

A RIPPING YARN OF TOM MERRY & CO. IN CHICAGO INSIDE!

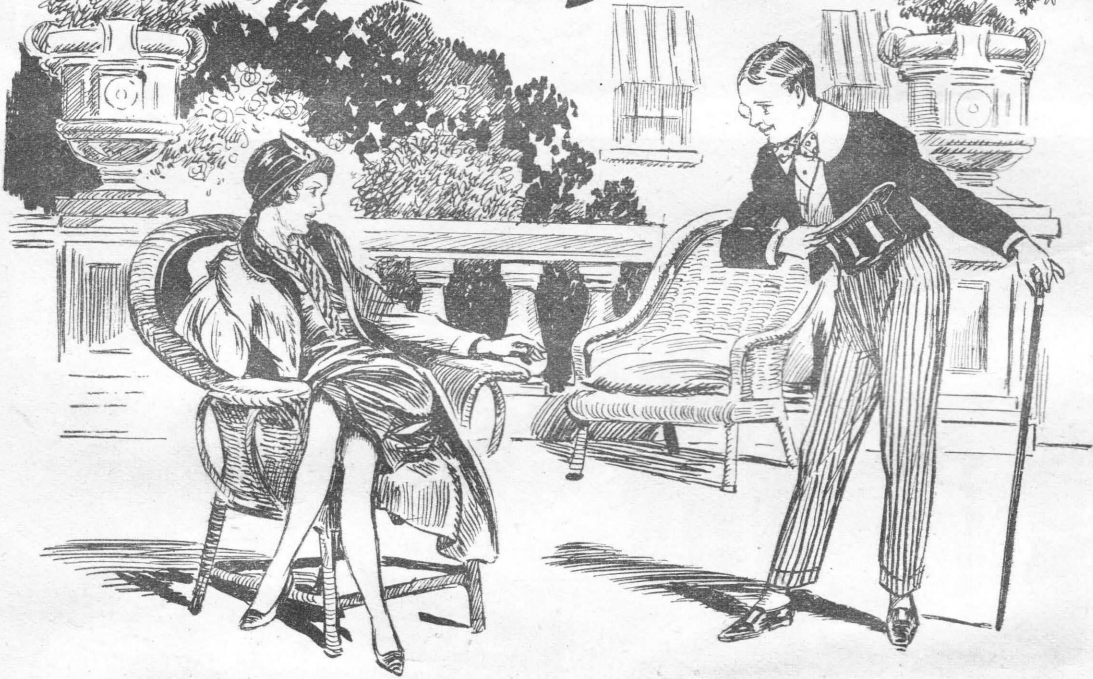
CONTINUOUS
VARIETY!
YOUR FAVOURITE
STARS -
TOM MERRY & Co
INSIDE!

The GEM

2^d



GUSSY "DISCOVERS"



Gussy didn't think much of America until he discovered Miss Constantia Potts!
After that he took another look round and discovered America again!

CHAPTER 1.

Trouble in the Train!

"PONGO, Pongo! Have you seen Pongo?"
"Weally, Wally, I am not likely to have been keepin' a watch on your beastly mongwel!"
"Pongo, Pongo! Have you seen Pongo, Tom Merry?"

"Not since the last time."

"Pongo! Blake, where's Pongo?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Pongo, Pongo!"

Wally—once known in the Third Form at St. Jim's as D'Arcy minor—was looking anxious and worried. The westward train was speeding towards the city of Chicago, and Tom Merry & Co. were looking round for their belongings.

They were on their journey to the ranch of Tom Merry's uncle in Arizona. Their last stopping-place had been New York; their next was Chicago, the "Windy City," as it is called by its inhabitants; better known to European fame as the city of canned beef.

Mrs. Stuyvesant—the stout, kind-hearted lady who had taken charge of the boys on their arrival in New York from England—was with them now, dozing in her seat. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—D'Arcy major—was carefully flicking a few specks of dust from his beautifully creased trousers; Tom Merry and Jack Blake were reading a fortnight-old copy of the "Magnet" between them, and Skimpole, of course, was making notes for his book of travels, when a stir among the passengers warned them that they were approaching their destination.

Wally was looking for Pongo; as a matter of fact, he had already spent a great deal of his time since landing in America in looking for Pongo.

Pongo was not always to be found, and Wally lived in a state of apprehension of leaving him behind somewhere along the line.

"We're pretty near Chicago," said Wally. "Of course, we can't get out of the train without Pongo. If you don't

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want to go on to St. Louis, you'd better help me look for him."

"I should uttably wefuse to go on to St. Louis," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am tired, and in need of west and wefwashment. Besides, I don't believe this twain goes to St. Louis."

"What did you do with the beast?" asked Tom Merry.

"Sure you had him on the train at all?"

"You jolly well know I did," grunted Wally. "The conductor said he would keep an eye on him on the platform, and I trusted to him. Catch me trusting a conductor again! Pongo's gone!"

"Well, you can pick up some stray dog in Chicago that will do just as well," suggested Jack Blake.

Wally's only reply to this friendly suggestion was a dagger-like glare.

"I'm afwaid it's extwemely impwob that Wally will find a stway dog in Chicago," he said. "I have heard that all stway dogs in Chicago are used up in the canned beef factowies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally looked more anxious than ever.

"My only Aunt Jane! If I lose sight of Pongo, that's what may happen to him! Look here, you fellows, help me to find him!"

But the fellows only grinned. They were not inclined to enter upon a hunt up and down a crowded train on the track of a vanished mongrel. The seats were all full, and several people were lounging in the aisle which ran through the centre of each car. Near the boys two men were chatting—one of them, a keen-faced fellow, with the unmistakable air of the American reporter; the other, a stout old gentleman, who, judging by his manner, might have been the owner of all the train with Chicago thrown in.

"A hundred thousand, Mr. Potts," said the reporter, jotting it down in his notebook; "a hundred thousand a week!"

"I guess that's the number, sir," said the stout gentleman. "You can put that in the 'Evening Cocktail,' sir, and not be far wrong. A hundred thousand animals, sir, enter

—PONGO GOT LOST IN CHICAGO! IT'S FULL OF THRILLS & FUN!

AMERICA!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

the gates of the Potts' stockyard every week. I guess so, sir."

And the stout gentleman put his thumbs into the arm-holes of his loud check waistcoat, and beamed with great satisfaction.

He was evidently proud of the number of animals that met their doom in the Potts' stockyard every week.

The reporter, having apparently finished his interview, closed his book with a snap and strolled along the car, and Mr. Potts, of Chicago, sat down in his seat again.

There was a wild yell as the stout person of the Chicago merchant plumped down. A mongrel dog had been curled up on the seat, asleep, and Mr. Potts had not noticed him.

Poor Pongo was nearly flattened, and he squirmed out frantically from under the stout gentleman with a yelping yell that made Mr. Potts jump up with remarkable activity.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Potts.

Wally came running along the car.

"Here he is! Here's Pongo!"

"You young rascal!" roared Mr. Potts. "How dare you bring a dog into a car?"

"How dare you sit on my dog?" exclaimed Wally, equally wrathful. "You've nearly squashed the poor beggar. Do you think you're a bantam-weight, to go about sitting on dogs?"

Mr. Potts turned purple. He certainly did not look like a bantam-weight.

"You—you—you!" he stuttered.

"Come on, Pongo! Jolly good thing I've found you before you got worked up into canned beef!" said Wally.

"Boy!" roared Mr. Potts.

"Eh?"

"Do you know whom you are addressing, sir? Hiram K. Potts, sir—Hiram K. Potts, of Chicago, sir!"

"Good!" said Wally affably. "My name's D'Arcy—called Wally for short—you may call me Wally if you like."

Some of the passengers began to chuckle. Mr. Potts glared at Wally in purple wrath, and seemed inclined to commit assault and battery on the spot. Wally tucked the shaggy favourite under his arm and beat a retreat. He was received by his elder brother with a portentous frown.

"Wally, I am afraid you have been wude to that gentleman—"

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

"I insist upon beginnin'—"

"Then ring off as soon as possible!"

"I uttally wufuse to wing off! I wegard you as havin' failed in respect to a gentleman oldah than yourself—"

"Yes," grinned Tom Merry, "a trifle older, I think."

"As head of the family, as far as Amewicah is concerned, I feel called upon to apologise for you," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall immediately pwoceed to tendah an apology to the gentleman."

"Go it, old son! You can apologise if you like! It will keep you quiet for a time, anyway!"

"I wufuse to allow you to wegard it in that light, Wally!"

"Rats!" said D'Arcy minor cheerfully.

D'Arcy rose and adjusted his eyeglass. He felt himself called upon to sustain the reputation of the house of D'Arcy for politeness and respect towards elders. But as he was about to go along the car the train, which had been slackening, clattered to a halt.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Is this our station, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, rather—Pacific Avenue Depot."

"Pway wait a few minutes while I apologise to—"

"Yes, I can see us doing it!" grinned Jack Blake, passing his arm through Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's and pulling him along the train platform. "You're coming along with us, my son!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Dear, dear," said Mrs. Stuyvesant, gathering up her wraps; "we alight here, my dear boys! Pray do not lose sight of me! It would be a great trial if you were to get lost in Chicago, as you did in New York, my dears!"

And in spite of Arthur Augustus' great desire to tender

an apology to Mr. Potts, of Chicago, the travellers left the train and the station.

CHAPTER 2.

In Chicago!

WALLY kept Pongo tightly in his arms, determined to run no more risks with his favourite, and careless of the rumpled and hairy state of his waistcoat.

Having given directions for the baggage to be expressed to her hotel, Mrs. Stuyvesant gathered the juniors round her—a great deal like a hen gathering her chicks—and entered a taxi. Arthur Augustus handed her in with all the grace in the world, and just then he caught sight of Mr. Potts, of Chicago, coming out and looking round, apparently for some vehicle.

"Pway excuse me a moment, madam!" said D'Arcy.

And he cut across to the stout Chicago merchant, and stopped before him, raising his silk hat in a way that was possible only to the swell of St. Jim's.

"My deah sir—"

"Eh?" said Mr. Potts. "What do you want?"

"Pway allow me to apologise!"

"Eh?"

"My young bwothah, I am afraid, was somewhat wude to you," said Arthur Augustus. "It was simply the exubance of high spiwits, my deah sir. It is impos for D'Arcy to delibewately intend to be wude, especially to an oldah gentleman. I weally beg to be allowed to apologise for him, my deah sir."

"Oh!" said Mr. Potts. "This is some more of your little jokes, I guess."

"Weally, sir—"

"I guess I wish I had you in my stockyard, sir," said Mr. Potts. "I'd make you larn, sir, I guess. Yes, sir. A dandified puppy—"

"I wufuse to be alluded to as a dandified puppay!"

"An eyeglassed, empty-headed johnny!" said Mr. Potts. "A brainless chump, sir! I wish I had you in my stockyard on the south side, sir! Yes, sir!"

"It is appawntly useless for me to express—"

"Oh, get, do!" said Mr. Potts.

"Vewy well! I have done my best to set mattahs wight with—"

"Popper!"

It was a sweet, girlish voice. A big car had stopped, and a girl stepped out upon the sidewalk—a graceful girl, with beautiful features, and a rich, clear complexion. D'Arcy glanced at her with interest. She reminded him of Cousin Ethel.

The canned beef merchant's somewhat coarse face lighted up at the sight of the girl, and he turned away from Arthur Augustus, forgetting his existence.

"You're late, chuck," he said.

"I'm so sorry, popper!"

"I guess it's all O.K.!" said the packer. "Let's get!"

"What are you looking so excited about, pop dear?"

"I've been bothered by a perky young son of John Bull," said Mr. Potts. "Let's get!"

And the Chicago packer and his daughter entered the huge car, and drove off.

Blake ran up and dragged D'Arcy away.

"You ass! You're keeping us waiting!"

"It is necessawy to wait on important occasions, deah boy. And I wegard it as important to keep up the weputation of the D'Arcy family in a stwange countwy. I wegard that old gentleman as a howwid boundah."

"Come on!"

"But the young lady was wippin'! She called him popper. Do you know what popper means in the Amewican language, Blake?"

"It means father, dummy!"

"Then she is pwobably his daughter," said D'Arcy. "But pway wait a minute, Blake! Before we entah the taxi, I wish you to cleahly undahstand that I uttally wufuse to be called a dummy—Ow!"

D'Arcy went into the taxi with some violence, and Jack Blake followed him. The vehicle drove off towards the Grand Atlantic Hotel.

"Blake, I wegard you—"

"Shut up!" said Blake. "You've been keeping Mrs. Stuyvesant waiting."

"Bai Jove, I am weally vewy sowwy, madam! Pway accept my pwofound apologies!"

Mrs. Stuyvesant smiled, and accepted them, and they drove to the hotel. It proved to be a palatial building. The juniors of St. Jim's had been astonished by the skyscrapers in New York. But they saw buildings in Chicago that effectually dwarfed some they had seen there.

The boys were glad enough to get to their quarters. They had spent one night on the train, and it could not be called an eminently comfortable one. The handsome, and well-appointed hotel was something like home after a railway sleeping-berth.

The rooms commanded by Mrs. Stuyvesant gave a view of Lake Michigan, whose glimmering waters the boys could see in the fading daylight.

The juniors, as usual, had a large room to themselves, with five beds in it, and it recalled to their minds the old dormitory at St. Jim's in far-off England.

"Ripping view!" said Tom Merry, looking out of the window. "We'll have a sail on the lake, if we can squeeze in the time. Mrs. Stuyvesant is going to hand us over to the chap who is to see us to my uncle's ranch here. We may be able to persuade him to hang over a day here—"

"Yaas, wathah! We are to meet Colonel Stalker at this hotel, deah boys. And, weally, although Mrs. Stuyvesant is kindness itself, I shall be pleased to twavel with a militawy man. Mrs. Stuyvesant is wathah twyin' with her extweme anxiety for our safety."

"Well, you shouldn't have got lost in New York!"

"I wasn't lost! I was kidnapped by that wascal, Captain Puntah!"

"Well, you shouldn't have got kidnapped, then!" said Blake. "You're always doing something. What would have happened if I hadn't arrived from England, and rescued you from that den in the Bowery?"

"As a mattah of fact, it was I who wesued you, Blake."

"Rats! Why, I—"

"Cheese it!" said Tom Merry. "We've got to get dressed for dinner yet, and I want a jolly good bath, after all that railway travelling. Don't jaw, my sons, but get to work!"

"I guess so," said Wally, who was quite an American by this time, as far as language was concerned. "Not so much chin music, you know."

"I wefuse to allow you to use such vulgah expressions, Wally."

"That cuts no ice with me," retorted Wally placidly.

D'Arcy did not reply; he did not quite know what the slang expression meant, for one thing, and Wally had the advantage. He devoted his attention to changing his clothes—a labour of great love with Arthur Augustus. The best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's was anxious to keep up his reputation in the new world.

Mrs. Stuyvesant, who was a friend of Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, had met the boys in New York, and brought them to Chicago. At Chicago they were to be handed over to Colonel Stalker, a friend of Tom's uncle, Mr. Poinsett, who was to see them to the Arizona Ranch which was Tom Merry's destination. What Colonel Stalker was like the boys had no idea, but they had a vague idea of a white-whiskered, military man, something like Lord Eastwood, D'Arcy's respected "gub'nor," in appearance.

Colonel Stalker was to take them in his charge for the journey over the Rocky Mountains, and, needless to say, the boys were looking forward to that adventurous journey.

The boys were dressed in good time for dinner, and they joined Mrs. Stuyvesant and descended to the dining-room, which was of almost endless dimensions. America is the land of vastness, and in the hotels the vastness is most apparent.

Wally indulged in a slight chuckle as they reached the table where their places had been taken. Opposite was seated a stout gentleman, whom the juniors at once recognised as their acquaintance of the train—Mr. Potts, of Chicago.

Mr. Potts glanced across at the boys, and did not seem pleased to see them. They were evidently staying at the same hotel as the Chicago millionaire.

The girl who had met Mr. Potts at the station was beside him, and now they saw her in the full electric light, the boys could see that there was some resemblance between her features and those of the fat packer. But while the man's face was harsh and gross, that of the daughter was beautiful and interesting.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

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Tom Merry looked at him curiously.

"What's the matter with you, Gussy?"

"Did you evah see such a wippin' gal, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, rather!"

"But not since we landed in Amewicah," said D'Arcy, with a far-away look. "Do you know, Tom Mewwy, that once or twice I fancied I was in love at St. Jim's?"

"I remember you making a silly ass of yourself!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy— But I can afford to pass ovah your wude wemarks. How old would you think that charmin' young lady is?"

"Blessed if I know! About twenty-four."

"Pewwaps undah twenty, I should say. Anyway, she is not vewy much oldah than I—"

"My only hat!"

"It is vewy wotten that that young wascal Wally should have got on to the wong side of her governah. I shall have to make it up somehow."

The dialogue had been in very low tones, audible only to the speakers. It stopped now, as the soup arrived. Arthur Augustus hardly ate any soup. He scarcely touched his fish. Entrees passed him unnoticed. Dinner was almost over, in fact, before he awoke to the knowledge that he had eaten next to nothing.

But he did not care.

The bright eyes of the American girl had worked havoc with D'Arcy's susceptible heart, and the swell of St. Jim's was in love again.

Tom Merry noted his expression with secret chuckles.

Arthur Augustus was deeply in earnest—as he usually was at such times—but to Tom Merry his new infatuation only presented a prospect of fun.

CHAPTER 3.

Pongo Causes Trouble!

AFTER dinner Tom Merry & Co. felt inclined for a stroll out to see Chicago.

They had not much time for looking at the Windy

City, for it had been arranged that they were to continue their journey at midday next day, when Colonel Stalker had arrived to take them in charge. As a matter of fact, their stay in Chicago was to be longer than they had anticipated.

There was one member of the party who was not inclined for a stroll. That one was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"You can leave me here, deah boys," he said. "I am wathah fatigued, and I have a lot of shoppin' to do to-morrow. There is an awfully big shoppin' place near here—Marshall Fields, you know—and I am cuwious to see a weally big Amewican store. It is one of the sights of Amewicah. And it is our last chance of shoppin' before we get to the Wockay Mountains."

"But what on earth do you want to buy?" demanded Tom Merry. "You bought enough things in London to last a regiment for a year's march."

"Yaas, but I ovahlooked many necessawies. For one thing, I shall want some cartwidges."

"Cartridges!" howled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I have no cartwidges for my wevolvah."

"Let me catch you with a revolver?"

"My deah fellow, I should nevah have been kidnapped in New York if I had not taken Tom Mewwy's advice, and left my twusty wevolvah at the bottom of my twunk in the hotel. I shall not make the mistake again."

"My dear ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. Besides, we are pewwaps goin' to visit the Chicago stockyards to-morrow, and I may wequiah a wevolvah there. How do you know some feahful wild beast may not bweak loose?"

"Well, anyway, come along now and have a look at the city by night."

"No, I think I will stay in this evenin'; besides, I have to apologise to Mr. Potts for Wally's feahful wudeness to him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see why you are chucklin', Tom Mewwy."

"Put a word in for me," said Blake, grinning. "You're quite right; she's a ripping girl."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, come on! Let's get off, and leave Gussy to compose an ode to an American girl's eyebrows."

"I guess it's time we moved," said Wally. "If we're not spry we shan't see much of the place, I calculate. Let's get."

And they got.

They had to take Louis, Mrs. Stuyvesant's servant, with them, or the good old lady would have been anxious. And Louis, who had lost D'Arcy in New York, was determined not to lose anybody in Chicago. He watched them like a cat watching a mouse, and if the St. Jim's juniors stopped

to look in a shop window Louis stopped also; when the boys started again Louis started.

The surveillance was not pleasant, but Louis was doing his duty. Not that the boys could not have given him the slip if they had chosen. But the thought of causing their kind friend anxiety prevented them from "japing" their beautiful Frenchman.

They entered upon the seemingly endless State Street, and Wally, of course, had to dodge in front of a tearing car, and narrowly escaped with his legs unamputated. Crossings in Chicago are a great deal more dangerous than in New York or London, as the juniors were not long in discovering. Tom Merry & Co. joined him on the opposite sidewalk, and grasped him with one accord and shook him.

"Hallo! What are you up to?" roared Wally.

"You young ass!" said Tom Merry. "If you get killed under a car I'll give you the licking of your life!"

Merry, and, at all events, it would mingle with the atmosphere. Here—"

"My dear ass, that's due to atmospheric conditions—the air's so clear, or something. Those clouds of smoke aren't made by fires, anyway. It's one of the ways of Chicago. You can tear that page out of your notebook."

"Upon the whole, I shall leave it there, Merry. I am not quite sure that you are right; but, even so, it is very interesting information, and none of my readers will be likely to come to Chicago and see for themselves."

"Good! You'll get out a ripping book of travels on those lines," grinned Tom Merry. "I don't think it's an uncommon method, either. What are you pulling at my arm for, young Wally?"

"Have you seen Pongo?"

"Blow Pongo!"

"He's gone!"



Pompey was in the grasp of a stout lady who looked like a chambermaid. She had a grip on his woolly hair with one hand and was boxing his ears with the other. Pompey was squirming and wriggling painfully. "Bal Jova! That is wathah wuff on the coon!" said Gussy.

"I should say so!" chimed in Blake. "It's bad enough to have Skimpole mooning about with his nose in a notebook, without having you dodging under cars!"

"Oh, really, Blake!" said Skimpole, blinking at the Fourth-Former of St. Jim's through his big spectacles. "I must really take notes if I am to produce a good book of travel on my return to England. I am noting many prominent facts with regard to Chicago. The number of fires—"

"The number of which?"

"The number of fires, and the slight attention that is paid to them, is surprising," said Skimpole seriously. "I have read that the whole city, practically, was burnt down in 1871, and really I am not surprised, by what I have observed."

"But I haven't seen any fires, Skimmy."

"I have not actually seen the burning houses," said Skimpole; "I have deduced a great number of fires from the quantity of smoke that floats about the street. Some streets are quite overhung by it."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Ass! That comes from the big chimneys."

"But smoke from the big chimneys would float upwards,

"Let him go, then!"

"I tell you he's gone! He must have dodged away when I was dodging that car, and perhaps he's on the other side of this confoundedly wide street all the time."

"Leave him there, then!"

"No fear!"

"Stop, you young beggar!" roared Tom Merry, clutching at him. But it was too late. Wally was dashing off in the thick of the cars again.

And thick enough the cars were, streaming up and down the wide street.

D'Arcy minor disappeared in a moment, and Tom Merry breathed wrath and retribution as he started after him.

Jack Blake ran after Tom Merry; but Skimpole remained on the sidewalk, entering some more notes into his book on the subject of the number of cars that passed up and down State Street.

Wally dodged through in safety and gained the farther side, and darted up and down through a considerable crowd, looking for Pongo.

The dog was lost again!

Tom Merry reached the junior and made a clutch at him,

but Wally eluded him and dashed across the wide street again.

"Come back!" yelled Blake.

He might as well have yelled to the waters of the lake to cease flowing. Wally had decided that Pongo must have crossed the street, after all, and he was after him. He did not mean to go back to the hotel without Pongo.

"Zat you come back viz you!" screamed Louis, in great distress. "Ciel! Zat you come back!"

But Wally was after Pongo, and Blake and Tom were after Wally. The unhappy Frenchman dashed after them again across the street, shouting to them to stop. He caught up with Tom Merry and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Zat you stops, viz you!" he gasped.

"The young beggar's getting lost! Let me go!"

But Louis held on. Blake came back towards them, looking red and excited.

"He's gone!" he said.

"The young villain!" growled Tom Merry. "I've a jolly good mind to tan his hide when he comes back to the hotel!"

"Well, he's pretty certain to come back! He's not ass enough to get lost for good. We may as well be getting in now!"

And the juniors, taking Skimpole with them, went back to the hotel with Louis. The Frenchman was very excited and anxious, but the boys had little fear for Wally. And Mrs. Stuyvesant, fortunately, did not have to be told that the junior was missing, for on their return, the boys discovered that their friend had gone to a meeting of the Chicago branch of the Association for the Asphyxiating of Superfluous Dogs—a body of which Mrs. Stuyvesant was president.

As for Arthur Augustus, he was not to be seen. But they discovered him at last on the balcony.

CHAPTER 4.

D'Arcy Makes His Peace!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had not been losing time. The moment his friends were out of the hotel, and he felt himself safe from their observation and chipping, he had set out to look for Mr. Potts, with the intention of completing the apology commenced at the railway station.

Mr. Potts was not immediately to be found, however. Arthur Augustus inquired of the hotel clerk, of waiters, and messengers, but the millionaire had disappeared after dinner, and it was some time before he reappeared. Doubtless he had had some business call, and, like the true American millionaire, he never allowed pleasure to interfere with business.

Arthur Augustus was standing in the hall when a grinning little darkey came up to him with the news that Mr. Potts was in the smoking-room.

"I guess, sah, dat Mr. Potts am in de smoking-room, sah," said the little fellow.

"Thank you vewy much," said Arthur Augustus, feeling in his pockets. "I am sowwy I haven't any change. Can you change a five-dollah bill?"

The darkey grinned. His wages at the hotel amounted to five dollars a week, so he was hardly likely to have the amount of change about him that the swell of St. Jim's required.

"No, sah—sorry, sah, I can't, sah! I get de change debblish quick, sah!"

"Vewy well," said D'Arcy, handing the note to the darkey. "What is your name, my lad?"

"My lad" was only some year or so younger than D'Arcy, but D'Arcy had a way of assuming paternal airs, even towards fellows older than himself.

"Pompey, sah—named after Pompey de Great, sah—called Pomp for short, sah!"

"Vewy good, Pompay!" said D'Arcy, pronouncing the name in his own peculiar fashion. "Pway give me the change pwesently."

"Yep, sah!"

And Pompey grinned expansively and walked off with the note. Arthur Augustus made his way to the smoking-room. It was not the quarter of the hotel that the swell of St. Jim's would have frequented of his own accord, for he had never fallen into the way of smoking.

He found Mr. Potts in the smoking-room, his fat person reposing upon a comfortable lounge, and a fat cigar in his mouth.

It was a first-rate Havana cigar, as D'Arcy could tell by the scent of it, and he felt his respect for the millionaire increase somewhat.

Mr. Potts was talking to a younger man, fashionably dressed, who eyed Arthur Augustus somewhat superciliously as he came up.

D'Arcy was quick to note it, and to resent it, but he

allowed no trace of his resentment to appear in his manner. He turned his attention wholly to Mr. Potts.

"Pway excuse me a moment, sir."

Mr. Potts looked at him.

"So it's you again, is it?" he said. "I guess this is the young cub I was telling you of, Fish."

"Shall I kick him out for you, sir?" said Mr. Fish.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass and fixed a withering stare upon the young Chicago man-about-town.

"I should uttably wufuse to be kicked out," he said. "If you should attempt anything of the sort I should administah a fearful thwashin'."

"Oh, get!" said Mr. Fish.

"Slide!" said Mr. Potts. "I've had enough of your cheek! No more of it, sirree! Slide!"

"I wish to apologise—"

"Get!" said Mr. Fish.

"Vewy well!" said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I will wetiah, but I must say to you, sir"—and he turned his eyeglass upon Mr. Fish—"that I weward you no gentleman!"

Mr. Fish grinned and sucked his cigar.

"Cub!" he remarked.

"And if I met you in a less public place, sir," went on D'Arcy, "I should thwash you on the spot!"

"Oh, get!"

"As I do not wish to make any disturbance in this hotel, I will wetiah. I am sowwy you will not accept my apology, Mr. Potts. As for this boundah, I weward him as a wank outsidah!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away. He strolled into the vestibule in a rather disturbed state of mind. His intended acquaintance with Miss Potts had not been made.

A shining black face glimmered in the electric light.

"Guess dis your change, sah."

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy absently. "I had weally forgotten it! You may keep it for your honesty, deah boy!"

And he walked away, leaving Pompey staring after him. The swell of St. Jim's made his way to the hotel balcony, where a number of guests of the Grand Atlantic were seated, the weather being unusually mild for the time of the year.

The swell of St. Jim's only wanted to get to a quiet place to think over his future plans, but as he stepped on the balcony he caught sight of Miss Potts sitting under the arched roof, which was ablaze with electric light, and reading.

D'Arcy stood still for a moment. His heart was beating, and his knees knocked together.

But the swell of St. Jim's took his courage in both hands, so to speak, and made his way across to where the young lady was sitting. She glanced up as a shadow fell across her book, and D'Arcy raised his hat.

She did not know the boy, having barely noticed him at dinner, but there was something so earnest and so entirely gentlemanly and respectful in D'Arcy's manner that no sensible girl could have taken offence. D'Arcy coloured as he realised the enormity he was guilty of in addressing a lady to whom he had not been introduced, but he went on courageously.

"Pway excuse me," he said. "You will pwobably weward me as a boundah for addressin' you, but I weally have somethin' most important to say."

The girl smiled.

"I guess you can say it," she said.

D'Arcy was rather sorry she "guessed," but her voice was very sweet and pleasant, and it made the objectionable word sound quite fascinating when he came to think of it.

"I know it is a fealful cheek of me to speak," said Arthur Augustus, "but I have had the misfortune to offend your wespacted fathah."

"Popper?"

"Yaas. My young bwother was wathah wude to him in the twain, but it was quite unintentional, and I wished to explain, but Mr. Potts will not listen to me. I—I thought pewwaps you might allow me to explain to you."

The girl looked at him curiously.

"You are from England?" she said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What is your name?"

"Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Pway do not mistake me for a boundah. I belong to St. Jim's. I am in the Fourth Form there. My govannah is Lord Eastwood. I know you Amewicans don't think anythin' of titles, of course, as you live in a Wepublic, but it is considahed quite wespactable in England."

Miss Potts laughed.

"You haven't been long in America," she said; "and, to D'Arcy's great relief, she did not pronounce it "Amurrica." "We are fonder of lords on this side than you are on your side, I guess."

"Bai Jove! But why?"

"Because we live in a Republic, I guess," said Miss Potts. "Sit down, Mr. D'Arcy. I guess I'll talk to you. It will

be real interesting. Popper will be out here in a while, and I'll introduce you."

Arthur Augustus beamed.

"Bai Jove! Will you weally?" he exclaimed. "That will be awfully wippin' of you, you know!"

Miss Potts laughed. D'Arcy sat down, and they were soon talking amicably. Miss Potts found Arthur Augustus more interesting than her book. She had been reading an American novel dealing with the manners of the English aristocracy and learning that they were distinguished by an overbearing and supercilious manner.

The quiet and respectful manner of the son of Lord Eastwood consequently interested her, and the veracious novel dropped unheeded to the floor.

Arthur Augustus told her of St. Jim's, of his home at Eastwood, of the time he had witnessed a debate in the House of Lords when his father was speaking. As a true Republican, Miss Potts was, of course, very much interested

from the most fatal of all kinds of snobbishness—that of being ashamed of one's own flesh and blood.

"You're off the track, popper," she said, in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone. "This isn't his lordship. The popper's the lordship, and my friend is Mr. D'Arcy—the Honourable Arthur Augustus."

Honourable was not so impressive as lordship, but anything in the way of titles was welcome to a true Republican.

"I am pleased to meet you, honourable!" said Mr. Potts, as he shook hands with Arthur Augustus. "As to our little scrap, don't remember it. I was kinder mad over sitting on the dog, you know. That's all right. It's all over. I'm very glad to welcome your lordship to Chicago."

"Thank you vevy much, sir," said D'Arcy. "I was vevy much disturbed in my mind at your supposing me to have acted wudely, or to have intended any disrespect."

"I guess you're the real article, sir," said Mr. Potts. "All



"Keep off! Help—ow! Murder!" Colonel Stalker had the rascally Punter by the collar, and was lashing the captain with his cane. Captain Punter, as much amazed as hurt, leaped and squirmed and yelled, but the merciless lash of the cane continued.

in the House of Lords. They were still talking cheerily when there was a heavy step near at hand, and a heavy voice ejaculated:

"Constantia!"

"Pop!" she said, looking up. "I guess I want to introduce my friend, pop—my particular friend, Mr. D'Arcy, the son of Lord Eastwood."

Mr. Potts' face was growing purple, but at the mention of "Lord Eastwood" a gentle calm seemed to fall upon him.

"Lord—Lord—Lord Eastwood!" he said faintly. "A—a—a lord!"

"That's it, pop."

Mr. Potts held out a fat hand.

"I'm pleased to meet you, your lordship!"

Miss Potts gave a perfectly unconstrained, little rippling laugh. There was no humbug about the American girl, and she evidently had a strong affection for her father, commonplace and snobbish as he undoubtedly was, that raised her more than ever in D'Arcy's esteem.

Although the girl had the benefit of the Potts' millions, in receiving an education and training that placed her socially in a place her father could never hope to reach, there was not the slightest trace of shame for him, although D'Arcy knew he must have made her unconsciously wince at times.

But a kind heart and a sense of humour saved Miss Potts

wool, and a yard wide, I guess. How is your noble father, honourable?"

Why Mr. Potts called him honourable, D'Arcy couldn't understand, but he concluded that it was an American mode of address, and allowed it to pass.

"My govannah is all wight, sir, thank you!" he said.

"And your noble mommer?"

"My—my—my—I—I—I—"

"Lady Eastwood," explained Miss Potts, laughing.

"Oh, my matah is quite fit, sir, thank you!"

"We are plain Republicans on this side of the pond, honourable," said Mr. Potts. "You will understand that, I guess. We take no stock in titles, as you will observe. But we have a proper respect, sir, for the prejudices of an old and effete country, sir. Did you happen to meet Lord Swampbank before you sailed?"

"No—no; I don't think I know the gentleman, sir."

"Perhaps you can tell me how Lady Magillicuddy is?" said Mr. Potts, with an air of great solicitude.

"I have nevah seen her, sir."

Mr. Potts asked after a great many more titled people, and D'Arcy drew the impression from him that he had a wide acquaintance in English aristocratic circles. As a matter of fact, Mr. Potts' acquaintance with English titles was

gleaned wholly from the columns of a snobbish New York paper.

"Bai Jove, it is pleasant to meet a gentleman who has so extensive an acquaintance in England!" said D'Arcy, beaming. "It makes a fellow feel quite at home, you know. Mrs. Stuyvesant will be vevy pleased to meet you, sir."

"Mrs. Stuyvesant?"

"Yaas, the extwemely kind lady who is conductin' us here."

"One of the first families in New York!" gasped Mr. Potts. "I really did not know that you had such connections, honourable. I can't say how sorry I am that little scrap occurred."

"Pway don't mention it, Mr. Potts!"

"I— Ah, here are your friends. Introduce me."

It was at this moment that Tom Merry and Blake came on the balcony. Skimpole had gone up to his room to fill in his notebook with the day's entries. Tom Merry and Blake were forthwith made acquainted with Mr. Potts, who invited the whole party to dine with him the following week in his mansion on the lake front.

It was at present in the hands of decorators—a fact that was inconceivably painful to Mr. Potts, for, having captured a lord's son, he would gladly have carried him off home and installed him there, and called upon all Chicago society to come down and see his prize.

He was greatly disappointed to learn that the juniors were going west the next day; but he insisted upon their visiting the stockyards the next morning, assuring them that it was one of the sights of Chicago—as undoubtedly it was.

When they parted for the night, the juniors were on excellent terms with both Mr. and Miss Potts.

Wally came in just as Mrs. Stuyvesant returned, and he came without Pongo. He was looking very tired and muddy and cross.

"Haven't you found him?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" growled Wally. "This means sticking in Chicago till he's found. I'm not going to stir till I've got Pongo."

"Wally, Wally, it will be impos. We could not put our friends to so much trouble. I shall insist upon your comin' at the time awwanged."

"Rats!" said the disrespectful younger brother. "I'm not going without Pongo. I've hunted for him everywhere. My idea is that he has been scooped in by some of those canned-beef rotters, and canned!"

"Well, if he's been canned, you can't wescue him now, deah boy."

"Hardly!" said Blake, grinning. "Besides, in that case, he will probably be imported into England as canned beef, and you can inquire for him after we get back, with more chance of success."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"He may not be canned yet!" growled Wally. "I know I'm jolly well going in the morning to look at the stockyards, and see if I can see anything of Pongo."

"Well, we're going, as a matter of fact," said Tom Merry. "We've accepted Mr. Potts' invitation to go. But don't you start casting reflections on American tinned meat, you young rascal. You can't insult a man in his own quarters."

"Wally, Tom Mewwy, you can wely upon my younghah bwothah not to act in such an exceedingly ill-bwed mannah," said Arthur Augustus.

"I'm not sure about the young scamp!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wally. "I'm not likely to tell them I'm looking for Pongo, or they'd take jolly good care I didn't find him. I shall keep my eyes open, though. I'm not going to have them can him as beef, if I can help it!"

And in that determined mood D'Arcy minor went to bed, and rose up early in the morning in an equally determined frame of mind.

CHAPTER 5.

At the Stockyards.

MRS. STUYVESANT intended to shop that morning, and so she willingly gave the juniors leave to visit the stockyards, under the care of a person Mr. Potts sent specially to conduct them.

The guide was a young man in a Homburg hat and with a nasal twang, and evidently "all there," like most of the Chicago fans the juniors had met.

He was cute and he was spry, and he knew his way about. He told the juniors as much, and also gave them much information on the subject of the stockyards of Chicago as they travelled southwards in the street cars.

"I guess Chicago lays over any other city, east or west," said Mr. Nawger—for that was the young man's name. "Biggest buildings, biggest trade, biggest stockyard, biggest everything, I guess. I guess so, sir."

"Where do you go to inquire after a lost dog?" asked Wally.

"Police department, City Hall, or any station," said Mr. Nawger, looking at him. "Have you lost a dog?"

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"Yes, my dog Pongo. I say, Mr. Nawger, I—I—"

"Shut up!" said Tom Merry.

"I don't see why I shouldn't ask one who knows."

"I wescue to allow you to put the question, Wally!"

"Rats!"

"By the way, Mr. Nawger," said Skimpole, looking up from his notebook, and asking questions with his usual disregard for anything but the desire to have them answered. "As you are connected officially with the stockyards of Chicago, you may be able to tell me whether there is any truth in the allegations made against the packers?"

"Eh?" said Mr. Nawger.

"Is it true that dogs and cats are mixed up with the other meat and disguised by flavouring, and packed off as tinned beef, or devilled kidneys, or other table delicacies?" asked Skimpole.

Mr. Nawger did not reply.

"Is it a fact that when a workman falls into the machinery they don't stop the machine, but chop him up with the rest, and send him off to Europe as canned beef?"

"I guess so," said Mr. Nawger. "That happened to twenty thousand workmen last fall alone."

"Dear me!" said Skimpole, entering down that astounding number in his notebook. "Amazing!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Really, D'Arcy, I think I am quite right in characterising this fact as amazing. And does it cause no excitement in the city, Mr. Nawger?"

"None at all," said the voracious Mr. Nawger. "When a man is missed from his usual place, they all know what has become of him. A fellow will say, 'Hallo, there's Smith gone! Was it in the devilled kidneys, or the fertiliser?' It becomes quite a standing joke in the stockyards."

"Amazing!"

The juniors were laughing, but Skimpole did not heed that. He jotted down Mr. Nawger's information with eager interest, and asked for more, and received it. Mr. Nawger was not at all stingy with amazing facts concerning Chicago and its stockyards. Skimpole was hardly satisfied by the time they reached the famous stockyards.

Tom Merry & Co. and their amiable guide walked from Thirty-ninth Street into the union stockyards.

It is a common thing for visitors to Chicago to be conducted over the stockyards as one of the great sights of the city.

The sight was certainly interesting enough. Packing-town seemed to form a community by itself—a town within a city, and a hive of industry where, early and late, thousands of workers toiled, from the slaughterers, under whose humane-killers the great steers fell, to the labellers who gave the final touch to the tins that went forth by myriads to all corners of the world.

It was over the works of Potts, Craggs, Scruggs & Co. that the British lads were conducted by the obliging Mr. Nawger.

He gave them many particulars as they went, with an eye to Skimpole's notebook; and although Skimpole jotted down everything in good faith, the other lads believed as much as they chose of Mr. Nawger's airy talk.

The slaughtering department they preferred not to see, but to the other sights they went in the regular order, and saw the progress of a steer from the slaughter-house to the labelled tin.

It was not a pleasant experience, but it was worth going through. A visitor can hardly be said to have seen Chicago without having seen Packing-town, from which so great a portion of the city's wealth is derived.

The vastness of it all, and the infinitesimal division of labour struck the boys more than anything else.

Here was a man whose duty was to wield an axe, and give a single chop to a carcass that was brought before him, and this one chop he repeated an infinite number of times during the day. His work had grown mechanical, and he could hardly have made a faulty stroke if he had tried.

The tour of the packing-houses was made, Wally keeping a sharp eye open for any sign of a doggy addition to the beef that was being canned.

But if the packers, as their enemies alleged, added the stray dogs and cats of Chicago to the beef and pork, the visitors saw no sign of it. All they saw was neat and clean and orderly, though they observed, of course, that there were doors that were not opened, passages that could not be entered, staircases into regions below that were not to be passed.

"I guess you've seen a sight of things," said Mr. Nawger when the tour of inspection was over at last. "This way to Thirty-ninth Street, and I'll see you on the car up-town."

And the obliging Chicagoan, having seen them on the car, took his leave, and the juniors whizzed off to a more savoury quarter of the city.

CHAPTER 6.
Pompey Catches It!

THE boys were very silent in the car. They had seen a centre of huge industry, upon which the prosperity of Chicago mainly depended; and it had given them food for thought.

Wally, however, was thinking about Pongo. He had seen no sign of him in the packing-yards, but he meant to remain in Chicago till he found him.

Arthur Augustus was looking at his watch. The juniors were to meet Colonel Stalker at the hotel for lunch, and in the afternoon to proceed on their journey westward.

"Rats!" said Wally.

The juniors left the car, and Wally inquired of a policeman the way to police headquarters, and left the others to return to the Grand Atlantic without him.

Mr Potts and Miss Constantia were at the hotel, the millionaire's house having not yet been placed in a state for its owner's reception.

The boys went up to their room, and as they were entering it there was the sound of a wail along the corridor.

"Oh-h-h-h-h!"

"Somebody's getting hurt," said Jack Blake.

"Oh-h-h-h-h!"

"Bai Jove! It's that niggah gettin' a whackin'!"

The juniors looked along the corridor.

Pompey, the little coon, was in the grasp of a stout lady who looked like a chambermaid, who had a grip on his



"Go ahead, Gussy!" grinned Tom Merry. "Yaas, wathah!" There was a crash as D'Arcy's oar struck upon a chunk of ice and slipped from his hand. He caught a crab with the other and his heels flew up above his head and his head bumped against hard wood. "Ow!" yelled the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! I shall have to miss my shoppin', aftah all, unless we can persuade the colonel to stay anothah day in Chicago!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally did desire to do some shoppin'."

"What price Pongo?" said Wally. "We shall have to stay here a bit till I find Pongo."

"I am afwaid that Colonel Stalkah will herdly see the importance of waitin' for a wotten mongwel, Wally!"

"Look here, if you think I'm going without Pongo—"

"Now, be reasonable," said Tom Merry. "We can't ask a man who has come all the way from Arizona to wait in this city because you've lost a dog. The colonel may be in a hurry."

"You can leave an advertisement in the 'Chicago Mail,'" said Blake. "Also, go to the police headquarters at the town hall. We shall go near it in this car."

"If you think I'm going to leave Chicago without Pongo," said Wally again, "I can only calculate that you are talking out of your hat! I'm sticking here till he's found!"

"I shall insist upon your comin' away with us, Wally."

wooly hair with one hand, and was boxing his ears with the other.

Pompey was squirming and wriggling painfully, and blubbering at the top of his voice.

"Bai Jove! That is wathah wuff on the niggah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I should be inclined to intahfeah if it were a man, you know, but a chap can't vewy well punch a lady on the nose."

Tom Merry ran along the corridor.

The chambermaid was a large-boned, powerful woman, who looked as if she could have held her own pretty well in a prize ring, and if D'Arcy had overcome his objection to smiting one of the fair sex on the nose, it is probable that he wouldn't have stood much chance in a combat with the aggressive female.

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Draw it mild, you know."

The servant looked at him with a baleful eye.

"You get!" she snapped.

"Yes, but—"

"You get!"

"What has he been doing?"

"Me do nuffin'!" wailed Pompey. "Me do nuffin'! No, sah! Me nebbber put de blacking in de bed, sah! Me do nuffin'!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh-h-h-h-h-h!"

"Oh, let him alone!" said Tom Merry. "He's had enough, even if he did put the blacking in the bed. You'll bust his coconut!"

"You get!"

"Yes, but really——"

"You get!"

If the chambermaid had been a man Tom Merry would have hit out, for his temper was rising. But the impossibility of punching a lady on the nose was as apparent to Tom Merry as to Arthur Augustus.

But there was an alternative, which Tom Merry quickly thought of. He had come to America with the idea that in that land of the free and the Republican it was impossible to tip the natives; but a day in New York had been sufficient to correct his error. He had found a tip go just as far in America as in England, with this difference—that an American expected a far larger tip than an Englishman in the same position.

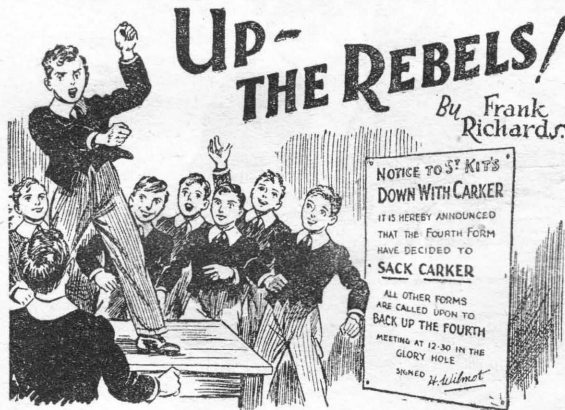
He plunged his hand into his pocket and drew out a dollar bill. A shilling would have served the same purpose in England.

"I say, do let him off!" he said, putting the dollar into the chambermaid's hand.

The bill worked wonders.

The Medusa-like features of the chambermaid relaxed, and a grin, intended for a sweet smile, appeared thereon.

"I guess he's had enough," she remarked.



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And Pompey's wool was released.

"You're all right now," said Tom Merry reassuringly.

And he walked away, the little darkey standing looking after him, rubbing his woolly head and his large ears, with the tears glistening on his ebony cheeks.

But as Tom Merry reached his door there was a patter of feet behind him, and Pompey overtook him.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Tom, with a smile.

"Me tank you, sah," said Pompey. "Many tanks, sah!"

"Oh, that's all right!"

"Me do anything for you, sah!" said Pompey, with a curious earnestness in his voice. "You want anything, me do it, debblish quick, sah!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Good! Then you'd better find Pongo."

"Dad de young gen'l'man's dog, sah?"

"That's it."

Pompey grinned. His tears had quickly vanished. The jolly spirits of the little darkey could not be long damped.

"Me find him, sah."

"Look here, if you find him, I'll give you five dollars," said Tom Merry, who thought it possible that the darkey who, of course, knew Chicago well, might be able to discover the dog. At all events, he would have more chance than Wally.

Pompey shook his head.

"No dollars, sah. Me find him, debblish quick!"

And Pompey vanished.

Tom Merry was smiling as he went into his room. There was something taking about the little darkey, and Tom felt that he liked him. But he had little expectation of seeing Pongo again.

CHAPTER 7.

Wally Makes Terms!

WALLY had not returned when Mrs. Stuyvesant and the boys went down to lunch. But at the foot of the stairs a messenger boy approached Tom Merry and handed him a letter.

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Stuyvesant. "Where is Wally, my dears?"

Tom Merry, who had a feeling that the letter was something to do with the young scamp of St. Jim's, opened it quickly. It contained a couple of lines.

"Can't leave Chicago till I find Pongo. Shall not return to hotel till it's agreed I am to stay here for him. If agreed, burn red light in window.

"WALLY."

Tom Merry grunted.

He knew Wally well enough to know that he would keep his word, and it was difficult to say how the young rascal was to be caught until he chose to come back.

"Is that from Wally, Tom?" asked Mrs. Stuyvesant.

"Yes, ma'am. He can't come back to lunch," said Tom Merry.

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Stuyvesant. "And I wanted to introduce you all to the colonel. I hope he will soon return."

As Mrs. Stuyvesant was leaving Chicago that afternoon, after handing over the boys to their new protector, Tom considered it best not to trouble her with the position Wally had taken up. Colonel Stalker would have to be told, but it was unnecessary to bother their kind old friend. She had had enough trouble over the disappearance of D'Arcy in New York, without having to worry about the disappearance of Wally in Chicago.

In the luncheon-room a tall gentleman was standing by a window, and he turned as Tom Merry & Co. entered.

Although he was dressed in the garb of the city, there was an air about the tall gentleman that smacked of the free prairie, and hinted that he was accustomed to looser and more free garments. His attire was somewhat striking. His boots had an aggressive polish, and seemed too small for him, and he walked a little painfully in them, and his waistcoat was of a glaring pattern that troubled the artistic eye of Arthur Augustus the moment it fell upon it.

His watch-chain was on the scale of a cable, and his necktie was adorned by a huge diamond, which would have been worth thousands of dollars if it had been worth anything. His hair was carefully parted in the middle, but showed a strong disposition to stand out in various directions. His face, browned by sun and all kinds of weather, was rugged and good-natured, and his moustache looked like a bush.

There was a stain of tobacco-juice on his lips, and, as a matter of fact, on his shirt-front.

This gentleman came towards the juniors with a creaking

gait, due to the new boots into which he had remorselessly crammed his big feet. He had evidently met Mrs. Stuyvesant earlier in the day. The good lady showed not a sign of the effect the gentleman's striking get-up must have had upon her.

"Ah, so here are the boys!" exclaimed the tall gentleman, with a courtly bow to Mrs. Stuyvesant. "These are the youngsters!"

"These are the boys, colonel," said the lady, and she introduced them all in turn. "Boys, this is Colonel Stalker, who has so kindly undertaken to escort you to Mr. Poinsett's ranch in Arizona."

Captain Stalker gripped each boy by the hand very hard, but Tom Merry hardest of all. He had a powerful grip, and it made the boys wince, but it came from a warm heart. He looked with great interest at Tom Merry.

"So you are my old friend Gabey's nephew!" he remarked. "You are Tom Merry, Gabriel Poinsett's nephew! Shake again!"

Tom Merry smiled, and shook hands again.

"He'll like you," said the colonel. "I like your looks, by gum, and when old Stalky likes a galoot's looks, that galoot is all right, sir! By gum!"

And they went to lunch.

Colonel Stalker struck the juniors as being somewhat of a character, but they liked him from the beginning of their acquaintance. There was a breeziness about the colonel that appealed to them. He seemed a son of the boundless West, cramped as much by the city round him as by his new city clothes.

He had evidently donned that striking get-up to do honour to Mrs. Stuyvesant and Mr. Poinsett's nephew, instead of coming to Chicago in rancher garb.

Tom Merry could imagine that the powerful frame of the colonel, which seemed likely to burst out of his store clothes, would be set off to advantage by the rancher dress he wore on the grasslands of Arizona.

Colonel Stalker was very attentive to Mrs. Stuyvesant in an old-fashioned, artless way that was very taking, and he told Tom Merry about his uncle and about the ranch in Arizona in a vivid and picturesque way that greatly excited the boy's imagination.

The colonel had, too, a curious and amusing way of ringing the changes, so to speak, about his own name, and he alluded to himself as Stalker, Stalky, and Stalk, and old Stalk in a way that made the juniors chuckle inwardly. He had, too, a strong smack of Westernism in his talk; he spoke of men as "galoots" and "pilgrims," of playing a trick as "ringing in a cold deck," and he "reckoned" oftener than he "guessed."

After lunch Mrs. Stuyvesant, with her maid and her faithful Louis and her boxes, departed from the railroad depot, the colonel and the boys seeing her off. Then the colonel, who had hitherto seemed only a good-natured old fellow, showed that he had a keen and businesslike side to his nature.

"Where's the other one?" he asked, as they left the depot.

"Wally?" said Tom Merry. "He's still out, the young rascal!"

"Our train goes at four," said Colonel Stalker.

"I'm sorry. Better read this!"

"Good! I thought you were keeping something from the old lady," said Colonel Stalker. "No good worrying her; quite right, I guess. What's this?"

He read through Wally's brief note, then he laughed.

"Guess the young colt's in want of a lamming," he said.

"Still, if he's fond of the dog, I kinder reckon I'd hang on to Chicager a little longer to give him a chance."

"Bai Jove, that's awfully good of you, sir!" said D'Arcy. "I have a particular weason for wishin' to stay in Chicago another day or two, sir, if it wouldn't put you to any great twouble."

"We should all like to see the city a bit, sir," said Tom Merry; "but it's not fair to give you more trouble, when you've taken so much already."

The colonel smiled good-naturedly.

"I reckon I ain't hung up for time," he said. "We'll stay in Chicager for a day or two, and no harm done. But we can't agree to stay until the dog is found, for he may never turn up again."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked troubled.

"But if we don't agree to the young scamp's terms, he won't come back, sir," he said.

"Then we shall have to trail him down, I reckon."

They returned to the hotel, but nothing had been seen there of Wally. It was clear that they could not catch the train as originally arranged. The prospect of staying a few

days in Chicago was pleasant enough to the juniors. They had not yet seen a tithe of the sights of the great city.

"What about putting the light in the window as a signal to Wally, sir?" asked Jack Blake.

Colonel Stalker shook his head.

"I guess not. That would mean that we agree to remain till the dog's found; and we can't do it. Old Stalky never broke his word yet. You bet, sir. We shall have to find the young galoot, or hunt him out!"

And if Wally was watching for the signal, he watched in vain.

The colonel smoked a cigar on the piazza, as he called the balcony, and after that suggested a run on the north side to see the city. The juniors gladly assented, Skimpole getting out a new notebook, the old one being quite full up with his notes on the Chicago stockyards.

Arthur Augustus, however, did not jump at the idea of the excursion.

"I am feelin' wathah fatigued," he remarked. "If you fellows will excuse me, I will remain at the hotel."

Colonel Stalker looked at him.

"Guess you'll larn to be a little bit tougher on the ranch," he remarked.

D'Arcy coloured.

"Pway do not wegard me as a nincompoop, my dear sir!" he exclaimed. "I assuah you that I am nothin' of the sort. But I should pwefer to remain in the hotel, if you will kindly excuse me."

"I reckon it's a free country," said the colonel.

And Colonel Stalker and the juniors sallied out, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy alone in his glory.

CHAPTER 8.

Arthur Augustus Is Angry!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS had remained behind to see Miss Constantia. He was fatigued, or he would not have said so, but his chief reason for staying in was to see the American girl, who had won his susceptible heart.

She had not been there for lunch, but he knew she was coming in before dinner, and he hoped for another little talk.

Arthur Augustus was already considering whether to lay his fortune—consisting just then of seven or eight trunks of clothes and about two hundred dollars in cash—and his heart at the feet of Miss Potts, to say nothing of his title of "Honourable," which would probably weigh more in Hiram K. Potts' estimation than either the heart or the fortune.

After all, an engagement for seven or eight, or even ten years would be a good thing, and Arthur Augustus was quite certain that he would not change his mind during that time.

The question was, how would Miss Potts look at it?

In ten years' time D'Arcy would be twenty-five or so, but Miss Constantia would be about thirty-four, and she might not be willing to remain single so long, even for the sake of an undying affection.

D'Arcy pondered whether he would put it to her bluntly, and hang his life's happiness on her answer; for, of course, his life's happiness was involved. It always was when he fell in love.

He was debating that momentous question when he received a friendly tap on the arm, and turned to see Mr. Fish at his elbow.

Arthur Augustus looked at him.

His previous meeting with Mr. Fish had been decidedly unfriendly, and he was surprised at the agreeable smile the young dude had worked up upon his face at the present moment.

"I am glad to see you again, Mr. D'Arcy!" said Mr. Fish effusively.

D'Arcy put up his eyeglass, and surveyed Mr. Fish calmly.

"Thank you vevy much!" he replied. "I must warnk that the pleasuah is entirely on your side, my fwient."

Mr. Fish coughed a little. He had learned from Mr. Potts that the youth he had been so rude to was the son of an English lord, and the Republican heart was touched at once. He would willingly have allowed the son of any lord to walk over him, and he was earnestly desirous of repairing his blunder.

"I am sorry there has been anything like a schemozzle," he said.

"Pway what do you mean by a schemozzle?"

"I—I mean anything like a difficulty."

"A difficulty?"

"A quarrel," said Mr. Fish.

"Oh, I see! Pway excuse my ignowance, but I have not been long enough in Amewicah to study this language, you know," said D'Arcy.

Mr. Fish turned pink.

"I guess I wish I had known who you were," he said cordially. "I wouldn't have let out on you instanter as I did. It was really Potts who misled me."

"Vevy good! I am quite willin' to accept your apologies."

"Good!" said Mr. Fish heartily. "Will you have a cigarette?"

"I don't smoke, thank you!"

"Will you—er— H'm! I should like to have a chat with you over the Old Country, you know," said Mr. Fish.

"I am weally sowwy, but I have no time for a chat now."

That was enough even for the tuft-hunter. He walked away, and Arthur Augustus smiled, and resumed his meditations.

But Mr. Fish was not the only snob in the Grand Atlantic Hotel.

The fact that D'Arcy was the son of a lord, and had the right to be called the Honourable Mr. D'Arcy, had been spread far and wide by Mr. Potts, and the swell of St. Jim's came in for a great deal of attention on that account.

It puzzled him at first, but as soon as he realised the truth, he carefully avoided the cordiality that was so generously extended towards him.

Anything like snobbishness jarred on the nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, and it was snobbishness, pure and simple, that actuated Mr. Potts and his friends.

But to Mr. Potts, when he saw him, D'Arcy, of course, was all smiles.

He was slow to believe that the father of his beloved was a snob, and, though Mr. Potts had many curious little ways, D'Arcy was prepared to like him for Constantia's sake.

He wished the millionaire would not persist in addressing him as honourable. But, after all, that was only a trifle, and he was learning how pleasant a ring a title has in Republican ears.

"Come into the smoke-room," said Mr. Potts, passing his fat arm through D'Arcy's.

D'Arcy was nearly as tall as the millionaire, but only about one-third in girth.

"I guess I wantar have a little chat with you."

"With great pleasuah, my deah sir!" said D'Arcy.

He sat down in the smoke-room, though he did not smoke.

Mr. Potts resumed his previous day's conversation on the subject of British aristocracy, and asked for all sorts of information. But this time he took a deeper interest in D'Arcy's own connections. He was very interested to learn that Arthur Augustus had an elder brother, and smiled with satisfaction at hearing that he was called Lord Conway. The son of a lord, and the brother of a lord assumed an almost holy importance in the eyes of Hiram K. Potts.

Arthur Augustus did not dream of the thoughts that were passing through Mr. Potts' mind, even when the millionaire asked if Lord Conway contemplated visiting America.

"Yaas, as a mattah of fact, he does," said D'Arcy. "He has been thinkin' evah since he left Oxford of goin' to the Canadian Wockies to shoot grizzly bears, you know. And, if he goes, I shall insist upon goin' with him to look aftah him."

"Canada!" said Mr. Potts. "Why, that's only just over

the lake from here! Lord Conway would have to give Chicago a look in, I guess."

"Yaas; vevy pwobably he would."

"Why don't you write to him on the subject, and point out to him that your friend, Hiram K. Potts, would be only too happy to entertain him in his mansion on the lake front?" said Mr. Potts encouragingly.

"Bai Jove, sir, you are vevy kind!"

"Not at all, honourable. I shall be proud to make his acquaintance."

The remembrance that Miss Constantia would be on the balcony by this time now occurred to D'Arcy's mind, and he took his leave from Mr. Potts, and strolled away.

Miss Potts was there, and she welcomed D'Arcy with a smile.

Arthur Augustus dropped into a seat by her side, and his heart beat. Should he, or should he not?

Miss Potts was so frank and cordial, and so unconscious of his secret agitation, that he felt it would be impossible to speak on the subject just then.

The opportunity must come before he left Chicago, however, he was quite determined upon that.

They had been chatting some time when Mr. Fish appeared. Apparently he knew Miss Potts well, for he dropped into the chair on the other side, and entered into talk. He made it a point to ignore D'Arcy, in retaliation for Arthur Augustus' refusal to accept his acquaintance, and, as he spoke about matters in which Miss Potts was interested, and which D'Arcy knew nothing about, he succeeded to a certain extent.

D'Arcy was only a lad, and not quite up to dealing with an experienced man about town in a contest of this kind, and Miss Potts, who suspected nothing, did not see the cloud that was gathering on D'Arcy's brow.

D'Arcy's natural diffidence aided the cool American in his object, and ere long the English boy was sitting quite silent, while the American was monopolising the attention of Miss Constantia.

The girl left them presently to dress for dinner, and then Fish glanced at D'Arcy with a curious glimmer in his eyes, but did not speak. It was Arthur Augustus who spoke.

"Sir," he said, turning his monocle upon Mr. Fish, "I wegard you as a boundah!"

"Sho!" said Mr. Fish.

"I wegard you as a cad!"

"Sho!"

"If it were not for eweatin' a disturbance in this place," said D'Arcy, his voice trembling with anger, "I would give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Sho!" said Mr. Fish, for the third time.

Arthur Augustus did not quite understand the force of the ejaculation, but he guessed that it implied an affected surprise, with an undercurrent of irony.

The American's coolness irritated the lad still further as Mr. Fish fully intended that it should.

"I wegard you, sir, as a beast!" said D'Arcy. "Only a wotten pwesumptuous cad would have thwust himself upon me at this moment. You are what we call in the huntin' field in England, sir, a thwustin' scoundwel!"

"Sho!" said Mr. Fish, for the fourth time.

And he lighted a cigarette.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet. Mr. Fish was in great danger at that moment of having his cigarette knocked down his throat by a right-hander; but Arthur Augustus was keenly conscious of the bad form of a quarrel in public.

He gave Mr. Fish a glance through his eyeglass, which

Potts, the Office Boy!



spoke eloquently of the volumes of scorn in his bosom, and turned on his heels. And his ears burned as he heard Mr. Fish break into a mocking laugh behind him.

CHAPTER 9.

D'Arcy's Honour Is Satisfied!

COLONEL STALKER came in with Tom Merry & Co. in good time for dinner, all of them tired and dusty, and in high spirits.

They had seen a great deal of Chicago, but they had seen nothing of Wally. The youngest scion of the house of D'Arcy was keeping his word, and he was keeping out of sight.

Colonel Stalker, with unflinching good humour, was treating the matter as a joke. The gallant colonel went into the hotel bar for a cocktail after his efforts in the cause of the amusement and instruction of his young friends, and Tom Merry & Co. ascended to their quarters in the endless lift, or, rather, elevator.

D'Arcy was there, dressing for dinner, when they came in. He had nearly finished, and was standing before a big glass, fastening a rose in his dinner-jacket. The juniors looked at him and grinned.

Arthur Augustus had been extremely careful with his dress, and he looked as bright and neat as a new pin.

He glanced round as they came in.

"Will you fasten this wose for me, Blake?" he said. "I have twied a dozen times, but I can't get it wight."

"Certainly," said Blake. "Where's the pin?"

D'Arcy handed him the pin, and Blake started. There was a sudden wail of anguish from the swell of St. Jim's.

Blake stared at him in surprise.

"What on earth's the matter with you?"

"Ow! You wottah! You have wun the pin into my shouldah!"

"Well, why can't you be more careful with your shoulder, and not run it on the pin?"

"You are a feahful wottah! I cannot help suspecting, Blake, that you did it on purpose for a bwutal joke!"

"He's getting suspicious in his old age," said Blake. "Fancy suspecting that of me!"

"If you give me your word that you didn't do it on purpose—"

"But I did do it on purpose," said Blake calmly. "But that doesn't excuse your suspiciousness. I regard you as a suspicious beast, and I seriously question whether I can continue to regard you as a friend."

"Pway don't wot! I will ovahlook your bwutal joke, if you will— Ow!"

"What do you want me to ow for?"

"Ow! You have wun the pin into my arm!"

"Curious that you must keep on getting into the way of the pin. You will be saying that I've run it into your neck next—"

"Ow!"

"What's the matter now?"

"You have wun it into my neck, you beast!"

"There!" exclaimed Blake triumphantly. "I told you so! I said he would say next that I had run it into his neck."

"But you have weally wun it into my neck, you howwid wuffian!"

"If you are going to keep on grumbling like this, Gussy, it's not much good my trying to help you. If I keep on

long enough I am certain to stick it in the right place at last. It's only a case of trying long enough."

"I wefuse to be punctured all ovah with that pin, Blake. Tom Mowwy, will you have the kindness to fasten this wose in my jacket?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes," said Tom Merry. And the rose was satisfactorily fastened at last.

The juniors descended to dinner, and they found the colonel in the dining-room.

Colonel Stalker had not dressed for dinner, apparently having no evening clothes in Chicago. But he looked all the better for it. His town garb, which he had bought in innocence of his heart on the recommendation of a shopman, was fearful and wonderful to behold, being of the reach-me-down variety, and fitting only where it touched, so to speak. Evening clothes on the same system would probably have been still more wonderful to behold.

But, whatever his clothes might be like, nothing could exceed the good-nature and kindness of the colonel's rugged, bronzed face. The juniors of St. Jim's had taken a great liking to him, and were looking forward to their journey under his charge.

The colonel was full of tales of the Wild West, and though he certainly exaggerated sometimes, that was merely the boundless fancy of the boundless West.

A man who lived on a ranch of which he could not see the boundaries with a telescope, and who thought little of riding ninety or a hundred miles in a day, naturally thought and spoke on a large scale; hence his exaggerated accounts of happenings on the other side of the Rockies.

It was noticed that Arthur Augustus was very thoughtful during dinner. His brow was clouded, and he replied only in monosyllables, or did not reply at all, to the remarks of his comrades.

Tom Merry and Blake guessed that something had happened while they were away from the hotel, and after dinner, when Colonel Stalker adjourned to the smoke-room, they questioned the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy was not to be drawn at first. But his chums, who were really a little concerned, insisted on knowing what was the matter.

"You're not feeling anxious about Wally, are you?" asked Blake. "He will be all right. He'll come back when he's run through his tin."

"Not at all, deah boys. Wally can take care of himself, I wathah fancy."

"Then what's the matter?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Well, as a mattah of fact, deah boys—" D'Arcy paused.

"Well, as a matter of fact—get on with the washing." "I have been insulted."

D'Arcy made this statement solemnly, prepared to see it produce a great effect upon his chums. His expectations were realised. Tom Merry and Blake gave a simultaneous start of horror, and looked as solemn as owls.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Blake.

"Absolutely imposs," said Tom Merry. "There must be some mistake. Surely no one in Chicago would have the unparalleled nerve to insult the one and only Augustus?"

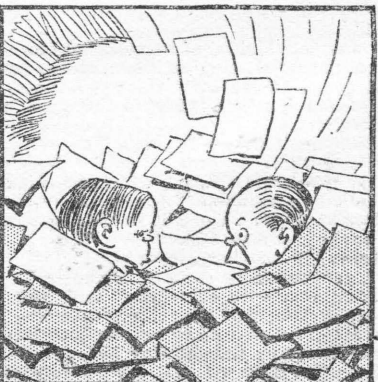
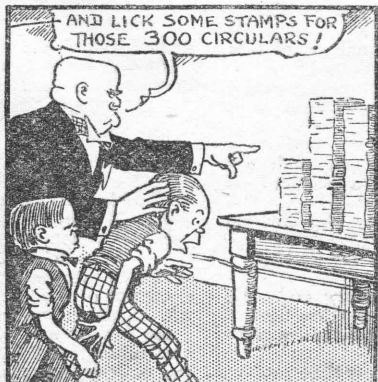
"I wathah think you are wottin', you wottahs! I have been insulted. Of course, it was imposs for me to knock him down in her pwesence."

"Him! Whom? In whose presence?"

"A wascal of the name of Fish!"

"Then you haven't strewed the hungry churchyard with his bones yet?" asked Blake.

LICKED TO THE WIDE!



"Pway be sewious, Blake! I am weposin' a gweat confidence in you fellows. I have been gwossly insulted, and it was impos for me to stwike him in her presence. You see, he would pwobably have stwuck me—"

"Yes, that might happen, unless you finished him off at one fell swoop."

"And then it would have degenerated into common, vulgah scwappin'," said D'Arcy. "Of course, anything of that sort was impos. But I have wead that in Amewicah the custom of duellin' is not yet extinct—"

"Duelling!" shrieked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, with a really ferocious look behind his eyeglass. "It is impos for me to soil my hands upon the wascal."

"Especially as he might start soiling his hands on you," Blake suggested.

"Yaas, exactly. You see, it sounds so easy to knock a man down. But suppose he gets up again and knocks you down? The thing has its drawbacks. It would be impos for me to entah into anythin' so bwutal. But I think I ought to be given satisfaction in a mannah suitable to a gentleman, you know. I should be pwepared to meet him on the field of honah."

"Well, you bloodthirsty young bounder!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Fancy wanting to shed the blood of Mr. Fish!"

"I don't believe fishes have any blood," said Blake. "You see, it would be impos, Gussy—"

"If you cannot treat the mattah sewiously, Blake, pway withdaw fwom the discussion," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"As for bein' bloodthirsty, of course I should be extremely sogwy to hurt anybody, and I should wegard bloodshed with howwah. But I weally think the cad ought to give me satisfaction."

"This is what comes of visiting the stockyard," said Tom Merry, with a shake of his head. "I never guessed it would have this effect upon you, Gussy. You'd better ask Mr. Potts to give you a job as slaughterer."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Pway be sewious. Is it a fact, Tom Mewwy, that duels are still fought in Amewicah?"

"I believe so," said Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "In the Southern States they still shoot at one another, I believe; but probably the duels are on the French system, and nobody gets hurt."

"Well, as a mattah of fact, I should wegard that as more satisfactory, as I weally do not wish to hurt this wascal, so long as my honah is satisfied."

"So you're going to challenge Mr. Fish to a duel?"

"Yaas, wathah! Will you chaps be my seconds?"

"Your which?"

"My seconds. I shall wequiah seconds in a beastlay duel, you know."

Tom Merry and Blake looked at one another. Gentle and good-natured as D'Arcy was, when he had an idea in his head it was no use arguing with him. And he apparently had a fixed idea now that Mr. Fish ought to give him satisfaction as a gentleman.

"If you will take my message to him I shall be vewy much obliged," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "Othahwise, I will wite."

"But, my dear ass—"

"I wufuse to be called an ass, and I am wesolute upon the mattah! Will you be my seconds," said D'Arcy, in a stately way, "or shall I act without seconds?"

"But think of his aged grandparents," urged Blake. "Think of his Aunt Selina and his Uncle James! Suppose you bring them down in sorrow to the crematorium? Think of their great grief! They will curse the name of Gussy—"

"Pway don't use such extremely stwong expressions, Blake!"

"They will use stronger expressions if you start murdering Fish!"

"I was not thinkin' of murderwin' him; I only want him to give me satisfaction as a gentleman, you know!"

"It comes to the same thing. Besides, suppose you get any of his gore on your clothes—you might ruin your trousers."

"Pway don't wot—"

"Better think it over, Gussy! Besides, you can't ask Stalker to wait in Chicago while you commit a murder! It wouldn't be reasonable!"

"Pewwaps you are wight in some wespects. But how am I to treat this man Fish?"

"Treat him to some ginger-pop!"

"If you cannot be sewious, Blake—"

"Treat him with contempt," said Tom Merry seriously. "Sneer at him, curl your lip with scorn, and treat him as a worm! That will make him feel infinitesimal, and will be cleaner than any slaughtering business."

"Yaas, pewwaps so! Bai Jove, here he comes!"

Mr. Fish came by. He glanced at D'Arcy. Arthur

Augustus fixed his monocle in his eye and bestowed a glare of withering contempt upon Mr. Fish.

Mr. Fish, however, refused to be withered. A distinct chuckle was heard as he walked on, and Arthur Augustus turned pink with wrath.

"You observed that, Tom Mewwy? Contempt has absolutely no effect upon the bwazen wascal!"

"Didn't you hear him groan with mortification?" asked Blake, with an air of astonishment.

"I thought I heard the cad chucklin'."

"Something wrong with your auricular apparatus," said Blake, with a shake of the head. "If that wasn't a groan of mortification, I never heard one."

Which was perfectly true—Blake had never heard one.

But Arthur Augustus was satisfied. If his enemy was



The mongrel leaped on to the table, yelping with terror. "Sho!" gasped Wally's side of the table. The animal made another bound, and landed on the other side. "Ow!"

groaning with mortification, honour was sufficiently satisfied—for that evening, at least. And contented smiles once more revisited the countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 10.

Captain Punter Catches It Hot!

THE next morning nothing had been heard of Wally. D'Arcy minor was keeping up the game.

Colonel Stalker was inclined to grow a little anxious, but Tom Merry assured him that Wally would be all right. And, as a matter of fact, when they came out of the Grand Atlantic that morning Blake sighted the truant on the other side of the roadway.

He dashed across, but it was in vain. Wally had seen him coming and had disappeared. Jack Blake came back red with exasperation.

But Colonel Stalker chuckled.

"I reckon it's all O.K. so long as the kid hasn't come

to any harm," he remarked. "I kinder calculated that he might have dropped into trouble with some crooks, you know. I hear that one of you was kidnapped in New York."

"Yaas, wathah! I had the gweat misfortune to be kidnapped by a wascal named Puntah," said D'Arcy. "I was impwisoned in an extwemely dirtay place, where I was not even allowed to wash, until I contwived to escape and also to wescue Blake. I should not be surprisid to see that wascal Puntah in Chicago."

"Well, he haunted us in New York," said Tom Merry. "He might think it worth his while to try the same game on in Chicago. Why, my hat!"

"What's the talk?"

"Talk of the Prince of Darkness! Look there!" Tom Merry pointed.



"Ow!" gasped Mr. Fish. The waiters made clutches at the dog from and landed on the expansive shirt-front of Mr. Fish. The Chicago "Ow! Take him off! Ow!"

At a short distance from the hotel, on the same sidewalk, a man with a pointed moustache and an aquiline nose was standing, with a cane under his arm. The boys knew him again at once. It was Captain Punter, the sharper who had attempted to fleece them on the steamer coming from England, and who had kidnapped D'Arcy in New York by the aid of a gang of Bowery toughs.

Colonel Stalker glanced at the man, and a grim look came over his bronzed face.

"Is that the scoundrel?" he inquired. "Why isn't he in the calaboose?"

"The—the what?"

"The calaboose—prison, younker! Wasn't he arrested?"

"Oh, no; he was never caught. And besides, it would have been hard to prove even if we had made a police case of it. Mrs. Stuyvesant thought it best to let the matter drop and get us away from New York at once."

"Correct! But I reckon he's hyer in Chicago after you," said Colonel Stalker. "And, anyway, he's up to no good. Wait here for me, sonnies."

And the colonel strode along to where Captain Punter was standing.

The sharper glanced at him, reading intended trouble in his lowering brow, and was on his guard at once.

"Name of Punter, I reckon?" said the colonel.

The sharper shook his head.

"My name is Brooks," he said. "Lieutenant Brooks, of the Secunderabad Lancers. I don't think I have the honour of your acquaintance."

"I hain't a keerd with me," said Colonel Stalker. "I'm Colonel Stalker—old Stalky, sir!—and down on any sort of a mugwump, sir! I'm old Stalk of Arizona, sir—old Stalky of Tombstone! You can't play any kind of a gun-game on old Stalk, sir! No, sir! You're Captain Punter, who roped in my young friend yonder in New York, and rung in a cold deck on him! I guess so, sir!"

"You are quite mistaken—"

"I guess I prefer to put my ducats on my young friend, sir," said Colonel Stalker. "I don't take any stock in you—not worth a Continental—red cent, sir. I can see you are a galoot and a sharp fit for any skin game! I am going to give you a warming-up, sir, and show you how we treat galoots of your heft out West!"

"Keep off! Help—ow! Murder!"

But the colonel had the rascal by the collar, and had wrenched away his cane, and was lashing the unfortunate captain with that cane in the most vulnerable parts of him.

Captain Punter, as much amazed as hurt, leaped and squirmed and yelled, but the merciless lash of the cane continued.

Tom Merry & Co. hurried up, with some idea of stopping the colonel, but they could not very well interfere with their elder, and besides, there was no doubt that the rascal deserved his punishment.

The passers-by stopped and looked on, and the juniors stood looking on, and a crowd speedily collected and stared at the strange scene.

Captain Punter struggled and yelled, but although he was no weakling he was an infant in the grip of the herculean Western colonel, and he had no chance.

The cane descended again and again in a shower of blows, and Captain Punter hopped and danced as if to music.

"Bwavo!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard that as weally exemplawy punishment for the wascal! I should have been gweatly inclined to give him a feaful thwashin' myself!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tom Merry. "And Manners lent me his camera just before we sailed. If only I had it now!"

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Yell! Shriek! Shout!

"Dear me!" said Skimpole, dragging out his notebook. "I must take some notes of this. A most peculiar scene witnessed in the streets of Chicago. Dear me! Can you tell me how many times the colonel has already smitten him, Tom Merry?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"I should like to be exact in the particulars I give in my book of travels—as exact as possible."

"Go it, uncle!" yelled a dozen little ragamuffins, as the colonel plied his cane. "Make him skip, granny!"

Lash! Lash! Lash!

A burly policeman came pushing his way through the throng.

"Hyer, what's all this about?" he demanded gruffly.

Colonel Stalker desisted at last.

"I guess that will do!" he exclaimed, throwing down the cane, and wiping the perspiration from his forehead with a huge red handkerchief. "I kinder reckon I've made the galoot hop!"

He was right. Captain Punter was staggering and very white. He had had a severe punishment, and there was a glint in his eyes like the look of a spiteful cat. He muttered savage words under his breath.

The policeman, swelling with importance, shoved back the onlookers.

"I guess you can't do this on the streets of Chicago!" he declared. "I reckon I'll take you in charge, old fire-and-thunder! I guess—Hyier! Where are you going?"

But Captain Punter was gone.

As he was the injured party, and he had not chosen to make any charge, even an American policeman could not very well proceed with the matter.

Colonel Stalker swung away, and the officer did not interfere with him. He vindicated the law by cuffing the small boys within reach, and sending them howling away, and stalked off with great dignity.

Tom Merry & Co., glad enough to get a distance from anything connected with the American police, followed the colonel.

Skimpole shut his notebook.

"Very interesting," he exclaimed. "A most remarkable

scene. I would not have missed it for anything. By the way, do you know the exact dimensions of the auditorium, Tom Merry?"

"Haven't the faintest idea."

"Dear me! I shall have to ascertain. Where are we going now?"

"Shopping at a big store."

And the party reached the gigantic establishment of Marshall Field, and entered.

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy Does Some Shopping!

LIKE everything else in Chicago the stores were on a gigantic scale.

The building of Marshall Field's was a magnificent structure as far as size went. The wholesale building, which the visitors had permission to view, occupied a whole square, bounded by four streets.

The retail building, where D'Arcy had to do a great deal of shopping, was at the corner of State Street and Washington Street. A height of seven floors was quite modest for Chicago. But the floor space was over six acres, to compensate for the lack of height.

When the boys commenced their shopping, they found that everything the heart could desire was to be had by those who could pay for it.

Arthur Augustus, being plentifully supplied with money, his purchases were great. He bought something in nearly every department, ordering the goods to be sent to the Grand Atlantic. The shopmen, on learning that he was going West, recommended all sorts of things, pledging their experience that he would really need them. The swell of St. Jim's had brought his own outfit of guns, still packed among his baggage, but in other matters he was not so well provided.

Folding tents and waterproof blankets, and camp kettles and patent stoves, and all sorts and condition of things, useful and useless, swelled the list of his purchases, and the swell of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's was deaf to reason on the subject.

"My deah boys, we are goin' to a perfectly wild country," he said. "We may find ourselves absolutely up a tree for something. Suppose we wan out of soap?"

"There's no reason for ordering a hundredweight of it."

"I have ordahed only one gwoos of cakes of soap. Then that patent bath for campin' out, and turnin' into a bed at night, and a packing-case by day, is a weally wippin' ideah, and you don't find inventions like that in any country but Amewicah."

"And even in Amewicah I don't suppose you find 'em work!" growled Blake.

"We cannot tell without givin' them a twial. It was a most polite chap sold me that camp-bed, and he recommended it on his own responsibility."

"Perhaps he wanted to make a sale."

"Oh, weally, Blake, you are a wotten, suspicious boundah, you know. I suppose the man wouldn't sell a useless article simply for the sake of gettin' my tin. It would be next door to stealin'."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Blake resignedly. "It's no good arguing with you. You'll have a jolly big bill to pay!"

"I suppose I can't allow considerations of expense to stand in the way of my personal comfort, deah boy?"

"I suppose not, dummy!"

"I wufuse to be called a dummay. I—"

But Jack Blake was striding on, and the rest of D'Arcy's remarks were wasted in the desert air of the patent camp-bed department.

The tour of the vast building was completed at last, and D'Arcy's shopping was finished, too. Then they adjourned—by way of the elevator—to the refreshment-rooms, and enjoyed a good lunch.

"Shoppin' is wathah exhaustin' work," said Arthur Augustus. "I am twyin' to make out how much these bills come to. Lemme see. There are a hundred cents to a dollah, and something over three dollahs to a pound. Ninety and eighty-two are one hundred and seventy-two, and fifteen is one hundred and eighty-seven dollahs. I can't weckon the cents; I shall have to leave them ovah. One hundred and eighty-seven divided by three brings up the numbah of pounds woughly. I make it somewhere about sixty pounds, deah boys!"

"I dare say that's somewhere near it."

"Then I shall have thirty-seven pounds to pay. That is wathah a large sum, and I am afwaid I have not enough money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is no laughin' mattah, Tom Mewwy. I weally did not realise that the things were wunnin' up like that. Those shopmen are such dweadfully persuasive fellows, you know."

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As they are so obligin', I suppose they won't mind the things bein' sent back again?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, I shall be sowwy to give them so much twouble for nothin', but people weally keep shops to oblige the public, don't they?"

"Not wholly, I think," grinned Blake. "Sometimes they have an eye to their own profit, you know."

"That is a much lowah motive, and I wufuse to take it into considewation. I shall apologise handsomely when I send the things back, and that will settle the mattah, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha! There must be something wrong with your supposing machine if you suppose that!" shrieked Blake.

"I suppose they would not like me to keep the goods without paying for them?" said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"That is the only alternative."

"I am rather glad this has happened," said Skimpole. "I shall be curious to see how they act in the matter. It will make a very interesting note for my book of travels."

Lunch over, the party left the gigantic store, and walked along State Street. Arthur Augustus suggested that it was hardly the proper thing to visit Chicago without a trip on the lake. Lake Michigan rolled its wide waters before the city, and beyond the lake was Canada—British soil. Canada, it is true, was a good distance from England, and yet it gave the juniors a curiously home-like feeling to reflect that they were so close to land upon which the British flag flew, and gladly enough would they have taken a trip across the Great Lakes to set foot, at least, on the shores of the grand old Dominion.

But Lake Michigan was not, as Blake ruefully remarked, as easily crossed as the Serpentine in Hyde Park.

"All the same, we'll have a look at Canada some time," said Tom Merry. "We haven't finished our travels yet. As for going on the lake now, Gussy, this isn't the best time of the year for boating."

"Yaas, wathah, I know that; but when the fellows at St. Jim's ask us what it's like on the great lakes of Canadah, it's no good telling them that we were afwaid of the cold, deah boy."

"Well, we'll ask the colonel."

Colonel Stalker was not much in favour of a trip on the lake, but he consented, and arranged to wait for the boys on the shore while they had a pull. The juniors found that there were boats to be had on hire, and they were soon aboard and pulling on the wide waters of Michigan.

"Bai Jove, the watah here is wuffer than it is on the Why! at St. Jim's!" said Arthur Augustus, with the air of one making a great discovery. "Howevah, I think it would be a good ideah to pull agwoos and have a look at Canadah."

"Oh, chain him up!" said Blake.

"I wufuse to be chained up—I mean I wegard your wemarks as widiculous, Blake. I feel that I am quite capable of pullin' agwoos to Canadah. I take a great interest in Canadah, as the only weally respectable part of this continent."

"Oh, you can pull across to Canada if you like!" said Blake resignedly. "But it isn't the width, ass; it's the length of Lake Michigan you've got to cross, duffer; and then you've got to pull through the straits, ass, into Lake Huron, dummy, and then pull for Canada, chump!"

"I weally think I am up to it, all the same," said D'Arcy. "I have no ideah what the distance is, but I have vewy little doubt that I can manage it."

"Go ahead, then!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

There was a crash as his right oar struck upon a chunk of ice and slipped from his hand. He caught a "crab" with the other, and the heels of Arthur Augustus shot up above his head, while the back of his head came with a bump against hard wood.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus sat up. He rubbed the back of his head and glared at the shrieking juniors.

"You feahful wottahs! What are you laughin' at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy picked himself up. There was a bump and an ache on the back of his head, and he did not feel inclined for any more rowing. The project of pulling the length of Lake Michigan was given up.

"I weally think we had bettah go ashore," he said.

"But we've not got to Canada yet."

"Wats! I have a feahful bump on my head."

Skimpole had jerked out his notebook and pencil. He was grinning gleefully.

"Dear me!" he murmured. "I'm awfully glad this has happened. It will make a comic incident for my book of travels. I am very glad—Ow! Who's that knocking my hat off?"

"It is I, you uttah ass!" growled Arthur Augustus, ruffled for once. "I have a feahfully stwong inclination to knock your silly head off, too!"

"Really, D'Arcy—"
 "Pway pull ashore, deah boys! I wefuse, undah the cires, to wov you ovah to Canadah."
 And Tom Merry and Blake pulled ashore.

CHAPTER 12.

Declined With Thanks!

"HALLO! There he is!"
 The boys had joined Colonel Stalker, and they were walking back towards the Grand Atlantic, when Tom Merry suddenly caught sight of Wally and made a rush for him.

The youngest scion of the famous house of D'Arcy dodged, but he dodged too late.

Tom Merry's grip was upon his shoulder and he was caught.

"Bai Jove, deah boys, we've got him! Pway hold him tight, Tom Mewwy, while I considah whethah to give him a feahful thwashin!"

Colonel Stalker looked down at the junior from his height of six-foot-three.

"So that's Wally!" he said grimly.

"Yes, I'm Wally," said D'Arcy minor. "I'm glad to make your acquaintance." And he calmly shook hands with the astonished colonel. "Have you seen Pongo?"

"Thunder!"

"Sorry I can't join you at present," said Wally, with a wary eye on Tom Merry. "I'm still looking for Pongo, and I can't leave Chicago till I've found him."

"You'll leave this citay when we do, deah boy. As for Pongo, he is certainly turned into pweserved kidneys or sausages long ago. Don't be unweasonable."

"I'm not going to leave town till he's found. I've hunted up and down Chicago. I lodged last night in a dive in Clark Street," said Wally cheerfully. "If you chaps want to see the elephant, I can show you round. I've learned a lot about Chicago."

"Bai Jove! Where is the elephant? Is it in a menagewie?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any reason to cackle at that simple question, Wally."

"Naturally; you don't know the American language," said Wally patronisingly. "To see the elephant is American for seeing the sights."

"Is it weally?"

"Dear me! I must make a note of that," murmured Skimpole.

"I've seen the elephant, but I haven't seen Pongo," said D'Arcy minor. "I can't leave Chicago till I know what's become of him. But I don't want to delay your journey, Tom Merry, if your uncle is expecting you at his ranch. You fellows can go on and leave me here."

"Young ass!" said Tom Merry. "Of course we can't leave you. I'm sorry about Pongo, but I don't see what's to be done."

"I guess the dorg's gone," said the colonel. "It's a durned pity; I'm fond of dorgs. But if he's gone into canned beef you'll never get him back again."

"That young darkey at the hotel is looking for him, too," said Tom Merry. "He's promised to find him, though I don't see how he's going to do it. Look here, Wally, you must admit that it's no good."

Wally looked disconsolate.

"I'm beginning to think so," he said. "Poor old Pongo! I don't know what I shall do without him."

And, for the first time in his experience, Tom Merry saw a suspicious moisture on the eyelid of D'Arcy minor. A very strong affection bound the scamp of St. Jim's Third to the shaggy mongrel which had always been the best-hated animal at the school.

The colonel's grim, bronzed visage softened.

"I guess I'm not the galoot to part a pilgrim from his dorg," he said; "but I reckon we kain't stay in Chicager for the rest of our lives, kiddies. Suppose we give you a couple more days to look for the dorg, sonny, and if you don't find him then, you will reckon to give it up and come West?"

"You're awfully good, sir!" said Wally gratefully. "You don't know how much I think of that dog, sir. I—I—I agree!"

"Honah bwight, you young wascal!" said Arthur Augustus. "Come to the hotel. I am afraid you did not stay at a vevy weputable place last night, for your jacket is extwemely dustay, and your boots have not been bwashed. Your necktie is not stwaight, eithah. I twust you will not twy to bwing diswepete upon the name of D'Arcy while you

are in Amewicah, deah boy. Speakin' about Pongo, why don't you ofah a weward for him?"

"I've been to the police department at the city hall about it," said Wally despondently. "To tell the truth, I'm running out of cash. It goes, you know. I've offered five dollars."

"Then send a messengah and ofah twenty."

"But I haven't the tin."

"I have, though," said Arthur Augustus. "You know that I dislike your dog as much as I dislike Hewwies' bulldog. Neithah of them have evah shown anythin' like a pwopah wespact for a fellow's twousahs. But, undah the pwesent cires, as you appeal to attach some importance to wescuin' Pongo fwom the stockyard, I shall back you up to any extent. Ow! What are you thumpin' me on the back for?"

"To show my gratitude!"

"Then I wish you would be ungwateful, you wuff young wottah! I was about to say that I am wathah in funds now, as I haven't done any shoppin'—or, to be exact, I have done a lot of shoppin', but I am goin' to send the things back, as I find they are more expensive than I thought. I shall easily be able to spare twenty dollahs for findin' that wotten mongwel!"

And when they reached the hotel the message was sent off at once to the police headquarters. Then the party entered, and a number of packages being carried in attracted the attention of the juniors as they reached their room.

The room seemed to be pretty well filled by them. There were packages to the right, packages to the left, and packages all round them; packages on the beds, packages beside the beds, and packages under the beds; packages on the landing, and packages in the corridor, and packages still coming up in the lift.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass, and looked over the varied and endless assortment.

"Bai Jove, I wondah what all this means?" he remarked casually.

"Ah, Mr. D'Arcy, I presume?" said a smart-looking clerk, stepping towards the swell of St. Jim's. "I'm from the store, sir. Your little account, if you please!"

"Bai Jove!"

"One hundred and eighty-eight dollars less ten cents."

"Thunder!" exclaimed the colonel, aghast.

"Oh, it's all wight!" said D'Arcy airily. "I have changed my mind about havin' those things, deah boy, and I should be glad if you would give instwuctions for them all to be taken back again."

The young man from the store stared at him, petrified. Arthur Augustus went into the room, and began to take off his hat and gloves. He was surprised by receiving a tap on the shoulder. It was the young man from the store.

"Yaas, what do you want?" said D'Arcy. "You shouldn't come in here without knockin', you know! I thought I'd finished with you! Is there anythin' else?"

"I guess so, sir; there's your little bill!"

"I've changed my mind about havin' the things!"

"I'm afraid you can't do that, sir. I'll trouble you for this little bill!"

"Pway weturn the bill and the goods to the store, deah boy, and tell them I am sowwy that I have had to change my mind on the mattah!"

"Don't do anything of the sort," said Tom Merry, laughing. "It's all right! Gussy, the bill will have to be settled!"

"Imposs, deah boy! I haven't the necessawy tin; and besides, I object to spendin' money in weckless extwavgance!" said D'Arcy severely. "I am wathah surprised at you, Tom Mewwy. You know I pwomised my guv'nah not to be weckless in money mattahs!"

"You will have to settle the bill!" roared Blake.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! All the shop men assuahed me that the goods were worth more than I was payin' for them. In that case, it is to their intwest to take them back."

"Oh, you shrieking ass! The things must be kept and paid for as you ordered them."

"If the store persons would considah themselves as injuahed in any way by the twansaction," said D'Arcy, with great dignity. "I should certainly keep them, and pay for them. Am I to understand that the store would wefuse to take them back?"

The young man from the store grinned.

"That's about the size of it," he remarked. "There would be trouble."

"Then I will take the things," said D'Arcy, with a wave of the hand. "And now pway don't bothah me any more, as I have to dwess for dinnah!"

(Continued on page 19.)

TAKE A LOOK AT—



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

HALLO, chums! I've some great news for you! Next week I am offering as first prize in a simple competition a topping Home Cinema. How do you like the idea? Great, isn't it? Think of the fun you could get out of a prize of this kind! There are other prizes, too—one hundred "Rigby" Swallow Model Aeroplanes, to be precise. Mind you enter this competition. There's nothing difficult about it, and the prizes are really worth having. Don't forget—it's in next Wednesday's GEM. So, by the way, is

"TOM MERRY & CO. OUT WEST!"

which is the next story by Martin Clifford in our grand series of adventures abroad. Keep a look out, too, for

LIGHTNING BRUCE BRADMAN!

He's in the thick of thrills again next week and just as speed-crazy as ever. By way of humour in quick, snappy form you will find another delightful "Potts" study by our special artist. Yes, sir, next week's GEM is a scorcher! Don't miss it!

A CYCLING RECORD!

How would you like to cycle a hundred miles a day, regardless of weather conditions and how you felt personally, for close on a year, without a break? It's a tall order, what? But a young Londoner of twenty-two years of age has done this and thereby set up a new cycling record. As far back as 1911 a Mr. Marcel Planes put up a cycling record of 34,366 miles in a year. Our young Londoner, Mr. A. A. Humbles, set his heart upon knocking that record sideways, so on January 8th of last year he sat astride his bicycle and determined to ride a hundred miles a day—or bust! By the time the three hundred and thirty-eighth day came round he had cycled as many as 34,367 miles. This is the new record, officially, so you cycle fans with aspirations have a stiff task to tackle if you want to beat it in the years to come. Humbles got quite a reception when he had completed his last mile, and, incidentally, was presented with a special trophy by Sir Malcolm Campbell. Outstanding tit-bits of Humbles' record ride are: He is now an inch taller than when he started; his chest has expanded two inches or more; only two chains were replaced during the lengthy ride, and only four tyres were used. His bicycle? Just an ordinary racing machine. British made, of course!

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NO GOOD WITHOUT A MICROSCOPE!

What is? Why, the world's smallest Bible, John Cardax, of Nottingham. It measures—the Bible, I mean—three quarters of an inch long, five-eighths of an inch wide, and a quarter of an inch thick. The midget in question is on "show" in the Commonwealth National Library, Australia, but to read it you first need a microscope!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Teacher: "Describe a foul proceeding?"

Bright Pupil: "A chicken going down the road!"

SCHOOLBOY SHARK HUNTER!

His name is Dudley Daly, and his age is fifteen. But quite recently, after a terrific struggle which lasted forty minutes or so, he landed a real 354 lb. man-eating shark at the mouth of the Umgeni River, Africa. Is he the youngest shark catcher in the world?

THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST EDITOR!

Have you heard about this young Frenchman? His name is Pierre Bourgeon, aged fourteen, and his paper, the "Petit Lyceen," was started six or seven months ago. He started out into newspaperdom with five shillings approximately, and now his circulation figures are in the region of 1,500 copies per issue. These, incidentally, Pierre sells at 2d. per copy. But he's a go-getter in this young French boy. First he had the "nerve" to ask the French Prime Minister for an interview and a statement that he could print in his paper. The French Prime Minister was so taken with the youth that he duly obliged. Since that momentous beginning young Pierre has been feted in London, received by the Lord Mayor, escorted over the House of Commons, and shown over the Prime Minister's house in Downing Street. Lucky fellow! Just shows you what enterprise and a spicing of courage will do, what? By the way, Pierre Bourgeon got the "editing craze" at the early age of five, when he ran a magazine!

AS BIG AS WEMBLEY!

We think a mighty lot of the Wembley Stadium and the vast number of people it can accommodate. But what about the old Colosseum of Ancient Rome, built centuries and centuries ago? In its popular days as many as 90,000 people could witness the strange "shows" that were put on for their benefit. Then, when the Colosseum fell from grace, so to speak, its giant stones were "pinched" for the building of palaces and noblemen's houses.

It was left to Napoleon I to tidy up the mess the bespoilers had left, and to accomplish this he got 30,000 workmen on the job. They made some amazing discoveries, among them a number of concealed water channels which were capable of flooding the arena with gallons and gallons of water. Thus, if the Christian martyrs got the better of the wild beasts against whom they had so often to fight for their lives, the rushing water could dispose of them very spectacularly—providing, of course, the Emperor felt in the mood for such barbaric amusement.

LEADING A DOG'S LIFE!

How did this familiar phrase originate, asks Ted Waters, of Walsall. Well, in the centuries gone by every village, town and city had its hangers-on in the form of scavenger dogs. They were most frequently seen in the region of refuse bins and rubbish dumps. As can be imagined, these four-footed scavengers were none too popular with the people, who used to kick them on sight or belabour them with sticks in an attempt to drive them away for keeps. But the dogs always came back, and between scavenging for scraps they spent their life dodging kicks and blows, hence the use of the phrase to-day in connection with anyone who leads a harassed life among his neighbours or family, etc. Next, please!

A SHOOTING PLANT!

Is there such a thing? asks F. B., of Glasgow. Answer: Yes. When a witch-hazel seed pod becomes really ripe the pod bursts open and the seeds are shot in all directions, sometimes to a distance of fifty feet.

THE WISE ELEPHANT!

Daisy weighed—she is an elephant—three tons and a half, and certain people who were testing out a special piece of "armour-plated" glass an inch in thickness, thought she would provide a fine testing weight. But Daisy was wide. She took one look at the piece of glass suspended above her upon which, according to theory, she was supposed to swing, and decided that it wasn't good enough. She backed up against a steel revolving door and promptly buckled it; sat down and trumpeted and refused to be coaxed. In despair, a four-ton lorry was fetched. It was swung up to the piece of armour-plated glass and one by one thirteen men clambered into the lorry. But the thirteenth, as is so often the case, was unlucky. The glass snapped. Daisy trumpeted her glee!

"ON THE BULL!"

It was football and the cry was: "On the ball!" Eleven sturdy Devon fellows were playing a hearty game against eleven monks who had been forced to say good-bye to Spain during the revolution a few months back, and had taken up residence at a place called Iybridge. But the Spanish monks had soon picked up the gentle art of football, and they beat eleven teams in eleven matches straight off the reel. But the twelfth match developed into something like a bull fight, for a cow wandered on to the pitch, chased by a frisky dog. "On the ball!" was forgotten, and "On the bull!" took its place. The Spanish monks set about that infuriated cow in true bull-ring fashion and thoroughly enjoyed the pastime until the cow was conquered. Then it was "On the ball!" again, and the match was finished.

YOUR EDITOR.

GUSSY "DISCOVERS" AMERICA!

(Continued from page 17.)

"But you haven't paid the bill, sir!"
 "Haven't I explained to you that I haven't enough money?" said D'Arcy patiently. "I will take the goods. I am leavin' Chicago shortly, and will take them with me, and will wite to you frowm Awizona."

The young man grinned.
 "I'm afraid that's not good enough, sir!"
 "Bai Jove, the chap isn't satisfied yet! I know I shall be late for dinnah! What do you want, then? Pway buck up!"

"The cash, please, sir!"
 "I haven't any!"
 The young man looked petrified.
 "To be exact, I have some, but not nearly enough; and, besides, I must have some pocket-money," said Arthur Augustus. "You stwike me as bein' a most unweasonable person. I shall have to wite to England for a wemittance!"

"Not good enough!" said the young man.
 "Is it poss, sir, that you doubt my integwity?" said D'Arcy, in his most stately manner.

"I guess so!"
 "Then I wefuse to discuss the mattah with you furthah!"
 And D'Arcy turned away, and took his coat off, and prepared to make his toilet. The amazed young man from the stores tapped him on the shoulder.

"Bai Jove, are you still here?" said D'Arcy, turning round almost crossly. "You are weally a most persistent fellow! What do you want now?"
 "The cash, sir!"

"Pway depart at once! I wefuse to discuss the mattah furthah!"
 "But——"

"I wepeat that I wefuse to discuss the mattah furthah! If this is how you cawwy on business in Chicago, I must wemark that I don't think much of your methods! I have nevah been tweated with such gwoss diswespert in Wegent Stweet or in Piccadilly!"

"You'll hear from us, sir!" said the young man, as he beat a retreat for the door.

There he was stopped by Colonel Stalker, who was almost convulsed with laughter. The juniors were all roaring, too; and D'Arcy was the only one who could not see a comical side in the matter.

"It's all O.K.!" grinned the colonel, gasping for breath. "Come along, and I'll give you my cheque, young man. It's all O.K.!"

The young man from the store left the hotel with Colonel Stalker's cheque in his pocket. And the bill was duly sent on to be honoured by Lord Eastwood. But Arthur Augustus did not trouble about that. He was thinking of Constantia, and he dressed for dinner with extraordinary care, and went downstairs with a flower in his jacket.

CHAPTER 13.

Rough on Mr. Fish!

WALLY was not to be seen in the dining-room, but Tom Merry caught a glimpse of him outside the hotel, talking to a policeman.

The policeman turned away, and Wally turned round. He had something under his jacket, something that moved, and wagged a shaggy tail.

"Pongo?" asked Tom Merry.
 "No; worse luck!"

"Then what have you got there?"
 Wally opened his jacket a little, and showed the hungry-looking countenance of a street cur. The animal was wriggling against his waistcoat.

"It's not Pongo," said Wally. "I believe that chap knew it wasn't Pongo when he brought it in, but he wanted a tip."

"But you're not keeping it, are you?"
 "Well, the poor brute's hungry," said D'Arcy minor. "Look at him! The policeman said it would be taken to the Dogs' Home and killed, and I didn't like the idea. I tipped him half-a-dollar, and took it."

"But what are you going to do with it?"
 "Feed it!" said Wally, going into the hotel.
 Tom Merry stared. Then he laughed, and followed Wally. He was kind-hearted enough himself, but he would

not have ventured to take a shaggy, dirty mongrel from the streets into the dining-room of one of the most expensive hotels in Chicago.

Wally entered the dining-room, keeping the little street-dog carefully concealed under his jacket. He knew that if it was seen it would never be allowed to pass the waiters.

Arthur Augustus glanced at him with a disapproving eye. The swell of St. Jim's had secured a seat next to Miss Potts, by the favour of Hiram K. Potts, of Chicago, and he was looking his best. D'Arcy always looked his best in evening clothes, and certainly he was elegance itself now.

Wally formed a striking contrast. He was not dressed for dinner, and his clothes were dusty, his hair somewhat untidy, and his jacket was bulged out by the dog.

He dropped into his place on the side of the table opposite his brother, and the serviette he quickly outspread helped him to conceal the presence of his protege.

"You know that boy?" asked Miss Potts casually.
 "Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, somewhat shamefacedly.
 "He is my youngh bwothah!"

"I notice a resemblance now. What a pleasant-looking lad!"

Arthur Augustus drew a breath of relief.
 "I am vewy glad you do not considah him a little wuffian, Miss Potts!" he said. "He has actually come into dinnah in lounge clothes!"

Miss Potts laughed.
 "Boys will be boys!" she remarked.
 "Ya-a-as; I suppose so!"

Wally's proceedings during dinner puzzled Arthur Augustus, who kept an anxious eye on him. Wally ate his soup sedately, but when the fish appeared D'Arcy saw him deliberately smuggle a piece down upon his lap. In the two or three following courses the same thing happened, and D'Arcy was amazed and alarmed. He trembled lest anyone else should observe the delinquencies of his younger brother, and he felt himself turn cold when he observed that Mr. Fish had his eye on D'Arcy minor.

Mr. Fish was on the other side of Miss Constantia, and he had certainly overheard D'Arcy tell the girl that Wally was his brother; but it suited the purpose of Mr. Fish to ignore that fact.

"Curious little beggar on the other side of the table!" he remarked to Miss Potts. "He can hardly be staying at the hotel."

Arthur Augustus shivered.
 "I guess it's some kitchen-boy playing a joke of some kind," went on Mr. Fish, in amazement. "Surely the impertinent young rascal ought to be turned out of the room?"

"He is D'Arcy's brother."
 "Sho! I took him for a kitchen-boy!"

D'Arcy trembled with anger. He knew perfectly well that Mr. Fish had not taken Wally for anything of the kind, but it was impossible for him to speak.

Wally continued to help his protege from nearly every course, and more than one eye at the table was turned upon him as the dinner progressed.

By the time the dessert appeared the head waiter had noticed that something was going on, and he sidled up behind Wally's chair. He was almost paralysed to see the head of a shaggy street mongrel peeping out from the boy's lap. He tapped Wally on the shoulder. He was a German waiter, and his command of English was not great. His fat, red face became very excited.

"It is not tat it is allow," he said. "It is tat you take away mit him."

"No thanks," said Wally, under the impression that the man was offering him some delicacy. "Never mind."

"Ich sage, dass it not allow—tat it not do."
 "I won't have any, thanks."
 "Das it not allow mit tog."

"Oh, take it away!"
 "You take it away—mit him!"

"The chap's mad!" muttered Wally. "Look here, you cut off! Go and have your say out in the vestibule."
 "Ich sage——"

The head waiter broke off in despair, and rushed off to find the manager—a most gorgeous individual in evening attire, with a great diamond on a huge shirt-front, and a fraction of waistcoat into which most of the colours of the rainbow were worked.

But Wally had realised by this time that it was his dog that had caused the excitement.

Tom Merry was nearly choking with laughter.
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"You'd better cut!" he whispered.

Wally shook his head.

"Blessed if I'm going to cut!" he said, with sturdy British independence. "I'm not going to cut for a lot of American bounders!"

Mr. Fish grinned across the table through the flowers.

"I am afraid they are going to turn him out," he remarked, as the manager came sailing up. "I guess Mr. D'Arcy had better step in and claim his brother."

The manager touched Wally on the shoulder. He evidently shared the indignation of his head waiter, but he was a cool American.

"I guess dogs aren't allowed in here," he said. "Git!"

"I'm feeding him."

"I guess I'll be glad if you'll get, and take him, and keep on the outside of my door next time you pass," said the manager.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Wally..

The manager did not obey. He grasped the lad by the shoulder.

Wally started up, and the frightened dog leaped from his lap. He bounded into the middle of the table, yelping with terror.

"Sho!" gasped Mr. Fish.

The waiters made clutches at the dog from Wally's side of the table. The animal made another bound, and landed upon the expansive shirt-front of Mr. Fish.

The Chicago dude gave a yell.

"Ow! Take him off! Ow!"

The dirty, shaggy brute was clawing at his shirt and waistcoat. Mr. Fish sprang up with such violence that his chair was hurled backwards. The dog dropped to the floor and skipped out of the nearest door at top speed. Mr. Fish stood, the centre of attraction, with his shirt-front clawed and muddy, and his trousers dripping with water from an overturned bottle.

His face was a study.

Miss Potts was smiling. Several of the guests at the table were laughing. Mr. Fish gave D'Arcy minor a furious look, and rushed from the room to change his clothes. In the excitement Tom Merry and Blake dragged Wally away.

CHAPTER 14.

Rejected Addresses!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS succeeded in making Wally's peace with the irate manager, backed up by the influence of Mr. Potts.

Mr. Potts regarded the matter as a good joke, and only laughed at Mr. Fish's wrath. Anything done by the son of a lord was right in the eyes of the canned beef potentate, and if the stray dog had jumped on his own shirt-front he would probably have forgiven him.

Arthur Augustus had made rapid progress in the millionaire's favour, as we know; but about Miss Potts he was not quite so certain.

That the American girl liked him he was aware; but he had a sinking fear that the disparity between under fifteen and over twenty-four might appear greater in her eyes than in his own.

He had determined once more to try his luck, but Miss Potts was absent from the Grand Atlantic that evening, and he had no chance.

Tom Merry & Co. dragged him off to the theatre, too, and the chums spent a pleasant evening.

The next day there was more sight-seeing in Chicago, but Wally had eyes only for the missing Pongo; but the dog was not discovered.

The search for a stray dog in a great city was, indeed, a hopeless task, especially if it was a fact that such unfortunate creatures were roped in at the stockyard, as the chums found to be a current joke in Chicago.

But Wally would not give up hope.

He had given his word to leave Chicago with the party at a certain time if the missing mongrel had not turned up, and as the time drew near he made up his mind to it, but he was very despondent.

During the last evening in Chicago he went out for a long walk to have a final look for Pongo, and Tom Merry and Blake went with him, in sympathetic mood.

Arthur Augustus remained at the Grand Hotel. Having seen Skimpole settled over his notebook, and the colonel comfortably ensconced in the smoke-room, Arthur Augustus looked for Miss Potts and found her. The girl was with her father, but Mr. Potts soon walked away and left them together.

Music was proceeding in the room, and, under cover of it, Arthur Augustus felt his courage rise to broach the dreadful question. He felt that he could not leave Chicago without revealing his love, and, if possible, inducing Miss Constantia to accept an engagement-ring.

"We are leavin' Chicago to-morrow, Miss Potts," he remarked, with a heavy sigh.

The girl's eyes turned upon him.

"Yes. I guess I'm really sorry."

"I am glad you are sowwy."

Miss Potts laughed.

"I dare say we shall meet again," she remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! I hope we shall, Miss Potts. Since I have known you, I—I—I— May I call you Constantia?"

"Certainly, my dear boy."

D'Arcy's heart sank. He wanted to call the millionaire's daughter Constantia, but he didn't want her to regard him as a dear boy.

"I am not exactly what you would call a boy, you know," he remarked. "I am in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, you know."

This was so much Greek to Miss Potts, but she smiled sweetly.

"Are you really?"

"Yaas, wathah! I was thinkin', Miss Con—Con—Constantia—"

Arthur Augustus stammered and broke off.

"Yes, you were thinking—"

"I—I—I— Oh, Constantia. I—I—I—"

Miss Potts looked somewhat concerned. She liked D'Arcy, and she thought there must be something wrong. The swell of St. Jim's was stammering and confused, and his face was very red.

"Is there anything the matter, Arthur?" she asked gently.

It was the first time she had used his Christian name, and it made Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's heart beat very quickly.

"N-n-no, not exactly!" he stammered.

"Have you a pain?"

"N-n-no, not a pain."

"An ache, then?"

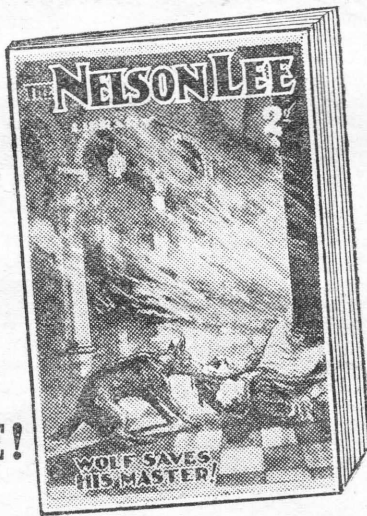
D'Arcy smiled feebly.

"Ya-as, I have an ache."

"Dear me! Where?"

"I-i-in my heart."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Miss Potts. "A pain in your heart! You must see a doctor at once! Was it something you had at dinner, do you think?"



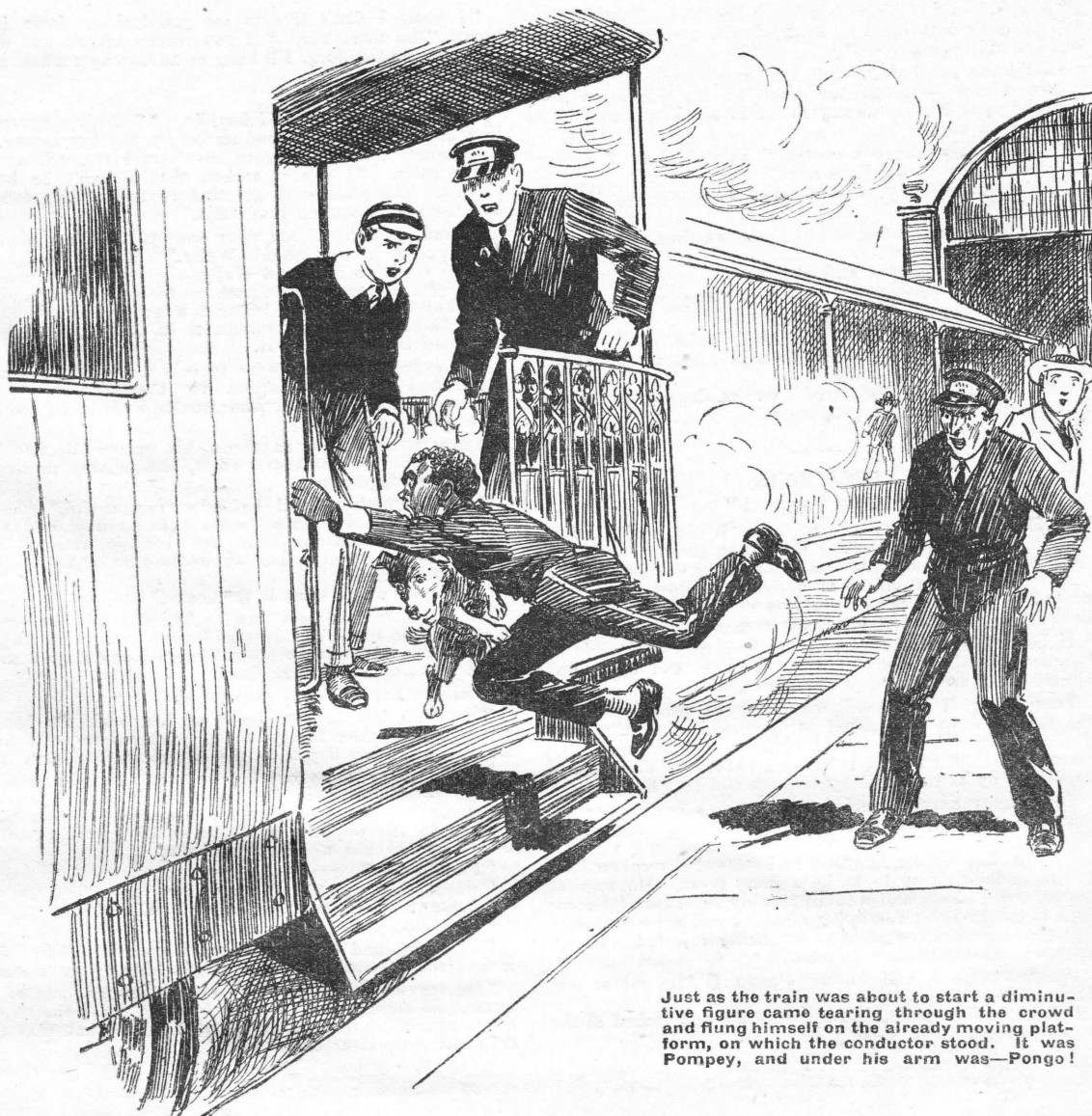
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Just as the train was about to start a diminutive figure came tearing through the crowd and flung himself on the already moving platform, on which the conductor stood. It was Pompey, and under his arm was—Pongo!

"Weally, Miss Potts—"
 "Or have you been over-exerting yourself? I guess you make me feel anxious!"

"Nothin' of the sort. It is a heartache. I—I—I am in love!"

D'Arcy's face was absolutely scarlet by this time. Miss Potts looked at him. She was strongly inclined to burst into a laugh, but she restrained the inclination.

"In love! Oh, Arthur! You!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, feeling more at ease now that the ice was broken. "I have been desperately in love for several days."

"Is it a Chicago girl?" asked Miss Potts, with interest.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, do tell me her name!"

"Oh, Miss Constantia, cannot you guess?" stammered D'Arcy.

She fixed her eyes upon him in blank amazement, and then, as she read his meaning, she could no longer restrain the laugh. But it was only for a moment. She laid her hand gently upon his arm.

"Oh, Arthur, you must not be a little goose!" she said. "Do you know I am twenty-four years old, and you are only fourteen?"

"Nearly fifteen," said D'Arcy, as quick as lightning.

"Well, fifteen. I guess it isn't a great difference. What would Lord Eastwood say if you went home engaged to an American girl nine years older than yourself?"

"I should show him your photograph, and then he would be charmed."

Miss Potts smiled. D'Arcy undoubtedly was a goose, but he was a very chivalrous and amiable goose.

"My dear boy, you must dismiss anything of that kind from your mind," she said. "I had no idea you were thinking of anything of the sort. You are a very nice boy."

Arthur Augustus winced.

"But you must remember that you are only a boy. I am very flattered, but I am not in the least in love with you."

"Oh!"

"When you are a little older you will feel glad that you proposed to me, and not to some girls you might meet in Chicago," said Miss Potts, with a smile. "You are a little goose, and I almost wish you were fifteen years older. Now, if it were your elder brother I might think of it. I guess I've made up my mind to marry a title!"

"Oh!" said D'Arcy again.

"So we'll be good friends, and we won't talk any more nonsense," said Miss Potts. "Has your brother found his dog yet?"

"I weally do not know," said D'Arcy. To change the subject from love to Pongo was too bad; it was a drop from the sublime to the ridiculous, with a vengeance.

They parted a few minutes later, and Miss Potts shook hands with the swell of St. Jim's with a smile.

"Good-night, Arthur, and don't be a goose! Don't forget me!"

"Nevah," said Arthur Augustus—"nevah! Your image will be evah impwinted upon my heart, and in the lonely watches of the night—"

Miss Potts laughed outright and ran away.

Tom Merry thumped the swell of St. Jim's on the shoulder, and D'Arcy swung round to see Tom and Blake grinning at him.

"What's that about a watch?" said Blake. "You're not buying a new watch, surely?"

"No!" said D'Arcy, with unusual brusqueness. "Pway don't be wiculous!"

"You were saying something about watches at night."

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away.

Blake looked bewildered, but Tom Merry was laughing. He had an idea of what had happened.

"Well, what's the joke?" demanded Blake. "Has Gussy got a bee in his bonnet, or has he been drinking one of the colonel's cocktails, or what?"

"No; I think he's discovered America—as represented by Miss Potts! He's been proposing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 15.

"Bravo, Pompey!"

THE juniors went up to bed, Wally and Arthur Augustus both looking somewhat gloomy.

Arthur Augustus was thinking of Constantia and Wally was thinking of Pongo. The last search had proved as fruitless as the previous ones, and nothing had been seen or heard of the missing dog.

If he had not met a violent death at the stockyards he had doubtless been stolen and taken away, and Wally had almost given up hope of seeing him again.

Tom Merry had remembered Pompey's promise to find the dog, and he had asked in the hotel after the little darkey, but, as it happened, Pompey was gone, too. Tom learned that he had not been seen since that day, and if he turned up at the hotel again he would be "fired."

Tom Merry never expected to see either Pompey or the dog again, but Wally had a faint hope lingering in his breast.

At breakfast Arthur Augustus had somewhat recovered his spirits, sufficiently so to make a good meal. He was, of course, still in love, and would probably be in love for some days to come; but an undying affection and a never-fading memory were his consolations for being rejected. Wally, however, refused to be comforted.

Pongo was gone, and without Pongo, D'Arcy minor was disconsolate.

Colonel Stalker pulled at his moustache and looked at the junior several times during breakfast.

"I guess I don't like to see you looking down in the mouth," he remarked. "If you reckon there's any chance of roping in the dorg, I'll hang on to Chicager a bit longer, youngster."

Wally shook his head.

"It's all right," he said heavily. "I don't suppose he'll be found now. It's no good sticking it out any longer."

"I guess it's hard cheese, too," said the colonel sympathetically. "I kinder reckon that it can't be helped, though. The police will get that reward if they can, you can bet your boots on that, boys."

"Yaas, wathah! I am vewy sowwy, but I am afwaid it is no use stayin' any longah, Wally."

"I'm ready to go," said Wally.

And the juniors went to pack up their belongings.

Arthur Augustus had brought a great deal of luggage from England, and his purchases in Chicago had greatly increased the amount of it.

The express company were to collect the baggage at the hotel, and as they charged by the separate "piece," D'Arcy's array of boxes and trunks were likely to come to a good figure.

Blake advised him to throw his camp-bath and some other articles out of the window, but D'Arcy declined to adopt the suggestion.

"That camp-bath will be extremely useful," he said. "You can turn it into a packin'-case by day, and a bed by night, and bath in it in the morning. I don't quite know how to open it, but we don't want it open till we get to Awizonah."

"And you won't want it then, ass!"

"I object to the term 'ass!' Ah, here are the expwess men! These boxes and twunks belong to me, my fwriends, and I want you to take special care of the largest twunk, as it contains all my silk hats."

And the baggage was dispatched.

The train left for St. Louis at ten, and, the baggage having gone, Tom Merry & Co. prepared to walk to the station, or rather depot, as the Americans called it.

As the party came out of the hotel Wally cast a last glance round, as if in the vague hope of catching sight of Pongo. But Pongo wasn't to be seen. A man hastily crossed to the opposite sidewalk as the party came out, and Blake caught a glimpse of him.

"Punter, by George!"

Colonel Stalker whisked round.

"Punter! That scallywag again! Where?"

"He's gone!"

The rascal had disappeared in the crowd. The colonel looked round wrathfully, and tugged his grey moustache.

"He savvies too much to let old Stalky get hold of him again," he remarked. "I guess I kinder made the critter's bones ache t'other day. Yes, sir, I opine that that hoss-thief will keep clear of our trail."

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Tom Merry was not so sure of that. Captain Punter certainly had had a severe lesson, but he seemed to be haunting them as he had done in New York. But no doubt he would be left behind for good in Chicago.

The railway depot was swarming with busy crowds when they reached it. The train was waiting, and they had only to take their places.

Wally looked up and down before he stepped aboard the train platform. There was no glimpse to be had of a dog.

The train filled up, and the scream of an engine was heard. Just as the train was about to start a diminutive figure came tearing through the crowd, and flung himself upon the already moving platform where the conductor stood, and rolled over.

It was a little darkey, with a dog in his arms. The conductor grasped him by the shoulder, and jerked him to his feet, and shook him.

"You young black imp!" he roared. "You limb of darkness! You give me a turn!"

"I see sorry!" gasped Pompey. "Me jus' catch train, sah!"

"You black whelp!"

"I devilish sorry! Ow, ow!"

The man was boxing his ears, right and left.

Wally ran out of the car, and caught him by the arm.

"Stop it!" he said.

"What the thunder—"

"He's brought me my dog! Let him alone! Come here, Pongo! Pongo, Pongo!"

It was indeed Pongo!

Wally gathered his favourite up in his arms and hugged him as the train swept on, and returned to his friends in the car.

Pompey followed him, grinning from ear to ear, apparently none the worse for his rough handling.

"Bai Jove! That's the wotten mongwel!"

"Pongo!"

"Oh, that's Pongo, is it?" said Colonel Stalker. "Well, I'm glad to see Pongo safe and sound. Old Stalky's glad, sir."

"Good doggie!" said Wally, keeping Pongo on his knees, and patting him. "I'll put his chain on now. I'm not going to run any risks with him. I wonder where the young rip has been all the time?"

"So you've found him, Pomp?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

The darkey grinned expansively.

"I see found him, sah!"

"How did you find him?"

"I see look eberywhere, sah! Tink me find him to please Mass' Tom," said Pompey. "Me guess me find him, sah."

Find him at last. He lead about blind man."

"My hat! Did you take him away from a blind man?"

Pompey grinned again.

"Not real blind, sah. Spoofo, sah."

"Oh, I see!"

"Wish I'd met him," said Wally. "I'd have given him one of my left-handers, the rotter! Poor old Pongo! See how thin he is!"

"But you're on the train now, kid," said Tom Merry, looking at Pompey in a rather puzzled way. "You're leaving Chicago."

"Me know, sah."

"You've lost your job at the hotel through looking for Pongo."

"I see no care, sah."

"But we must send you back somehow."

Pompey looked alarmed.

"No send back, sah."

"You don't want to go back to Chicago?" asked Tom Merry.

Pompey shook his head emphatically.

"No, sah."

"Have you any friend in St. Louis?"

"No, sah."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"No care, sah."

"The coon can be sent back from the next stopping place," said Colonel Stalker. "I guess we'll pay his fare, and put something in his pocket."

"Yaas, wathah! He is entitled to the weward for findin' Pongo. That's twenty dollahs, deah boys. Here's your twenty dollahs, Pompey."

But Pompey refused to touch the greenbacks.

"I see found dog for Mass' Tom," he said. "Me no find for cash. Me do it for Mass' Tom."

Tom Merry was curiously touched. The ebony face of the little coon was very earnest and serious.

"But you can take the money," he said. "You have earned it, Pompey."

"I see no gwine take it, sah."

"But you have earned it, kid."

"If Mass' Tom say I see take it, I see take it," said Pompey.

"Well, I do say so," said Tom Merry, laughing.

And Pompey put the twenty dollars into his pocket.

The conductor came along the car with a black brow.

"Guess that nig goes," he said. "He can travel in the nigger car; not here among white people, I guess."

Tom Merry flushed indignantly.

"Let him alone! I will pay for him!"

"The nig goes, I reckon."

It was Tom Merry's first experience of the colour prejudice in the United States.

Pompey settled the difficulty himself.

"I see gwine," he said.

"You get off at the next station," said Tom Merry.

"Here, take this—it will pay your fare back to Chicago, and something over."

But Pompey did not take it.

"I see no gwine back," he said.

"Do you want to go to St. Louis?"

"I see gwine where Mass' Tom go."

Tom Merry laughed.

"But I am going over the Rocky Mountains."

"Then Pompey is gwine ober de Rocky Mountains."

"Don't be an ass, Pomp. Get back to Chicago, and get your job at the hotel again," said Blake. "Blessed if I can understand the coon."

"He gets outer this car, I calculate," said the conductor.

"I see gwine!" said Pompey.

And he scuttled away, the conductor following, growling.

Tom Merry looked at the colonel, who was pulling at his moustache.

"Do people really object to black fellows in the car, sir?" he asked.

"I guess I do!" said Colonel Stalker.

"But what harm does a little coon do?"

"I guess he's a nig, and not on an equality with a white man," said the colonel, with an air of finality. "I guess I don't dislike nigs. But I bar travelling in the same car with a coon. Yes, sir!"

Tom Merry was silent, but he wondered. It was a considerable number of years since the great Civil War had abolished slavery in the United States, but the line of cleavage between black and white was as strongly marked as ever.

Even the overflowing kindness of the colonel's good nature was not proof against the prejudice in which he had been born and bred.

Little Pompey disappeared, and Tom Merry did not expect to see him again.

But when, in the course of time, they arrived at St. Louis, where they passed one of the nights of the journey, Tom Merry found Pompey in his room when he went up to bed.

He stared at him blankly.

"Pomp!"

"Yes, sah!" grinned Pompey. "I see hyar, sah! I see ready to help you, sah! I see take off your boots, sah, clean 'em in de morning, sah!"

"But you are not my servant," said Tom, half-laughing and half-vexed.

Pompey nodded emphatically.

"I see nebbber leabe you, sah!"

"You young ass!" said Tom Merry. "As you've come so far, you'd never get back safe, and I suppose you must come with me now."

Pompey beamed like the rising sun.

"I see follow you, sah, eberywhere. I see go anywhere with Mass' Tom."

"Bai Jove, here's that niggah again!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard it as wathah wemarkable that that niggah pops up wherevah we go!"

"Leave him alone," said Wally. "He found Pongo, and Pomp is all right. I stand by Pomp. Let him come with us, and I'll stand his exes. I can borrow the tin from Gussy."

"Weally, Wally—"

"No, you won't," said Tom Merry. "I'll see him through, though I'm blessed if I know what to do with him."

"I see follow Mass' Tom."

And Pompey kept his word. The colonel, who thought the coon might be useful to the juniors now that they were getting to the frontiers of Eastern civilisation, and about to enter a region where it would be necessary to rough it, willingly gave his permission for Pompey to accompany the party. And Pompey was happy.

So long as he went with Tom Merry, he seemed to want nothing more.

And with Tom Merry he went; and Pomp was one of the party that set out the next morning on the long journey eastward, with the Rocky Mountains looming ahead.

THE END.

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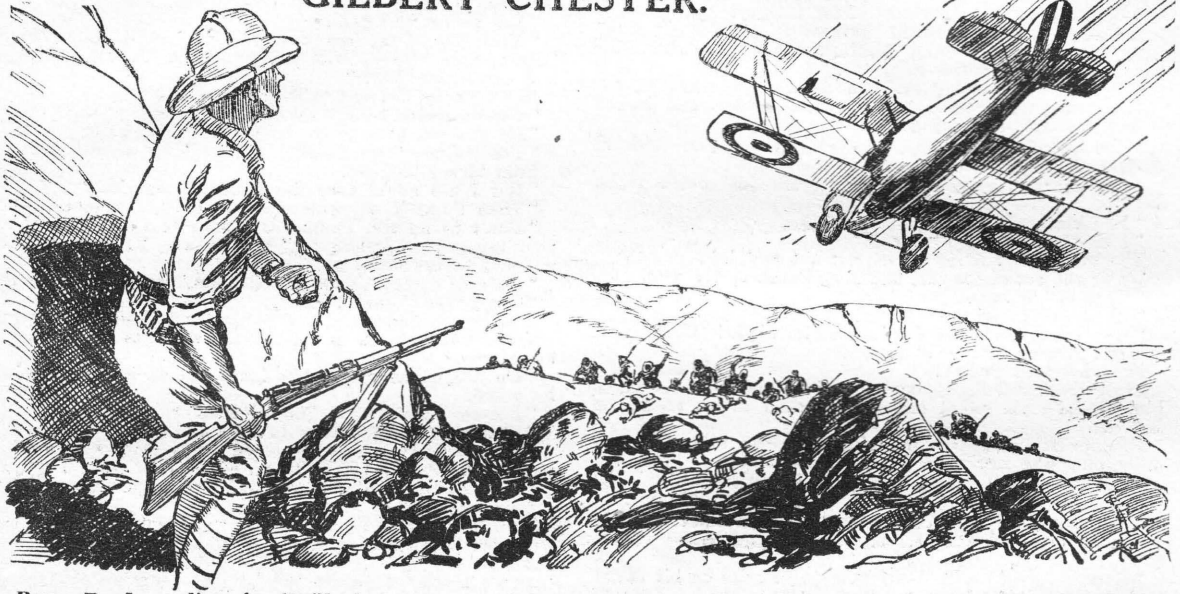
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CHAPTER 1.

Arabs!

LIKE a great red ant, the crimson racing car moved against the merging browns of the desert. Stopping, starting, slowing, jerking, it laboured sluggishly over the rough, undulating ground.

Like billows of some muddy sea, the landscape rolled away in an endless expanse of sandy wadis and rocky ridges, with here and there a hardy shrub which, somehow or other, contrived to eke out a precarious existence in the sun-scorched ground.

Now nosing upwards like a tank, now slithering downhill like some monstrous crab, the red car staggered on its difficult way, a cloud of steam issuing from its boiling radiator.

"I reckon that French officer, back at Deir ez Zor, was right," Bruce Bradman, the famous speed crack, lay back in his seat behind the wheel as the car groaned wearily out on to the flat top of a little tableland. "It looks as if we'd bitten off more than we can chew, this trip. We ought to have followed the railway instead of trying to take this short cut."

Jimmy Cope frowned. He paused before replying, to ease his big white sun helmet.

"We'd have butted trouble, anyway, Bruce. Those Selongese rascals who're after us will be following along that route. By taking this short cut, we've dodged 'em. With luck, we ought to strike the river well ahead of them, with a good lead in hand."

"If the old bus doesn't break in half before we get there," Bruce grunted dubiously. "And talking of the Euphrates reminds me of water. That blessed rad must be nearly dry. Better fill her up, Joe."

Joe Anson, his ex-sailor mechanic, drew a battered petrol-tin from the back as the racer pulled up. He went to the radiator and removed the hot filler cap.

"We shan't fill her up no more, skipper, till we strike a waterworks," he announced gloomily, as, with care, he poured a bare three quarts of liquid from the tin. "We ain't done nothin' but fill her up since we left Syria. That's the blinkin' lot, bar what we've got in our water-bottles for drinkin'."

Hari, a stout, bespectacled Babu, who formed the fourth member of the party, clutched at his water-bottle in alarm.

"I desire to make formal protest against dissipation of aqueous refreshment upon mechanical contrivances. Excessive solar temperature occasions exquisite sufferings in

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region of humanitarian epiglottitis. In short, existence without drink is insupportable."

Bruce suppressed a feeble smile. The situation, Hari's muddled English notwithstanding, was far from humorous. It was, in fact, desperate. An endless waste of arid country, torrid heat that blistered, hot sand that seared the throat and tonsils, and uneven going which rendered any speed above a crawl impossible—these things threatened disaster.

"We can't live without water, true," he agreed huskily. "But the engine won't carry on without it. If she packs up, we're done."

He got down and stoically emptied the contents of his own water-bottle in the radiator. Joe followed suit. The level rose a little, but inadequately. Cope made to add to it from his slender store.

"You and Hari had better hang on to yours," Bruce said, checking him. "We must keep something in hand. Maybe we'll strike a water-hole. With luck, this lot will keep her going for a few more miles. We may be nearer the river than we think."

The sailor shook his head sombrely.

"I don't believe there's sich a thing, cap'n. I was adrift in the middle o' the South Atlantic in an open boat, once. We was fixed like we're fixed now—nothin' doin' an' up a gum-tree, so to speak. If a cloud 'adn't of come up on the 'orry-zun, we'd of perished. When the rain come down, we laid our shirts out to catch it. Wrung 'em out, we did, into the pannikin. That kep' us alive until a ship 'ove in sight and picked us up. Well, there ain't no clouds 'ere—"

"By Jove, though!" Cope sprang up on the seat and peered eastwards. "Look there, you chaps!"

The other three mounted the car, and followed the direction of Jimmy's outstretched hand. Rolling up on the skyline was a dun grey cloud, whirling aloft like a column of smoke.

"Dust!" Bruce pronounced critically. "Coals to Newcastle, old man."

"Sure—dust!" Jimmy muttered. "But—By heck, it's no dust storm, Bruce. It's too small and localised. It's men—camels—horses! And they're coming this way. We're saved!"

"By gosh, you're right!" Bruce agreed, his face clearing. "Get ready to signal. We daren't risk them missing us."

Cope climbed on to the back seat, and, a slim figure in his shirt and well-cut riding breeches, waved wildly with his coat as the cloud came on. As in response to his signal, it veered. Rushing down upon the car, it resolved itself into a band of horsemen.

White-robed figures on their galloping steeds, the newcomers were clearly Arabs. There were about two dozen of them. As they approached, they scattered, spreading out in crescent formation.

Jimmy waved anew. In answer, a tall figure detached himself from the van of the crescent. He reined in and pointed at the car, gesticulating excitedly to his companions.

Again the latter dashed out in a fresh manoeuvre. Circling the edge of the plateau, they almost surrounded the travellers in a thin, widely spaced cordon.

"What the deuce are they doing?" Jimmy muttered, shading his eyes to watch the riders, who, while they made the encircling movement, kept their distance. "Taking stock of us?"

In answer to his query, the tall man raised himself in the saddle. A puff of smoke burst out above his horse's head, and something sputtered off the ground close by the car. A second, and a sharp rattle of rifle-fire broke from the horse-shoe line of Arabs. The air was thick with flying lead.

"Hostile, by gosh!" Bruce yelled. "Down flat—for your lives!"

He grabbed a rifle, and flung himself on his chest on the ground. Jimmy came tumbling after him. The sailor dropped more slowly, while the Babu made a frantic dive under the chassis, where he strove to force his stout form below the under-shield.

Galloping in an ever-closing circle, the Arabs went on firing. Prone on the sand, Bruce and his two white pals sent a few quick shots back in reply. For the moment they did not wish to hit the riders. The attack might have been launched in mistake, and if there was still a hope of parleying with the foe, it would be better policy to avoid angering them by casualties.

As the shots sailed harmlessly past, however, the Arabs gathered courage. The circle went on closing. At closer range now, their aim grew increasingly accurate. The ground about the car was slashed with bullets.

"It's no go. They mean business!" Bruce growled. "All right—if you want it, my friend, take that!"

He snapped a lightning shot at an Arab, who, more daring than the rest, swooped in. The horse went racing madly past, its saddle empty. On the ground behind a huddled mass of white lay still, where the rider had pitched.

Jimmy and Joe let drive from their respective stations. Two other saddles emptied. Then, learning caution, the remaining horsemen dashed into the distance. Dismounting, they disappeared behind some rocks.

"They're going to try it on foot," Cope said, his blue eyes keenly on such spots as offered likely cover for the foe. "They're creeping back to snipe us. I suppose it means the Selongese?"

"I think not." Bruce shook his head. "They came from the east. The Selongese are behind us somewhere. They'd have come from the west if they'd been sent to pursue us."

"Then I don't understand it!" Cope muttered. "Why should these fellows want to attack us? We haven't done anything to them."

"Sure. But they're likely to do something to us if we're not careful," Bruce rejoined, shrugging. "I don't care what their game is, so long as they don't bring it off."

He loosed a shot at a gob of fleecy white which broke suddenly from a neighbouring rock. The first sniper had taken up his position, and in a few moments the sand about the car was furrowed by a hail of driving lead.

Hurriedly the defenders scraped up sand with their naked hands, to form a tiny ridge for shelter. Flat behind these hastily improvised shields, they kept on firing steadily. Though bullets sputtered ceaselessly into the sand heaps, they did not penetrate. At quieter intervals, Bruce and his comrades added to their cover. Securely entrenched, they held their enemies at bay.

At length the Arabs' fire slackened. For a little a desultory sniping continued. Then at last, this, too, ceased. The surrounding desert grew still.

Presently white-garbed figures appeared beside the distant horses. Cautiously the defenders watched. They saw the figures mount and ride off in the direction they had come.

"Twenty—twenty-one——" Bruce counted, carefully checking their number. "Looks as if they'd had enough. That'll be about the lot."

"Run out of ammo, more likely," Cope commented. "These fellows don't carry much with them. I'll bet they've just drawn off to raise a fresh supply of cartridges. We haven't heard the last of them."

"Then the sooner we're on our way and out of it, the better," Bruce exclaimed, springing to his feet. "Let's push on while the going's good!"

He strode to the car where the redoubtable Hari, reassured by the silence, was wriggling cautiously out from under the chassis.

"Huh! You're a fine fellow, aren't you?" he added sarcastically, with a glance at the Babu. "A lot of help in a jam, I must say——"

He broke off, his eyes on the ground by the front axle. The sun-baked sand was wet, and, with a low cry, he sprang to the radiator. In its lower tank was a gaping bullet hole. And in a flash he realised the worst. The precious water had drained away!

CHAPTER 2.

The Tunnel!

OVER towards Syria, the sun was low upon the horizon. During the delay occasioned by the recent attack the afternoon had passed. Now nightfall hastened with the speed peculiar to southern latitudes.

Their sole thought to get away before the foe returned, Bruce and his friends set the car in motion. They had little hope of making any considerable distance; the engine, robbed of its accustomed cooling, rapidly overheated. It was problematical how long it would hold out.

A viscous haze of atomised lubricating-oil streamed from the crank-case vent. At any moment a big-end or crank-shaft bearing might burn out, and the engine seize up.

"The only thing's to make the best of what daylight remains," Bruce grunted philosophically. "Once darkness falls, we'll be blinkered. We daren't switch on the headlights. They'd only betray us."

Cope nodded glumly, and, to the asthmatic wheezing of a protesting engine, the racer lumbered doggedly onwards till, a black shadow in the dim light of the setting sun, a vast shape reared itself against the dark sky ahead.

As they drew nearer, the pals got a better look at it. The shape seemed like a low hill which stood up out of the surrounding desert like some enormous ant heap.

"That's our mark," Cope said, with a jerk of his thumb towards it. "We can defend a position of that sort, anyhow. Let's make it."

"Agreed!" Bruce answered, and steered the racer for the mound.

As he neared its base, he switched the headlights on, looking for some spot the car could climb. But the sides of the hill were almost sheer. Unless the bus found wings, she could not gain its summit.

To leave the car below spelt risk of her being damaged by the Arabs, if and when they returned. And to lose the bus meant disaster, even though they held the hill. Bruce Bradman's hopes sank to zero. A reek of burning oil warned him of impending engine failure. She would go no farther.

It was then that the headlight beams caught a black patch against the hillside. A square of black against the brown of the mound, it arrested his instant attention.

A narrow hole gaped in the steep.

Bruce and Jimmy sprang to earth and ran to the spot. They found the hole ran deep into the mound. It had obviously been dug by human hands, for its sides were shored up with timber, and from the well-preserved appearance of the latter, at some quite recent date.

The pair inspected their discovery curiously. It seemed strange that this tunnel-like aperture should run into the hill.

"We could shove the bus in here," Bruce remarked. "She'll be well out of sight. And she'll just about squeeze through. I dare say if the car were hidden, these infernal Arabs would fail to spot us. It's a chance worth trying for, anyway."

Cope nodded, and Bruce locked the car around. So low was the hole, however, that he could not drive her in. When he lowered the windscreen, there was hardly room for the steering-wheel to clear the top timber which sustained the roof.

Between them the four men shoved the racer through the narrow opening. But after a few feet the tunnel narrowed. The car could go no farther. Bruce reached in and pulled the handbrake on, for the passage sloped gradually downwards. Utter stillness succeeded the faint squeak as the brakes went on.

Bruce squeezed himself with difficulty past the front wing. A new curiosity filled him. What was this tunnel, and why had it been driven into the hill? Its presence in the heart of these desert wastes seemed peculiar.

The headlights, still on, were blazing down the narrow passage which led into the earth. They caught and brought into relief its walls. As his gaze fell upon them, Bruce gave a gasp of astonishment.

The tunnel walls were neither brick nor timberwork. The place was a corridor of stone, where grotesque and monstrous images loomed in bas-relief from huge slab panels set vertically to the floor.

His cry of surprise brought his companions to him. In amazed silence, the four stared at this avenue of bird-faced

men and winged monsters, still guardians of these mysterious portals.

"Cripes!" the sailor breathed, the back of his grimy hand drawn slowly across his sweating forehead. "Wot's this 'ere? The Chamber of 'Orrors?"

"Ancient Assyrian!" Bruce pronounced. "These must be some old remains of the civilisation that existed round the Tigris and Euphrates over a thousand years ago. I— Here, Hari—where are you going?" He clutched the Babu's arm as Hari veered in a panic for the exit.

"Sir—" The wretched Hari's teeth chattered till they threatened to fly out of their sockets. "I have experience of natural apprehension, in view of spectral emanation. My curriculum did not embrace archæological studies. And, you will appreciate, I have reluctance to proceed. I am not good mixer with the dear departed."

"Ghosts? Rot!" Bruce exclaimed contemptuously. "Don't be a chump, you idiot! There's nothing here except a lot of old stones."

Hari's teeth went on chattering. Great beads of perspiration bathed his brown brow. His spectacles slid down along his nose. Above their horn-rims, his eyes rolled in horror.

"Beloved mister, I beg to assure you I have no interest in masonic matters. I will go look for nomadic marauders. I will constitute myself custodian of exit aperture. I have no time for sepulchritude of this bally dump."

"We might be able to hold this place better than the hill outside," Cope suggested. "I vote we see what's down this passage, Bruce. There's nothing like making sure. Seems to me, people have been here recently."

"Come on, then," Bruce rejoined, and squeezed back to the car for tackle. "I'll switch off these lights. They may show outside."

A hollow groan from Hari accompanied the abrupt plunge into darkness. Then the gloom was broken as Bruce switched on an electric torch. Gripping their automatics, the three white men moved slowly down the tunnel, the reluctant Babu following closely on their heels. Much as he feared to tread in their footsteps, he feared still more a lonely vigil in the dark.

The tunnel ended quickly. It gave out in a shadowy hall—a rectangular space of many pillars, rising to a half-seen roof. All round the walls, a range of carven figures was visible. Fantastic effigies of bearded men, they seemed to leer maliciously down upon the intruders.

As Bruce swung his torch-ray, a swarm of bats, disturbed

by the light, broke noisily from the roof. The sudden whirring of a myriad wings awoke the echoes of the silent chamber. The rush of sound upon the air was stabbed by a shrill squeal of terror from the Babu.

"Some ancient throne-room, perhaps," Bruce ventured, staring at the great sculptured beasts which reared their towering heads athwart a further door.

Each had a human head, the body of a bull, the feet of lions. Along their flanks were folded mighty wings, as of an eagle. Still and inscrutable, these sentinels of a former age loomed in grim challenge against the advice of these puny intruders, who had dared to penetrate their secret lair.

"There's something still beyond," Bruce muttered, and strode to the square-topped arch which cleft the far end of the hall.

As he reached its threshold he fetched up with a jerk. From the black recesses of the passageway beyond there broke the echoes of a wild, unearthly scream.

"Crikey!" The seaman crouched, his gun gripped tight. "Wot's that?"

Bruce and the rest listened, the shock of the ensuing silence throbbing in their strained ears. Everything was still as death. It was as though the sound just heard had never been.

Slowly the four looked at one another in the ghostly silvren of the torch light. The Babu's features were ashen. Old Joe's were white, though his gnarled face wore an expression of grim determination.

The foetid air was deathly hot. From the doorway came a stifling waft of wind. It was a lifeless draught that scorched the lungs and nostrils, as though some death wind had stirred the waters of a Tatarian sea.

A cold sweat stood out on Bruce Bradman's forehead. His inner urge was to turn and flee for the open. He guessed that his companions felt about the same.

He took an instant grip on himself. If he knew fear he had never heeded it. And he would not let it take him now. He forced a calm smile to his parched lips.

"I don't know what it was, but whatever it is we'll have it out! We can't afford to leave a possible enemy on our flank. Come on!"

He stepped resolutely into the corridor beyond the arch, and the others shuffled in his wake. With infinite caution they filed along the passage, Bruce at their head, his torch beam sweeping the gloom ahead.

As they went fresh bats rushed shrieking past their heads. The low roof echoed to the beating of their frenzied wings. The whole place filled with the nightmare of a ghastly horror.

Then the passage ended in a wall of naked earth. Down at floor level yawned a tiny hole, so small that it could only be negotiated on hands and knees.

Still gripping his torch, Bruce set out to crawl along it. In his right hand was his gun. Working his way on wrists and knees he wriggled forwards, unpleasantly aware in his present posture he was practically defenceless.

The pipe-like tunnel finished abruptly after a few yards. He had a glimpse of some square chamber beyond as his torch ray stabbed it, and for a moment he held back, scanning what lay ahead. Hearing no sound, he crawled out into the chamber, stood erect, and held his torch so as to help his comrades as they crept towards him.

"Buck up, Jim," he urged in an understone. "Are you all ri—"

He pitched forward with a gasp as something landed full upon his back. He went down with a heavy thud. The torch went out. As he reached frenziedly to grip it a hand swept in and whipped it out of reach. He scrambled up, to hear the whisk of draperies, the faint scurry of departing feet.

From the utter blackness of the stifling hot void came—or so it seemed—the echoes of a mocking laugh.

"Jim—Joe! Where are you?" he panted.

But only silence answered him. Though he called again and again no friendly hail soared back to him through the gloom.

He started groping in a frenzy at the unseen walls, searching vainly for the tunnel. But everywhere a solid mass of masonry greeted his frantic fingers. The exit had vanished as by magic!

CHAPTER 3.

The Man in Blue!

BRUCE BRADMAN fetched up dead after a moment, and fought himself into an artificial calm. He was entombed, cut off from his friends. And the realisation had its own peculiar horror. At the same time, he knew that his one hope lay in an icy coolness, however far he was from feeling it.

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Galloping in an ever-closing circle, the Arabs went on firing. Prone on the sand, Bruce and his two white pals sent a few shots back in reply, while the Babu dived under the chassis, where he tried frantically to force his stout form beneath the undershield.

He had lost his weapon when he fell, and he had no idea of where it lay. He went down on his knees and started groping for it. But though his eager hands swept a zone of thick dust that lined the floor, he failed to locate the automatic.

Gradually a sense of sanity returned. He remembered that he had matches in his pocket. He found them, and after a pause to listen he struck a match.

For a brief minute its flickering flame threw a feeble glow about the chamber. The floor was bare—his weapon gone. He had barely time to probe the distant shadows when the match went out. He struck another and continued his searching.

Everywhere blank walls faced him. Yet they could not have been blank when he entered the apartment—that was certain. Common sense told him that some secret slab had slid across the tunnel mouth. That was the only possible explanation.

But where the slab lay was another question. The walls constituted an unbroken series of great stone panels. In the darkness, after his torch had gone out, he had lost all sense of direction. One slab was simply like another. And so cunningly did they fit one another it was impossible to guess which had moved. When he tried them all rang solid to his knuckles.

Finally he gave up the problem—it was insoluble. He could but content himself with the cold comfort that he was unarmed, cut off from aid, and left in splendid isolation to face the perils of an unknown foe. To add to his difficulties, his little store of matches was desperately slender.

How hot the place was! He could hardly breathe. How ghostly his every movement echoed back at him from off the vagueness of the walls! He wanted to shout out—to scream. Only by a miracle of self-control did he repress the overwhelming urge. He realised its very madness.

He steadied himself. A master of the track, he had faced death in many shapes and forms. He could face the threat of it now, even though it came in novel shape. If he must face it alone he would do so.

His quivering hands grew still. He chose another match and struck it. He held the flaming stick aloft and probed the chamber with his dogged gaze. He now saw that there was a narrow slit in the further masonry.

It was not the tunnel mouth—the tunnel had been low and round. The gap which met his gaze was high and slender. By edging sideways he might just squeeze his muscular body through it.

He did so and emerged in a second chamber about the same size as the one just quitted. Then his match petered out with a final sizzle, and he was in darkness again.

Every moment he expected that something would swoop down in the gloom upon him. Had it done so he would almost have welcomed it. At least, it would have spelt company. But nothing happened. He clutched in a flurry at matches which refused to leave their box. At last he forced one free and slashed it at the box side.

He glimpsed an archway at the chamber head, strode to it, and stepped through. Just in time he fetched up. He was at the top of a flight of stone steps.

He struck another match and clambered down them. But at their foot he stopped again. His way was barred by a wide sheet of water—a flooded area, he guessed, which, fed from some underground spring, had once been a sunken corridor.

He went down on his knees, stretched out a hand and probed cautiously for the depth of the water. Though his arm went in to the shoulder he found no bottom. He withdrew it, and rose again on his knees. He would have to swim—

He made to rise, but did not. At that instant something cold and hard pressed home against the nape of his neck.

In the shudder of contact he recognised the blunt nose of a pistol. He knew his slightest movement must be fatal. A hair touch on the trigger and his spinal cord would be severed.

Icy cold, he awaited the sequel. It was a mellow voice.

"If you stir, I shoot!"

The words were Arabic.

"All right," Bruce growled back in English, and heard a stifled gasp.

"Wha—what did you say?" the voice demanded, in the same language.

"I said all right," Bruce repeated sulkily.

"I—I believe it is!" The one behind him gave an hysterical little laugh, and he felt the chilly muzzle withdrawn abruptly. "Stand still, will you?"

He waited. Then the gloom flooded to a splash of pure white light. He turned slowly, and found a girl standing behind him on the steps. In her right hand was gripped an automatic pistol, in her left a torch. He recognised both as his own.

With a jolt he realised that she was as white as himself. Indeed, the curly hair which framed her pretty features was corn-yellow. She wore a silk shirt and a pair of whipcord riding breeches. In her slimness she might almost have been Jimmy Cope.

Her feet were bare. She had shed her shoes, and, he guessed, had thus contrived to steal up unheard behind him. He knew now that it was she who had snatched his torch and a gun as he left the tunnel.

"I—I thought it was them come back!" she gasped, staring at him. "Who—who are you?"

Bruce explained briefly. While he did so he wondered what she was doing in this eerie place. A white girl, in the heart of the desert!

"But what are you doing here?" he began, when she checked him with a gesture.

"Never mind! Come quickly! There may yet be time."

She drew up a rope which hung hidden in the water, tautened it, and hitched it to some pin in the masonry.

The rope stretched out across the flooded channel, and as he swung herself with agile grace along its dripping thread, Bruce followed.

She sprang through a doorway on the far side of the water. Round the corner lay a grey-haired man, his head swathed in bloodstained bandages.

Above him leered an eagle-headed figure—a thing of stone which held aloft a ring-shaped object. On the floor about him was strewn a gleaming litter of metal. Gold!

Bruce dropped on one knee beside the wounded man. He was sorely hurt, but still alive. As Bruce touched him he opened his eyes feebly. The speed ace saw a look of relief sweep across his pallid features.

"My name's Hale. I'm an archaeologist," he explained, in response to Bruce's quick question. "I was digging into these old remains, with the aid of my daughter here and some Arabs. I oughtn't to have brought her into this wild country. Serve me right, for a fool—"

"I would come," the girl puts in quietly.

"Yes, you would." The injured man smiled feebly. "Like your mother. When you would, you would. And that was that. Well, it's all right now. If there's an Englishman here—"

"But what happened?" Bruce demanded.

"We struck on this dross, worse luck, as it turned out," Hale answered, pointing to the clutter of gold objects strewn upon the floor. "My Arabs lost their heads. Sight of the gold roused their greed. They'd have murdered me to get it. Only Mary beat 'em off somehow, bless her heart! Poor fools—if they'd only known. Gold was scarce in the old days, and all this stuff is thin as tinfoil. It's of little actual value!"

Bruce nodded. Everything was plain enough now. Hale's Arabs had no doubt retreated to fetch reinforcements. These had fallen in with the car, and, taking it for a rescue party, had attacked it without further ado.

With the help of Mary Hale, Bruce raised the slab which hid the tunnel mouth. Its secret had been discovered by the archaeologist. On its far side, Cope and Joe Anson hammered and pounded in a frenzied fury. They had sought to smash through its granite mass, though they had little hope of finding Bruce alive.

Between them they bore old Hale out to the open. No Arab would dare approach the mound till daybreak, he declared. Only by dint of extra pay had he prevailed upon the superstitious natives to enter the place in daylight, for they regarded it as accursed and haunted.

Still, the river lay at no great distance, and upon its banks a native village. Hale did not doubt the Arabs would return at dawn—a hint which set Bruce Bradman to work patching up his damaged radiator as best he might.

As the sun thrust its red shafts across the dying stars he put aside his soldering-iron. The job was done. Joe fetched water from the flooded passage, the car was pushed outside, and the engine started.

As its opening roar echoed off the mound the crack of rifle-shots cut through the din. Bruce flung the girl to earth and dropped beside her. The air was thick with

bullets. The Arabs had stolen back in the grey light of dawn.

Grimly Bruce and his friends crawled back into the black cover of the borings. As the sun climbed into the azure of the morning sky they prepared stubbornly to defend the position.

"Get your knives out, boys!" Bruce thrust a last cartridge-clip into his magazine, and turned, stern-jawed, to face the open. "We must hold the passage, if we can, by hand-to-hand fighting!"

He crawled back to the tunnel mouth, and lay there, his eyes on the sun-blaze of the outer world. Still on the sand there sprawled a dotted line of white-robed shapes—Arabs, whose greed for the yellow metal of Assyria had brought upon them the ultimate penalty.

But others lurked amongst the rocks beyond. The bark of rifles and the spang of lead smote the air ceaselessly. Behind a little ridge of sand Bruce Bradman crouched. And as the dogged enemy tried another rush his precious hoard of cartridges melted.

Outside, he could see the Arabs gathering anew. Only one bullet now remained to fire, and he dared not shoot as yet. It seemed they read the meaning of his silence. In a wide-flung arc of crouched white forms they crept down upon the tunnel.

"Stick it, boys! We've a chance in the tunnel. One at a time they'll have to make it!" Bruce growled between clenched teeth. "They're coming—"

Yet outside the crescent-fan of natives halted. Irresolute, they wavered, as though afraid at long last to test the gaping hole which had blazed death at so many of their brethren.

Grimly Bruce waited, his finger hooked upon the trigger. He saw a man throw up his hand and shout. In a flash the Arabs turned and sped back for the rocks. Through their excited shouting Bruce Bradman heard the sound of a dull droning.

He sprang to his feet and ran into the open. Overhead a plane was circling, on its wings the red, white, and blue circles of the R.A.F. He saw it dive, and the putt-putt! of a machine-gun burst clove the roar of its powerful engine.

The Arabs scattered for cover of the rocks, dashed for their hobbled steeds, and, spreading out, fled for the hazy distance. As Bruce ran forward, waving, the plane wheeled and landed on some flat ground near to hand. A trim young man in Air Force blue dropped from the cockpit.

Bruce turned to Mary Hale with a light laugh. "They'll fly your father to the doctor. It's all right now!"

"But you?" she asked anxiously, with a glance at the battered red car.

Bruce's humorous mouth broadened in a cheery grin. "Oh, we'll just be jogging along! Thanks to our friend in blue, it's all plain sailing!"

(There's another thrilling complete yarn of Bruce Bradman and Co. in next Wednesday's GEM! Don't miss it!)

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