

357

THE ST. JIM'S REFUGEE!

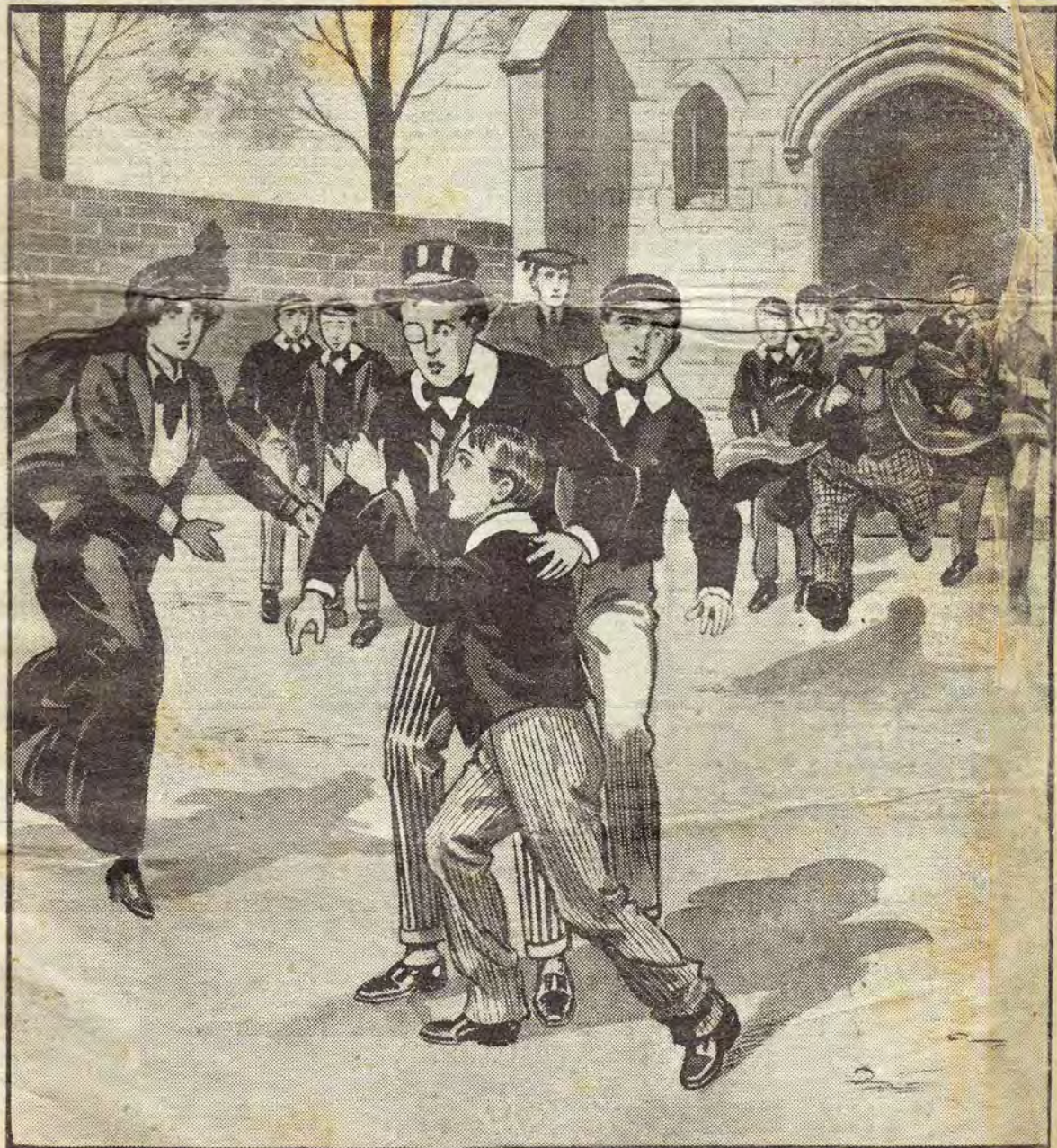
A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

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THE ST. JIM'S REFUGEE!

A Grand Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"He's fagged out and fallen down in the road," said Blake, as he knelt down beside the little lad and raised his head. "Hullo, kid!" The dark, foreign face was drawn with suffering, as the juniors could easily see, and the little fellow appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion. "Non, non, non!" he murmured, almost inaudibly. (See Chapter 5.)

CHAPTER 1.

Shopping Extraordinary.

"**A** HUNDRED jam-tarts!"
"Yes, Master D'Arcy."
"Fifty bottles of gingah-bceah!"

"Yes."
Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—the famous Co. of the New House at St. Jim's—had just arrived at the door of the school tuckshop, when the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was heard from within, giving those astounding orders.

There was no mistaking the voice of Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy. The swell of the School House had an accent that was all his own.

Figgins & Co. exchanged quick glances, and paused. Fatty Wynn smacked his lips. Merely hearing a fellow order a hundred jam-tarts made Fatty Wynn's mouth water.

"My only hat!" whispered Figgins. "Gussy is going it! This sounds like a big feed, my sons—a whacking big feed for those School House bounders—what?"

"It does!" murmured Kerr. "It do!"
"And being in a state of war," went on Figgins, "it is justifiable to commandeer the enemy's supplies—what?"

"It is—it are!"

Next Wednesday:

"**TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!**" AND "**OFFICER AND TROOPER!**"

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"I should jolly well say so!" murmured Fatty Wynn. "Hundred jam-tarts! Fifty bottles of ginger-beer! My only Aunt Selina! Gussy must have had a whacking remittance this morning! It would be a sin and a shame to let such a feed as that be wasted on the School House rotters. Collar him as he comes out."

"What-ho!"

Figgins & Co. took up strategic positions round the doorway—ready for D'Arcy of the Fourth to emerge from the tuckshop with his tremendous supplies. It was a half-holiday that afternoon at St. Jim's, and it looked as if Arthur Augustus was going to celebrate it with a "feed" on an unusual scale. Certainly there were frequently "whacking" feeds in the studies when the juniors were in funds. But jam-tarts were seldom ordered by the hundred. It was evidently an extraordinary occasion; and Figgins & Co., as the deadly enemies and rivals of the School House juniors, were ready to chip in and take advantage of it.

There were, as Figgins & Co. would have explained, two great wars in progress at the present moment—the German war on the Continent, which was merely a thing of yesterday; and the war between the two Houses at St. Jim's, which had lasted ever since the old school was divided into two houses. And it was needless to say which was the more important of those two wars.

"Oh, listen!" murmured Fatty Wynn ecstatically, as Arthur Augustus's voice went on, inside the tuckshop:

"I'll have three of those big cuwvent cakes, Mrs. Taggles, and three of the seed cakes. And two big bottles of sweets—the kids will like them."

"They will!" murmured Figgins, sotto voce. "New House kids—what?"

And the Co. chuckled softly.

"And you can make me fifty ham sandwiches, please—nice big ones," continued the voice of the unseen swell of St. Jim's. "Put in plenty of ham, please. I dare say the poor chaps will be wathah hungwy."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

Figgins & Co. stared at one another. If Arthur Augustus expected a visit from the German Army, and had intended to lay in provisions for a siege, he could hardly have given his orders on a more lavish scale.

"My word!" murmured Kerr. "Has he come into a fortune? Has he broken into a bank? Where has he been getting the tin?"

"Must be rolling in filthy lucre!" said the astounded Figgins. "Why, it will cost him pounds and pounds! My hat!"

"And fifty of those nice wolls and fifty hard-boiled eggs!" continued the voice within the tuckshop.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And twenty of the best apples—vewy big ones, please—nevah mind the cost—"

"Regardless of expense," chuckled Figgins. "Good old Gussy! This will be a gala day in the New House."

And the Co. chuckled again.

"Is that all, Master D'Arcy?" There was a note of surprise in the voice of Dame Taggles.

"My hat! I should think it was all!" murmured Figgins.

"Yaas, that's about all, Mrs. Taggles, thank you vewy much. Pway take it out of this fivah. If there's any change put it in extra jam-tarts. The kids are suah to like the jam-tarts. I don't suppose they get any weally good jam-tarts at home."

"My hat! Is he going to stand a school treat or something?" gasped Figgins.

"Pway wap them up in a parcel, Mrs. Taggles."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

"Or in several parcels," continued the swell of St. Jim's. "Pewwaps it would be bettah to make several parcels, as they will go bettah into the cah."

"Into the car!" whispered Fatty Wynn. "Then it's going to be a picnic—and he's going to have a car out—the boulder!"

Figgins shook his head seriously.

"I disapprove of living on the fat of the land, considering these hard times," he remarked. "We ought to put it down. It will be a valuable lesson to Gussy to have his feed raided. This isn't a time for rolling in giddy luxury."

"Hear, hear!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus's voice was heard again. "I shan't be able to cawwy all that lot, Mrs. Taggles. The gingah-beer and the cakes will be wathah heavy. I'll take what I can with me, and you can send the west down to the lodge, and Taggles can put them into the motah-cah when it comes wound."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

A few minutes later Arthur Augustus was heard coming towards the door, and Figgins & Co. exchanged quick glances, and stood ready for a rush.

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 357.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

The elegant figure of the swell of St. Jim's appeared in the doorway of the tuckshop. He was simply loaded with parcels. He had two or three parcels in each hand, holding them by the string, and a packet under each arm, and several smaller packets bulging out in his pockets. He was quite unable to walk with his usual elegant saunter—which the St. Jim's juniors described as Gussy's Piccadilly crawl.

"Collar him!" rapped out Figgins, as the swell of St. Jim's stepped out of the tuckshop.

"Gweat Scott!"

Figgins & Co. rushed upon the School House junior like Uhlau raiders. They grasped him and his parcels on all sides.

"Bai Jove! Hands off, you wottahs—gwoooogh! You uttah wottahs—oh cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus was down. But he put up a tremendous fight, and several of the parcels burst in the progress of it. Jam-tarts were scattered among the combatants. Fatty Wynn rolled back before a doughty upper-cut, and sat down in the quad with a sudden shock and a gasp. But the next moment Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's silk hat was jammed over his eyes, and jam-tarts were plastered on his aristocratic face. He gasped and sputtered frantically.

"Gwoooogh! You wottahs! Wescue, School House! Oh cwikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn scrambled up, and grabbed at the parcels. There was a shout in the distance, and Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the School House, came speeding to the rescue. Blake and Herries and Digby, D'Arcy's chums in Study No. 6, came tearing along from another direction. Help was at hand. But it was not in time.

"Wescue! Gwooooh! Wescue!"

"Buck up!" roared Blake. "New House rotters! Go for 'em!"

"Cut it!" panted Figgins.

And the Co. promptly cut it, taking with commandeered parcels. Fatty Wynn had two in each hand, and Kerr and Figgins had one each, and they sped like deer across the quad in the direction of their own quarters. Arthur Augustus sat up, gasping, in the midst of several burst parcels, with jam sticking on his face, and cream smeared on his elegant "clobber," and dust all over him. He wrenched furiously at his topper to get it off his eyes.

"Bai Jove! Gwooooh! Oh, my hat! Help! Wescue!"

Tom Merry & Co. arrived panting. But Figgins & Co. had disappeared into the New House, and they were safe from pursuit. The rescuers gathered round Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. They were laughing.

Arthur Augustus groped wildly for his eyeglass, and stuck it into a jammy eye, and blinked at them.

"Oh cwumbs! Those New House wottahs have waided me—oh deah! I have been thwown into quite a fluttah! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You look a picture!" gasped Tom Merry. "Buzz off and get your camera, Manners! This ought to be put on record."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up.

"You uttah asses! If you bwing your wotten camewah heah, Mannahs, I will bwreak it ovah your silly head! Gwooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh cwumbs! I feel in a vewy disgustin' state!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I was not awah that those wottahs were waitin' for me. Why didn't you come to the wescue, you uttah asses! I shall have to go and change my clobberah now—gwooooh! And the cah will be wound soon—ugh! You uttah duffahs."

"Why didn't you tell us you were standing a feed?" said Tom Merry. "We'd have come and helped you carry the grub."

"Wats! I'm not standin' a feed."

"Not?" exclaimed Manners. "Then what were you laying in all that grub for?"

"Lying in it, you mean!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats! I have no time to stand feeds now, you duffahs! Gwooooh!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry indignantly. "You were getting in all that tommy, and you weren't going to ask your old pals."

"Wathah not! Wats!"

"Whom were you going to ask, then?" demanded Blake.

"Nobody! Gwooooh!"

"Nobody! You were going to stand a tremendous feed like that all for yourself!" exclaimed Blake, aghast. "Well, this beats Fatty Wynn! Serve you jolly well right if the New House boulders have collared it, then!"

A Magnificent New, Lost, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Weally, Blake—"
 "I'm shocked at you, Gussy!" said Tom Merry sadly.
 "You're getting avaricious in your old age! Shame!"
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Disgusting!" said Digby sorrowfully. "Oh, Gussy!"
 "You uttah ass—"
 "We can't allow this sort of thing!" said Blake, with a shake of the head. "A chap who blows quids on a feed, and doesn't ask his old pals, has to be suppressed. I suggest that we suppress him!"

"Hear, hear!"
 "Weally, you fellows, you don't undahstand—"
 "No, we don't," said Tom Merry. "Bump him!"
 "Hands off, you fatheads! Welease me!" Yawwooh!"
 The indignant juniors did not release him. They bumped him down into the squashed jam-tarts, and left him gasping. Arthur Augustus sat panting for breath for some moments. Then he scrambled up once more, and shook his fist after the retreating juniors, and toddled away to the School House, with six or seven much-dilapidated tarts sticking to various parts of his person.

CHAPTER 2.

The Relief Expedition.

ZIP-ZIP! Toot!

Tom Merry & Co. were chatting outside the School House, half an hour later, when the big car swung up the drive. The School House juniors were discussing the football match that was to be played that afternoon with the New House eleven, but they paused as the car came up. Save for the chauffeur, the car was empty. Evidently it had called for somebody.

"Hallo! That's from the Wayland garage," remarked Kangaroo of the Shell. "Who's having a car out this afternoon?"

"Gussy was saying something about a car," Blake remarked.

"Can't be Gussy," said Tom Merry; "Gussy's playing in the match. What should we do if our outside-left were left outside?"

"Sowwy, deah boy; I can't play this aftahnoon!"

The juniors turned as Arthur Augustus came out of the House. He had changed his "clobber," and looked his usual elegant and immaculate self. From the tips of his elegant boots to the crown of his shining silk topper, Arthur Augustus was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

"Can't play?" repeated Monty Lowther.

"No, deah boy."

"Well, that's no news!" remarked Lowther. "We know you can't; but you generally do, all the same!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"What rot!" exclaimed Blake. "What's the little game, Gussy? Go and bury that topper, and get into your footer rig at once!"

"Imposs, deah boy! I'm not goin' to play, and you're not goin' to play, eithah!"

"Wha-at!"

"And Dig and Hewwies are not goin' to play!"

"Rats!" said Dig and Herries together.

"I wequiah your assistance," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

"Well, of all the nerve!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "You want to walk off three of my players, and walk yourself off! Are you dotty?"

"Certainly not! I have a mattah of the gweatest importance to attend to this aftahnoon!" said Arthur Augustus impressively. "I have hired this cah frowm Wayland—"

"So it's for you?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I have also expended a fivah in provisions at the tuckshop, to take in the cah—"

"Look here!" roared Tom Merry. "You fellows are not going on a picnic instead of playing in the match!"

"It isn't a picnic, deah boy."

"Then what the dickens is it?"

"It's a welief expedish."

The juniors stared blankly at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he made that announcement.

"A—a—what?" exclaimed Tom. "A relief expedition! What on earth are you burbling about now?"

"I wefuse to have my wemarks chawactewised as burblin'! Robinson!"

"Yessir!" said the chauffeur, touching his cap.

"Pway dwive to the lodge, and ask the portah for the parcels to put in the cah, and oblige me by waitin' there!"

"Yessir!"

Robinson "tooled" the car away to Taggles' lodge.

"I have to call on Figgins," said Arthur Augustus, looking at his watch. "You chaps go and get your coats on. Figgins will hand ovah my wopahy when he understands that it was intended for a welief expedish. Then come down to the gates."

"You—you—you crass ass!" said Jack Blake. "Will you tell us what you are driving at, or do you prefer to be bumped till you squeak?"

"I wefuse to be bumped, and I should certainly not squeak undah any cires. I should wegard it as undignified. You othah chaps can go and play footah. I wequiah the assistance of Blake and Hewwies and Dig. Buck up, deah boys!"

"Mad!" said Monty Lowther, tapping his forehead. "Quite mad! It's been coming on for a long time. I've noticed it. P-p-poor old Gussy!"

And Lowther sobbed a little.

"You feahful ass!" said Arthur Augustus. "Will you get weady, Blake? There is no time to lose."

"Will you explain what you're driving at?" shrieked Blake.

"No time to explain now. I will explain in the cah."

"You think you're going to buzz off and leave a House match, without us knowing what the game is!" roared Herries.

"Yaas. You can twust to my judgment, I suppose?"

"Catch us!" growled Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Will you explain, you frabjous ass!" shouted Merry.

"There is no time, deah boy. I have to see Figgins, and get off. I will explain to you in the car, Blake. Buck up!"

And Arthur Augustus walked off in the direction of the New House. Tom Merry & Co. stared after him in astonishment for a moment or two. Then there was a rush, and the swell of St. Jim's was seized on all sides. They rushed him back to the School House, and jammed him against the wall.

"Now, you fathead—"

"Now, you blithering jabberwock—"

"Ow! Welease me! You are wumplin' my clothes!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Will you explain?"

"I wepeat that there is no time.

Pway leggo!"

"Bump him against the wall!" said

Tom Merry. "Now—"

"Hold on! I will explain, if you

weally insist—"

"Bump him, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was bumped against the wall, and his topper fell off, and he made a wild clutch at it. Kangaroo of the Shell caught it with his toe, and skilfully passed it to Clifton Dane, who passed it in turn to Reilly, who "skied" it with a really splendid kick. The topper disappeared among the elms.

"Oh, you asses! You wottahs! Leave off! I'm explainin' as fast as I can, you fwabjous duffahs!" cried Arthur Augustus. "You are wastin' time and wumplin' my clobber—"

"Now explain, before we jump on you!" said Tom Merry.

"I wefuse to be jumped on! I am goin' to take these kids with me—"

"What kids?" demanded Blake wrathfully.

"You fellows, I mean—because I shall wequiah assistance in dealin' with the wefugees."

"What wefugees?" howled Blake. "Where? How? When? What? Which?"

"The Belgian wefugees, deah boy."

"Belgian wefugees," said Blake dazedly. "My—my hat! He's dreaming! Or else he's barmy in the crumpe!"

"Barmy!" said Monty Lowther. "Better tie his hands—"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! If you fellows wead the papahs, you would know that the Belgian wefugees have been awwivin' in this country in cwowds evah since the wotten Germans got into Antwerp—"

"We know that, fathead!"

"They are comin' ovah in all sorts of ways," went on Arthur Augustus. "No end of them landed at Dovah and Folkestone and places in the wegulah boats. And one of the Wed Gwoss societies has engaged a steamah to bwing a lot

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 357.

orah to Shoremouth, and land them there, to be taken to London. The steamah awwives this aftahnoon."

"But it's thirty miles from here!" shouted Blake,

"That's why I've hired a cah, deah boys."

"My hat!"

"And I've expended all my fivah in pwovisions to take with me," resumed Arthur Augustus. "There will be hundweds of them, and they are bound to be hungwy, poor chaps! My ideah is to take all the things I can cawwy, and meet them as they come off the steamah, and hand them out, you know. I wegard that as a bettah way of spendin' a half-holiday than playin' footah!"

"Great Scott!"

"And now, if you will have the gweat kindness to welease me, I will go and get anothah toppah," said Arthur Augustus, with great dignity.

The astonished juniors released him. Arthur Augustus's "wheezo" was certainly surprising, but they had to approve of it. Blake and Herries and Digby exchanged glances.

"After all, I'm not keen on playing this afternoon," Blake remarked casually. "You can beat the New House without me, Tom Merry."

"Easily," said Tom.

"Look here, fathead—"

"I trust that my absence will not lead to a defeat, Tom Mewwy."

"It will," said Monty Lowther. "The defeat of the New House!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Well, under the circumstances, I'll let you go," said Tom Merry magnanimously. "After all, we don't really need you Fourth-Form kids—"

"You silly chump—" began Herries.

"Pway go and get your coats, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus.

And the chums of Study No. 6 prepared for the expedition, while Tom Merry busied himself in picking out four reserves to take their places in the School House team.

CHAPTER 3.

Fatty Wynn—Hero.

"JUST a couple, Figgy!"

"Rats!"

"Well, only one, then!" pleaded Fatty Wynn

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Figgy—"

"Shurrup!" said Figgins. "It's time to get changed for the match. We'll lock the loot up in the study, and have a ripping feed afterwards!"

"Just a single tart—"

"Shut up!" roared Figgins.

The New House Co. were in their study, where they had taken the plunder. It was a most gorgeous plunder, and Fatty Wynn was regarding it with longing eyes. But the stony-hearted Figgins would not allow him to touch a crumb.

True, it was only an hour since dinner; but Fatty Wynn remarked pathetically that he had only had three helpings, and nothing since excepting a cake and a few tarts and a jam-roll. And he told Figgins that it was always best to lay a solid foundation before undertaking anything, especially keeping goal in a footer-match.

But Figgins was inexorable. He wanted Fatty Wynn to be active in goal, he explained, not in a state of a bo-constrictor recovering from a gorge. And with adamant determination Figgins forbade the consumption of a single tart in all that generous supply.

Afterwards, Fatty Wynn was at liberty to "wire in" as much as he liked. But to Fatty the ninety minutes were likely to seem like ninety hours, if not ninety years.

Tap!

The study door opened, as Fatty Wynn was putting on his most persuasive expression. The Co. stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he walked into the study. They made a movement towards him, but Arthur Augustus held up his hand in sign of peace.

"Pax, deah boys."

"Come to look at the grub?" asked Figgins genially. "You can look at it as much as you like. You can look, but you mustn't touch, you know."

"I have come to take it away, Figgins."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fatty Wynn doubled up a pair of very plump fists.

"Where will you have it?" he asked.

"Pax! I am not going to use violence," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity.

The chums of the New House chuckled. As they were

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 357.

three to one, with dozens of allies within call, it would not have been much use if Arthur Augustus had used violence.

"My only hat!" said Figgins. "Gussy has come to try the effect of his eloquence on us! Gussy, old man, it's N.G. We have commandeered these supplies. All's fair in war, you know. But I'll tell you what—you can come to tea after the match!"

"Pway allow me to explain—"

"Time to change for the match," said Kerr.

"I insist upon your listenin' to me. I have purchased those things to take on a relief expedit. They are for the Belgian wefugees, who are bein' landed to-day at Shoremouth. Undah the cires, Figgins, I am suah that you will hand them back to me!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

Figgins's face fell. That successful raid had caused much triumph in Figgy's study.

Now the vision of a gorgeous feed at the expense of the School House seemed likely to fade from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Kerr.

"Undah the cires, deah boys, you can call that waid off. I put it to you, as one gentleman to anothah!" said Arthur Augustus. "That grub is for the Belgian wefugees. You can help me cawwy it down to the cah!"

"Honour bright!" asked Figgins.

"Honour bwright, deah boy!"

Figgins gave a grunt.

"Then it's all right. Of course, we shouldn't have raided you if we'd known. Wrap it up again, you fellows!"

"Oh crumbs!" repeated Fatty Wynn.

"Can't stick to it under the cires," said Figgins. "Wrap it up!"

"I wegard you as actin' in a pwopah spiwit, Figgay, deah boy!"

"Thanks!" said Figgins solemnly. "After that, Gussy, everything in the garden is lovely. I shan't miss the feed now. Lend a hand, Fatty. You fat boulder, stop looking at those tarts. They're for the giddy wefugees!"

Fatty Wynn cast a mournful look at the heap of good things on the table. It cost a great effort to surrender them. But Fatty Wynn was of the stuff of which heroes are made. He made the effort.

"A—a—all right, Figgy," said the fat Fourth-Former, a little huskily. "Of—of course, I agree. It's all right. But, I—I say, what a ripping cake that is! Don't wrap it up for a minute, Figgy!"

"Rats!" said Figgins; and he proceeded to wrap up the cake.

"I—I say," remarked Fatty, after a pause, "those Belgian johnnies will very likely be seasick, and they won't feel much inclined for jam tarts!"

"Bosh!" said Kerr, wrapping up the jam-tarts.

"Well, perhaps you're right," sighed Fatty. "But—but, I say, what about the sweets? The Belgians won't want them."

"Shut up!"

"Now, do be sensible, Figgins. The sweets will very likely make them sick after a sea voyage, and it's rough in the Channel now, and—"

"Bow-wow!"

Fatty Wynn suppressed a groan. He really seemed to be suffering physically as he saw the good things disappear into the parcels again. It was, as he said afterwards, worse than being at the dentist's.

"You can lend a hand to carry them down to the car, Fatty," chuckled Figgins. "That'll be the last you'll have to do with 'em!"

Fatty Wynn sighed deeply.

Arthur Augustus, smiling serenely, took up one parcel, and Figgins & Co. took up the others, and they proceeded downstairs.

They quitted the New House, Fatty Wynn lingering behind a little, almost overcome by the temptation to open his parcel and sample the contents. Figgins looked back.

"Fatty!" he shouted.

"Ye-e-es. C-c-coming, Figgy!"

"Buck up, you fat oyster!" said Figgins suspiciously.

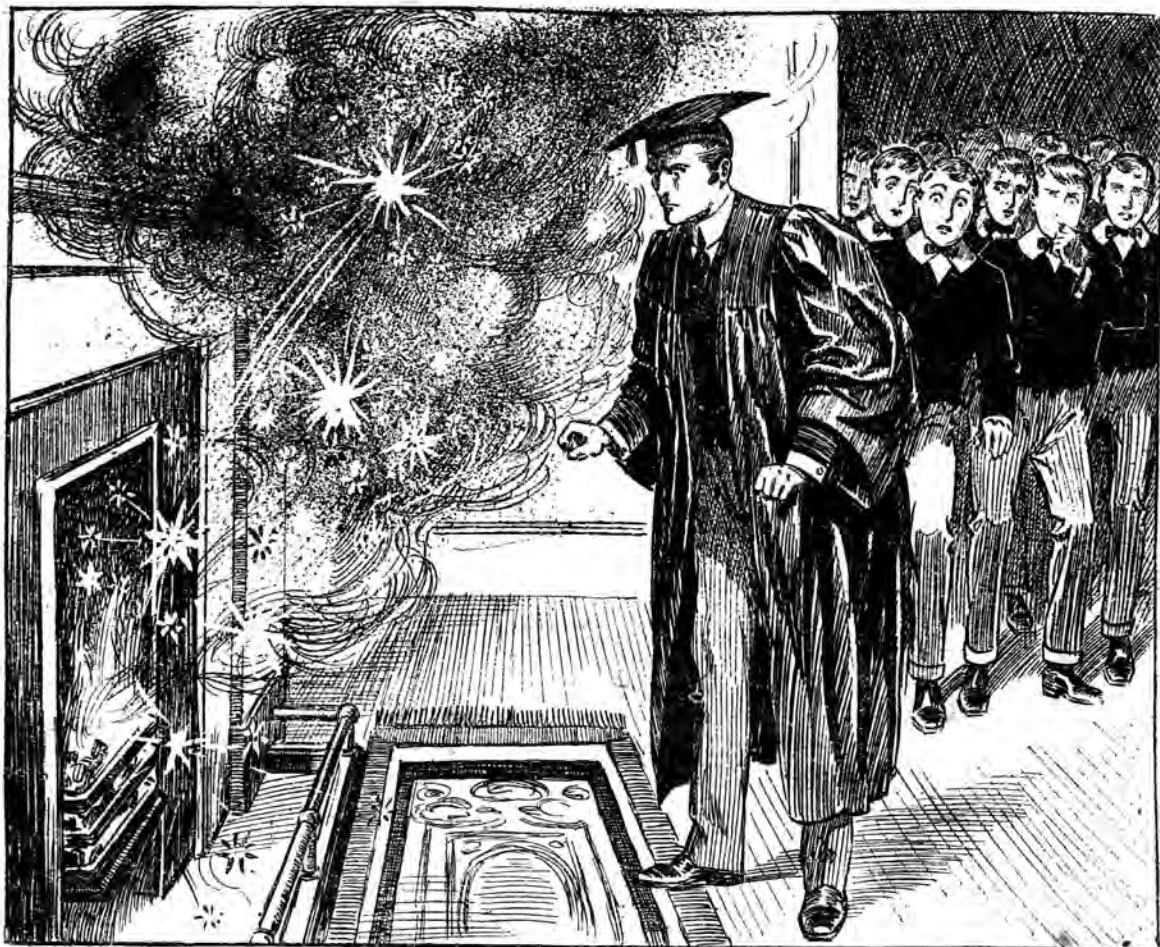
"Keep in front of me!"

"I—I say, Figgy, I—I was just thinking that cream puffs would have a very bad effect on Belgians. They're not used to them, you know!"

"Shurrup!"

The car was waiting outside the gates, with a good many St. Jim's fellows looking on.

Taggles, the porter, had placed in it the numerous and various packages sent down to his lodge. Blake and Herries and Digby, in their caps and overcoats, were already in the car, and Arthur Augustus joined them there. Figgins & Co. handed in the restored loot. The four juniors and the



Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Mr. Railton struck a match and lighted the gas. Fellows crowded in at the doorway in great astonishment. "What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Railton, exasperated. "Someone has placed these fireworks in the grate—" Bang! Bang! Bang! Squizzzzzz-fizzzz! (See Chapter 7.)

numerous parcels filled the car, roomy as it was. Fatty Wynn stood with his eyes fastened upon the pile of packages as if they mesmerised him.

"Now we're weady!" said Arthur Augustus. "Thank you vewy much, Figgay! I wegard you as havin' acted like a weal sport!"

"Oh, don't mench!" said Figgins.

"I twust you will win the match, Tom Mewwy, though I am afwaid therè is not much chance of that now. But it is in a good cause, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at, Tom Mewwy! Wobinson!"

"Yessir!"

"Pway dwive on, and get to Shoremouth as quickly as you can!"

The chauffeur started the engine. The St. Jim's fellows stood round in a crowd to cheer the departing car. Several of the fellows, having heard what was on, had rushed to the tuckshop, and returned with parcels, which they tossed into the car, and Blake & Co. were half hidden by them now. They had their legs buried in parcels, they had parcels on their laps, parcels jammed among them, and parcels behind them and all round them.

Fatty Wynn seemed to awaken from a sort of trance as the car started, and he rushed after it.

"Hold on, Gussy!"

"Hurray!" shouted the crowd, waving their caps. Fatty Wynn pelted after the car, at the same time seeking to extract something from his pocket. Fatty Wynn's clothes fitted him a little tightly, and it was not easy to extract anything from his pocket while he was running. His contortions were really extraordinary.

"Hold on!" panted Fatty. "Gussy——"

"Weally, Wynn——"

Fatty made a supreme effort, and reached the car, at the same time jerking out a packet from his tight pocket.

"There you are!" he gasped.

He tossed it into the car, and halted, panting. Arthur Augustus caught it on his chin, and gave a yell. It was a packet of toffee.

"Bai Jove, you uttah ass! Oh, thank you, deah boy!"

"Good old Fatty!" chuckled Blake. "His last stick of toffee! Ha, ha, ha!"

The car rushed on, and Fatty Wynn walked back to the gates with a heavy heart, but feeling that he had deserved well of his country.

CHAPTER 4.

The Refugees—from Belgium.

TOOT—TOOT! Whurrrrr!

The car rushed on, down long white roads, through deep country lanes under the lean branches or leafless trees. It was a fine, keen winter's afternoon, cold but sunny. The juniors enjoyed the rapid run in the car. They had succeeded in stacking their parcels in a little better order, but they were still surrounded by them. Arthur Augustus's noble face was very cheery.

Very frequently Arthur Augustus's great ideas were received with sniffing scorn by Study No. 6. And it was very pleasing to the swell of St. Jim's to find his present "wheeze" greeted with such hearty approval. Blake & Co. were a little worried as to how the School House junior eleven would get on in their absence. But they were more than willing to devote the afternoon to relieving the sufferings of the Belgian refugees who had sought an asylum on the shores of Britain.

The steady stream of refugees from that unhappy country,

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

over-run by the German hordes, trampled under the iron heel of the Prussian War Lord, was still coming in, but the St. Jim's juniors had seen nothing of them so far. They had subscribed a good deal of their pocket-money for their aid, and that was all. To see them and help to tend the unfortunate fugitives personally was a great privilege, and the chums of Study No. 6 were very keen to undertake it.

"Simply a ripping idea of yours, Gussy!" Blake remarked. "Blessed if I knew how you came to think of it!"

"Very queer indeed!" said Herries.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Some fellows think of things, you know, and some fellows don't. I'm one of those who do. That's all!"

"Bow-wow!" murmured Dig.

"As soon as I heard that a steamah was bwingin' a cargo of wefugees to Shoremouth I thought of it, deah boys, and pwoceeded to awwange the mattah."

"And why didn't you tell us?" demanded Blake indignantly. "I dare say I could have made the whole arrangement much better."

Arthur Augustus grinned.

"Cash was wequered," he explained. "I wote to my patah and told him I must have ten pounds at once to cawwy out the scheme. And the money only came this mornin', you see. The patah has played up like a weal bwick. Of course, it's up to evewyboday who's got money to spend it like watah just now. The poor are givin' their lives, and the wick can give their money at least—what?"

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "Hallo, there's the sea!"

"Good!"

"And that's Shoremouth," said Digby, standing up in the car; "and, by Jove, there's a steamer along the quay. It's in."

"Buck up, Wobinson!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

The chauffeur bucked up, and the car rushed on down the road into the little coast town of Shoremouth, looking out over the waters of the Channel. The "front" of the little place was crowded with people. The steamer along the quay was discharging its living cargo, who were to be taken by a special train to the refugees already prepared for them in the southern counties. The car stopped, and the four juniors alighted.

It was a strange and unaccustomed scene for their eyes.

It was like a dream, like a vision of the unreal. For it was hard to believe that, at so short a distance from peaceful England, savage raiders were burning peaceful inhabitants out of house and home, and driving them forth to live upon the compassion of a foreign country.

The cheery looks died off the juniors' faces as they looked upon the grim procession that landed from the steamer, and took its way towards the railway-station. Men and women of all ages, some of the women carrying little children, with other children clinging to them, some half dressed or dressed in all kinds of odd garments, some carrying pitiful little bundles, containing all they had been able to save from the wreck of their homes.

Snatches of their talk, in French and sometimes in the difficult dialect of Flanders, came to the ears of the group of juniors.

"On a brule tout!"

"C'est affreux!"

"Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!"

"Courage, courage, mes enfants!"

"Poor chaps!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a lump in his throat. "Bai Jove, it makes a chap want to be gwown up to have a go at those wotten Pwussians, doesn't it?"

"By Jove, it does!" said Jack Blake between his teeth.

"Never mind. Wait till Tommy Atkins gets at them; then they'll pay the piper!"

"Yaas, watah!"

"Let's pile in and help," said Herries. "They're giving them coffee and sandwiches at the station. Come on!"

"Yaas, pile in, deah boys!"

There were many kind hands at work doing their best for the refugees, but the number was very great of the latter, and more hands were wanted. Blake & Co. set to work at once. Robinson, the chauffeur, tumbled the parcels out of the car, the juniors unwrapped them, and distributed the contents to the refugees as they passed in a weary line into the station.

Arthur Augustus's choice of provisions had been a little peculiar, his purchases having been made from a schoolboy's point of view. Cream puffs and jam-tarts and bullseyes were

not precisely the things the tired, hungry refugees wanted most. But they were acceptable, and the juniors received many a grateful smile from weary mothers as the sticky but tasty morsels were handed to crying children.

Sandwiches and rolls and hard-boiled eggs were more useful to the grown-ups, and were gratefully accepted.

Extensive as was the supply brought in the car from St. Jim's, it was very soon exhausted.

Then the juniors set to work making themselves useful. Arthur Augustus picked up a weeping little girl and carried her to the station, and the little one left off crying as she found amusement in clawing his silk topper. The silk topper soon looked more like a bushy, but Arthur Augustus bore it heroically. Blake and Herries and Digby did porter's work, and did it manfully. All sorts and conditions of things had to be carried for the fugitives—bundles of clothing, packets of food, parrots in cages, all kinds of little household treasures, which had been snatched up as the wretched victims of war fled from their ruined homes.

The early winter dusk was falling, but the juniors had forgotten all about calling-over at St. Jim's. They were too busy for that. And there was no doubt that their Housemaster would excuse a late return when he learned how they had spent the afternoon.

In the crowded railway-station several trains had departed already, but the platforms, the waiting-rooms, and the passages were still crowded. Among the worn and weary crowd there were women seeking information concerning missing children, perhaps left behind in the hurried flight in Belgium, separated from their parents in the wild crowd. The St. Jim's juniors looked on with heavy hearts. It was their first experience of the horrors of war.

"And we might have this in England, too," said Blake, in a low voice, "if it wasn't for the Navy and Tommy Atkins. It's horrible! What will they find their homes like when they go back after the war?"

Arthur Augustus shivered.

"It doesn't beah thinkin' of, deah boys. The only consolation is that the beastly Kaiser is goin' to get it wight in the neck!"

"My hat!" said Herries, as six o'clock rang out. "We shall jolly well be late for calling-over, you chaps!"

"Oh, nevah mind callin'-ovah!" said D'Arcy. "We must see the end of this. Some of these kids may be left behind. What a numbah of kids there are, too—poor little beggars! And they don't cw yew much eithah!"

And Arthur Augustus rushed forward to hand children into a crowded carriage into the arms of their mother. He lifted them tenderly, as if they were made of porcelain, and placed them carefully into the mother's arms—a thin-faced, stricken-looking woman, with trembling lips.

"Merci, merci!" she murmured. "Comme vous êtes gentil, monsieur. Merci!"

"Twavellin' all alone?" asked Arthur Augustus, thinking that perhaps the husband was lost in the crowd. "I mean, vous êtes toute seule, madame? If your husband is heah I will look for him for you."

"Comment!"

"Bai Jove! I mean, si votre mari est ici, je le chercherai," said Arthur Augustus, in the best French of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

The Belgian woman's eyes filled with tears.

"Mon mari!" She made a gesture towards the distant Continent. "La-bas!"

"He has remained in Belgium?" asked D'Arcy. "Il est resté chez-chez—"

"Il est mort, monsieur."

"Dead! Bai Jove, I'm awfully sorry!"

"On l'a tué."

And the woman gathered her children round her, crying softly. "They have killed him!" were the words she had said. Arthur Augustus retreated with a heavy heart. There was nothing to say in consolation of such sorrow at that.

"Bai Jove, deah boys, this makes me feel awfully wotten!" murmured D'Arcy, as he rejoined his companions. "I weally feel as if I shall be wude to Herr Schneider when we get back to St. Jim's. I feel as if I cannot stand a German now. The wottahs—the uttah wottahs—to treat peaceable people like this! I should like to be within hittin' distance of the Kaisah. I would show him somethin' in uppah-cuts."

Blake nodded gloomily.

The scene was misery itself, and there was nothing to be done, save to relieve the wants of the refugees in a small way. Their burnt and blackened homes—their slaughtered relatives; those sorrows were beyond human sympathy to repair.

The last train moved out at last. The refugees were all on their way to kindly shelter, at least. It was all that could be done. With sad and shadowed faces, the schoolboys left the station, and walked back to the car. They stood for

ANSWERS

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some minutes looking towards the sea—the narrow Channel, which was the strongest defence of their own homes against the ruthless invader. Never had they realised so clearly how much the sea meant to their island home.

"Thank Heaven for the Channel!" said Blake at last. "Come on, let's get back! I'm glad we came. We've been some use, and that's something; but it's made me feel beastly. It must be awful over there. Think of the towns and villages where the beastly Uhlans may ride in at any minute. Oh, it's rotten!"

The juniors clambered into the car. They had started their afternoon's excursion in the highest spirits; they ended it in the lowest. But they were glad that they had come.

CHAPTER 5. Good Samaritans!

THE car buzzed out of the little seaside town, with its headlights gleaming through the mist that had rolled up from the sea.

Within the car the juniors sat silent.

All the parcels were gone, and there was plenty of room. The juniors were feeling hungry now; they had not thought of themselves while distributing food to the refugees. Blake's foot knocked against a little packet on the floor, and he groped for it and picked it up. It was a packet of toffee.

"My hat, Fatty's toffee!" exclaimed Blake.

And the juniors laughed. It was the heroic gift of Fatty Wynn of the Fourth, and it had lain unnoticed in the bottom of the car.

"Good old Fatty!" grinned Digby. "It must have made his heart ache to part with it, after parting with the grub, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors felt their spirits rising, as they buzzed along in the keen air, out of sight of the misery they had witnessed.

But there was a sudden jamming on of brakes, and the car slowed down.

Arthur Augustus peered out.

"What's the mattah, Wobinson?"

"Somebody in the road, sir."

The car halted.

The road was dark, save for the bright headlights of the car. The juniors jumped out.

A figure lay by the roadside—that of a boy of about ten years old, dressed in knickerbockers, and a man's coat, with bare head. A glance at his face in the light from the car showed that he was not English.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Who's this?"

"One of the refugees, looks like," said Herries.

"But how—"

"He's fagged out, and fallen down in the road," said Blake, as he knelt down beside the little lad, and raised his head.

"Hallo, kid!"

The dark, foreign face was drawn with suffering, as the juniors could easily see. The little fellow was in the last stage of exhaustion. Probably it was long since he had eaten anything. But his big, dark eyes opened as Blake spoke, and fixed themselves on the junior's face, with an expression in them like that of a dumb, suffering animal.

"Non, non, non!" he murmured, almost inaudibly. "Ne moutez pas la vie! Non, non!"

"What does he mean, deah boy?"

Blake's lips set.

"The poor kid! He's asking me to spare his life."

"Bai Jove!"

"He doesn't know where he is," said Dig huskily. "He thinks he's still among the Germans."

"Cheer up, kid," said Blake. "It's all right. I—I mean, nous sommes amis—we are friends! Comprenny?"

"Anglais!" said Herries. "Angleterre ici—compreunny?"

Possibly the accent of the juniors' French left something to be desired, for the little fellow did not appear to understand. His eyes roved about him wildly.

"How the deuce did he get here?" Blake muttered in perplexity. "We're more than two miles out of the town. He must have started walking."

"Lost his people, perhaps, or they've lost him."

"May be a kid who's come over on his own," said Dig. "I've heard that lots of them got separated on the other side in the crush. His people may be still in Belgium."

"Poor kid!"

"I'll bet he's hungry," said Blake. "Looks like it. I say, kid, are you hungry?"

"Pitch it to him in French," said Herries. "Go it, Dig. You're strong in French."

"Right-ho!" said Dig. Digby was a great French scholar, and the juniors agreed to let him be the interpreter.

"Avez vous faim?" asked Digby.

A nod.

"He understands me," said Dig, with much satisfaction. "He's hungry."

"Bai Jove! And there's nothin' left to give him to eat!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in distress.

"Fatty Wynn's toffee!" exclaimed Herries.

"Yaas, bai Jove! Where is it?"

"Here," said Blake. He extracted the toffee from the packet, and passed it to the little Belgian. The boy almost snatched it, and stuffed it whole into his mouth, and began to gnaw it.

"Must be feahfully hungry," said Arthur Augustus, as he watched the little fellow masticating the tough toffee. "I wathah think he's come away in a huwvy, too. He's got a man's coat on, and his hat seems to be missin' entially."

"Where's your father, kid?" asked Blake. "Put it to him, Dig."

"Ou est votre pere?" asked Digby.

"Mort."

"Bai Jove!"

"Et votre mere?" asked Dig.

"Je ne sais pas."

"He doesn't know," said Dig. "His father's dead, and he doesn't know where his mother is. That's clear."

"Ask him whether his mere was at Shoremouth with that crowd?" said Blake.

Digby considered a little. A somewhat severe strain was being put on his French.

"Votre mere—elle etait la bas?" asked Dig, with a wave of the hand towards the distant town.

"Non."

"She wasn't there?" said Dig. "Vous avez venu tout seul dans le bateau?"

"Oui."

"He came along alone in the boat," said Dig, greatly satisfied with his success as an interpreter. "I expect he got separated from his mother in the crush on the other side."

Came over alone in the boat, and wandered away from the rest, instead of getting into the railway-station. Lost his way then, most likely."

"Ask him if he knows anybody in this vicinity?" said Blake.

"Qu'est que vous faites ici?" asked Dig, turning on the French again.

"Je ne sais pas."

"Vous cherchez quelqu'un?"

"Non."

"He ain't looking for anybody here," said Dig. "He's just wandered away from the rest, because he knew nobody in the crowd, poor kid. Doesn't know where he's going."

The juniors looked at one another dubiously. The little Belgian finished the toffee. By this time he had evidently realised that he was among friends, for the look of haunting dread had left his face, and he muttered:

"J'ai faim."

"He's looking for a farm," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps he knows some farmah in this neigbbahhood, deah boys."

Digby snorted.

"He hasn't said anything about a farm, ass!"

"Weally, Dig, I distinctly heard him allude to a farm."

"Fathead! Faim is French for hungry."

"Bai Jove, so it is!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "We haven't anythin' left for him to eat. It's wotten."

"The question is, what are we going to do with him?" said Blake in perplexity. "We can't leave him here, tired and hungry."

"Imposs, deah boy!"

"We might run him back to Shoremouth; but the last of the crowd have gone, and there's no one there to take him in charge."

"It's wathah a difficult posish," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Howevah, we can't desert a kid in distress."

"But what the dickens—"

"It's perfectly plain what we've got to do, deah boy."

"Is it?" said Blake. "Tain't plain to me! What have you got in your silly noddle now?"

"We must take him along with us, deah boy."

"Along with us!" exclaimed Blake and Herries and Digby together.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But—but—"

"We can't possibly abandon him, deah boy. I twust you do not think that we could act in this mattah like Pwussians!"

"No, ass; but—but—"

"Might find somewhere to put him," said Dig. "We're late for calling-over as it is, and a little more won't hurt. Might find somewhere—"

"I twust you don't think we could leave an unfortunate

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Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

wefugee in a workhouse, or anythin' like that!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Well, no; but—but—"

"It's up to us, deah boys!"

"But—but we can't take the kid into the school!" ejaculated Blake. "We—we shouldn't be allowed to! Where could we put him? I can just imagine Railton's or Linton's face when we said we'd brought a refugee home to St. Jim's!"

"He'd be sent down to the local casual ward at once," said Herries.

"Wats! They wouldn't be such beasts!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I admit that it is wathah an unusual pwocedint' to take a wefugee into a school!"

"I should jolly well say it was!"

"But the cires are wathah unusual. It isn't our fault, you see—it's the Kaisah's fault. It's all through that wiculous person's attack of swelled head. My deah boys, I wufuse to leave the Kaisah's victim heah in the woad! It's up to us to look aftah him. He is in our hands now, and has nobody else to look aftah him. And we needn't take ewevybody into our confidence ovah it!"

"Eh?"

"We'll take him secwetly into the school, you see," Arthur Augustus explained. "And then we can feel our way, and see what the mastahs think about it befoah we let out that we've got him there!"

"H'm!"

"That's my ideah," said Arthur Augustus. "We'll take him in, and put him into the studay to begin with. Then we'll find out diplomatically whethah we should be allowed to keep him there. If we are, it's all wight. If we're not, then we shall have to keep his pwesence a secwet—see?"

"My hat!"

"What are you gwinnin' at, Wobinson?"

The chauffeur started.

"I, sir! Was I gwinnin' at, sir?"

"Yaas, you were."

"Sorry, sir!" murmured the chauffeur.

"Help the poor kid into the cah, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "If you fellows won't back me up, I shall take charge of him alone!"

"Oh, we'll back you up!" said Blake resignedly. "Of course, we can't abandon the kid. But I think there'll be a row!"

"Wats!"

"Come on, kid!" said Dig, helping the Belgian boy to his feet.

The little fellow seemed to resist.

"It's all right," said Dig. "Vous comez with us—I mean, vous venez chez vous, kid—chez nous, you know. Notre maison, what? Vous mangez—dormez—and so on."

The little Belgian grinned, whether in appreciation of the offered hospitality or on account of Dig's French it is impossible to say. But he made no further objection, and he was lifted into the motor-car, and the rugs were wrapped round him, and the juniors started again for St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 6. D'Arcy's Protege.

BLAKE & Co. were very thoughtful as the car ran on swiftly through the misty evening.

The little Belgian lay back among the rugs, resting and warm, and his big dark eyes roved from one face to another with perplexed looks. He understood that he was in friendly hands, but he was puzzled. But, at all events, he was now warm and comfortable.

"Ask him what his name is, Dig," said Blake.

"Comme vous vous appelez, mong onfong?" asked Dig.

The little fellow smiled again.

"Je suis, Charles."

"Sharl!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Is that a surname?"

"Ass!" said Dig. "That's the way they pronounce Charles. His front name is Charles—that's what he means by Sharl!"

"We'll call him Charlie," said Blake. "Or I suppose it would be Sharlie in his own language. All right now, Sharlie?"

"Comment?"

"What does he mean by commong, Dig?"

"He means that he doesn't understand, fathead! Vous etes, content, Charles?" asked Dig loftily.

"Oui, merci."

"Asking for mercy again!" said Herries.

"Fathead!" roared Digby. "Merci is French for 'Thank you.'"

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"So it is," agreed Herries. "Don't you swank with your blessed French, Dig. The kid grins every time you speak to him!"

"That's because he's so pleased at being talked to in his own language."

"Oh, I thought it might be because it tickled him!"

"Ass!"

"I wish I knew what we were going to do with him," said Blake ruminatingly.

"Feed him first, deah boy, when we get him in."

"Yes, ass; but after that?"

"Put him to bed somewhah. He's tiahd!"

"I mean, how are we going to dispose of him. It's all very well to play the Good Samaritan—a jolly good thing, of course; I know that! But—but to take a strange kid into a school like St. Jim's—a kid in knickerbockers and an old gentleman's tail-coat, without a hat—Oh crumbs!"

"He pwobably didn't have time to stop for his hat when the Pwussians were settin' fiah to his house, Blake!"

"Ye-e-s, I know. But—but I can't help thinking that there will be a row, and the kid will be sent away somewhere!"

"There's a lot of homes for 'em, you know," remarked Herries. "Railton will send Taggles with him at once, most likely, if he sees him!"

"That's all vewy well; but I wegard it as bein' up to us to take care of him," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "The kid is in an exhausted state, and he's jolly well not goin' to travel any more till he's wecovered. Besides, we may be able to find his people. The Pwussians can't have murdered all his welations, and we can advertise for them, or somethin'. We can keep him dark in the studay!"

"The other fellows will spot him, and jaw."

"We must take pwecautions about that. I am interestet in the youngstah, and I am not goin' to desert him!"

"Well, we're in for it," said Blake. "Perhaps if we took him in openly, and handed him over to the house-dame—"

"Wats! I am goin' to keep him undah my eye. He would be sent away somewhah, and disappah. I am goin' to keep him till I can find his people!"

"Eh?"

"I mean it, deah boys. I wegard him as my pwotegé!"

Blake groaned.

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus crossly. "It will be a feathah in the cap of Study No. 5 to be lookin' aftah a Belgian wefugee, and findin' his missin' pawents for him. I wegard this kid as bein' in my special care, and I am not goin' to part with him till I can westore him to the arms of his mothah!"

Arthur Augustus had evidently made up his mind. When Arthur Augustus had made up his mind, there was nothing more to be done. Blake and Herries and Dig resigned themselves to their fate.

Meanwhile, the car was speeding on, and St. Jim's was drawing near. The gates of the old school came in sight at last. D'Arcy signalled the chauffeur to halt. The big car swung to a stop a hundred yards from the school gates.

"We've got to get in quietly," said Arthur Augustus, as he alighted. "We mustn't let Taggles see the kid, or he will jaw, you know!"

"I jolly well think he would!" chuckled Blake.

"Put my ovahcoat on, kid," said Arthur Augustus. "Mottez—vous—comprenny? And the hat, too—le chapeau aussi. C'est bong!"

"What's that for?" asked Blake, as D'Arcy arrayed the Belgian boy in his overcoat and silk topper.

Both were considerably too large for the little Belgian. The coat came down to his boots, and the hat rested on the bridge of his nose.

The juniors grinned at the peculiar sight he represented. Robinson the chauffeur seemed to explode suddenly, and he bent over the machinery and pretended to be very busy with it as Arthur Augustus's eyeglass turned upon him.

"You see, we must let Taggles think that he is one of us," explained Arthur Augustus. "With his coat-collar turned up, and in the dark, Taggles won't notice!"

"He'll notice the kid bottled up in that hat!" gasped Herries.

"Oh, that's all wight! It will pass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Better put my cap on him," chuckled Blake. "It's too big, but it won't look quite so striking as that. He can pull it down over his chivvy!"

Arthur Augustus regarded the little Belgian thoughtfully. Charles was submitting to his new rig with exemplary patience.

"Pewwaps you are wight, Blake," said D'Arcy, taking the topper off his protege. "Twy your cap on him!"



Our artist depicts above a stirring scene near Ypres. A British gun is threatened by the rising waters which the self-sacrificing Belgians have let loose upon their country, and the gunners put forth all their efforts to cross the inundated area. If they can reach the higher ground before the waters rise, their precious gun will be safe, and able to work further destruction upon the German hordes. With shells bursting overhead, the task is far from safe, but these gallant sons of Empire are ready at any time to dare all for the honour of Britain and the safety of our race.

Blake tried the cap. It was several sizes too large for the little fellow, but, as Blake remarked, it certainly concealed his face a good deal, and that was what was wanted.

"That's bettah, deah boy. You can go in without a cap. Taggles won't notice the kid now; he'll simply think there were five of us instead of four. All wight!"

"Mind the kid don't jaw, then," said Herries. "Even Taggles has sense enough to know that a St. Jim's chap wouldn't come in talking French."

"Yaas, tell him not to jaw, Dig. How does it go—ne jawez-vous pah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wobinson!"

"Yes, sir?" said the chauffeur.

"You can take the cah back to Wayland now, Wobinson. Aftah such a vewy long wun, I ought to give you a wathah decent tip, Wobinson."

"Thank you, sir!"

"I was thinkin' of half-a-sovereign, Wobinson——"

"You are very good, sir!"

"But owin' to the fact that I have spent all my cash on

pwovidin' for the wefugees, I sha'n't be able to do it, Wobinson. Undeah the circs, I am sure you don't mind. Good-night, Wobinson!"

"G-g-good-night, sir!" gasped Robinson.

Blake chuckled, and slipped a half-crown into the chauffeur's hand. Robinson drove the car away, and the chums of Study No. 6 proceeded towards the gates of St. Jim's, with the little Belgian in their midst. They had brought D'Arcy's protegee home, and the next step was to smuggle him unseen into the school, which was probably not so easy to do.

"Take his othah arm, Dig," said Arthur Augustus. "Keep him between us, and in the shadow as much as possible. You wing the bell, Blake, and talk to Taggles. Call him names, and make him watty, and then he won't start lookin' at Charlie."

"Blessed if you ain't cram-jam full of good ideas to-day, Gussy," said Blake admiringly. "I'll swear at Taggles, if you like. Tell me some words."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY, FREE SUPPLEMENT IN "THE MAGNET," NOW ON SALE!

"J'ai faim!" murmured the little Belgian.
 "The kid says he's hungry," said Arthur Augustus severely. "This isn't a time for your wotten jokes, Blake! Wing the bell, and wing off!"
 And Jack Blake tugged at the bell, giving a terrific peal that made Taggles jump in his lodge.

CHAPTER 7.

Smuggled In.

TAGGLES came down to the gates with a glimmering lantern in his hand. There was a mist in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's, and it was very cold. Taggles wasn't in a good temper. He hated being disturbed after locking-up. And it was very long after locking-up now. Taggles blinked through the bars of the gate, and frowned.

"Oh, 'ere you are!" he growled.
 "Ere we are!" said Blake cheerfully. "'Ow are you, Taggy?"

"Which you'll get into trouble for bein' late," said Taggles. "Which Mr. Railton says, says he, that you're to report yourselves to 'im immediate, says he. Send them young rips to me at once when they comes 'ome, Taggles, says he!"

"Wubbish!" said Arthur Augustus. "I cannot ccredit that Mr. Wailton used such expressions at all, Taggles. You are exaggeratin'!"

"Ugh!" grunted Taggles.
 He unlocked the gates, and the juniors came in, little Charlie in the midst of them.

"Ho!" said Taggles. "Five of you, is there?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "No harm in giving another chap a lift home, Taggy, is there?" asked Blake. "I say, what's that on your face, Taggy?"

"There ain't nothing on my face!" growled Taggles.
 "Yes, there is!" exclaimed Blake, in tones of alarm. "My hat! A big red thing looks like an overdone beet-root—sticking right on the middle of your face!"

Taggles put his disengaged hand up to his face in surprise and alarm.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Blake. "It's only your nose, Taggles!"

"You—you—you—" stuttered Taggles.
 Blake chuckled, and followed his comrades, who were walking off quickly in the direction of the School House. Taggles slammed the gate and locked it, and went back to his lodge, murmuring things about junior schoolboys in general, and Jack Blake of the Fourth in particular.

Half-way to the School House Arthur Augustus halted, in the dim mist under the leafless elms, and his comrades halted, too.

"Well, what now?" demanded Blake. "We've got to report ourselves."

"Yaas; but we've got to put Sharl somewhah. How are we to get him into the House without bein' spotted, deah boys?"

That was a poser. They had passed Cerberus at the gate, so to speak; but further progress was not easy. Inside the well-lighted School House there would be dozens of eyes upon them immediately, and if they took Charlie in with them, he was quite certain to be spotted in the first moment.

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake at length.

"Can't be done!" said Digby.

"Wats! It's got to be done! The kid is undah our protection, and we can't leave him out heah in the quad, I suppose."

"J'ai froid!"

"Bai Jove! What is he sayin' now?"

"He says he's cold," said Dig.

"No wondah, in this beastly wind," said Arthur Augustus.

"But he's warmah than I am, as he's got my coat on. He'll be all wight in Study No. 6 when we get him there. Suppose you go in, Blake, and go into the common-woom and shout 'Fiah! Fiah!'"

"What on earth do you want me to shout 'Fire! Fire!' in the common-room for?" demanded Blake, in astonishment.

"That would dwaw ewewybody into the common-woom, and then I could wush him in without bein' seen."

"And what would they say to me when they found there wasn't a fire?" howled Blake.

"That is a minah point!"

"Well, you can go in, and shout 'Fire! Fire!' if you like," said Blake; "I'm not takin' any!"

"Hewwies, deah boy, will you go into the common-woom and shout 'Fiah! Fiah!'"

"No, I won't!" growled Herries.

"Digby, deah boy—"

"Rats!" said Digby.

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"Well, somethin's got to be done!" said Arthur Augustus. "Go in and shout 'Fire! Fire!' yourself!" said Herries indignantly.

"Imposse, deah boy! I should look so widiculous when they found there wasn't a fiah!"

"What about us, then?" shrieked Blake.

"Pway don't argue, deah boy! You are always arguin'!"

"Ja'i faim!"

"Hallo! He's sayin' somethin' again," said Arthur Augustus. "What is it now, Dig?"

"He says he's hungry!" chuckled Dig.

"Je suis fatigued!"

"Now he says he's tired," said Dig.

"Of course he is, poor kid!" said D'Arcy. "I weally wish you chaps would think of a way of gettin' him in, instead of wastin' time like this. Bai Jove! I've got it! We've got some of the giddy fireworks left ovah from the Fifth of Novembah, you know. Blake can go in and get them—"

"You're thinking of using fireworks to warm the poor kid?" asked Herries. "That wouldn't be any good—"

"Weally, Hewwies, I am not thinkin' of anythin' of the sort! Blake can let some fireworks off in the Form-woom passage, and there will be a wush there to see what is the mattah, and then—"

"And then I shall be scalped!" growled Blake. "Railton will lick me if I let fireworks off in the House, you fathead!"

"It is in a good cause, deah boy."

"Bow-wow!"

"I wegard it as bein' up to you, Blake," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "Besides, you need not be spotted. The fireworks are in the box in the wood-shed. You can get some jumpin' cwickahs, and put a fuse to them—say in the Form-woom. There's nobody there at this time. And when they go off ewewybody will wush there at once to see what is the mattah—"

"I dare say they will, but—"

"And you can cleah off before they come!" urged Arthur Augustus.

Blake hesitated. It was an heroic method; but, really, it was difficult to say what was to be done. They could not stay out in the misty quadrangle for ever. Blake made up his mind.

"I'll chance it," he said.

"Good man! Back up, then!"

Blake snorted, and tramped away to the wood-shed. He came back with his overcoat pockets stuffed with crackers. Then he went into the School House.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther met him as he came in, and hailed him at once.

"Hallo! Where are the others?" asked Tom.

"Motor broken down?" asked Manners.

"Hold on, Blake! Can't you hear us talking to you?" shouted Monty Lowther, as Blake walked on.

The Fourth-Former did not even answer. He hurried down the passage, and the Terrible Three looked at one another in surprise.

"What the dickens is the matter with him?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Off his dot, I should think!" said Lowther.

"And where are Herries and D'Arcy and Dig, I wonder?"

The Terrible Three looked out into the quadrangle. Against the warm light in the hall they could easily be seen by the juniors under the misty elms. But the fellows in the quad were hidden from sight.

"Can't see any sign of them here," said Tom Merry, puzzled. "Blessed if I catch on! Blake doesn't seem to want to know how the House match went, either."

"Hallo! What on earth's that?"

"Great Scott!"

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

"It's an explosion—"

"My hat!"

"It's in the Form-room—"

"What the deuce—"

There were exclamations from all sides. A general rush was made down the Form-room passage. The door of the Fourth Form-room was open, and there was a smell of gunpowder. And from within the room came repeated detonations.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

"My only aunt! What the deuce—"

"Who—what—which—"

"Look out—here comes Railton!"

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, came striding down the passage, with a frowning brow.

"What is this?" he exclaimed sternly. "You are letting off fireworks in the house?"

"No, sir," said Tom Merry meekly.

"Someone is doing so!" exclaimed Mr. Railton sharply. And he strode into the Fourth Form-room.

It was dark there, save for a glittering of red sparks in the direction of the grate, where the crackers were still banging away merrily.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

Mr. Railton struck a match and lighted the gas. Fellows crowded in at the doorway in great astonishment. The Housemaster looked round him amazed. The room was empty, save for himself, and the crowd in the doorway.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Railton exasperated. "Someone has placed these fireworks in the grate—"

Bang, bang, bang! Squizzzzzz—fizzzz!

"And lighted them—"

Fizzzz! Bang, bang, bang!

"And apparently gone away. He shall be punished severely."

Bang, bang, bang!

The passage was swarming with astonished fellows, seniors and juniors. Some of them had an impression that a Zeppelin was dropping bombs on St. Jim's. There was a roar of voices, excited exclamations on all sides. In the midst of the confusion, Jack Blake slipped out of the Shell Form-room, where he had prudently taken cover after starting the crackers in the Fourth Form-room. He scudded away, and reached the hall, which was quite deserted, and ran upstairs to the Fourth-Form passage. There was a light in Study No. 6 now, and the voice of Arthur Augustus was heard.

"Stunnin', bai Jove!"

Blake came breathlessly into the study.

Herries and Digby and D'Arcy were there, and the Belgian boy. Arthur Augustus grinned cheerfully at Blake.

"It's all wight, deah boy!"

Blake snorted.

"All right, is it? It won't be all right if they find out who started the crackers in the Form-room, you duffer. The whole house is in a roar."

"Bai Jove!"

"Some thumping ass was singing out that it was a Zeppelin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothing to laugh at, you chump!" howled Blake. "There will be a row about it. Listen to them now."

The roar of voices in the distance could be plainly heard.

"Nevah mind, deah boy, it's all wight," said Arthur Augustus, with undiminished satisfaction, "we got in all sewene. There wasn't a soul in the hall—"

"I should say not," growled Blake.

"And not a soul on the stairs. Nobody spotted us gettin' heah," said Arthur Augustus. "It was weally a wippin' ideah of mine. Shut the door, Blake, deah boy—somebody might pass."

Blake closed the door. Charlie had sat down in the arm-chair, still in D'Arcy's coat and Blake's cap. He had been smuggled successfully into the School House, and was safe in Study No. 6. He blinked sleepily at the juniors as he sat toasting his toes at the fire, which Digby had already lighted. Arthur Augustus persisted in expressing satisfaction, in spite of the uproar that was still going on below. There was a sound of footsteps in the passage. Herries, who was always a practical chap, was extracting stores from the study cupboard, and he had pulled the table up beside Monsieur Charlie as he sat before the fire. The little Belgian's eyes gleamed, and he started operations upon bread and butter and sardines with an appetite that was worthy of Fatty Wynn at his best.

"There's somebody coming," said Blake. "What—"

"Lock the door—quick!"

Blake turned the key in the lock just as the footsteps stopped outside Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 8.

The Refugee of Study No. 6.

KNOCK!

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Who's there?"

The handle was turned. The door did not open, and Tom Merry's voice came from outside, in tones of surprise.

"Let me in, Blake, if you're there."

"What's wanted?"

"There's been an explosion in the Form-room."

"Go hon!"

"Some silly ass has been stacking fireworks in the grate, and setting them off in a regular heap," said Tom Merry.

"Railton and the prefects are looking for him. He will get it jolly warm when he's caught, the thundering duffer."

"Have you got him yet?" asked Blake, chuckling.

"Not yet. What are you keeping the door locked for?"

"So that it won't open," explained Blake.

"Ass! Have the others come in yet?"

"Yaas, wathah, we're all heah, deah boy!"

"I didn't see you come in."

"Pewwaps you were lookin' at the explosions in the Form-room, deah boy," chuckled Arthur Augustus. "A vewy remarkable circumstance, I must say. Who evah could have been lettin' off those fireworks?"

"Whoever it was, he'll get it in the neck when he's bowled out," said Tom Merry. "You chaps are late."

"Yaas; 'we've been vewy busay."

"Reported yourselves to Railton yet?"

"Not yet," said Digby.

"You'll find him in a wax. Why the dickens don't you open the door? What are you hiding in there?" demanded the perplexed captain of the Shell.

"Oh, wun away and play, Tom Mewwy!"

"What!"

"Can't talk now," said Blake. "See you later."

"Look here, why can't you let me in? What's the little game?"

"Bow-wow!"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry, and he bestowed a kick upon the door, and went his way. Arthur Augustus drew a breath of relief.

"Thank goodness he's gone!" he said. "We don't want the fellows to be thinkin' that we're hidin' somethin' in the study, you know. The ideah is to keep them all off the twack."

"We could let Tom Merry into the secret," remarked Herries. "He can be relied on."

Arthur Augustus shook his head decidedly.

"Least said soonest mended," he declared. "No good twustin' to the disavowal of the youngstahs. They would be bound to talk. Bai Jove! That kid seems to be enjoyin' his suppah. Is there anythin' else in the cupboard? He's finished the sardines."

"Only cheese," said Herries, lifting it out. "Luckily there's plenty of that. Do you like cheese, kid?"

"Du fromage, mon enfant," said Dig.

Charlie tucked into the fromage with an undiminished appetite, helping it down with wedges of bread-and-butter. The hospitable owners of Study No. 6 were glad to see him so engaged. But they could not help thinking of the difficulties of the situation. If the other fellows spotted the stranger in Study No. 6, there would be so much talk on the subject that the masters or prefects would certainly make the discovery almost immediately. The presence of Charlie from Belgium had to be kept profoundly dark. But that could only be done by keeping the study door locked; and the locking of the study door was an unusual proceeding, which was certain to attract attention.

"We've got to report ourselves," Digby remarked. "The sooner the better, too. We shall have to leave the kid here while we're gone."

"We'll lock the door on the outside, and take the key away, deah boys."

"I—I suppose that's the only thing to be done," said Blake dubiously. "Come on! Railton will be in a wax anyway."

"Tell him in Fwench that we'll come back soon, Dig."

Digby explained to Charles.

"Vous restez ici—nous reviendrons, kid."

"Oui!"

"That's right—noo reviongdrong," said Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "Come on, deah boys! This reminds me of the time when Tom Mewwy found a lost baby and brought it in. Luckily this kid is too old to cwy like that blessed baby."

Blake cautiously opened door and peered into the passage. It was empty, and the chums slipped out, and Blake locked the door on the outside and put the key into his pocket. Then the four juniors walked downstairs to report themselves in their Housemaster's study.

Mr. Railton had just returned there, after a vain search for the author of the outrageous explosions in the Fourth Form-room. His knitted brows showed that he was very much annoyed. Skimpole of the Shell had started the rumour that a Zeppelin was dropping bombs on St. Jim's, and some of the youngest fags were still in a state of alarm. Herr Schneider, the German master at St. Jim's, had shared the alarm. At the word Zeppelin, repeated by the crowd, who did not know what was happening, Herr Schneider had rushed upon the scene, with the really benevolent intention of interceding with the German invaders, if possible, and causing them to sheer off.

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A Magnificent New, Long? Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

The stout Herr was in Mr. Railton's study now, mopping his brow after the excitement.

"I am ferry glad tat it was only a false alarm, my tear Mr. Railton," he said. "It was a choke of some pad poy!"

"I shall find him, and punish him severely!" said Mr. Railton—which was very grateful and comforting for Blake to hear as he arrived at the door.

"Ja, ja, wohl; it was ferry pad! I tinkt tat efery day der Zeppelins gum," said Herr Schneider. "Ach! Dey are terrible, der Zeppelins—ferry terrible! I hope tat dey spare dis school ven dey destroy eferyding else, Herr Railton!"

Mr. Railton made an irritable gesture. He liked and respected Herr Schneider, but the German master's unlimited belief in the terrible German airships was a little irritating. Herr Schneider had a sincere affection for the country where he had found a home for many years, and this led him to bemoan the coming fate of the British Empire, which—from the Schneider point of view—was in a very sad way indeed. But as everybody else at St. Jim's knew that the British Empire was going quite well, and that another Empire—made in Germany—was on his last legs, the good Herr's compassion for his adopted country was regarded as superfluous.

"Ah, come in, Blake!" said Mr. Railton, as he saw the juniors at the door. "You have missed calling-over. What do you mean by coming in so late?"

"Very sorry, sir," said Blake. "We were delayed in Shoremouth—"

"You have been to such a distance from the school?" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "You should have asked permission first!"

"Yaas; I nevah thought of that," said Arthur Augustus. "It was my ideah, sir. But I am suah you will excuse us, sir, when you know what we've been doin'!"

"I am not so sure of that," said the Housemaster drily. "However, I am willing to hear your explanation, if you have one to offer!"

"We've been helpin' the wefugees, sir."

"The—the what?"

"There were a lot of Belgian refugees landed at Shoremouth this afternoon, sir," said Blake meekly. "We've been helping them—feeding 'em and carrying things for them, sir. They needed help!"

Mr. Railton's brow cleared.

"Indeed! Then I will say that you have been very worthily occupied, my boys. It was a very kindly thought to spend your half-holiday in that manner. I am glad that St. Jim's boys have been of service to those unfortunate people!"

"It was a howwid sight, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "Lots of them in wags, and neably all of them without any money. The wotten Germans have all their money! I—I beg your pardon, Herr Schneider!"

"You may go," said Mr. Railton hastily.

The juniors hastily left the study. Herr Schneider's expression was a study in itself.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, as they went down the passage.

"I'm sowwy I gave old Schneider that dig—I really forgot he was there! He's a decent old chap, and he can't help being a beastly German, you know. Still, after what we've seen to-day, it's vathah hard to feel fwindly towards a German. And the old duffah thinks that their beastly Zeppelins are goin' to make us sit up! Wubbish!"

"Hallo! Here you are intirely!" exclaimed Reilly of the Fourth, meeting them in the hall. "Now, tell us all about it!"

A crowd of juniors surrounded Blake & Co., and insisted upon hearing all about the afternoon's expedition. The four juniors were anxious to get back to Study No. 6; but, at the same time, they were anxious not to excite suspicion. So they had to stay and give an account of their adventures, which was listened to with the keenest interest.

"And how did the match go, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus at last.

"Oh, we beat them!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Did you weally?" exclaimed D'Arcy, in surprise.

"Talbot kicked the winning goal," said Manners. "We were one to nil. We shouldn't have had a chance, though, if

you'd been there, Gussy. You can consider that you won that match for us by going to Shoremouth!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "It's time we started our pwep, deah boys. We sha'n't be able to finish it, any-way!"

"Better cut across and get something from the tuckshop before it closes," said Dig. "I'm frightfully hungry!"

"Yaas, wathah, and so is— Ahem! Let's go to the tuckshop first. I hope some of you fellows have some money. I'm stony!"

Fortunately, Blake and Herries and Digby were not in that sad state. They purchased supplies in Mrs. Taggles' little shop, and returned to Study No. 6. As they reached the door they heard a peculiar sound proceeding from the study.

"Bai Jove! That sounds like somebody pwactisin' your cornet, Hewwies," said D'Arcy. "But the door's locked—"

"It's that kid snoring," murmured Blake. "My batt! That'll have to be stopped!"

He unlocked the door quickly, and the juniors hurried in. Charlie had finished the cheese, and he was lying back in the armchair, sleeping the sleep of exhaustion. His mouth was open, and a deep snore proceeded from him. Evidently he had quite made himself at home in Study No. 6.

Blake locked the door again. The juniors stood regarding Charlie in dismay. His deep and powerful snore could be heard from the passage, and it was certain to be heard and to cause comment; yet they had not the heart to awaken him. It was probable that the little fellow had not slept since he was driven from his ruined home in Belgium.

"Poor kid!" said Dig.

"But what a twighful wow!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "The fellows will heah it, and want to know what is the mattah!"

"Can't be helped! We'll keep the door locked, and let 'em think that it's you snoring, Gussy," said Blake.

"You uttah ass! I nevah snoah!" exclaimed D'Arcy indignantly. "Howevah, we can't wake the poor kid up at pwesent. Let's get on with the pwep!"

And the chums of Study No. 6 settled down to their prep, simultaneously eating sandwiches, as there was no time for tea.

Preparation had to be done, whatever happened. So they ate and worked to a musical accompaniment from the sleeping Charlie.

CHAPTER 9. In Hiding.

THUMP!

"Hallo! Can't you let a chap in?" It was Levison's voice at the door. Levison of the Fourth was puzzled at finding the door locked.

Blake put his finger to his lips.

"Not a word, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Shush!"

"What's on in there?" came Levison's voice through the keyhole. "What have you got the door locked for? Who's that snoring?"

Blake tiptoed to the door, and whispered through the keyhole:

"Hush, Levison! You'll wake him up!"

"Time he was woke up when he's making that row!" replied Levison.

"Who is it? Sounds like Herries' cornet at its very worst. Is it Herries?"

"No. Gussy was awfully tired when he came in," said Blake diplomatically.

"Blake, you wottah—"

"Shush!"

"You are delibewately misleadin' Levison," said Arthur Augustus, in a fierce whisper.

"Shush! Do you want him to know the kid's there?" whispered Blake.

Arthur Augustus held his peace, but he looked volumes at Blake. It was distinctly painful to the swell of St. Jim's to be supposed guilty of that sonorous and powerful snore, and that was certainly the impression Levison of the Fourth received from Blake's exceedingly diplomatic remark.

FOR NEXT WEEK:

TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!

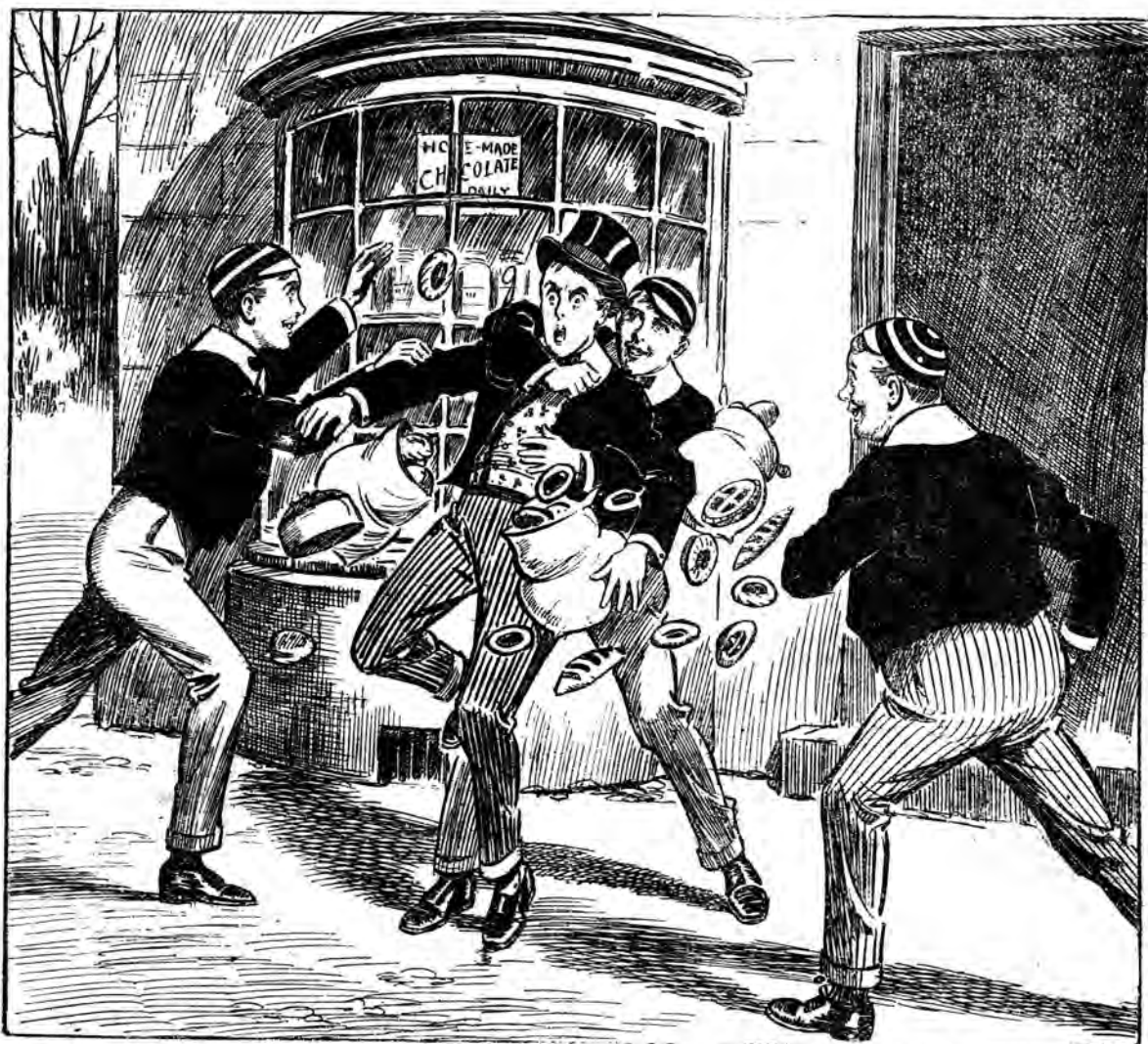
Another Splendid
Long, Complete
Story of Tom
Merry & Co. at
St. Jim's.

—By—

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



The elegant figure of the swell of St. Jim's appeared in the doorway of the tuck-shop. He was simply loaded with parcels, and was quite unable to walk with his usual elegant saunter. "Collar him!" rapped out Figgins, as Arthur Augustus stepped out of the tuck-shop. (See Chapter 1.)

"Gussy, by George!" exclaimed Levison. "Let him snore like that in the dorm, that's all. I'll jolly soon wake him up if he does!"

"Hush!" said Blake, through the keyhole.

Levison chuckled.

"I'll bring the fellows along to hear it," he said. "I've never heard Gussy perform like that before! My hat! This'll make 'em chuckle!"

Levison's footsteps were heard receding. Arthur Augustus looked at Blake as if he would eat him.

"You—you feahful wottah!" he gasped. "That beast is goin' to bring along the chaps to heah that feahful wow, and they will think that I snore like that! If it wasn't for wakin' up my pwotege, Blake, I should give you a feahful thwashin'!"

There was a sound of many footsteps in the passage. Loud chuckles were heard, as the juniors outside listened to the snoring. Their remarks came through the door to the ears of the chums of Study No. 6.

"My hat! Gussy's going it!" said Monty Lowther. "He must be snoring through a megaphone, I should think. Does he make that row in the dorm of a night?"

"He'd get jolly well slaughtered if he did, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "I say, Blake, you'd better wake him up. He'll have a fit or something!"

"Poor old Gussy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, listen to the band!" chanted Reilly of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus listened in anguish to the remarks from

the passage. But he dared not say a word, for if the juniors outside had learned that the snore did not proceed from the swell of St. Jim's, they would certainly have wanted to know whom it did proceed from. And the secret had to be kept.

Blake and Herries and Digby chuckled. The expression of D'Arcy's aristocratic features tickled them immensely.

A heavy, ponderous footstep came along the passage, and the four chums exchanged uneasy glances. It was the step of a master, and they wondered whether he was coming to the study.

"That's Schneider's hoof," muttered Blake. "Nobody else makes the house shake like that. But he can't be coming here, surely? He's got no business with us. None of you chaps have German lines to do, have you?"

The juniors shook their heads. But they listened uneasily. The ponderous footsteps stopped outside the study, and the chuckling outside ceased. Then Herr Schneider's voice was heard.

"Vat is all tat, mein poys? A little choke tat you haff—yes?"

"We're listening to D'Arcy snoring, sir," said Levison. "It's as good as a band."

"Mein Gott! Tat is D'Arcy—hein?" Herr Schneider tapped at the study door.

"Yes, sir!" called out Blake desperately.

"Let me in, Blake. Vy for is dis door locked mit itself, den? I want for to speech mit you, mein poys."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Vat tat you say, Blake?"

"Oh, I—I—all right, sir! I—I'll find the key!" gasped Blake.

"He mustn't see Charlie!" gasped Dig. "And—and it would frighten the kid to see a German. He doesn't know that old Schneider is warranted harmless."

As if the deep voice of the German master had penetrated through his slumbers, the little Belgian ceased to snore, and sat up in the armchair, with a startled light in his eyes.

"Machen die ture auf!" came Herr Schneider's voice sharply. He was annoyed at being kept standing in a draughty passage.

Charlie started to his feet, trembling in every limb. He did not understand the words, which simply meant "Open the door"; but he knew that they were uttered in German. And the unfortunate little fellow had had reason enough for terror at the sound of a German voice. He sprang from the armchair, and caught hold of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's arm, fleeing to him as if by instinct for protection.

"It's all wight, kid," whispered D'Arcy. "I—I mean—"

"Rassurez vous, mong enfant," whispered Dig.

"A moi! Ayez pitie de moi!" panted the little Belgian, his eyes roaming round the study like those of a trapped and frightened animal.

"We must hide him!" gasped Blake.

"He'll be willing enough to hide, poor kid," said Herries.

"He's scared out of his wits already. But where?"

"In the cupboard," said Blake hurriedly.

The study cupboard was not large; but it was large enough to hide the little Belgian. Blake tore it open, and Digby helped Charlie into the cupboard. The little fellow certainly did not understand why he was being hidden; but he understood that he was to hide, and a German voice at the door made him only too glad to hide himself. He scrambled into the cupboard in silence, his heart palpitating, his eyes gleaming wildly.

"Not a word, kid!" whispered Blake.

"Pas une mot!" muttered Digby. "Vous comprenez."

"Oui, oui!" panted Charley. "C'est un Allemand—c'est un meurtrier! Ayez pitie de moi!"

"Keep quiet."

"Taisez vous," said Dig.

The cupboard door was closed, and Blake placed a chair before it, and laid a couple of books on the chair. Then he bolted across to the study door and opened it. The German master was knocking angrily. He blinked sharply at Blake through his glasses as the door was flung open.

"Mein Gott! Vy for is it tat you keep me waiting like tat, after, Blake?" he demanded.

"I—I'm sorry, sir," stammered Blake.

"P-p-pway excuse us, sir—"

"Ach! You are avake, den, D'Arcy?"

"Ya-a-a-s, sir!"

"You snor ferry loudly. Dat is not goot. Is it tat you are not in goot health?"

"I—I—I'm all wight, sir."

"Will you—will you sit down, Herr Schneider?" murmured Blake, pulling out the armchair for the stout master.

"Dank you, mein poys," said Herr Schneider, sinking comfortably into the armchair. "Dat is goot. Dank you!"

"N-n-n-not at all, sir. V-v-very kind of you to come and see us, sir," said Blake.

The German master had settled down as if for some time. The chums of Study No. 6 were in a state of mental anguish. Herr Schneider did not, so far, suspect the presence of a stranger in the study, and he was not looking towards the cupboard. But at any moment there might come some sound from the little Belgian hidden in the cupboard, and then—And if the Herr stayed long, and the "kid" fell asleep, and began to snore again—

Herr Schneider smiled genially at the juniors. He had been a little cross at being kept waiting in the passage; but he was a good-tempered old gentleman, excepting sometimes in class. In the German lesson the juniors sometimes found him quite a Hun.

Blake & Co. wondered despairingly what he had come for. It was quite unusual for the German master to come to Study No. 6 for a chat, and it was cruel luck that he should choose this particular evening for beginning a new custom. But they soon discovered what Herr Schneider wanted.

"It is tat you have een to Pelgians tat have arrived, mein poys, dis afternoon?" he remarked.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell me all about it," said Herr Schneider.

Blake gave his chums a despairing glance, and plunged into a description of the scenes of the afternoon. He cut it as short as he could; but Herr Schneider wanted to know all about it, and he asked many questions. Blake & Co. listened in anguish for some sound from the cupboard to betray the presence of the refugee. But Charlie, fortunately, was quite quiet. Doubtless, he had been thrown into a state of terror

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 357.

by the proximity of a German; and at his tender age, and after his fearful experiences, he would hardly distinguish between the Kaiser's savage soldiery and a peaceful German master at a school. He was not likely to betray himself while Herr Schneider was there unless he fell asleep.

"Ach! It is ferry sad," said Herr Schneider, when the story of the afternoon's relief expedition was finished at last. "Ferry sad indeed! Mein heart pleeds for dose poor people. How much better if dey had allowed to Ghermans to occupy te country beacefully!"

"Rats!" said Blake, without stopping to think.

"Vat!"

"Excuse me, sir. But they were bound to keep the enemy out if they could," said Blake. "Better for a country to be cut to pieces and burnt to ashes than to knuckle under to an invader. A thousand times better."

"Yaas, watah!"

Herr Schneider smiled indulgently.

"Ach, it is ferry sad! And to dink dat it will happen in dis country too, tat makes me weep, mein poys!"

Blake glared. Politeness to a master was all very well; but he could not stand that. Besides, as Blake would have explained, he came from Yorkshire, where they always say what they think, and say it plainly.

"There'll be a jolly lot of Germans weeping before they treat this country like that, sir," said Blake. "I jolly well wish they would come, and give us a chance at them. But if we wait till they fly over in windbags, we shall have to wait a long time!"

"Blake, you are impertinent!"

"Sorry, sir. But you can't expect a chap to listen to rot like that!" said Blake.

Herr Schneider rose to his feet. It was really rough on him, because he was prepared to weep for the fate of the United Kingdom, and his kind sentiments found no appreciation whatever in Study No. 6. Study No. 6 considered that he would have enough weeping to do for his own Fatherland shortly.

"Ach! Goot-night, mein poys," said Herr Schneider, quite abruptly; and he retired from Study No. 6.

The four chums were glad enough to see him go. But before Blake could close the door after him, Tom Merry appeared in the doorway, and cheerfully stepped into the study, and Manners and Lowther after him.

"Finished your prep?" asked Tom.

"I've done all I'm going to do!" growled Blake.

"Run along and let us finish," said Herries, with an uneasy glance at the cupboard.

"Oh, bosh!" said Tom. "We've got some chestnuts here. We'll roast 'em at your fire, while you're finishing your prep. We're done long ago."

"I—I say—"

"The—the fact is—"

"What's up?" asked Monty Lowther, scanning the flustered faces of the four juniors. "Don't you want us here?"

"Well, you—you—see—"

"Undah the circe, deah boys—"

"What circes?"

"Ahem! I—I—cannot exactly explain, but—but if you would wun along—"

"If you want us to clear out, you'd better say so!" growled Tom Merry. "If this is what you call civility, you've got queer ideas on the subject, that's all. Come on, kids!"

"Pway don't be watty, Tom-Mewwy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, greatly distressed at the bare idea of being supposed uncivil. "You—you see—"

He broke off suddenly, as a deep and sonorous sound proceeded from the cupboard. And the Terrible Three, who had been about to quit the study in a very huffy mood, halted in great astonishment, and stared at the cupboard blankly.

"M-m-my hat!"

CHAPTER 10.

Arthur Augustus is Very Firm!

SNORE!

There was no doubt about it! Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther stared at the study cupboard as if their eyes were glued to it. They stood rooted to the floor in utter amazement.

"Snor-r-r-r-r-r!"

"What on earth—" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"It's in the—the—the cupboard!" stuttered Manners. "You—you haven't got your bulldog in the cupboard, Herries?"

"Tain't a bulldog," said Lowther. "What the dickens little game are you fellows playing? Who's in your blessed cupboard?"

"Snore!"

The chums of Study No. 6 exchanged glances of dismay.

The secret was out now, with a vengeance. Blake jumped to the door to close it, just as Talbot of the Shell looked in. Talbot nearly caught the door on his nose.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed.

"Come in, Talbot!" said Tom Merry with a chuckle. "We're unearthing a giddy mystery. These kids are up to something."

"You told me there were chestnuts," remarked Talbot.

"This isn't a chestnut; this is something new—quite new!" grinned Lowther. "Listen!"

Snore-ore-orr!

Talbot jumped.

Blake pushed him into the study, slammed the door, and locked it. It was one more fellow in the secret, but Blake did not want any more. The four Shell fellows were grinning, but they were utterly astonished, too. The mystery of the cupboard simply beat them.

"What is it?" demanded Monty Lowther. "Who's the Sleeping Beauty?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose we shall have to tell these boundahs now," said Arthur Augustus. "It's vewy awkward. Of course, you fellows undahtake to keep the secret?"

"What have you got there?" exclaimed Talbot.

"A wofugee."

"A which?" ejaculated Monty Lowther.

"We picked him up on the road from Shoremouth," groaned Blake. "Gussy insisted upon adopting him, and we've brought him home. There'll be a row if they discover that we're giving waifs and strays a home in our study."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say so."

Blake opened the cupboard door, and the Shell fellows stared at the little Belgian. Charles was curled up there, fast asleep. They gazed at him blankly.

"Well, this beats the band!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "So so this is the chap who was snoring? It wasn't Gussy, all the time?"

"Certainly not, you ass! I twust you do not think I could snore like that!" exclaimed D'Arcy indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't a laughing matter!" groaned Blake. "Goodness knows what we're going to do with him! He does nothing but eat and sleep and snore—and he snores most. The poor kid is fagged out, of course. The rotten Germans have burnt his home in Belgium, his father's dead, and his mother's lost. Goodness knows what's to become of him! Gussy has adopted him for the present."

"Not pwecisely, deah boy! I have made him my pwotege!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "He is undah my charge. We have got to shelter him for the night, and look aftah him genewally."

"And what on earth are you going to do with him to-morrow?" asked Talbot, in amazement.

"Sufficient unto the day is the bother thereof," said Blake. "Never mind to-morrow. The question is, what are we going to do with him to-night?"

"Make up a bed in the study, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "We can sneak some blankets down heah frowm the dorm, and use your ovaheats—"

"You can use your own overcoat!" growled Herries.

"Wats! It would wumple it too much. He can remain here in a made-up bed for the night, and we can come down in the mornin' vewy earlay, befoah the maids are about, and get him out of sight," said Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, he's wakin' up!"

The little Belgian ceased to snore, and opened his eyes. He made a jump out of the cupboard, looking at the Shell fellows with scared eyes. The poor little fellow's nerves had evidently not recovered from the strain they had been through, and the sight of a strange face frightened him.

"It's all right, kid," said Tom Merry reassuringly. "All friends here."

"He doesn't speak English, deah boy."

"Nous sommes amis," said Tom Merry. "Anglais, vous savez. Il n'y a rien de craindre."

"Hurrah!" said Monty Lowther. "That shows what education will do for a fellow. The pity is that the kid doesn't understand it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The little Belgian drew closer to Arthur Augustus, as if to shelter behind him. The swell of St. Jin's smiled benignantly. He was extremely flattered by that instinctive trust which the little refugee reposed in him.

"Poor little bounder!" said Manners. "Might dig up a jacket for him somewhere. That coat must have belonged to his grandfather. I say, I should recommend you to hand him over to the House-dame. Mrs. Mimms would look after him all right. Dash it all, they couldn't turn the kid out, anyway."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus promptly.

"Tain't a bad idea," said Blake. "Now, Gussy, be reasonable."

"Wubbish! You see how scared the kid is," said D'Arcy indignantly. "He is holdin' on to me now. That old boundah Schneider neahly fwightened him to death with his wotten German jabber. The kid's in a state of nerves, and he wequires careful lookin' aftah. I wufuse to part with him—at pwesent, at any wate. Those grown-up persons don't undahstand these mattahs. They would send the kid off somewhah, and he would be fwightened to death. Look how he's holdin' on to me."

"He seems to have taken a fancy to Gussy," remarked Monty Lowther. "There never is any accounting for tastes."

"Wats!" Arthur Augustus patted the little refugee protectingly on his dark, curly head. "I say, kid—I mean, voyez, garcon, voulez vous reste chez moi?"

"Oui."

"Vous n'avez pas peur ici?"

"Non."

"Mais vous auez si je vous envoie?"

The little fellow clung tighter to D'Arcy's sleeve.

"Mais oui, oui, oui, oui!"

"There you are!" said Arthur Augustus triumphantly. "How can I send him away aftah that? I weward you as a beast, Mannahs!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I weward you as anothah beast, Blake!"

"Look here—"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort. I am goin' to look aftah my pwotege. It is up to me, and a D'Arcy nevah goes back on his duty. Say no more; I am wolved."

"Better bump him," suggested Lowther thoughtfully.

"Weally, Lowtah—"

There was a thump at the door.

"Bedtime, you chaps!" called out Reilly of the Fourth, in passing. "Sure, you'll have Kildare aftah you."

The juniors looked at one another helplessly. The distress of the little refugee moved their hearts, and certainly there might be a "row" if it were discovered that Charley had been smuggled into the house. But—However, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was determined. He had constituted himself protector-in-chief to the little victim of the Huns, and there was no arguing with him.

"But—but you can't keep him here long, you know," said Tom Merry feebly. "What about to-morrow?"

"Blow to-morrow!"

"And the day after—"

"Blow the day aftah!"

"Oh, blow the whole calendar if you like!" said Jack Blake resignedly. "Let's get to bed, and Gussy can look after his giddy protege. We shall have a prefect routing us out of here in a few minutes."

"Yaas, buzz off; I'll come aftah you," said Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry & Co. quitted the study, grinning. Arthur Augustus was likely to have his hands full in disposing of his protege. They admired Arthur Augustus's kindness of heart, but, as Lowther remarked, his head was not quite equal to his heart. It could certainly not be long before the presence of the little refugee in the School House was discovered, and then the game would be up. But Arthur Augustus refused to see that very obvious fact.

The juniors went to their dormitories, Arthur Augustus staying behind to explain to Charlie, in his best French, that he was to remain in Study No. 6 till he—D'Arcy—returned. The little fellow seemed to understand, and Arthur Augustus went out, and closed the door carefully, leaving Charlie ensconced in the big armchair before the fire. He had to turn the gas out, as a light in the study would, of course, have attracted attention. The Fourth-Formers were in bed when Arthur Augustus arrived in the dormitory, and Kildare of the Sixth was waiting to see lights out. He gave the swell of the Fourth a stern glance.

"What are you so late for?" he demanded.

"Pway excuse me, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Take fifty lines!"

"It's all wight," assured Arthur Augustus. "I won't keep you waitin' more than ten minutes, Kildare."

"Ten minutes!" ejaculated Kildare. "If you keep me waiting more than two minutes I'll skin you!"

Arthur Augustus managed to be in bed in two minutes, and the prefect put out the light and quitted the dormitory. But Arthur Augustus did not sleep; he was thinking of his protege in Study No. 6. Blake and Herries and Digby were thinking of him, too. They wondered whether he would snore. As soon as the coast was clear, Arthur Augustus intended to collect some blankets, and take them down to Study No. 6. But it unfortunately happened that the coast was not destined to be clear just yet.

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A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARY CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

CHAPTER 11.

Herr Schneider is Alarmed.

THE door of the Fourth-Form dormitory was thrown suddenly open, and Kildare strode in and turned on the light. Darrel of the Sixth was with him. The two prefects stared up and down the dormitory, and the juniors sat up in bed and regarded them in surprise.

"Hallo! What's the row?" called out Hammond.

"Yaas, wathah! What's the twouble, Kildare?"

"Are you all here, you young rascals?" demanded the captain of St. Jim's.

"All here!" reported Blake.

"Yes; I thought I saw you all to bed," growled Kildare. "See if any of the beds are made up with dummies, Darrel, old chap."

Darrel went along the dormitory, examining the beds. Most of the juniors were sitting up now, but one or two had fallen asleep already.

"What's the matter?" demanded a dozen voices.

"Some kid hasn't come to bed," growled Kildare. "I suppose it is one of the Fourth, as I found him in Study No. 6—your study, Blake."

"M-m-my study!" gasped Blake.

"You—you found him, bai Jove!"

"I heard somebody snoring in your study," said Kildare. "I went in, and somebody jumped out of the armchair and bolted past me in the dark. It couldn't have been one of you, as you're all here. All right, Darrel?"

"They're all here," said Darrel.

"Then it must have been a kid from another dormitory," said Kildare. "Come on; we'll go along to the Shell! I'll skin the young rascal when I catch him!"

The two annoyed prefects left the dormitory, putting out the light, and stalked away. The chums of Study No. 6 sat in bed in utter dismay.

"Oh ewumbs!" said Arthur Augustus. "Then he's gone from the studay! Whyt wotten luck!"

"Where the dickens has he bolted to, I wonder?" growled Blake.

The silly ass must have frightened him, goin' in suddenly and wakin' him in the dark. I wegard Kildare as a silly duffah!"

"What are you babbling about?" asked Levison. "Who was in your study, Blake?"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Blake.

"'Twasn't one of the Fourth, I guess," said Lumley-Lumley. "Whoever it was, I don't see how he could have dodged the prefects at bedtime."

The Fourth-Formers discussed the matter in great surprise; but Blake & Co. did not contribute to the discussion. They were overwhelmed with dismay. Charley had fled out of the Study No. 6., and goodness only knew whither he had fled. And what was to be done was a question to which it was exceedingly difficult to find an answer.

Meanwhile, Kildare and Darrel had proceeded to the Shell dormitory. The Shell fellows stared as the light was suddenly turned on.

"All here?" demanded Kildare gruffly.

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry, sitting up in bed. "We're generally all here after lights out, Kildare."

"Somebody's downstairs," growled the St. Jim's captain.

"He was in Study No. 6—"

"Study No. 6!" ejaculated Tom.

"Yes, and bolted past me in the dark when I routed him out. It's some blessed kid playing some blessed trick, I suppose."

"Great Scott!" murmured Lowther.

"They're all here, Kildare," said Darrel.

"Must be a fag of the Third or the Second, then," said Kildare. "Come on!"

And the prefects went on their round.

But the other dormitories proved to have their full number of occupants, and the two prefects finished their round baffled and exasperated.

"The young rotter must have bolted up to bed," said Kildare at last. "I suppose he got into his dormitory while we were looking into another. No good asking them questions; chuck it!"

And the prefects gave it up. There was nothing else to be done. Naturally, they did not suspect for a moment that the boy routed out of Study No. 6 in the dark was a stranger within the walls of St. Jim's.

But where was Charlie?

There were eight juniors now in the School House who knew of his presence in the house, and they were much exercised in their minds on the subject.

Where would he get to—and what would become of him? To search for him in the dark, through the house, was scarcely feasible. In the state of terror the little fellow was

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in, he was not likely to show himself where there was a light.

Arthur Augustus sat up in bed thinking it over.

"It's that wotten Schneider's fault," he murmured. "If he hadn't come to the studay, the kid wouldn't have been frightened. The young ass thinks there are beastly Germans heah, and he is in a blue funk, natuwall. All German mistakes ought to be exported, bai Jove! But what the deuce is to be done?"

Evidently nothing could be done by remaining in bed, and Arthur Augustus, after cogitating on the matter, slipped out of bed and dressed himself. By that time most of the Fourth were asleep, but Blake and Herries and Dig were too anxious to sleep.

"Is that you, Gussy?" murmured Blake, as he heard Arthur Augustus's movements in the dark.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm goin' to look for Sharl."

"You can't find him, ass."

"I'm goin' to look all the same. You chaps stay here, you can't do any good. I dare say I shall find him all wight."

"But—but—"

"Oh, wats! Don't wake up the chaps."

Arthur Augustus quitted the dormitory in his socks, with a stealthy tread. Blake and Herries and Dig remained where they were. They did not see much use in blundering about the passages in the dark.

It was past ten o'clock, and the lights were out in the passages. Downstairs there was plenty of light; but Arthur Augustus was pretty certain that the fugitive had not gone in that direction—he would have been discovered by that time if he had done so. Arthur Augustus crept down to Study No. 6, in the faint hope that Charlie might have returned there. But Study No. 6 was drawn blank.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "Where on earth am I to look for him? Pewwaps he's bolted into the box-rooms."

The swell of St. Jim's crept up the stairs again. As he reached the upper passage, he paused. He had caught a soft step in the darkness.

"Bai Jove, I've found him!"

He stood listening. The stealthy step was drawing nearer to him in the gloom. Who but the unfortunate Charlie could be creeping about the passages in the dark?

Arthur Augustus ventured upon a cautious whisper—in French, of course. It was no use speaking in English to the little Belgian.

"C'est vous?" he murmured.

The footsteps ceased.

"Oui!" came back a whispering voice.

"Tres biong!" said D'Arcy, in great relief. "Je vous ai cherche."

"Vous m'avez cherche—moi?" asked the whispering voice, in an accent of surprise.

"Mais oui."

"Alors, vous m'avez trouve."

"Oui, oui!" whispered Arthur Augustus. "Venez avec moi."

"Eh?"

"N'avez pas peur, pauvre garçon—"

"My hat!"

At that sudden surprised exclamation, Arthur Augustus realised that it was not the little Belgian who was whispering to him in the dark passage.

"Gweat Scott!" he ejaculated.

"Gussy! You ass!"

"Tom Mewwy! You fathead!"

Tom Merry chuckled softly.

"You—you fwabjous ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"I thought I had found my pwotege. What did you whispah in Fwench for, you silly duffah?"

"You thumping duffer! I thought I'd found him, too!" chuckled Tom Merry. "What the deuce are you doing out of your dorm?"

"Lookin' for Charlie, of course. What are you doin', you ass?"

"Looking for him, too, of course. And we've found one another," grinned Tom Merry. "Do you know where he is?"

"No. Do you?"

"No."

"Bai Jove! It's a wathah awkward posish, Tom Mewwy. We've got to find him, you know—he may get into some twouble," groaned Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps it would have been bettah, aftah all, to hand him ovah to the House-dame. But there would be a feahful wow if Wailton found it all out at this time of night."

"Just a little bit!" grinned Tom Merry. "Keep your pecker up—we'll find him. My only Anst Jemima—what's that?"

It was a sudden bellow of surprise and alarm from the next floor below. The two juniors rushed to the stairs and looked over the banisters. They recognised the voice of Herr Otto Schneider, the German master of St. Jim's.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

Herr Schneider had evidently just come up to bed. He had opened his door and turned on the electric light. The juniors could see the portly form in the light in the doorway. Herr Schneider was staring blankly into the room, and ejaculating:

"Mein Gott! Vat is tat? A poy in my ped! Ach, Himmel!"

"Gweat Chwistopher Columbus!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "He's hidden himself in old Schneidah's room! Oh, cwumps!"

"Ach! Was denn? Poy—ach! Mein Gott!"

There was a startled yelp from within the room.

"Les Allemands! Les meurtriers! A moi! A moi!"

"Mein Gott!"

The two juniors over the banisters caught a glimpse of the little Belgian, his eyes distended with fear; but only for a moment. As Herr Schneider, justly indignant and surprised at finding a boy in his room, strode in with outstretched hand to seize him, Charlie dodged round the room, and darted out of the doorway.

The next instant he was fleeing wildly up the stairs. Herr Schneider had made a jump after him, stumbled over a chair overturned by Charlie in his flight, and fallen with a bump.

"Mein Gott! Ach! Help! Oh, himmel!"

"Here he comes!" gasped Tom Merry. "Look out, Gussy!"

Charlie came blindly up the stairs, and as he reached the landing Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus seized him and stopped him. The little Belgian struggled frantically.

"Ne m'ôtez pas la vie! Ayez pitie de moi!"

"It's all wight!" gasped D'Arcy. "Calmez-vous—rassurez-vous!"

Fortunately, Charlie recognised his voice. He ceased to struggle, and clung to Arthur Augustus, trembling and shivering.

"Sauvez-moi! Les Allemands! Les Allemands!" he gasped.

"The Germans! The Germans!" That was the terrified thought of the little fellow, who only a couple of days ago had seen the Germans burning his home and slaughtering his fellow-countrymen. The mere sight of Herr Schneider had been enough to throw him into a frenzy of fear.

Arthur Augustus and Tom Merry hurried him away along the passage. There were voices and footsteps below. Half a dozen startled persons were hurrying up to Herr Schneider's room to see what was the matter there. There was no time to lose.

"He's got to be hidden somewhere!" panted Tom Merry. "They'll be looking for him!"

"I'll take him into the dorm!" whispered Arthur Augustus. "It's all wight! You cut back to bed! Venez avec moi, kid!"

"They'll look in the dorm—"

"I'll hide him undah the bed!"

"Oh, good!"

Tom Merry hurried into the Shell dormitory, and bolted into bed. Arthur Augustus drew Charlie into the Fourth-Form dormitory. All was quiet there. The little Belgian was like an infant in D'Arcy's hands; his trust in the swell of St. Jim's was complete.

"Undah the bed," whispered Arthur Augustus. "Sous le lit, kid!"

"Oui, oui!"

Charlie, with Herr Schneider's face before his mind's eye, was only too glad to dive under the bed and hide. Arthur Augustus turned in.

"What on earth—" came a voice from Blake's bed.

He was not asleep.

"Shush, deah boy! The kid's here!"

"Oh, Jupiter!"

"He had hidden himself in Schneidah's room—"

"My hat!"

"And when the old boundah went up to bed, he was frightened again. He called him a murdewah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!"

It was time to "Shush" for there were already footsteps outside the dormitory door.

Arthur Augustus and Blake composed themselves to an appearance of deep slumber. Under the bed, Charlie lay crouching, as quiet as a mouse when the cat is near.

CHAPTER 12.

Early Rising.

M R. RAILTON strode into the dormitory, and turned on the light. Herr Schneider was behind him. "The boys all appear to be in bed," said the Housemaster, with a searching glance along the dormitory. "Ach! It was not von dem, Herr Railton! It was a French poy tat I have seen in mein zimmer—in my room, isn't it?"

Mr. Railton made a gesture of impatience.

"My dear Herr Schneider, how could you have seen a French boy in your room, when there is not a French boy at St. Jim's?" he exclaimed.

"Ach! It is ferry extraordinary! But he was Franzosish, dat is gewiss—certain. Venn dat I found him, he say, 'Les Allemands! Les meurtriers!'"

"It was an absurd joke of one of the juniors, then?"

"But I see his face, Herr Railton—I repeat tat he was French!"

"Impossible!"

The two masters quitted the dormitory, to pursue their researches elsewhere. The chums of Study No. 6 drew a deep breath of relief.

"Railton thinks that old Schneider has been dreaming!" chuckled Blake. "He's not likely to think that there's a French kid in the House!"

"Wathah not! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll put it down to too much lager!" grinned Herries.

"What's all the row about?" came a sleepy voice from Lumley-Lumley. "What did they want?"

"Better go and ask them!" yawned Blake.

"Bow-wow!" said Lumley-Lumley; and he went to sleep again.

"What are you going to do with the kid now, Gussy?"

whispered Blake. "I'm goin' to put him in my bed," said D'Arcy. "I'll share yours, deah boy. We shall we all wight until mornin', and I'll get up befoah wisin'-bell and cleah him off!"

"Oh cwumps!"

Arthur Augustus waited a little time, however, in case the masters should return. But there was no alarm, and at last he turned out, and whispered to the hidden Charlie:

"Vous gettez into bed, deah boy—I mean, prenez vous mon lit, nespah!"

"Il est pas ici—l'Allemand?" quavered Charlie.

"Non! He's gone! I mean, il est parti. Comez vous out!"

Charlie squirmed out from under the bed, and turned in with a grunt of contentment, as Arthur Augustus pulled the warm bedclothes over him.

He was fast asleep in a couple of minutes. Arthur Augustus turned in with Blake.

"All wight now, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Bai Jove! I'm sleepay!"

"Wait till he begins to snore!" chuckled Blake.

Snore!

Charlie was beginning already.

Fortunately, the rest of the juniors were asleep, and Charlie's snore did not awaken them. Arthur Augustus was soon asleep, too, though the snore from the next bed kept him awake a little while. He was too sleepy just then to debate in his mind what was to be done with Charlie on the morrow—excepting that he intended to rise before it was light, and get the refugee out of the dormitory.

Arthur Augustus was a pretty sound sleeper, and the probability was that he would not have opened his eyes before the rising-bell clanged out. But at six o'clock he was startled out of his slumbers by a jab in the ribs, and he awoke.

"Gwooh! Wharrer marrer? Oh!"

"Wake up!" growled Blake.

"Gwooh! I wefuse to wake up! Lemme alone!"

Blake shook his bedfellow, as he settled down to sleep again.

"Fathead! The rising-bell will go in half an hour!"

"Oh, bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus rubbed his drowsy eyes, and blinked round in the dark. There was not a glimmer of light yet in the dormitory. "I think I will leave it a bit, deah boy!"

"No, you won't!" said Blake.

"It can't be thwee or four yet—"

"Six just gone!"

"Oh cwumps! I'll tell you what, Blake, deah boy. You can take charge of the kid for a bit. I can trust your disewetion—"

"You can trust me to stay in bed till rising-bell," said Blake, with a chuckle. "Out you go!"

Arthur Augustus sighed, and turned out. He hadn't much choice in the matter, as Blake had planted a powerful knee against his back, and was shoving. Arthur Augustus bumped on the floor, and snorted.

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"Gwooh! You wuff ass! Oh!"

Blake turned over and went to sleep again. Arthur Augustus shivered in the cold, and hurried into his clothes.

"I say, Blake, deah boy—"

No reply from Blake. He was fast asleep again. Blake, old chap, do you mind if I give the kid your clobber?"

No answer.

"Silence gives consent, I pwesume," murmured Arthur Augustus. "The kid can't go about dweased in that wotten old coat, and twousahs would be much wamah than knickerbockers. Blake's things would be wathah big, but this is no time to think of the fit. We must do the best we can for him!"

And he proceeded to awaken Charlie.

Jack Blake did not awaken till the rising-bell was clanging out in the pale grey dawn.

He sat up, and yawned, and spotted Arthur Augustus at his toilet. D'Arcy's bed was empty; Charlie had vanished.

"Hallo!" said Blake.

"Hallo, deah boy!"

"What have you done with him?"

"He is in the box-woom now—the top box-woom. Nobody is likely to go there!"

"Pretty cold for him—what?" shivered Blake.

"I have taken up all the wugs I could find, and seweval ovalcoats—Dig's and Hewwies'—"

"Ha, ha, ha! What will Dig and Herries say?"

"I am suah I don't know—and yours!"

"Mine!" howled Blake.

"Yaas. It is necessary to keep the kid warm, you know. My big twunk is there, and I have told him to hide in it if he heahs anybody comin'. We've got to get some bwakfast to him somehow!"

Blake turned out of bed, and looked round for his clothes. The clothes were not to be seen. He looked puzzled.

"Seen my clobber?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"Well, where are they?"

"Charlie's got 'em on."

Blake jumped.

"M-m-my clobber!"

"Yaas, I had to dwess him in somethin', you know; he couldn't weah those old wags. I've hidden them away in an empty box."

"You—you—you thundering idiot! What am I going to dress in?" howled Blake.

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

"You—you—"

"Shush! The fellows are wakin' up, you ass!" whispered Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't give the whole show away, you duffah!"

"You—you want boiling in oil!" mumbled Blake. "You—you ass! You could have given him your Sunday clobber!"

"I wequire my Sunday clobber on Sunday, deah boy. It would be wathah mucked up, campin' out in a dustay box-woom."

"And what about mine?" breathed Blake sulphurously.

"Shush!"

"Hallo, what are you fellows rowing about?" asked Levison.

"Wats!"

Blake contained his indignation with difficulty, and proceeded to get out his Sunday garments to dress himself. Arthur Augustus proceeded cheerfully with his toilet. He was quite satisfied with the way he had disposed of Charlie. Blake didn't seem quite satisfied; but there was no satisfying everybody.

CHAPTER 13.

Herr Schneider on the Track.

TOM MERRY looked for Arthur Augustus as soon as he came down that morning. He found the swell of St. Jim's outside the little tuckshop in the corner of the quad, knocking at the door, and trying to induce Dame Taggles to open at an earlier hour than usual. But the good lady did not appear to be there—at all events, there came no reply to D'Arcy's knocking.

"It's wotten," said D'Arcy, as the captain of the Shell joined him. "I want some bwekkah for Charlie, you know, and this beasty place isn't open. There's nothin' left in Studay No. 6. Is there anythin' in your studay, deah boy?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, laughing, "and Charlie's very welcome to it. Where is he?"

"In the top box-woom. Come and give me the gwub."

The two juniors repaired to the Shell passage, where Tom Merry generously turned out the whole contents of his study cupboard. Fortunately, there was a good supply, and Arthur Augustus packed it in a bag to take to the refugee. Tom

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Merry accompanied him. D'Arcy looked round very cautiously as he made his way up the several flights of stairs that led to the remote box-room. But they were not observed.

There was a sound within the room as D'Arcy turned the handle of the door. But as they entered there was no one to be seen. Charlie had disappeared, and Tom Merry looked round in surprise. Arthur Augustus smiled, and called out softly:

"It's all wight, Charlie. C'est moi—ca va!"

Then the lid of a big trunk opened, and Charley's dark face looked out. His face lighted up at sight of Arthur Augustus, and he jumped out of the trunk.

"My hat!" said Tom Merry.

"That's a dodge, in case anybody comes up," Arthur Augustus explained. "Wathah a good idea—what?"

"Oh, topping!" said Tom Merry. "How long are you going to keep him here?"

"As long as ness," said D'Arcy calmly. "He is undah my charge, you know. He will be all wight heah. Nobody evah comes up heah."

"I should think he would want a wash sometimes," Tom Merry suggested.

"That's all wight. I've told him where the newwest bath-woom is, and explained to him the time when the fellows are all in the Form-rooms," said Arthur Augustus. "He understands perfectly. Belgians are wathah clean people, you know, and he was quite glad to heah of the bath-woom. What are you gwinnin' at?"

"Ahem! I was thinking that his clothes suit him down to the ground."

"Oh, wats! This isn't a time to think of a close fit."

Certainly Blake's clothes were not a close fit on the little Belgian. They were about six sizes too large for him. The trousers were turned up almost to the knees, and still "mopped" the floor, and the Eton jacket came down nearly to his knees behind. But Charlie did not seem to mind. He sat down to the cold collation provided from Tom Merry's study cupboard, and tucked into it with great gusto. The juniors watched him eat, and large as the supply was, he finished it almost to the last crumb. Then he laid down in the rugs and coats D'Arcy had provided for him, and went to sleep. A minute later his deep snore boomed through the box-room.

"He seems to be a beggar for sleep," grinned Tom Merry.

"What a giddy snore!"

"Nobody will heah him up heah, deah boy."

They quitted the box-room, leaving Charlie to his sleep, of which he seemed as if he would never have enough.

"They were just in time for breakfast when they got down."

"Where have you been disappearing to?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell, as Tom Merry came in. "I've been looking for you."

"I've been round with Gussy," said Tom vaguely.

"And where has Gussy been?"

"Oh, he's been round with me!"

"Fathead!" said the Cornstalk; but Mr. Linton glared along the table just then, and he was not able to ask any more questions.

Arthur Augustus was looking extremely satisfied with himself when he went into the Fourth Form-room for lessons that morning. His refugee was safely disposed of, and provided for; and what more was to be desired? Blake and Herries and Dig had given up arguing on the subject. It was necessary to give Arthur Augustus his head, as Blake put it. But what would be the outcome of the hiding of the refugee in the School House of St. Jim's it was impossible to say.

What Mr. Rulliton would have said, if they had marched him in openly in the first place, they did not know. But they could guess what he would say if he learned that Charlie had been smuggled into the School House without his knowledge, and lodged in the box-room; and that it was D'Arcy's refugee who had given Herr Schneider such a startling shock the previous night.

In fact, the longer Charlie remained undiscovered, the more difficult it would be for his protectors to confess that he was there.

But Arthur Augustus had no doubts. He went on his way regardless.

After morning lessons, when the juniors came out, they were just in time to see the Head come out of his house and step into the car, and drive down to the gates. It was rather unusual to see the Head go out in his car just before lunch; but Levison of the Fourth knew the why and the wherefore. There were very few things that went on in the school that Levison of the Fourth did not know something about.

"The Head's off to the station," he remarked. "I'm going to have a look at the giddy guest when she comes."

"She!" said Blake.

"Yes; the Head's got a lady guest coming," said Levison.

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"How do you know?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, a fellow hears things!" he remarked.

"Great man, the chap who invented keyholes for doors!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Oh, rats!" said Levison crossly. "It's a French lady, I think. Anyway, I heard the Head mention to Railton that she would speak French—some giddy refugee from the Continent, and Mrs. Holmes is going to take her in for a time—see?"

"Bai Jove! Then some of us ought to be on the spot to give the lady a good welcome!" said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "I'd bettah go and put on my toppah."

And he did!

A good many juniors were on the spot when the car came back. A deeply-veiled lady was seated beside the Head in the car; and Dr. Holmes's manner was very courteous as he assisted her to alight. The juniors all raised their hats very politely. In spite of the veil, they could see that the lady's face was pale and worn, and that her eyes showed signs of weeping.

"Poor soul!" said Tom Merry, his face very grave, as the veiled lady passed into the Head's house, leaning heavily on Dr. Holmes's arm. "Jolly good old sport, the Head—and Mrs. Holmes too. She looks a nice sort. I wonder if those beastly Prussians ever think of the harm they're doing, the rotters?"

"Yaas, wathah! I wegard them as beasts! I considah—"

"Shurrup!" murmured Blake. "Here's the Schneider-bird."

Herr Schneider was frowning. He had heard the uncomplimentary references to his countrymen. He paused to speak to the juniors.

"It is ferry strange, mein poys," he said. "Last night a ferry strange ting have happen wiz himself."

"Yaas, sir?"

"Venn I goes mit meinself to ped," said Herr Schneider, "it is tat I finds in mein zimmer a poy—a French poy—a little Franzosisch poy. Mr. Railton he dink tat it was vun chunior tat play a drick."

"Oh, sir!" murmured Blake.

"I asks you," said Herr Schneider impressively. "It cannot be tat I dream it wiz myself, because it was tat I was proud awake before, ain't it? Shall it be tat vun of you poys was in mein room last night, hein?"

There was a general shaking of heads.

"Das ist gut," said Herr Schneider. "I dakes your word. Ja, ja, woh! I have say to Herr Railton tat is was not a poy of dieser school—tat it was a French poy—or perhaps a Belgian, I know not. He speak mit himself in French. Ach, I am quite certain of tat!"

"Extraordinary, sir," murmured Tom Merry. "Are—are you quite sure you—weren't mistaken, sir?"

Herr Schneider shook his head.

"I was not mistaken mit meinself," he declared. "Das ist gewiss. It is ferry strange, but it is gewiss—vat you call certain. I have seen in mein room a French poy—and every-one he say tat dere is no French poy in te school. But I dink tat I find him—hein?"

And Herr Schneider walked away, his fat brow corrugated with thought.

"Is he off his rocker?" ejaculated Levison, in amazement. "There jolly well isn't a French kid in the place, I know that. I'm jolly certain I should have heard something about him. I'm generally pretty well posted."

"Oh, it was lager, I suppose!" said Kangaroo. "Schneider has been drinking to the success of the giddy Zeppelins—and after his fourth glass he sees all sorts of things."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. strolled away without a word. They knew that the German master was not mistaken, though his words had filled the other fellows with blank astonishment. Arthur Augustus was looking a little uneasy.

"Bai Jove, you fellows, suppose that old boundah starts searchin' the place?" he said, in a worried tone. "Why the dhooce can't he put it down as a dream, and shut up! These Germans are frightfully obstinate persons."

"Well, he's not likely to get up to the top box-room," said Blake. "He's got too much weight for a climb like that."

"Germans are very thorough," grinned Monty Lowther. "Schneider's got the idea in his head that there's a French kid hiding in the place; and he won't be happy till he's nosed him out."

"Oh, wats!" snapped Arthur Augustus.

The German master's proceedings were certainly alarming for the juniors who had so peculiar a secret to keep. Herr Schneider knew that he had seen a foreign lad in his bedroom, and he declined to accept Mr. Railton's opinion that it was one of the St. Jim's juniors, and that he had been

mistaken as to his nationality. And Herr Schneider had all the thoroughness and dogged determination of his race. He had seen the boy, and the boy had disappeared. Therefore he was hiding about the place somewhere; and the fat Herr was determined to elucidate the mystery, and prove to Herr Railton that he had not been mistaken at all. And the juniors spotted him waddling about from place to place, peering through his glasses into all sorts of corners, apparently in the hope of discovering the elusive "Franzosisch" youth.

Arthur Augustus went in to dinner with a clouded brow. There was no telling what harm might come of the suspicious German master's investigations. After dinner, however, the juniors lost sight of him; and as it was Herr Schneider's custom to have a nap after his lunch, they breathed more freely in the belief that he was safely disposed of for the time. They little guessed where he was!

CHAPTER 14.

A Surprising Meeting!

"B Al Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped and swept off his topper with a graceful bow. Blake and Tom Merry and the rest did the same.

An elegant-looking lady had stepped out of the Head's house, and was crossing towards the garden. It was the veiled lady who had come in the Head's car from the station; but she was not wearing her veil now, and the juniors could see her face clearly—a sweet, kind, and patient face, but with evident signs of deep trouble engraved in it.

"Good-aftahnoon, madame!" ventured Arthur Augustus. "I—I mean boug jour."

"Bon jour!" said the lady, with a kind smile and a nod.

"J'espere que vous vous trouvez bien ici, madame!" said Dig politely.

"Merci, oui!"

And the juniors stood hat in hand while the lady passed them.

"I was goin' to make a welcomin' speech in Fwrench," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "But I forgot the words, you know. Wathah a decent sort, you know. I twust she has not had her home burnt by those beastly Uhlans. Great Scott! Look there!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Charlie!"

"Bai Jove, the game's up now!"

The game was up, with a vengeance! For from the open doorway of the School House came Charley at top speed, with Blake's clothes flapping round him, and his face full of terror.

Behind him came Herr Schneider, panting and puffing.

"Tat you stop him!" shouted Herr Schneider. "I have found him wiz himself! Kildare—Mr. Railton! Stop tat poy tat is vun purgular, I dinks! I have found him in te top box-room, where he hide wiz himself!"

"A moi!" shrieked Charlie. "A moi! Les Allemands!"

"Tat is tat French poy tat was in mein zimmer—"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Railton, rushing out of the School House and staring in amazement at the extraordinary figure streaking across the quad. "Who—who is that?"

"Looks like a Froggy!" gasped Kildare. "But how the deuce did he get here?"

"He was in mein room last night! I have search wiz myself after. And I have found him in te box-room wiz himself before. He sleep, and he snore. Ach! He snore, and I seize him, and he squeak and run! Stop him!"

"This way, Charley!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Venez ici, mon ongfong! Bai Jove, the game is wight up now!"

The little Belgian rushed to Arthur Augustus for protection. He clutched hold of D'Arcy's sleeve, and an excited crowd gathered round them. Blake & Co. exchanged hopeless glances. It was all out now; and Blake rubbed his hands in anticipation of the interview in his Housemaster's study that would follow.

"L'Allemand! L'Allemand!" panted Charley. "It va me tue! A moi! A moi!"

"It's all wight, kid—calmez vous!"

There was a sudden cry from the veiled lady, who had looked back to regard the scene. She came running towards the juniors, her arms outstretched. Her face had a dazed expression, her eyes were lighted up.

"Bai Jove! What now?" gasped D'Arcy.

"My dear madame—" said Mr. Railton.

But the lady did not heed him.

"Charlot! Charlot!"

The little Belgian spun round, and, leaving Arthur Augustus, he ran towards the woman who called his name, and in a moment was locked in her arms.

The juniors gazed on the scene dumbfounded.

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"Madame Laverge," exclaimed Mr. Railton, "you—you know this boy?"
 "Charlot! Mon enfant!"
 "Maman!"
 "What does 'mamang' mean, Dig, deah boy?"
 "It means mere—mother, fathead!"
 "Bai Jove! But—but, madame, this is vewy wemarkable"

"What the deuce—" gasped Tom Merry.
 "Maman! Maman!" sobbed the little Belgian, twined in the arms of the weeping lady. "Tu m'as trouve, chere maman."

"Dieu merci! Mon petit fils."
 "Mein Gott!" murmured Herr Schneider, rubbing his eyes with an enormous handkerchief. "Ach! Tat is ferry touch-ing! I veeper for zem! Ach!"

"Mon fils! Mon fils!"
 "Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, jamming his famous monocle into his eye and regarding the reunion of Charlie and his mother with great satisfaction. "I weally think we score this time, deah boys! If I hadn't bwrought Charlie heah—"

"D'Arcy!"
 "Yaas, sir?"
 "Can you explain the presence—the very fortunate presence, as it happens—of this boy in the school?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir! He is my pwotege."
 "Your—your what?"
 "My pwotege, sir!" said Arthur Augustus calmly.
 "Oh, your protege! How did he come here? Why was he hidden in the box-room where Herr Schneider found him? Are you responsible?"

"We're all in it, sir," said Blake meekly. "As it turns out that his mother is here, sir—ahem!—perhaps you'll excuse us—ahem!"

"It's all wight, Blake! Mr. Wailton will look at it in the pwopah light, I am suah. We found the kid on the woad yestahday, sir; he had wandahed away fwom the othah wufegees, and there was nothin' for it but to bwing him heah. As we hadn't permish to bwing him into the school, sir, I undahtook to look aftah him on my own account."

Mr. Railton gasped.

"D'Arcy! You—you hid the boy in the school?"
 "Yaas, sir. Undah the cires, I did not see that there was anythin' else to be done," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I felt that I was actin' for the best, though I can't say I exactly foresaw that he would meet his mothah heah—"

"Not exactly!" murmured Monty Lowther.
 "Your—your proceeding was most extraordinary, D'Arcy! It was quite right to give the boy shelter; but you should have brought him to me, and not kept the matter secret," said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Ahem!"
 "You have acted in an extraordinary manner, D'Arcy. The boy should certainly have been taken care of. Did you think that I should fail in that respect?"

"N-n-not exactly, sir. But—but I werged myself as the pwopah person to look aftah him, and—"

"Shurrup!" murmured Blake.
 "Weally, Blake—"

"As the matter has turned out so happily, D'Arcy, I shall not punish you—"

"Oh, bai Jove!"
 "But if you should act in the same manner again I shall cane you severely."

"Weally, Mr. Wailton—"

"That will do, D'Arcy!"

"But weally, sir—"
 Arthur Augustus was interrupted again, this time by madame. Little Charlie had explained to his mother in rapid French how he had been brought to St. Jim's; and madame seized Arthur Augustus's hands in both her own, and kissed him on both cheeks, much to Arthur Augustus's astonishment, at the same time pouring out a stream of grateful words—unfortunately in French—broken by sobs and tears of joy.

"It's all wight, madame!" said Arthur Augustus. "Jolly pleased, I assure you! Tell her in Fwench, Dig! Awfully glad, you know! Don't mench! Ne menchez vous pas— Oh, bai Jove!"

Then Mr. Railton gave madame his arm to the Head's house, Charlie taking her other hand and trotting along by her side. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed upon his chums the smile of superior wisdom.

"Didn't I tell you it would be all wight, deah boys?"
 "You did!" grinned Blake. "You did! But it came jolly near being all wrong! Three cheers for the biggest ass at St. Jim's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Weally, Blake—"
 And Arthur Augustus was cheered heartily.

Tom Merry & Co. learned more later of Charlie and his mother. In the rush of the fugitives from the burning town in Belgium they had been separated—they had been hurried upon different boats, and had sought one another afterwards in vain. While Charlie had come in the crowded steamer to Shoremouth, his mother had landed in another port.

Madame Laverge was an old acquaintance of Mrs. Holmes, and the Head's wife had offered her a temporary home at the school; and the sorrowing mother had come there, little dreaming that it was to be the means of discovering her lost boy. She did not know even whether he had been left behind in Belgium—whether he might not have been slain by a falling shell—and though many kind helpers were seeking traces of him, the poor lady had almost despaired of seeing him again. And then came the accidental meeting in the quadrangle at St. Jim's.

And Arthur Augustus had done it!
 True, the other fellows pointed out to him—taking really a great deal of trouble to point it out—that if he had placed Charlie in charge of the House dame in the first place the reunion would doubtless have taken place sooner. To which Arthur Augustus's reply was "Wats!" They pointed out also that if Herr Schneider hadn't routed Charlie out of his hiding-place in the box-room, he wouldn't have met his "maman" at all, but might have gone on being hidden until she left St. Jim's; and so the credit was really due to Herr Schneider. To this Arthur Augustus's reply was also "Wats!" Indeed, the general opinion was that Arthur Augustus had acted like a howling ass, not to say a born idiot. But to these carping critics Arthur Augustus made the invariable reply—"Wats!"

And of the undying esteem and gratitude of at least two persons he was assured—the Belgian lady and little Charlie, the St. Jim's Refugee. So Arthur Augustus had reason to be satisfied.

(Another splendid long, complete school tale next Wednesday, entitled "TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!" Order in advance.)

TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY

A Real Number of this Amusing Magazine,
 :: Edited by the Juniors of St. Jim's, is ::

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TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY, FREE SUPPLEMENT IN "THE MAGNET," NOW ON SALE!

THE FIRST CHAPTERS OF OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY.

OFFICER AND TROOPER.



An Enthralling New
Story of Life in the
British Army.

Specially Published for
Patriotic British Boys

By
BEVERLEY KENT.

THE OPENING INSTALMENTS.

Bob Hall, a fine, strapping young fellow, in the employ of a moneylender, grows tired of the monotonous clerical life he is leading, and decides to lay down the pen for the sword. By a stroke of great good fortune, he succeeds in joining the 27th Hussars, known to the military world as the "Die-Hards." Here he chums up with Private Dent, a fellow after Bob's own heart. Life at the barracks in no way resembles a feather-bed, and the new recruit soon falls foul of Goss, a burly private, and somewhat inclined to be a bully and a braggart. In a stirring fight with this giant, Bob Hall distinguishes himself by his pluck and endurance, winning the admiration of the whole regiment. Goss, in revenge, causes a nasty accident to befall Bob in the riding-school; but, luckily, the lad recovers.

(Now go on with the Story.)

The Reckoning!

"I'd have given the show away if it wasn't for you, Dent," Bob cut in quickly. "I didn't know what the adjutant was driving at, and, of course—"

"Lucky I was able to give you the tip without being twigged," Dent chuckled. "Hamshaw would have been on me like a hundred of bricks if he had spotted me. That's all right now, anyhow. But Goss has to go through the hoop, and we'd better fix up the plan."

"What did Goss do?" the lad inquired, in amazement.

"He pulled the lever after the horse had taken off at the hurdle, and as the top bar went up a couple of inches Jupiter hit it, of course."

"And that was how the horse came down, and I got the fall?"

"Of course it was. I was keeping my eye on Goss, and I saw him do it, so there's nothing more to be said."

"There's a bit to be done, though!" Hosty rapped out angrily. "He's a disgrace to the regiment, is Goss, an' it's time we dressed him down!"

"What do you mean to do?" Bob inquired.

"Well, it's this way," Dent explained confidentially, as the three friends paused at the foot of the stairs leading to the barrack-room. "You see, we never report any man officially if it can be avoided. That's the tone we take for the credit of the regiment, for we don't want our troubles noised abroad. There'd be plenty of talk, and the other chaps would have a dig at us. All the same, though, we don't forgive a dirty trick; and as Goss is in our barrack-room—why, the barrack-room will deal with him, and the rest of the regiment won't know unless Goss cares to blab—which ain't likely."

"But can't you leave him to me?" Bob protested. "I'm game to take him on and thrash him again."

"No fear! That's all right in private quarrel, but this business is something more'n that. Goss might have wiped you out, and then the truth could not have been kept back, and the whole regiment would have been scoffed at wherever there's a red cent. We'd have been sent out of Aldershot in disgrace probably; the adjutant himself might have got into trouble; there's no knowing where the mischief would have stopped. No; this business is simple enough the way we'll

tackle it; and Goss won't be able to report us, either. Say, Hosty, have Graham and Delmage and—"

"They've all gone ahead, and are waiting for us," Hosty interjected.

"Then come along, and we'll get the job over."

The three friends climbed the stairs and entered the barrack-room. Goss was sitting before the fire, and the men Hosty had mentioned were gathered around him. Otherwise, the barrack-room was empty.

Bob went over to his bunk and lay down, wondering what next would happen. He was stiff, sore, and tired, and, in any case, he knew that his services would not be required, and probably were not desired.

Suddenly he saw Dent pull a blanket off a bunk and advance quickly and on tiptoe towards Goss, who did not hear his approach. Dent flung the blanket over Goss's head, and drew it tightly, whilst the latter sprang to his feet and struggled wildly. Without a word the other soldiers stepped to the assistance of Dent, flung Goss to the floor, and held him down. Hosty handed a whip to Dent, and then the latter quickly but deliberately administered twenty cuts with no niggard hand.

The whip was flung away. Goss was released, and, with some difficulty, extricated himself from the blanket, and stood up, pale and passionate. But his assailants by this time were all seated in a group, gazing reflectively into the glowing embers. It was impossible to prove who had administered the castigation.

For some moments Goss stood shaking with pain and wrath. Then he gave a short laugh, and the others looked round inquiringly.

"Well?" Dent queried.

"You've given me best!" Goss muttered. "And I s'pose that ends the business?"

"Yes, it does."

"All right! I own up, and I bear no malice. But I wish one of you chaps would get a new tunic for me; I don't want to be seen in this plight."

The soldiers rose to their feet and held out their fists. Goss solemnly shook hands, and then he turned to Bob. The latter sprang out of bed and cordially returned the grip his late enemy extended, and thus all was forgotten and forgiven, for that is the way in the Service.

From Recruit to Duty Man.

Reveille!

Throughout the whole of Aldershot bugle clamoured with bugle in one long-drawn call as day broke and the thin morning light filtered weirdly through every barrack-room. Colour-Sergeant Baxter emerged from the cubicle at the end of the room which did duty as his special apartment, and, grasping a heavy beam, he proceeded half a dozen times to drop it heavily on the floor.

The bang and clatter in which the worthy sergeant indulged had the effect he desired. In the face of that startling uproar not even the most lazy mortal could keep asleep. Men yawned, stretched themselves, and tumbled out of bed, and the sergeant retired to his cubicle to complete his toilet. There are many ways of awakening a barrack-room, but perhaps none more effectual than the one devised by Colour-

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY—**"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"**A Magnificent New, Lost, Complete School Tale of Tom
Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Sergeant Baxter; and, as he often said himself, it saved a lot of trouble.

Bob awoke, stiff and sore, and would have given a good deal for another snooze. A quarter-past six on a winter's morning was not the hour he had been called upon to begin his work in civilian life, and, after the exciting and strenuous experiences of the previous day, he felt but half refreshed by the night's slumber, which had seemed to pass like magic.

He crawled out of bed, however, to see his comrades hastily donning their rough stable attire, and, when ready, he followed them down the bleak stone steps and out into the wind-swept square. They all made tracks for the long rows of stables, and he followed silently.

It is good to be greeted cheerily when one is out of sorts, and certainly the neighing, the jingling of halter-chains, and the thud of hoofs within the stalls gave an unmistakable token of welcome to the troopers as they approached their mounts. Lanterns were quickly lit, and by their light Bob saw a row of fifty equine heads all turned towards the door as the men walked in to groom, water, and feed the regimental chargers.

Having yet to learn all that is essential to the proper care of a horse, Bob was put at the rougher work, and most of the hour was spent by him carrying water in buckets from the main tap to his comrades. Even here he found from experience that once again there is the right and the wrong way of doing everything, and the icy water had plentifully splashed over his legs and feet before he acquired the waddling gait that ensures the safe and expeditious transit of a full pail. He wound up the morning pitching hay down from the loft, and he was presently warm and comfortable when "stables" were over and he went to the washhouse to prepare for breakfast.

To his surprise and joy, it was ready awaiting him, the orderly-man having drawn the day's rations from the stores and set out the plates, cups, and knives, with the aid of his two assistants. With breakfast, the men seemed to forget the unpleasantness of their cold and early duties, and joke followed joke in the course of the meal. In truth, from that time on until "tattoo," the troopers were bubbling over with fun and good-humour, and their cheery spirits did much to lighten the work, and brighten the lot of the young recruit.

For it is a mistake to think that there is not plenty of work in the Army, only it is so well regulated and the amusement of the troops is so well catered for that their spirits are always high, and work and play are carried on with a will. As for Bob, he seemed that day to be too busy to think, and he met so many men of different ranks, all of whom were above him, that he almost despaired of sorting out the different forms of duty he was expected to perform.

He went out with Baxter, and was drilled on foot, came back and peeled potatoes, was marched off by Blyth to the riding-school, was then informed he belonged to the fatigue-squad, and told off to coal in a long procession for half an hour. Then he had his dinner, was drilled again, and this time by the sergeant-major; was told to go to school, and found another soldier there, who made him read and write by way of a test; was thence taken to the shoeing-forge, then to the stables again, and finally was carried off by Bill Dent and Hosty to the gymnasium, where they gave him his first lesson in calisthenics.

Then followed a truly glorious evening. Whatever military life may have been in the old days, there is no reason whatever now why a healthy-minded young fellow should go beyond the circle of his own comrades in search of enjoyment. Every form of sport seemed open to Bob in the life of the Die-Hards. The regiment was the crack one at Aldershot, and was determined, at all costs, to hold that proud position. It held the field for musketry and rifle practice, was first at all athletic meetings, could execute the musical ride with a grace and precision far in advance of all other cavalry regiments, held the boxing championship, had the best cricket and football teams, and could put up the most varied and enjoyable smoking concert that had been seen for twenty years.

Every man was critically questioned on joining, not once, but by twenty different club secretaries belonging to the regiment in search of fresh talent. Could he sing, or act in theatricals, in how many seconds could he do the hundred yards, what place did he play in Soccer, would he join the Y.M.C.A. or revolver club, had he a taste for billiards? These and a dozen like questions were hurled at the lad's head as he knocked off work for the day and strolled from room to room, where the troopers were reading from piles of fresh magazines lying on the tables, or playing indoor games, or chatting in groups over the prospects of the coming matches and the relative merits of their own candidates for selection in the various teams.

There was a concert that evening to which the colonel, the

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adjutant, and half a dozen of the other officers came, and in which they took part. The singing and acting were excellent, and the clog-dancing drew down the house. Bob himself was called upon for a song, and was forced to comply, and he acquitted himself so creditably, amidst a burst of applause, that there and then he was put upon the list of future artistes, and found that he had made fresh friends in quarters he had never anticipated.

So passed the first day, and several more, during which the lad gradually shaped into the stamp of a smart Hussar. By degrees the reason and object of all his duties became apparent, and he grew to know most of his superior officers, and to accord to them the respect their various ranks demanded. Though still raw, and with all the scientific part of his career to master, he had settled down into his new life, and found that he enjoyed it with a zest he had never known before.

It was about three weeks since he had joined the regiment, when one day a sergeant whom he had seen but never spoken to as yet entered the barrack-room and looked around.

"Trooper Robert Hall!" he bawled.

Bob sprang to his feet and stood to attention.

"Here, sir!"

"You're a duty man, and you are to go on guard to-night."

The lad flushed with pleasure. To be a duty man meant that he was now considered sufficiently trained to take his place in the ranks. Meantime, the sergeant was gazing at a list he held in his hand.

"Trooper Hosty!" he yelled.

"Here, sir!"

"You're on guard too. You're the only two wanted from this barrack-room."

The sergeant left, and Hosty groaned.

"We'll have to be in our boots for twenty-four hours—eh?"

Bob suggested, by way of sympathy.

"Tain't that," Hosty replied. "We all have to take our turn, and I knew mine was coming. But Sergeant Thorp is in charge, it seems, and he's a fair caution."

"What's the matter with him?" Bob inquired, with keen interest.

"He's the biggest stickler for the regulations out, and the greatest fusser. We'll have a lively time before we're relieved; it's always so. Just you wait and see if my words don't come true."

At ten o'clock the guard fell in, in marching order. Sergeant Thorp, with a corporal, lance-corporal, and twenty men, paraded on the barrack-square, where the adjutant stood waiting. Ball ammunition was served out, the men were closely inspected, and then at the word of command they marched off in charge of Thorp to replace the old guard.

Then followed an amount of formalities, carried out with the utmost exactitude, the full significance of which the lad did not understand. But it is by close attention to details at home that soldiers are made fit for war, and the strict observance of guard duties trains the sentry to be wideawake and alert when he stands on the field of battle in the darkness and silence of night as the only safeguard between the enemy and his own sleeping comrades.

"Old guard! Present ar-r-ms!"

"New guard! Present ar-r-ms!"

"Old guard! Shoulder ar-r-ms!"

"New guard! Shoulder ar-r-ms!"

The orders came crisp and strong as the two bodies of men faced one another, whilst the bugle rang out.

Sergeant Thorp, accompanied by the sergeant of the old guard, entered the guard-room, where the keys were formally exchanged, the inventory of all goods there were carefully checked, the prisoners handed over, and the report for the last twenty-four hours duly signed. Sergeant Thorp had now "taken over" the guard, and as the other sergeant led his tired men away, Bob and his comrades filed into the room.

Two hours' sentry-go and four hours' rest in full marching-order is the rule during the twenty-four hours on guard. Thorp proceeded to post his men at the various sentry-boxes, and Bob and those who were not wanted lay down on the wooden beds with wooden pillows, in full marching attire, ready to spring to their feet at a moment's notice. To sleep, of course, was impossible, except in the case of those old soldiers, who by long practice had become accustomed to guard duty. But the rest itself was something, and the men, who were free to amuse themselves as they liked, chatted together whilst they waited their turn to be called out. As there were five posts to be filled, and Bob's number was six, he knew, of course, that he would be in the first relief which could come on at midnight.

Having posted his men, Thorp returned to the guard-room, and, to the covert amusement of the soldiers, he began to read the report again, and go over the inventory. Half a dozen times he drew the report from his tunic-pocket to make

sure it was correct, half a dozen times he went out to walk round the posts. Whenever he returned he shuffled, fidgeted, and showed himself ill at ease with his responsibility. He was an over-anxious man, and therefore not fitted for the promotion he had received. Bob began to see that Hosty's statements were likely to come true.

The big barrack clock boomed out the first stroke of midnight, and Thorp jumped to his feet.

"Fall in—fall in!" he cried. "If I hadn't the relief posted and the field-officer came round, I'd get into trouble for certain."

Hosty chuckled.

"Told you so!" he murmured to Bob. "Thorp will be in a fever by the time we're relieved. He always thinks he's on the brink of disgrace."

On Guard and in Disgrace.

Thorp led Bob down to the barrack-gate, and the sentry on duty brought his carbine to his shoulder.

The sergeant took down the placard hanging on the sentry-box, and read the instructions rapidly to Bob. They embraced many commands—to take charge of all property within sight, to challenge all who attempted to enter the barracks, to give the alarm if necessary, and lots more, which the lad only partly heard, and did not fully understand. Then Thorp marched off with the sentry who had been relieved, and for the first time in his life Bob stood on "sentry-go."

At first the novelty of the situation interested the lad, and he stood steady and expectant outside his box. Away in the distance the tall barrack buildings loomed up dark and silent. Overhead the branches of an old oak-tree creaked in the wind, and down the road he heard from time to time the jolting of a waggon or the loud laughter of belated pedestrians returning home in groups or couples.

But to stand on sentry-go is at all times cheerless work, and at night, alone with one's own thoughts, facing the biting wind, numbed in every limb and unable to take sufficient exercise to properly restore one's circulation, the minutes are apt to crawl with painful slowness, and to a young soldier the two hours' duty seems more than a long day's work.

Thorp came with unexpected suddenness from time to time from out of the shadow of the box and closely scrutinised his sentry. Then he would pass on without remark, and once again Bob would be left to his own reflections, which dwelt more and more on his comfortable cot in the barrack-room as the time went slowly by.

He was standing, wondering if he would be able to move his legs and walk away when the hour came for his relief, when he heard out on the road the tramp of several feet, and then a hasty scurrying as if men were taking cover. He was now alert, and he gripped his carbine ready for action if necessary.

Again he heard footsteps, but in lesser numbers, and as the later pedestrians approached he recognised from their voices that they belonged to the educated classes. They were chatting pleasantly when again the lad heard the scurrying of feet, hoarse threats, the sound of a struggle, and a cry.

"Help—help!"

Without a moment's thought as to the danger he ran, the plucky lad dashed out into the road five paces away, and rushed to the assistance of two gentlemen who were struggling desperately, surrounded by a gang of roughs.

With an answering shout, Bob rushed to the fray, clubbed one of the gang, struck another a terrific blow with his fist, and closed with a third. Terrified by the unexpected onslaught, the Edwards soon gave way. Some dashed back towards the town; others made for the open country. But even as one of the gentlemen was turning to thank the young soldier, the other shouted to him in dismay.

"I've lost my watch, Forsyth!" he yelled. "That villain dashing back to the town has got it, for I felt the tug just before he bolted. I'm going after him. Come along—come along!"

The speaker, a well-set-up, middle-aged man, as Bob judged from his back, which he could dimly see in the dark, dashed down the road as he spoke, and his companion, starting after him, shouted to Bob to follow.

"Come on, and help!" he yelled. "We may need your assistance."

"I can't go, sir," Bob shouted back. "My duty is here."

The first gentleman, now forty yards away, stopped and turned for a moment.

"Quite right, sentry!" he yelled back. "You stop at your post, of course!"

Both the men whom Bob had rescued then raced along the road, and Bob returned towards his box, fancying he recognised one of the voices, and wondering much who that could be.

"I wonder if they'll ever come up with the villain, any-

how?" he murmured, as he crossed the gateway. "Scoundrel and footpads like that ought jolly well to be—"

"Halt!"

Bob started. The voice came from the direction of the sentry-box, and as, disobeying the order, he pressed on to the spot, Sergeant Thorp advanced, running as hard as he could down the square, and followed by all the guard at the double.

"Halt!" Thorp yelled again.

Bob stopped and stood at attention. His heart was thumping in his ribs. For some reason he could not divine, he knew that big trouble was in store.

Thorp was shaking with passion as he reached the lad.

"You left your post!" he yelled. "You—"

"A gang of villains were attacking a couple of men just outside the gate," the lad pleaded. "The gentlemen would have been badly knocked about. I was only in time to—"

"They weren't inside the barracks?" Thorp cried.

"No, sir; just outside. No one could have passed in whilst I was there, and I thought—"

"Thought! What right had you to think? You were here on sentry-go! You should have given the alarm, and the guard would have turned out. If—"

"But the guard wouldn't have been in time, sir. Anything might have happened, and—"

"Don't bandy words with me!" Thorp thundered. The man was trembling with fright and horror at the violation of the regulations. "You have grossly neglected your duty; you are a disgrace to the Service. Fall in—fall in! Close round the prisoner and conduct him to the guard-room. He is under arrest, and will appear in the orderly-room in the morning."

Surrounded by the guard, Bob was marched back, his place being taken by another sentry. The lad flung himself on a wooden bunk, and tried hard to collect his thoughts and think out some way by which he could escape the calamity which had befallen him. Hosty came over and sat down next him.

"What happened?" Hosty inquired kindly.

"There was a row on the road, and I rushed out to save a couple of decent chaps who yelled for assistance."

"Yes; we heard that, and we came down at the double. Why didn't you give the alarm?"

"I never thought about that. Besides, I was only a few yards from my box, when all's said."

"That's so; but you'd nothing to do with any disturbance outside the barracks. Thorp is right technically, and I told you the sort he was. Another sergeant might take a more liberal view of the business. I've often known 'em to do so. But that's beyond Thorp."

"Then what will happen?"

"Goodness knows! You're in a tight fix, but keep a stiff upper-lip, old chap; all may come right yet."

That night passed slowly and wearily to Bob Hall. He lay awake, staring at the grimy ceiling and racking his brains to know what harm he had really done. If only he could ascertain who the men were whom he had befriended and probably saved from serious danger, he could get them without difficulty to explain his action and intercede for him. He had exceeded his duty, he saw that now; but, all the same, he knew full well that he had played the part of a man. Yet Thorp was right technically, and Thorp was a fidgety ass—that was the worst of it.

Morning came, and Bob was marched off to the orderly-room.

"Escort and prisoner, 'shon!" shouted Thorp.

Bob stood to attention. The adjutant was at the desk, and gazed at the lad curiously.

"Quick march! Halt! Front turn! Prisoner, two paces to your front! March! Stand at ease!"

Bob stepped out from before the two privates who, with rifles to their shoulders, had formed his escort. The lad was without his belt—the sign that he was under arrest.

"What's the charge?" the adjutant demanded.

"Neglect of duty and absence from his post when on sentry-go," Thorp replied.

Hamshaw elevated his eyebrows.

"This is a very serious charge, sergeant," he remarked icily. "Give your evidence, and bring forward your witnesses."

Thorp proceeded to state how he had posted Bob on duty at the barrack-gate, and produced his report-book in proof of his words. He told how, hearing a row outside the barracks, he had brought the guard down with all speed, to find that Bob was out on the road engaged in a broil with civilians who had not attempted to enter the barracks, but were fighting amongst themselves outside the boundary of the sentry's duties. He stated that on this account he placed him immediately under arrest, and brought him before the orderly-room.

(Another grand instalment of this story will appear next Wednesday. ORDER IN ADVANCE!)

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FROM THE FIRING-LINE!

A Series of Letters of Enthralling Interest received direct from Corporal Charles, of his Majesty's 7th Dragoons, who is an old reader of "The Gem" Library, and is now on active service on the Continent with the British Expeditionary Force.

(Exclusive to "The Gem" Library.)

No. 10.—

PADDY AND THE DESPATCHES!



I hope you're not getting tired of the brave and thrilling exploits I'm sending you from the firing-line. I can't send along any other kind, for, to tell the truth, there's nothing happening here except deeds of daring and heroism such as have not been equalled in any age.

Are we downhearted? No! Is Tommy Atkins played out? Ten thousand times No! Ask the Kaiser's square-headed lager-swillers! They'd rather face anybody than our lads with the cold steel behind them. I've seen Germans trembling in every limb and down on their knees squealing for mercy before we've got within striking distance of them, and I've seen others crying in sheer funk like babies.

The King's Dragoons have been in the thick of it for days in the neighbourhood of the Yser. It's been charge, charge, charge almost every day. I've lost count of the villages we've cleared of the Kaiser's hosts, and of the guns we've collared, and of the prisoners we've taken.

What I'm going to tell you about now concerns a despatch-carrying feat of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, and particularly of Private Paddy.

Shure, Paddy's a broth of a bhoy, and I'll wager everyone who hears his story will wish him a speedy recovery from the wounds he received for performing his gallant despatch-carrying.

The King's Dragoons were having a wee rest after a hot bit of charging, when reinforcements of the enemy gave us and the infantry entrenched near by a few anxious moments. We were not so badly off, however, as a battalion of the Gloucester Regiment. Orders were given to the Gloucesters to retire. Bugle-calls were no good with the row going from the howitzers and machine-guns.

"Who'll volunteer to carry despatches to 'em?" cried the dapper little lieutenant.

Every fusilier wanted the job, though it meant crossing an open space of about four hundred yards, which the Germans were raking with Maxims and rifle-fire. It was asking men to go into an inferno.

"Ye'll have to toss for it, bhoys!" cried their officer.

"Ye can't all go."

The first to leave was a shock-headed chap, who didn't look as if there was very much in him. Ducking in a comic way, and grinning about him as if he were taking a cock-shy at a row of cocoanuts, he rushed into that blinding hail of bullets. The first hundred yards he cleared without being hit. We looked on, amazed. In the second lap, however, he was bowled over. We saw him stagger erect and go on; but a second time he went down, and he never got up again.

Two lads went off at once after him. By a miracle they reached him. While one threw his comrade over his shoulder and made his way back to the lines, the other went on with the despatch. All the time, of course, the Germans were keeping up a hot fire. Just as the wounded man and his mate were within a few yards of safety, and we and the fusiliers were cheering them, a perfectly wicked volley came across from the enemy's lines, and both lads collapsed.

Moreover, the other fusilier—the chap with the despatch—had been shot down. Paddy—that's the only name I know him by—went off to recover the despatch and deliver it. Paddy had been the life and soul of the boys in the trenches. Never was there such a hearty cheer as when he went off.

Ducking and running, and occasionally waving back his

hand at us, Paddy kept on his way. More than once he dived down; but it was only a trick of his to make the Germans think they had picked him off. For three hundred yards out of the four he kept up the race against death, while we could hear the Gloucesters cheering the sight of him; then at length he went down, with bullets in both legs, as we learned afterwards.

A dozen men of the Gloucesters, as brave as their Irish pals, ran out to bring him in. Most of them were shot down, but Paddy was able after all to deliver his message.

Later, the battalion holding the advanced position was able to fall back in good order. But it wasn't the least bit too soon. Had it not been for the brave lads who risked their lives to carry that despatch, that battalion of the Gloucesters would certainly have been wiped out, for the Germans were working round, unknown to the officer in command, and was indeed on the point of encircling it when the retirement was begun.

It was on this very day, some hours later, that I had an amusing adventure with a Uhlán, who proved to be that great rarity, a German gentleman.

I'll not take back a single word as to what I've said about the Kaiser's soldiers I've met in this war. In the great majority of cases they are a cowardly, traitorous, bullying, vicious set of blackguards; it is, therefore, all the more remarkable to tell of a German who was really and literally "an officer and a gentleman." Yet perhaps it is not so very remarkable when you come to hear the whole of my story.

The Germans had taken up a strong position in a village on the Belgian frontier. With machine-guns up on the roofs of the houses, they were playing skittles with our boys.

"Clear 'em out, lads!" our old colonel cried. "Make a clean sweep of 'em! Show 'em how the King's Dragoons can charge!"

We did show them. A full squadron, in face of a murderous fire, we galloped like mad across the fields, fairly digging them out of the trenches on the outskirts of the village. They retired to the streets, where we had hand-to-hand fights, and gave 'em beans by the bushel, notwithstanding the hurricane of shots they poured down on us from the roofs.

In a short time we had practically cleared the village of them, when, on reaching the other side, we found about sixty Uhlans galloping to the assistance of their comrades. What was extraordinary about this lot of Uhlans was that their officer, a fine-looking, strapping chap, was leading his men instead of trotting in their rear, and shouting "Vorwärts!" like some old crazy parrot, as is the invariable custom.

Our colonel was with us, the dear old chap, as plucky as any of us.

"Back, my lads!" he commanded, some of us seeing the twinkle in his eye. "Retire! We'll bottle up these terrible Uhlans!"

We twigged the game at once. We drew back, luring the Uhlans into a sort of market-place; then we quickly reformed, and charged in at them. My word, that was a daisy of a fight! It was cut and thrust, jab and shoot. It was about the hottest five minutes I've had since I left Liege, at the beginning of August.

(Continued on page iii. of cover.)

Somewhat or other, I and the German officer got detached from the others. He was slashing at me with his sabre. I was using my carbine like a quarterstaff. There was no time to reload. My revolver, too, was empty.

Hacking and jabbing, I attacking and he backing, we gradually found ourselves outside the village and away from the general fighting. Neither of us had so much as a single shot. And we were still parrying and doing our utmost to slaughter one another, when from one of the houses near us a hurricane of bullets was poured down on us.

Strange to say, though our horses were shot down under us, we were unharmed. Directly I got free of the stirrups, and could stand erect, I went for him again.

"Surrender!" I yelled at him. "I've got you whacked!" "I'm not so sure," retaliated the Uhlan, to my surprise in excellent English. "How's that?"

I felt a sharp pain in my forearm. He had pinked me with his sabre. It only made me more savage and determined.

"Not out!" I shouted, giving him a terrific thump on the wrist with my carbine. "What price that?"

"Offside!" he grinned back.

I charged him again, and had the good luck to see the heavy cavalry sabre go whizzing out of his hand. Just when I thought I'd got him at my mercy, I stumbled on top of him. He wrenched my carbine from my fist. We struggled and wrestled. When we stood erect neither of us had a weapon left.

"Surrender! You're helpless now," I told him.

"Like yourself," he grinned, as if the whole business was some good joke.

"Up with your dukes!" I shouted. "I'm going to give you a hiding."

"You're a bloodthirsty wretch," he returned, "but you can have a try!"

We must have been as mad as March hares, both of us, now I come to think it over. We had no spectators—had the whole battlefield to ourselves, apparently. And there we were, prancing about over the ground which was covered with empty cartridge-cases, with silent, motionless figures lying here and there, and a background of shattered houses and ruined fields—fighting for our lives. Yet so evenly matched were we, that, if we had kept on for about twelve hours I believe the fairest result would have been a "draw."

"Steady on!" suddenly cried the German officer, as I countered a straight left. "What's the good of scrapping? Let's have a cigarette."

"A what?" I asked, unable to believe my ears.

"A cigarette," he replied, coolly proceeding to take a gold case from his pocket. "The fat ones are Turkish, but you'll find the Virginia quite good."

I laughed aloud. In another minute we had lighted our fags, and were strolling back to the village like a couple of pals.

"You're my prisoner—understand that," I told him.

"Oh, if you like," he grinned. "A change is as good as a rest, they say. Perhaps we'll have a chance to finish off that scrap another day."

"We will," I assured him. "We'll have it with gloves, under Queensberry rules; as soon as we get a half-day off."

Before I close I must tell you how we and the 18th Hussars saved nearly a dozen of our guns from a surprise attack of the Germans. It happened the day before I penned this.

We had been busily engaged all the morning under shot and shell, driving off the enemy, who were attacking a retreating infantry division, when the order was given for us to take the German guns, as their fire had become intolerable.

They were on the edge of a wood over a mile away. We galloped across several fields. The shelling and rifle-fire became terrific. On the hillside were eleven guns, and we were determined to silence them. The scream of the shrapnel did not daunt us. Yelling and shouting, we became frantic, and so did our horses. The rifle-fire soon ceased, for we rode down their infantry and hacked them to pieces.

Nothing could stop us—not even the barbed-wire they had put up. We cut through it, and when we were not more than a hundred yards from the guns many of the gunners ran away, and took shelter in the wood. The others that remained got mangled under our horses' hoofs.

We got up to the guns, spiking them and putting them out of action. And then the order was given to take a breather, and shelter under a railway-bank. It was about time, too, for they had got the range of us again, and we had to dash through a hail of shell and bullets.

Of the four hundred horses that had galloped out when the charge had sounded, only seventy-three came back, and many of these poor, brave creatures were so badly wounded that they had to be sacrificed.

The Front will recount another thrilling next week's issue of THE GEM.

THIS WEEK'S CHAT.

The Editor's Personal Column.

For Next Wednesday—

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next week's grand long, complete tale of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled as above, records the arrival of a new science master, who, while making himself highly popular among the "brainy" set in the School House, is viewed with keen distrust by Talbot. A daring burglary occurs at Glyn House, and Talbot becomes assured that the new master is an old acquaintance of his crackman days, who has come to St. Jim's to carry out his nefarious work. A bitter struggle ensues in the lad's breast. Should he proceed to "show up" his old comrade in crime, or allow the burglar to remain undetected? It is indeed a perplexing situation for the handsome Shell fellow, but he has learned to play the game, and, after a stirring feud with the supposed science master, he does the right thing, recking not of the consequences, and

"TALBOT'S TRIUMPH!"

is complete.

"TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY!"

By the time this issue of the "Gem Library" is in the hands of my chums the Grand Christmas Number of our great companion paper, "The Magnet," will be on sale throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire.

It is not seemly for an Editor to indulge in expressions of boasting and vainglory; nevertheless, it is with a feeling of real pride that I send this record number forth into the world to make its mark, and flourish as no other Christmas Number has done before it.

Many indeed are the features contained therein, but I venture to express the opinion that none will afford so much interest and delight to "Gem" readers as

TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY!"

the unofficial organ of the junior section of St. Jim's. The Christmas Number of this most amusing and exciting journal has been reproduced by special permission of its youthful Editor, Tom Merry. Space precludes me from enumerating in full the contents of the paper, but I will mention a few of its thoroughly entertaining articles. Figgins, of the New House has allowed his imagination to run riot, with the result that a highly-coloured serial, of the days when pirates sailed the seas, makes its appearance. D'Arcy discourses on dress, Jack Blake is to the fore with a fine footer article, and Monty Lowther gives full scope to his humorous temperament in the replies to correspondents, some of which are nothing if not crushing. Herries finds inspiration for a poem in his beloved bulldog Towser; and Fatty Wynn, not to be outdone, describes in honest verse the fun and corresponding risk of a dormitory feast at midnight.

To my mind, the copy of this fine journal of St. Jim's—which, by the way, is easily detachable—is in itself well worth the sum charged for the entire Christmas Number of "The Magnet."

I strongly urge all Gemites to take out and retain this issue of the "Weekly," so that, should future numbers appear at any time, the copies may be bound together in the form of a volume.

The Christmas Number of "The Magnet Library" is easily distinguishable on all bookstalls by its most attractive and artistic cover. The price is twopence, the value better than ever it was, and you should secure a copy at all hazards. Your Christmas will be incomplete without it.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

J. C. Cussens (Co. Cork).—The names you require are: James Monteith, George Kerr, David Wynn, and Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

W. A. Wallis (Dovercourt).—I am much afraid I cannot help you, as our Back Numbers Column has long since been discontinued.

Dick Boorer (South Croydon).—You will know by the time this appears what happened to Talbot.

B. L. F. (Rotherham).—A book on the subject you mention can be obtained from Messrs. Gamage, of Holborn. I am afraid I can make no definite promise with regard to your suggestion.

YOUR EDITOR.

A Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE

NOT A NEW SUBJECT.

Friend of Family: "And what are you learning at school now, Tommy?"

Tommy: "Oh, gozinter chiefly."

Friend of Family: "What's that—a new language?"

Tommy (wearily): "No; just gozinter. One gozinter two, two gozinter four, three gozinter six."—Sent in by Miss E. Dennis, Bermondsey, S.E.

EQUALS.

A magnificent liner was steaming into Southampton Harbour, when a grimy coal-lighter drifted immediately in front of it. An officer on board the liner, seeing this, shouted:

"Clear out of the way, there, with that barge!"

The lighterman, a native of the Emerald Isle, shouted in reply:

"Are yez the captain of that vessil?"

"No," returned the officer, "I am not."

"Then speak to the captain," said the Irishman. "I'm captain of this."—Sent in by R. W. Sly, Glasgow.

HARD LUCK.

Little Willie was complaining because his elder brother had been given a larger helping of Christmas pudding than he had.

"But you must remember," said his mother gently, "that Harry is older than you."

"That's just it," wept the little chap. "He was eating Christmas-pudding for three years before I was born."—Sent in by Clifford Hague, Leeds.

WHY NOT?

"Mother," asked little Charlie, "is it correct to say that you 'water a horse' when he's thirsty?"

"Yes," said his fond parent, "it's quite right."

"Well," chuckled Charlie, "I'm going to milk the cat."—Sent in by P. Linnell, Cannock, Staffs.

DIDN'T MATTER.

Little Dick came to his mother looking deeply dejected, and confessed he had broken a tile in the fireplace.

"Oh, never mind, dear," said his mother, "But how ever did you do it?"

"I was hammering it with father's watch," came the reply.—Sent in by J. Marshall, Southsea.

BRITISH-MADE.

A German was vainly trying to open an account with an English firm.

"No," said the Englishman, "I prefer British goods."

"I guess you're right there," put in an American.

"Although I must say I owe my life to German industry."

"Ah, is that so?" translated the German.

"Yes," went on the Yankee. "It was at Manila. A shell from a Spanish ship in the harbour fell foul of my shirt-front."

"And you vos live?" asked the German.

"Yes; and I owe my life to German industry. That shell was made in Germany, and when it bumped up against a stud made in England—well, it kinder subsided."—Sent in by E. Pendlebury, Manchester.

THE SAME.

A hotel-manager was once informed that a gentleman wished to speak to him, and on their meeting, the following dialogue took place:

"Do you remember kicking out a poor fellow who was unfortunate enough to be unable to pay his bill?"

The manager, with visions of successful gold-prospectors in his mind, replied apologetically:

"Well, sir, I'm sorry, but business is business, you know, and—"

"Pray don't mention it!" said the diner. "But might I—er—trouble you again?"—Sent in by Jack Brady, co. Antrim, Ireland.

NOT WHAT HE MEANT.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said an Irish stage-manager to his audience of three, "as there is nobody here, I will dismiss you all. To-night's performance will not be performed, but will be vacated to morrow evening."—Sent in by W. L. J. (name omitted).

WATER NEXT TIME.

A teacher in a Cumberland school received the following letter: "Sir—Will you in the future give my son easier sones to do at nites? This is what he's brought home two or three nites back: 'If fore gallons of bere will fill thirty pint bottles, how many pint-and-a-half bottles will nine gallons of bere fill?' Well, we tried, and could make nothing of it at all, and my boy cried, and said he didn't dare to go back in the mornin' without doin' it. So I had to go and by nine gallon kegs of bere, wick I could ill afford, and then he went and borrowed a lot of wine and brandy bottles. We filled them, and my boy put the numbeer down for the answer. I don't know whether it's right or not, as we spilt some while doin' it."

"P.S.—Pleas let the next sone be in water, as I am not able to by bere."

—Sent in by G. Bowles, Tonbridge.

THEIR PROPERTY.

George: "I say, Jim, have you heard that the Eskimo have sent an ultimatum to the Kaiser?"

Jim: "No. Why?"

George: "Because he's up the pole, and that's their property."—Sent in by M. Leaf, Manchester.

WHAT HE USED.

A man, living in a poor quarter of the town, was visited by a lady who was interested in the betterment of the unfortunate.

"Mr. Casey," said she, "I am trying to interest people in the neighbourhood in a people's bank to be started here. Would you mind telling me where you deposit your wages?"

Mr. Casey smiled grimly.

"Tis twenty-two shillin's a week I earn, mum," he said. "Whin I have paid the rent, the provisions and the grocery bills, an' the milkman, an' bought what's needed for Bridget an' me an' the five childer, I deposit the rist o' the money in barr'ls, mum. I uses sugar-barr'ls mostly; they're a bit larger, an' so holds more. But whin I can't git them, I make do with plain flour-barr'ls."—Sent in by Rachel Renfrey, Aberdare.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED.

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the sender will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED—The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

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