

"TOM MERRY & CO. ABROAD!"

VOL. 4.

The GEM 1^a

NO. 91.

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LIBRARY*Complete Stories for Everyone and Every Story a Gem!***TOM MERRY & CO.**
ABROADA Tale
of the Chums of St. Jim's.

By...

MARTIN CLIFFORD.**CHAPTER 1.****Off at Last.**

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, sat in the carriage polishing his eyeglass with a thoughtful air. The train was rushing Londonwards at top speed, through the keen October morning. It was a first-class carriage, and was supposed to seat six persons, but there were ten juniors of St. Jim's in it, and it was rather a puzzle to find room for so many. But they all wore an air of satisfaction, for they were on their way to Paris at last, and there was no likelihood of another telegram and another ignominious retreat to St. Jim's again.

D'Arcy seemed to be thinking something out. He polished his eyeglass mechanically. The thoughtful frown deepened upon his aristocratic brow, and for a time he did not seem to notice how he was being squeezed on one side by Jack Blake, and on the other by Tom Merry, of the Shell.

Blake was winking at Tom Merry, and perhaps they were doing a little more shoving than even the crowded state of the carriage necessitated.

Arthur Augustus woke at last to the fact that there was an elbow digging in his ribs on the port side, so to speak, and a shoulder jamming against him to starboard.

He ceased to polish the monocle, jammed it into his eye, and stared alternately at Blake, of the Fourth, and Merry of the Shell.

"Weally, deah boys!" he remarked, in a tone of mild remonstrance.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Weren't you asleep?"

"Certainly not, Tom Mewwy!"

"Thinking out a contribution for 'Tom Merry's Weekly'?" asked Blake.

"Nothin' of the sort!"

"Oh, I know what's the matter with Gussy!" said Monty Lowther, whose long limbs were stretched along the luggage-rack above, Lowther finding that more comfortable than a squeeze on the crowded seat. "He's thinking of the charming young lady at the draper's in Rylcombe. He forgot to say good-bye to her!"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upward.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard that wemark as impertinent to myself, and diswespctful to the charmin' young lady in question!"

"Go hon!"

D'Arcy rose excitedly to his feet.

"And if you do not immediately withdwaw it, Lowthah, I shall have no wesource but to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, hold him, somebody!" said Lowther lazily.

"I wefuse to be held! I wegard you as a wotiah! If you do not immediately apologise, I shall thwash you! You can take your choice!"

"Rats!"

"Come down off that wack, Lowthah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you goin' to get off that wack?"

"Oh, calm down, Gussy!" said Blake. "How can you thrash Lowther here? You must see that there isn't room! You had better leave it till we get to Charing Cross!"

"I wefuse to leave it till we get to Chawin' Cwoss!"

"Then suppose Lowther considers himself thrashed?" suggested Digby.

"I wegard you as an ass, Dig."

"What I've always said is, that Blake ought not to take him out without a chain on!" said Monty Lowther, addressing space. "He's as troublesome as his minor's dog Pongo.

A railway-carriage is a place within the meaning of the act, and I contend that Gussy ought to be muzzled!"

"You utter ass!"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy!" said Manners. "You can't make a row here, you know. There are ten of us in the room of six, and if anybody treads on my feet there will be ructions!"

"If Lowthah withdwaws his wemarks——"

Monty Lowther jammed a penny into his eye in ludicrous imitation of an eyeglass, and blinked down at the juniors in the carriage.

"What I have said, I have said."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then pway descend here and take your thwashin', Lowthah!"

"Ask me another day!" sang Lowther.

"If you do not immediately descend I shall dwag you down!"

"Dwag away!"

"Pway keep back out of the way, you chaps! I am goin' to dwag Lowthah off the wack!"

"Look here——"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort! This is a question of dig, with me now, and I am goin' to give Lowthah a feahful thwashin'."

And Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs with a determined air.

The grinning juniors crowded back. Tom Merry & Co. were en route for London, to take the express to Dover, for the Calais boat. They were going to Paris for a holiday, and they were in the highest of high spirits. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's was the only serious face in the crowded carriage.

Lowther took a firmer hold upon the luggage-rack, and prepared to resist boarders. He had the rack to himself, excepting that there was a strapped bag belonging to Blake at the end where his feet were.

D'Arcy pushed his cuffs back, and took a grip upon Lowther's shoulder.

"Now, then, you wottah!"

"Go ahead!"

D'Arcy gave a wrench. Lowther did not stir. D'Arcy might as well have tried to pull the rack itself away.

Arthur Augustus pulled, and yanked, and dragged, but he made no impression upon Monty Lowther, who held on firmly, and did not budge.

The swell of St. Jim's desisted at last, gasping for breath.

"Lowthah, I weward you as a beast!"

"Drag him down!" said Tom Merry. "Strew the Lowther hungry railway-carriage with his bones, Gussy!"

"Pway don't wot, deah boy!"

"Well, we're waiting for the circus, you know."

Arthur Augustus released Lowther's shoulder, and changed his grip to one of the Shell fellow's ankles.

This gave him a better chance. With a tremendous jerk he tore Lowther's foot off the rack and dragged his leg downwards.

"Oh!" gasped Lowther.

He sat up quickly on the rack, and, naturally, bumped his head against the top of the carriage, and then he said "Oh!" still more emphatically.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Go it, Gussy!"

"Go it!" said Figgins. "Two to one on Gussy! Look after your head, Lowther. It makes an awful row when wood meets wood!"

"Come down, you wottah!"

"Leggo, you ass!"

"Wats!"

"More rats!"

D'Arcy hung on to Lowther's captured leg as if it had been a bell-rope, and he were the bell-ringer. Lowther hung on to the rack, but he was naturally getting a pain in his captured leg.

"Will you leggo?" he roared.

"Certainly not, deah boy!"

Lowther snorted. With his free foot he kicked Blake's packed bag off the end of the rack, and it swooped down upon D'Arcy.

"Look out!" yelled Kerr.

But it was too late for D'Arcy to look out.

The bag plumped upon his chest, and he released Lowther's leg, and sat down on the floor of the carriage, among the innumerable feet of the St. Jim's juniors.

"Ow!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "Goal!"

"What price my bag?" demanded Blake wrathfully, as he struggled over D'Arcy to pick up his property, which certainly had had a heavy biff upon the floor.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"Blessed if I know!" said Lowther, misunderstanding.

"Seven-and-sixpence, I should say!"

Blake breathed hard through his nose. That bag had certainly seen service, but it had cost two and a half guineas when he came to St. Jim's.

"You are tweadin' on my twousahs, Blake!"

"Blow your trousers!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort—I mean—I——"

"Hallo, the train's slackening!" said Fatty Wynn, looking out of the window. "I wish you'd give me a little more room, Kerr!"

"You've got room enough for two already!"

"Pway get off my feet, Blake. I want to get up and thwash Lowthah!"

"Yes, let him get on with the thrashing," said Monty Lowther. "It's getting interesting!"

"Bai Jove, I——"

"Here, you be quiet!" said Harry Noble, adding his feet to Blake's upon the aristocratic person of Arthur Augustus. "There isn't room here for a row!"

"Pway wemove your feet, Kangawoo!"

"Rats!" said the Australian junior cheerfully. "They're all right where they are! You're going to stay on the floor till you make it pax with Lowther!"

"I wufuse to make it pax with Lowthah!"

"Then stay where you are!"

"I wufuse to stay where I am!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy struggled under the feet. But Digby and Figgins added their feet to the others, and the swell of St. Jim's was pinned down.

He gasped and glared, but it was of no avail.

"Lemme gerrup, you wottahs!"

"Rats!"

"I wufuse to make it pax!"

"Good!"

"On second thoughts——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"On second thoughts, you uttah wottahs, I will make it pax!"

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "If there's any more trouble we'll shove you under the seat, and keep you there till we get to Charing Cross."

"I should wufuse to wemain undah the seat!"

D'Arcy staggered up. He was very dishevelled, and very dusty. He dusted himself down with a glare of indignation that only evoked disrespectful mirth from the juniors of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove, my clothes are simply wuined!"

"Well, you do look a bit of a sight!" said Blake, scanning him critically. "What I wonder is, Gussy, why you do these things!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Train's slowing down," said Fatty Wynn again. "I suppose there will be time to get a decent feed at Charing Cross before we catch the Dover train?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No; as it happens, it will be rather a rush. But we can have a lunch-basket put on the train."

"A lunch-basket!" said the Falstaff of the New House at St. Jim's. "A lunch-basket did you say?"

"Yes, a lunch-basket."

"I suppose you mean half a dozen lunch-baskets!" said Fatty Wynn. "I'm hungry, and I suppose you fellows will want something to eat. I haven't had anything since breakfast, except a little lunch Miss Fawcett gave us just before we started, and then I ate next to nothing. I never eat much when I'm excited, and I only had some cold beef and ham, a pork chop, and some pudding, and cake. I ought to have laid in some more."

"Could you have found room for it?" asked Blake curiously.

"I'm getting jolly hungry now. It's a curious thing, but I always do get hungry in this October weather. We ought to have a feed at Charing Cross, as well as a lunch-basket each in the train. It's no good being reckless of one's health!"

"It will be necessary for us to stop some time at Chawin' Cwoss, too," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"What for?" Tom Merry demanded.

"That's what I was thinkin' about when I was intewrupted by the necessity of thwashin' Lowthah. How long have we in London?"

"A quarter of an hour."

"That will not be enough, deah boy."

"My dear chap, you are going to Paris for a holiday, no to London," said Tom Merry patiently. "You don't want to see the Zoo to-day."

Another complete tale of the Boys of St. Jim's, By Martin Clifford.



"What do you think, deah boys?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed rather dubiously at the travelling coat.
 "Ripping!" said his chums in chorus.

"I was not thinkin' of the Zoo, Tom Mewwy."

"Well, the Tower Bridge, then?"

"Pway don't be an ass! You know vewy well why I want to halt in London. I must purchase a silk hat and a decent coat in London, at all events. The only twouble is, whethah it is poss. to get a decent coat weady-made. I have nevah worn one weady-made, but a chap told me they could be bought in some parts of London."

"Go hon!"

"I shall wequire at least three hours for shoppin'!"

"You'll have a quarter of an hour for shopping," grinned Blake; "and if you lose the Dover train, I'll scalp you!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be scalped, Blake! I suppose you don't want me to land in Fwance lookin' like a waga-muffin?"

"Well, you never look much, you know!" said Digby.

This was too much for Arthur Augustus, the swell of St. Jim's and the best-dressed fellow in the school. He gave Digby a freezing glare, and relapsed into silence.

But the thoughtful frown was still upon his face. He was still thinking of the weighty problem, how to do sufficient shopping in London in the short space of a quarter of an hour.

CHAPTER 2.

The Bolters

THE train rushed on, to the accompaniment of cheery chatter and laughter from the juniors of St. Jim's. They were as gay as crickets at the prospect of this run abroad. Uncle Frank was to meet them in Paris, but on the journey they were their own masters. They were quite able, of course, to take care of themselves, for in these days a trip to Paris is little more than a trip to Margate.

Miss Priscilla Fawcett, Tom Merry's old governess, had given them many cautions, which they had listened to with proper respect; but they were fully satisfied of their ability to make the journey to Paris without disaster. D'Arcy, too, had assured Miss Fawcett at parting that he would look after Tom Merry, an assurance which doubtless greatly relieved the old lady's mind.

Uncle Frank was Miss Fawcett's brother, and not Tom Merry's uncle, as a matter of fact; but he was always called Uncle Frank. It was his idea for Tom Merry & Co. to have a run to Paris while he was there to look after them; and, needless to say, the juniors had jumped at the idea.

They were talking over the prospect, and airing their French, which would soon be necessary, while the train

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

rushed on; but there were now two of the party silent and serious instead of one.

Fatty Wynn was as troubled in his mind as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy was troubled by the insufficiency of his wardrobe. True, he had wired to various Parisian outfitters to meet him at the hotel in Paris on his arrival. Uncle Frank had taken quarters for them in the Hotel Ste. Genevieve, in the Rue de Rivoli, where he was residing himself, and as soon as he arrived there, Arthur Augustus would be able to give his orders for boots and hats and coats and neckties and shirts. But there might be delay, there might be mistakes, and, in case of accidents, D'Arcy wanted to do a little shopping in London.

Fatty Wynn didn't want to do any shopping, except in the refreshment line. But he was seriously alarmed at the prospect of going on to Dover without a square meal. Suppose anything should go wrong with the lunch-basket! The mere idea was appalling!

And the quarter of an hour in town would be fully occupied in seeing to the luggage, of which the juniors had, of course, a certain amount for a fortnight's stay in the French capital.

It was a problem for D'Arcy to think out, and for Fatty Wynn, though they had different objects in view.

Arthur Augustus suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Bai Jove! I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"An idea!"

"Hurrah!" shouted Monty Lowther. "Hip, pip! Now that he's started, very likely he will get another idea some day! Who knows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Go it, Gussy! This shows that your brain has begun to work, after all these years, at all events!" said Lowther encouragingly.

"I twust, Lowthah, that you will not dwive me to givin' you a feashful twashin'!" said Arthur Augustus. "I've got an idea, deah boys! We are catching the twain for Dovah to take the afternoon boat to Calais?"

"Yes."

"Well, why not catch the next twain, and take the next boat?"

"Ass! The next boat would be the night boat, and we don't want to travel at night."

"I do not see any wisk in twavellin' at night; and, anyway, I shall be there to look aftah you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause for unseemly mewwiment, Mannahs!"

"But we couldn't go home in the dark," said Lowther.

"Pway do not be fwivolous!"

"We can't travel by night boat," said Tom Merry. "In the first place, there's no necessity. In the second place, it's jolly uncomfortable."

"I twust that you are not gwowin' to be a mollycoddle, Tom Mewwy!"

"Ass! There's no need to go hunting for discomfort, is there? Besides, the night boat means the night train to Paris, and that means keeping awake all night, or else going to sleep on the seats."

"Yaas, but—"

"Losing a night's rest is the rottenest possible way of beginning a holiday," said Tom Merry. "You want to be just as fit for a holiday as you are for work, if you're to make anything out of it. Early to bed and early to rise is the idea!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Therefore, we're going to catch the afternoon boat!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Oh, blow your butts! It's settled!"

"I think I rather agree with Gussy, though," said Fatty Wynn. "I don't like the idea of night travelling, but I must admit that I want a square meal in London."

"You can have lunch on the train."

"Suppose something went wrong—"

"Rats!"

"Yes; but consider—"

"Yaas; but welfect—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Tom Merry. "We're getting in to Charing Cross now, and you had better pull up your socks! There's the luggage to look after, and they'll put it into a train for Southampton or Reading if you give them half a chance!"

The express was slackening at last.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy fell into reflection, but there was a slightly obstinate expression upon his face that would have aroused Tom Merry's suspicions if he had noticed it.

But Tom was busy rattling off French with the others, getting it polished up ready for the benefit of the Customs officers at Calais.

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Fatty Wynn ventured one remark on the subject.

"Remember, we've got to cross the Channel, Merry. We ought to lay a good foundation, you know, to keep up our strength."

"It wouldn't last you over the Channel," said Tom Merry. "Vous avez le mal-de-mer, you suffer!"

Fatty Wynn's face lengthened.

In the excitement of setting off on the journey, he had forgotten that, but now a vivid recollection came into his mind of his last experiences on the sea.

"But it's a short trip," he said hopefully, "and the weather's not rough."

"It will be rough enough for you if you start feeding."

"But it's better to lay in a good foundation here, and not have anything more till Calais, perhaps."

"Lay it in in the train, then."

"Yes, but—"

"Hallo! Here we are!"

The express clattered to a halt.

The juniors grabbed bags and portmanteaux, and poured out of the carriage upon the platform. There were three trunks belonging to the party, as well as the array of bags they carried among themselves.

Tom Merry and Figgins rushed off at once to see to the trunks, while the other juniors took care of the bags.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy drew Fatty Wynn aside.

"I say, Wynn, old chap, do you feel weally hungwy?"

"What-ho!" said Wynn, with great feeling. "Let's cut off to the refreshment-room, D'Arcy. There's time for a snack at least."

"But you'd wathah go out and have a weally good feed?"

"Of course, but—"

"I've got some shoppin' to do. Come with me."

Fatty Wynn stared.

"What about the train?"

"We can catch the next."

"But Tom Merry—"

"I will explain to him."

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"They'll jolly well bundle you neck and crop into the train, Gussy! It's no good! Come on! This way to the refreshment-room!"

"I should wefuse to be bundled neck and crop into the twain, Wynn!"

"That wouldn't make much difference."

"H'm! Pewwaps there is somethin' in what you say, Wynn. I will send Tom Mewwy a note by a portah to explain that we are comin' by the next twain."

"Well, that's not a bad idea," said Fatty Wynn reflectively. "I can't help feeling alarmed about the grub, as these railway chaps are so uncertain. If I don't lay in a good foundation now, I shall be hungry on the boat, and I sha'n't be able to eat if I am seasick. It's a good idea of yours, D'Arcy!"

"Then let us buzz off, deah boy!"

"Right-ho! After all, we can join them in Paris. It's only a matter of coming on by the next train," said Fatty Wynn. "I think we ought to look after our health."

"Come on, then. We will have lunch first, and then we'll go out shoppin'."

"Good!"

"I will bowwow a pencil somewhere to write to Tom Mewwy."

"Here's my fountain pen."

"Good!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wrote on a leaf of his pocket book, tore it out and folded it, and called to a porter.

"Portah!"

The porter looked round.

"Pway take this note to that chap. You see the chap with the twunks—the one with the curly hair?"

"Yessir."

"Pway give it to him just before the twain starts for Dovah, will you? Pway accept this half-crown."

"Yessir."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn promptly quitted the station.

CHAPTER 3.

Left Behind!

TOM MERRY was too busy just then to notice the desertion of the two juniors. The Continental express was in waiting, and Tom Merry saw the trunks trolleyed over to it, and put in the van. Then there was an interval of four or five minutes before the train started on its long run to the Kentish seaport.

"Well, the trunks are all right," said Tom Merry. "Labelled, and in, and everything. Now, it wouldn't be a bad wheeze to get a look at the buffet before we start."

"Good egg!"

Another complete tale of the Boys of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

"I've taken the places," said Lowther. "I've jammed down a bag or a hat or something on every blessed seat. All the corner seats are gone, of course."

"Can't be helped."

"I suppose we're all here," said Tom Merry, looking round. "Hallo, where's Fatty; and Gussy, too!"

"Fatty's in the buffet, I suppose," said Figgins, with a grin. "I suppose we shall find Gussy along with him."

"Come on, then."

The juniors hurried to the buffet. It was pretty well crowded, and they had to look round for some minutes before they discovered that D'Arcy and Fatty Wynn were not there.

"Hallo, where have they got to?" exclaimed Tom, in some alarm. "Nice if they get lost just before the train starts."

"Phew!"

"It's going in three minutes, unless it's late."

"Where can the asses be?"

"Hallo, here's a chap wants to speak to you, Tom Merry."

Tom Merry turned towards a porter who was hastening towards him. The man held out a folded paper, a leaf from a pocket-book.

"Young gent gave me this to give you, sir."

Tom Merry took it mechanically. He opened it, and glanced through it, and gave a howl.

"My hat!"

"What's the matter?"

"It's from Gussy. Listen!"

"Dear Tom Merry,—As I have some shopping to do, I cannot very well go by this train; but I will follow in the next, and join you in Paris."

"ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY."

"The ass!"

"The duffer!"

"The frabjous babbler!"

With these ejaculations, and some more to the same effect, the chums of St. Jim's stared at the note from D'Arcy, and at each other. Tom Merry turned quickly to the porter.

"Did you see where the chap went after giving you this?" he asked.

"He left the station, sir."

"How long ago?"

"About six or seven minutes, sir."

"Oh, crumbs! It's no good, kids; they're gone. Did another chap go with him, porter—a fat chap with a pink chivvy?"

"Yes, sir," said the porter, grinning. "There were two of them, sir."

"Fatty's gone to get a feed," said Figgins, "and Gussy has gone shopping. The burbling asses! Shall we go on and leave them behind?"

"Gussy will get lost in London if we do."

Kangaroo shook his head decidedly.

"It won't do," he exclaimed. "We shall have to look for them, and go on by the next train."

"I suppose there's nothing else to be done."

"Oh, won't we bump him when we catch him!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "We might have guessed he would be up to some little game like this."

"Yes, rather."

"I say, the things are all in the train!" exclaimed Figgins, in alarm. "It's going off in about a minute! All our stuff will go to Dover, without anybody to look after it. My hat! I left my hat on the seat."

"And I mine!" exclaimed Manners.

"Phew!" said Lowther. "I left my camera there, too!"

"And the trunks!"

"Great Scott!"

The juniors rushed frantically off to the platform to recover their property before the train started. Tom Merry grasped the porter by the arm.

"Here, come on!" he exclaimed. "I've got to get my trunks out—you savvy? We're not going by this train after all. Come and help."

"Yessir."

They raced down the train.

Tom Merry's trunks were safe enough in the luggage-van, and the guard said things when he was called upon to deliver them upon the platform again.

"No time!" he said; and other and more expressive things too.

"But we're not going by this train!" yelled Tom Merry.

"Look at the clock."

"But—"

"Train just starting."

Tom Merry groped in his pocket, found a five-shilling piece, and pressed it into the man's hand.

"Look sharp, chappy!" he said.

The guard grinned, the porter lent a hand, and the trunks whisked out upon the platform. The whistle was screaming.

"Narrow shave, sir," said the porter.

Tom Merry gasped.

"I wonder whether the other chaps have got their hats and bags?"

The train was moving now. The St. Jim's juniors, very red and flustered, were crowding on the platform, carrying hats and bags and other properties which they had left on the seats to prove their ownership.

Only Digby was bareheaded, and had no headgear in his hands. He had been too late to save his straw, which had gone on a journey to Dover by itself.

"All here?" gasped Tom Merry.

"I think so," said Figgins. "Where's your chapeau, Dig?"

"In the carriage," said Dig wrathfully. "I grabbed a bag in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, and left my hat. I wish I had left the brolly now. It's Gussy's."

"Oh, won't we bump him!" said Figgins.

"What-ho!"

"It's the night train and the night boat now," said Tom Merry. "Lucky the same tickets will do, or I should have a nice little bill to bring in to Gussy. We'd better put up the luggage at the station and go and look for Gussy."

"As a matter of fact, I could do with something to eat," remarked Blake. "I suppose we sha'n't have far to look. We shall discover Fatty in the nearest grub shop."

"Ha, ha! That's pretty certain."

"Shove the luggage somewhere for us, porter," said Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat! To think that we ought to be whisking off to Dover, and we're standing here putting away luggage! We'll give Gussy the bumping of his life when we find him."

"What-ho!"

The porter packed the luggage on a trolley, and wheeled it away, the chums following him. Tom Merry looked round at his companions.

"It's agreed," he said, "wherever we find Gussy, we're to bump him at once, no matter where it is."

"Agreed!"

The juniors were all feeling wrathful. They were anxious to get to Paris, and D'Arcy's outbreak meant a long delay, and travelling by night and in the small hours of the morning.

There was vengeance in store for the swell of St. Jim's as soon as he was found.

The luggage was put up at the station, and Tom Merry put his tickets away in safety, and tipped the porter, and then they left the station.

With wrathful faces they set out in search of the swell of St. Jim's. Digby looked round anxiously for a hat-shop, and soon found one.

"I shall have to get a new straw," he said. "Of course, I shall take the bill to Gussy."

"That's only fair."

"I may as well have a decent one, then," said Dig, looking round the shop. "I usually give six-and-six, but on an occasion like this—"

"Yes, sir! What can I do for you, sir?" said a polite shopman. "Straw hats? Yes, sir. How do you like this style? Five-and-six."

"I usually pay six-and-six," said Dig.

"Ahem! We have some very fine straw hats at six-and-six. Look at these."

"Haven't you some more expensive ones?"

The shopman coughed again. He thought Digby a very peculiar customer.

"Yes, sir; these at eight-and-six."

"Those the dearest?"

"Oh, no, sir; not at all, sir. We have these at ten-and-six, and a better make at—er—twelve-and-six."

"I'll have one of the twelve-and-sixers, please."

"Certainly, sir. I think you will be very well satisfied, sir."

"I don't think Gussy will be," grinned Dig, as he handed out the twelve-and-six. The hat certainly looked very nice, though the chums could see no difference between it and the eight-and-sixers; and perhaps it would have puzzled the shopman to point out any.

The straw was paid for, and the juniors quitted the hatter's.

"It's a bit late in the season to buy a straw," grinned Digby. "A bit of luck for that chap to sell off old stock at Gussy's expense."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My straw was a bit rocky, but I thought it would do to cross the Channel in."

"I should prefer a boat," said Lowther, shaking his head.

"Oh, don't be funny, old chap. I believe they wear straw later in the season in France, so this one will do me down all right. I'll keep the bill as a little present for Gussy."

And that matter having been satisfactorily settled, the juniors of St. Jim's set their wits to work to find the two missing youths.

CHAPTER 4.
A Little Lunch.

"THIS way," said Fatty Wynn.
"Bai Jove!"
"Come in, old chap. This looks a decent restaurant."

"But I was not lookin' for a westauwant, deah boy. I want to get a coat."

"Oh, the coat can wait!"

"Yaas, but—"

"Better lay a good foundation," urged Fatty Wynn. "I'm jolly hungry now. I get awfully sharp eet in this October weather, you know."

"Yaas, but there is a—"

"Come in! Doesn't the place smell beautifully?"

"I haven't noticed it. Look here, Wynn, if we do our shoppin' first, we can have a west while we have the grub."

"I'd rather have the grub first, in case of accidents."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Come in!" urged Fatty Wynn. "The other fellows are gone now, and we've got plenty of time. We can shop for hats presently."

"It is not only a toppah I want, but a coat, and some gloves, and neckties, and boots."

"Well, I'm not jolly well going to wander over half London with you," said Fatty Wynn; "not till I've had some grub, anyway!"

"Oh, vewy well, we'll have a little lunch first!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, yielding the point. "Come in."

"That's better! You'll feel much better for shopping when you've laid a solid foundation of good grub!"

"Pewwaps!"

They entered the restaurant. It was a good class restaurant in the Strand, and seemed to promise something very nice in the way of a feed. Fatty Wynn sat down at one of the tables, and a waiter hurried up.

"Just a little lunch," said D'Arcy, looking over the menu.

"Suppose—"

"Here, give me the bill," said Fatty Wynn. "I can order something quicker than you can. There's no time to lose."

"There's heaps of time before the next twain goes."

"Yes, but I'm hungry!"

And Fatty Wynn proceeded to give his orders. The extent of them made the waiter open his eyes. The table was soon loaded, and the two juniors began to eat. D'Arcy was hungry, and Fatty Wynn was ravenous. The inroad they made upon the lunch was considerable, and long after Arthur Augustus had finished Fatty Wynn was still wiring in.

D'Arcy put on his gloves, and took them off again, polished his hat, and polished his eyeglass, and shifted in his seat. He did not want to hurry the Falstaff of St. Jim's, but he wanted to be off to do his shopping.

The restaurant was pretty full, and most of the tables were taken. Fatty Wynn kept his waiter pretty busy looking after him.

"Bai Jove, Wynn!" said D'Arcy at last.

"Like some of this partridge-pie, Gussy?"

"No, thank you!"

"Try the jelly."

"I have finished."

"Better lay in a good foundation."

"Wats!"

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes," said Fatty Wynn. "I believe in getting a good feed while you have got the chance. As we are sharing the expense of this feed, you might as well have your whack!"

"I have had enough, deah boy."

"Oh, you've got a bird's appetite! Why don't you take to exercise of some sort, and get up a weally healthy hunger?"

"Pway hawwy up, deah boy!"

Fatty Wynn shook his head seriously.

"I'm sorry, Gussy, but that's impossible. It's frightfully bad for the digestion to hurry over one's meals. I'll do anything else for you, old chap, but don't ask me to bolt my food. I can't. I'm a small eater, but I like to take my time."

"Bai Jove!"

"You can have something to drink to fill up the time, or put in some ices."

"Wats! I want to start my shoppin'!"

"Well, I sha'n't be more than half an hour now."

"Gweat Scott!"

"You should really try this pie—it's spiffing!"

"Wats!"

"Well, that's my advice. You'll be sorry for it if you go to sea hungry. Think of the crossing. You won't be able to eat anything on the boat. My word! These pies are simply stunning!"

"Pheh!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 91.

NEXT THURSDAY: "TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"H!"

"Ow!"

"My pie! My pie!"

"Help!"

"Police!"

"Get out!" shrieked the manager. "Get out! Police! Get out!"

Fatty Wynn was gazing at the wrecked food, looking like Niobe. Arthur Augustus was sprawling amid the broken dishes and plates and scattered viands.

The manager was nearly tearing his hair. The other diners were on their feet now, looking on in amazement.

"What's the matter?"

"They haven't gone."

"Eh! What!"

"Look there!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pointed towards the entrance. The face of Jack Blake could be seen looking round the glass doors. The juniors of St. Jim's had tracked down the truants by the simple process of looking into every eating-house on their way.

Jack Blake caught sight of Arthur Augustus at the same moment. He turned back quickly to his comrades outside.

"I've found 'em!"

"Jolly good!" said Tom Merry.

Eight vengeful juniors poured into the restaurant. Arthur Augustus gazed at them with astonishment as they came up to his table. Fatty Wynn was too busy with a partridge-pie to do more than give them a short nod.

"Bai Jove, haven't you gone, deah boys?"

"Do we look as if we had?" demanded Kangaroo.

"Did you lose your twain?"

"No, we lost you."

"Bai Jove, you know, you needn't have been nervous at goin' on without me, deah boys! I was goin' to wejoin you in Pawis, and I have given you full diwections about the journey!"

The chums looked at him speechlessly. They had not imagined that the swell of St. Jim's would attribute their staying behind to this cause.

"But pewwaps it was wiser," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "You would pwobably have got into some bothah with the Customs if I had not been there to twanslate for you. You could hardly get on without an interpwetah. Pewwaps it was wisah of you on the whole to decide to go by the latah twain."

"You—you ass!" said Tom Merry, finding his voice at last.

"I decline to be called an ass!"

"You've made us lose the train—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And we nearly lost the luggage."

"That was vewy careless of you, deah boys."

"And we might have lost you if we hadn't tracked Fatty down by his appetite," said Figgins.

"And now," said Tom Merry, "we're going to bump you, as a lesson not to play the giddy ox again while we're on this trip."

"I wefuse to be bumped! I—"

"Collar him!"

The swell of St. Jim's sprang to his feet, excitedly protesting, but the grasp of eight pairs of hands speedily reduced him to helplessness.

"Hold on! Wescue! Don't be an ass! Can't you see you're makin' a disturbance and attwactin' attention, you duffahs! Leggo!"

"Bump him!"

And Arthur Augustus was forthwith bumped.

Two or three waiters rushed up excitedly, and the hotel manager was brought upon the scene, but the juniors of St. Jim's were too excited to care.

They bumped Arthur Augustus, and bumped him again, and the swell of St. Jim's struggled and wriggled and yelled in vain.

Only one of the party remained calm, and that one was Fatty Wynn, still wiring into the partridge-pies.

"Bai Jove! Help!"

"Bump him!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"There!" gasped Tom Merry; "there! That's all right!"

Arthur Augustus was released. He staggered against the table and sent it flying. There was a yell from Fatty Wynn as his pie was whisked away by the falling table, and a terrific crash of breaking crockery on the floor.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "You've done it now, Gussy!"

CHAPTER 5.
D'Arcy's Coat.

"H!"

"Ow!"

"My pie! My pie!"

"Help!"

"Police!"

"Get out!" shrieked the manager. "Get out! Police! Get out!"

Fatty Wynn was gazing at the wrecked food, looking like Niobe. Arthur Augustus was sprawling amid the broken dishes and plates and scattered viands.

The manager was nearly tearing his hair. The other diners were on their feet now, looking on in amazement.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Tom Merry, to the excited manager. "We'll pay for the damage. Gussy, get up out of the grub and pay for the damage you've done!"

"Police! Get out!"

"We're going. Don't you want to be paid?"

The manager calmed down a little.

"It was only fun!" explained Tom Merry. "Gussy, this gentleman is waiting for you to pay for the damage."

"I refuse to pay! I—"

"Then the police will be sent for."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You don't want to be arrested on the eve of going to France," said Tom Merry severely. "Fancy your father's feelings, too, when he hears that his only Gussy has been bilking a waiter."

"Weally, you wottahs—"

D'Arcy staggered up.

"I will certainly settle for the damage," he said. "It was weally all your fault, and I shall give each of you a feaful thwashin', but for the pwesent I will settle the damage. Pway let me know how much it is, deah sir!"

The waiter named a figure that included all the damage done, and as much again that was not done. At D'Arcy did not argue. Perhaps the man thought the damaged prestige of the restaurant ought to be paid for too. The bill was settled, and the lunch was paid for, and the juniors left the place, the glowering glances of the manager following them to the door. Fatty Wynn was inclined to remain and start another lunch, but he received no encouragement from either his chums or the restaurant manager. That gentleman had had enough of the St. Jim's juniors and their harmless little ways.

Arthur Augustus was breathing hard as he emerged into the street. He was very dusty and very shaken up, and his necktie was undone and his collar awry. He was very angry, too.

"Better look for another restaurant," said Fatty Wynn. "You fellows might have been a bit more thoughtful. I hadn't finished my lunch."

"I suppose you never would have unless you were interrupted?" remarked Lowther.

"Besides, the cooking in that place was good. Now we sha'n't be able to go there again."

"Hallo, Gussy, anything wrong?" asked Blake, looking at his elegant chum's clouded face, and affecting to be greatly astonished.

"Yaas, Blake."

"What's the matter?"

"I have been tweated with gwoss diswespect by a set of wottahs."

"By Jove! Where are they? Point them out, and we will wade in their gore!" said Blake, with a ferocious look.

"You uttah ass! You know perfectly well whom I am alludin' to! I wegard your conduct as uttably diswespectful and bwutal!"

"But we wanted to give you a lesson about playing the giddy ox, you know. It was entirely for your own good."

"Absolutely!" said Lowther.

"I refuse to discuss the mattah. I refuse to considah you wottahs as fwends after this. I shall endeavour in future to keep my circle of fwends select, not to say swaggah."

"I'm so disappointed!" said Kangaroo. "I was looking forward to going shopping with Gussy this afternoon."

D'Arcy's face cleared a little.

"If you want to come shoppin', deah boy—"

"It would be a real pleasure!" said the Cornstalk chum.

"I was about to suggest that we should drop in at the next hatter's and get your boots."

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"What price these coats?" said Blake, stopping outside a

ready-made clothes shop. "Some of these look nobby. Do you want a coat, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come in here, then."

"If you are disposed to assist me, deah boys—"

"Of course we are!"

"In that case I withdwaw my wemarks, and I shall continue to wegard you as fwends."

Blake fell into D'Arcy's arms and hugged him, sobbing the while. The swell of St. Jim's struggled in vain to escape.

"Welease me, you ass!" he gasped.

"But I'm showing a touching emotion."

"If you do not welease me instantly I shall stwike you!"

Blake released him with a sob.

"How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankful Gussy," he murmured. "Gussy, Gussy, how can you be so unkind to your uncle?"

"Oh, pway don't wot, you ass!"

D'Arcy entered the shop and the chums followed him in. They exchanged a general grin, but their faces were quite grave when D'Arcy looked at them. The shop was one where clothes ready-made were supplied, of the kind familiarly known as reach-me-downs. The cut of the clothes displayed in the shop made Gussy shudder.

"You are an ass to come in here, Blake!" he said. "Do you think I could possibly wear any of these dweadful things?"

"Yes, sir; what can I get you, sir?" said a gracious shopman. "Splendid winter overcoats, sir, from eighteen-and-six."

"All one price—three-and-nine!" murmured Blake.

"I want an ovacoat, my deah fellah," said D'Arcy, "but I'm afraid you haven't one that will suit me."

"Very fine overcoats, sir, up to three guineas."

"Bai Jove!"

"My friend gives ten guineas for his overcoats, you see," explained Blake; "but I've no doubt you would be willing to take ten guineas for one of these."

"Ahem, sir!"

"You see, Gussy, you can get them here at the usual price."

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake!"

"Anyway, you needn't bother about the fit of a travelling coat," said Manners. "You'll want somethin' warm for the Channel-to-night."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's a beauty! It's got a pattern that will blind the officers in the Douane, and you will get through Customs free."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"That's a splendid coat, gentlemen!" said the shopman. "I sold a coat exactly like that to the Marquis of Noacres the other day. It's very much worn, sir."

"Yaas, but I want a new coat," said D'Arcy.

"Ahem! I did not mean this coat was much worn; I mean it is very fashionable just now, sir."

"I see. What do think, deah boys?"

Arthur Augustus gazed rather dubiously at the travelling coat.

It was made of a kind of cheap tweed, of a loud and glaring chessboard pattern, and it would certainly have attracted general attention anywhere to anybody who had worn it.

"Ripping!" said Blake.

"Stunning!" said Lowther.

"What do you think, Tom Mewwy?"

"I think you don't often see a coat like that, Gussy."

"It looks pweety warm, don't you think?"

"Oh, yes; it'll keep you warm."

"Warm as toast, gentlemen!" said the shopman. "I can let you have that coat for two guineas and a half."

"Bai Jove! That's awfully cheap! Are you sure you haven't made a mistake?"

The shopman coughed, and looked at a card attached to the coat.

"Ahem! I should have said three guineas. Exactly."

"What do you say, deah boys? I must have a coat, and it will save goin' ova to Bond Street if I take this."

"Then you can jolly well take this!" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"But the question is, does it suit me?"

"My dear chap, you could go a hundred miles without coming across anything like it!"

"Will you try it on, sir?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The shopman helped D'Arcy on with the coat. It was about four sizes too large for him, but this the shopman skillfully disguised by holding the material tight at his back while he buttoned it up.

"Feels a little woomy," said D'Arcy.

"You can wrap it round you on the boat," suggested Kerr.

"It will answer the purpose of a travelling rug."

"I have a wug already."

Another complete tale of the Boys of St. J.m's. By Martin Clifford.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"Yes, but an extra one will be welcome if it's a cold night. Besides, there's something striking about that coat."

"The Parisians will look at it," said Lowther encouragingly. "I don't suppose they've got anything like it in Paris."

"Yaas, I think I will take it."

"Very good, sir," said the shopman. "Can I send it for you?"

"No; I'll wear it, please."

"Very good, sir. Ticket off? Certainly. Suits you beautifully, sir, as if it had been made for you. Splendid large pockets. Very useful when travelling, sir. Three guineas, if you please."

"Two guineas and a half," said Tom Merry, who had no intention of letting his chum be swindled.

"Ahem! That was a mistake, sir—"

"Ah! You made a mistake?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you can make another."

"Really, sir—"

"Take the coat off, then!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I can let you have it at a reduction, sir," said the shopman hurriedly. "Two guineas and a half, please. Cash! Yes, sir! Thank you, sir!"

The coat was paid for, and the chums left the shop. Nine juniors with great difficulty kept grave faces as D'Arcy walked out in that splendid coat.

"Bai, Jove, deah boys, it feels much looser now than it did when that chap was twyn' it on in the shop!" D'Arcy remarked.

"Go hon!"

"It is vewy wemarkable, isn't it?"

"Extraordinary!"

"It seems a little too long for me. Bai Jove, there's heaps of woom to spare in it! I am afraid it's a wotten bad fit!"

"Amazing!"

"It was absurd to suppose that a weach-me-down shop could give me a fit, I suppose?"

"Wrong!" said Lowther. "As a rule, they can give you fits!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is vewy warm, anyway," said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! Do you know, deah boys, it seems to me as if this coat is attwactin' attention."

"Oh, rot!" said Lowther. "People are looking at my pretty face, that's all it is. Are you going to buy anything else, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah! Is there a boot shop near?"

"There's one. Of course, you want some sabots."

"Some which?"

"Sabots, dear boys—wooden shoes. You know they wear them in France," said Monty Lowther, with a perfectly grave face. "To be taken for a true Parisian, you must wear sabots, you know."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that! I—!" You ass, you're wottin', are you?" said D'Arcy, as the juniors burst into a yell of laughter. "However, I shall wequire some boots, so wway come in."

And they entered the bootmaker's.

CHAPTER 6.

Too Late!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS did not purchase any sabots, but he was laden with three pairs of boots and shoes when he left the shop. Then Fatty Wynn suggested an adjournment to another restaurant to finish the interrupted lunch—a proposition that was negatived by nine voices to one. It was not till some time later that the ravenous Fatty was allowed to seat his weary limbs at a table with a substantial meal spread before him. It was then that Digby brought in his little bill.

Arthur Augustus had parcels and packages all round him as he sat down. He had gone on purchasing until his comrades had stopped him by force, and dragged him into the restaurant after Fatty Wynn. He was looking over the array of parcels to make sure that they were all there, when Digby jabbed him in the ribs.

D'Arcy turned round with a gasp.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Time to settle up that twelve-and-six you owe me," said Digby in a business-like tone. "I shall want the tin to change into French money."

"Certainly, deah boy!"

D'Arcy fished out a half-sovereign and a half-crown, and laid them on the table. Digby slipped them into his little leather purse. A thoughtful look came over the face of the swell of St. Jim's.

"By the way, deah boy, I don't wemembah your lendin' the Gem Library.—No. 91."

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

me twelve and six," he remarked. "I weally do not wecall the debt at all."

"Go hon!"

"Of course, it is imposs. for me to doubt the assurance of a friend, and if you say I owe you the money it is all wight, but I weally do not wemembah."

Dig pointed to his new straw hat.

"Can you see that?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye and looked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What is it?"

"A staw hat."

"Yes; but what sort of a straw hat?"

"Weally, Dig, I fail to quite compwehend you. It seems to me an ordinary staw hat."

"It's a new one."

"You must be vewy weckless with your tin to buy a new staw hat at this time of the year, deah boy."

"It wasn't my money."

"Oh, someone bought it for you?"

"Exactly."

"Weally! Who was it, deah boy?"

"You!"

"Eh?"

"I paid for it, but you've just settled, so it's all right," said Digby cheerfully. "I got the most expensive one they had, as you have such expensive tastes, you know. You see, my hat was lost in the train, through your playing the giddy goat, and you bought me this one in the place of it."

Arthur Augustus turned his monocle upon Dig.

"I wefuse—"

Digby chuckled.

"No good refusing; you've done it."

"I wefuse—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway let me finish. I have no objection to purchasin' the new hat, but I wefuse to be chawactewised as a giddy goat!"

"Well, frabjous ass, if you like that better!" said Digby genially.

"I wefuse. Pway don't poke me in the wibs like that, Wynn. It thwows me into a fluttah."

"Pass the salt, then. I've asked you twice."

"Weally, sowwy, deah boy."

D'Arcy passed the salt. He glanced at the straw hat, and at Digby several times, and seemed to be giving the matter a considerable amount of thought, but he did not speak on the subject again.

Fatty Wynn, of course, was not finished when the chums dragged him away. As they had time in London several of them decided to do a little shopping. Then they had to get some cash changed into French coin, and when they entered the bureau for the purpose D'Arcy made the discovery that he had expended nearly all he possessed.

"Bai Jove, that's wotten!" he remarked. "Fancy startin' out for a holiday in Fwance and spendin' all the cash in London. It is wathah wemarkable."

"My dear chap, you're capable of anything," said Blake.

"I wefuse to admit anythin' of the sort. I have only done such shoppin' as was absolutely necessary. But it is wathah wotten to wun out of cash like this. I shall have to send a wiah to my govvernah for some more. That's wathah wotten, too, as he has been gwowin' vewy close with the fivahs since this supah-tax business. I believe in havin' plenty of Dweadnoughts, of course, but it is wathah wuff that my pocket-money should be stopped to pay for Bwedish Naval supwemacy. I will wush off and send a wiah—"

"Hold on a minute! We'll come with you when we're finished here."

"I shan't be five minutes."

"You won't be a minute without my eye on you!" chuckled Blake. "We've had enough of your losing trains."

"Weally, Blake—"

"The night train goes at nine o'clock, and we're going to be on time," said Blake, linking arms with his elegant chum. "I'm going to keep an eye on you."

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Nuff said; that's settled."

And Blake went with D'Arcy to the telegraph-office, and did indeed keep an eye on him all the time, and never allowed him to escape observation for a moment.

At a quarter to nine the chums were on the platform ready for the train, Fatty Wynn, with a big bundle under his arm, containing nearly every variety of comestible so far as the station buffet. Fatty Wynn did not mean to run risk.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was laden with packages, the chums refusing to take any of them, as a lesson to Arthur Augustus to do his next shopping at a more timely moment.

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The man in uniform lifted his hat and bowed profoundly. D'Arcy raised his topper and bowed in return.

"Here's the train," said Blake. "Bag the corner seats."

"Yaas, wathah."

"There won't be room on the racks for all those packets, Gussy. Better leave them in the luggage-office here, to be called for when we come back."

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy!"

"Suppose we leave Gussy in the luggage-office, too?" suggested Figgins. "It would save a lot of worry en route."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Here you are! Shove the parcels down, and keep an eye on Gussy."

"Well, I'm ready for a rest," said Fatty Wynn, sinking into a corner seat. "I say, are any of you fellows getting hungry?"

"No, gourmand. For goodness' sake, don't begin eating till we've started. It isn't ten minutes since you bolted a beefsteak pie."

"Nearer twelve," said Fatty Wynn, looking at his watch.

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter with Gussy?"

"Pway look aftah my parcels, deah boys!" exclaimed D'Arcy, springing out of the train. "I will be back before the twain starts."

"What!"

"I've forgotten my toppah. I want a new toppah badly. I've lost the old one."

"That you jolly well won't!" roared Blake, leaping after Arthur Augustus, and seizing him as he fled, and whisking him back. "You'll stop here."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Stand where you are!"

"I wefuse! I—"

"You can wefuse till you're blue in the dial, but you'll stay," said Blake, with a chuckle. "Lay hold of him, Figgys."

"What-ho!" said Figgins heartily.

"Blake, welease me!"

"Rats!"

"If you wefuse to welease me, I shall lose my tempah and stwike you!"

"More rats!"

"I have forgotten my toppah. You cannot possibly expect me to go to Fwance in an old toppah. Pway welfect, deah boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, I—"

"Shove him in, Figgys!"

"Good! Heave away!"

Arthur Augustus, vainly struggling, was heaved into the carriage. He bumped into the other juniors, and his topper rolled off upon the floor. D'Arcy staggered over Monty Lowther's long legs, and sat down—on his topper!

Scrunch!

"Great Scott!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy sprang up like a jack-in-the-box. He picked up his topper; it looked like an opera hat, only more so.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake, jumping into the carriage.

"If you go stony in Paris, Gussy, you can take that round."

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the cafes as a concertina, and pick up a few honest centimes."

"You uttah ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My toppah is wuined!"

"Well, it does seem to have lost some of its gloss," said Blake, eyeing the crushed topper critically. "But perhaps with a hammer and nails and some glue you could repair it. Wait till we get to Paris."

"I have no othah hat with me."

"That's all right."

"I can lend you a travelling cap," grinned Kangaroo. "It could be a couple of sizes too large for you, but that's all the better on a cold night. You could pull it down over your nose and chin."

"I wufuse to twavel in a cap. You will see now, Blake, that it is absolutely impewative for me to go out and purchase a toppah."

"Yes—I don't think."

"But sewiously——"

"Sit down."

"I wufuse to sit down. I will wun like anythin', you know."

"Ass! The train starts in two minutes."

"I will catch the twain in the mornin', and join you in Pawis."

"Rats!"

"Well, suppose we all get out. I will stand tweat, and we will all put up at the Cecil for the night."

"All for a new hat!" grinned Tom Merry. "Gussy, you grow more killing every day. If you must have something, borrow a cap from a porter."

"Pway don't be fivivolous at a moment like this, Tom Merry."

Slam!

The door closed. The tickets had been examined, and the doors closed, and the train gave a warning snort.

"We're off."

"Once more, Blake, I appeal to your common-sense. Can I possibly twavel in a cwushed toppah? Pway be sensible, deah boy!"

"We've started."

"Bai Jove, it's too late!"

"Sit down, Gussy. My ribs won't stand much more."

"Vewy well," said Arthur Augustus. "I hold you wespensible, Blake, for havin' to twavel in a crushed toppah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the train rattled out of the station.

CHAPTER 7.

In the Dover Express.

THE St. Jim's juniors had a whole carriage and the best part of another to themselves. Fatty Wynn had a corner seat, and next to him sat D'Arcy, trying to smooth out his damaged topper. Kangaroo was on D'Arcy's other side. Opposite them were Tom Merry, Blake, and Kerr. For a long time, to the rattle of the train, there was an accompaniment of cheery talk and chat and laughter. The juniors were in the highest of spirits. But as the evening hours wore on, the talk became more desultory, and finally it died away. The usual bedtime of the juniors of St. Jim's was half-past nine. At half-past ten they were very heavy-headed.

"Blessed if I'm not going to sleep," said Kangaroo, coming out of a doze with a jerk.

"Bai Jove, I believe I was noddin' off, too."

From Fatty Wynn came a melodious snore. Fatty had demolished half the contents of his parcel, and he was satisfied inwardly. The next requirement was sleep, and Fatty was sleeping the sleep of the just, undisturbed by the roar and rattle of the train as it swept through Kentish hill and dale.

"It was a merciful slumber, for it prevented Fatty from thinking of the coming crossing."

Fatty, perhaps, on account of his enormous stowage capacity, was very liable to sea-sickness, and he could never think of a crossing without a shudder. On a certain occasion when the St. Jim's juniors had spent a vacation at sea, Fatty's sufferings for the first few days had been tragic. And Fatty had heard terrible accounts of the Channel. In fact, Figgins had proposed crossing at Newhaven to Dieppe, for the sake of having more sea; and Fatty, usually quite calm and urbane, had become quite excited on the subject. Twenty-one miles of salt water was quite enough for him.

Tom Merry gave a portentous yawn.

"Better get some sleep," he remarked. "We sha'n't get any on the boat. Can't sleep on deck, and you get sick if you stay below."

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"Groof!" replied Kangaroo. He was already nodding off again.

Arthur Augustus had smoothed out his damaged topper. It was still looking decidedly "rocky," but it was possible to wear it till it could be replaced. D'Arcy put it on his head, and then he nodded off to sleep.

Slumber settled upon the carriage.

Sleep sitting up in a railway-carriage, even on softly-cushioned seats, is not exactly comfortable. And when the trains are given to jerking and jarring, it is not exactly safe, either.

Arthur Augustus nodded forward, and nodded again and again as the train jerked over the metals.

Each jerk almost hurled him out of his seat, and it seemed a miracle that he lurched back again without falling.

Kerr was asleep on his side, just in front of D'Arcy, and he had a series of miraculous escapes from being plumped upon.

But the catastrophe came at last.

An extra violent bump of the train made D'Arcy lurch forward, and this time he went a little too far, and lost his balance.

He awoke with a gasp as he went shooting forward; but it was too late for him to save himself.

Bump!

Right upon Kerr bumped the swell of St. Jim's.

His arms went round Kerr's neck, his chin on Kerr's travelling cap, and he bore Kerr backwards, his silk hat jammed on the back of the seat, and was once more reduced to a concertina.

"Ow! Gweat Scott!"

"Oh!" roared Kerr, awakening. "Ow! Help! Collision on the line!"

"Phew!" exclaimed Tom Merry, jumping up. "Look out!"

"It's all wight——"

"Something fell on me——"

"It's all wight, deah boy; it was I."

"You—you ass!" gasped Kerr, shoving D'Arcy back into the opposite seat. "You utter ass! What do you mean by sprawling on me?"

"You see——"

"Do you think I'm going to nurse you because you're sleepy?" roared Kerr.

"Bai Jove!"

"You can go and sit on Blake's knee, if you like, you're jolly well not going to sit on mine. You'll want a blessed feeding-bottle next!"

"You uttah ass! It was an accident."

Kerr rubbed his head.

"Well, don't jam your silly chin on my napper by accident any more, or there'll be another accident, and somebody's nose will be hurt in it."

"My chin is hurt already."

"Well, why can't you keep it on your own side of the carriage?"

"I wegard you as an ass, Kerr. The twain jolted me ovah."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Fatty Wynn woke up.

"Hallo! Is this Dover?"

"No," grinned Tom Merry; "it's over! Are you hungry, Fatty?"

The fat Fourth-Former blinked at him.

"Well, now you speak of it, Merry, I'm a little bit peckish."

And he attacked the contents of his package. But he was sleepy, and he soon dropped off again with a half-eaten sausage-roll in his hand.

"I'll change places with you, Kangaroo, if you like," said Kerr.

"Certainly," said the Cornstalk chum, getting up. "But why? You've got your back to the engine there."

"Oh, I should like to sit beside Gussy!"

They changed seats, and D'Arcy's face cleared, and he gave Kerr a cordial smile.

"Vewy good, Kerr. I am glad to see you not beah any malice for that little accident. I am wuff expressions you used in the heat of the moment. I am vewy pleased to have you ovah here."

"You see, I don't want you to biff me again when you start rolling," explained Kerr brutally. "Kangaroo can have the next lot. He's a School House chap, and it's only fair that he should have it."

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus.

Kerr went to sleep in the corner seat. The juniors did not awaken again till, close upon midnight, the train gave a series of heavy jars, and stopped.

Tom Merry jumped up.

"Dover, by Jove!"

The platform was dark and crowded. Porters mingled

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their deep voices in the endless din. Tom Merry threw open the carriage door. Bags were piled upon a willing porter, and when he had received all D'Arcy's property, he looked like Father Christmas laden with presents. As he was entitled to payment per package, he was likely to have a nice little bill for the juniors aboard the boat.

"Calais boat!" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, sir!"

Tom Merry rushed off to see to the trunks. Blake linked his arm in that of Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's looked at him doubtfully.

"How long before the boat starts, Blake, deah boy?" he asked.

"Blessed if I know. I think about twenty minutes."

"Then there is time for me to wun out to a hattah's—"

"Rats!"

"Blake, I insist—"

"More rats!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Take his other arm, Dig."

"Certainly."

And Arthur Augustus was escorted to the Calais boat.

CHAPTER 8.

The Calais Boat.

THE boat was pretty well crowded. Nervous passengers, crossing the Channel for the first time, asked continually whether it was the Calais boat, unaware that it could not possibly have been any other. A man stood at the gangway announcing that it was the "Callis" boat, while another a little further off, who had evidently picked up a little French somewhere on the Channel, was announcing with equal energy that it was the "Callay" boat.

The juniors grouped on deck round their luggage, and polite attendants brought them deck chairs, and were duly tipped. The porter who had borne their packages from the train claimed a small fortune in return, and D'Arcy paid it without demur. Whether all the packages were still there it was impossible to see in the darkness, but the chums hoped for the best, and took care not to suggest to D'Arcy that some of them might have been lost.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy. "There's quite a crowd. How long shall we be upon the watah, Tom Mewwy?"

"Just over the hour."

"That's not so much, deah boy. I hope none of you fellow will be seasick. It doesn't look like bein' a wuff night."

"The Channel's always a bit rough at night."

"Oh, dear!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Are you hungry, Fatty?"

"N-n-no!"

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Tom Merry, in astonishment.

Fatty Wynn did not reply. He was gazing apprehensively into the deep darkness seaward, broken fitfully by the moving light of the lighthouse.

The ship was not moving yet; but Fatty Wynn was already beginning to wish that he had not laid quite so solid a foundation.

"These chairs are quite comfy," said Arthur Augustus, stretching his legs a little. "How nice of the attendants to bring them wound so quickly, and for nothin'. The chap told me there was no charge."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah in that wemark, Figgins."

"Oh, my hat! Never mind; I tipped him, so it's all right," grinned Figgins.

"Bai Jove! Did he want a tip?"

"Oh, no; he's an altruist, and he stays on these boats for the special purpose of putting his principles into practice," said Figgins.

"Oh, pway don't wot."

A French face loomed up in the gloom—a dark face with a beard and black eyes. A pair of hands held out a mackintosh.

A voice speaking at express speed reiterated something, in which the word "jambes" alone was intelligible to English ears.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, putting up his eyeglass and surveying the man, who had a heap of waterproofs over his arm, and was still jabbering away excitedly. "Bai Jove! Is that chap a Frenchman, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes," said Tom, laughing.

"Is he talkin' to us?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"I don't want any jam, thank you," said D'Arcy politely. "It's vewy nice of you, but I am not going to eat just before the voyage."

The man stared, and jabbered again. Kerr went off into a shriek, but D'Arcy was too much occupied with the Frenchman to notice that.

The swell of St. Jim's shook his head.

"Non, non," he exclaimed; "I don't want any jam."

The man gesticulated to the mackintoshes.

"Bai Jove, if this is a specimen of the French nation, I don't think vewy much of their intelligence!" said D'Arcy. "I've told him in plain English that I don't want any jam, and he goes on jabbewin' all the same."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Figgins. "Perhaps he doesn't understand plain English. He might prefer it in plain French."

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

And D'Arcy thought of his French, and started.

"Non, non, merci!" he exclaimed. "Je ne veux pas que vous donnez moi le confiture."

"Oh, hold me, somebody!" shrieked Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pewwaps my Fwrench may be a little wocky, but he ought to undahstand," said D'Arcy. "I know that jam is confiture in French."

"Ha, ha! He wasn't talking about jam."

"Weally, Kerr, he used the vewy word."

"Ha, ha, ha! He said jambes—j-a-m-b-e-s!"

"Oh! That means legs!"

"Of course it does."

"But what could he possibly mean?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in bewilderment. "He cannot suppose that I want any legs—legs of mutton, or anything."

"Ha, ha! He wants to give you a mackintosh to cover your legs, you duffer, against the spray. We shall have lots of it when the boat begins to roll."

"Oh, I see! Speak a little more slowly, old man, and I may be able to catch on," said D'Arcy, forgetting again that the man did not understand English.

The man jabbered again, and gesticulated.

"Yes, yes, certainly," said D'Arcy. "Oui, oui, mon garcon. Showez the blessed things on my jambes if you likez-vous."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The man understood gestures, if not words, and he grinned and covered up D'Arcy's legs with the mackintosh, tucking it in on either side of the deck chair.

"Good!" said Arthur Augustus. "This is vewy warm. Thank you vewy much—I mean, merci, mon ami, merci beaucoup."

The man gesticulated.

"Bai Jove! I suppose he wants a tip."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy extracted a sixpence from his pocket, and handed it to the Frenchman. He looked at it, and gesticulated.

"My only hat! He's doing it again!" exclaimed D'Arcy, watching the Frenchman's gesticulations in great surprise. "Is this an entahtainment, I wonder?"

The Frenchman began to shriek. In the midst of the volume of rapidly-uttered French, D'Arcy distinguished a word.

"Deux! That means two, doesn't it, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, that's correct."

"Good! It's awfully polite of the chap to make all this fuss about givin' me an extwa mac. No, it's all wight, deah boy, one's enough."

Jabber, jabber, jabber!

"One's enough," repeated D'Arcy. "C'est—c'est—what's the beastly word? It suffice, you know—c'est—lemme see—assez. See?"

Jabber, jabber, jabber!

"Bai Jove! He must be doin' this for exahcise."

"Non, non!" shrieked the man. "Un autre."

"He's talkin' about oats now. Certainly not; I don't want any oats. I wogard the question as wiculous."

"Un autre—un autre!"

"I tell you, I don't wewuire any oats," said D'Arcy testily. "Pway explain to the ass, Kerr, as you seem to be able to guess what it all means."

The Scottish junior shrieked.

"He means he wants another, you ass—not another mac.—another tanner."

"Bai Jove! But it's watah wotten bad form to ask for a tip in this way."

"Ha, ha! It's not a tip! The charge for the mac. is a shilling."

"Bai Jove! That's too much."

"Better explain that to him in French," grinned Kerr. "Otherwise, you'd better shell out the other tanner. He'll have a fit soon. He must have a pain in his throatt already."

D'Arcy paid the other sixpence, and the Frenchman finally left him alone. Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath.

"Bai Jove! This is quite a twial to one's feelin's, you

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know. Some of them make a charge, and some of them want tips. How the dooce are you to tell one from another? I dare say we shall meet some boundahs who make a charge and want tips as well?"

"That you will," grinned Tom Merry; "and plenty of them. The best-known word in the French language is 'pourboire,' and that means a tip—and they spring it on you at every turn. I believe the backsheesh in Turkey is nothing to it; a chap who has been there told me so, anyway."

"Bai Jove! I shall have to keep a sepawate pocket for half-fwanc pieces. Did you notice whethah it was a tannah or a half-sovewoin I gave that chap, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ha, ha! How could I see in the dark?"

"I twust my governah will not forget to send off the cash to the hotel in Pawis by the first post," said Arthur Augustus. "It must be vewy wotten to find yourself in a fowewn city without any tin; though, of course, I could always bowwow of you chaps. If I have to, you had bettah keep count, as I nevah wemembah money mattsahs."

"Oh, good!"

"We're moving!" exclaimed Manners.

"Bai Jove!"

The Calais boat was in motion.

CHAPTER 9.

Crossing the Channel.

FATTY WYNN leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes. The fat Fourth-Former of St. Jim's would have given untold gold to be able to sleep then. But sleep would not visit his eyelids.

The best way to avoid sea-sickness is to resolutely refuse to think upon the subject. This will put it off, even if it does not save you altogether. But Fatty Wynn simply could not help thinking about it.

The dreadful vision was before him all the time. Dreadful recollections of his last trip to sea rose in his mind.

The other juniors were feeling very fit as yet.

They rose from the seats, and walked up and down the deck to keep themselves warm, as the vessel glided away from Dover pier.

High overhead streamed the rays from the lighthouse.

Tom Merry glanced round him with satisfaction.

There was a sense of adventure and romance in travelling by night, which is lost in the glare of day, and to the junior's mind it compensated for the lessening of material comfort.

"This is jolly!" said Figgins.

"Ripping!" said Kangaroo. "I don't feel a bit fagged, either. We had a pretty good snooze in the train."

"Wait till you get into the French train," grinned Lowther.

"Oh, no good meeting troubles half-way. How jolly that light is? It meets the Calais light in the middle of the Channel, I believe."

"It's weally only a step acwoss," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It would be wathah intwestin' to cwow it in an aeowplane, like that chap Blewiot. By the way, there's an aeowplane exhibish on in Pawis. We mustn't miss that."

"We sha'n't miss anything," said Blake emphatically. "We sha'n't even miss you, Gussy. I shall keep you tied to my wrist all the time."

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy."

There was a deep groan in the gloom. The juniors started.

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

It was Fatty Wynn.

He was leaning forward in his chair, in a state of suffering compared with which the tortures of the Inquisition were a playful joke.

"Hallo, Fatty! Feel bad?"

"Groo!"

"He's got it," said Kerr. "Poor old Fatty!"

"Groo!"

"Get some water for him," said Figgins. "Here, you chap, you speak English? Bring some water."

Jabber, jabber, jabber!

"Oh, dear, it's a French ass. L'eau," said Figgins—

"L'eau, s'il vous plait, pour mon ami—vous comprenez?"

"Oui, m'sieur!"

The man brought a glass of water in a few seconds, and thoughtfully brought a big tin basin, too. Fatty Wynn was in a terrible state already, and the vessel was hardly on the sea yet.

Figgins tipped the man, and put the glass to Fatty's lips. Fatty took a little gulp, and gave Figgy a look of thanks; he could not speak. As a novelist would say, his feelings at that moment were too deep for words.

"Bai Jove, this is wuff on Fatty!" said D'Arcy. "The

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boat is beginnin' to well, too. I hope you fellows will be able to stand it."

"Worry over yourself, old chap," said Blake kindly. "You'll be stretched on the deck inside ten minutes."

"Nothin' of the sort, deah boy. I'm a pwetty good sailah. I am goin' to look aftah you chaps."

"I don't think!" grinned Blake. "What do you say, Dig?"

Dig did not say anything.

He sat down again, with a strange look upon his face, and he did not venture to open his lips, apparently in dread of some catastrophe if he did.

The boat was getting out into the sea, and the sea was rolling a little. The vessel rolled, too, and from various parts of the deck came sounds of suffering.

"Feel any bettah, Fatty, deah boy?"

Groan!

"Does it hurt?"

Groan!

"Shall I pat you on the back?"

Groan!

"Bai Jove!"

"Let's walk up and down briskly," said Kangaroo. "That's the dodge, you know. I wasn't sick on the voyage from Australia to England, after the first day."

"The Channel's worse than the Pacific, travellers say," said Tom Merry doubtfully.

Groan!

"Poor old Fatty!"

Figgins and Kerr remained with their chum. Fatty Wynn rocked in his chair. He would have pitched out of it several times, but for Figgins's restraining hand.

"Think you'd feel better below, Fatty?"

Groan!

"I've heard chaps say that lying down in a bunk is good," said Kerr. "You give more to the motion of the ship, you know."

Groan!

"Poor old Fatty! Will you try downstairs? Don't try to speak—just nod your head if you'd like us to take you down," said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn feebly nodded his head. He would have been willing to try anything at that moment to cure the terrible mal-de-mer, even to the extent of jumping overboard.

Figgins and Kerr helped him to the companion, and with some difficulty in the rolling of the vessel, they navigated him downstairs into the saloon.

Fatty collapsed upon a bunk in a state of anguish.

Figgins sniffed savagely.

"My hat! The place is as stuffy as—the inside of—of a hat-box! Ow! Look at all those poor rotters—all sick!"

"Blessed if I'm going to look," said Kerr. "Not much!"

"This is worse than the deck."

"A jolly sight worse! You can't see the others there."

"Feel better, Fatty?"

Groan!

"Like to go on deck again?"

Groan!

Figgins caught hold of the bunk, and held on, a sudden curious greenish tinge coming over his face.

"Bad?" asked Kerr quickly.

"Oh, no," said Figgins haltingly; "I'm—I'm all right. I'm perfectly all right. I'm never sea-sick, you know—practically never! I—I'm all right now."

"Oh!" groaned Fatty.

"Like to go up again?"

"Get me out of this, for mercy's sake!" groaned Fatty.

"Right-ho! Lend a hand, Kerr."

They navigated Fatty Wynn to the stairs again. Figgins gave a sudden lurch, and sat down on the lowest step—and we draw a veil over the anguish that followed.

"Oh!" groaned Figgins.

"Ah!" groaned Fatty Wynn.

"Lend a hand, steward, will you?" said Kerr.

The two sufferers were brought on deck again. The keen clear air of the sea revived them somewhat, and they were able to stagger to their chairs.

Digby was in anguish by this time, and Blake and D'Arcy were sitting down. Blake was staring stonily before him, without speaking, and an expression was on his face which indicated an iron resolution.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was in shadow, and could not be seen. But his hat had been crushed once more by bumping against something, and he had not even attempted to restore its shape.

"This is what comes of taking the night-boat," said Kerr. "Blessed if I haven't a good mind to give D'Arcy another bumping."

D'Arcy did not speak.

"Do you hear, you frabjous burler?"

"Ow!"

Another complete tale of the Boys of St. Jim's—By Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER 10.

Land at Last!

FARE out in the dark Channel the Dover light crossed the circling light from Calais. But the juniors of St. Jim's were not looking at either. All excepting Kangaroo were sitting in the deck-chairs, or hanging at the side, in dumb misery. The Cornstalk was feeling a little qualmy himself, but he had not yet given in. There were many passengers on deck who seemed to find life a weary burden, and from below came occasional sounds which indicated that matters were no better there, and were probably a little worse.

It was not what a sailorman would call a rough night; but it was rough enough to a landsman. Near Tom Merry a man was sitting and drinking coffee, and Tom wondered how he could do it. A passenger—evidently a hardened case—was smoking a cigar and looking towards the Calais light.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy faintly. "Bai Jove!"

"Oh dear!"

"Is land in sight yet?"

"Ow! Why did I ever come to sea?" groaned Fatty Wynn. "I was all right on dry land! I must have been off my rocker! To think that I might be safe in bed at St. Jim's now, if I'd have had the sense of a rabbit. Oh dear!" And Fatty almost wept.

"Just our luck to choose a rough night for a crossing!" groaned Digby.

"This isn't a rough night," said Kangaroo. "This is calm!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"You should have seen some of our nights in the Pacific when I was coming over from Australia! Why——"

"Ow!"

"Gwheat Scott! The time-tables put this crossoin' at an hour and five minutes, and we have been the best part of the night aboard already!"

"About four or five hours, I think!" said Blake.

"Oh dear!"

"Just over half an hour," said Kangaroo, looking at his watch.

"Oh, pway don't wot, deah boy!"

"It's the truth."

"I refuse to cweddit anythin' of the sort. I have been suffewin' for hours. I think I can see the sun wisin'!"

"Poor old Gussy! The sun won't rise till we're near Paris in the Nord Express!"

"I am sure I can see a light in the sky!"

"My hat," exclaimed Kangaroo, looking round, "you're right! It's the Calais light, not the sun, though!"

"Then we must be near land," said Figgins hopefully.

"Well, getting near," said Kangaroo.

The ship forged on. In the heart of the Channel the water was rougher than ever. The desultory talk died away. Misery was too great for words. The sight of the darkly-heaving water, dim in the gloom, made the passengers shudder. Wild thoughts of a peaceful resting-place deep down under that heaving mass flashed into the mind of Fatty Wynn. He was the acutest sufferer. He smiled at the idea of its being called heroism to face death at sea. What was death compared with this?

"The light's getting nearer," said Kangaroo hopefully.

The Cornstalk's voice was subdued now.

D'Arcy cast a weary glance round.

"Bai Jove, we're not goin' stwaight towards it, deah boy!"

Throb, throb, throb! went the steamer.

"Bai Jove, I weally think somebody ought to speak to the captain, and tell him he ought to head diwectly for land!"

"I suppose he's doing his best," said Kangaroo soothingly. "The water's getting smoothe, too. Can't you notice it?"

"Blessed if I can!" grunted Blake. "They say these big boats don't roll; but if this one isn't rolling, I'll eat my hat!"

"Well, I suppose the biggest one's bound to roll a little."

"This isn't rolling a little—it's nearly rolling over!" said Blake peevishly. "I shouldn't be surprised to see the water coming over the side any second. Blessed if I don't write to the company about it when we get ashore—I mean, if we get ashore!"

"Oh dear!"

"Blessed if I see how you stand it, Kangaroo!" said Tom Merry. "But I've heard that the feeblest constitutions stand the sea better than strong ones."

"Rot!" said Kangaroo.

"Well, it looks as if there might be something in it," said Lowther. "Why, what's the matter with Australia?"

Kangaroo had made a sudden dive for the rail.

"Poor old Kangy! He's got it at last!"

"Bai Jove! Well, it's only fair, you know!"

The steamer forged on swiftly, but with what seemed terrible slowness to the passengers. Fatty Wynn had given up all resistance now. He had abandoned himself to the terrible malady, and he sat like a ghastly statue, saying no word, but every now and then emitting a low, painful moan.

There was a noise of quick footsteps on the deck; sailors passed on and fro, Blake started up hopefully.

"That looks like land!"

They turned their eyes towards invisible France. Lights glared at them through the night. Many lights, gleaming welcome. The steamer was getting to her berth.

"Bai Jove, land at last!"

Arthur Augustus uttered those words as if they had been at sea in an open boat for a couple of weeks. The gleaming lights of Calais gave new life to the juniors. Even Fatty Wynn "bucked up" for a moment.

"Are we getting in?" he murmured.

"Yes. Can't you feel we're not rolling now?"

"Oh, dear!"

Slowly the steamer moved in. There was a hoarse yelling of sirens, to an accompaniment of hoarse voices. Glimpses of the shore, glimpses of moving figures, glimmered in the uncertain lights.

"Here we are at last!"

Fatty Wynn raised a ghastly face.

"Sure?"

"Yes, it's Calais!"

CHAPTER 11.

The Douane.

Calais at last!

The crossing had taken little over the hour, but passengers who were seasick felt as if it were years and years.

As the ship became steady the juniors quickly recovered from their inward qualms, though they were left with a sickly feeling for a time. Fatty Wynn was the last to recover. He was still mumbling as he joined the crowd

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for the shore. The juniors collected up their hand baggage, and saw their trunks in the possession of three or four Frenchmen, who carried them off to the Douane.

They tramped ashore slowly with the big crowd moving off the steamer, and Tom Merry was careful to keep the porters in sight. The baggage was slammed down upon a long counter, where sick and tired passengers were waiting their turns for the Customs officials to examine their effects.

There was an hour before the express started for Paris, to allow of the kindly attentions of the Douane officials. The latter were quick, cheerful, and polite for the most part. With the courtesy natural to Frenchmen, they seemed desirous of giving as little trouble as possible. It is the system, and not the individuals, that causes so much bother and inconvenience to Continental travellers. The juniors, who wanted nothing so much as a rest and some hot coffee after the crossing, stood about waiting in the long, irregularly-lighted room, crowded with nervous and anxious passengers, where the officials, quick and ready as they were, were hardly able to deal with the baggage as fast as the porters slammed it down before them.

"This is jolly—I don't think!" said Figgins. "Why don't they have some blessed system of letting tourists pass in without all this rot? I suppose they don't suspect a party of schoolboys of smuggling tobacco?"

"Ha, ha! No, I suppose not! It's the system!"

"Blessed rotten system, then!"

"Well, we have it on our side of the Channel," said Manners. "Only, of course, it's not so complete, and not such a beastly bother. I believe they have a tariff against nearly everything here—you pay for bringing in a bicycle, and I've heard of a chap who had to pay on an artificial tooth—though I never quite believed that."

"Lot of rubbish," growled Figgins. "Look at those chaps at the door, with blessed swords on. See how they pop forward whenever a bag passes them, to see if it's got the chalk mark on. Like a blessed Tweedledum and Tweedledee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vous n'avez rien a declarer?"

"Nothing!" said Tom Merry. "I mean—rien!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter? You have nothing to declare, have you?"

"My parcels."

"What about them?"

"Where are they?"

"Is that a conundrum?"

"It is not a conundrum, Blake. I have left them on the boat. Boots and collars, and neckties, and shirts! Bai Jove!"

"Jolly good thing, too!" said Blake. "I suppose it never occurred to you that you'd have to pay duty on them here?"

"Bai Jove! Duty?"

"Yes, and a jolly big sum!"

"Imposs."

"It's the law, ass!"

"I mean, it's imposs, because I haven't a big sum with me."

"Then they'd detain the goods."

"But I should take them in as twavellah's luggage, deah boy!"

"There's a limit, ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass!"

"Well, dufter, then—there's a limit. The things in the trunks will pass, I expect, but a lot of packages containing newly-purchased goods—my dear chap, you'd be lucky if Tweedledum and Tweedledee yonder didn't arrest you as a smuggler."

"Gweat Scott!"

"You've had a narrow escape," said Blake solemnly.

"But—but I don't want to lose the things, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, in alarm.

"That's all right; they'll be taken back to Dover on the boat, and kept there till claimed. You can leave word here, or write to the company from Paris."

"But—"

"By Jove, they're getting through the bags!" said Tom Merry. "They're not such asses as they make themselves out to be, really!"

Tom Merry's tribute was deserved.

The Customs officials, doubtless from long experience, knew which passengers required looking after, and which didn't. The examination of the juniors' bags was very perfunctory. One or two of them were opened, and a hand was thrust in, but the greater number were chalked without being even opened. The trunks, of course, took longer, but even with them the delay was not at all what the boys had expected.

"Vous n'avez rien a delarer?"

"Non."

That was the usual formula.

"Done at last!" said Tom Merry, with a sigh of relief. "They haven't asked us to pay anything, not even on that coat of yours, Gussy."

"My coat!"

"Well, you have to pay on gramophones, I believe, and traction engines, and things, and that coat of yours is louder than a gramophone or a traction engine."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Come on!" said Blake. "Don't lose sight of the Mercuries with the trunks. They'll shove them into a train for the North Pole if they get a chance. They're the same on both sides of the water."

"Paree, Paree?" asked one of the porters.

"Yes; Paris-Nord."

"Paree-Nor!" said Figgins.

"Oui, oui, oui!"

"Like a blessed guinea-pig, isn't he, with his wee-wee-wee," said Blake. "Go ahead, old chap. I'm only saying that you're like a blessed guinea-pig, and you can't understand. Marche!"

The man grinned, and carried on the trunk. Blake had spoken with an agreeable smile on his face, and the man no doubt thought that the English lad was paying him some sort of a compliment.

As the juniors passed out of one of the great doors, the two soldiers on guard there—one on either side of the portal—darted forward to look at the bags, to make sure that they bore the mark of the Douane.

They had been darting forward like that to examine bags ever since the juniors had been there, and they looked as if they were moved by springs, and Figgy's comparison to Tweedledum and Tweedledee was not inappropriate.

"Vous n'avez rien?"

"Rien, messieurs," said Tom Merry politely.

"I have, though," said Blake. "J'ai—I mean, je l'ai."

"Eh, monsieur! Vous avez—"

"Oui; j'ai faim," said Blake. "J'ai soif. Do you tax hunger and thirst in this blessed country? Because if you do, you'd better pile it on me."

Tweedledum and Tweedledee looked decidedly puzzled. They did not understand the English part of Blake's remarks, and his telling them that he was hungry and thirsty only puzzled them.

"Je non comprends pas, monsieur," said Tweedledum.

"Comprong be blowed!" said Blake. "I'm hungry. J'ai faim—I have hunger, as you say in your blessed French. On est le blessed buffet?"

Tom Merry dragged Blake on, leaving the Frenchmen puzzled and amazed. They looked at each other significantly, and Tweedledum tapped his forehead, and Tweedledee nodded solemnly. It was quite plain to them that the English were mad.

"You ass, come on!" said Tom Merry. "What do you think Fatty Wynn will be like if he doesn't get a square meal before he gets into the Paris train?"

"I say, I'm feeling peckish," said Fatty Wynn. "Curious how a chap gets over sea-sickness as soon as he gets on dry land. It seems like a dream. We ought really to have stood it a bit better, you know."

"Ha, ha! It's easy to say that on terra firma."

"Yes, I suppose so. Never mind: I'm awfully hungry. Here's the buffet. If you fellows will bag the seats, I'll go in and order supper for ten."

"Good!"

And while Tom Merry & Co. "bagged the seats"—literally, for they captured them by slamming the bags down upon them—Fatty Wynn entered the station buffet, and ordered supper, and he did not err upon the side of stinting.

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"Look out!" yelled Kerr. But it was too late. The bag plumped upon D'Arcy's chest, and he sat down on the floor of the carriage among the feet of the St. Jim's juniors.

CHAPTER 12.

Fatty Wynn is Quite Himself Again.

FATTY WYNN was quite himself again when they sat down to supper. In fact, that terrible mal-de-mer seemed to have freshened him up, and made him capable of more than usual efforts.

The juniors sat at three little tables in a row, and the tables were well laden. The garcon in attendance was very attentive.

Fatty Wynn's orders had been generous; and French waiters expect tips in exact proportions to the amount of the bill. The longer the bill, the bigger the tip. So Fatty Wynn's orders delighted the heart of the garcon.

Cold chicken, ham and beef, disappeared rapidly before the hungry juniors. They were all hungry, all ready to distinguish themselves in the gastronomic line. And the viands were good. Fatty Wynn had ordered from beginning to end, but every now and then he glanced at the menu and jerked out a fresh order, and the garcon was kept busy coming and going.

"Jolly good!" said Blake. "Garsong!"

"M'sieur."

"Donnez moi le blessed salt."

"Eh, bien, m'sieur! Le-le-le blessey——"

"Le sel, s'il vous plait," grinned Kerr.

"Oh, I haven't got into the way of it yet," said Blake. "Never mind; what's in a name, so long as you get the salt? This chicken is all right, garsong."

"Oui, oui, m'sieur."

"Good old guinea-pig! Any more ham knocking about?"

"Here you are!" said Digby. "I say, take care, you know; these garsongs at the seaports often know a bit of English. They pick it up from the travellers."

"Oh, this chap doesn't understand," said Blake. "You could say anything to him."

"Bai Jove, it's a safah course only to say polite things, deah boy!"

"Rats! Besides, I am polite. If you say I'm not polite, Gussy, I shall be under the painful necessity of interrupting the proceedings by giving you a thick ear."

"I should uttably wefuse——"

"Pepper this way," said Manners.

"Certainly, deah boy."

"Any frogs on the menu?" asked Blake, who was determined to keep on, if only to show his confidence that the garcon did not understand any English. "I don't think a French menu is quite complete without them. Have you any frogs, garsong?"

"Je ne comprends pas, m'sieur."

"There you are, Dig; I told you he didn't comprong," said Blake triumphantly. "You could ask him where he dug up his face, and he wouldn't do anything but grin and say, 'Je ne comprong pah.' It's all right. By the way, I've heard that they sometimes stew puppy-dogs in this country. I say, garson!"

"Shut up, Blake!"

"Rats! Garson!"

"M'sieur."

"Do you make fricassees of puppies on this side of the Channel?" asked Blake, with a bland smile.

"Ah, non, non!" said the garcon, with an equally bland grin. "Monsieur is quite safe."

And he turned away with empty plates.

His last remark had been made in excellent English, and Blake turned scarlet. The juniors simply roared.

"Bai Jove," gasped D'Arcy, "I wegard that as wathah funnah! You are quite safe, Blake, deah boy."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha, ha! M'sieur is quite safe," yelled Figgins. "Oh, Blake, fancy giving the blessed Frenchman an opening like that! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you New House ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake glowered. He had indeed made an ass of himself, and he could not deny it. The garcon had scored, and scored well, though at the risk of his tip. Arthur Augustus wagged a warning forefinger at Blake.

"Listen to me, Blake, deah boy."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort. You have tweeked the garcon with gweat wudeness. I considah that you owe him an apology."

"Rats!"

"I put it to the fellows," said D'Arcy, looking round. "You have made insultin' remarks to the garcon. It would serve you right if he slanged you back again. You thought he could not understand, but he must have understood."

"He said he didn't."

"Pewwaps he understood some, and not the west, then. Anyway, you have tweeked him with wudeness, and you owe him an apology. I appeal to the fellows."

"Gussy," said Tom Merry. "I recommend Blake to apologise, and be more careful in future."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"He is comin' back now," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "If you do not do the pwopah thing, Blake, I shall be unable to considah you any longah in the light of a friend."

"Ass!"

"I decline to be addressed as an ass. Weally—"

"Here he is," said Tom Merry. "Seriously, Blake, you must have hurt the chap's feelings, and you ought to tell him you're sorry."

Blake did not reply. He had a short inward struggle, and then he turned to the waiter, who came up with his usual cheerful expression.

"I say, garson!"

"M'sieur!"

"I was only joking just now, you know. I didn't think you understood. Anyway, I'm sorry for what I said. Savvy?"

The garcon nodded.

"Oui, m'sieur, je comprends, parfaitement. M'sieur is very good."

"I wegard you as havin' done the pwopah thing, Blake."

"Oh, you go and eat cokernuts!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"What does that blessed bell mean?" asked Fatty Wynn, looking up from his tenth plate.

"Time to sheer off."

"I haven't finished my supper. I'm only beginning."

"Better have the express kept back, then," said Blake sarcastically. "Shall I run and hang on the engine?"

"Well, I haven't finished. I suppose I can take something in the train, though."

"Take the whole blessed buffet, and the garcon too," advised Lowther.

Fatty Wynn did not go quite as far as that, but he made up a quite respectably sized parcel to take with him. The juniors left the buffet. The "addition" came to a figure that made even D'Arcy open his eyes, and the garcon's "pourboire" was very considerable; but that did not affect Fatty Wynn. He was happy. He had had one feed, and was just going to have another; and what more was required to make anybody happy?

The juniors poured out of the buffet.

D'Arcy, with his remarkable coat, was not sorry to get out of the light. That coat was making a sensation wherever it appeared. It was so much too big for D'Arcy that he stumbled about in it, and he had to gather up the skirts in his hand to walk with safety. The train was not

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starting yet. As the juniors came out, a couple of Frenchmen were talking near the entrance of the buffet, and D'Arcy caught the word "habit."

The swell of St. Jim's turned pink.

"Did you hear that, Blake, deah boy?"

"Eh, what?"

"They were wemarkin' on my coat."

"I thought they were talking about an abbey," said Blake indifferently. "I'm sure I caught the word abbey."

"The French word for coat is pwonounced abbey."

"Oh, is it? Well, I told you that that coat would make a sensation on this side of the water," grinned Blake. "Of course, they haven't seen anything like it before."

"I considah that you boundahs were wottin' when you let me buy this coat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can see no cause for wibald laughtah. The worst of it is that I cannot get wid of it now. I weally do not desire to entah the Pawis hotel in this coat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was vewy warm on the boat," remarked D'Arcy. "That's all wight. But it is a howwow to look at, and it doesn't fit me now as it did when I twied it on in the shop in the Stwand."

"You should do your shopping at more appropriate times, Gussy, and perhaps you wouldn't be rotted on the subject!" remarked Kangaroo.

"I wegard you as a set of wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall use a wug in the twain, and leave this coat here," said D'Arcy. "I am goin' to thwow the wotten thing away!"

"Well, it's about the best thing you can do with it!" agreed Tom Merry. "Buck up! The train will be starting!"

There was a platform seat near the buffet entrance. Arthur Augustus strolled to it and sat down, and quietly slipped off his coat there. He let it fall upon the seat beside him. Blake leaned out of the carriage door.

"Come on, Gussy!"

"Wight you are, deah boy!"

D'Arcy ran for the train, leaving the coat on the seat. He flattered himself that he had got rid of it without attracting attention.

"That's all wight!" he remarked, as he jumped in. "I've left the beastly thing on the seat. If I evah buy a weady-made coat again, Blake, I shall not take your advice!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Monsieur!"

It was a yell from the platform. The engine was snorting—the train was about to start. A porter tore up to the carriage, and jumped upon the step. D'Arcy gasped. The loud check coat was on the man's arm.

"Monsieur! Monsieur!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "He's found your coat; he thinks you forgot it on the seat!"

"I won't take it!"

"You must, ass! Tip him!"

"I wufuse! I—"

"Don't be stingy, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"The man's trying to serve you. This is French politeness. Give him half-a-franc."

"I wegard it as wotten!"

The porter was beaming. He evidently thought he had done something very useful and gratifying in bringing back the coat the English lad had forgotten on the seat. It would have been cruel to un deceive him; or, rather, impossible to make him understand. D'Arcy took the coat, and placed a franc in the man's palm.

"Thank you vewy much!" he said, with an effort. "Merci—merci!"

"Ah, merci, monsieur!"

The train was already moving, carrying the porter along on the step of the carriage. He jumped off to the platform, and touched his cap to the chums as the train rolled out of Calais-Maritime station.

The St. Jim's juniors were off to Paris!

CHAPTER 13.

The Nord Express.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS looked at the coat, and finally donned it, and sat down. As he had to take it with him, he thought he might as well have the benefit of it. And it was cold in the train. Night travelling late in the season is not comfortable, unless one uses the "wagons-lit." The juniors wrapped themselves in coats and rugs, settled on the cushions as best they could, and prepared to "stick out" the journey to Paris.

Another complete tale of the Boys
of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

"I'm feeling sleepy!" said Fatty Wynn, relinquishing his attack upon his provisions at last.

"Go hon!" said Tom Merry. "You surprise me! It's only one o'clock in the morning!"

"Well, I'm going to sleep."

And the New House junior closed his eyes, and nodded off.

"Can't do better," said Blake. "Here's another. Not much chance to see the country here, either. Black as your hat!"

"We could have seen it if we had come by the day boat," growled Kangaroo. "Suppose we bump Gussy now!"

"Weally, Kangaroo—"

"It would have been dark by the time we got to Calais, I expect," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "Never mind, we'll see it going back, if there's anything to see. I'm going to explore the Land of Nod just now!"

And he closed his eyes.

"Bai Jove! We shall be in Pawis by dawn!" Arthur Augustus remarked. "I shall leave this coat in the twain. I wogard you as a set of wottahs for havin' let me buy such a feahful thing! By the way, my young bwothah Wally hasn't turned up? You wemembah he vowed he would come to Pawis, too!"

"He's a beggar for cheek!" said Blake. "Of course, the Head wouldn't let a kid like that come. He wouldn't let you come, if we weren't here to look after you!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Good-night!"

"I wogard that wemark—"

"Groo!"

And Jack Blake went to sleep.

The Nord Express rushed on through the dim night. The juniors were soon all asleep, though they woke up every now and then, by fits and starts, to find that the night was still black, and the train still rushing on.

There were several stoppages, and sometimes they woke, and sometimes they didn't. They were not afraid of being carried past their destination. The Gare du Nord at Paris was the terminus of the line.

Arthur Augustus slept soundly for a great distance. The swell of St. Jim's would have been shocked if he could have seen himself as he slept. The crossing of the Channel and the night travelling had left its mark on him. His collar was rumpled and soiled, his necktie awry, his clothes ruffled and rumpled, even his hair was not tidy. The hideous check coat was the finishing touch. The other juniors all looked much the same, except for the coat.

The train jerked and banged, and D'Arcy awoke.

"Bai Jove! Is this Pawis?"

The train had stopped, and the lights of a station gleamed at the windows. Arthur Augustus put his head out. A porter looked at him.

"Is this Pawis, deah boy?"

The man mumbled something, in which the word "comprends" was the only one distinguishable.

"Bai Jove! Sowwy, deah boy; I forgot you didn't speak English! Est il Pawee?"

"Creil," said the man.

"Bai Jove! I've never heard of it, but I suppose it isn't Pawis. Thank you vewy much—I mean, merci beaucoup!"

And D'Arcy sat down again.

The train restarted with a banging of doors, but Arthur did not feel inclined for more sleep. He took out his pocket-mirror, and examined his face, and gave a start.

"Bai Jove, I do look a sight! I shall have to get a clean-up somehow before we get to Pawis!"

He poked Tom Merry in the ribs. The hero of the Shell gave a grunt.

"I say, Tom Mewwy!"

"Groo-oo!"

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy!"

"Yaroo! 'Tain't rising-bell! Shurrup!"

"But I want to speak to you, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking him.

Tom Merry came with a jump out of the land of dreams.

"Eh, what? Is it Paris?"

"No. We have just passed Creil. I don't know where that is, but we have just passed it, deah boy. I want a clean-up before we get to Pawis. I couldn't possibly pwesent myself in the Wue de Wivoli in this state!"

Tom Merry glared.

"Do you mean to say that you have woke me up to tell me that, you dangerous lunatic?"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a dangewous lunatic!"

"You—you frabjous ass!"

"I should be sowwy to commence a holiday in Pawis by givin' you a feahful thwashin', Tom Mewwy, so pway do not pwovoke me! You know what I am like when my tempah is woused. I want to know if I can get a wash on the twain."

"Of course you can, idiot!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Shut up, and let me get to sleep!"

"But where can I get the wash, deah boy?"

"Down the corridor, of course, you silly ass!"

And Tom Merry closed his eyes again.

"Bai Jove! Quite wight! I ought weally to have thought of that!" remarked Arthur Augustus, and he went along the corridor of the train.

He was feeling so dirty and discomposed by night travelling that he felt that a wash would be a boon and a blessing. Naturally, he had not yet caught on to French customs, or he would have avoided that door as he might have avoided the mouth of a cannon.

"Bai Jove! Here we are!"

He opened the door. He caught one glimpse of a young lady calmly combing out her back hair, and then he shut the door and fled.

He regained his carriage with crimson cheeks. Tom Merry blinked at him sleepily.

"Hallo! You've been quick! Had your wash already?"

"N-n-no, deah boy!"

"Aren't you going to have it?"

"N-n-no! On second thoughts, I have decided to wait till we get to the hotel in Pawis!"

And Arthur Augustus sat down, and hid his pink face behind the folds of his famous coat.

CHAPTER 14. The Coat Again!

"PARIS!" It was Figgins who shouted out the word, shaking the juniors till he woke them. All of them had been soundly asleep when the train stopped in the Nord station in Paris, and only Figgins had awakened. He had promptly awakened the others.

"Paris!" said Tom Merry, rubbing his eyes. "Good!"

"Bai Jove! Pawis at last!"

"Well, here we are again!" said Blake. "Hand those bags down! You can look after the trunks, Merry, while I look after Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

They jumped out of the train. Bags and portmanteaux and rugs and umbrellas were borne out, and apportioned among them. Tom Merry looked after the trunks. Arthur Augustus looked anxious.

"Blake, deah boy—"

"Can you carry another bag, Gussy?"

"I have one in each hand already, deah boy!"

"So you have! Never mind; carry this umbrella in your teeth, will you?"

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

"Then I shall have to put it under my arm. I hope this is not the beginning of the end, Gussy. I can't have you refusing to do obliging things all the while we're in Paris!"

"Weally, you know—"

"This way! I want some coffee!"

"And I want some grub!" said Fatty Wynn. "I've never heard it remarked upon that the air of this country gives you an appetite, but I find it does. I feel jolly hungry!"

"You don't need a change of air for that, Fatty."

"Of course I've been fasting a lot owing to the travelling—"

"Ha, ha! Fasting for about an hour, I suppose."

"Well, I'm jolly hungry now, anyway! I think I'll make for the hotel here. I suppose there is one? You'll find me there!"

And Fatty Wynn ambled off.

"I say, Blake, deah boy, how do you think I look?"

"A regular sight!"

"Weally—"

"You'd better shove that coat back into the carriage. It was a joke, but I think you've carried the joke far enough!" grinned Blake.

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus stepped into the carriage and stripped off the objectionable coat and threw it upon the seat. He stepped out again with a great sense of relief.

"Bai Jove, that's all wight! I shall nevah see the feahful thing again, now!"

"Shall we breakfast here, or get on to the hotel?" asked Figgins. "It's jolly early, and I don't feel very hungry!"

"More seedy than hungry!" said Lowther. "Night travelling does tell on a chap!"

"Yaas, wathah! I feel quite dirty and wuffed!"

"You look it, too!"

ANSWERS

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"We must manage to get a clean up somehow," said D'Arcy. "I cannot present myself to the Pawis public in this messy state! That is vewwy important. We can get cleaned while Fatty Wynn is gorgin', and then all start togetah!"

"Good wheeze!"

And indeed a good wash and general clean up at the station did work wonders with the juniors, and made them feel new boys. Then Figgins hunted Fatty Wynn out of the buffet, and dragged him off almost by main force. Fatty Wynn protested pathetically, but Figgins was adamant.

"You can get enough at the Ste. Genevieve," he said. "No time to waste now. Mr. Fawcett will be expecting us, too. We wired from London to say that we were coming by this train."

"Yes, but——"

"Oh, come on!"

"I'm hungry."

"Rats! Get a move on!"

And Fatty had to go. Tom Merry was outside, signalling to a taxicab. The horse taxis, which are so familiar a sight in Paris, appeared for the first time to the eyes of the St. Jim's juniors. One, of course, was not enough for the party. Three were called up, and the luggage was piled into them, and the juniors followed.

Tom Merry was the last to enter, and he had his foot on the step when an excited man in uniform rushed out of the station and stopped him.

"M'sieur! M'sieur!"

"Hallo!"

The Frenchman jabbered rapidly in his own tongue. Tom Merry could both speak and understand French at St. Jim's, but French at this rate, and in the colloquial style, was too much for him. He hardly followed a word.

"I suppose it's another *pourboire*," said Blake, from the next taxi. "Give him a franc."

"Well, I suppose that's what it is."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here you are," said Tom Merry, holding out a silver franc to the man.

The Frenchman stared at it blankly.

"Non, no, no, no, non!" he said volubly.

"My hat," said Kangaroo, "he wants more! Perhaps he's some giddy officer or other, by his uniform! Do they tip officers here, I wonder?"

"Of course not."

"Pawpaws he's a guard, or a shuntah, or somethin'," said D'Arcy. "It's vewwy hard to tell the difference between one Frenchman and another when they're in uniform."

"Make it two francs, Tommy."

"All right."

Tom selected a second silver piece and held it out. The man gazed at it in amazement.

"Non, non, non, non!"

"Make it a fiver!" said Lowther. "For goodness' sake let's get off—all Paris is collecting here already!"

All Paris was not collecting, but a goodly crowd gathered round, looking on with curiosity. Every member of it began to join in the explanation, making confusion worse confounded.

"I want to be off!" yelled Tom Merry. "Je parte—vous savez?"

"Non, non, non! Vous attendez!"

"Bai Jove! He's talking about tongs now!"

"He's telling us to wait," said Kerr.

"We're not going to wait! It can't be anything to do with the Customs, and we haven't broken any laws—yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Knock him down!" said Figgins.

"Bai Jove, that would be wathah wuff! The chap may be twyin' to do us a service of some sort, for all we know!"

"Never mind! Knock him down, and let's be off!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the Frenchman, waving both hands, and then pointing at a porter who was emerging from the station. "C'est la!"

"Say what?" said Blake.

Tom Merry looked at the porter and yelled. The man had the famous check coat over his arm. The gentleman in uniform had evidently rushed forth to stop the chums while their property was restored to them.

D'Arcy's face was a study as he looked at the famous coat. He had fancied that he had seen the last of it when he left it in the empty railway-carriage, but that reach-me-down coat was evidently destined to haunt him.

"Gweat Scott! It's the coat!"

The man who had detained them beamed.

The porter came up with a great air of importance, and the crowd all beamed as much as the man in uniform.

They were all evidently glad to see the lost property restored to these young Englishmen, members of a nation very popular in France at this time.

"Gweat Scott!" said D'Arcy again.

"Take it, for goodness' sake, Gussy!" said Blake. "Bury it somewhere quietly later on! We shall never get away if you try to explain!"

D'Arcy took the coat. He thanked the porter in his best French, and gave him a two-franc piece.

The man in uniform lifted his hat and bowed profoundly. He seemed too lofty a person to tip, so D'Arcy raised his battered toppler and bowed in return.

The Frenchman bowed again, and D'Arcy bowed again, and then he thought it had gone far enough—but no, the gentleman in uniform made a third bow, and D'Arcy had to make a third one.

How long it would have gone on if it was impossible to say, but Blake stopped it by seizing D'Arcy and forcibly throwing him into the nearest taxi. The crowd gave a yell of laughter, in which the uniformed gentleman joined, and the taxis drove off from the Gare du Nord.

Arthur Augustus struggled to his feet. Blake was not in the same taxi, so the swell of St. Jim's could not immediately wreak his vengeance.

"Blake! Blake, you wottah!"

"Hallo!" called back Blake, from his vehicle.

"I wegard you as a beast!"

"Go hon!"

"I shall give you a feahful thwashin' when we awwive at the hotel!"

"Good!"

"You are an uttah wottah!"

"Go it!"

"I wegard you with contempt!"

"Hurrah!"

And Arthur Augustus gave it up.

CHAPTER 15.

The Arrival.

IT was the first sight of Paris for the juniors, and, fatigued as they were by the night travelling, they revived as they looked about them from the taxicabs. It was bright and full morning, though the hour was yet early. Offices and shops were closed, but the streets were already assuming a lively appearance. Had the juniors known Paris better, they could have had their luggage sent from the station, and taken the underground railway to the Rue de Rivoli at about a fiftieth part of the present cost. But they were new to the capital of the universe—and, besides, they were not sorry to catch as early a sight of the great city as possible.

The Gare du Nord was left behind, and the taxis rolled along the seemingly endless Rue de Lafayette—a street named after a romantic figure in French history. The juniors looked about them with interest. They were not simple enough to assume the manners of old travellers, often assumed by week-end trippers, which do not deceive the most casual observer. Paris was new to them, and they could not possibly have disguised the fact if they had tried.

From the Rue Lafayette they turned through part of the Rue Laffitte into the Boulevard des Italiens, and caught sight of the grand building of the Opera on their right, as they fared on towards the Place de la Concorde.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the Opera House.

"Bai Jove, that's a fine buildin'!" he remarked. "I wondah what it is? I say, dwivah, what's that buildin'? Oh, I forgot! Cocher—— Is it 'cocher,' or 'cochon,' Kerr?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah! I say, cochon," said D'Arcy, giving the driver of the taxi a dig. "I say, cochon——"

The man glared round at him. His look rather startled D'Arcy.

"Cochon!"

The driver of the taxi murmured things in unintelligible French, but the furious expression of his face showed that he was not paying compliments.

Arthur Augustus gazed at him in wonder.

"What's the mattah with him, Tom Mewwy? He appears to be excited about somethin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Attendez, cochon!"

"Hold on, you ass!" gurgled Kerr. "Cochon means pig, and it's a big insult here!"

"Bai Jove!"

"A driver is a giddy cocher!"

"There is vewwy little difference. Howevah, speak to him and explain, pway! I don't want the silly ass to think I was callin' him a pig!"

Kerr poured out a volley of French at the taxi-driver, who grinned in restored good-humour as the Scottish junior explained.

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"Monsieur!" It was a yell from the platform, and a porter tore up to the carriage. D'Arcy gasped. The loud check coat had turned up again.

"Is it all wight?" said D'Arcy anxiously.

"Yes," grinned Kerr, "it's all right!"

"Ask him what that buildin' is."

"It's the Opera."

D'Arcy turned his monocle upon it again.

"Bai Jove! It's wathah more imposin' than our Opewah in Covent Garden!" he remarked. "A vewy fine buildin' indeed! I heah that they have opewa heah thwee times a week, all the year wound, which is a gweat impovement in the wotten system in London. And there is no gwand opewah in English heah, which is somethin' to be thankful for!"

"No, it's in French!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove, I neyah thought of that! Do they twanslate weign opewas into Fwrench to perform them heah, Tom Lewwy?"

"Yes."

"Bai Jove! I wegard them as vandals!"

And D'Arcy shook his head solemnly. D'Arcy, after the discovery that he was possessed of a remarkable tenor voice, had become deeply interested in opera; but the rest of the gums found objects of greater interest in the streets they used through.

Through the Boulevard des Capucines they reached the place of the Madeleine, and they looked with great interest at that imposing edifice.

Then, crossing the Rue St. Honore, they went down the Rue Royale to the Place de la Concorde.

And in that famous Place they looked about them with interest, not unmingled with awe.

For in the handsome Place, surrounded now by splendid buildings, ornamented and well-kept, many terrible scenes had been enacted. In the Reign of Terror it had been called the Place de la Revolution, and daily the grim tumbrils had brought thither the batches of prisoners to be devoured by the unrelenting guillotine.

A hundred years and more had passed since then, but in later days the Place had known terrible scenes.

In 1871 the victorious Germans had camped there after the siege of Paris; and in the same year, in the terrible struggle of the Commune, it had been the scene of fearful struggles between the unfortunate Communists and the Government troops.

The end of the Rue Royale had been barricaded then, and the despairing Communists had held the barricaded Rue

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against the swarming troops in the Place, and the fighting had been desperate.

Tom Merry remembered the history of the Place, and he looked about him, but it was hard to realise that this peaceful and beautiful place had been the scene of such fearful fighting and carnage within the memory of men not yet old.

"Bai Jove! That looks like Cleopatra's Needle!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a nod towards the famous obelisk in the Place.

"It's a twin to it," said Tom Merry. "It came from Egypt, like the one on the Embankment. They were a pair at the gates of a temple in Egypt, I believe, some odd thousands of years ago."

"Bai Jove!"

"Hullo, here's the Rue de Rivoli," said Kerr, looking round and seeing the name of the street up on one of the little blue-and-white signs so familiar in Paris.

"Good!"

"Bai Jove! I shall not be sowwy to get to the hotel and get some sleep," said Arthur Augustus, with a portentous yawn. "Upon the whole, deah boys, I think I shall go to bed first thing at the hotel, and not get up till the afternoon."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I think we shall all want to do that," he remarked.

"I think we ought to have a bit of a feed first," remarked Fatty Wynn. "Nothing like laying a good foundation, you know."

"Good old Fatty!"

"Well, I must think of my health. I believe I lost weight on that rotten boat."

"Ha, ha! I've no doubt you did."

"I shall make up for it in Paris; and I get extra hungry in this October weather, somehow."

"Wue de Wivoli," said D'Arcy. "I suppose we shall be there in a few minutes now?"

"I don't know. I've heard that the Rue de Rivoli is one of the longest streets in the world."

Kerr looked about him with keen eyes.

"We haven't come the shortest way from the Gare du Nord," he said. "This chap turned to the left into the Rivoli. He could have got into it before."

"Ha, ha! I suppose it's no good expecting him to take short cuts to save strangers the fare."

"They jolly well won't take any long cuts with me when I know Paris a little bit better!" said Kerr emphatically.

"Hullo! That's a fine buildin'! Is that our hotel, Tom Mewwy?"

"No, ass! That's the Louvre."

"The Louvre! Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass with great interest upon the mass of splendid buildings, part of which formed the ancient palace of the Kings of France in the old days when kings were, and barricades were not.

"It's a giddy museum, now," said Kerr.

"I suppose we'd better look at it one day," said D'Arcy. "A Frenchman in London always goes to the British Museum, so it is only fair to go to the Louvre. Howwid bore, goin' to museums."

"Yes, rather! But it's one of the sights."

"There's a Venus of Milo, or a Milo of Venus, in there—I forget which," said Fatty Wynn, looking round. "I remember a chap telling me. It's got a leg, or an arm, or a head, or something missing."

"Go hon!"

"Hullo! Is that the hotel?"

Tom Merry looked.

"Hotel Ste. Genevieve. That's it!"

"Opposite the Louvre. Good!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The taxi-cabs stopped and disgorged their burdens. Willing hotel porters sallied forth to take the baggage into the buildings. A little gentleman who was walking up and down on the balcony looked down into the street and hurried down in time to meet the juniors in the hotel vestibule.

"My dear lads!"

"Uncle Frank!"

CHAPTER 16.

Kerr Interprets.

UNCLE FRANK greeted the juniors of St. Jim's very warmly.

If he had been the uncle of all of them he could not have been more pleased to see the party arrive at the Hotel Sainte Genevieve.

He shook hands with them all round, and then shook hands again, while an admiring circle of persons gathered to see this touching display by an Englishman.

"But you must be feeling dreadfully fagged after the night THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 91.

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train," said Uncle Frank. "What you want now is a good, sound sleep."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy—I mean deah sir!"

It was true. Most of the juniors were almost closing their eyes as they stood. Fatty Wynn was leaning against a pillar, and had already nodded off.

"What possessed you to travel by night?" asked Mr. Fawcett.

"Ahem! You see, sir—"

"Gussy lost the train."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"We gave him a jolly good bumping for it, sir."

"I did not exactly lose the train, sir. I stayed behind to do a little shoppin', and the othah fellows natuwallly felt a little nervous about goin' on alone—"

"Oh, cheese it, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to cheese it. Mr. Fawcett is entitled to an explanation. I—"

"What about something to eat before you get to bed?" asked Uncle Frank.

"Bed, please!" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Undah the cires, I considah bed the pwopah capah, sir."

"Then come up," said Uncle Frank. "Your rooms are ready. I have two large bed-rooms for you, opening into one another."

"You are all kindness, sir."

"Bosh!" said Uncle Frank.

He moved away towards the lift. There was a bell at the side of it, with the word "Ascenseur" inscribed upon it, and Mr. Fawcett pressed the bell.

A man in uniform appeared from nowhere.

He made gesticulations to show that he wanted to get through the juniors to the lift apartment, but Arthur Augustus was in his way, and Arthur Augustus had chosen that moment to polish his eyeglass.

"Pway don't push against me, deah boy!" he remarked.

"You can't come through this way. Twy the othah door."

"Ascenseur—ascenseur!" reiterated the man in uniform.

"Bai Jove! Certainly not!"

The man jabbered and gesticulated.

"Gweat Scott!" said D'Arcy, in amazement. "Fancy a chap comin' into an hotel like this to do a song turn! He doesn't look like a buskiah, eithah!"

"What are you drivelling about?" asked Blake.

"I decline to have my wemarks chawactewised as dwivellin', deah boy."

"Why don't you let the man pass?"

"We don't want him to sing here."

"Sing?" howled Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He doesn't want to sing, ass! He wants to work the lift, duffer!"

"Nothin' of the sort! He wants to sing a song."

"You frabjous ass! What put that idea into your head?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I decline to be called a fwabjous ass. The man said so himself. There he is, sayin' it again—a song, sir! Can't you hear him?"

"Ascenseur!" repeated the liftman wildly.

"Certainly not! Go and sing somewhere else. Give him a tip, Kerr, and tell him in French that we don't want him to sing."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Kerr.

"What are you cacklin' at, Kerr?"

"You ass! The chap is saying 'ascenseur'—lift—don't you understand? He isn't singing a song, sir! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say they call a lift a songsir in Pawis?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pray let the liftman pass," said Uncle Frank.

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy, deah boy! I weguarded you as a sort of niggah minstrel," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, Gussy, Gussy! You'll be the death of me!" murmured Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Please get into the lift," said Mr. Fawcett.

"Certainly, my deah sir."

The juniors crowded into the lift, and it whirled up to the second floor of the hotel. There were endless floors above, but they did not explore the extent of them. Their rooms were on the second floor.

They streamed out of the lift.

Mr. Fawcett had a suite of rooms, and one of the boys' windows looked out over the Rue de Rivoli and the Louvre across the way. Tom Merry glanced out of the window. He could catch a glimpse of the endless traffic below, and could see the morning sun glinting on the gilded tops of the Louvre railings.

They looked round their rooms with much satisfaction.

"I say, this is jolly, sir!" said Tom Merry. "You are awfully good to look after us like this!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Like giddy home!" said Kangaroo. "My hat! How comfy the beds look! I shall sleep like a blessed humming-top!"

"Yaas, wathah; and fortunately we haven't yet any acquaintances in Pawis to come and disturb us."

"You are a little mistaken there, D'Arcy," said Mr. Fawcett. "There have already been three callers for you."

D'Arcy lifted his eyeglass upon the old gentleman in surprise.

"For me, sir?"

"Yes. I showed them Tom's telegram, however, and they will call again."

"Bai Jove! I suppose it's some of the governah's fwiends have discovahed I'm comin' to Pawis. Was there anybody ffrom the Bwitish Embassy, sir?"

"Oh, no!"

"I pwesume they left their cards, sir?"

"Certainly—er, their names, at all events. One was Monsieur Berthier, bootmaker."

"Oh, bai Jove! I wished to them, you know, ffrom London to meet me here, as I have wun out of all sorts of things I wequire for a stay in Pawis. I forgot to wish again that I was comin' by a latah twain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, deah boys!"

"The second caller was M. Charpentier, tailor."

"Yaas, bai Jove!"

"The third man was M. Picquart, hatter."

"Gweat Scott!"

"They will all call again."

"I twust they will give me a chance to get to sleep first," said Arthur Augustus. "I am as sleepy as—anythin'!"

"Well, have a good sleep, and join me at lunch—dejeuner, they call it here," said Mr. Fawcett. "If you require anything, touch the bell, and the garcon who attends to this floor will get anything for you."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Mr. Fawcett retired, and left the juniors to their own devices. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on a bed and began to take off his boots. The luggage had been already piled in the rooms.

"Bai Jove, I do want a sleep! Will you unpack my box, Tom Mewwy, and get out my pyjamas? You will find them at the bottom of the biggest twunk."

"Not much!"

"Will you unpack my box, Dig?"

"No fear!"

"I say, Blake, will you—"

"Why don't you unpack it yourself, you lazy ass?"

"I'm takin' my boots off."

"My pyjamas are in my bag," said Lowther. "Yours would be if you had the sense of a grasshopper, Gussy!"

"Pway wing the bell, Tom Mewwy."

"Do you want the garcon?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry touched the bell, and a short, thickset man with a perpetual smile appeared at the door. Arthur Augustus looked at him.

"Vous etes garcon?" he demanded.

"Oui, oui, m'sieur!"

"Pway unpack my box, deah boy, and donnez moi my giddy pyjams!" said D'Arcy, throwing a bunch of keys towards the box, and then proceeding with unlacing his boots. "I say, Tom Mewwy, pull my boots off, will you?"

"I'll knock your head off, if you like."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy— Bai Jove, that garcon doesn't understand yet! I spoke in plain English. Speak to him in French, Kerr!"

"Certainly!"

Kerr babbled away in French. D'Arcy slid off the bed and began to peel off his clothes. The garcon looked amazed, but he did as he was bid. He crossed to one of the washstands, took a full jug of water, and crossed over to D'Arcy.

Before the swell of St. Jim's could guess what he was going to do, he had inverted the jug, and the water was streaming all over the elegant junior.

D'Arcy gave a gasp, and collapsed upon the floor.

CHAPTER 17.

Arthur Augustus's Slumbers are Disturbed.

"W! Yow! Wow! Groo!"

Such were the remarks of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The other juniors stared blankly at the garcon. Kerr seemed to be going into convulsions.

"Bai Jove! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The man's mad!" gasped Tom Merry. "What has he done that for?"

The garcon smiled cheerfully, and quitted the room. D'Arcy staggered to his feet, streaming with water, and speechless.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kerr.

"You—you ass!" gasped Figgins, the truth dawning upon him. "What did you tell the garcon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wottah!" shrieked D'Arcy. "You were tellin' him to pour the beastly watah ovan me instead of to unlock my twunk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy hurried his dripping jacket and waistcoat to the floor and rushed at Kerr. Kerr promptly dodged round one of the beds.

"Stop!" shrieked D'Arcy. "I am goin' to thwash you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, hold on, Gussy—"

"I wefuse to hold on! I wegard Kerr as a beast. I am goin' to give him a fearful thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus dashed in pursuit of Kerr, leaving a trail of water wherever he went. The Scottish junior dodged him round the beds.

The rest of the party roared.

"You should do your own jabbering, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, with tears of mirth in his eyes. "And you shouldn't be such a flacker as not to unpack your own trunk. It serves you right."

"I decline to admit anythin' of the sort, Tom Merry!"

"Oh, be quiet now; I'm going to bed!"

"I'm sowwy, but I shall have to thwash Kerr before we go to bed!"

"Cheese it!"

"I decline to cheese it!"

Fatty Wynn had already turned in, only half-undressed, and was sleeping like a top. Kerr dodged over his bed, jumping clear, and Arthur Augustus made a bound after him. He fell short, caught his feet in the counterpane, and sprawled across Fatty Wynn.

"Ow!" he gasped, as he plumped down.

The shock awoke Fatty at once. He squirmed round, with the weight of the swell of St. Jim's upon him, and gasped in angry astonishment.

"Hallo! Wharrer marrer? I—how—who—you ass!"

He laid hold of D'Arcy with both hands.

"Hold on, deah boy! I—I mean, leggo! It was quite an accident!"

"You've woke me up!" roared Fatty Wynn. "I'll—I'll squash you! Lend a hand, Kerr, will you, and we'll squash the idiot!"

"I decline to—ow—ow!"

"With pleasure!" said Kerr, and he promptly seized Gussy's ankles, while Fatty had a loving embrace round his neck.

The swell of St. Jim's struggled furiously, but he could not escape with a tenacious enemy at either end of him.

"Ow! Leggo! Pway welease me!" he gasped.

"Make it pax, then," said Kerr.

"Ow! Yaas, wathah! I make it pax!"

"That's all very well," said Fatty Wynn indignantly; "but he woke me up. Blessed if I make it pax! Squash him!"

"Welease me!"

Kerr let go, and D'Arcy jerked himself away from Fatty Wynn. He stood up, dishevelled, and glared at the Scottish junior.

"I shall not thwash you, Kerr, as I have made it pax—"

"Be still, my heart!" murmured Kerr theatrically; and the juniors yelled.

"But I wegard you as a beast!"

"I call that ungrateful, after getting a shower-bath for nothing," said Kerr. "Have you any more orders for me to translate to the giddy garcon?"

Arthur Augustus deigned no reply to this question.

He opened his box, and dragged out the contents, and found his pyjamas, and then he stripped and towelled off the effects of the shower-bath, and tumbled into bed. The others were all in by that time.

Day was rising over Paris, and the city was awakening to new life, but they did not feel inclined for anything but sleep. In a very few minutes they were in the land of dreams. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sunk in slumber, and dreaming that he was chasing Kerr up and down the School House at St. Jim's with a water-jug, when he was suddenly awakened. He opened his eyes, and found the second-floor garcon at his bedside.

"Yaw-aw!" said D'Arcy.

"Pardon, m'sieur—"

"Pway clear out! I'm asleep—I mean, I'm westin'!"

"Pardon, m'sieur—"

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"Wats!"

"Mais, monsieur—"

"Bai Jove! Can't you let a fellow alone?" howled Arthur Augustus, exasperated. "Can't you see that I'm tired?—je suis fatigued. Bunkez-vous!"

"Mais—"

The garcon held out a card, and D'Arcy looked at it. It bore the name "M. Picquart," and in the corner was the word "Chapeaux."

"Bai Jove, the hatter! Tell him to call this aftahnoon—to-morrow—any time! I'm asleep! Chuck him out! Chuck yourself out! Go and die somewhere!"

And D'Arcy turned his head on the pillow.

"Pardonnez moi, m'sieur!" A fat little man had followed the garcon into the room. "Je suis M. Picquart—"

"Pway call another time, deah boy!"

"Pardon, je ne comprends pas—"

"Bunkez vous—clearez vous out!" said Arthur Augustus sleepily. "Apres-midi—to-morrow—demain—cut off!"

And he went to sleep.

The hatter and the garcon exchanged glances, and then, shrugging their shoulders up to the ears, they left the room.

D'Arcy slept peacefully for about ten minutes.

Then a touch from the garcon interrupted him once more, and he opened his weary eyes. The other juniors were sleeping on peacefully.

"Bai Jove! Is that you again, you howwid beast?"

"M'sieur—"

"Go away! Taisez-vous—shut up!"

"En autre monsieur—"

"Kill him!"

The garcon thrust a card under D'Arcy's nose. It bore the name "Jacques Charpentier," and the legend "Tailleur."

Arthur Augustus groaned in spirit. His sins were finding him out in the shape of these worthy gentlemen, who did not mean to lose their orders.

"My only hat! It's the blessed tailor! Tell him to come again pweently."

"M'sieur!"

"Tell him to returnez-vous this apres-midi!" said D'Arcy, half asleep, and wholly enraged. "Tell him I'll give him a thick ear if he doesn't bolt. Savvy?"

"M'sieur!"

D'Arcy sat up in bed and grabbed the pillow. The garcon made a spring for the door, and vanished.

The swell of St. Jim's settled down in bed again. A sleepy voice was heard from Tom Merry's bed.

"What's all that blessed row about?"

"It's a wotten lot of asses wowwyin' a chap!" said D'Arcy. "All your fault, Tom Mewwy, for—for missin' the twain in London."

"Oh, go to sleep!"

Arthur Augustus took that excellent advice. He was fast asleep when the garcon—looking a little uneasy—re-entered the room a quarter of an hour later with another business card.

"M'sieur!"

D'Arcy came out of a dream of St. Jim's. He started up in fury.

"Bai Jove! You again!"

"M'sieur—"

"Bai Jove! I'll bwain you!"

D'Arcy glared at the card the garcon held out appealingly. It bore the name and style of Monsieur Berthier, bootmaker. Monsieur Berthier was peeping round the door.

"Get out!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"M'sieur—"

D'Arcy jumped out of bed, pillow in hand. The garcon fled, and bumped Monsieur Berthier over in the passageway as he slammed the door.

"Bai Jove! I'll squash that chap if he comes in again!" murmured D'Arcy.

He turned in, and went to sleep again; but he slept with one ear open. The door of the room cautiously opened about ten minutes later, and the garcon looked in. He came cautiously in, but the slight sound he made awakened the irritated swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus closed his grip upon the pillow, and suddenly sat up in bed.

"Bai Jove! You wottah!"

The garcon made a dive for the door, but the junior was quicker. The pillow flew through the air, and it smote the garcon on the back of the head.

With a wild yell he disappeared through the open doorway.

The door slammed, and the swell of St. Jim's gave a chuckle and turned over to go to sleep undisturbed this time.

CHAPTER 18

The First Letter from Home.

THE juniors slept on till midday, when Mr. Fawcett looked into their rooms to call them. Tom Merry awakened as he came in, in a bright and cheerful mood.

"Hallo! What's the time, sir?" he asked.

"One o'clock."

"My hat! Time we were up!"

"Yes, I think so, if you are going to lunch with me," said Uncle Frank. "You have had a good rest, and you can go to bed early to-night."

He gave Arthur Augustus a gentle shake. D'Arcy's eyes opened.

"Bai Jove! Is that you again, you wotten beast?"

Uncle Frank gave a jump.

"D'Arcy!"

"Gweat Scott! I—I didn't know it was you, sir! I thought it was that beastly garcon again," said Arthur Augustus, rubbing his eyes. "I beg your pardon, sir."

Uncle Frank laughed.

"Very good. Better get up now."

"Certainly, sir."

The juniors turned out. Fatty Wynn was the only one who was not willing to rise, and he was helped out with the utmost kindness by Blake, who poured some cold water over him in case he should be still asleep. Strange to say, this kindness only drew lurid threats from Fatty Wynn.

"Well, feel better for a sleep, anyway," said Tom Merry, as he sponged himself down in cold water, recklessly splashing D'Arcy in spite of his protests. "I believe I'm getting ready for a meal, too."

"What-ho!" said Fatty Wynn, with emphasis.

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors completed their toilet. The sound sleep had refreshed them after the night travelling, and if they did not feel quite as fit as usual, still they were quite fit enough to enjoy themselves.

They descended to the dining-room, where they found Uncle Frank and a substantial lunch. Outside the windows, crowds were passing up and down the Rue de Rivoli. Over the way loomed up the Louvre. The juniors' hearts were beating.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he sat down. "I am weally feelin' vewy fit, deah boys! I wathah think we shall enjoy our stay in Pawis, you know."

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry. "Hallo, here's a letter from somebody, for somebody!"

"I twust it is not fwom one of those twoublesome wottahs—"

"It's for you, anyway."

A waiter brought the letter on a salver. It bore the name and address—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Hotel Ste. Genevieve, Rue de Rivoli, Paris. It bore also a twopenny-halfpenny stamp and an English postmark. D'Arcy started as he saw the handwriting.

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the row?"

"It's from Wally!"

"Your giddy minor! Tell us the news!"

Arthur Augustus opened the letter. It contained but a few lines.

"Dear Gussy,—Did you think you had dodged me, cocky? Joining you in Paris! Your affectionate minor,

"WALLY."

THE END.

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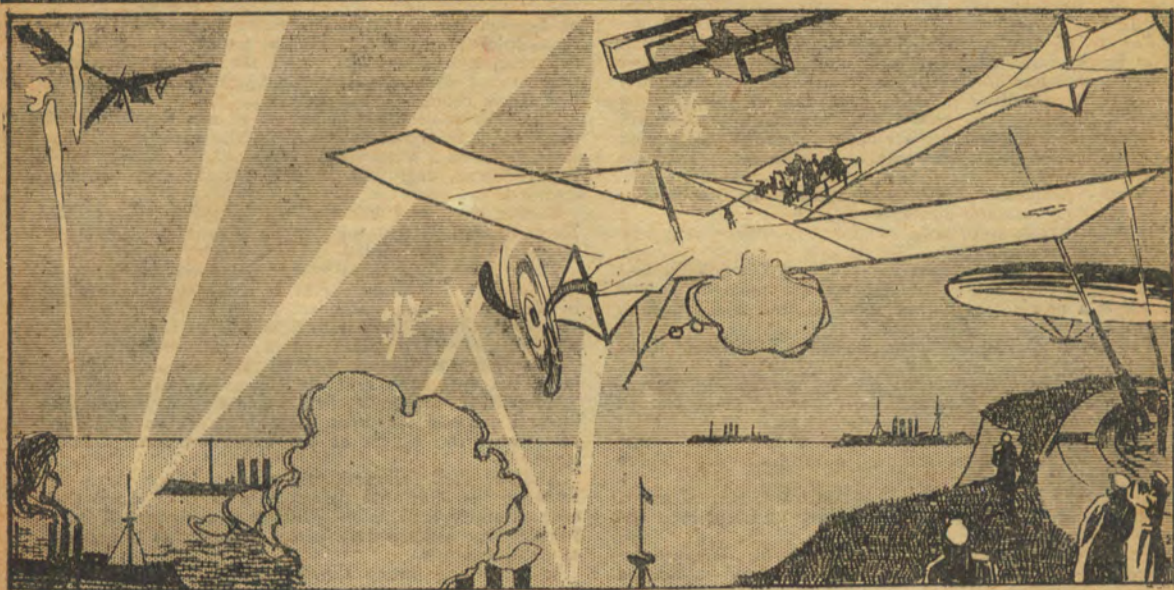
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BRITAIN'S REVENGE!

By JOHN TREGELLIS.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ARE:

AUBREY VILLIERS, nicknamed Sam Slick. A lad who has performed wondrous service for his country in her time of need, during the terrible invasion by the Germans.

STEPHEN VILLIERS, his brother. He is Sam's companion in all his exploits.

After the sweeping defeat of the Germans in London, as related in "Britain at Bay," the country is astounded by two brothers—men named Carfax.

Harrington Carfax, a scientist-inventor, discovers the way to make gold, and presents to the Chancellor of the Exchequer £100,000,000.

John Carfax has invented an absolutely perfect aeroplane, and he takes Sam and Steve to Germany.

On the way they capture a German naval officer, and John Carfax sends the Teuton into Berlin with his own terms. At the conclusion of his demands, he adds:

"If my terms are unaccepted by ten o'clock to-night, I shall proceed to destroy Potsdam. I shall then deal with Berlin, and the other chief German cities in their order."

(Now go on with the story.)

Potsdam Pays the Penalty.

High in the starry heavens the great aeroplane hung motionless as the minutes went by, awaiting the answer from the dark city far below. Not a breath of wind stirred, and, save for the faint whirr of the revolving fans that kept the Condor poised, not a sound was heard.

Her owner sat upon the bridge, on a light camp-stool, smoking unconcernedly as he gazed into the dark void, the smoke wreaths curling round him. The boys looked at him, and wondered he could remain so calm, when the fate of a nation hung in his hands. There was something awesome about John Carfax at times, so silent and Sphinx-like was he.

"D'you think the prince'll give him his terms?" murmured Stephen, as the brothers looked down over the rail at the sleeping land below. "Carfax meant what he said."

"You bet he did," replied Sam.

"Then Germany's got no choice but to make the signal and agree to them."

"We shall know soon," said Sam doubtfully; "but I don't feel over sure we're going to score."

"But they'll have to give in! What else can they do?" exclaimed Stephen.

"Don't know. They may stick it out. I think Carfax asked too much," his brother replied.

"Hang it all, not so much as they asked of Britain!"

"No," said Sam, with a shrug of his shoulders; "but Germany ain't ruined and laid waste, like our country was when the Germans offered those terms. They'll think that makes a difference."

"Not laid waste!" returned Stephen. "That's soon altered. She will be, precious quick, if they don't hurry up an' show that signal."

"You see, they don't quite grasp that yet," said Sam drily. "It's not come home to them. When they understand, p'raps it'll be different."

"I suppose that liner captain'll go to Prince Henry with the message right enough?"

"Yes, I should say so, for the sake of his country. He does understand what the Condor can do, you see. But they're a pig-headed lot, these Germans. They'll probably try to bluster it through."

Stephen glanced at the quiet figure of the inventor, smoking on the bridge, and thought the chance of blustering successfully against him was a poor one. The time passed rapidly, as it seemed to the boys, and they wondered what was passing in the council-room of the brilliantly-lit palace, that looked like a mere blur of light far underneath. Sam looked at his watch.

"Ten minutes to nine," he said. "They've barely an hour."

"There's the signal!" cried Stephen eagerly, as a brilliant spot of light appeared at the summit of the watch-tower, the position of which could be seen. "They've surrendered!"

Carfax glanced at the light, and struck a fresh match for his pipe. The two assistants watched the white spot without saying anything.

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NEXT THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"That's not it," said Sam. "They were to show two lights side by side. See, it's making signals. Morse code, isn't it?"

"For us, of course," said Stephen, watching it intently. The bright light began to wink and disappear at short intervals, showing and vanishing again. It was evidently done by an occulting shutter, and the signals, plainly visible at that height, were obviously meant for the Condor. Dot—dash—dot—dot—dash, they flashed through the gloom; long gleams and short, alternately. Carfax lazily read the signals out, aloud.

"Your—proposed—action—is—against—International—law—stop." So ran the message.

"Is that a fact, sir?" said Stephen.

John laughed grimly.

"I neither know nor care," he said. "I am 5,000 feet above International law, at the present moment. The Condor is a new factor in the universe, and is a law unto herself."

"I've heard of this law between nations," muttered Sam, "but—"

"The only law I know is the need of my country, threatened by an insolent and ambitious Power," said Carfax briefly.

"They won't get much change out of the chief," murmured Kenneth, who was standing near the boys. "There it goes again."

The winking light from the Potsdam tower started anew, Carfax repeated it as it was flashed, for he could read the Morse code at sight.

"Your—demands—are—impossible to grant. If—threat—carried out—it will—draw—wrath—of—the world—upon you—stop."

Carfax coolly filled another pipe.

"I am dealing with Germany, not with the world," he remarked.

The Condor made not the slightest reply to any of the signals, but remained just where she was.

"We've got an electric flashlight worked by an accumulator on board," murmured Stephen to his brother. "I saw it in the pent-house. But—"

"The chief's said all he means to say," replied Kenneth. "He doesn't intend to talk to them."

From several points in the big military area just outside the town, searchlights were directed upwards towards the sky, but at that height the Condor was out of their reach, and their light was diffused far too much to illumine the airship to any extent long before it reached her. Carfax watched with a slight, grim smile as the anxious rays crossed and wavered far below.

"Wouldn't they just slap a shell into us if they could do it?" murmured Sam, "whether time was up or not. They're gettin' pretty desperate down there, I fancy."

"The messages show that," said Stephen. "As for the time, it is nearly up. Your watch shows London time, but Berlin's fifty-four minutes later, if I remember right. It's nearly ten by their time, an' we're goin' by it."

"That's right enough," nodded Kenneth. "Their sands have nearly run out."

"My word! An' we start destroying 'em in about ten minutes!" ejaculated Sam. "I don't envy 'em their feelings down there!"

"They have only to show the two lights on the tower, and then no harm will befall Germany," said Carfax quietly.

"It's nearly time they dropped sending messages, then, and showed them," said Stephen, half to himself. "But no! There goes the flashing again."

The signals were made more rapidly this time.

"Send—an envoy—to discuss—terms—palace.—Endeavour come—to agreement—stop."

"They're climbin' down," said Stephen, watching eagerly. He was familiar enough with the Morse.

"My terms are not to be discussed," said Carfax leisurely. "They are to be accepted or refused. The ultimatum was clear."

A thrill shot through both of the brothers as they realised how immovable Carfax was, and how relentless. The crisis was at hand. The signals had ceased, the Condor made not the slightest answer, and the tower below was still dark.

"They think he's bluffin'," muttered Sam. "They believe he either won't carry out his word, or that he can't."

"The chap's made of iron," said Stephen. "He'll see it through."

The young scouts glanced at each other. It seemed awful to think of dealing destruction far and wide, out of the darkness of the night, from that great machine that held the land below at her mercy.

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NEXT

THURSDAY:

"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

But the brothers remembered the scenes they had witnessed, the laying waste of England, the ruin and wreck of London by the pitiless German guns, the slaughter of the helpless populace by shell-fire, the executions, the horror, suffering, and starvation. And their hearts hardened as they looked down upon the headquarters of German ambition below them, and the stately palace.

Borne by some upward current of air, the chimes of the great clock in the steeple reached the ears of the Condor's crew, faint as a mere tinkle. Then the strokes of the huge bell followed, only just audible, till the tenth stroke had sounded.

Carfax rose, and knocked out his pipe. He nodded to Kenneth and Hugh, and as he placed his hand on the lever, the Condor glided ahead swiftly.

There were four tubes now fixed in the platform, pointing downwards to the earth, and the two assistants were in charge of them. The aeroplane circled gently in the sky, descended a little lower, and then came almost to a standstill when the palace was accurately below.

John gave a sharp command, and a couple of seconds later the first tube sent its charge hurtling downwards. There was a long pause, then a great white flash seemed to blossom out suddenly upon the palace, and several moments afterwards the echoes of the explosion came thundering upwards.

Another shell followed, and another. The third seemed to wrap the shattered palace in a flood of flame that increased and spread, leaping higher and higher. Then, ceasing fire, the airship drew away, leaving the palace a heap of flaming ruins.

With a long swoop the Condor sped away southwards towards the great military area outside the town, where a vast camp was to be seen, near the cantonments and barracks of the royal troops.

"We aren't going to destroy the town, then," said Stephen, with something like a sigh of relief.

"I have no quarrel with citizens," said Carfax. "It is with the troops and their leaders that I have to do. But what will follow if they continue to refuse my terms, is another matter."

In two huge sweeps the aeroplane came down much nearer the ground, and the arrays of tents could plainly be seen, with troops, awake and ready for action, in all directions. The big barracks and depot buildings were close by, and several batteries were also at hand, for it was one of the greatest military centres in Germany.

"They have chosen their course. They must pay the penalty," said Carfax grimly. "Let go, there!"

Before the boys had realised what was happening, the Condor was spouting her deadly projectiles with unerring aim, while she swept through the air at high speed. Rattling explosions and outbursts of flame marked her track, parallel upon the ground; and blazing tents, stores, and scattered troops showed the havoc wrought in less than a minute. It was stupendous—the boys could hardly believe their eyes. All that the Condor had done beforehand was nothing to this, nor would they have believed she could deal destruction at such a rate.

How Sam Tapped the Wires.

Batteries and machine-guns began to roar on several sides, and shells and missiles to hurtle through the air. But the Condor was travelling at such a pace, and her range so impossible to find out quickly, that the shots went far wide of her.

A single stray shell and a few machine-gun bullets whistled close past her by mere accident, and after her two swift dashes up and down the lines of the camp, she went flying skywards again in a mighty spiral, long before the German guns had gauged her distance, and was beyond their reach. Below, the camp and cantonments were shattered and blazing in fifty places.

One long row of barrack buildings was burning furiously, and the others were soon in like case. The terrible bombs of picric acid and petrol did not merely demolish the enemy—they wiped them out of existence.

"Look at the troops running for shelter to the town!" cried Stephen, watching through a night-glass, which showed, in the glare of the flames, hosts of horse and foot streaming into Potsdam as fast as they could go. "I wonder they ain't afraid of drawin' our fire on to the city!"

"They're countin' on Carfax's humanity," said Sam, watching intently. "We'd little cause to count on theirs when Von Krantz bombarded the English towns."

"There's a big part of the score paid off here, though!" said Stephen. "The military district's a blazing desert!"

"I'm glad they got the women and non-fighters away in time. They took that much precaution," said Sam. "It's

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a wonderful spectacle. I don't know that I fancy it much as war, all the same. Wonder what the destruction amounts to by now?"

"I see no reason to pity 'em," said Stephen grimly. "Every man there is an enemy of our country, an' will be called out to fight against our men. They were given a fair offer, and had only to take it. If one of those shells chances to find us, they'll win yet," he added, as a big projectile came shrieking through the air not far away.

"We've pretty well abolished 'em, sir," said Kenneth to his chief, conning the scene with a powerful night telescope. "The magazine is still standing, though."

"We'll finish up with that," said Carfax. "Give it one of the ten-inch petards."

One of the most powerful explosive bombs the Condor carried was placed in the largest tube, the airship stopped dead, and with great care and accuracy Hugh took his sight and made his calculations. A dark blot, outside the region of the flames, and surrounded by a light ribbon that was really a wide moat of water, could be seen distinctly underneath. The tube clicked, and the bomb sped downwards upon its errand.

A flash that lit the earth for hundreds of yards around was seen, and then an awful, devastating explosion that made even the Condor vibrate and tremble violently, at her height of 3,000 feet. The bomb, which no power could resist, had reached the vitals of the great magazine, and exploded the tons of war material stored there. The debris and powdered masonry, hurled into the air, blotted out the view completely for several seconds, and the roar was like that of a dozen thunderclaps. It seemed as if the blow must have shaken half Germany, so terrific was it.

"Gosh! Wasn't that awful!" gasped Stephen. "The blowing up of the Paglesham magazine was no more than a pistol-shot to it! They've had their lesson now!"

A dead silence fell as the last echoes of the explosion passed away, and no signs of life could be seen for far around, amid the glare below. The batteries, to the last gun, had ceased their efforts to find the Condor's range, and all was deadly quiet. Carfax laid his hand on the starting-switch.

"Enough," he said, without a sign of emotion. "We have carried out the terms of my ultimatum. It only now remains to give the warning before proceeding to deal out a far greater punishment."

The Condor sailed rapidly back again towards the town of Potsdam itself, which was utterly stunned by the disaster.

"To offer fresh terms?" said Sam wonderingly.

"The terms remain the same," was Carfax's reply. "Fix the signalling-hood, Kenneth."

"Good heavens!" said Stephen, under his breath. "Is there anyone left alive who's fit to give an answer?"

"Nonsense!" said Sam gruffly. "The loss of life wasn't anything like the loss of war-stores an' property. The Potsdam streets aren't touched, bar the palace, an' it isn't likely anybody stayed in that after the warning they had."

The searchlight, fed by a small but compact electric accumulator, shot a dazzling white beam across the sky from the Condor's platform. Carfax let it remain stationary for several minutes, to give plenty of time for it to be observed and watched. Then he commenced to flash his signal in the Morse code, just as the Germans had done.

"Are my demands agreed to, or must I repeat my operations upon the city of Berlin?"

"Whew!" whistled Stephen, as he saw the signal given. Very soon an answer came from the tower, which was still intact.

"Stop this cruel bombardment, which is against all rules of war, and let us discuss terms in the name of humanity!" Carfax flashed his reply at once.

"Have shown you more humanity than you showed to London. Accept or refuse my terms."

Again came the response from Potsdam:

"I have no authority to accept behalf of German nation."

John was ready with his reply:

"Give you till noon to decide. If not accepted then, no choice but to destroy Berlin. Message ends."

"Shut off the light," said Carfax coolly, "and stow the accumulator away. We have nothing to do now but wait."

The dark hours passed slowly, for midnight was long past, and the morning was drawing near. From time to time furtive signals appeared from the tower, but the airship took no notice of them. The sign of yielding was not yet made, and Carfax would recognise no other.

"If he's going to destroy Berlin," said Stephen uneasily to his brother, "to-night's job will be nothing to it."

"He's a man of his word," was all the reply Sam made.

Somehow, the boys felt almost as anxious as any German might be that an agreement would be arrived at. In their own minds, both of them dreaded to witness such a sight as

the destruction of Berlin by fire and explosives, much as they had seen of the grim horrors of war.

Carfax sat apart, giving no sign, nor would he answer any questions about the coming task, or his intentions. He looked relentless as a stone statue, and the longer they waited, the more the two young scouts hoped that the calamity would be averted.

At about 5 a.m., the Condor left her station over Potsdam, and sailed quietly away to the north-west, Carfax pacing the bridge with a thoughtful face. Presently he beckoned Sam to him.

"Although it will make no difference to my demands, whatever happens," he said, "it would be some help to me to know what is happening elsewhere, both in the North and on the French frontiers. Also, how much German opinion is shaken by what has happened. Up here, we have no means of knowing."

"No, sir," said Sam. "I should think it's pretty difficult to get news to an airship at night in an enemy's country. There's no way, I suppose?"

"There is a way," replied Carfax. "The main telegraph-wires all over the country will now be busily sending the news down all their length—some of it in cipher for the Government, and some in ordinary code, for newspapers, and so forth."

"Yes, that's true," said Sam.

"Much of the news sent will be stopped by the German Government censors, who will hold it back from the newspapers as yet."

Sam nodded. He knew it well enough.

"This news could be learned by tapping the telegraph-wires at certain points between the chief towns. You understand telegraphy, don't you? Will you undertake it? It's a dangerous piece of work, of course."

"It's just my job, down to the ground, sir," said Sam eagerly. "Of course I'll tackle it. But have you got the necessary things?"

"We are equipped for all these emergencies. I have a small receiver and wires, specially made for the purpose. You have only to attach one plate to the telegraph-wire, and the other in the ground, and you will be able to catch the messages in transit."

"I'm ready whenever you give the word," said Sam, anxious enough for some service on his own account.

"I will put you down at one of the most favourable spots, most of which are known to me, on the main trunk lines. Almost anywhere between two big towns it would be successful to-night. A lonely place is needed, and, of course, I shall have to leave you there for a time. The Condor must land you quickly and clear out, for fear of drawing any attention to the spot. You will have to take your chance."

"Certainly, sir. I know how to look after myself fairly well," said Sam, with a smile.

"You may have to wait some time before you get messages that are any use to us, and in a code that we can read. Take this electric torch with you, and when you are ready to return flash it upwards three times. It will be visible at a great distance from above. If by any mischance the torch should fail to work, fire your revolver in the air. We'll be with you in a twinkling."

"Very good, sir," said Sam, putting in his pocket the little electric torch, which could be lit by pressing a button in its side. "We haven't very much time, if we're to make use of the darkness," he added; "the dawn will be on us in half an hour."

Turning her head still farther northward, the Condor made a wide circuit round the outskirts of Berlin at her highest travelling speed, and in another ten minutes she slowed down over a bleak, lonely heath many miles to the north-east of the city. Across the heath was a line of telegraph-poles.

"This is a single wire, so you can make no mistake," said Carfax. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," replied Sam, who had procured the receiver and the other apparatus, and placed himself near the platform's edge.

With a rapid spiral swoop, the Condor came right down out of the skies and brought up close to one of the telegraph-poles as gently as a feather alighting. Sam swung himself off on to the top of the pole, and away went the aeroplane into the darkness again.

Hanging on to the pole's china insulators, with the receiver slung at his back, he quickly hooked one of the plates to the telegraph-wire. Sliding down the pole, and leading his own wire to the ground, he dug the spike at the end of the second wire deep into the ground, and so made the connection. Seating himself on the turf, he adjusted the screws of the receiver, and all was ready.

A glance round showed him that he could scarcely be in a more lonely spot. The heath was dotted here and there

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with small copses and thickets, one of which was close at hand. There was no house for a mile or two. Patrols would be guarding the wires, no doubt, in such times, but Sam calculated he could not be in a place less likely to be surprised by them.

There was little time to speculate on that, however, for no sooner had he fixed up the receiver than the needle began to click at once. He had broken right into the middle of a message, and one in the ordinary German code, moreover, easy to be read. The sound of the clicks was enough for Sam's trained ear to go by, without seeing the needle.

The Landing at Husum.

The message was in excitable language, and was describing the havoc at Potsdam, and the mysterious British airships threats. Plenty of sensational details were poured out. The message was evidently intended for some newspaper at the other end of the wires, and Sam smiled grimly as he read it, wondering if the Press censor would let it be published.

He jotted the words down in a pocket-book by shorthand as they arrived, but the message was not of much use in itself, and told him nothing he did not know. Presently it ceased, and after a very short pause the needle started again.

This time, however, the message was in some private code or other, probably official, and Sam could make nothing of it. Several similar messages followed during the next quarter of an hour, and none of them were intelligible to anybody who did not hold the key to them.

Presently, however, a piece of news in ordinary code came along, that made Sam prick up his ears. He noted it down, anxious not to lose a word, in order to report to Carfax as soon as he was on the airship again. A short interval, and then another message followed, also important, and this Sam jotted down as well, wasting no time in transcribing it, for he was anxious to catch every word. The instrument became quiet again, for the moment.

A dry twig cracked, not far away, and Sam, alert as a watch-dog, sprang to his feet. A man, evidently in some sort of uniform, was creeping towards him from the little copse.

As soon as he realised he was discovered, the man stood upright sharply, and presented a rifle at Sam. But at the very first glimpse the young scout's revolver was out, the shot rang through the night, and the German fell on his face, the rifle clattering beside him.

The man belonged to the German Service Corps, and was attached to the details guarding the wires and railways. He had hardly fallen when four others dashed out of the copse with a shout, and rushed at Sam, firing as they came.

A bullet whistled past Sam's ear, and his quick pistol brought two of the men to the ground. At the same moment there was a loud rushing sound overhead, and down came the Condor like some huge monster out of the sky, between Sam and his assailants.

The Germans staggered back in dismay as the enormous machine seemed to hurl itself at them, and a startled cry broke from them. Sam grasped his receiver and sprang aboard instantly, breaking the connecting wires. The Germans, recovering themselves and realising what the huge machine was, clapped their rifles to their shoulders and fired, just as the Condor went whizzing skywards again, bearing Sam with it. Stephen took a swift snap with his carbine at the Germans, but so swiftly was the airship travelling that neither his shot nor theirs went anywhere near the mark.

"Close thing that, sir," said Sam, as the Condor soared far up into the sky again. "They must have been stalkin' me through that copse, and I was too busy to watch. I ought to have taken you with me, Steve."

"We were coming your way, and hearing your pistol-shots, we thought it was the signal," said Carfax. "Lucky we did. Have you tapped any messages?"

"Rather! The first lot are mostly newspaper stuff, screeching about the disaster at Potsdam. There was nothing about your terms, sir; but here's a message that's important."

He read out from his pocket-book, translating the German sentences into English.

"A brigade of British troops, believed commanded Lieutenant-General Blake, have made raid on Schleswig coast, and landed at Husum."

"They have taken a strong position, and evidently await reinforcements by sea, which, however, have not arrived."

"Large body of Hanover troops under General Loschwitz are pressing the British hard. Have cut them off on two sides, and it is practically certain the British troops will

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NEXT THURSDAY: "TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

be overwhelmed soon after fighting begins at daybreak. Their position is desperate, and victory, so far, lies with the German arms."

Stephen uttered an exclamation, and the news had its effect on everybody. Carfax looked disturbed, turned away and paced the bridge by himself, thinking rapidly.

"This is beastly bad news, if it's true," said Sam. "It must be the transports we saw; they've landed their troops. They've made a plucky dash to get first footing, but, of course, unless they soon get more help by sea they'll have a poor chance."

"Something must have happened to the reinforcements," said Stephen gloomily. "I say, it's awful to think of our chaps in such a fix up there. It may mean the Germans winnin' the first victory. And I suppose Carfax—"

The inventor, turning, walked towards them sharply.

"I have considered this matter," he said. "Berlin must be shelved for the present. If the British are so hard pressed, we must help them if it can be done. We will start at once for Schleswig."

"Hurrah!" cried the boys, with great relief. "By Jove, sir," said Sam, "I almost feared—"

"That I should be bound to stay here. Luckily, I did not give my word to destroy Berlin, but only threatened that I might have to do so. I can wreck the German capital as easily to-morrow as to-day," added Carfax; "and it will strengthen our hands all the more if the British flag gets a good footing in North Germany."

The Condor was now racing through the air at sixty miles an hour, and the world beneath was rapidly becoming visible as a new day dawned.

"I am jolly thankful for this," said Sam presently. "We got the news none too soon, though."

"Where is Husum?" queried Stephen.

"Schleswig shore. On the mainland, behind the island of Nordstrand," replied Carfax.

"Will it take long to get there?" said Sam.

"Three hours, at this rate. We go straight as the crow flies."

"My word, we may not be in time after all!" muttered Stephen anxiously. "Accordin' to the telegram, the Germans'll be able to pile on swarms of troops and guns all the time."

"They haven't reckoned on the way British troops hold out when they're cornered," said Kenneth.

"They ought to know it by now," said Sam grimly. "But I suppose none of the troops here have been in England: We've accounted for those who did come."

Anxiously the crew of the airship waited while she tore onward upon her journey. Swift as she was, it seemed an age before the long plains were passed, and the mouth of the Elbe showed ahead with the sunlit autumn sea beyond. The Condor flew onwards north along the Holstein coast, with its maze of islands lying off the mainland, and presently Carfax pointed ahead.

"Husum," he said; "and I can hear the sound of firing!"

The dull mutter of heavy guns was borne upon the air, and presently great bodies of troops, like ants on a gravel path, could be seen upon the open spaces near the coast.

On a neck of land a mile wide, running out into the sea, were the British troops. They were entrenched in a well-chosen position, and had a masked battery of guns which were pounding away at the Germans, while every trench rattled and spluttered with rifle-fire.

"Those are our men!" cried Kenneth. "See, they've got a fine strong position!"

"Strong position?" echoed Sam, who had seen far more of war than the young aeronaut. "Yes, but can't you see they're all but done for? The Germans have got six batteries to their one, and seven times the men. As soon as they've silenced the British guns it's a certainty for them."

"If it wasn't for the sea on three sides of him, General Blake'd have been wiped out before now," said Stephen anxiously. "I say, look at those troops lyin' out in the open, near the Germans. They're gettin' it hot!"

Everybody aboard her watched with tense anxiety as the Condor came rushing onwards to the scene of the battle, at a great height. The troops Stephen pointed out were a battalion of foot, lying down in whatever cover they could find, well to the right front of the British position, and they were keeping up a brisk fire upon the enemy.

"They're there to protect the flank," said Sam. "an' they'll be blotted clean out for their pains. Hang it, I wish we could go faster yet! By Jove, Steve, I believe they're the Fusiliers!"

The plucky little body of infantry were receiving fearful punishment. The German machine-guns were playing upon them with deadly effect, and a storm of rifle-bullets swept

Another complete tale of the Boys of St. Jim's. By Martin Clifford.

the place. They had lost fully a third of their number, and their case became worse every minute.

"They're sending in a cavalry charge to cut the Fusiliers up!" cried Sam, pointing to two full squadrons of Prussian Hussars that had been waiting behind a rise of ground, and now came sweeping over it towards the Fusiliers, who were too badly damaged to withstand such a charge of cavalry, and had little chance to retreat either, even if they wished to.

"We're just in time, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Stephen. "We can blow up the German batteries, and wipe out those cavalry squadrons with a few bombs! Won't our side bless the Condor!"

Carfax shook his head.

"I can spare none of our explosives for such an affair as this," he said. "We carry only a certain number. The Condor is playing for a greater stake, and I can run no risk of being unable to carry out my threat to destroy Berlin."

Sam looked aghast.

"Do you mean we can do nothing, sir?" he said. "Those swarming Hussars will cut the Fusiliers to pieces in another minute, and the guns—"

"I did not say we can do nothing," replied Carfax coolly. "You shall now see the Condor deal with the German cavalry."

The aeroplane made such a tremendous curving swoop towards the earth, and at such an awful speed that the boys' heads swam, and they felt sick and dizzy. Almost before they realised it, the Condor was within eight feet of the ground, right between the Fusiliers—who were hastily forming squares to try and repel the cavalry—and the German Hussars.

Right ahead the two Hussar squadrons were charging with a mighty thunder of hoofs. The Condor had placed herself in between them and their prey, in the twinkling of an eye.

Then, skimming over the ground at a dizzying pace, she hurled herself full into the charging squadrons. There was a wild, harsh shout from a hundred throats, and the airship ploughed like some destroying monster among the flashing sabres and frantic horses, splitting the squadron in two with irresistible force.

The Arrival of the Transports.

Sam's first thought when the Condor dashed among the Hussars was that Carfax had been seized with sudden madness, and meant to smash the airship up. He did not dream that she could survive it.

The first shock made the Condor quiver from end to end, as she met the charging cavalry; but it hardly checked her speed, and the boys realised a moment later that she was in little danger.

The steel edge at the front of her framework flung the horsemen back, and sent them flying, as a locomotive flings a strayed colt out of its track.

The frame of the great aeroplane was so elastic that she did not suffer in the slightest.

"Great Scott! She'll mow through 'em like a sickle!" gasped Stephen, staggering, as the first lurch nearly threw him off his balance.

The next few moments were a wild whirl of plunging troop-horses, unseated riders, and frantic outcries on all hands.

Savage, moustached faces seemed to appear like magic in front of the airship, to be swept down and passed over as soon as they came into view.

A roar of hoofs and voices and clanking metal filled the air. Many sabres struck the side of the Condor's platform, were shivered in two, or forced from their owner's hands.

The horses, used though they were to the shocks of battle, and trained not to flinch from guns or steel, became unmanageable at the sight of this huge monster from the upper air plunging into their midst.

A broad swathe of unmounted and stricken Prussians was left behind the Condor, and the squadron was cloven violently in two portions.

It was all over in twenty seconds, and the airship emerged on the farther side.

Before the boys had time to realise her next move she had turned, and was flying back on the second squadron, following them up and taking them in the rear.

Slap through the whole mass of men and horses she went again, creating even more havoc than before, but with less shock, for she was travelling in the same direction.

She emerged on the nearer side once more, and, spinning round, swept on to them a third time from the flank, taking them sideways, and breaking through both squadrons.

Squadrons, indeed, no longer. They were no more than broken and scattered body of horse, galloping in all

directions, the greater part making back towards the German lines as fast as they could go.

Not a single Hussar came within a hundred yards of the Fusiliers, who were now firing rapidly into the retreating horsemen.

No sooner was the third rush made, however, than the Condor went soaring skywards in two great curves.

Before the cavalry charge was broken, and while she was in the midst of it, the Germans could not fire at her for fear of butchering their own men.

As soon as she was clear the pom-poms and smaller field-guns opened fire furiously; but so rapid was Carfax's retreat upwards once more that they were unable to catch or follow her.

For a second or two the Maxim bullets and pom-pom shells screamed close under her, one of the latter slapping right through the framework, while a bullet chipped the rail within an inch of Stephen's hand.

But the Germans, misjudging her immense speed, shot chiefly underneath her, as a sportsman does when shooting too closely at a rocketing pheasant.

She swerved up into the clouds again in gigantic spiral swoops, and was poised out of all danger of being hit in a very short time.

"Very satisfactory," said Carfax coolly. "Kenneth, tighten up those rivets on the front plates there. She's loosened them a trifle."

"Great pokers! Wasn't it immense?" cried Stephen. "She's hashed up those squadrons, an' the Fusiliers are saved. See, they're fallin' back on the main position now they've got the chance!"

"I thought she'd be buckled up like an umbrella!" said Sam.

"She's built to stand that sort of thing," said Carfax cheerfully; "but I'm really very pleased at the way she stood it. It was more or less of an experiment."

"Did you see the Fusiliers staring?" said Hugh, who was the only one that had looked back during the charge. "They were quite as amazed as the Germans."

"No, I didn't," answered Sam. "I was busy enough lookin' in front; and, besides, it all seemed to be over and done with before you could say knife. But, thank goodness, we've saved 'em. They were our own old battalion, Steve, or I'm much mistaken. Wonder if Devine was there? How's the fight goin' now?"

The Condor's crew watched keenly, the battle being spread out before them like a map far beneath. The two forces were hammering away at each other as hard as ever; but one of the German batteries was devoting itself to firing at the Condor—a mere spot in the sky, from their point of view—and trying to find her range, without the slightest success.

The shells burst so wide that no one who did not know the difficulty would have believed they were firing at her at all.

The Fusiliers had moved in and joined the main position of the British troops, where the trenches were; but the German force, growing larger all the time, as more regiments were hurried forward, was pressing General Blake terribly hard.

"We've shaken 'em, anyhow!" said Stephen eagerly. "Now, if we could just mop up those masked batteries on the hillside our chaps would have a real good chance."

Carfax shook his head.

"I cannot spare the explosives to do it," he said. "Berlin still stands, and my ultimatum is unanswered. A single bomb I might use, but even that would be a concession, and it would not make much difference either. It could only account for one battery."

"Confound Berlin!" muttered Stephen. "If it were me, I'd rather—"

"The transports!" cried Sam, pointing to seaward, beyond the islands that lay off the coast.

All hands at once followed his gaze.

Ten tiny toy ships, each with a feather of smoke trailing aft from it—in reality, large, 3,000-ton steamers, but scarcely visible at that distance—could be seen heading towards the land, fully twelve miles out.

They were keeping close together, and on each flank were three other ships, quite different in form, while two smaller ones brought up the rear.

"Right! It's the reinforcements at last!" cried Kenneth; "and a jolly strong lot, too, I should think! Our general below will be all right when he's got that lot to back him. Those others are warships, I suppose?" he added, focussing the telescope eagerly.

"Yes, an escort of big, armoured cruisers," replied Sam, with his field-glasses to his eyes, "and those behind are gunboats. It's only a short voyage over from England, an' those transports ought to hold 80,000 men if they're well packed, besides guns."

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NEXT
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"TOM MERRY & CO. IN PARIS."

"Our chaps below won't have seen 'em yet," said Kenneth. "It'll be another hour before they can land the fresh troops, I should say."

"My word!" muttered Stephen. "Can that little force hold out so long? Things look pretty thick down there. The Germans must be ten to one by now, an' they'll rush 'em at any cost when they see the transports comin'."

Carfax turned to Sam.

"You've seen the whole campaign in England," he said, "and know more of ordinary warfare than I. What do you think?"

Sam surveyed the conflict quickly.

"General Blake holds too strong a position to be rushed, even by a very big force," he said, "unless he were first pounded to pieces by artillery; an' that's what's happening. If the German batteries were silenced, or hampered, the general could hold out."

"Full speed ahead!" said Carfax, jerking the lever over. "I've no bombs to throw away; but if hampering is what they want, they shall have it."

The Condor dropped in a long slant several hundred feet, and slowed down over the German batteries on the farther hill.

With their glasses the crew could plainly see the consternation caused among the German gunners by the airship's arrival overhead.

"That's givin' 'em something to think about!" said Kenneth grimly. "They reckon we're considerin' which of 'em we'll blow to smithereens first. There comes the first shot!"

A shell came screaming up through the air; soon two batteries had elevated all their guns, and were pumping projectiles at the Condor with feverish haste.

She, on her part, swooped swiftly to and fro at various heights, first poising herself for a second over one battery, and then darting off to another.

The air seemed to be humming with shells, but none of them came within danger-distance of the aeroplane, and most were surprisingly wide of the mark.

"You see what it is to shoot at a fast airship straight overhead," said Carfax, who was steering with perfect coolness. "Those gunners are the pick of the German Army, many of them. They could plump shells into an eight-foot target two miles away; but they can't hit the Condor goin' at fifty miles an hour, with nothing to give them the range."

To and fro the great machine sped, and it was plain she was demoralising the German gunners, good as they were. Few troops can stand such a test as a continued threat from something which they cannot strike back at.

When the batteries turned their guns on the British again they made much worse practice than before, for their nerves were shaken. Even though the Condor did not actively attack them, she kept them on the "jump."

It was a thrilling experience for both sides, so much so, that the boys did not notice how quickly the time went.

"The transports are nearly there, by George!" cried Stephen. "They've been quicker than we reckoned!"

The ships were rapidly filing in through the narrow channel, past the island of Nordstrand, and were quickly sheltered by a point of the mainland from being shot at by the German batteries. The landing-place was admirably chosen; the steamers, though large, were fitted for shallow waters, and the disembarking began at once, screened from the Germans by the higher ground. Those on the Condor had an excellent view of it.

The six big cruisers had to remain a long way out, too far to join in the fight. Their task had been the

guarding of the transports on the voyage. But the two gunboats were light-draught vessels, and able to navigate the shallow channels round the islands. They took up a position well inside Nordstrand, and opened fire upon the German forces with their two 4.7 guns apiece, at extreme range, and made splendid practice.

With the greatest smartness and speed the landing of the powerful force from the transports was carried out. Five strong batteries were ferried ashore on pontoon-boats, and the newly arrived regiments, falling into rank as they landed on the beach, at once went ahead to strengthen General Blake's position. The numbers under his command were doubled within half an hour.

Meanwhile the Germans made a desperate attempt to storm the position by sheer weight of numbers, before the reinforcements could land. But the gunboats which commanded the whole approach thoroughly, met them with such a fearful storm of shrapnel that the attack was repulsed with very heavy loss.

The general's position, guarded on three sides by the sea, was far too strong to carry in such a way, and now that the new powerful batteries arrived, they and the gunboats were able to give the German artillery such a handling that the latter had to fall back, and take up fresh positions. The German forces were fairly repulsed, and for a time the action ceased.

"Hurrah!" cried Stephen, as the Condor sailed back towards the sea. "We've got one foot fairly planted on German soil, and by George, it shall never be lifted out till we've made 'em feel our weight, an' hauled their colours down! Are you goin' to land, chief?"

"Yes!" said Carfax. "Soon I must start back for Berlin, but first I wish to learn what news there is from England, and this is a great opportunity."

The fighting, except for a little skirmishing between outposts, had ceased some time before the Condor finally poised herself to settle, for she waited till her arrival could be no hindrance to the in-coming troops. Then, choosing a place well-sheltered by a tall slope of ground, and near the commanding officer's position, Carfax brought the Condor to the earth as lightly as a feather, resting with her propellers and fans cocked up out of harm's way.

A mighty cheering from all the troops in sight greeted her, and General Blake, himself, with two of his staff, and the commander of one of the gunboats, who had just landed, came forward to welcome the aeronauts.

"You're Mr. John Carfax, of course," the general said, shaking hands with the inventor. "To thank you enough for what you've done is impossible, sir! I believe we owe it to you that we're not wiped out, for the way you shook up those German gunners was amazing. And, as for the routing of those Hussars—I could not believe my eyes!"

"Glad to do what I could, general," said Carfax; "and I'm sorry it wasn't more; but we're about short of explosives, you see. We heard you were rather hard pressed, and came from Berlin to see what we could do. These youngsters are cruising with me."

"Why, it's Colonel Blake!" exclaimed Sam, directly he saw in the general their old friend of the Sheppey command, with whom they had seen so much service at Sheerness.

He had been made a lieutenant-general for his services, but the boys had not realised, when they heard his name, that it was their former commander.

(Another long instalment of this thrilling serial next week.)

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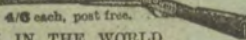
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