

956
READERS WIN £10!

Result of "Scarlet
Streak" Competition
(No. 4) inside.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

The GEM 2^d

LIBRARY

No. 956.
Vol. XXIX.
June 12th,
1926.



GUSSY, THE SAFE-BREAKER!

(A sensational discovery by the Chums of St. Jim's described in the long complete school story inside.)



Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library,
The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

WE are often hearing references these days to the times in which our forefathers lived—the "good old days" as our gloomy pessimists call them. Why they should be called "good old days" is beyond my comprehension. But still, these pessimists who like to look back instead of looking forward don't constitute a majority in the world of opinion. Having picked up a letter from a disgruntled "Gemite" who declares that the GEM is nothing like as good as it used to be, it comes as a balm of relief, as it were, to find that the next letter comes from a chum who has read our little paper for twelve years. And this is what he says: "I started to read the GEM when I was twelve years of age. At that time I thought it a wonder paper. But now, after reading it without a week's break for twelve years, I cannot find words suitable enough to express my appreciation of what has been a consistent comfort and a friend to me. I would like to thank Mr. Martin Clifford through your columns for the amazing improvement he has made with what is, in my opinion, the finest set of schoolboy characters in the world," etc. Now that comes from a reader who has grown from boyhood into manhood. He apparently is of the generation that advances. He pays his twopence for the GEM and considers it money well spent. And, you chaps know, it is money well spent. "Satisfaction" is a word I keep in front of me all the time. I don't expect you fellows to buy the GEM unless you consider you are getting a good twopennyworth. And when you bump into Mr. Pessimist who talks so airily of the days gone by, just ask him what he would do without his trains, his motors, his wireless. With Master Pessimist just ask him how he would like to have lived in the "good old days" when there were no papers—no GEM. That'll make him sit up a bit!

THE NEW SERIAL!

I made mention in last week's Chat of a grand new serial story by Sidney Drew, and as there may be a few amongst you who missed that announcement it will bear repetition. All of you know the type of yarn Sidney Drew gives us. Well, then, this new treat which is billed to follow "The Scarlet Streak" in a fortnight's time is better than anything else I have read from Sidney Drew's eloquent pen. The title—"A Phantom Throne"—is sure to get you guessing. Your old favourites—Ferrers Lord, Prince Ching Lung, Dave Rees, Val Hilton & Co. are all well to the fore, and in balanced contrast to the lighter treatment of the story is a strong, dramatic theme that strikes a new note. You'll enjoy this yarn, boys, take it from me, so look forward patiently to the opening chapters.

NEXT WEDNESDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"THE MADNESS OF MANNERS!"

By Martin Clifford.

The long complete story for next week shows one of the Terrible Three in hot water. It doesn't follow that because Manners is a principal character in the GEM stories that he can do no wrong, and in this story we get a glimpse of the "bad" side of him.

"THE SCARLET STREAK!"

The curtain rings down next week on the powerful drama that has been unfolded during the run of this popular serial story, and there is a surprise ending to it. Readers shouldn't miss the conclusion of this tale, for it is a fighting finish.

THE £10 COMPETITION!

On page 11 will be found the result of "Scarlet Streak" Competition No. 4. There is still another opportunity left open to you in next week's issue to bag something really useful in cash, for that issue will contain the tenth and final contest carrying with it the £10 in prize money. Mind you go after it, chums. Cheerio!

YOUR EDITOR.

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WIRE IN NOW!

TUCK HAMPER AND MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR WIT.

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.

BRAVO, BRIGHTON!

OPEN TO DOUBT!

Skinnem had invented a new hair restorer, and had sent out a large number of sample bottles to well-known people in the town, hoping to secure some testimonials for advertisement purposes. "I don't know whether to publish this testimonial or not," he said to a friend who was calling upon him as he was opening the letters. "What does it say?" inquired the other. "Well, it says," said the proud inventor, "Before I used your hair restorer I had three bald patches, now I have only one!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to Eric Clent, 61, Montpelier Road, Brighton.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

"Waiter," cried the angry diner, "I ordered chicken soup! What do you call this?" "It is chicken soup, sir. Young chicken soup." "Young chicken soup? What do you mean?" "Well, it's the water we boil the eggs in, sir!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. V. Fineham, 1, Foxton Villas, Fengate, Peterborough.

QUITE CORRECT!

Mr. Raiton: "What is the famous monument in London the effigy on which has but one eye?" Lowther: "Cleopatra's Needle, sir!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Mary Higgs, The House, Globe Works, Chatsworth Road, Clapton Park, E. 5.

PROOF POSITIVE!

Old Lady (to tramp): "My good man, your story has such a hollow ring." Tramp: "Yes, missis; that's the result of speaking with an empty stummick!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Clifford Isles, 104, Gladstone Street, Bradford Moor, Bradford.

IMPOSSIBLE!

Fond Mother. "Now, Tommy, I want you to promise that you will always be honest and truthful when you grow up." Tommy: "But you know I can't do that, mother." Mother: "Oh, and why not?" Tommy: "Because I promised dad that I'd be a lawyer like Uncle John!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. E. Jones, 13, Princess Road, Levenshulme, Manchester.

A BAD POLICY!

"Shure, Murphy," said Pat, "bettin's a shockin' bad habit!" "Shure, Pat," said Murphy; "but why?" "Well, Castigan bet me a bob to sixpence that I couldn't swallow an egg without breaking the shell of it." "And did you lose the bet?" "No; but if I jump about I'll break it, and cut my inside wid the shell, an' if I kape quiet it'll hatch, an' I'll have a white Leghorn rooster to dale with!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Fred Shaw, 61, Pontypridd Road, Porth, Rhondda, Glam.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON.

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

A NEW DEPARTURE! With the aid of a piece of bent wire and an article on "Safe-breaking," Arthur Augustus fondly imagines that he can open a safe as easily as a professional cracksmen. But like a good many of Gussy's "bwain-waves" something goes wrong somewhere!

D'ARCY'S NIGHT OUT!

A Rousing Story of Tom Merry & Co., at St. Jim's, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the central figure.

By

Martin Clifford.



CHAPTER 1. Gussy's Latest!

"**B**AI JOVE! Have you heard the news, deah boys?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the St. Jim's Fourth, stood in the doorway of Study No. 5, staring in at Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries, who were hastily preparing for morning school.

Jack Blake grinned. "Yes, Gussy," he said gravely. "I hear that the Dutch have taken Holland. Is it really true?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Herries and regarded him severely.

"Weally, Hewwies—" he began.

"Good old Gussy!" said Digby. "He'll wake up in a moment, and find that he'll be late for morning school."

The swell of the Fourth turned a frigid eye upon Digby.

"Digby," he said, "pway wemembah that I was up long before you this mornin', so that there is no feah that I am not awake. I have news—"

"You chump!" Blake cut in. "You'll be late!"

"You've got about three minutes, Gussy, you idiot!" said Herries.

"Tumble about, you ass!" chimed in Digby. "You'll get us all late!"

D'Arcy screwed his eyeglass further into his eye.

"I am neither a chump, an idiot, nor an ass," he said loftily. "The only thing is that I have been a little further afield than you fwabjous idiots, and have heard quite an excitin' piece of news. The Head's lost the key of his safe!"

The three Fourth-Formers stopped short in their preparations for classes, and stared at their immaculate study-mate in the doorway.

"Great pip!" growled Blake. "And he calls that exciting!"

Herries snorted.

"I thought it was something important," he said.

"We might have known it would be nothing much when Gussy says he's got exciting news," remarked Digby cuttingly. "He'd call it exciting if he lost the crease in his beastly trousers!"

Gussy eyed his study-mates indignantly as they picked up their books and prepared to advance towards him.

"I considah that it is vewy important when the Head loses the jolly key of his safe, deah boys," he said. "He cannot get it open, you know!"

"In the sequence of things, having lost his key, that would be natural," murmured Blake.

"And in his loss we sympathise with him deeply," said Digby solemnly.

"Yes. Is there a reward out, Gussy?" asked Herries blandly.

"You asses! I—"

"Out of the way, Gussy!" roared Blake. "Some of us intend to go into morning classes if you don't!"

"Bai Jove! And leave the Head stwanded, deah boys?" Blake, Digby, and Herries stopped dead.

"Stranded?" queried Blake blankly. "What are you burbling about, you ass?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy suddenly warmed to his subject.

"Talkin' about?" he repeated. "Why, the Head, deah boy. I have just informed you that he has lost the key of his safe. Havin' lost the key, he cannot open the safe, with the result that he is in a feahful fix. Surely you do not intend to go into Form and leave him stwanded?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Hark at the chump!" chuckled Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You silly ass, Gussy, what can we do about it?" asked Digby.

"Bai Jove! I wathah think that we could offah to open it for Dr. Holmes," said Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

"Oh, my hat, hark at the priceless idiot!" shouted Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Digby.

"Gussy, you get worse and worse!" Herries leaned against the doorway and cackled with enjoyment.

Apart from the extraordinary nature of D'Arcy's "news," the serious, concerned expression on his refined face was enough to make the kitchen cat laugh, as Herries expressed it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only aunt!"

"The silly owl!"

The three juniors yelled their mirth.

"Weally, you wottahs," exclaimed D'Arcy indignantly, "I wefuse to be designated as a silly owl! I—"

"You babbling chump, come along!" gasped Digby.

"I wefuse to come along, deah boy!" said D'Arcy frigidly. Jack Blake smothered his mirth and looked serious.

"But, Gussy, it is time we were in Form. You'll get scragged by Lathom if you are not there in less than a couple of minutes from now," he said coaxingly. "I mean to say, you cannot very well expect to open Dr. Holmes' safe for him if he has lost the giddy key, and—"

"Pway, pardon me for intewwuptin' Blake, deah boy,"

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broke in Arthur Augustus politely, "but that is pweicely what I pwopose to do. You see—"

"You silly ass, how do you think you are going to open it—even if the Head were to let you try?" demanded Digby.

"Easy, deah boy," Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle firmly into place. "By the simple manipulation of a piece of stout wiah, the tumblers of the lock may be lifted, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" suddenly shrieked Herries. "Hold me up, someone! The chump has been reading that safe-breaker's article in the magazine your pater sent you, Blake!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I believe he has!"

"There's the bell!" cried Digby suddenly. "Come on, Gussy!"

But the swell of St. Jim's shook his head determinedly.

"Pway give my wespets to Mr. Lathom, deah boys, and inform him that I gweatly wegwet bein' unable to attend classes just now," said Arthur Augustus, "but I weally and twuly think that it is up to me to do what I can for the Head in the circumstances. Wun along, deah boys; you'll be fwithfully late, you know!"

And, knowing by experience that nothing would turn Arthur Augustus from his purpose, Blake, Herries, and Digby hurried away.

CHAPTER 2.

The Gentle Touch!

TAP, tap, tap!

Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, looked up from his perusal of the morning's correspondence as there came a knock at his study door.

"Come in!" he called.

The door opened, and into the room stepped an ifmaculate figure, with an eyeglass screwed firmly into position.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bowed politely.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said respectfully.

The Head nodded briefly.

"Good-morning, D'Arcy! But why are you here? Why are you not in your Form?"

He withdrew his watch from his waistcoat pocket and consulted it as he spoke.

"I twust you will pardon me, sir," replied Gussy, choosing his words with great care. "But I ovahheard Mr. Wailton tellin' Mr. Selby just after brekkah that you had mislaid or lost the key of your safe."

Again the Head nodded.

"That is so, D'Arcy," he admitted. "But I do not see that the occurrence could possibly interest you."

"Bai Jove, sir, that is where you are w'ong, if I may say so—vewy w'ong!" said D'Arcy. "I wemembah vewy well my patah once losin' the key of his safe at home, and he was placed in a vewy awkward pwedicament until he was able to get a wewpewentative fwom the firm fwom whom he bought the safe to open it for him. I merely thought, sir, that I could save you that unnecessawy twouble."

Dr. Holmes' eyebrows went up in some surprise.

"You, D'Arcy?" he ejaculated. "Ahem! In what way can you save me trouble?"

"By openin' the safe for you, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

To say that the Head of St. Jim's was surprised is but to put it very mildly. He rose to his feet and stared at the junior as though he could not believe the evidence of his ears and eyes.

"You open the safe for me, D'Arcy?" he said sternly. "Impossible! I trust that you are not—not joking, and that—"

"Jokin'! Bai Jove, sir, wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I wushed heah to help you. Weally, sir, do you think that I would have missed takin' my place in class othahwise?"

D'Arcy's face had expressed the indignation he felt at the suggestion that he was not being serious—that he was, in fact, trying to pull the Head's leg.

Dr. Holmes saw that the Fourth-Former was in deadly earnest, and his frown relaxed a little.

"But, how, my boy, do you propose to open the safe without a key?" he asked.

For answer, D'Arcy pulled from his pocket a short length of stout wire.

"With this, sir," he answered quietly. "By bendin' the end of this wiah into a small hook, then curvin' the remainder gwadually, the tumblers of the lock are waised and released."

"Hem! And how did you come by this very interesting knowledge?"

"In a magazine, sir," explained D'Arcy, approaching the safe, an old-fashioned affair with a lever handle and quite separate lock. "Jack Blake has a copy of the 'Wegent Magazine' sent him evvery month, and I was particularly

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intwested in an article witten by an ex-safe-bweaker, explainin' how to open safes and locks with wiah, you know."

D'Arcy dropped to one knee, and, sliding aside the dust-cover of the lock, inserted the prepared wire into the cavity it exposed.

For some moments he delved and scraped with the wire, and the Head watched him in tongue-tied amazement.

"Of course, sir," explained D'Arcy, working away the while, "one could only open old-fashioned safes by this method. You see, this safe is locked quite sewapately fwom the handle—what I mean to say is, that if you just close the safe by means of the handle, it does not lock itself. You have to do that by means of the key."

The Head agreed gravely.

"That is so, D'Arcy," he said. "And I am just wondering if, by any chance, I did not lock it last night? I do not keep anything of value in there; only school books, registers, examination papers, and such-like. I have not tried it this morning to see, and—"

"Ha!" The swell of the Fourth suddenly let out an excited ejaculation. "Did you heah that click, sir?" he asked eagerly. "I have waised the tumblahs. Quick! sir! Please turn the handle and pull!"

Dr. Holmes did so, and the great, heavy door swung slowly outwards.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Head.

"Bai Jove, sir! That was vewy quickly done, wasn't it?" cried D'Arcy, beaming. "That safe-bweakin' johnny in the book was quite wight, wasn't he, sir? Weally, I am pleased that I was able to open it for you, Dr. Holmes. I—"

The door of the study was suddenly pushed open, and Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, appeared.

"Excuse me, sir," he said to the doctor. "I have just heard that you have mislaid the key of your safe. Is that true?"

"Yes, Mr. Ratcliff," admitted Dr. Holmes. "But D'Arcy here has just managed to open the safe for me, so—"

Mr. Ratcliff stared at the open safe, then at D'Arcy.

"But," he said, "I don't understand. I was with you last evening, sir, when we were going through those examination papers, and you certainly did not lock your safe after returning the papers. That is why I came along, for it struck me that, thinking you had locked it, you had not troubled to try to open the safe."

He smiled sarcastically at D'Arcy.

"I do not imagine that D'Arcy's piece of wire had much to do with the opening of it," he added grimly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared from the New House master to the Head, and then to the piece of wire in his hand.

"Bai Jove!" was all he said.

The Head coughed.

"Ahem! It seems, then, D'Arcy, that your efforts were—well, not so successful as we thought."

The swell's crestfallen expression had touched Dr. Holmes somewhat.

He realised in that moment how very sincere D'Arcy had been in coming to try to open the safe for him, and, scrupulously fair at all times, the Head felt really sorry for the junior.

"But the click, sir—the click!" stammered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I distinctly heard the tumblah click."

"So did I, my boy. But I suppose the tumblers would do that were the lock secured or not."

He frowned as Mr. Ratcliff gave a somewhat harsh laugh.

"But I appreciate your good intentions, D'Arcy," Dr. Holmes went on quietly. "Go to your Form now, and tell Mr. Lathom that it is my wish you should be excused for being late this morning."

D'Arcy's face brightened.

"Bai Jove, sir—thank you vewy much!"

And, ignoring the amused glances of Mr. Ratcliff, the swell of the Fourth left the study.

CHAPTER 3.

Baggy's Reward!

"SHUT up, you fellows!"

Tom Merry, the junior captain of St. Jim's, whispered those words, and stared towards the door of Study No. 10.

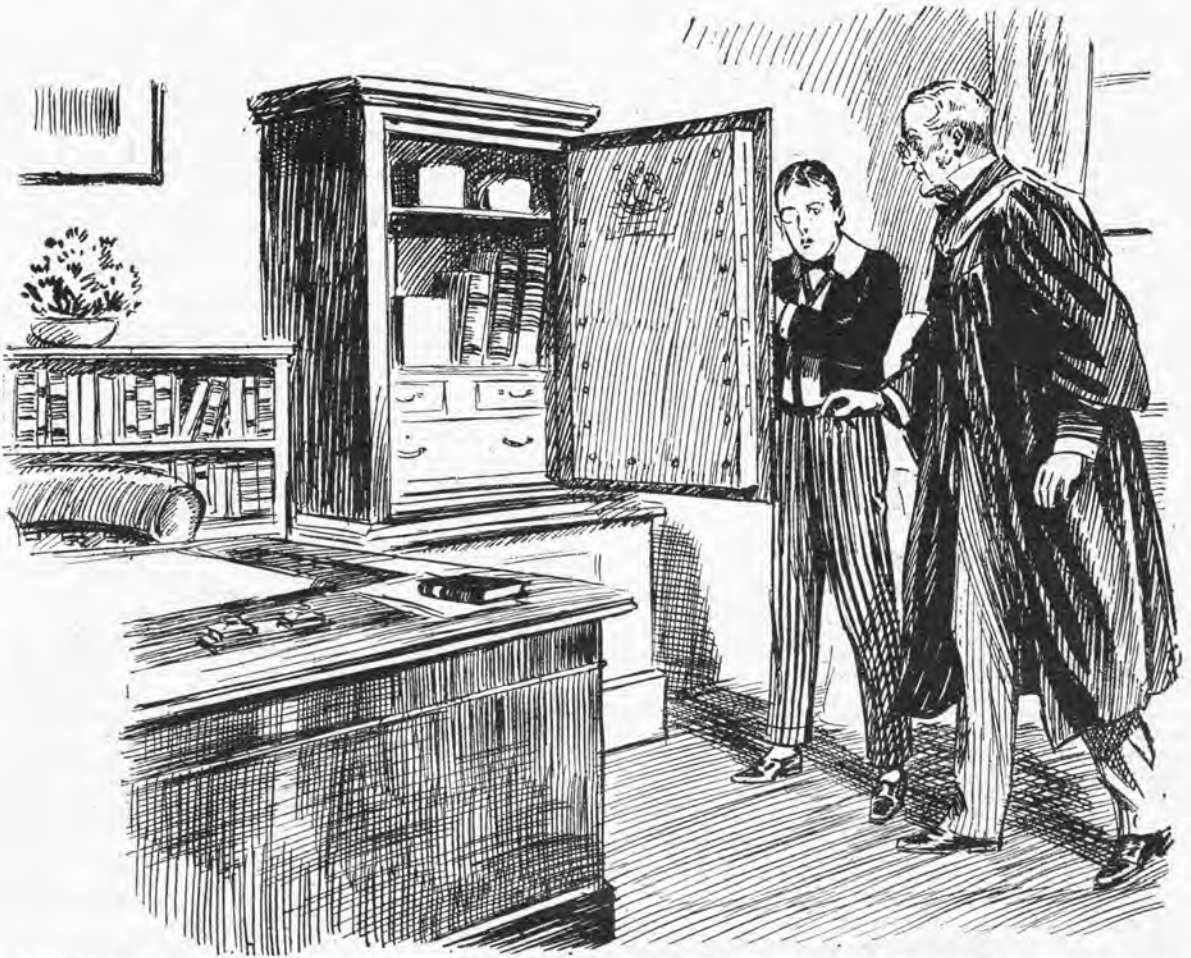
Monty Lowther ceased rubbing at the bat he had been oiling, and glanced up questioningly.

Manners, intent on testing a new shutter he had just fixed in the lens of his camera, went on with his task blithely.

Click! Click! Click!

Tom Merry picked up a book, and hurled it with accurate aim.

Biff!



"Ha!" The swell of St. Jim's let out a sudden ejaculation. "Did you heah that click, sir?" he asked eagerly. "I have waised the tumbblahs. Quick, sir, please turn the handle and pull." Dr. Holmes did so, and the great, heavy door swung slowly outwards. "Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. (See Chapter 2.)

Manners ceased to click his camera as the flying book smote upon his head.

"Ow! You silly owl!" he roared. "You nearly made me drop—"

"Shut up!" snapped Tom Merry. "Listen!"

"But—"

"Dry up, you ass!" hissed Monty Lowther. "There's someone outside the door."

"Well, what if there is, you chumps? There's plenty of room for them, isn't there? What—"

"Shush!" Tom Merry held up a warning hand, and, unwillingly, Manners "shushed."

Wheeze! Grunt! Wheeze!

The Terrible Three could hear from without the study door a faint, laboured sound, as if someone were panting hard.

Tom Merry's face relaxed.

"It's all right, you chaps," he grinned. "It sounds like either Baggy Trimble or Fatty Wynn—winded, too!"

Monty Lowther went on with his oiling.

"The silly ass has been running, by the sound of it," he said.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

The Terrible Three glanced at each other significantly.

"It isn't Fatty Wynn," remarked Tom Merry.

"Far too polite for a New House chap," said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

"It's Baggy!" said Manners. "Wonder what's up?"

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Again came the almost timid rapping upon the door.

"Come in!" called Tom Merry.

"And wipe your feet on the mat!" shouted Monty Lowther.

The door opened, and into the room rolled the fat news-monger of St. Jim's—Baggy Trimble.

"Hallo, you fellows!" he puffed, peering round the study.

"Good afternoon," said Tom Merry politely.

Manners grinned.

"Take a seat, Trimble," he urged.

"Better make it the coal-scuttle," Lowther laughed. "The chairs are rather weak!"

Baggy Trimble passed a wavering hand across a hot brow.

"Those stairs," he said complainingly. "Really, they take it out of a fellow! Don't get enough to eat to keep up a chap's strength, that's what it is."

He put his hand in his trousers pocket and pulled out a packet.

The Terrible Three saw at once that it was a registered postal packet.

"Tom Merry," began Trimble, in a little stronger voice.

"That's me," the Shell captain assured him gravely.

"I met Mr. Railton—"

"Is that for me?" asked Tom Merry, pointing to the packet.

"—in the passage downstairs, and—" went on Baggy.

"Is that registered packet for me, you ass?" repeated Tom Merry.

"—he asked me if I would take a registered packet that had just come, up to you. I—" Baggy Trimble rambled on, regaining his breath and speaking laboriously.

"You burbling chump!" roared Tom Merry, suddenly grabbing at the packet. "Cut the cackle, you silly ass!"

"But I was telling you, Tom Merry!" persisted Baggy Trimble, an injured expression on his fat face. "I said 'Yes,' and I hurried—"

"Thank you for bringing me the packet. I see it's for me," acknowledged the leader of Study No. 10, nodding towards the door. "Now buzz off!"

"I hurried, because I thought it might be a remittance, and—"

"Run away!" said Tom Merry.

"And, if so, that perhaps, Tom Merry, you might feel grateful to me, and—"

"Clear off!" shouted the junior captain.

"And if you were thinking of having a feed on the

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strength of it, that you might ask me. I——" Baggy Trimble looked appealingly at Tom Merry, who laughed suddenly.

"Hark at the ass!" he said.

"The cheeky beggar!" said Monty Lowther.

"Get out!" ordered Manners.

Baggy Trimble gazed with rapturous eyes upon the postal packet, which Tom Merry was still holding in his hand.

"Aren't you going to open it?" he asked.

"Not until you've hooked it," the leader of the Shell replied calmly. "Buzz off!"

"But——"

"Chuck him out, you chaps!" ordered Tom Merry.

"Yes, come on, chaps!"

The Terrible Three made a combined movement towards the fat junior.

Trimble backed towards the door.

"You rotters!" he began excitedly, as the Terrible Three made a grab at him. "Don't you—— Yaroo!"

The door was opened, and the fat youth was run through it into the Shell passage. He brought up against the opposite wall with a gasp like a punctured toy balloon and sat down, roaring.

"Wow-ow!"

"Baggy," advised Merry severely, "you should never ask for rewards. It's not done. Thanks again, though, for bringing me the registered packet."

Slam!

The door of Study No. 10 shut noisily.

Baggy Trimble scrambled to his feet and puffed with indignation.

"I was right, then!" he muttered. "I had an intuition that there was cash in that envelope. The measly rotters! They'll have a blow-out, without even thinking of me!"

He stood for a moment, hesitating. Then he bent down and applied his ear to the study keyhole.

If he was not to be invited to the feed that he felt sure would be the result of this registered packet, then the next best thing would be to hear the rustle of the crisp notes as they were taken from it.

But Baggy Trimble was in for a disappointment.

And his face fell lower and lower as he listened at the keyhole.

CHAPTER 4.

A Strange Letter!

"BY Jove, you chaps! Listen to this!"

Tom Merry tore open the postal packet, and withdrew from it a letter.

It was not a long one, and he read it aloud.

"Dear Tom," the letter ran,—"I do not expect you remember me, but your aunt, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, tells me that you are 'a dear, good little boy'—to use her own words——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Manners and Lowther together. Tom Merry grew red.

"Don't try to be funny, you fellows," he said darkly. "Listen!"

Lowther and Manners dutifully listened as Tom Merry read on:

"And that you can be trusted. Now, I have bought an old mansion near your school, which has lain untenanted, but fully furnished, for the past twenty-five years."

Manners whistled.

"Phew! Not Summerfield Towers—that old place I have photographed so much?"

Tom nodded.

"Yes, that's the place," he replied. "But listen to this. He says:

"I understand from the lawyers that there is an old safe built into the wall of one of the rooms, which has not been opened since an old professor, the previous owner of Summerfield Towers, as the place is named, died. No relatives of this old man have been traced, and it is not known if the safe contains anything of value or not. But what the lawyers do know is that at one time the professor had two safes of precisely similar pattern, and used to open both with the same key. He had the safes made for him for convenience. I understand. Before he died, however, he sold one of the safes, and it is now in your headmaster's study. Strange, is it not?"

"Ha, ha, ha! The safe that old Gussy opened this morning!" laughed Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Gussy! He was quite upset when Ratty suggested the safe was open all the time!" chuckled Harry Manners. "Go on, Tom!"

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"Enclosed you will find two keys—one which will open a back door of Summerfield Towers and the other which should open the safe. I want you to pay a visit to the house when you get a chance—there is no hurry—and see what the old safe contains. If by any chance you find anything of value therein, take charge of it until I have a chance to run down. I do not think you will find anything, but I thought this would provide you with something to do—a little out of the ordinary run of life at school.

"I should keep your own counsel about this letter and what I have asked you to do, and tell none but your own chums, who, Miss Priscilla Fawcett tells me, are such 'sweet little boys'—once again to use her own expression.

"Your own affectionate

"UNCLE BOB."

As Tom Merry finished reading the letter, Manners and Lowther glanced at each other in some excitement.

"My hat!" cried Lowther, his eyes sparkling. "That sounds jolly interesting, doesn't it?"

"Rather!" said Manners. "I shall be able to take a flashlight photograph of the treasure in the safe, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Tom Merry. "You silly owl! We don't know that there is any treasure in it yet. I don't suppose there is for a moment."

But Manners refused to put the idea from him.

"You don't know," he persisted. "Funny things happen in these old mansions that have been closed up for years. I am going to send off for some magnesium and some special plates. I might be able to sell the photos of the treasure to some magazine or other, and make no end of money. You could write the article, Tom!"

Tom Merry laughed again.

"Yes—when we have found the treasure!" he said. "In the meantime, what about cricket, you chaps? It's only a practice match, but we cannot afford to put it on one side. Uncle is in no hurry for us to go over to Summerfield Towers. We can run across there on Saturday afternoon."

"Great!" cried Manners, giving his camera a final click. "I shall have the magnesium and plates by then, you chaps!"

CHAPTER 5.

Baggy Makes a Bargain!

BAGGY TRIMBLE rose to an upright attitude outside the door of Study No. 10 and prepared to decamp. His face was blank and doleful.

What he had heard was entirely contrary to anything he had expected to hear.

Truth to tell, Baggy was hungry, and when Mr. Railton had asked him to take a registered packet to Tom Merry the fat Fourth-Former had conjured up rosy visions of a feed. Registered letters usually contained money.

But when it came to sending "mouldy keys" by registered post—well, Baggy Trimble's disgust was supreme.

He had never heard of such an asinine proceeding. Who the dickens wanted to "bone" a key, that it should be registered?

Now, if it had been something in the tuck line, he could have understood it, and——

He broke off suddenly as he felt himself seized by either arm, gently but firmly, and propelled down the passage at a speed that was entirely foreign to one of his proportions.

His short, stubby legs twinkled in an amazingly spritely manner. At top speed he was rushed through the open doorway of Study No. 7 and the door closed behind him.

Slam!

He brought up suddenly as he was released, and, red-faced and puffing breathlessly, he turned and saw Racke and Crooke, the bad blades of St. Jim's.

"Baggy," said Racke admonishingly, "you were playing the spy."

"Outside Tom Merry's door," put in Crooke. "How pleased he would be to know that, wouldn't he, Aubrey?"

The black sheep of the Shell nodded.

Baggy Trimble found his tongue.

"I wasn't listening, you chaps, really!" he gasped, a little wildly. "I——"

"No," agreed Racke airily; "you were bending down to make sure you had shut the door properly!"

"But—but I wasn't listening, Racke, really! I——"

Racke glanced meaningfully at Crooke.

"Better run him along to Tom Merry and tell him that——"

Baggy Trimble blanched.

"Oh, I say, Racke, don't be a cad!" he pleaded.

"It all depends," said Aubrey Racke. "What did you hear?"

"Nothing, Racke. You can believe me. I——"

"Collar him!"

The letters changed hands when he had listened to the instructions Racke gave him, and he rubbed his hands knowingly.

"I understands, Master Racke," he said thickly. "You leave it to me. I'll post them letters to-night, an' I'll be at the Towers well before the time to-morrow night, to let 'im in."

He held out his hand and took the pound note Racke handed to him.

"And, if things go all right," the scheming junior said softly, "there'll be another for you."

Mr. Lodgey winked solemnly.

"If he turns up, things'll go all right, don't you fear. Leave it to me, Master Racke. An' now I'm ter foller you ter Summerfield Towers this afternoon?"

Racke nodded.

"Yes," he replied: "I want to shove a message in that safe all ready for him."

Mr. Lodgey stared after the two juniors as they made off through the trees.

"Young rips!" he muttered, tucking the note away. "Well, it ain't nothing to do with me if they want ter get one of their mates locked up."

He laughed.

"They'll get pinched themselves one of these days, if they ain't careful. Which I hopes they won't. Racke pays well, darned if he don't!"

With which reflection he ambled off in the direction Aubrey Racke and Gerald Crooke had taken.

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy Gets Mysterious!

"LETTER for you, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, nettled rather at the set of his tie, which had proved very refractory, turned from the study looking-glass and screwed his eye-glass into correct position.

Jack Blake stood in the doorway, a letter in his hand.

Behind him were Herries and Digby.

"I've just brought it up from Hall," went on Blake.

"Bai Jove! Thanks, deah boy."

It was nothing unusual for the swell of St. Jim's to receive letters. He often did.

But this one seemed to have excited his chums.

They stood in the doorway as Gussy glanced at the envelope.

"Bai Jove! What disgwaceful w'itin'," ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

Blake grinned.

"We thought so, too, Gussy," he remarked.

"I wondah whom it is twom?"

D'Arcy withdrew a pearl-handled penknife from his waistcoat-pocket, and, slitting open the somewhat dirty and well-fingered envelope, extracted the letter it contained.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped, scanning the lines. "Bai Jove!"

He read it through again.

Blake, Herries and Digby advanced into the study. It was evident to them that Gussy's letter had caused no little amazement.

"Anything the matter, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus started, and, with a quick movement, folded the communication.

"Er—no, deah boy," he answered awkwardly. "Nothin's the mattah. Why?"

Herries grinned.

"Is it from the girl at the Wayland bunshop, Gussy?" he asked.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"She's charming, and is spoons on you—"

"Pway don't wot, Hewwies."

The ornament of the Fourth placed the letter in his pocket and turned back to the mirror.

"P'raps it was a refusal," said Digby solemnly.

Arthur Augustus turned his head.

"Don't be a biggah dummy than you can help, Digby," he said frigidly. "As a mattah of fact, it is wathiah pwivate, deah boys!"

The smile faded from Blake's face.

"Oh, I am sorry, Gussy!" he explained. "If it is something you wish to keep to yourself, of course, we do not want to know about it. But—"

D'Arcy swung round from the looking-glass.

"That's all wight, deah boy," he beamed. "I quite undahstand that you fellows didn't think. Bai Jove! Say no more, Blake, deah boy—it is quite all wight!"

He gave a final glance in the glass, then, still beaming, left the study.

Blake, Herries and Digby looked at each other blankly.

"What's got the silly chump now?" growled Herries. "I don't like it when Gussy gets close about a thing."

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Blake shook his head.

"Nor I," he said. "I am not curious, as a rule, but I'd like to know who that letter was from."

"It took Gussy by surprise, whatever it was," said Digby. "It's funny!"

It was "funny," but it had to remain at that.

Arthur Augustus made no mention of the letter during the day. In Form, he was strangely inattentive, with the result that he received five hundred lines from Mr. Lathom, his Form master.

Blake, Digby and Herries were puzzled, and they did not like it at all.

"Why doesn't the chump explain?" asked Blake, as they made their way to their study that afternoon after dinner.

"He hardly ate anything," said Digby.

"And he hasn't been seen since," remarked Herries.

He kicked open the door of their study as he spoke. From inside came a startled exclamation.

"Bai Jove!"

The three juniors saw Arthur Augustus D'Arcy reeling away from the door, before which evidently he had been kneeling.

In his hand was a piece of stout wire, bent into strange shapes, whilst on the floor where he had been kneeling was a magazine opened at a page, the heading of which read, "The Confessions of a Professional Safe-Breaker!"

"Great pip!" grinned Blake, eyeing the startled swell of St. Jim's.

"What's the game, Gussy?" asked Herries.

"Trying to pick the thumping lock!" suggested Digby amiably.

The swell of St. Jim's stood regarding his chums, his aristocratic face flushed.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "You fellows gave me quite a start. I didn't heah you comin', you know. I was just seein' if this jokah in the magazine was wight in what he says, deah boys. He says—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake, holding his sides. "Gussy, you blithering bandersnatch!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Gussy, the burgular!" chuckled Digby.

"Digby, you ass!"

"The swell safe-breaker of St. Jim's!" cackled Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three juniors yelled with laughter.

Arthur Augustus stood gazing indignantly at the mirthful three.

"I see nothin' to cackle at, you fellows," he said. "That article is vewy enlightenin', weally. I should nevah have been able to open the Head's safe if—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ratty says you didn't open it, Gussy!" reminded Blake.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"It was open all the while!" said Herries.

"Pway excuse me, deah boys," Gussy said coldly. "Watty doesn't know anythin' at all about it. The Head and I distinctly heard the click of the tumbler, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! Theah goes the bell for aftahnoon school!" said D'Arcy.

"Yes! Buck up, Gussy! If you're late this afternoon you'll get another five hundred lines!" warned Blake solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah! I'm comin', deah boys!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Terrible Three Decide!

TOM MERRY'S brow was puckered. He held a letter in his hand.

He did not like anonymous letters at any time.

But this one was the limit!

It had come by the morning's post, and he had received it almost precisely at the same moment that D'Arcy had been handed his by Blake.

"What'll you do about it, Tom?" asked Manners.

"What about going to the police?" queried Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"It's a jape, I believe," he said.

Manners nodded.

"Certainly looks like it," he said.

Tom Merry stuffed the letter into his pocket and followed his chums down to morning school.

But he could not turn his attention to lessons. Throughout both morning and afternoon classes he thought of the strange letter in his pocket. And after tea he led his chums to Study No. 10 instead of going out in the quad, which was usual.

"I have been thinking about that letter, you chaps," he said when the door of Study No. 10 had closed. "Has it struck you as being funny at all?"

Monty Lowther grinned.

"I did think it was humorous in parts," he said dryly. "For instance, you being a dear, good little boy was very funny, and—"

"Shut up, you fathead!" said Tom Merry severely. "This is no time for rotting. Besides, I am talking about that letter this morning—not Uncle Bob's."

"I thought, as you did, that it was a jape, Tom," said Manners.

Tom Merry's face was thoughtful.

"It may be," he admitted. "But it is curious that, until yesterday morning, none of us knew that my uncle had bought Summerfield Towers."

"True, O wise one!" murmured Lowther.

"What about it, then, Tommy?" asked Manners.

"Only that the news must have leaked out jolly quickly," said the leader of Study No. 10 quietly. "That is, if it's a jape!"

Tom Merry broke off.

"My only aunt!" he almost shouted.

"Got a pain, Tom?" asked Lowther feelingly.

"Er—no!"

"Does it hurt?"

Harry Manners looked concerned.

"You silly asses, shut up! What about the lecture at Wayland that Mr. Lathom was spouting about this morning?" said Tom Merry excitedly.

Lowther and Manners eyed the junior captain in surprise. "Crumbs! What has that got to do with capturing your thumping burglar?" asked Lowther.

"Unless he's dying to go to the lecture. Are you, Tom?" grinned Manners.

"You thick-headed chumps," said Tom Merry, "don't you see the wheeze?"

Manners shook his head.

"Can't say I do," he admitted.

"I must confess to a little thick-headedness," Monty Lowther said, with a grin. "I can't see the connection between the lecture and—"



St Jims Jingles!



No. 39.—FRANK LEVISON, of the Third.

ST. JIM'S has many a sterling

son
To keep her banner flying;
And young Frank Levison is
one.

A fact there's no denying.
Though but a fag of tender years
He's more than merely skittish;
His exploits earn the ringing cheers
Of those who love what's British!

He follows Wally D'Arcy's lead
In youthful enterprises;
To play the game's his constant
creed,
Bad sportsmen he despises.
With Jameson, Curly Gibson,
Frayne,
He's formed a firm alliance;
To Selby and his swishing cane
They offer stout defiance!

Doris and Ernest love young Frank,
He's first in their affection;
His nature is devoid of "swank,"
He seldom needs correction.
Frank is a staunch and loyal chum,
In danger never fearful;
And whether life is gay or glum
He keeps serenely cheerful.



A popular member of the
fag fraternity.

When Ernest Levison's beset

By troubles which assail him,
Young Frank has never failed him
yet.

Nor will he ever fail him.
He rallies to his major's side
In every cruel crisis;
To help his brother is his pride—
"Keep smiling!" his advice is.

Though yet a fledgling in the spheres
Of footer and King Cricket,
Frank shows high promise for his
years,
He's splendid at the wicket.
When a few years have sped their
course,
And he has grown much bigger,
Young Frank will be a potent force,
A fine, outstanding figure!

A splendid fellow, through and
through,
Of loyalty unswerving;
Gentle, courageous, and "true blue,"
Our warmest praise deserving.
St. Jim's has many in her ranks
Worthy of admiration;
Perhaps the strongest claim is
Frank's—
First in his generation!

Manners and Lowther started.

"My aunt!"

"My hat!"

"You see," Tom Merry went on slowly, "at the moment, only we three in all the school, so far as we know, can possibly know anything about it."

"And yet you get a letter warning you that the safe at Summerfield Towers will be burgled to-night at ten-thirty," mused Manners.

"And it also tells you that if you want to see the burglar arrested, to be there sharp at that time," said Monty Lowther.

"That's it," said Tom. "And it suggests that any attempt at giving the alarm in the meantime would only have the effect of scaring William Sikes away and spoiling the coup."

The three juniors gazed at each other.

"The thing is, what shall we do?" queried Manners.

"That is the question," said Monty Lowther profoundly.

"To be there at that time to-night would mean breaking bounds, unless—"

"What's the matter with getting passes to go to the lecture and—"

Manners and Lowther looked at their leader in amazement as he made the suggestion.

"So that we could go to the Towers?" asked Lowther.

"That wouldn't be playing the game," chimed in Manners.

Tom Merry's face crimsoned.

"I didn't suggest that we should play the dirty, you chaps," he said. "I think you fellows should know me better than that."

It was Manners' turn to blush.

"Sorry, Tom," he said. "I didn't mean it like that. What I meant was that we could hardly get passes and not go to the lecture."

"I did not suggest that we should," said Tom Merry quietly. "We would go to the lecture, and leave half-way through."

"Good egg!" agreed Harry Manners, grasping the situation. "I see the wheeze now."

"We can sprint to the Towers," said the leader of the Shell. "If nothing happens, and it is a jape, we can double back and reach the school without anyone being the wiser."

"But suppose there is something in the warning," suggested Manners. "We may even catch the burglar chap!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"When we do, and if we do, we'll talk about it then," he said. "In the meantime—"

The juniors, intent on their conversation, failed to hear footsteps approaching along the passage.

Suddenly the door was kicked open, and into the study walked Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries.

"Hallo, kids!" greeted Tom Merry. "What are you doing in a respectable study?"

"Not so much about the kids, you Shellfish!" grunted Blake. "We want to know if you've seen Gussy?"

The Terrible Three exchanged grins, then they peered round the room, under the table, and behind the easy-chair. Lowther even pulled open the drawer underneath the study cupboard.

"No," said Lowther sweetly. "He doesn't appear to be here. Lost him?"

Tom Merry faced the Fourth-Formers.

"You ought to take more care of the silly ass," he said.

"Have you whistled for him everywhere?" chimed in Manners.

"Don't rot, you chaps," said Blake. "Have you seen him since lessons?"

"No," answered Tom Merry. "Haven't set eyes on his aristocratic countenance since the bell went."

Blake, Herries, and Digby looked troubled.

"What are you fellows doing this evening?" asked the leader of the Fourth suddenly.

"Inquisitive, ain't you?" asked Lowther, with a grin. "Why, are you going to organise a search-party to find the tailor's dummy?"

Jack Blake ignored the question.

"Some people can't help being asinine chumps," he said brusquely. "If you weren't doing anything to-night—"

"But we are!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Rather!" said Manners.

"Most important engagement!" grinned Monty Lowther.

Jack Blake looked grim.

"Of course, if you insist upon being silly asses," he began.

"The Shell is full of 'em."

"They can't help it," said Herries.

"The burbling idiots!" growled Digby.

"Thanks for those kind words," said Tom Merry softly. "Anything else this evening? If not, please close the door behind you!"

"Only a polite request to go and hang your beastly selves!" snorted Blake, turning towards the door. "Come on, chaps!"

The three Fourth-Formers moved towards the door.

"Ta-ta!" said Manners. "Sorry you couldn't stay!"

"If we see Gussy, we'll hold him until you come!" called Tom Merry, as Blake followed Herries and Digby out of the study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang!

The door slammed noisily as Jack Blake & Co. left, and the Terrible Three heard them go down the corridor.

"Sorry to upset poor old Blake," laughed Tom Merry. "But we could not very well let him into what we are going to do. You see, uncle has asked us to say nothing yet, so we are bound to keep mum."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Monty Lowther's mirth broke out again. "Didn't Jack Blake look riled about something? Wonder what that silly ass Gussy has been getting up to?"

"I expect we shall hear all about it, sooner or later," prophesied Harry Manners, grinning. "Come on, you chaps. We had better get along and see about those passes for to-night."

They left the study, dismissing Gussy and Jack Blake & Co. from their minds. But they were to "hear all about it," as Manners had foretold, much sooner than any of them expected.

CHAPTER 9.

At Summerfield Towers!

TO say that Arthur Augustus was perturbed by his letter is but to put it mildly.

His aristocratic mind was sorely disturbed, and as the day had progressed he had steadily become worse.

At every opportunity he had pulled the letter from his pocket and read its contents; and, although he could now have recited the ill-written scrawl by heart, whenever he thought he was unobserved he scanned it again and again.

Now, after tea, he had found sanctuary behind the gym, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 956.

and was perusing the scribble once more, with puckered brows.

"Deah Sir," he murmured,—"Having a friend at St. Jim's, I have heard of your exploit this morning in opening Dr. Holmes' safe. Knowing your strict sense of honour, I asks you at once not to say anythin' to no one."

D'Arcy broke off with a helpless gesture.

"Bai Jove! What wotten gwammiah!"

He went on:

"Relying on your traditional honour, I asks you to come to Summerfield Towers to-night, after lights out, and open my mastah's safe."

Gussy paused, then went on:

"He is away, and has sent to me to send him somethin' from the safe. I have mislaid the key, an' if he finds out, it will be the sack for me. I can trust you, sir, but I can't trust no professional from a safe firm. You could get out after dark, sir. Do this for me, and I will be eternally grateful. I will let you in at the front door."

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy again. "He seems to be in a wotten posish. I cannot vewy well let him down, especially aftah weadin' the widah he puts to his lettah."

He proceeded to read the "rider" for about the fiftieth time that day.

"P.S.—I have heard that no one ever appeals to a D'Arcy in vain!"

The swell of St. Jim's screwed his monocle more firmly into position.

"Wathah not," he said proudly. "That is vewy twue. But he makes it decidedly awkward, bai Jove! I shall have to bweak bounds; but I simply cannot let the blightah down. I—I am suah that it could not be wong of me to oblige a poor fellow, seein' that he stands to get the sack. Bai Jove! No, a D'Arcy nevah stands by and ignores a cwy for help. I— Oh!"

"Got him!"

"Now, you ass, what's the game?"

"Yes; why all this thussness?"

From around the corner of the gym wall, Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries had suddenly appeared, and with one accord they threw themselves upon Gussy.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's. "Mind, you fwabjous chumps!"

"Look here, you idiot—" began Blake.

"Weally—"

"What's taken you?" roared Digby.

"Wats! I—"

"You are more trouble to us than a monkey off its chain!" shouted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies, I twust you do not liken me to a monkey. I—"

"What are you giving us the slip like this for?" demanded Digby.

"I am not giving you the slip, deah boys. I desiah to be alone, that is all," said D'Arcy frigidly. "I—"

"But, you doddering idiot, we—" Arthur Augustus raised his monocle, and eyed Blake coldly.

"Weally, Blake, I wefuse to be designated as a doddewin' idiot," he said stiffly. "Bai Jove, I twust you will not make it necessary for me to administrah a feahful thwashin', deah boy. Pway do not go too far."

The leader of the chums of the Fourth breathed hard.

"But, look here, Gussy," he said sternly. "No one but a lunatic would go on as you have to-day. Ever since you had that letter—"

"Pway leave the lettah out of it, deah boy."

"But—"

"That was entirely a pwivate communication to me."

"Yes, but—"

"And I uttahly fail to see what it had to do with you fellows. It is awfully good of you to be interestwed in my affaish. I am twemendously sowwy that I cannot take you into my confidance, deah boys. The posish is that it is quite imposs."

The swell of St. Jim's smuggled into his pocket the letter which he had been holding behind him against the wall.

"Kindly allow me to pass, Hewwies, deah boy."

Herries obeyed, and Arthur Augustus walked away.

"Well, I'm blowed!" muttered Blake.

"That letter again!" breathed Herries.

"What can the silly ass be up to?" growled Digby.

The three juniors stood gazing after the retreating form of Arthur Augustus with puzzled expressions.

They were perturbed. They knew Gussy, and when it

came to this secretive business, this studied avoidance of them, they felt that something out of the ordinary was in the wind.

"Why doesn't the chump tell us, if something is worrying him?" asked Herries.

Blake shook his head.

"It's beyond me," he said. "You know how stubborn the dummy is when he gets these fits. I've a feeling that something is going to happen."

"So have I," said Digby.

"Same here," muttered Herries. "Things usually happen when Gussy gets on his high horse."

"The thing is, what are we to do?" asked Jack Blake moodily.

"I cannot see what we can do," said Digby. "The ass has kept out of our way all day for some reason."

"All we can do is to keep our eyes on the chump," chimed in Herries.

The chums of Study No. 6 agreed, and, with a feeling that something out of the ordinary was going to happen, with Gussy as a conspicuous actor, they walked towards the School House.

But, to their satisfaction, Gussy behaved himself quite normally for the remainder of the evening, sitting down quietly to his prep in the study, and then reading until bed-time.

His participation in the conversation that evening was

Blake ventured an eye above the sheet, and saw a faint outline of a figure silhouetted against the window for a moment.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was getting up.

There was no doubt about that at all.

The faint sounds continued for some moments, then the three juniors heard the door of the dormitory open and then shut quietly.

In unison they leaped from their beds.

"Come on, you chaps!" breathed Blake. "He's going out, the chump. Hurry, or we shall miss him!"

In record time the three chums dressed, and, without awakening any of the sleeping juniors, they slipped out into the dimly-lighted corridor and tiptoed down the stairs.

"Of course, the doors are left open to-night, for the Wayland lecture party to get in," whispered Blake. "Hark, there goes the latch! Gussy's gone out!"

Racing down the stairs and along the hall to the large door, with as little noise as possible, Blake, Herries, and Digby gained the steps in time to see a shadowy figure disappearing in the direction of the path that ran under the elms.

"The silly fathead is going to break bounds," muttered Blake.

"Yes, he's making for the slanting oak."

"The chump!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had reached the school wall,

IS YOUR NAME HERE, CHUM?

Result of "Scarlet Streak" £10 Competition No. 4.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been divided between the following two competitors, whose efforts, each containing three errors, came nearest to correct:

MISS M. GUNN, 15, Waverley Park, Edinburgh, N.B.
F. SHAW, 61, Pontypridd Road, Porth, Rhondda, Glam.

The Five Prizes of £1 each have been divided among the following ten competitors, whose solutions each contained four errors:

J. Copson, 36A, Ellingham Road, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.
A. Diver, 55, Rutland Road, S. Hackney, London, E. 9.
A. Jones, Vine Cottage, Dudley Road, Ventnor.
C. Lloyd, 185, Holyhead Road, Wednesbury, Staffs.

J. M. O'Meara, Peveril, Pollards Hill Nth., Norbury, S.W. 15.
J. Paterson, 367, Edge Lane, Fairfield, Liverpool.
A. Robinson, 1A, Barkworth Road, S. Bermondsey, London, S.E. 1.
L. Townsend, 7, Burgundy Street, London, S.E. 1.
H. Williams, 31, Marine Street, Llanelli.
J. Williams, 43, Glamor Road, Llanelli.

The correct solution was as follows:

The Monk is the leader of the gang who are after the Scarlet Streak. The Monk believes that with it he could terrorise the earth. His headquarters are in a lonely building far from a highway. For a long time he has hounded the inventor in his efforts to gain his secret, and there is no limit to which the scoundrel will not go in order to possess this terrible instrument.

that of a polite, mildly-interested person, and by the time the juniors trooped up to dorm, Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries were more mystified than ever.

For some time after lights out the three lay listening to the sounds from D'Arcy's direction—sounds of very deep breathing on the part of the swell that did not deceive them in the least.

Arthur Augustus was pretending to be asleep!

The minutes slipped by, and one by one the juniors dropped into slumber. But Blake, Herries, and Digby did not sleep, they lay very much awake. The very fact that D'Arcy was feigning sleep, although they had not had an opportunity of telling each other that they knew it, was enough to awaken their suspicions.

"Blake, dear boy, are you asleep?"

Blake grinned in the darkness, as that well-known voice reached his ears.

But he did not reply.

"Hewvies, are you awake?"

Snore!

"Digby, old man, can you hear me?"

Puff! Blow!

Digby, apparently, was very much asleep.

"Is anyone awake?"

D'Arcy's voice was raised slightly as he asked the last question. But nothing in the nature of a reply was vouchsafed—only heavy breathing and a few snores.

A moment passed, and then Blake, Digby, and Herries heard a movement from Arthur Augustus' bed.

at a gloom-filled, secluded spot where an ancient oak spread its branches over the top of the stones. All St. Jim's fellows knew this spot—it was a favourite exit for Aubrey Racke and Crooke, who were notorious breakers of bounds. Blake & Co. often had used it themselves, but not so late at night as this. It was now ten o'clock.

The three juniors pulled up for a moment or two, listening intently. Then they grinned in spite of their anxiety.

"Ow cwumbs! I shall wuin these twousahs!" came a despairing muttering from the direction of the oak. "Bai Jove! I've torn a piece out of them now!"

There came a deep sigh, then—

Thud!

"Quick, he's dropped on the road outside!" breathed Blake. "We ought to have stopped the silly ass. He'll be—"

"Oh, let's go on with it now," said Digby. "If we keep him in sight, he can come to no harm."

"We shall be breaking bounds, but we can explain, if there is any trouble. Gussy wants a lesson, and it is up to us to give him one," said Blake firmly.

One after the other the three chums climbed the old tree and dropped to the road. Then, keeping to the shadows by the side of the road, they followed their chum who had refused to take them into his confidence.

A little way up the road Arthur Augustus turned off into a dark lane, and Blake & Co. had to creep a little

closer to keep him within sound. It was impossible to see him.

Twenty minutes later they heard the rattle of some iron gates being opened. The next moment they saw, looming through the darkness, the outline of a pair of heavy drive gates, one half of which was partly opened.

Blake whistled softly.

"Summerfield Towers!" he said. "What the dickens does the fathead want there?"

"It's empty, isn't it?" asked Digby.

"Yes, has been for years. Used to belong to an old professor who died. The furniture is still in it, but there is no one living there."

"Come on, then!" whispered Herries anxiously. "Let's get along the drive and see what the ass is up to. He'll get himself into trouble before he is finished, the silly—"

He stopped suddenly, as plainly to the ears of the three juniors came the sound of voices—one a man's, mumbling and indistinct, the other that of Arthur Augustus himself. Then, softly but quite distinctly, came the thud of a door shutting far down the drive.

Blake & Co. ran forward along the neglected, weed-strewn approach to Summerfield Towers.

But they had not gone far when suddenly, from behind them, came running footsteps, and before the juniors knew what was happening, three figures had thrown themselves upon them, bearing them struggling to the ground.

"Got 'em!" cried a well-known voice.

"Yoo! Wow! Grrrrh!"

"First time!" said another.

"St. Jim's for ever!" said a third.

And, gasping for breath, for they had been taken quite by surprise, Blake, Digby, and Herries realised that they were in the hands of the Terrible Three.

CHAPTER 10.

The Arrest of Arthur Augustus!

JACK BLAKE was the first to regain speech. "You burbling chumps!" he roared. "What the dickens do you think you are up to?" "Get off my chest, you silly ass!" gasped Herries. "And take your silly foot off my face!" spluttered Digby. "Oh, my hat, it's old Blake!" said Tom Merry blankly. "And I'm sitting on Herries!" gasped Manners. "Then my foot must be in Digby's dial!" breathed Monty Lowther.

"Of course it is, you frabjous chump!" roared Digby. "Gerroff! Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've captured the giddy thieves!" gasped Tom Merry. "Stick to 'em tight!"

"Oh, what a jape!" Lowther sobbed hilariously.

"No wonder Blake wanted to know what we were doing to-night!" spluttered Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerrup! You fathead, you'll drive all the wind out of me!" shouted Blake. "What's the game?"

Tom Merry allowed Blake to rise—an example followed by Monty Lowther and Manners. But a moment later the Terrible Three regretted their action, for Blake & Co. were decidedly warlike.

"You silly owls!" roared Blake, as his fist caught Tom Merry a crack on the jaw. "We'll teach you to jape us!"

"Yarooooop!"

Biff!

"Take that!" shouted Digby, presenting Monty Lowther with an ear-tingler.

"Look out; they—"

"We'll give you thieves, you fatheads!" snorted Herries, dotting Manners on the nose.

"Ow! Here, draw 't mild, Herries! We—"

The Terrible Three retreated before the sudden wrathful onslaught of Blake, Herries, and Digby, as the now infuriated juniors, who fully thought that Tom Merry & Co. had worked off a jape on them, charged.

What might have happened is open to conjecture.

The Terrible Three would have been bound to defend themselves in any case, and it is probable that the fight might have waxed fast and furious.

But there came a dramatic interruption.

Heavy footfalls sounded on the drive, and the dazzling light from a lantern swept over the struggling juniors.

A burly figure charged in amongst the St. Jim's chums and separated them.

"Now then, now then!" said a stern voice. "What's hall this?"

Tom Merry & Co. and the chums of the Fourth staggered apart with dismayed feelings.

Through the gloom gleamed bright buttons.

It was a policeman!

"My hat!" said Tom Merry. "It's old Crump!"

"Which you're wrong, young man!" came a gruff voice. "I am P.-c. Poggles, from Wayland. Crump's hill, an Hi'm 'ere in his place. Now then, wot sort of a game do you young gents think you're a-havin'?"

Tom Merry & Co. stood spellbound. For the moment they did not know quite what to say.

Events had turned out in a surprising manner, and, if it had been a jape, and Blake, Herries, and Digby were the "burglars," then no more need be said about it.

Blake & Co., on the other hand, not knowing anything about the letter of warning and the supposed trap to catch a burglar, sought to inform the man of law as to the true position of affairs.

"You see," began Jack Blake, "I and my two friends here were—were—"

"Following another of our friends," went on Digby. And then he stopped.

Herries took up the narrative.

"The silly ass broke bounds, you see," he said. "And we were following him to—to—"

"See where he was going!" finished Blake brightly.

"H'm! You were, were you?" said the constable suspiciously. "Didn't you know where he was a-going?"

"No," answered Blake frankly. "He is a silly chump—er, I mean to say, he ought not to be out, and—"

The constable turned to the Terrible Three.

"And where do you three come in?" he asked suspiciously.

"Oh, those silly asses must have followed us!" said Blake. "They have just set on us, and—"

"And where is this 'ere mate o' yours you were a-followin'?"

Jack Blake started.

In the excitement Blake & Co. had forgotten all about Arthur Augustus.

"My hat, yes! I wonder where he is? We ought to—"

But he got no further, for the policeman suddenly shut off his lantern, and the juniors saw that he was gazing towards the black outline of the distant mansion.

In one of the lower windows, on a level with the ground, fitful flashes of light were visible.

The constable's teeth came together with a snap. Then, leaving the little knot of juniors, he strode off at a rapid pace along the grass at the side of the drive.

The juniors followed. Tom Merry & Co. sensed that something was wrong. They realised that Blake & Co. were not the "burglars," and that there had been more in the letter than they had thought.

The very fact of the policeman being there showed that whoever had sent the letter had evidently, also, informed the police.

What were they about to see?

As they neared the mansion they saw that the light evidently came from a pocket electric torch. Following the policeman, the juniors crossed the stretch of drive before the silent house, and then they peered in at the window.

A form was kneeling before a safe, working at it with a piece of wire in one hand, whilst he held a torch in the other. There was no doubt about it. An attempt was being made to open the safe in which Tom Merry's uncle had said might be some valuables.

The form had its back to the window, but as the little party peered in, agog with excitement, it turned its head a little.

There came a flash as the light of the electric lamp caught a monocle the "burglar" was wearing, and for a moment the beam played in an upward direction, throwing the intruder's profile into sharp relief.

Players Worth Watching By JACK HOBBS

Don't miss this fine article of the world's greatest batsman, boys! Jack tells you all about the "dark Aussies" in the Australian Eleven, and he knows as much about them as anybody! You can read this splendid article in this week's MAGNET—the topping paper which is famous for complete school stories featuring Billy Bunter, the world's biggest laughter-maker.

The MAGNET

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The monocled "burglar" was none other than D'Arcy! "Great pip! It's Gussy!"

Blake almost shouted the words as he realised that the end of the trail had been reached. This, then, was the explanation of Gussy's mysterious movement. He had come here to open a safe! Why?

Crash!

The policeman did not waste any time. His mind had rapidly been made up.

Withdrawing his truncheon, he broke the glass of the window near the lock. This done, he thrust in his hand, released the catch, then, throwing up the lower portion of the large window, he leaped into the room.

"Hold, there!" he said, sternly, advancing to the figure, which had risen to its feet. "I've caught you in the act! I arrest you on a charge of breaking and entering!"

CHAPTER 11. D'Arcy Makes a Prediction.

"BAI JOVE!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—for the supposed burglar was indeed the swell of St. Jim's—rose to his feet and faced round upon P.-c. Poggles, of Wayland, his aristocratic face the picture of dismay.

The constable had flashed on his lantern again, and the shaft of light played upon D'Arcy's features.

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah?" Arthur Augustus asked blankly.

The policeman chuckled grimly.

"Wot's the matter!" he repeated. "That's what I've come to see about, that is. That's wot you'll have to tell the beak, too—tell him what's the matter!"

"But—"

"I'll ave to warn you that anything you say now will be used as hevidence against you!"

"Bai Jove!" repeated D'Arcy weakly. "What's the fwabjous chump talkin' about?"

The constable laid a heavy hand upon the arm of Arthur Augustus.

"Look 'ere," he growled, "that's enough of that kind of talk! Hi'm a-doin' of me dooty. Hi've found you on enclosed premises, an' tryin' to open this 'ere safe. 'If that ain't good enough, I don't know wot is!"

"But, you fwightful idiot," said Gussy, "I was asked to come, and I was admitted in the pwopah mannah at the door!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" The man of law chuckled hugely. "A likely tale—eh? And who hadmitted you, might I ask?"

By this time the juniors at the window had recovered from their stupefaction, and were now clambering through the open window one by one.

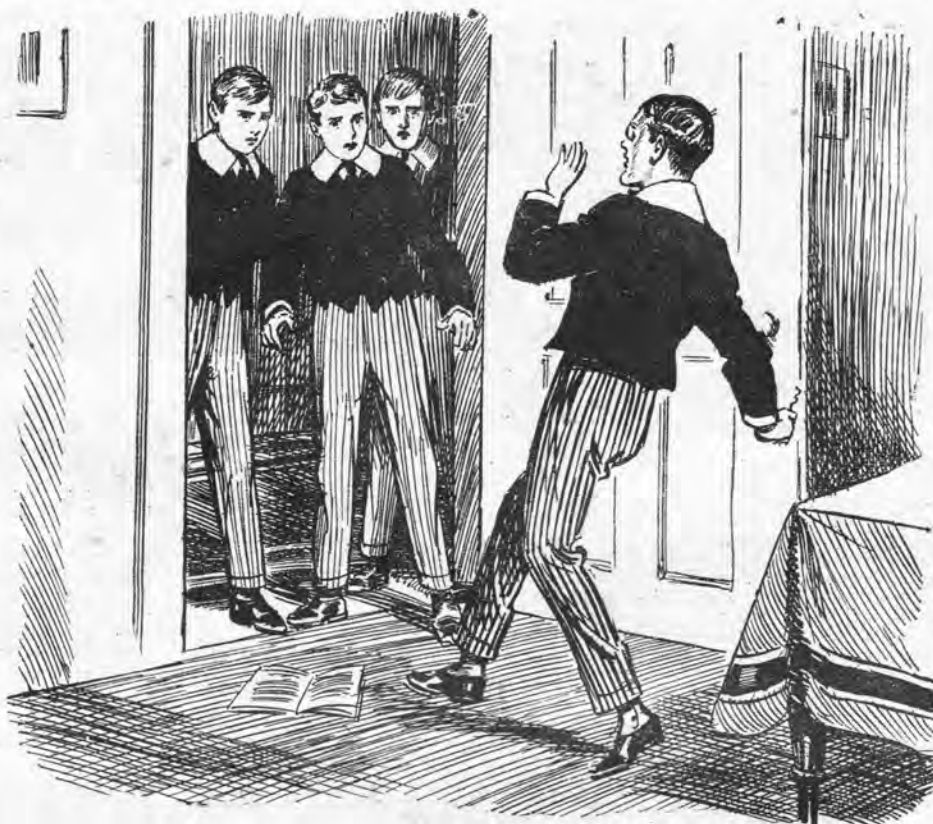
"Look here," began Tom Merry hotly, touching the officer on the arm. "You've made a jolly big mistake, sir, and—"

"That's Gussy—D'Arcy, of St. Jim's!" interrupted Blake. "His father is Lord Eastwood!" said Herries indignantly.

"Hi don't care if his father's the Lord Mayor o' London!" said the constable doggedly. "I've found 'im tryin' to hopen this 'ere safe, and that's all I know—or want to know!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus' eyes gleamed. "The silly ass!"

"An' that sort o' talk won't do you no good, I might



Blake, Herries and Digby marched up to the door of Study No. 6. "We'll see what the ass is up to," said Herries. He kicked open the door, and a sudden exclamation came from inside the study. "Bai Jove!" The eyes of the three juniors opened wide as they saw D'Arcy reel away from the door, before which he had been kneeling. In his hand was a piece of bent wire, whilst on the floor was a magazine which he had evidently been scrutinising. (See Chapter 7.)

inform you!" growled P.-c. Poggles, suddenly spotting a piece of wire clasped in the swell's right hand and snatching it from him. "I ain't such a silly ass, as you calls me, to let you go jus' because a parcel of boys ses you're the son of a lord. Hi've known real live lords to go wrong afore now."

"But," insisted D'Arcy, "I tell you I was admitted. The man—the caretakah, I believe—let me in at the fwont door."

"Where is 'e now, then?"

"He's gone to get me a light, and—"

"Now, look 'ere, it ain't no use you comin' those fairy tales with me!" Poggles said. "There's no caretaker 'ere. This place has been closed up for years."

"But I tell you," almost shouted D'Arcy, "there is a blessed caretakah, and he let me in. He—"

"Come along of me; there'll be a sergeant from Wayland 'ere in a minute."

P.-c. Poggles dragged D'Arcy towards the door.

"I wefuse!" protested the swell of St. Jim's. "I—"

"Come on—an' come quiet!"

"Bai Jove! The ass is goin' to lock me up, you fellows!" D'Arcy wailed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was dragged into the hall, the juniors following, in great dismay.

The whole business was inexplicable to 'hem. They could find no explanation to what had happened. Tom Merry knew, of course, that the constable was right in saying that there was no caretaker.

What could Gussy have meant when he said that he had been admitted?

Blake suddenly remembered hearing the sounds of voices down the drive—a man's and that of Gussy.

"Look here," he called to the policeman, who by this time had almost reached the front door, "he was admitted. We distinctly heard a man's voice while we were up the drive, and then we heard D'Arcy's. Then a door shut, and—"

The constable had grabbed at the door, and, without turning the rather old-fashioned latch, it came open to his touch. It had been standing ajar.

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 956.



EDITORIAL!

By TOM MERRY.

THIS is the time of the year when everything goes "swimmingly," so to speak. Bathing is the order of the day, and although we are not favoured by the sea at St. Jim's, the River Rhyl is ideal for bathing. Of course, the river has its danger-spots, where no wise fellow would dream of swimming, because of the strong current. Generally speaking, however, the river is safe. One small fag, who is a comparative newcomer to St. Jim's, declares that the water is shark-infested; but this is merely an excuse for dodging bathing-parade on Wednesday afternoons! There are no sharks in the Rhyl, and no crocodiles or alligators, either; though I once saw a porpoise there—Baggy Trimble was bathing at the time!

There is nothing in the Rhyl that can bite you or sting you or nip you. This cannot be said of the sea, where crabs take a fancy to a fellow's big toe, and where certain kinds of jellyfish have been known to sting. Sometimes, too, a shark finds its way into English waters, and bathers are in danger of being bolted for breakfast!

Personally, I prefer river-bathing to sea-bathing. But other fellows have other views, which I have permitted them to ventilate in this issue.

St. Jim's has many first-class swimmers. Practically every fellow in the Sixth is a strong swimmer, Kildare and Darrell being the pick. The Fifth have some "star turns," also; and there is some rare swimming talent among the juniors. Dick Redfern and Talbot and Harry Noble are perhaps our best men. They seem as much at home in the water as upon terra firma.

If there was a booby prize for the worst swimmer at St. Jim's, who would get it? There would be several candidates for the dubious honour. Baggy Trimble is about as buoyant as a brick! Most fat fellows are fine swimmers, but Baggy is an exception. He always bathes at the very shallowest part of the river, and "swims" with one leg on the bottom. Baggy will need to make meteoric progress if he ever hopes to swim the Channel!

George Alfred Grundy is another of swimming's "also rans." Grundy does a tremendous amount of splashing and snorting when in the water, but he never appears to make any appreciable progress!

Another duffer at the aquatic art is Herbert Skimpole, whose antics in the water would make a cat laugh. When Skinny goes swimming, he always takes with him a stout pair of water-

wings, a cork belt, and a lifeline! Skimmy's motto is undoubtedly "Safety First!" He takes so many precautions against getting drowned that we shall never find it necessary to drag the ryer for his body!

Bathing is a glorious summer pastime; and the moment this Editorial is written I shall make tracks for the River Rhyl, and disport myself gaily in its clear and pleasant waters.

TOM MERRY.



TUMBLE from bed, and hurry along!

Who's for the morning dip?

The sparkling Rhyl flows swift and strong,

Who's for the morning dip?

Up, you fellows! The world's awake!

Answer the call with vim;

Merry and Talbot, Gussy and Blake—

Who's for the morning swim?

The air is nippy and keen, I know,

(It's all in the morning dip!)

And all of the icy winds that blow

Are cutting you while you strip.

But don't stand shivering on the brink,

Quaking in every limb;

Take a "header," don't stop to think—

Who's for the morning swim?

Breast-stroke, side-stroke, go-as-you-please,

Heigho, for the morning dip!

While birds are twittering in the trees,

And the frisky lambkins skip.

The slacker is curled in bed, asleep,

Who gives a thought to him?

The river winds onward, broad and deep—

Who's for the morning swim?

Fine for the breakfast appetite

Is the early morning dip!

And your spirits soar like a bird in flight

Taking its acry trip.

On the silvery surface of the stream,

Where the tall swans glide and skim,

You lazily float, as in a dream—

Who's for the morning swim?

Oh, this is the schoolboy's joy of joys,

Hurrah for the morning dip!

A treat beloved by British boys,

Which only the slackers skip.

Then tumble out at the peep o' day,

When the lark is singing his hymn,

And the shades of night are charmed away—

Who's for the morning swim?

SEA OR RIVER BATHING?

Some Contributors State Their Choice.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY:

I much pwefer sea-bathin' to wivah bathin', deah boys, an' if you wead the stowy of my misadventures, in this issue, you will undahstand the weason why! Bathin' huts are pprovided at the seaside, an' there is vewy little wisk of a fellow's clobbah bein' made away with. But when you leave your togs on a wivah bank, some pwowlin' wascal will pwobably take a fancy to them, an' then you will find yourself in a dweadful dilemma, bai Jove!

REGINALD TALBOT:

This is entirely a matter of personal taste. I prefer the sea myself, especially when it's in a frisky and frolicsome mood, and you can bob merrily up and down on the waves. River-bathing gets rather tame after a time, because the river is always the same, whereas the sea is in a different sort of humour every time you visit it. The old chappie who founded St. Jim's made a great mistake in not having it built on the top of a cliff, where we could dive out of our dormitory windows into the sea!

CURLY GIBSON (Third Form):

Give me the jolly old river, every time! There's no danger of being gobbled up by sharks, or nipped by crabs, or stung by jellyfishes. There are no submerged rocks to give you nasty cuts and gashes. There's no tide to carry you away out of your depth, and there's no beastly shingle to walk over, and hurt the souls of your feet. I've no simperthy with the fellows who want St. Jim's shifted to the sea. If such a thing happened, those same fellows would soon be pining to get back to the rippling Rhyl!

HERBERT SKIMPOLE:

Neither sea-bathing nor river-bathing makes any appeal to me. If I had my own way, I should never bathe at all, but merely content myself with a hip-bath every morning. Bathing, to my mind, is a very perilous pastime.

EPHRAIM TAGGLES (the school porter):

Fancy askin' me my views on bathin', when I ain't set foot in the water for nigh on forty year! Don't run away with the notion that I'm a member of the Great Unwashed. I takes my bath reg'lar every Quarter Day; an' a nice 'ot bath, in my opinion, beats sea-bathin' an' river-bathin' 'ollow!

MR. VICTOR RAILTON:

River and sea bathing are both admirable. I am equally fond of each, and have no preference. Those who are fond of sea-bathing will have their hearts' desire shortly, when St. Jim's breaks up for Summer Camp.



D'ARCY'S DILEMMA!

An Amusing Story featuring
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy,
the swell of St. Jim's.

BY ROBERT
ARTHUR DIGBY.

"COMIN' for a dip, deah boys?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"No time," said Jack Blake.

"It's only half an hour to calling-

over."

"But if we hawwy—"

Blake yawned.

"I've had enough hurrying and scurrying for to-day," he said. "That cricket match has taken all the energy out of me. I feel like a limp rag."

"Same here," said Herries. "Besides, it's too jolly hot to go fagging down to the river."

"You'll feel nice an' cool aftah a dip, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus persuasively.

But his chums were not to be drawn.

It was a sultry evening, and the atmosphere was stifling. Certainly a dip in the cool waters of the Rhyl would be ideal, but nobody, with the exception of Gussy, felt energetic enough to tramp down to the river. Time was short, too, and it would mean rather a rush.

Blake and Herries remained sprawling on the bench in the quadrangle, and Arthur Augustus hurried into the House for his towel and bathing-costume. A few moments later he was setting out at a brisk pace for the river.

Arrived at the river-bank, at the official bathing-place near the boathouse, it did not take Arthur Augustus long to divest himself of his clothes. Gussy generally took hours to dress himself; but Gussy undressing was another matter. He had donned his costume in a twinkling, and had thrown his clothes carelessly on to the grassy bank without stopping to fold them as he usually did.

Splash!

Arthur Augustus took a graceful "header" into the cool water. He disappeared beneath the rippling surface, and when he popped up again, with his hair matted over his forehead, there was an expression of serene enjoyment on his classic face.

"This is wippin'!" panted the swell of St. Jim's.

And, turning on his back, he floated leisurely downstream.

Arthur Augustus was so absorbed in his dip that he failed to notice the sudden appearance on the towpath of a corpulent gentleman carrying a large and bulky bundle. This gentleman would probably have styled himself a wardrobe specialist. In common parlance, he was a ragman.

The ragman deposited his bulky bundle on the bank, and started to sort out the various odds and ends of clothing it contained—his takings for the day. It was a quaint collection. There were dilapidated garments of all kinds—greasy coats and tattered trousers, waistcoats which had long since been pensioned off by their original owners, and a battered top-hat which was in an advanced stage of senile decay.

The wardrobe specialist sorted out this miscellaneous collection with a practised hand and eye. Then, chancing to look up, he caught sight of Arthur Augustus drifting leisurely downstream. He caught sight also of Gussy's garments, lying in a heap a dozen yards away, and he seemed more interested in Gussy's garments than in Gussy himself.

"My heye!" he ejaculated. "Wot a find!"

The temptation to add Gussy's elegant clothes to his collection was very strong, and the ragman could not resist it. He knew that the well-cut, stylish garments of Arthur Augustus would fetch very much more than the dilapidated raiment which he had been sorting out.

The ragman was tempted—and fell! He made a stealthy movement towards Gussy's clothes. Then, stooping swiftly, he gathered them up in his arms.

At that moment Arthur Augustus turned and started to swim back. He glanced along the bank to make sure that his clothes were safe, and he was horrified to see a corpulent and shabby individual in the act of commandeering the clothes.

"Bai Jove!" panted the swell of St. Jim's, quickening his stroke. "That feahful wottiah is stealin' my togs!"

The ragman saw that he was "spotted." He gave one startled blink at the approaching swimmer, and then, with Gussy's clothes in his arms, he turned and bolted away along the towpath with remarkable agility for one so plump.

"Come back!" shouted Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "Bwing my togs back, you awful wottiah!"

But the ragman, emulating Charley's Aunt, was still running. He vanished round a distant bend of the towpath, and the elegant garments of Arthur Augustus vanished with him!

The swell of St. Jim's scrambled out of the water. For a moment he was minded to give chase, but he realised that to pursue the fugitive in a bathing-costume would hardly be dignified. Besides, he had nothing on his feet, and the towpath was littered with small, sharp stones.

In any case, the ragman had such a good start that it was doubtful if Arthur Augustus would have caught him.

"The uttah wascal!" gasped Gussy. "He has taken my togs, an' my wallet an' gold tickah are in the pockets! It's wotten! An' how am I goin' to get back to St. Jim's in time for callin'-ovah?"

It was a dreadful dilemma, and there was only one thing to be done. In his precipitate flight the ragman had left behind him on the bank his bundle and its tattered contents. Arthur Augustus would have to select the most wearable of the garments and don them, and hurry back to St. Jim's. To return to the school in his bathing-costume was unthinkable.

Fortunately, Gussy's towel had not been taken, and he was able to dry himself. This done, he foraged about among the heap of old clothes in the hope of finding something to suit him.

"Ugh! I simply cannot wear any of these dweadful things!" he muttered.

Yet he knew that he would have to wear them.

Further delay would mean being late for calling-over, so Arthur Augustus took the plunge. He found a comparatively clean shirt and put it on. Then he donned a pair of very greasy and very baggy trousers which were too long and too loose. But they had this advantage—they overlapped and hid from view the pair of hefty hob-nailed boots which Gussy found in the collection.

A very frayed and seedy-looking jacket was then donned, and the battered top-hat completed Gussy's equipment. Had he been

able to survey his appearance in a mirror Gussy would certainly not have had the courage to return to St. Jim's. But there was no mirror handy, and the swell of St. Jim's did not realise what an appalling scarecrow he looked.

Arthur Augustus raced back to the school, still bristling with indignation at the knowledge that he had been robbed. It would have gone hard with the pilfering ragman had Gussy encountered him on his hurried journey.

Gussy hoped and prayed that the school quadrangle would be deserted when he got in, but his luck seemed completely out that evening.

The quad was alive with fellows, and they stared blankly at the swell of St. Jim's as he came in. Certainly Arthur Augustus did not resemble a swell now. He looked like a music-hall comedian personating a tramp.

"What the merry dickens—!" began Jack Blake, in amazement. "Here's some awful tramp—"

"It—it's Gussy!" gasped Herries.

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a rush of feet towards the hapless Gussy, and the quadrangle rang with laughter.

"Gussy's bought a new suit!" gurgled Monty Lowther. "That's going to be his Sunday best in future!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Note the new fashion in trousers!" said Lowther. "Beats Oxford bags hollow! And note the pristine splendour of Gussy's topper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Arthur Augustus flushed crimson. Without stopping to explain his sudden transformation from a tailor's model into a tattered tramp, Gussy ran the gauntlet of the grinning crowd, and fairly flew up to the Fourth Form dormitory to change his clothes.

There was an agreeable surprise for Gussy when he reached the dormitory. His gold watch and his wallet had not been stolen, after all. They were on his locker, where he had absent-mindedly left them.

"That's a blessin', anyway!" panted the swell of St. Jim's. "My money an' watch are safe. But I doubt if I shall evah see my togs again. They are lost an' gone for evah, I'm afraid."

Such was not the case, however.

When Arthur Augustus—clean, sober, and properly dressed, as they say in the Army—paraded with his schoolfellows for calling-over, Mr. Railton beckoned him aside.

"I believe, D'Arcy, you were robbed of your clothes this evening while bathing in the river?" said the Housemaster.

"Yaas, sir. Some awful wascal of a wagman—"

"I have seen him," said Mr. Railton. "Returning from my evening walk, I saw a man hurrying along the road with a bundle of clothing. I took no particular notice at first, but when a St. Jim's cap fell out from the bundle into the roadway, I realised that the clothes belonged to one of the boys here. I stopped the man, and extracted a confession from him, and recovered the clothes, which have been sent to your study. I have dealt with the rascal as he deserved to be dealt with. I advise you to be more careful in future, D'Arcy, and to deposit your clothes in a safe place whilst bathing. You may go to your place."

Arthur Augustus thanked Mr. Railton profusely for recovering his clothes. He rejoined his schoolfellows, with a smile of satisfaction; but his chums will not soon let Gussy forget what a grotesque guy he looked on that eventful evening!

THE END.



D'ARCY'S NIGHT OUT!

(Continued
from
page 13.)

Then, turning the beam of his lantern upon the region of the keyhole on the outer side, he laughed harshly.

"This looks as though 'e was let in, don't it?" he sneered. "Look at them scratches!"

He held up the piece of twisted wire he had taken from D'Arcy.

"Them scratches was made by this 'ere wire as 'e forced the lock back. An' I must say, for a young 'un, 'e's done it very well. Ah! 'Ere comes the sergeant!"

He was right.

Heavy footfalls could be heard approaching down the drive, and through the gloom of the porch a burly figure loomed.

"Evening, sergeant!" went on P.-c. Poggles, throwing out his chest importantly. "Information received was correct, an' I am pleased I sent to the station an' asked for you to come. I 'ave made an arrest!"

The sergeant peered at the circle of indignant juniors, then at the seething Arthur Augustus. He started violently as he recognised that the prisoner was the son of Lord Eastwood.

"What does this mean, Poggles?" he rapped shortly. "You must have made a mistake. This is a boy from St. Jim's—D'Arcy, the son of Lord Eastwood!"

"Bai Jove!" broke in Gussy. "That is pweicely what we have been tellin' the fwithful ass! My patah will be tewwibly annoyed when he hears of this!"

"I caught 'im at the safe, whether or no—whoever he is," growled Poggles obstinately. "E was on enclosed premises, and—"

Tom Merry stepped forward.

"Sergeant, I think I can explain a little, if you will step inside for a moment," he said.

The police-sergeant followed the junior captain of St. Jim's into the room in which the safe stood.

In a few sentences Tom Merry placed the officer in possession of the facts so far as he knew them—that the mansion now belonged to his uncle, and that he, Tom Merry, was his legal representative at the moment.

"I expect the chump—D'Arcy, I mean," he went on—"got to know about it, and tried this on as a jape. Unless I make a charge against him, the whole thing falls to the ground, doesn't it?"

The sergeant hesitated.

"Well, Master Merry," he said gruffly, "I hardly know what to say. Of course, it is a serious charge to be found as D'Arcy was, on enclosed premises and tampering with a safe. You see, the constable—who is a new recruit to us—makes the charge in this case."

"But," persisted Tom Merry, "it is ridiculous! D'Arcy was not here to commit a robbery. He—"

"You see, Poggles got a letter this morning, warning him that an attempt was to be made on the safe to-night late, and—"

Tom Merry whistled.

"Great pip! So did I! That is why we are all here. I don't know, sergeant, but I expect, if the truth is known, D'Arcy got one as well. This is a huge jape!"

The sergeant frowned in the darkness.

"It is a serious thing for anybody to joke with the police, young sir!" he growled. "This will not stop here."

"You will release D'Arcy, though?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

"Under the circumstances, yes," was the reply. "I will have a talk to Poggles. I—"

But Tom Merry was through the doorway like a shot and leaping into the porch.

"It's all right, Gussy!" he cried. "You're free. The sergeant isn't going to lock you up!"

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"Bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus feelingly. "That is wathah a welief, deah boy! Poggles, kindly wesease my arm."

P.-c. Poggles did so, with a bad grace, the next moment, when his superior officer emerged from the doorway and signed him to that effect.

"That's bettah!" said D'Arcy. "Tom Mewwy, I cannot expwess my gwatitude as I should like to. That ass Poggles—"

"Dry up, Gussy! The thing is—why were you here? What were you doing in that room?" demanded Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus drew himself up stiffly.

"Pway do not ask me that, deah boy," he replied. "I am afwaid I cannot weply."

Tom Merry looked stern.

"But you must be able to explain why you were there. Who let you in?" he asked.

"The caretakah, deah boy—" Then he stopped, suddenly realising that by saying even that much he would possibly get the man who had appealed to a D'Arcy into trouble.

"But there is no caretaker, you owl!" said Merry.

"What about that letter you had this morning, Gussy?" suddenly asked Jack Blake bluntly.

He had been weighing up the pros and cons of the affair, and he had come to a very definite conclusion. That letter had undoubtedly been the cause of D'Arcy's nocturnal visit to Summerfield Towers.

Arthur Augustus started.

"Bai Jove! I have told you once, Jack Blake, that it was a private—"

"Letter!" snapped Tom Merry. "Then he did have a letter?"

"I should think the ass did!" growled Blake.

"And he's been as mysterious as a Chinese puzzle ever since," added Herries.

"My hat!" muttered Digby. Then he shut up quickly. He had just remembered going into Study No. 6 and all but knocking D'Arcy over when he had been trying his hand at picking the lock of the door.

Tom Merry turned to the sergeant.

"It is as I thought," he said. "This is all a jape!"

"I shall have to make a report, all the same, Master Merry," the sergeant said. "But I hope you will be able to get to the bottom of the mystery, and have an explanation ready for Dr. Holmes. For I shall have to walk up to the school in the morning to see him."

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "There will be a feahful wumpus if you do!"

In which Arthur Augustus proved to be a prophet of considerable ability.

CHAPTER 12. A Baffling Mystery!

THE juniors took leave of the sergeant and the now sulky P.-c. Poggles, who hovered in the background like a wolf deprived of its prey, and turned their faces in the direction of the school.

The two police-officers immediately began a tour of inspection, which elicited the fact that a rear window had been forced, and an entry into the old mansion gained in that manner.

They took copious notes, and finally the sergeant departed, leaving a highly injured Poggles in charge, in case there were "further developments," as the sergeant put it.

"Developments!" growled Poggles, when the sergeant's footsteps died away in the distance. "I collared all the bloomin' developments there was—or is likely to be, too! That young rip was as guilty as—as sure as my name's Poggles! Wot a life! Wot a sergeant! There won't never be promotion while the likes of him lets all the criminals go!"

Meanwhile, the "criminal," escorted by the juniors, was mildly protesting his regret at the trend of events.

"Look here, Gussy," said Tom Merry seriously, "there is going to be a glorious old row over this, so you might just as well tell us about that letter. If it will ease your mind at all, I may as well tell you that the police received a letter, saying that an attempt was going to be made on that safe to-night, and—"

D'Arcy stopped dead in the lane.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated, placing his monocle firmly into place. "What did you say, Tom Mewwy?"

The leader of the Shell repeated what he had said, slowly and deliberately.

The swell of St. Jim's gasped.

"I may also tell you," went on Tom Merry, "that I received a letter this morning warning me about the intended burglary."

This time it was not only D'Arcy who gasped. Blake, Digby, and Herries joined their chum with surprised exclamations.

"You, Tom?" said Blake. "Why you?"

Tom Merry had been thinking deeply, and he had come to the right conclusion that, in the circumstances, it was only fair to D'Arcy to tell them all the true position with regard to the Towers.

"It so happens that Summerfield Towers belongs to an uncle of mine, who has, for the time being, put the old place under my charge," he said quietly. "You talked about a caretaker, Gussy. As a matter of fact, there isn't one."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was a picture, and as the rising moon revealed it to his chums they could not help smiling at the comical expression it held.

"Not a caretaker, Tom Mewwy?" His voice held a note of surprise. "But—but, deah boy, there must be, I—"

"I tell you there is not!" interrupted Tom Merry shortly. "My hat! Then who wrote that lettah to me?" demanded D'Arcy.

Jack Blake grinned.

"The fellow who wrote old Tommy, here, and the one who informed the police, I should imagine," he said dryly. "Do you remember what I called you to-day, Gussy?"

"No, deah boy, I—"

"A doddering idiot!" finished Blake.

"Bai Jove! I—"

"And I said you were more trouble to us than a monkey off its chain!" stated Herries seriously.

"Weally, Hewwies, I—"

"And I told you that you were a silly ass!" growled Digby.

"Look heah—"

"You are all three, with much more thrown in," said Blake severely. "You chump! You have made us a nice laughing-stock, haven't you?"

"But—"

"I knew trouble would come of that letter," went on Jack Blake. "If you had told us all about it at first this would not have happened."

"But the w'itah appealed to my sense of honah, Blake, and—"

"Rats!"

"Moreovah, he appealed to a D'Arcy!"

"He appealed to a babbling fathead!" snorted Blake.

"Weally, deah boy—"

Tom Merry thought it time to interrupt these little pleasantries, which at any other time he and his chums of Study No. 10 would have enjoyed thoroughly.

"Look here, Gussy, have you that letter with you?" he asked.

"Bai Jove, yes, deah boy. But—"

"Let me have a look at it!" demanded the junior captain.

"Weally, I—"

"Gussy," persisted Tom Merry. "you must get out of your silly brainbox all thoughts of honour. The chap who sent it to you has no sense of honour at all."

"Don't you think so, Mewwy?" asked the crestfallen D'Arcy.

"I am quite sure of it," replied Tom Merry. He realised only too well D'Arcy's highly developed sense of honour, and he knew that the swell of St. Jim's would go through fire and water and suffer anything rather than be guilty of a breach of confidence. "The cad who sent it to you did so deliberately, knowing it would get you into trouble. And it was someone who knew you well, too, I should say."

Arthur Augustus began to think that Tom Merry was right, and a sense of injustice began to swell within him.

"Bai Jove! What a perfectly wotten twick, if you are wight!" he said indignantly.

"I am right," said Tom Merry. "You ought not to hesitate a moment, Gussy. I have told you who owns the Towers, and that there is not a caretaker—there is no one there at all, in fact."

D'Arcy finally cleared his mind on the matter; then, placing his hand in his pocket, he produced a crumpled sheet of paper, which he handed to Tom Merry.

By the light of an electric torch the juniors crowded round and read the illiterate scrawl.

"Phew!" whistled Blake. "Whoever wrote that to Gussy knew him as well as we did."

"What do you mean, Blake? Do you suggest—" began D'Arcy coldly.

"I mean to suggest," said Blake evenly, "that they knew you were chump enough to swallow it whole!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Jack Blake turned on his heel.

"Come on, you chaps; we shall get scragged no end as it is! We can do no more to-night. To-morrow—" He paused suggestively.

"To-morrow, bai Jove," broke in D'Arcy heatedly. "I am goin' to make it my biznay to twack down the w'itah

of that lettah, deah boys. I will twack him down and give him a feahful thwashin'! I—"

But Arthur Augustus suddenly discovered that he was alone; the juniors had walked on.

The thoughts in the mind of each of the juniors were identical.

Who had written those three letters? Who had known that Tom Merry's uncle had purchased Summerfield Towers? Who had known that D'Arcy had opened—or attempted to open—the Head's safe at St. Jim's?

It was a baffling mystery for the present. But it was one the juniors intended to tackle on the morrow.

CHAPTER 13.

The Message in the Safe!

ST. JIM'S seethed with excitement the next morning.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been arrested the night before!

He had been caught by a policeman, trying to open a safe at Summerfield Towers.

Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. were mixed up in it, too!

No one quite knew how, but they were!

A police-sergeant had just been to see the Head, and D'Arcy had been summoned to Dr. Holmes' study.

Third-Formers chattered excitedly, and many and varied were the tales that spread through that inky-fingered fraternity.

The juniors of the Shell and the Fourth stood about in groups, discussing the sensational rumours, whilst even the seniors evinced an unwonted interest in the doings of the chums.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were in Study No. 10, discussing with the Terrible Three the astounding leakage of news.

"How on earth has it all leaked out?" asked Tom Merry.

"I don't know!" growled Jack Blake. "It beats me altogether!"

"It isn't as though we said anything last night to anyone," remarked Herries.

"Unless one of us babbled in our sleep?" suggested Monty Lowther brightly.

"Don't be an ass, Monty!" snapped Tom Merry. "This is a serious business! Don't you fellows realise what it means?"

"Trouble—heaps of it!" said Harry Manners.

"More than that!" said Tom Merry seriously. "It means that the culprit is actually in the school!"

Jack Blake nodded.

"I thought that last night when I saw the letter to Gussy!" he said.

"So did I," said Digby. "Whoever wrote that letter knew that the silly ass would be as close as an oyster, once his honour had been appealed to—especially as the whole family code was sort of dragged into it."

"That's just the point," nodded the leader of the Shell.

"I wonder who opened the door of the Towers to Gussy? Of course, the whole thing had been wonderfully well arranged."

"Those scratches around the keyhole had been deliberately put there, I suppose," suggested Blake.

"Of course," agreed Tom Merry. "To make it appear that Gussy had broken in."

"What a caddish trick!" said Manners hotly. "It—"

He stopped suddenly.

"What?" asked Tom Merry.

"I was just going to say that it is just the sort of thing Racke and Crooke would get up to," Manners went on.

"I thought that, too," said Tom Merry. "But I don't see how they could have known anything about it. Hallo—" He broke off as a hurried footstep sounded in the passage outside the study. "I expect this is the summons to the Head."

It was! A few moments later, the juniors were standing before the grave-faced Dr. Holmes.

Aubrey Racke and Gerald Crooke were sitting in their study meantime, awaiting the bell for morning school.

Crooke was white and nervy, and he started violently at every sound in the passage outside.

"I don't like it," he muttered. "We've gone too far this time, and—"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Racke. "You funky idiot, how are they going to find out anything? We are safe enough."

"What about Trimble?" asked Crooke shakily.

"Well, what about him? What does he know? Do you think that fat idiot will connect the Head's key with D'Arcy trying to open a safe at Summerfield Towers? You give him credit for more beastly brains than I do, if you think he will."

"And then there's Lodgey—he might blab."

Racke laughed shortly.

"Not he! I know too much about that gentleman for

him to chance opening his mouth. Besides, why should he? He's been well-paid. Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled suddenly. "I wonder what those silly fools would say if they knew that we were watching them all the time from the trees down the drive last night?" he concluded gleefully.

Gerald Crooke looked apprehensively towards the door. "Not so loud, you ass!" he said softly. "Someone may hear you!"

Aubrey Racke rose to his feet and stretched out his hand for his books.

"Oh, come on—you get on a fellow's nerves! I tell you they can prove nothing. There goes the bell."

The pair left their study, and Racke made up his mind for a day's thorough enjoyment at the expense of D'Arcy and Tom Merry.

But his pleasure was suddenly cut short after morning school when he discovered that he had lost the Head's key. The key he had taken from Baggy Trimble had disappeared!

Frantically he searched his pockets and then the study. "Crooke, you fool, you are not pulling my leg, are you?" he cried, his face much whiter than usual. "You—"

Gerald Crooke's condition convinced his companion that he had nothing to do with the disappearance of the Head's key.

"There you are," whined Crooke. "You have lost that key, and when it is found there will be direct evidence against us. You—"

"Shut up, you ass! Someone will hear you if you yell like that! I must have dropped it after we came away from the grounds of the Towers. Crooke, we shall have to get that key back. If that should be found, there will be an inquiry, and then that fat beast Trimble might open his mouth."

Crooke nodded miserably. He was heartily sorry now that they had come down the passage when Baggy Trimble had been listening at the keyhole of Study No. 10.

"Look here," suddenly snapped Aubrey Racke, who had been thinking rapidly. "I know what we'll do. We'll slip down to the village—". He paused suddenly. "No, that won't do," he went on thoughtfully. "We must not both go. You slip into the village sharp and get Lodgev to phone the Head. Tell him to say that it is the gov'nor's chauffeur speaking, and that my pater would be greatly obliged if he would allow me to meet him in Wayland this afternoon, as he happens to be there on business."

"But—"
"Listen! It's got to be done, if you don't want to be found out," Racke snapped. "Tell him to say that the pater would like his son's friend, Gerald Crooke, to be excused school also, to accompany him. It will work all right!"

"And w-what will happen then?"
"Idiot! We'll slip over to the Towers and search for that beastly key. I must have dropped it when we were—"

Crooke grabbed Racke's arm convulsively as a sound was heard in the passage.

The two black sheep stood silent until the footfalls faded away.

Then Racke went on.
"Merry will not be going over until Saturday afternoon, so we shall have the coast clear. Now then, Crooke, off to the village as fast as you can."

Gerald Crooke did as he was bid, and, to the satisfaction of himself and his shady companion, the scheme worked satisfactorily.

The only drawback to its successful conclusion was the fact that the Head had excused the Terrible Three and Jack Blake & Co. for the afternoon, that they might go over to the Towers with the sergeant.

That morning, investigating further into the strange events of the previous night, he had made certain discoveries, he said, and there was evidence that the safe had been opened. If D'Arcy had not opened it, then someone else had.

It would be as well for Tom Merry to open it in front of him, although, as it was not known what the safe contained—if anything at all—it would be next to impossible to prove anything.

In addition, he wanted D'Arcy there on the spot, also the juniors who had taken part in the nocturnal drama.

The sergeant and the juniors arrived at Summerfield Towers before Aubrey Racke and Gerald Crooke, and, first putting several questions to D'Arcy and arranging the juniors at the window through which they had seen the swell of St. Jim's, he compared the footprints.

"Ah!" he muttered. "That's why I wanted you all here. There were at least three other people here last night. Who were they, I wonder?"

"Bai Jove! Three othah people?" echoed D'Arcy, raising his eyeglass.

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"Yes! Two were schoolboys, by the size of their boot-marks, and the other was a man—and his footprints are at the back, where he climbed through a window."

The juniors gasped.

The mystery was deepening with a vengeance. Who on earth could the man have been? And who were the boys?

"Now, Master Merry," said the sergeant, "we will have that safe open, if you please."

A move was made to the room, and, in a tense silence, Tom Merry inserted the old key in the lock of the safe, turned it, and swung the heavy door outwards.

As the dark interior of the great receptacle was revealed, the juniors opened their eyes wide.

"Ah!" said the sergeant ponderously. "Ah! The safe has been opened, you see!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy weakly.

For on a piece of white cardboard, leaning against the back of the safe, in the same scrawl as that in which the letters had all been written, were the words:

"EVER BEEN HAD? THIS SAFE IS AS EMPTY AS YOUR SILLY HEAD, D'ARCY!
DON'T TELL ANYONE, WILL YOU?"

CHAPTER 14.

The Head's Key!

"THAT'S proof positive that the whole thing is a jape!" said Tom Merry, after a dead silence on the part of the juniors.

The sergeant nodded.
"I think so, too," he said. "It certainly was not the work of a burglar in the real sense. But who was the man? I think I will have a walk into the village. Perhaps I may gain some news there."

Tom Merry looked at him sharply, and he felt that the sergeant had just been smitten with an idea. He was right, too!

Left to themselves, Tom Merry and the rest of the juniors stared at the cardboard, with its rude message.

Indignantly D'Arcy clenched his fists.

"Bai Jove, I do not approve of violence as a wule, you fellows," he said, "but if I had the wude wottah here who wrote that, I—I would give him a most feahful thwashin'!"

Tom Merry closed the door of the safe with a bang.

"I can't understand you, Gussy," he said. "Why didn't you let Blake into it when you got that letter?"

"Tom Mewwy, I did not realise that it was a hoax," replied D'Arcy, with dignity. "Besides, the person, whoever he was, appealed to my honah. I only wanted to get the poor beggah out of his fix!"

"And you've got yourself properly into the soup trying to do it!" growled Blake.

"Besides," said Digby, "how did you suppose anyone out here at Summerfield was going to hear about your trying to open the Head's safe and write to you about it the same day?"

"Well, deah-boy, fame twavels quickly, and—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the others.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy frigidly. "This is no laughin' mattah, deah boys. It—"

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!" sobbed Blake. "No laughing matter!"

"I gave the question a gweat deal of thought!" declared Arthur Augustus.

"Ass!" snorted Digby.

"Weally, deah boy—"

The swell of St. Jim's knew that he deserved a ragging, and he was trying hard to keep unruffled.

"Look here, you fellows!" he said seriously. "I wasn't the only beggah to be taken in. Tom Mewwy was, and so were the police!"

There was silence for a moment.

Then Tom Merry shook his head.

"No, Gussy," he said. "We were not exactly taken in. We thought it was a jape, but as I was bound to keep mum about the Towers, we arranged to be here to investigate."

"We didn't dream that the one and only Gussy would be on the job, though," said Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove!" D'Arcy's voice rang excitedly through the room. "Look there!"

The juniors saw him run to the window, pointing in the direction of some trees across the grass bordering the drive on the right.

"Great Scott!" muttered Tom Merry. "It's a couple of St. Jim's chaps, and— They've gone!"

It was true.

Two forms had been bending, as though searching for something amongst the trees. But D'Arcy's voice had apparently warned them, for, without looking round, they suddenly bolted and disappeared.

Arthur Augustus leaped for the door.

"I am goin' aftah them, deah boys!" he called as he went.

"Bai Jove! I believe it was—"



Blake & Co. were approaching Summerfield Towers when they were suddenly pounced on from behind and borne struggling to the ground. "Got 'em!" cried a well-known voice. "First time!" said another. "St. Jim's for ever!" shouted a third. Gasping for breath, for they had been taken quite by surprise, Blake, Digby and Herries realised that they were in the hands of the Terrible Three. (See Chapter 9.)

The remainder of his sentence was lost as he raced along the hall and into the drive.

"Shall we follow?" asked Blake.

"No," said Tom Merry. "By the time we get out there and after them, they will have had time to separate and go in any direction. Besides, we shall easily find out who they were."

"That's right," asserted Blake. "They must have permits to be out."

Herries was still gazing towards the trees where the two forms had been seen.

"I wonder what they were doing there, anyway?" he said slowly. "They were looking for something."

"It seemed like it," said Manners.

"Let's go out and have a scout round," said Tom Merry.

The juniors left the mansion and walked over to where they had seen the two St. Jim's fellows.

To reach it they had to pass over a stretch of grass, tall and neglected with the passing of years and lack of cultivation.

When they gained the trees, however, and passed under their shadow, Tom Merry and Jack Blake, who were leading, suddenly pulled up with exclamations of surprise.

Before them, in the deep shade beneath the spreading foliage, lay a space that had been newly turned. It looked as though someone had come along and commenced to dig up the ground and then given it up as a bad job.

"This looks strange!" muttered Tom Merry. "This was where those two fellows were. But they didn't appear to be digging, did they?"

"No!" said Blake. "They had no garden tools with them. Besides, they looked as though they were searching for something. I wonder what it all means?"

The juniors stared at the oblong of newly turned ground before them.

Suddenly Tom Merry started.

"I say, you chaps, do you notice how the grass is broken down all round this space?" he said excitedly.

"Great pip, yes!" jerked Digby.

"And look at the side there," said Monty Lowther, pointing to the further side of the little oblong. "Earth has been piled up there!"

It was true, for all among the grass on the opposite side of the small clearing particles of earth were visible, as though a hole had been made in the ground and the removed soil piled there.

"Someone's been digging a hole and filled it in again," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I wonder why?"

"Perhaps someone's sown another tree," suggested Monty Lowther, unable to resist a joke.

"Fathead!" remarked Tom Merry. "I tell you what we will do, though, you chaps, we'll get some spades from the outhouse at the back and have this little lot opened up again. This is fishy!"

"I wonder how the sergeant came to miss this?" queried Manners, when, some five minutes later, the juniors were taking it in turns to dig.

"He searched round by the back windows. I don't suppose it occurred to him to look for anything here. Besides, after all, why should he think of looking for this? He—My aunt! Look what old Herries has turned up!"

Tom Merry broke off with a cry of surprise as he saw something come up on the spade Herries was using.

It was an old-fashioned, curiously carved Chinese dragon in solid gold!

The juniors eyed the object with curious feelings, as Herries stooped, picked it up, and handed it to Tom Merry.

"There's something else underneath," panted Herries, "I felt the spade touch something hard."

He set to work once again, to bring to light a small, finely carved gold snuff-box.

"My hat!" gasped Jack Blake. "What have we got here—a blessed treasure trove?"

"Looks like it!" grinned Lowther.

"I don't know about that, you chaps," said Tom Merry seriously. "It seems to me that last night's affair was more serious than we have been thinking, after all."

"What do you mean, Tom?" asked Blake.

"That this little lot was in the safe when it was opened. The old professor was a very eccentric old cove, and it is quite possible that he had this sort of thing locked up in his safe."

"Phew! Look, there's another of 'em!"

Manners pointed to Herries, who was now holding up a small, bright box.

"That looks like platinum—it is, too!" announced Tom Merry.

The juniors worked away at the hole, and after a couple of hours' digging, unearthed quite a little pile of gold, silver, and platinum articles, the value of which was considerable.

Suddenly Blake, who had taken a spade, stooped and picked up a small article from the soil.

It was a key!

"I don't suppose that this is very valuable, Tom," he said, with a laugh. "You don't want to keep this?"

Tom Merry smiled, but as Blake was about to fling the key from him into the grass, he gave a shout.

"Hold on, Blake!"

Something about that key had struck Tom Merry as being vaguely familiar. Its shape seemed to be out of the ordinary.

Where had he seen a key like this one before?

He took it from Blake. Then, after a quick examination, he gave another shout.

"It's just like the key Uncle Bob sent me to open the safe with!"

He thrust his hand into his jacket pocket and brought out the key his uncle had sent to him.

The juniors whistled.

The two keys were identical!

Tom Merry was trembling with excitement as the truth burst in upon his brain.

"The Head's key!" he almost shouted.

"What?" yelled the juniors, in chorus.

"This is the missing key of the Head's safe," repeated Tom Merry. And quickly he told the wondering Fourth Form juniors the history of the two safes.

As he finished, Arthur Augustus came bursting through the thick, matted undergrowth beneath the trees.

"Bai Jove! I say, you chaps," he panted excitedly. "who do you think those wottahs were? Aubrey Wacke and Gwald Cwooke!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I am not surprised," he said. "They are about the only pair capable of carrying out a rotten stunt like this. The thing we have to prove now is that they wrote those letters."

"I saw them distinctly as they parted and ran in opposite directions in the lane!" panted Arthur Augustus. "I fell o'ah a beastly woot in the gwass, and they got cleah away. Bai Jove! What's happened heah, Tom Mewwy?"

Tom Merry told him.

"Come on, you fellows!" he went on. "This wants thinking over quietly. Let's get back to the school. We can take this collection with us."

By the time they reached St. Jim's it was past seven o'clock, and the juniors had come to the conclusion that the whole jape had been worked by Racke and Croke.

"What we have to find out now is how they got to know about uncle being the owner of Summerfield Towers," said Tom Merry, as they reached Study No. 10.

"Yes, but the key of the Head's safe was missing before you got that letter, Tom," reminded Harry Manners.

"I know. That is one of the mysteries we have got to get to the bottom of. And that is why I don't want anything said to those rotters or the Head until we have thrashed it out more," said Tom Merry. "We mustn't let the cads think we suspect anything until we are sure of 'em, and—"

He broke off abruptly.

He was standing gazing down into the quad as he was speaking, and something—or, rather, somebody—he saw down below took his mind back to a happening on the Wednesday before morning school.

Below, in the quad, was a figure walking—or waddling—towards the School House. It was Baggy Trimble.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Baggy Trimble!"

The juniors looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, what about him?" asked Manners.

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"Why, he was the beggar who brought up the registered letter in which my uncle sent the key," said Tom Merry. "Blake, old man, run down and collar him. We'll put a few questions to his fat majesty!"

Blake left the study, and returned in a couple of minutes with the fat Fourth-Former in tow.

His fat, pasty face was pastier than ever, and he looked from one to the other of the juniors in growing alarm.

Then his eyes fell upon Tom Merry over by the window. And from Merry's face his eyes dropped to the key that the leader of the Shell was still absently swinging on the end of its string.

Baggy Trimble's eyes nearly started out of his head. "Oh, Tom Merry!" he stammered, forgetting himself in his agitation. "Where did you get that key? It is the key of the Head's—"

He suddenly caught himself up with a start. But it was too late.

The interest of the juniors had suddenly taken a quick leap.

Tom Merry raised the key and looked at it.

"How did you know that this is the key of the Head's safe?" he asked. "For you were going to say 'safe,' weren't you?"

Baggy Trimble seemed to wobble in his utter collapse.

"Ye-es; b-but—" he stuttered.

"How did you know?" repeated Merry sharply.

"I—I w-was the one who—who p-picked it up!"

"My hat!"

"You picked it up, did you?" asked Tom Merry. "Where?"

"On the Head's mat outside his study door."

"What did you do with it then?" persisted Merry, his face set and stern now.

"I—I gave it to Racke!"

The juniors gasped.

"How was it you came to give it to Racke?" was Tom Merry's next question.

"Because he made me!" quavered Baggy Trimble, thoroughly frightened at the expressions of the juniors. "He—he bumped me, and—and the key fell out on the floor!"

"Look here, Baggy," thundered Tom Merry, gripping the fat junior by the wrist. "You are keeping something back. Better get it off your chest whilst you've the chance. Remember, the police are on this case."

Baggy Trimble's knees knocked together with sheer panic. In stumbling sentences, he told how he had listened outside the door of Study No. 10. How Racke and Croke had come along and caught him, and, under penalty of taking him to Tom Merry, had forced him to tell them what he had heard.

D'Arcy listened with growing indignation, and when Baggy had finished he strode towards the door, glancing at his wrist-watch as he did so.

"Where are you going, Gussy?" asked Blake, as the swell of the Fourth opened the door.

"I sha'n't be long, deah boys," replied D'Arcy. "We have all the pwoof we want now. I am goin' to give Wacke a feahful thwashin' before he goes to see the Head, bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 15.

Gussy Demands Satisfaction!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was seething with righteous anger.

Quite apart from his own serious position—for he was not yet out of the wood, he well knew—the swell deeply resented the act that had caused him to lead his chums into the events of the night before.

His own honour had been outraged. Racke had attacked him in the one vulnerable point. He had appealed to D'Arcy's honour to keep mum and act as a sporting gentleman by helping one in trouble.

And the whole thing had been a hoax!

The swell of St. Jim's was trembling with indignation as, knocking upon the door of Study No. 7 in the Shell passage, he threw it open and stalked in.

Aubrey Racke and Croke looked up sharply.

They had been spending a jumpy hour, wondering if D'Arcy had recognised them that afternoon.

"Hallo, my clever safe-breaker!" greeted Aubrey Racke, with a sneer. "There are no safes here to rifle, Gussy!"

"You wascal, Wacke—"

Arthur Augustus eyed the black sheep of St. Jim's with withering scorn.

His hands were clenched tightly as he advanced towards Racke.

"You absolute wottah, Wacke!" he said. "Bai Jove! I am afwaid that I cannot find words sufficiently expressive to record my opinion of you—you beastly plottah!"

"Splendid!" murmured Racke complacently. "I believe

I have heard you speak in something of a similar strain before, D'Arcy, Get out!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus stood firm, rolling back his sleeves. "Not before I have administered to you a feqful thwashin'!"

"What, another one?" said Racke sneeringly. "You have promised me that many times, and—"

"Yaas, wathah! And you are going to get it now, Wacke, you cad! Put up your hands!"

Racke turned pale. "Here, get out!" he repeated. "Crooke, help me to chuck this silly ass out. I—"

Arthur Augustus swung round suddenly upon Crooke.

"Bai Jove, he had bettah not!" he said.

"Come on, Crooke, you idiot, out with him!"

Racke made a rush at the swell, but D'Arcy was ready for him.

With a neat tap he planted his bunched fist squarely upon

the nose of Aubrey Racke, and that junior staggered back with a howl of pain and rage.

Crooke, in response to Racke's request, had made to grab at D'Arcy.

"Bai Jove! Cwooke, you are neahly as big a cad as Wacke, and I'll deal with you latah!"

He thrust aside the toady's grasping hands, twirled him round, caught hold of the back of his collar, then ran him from the study, shutting the door upon his rapidly retreating figure.

Then D'Arcy turned and faced Racke.

"Now, Wacke, put up your hands, you cad!" he said sternly. "Bai Jove, you are goin' to get the thwashin' of your life! Up with them, you wottah!"

Racke breathed heavily.

He could see that D'Arcy's mind was thoroughly made up, and he also knew that when D'Arcy was in his present mood he was a highly formidable opponent.

In addition, Racke sensed that Arthur Augustus knew more than was good for his—Racke's—peace of mind. How the thump had he come to find out?

"I—I can't fight you now, you silly idiot—" began Racke.

"You are goin' to fight now, Wacke, whether you like it or not. If you don't put them up, you beastly cad, I will swike you wheah you stand!"

Racke, realising there was no help for it, put-up his hands. The next moment the juniors were at grips.

Outside in the corridor Crooke stood listening for a moment or so, hesitating what to do. That D'Arcy had seen them and found out something was patent. The thing was how much had he discovered? Should Crooke go back into the study and help his crony, or—

He was pondering over the situation when hurried foot-falls along the passage caused him to turn his head. A look of fear came into his eyes as he saw the Terrible Three and the chums of the Fourth approaching.

"Where's Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"In there," said Crooke meekly, pointing to Study No. 7. The leader of the Shell flung open the door and the juniors crowded about him as he looked into the study. The sight that met their eyes held them spellbound.

Arthur Augustus, the light of battle in his eye, was fore-



Tom Merry broke off with a cry of surprise as he saw something come up on the spade Herries was working with. It was an old-fashioned, curiously carved Chinese dragon—in solid gold! (See Chapter 14.)

ing Racke all round the room, getting in blow after blow as he did so.

"Great Scott!" breathed Blake admiringly. "Hasn't Gussy got it this time! Oh! Lovely! Right where it should have been, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!" gasped the swell, following up his attack. "The awful cad deserves a thwashin', and, bai Jove, he's goin' to get one!"

Thud! Thump! Crack!

The two combatants waltzed round the room.

That Aubrey Racke had lost his nerve was apparent to the juniors.

He was not fighting at all—merely waving his arms about wildly, trying to avoid the rain of blows that was descending upon him.

Racke knew that the game was up, and panic had seized him. He knew that Gussy must have found out who had sent that letter. Visions of the police-court rose before him, and knocked all the fight he ever had clean out of him.

The juniors forgot the serious sequence of happenings over the past twenty-four hours as they watched the well-merited punishment the highly indignant swell of St. Jim's was meting out to Racke.

They cheered D'Arcy delightedly.

Suddenly Racke threw up a trembling hand.

"I—I've had enough, hang you!" he gasped.

"Bai Jove!" panted Arthur Augustus, turning a warlike eye over his shoulder. "Now where's that wottah Cwooke?"

Crooke, trembling in the corridor on the outskirts of the juniors, heard his name, and, with terror in his eyes, he turned to bolt.

But he was unfortunate.

A grim figure in mortar-board and gown stood immediately behind him. It was the reverend Head of St. Jim's.

Dr. Holmes, who had just received a telephone message from the sergeant of police, barred his way with upflung hand.

"I want you, Crooke," thundered Dr. Holmes, in the terrible voice he used on occasions when the discipline of the school had been flouted and the guilty party stood before him.

Crooke's face went as white as a sheet. The Head

(Continued on page 28.)

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OUR "SCARLET STREAK" COMPETITION

First Prize £5,
AND FIVE PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

YOU MUST NOT MISS THIS, BOYS!

(RESULT OF CONTEST No. 4 appears on PAGE 11.)

HERE is the ninth of our topping one-week competitions, you fellows. You will enjoy it because it is a novel idea, with some jolly good prizes which simply *must be won*.

You are, of course, all reading our new serial, "The Scarlet Streak," which appears on the next page. Well, we have written a paragraph about it which the artist has put into picture-puzzle form.

In attempting to solve the puzzle it will help if you read the story *and* see the film ; also, the sense of the sentences will assist you. But you should remember each picture or sign may represent part of a word, one, two, or three words, but not more than three words.

Try your hand at solving the paragraph—you can see that the opening words are "Pirate Cove, a beautiful . . ."—and then write your solution **IN INK** on a sheet of paper. Cut out the puzzle and the coupon together; attach your solution to the tablet, and, having signed and addressed the coupon **IN INK**, post your effort to:

GEM, "Scarlet Streak," No. 9,

Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4 (Comp.), so as to reach there not later than FRIDAY, JUNE 18th. Any efforts arriving after that date will be disqualified.

Next week we shall give you another new puzzle and there will be more splendid prizes to be won.

RULES WHICH MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO.

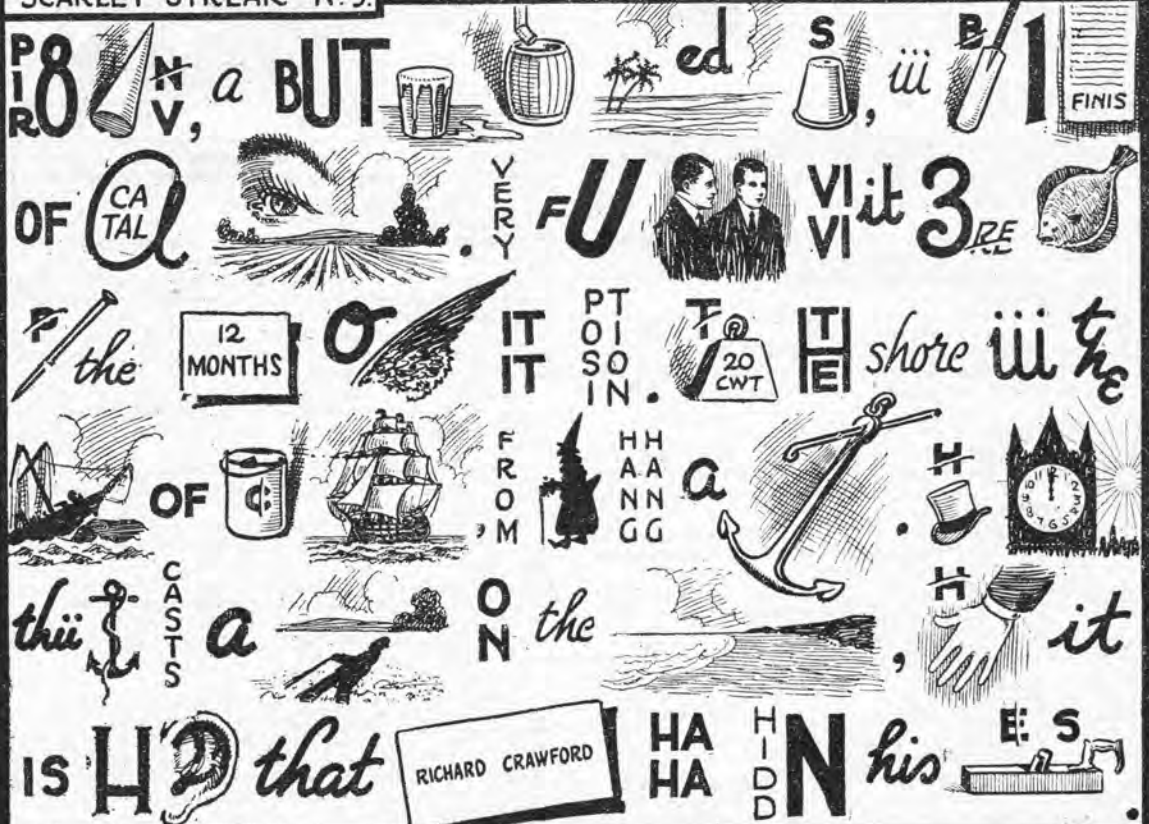
The First Prize of £5 will be awarded for the correct, or most nearly correct, solution. The other prizes will follow in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to divide any of the prizes should it be necessary in the case of ties.

You may send as many efforts as you like, but each must be complete in itself, and must consist of a solution, a puzzle, and a signed coupon. Solutions containing alternatives will be disqualified. The decision of the Editor will be absolutely final.

No one connected with the staff or proprietors of this journal may compete.

Our Grand Story. "The Scarlet Streak," has been filmed by the Universal Co. Read the story *and* see the film.

"SCARLET STREAK" №9.



I enter "Scarlet Streak" Contest No. 9, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

GEM. Closing Date, Friday, June 18th.

CONVERGING TRAILS! Three separate parties are hurrying with all speed towards the spot where the plans of the Scarlet Streak lie hidden. Who'll get there first?



An Amazing Story of Romance and Adventure based upon the Death Ray, the most sensational invention of modern times!

The Secret Shack!

THE rusted cable broke in Bob's hand, and he dropped through thin air!

One glimpse he had of the great bulk of the carrier swaying madly against the blue sky above him—then it vanished as he fell, turning over and over, towards the black spikes of rock and the foaming sea far below.

He saw Mary falling near him—then everything was lost in a mad whirl as the white-tipped waves raced to meet him.

The speed at which the broken carrier was travelling when they fell lent direction to their flight. Instead of dropping straight downwards, they fell at a slant, and it was this lucky chance that flung them clear of the menacing rocks.

Bob expected every instant to feel himself smashed against the unyielding ramparts of that iron-bound coast. Instead, he slashed headfirst into water and went down to a tremendous depth ere he was checked by the smooth base of some sea-washed rock-turret and sent lifting to the surface again.

The fall through the air had robbed him of half his breath; his lungs were almost bursting when his head shot clear of the waves. Instinctively he trod water, gulping in air as he looked about for Mary. He saw her just breaking the surface half a dozen yards away and struck out towards her.

"Hurt?" he gasped.

She shook her head, and smiled as he slipped a hand about her shoulders and held her while she drew in great gasps of air.

Distant now, Bob could see the broken carrier flailing and swinging madly as it still raced, on its single pulley, along the cable to the far side of the gulf. To his right rose the beetling cliff; high up on the ledge from which the cable started, he could just make out the straining figures of the Monk and Pug Logan. Both were looking down, searching the water for sign of them.

Farther along, where the cliff ended and gave place to a rocky foreshore, Bob glimpsed two running figures—the count and one of Livingston Scott's men.

"The count's over there," he told Mary, shouting the words to make them carry against the beating of the waves on the broken base of the cliff. "Can you swim to—"

"Yes—I'm all right!" Mary answered. "I can manage."

Side by side, they struck out for the point towards which the count was racing. It was some little distance, and they had to fight against the ugly, vicious currents set up by the rocks all around. But they made it safely; the count knelt on a broad slab of smooth rock and helped Mary out of the water, while his companion assisted Bob.

Up on the ledge of rock, high above them, the Monk and Pug Logan watched. They were too far away to be able to do anything, and there was no way down by which they could make any fresh attack on the pair. The Monk snarled angrily, as he saw his late prisoners helped from the water.

"Evans again!" he grated, whirling round on the prize-fighter. "Evans again—he got her away! Why didn't you lay him out while you—"

"What chance did I have!" Pug growled back at him. "The whole gang of 'em was on me like lightnin'! An' I came after them two as quick as I knew 'ow—but who'd he thought that young fool Evans would have had pluck enough to chance that rusty old carrier? The thing's been ready to break for—"

"And it did break!" the Monk snarled, his black eyes glittering and his thin lips stretching across his ugly teeth as he spoke. "It did break! And what happened? Instead of the pair of them falling on those rocks and being smashed—they fall clear! That fellow Bob Evans is born lucky, but—"

"But he won't be lucky next time I get my mitts on 'im!" the prize-fighter cut in. "He fetched me a real nasty clip on the jaw just before he got away! Nobody can 'it Pug Logan like that and get away with it!"

He bunched his big, broken-knuckled fists as he spoke, and his features took on a grim expression as he peered down.

It did not take Bob very long to recover from his immersion, but Mary had been through a great deal that day, and Mrs. Scott saw that she was put to bed and made comfortable. By the following morning, however, she was almost as fit as ever, and once again she and Bob tried to solve the secret of the Cross Word puzzle that her father had left her.

The puzzle contained a message which would lead them to the hiding-place of the blueprints of the Scarlet Streak.

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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

BOB EVANS, a young reporter on the "Daily Times," has sacrificed his career in order to aid

RICHARD CRAWFORD and his daughter MARY in their fight against a gang of crooks. Mr. Crawford has invented a death-ray machine called the Scarlet Streak. A crook known as

THE MONK is trying to get possession of the invention in order that he may terrorise the world. He quarrels with two of his

aides, LEONTINE and COUNT K., who make friends with Bob and Mary. Mr. Crawford has disappeared, and Mary and Bob believe him to be dead; only the count is aware of the fact that the inventor is in hiding. Mary finds a cross-word puzzle left by her father, which contains the secret of the hiding-place of the blue-prints of the Scarlet Streak. They are somewhere on Catalina Island. With Bob and Leontine, she goes in a motor-boat, driven by the count, towards the island. They are

pursued by the Monk, his henchman, Pug Logan, and two other men, who wreck their craft and capture Mary. They take her to Pine Bluff, the home of Pug Logan, situated on the side of a hill near a derelict mine. Bob, Count K., and Leontine, however, reach the island in safety. After calling upon

LIVINGSTON SCOTT, an old friend of the inventor, Bob hears from the Monk. Anxious for Mary's safety, he visits the arch-villain, only to be trapped and confined to a room next to where Mary is imprisoned. Mr. Scott, assisted by a stalwart party of men, follow hard on the trail, with the result that Bob and Mary are able to gain their freedom. They are making a daring escape in a rusted carrier which runs along on a thin length of steel cable stretching across the gulf to the hill beyond, when the trolley breaks, precipitating them both to the black spikes of rock and the foaming sea below.

(Now read on.)

"He was working for weeks on this Cross Word puzzle," said Mary, "so I know that the secret is in it; in any case, he mentioned it in his letter."

Mary smoothed out the crumpled sheet on the table before her. She had changed the out-of-date frock which the woman at Pug Logan's shack had forced on her, for a trim riding-habit. Livingston Scott kept a number of horses, and she and Bob had been riding through the woods earlier in the morning.

The room in which they sat was broad and sunny, and led directly to the porch in front of the mine-owner's house. It was a luxurious place compared with Pug Logan's dilapidated shack, and Mary could not help appreciating the comfort of it.

She reached out for the telegram which had been sent to Scott, and which was signed with the word "Shadow."

"It's queer that Mr. Scott should have had this," she said to Bob.

"In a way, it is," Bob answered. "I'd like to know who the dickens the 'Shadow' is!"

He did not know that it was under this cognomen that Mary's father hid his identity—that, in their fight against the Monk and his gang, the grey-haired inventor was ever watchful, ever on the alert to do what he could to aid them; although he dared not reveal to them the fact that he was not dead, for that would have brought the Monk down on him once more.

"The numbers of the telegram from the Shadow must be the key to the Cross Word puzzle," Bob went on, as he gazed at the telegram. "I was thinking about it last night, and I believe I got somewhere near it! I worked part of the thing out!"

"You did!" Mary exclaimed eagerly. "How much have you—"

She broke off as Livingston Scott came into the room.

"How are things going?" the bearded mine-owner asked.

"Pretty good," Bob answered, and he held out to him a sheet of paper bearing the results of his work. "Getting somewhere near the solution, I think!"

Mary peered at the paper as Scott took it. She read a few words from it and turned to Bob with shining eyes.

"That's shaping something like it!" she said quickly. "Bob, you're getting near it! We'll beat the Monk to those blueprints yet. I believe we can—we can—"

Her eyelids drooped as she caught the back of her chair, and she swayed a little on her feet. Bob slipped an arm about her waist and supported her as he looked into her face, from which the colour was ebbing slowly.

"I feel faint. It's the excitement, I guess," she said slowly. "I'll go out and get a breath of fresh air."

The excitement was partly responsible, but the truth was that she had barely recovered from her experiences of the previous day. Bob offered to help her out to the veranda, but she waved him aside.

"I shall be quite all right in a minute or two," she said, and went out to lean against a post in the cool out-of-doors.

Bob watched her go, then sat down slowly and returned to the Cross Word puzzle.

"Better let her be alone," Livingston Scott said quietly. "Mary's a bit weak yet, but she'll soon be fit again. She's had a pretty tough time, you know."

Out on the veranda Mary stood leaning against the post and watching the life of the broad yard and garden at the back of the house. A man was rubbing down a horse in the stables, another was leading a pair of animals to water. In the distance she could see the workings of one of Livingston Scott's mines, while, away to the left, stretched the rolling, sunlit expanse of his ranch.

To her ears the sound of voices came from around the corner of the house; she could not distinguish the words nor the tones, but she had an idea that it was the count who was speaking.

Mary was right. The count was talking to Leontine, and the woman was angry.

"Why don't you get hold of that Cross Word puzzle from Bob?" she wanted to know. "Get it and work it out for yourself—then we'll get the plans of the machine. That's what we're here for, isn't it? You said that you were splitting with the Monk so that you could work on your own and get those blueprints for—"

"I sha'n't do anything of the sort!" the count cut in, and there was quiet anger in his voice. "I have made my plans, and I intend to stick to them!"

"Then what are your plans?" Leontine snapped at him, and her sloe-black eyes narrowed as she spoke, while her lips tightened. "Why don't you tell me what you intend doing?"

"Because I don't wish to," answered the count evenly, and, with the words, he turned away.

Leontine remained looking after him. She could not understand the count; he was altogether mysterious. The

Monk had never trusted him, and Leontine could see that he had some motive in not accepting the opportunities which were daily being presented to him. It would have been the simplest thing in the world to have stolen from Bob and Mary the only clues they had to the whereabouts of the plans of the death-ray machine—yet the count would not do it!

The count strolled around the corner of the veranda, and he checked in his stride as he saw Mary leaning a little distance from him, one hand pressed to her reeling head. She was swaying against the handrail before her, and the count jumped towards her, catching her as she drooped there.

"Thank you!" whispered Mary. "It's so silly, but I—I feel a little—"

"Don't try to talk," the count said, as he held her. "You'll feel better in a moment, then I'll help you into the house. Lean on me for a bit—that's right!"

He held her, and he was still holding her as Leontine started to follow the count. She stopped dead on the corner at what she saw—Mary in the count's arms!

She believed that it was because of Mary that the count refused to adopt drastic measures in his search for the plans of the Scarlet Streak—and now all Leontine's suspicions were fulfilled. She glared as she saw the count helping the girl back into the house, and she stepped forward to where she could watch her being assisted into the broad room.

Bob and Mr. Scott hurried to meet them, and Leontine saw Mary shake her head and wave away proffered assistance as she straightened from the count's supporting hands.

"I'm ever so much better now," Mary told them. "It was only—"

"If you're not better—I've got some news that will make you well!" Bob exclaimed, as he picked up a sheaf of papers from the table. "I've solved the puzzle!"

"Solved it!" gasped Mary, and her eyes lit up as she spoke.

"I've solved the puzzle," Bob repeated. "The blueprints are hidden at Pirate Cove—we must dig under the shadow of the anchor at noon."

"Pirate Cove!" Mary exclaimed. "Where is that?"

"Over the mountains—just off the north road," Livingston Scott told them. "I know the anchor, and you can't miss it once you get to the cove."

"Then we'll go now," Mary exclaimed. "We'll—"

"No!" Bob shook his head, then glanced at the count. "I don't think Mary is well enough for a long—"

Mary started to protest, but Scott cut in with:

"Too late to go to-day—it's past noon, and Pirate Cove is at the other end of the island."

"Then that settles it!" the count exclaimed to Bob. "And perhaps it is just as well—Mary will be fit enough to go to-morrow."

And in the doorway behind them, Leontine smiled in crafty fashion—and slipped silently away.

"If you care to walk over to the workings that you can see on the side of the hill at the back," said Scott, "I've a map of the island in the office there, and I can show you the exact location of the cove."

Bob reached for his hat as the mine-owner picked up his own. The three of them started for the door, then paused as they saw that the count was not accompanying them.

"I'll not come, if you'll excuse me," he said. "There are one or two little things I should like to do—you'll be back for lunch, anyhow, I expect."

"I'll bring the plan back with me," Scott told him. "Maybe you'd like to see it."

The three left the room.

The count waited until they were out of sight before he, too, made for the porch. He slipped quickly down the steps and strode straight for the path that led down to the shore. The path carried him for nearly three miles over the cliffs, then he left the track altogether and started across broken ground to where a thick cluster of trees showed in a hollow some way ahead.

Into the trees he plunged, stopping once he was amidst them to turn and scan the ground over which he had passed. For long minutes he stood there, until he was absolutely certain that he had not been followed. Assured of this, he continued his way through the wood.

Bushes and brambles were netted about the spaces between the trunks of the trees, but the count forced a way through them, reaching a narrow, moss-grown path which took him to a little clearing before a low-fronted shack in the very heart of the wood.

The ground in front of it was heavy with lank grasses, and the count ploughed through them, stepped to the low door and knocked on it deliberately—three distinct raps.

He waited a few moments, while he gazed cautiously at the close-packed trees from out which he had come, then the door opened and he stepped inside.



The terrified animal, the bit fairly between its teeth, tore on straight for the headland that jugged sheer over the sea. Its flying hoofs ploughed the turf, sending lumps back at Bob as he spurred his own mount in pursuit. (See Page 27.)

He found himself looking into the lined features of Mr. Crawford. The inventor smiled as he shook hands with the count, then waved to what stood behind him.

"Almost finished!" he exclaimed softly.

The count stood staring at the massive bulk of the machine before him—the second Scarlet Streak. The count had seen the death-ray machine which the Monk had accidentally destroyed, but this one looked even bigger and more powerful. There was a brutal strength in the great, swivelled head, and the mighty lens seemed to glare at him like a single malignant eye.

"You've been working hard!" he commented, as he turned to the inventor again. "What I came to tell you was this: they have solved the hidden message, and are to make the attempt to-morrow."

Mr. Crawford smiled, and nodded his head.

"It is well—and I have almost finished another machine to replace the one that the Monk destroyed." He frowned a little, as he added: "Are you sure that no one suspects that I am on the island?"

"They don't know that you're still alive!" the count exclaimed. "Let alone that you're a Catalina! Well, I can't stop—I've got to get back to Scott's place. Is there anything you want here? Or have you—"

"I've got everything that I need," the inventor answered him. "I managed to tap one of the power-lines from a mine on the other side of the hill there, and that gave me the current for a trial test of the Scarlet Streak. There's absolutely nothing I need—except your assurance that you won't tell a soul that I am here."

"No one shall know that," the count said quietly. "You are safe enough."

He shook hands as Mr. Crawford held the door open for him.

The count slipped out. For a moment Mr. Crawford watched him until he was lost to view amidst the trees. The inventor stood looking at the sunlit foliage, and at the curving bulk of a road-surmounted hill beyond the wood—then he closed the door, barred it firmly with a stout balk of wood and turned once more to the death-ray machine.

The Watcher in the Bushes!

THROUGH the woods, in the same direction as that which the count had taken, Leontine was hurrying swiftly, making for Pine Bluff. It lay some distance farther on than the shack in which the inventor was hiding, and it was only by chance that the count sighted her as she hurried over the brow of the hill back of the hidden building.

She was silhouetted against the skyline, and the count stopped dead as he saw her; he watched her until a dip in the trail took her out of sight—an instant later and he was hurrying after her.

He knew that the trail led only to the derelict mine at Pine Bluff; and above the mine was Pug Logan's place and the temporary headquarters of the Monk's gang. If Leontine was going in that direction, she meant mischief!

Leontine's face was set as she neared her destination; she had no difficulty in locating Pug Logan's cabin; it was the only one for some distance around, and the trail through the woods led up the side of the cliff and straight to it.

She approached it by the back way, and saw a woman washing clothes at a tub in the yard behind the house. A man, whom she recognised as Pug Logan, was sitting near reading a paper and smoking.

He started when he saw Leontine coming across the grass and jerked to his feet, while his wife watched her suspiciously.

"Hallo, Pug!" Leontine greeted. "You remember me, don't you? Is the Monk here—I want to see him, and it's urgent."

The prize-fighter's battered face split in a grin as he answered:

"The Monk ain't here right now. I dunno where he's gone. Anythin' I can do?"

Leontine did not answer for a moment; she glanced around, then smiled at him as she half-whispered, with a glance over his shoulder to his wife at the wash-tub:

"I want to talk to you alone."

"Sure! Come around the side of the house," Pug

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answered, and he touched her arm to guide her in the right direction.

There was a lawn at the side of the house, with a garden seat set by some bushes.

"We can talk better if we sit down," Leontine suggested, as she walked towards the seat and dropped on to it. The pugilist seated himself at her side, then leaned his head forward confidentially to hear what she had to say. "You don't know when the Monk will be back?" Leontine asked.

"He may be along any time now," Pug told her. "Or he might be a long while. I don't know where he's gone, or where he—"

Leontine cut him short.

"The Monk and I have had a row," she said. "But I want to get back with him."

"I've heard you wasn't friends no longer," the prize-fighter remarked, as he leaned his head closer to catch her whispered words.

"Well, I've found out something that'll make him a bit more friendly," Leontine assured him. "I've learned that the blueprints are in Pirate Cove—dig under the shadow of the anchor at noon, and you'll find them."

"That's good news!" Pug exclaimed, and his beady eyes lit up as he spoke. "If you was to hang about here a little while, you might see the Monk and tell him it yourself."

"No, I can't stay," said Leontine. "But if you—"

"Just leave it to me," Pug broke in. "I'll square things with the Monk, and we'll all go after the stuff together."

He stood up as he spoke, and Leontine rose with him.

"You'll do your best to put things right for me, then," she said, as she held out her hand.

"You bet I will!" the battered-faced man told her heartily.

And Leontine moved away, making for the front of the shack. Pug stood there watching her go until she turned the corner, then he sank back on his seat, smiling softly to himself. To Pug, Leontine was somewhat different from other members of the Monk's gang, and it wasn't often that he had a chance to speak to anyone so well-dressed as she.

From the back door of the shack Mrs. Pug Logan watched Leontine go, and then she came striding across the grass, the copper-stick held in her hand. Before Pug knew what had happened he took the weight of the wet copper-stick on the back of his head, and as he jumped to his feet his wife struck out at him again.

"What's the matter?" Pug gasped. "What the— Who—why—"

"Matter enough!" his wife gasped. "When ye get to thinkin' ye're a sheikh, it's time I was changing yer ideas!" She enforced her opinion with the copper-stick, while Pug grunted as he tried to escape:

"That's one o' the Monk's friends. They had a row, an' she wanted me to fix it for her."

"Ye're the one that'll need fixin' when I've done with you!" snorted Mrs. Logan. "Flirtin' right in front o' my very eyes an'—"

She ceased belabouring him with the stick as a growling voice sounded:

"What's the trouble here?"

It was the Monk, and he stood glaring at the pair of them. His eyes were narrowed, and his thin lips were pressed to a bloodless line. The leader of the gang had been in a raging temper ever since Bob and Mary had escaped him, and Pug knew better than to trifle with him.

The woman, too, was scared by the gleam of his sunken eyes, and she hurried away, while Pug straightened his clothing as he stepped towards the Monk.

"I got some good news for you," he said. "It's jest what you've bin waitin' for, an' when you hear it you'll—"

"What is it?" the Monk ripped at him. "Don't blather! If you've got something to say, say it, an' say it quick!"

His eyes glinted, and his bearded jaw jutted as he snapped the words.

"That girl who double-crossed you—Leontine?" Pug exclaimed. "She—"

"Has she been here?" demanded the Monk.

"Yes, and she wants to get square with you," Pug answered him. "She's told me where the blueprints are, and she—"

"Told you where—"

The Monk gasped as he gripped the man's arm. Through his sleeve Pug felt the fierce bite of the crook's strong fingers, and he said quickly:

"Yes; they're in Pirate Cove. You've got to dig under the old anchor there at noon, where the shadow falls!"

A thin, evil smile curved the corners of the Monk's lips

as he heard the words. Then he gazed speculatively at the prize-fighter.

"Too late to go to-day," he said slowly. "We'll go to-morrow. We'll take your boat, and be there ahead of Evans!"

"We can dig around a bit before noon," Pug told him. "It'll be easy. I can calculate just about where the shadow will fall."

They moved towards the house. Had they looked behind they might have noticed a slight movement in the bushes at the edge of the wood near the shack. The count was there. He had followed Leontine, and had stopped to listen when the Monk appeared on the scene.

He had heard all he wanted to know, and he knew where Pug Logan kept his boat, moored to a shelf of rock that ran right down to the sea.

In a matter of minutes the count was by the boat. He jumped into it, searched around for a moment, then picked up an adjustable wrench from under a seat near the engine. He lifted the cover, and bent over the engine itself.

It was barely a minute's work for him to remove the jets from the carburettor. He slipped them into his pocket, closed the engine cover, jumped from the boat, and then hurried off in the direction of Livingston Scott's house.

The Monk might think that he could make an early start for Pirate Cove on the morrow, but he would be mistaken!

The Dive of Death!

THE following morning, Mary and Bob made ready for the ride to the cove. They had expected the count to come with them, but when Livingston Scott had the horses brought round there was no sign of him. The mine-owner himself could not accompany them. He offered an escort of men from his mine, but they preferred to go alone.

"Good luck!" he called to them, as Bob mounted. "You know the way? Cross the mountains, and follow the North Road."

"We shall find the way all right," Bob answered. "Ready, Mary?"

She nodded, and a moment later they were cantering down the trail to where the rocky heights of the Catalina Hills rose blackly against the morning sky.

"It's funny that Leontine didn't want to come," Mary commented, as they reined in their horses after the first canter. "But I haven't seen anything of her for the last hour or so."

"Perhaps she didn't understand that we were starting so early," Bob answered.

But Leontine knew that well enough. Even while they were speaking of her she was hurrying towards Pug Logan's shack, and she reached it just as the two were about to start for the motor-boat.

The Monk stopped short when he saw her.

"Good-morning!" he greeted, and there was a menacing quality in his evil voice which Leontine did not notice.

She glanced meaningly at Pug Logan. He grinned understandingly, then slipped away and left the two together.

"Did you get my message?" Leontine asked.

The Monk nodded.

"Yes, Pug delivered your message all right," he told her calmly, "and we're just about to start after the blueprints."

"Good!" Leontine exclaimed. "It was a stroke of luck that I found out where they were hidden. Mary and Bob Evans will be starting about now."

"Will they?" asked the Monk. "I don't think I shall let them worry me!"

He spoke grimly, and Leontine laughed at his tone. She hesitated a moment, then said:

"So you were starting right away. I'll come with you, then."

Abruptly the Monk's manner changed. His eyes narrowed, and he bent closer as he hissed:

"You're out of it! You told Pug where the blueprints were hidden, and that's all I wanted to know!"

Leontine stared at him blankly, and she was still staring as a man came up, carrying two shovels, and followed by Pug Logan.

"Take them down to the boat!" the Monk snapped at him.

"All ready an' waitin' for you," Pug Logan called as he moved off with the man.

The Monk turned to follow, but Leontine caught his arm.

"You don't mean what you said, do you?" she asked, and her voice was dangerously calm.

"You bet I mean it!" the crook snarled, and with the words he swung away.

Leontine's dark eyes blazed anger as she watched him disappear down the path. She had not expected this. For a space she stood trembling with anger; then, quite suddenly, she smiled.

The Monk was going by boat. A car would be quicker. She could hire a machine from a place on the far side of the Bluff, and be at Pirate Cove long before the Monk or anyone else could get there!

With this idea in her mind she hurried away.

Down on the shore, Pug Logan dismissed the man, and placed the shovels in the boat. He and the Monk climbed in. Pug jabbed the starter-handle of the motor home and heaved on it. Nothing happened, and he lifted the engine cover and peered at the engine.

"Somebody's swiped the carburettor!" he gasped.

"What!" exclaimed the Monk, and he bent to look down. Pug Logan pointed out the gaps left by the missing jets.

"Who could have done this?" the crook gasped. "If I——" He broke off, then looked at his companion. "Somebody knows what we're after!" he said quickly. "But we can beat 'em yet. Get a car. We'll cross the island and get a boat on the other side."

"We can get to the Cove without another boat," Pug told him, as he slammed down the engine hatch and slipped into his coat. "Where are those spades? Come on!"

And they started to retrace their steps at a run.

In the meantime, Leontine was hurrying round Pine Bluff. It was farther than she thought to her objective, and it was some time before she reached the place. A score of men worked a small mine here, and she knew that they kept a Ford car for bringing up their supplies.

The man who owned the car made no difficulties about letting her hire it, and he was soon backing it out of the barn in which he kept it.

"What's the time now?" Leontine asked, as the man brought the machine to a halt.

"Half-past eleven," he answered.

"How long will it take to get to Pirate Cove?"

"About half an hour, if we hurry," the man answered.

"Not as it's a road you can hurry on, because——"

"I'll drive, you show me the way," Leontine exclaimed.

"Get a couple of shovels first."

The man hurried off, while she stood waiting impatiently until he threw the shovels into the back of the car. She had cut things finer than she had imagined; it was going to be something of a race to get to the Cove before the others.

She slipped into the driving-seat, and the man had to make a jump to get into the back seat as she sent the Ford away with a rattle and a roar.

As she got away, the Monk, too, was starting. He had a powerful machine, but he knew that he would have to shift it over the roads to get to the cove before Bob and Mary.

The two were cutting across country, so that there were three parties converging on the Cove, and each making for it by a different route, all going as hard as they knew. Twice Bob and Mary had missed their way, and they were pushing their animals to make up for lost time.

Leontine had got every ounce of speed that she could out of the Ford, and she drove in a fashion that scared the man behind her. They had covered some distance, when the road began to curve, and, beyond the bend, Leontine could catch the blueness of the sea.

"Steady!" the man gasped, as he leaned over from behind her. "There's a bad bend right on the edge of the cliff, and——"

The man's voice ended in a gasp of terror. The road seemed to end right on the edge of the cliff; actually, it bore sharply to the left.

Leontine trod hard on the brake-pedal and hauled on the steering-wheel. The car skidded madly; the off-side wheels skidded off the road in a cloud of dust, and the owner of the Ford was flung sheer out of the machine to the steep slope beyond.

Leontine did not stop. She sent the Ford on again without an instant's pause, round the bend and down the slope.

At the very moment that Leontine was racing madly down at it, Bob and Mary were approaching it from the other side, hidden by the banks. From the corner they could cut across country in an almost direct line for Pirate Cove, instead of following the curves of the road.

They heard the thunder of the roaring machine before it turned the corner, but it was on them ere they could pull up. It smashed straight at them.

Mary's horse reared madly, just missing the thundering car. Bob switched his animal out of the way in the nick of time, and he gasped as he saw that Mary's horse had taken fright and was bolting.

READ THE STORY!

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SEE THE FILM!

Straight off the road it went, the bit between its teeth, and racing wildly. Its flying hoofs ploughed the turf, sending lumps back at Bob as he spurred his animal in pursuit. But his horse had not the maddened fear of the scared animal, and Mary shot ahead of him.

Down the slope of one hillside she went, and the runaway pounded straight for a headland that jutted sheer over the sea.

Mary pulled with all her strength on the reins, but the animal was holding the bit fairly, and she could make no impression on him.

On to the headland he went as though he meant to plunge with his rider into the sea beyond.

In the last possible moment he stopped, four legs apart, steel-shod hoofs ploughing the ground. He stopped with such suddenness that Mary was flung out of the saddle.

Right over the edge of the cliff she went, plunging to the sea beyond.

Bob, racing up behind, saw her go. He did not hesitate. He reined in his animal, leaped from the saddle, jumped to the brink of the cliff, and the fraction of a second later he was diving for the white patch, far below, that marked the spot where Mary had fallen.

He slicked through the waves, plunging to the green of the deeps below the surface.

Down he went, his eyes wide open, seeking some sign of Mary.

He saw rocks and shingle on the bottom, he glimpsed the tangle of a weed-grown wreck, and in the heart of it, caught by the clinging weeds, held by the soft clutch of rotting woodwork, he saw Mary!

(Don't miss the concluding chapters of this thrilling yarn next week, chums. This will, incidentally, be your last chance of entering our £10 Scarlet Streak Competition.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 956.

D'ARCY'S NIGHT OUT!

(Continued from page 21.)

advanced through the now divided juniors and stepped into the study. He took in the situation at a glance.

"D'Arcy, it was not for you to take the law into your own hands," he said severely. "You apparently have found out the truth, however."

"Bai Jove! Wathah, sir!"

Dr. Holmes turned to the cringing and now thoroughly frightened Racke.

"I have just received a telephone message from the police, Racke," he said. "They have interviewed a person named Lodgey, and he—"

A low cry burst from Aubrey Racke's colourless and now swollen lips.

"Did he—he—" He stopped in utter confusion.

"He has informed them of his and your parts in this disgraceful business," said Dr. Holmes grimly. "He also told them that you removed and buried some very valuable gold and silver antiques from the safe at Summerfield Towers. When the police arrived a little time ago they had disappeared. What have you done with them?"

Again Racke allowed a cry to leave his lips.

"We—were buried all that stuff, sir," he stammered. "We did it for—for a joke. It's all quite safe, and—"

Tom Merry stepped forward.

"We have all the antiques, sir," he said. "We found them this afternoon. We also found this—"

He held up the missing key of Dr. Holmes' safe.

"Where did you find it, Merry?" asked the Head, in great surprise.

"Buried with the treasure, sir," replied the leader of the Shell. He turned to Baggy Trimble, who had been looking on with tremulous interest. "You'd better tell Dr. Holmes your part in the affair, Trimble," he suggested dryly.

And Baggy Trimble did.

As Arthur Augustus predicted, there was a "feahful wumpus".

Needless to say, Aubrey Racke and his cronies Crooke nearly suffered the supreme punishment of expulsion.

It was only the appeal of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy that saved them.

As he put it to the Head:

"It was my fault for bein' such a sillay—such a duffab, sir. I ought not to have taken notice of such an appeal. But, you see, they appealed to the honah of a D'Arcy, and—"

"D'Arcy," said the Head, "your participation in the unfortunate affair is deserving of severe punishment—"

"Bai Jove, sir!"

"But your sense of honour is a laudable one," went on Dr. Holmes. "It is to be regretted that Racke and Crooke do not share it in equal proportions. I will think it over, D'Arcy."

And, eventually, Aubrey Racke and Crooke thought it over with painful regularity for a day or so. In fact, every time they attempted to sit down they heartily regretted the part they had played in D'Arcy's Night Out.

THE END.

(There will be another rattling fine story of Tom Merry & Co. in next week's GEM, entitled "The Madness of Manners!" Mind you read it, chums.)



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