up before me since you joined the ship?" asked the officer. "Dunno, sir," answered Steve. "What time do you mostly get up?"—Sent in by J. B. McHugh, 6, Perth Street, Belfast.

### SAVED ON THE POST!

"And what was the most exciting match you ever played in?" asked the inquisitive man of the great footballer. "It was the cup final," answered the great soccer player. "I was playing centre. The score was two all, with two minutes more to play. I had the ball at my feet, and was tearing through the defence when I saw the referee looking at his watch. Shoot, man! Shoot man! the crowd was roaring. I shot, and a great howl went up from the crowd, while the referee's whistle sounded shrilly." "But did you score?" asked the questioner. "Score!" said the footballer scornfully. "Why, it took me ten minutes to get the bed-rail from between my toes! I was dreaming!"—Sent in by A. Tucker, Hayford, St. Ives, Liskeard.

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