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The GEM 2^D



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ST JIM'S ON

TOM MERRY & CO. AT THE WAXWORKS!
No animals are allowed—but Gussy certainly makes an ass of himself!

CHAPTER 1.

Something Like Good News!

MERRY!" Mr. Railton looked into the Common-room in the School House at St. Jim's. It was evening—a dark winter's evening—and most of the juniors were there. Tom Merry was deeply engrossed in a game of chess with Monty Lowther, and he did not hear his name called.

"Merry!"

"Check!" said Tom Merry.

Manners came over and gave the hero of the Shell a dig in the ribs.

"Can't you hear Mr. Railton calling you, fathead?"

Tom Merry looked up quickly.

"Did you call me, sir?"

"Yes," said Mr. Railton. "You are wanted in Dr. Holmes' study, Merry. You will kindly go there at once."

And the Housemaster walked away.

"Oh, rats!" groaned Tom Merry. "What is it this time, I wonder? You can take my place here, Manners. I don't suppose I shall be much inclined for chess after the Head has finished."

He vacated the chair at the chess table, and Manners dropped into it.

"What do you think it is, Tom?" asked Monty Lowther. "I can't call to mind any special bit of trouble to account for this sudden and pressing invitation to the Head's study."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Blessed if I know! But the Head doesn't want to see me for nothing. It's rotten—on this special date, too!"

"What is there special about the date?" asked Jack Blake of Study No. 6. "Is it anybody's birthday?"

"Oh, no! It's Tuesday, and to-morrow's Wednesday—"

"Go hon!"

"What I mean is, to-morrow is an anniversary in the Merry family," explained Tom. "It's the anniversary of the date when my uncle won the Victoria Cross in Afghanistan, and we always keep it as a holiday. I was thinking of explaining that to the Head and putting it to him, as an old sport, whether he ought not to give me the whole day—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I can see him doing it!"

"I don't see why he shouldn't. I always had a day out on that anniversary before I came to St. Jim's, and why shouldn't I keep up an old custom—especially such a ripping one?" said Tom Merry. "But this knocks it on the head. After he has got through with the lecture, or the licking, whichever I'm going to have, it would look like a nerve to ask him for a whole holiday to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy it would strike him rather in that light."

"Well, it's rotten! That's all I've got to say!"

And Tom Merry, looking as glum as ever he could look—which wasn't very glum, after all, for Tom's was a sunny nature—marched out of the room to pay the undesired visit to the sanctum of the Head of St. Jim's.

"Hard cheese!" said Blake, addressing Lowther and Manners.

But Lowther and Manners were deep in a chess problem, and they did not hear or heed.

"Hard cheese!" repeated Blake, turning towards his chums of Study No. 6—Herries and D'Arcy. "Of course, it would have been like Tom Merry's cheek to ask for a whole holiday to-morrow, when the rest of the school has only a half."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthure Augustus D'Arcy. "But I have observed that that boundah, Mewwy, has cheek enough for anythin', don't you know!?"



THE SPREE!

by
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**

"Right!" said Herries. "Why, if he had a whole holiday, of course we should have the same. We couldn't be put in the shade by a boulder in the Shell!"

"Certainly not!" agreed Blake. "What does his old anniversary matter? Why, I've got lots of anniversaries in my life. There's the anniversary of the day when my governor—"

"Had the brokers in?" suggested Gore of the Shell. "Sent me to St. Jim's," said Blake, taking no notice of Gore. "Then there's the anniversary of the day when we collared Figgins & Co.'s concert-party, though that hasn't come round yet—"

"Yaas, wathah! And there's the anniversary of the day when I purchased my first fancy waistcoat—"

"Ha, ha, ha! There's lots of anniversaries, and I could make up a list of three hundred and sixty-five, if we could have a holiday on each," said Blake. "That would suit me. Still, as I was saying, it's hard cheese on Merry to get a licking on the eve of his anniversary, especially when his uncle nabbed the Victoria Cross."

"Picked it up at a sale, I expect," jeered Gore.

"You'd better say that to Tom Merry," said Blake. "It's about time you had a licking, Gore. You're a pig!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Meanwhile, Tom Merry was making his way to the Head's study.

He knocked at the door, and the deep voice of the Head bade him enter.

Dr. Holmes adjusted his pince-nez and looked at Tom Merry as he came in. There was a telegram lying on the writing-table before the doctor, and Tom noticed it and felt more cheerful. It was possible that it was not a licking he had been called into the Head's study for, after all.

"Merry," said Dr. Holmes, "I have—er—received a wire from your former governess and guardian, Miss Priscilla Fawcett."

Tom Merry looked a little anxious.

"I hope there is nothing wrong at home, sir?"

The Head smiled.

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind!" he replied. "Nothing wrong, I am glad to say. This telegram from Miss Fawcett relates to—er—to a certain anniversary which appears to be kept up in your family."

Tom Merry's face brightened.

He had often owed much to the thoughtfulness of Miss Priscilla Fawcett. But that she should have come to the rescue in this particular way was really ripping.

"Yes, sir. To-morrow's the anniversary of the day when General Merry won the Victoria Cross. He was only a lieutenant then. We have always kept up that date as a holiday."

"So Miss Fawcett explained," said Dr. Holmes graciously. "Now, Merry, it would be impossible for me under ordinary circumstances to grant you a holiday which was not shared by the whole school, but upon such a peculiar occasion—"

"Oh, thank you, sir—"

"One moment! I have inquired of your Form master, and he tells me that your progress with your studies is so very satisfactory that the holiday could safely be granted. I was very pleased to hear this, of course."

"It was very kind of Mr. Linton, sir."

"Mr. Linton always does you justice, Merry, though I believe you have sometimes regarded him as a somewhat strict Form master. Under the circumstances, I have no hesitation in acceding to Miss Fawcett's somewhat pressing request and granting you a whole holiday to-morrow instead of the usual half-holiday."

"Thank you, sir!" said Tom Merry gratefully. "I shall not forget your kindness, sir."

And then the hero of the Shell hesitated.

"Well, Merry," said the Head kindly, "you have something to say to me?"

"Ye-e-es, sir. Could I—would you think it a check—I mean, a nerve—that is to say, presumptuous, if I ask you to—to—"

Tom coloured and paused.

"You may speak out, Merry," said the Head, smiling, "especially as I think I can guess what is coming."

Thus encouraged, Tom Merry went on with more confidence.

"It's—it's like this, sir. If you could let Lowther and Manners have the holiday, too, it would be ripping, and—and—"

"I understand, Merry. And I have already thought of that, and spoken to Mr. Linton on the subject. Manners and Lowther have shown exemplary conduct lately, and as it is a very special occasion, I shall grant them leave at the same time with you."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Tom Merry was beaming now. "You are very kind, sir."

"Not at all. I am glad that your conduct, Merry, has enabled me to gratify you and Miss Fawcett in this little matter."

And the Head turned to his writing-table again; and Tom Merry left the study. He went back to the School House Common-room at a speed which left a breeze behind him in the passages, looking more like a fast forward making for the enemy's goal than anything else.

He burst into the Common-room like a whirlwind, and rushed upon his chums, who were still deep in their game of chess. He grasped them both at the same time, and dragged them off their chairs, and waltzed them round the room. The chess-table went over with a crash, and the pieces were scattered far and wide, and that was a sudden finish to that particular game of chess.

Manners and Lowther gave a simultaneous shout.

"You howling lunatic!"

"You gibbering maniac!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Tom Merry. "Hear me smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

He waltzed the helpless juniors round and round till they tore themselves loose, and hurled themselves upon him in wrath.

They seized him and pinned him against the wall, with ruffled hair and torn collar, and glared at him.

"Now," said Monty Lowther, "explain yourself, before we jam your head against the wall!"

"What's the matter?" said Manners. "You've busted up our game of chess, and carried on like a lunatic generally. What's the matter? Have you anything to say before sentence is passed on you?"

"Yes. Ha, ha, ha! The Head—"

"Blow the Head! What the—"

"I tell you—"

"What do you mean by—"

"The Head—"

"Jam his napper against the wall, Lowther, as he won't explain."

Biff!

Tom Merry's head and the wall met; and Tom gave a yell.

"Now will you explain?" demanded Lowther severely.

"Ain't I trying to explain?" howled Tom Merry. "I tell you the Head sent for me to tell me I was to have a whole holiday to-morrow—"

"Oh, I see! But—"

"And you two are to have the same."

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

They released him. Tom rubbed the back of his head. Then the three joined hands and executed an impromptu war-dance. They cared nothing for the eyes upon them. The Terrible Three never did.

"Well, my hat!" said Gore. "That's what I call favouritism! Fancy those three rotters having a whole holiday, and us being left out of it!"

"Rotten!" said Mellish. "Rank favouritism!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Blake warmly. "It's disgusting to

he's you two snarling! Why can't you let a chap alone? Those three are pretty cheeky. And they have an idiotic idea in their heads that the Shell is a cut over the Fourth Form. But they're three of the best, all the same, and worth a bushel of you two!"

"Yaas, wathah! I weally think Goah and Mellish would do bettah to banish the feelin' of envy, hatwed, and unchawitableness frowm their bweasts," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Why shouldn't Tom Mowwy be allowed to keep up his beastlay anniversawvy?"

"Right-ho!" said Herries. "Why not? Let him have it without a lot of snapping. And it's only natural his chums should have it along with him."

"That's all very well," said Gore. "But—"

"Rats! You shut up! You're a pig—"

"I tell you—"

"Oh, wing off!" said Arthur Augustus. "You make me tiahed, Goah—not to say weally exhausted. Pway dwy up!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 walked over to the Terrible Three and congratulated them.

"Good for you!" Blake said. "I hope you have a ripping time!"

"Thanks!" said Tom Merry. "We shall! We're going to make a day out of it—leave St. Jim's first thing in the morning."

"And have a day in town," said Lowther.

"And explore London," said Manners. "What-ho!"

"Jolly!" said Blake cordially. "You'll go up from Rylcombe in the first train, I suppose?"

"That's it; at half-past eight in the morning."

"Good! Hope you'll have a ripping time!"

But Blake's brow was very thoughtful as he signed to his chums to follow him, and left the Common-room. They went to Study No. 6, their own quarters, and Blake carefully closed the door.

"Of course," he remarked, "you two know what we're going to do?"

"Yaas, wathah! It's simplay impos for us to be left behind when the Tewwible Thwee are goin' to have a day out in town."

"Right!" said Herries emphatically. "Of course, it was right to sit on Gore for his caddish grumbling. But it's a different matter with us."

"Exactly!" said Blake, with a nod. "If the Terrible Three put us in the shade, it would be a blow at the prestige of Study No. 6. We've simply got to go."

"Yaas But I suppose it would be no good askin' the Head for permish?"

Blake laughed at the idea.

"Not much. We shall have to take French leave; and if there's a row afterwards, we shall have to face the music. I suppose you're game?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We needn't say a word to a soul, but just skip out of the gates after breakfast, and bolt. We shan't be able to carry any bags or anything; but we happen to have plenty of tin just now, and—"

"Yaas, wathah! I have the fivah my governah sent me, and—"

"And I have seventeen bob. We shall be all right. We've got to catch the same train as Tom Merry in Rylcombe."

"It is weally a wippin' opportunity," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "You see, I can nevah get weal satisfaction in my clothes without an occasional visit to the centah of fashion—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Now's your chance, Gussy—"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have a great deal of shoppin' to do in Bond Street, you know. It is weally fortunat that I am in funds, though, of course, I can tell the shopkeepers to send in their beastlay bills to my governah. Yaas, I weally think we shall have a wippin' time in town, deah boys."

And the chums of the Fourth fell to laying plans, which was exactly what the Terrible Three were doing in their study at the same time.

CHAPTER 2.

Catching the Train!

TOM MERRY jumped out of bed cheerfully the following morning, and proceeded to pull the bedclothes off Manners and Lowther.

The chums of the Shell yawned and got out of bed shivering in the cold of the winter morning.

"It's going to be fine, that's one comfort," said Tom Merry, looking out of the window. "It's jolly cold, but clear as anything!"

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"Yes, here," said Monty Lowther; "but we may find it thick enough in town."

"Never mind that. After all, there is a lot of fun in going about in a fog."

"Especially if you get lost in it, or run over, or—"

"Oh, rats! Don't croak, but get into your things, old chap!"

The Terrible Three were first down of the Shell. They were all eagerness to be off, but they did not confide their intention to anyone, excepting Study No. 6. The Head, naturally, imagined that the holiday would be spent rather nearer St. Jim's than London, and they did not want to enlighten him. It would be time enough to reveal the facts after they had come home at night.

"The Head might be anxious about us, you see," Tom Merry said considerably. "He might think we weren't able to take care of ourselves, which would be—"

"Rot!" said Monty Lowther.

"Yes; but I mean it would be awkward, for he mightn't let us go."

"Then we should have to cut it."

"Couldn't be did, old chap! After he's been so kind as to give us the holiday, it would be ungrateful. But if he doesn't know anything about it till we come back—"

"Then he can't object—"

"Exactly; and that will save trouble in the family."

So the chums of the Shell were reticent.

After breakfast they left the dining-hall, and a few belongings were crammed into a bag. Then they hurried down to the gates. In the quadrangle they met Figgins & Co., the chums of the New House. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn stared at them, amazed to see the three in overcoats and Tom Merry carrying a travelling-bag.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Figgins. "Whither bound?"

"Oh, just going for a little run up to town, you know!" said Tom Merry carelessly.

"If you're trying to pull my leg, Tom Merry—"

"But I'm not, Figgy. I wouldn't pull either of your legs for anything. They're long enough already!" said Tom Merry, with a glance at Figgins' extremely lanky legs. "You see—"

"Oh, don't rot! Are you really going up to town?"

"Certainly. Don't you see me in my coat and behold my bag? What more do you want? We're off to catch the eight-thirty at Rylcombe."

"But what's the game? Why aren't you going to have lessons to-day?"

"It's the anniversary of the day my uncle got the Victoria Cross—"

"My dear chap," said Kerr, "a good many 'uncles' have got the Victoria Cross, but they don't lend much on it!"

"I tell you my uncle got the Victoria Cross for saving a gun in Afghanistan, and we keep up the date in the family. The Head has looked at the matter in a sensible light, like the jolly old sport he is; and he's given Lowther and Manners leave as well as myself. So we're off!"

And the Terrible Three walked on, with an extremely important air.

Figgins stared after them.

"My hat!" he said. "So they're off! I've half a mind to take French leave and follow!"

"Good wheeze!" said Fatty Wynn. "They're sure to have some ripping feeds in town, and we could join them, and they would have to stand treat!"

Figgins snorted.

"Oh, rats! If you don't leave off talking about grub, Fatty Wynn, you'll make me hungry! Hallo, here come those kids from Study No. 6 in the rotten School House!"

Blake, Herries, and D'Arcy were coming towards the gates at a run.

They had their coats on, and Blake and Herries were in caps, but D'Arcy was sporting a handsome silk topper in honour of the occasion. The swell of the School House looked really imposing in his elegantly cut coat, shining topper, fancy tie, natty spats, and his eyeglass.

"My Aunt Sempronia!" ejaculated Figgins. "Where are you kids off to, and what is Gussy looking so killing for? Is he in love again?"

D'Arcy turned red.

"Weally, Figgins, I wish you would not allude to that mattah!" he said, with a great deal of dignity. "You wecall a bittah wecollection in my mind—"

"Didn't know you had one!"

"What, a bittah wecollection—"

"No; a mind," said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Come on!" shouted Blake. "We shall be late!"

"Yaas, wathah! I should thwash you for that wemark, Figgins, but I am in a huwvy to catch a twain!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I breathe again!" said Figgins. "But, I say, Blake, where are you going?"

"Oh, up to town, you know, to see how things are going on!" said Blake.

"Has the Head given you a holiday, as well as Tom Merry?"

"No; we've given ourselves one. Come along—we shall have to run!"

"Yaas, wathah! Buck up, deah boys, and wun like anything!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 rushed on.

"Ere, where are you goin'?" shouted Taggles, the porter, as they darted through the ancient gateway of St. Jim's.

"Come back 'ere!"

Arthur Augustus turned round.

"I wegwet that it is imposs, Taggles. You see——"

"Come along!" howled Blake, catching him by the arm and rushing him along. "Do you want to lose the train?"

"I was only explainin' to Taggles——"

"Blow Taggles! Get a move on!"

dodge chapel and get our things and catch the train at Rylcomb if we hurry."

"Good wheeze! Come on!"

And the chums of the New House tore off to carry out the idea. Meanwhile, the Terrible Three were striding manfully along Rylcombe Lane to the station, unconscious of pursuit.

They reached the station three minutes before the train was due, and Tom Merry had time to stop at the tuckshop and lay in a hamper. With great forethought he foresaw that they would be hungry in the train, for it was a long run to London.

The chums found a carriage to themselves, and secured their seats, and the bag and the hamper were deposited on the racks.

"Good time!" said Tom Merry, with satisfaction. "Do you know, I half wish those bounders in Study No. 6 were coming along. Of course, I couldn't ask the Head."



BIFF! As the ruffian came at D'Arcy, Arthur Augustus let out a terrific drive which caught the man full between the eyes and sent him flying!

"I am weally wunnin' as fast as I am able to wun, Blake, and I weally wish that you would not gwasp my arm like that! You are cwumplin' my coat!"

"I'll crumple your neck if you don't buck up!" said Blake.

Figgins & Co. looked after them from the gate. Figgins turned to the Co. with a gleam in his eye.

"Are we going to be left out of this?" he demanded. "Is the New House to take a back seat in this way? Is the School House going to take all the fun, and are we going to stand it? Are we going to take it lying down?"

"No," said Kerr; "not by long chalks!"

"Rather not!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically. "It would be infra dig——"

"You'll be in for a dig if you start spouting Latin to me!" said Figgins. "But, I say, we've got to show that we can play up to the School House every time. Tom Merry has gone off with the permission of the Head, and Blake has gone off without it. Now we're going off, too, like——"

"Like fireworks!" suggested Kerr.

"Like Blake," said Figgins. "Are you ready? We can

"It would have been rather thick," agreed Monty Lowther. "The Head couldn't give the whole school a holiday because your uncle pawned his Victoria Cross that time——"

"Eh?" said Tom Merry, looking up.

"My mistake," said Lowther blandly. "Now we're off!" The engine was puffing. There was a sudden yell on the platform:

"Stand back there!"

"Rats!" came a gasping voice in reply.

Three breathless figures came bolting along the platform, to the nearest carriage, which happened to be the one the Terrible Three were sitting in. The door was torn open, and Blake plunged headlong in. He sprawled upon Tom Merry and dragged him to the floor; and after him came Herries, who fell over them. Then D'Arcy jumped into the carriage as the train was starting, and went sprawling over the heap. The guard slammed the door, and the train was off.

"Ow!" gasped Tom Merry. "Get off my neck!"

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I weally think it is most inconsiderate of you to fall down and cause me to fall upon you," said Arthur Augustus, picking himself up. "I have quite hurt my knee, jammin' it in the small of your back, Hewwies."

Herries, as he had had all the wind knocked out of him, could only gasp in reply.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Lwther, looking out of the window, "My hat! Look there!"

The exclamation drew general attention to the platform. The juniors crammed the windows, looking out. The train was gathering speed, but as they looked out they caught a last glimpse of the platform of Rylcombe Station and three figures standing there, staring in dismay after the train.

"Figgins & Co.!" shouted Manners.

Tom Merry waved his cap out of the window. The platform vanished from sight, and Figgins & Co. disappeared. The juniors sorted themselves out.

"Well, we're here," said Blake, looking round. "It was a near thing."

"And we're jolly glad to see you!" said Tom Merry heartily. "Figgins & Co. had the same idea, but they've slipped up on it. Hallo! What's the matter with Gussy?"

"Where's my toppah?"

D'Arcy's hat had fallen off in his fall and disappeared from sight. The swell of St. Jim's was looking round for it anxiously.

"Blow your old topper!" said Blake. "You——"

"It wasn't an old toppah, Blake. It was a new toppah, with the latest thing in curly bwims——"

"Well, blow your new toppah, then! Why couldn't you come in a cap like the rest of us?"

"Because I'm not a commonplace boundah like the west of you!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I regard it as a duty to uphold the dignity and honah of the coll, and on a twip to town like this it is absolutely essential to weah somethin' decent! Pway give me my toppah! Where has the beastlay thing got to?"

"Here it is," said Herries, fishing it out from under a seat. "It's a bit more curly than it was though."

D'Arcy gave a wail of anguish. The silk hat had been sat on in the confusion, and had rolled under the seat—a mere wreck, bearing a closer resemblance to a concertina than to a hat.

"Oh, my hat! My new toppah!"

"Oh, you can straighten it out," said Blake, "or you can chuck it out of the window and buy a cap in town!"

"I wefuse to buy a cap. I wefuse to weah anythin' on this twip but a toppah. As soon as we weach town, deah boys, we must do some shoppin', and I will get a new toppah!"

"My dear kid, you shall have half a dozen new toppers if you like," said Tom Merry, "and wear 'em one on top of another, like an old-clothes man."

"I regard that remark as fwiwolous, Tom Mewwy."

"And I regard you as an ass, Adolphus. But dry up about the hat, and let's open the hamper. I'm getting hungry already."

The hamper was duly opened, and the juniors sampled its contents with much satisfaction as the train rushed on through the wintry landscape.

CHAPTER 3.

In Town!

"DEAH me!" said Arthur Augustus, in amazement, as the train drew to a stop. "What is that chap saying, you know?"

"Clpmjung!" shouted the porter.

Tom Merry rose from his seat.

"Get out here."

"But what station is it, deah boy?"

"Clpmjung!" yelled the porter.

"He must be talking in Esperanto," said D'Arcy, as he stepped from the carriage. "I say, my good fellow, come here, will you?"

The porter looked at him, and seeing how exceedingly well-dressed the swell of St. Jim's was, scented a tip and came.

D'Arcy screwed his glass into his right eye and stared at the man.

"I say, you know, what's the name of this beastly station, you know?"

"Clpmjung," said the porter promptly.

"Yaas, it's Espewanto right enough," said D'Arcy. "I started learnin' Espewanto once, you know, and it sounded just like that. Mi eklernis Esperanton laste jaro," he said

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to the porter, in that most modern of languages, with a beaming smile.

The porter gasped.

"Beg pardon, sir! I don't quite catch on, sir!"

"I said I started learnin' Espewanto last year," said D'Arcy.

The porter looked as if he thought he had to deal with a lunatic. The St. Jim's juniors, crowding out of the carriage, were grinning hugely.

"Yessir," said the porter feebly.

"Do you know any more besides that word?" went on D'Arcy. "Isn't it extremely curious, deah boys, that they should shout out the name of the stations in Espewanto?"

"Oh, you owl!" gasped Blake. "That's porter-language he was speaking; it means 'Clapham Junction.' Porters always pronounce Clapham Junction like that."

"My word!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "I see. You surpris me, Blake! Then he was not weally spcakin' Espewanto at all?"

"Of course he wasn't, fathead!"

"I object to bein' called a fathead!"

"Oh, come along!" grunted Blake.

The porter was turning away with rather a glowering face, and was already shouting "Clpmjung!" for the benefit of the other passengers, when Tom Merry, who had been laughing too much to interfere before, tapped him on the shoulder.

"Take this bag and get me a taxi," he said.

The porter touched his cap, his wrath vanishing in an instant.

"Yes, sir."

And the six juniors followed the porter through the mazes of Clapham Junction.

"It'll be a bit of a squeeze in a taxi," said Tom Merry.

"We might put Gussy on the roof, of course, with the bag——"

"I uttally wefuse to be put on the woof with the bag!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Then we'll find room inside somehow. Thanks, my man. Tumble in, chaps! I say, Gussy, that's thoughtless of you!"

"What is thoughtless of me, Tom Mewwy?"

"You've forgotten to give the porter a shilling."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Now, don't keep him waiting; he's a busy man, and a director of the line may drop down on him any moment."

D'Arcy gave the porter a shilling, and that individual grinned and touched his cap and retired. The boys crowded into the taxi somehow, and the driver, who saw that he would have a good fare, was all smiles.

"Let me see," said Tom Merry, standing by the open door.

"We've saved time by a feed in the train, and we can start sightseeing at once."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Where shall we go first, kids?"

"I should gweately pwefer Buckingham Palace——"

"I dare say you would, but I forgot to wire that we were coming, so they won't expect us there," said Tom Merry gravely. "Suppose we make it the Tower of London?"

"Yaas, wathah. But that is a feahful long way ffrom here, isn't it?"

"Less than a hundred miles, I believe," Tom Merry picked up the speaking-tube and spoke through it. "I say, driver, do you think this bus could get as far as the Tower of London without conking out?"

The taximan conked.

"Yessir, it'll cost you about ten bob!"

"Think that's all right, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Get your ten bob ready, then," said Tom Merry coolly. "Drive on!"

"Oh, weally, Tom Mewwy——"

Tom Merry jumped into the taxi, and it rolled away. The hero of the Shell was not acting thoughtlessly; he thought it would be a good idea to have a drive through the length of London and look at the great city, and one way was as good as another.

The taxi rolled off, and the juniors, fresh from the heart of the country, looked with great interest at the changing panorama of the streets.

A light mist hung over London, but as yet the streets were clear. It was a warning of a fog to come, however.

As they drew near the City, the mist was thicker, but it was not yet obstructive to the view. The remains of the provisions from the hamper had been packed into their pockets, and they finished them in the cab.

"Deah me!" said Arthur Augustus. "What is that disreputable place, Tom Mewwy?"

"Oh, that's Tower Hill," said Tom Merry, looking out and finishing a tart. "We're close there now!"

The taxi came to a stop, and a loafer threw open the

door. The juniors tumbled out, and D'Arcy adjusted his straightened-out hat, and handed the taximan a ten-shilling

The juniors were all in funds, and they had made up their minds to have a really ripping time on their trip to town, and spend all they had.

Tom Merry took his bag, and the taxi drove away, and the chums of St Jim's entered the precincts of the Tower.

"This way," said Tom Merry, leading the way into the ticket-office. "You come through here!"

"I weally pfer to go this way, Tom Mewwy!"

"You can't go without a ticket, fathead!"

"Oh, I see! I weally did not think of that!"

Tom Merry paid for the tickets and the juniors passed on. Tom Merry glanced at the refreshment-room and thought of Fatty Wynn.

"We should have a halt here if Figgins & Co. were with us," he remarked. "I wonder what they did when they lost the train?"

"They may be coming on by a later one," said Lowther.

"They won't be likely to fall in with us, I expect!"

"Oh, those New House bounders don't know how to manage anything!" said Blake. "We made up our minds to come, and here we are, you see!"

"Yaas, wathah! I say, Tom Mewwy, who and what is that cewious-lookin' chap?"

"That's a Beefeater, Gussy!"

"Is he weally? And does he weally live on beef, you know?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy he has something else sometimes—mustard, for instance!"

The party entered at the Byward Tower, Tom Merry leading the way with a decided air; though, like the rest, he was paying his first visit to the ancient fortress.

CHAPTER 4.

In the Tower of London!

"WEALLY, Tom Mewwy, these sentwies and Beefeaters seem a pleasant lot of fellahs, you know," Arthur Augustus remarked. "Do you notice how they smile at us?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' to cackle at in my wemark, Tom Mewwy!"

"You would see it if you could see yourself, Gussy! Your hat is closing up like a concertina again, that's all! Hence these smiles!"

"Oh, weally, I did not think of that!"

D'Arcy took his topper off anxiously, and thumped it out straight again. Then the juniors followed Tom Merry's lead to see the Crown jewels.

"How vovy pweety," said Arthur Augustus, surveying the regalia through his monocle. "Weally nobbay, in fact!"

"Ripping," said Blake, opening his guide-book. "That big crown is the King's crown, and was constructed in 1858!"

"Oh, don't!" said Tom Merry imploringly. "Let's look over the place, but don't let us have any facts, please!"

"Rot!" said Blake. "What have you come here for if not to improve your mind and increase your knowledge? The principal jewels were taken from crowns—"

"Oh, dwy up, Blake, old chap!"

"Among them observe the large ruby given to the Black Prince in Spain, in 1567!"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind!"

"Henry the Fifth wore it in his helmet at Agincourt—"

"Oh, I'm off!" said Tom Merry.

And he led the way out. Blake followed rather unwillingly. He was bent upon improving the minds of his companions by the easy method of spouting from a guide-book.

"Immediately in front of it is the sapphire purchased by King George V," he said, as they left the room. "Seven other sapphires—"

But the juniors had fled.

The next visit was paid to the Armoury, and there the juniors saw a great deal to interest them, especially D'Arcy, who said that the figures in armour reminded him of his "ancestahs" in the hall at Eastwood.

Blake stopped before the equestrian figure of Henry VIII. "Did any of your aunt's sisters look like that?" he inquired. "They must have been jolly stout ladies, then!" D'Arcy gave him a withering look.

"I said my ancestahs, Blake!"

"Oh, your ancestors! My mistake! Hallo, here's a jolly looking johnny!" said Blake, looking at the equestrian figure in the centre of the room, and opening his guide-book again. "In the window recess there are shields and horns—no, that's not it! In the centre of the room is an equestrian figure, the man wearing a—"

"Pway dwy up with that dweadful guide-book!"

"Fine suit of early sixteenth-century armour, bearing—"

"Don't!"

"The Nuremberg stamp!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah, wats!" said Arthur Augustus, surveying the figure carefully through his eyeglass. "I know more about philately than any of you boundahs, and I know that there wasn't any Nuremberg stamps in the sixteenth century!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It doesn't mean a postage-stamp, fathead—"

"Oh, come along!" said Tom Merry. "Blake's just going to start again."

They went through the armoury. They left the building by the stairs, and came out upon the parade.

"Let me see," said Blake. "This must be Tower Green."

"And there's the site of the scaffold," said Lowther.

"Howwid!" said D'Arcy, screwing his glass into his eye. "It makes me quite shudder to look at it, you know. When I think that William the Conquerwah was beheaded there by—"

"Then you can leave off shuddering," said Blake, "for he wasn't. He wasn't beheaded at all that I know of."

"Lot of history you must learn in the Fourth Form," Manners remarked.

"Oh, I can soon tell you who was beheaded there!" said Blake, referring to his guide-book. "On the right of the fireplace is an elaborate piece of sculpture— No, that isn't it! Oh, here we are! The following persons are known to have been executed on this spot: Queen Anne Boleyn—"

"Oh, don't tell us any more, Blake!"

"Margaret Countess of Salisbury—"

"You weally make me shuddah, Blake! What howwid

(Continued on the next page.)

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St. Jim's on the Spree!

(Continued from page 7.)

boundahs they must have been in those times to tweek ladies with such extweme wudeness!"

"Queen Catherine Howard, fiftieth wife of Henry the Eighth—I mean, fifth wife—"

"Poor thing!" said D'Arcy. "Pway don't go on."

"Jane Viscountess Rochford—"

"Leave off!"

"Lady Jane Grey—"

"Cut it short!"

"Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex—"

The juniors marched off, and Blake snapped his guide-book shut.

"We'll have a look at the wharves," said Tom Merry. "We musn't forget that we've got to see the whole of London in one day, so we can't afford to waste all the morning on the Tower."

"We haven't seen the dungeons yet, Tom Mewwy."

"You can't see them without a special permit."

"Let's go and get one."

"It can't be done now, fathead. Come along, and look at the river. Traitors' Gate is down there somewhere."

"Yaas, wathah! One of my ancestahs was landed on Twaitahs' Gate in the weign of King Henry—I forget which—and they cut his head off, you know, on that beastly block we saw in the armouwy. I weally hope it did not hurt him vewy much."

"Let's hope not. Hallo, there's Traitors' Gate!"

D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass and surveyed the famous gate with strong disfavour.

"It's shut up now, Tom Mewwy."

"Of course it is. It's not used."

"But I want to go through it, you know, and see the way the twaitors used to come in."

"Well, you can't, you see."

"I weally think I must, you know. Where does the governah live? I will go and ask him to have the gate opened—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Go and look for him, then, and we'll wait for you."

"Here, you musn't go down there!" shouted a Beefeater, as D'Arcy lifted himself over the railings farther along, to go down to the water's edge.

D'Arcy looked at the excited man.

"But I want to," he said, as if that explained everything.

The explanation did not seem to satisfy the sturdy yeoman.

"Come back, you young rascal!"

"Wats!"

"Come back!"

Arthur Augustus did not answer. A fancy had entered his mind to go down to the water and get into one of the boats, to take a view of the Tower from the river. It was not likely that such a trivial consideration as a regulation would stop him.

The Beefeater, astounded at this defiance of his authority, clambered over the rails in pursuit of the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry hung on to the rails and laughed.

"My hat! That chap will be the death of me!" he exclaimed. "I really think our day in town wouldn't have been a success without Gussy."

Arthur Augustus reached the river and jumped into a boat.

"Pway take me out into the wivah," he said to the astonished waterman.

"But—"

"Huwwy, my deah fellow, there is an angwy Beefeatah affah me!" said D'Arcy quickly.

"Come back, you young rip!" yelled the Beefeater, prancing on the bank and brandishing his arms at D'Arcy.

The waterman shoved off, and the widening water between the boat and the shore prevented further pursuit.

The waterman, grinning, put out his oars. D'Arcy stood up in the boat, adjusted his monocle, and took a cool survey of the excited Beefeater.

The latter was still prancing.

"I wegard you," said D'Arcy, "as a wude, wuff boundah. I shall certainly weport your wude mannahs to your commanding officah. Pway do not address me in that tone of voice. I wegard you as a vidualous person!"

"You young scoundrel—"

"Pway modewate your language, or I shall be undah the necessity of comin' back and givin' you a feahful thwashin'—"

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D'Arcy broke off suddenly, as the boat gave a lurch on the river, and he sat down without intending to do so.

"Sorry, sir!" said the boatman, grinning.

"Yaas, wathah! I weally wish you would be more careful. I am not stwong enough to stand these shocks, you know," said D'Arcy.

"Where do you want to be landed, sir?"

"Somewhere where that wude person cannot follow me," said D'Arcy, with unusual prudence. "Is that my friend shouting to me?"

Tom Merry was howling across to the boat.

"Yes. He says he'll meet you on the Tower Bridge."

"Vewy well, land me there—or somewhere where I can get there."

And it was done.

D'Arcy paid the boatman and rejoined his friends, who had left the Tower precincts and ascended to the bridge.

"What a feahfully nawwow escape!" he exclaimed. "I feel quite exhausted, deah boys."

"If you get up to any more of your tricks," said Tom Merry, "we shall put a chain on you, and lead you about for the rest of the day."

"I wufuse to have a chain put on me—"

"Oh, dry up, and come along!"

"It is weally time that we went to do a little shoppin'," said D'Arcy, thumping his battered hat into shape again.

"Let us get to Bond Street."

"Mark Lane Station," said Blake, referring to his guide-book. "A few minutes' walk from the Tower. Easy access to Baker Street on the Metropolitan, and Madame Tussaud's Exhibition of Waxworks is there."

"Who says waxworks?" asked Tom Merry.

"Waxworks!" said five voices.

So the party walked to Mark Lane Station, and entered a Metropolitan electric train for Baker Street, en route for Madame Tussaud's.

CHAPTER 5.

Lost in the Fog!

THE weather had been growing foggier and foggier, and the stations were very misty as the train passed through them. Arthur Augustus was a little anxious about getting out at the right station. Every time the train stopped he screwed his monocle into his eye and stared through the misty glass in search of information on the subject. It was in vain that Tom Merry pointed out that his anxiety was quite unnecessary.

"That guard there calls out the name of the station every time, ass!" said Tom Merry. "You've only got to keep your ears open and let your monocle alone, Gussy."

"That's all vewy well, Tom Mewwy; but suppose he should forget, or else call out the wrong name, when we get to Baker Street? We should get cawwied past our destination."

"We could come back again, I suppose," said Lowther.

"Yaas; but we don't want to waste time, you know, deah boy. We've got to see all the sights of London in one day, as well as do a great deal of shoppin', and we shan't have any time to waste, I assure you, Lowthah."

The train stopped again.

D'Arcy brought his eyeglass to bear on the misty glass, and the word "Baker" in large letters caught his eye. He jumped up immediately.

"Come on!" he called out, rushing along the carriage. "I knew that chap would make a mistake soonah or latah! Come on!"

"Come back!" yelled Tom Merry. "This isn't our station!"

"Yaas, it is! I told you the guard would forget, and he's done it. This is our station! Come on, and huwwy like anythin', or you will be cawwied past the place!"

And D'Arcy tore along the corridor of the carriage and off the train.

"Oh, come on!" growled Tom Merry. "This is Farringdon Street, but that howling ass will be lost if we leave him behind."

"Now then, gentlemen! Are you getting off or staying on?"

"Getting off, old top," said Blake. "We've lost a lunatic."

And the juniors of St. Jim's poured off the train, which buzzed out of the station, leaving them looking for Arthur Augustus.

"Here you are, deah boy!" said D'Arcy cheerfully. "Lucky I noticed the name of the station, wasn't it? You would have been cawwied on—"

"You ass! This isn't Baker Street—it's Farringdon Street!"

"That's what the conductah chap said, Tom Mewwy; but he was mistaken. I happened to notice the name of the station, you see!"

"Ass!" roared Tom Merry. "I tell you this is the wrong station!"

"I object to bein' called an ass. Besides, you can see for yourself than I am wight, and this is Baker Street! Look there!"

"Baker!" read out Tom Merry. "Baker & Co.'s cigarettes! Oh, you—you worm! That isn't the name of the station—that's a cigarette advertisement!"

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, surveying the sign through his monocle. "Now that you call my attention to it, Tom Mewwy, I see that you are quite wight. You see, the station was so beastlay misty, you know, and I only caught the one word 'Bakah,' and there wasn't time to stop and welfect on the mattah. We had to wun like anythin' to get off the twain in time."

"Oh, it's no good talking to him!" said Blake. "We shall have to wait for the next train."

"Not at all," said Arthur Augustus. "If this is Farringdon Street, I wemembah heawin' that there is a market

"This way, D'Arcy!" shouted Tom Merry.

There was no reply.

"D'Arcy! Gussy! You'll be lost, you ass, Gussy!"

But only the shouts resounded through the fog. A veritable blanket of fog was settling down upon the metropolis, and D'Arcy had disappeared into its yellow depths.

"Here, keep together!" exclaimed Tom Merry, stopping Blake as he was rushing off in search of D'Arcy. "No good any more of us getting lost!"

"No, by Jove!" exclaimed Manners. "If we lose sight



CRASH! There was a frightful clatter of broken crockery as Figgins gave the waiter a hefty push, which sent him flying!

or a bazaar or somethin' in this distwict, and we ought to have a look at it as we are on the spot."

"Look here, Gussy, we've no time," said Tom Merry. "We shall have to save time if—"

"If you think you can save time waitin' for twains, Tom Mewwy, you will compel me to regard you as an ass. Come on, let's get out."

Arthur Augustus was set upon seeing Farringdon Market, and the others turned it over in their minds and agreed.

They left the station, and found the atmosphere outside of a consistency something like that of pea soup.

"My hat!" said Herries. "This is rather thick!"

"Yaas, watah! And talkin' of hats weminds me that I have to get a new one. Is there a fashionable hattah near here, Tom Mewwy?"

And D'Arcy marched off to see. The others pursued, fearful of losing the swell of St. Jim's in the fog.

There was a sudden pouring of people from the station, and they were separated for the moment,

of one another we're dens for. You can't see a foot before your nose in the fog."

"You can't see a hand before your nose, even," said Lowther.

"Gussy! Gussy!" shouted Tom Merry.

But the voice of Gussy did not answer.

"It's no good!" growled Blake. "The fog echoes the sound, so that you don't know the direction it's coming from. We may run into him if we keep on!"

They went on steadily through the mist, but there was no sign of Arthur Augustus.

They searched far and wide, and they inquired of passers-by; but in the fog everybody was too busy in picking out his own way to have any eyes for anybody else. No one had noticed D'Arcy.

There was a flare of lights in the fog. The chums emerged into the glare of huge naphtha lamps, lighted to dispel the midday gloom. In every weird-lighted face they sought

for the features of Arthur Augustus, but they found him not.

They gave up the search at last as hopeless.

"He's gone!" said Tom Merry. "Well, we are having a day, and no mistake. I hope he won't come to any harm, that's all. I should feel like punching his head if it weren't that I'm afraid something may have happened to him."

"What the dickens are we to do?" said Blake. "It's no good going to the police—they couldn't find anybody in this fog, and they wouldn't start looking."

"I say, he knows we were going to the waxworks!" exclaimed Lowther. "If he misses us—I mean when he misses us—don't you think it will strike him to look for us there?"

Tom Merry nodded thoughtfully.

"Yes, I should think so. Even Gussy wouldn't be ass enough to try to find anybody in the market, though he might look there. He's bound to come to the waxworks. Let's get there and see, anyhow."

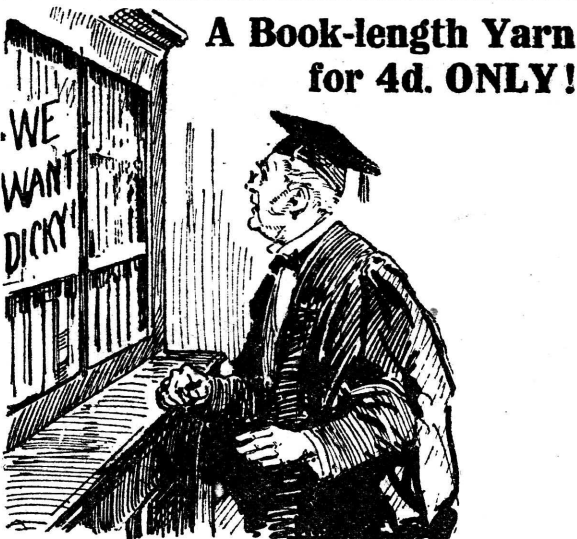
And the juniors, having decided that it was the best thing to be done, lost no time in getting to Baker Street Station.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy in Danger!

MEANWHILE, what of Arthur Augustus? The swell of St. Jim's did not notice for some minutes that he had lost his companions. He went on in his search for a hatter's shop, thinking that they were following him. He did not spot the hatter's, although there was one quite handy, and finally D'Arcy stopped and realised that he was alone.

"They seem to have lost themselves," said the swell of



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St. Jim's, adjusting his monocle and peering through the fog. "How extremely careless of Tom Mewwy! I weally ought to have kept a sharpah eye on him, pewhaps. I hope they will come to no harm' but I am vewy uneasy."

And Arthur Augustus started looking for Tom Merry & Co. He had forgotten how many streets he had crossed, and how many turnings he had taken, and he could not see a yard ahead of him in the blinding fog. Naturally, enough, he wandered he knew not whither, and presently awoke to the fact that he was hopelessly lost.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "I weally do not know my way. And if I have lost myself, what may not have happened to those poor boundahs. I weally wish I had taken bettah care of them."

D'Arcy felt quite remorseful on this point.

"I shall have to apologise most handsomely when I meet them again," he muttered; "but weally I do not see how I shall ever meet them again in this dweadful fog. This must be what they call a beastlay pea soup fog. Gweat Scott! I wondah where the doose I am, you know?"

D'Arcy stared round him in perplexity growing to dismay. There were few lights glimmering through the fog, and those he could see came from dingy little shops. The pavements were broken and dirty, the people who loomed past him in the mist were ill-dressed and rough of aspect.

"Where am I? I am afraid I have got into a vewy unfashionable quartah," the swell of St. Jim's murmured. "I weally wish I could see a policeman and ask him for a diwection. It is not safe to ask anybody except a policeman in this kind of place, I know."

But there was nothing like a policeman to be seen. A roughly dressed individual loomed through the fog, and D'Arcy stopped him. He raised his battered hat politely. D'Arcy would have been as polite to a tramp as to a marquis.

"I weally beg your pardon, my good fwied!" he exclaimed. "But could you tell me where I can find a policeman?"

The youth stared at him without replying.

"I have lost my way," explained D'Arcy, "and I wish to find a constable to diwect me. I want to get to Fawwingdon Street Station. If—"

"Good 'eavens!"

The ejaculation broke from the youth, accompanied by a breath of reeking spirits.

"Pewwaps you could get me a taxicab," said D'Arcy. "I should be vewy pleased to pwesent you with half-a-crown, if you did."

"Good 'eavens!" ejaculated the man again.

He seemed to be feasting his eyes upon D'Arcy. He came closer through the gloom, and revealed a square, unshaven jaw, a pair of deep-set ferrety eyes, a knobby forehead, and an old cap. His garb was of the roughest and filthiest condition, and he reeked with stale tobacco and spirits. D'Arcy thought him a very unpleasant character.

His ferrety eyes took in every detail of the junior's elegant attire, and nearly bulged from his head at the sight of the gold watchchain and diamond sleeve-links. D'Arcy had his coat open to show his beautiful waistcoat. It must have seemed to the rough that the swell of St. Jim's had been dropped at his feet by a kindly fate, as it were, to supply him with funds for almost endless dissipation.

"Good 'eavens!" he said for a third time.

"I weally do not quite compwehend that wemark," said D'Arcy. "If—"

"Here, Bill, Joe, Mick! Here's a toff! Kim on!"

The rough yelled out the words and rushed at D'Arcy at the same moment. The swell of St. Jim's was taken by surprise. But, swell as he might be, D'Arcy had learned activity and acquired strength on the football field and in the gym, and he had heaps of pluck. As the filthy hand of the ruffian gripped his shoulder, he realised his danger and hit out.

The clenched fist in the lavender kid glove smote the ruffian between the eyes, and he reeled on the slippery pavement and went down in a heap.

"I am extremely sorry to stwike you," said D'Arcy, looking down at him, "but, weally— Bai Jove, I think I had bettah wun for it!"

Three or four dim forms loomed up in the gloom, undoubtedly members of the ruffianly gang called together by the vells of the rough who had found the prey.

D'Arcy might have run for it if he had known where to run, but in the fog he was utterly at a loss. He ran right into a dim form he did not see till too late, and two strong arms closed round him.

"Is this the dude, Tadger?"

"Hold him!" yelled Tadger, scrambling to his feet. "He's 'it me in the heye. 'Old 'im while I cut him inter little bits!"

"Weally, my good fellahs—"

"Old him!"

D'Arcy, with a wrestling trick, laid the man who was holding him on his back on the pavement. Then he ran for his life. He held his hands out before him as he ran, and it was well that he did so, for a minute later he came full tilt against a wall. His hands crashed on the bricks and he was stopped.

The wall barred his progress, and behind him sounded the footsteps and shouts of the roughs. D'Arcy looked round wildly. In the distance through the fog was a glare of lights. The main road was there, but he had no time to reach it. The ruffians were upon him.

"There 'e is!"

"Down the toff!"

D'Arcy put his back to the wall and clenched his fists. His monocle had dropped to the end of its cord, and his eyes were flashing.

"Come on, then, you scoundwels!" he exclaimed. "Come on, and I will give you a fearful thwashin'! Come on, you wascals!"

The rascals came on. There were three of them who had overtaken him, and they came on together with a savage rush. D'Arcy let out with right and left. Tadger went over like a ninepin, and another rascal rolled across him to an accompaniment of loud oaths. The third man gripped D'Arcy and pinioned him to the wall, and in spite of the junior's struggles, held him there.

"Come on!" he yelled. "I've got him!"

The two rascals who had been floored jumped up. One was snatching off his buckled belt to use as a weapon.

"Wescue me, you wuffian!" panted D'Arcy, as he was ground against the wall. "Wescue!" The familiar cry—familiar enough in rows with the Grammar School or the village lads at Rylcombe—rang half unconsciously from his lips. "Wescue, St. Jim's!"

There was a shout through the fog.

"Hallo, hallo!"

"Wescue!" yelled D'Arcy. "Help! Wescue, St. Jim's!"

"Right-ho!" shouted a familiar voice. "Come on, kids! It's Gussy—the one and only Gussy! Come on! Now, together!"

Then three forms loomed up, one long and lean, one medium-sized, and the other plump—very plump, in fact. D'Arcy gave a shriek of joy.

"Figgins & Co.! Bai Jove!"

Figgins & Co. they were. They came down on the roughs as if they were charging up a football field. The fellow who held D'Arcy was gripped with a Rugger tackle round him, and went flying. Tadger and his friend had no sooner got on their feet than they were swept off them again.

"Sock into 'em!" yelled Figgins.

But the roughs did not wait to be "socked." They had had enough of the quality of Figgins & Co. They picked themselves up and ran. Stumbling and cursing, they disappeared into the fog, and Figgins & Co. were left masters of the situation.

CHAPTER 7.

A Trip in a Taxicab!

F IGGINS stared at D'Arcy, and D'Arcy stared at Figgins. Then they shook hands.

"Fancy meeting you!" said Figgins.

"And fancy meeting you, bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

"Come along," said Kerr; "better get out into the light. Those rascals may come back with some more of the same kidney."

"They're coming already!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "Come along, kids!"

Figgins passed his arm through D'Arcy's, and the four juniors hurried in the direction of the flaring lights. In a minute or less they were safe out in a lighted road.

"Good!" said Figgins, slackening pace. "Gussy, old kid, this is like a novel. Fancy knocking against you in the fog! How did you get here?"

"Tom Mewwy and the othahs lost their way," explained D'Arcy. "I was lookin' for them, and got into that howwid place, somehow. But how did you get there? I was nevah more surprised in my life."

"Oh, we came up from Rylcombe by the next train after you," grinned Figgins.

"We've been to the Tower," said Kerr.

"And had a feed," said Fatty Wynn.

"Then we came along to have a look at Farrington Market, and lost our way in the fog," said Figgins. "We were trying to find it, and I had just caught sight of those giddy arc lamps at the end of the street, when I heard you yell."

"It was extremely fortunate for me, Figgins, and I am vevy grateful. But I am vevy anxious about Tom Mewwy."

"Ha, ha, ha! I dare say he is anxious about you, too!"

"Oh, that's wot, you know! He knows that I can take care of myself. But those youngstabs ought not to be goin' about London alone, you know. I must try to find them."

"Ever tried looking for a needle in a stack of hay?" asked Kerr.

"I must find them!" said D'Arcy emphatically. "I should nevah forgive myself, nevah, if they came to any harm. We were goin' to look at Fawwington Market when I missed them in looking wound for a hattah's shop."

"Well, you do need a new tile," said Figgins. "Been using that one for a concertina?"

"No, it was sat upon in the twain. Aftah the market we were going to Madame Tussaud's. I think it vevy pwob that Tom Mewwy will be sensible enough to go stwaight there, and I weally think I had bettah huwwy there like anythin' and see."

"Good!" said Figgins. "Madame Tussaud's is the next place on our list, and we'll come with you, Adolphus."

"That is vevy kind of you, Figgins."

"Better get a cab," said Kerr. "D'Arcy can pay for it, as he's rolling in wealth. I wonder if we could pick up a taxi."

"Yaas, wathah! There's one already!"

A taxicab was passing, vacant, at a snail's pace in the fog. D'Arcy hailed it, and it came to a stop.

The swell of St. Jim's opened the door, and Figgins & Co. stepped into the taxi.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver.

"Madame Tussaud's in Mawylebone Woad!"

D'Arcy closed the door, and the taxi moved off.

"Nice and comfy in here," said Figgins, "but not quite so comfortable as your governor's car, Gussy. Do you remember the day we went out in it?"

"Yaas, wathah! I wemembah you actin' like a howwid boundah on that occasion. Ow! I weally wish you would be more careful. Somebody twod on my toe then!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Did you twead on Gussy's toe, Kerr?"

"Certainly not!" said Kerr, grinning. "Did you twead on Gussy's toe, Fatty?"

"No," said Fatty Wynn. "It must have been you, Figgyl!"

"It must have been! I'll move my foot out of the way—"

"Ow! You have kicked my ankle, Figgins!"

"Sorry! I m clumsy to-day! I'll move my foot again—"

"Gwocoooh!"

"What are you making that row for, Gussy?"

"Weally," said D'Arcy. "I wish you would keep your wotten old feet still, Figgins. This is the vevy last time I shall wide four in a taxi!"

The taxi crawled slowly along on account of the fog, the horn going every few seconds. But as they drove farther west, the fog cleared, and in the Marylebone Road there was only a slight haze drifting from Regent's Park.

"This is bettah," said D'Arcy. "I don't like the fog at all. Look out and see if you can see anything of Tom Merry and the othah boundahs, deah boys!"

The taxi increased in speed, and drew up at last opposite the great entrance to the famous waxworks' exhibition in the Marylebone Road.

D'Arcy was glad to get out on the pavement. He had had enough of Figgins & Co's feet. He stood on the pavement, feeling in his pockets for his cash.

"I weally hope I have not lost all my money in wunnin' away fwom those wuffians," he remarked. "I don't seem to find it. Would you mind, dwivah, if I gave you an I.O.U. for the amount, if I have lost my money?"

The taxi driver glared.

"Oh, it's all wight!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I wemembah now! I put it all in my waistcoat pocket to keep safe, except a few half-cwows and shillin's. Hoah it is, dwivah!" He handed the taximan a ten-shilling note. "Much obliged to you! Good-bye!"

"Thank you, sir," said the grinning driver, touching his cap.

D'Arcy and Figgins & Co. turned towards the entrance of Madame Tussaud's.

"I weally hope we shall find Tom Mewwy— Oh! Ow! Ooooooooh! Wescue me! Pway, what evah are you doin', deah boys!"

D'Arcy was suddenly swept off his feet by a rush of five individuals, who surrounded him and whipped him off the pavement in a twinkling.

"Wescue me! I insist upon bein' immediately put down!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's, struggling in the hands of his captors. "I insist—why, it's Tom Mewwy!"

"You—you champion ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry, shaking him, as he was set upon his feet again, gasping. "What do you mean by it?"

D'Arcy put his collar straight and his tie to rights. "I weally do not compwehend you, Tom Mewwy!" he said. "I have been vewy anxious about you, since you lost yourself in the fog—"

"I—w—what?" gasped Tom Merry.

"I have been vewy anxious. There were five of you," said D'Arcy severely, "and I must say I am surprised at your losin' yourselves. I thought you would be sensible enough to come heah, though!"

"Well, my word!" said Blake. "Of all the cheek!"

"Of all the nerve!" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

"The unutterable impudence!" exclaimed Manners.

"Confounded cheek!" said Herries.

"Weally, I don't quite compwehend! Howevah, all's well that ends well, though I got into a most unfashionable quartah of the town in looking for you, and should have been wobbed if Figgins & Co. hadn't come to the wescue like Bwitons, in the nick of time!"

"I thought you'd be getting into some scrape," said Tom Merry. "I'm glad Figgins fished you out of it, you image!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"And I'm jolly glad to see you Lere, Figgy!" said Tom, slapping his old rival of the New House at St. Jim's on the shoulder. "I suppose you caught the next train?"

"That's it! And we've been over the Tower," grinned Figgins, "and now—"

"We'll finish the day in company, eh?"

"That's what I was going to propose!"

"Yaas, wathah! We shall make quite a nice party, and, I say, Figgins, do keep your eye on Tom Mewwy and see that he doesn't get too far away fwom me when I'm not lookin'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Figgins. "I'll take care of him. Are we going into the waxworks?"

"Rather," said Tom, "unless Gussy's afraid of being detained!"

"How could I be detained, Tom Mewwy?"

"Chamber of Horrors, you know! They might'n let you out again! You beat most of the specimens they've got there!"

"I wegard that as a most objectionable wemark, Tom Mewwy!"

"Oh, come on!" said Tom, going up the steps.

D'Arcy hesitated.

"Upon the whole, I weally think I had bettah do some shopping first—I don't like goin' in that place in this beastlay cwushed hat!"

"Bring the ass along, kids!"

D'Arcy looked in at the door and saw a young lady presiding at a picture-postcard desk, and refused to advance another step.

"I wefuse to go in until I have a new hat," he said. "It is absolutely imposs for me to entah a bwightly lighted place and show myself up in the pwesence of ladies with this feahful-lookin' hat! It's no good arguin', Tom Mewwy! My mind is made up!"

"Oh, give him his head," said Lowther. "Besides, it occurs to me that we could very well see the waxworks after dusk, and ought to see as much of the town as possible while the daylight lasts!"

"Yaas, wathah! That is a vewy sensible wemark, Lowthah!"

"Right-ho, there's something in that," said Tom Merry.

"We haven't had a look at the West End yet. Where do you want to get that blessed hat, Gussy?"

"I think Bond Stweet is the place!"

"You can get a motor-bus here to Bond Street. Come along, then!"

"I weally think a taxi—"

"We should want more than one for us, and this isn't a Lord Mayor's procession," said Tom Merry. "Come along, and don't argue! You're making me tired!"

The nine juniors piled themselves on the top of a motor-bus at the corner of Baker Street, taking the front seats. They moved off down Baker Street and Orchard Street. In Oxford Street the fog had cleared somewhat, and the juniors looked round with great interest as they buzzed along.

"Bond Stweet!" exclaimed D'Arcy, and they alighted.

CHAPTER 8.

D'Arcy Does Some Shopping.

BOND STREET was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's Mecca. A look of happy satisfaction settled upon his face as he strolled down that famous thoroughfare, twisting his gold-headed cane.

"I have wathah a lot of shoppin' to do," he remarked. "First and foremost, of course, is the hat. I think I shall get only one hat, as it would be too much beastlay fag to cawwy anythin'. But there is a wippin' shop here for fancy waistcoats, and I must have some ties. I haven't more than a couple of dozen at St. Jim's, and I always like a waviety. Then I shall want to ordah some dwess collahs."

"My word!" groaned Tom Merry. "I can see how the rest of the day is going to be spent. We're in for it, kids, so let's go in somewhere and have a good solid lunch before we start."

"Yaas, wathah! And I will stand tweat, deah boys. I wathah feel that I want a wash, too!"

A good solid lunch was disposed of, and though the bill made even D'Arcy open his eyes, he remembered that he was in Bond Street, and paid without a murmur.

Then they went along to the hatter's, and D'Arcy tried on nine or ten silk hats, and asked the opinion of his comrades as to each. At last, however, he selected one.

They left the hatter's and dropped into another shop for ties, of which D'Arcy purchased a dozen, as well as a box of collars. Next the juniors went in search of the waistcoat shop.

"Heah we are, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "Now, I weally think we shall have to spend a little more time here, as this is a most important mattah."

"Oh, buck up!" growled Figgins.

"It is simply imposs to buck up in a matter like this. I—"

"What can I do for you, sir? Waistcoats—the latest thing? Exactly! Step this way, please! Fancy waistcoats—the latest, mind, and the best."

And D'Arcy was soon being attended to with great civility. Waistcoats were forthcoming in endless numbers and infinite variety.

D'Arcy gazed at them ecstatically, and was at a loss. Where all were so desirable, it was difficult to choose.

He asked the advice of his companions, and each recommended a different waistcoat, out of sheer mischief, but even D'Arcy stopped short of purchasing eight.



Potts, the Office Boy!.....



"Weally, this wed one with blue stwipes and gween spots looks awfully nobbay!" he exclaimed. "I certainly must have that!"

"But this green one with pink stars!" said Figgins. "You mustn't lose a startler like that, Gussy. You'll simply knock 'em at St. Jim's with that waistcoat."

"Yaas, I think you are wight, Figgins. I will have that one, too."

"What about this marvellous thing in red, blue, green, pink, and yellow?" demanded Lowther. "If you miss a striking thing like that, Gussy, you will be a bigger ass than you look."

"Impossible!" murmured Kerr.

"Yaas, pewwaps I had bettah have that one also," said Arthur Augustus. "I should like them all, weally, but I must not be extwagant. My governah always warns me against bein' extwagant in clothes, you know, and he is quite wight. It's a thing I nevah do. I will take only these three."

The waistcoats were wrapped up and paid for. Then arose the question of transport.

"We could send them for you, sir," the shopman suggested. "Oh, no, I must take them. I want them particularly at once," said D'Arcy. "I think you had bettah cawwy them, as you are the leadah of the party, Tom Mewwy!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "I've left my bag at the station so as not to have to carry it, and I'm not going to start as a luggage-carrier in my old age!"

"Lowthah, will you cawwy them—"

"Rats!" said Lowther. "Carry them yourself, Gussy!"

"But I am already cawwyin' my collahs and ties, Lowthah!"

"Why not put 'em on?" suggested Figgins. "That's the simplest way."

"Yaas, wathah, it is a good idea, and it is stwange that I nevah thought of it. Pway undo the parcel again, deah boy, while I take my coat off. Lend me a hand, Tom Mewwy, pway!"

Tom Merry willingly obliged, being rather careless in the process.

"Don't jerk me in that wuff mannah!"

Coat and jacket were removed, and then Arthur Augustus donned the new waistcoats, one over another, and the jacket and coat were replaced. The swell of St. Jim's assumed a rather plump appearance, but Figgins pointed out that he was still slimmer than Fatty Wynn, and they all assured him that he looked ripping, so he was satisfied.

"I am afraid I have spent nearly all my cash now, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, as they quitted the shop. "But that weally doesn't mattah, as you are all in funds. I don't think we ought to leave Bond Stweet without havin' tea at a teashop!"

"Good idea!" said Herries. "And I could do with some tea. What with your hats and ties and waistcoats, you've about worn me out!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Here's a smart place!" said Tom Merry. "Come in!" They entered the teashop. It was an extensive and brightly lighted place, with a fashionable crowd in it. Youngsters of the age of the St. Jim's heroes were not common there, but that did not trouble them.

D'Arcy affixed his monocle and surveyed the place with the air of a prince, or an ambassador, at least, and led the way to an unoccupied table.

"Pway sit down, deah boys! One of these tables isn't weally large enough for nine of us, and we don't want to sepawate. Pull anothah up to it, Tom Mewwy. Yaas, wathah, what do you want? Don't be in a huwwy!"

"You must not move the tables," said the waiter, surveying the party of youngsters—who, to tell the truth, were somewhat muddy—with great disfavour.

"Oh, that is mere wot, my deah fellow!" said D'Arcy. "You see, we want to be comfy. This is vewy important. Buzz off and don't wowwy!"

"You must not—"

"Pway don't wepeat your remarks. They are not at all intewestin'. Push that person out of the way, Figgins, and bwing that table here."

Figgins promptly pushed the waiter out of the way, with a vigour that was perhaps not wholly called for. The waiter lurched against a table, and knocked it flying, and there was a terrific crash of crockery.

D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass and stared at the wreck.

"Extwemely clumsy!" he said. "If I were the pwo-pwietor here I should discharge you! That is wight, Figgins. Now, waitah, when you have finished wubbin' your silly bones, will you pway take the ordahs!"

"Get hout!" exclaimed the waiter. "Get hout, or I'll call the proprietor!"

"I assuah you I have not the least objection, but we weally came here to have tea, not to make the acquaintance of your estimable pwo-pwietah, though I have no doubt he is a most excellent person. Pway—"

A fat man in evening dress, with a diamond stud glittering in his shirt, and a waxed moustache, came upon the scene. His little eyes were glittering with rage at the scene in his teashop, which had attracted general attention from everybody there.

"Get out, you young rascals!" he hissed. "Leave my shop at once!"

"Certainly not!" said Tom Merry sharply. "We came in here for tea, and we're going to have it!"

"You—you—I'll call the police!"

"Pway don't be an ass, my deah fellah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I object to bein' addressed in that tone of voice, too! I wegard it as caddish! Pway be calm—"

"You—you—Will you leave my shop?"

"No, wathah not! Pway take my ordahs—"

The proprietor was swelling visibly. D'Arcy's placid calmness seemed to give the finishing touch to his bad temper. He seized the swell of St. Jim's by the collar.

"Welease me!" howled D'Arcy. "You are wumplin' my collah."

"Arthur!"

A tall, aristocratic-looking man uttered the name in tones of amazement as he came up. There was a lady with him, who also stared at Arthur Augustus in astonishment.

Arthur Augustus put on his monocle and looked at the stranger.

"Bai Jove! My governah!"

CHAPTER 9.

An Unexpected Meeting!

LORD EASTWOOD stared at Arthur Augustus, and Arthur Augustus stared at Lord Eastwood.

Gussy's manners usually had that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, but the unexpected meeting with his "governah" in the teashop took the swell

"Swallow that One!"



of St. Jim's a little aback for once. But he was quick to recover. He raised his new hat.

"So it's y' patah," he said languidly, "and the matah, too! How so you do?"

The proprietor was almost squirming by this time. The discovery that he had nearly ejected the son of a lord from his shop almost made him faint. He would willingly have kissed Gussy's spats if he had been allowed to do so.

"My lord!" he stammered. "A thousand pardons—a thousand pardons, my lord!"

"This is my son," said Lord Eastwood coldly. "What is the trouble about?"

"Nothing—a mistake—an absurd mistake, my lord, due to the inexcusable clumsiness of a waiter, my lord. I beg your pardon, my lord, and your lordship's son's pardon, too. James, how dare you be uncivil to his lordship's son!"

"Well, I be blowed!" murmured the unfortunate waiter.

"Get away at once, you clumsy rascal. Pray excuse me, my lord! If your lordship's son will deign to take his tea—"

"Yaas, wathah! You are weally a most cuwious person," said D'Arcy, regarding the proprietor through his monocle—"you are weally! I don't mean to look at, though even in that way you are wathah cuwious, but in your mannahs. That waitah chap is not so much to blame as you are; though he is certainly an ass!"

"I will discharge him! I—"

"Pway don't do anything of the sort. Let him wait on us, and he'll be all wight. You will have tea with us, won't you?" continued D'Arcy, turning to his astonished parents. "Pway allow me to present my fwends; I think you have met them all before."

"What—what are you doing in town, Arthur?" asked Lady Eastwood faintly. "Why are you not at school?"

"These boundahs have a holiday," explained D'Arcy, "and I have come to town with them to show them wound and take care of them. Tom Mewwy has been lost once already, and I am jolly glad I came. Pway sit down!"

Tom Merry was placing a chair for her ladyship at the table, and she gave him a sweet smile and sat down; and Figgins was similarly polite to Lord Eastwood.

"Yaas, now we are quite comfy."

Lord Eastwood laughed.

"Well, I am surprised to see you here," he said, "but I am glad to see you all, my lads, and you must have tea with me—with me, you understand!"

"Yaas, wathah! That is vewy convenient, because we are wumin' out of money," said Arthur Augustus. "This is weally a most providential meetin', patah!"

His lordship laughed again.

Lady Eastwood was very gracious to the boys, and soon put them at their ease. The waiter was all eagerness to oblige. The proprietor would willingly have embraced the boots of every individual member of the company.

The tea was really ripping.

As a peer of the realm was standing treat, the juniors did not spare the good things, and they had a royal feed, which knocked the best of the dormitory feasts at St. Jim's into a cocked hat.

Fatty Wynn especially came out strong, and upheld the credit of the New House in a really praiseworthy way.

"This is a very fortunate meeting," Lord Eastwood remarked. "Arthur has a genius for getting into trouble, and I am glad you are with him, Merry, to look after him."

Tom smiled assent, but Gussy looked rather indignant.

"You don't quite compwehend, sir," he said. "It is I who came to look aftah Tom Mewwy."

"Yes, yes, no doubt. So you have been lost in the fog?"

"I? Certainly not! Tom Mewwy, Mannahs, Lowthah, Blake, and Hewwies were lost in the fog. I missed my way lookin' for them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We have been ovah the Towah," said Arthur Augustus, "and we are goin' to Madame Tussaud's after tea. I have been doing some shoppin', matah. I say, I weally wish you and the patah would come to the waxworks with us—"

"I am afraid we have an engagement," said Lady Eastwood, smiling.

"Yes, rather," said his lordship, looking at his watch; "and we have already stayed too long. The car will be waiting for us. Don't hurry away, my boys, but I must say good-bye."

And Lord Eastwood shook hands manfully with nine juniors in turn, and Lady Eastwood pressed her son's hand, and they parted.

The boys stood up till they were gone, and then sat down to finish their tea. Lord Eastwood saw to the settling, but the waiter hovered about. D'Arcy, when he finally rose from the table, pressed a half-crown into that individual's hand.

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"I am sowwy you had such a fall, my good man," he said. "It was because you were such a silly ass, you know! Are you weady, Tom Mewwy?"

"Quite ready."

"Just a minute," said Fatty Wynn. "These cream puffs beat anything we get at the tuckshop, and it would be a sin and a shame to leave any of them, especially as they're paid for. I say, Gussy, I'm glad we met your governor!"

"Yaas, wathah! Governahs are weally useful institutions when it comes to payin' for things."

"Ha, ha, ha! You've brought him up well, I can see!" Monty Lowther remarked. "You didn't neglect him in the early years of his thoughtless youth!"

"Yaas, wathah! Come on, boys, or we shall be late! We've got to catch a twain to-night aftah the waxworks. Hallo, there is that pwpowietah chap! I wondah why he is bowin' and scwapin' in that widiculous mannah. I wondah it doesn't give him a pain in his back, you know. I wathah dislike that person. Come on!"

They left the teashop. Dusk was falling in the streets,



"YOW!!" D'Arcy fairly yelled as the old gentleman, whom he belloyed: "You dmp"

and the lamps were being lighted. The adventurous day was drawing to a finish, but there was plenty of time to see the waxworks before going home. There was a train at half-past eight, which would serve them, and they had decided to go by it.

"The buses are cwammed," D'Arcy remarked, as they walked into Oxford Street. "I think we had better have some of these taxis. Two of them will hold us quite comfy, and Tom Mewwy can pay for both! Also, I think we had better dwive wound Westminster!"

And two cabs were forthwith found and engaged, and the chums of St. Jim's bundled into them. Gussy was determined to see the Houses of Parliament, so they drove round Westminster, with anxious eyes on the taximeters.

Tom Merry had enough money left to pay the taximen, and Lowther expended his last silver in making up the tips. Cash was getting scarce. Figgins was the most flush now, and he was quite eager to take his turn of paying, though, as he remarked, he couldn't do things quite on the scale D'Arcy did.

"Well, here we are again!" said Lowther, as they

ascended the steps leading to the huge Tussaud's building.

"If Gussy doesn't bolt again—"

"Mind he doesn't!" exclaimed Blake. "In with him!"

He shoved Arthur Augustus into the revolving door which gives admittance to the building, and then put his foot against the next division of it, so that Gussy was shut in without any means of getting in or out, either.

"Are you in yet, Gussy?" he called out.

"No, I am not! The door has ceased to revolve," said D'Arcy. "There is one division of it in front of me, and the other behind me. Push it round!"

"Isn't it going now?"

"No; I am shut in! Pway push!"

"Oh, I'm afraid it's no good, Gussy! You are a prisoner.



Blake thought was a waxwork model, seized him by the ear, and called him a rascal!"

Just wait there quietly till we come out, and I'll see if I can open it from the other side."

All the time Blake had his foot against the door.

There was a howl of indignation from the swell of St. Jim's.

"I refuse to remain here quietly till you come out, I refuse—"

An attendant, seeing that something was wrong, came up. Blake removed his foot, and pushed the door quickly round. D'Arcy tumbled through on his hands and knees upon the mat.

"Bai Jove, that is an extremely stwange door!" he exclaimed; then, catching sight of Blake's grinning face: "You howwid, wotten boundah, you were holdin' it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blake, I wegard such a joke as fwivolous and wotten!"

"Come on, there!" called out Manners. "Yqu'll get left!"

The juniors had entered by the next door, and were already passing through the turnstile. Blake and D'Arcy hurried after them, the swell of St. Jim's being no longer

nervous about facing the young lady at the picture postcard counter.

"Stop a minute, deah boys!" exclaimed D'Arcy, politely raising his new topper to the lady there. "I want some pictuahn postcards. Pway give me half a dozen packets!"

"Six shillings, please!"

"Pay for them, Figgins, will you? Yaas, I will have them w'apped up. Will you put them in your pocket, Mannahs?"

"Rats! Put them in your own pocket!"

"I can't! Cawwysin' a parcel in the pocket makes the coat dwag, and soon spoils its shape."

"Well, of all the cheek! What price my coat?"

"What pwice your coat?" said D'Arcy, misunderstanding, and scrutinising Manners' coat through his monocle. "Well, about eighteen-and-six, I should say, deah boy!"

"Eighteen-and-six!" yelled Manners. "I'll—"

"Now, then, peace in the family!" said Tom Merry. "You'll have to carry all the things you buy, Gussy, so come along!"

"Then I will leave them. I shan't want those pictuahn postcards, thank you, miss! I'll make you a pwesent of them, with my kind wegrads. Come on, deah boys!"

D'Arcy passed the packet back to the amazed girl, and walked on.

Figgins, who had just paid six shillings for the cards, followed him with a curious expression on his face. He looked as if he did not know whether to laugh or to kill Arthur Augustus.

"This is a nice woom!" said D'Arcy, as they entered the first hall. "Kings and queens, I see! Vevy nice!"

"The knaves are downstairs," said Lowther, whose propensity for punning broke out at the most unexpected moments, "in the Chamber of Horrors, you know."

"Wotten!" said D'Arcy. "I say, have you got a catalogue, Blake?"

"Certainly I have!"

"Ah, I was just hopin' you hadn't! You won't wead out anythin' fwom it, will you? There is one thing I want to see vevy much, and that is Gwace, the gweat ewicketah. Can you tell me where Gwace, the gweat ewicketah, is?" asked D'Arcy politely, addressing a policeman standing just inside the hall.

The policeman did not reply.

"Can you tell me where Gwace, the gweat ewicketah, is?" repeated D'Arcy, raising his voice, under the impression that the constable was deaf.

The policeman stared the swell of St. Jim's straight in the face, but not by the quiver of an eyelid did he give any indication that he had heard the question.

D'Arcy coloured with indignation. The pink of politeness himself, anything like rudeness always made him indignant.

"I had the honah of addressin' you, my good man!" he said, in slow and measured tones. "I asked you a question."

Still no reply came from the policeman.

"You wude person!" exclaimed D'Arcy exasperated. "I wegard you as a bwute! I will weport you to your beastlay inspectah, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of St. Jim's looked in amazed indignation at the juniors, who were screaming with laughter. Tom Merry was rocking to and fro, and Figgins was doubled up. The tears were streaming down the cheeks of Fatty Wynn.

"I fail to see anythin' comical in this man's beastlay wudeness," said D'Arcy huffily. "You will encouwege him by this idiotic laughin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Punch his head!" gurgled Herries.

"Dot him on the nose!" said Kerr.

"Only mind you don't break him!" said Manners.

Arthur Augustus gave quite a jump as a light dawned upon him.

"Bai Jove! I believe the beastlay thing's a waxwork!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy adjusted his monocle and stared at the policeman. He could see now that it was a wax figure, though so remarkably lifelike that the mistake was excusable.

"Well, upon my word, you know!" said Arthur Augustus. "Vevy cwicious! Vevy cwicious indeed!"

The juniors, still laughing, walked on. They surveyed the kings and queens. Blake opened his catalogue, and started explaining things.

"I wonder who this old gentleman is?" remarked Arthur Augustus, stopping before the effigy of Chaucer. "Quite a nice-lookin' old man."

"No. 151," read out Blake. "'Geoffrey Chaucer, styled the father of English poetry, because he was the first who—'"

"Thanks, that's enough! Hallo, who's this?"

"No. 140, William Caxton, born in Kent in 1410, died 1491. He was an English merchant long settled on the Continent, introduced printing into—"

"Wats! Come along, deah boys, or Blake will nevah shut up!"

"And now for the Chamber of Horrors!" said Figgins. "Mind your eye, Gussy!"

"Pway don't be so fwivolous. Figgins!"

They passed the turnstiles into the adjoining apartments, Kerr paying the necessary entrance fees for the nine of them. Figgins had reached the state of being stony broke.

"Coiners' den," read out Blake. "Here's No. 41—Charles Peace, murderer and burglar. That's better!"

"Charles Peace!" said Arthur Augustus. "Where?"

"Can't you see him?" exclaimed Lowther, pointing to an old gentleman who was quietly looking through his catalogue.

"Is that weally Charles Peace? He looks vevy old!"

"Charles Peace, in his disguise as 'Mr. Thompson,'" read out Blake, unheeding.

"Oh, I see! He is in disguise as an old gentleman!" said D'Arcy, walking up to the unconscious visitor to the Chamber of Horrors, and surveying him through his monocle. "Bai Jove! How exactly like life!"

Monty Lowther stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth to keep back a yell of laughter. Tom Merry sat down on a seat and wept. Blake seemed to have a pain. Fatty Wynn simply gurgled. Arthur Augustus continued to stare at the old gentleman.

"Wonderful!" he went on. "Bai Jove, deah boys, it is moving, too. I distinctly saw the eyebwows move that time."

The old gentleman, becoming aware of D'Arcy's scrutiny, raised his eyes from the book and stared at the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus gasped with sheer amazement.

"Bai Jove, I've never seen anythin' like it!" he exclaimed, in great admiration. "It moves its eyes just like life! Much bettah than the othah figuahs. But, of course, you could easily tell it wasn't alive, if it came to that. That wed tink on the nose is a little overdone, and the whiskers look vevy shaggy, like a scwaggy old goat's whiskahs."

"Boy!" roared the old gentleman.

D'Arcy nearly jumped out of his shoes.

"Bai Jove, it talks, too!" he gasped.

"Boy, how dare you!"

"Marvellous! I should weally think it was alive, Lowthah, if I thought such a funny-lookin' old codgah could be alive at all, I should weally! Charles Peace must have been a feahful scoundwel, if he weally looked like that!"

The old gentleman, looking like a thundercloud in the face, reached out and seized the swell of St. Jim's by the ear.

"You impertinent young rascal!" he roared.

D'Arcy gave a yell.

"Why, it's alive!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I beg your pardon, my deah sir! Pway welease my yah! I took you for a waxwork. Pway don't be so wuff! I nevah thought a livin' bein' could have a face like that, you know, weally! Ov, ov, ov! If you do not immediately welease my yah, I shall stwike you!"

The old gentleman released D'Arcy's ear at last, and the swell of St. Jim's staggered away, claspings his hand to it.

"Lowthah, did you know that that cuwious-lookin' old person was alive all the time?" he demanded indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then I shall thwash you! I shall give you a feahful thwashin'!" D'Arcy pushed back his cuffs.

"Come along, Gussy," said Tom Merry, taking his arm. "We shan't have time to see the whole thing if we don't buck up."

"Yaas, you are wight. Let's buck up, deah boys!"

The round of the waxworks was completed at last, and they left the famous building and found themselves in the Marylebone Road again.

Tom Merry looked at his watch.

"Just easy time to catch the train," he said. "I think we've had a very decent day out, kids, and crammed a lot into it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We've had a good time, and we're all broke," continued Tom Merry, "except for that pound note Gussy put aside for our return fares to Rylcombe. We'll take a bus to the station. Here's one! Jump on!"

And the juniors swarmed upon a bus and whirled away through the dim evening and the glimmering lights of the great city.

CHAPTER 10.

Almost Stranded!

TOM MERRY & Co. swarmed off the omnibus, and looked about them in the misty evening. The fog was settling down more thickly on the great city. There was a glare of lights through the yellow haze, and the traffic was going at a walking pace.

"This way!" said Tom Merry, leading off.

"Don't huwwy, Tom Mewwy. It would nevah do for you to get lost again, you know. We should lose the twain home while we were hunting for you."

"We shall lose it anyway if we don't buck up," said Tom. "Hand over that pound and I'll take the tickets."

D'Arcy felt in his waistcoat pockets.

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, why don't you hand it over?"

"I—I'm afraid I've lost it, or else had my pocket picked. My word, I'm sowwy! I really must have had my pocket picked!"

"Oh, you ass!" howled Blake. "You—you—oh, there ain't a word!"

"Don't be wude, Blake. How can I help it if a wascally person picks my beastlay pockets. I put the pound note in my waistcoat pocket to make suah of it, and now it's gone. It is vevy unfortunate, but it's no good bein' wude about it."

"You're quite sure it's gone?" asked Tom Merry, as calmly as he could.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy excitedly. "I've felt in evwy beastlay pocket, and it's gone. I am sowwy. I suppose we are stranded."

"Let's see how much we can raise," said Tom Merry, looking round. "I'm down to coppers. Fivence, that's my little lot. Here, chuck it into my cap."

The juniors poured their remaining stock of wealth into their leader's cap. Then Tom Merry counted up. Whether Arthur Augustus had had any of his pockets picked could not be told, for he was too careless with his money to know, but the total for all amounted to only twelve shillings and sixpence, and the tickets to Rylcombe cost nineteen-and-six for the nine.

"Seven bob more wanted," said Tom Merry. "Rotten! We're stranded unless we can raise the wind." He looked



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at his watch. "Train goes in a quarter of an hour. Come along!"

He turned back to the street.

"What's the wheeze?" asked Figgins, following him.

"I'm going to see if I can find my uncle and raise a loan."

"Your uncle, Tom Mewwy! Why, your uncle is in India!"

"Ass! I mean my avuncular relative whose coat-of-arms is the three brass balls—in short, a pawnbroker, fathead!"

"Oh, I compwehend! Shall I pawn my watch? It cost twenty-five guineas, you know, on my birthday, and we weally ought to be able to waise quite a lot of money on it."

"Oh, no; mine will do. It cost thirty bob!" grinned Tom Merry. "But we shall get enough to make up the sum we want, if we can find a shop. I'll ask a policeman."

A stalwart six-foot guardian of the peace looked down with a kindly eye on the juniors as they approached him.

"If you please, constable," said Tom Merry, "can you tell me where there is a pawnshop?"

The policeman stared.

"A—a—a what?" he inquired.

"A pawnbroker," said Tom Merry. "We've lost our cash and can't get home. I want to pawn my watch for seven bob."

The policeman smiled.

"I'm afraid it's no good to-night, my lad," he said. "The pawnbrokers are all closed."

The juniors looked dismayed. Their last hope was knocked on the head. They were stranded, with no possibility of getting back to St. Jim's—stranded in London!

"My word!" said Tom Merry. "It's all up, then, I suppose. Oh, Gussy, why were you born?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I think he ought to have a study licking," said Figgins. "Suppose we roll him in the gutter? It's nice and muddy!"

"You—you wuffian! I wufuse to be wolloed in the gutter! Constable, I have had my pocket picked. I have been wobbed!"

The constable looked amazed.

"I had a pound note in my waistcoat pocket, and—"

"Which waistcoat?" grinned the policeman, looking at D'Arcy's open coat. "You seem to have a lot of 'em!"

"Which waistcoat?" repeated D'Arcy. "Oh, bai Jove, I had forgotten! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at now, image?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, don't you wemembah that I've put on the new waistcoats I bought ovah my own one? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what about it?"

"You see, my money was in my own waistcoat pocket, and I have been feeling in the pockets of the outside waistcoat for it all the time. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you utter ass! You cheerful lunatic!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It is weally vewy funny."

"Yes, you are too funny to live," said Blake, but he was too relieved to be angry. "See if the cash is safe, do!"

D'Arcy unbuttoned his waistcoats one after another, much to the amusement of the policeman. His own garment was revealed at last, and there, sure enough, he found the last pound note in the pocket. He held up the note between his thumb and finger.

"Look, deah boys! Got it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "You ought to be suffocated, Gussy, but we'll forgive you as you've found the money!"

"Yaas, wathah! Heah is a ten-shillin' note, too, in another pocket. I was not bwoked aftah all. I shall be obliged, constable, if you will accept this ten-shillin' note, as you have saved us fwom bein' stwanded!"

And D'Arcy pressed the note in the policeman's hand. Then the juniors hurried into the station.

Just as they were entering, D'Arcy stopped, struck by a sudden thought.

"Hallo! What is it now?" asked Tom Merry.

"We haven't been to the Zoo!"

"Well, we couldn't go everywhere, I suppose," said Figgins.

"No, wathah not; but I particularly wanted to go to the Zoo!"

"Collar him!" roared Tom Merry.

D'Arcy was turning towards the station entrance again. Blake, Figgins, and Kerr promptly collared him and stopped his progress. Tom Merry took the tickets and D'Arcy was assisted on to the platform. The train being in, he was bundled into a carriage.

"I wufuse to go home!" he bawled. "I distinctly wufuse to go in this twain!"

"Sit on him!" said Tom Merry.

"Mv hat! Ov! You are sittin' on my hat, Hewwies!"

"So I am," said Herries, getting up in a leisurely way. "You are going back as you came, Gussy, with a battered tile!"

"You howwid wuff boundah. My ———"

The engine snorted and screamed, the train jerked and started, and moved out of the station. The juniors glued their faces to the misty window for a last glimpse at London.

"Wayland! Charge here for Rylcombe!"

"Change here!" bawled Tom Merry, in Gussy's ear, waking him up from his dose with a start. "Do you want to go on? Buck up!"

The juniors changed trains. Most of them were very sleepy now. The run in the local to Rylcombe was a short one. D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn were fast asleep when they arrived, and had to be roused and bundled into the station hack.

The juniors had enjoyed their day out, but they were glad enough when the hack stopped at the gates of St. Jim's, and the driver rang up Taggles.

Taggles glared at them, but they did not mind him.

"The horders is for you to go straight to the 'Ead," he said. "He's a-waiting for you, and hain't you in for a high old time, not half!"

"Then we'll go straight to the 'Ead!" said Figgins.

Tom Merry paid the driver, and the hack rolled off. Taggles shut the gates and locked them again, and the nine juniors made their way to Dr. Holmes' house, and were at once admitted to the Head's study.

Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was with him, and so was Mr. Ratcliff, the New House master.

"Ah, you have returned at last!" said Dr. Holmes, looking severely at the delinquents as they stood in a row, caps in hand, and looking very penitent. "What have you to say for yourselves?"

"We've had a nice day, sir, thank you!" ventured Tom Merry.

Dr. Holmes concealed a smile, and Mr. Railton turned his face away.

"You might have guessed that I did not intend you to go away alone for a whole day, Merry!" said the Head. "I suppose you have been up to town!"

"Yes sir!"

"As for Blake, Herries, and D'Arcy, and the three New House boys, they had no leave of absence, and therefore must be regarded as truants!"

"Oh, weally, sir," said D'Arcy. "I hope you will forgive us, sir, but we couldn't let Tom Mewwy, Mannahs, and Lowthah go to town alone, with nobody to look aftah them. As it was, they lost themselves in the fog once, and I was vewy anxious till I found them again!"

This time Dr. Holmes could not help smiling.

"But even that does not excuse Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn," he said.

"Yaas, sir, wathah, for they came in the nick of time to wescue me when I was attacked by wuffs after Tom Mewwy lost himself. I should have been wobbed but for Figgins & Co."

"I should have asked you to let them all come, sir," said Tom Merry; "only—only I hadn't the cheek. I hope you won't be severe, sir!"

"Well, you have done very wrong," said Dr. Holmes, relenting. "I was beginning to be anxious about you. But I am glad to see you are safe home again. If you promise me that such a thing shall not occur again, I may deal leniently with you. I know that none of you would break a promise!"

"We promise, sir!" said nine voices in unison.

"Very well, then, you will take a hundred lines each, which you will show to your Housemasters to-morrow. I think that will meet the case. You may go, boys. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir, and thank you very much!"

And the juniors, extremely well satisfied to have got off so cheaply, left the study.

There was a general good-night in the passage, and then they went to their respective Houses. They quickly tumbled into bed, and, tired out by their day's adventure, slept like tops till rising-bell went in the morning.

And the next day the juniors of St. Jim's were listening, with bated breath, to the recital of the adventures of Tom Merry & Co in town.

THE END.

(Look out for next week's thrilling long complete yarn. It is called "THE NOBBLING OF 'NOBBLER' JIM!" and features TOM MERRY & Co. and FERRIS Locke!)

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THERE'S LOTS OF GOOD STUFF IN—



Address all letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, Chums! Have you enjoyed this week's programme of good things? Of course! Well, there's another big treat in store for you all next Wednesday. The long St. Jim's yarn is a corker! Does the title

"THE NOBBLING OF 'NOBBLER JIM'!"

intrigue you? I bet it does! And so will the story, for Martin Clifford has put his beef into it. Talking of Martin Clifford, I'd like to let those of you who missed my chat last week know that he has turned in a double-length yarn of Tom Merry & Co. which is due to appear in the GEM pages in a fortnight's time. This is in response to the overwhelming demand I received from Gemites after the publication of the double-length school story which appeared in our Christmas issue. You like the idea? Then keep your peepers open for this particular number of the GEM. Don't forget—a fortnight's time. Now to switch on again to next week's programme. Owen Conquest's story of the Rookwood heroes is one of the best he has written. In it Arthur Edward Lovell is the star turn, as the title

"LOOKING AFTER LOVELL"

suggests. Don't miss it, chums, on any account. The same applies to the next story in

"THE SKY RAIDERS"

series. There are thrills galore in this story and plenty of healthy excitement. Yes, Potts, the office boy, will be in evidence next week, and his cheeky wit will give you the usual tonic laugh. Finally, there will be more news from the notebook. Order your GEM early—that helps the newsagent, and it certainly saves you from being disappointed.

BANK RAIDERS BEWARE!

American bandits who specialise in bank raids have got something coming to them, as our American cousins say, for the latest American banks have taken extra-special precautions against these unpleasant callers. One of them takes the form of a cunning trap-door upon which the bank raider must stand when he does the hold-up trick. The clerk behind the counter merely looks horrified, doubtless puts up his hands quickly, and at the same time stealthily jerks a lever which is fixed near his foot. Then—hey presto!—the floor upon which the bandit is standing collapses, and down he goes into the special cell prepared for him, in true Sweeney Todd style. The snag with this arrangement

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is that an innocent customer might suffer the same fate if the clerk absent-mindedly jerked the foot lever. However, it's a step in the right direction, so to speak. Another device allows the clerk to touch a lever with his foot, which has the effect of ringing a shrill alarm which carries over a range of several streets. Still another stunt, and perhaps the most effective, is that which places the clerk behind inaccessible steel walls, out of range of all guns. He conducts his business by means of mirror reflections. He can see the customer and the customer can see him, but to hold a gun which would successfully induce the clerk to part up with the cash is a practical impossibility. If the bandit, for instance, fired at the clerk's image in the mirror, he would only succeed in smashing the mirror. On account of these precautions, bank raiders in America are finding a severe falling off in business!

A NEW SPEED BID!

During February, 1931, all the sporting world thrilled to the glorious news of Sir Malcolm Campbell's successful attempt at establishing a new land speed record. On the Daytona Beach of Florida his famous speed car Blue Bird ate up the miles like a meteor, and the special timing apparatus installed to check the attempt pronounced his speed to be 245.736 miles per hour! Having achieved that most racing motorists would be prepared to sit back on their laurels, so to speak. But Sir Malcolm Campbell isn't satisfied that the best has been got out of Blue Bird. This month he intends to have another cut. To quote his own words, he is going to get the last ounce out of Blue Bird before he puts her away for good. A new engine of approximately 1,500 h.p. has been installed in Blue Bird, and additional streamlining alterations have been made in her design. It's a far cry to the Florida beach where Sir Malcolm will attempt to beat his own record, but it is quite safe to say that all true sportsmen, whatever their nationality, will wish this intrepid Britisher "the best of luck."

IS THIS A RECORD?

If you had been watching the footer match between Henley-on-Thames Juniors and Remenham (Berks) which took place recently, you would have experienced extreme difficulty in keeping count of the score. Everton and similar first-class professional Soccer sides have accustomed us to large scores this season, but even the pros cannot equal the feat of the Henley Juniors. Thirty-four times in ninety minutes

these young footballers found their opponents' net, and the only reply the Remenham side made was one goal! Thirty-four goals to one—almost unbelievable, isn't it?

EIGHT THOUSAND MILES BY AIR!

That sounds quite an attractive trip, doesn't it. And when I mention that the cost of this lengthy journey works out in the region of fourpence a mile, which includes meals and hotel accommodation en route, or £130 inclusive, you can quite see how those fortunate enough to have money to burn will take advantage of this latest offer from an enterprising airways firm. The route lies between London and the Cape, the longest air service in the world, and if things work out according to plan, a regular weekly service between England and South Africa will be established. It is an enterprising venture, and puts the kybosh on those folk who always declare that aerial travel will never be popular on account of the enormous expense. Fourpence a mile, all found, wants a bit of beating!

TALLY-HO!

The hunt was in full swing. Master Reynard was hopping it as fast as his powerful muscles would function. Behind him raced the hounds. Then a farmhouse and its adjoining buildings hove in sight. Somewhere among them the cute old fox had gone to earth. The hounds sniffed all round the farm buildings, but the scent was gone, so was the fox. The huntsmen packed up and went home. Next morning the farmer wondered why his terrier dog was so mighty keen to get into a warehouse close handy, so he opened the door. Then he got a surprise. Inside the warehouse was the farm cat, and curled up contentedly beside him was the fox. Apparently the fox had bolted into the warehouse the previous day and kept himself hidden. Later on the cat had been locked in the warehouse for the night, and being unable to get out, the wily old fox had decided to make the best of it. His friendliness with the cat served him well, for the farmer promptly took charge of the fox, carted him off to a large, thick wood, and set him free.

THE NOAH'S ARK OF 1932!

If you had been in the vicinity of Dumstable Station a few weeks ago you would have rubbed your eyes and wondered whether old man Noah had come to life again, complete with the famous Ark in which the animals trooped two by two. For into the station puffed a fussy train containing two elephants, twelve lions, two tigers, five leopards, three bears, two wolves, three hyenas, two dromedaries, twenty-five monkeys, a sea lion, fifty parrots, two crown cranes, a kangaroo, a pelican, and forty other "oddmments" of animal life! All these beasts originally belonged to Bostock's famous circus, which has now been closed down, and for the time being Whipsnade, the open-air Zoo, will be their home. It took six hours to get this modern Ark "loaded" with its wild cargo, and people on the stations through which this "special" train" passed must have wondered mightily at the weird and dreadful roars, howls, and squeaks that came from its occupants.

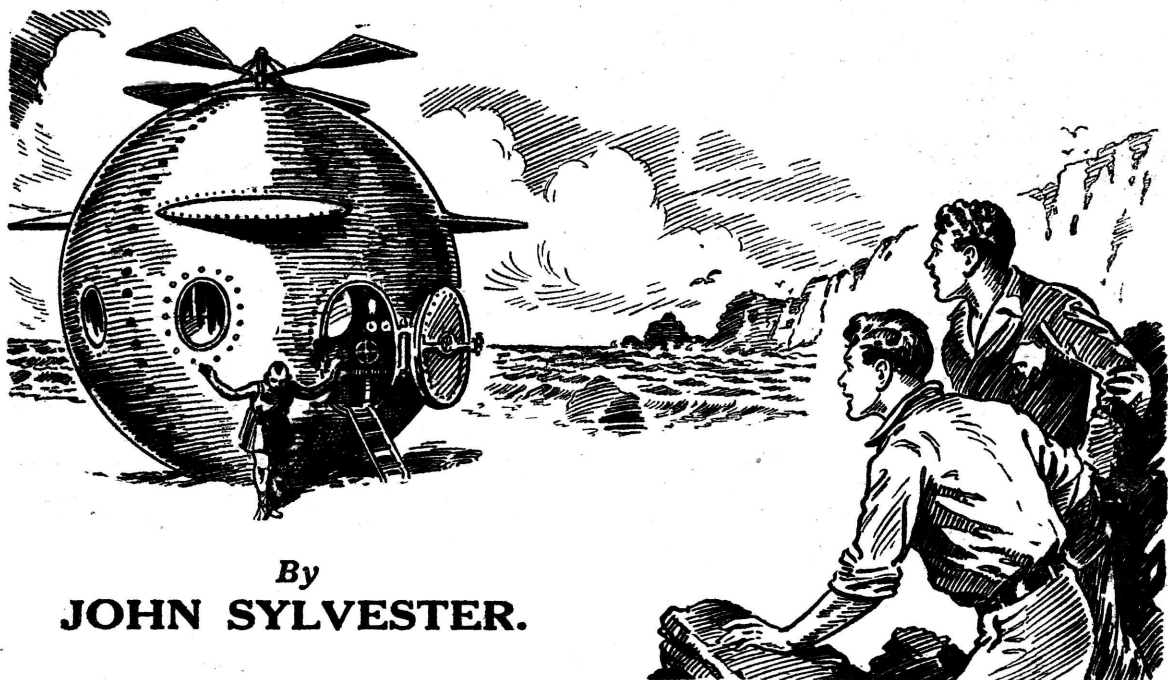
HEARD THIS ONE?

School Inspector (to bright youth): "What would you do, Tommy, if you had a million pounds?"
Bright Youth: "Nothing!"

YOUR EDITOR

THRILLING COMPLETE NEW ADVENTURE STORY.

THE SKY RAIDERS!



By
JOHN SYLVESTER.

MEET BILLY, NICK, AND OSAKA! They're marooned on Mars! And though it may be fine, it simply rains adventures!

CHAPTER 1. The Meteor.

GOSH, we are moving!"

Nick Redburn gave a cry of amazement, and rushed to one of the portholes. He was followed by his companion, Billy Armstrong.

They were in a circular cabin, the walls of which were covered with switchboards, glowing valves, intricate mechanism. That was all they knew.

Half an hour ago, on a morning stroll along the Cornish coast, where they were holidaying, they came across this airship—as it proved to be. It was a colossal aluminium sphere, unlike anything they had seen before.

It was in charge of a boy no older than themselves, but who had a curious bluish skin. Now he was smiling at them, quite friendly, though they hadn't been able to understand a word he said; and he was gripping one of the control levers.

"My hat!" Billy gasped. "If your idea is right—"

Nick's idea sounded incredible at first. It was that this astounding machine contained a visitor from another planet. It was the only theory that accounted for a boy with a blue skin.

Meanwhile, the airship had left the ground. And they were aboard.

In a second, it seemed, the sea became a gleaming expanse of gold, immeasurably below, and then everything was blotted out but white, clinging clouds.

"But surely—"

Nick broke off. His panic had been momentary. He was swept by a gust of excitement. They were leaving the earth behind them. He was convinced they were being whirled into space by a machine that had travelled millions of miles across icy desolation from a distant planet.

"It's a blinking nightmare!" Billy was saying to himself, as the clouds pressed against the porthole like cotton-wool. "I'll wake up presently."

"Nightmare! It's the biggest adventure that could happen to anyone. And I know I'm right," Nick cried. "This man or boy, or whatever he is, proves it. You've heard of red skins, yellow skins, black skins; but you can go all over the world without finding a blue skin. Yet

why not? Why shouldn't there be blue men, or green men, or purple men, so far as that goes?"

"Well, there aren't," was all Billy could reply.

"But there are! Here's one in front of us. Apart from that, he isn't terribly different from ourselves. He's just what you'd expect to find if you could leave the earth and visit one of the stars."

"Nick, you are crazy. Besides," said Billy, with a breathless afterthought, "no one could live on a star. It's too dashed hot!"

"Planet, then," said Nick impatiently. But the idea had gripped him. It was stupendous. "It can't be anything else. This airship is so utterly different from anything that's been thought of. You often read about the planets being inhabited. Some of them must be. They know a dickens of a lot more than we do. They may have been trying to get into touch with us for hundreds of years. And now it's happened. This is their first success."

Billy stared. He was speechless. Yet it no longer sounded so wildly extravagant. After all, the airship had to be accounted for, and also this amazing creature.

If any further proof were needed, it came when the airship burst through the atmospheric veil, so that the sky was no longer bright blue. It entered an eternal night that was yet brilliant because of the enormous gleaming mass of the earth suspended beneath them.

It was eerie and staggering like a colossal phosphorescent globe. The shape of the continent of Europe, with the northern part of Africa stood out in luminous relief.

"There's England! Just as though you were looking down at a map!" exclaimed Nick excitedly.

"But look at all the other stars! And the sun! Gee, I'm nearly blinded!" cried Billy.

He stepped back, covering his dazzled eyes with his hand; but at that moment there was a warning cry. Until now the blue-skinned boy had been watching them with curiosity. All at once, however, he saw rushing towards them one of the most terrible perils of the sky.

Meteors!

Billy saw the emerald brilliance of the vast planet they were leaving streaked by something dark.

He craned his neck, and now it was like looking at a

fantastic barrage, but instead of shells, huge masses of rock, weighing thousands of tons, were tearing towards them.

It seemed impossible they could escape being hit. They were running into a cluster of meteors, which at first resembled a swarm of bees, but now looked like a frightful avalanche about to sweep them to destruction.

Billy uttered a sharp cry, more of anger and disappointment than fear. If they were even brushed by one of those rocks, whirling at such incredible speed, the tiny spherical airship in which they were braving the wastes of space, would burst into nothingness like a soap bubble.

"We've got to get there! We can't crash now; we've only just started!" he cried, almost fiercely.

But the boy pilot was back at the controls. He was working two levers frantically. Would he be too late?

A terrifying mountain of stone nearly blotted out the view from the porthole. It gleamed like platinum in the rays of a naked sun. It was right on top of them now, growing bigger and bigger. The veins of ore were plainly visible. In another moment—

They dived.

A dreadful black shadow plunged them into momentary darkness. They could do no more. They were dropping as rapidly as possible.

Tensely they waited, and then the shadow passed.

Throughout there had been no sound. That was the uncanny part. Like a monstrous bird of prey the meteor seemed to hang over them, and then vanish.

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Billy, breathing again. "But what's going to happen next?"

"Ask me another!" exclaimed Nick. "But to think nobody knows about this, to think we just dropped off the face of the earth!"

"That's the best part of it," grinned Billy, his eyes sparkling. "But, I say, I'm hungry."

"You are likely to be for a long time. Do you know how far we've got to go?"

Billy shook his head.

"Well, Mars is the nearest planet, and that's about fifty million miles. We'll be here for weeks—months!"

It was an adventure, the biggest and most amazing that could ever happen. They would be the first human beings to explore the mystery of the sky, and set foot on another planet.

CHAPTER 2.

Mars!

IT took months, as Nicky said. But there was no way of measuring time. There was neither night nor day.

They did not take long, however, making friends with their strange companion. In a surprisingly short time they picked up enough of his language to be able to ask him questions. And they found that the first guess was right—they were bound for Mars.

He seemed much like themselves, except for the colour of his face. But, as Nick had pointed out, if there were black races, why shouldn't there be blue races? On Mars, they gathered, nearly everyone was blue, except a race of dwarfs with long hair and an unpleasant habit of torturing prisoners.

Mars, from all accounts, was more highly developed than the earth, although a much smaller part of it was inhabited by civilised beings. There were dense jungles which it was death to enter.

Scientists from Mars had made frequent attempts to communicate with their nearest neighbour, the Earth.

On this recent attempt fifty airships had set out controlled by wireless. Of the fate of the others Osaka, as he was called, could say nothing.

"I was with my uncle," Osaka explained. "We fell into the sea, and he was drowned. Then we drifted to where you found me."

"But very likely others have landed on the earth," said Billy.

"It is possible," Osaka nodded.

Shortly after this an unforeseen difficulty arose. The supply of air began to run short.

They were near their destination when it first happened. Day by day they were eagerly watching the planet they were approaching grow larger and larger.

At last it seemed to fill the sky. It no longer seemed above but beneath them. It was criss-crossed by strange geometrical markings—the canals which astronomers had observed and wondered about from the earth. Continents and seas, and tremendous stretches of yellow vegetation became visible.

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Billy shouted aloud with excitement as he saw the land coming closer.

"Ahoy, Nick! I feel like good old Columbus. But, I say—what's wrong?"

As he spoke, something happened to them both. There was a queer gurgle from behind. Osaka threw up his hands and pitched forward.

Nick was clutching his throat, and Billy felt his heart suddenly pound like a piston. He was struggling for breath.

They must get air—air at any cost. He realised, in a flash, that the precious supply had run just short.

Nick had collapsed, and lay panting on the floor. The machine, no longer controlled, was zigzagging downward. The stream of wireless waves could not correct the details of its course, but was only powerful enough to pull it approximately.

Billy had picked up something about the management of the ship, but the first essential was air. They could only last a few seconds longer in this hermetically sealed trap. But there was air outside.

His lungs were bursting, but with a supreme effort Billy struggled to an illuminated dial. He turned a small wheel, and instantly the panel by which they had entered flew open.

A terrific gust of wind blew in. The effect was instantaneous. His parched lungs responded, and he saw the lump figures on the floor stir into life.

But they were near the ground. He must slow down the acceleration, or they would crash. He staggered to another lever and pulled it hard.

He was only just in time. Almost as he did so they struck the ground. He was sent spinning against the opposite wall of the cabin.

There was a squelching sound; they still seemed to be sinking. The portholes were blackened by a curtain of mud. Through the open door was a glimpse of incredible vegetation, waving like long ribbons of seaweed.

Nick had opened his eyes. He managed to stagger to his feet.

"What happened?" he stammered.

"You were winded, that's all. But it doesn't matter. We made a good landing. We are safe enough now."

Osaka, meanwhile, had also risen. He was still panting, and at Billy's optimistic announcement he shook his head.

"We are a long way from being safe. We've fallen into the Yellow Swamp."

"But, can't we— Good heavens, do you mean we are stuck?" asked Billy, as the truth began to dawn on him.

"We can't fly any farther," said Osaka, suddenly pointing. "Look, we are sinking deeper every minute!"

They both followed the direction in which he was pointing. Instantly their relief was turned into dismay.

A dark, ochre-streaked slime was creeping in through the open door. Moreover, the floor had already tilted, and the dreadful suction of the mud could be perceptibly felt.

"The swamp extends for hundreds of miles," Osaka was saying. "It has never been explored. There are reptiles living in it which have been extinct for thousands of years on the other side of Mars."

Extinct reptiles! Billy had a mental picture of drawings he had once seen of the ichthyosaurus and pterodactyl. Perhaps the monsters dwelling in this swamp were even worse.

Anyway, what did it matter? If they had come safely for millions of miles across space, they needn't be alarmed by anything else. They would know more about Mars, if this part had never been explored, than the Martians themselves.

"We'd better get out. I want to enjoy the scenery!" Billy said, with a defiant grin.

But it was not so easy to get out.

He led the way, but immediately he found himself floundering in the invading mud. It clung to his legs like thick treacle. He managed to fight his way to the door, and then a startling sight met his gaze.

They had fallen into a sea of liquid slime, bubbling with the release of imprisoned gases, dotted with tiny islets on which strange trees were growing.

"Climb on to the top of the airship," he heard Osaka call out. "I'm bringing a rope."

What could they do with a rope?

But he obeyed, and, glancing back over his shoulder, he saw the others were following. Steps had been cut in the spherical, slippery side, but the slightest false move meant dropping to certain death in that treacherous mire.

He reached the top, however. Osaka scrambled up after him, a coil of rope in his hand. The Martian boy swung this above his head, and a noose went whirling towards one of the tall trees on the nearest islet.

"It's our only chance," he said.

The noose slipped over the branch of a tree. Fastening the other end, Osaka motioned to Billy.

"It will only bear one of us. You must be quick."

Billy disliked being the first to save himself, but there was no time to argue. The airship was sinking farther into the mud. It gave a violent lurch even as he stepped off the roof, hanging by his hands from the taut rope.

It was slow progress. The muscles of his arms ached as he made his way, hand over hand, like an acrobat. All at once he heard Nick shout in alarm.

For an instant he paused. Looking down, his heart missed a beat. What he saw was so incredible that he could hardly believe his senses.

Something was rising out of the slime not fifty yards away. A pair of dripping feelers waved in the air. Then a whitish, scaly body—immense, the size of an elephant.

It rose slowly, with yellow ooze slithering from the surface. An enormous, grotesque monster, with a hundred arms, like a colossal octopus.

Billy gasped. The fantastic thing was sweeping towards

the rope, and it bent dangerously. But he was fighting an uneven battle. With a choking cry he let go.

For a sickening instant he seemed suspended in mid-air. Then he plunged down, and he saw a mountain of scaly skin, and a white, jelly-like mouth opening to receive him.

This was the finish. But in the last second, before he lost consciousness, he braced himself inwardly. It had been worth while—this adventure. Even though it ended in this terrible swamp.

"But if only I had a gun—anything—"

He struck the surface with a crash. Loathsome tentacles, quivering with eagerness, were closing around him. Other monsters, hungry, and jealous of the prey, were racing towards the spot.

But Billy no longer saw them. Everything went black.

When he opened his eyes the blackness was still complete. But he realised, dazedly, he was on dry land. His heart gave a wild leap as he recognised Nick's voice.

"I thought you were never going to wake up!" exclaimed Nick, in relief.

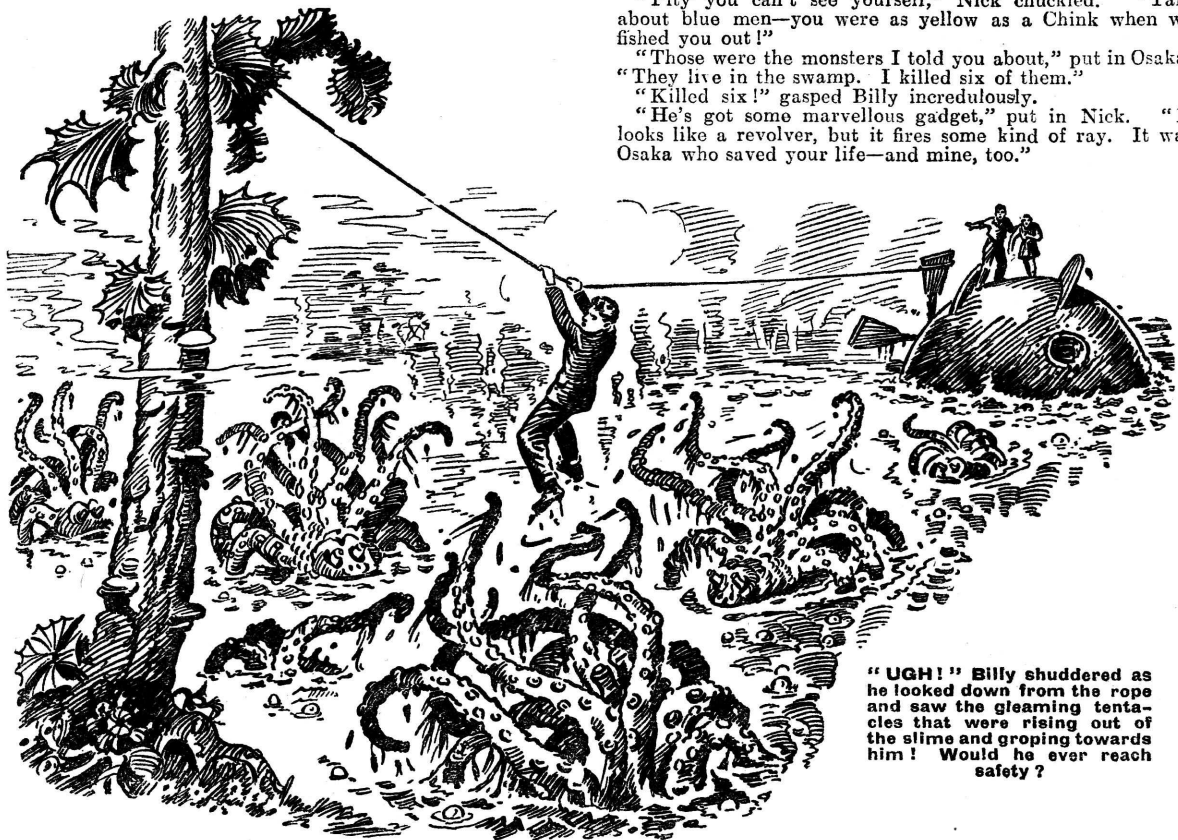
"But where—how?" Billy spluttered, trying to sit up.

"Pity you can't see yourself," Nick chuckled. "Talk about blue men—you were as yellow as a Chink when we fished you out!"

"Those were the monsters I told you about," put in Osaka. "They live in the swamp. I killed six of them."

"Killed six!" gasped Billy incredulously.

"He's got some marvellous gadget," put in Nick. "It looks like a revolver, but it fires some kind of ray. It was Osaka who saved your life—and mine, too."



"UGH!" Billy shuddered as he looked down from the rope and saw the gleaming tentacles that were rising out of the slime and groping towards him! Would he ever reach safety?

him, its arms moving like the legs of an enormous spider. It seemed to be gliding at amazing speed over the surface of the mire.

Nor was it alone. As far as he could see, the mud was being churned up, and similar monsters were stirring, like foul, hideous creatures that live under the sea tremendously magnified.

Could he reach the safety of the tiny island in time? It seemed impossible. Even if he did, what of Nick and Osaka, marooned on the sinking airship?

He dared not look. Setting his teeth, he swung himself along the stretched rope. But as he moved, hanging first by one hand and then by the other, those dreadful reptiles rushed towards him.

They seemed to move with one accord and one object, like a shoal of sharks scenting human flesh. Tentacles flashed in the sun immediately beneath him. They waved and lengthened, trying to reach his legs.

He jerked himself out of reach. But a moment later something coiled around his ankle and tightened.

He had no knife, no weapon of any kind. He struggled to free himself, but it was impossible. Another tentacle leapt out like a whip and seized his right leg.

To his horror he was being dragged down. He clung to

"Then we are on the island? You managed to reach it?"

"Yes, and we are safe for the night. So long as it's dark we shan't be attacked."

Billy wiped the mud from his eyes. He was thinking hard.

"To-morrow—" he began.

"We'll let to-morrow look after itself. But, according to Osaka things are going to be even more lively."

"They will come back," said Osaka. "Those beasts you saw—and others more terrible."

"Nothing like being cheerful, old sport. But you've got a useful little gun," said Nick.

"Unfortunately," said Osaka, "there is only one charge left. When that is gone—"

He broke off. A strange sound suddenly reached them, like the howl of a rising wind. It was weird, uncanny, and was followed by a sullen, reverberating roar.

Billy sat up with a jerk. His head had magically cleared.

"What was that?" he whispered.

"Drums," came the reply. "The swamp is inhabited by a race of dwarfs. We have nothing to fear until daylight, but I think those drums are summoning the tribes. I believe," Osaka added, listening again to the menacing rumble, "they know we are here."

CHAPTER 3.

A Strange Flight.

WHERE on earth—"

Billy sat up and rubbed his eyes. Then he remembered. He wasn't on earth at all. He was fifty million miles away. He and Nick were the first earth-dwellers to wake up on the planet, Mars.

"Nicky! Good lord, are you asleep?" he called. But there was no answer. Nor was there any sign either of Nick or the Martian boy, Osaka.

Alarmed, he sprang to his feet. He was thoroughly wide awake now. He realised they were on a tiny island in the middle of a marsh, Underneath the liquid mud of this enormous bog was the airship in which they had travelled.

He remembered the fantastic monsters that had risen out of the slime the previous night—huge, octopus-like creatures, with a hundred tentacles, capable of skimming across the surface of the swamp-like, colossal spiders.

And that was only the beginning. There must be other creatures even more startling. Last night they had heard drums beating. Osaka had said the jungle, on the opposite shore, was inhabited by a race of dwarfs.

"All to the good," reflected Billy. "If we didn't want things to happen, we might as well have stayed at home." Then he made a trumpet of his hands. "Nick!" he yelled.

Still no answer. This time he felt really scared. It wouldn't take five minutes to explore the island, and it didn't. The result was not a sign either of Nick or the Martian boy.

At first Billy could hardly believe his senses. Had they heard him shouting they would obviously have replied. If they couldn't hear him, they must have left the island. But where could they have gone?

The island was completely surrounded by bog the consistency of thick treacle. It was impossible to cross it; madness to try.

What had happened during the night while he was asleep? Had the tentacles of one of those monsters reached out and swept them to a hideous death before they could even utter a warning cry?

He gave a shudder. To be left alone— But what was that whirling sound? For a moment it seemed so like the drone of an aeroplane that he looked up.

"Holy smoke!" he gasped.

Was it a bird, or some winged reptile? He wasn't sure of the difference, but he had never seen any living thing so big that could still fly.

It resembled more than anything else a flying fox. The furry body showed between moth-shaped wings, and they must have measured thirty feet from tip to tip. They flapped slowly as the thing hovered, then suddenly it came swooping down.

He realised it was rushing straight at him. He had no weapon with which to defend himself, nor would anything short of a big game rifle have been of much use. He started to run, hoping to make for the shelter of the trees.

But he was too late. He stumbled in his wild scramble, and before he could pick himself up there was a rush of air and the light was blotted out. The wings seemed to shut out the sun like an immense umbrella.

What could he do? To fight this weird creature was useless. Its talons were sinking into his waist like sharp nails. In another moment they would tear him to pieces.

But to his amazement they didn't. The wings had drooped, but now they were spreading out again. More astounding still, he was being actually lifted from the ground.

"My sainted aunt! It's going to take me for a joy-ride!" he nearly cried out.

For a second he could hardly believe that this was actually happening. He was being carried upwards. The claws dug in more sharply, and the momentum increased. They were now shooting straight up into the air.

Where was he being taken? If he were dropped— He looked down. Two hundred feet below, the marsh looked smooth and yellow in the morning sun. But it was no longer still.

Once more there was a stirring in its mysterious depths. A white tentacle rose like a long, wriggling worm; then another. Finally the octopus came into view.

He saw two more similarly rise to the surface. Powerful brutes, to be able to move in that thick slime as easily as a crab under water. They must have scented him.

So far he was out of their reach. If he fell from these mighty claws he would be snapped up like a morsel dropping from the sky. But if he didn't, what could he hope for?

"I wonder if this is what happened to Nick and Osaka?" he thought.

He was being rushed through the air at a speed that made him dizzy. They were across the swamp now. Beneath was

firm ground and a jungle of trunkless trees and mammoth ferns.

They looked, as on the previous night, like tremendous ribbons of seaweed waving in the breeze.

"You are for it now, Billy!" he muttered, as they swooped downwards.

For a moment he shut his eyes as the ground rose up sickeningly. But despite the speed with which the winged reptile tore down, there was no violent impact. His dangling feet touched the ground, and the claws were withdrawn.

A sudden yelling and beating of drums made him look to the left, and he saw a group of figures stranger than anything he could have imagined.

They were like pygmies, stark naked except for a loin-cloth. They were not blue-skinned, like Osaka, but covered with black and white stripes.

These may have been painted, for their faces were horribly tattooed. They wore heavy bone rings—the size of an ordinary bangle—in their underlips, and they carried spears.

But still more amazing was the behaviour of the winged reptile itself. Instead of attacking the dwarfs it settled about ten yards away, folding its wings, and standing so motionless that it looked like some fantastic piece of sculpture.

Billy could only gape incredulously. The truth—plain enough in one sense—seemed impossible to believe. Surely this weird, bat-like creature wasn't tame enough to be used by the natives!

Yet there appeared to be no other explanation. This was Mars, after all. Anything might happen here. It was possible that these dwarfs or pygmies had trained the reptile to catch intruders for them.

Meanwhile, the natives themselves were approaching. Billy stiffened, hastily speculating on his chances of knocking down the leader and bolting.

But where could he run to? He wouldn't stand much chance if he did escape in a forest that was like a nightmare. Also, he wouldn't get far before those claws grabbed him again, and next time they might not be so gentle.

"Better wait and see," he reflected. "After all, the blighters may only be inquisitive."

He hadn't long to wait. A noose quivered in the air and whirled round his arms. Not until it was drawn tight, so that it was impossible to move his arms, did the dwarfs venture right up to him.

The tallest of them came up to his shoulders. They had fuzzy hair and queer, wizened faces, reminding him of pictures he had seen of Australian aborigines.

Their spears, he noticed, were made out of some tough wood, not metal, sharply pointed as a thorn, and probably poisoned.

Several spears were thrust out threateningly, and the gesticulations made it clear he was meant to walk on. He decided to obey.

Instantly a drum was beaten vigorously. No doubt that was a message to other natives that he had been captured. They would now take him into the village. But suppose—

He caught his breath. A staggering possibility had just struck him.

"If only Nick was served the same way! By Jove, I believe that's the explanation!"

His heart knocked with excitement. He hurried forward eagerly now. The dwarfs were leaping about on every side of him like monkeys.

But where was the village? This was sheer jungle. There was no sign of any huts.

He was brought to a stop in front of a big shrub with large hairy leaves. One of the dwarfs knocked aside the leaves with a spear and disclosed a hole in the ground.

It looked like the burrow of some wild beast, but a moment later Billy was pushed forward.

The drop was about four or five feet. Shouts from behind urged him on. He had to bend nearly double to avoid hitting his head against the roof of the tunnel.

He was still hurried on. They passed through cave after cave, joined by narrow corridors. Then abruptly he was brought to a halt on the brink of what looked like a deep well shaft.

The crowd behind him were shouting raucously. A spear pricked his back. But as he still didn't move a dozen pairs of hands thrust him with such unexpected violence that he lost his balance.

He felt himself falling through inky darkness. Above, grotesque faces, in the glare of torchlight, peered down the black tunnel through which he was plunging.

But the actual distance seemed much greater to him than it was. When he struck the bottom, it was not hard, as he feared, but surprisingly soft.

Then the reason flashed on him. He gave a gasp as something underneath him moved—something alive.

What has Billy fallen on? Where are Nick and Osaka? Whatever you do don't miss the continuation of this gripping yarn in next week's GEM!

SIDE-SPLITTING COMPLETE ROOKWOOD YARN.

LOVELL'S LOVE AFFAIR!

By OWEN CONQUEST.



**When Lovell plays the Cavalier he is a scream—not half!
So read this topping yarn and then—just hold your sides and laugh!**

CHAPTER 1. Smitten!

HEAR that?" Arthur Edward Lovell asked that question. Lovell's three companions nodded. Jimmy Silver and Newcome and Raby had all heard.

"Couldn't miss it!" remarked Jimmy Silver. "Someone yelled out—a girl, I fancy."

"Just what I thought," said Raby. "Anything wrong, I wonder?"

"Soon find out," remarked Newcome. "It came from the other side of the hedge."

"Then let's jolly well find out!" snapped Lovell. "This way!"

He made a move for the hedge near which the Fistical Four had halted.

Jimmy Silver & Co. hesitated for a moment, then they followed. They were returning to Rookwood from Coombe village by the short cut through the fields, on account of its being near the locking-up hour. Time was precious, but if there was a damsel in distress, even the prospect of being locked out of gates had to be disregarded.

Lovell found a gap in the hedge and dived through. His chums came close on his heels. They heard Lovell yell as they scrambled after him.

"You cad! Let her go!"

"Help!" came a cry, in the same feminine tone that they had heard shrill out a few seconds before.

Silver and Newcome and Raby staggered to their feet and took their bearings. That task occupied but little time, for it was easy to see what had happened.

A struggle was taking place near the hedgerow. The participants were a rough-looking, square-jawed gentleman and a charming, though much distressed, young lady. The bone of contention was apparently the young lady's handbag. "A footpad!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Tackle him!"

"What ho!"

"Lovell's in already!"

And Lovell was. Arthur Edward, though useful with his fists, was not a pugnacious fellow. But the sight of beauty in distress had evidently stirred a latent pugnacity within him. He flung himself on the footpad as though his life depended on it.

The gentleman of the road was swept off his feet—literally. Lovell's right landed on the side of his jaw, and Lovell's left

caught him behind the ear. The combined effect was to bowl him clean over.

"Yu-u-urp!" yelled the footpad.

"Collar him!" howled Jimmy Silver. "We'll hand him over to the police!"

The Fistical Four flung themselves into the fray; but the square-jawed gentleman, though somewhat overweighted in appearance, had a turn of speed, acquired, possibly, in previous emergencies of the same kind. Before they could pin him down he was on his feet again.

Lovell flew at him again; but this time it was the other man that got in first. A leg-of-mutton fist lashed out, and Lovell's chin experienced the sensation of being kicked by a mule.

Jimmy Silver and the others closed round the ruffian; but he pushed them violently aside, hesitated for a moment as though wondering whether he could still acquire anything before he went, then turned on his heel and ran for it.

"After him!" sang out Jimmy Silver.

They broke into a run. Then something pulled them up. The young lady was calling out to them.

"Stop! Let him go, please!"

The three juniors reluctantly stopped.

"But he ought to be under lock and key!" protested Jimmy Silver. "We can get him all right!"

"But you might be hurt!"

"We'll risk that."

"Then there's your friend. Are you going to leave him?"

"Well, the rotter's got a good start, anyway!" grunted Jimmy Silver, none too graciously. "We'll tell the police instead. How do you feel, old bean?"

Lovell stood up again, nursing his chin.

"Fine, thanks!" he replied, surprisingly enough. "I'm all right!"

"But you must be damaged, old chap; he gave you a fearful biff!"

"It was nothing! How are you, miss?" inquired Lovell sheepishly.

The young lady they had assisted was regarding Arthur Edward Lovell with undisguised admiration. Now that the juniors had time to look at her they observed that she was decidedly pretty.

"I'm unhurt, thanks to you!" she said. "It was splendid of you to help me—all of you."

"Pleasure!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Pity we didn't catch the blighter, though!"

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"I'd rather he got away than see any of you injured. But are you sure you're really not hurt? Hadn't you better see a doctor?"

Lovell's face, to the surprise of his chums, turned a rosy pink under the young lady's anxious glance.

"I'm as right as rain, thanks!" he said. "I—I was going to suggest, after what's happened, that we'd better see you home."

The girl's eyes turned to Lovell's cap and she smiled. "It will be very easy for you to do that. You belong to Rookwood, don't you?"

"We do, and we're going to be late for calling-over, too!" remarked Raby.

"Then I shan't make you any later, for I am going to Rookwood myself!"

"You're the Head's niece, then—Brenda Chisholm?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Well, that's a coincidence!"

"No need to introduce myself now!" said the Head's niece, with a merry laugh. "How is it that I'm so well known before I've even arrived?"

"News soon gets round," said Jimmy Silver sagely. "Anyway, it's something of an event to have lady visitors staying at the Head's house. What are you looking like a boiled owl for, Lovell?"

Lovell started. "I didn't know I was." "Well, you were! But we'll have to make a move, now. If you're ready, Miss Chisholm—"

"I'm quite ready! And please don't worry about being late! I shall speak to uncle as soon as I see him, and I know it will be quite all right."

"Oh, good! Kim on, then, chaps!" And in the gathering dusk they resumed their journey to Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver & Co. talked away very cheerily with their new and charming acquaintance on the way. The chums of the Fourth didn't find a lot in common with girls, as a rule; but Brenda Chisholm's frank and engaging manner overcame their instinctive prejudice.

Arthur Edward Lovell did not seem to find it so easy to join in the chatter. Brenda Chisholm addressed more of her remarks to him than to any of the others, which, considering the leading part Lovell had taken in her rescue, was not unnatural. But something seemed to tie Lovell's tongue when it came to replying.

The Fistical Four felt quite sorry when the gates of Rookwood were reached. They had enjoyed the walk and the talk immensely.

Jimmy Silver rang the bell, and old Mack turned out of his lodge, muttering to himself.

"Nice goin's on, don't think! Which there'll be trouble for you young raskils! Ho, a lady, too!"

"I'm Miss Chisholm," announced the Head's niece, as the old porter turned his key in the lock. "Did my luggage arrive safely?"

"Ho, yes, miss! Which the 'Ead, your uncle, feels worried over you bein' so late."

"I'll see him at once. Will you show me the way to his house, boys?"

The Fistical Four were only too glad of the chance. They marched triumphantly through the gates and led their fair companion past the lodge in the direction of the Head's house, leaving old Mack fairly blinking.

Naturally, in the exceptional circumstances, Dr. Chisholm overlooked their lateness, when the matter had been explained to him. He graciously thanked his niece's rescuers, then sent them off to their House with a note to Mr. Dalton.

The Fistical Four returned to the Classical House in great good humour.

"Not a bad little entertainment, my pippins!" said Jimmy Silver. "For a girl, Brenda Chisholm's rather exceptional!"

"Hear, hear!" Then Arthur Edward Lovell found his tongue again.

"Exceptional!" he said witheringly. "Is that all you can think to say about her? What about her face? What about her lips? And her eyes—did you notice her eyes?"

Jimmy Silver stared. "Can't say I did. Was there something wrong with 'em, then?"

"Wrong?" gasped Lovell. "I should jolly well say not! Why, they're wonderful! Like—like limpid pools!"

"Great pip!" "Seem to have read that in a novel somewhere!" remarked Jimmy Silver, rubbing his chin reflectively. "But look here, Lovell, old scout—"

"You chaps don't seem to have an eye for beauty," went on Lovell, unheeding. "Why, Miss Chisholm's the most beautiful girl it's possible to imagine!"

"My hat!" "Draw it mild, old bean!"

"Arthur Edward Lovell," said Jimmy Silver solemnly, "there's only one interpretation to be placed on your

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remarks. Ever since we ran into her I've thought something was happening to you, and now I'm sure of it. You're smitten!"

"Great pip! Of course!" howled Raby. "Lovell's in love! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Newcome. "You silly asses—" began Lovell furiously.

"Pax!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Excuse 'em, old chap. They don't understand the seriousness of—ahem!—affairs of the heart like we old stagers do. Where are you going?"

"Indoors!" snorted Lovell. "If the best you fellows can do is to cackle and make idiotic attempts to be serious, I'll leave you till you get over it!"

Having said which, Arthur Edward tramped off in high dudgeon.

"Sealed, signed, and settled!" remarked Jimmy Silver, as he and his two remaining followers went in after Lovell. "There's no doubt about it now. Lovell's spoony!"

And Jimmy Silver's opinion was amply confirmed by what came to pass very soon after.

CHAPTER 2.

Lovell in Love!

"LOVELL!" No answer. "Lovell!" repeated Richard Dalton, M.A., beginning to glare in the direction of Lovell's desk in the Fourth Form.

Still no reply. Arthur Edward Lovell appeared to be writing. What he was writing was not known to Mr. Dalton, but from the dreamy, far-away look in Lovell's eyes, the master of the Fourth shrewdly guessed that it was not concerned with the lesson.

Mr. Dalton brought down his pointer on the front of his desk with a crash and fairly opened his lungs:

"Lovell!" "Oh! Yes, sir!"

Lovell, with a violent start, came round at last. "Read out what you were writing on that sheet of paper under your desk!"

Lovell gasped. "I—I can't, sir. It's—it's private!"

"Nothing is private in class!" retorted Dicky Dalton. "Are you prepared to read it out?"

Lovell's expression was quite extraordinary. Whatever was on the paper, it was very evident that he did not want it read aloud to the Fourth.

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd much rather not!" he faltered.

"Then Higgs shall do it for you!" snapped Mr. Dalton. "Take the paper from Lovell, Higgs, and read it out aloud!"

Higgs, whose desk was next to Lovell's, grinned with the utmost cheerfulness, and reached out for Lovell's precious scrap of paper. Arthur Edward made a movement to stop him, but he was too late. In a couple of seconds Higgs was on his feet, holding the sheet of paper before him.

Then came the bombshell.

"To the Heart Editress, the Sloppy Magazine," read out Higgs, his eyes fairly goggling as he saw what was coming.

"Dear Madam,—I am writing to ask your advice. I am fifteen years of age, and I have fallen in love with a young lady several years older than myself—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a roar from the Fourth. Even Silver and Newcome and Raby, sworn chums of Lovell as they were, could not help it. They yelled.

Dicky Dalton looked at Lovell, then looked at the Fourth. He seemed almost overcome.

"Silence!" he managed to splutter at last. The laughter died away at last, and Higgs continued:

"I don't know yet whether she cares for me or not, but I feel that she is not altogether indifferent. Do you think it wise for me to propose soon, or shall I put it off till I am a little older?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth.

Dicky Dalton tore at his collar as though it had begun to throttle him.

"Is that all, Higgs?" he asked.

"That's all, sir—quite enough, too!" added Higgs, sotto voce.

"Lovell! Boy! Is this a weird attempt at a practical joke, or—or is it—can it possibly be—"

"I'd rather not discuss personal matters in class, sir!" said Lovell, his face scarlet. "But it's not a joke, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence!" roared Dicky Dalton. "That implies, then,



"WHOOOP!!" The tall young man let out a wild yell as Lovell hurled himself upon him and tried to drag him to the ground.

Lovell, that this—this preposterous letter is written in good faith? Ridiculous!"

"Well, sir—"

"Preposterous!" hooted the master of the Fourth. "If I ever catch you writing such nonsensical rubbish again, Lovell, I shall take you straight to the Head! In the meantime, I hope to impress on you that in any case it must not be written in class. Stand out!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Arthur Edward Lovell was rather glad to stand out in preference to pursuing the subject. He went to the front of the class; Dicky Dalton's cane suddenly loomed into prominence, and Dicky Dalton's cane rose and fell quite a number of times.

After that the romantic Fourth-Former returned unhappily to his desk, and Dicky Dalton carried on with mathematics. The Fourth listened with respectful attention. But despite that fact, they acquired but little mathematical knowledge during the remainder of the lesson. One subject only was in the minds of the Fourth now. That subject was Lovell the Lover!

CHAPTER 3.

The Knight Errant!

"HERE he comes!"
 "Make way for the giddy Don Juan!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush to surround Arthur Edward Lovell as he came out of the Form-room that morning.

"Look here, you silly asses—" said Lovell.

"What's she like, Lovell?"

"Tell us all about her, old bean! Has she got cross eyes?"

"And a red nose?"

"And false teeth?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell glared.

"Sounds as if some of you chaps would like a thick ear! You'll jolly well get it in a minute!"

"There, there!" grinned Tommy Dodd of the Modern House. "Don't loose its 'ickle temper! What would Amelia say?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling idiots—"

"But, seriously, Lovell, old chap," said the leader of the Fistical Four cheerfully, "you can't allow this to go on.

Miss Chisholm is a nice girl, and all that, but it's all rot for you to start getting sentimental over her—and it's got to stop! It's a 'halfer' to-day, and you've got a good chance to forget all about her. What about a run over to Bagshot on our bikes, a talkie show, and tea out?"

"Can't be done!" said Lovell promptly.

"The other direction, then? We can trot down to Coombe and take a train—"

"I'm sorry, but I've decided to stay in this afternoon!"

"Now, look here, Lovell—"

"You chaps don't want to bother about me," said Lovell. "You go to Bagshot on your own, and I'll see you when you come back. I—I've got some lines to write."

"You mean you want to moon about on the chance of running into Miss Chisholm again!" said Jimmy Silver severely. "Not good enough, old bean! You're coming with us!"

"I'm not!"

"My dear footling, fozzling ass—"

"I'm staying here!" said Lovell, in tones of finality. "That settles it!"

And it did. Lovell could be determined when he liked. He liked on this occasion. His three chums argued and begged and threatened—but in vain.

Silver and Newcome and Raby did not go out that afternoon. In the exceptional circumstances, they felt that it was up to them to stay in and look after Lovell.

It was a kindly action on their part. But Lovell did not appreciate it. In his present romantic mood Arthur Edward preferred his own company to that of his old colleagues. Silver and Raby and Newcome somehow cramped his style.

Lovell went for a walk round the playing fields, then sat down under one of the trees in the quad, then tramped down to the gates. His three chums followed suit.

By the time they had finished these perambulations it was midway through the afternoon. Jimmy Silver suggested a snack in the tuckshop, and Raby and Newcome, a little bored by the aimless proceedings by this time, assented.

They went off together, promising to see Lovell again shortly.

It was Lovell's chance. He strolled over towards the Head's garden, hoping against hope that he would have the luck to run into the young lady who had captured his youthful heart.

But Lovell's luck was out. Instead of running into Miss
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Brenda Chisholm, he ran into a tall, good-looking young man who was walking over from the gates.

The stranger gave Lovell a nod.

"Excuse me, youngster, but can you tell me where I can find Miss Chisholm?" he asked.

Lovell frowned. He didn't quite know why, but he found himself mentally deciding that he didn't like the newcomer. But there was no reason to make any other than a polite reply, so Lovell responded with:

"She's staying at her uncle's house, over there; in fact, I believe I see her in the garden," he added.

"Thanks!"

And the young man, with a nod, strode off towards the gate leading to the Head's garden.

Lovell watched him meet the Head's niece and shake hands with her, something very much like jealousy stirring him as he did so. He was quite sure now that he didn't like the stranger.

The two came strolling towards him, neither of them apparently aware of his presence.

Suddenly Lovell became conscious that they were behaving a little strangely. Both seemed to be gesticulating and arguing as though a serious dispute had cropped up between them.

As they drew nearer, the watching junior could not help hearing what they were saying. What he heard caused him almost to jump with astonishment. By the sound of things a serious dispute had certainly arisen.

"Unhand me, you scoundrel!" was the first remark he caught from Miss Chisholm.

"Not till you have listened to what I have to say, my proud beauty!" came the tall young man's response, tailed off by an almost incredibly brutal laugh.

Lovell's mind flashed back to the previous evening, when he had come to Brenda Chisholm's rescue. Was history to repeat itself? Was fate to link him up with this charming girl in a whole series of gallant rescues?

Arthur Edward took a step towards the gate of the garden. As he did so, he heard Miss Chisholm say, "I shall cry out for help!"

"I am afraid your cry will remain unanswered in this wild, desolate spot!" retorted the tall young man, suddenly seizing her by the throat. "Who is there to hear your cry?"

All Arthur Edward Lovell's instincts of chivalry came to the surface for a rush.

"There's me!" he yelled, excitedly and ungrammatically.

A moment later he was through the gateway and making a leap at Miss Chisholm's visitor.

CHAPTER 4.

Not According to Programme!

"WHOOOOOP!"

It was a wild yell from the tall young man. "How dare you attack this young lady?" demanded Lovell, hanging on to the tall young man's neck with one hand and hammering him with the other. "Why, I'll smash you! I'll—Ow!"

His host had managed to shake him free at last, and followed up that movement with a grab at Lovell's nearest ear.

"What the thunder do you think you're doing, you young savage?" hooted the tall young man, maintaining a firm hold on Lovell's ear. "Why, it's the youngster that showed me the way just now!"

"Lovell!" exclaimed Brenda Chisholm. "What ever were you doing, Lovell? Is this a joke, or—"

"Joke?" echoed Lovell, in astonishment. "I should call it the opposite of a joke when a chap threatens you and attacks you! Did you imagine I was going to stand by and watch while he throttled you?"

Miss Chisholm and the tall young man seemed to blink at Lovell for a moment. Then they looked at each other. Finally, they laughed—laughed uproariously and unrestrainedly.

Lovell stared from one to the other, hardly able to believe his eyes. Surely these could not be the same two that were

in frenzied argument only half a minute before! A horrible doubt began to assail Arthur Edward.

The tall young man wiped the tears of merriment from his eyes and released Lovell's ear, giving him a pat on the shoulder with the freed hand.

"Well, that's rich!" he said. "One thing about it, Brenda, you've a very gallant protector to look after you while you're at Rookwood!"

Brenda Chisholm smiled.

"I know I have. Lovell, this is a friend of mine—Mr. Archie Wilmott. It was nice of you to attack him so ferociously when you thought he was going to hurt me, and I know you did it from the best of motives. But, as it happens, there was no need for it. You see, we are acting together in an amateur dramatic show shortly, and Mr. Wilmott came to see me this afternoon to rehearse some of the scenes!"

Lovell stood speechless.

There were others, however, whose voices did not desert them. Jimmy Silver and Newcome and Raby had been standing by the gate unobserved for some seconds. And Jimmy Silver & Co. couldn't help themselves. They roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Brenda Chisholm turned to them, frowning; but she smiled again as she recognised them.

"Good-afternoon, boys! You really mustn't laugh. Any of you might have made the same mistake!"

"Sorry, Miss Chisholm!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "We shouldn't have heard you, really, anyway, but we're looking after Lovell this afternoon, and when we heard—Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Newcome and Raby.

Lovell, with a mighty effort, managed to utter coherent and comprehensible speech.

"I—I—I'm sorry, Miss Chisholm!" he gasped. "Naturally, I thought—"

"Of course you did!"

"I—I got the idea—"

"That was quite understandable!"

"It—it seemed to me—"

"Please don't worry!"

"Well, I'm fearfully sorry, anyway!" blurted out Lovell.

And with that remark he came to the end of his verbal resources and fled.

Jimmy Silver and Newcome and Raby, gurgling with laughter, raised their caps to Miss Chisholm, then rushed after him.

They caught him near the steps of the Classical House. Lovell did not seem pleased to see them; in fact, he glared.

"Well, that's that, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver kindly. "Pity you've made a mess of things; but you have, so it's no good worrying! Forget all about her now, and come back to the study for tea and a jaw about footer!"

"Good wheeze!" said Newcome and Raby together.

But Arthur Edward Lovell did not respond in like spirit. He thrust his hands in his trousers pockets and snorted.

"Fine pals you are, I must say!" he said. "If it hadn't been for you following me about all the afternoon I shouldn't have butted in at the wrong moment, and this wouldn't have happened!"

"But, my dear old chap—"

"Rats!" snorted Lovell. "You go up to the study and have tea, if you like. I'll tea in Hall to-day!"

Jimmy Silver sighed.

"And I imagined the shock would bring you back to your senses again! This means, then, that you're still going on being spongy about her!"

"I'll thank you not to mention the matter again, Jimmy Silver!" said Lovell tartly. "I suppose a chap can do as he likes, can't he?"

"Just where you're wrong, old bean!" chuckled Jimmy Silver. "If you think we're going to allow you, a pal of ours, to keep on making a fathead of yourself, you're jolly well mistaken. We'll show you you are—won't we, you chaps?"

"What-ho!" responded Newcome and Raby, in unison.

To which declaration of war Arthur Edward Lovell made answer with the ancient and classic monosyllable:

"Rats!"

END OF FIRST STORY OF SERIES.

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EASTWOOD CUP—THIRD ROUND!

ST. JIM'S HARD FIGHT!
GREYFRIARS NEARLY OUT!

By "OLD BOY."

St. Jim's,
Wednesday.

TWO events combined to raise expectation to fever heat over St. Jim's cup-tie with Rookwood—first, Rookwood's dashing 7-0 victory over Low Beach in the previous round, and the reports of their wonderfully improved form; and second, an injury to Tom Merry's ankle during practice which might, or might not, keep the home captain out of the game!

On the morning of the match there was a most serious conclave centring about Tom Merry's ankle. Arriving at St. Jim's early I attended it. So did the junior committee and Kildare of the Sixth.

"I think it will stand it," said Tom Merry confidently.

"I hope so," said Lowther anxiously. "Yes, I think it will be all right," assented Kildare, whereat there was a sigh of relief from the committee. Kildare's veto would have been final!

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked very fit, and "Uncle James" told me that he had no doubt about winning. The only question was—by how many goals?

"We'll kick with the sun," he said, as the coin spun in his favour. "Now, what about those goals you've been promising us, Lovell?"

But pride goeth often before a fall, and from the kick-off the Saints swept down the field, Tom Merry well to the fore—and Rookwood's defence was caught napping. Rawson came out of goal to dive at Blake's feet, but Blake sidestepped, and sent in a swift ground shot that found the net, and brought a wild roar to the lips of the crowd! One up!

An injury had kept Tommy Cook out of the team, and Erroll, the Rookwood goalkeeper, but a useful all-round player, had taken Cook's place at right-half, Rawson deputising between the sticks. He had made an unhappy start!

From the recommencement, however, Rookwood gave full value for money. A coolly executed attack found Figgins and

Kerr for once in a quandary, and Jimmy Silver whipped the ball across to Tommy Dodd at centre. Dodd trapped, turned, and shot all in a second. Fatty Wynn dived, but he was completely beaten.

It certainly began to look bad for St. Jim's. Rookwood came again and again, and their football was pretty to watch. Fatty Wynn held the fort in determined style, but a combined rush just before half-time was too much for him. He went down beneath a welter of players, and when he managed to scramble up again, Jimmy Silver was shaking hands with every member of his team; and the ball, hot from his foot, spun in the corner of the net!

In the second half it was obvious that all was not well with Tom Merry's foot, but he played up gamely, nevertheless. Rawson in goal made ample amends by saving from Blake and Levison and Talbot in quick succession, and then bringing off a spectacular dive at Tom Merry's feet, as he went through on his own. That dive did it—Tom went head over heels, and, rising, was seen to limp badly.

With Tom Merry a passenger, Rookwood

piled on all sail, and Fatty Wynn's coolness and dexterity alone saved St. Jim's from further downfall. Then the Saints made a desperate effort, and Tom Merry, in spite of his limp, got the ball out to Levison, and Levison went past Conroy, and let fly before Rawson could advance to narrow the angle. Rawson leaped, but no goalkeeper could have stopped Levison's drive! A delighted yell signalled the levelling of the scores—a quarter of an hour before time.

Rookwood had all the play, and Fatty Wynn, tired but heroically invincible, bore the brunt of those fifteen minutes' play. He tipped them over the bar, turned them round the post, and saved again and again at close range, when his charge seemed doomed. The minutes were creeping on, when Tom Merry clapped his hands as a signal to Kangaroo.

Tom was unmarked, not being considered dangerous with an injured ankle, and Kangaroo slung the ball across to him.

With his goal in imminent peril, Rawson came rushing out—showing again his only fault. He came too far, and D'Arcy, pulling up just before Rawson reached him, sent the leather square across to Tom Merry, alone and unmarked before goal.

St. Jim's chances in the Cup depended on Tom Merry's coolness. With a full-back thundering up behind him, he trapped, steadied himself, and kicked straight and sure—not hard, but perfectly straight, with his sound foot. The ball rolled gently over the line as Conroy pelted up to stop it—seconds too late!

The ball was hardly rolling again ere full time came.

"Well played, Merry!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "You fellows deserved to win!"

"But we'll have our revenge next week!" sang out Lovell, mindful of the Saints' league fixture at Rookwood next Wednesday.

By phone came the news of Greyfriars' battle with St. Anselm's. The Friars were a goal down throughout the game, but just managed to equalise on time. The replay will be in a day or two. My friend on the phone said the Friars were upset by shock tactics, but the replay may tell a different tale!

RESULTS.

ST. JIM'S .. 3	ROOKWOOD .. 2
Blake, Levison, Merry.	Dodd, Silver.
Teams: ST. JIM'S: Wynn; Figgins, Kerr; Redfern, Noble, Lowther; Talbot, Levison, Merry Blake, D'Arcy. ROOKWOOD: Rawson; Raby, Conroy; Erroll, Silver, Doyle; Mornington, Lovell, Dodd, Newcome, Grace.	
GREYFRIARS .. 1	ST. ANSELM'S .. 1
Wharton	Beldam.
RYLCOMBE G.S. .. 6	CURLINGHAM .. 4
Monk (2), Gay (3), Wootton min.	Bent, Richards (3).
ST. FRANK'S .. 11	ST. THOMAS' .. 0
Nipper (4), Grey (2), De Valerie (2), Pitt (2), Handforth (penalty).	
BAGSHOT .. 2	ABBOTSFORD .. 7
Pankley (2)	Fenne (5), Williams (2).
DOONE VALLEY .. 4	ST. CAESAR'S .. 0
OVERCOURT .. 8	ST. JUNIPER'S .. 1
TRESSALEIGH .. 0	RIPPINGHAM .. 2

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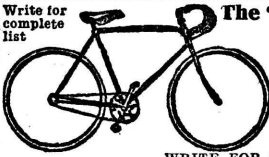
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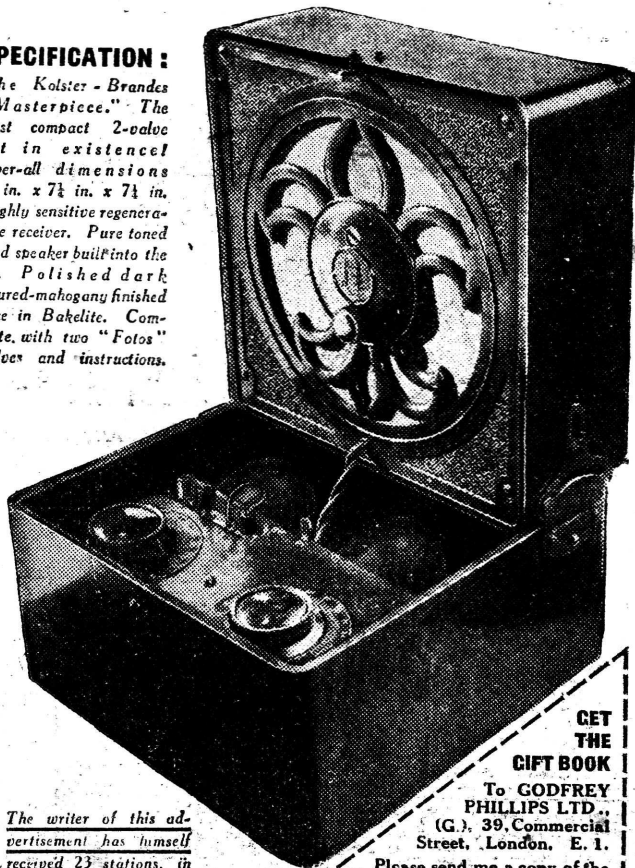
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