"TOM MERRY & CO. GO GAY!" SPARKLING STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S—WITHIN!

The GEM

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START BELOW ON A JOLLY TRIP TO THE RIVIERA—

TOM MERRY AND CO.

An exciting excursion to the South of France—a visit to a casino, with Gussy trying to break the bank! All the rollicking fun of a gay carnival! These are but a few of the highlights of this grand yarn of the adventures of Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 1.
Something Like News!

"I'M awfully sorry—and jolly glad!"

"Eh?"

"I'm awfully glad—and jolly sorry!"

"What?"

"Oh, he's off his rocker!" said Jack Blake of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, surveying Tom Merry of the Shell with a pitying glance. "I've noticed him like this before, though never quite so bad."

"You see——" began Tom Merry.

"Yes, I see a howling ass!" agreed Blake. "Any news in that letter?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, rather!"

He was standing on the steps of the School House at St. Jim's, and he had just been reading a letter from home. Monty Lowther and Manners, his chums in the Shell, had been waiting for him to finish it, and had been improving the shining hour by chipping Blake and D'Arcy of the Fourth, who were sitting on the stone balustrade. Tom Merry's sudden and somewhat mysterious exclamation had drawn all eyes upon him.

He flourished the letter in the air.

"It's ripping!" he exclaimed. "And rotten!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, jamming his eyeglass into his eye and turning it upon the hero of the Shell. "I wegard that wemark as wathah cwyptic, Tom Mewwy."

"You see, I'm jolly glad, and awfully sorry," explained Tom Merry.

"I'm afwaid I'm no wisah."

Monty Lowther and Manners took Tom Merry by the shoulder and shook him violently.

Tom struggled in their grasp.

"Here, chuck it!" he gasped. "What's the row?"

"Explain yourself, then," grunted Manners. "What are you glad about?"

"And what are you sorry about?" demanded Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! Explain yourself, you ass!"

"Leggo!"

"Well, are you going to explain?"

"Yes, ass!"

Tom Merry gasped for breath as his chums released him.

"You see," he panted, "this is a letter from my old governess and guardian Miss Priscilla Fawcett."

GO GAY!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"I know that," said Blake. "If you hold your blessed letter under a fellow's nose, he can't help seeing the fist."

"Well, then——"

"Pway explain, Tom Mewwy."

"You're interrupting me."

"Weally, you know——"

"Shut up, Gussy, and let Tom Merry go on with the washing."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Oh, wing off! Go on, Tommy!"

"I wefuse to wing off. I——"

"Dry up!" roared Blake. "Can't you see we're on tenterhooks? Go on with the explaining, Merry, and if Gussy speaks again I'll biff his silk hat!"

D'Arcy opened his lips, but closed them again without speaking. Blake had clenched his fists, and he looked in deadly earnest. And D'Arcy, who would not have been daunted by any personal threat of violence, did not care to risk the safety of his elegant topper by persisting. He contented himself by giving Blake a withering look through his monocle, but as Blake was looking at Tom Merry the scornful glance was quite wasted.

"You see, this letter is from Miss Fawcett——" began Tom Merry over again.

"We've had that. Get on to lastly."

"She says she's not well, and that's why I am sorry——"

"Oh!"

"And she says she's ordered to the South of France for her health, and that's why I'm glad."

"Blessed if I can see why it should make you glad," said Blake. "What good will it do you?"

"I'm going with her."

"What!"

"I'm going with her," said Tom Merry calmly.

Blake jumped off the balustrade.

"You're going with her to the South of France?"

"Yes."

"Then I'm jolly well going with you," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, and I shall have to come, too, to look aftah you," said D'Arcy. "I could not think of lettin' a chap of your age go alone, Tom Mewwy."

"Well, of all the cheek! You're younger than I am!"

"Yaas, in yeahs; but I was thinkin' of expewience and sense," explained D'Arcy.

"Read out the letter," said Monty Lowther, before his chum could make any rejoinder to that remark.

"It's just a brief note, as Miss Fawcett is very busy," said Tom Merry. "Listen!"

"Silence for the lettah, deah boys!"

"Shut up, Gussy!"

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"Order!"

"I wefuse——"

"Another word," said Blake darkly, "and biff goes your topper!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy relapsed into indignant silence.

"My dear Tom," read out the hero of the Shell, when silence was restored, "I have been ordered by my medical man to try the effect of a few weeks in the South of France. I have obtained Dr. Holmes' permission for you to accompany me there to stay for a week. I am sure you will enjoy the excursion. In haste——'"

Tom did not read out the rest. The terms of endearment with which the letter bristled were for himself alone, and so also were the affectionate inquiries after his health, and the state of his chest, and so forth.

The juniors simply glared at Tom Merry.

"Well, some fellows have all the luck," said Lowther.

"Bai Jove! That's vewy twue. But I hope that Miss Fawcett isn't vewy bad in health, Tom Mewwy?"

Tom shook his head.

"You may be sure she isn't, Gussy, or I shouldn't be feeling so cheerful at the present moment," he said. "She has had a cold, and is well now, that's all—only a run to the South of France will do her heaps of good, I expect. I'm awfully sorry she had the cold, and awfully glad she's going South—and taking me."

"Yaas, I should think so."

"I wish you chaps could come," said Tom Merry regretfully. "But you couldn't get away, Manners, even if you had permission, as you're working up now for the Craven Prize."

Manners shook his head.

"No, it couldn't be did."

"I'll try to work it for you to come, Monty——"

"And me," said Blake.

"And I," said D'Arcy. "I'm bound to come, you know, or else you youngstahs will be gettin' into all sorts of twouble."

Binks, the School House page, came out.

"Master Merry!"

"Hallo, Binks!"

"The 'Ead wants to see you, sir."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "It's about this letter, of course."

"Put in a word for me," said Lowther.

"Yes, rather!"

"And don't forget us," said Jack Blake.

"Bai Jove! Wathah not."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'll do my best."

And the hero of the Shell made his way towards the Head's study. The juniors remained on the School House steps, waiting patiently. The days passed pleasantly enough at St. Jim's, true, but the idea of a run abroad was very enticing. To see the sunny South of France, the bright Riviera, would be marvellous.

And their anxiety was keen as they waited for Tom Merry to return.

The hero of the Shell was absent not more than ten minutes, but it seemed an age to the anxious juniors.

He came back at last, and his face was very bright.

"Good news?" said Blake eagerly.

"Yes, rather! Miss Fawcett specially requested the Head to allow me to take some young companions, and offered to stand the whole expense of the journey for them, so that their parents would not be troubled in the matter."

"Hurrah!"

"She thinks I might be lonely if I travelled only with her and her maid; and, as a matter of fact, it wouldn't be exactly exhilarating," said Tom Merry thoughtfully.

"Wathah not!"

"So I have permission to take three companions."

"Us?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Exactly."

Monty Lowther, Blake, and D'Arcy beamed with satisfaction.

"Hurrah!" roared Blake, with stentorian tones that rang through the School House.

"Hip-pip!" yelled Lowther.

"Bravo!"

"Hallo! Here's Figgins!"

The lanky junior captain of the New House came strolling up, with a grin upon his cheery face.

"Heard the news, Figgy?" asked Tom Merry. "We're going away, old chap!"

"Strange!" said the lanky New House junior. "So am I. My uncle—you've heard of my uncle, I dare say—he's a retired major, and spends his time hunting for health up and down the South of Europe—he left his liver in India. I've heard my father say—well, my uncle is a jolly good sort!"

"But what——"

"He's been in Italy for some time, and he's coming up to the South of France," said Figgins. "I wrote him a nice letter at Rome, inquiring about his health—my father said that was an awfully interesting subject to him—and perhaps that's the cause of it."

"Cause of what?" exclaimed Tom Merry, exasperated. "Why don't you come to the point, you ass?"

"I'm coming to it. My uncle is staying at Nice."

"Nice?"

"Yes. N-I-C-E. Spelt Nice, and pronounced Neece."

said Figgins, in a tone of elaborate explanation. "Understand?"

"I suppose it's nice there?" said Monty Lowther innocently.

"Oh dear!" groaned Figgins. "Every chap in the New House has made that rotten pun already. You were bound to come along with it, too!"

"Look here——"

"Well, what about your uncle at Nice?" said Tom Merry.

"Why, it occurred to him that he's got a nephew at school in England—a really nice boy, whom anybody might be glad to have in the family."

"Wats!"

"And he's bethought him that I might like to visit an affectionate uncle, especially when he's staying in the South of France."

"Bai Jove!"

"Figgy! You don't mean to say——"

Figgins nodded.

"But I do. I'm going to visit my uncle at Nice—in time for the carnival! My hat!"

"Bai Jove!"

"I was just coming to ask the Head's permission to take Kerr and Wynn with me," said Figgins. "Nunky will pay the piper—he understands that a kid doesn't want to be thrown wholly on a gentleman of uncertain years for companionship—and I don't suppose he wants me to be with him all the time, either. He plays baccarat, you know, and helps to support the South of France that way. I don't suppose he would consider baccarat a proper diversion for a youth of my tender years."

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose not!"

"So he's put in a word with the Head for my chums," said Figgins. "I think it will be all right. I wish you chaps were coming."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you sniggering at?"

"Why, we are coming, that's all!" cried Tom Merry.

"What?"

"We're going down the same way," grinned Tom. "I am awfully glad you're coming, Figgy. It will make a jolly party. How ripping!"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard it as distinctly wippin'!"

"My old governess is going for her health," explained Tom Merry. "I'm going with her, and so are Blake and D'Arcy and Lowther."

"By Jove!"

"Miss Fawcett hasn't settled upon Cannes, Mentone, or Nice—it's to be one of the three," said Tom. "I shall settle it for her—Nice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's ripping!"

"Bai Jove! Wathah!"

Figgins left the excited juniors, and went in to see the Head.

Kerr and Wynn came strolling across the quadrangle from the direction of the tuckshop. There was a smear of jam on the fat cheek of Fatty Wynn.

"Seen Figgins?" asked Kerr.

"Yes; he's just gone in to see the Head."

"Good! I think it will be all right. What are you chaps grinning about? Somebody left you a fortune?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Going to have a feed?" asked Fatty Wynn, with interest. "If you are, I don't mind joining you. I'm rather peckish."

"You blessed porpoise!" said Kerr. "And I've only just dragged you out of the tuckshop, and you'd nearly cleared out Mrs. Taggles' stock!"

"I always get hungry at this time of the year. I suppose it's the weather. You see——"

"It's not a feed," said Tom Merry.

He proceeded to explain. Fatty Wynn's interest in the matter visibly declined when he discovered that it was "not a feed," but Kerr was delighted.

"Jolly good!" he exclaimed. "Hallo, here's Figgins! What's the verdict?"

"You're coming," he said.

"Both of us?"

"Yes."

"Hurrah!"

"Bwavo!"

"Oh, it's ripping!" said Tom Merry. "It's scorching! I haven't felt so chippy since we beat the Grammar School at the last footer match."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let's celebrate," said Figgins, holding out his hand. "This is where we gloat, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha! Good!"

And the juniors joined hands in a ring, and danced a war dance with great glee. Mr. Railton came out on to the steps of the School House, and glanced at them. The Housemaster seemed astonished.

"Merry! Figgins! Blake!"

The dance of triumph suddenly ceased.

"It—it's all right, sir," ventured Tom Merry, with a very red face. "We've—we've got a holiday, sir, and—and we're celebrating."

"Oh!"

Mr. Railton smiled and retired.

"Upon the whole," said D'Arcy thoughtfully, "I wathah wegard these pwoceedings as somewhat inconsistent with a fellow's dig. Pway celebwate a little more quietly, deah boys."

CHAPTER 2.
Getting Packed.

THE news that Tom Merry & Co. were leaving St. Jim's for a holiday excited great interest, especially in the Lower School.

The great men of the Sixth, of course, could not be expected to notice the goings and comings of the juniors. But the Fourth Form and the Shell were keenly interested. Most of them made generous offers to accompany the chums, if permission could be obtained and guaranteed. None of the offers was accepted. Some of them were really pressing, as in the case of Skimpole of the Shell.

Skimpole seized upon Tom Merry as soon as he heard of the proposed excursion, and caught him by a button, in his objectionable way, so that he could not possibly escape, and blinked at him with great seriousness through his spectacles. Skimpole, the genius of the Shell, was always in deadly earnest.

"Tom Merry——"

"Hallo!" said Tom, resigning himself to his fate. "What is it, Skimmy?"

"What is this I hear?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Tom Merry. "You probably hear a giddy ass talking, unless you are deaf when you speak."

"Really, Merry——"

"I've got a trunk to pack, Skimmy."

"Exactly. I hope to have a trunk to pack also," said Skimpole. "I was thinking of accompanying you, Merry."

"Thanks, but I'm not in need of an accompanist," said Tom. "I'm not going on a singing tour."

"You misunderstand me. I think it would be a good idea to go to the South of France with you. You see, it would probably do me good."

"Well, that's a jolly good reason."

"The Head would doubtless give permission, when I explained to him that I should look after you all like a father."

"Oh, no doubt!"

"Then the only difficulty would be money. I unfortunately have no money, and I have heard that the railway journey to Nice is expensive, and the cost of living there is high."

"Quite right."

"But doubtless you and your friends would be willing to make a generous subscription to pay my expenses, for the sake of my company," suggested Skimpole.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes—I don't think," he remarked.

"I should be able to show you about," said Skimpole. "Besides, Nice is very near Monte Carlo, where they play roulette, you know. Now, by bringing my scientific brain to bear upon the subject, I have not the slightest doubt that I could devise a system by which one would win continually at roulette, and then the expenses of my journey would be more than paid, and we should have a large sum of money to divide."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see any cause for laughter. I have heard, too, that there are public gambling places in Nice, where a game is played with a ball, and by devoting my scientific brain to the subject I could break the bank at each of the casinos."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Merry——"

"My dear ass," said Tom Merry, "even if your scientific brain could devise a system, you wouldn't be allowed to gamble—and it would be a rotten thing to do, anyway!"

"But treated scientifically, it would not be gambling; it would be a dead certainty."

"Yes—for the bank."

"You see——"

"I've got to pack my trunk, Skimmy——"

"Yes. You see——"

"I must be off."

"You see——"

"You said your cousin wasn't like you, Figgins," remarked Gussy, "so I naturally supposed that he was good-lookin'. Ow! " Arthur Augustus gave a jump as the peach, aimed by Figgins, landed fairly on his nose. "Ow! Bai Jove!"

Tom Merry took the genius of the Shell by the shoulders, twisted him over, and sat him gently on the floor.

Then he walked on, leaving Skimmy staring after him through his spectacles in blank astonishment.

Tom Merry looked into Study No. 6, the famous apartment where Blake and Herries and D'Arcy and Digby had their quarters. It was evening, but Blake and D'Arcy had no prep to do, as they were leaving the school on the following morning.

Digby and Herries were not coming, but they were cheerfully helping their chums to pack. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy really seemed in need of assistance.

The swell of St. Jim's had two large trunks in the study, and around him were piles of his possessions—clothes and shirts and collars and other belongings galore.

He seemed a little puzzled to know where to begin.

"I suppose I shall want a dozen shirts," he remarked meditatively. "It wouldn't weally do to take less than a dozen."

"Getting on with the packing?" asked Tom Merry as he looked in.

Blake grunted.

"I've nearly finished mine," he said. "Gussy has hardly begun. He wants to take over to Nice every blessed thing he possesses."

"Weally, Blake——"

"I told him he can have only one trunk, but he's started packing two. Of course, we shall leave one of them behind."

"Of course," assented Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle into his eye and glanced from Blake to Tom Merry, and from Tom Merry back again to Blake.

"I twust you are jokin'," he observed. "Of course, I shall uttahly wefuse to have one of my twunks left behind."

"One or both," said Blake. "I don't care."

"Of course, I should decline to have one or both left behind. I am only cwammin' in the things I shall absolutely need."

"You don't need a hundred and fifty collars——"

"Pway don't exaggewate, deah boy. I am only takin' two dozen collahs."

"And five hundred neckties!"

"Pway don't be widiculous! I have only ten or twelve neckties."

"And three dozen pairs of boots——"

"Only eight pairs, deah boy, without countin' my dancin' shoes and the football boots and the slippahs."

"And nineteen silk hats——"

"I have nevah in my life possessed as many as nineteen toppahs at once, and you are perfectly awah of the fact, Blake," said Arthur Augustus with a great deal of dignity. "I am takin' thwee toppahs, and I have learned by bittah expewience that that is not too large a numbah. I have sometimes been placed in a deuced awkward posish by not havin' a single toppah to weah."

"Oh, let him pack the trunks!" said Tom Merry. "I'll contrive for them to be left behind at London or Dover."

"I should uttahly wefuse to have my twunks left behind at London or Dovah."

"You'd better pack only one, and you'll have to wear all the toppers you take, so I should recommend only one," said Blake.

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Of course, if you like to travel like an old-clothes

merchant, with three top-hats on at once, there's no objection to that," said Blake thoughtfully.

"I wegard that suggestion as widiculous."

"Well, it's the only way you'll get three toppers along."

"There's my hatbox——"

"Yes, there it is—and there it will stop."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Really, ass——"

Tom Merry laughed and left Study No. 6, where the argument waxed warmer and warmer. He went into his own study, where Monty Lowther was busily engaged cramming things into a solid-looking leather trunk which had Manners' initials upon it.

"Getting on?" asked Tom cheerfully.

"Yes, pretty well, considering that I'm doing it without help," grunted Lowther.

Tom laughed.

"Well, I'm ready to lend a hand. Whose trunk is that?"

"Manners'. It's bigger than either of ours, and we only want to take one between us."

"Good!"

"I've put in my camera, and I've taken Manners' new films," said Lowther. "There's no telling how many films I shall need. I intend to get some views of Nice and Cannes and Monte Carlo, and some specimens of the natives."

"You've put in my new films, have you?" said Manners.

"Yes. I'm taking your collars, too. It's lucky we have the same size, isn't it?"

"Well, by George——"

"By the way, I want your watch; mine has stopped. You can take my ticker to be mended, and then use it till I come back."

"Oh, all right!" said Manners in a sarcastic tone. "You're sure you wouldn't like my boots or socks—or my head, for instance?"

"Got plenty of boots and socks of my own—and yours would be too big, anyway!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "And as for your head, there's nothing in it!"

"Look here——"

"Come to think of it, though, I'll borrow your raincoat; mine's come unstuck. If you can think of anything else, Manners, old man, I'm always willing to entertain suggestions."

But Manners had no more suggestions to make.

Half an hour later Taggles, the porter, carried the trunk downstairs; and then the chums of the Shell, over a late tea, discussed the coming journey, and Tom Merry and Lowther promised to so bombard Manners with picture-postcards that he would feel as if he were with them all the time.

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CHAPTER 3.
Southward Bound!

HALF St. Jim's turned out the following morning to see Tom Merry & Co. off. The party, numbering seven, crowded into the school bus with their numerous trunks and baggages, and rolled out of the gates of St. Jim's, amid cheers from the juniors. Skimpole of the Shell dashed after the bus as it left the gate, waving his hands wildly.

"Hold on! We've forgotten something!" exclaimed Figgins. "Hold on, driver!"

"Yes, sir."

The bus came to a halt. Skimpole ran up panting.

"Well, what is it?" asked Tom Merry.

"You've forgotten——"

"What?"

"It is not too late to arrange for me to come with you——"

"You shrieking ass!" exclaimed Blake indignantly. "Do you mean to say you've stopped us to tell us that?"

"But if I do not come, I do not wish to deprive you of the wonderful system I have devised for breaking the bank of Monte Carlo," gasped Skimpole. "All last evening I was studying the game of roulette, and bringing my powerful brain to bear on the subject. I have devised a splendid system, which will enable you to break the bank in a quarter of an hour or so."

"My dear duffer——"

"I have written it out so that a child can understand it," said Skimpole. "It will not, therefore, be much above your intellectual grasp, Merry."

"Thanks, awfully!"

"Yaas, wathah! Skimpole appeahs to entahtain a vewy high opinion of your intellectual gwasp, Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

"Here is the paper," said Skimpole, fumbling in his pocket. "You will take it, and I shall only claim half of the fortune you make at Monte Carlo."

"Go hon!" said Kerr

"But——" began Tom Merry.

"Drive on, there! We shall lose the train, and we've got to meet Miss Fawcett in London!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Wait a minute," said Skimpole, hanging on to the bus. "You must take the paper, Merry, or you will not be able to play on the system."

"My dear ass——"

"Here it is!"

Skimpole dragged a paper from his pocket. Tom Merry glanced at it. It was covered with lines, and the first commenced thus: "Quo usque abutere, Catiline, patientia nostra."

The hero of the Shell burst into a laugh.

"Is that the system, Skimmy?"

Skimpole blinked at the paper through his spectacles.

"Dear me!"

"Huwwy up, deah boy!"

"Dear me! In the hurry of the moment I must have placed the wrong paper in my pocket," said Skimpole. "That is a Latin imposition which I was writing by the orders of Mr. Linton. I must have——"

"Well, here you are! I must be off!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Perhaps you had better wait till I have fetched the right paper, Tom Merry. It may mean a fortune for you—and I will not be gone more than ten minutes."

"Sorry, Skimmy——"

"Really, Merry——"

"We must be off! Good-bye!"

"I will send the system after you, Merry!" bawled Skimpole, as he was left standing in the middle of the road,

with the paper in his hand. "I will send it to you so that you will get it in time."

"Thanks! Don't trouble!" shouted Tom Merry.

"No trouble at all—it will be a pleasure. I——"

Skimpole's voice died away in the distance as the bus rolled on.

The driver put on speed, and the juniors were in good time for the train. They were soon speeding Londonwards as fast as the express could carry them.

"By the way, how many trunks has that duffer brought?" asked Tom Merry.

D'Arcy looked up from his corner seat, where he was carefully polishing his silk hat.

"Weally, Tom Merry——"

"Hallo! What's the matter with you?"

"I wegard duffah as a wude expwession. I——"

"My dear chap, you're not the only duffer in this carriage. I don't see why you should jump to the conclusion that a chap is talking to you simply because he uses the word duffer."

There was a chuckle in the carriage. D'Arcy made a dignified bow.

"If you assuah me that you were not speakin' of me, Tom Mewwy, I shall be satisfied."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I was speaking of you," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Weally, deah boy——"

"How many trunks did you bring?"

"Two!"

"After what I told you?"

"It was imposs. to cwam my things into fewah twunks than two. I have only two twunks and a hatbox. I wegard that as vewy modewate."

"Lowther and I have only one trunk between us, and no hatbox."

"Yaas; but then you are not what I should chawactewise as well-dwessed chaps, you know."

Lowther glared, and Tom Merry grinned.

"Well, if those trunks and that hatbox get as far as Nice I shall be surprised," he remarked.

"I shall keep an eye on my twunks myself."

"Well, nous verrons—that means we shall see," said Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus DArcy was feeling a little apprehensive when the train rolled into the huge London station. He determined to keep a personal eye upon his baggage. The trunks were piled on the platform, and Blake looked over them with a careful eye and stuck a label on one of them.

Tom Merry was looking up and down for Miss Fawcett. His old governess had promised to meet him in London, and they were to make the further journey to Dover in company.

Miss Fawcett was discovered in a waiting-room, and as Tom Merry and Lowther and Figgins looked in she rose from her chair, catching sight of them.

"My darling Tommy!"

It was only a short while since Miss Priscilla had seen Tom Merry, but it might have been a dozen years or so by the effusive joy she showed in meeting him.

"My sweet boy! My dearest Tommy!"

And her arms were round Tom Merry's neck in a moment, and she kissed him on both cheeks in the most affectionate way.

Lowther and Figgins, with heroic efforts, kept their faces straight as they looked on. The other occupants of the waiting-room did not. There was a general grin, and gazes of great interest were fastened upon Tom Merry and Miss Fawcett.

Tom Merry turned crimson.

But he would not make a movement or say a word that would wound the feelings of his old friend, and he endured the affectionate greeting with great fortitude.

"My sweet little darling!" said Miss Fawcett, who never could understand that Tom Merry had grown past the age of six or seven. "How well you are looking! I am so glad. It is really sweet of Dr. Holmes to allow you to come abroad with me, isn't it?"

"Awfully!" said Tom.

"I hope this appearance of health is not deceptive, however," said Miss Fawcett, eyeing her favourite anxiously. "Perhaps that flush in the cheeks is hectic—it seems almost too red for good health."

Monty Lowther nearly exploded, but he checked himself in time. Certainly Tom Merry would have been in the most abounding health if the flush in his cheeks had been natural. Figgins turned to stare at an advertisement on the wall with the most intense interest. The waiting passengers in the room exchanged glances. Tom Merry observed it, though his old governess was quite unconscious of the fact.

"In any case, a week or two in Nice will do you a great deal of good," said Miss Fawcett. "I felt that I should really have come to the school to help you pack. Have you packed all the pills and medicines you will require?"

"Oh, yes, I think so, dear!"

"Ah! Fortunately I have a good supply in my own luggage," said Miss Fawcett, with a beaming smile. "I never travel without them—they are invaluable. But it's just like a child to forget them."

The big and sturdy "child" of fifteen wriggled uncomfortably. But just at that moment the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was heard raised in wrath on the platform, and it interrupted Miss Priscilla's affectionate inquiries.

"Hallo! There's Gussy in trouble!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Excuse me, dear!"

And he hastily quitted the waiting-room, glad of an excuse to get away. Outside, on the platform, Arthur Augustus and Blake were having a fierce argument—for Gussy had discovered a label on one of his trunks which certainly would not have taken it where Gussy was going. Tom Merry, however, tactfully smoothed matters over. Later, the juniors enjoyed a really good meal in the buffet, Fatty Wynn especially distinguishing himself. And then, to the fat Fourth-Former's delight, Miss Fawcett arranged for the lunch-baskets in the train.

And at length the party were off, speeding southward through Kentish hills and dales to Dover, en route for Paris and the south.

CHAPTER 4.
A Missing Trunk!

"DOVER!"

"Dovah piah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, jamming his eyeglass into his eye and looking out through the carriage window. "And it's wainin'!"

"Dear me!" said Miss Fawcett.

The juniors tumbled out of the train and joined the crowd that was surging towards the waiting boat.

A fine drizzle was falling, and coat collars and umbrellas were up. Tom Merry took charge of Miss Fawcett, while Hannah, the maid, carried the umbrella, and the bag, and the purse, and the smelling-salts.

Jack Blake dashed away to see to the luggage.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, mindful of the safety of his trunks, dashed after him, but Blake disappeared in the crowd.

Monty Lowther thrust an arm through D'Arcy's, and marched him on.

"Come on, Gussy!" he exclaimed. "There's a big crowd, and we want to bag seats on the lee side."

"Yaas, wathah! But——"

"Come on, then!"

"Yaas, but——"

"This way!"

"Blake is going——"

"That's all right; Blake's looking after the luggage; besides, it really does not need looking after, as it's labelled for Paris."

"Yaas, but——"

"Use your elbows."

"But my twunks——"

"That's all right."

"Of course it's all right," said Figgins, taking D'Arcy's other arm. "This way. I'll help you. You'll get your clothes rumpled if these rude people jostle against you, to say nothing of the risk to your topper."

"That's vewy thoughtful of you, Figgins; but——"

"Rush for it."

"But——"

"Here we are!"

They were on the plank bridge leading on deck now, and it was too late for Arthur Augustus to struggle back. He resigned himself to his fate, and was rushed on deck in the crowd.

As rain was falling, most of the passengers went below, but the juniors of St. Jim's did not intend to go down. They found seats on the lee side, and spread macintoshes to sit on, and placed D'Arcy there to keep guard over their coats and umbrellas and packages.

"Don't leave this spot for a moment," said Figgins warningly.

"But——"

"Stick there as if you were glued."

"Yaas, but——"

"If anybody sits down on this row, tell him the seats are engaged. If he's French, and doesn't understand English, give him a biff on the ear. He'll understand that."

"Yaas, but——"

"Mind you don't move."

"But——"

Figgins and Lowther rushed away, leaving D'Arcy alone. The swell of St. Jim's rose to his feet, and then sat down again. He had been left in charge, and he could not very well abandon his trust.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "This is too bad! I feel convinced that Blake intends to play some wotten twick with one of my twunks."

And he waited anxiously.

Fatty Wynn came along, with a large packet in his hand, and sat down, and began to munch at the contents of his bag.

"Wynn, deah boy——"

"Have some?" said Fatty Wynn, holding out the bag. "They're pork pies, and ripping. I got them at the station."

"No, thanks; but——"

"You mayn't be able to eat presently," said Wynn.

"Yaas, but——"

"They're jolly good!"

"I should advise you to be careful, deah boy."

"Oh, that's all right! If I'm going to be ill, I may as well have a feed now; it won't make it any worse."

"Will you look aftah these seats, Wynn, while I go and look aftah the luggage?"

"Certainly. Sure you won't have a pork pie? There's a lot of fat and gravy in them."

D'Arcy shuddered.

"No, thanks."

And he hurried away.

There was a large crowd pouring on the big Channel steamer, and there were sailors running to and fro, and innumerable porters staggering under baggage, and voices in confusion on all sides—a veritable babel.

It was really by good luck that Arthur Augustus got on the track of the St. Jim's baggage. He recognised a hatbox that a porter was carrying on board. He tapped the man on the arm.

The sight of the hatbox was a great relief to D'Arcy. His most precious possession was safe, at all events. But where was the rest of the luggage?

"Where is the west, portah?" he asked.

The man stared at him.

"Don't you undahstand, deah boy? Where is the west?"

The man looked puzzled, but he pointed towards the German Ocean, and walked on. Arthur Augustus stared at him in blank astonishment.

Then he looked in the direction pointed out by the man. Surely the porter did not mean that the luggage had fallen overboard?

D'Arcy hurried after the man, bumping into two or three hurried passengers as he did so, and caught him by the shoulder.

"Stop—please stop!"

"Yessir!"

"Where is the west, deah boy?"

"It's in that direction, sir," said the puzzled porter, pointing. "But you're going south, sir."

"Eh?"

"France is south, sir, not west."

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye.

"I wegard you as an ass!" he exclaimed. "When I said west, I did not mean west, I meant west."

Without being an ass, the porter might be pardoned for not fully understanding that explanation. He put down the hatbox on a heap of luggage, and walked off, eluding the swell of St. Jim's in the crowd.

D'Arcy, however, recognised the trunks upon which the hatbox had been placed. The luggage was there—the "west" that he had been inquiring after.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus began to examine the trunks.

Tom Merry had taken Miss Fawcett and Hannah below. The rest of the juniors had gathered with Fatty Wynn, wrapped up in macintoshes, and enjoying the keen wind and rain in their faces.

There was a hoarse rattling and shouting and trampling. The steamer began to move.

Arthur Augustus was hardly conscious of the motion under his feet.

He was clambering among the piled luggage, trying to identify his trunks. He counted them all, and found one short. And he soon discovered that that one was one of his own.

The swell of St. Jim's, with the rain running unheeded down his topper, dashed off to interview Blake.

"Blake! Where is that wottah?"

"Hallo!" said Figgins.

"Where is Blake?"

"Here he is!"

"What's wanted?" said Blake affably. "Are you qualmy already, Gussy?"

"I'm not qualmy——"

"Take a bit of fat pork for it," said Blake. "Fatty will give you some. Let it slide gently down your throat, and it will cure mal-de-mer in next to no time."

"You uttah ass——"

"If that's no good, try a deep, deep draught of cod-liver oil."

"Ow!" groaned Fatty Wynn. "Shut up, Blake!"

The steamer was already heaving a little.

So was Fatty Wynn.

"I am not seasick," said D'Arcy. "I have been lookin' at the luggage, and find that one of my twunks is missin'."

"Missing?"

"Yaas."

"You are sure?"

"I counted them."

"By George! Then it must be the one I sent back at Dover," said Blake, with an air of thoughtful calculation.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"It's all right, Gussy. You've got one, you know, the same as we have."

"You—you uttah wascal——"

"What! Didn't you want me to leave you one?"

"You have sent back one of my twunks!"

"Yes rather!"

"I—I—I——"

"You see, it will save you ever so much trouble in France," said Blake. "You won't have to change your clothes so often."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I——"

"Why not make the captain turn back?" suggested Kerr. "We're not a quarter of a mile off the pier yet."

"Bai Jove! Yaas!"

Arthur Augustus rushed off. Blake jumped to his feet.

"You ass, Kerr! It would be just like Gussy—— Listen!"

D'Arcy's voice was heard at the bridge.

"Captain! Where's the captain? Pway turn the ship wound, deah boy! One of my twunks has been left behind——"

There was a yell of laughter, in which the juniors of St. Jim's joined with all the force of their lungs.

The ship was not turned round.

CHAPTER 5.
A Feed for Fatty!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY rejoined his friends with a clouded brow. He did not speak to them during the crossing of the Channel.

Some of them, however, were not at all inclined for conversation, especially Fatty Wynn. Fatty sat huddled up, heedless of the drizzle—heedless of everything—and he would have remained heedless if the steamer had sprung a leak and gone to the bottom of the Straits of Dover—if he had not regarded it as a happy release from his sufferings.

Down below, Tom Merry was looking after Miss Fawcett, who required some looking after. But all things come to an end, even a Channel passage—though it seems to spin out to interminable lengths while it is in progress.

Calais pier loomed up at last, and the steamer rolled into the harbour.

Glad enough were the juniors of St. Jim's to step ashore.

Arthur Augustus kept his eyeglass fairly glued on Blake when they landed. He was afraid that the hatbox might be sent after the trunk. He knew that Blake's fell designs included the hatbox.

And the loss of that would have been little short of a calamity. For the topper Arthur Augustus was wearing was decidedly damaged by the rain and by knocking about on board. He intended to change it for a new one in Paris, where they were to stop for the night.

But Blake, apparently, had forgotten that hatbox.

Luggage and juniors piled into the Nord Express, which rolled away rapidly towards Paris.

The stay in Paris was to be only for one night, though Tom Merry & Co. would gladly have spent a few days there.

The evening was well advanced, and the juniors were sleepy enough, when the express rolled into the Nord Station.

Of Paris they saw little as three taxicabs bore them and their baggage to the hotel.

"Le neuf!" came the croupier's voice. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Nine's my numbah!" Gussy had won, and he beamed as the croupier's rake pushed his winnings towards him. "What do you think now, deah boys?"

They slept soundly that night, and Arthur Augustus forgot the loss of his trunk in the slumber of healthy fatigue.

The express for the south started from the Lyons Station at nine in the morning.

Miss Fawcett had taken care that there should be a substantial breakfast prepared for the juniors, and even Fatty Wynn was satisfied with it.

After breakfast the baggage was piled on cabs, and the juniors crowded in, and they drove off to the Gare du Lyon. Seats had been reserved for the party in two adjoining compartments, and Arthur Augustus led Miss Fawcett along the corridor, and politely seated her in the wrong carriage and bestowed her there in great comfort—till Tom Merry found them and routed them out and bore them to the proper place.

The train moved out of the station at last.

It had been drizzling with rain in Paris, but as the hours of the morning wore away the juniors found themselves under a sunnier sky.

Arthur Augustus, still angry over the loss of his trunk, and unable to keep up chilly dignity under the constant fire of Blake's cheerful conversation, buried himself in a French newspaper. He looked up from it as a uniformed attendant came along the corridor and looked into the carriage.

"Dinner!" said the man. "Billet!"

"Bee-yay," repeated Arthur Augustus. "Dee-nay—bee-yay! Now, I wondah what that means?"

Fatty Wynn rose to his feet, his eyes glistening. It was only about eleven o'clock, but Fatty was always ready for a meal.

"It means they're having dinner," he said. "I'm feeling awfully peckish! I thought perhaps the jolting of the train would take my appetite away, but it hasn't. Yes, I'll have dinner!"

"Sit down, ass!" said Tom Merry. "They don't have dinner till seven."

"But he says——"

"He means——"

"I suppose I know what dinner means!" said Fatty Wynn indignantly. "We learn French in the Fourth Form, Tom Merry—and a jolly lot better than you do in the Shell. The chap may mean lunch; anyway, he means grub."

"Lunch isn't till twelve."

"Well, it may be an extra dinner for passengers who get hungry," said Wynn. "I think it's very likely. I've heard that the Paris-Lyons-Mediterranean line is a very well managed railway, and it would be an awfully good wheeze to have an extra dinner in the morning for passengers who get extra hungry. I haven't noticed that Frenchmen are very sensible as a rule, but that would be a good dodge——"

"Billet pour diner," repeated the attendant. "Billet pour dejeuner."

"There, now he says dejeuner!" said Fatty Wynn. "I know jolly well that that means lunch! Yes, I'll have lunch."

"I tell you——"

"My dear Merry, it's no good telling me that Fourth Form French is different from Shell French——"

"It might be different from French French," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Billet pour dejeuner, pour diner," repeated the attendant, making his meaning less clear in the hope of making it understood—as French garcons frequently do.

"Yes, I'm coming to have lunch," said Fatty Wynn.

"Monsieur?"

"Oui!" said Fatty "Oui, oui, oui! Blessed if it doesn't make me feel like a blessed guinea-pig talking this blessed lingo! Oui, oui, oui!"

The attendant took out a little book, jerked out a slip of paper from it, and handed it to Fatty Wynn; then he looked round inquiringly at the others.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "Oui!"

Fatty Wynn stared at the slip of paper.

"What on earth's this? Here, you chap, I can't eat this—pas bong pour mongjay!"

"You ass!" almost shouted Tom Merry. "Why won't you let me explain? He——"

"I tell you——"

"He's only coming round now to find out the number of people who want places in the dining-car!" bawled Tom Merry.

Fatty Wynn's face fell.

"Oh!"

"Now do you understand?"

"Ye-es. Then there isn't any grub yet?"

"No; there's lunch at twelve, and dinner at seven, and afternoon tea at half-past four."

"What blessed time do we get into Nice?" demanded Blake.

"Nearly eleven to-night."

"Oh!"

The attendant handed round the slips for the luncheon places and passed down the corridor of the train.

Fatty Wynn grunted in disgust.

"Well, this is rotten!" he exclaimed. "I was just beginning to think that French railways are really well managed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well for you to cackle! But I'm hungry!"

"Well, go along to the dining-car, and you can dig up a petit dejeuner," said Tom Merry. "They'll give you something now if you've got a tip handy."

"Well, that's a good idea!"

And Fatty Wynn rolled along the corridor to the dining-car, and as he did not return his chums supposed that he had found a meal. As a matter of fact, he was seated at a table there, eating, when the whole party went along to lunch at twelve. And he did not leave off, but started lunch with them in the most cheerful way.

CHAPTER 6.
The Arrival!

THE P.-L.-M. express tore on through swift-changing scenery—hills and plains, rivers and meadows—and the juniors saw much of the fair land of France as they rapidly sped onwards.

But even with the ever-changing scenery around them, the hours and hours in the train grew weary at last. Lowther and Figgins played chess, and D'Arcy brushed his silk topper and yawned, and Miss Fawcett went to sleep as the afternoon drew to its close. The night had set in by the time the train had passed Avignon, and at Marseilles the juniors had only a glimpse of a rainy street with an electric tram rolling along it. Then onward rolled the express, along a coast which would have been beautiful if there had been daylight for the voyagers to see it.

They had lunched on the train, and dined on the train. Fatty Wynn felt like supping on it, too, as the evening grew older.

After they had left Grasse behind, Arthur Augustus retired to beautify himself ready for his arrival at Nice. He was about half an hour occupied in doing so; but when he came back he was looking so spick and span that it was difficult to believe that he had spent a whole day in railway travelling.

"Half-past ten," said Figgins, when the lights of Cannes had faded into the blackness behind. "Getting on now."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"This reminds me of the long railway journey we had when we were in the States," said Tom Merry. "It's a bore, but it's ripping to get from one end to the other of a big country in a single day."

"Yaas, wathah! I say, you chaps, do you think this necktie thowoughly agwees with the waistcoat I am weawin'?"

"I haven't heard them arguing at all," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I wish you would be sewious on a sewious mattah. The looking-glasses on this twain leave very much to be desired, and it is a new necktie. I was a little doubtful as to whethah the tone absolutely harmonised with the tone of the waistcoat."

"Well, it's a rather important matter, too," Blake remarked. "Anybody got a microscope?"

"Weally, deah boy——"

"Upon the whole, Gussy, you look about as nice as ever you do," said Monty Lowther.

"Pway don't be funnay, Lowthah. I have heard that the people are awfully well dwessed in Nice, and I do not wish to awwive there lookin' a dowd."

"Well, I don't suppose the most fashionable part of the population will be waiting at the station to see us," said Lowther.

"Hallo! Here we are!"

The express was slackening.

"Nice at last!"

Miss Fawcett woke up.

"Where are we, dears? Have we passed Marseilles?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It's Nice, dear!"

"Dear me!"

It was a fine night. The juniors looked out of the corridor windows into a large and airy station, pretty well deserted at that hour. The train stopped, and Tom Merry led Miss Fawcett out, while Arthur Augustus was very polite to Hannah. The juniors loaded themselves with hand luggage, and poured out of the train upon the platform. The trunks bumped out.

Arthur Augustus looked up and down through his eyeglass.

"I do not see the exit," he remarked.

"Will a sortie do?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! I'd forgotten they called it a sortie in this countwy. Come this way, deah boys; here's the sortie."

"I'll look after the luggage," said Tom Merry. "Just see if the hotel omnibus is waiting for us, Figgy, will you?"

"Right you are!"

The hotel omnibus was there; and after the luggage had been rescued, it was piled thereon; and the juniors, having deposited Miss Fawcett and Hannah inside, followed them in. They quite filled the vehicle. Then they rolled away from the station.

Tom Merry glanced out and caught a glimpse of the broad Avenue de la Gare, with the tram-lines, and a glimpse of huge palm-trees.

"By Jove! Palm-trees!" he exclaimed. "Look there!"

"Bai Jove!"

"How jolly!" said Figgins. "It's really getting out of one's own country when one finds palm-trees!"

Fatty Wynn's eyes glistened.

"I wonder if any of them are coconut-palms?" he exclaimed. "I'm fond of coconuts, and I could eat a few before supper."

"Here we are, deah boys!"

They stopped at the hotel. A bowing manager and waiters with effusive smiles welcomed them, late as the hour was. They were shown up into their rooms at once, and supper was sent up after them—a supper to which only Fatty Wynn did real justice, for the others were too tired and sleepy even to eat.

They turned in and slept a heavy and comfortable sleep. From without they heard once or twice the clang of a tram as they sank into balmy slumber.

Tom Merry was the first to awake. He opened his eyes in a blinding flood of sunshine, which was pouring in at the window of the large room the juniors were sharing. He closed them again immediately and rubbed them, and then sat up in bed.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

It was a curious surprise. They had left England with the drizzling rain to see them off; and now he woke up a day and a half later to find himself dazzled by brilliant sunshine.

He jumped out of bed, and his cheery voice called up the others.

Fatty Wynn turned over and grunted.

"Ow! 'Tain't rising-bell yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha! This isn't St. Jim's, Fatty; this is Nice."

Fatty Wynn rubbed his sleepy eyes.

"Well, we haven't a train to catch this morning—no need to turn out early!"

"Early!" said Tom Merry, looking at his watch. "It's a quarter-past nine!"

"Well, we're on a holiday, you know."

"Oh, don't be a slacker!"

"I think I could do with another couple of hours. And if you're going down, you might tell them to send my breakfast up at twelve!" said Fatty drowsily. "I don't mind much what it is, so long as it's good and there's plenty of it."

"Get up, Fatty!" said Kerr.

"Oh, bosh! Lemme alone!"

Figgins dipped his sponge into cold water. Fatty rolled out of bed with a dissatisfied grunt.

"Breakfast, Fatty," said Figgins persuasively. "Think of breakfast! The longer you stay in bed the later you'll feed."

"Think of that, Fatty!" said Kerr solemnly.

Fatty Wynn grunted. But as soon as he began to move about he found that he was hungry, and he was ready first of all to go down.

CHAPTER 7.
Seeing the Sights!

NICE lay in a blaze of sunshine as Tom Merry & Co. looked out of the hotel in the morning after their late breakfast.

The charming city that looks out over the Bay of the Angel was more than usually gay, for the carnival, which had commenced, was still in full swing.

The streets were gay with coloured poles and festoons and

coloured lamps that at night shed a variegated light upon the merry crowds.

The hotel at which Tom Merry & Co. had passed the night was near the station, in the broad and handsome Avenue de la Gare, or Station Avenue, the principal street in Nice. From the P.-L.-M. Station to the Place Massena, the Avenue traverses the whole town, and, in fact, is the town. Trams were clanging along, and the great street presented a very animated appearance. There were sprinklings of confetti on the pavements, which showed that some of the carnival celebrations had taken place the previous night.

"Jolly place!" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I think we shall have a ripping time here," said Figgins. "I shall have to go and see my uncle this morning. I hear that Miss Fawcett has engaged a villa facing the sea, adjoining the one that my uncle has. That will be ripping, as we shall have only a garden fence between us."

"Jolly good!"

"I'm feelin' a little wowwied——"

"What about, Gussy?"

"As we're goin' on to the villah to-day, I haven't unpacked anythin', and I can't change my waistcoat."

"Well, what on earth do you want to change it for?" asked Blake.

"It was owin' to the joltin' of the twain last night," said D'Arcy. "I spilt a spot of gwavy on it at dinnah."

"Go hon!"

"Of course, I can get it cleaned; but I hate to go out in the mornin' with a stained waistcoat. Anothah feahful twouble is that I cannot wemembah which of my twunks I packed the waistcoats in. They may be in the twunk that Blake sent back to St. Jim's, and in that case I shall have no change of waistcoats."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass wrathfully upon his unrepentant chum.

"Weally, Blake, there is no cause for wibald laughtah in such a howwid misfortune fallin' upon a chap thwough your weckless wottenness!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cackle again, Blake, I shall wegard it as impewative to administah a feahful thwashin'!" said D'Arcy, pushing back his cuffs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vewy well, I——"

"What a pleasant morning!" said a gentle voice. And D'Arcy lowered his war-like hands and flushed scarlet as he turned to see Miss Fawcett. He raised his silk hat with a graceful bow.

"The town looks very pleasant indeed," said Miss Fawcett. "As you know, my dear boys, we are only at the hotel for the night, and we go to the villa to-day. Hannah and I are going first, to make sure that everything is in order and the beds well aired."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "We should only be in the way. Shall we have a stroll round the town and turn up for lunch?"

"You are sure you will not get into any mischief?"

"Oh, that's all wight, madam!" said Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "I shall be lookin' aftah them, you know."

"If you go near the shore, be sure not to get your feet wet," said Miss Fawcett. "And mind you do not get into any disputes with any of the fearful-looking men I have seen. I do not think that brigands still exist in France, but there are some men here who look very much like the brigands in an opera chorus, and I want you to be careful to avoid them."

Tom Merry grinned.

"I think they're harmless enough, dear," he remarked.

"Ah, look!" breathed Miss Fawcett. "There is one."

A Nicois was strolling past the hotel. He wore a black slouched hat and a black cloak, a pair of fierce moustaches, thick, black eyebrows, and a dusky complexion. Under his black brows his eyes glittered dark and fierce. He stopped as he came near the group of juniors, and they had a good view of him. He was evidently an Italian, or half-Italian, inhabitant of Nice. He fumbled in his pockets as he stood there, and Miss Fawcett trembled.

The Nice gentleman might well have taken part in the chorus in "Ernani," or "Il Trovatore," without making up for the part in the least.

"Oh dear!" murmured Miss Fawcett. "I—I had no idea that there were such dreadful men in a French town! I am sure he is feeling for a weapon."

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh dear! I—I——"

"It's all right," whispered Tom Merry.

The brigand had withdrawn his hand from his pocket, and he proceeded to roll a cigarette. He had been feeling for the cigarette-paper. Miss Fawcett breathed a sigh of relief. The Nicois gentleman rolled the cigarette and placed

(*Continued on next page.*)

Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Fine footballs are awarded every week for the two best jokes received, and a half-a-crown is paid for every other joke that appears in this column.

SECOND TO ONE.

Golfer: "I say, I came second in the golfers' championship the other day."

Friend: "What was the name of the other competitor?"

A football has been awarded to C. Foskett, 108, Shepperton Road, Islington, London, N.1.

* * *

A TART RETORT.

"What do you think of the soap?" asked the barber, lathering his customer too generously.

"The best I've ever tasted!"

A football has been awarded to L. Brown, Silver Birches, Tandridge Road, Warlingham, Surrey.

* * *

LIVING PROOF!

Pat: "What is the height of ignorance?"

Mike: "Measure yourself!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Barrington, 33, Peckham Park Road, Peckham, London, S.E.15.

* * *

HE KNEW!

Teacher: "Tommy, what do you know about Adam?"

Tommy: "He was a good runner."

Teacher: "Why do you say that?"

Tommy: "He was first in the human race!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Thomas, Goleufryn, Lower Brynamman, Glamorgan.

* * *

TWO BAD!

Jack: "Did you hear the joke about the three eggs?"

Jim: "No."

Jack: "Too bad!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Welsford, 59, Fishponds Road, Tooting, London, S.W.17.

* * *

UNFORTUNATE.

Fortune-teller: "I'll tell you your fortune for two shillings."

Passer-by: "If you were a real fortune-teller you would know that I haven't got two shillings!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to M. Lidgey, 71, New Road, Llanelly, S. Wales.

* * *

GETTING DOWN.

Binks: "How do you get down from an elephant's back?"

Jinks: "You don't; you get it from a goose!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Peal, 182, Merrow Street, Walworth, London, S.E.17.

* * *

WHY WORRY?

Son: "What's the plural of hippopotamus, dad?"

Father: "Hippopot—— Oh, well, who'd want more than one, anyway?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Leatherland, "Brynderwen House," Brynderwer Buildings, Newport, Mon.

* * *

A STRETCH OF ANOTHER SORT!

Tom: "Did you hear about the man who stole a mile of elastic?"

Ted: "No."

Tom: "He got a long stretch!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Handon, 26, Strawberry Hill Road, Twickenham.

it between his lips, and then seemed at a loss. He rummaged in his pockets again, and then, glancing at the juniors, came over towards them.

Miss Fawcett shuddered.

"Oh dear! Oh dear! Let us go in!"

Tom Merry held her hand.

"Don't be alarmed, dear."

"But—but——"

The native raised his slouched hat and spoke in French; Nicois French, with an accent that would have set a Parisian's teeth on edge. Tom Merry distinguished the word "allumette," and fortunately remembered what it meant.

"Give him what he asks for," murmured Miss Fawcett. "Don't struggle! Give him your watch; I will buy you another, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear Tommy!"

"It's all right, dear; he's only trying to borrow a match."

"Oh!" said Miss Fawcett.

Tom Merry felt in his pockets and produced a match-box, and struck a match and gave the Frenchman a light. The native raised his hat again, gave thanks in his dialect, and walked away.

Miss Fawcett breathed a deep sigh of relief as he went.

"What an escape!" she murmured.

"But he wasn't a brigand," grinned Tom.

"N-no; but he might have been! Promise me that you will all keep together, deah boys, if I let you go out of my sight."

"Certainly!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Perhaps, however, you would prefer to remain in the hotel?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Not much."

"We shall be all right," said Tom Merry reassuringly. "There aren't really any brigands here, you know, and the chaps can't help looking as if they've just jumped out of an opera. Au revoir, dear!"

And the juniors went down the street, leaving Miss Fawcett with some misgivings.

"We'll all keep together," said Figgins. "My uncle knows I'm with Miss Fawcett, so he won't expect me till he sees me. Where shall we go first?"

"Go and have a look at the sea."

"Good!"

"I say——" began Fatty Wynn hesitatingly.

"Well?"

"I've heard that there are some jolly good grub places here. It might be a good idea to make a round of them first thing, so that we shall know in future."

"Bai Jove!"

"And he's only just finished brekker," growled Blake; "and eaten enough for a small army, too."

"Well, you see——"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I always get hungry this time of the year," said Fatty Wynn pathetically.

"Po-oo-f!"

"Let's get on a tram and go down the street," said Figgins. "This street leads to the sea. There are a lot of sights to be seen here; Roman ruins up at Cimiez, some blessed old amphitheatre or other, and a castle or something on a hill, and a lot of things."

"Pewwaps it would be a good ideah to stwoll along and look at the shops," suggested D'Arcy. "As Blake had the astonishing cheek to send my twunk home, I shall have to find a weliable outfittah among the first things I do."

"Oh rats! Jump on this tram!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"On you get!"

And D'Arcy was jerked upon the tram. The juniors followed, standing on the platform outside the car—greatly preferring that to the stuffy interior, as many of the Nicois seemed to also.

The tram rolled on with a clatter down the broad Avenue de la Gare. The juniors looked round them with great interest. Most of the life of the town was in that avenue, and in the extensive Place which terminated it towards the sea. Up in the Cimiez quarter were the great hotels and the expensive private residences, and down on the "front" were the handsome cafes and teashops, but the life of the town simmered up and down the broad Avenue de la Gare.

The tram rolled on through the busy streets, lined now with the decorations of the carnival. Towards the Place Massena it passed between colonnaded sidewalks that reminded the juniors for a moment of the Rue de Rivoli in Paris; and then it rolled out into the Place and stopped before the Casino Municipal—a building that the juniors were to know better.

The boys poured off the tram. Beyond the giant palms and mimosas in the Jardin Publique they could see the wide street of the Bai des Anges, and beyond that the rolling blue of the Mediterranean Sea.

"This way," said Tom Merry.

And the juniors, with a delightful sense of novelty, strolled under the palm-trees towards the blue sea.

CHAPTER 8.
A Bargain for D'Arcy!

TOM MERRY & Co. drank in the unfamiliar sights and sounds with keen eagerness.

A band was playing in the Jardin Publique, and the strains of a Wagner march came to their ears. They came out on the esplanade—the far-famed Promenade des Anglais—Promenade of the English—a name given in grateful remembrance of the English visitors at Nice many years ago. In a time of scarcity and unemployment in the city the English residents had raised the money to find work for a great number of the destitute in building the esplanade; a kindly deed commemorated in the name it has ever since been called by.

The Promenade des Anglais, with the great white buildings at its back, and the sapphire sea rolling in front, burst upon the view of the juniors as they turned out of the public garden. It was a glorious scene!

The juniors walked down the promenade, gazing in delight upon the white-fronted great buildings, the row of giant palms, and the curling waves that broke with a soft murmur almost at their feet.

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

"Jolly good!" said Fatty Wynn. "Did you notice the jetty we've just passed?"

"Yes. What about it?"

"I was wondering——"

"Well?"

Potts, the Office Boy!

"Whether they have a buffet there."

Figgins seized his fat chum by the arm and dragged him on.

"You come on!" he exclaimed. "You don't want a feed yet. Perhaps I'll let you have a bite before lunch, but not yet."

"Oh, really, Figgins——"

"Cheese it!"

Fatty Wynn relapsed into dissatisfied silence. The scenery was grand—and Fatty Wynn had an eye for scenery. But it is probable that he would have given the Promenade des Anglais and the Bai des Anges for the sight of a well-spread lunch-table.

"Messieurs—messieurs!"

It was the piping voice of a picture-postcard merchant, and he came up with effusive smiles and outspread stock.

"Carte postal, monsieur?" he said, addressing Arthur Augustus persuasively. "Cinq franc. Verree fine good!"

"We weally don't want any, deah boy."

"Good fine carte postal."

"Je ne veux pas acheter," said D'Arcy, counting out the words, as it were, with a laborious mental effort over each.

"Fine—good!" explained the postcard merchant. "All Engleesh buy. Good and fine!"

"I weally don't see how he knows we are English."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I do not like the way picture-postcard fellows wush up to a chap, as if he looks like a gweenhorn and a stwangah. I wegard it as weally insultin'! How does he know we haven't been weeks and weeks here?"

"Perhaps you look like a mug!" suggested Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Fine, excellent!" said the merchant persuasively. "Cinq franc."

"What does he mean by song fwong, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Five francs."

"Bai Jove! That's wathah expensive, isn't it? Five fwancs for four wotten cheap postcards? I've heard pwices are high in Nice, though. But I suppose we ought to buy some as the people here depend on English visitahs for their livin'."

"Prices are high, but I expect they vary according to the simplicity of the visitor," grinned Tom Merry. "I don't think five francs is the rock bottom price for those postcards."

"Bai Jove!"

"He's pulling your respected leg, Gussy," said Blake. "Come on, and let him look for another mug. No need for him to do you."

"Vewy good. Merci, non," said D'Arcy.

He walked on with his chums. The Nice picture-postcard merchant followed him, trying to spread out the picture-postcards for him to look at.

"Fine—good!" he insisted. "Me speak Engleesh! Fine before and so good!"

"Bai Jove! Is that English?"

"And so before and good," said the merchant, "also fine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Me speak too good and so fine English," assured the merchant, "also picture carte postal bon fine good! Quatre franc."

"What does he mean by cart fwong, Kerr?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Four francs."

"Oh, I see!"

"The price is coming down," grinned Tom Merry. "It will be rather interesting to see exactly what it comes down to. Don't buy."

"Wathah not! I am afwaid the chap is a wascal. If the postcards are only worth four fwancs he was twyin' to swindle me in askin' five fwancs at first."

"Go hon!"

"They have to live, you know," said Kerr. "Il faut vivre."

"Weally, I do not see the necessity," said D'Arcy, with a glance at the ragged and dirty merchant. "I cannot see that this person is either ornamental or useful."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Excellent, and so fine good!" urged the merchant. "Trois franc pour le quatre."

"Twah fwanc! How much is that, Kerr?"

"Three francs for the four!"

"Oh, I see! It's comin' down wemarkably."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Tom Merry. "That chap means to keep us company all the way down the Promenade des Anglais. Let him go on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Nice good and so fine carte postal. Deux francs!" urged the merchant.

"Bai Jove! They're only two fwancs now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus stopped, jammed his monocle into his eye and fixed it severely upon the persuasive native of Nice. There was scorn in D'Arcy's look, and it glittered through his monocle in the glance of his eye.

"Pway let me alone," he said. "I wefuse to buy your wotten postcards! I wegard you as a dishonest beast! You are appawently capable of over-chargin' a stwangah instead of tweatin' him with the most exact honesty, as a decent chap should. I wegard you as an absolute wottah! Pway buzz off!"

"Nice and so fine good postcard—un franc," said the Nice merchant almost despairingly.

"I wegard you with pwofound contempt!"

"So good fine before and excellent postcard——"

"Pway get out!"

"Excellent, and so fine good!" urged the merchant.

"What does he mean by songkong songteem, Kerr?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Fifty centimes."

"Bai Jove, that's about three halfpence, isn't it?"

"Yes!"

"I suppose we've got to the real price of the postcards now," grinned Blake. "You may as well have 'em, Gussy."

"Yes; they'll do to send to Manners," said Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, I have no particulah desiah to send postcards to Mannahs."

"But I have, so it amounts to the same thing. Buy them. I suppose you're not going to refuse to buy after beating the man down in the price like that?" exclaimed Lowther.

"Why, I didn't——"

"Now, Gussy!"

"I appeal to all you chaps——"

"I think you'd better buy the postcards," said Blake solemnly. "It's really all you can do now, Gussy."

"But I pwotest——"

"Cinquante centime," murmured the merchant.

ASKING FOR IT!

"Vewy well, I will take them. But——"

"Buck up, Gussy! You're keeping us waiting, and we've wasted a lot of time already over your blessed bargain-hunting."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"Oh, hurry up!"

D'Arcy bought the postcards for half a franc, and Lowther kindly relieved him of them and slipped them into his pocket.

D'Arcy's face relaxed.

"Thank you, Lowthah! It's vewy kind of you to cawwy them for me and save me fwom the unpleasant necessity of bulging out my pocket."

"Of course I'll carry them," said Lowther. "I'm going to send them to Manners."

"But——"

"It's all right, Gussy, you needn't bother. All you've got to do is to get the stamps now," said Lowther. "Don't forget."

To that Arthur Augustus made no reply. Words failed him.

CHAPTER 9.
A Villa at Nice!

TOM MERRY & CO. strolled the length of the Promenade des Anglais and then strolled back again towards the Jardin Publique, and outside the entrance to the famous Jetee, Fatty Wynn called a halt. He had caught sight of the magic word "Restaurant" in big type.

"Hold on!" he said. "This must be one of the sights of the place, you know. We ought to have a look at it."

"I know the part of it you want to look at," growled Figgins. "You're not hungry yet."

"Look here, Figgins, I——"

"We've got to get to the villa for lunch, too," said Tom Merry. "Miss Fawcett will be alarmed if we don't turn up, and it's a quarter to twelve."

"Yes, but——"

"Pewwaps it would be bettah to make for the villa at once," Arthur Augustus suggested. "I will show you fellows wound the town aftah lunch."

"Don't forget those stamps," said Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"The question is, where is the villa?" said Tom Merry, looking up and down the esplanade. "I know it's on the Des Anglais, and it's called the Villa des Fleurs."

They hailed a voiture, and very soon arrived at the villa. Tom Merry looked round with admiration as he and his chums walked up the path, even forgetting for the moment that he had a keen appetite, and was late for lunch.

The white villa stood in the midst of rich gardens, surrounded by great palm-trees. A veranda, gay with flowers and ferns, ran along the front of the house, and upon it a row of french windows opened.

In an easy-chair on the veranda sat a middle-aged gentleman with a somewhat military aspect, with white whiskers and moustache, and a bald head. Miss Priscilla Fawcett was seated in a garden-chair near him, talking in agitated tones. Neither of them noticed the juniors coming up through the garden under the palm-trees.

"But I am sure something has happened, major," said Miss Fawcett.

"Nonsense, ma'am!" said the white-whiskered gentleman. "My darling should have been here at half-past twelve."

"The boy's all right."

"I am afraid that some of the ruffianly looking men I saw about the place may have carried him off."

"Huh!"

"Oh, Major Figgins, you don't know how uneasy I feel!"

"The boy's all right!" grunted the major. "I only wish I was as sure about my nephew."

"What, dear Figgins——"

"I mean my elder nephew—his cousin!" growled the major. "Archie Hilton! I don't know where he is to-day—over at Monte Carlo, I suppose. Huh! I——"

"But, Tommy——"

"Huh!"

"Do you think I ought to telephone for the police?"

"Huh!"

Tom Merry ran up the steps of the veranda.

"Here I am, dear!"

Miss Fawcett rose to her feet, with a little cry.

"My sweetest darling!"

She clasped Tom Merry in her arms, and kissed him tenderly.

"My darling boy! How anxious I have been!"

"I'm sorry," said Tom, in wonder. "But why? I've only been having a look round, you know."

Figgins greeted his uncle, and introduced him to the other juniors. Then they sat down, and did full justice to a solid lunch. Major Figgins chuckled a good deal when he heard the story of the man with the postcards.

"He's a decent chap," said Kerr after lunch, when the juniors were standing chatting on the veranda. "I like Figgy's uncle. He's going to take us all for a motor-car excursion over to Cimiez, with a feed at the Winter Palace thrown in. Figgy's uncle is an acquisition."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Figgy's cousin is here, too," went on Kerr. "We haven't seen him yet; he's staying next door with the major, but he's away. I gather that he's going the pace in Nice. How long is it since you've seen your Cousin Archie, Figgy?"

"Years," said Figgy, who was busy with a peach.

"What's he like?" asked Tom Merry.

"Oh, a decent chap!" said Figgins. "Not much like me."

"Joli garcon!" murmured the stout lady, bestowing a hearty k
"I wondah if this is a Fwench custom?" He was quite unaware of

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass! I mean he's not much like me to look at."

"Good-lookin', pewwaps?" suggested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Figgins bestowed a glare upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Are you looking for a thick ear, Gussy?" he asked.

"Certainly not, Figgins. I wegard the question as widiculous."

"Well, you'll find one, whether you're looking for it or not, if you're not careful with your funny remarks!" said Figgins warningly.

"I wasn't makin' any funny wemarks. You said your cousin wasn't like you, so I naturally supposed that pewwaps he was good-lookin'."

Figgins picked up a peach.

The other juniors were chuckling, and the evident innocence with which Arthur Augustus uttered his remarks made them chuckle all the more. D'Arcy did not see Figgins proceeding with the peach. Figgins took careful aim, and landed it fairly upon D'Arcy's nose.

"Ow!"

Arthur Augustus gave a jump. Two distinct spots showed upon D'Arcy's immaculate collar.

"Bai Jove! Somebody thwew somethin' at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who was it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Was it you, Figgins?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus glared round him wrathfully. The juniors were almost in hysterics. He was unaware of the spots of peach juice on his collar, but they showed up to great advantage against the otherwise spotless white. What

upon Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove!" gasped Gussy in dismay. notice pinned on the back of his hood inviting everyone to kiss him!

Gussy would say when he discovered them was unimaginable.

"I wegard you as a set of wottahs!" he remarked.

And the swell of St. Jim's looked away with a stately air.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, pway don't cackle!"

Figgins went on eating peaches.

"As a matter of fact, my Cousin Archie is rather good-looking," he went on. "But he's not like me otherwise."

"Bai Jove!"

"He's a weak-natured sort of chap—good-natured and good-tempered, and easily led," said Figgins. "Now, I'm not like that."

"No, you're not," agreed Kerr, with the frankness of an old friend. "You're an obstinate ass as a rule."

"Yaas, wathah! I must say I wathah agwee with Kerr."

"Archie's a good sort, though," said Figgins. "If he'd let me look after him he'd be all right. But he's twenty-five years old, and he thinks he can look after himself. It's an idea chaps get when they reach that age. My uncle was his guardian, and used to keep a tight hand over his spending; but now, of course, Archie can do as he likes with his own. And from what I hear he chiefly likes to pass it over to the croupiers. They have a game here called petits chevaux, and they play roulette and trente-et-quarante over at Monte Carlo, and they seem to be methods by which a chap gets experience in exchange for money, and Archie is getting his experience now. I believe my uncle is feeling rather anxious about him."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps it would be a good ideah for me to take him in hand a bit while I'm at Nice. I could look aftah him, and give him some jolly good advice."

"Jolly good idea, if you're looking for a set of thick ears!" agreed Figgins heartily. "When you've finished eating fruit, Fatty, if you ever do, I'm ready to go out."

"I'm finished," said Fatty Wynn, with a sigh and a regretful glance at the dessert piled on the table, and a strange, new feeling of having had quite enough.

Miss Fawcett and Hannah were to have a drive along the esplanade. And Tom Merry & Co. saw them safely started, and then strolled off "on their own," to see some of the sights of Nice.

CHAPTER 10.
The Gaming Tables.

"CASINO."

Tom Merry read out the word on the sign that stared across the expanse of the Jardin Publique.

"Looks interesting," remarked Figgins. "Let's go in to see what it is like."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The St. Jim's party walked up to the entrance. They entered a vestibule, and passed a door, and then came to a second door, at which two commissionaires in uniform kept watch and ward. They blocked the doorway.

"Les billets, s'il vous plait."

"Oh, they want tickets!" said Tom Merry. "You have to pay to go in."

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

Tom Merry went back to the entrance, and paid two francs each for seven tickets, and then the juniors entered the casino. It was well on in the afternoon now, and the place was crowded.

It presented a scene that was so new and strange to the juniors of St. Jim's that they could only stand and look about them.

The casino was a vast apartment, with rows of palms growing in tubs, and chairs and tables in hundreds—all of which seemed to be occupied now. At the farther end was a raised platform, where an orchestra was discoursing sweet music. But what surprised them was another sight which they had not thought of yet.

On either side of the entrance was a large, long green table, and each table was surrounded by an eager crowd.

From amid the crowd came the voice of a croupier.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs!"

"Make your game!"

They were gambling tables. The people crowded round them were gambling, and their keen faces showed how eager they were in the pursuit.

Farther along the room were large alcoves in the wall, and in each of the alcoves was another gambling table, surrounded by its crowd. As the juniors learned afterwards, more and more tables were opened to meet the demand as the season advanced and visitors came more thickly to Nice. And in all the other coast towns—Cannes and Mentone and San Remo and the rest—were more casinos and more "la boule" tables, drawing a never-ending supply of cash from the visitors to the Riviera.

"Let's have a look, anyway," said Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors drew near to the nearest table. It was a long table, some thirty feet in length, and in the centre was a shallow bowl, marked with a circle of figures. The numbers were from one to nine, repeated twice, and each number had a slot attached, so that there were eighteen slots. The croupier stood up at the side of the table and threw a ball in a circle. As it slackened down it was watched with keen eyes by the crowded gamblers. It fell into a slot at last, and the number attached was the winning number. As the juniors looked on the number nine won, and the croupier announced it.

"Le neuf!"

(*Continued on page* 17.)

GREAT NEW FEATURE COMING!

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

HALLO, CHUMS !—I promised last week to tell you all about the GEM's grand new feature, so here goes. First of all, let me say that nothing like it has ever appeared in the pages of the GEM before—it is an entirely new departure for our paper, and, of course, it's a winner !

This feature, which starts in a fortnight's time, is a serial story told in a series of special pictures and brief captions by means of which readers are able to see clearly the actual sequence of incidents in picture form as the story progresses. One of the best artists of the day is drawing these special pictures, which will consist of a set of twelve every week.

The subject of our picture-story is one that offers unlimited thrills, for it centres around that wonderful body of men, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. In particular it stars the adventures of a young Mountie, and the title is :

" MICK O' THE MOUNTED ! "

Mick is a new chum you are going to like, and his nerve-tingling experiences as a crook-catcher will keep you thrilled week after week. Meet Mick in the GEM in a fortnight's time and start with him on his amazing life of adventure in North-West Canada. Give your pals the tip, too, about our super picture-story—it's much too good to miss !

In the meantime, let's take a look at our programme for next Wednesday. The top-line item is, of course, another splendid yarn of Tom Merry & Co. The chums of St. Jim's are still on holiday in the South of France, and their adventures, fascinatingly told by popular Martin Clifford in

" THE BLACK DOMINO ! "

—the intriguing title of our next yarn—are even more exciting than in " Tom Merry & Co. Go Gay ! " Therefore, chums, you are booked for a first-class story that is guaranteed to contain the maximum amount of holiday thrills, fun, and adventure.

Next, there will be more thrilling chapters of our popular serial,

" ST. FRANK'S VERSUS FOO CHOW ! "

The St. Frank's holiday party make a determined attempt to break away from their island prison to recapture Lord Dorrimore's steam-yacht, the Wanderer, which brought them out to China. How they fare in their fight against Foo Chow's soldiers is thrillingly told by Mr. E. S. Brooks, in the next powerful instalment.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,336.

To complete this ripping number there will be another humorous adventure of Potts, the office-boy, and, of course the Jester's selection of readers' prize-winning jokes, and special news pars.

BARGAIN BOOKS FOR BOYS.

By the way, don't forget what I have already told you about the two new issues of the bumper books, " The Holiday Annual " and " The Popular Book of Boys' Stories." Both are on sale now—and selling like hot cakes ! The former, which has been reduced to five shillings, is packed with grand school and adventure stories and many other interesting features. The " Popular Book," which is still two shillings and sixpence but has been considerably enlarged—it now has 192 pages—is a fine collection of thrilling adventure stories that will appeal to every boy.

If you have not already got these two wonder books, drop a gentle hint to your parents about them.

PLEASANT EVENINGS AT HOME.

After a strenuous day at work, young people, and old people, too, for that matter, feel the need of some diversion. This is simple to obtain, in many directions, during the summer, but with the approach of dreary winter nights the solution is not so easy.

Billiards is a pastime of never-failing pleasure in which everybody at home can participate. The firm of E. J. Riley, Ltd., have long been famous for the special attention they have paid to the development of Home Billiards.

Riley " Home " Billiard Tables are made in a variety of sizes suitable for any size of room. E. J. Riley, Ltd., particularly emphasise the fact that their " Home " Billiard Tables are not toys. Every model, right down to the smallest, is a perfect replica in construction of a full-size billiard table.

The fact that all Riley " Home " Billiard Tables can be obtained on easy terms make them even more attractive for family entertaining. As little as 8s. per month brings a Riley " Home " Billiard Table, complete with all accessories, and seven days' free trial is allowed.

Full details of all Riley Billiard Tables will be supplied on application to the manufacturers, E. J. Riley, Ltd., Raleigh Works, Accrington, or Dept. 32, 147, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.1.

THE SELF-DRIVE CAR !

The very latest thing in cars is a model which drives itself ! It has an automatic clutch as well as an automatic gear change. All you have to do is to start the engine and operate the accelerator pedal. To start the engine press a button—very simple. Seat yourself in the car and press gently on the throttle pedal. As the engine revolutions increase first gear is automatically engaged and the clutch slides slowly in. The car moves off and you press the accelerator down a bit further, with the result that second gear is automatically engaged, and so on, until you are in top gear. When you reach a hill, if the car slows down too much owing to the steepness, then the car just changes into a lower gear for you ! Well, all we want now is a car that steers itself and automatically operates the accelerator pedal, and then we shall be able to climb into it, start up the engine, go to sleep—and wake up wherever we intended to halt ! Or better still, we can send the car to fetch a friend all by itself !

THE SCOOTER SQUAD !

Here's a story of something that happened a few weeks ago, but it's so good that I think it is worth telling now. Tony Harvey was the twelve-years-old leader of a band of fifteen Camden Town boys who had saved up their coppers in order that they could go to the Radio Exhibition at Olympia. The great day arrived and Tony and his fourteen followers set out for Olympia—on scooters ! But when they arrived they found that they had struck an unexpected snag—there was nowhere for them to park their scooters. Tony pointed out that they couldn't afford to park them in the official car park as they had not come prepared for that. On the other hand the commissionaire regretfully pointed out that they could not leave them in the vestibule. Tony, on his part, thought that there ought to be a special scooter park—and said so ! However, all's well that ends well, for just then along came Mr. Alec Moody, the organiser of the exhibition, and hearing of the trouble, he at once placed his office at the disposal of Tony & Co. as a parking place !

FIRE !—BULL !

Some fire-fighters on a farm in Essex recently had a nasty shock. Eight haystacks, a barn, a granary, a cowhouse, and a food store were on fire, and no fewer than two hundred volunteers from cottages and bungalows round about turned out to assist in fighting the flames with a chain of buckets. All went well until another [came on the scene, and his idea was not so much to help as to hinder—he was a large bull ! The fire-fighters, who were not afraid of the flames, were not quite so sure about the bull, and spent a lot of time avoiding him—and no wonder, for he didn't seem to like the look of them very much ! Eventually the bull was rounded up and removed, and the job of extinguishing the flames went on, but not before a [great deal of damage had been done.

BRAVO, DAVID !

In these days of great enthusiasm for tunny fishing it is good to see a twelve-year-old boy holding his own, and more than his own, with the best of them. This honour goes to David Leigh, of Godalming, who recently landed a tunny, weighing 763 pounds, off the Dogger Bank. This fish is only 35 pounds smaller than the world's record tunny landed by Colonel E. T. Peel. David's tunny is over six feet round and nearly nine feet long, but he only took five minutes over the hour to land it, despite the fact that it towed him five miles, and at one time tried to dive under a trawler ! David is naturally very pleased at his catch, but he is not yet satisfied—he wants to land the world's record tunny ! Good luck, David !

YOUR EDITOR.

TOM MERRY & CO. GO GAY!

(*Continued from page* 15.)

Tom Merry looked up and down the table.

The green cloth with which it was covered was divided by lines, marking off spaces numbered, and on these spaces the gamblers placed their stakes, according to the number they chose to back.

There were also other spaces for combination of numbers. The juniors, getting closer to the table as players retired moneyless, had a good view of the game.

"Pair," or even numbers, had a space marked off on the cloth, and "impair," or odd numbers, another space. Players backing pair or impair received exactly the amount of their stake added if they won.

On a single number, however, the winner received seven times the amount of his stake. There were, however, eight chances to one against him, as, of course, only one number out of the nine could win. And that was if the game was played fairly. But Tom Merry, who could do anything he liked with a cricket ball, thought as he looked on that he could learn to handle the "la boule" quite as well, and throw it to drop where he pleased. And he had a strong suspicion that if a heavy stake were laid on a certain number, that number would be extremely unlikely to win.

The game was played with great rapidity. Each coup did not occupy more than two minutes, and sometimes as much as twenty to fifty pounds were lost at one coup.

At other times, however, there might be only fifty francs on the table.

A Frenchman standing beside Tom Merry was playing with fifty-franc notes; most of the players used five-franc notes. Bets of five francs were permitted, which brought the game within the means even of the poor—unlike Monte Carlo, where the minimum is much higher.

The Frenchman was having a run of luck, and for several coups his big notes returned to him with seven added, so that in the course of ten minutes, while the juniors watched him, he had made between forty and fifty pounds. Twice as much, at least, had been lost by the other players.

"Bai Jove!" remarked D'Arcy. "That chap is wakin' it in!"

"Look at the others, though," said Blake.

"Yaas, but I weally thinkk I ought to have a plunge, you know. I've got wathah a feelin' that I shall win."

"Don't be an ass!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"It's a mug's game," said Lowther. "They don't keep up this big building and pay all the employees on the losses, you can be sure of that."

"Not much!" said Kerr. "And a player has no chance in this game. Even if they play fairly, the game is planned for everything to be in favour of the bank. This is different from roulette."

"Yaas, but a chap might have a wun of luck."

"Rats!"

"Well, aftah all, we're on a holiday, and it's only a few fwanks," said D'Arcy. "The people here are playin' with five fwancs."

"I don't think you ought to play," said Tom Merry seriously. "I don't want to preach, but gambling is gambling, you know, and we're supposed not to do it. If Miss Fawcett had known that there was public gambling here she wouldn't have consented to our coming."

"Yaas, but——"

"Oh, this is not gambling!" grinned Kerr. "It's a dead cert, as Skimmy says—a dead cert for the bank."

"Yes, rather."

"I should be vewy sowwy to do anythin' of which Miss Pwiscillah did not appwove," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "But, all the same, I should vewy much like to have a plunge. If I win a hundwed pounds I will stand a yachtin' expedition at Villefwanche."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see why I shouldn't win. This chap here is pilin' up money. There, he's gone now—and taken about fifty pounds with him! If I had started playin' when the ideah first came into my head I should have won a lot of money now."

"My dear Gussy——"

"I weally think we are entitled to a little plunge on a holiday, you know. I will explain to Miss Fawcett that I had a feelin' I should win."

And Arthur Augustus took out his purse.

When the swell of St. Jim's had made up his mind, it was useless to argue with him, as his chums knew of old. He changed a fifty-franc note.

Kerr shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him go on," he said; "it's the best way to cure a chap really. He can't win, and he'll pay for the experience."

"I wathah feel I shall win."

"Well, ass, if you win you'll come back again to play, and then you'll lose it again and a lot more with it. The people who run this place know that well enough."

"I should awfully like to bweak the bank."

"Ha, ha, ha! How many duffers have said the same?"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

Arthur Augustus laid five francs upon a number on the green cloth.

The croupier glanced up and down the table.

"Les jeux sont faits."

And then came the warning as the ball rolled round the shallow bowl and slowed down ready to drop into a number.

"Rien ne va plus!"

The ball slid into a round slot and stayed there. D'Arcy's number lost.

The swell of St. Jim's smiled.

"Nevah mind! Luckay it was only five fwancs," he remarked cheerfully. "It might have been more, you know."

"Oh, chuck it!"

"Wats! I'm goin' to get that five fwancs back."

"You'll send the gold to look for the silver," said Kerr, "and neither of them will come back."

"Wats! I'm goin' to get that five fwancs back."

And Arthur Augustus dropped a ten-franc note on the green cloth this time. Tom Merry was looking grave. Without being over-righteous, he did not approve of gambling, and he felt that D'Arcy was being carried away with excitement, and would be sorry afterwards that he had played, whether he won or lost. But for the moment there was no use in talking to the swell of St. Jim's.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

"Les jeux sont faits."

"Rien ne va plus."

D'Arcy watched the revolving ball anxiously. Very differently from the roulette, of which he had read a description, the ball was rolling at random on the shallow bowl, and sometimes it half fell into a slot and jerked out again.

"Le neuf!"

D'Arcy uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Bai Jove! Nine's my numbah!"

Gussy had won!

The elegant junior beamed as the croupier's rake pushed his winnings towards him.

"What do you think now, deah boys?"

"I think you'd better chuck it," said Kerr.

"Wats! I've won!"

"Well, now's the time to leave off!"

"Bosh! It would be silly to leave off when you're winnin'."

"You ass! When you lose you go on to get the money back; and when you win you go on because you're winning! That means that you'll never leave off!"

"I weally think I ought to plunge a bit."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "My belief is that kids of your age aren't allowed to play here, and when the manager sees you, he'll make you quit."

"I should wefuse to quit."

"The persons in authority will probably be blind of one eye, though, so long as you lose," said Kerr sarcastically. "And, if you assure them that you are over twenty, you will find them ready to take your word."

"Here goes!"

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

D'Arcy dropped a ten-franc note on the nine.

CHAPTER 11.

"A Fool and His Money——!"

"LE neuf!"

Nine had won again!

Arthur Augustus' eyes glistened with excitement.

The croupier, whose business it was to rake in the losses and pay out the winnings, grinned at him across the table as he threw over seven ten-franc notes. He probably knew quite well that the money would not remain long on D'Arcy's side of the table.

The swell of St. Jim's gathered up his winnings.

"Good!" he remarked. "I had wathah a feelin' that I should win if I played for highah stakes!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Kerr——"

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."
"Bai Jove!"
"Chuck it now, Gussy!"
"Wats! Not when I'm winnin'."
"Look here, Gussy, you ought not to be doing this, and you know it," said Tom Merry resolutely. "It's as bad as betting on horses."
"Yaas, but——"
"Les jeux sont faits."
"Bai Jove! I shall have to huwwy up."
Arthur Augustus dropped a twenty-franc note on the nine.
"Rien ne va plus."
D'Arcy watched anxiously now.
"Le neuf."
The ball had settled in the slot numbered nine again.
Arthur Augustus had won, and the croupier opposite pushed him over seven twenty-franc notes. D'Arcy's eyes glistened.

He was accustomed to having more money than most of the juniors at St. Jim's—or the seniors, either, for that matter—but money had never come to him like this before.
His winnings amounted altogether to 375 francs, and he counted them with a great deal of satisfaction.
"Thwee hundwed and seventy-five fwancs," he remarked. "That's nearly five pounds in weal money—English money, I mean. This is the way to get wich quick, and no mistake!"
"Oh, chuck it!"
"Do leave off, Gussy!"
"You fellows go along and have some coffee," said D'Arcy; "I'm going in for this. Of course, I shan't keep the money I win, as I am not a gamblah. I shall put it in the poor-box. But I am wesolved to go on while I've got such a stweak of luck."
"Look here——"
"Pway don't bother, deah boy."
And D'Arcy threw a twenty-franc note on the table, on the seven this time. He threw another in impair—the odd numbers.
The ball revolved.
"Bai Jove! It's the seven!"
The ball almost dropped into the eight, and finally settled in the seven. Arthur Augustus had won on seven, and also on impair, as seven was an odd number.

His eye glistened behind his eyeglass.
"Bai Jove! This is wippin'!"
He received his winnings—seven twenty-franc notes on the number, and a single twenty-franc note, the equal of his stake, on impair.
"Gad! You're winning, kid."
It was an English voice behind the swell of St. Jim's, and he glanced round with a flushed and feverish smile.
A young man of about twenty-five, with good-natured, blue eyes, and a fresh complexion, stood at his elbow.
Figgins uttered an exclamation.
"Archie!"
The young man started.
"Hallo, kid! You've arrived, have you?"
"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Figgins. "This is my cousin, Archie Hilton, kids. Are you playing here, Archie?"
"I've been playing."
"Winning?"
"Oh, comme ci, comme ca!"
D'Arcy was playing again. He threw a "twenty" on six, and six turned up. Again seven "twenties" were pushed across to him.
The swell of St. Jim's was labouring under the most intense excitement now. The fever of gambling was upon him. Hilton tapped him on the shoulder.
"You'd better drop it, kid, begad," he said. "It's not good for you. They don't let boys play here, either, as a rule."
"I'm goin' on."
"Better drop it."
"Thank you, but wats!"
Hilton laughed. Blake pulled at D'Arcy's sleeve.
"Do chuck it, Gussy, there's a good chap. I want to get some coffee."
"Go and get it, then."
"I want you to come."
"I won't!"
The boys looked at one another. It was very unlike Arthur Augustus to answer in that tone, and it showed how deeply he was excited by the allurements of the game.
"Gussy——"
"Oh, pway wing off!"
D'Arcy had placed two "twenties" on the board again. Both lost. Then for a succession of coups the elegant junior experienced bad luck.
Kerr, who was watching the game with a keen Scottish eye—and keeping his money in his pocket—observed that the croupier was now throwing the ball a different way. Whether that had any effect on the game Kerr would not have undertaken to say, but certainly even numbers were now turning up instead of odd numbers.
D'Arcy, who had been winning on impair, naturally went on backing the odd numbers, with an eye only on the revolving ball.
His winnings melted away like snow in the sun.
In ten minutes the little heap of notes was transferred over the table to the croupier's box, and D'Arcy dragged out his purse.
"Keep your stakes low, for goodness' sake," urged Tom Merry, as D'Arcy poured the contents of his purse on to the table for use.
Arthur Augustus shook his head.
"No good hangin' it out, deah boy."
"But——"
"Pway don't wowwy."
D'Arcy dropped a "twenty" on the nine, which had served him well previously. Four turned up, and the note was swept away by the remorseless rake of the croupier.
"That's twenty francs gone," said Kerr. "If it were mine, I should be thinking what I might have bought with it."
"What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn feelingly. "There's a restaurant attached to this place, too. I'd rather spend the money there."
"Oh wats!"
D'Arcy backed nine, and then seven, and then three. Other numbers turned up, but he went on. The flush was dying out of his face now, and the boyish countenance was growing strangely white and strained.
D'Arcy had a great deal of money, but the loss of a little heap of notes made a great deal of difference even to the swell of St. Jim's, if he did not win them back. And there seemed little chance of that. There was not merely a percentage in favour of the bank, as at the roulette tables at Monte Carlo, but the whole game was absurdly unfair to the player. The player had practically no chance, and many could see it plainly enough, and yet the instinct of gambling was so strong that they went on playing, and watched their money being taken with almost the certainty beforehand that it would go.

"Get off the odd numbers," said Kerr. "If you must play, keep an eye on the croupier as well as on the table."

"Oh wats!"

"Well, a fool and his money—— You know the rest!"

"Pway don't wowwy!"

The pile of notes melted away. Every note went; and then D'Arcy suspended his play and the game went on.

"Pewwaps you were wight," he remarked, after a pause. "Pewwaps I ought to have changed to an even numbah. I will now."

"Oh, drop it now!"

"But I've lost two hundwed francs!"

"Better that than more."

"Pway lend me a few notes, Tom Mewwy."

"Don't be an ass, Gus."

"Will you lend me a few notes or not?"

To a question put in that tone Tom Merry could only make one reply, sorely against his better judgment. He put all the money he had with him in D'Arcy's hand.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy."

And the swell of St. Jim's played again.

CHAPTER 12.
Gussy Learns a Lesson.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, in the course of the past twenty minutes, seemed to have grown ten years older. Keen anxiety was in his face—his brows were contracted, and his eyes had an unnatural glitter in them.

His chums watched him in silence. The junior's ill-luck pursued him. As a matter of fact, he had had more good luck than usually falls to a player at such a game as la boule, and there was no more for him that afternoon.

Tom Merry's five notes followed D'Arcy's own ten, without a single win to break the monotony of losing. Then D'Arcy hesitated.

"Come on, old chap," said Blake, assuming a cheerfulness he was far from feeling. "Let's go and have some coffee."

"Wats!"

"Your tin's all gone!"

"Lend me yours."

"My dear chap——"

"You will not wefuse to lend me some money, I pwesume, Blake?"

"Not for this rotten game!" said Blake firmly.

"Blake!"

"Don't be an ass, Gussy! I——"

"Where are you going?" demanded Tom Merry, as D'Arcy, with a strange, dark look on his face, turned from the table.

"I'm goin' to waise some tin on my watch."

Tom Merry stared aghast.

"My hat!" said Kerr. "He's got it bad! Come back, you ass!"

"Hold on, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to hold on!"

"I'll lend you the tin, if you like," said Blake resignedly.

"I wefuse——"

"Oh, here you are—take it!"

D'Arcy hesitated a moment. He was angry. But the sight of the green cloth and the revolving ball fascinated him. As he hesitated, the ball dropped into a slot, and the croupier's voice announced the winning number.

"Le neuf!"

It was nine again. D'Arcy uttered an exclamation.

"Bai Jove! If I had played that time——"

"But you were playing on even numbers now," said Lowther.

"Oh, wats!"

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

"I will bowwow the money if you like, Blake."

"I think you are an ass, but here you are."

The notes went on the green cloth. D'Arcy lost three times in succession on the nine, and then betted on seven, and nine turned up. Then on seven again, and five turned up. Then on odd numbers, for safety, and eight came up, and then four, and then two.

By that time all Blake's money was gone.

"For goodness' sake be sensible!" said Tom Merry. "How long would it take you to win all that back again, even if you could do it?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"You've lost over six pounds already."

"Bai Jove!"

"Have a rest, anyway, and come and have some coffee, and then come back again, if you like."

"I've got a feeling that if I go on now I shall win."

"Well, try one more note, and if it loses, come and have a cafe au lait."

"Vewy well," said D'Arcy, after a moment's hesitation.

Monty Lowther fished out a note, and handed it to D'Arcy, who threw it upon nine. Eight turned up, and the note was raked across the table.

Without giving the swell of St. Jim's time to argue, Tom Merry linked arms with him, and dragged him away from the table.

"This way for coffee!"

"Oh, all wight!"

Figgins tapped his cousin on the arm. The young man looked down on him.

"Coming to have a cafe with us, Archie?"

Hilton shook his head.

"No, Figgy!"

"Going to play?"

"Yes."

Figgins did not argue. It was not the place of a boy of his age to point out even the obvious to a man of twenty-five. He nodded, and followed his chums.

The juniors sat down at one of the little round tables, and a fat waiter came up, squirming and bowing, and Tom Merry ordered coffee. The band on the raised platform at the end of the casino was playing the prelude to the Third Act of Lohengrin, and the inspiring strains were very agreeable to the juniors, excepting to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The orchestra was a good one, and the music good, and as a rule D'Arcy had a musical ear. But now it irritated him. The feverish excitement of the gaming table had thrown him into an unusual state of nerves.

"Bai Jove! I wish they'd stop that wow!" he remarked.

"It's good!" said Kerr.

"Oh, it wowwies me!"

"Here's the coffee."

D'Arcy drank his coffee in silence. His face was pale, but a deep flush was stealing into it. As he grew calmer, he realised what he had been doing, and he was beginning to feel a growing sense of shame.

His chums did not speak of the gaming. But they knew from D'Arcy's looks what his feelings were like.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "I have been playin' the gidday ox, deah boys!"

"Only just realised it?" asked Kerr.

"Oh, we're all human at times, you know," said Jack Blake, with an air of great wisdom. "It's all right, Gussy. It's a lesson, anyway."

"I've lost over six pounds in English money."

"Rotten!"

"Feel jolly thankful you can afford to lose it," said Kerr seriously. "I was watching some of the faces round the tables. Most of the players can't afford to lose. It's not so bad at Monte Carlo, for there poor people can't get in; but here, with a five franc minimum, any chap can play. A fellow who gets a hundred francs wages on Saturday can stroll into the casino, and lose every blessed franc in five minutes, and then go home to his family without a centime. It's beastly!"

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I don't hold with the chaps who declare in season and out of season that England is the finest country in the world, and that no foreign country is a patch on it. But I must say that we're a long way past this sort of thing in England. It's astounding that it's allowed."

"And there are the blessed regulations hanging up, signed by the Minister of the Interior," said Figgins, with a sniff. "Fancy our Home Secretary taking on the job of regulating gaming dens! Good old England! A chap has to get out of his own country for a bit to realise what a jolly good country it is."

"Yaas, wathah! I've been an ass, you chaps."

"That's nothing new."

"That is a wude wemark, Kerr, but I pass it ovah, as I feel that I deserve it. I have been playin' the gidday ox. It isn't only the money that hits me wathah hard, but I have been a wotten gamblah," said D'Arcy, with a look of keen distress. "I didn't fully wealise it, you know, but this is the same thing as bettin' money on cards and horses, which fellows have been expelled from St. Jim's for doing."

"Well, it's no good bothering about it now," said Tom Merry. "Only make up your mind not to play again, that's all!"

"Of course, I shall nevah play again!" said Arthur Augustus. "That goes without sayin. I will waise the

cash as soon as I can to pay you chaps, but I won't gamble any more. It makes one feel such a worm."

"Well, if the worm turns over a new leaf, it's all right," said Kerr.

"Pway don't be funnay. It's a beastlay sewious subject." Arthur Augustus finished his coffee, and rose to his feet. "Are you weady to move, you chaps?"

"The band's worth listening to," said Kerr.

"Oh, all wight, but——"

"Well, if you want to go——"

"As a mattah of fact, I do. This beastlay place makes me feel sick. I feel howwibly ashamed of myself, and I don't want evah to come here again!"

"Then let's get a move on," said Tom Merry.

And the St. Jim's juniors settled for their coffee and strolled down towards the vestibule.

As they passed the la boule tables they glanced round for Archie Hilton.

He was standing where they had left him, but he did not see them; he had eyes only for the green cloth and the revolving ball. His face was white, and his eyes glittering. He had a few notes before him; the juniors did not need telling that he had been losing heavily.

Figgins' brow was clouded as they passed on.

"No wonder my uncle is anxious about him!" he muttered. "These rotten places ought to be blown up!"

They quitted the casino and strolled down towards the sea. It was a glorious spring afternoon, and the sun was shining gaily on wide, blue waters. But there were two faces in the St. Jim's party that were clouded—Figgins' and D'Arcy's.

CHAPTER 13.

An Unlucky Plunger!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS was very silent for the rest of that day. The swell of St. Jim's was usually in a state of satisfaction with himself, but he was not satisfied now. For once, he had done something that he was ashamed of, and shame for his own conduct was a new thing to D'Arcy, and a very troublesome one.

The other juniors, seeing how he felt about the matter, left the subject unmentioned. But that did not comfort D'Arcy much.

"I feel as if I ought to kick myself hard," he said. "I cannot imagine how I allowed myself to act the gidday ox like that. It was the beastlay excitement of the game; but it's wotten bad form to get excited, too."

It was after dinner, and the juniors were sitting on the veranda of the villa. Before them the garden lay glimmering in the glorious moonlight of the South, and beyond the palm-trees they caught a glimpse of the silver sea.

Major Figgins had come in for a chat with his nephew and Miss Fawcett, and sat on the veranda smoking his strong Indian cigars.

"I shall be awfully careful in future," D'Arcy remarked; "but that doesn't make me feel any more comfy now. I weally wish somebody would box my yahs—I do weally!"

Biff!

Arthur Augustus nearly rolled out of his chair as a mighty clump made his ears ring.

"Bai Jove!"

He jumped up.

Jack Blake resettled himself in his chair after having taken his chum at his word, and he met D'Arcy's wrathful glare with a cheerful smile.

"Is that all right?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Or would you like another?"

"What!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "You asked for it, you know, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" said D'Arcy, rubbing his ear. "Of course, I was speakin' figuwatively. You uttah duffah!"

"Well, you deserved it, anyway," said Figgins.

"Pewwaps so," said D'Arcy, sitting down and still rubbing his ear. "Howevah, if anybody does that again there will be a wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As a mattah of fact," went on D'Arcy, after a pause, "I don't know what I shall do for tin, deah boys. I'm stony, you know, and I owe you fellows money. I shall have to wiah for some to my guv'nah, and I don't know what to tell him."

"You can say you've lost your money," grinned Kerr. "You needn't mention the la boule tables."

"Bai Jove!"

"Of course, that's only a joke," Kerr explained laboriously. "The best thing you can really do is to write to your governor and make a clean breast of it, and tell him you're resolved never to play the giddy goat again. Meanwhile, we'll raise some tin amongst us to see you through."

Arthur Augustus nodded thoughtfully.

"That is wathah a good ideah, Kerr."

"There's somebody coming up the garden," said Fatty Wynn. "Look!"

The juniors glanced in the direction in which the fat Fourth-Former nodded. There was a stir in the palms in the direction of the next villa, the one occupied by Major Figgins' household. There was a gate in the wall there, which was generally left open since the major's new neighbours had arrived.

Major Figgins was smoking seriously and did not notice the newcomer. But the juniors recognised him as soon as his form emerged into view in the moonlight.

It was Archie Hilton.

The young man's face was deadly pale and showed up in a ghastly way in the clear brilliance of the moon.

Figgins changed colour as he saw it.

"What on earth's the matter with him?" he muttered. "He looks as if——" The junior did not finish

Hilton came up the broad steps of the veranda, between the green tubs of flowering shrubs. There was an unsteadiness in his walk that matched the ghastly paleness of his face.

"Archie, old man!"

Hilton did not even hear Figgins speak. Without glancing at the juniors, he made his way towards the major.

Figgins' uncle glanced up at him.

"Hallo, Archie! You were not in to dinner."

"No, uncle."

"Casino, I suppose?" grunted the major. "Or have you been over to Monte?"

"I haven't been to Monte to-day."

"You've been gambling, I'm sure of that," said the major. "I wonder whether you will ever learn sense?"

Hilton gave a low, bitter laugh.

"I suppose not," he said. "I want to speak to you, uncle. It's important."

"Well, go ahead," said the major, without shifting from his comfortable position in the deep garden chair. "I'm listening."

"Alone, I mean."

Tom Merry glanced at his chums.

"I think we'll have a bit of a stroll round the garden," he remarked; and the juniors followed him down the steps.

Hilton went on speaking to his uncle in a low voice.

The boys saw Major Figgins start bolt upright in his chair and fix upon his nephew a look that would probably have terrified the Sepoys in his old regiment in India.

PEN PALS

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Stanley Dunn, 130, Tyers Street, Vauxhall, **London, S.E.11**, wants correspondents in the Boys' Brigade.

Norman G. Foster, Beech Cottage, Greenham Common, Newbury, **Berks**, wants correspondents, ages 13-14.

Jack Greaves, c/o H. Morris, Castle Street, **Sheffield, 3**, wants to hear from readers keen on old "Nelson Lees."

Arthur Brightman, 44, Elphinstone Road, Walthamstow, **London, E.17**, wants correspondents interested in model railways and stamps, ages 14-16.

A. Ellis, 60, Old Chester Road, Tranmere, **Birkenhead**, wants correspondents, ages 15-16.

John Sturges, 100, Watenford Road, Fulham, **London, S.W.6**, wants a correspondent in Australia or New Zealand, interested in drawing, age 12-14.

Arthur Kelly, Trovince, 198, Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill, **Essex**, wants a correspondent interested in shipping, especially in India and South America, age 15-17.

P. H. Charles, Moreland, Meadowcourt Road, **Leicester**, wants to hear from readers interested in foreign stamps and railways.

"No, sir!" thundered the major in a voice that was clearly audible all over the garden. "No, sir!"

"But, uncle——"

"Do you think I am going to be a party to your follies, sir—and help you to ruin yourself?"

"But——"

"No! Not a franc, sir!"

Hilton stood silent, biting his lips.

"If you've lost all your money," went on the major in a more moderate tone, "all the better; you will have to stop now. If you can't raise any more in Nice, all the better; it will be a lesson to you. It will give you a taste in advance of the poverty you are preparing for yourself."

"Uncle——"

"I wouldn't lend you a franc, my boy, to play at those scoundrelly casinos."

"But I tell you——"

"For your own sake, no!"

"That's enough."

Hilton turned and strode off the veranda. His white face was set in anger. The major called after him once, but the young man did not turn his head.

The juniors saw him stride from the garden. He did not look at them. But they saw that his face was desperate in the moonlight.

"Bai Jove!" muttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That's what I started to become, Blake, dear boy—that's what it leads to."

Blake nodded.

"But you'd never have been such an ass as that, Gussy."

"I hope not. But——"

And D'Arcy fell into silence. He had had a lesson, if he needed one. The swell of St. Jim's was not likely to fall into the vice of gambling again.

CHAPTER 14.
The Battle of Flowers!

THE next morning the juniors were up bright and early. It was a perfect morning, with a blaze of sunshine on the blue sea and the palm-trees.

At breakfast Miss Fawcett had an announcement to make which was interesting enough to the juniors.

"There is a Battle of Flowers to-day, my dear boys," she said, "and to-night there is a procession. You will need masks and dominoes. You had better get them ready this morning."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

And after breakfast the whole party sallied out into the Avenue de la Gare on shopping bent. Miss Fawcett was standing the expense of the carnival outfit, and the juniors were soon provided. Some of them selected pierrot costumes of a light silk or satin to be worn over their own clothes, and they tried them on in the shop with much satisfaction and loud laughter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put up his monocle and surveyed Blake in his costume with a somewhat disapproving shake of the head.

"Don't you like it?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, it's vewy pwetty."

"Then what are you wagging your empty numbskull for?"

"I wefuse to have my head alluded to as an empty numbskull. I was shakin' my head because I was thinkin' of——"

"Do you always shake your head when you're thinking?" asked Kerr. "You must shake it regularly once a week, then."

"Weally, Kerr——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was thinkin'," said D'Arcy, "that a piewwot costume is hardly sufficiently dignified for a chap like me. I weally think that I shall have to have somethin' a little more sedate. A fellow must considah his dig.""

"Oh, rats!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"You can have a long domino with a hood," said Tom Merry. "The women wear them, but lots of men wear them, too. The pierrot is good enough for me."

"Upon the whole, I think I will take your advice."

And Arthur Augustus selected a really handsome pink domino—a long silk cloak with a hood—and a black velvet mask.

Arrayed in them, he looked for all the world like a feminine merrymaker, except for the ends of his trousers showing under the domino.

"You must turn up your trousers," Blake remarked. "My hat! What an elegant figure, too! You can generally tell a man in a domino, but blessed if I shouldn't take Gussy for a girl."

(Continued on next page.)

"Weally, Blake——"

"Draw in the waist a little tighter—good! Now then, you chaps, if D'Arcy comes out with us this evening, no flirting will be allowed."

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake!"

"I am sure it looks very becoming," said Miss Priscilla, with her sweet smile. "I think D'Arcy looks very nice."

"Thank you vewy much," said D'Arcy, surveying himself in the glass. "I weally think I do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the costumes were carried off. Most of the juniors had chosen pink and black, the carnival colours for the year; but Figgins had a violet domino, and Fatty Wynn a purple one, for the sake of variety.

The juniors returned to the villa to lunch in high spirits.

In the afternoon came the Battle of Flowers, to which the juniors sallied forth in a body.

Major Figgins gave his arm to Miss Fawcett, to lead her to the seats engaged on the promenade to witness the mimic battle; but the juniors were not inclined to sit down. They preferred to mingle with the crowd.

The whole of the huge promenade was fitted up with seats in endless rows, which gradually filled with spectators, as well as the grand stand in the Place Massena, the centre of Nice.

Carriages filled with laughing merrymakers rolled up and down the roadway, and flowers flew thick and fast.

Tom Merry & Co. heartily enjoyed themselves. They found out the spot where the major was sitting by the side of Miss Priscilla, and gave them a shower of flowers, and Miss Priscilla raised up her fan to defend her kind old face, and laughed as merrily as a girl.

Bustling crowds filled the streets, and all Nice was given up to merriment. Tom Merry & Co. made the most of it, and the only one whose pleasure was at all clouded was Fatty Wynn. He was, however, satisfied at last, when the chums returned to the villa and partook of a hearty meal.

After tea the juniors dressed for the evening's merriment. There was to be great fun in Nice that evening, with all the carnival merrymakers in fancy costume keeping up the wild gaiety of the season. Tom Merry & Co. had heard enough of the fun of the carnival to be eager to join in it. They dressed in their dominoes in great glee, and donned their masks and sallied forth.

The juniors walked out into the Promenade des Anglais, already crowded by merrymakers in mask and domino, and strolled down towards the Place Massena. There the crowd was thicker, and the juniors were soon separated. They had arranged, in case of separation, to meet later at a teashop in the Place, for it was not likely that they would remain together in such a crowd. They were soon whirling in different directions among many dancing revellers, and throwing confetti in handfuls at the strangers they jostled against, and receiving showers of it in return.

CHAPTER 15.

Arthur Augustus is Kissed!

THE scene of the Place Massena and along the Promenade des Anglais was growing more and more animated as the evening drew on.

Coloured lights gleamed and glittered on all sides, lighting up the scene with a strange bizarre effect. Crowds of figures in gay dominoes jostled one another, and the air was full of showering confetti. Along the Place Massena and the Avenue de la Gare the procession wound itself—huge, grotesque figures in gay colours, and endless soldiers. Men danced along with huge cardboard heads on their shoulders, and figures a dozen feet high whirled grotesquely above a pair of legs of ordinary size. Loud shouts and laughter filled the air, and amid showering confetti strangers clasped one another and danced in rings, or whirled in the waltz to the strains of the marching band.

Arthur Augustus suddenly found himself clasped by a figure in a violet domino and whirled away in a waltz, and before he could resist he was dancing in the midst of a cheering circle.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, who thought that he remembered that violet domino and the long legs in trousers under it. "Bai Jove, Figgins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figgins, you ass! Leggo!"

But Figgins did not let go. He waltzed with Arthur Augustus till they were both breathless, and then they finished by careering wildly into the midst of the band.

There was a crash of instruments not intended by the composer of the carnival music, and a roar from the hatless musicians. A fiddler and a drummer rolled on the ground as D'Arcy crashed backwards on to the big drum and Figgins rolled over him, and yells and shrieks arose. A gendarme seized Figgins, and dragged him roughly away; but another gendarme helped D'Arcy up in the politest possible manner.

"Voila, ma'amselle," he said, as he set the swell of St. Jim's on his feet.

"Thank you vewy much!" exclaimed D'Arcy breathlessly.

The gendarme gave a jump.

"Mon Dieu! C'est un garcon!" he exclaimed. "It is a boy!"

"Bai Jove!"

The gendarme, with all his gentle manners gone, gave the swell of St. Jim's a push that sent him whirling into the crowd.

"Bai Jove! You wude ass!"

Arthur Augustus collided with a French lady and righted himself. He looked round wrathfuly for the offending gendarme. Fortunately, he could not find him, or there would have been a battle.

"Come on, Gussy," said Tom Merry in his ear.

"I'm lookin' for a wude wascal, Tom Mewwy."

"Oh, come on!"

"Wats! I have been wudely pushed!"

"It's all in a day's work!"

"Oh, vewy well; but I weally think I ought to have given that beastlay gendarme a feahful thwashin'," said D'Arcy regretfully.

Monty Lowther came up and collided with the swell of St. Jim's. D'Arcy reeled, and the Shell fellow threw his arms round him to hold him. In doing so, he pinned a card upon the rear of D'Arcy's hood, without the knowledge of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! You clumsay Fwench ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it is you, Lowthah? I did not know you masked. I wegard you as an ass!"

Lowther chuckled and disappeared. D'Arcy moved on, and noticed that many eyes were turned upon him as he passed. He was quite unaware of the card pinned upon the back of his hood, upon which the words, written in large letters in French, showed up plainly in the glare of the illuminations:

"Un baiser, s'il vous plait!" "A kiss, if you please!"

As D'Arcy was supposed by the spectators to be a girl, from his manners and costume, the invitation was a striking one. The merrymakers naturally supposed that a particularly daring lady, feeling secure in the guise of her mask, was carrying the freedom of the carnival to a great length. And as D'Arcy made a very graceful girl, his written invitation was not likely to pass unnoticed in the gay crowd.

"Un baiser!" exclaimed a Frenchman. "Certainment, mademoiselle, voila!"

And he threw his arms round D'Arcy's neck and tried to kiss him. D'Arcy staggered back.

"Ow! Gwoo! You howwid wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Un baiser! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mask after mask clutched D'Arcy in passing, and attempted to kiss him, much to the amazement and rage of the junior.

"Bai Jove!" he exclaimed. "Of all the wude beasts, I wegard these fellows as the wudest and beastliest, Tom Mewwy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you change costumes with me?"

"Not much! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Leggo!"

Another attempt at an embrace was made by a fat French gentleman.

D'Arcy shuddered all over.

"Leggo! Gewwoff! Oooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "You're asking for it, you know!"

"Ow! Gewwoff!"

"My only hat!" gurgled Monty Lowther. "This is too funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe all the people have gone cwanky all of a sudden!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "I wefuse to be attacked in this bwutal mannah!"

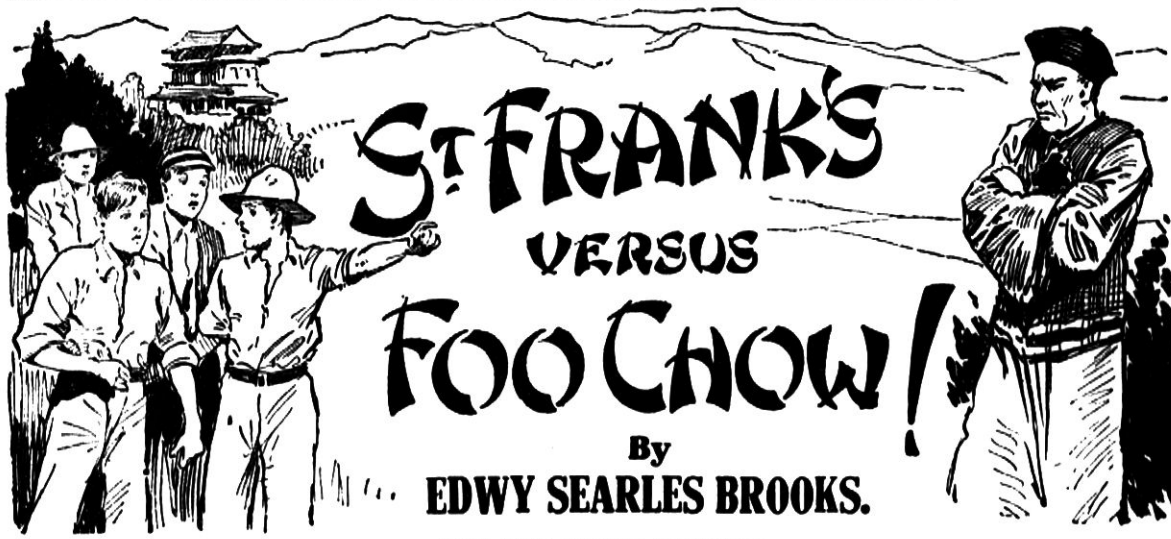
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jerked off his mask. His face being seen, proclaimed the fact that he did not belong to the gentle sex; and he was no longer kissed by any of the masculine gender. But the card was still on the hood, and its invitation was taken advantage of by some of the gentle sex. For, as the evening advanced and the excitement grew higher, the merrymakers, secure in their disguises, grew more and more reckless.

"Joli garcon," murmured a stout lady, bestowing a hearty kiss upon the junior, and Arthur Augustus gasped with dismay.

(*Continued on page* 28.)

ANOTHER POWERFUL INSTALMENT OF OUR POPULAR SERIAL.



St. FRANK'S VERSUS FOO CHOW!

By EDWY SEARLES BROOKS.

HOW THE STORY OPENED:

Yung Ching, of the St. Frank's Remove, has been kidnapped by Dr. Foo Chow, an all-powerful war lord of Inner China, who covets the province of Hu Kiang, ruled over by Yung Ching's father. A holiday party from St. Frank's set sail to rescue him, but they are captured by Foo Chow and imprisoned in his island stronghold. Nelson Lee and a few others, however, escape and succeed in rescuing Yung Ching. Handforth takes him to a friendly Chinaman he knows, while Nelson Lee & Co. go back to the stronghold. When Handforth returns from his mission he is made captive by Foo Chow's soldiers and taken to a prison in Yang Fu.

The Threat!

YANG FU was teeming with its native population as the car passed through the tortuous streets, and Edward Oswald Handforth gained quite a lot of interest from the curious, unfamiliar sights. But when the prison was reached, he was marched straight in and led down dark passages until he reached a smelly apartment where the only light came from a narrow grating. He was flung in, and the door was closed and bolted.

"By George!" said Handforth blankly.

This was prison indeed! There was not even a bench to sit upon—there was no comfort of any kind. The cell was primitive in the extreme, and the ventilation was bad. Every movement of Handforth's caused him pain, for those ankle chains were heavy, and the clamps bit into his flesh.

"My hat! I'd no idea they were going to start these tricks," he muttered, with an awakening sense of alarm. "Rats! It's only being done to scare me—they won't keep it up for long! Blow Foo Chow and all his gang!" he added defiantly. "They won't get any information out of me!"

He clanked up and down until the pain of it brought him to a standstill. And there he stood, leaning against the wall. Dimly he could hear the sounds of the city—the strange, Chinese voices, the rattle of a cumbersome native wheelbarrow now and again, the marching of soldiers. And it seemed to Handforth that hours must be passing.

As a matter of fact, the door was flung open within forty-five minutes, and Foo Chow himself appeared. The Chinaman was now attired in native, flowing robes, and looked more impressive.

"Well?" he said gently. "You are less obstinate now?"

"I'm still keeping my tongue quiet, if that's what you mean," retorted Handforth. "It's no good, Dr. Foo Chow. I've put Chingy where you'll never find him, even if you send your armies out in every direction. And I'm going to keep the secret, too."

"You foolish boy!" said Foo Chow. "You do not realise what agonies you are inviting! I will give you this one chance—but, remember, it is the only chance. Speak now—or you will be forced to speak."

"Forced!" snorted Handforth. "Huh! Try it on!"

"You still refuse?"

"Yes, and I'll keep on refusing from now until doomsday!" roared Edward Oswald stubbornly. "I'm not afraid of your beastly threats! You're going to torture me, eh? All right—go ahead! If I speak, you'll only torture poor old Chingy, so it might as well be me. I'm stronger than he is, anyhow."

"That is your final decision?"

"You can go ahead with your dirty work, and be hanged to you!" replied Handforth defiantly. "Do you want to know how much I care about you, old yellow face? Just that much!"

Snap!

Handforth deliberately snapped his fingers in front of Dr. Foo Chow's nose, raising both manacled hands in order to perform the gesture. The Chinaman did not change in his expression in the slightest degree, but his eyes seemed to burn with a peculiar intensity.

"Very well," he purred, his voice silkier than ever, "I shall remember that, my young friend."

He turned on his heel and left the cell. Handforth grinned to himself, and felt that he had fittingly upheld the best traditions of the St. Frank's Remove. It wasn't likely that he, the leader of Study D, was going to be scared by a beastly Chinaman!

Less than a minute later the door was again opened, and this time Handforth was grasped by two great warders. They were not ordinary soldiers, but villainous-looking brutes, attired in dirty cotton garments which made some pretence of being uniforms.

"All right—don't push!" said Handforth indignantly.

But he was pushed, and very violently, too. Down the dark passage, stumbling over the uneven stone flooring, he was forced to the end, where the smells became even more pronounced. At last a great door was unbarred, and he was thrust through.

He found himself in pitchy darkness, and the door was closed and barred again. He stood there, breathing hard. Vaguely, he had an idea that his captors were about to practise some form of torture upon him.

After a while he found that the darkness was not so intense as it had seemed. A few glimmers of light were coming through a grating near the roof.

And now he was able to see round him. He wasn't alone, as he had thought. This dungeon-like place was peopled by others. Four—no, five—indeed, six. The luckless creatures were leaning against the walls or lying on the floor, and all were chained as Handforth was chained.

"Great Scott!" muttered Handforth, aghast.

The condition of the nearest prisoner appalled him. The man was half naked, too, wearing only a few tattered remnants of black, greasy clothing. He was a cripple, having only one arm. With a shock, Handforth realised that he was looking at a man who had been subjected to torture.

In fact, he felt—he instinctively knew—that he had been placed in a special chamber—one that was reserved for torture subjects! He had never believed that such a noisome dungeon as this could exist, even in China.

"Oh, my goodness!" he muttered huskily.

A clanking of chains sounded, and two of his companions came clawing at him, speaking in Chinese, and staring at him with hollow, wild eyes. One had only a single leg, and the other was without any ears. They looked like monstrous creatures from a nightmare. And they clawed at Handforth's white flannels, their voices grating upon his ears terribly.

"Chuck it!" he muttered. "Oh, my hat! What the

dickens can I do? The poor beggars can't help it—they're mad, I believe! Driven off their rockers by torture! And I—I'm in here, waiting for my turn——"

His thoughts shied at the prospect. He couldn't bear to think what the immediate future might bring. He stood there, his whole senses dulled by the abrupt realisation of his true position.

And, in the meantime, Dr. Foo Chow was returning to his palace. These journeys between Yang Fu and the island stronghold were nothing to the Chinese millionaire, for he had modern methods of transport.

All over the countryside, great parties of soldiers were searching—scouring the district for Yung Ching. And Dr. Foo Chow, sitting in his car, allowed his eyes to smoulder with anxiety and hatred. These Britishers had won a trick, and it was foolish to deny the fact. But Foo Chow did not mean to let the affair stand. He was the master, and he would prevail!

When the gongs boomed out for luncheon in the palace, Dr. Foo Chow sat at the head of the centre table, as usual. Not for a moment did he depart from his pretence of being host. But there was a strained feeling in the air.

"Doubtless you are all wondering what has happened to your young companion," he said, before any questions could be asked. "He is quite safe, and unharmed—and will remain safe if he proves sensible."

"What does that mean, Dr. Foo Chow?" asked Lord Dorrimore.

"It means that I am not to be flouted by a mere boy," replied the Chinaman. "This young gentleman—this Handforth—is aware of Yung Ching's hiding-place. So far, he has refused to divulge the secret——"

"Good old Ted!" sang out Willy.

"Hear, hear!"

"Handy won't give the game away!"

"St. Frank's for ever!"

A perfect chorus of defiant shouts came from the juniors.

"I like to see this display of confidence," smiled Dr. Foo Chow gently. "However, I am afraid it is misplaced. My young prisoner will loosen his tongue before another three hours have passed. My methods are always successful," he added silkily. "I am a man who always wins!"

"Does that imply torture?" asked Nelson Lee.

"Yung Ching is lost, but I have another boy in his place, so why should I concern myself?" asked Dr. Foo Chow blandly. "But let us not disturb our meal, ladies and gentlemen. Your young friend will be restored to you before the hour of tea, and I do not think he will be harmed. My methods are very effective, and actual torture will not be necessary."

It was only with difficulty that Lord Dorrimore kept himself down. But he realised the futility of making a scene, and he held himself in check. Later, he unburdened himself to Nelson Lee and Barry Stokes.

"I shan't be able to stand much of this!" he said thickly. "Good glory! That velvet-faced demon makes me want to strangle him!"

"I seem to have some recollection that you promised to be good for a week," said Lee dryly. "You told me that last night's affair would satisfy you for several days——"

"Yes, I know that, but I'm beginnin' to get super-charged again," interrupted Dorrie. "It's Foo Chow, I think. If he'd only keep out of our way, I might simmer down. But the very look of him sends my temperature to boilin' point, an' one of these times I shall start blowin' off steam from every pore!"

"I feel the same way, Mr. Lee!" muttered Barry Stokes grimly. "What in the name of all that's fiendish is he going to do with Handforth? The poor youngster is going to be tortured, or I'm a Chinaman myself!"

"Hadn't we better reveal Yung Ching's hiding-place?" asked Dorrie.

"Not yet," replied Lee, shaking his head. "Foo Chow will merely threaten, to begin with, in my opinion. And if Handforth still remains obdurate he will tell us, and then we can make terms. But, after all our trouble in rescuing Ching, we don't want to give him up. Remember what we're surrendering to!"

"It's an infernally bad position altogether," said Stokes, frowning.

And they were all forced to agree there seemed to be no possibility of an immediate improvement.

Handy Says "No!"

EDWARD OSWALD HANDFORTH slept.

Nature, after all, would not be denied, and although his spirit was as strong as ever, bodily weariness overtook him. In that noisome dungeon, with half-crazed human relics as companions, he had felt that he was lost indeed. His stout heart was shaken, but his stubborn will was unmoved.

Those nightmare companions of his had bothered him for a while, but had soon crawled away into their own corners. And Handforth had felt a great tiredness coming over him. But sleep, of course, was out of the question. Under no circumstances would he allow himself to doze. In fact, the very idea of sleep was ridiculous.

Yet he had sunk down into a squatting position, and was now slumbering heavily, snoring with all his usual power. The discomforts of his prison, the horrors of his thoughts, the pain of his manacles, were not sufficient to keep him awake.

He had been on the go continuously for over twenty-four hours. A long struggle in the river, a brief nap in the sun while his clothing dried, and then a night of nervous excitement. And miles and miles of trudging, too. It was small wonder that he slept in the midst of these present discomforts.

But his spell of merciful unconsciousness was not to last for long.

Scarcely an hour had elpsed before the door was unbarred and flung open. Handforth still slumbered, but his maimed and hideous companions scrambled forward, all talking at once, all pleading. Perhaps it was food they wanted, perhaps water—but they were cruelly cast aside by the two brutal warders.

These gentry seized Handforth, and shook him.

"Shurrup!" muttered Edward Oswald irritably. "Do that again, Church, my son, and I'll biff you!"

He was shaken with greater violence.

"Oh, hallo!" said Handforth, opening his eyes. "Ringbell, eh? By George! What? I—I mean—— Oh, corks! It's you, is it?"

Realisation came to him as he saw the hulking forms of his guards and the stagnant dungeon.

"What's up?" he asked, glaring. "Leggo my arm, blow you! Take your filthy paws off me! I'm not moving for you, or anybody else! Can't you let a fellow have a nap without bothering him——"

He broke off and struggled violently. But it was useless. He was dragged out of the dungeon, his captors showing no mercy. And Edward Oswald was realising that his muscles were aching severely, the effect of so much walking and exposure during the night. Moreover, those cruel manacles were agony itself.

"You wait!" he panted fiercely. "By George, just you wait!"

Along the dim corridors again he was taken, and then down some uneven steps. This was to be a dungeon in the real sense of the word!

The air did not reek so much down here, and there was a chill feeling in it. Handforth found himself in a great cellar, with a low roof and uneven stone walls. Light was provided by means of two primitive lamps which flickered eerily. Shadows were cast into every corner.

No word was spoken. Handforth was taken to a thick wooden chair, and forced down upon it. Straps were placed round him, so that he could make no movement. And the chair itself was fixed to the floor by means of iron brackets. These very preparations were sinister. They were enough to send a chill into the stoutest heart.

The two warders vanished, and Handforth found himself utterly alone. He looked round wonderingly, now very wide awake. Over in one corner there was a kind of forge, with a black opening, which was evidently a chimney. A fire was smouldering there, almost dead, and there were irons on a stone block near by. In other parts of the cellar there were curious, primitive contrivances of woodwork and iron.

"By George!" breathed Handforth. "The torture chamber!"

A sort of cold horror came over him as he realised the truth of his guess. And his present solitude had its own significance, too. He was being left alone so that he could see the nature of his prison—so that his spirit would be broken, even before the torture was threatened.

It was a true example of Chinese devilry.

"I'll bet the Spanish Inquisition isn't in it with this," Handforth told himself. "My only hat! I seem to be in for a pretty lively time of it! But I'm not going to give Chingy away—not if they slice me up by inches! The Handforths don't knuckle under to anybody, let alone to dirty Chinks!"

The bulldog defiance welled up within him—that defiance for which he was famous. He actually grinned, although it was a twisted sort of affair. He'd show 'em! What did he care for their rotten torture?

He suddenly started. There was another presence in the room, although the door had not been opened. There was a shadow in the far corner, just beyond the range of Handforth's turned head. He tried to twist round, but could not do so.

"Who's that?" he asked fiercely.

There was something horrifying in the thought of somebody creeping up behind him. Bound and helpless, he felt

utterly at the mercy of this unknown presence. But it moved out, so that he could see it distinctly.

"My goodness!" muttered Handforth.

The man was an elderly Chinese, bare to the waist, and with a skin that was like old parchment. His face was wrinkled and wizened, with hollow eyes. He had a single projecting tooth, which added to the general effect of the nightmare. This, without question, was the chief torturer! In his thick-soled native shoes, he padded over to the furnace and set some bellows working.

Then Dr. Foo Chow appeared, entering the cellar by means of the ordinary door.

"You—you rotter!" panted Handforth hotly.

"Well, my young friend, are you in a more pliant mood?" asked Dr. Foo Chow gently. "I do not wish to cause you any unnecessary pain, but you must remember that I am the master here. I demand certain information, and before I have done I shall receive it."

"You're an optimist, aren't you?" said Handforth contemptuously. "But, by George, this tells me something! You haven't found Chingy—eh? Good egg! You won't get any information out of me, you yellow serpent!"

Dr. Foo Chow was as immobile as ever.

glowing with burning heat, was gradually brought nearer and nearer to Handforth's left eye.

"Now!" whispered Dr. Foo Chow. "Just one word!"

"No!" panted Handforth.

"You still have a few moments——"

"*No!*"

"Blindness is a sad affliction!" said the Chinaman softly. "Remember the years you have to live——"

"*No!*" shouted Handforth, with defiance. "Haven't I told you that I won't speak? You—you yellow hound! Do your rotten worst!"

It was impossible for him to withdraw his head, for the chair-back was high, and there was no escape. The iron, now glowing red, came nearer and nearer, until the heat from it was blistering in its intensity. Handforth closed his eyes tightly, and, with set teeth, he waited.

In a peculiarly detached sort of way, he wondered what the first searing pain would be like. He wondered if he would yell. He hoped not, for he did not want to give Dr. Foo Chow the slightest satisfaction. A kind of perspiration was breaking out over him, but the thought of saying that one word "Yes" never even occurred to him. The mere possibility of giving in did not enter his head.

"I am about to give the order!" said Foo Chow, as the torturer withdrew the white-hot iron from the fire and held it near to Handforth's face. "Tell me what you have done with Yung Ching!" "Never!" exclaimed Handy. "Get on with the torture, you fiend!"

"Still arrogant—eh?" he murmured. "You are certainly an unusual boy! I know how you British love to exploit your famous doggedness—but this time the Chinaman will win! You will speak, my friend."

Handforth snorted.

"Do you think your torture will make me speak?" he retorted. "I can stand pain as well as anybody, and you're not going to get me to give Chingy away. You can kill me first!"

"Killing would not suit my purpose at all," replied Foo Chow. "No, my boy, I shall use more subtle methods than that."

"Well, there's one thing—I can only stand a certain amount of torture, and then I'll become unconscious," said Handforth bluntly. "That'll do you a fat lot of good, won't it? Rats to your giddy inquisition!"

Foo Chow made a sign to the torturer. A white-hot iron was withdrawn from the fire, and the half-naked Chinaman came silently over, and Dr. Foo Chow stood well back.

"I am about to give the order," he said softly. "If you wish to speak, say the one word 'Yes.' The operations shall then cease."

Handforth was gazing at the white-hot iron fascinatedly.

"I won't say a word!" he muttered. "At least, I won't tell you about Chingy! Go on! Let him torture me! Can't you get it over, you fiend?"

Foo Chow spoke two words in Chinese. The man with the wizened face came nearer, and the white-hot iron, still

Minutes seemed to pass, and the heat from the iron grew less. Still the agonising touch did not come. He opened his eyes suddenly, and saw that the wizened man was back at the furnace. And Dr. Foo Chow was close by him.

"You—you rotter!" gasped Handforth. "Why can't you get on with it?"

"I will give you another chance!" said the Chinese millionaire. "It is my usual custom to delay the actual mutilation until the last moment. But that last moment is nearly at hand," he added silkily. "I mean to get what I aim for! Never forget that!"

He clapped his hands, and the two warders appeared. Handforth was quickly unstrapped, and his jacket and shirt were stripped off. And now, bare to the waist, he was carried over to a rudely constructed block. His manacles had been removed now, and he was spreadeagled upon the block, face upwards, and ropes were tied from his hands and feet beneath the block. He lay there, utterly helpless.

"Good!" he said with greater defiance than ever. "I've often wanted to know how you Chinamen tortured your victims, and now I'm having some first-hand exhibitions." He laughed. "By George, I shall be able to shove this in one of my Trackett Grim stories later on! There's nothing like realism!"

Dr. Foo Chow stood there, slowly stroking his chin.

"An amazing boy!" he murmured. "Yes, truly an amazing boy!"

The Wooden Cage!

THE most peculiar feature of the whole affair was that Handforth still had that feeling of detachment. He couldn't help imagining that he was a mere onlooker. And again he felt that this was a giant hoax, and that there was no actual danger. He was inwardly gloating, too. Foo Chow would never adopt these methods if Yung Ching's hiding-place had been discovered. It was a direct proof that the little Chinee was still safe.

So far, Handforth told himself, he hadn't been tortured at all, and he was quite prepared to stand anything these human devils could devise. He didn't appreciate the fact that he was being cruelly tortured all the time. The mental strain alone was a refined calculating torture.

A fellow of ordinary pluck and temperament might have knuckled under before this. And who could have blamed him? But Edward Oswald Handforth was a tartar indeed! Dr. Foo Chow was inwardly amazed at his victim's sustained defiance. There was something about this British schoolboy which baffled him.

"Perhaps the red-hot iron is rather crude," he said gently. "Let us try something more refined."

"You can try any old thing you like," retorted Handforth carelessly. "But if you think I'm going to knuckle under, you've made the biggest mistake of your crooked career! Bring out your thumb-screws and racks, and do your worst! Who cares for a yellow-faced baboon like you? My hat! You make me laugh!"

"Yes, you are certainly an amazing boy," said Dr. Foo Chow, unmoved.

He made a sign, and the wizened man came into Handforth's vision. He was carrying a long, curved knife, and the blade glittered in the flickering light from the smelly lamps.

"Such a pity!" murmured Foo Chow. "You have a splendid chest, young man. A slow removal of a few inches of skin will, I am afraid, leave a nasty scar. And the pain itself will be severe. Always remember, however, that one word will bring the operation to a stop."

"Go ahead!" said Handforth cheerfully. "I'm ready!"

He was quite surprised at himself. If he had pictured himself in this position he would have felt horrified. He would have concluded that his fear would have shattered his nerves, and compelled him to give in. But now that the actual thing was happening, he felt as cool as ice. Torture? Why, there was nothing in it! It was simply a matter of keeping your nerve!

He watched the blade as it came nearer to his skin.

"You will say the word?" asked Dr. Foo Chow.

"You can go and boil yourself!" replied Handforth deliberately.

Suddenly Foo Chow snapped his finger. The knife was withdrawn.

"Wonderful!" said the Chinaman. "I can see that these methods are quite useless. Your obstinacy will never be overcome in this manner. You will sink into unconsciousness before you speak."

"You can speak the truth, then?" asked Handforth sneeringly.

"You need a slower form of inducement," continued Dr. Foo Chow. "You are one of those people who require something prolonged. Twenty-four hours of the cage will no doubt bring you into the necessary frame of mind. Yes, my young friend, the cage is the better method."

"Good!" said Handforth. "Lead me to the zoo!"

He was still keyed up to that high pitch of defiance, and he took a sheer joy in answering Dr. Foo Chow in this characteristic manner. By George, what a yarn to tell the chaps when he got free! Handforth never admitted for a single second that he might be held captive for good.

Again he was released, and he was allowed to put his shirt and jacket on. The manacles were not replaced on his wrists and ankles, however. In charge of those two great warders, he was removed from the cellar.

Dr. Foo Chow had changed his plan deliberately. He knew that he was dealing with a youngster of extraordinary obstinacy and courage. Dr. Foo Chow had never met anybody with Handforth's nature.

The prisoner was taken out into the open air, where the afternoon sun beat down with relentless heat. In the rear of the prison there was a kind of enclosed yard, where refuse was piled promiscuously.

Without pausing, Handforth was taken through the yard, where the flies swarmed in myriads, and out by way of a narrow door. He was marched through the streets, and now a number of soldiers were in charge, pushing the harmless but inquisitive inhabitants out of the way without ceremony.

At last they reached a square—about the widest space in the whole city. It was thronged with people, most of them attending to their normal daily work. It was a kind of market, by what Handforth could judge, but everybody seemed to leave their business on purpose to stare at him, and follow the soldiers, in order to find out what the excitement meant.

Edward Oswald's grim courage was still with him. He was sustained by that dogged obstinacy of his, and he vaguely wondered what kind of torture they were preparing for him now. The chances were that it would be something even more devilish than his previous experiences.

At last, almost in the centre of the square, a halt was called. Here there were more soldiers, and they were keeping guard over a primitive-looking wooden cage, which more closely resembled an oblong crate. It was standing on its end, and was rather broader at the bottom than at the top. It was just about the height of an ordinary tall man.

Handforth looked round, half expecting Dr. Foo Chow to appear. But the great war lord did not care to come among his people in this way, for it would probably mean a certain loss of "face." He was a great man, and was obliged to hold himself exclusive.

"So they're going to shove me on exhibition—eh?" said Handforth defiantly. "Well, they'll never make me give in, that's one thing."

One side of the "cage" was opened, and he was forced within. The top was of solid planking, with a hole in the centre. One plank hinged back, and Handforth's neck was thrust in. He now found himself hanging by the neck, for his head could not get through the small hole, and his feet were over a foot from the bottom of the cage.

So this, then, was the end! They were going to strangle him in cold blood, in view of the whole population.

Then he felt something under his feet. He was raised, and the pressure on his neck was relieved. He gripped at the wooden bars of the cage angrily.

"You rotters!" he panted. "Why don't you get it over, and finish with it?"

The officer in charge of the operations looked up at Handforth's protruding head after the door of the cage had been closed.

"So you stay!" he said, in indifferent English. "Under your feet, flat stones. Savvy? To-mollow, one go. Neck stletchee. Next day, two go. Neck more stletchee. Next day, thlee go——"

"If you think my neck's made of indiarubber, you're wrong!" interrupted Handforth coldly. "There's a limit to this 'stletchee' business. But I can see the wheeze, you rotters! My hat! Who thinks of all these tortures? Anyhow, I'm safe for the time being!"

"You say him word, as Excellency want, and allee same good," declared the officer. "I come evely one-two-thlee hour. You speakee word, and quick fleedom and go backee palace. Savvy?"

"When I get out of this," said Handforth, "I'm going to smash that ugly face of yours into a mash!"

The officer failed to understand. At least, he looked puzzled for a moment, and then moved off with his men. Handforth was now left entirely alone. The soldiers, at any rate, left him, but the ordinary population came crowding round, pointing to him, gesticulating, and chattering volubly. Nobody, however, made the slightest attempt to actually approach the cage.

Handforth did not know that this form of barbarous torture was employed as a means of capital punishment. And Yang Fu was by no means the only Chinese city in which such methods were indulged in.

This wooden cage is to be found in many parts of China. The condemned victim is placed on the thin, flat stones, and each day one stone is taken away. And so the added pressure on the ill-fated prisoner's throat ultimately results in strangulation. It is a slow, agonising business, made trebly worse by the mental torture which accompanies it. For the victim knows that the next day the grip on his throat will be tighter.

With the departure of the soldiers, Handforth's defiance also deserted him. He suddenly felt a swift, nauseating reaction. His weakness was startling, and he felt sick and faint. Every limb trembled, and his weariness was a real pain.

He was suffering no physical harm, however—at least, not at the moment. But after a while the discomfort became acute in the extreme. There was absolutely no rest. To lean against anything was impossible, and to relax himself was dangerous, since his neck at once became caught in that wooden hole.

This was genuine torture, without any question. To get any ease was hopeless, to change his position was risky, and he was tired and weary after his recent adventures. And his thirst was increasing as the beating sun blazed down upon his bare head.

But Edward Oswald Handforth's pluck was unimpaired,

Foo Chow Asks for It!

LORD DORRIMORE and Mr. Beverley Stokes were talking together on the terrace of Dr. Foo Chow's palace.

"Looks a bit like thunder," said Mr. Beverley Stokes, as he glanced at a bank of clouds in the distance. "Phew! This heat is stifling! A good storm would clear the air a bit."

Lord Dorrimore threw his cigarette-end away with a growl.

"The weather doesn't interest me, old man," he said. "I can't help thinkin' about that poor young beggar, Handforth. What are they doin' to him?"

"We're all asking ourselves the same question, Dorrie," said Nelson Lee quietly. "But there is nothing that we can do. I don't mind admitting that I have never felt so utterly powerless."

"Can't we make another dash?" asked his lordship.

"Impossible——"

"If we can grab one of these motor-cars, it might be done," urged Dorrie.

"I tell you it's impossible," repeated Lee. "Since our escapade of last night there has been a much greater vigilance. Every car is guarded by soldiers. The drawbridge is only lowered when there is traffic to come upon the island, or leave it. Foo Chow does not mean us to cause him any more trouble. Why, do you realise that this place is surrounded by thousands of armed men? I am not exaggerating. There are literally thousands!"

Dorrie grunted again.

"By gad, I suppose you're right!" he muttered. "It wouldn't be half so bad if we only knew what they're doin' to the poor kid. It's not much good askin' Foo Chow, because he'd only tell us a lot of lies."

A group of St. Frank's juniors were talking in very much the same strain, farther along the terrace, as they lounged in the shade of a great palm. Irene & Co. were there, too, and every face was concerned.

"This sort of thing can't last much longer," Dick Hamilton was saying. "There's got to be a break, and I expect we shall be the ones to make it. I don't think we could live in these conditions for another twenty-four hours."

"Why not go for old Foo Chow, as soon as he appears, and give him the hiding of his life?" suggested Buster Boots of the Fourth.

"He'd make it too hot for us afterwards," growled Jack Grey.

"Who cares?" said Boots. "Anything for a bit of a change!"

"Couldn't we torture him until he told us where Handforth is?" asked De Valerie. "Give him some of his own medicine! It's about the only thing he'll understand."

Church shook his head.

"It's no good treating it as a sort of jape," he added bitterly. "Foo Chow's got the upper hand, and he's probably torturing Handy in earnest. We couldn't do anything like that. We're not Chinese."

"He's right, you chaps," said Dick Hamilton, nodding. "Our torture would be just an ordinary ragging, and Foo Chow would only make things worse for us afterwards. No, we've got to admit that we're absolutely helpless."

"And poor old Ted remains a prisoner?" asked Irene in distress.

"Sorry, old girl, but I don't see that we can do anything," said Dick. "If there was the remotest chance——"

"There's Foo Chow, now!" interrupted Reggie Pitt.

The Chinese millionaire's car had just come gliding up to the terrace. Dr. Foo Chow alighted, and caught sight of Nelson Lee and Dorrie talking with Mr. and Mrs. Stokes. Umlosi hovered in the background, always keeping his beloved "N'Kose" in sight.

"You will be interested, perhaps, to hear of your young friend's behaviour under torture," said Dr. Foo Chow smoothly. "I can assure you that the boy is the most wonderful subject we have ever dealt with."

"You cur!" exclaimed Dorrie thickly. "Perhaps you've never tried torturin' a British boy before?"

"I must admit that the experience is a novel one," replied Foo Chow. "The boy Handforth not only refused to speak when threatened with hot irons, but even cold steel had no effect."

"What butchery have you been committing?" asked Lee huskily.

"Have no fear! The boy is not harmed," replied the Chinaman. "I concluded that the usual methods would be futile. His obstinacy is such that it needs prolonged treatment. So he is placed in a cage, with his neck encircled by wooden planks——"

"Have you condemned that poor boy to the cangue?" asked Lee in horror

"No, not exactly that," said Dr. Foo Chow. "The cangue is a wooden collar, as you probably know, encased in which the victim can neither lie down nor feed himself. This cage is different. Your young friend stands upon flat stones, and for the moment he is safe. One of those stones will be removed in the morning, and unless he chooses to speak, he will spend a somewhat uncomfortable day!"

"You hound!" shouted Dorrie furiously.

"Tut-tut! There is no need for this excitement," said the Chinaman. "The boy is quite safe, and he has only himself to thank for his position. On the day after to-morrow a second stone will be taken away. But a third, I fancy, will be scarcely necessary. For he will either earn his release by loosening his tongue, or will be in no further need of attention. You see, I am perfectly frank on this matter. The boy's obstinacy has amused me."

"Amused you!" said Nelson Lee, flushing red with anger that even exceeded Dorrie's. "By Heaven, Foo Chow, there are some things I can stand, but I cannot stand this!"

Crash!

Nelson Lee's fist struck the Chinaman on the point of the chin, and he fell headlong, a sprawling, grotesque figure.

(That's something for Foo Chow to be getting on with—but worse is to follow! Don't miss next week's thrilling chapters.)

TOM MERRY & CO. GO GAY!

(*Continued from page 22.*)

"Bai Jove! I wondah if this is a Fwench custom!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lady after lady complied with the written request of the pinned card; and the swell of St. Jim's, almost distracted, dodged out of the crowd and sought refuge within the entrance doors of the casino.

The casino was open, and there was a crowd of masks and dominoes in the place, and men and women masked were standing round the gambling tables, playing.

D'Arcy wandered down the casino, and sat down at one of the tables and ordered coffee. The waiter who brought it smiled broadly at the inscription on the back of the hood. Arthur Augustus noticed it, and wondered why he smiled. People passing up and down looked at him and grinned; and the persons at the tables round him chuckled and exchanged whispers. The swell of St. Jim's was puzzled and uneasy. He crossed over to a looking-glass on the wall, to see if he could discover in his reflection the cause of the general merriment. He gave a gasp as he caught sight of the placard pinned to his hood. He snatched it off and read:

"Un baiser, s'il vous plait!"

"Gweat Scott!"

The swell of St. Jim's tore the card up. He drank his coffee wrathfully, and quitted the casino in search of the chums of St. Jim's, with the fixed intention of administering a fearful thrashing to Figgins, whom he suspected of having played that little jape on him.

But he didn't find him until he returned to the villa. The sound of cheery voices in the dining-room, of which the window opened on the veranda, warned him that his chums had returned. He entered at the french windows. The juniors, still in their costumes, but with the masks removed, were enjoying a big supper. Figgins looked round as D'Arcy came in.

"Hallo! Here's Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah, you ass!"

"Why, what—— Ow!"

Figgins yelled as Arthur Augustus seized him by the shoulders, and he went backwards over his chair upon the floor. As he had a glass of lemonade in his hand at the time, the result was disastrous. The liquid shot into his face, and he sputtered and gasped. Arthur Augustus proceeded to bump his head on the floor.

"There, you ass! There, you duffer!"

"Help!" gasped Figgins. "Help! He's mad! Rescue, New House——"

Fatty Wynn and Kerr rushed to the rescue. Arthur Augustus was dragged off, and Figgins staggered to his feet.

"You dangerous ass!" he roared. "What do you mean?"

"That is a slight chastisement for the twick you played me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"It was I pinned the card on you!" yelled Lowther. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I apologise most sincerely, Figgins I——"

"You shrieking ass!"

"Weally, deah boy, as I have expwessed my wegwet, you——"

"You dangerous lunatic!"

"I wefuse to be called a dangewous lunatic. As you played that twick, Lowthah, I shall now pwoceed to give you a feahful thwashin'. I——"

With one accord the juniors threw themselves upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and bore him to the floor. There they sat on him.

"Now, make it pax all round," said Tom Merry. "Do you hear?"

"Ow! I wefuse!"

"Bring the blancmange here, and swamp him with it."

"Ow! I—I wefuse——"

"Will you make it pax, then?"

"Ya-a-as, wathah!"

And D'Arcy was allowed to rise. Tom Merry shook a finger at him warningly.

"Now, then, wire into your supper, and be quiet!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Dry up!"

D'Arcy sniffed indignantly, and sat down to supper. But he was never in an ill-humour long. He was soon smiling again.

"Bai Jove! It has been a wippin' time!" he remarked. "I'm jolly glad we came here for the carnival, Tom Mewwy!"

"Yes, rather! It's been great fun—and there's more to come," said Tom Merry. "And we're going over to Monte Carlo next week!"

"Jollay good!"

And the juniors of St. Jim's, as they went to bed, tired out, but perfectly cheerful and contented, agreed with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that it was indeed "jollay good!"

THE END.

(And so is next Wednesday's yarn of the chums of St. Jim's "jollay good"! Look out for "The Black Domino!"—starring the further humorous and exciting adventures of Tom Merry & Co. in the South of France.)

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