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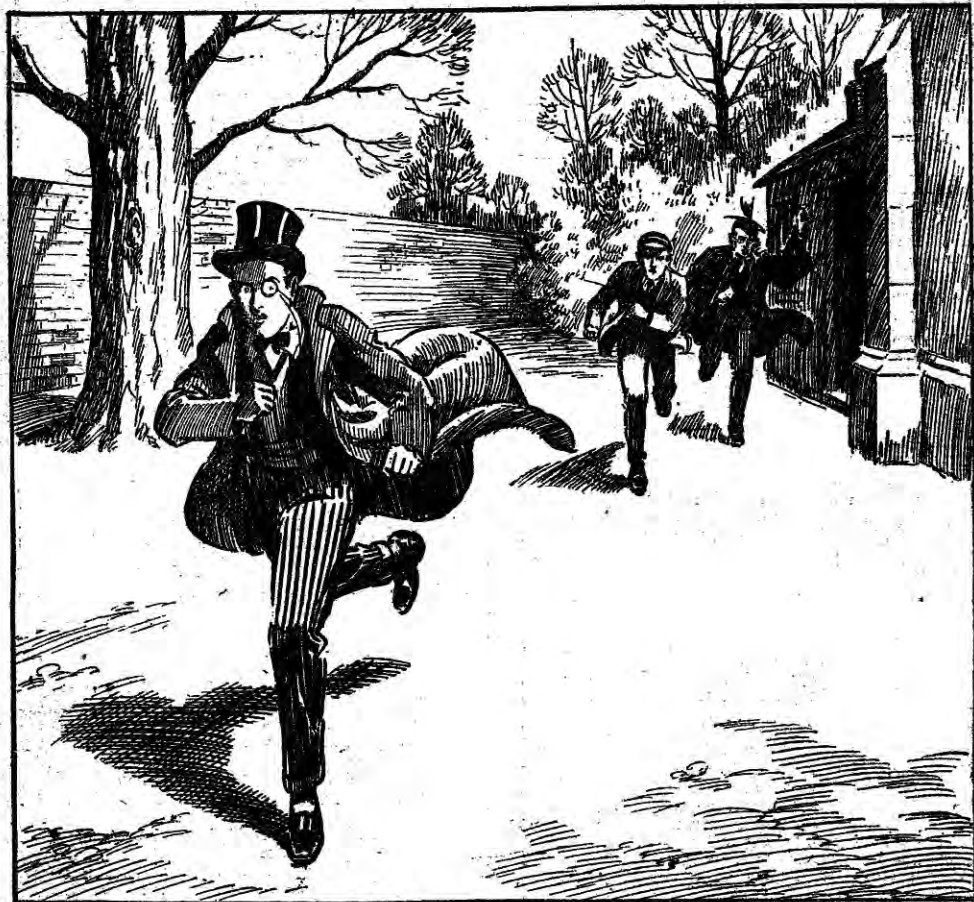


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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



"Stop!" roared Knox. "Stop!" screamed Mr. Selby. D'Arcy dashed away at top speed, leaving his pursuers panting in the rear. (See Chapter 8.)

CHAPTER 1.

Arthur Augustus Dares to be a Daniel!

"YOW-WOW!"

That loud howl resounded from the Third-Form room at St. Jim's.

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth

ejaculated:

"Bai Jove!"

There were four Fourth-Formers waiting in the passage—Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy, the chums

of Study No. 6. They were waiting for Arthur Augustus' young brother, Wally of the Third.

In the Form-room the Third Form were at evening-preparation, with Mr. Selby, their Form-master.

All forms above the Third had the high privilege of doing their preparation in their own studies—at their own free will, as it were. But the fags of the Third had no studies, and they prepared their lessons in the presence of their Form-master, which meant a decidedly unpleasant hour and a half every evening for the Third

Next Wednesday:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!" AND "COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOLDAYS!"

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Form, for Mr. Selby was not a pleasant or a good-natured gentleman.

The Third were at prep, and Arthur Augustus and his friends were waiting in the passage till they had finished. They wanted Wally.

D'Arcy minor had been in trouble with his Form-master that day. He often was in trouble with his Form-master. D'Arcy minor was, in fact, born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

It was not a heinous crime to introduce white mice into the Form-room at afternoon lessons; but it was a reckless proceeding, especially when the Form-master was Mr. Selby. Wally had been severely caned, and, tough as that young gentleman was, he had fairly squirmed under the infliction.

Hence the brotherly affection with which Arthur Augustus was waiting for him. The noble and elegant Arthur Augustus often had little rubs with his unruly minor. At the same time, he regarded him with fatherly protecting interest. In Study No. 6 there was a feast of the gods—a "spread" that would have delighted the heart of any fag—and it was, as Blake described it, a consolation prize for Wally. If anything could console D'Arcy minor for his misadventure with the Form-master, that spread could.

Arthur Augustus & Co. had been waiting cheerily for Wally, to rush him off to the study as soon as he emerged from the Form-room. Arthur Augustus wore a beaming smile. Blake and Herries and Digby were cheery, but a trifle impatient. They were quite ready for that study spread.

Then came that loud howl from the Form-room—a howl that rang the whole length of the passage.

The beaming smile faded from the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He recognised in that howl the dulcet tones of his minor.

Blake gave a shrug of the shoulders. "More trouble for Wally!" he said. "Poor little beggar!" said Herries. "Selby does go for him, don't he?"

"The wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I regard Selby as a perfect beast!"

"He is a beast!" agreed Digby. "But I dare say Wally has been up to something. May have catapulted him, or something of that sort. It would be like Wally."

"Yaas, but—"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

It was another yell, louder than the first. Then Mr. Selby's acid, unpleasant voice was heard.

"D'Arcy minor, how dare you make that ridiculous noise? Hold out your hand again!"

Arthur Augustus' eye gleamed through his eyeglass. "He is still canin' my minah!" he ejaculated. "I am not standin' this!"

"Hold on, Gussy!" shouted Blake, as the swell of St. Jim's made a stride to the Form-room door.

Arthur Augustus did not hold on, and Blake grabbed at him too late. The door of the Third-Form room was thrown wide open, and Arthur Augustus strode in.

His eyes were gleaming with wrath. The noble blood of all the D'Arcys was boiling in his veins.

There was a buzz from the crowded ranks of the Third as D'Arcy strode in. Wally was standing out before the Form, and Mr. Selby, cane in hand, was about to administer another stinging stroke upon a grubby paw. Wally did not look happy. There was a smear of ink on his nose, and another on his collar, and his features were twitching. Wally was hard as nails, and he prided himself upon the fact that he never "blubbed." But he was dangerously near to blubbing now.

The stroke did not fall. Mr. Selby held his hand in sheer astonishment at the sight of Arthur Augustus. His thin hard face became pink with anger.

"D'Arcy, what do you want here? How dare you intrude into the Form-room during preparation?"

"I protest!"

"What!"

"I firmly protest against this excessive punishment of my young bwotah!" said Arthur Augustus majestically.

Mr. Selby stood rooted to the floor. For the moment he could not believe his ears. For a junior of the THE GRM. LIBRARY.—No. 412

Fourth-Form to march into his den, as it were, like a new Daniel into the lions' den, and protest against his proceedings, was so astonishing that it quite took Mr. Selby's breath away.

In the doorway Blake and Herries and Dig looked at one another speechlessly. Their breath was taken away as well as Mr. Selby's.

"D'Arcy," gasped Mr. Selby at last—"boy, are you out of your senses? Leave this room at once!"

"You ass, Gus!" murmured Wally, under his breath. "Hook it!"

Arthur Augustus did not heed either of them. He stood his ground like a Paladin of old, his eyeglass gleaming in his eye.

"Do you hear me, D'Arcy?" shouted Mr. Selby. "I hear you, sir."

"Then quit this room at once! I shall report this insolent behaviour to your Form-master!"

"You may report what you like, Mr. Selby! I refuse to allow my minah to be treated in this brutal manner!"

"You—you refuse!" stuttered Mr. Selby. "You—refuse! You will not allow! You must be mad, D'Arcy! This astounding insolence—"

"I repeat my words, Mr. Selby!"

Mr. Selby raised his cane.

"Leave this room, D'Arcy!"

"Are you goin' to cane my minah again?"

"I am certainly going to do so! Obey me! Go!"

"Undah the cires, I refuse to go!"

"Gussy!" came Jack Blake's appealing voice from the doorway. "Gussy, old man!"

D'Arcy did not even hear:

"For the last time," said Mr. Selby furiously, "will you go, D'Arcy?"

"I feel bound to refuse to do so, Mr. Selby!"

Lash!

Mr. Selby's cane came down across the shoulder of the Honourable Arthur Augustus, and the swell of St. Jim's uttered a sudden yelp of pain.

"Wow! Oh, you wottah!"

"What—what! Boy, go!" thundered the Form-master.

And he grasped Arthur Augustus by the collar with one hand, and wielded the cane with the other. Loud thwacks rang upon Arthur Augustus' well-fitting Eton jacket.

"Yawwoh! Yow! Ow! Oh, you beastly wottah!" roared Arthur Augustus. "How dare you cane me! You are not my Form-mastah! Welease me!"

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Yoooop!"

Arthur Augustus' noble blood was fairly up. He whirled round on the Third-Form master, grasped the cane, and wrenched it from his hand. In a second the cane was snapped in two, and the pieces flung across the room.

"My only Aunt Jane!" gasped Wally.

"D'Arcy!" Mr. Selby almost choked with wrath.

"You—you—"

He clenched his hands, and advanced upon the swell of the Fourth as if to attack him with his fists. D'Arcy clenched his fists, too. If Mr. Selby had struck him, Arthur Augustus would have returned the blow, straight from the shoulder. He was quite reckless of consequences now. Fortunately for both, the enraged master held his hand.

"D'Arcy, follow me! Do you hear? I shall take you immediately to the Head! Follow me!"

"I am quite prepared to explain to Dr. Holmes!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

And, with his noble nose high in the air, Arthur Augustus followed the Form-master, who strode ahead, with whisking gown. They passed Blake and Herries and Dig, who were dumb with dismay. Arthur Augustus had put his foot in it this time with a vengeance.

Wally of the Third rubbed his smarting hands, and whistled.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he murmured. "Gussy is an ass—and a brick! What's going to happen now? My only sainted Aunt Jane!"

CHAPTER 2. Before the Head!

TOM MERRY stopped and stared.

Manners and Lowther, who were with him, stopped also and stared.

The sight of Mr. Selby whisking along the passage, with flushed and furious face, and Arthur Augustus following him with the calm and sedate walk of Vere de Vere, surprised them.

Mr. Selby passed them without a look or a word. Arthur Augustus bestowed a calm nod upon them.

"Gussy!" murmured Tom.

"What the merry dickens!" said Manners.

"In for it?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, I think so," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Mr. Selby has requested me to follow him to the Head. I had to interfere in his treatment of my minah. I did not approve of his severity."

"You did not approve!" murmured Tom Merry, almost overcome.

"No. I regarded it as brutal!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Selby looked back.

"D'Arcy, follow me!"

"I am followin' you, sir."

"Do not stop to talk to those juniors. Follow me at once!"

"Vewy well, sir."

Mr. Selby whisked on. Arthur Augustus followed him in quite a stately manner. The contrast between the curious, excited master and the elegant and cool junior was very striking. It was all in favour of Arthur Augustus. Mr. Selby undoubtedly looked decidedly vulgar at that moment.

"Gussy, old man," murmured Tom Merry, accompanying the swell of St. Jim's down the passage, "don't play the giddy ox, you know. Remember it's the Rookwood match to-morrow, and you don't want to get detained."

"I should refuse to be detained, Tom Mewwy."

"Oh, you fathead!" groaned Tom.

Arthur Augustus was on the high horse now, and when Arthur Augustus was on the high horse no amount of argument would induce him to dismount. The Terrible Three exchanged hopeless looks, and watched him enter the Head's study at the heels of the Third-Form master.

"Poor old Gussy!" murmured Tom. "Selby is a bit of a beast, but—"

"There'll be trouble," said Monty Lowther. "Poor old Gussy!"

Blake and Herries and Digby joined them in the passage. They were looking lugubrious. They waited glumly for the reappearance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The latter, to judge by his aspect, was far less concerned than his chums. He was perfectly cool and composed as he entered the Head's study.

Dr. Holmes was in conversation with Mr. Railton, the master of the School House. Both of them looked very surprised at the sight of Mr. Selby's almost purple face.

"Dr. Holmes," stuttered Mr. Selby, "I have brought this junior to you. I am incapable of dealing with him."

"My dear Selby—"

"The boy has entered the Form-room, interrupted the preparation of my Form, and intervened between me and a junior whom I was punishing," said Mr. Selby, his voice trembling with rage. "He has snatched my cane away and broken it. I leave him in your hands, sir."

Dr. Holmes' brow became hard and stern.

"D'Arcy, is it possible—How dare you—"

"I feel quite justified in actin' as I did, sir," said Arthur Augustus, respectfully but firmly.

"What!"

"Mr. Selby was tweatin' my minah in a brutal mannah!"

"D'Arcy!"

"I felt bound to chip in, sir—I mean to intahfeah. As for bweakin' Mr. Selby's cane, I did not do that till he whacked me with it, sir. Mr. Selby is not my

Form-mastah, and has no wight to cane me, especially across the shouldahs."

"You caned D'Arcy, Mr. Selby?"

"I could scarcely allow him to enter my Form-room, sir, and defy my authority."

"Undoubtedly. D'Arcy, you have acted in an incredibly insolent manner."

"Weally, sir—"

"You have taken it upon yourself to oppose a Form-master in his duties."

"I did not wegard—"

"I can scarcely find words, D'Arcy, to describe your conduct," said Dr. Holmes severely. "You will instantly apologise to Mr. Selby."

Arthur Augustus' eyes glinted.

"I cannot apologise sincerely, sir, when I am not in the wong," he said. "If I told Mr. Selby I am sowwy I should be tellin' an untwuth."

"D'Arcy! Then you are not sorry for your conduct?"

"I cannot be sowwy, sir, for actin' accordin' to what I considahed wight. Mr. Selby was bein' brutal!"

"Silence!"

"My minah has alweady been licked to-day, and Mr. Selby was lickin' him again, I am suah, for nothin'."

"You have no right to say anything of the sort, D'Arcy. You have no right even to think so. It is not for you to criticise a Form-master."

"Bai Jove!"

"My dear D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton gently, "you must surely realise that you have acted very wrongly."

"I cannot wealise it, sir. Mr. Selby was brutal!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Head. "Do you wish me to send you away from the school, D'Arcy?"

"Gweat Scott! I—I mean no, sir."

"Then take care not to repeat such insolent words."

"I twust, sir, that you do not wegard me as bein' capable of insolence," said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I should wegard it as the vewy worst of taste."

"You are insolent, however, perhaps without intending it," said the Head. "I shall cane you, D'Arcy, for entering Mr. Selby's Form-room without permission, and offering an opinion there upon his action."

"I am quite willin' to be caned by you, sir. I think it is wathah unjust—"

"What!"

"But I know you mean to be just, sir, and I should not dream of opposin' your wishes in any way."

The Head seemed at a loss for words for a moment. Mr. Railton turned to the window to hide a smile. Dr. Holmes settled the matter by taking up his cane.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Swish!

Arthur Augustus set his lips hard. To "howl" over a caning did not consort with the dignity of Vere de Vere. But that swish was a stinger, and Arthur Augustus very nearly forgot what was due to his dig.

"The other hand, D'Arcy!"

Swish!

Arthur Augustus had his teeth set now. He did not yelp. His palms felt as if they were on fire.

Dr. Holmes laid down the cane.

"Now, D'Arcy," he said quietly, "you have been punished for your impertinence. You will now apologise to Mr. Selby, and the matter is ended."

"I am sowwy, sir—"

"You hear me, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Then obey me—at once!"

"I feah, sir, that I cannot apologise to Mr. Selby!"

Dr. Holmes raised his eyebrows.

"Are you aware, D'Arcy, that you are disobeying the orders of your headmaster?" he exclaimed.

Arthur Augustus looked deeply distressed.

"I am vewy sowwy, sir. It would be quite howwid for you to suppose me lackin' in pwopah respect for my head-mastah. But undah the cires, sir, I feel that I cannot apologise to Mr. Selby. I am not sowwy for interferein' in the mattah, considewin' that his conduct was—"

"D'Arcy!"

"Vewy well, sir, I will not wepeat what I think of

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

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

Mr. Selby's conduct. But it is impos for me to apologise for havin' acted wightly."

"I will waste no more words upon you, D'Arcy. Unless you apologise to Mr. Selby at once, you will be confined in the punishment-room, and kept there until you have rendered Mr. Selby the apology that is his due."

Arthur Augustus squared his shoulders, and drew a deep breath. Arthur Augustus was the easiest-going fellow at St. Jim's. But he had a strong will on some occasions. He had often declared that he was as firm as a rock, while his study-mates averred that he was as obstinate as a mule.

"Well, D'Arcy," said the Head, after a pause.

"I am weady to go to the punishment-woom, sir."

Dr. Holmes made an angry gesture.

"I will take you at your word, D'Arcy. Mr. Railton, will you kindly take D'Arcy to the punishment-room, and lock him in there?"

"Certainly, sir."

"You will go with Mr. Railton, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus followed the Housemaster from the study. Mr. Selby's eyes were glinting. He was quite satisfied with the delinquent's punishment. The Head glanced at him rather curiously when D'Arcy was gone.

"I suppose, Mr. Selby, that there is nothing in the boy's allegation that you were using D'Arcy minor with undue severity."

"I was caning him, sir," said Mr. Selby. "I think I had reason. D'Arcy minor used a catapult in the Form-room, and I, sir, was the target. A pellet, sir, struck me behind the ear."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head. "The young rascal! You were undoubtedly justified in punishing him in the severest manner. I am sorry, my dear Selby, that this has occurred; but that obstinate boy will, I think, soon be brought to his senses."

"I trust so, sir," said the Third-Form master, and he quitted the study, almost in a good humour.

CHAPTER 3. The Prisoner!

"Gussy!" The anxious chums of Arthur Augustus greeted him in the passage. Mr. Railton walked on.

"I am sowwy I cannot stop to speak to you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I have to follow Mr. Wailton."

"Licked?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah," said D'Arcy, rubbing his hands. "Yaas, vewy bad! But I do not gwumble at the Head. He probably wegarded it as his duty."

"Probably!" grinned Lowther. "But what's the trouble now? Railton isn't going to lick you, too, I suppose?"

The Housemaster was out of hearing.

"No. He is takin' me to the punishment-woom—Nobody's Study, you know."

"What for?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"I am goin' to be shut up there till I apologise to Mr. Selby. That," added Arthur Augustus serenely, "means a life sentence, deah boys. For I certainly nevah shall apologise to Mr. Selby."

"Look here, Gussy—"

"Don't play the giddy ox, Gussy—"

"Wats!"

"Think of the Rookwood match to-morrow," urged Tom Merry. "You ought to be in the team going over to Rookwood, you know."

"Bai Jove! I hadn't thought of that."

"Buck up and apologise to the Selby-bird, then," urged Herries.

"Impos, Hewwies! A chap must considah his dig."

"You fathead—"

"I wufuse to be called a fathead, Hewwies! About the Wookwood match, Tom Mewwy, that will be all wight. I am comin' to Wookwood."

"How can you come if you're in the punishment-room, ossa?"

"I wufuse to be called an ass. I shall get out somehow. THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 412.

Pewwaps you fellahs can help me. In any case, I shall uttably wufuse to be detained to-morrow aftahnoon. I am goin' ovah to Wookwood."

"You can't, you fathead!"

"Wats!"

"I shall have to put another chap in—"

"I pwotest, Tom Mewwy, against your givin' my place in the team to anoath chap! I wufuse to allow anythin' of the sort!"

"But you can't come, duffer!"

"I am comin'!"

Mr. Railton was looking back and beckoning from the end of the passage.

"I must go, deah boy. But wemembah, Tom Mewwy, I am comin' to Wookwood to-morrow aftahnoon, and I am goin' to play in the match. You can wely on me."

And Arthur Augustus hurried after Mr. Railton, leaving the chums of the School House staring at one another helplessly.

"Gussy'll be the death of me, yet," groaned Blake.

"Let's go and see him shut up."

Tom Merry & Co. followed at a distance. Mr. Railton and D'Arcy had reached the punishment-room in the upper passage—Nobody's Study, as it was called by the juniors. There was a deep alcove in the wall, and at the end of the alcove was the strong oaken door of the punishment-room. Mr. Railton turned the big, rusty key in the great lock with a grating sound, and threw the door open. The room was dark and bare.

"D'Arcy," said the Housemaster quietly, "I do not desire, and the Head does not desire, that you should be confined here. Think over it, my boy, and do what Dr. Holmes has commanded you."

"You are vewy kind, Mr. Wailton. But I cannot apologise to Mr. Selby when I wegard him as—"

"That will do, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton curtly.

"Vewy well, sir."

Mr. Railton looked very hard at Arthur Augustus for a moment, but he made no further remark. Arthur Augustus walked into the punishment-room with his head erect. The Housemaster followed him in, and lighted the gas. He glanced round the room—it was cold and dismal enough. Nobody's Study was furnished with a chair and a table, and one or two other articles of furniture—barely enough. The bedstead was in a corner, but there was no bed on it, as the room was hardly ever used.

After another expressive glance at the junior, the Housemaster withdrew, locking the door, and taking away the key.

Arthur Augustus shivered.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "This is wathah wotten! Howevah, a fellah has to considah his dig."

He looked out of the grimy window. The window was guarded by an iron bar. It gave a view of brick walls.

"Gwooh!"

Arthur Augustus sat down on the bed.

He did not feel cheerful.

To be set in opposition to the Head, whom he greatly respected, and to Mr. Railton, for whom he had a tremendous admiration, was distinctly unpleasant. Yet he felt that he had no choice in the matter. Mr. Selby had been brutal, and he felt called upon to chip in. He could not and would not apologise for having been in the right, as he regarded it.

Tap!

Arthur Augustus jumped up and approached the door.

"Hallo, deah boy!"

"You're there, Gussy?"

It was Blake's voice.

"Yaas."

"How do you feel?"

"Wotten!"

"Fed-up already?"

"Oh, yaas!"

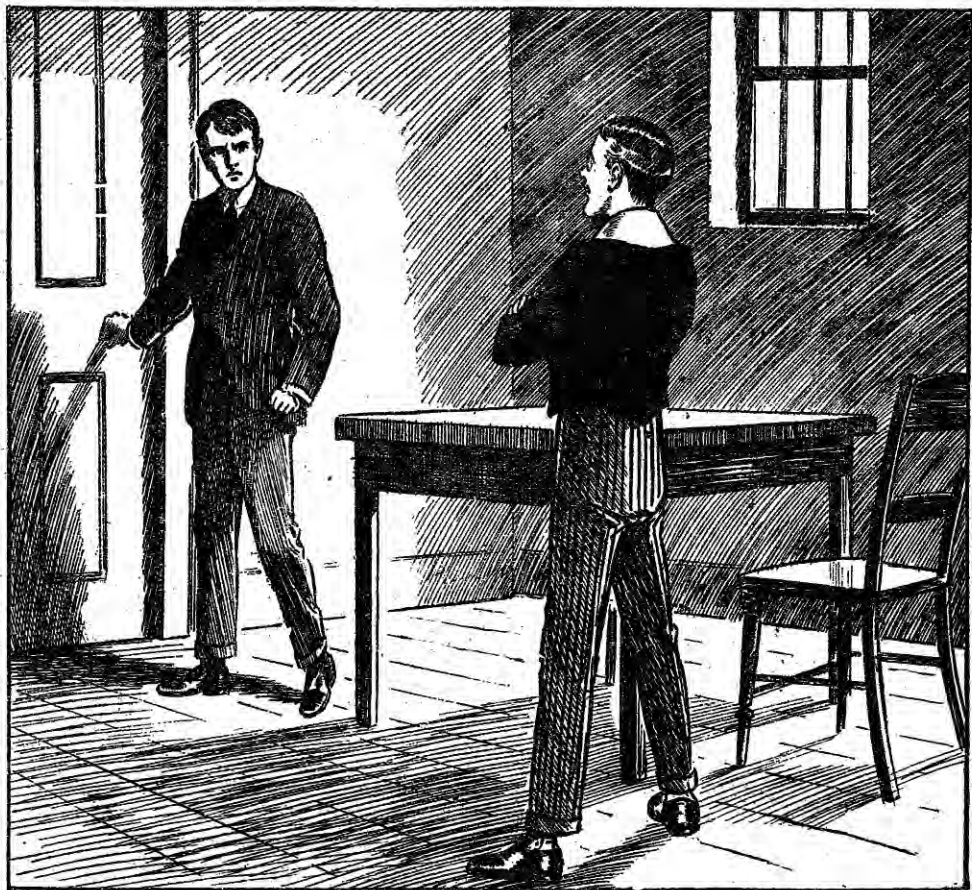
"Better make up your mind to give Selby some soft sawder. Soft sawder don't cost anything," said Blake through the keyhole.

"Wats!"

"Oh, you ass!" murmured Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

Then another voice was heard. It was the voice of Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's.



Arthur Augustus stood his ground fearlessly, and the bully of the Sixth paused. "You'll be brought to your senses pretty soon," he snapped. "You ought to be sacked for your cheek!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Cut off, Blake, you young rascal. Don't let me catch you hanging about here again!"

The key grated in the lock. Kildare came into the room, followed by Toby, the page of the School House. Toby's rugged face was very commiserating in its expression. He liked and admired Arthur Augustus, and his looks showed his deep sympathy. Toby was laden with a mattress and bedclothes.

He proceeded to make the bed.

"You seem to have got yourself into a pretty fix, young 'un," said Kildare.

"Yaas, Kildare. It's vawy wotten."

"Better make up your mind to do as you're told," said the captain of St. Jim's. "Don't you know that it's cheeky to be disrespectful to the Head, and jolly bad form?"

"I have no desire to be disrespeful to the Head," said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "I twust Dr. Holmes will not misconstrue my conduct. But it is imposser for me to apologise to Mr. Selby."

Kildare shrugged his shoulders. He had not a very high opinion of Mr. Selby himself; but he knew what was due to the discipline of the school. However, it was evident that there was no arguing with the swell of the Fourth. Kildare was of opinion that a night in the punishment-room would make a considerable difference to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's views on the matter.

The bed made, Kildare waited while Toby went away and returned with a tray. On the tray was a plate of bread-and-butter and a cup of cocoa. Toby set the tray

on the table, and, with another commiserating look at Arthur Augustus, departed. Kildare followed him out, and locked the door.

As the captain of St. Jim's went down the passage, with the key in his hand, he paused, and looked in at Study No. 6. Blake and Herries and Digby and the Terrible Three were there, in somewhat glum consultation. They looked glumly at Kildare.

"You're to keep away from the punishment-room," said Kildare curtly. "You know it's not allowed to speak to a kid detained there. I caught you at it, Blake. I ought to report you. Well, I won't; but don't do it again, or I shall have to. You know what my duty is."

Kildare left the study without waiting for a reply, and delivered the key of the punishment-room to Mr. Ralston.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another dubiously.

"That means that Kildare is going to keep his eye open," said Tom Merry. "I suppose he must do it, as he's a prefect. We can't speak to Gussy."

"Poor old Gussy!" said Manners. "He will be fed up with it before morning."

Blake grunted.

"He's an ass," he said. "But—but Selby was pitching into Wally too much. The man's a beast!"

"Yes, rather!" agreed all the chums together, very heartily.

"And Gussy's as obstinate as a mule," said Blake gloomily. "He won't apologise to Selby. Goodness knows how it's going to end."

The "spread" was on the table, but the chums of the

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

School House were not feeling in a mood for jollification just then. Their thoughts were with the lonely junior shut up in Nobody's Study. Arthur Augustus was in the right in one sense and in the wrong in another sense, but it was certain to his chums that he would not give in. What was to come of it?

CHAPTER 4.

Bad Luck All Round!

ALLO! Funeral going on?"

Thus Figgins of the Fourth. Figgins & Co. had arrived from the New House. They had been invited guests to the "spread," and they had arrived. They found Study No. 6 looking gloomy and glum. Hence Figgins' humorous query as to whether a funeral was going on.

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Kerr. "Do you always look as cheerful as this at a tea-party?"

"I see you've got the spread ready," remarked Fatty Wynn. "You haven't been waiting for us? I made these boudoirs come along on time."

"Where's Gussy?"

Blake explained.

"Oh, my hat!" was Figgins' comment. "What a giddy kettle of fish! Poor old Gussy! He's always in the wars. Last time he was in love; now he's in the punishment-room. That's the worse, of the two."

"Goodness knows how long he'll stay there," said Blake. "He's so jolly obstinate."

"And there's the Rookwood match to-morrow," remarked Kerr. "You'll have to fill his place in the team."

"I suppose so."

"Better put in a New House chap," remarked Figgins.

"There's young Owen—"

"Oh, blow young Owen!"

"Well, after all, we want to beat Jimmy Silver's team, and if you can strengthen the eleven, you know—"

"Bow-wow!"

"It's rough on Gussy," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "My idea is that we'd better talk it over while we have tea. No good letting a good spread spoil, you know."

Fatty Wynn was already beginning. He was sorry for the mishap of Arthur Augustus, but he was hungry, and he had a healthy appetite. The other juniors followed his example. After all, they were hungry.

Tea was in progress when Wally of the Third arrived. After his painful experiences in the Form-room, D'Arcy minor might have been expected to look down in the mouth. But he didn't. He was quite serene as he came into Study No. 6.

"Hallo, feeding?" he said cheerily.

"Pile in!" said Blake. "This feed was really got up for you, you young scamp. It was Gussy's idea."

"Good old Gussy!" said Wally heartily. "Gussy's a good sort. You should have seen him stand up to old Selby, you chaps. Like a Trojan. I suppose he's been licked."

"Yes."

"Where is he now?"

"Shut up in Nobody's Study."

The grin faded from Wally's face, and his fork was arrested half-way to his mouth.

"My only Aunt Jane!" he ejaculated. "What have they shut him up for?"

"He won't apologise to Selby."

"Of course he won't!" said Wally warmly.

"And he's shut up till he does."

"Oh, crumbs!"

The scamp of the Third had started upon the spread quite voraciously. But his appetite seemed suddenly to have fled. His face was a picture of dismay. He laid down his fork and rose.

"Where are you going?" asked Tom.

"I'm going to speak to Gussy."

"Can't be did; the prefects are looking after that."

"I'm going to chance it."

"Look here—"

The fag did not heed; he quitted the study, and ran along the passage. He arrived breathless in the alcove, and tapped on the door of Nobody's Study.

"Gussy!" he called out.

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"Hallo, deah boy!"

"I say, Gussy— Yaroooooh!" yelled Wally suddenly. A finger and thumb fastened upon Wally's ear from behind, and he was whirled round. He found himself looking at Knox of the Sixth.

"Speaking to a kid under detention—what?" said Knox. "Come along with me, you young rascal. You know it's against the rules."

"It's my major in there."

"I know all about it," grinned Knox. "I've been told to keep an eye on the punishment-room. Your major is getting what he deserves, and you're going to. Hold out your hand!"

"Look here, Knox—"

"Would you rather be taken to your Form-master?" grinned the bully of the Sixth.

Wally grunted, and held out a grubby hand.

Swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Wally. The prefect had given him a tremendous cut.

"Shut up!" said Knox. "Let me catch you breaking the rules again, and you'll go straight to Mr. Selby. You know what you'll get then. Cut off!"

Wally, with a furious face, squeezing his hand under his arm, returned to Study No. 6.

"No go," he said. "That cad Knox is on the watch."

"Shush!" murmured Tom Merry warningly.

Knox of the Sixth looked into the study.

"I suppose you kids know the order?" he said. "Any junior found hanging about the punishment-room will be detained for the next half-holiday. Housemaster's orders. Mind you don't get caught, that's all."

And Knox departed, grinning. Any misfortune that fell upon Study No. 6 was sure to afford pleasure to their old enemy.

"That would mean all U.P. with the Rookwood match," said Blake. "Well, I suppose we can't do Gussy much good by calling him names through the keyhole."

Wally gave a smort.

"I'm not going to leave my major stranded," he said. "I'm going to have a jaw with old Gussy, anyway. Blow Knox!"

"You young ass!" said Blake crossly. "You're the cause of all the trouble. What did you do to old Selby to make him lick you at prep?"

"Only caught him in the ear with a catapult," said Wally. "He'd been licking me for nothing, so I went for him!"

"You young ass!" roared Blake. "You ought to have been skinned!"

"Well, I was jolly near skinned when Gussy came in," said Wally. "Gussy's rather an ass, but he's a brick, and I'm going to stand by him. He's not going to be fed on bread-and-scrape, either, if I can help it. I'll take some of this tommy away with me, and you can bet that I'll get it to him somehow."

"You can't!" growled Manners.

"Oh, you Shell boudoirs don't know how to do things!" said Wally disdainfully. "You leave it to me. We've got some brains in the Third."

And when Wally left Study No. 6 he carried a bundle with him—tuck that was, somehow, to be conveyed to Arthur Augustus in the punishment-room, if the devoted Wally could contrive it.

"Well, it's a bad bizney," said Figgins. "I don't see what can be done. Gussy will be left out the Rookwood match, I suppose."

"Looks like it," growled Blake.

Figgins & Co. left. They were sympathetic, but there seemed nothing to be done. The Terrible Three returned to their study to finish their preparation in somewhat dashed spirits. They could not help being concerned for the unfortunate swell of the School House.

Arthur Augustus' plight was known to all the school by this time.

Fellows continually dropped into Study No. 6 to ask for particulars. Talbot was the first, and then came Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn, and Gore and Skimpole, and Reilly and Kerruish and Julian, and Lumley-Lumley and Levison; in fact, there was quite a procession of sympathetic inquirers in and out of Study No. 6; till

Blake and Herries and Digby were fed up with the subject.

The School House prefects were evidently keeping an eye open, for Julian of the Fourth, venturing to the door of Nobody's Study to exchange a word with D'Arcy through the keyhole, was immediately pounced upon by Rusden. And Julian was caged at once, and detained for the morrow afternoon—a heavy punishment, for he had intended to accompany the St. Jim's junior eleven to Rookwood.

And worse than that was to happen. Kangaroo of the Shell made the venture, and he was spotted by Knox, and marched off to the Housemaster. The sentence of detention for Wednesday afternoon was very severe in his case, for Harry Noble was centre-half in the junior team, and a tower of strength in Tom Merry's eleven. Kangaroo brought the news dismally to Tom Merry's study.

"You'll have to fill my place to-morrow," he said.

"What on earth for?" demanded the captain of the Shell warmly. "I've got to fill D'Arcy's place already, and I can't have Julian, as the young ass has got himself detained."

"I'm detained, too," grunted the Cornstalk junior. "I just had a word with Gussy—"

"Oh, you duffer!" said Tom crossly. "You haven't done Gussy any good, and now you've mucked up the team."

"Sorry. Can't be helped! I didn't know Knox was spying," said Kangaroo glumly. "Can't be helped now. I'm detained."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows over the footer list as Kangaroo left the study.

"Looks ripping for the Rookwood match—I don't think!" he growled: "I could have put Julian in Gussy's place, and the team wouldn't have been a penny the worse. But he's detained. Now Kangy's got it in the neck. I shall have to put in Owen of the New House at half; and he's not nearly so good as Kangy. I don't know who's to take Gussy's place at outside-left. Hallo, Talbot!"

Talbot of the Shell entered the study with a rueful countenance.

"I'm awfully sorry, Tom!"

"What's the row?"

"I suppose you were depending on me for to-morrow?"

"Yes, rather; you know I am," Tom Merry jumped. "Don't say you're detained."

"I'm sorry, but I am."

"Speaking to Gussy?" yelled the exasperated football captain.

"Well, it seemed so rotten poor old Gussy being shut up there all on his own. I just had a word with him through the keyhole, and Darrel spotted me."

"Oh, you fathead!" groaned Tom Merry. "There's Jimmy Silver's team at the top of its form, and now I've lost my best winger, as well as the best half; to say nothing of Gussy. The match is a goner!"

"I'm awfully sorry."

"I should think you are. If any other member of the team tries to get a word with Gussy, I'll scalp him!"

Tom Merry hurried from the study, to speak a word in season to the remaining members of the team who belonged to the School House. There were no more "casualties," fortunately; but Tom Merry's prospect for the morrow was not a rosy one. His best forward and his best half-back were detained, and the only fellow who could have replaced D'Arcy—Julian of the Fourth—was detained, too. There would be three second-rate players in the eleven that was to face Rookwood's very best. No wonder Tom Merry was exasperated.

CHAPTER 5.

In the Dead of Night!

"BAI JOVE!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat up in bed.

Midnight had tolled out from the clock-tower of St. Jim's, and the old school was buried in darkness and slumber.

Arthur Augustus was in bed in the lonely punishment-room. He was only dozing, however; his nerves were in

a somewhat excited state, and he did not sleep so soundly as usual.

Tap!

The knock at the door startled him. In the solitude and darkness there came back into his mind the uncomfortable remembrance that Nobody's Study was supposed to be haunted.

Tap!

"Are you awake, Gussy?"

The whispering voice through the keyhole reassured Arthur Augustus. He recognised the tones of his cheerful minor.

"Wally! You young boundah!" he ejaculated.

"Wake up, you slacker! I've been tapping on the door for ten minutes," growled Wally. "Everybody's in bed, but I don't want to make a thumping row."

Arthur Augustus slipped out of bed. The cold was keen, and he drew the blankets round him, as he stumbled to the door.

"What are you doin' out of bed, Wally?" he exclaimed. "You will get into a feahful wow if you are caught."

Wally chuckled.

"I know that, duffer! I've sneaked down out of the dorm to speak to you. I've got some grub for you here. What did you have for tea?"

"Bread-and-buttah."

"Well, I've got ham-sandwiches, a savcloy, a cake, and a bag of tarts, if you can get hold of them."

"I am afraid you cannot squeeze them through the keyhole, deah boy."

"I'm afraid not, fathead. Have you got a cord or a string?"

"What for?"

"You could let it down from the window, and pull up the bundle."

"Bai Jove!"

"I can cut out of the house easy enough, Gussy. You were a brick to stand by me as you did. I'm sorry you got into this scrape."

"I only did my duty as your majah, Wally."

"Are you going to give Selby soft sawder in the morning?"

"Certainly not!"

"You can't stay here for ever, Gussy."

"I should pwefer to stay heah for evah, wathah than apologise to a person I wogard with contempt."

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane; he's on the high horse again!" groaned Wally.

"Weally, you cheekay young boundah—"

"Anyway, here's the grub. If you haven't got a cord, tear up your shirt, and make one. Buck up!"

"Hold on, deah boy. I am not vewy particulah about the gwab, but there is somethin' else you can get for me."

"Go it! What do you want?"

"A file!"

"A—a—a what?" ejaculated Wally.

"I require a file to wemove the bahs from the window."

D'Arcy minor gave a gasp.

"Gussy! You old duffer! You're not thinking of bolting!" he exclaimed.

"Certainly not! I should wogard bolting as disrespectful to the Head. But I have to play in the Wookwood match to-morrow aftnoon. I decline to allow Mr. Selby's tantwums to interfere with my football engagements. I am goin' ovah to Wookwood."

"My hat!"

"Pway give Tom Mewwy a message in the mornin'. Assuah him that, undah any cires whatevah, I wufuse to give up my place in the eleven. I cannot go ovah with the team, but I shall join them at Wookwood. Tell Tom Mewwy to take my footah clobber."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Pway repeat that message word for word to Tom Mewwy, Wally. And get a file out of Blake's tool-chest in No. 6. I will make a stwing to let down from the window."

"Gussy, old man, there'll be an awful row—"

"Wats!"

"Selby will come after you, very likely—"

"Let him!"

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WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

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"It'll take you a fearful time to file through the bars."

"I shall have all the mornin'."

"Look here, Gussy—"

"Weally, Wally, it is too cold to talk; I am vewy neashly freezin'. I expected some fellah to come befoah I went to bed, but I suppose the pweffects have been watchin'."

"They have, rather," chuckled Wally. "Julian and Talbot and Kangaroo have been detained for to-morrow, for speaking to you."

"Bai Jove! Then the team will need me more than evah. I shall certainly not fail them, in spite of Mr. Selby's tantrums. Pway wun and get that file, Wally!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Wally. "If you get sacked, Gussy, we'll go together. We'll make our people send us to Greyfriars—what?"

"Wubbish! Cut off!"

"I'm off!"

There was a faint sound of stealthy footsteps; D'Arcy's minor was gone. Arthur Augustus, shivering, sat on his bed, in the dark, and proceeded to make the required cord. His experiences as a Boy Scout stood him in good stead now. He tore one of the sheets into narrow strips for the purpose. When the improvised cord was completed, he groped to the window and opened it. The strong iron bars prevented a passage through the window, but he could reach it easily with his hands. He pushed up the lower sash, and let his cord dangle out.

Wally was evidently already in waiting; for there came a pull on the cord. Arthur Augustus jerked at it in response, to show that he understood. After a few minutes he drew it slowly up.

There was a weight on the cord now.

Slowly and steadily Arthur Augustus pulled upon it, till a bundle reached the window-sill, and was drawn upon it. The bundle was drawn, with some squeezing, through the space between the bars. Arthur Augustus closed the window.

He unfastened the bundle in the dark. His fingers encountered the file, and he hastened to conceal it under his mattress. The other contents of the bundle were placed out of sight under the bed.

"All serene?" came a whisper from the keyhole.

Arthur Augustus stepped quickly to the door.

"All sewene, Wally! Thank you vewy much!"

"Oh, don't mench! But, I say, Gussy, you'd better not bolt to-morrow."

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus. His mind was quite made up on that point. "Give my message to Tom Mewwy, Wally, and don't forget to tell him to take my football clobber with him. I shall vewy likely cleah out while the chaps are at lessons in the mornin', Wally. Tell Tom Mewwy I shall join him at Wookwood. And I want you to get my ovahcoat and toppah in the mornin', and leave them somewah for me to take. Put them in the woodshed."

"Oh, all right!"

"And in case I have to wun for it, you might wheel out my bike in the mornin', and leave it neah the side gate."

"Anything else?"

"That is all, deah boy. Now go back to your dorm. I'm fighwfully sleepay!"

"Good-night, Gussy!"

"Good-night, kid!"

Wally hurried away, and Arthur Augustus turned in again, much comforted in his mind. In spite of Mr. Selby's tantrums, in spite of everything, Arthur Augustus was fully determined to play in the match at Rookwood. As to what would happen afterwards, he did not give it much thought. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof, and it was no use meeting trouble half-way.

CHAPTER 6.

Never Say Die.

THE RE was a vacant place in the Fourth-Form room the next morning. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still a prisoner in the punishment-room.

At breakfast-time his Housemaster had visited him, with Toby and a tray. Mr. Railton was kindness itself; but he found the swell of the Fourth as hard as adamant. Arthur Augustus was willing to do anything excepting apologise to Mr. Selby. As that was the only thing required of him, it was evident that there was "nothing doing."

Mr. Railton had left him rather impatiently, and Arthur Augustus ate his breakfast in solitary state.

After breakfast came Toby to "do" the room.

Knox of the Sixth lounged in the passage, quite prepared to collar Arthur Augustus if he should attempt to take the opportunity of bolting. But D'Arcy was not thinking of bolting just then. He knew that the door was guarded.

Toby made the bed, and, of course, he immediately missed the sheet which Arthur Augustus had manufactured into a rope the previous night. And as Toby's eyes were keen, he also spotted the bundle hidden in a shadowy corner.

"Oh, Master D'Arcy!" Toby murmured.

"I twust, Tobay, that you will not betway me!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pway, don't say a word about the sheet, deah boy—not until this aftahnoon, at any rate!"

"I won't, Master D'Arcy; but—"

"Or to-mowwow mornin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"Then it will be all wight. Pway be a pal, deah boy!"

The idea of being a "pal" to the noble Arthur Augustus would almost have made Toby go through fire and water. The secret of the missing sheet was locked deep in Toby's faithful breast.

The bed was made, and the room "done," and Toby departed. Knox lounged up to the door with the key in his hand.

"Sticking it out—what?" he sneered.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Silly young ass!"

"I have not asked for your opinion on my conduct, Knox, and I wegard your wemark as impertinent."

Knox made a movement towards the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus stood his ground fearlessly, and the bully of the Sixth paused. He did not want to risk the Housemaster discovering him "pitching into" the imprisoned junior.

"You'll be brought to your senses pretty soon!" he snapped. "You ought to be sacked for your cheek!"

Knox slammed the door and locked it.

"Wats!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

He went to the window and looked out as well as he could. He caught sight of Wally of the Third, who waved his hand and grinned reassuringly. Arthur Augustus waved back, satisfied that his minor had done what he asked of him.

Wally had, in fact, delivered his message to Tom Merry, much to the surprise of the captain of the Shell.

Tom was still thinking about it when the juniors had to go into the Form-rooms. It was true enough that D'Arcy would be very valuable if he turned up at Rookwood for the match. With all Arthur Augustus' elegant manners and customs, he was a good footballer, and very fast and sure on the wing. And as Talbot and Kangaroo were detained by the Housemaster's order, Tom Merry was in need of a good player. The presence of Arthur Augustus might possibly make all the difference between victory and defeat.

But the idea of the swell of St. Jim's clearing out of the punishment-room and "bolting" filled Tom with dismay.

He thought a little further than D'Arcy, and his mind dwelt upon the possible consequences.

But it was impossible to communicate with Arthur Augustus, and urge him to give up his reckless scheme. The junior football captain could not run the risk of being detained that afternoon, which would have meant the finish for the chances of St. Jim's at Rookwood. Besides, it would have been useless; he had had some

ANSWERS

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No. 7. "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD," 1st 2nd OUT TO-DAY. BUY IT AT ONCE!

experiences of the exceeding firmness of the swell of St. Jim's. Whether it was the firmness of the rock, or the obstinacy of the mule, certain it was that argument would have had no effect whatever upon the determination of the Hon. Arthur Augustus.

Tom could guess how D'Arcy was spending the morning, as Wally had mentioned the file conveyed to him from Jack Blake's tool-chest.

The captain of the Shell was a little absent-minded in class that morning, and Mr. Linton was sharp with him once or twice; not guessing the worry that was on Tom's mind.

While the rest of St. Jim's were grinding away in the Form-rooms Arthur Augustus was busy.

The file was hard at work on the window-bar.

Arthur Augustus knew that he was not likely to be visited till after morning lessons. He had several hours before him. He had expected to get through the bar in less than an hour.

To his dismay he found that it was harder work than he had anticipated. The file ate away the rusty iron, but slowly.

He discovered that his arm ached considerably after a short time, and he began to change the file from one hand to the other.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, after an hour of it. "Bai Jove!" It keeps me vewy warm, but it is vewy unpleasant work. It is wathah hard, too. If I hadn't promised to play at Rookwood, I should weally feel wathah inclined to give it up. But nil desepwandum!"

Grind, grind, grind!

Both his arms were aching by the time the bar was cut through. But for the rust that had eaten deep into it the file would never have severed it in the time. Arthur Augustus grasped the bar and tried it. It did not yield the fraction of an inch. He set to work upon the other end of it, gracing his file with a fragment of butter he had thoughtfully saved from breakfast.

Twelve o'clock boomed out from the old tower. The bar still held its place.

"Oh, cwumbs!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

There was a sound of cheery voices from the quadrangle. The St. Jim's fellows were out of the Form-room.

"What wotten luck!" groaned the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus had calculated very cunningly. He had intended to take French leave while boys and masters were occupied in the Form-room. But the filing had proved too long a process.

School was out now.

The junior eleven were catching an early train for Rookwood, and were not waiting for dinner. The journey was a long one.

Evidently the imprisoned member of the team would not be able to catch the same train.

Arthur Augustus fled away desperately. He ceased at last, and dragged at the bar.

Snap!

"Huwway!"

The obnoxious bar was out at last.

Freedom lay before the swell of St. Jim's—at the bottom of a sheer drop of well over forty feet.

But that was a trifle to the determined Gussy.

He sat on his bed, and proceeded to cut up the bedclothes with his pocket-knife, and plait the strips into a rope. The damage to the bedclothes could not be helped, it could be paid for afterwards. At present the pressing matter was to obtain a rope to reach the ground.

With nimble, tireless fingers, the swell of St. Jim's plaited away. The rope grew and grew under his hands, curling about his feet like a serpent.

CHAPTER 7.

Off to Rookwood.

"READY!" said Tom Merry.

"Here we are!" said Figgins.

The team were about to start.

Talbot and Kangaroo accompanied them as far as the gate, with dolorous looks, and so did Julian of the Fourth. Detention held them within the walls of St. Jim's. They could not very well grumble, as they had taken the risk when they broke the rule concerning

the prisoner in the punishment-room. But it was hard, all the same.

Tom Merry had filled Talbot and Kangaroo's places, the former with Reilly of the Fourth, the latter with Owen of the New House, also of the Fourth. The team now consisted of Fatty Wynn, goal; Herries and Reilly, backs; Redfern, Owen, Lowther, halves; Kerr, Figgins, Tom Merry, Blake, and D'Arcy, forwards—D'Arcy's place being still open if he turned up. But as Tom Merry had little faith in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turning up, he was taking along Digby for outside-left. The team had been somewhat rearranged, to put the reserves in the places where they were most fitted. Three or four fellows were going over with the team—not many, as the distance made the railway fare an object.

It was a very good team, but not the strongest that Tom Merry could have put into the field under happier circumstances. Dig, of course, was very keen to play, but he did not pretend to have the pace of his noble chum Gussy on the wing. Talbot and Kangaroo were a serious loss. But it could not be helped; and Tom had the satisfaction, such as it was, of knowing that he had got together the best junior team that St. Jim's could provide under the circumstances.

"Good-bye and good-luck!" said Talbot.

"And look out for Gussy in an aeroplane," grinned Kangaroo.

And they started.

Blake had scuttled round the house to take a "squin," as he expressed it, at the window of the punishment-room, and he was looking very thoughtful as the party tramped down the road with their bags.

"It's hard cheese on poor old Gussy," said Dig. "Of course, the duffer won't be able to bolt."

"He's going to try," said Blake. "He's been using that file."

"How do you know?"

"I've had a squint at his window. The bar's gone."

"Great Scott!"

Tom Merry looked very anxious.

"There's no way of getting down from the window!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Gussy's a scout!" said Blake. "Any scout can make a rope, if he's got the materials. Gussy would think nothing of ripping up the bedclothes. His noble pater would have to pay for 'em."

"The reckless ass!" said Tom, frowning.

"Oh, he's safe enough! But"—Blake shook his head—"he won't get clear. Why, the place is swarming with people who'll spot him. Of course, most of the fellows won't give him away if they see him; Levison or Mellish might, though. But the prefects will spot him."

"Sure to," agreed Tom.

"He'll be collared and yanked back at once," said Blake. "Poor old Gussy—always running his noble napper against a brick wall. There isn't a chance in a million of his getting to Rookwood. Still, I've got his clobber in my bag, ready for him if he does come."

"All the better for him if he's stopped," said Kerr. "The Head will be in an awful wax about it."

"By Jove, he would!"

"Blessed if I know whether I ought to play him if he does come!" said Tom.

"Oh, rats!" exclaimed Blake warmly. "You'll have to, of course—Gussy isn't going to take the risk for nothing. If he turns up at Rookwood, he plays, of course."

"I'll stand out, if he does," said Dig. "But he won't."

Convinced as they were that Arthur Augustus would not succeed in getting clear, the juniors looked back several times as they walked down to Rylcombe. But there was no sign of the swell of St. Jim's in pursuit.

At Rylcombe they had to wait five minutes for the local train; but it rolled away, without anything being seen of Arthur Augustus.

The party had to change at Wayland Junction for the express. They crossed to their platform, with tea minutes to wait for the train.

"I shouldn't really be surprised if Gussy turned up at the last minute," Blake remarked thoughtfully. "Hallo, there's a car, anyway!"

Zip-zip! Hoot-toot!

A car had stopped outside the station.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

"Gussy can't have got a car," said Figgins.
 "My only hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "Selby!"
 Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, dashed upon the platform. His face was red and excited.
 He rushed up to the group of astonished footballers.
 "Is D'Arcy here?" he panted.
 "D'Arcy! No, sir!"
 "Has he bunked?" ejaculated Blake.
 Mr. Selby did not reply to that question. He scanned the group of juniors to satisfy himself that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was indeed not there. Then he stood watching the entrance to the platform, like a cat watching for a mouse.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances.
 It was evident that Arthur Augustus had "bunked," and that the master of the Third guessed his destination, and had come to stop him.

Blake set his teeth.
 "The meddling rotter!" he muttered. "He ain't Gussy's Form-master—it's no business of his! Why can't he keep out of it?"

"Wouldn't be like him!" growled Herries.
 "Like his cheek to be after Gussy!"

"I—I say," murmured Herries. "I—I suppose it wouldn't do to scrag him, would it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Fathead!" said Tom Merry.

"He ought to be scragged!" growled Blake. "But there's a silly rule against scragging Form-masters. Blow him!"

The express was signalled. The juniors waited—and Mr. Selby waited. The situation was growing exciting.

CHAPTER 8.

Bolted!

AND where was the Honourable Arthur Augustus? The swell of St. Jim's was on his mettle.

The rope had been plaited from the strips of bedclothes by the active fingers skilled in scout-craft. The rope finished, Arthur Augustus carefully tested every foot of it. He was reckless, but he did not mean to run unnecessary risks. The bare idea of shooting down to the ground, and landing there in a smashed heap, was very uncomfortable. But the rope was strong, and more than capable of bearing his weight. It would have been a different matter with Fatty Wynn; but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not a heavy-weight.

"That's all right!" murmured Arthur Augustus, when he was satisfied of the strength of the rope. "Now for it, bai Jove! If Wally's left out on my bike, I can cut across to Wayland fastish than that cwallowin' local twain, and catch the express along with the team. Bai Jove, won't they be surprised to see me!"

With a chuckle, the swell of St. Jim's secured the end of the rope to a remaining fragment of the filed bar. He allowed the rope to slide down out of the window, and had the satisfaction of seeing that several feet of it trailed on the ground. The window of Nobody's Study was not overlooked. Bare brick and stone walls shut in the narrow space outside it—only a slight glimpse of the quad could be had. Arthur Augustus had no fear of being observed in his descent. It was after that that the dangers would begin.

He clambered actively through the window, and swung on the rope. Arthur Augustus had plenty of pluck, and the dizzy height did not make his head swim.

Hand below hand, he lowered himself nimbly.
 Lower and lower, swiftly and surely, till his feet touched the ground. Then he paused to take breath.

But he did not waste time. He had succeeded so far. It remained to get clear of the precincts of St. Jim's—unseen, if possible. But seen or not, Arthur Augustus intended to go, even if he went with two or three prefects raging on his track.

He crept to a corner and peered out over the quad. It was deserted. Arthur Augustus realised that it was dinner-time, though he was not thinking of his dinner. He gave a little chirrup of glee. The fellows and the masters would all be indoors; nothing would be simpler than to get clear—unseen, unsuspected.

That happy thought had just come into his mind when a loud exclamation from above reached his ears.

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He glanced up in alarm.

The head and shoulders of Knox of the Sixth appeared from the window of the punishment-room. The prefect was glaring down at him in astonishment.

"Great Scott! D'Arcy! Stop, you young rascal!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Filed, by thunder!" ejaculated Knox. "A rope, by gad! You young scoundrel, come into the House at once!"

Arthur Augustus set his teeth.

He was discovered!

He realised that Toby must have brought his dinner to the punishment-room, with the prefect in attendance to unlock the door, and, of course, it had been discovered immediately that the room was empty.

Arthur Augustus thanked his lucky stars that he had not been a few minutes later. Had Knox entered while he was still in the room, he would have noted the filed bar at once, and escape would assuredly have been cut off. But Arthur Augustus, as it happened, was ahead.

"Do you hear me?" roared Knox.

"Go and eat coke, you wottah!" was Arthur Augustus' reply.

"Stop!"

Arthur Augustus did not stop. His only idea was to reach his bike, and flee. He rushed for the woodshed.

Knox withdrew from the window. Shoving aside the astounded Toby, the prefect rushed out of the punishment-room, and dashed down the stairs. The bully of the Sixth was due in the dining-room, but he was only thinking at that moment of recapturing the junior. It was his duty as a prefect, and Knox was very zealous in the performance of his duties, when he could make somebody uncomfortable thereby. The prefect bounded down the stairs three at a time, and rushed for the door, and there was a roar as he rushed into Mr. Selby, who was crossing the hall towards the dining-room.

"Oh! Ah!"

"Yah!"

Mr. Selby went flying. Knox staggered back dazedly from the shock, and Mr. Selby rolled on the floor.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Knox, clinging to the banisters. Mr. Selby sat up.

"What! Who— Ah, Knox! How dare you rush into me, Knox! How dare you collide with me like a—a wild beast, Knox!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "I am hurt. I believe I am injured. Ah-h-h! Knox, you— you ruffianly imbecile!"

"I—I beg your pardon, sir!" panted Knox. "I—I was after D'Arcy!"

Knox was winded, but he knew how to make peace with Mr. Selby.

That gentleman bounded to his feet.

"D'Arcy!" he ejaculated. "D'Arcy of the Fourth, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he not in the punishment-room?"

"He has bolted, sir."

"Goodness gracious!" Mr. Selby gasped for breath, and his eyes glittered green. "That insolent boy—he has gone! But how—how?"

"Out of the window, sir."

"But—but the bar?"

"Filed away, sir."

"Good heavens! He must have had accomplices in this, then!" exclaimed Mr. Selby. The Third-Form master almost forgot that his tumble had hurt him. "You did quite right to follow him at once, Knox, though you might have been more careful. Where is he now?"

"I saw him in the quad, sir."

"Come—come with me at once!"

Mr. Selby rushed out into the quadrangle, with Knox at his heels. Mr. Selby would as soon have been deprived of his victim as a cat of a mouse within reach of her claws. The Form-master was not likely to forget or forgive the way Arthur Augustus had stood up to him in the Form-room, and defied him before the eyes of all the fags of the Third. The longer Arthur Augustus remained in the punishment-room before he rendered the apology, the better Mr. Selby would be pleased; and the bare idea of the junior erasing his punishment made him furious.



Lash! Mr. Selby's cane came down across the shoulder of the Honourable Arthur Augustus, and the swell of St. Jim's uttered a sudden yelp of pain. "Wow! Oh, you wottah!" (See Chapter 1.)

Master and prefect dashed out of the House, and round the building. There was a shout from Knox.

"There he is, sir!"

"Where—where?"

"The woodshed! This way, sir!"

"Seize him, Knox!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just come out of the woodshed. He had found his coat and hat there, placed in readiness by the obliging Wally. He came out in coat and topper—to find Knox streaking for him as if on the cinder-path, and the Form-master running laboriously behind. Knox was in the lead now.

Arthur Augustus' eyes gleamed.

"Stop!" roared Knox.

"Stop!" screamed Mr. Selby.

D'Arcy dashed away at top speed.

He was quite as good a runner as Knox—better, in fact. Knox had the advantage of years, but his wind had been sapped away by cigarettes. Arthur Augustus ran like a deer.

He vanished round the outbuildings, heading for the side-gate. If Wally had carried out his instructions, his bike was there. Once astride his faithful "jigger," all was serene!

"Good old Wally!" gasped D'Arcy.

The bike was there, leaning against the wall just inside the gate. Arthur Augustus tore the gate open, rushed the bike out, and the gate slammed behind him. A toppler and a coat were not exactly suitable attire for quick riding, but it was too late to think of that. Arthur Augustus hopped on his machine, and his feet hit the pedals hard, and they fairly flew round.

A few seconds later Knox dragged the gate open and rushed out. Arthur Augustus was turning into the high-road on the bike, and he disappeared the next moment.

Mr. Selby came panting up.

"Have you caught him, Knox? Why are you dawdling here? Where—"

"He's got a bike, sir. He's gone!"

"A bicycle!" shouted Mr. Selby. "It is a plot! He has had accomplices in this!"

"No doubt about that, sir," said Knox. "I fancy the others were with him in this. They want him in the junior team. He's gone after them, I should say."

"After them? After whom?"

"Tom Merry and the rest."

"Eh! Where have they gone, then? Are they not at dinner?"

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

Knox grinned a little. Mr. Selby took no interest whatever in football; he never knew when there was a first eleven match on, let alone a junior fixture. The Rookwood match, so important to Tom Merry & Co., was nothing at all in the eyes of Mr. Selby. He had never even heard of it.

"They're gone over to Rookwood, sir," Knox explained. "D'Arcy was in their team, but, as he was detained, he couldn't go."

"Bless my soul! Do you seriously mean to tell me, Knox, that the boy can have had the astounding audacity to break detention to play in a football match?"

"Just like one of those cheeky kids in Study 6, sir. I haven't the least doubt of it."

Mr. Selby almost raved.

"But such a flagrant defiance of authority, it is unheard of. He must be stopped, brought back, punished! Why, if such a defiance of authority is allowed to pass there will be an end of all discipline in the school. He must be prevented from going, Knox!"

"He's gone, sir!"

"Have the others started?"

"Well, they'll have to go from Wayland Junction," said Knox. "The express can't have gone yet. I suppose D'Arcy intends to join them on his bike. That must be the idea."

"He must be stopped!" raved Mr. Selby.

Knox did not reply. He was more than willing to stop Arthur Augustus, if it could be done, and disappoint him, but he did not see how it was to be done.

"Come with me, Knox. The boy is ruffianly enough to resist, and I may need help. We will take the local train from Rylcombe."

"It's gone long ago, sir. They caught that to Wayland. The next doesn't get there till long after the express has gone."

"He shall not escape!" thundered Mr. Selby.

"I don't see—"

"Go to the garage at once, Knox, and order out the car. Use my authority. Tell the chauffeur not to lose an instant. We will go to Wayland. The car will travel faster than a bicycle."

"I—I haven't had my dinner, sir."

"Never mind your dinner, Knox. I have not had mine. At such a time as this one must be prepared to make little sacrifices for the good of the school."

"Very well, sir."

Knox started for the garage, and Mr. Selby rushed into the House to change his gown and cap for a coat and a hat. Knox was in a bad temper by this time. He was very keen to be "down" on Study No. 6 in any manner whatever, but he did not want to miss his dinner. As for the "good of the school," he knew that what Mr. Selby was thinking of was not the discipline of St. Jim's, but his own private animosity. But there was no help for it, and Knox carried out Mr. Selby's instructions.

Five minutes later the car was buzzing away to Wayland, with Mr. Selby and Knox seated in it. They kept their eyes wide open for a cyclist, but they did not spot Arthur Augustus on the way. The swell of St. Jim's was riding hard by short cuts that the car could not take. But Mr. Selby had no doubt that the rapid car would beat the bicycle in the race to the station, and he looked forward with spiteful satisfaction to marching Arthur Augustus D'Arcy back to St. Jim's—back to a caning and the punishment-room!

CHAPTER 9. Touch and Go.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was simply flying along on the bike.

His silk hat was on the back of his head, his coat-tails were flying in the breeze, his hand-some trousers were bagging dreadfully as he ground away at the pedals. But for once the swell of St. Jim's was not thinking of his clobber. Even clobber had taken a secondary place now. He had time to get to Wayland Junction for the express, and to join the party for Rookwood, but only just time. He fairly flew, and he did not even observe that one of his trouser-legs was ripped, and that mud spattered him above the knees.

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He came out into the Wayland road with a rush, and buzzed on into the town and to the station. The big station clock caught his eye. Three minutes more! He gave a gasp of relief as he jumped off his machine.

"Done it, bai Jove!"

Then his eyes fell upon Dr. Holmes' motor-car standing outside the station, and upon Knox sitting in the car. Mr. Selby was inside the station. Knox, the prefect, was keeping watch outside in the car.

Gerald Knox spotted Arthur Augustus just as Arthur Augustus spotted him. Arthur Augustus leaned breathlessly on his bike, and ejaculated:

"Bai Jove!"

"Caught!" chuckled Knox.

He jumped out of the car.

But Arthur Augustus was not caught yet.

He leaned the bike against the red pillar-box outside the station, and ran in. Knox made a grab at him, and missed, D'Arcy dodging him like a Rugger three-quarter eluding a tackle. He vanished, panting into the station entrance.

Knox paused there, grinning. Mr. Selby was on the departure platform, watching. The swell of St. Jim's was not likely to elude him. Knox stationed himself in the entrance to cut off D'Arcy's escape. Taken between two fires, as it were, Arthur Augustus certainly seemed to be at the end of his tether.

The swell of St. Jim's did not stop for a ticket. He knew that the express was signalled, and he rushed for the platform. The porter at the gate was well acquainted with the Honourable Arthur Augustus, and he did not stop him. He had observed the football team on the platform, and could guess that this was a belated member of the team trying to catch the train.

There was a general gasp from Tom Merry & Co. as they spotted the swell of St. Jim's coming breathlessly on the platform.

"Cave!" yelled Blake.

"Look out, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus panted.

"All sewene, deah boys! Heah I am!"

"Look out!" shrieked Dig.

"Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus was about to join his comrades, when he became aware of Mr. Selby bearing down on him. He had not had time to think, and he had not yet realised that Knox was not likely to have come over in the Head's car by himself. But at the sight of the Third-Form master D'Arcy understood all.

He stood rooted to the platform, the Form-master interposing between him and the football team.

"Stop!" said Mr. Selby acidly.

"Oh, cwikey!"

"You will return to the school with me immediately, D'Arcy. I fully understand your insolent plan of going to Rookwood, in spite of your detention. You will certainly not be allowed to do anything of the kind. Come!"

Arthur Augustus backed away as Mr. Selby reached out a hand to place on his shoulder.

"Weally, Mr. Selby—"

"D'Arcy, I command you—"

"You are not my Form-mastah, sir, and I wefuse to wecognise your right to give me ordahs!"

"You impertinent young rascal!"

"I decline to be called an impertinent young wascal!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Bai Jove! Heah comes the twain! Pway allow me to pass, Mr. Selby!"

"Boy!"

The express came roaring in, and stopped. Tom Merry & Co. boarded the train. They had only a minute to do so. Herries made a stride towards Mr. Selby, probably with some half-formed intention of "scrapping" him; and Jack Blake dragged him back in time, and bundled him into the train.

"Look here—" began Herries.

"You sit down, fathead!" said Blake. "You're not going to ask for the sack. Form-masters are sacred, old scout."

"It's hard cheese, but it's all up with Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Good-bye, Gussy, old son!"

Arthur Augustus panted with wrath. He made a rush for the train, and Mr. Selby promptly seized him, and held him back. The junior could easily have laid the Form-master low with an upper-cut, but angry as he was, Arthur Augustus fortunately did not go to that length. The doors slammed, the juniors in the train shouted goodbye to the disappointed Gussy, and the express glided out of the station.

Mr. Selby held the swell of the Fourth in a firm grip till the train was quite out of the station. Then he released him, with a grim smile.

"You will now come with me, D'Arcy. I shall report this conduct to the Head."

Arthur Augustus set his teeth.

"I regard this intefewence as uttally unwawwanted, sir," he said.

"Silence! Follow me!"

Mr. Selby strode away, frowning, and Arthur Augustus followed him. The express being gone, and with it all chance of getting to Rookwood with the team, Mr. Selby had no doubt that the rebellious junior would follow him quietly to the car, and return to St. Jim's.

But nothing was further from the thoughts of the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

He was not beaten yet. The firmness of a rock and the obstinacy of a mule combined were as nothing to the determination of Arthur Augustus at this moment.

He was not at the end of his resources by any means, and his noble brain was working rapidly.

He followed Mr. Selby out of the station, Knox of the Sixth greeting him with a sneering grin.

"Get into the car, D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus crossed the pavement towards the car. But he did not get in. As he reached it he made a sudden spring, and rushed for his bicycle, still leaning on the pillar-box.

"Stop him, Knox!" shouted Mr. Selby, in anger and alarm.

Knox rushed at the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy reached the bike, and Knox reached him. Knox grasped him by the shoulder with one hand, and seized the handle-bars of the machine with the other.

"Let go, you wottah!" panted D'Arcy.

"Stop, you young fool! Oh—ah—yah!"

Arthur Augustus was desperate. He hit out, and his fist came with a terrific thump on Knox's chest. The Sixth-Former staggered back, and sat down on the pavement, dragging the bike down with him. He let out a fearful yell as the pedal clanged on his shin.

"D'Arcy!" shrieked Mr. Selby.

"Yow-ow-coop!" yelled Knox.

D'Arcy did not reply. He was running. In a twinkling almost he disappeared in the traffic of Wayland High Street.

"Good heavens!" gasped Mr. Selby. "Knox, follow him—pursue him!"

"Yoooop!" groaned Knox. "Oh, my shin! Ow! I'm hurt! Grooooh!"

"Really, Knox—"

"Wow-wow-wow!"

Mr. Selby gave an impatient snort, and strode after Arthur Augustus himself. The loungers and cabmen outside the station were grinning hugely. Dignity forbade Mr. Selby to start upon a wild footrace with the runaway junior. But if he had run his hardest he would not have had much chance in a footrace with the Fourth-Former. Arthur Augustus could have given him fifty yards in a hundred and beaten him easily.

Mr. Selby paused in the High Street, and blinked furiously after the vanished junior. D'Arcy had disappeared from sight. The Form-master, gritting his teeth, returned to the car and the groaning prefect.

CHAPTER 10.

A Race on the Road.

"BAI Jove! That was a nawwow squeak!"

Arthur Augustus slackened down, panting but victorious.

He had lost his train, and he had lost his bike. But he had other resources, if there was time. And he did not lose a moment.

At a quick walk he hurried in the direction of Wayland garage. He reached it in a few minutes.

Arthur Augustus was well known there. Many a time he had telephoned for a car for some excursion, and more than once he had hired a car to take out the wounded soldiers from the hospital. His noble pater had sometimes had quite extensive bills to pay for those little excursions. Arthur Augustus sauntered into the office in quite a leisurely way. He wanted a car, but he did not want to make it known what he wanted it for by any means.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Wheeler!"

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Wheeler urbanely.

"I suppose I can have my usual cah?"

"Certainly, sir."

"The fact is, I am wathah in a luwwy," said Arthur Augustus. "I've lost my twain, and it's a mattah of ovahtakin' a footah team in time to play in the match. Will you let them wun out the cah as quickly as possible?"

"Certainly, certainly."

Mr. Wheeler's charge was three guineas for the first fifty miles, and a shilling a mile afterwards. Most junior schoolboys applying for a car on those terms would probably have been asked for a sight of the cash. But the son of Lord Eastwood was not troubled in that way. Mr. Wheeler was only too ready to put it down to the account, to be settled by a cheque from his lordship. And Arthur Augustus had no doubt that his noble pater would pay that little bill quite cheerfully when he knew how extremely urgent the case had been. In that Arthur Augustus was probably mistaken. But he did not care in the least if the bill was stopped, from his allowance. There was only one thing that mattered, and that was to get to Rookwood in time for the football match.

A handsome car was soon in readiness in the garage yard. Arthur Augustus was keeping one eye on the street, wondering whether Mr. Selby would "tumble" to his plan, and come along to stop it. But there was no sign of Mr. Selby.

"Ready, sir," said the chauffeur, touching his cap.

"Vewy good! I want you to get to Wookwood as fast as poss, chauffeur. You go thorough Latcham, and then to Coombe. Make her wip, deah boy."

"Yes, sir!" grinned the dear boy.

Arthur Augustus stepped into the car, and the chauffeur started it. The swell of St. Jim's gave a quick glance round as the car glided out into the High Street. But the enemy was not in sight.

"Now let her wip!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

The car "ripped" along the Wayland road.

Hoot-toot-toot!

Arthur Augustus jumped.

Ahead of him on the road was another car, and he recognised Dr. Holmes' Mercedes. The next moment he recognised the backs of two heads in it—the heads of Gerald Knox and Mr. Selby.

"Gweat Scott!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

Mr. Selby and Knox were on their way back to the school. They had started in the car while Arthur Augustus was busy at the garage. For some distance their way lay along the Wayland road—the same as Arthur Augustus' way. They were only a few minutes ahead, and he had overtaken them.

"BAI Jove, how uttally wotten! Stop, Wobinson—no, keep on! Make her wip!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Selby had glanced round at the sound of a car hooting behind him.

His face was a study as he spotted Arthur Augustus in the following car.

"D'Arcy," he ejaculated—"in a car! Good heavens!"

"D'Arcy!" repeated Knox, with a whistle. "He's got a car for Rookwood, by Jove! Of all the cheek—"

Mr. Selby jumped up, and waved to D'Arcy's chauffeur.

"Stop!" he shrieked. "I command you, stop!"

The chauffeur did not even look at him. A sudden excited command from a perfect stranger was not likely to make him stop. D'Arcy's car was passing the Mercedes now, and drawing ahead.

"D'Arcy! Stop!"

"Stop, you cheeky young villain!" yelled Knox.

"Wats!"

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY,

"CRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

That was all D'Arcy's reply.

The car rushed on, and Mr. Selby was left behind. The master of the Third almost danced with rage.

He had given up the chase of the elusive junior as a bad job; but, the express being gone, he had had no doubt that D'Arcy, on his part, had given up the idea of going to Rookwood. Mr. Selby had the satisfaction of feeling that he had knocked that idea on the head, at any rate.

But the sight of the swell of St. Jim's tearing along in a big car acquainted him with the true facts at once. The unbeaten Gussy was still bound for Rookwood. It was defeat for Mr. Selby, after all—and Mr. Selby would have sacrificed a year's salary rather than have allowed the truant to have his way.

He leaned forward and yelled to his chauffeur.

"Follow that car! Overtake it—hurry!"

Dr. Holmes' chauffeur put on speed.

It was a race now between the two cars.

They were about equally matched in point of speed, and both of them fairly flew along the high-road.

Arthur Augustus held on his toppler and looked back.

A hundred yards behind, the St. Jim's car was tearing on his track, with Mr. Selby in it, gesticulating wildly.

"Bai Jove, they're chasin' me!" murmured D'Arcy.

"Old Selby is wathah a stickah. I say, Wobinson"—the chauffeur's name was not Robinson, but Arthur Augustus called all chauffeurs Robinson, that being the name of the family chauffeur at home—"Wobinson, deah boy, make her wip! There's a cheeky wottah twyin' to wace us. Don't let our car be beaten on the woad, Wobinson!"

"Leave it to me, sir!" chuckled the chauffeur.

D'Arcy's driver was of the true race of chauffeurs; he would rather have smashed up anybody's car than have been beaten on the road.

The car fairly hummed along.

After it came the Head's car, humming, too. Mr. Selby was urging on his driver. Knox looked rather uneasy as the milestones flashed past, and loud shouts came from angry drivers of other vehicles.

"We're exceeding the speed limit, sir," said Knox.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Selby.

"But we are, sir. We're doing a good twenty-five miles an hour."

"Rubbish!"

Mr. Selby was not to be reasoned with. He was risking getting a summons for furious driving, but he was too angry to think of that. The racing cars would probably not have got a mile out of Wayland without being stopped, but for the fact that many of the gentlemen with stop-watches, who were wont to lurk behind hedges and lay traps for reckless motorists, were away at the war. It was his serene Mightiness the Ogre of Europe to whom Mr. Selby owed it that he could break the law with impunity.

"We shall catch him!" panted Mr. Selby. "I will follow him all the way to Rookwood if necessary."

"Unless we get pulled up," mumbled Knox.

"Nonsense!"

"It means a summons, sir."

"Pray do not talk rubbish, Knox."

"Oh, all right, sir!"

Arthur Augustus looked round over the back of his car. His face was flushed with excitement; he had forgotten even the Rookwood match, and was enjoying the race. He waved his eyeglass to his pursuers encouragingly.

Mr. Selby shook his fist in answer to that encouraging wave. He was quite beside himself with anger. He did not stop to consider what the Head was likely to say or think about this reckless use of his car.

Ten miles had slipped under the wheels. The two cars, still separated by about a hundred yards, were following a white road across a moor. Then the Head's chauffeur slackened down.

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Mr. Selby shouted at him furiously.

"What do you mean? What are you stopping for?"

"Beg pardon, sir—"

"Get on!"

"Very well, sir; but I thought I ought to mention—"

"Nonsense! You are losing time. If that truant escapes, I shall hold you responsible!" shouted Mr. Selby.

"Very well, sir; only we can't go much further."

"Why—why not?"

"I've got barely enough petrol left to get back to the school, sir, if we turn back now."

"Petrol! Petrol! What—what?" Mr. Selby almost foamed. "Do you mean to say that you have been imbecile enough to come out without sufficient petrol?"

"You ordered the car for Wayland, sir," said the driver surlily. "I didn't know there was a long stretch to follow. I wasn't told."

"Do you mean to say you cannot keep on?"

"Certainly, sir; but I can't get back again if I do."

"You must obtain petrol from somewhere!"

"I'll stop in the next town, sir, and try, if you like," said the chauffeur. "I don't say I can. I'll try. What I know is that Dr. Holmes 'ave ordered this car for four o'clock this afternoon, and I ain't too much time to get back now."

Mr. Selby fairly gasped.

To renew the supply of petrol would take time, even if it was possible. All hope of recapturing Arthur Augustus was at an end now. D'Arcy's car was, indeed, a speck in the distance now.

"Return to Wayland!" snapped Mr. Selby savagely.

The chauffeur turned the car in the road, and Mr. Selby, trembling with rage, was carried back to the market-town. Knox did not dare to say a word. He was afraid the disappointed man's wrath might turn upon him.

Mr. Selby gritted his teeth during the run back. He was savagely angry. He ordered the car to stop at the station, and called a porter, to ask after trains. It was more than an hour since the express had gone. Another was due to start in ten minutes.

The master of the Third jumped from the car.

"Take the car home!" he said curtly.

He hurried into the station without another word. When the express started, Mr. Selby was seated in a first-class carriage, his face pale with anger. He still had hopes of arriving at Rookwood in time to stop Arthur Augustus playing in the match. That, at least, would be some satisfaction, and worth the journey—to march Arthur Augustus off the field, under the eyes of all the Rookwood fellows, with a grip on his ear. Arthur Augustus had escaped, but he had not done with Mr. Selby yet!

CHAPTER 11.

A Surprisin' Meeting!

"H EEE'S Coombe!" The train stopped, and Tom Merry & Co. poured out on the platform. They had changed at Latcham, and the local train had brought them on to Coombe, the little village near Rookwood School. Two or three fellows in Rookwood caps were on the platform waiting for them.

Jimmy Silver, the junior captain of Rookwood, was there, with Lovell and Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook. They greeted the St. Jim's party cheerily.

"We've got a brake outside," said Jimmy Silver. "This way!"

Tom Merry & Co. marched out to the brake.

They piled into the roomy vehicle. It was a clear, cold winter's afternoon, and the footballers enjoyed the drive in the brake, through the keen air, after the stuffy train.

FOR NEXT WEEK :

GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!

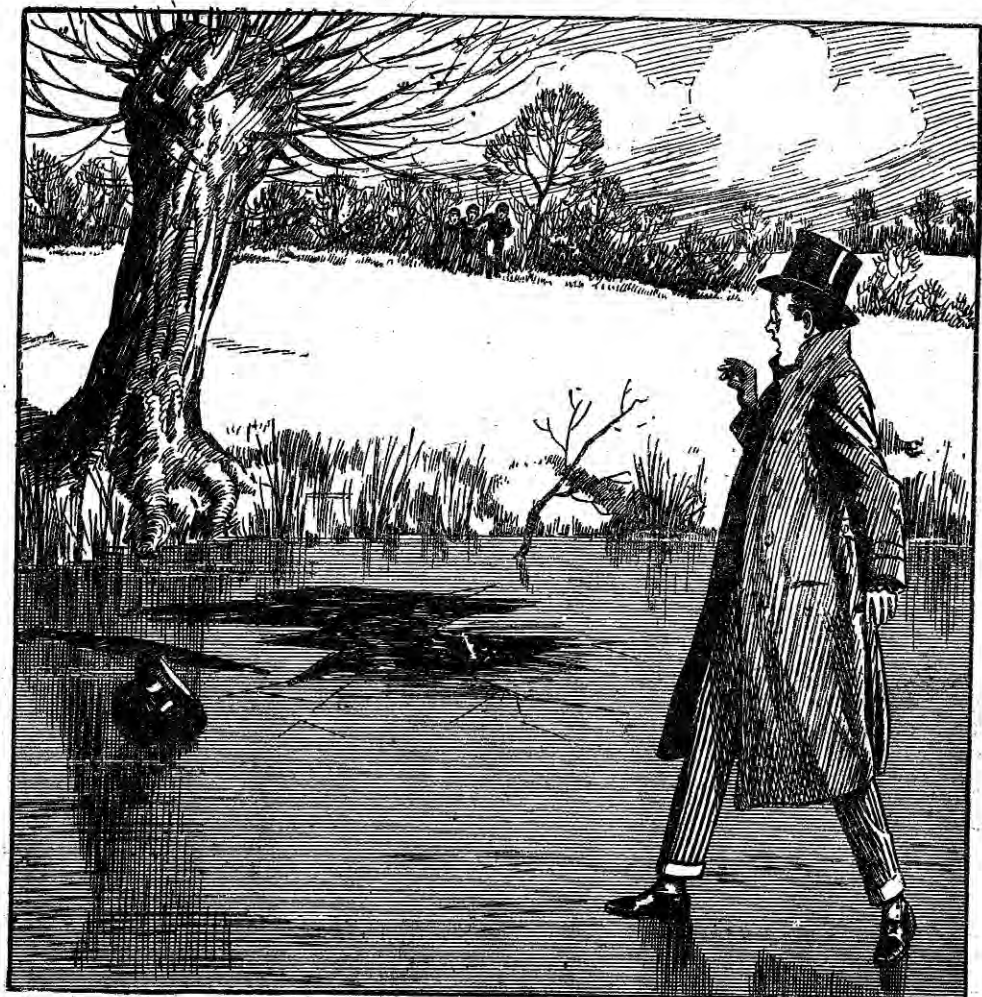
Another Splendid, Long, Complete Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

—By—

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



The moment the tyrant of the Thir'd was in danger, all animosity vanished from Arthur Augustus' generous breast. He forgot everything but the fact that Mr. Selby had disappeared in deep water, and could not swim. Tearing off his coat, he bounded to the gap in the ice. (See Chapter 13.)

"No sign of Gussy!" grinned Monty Lowther, as they drove on. "I half expected to see him swooping after us in an aeroplane."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll have to play, Dig."

"I'm ready," said Dig. "But we'll leave it till the last minute. Gussy may turn up. He's as obstinate as a mule."

"One of your chaps left behind?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes," said Tom. "Our outside-left—"

"Left outside, on this occasion," explained Monty Lowther.

"He's going to come after us, if he can," said Tom Merry. "I fancy we sha'n't see anything of him, though. As a matter of fact, he's detained, and he bolted."

"My hat! What a nerve!" said Lovell, with a stare.

"I wish him luck!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "Who is it?"

"D'Arcy! You remember him?"

"Yes, rather!" Jimmy Silver chuckled. "Chap with a lovely accent, I remember—and a ripping winger! I hope he'll come."

Jack Blake was looking out. It seemed outside the

bounds of possibility that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could turn up at Rookwood in time for the match. But Jack knew his chum, and that mulish obstinacy which Gussy called the firmness of a rock. He would not really have been surprised to see Arthur Augustus arrive, by some means or other, at the last moment.

Rookwood came in sight, rising to view over the leafless trees. A car was standing outside the school gates, and several Rookwood fellows were gathered round it.

An elegant form, in a handsome overcoat and a somewhat ruffled silk hat, had stepped from the car.

Blake gave a wild yell.

"Gussy!"

"Gussy!" shouted all the team together.

The junior at the gate looked round.

"Bai Jove! Beaten you at the post, deah boys."

The brake halted. Tom Merry & Co. swarmed down, and surrounded the smiling swell of St. Jim's.

"How did you get here?" roared Blake.

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

"I came in this cah, deah boy."

"But—but—"

"You see, Wobinson made her wip," explained Arthur

Augustus - "We have beaten your old twain hollow. You had to go to Latcham, and take the local heah. If it had been an express all the way, you would have won. But, as a mattah of fact, we have beaten you at the post, haven't we, Wobinson?"

"Yessir!" grinned the chauffeur.

"Well, my hat!"

"Old Selby chased me in the Head's cah!" grinned Arthur Augustus. "But they chucked it aftah about ten miles; wan out of petwol, pewpaws. Old Selby is beaten to the wide. Sowwy to disappoint you, Dig."

"I'm not disappointed, fathead," said Dig. "But there'll be a frightful row about this afterwards."

"Yaas; I shouldn't wondah," agreed Arthur Augustus calmly. "However, the principal point is that I am heah. How do you do, Silvah, deah boy? We are goin' to beat you this time."

"Well," said Tom Merry, with a deep breath, "I'm glad you're here, Gussy, but you'll have to go through it when we get home. Selby will be raging like a Hun."

"He is always wathah Hunnish, deah boy. Nevah mind Selby. I pwesume you brougnt my clobbah with you."

"I've got it here," said Blake.

"Thank you!"

The St. Jim's footballers went in at the gates. Arthur Augustus bestowed a handsome tip upon "Wobinson," thanked him cordially for having made her "wip," and dismissed the car.

He followed his comrades into the dressing-room, and proceeded to change with them, in a cheerv humour.

The consequences of his wild escapade did not seem to be troubling the Honourable Arthur Augustus at all. He had to give all his thoughts just now to beating Rookwood, and he dismissed all considerations of the future to a more convenient time.

"Feeling fit, you duffer?" asked Blake.

"Fit as a fiddle, deah boy. But I object to bein' called a duffah."

"Well, fathead, then!" growled Blake.

"Wats! Why aren't Talbot and Kangawool in the team, deah boy?"

"Detained for jawing to you in the punishment-room," said Tom Merry.

"How wotten! Awf'ly luckay I got 'ere, then, isn't it? Two of the best left out is bad enough—but three would have fairly put the lid on. You can wely on me to pull the game out of the fiah, deah boy."

"Did you see anything of Selby after he chased you in the car?" asked Figgins.

"No. I suppose he has gone home."

"Not likely to be following you here—what?"

Arthur Augustus started.

"Gweat Scott! As he gave up the wace, I thought he had chucked up the idea of catchin' me, you know. He wouldn't be beast enough to come on heah, and make a scene, I suppose."

"Wouldn't he?" growled Blake. "Lot he would care about making a scene."

"Well, he couldn't intewwupt the match, anyway," said Arthur Augustus, after reflecting a moment. "He's not likely to come all the way in the Head's car, after losin' me. And there's an hour and a half between the express twains, you know. If he does come, we shall have to sewag him. I shall certainly refuse to take any notice of him if he tries to intewwupt the game."

The St. Jim's fellows left the dressing-room, and found Jimmy Silver & Co. ready in the field. The idea that Mr. Selby might visit Rookwood, with the intention of interrupting the game if possible, was somewhat disquieting. But it was useless to worry about it; they could not help it. For the present, they devoted their minds to the Rookwood match.

CHAPTER 12.

Gussy's Goal.

JIMMY SILVER won the toss, and gave St. Jim's the wind to kick off against.

Jones major of the Fifth Form at Rookwood was refereeing the match. The whistle went, and the ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot.

From the kick-off, the Saints realised that they were "in for" a decidedly tough match. There had been a time when the Rookwood match was regarded by them as more or less of a joke; but that was before Jimmy Silver had become junior football skipper. At the present time, the Rookwood team was first-rate. The two sides of Rookwood, Classical and Modern, had been very nearly equally drawn upon to supply the team. Every fellow in the team—Jimmy Silver, Baby, Newcome, Lovell, Flynn, Oswald, Tommy Dodd, Cook, Doyle, Towle and Lacy—was a good man. And Tom Merry's team, though really good, was not the best that St. Jim's could have furnished. They missed Talbot sorely on the right wing, and Kangaroo in the middle of the half-way line.

Arthur Augustus fully intended to make up for all deficiencies by his brilliant play, and had indeed promised to do so; his promise having been received with general sniffs.

But, as a matter of fact, Arthur Augustus was specially brilliant that afternoon.

Perhaps the knowledge of all he was risking in playing in the Rookwood match bucked him up. Perhaps it was the excitement of the escape and the chase that tuned him up. At all events, he was in wonderfully fine form.

Never had his pace been so swift, never had his passing been so accurate, or his kicking so sure.

In spite of the wind in their faces, the Saints led off with a hot attack, and brought the leather down to the home goal. Arthur Augustus was well to the fore. And when Baby, in goal, knocked out the leather Tom Merry had sent in, Arthur Augustus captured it from the back who sought to clear, and sent it spinning in again. And Baby barely got his head to it in time. Rookwood cleared, after all, but it had been a narrow shave, in the first five minutes of the game.

"Good old Gussy!" called out Tom Merry. "Keep that up!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

The match was exciting from the start. There was soon a hot attack on the visitors' goal; but Fatty Wynn, between the posts, was all there. The plump Welsh junior put "paid" to all that he received, so to speak; Rookwood could not score, though the ball came through several times.

Then came a struggle along the touch-line, and the ball went into touch several times, and a fierce attack at last forced the Rookwooders to concede a corner. But the corner kick did not materialise. The game swayed again to midfield, and neither side succeeded in getting away.

A crowd of Rookwood fellows had gathered round the field. Prominent among them was a slim youth with an eyeglass in his eye—Smythe of the Shell, the great chief of the nuts of Rookwood; once the captain of the junior eleven. Smythe was looking on with a tolerant smile.

"Not much class, this fag play," Smythe confided to his companions. "Close on the whistle, and not a goal! They call this football, by gad!"

As a matter of fact, it was good football on both sides; so good, that neither side was able to score. In the field, Jimmy Silver & Co. seemed to be a little the stronger, but the St. Jim's goalkeeper was a tower of strength, and that equalised matters. Fatty Wynn was not to be beaten. St. Jim's had fewer chances at goal; but the greater number of chances at goal that fell to the Rookwooders did not materialise, owing to Fatty Wynn's impregnable defence. Fatty saved the most telling shots; and some of the Rookwood fellows remarked that it was miraculous to see him shift his weight about at such a rate.

Pheep!

Smythe of the Shell shrugged his shoulders.

"There goes the whistle, by gad!" he remarked. "And they haven't broken their duck, dear boys. It wasn't like this in my time."



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No. 7. "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD," 10. OUT TO-DAY. BUY IT AT ONCE!

The Rookwood nut was quite right in that. In his time the St. Jim's team would have scored half a dozen goals by that time. But Jimmy Silver & Co. had held them to the end.

"Well, where are they, Gussy?" Jack Blake demanded, as the footballers rested after the whistle.

Arthur Augustus looked surprised.

"They! Who?"

"Those goals."

"What goals, deah boy?"

"Those goals you were going to take," said Blake. "Haven't you promised to pull the game out of the fire? What I want to know is, where are those goals?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Comin', deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Those Wookwood boundahs are vevy hot stuff, you know. But this isn't goin' to be a draw. I'm goin' to pile in like anythin' in the second half."

"It's a New House game so far," remarked Figgins loftily. "Fatty's saved our bacon."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, that's all wight; but it takes a School House chap to sooth goals, Figgay."

"Fathead!"

"Wats!"

"Hallo, here we are again!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "Trot along!"

The brief interval was over, and the teams lined up again. The St. Jim's juniors had forgotten all about Mr. Selby by this time. Fortunately, the master of the Third had not turned up. He was, in point of fact, on his way; but the way was long, and he was an hour and a half behind the football team.

The change of ends brought the wind behind the backs of the St. Jim's team. The wind was freshening, and they felt the relief at once when it was behind them. The first half had been goalless, and both sides were determined that the game should not end in a draw. Both sides played up for all they were worth, and both sides were good, sound players, and both skippers knew their business well. It was, indeed, a battle of the giants, and the Rookwood crowd round the field was thickening. Even Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, had strolled down to look on—a very great honour for a Lower School match.

Both sides, too, were hard and fit, sound in wind and limb, and gruelling as the game was, there were no "lame ducks" so far. But by the time the second half was ten minutes old misfortune fell upon St. Jim's. Figgins, at inside-right, was bowled over in a charge—quite a fair charge—but he twisted his ankle in falling, and when he was picked up his face was a little twisted, too, and pale with pain. The game was stopped.

Kerr ran to him anxiously. He supported Figgins, who leaned heavily on the Scottish junior's shoulder.

"Hurt!"

"M-m-my ankle!" gasped Figgins. "Awfully sorry, Tommy, but I shall have to go off. I—I couldn't run a yard!"

"Right-ho!" said Tom, as cheerfully as he could. "Sorry you're crocked, old chap. Come on again if you feel up to it."

Figgins nodded, and a linesman helped him off. Figg was bearing up with grim fortitude, but it was easy to see that he was in great pain, and that he would not be much use again that day.

Tom Merry was left with four in the forward-line; the game went on minus George Figgins. The loss was almost irreparable. Figgins was one of the very best. The Rookwood attack was unslacking, and they drove their way down the field now. The attack on goal called for all Fatty Wynn's powers of defence. Fortunately, the fat Fourth-Former was not found wanting. For several minutes Fatty Wynn was playing the game almost "on his own," so sharp was the attack on his citadel. But Fatty turned up trumps, and he got the ball away to Herries, who cleared out to midfield. Then, like a red streak, the most elegant footballer on the field was on the ball, and Arthur Augustus was sprinting for goal.

It was the chance of a lifetime. In that eager attack, which had looked like a dead certainty, Jimmy Silver's followers had forgotten caution. The defence was nowhere.

The forwards were fairly off the scene, the halves had no chance at Arthur Augustus, and he was upon the backs before they could fall back to stop him. He seemed to wind round the right back like a serpent, and left him fairly stranded as he rushed on, dribbling the ball. The back gasped, as well he might. It was a single-handed rush, for the rest of the St. Jim's forwards were nowhere; it was not a question of passing, there was nobody to take a pass. It was Gussy against the field. He had the goalie to beat, and his shot came in like a cannon-ball, while behind him the Rookwooder was raging on his track. Baby, in goal, headed out the ball more by luck than anything again, and breathed again; but he congratulated himself too soon, for the headed ball met another head, and came back like a pip from an orange, and it was in the net before Baby knew it was coming.

"Goal!" gasped the onlookers. "Great pip! G-g-goal!" It was goal; there was no mistake about that. Baby blinked at the ball like a fellow in a dream.

Arthur Augustus was superb at that moment.

From somewhere on his elegant person, he extracted his eyeglass, and jammed it into his noble eye. He surveyed the baffled Rookwooders with a kind and affable gaze as they panted up.

"I wathah think that's a goal, deah boys!"

"Goal!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "Oh, yes, I rather think it is, and the thunderingest goal I've ever seen."

"Goal!" stuttered Tom Merry. "Oh, Gussy!"

"Alone he did it!" chortled Blake. "Good old Gussy! Come and be banged on the back, my tulip!"

"Thank you; I would wathah not. Pwax excuse me, Tom Mewwy, for takin' the game into my own hands like that!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "You see, it seemed wathah a chance for a wuzh, as the Wookwood boundahs were off the mark—"

"Huray!"

"And I weally had only time to make suah that I was not offside, you know—"

"Gussy, old man, you're a giddy jewel!" gasped Tom Merry. "Blessed if I thought you had it in you. Good old fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

Baby had tossed out the ball, with a rather glum look. It was taken back to the centre of the field, and the teams lined up again.

St. Jim's were in tremendous spirits now.

The game had seemed so even, that it had looked as if a ding-dong match right up to the finish would end in a draw. But that chance had come, and the outside-left had been on it like lightning. The Rookwooders had made a slip; but only a first-rate player could have turned it to advantage as Arthur Augustus had done. It had been touch-and-go; but fortunately, as Blake remarked afterwards, it had proved to be touch and not go. There was the goal.

There were fifteen minutes to go, and every minute of that fifteen was packed with strenuous play. But the St. Jim's defence was like iron now. They were a man short, and another chance like the one Gussy had made so much of was not likely to come. But they kept the enemy at bay. Twice Jimmy Silver came through the line, but each time he met his match in David Llewellyn Wynn. It was no go, but Rookwood fought on to the very finish.

"Pheep! The whistle went at last.

The footballers, panting, very nearly "done" by that gruelling game, were glad of the cessation of play. St. Jim's had scored once—Gussy's goal—and Rookwood had not broken their duck. St. Jim's had won the Rookwood match. Figgins clapped Arthur Augustus on the shoulder with a terrific clap, as the players came off the field.

"Yow-wow!" said Arthur Augustus. "Weally, Figgins—"

"Good old Gussy!" chortled Figgins. "What a thumpin' stroke of luck you came! If Selby says a word to you after this, we'll boil him in oil!"

"Wasn't it a ripping goal?" chuckled Blake. "Put your money on Study No. 6!"

"Huray!"

But Arthur Augustus bore his blushing honours, thick upon him, with becoming modesty.

"Wats, deah boys!" he said. "I happened to get that

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goal, but the Wookwood boundahs would have had two or three but for Patty Wynn. Patty saved the game. It's a case of bonahs divided."

"Well, that's so," admitted Blake. "But Study No. 6 scored the winning goal, all the same. And we've beaten Rookwood. I wish the Head could have been here to see that goal; I know he'd excuse you for bolting if he'd seen it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. changed in great spirits. Arthur Augustus was the most cheerful of all. If he had needed any justification for bolting from St. Jim's that afternoon, surely the winning goal was a complete justification. Arthur Augustus thought so, and his chums agreed with him. It was doubtful whether the Head of St. Jim's would also agree, however—very doubtful.

CHAPTER 13. At Close Quarters.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were prepared to entertain their visitors at a royal high tea after the match, and Tom Merry & Co. were quite prepared to do justice to that high tea. But, now that the match was over, the thought of Mr. Selby was in their minds. Whether the master of the Third would follow Arthur Augustus to Rookwood they did not know, but it was likely enough; they knew his hard and bitter nature, and his disinclination to admit defeat. He would enjoy making the juniors feel uncomfortable in the presence of the Rookwood fellows. Above all, it would be a pleasure to him to march Arthur Augustus away by the ear, with a crowd looking on. Arthur Augustus certainly would have refused to be marched away in that humiliating manner before all Rookwood. As he remarked, he would rather knock Selby down, and chance the consequences. But his affectionate chums had no intention of letting him chance the consequences of knocking Selby down. There would not have been much "chance" about the consequences—the consequences would have been a dead cert.

So, all things considered, Tom Merry & Co. resolved to leave Rookwood as soon as they had changed, to avoid a meeting with Mr. Selby at the school. They naturally shrank from anything like a "scene" there, their feelings being a little more sensitive than Mr. Selby's own.

So they took their leave of Jimmy Silver & Co., and Jimmy, who understood their motive, acquiesced. The brake came round to take them to the station, to catch an earlier train than they had originally intended. This would necessitate a wait at Latcham Junction for the express home; but at Latcham they did not mind encountering Mr. Selby if he came upon them there.

They took a cordial leave of the Rookwood fellows. Jimmy Silver was naturally not pleased by the result of the match, but he was sportsman to the finger-tips, and he congratulated Arthur Augustus heartily upon that splendid goal.

"I wathah like that chap Silvah," Arthur Augustus remarked, as the brake rolled away down the frosty road. "A regular sportsman, you know. How is your ankle, Figgah, deah boy?"

"All serene!" said Figgins. "Only a little pain. Never mind that. I'm thinking of you when you get home."

"That's all right. I'm jollay glad we've dodged Selby at Wookwood, and pvenented the boundah ffrom makin' a ridiculous scene there."

"Of course, we don't know he's coming there," said Tom Merry thoughtfully, "but it was best to be on the safe side. Hallo! My hat!"

"Selby!" ejaculated Blake.

"Wun down!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Wathah too late to collah me on the footah-field, though—what?"

It was Mr. Selby.

He was striding along the lane at a great rate, his coat-tails whisking in the wind. A slow local train had brought him to Coombe, and he was walking to Rookwood, there being difficulties in getting a vehicle in the little village. Mr. Selby was not a good walker—he did not like exercise of any sort—and he was easily fatigued. His temper, in consequence, was at white heat. He

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realised that he would probably be too late to interrupt the match, but he was looking forward to administering corporal punishment to Arthur Augustus before a staring crowd of Rookwood fellows. That would be some consolation, at least.

He stopped as he sighted the crowd of juniors in the brake, with Arthur Augustus among them. It was the last straw. He was even too late to humiliate the swell of St. Jim's before the Rookwooders.

"Stop!" he shouted.

As Mr. Selby planted himself in the middle of the road, the driver brought the brake to a halt. He could not proceed without running down the Form-master.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" ventured Tom Merry.

Mr. Selby took no notice of him.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Descend from that vehicle at once!"

Arthur Augustus turned his celebrated eyeglass calmly upon the infuriated Form-master. Mr. Selby was trembling with rage. He was looking utterly undignified, too, but that did not seem to trouble him.

"You are not my Form-master, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am willin' to answah to Dr. Holmes for bweakin' bounds!"

"Descend at once!"

"I wefuse, sir!"

"If you do not descend immediately, I will drag you out with my own hands!" panted Mr. Selby.

He clambered on the step of the brake. Arthur Augustus rose to his feet with a great deal of dignity.

"Wathah than entah into an undignified scuffle with a gentleman of your years, sir, I will descend," he said loftily.

And he descended.

"You young scoundrel!"

"I object to that expession, Mr. Selby."

"Come here!"

Arthur Augustus backed away. Mr. Selby was gripping his umbrella in a businesslike manner. He seemed to have completely lost control of his temper. The swell of St. Jim's had no intention whatever of being thrashed with an umbrella.

"What for, sir?" he asked calmly, keeping his distance.

"I am going to chastise your insolence, you young scoundrel!"

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

"Come here!"

"I wefuse to appwouah you, sir, in your pwesent tempah! Pway allow me to point out that you are actin' in an extrenely undignified mannah!"

There was a chuckle from the brake. It was a serious moment, but it was hard to keep serious when Arthur Augustus was on the high horse. Mr. Selby did not chuckle. He gasped with rage, and made a rush at Arthur Augustus. His umbrella swept the air. Had he reached the junior, he would certainly have hurt him severely—perhaps so severely that he would have had to answer for it seriously himself. But Arthur Augustus dodged nimbly.

"Stop, you young rascal!" yelled Mr. Selby.

"Wats!"

"I—I will thrash you! I—I—I—"

The angry man pursued the elusive junior.

"Pway don't wait for me, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, with undiminished coolness. "I will wejoin you at Latcham. I am goin' for a little wun."

Arthur Augustus sprang through a gap in the frosty hedge, with the umbrella lashing only a foot behind him. Mr. Selby was getting dangerous. The junior broke into a run across the field, with the furious master in full chase.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry, standing up in the brake to watch them over the hedge. "Selby must be out of his senses!"

"He can't know what a figure he's cutting!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Why didn't you bring your camera, Manners?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He won't catch Gussy," said Kerr. "But we'll wait. We've got lots of time."

Certainly it did not look as if Mr. Selby would catch Arthur Augustus. On the further side of the field was

the river, the surface frozen hard. Arthur Augustus slid out on the ice. Mr. Selby halted in the frosty rushes, and roared.

"Come back!"

"Thank you! I pwefer to wemain heah!"

"I shall fetch you, you—"

"Pway don't mind me, sir. It's a wathah healthy exahcise, slidin'!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "Sowwy I didn't bwing my skates, but I did not foresee this. Pway undahstand at once that I wefuse to be twashed with an umbwella!"

Mr. Selby did not reply. He trusted himself to the ice. Perhaps Mr. Selby had been able to slide in the long, long ago, when he had been a boy—indeed, if he had ever been a boy at all. But certainly he was what Blake would have called a cack-handed slider now. He covered about two yards on the ice, when his feet flew in different directions, and he came down with a terrific bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the brake as Mr. Selby's legs flew in the air.

But the laughter died away in an instant.

Crack!

The ice was strong enough for skating, but it was not strong enough to stand that terrific concussion.

It broke under Mr. Selby's weight like glass under a stone.

Black water bubbled up through the gap in the ice, and through that gap Mr. Selby vanished from sight.

The juniors in the brake stood frozen.

Arthur Augustus gazed at the gap in the ice, thunder-stricken. Water bubbled out, but Mr. Selby had disappeared.

"Bai Jove!"

The juniors in the brake were a hundred yards away—far too far to help—but Arthur Augustus was there.

The moment the tyrant of the Third was in danger all animosity vanished from Arthur Augustus' generous breast. He forgot everything but the fact that Mr. Selby was in deep water, and could not swim. He stayed only to tear off his coat and toss away his hat.

Then he bounded to the gap in the ice and plunged in. "Gussy!" panted Blake.

The juniors were leaping and scrambling wildly down from the brake now. They scrambled through the hedge and tore furiously across the field. The black waters that had closed over Mr. Selby had closed now over the head of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 14.

A Narrow Escape!

TOM MERRY was the first to reach the ice. He came panting up to the yawning gap, where the black waters bubbled out over the broken, jagged edges, and, as he reached it, a head appeared in the opening—the drowned head of the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus came up, and not alone. His face was white as death. The bitter cold of the icy water had penetrated to his very bones. But the Form-master was in his grasp, and Mr. Selby's head appeared. He was unconscious. He lay like a log in the grasp of the exhausted junior. Arthur Augustus gripped the broken edge of the ice with one hand, holding up the insensible Form-master with the other. For more than a minute he had struggled in the choking depths, and he was spent.

Had there been no help at hand, Arthur Augustus would have gone down to his death with his enemy whom he had saved.

But there was help—the help of eager hands. Tom Merry's grasp was upon the swell of St. Jim's at once.

Arthur Augustus could not speak. He was numb.

"Take Selby, while I hold Gussy!" panted Tom.

Figgins and Blake were at hand, and they seized the insensible Form-master. Dig and Lowther lent a hand, and Mr. Selby was dragged out on the ice.

Tom Merry and Kerr had Arthur Augustus' hands, and they drew him forth.

"Gwoogh!" gasped D'Arcy.

Blake held him; he almost hugged him.

"Gussy, you ass!" Blake's voice was shaking. There

were tears in his eyes. "Gussy, you dummy! Oh, you silly ass!"

"Gwooh!"

"Get this coat on—quick—quick!"

"Thank you, dear boy! Gwoogh! Selby all wight?"

"Alive, right enough," said Lowther, "but pretty far gone. We shall have to get him to a doctor. Lend a hand, and run him to the brake."

Half a dozen of the juniors lifted the insensible man and rushed him away across the field to the road. Arthur Augustus followed, running, with Blake holding his arm. Swift exercise was what he needed to counteract the effects of that plunge into icy water, but his head was swimming, and his feet felt like lead. Blake and Digby helped him along.

They reached the brake, and were bundled in.

"Drive to the nearest doctor's—quick!" panted Tom Merry. "Never mind the station! You know the doctor's?"

"Yes, sir."

The brake started, the two horses fairly galloping. Arthur Augustus, drenched and dripping, sat with half a dozen coats round him. Half a dozen more were wrapped round Mr. Selby. The Form-master groaned, and opened his eyes wildly.

"Help," he panted—"help! Oh! Where am I?"

"Safe as houses, sir!" said Tom Merry.

Mr. Selby shivered.

"I—I fell in!" he stammered. "I—I was under the ice! Oh, the darkness! I—I was choking! I—I— Did you get me out?"

"D'Arcy did, sir."

"D'Arcy!"

"Yes, sir. He went in for you—under the ice," said Tom Merry, with a shiver. "Thank Heaven, he didn't stay there!"

"D'Arcy did!" Mr. Selby gasped. "D'Arcy!"

"I am sowwy you have been in dangah, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "Yestahday, sir, I wefused to apologise to you. Now, sir, I ofah you my most pwofound apology!"

"Grooh!" said Mr. Selby.

He closed his eyes again.

The brake halted outside the house of the village doctor. That gentleman was at home, and Arthur Augustus and Mr. Selby were rushed in. Arthur Augustus was sneezing; Mr. Selby was groaning. Arthur Augustus was chiefly in need of a change of clothing and a rub down, but Mr. Selby's case was more serious. He was only half conscious, and the medical gentleman announced that he could not possibly take a journey.

"You had better leave the gentlemen in my hands, and I will see that he is placed in the cottage hospital," said the doctor.

"Thank you, sir!" said Tom Merry.

There was nothing else to be done. Arthur Augustus being dried, and provided with a suit of clothes belonging to the medical gentleman's son, the juniors took their leave, leaving Mr. Selby in the doctor's charge. It was pretty certain that the master of the Third would not return to St. Jim's for some days at least. He was booked for a severe cold, at the very least.

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus soberly, as they drove to the station, "I am wathah sowwy, you know! Of course, Selby was a bwute, and he had no wight what-eva to chase me down in that wicidulous mannah; but— but, upon the whole, dear boys, I realise that it is wong to bwreak bounds, and I think I did quite wight in apologisein' to Selby."

"Jolly lucky for Selby you were there," growled Herries. "I wonder if he'd have gone in for you if you'd bumped through the ice?"

"Ahem! Pway don't wondah anythin' of the sort, Hewwies! Atchoo-choo-choo!"

"Hallo! What are you talking Russian for?"

"Weally—atchoo—weally, Hewwies— Atchoo-choo-chooooooooh!"

Arthur Augustus was not talking Russian; he was sneezing. And he continued to sneeze at intervals during the journey home to St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove," he remarked, as the football party left the train at Rylcombe. "I wathah think—atchoo—that I'm catchin'—atchoo—a c-cold!"

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

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

"Go hon!" grinned Blake. "Never mind. A few days in the sanatorium, with Miss Marie looking after you, won't hurt you."

"Atchoo-choo-choo!" was Arthur Augustus' reply.

The juniors hurried on to St. Jim's. They were anxious to get Arthur Augustus to bed. He was certainly booked for a severe cold.

Taggles, the porter, looked at them grimly as they came in.

"Master D'Arcy!" he ejaculated. "So you've come 'ome—wot? Report to the 'Ead at once!"

"Atchoo-chooh!"

"Which the 'Ead is awaitin' for you," said Taggles, "and which he's waxy! My word!"

"Atchoooh!"

The juniors marched on to the School House. Knox, the prefect, sighted them as they came in. He bore down on them at once.

"D'Arcy!"

"Atchooooooh!"

"Hallo! Been out catching colds?" grinned Knox.

"Gwoogh! Atchooh!"

"You're to go to the Head at once! I'll take you!"

"We'll take him," said Tom Merry curtly.

And the chums of the School House marched Arthur Augustus to the Head's study. Tom Merry knocked.

"Come in!"

"Atchoo-chooh!"

Dr. Holmes' brow grew dark and stern at the sight of Arthur Augustus. The vials of his wrath were all ready to be poured upon the devoted head of the swell of St. Jim's. The time had come for paying the piper!

"D'Arcy"—the Head's voice was like the rumble of thunder—"D'Arcy, you have— Why, what— Bless my soul, what is the matter with him?"

"Gwoogh! Atchoo-choo! Gwoogh!"

"Tumble in the river, sir; bad cold," said Tom Merry. "May we take him to the dorm now?"

"Dear me! The boy is in a feverish state!" exclaimed the Head. "Take him to the sanatorium at once! Ask the matron to take charge of him. D'Arcy, I will deal with your conduct later! You are ill!"

In five minutes Arthur Augustus was safely tucked up between warm blankets, with a hot-water bottle at his feet. Then Tom Merry was called into the Head's study to give an account of what had happened.

Tom gave an eloquent account. He did not attempt to excuse D'Arcy's bolt; that would have been useless. But he described how Mr. Selby, having followed him to

Rookwood, had gone through the broken ice, and how Arthur Augustus had plunged in after him at the risk of his life. Tom's voice shook as he related that. His look told plainly of the fear that had been in his heart that the generous-hearted junior would never appear alive from the frozen depths of the river. Dr. Holmes listened in silence.

"Thank you, Merry!" he said at last. "What you have told me places a very different complexion on the matter. D'Arcy's conduct is inexcusable, but—but he has shown very great courage, and also generosity. I shall consult Mr. Selby before I decide what is to be done. You may go."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was in the school hospital for four days, but when he reappeared among his chums he was looking quite his old self.

Mr. Selby's case was harder. His stay in the cottage hospital at Coombe was likely to run into a fortnight at least. That was good news for the Third Form, and Wally danced a war-dance in the Form-room when he heard it. The fags would have been quite contented if Mr. Selby had remained at Coombe for the term of his natural life.

Messages, however, passed between the Form-master and the Head. Even Mr. Selby's hard heart had been a little touched. He knew that Arthur Augustus had saved his life at the risk of his own, and at a moment when he had been seeking to inflict severe punishment on the junior. So his message to the Head was that Arthur Augustus had rendered him the required apology, and that, so far as he was concerned, he hoped the matter would be regarded as closed.

Whereupon Dr. Holmes called the swell of St. Jim's into his study, and talked to him for ten minutes, and Arthur Augustus looked quite breathless when he came out of the dreaded apartment. He confided to Blake that he would "wathah" have had a licking than that talking to, which somehow made him feel quite in the wrong. However, he added that the Head was a "bwick," and that even old Selby was "wathah bwicky." And he astonished his cheerful minor with a severe admonition to be more respectful to his Form-master in the future—an admonition which caused Wally to stand with his mouth wide open like a newly-landed fish till his major had finished. Then Wally ejaculated, "My only Aunt Jane!" and whistled. Whether Arthur Augustus' admonition had any permanent effect upon the scamp of the Third was doubtful.

THE END.

TOM MERRY'S RIVALS



JOHNNY
BULL
OF
GREYFRIARS



FRANK
NUGENT
OF
GREYFRIARS

AFTER MANY YEARS!

A Magnificent Complete Story for the Christmas Holidays, specially written for this number of "The Gem" Library.

By REGINALD THOMPSON.

CHAPTER 1.

A Villain and His Dupe.

COLD night, Sir Richard!"

A "Ay, Joshua—a bitter night, to be sure!"

The old library at Hurtman Hall presented a musty appearance. Its walls were lined with heavy, old-fashioned bookcases, paintings by old masters, which must have been worth many thousands of pounds, and trophies of the chase, old and valuable.

The room was almost in total darkness, save for that part adjacent to the ancient fireplace. In the grate huge red logs spluttered away merrily, and lit up the form of Sir Richard Hurtman, grey and haggard-looking, whose eyes bore that cold, expressionless appearance which told of years of long suffering and mental anguish.

Sir Richard lifted his eyes from the glowing embers, into which he had been gazing almost unconsciously, and turned them in the direction of old Joshua Hepstone, as he stood at his side.

It was strange, but, although Sir Richard was the master and old Joshua the servant, the baronet seemed to flinch and to shudder with dread as his servant's beady eyes fixed their steely gaze on his.

His whole appearance was strange, almost to an extent of being weird. He was dressed entirely in black, and his head, long since shorn of hair, was adorned with a black skull-cap. His large Roman nose, the perpetual smile, evil in nature, which lurked round his thick, ugly lips, and the fact that his mouth held but two or three sound teeth, only intensified his forbidding appearance.

"What a night to be out and about!" said old Joshua. "And Christmas Eve, too! Christmas Eve! Ah!" The old servant rubbed his hands together, and drew closer to the fire. It is cold, bitterly cold! It is snowing hard—snowing harder than—

Old Joshua halted abruptly, and turned his eyes away from the baronet for a moment, but the next they had returned, to glare once again at the hunched-up form of Sir Richard. For a moment there was silence in the library, then the old servant continued:

"Christmas Day to-morrow, your lordship! How are you going to spend the great festival? Will you be having any guests? Shall I—"

"I shall be having no guests, Joshua," replied Sir Richard harshly. "You know that very well. I shall spend my Christmas Day as last year!"

Again old Joshua's face broadened into that villainous smile.

"Rise late, dinner by yourself, no tea, bed early—oh? H'm! How times have changed! You are not the man you were, Sir Richard! Remember the times when—when—"

Old Joshua halted in the midst of his conversation—still once again, as though he feared to continue his remarks.

Sir Richard rose to his feet, and commenced to pace up and down the room.

"Don't taunt me, Joshua!" he muttered, half under his breath. "Don't taunt me, man! Out with it if you must! Remind me of those days when I used to romp and play

with my daughter and her friends. Tell me that I was a light-hearted, fun-loving man in those days, fond of romping and playing with children. But—oh, it's terrible—terrible!"

"Ah, but it's true, isn't it?"

Sir Richard quivered at the taunt.

"Yes," he exclaimed, "it's only too true! If only—"

"If only you could recall the past," finished old Joshua. "Ah, but a deed once committed can never be undone!"

The old servant drew a chair toward the blazing fire.

"Come, Sir Richard," he said, almost pleadingly—"come and sit down. You seem restive this evening. You don't seem exactly yourself. Are you worrying about anything? Are you— Why, of course! But, there, it's only natural. One cannot help thinking of these little things at times."

Sir Richard sprang forward, his eyes showing the bitter enmity that existed between him and his servant.

"Confound you, man!" he thundered. "Can't you stop it? Won't you ever forget to remind me of all that happened on that never-to-be-forgotten Christmas Day? Don't you think I have regretted it all? Don't you think I have suffered sufficiently for my actions?"

"Yes," taunted the old servant. "It was a night such as this, wasn't it? Don't you remember how it snowed—how the wind howled and blew the slates off the roof? But she was a pretty girl, wasn't she? And really so good, although you thought otherwise at the time!"

Sir Richard flung himself down in his chair, and buried his haggard face in his two hands.

"Don't—don't!" he moaned. "It's too hard! I can't stand it! To think that I should have to suffer like this! To think that I should end my days in such awful misery! If only I had been reasonable, and acted as a father should! But she's gone now—gone from me for ever! Perhaps she's dead; perhaps she's alive and in want—starving! Good heavens! To think that I should have my millions, and yet be so unhappy! And all through one rash action! It's terrible—heart-breaking!"

Sir Richard lapsed into silence. Inside the room all was quiet, but outside the wind blew and howled with all its terrible force. The snow and hail beat against the windowpanes as though to force an entry into the room, and to add to the baronet's anguish of mind.

The inclement weather did not appear to affect the evil old servant. He was happy and quite contented. He was playing a great game of his own, and thoroughly enjoying himself.

He was at the Hall on that memorable Christmas Day when Sir Richard's only daughter Elsie had informed her father of her intention to marry young Jack Vernon. Jack was a good-looking, earnest young fellow, with quite a good future before him. But the baronet objected to the marriage, and said so in firm tones.

He asked his daughter to break off the engagement; he tried to persuade her, he even ordered her, but to no effect. And then came the climax. Headstrong and quick-tempered, Sir Richard ordered Elsie out of the house, and forbade her ever to return again.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY!

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

Months afterwards he regretted what he had done. He endeavoured to trace his daughter, he inquired for her everywhere, he advertised for her, but all to no good. Elsie was not to be found.

And now the old man was suffering for his misdeeds. His life was a misery; he had money, but no wish to live—in fact, death would have come as a relief to him. He had not a friend in the whole world. No one cared for him, and no one wanted him, save old Joshua. And old Joshua only cared for him for the money which would go by will to him on his death.

The old servant sat in his chair, and gloated. He knew the feeble old baronet's weakest point, and he did not fail to dwell upon it.

"Don't give up hope, Sir Richard," he said craftily. "She may be alive, you know. In fact, she may be coming to the Hall for Christmas. Supposing she drove up to-morrow? H'm! We'd be happy, wouldn't we?"

Sir Richard jumped to his feet, and clenched his fists.

"You villain!" he exclaimed. "I can't stand any more. You have gone quite far enough. One word more, and I'll—"

"Sh!" said old Joshua, endeavouring to push the baronet back into his chair. "You're not quite yourself to-night. Just sit down for a moment or two, and take it easy!"

"Take it easy be hanged!" raved the infuriated baronet. "Take it easy, whilst you hurl your taunts at me! By thunder, man, you've roused me with a vengeance! Not another word will I listen to from you! Out of this room you go this very moment—out of this room before I—"

"And suppose I refuse to go?" asked Joshua, with deep unconcern. "What then?"

Sir Richard did not trouble to answer. He rushed at the servant, and gripped him about the chest. Sir Richard was getting on for seventy, and had left his days of strength behind him long since. But at this moment his rage and annoyance seemed to have endowed him with superhuman powers. He lifted his taunter up as if he had been a child, and carried him to the door of the library.

"Taunt me, would you, you villain!" he exclaimed, in righteous anger, as he opened the door and hurled his old servant out into the dark passage. "I've been a hard man in my time, and done many things in my time which I have regretted; but if you raise my anger once again, I shall do to you that which I shall never regret!"

The baronet closed the door with a bang, and sat down by the fire once again. For some minutes he leaned back in his chair with his eyes closed, apparently asleep. But Sir Richard was not asleep. He was thinking, and thinking deeply.

His daughter had been dead to him for many, many years, but would she ever return?

CHAPTER 2.

Alone in the Snow.

NINE, ten, eleven, twelve! The bells of the little village church tolled out their golden chimes, heralding the coming of still another Christmas Day. Inside the little village church the choir-boys' voices blended in singing the hymns and carols which told of the dawn of a day full of joy and happiness to some—a day of sorrow and anguish to others.

The strains of the music floated across the wintry air, and fell upon the ears of two little urchins who, footsore and worn and tired with hunger, were struggling with might and main against the bitter east wind, which seemed to shriek and blow with the sole intention of barring their progress.

"Much farther, Joe?" asked the smaller of the two boys of his brother, as he breathed on his hands in an endeavour to restore the warmth in them which had disappeared some hours before.

"No, Dicky, not much farther," replied his brother, a lad of some fourteen summers. "We shall soon be there."

"But that's what you keep on saying," pursued Dicky. "It's always 'We shall soon be there.' The poor little fellow shivered with the cold, and drew closer to his brother. "Joe," he added, looking up pleadingly into his brother's face, "I am so awfully cold. My teeth are chattering, and I don't feel as though I've got any feet. And Joe—"

"Yes, Dicky?" questioned Joe, as his brother halted.

"Joe, I wonder what mother's doing now? I wonder whether she's feeling any better?"

Joe clasped his brother in his arms, and drew him closer towards him.

"Don't you worry, Dicky boy," he said, in as cheerful a tone as he could possibly muster under the circumstances. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 412.

"Mother's all right. Why?"—he forced a laugh—"didn't Mrs. Brown say she would look after her until we fetched the doctor?"

"Yes, she did," protested Dicky. "But supposing—supposing—"

"Supposing what?" asked Joe.

Dicky's voice dropped to a faint murmur.

"Supposing she should die before the doctor arrives?"

Joe didn't answer his brother's question. He wanted to put a bold front on matters, if only for the sake of cheering up his brother, but he couldn't—his tongue was simply powerless to utter any words of consolation.

Supposing she should die! Joe's heart almost stopped beating at the thought. His mother die! Oh, how terrible was the thought! And yet she might. When he had left her in the care of Mrs. Brown to go and fetch a doctor, she was in a bad state. For days, owing to the want of a helping hand, she had had next to nothing to eat, and the frightful cold which she had contracted on her chest, had brought her to a state of exhaustion, and nothing but sound medical treatment could save her.

Joe took hold of his brother's arm firmly, and endeavoured to help him through the tracks of snow at a quicker pace.

"Come along, old boy!" he exclaimed brightly. "Best foot forward! We'll soon rout out that old doctor. I don't suppose we shall have to go more than another hundred yards."

But Joe knew that the doctor's house was at least another three miles away, and as at every yard their progress seemed to become slower and slower, and his bones began to ache still more with battling against the driving snow and wind, he began to wonder whether they would ever arrive at their destination.

For a brief space the snow clouds thinned slightly, and as Joe cast his eyes about him, he perceived a lighted window in the distance, and his heart quickened its beats as the thought that it might be the doctor's house in which the light was showing, came upon him.

"Come along, Dicky," he urged. "Pull yourself together. That's the doctor's house over there, I'm sure. Maybe he's still up. Hallo! What's the matter?"

Joe gazed down at his brother's recumbent form, and perceived that that which he had dreaded most had happened. Dick had lapsed into unconsciousness!

"Dicky, Dicky!" cried Joe in alarm. "Try and walk a little farther. Just another few yards. Can't you possibly manage it?"

Joe's pleadings were in vain. The biting wind and piercing snow had conquered all human endurance as far as little Dicky was concerned.

Joe pondered over the situation for a while, then decided upon a course of action. He picked up his brother's helpless form, and swung it over his shoulder. He staggered from side to side as a fresh swirl of snow caught him broadside on.

Then righting himself again in an instant, he plunged forward once more. Doggedly he forced one foot before the other, determined to do or die.

Unburdened, Joe had found the going hard, but with the dead weight of Dicky's unconscious form on his shoulder, his task was increased tenfold.

With head bowed down, in order to avoid the cutting force of the bitter wind, he gritted his teeth and staggered onwards, ever onwards. Gradually his strength began to leave him. He became hysterical, and spoke his thoughts aloud.

Would he ever reach the house? Would he—

Ah, there was the lighted window above him! He had not failed after all. He saw the front door of the house before him, he perceived the knocker within arm's-reach. Another two inches, another inch—

With a soft moan, Joe reeled backwards, and he fell with his brother's unconscious form noiselessly into the snow. He had gone off into a dead faint. The bitter hardships which he had gone through had proved too much for him. He had fought his fight courageously, only to be thwarted at the eleventh hour.

CHAPTER 3.

The Portrait on the Wall.

OLD Joshua came down the following morning in a very irritable temper. At no time was his temper of the best, and the quarrel he had had with Sir Richard the previous evening had not tended to improve it.

"Ugh!" he grunted, as he glanced through a window of the entrance-hall. "Christmas Day! A fine Christmas for me! Nothing to do, no one to talk to, and the old man in

a beast of a temper. Don't know what's coming to him lately. Getting childish in his old age. Wish he'd hurry up and die. I'm tired of waiting for his fortune!"

The old servant pulled to the curtains of the window, and made for the front door of the hall.

"More snow!" he muttered to himself again. "Nothing but snow and biting winds! Suppose it's about a foot deep now!"

He unbolted the door, and pulled it open with a jerk. As he did so, two human forms fell inside on to the mat—the forms of Joe and little Dicky.

Old Joshua staggered back in amazement, and for a moment his face turned a ghastly white.

"Good heavens!" he cried, in a quivering voice. "What ever's this?" He recovered himself in a moment, and lifted Joe to his feet, causing the snow which had gathered on the youngster to fall in a heap to the mat. "Here, boy, pull yourself together! What are you doing here? What do you mean by sleeping on my doorstep?"

The jerk which the old servant gave Joe brought him abruptly to his senses. For a moment he seemed dazed. Where was he? Why was he so cold, and what was the cause of that aching, hungry feeling in his stomach? Why—

And then suddenly recollection came back to him. He remembered his bitter struggle against the raging elements, he remembered approaching the doctor's house, as he thought, he recollected reaching for the knocker. And then remembrance failed him.

He looked up into Old Joshua's sinister, evil-looking eyes. "Is the doctor in?" he inquired, almost flinching at the vicious gleam in the man's eyes.

"Doctor!" exclaimed Old Joshua, with a sneer. "This ain't no doctor's. The doctor's house is miles away from here. And what may you be wanting a doctor for? Strikes me that that's a trumped-up tale. I believe you came here for thieving purposes, and were overcome by the cold."

Joe shivered with fright. "I did come for a doctor," he said, in an earnest tone. "Mother's very ill, and if the doctor doesn't come to her soon she may die."

"Die!" sneered Old Joshua callously. "What a tale! Here, come along! You're going out of this, you and the other kid. Your brother, I suppose? H'm! Both thieves. Came out to pinch a bit of brass to pay for your Christmas dinner, eh? But you've come to the wrong place. Come, clear out of it at once!"

He pulled Dicky roughly to his feet, and although he jerked him this way and that, he could not bring the youngster back to consciousness. His face was deathly white and showed plainly that he was in a very bad state and in need of warmth and food. But Old Joshua was in too much of a rage to observe this.

"What's the matter with you?" he cried, pulling Dicky roughly towards him. "Shamming, are you? I'll soon alter that. Here, let's get hold of that stick!"

He reached towards the hallstand, in which was resting an old ash-stick, and, drawing it forth, raised it above his head preparatory to bringing it down on the unconscious lad's shoulder.

"I'll teach you to come here to thieve!" he exclaimed. "I'll show—"

"Joshua!"

The old servant turned sharply, to perceive the form of Sir Richard Hurtman standing at the foot of the broad staircase.

"Joshua, what's the matter?" asked Sir Richard, glancing first at Joe and then at Dicky.

"These two young villains came here to thieve," explained Old Joshua, "and I'm just giving them a little punishment instead of handing them over to the police, as they deserve."

"Thieve!" ejaculated Sir Richard, in amazement. "But—"

Joe turned to the baronet, his eyes depicting the sore straits which he was in.

"Oh, sir," he cried pleadingly, "do believe me! This awful man won't. I swear we didn't come here to thieve. We came out to find a doctor, and—and I thought this was the doctor's house. Please, sir, that is the honest truth. Oh, do say that you believe me!"

Sir Richard stared at the boy without answering.

"Don't let that man hurt my brother," murmured Joe. "He's bad, real bad, and I'm afraid he's going to be ill. He's had nothing to eat for more than a day, and—"

Joe broke off abruptly. He was overcome with the cold and hunger, and was powerless to utter words. His terrible state struck a chord of pity in the old baronet's heart, and all his sympathy went out to the plucky young fellow who pleaded with him.

"Here, come inside!" he ordered. "Joshua, carry that helpless lad up to the library, and get them both something to eat and drink."

"But—but—" stammered the callous old servant.

"No 'buts, man!' thundered Sir Richard. "Do as I tell you instantly!"

Whilst Joshua half-dragged rather than carried Dicky up to the library, Sir Richard led Joe by the arm and helped him to mount the stairs.

At last they reached the library, and two chairs were placed before the blazing fire by the kind-hearted baronet. The warmth from the fire put new life into Joe, and served the purpose of bringing Dicky back to consciousness.

For a moment he gazed about him in astonishment, but a few consoling words from Joe sufficed to restore his peace of mind. Then he sat back in his chair, his eyes closed. He would have gone off into a sound sleep once again had not Old Joshua entered that instant with a tray of catables and steaming hot coffee.

As he drew towards the table the old servant's eagle eyes glanced first at Joe's drawn, white face and then at an old portrait on the wall. He staggered backwards, as though he had received a great shock, causing the cups and saucers on the tray to rattle alarmingly.

"Joshua!" exclaimed Sir Richard, looking up. "What's the matter? Surely you have not been imbibing so early in the morning?"

"No—er—that is—no!" stammered the servant. And then, collecting his thoughts, added: "It's the cold, Sir Richard. It's very cold this morning, biting, and my hands are frozen."

"You'd better go and warm them at your own fire," said Sir Richard, "and then light a fire in one of the bed-rooms for these boys."

Old Joshua turned on his heel, and, after first gazing intently at Joe and then at the portrait on the wall, he left the room, muttering to himself.

"Now," said Sir Richard, in a kindly voice, when the door was shut, "just tell me your story."

The old baronet handed a cup of hot coffee to each of the two boys, and the steaming liquid sent Joe's blood into a tingle and put new life into him.

In between the sips he told the eager baronet the tale of his wanderings in the snow, and of his fruitless search for the doctor. He also told of his mother's critical state, and as Sir Richard listened to every word the better side of his nature came on top, and the boy's plucky fight against adversity brought back all his old love for children.

He called to mind the old days when he had been fond of children and had enjoyed a romp with them, and he could not bring himself to send the youngsters out into the snow again.

"You're a plucky lad, Joe," he said, "and I admire you for sticking to it as you did. Now, I'm not going to let you go out in this awful weather. Look here, give me your mother's address, and I'll phone for a doctor to visit her."

"Oh, sir," said Joe, "I don't know how to thank you! You're so kind, but—but I must go home to mother. She will be worrying about me."

"No, no, my lad; you cannot. I wouldn't hear of it. After all your experiences you might easily collapse." Sir Richard smiled. "That would be worse than ever, wouldn't it? Now, don't let us argue about the matter. You're going to spend your Christmas with me, and if your mother is able to be moved she shall come as well."

"Oh, sir, I—"

"Hush! Not a word! I'm glad to have your company, my boy. I used to be very fond of children, until—until—" Sir Richard pondered, and then continued: "Tell me where your mother is, and I'll see about that doctor immediately."

Joe gave the required address, and then, after he had spoken to the doctor over the telephone, Sir Richard rang for his servant. Old Joshua entered the library.

"You rang, Sir Richard?" he asked sullenly.

"Yes," replied the baronet. "Have you got that room ready?"

"Yes," replied the servant.

"Well, take this lad"—Sir Richard pointed to Dicky, who was nodding off to sleep once again—"and put him in bed."

Old Joshua carried Dicky out of the room, and then Sir Richard continued his conversation with Joe. He asked him all about his life, and his parents, and learnt that Joe's father had died many, many years ago. Joe told him of the bitter struggle his mother had had to get a living and make both ends meet.

The old man listened intently to Joe's every word, and then at length, seeing that the boy was in need of a few hours' rest, he suggested that he went to his bed-room.

Joe, who could hardly keep his eyes open, readily fell in.

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with the baronet's suggestion, and five minutes later he was lying in the softest bed he had ever slept in, in a deep and peaceful slumber.

CHAPTER 4. A Wrong Righted.

WHEN Joe awoke the rays of the winter sun were playing fitfully upon the looking-glasses and pictures on the walls of the bed-room. It was afternoon, and although the wind had dropped, the ground and trees were still covered with a heavy mantle of snow.

He turned round to see if his brother was awake, and observed, to his astonishment, that Dicky was not in the bed. Joe gazed all round the room, and called to his brother, but no sign of him could he see.

Suddenly he caught sight of an opening in the wall, and saw at once that a panel had fallen back. He wondered whether Dicky had gone through. He put his head inside the opening and called:

"Dicky, where are you? Can't you hear me?"

The only reply Joe received was the echo of his own words, and then, hoping against hope that his brother was safe and sound, he commenced to dress, making up his mind to go in search of Dicky along the passage of which the panel was an entrance.

He finished dressing, and then, drawing towards the opening in the wall, was just preparing to enter the secret passage when Dicky appeared before him. Dicky was covered with cobwebs and dirt, and Joe gazed at him in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Where ever have you been to, kiddie?" he asked.

"Do come along here, Joe!" begged the younger boy. "That awful man is saying some terrible things about you and me. He's talking to himself, and saying that he's going to—murder us!"

"Murder us! What ever for?"

"I don't know. But do come and listen to him!"

"Right-ho, old fellow!" said Joe cheerily. "I'll come!" And he pulled himself into the opening.

Inside the passage all was dark, and the two youngsters had great difficulty in finding their way.

"Where is the man?" asked Joe, when they had crawled about twenty yards. "Where did you see him?"

"Through a crack in the wall," explained Dicky. "Sh! Here it is. Be quiet, or he'll hear us."

Joe put his right eye to the small hole in the wall, and saw in front of him a bed-room, in which old Joshua was sitting at a table muttering to himself.

"The little beasts!" Joe heard him say angrily. "To think that they should come here to thwart me! To think that that woman should be alive after all these years! Good heavens! If the old man was to see her! If—" He ground his teeth with rage. "He mustn't—he mustn't!" he cried; and, rising from his seat, commenced to pace the room.

For a moment he was lost to Joe's view, but the boy could still hear his muttered threats and curses.

"I've got to do something," continued old Joshua. "If he sees that woman I shall lose all—the money, the house, everything which I have waited years for. The old man will be that overjoyed at seeing her that he'll disown me—probably turn me out of the house for ever. Ha!"

Old Joshua laughed in that cynical way of his.

"But I'm not done yet, Sir Richard—not nearly! There's still some life in the old dog. One thing, those kids are safely locked in their bed-room, and if Sir Richard wants to see them, he'll have to spend a good day in battering the door down, for I've hidden that key where he'll never find it. H'm! I've dealt with the kids, and now for Sir Richard. If he raises any objections to my proposals—well—" he gazed longingly at a heavy revolver he held in his hand—"well, it'll be his own fault!"

Joe's heart beat wildly in suspense as he saw the servant slip the revolver into his pocket and prepare to leave the room.

"Did you hear what he said, Joe?" asked Dicky, his whole frame shaking with nervous excitement. "What did he mean about that woman he said Sir Richard mustn't see? And why did he talk about us as he did?"

"Don't know," replied Joe. "But he's going to do Sir Richard some harm if he doesn't carry out his wishes. Did you see that ugly gleam in his eyes? I didn't like it at all, and I believe he'll do as he threatens. Come along, Dicky; we must go back, and try and prevent him hurting Sir Richard."

The two boys began to crawl slowly back to the opening in the wall through which they had passed. Yard after yard they covered in the inky darkness, but no sign of the entrance could they discover.

Joe's heart flew to his mouth as the thought that they had

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lost their way dawned upon him. Supposing they could not find the entrance? Supposing—

Suddenly Joe caught sight of a crack in the wall, and as he looked through it he uttered an exclamation of despair.

"Look, Dicky!" he cried, his voice shaking with fear. "Look through there! It's our bed-room! We're shut out!"

Dicky looked, and saw the truth of Joe's words.

"Oh, Joe," he murmured tearfully, "what ever are we to do? How can we get out?"

"Can't say," answered Joe, calling together all the courage he possessed to his command. "But don't despair, Dicky. We'll find a way out somehow. Let's come farther along this passage."

Joe took hold of Dicky's arm, and led him along the passage. Slowly they proceeded, dreading that every step they took would plunge them into some unseen danger. They turned a corner in the passage, which hereabout became lower, thus causing the boys to crawl along in a crouching attitude.

For upwards of five minutes the brothers struggled along the dark, evil-smelling passage, and then, just as Joe's heart was about to fail him, he caught the sound of voices raised in anger.

He crawled a few yards farther along the passage, and the sounds of a heated argument between two angry men became louder and louder, and suddenly Joe recognised them as belonging to Sir Richard and his rascally servant. Was old Joshua endeavouring to force Sir Richard to accede to his demands? And if he refused, would the servant carry out the threat Joe had heard him utter?

In a state of nervous excitement, Joe pressed his ear to the wall in order to catch some words of the conversation.

"Bring those boys to me at once!" Joe heard Sir Richard angrily demand. "If you don't do as I tell you this minute, I shall go and fetch them myself!"

"I don't think you will, Sir Richard!" said old Joshua, in a high-handed tone. "At least, you might go to fetch them, but it will take you all day to get into their room."

Sir Richard turned to his servant in surprise.

"Take me all day to get into their room?" he queried. "I don't understand."

Old Joshua rubbed his hands together in glee.

"Well, you see," he explained, "I have taken a little precaution. I have locked them in their room, and put the key safely away."

"What ever for?" exclaimed Sir Richard, his temper rising rapidly. "I don't understand the meaning of your actions. Explain yourself, man—explain yourself immediately!"

"Not so loud, Sir Richard!" bade old Joshua. "Don't allow yourself to get so excited. I want to have a talk with you—just a friendly little conversation. I'm going to leave you to-day."

"You are at liberty to do so," said Sir Richard. "I shall really be only too glad to be rid of your company. Just lately you have persisted in taunting me with the past, and nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see the back of you."

"Maybe," replied old Joshua. "But before I go I want to have a little understanding with you. I want you to hand me a little money—shall we say ten thousand pounds? Yes, that will do nicely."

Sir Richard reeled backwards in amazement.

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" cried the baronet hotly. "What do you mean by making me such a request? It is preposterous, unheard of!"

"Is that the tone you're going to adopt?" sneered the servant. "Very well, then, I will go one further. I will say that I demand the money."

"You demand?"

"Yes; and you'll hand it over instantly if you value your life! I'm tired of this tomfoolery. Come, now!" The man drew his revolver from his pocket and pointed it directly at his master's head. "Which is it to be? Decide at once if you value your life!"

Sir Richard's eyes wavered at the sight of the revolver directed full at his head. For one moment he stood with his eyes fixed on the floor, his face white with suppressed anger.

The next instant, his whole frame drew taut, and with one catlike spring he hurled himself full at the villain before him. Old Joshua was taken completely by surprise, and he reeled backwards under the baronet's pressure. His right arm was pinned to his side, thus preventing him from using his revolver.

Joe, from his hiding-place, listened to the two men struggling on the floor with breathless excitement. The seriousness of the situation flashed upon him, and he began to hope against hope that Sir Richard would succeed in overpowering his rascally opponent.

But it was not to be. Slowly Old Joshua got the upper hand. Gradually he drew his left arm free, and commenced to pound

(Continued on page 28, Col. 2.)

OUR GREAT SCHOOL SERIAL STORY!

COUSIN ETHEL'S SCHOOL DAYS



A Magnificent Serial Story dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's and their Gir Chum. Specially published at the earnest request of readers of the "Gem" Library.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The Previous Instalments told how:—

ETHEL CLEVELAND, a pretty English girl, and cousin to ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the swell of St. Jim's, goes to St. Freda's to continue her education.

On the first day of her arrival at the school, she is attracted by the personality of DOLORES PELHAM, a high-spirited girl of Spanish descent. Subsequently, Ethel saves Dolores from disgrace, and the two girls become firm friends.

One afternoon D'Arcy drives his cousin and Dolores over to St. Jim's to witness a football match between the School House and New House.

Owing to Dolores acting contrary to her friend's wishes, a slight misunderstanding arises between the two girls.

Referring to the match which is about to start, Dolores remarks:

"It will be a frightful bore, of course. Football matches always are."

"I don't think so," Ethel retorts.

(Now read on.)

The Start of the Game.

"Oh, you have such curious tastes, Ethel! What is there to see in a football match?" said Dolores impatiently. "But, of course, if Figgins is playing—"

"I wish you would not mention Figgins in that way, Dolores," said Ethel.

"Very well. I suppose you know all the boys?"

"Yes, I think so."

"How lucky you are to have a cousin like Arthur! What did you say?"

"We shall have to be quick, dear."

Dolores yawned.

"Oh, very well! But I do love to have you do my hair, Ethel! It makes me feel calm and contented. And I am not always calm, am I?"

Ethel smiled a little.

"No, indeed you are not, Dolores."

"But I am enjoying this afternoon," said Dolores. "It is delightful! Figgins is a curious fellow. I can see quite easily that he attaches immense importance to his game of football, and it seems very odd to me. Well, if you really think you ought to hurry, I suppose I must."

"I wish you would, dear. They will think we do not care if we miss the kick-off, and after Arthur has taken the trouble to drive over for us, it will look ungracious. Don't you think so?"

"Possibly."

Dolores' tone implied that she did not care very much how it looked. She had said she would hurry, but she allowed herself ample time. She looked at the reflection of her dusky, beautiful face carefully in the glass, and gave her hair and dress a final touch or two to make them perfect.

Ethel watched these preparations with ill-concealed impatience. She was beginning dimly to realise that there was likely to be a discord between her nature and Dolores'; that their minds did not run in the same groove on all matters.

Dolores was ready at last, and they descended.

As they emerged into the quadrangle, several fellows took their hats off to Cousin Ethel and her companion, and the Spanish girl was the recipient of many glances.

Four or five fellows came out of the School House in coats

and mufflers over their football garb, and greeted Cousin Ethel warmly. Jack Blake, Herries, Digby, Monty Lowther, Manners, and Tom Merry were presented to Dolores.

They went down to the junior ground in a body, and Herries, as it happened, walked beside Dolores.

Herries was not much of a lady's man, but the burly Fourth-Former was polite, and he felt it his duty to talk to the visitor. He told her about his dog Towser—an inexhaustible subject with Herries of the Fourth.

Dolores listened, with a charming smile.

"You ought to see him!" said Herries, delighted to have found so interested a listener. "I'll take you round to see him after the match, if you care to, Miss Pelham."

"Oh, I should love to!" said Dolores. "I am so fond of spaniels!"

Herries jumped.

"Spaniels?"

"Yes. Didn't you say he was a spaniel?"

"I said a bulldog."

"Oh, a bulldog!"

"Yes," said Herries; "a real-bred one, you know, and bites like a vice. If you put your hand in his mouth he'd have it right off in one snap."

Dolores gave a little shriek, and Herries roared with laughter.

Jack Blake gave him an inquiring look.

"I'm just telling Miss Pelham about Towser," chuckled Herries. "Miss Pelham is fond of dogs."

"Yes, indeed I am," said Dolores brightly; "and especially collies."

"Towser is a bulldog, Miss Pelham."

"I mean bulldogs, of course," said Miss Pelham, with a charming smile.

Herries looked a little puzzled. But they had reached the ground now, and the subject of dogs had to be dropped.

Camp-chairs in an advantageous position had been arranged for the two girls when it was pleasing them to sit down, but for the present they stood to watch.

The two teams turned out into the field. Ethel's eyes ran over all her old friends. She gave them nods and bright smiles.

There were Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn on the New House side, prominent among the rest of the team. On the School House side Tom Merry was captain, and D'Arcy and Digby, Blake and Herries, Lowther and Manners, Reilly and Noble, Glynn and Dane backed him up. They were two fine teams, and towering over them was Lefevre of the Fifth, who was referee, in Norfolk jacket and whistle complete.

The kick-off fell to the School House, and the ball rolled, and the two teams dashed into the game with great vigour.

It was junior football, with plenty of rush and kick, but it was fine football, all the same. House matches were very keenly contested at St. Jim's, and both Tom Merry and Figgins had their men in splendid form.

Dolores glanced at the School House junior captain, with a new interest in her face.

"Who is that, Ethel?" she asked.

"Tom Merry," said Ethel.

"Oh, that is Tom Merry?"

"Yes. Do you like him?"

"He is very good-looking," said Dolores.

And once more Ethel was conscious of a jar. It had never

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

NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

occurred to her to think whether Tom Merry was good-looking or not. Why did Dolores think of such things—above all, speak of them?

Ethel did not reply to the remark. She kept her eyes intently fixed on the game, which was growing fast and furious.

School House versus New House.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

Dolores had turned away to watch the flight of a bird across the clear blue sky. The loud shouting of the excited crowd drew her glance back to the field of play.

She looked at the game.

Fatty Wynn, the New House goalkeeper, was stretched on the turf. He had made a wild clutch to save, but the leather had evaded his finger-tips, and the ball was in the net.

The School House players were grinning with delight; the School House crowd round the ropes were roaring applause.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

"What is it?" asked Dolores.

"A goal," said Ethel.

"Who has taken it?"

"Tom Merry—for the School House."

"Oh! And is the game finished now?"

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Oh, no! They play for an hour and a half, and the greater number of goals wins the match, dear."

Dolores stifled a yawn.

"An hour and a half?" she said.

"Yes."

"And they have played ten minutes so far," said Dolores, looking at her little gold watch.

"Yes, about."

"Oh!"

Cousin Ethel looked at her. Fatty Wynn had fisted out the ball a little crossly, and the players were retiring to the centre of the field for the restart.

"Are you tired, dear?" asked Cousin Ethel.

"Oh, no!"

"Will you sit down?"

"I may as well."

Dolores sat down in one of the camp-chairs. Cousin Ethel sat down beside her. Ethel felt more out of harmony than ever with her friend. Why had Dolores come to the match if she were tired of it in ten minutes?

The answer, of course, was obvious. Dolores had come for the excursion, not for the football match; watching it was the price she was willing—or unwilling—to pay for the outing.

It was not an uncommon case, of course. Ethel remembered the enclosure at Lord's during a public school cricket match—sisters and cousins and aunts waiting or walking about listlessly while the cricketers played, wondering all the time what the fellows could see in the game, and how long they would be, and why they should prefer bowling a leather ball at three sticks in the ground instead of coming to have a cosy tea and chat.

To a girl who did not understand the game, after all, it was bound to be a bore; and a fellow who took a girl to see one, without acquainting her with how it was played, deserved to suffer the result. But with Dolores it was not only ignorance of the game—it was complete indifference. Ethel tried to explain to her, but the Spanish girl was hardly listening.

"You see Blake now," explained Ethel. "He is taking the ball along the touch-line. He is outside-right. He is trying to beat Kerr—outside-left on the New House side. I don't think he'll beat Kerr—he is too sharp for him. There, see, Kerr has sent the ball to his inside!"

"Why didn't Blake pick it up?" asked Dolores carelessly.

Cousin Ethel could not help laughing.

"This is Association," she explained. "Hands are not allowed. It is in Rugby that the ball is passed by hand."

"Oh, indeed! Are there two kinds of football, then?"

In the face of a question like that, Ethel hardly knew what to say.

"Yes, dear," she replied at last.

"But I saw the plump boy—what do you call him?"

"Wynn—the goalkeeper."

"Yes. Well, I saw him pick up the ball in his hands."

"Yes, the goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball within his own area, you see."

"Oh, I see."

"Ah, there! Listen! Hands!"

The School House crowd was roaring.

"Hands! Hands!"

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"Yah!"

"Play the game!"

Pratt, of the New House, at half, had handed the ball down, quite unintentionally, in the excitement of the moment. But the crowd were vigilant. The roar rang like a storm over the footer field.

"Hands!"

"Where's the referee?"

"Yah! This ain't Rugger!"

The referee's whistle rang out.

Pratt was penalised, and Cousin Ethel went on to explain the matter to Dolores; but she soon found that the Spanish girl was not listening. The play was growing hotter and hotter, and Ethel was keenly interested, and she soon left Dolores to herself, and watched the game.

It seemed ages to Dolores before the whistle went for the interval.

As the play ceased, and the players trooped off the field or lounged about it, resting, Dolores turned eagerly to Ethel.

"It is over, Ethel!"

"The first half."

"Oh!"

"There will be an interval of five minutes."

"And then—"

"Then the second half."

"Oh!"

A group of players came over towards the edge of the field where the two girls were. Figgins beamed at Cousin Ethel.

"It's a warm game, Cousin Ethel."

"Yes, indeed, and I'm enjoying it," said Ethel.

"We haven't scored yet," Figgins remarked. "Sun against us, you know."

Cousin Ethel smiled.

"Yes, I know," she said.

"It will be a bit different in the second half, of course."

"Wathah not!" said D'Arcy. "The sun hasn't anything to do with it, deah boy. We're not beatin' you in the sun—we're beatin' you on the earth."

"Beating us!" said Figgins. "Lock here, if you are going to be humorous—"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Don't crow too soon, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, slapping the swell of St. Jim's upon the back. "Many a ship 'twixt the ball and the goal, you know."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I wasn't quite ready for that goal, either," said Fatty Wynn.

"You won't be ready for the next, deah boy."

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, Fatty Wynn—"

"And many of 'em!" said Fatty Wynn emphatically.

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Don't crow, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake, if you hint that I am cwowin'—"

Phip!

"Hallo! There's the whistle!"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Tom Mewwy."

"There's the whistle, ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass. And you are intewwuptin'—"

"Oh, come on!" said Blake, grasping his chum by the arm, and rushing him off towards the centre of the field, and D'Arcy's voice died away in vain expostulation.

"They are beginning again?" asked Dolores.

"Yes."

"Another three-quarters of an hour?"

"Yes. I am sorry you are so bored, Dolores. If you had told me, I would not have come here to-day. We could have done something you would have liked better."

"Oh, no; I am glad to come," said Dolores.

But her expression as she watched the resumption of the footer match was a sufficiently plain indication that it was not the football that she was glad to come for.

Glorify for Figgins.

Tom Merry and his merry men were pressing the New House hard now. In spite of the advantage gained by the change of ends, Figgins & Co. did not seem to benefit much. A sustained attack by the School House resulted in a goal scored by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a splendid long kick that beat Fatty Wynn all the way.

Fatty Wynn did not look pleased. He was the star goalie of the New House juniors, and he had been beaten twice between the posts. Fatty Wynn did not mean it to happen again. He was all eyes and hands now. The School House attack was still pressing hard, but Fatty saved, and saved again, amid thunderous cheers from the New House supporters.

Ethel clapped her little hands.

"Bravo!" she cried.

Dolores looked at her

"What is it," she asked—"another goal?"

"No," Wynn is saying splendidly. There were two that looked certain, and he has stopped them both."

"Oh!" said Dolores carelessly.

"It is very interesting, Dolores, if you would only take a little interest in it," said Ethel, with a touch of reproach in her voice.

Dolores laughed.

Harder and harder the School House pressed their attack, but Fatty Wynn was too good for them. As fast as the leather was whizzed in, a Welsh fist or a Welsh foot was ready for it, and it came out again.

And at last the backs cleared, and the fight went swaying away to midfield. The School House rallied, and strove to press home the attack again, but the New House held their ground.

The School House had shot their bolt, for the present, at least. The New House advanced, and Tom Merry realised that defence was needed now.

He brought his men together to defend the goal, and a tussle waged in the School House half, Tom Merry & Co. striving in vain to clear.

And now Kerr, out on the wing, captured the ball, and ran in well, and, beaten by Herries at back, passed in to Figgins. Figgins captured the ball, beat Glyn easily, and slammed it in. And Dane in goal had no chance.

There was a roar from the New House crowd:

"Goal!"

"Hurrah, Figgins!"

"Goal! Goal!"

It was the first score for the New House. And as Figgins' name rang out in a wild yell of applause, Dolores showed a little gleam of interest.

"That was Figgins?" she asked.

Cousin Ethel did not reply. She was on her feet, clapping her hands, and her eyes were dancing.

Dolores smiled strangely.

Cousin Ethel sat down again as the teams lined up for the restart, and then Dolores repeated her question:

"That was Figgins?"

"Yes," said Ethel, "that was Figgins. He has taken a goal!"

And she was watching with all her eyes now.

That success had heartened the New House attack, and they were fairly swarming round the School House goal within a few minutes after the whistle.

Figgins was thinking of Ethel's eyes upon him, and, like a knight of old, he fought far more valiantly with a fair lady's eyes to watch his deeds. Figgins seemed to play like two men that afternoon. Alone, almost, he beat the School House halves, and kicked for goal with the backs almost upon him. And again Clifton Dane was beaten, and the ball rolled in the net. Figgins rolled himself on the grass the next second, with Herries rolling over him; but what did Figgins care? He sat up, dazed, to hear the inspiring roar round the crowded field:

"Goal!"

"Bravo!"

The score was equal now, with ten minutes more to play. Both sides were pretty well played out; but they went at it again hammer and tongs, equally determined that the game should not end in a draw.

There was no more show play; no skiving of the ball just for bluff. It was deadly play, with the best the fellows had in them thrown into it. Both sides meant business; and here and there could be seen a fellow simply stranded, gasping for breath, with never a run left in him.

Loud rose the shouts of the crowd now:

"Go it, School House!"

"One more goal, Figg!"

"Buck up, New House!"

"Play up there! Play up!"

But the minutes were creeping on. The struggle was in midfield now, but it broke and eddied up to the School House goal. Twice Dane flung out the ball, and yet again, but this time it met a hard head—the head of Figgins—and came back into the goal like a stone from a catapult, and Dane wasn't ready for that rapping return. There was a roar:

"Goal!"

"Figg's done it!"

"Hurrah!"

"New House wins! New House wins!"

"Bravo, Figg!"

Truly, the New House had won, for there were but two minutes more of play, and the whistle went with the score unchanged.

The New House had won with three goals to two, and Figgins—the great Figgins—had scored all three of the winning goals!

It was glory for Figgins, and no mistake!

His comrades clustered round him as he came off the field, thumping him on the back, while the crowd cheered themselves hoarse.

Figgins was the hero of the hour.

Even the School House fellows, little pleased as they were by their defeat, joined in cheering Figgins.

"Figgins! Figgins! Bravo, Figgins!"

"Good old Figgins!"

Figgins bore his blushing honours thick upon him with a good grace. There never was a more modest fellow than Figgins, or a fellow less likely to suffer from an attack of swollen head.

Best of all to Figgins was a clap from a pair of little hands, and a brilliant glance of congratulation from blue eyes.

Dolores looked almost irritable.

"What has Figgins done, Ethel?" she asked.

"Won the game," said Ethel.

"All by himself?"

"Well, he kicked all the goals for his side."

"Is it over now?"

"Yes," said Ethel, laughing.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Dolores.

Great Preparations.

Tom Merry & Co. were pretty well fagged out by that gruelling match; but after a rub-down and changing their clothes, they felt pretty well themselves again. Looking very ruddy after the exercise, they clustered round Cousin Ethel and her friend in the best of humours. Every School House fellow had a separate explanation why the School House hadn't won. The explanations did not all tally one with another, but that did not matter. The New House explanation of the circumstance was that they had played a better game, an idea that was scouted by the School House fellows as absurd. But there was high good-humour on both sides; the fellows knew how to give and take, and football successes were so evenly divided between the two Houses as a rule that honours could be considered easy. And the presence of Cousin Ethel made it impossible for anybody to be in anything but a good temper.

Tom Merry, immediately he knew that Cousin Ethel was coming to see the match that afternoon, had planned a really gorgeous tea in the study for the entertainment of the two girls from St. Freda's. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had insisted that the feed should be in his own study; but Tom Merry pointed out that his room was larger, and that the number of guests would be considerable. D'Arcy gracefully conceded the point, but only on condition that he was allowed to contribute a full half towards the feed. That was agreed to, and Fatty Wynn of the New House had been entrusted with the shopping—a task he was fully equal to, for, of course, Figgins & Co. had to come to the tea. Whenever Cousin Ethel had tea in the School House there was a general feeling that Figgins ought to be invited, though, as a member of the rival House, he was liable to be seized and bumped severely if he entered the School House on any other occasion. The four chums of Study No. 6 were coming, too, and, of course, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther would be there, and with the two girls, Tom Merry's study was likely to be well filled.

But did that matter? "Kind hearts are more than coronets," Manners said, when the subject came up; and although the quotation did not seem really very apposite, it was agreed that it was so. And if everybody were determined to be in a good humour and make things easy for everybody else, surely the party was bound to be a success. In fact, all parties, at all times and places, would be successes if that golden rule were carefully observed.

Leaving the two St. Freda's girls in charge of Figgins and D'Arcy and some other juniors, the Terrible Three had gone off to their study after the match to get the tea ready.

Dolores knew that tea in a study was coming, and she wondered very much what it would be like, and was looking forward to it with curiosity.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther set to work cheerfully in the study. It was always considered a privilege to entertain a girl to tea, and such a girl as Cousin Ethel was an acquisition anywhere.

Tom Merry cast an anxious glance about the familiar old study as he entered. It seemed to him a little shabbier than usual.

Perhaps it was the contrast after Cousin Ethel's bright face and pretty frock. The hero of the Shell looked round him quite disparagingly.

"Better dust up the study a bit," he remarked. "We had a duster once, I remember. Do you know where it is, Lowther?"

"Blessed if I do!" said Lowther.

"Manners, old man, what have you done with the duster?"

"Haven't seen it for monkey's years," said Manners.

Tom Merry snuffed.

"Look here, we must dust the study!"

"Better get tea," said Monty Lowther. "Figgins & Co. are coming in at five exactly, and they'll be peckish. You know what Fatty Wynn is. And the girls—"

"Yes, but we ought to make a study decent for the girls."

"Well, use a pocket-handkerchief."

"Right-ho!"

Tom Merry jerked Lowther's pocket-handkerchief from his pocket, and began to dust the mantelpiece with it.

Lowther gave a roar.

"You ass! Gimme my hanky!"

"I'm dusting."

"Give it me, you frabjous ass!"

"Well, it's jolly dusty now, if I did give it to you," said Tom Merry. "You'd better go and get another, old fellow."

And Monty Lowther, with a snort of wrath, did go and get another.

Tom Merry grinned, and continued to dust the study. He certainly made an improvement, but the handkerchief was in a decidedly grubby condition by the time he had finished.

"Gettin' on all right, dear boy?"

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice at the door.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry. "Come to lend a hand?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Right-ho! Get in some coals, will you?"

D'Arcy paused.

He was dressed in his most elegant garments, and fetching in coals certainly did not seem quite in accordance with his appearance.

"Ya-a-s, dear boy!" he said at last.

"And he bore away the scuttle in a gingerly manner."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners.

D'Arcy came back in a few minutes. He was not alone. Jameson of the Third was carrying the scuttle, full of coals. Jameson was grinning. He was generally so grubby that a little coal-dust made no difference to him.

He brought the scuttle into the study, and set it down, and was presented with sixpence by the swell of the Fourth. Jameson bit the sixpence to make sure that it was a good one—a proceeding that D'Arcy viewed with silent indignation—and then went out, with a nod.

"Anythin' else, dear boys?" asked D'Arcy.

Tom Merry looked round the study.

"Yes; make the toast."

"The toast?"

"Certainly!" said Manners. "I've cut the bread already. We only want about a dozen rounds made, and the fire's burning beautifully. Go ahead, and mind you don't burn it!"

"Veery well, dear boy," said D'Arcy feebly.

He was rather regretting by this time that he had come to help. But he could not retreat. He sat on the end of the fender with the toasting-fork, and began to toast. Monty Lowther came back to the study, and grinned as he saw D'Arcy at work.

"Good old Gussy!" he exclaimed. "Go ahead! Are you fond of making toast?"

"Weally, Lowther—" gasped D'Arcy.

"Look here, Tom Merry, I've got no more handkerchiefs," said Lowther. "I can't find any, you frabjous duffer!"

Tom Merry, having finished dusting, tossed the decidedly grimy handkerchief back to its owner.

"There you are, Monty, my boy."

Lowther took the handkerchief, and looked warlike; but as he saw the end of a cambric handkerchief peeping out of D'Arcy's pocket, his frown changed to a grin. He crept gently and quietly behind the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry and Manners watched him in silence.

Lowther suddenly seized the elegant Fourth-Former, and pulled him back off the fender upon the hearthrug. D'Arcy gave a yell, the toast went in one direction, and the fork in another.

"Ow! Weally—"

Lowther, quick as thought, jerked D'Arcy's handkerchief from his pocket, and crammed the soiled one in its place, and then dragged D'Arcy to his feet.

"Sorry, old man!" he said.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You uttah ass! You fwabjous duffah! I weally think I ought to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

(Another long instalment of this splendid school serial in next Wednesday's "G.M." Order your copy in advance.)

AFTER MANY YEARS!

(Continued from page 24)

away at the baronet's head. The blows he received weakened the elder man, and he began to give way.

At that moment Joe must have touched a hidden spring in the wall, for all of a sudden the panel flew inwards and struck the servant hard upon the head and sent him hurtling to the ground.

Without a second's delay Joe leapt into the room, followed swiftly by Dicky, who, though trembling with nervousness, realised the seriousness of the situation. Both boys rushed towards the fallen scoundrel, and flung themselves upon him.

"Hold his legs, Dicky!" cried Joe. "I'll take his arms!" The blow on the head had somewhat dazed Old Joshua, and for the time being he was incapable of struggling. The two boys hung on tenaciously, and just when the scoundrel showed signs of making action Sir Richard came to the rescue.

"I'll look after him," he said to the boys. "You just run and fetch that rope in the corner over there."

Joe hastened with all speed to the corner the baronet indicated, and returned hastily with the rope.

Sir Richard took it, and five minutes later, with the help of the two boys, he had bound and gagged his rascally servant securely.

The baronet turned to the boys to thank them for coming to his rescue, when he heard a motor draw up outside.

"You'd better come down with me," he said. "I expect that is your mother. The doctor wired me to say that she was much better, and that he was bringing her along here."

A feeling of thankfulness that their mother was out of danger came upon the two youngsters, and eagerly they followed Sir Richard down the stairs.

The baronet reached the door first, and drew it open, to reveal on the threshold a woman, scantily attired, with drawn face and sullen eyes, telling of illness and hardship. Suddenly the light from the sinking sun rested full on the woman's face, and as it did so Sir Richard's hand flew to his head, and he uttered a deep moan.

"Elsie!" he exclaimed. "You—"

"Father!"

For an instant the two stared at each other incredulously, and then the old man flung his arms round the woman.

"Elsie!" he cried. "My Elsie! Safe and sound, after all these years! Oh, how thankful I am!"

Joe's mother wiped away tears of joy from her eyes, and caressed her father once again. Her heart was full to overflowing. She wanted to say something—she wanted to utter her thoughts of thankfulness, but the words seemed to be choked in her throat. She was overcome with happiness at being brought back to her father, and at the thought that although he had many, many years ago turned her out of home, had disowned her, he now welcomed her with open arms.

Some two hours later Sir Richard, Joe, and Dicky, and their mother were seated round a great festive board in the dining-room at Hurtman Hall. Sir Richard, in the hour of joy, had relented towards his villainous servant, and instead of handing him over to the police, had given him his liberty, and allowed him to leave the Hall untouched.

The two boys' faces glowed with eager anticipation as they watched Sir Richard carve the huge turkey which rested in front of him, and eyed the host of good things with which the table was spread.

Now that his mind was free from worrying thoughts, Sir Richard looked a good ten years younger. His every action showed plainly how overjoyed he was.

"Well, Elsie," he said, turning to his daughter who had been restored to him. "I must say your sons and"—he added, as an afterthought—"my grandsons are two plucky little fellows. The way they came to my rescue was simply magnificent, and I say right now they do you credit."

Joe and Dicky both blushed at the old baronet's remarks, but they were soon restored to their ease by the old gentleman's cheery voice.

"Now, boys," he said, "eat, drink, and be merry. This is my happiest Christmas, and I want you to enjoy yourselves as much as you possibly can."

And there is little doubt that Joe and Dicky did enjoy themselves more than ever before. Their grandfather looked after them in every way, and he, too, felt infinite joy in the fact that the true spirit of Yuletide had returned to him after many years.

THE END.

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has set in, so when the hair is healthy it keeps it fresh, bright, and strong. Only just two or three days a day, that is all that is necessary to make the most dull and lifeless head of hair a pride to its owner.

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To EDWARDS' HARLENE
20-26, Lamb's

Dear



THIS WEEK'S CHAT

Whom to Write to —
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For Next Wednesday:

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

By Martin Clifford.

Sparkling with rich humour is Martin Clifford's next long, complete story of the chums of St. Jim's. Fascinated by the evolutions of an American hypnotist who displays his prowess in Rykcombe, the great Grundy determines to follow in his footsteps, and to acquire a knowledge of the mysterious art. A chapter of accidents follows, and Grundy is voted stark, staring mad by his amazed schoolfellows. Finally, the matter reaches the ears of the powers that be, and the brief but exciting reign of

"GRUNDY THE HYPNOTIST!"

terminates very abruptly. The story is a perfect scream from start to finish.

AN AIR MECHANIC'S TRIBUTE.

The following congratulatory letter comes to hand from a loyal reader of the "Gem" Library serving in France:

"No. 1 Wing,
 Royal Naval Air Service,
 c/o Naval Mail Officer,
 Dover."

"Dear Editor.—May I express my grateful thanks to you for your bright little paper, which has been my staunch companion through many a time of stress and trouble, and which has always been the means of cheering me up when I felt 'down and out'. For its wonderful cheering propensities I can recommend it to anyone suffering from the blues. I have taken in practically every copy since its publication, and, although I am now over twenty, I still feel as keen on it as ever."

"I am at present stationed outside a town in North Flanders, and your paper is obtainable here, though at double the usual price. It's well worth it, though. I have been out here over a year, and am naturally a little fed up with France."

"Wishing your paper the success it well merits, and trusting you will excuse these ill-expressed but none the less sincere lines,

"Believe me, yours very truly,
 "W. J. STANLEY FLEETWOOD,
 "(Air mechanic)."

This is the sort of letter which goes far to counteract the venomous snarling of the grumblers, and I am much indebted to my correspondent for his glowing tribute to the "Gem" Library.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Reader.—Yes, I hope that when the meet again on the football-field, the "tables."

information you require away with them.

M. E. H. (Manchester).—You should send in your postcards to Gough House.

"A Namesake" (Shanghai).—My postbag this week been unusually heavy, and some splendid letters have into this sanctum, but none so splendid as yours. you'll write again. In reply to your query, Mr. Currier services have been retained at St. Jim's.

N. T. Roberts-Sutton (Wolverhampton).—I have times pointed out why our Correspondence Exchange continued. Owing to the war, postal facilities have considerably delayed, and in many cases letters do not at their destination. This is hard luck, of course, but should grin and bear it, like other Grimes do.

George McC. (Liverpool).—Sorry, but the readers in tion failed to give their full addresses.

E. F. W. (Wedsfield).—An excellent suggestion, which shall receive due consideration.

Nellie McK. (Sydney).—Jokes not quite up to standard. Thank you for your kind comments.

Private W. M. (Aberdeen).—I quite agree with Words could not be strong enough for the caddish conduct the fellow who sent the abusive letter to my Leyton girl.

Rifleman H. (Wallington).—What! Another Tommy "Gem" and "Magnet" public seems to be enlisting masse. I must thank you most cordially for your fine of this journal against the idiotic attacks made upon Happy New Year!

Joseph S. (Kimberley).—I fear the publication of your would have precious little effect upon Malpas & Co. are incorrigible. Sorry I cannot get you a correspondent. The Exchange has temporarily closed down.

George M. (Sheffield).—I do not think a competition lines you suggest would appeal to the majority of my. Thank you all the same.

F. G. (Upper Norwood).—It ought not to be a very matter for you to form a football club. Talk it over your chums.

"A Reader" (Melbourne).—I would refer you to the four-page supplement published with our Christmas Number.

C. T. (Victoria).—Many thanks for your loyal letter.

"Un Jeune Australien" (Melbourne).—I agree with that my Colonial chums are hard hit by not being able part in the various competitions. One of these times inaugurate a competition confined solely to Colonial.

W. B. B. (New South Wales).—Sorry I cannot oblige with the particulars you require. It would necessitate a deal of research to do so, and myself and staff have our full as it is.

Harry A. (Sheffield) wishes Lumley-Lumley would and have a few cigarettes. Quite a queer sort of request.

J. H. (Barrow) is brief and to the point. He sends five-word message on a postcard: "Your paper is the I hope J. H. will never have cause to deviate from opinion."

H. A. H. (Dorchester).—Thank you for your letter names and addresses of soldiers requiring books and lished from time to time.

J. B. Clarence (New South Wales).—The issues tion are long since out of print. Sorry!

P. O'Connor (Tipperary).—"School and Sport," pence, by Frank Richards, is still obtainable from agents.

T. B. (Manchester).—Sorry, but I have no re mention.

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