

**"GUSSY, THE WAITER!"** SIDE-SPLITTING LONG COMPLETE  
SCHOOL YARN WITHIN.

# The GEM

2<sup>D</sup>



## CHAPTER 1.

## The Major!

"G O it, deah boys!"  
 "Grooogh!"  
 "Wow, Bwothahs,  
 Wow!" quated  
 Arthur Augustus severely.  
 "Pway do get a move on,  
 deah boys!"

"Phew! Shurrup, you!  
 Why, you—"

"Don't waste bweath in  
 talkin', you know! Pway put  
 your beef into the wovin',  
 Tom Mewwy!"

"Why, you—you—" splut-  
 tered Tom Merry.

"Wow, Bwothers, Wow!"  
 again quated Arthur Augus-  
 tus, lazily dangling a slender  
 hand over the side of the  
 boat. "Do buck up, Blake!  
 We shall nevah weach Sam  
 Kettle's cafe at this wate, and  
 I am vewy thirsty!"

"You—you image!" gasped  
 Tom Merry.

Both he and Jack Blake  
 ceased rowing. They mopped  
 streaming brows and  
 glowered sulphurously at  
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.  
 The other fellows in the boat  
 —Lowther, Manners, Digby  
 and Herries—grinned.

It was a Wednesday half,  
 and Tom Merry & Co. had  
 taken a boat up river for the  
 afternoon. It was also a hot  
 day, and a beautiful day.  
 The hot sun beat down from  
 a cloudless sky on wooded  
 banks and sparkling river—  
 and on the perspiring oar-  
 men. Boating, on a hot  
 summer's day, had its draw-  
 backs. Tom Merry and Jack  
 Blake found it hard work.  
 Apparently Arthur Augustus,  
 reclining gracefully among  
 cushions in the prow, did not  
 find it hard; perhaps that was  
 because he was not rowing—  
 only criticising and giving  
 orders to the fellows who were  
 rowing.

"You—you silly image!"  
 repeated Tom Merry, heated  
 in more ways than one. "In-  
 stead of lying there wagging  
 your silly chin why don't  
 you come and take a hand with the sculls?"

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"He hasn't touched a scull all the afternoon!" gasped  
 Blake. "Gussy, you lazy slacker—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come and take a turn!" roared Blake wrathfully.

"We'll see how you like pulling in this sun! You can  
 jolly well pull us to Sam  
 Kettles on your own now!"

"Bai Jove! I am far too  
 fatigued, Blake!"

"Come on—take my place,  
 you lazy slacker!"

"I uttably wefuse to do  
 anythin' of the kind, Jack  
 Blake! In the cires—"

"We'll see about that!"  
 said Blake grimly, twisting  
 round and grabbing Arthur  
 Augustus by the feet. "Up  
 you come! Yank the dummy  
 up, chaps! Shove the sculls  
 into his fists, Tom. Stand by  
 with a scull, Digby, and if  
 he jibs hit him on the napper  
 with it!"

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# GUSSY



"Gweat Scott! Weally, you fel-  
 lahs— Yooooop!"

Bump!

The back of Gussy's head hit the  
 floorboards with a crack as Blake  
 hauled on his elegantly clad legs. Tom  
 Merry also made a grab at the wildly  
 waving legs, while Digby grasped a  
 scull and jumped up. The boat rocked

wildly as the yelling Arthur Augustus struggled up into  
 a sitting position, his features crimson with wrath.

"Yoooooop! You feahful wuffians—"

"Going to row or not, Gussy?" demanded Blake.

"I uttably wefuse to— Oh'wikey! Keep off with that  
 wotten scull, Digbay!" shrieked Gussy. "Mind my bags!  
 You are wumpling them feahfully! I wefuse— Yow! All

wight, you wuffians! Yaas—  
 yaas!"

"You'll do your whack and  
 row?"

"Yaas, yaas! You feahful  
 wascals! Ow, ow!"

Arthur Augustus decided to  
 row. He wished now that he  
 had lain low, and said  
 nothing, instead of criticising  
 the other less fortunate  
 fellows.

He jammed his eyeglass  
 into place and gave his grinning chums an icy, withering  
 glare. Then he carefully folded his boating blazer, placed  
 it on the seat by his side, and picked up the sculls.

"Go it, Gussy!"

**"ALL THINGS COME TO HIM WHO WAITS!"**

Gussy's a waiter, and every possible  
 trouble comes to him in this price-  
 less long complete yarn of Tom  
 Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

—HIS CUSTOMERS ROAR AT HIM—& TURN CHAIRS & TABLES OVER!

# the WAITER!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD



"Put your beef into it, old chap!"

"Row, Brothers, Row!" misquoted Monty Lowther, with a chuckle.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus started to row with dignity, but he did not put his beef into it. Even so he found it hot work, and the perspiration began to stream from him, while the grins on his chums' faces made him almost stop work more than once. But each time the scull in Digby's hand bade him keep on.

But journey's end came at last—and none too soon for Arthur Augustus. A turn in the river brought Riverside Cafe into sight, and Arthur Augustus pulled towards it wearily. If he had been thirsty before he was more than trebly so now.

The boat thudded against the little jetty, and the juniors tumbled ashore, eager for much-needed refreshments.

Riverside Cafe was nothing more nor less than a little wooden shanty stuck on a patch of rough grass. It was kept by Sam Kettle, a disabled ex-Service man and an old friend of Tom Merry & Co., and it was a favourite calling-place for picnic parties, and much patronised by St. Jim's fellows on summer halves and evenings. At his little cafe Sam also sold stores to odd boatmen and fishermen.

Altogether the cafe was a very useful place in summer, and very popular both with St. Jim's fellows and local pleasure seekers.

Several of the tables set out on the grass in front of the cafe were already occupied with St. Jim's and Grammar School fellows. Sam himself was busy at work repainting the sign over his doorway. But he came down the ladder and greeted Tom Merry & Co. cheerily.

"Ginger-beer for seven, and plenty of it, Sam!"

"Very good, Master Merry!"

"And a lemonade for the major, Sam!" said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a laugh. To Sam Kettle, mention of "the major" was like a red rag to a bull. For the major was none other than Major Croaker, Sam's neighbour—and the two were far from being neighbourly.

Sam's cafe was not popular with Major Croaker. It was set on a triangular piece of waste ground, bordered at the front by the towing-path, on one side by the woods, and on the other side by a white-painted fence. Beyond the fence, through a thin belt of woodland, showed Major Croaker's house.

To the major the cafe was a nuisance. Picnic parties who visited the cafe left litter about, according to the major. According to him also they made an infernal din, and worse—trespassed upon his property.

Naturally, the major blamed Sam Kettle; though Sam refused to admit his responsibility for what his customers did.

But the major did more than object to the presence of the cafe. He also claimed ownership of the waste land upon which it stood, and had given Sam notice to quit on numerous occasions. So numerous, in fact, had his notices been, that the matter had become a standing joke in the neighbourhood.

For Sam Kettle ignored them. The ramshackle shanty called Riverside Cafe had stood there for long years, and had belonged to Sam's father before him. In Sam's view the ground was as public as the woodland path that led to it through the woods from Rycombe village. Had Major Croaker any legal right to evict him he would have done so years ago. But it seemed clear that he hadn't. It was sheer bluff, and Sam knew it was bluff.

None the less, Sam's position was difficult. The major was a powerful man locally, and though he made no legal move to evict him he made things unpleasant in other ways for the ex-Service man.

But Sam did not fear him—far from it. On one famous occasion, when the major had forced himself into the shop, Sam had given him the contents of a lemonade siphon over his crusty features. Hence Lowther's remark.

"Lemonade—yes, I'll give 'im lemonade!" grinned Sam. "Let the major come trespassin' behind my counter agen, that's all!"

"Has he visited you again lately?" laughed Tom Merry.

"No; but he's always writin' complainin', like, and threatenin' to have me and the bloomin' cafe kicked out of this," said Sam grimly. "Jest let 'im try, that's all! If he could prove his right to this 'ere land he'd have got me out legally long ago—that's what I says."

"Well, that's pretty clear, Sam!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! Stick to your guns and bothah the cussy old major, deah boy!"

"I'm goin' to, Master D'Arcy! My father had this cafe afore me, and what I says is this: Let the old hunks prove his right to this patch of land, and I'll clear out soon enough. And, what's more—Comin', sir!"

Sam Kettle broke off and hurried away to attend to an impatient customer.

The juniors seated themselves at a table in the shade of the cafe. Just above their heads was the lowered window shutter, which formed a sort of counter when the window was raised. Within the cafe itself were several small tables, at one of which three juniors, wearing Grammar School caps, were seated, with glasses of ginger-beer before them.

But Tom Merry & Co. didn't glance into the cafe—or, if they did, they did not notice the Grammarians.

"Thank goodness for a bit of shade!" gasped Blake, mopping his heated brow. "Sun-bathing may be all right, but give me—Hallo! Look who's—Oh crumbs! Look out!"

Blake broke off with a yell, and leaped up, but he was too late.

From the opening above their heads came a sudden fizzing sound, and then—

Swooooosh, swooooosh, swooooosh!

Three streams of lemon-coloured liquid shot over the lowered counter. One took Blake full in the face. Another went down the back of Tom Merry's neck. The third stream hit Arthur Augustus on the left ear.

"Yarrooop! What the—"

"Yooooop! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Gwooooh! Why, what—Gug-gug! Stoppit! Gweat Scott!"

The three juniors leaped up, almost upsetting the table, with yells of astonished alarm and rage. Arthur Augustus shrieked as the stream fairly swept him fore and aft.

Then they saw what it was. Framed in the window space were three grinning and well-known faces—Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and Carboy, their old enemies of the Grammar School.

"It's that rotter Gay!" yelled Blake. "Quick! Collar—Groogh!"

Swoosh, swoosh, swoooooosh!

The grinning Grammarians still held the hissing lemonade siphons in their hands, and they were going strong. Tom Merry & Co.—scarcely one of them escaping the deluge—leaped and danced away, and then made a combined and furious charge into the dim interior of the cafe.

"Collar the rotters!" hooted Tom Merry.

"Yas, watah! Smash the feahful wascals!" shrieked Gussy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yelling with laughter, Gordon Gay & Co. dodged round the tables and leaped to escape. Gordon Gay made a flying leap through over the lowered counter, and easily got clear. Carboy emptied his siphon into Blake's wrathful face, and as Blake staggered back, thus stopping the rush, Carboy vaulted through the window space after his leader.

Tom Merry and Blake followed recklessly. The rest rushed at Frank Monk—to go headlong over a table the desperate Monk overturned in their path.

Crash!

"Yarrooogh! Look out! Yooooop!"

Amid the uproar and confusion Monk dodged clear and leaped for the open door. Too late to stop him, Monty Lowther grabbed a large juicy meat-pie from the counter, and sent it whizzing after him. At the same moment Herries grabbed one of the Grammarian's glass of ginger-beer, and sent the contents streaming after the meat-pie.

Both missed Frank Monk. But neither was exactly wasted. For just as the flying Grammarian leaped through the doorway an elderly gentleman strode round the corner.

He was a stout, florid gentleman in golf attire. And the flying Frank Monk met him in full career, and there was a terrific collision.

Frank's head took the old gentleman in the chest. The juicy meat-pie burst amid a smother of sticky pastry on his chin, and the flood of ginger-beer splashed into the new-comer's florid features.

Swoosh!

Bump!

The old gentleman staggered backwards with a startled howl, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, recognising him in sudden horror, ejaculated:

"Bai Jove! The majah!"

## CHAPTER 2. The Accident.

"OH, great pip!"

There was a sudden silence.

"G-good gad! G-gug-grooogh!" gurgled Major Croaker.

He sat and gasped and panted as if for a wager, blinking through particles of meat and pastry that adhered to his thick eyebrows, with ginger-beer dripping from his chin.

Frank Monk sat on the step, opposite to the major. But not for long. The moment he recognised the old gentleman he gave one horrified blink, and then he leaped up and bolted for his life.

Tom Merry & Co. let him go. They were too startled to do anything else. Sam Kettle, who had been attending to customers at a far table, came hurrying up. He jumped as he sighted the unfortunate major.

"Strewh!" he gasped. "What—what's happened 'ere! Them young rips—"

"Villain!" gurgled Major Croaker, shaking a furious fist up at Sam. "Groogh! Rascal! You shall pay dearly for this!"

"Eh!" Sam Kettle stared at him. "What have I done, sir?"

Major Croaker spluttered wrathfully, and staggered to his feet.

"You—you rascal!" he hooted. "Assaulted, begad! I am hurt, injured, and humiliated, Kettle. And you are to blame, my man!"

"Oh, am I?" grunted Sam Kettle. "How is it my fault? I didn't ask you to come 'ere, did I?"

"No; but you incited those young villains to assault me and to throw abominable stuff at me!" roared the major, getting his parade voice back again. "I will have the law on you for this, Kettle!"

"Get on with it, then!" snorted Sam Kettle independently. "Ain't you always goin' to have the bloom in' law on me? That's nothin' new, Major Croaker!"

"What, what? Do not add further insolence to your abominable behaviour, Kettle! All these years you have defied me, but my—grooogh!—patience is exhausted, my man! I came here to make a complaint—"

"You never comes here for anything' else, do you, sir?" said Sam, with heavy sarcasm. "What's the matter now? I suppose you've heard some poor children enjoyin' themselves here—"

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"I have heard village children here making an abominable noise—a disgraceful uproar! They could be heard from my house!"

"Well, what harm were the kids doin'?" demanded Sam indignantly. "Let 'em enjoy themselves, I say. In any case, it ain't my fault; I ain't responsible for them making a row."

"You are responsible, Kettle, by allowing this wretched shanty to remain near my house!" hooted the major. "I have already ordered you to remove it. And this—this abominable outrage settles the matter. I give you a week's notice, here and now, to remove your wretched cafe from here!"

"Right, sir!" said Sam calmly. "I'll add that to the collection of notices I got from you—about forty of 'em. Why not make it a bloomin' illuminated address for a change, sir?"

There was a chuckle, the major's florid features crimsoned with rage, and he shook his fat fist in Sam's cool face.

"You—you insolent ruffian!" he bawled. "Enough! I mean it this time, my man! You have incited these young villains to assault me—"

"Bai Jove! Weally, sir," said Arthur Augustus, feeling it due to him to butt in, "you are quite w'ong there, Majah Cwoakah! It was not Sam's fault at—"

"Silence, boy! I will report your rascally behaviour to your headmaster, begad! As a governor of St. Jim's, I shall insist upon Dr. Holmes punishing you with the utmost severity. Kettle!"

"I'm here, sir! No need to shout!" said Sam Kettle sullenly. "No need to get these young gents inter trouble, neither. It were your own fault for comin' bargin' round the corner like—"

"Silence, sir! Enough! I give you one week to clear your nuisance of a cafe off my ground!" roared the major, and with that he shook a final fist and stamped away, disappearing through a gate in his white-painted railings.

"My only hat!" gasped Jack Blake. "He means it this time, Sam. Better look out!"

"You fellows had better look out, too!" exclaimed Levison grimly, who was seated at one of the tables with his chums, Cardew and Clive. "Old Croaker will make you sit up—"

"Blow and bother the old rotter!" grunted Tom Merry. "Look here, this is all the fault of that ass Gay and his pals. We'll make them sit up— Hallo, here's one of the bounders' caps!"

As he spoke Tom picked up a Grammarian cap from the floor. A glance inside the cap showed that it was Frank Monk's, and Tom shoved it in his pocket with a chuckle.

"We'll get 'em," he remarked, his eyes gleaming. "Monkey's bound to come back for his giddy cap. Drink up your ginger-pop, chaps, and let's clear!"

"But—"

"But we'll not go far," smiled Tom. "We'll hide in the bushes there, and if Monkey and his pals do come back—"

"Bai Jove! Good ideah, Tom Mewwy!"

They all thought it a good idea. They were probably booked for a licking if Major Croaker reported them, and they felt that Gay & Co. were responsible for the trouble and ought to pay.

Tom Merry & Co. were determined to make them pay. They drank up their refreshment, had a few moments' chat with Sam Kettle, and then they boarded their boat and departed.

But they did not pull far. Farther along the river-bank they jumped ashore and tied the boat up. Then they crept through the wood towards the cafe again.

On the edge of the triangular clearing they paused, keeping out of sight in the trees and thickets.

A glance showed them that Levison & Co. and most of the other fellows had gone, only a couple of St. Jim's fags being still at the tables. Business having slackened off again, Sam Kettle had mounted his ladder and resumed his sign-painting operations.

"No signs of the bounders yet," murmured Tom Merry, glancing away along the woodland path through the woods.

"But Monkey's bound to return for— My hat! There they go! Good!"

"Wippin'! You were quite wight, Tom Mewwy!"

Three lurking figures had suddenly appeared on the woodland path—three cautious youths, two of whom wore Grammar School caps! Tom's judgment was correct.

The three gave a cautious look round, and then they started at a run for the cafe.

"Now!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Rush the bounders and give 'em beans, chaps!"

"What-ho!"

And the seven St. Jim's avengers rushed from hiding, and made for the enemy with whoops of triumph.

But they whooped too soon. They were heard at once, and Gordon Gay gave a startled yell of warning.

"Look out, you men—a giddy ambush!" Gay and Carboy instantly turned about and bolted round the cafe. Frank Monk, who was inside the building, instantly gave up all thoughts of his cap and rushed out after them.

Then came the disaster—as unfortunate as it was unlooked for.

In his alarm Frank Monk quite forgot Sam Kettle and the ladder.

He rushed blindly through the doorway, and crashed full tilt into the ladder. There came a yell of alarm from Tom Merry as he rushed up.

"Look out, Sam! Oh, great Scott!"

Crash!

Frank Monk reeled back, almost stunned by the collision with the rungs of the ladder. But his headlong charge had fairly lifted the bottom of the ladder from the ground. A wild yell came from Sam Kettle, and the paint-can whirled one way, splattering paint far and near, and the brush went another way.

Then Sam himself came down with a rush, falling with a heavy, frightening thud to the ground.

He lay there motionless, his left leg crumpled up under him in a curiously ugly manner.

"Good heavens!"

Tom Merry ran and stooped over him.

Frank Monk was standing holding his head dizzily, but Gay and Carboy came running back at once, realising the matter was serious.

"Is he hurt, Merry?" panted Gay, in great alarm. "Oh, my hat!"

Sam Kettle half-raised himself, and groaned deeply as Tom put an arm under him.

"Sam, what is it—your leg?"

"Yes; it's broken, I think!" panted the cafe-keeper faintly, his face twisted with pain. "Don't—don't touch me for a bit!"

He lay there breathing hard for some moments, half-supported by Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus. The rest grouped themselves around, all their reckless high spirits fled now. Their little rag had ended in a serious accident, and they were all upset and alarmed.

"Better get a doctor, young gents!" panted Sam, at last. "It—it's my gammy leg, too! This—this looks like ruin for me. It were an accident, of course. But—but who's goin' to look after my cafe now? It'll be weeks afore I'm fit to—!" He broke off with a faint groan, and then was silent.

"Unconscious!" breathed Tom Merry.

"It—it was my fault!" gasped Frank Monk dismally. "What shall we do—?"

"It was no more your fault than ours!" said Tom Merry tensely. "We're all to blame. But—we're wasting time. I think the best thing is to take him along to Dr. Short's surgery—it's only a few minutes from here luckily. Find something for a splint and for bandages—smartly now!"

"We'll soon do that!" said Gay eagerly.

All the juniors were Scouts, Gay and Tom Merry being troop leaders at their respective schools. They had all had first-aid experience, and very soon they were bustling about, eager to do what they could for the injured man. A suitable length of wood was found, and the broken limb examined, put into place by Tom Merry, and a rough splint fixed. Then a hurdle was fixed up, and Sam Kettle placed upon it and made as comfortable as possible.

By this time Sam had come round again, and his strained, white face showed alarm as they raised him on the hurdle.

"Why—what— Hold on, young gents," he panted faintly. "Where are you takin' me?"

"To Dr. Short's place. He'll soon fix you up, and say what's to be done," said Tom Merry.

"But—but— Well, I s'pose it's the best thing to be done!" groaned Sam. "But what about my shop—who's goin' to look after it now?"

"We'll see to that, old chap!" said Tom. "We'll look up



Tom Merry & Co. leapt and danced away from the hissing siphons in the hands of the grinning Grammarians!

and let you have the key, and you can make arrangements later. Don't worry about that now."

But clearly the unfortunate Sam was worrying about that very much, despite the pain he must have been suffering. While the juniors fixed him up for the short journey he groaned dismally at the position. Summer was his harvest-time, and now he was booked to lie up for weeks, perhaps for months. And he could not afford to engage someone to take his place. Save for his small pension, the cafe was his sole means of livelihood.

"Wotten, bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great distress. "Weally, Sam, we are vewy, vewy sowwy about this. It is vewy unfortunate indeed. But pway do not wowy about it now, deah boy. We will make things wight somehow!"

"Yes, rather! Come along, you fellows!" said Tom Merry. "Gussy, you can stay behind and lock up. Bring the key along to the surgery!"

"The key's in a drawer under the counter, Master D'Arcy," panted Sam Kettle. "I'm sorry to bother you like this, young gents—"

"My dear man, wasn't it our fault?" said Tom.

In a silent group they started off with the injured cafe-keeper, only Arthur Augustus staying behind to see the place shut up safely. Arthur Augustus realised only too well that, but for their reckless ragging the accident would not have happened, and he was only too eager to do what little he could do to make amends in some way. Moreover, he was deeply upset over the affair—especially now he realised what a serious matter it was for the hapless Sam.

The cafe would probably be closed all the summer months now, for the injury to Sam's leg certainly looked serious. And if the unfortunate man depended on the place for a living, then it was indeed a tragedy.

Arthur Augustus thought of this dismally as he carried in the empty glasses and plates, and put the tables and chairs in the hut at the back of the shanty. Then the junior closed the wide window down, and fixed the shutters into place, and it was as he was just finishing locking the door that the great brainwave struck the swell of the Fourth.

It struck him hard, and almost took his breath away. "Bai Jove!" he murmured, his eye gleaming behind his eyeglass. "The vewy thing—the vewy ideah, bai Jove! What a weally wippin' bwainwave! Aftah all, it is up to us to make things wight for Sam! Bai Jove!"

In a state of great excitement Arthur Augustus hurried away towards Dr. Short's house. A swift run along the woodland path, and then along a narrow lane, soon brought him to the local doctor's house, and as he ran, Gussy's enthusiasm for his idea grew and grew.

He met his chums and Gay & Co. just emerging from the gateway in a subdued group.

"Well, deah boys, is Sam all wight?" panted Gussy as he ran up. "What does the doctor say?"

"Pretty bad, Gussy," was Tom's sober answer. "He says poor old Sam will be laid up for weeks and weeks, and—"



Possessed of plenty of pluck and a splendid cricketer is Algernon de Vere, a newcomer to the Greyfriars Remove. But he's a snob—an elegant snob whose supercilious airs soon get him into hot water with the free and easy Greyfriars fellows. Yet despite de Vere's haughty manner, beneath his dandified exterior is a secret—a secret that eventually causes his downfall and a sensation at Greyfriars. You must not miss reading this sparkling book-length story; see your newsagent about it right away.

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"Is he in the surgewy now?" demanded Gussy breathlessly. "I must see the poor old chap at once."

"You're too late, Gussy. Dr. Short's just taken Sam off in his car to the cottage hospital at Rylcombe. If you've got the key, though—"

"I have the key heah, and weally must see Sam," said Arthur Augustus. "I want to assuah the poor chap that all will be quite all wight at his cafe. You see, I have got a weally bwiliant bwainwave, deah boys."

"Well, what is it, Gussy?" asked Blake, with little enthusiasm. "If it's one of your usual brainwaves—"

"It is a weally bwight ideah," said Gussy eagerly. "You wealise what this will mean for Sam Kettle—that unless somethin' is done his cafe will have to be shut up? That will be a vewy sewious thing for Sam, you know. Pewhaps it will mean wuin for him. Someone else may see a chance and put a place up and take all his twade, or possibly that mean wottah, Major Cwoaker will seize his opportunity to get the cafe wemoved."

"Well, he's mean enough," admitted Tom Merry, nodding. "Yes, we're just worrying about all that, Gussy. It's rotten. But—"

"Vewy well, then! My ideah is this, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus triumphantly, blinking at his chums. "To save Sam having to close down—pewhaps altogether—I pwopose to wun the cafe myself—or with youah help if you like."

"Wha-what?"

"It was a weal bwainwave—stwuok me in a flash, you know," said Gussy modestly. "You see, Sam is only busy in holiday-time and on summah evenings. Vewy well. Instead of wasting time on ewicket or wovin', I shall take charge of—"

"Wasting time—on cricket!" gasped Tom Merry. "You—you owl!"

"I wepeat what I said, deah boys! After all, business comes befoah pleasure, and it is up to us to look aftah Sam's affairs now this has happened. Whether you fellows help or not, I am quite determined to take the cafe in hand," finished Gussy.

They all blinked at him.

"You—you really mean that, Gussy?" stuttered Blake, at last.

"Yaas—most certainly I do, Blake."

"You—you fearful chump!"

"You blithering fathead!"

"Weally, Blake! Weally, Tom Mewwy!"

"You must be potty," said Blake. "I only wish we could do something for old Sam. But—but you couldn't possibly do that. In any case, you burbling owl, the Head wouldn't allow it, you idiot!"

"I object stwongly to being weferred to as a burbling owl and an idict, Jack Blake!" said Gussy, with joy dignity. "Especially befoah Gwammahwians! Howevah, I wepeat that I am in deadly earnest, and I see no weason why the Head should not permit it. Wathah not!"

"But, you blithering fathead—"

"I wefuse to be called a blithering fathead, Blake!"

"But—but you can't be serious!" almost howled Blake.

"What about cricket and the rowing, and—"

"There is no need for you fellows to help—in fact, I would much wathah take charge of the business on my own—"

"But you'll be sacked if the Head hears of such a thing!"

"Wubbish!"

"If you think the Head will allow—"

"I am wowwyin' about Sam Kettle, not the Head," said Arthur Augustus, with lofty scorn. "In the unfortunate cires, I think it is up to me, and I am goin' to do the wight and pwopah thing. My mind is quite made up, Blake. I am goin' now to the cottage hospital to assuah Sam that it is quite all wight, and that I will be wesponsible outside school hours for his cafe."

"But, you silly chump—"

"If you would like to come with me—"

"No fear! You burbling fathead—"

"Wats! I wefuse to heah you, Jack Blake!"

And with that Arthur Augustus hurried away, his eyes gleaming with determination, and the key of Riverside Cafe clutched in his hand. Obviously the mind of Arthur Augustus was quite made up; and when once it was made up it was a fixture, as Blake & Co. had good reason to know, and they stared after their noble chum in speechless alarm and dismay.

### CHAPTER 3 Hot Stuff.

"O<sup>H</sup> crumbs!"

"Oh, my onlj, hat!"

"The frightful ass!"

Thus Tom Merry & Co., as they stared blankly after Arthur Augustus.

They were used to Gussy's "brainwaves," but they felt this was the limit of idiotic folly, much as they approved of the noble Gussy's resolve to help Sam Kettle in his extremity. But Gussy's way quite took their breath away. Certainly the school authorities, whether sympathetic towards the cafe-keeper or not, were not likely to agree to a St. Jim's fellow taking charge of the Riverside Cafe in his spare time.

But Arthur Augustus rarely did see eye to eye with his more practical chums.

"The—burling fathead!" breathed Jack Blake at last. "The idiot means it! I'm sorry for Sam, and I'd do anything reasonable to help the poor chap. But we can't let Gussy make such an ass of himself!"

"Impossible!" agreed Herries, shaking his head. "We should be the laughing-stock—"

"Just what Gussy would do!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Let him rip! After all—"

"You ring off, Gay!" snorted Blake. "You'd be the chaps to do the laughing, wouldn't you? Look here, we'll have to run after the ass—"

"No good doing that. Might as well try to argue with a mule as Gussy," said Herries. "He means business!"

"Let him go!" advised Tom Merry, restraining a smile. "Sam Kettle's too sensible to allow such a thing. He'll soon put Gussy off it."

"Well, that's so," admitted Blake, his brow clearing. "All right! Let's get back to tea, then!"

And Tom Merry & Co. started back for tea, parting with Gay & Co. on good terms for once; neither side felt like further ragging, after what had happened.

The juniors strolled back to St. Jim's, and they were half-way through tea in Study No. 6—the Terrible Three being honoured guests—when Arthur Augustus put in an appearance. Instead of sitting down at the table, the swell of the Fourth gave his chums a cold look, and started to rummage in the cupboard. He produced an old blazer at last, and started for the door again.

The juniors stared.

"Here, hold on, Gussy! Aren't you having any tea?" demanded the surprised Blake.

"I do not wequiah any tea, Jack Blake," said Gussy coldly.

"But, here—hold on, you ass! Where are you going with that?"

"I am going down to the Rivahside Cafe, to begin my duties theah!" answered Gussy icily. "Whatevah you fellows may think, I wegard it as up to me to make things wight for Sam Kettle."

"Oh, great pip! Then—then Sam's agreed to your potty idea?" yelled Blake.

"It is not a potty idea, Blake! It is a vewy good idea; and though Sam Kettle was vewy reluctant to agwee, he agweed aftah a gweat deal of argument. The mattah is now quite settled."

"Phew! How is Sam—" began Tom Merry.

"He is vewy comfortably settled in hospital, but I feah he is booked for a long stay," said Arthur Augustus quietly. "Howevah, it is a gweat welief to him to know that his cafe and business will be kept goin' durin' his absence. I have assured him that not onlay do I pwopose to keep it goin', but I pwopose to incwease the stock and make it a flouwishin' business."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hitherto," said Arthur Augustus, "Sam has been unable to extend his stock and business owin' to lack of funds. I pwopose," ended Gussy modestly, "to incwease the stock and the business genewally by supplyin' the necessawy funds and business ability."

"Oh! Oh crikey!"

"That is my pwogwamme. But I have no time to waste heah," said Gussy frigidly. "I am makin' a start this evening, and have a gweat deal to do befoah lock-up."

"But you'll be sacked if—"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus departed, apparently determined not to heed any pessimistic warnings.

"Well, my only topper!" groaned Blake. "That does it! If the Head hears about it—"

"Let's hurry through tea and go after him," suggested Digby. "He certainly means business, the awful ass!"

Arthur Augustus obviously did. And it was agreed to adopt Digby's suggestion, and tea was accordingly rushed through.

Meanwhile, the swell of the Fourth was hurrying riverwards. As usual, Arthur Augustus had taken up his scheme with whole-hearted enthusiasm, and he was eager to get to work. Not only was he taking the matter up from a sense of duty, but his tender heart was touched by the plight of Sam Kettle. And the opposition of his chums only increased Gussy's determination to see it through.

He reached the deserted cafe at last. Opening the door, he set to work making ready for business. A good look round showed him that most of the goods were clearly marked, while a price list of various foodstuffs and drinks hung on the wall, so that Gussy did not anticipate any trouble in that direction.

Out of regard for his natty, spotless flannels, Gussy had already changed into old clothes; and, finding a more or less white apron and chef's hat belonging to Sam Kettle, he donned them and set to work.

As business was slack at the moment, Arthur Augustus decided to do some painting, so he got to work on the wall, and painted a large sign advertising "D'Arcy's Cafe."

He had scarcely done so, however, when business became brisker. There was the sound of voices, and then two Grammar School youths appeared from the direction of the little jetty. Arthur Augustus recognised Lacy and Chandler of the Grammar School Fourth, and he frowned—he did not like either Lacy or Chandler. Then, remembering his new position, Arthur Augustus turned his frown into a smile.

"Good aftahnoon, deah boys!" he said, descending to earth gracefully. "Anythin' I can do for you?"

"G-good gad!" gasped Lacy, suddenly recognising Gussy.

"Oh, my Sunday topper! It—it's that fellow D'Arcy!" gurgled Chandler. "What the dickens—"

The Grammarians almost fell down at sight of Arthur Augustus in his apron.

"What the merry thump are you doing here in that rig-out, D'Arcy?" demanded Lacy blankly. "Where's old Kettle?"

Arthur Augustus explained. Lucy and Chandler gazed at him, and then doubled up and howled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" said Gussy severely. "It is weally nothin' at all to gwow wibald about, Lacy! It is a vewy unfortunate and sewious mattah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my Sunday tile!"

Arthur Augustus followed them into the cafe, highly indignant at their unseemly merriment.

"Tarts and ginger-pop, Gussy!" ordered Lacy, at last. "Oh, my hat! Jever know such a lark! What will his noble pater say when he hears! Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I were not wequiahed to be wespectful to customahs I would punch your wotten nose, Lacy!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Howevah, I wegwet that we have no tarts to-day—appawently we are sold out. But we have some vewy nice sandwich cake—"

"We'll have some of that then, my man!" chortled Lacy. "Here's the dibs—sorry I can't tip you, but I don't tip insolent menials!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus maintained a dignified silence, though he longed to punch the humorous Lacy's nose. He put the money in the till after cutting two slices of sandwich cake and serving the ginger-beer. Then, with a final haughty glance at the Grammarians, he gathered paint and brush and mounted the ladder again, leaving the two to their refreshments.

It was mistaken policy, however. Gordon Gay & Co. were fellows who, in the circumstances, would have played the game and refrained from ragging. But Lacy and his equally shady pal were not so particular.

"Well, the awful idiot!" giggled Lacy. "I say, what a lark!" He glanced round the little cafe, and his eyes gleamed as he sighted a big jar of mustard lying open on the counter. Close by was half a ham and a pile of newly cut sandwiches. "Just keep an eye on that burling idiot, Chandy!"

Chandler nodded and gurgled as, working swiftly, Lacy opened sandwich after sandwich and daubed mustard thickly on the ham inside. He finished the big pile, and then, opening up the sandwich cake with a knife, he likewise daubed the jam-covered layer thickly with mustard, and carefully replaced the top layer.

He had scarcely done this when cheery voices and laughter sounded from the river. A racing four had just landed at the jetty, and four oarsmen in the St. Jim's rowing shorts and vests ran up to the cafe. They proved to be Figgins, Kerr, Redfern, and Owen, of the New House. Evidently they were unaware of Sam Kettle's accident, for before they reached the cafe Figgins had bawled out:

"Aho! there, Sam, old son! Ginger-pop for four thirsty mariners!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus realised that business was becoming brisker, and he nearly fell down the ladder in his haste to obey the order. If Lacy & Co. had been started at

sight of him, however, Figgins & Co. were more so—much more so.

They nearly fainted as they sighted the new cafe manager.

"G-good lor!" gasped Figgins. "Do—do my aged eyes deceive me, or is that really our own Gussy in that apron?"

Arthur Augustus explained, and Figgins & Co. restrained their hilarity with difficulty. They were sorry enough to hear the news about Sam Kettle, but really—

It was only by a manful effort that Figgins retained his gravity.

It appeared that Figgins & Co. wanted tarts as well as ginger-beer, but when Arthur Augustus recommended the sandwich cake they agreed to have that instead of tarts. So Gussy carefully cut a slice for each after serving the ginger-beer.

At that Lacy and Chandler hastily finished their own refreshment and slipped out. They got out only just in time. Figgins & Co. were hungry as well as thirsty, having been for a long pull up-river. Almost simultaneously they started work on the sandwich cake. And almost simultaneously, as they took big bites, their faces underwent sudden changes, becoming agonised in expression.

They had found the mustard.

All four jumped up, spluttering and choking, and then came four spluttering yelps.

"Yarrop! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Groooogh! What the— Ow, ow! Groooogh!"

"Mustard!" gurgled Figgins, his eyes glaring ferociously. "Gug-gug— Groogh! Mustard!"

Crash!

The table went smashing over amidst a crashing of breaking glasses.

"Bai Jove! Whatvah is the mattah, you fellows?" gasped Gussy, turning back from the doorway.

"Groooogh! Matter?" shrieked Figgins, spluttering frantically. "Yow-ow! My mouth's burned out! Groogh! Mustard! It's a rotten School House jape! Collar him!"

"Bai Jove! Weally— Oh, gweat Scott! Yarrop!"

It was Gussy's turn to yelp, and he did yelp in astonished surprise and pain as four incensed oarsmen fell upon him

the moment they had recovered somewhat from the effects of the mustard. Arthur Augustus crashed to the floor with all four on top of him. The oarsmen's mouths were red hot, and in their agonised wrath they naturally imagined Arthur Augustus was responsible.

"Yawwoooooop!"

A wild, dismal howl escaped Arthur Augustus as he crashed down with the four wrathful New House men on top of him, and it was this howl which greeted Blake & Co. as they trotted into the clearing.

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### The Major Decides to Go.

"WHAT the dickens—" gasped Blake.

"Hallo! That sounds like old Gussy!" grinned Herries.

Tom Merry. "He's soon got himself into trouble," said "Just what we expected of him! Let's see what's up!"

The School House fellows rushed into the cafe, and were just in time to save Arthur Augustus from a record ragging.

They dragged Figgins & Co. from their yelling victim, and the trouble was explained.

"But I put no wotten mustard into the cake!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! Keep those wottahs off, deah boys! There was no mustard in the sandwich cake. Lacy and Chandler had some onlay a few moments ago. And if—oh, bai Jove!"

"You say Lacy and Chandler had some, Gussy?" demanded Tom Merry, suddenly suspicious. "We met those two rotters just now outside, and we wondered what they were cackling about."

"Oh, bai Jove! They must have done it, the feahful cads!" gasped Gussy. "I left them in heah white I was paintin', you know. I wondahed myself why they went out giffin'. Gweat Scott!"

"You mean those cads did it?" yelled Figgins.

"They must have done. They had some of the cake, and there was none in it then, bai Jove!"

That was enough for Figgins & Co. They departed with a rush on the trail of Lacy and Chandler. And a moment or two later there arose a sudden succession of distant yells—yells that were in the unmistakable voices of Lacy and Chandler.

"They've got 'em," grinned Blake. "Good! Just the rotten sort of trick those cads would do. We'll leave 'em to it. Better chuck the rest of that cake away, Gussy. And now, what about it? You've made a good start, anyway—I don't think."

"If you have come heah to ewiticise, Jack Blake—" began Arthur Augustus heatedly.

"No, we haven't, Gussy," said Blake seriously. "Look here, do you really mean to go ahead with this game?"

"Yaas, I certainly do, Jack Blake!"

"Why not get the beak's permission first, anyway," said Tom Merry patiently. "Goodness knows we're all only too eager to help Sam Kettle. But—"

"I see no reason why I should get permission, Tom Mewwy! I shall not allow my duties heah to interfere with lessons," said Gussy frigidly.

"There's no reason to risk all this, though, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Look here, old man, why not let us all club together to hire a man to look after the place. After all it was mainly through us—"

"I did mention that to Sam Kettle, and he did not approve of the suggestion, deah boys," said Gussy, slightly mollified. "Sam is wathah queah, and though he twusts us he wufuses to twust stwangsahs. He also feahs twouble with the w'etched majah, you know. Howevah, it is too late to atah plans now. I have already given my word to Sam to look aftah the place, and I have no intention, whatevah comes or goes, to bweak my word."

"Oh dear! Then," said Tom Merry, glancing at his chums, "if you're determined, Gussy, we're game to stand by you and lend a hand. The Head might sack one, but he can't sack the lot of us."

"That's the idea," said Blake, nodding. "If Gussy means to be stubborn—"

"I have no intention of bein' stubborn, Blake. It is a mattah of honah and duty to me," said Gussy calmly. "And I do not wequiah any help as I do not wish to dwag you youngstahs into twouble if anything does go w'ong. Howevah—"

He paused. After all, as Arthur Augustus realised on reflection, it would be better to have his chums behind him in the project.

"Howevah," he resumed with dignity, "though I can cawwy on quite well myself, deah boys, I shall be pleased to have your aid at any time. I have a gweat deal of work

### THE WAY OF THE WIZARD!



A splendid fellow in every way—the finest cricketer in the school, yet without a trace of "side"—good-hearted, good-tempered, liked by everyone with whom he comes in contact. Such is Dick Lancaster, the new man in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars. If the truth were known, however, Lancaster is a crook, an impostor, a cheat, a notorious cracksman! Meet this amazing character in the sensational long complete school and adventure story of the chums of Greyfriars in this week's issue of

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to get done as I want to weorganise the business. I also want to wepaint the whole place, also those tables and chairs. I want to make the cafe more up to date and attractive, you know. As you see, I have painted a new sign."

"Oh, my hat!"

Arthur Augustus certainly did mean business.

And, after all, the whole idea began to appeal to Tom Merry & Co. It would be rather a lark to keep the business going for the unfortunate Sam Kettle, apart from the fact that the accident had happened through them, and that it was up to them to make amends if they could.

So, after some discussion, the juniors agreed to back up Arthur Augustus—though that youth insisted upon remaining in charge.

"We'll tackle the painting first," remarked Tom Merry, eyeing the shabby tables and chairs critically. "Are there any more brushes, Gussy?"

"Three or four, deah boy!"

"Good! Get busy, then, you fellows! Herries, tie that blessed dog up and lend a hand."

Herries had brought his bulldog, Towser, with him, and he snorted at that.

"Eh? Why should I tie old Towser up? Hasn't he as much right to be free as you, Tom Merry?"

"Oh rats!"

There was no time to argue the matter, so Towser remained free, and the juniors got busy. Brushes were rooted out from the lean-to shed behind the cafe, and the paint distributed. Arthur Augustus and Tom Merry carried on with the signboard which Sam Kettle had started, Blake and Herries began the big job of painting the building itself, while the rest concentrated on chairs and tables.

It was quite a busy scene. With jackets off and sleeves turned up, the enthusiastic painters soon made the paint fly—in more ways than one!

Figgins & Co. came back, looking breathless, but satisfied, having obviously dealt suitably with Lacy and Chandler. They stared and then howled at the busy scene, but Tom Merry & Co. did not heed their chipping, and after they had finished their refreshments Figgins & Co. boarded their craft and departed—still laughing.

Other customers came and went, and it was just as the juniors were thinking of knocking off that Major Croaker happened.

The crusty old martinet came stamping into the clearing, and he nearly had a fit as he sighted what was afoot.

"Begad! What—what— Good gad!"

Obviously the major had received a severe shock—not only at sight of the St. Jim's juniors, but at the fact that the cafe was still open.

He glared in growing disappointment and wrath.

"What—what—what the deuce are you boys doing here?" he roared.

"Painting, sir, she said!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"I require no impudence," snapped the major, glaring now at the humorous Lowther. "What does this mean? I was given to understand that that fellow Kettle had met with an accident, and that this—this confounded place was closed!"

"Sam Kettle has met with an accident, sir!" retorted Tom Merry stoutly. "He's in the cottage hospital—with

a broken leg. But this cafe isn't closed, and what's more it's going ahead stronger than ever, Major Croaker!"

"What—what— Confound your impudence, what do you mean?" hooted the major. "I was hoping—I understood that this confounded place was closed owing to the fellow's accident."

"Well, it isn't, sir. It's remaining open," said Blake coolly. "Sam Kettle has plenty of friends to stand by him at a time like this."

"And what is more to the point, sir," said Arthur Augustus with frigid politeness. "Sam has friends who intend to see that no ill-natured enemy of his shall take a wotten advantage of his unfortunate accident in any way, Majah Cwoakah."

"What—what— Good gad! You impudent—"

"But this is our busy day, sir," remarked Lowther blandly. "If you require anythin' we shall be delighted to serve you. We have some excellent ginger-pop, and something really hot-stuff in the sandwich cake line. What about a ginger-pop and a twopenny slice—"



Frank Monk crashed into the ladder, and a moment later Sam Kettle came crashing down to earth!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You impudent young rascals!" bawled the major, almost dancing with rage. "Cease that absurd painting this instant and return to your school!"

"Bow-wow!"

The juniors did not cease their painting. They ignored the irate old warrior and resumed operations vigorously—a trifle too vigorously, perhaps. The dancing major suddenly yelped as a spurt of red paint flew from Lowther's busy brush and struck his right eye.

Splish!

The next second—either by accident or deep design—a brushful of yellow paint from Blake's brush descended upon the major, spattering him from head to foot.

"Sorry, sir!" said Lowther.

"Awfully sorry, sir!" gasped Blake, looking down innocently. "Did I splash you? You're standing a trifle too near, sir!"

"Hallo, what's happened, you fellows?" asked Herries, looking round and shaking his brush at the same time. "I hope— Oh crumbs!"

The contents of Herries' brush descended full upon the

furious major, and again he was spattered from head to foot—this time in blue paint.

"Dear me—how unfortunate, sir!" said Herries, in some concern. "But you're standing too near— Oh, my hat! Here, leggo—yarooop!"

Obviously Herries had overdone it. He realised it as the major—in a towering rage now—grabbed him by the ankle and hauled him from the steps he was standing on. Herries descended to earth with a resounding bump and a howl. The major released him and grasped his walking-stick.

"You—you insolent, careless young villain!" he howled. "I will teach you to play such abominable tricks upon me! Take that, and that, and that!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooop!" roared Herries, as the walking-stick landed on his anatomy. "Oh crumbs! Yoooop! Help! Drag-gimoff!"

But there was no need for anyone to "drag-gimoff." Just then Towser made his presence felt.

Towser was devoted to Herries, just as his master was devoted to Towser. And Towser had already taken an instinctive dislike to the bullying major. Even while the domineering old warrior had been bawling Towser had been sniffing and growling about his golf stockings.

Up till then, in his rage, Major Croaker had scarcely been aware of Towser's presence. Now he became aware. He had just time to land three whacks on Herries when Towser gave a deep, fierce growl, and, leaving the golf stocking, he bestowed his attention—and his teeth—to the seat of the major's plus-fours.

The result was sudden and electrical.

The major gave a wild roar and a convulsive jump, his stick flying from his hand.

"What the deuce— Yooop! Good gad! Drag the confounded dog off!" he shrieked, jumping about madly.

"Towser! Oh, my hat!" yelled Tom Merry. "Call him off, Herries!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries, scrambling up. "Hang on, Towser!"

Towser, growling ferociously, hung on.

Tom Merry and Blake jumped to the rescue, however. They grabbed Towser and strove to drag him off, while the yelling, fuming major strove to drag himself off.

It was a tug-of-war, and as the bulldog's grip did not loosen, Major Croaker's plus-fours gave up the ghost, for something obviously had to go.

There was a ripping, tearing sound of rending cloth, and the major leaped away, free; but he left a square patch of plus-four in Towser's teeth as spoils of war.

Even so Towser was far from satisfied, and it was all Tom and Blake could do to hold him back.

"Better go, sir!" gasped Tom Merry. "If he gets free he'll have the whole suit!"

"Yes, I will go!" bellowed Major Croaker, backing away hurriedly and trying to cover the breech with his jacket by dragging it down. "And I will report this—this outrage to your headmaster. I will make you suffer—"

"Look out!" yelled Lowther. "He's getting loose!"

The major did not stay to see if Towser was getting loose. He abruptly turned tail and fled. A howl of laughter followed him as he vanished through the gate.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But the juniors sobered down quickly enough when they had time to reflect upon the unfortunate happening.

"Oh, my hat! We're for it now!" said Tom Merry, his face assuming a look of alarm. "We're forgetting the thumping old jossier is a governor of St. Jim's. He's bound to report this."

"Let him!" growled Blake. "Still, this comes of bringing that fatheaded dog, Herries. I told you not to bring him!"

"And I told you to tie him up!" snorted Tom Merry.

"Rats!" said Herries indignantly. "Think Towser was going to see me whacked by that bullying old idiot? Likely, I must say! In any case he deserved it, and more. The old rotter's been gloating over Sam Kettle's accident. It's pretty clear he came here to make sure the place was closed. Just what he's been trying to bring about for years."

"Well, that's so," said Tom grimly. "Any decent fellow would have shown more generous feelings in the circumstances. But the man's a bullying cad!"

"Yaas, wathah! Let the wotten majah do his worst!" said Arthur Augustus. "The Head dislikes him, and so do the othah governors, anyway."

"But that won't save us from a licking!" groaned Tom Merry. "Anyway, it can't be helped now. Let's clear up and get back home. Close on call-over."

A glance at the juniors' watches showed that it was perilously close on calling-over, and they hurriedly cleared up and helped Gussy to count the day's takings and lock up the cafe. Then they hurried back to St. Jim's, very apprehensive, but hoping for the best.

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## CHAPTER 5.

### No Backing Out for Gussy.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. spent an anxious evening. They expected every moment an urgent summons from the Head. But prep, supper, and bed-time came without the expected summons materialising.

They went to bed quite hopeful and relieved. Incredible as it seemed to them, knowing Major Croaker as they did, the major, obviously, had not reported them yet. Possibly he was not equal to making the report after his alarming adventure with Towser. Possibly he had given the subject due reflection and had decided not to take proceedings in the matter, or possibly he had decided to sleep upon it. The juniors hoped the former, but they were exceedingly doubtful, though hopeful.

At nine o'clock the next morning, however, Tom Merry & Co. knew the worst, and all their hopes fled. Just as they were getting ready for morning lessons Kildare brought a message from the Head.

The seven culprits were wanted in the Head's study at once!

The guilty seven groaned dismally and went.

The Head was there alone, and he gave the juniors grim looks.

"Late last evening," he began, eyeing the juniors sternly, "I had an unexpected visit from Major Croaker, of Riverside House. He has made a very serious complaint against you seven juniors. On two occasions last evening you made disgraceful assaults upon the major's person. Not only that, but I understand that you, Herries, incited your pet bulldog to attack him. Such charges appear to be utterly incredible, and I am now waiting to hear what you have to say in the matter."

And the Head waited grimly to hear what they had to say.

They had very little to say. The first "assault" was certainly an accident in so far as the major was concerned. Frank Monk had "budded" the major by accident, and the meat pie and ginger-beer were meant for him and not for the major. But on the second count they could not plead innocence. Those splashes of paint had not been accidental, and they knew it, just as the major knew it. As for Towser, Herries had most certainly not incited him to attack the old warrior. None the less—

The juniors explained as best they could. They told the truth and made no excuses.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Holmes as they finished.

"Am I to understand, then, that you have actually undertaken—to keep that cafe going in your spare time, boys?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Absurd! Utterly absurd!" snorted the Head. "I am sorry for this man, Kettle, and I appreciate your generous motives in the matter. But it is utterly absurd and ridiculous, and you should have approached Mr. Railton or myself in the matter before making such a farcical promise, D'Arcy."

"I see now that I should have done so, sir, and I regret that I did not," said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "I trust, however, that you will overlook my ewwah, and will now give your kind permission to the ventuah, sir."

But D'Arcy's trust was sadly misplaced.

The Head almost exploded.

"I shall most certainly do no such thing, you foolish boy!" he hooted.

"Bai Jove! Weally, sir—"

"Silence! While I appreciate your motives, and while I am sincerely sorry for this man, it is quite impossible for me to entertain such an absurd suggestion," said the Head sternly. "Doubtless the man's relations or the responsible authorities will do something for him. But it is impossible and utterly absurd that scholars of this school should, or could, undertake such a task. You must end this foolish nonsense at once, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir—"

"Be quiet, sir! If you have the key in your possession it must be returned without delay to this man, Kettle," said the Head emphatically. "And I forbid any of you to visit the cafe again for such a purpose."

"Oh, bai Jove! Weally, sir, allow me to point out—"

"Enough! It is obvious to me that you have been impudent beyond measure to Major Croaker," said the Head angrily. "You have shown no regard whatever for the fact that he is a gentleman of some standing in the neighbourhood or that he is a governor of this school. Major Croaker has requested me to flog you all, but I think a severe caning will meet the case. Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir, I must protest—"

"Hold out your hand, boy!"

It was almost a bellow. Obviously Major Croaker's visit had upset the Head.

Arthur Augustus decided to postpone his protests until a more favourable opportunity. He also decided to obey.

The Head had promised to cane them severely, and he was a man of his word. Tom Merry & Co. were squirming, and their expressions were agonised as they tottered from the study at last.

Amid a chorus of "Ow, ow, ow! Yow!" the hapless culprits wended their way to the Form-rooms. That morning was neither a comfortable nor a happy one to Tom Merry & Co. But it ended at last, and the seven congregated in Study No. 6 to discuss the situation—though in the view of all but Arthur Augustus it needed little discussing now.

"That settles it, of course!" said Tom Merry dismally. "It's rotten, Gussy, but it can't be helped. We'll try to help old Sam some other way."

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus turned an astonished eye-glass upon Tom. "I do not undastand you, Tom Mewwy. There is no need for anothah way. The mattah, as you remark, is settled. Though I have a great respect for Dr. Holmes, he can go and eat coke so far as I am concerned. In this mattah I shall certainly not respect his wishes."

"Eh? What?" exclaimed Blake. "Mean to say you're thinking of butting against the Head's orders, fathead?"

"Most certainly, Blake! It is quite impos for me to go back on my word in this mattah. I shall most certainly wufese to let Sam Kettle down now, whatevah comes or goes!"

"You—you mean you'll defy the Head and go on with it, Gussy?" said Manners blankly.

"Absolutely, deah boy! I have no othah course in the cires!"

"But you'll be sacked!" yelled Blake.

"Pway do not woah at me, Blake—you know I stwongly object to bein' woahed at! I should stwongly object to bein' sacked, of course; but I see no reason why the Head should sack me for doin' what I considah the wight and pwopah thing. In any case," he added calmly, "I should pwefah to be sacked wathah than forced to bweak my word!"

"Idiot!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You footling fathead!" roared Blake. "You'll have to drop it now. You can't defy the beak like that, you fooling duffer! You—"

"Wats! I wufese to be called names in this mannah, Jack Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with lofty dignity. "As you appawently pwefah to be wude instead of discussin' the mattah weasonably, I must wetiah fwom the woom!"

And Arthur Augustus retired from the room.

Out in the passage he bumped into Baggy Trimble, the fat junior of the Fourth.

"Oo, ow! You clumsy idiot!" howled Trimble. "Why can't you— Oh, it's you, Gussy, old man!" Trimble's manner underwent a sudden change as he recognised Arthur Augustus. "I'm just looking for you, old chap. I want to—"

"I have no desiah to know what you want, Twimble! Pway wun away and don't bothah me!"

"But—hold on, old chap, it's very important. It's about your cafe, Gussy!"

"Oh!" Arthur Augustus condescended to stop at that. "What is it, Twimble! How did you know—"

"He, he, he! I know all about it, Gussy," grinned Baggy. "It's really a ripping idea of yours to take over Sam Kettle's cafe. Not that I care much for Sam—he's low and suspicious, you know; won't ever trust a chap; always wanting cash in advance, the mean beast! Like his cheek to mistrust a St. Jim's chap, what?"

"It would be with any othah fellah but you, Twimble," said Gussy sternly. "But Sam is vewy wise in not twustin' you, for you are weally a wascally, bilkin' little weptile, you know. You must excuse my speakin' plainly, Twimble, but—"

"Why, you beast—I mean, you're mistaken, Gussy. I—I say, I wanted to say—"

"Pway be quick, Twimble, for I am in a huwwy. What is it you wished to tell me?"

"I wanted to ask you something, Gussy—something awfully important. I—I feel frightfully sorry for poor old Sam—we were awfully pally, you know."

"That is scarcely the twuth, Twimble! The last time I saw you there Sam kicked you out for twyin' to evade payment for some tarts," said Gussy sternly. "And you are nevah vewy sowwy for anyone but yourself!"

"Oh, really, Gussy, I am sorry—fearfully sorry for Sam. I'm most anxious to do all I can to help him in his—his distremity," said Trimble. "I'm eager to place my generous services at his disposal. If you happen to be raising a fund for him, Gussy, come to me!"

"I should certainly nevah come to you, Twimble. You would eithah want to bag or bowwow some of the fund, if I did, Twimble! Pway cut the silly, untwuthful cackle and explain."

"Oh, really, Gussy, you ought to give a fellow credit for generous motives!" said Baggy reproachfully. "The—the fact is, I wish to offer my services to the good cause. You'll want help, I bet, now your pals have let you down."

"Bai Jove! Then you were listening at the keyhole just then, Twimble?"

"Nothing of the kind! Only I guessed that would happen when I heard about the Head licking you," grinned Baggy. "Well, what about it, Gussy? I'm willing to take over the job of waiter—though I'd prefer to undertake inside work while you do the waiting outside, you know. Anyway, that's my generous offer—my services free and heartily offered to—"

"Bai Jove! Is—is that what you wanted to ask me, Twimble?"

"Exactly, old man! My willing and generous services free and— Here, what— Yoooooooooop!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus planted a hearty kick behind Baggy, and then grasped him and strewed him across the passage with a still heartier bump.

"Yarooooop! Why, you awful beast—"

"That is my ansawah, Twimble!" gasped Arthur Augustus heatedly. "And if I catch you anywhere near Wivahside Cafe I will give you a feahful thwashin', bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus walked on. Obviously there was no job going at Riverside Cafe for Baggy Trimble, whether his services were generously offered free, or otherwise! Perhaps Arthur Augustus suspected that Baggy's help would be a trifle too free and generous—as regards getting rid of the food-stuffs, at all events!

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Good Customer!

"HE, he, he!"

Since noon, apparently, Baggy Trimble had changed his tune considerably. Arthur Augustus, as he hurried along the passage on his way out of doors, could not help paying regard to him.

It was immediately after afternoon lessons. Since the discussion in Study No. 6 Arthur Augustus had not spoken to his chums—though they had tried to speak to him. But the noble Gussy was on his high horse. He was, in fact, somewhat disgusted with his chums for taking notice of such a small matter as a beak's order! Gussy's word was his bond, and all the king's horses and all the king's men would never make him break it—not even the Head. Certainly his chums had not given their word to Sam Kettle; but Gussy considered they should not have climbed down so tamely and submitted to the beak's order as they appeared to be going to do.

So Arthur Augustus determined to ignore them and see the matter through on his own. As a matter of fact, it rather gave him more satisfaction and pride to see it through on his own. Gussy had any amount of confidence in himself.

He was ready and eager to see the thing through, and he was in a great hurry to get down to the cafe when he happened upon Baggy Trimble.

"He, he, he!" giggled Baggy, apparently greatly amused at something. "I say, Gussy, just goin' down to the giddy cafe?"

"Yaas, you fat wottah! I am just goin' down to the cafe, and if you dare to go neah there—"

"Look here, why not let a fellow lend a hand? I'm ready and willing—"

"Wats! You would devoah ewevy sowap of gwub in the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,218.

## A BIG SURPRISE IN STORE FOR ALL "GEM" READERS!

(See next week's tip-top issue for further details.)

place, you fat wobbah!" snorted Arthur Augustus, hurrying on again.

"Yah! Beast!" bawled Trimble after him. "Yah! Nippy! A cup of tea and a bun, Nippy! Yah!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus vanished. Trimble giggled again.

"He, he, he! I'll show him, the mean beast! Dare to go near, eh? I'll show him!"

And Baggy rolled out of the School House and made his way to the woodshed. As a matter of fact, Baggy had known perfectly well that Arthur Augustus would again turn his kind offer down. Baggy only wanted to make sure that Gussy was going to the cafe.

Now he knew, Baggy was ready and eager to put into operation a little scheme he had thought out—a scheme to get a free feed at Riverside Cafe, and Baggy meant it to be a record feed. Where grub was concerned the fat junior was entirely unscrupulous. It was, in Baggy's view, a masterly scheme, and he had thought it out carefully in the Form-room that afternoon, and he had made all preparations at afternoon break.

Now all was ready. After a careful blink about him, Baggy dived into the woodshed, emerging a moment later with a big leather bag.

With crafty caution the fat youth rolled out of gates with the apparently heavy bag, and made for Rylcombe Woods. In a quiet clearing, less than a hundred yards from the Riverside Cafe, Baggy settled down and got busy.

From the bag he withdrew a suit of baggy, rumpled clothes, a soft felt hat, a turned-up collar, and a vivid red tie, and a box of make-up and various other theatrical materials.

Hanging a small mirror on the branch of a tree, Baggy began his rapid-change act. He pulled the baggy trousers over his own trousers, and changed his collar and tie. Then he donned the waistcoat over his own waistcoat, afterwards donning his own jacket and putting the man's-size jacket over that. It fitted fairly well then across the shoulders, and, though somewhat long, Trimble was satisfied.

This done, Trimble started to make-up.

Though far from being an expert, Baggy made quite a good job of it, and by the time he had finished, his own mother would certainly not have recognised him. His fat face was thick with greasepaint, and he wore false, black eyebrows, and a small, false black moustache. Altogether he bore a remarkable resemblance to a better-dressed Tired Tim. With a pair of American glasses—borrowed for the occasion without permission from Handcock's study—Baggy finished his remarkable transformation.

With his jacket buttoned tightly, the disguised Baggy rolled away to the cafe. He found it deserted, save for Arthur Augustus. That youth, clad in his white apron, was busy setting out the tables inside the room.

Having made sure nobody else was about, the fat schemer seated himself at one of the far tables, and rapped bard upon it.

Arthur Augustus came out into the sunshine and stared at him.

For the moment Baggy felt qualms. He imagined the swell of the Fourth suspected something. He was quite wrong, however. Arthur Augustus, in fact, was rather uneasy on sighting the stout little gentleman for quite another reason.

On arriving, Arthur Augustus had tried the paint on one

of the chairs and found it still wet, and he had intended to place a warning notice on the painted furniture, showing that it was wet paint. But he had been too busy until now to do so. Now he felt apprehensive on noting this fat customer had selected one of the green and newly painted chairs and tables.

"Oh, bai Jove!" murmured Gussy.

But he hoped for the best and crossed over to the fat gentleman.

"Good aftahnoon, sir! A wippin' aftahnoon, my dear sir!"

"Tophole—I mean splendid!" said Baggy, affecting a deep, gruff voice. "I want a few jam-tarts—say a dozen twopenny ones."

"Vewy good, sir! We had a fwesh supply fwom the village only a few moments ago," said Arthur Augustus, slightly surprised at an order for jam-tarts from a grown-up man. "Anything else, sir?"

"Eh? Oh, yes—lots," said Trimble. "A dozen cream-buns, a few slices of pound cake, a few sausage rolls, and some chocolate biscuits. That'll do to be going on with, my man. And of course, something to drink—say one or two bottles of ginger-beer and lemonade."

"Bai Jove! Oh! Ah! Yaas, sir! Vewy good, sir!" gasped Gussy.

He was still more surprised at such orders. But he was delighted to get hold of such a good customer for all that. The more profit Arthur Augustus was able to send to Sam Kettle in hospital, the more pleased he would be.

He hurried away to execute the lavish order, wondering rather dazedly why the fat man's face and voice seemed strangely familiar.

The small, marble-topped table was too small to hold such an order, so Gussy dragged two more—unpainted ones—up, and piled the plates of good things on both. He had just finished serving the order, and Baggy was just making a good beginning at shifting it, when a lady and a couple of girls entered the clearing.

Before Gussy could stop them, they all three sat down on the newly painted chairs, which they had left out on the previous evening to dry. Then Arthur Augustus recognised the lady as a new mistress at Spalding Hall Girls' School, and the girls as pupils—girls he knew quite well.

"Oh, bai Jove!" groaned Gussy.

But there was no help for it. Wet or dry, the three had now sat down on the green chairs—the damage, if any, was done. He could only hope for the best.

He hurried across to the new customers, crimson with blushes as he saw the girls give violent starts as they recognised him. Then they started to giggle, but were instantly stopped by a frown from Miss Parsons, the new mistress.

"A pot of tea, and bread-and-butter, please!" ordered Miss Parsons.

"Oh, yaas, sir—I mean, yaas, ma'am!" gasped Gussy.

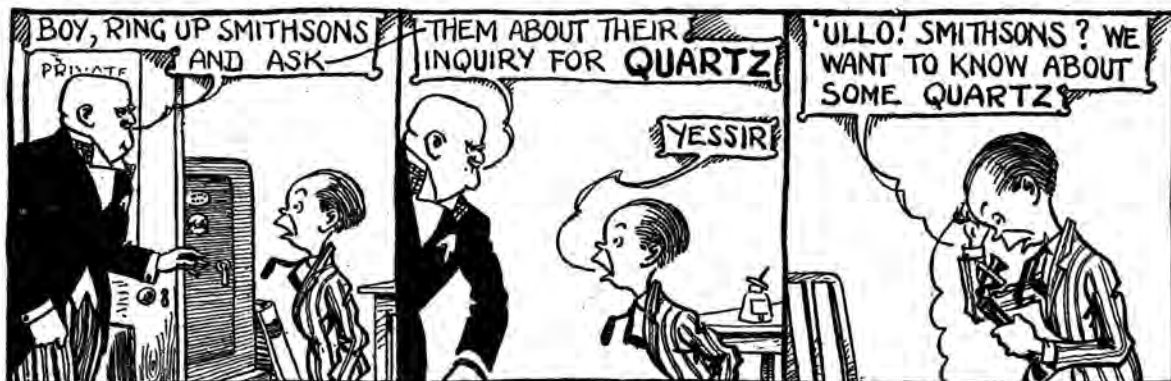
He started off, banged into a table in his confusion, and nearly came a cropper. But he saved himself, and entered the cafe safely.

He served the tea and bread-and-butter, blushing hotly under the grinning, yet perplexed gaze of the Spalding Hall girls. Miss Parsons laid her bag on the table, also her gloves.

"One moment, boy!"

Apparently—unlike Trimble—she intended to pay before consuming the foodstuffs. But even as she picked up her

## Potts, the Office-Boy.



bag again, Miss Parsons gave a little shriek, echoed by her pupils.

"G-good gracious! This paint is wet—quite wet! My handbag and my gloves are ruined!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

By ill-fortune the lady had selected one of the wooden tables—newly painted and varnished by the juniors. And it was—as Gussy had feared—still wet and sticky.

"Oh, by Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy vewy sowwy, Miss Par—I mean, ma'am—tewwibly sowwy! I—I think you had bettah not sit longah on that—that chair, ma'am."

"Disgraceful! Monstrous!" gasped Miss Parsons, not quite grasping how serious the position was. "How dare you place newly painted tables here without a warning notice? My handbag is— Good gracious! Are you not a St. Jim's boy? I am sure—"

"Oh deah! Yaas, ma'am! You—you see—"

"Then is this a stupid, practical joke?" stormed Miss Parsons, who seemed a very irritable lady indeed. "I shall report this—this outrage to your headmaster—"

"But—but hadn't you bettah get up off the wet paint, ma'am," gasped the distressed Arthur Augustus. "You see—oh, bai Jove!"

As if moved by the same spring, the two girls sprang up in sudden alarm. Miss Parsons was a second behind them, and as she sprang up she fairly lifted the table with her.

Arthur Augustus saw the danger, and jumped forward to rescue the tea-tray. He was a trifle too clumsy, however. Catching it with his hands he sent the teapot leaping off with a jerk, spattering hot tea right and left.

Miss Parsons gave a shriek as she got most of it.

The teapot crashed to the ground, likewise cups and saucers and milk-jug, and Gussy gasped in alarm. He did more than gasp the next moment.

"You—you stupid, careless young rascal!" cried the schoolmistress. "Good—good gracious! Your dresses are ruined, girls—and mine—good gracious! You young scamp!"

"Weally, ma'am—oh ewiky! What— Yooooop!"

Whack, whack, whack!

The hapless Arthur Augustus leaped away with a startled yell as Miss Parsons grabbed her parasol in sudden anger and started to belay him with it. Really it was no wonder the good lady was angry in the circumstances. At all events she certainly was angry—had lost her temper completely. And Arthur Augustus did not stay to explain or apologise—he fled.

Whack, whack!

Miss Parsons just got two more swipes in, and then Arthur Augustus was well away, going strong. And six St. Jim's juniors who entered the clearing just then got the shock of their lives as they saw the unhappy climax.

"G-good, lor!" gasped Jack Blake. "What the dickens—"

"It's that new mistress from Spalding Hall," gasped Tom Merry, staring blankly. "She's been whacking old Gussy with her gamp! Oh, my only hat!"

"Trust Gussy to find more trouble!" grinned Lowther. "Oh, my hat! Look at the paint on their giddy dresses! That's what's happened! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup!" snapped Tom Merry in alarm. "Don't make it worse for the ass! Hallo, they're clearing off! Good!"

Miss Parsons and the two girls, talking indignantly and

excitedly, walked away from the cafe and vanished along the woodland path. Blake & Co. wisely kept out of sight until they had gone—as did Arthur Augustus. But he emerged now, and groaned dismally as they grinned at him.

"Gussy, you awful ass—"

"Ow, ow! Oh, ewiky!" panted Arthur Augustus dismally. "It was that w'etched paint, you know. It wasn't dwy and they sat on it. Then I upset the w'etched teapot ovah Miss Parsons, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is nothin' to cause mewwiment, Blake! I considah— One moment, deah boys!"

He was interrupted by a rapping on the table by the queer old gentleman—otherwise Baggy Trimble. Trimble had quite enjoyed the scene, overlooking the fact that he himself was seated on one of the green-painted chairs. But he had not allowed the scene to interfere with his eating operations. He had quite cleared the table now, and wanted more—especially now Tom Merry & Co. had arrived.

Arthur Augustus bustled away to attend to him. He was still flustered and upset, but business came first with Gussy. After carrying several piled plates to his hungry customer, Arthur Augustus joined his chums in the cafe.

"Who is the old gent?" demanded Tom Merry, staring across the little patch of lawn. "Something queer and rather familiar about him."

"I weally do not know, Tom Mewwy. But he has a weamarkable appetite. Wathah a pig, you know. I shouldn't be surprised if it turned out to be Twimble's patah, in fact. He wathah wesembles— Bai Jove! What—"

He was interrupted. From the old gent outside came a sudden, ferocious yell. And the startled juniors saw him suddenly leap up, the chair sticking to him as he did so. Then he seemed to fall over the chair and roll on the ground. But he was up the next moment, yelling and spluttering frantically, and dancing madly about, with his hands clutching his mouth.

"What the merry dickens—"

Tom Merry & Co. rushed out, quite alarmed.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Only Trimble!

"**B**AI JOVE! My dear, dear sir, whatevah is the mattah?" gasped Gussy, rushing up in alarm.

"Grooogh! Yarrooogh! Mustard!" shrieked Trimble, quite forgetting to disguise his voice in his anguish. "Grooogh! Mustard in those beastly ham sandwiches! Yarrooogh! You beast, Gussy!"

"What—what—"

"My hat! What—who the thunder—"

"Trimble!" yelled Monty Lowther, suddenly noticing the fact that Baggy's moustache was hanging loose over Baggy's convulsively clutching hand. "It's that fat rotter disguised! It's Trimble!"

"Oh, bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"

"Yarrooogh!" roared Trimble. "Yow! Grooogh! I say, you fellows, don't believe that beast Lowther! I'm not—grooogh!—Trimble at all! Help! My mouth's burned out! Can't you see I'm not Trimble!"

"Bai Jove! You—you feahful little wottah!" yelled Arthur Augustus, quite recognising Baggy now. "Collar the fat little bilker, you fellows! He has scoffed about ten shillings' worth of gwub, and was goin' to cleah off without payin'. I see it all now, the feahful—"

"Eh? Here, keep off!" roared Baggy, suddenly realising



the new danger. "I'm not Trimble. Can't you see I'm not? I say, it's all right. I'll pay you out of my next cheque from home—in the morning, Gussy. Besides—grooogh!—can't you see I'm not— Yoooop! Keep off!"

But Tom Merry & Co. had got over their amazement now, and they did not keep off. Baggy turned to bolt—too late. A dozen hands grasped him before he had covered three yards, and he was hauled, kicking and struggling, to the cafe.

"I see it now," grinned Lowther. "That cad Lacy must have put mustard in those sandwiches yesterday as well as in the sandwich cake. Were they cut yesterday, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove! Yaas, that is it. Gweat Scott! And if he hadn't, this fat little beast would have bilked me and cleaved off. As it is, he's had about ten shillings' worth—"

"Well, he can pay for it in another way, Gussy," said Tom Merry grimly. "Give him a few more sandwiches, and then make him work it out for the rest of the evening."

"Good wheeze!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Here, I say, you fellows— Yarrooop!"

But there was no mercy for Baggy. The fat schemer was found out, and had to pay the price. The sandwiches were examined, and all those containing mustard were given free to Baggy. Some were rammed into his yelling mouth, some crammed down the back of his neck, and some rubbed into his hair and over his features.

When this was done Baggy was almost in hysterics. Nor was that full payment. After that Trimble was kept busy at work. He was given all the washing-up to do, and then he was set to scrub the cafe floor—and it needed scrubbing. By the time Tom Merry announced that it was time to return to St. Jim's Baggy was almost a wreck, and though he had had a good feed, certainly, he had more than decided that it was not worth the price he paid.

"And now we'll kick him all the way back to St. Jim's," said Blake, as Arthur Augustus locked the cafe door and pocketed the key. "We'll give you a yard start, Trimble, and then—"

"Yarrooop!"

Trimble did not wait for the yard start—he flew, and a yell of laughter followed him.

"Well, that's taught Baggy a lesson!" grinned Tom Merry. "But— Oh, my hat! We came to try to persuade old Gussy to give this game up. Instead of which—"

"It is quite useless to attempt to persuade me, Tom Merry," said Gussy.

"But, my dear man—" began Blake patiently.

"Wats! I uttally wefuse to listen!"

And Arthur Augustus did refuse to listen, and his chums gave it up at last and hoped for the best. They tramped back to St. Jim's, fully expecting Trimble would be back there by the time they arrived.

But Trimble's luck was out still. The crafty Baggy, fully expecting the chums to chase him, had not taken the short cut along the path. Instead, to throw his pursuers off the scent he had swarmed over the white rails and taken refuge in Major Croaker's garden, intending to lie low there until Tom Merry & Co. had gone.

Not until Tom Merry & Co. had vanished from sight in the early evening dusk did Baggy dare to move. And then, just as he was about to leave the shelter of the shrubbery, he gave a startled gasp and dropped back into shelter again.

He had heard a voice—a rasping, well-known voice.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Baggy. "That beast of a major!"

He scarcely dared to move as footsteps and voices came nearer. Then Major Croaker hove into sight. He was walking and talking to one of the gardeners.

"Don't attempt to bandy words with me, Johnson!" the major was snorting angrily. "You have your orders. Obey them, confound you!"

"Very good, sir," grunted Johnson. "Only I thought as I'd point out what the men thinks, beggin' your pardon, sir. They thinks as it's hard lines on Sam Kettle, seein' as he's in 'orspital—"

"Silence! Rubbish, begad!" almost roared Major Croaker in reply. "For years I have fought that stubborn fellow, and while I am—ahem!—sorry for him, I do not intend to miss this opportunity of removing that outrageous nuisance of a cafe from the vicinity of my grounds."

"Yes, sir. But if I may make so bold—"

"You may not!" hooted the major angrily. "Enough! You have your orders. Obey them. Begad, what are the servants coming to? You will gather your men at the wretched cafe this very evening at dusk, and you will remove the whole contraption, lock, stock, and barrel, from the spot. I will stand the whole responsibility for my action. That fellow dare not— Ahem! But you understand, Johnson."

"Yessir. But—"

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"Allow me to finish, begad! The work must be done speedily, and no damage must be done if possible. I shall be there myself to superintend operations. Fortunately, the main building is in sections, and should be removed easily. And the whole building must be re-erected on that piece of waste ground beyond the wood. That, however, can be done to-morrow morning early, Johnson."

"Yeess, sir," grunted Johnson, who obviously neither approved of the task nor relished it. "But that land's far away from the river, and Kettle will lose most of his trade. And, what's more—"

"Be silent, Johnson!" bawled the major. "I do not desire to hear your views on the subject. Unless you wish to leave my employ you will obey my orders, sir! You understand?"

"Yes, sir! Very well, sir!"

And Baggy Trimble, a moment later, heard the gardener



His eyes were blinded, his lungs choked, but somehow Gussy got out of the cafe carrying the unconscious Trimble!

tramping away. The major did not go for some moments, however. He walked up and down, smoking a cigar. Trimble groaned and groaned, knowing he was already late for call-over. But the major cleared off at last, and Baggy scuttled to the fence and climbed over to safety. Then he bolted hard for St. Jim's.

He had already parted with the clothes he had "borrowed" from the school theatrical property box, and he cared nothing what happened to the bag either, for it was also borrowed. He was streaming with perspiration and panting like a grampus when he arrived at St. Jim's at last. There he "bagged" a hundred lines for being late,

thus adding to Baggy's decision that the feed had not been worth it.

But he still had in mind the little plot he had overheard. At first Baggy was determined not to tell Arthur Augustus, but later on his wrath subsided and he changed his mind. Even Trimble, young rascal as he was, did not approve of Major Croaker's mean and ungenerous scheme, to put it mildly. Just before starting prep Baggy rolled along to Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus happened to be out at the moment, but Baggy met him later in the passage. He listened in startled alarm as Baggy told his tale.

"Oh, bai Jove! Is that twue, Twimble, you're not—" "Of course it's true, Gussy!" snorted Baggy. "Many fellows wouldn't have told you after the treatment I received at your hands this evening! But I'm a forgiving fellow, and I hope I'm not such a rotter as to allow that

school wall, and in another few seconds the swell of the Fourth was out in Rylcombe Lane, making swift tracks for Riverside Cafe.

Arthur Augustus had given his noble word to Sam Kettle to look after his interests, and he meant to keep it.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Gussy Guards the Fortress!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS ran hard. Not for one moment did he doubt Trimble's statements. At any other time, or in other circumstances, he certainly would have done. But he knew the major's character, and he had heard his threats. Moreover, Trimble's story rang true, for once.

He was defying the headmaster and the rules of the school. Breaking bounds after lock-up was a serious matter. It might even mean the sack in such circumstances. But Arthur Augustus never gave his own danger a thought.

Somehow the ill-natured, scurvy scheme had to be frustrated. Though how he was going to do it Arthur Augustus had, at the moment, no idea. Arthur Augustus was surprised that the major had actually come to a definite decision to do something in the matter. He had threatened enough times, as he knew, to get the cafe shifted, either legally or under his own responsibility. But he had never done anything, in actual fact—which certainly lent force to Sam Kettle's claim that the major had no legal right to the land.

Now, according to Baggy Trimble, he meant serious business. With Sam out of the way, he would find it an easy task, no doubt. And, in any case, the major was comparatively wealthy, while Sam certainly had no funds to fight a case in court. Possibly the major was banking on that. He was a powerful man locally, also, and a law unto himself.

Arthur Augustus thought of all this as he ran for the cafe, and he gritted his teeth with determination.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "If that fearful old wottah does entah the cafe to-night it will be ovah my unconscious form. Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus was in a warlike mood and meant business, just as the major evidently did. He was almost disappointed when he found the clearing unoccupied and the cafe in darkness.

He was not taking any risks, however.

It was quite light yet, though the dusk was deepening rapidly. Opening the cafe door, Arthur Augustus went inside, closing and locking it after him. Then he went to the little side-window at the rear of the cafe and opened it quietly. After which he dragged a chair to the window and settled down to watch and listen.

It was a silent night, with scarcely any breeze stirring the leaves of the trees. Only now and again came a soft rustle that made the silence in the dark woods seem more intense. The faint murmuring ripple of the river reached him through the open window. And then, much sooner than Gussy expected came another sound—the sound of footsteps and deep voices.

Arthur Augustus stood up, tense and watchful.

If it did come to an attack he was quite prepared, and he felt capable of holding his own. Within easy reach of his hands was as much ammunition as he was likely to want. There was a box of eggs by him on the floor, and plenty of other articles which would make excellent ammunition.

And Arthur Augustus was quite ready to make use of them.

Yet he couldn't help wishing his chums were with him, for all that. It was nerve-racking waiting there in the gloom and silence. He was almost glad to hear the expected advance at last.

The voices grew louder, and his eyes gleamed as he recognised Major Croaker's harsh, domineering voice.

"Here we are, my men! Lose no time, and remember to do as little damage as possible. Remember, also, that I shall be present to see my orders are carried out to the letter. You will try to force the lock, but if that fails then the door must be broken down. Get to work!"

"How can we break a door down without doin' damage, sir?" growled a voice, almost sulphurously.

"Hey? What's that? Don't talk nonsense, man!" barked the major. "You know who and what I am! I will accept full responsibility for anything done. That fellow Kettle will never dare, nor has he the funds at his disposal. But, enough! Set to work at once!"

"Bai Jove! Your men will do nothin' of the kind, Majah Cwoakah!"

Arthur Augustus had poked out his head through the

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beast of a major to play his rotten trick on old Sam Kettle. Here, I say, Gussy, where you going—the Head?"

But Arthur Augustus did not stop to tell Trimble where he was going. He was certainly not going to the Head, however. Nor was he going to anyone else. In Gussy's view it was a matter for him, and him alone. He would have liked to get the help of his chums, but he felt certain they would not be enthusiastic to help him in what he proposed doing.

Getting his cap he cautiously made his way out of doors. With still more caution he slipped through the elms and shrubbery until he reached the old oak-tree against the

little window and spoken. The effect on the major was electrical. He leaped almost a yard into the air. His men jumped and gasped.

"Blow me!" exclaimed Johnson, in a startled voice.

"Blowed if somebody ain't there, sir!"

"What—what— Good—gad!" gasped Major Croaker.

"Who— Why—"

He glared transfixed at the dimly seen face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and its gleaming eyeglass. He recognised it at once, and gave a startled, astounded snort.

"Good gad! It—it's that young villain again! The fool has taken charge of the confounded place in Kettle's absence!" he snorted angrily. "Boy! Imbecile! What in the name of thunder are you doing here at this hour of the night? Does your headmaster know you are here, boy?"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Arthur Augustus coldly.

"Then—then leave this place and return to school immediately!" barked the major. "Begad! What is the confounded school coming to? Open that door and return to school at once, you young rascal!"

"Wats!"

"What—what?"

"I said 'Wats!' and I mean 'Wats!'" said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wefuse to obey any ordahs of yours, Majah Cwoakah! Not only that, sir, but, as Mr. Kettle's wewepresentative, I ordah you and your men to wewiah at once from these pwemises!"

"Good gad!"

"I have heard your wascally instwuptions to your men, Majah Cwoakah, and I am bound to say that I considah you are a w'etched, unspuwtsmanlike wottah!" said Gussy indignantly. "Only a wottah would take advantage of Sam Kettle's absence in this mean and ungenahwous mannah!"

"Boy—impudent young jackanapes!" hooted the major.

"Your opinion of me does not trouble me, sir!" said Arthur Augustus coldly. "Kindly wewiah with your men, sir! If you attempt to bwreak open that door I warn you sewiously that I shall wewist you with all my powah, watevah the consequences!"

"Begad! The—the insolent young villain!" choked the major, almost dancing in his rage at being so "ticked off" before his grinning men. "I—I— You shall suffer dearly for this, boy! Your name is D'Arcy! Very well! I myself will take you to your headmaster this very evening. Men, force that door without delay!"

The men looked at Johnson and at each other. But there was no help for it. Whether he was in the right or not, Major Croaker meant to carry through his intention—if he could. Sam Kettle's cafe had been the bee in the major's bonnet for years. It had grown and grown, so to speak, until now the major was ready to take any action to satisfy his seething rage and desires.

Johnson moved to the door, and started to insert a crowbar in the door jam. He never did insert it, for the next instant something flew through the little window and took Johnson full in the left ear.

It was an egg—a fact Johnson soon discovered as it burst and ran down his neck.

Johnson's startled yell could have been heard at the far edge of the woods.

"I am sowwy to have had to do that, Johnson," remarked Arthur Augustus, with regret in his voice. "I know this task is distasteful to you. Appahwenty you are not such a mean-spwited wottah as your mastah. Howewah, if you twy again you will get anotheah!"

"G-good gad!" gasped the major. "Johnson, break that door down this instant! Don't stand there like a confounded dummy, man! You other men climb through this window and bring that young villain out!"

Johnson snorted, and did his best to obey. Possibly he was angry now, or possibly Gussy's few kind words of regret made him hope the egg-slinging would not be repeated.

At the same moment, Johnson's men crowded round the window, eager to be the first to grab Gussy, and anxious to get it over. In less than three seconds they were considerably less eager, while Johnson discovered that Gussy's kind words to him were a snare and a delusion.

Splosh! Smack, smack, smack! Splosh!

Eggs fairly rained through the little window. Arthur Augustus let Johnson have half a dozen in swift succession to be going on with—and Gussy was a deadly marksman. Then he concentrated upon Johnson's men.

At such close quarters even eggs are deadly missiles, and where they landed they hurt, in addition to making a mess. Soon the peaceful night air of the woods and river rang with yells of wrath and howls of pain.

Major Croaker got one of the first eggs full on the chin, and he hastily retired from the scene to a safer spot, gasping and spluttering frantically. For a change, Arthur Augustus gave the eggs a rest and let fly a few pound bags of flour.

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Whizz, whizz, whizz!

Every bag found a billet, and the air was full of powdery flour, and echoed with sneezes and coughs.

That finished the first assault on Gussy's citadel.

The attackers drew off in a disorderly, scrambling group. It was now too dusky to see what they looked like, but Gussy knew they must have looked decidedly eggy and floury.

Arthur Augustus paused to take breath and rest while the attackers removed egg and flour from various parts of their features and hair. The major was raging, and he bawled to his men to renew the attack. But his men wanted a rest, and they intended it to be as long as possible.

Major Croaker raged at them in vain.

"Pway come on yourself, Majah Cwoakah!" called Arthur Augustus, breathless with excitement and triumph. "An officah should lead fwom the fwont and not the weah, you know! I have plenty of ammunitiun heah, old bean!"

"You—you reckless young villain!" shrieked the major. "You shall suffer dearly for this!"

"I am fightin' for the wight, Majah Cwoaker, and I do not feah the wewults!" replied the stout-hearted Gussy. "Pway get goin', as I pwefah action to bein' forced to listen to your men's language."

But the major was not so easy himself to get going. He held a consultation with his men at some distance, and then he came towards the window with due caution.

"Boy, one moment! I wish to speak to you!" he snapped. "If you will promise not to assault me, I will approach and discuss the matter in private!"

"Vewy good, sir! I am quite weady to heah what you have to say, Majah Cwoakah," said Arthur Augustus, leaning out of the window. "I warn you, howewah, that undah no circumstahces will I allow you to entah this cafe!"

"I desire to make you an offer, D'Arcy," said the major, stepping nearer, and facing Arthur Augustus. "If you will leave this place at once I will not report you to your headmaster for this outrageous behaviour to me, a governor of your school."

The major spoke almost in a whisper, his voice trembling with wrath apparently. Arthur Augustus stooped lower.

"I wewget that I cannot agwee to that, majah," he replied, with graceful dignity.

"You refuse, boy?"

"Most emphatically, sir! It is quite impos— Oh! Oh, gwreat Scott! Leggo, you feahful wottah!"

Arthur Augustus broke off with a startled roar. For—to his utter amazement and indignation—Major Croaker, with a surprising and unexpected leap, had jumped up and grabbed hold of him.

It was treachery—black treachery! The innocent and trusting Arthur Augustus had been had. Never had Gussy spoken a truer word when he had called the major unspuwtsmanlike. It was certainly not playing the game in any sort of manner, and Gussy's anger and amazement knew no bounds.

He struggled desperately to drag himself free, but he struggled in vain.

The major had got him by a dirty trick—but he had got him and he meant to hold him.

"Got you, you young villain!" he gasped. "Johnson, Jones—lend a hand here!" he called, raising his voice to a bawl. "Quick! I have the wretched young scoundrel! Ha! Begad! I'll teach you to throw eggs at me, confound you! Out you come!"

"Yawwoop! Oh cwikey! You wotten, tweacheahwous cad!" shrieked Gussy, kicking and struggling. "Leggo! Leggo, or I'll punch your nose, Majah Cwoakah, gwernah or no gwernah! Leggo!"

The major did not let go. The next instant Arthur Augustus—ever a man of his word—punched the major's nose.

Deliberately, and with full intention, Arthur Augustus of the Fourth at St. Jim's, heartily and vigorously punched the august nose of Major Croaker, a governor of St. Jim's.

The major roared and bellowed fiendishly—but he retained his grasp on Gussy.

It was hopeless. Many strong hands joined the major's, and, despite his desperate struggles, Arthur Augustus was hauled through the window and landed on the grass like a stranded, wriggling fish.

"Got the—the young scoundrel!" choked the major, releasing Gussy now and hugging his nose in anguish. "Ow, ow! Hold him, men! He shall be taken at once to St. Jim's, and his headmaster shall deal with him without delay! I shall insist upon a flogging and expulsion. Begad, I shall insist upon nothing less!"

"And what about this 'ere cafe, sir?"

"Confound the cafe!" hooted the major. "That can wait! Never fear, I shall deal with that later, Johnson! I am smothered in egg and flour, and my nose— Groogh! The headmaster must see what this reckless young hooligan

has done. I shall not change. I shall visit St. Jim's just as I am. Bring the young scoundrel along, Johnson!"

And the hapless Arthur Augustus was taken along. The gallant swell of the Fourth had done his best, but he had met disaster. Now his enemy intended to do his worst. Gussy's venture into trade looked like turning out serious.

## CHAPTER 9.

## Trimble on the Trail!

"TRIMBLE!"

"Oh! Oh, yessir!" gasped Trimble.

Baggy Trimble always was apprehensive when Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, called to him.

It was scarcely two seconds after Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had left him—in fact, Trimble was still staring after Gussy. He had seen Gussy get his cap and depart, and he was very curious indeed. But Mr. Railton's voice brought him round with a jump.

"Yes, sir!" he repeated. "You—you called me, sir! I—I just left my study for a book, sir!"

"In that case, I shall not punish you for being out of your study during preparation, Trimble," said the Housemaster. "But I am looking for D'Arcy. Kindly go to his study and send him to me."

Mr. Railton's voice was stern—very stern. As a matter of fact, it was the Head who wanted Arthur Augustus. Miss Parsons had complained officially of the afternoon's affair, and the headmistress of Spalding Hall had complained to Dr. Holmes on the phone. Naturally, after having forbade Gussy visiting the cafe again, the Head was angry, very angry. And the beak wanted an explanation from Arthur Augustus.

"D'Arcy has—has just gone downstairs, sir!" gasped Baggy.

"Indeed! Then go after him and tell him he is wanted at once, Trimble!"

"Oh, yessir!" gasped Baggy.

Baggy went downstairs hurriedly. He spotted Gussy leave the House, and he was just in time to see him vanish into the shrubbery.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Baggy. "He's going out, I bet! He, he, he! What a chance for a fellow to dodge prep! My hat! I've a jolly good excuse! Railton's ordered me to go after that ass and fetch him back, and I'm blessed if I don't—when I've seen what Gussy's up to! He, he, he!"

It struck Baggy as quite a bright idea.

He would only be carrying out Railton's orders even if he followed Gussy to Rylcombe. And he would be dodging prep and having a nice airing into the bargain. Moreover, Baggy was very curious to find out Gussy's game. As yet it did not occur to him that Arthur Augustus was actually going to the cafe in the woods. But once in Rylcombe Lane Baggy soon realised that he was, as he saw Gussy dive into the wood that lined the lane.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Baggy. "Of course, the silly owl's going to see old Croaker doesn't carry out his blessed threat. Oh crumbs!"

Baggy was quite startled, but after a moment's reflection his eyes gleamed. If Gussy was going to the cafe then there was a chance—only a chance, perhaps, but still a chance—that there might be a feed going at the end of the trail. In any case, if the major and his men did turn up there would be something worth seeing. Baggy felt certain about that, knowing Arthur Augustus as he did.

And he followed on the trail with renewed interest and eagerness, feeling safe in the knowledge that he was only carrying out orders.

As he had anticipated, the trail did, indeed, lead to the cafe.

Like a fat shadow Baggy had followed his quarry through the woods, and he was not far behind when he reached the clearing at length. He lost sight of Arthur Augustus, but he was just in time to hear the door close upon him.

By this time Baggy Trimble was panting and breathless with his hurried pursuit, and he was only too glad to hide and rest a bit while he decided upon his course of action.

Should he butt in right away upon Arthur Augustus and trust to luck? Gussy ought to be grateful to him, anyway. He could deliver his message from Railton, and persuade Gussy to join him in a feed before going back with him. On the other hand, Gussy—in his present mood—might boot him out, and then all hopes of a feed might be gone for good.

Baggy, upon reflection, decided to wait and see what happened—and a few minutes later he felt very thankful that he had!

The arrival of Major Croaker & Co. made Baggy lie very low indeed, nor did he emerge from hiding during hostilities.

Baggy, though startled, was quite entertained by Gussy's gallant defence of his fort, and he felt quite sorry—from the entertainment point of view, at least—when his defence came to such a disastrous and sudden ending.

Almost before Baggy had realised the fact, Arthur Augustus was gone, and his captors with him.

Then Trimble gave a deep, deep gasp, and his grin faded.

"M-mum-my hat!" he murmured. "This means the sack for poor old Gussy! What an awful ass! And what a rotter that beast the major is! I—I wonder—"

Baggy gave a cautious blink around the dusky clearing.

The tramp of feet and the loud, indignant protests of Arthur Augustus had died away, and silence had settled upon the spot again.

And the little window near the door of the cafe was still wide open!

The realisation of that fact reminded Baggy that he was hungry, and that his main hope in following Gussy's trail had been to satisfy that hunger.

Now—if he only dared, and if he could squeeze through that window?

"Blessed if I don't have a go, anyway," breathed Baggy. "Looked to me as if those bounders had a job to drag Gussy through it—in fact, that's why Gussy yelled so much, I expect. Still, it's worth trying. Here goes!"

Baggy had been sorry to see Gussy captured, and he felt sorry for any fellow who was going to be bunked. But Baggy was hungry, and he dismissed Gussy from his fat mind and concentrated on the main job in hand. He did not worry himself with thoughts of Railton. Easy enough to tell him he had been hunting everywhere for D'Arcy.

He hurried over to the little window. Then he groaned as he found it well above his head. The sight of one of the newly painted tables raised his hopes again, and he dragged it under the window and climbed gingerly upon it.

But disappointment awaited him again. Try as he would he could not squeeze through the little window. Gussy had been dragged through, but then Gussy was slim as an eel—a good many inches less in circumference than Baggy. Baggy, in fact, could scarcely get his shoulders inside sideways!

He soon realised it was simply hopeless. He could smell and even see many of the good things within, but it was a case of so near and yet so far.

Panting and breathless with his exertions, Baggy gave it up at last and wandered along to the door dismally. It would be locked, of course, but—Baggy's eyes suddenly fell upon something.

"M-my hat!" he gasped.

It was the crowbar, still sticking in the jam of the door as Johnson had left it.

Trimble blinked at it in the gloom. Dare he do it? It would be a bit thick if he had to return still hungry after all his trouble!

A determination not to return to St. Jim's still hungry took possession of Baggy. He grasped the crowbar with sudden decision, and bent his weight—which was very considerable—upon it.

Creak, creak, creak!

The door groaned and cracked and creaked. It was an old door that had weathered many a winter, and Trimble kept on hopefully. The fat youth strained and wrenched with all his might, growing bolder and bolder.

That he was attempting a thing that might easily land him in a worse place than the detention-room at St. Jim's never even occurred to the fatuous and thoughtless Baggy. Had D'Arcy not been connected so closely with Sam Kettle's cafe Baggy, undoubtedly, would never have dreamed of trying to burgle it for grub, or anything else. The fat youth regarded another fellow's grub as fair game to bag if he could. And he thought no more of his burglarious attempt now than he did of raiding a study cupboard at St. Jim's.

At all events, that was the view Baggy held, and he gave a grunt of deep satisfaction when he heard something go at last.

It was the sudden snap of the lock, and next moment Baggy had thrown the crowbar away and was pushing the door open.

The whole contents of Gussy's cafe were at his mercy, and Baggy gave a deep chuckle of satisfaction. He hurriedly closed the door behind him and blunked about him.

It would take the major at least an hour to visit St. Jim's, get his business over there, and return. Baggy realised he had plenty of time, and that he need not fear interruption. Still, it was better not to take chances. So he found a heavy box and dragged it out and rammed it against the closed door.

Then he went to the little window, closed it, and dragged the curtains across. The dusk was deepening into darkness

outside, and he could scarcely see in the cafe now. The sudden thought that he would have to return alone through the wood, or else by the towing-path, occurred to him then, and he gasped in alarm. But his hunger overcame his fears.

Remembering there was a lamp fixed to a bracket on the wall, Baggy struck a match and lifted it down. A shake told him it was full of oil, and he soon lit it. Then, in the cheery glow his courage revived, and he settled down to serious business.

He had the pick of the cafe at his disposal, and he started work on jam-tarts, his favourites. Soon the greedy, fat youth's jaws were working overtime.

Rarely had Baggy Trimble enjoyed such a feed. But it was not fated to last until Baggy's appetite was satisfied.

He was just starting operations on a pile of sausage-rolls, his jaws working a trifle more slowly now, when quite suddenly he stopped eating.

A sudden sound from outside had reached his ears, it seemed like the sound of running feet, and Baggy gave a startled gasp and leaped to his feet, the plate on his lap dropping with a crash.

But that was not all. As he leaped up in startled alarm the chair he was seated on crashed back against a box behind. And on the box the lamp was standing.

What actually happened Baggy did not see—he only saw the results. But apparently the back rail of the chair caught the lamp and swept it off the box.

Crash!  
It seemed to the startled Baggy that an instant's darkness followed, and then a vivid sheet of flame shot up as the upset paraffin caught fire.

In a flash the whole floor was alight, and Baggy gave a sudden shriek of terror at that, and lost his head completely.

"Why—what—Oh crikey! Help! Fire! Yarooop! Help! Police! Fire!"

A fellow with cool nerves might have saved the situation even then, but Baggy didn't possess cool nerves, and now he lost his wits completely.

Yelling in alarm he rushed first to the little window, tore aside the curtains, and wrenched at the fastenings. Then, remembering the impossibility of his squeezing through, he abandoned that idea, and rushed madly for the door.

There was a roar of flames by this as sawdust, paper, and boxes caught alight, and the darkness had given place to vivid light and scorching heat. The whole floor seemed swept by flame, but in his terror the luckless Trimble rushed across towards the door.

And then came further disaster for the grub-raider. Half-way across to the door he trod on something—it was the fallen lamp, in fact—and Trimble's foot shot from under him. He sprawled forwards, completely lost his balance, and then he went crashing down with his head full-tilt against the box before the door.

He lay there a second, dizzy, half-blinded, and choked, and then his senses left him and he knew no more.

Meanwhile, the flames grew fiercer and the smoke thicker and thicker, and in a matter of seconds the whole place was a roaring mass of flame, and in the midst of it the hapless Baggy lay, stunned and unconscious!

#### CHAPTER 10. Gussy Retires!

**T**HAT the arrival of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at St. Jim's that night in the charge of Major Croaker and his men caused a sensation would be putting it mildly.

Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three happened to be going down to the Common-room when the party arrived and were shown into the Head's sanctum. The juniors saw

the group go, and they were transfixed with amazement and alarm beyond measure.

They had wondered where Arthur Augustus had got to—and now they knew.

Arthur Augustus had been down to Riverside Cafe—had actually broken bounds after lock-up—and he had been collared by Major Croaker and his men.

But what had happened? The state of the major's clothing, and especially the swollen nose he was sporting, filled an excited crowd with curiosity. It also filled Tom Merry & Co. with deep concern and alarm.

That Arthur Augustus was responsible for the state of affairs they could not doubt. Else why was he being brought, closely guarded like a criminal, back to St. Jim's by the major's men?

If the hare-brained Gussy had pelted the major's men with eggs and stuff it was serious enough; if he had pelted the major himself with eggs and stuff it was a thousand times worse; but if Gussy had also given Major Croaker that swollen nose, then Gussy was, without a shadow of doubt, booked for the long jump, the sack, and the boot!

"Oh, my only topper!" groaned Blake. "What ever has the born idiot been up to? Why on earth didn't we chain him up?"

"Let's go along and see what's up," said Tom Merry dismally. "I knew the blessed business would end up like this, somehow!"

They hurried along to the Head's corridor. The little group had vanished inside by now, and the door had closed upon them. D'Arcy's alarmed chums waited and listened. Mr. Railton had escorted the major and his prisoner inside the Head's study, and they could hear his deep voice now within.

As a matter of fact, the Head was at dinner just then, and it was some minutes before he appeared through the communicating door into his study. His face showed startled concern—almost horror—as he sighted the major's face and general appearance.

"Good gracious! What ever has happened, my dear major?" he gasped. "This—this unexpected visit, and—and, really, sir—"

But Major Croaker very soon made it clear as to what had happened.

"Abominable!" was the Head's ominous comment at last. "Utterly disgraceful and incredible! You—you have amazed me, Major Croaker! I am astounded and dismayed beyond measure that any boy of mine could have behaved in such a scandalous manner! He—he actually struck you in the face? Good gracious! Such ruffianly conduct—such—such—"

The Head seemed at a loss to find words to express his opinion of Gussy's conduct—which certainly wasn't very promising for that unfortunate junior. So he gave it up and turned to Arthur Augustus, his brow thunderous.

"D'Arcy! Boy!" he rumbled. "You—you have heard Major Croaker? If the facts are as he states, then—"

"The facts as Majah Cwoakah has stated them are more or less true enough, sir," admitted Arthur Augustus, with some heat. "He has omitted to explain, however, that in the first place he had no right whatever to attempt to bweak into the cafe; in the second place, his action in takin' advantage of Sam Kettle's absence in hospital was utterly wotten, and the action of an unscrupulous cad, and that I struck him because he had captahued me by tweeahwuy, and also—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!" thundered the scandalised Head. "How—how dare you! Not another word!"

"But, weally, sir—"

"Enough!" snapped the Head, holding up his hand. "There is no need whatever to go into the matter further. I gave you express orders, D'Arcy, that you were not to visit that—that cafe again!"

"Oh, yaas, sir! But in the cirs—"

"Silence! Yet," continued the Head, his voice rising

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angrily, "you have dared to defy me again and again! Only this evening I received a serious complaint regarding your behaviour at the cafe from the principal of Spalding Hall School. For such brazen defiance expulsion is not too severe a punishment!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Yet such defiance is," went on the Head, his voice trembling with anger, "as nothing compared with your more recent crimes. You have broken bounds after lock-up to visit that place again, and you have actually carried out an outrageous assault upon Major Croaker, a neighbour and a governor of this school; you have actually struck him in the face! Nothing can meet the case but instant expulsion!"

"And I insist upon the young villain being soundly flogged in addition!" hooted Major Croaker, stroking his swollen nose tenderly. "I insist—"

"Kindly leave the matter of this boy's punishment to me, Major Croaker," said the Head icily. "I feel bound to state that, in my view, this unfortunate affair should not have taken place at all. The boy, however, has amply earned expulsion, and he leaves the school in the morning."

"Oh, bai Jove! Pway listen to me, sir—"

"Enough! You are wasting your breath, D'Arcy! You will pack your boxes this evening. Mr. Railton, kindly ask Kildare to come here. He must help D'Arcy to pack. Afterwards the boy must be locked in the punishment-room for the night."

"I utterly refuse to submit to expulsion, sir! My only course, in the circumstances, is to withdraw from St. Jim's, as you refuse to allow me to remain. But I refuse to be expelled!"

"D'Arcy! What—what— Good gracious!"

The Head soon discovered what Arthur Augustus meant. To the noble Gussy there was a distinction and a difference between retiring and being sacked—and Arthur Augustus started to retire there and then.

He decided to do so while the going was good, and before Kildare appeared on the scene. Before anyone realised his intention he had torn open the door and rushed out!

There was a sudden gasp in the passage, and the little scared group there scattered before his headlong rush.

"It's Gussy! Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

All the juniors were white-faced and upset. The Head's booming voice had reached them clearly, and they already knew the worst. But they hadn't anticipated the "retirement" of Arthur Augustus.

He went through them like a knife through cheese, and vanished in the distance, going strong. Mr. Railton came dashing out.

"D'Arcy! Where— Stop that boy! Merry, D'Arcy has just escaped from this room! His intention, no doubt, is to run away!" he gasped. "Go after him at once—without delay! He must be apprehended at all costs. Levison, run and find Kildare. Tell him to get the prefects together in order to search for D'Arcy!"

"Oh! Oh, yes, sir!"

Levison and several others grasped the position then. But Tom Merry & Co. had grasped it seconds before, and they were already speeding away.

"After me, chaps!" panted Tom Merry. "I'm pretty certain I know where he'll make for."

Tom's chums were also, and they followed him silently, their faces anxious and strained. Arthur Augustus was well away, but his game was up, and his number was up. Sooner or later he would be captured, and then—St. Jim's would know him no more. Tom Merry & Co., as they plugged on through the dark woods on the trail of the runaway, felt quite certain of that, and their hearts were heavy as lead.

## CHAPTER 11.

### None Too Soon!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS ran hard through the dark woods. He knew the well-worn path well enough, even at night. His mind was in a whirl, and he felt stunned by the sentence. He had expected trouble, but he had also expected the kindly Head to listen to reason—his reason! He had expected the Head

(Continued on page 27.)

# "Well run Sir!"

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# MANDERS v. THE LATCHAM PET!

By OWEN CONQUEST.



## CHAPTER 1. Manders, as Usual!

"OUT of it!"  
"What?"  
"Shift!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared.

The four chums of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood were sitting in a cheery row on the stile in Coombe Lane.

Across the footpath from the field a man came slouching, and the Rookwood juniors moved along to make room for him to cross.

They knew the man by sight—a burly, thickset man with a battered nose, a bulldog jaw, and a beetling brow. It was William Bull; known among his friends at the Bird-in-Hand as Billy Bull, and once known in the Ring as the Latcham Pet.

Mr. Bull's prize-fighting days were over, but he still possessed a punch that made him feared and respected at the Bird-in-Hand, and a temper that made him avoided by all but the roughest characters.

Jimmy Silver & Co. neither feared nor respected him, but they politely made room for him to cross the stile. And they stared at him in surprise when he ordered them to "shift."

It was still early in the afternoon, but the flush in Mr. Bull's mottled face, the gleam in his eyes, and his unpleasant manner, hinted that he had already "pushed one back," if not more than one. His manner to the Rookwood juniors was surly and bullying.

"Deaf?" he went on, as they stared at him. "Shift! 'Ear me? Shift off this 'ere stile! A bloke wants to rest—see? Shift!"

Jimmy Silver's eyes glinted.

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Mr. Bull had a high hand at the Coombe "pub," especially on a Saturday night. But if Mr. Bull thought that he could bully Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood, Mr. Bull was making a mistake.

The juniors did not shift. They sat tight.

"We're sitting here!" said Jimmy mildly.

"I said shift!" answered Mr. Bull.

"You cheeky bounder!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell. "Do you think you can give us orders? Shift yourself!"

"You asking for it?" inquired Mr. Bull, his little reddened eyes glittering at Arthur Edward. "I want to sit down 'ere! Shift!"

"No room!" said Raby.

"We're here, and we're sticking."

"Yes, rather!" said Newcome emphatically.

Billy Bull glared at the four. Jimmy

Silver & Co. certainly would have made room for any tired pedestrian who wanted to sit on the stile. But they were not to be bullied and ordered off by the lounge of the Bird-in-Hand. Not if Billy Bull had had a punch like Carnara could he have hectored the Fistical Four of Rookwood.

"I'll blinkin' soon shift you!" said Mr. Bull.

And he grasped at Arthur Edward Lovell, who was nearest to him, and grabbed him off the stile.

Lovell went down in the field with a bump and a roar.

"My hat!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Pile in, you men!" Jimmy and Raby and Newcome fairly jumped at the ruffian.

Had Billy Bull been given time to get in the punch that had once made the Latcham Pet formidable in the ring, serious damage would have been done to at least one of the Rookwooders. But Jimmy Silver & Co. gave him no time for that.

The three juniors landed on him from the stile and bore him backwards into the field. Mr. Bull went down in the grass, on his back, with a crash.

"Keep him down!" panted Jimmy.

"What-ho!"

Mr. Bull heaved under the juniors like a billow on the sea. But he went down again; and Jimmy Silver, still kneeling on him, grasped his large and prominent ears with both hands and banged his bullet head on the earth. The roar from Billy Bull rang far across the fields and lanes. His head was hard, but the solid earth, evidently, was harder, and had the best of it.

A lean and angular figure appeared in the lane, coming from the direction of Rookwood School. Jimmy Silver & Co., their hands full with the struggling pugilist, did not observe the approach of Mr. Roger Manders, the Modern

beak at Rookwood. Mr. Manders, however, observed the struggle that was going on on the farther side of the stile, and stopped to stare at it. Portentous wrath gathered on the brow of Roger Manders.

As Jimmy Silver & Co. belonged to the Classical side at Rookwood, the Modern master had no concern with them. But it was Mr. Manders' way to intervene where he had no concern.

"Boys!" hooted Mr. Manders. "Boys!"

Thus made aware of Manders' presence, the Fistical Four looked round. But they did not let go of William Bull.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Mr. Manders angrily. "You—Rookwood boys—entering into a disgraceful disturbance with a public-house loafer! I am ashamed of you! You should be ashamed of yourselves!"

**K.O.!**  
**When Billy Bull, the Latcham Pet,**  
**beats up Mr. Manders, Jimmy**  
**Silver & Co. say it is**  
**O.K.!**

Mr. Manders leaned over the stile. He waved a commanding, bony hand at the Classics.

"Release that man! Go back to the school! Report yourselves to Mr. Dalton instantly!"

"Oh, let the rotter go!" said Jimmy Silver.

William Bull was released, and the two juniors jumped away from him. The Latcham Pet sat up, panting.

"I'll out yer!" he gasped. "Jest wait a tick till a cove gets his breath!"

Mr. Manders' presence would not have saved the Fistical Four from damage had they waited the necessary "tick" till the Pet got his breath. But they did not wait. They vaulted over the stile and trotted up the lane towards the school.

Mr. Manders sniffed, and stalked on towards the village. The Latcham Pet clambered clumsily over the stile and glared after the juniors. But Mr. Bull, though formidable at close quarters, was of no use in a foot race. He shook a leg-of-mutton fist after the four, rubbed the back of his head where it had smitten the earth, spat out some remarks that almost turned the atmosphere blue, and tramped away towards the Bird-in-Hand. He was no longer desirous of resting on the stile; he felt the urge for liquid refreshment after his tussle.

And Jimmy Silver & Co., with feelings towards Roger Manders that could have been described in no known language, walked back to Rookwood.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Uncle James Knows How!

**J**IMMY SILVER grinned.

Lovell was scowling. Raby and Newcome were frowning. Jimmy had been looking very thoughtful. Now he grinned.

Something of an entertaining nature, apparently, was working in the bright intellect of Uncle James of Rookwood.

The chums of the Fourth had walked back to the school. They had felt it better to report themselves to their Form master; to anticipate the report that Mr. Dalton was certain to receive from Manders later. Richard Dalton quite understood; he knew Manders. He listened to the juniors, admitted that they had not been to blame, and dismissed them. But the four were excited and wrathful. Manders had given them a great deal of trouble, in one way and another, Manders being a gentleman who never could mind his own business. They owed him lines, they owed him lickings, they owed him detentions. In fact, there was no enumerating the sins of Manders. Now he had spoiled their half-holiday, assumed that they were ruffianly young rascals, and got away with it, so to speak. The Fistical Four yearned to make Manders sit up. They really had a feeling that life at Rookwood School would not be worth living till they had made Manders sit up.

That was the subject of Jimmy Silver's deep cogitations as the chums of the Fourth strolled in the quad. More than once they had tried their luck at making Manders sit up; but Manders seemed to have had all the luck.

"The rotter!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, for the tenth time. "The worm! The Modern tick! I'm fed-up with Manders! I say, let's go and rag some of the Modern cads! If we can't rag Manders, we can rag his House."

"What about cricket?" asked Raby. "It's a bit late now to start again for Latcham."

"Manders has mucked up the afternoon!" growled Newcome. "My hat! We've got to get back on Manders somehow!"

"We're going to, my infants!" said Jimmy Silver. There was a cheery grin on Jimmy's face. "I've got it!"

Grunt from Arthur Edward Lovell. Arthur Edward had little faith in any stunts but his own.

"It's the wheeze of the term," said Jimmy, "and I fancy we can pull it off. That brute Bull—"

"Oh, blow him!" said Lovell. "We don't want another shindy with Bull!"

"He's a retired pug," said Jimmy unheeding. "He used to scrap in the ring; and he gets jobs now and then giving instruction in boxing."

"I know that! We're not going to box with him, I suppose."

"Dry up a minute, old chap, and let a fellow speak!" said Jimmy. "The brute tried to bully us, and got us into the row with Manders, and we owe him one. We owe Manders more than one. And—"

"There's old Manders!" grunted Lovell.

From the direction of the gates the lean, angular figure of Roger Manders appeared in the offing. He gave the Fistical Four a glance—a very acid glance—and disappeared into his House.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"What we want," he remarked, "is a telephone."

"What the thump do we want a telephone for?" demanded Lovell.

"To ring up the Bird-in-Hand."

Jimmy Silver's chums fairly jumped. The unsavoury hostelry had a rich and juicy reputation, and was strictly out of bounds for all Rookwooders. It was the haunt of the Latcham Pet, their late adversary. It was a place of which Rookwood men were expected to know nothing, or, at least, to see nothing. The three juniors almost goggled at their leader.

"Ring up the Bird-in-Hand!" gasped Raby.

"Just that!" said Jimmy, with a nod.

"Do you want to be sacked from Rookwood, you howling ass?" demanded Lovell.

"Not at all, old bean! We're going to keep it dark, Come on!"

"But what—" exclaimed Newcome.

"Come on, and leave it to your Uncle James."

Jimmy Silver walked towards the House. Raby and Newcome followed him in wonder, but quite willing to leave it to Uncle James. Arthur Edward Lovell snorted as he followed. His opinion was that it should be left to him to deal with Manders; but he had that opinion entirely to himself.

"Morny, old bean!" Jimmy Silver greeted Valentine Mornington of the Fourth as they entered the House. "Any of the beaks out, do you know? I want to borrow a phone."



Jimmy Silver & Co. landed firmly on top of Mr. Bull, and he went down on his back with a crash!

Mornington grinned.

"Greely's gone on the river," he said.

"Good!"

Jimmy Silver headed for the study of Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth Form. If Greely had gone on the river, his telephone was at the service of a junior who needed one for a jape on Manders.

The captain of the Fourth tapped at the door, to make sure. There was no reply from within, and Jimmy opened the door.

"All serene!" he said. "Trot in!"

The study was empty. The Fistical Four "trotted" in, and Jimmy closed the door.

"Look here—" began Lovell.

"Cheese it, old man! We've got to get finished before Greely comes in."

Jimmy Silver picked up the receiver, and gave a number.

A husky, beery voice came through. It was the voice of Mr. Stiggins, the landlord of the Bird-in-Hand at Coombe.

"Allo!" said Mr. Stiggins.

"Can I speak to Mr. Bull—the Latcham Pet?" asked Jimmy.

"I'll call 'im!" answered Mr. Stiggins.

Jimmy Silver's chums watched him in silence, with one eye on the study window, in case Mr. Greely should return from the river. Greely, if he returned, was not likely to be pleased at finding the Fourth-Formers in his study making free with his telephone.

A rough, husky, surly voice came through:

"Billy Bull speaking! What's wanted?"

"Is that Mr. Bull, known as the Latcham Pet?" asked Jimmy, in the high cracked voice it had pleased him to adopt.

"You got it!"

"I understand that you give instruction in boxing?"

"Suttingly!" The surly voice was a little more civil, as Mr. Bull scented a client, and a fee, which meant liquid refreshment for the Pet. "That's just my line, sir!"

"Could you manage to give a lesson this afternoon? I am speaking from Rookwood School."

Jimmy heard the bruiser gasp.

"The school, sir? Suttingly, sir! Pleased and proud to be at your service, sir!" said the Latcham Pet eagerly. "You the 'eadmaster, sir? You can't do better, sir, than put the boys in my 'ands, sir."

Jimmy suppressed a chuckle at the bare idea of the Head of Rookwood engaging such a character as the Latcham Pet to give boxing instruction to Rookwooders. But the Pet was evidently hopeful of having got on to a good thing.

"Your instruction is not intended for the boys, Mr. Bull. It is not the headmaster speaking. Perhaps you have heard of Mr. Manders, the master of Manders' House here."

"I've 'eard of you, sir, and I'll be 'appy to make your acquaintance, sir!" answered Mr. Bull.

"If you could be here at, say, five o'clock—"

"I'll make a point of it, sir."

"And give me a first lesson in boxing—"

"Suttingly, sir!"

"At your usual fee, whatever it is—"

"Oh! Yes—yes, sir, suttingly!" gasped Mr. Bull.

His usual fee was immediately enlarged in Mr. Bull's mind.

"Very well. Please call at Rookwood and ask for Mr. Manders, at Manders' House. You understand that you are to instruct Mr. Manders, and you will ask for him. I can rely on you?"

"You can, sir! Strike me pink—I mean, suttingly, sir! Five o'clock, sir, you'll see me, prompt!"

"Thank you, Mr. Bull!"

Jimmy Silver rang off.

He turned to his comrades, who were staring at him open-eyed.

"Time we cut," he remarked casually. "Greely might come in. We don't want a beak to know we've been on the phone this afternoon."

They cut. They did not speak till they were out of the House, under the old Rookwood beeches.

"My—my—my only hat!" gurgled Raby. "Jimmy! Oh, Jimmy! That—that beery bruiser will blow in at five—"

"Exactly!" assented Jimmy Silver.

"He will butt in on Manders!" gasped Newcome.

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Raby.

"I fancy," said Jimmy Silver, "that there will be some sort of shindy in Manders' House at five o'clock. I fancy that Manders may be mixed up in what he calls a disgraceful disturbance with a public-house loafer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I think we may as well tip some of the fellows, so that Manders may have an audience."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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Long before five o'clock quite an army of Classical juniors had gathered within easy distance of Manders' House on the Modern side. And, to judge by their grinning looks, they were anticipating entertainment.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### A Surprising Visitor at Rookwood!

C ECIL KNOWLES of the Modern Sixth stared towards the gates. Knowles, Captain of Manders' House, was strolling in the quad, when unusual sounds at the school gates drew his attention. Old Mack, the porter, was standing in the gateway, and a number of Rookwood fellows had gathered round.

Coming in from the road was a short, squat, thickset figure, with a battered bowler hat stuck on the back of a bullet head, a red nose gleaming in the June sunshine, and a square jaw jutting out threateningly.

Knowles stared in astonishment at Billy Bull, the Latcham Pet, wondering what that well-known, but not respected, local character wanted at Rookwood.

He was coming in, and old Mack was standing in his way. Old Mack did not want to admit Mr. Bull. But, as the gate was open and as Mr. Bull could have lifted old Mack back into his lodge with one punch, old Mack did not seem to have much choice in the matter.

Knowles hurried down to the gates. From another direction Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, hurried to the same spot.

Old Mack, protesting, was retreating before Mr. Bull's brandished fist and jutting jaw, and looked as if he needed help.

"Here, what's this?" exclaimed Knowles. "What do you want here, my man?"

The Pet glanced at him.

"Called to see Mr. Manders," he answered. "Special appointment, sir—and this 'ere hold himage don't want to let a bloke in."

"Oh gad!" murmured Smythe of the Shell. "That's a jolly queer visitor for old Manders, you men."

And the Rookwooders, looking on, stared and grinned.

From the direction of Manders' House more than a score of Classical fellows were looking—and grinning. Jimmy Silver & Co. were aware that the Pet had arrived.

"But—but—" stuttered Knowles, in amazement. "You—you can't come in here, Bull! There's some mistake—"

"There ain't any mistake," contradicted the Pet. "Mr. Manders phoned me to come, and 'ere I am."

"You can't come in," said old Mack. "Anyhow, you jest wait 'ere till I send to ask Mr. Manders—"

"Wait 'ere be blowed," answered Mr. Bull. "I'm 'ere to see Mr. Manders, ain't I? Get hout of it!"

"Ow!" gasped the Rookwood porter, as the Latcham Pet gave him a push.

Old Mack sat down quite suddenly.

Mr. Bull strode in. There was an angry expression on his bulldog face. Mr. Bull's temper was never good, and it was never improved by the ale at the Bird-in-Hand. Old Mack's objections had irritated him. His jaw jutted more than ever as he strode in.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Knowles, dropping his hand on William Bull's arm. "Oh! Ow! My hat!"

Mr. Bull gave Knowles a push. Knowles sat down. There was a great deal of beef in a push from William Bull.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Smythe of the Shell; and he backed away. And the other fellows backed with him. Nobody wanted a push from Mr. Bull.

Only Bulkeley of the Sixth interposed. He planted himself directly in the path of the old pug.

"Hold on a minute," said Bulkeley civilly. "I think there must be a misunderstanding here. I had better speak to Mr. Manders before—"

"Ook it!"

"Look here, my man—"

"Oook it, before I 'it you!" suggested Mr. Bull.

Bulkeley stood like a rock. He was a big, powerful fellow, though certainly not a match for a prize-fighter. Mr. Bull eyed him wolfishly.

"You 'ooking it?" he demanded.

"Certainly not. You cannot come in here," said the Rookwood captain. "And keep your hands to yourself! Oh, my hat!"

Bulkeley of the Sixth went sprawling under a "jolt" from Mr. Bull's hefty right. There was a shout from the Rookwooders.

The Latcham Pet, angrier than ever now, strode on into the quadrangle. Bulkeley sat up dizzily.

"Now then, where's Manders?" demanded Mr. Bull, staring round him. "Manders' House," he says to me on the phone. Where's the blooming show? 'Ere, you, nipper, you point it out—see!"

The nipper was Tommy Dodd of the Modern Fourth. Billy Bull seized him by the shoulder with a grasp that was like the hug of a bear. Tommy Dodd gasped.

"Oh crumbs! This way, old bean."

Tommy did not intend to argue with a prize-fighter who had a grip on him. Also, he was rather interested to know what Manders would do with this remarkable visitor. Tommy, like most of the onlookers, supposed that there must be some mistake; it was unimaginable that Mr. Roger Manders really had telephoned to this unwashed ruffian to come up to the school. If Billy Bull had received such a telephone call it was obviously a spoof of some kind—somebody was pulling his leg. Tommy Dodd, who liked Manders no more than any other Rookwooder did, had no objection to landing the Pet on him.

He conducted Mr. Bull meekly to Manders' House. Jimmy Silver & Co. lined up on either side of the entrance to watch them pass in. Billy Bull scowled at the crowd of grinning faces. Mr. Bull, at least, could see nothing to grin at.

A lean face, with a startled and almost horrified expression on it, appeared at Mr. Manders' study window. Roger Manders stared out at his amazing visitor, with his eyes almost starting from his head.

He leaned from the window.

"Who—who is this?" he gasped. "Who—what—why—"

Mr. Bull looked round at him.

"Name of Bull, sir," he answered. "The Latcham Pet, sir! You Mr. Manders?"

"Yes, yes! Certainly! But what do you want? What do you mean? What—" stuttered Mr. Manders.

"'Appy to meet you, sir," said Billy Bull, very civilly for him. "'Ere I am, 'cording to a arrangement, sir."

"What? What? Why have you come here?" gasped Mr. Manders.

"Ain't it five o'clock?" demanded Billy Bull.

"I—I believe so! But—but what—"

"Well, then, 'ere I am," said Billy Bull; and he marched into the House, still holding on to Tommy Dodd. "'Ere, you young shaver, you take me to the old bloke! Bust me if he don't seem to have forgot asking me to come! You take me along to 'im, see?"

"This way!" gasped Tommy Dodd. And he led the Latcham Pet to Mr. Manders' study and tapped on the door.

Billy Bull opened the study door. He released Tommy Dodd, who scudded away immediately to join the gathering crowd outside the House. That crowd was thickening opposite Mr. Manders' study window. The window was wide open in the warm June afternoon; and the fellows outside had quite a good view of the interior. There was rather a struggle for front places. Modern fellows and Classical fellows, seniors and juniors, gathered there, to stare in amazement and wonder.

Amazement and wonder were also depicted on the lean countenance of Roger Manders as he stared at his unexpected and unwelcome visitor.

Billy Bull took off his battered bowler hat quite respectfully to the Modern master as he entered the study. He was annoyed and irritated, and it was not easy for the Pet to subdue his accustomed bullying manner. But he saw—or fancied he saw—a paying client in Mr. Manders, and so he summoned up all the civility he was capable of.

"'Arternoon, sir!" said the Pet, quite affably. "Warm 'afternoon, sir! Well, 'ere I am!"

Mr. Manders stared at him across his study table. What this unwashed hooligan, smelling unpleasantly of stale tobacco and beer, wanted with him was a deep mystery to

Mr. Manders. He was intensely annoyed by the man's impudence in coming there, whatever he wanted, and he was rather alarmed, too. Billy Bull's aggressive jaw might have alarmed a more courageous gentleman than Roger Manders.

"I—I—I see you are here," stammered Mr. Manders. "What—what is the—the object of this visit? Why are you here?"

Billy Bull stared, in his turn.

"I don't ketch on," he said. "It's five, ain't it? Look at your own blooming clock!"

He indicated the study clock with a stubby thumb.

"Oh! Yes, quite! But—but what— Really, sir—if you have been drinking—" gasped Mr. Manders. "Really—"

"P'r'aps I've pushed one back," said Mr. Bull, "p'r'aps two or three! What about it? I'm 'ere on business! You're Manders, ain't you?"

"Yes, certainly. But—"

"You're the old gent I saw in the lane this 'arternoon, when them young rips was 'olding me down," said Mr. Bull. "'Appy to see you agin, sir! Very glad to be of



Billy Bull himself came scrambling out of the window in hot pursuit of Mr. Manders!

service to a gentleman like you, sir! You're a bit old in the tooth for boxing—"

"What—what—"

"But never say die, sir!" said Billy Bull encouragingly. "It's 'andy, even for an old cove like you, sir, to know how to put up his dooks. And I'm the man to teach you how, sir—you can take your davy on that."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Manders. "I—I fail to understand you. I—I request you to retire, Mr.—er—Bull, if that is your name. I—I am very busy this afternoon—"

"I don't mind waiting, if you offer a bloke a chair," said Billy Bull. "I always attends the convenience of my clients, sir. Bless your 'eart, sir, I'll sit down and put on a pipe, and wait as long as you like."

"I—I—I do not desire you to wait, sir!" gasped Mr. Manders. "I—I desire you to leave at once. I—I cannot understand why you have come here at all. You have no business here! Please go, without a disturbance."

"No business 'ere?" repeated Billy Bull blankly. "Wot's that? Ain't it five o'clock?" He pointed his stubby thumb at the clock again. "Wot are you driving at? Look 'ere, Mr. Manders, you're wasting a bloke's time! Five o'clock was the time, and five o'clock it is! What I says is, let's get to it."

And Mr. Bull spat on his hands.

## CHAPTER 4.

## Awful for Manders!

ROGER MANDERS stared blankly, almost stupefied, at the Latcham Pet.

"Get to it!" repeated Mr. Manders dazedly. "Get to what?"

"Boxing, of course!" snapped the Pet.

"Boxing!" gasped Mr. Manders. He shuddered at the bare idea of boxing with that awful ruffian. "Upon my word! Did you say b-b-boxing?"

"I didn't say nothing else!" snapped Mr. Bull. "I ain't come 'ere to teach you furrin langwidges or mattymatics, that's a cert. I come 'ere to teach you boxing."

"You—you—you have come here to—to—to teach me boxing!" articulated Mr. Manders, wondering whether he was dreaming this.

"You're changing, I s'pose?" asked Mr. Bull.

"Choo-choo-changing?" stuttered Mr. Manders.

"Well, I s'pose you ain't boxing in them togs," said Mr. Bull, puzzled. "Better 'ook that long-tailed coat on, anyhow."

"Upon my word!"

"Well, what about it?" demanded Billy Bull. "We're wasting time, sir. Are we getting to it, or ain't we?"

"Goodness gracious! Certainly not!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"If you are not mad, you must be intoxicated. I request you to go."

"You asks a bloke to go!" roared Mr. Bull. "Turns a cove down—for nothing. You don't even offer a man his fee, arter he's walked a mile. My word! I ain't been received civil 'ere! I've 'ad to push over three blokes to get into the blooming 'ouse at all. Now you tells me I ain't wanted. Why, for 'arf-a-pint I'd push your features through the back of your 'ead!"

"Go—go—please go. I—I will telephone for the police!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"Arter I come up 'ere special?" shrieked Mr. Bull. "Blow me tight! Strike me pink! Bust my buttons! You ugly old himage, you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came floating in at the open window. The stentorian tones of Mr. Bull were heard across the quad. More than half Rookwood had gathered to look on and listen.

Mr. Bull did not heed the laughter "off." His gleaming little piggy eyes were fixed on Mr. Manders.

"Go, says you!" he snarled. "Well, pay a man and let a man go! 'And over that there guinea—twenty-one blooming shillings—and I'll 'ook it and glad. And you're lucky if I don't land you one afore I 'ook it. Now, then."

Mr. Bull stretched a horny hand, in a sad state of uncleanness across the table. Mr. Manders stared at it. Mr. Manders was a very careful gentleman with his money. It gave him a pain to part with a shilling for something. To part with twenty-one shillings for nothing was unthinkable.

"What—what—what do you mean?" he articulated. "I shall certainly not give you money. Go away at once. You—you can be imprisoned for coming here and demanding money. I shall prosecute you if you do not depart instantly. Go away!"

Billy Bull stared at him, his bulldog face growing grimmer and grimmer till his expression was positively terrific.

"You—you—you ain't even paying a bloke!" he gasped.

"Certainly not! I refuse—refuse absolutely—"

"Arter I came up 'ere special?"

"I did not desire—I did not—"

"You change your blooming mind, and you don't want boxing lessons, and you give a man all his trouble for nothing!" roared Mr. Bull, in a voice that woke almost every echo at Rookwood. "My eye! Strike me pink and blue! You fancy you're getting away with that, you ugly hold himage, you! You're asking me to 'it you."

"Go away!" said Mr. Manders faintly. He waved his bony hands at Billy Bull. "Go away! Oh, go away! I—I will give you a shilling to go away."

Headless of that munificent offer, Billy Bull came round the table. His intention in coming round the table was only too clear, and Mr. Manders promptly circled round the other end.

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

He bolted for the door.

With a snarl the pugilist leaped after him. He grabbed Mr. Manders by the collar, and jerked him back.

A shriek of terror broke from Mr. Manders.

"Help! Help! Police! Help! Oh! Help!"

"You hold himage!" roared Billy Bull, in furious wrath. "You ugly hold himage! You double-crossing old dodger—"

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"Help!" raved Mr. Manders.

He tore himself frantically away. His collar tore out, and remained in the sinewy grasp of Mr. Bull. Manders, free for the moment, rushed across to the open window.

"Strike me pink!" ejaculated the Latcham Pet. He rushed after Mr. Manders, breathing fury.

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Manders.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the quad. A sea of grinning faces looked up at the study window.

A grasping hand behind barely missed Manders, as he scrambled desperately through the window. He dropped in a sprawling heap outside. Mr. Manders was not an active gentleman, and this was the first time Rookwood had seen him in an acrobatic performance. The crowd rocked and roared.

Billy Bull stared out of the window, with an infuriated face.

"Swindling a bloke!" he roared. "Asking a bloke to come up 'ere special, and turning him down! Strike me pink! I'll maul you till you ain't got a 'owl left in you! Strike me pink and blue!"

And Billy Bull, in his turn, scrambled out of the study window, in hot pursuit of Manders.

The Modern master scrambled to his feet. He cast a fearful glance at the terrifying figure scrambling after him from the study, and bolted across the quad. A howl of laughter followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Manders!"

"After him, Billy! Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bull landed in the quad, and streaked after Mr. Manders. The convulsed crowd opened to let him pass. Jimmy Silver & Co. rocked with mirth. Shouts and yells of laughter rang from all sides. Across the quad went Roger Manders, his long legs going like clockwork. After him tore Billy Bull, panting and puffing, bent on vengeance. After the two of them surged the Rookwood crowd, howling with merriment.

"Did you ever?" gasped Jimmy Silver, wiping his streaming eyes.

"Hardly ever!" chortled Lovell. "Oh dear! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Manders!"

"Bag him, Billy Bull. Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Manders was streaking for the Head's house. But he had no time to reach it. Billy Bull and vengeance were too close behind. A clutching hand grasped the streaming tails of Mr. Manders' coat.

His flight was checked so suddenly that he spun right round the Latcham Pet, like a satellite revolving round a planet.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now then—" snarled the Latcham Pet.

"Ow! Wow! Help! Draggimoff! Help!" raved Mr. Manders, as he crumpled up in the herculean grasp of the enraged Pet.

Fortunately for Mr. Manders, there was help at hand—plenty of help. Mr. Bull had only time for two or three hefty thumps. Then Bulkeley and Knowles rushed down on him, and five or six more seniors, and grasped him, and dragged him away from Manders. Jimmy Silver & Co. lent a hand—and a score more Rookwooders; as many hands were laid on Billy Bull as there was room for. And even the Latcham Pet had no chance against such odds.

Mr. Manders sat spluttering, gasping, and shrieking for help. The Latcham Pet, yelling and roaring, and struggling, was rushed away headlong to the gates, in the midst of a mob of Rookwooders, and hurled out into the road. By the time he landed there, even the Latcham Pet realised that he had had enough, and he picked himself up, and limped away, to find consolation—of a fluid nature—at the Bird-in-Hand. He left Rookwood in a roar.

Knowles and Bulkeley picked Mr. Manders up. They helped him back to his House. They landed him spluttering in his study. And they did not laugh till they had closed the door on him.

THE END.

In the end study, on the Classical side, there was rejoicing. The Fistical Four were quits with Manders at last. Even Arthur Edward Lovell admitted that Uncle James had put it through with eminent success. It was likely to be long before Rookwood forgot the visit of Billy Bull, and the sight of Roger Manders scrambling out of his study window, and streaking across the quad. It was likely to be longer still before Mr. Manders forgot it.

(Jimmy Silver & Co. are quits with Manders at last! Next week there is another new complete Rookwood yarn in the GEM! Don't miss it!)

MORE OF OUR THRILLING SERIAL

# THE ISLAND CASTAWAYS!

(Opening Chapters  
re-told on page 26.)



## The Voice From the Sea!

**F**OR a moment I had a sickening feeling. I knew that the plane had floated above the landing carriage, but landing on water is a much more tricky business than landing on earth; you want to skim over the surface and come gently to rest. I didn't fear for our lives; a skilled pilot like Matt Kay Lee would be unlikely to nose-dive into the sea. We were even now not much over a mile from the island, and both of us were capable of swimming that distance easily, even if the others did not put off in the raft to our assistance. And every blessed shark in the neighbourhood must have been attracted to the scene we had just left.

My fear was the savages. I knew from our tame native that the beggars had uncannily good eyesight. It was that plane they feared; if they saw it fall into the sea they might return, mad with the lust for vengeance, or at all events go back to their island and fit out another expedition, if they believed they had no longer to face the machine which dealt death and disaster.

I told Matt my thoughts, for conversation was easy now that the roar of the engine had ceased and we were planing gently down over a sea of sapphire blue, with the intense heat of the afternoon sun broken by the rush of air in our faces.

"I doubt if anyone is looking," he said. "I guess the invaders are just concentrated upon seeing their dear homeland once again. But I hope we do make land. For one thing, I'm a dud swimmer, and for another I'm mighty keen on this plane. Guess you get attached to a machine that's taken you round the world, and I don't want to lose it."

He was perfectly cool; his eyes were fixed ahead on that

great stretch of sand by our camp, though every now and then he glanced at his altitude meter which was dropping rapidly now. I could see dad hustling back Sunday and my excitable black dog, who would have rushed to meet us. And then Matt half-turned.

"We shall just do it, but prepare for a bump."

I had a vision of blue water under me, then tumbling surf. Something seemed to come up and hit us violently, the machine heeled a little but recovered, and we were at rest on the sand, with the surf breaking round the tail of the plane—and I did not care if the savages had the finest eyes and the finest telescopes, there was little or nothing in our landing to indicate that it was forced, certainly nothing to suggest to the savages that the death-dealing machine from which they had suffered so badly, would not be in evidence the next time they called.

Dud was a bit sick that we had let two canoes get away instead of the one he had planned should escape; but Matt defended me, and he had one quite unanswerable argument. He said that if we'd stopped to finish off the other canoe it was heavy odds that we should have crashed into the sea, so that by tempering justice with mercy we had saved our own lives.

Dud agreed that, after the disaster they had experienced, it was very unlikely that the natives would try another invasion; but he was mighty thorough.

He started up the car, and we went down to Crocodile Creek, and then round and back to the other side of it, travelling up and down round the coast for an hour, looking for any survivors who might have eluded the sharks and be swimming ashore. We did not see a solitary swimmer, and could only come to the conclusion that the sharks

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**RESCUED AT LAST!**  
**Island Castaways found by**  
**American millionaire!**

round Necessity Island thoroughly knew their business and had excellent appetites.

Our tame native rejoiced at the disastrous defeat of his fellow-countrymen, and after that hectic day of excitement we settled down to quite a humdrum existence, got the pump working, started improving our buildings, and digging and sowing. Except for Matt, we were all pretty well convinced that we were in for a long spell on the island, and sometimes my heart sank when I thought how long it might be.

It was about a week after the attempted invasion by the savages, and on a blazing afternoon we were sitting resting in the shade of a big tree on the edge of the jungle. Matt and Jill were trying to do a crossword puzzle they had found in an old weekly paper someone had brought off from the Maglo. Dad was dozing, mother was sound asleep, Dud lay on his back, and I sat gazing out at the steel bronze haze over the sea, staring at something I felt must be an odd-shaped cloud, but which somehow looked like smoke.

Could it be smoke away on the horizon? It was worth while going get the glasses, so, pulling on my battered linen hat, I hurried over the hot sand to the camp, and one glance through the binoculars told me that it was smoke.

It was a ship!

Almost wild with excitement, I rushed into our cabin and up to the wireless. The ship was a long way off, and only a small one, but it was the first vessel we had seen since we had been cast on the island. If it had wireless, and the operator was on duty, even our feeble signals should carry to it.

But as I started to send out the SOS my heart sank. On small boats a wireless operator was often not at his post; it would be just sheer luck if the message reached the boat, and perhaps the old-fashioned beacon had advantages after all.

But I kept tapping away, appealing for help, then listening intently for a sound of Morse to bring a glimmer of hope.

And then a voice said quite loudly in my ear:

"Say, can you hear me? This is the American yacht Hudson Star; owner, Matt Kay Lee, of New York! Have you sighted an airplane? Over!"

### Rescue!

**T**HAT voice booming in my ear, almost as though I'd put on headphones for a station coming in at full loud-speaker strength, had me absolutely dazed for a moment. Often when hammering out a weak SOS I had wondered what my feelings would be if I switched over the receiver to hear some faint reply in Morse, to learn that we were in contact with civilisation again.

But hearing that strong American voice knocked me over. I think I must have sat there, jaw dropped, eyes bulging, for some moments before I could really grasp the significance of the thing, and then I managed to pull myself together.

Young Matt Kay Lee had been right; his father was a stickler. He was searching the Pacific in a speedy yacht fitted with a wireless transmitter that would have made a big liner's outfit seem but a whisper, and the operator in the cabin of the yacht was not worrying about the castaways on an island. His demand was, "Had we seen an airplane?"

And everything depended upon me getting over an answer to that question, and the yacht might be steaming away from our island whilst I was sitting there like an idiot.

Frantically I tapped out the message, my hand trembling as I worked the key:

**"Matt Kay Lee made forced landing here. All well. Want to be taken off. Over."**

I moved the switch, heard the carrier wave, and then the loud voice dinned in my ears again.

"Say, that's just great. I'll tell the owner. Stand by to receive further message. Over."

I put down the headphones, and snatching up a pair of binoculars, hurried out of the hut, and focused the glasses on the puff of smoke, and could discern a white yacht miles out. As I looked I could see that she was altering her course.

"Matt!" I yelled at the top of my voice. "Your father wants you on the phone!"

I stopped just long enough to hear the American give a sharp cry and see him and Jill

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jump to their feet, followed swiftly by Dud. Then I raced to the hut again and put on the headphones just in time to hear an excited voice saying: "Hallo! Hallo! Is Matt Kay Lee, junior, anywhere handy your end?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, "he's coming along now."

I worked the Morse key slowly, thinking that an American millionaire was scarcely likely to be an expert, and I had scarcely finished when Matt bounded into the hut.

"Well done, dad!" he tapped out on the transmitter. "Can you hear me?"

"Sure, boy!" came the reply.

Matt, who had put on the other pair of headphones, grinned at me, and I felt an idiot, flushed, and went out, leaving him to carry on the conversation with his father away on the steam yacht Hudson Star.

As a wireless operator I had certainly not distinguished myself. Had I been listening-in with that yacht within a few hundred miles I could easily have picked up any signal, and it could probably have picked up mine; but with our solitary high tension battery getting a little on the weak side, we had refrained from even listening in to the Daventry news in order to conserve our current for the sending of an SOS should a ship come in sight.

And then, to my amazement, Dud gripped my hand, and Jill flung her arms round my neck and kissed me as I emerged from the hut.

"Oh, Barry, we owe it all to you!" she cried. "If you hadn't spotted the yacht and got out that message, we should have lost this wonderful chance, and might have been here for the rest of our lives."

"It's one up to you, old lad!" said Dudley, taking the binoculars and looking out to sea.

Dad and mother came hurrying up, followed at a short distance by our tame native, who was pointing excitedly at the swiftly moving yacht, which was now clear to the naked eye.

"You've got in touch with a ship, Barry?"

"Matt's father has got in touch with us, dad, would be a better way of putting it. That's Matt Kay Lee's yacht, the Hudson Star, and he's got a young Daventry power station on board."

Dad just stood there gazing out to sea, but mother's face was beaming.

"Come along, Jill dear," she said, "we must go and change and have tea ready by the time that Mr. Lee arrives. This is really wonderful! Dudley, do explain the situation to that poor brown man, I'm sure he's frightfully worried about it, and we might as well give him the island, we shan't want it!"

Dud grinned.

"Sunday's welcome to it so far as I'm concerned," he said, "but I doubt if he'll want it. I know I shouldn't care to live alone here with the knowledge that my nearest neighbours were a savage crowd with every temptation to murder me!"

As mother and Jill went off to their huts to change, and Dad started to try to explain the situation to Sunday, Matt came out looking almost crazy with delight.

"I backed on dad, and he hasn't let us down! Oh, it's great!" he cried excitedly, and broke into a little dance on the hot, yellow sand.

"Yes," I said, "I'm awfully bucked about it. But I suppose the island means more to us than to you, Matt. You were forced down here, and spoilt the thing you'd set out to do, but we were cast up in a ship. We sort of brought the ship to the island, built our home here, have been pretty happy here, and I'm not going to say that I can leave without a sort of regret."

"A very deep regret, my boy," said dad quietly. "Of course, I am very glad that your father has found us, Lee. It was terrible to contemplate the possibility of you young people having to spend your lives cut off from everything here. I think it would have driven me mad if I had contemplated it. But in many ways I shall look upon Necessity Island as the place where I spent some of the happiest days of my life, where a man had man's work to do, where a man was monarch of all he surveyed."

Matt looked a little puzzled, but I knew what was passing in dad's mind.

"There's one thing, dad," I said cheerfully, "you won't be going back to life in an office, and you needn't be more civilised than you want to be! With that treasure we found you'll be able to buy that ideal place you used to talk of on the Norfolk coast."

Dad brightened visibly, and then Dad strolled up.

**THE OPENING CHAPTERS.**  
Young BARRY MAYNE, in company with his mother and father, his elder brother, DUDLEY, and his sister, JILL, are wrecked on a Pacific island. Salvaging a car, together with some provisions, Barry and Dud tour the island and discover a skeleton buried in the sand. Barry eventually succeeds in getting a transmitting wireless set working. Later, during the eruption of a volcano on the island, the castaways come across a native, who informs them that a cannibal tribe may arrive at any moment. Sure enough the cannibals arrive, but turn tail when an aeroplane, piloted by Kay Lee, a young American, appears on the scene. Three days later the castaways discover a chest full of gold and jewels buried in the sand. Before very long, however, the cannibals return in force, and Lee and Barry are "bombed" them with rocks from above when their engine conks out owing to shortage of petrol.

(Now read on.)

"There's a bloke who's just refused a kingdom!" he said, with a jerk of his thumb towards the troubled-looking brown man. "He won't take the island. He says he wants to come with us, and stay with us until he dies. I suppose it's frightfully complimentary, but it's also dashed awkward."

"Why?" I asked, watching the approaching yacht, with the black smoke pouring from her yellow funnel, her white hull gleaming against the vivid blue of sea and sky. "I've just been telling dad that he'll be able to have his ideal home now. Why not take Sunday home with us as a worker on the estate? We've three-parts civilised him, he's loyal, quick at picking up things, and I should think he's tough enough to stand our climate. Anyway, we can't leave the poor chap here."

"Bright idea!" said my brother, and dad jumped at it, and was looking quite bucked as we walked down to the water's edge to watch the yacht come in.

A boat was being swung out, we heard the clang of the engine-room telegraph, and then a shrill whistle, and the rattle of the anchor chain.

And a short, thickset man in a grey flannel suit and a big Panama hat was standing at the side, frantically waving his hand. He was into the white dinghy on the heels of its crew almost the moment it had struck the water.

Two sailors were rowing, an officer in white drill sat in the stern, and beside him sat Matt Kay Lee's father, the millionaire who had refused to believe what the world believed, but had set off on an apparently hopeless quest in search of his son.

The bows of the dinghy grounded on the sand, and the millionaire jumped out and grasped his son's hand. He had a pleasant, shrewd, keen face and a quick, restless manner. Matt introduced us, and he thanked us for our hospitality to his son, and looked round him with keen interest.

Then mother and Jill appeared. Mother looked as though she were at some garden party, and had recovered all her old dignity, whilst young Jill looked very pretty in a filmy blue dress, with a broad-brimmed blue hat on her dark head.

"This is Jill, dad," said Matt, and something in the way he said it, and the look he gave my sister, rather puzzled me.

"And now you must come and have some tea," said mother, and we had the American millionaire startled when he entered our dining-tent and saw a daintily laid table and quite a tempting meal.

"I guess you've made yourselves mighty comfortable here. I want you all to come and dine with me on the yacht to-night; but after this I don't know that you'll be hankering for it."

"Oh, we'd love it!" said mother.

And then dad was telling our visitor about the treasure we had found, and the difference it made to our future lives.

"That's great!" said Matt Kay Lee, of New York. "At a pinch I can get the crowd of you on the Hudson Star. I'll have a wireless message sent out instructing a steamer to put in to take Matt's plane and your luggage to—"

"Say, dad, you've got that all wrong!" drawled Matt lazily. "I'm flying round the world, and I guess I'm going to fly home to New York, if you'll just get a hustle on some petrol firm to send out supplies."

We all looked at him a little blankly, and I saw a troubled light in Jill's eyes. But the millionaire chuckled.

"Well, it's your shout, Matt. I like the idea of you sticking it, though I don't like the idea of you taking the risk, after what I've been through the past few weeks. Still, I'll get back to the yacht and keep my wireless operator busy for a bit. It means stopping here for at least a week, and I'm fed-up with the yacht already."

That night we all dined on the yacht, and the luxurious saloon, the elaborate meal, and the white-coated stewards brought us back to the civilisation which we had seemed to miss so little.

Matt Kay Lee proposed a toast.

"Here's to the safe return of all of us," he said—"especially to my boy making a lone flight across the Pacific!"

"As a matter of fact, dad, I wasn't thinking of a lone flight for the last stage. I was thinking of taking young Barry Mayne with me, if he would care to come!" drawled young Matt, as he lit a cigarette.

And I made an ass of myself, giving a whoop of delight which must have pretty well deafened everyone in the saloon of the yacht. I reached out to shake Matt's hand and sent a bottle of champagne crashing over, and the wine running across the table.

(See next week's GEM for the concluding chapters of Barry Mayne's thrilling narrative.)

## GUSSY THE WAITER!

(Continued from page 19.)

to feel the indignation he himself had felt at Major Croaker's amazing and ungentlemanly conduct in regard to the unfortunate Sam Kettle.

But whether the Head had felt it or not—and Dr. Holmes certainly had, to judge from his attitude towards the major—it had not saved Arthur Augustus from the punishment he had so recklessly risked.

The luckless swell of the Fourth had not bolted with any clear plan of action in his mind. All he knew was that he wasn't going to be expelled. He would retire from school until the Head had had time to reflect upon his error in taking the part of the unspeakable Major Croaker.

And the first place, naturally, that Arthur Augustus thought of in which to seek sanctuary was Riverside Cafe. There was food and shelter. Moreover, he knew that the unspeakable major had only postponed his unworthy designs on the cafe. Arthur Augustus had given his word to take care of Sam's business, and he meant to do so come what might. His place was there, and he intended to guard it against all comers.

He sighted it at last.

Doubtless, he reflected, it would be some time before the school authorities learned where he was. He would have ample time to prepare for a siege, if necessary. This time he would also be on his guard against the major's treachery. And if it came to a fight—

Arthur Augustus' reflections came to an abrupt stop as he suddenly became aware of shouting ahead, and it seemed to come from the cafe. And then, as he entered the clearing from the woodland path, his heart leaped as he caught a glimpse of sparks and flame-riven smoke through the little window of the building.

The cafe was on fire, and somebody was inside the building!

"Oh, bai Jove!" panted Gussy. "Gweat Scott! That sounds like Twimble's voice, and yet it can't be! Good gracious!"

The voice had ceased yelling now. From within the building came the fierce crackle of burning wood. There was a tinkle of bursting glass as the window panes cracked to pieces in the heat, and from the openings shot leaping flames and billowing smoke.

"Help!" roared Arthur Augustus at the top of his voice.

Again and again he flung himself desperately at the door. It did not move; and then, as he placed his shoulder against it and started to push, he was more successful.

It moved a trifle, and then suddenly it moved with a rush as the box got a start and slid over the floor under his weight.

Arthur Augustus dashed inside, coughing and spluttering and half-blinded as the smoke enveloped him. He felt the scorching heat whipping at him, but he stumbled blindly forward.

Somewhere in the smother of blinding smoke and scorching flame he knew an unconscious form lay. Arthur Augustus had not stopped to wonder how and why anyone should be inside. Swift action was necessary if a life was to be saved.

(Continued on page 28.)

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## GUSSY, THE WAITER!

(Continued from page 27).

He groped about blindly, dizzily, heedless of the things that licked out at him and of the heat that scorched his face and hands. He could see nothing but billowing smoke and sparks and flames, but suddenly he caught a low, faint groan, and then his groping hands touched something—a human form.

Arthur Augustus stooped and grasped it in his arms. He raised it with a superhuman effort, and staggered drunkenly back to the doorway. The form was terribly heavy, and dreadfully limp, but sheer desperation lent the junior the strength to cover that yard of burning, crackling floor.

His eyes were blinded, and his lungs choked and burning, but somehow he reeled out into the open, his form outlined against the flames within the cafe.

There was a shout, and the swift patter of racing feet. Tom Merry came speeding across the grass, and he was just in time to grasp Arthur Augustus as he sank to the ground, his burden still in his grasp.

"Lend a hand here—quick, you fellows!" roared Tom. "Gussy—Gussy, old man, is there anyone else inside?"

"No, it's Twimble!" Arthur Augustus managed to get out, and then he collapsed just as Blake and the rest came pelling up, their faces showing their great alarm and fear.

"What—what on earth—Tom, is it Gussy? Good heavens!"

"He went in there after Trimble—though how Trimble got there goodness only knows," breathed Tom Merry. "We'd better rush them off to school—quick, Blake!"

"And the cafe?"

"Too late to attempt to save it now—look at it!" said Tom, as a sheet of lurid flame shot skywards through the roof. "That's about the end of poor old Sam Kettle's cafe! What awful luck for the chap! But—lend a hand and never mind that. 'Hallo, here's someone else!'"

It proved to be a couple of farm-hands, and after them came running several familiar figures—St. Jim's prefects, led by Kildare, who had guessed quickly enough where the runaway would make for.

"They had made straight for the spot, and the glare above the trees had hastened their coming considerably. Kildare soon took charge as he understood.

"You kids get back to school now," he ordered. "Hallo, D'Arcy's coming round already. Good! Fetch some more water, Darrell, old chap! Any of you fellows know how Trimble came to be here?"

"Goodness knows!" said Tom Merry. "But I believe Railton sent him after D'Arcy just before prep. Perhaps the poor chap followed Gussy here and got locked in somehow."

"Well, we'll soon know, anyway," said Kildare grimly. "Now get back to school, kids—we'll see to these fellows!"

And, much as the juniors wanted to see the end of things, they knew better than to disobey Kildare. They tramped away, leaving the unlucky Riverside Cafe to burn itself out, watched by a growing crowd of staring villagers, for it was soon seen that nothing could be done.

It was the next morning before the juniors heard any news of either D'Arcy or Trimble, and then the news was good. Trimble's hands were scorched rather badly, and he was suffering severely from shock. Arthur Augustus had been merely overcome by smoke, though his hands also were slightly scorched. But the doctor kept both in bed the next day. Tom Merry & Co.—to their surprise—readily obtained permission to see their chum in the sunny; and they went, dismally, feeling it was likely to be the last time they would see him at St. Jim's. But they found Arthur Augustus nothing like so dismal.

"Expelled!" he remarked airily, as Blake mentioned it sadly. "Rai Jove! I should wese in any case to be expelled, Jack Blake. However, you will be glad to hear the Head has reconsided his decision. The patah turned up this afternoon, you know, and I fancy he had something to do with it, though the patah says it is owing to my yankin' Twimble out last night. However, it is quite all wight now. The wotten majah, I believe, had words with both the Head and the patah and he has actually weseigned from the Board in a tempah. You see, he didn't know who my patah was."

"And—and you're let off, Gussy? Absolutely?" gasped Blake in delight.

"Absolutely, deah boy—the whole mattah is dropped!" said Gussy. "But I am vewy distressed about poor old Sam Kettle, and I am waisin' a fund on his behalf, deah boys. The patah has pwomised to help, and I shall expect you to wally wound in gweat style. Can I wely on you?"

And Gussy's chums assured him that he could. But as it turned out there was no need for anyone to "wally wound." For while raking among the ruins of the cafe that same evening, Tom Merry & Co., searching for the till, came across something more interesting—an old iron cash-box, which proved to contain nearly five hundred golden sovereigns. And with the money were old accounts and documents that proved beyond question that the money was the life savings of Sam Kettle's father, killed in an accident at Ryelombe Station years ago.

It was a remarkable find, and Sam soon proved his right to the money. And long before he had left the cottage hospital a new and more imposing Riverside Cafe was in process of building on a piece of ground across the river which Sam had purchased. So Gussy's venture into trade had happy results after all—at least for Sam Kettle, and certainly for Arthur Augustus, the St. Jim's runaway.

THE END.

(Good old Gussy's got plenty of pluck, but he isn't much of a business man! You'll get another good laugh next week, when you read "Skinspot's Musical Spasm!")

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