

FILL UP HERE WITH LAUGHTER! READ "GUSSY GOES 'GOOFY'!" INSIDE.

The GEM 2^D



GUSSY IS AT HIS BRIGHTEST AND BEST IN THIS PRICELESS—

GUSSY GOES



Gussy is in love again—it's sad—for him—yet true,
But you can read this yarn and laugh—it won't be sad for you!

CHAPTER 1. The "Gooffiness" of Gussy!

"LOOK!"

"What is it?"

"Just look!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry puzzled. He had just come downstairs from his study in the School House at St. Jim's, to find half a dozen juniors crowded at the Hall window, looking out into the quadrangle as if some matter of unusual moment was proceeding there. Every face wore a grin, and it was evident that the School House juniors were highly amused by what they saw under the old elms in the quadrangle.

"But what's the—"

"Come and look," said Manners. And, catching Tom Merry by the arm, he drew him to the window. "It's too funny for words!"

Tom Merry craned his neck to look over the heads that already crammed the window.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

"He doesn't know we can see him," said Lowther. "My word, look at him! Isn't it enough to kill a cat?"

Tom Merry looked out of the window.

"By Jove, D'Arcy!"

"Arthur Augustus, as large as life," grinned Lowther.

"But look at him! Look at his togs! Look at his collar!

Look at his hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry was amazed as well as amused. From the Hall window a junior could be seen walking under the elms.

He was walking slowly to and fro, and was quite unconscious of the fact that he was watched by seven or eight grinning juniors from the window.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House, was famous for his faultless attire. His waistcoats were many and gorgeous, his hats the highest and shiniest in the school; the crease in his trousers was the envy and despair of the Sixth Form dandies. Nobody at St. Jim's could tie a necktie or wear an eyeglass like D'Arcy. In his own particular line the swell of the School House reigned supreme.

GOOFY!

By
Martin Clifford.

But now there was a change.

It was D'Arcy who was slowly pacing to and fro under the elms, but a changed D'Arcy. His Eton jacket wanted brushing, his trousers had a scarcely perceptible crease, and showed a terrible tendency to bag at the knees. His collar had evidently been worn for two or three days, and his necktie was a little on one side. His waistcoat was as gorgeous as ever, because D'Arcy possessed no waistcoat that was not gorgeous; but it was slightly crumpled, and one button was carelessly left unfastened. His silk hat, cocked over one ear, presented a furry appearance, having been brushed the wrong way, a fact of which D'Arcy was apparently ignorant. His eyeglass dangled at the end of its cord, and his hands, ungloved, were thrust into his trousers pockets. Tout ensemble, as Monty Lowther, who was proud of his French, put it, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked a mere wreck.

Tom Merry ran his fingers through his curly hair and stared at Lowther and Manners.

"What does it mean?"

The chums of the Shell chuckled.

"Blessed if I know!" said Manners. "Keep quiet, you kids, and don't give the alarm. I'm going to fetch my camera and snap him like that."

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

Unfortunately for Manners' project the roar of laughter reached the ears of the junior pacing outside under the elms.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy started and looked up.

He looked up to see a window crammed with grinning faces, and his own face went crimson as he saw them.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of the School House turned away with a glowing countenance. The juniors at the window roared themselves hoarse.

"But what's the matter with him?" exclaimed Gore, of the Shell. "Fancy D'Arcy going about in that style, and mooning under the elms as if he had something on his mind."

"Perhaps he has," said Mellish of the Fourth. "He looks as if he has committed a murder, and doesn't know what to do with the body."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were laughing, too. The chums of the Shell could not help being tickled by the latest peculiarity of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. But the Terrible Three were a little concerned, too.

"There must be something the matter with him, you know," Tom Merry remarked, as they moved away from the spot.

"Yes, by Jove!" said Manners. "I've never seen him like it before."

"I wonder—" began Monty Lowther.

Then he stopped, a grin overspreading his face, and a glimmer of fun coming into his eyes. His chums looked at him.

"Well, you wonder what?" asked Tom Merry.

"I wonder—"

"Go on!" rapped out Manners.

"Well, I wonder whether he's in love again?"

Tom Merry and Manners stared blankly at Lowther. They had not thought of that explanation, simple as it was.

"D'Arcy in love!" chuckled Manners.

"Why not? He's been in love before. You surely remember how desperately gone he was on the Head's niece when she was at St. Jim's."

"I should say so. It was simply screaming."

"In love," murmured Tom Merry. "I shouldn't wonder. You see, a fellow may get into the habit. It's easy to get into a habit—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But there isn't any girl at St. Jim's," said Manners. "It can't be Dame Taggles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or Mrs. Mums, the House dame—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It may be somebody outside the school," said Lowther. "It might be Frank Monk's sister at the Grammar School. It might be—anybody."

"Well, yes, it might be. There's no accounting for anything D'Arcy does. But you remember that the last time he was in love he bloomed out as a bigger dude than ever. He was simply gorgeous."

"You never know how a thing of this kind will take you," said Lowther, with the air of a sage. "Perhaps he's disappointed this time. I believe lovers always begin to neglect their personal appearance when they lose hope."

"We shall have to look into this," said Tom Merry. "We can't have our House masher going about looking like a wreck. If there's anything wrong with him, Blake ought to know. Let's go along to Study No. 6 and inquire."

"That's a jolly good idea!"

And the Terrible Three went upstairs to the corridor upon which the Fourth Form studies opened, and kicked gently at the door of Study No. 6.

Tom Merry's suggestion was a good one. As D'Arcy chummed up in Study No. 6 with Blake, Herries, and Digby, that was certainly the right place to go for information.

"Come in, fathead!" roared a voice from within the study.

The Terrible Three entered the room.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were there, busily working at "lines." Blake looked up at the Terrible Three. Between the chums of the Shell and the Fourth-Formers relations were sometimes strained—sometimes very strained. They would always chum up like brothers for a row with the New House at St. Jim's, but on other occasions there was frequently war in the School House.

"Hallo, rotters!" said Blake cheerfully. "So they've let you out?"

"Let us out!" said Tom Merry. "Out of what?"

"The monkey-house!"

"Oh, don't be funny! We've come to speak to you—"

"Please speak in as low a voice as possible, then, as I'm busy, and can't stop. The sooner you get it over the better."

"But it's serious, Blake. It's about Gussy."

Blake laid down his pen.

"Hallo! Anything wrong with Gussy?" he said. "I've noticed that for two or three days past that he's been a bit strange in his manner."

"Ah, you've noticed it, too!"

"Is anything wrong?" said Blake anxiously.

Arthur Augustus sometimes tried the patience of his chums in Study No. 6, but the attachment between them was a very sincere one.

"Oh, he's all right!" said Tom Merry. "Only he's going about looking like a wreck."

"Yes, I noticed he had grown careless of his appearance."

"His hat was brushed the wrong way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And when a thing like that happens," said Tom Merry, "it shows that there's something fundamentally wrong."

"I should say so. He bunked off a while ago," explained Blake. "We all have some lines to do, and he said I could do his, as he couldn't give his attention to the matter now. What do you think of that?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"It was just like Gussy."

Blake scratched his nose thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I know what's the matter with him!" he said.

"Do you think he's in love again?"

Jack Blake gave a jump.

"My only panama aunt—I mean hat! You've hit it! He's 'goofy!'"

"You think—"

"Of course. It's as plain as your chivvy—or nearly. Of course, nothing could be quite so plain as that."

"Then—"

"Hush!" murmured Monty Lowther. "He's coming!"
 "Who's coming?"
 "Arthur Augustus!"
 The next moment Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus Becomes Annoyed!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS glanced at the chums of the Shell with a lack-lustre eye. Then he crossed the study to the fire, and sat down in the armchair. He put his feet on the fender, and sat there, his hands deep in his pockets, staring at the fire.

The juniors exchanged wondering glances. Truly there was something the matter with the swell of the School House when he acted in this extraordinary manner.

Silence fell in the study. Tom Merry was the first to break it.

"I say, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus made no reply. He did not seem to hear the remark as he stared gloomily into the fire.

"I say, Gussy!" repeated Tom Merry, in a louder tone.

D'Arcy gave a slight start.

"Did you address me, deah boy?"

"Yes, I did. What's the matter with you?"

"Nothin'!"

"What are you mooning about?"

"I am not moonin', Tom Mewwy."

"What do you mean by going about without a crease in your trousers, after what you've brought us up to expect of you?" demanded Tom Merry severely.

A momentary shade of anxiety crossed D'Arcy's brow as he glanced down at his extremities. But it was only momentary.

"Aren't you going to explain yourself, Gussy?"

"I've nothing to explain, deah boy."

"Are you well?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Will you come and have a sprint round the quad?"

"Pway excuse me, deah boy! I weally do not feel up to any such wuff exercise just at pwsent."

"What's her name?" demanded Monty Lowther suddenly.

There was a giggle in the study, and D'Arcy started and turned red.

"Pway what did you remark, Lowthah?"

"What is her name?"

"Whose name?"

"Hers."

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet. He screwed his monocle into his right eye, and took a survey of the grinning Lowther, starting at his head and descending to his feet, and then travelling upward again to his face. But Lowther seemed quite unabashed by the steady, scornful survey of Arthur Augustus.

"Lowthah, I weguard your remark as fwivolous and impertinent, not to say vulgah," said Arthur Augustus at last.

"Dear me!" said Lowther. "Now, I regarded it as quite select, not to say swaggah!"

The mischievous Lowther was repeating one of D'Arcy's own favourite phrases. D'Arcy looked caggers at him.

"You are a wude beast, Lowthah! I weguard your pwsence in this study as an intrusion. Pway twavel!"

"But, my dear Gussy, we're worried about you—"

"I wefuse to be wowwied about! Get out!"

"Then you won't tell us her name?"

D'Arcy's crimson countenance was a sufficient proof that the juniors had guessed correctly. D'Arcy's weakness had found him out again. The swell of the School House was in love.

"Lowthah, I should be extremly sowwy, undah the pwsent cires, to use violence, but I shall thwow you out of this study if you make that remark again!"

"Oh, very well, keep your secret!" said Lowther. "As a matter of fact, I know what her name is well enough."

Arthur Augustus started.

"I wefuse to cwedit that statement, Lowthah."

"Shall I guess?" grinned Lowther.

"It is a mattah of supweme indifference to me."

Blake had laid down his pen again, and he was looking interested. So were Herries and Digby. Blake looked inquiringly at Lowther.

"I say, is that a fact?" he said. "Do you know what her name is, Lowther?"

"Well, I think I can guess, at least."

"How can you guess?"

"Why, D'Arcy always falls in love with girls named Ethel," explained Lowther. "There was his Cousin Ethel,

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

and the Head's niece Ethel. I'll bet Tom Merry's new cricket bat that her name is Ethel!"

"Lowthah, as I weguard you as a beast, your remarks on this subject are fwivolous, and savah of diswespct towards a most estimable lady."

"Nothing of the kind, Gussy. I know she must be a ripping girl, or you wouldn't fall in love with her. But you might take old friends into your confidence."

"Undah the cires, I must decline to weguard you as a fwied."

"My dear Gus, I'm just the chap to help you," said Lowther. "You're disappointed in love. I know what it's like, because I've been there myself, though I never reached the stage of wearing a soiled collar."

Arthur Augustus turned crimson again.

"I'm a man to help you," said Lowther encouragingly. "If you're thinking of carrying off the fair charmer, I'll lend you my new tandem bicycle."

"Lowthah, I have already remarked that you are a beast!"

"Once aboard the tandem and the girl is mine!" said Lowther. "Really, Gussy—"

"Oh, shut up, Monty!" said Tom Merry, who saw that Arthur Augustus was really vexed. "Don't chip him! Gussy, old kid, I'm sorry for you. I fell in love when I was twelve years old, and it was awful. Don't worry."

There was real sympathy in Tom Merry's tone, and D'Arcy melted at once.

"I should like to speak to you, Tom Mewwy," he said. "Not in the pwsence of these wotten boundahs, though!"

Monty Lowther wept a little.

"Hark to the young rotter!" he said. "That's what he calls me, after all my sympathy and advice, and offering to lend him my tandem bicycle to carry off—"

"I wefuse to listen to your silly remarks, Lowthah. You are a beast, and haven't any pwopah feelin's. If it were not for—for somethin' that westwains me, I would give you a feahful thwashin' on the spot!"

And Gussy stalked away.

CHAPTER 3.

D'Arcy Does Not Turn Up!

"HAVE you seen D'Arcy?"

It was the day after Augustus had admitted that he was in love. In the Fourth Form room that morning D'Arcy had been so absent-minded in class that Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, had noticed it, and descended heavily upon the swell of the School House several times.

D'Arcy left the class-room indebted to the Form master for a total of two hundred lines, but that circumstance did not seem to worry him.

He was evidently thinking of other things.

After dinner he disappeared. And after he had disappeared the voice of Tom Merry was heard up and down St. Jim's inquiring for him.

For it was Wednesday, and a half-holiday, and a House match was to be played at St. Jim's between the juniors of the two Houses. The rivalry between School House and New House at St. Jim's frequently found vigorous display on the football field, and the juniors entered into the matches with great zest. D'Arcy, in spite of his "dudish" ways, was a keen footballer, and played in the School House Junior Eleven. He was wanted that afternoon, but he was not to be found.

"Have you seen D'Arcy?"

Tom Merry asked that question in Study No. 6, and Blake, Herries, and Digby shook their heads simultaneously. "Saw him at dinner," said Blake. "I expect he's lying about somewhere."

"He sloped off just after dinner," said Digby. "I thought I saw him go down to the gates."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Herries. "He must have gone out, because I saw him shove a five-pound note into his pocket just before dinner. I suppose he's gone shopping."

Tom Merry made a grimace.

"The young villain, to go shopping when he's wanted in the match this afternoon!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, but there's plenty of time for that," said Blake, looking at his watch. "The kick-off is not till three."

"But he's got lines to do," said Tom Merry.

Blake, Herries, and Digby chuckled.

"Yes, rather!" ejaculated Blake. "He was mooning all the time in class this morning, and when Lathom looked at his exercise-book, what do you think he found?"

"Give it up!"

"There was a girl's name scrawled all over it," grinned Blake. "Lemme see! Was it Agnes or Jane?"



Tom Merry & Co. charged and the New House Co. went hurtling down the steps. Once more the School House was victorious!

"Ethel," said Digby.

"Ah, that's it, of course! You know it's not safe for a girl named Ethel to come near Gussy. He always falls in love with 'em. Well, it was scrawled all over his book, and Lathom squinted at him through his glasses as if he thought the chap was dotty. Gussy has captured two hundred lines, and he's got to show them up by tea-time."

"Yes, so Mellish told me. Mellish wants his place in the eleven this afternoon if Gussy can't play. But my idea was to help D'Arcy do his lines. Mr. Lathom will never know the difference in the hand."

"Good! Better find D'Arcy and tell him. We'll all come, and the lines can be knocked off before three. Otherwise, Gus won't be able to play."

"If it comes to that," said Tom Merry wrathfully, "there will be a row. I'm not going to have a member of my team standing out when he's wanted to play."

"Well, I know it's rather rotten, but—"

"If he stays out of this match to please himself, he can stay out of the next to please me!" Tom Merry said grimly.

Blake shook his head decidedly.

"I'm sorry, Merry, but I can't agree with you there," he said. "It's impossible for a member of this study to be left out of the House team."

"Rats!" was the emphatic, if not exactly Chesterfieldian, reply of Tom Merry.

Blake's eyes sparkled.

"Did you say rats to me, Tom Merry?"

"Yes, I did."

"If you came to this study in quest of a thick ear—"

"Stuff! I came to this study in quest of a tame lunatic, and I've found three," said Tom Merry.

And he walked out of Study No. 6, and slammed the door before Blake could reply.

He went down the passage, asking everyone he met for news of D'Arcy. No one had seen him in the School

House. Monty Lowther and Manners were quite ignorant on the subject. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, was standing at the door of his study talking to Darrell of the Sixth. Tom Merry asked them the question.

Kildare shook his head.

"No, I haven't seen him. Have you, Darrell?"

"Yes; I think I saw him going down to the gates," said Darrell.

Tom Merry hurried away.

It seemed pretty certain now that D'Arcy had left the school. And if he had really gone shopping, Tom Merry had little hope of his returning in time for the football match, let alone for the imposition beforehand.

"Hallo, Merry! Have you lost something?"

Tom was crossing the quad to the gates, when he was suddenly hailed from the direction of the New House by a familiar voice. He turned round and stopped as he saw Figgins & Co. coming towards him.

Figgins, long-limbed and muscular, Kerr, the canny Scotsman, Fatty Wynn, the plump, good-natured lad from Wales, and Marmaduke Smythe, the heir of millions, well known all over St. Jim's as Figgins & Co., were the leading lights of the New House Junior Eleven.

"Lost something?" repeated Figgins, looking at Tom Merry as he noted his worried expression. "What is it, kid? Tuppence, or a ten-pound note?"

"Neither," said Tom Merry, laughing. "It's a tame lunatic."

"Lowther or Manners?"

"Ass! It's Gussy!"

"Oh, Gussy! Where did you lose him?"

"He's been and lost himself," said Tom Merry ruefully. "He's got two hundred lines to send in before he can play this afternoon, and the young villain has gone off somewhere; shopping, I suppose, as Herries saw him put a fiver in his pocket before he scooted. Have you seen him?"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

"Anybody seen D'Arcy?" asked Figgins, looking round at the Co.

"Yes," replied Kerr. "I saw him go out as I was coming in half an hour ago. And he looked ripping, by Jove!"

Tom Merry walked on. Figgins & Co. followed. They burst into a sudden song after a whisper from Kerr, who was the poet of the Co.

Tom Merry could not help grinning as the refrain of a well-known comic song burst upon his ears, slightly altered to suit the occasion:

"Oh, where—oh, where has our Gussy gone?
Oh, where—oh, where can he be?"

"Oh, shut up!" shouted Tom Merry, turning round.

But Figgins & Co. only roared the chorus louder.

Tom Merry went up the steps of the School House, and the yell of the New House jokers followed him. In the exuberance of their spirits, Figgins & Co. followed him up the steps and yelled the chorus into the Hall. But in the Hall Tom Merry had found Lowther and Manners. A word to them was sufficient, and they were ready for Figgins & Co.

"Give 'em socks!" muttered Tom Merry.

"What-ho!" murmured Blake.

And as Figgins put his head in at the door, the School House juniors made a sudden rush. Back went Figgins from the charge, and in a second he was rolling down the steps with the Co.

The School House juniors grinned at them from the top of the steps. Figgins & Co. picked themselves up, rather dusty and ruffled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "It's my turn to smile. How do you like it?"

"You School House rotter!"

"Why don't you come up?"

"Do you think we couldn't?" shouted Figgins wrathfully.

"Yes, rather!"

"I'll show you! Come on, kids!"

The Co. were not the fellows to hang back where their leader led them, and Figgins was too excited to think of caution.

Up the steps they went charging. But three School House fellows lined the top step to receive them, and the upward chargers had simply no chance.

Figgins & Co. were rolling down the steps again in next to no time.

"Any more coming on?" asked Tom Merry politely.

Figgins rubbed his shoulder ruefully.

"We'll lick you this afternoon!" he growled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll wipe up the football field with you!" yelled Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come on!" growled Figgins crossly. And the Co. limped away to their own side of the quadrangle, followed by the laughter of the School House juniors.

CHAPTER 4.

The House Football Match.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS did not reappear before the time fixed for the kick-off in the House match. If he had gone shopping, he was making a day of it, as Lowther remarked. And the wonder was what he could find to buy in a sleepy little place like Rylcombe. The imposition remained unwritten, and as soon as it became clear that D'Arcy would not play, Tom Merry had the task of finding a substitute.

Mellish of the Fourth wanted a place in the team, and he assumed in an offhand manner that he would have it. But the young football captain had his own ideas about that.

"I hear that D'Arcy hasn't turned up, Merry," the ambitious youth remarked, coming up to Tom Merry as he stood outside the pavilion, with a worried look on his face.

"No!" said Tom Merry wrathfully.

"Ah, I'm sorry! But I'm quite willing to play!"

"Are you?" said Tom Merry, looking the generous volunteer up and down.

"Certainly," said Mellish, easily. "A good many fellows think I ought to have my cap for the Junior Eleven!"

"Do they?" said Tom Merry. "I really don't see what can have put the idea into their heads, Mellish!"

"I suppose that means that you don't think so?" said Mellish, with an unpleasant look.

"Yes, exactly!"

"Then I'm not to have my cap for the House match?"

"Can't be done!"

"Now, look here, Tom Merry. I expected—"

"Sorry, but you certainly had no right to expect anything of the kind," said Tom Merry. "As football captain I am the judge of whom I put in the team, and you are certainly not a recruit I should choose."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

"You take jolly good care to choose all your own friends!" retorted Mellish.

Tom Merry's eyes glittered.

"Do you mean to say that there is any favouritism?" he asked, his hands unconsciously clenching themselves as he spoke.

Mellish took a step backwards.

"Oh, no, no!" he said hastily. "But, really, Merry, I think I ought to have the place. I play good footer. What chap is there in the School House better than I am?"

"Well, Gore is better, for one. But—"

"That's just it," said Gore, coming up. "It's not often I agree with you, Tom Merry, but I must say you're right in choosing me to play in Gussy's place this afternoon."

Tom Merry looked at him.

"But I haven't chosen you," he said coolly. "You are better than Mellish, but there are two or three others better than you."

"Now, look here, Tom Merry, I'm not—"

"There's Walsh, for one; and there's Reilly. Reilly is about the best, and I shall put him in."

"I don't think you ought to do anything of the kind! I think—"

"I'm afraid I haven't time to listen to what you think now, Gore. I say, Reilly!" said Tom Merry, calling to a stalwart junior with a keen, intelligent face, who was looking at him with a half-expectant look.

Reilly was a Belfast lad and a keen footballer, and about the best player in the School House who was not already included in the eleven.

"Yes, Merry?" said Reilly eagerly.

"I shall want you this afternoon."

"Good for you! I'm ready!"

"Get into your things, then."

"Sure, and I'm ready in a jiffy!"

And when the School House eleven turned out, Reilly was in the front line in place of the missing Arthur Augustus. Gore and Mellish stood in the crowd of juniors to look on at the match, with most unpleasant expressions upon their faces. They disapproved heartily of Tom Merry's choice, and they would have given Reilly a hoot or two but for one thought that restrained them, and that was that the Belfast lad had a hot temper and a hard fist, and was not to be "ragged" with impunity. So Gore and Mellish contented themselves with growling at one another.

Figgins & Co. turned out in fine form.

The two elevens seemed equally matched as they confronted one another. Tom Merry had won the toss, and he chose, of course, the goal from which the keen March wind was blowing. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, who took the keenest interest in junior football, had consented to act as referee, and a great many of the Fifth and Sixth had come down to the junior ground to look on and cheer.

The whistle went, and the ball flew from the foot of Figgins. The House match commenced.

With the keen wind in their faces, the New House fellows were under a disadvantage. But Figgins & Co. played up wonderfully well.

Figgins' long legs always stood him in good stead on a football ground, and when he fairly got going, with the ball at his feet, he was not easily stopped.

Now he brought the ball right up the field, dribbling it through the School House defence in fine style, and he sent in a shot for goal before the backs could get on him.

But the ball came away from the foot of Manners, in goal, and Herries cleared, sending it well out to the forwards, who were on it in a twinkling.

Then came the chance of Tom Merry and his comrades. Passing the ball in beautiful style, with the wind behind them, they came down in a deadly rush upon the New House citadel.

Then shots rained in. But Fatty Wynn, the Welsh partner in the Co., proved himself a foe worthy of the School House steel.

Whatever they sent in to Fatty came out again, and the New House goalie seemed to be all eyes, hands, and feet. Fatty was a splendid goalkeeper. Monty Lowther insinuated that it was because there was no room for the ball to pass between him and the posts. But this was an exaggeration. Fatty Wynn was plump, but not so plump as that. But he was keen, active, vigilant, and it needed a very smart kick to catch him napping. Figgins & Co. rallied, and the School House rush came to nothing.

The first half was fought out obstinately, but no goals were scored on either side. And during half-time Figgins & Co. chuckled over that circumstance with great glee.

"If they can't score goals with the wind behind them," said Figgins, laying down the law in the dressing-room, "how are they going to do it with the wind in their faces?"

"They can't!" said Kerr confidently.

"Of course they can't! It's imposs. as that ass Gussy

says. By the way, I wonder where Gussy is? Tom Merry was going to play him!"

"They're playing Reilly instead," Fatty Wynn remarked thoughtfully. "He's sent in one or two good shots that I found hard to stop. He's a good forward, and I shouldn't wonder if Tom Merry kept him in the team and left Gussy out in the cold."

"Serve him right!" said Figgins emphatically. "A chap who fails to turn up for a football match deserves to be jumped on by wild elephants!"

"Rather! And I expect Gussy will get jumped on when he gets back to the School House! Anyway, I fancy he's lost his place in the House eleven for the rest of this season!"

The brief rest was over, and the footballers turned out again.

The change of ends brought the wind against the School House team, and Tom Merry and his comrades had to fight with the keen breeze in their faces. The New House team showed that they knew how to make the best of their advantage. Led by the indefatigable Figgins, they made rush after rush at the School House goal, and Manners was called upon again and again to save.

Twice the ball bounced from a goalpost back into the field of play, and the goal had the narrowest of escapes.

Then the School House rallied, and the tussle went into the New House half, and Fatty Wynn was put to the proof again. But the Welsh partner in the Co. proved himself equal to it. Tom Merry's surest kicks did not materialise, and the School House fell back in a goalless state when they came on.

There remained twenty minutes to play, when, hard pressed by the New House team, Tom Merry's men were forced to concede a corner.

The corner kick was eagerly watched for. The ball flew from French's foot, and a few seconds later Figgins slammed it into the goal.

There was no chance for Manners that time. The leather went past him like a rocket, and plumped into the net; and the New House crowd round the ground burst into a roar.

"Goal!"
"Bravo, Figgins!"
"Hurrah!"

It was first blood to the New House. Figgins & Co. had broken their duck, so to speak, almost at the end of the game.

The School House lined up again with deadly determination in their looks. They meant to equalise, or break something, as Tom Merry tersely put it.

They were in deadly earnest, but the New House players fought them hard. At last, however, the School House forwards got away in line, and, passing the ball with splendid precision, they drove their way goalward. Even Figgins was panting behind, and halves and backs were nowhere. Fatty Wynn was called upon to save, and he responded to the call with his usual alertness.

Right in went the ball from Tom Merry's powerful kick; but a strong Welsh fist was ready, and out it came again like a champagne cork.

But a School House forward was ready. It was Reilly, the new recruit. He sprang at the leather, clear of the ground, and in a flash he had headed it right into the net, long before Fatty Wynn knew what was coming.

The School House simply yelled.
"Goal!"
"Good old School House!"
"Goal! Goal!"

Tom Merry gave the boy from Belfast a hearty slap on the back.

"Well done, kid!"
Ten minutes remained to play, but in that ten minutes neither side succeeded in altering the score. When the whistle finally went it remained one goal each, and the House match had ended in a draw.

As the School House youngsters moved off the field Tom Merry tapped Reilly on the shoulder. The Irish lad looked at him brightly.

"You've won your cap for the Junior Eleven," said Tom Merry. "There isn't much of the season left, but you'll play till we stop footer."

And Reilly's eyes sparkled.
"Here, I say," exclaimed Blake. "What price Gussy?"
"Gussy? Gussy can go and eat coke!" said Tom Merry. "He's not an inch above Reilly's form, and he has failed to turn up for a match."

"In my opinion," said Monty Lowther solemnly, "the new recruit is Reilly the better of the two."

"Oh, none of your rotten puns!" said Blake crossly. "I want to know what Tom Merry means by saying that a

fellow belonging to our study is going to be left out of the House eleven?"

"I mean what I say," replied the hero of the Shell; "and if you were football captain, Blake, you would say the same!"

"Well, I dare say I would," agreed Blake, after a moment's consideration. "I didn't look at it in that light before. But there will be a row with Gussy!"

"There will," said Tom Merry grimly. "I'm going to have a row with him."

CHAPTER 5.

The Return of the Absentee!

"H^{AS} Gussy turned up?"
That was the question the School House footballers asked as they came in after the match, but the answer was in the negative. Arthur Augustus had not yet turned up.

"What the deities has become of him?" Blake said, looking a little worried. "I hope there hasn't been any accident."

The juniors looked grave. They all liked Arthur Augustus, and liked him all the better for some of his ways that they chipped him about.

"Not likely," said Digby. "If he's shopping, you know, he's not likely to leave off so long as he has any of his fiver left."

"Not if he was in Bond Street," said Monty Lowther. "But what is there for him to buy in Rylcombe? There's no fancy waistcoats there, and it would be a hunt to find a silk hat there. Even neckties are at a premium. It's safe to say that Gussy wouldn't wear anything that was sold in Rylcombe."

"That's so," agreed Tom Merry. "But if he's not shopping what did he want with a fiver in his pocket?"

"And I saw him take it out of his desk and shove it in," testified Herries.

"He can't have gone off to town, surely!" exclaimed Blake, in alarm.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I shouldn't wonder. Gussy is capable of anything if he once got the idea into his head."

The juniors were standing in a group outside the door of Study No. 6, discussing the question. They had just looked into the study to see whether Arthur Augustus was there, but it was empty. And the Terrible Three did not care to go on to their own quarters till the question was settled, though it was high time for tea.

"Perhaps—" began Monty Lowther; and then he paused.

The others looked at him.
"Perhaps it's Ethel!" grinned Lowther. "We were asses not to think of it. I forgot about Gussy being in love again, in the excitement of the football match."

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake. "And he's forgotten all about the football match, in the excitement of being in love!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's it!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "He's philandering, the young ass, and forgotten about the match! He—"

"Pwaw make woom for me to pass, deah boys!"
The juniors jumped at the sound of the familiar voice.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came along the passage, with a huge parcel under his arm. He evidently wanted to enter Study No. 6. They stared at the swell of the School House.

In spite of the careless habits D'Arcy had fallen into in the last few days he had dressed himself with more than his accustomed care for that visit to the village in the afternoon.

His trousers were beautifully creased, his waistcoat resplendent with all the hues of the rainbow, his silk hat shiny and well brushed.

(Continued on next page.)

CAMPING? BUY NOW



THE ROAMER TENT.

The greatest tent bargain ever offered.

Size 6ft. long, 4ft. 3in. wide, 3ft. 6in. high, 6in. walls. Made from strong white material. Brass-jointed poles, in 3 sections. Complete with all accessories in valise. Post 1/-.

11/6

Green Rotproof material 16/6

Sent C.O.D. if desired.

BLANKS, 303, CRAYS INN ROAD, Kings Cross, LONDON, W.C.1.

The reason was not far to seek. The beautiful unknown dwelt in the village, and Arthur Augustus could not run the risk of being seen by her in any but a really elegant state.

"Sorry," went on D'Arcy; "but you fellows are in the beastly way! Pway stand aside and allow me to entah the study."

"You—you—you image!" said Blake. "Where have you been?"

"I've been to Wylcombe, deah boy!"

"What have you been doing?"

"Pway do not make impertinent inquivies, Blake!"

"You—you—I—I'll—"

"I weally have not time to stay here and listen to your incoherent wemarks!" said D'Arcy. "I am wathah tired, and I want to go into the study, deah boy."

Tom Merry took him by the waistcoat button.

"Do you know that we expected you to play in the House match this afternoon?" he demanded sternly.

Arthur Augustus gave a start.

"Bai Jove! I had forgotten all about it, deah boy!"

"You—you had forgotten all about the House match?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You image!" roared the indignant football captain. "And you have the cheek to stand there and tell me so!"

"My deah Mewwy, I suppose you would not pwefer me to tell you a whoppah?" said D'Arcy, with great dignity.

"You forgot the match! You had the unspeakable nerve—"

"It weally quite slipped my memow, deah boy! I was thinkin' about more important mattahs, as a mattah of fact!"

"More important matters than a House football match, you apology of a dummy?"

"I wefuse to be called an apology for a dummy!"

"You ass!"

"I warged that as a most objectionable expression also. I am sowwy I forgot about the football match, and, as one gentleman to anothah, I expect you to accept my sincere expression of wegwet, and let the mattah dwop."

"I'm going to let you drop, too!" said Tom Merry grimly. "More important matters than a House football match! My word!"

"Weally, I hope the School House won the match," said D'Arcy. "I weally hope that you did not miss me vewy much. But I suppose they wan you all ovah the gwound?"

"As a matter of fact, we did not miss you at all!"

"Pway confine yourself to the twuth!" said D'Arcy.

"The frozen truth, my dear ass! We didn't miss you at all, as Reilly played up quite as well as you could have done. If we had missed you, we should have frog's-marched you for failing us!"

"I should have uttally wefused to be fwog's-marched!" said D'Arcy frigidly. "And I certainly cannot credit that Weilly played as well as I should have done! I am not the fellow to blow my own twumpeet, as you all know; but I must say that my football is a bit above the average among the juniors here. I suppose you lost or drew with the New House?"

"It was a draw," said Blake.

"Yaas, I expected as much," said D'Arcy, with a nod. "Nevah mind, deah boys, I will take particular care not to fail next time, and we will simply bwush up the gwound with the New House wottahs!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"There won't be any next time for you—this season, at least, Gussy!"

"I fail to compwehend the dwift of that wemark, Tom Mewwy!"

"I mean that Reilly played up well enough to keep his place in the team, and that he is going to keep it!"

"He is goin' to keep my place?"

"Exactly!"

"I shall absolutely wefuse to give my permish for anythin' of the sort!"

"I shan't worry about your permission, kid!" Tom Merry assured him. "The matter's settled, and you're done with Junior Eleven football for this season!"

"Nothing of the sort! I shall not allow Weilly to usurp my place in the eleven!" said D'Arcy. "It is twue that I have more important mattahs on my mind just at pwsent, but this is a question of dig with me. It is simply impos for me to allow Weilly to take my place in the Juniah Eleven. If he pwsumes to do anythin' of the sort, I should considah it impewative to give him a thwashin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You'd better give him one, then!" grinned Monty Lowther; "only make your will before you start. Reilly is a hard hitter."

"I do not care whethah he is a hard hittah or not. I wefuse to allow him to take my place in the team. But weally, deah boys, I am quite exhausted, and I want to go into the study. Pway let me pass!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

"What have you got there?" demanded Blake, ignoring the request of the swell of the School House. He indicated the bulging parcel that D'Arcy carried.

Arthur Augustus turned slightly red.

"Nothing much," he said. "Pway let me pass into the study, deah boys!"

"What have you got there?" repeated Blake, without moving.

"I wefuse to tell you!"

"Is it a feed?"

D'Arcy made a gesture of disgust.

"Certainly not!"

"Then what is it?"

"That is weally my affair, deah boys, and I wefuse— Let go that parcel, Blake! Digby, you wottah, don't catch hold of my collah, or I shall stwike you! Hewwies, you beast, dwop it! Dwop it, I say, or I shall no longah weward you as a fwend!"

But the protests of the swell of St. Jim's were ineffectual. Blake and his chums had been anxious about Gussy, and they were exasperated at his having got himself left out of the Junior Eleven. They could not dispute the justice of the sentence; but it was a slight upon Study No. 6, and they didn't like it. As Blake put it, they were getting fed-up with the worries of Arthur Augustus. And they laid rude hands upon his bulky parcel, which, as it was wrapped only in paper and tied with twine, came to pieces in a twinkling under their grasp.

"You howwid wottahs!" yelled D'Arcy.

The contents of the parcel tumbled out in the doorway and over the floor of the study. The juniors stared at the heap in blank amazement.

Some of them had thought that D'Arcy had gone shopping, but none had suspected that he would buy a variety of drapery goods, such as chintz curtains, tablecloths, mufflers, socks, towels, and silk handkerchiefs. Yet such were the articles that tumbled out on the floor as the parcel was burst open.

Blake and the rest simply staggered back. They looked at the strange variety of purchases and they looked at D'Arcy. D'Arcy was crimson. Blake was looking alarmed. The only explanation that occurred to him was that Arthur Augustus was wandering in his mind.

"Poor old chap!" said Blake feelingly.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass and stared at Blake.

"What do you mean, Blake, by that widiculous observation?" he exclaimed.

"Poor old boy!" said Blake soothingly. "Don't get excited. Calm yourself!"

"I wefuse to calm myself!"

"Hush, hush! I know all about it—all about it—"

"Blake, I weally—"

"Yes, yes. Come up to the dormitory, old chap—"

"I wefuse to come up to the dormitory. What the beastlay dickens should I come up to the dormitory for?" demanded the amazed Gussy.

"You had better lie down for a bit."

"I wefuse to lie down!"

"But you must, you know; you're not well. I'll get Mrs. Mimms to bring you a soothing draught—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Terrible Three.

Blake glared at them indignantly.

"I think you might be a bit more serious, Tom Merry," he exclaimed, "when you can see as well as I can that the poor kid is off his rocker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to be weward as bein' off my wockah, and if Mrs. Mimms bwings me a beastlay soothin' draught I shall thwow it at you, Blake!" exclaimed D'Arcy, getting excited.

Blake waved his hands pacifically.

"Now, look here, Gussy, you know perfectly well that you're wandering in your mind, or you wouldn't have bought all that rubbish."

"I had a weason for buyin' that wubbish."

"What was the reason?"

"I pwefer to keep that a secwet for the pwsent!"

Blake nodded, with a knowing smile.

"Of course, all lunatics are fond of imagining that they have secrets," he said, looking round. "I suppose all you fellows agree that he must be a bit balmy on the crumpeet?"

"Certainly!" said the Terrible Three, with one voice.

"Rather!" said Herries and Digby.

"I am not balmy on the crumpeet! I refuse to be considahed balmy on the crumpeet!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I had good weason for buyin' those things, but I pwefer to keep it a secwet at pwsent."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "I think I can guess. Come along, kids, and let's get in to tea! If you think of having a whip-round to raise the cash to buy a straight-jacket for D'Arcy, Blake, we'll subscribe to it."

And Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, laughing like

hyenas, went up the passage to their own study, and as they went they could still hear the voice of Arthur Augustus excitedly maintaining to his unbelieving chums that he "weally was not off his beastlay wockah."

CHAPTER 6.

Figgins Scents Fun!

"I SAY, Figgins, see if you can make anything of this beastly sentence, will you?"

It was Marmaduke who spoke, in Figgins' study in the New House at St. Jim's. Figgins & Co. were all there. Figgins was sitting on the broad window-ledge, his hands in his trousers pockets, his long legs stretched out, and a shade of thoughtfulness upon his manly brow.

Marmaduke looked up from his Latin exercise to ask the assistance of the great Figgins. He would rather have asked Kerr, for Kerr, the Scottish partner in the New

and he was a famous roaster of chestnuts. He glanced up with a glowing face.

"Have some chestnuts, Figgins?"

Even to that remark Figgins made no answer.

Fatty Wynn looked astonished.

"I say, Figgins, the chestnuts are done. Will you have some?"

"Yes—er—no," said Figgins absently.

"Will you help me with this beastly sentence, Figgy?" said Marmaduke. "Listen—sed quid ego haec autem neququam ingrata revolve? Now—"

"Come and do a dozen for me, Figgy," said Kerr. "You go on from here—und schlag auf schlag—"

"Better have some chestnuts," said Fatty Wynn persuasively. "They're roasted simply beautifully, Figgy!"

"Sed quid ego haec autem ne—"

"Und schlag auf schlag—"



The juniors stared with amazement as the contents of D'Aroy's parcel fell out on the floor. There were chintz curtains, table-cloths, silk mufflers, socks, towels, and all sorts of odds and ends!

House Co., was a marvel of knowledge, his keen Scottish brain assimilating all kinds of learning with perfect ease. But Kerr was busy with a German imposition, of which he had a hundred lines to write to please Herr Schneider, the German master of St. Jim's, a terrible giver-out of imposts.

"I say, Figgins!"

Marmaduke repeated his remark, but Figgins did not reply, or even look up. He was evidently in a brown study.

"Hang!" said Marmaduke.

Kerr looked up wearily from the spider-legs he was tracing on a sheet of foolscap, which were to be palmed off on the German master in the morning, with the pleasant fiction that they were German characters.

"Figgins, old fellow, you seem to have nothing to do. You might write in twenty lines or so for me. They'd never be noticed among the rest!"

Still Figgins did not speak.

Figgins was thinking something out, that was evident, and had no time to heed, or even to hear, the remarks that were made to him.

Fatty Wynn was roasting chestnuts at the fire. Anything in the least like cooking always appealed to Fatty Wynn,

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins. "I'm thinking!"

"These chestnuts—"

"Blow the chestnuts!"

"Well, you ungrateful rotter, after I've taken the trouble to roast them!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn indignantly.

"Sed quid ego haec autem ne—"

"And they're done to a turn—"

"Und schlag auf schlag—"

"You worrying asses!" shouted Figgins. "I'm thinking!"

"Oh, all right, I can manage the chestnuts!" said Fatty Wynn, beginning on them. "I only thought you might like some."

"Eh—what? Oh, I'll have some of those chestnuts, Fatty!" said Figgins, appearing to wake up to his surroundings.

"Hm! Well, here they are!"

"Will you come and do some of this German for me, Figgy?"

"Can't be did! I'm busy!"

"What with—eating chestnuts?"

"Yes, and thinking."

"You might listen to this disgusting Latin, some of you!" growled Marmaduke. "Sed quid—"

"What's that about a quid?" said Figgins. "What are you doing?"

"Virgil; second book of the *Aeneid*."

"Well, you've got it wrong. Virgil doesn't talk slang."

"Ass!" howled Marmaduke. "Is this a time to be funny, when I'm getting an ache in my brain over it? Listen to this—sed quid ego haec—"

"Now, look here, Marmy, just keep that for private consumption—"

"Sed quid ego haec autem—"

"My word, he goes on like the little brook!" grunted Figgins. "Men may come, and men may go, but Marmaduke Smythe goes on for ever."

"Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam—"

"Don't! I haven't done anything to you!"

"Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen," said Kerr, reading aloud as he wrote.

"These chestnuts are all right," said Fatty Wynn. "Have some more, Figgy?"

"Yes, I think I will. If these silly kids would only be quiet, I'd tell you what I've been thinking about."

"Is it a wheeze?" asked Kerr, laying down his pen.

"Yes, and a ripping one!"

"Then let's hear it. You can shove the chestnuts this way, Fatty."

"Right-ho! There's plenty. Go ahead, Figgins—"

"Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata—"

"Shut up, Marmaduke!"

"Shan't! I'm going to make this thing out, or burst something!" retorted the heir of Samuel Smythe, millionaire.

"Well, do it off your own bat, then."

"Rats! Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam—"

"Oh, help him, Kerr! He won't leave off till somebody does!" said Figgins. "You know what an obstinate pig he is. I'll scoff some of these chestnuts while you work it out for him. Blessed if I know why he can't construe a simple sentence!"

"Why can't you do it, then?"

"So I could, easily, but I'm eating chestnuts just now. Now, do it for him, Kerr, like a good chap, and make him shut up!"

"Sed quid ego haec autem—"

"What do you want to know, Marmy?"

"Lemme see. Does it mean that the chap is an ungrateful storyteller—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or that he—he—he—"

"Oh, ring off with your he, he, he! Give me the beastly thing! Sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata revolvo— Any silly ass could construe that sentence—"

"Go ahead, then!"

"Look here—"

"Oh, go ahead!"

"But why do I, however, relate these unpleasant things?"

"Blessed if I know! You're always saying something unpleasant. What I want to know is, how to construe the rotten thing!"

"You—you ass! That's it—sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata revolvo—but why do I here, however, these unpleasant things relate—"

"I don't see why you couldn't have explained that before."

"Lot of good trying to explain anything to an ass like you!"

"Oh, leave off talking a bit, Kerr, while I write it down!"

"Write yourself down an ass!" said Figgins. "Now, kids, are you ready to listen to me? I've nearly finished the chestnuts."

"You might shove some over this way," said Marmaduke.

"Let me see, it goes on with—quidve moror—"

"If you go on with that rotten Latin now, Marmaduke Smythe, you'll be given your choice between the door and the window as a mode of exit from this study!" said Figgins darkly.

"But I've got to—"

"You've got to shut up! I've been thinking—"

"Oh, I suppose we'd better all shut up, to celebrate such a rare event!" said Marmaduke, turning down the leaf of his Virgil and closing the book. "Hand over those chestnuts. Now, you get on, Figgy!"

"I've been thinking—"

"We've heard that before. You ought to go on from the point you left off at."

"If you interrupt me again, Marmaduke Smythe—"

"But you're wasting time."

"Give me your Goethe, Kerr, will you, to shy at that ass, if he will go on talking?"

"Not much! Here's your Latin grammar; you can have that."

"Well, it's a shame to chuck a book about; it spoils it."

"What about my Goethe, then?" howled Kerr.

"Oh, blow your old Goethe! But as I was saying, I've been thinking—"

"And, as I was saying, we've heard that before," said Marmaduke obstinately.

The Latin grammar flew through the air, and Marmaduke gave a terrific yell as it 'biffed' on the side of his head. It flew back the next moment from Marmaduke's ready hand, and Figgins dodged just in time, and there was a crash of a breaking pane of glass as the volume went through the window.

Figgins gave a yell.

"You ass, you've broken the window!"

"You've nearly broken my thinking apparatus."

"That means two bob for a new pane," growled Kerr.

"You'd better put up a shilling each. If somebody walks off with your Latin grammar, Figgy, it will serve you right. But are you going to tell us the wheeze, if there is one? If not, I'll finish my beastly impot."

"I was coming to the point, only Marmaduke kept on interrupting me."

"I'll jam his head against the table if he speaks again! Go on!"

"Well, I've been thinking about the case of Arthur Augustus, and I've come to the conclusion that there's something up."

The Co. were interested at once. Anything like a "wheeze" up against the School House was always certain of their hearty sympathy and support. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was, as it were, the weakest spot in the School House armour.

"Some of the fellows are saying that he's 'goofy' again," said Figgins. "I shouldn't wonder if it was so. Anyway, there's something on. If he's not in love, he's in some kind of a bother. My idea is that we should look into the matter."

"And screw some fun out of it."

"Well, yes, if possible. We had a good wheeze last time when Kerr dressed as a girl, and pulled the aristocratic leg of Gussy. Of course, we can't work the same wheeze twice. That wouldn't be worthy of the great traditions of the New House."

"And Gussy wouldn't be caught the same way twice, either."

Something NEW in Detective Thrillers



The HOUSE of DREAD

What is the sinister mystery surrounding the "House of Dread"? Who are the hooded men whose ghost-like figures are seen only at night, flitting from tree to tree . . . and what are their nocturnal occupations? To the reader of mystery tales "THE HOUSE OF DREAD" will provide an instantaneous appeal, for it is packed with sensation and intrigue—drama and breathless adventure. and features Nelson Lee, the famous detective, at his best. This COMPLETE THRILLER appears in the

NELSON LEE

Now on Sale - - - - 2d.

"Well, I was thinking of that, too. Now, my idea is to look into the matter, and if we can get up a jape against the School House wasters we'll do it. But if Gussy should happen to be in any real trouble, we'll help him out."

"Right-ho!" said the Co. heartily.

"Then, you see, we take up the position of a sort of guardian angel—four giddy guardian angels, as a matter of fact—looking after the general welfare of the Lower School," explained Figgins. "If Gussy is in trouble, and we fish him out of it, of course, that means a lot of kudos for us. While if we find it possible to jape those outsiders, that serves our purpose equally well. In either case, the New House comes out ahead."

"Good!"

"I've thought it over carefully. You know, I've played the detective before."

"Yes, I know you have," said Marmaduke. "The School House hasn't left off chipping us yet about the show you made."

Figgins turned red.

"Of course, everybody is bound to fail at times," he said. "But I've studied the methods of Ferrers Locke, and I really think I can work things out, you know. For instance, I've thought it out about Gussy."

"You don't know what's the matter, though."

"But I'm on the track. You know he was absent from the football match this afternoon, and Tom Merry was simply wild about it. It must have been something awfully important in D'Arcy's eyes that kept him away. I saw him come in—"

"So did we, but he didn't tell us anything."

"But he carried a big parcel under his arm," said Figgins. "I spotted that parcel. Now, I've been thinking that—"

"You've said that before," interrupted Marmaduke.

"Oh, shut up, old chap!" said Kerr. "Go on, Figgy! This is where it begins to be interesting."

"Why, in thinking it out," went on Figgins, "it occurs to me where to find the clue. What was in that parcel?"

"Grub, of course," said Fatty Wynn. "He was bringing in things for a feed in the study. That's pretty plain, Figgy."

Figgins gave the Falstaff of the New House a withering look.

"That's like you, Fatty—always thinking about grub. It wasn't anything of the sort. That parcel was too big for D'Arcy to carry under his arm like that if it had contained anything as heavy as grub."

"My hat!" exclaimed Kerr admiringly. "That's a real Ferrers Locke deduction, Figgy, and no mistake!"

Figgins gave a gratified smile.

"You see, I've been thinking it out," he said. "Now, it wasn't grub, so what was it? If we knew what was in that parcel we should know where D'Arcy had been, and then we should be fairly on the track."

"Good! But perhaps he had only been shopping."

"Of course he had been shopping. I know that. But what was it he was buying? Not fancy waistcoats and silk hats, as he did that time we were up in town, because they don't sell 'em in Rylcombe."

"That's true."

"Therefore, as he hasn't been buying things for himself or for the study, what has he been buying?"

"That's a giddy mystery."

"Why, don't you see?" exclaimed Figgins triumphantly. "He's been buying something simply as an excuse to go to a certain shop."

"My only hat!"

"You've hit it!"

"I think I have. D'Arcy is mashed on some giddy charmer in a shop in Rylcombe, if he's in love," said Figgins, with conviction, "and we've only got to see what it is he's bought to be able to guess what shop it was. Then we're on the track, and I can see oceans of fun ahead."

And Figgins chuckled jocosely.

"By Jove, I'm inclined to think you're right!" said Marmaduke.

"Thank you!" said Figgins. "If you're inclined to believe I'm right, that settles it."

"I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, Marmy. Our business at present is to discover what was in D'Arcy's parcel and get on the track."

"But how are you going to discover that?" asked Kerr.

"The easiest way in the world—by paying Blake a visit and keeping our eyes open," grinned Figgins.

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "And if it turns out to have been grub in the parcel, after all, they can't do less than ask us to stay to the feed."

"Oh, you can go and eat coke!" said Figgins. "Come

along, you chaps, and let's see Blake before the House is locked up."

And a couple of minutes later Figgins & Co. were crossing the dusky quadrangle to the School House.

CHAPTER 7.

Figgins on the Track!

"THEN you won't explain?"

"Certainly not, dear boy!"

"You cut a football match—a most important match, and—"

"I have already expressed my sorrow to Tom Mewwy, our respected skippah, and a fellah can't do more than that, Blake."

"Then you come home with a bundle under your arm, as if you were a giddy old lady attending the sales."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Chintz curtains and lace handkerchiefs—"

"Pway, dear boy—"

"And you won't explain?"

"Certainly not!"

"And you persist that you are not off your rocker?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, kids," said Blake, turning to Herries and Digby,

"what do you make of it?"

"Oh, he's balmy!" said Herries, pouring out a cup of tea. "After all, these chintz curtains will look very well up at the window here. Ours have never looked the same since my bulldog worried them."

"Well, there's something in that," admitted Blake. "And I dare say we can make use of the other rubbish."

"You are quite welcome to all the wubbish, dear boys."

"Thank you for nothing! — Hallo, Figgins!"

Figgins put his head into the study. He glanced curiously round the room. The chums of Study No. 6 were finishing tea, and D'Arcy's mysterious purchases were piled on the floor and the bookcase. Figgins' keen eye caught them at once, but he assumed an appearance of indifference.

"Hallo!" he said. "Thought we'd give you a look in and see if you were still alive after the football match."

"Oh, come in!" said Blake. "Sorry we've just finished tea. There's some water we can shove in the pot, and there's half a herring left!"

"Thanks awfully! Blake, you're too generous. But, as a matter of fact, we've had tea—"

"You look pretty done up," continued Blake, surveying Figgins & Co. as they came into the study. "Of course, you would be."

"We don't notice it ourselves," said Figgins sarcastically.

"But, I say, have you been to the sales lately? Who's responsible for this little lot?"

Blake laughed.

"Oh, D'Arcy brought all that in! He's been shopping in Rylcombe."

"My hat!" said Figgins, with a glance at the Co. The work of investigation was turning out easier than he had expected.

"If it's not at impertinent question, I should really like to know what D'Arcy is going to do with chintz curtains and towels and silk handkerchiefs and table-cloths—"

"So should we all: but he refuses to divulge the dread secret. The only possible explanation is that he has an idea of opening a shop—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Or else he's off his rocker!" said Blake.

"Where did you pick up all these things, Gussy, old son?"

"I bought the beastly wubbish in Wylcombe," said D'Arcy, to whom the subject was evidently an unpleasant one.

"Then I know where you got them. It must have been Short's, the draper's."

"Yaas, wathah! There's no secwet about that."

"Well, Blake," said Figgins, with a great deal of seriousness, "I fancy that your second explanation is the one. Gussy is off his rocker!"

"I'm not off my wockah!"

"Yes, you are, Gussy. I've noticed it for some time. It has been creeping on you, as it were, unawares. Fellows often go off their crumpets without noticing it at the time," said Figgins solemnly. "My idea is that there ought to be a subscription to buy D'Arcy a strait waistcoat."

"If you are goin' to indulge in such wude wemarks, Figgins, I shall have no alternative but to request you to withdraw from this study!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"I'm speaking for your own good. When I first saw you and your eyeglass I realised that your brain was in a tottering condition—"

"My bwain is not in a tottewin' condition!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

"And now it has finished tottering——"
D'Arcy rose to his feet, with a warlike look.
"And has gone right off," continued Figgins deliberately.
"Of course, it hasn't been noticed much in this study, where the other brains are rather rocky——"
"What's that?" exclaimed Blake, jumping up.
"I say all the brains in this study are rather rocky."
"You New House waster——"
"You School House duffer——"

"Kick them out, deah boys!" said D'Arcy, sitting down again. "I am weally wathah exhausted myself. But pway kick them out of the beastlay woom!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby advanced upon the visitors, Figgins & Co. retreated from the study. For some reason Figgins did not show fight, but, followed by jeers from the School House juniors, went downstairs with the Co. and vanished into the quadrangle. The faces of the Co. were discontented as they walked towards their own House. They followed Figgins' lead unquestioningly. But this did look like a back-down before the School House.

"I say, why didn't you go for the rotters?" demanded Fatty Wynn. "There wasn't a feed, after all, and so there was no reason to be peaceable that I could see."

"Nor I," said Marmaduke. "We ought to have wiped up the study with them before we left."

"Just so," said Kerr. "I don't quite catch on."
"My dear kids," said Figgins patronisingly, "we've effected the purpose we went to the School House for. That's enough. We've something more important than scrapping on the stairs to think about now. We've discovered the clue."

"Yes, there's something in that. We know that D'Arcy has been shopping at Short's, the drapers, and has bought a lot of silly rubbish he didn't want."

"That's where we come in," grinned Figgins. "Next time D'Arcy goes into the village, four kids about our size go, too. We'll shadow him, and see what he does. You know, there's a good-looking girl in Short's, the draper's. She's not exactly D'Arcy's style, I should think, but it looks as if it was the case. I know she's engaged to a chap in Rylcombe, and I can foresee a heap of fun, if she's the charmer."

And the Co. chuckled.

CHAPTER 8.

D'Arcy Does Some Shopping :

"TOM MEWWY——"

"Hallo, Adolphus!"
"I have remarked before, Tom Mewwy, that my name is not Adolphus, and I wegard the application of that name to me as a piece of widiculous fwivolity!"

"Sorry! I meant Algernon," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Do you want to speak to me, Aubrey? If so, buck up, Augustus."

"Yaas, wathah! I—I—you see——"

Tom Merry looked curiously at the swell of the School House. D'Arcy had met him as he was going down to the playing fields the day after the football match, and seemed to have something to say, but somehow was unable to say it.

"Well, get on, Gussy!"

"You—you—that is, do you think, Tom Mewwy——"

"Yes, sometimes, when my brain's in working order," said the hero of the Shell humorously.

"Pway don't wot, deah boy! This is a gewious mattah. Do you—do you think that your old governess, Miss Pwiscillah Fawcett, is likely to come down to the coll soon?"

Tom Merry stared at him.

"What on earth do you want to see Miss Fawcett for?"

D'Arcy blushed.

"I—I want to see her. I want to ask her advice——"

"About what—if I may ask?"

"About a most important mattah."

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm afraid my governess isn't much of an adviser on love topics, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"I don't exactly know when she will be here again," said Tom. "I'll write and ask her, if you like. I'll tell her you're in love, and she'll bring you some medicine for it."

"I wegard your we mark as beastlay!" said D'Arcy; and he stalked away.

Tom Merry went on laughing. Most of the School House Junior Eleven were at practice on the footer field, including Reilly, the new recruit. But Arthur Augustus did not turn up there. Blake looked for him to make him go, whether he liked it or not. But perhaps the swell of the School House suspected his kind intentions, for he kept out of the way till the chums of Study No. 6 were busily engaged.

Figgins & Co. were not at practice. They lounged in the gateway of St. Jim's, apparently much interested in viewing the country round about. They were waiting for Arthur Augustus. He came along at last.

Figgins almost gasped as he saw him.

Of late, as we know, Arthur Augustus had fallen into slovenly ways at St. Jim's. He had grown careless of his dress, and even of the parting of his hair. But now he appeared in all his pristine elegance.

His Eton jacket fitted him like a glove. His trousers seemed to have just come out of the press. His boots outvied the sun in brilliance, and his gloves were spotless. His collar was impeccable, his necktie tied with a finish that only the hand of Arthur Augustus could have given to any necktie. His silk hat had been polished till it shone again. His waistcoat simply dazzled the eye. His monocle was stuck in his right eye, giving an artistic finish to his appearance.

Figgins fell against Kerr, and clasped him for support. "My word!" he murmured. "Is it D'Arcy, or is it a gorgeous dream?"

D'Arcy glanced disdainfully at the New House juniors as he passed them in the gateway. He saw that Figgins was making fun of him, and at any other time he would have been tempted to stop and give the New House junior what he termed a "feahful thwashin'." But at present his mind was occupied by more important thoughts.

The swell of the School House walked away towards the village without once looking back. Figgins & Co. followed, taking care to keep out of sight as much as possible. But there was no need for their caution. D'Arcy was evidently too much preoccupied to think of anything but the matter he had in his mind. He walked into the village without the faintest idea that Figgins & Co. were after him.

"Careful!" murmured Figgins, as they entered the village street, and D'Arcy halted. "Keep in cover!"

Arthur Augustus had stopped in the street opposite the village drapery shop. He stood on the path gazing across

Potts, the Office Boy!



at the building with great interest. The shop, like many other in the High Street of Rylcombe, had been built in front of an old private house, and, while the ground floor was occupied by the draper and his family, the floor above, approached by the side door, was inhabited by another family. A brass plate beside the private door announced the fact to all whom it may concern that Professor Light-foot, violin instructor, dwelt there.

Figgins nodded his head after gazing at the building which occupied D'Arcy's attention so much.

"That's where the young ass goes for his violin lessons," he said to the Co. "You know he's been taking violin instruction for the last few weeks, and the Head allows him to cut class two hours a week in the afternoon to come down here. That's how he came to meet the draper's young lady."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! He's going in now!"

D'Arcy appeared to suddenly make up his mind. He crossed the road, and disappeared into the drapery shop. Promptly enough Figgins & Co. crossed the road after him, and Figgins squeezed his nose flat on the glass door. D'Arcy was standing at the counter talking to the draper's young lady. The latter was rather a pretty, fresh-faced country girl, not particularly intelligent, and rather given to giggling.

Figgins chuckled as he saw D'Arcy talking to her over the counter.

"Stay here, you kids," he whispered. "I'm going in!"

"You'll scare him off!"

"Not I! I'll risk it, anyway!"

And Figgins entered the draper's shop.

As it happened D'Arcy did not even glance to see whom the newcomer might be, and remained in ignorance of the fact that Figgins was in the shop at all. Figgins noted the fact with inward gleam. He placed himself on the farther side of a showcase, and sat down on a high chair. He was almost hidden from D'Arcy now unless the swell of St. Jim's should come round the case. As there was only the one attendant in the shop Figgins had to wait his turn to be served, and as he did not want to buy anything this suited him very well.

The girl behind the counter was smiling in a rather curious way. Probably she did not know what to make of D'Arcy. His purchases of yesterday must have amazed her, and he seemed inclined to repeat them to-day. But Mr. Short's young lady was a businesslike girl, given to making hay while the sun shone. If D'Arcy chose to buy all sorts of things that were of no earthly use to him that was his own affair.

"What can I show you, sir?" she asked in a honeyed tone. "More lace handkerchiefs?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy bought a dozen lace handkerchiefs.

"Would you like to see some—or—socks?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy.

And a great variety of socks were spread out for his inspection.

The swell of St. Jim's looked them over carelessly.

His purchases were evidently an excuse for remaining in the shop, and he did not care in the slightest degree what he bought, and, in fact, probably did not even know what he was looking at.

Yet Figgins was puzzled.

He had expected to see Arthur Augustus giving the girl behind the counter languishing looks, but so far from doing so D'Arcy appeared to be almost unaware of her existence.

The draper's young lady was evidently not the object of his adoration.

Figgins wrinkled his brows in thought over that problem. There was only one girl behind the counter at Short's, and that one was not D'Arcy's innamorata. Yet the swell of St. Jim's was running up a bill recklessly for no purpose other than that of remaining in the shop. It was a complete riddle.

D'Arcy purchased three dozen socks, hanging out the purchase as long as he could. The socks were of a coarse description, such as were worn by the children of the village, and D'Arcy would never have dreamed of putting them on his aristocratic feet. Next he looked at some neckties, Mr. Short being a provider of men's haberdashery as well as of goods destined for the adornment of the gentler sex. The neckties were of a flaming description, and one shilling each, and in his calmer moments would have made D'Arcy shudder. But now he selected them at haphazard, and bought them recklessly, and six of them were added to his pile of purchases.

"Can I show you some mufflers?" asked the girl demurely.

D'Arcy did not reply.

"Would you care to see some silk mufflers, sir?"

Still no answer.

"They are very comfortable in cold weather," the girl behind the counter hinted.

But Arthur Augustus was dumb.

His eyes were fixed upon a door at the back of the shop which had opened quietly. A girl had appeared in the doorway, and D'Arcy's eyes were fastened upon her as if he could not take them off.

The girl glanced into the shop, and saw D'Arcy. She nodded to the girl behind the counter.

"I did not know you were busy, Maud," she said in a low, clear, and very sweet voice; and she made to walk out of the shop.

D'Arcy, who seemed to have been held spellbound, made a quick step forward.

He raised his silk hat and bowed to the girl, who gave him a smile and a nod.

"I am so glad to see you, Miss Ethel," said Arthur Augustus.

Figgins gave a jump.

The name told him everything.

He glanced towards the girl in the doorway. He liked her at the first glance. She was about twenty-one or twenty-two, and her face was very pleasant, and almost beautiful. It had an expression which told of troubles patiently and gently borne. She was dressed almost wholly in black, very plainly and simply, but with excellent taste. Figgins understood at once.

Miss Ethel—whomsoever Miss Ethel might be—was the object of D'Arcy's regard. She was the cause of his visits to the draper's shop, and he evidently knew of the acquaintance between her and the girl behind the counter, and hoped to see her while he was lingering about the place—it was clear enough now.

"I see you are making purchases, Master D'Arcy," said the girl, looking in some surprise at the pile on the counter.

D'Arcy turned red.

THE BELL-HOP!



"Yaas, wathah, Miss Ethel! A few—a few things I want, you know."

Miss Ethel smiled.

"Are you really going to wear all those neckties, Master D'Arcy?"

D'Arcy glanced at the neckties.

"Weally, Miss Ethel! You weally don't think I could weah those feahful-lookin' things, do you?" he said reproachfully.

"Then why are you purchasing them?"

The girl behind the counter giggled, but Miss Ethel did not appear to hear it.

D'Arcy turned the colour of a beetroot.

"I—you see—weally—"

"Are they for someone else?"

"Yaas—yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy. "I—I am goin' to give them away!"

"Oh, I see!"

"Yaas, wathah! You are not goin', Miss Ethel?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Bai Jove! You know—weally—give my kind wegards to the pwofessah, won't you? And—and—"

"I will give your message to my father."

"Thank you, Miss Ethel!"

The girl inclined her head and went out. D'Arcy stood gazing at the door as though his charmer still stood there.

"Will you look at some silk mufflers, sir?"

The swell of St. Jim's did not reply.

"Ahem! Would you care to see some mufflers—"

"Er—yaas, wathah—I will have a dozen," said D'Arcy absently.

"Anything else, sir?"

"Yes, a dozen."

The girl stared at him.

"A dozen what, sir?"

"Just a dozen, please," said D'Arcy, without looking at her.

"Yes, but what?"

"I—I weally beg your pardon!" said D'Arcy. "Let me see! I—I shan't want anythin' more, thank you!"

"Shall I wrap them up for you?"

"Yaas, wathah, if you will be so kind!"

"I could have them sent up to the school for you, if you prefer it, sir."

"Pway don't! The chaps would get hold of them, you know! Pway w'ap up the parcel, and I will cawwy it undah my arm, you know!"

"Certainly, sir!"

The girl proceeded to wrap up the parcel. It was a very bulky one. D'Arcy stood in a brown study. Figgins watched him curiously from his coter on the other side of the showcase.

"There is your parcel, sir."

"Thank you. How much, pway?"

"Two pounds five shillings and threepence three-farthings, please."

Figgins gave a gasp.

"Pway change that fivah for me, miss."

The crisp note rustled on the counter. D'Arcy received the change and put it into his pocket without looking at it. Then he turned towards the door.

"You've forgotten your parcel, sir!" said the girl.

"Bai Jove, so I have, you know! Thank you! Good-afternoon!"

"Good-afternoon, sir! What can I do for you, please?" asked the girl, turning towards Figgins.

The New House junior had to reply, and his voice caught D'Arcy's ear at once.

"I—I want a packet of shoelaces, please," stammered Figgins.

D'Arcy turned round.

"Figgins."

"Hallo, D'Arcy!" said the unabashed Figgins. "Fancy meeting you!"

"Figgins, I wegard you as a beast!"

And D'Arcy stalked from the shop with his parcel under his arm.

Figgins grinned, took his packet of shoelaces, paid for them, and rejoined the Co. in the street. He found them staring after the figure of Arthur Augustus, labouring along with the huge parcel under his arm.

CHAPTER 9.

Plotting a Plot!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS walked down the High-Street of Rylcombe as if he were walking on air. In fact, it was only the weight of his big parcel that seemed to hold him to the solid earth.

He had seen his divinity!

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

It had only been for a few moments, and he had exchanged only a few commonplace words, and the opportunity had cost him two pounds five shillings and threepence three-farthings! But what did that matter?

Nothing at all!

Arthur Augustus was happy. He was, of course, very much in love; but his love was of the noble and chivalrous kind which can find nourishment upon a sigh or a tear. D'Arcy would have been quite content to gaze at the object of his worship from afar. To exchange words with her was a boundless delight. To touch her hand was farther than his thoughts travelled.

The swell of St. Jim's, however, had not forgotten the inopportune meeting with Figgins in Mr. Short's shop. He looked back several times as he walked homewards, and he saw Figgins & Co. strolling along the lane after him. They were apparently paying him no attention, but he knew very well that their eyes were upon him and his parcel.

That parcel was beginning to worry Arthur Augustus.

He knew very well that if he carried it into the School House he would be subjected to a fresh torrent of chaff from



"By Jove! You do look queer!" exclaimed Marmaduke, received the same as the rest of the New House.

his study-mates, and the whole School House would soon be shrieking over the joke.

But what was he to do with it? He thought of pitching it into a ditch and leaving it there. But there were those New House fellows just behind him. If he left the parcel anywhere en route it was pretty certain that Figgins & Co. would fish it out. Then the joke would be worse than ever, for the New House quartet would certainly bring the absurd purchases to the school, and parade them all over the place, with exclamations.

D'Arcy, in his mind's eye, could see all St. Jim's yelling with laughter, and he shuddered at the prospect.

It was impossible to get rid of that terrible parcel. As he carried it—it grew heavier every moment, as it seemed—towards the school, he thought of Eugene Aram and the body he could not get rid of. He was doomed to carry that ridiculous parcel into the school. His only hope was to smuggle it into the School House unseen, and hide it somewhere before his chums could get sight of it. How to dispose of it afterwards he did not know, but he could think of that later.

It was dusk when he arrived at the school. There was a light in the gym, and he glanced in as he passed. Blake

was on the vaulting-horse, and talking to Herries and Digby. Now was D'Arcy's opportunity. He hurried into the School House, and up to the Fourth Form dormitory. In a few moments more the obnoxious parcel was hidden under his bed.

D'Arcy breathed more freely now. He descended the stairs, and strolled out into the quadrangle with a careless air. Figgins & Co. met him at the door of the gym.

"Hallo, what have you done with it?" asked Figgins.

D'Arcy put up his monocle and surveyed him languidly.

"I fail to comprehend you, Figgins."

"Where's the parcel?"

"What parcel, deah boy?"

"The one you brought in."

"Bai Jove, Figgins, I weally think you must be dweamin'!"

"Why, you fearful prevaricator, do you mean to say that



duke. But the next moment he looked queer himself, for he saw House Co.—a jet of red ink in his face!

you didn't bring a big parcel into the school only just now?" exclaimed Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins, you are either dweamin', or else takin' an impertinent interest in a mattah that does not concern you!" said Arthur Augustus. And he walked into the gymnasium, leaving Figgins feeling rather flabbergasted.

"I wonder what he'll do with all that rubbish?" Figgins remarked, after a pause. "He'll get chipped to death if the fellows find it in the School House! But, I say, chaps, we've run him to earth and found out the giddy secret!"

"We have!" said the Co. "Three cheers for us!"

"Gussy is in love with the music merchant's daughter!"

"He is!"

"The worst of it is," said Figgins seriously, "that she seems to be a really nice girl, and can't have any idea that D'Arcy is making such an ass of himself. If we work up any japes on this subject to give the School House wasters a whack, we shall have to be careful not to let her name be brought into it, you know."

"Yes, rather! Have you got an idea?" said Kerr, who knew by the twinkle in Figg's eye that something good was coming.

"That's just what I have got," said Figgins, with a grin.

"Come back into the shadows here; we don't want to be overheard!"

And Figgins & Co. drew out of the light, closer to the wall of the gym.

"You know we thought at first that D'Arcy was spoons on Maud, the draper's assistant?"

"But that was a mistake!"

"I know; but the same wheeze I had in my head then will work all the same. You all know that Miss Jones is what they call walking out with a chap who serves at Sands'."

"We'll, we've seen 'em often enough together," said Kerr.

"But what good is all that?"

"Why, suppose young Sands should get jealous of Gussy?"

"But how can he, when Gussy isn't in love with Maud Jones, but with Miss Ethel?"

"Ass! I suppose he can be made to think that Gussy goes to the drapery shop to see the lovely Miss Jones, can't he?"

"Ah, I didn't think of that!"

"Suppose he got a letter," said Figgins; "an anonymous letter, say, warning him that a rival was in the field, and that if he turned up at a certain place on a certain evening he would find his rival there?"

"It's a ripping wheeze!"

"Then let's get along to the study and get the note written!"

And Figgins & Co., chuckling, vanished into the darkness. Scarcely had they disappeared when three heads came cautiously round the corner of the gym. The three heads belonged to Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. The Terrible Three had overheard every word that had passed between the New House quartet.

"They're gone!" murmured Tom Merry, looking cautiously round. "My hat, I thought the bounders were up to something, and now we're right on to the little game!"

"It's a jolly good wheeze," said Lowther, chuckling.

"If we had thought of it ourselves it would have been a good jape up against Study No. 6!"

"True enough! But as we didn't—"

"We are going to hop in and spoil Figg's little game!" asked Manners.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"What's the idea, then?"

"Figgins can go ahead. It's too good a joke to spoil!"

"But we can't let the New House score off the School House!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "That won't do at any price, Tom!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"I'm not thinking of letting them score off the School House, my son," he replied; "you can trust your uncle for that. I don't see any harm in letting them go ahead in rotting Gussy. He deserves to be japed for being such a screaming ass. But when the joke's over, Figgins & Co. won't be doing the laughing; we shall do all that. They're going to ambush themselves to watch the fun, and so are we."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if we take our squirts, and, say, some red ink along with us, Figgins & Co. mayn't find the wheeze so screaming at the finish as they anticipate."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But mind, mum's the word!"

"What-ho!"

CHAPTER 10.

Buried at Dead of Night!

ONE! The heavy boom from the clock-tower of St. Jim's echoed through the silence of the night, penetrating to the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House, and reaching at least one wakeful pair of ears there.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat up in bed.

Boom! came through the dim night again.

"Bai Jove, it is stwikin' twelve!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's.

The strokes boomed off dully, and silence reigned again over the great school.

D'Arcy put one leg out of bed. It was cold, and he shivered. Then the other leg followed, and he shivered again. Then the rest of D'Arcy followed the legs, and the swell of the School House groped for his clothes.

Crash!

A metal candlestick, placed on a chair beside the bed in readiness for use, went to the floor with a concussion that seemed absolutely deafening to D'Arcy, in the silence of the long, lofty room.

"Bai Jove, how beastlay exaspewatin'!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

He listened anxiously to learn whether any of the juniors had been awakened.

Jack Blake sat up in bed.

"Hallo! What was that?"

Arthur Augustus remained quite still and silent.

Blake looked up and down the corridor, and then lay down again.

Arthur Augustus breathed freely. He proceeded to dress himself with unusual haste; but Jack Blake was not asleep. The crash of the candlestick had awakened him, and he lay now in a state between sleeping and waking, and liable to be fully awakened again by the slightest sound.

There was a click in the darkness.

Blake started and sat up again in bed. He knew that it was the sound of the dormitory door closing.

"I say, who's that?" he exclaimed.

There was no reply.

"Anybody stirring?"

"Hallo! What are you mumbling about?" came Digby's sleepy voice. "What do you mean by making a row this time of night, Blake?"

"I heard somebody moving about," said Blake, striving to penetrate the darkness with his eyes, and failing.

"Oh, rats!" yawned Digby.

But Blake was certain of it, and he did not feel inclined to sleep again till his doubts were settled. There had been burglaries at St. Jim's in his experience, and it might be that another was planned for that night. He hopped out of bed and struck a match. The light glimmered feebly through the long, dim dormitory. Blake looked round him quickly and rather nervously, and then lighted a candle.

"Well, caught any burglars?" came Dig's sleepy voice.

"My hat!" exclaimed Blake, in a tone of astonishment that made Digby sit up in bed.

"What's the matter, Blake?"

"Gussy's gone!"

"Gussy gone?"

"Yes; his bed's empty and his clothes are gone, so is his candlestick. It must have been Gussy I heard leave the dormitory. I say, Dig—"

Blake paused, his face very serious. D'Arcy had been so strange in his manner lately, and at midnight's solemn hour trifles light as air assume a deeper importance. Jack Blake was uneasy.

"Well, what do you think?" asked Digby anxiously.

"I'm a bit worried about Gussy."

Digby slowly got out of bed. The night was cold and the bed was warm, and Dig was sleepy; but the call of friendship could not be disregarded.

"The young ass!" he murmured. "What silly tricks is he up to now? Shouldn't be surprised if he's gone down to the village to gaze at a window."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should think even Gussy would stop short of that. But I really think we ought to see that he doesn't come to any harm, wandering about in the middle of the night," said Blake. "Wake Herries!"

Digby shook the slumbering Herries by the shoulder.

"Groo—groo—geroooooo!" said Herries.

"Wake up, you lazy bouncer!"

"Groo! Wharrer matter?"

"You've got to get up!"

Herries blinked sleepily in the candlelight.

"Get out! 'Tain't rising-bell yet!"

"It's more serious than rising-bell," said Blake. "Gussy has gone out to gaze at the stars, or something. We want to be in at the death. Come on!"

"Oh, it's all rot, you know!"

"Come out, you lazy bouncer!"

"It's so jolly cold!"

"Chuck us over that sponge, Dig."

"All right," said Herries hastily. "I'll get up! But it's a lot of rot, you know! But I don't mind. We'll run him down and give him a hiding for worrying us!"

The three chums dressed quickly and left the dormitory. There was no sign of D'Arcy in the corridor, or anywhere about. The swell of St. Jim's had evidently left the House. A cold wind blowing on their legs as they descended the lower staircase warned them that the staircase window was open. It was an easy drop from the sill to the ground, and it was certain that D'Arcy had left the House that way.

"He's gone out!" muttered Blake uneasily. "Joking apart, it may be a serious matter. What on earth could he want to go out for at midnight—and a cold April night?"

"Off his rocker!" said Digby.

"I'm really afraid it's something of the kind!"

"Well, let's follow and see!"

"Come on!"

Blake dropped lightly from the window to the path outside, and his chums followed. A minute more and they were standing in the quadrangle, looking about them in the gloom. The darkness was less thick here than in the House, but it was still very dark.

"Can't see him!" growled Blake.

"Well, he isn't in sight," said Herries. "You can't expect to see him when he's not in sight, Blake."

"Scat! Can you hear anything, Dig?"

"Yes. I thought I heard a sound coming from the Head's garden."

"He can't be there, surely?"

"What could he be doing there?" said Herries.

"Shut up and listen!"

The juniors strained their ears. They could hear at first only the whistle of the April breeze in the branches of the trees. Then through the night came a heavier, duller sound. It was the sound of a spade striking the earth.

Blake gave a low whistle.

"There's no mistake about that, chaps!"

"He's digging!" whispered Digby excitedly.

"That's it."

"What on earth can he be digging in the Head's garden for at twelve o'clock at night?" murmured Digby.

"Goodness only knows!"

"Suppose—" began Digby.

"Suppose nothing," grunted Blake. "But we'd better go and see what he's up to. I'm convinced that he's off his silly rocker!"

The chums of Study No. 6 stole towards the little gate giving admittance to the Head's garden. It opened on the latch, and they entered. The sound of digging was now clearer to their ears. A light glimmered from behind a huge dark mass of laurels. It came from a lantern set on the ground. The sound of the spade was louder. But suddenly it ceased. Then a muttering voice was heard:

"Bai Jove, this is weally hard work!"

Blake chuckled.

"That's Gussy! Come on, and let's see what he's doing."

The juniors crept closer. They crept round the laurels, and came in sight of Arthur Augustus.

The swell of the School House had his back turned towards

Stirring Yarn of the South Seas!

KING of the ISLANDS



His name's Ken King, but from the Solomon Islands to the Marquesas they call him King of the Islands, the finest skipper and staunchest comrade in the South Seas. Cool, fearless, and a holy terror in a scrap, this boy trader's a match even for men like Bully Samson, his ruthless enemy, and every one of his amazing adventures among the tropic islands of the Pacific will make you hold your breath. Get this splendid yarn now!

Ask for No. 331 of the

BOYS' FRIEND Library - 4d.

Now on Sale at all Newsagents, etc.

them. His jacket lay on the laurels, and he was working in his shirt-sleeves, having just recommenced after a minute's rest as the chums came in sight of him.

He was digging away for all he was worth, and already had a considerable hole excavated in the soft soil behind the laurels.

Blake almost burst into a laugh as he saw him. D'Arcy had a pair of thick woollen gloves on to protect his hands while using the spade. Troubled in mind as he undoubtedly was, he was still D'Arcy the dude.

He stopped again and rested, with one foot on the spade. "My beastly hat! I'm gettin' quite exhausted! There was no reason why Hewwies should not have come with me and dug this beastly hole. He is as strong as a horse, and it would be much more appropiate for him to be doing beastly hard work like this than for a chap like me. But it was no good sayin' anything about the mattah to those silly wottahs!"

"My word!" murmured Herries. Some faint sound apparently reached D'Arcy's ear, for he glanced round. Blake pulled his chums back in time behind the laurels.

D'Arcy saw nothing suspicious, and after a minute or two went on with his digging. The juniors remained quite silent in their ambush.

"What on earth is the meaning of it all?" muttered Digby at last. "Is he stark, staring, raving dotty?"

"Looks like it." "I saw a parcel lying on the ground," said Blake. "Perhaps he's going to bury it. Blessed if I know what for!"

"He can't have killed anybody, and—" began Herries. "Ass! The parcel wouldn't hold a body, even if we could suspect D'Arcy of doing such a thing. What on earth he's burying, and what he's doing it for, is a mystery to me."

"Let's give a fearful yell and frighten him out of his wits," suggested Herries. "He hasn't any!"

"Well, let's give a yell, anyway, and—" "You can give a yell next time you find yourself looking at a football match. Shut up now, like a good fellow. Let me think."

Blake corrugated his brows, as an assistance in the process, and thought.

Suddenly a gleam darted into his eyes. He drew his chums farther way from the spot, so that they could talk without fear of being overheard. The sound of the spade still continued.

"I've got it!" he muttered. "Got what? The cramp?" "No, ass! I know what D'Arcy is burying in that parcel."

"Well, what is it?" "Some more rubbish like that he brought in yesterday. He's been shopping again, and brought home a lot of stuff, and he doesn't want us to see it."

"My hat! But why should he squander his cash on a lot of stuff, just to bring it out at midnight and bury it in the Head's garden?"

Blake chuckled. "Oh, I've got on to that!" he replied. "He's been buying that stuff at the draper's in Rylcombe as an excuse for going to the shop."

"Oh, I see! It's Cupid again!" "Exactly! He daren't admit the truth to us, and he daren't keep the things about in case we see them. Hence those tears—I mean, this digging."

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose that's right." "Depend upon it! It would be rather a good joke to tumble him into the hole and bury him up to his neck."

"Good! It would cure him if we did." "Ha, ha, ha! It would be rather a joke, but perhaps it would be rather rough. And, besides, I've thought of a better wheeze. Come and let's see how he's getting on."

They crept back to the laurel bushes. D'Arcy's spade was silent now. The juniors heard the crumpling of paper as the parcel was placed in the excavation. Blake peered round the laurels and saw D'Arcy shovelling in the earth upon the big package.

The swell of St. Jim's was evidently tired with his exertions. He shovelled in the earth in a perfunctory manner, and flattened it down with a few blows of the flat of the spade.

"Thank goodness that's done!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "No one will ever know anything about it, which is one good thing. Those wottahs will never guess that I have been out of the beastly dormitoway at all!"

Blake nearly choked as D'Arcy blew out the lantern and picked it up and then walked away from the spot with lantern and spade. Digby and Herries were chuckling spasmodically.

Blake thumped them on the back.

"Don't!" gasped Digby. "I can't stand much more. I always said that Gussy would be the death of me in the long run!"

"I must yell!" said Herries. "I must!" "Shut up! Wait till Gussy's gone. He's gone to put the lantern and spade in the shed. When he's cleared off we'll soon have the spade out again and have that giddy parcel up out of its untimely grave."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "And Gussy will find his dread secret is not buried so deep as he thinks," grinned Blake. "Quiet! We shall hear the gate click when he's gone."

"I say, if he goes back to the dormitory before us he'll know that we're out."

"No, he won't. He's certain not to strike a light, and in the dark he won't see that our beds are empty. He couldn't."

"Ah, yes, I forgot that!" "Click!"

The sound came faintly through the darkness. It warned the chums of the Fourth that Arthur Augustus had left the garden.

"Now, then!" said Blake. And in two minutes more the sound of a spade again woke the midnight echoes among the laurels in the Head's garden.

CHAPTER 11.

A Surprise for Gussy!

CLANG! Arthur Augustus yawned and opened his eyes. It was not only the clang of the rising-bell that awakened him as the dawn came stealing in at the high windows of the School House dormitory. It was a mingling of sounds—sounds of mirth, which echoed from one end of the dormitory to the other.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "There seems to be some joke on. I weally wondah what the fellows are laughin' at?"

He sat up in bed. It was a cold morning, and D'Arcy felt rather sleepy from having lost so much rest the previous night. The rest of the Fourth Form—the School House portion of it—seemed lively enough, however. Some fellows were sitting on their beds, or standing up, and all were grinning, or chuckling, or laughing. And, strange to say, their attention seemed to be turned towards D'Arcy's bed.

The School House swell rubbed his eyes. "Pway what's the joke, deah boys?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" The laughter redoubled as it was seen that D'Arcy was awake. The dormitory door opened, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, fresh from an early-morning sprint round the quadrangle, looked in.

"Now then, kids!" said Tom Merry severely. "What do you mean by these untimely sounds of revelry so early in the morning?"

"Hallo! Look at Gussy!" ejaculated Manners. And Lowther went into a roar.

D'Arcy gave the Terrible Three an indignant glance. Then his eyes travelled round the giggling dormitory. Finally, he looked closer around him, and discerned the reason for the unusual hilarity of the Fourth-Formers.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. He had reason to be amazed. At the rail at the foot of his bed hung a remarkable selection of neckties and socks.

D'Arcy could scarcely believe his eyes. The purchases of the day before, which he had so carefully buried at midnight behind the laurels in the Head's garden, had in some mysterious manner come to light again, and become arranged in ornamental fashion round his bed, while piles of clothes, hats, and waistcoats had been heaped on the bed!

"My—my beastly word!" murmured the astounded swell of St. Jim's.

"Ha, ha, ha!" D'Arcy gazed at the juniors, and then at the purchases. Then a notice attached to the wall over the bed caught his eye. It bore the words:

"ARTHUR AUGUSTUS ALGERNON,
(Outfitter),
Dealer in Socks and Neckties!
Sale Now On!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Hear me smile! Are socks going cheap this morning, Gussy?"

"Weally, Blake—" "How much a dozen for those giddy neckties?" asked Tom Merry. "My word! They beat your waistcoats hollow!"

(Continued on page 19.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

YOU'LL FIND IT IN—



Address all letters: The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, chums! The long school story last week was so long that our usual page of news and gossip had to be left out. But here we are again, all bright and smiling.

You will notice on Page 22 an order coupon which is intended to help you fellows who are writing in to me and complaining that you can't get your copy of the GEM. Once you have filled in that coupon and handed it to your newsagent he will reserve a copy of the GEM for you regularly every week. So those of you who really want to make certain of your GEM need not worry about being disappointed any more. Now to next week's programme. In the first place there is a delightful long complete school story of Tom Merry & Co., which is entitled:

"INVADERS OF ST. JIM'S!"

In this fine yarn Martin Clifford re-introduces Frank Monk & Co., of the Grammar School. And the manner of this re-introduction is novelty itself. I'll say no more about this latest "winner" from Martin Clifford's pen except to remind you that to miss it will be the equivalent of missing the best treat of the week!

"CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET!"

David Goodwin has another stirring instalment of his great story all ready for you next Wednesday, and for thrills and "atmosphere" it can't be beaten. Yes, Potts the Office Boy has a new joke to crack with you, whilst you will find another page of news from yours truly. In short, next week's GEM will be a gem, indeed!

HEARD THIS ONE?

George (to his pal Bill, who is about to fight a fellow nearly three times his weight and size): "Don't get windy! Keep telling yourself that you will beat him!" Bill (gloomily): "That's no good, George. You know what a liar I am!"

UNKNOWN MONSTERS!

Do you believe in fire-breathing dragons? I doubt if you do, but an American deep-sea explorer does. While on an expedition last year he and his companions saw some dim, huge shapes rising out of the depths of the Atlantic, from the mouths of which shot streams of luminous substance. According to this explorer's reports these unknown monsters are covered with spines and look truly fearful. So this coming summer will see a special expedition fitted out, whose object will be to search for and bring back to our museums these monsters of the deep—and any other fearsome-looking creatures which

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

precious exploration of the sea bed has failed to produce!

AFTER A VISIT TO LONDON!

Two GEM readers in the Midlands came to London a few months ago, and in the course of their sight-seeing they stopped and admired Big Ben, which graces the House of Commons. Now these two are arguing about the dimensions of the clock face, the size of the hands and the figures on the dial. "Could I tell them, etc." Well, as far as my information goes they are both wrong. The figures on the dial measure two feet high, the length of the minute hand is fourteen feet, and the clock face itself measures twenty-three feet across. True I haven't climbed up to Big Ben to verify these figures myself, but I pass them on to my two GEM readers with an expert's "O.K." behind them.

GOING UP—UP!

Sixteen thousand feet up in the air seems an uncomfortably high distance from the good old ground, but from one to the other is a journey that takes but six and a half minutes—that is, if you travel in the aeroplane that "climbs like a lift." This aeroplane, the invention of a Polish engineer, is called the "P.11," and the experts are regarding its early trials with great favour.

FORWARD, THE WITCH DOCTORS!

In an attempt to put down the evil influences of the witch doctors certain people on the African Gold Coast have offered to make a present of ten pounds to any witch doctor, who can transform himself into any bird or beast, or creepy, crawly thing—providing he does the trick in the presence of an umpire. If these stunts don't appeal to him, he can still win the prize if he is able to eat an orange or an apple while standing five yards away from it, or if he can "lift" something out of a sealed box without breaking the seal. This "generous" offer has given the cunning witch doctors something to think about. Up to the time of going to press the offer is still open, which proves that the African witch doctor is a shy bird, at any rate!

POWER!

Ever seen a turntable at a big railway terminus? Ever guessed its weight? Then listen to the story of the new turntable which has been recently installed at Euston Station. Its weight is thirty-six tons, its length is seventy feet, and it took twenty-eight men and two giant cranes an hour to instal it. Yet once "laid down," this turntable is worked by one man, even when an engine weighing

something like one hundred and twenty-seven tons is placed upon it!

GAINSBOROUGH'S BLUE BOY!

Do I know, writes a reader, why the famous painting, bearing the above name, was painted? I must admit that the question puzzled me at first, but continuing the letter I discovered the reason—according to my correspondent. He says that in Gainsborough's days there was a theory among painters that no picture could be successful if the predominating colour were blue. If that, indeed, is the reason, Gainsborough certainly put the kybosh on the theorists!

ROW, ROW, ROW!

A letter from a GEM reader, who witnessed the recent Varsity Boat Race, contains the query of "What is the most wonderful row in all history?" That's a tall order. However, my records can supply one answer which will, I think, interest my correspondent and the rest of my readers as well. On June 6th, in the year 1896, two Norwegians made up their minds to row the Atlantic—from New York to Havre, France—in an eighteen foot rowing boat, which "drew" only four inches of water. In this flimsy cockleshell craft they actually kept afloat without serious mishap until July 10th. Then a mountainous sea turned their boat upside down, and pitched the two plucky rowers overboard. No, they were not drowned, for both the men wore lifebelts; and the lifebelts, incidentally, were attached to their boat. After a desperate struggle, the two got their boat "right side up" again, climbed in, and assiduously began to bale her out. Things wereperate for them even then, for all their food had been pitched into the sea and lost when the vessel turned turtle. Yet luck, which seemed to have deserted them, began to smile again. A passing ship was sighted and hailed, a fresh store of provisions was taken aboard the rowing boat, and the two hardy oarsmen continued their journey to the French coast, and actually reached it. If any GEM reader knows of a more wonderful rowing feat than this I shall be pleased to hear about it.

THE SUPER DIVER!

A treasure of five million pounds value is the prize a diver hopes to "pick up" from the floor of the ocean if his special diving suit does all that is expected of it in the next few months. In the shoulders of this suit, which weighs, incidentally, a matter of 1,400 lbs., are fitted powerful searchlights, by the aid of which the diver hopes to locate the wreck of the Merida, a steamer which sank to the bottom of the sea twenty-one years ago off Virginia Capes. For the first time, it is claimed, a diver in this latest suit will be able to work in safety at a depth of over two hundred feet below the surface level. In a preliminary "try-out," the diver has already "dropped" to a depth of two hundred and ten feet and stayed there for one hundred minutes without discomfort. From that depth he was hauled back to the surface in just under two minutes. So, with luck, the treasure of the Merida won't remain at the bottom of the ocean "for all time," neither will other wrecks, freighted with valuables and gold, linger on the sea bed until they rot and fall apart.

YOUR EDITOR

GUSSY GOES "GOOFY"!

(Continued from page 17.)

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—" "What price the lace handkerchiefs?" howled Monty Lowther. "I'd like to have some, to send as a present to a charming young lady in Rylcombe." "Weally, Lowthah—" "What's all this fearful row about?" demanded Kildare, putting his head in at the dormitory. "What are you all yelling like hyenas for?" "D'Arcy has got a sale on," explained Tom Merry.

"Eh? What?" "Sale now proceeding!" said Lowther. "Sweeping reductions. Socks of the greatest variety and most startling designs going for next to nothing!"

Kildare stared at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's bed, and burst into a laugh.

"Great Scott! What have you rigged up your bed in that fashion for, D'Arcy?"

"I haven't wiggled it up at all!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Some wotten boundah wiggled it up like this while I was asleep!"

"Ha, ha, ha! But where did all the things come from? Surely you haven't been buying those terrific neckties and those fearful socks?"

"It's all good for twade, Kildare."

"H'm! You had better get them cleared away before a master sees them here, or it may not be good for you," said Kildare.

"Weally, Kildare—" "But the captain of St. Jim's was gone. He went laughing down the passage, and the Terrible Three went laughing after him. And renewed yells of laughter followed them from the dormitory. The expression on D'Arcy's face as he hopped out of bed and began to gather up the purchases was too funny.

"I say, deah boys, you might lend a hand with these beastly things, you know," said Arthur Augustus.

"Certainly!" said Blake. "Where do you do with them?"

"I weally don't know. Bettah wadda them up in a beastlay parcel, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't laugh, Blake! It's not a laughin' mattah. I took a feahful lot of twouble to get wid of this wubbish, but some wotten boundah has watched me, I suppose, and dug them up again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you wottah! Was it you?"

Blake yelled with laughter. The countenance of the swell of St. Jim's became crimson with wrath.

"Blake, I wegard you as a beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall decline to keep up your beastlay acquaintance! I have always endeavoured to keep my circle of friends quite select, not to say swaggah. I wegard you as a boundah and an outsidah, and I wefuse to wecognise you any longah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Blake.

It was too much for Arthur Augustus. He doubled up his fists and went for Blake. The latter, laughing too much to defend himself, retreated till he stumbled on a bed, and then D'Arcy began to hit out.

"Hold him!" gasped Blake. "He'll kill me; I know he will! Oh dear, some people are too funny to live!"

"I will give you such a feahful thwashin'!"

"Dear me! What is the matter here?"

It was Mr. Lathom's voice, as the little master of the Fourth, who boarded in the School House, peered into the dormitory.

"D'Arcy, are you fighting? Dear me! And I always thought you such a quiet lad. You will take twenty lines for fighting, D'Arcy."

"Weally, Mr. Lathom—" "Not a word, D'Arcy! Boys, you must not make so much noise, and pray come down. You are already late!"

Mr. Lathom passed on.

Blake sat on his bed and gasped.

"Never mind, Gussy. I'll do the lines for you," he jerked out. "It's worth it for the fun. Gussy—Gussy, you ought to go on the stage."

"Pway do not address me, Blake! I wefuse to wegard you any longah as a friend!"

And D'Arcy began to dress himself with great dignity.

The Fourth-Formers chuckled over the joke till they went downstairs, and they were still chuckling at breakfast. And

at the breakfast-table itself, when D'Arcy passed his plate up, it came back to him with a pair of glaring socks upon it.

D'Arcy's feelings were too deep for words. After breakfast he refused to speak to Blake, Herries, or Digby in the quad. They did not seem much hurt at being cut, however. They only laughed like hyenas when D'Arcy turned haughtily away.

The swell of St. Jim's was turning over in his mind what to do with his terrible purchases, but he could think of nothing. But after morning school Fortune seemed to befriend him. A pedlar passed the gates of St. Jim's, and a sudden idea flashed into D'Arcy's mind, and he called to him.

"I have some things to give away," explained D'Arcy. "Would you like them—neckties, socks, and things? I will give you half-a-crown to take them away!"

The pedlar was not likely to refuse an offer like that. And five minutes later, to Arthur Augustus' great relief, the pedlar was marching off with a parcel under his arm and a half-crown in his pocket.

And Arthur Augustus breathed freely.

CHAPTER 12.

D'Arcy Does Not Propose!

"GERMAN next!" grunted Blake, the following afternoon. "I really think it most unreasonable of Herr Schneider not to fall ill sometimes. Hallo, Gussy, where are you going? Aren't you going to honour Herr Schneider by cramming some of his lovely Deutsch?"

"It is time for my violin lesson," said Arthur Augustus.

"Ah, yes, I forgot! Give my kindest regards to the professor, and don't forget to remember me to the young lady in the draper's shop."

D'Arcy stalked away without replying.

Since the idea had come into D'Arcy's head to study the violin, he had been excused on two afternoons weekly to go down to Professor Lightfoot's, in the village, for his instruction.

He walked out of the room, went to his study for his violin-case, and was soon in Rylcombe Lane. He was once more D'Arcy, the dude, dressed exquisitely, with a beautiful flower in his coat. The splendour of his appearance would have been quite wasted upon old, dry Professor Lightfoot; but that splendour was not intended to dazzle the professorial eyes. There were more charming eyes in the place than the professor's.

D'Arcy reached Rylcombe and halted outside the side door next to the draper's shop.

It was some minutes before he knocked, not finding enough nerve to do so. And in those minutes he became conscious that he was subjected to a keen examination by a young man in a white apron outside the grocer's shop opposite.

D'Arcy, if he glanced round, found the young grocer's eyes fastened upon him like gimlets, and he grew uneasy under that steady survey. It really seemed as if the grocer's young man took a personal interest in his movements. Of course, that was impossible; still, D'Arcy felt very uncomfortable.

He knocked at the door finally, hugging the violin-case, which was his excuse for coming.

The maidservant showed him into the room where he usually received his instruction.

A dry-looking old man, with a shaggy white beard, rose to receive him. The room was over the draper's shop, and looked out into the village street. It served Professor Lightfoot for a dining-room, drawing-room, smoking-room, and study, according to the time of the day. But there was a neatness about the place which betrayed a woman's hand, although the old musician was evidently one of the untidiest of mortals.

"Aha, you are early for your lesson, Mr. D'Arcy!" said the professor, beaming upon his youthful pupil as he shook hands with him.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I like to see such keenness in a pupil," said the old gentleman, nodding his head. "I hope you have been keeping up the practice. Have you done as much this week as last?"

"Yaas, wathah, just the same!" said Arthur Augustus.

This statement was strictly true, and D'Arcy had done no practice at all either week.

"Good! Now we shall commence. Are you looking for anything?"

D'Arcy blushed.

He was indeed looking for something—Miss Ethel, who was sometimes in the room while he had his lesson, painting. D'Arcy knew that Miss Ethel more than half supported the little household by her painting, and that the professor's pupils might have been counted on the fingers of one hand.

Ethel, I don't wequiah a doctah. I-I-I— That's how it is. I-I-I—"

The door opened, and the professor came in.

"Dear papa, I am so glad you have returned," said Ethel. "Master D'Arcy is not well; he has a pain in his heart."

"Dear me!" said the professor. "That is bad. You should have said so before you had your lesson, D'Arcy. That accounts for your shocking bad playing—I mean—ahem!—you had better drive home to St. Jim's, and—"

"I am all wight now," said D'Arcy miserably.

"Are you sure?" said the kindly old gentleman, with an anxious look. "I have, now I come to think of it, several times noticed you go red and pale. Your face is very flushed now, and you look feverish."

"I assuah you that I am all wight, sir."

"You had bettah let me send for a conveyance—"

"Pway don't, sir; the walk will fweshen me up, and I shall be all wight, honah bwight," said the unhappy D'Arcy.

"Miss Pwiscillah, of course."

Tom Merry's old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, was the person he wanted to help him. He had thought of it before, and asked Tom Merry when she was likely to come to the school again. But she was not coming yet. Still, if the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet could go to the mountain. Why should he not take a run down to Huckleberry Heath and consult Miss Priscilla?

The idea was working in D'Arcy's brain as he entered the School House.

CHAPTER 13.

D'Arcy Keeps an Appointment!

"B AI Jove! That's for me!" Arthur Augustus glanced at a letter lying on the table in Study No. 6. It certainly was addressed to him and in a small and delicate hand. It looked like a feminine caligraphy, and the postmark was Rylcombe.



In the middle of the night, there was D'Arcy in the Head's garden digging a large hole. And by the side of the hole was a huge parcel which he was apparently about to bury! What did it contain?

"Very well, then, but really—"

D'Arcy escaped at last. His only comfort was the sweet sympathy in Miss Ethel's eyes as he left her. It was because she thought he was ill, of course; still, it was very sweet.

D'Arcy could have kicked himself as he walked up the lane to the school. He had planned that opportunity, and it had come about more easily than he had had any right to anticipate; and he had allowed it to pass him by. He had not spoken out! When would an opportunity like that recur? Probably never!

And the swell of St. Jim's reflected miserably that if it did recur he would probably never find the courage to speak. He would blush and stammer, and nothing more, and in the long run Miss Ethel would very likely come to the conclusion that he was a little weak in the head.

What was he to do?

Whose aid could he call in at this crisis of his life?

As he entered the gate of St. Jim's he caught sight of Tom Merry talking to Manners and Lowther. And then an answer came to his mental query.

D'Arcy's hand trembled as he picked up the letter from the table.

Was it possible—

He opened the letter hastily. A little pale pink missive fell out, and he caught it up and read it eagerly.

"Dear Augustus! I must see you again. Will you be at the village end of the bridge, under the big elm, at seven o'clock? I shall be there. I will not sign my name, but you will know from whom this comes."

That was all.

D'Arcy kissed the letter. Know from whom it came—why, of course he knew! It came from Ethel. She had guessed after all what he had wanted to say yesterday, and was so sweet as to give him another opportunity. Perhaps it was only to tell him that it was impossible—that was very likely. But to meet her—that was happiness enough!

D'Arcy had never seen Ethel's handwriting, but he had no doubts. He put the letter away in his pocket, and went about like one in a dream for the rest of the day.

After tea—during which meal in Study No. 6 he spoke not a single word to anyone, in spite of remarks and questions hurled at him—he prepared to sally out, and Blake, Herries, and Digby watched him with great interest.

D'Arcy, who never spared cash when his personal appearance was concerned, had long furnished the funds to have a large mirror erected in the study. As space was limited it was fastened up flat against the wall.

It gave Arthur Augustus a full view of his whole person, and he was very pleased with it.

He turned round to look at his friends, and put his eye-glass into his eye.

Blake, Herries, and Digby watched him.

"How do I look, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Lovely!" said Blake. "You look as if you had just got out of the Zoo."

"Pway don't be wude, Blake!"

"You ought to cover that waistcoat up, if you are going to meet anybody with weak eyesight," said Digby warningly. "It might blind them, you know."

"Weally, Digby—"

"Who's the victim?" asked Herries.

D'Arcy did not reply to that frivolous question. He walked out of the study, leaving the juniors chuckling.

It did not take D'Arcy long to reach the bridge over the Rhyll. At the end nearest the village of Rylcombe the trees were thick, shading the end of the bridge and the lane which led up to it. The big elm stood a little way back from the road, and the spot was very shadowy.

D'Arcy turned from the lane in the dusk, and halted under the spreading branches of the elm.

Rylcombe chimed told the quarter to seven. D'Arcy was a quarter of an hour early. But it was a fault on the right side. Anything was better than the risk of keeping a lady waiting. He waited patiently under the elm in the growing darkness till a footstep sounded from the direction of the village.

D'Arcy gave a joyous start.

"She's coming!"

The next moment a look of disappointment came over his face. The figure that loomed up in the dusk was a man's—a rather squat figure in an ill-fitting coat, with a round head surmounted by a bowler hat.

D'Arcy recognised the figure. It was that of Sands' young man—the youthful grocer who had eyed him so keenly when he was waiting outside the professor's door the previous afternoon.

Arthur Augustus did not take much interest in Mr. Sands' young man. He stepped back, expecting him to pass, but the youthful grocer did not pass. He stopped and stared hard at D'Arcy.

"Blessed if it ain't a case, then!"

Such were the amazing words uttered by Mr. Sands' young man.

"Did you address me?" asked D'Arcy, with dignity.

"Yes, I did. So you're 'ere?"

"Yaas, wathah! But I weally fail to see how it concerns you, my good fellah."

"Don't 'good feller' me!" said Mr. Sands' young man.

"I don't want any of your cheek, young shaver!"

Arthur Augustus gasped.

"Fellah! You—you dare to address me as a young shavah!" he ejaculated.

"How old are you?" said Mr. Sands' young man contemptuously. "About fifteen, I suppose? I'm nineteen, and big enough to eat you. Ain't you ashamed of yourself, running after a lady eighteen years old?"

"Whom are you speakin' of, pway?"

"I'm speaking of Miss Jones, my feecongsee," said Mr. Sands' young man. "That's who I'm speaking of, young shaver."

"If you call be a young shavah, I am afwaid I shall be weluctantly compelled to chastise you," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

Mr. Sands' young man grinned.

"Start!" he said laconically.

D'Arcy felt inclined to do so. But he remembered that Miss Ethel was almost due, and it would never do for her to find him fighting.

"What are you ere for?" demanded Mr. Sands' young man. "Answer that question, young shaver!"

"I am heah to meet a lady," said D'Arcy, in his most stately manner. "And if it were not for that cire, I should certainly give you a feahful thwashin' for your impertinence."

"You—you've got the cheek to own up!" gasped Mr. Sands' young man. "You hown up that you are 'ere to meet my Maud."

"Your Maud! I fail to see the dwift of your remark. I am heah to meet a lady with whom you have no acquaintance."

"Miss Jones at Short's, the draper's, is my feecongsee."

"I weally wish you joy, then," said D'Arcy. "I believe I have seen the lady."

"Yes, I believe you 'ave," said Mr. Sands' young man, with heavy sarcasm. "I really believe you 'ave. I believe you are always hanging about the shop, and going to the professor's for fiddling lessons as an excuse, too. I believe you are always buying all sorts of things in the shop as an excuse for talking to my Maud. Ho, yes!"

D'Arcy turned red. It was a natural mistake Mr. Sands' young man had fallen into, and the swell of St. Jim's had to admit that, and he realised that he had a jealous lover to deal with. How was he to get rid of him before Miss Ethel arrived?

"Weally, my good fellah—"

"Don't good fellow me!"

"Weally, you are mistaken. I have a gweat wespect for Miss Jones, whom I do not weally know. I believe I wemembah her servin' me."

"Ho, yes! I believe you do!"

"But weally I have no appointment with Miss Jones. I have never addressed her except acwoss the counter. I have been in the shop—"

"Haven't I seen you often enough?"

"But it was not to see her."

"I suppose you naturally want chintz curtains and dozens of ties and socks up at the school?" suggested Mr. Sands' young man.

Miss Jones had evidently related to him the curious circumstances of D'Arcy's purchases at the shop.

"No, that was weally a pwetext—"

"To see Miss Jones."

"No; to see somebody else who came into the shop once or twice to speak to her," said D'Arcy. "I considah that

WEDNESDAY IS GEM DAY!

Make sure of your copy every week by filling in the coupon below, chums, and handing it to your newsagent.

GEM ORDER COUPON.

To
(Name and address of newsagent.)

Please reserve for me every week, until further notice, a copy of the GEM.

Name
(Write your own name and address here.)

Address

Date



The young man hit out, and a moment later Gussy found himself sitting under the elm-tree with his hat jammed over his eyes.

you are entitled to this explanation. And now pway take yourself off, and oblige me."

But Mr. Sands' young man seemed as firmly planted where he stood as the big elm-tree itself. There was an exceedingly disagreeable look upon his face.

"So there's another lady in the case!" he sneered.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And what's her name?"

"You weally cannot expect me to acquaint you with that."

"No, I s'pose not, seeing that she ain't born yet," said Mr. Sands' young man more sarcastically than ever. "I've seen you go into that shop and stay half an hour, and not another soul has entered all the time."

D'Arcy could have explained that easily enough. He had sometimes wasted half an hour in the vain hope of seeing Miss Ethel. Sometimes, he knew, the professor's daughter, resting from her tasks, came down to speak to Miss Jones, who was a kind and good-natured girl, though of a somewhat dull and unintelligent order. But, naturally, Mr. Sands' young man did not see her, as she came from within the house. And, of course, D'Arcy would rather have suffered the tortures of the Inquisition than have allowed a lady's name to become mixed up in a quarrel.

"I cannot explain more," he said frigidly. "I expect you to take my word. Now pway go, as I expect—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wufuse to cheese it!"

"Don't tell 'em," said Mr. Sands' young man. "I've had a letter, I have, anonymous letter, warning me that you was coming here to meet someone, and it didn't need much to tell me whom it was. I know Maud is a flirt, because she's walked out with young men before now. I gave her a 'iding,'" said Mr. Sands' young man in an extremely significant tone.

"Did you weally?"

"Yes, I did. If Miss Jones don't come, I shall know that the letter was a jcke of some fellow who's jealous of me. But if she does—"

"I assuah you, my dear fellow, that I am heah to meet quite anothah person."

"Who is it?"

"That is my secwet, of course."

"Of course," mimicked Mr. Sands' young man, "of course! When was she to come?"

"At seven o'clock."

"There goes the quarter past."

The chimes of the quarter striking rang through the dusk. It was a quarter past seven, and D'Arcy gave a start as he noted the fact. He had hardly thought that a girl like Miss Ethel would be late for an appointment.

"Where is she, then?" grinned Mr. Sands' young man.

"I weally do not know, but it is pwob that she had been delayed, and I weally must wequest you to be gone before she awwives."

"Ho, yes! No doubt! Rather!"

"Pway depart—"

"I'll wait, thank you, and see who comes. If it ain't Miss Jones I'll apologise," said Mr. Sands' young man. "I'll apologise like a gentleman if I'm mistaken. But if it is Miss Jones, I'll give her the pleasure of seeing me wipe up the ground with you and bash your 'at over your heyes!"

"I weally assuah you—"

"Rats!"

"I am sowwy, young man," said D'Arcy firmly, "but you must go. It would nevah do for you to be hangin' wound heah to wecognise the lady and chattah about it among your acquaintance. I weard you as a cad. So go!"

"Try to shift me!" suggested Mr. Sands' young man.

D'Arcy allowed his monocle to fall.

"If you do not go, young man, I shall certainly shift you, and shall pwobably hurt you vewy much!" he exclaimed.

"Go hen, then!" exclaimed Mr. Sands' young man, striking a warlike attitude.

"I weally do not wish to have a quawwel with you—"

"I dare say you don't!"

"But you weally must go."

"Oh, you couldn't shift a white mouse, you couldn't!" said Mr. Sands' young man. "I don't know why I don't knock your blessed 'at over your heyes, I don't!"

"Will you go?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then you have only yourself to blame for the violence I shall be compelled to use," said D'Arcy. "I am reluctant to strike you, but I have no alternative."

"I don't mind!" grinned Mr. Sands' young man.

D'Arcy did not argue further. If there was to be a fight, it was better to get it over before Miss Ethel arrived. He rushed at Mr. Sands' young man, intending to grapple with him and hurl him forth into the lane. Somehow it did not work out exactly like that. Mr. Sands' young man apparently knew how to take care of himself. The next thing D'Arcy knew was that he was sitting down under the elm-tree, and that Mr. Sands' young man was jamming his hat over his eyes with mallet-like thumps.

"Oh, weally!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pway dwaw it mild! You are sinplay wuinin' my beastlay toppah!"

"Come hon!" shouted Mr. Sands' young man, dancing excitedly round the swell of St. Jim's. "Get hup and come hon!"

"Weally——"

"Get hup and come hon!" roared Mr. Sands' young man.

D'Arcy got up and came on. He hit out scientifically now, and Mr. Sands' young man took his turn at sitting down. And D'Arcy could do no less than return the compliment he had received by jamming the brown bowler hat down over the young man's ears with a heavy thump.

"Ow!" roared Mr. Sands' young man.

"Awise and pway come on!" said D'Arcy, whose fighting blood was aroused now. "Since you have driven me to usin' violence, I shall give you a feaful thwashin' while I'm about it!"

Mr. Sands' young man was not slow in getting up. He had plenty of pluck, and he was very angry. He rushed at D'Arcy, and this time they closed. D'Arcy's foot caught in a root and he went heavily down, dragging Mr. Sands' young man on top of him. They struggled in the grass, rolling over and over furiously, pommeling one another.

D'Arcy's elegant attire suffered in the course of the struggle. Mud and dust smothered him. His eyeglass was broken, his tall hat lost: its last vestige of resemblance to a topper, his fancy waistcoat burst its buttons, his collar assumed the appearance of a soiled rag. But D'Arcy had ceased to think of these things now. The blood of all the D'Arcys was boiling in his veins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was an irresistible roar of laughter from the trees. The hidden spectators of the ridiculous scene could contain themselves no longer. Forth from their cover rushed Figgins & Co., yelling like hyenas.

CHAPTER 14.

Some More Fun for Figgins & Co.!

D'ARCY and Mr. Sands' young man released each other immediately. Figgins & Co. stood in a row, staring at them and shrieking with laughter. D'Arcy and Mr. Sands' young man sat up and returned their stare.

"INVADERS OF ST. JIM'S!"

Fights are the order of the day when Frank Monk & Co. come to St. Jim's. Look at Skimpole— all prepared—in next week's cover picture below!



R
A
G
S

J
A
P
E
S

Order your copy NOW!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the New House juniors. "Hear me smile!" shrieked Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, my only panama aunt! Ha, ha, ha!" "Ho, ho, ho! Hold me, somebody!" screamed Fatty Wynn. "Oh, this beats the biggest feed I've ever had! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally!" said D'Arcy, with as much dignity as he could muster under the trying circumstances. "Weally, Figgins, I wegard this mewwiment as most untimely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway cease that wude and fwivolous cacklin'," said D'Arcy, rising to his feet. "I'm expectin' a lady here, but I cannot wemain to meet her in this feaful state."

"Ho, no!" said Mr. Sands' young man, staggering up. "Ho, no! She wouldn't look at you now, she wouldn't! She wouldn't look at her last young man after I had finished with him! Ho, no!"

"I again assuah you that you are undah a misappwehension," said Arthur Augustus. "I say, Figgins, will you eject this obnoxious person? I weally feel too exhausted."

"It's all right, Sandy," giggled Figgins. "I believe you had an anonymous note."

"I did," said Mr. Sands' young man, "warning me that this young shaver was here to meet somebody."

"And you jumped to the conclusion that it was Miss Jones?"

"Course I did!"

"Then you did that estimable lady a great injustice," said Figgins, with solemnity. "The best thing you can do is to go and beg her pardon."

"What do you know about it?"

"I know the fellow who wrote the note. He did it for a joke, to make you meet Gussy here and have a scrap with him."

"Ho, he did, did he?"

"Yes, he did. It was only in fun."

"I wish I could meet that funny fellow alone!" said Mr. Sands' young man, looking hard from face to face of the Co. "I'd make him look a bit funnier than he does now. Well, I'm off. I'm only half-satisfied, mind, young shaver!"

"I wufuse to be chawactowised as a young shavah!"

"I tell you I'm only half-satisfied. Let me find you hanging round Short's shop again, and I'll—I'll jam you into a box of eggs!" said Mr. Sands' young man. And he walked away, trying as he went to thump his bowler out into something like its original shape, without much success.

"I weally cannot appreciate a joke like that, Figgins," said D'Arcy. "You have caused me to get into a feaful state."

"Don't worry, Gussy; you won't be meeting a lady this evening," said Figgins comfortingly.

"I weally fail to see how you can know anything at all about the matter, Figgins."

"Oh, that was a joke, too!"

"Eh? I weally fail to compwehend!"

"I know the fellow who wrote that letter, too, you see," explained Figgins. And the Co. burst into a joyous laugh. D'Arcy turned crimson with wrath.

"You—you uttah wottah! Do you mean to say——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You have ventuahed to make a silly ass of me!"

"No; we were too late to do that—you were born one!" chuckled Figgins. "Ha, ha, ha! The note was well done, wasn't it?"

"Oh, you uttah outsiders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. danced round the swell of the School House in a circle, yelling like Red Indians.

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear us smile! Ha, ha, ha!"

Their smiles might have been heard on the other side of Rylcombe Wood.

But suddenly Figgins' yell changed its tone, and he stopped his war-dance.

"What was that?"

"What's the matter?" asked Marmaduke.

"Something wet came on my collar! Great Scott!"

Figgins put his hand to his collar, and drew it away again with the fingers stained red.

"My word!" gasped Fatty Wynn. "Blood!"

The juniors stared in amazement. The most amazed of all was Figgins himself.

"He's bleeding terribly! Quick, let's bind him up!"

"Let me alone!" exclaimed Figgins. "I'm not bleeding!"

"But that blood——"

"It's not blood."

"What is it, then?"

"Blessed if I know! It's—— Ow, ow!"

A sudden jet smote Figgins on the other side of his head. His face streamed crimson.

Kerr gave a shout.

"It's red ink!"

"Red ink!" gasped Marmaduke and Fatty Wynn simultaneously.

"Yes. It's some rotter squirting red ink at us from the bushes!" exclaimed Kerr, staring round at the foliage.

The next moment he gave a terrific whoop. A jet of red ink smote him fairly on the nose, and splashed all over his face, converting him into a Red Indian in a remarkably short space of time.

"By Jove, you do look queer!" said Marmaduke, grinning.

The next moment he looked queer himself, as a jet of red ink from a different direction caught him on the ear, and splashed over his face.

Fatty Wynn came in for a jet at the same moment.

Figgins & Co. were not laughing now. They were red—with ink and rage! Figgins made a rush for the bushes from which the hidden marksmen were taking aim with their squirts.

Swish, swish! came the ink again, and two jets struck him—one in the face, one in the neck. He reeled back, and slapped his hands to his neck. They came away red. The ink was running down over his shirt, and staining his collar and waistcoat.

"My word!" gasped Figgins.

"Better hook it!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn, and he set the example.

How many foes there might be in ambush there Figgins & Co. did not know; but the hunt for enemies armed with squirts and red ink was a serious undertaking. Figgins hesitated a moment, and then followed Fatty Wynn, and Marmaduke and Kerr followed him.

The aspect of Figgins & Co. was comical enough. Their faces and collars were a bright red, and the more they rubbed them, the redder they became. In the dusk of the lane it did not matter so much; but at school their return was likely to create a sensation.

"We shall have to sneak in and get washed!" grunted Figgins, as they went up the lane. "I wonder who it was? Hallo, that sounded like Tom Merry's laugh!"

A laugh came floating from the dusk behind.

"Tom Merry! We might have guessed!"

"Let's go back!" growled Marmaduke.

"Rats! Let's go on and get cleaned! We can get even with them some other time, and it's no good getting any more ink now!"

And Figgins & Co. went on.

It was, indeed, Tom Merry's laugh that they had heard. The Terrible Three had come out of their ambush.

D'Arcy stared at them, recognising them in the dusk.

"Tom Mewwy! Thank you vewy much!" he gasped. "Pway give me a hand up! I have had a wotten tick played upon me by those New House boundahs!"

Tom Merry laughed as he helped Gussy to his feet.

"We know all about it, kid."

"Indeed! Pway, how do you know all about it, Tom Mewwy?"

"We heard Figgins & Co. plotting it the other night!" grinned Tom Merry. "We've kept an eye on them since, you see, and when they came and ambushed themselves here, we knew the little game was coming off."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you might have told me!"

"Couldn't give Figgins away, you know; and, besides, it was too good a joke to spoil. You deserved it for being such a silly ass, you know."

"Exactly so," said Monty Lowther. "I wouldn't have missed this scene for anything. This is about the best turn you've ever given us, Gussy."

"Rather!" said Manners heartily. "I propose a vote of thanks to Gussy Adolphus, as the founder of the feast—I mean, the fun!"

"I veward you as thwee wotten boundahs!" said Arthur Augustus. "You have made light of a gwave subject."

"Oh, let's get along!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "I want to see what sort of a reception Figgins & Co. get at St. Jim's."

Even Arthur Augustus, in spite of his indignation, had to giggle at that.

"Bai Jove! They will cause a surprise!" he remarked. "I should say so. We don't want to miss it!"

And the School House juniors hurried along the lane.

CHAPTER 15.

Miss Priscilla Gives Good Advice!

MISS PRISCILLA FAWCETT stood at the door of Laurel Villa, at Huckleberry Heath, looking out into the pleasant sunshine of the Sunday morning, with a kind old face as pleasant as the sunshine.

A boyish figure stopped at the gate at the end of the garden path, and the old lady uttered an exclamation:

"D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—for it was he—raised his hat. Then he opened the gate and came up the walk.

Miss Priscilla gazed at him in amazement.

"D'Arcy. My dear boy, have you a holiday? What are you doing here?"

D'Arcy coloured.

"I asked the Head's permission to come and see you, Miss Fawcett," he said shyly.

"That was very nice of you, my dear boy, but—"

"Yaas, wathah; but you are surprised, of course? Deah Miss Pwiscillah, I have come to see you because I am in a fearful difficulty, and I think you may help me!"

"You want me to help you?"

"Yaas, wathah! Miss Pwiscillah, I—I—I— You won't laugh?"

"Certainly not!" said the amazed old lady.

"I knew that you would sympathise with me. I have no one else to explain mattahs to," said D'Arcy shyly. "Miss Pwiscillah, I—I— Oh, Miss Pwiscillah, she is such a wipping gal!"

Miss Fawcett looked at D'Arcy. Then she slowly took her glasses out of their case, wiped them, put them on, and looked at him again.

"I think I understand," said Miss Priscilla, her voice very soft.

"I knew you would," said D'Arcy brightly. "You were always so kind. "Oh, Miss Pwiscillah, I tried to speak to her the othah day—to tell her—but I hadn't the cheek! She spoke as if she knew I was so much younghah than she is, but weally it is only six yahs, and I look more than fifteen, don't I?"

"Perhaps a little," assented Miss Fawcett.

"And when I gwow up I shall be awfully wich, you know, and she won't have to do any more of that beastlay paintin'" said D'Arcy. "I wish I could tell you what a weally wippin' gal she is, Miss Pwiscillah!"

"I quite understand."

"Yaas, I knew you would. Will you help me, Miss Pwiscillah, and tell me what to do?"

"If you were to speak to the young lady, as you suggested, you could not possibly continue to see her," said Miss Fawcett quietly. "Don't you see, my dear lad, that however much in earnest you are, the young lady could not take any possible notice of your—your attachment. And under the circumstances, she would, if she were a girl of right feeling, realise that it was impossible to see you any more."

"Oh, Miss Pwiscillah!"

"That is certainly the case, D'Arcy. You would have to give up your lessons with the professor, and both of them would suffer."

"Oh, Miss Pwiscillah!"

"You do not wish that to come about? You would rather allow these fees to continue to be of service to this poor gentleman?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you must make up your mind at once to dismiss this thought from your mind," said Miss Fawcett firmly, "and never, above all, allow a hint of your feelings to escape you in the presence of the young lady."

Something moist glistened in D'Arcy's eye. Miss Fawcett affected not to see it.

D'Arcy realised that Miss Fawcett spoke the truth, and that tear was a tribute to a vanished love. For the swell of St. Jim's was "grit" to the backbone, in spite of his dudish ways. The path of right having been pointed out to him, he was not the fellow to blench or turn aside from it. He rose to his feet.

"Thank you, Miss Pwiscillah—thank you! You—you are wight—quite wight!"

He could say no more, his heart was too full.

THE END.

(Look out for another grand, long yarn next week, chaps! Frank Monk & Co., from the Grammar School, come to stay at St. Jim's, in "INVADERS OF ST. JIM'S!")

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,261.

A BREEZY TALE OF THE NAVY!

CHUMS OF THE FIGHTING FLEET

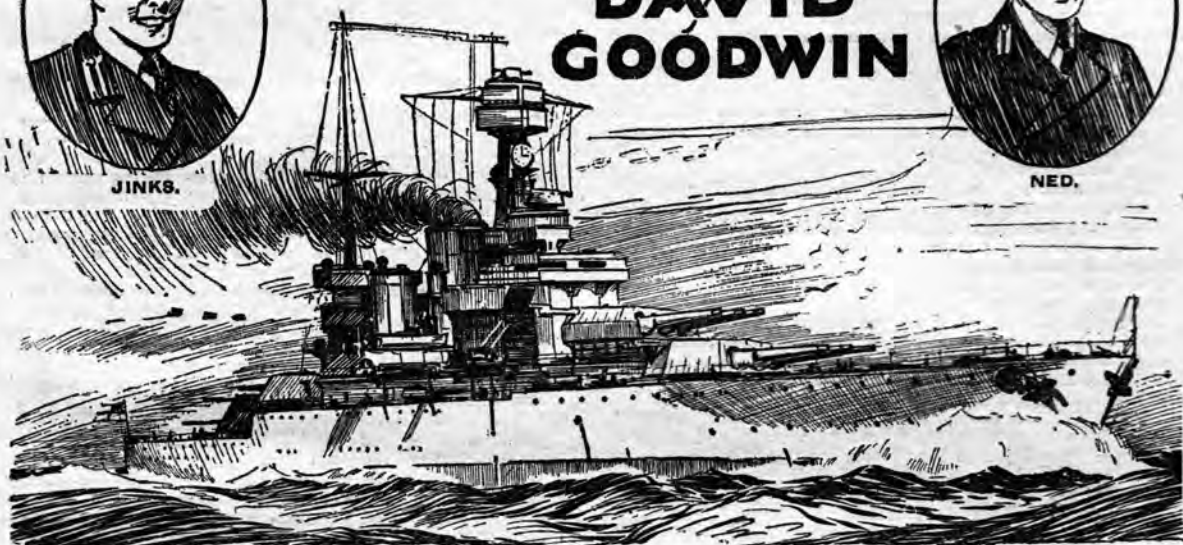


JINKS.

by
**DAVID
GOODWIN**



NED.



Ned Hardy, the only Middy in the Navy who has won the D.S.C., which he got for his part in the capture of a Russian spy, has just returned to the Victorious, from a secret visit to his brother Ralph. Ralph, formerly a lieutenant on the Victorious, was dismissed the Service after a robbery on board. Ned believes his brother innocent and thinks it was the work of spies. Ralph warns him that certain spies are now out to get Ned!

The Noble Art!

BELOW decks once more, Jinks sat down on his sea-chest and listened intently while Ned gave a full account of his meeting with his brother and all that Ralph had told him of the great espionage firm of Voroff & Co.

"Suffering Susan!" said Jinks, at the end of it. "What a crew! By your account, they've got spies all over the world, and would cut a throat as soon as look at you! But there's no doubt about it, after what you've seen aboard here lately. Nice gang we're up against."

"They are, and no mistake! If you think they're a bit too hot to tackle, Victor, old man, there's no reason why you should run the risk of mixing yourself up in the business. You can stand out—"

"What d'you take me for?" said Jinks indignantly. "Why, I wouldn't miss the fun for an admiral's command! My only complaint is that I've been left out of it a lot too much till now. You've had all the sport. Just you remember that I'm in the game as well as you!"

"I shall be glad of your help, if any more of it comes my way. It's a bit lonely, I can tell you, tackling ugly jobs like that all on one's own."

"By what I've seen, I don't think they'll let you alone, Ned. You've put their backs up by the trouble you've given 'em. However, I suppose there'll be an interval first. By the way, Hart says we shan't make Sheerness before to-morrow—the ship's going to run down the North Sea some way to-night."

When Ned Hardy turned out of his hammock and went on deck to the call of the bugle next morning, he found the Victorious ploughing through a wide waste of sunlit sea, and the only thing in sight was a great red lightship ahead, with

the words "Duke of Edinburgh" in white letters nearly as high as a man on her side.

"What's that doing out in the middle of the North Sea?" he said to Jinks.

"We aren't in the North Sea, you cuckoo. We're in the Thames Estuary, only it's so wide here you can't see any land. Margate's about twenty miles south, and we're running up the entrance of the Edinburgh Channel."

Other lightships and buoys came in sight mile by mile, and soon the long procession of shipping coming up Prince's Channel, and the Swin was seen. Then the cliffs of Sheppey became visible through the morning mists, and the low line of the Essex coast to the north-west.

"There's the Nore right ahead," said Jinks, "and the old fort on Garrison Point at Sheerness."

"It's a grim-looking shop, this!" said Ned, as the Victorious steamed into the entrance to the Medway, where the guns of Sheerness guarded the eastern lip, and the marshes of the Isle of Grain stretched away to the westward.

"Yes, isn't it? I like it, though. There's something about it you don't get in the Solent. Always feel as if the old Nore and Thames mouth is the gate of the Empire," said Jinks. "Rum that Martello tower looks, standing out in the water, doesn't it? There's a torpedo-boat coming out."

"By Jove, it's Watson's boat!" said Ned, and he waved an answer to the greeting from the bridge of the swift little black warship as she tore past.

"That's good! We shall see something of him," said Jinks. "He's bound down to Harwich, I expect, but he'll be back again soon. You'd better get forward; we shall moor in a few minutes."

The great battle-cruiser glided into the mouth of the wide estuary, stately and slow, saluted her sisters of the Fleet, and took up her moorings in mid-channel off Port Victoria,

just beyond Sheerness. The captain's galley was called away, and he went off at once to visit the flagship of the division. "No earthly chance of any shore leave yet," remarked Jinks, "but we'll have a fairly easy time, anyhow. Coming below?"

It was just after grog-time, dinner being finished on the lower deck, that the two chums went down, and on their way they saw a seaman carrying a pair of boxing-gloves.

"Hallo, Brinkman!" said Ned, for it was that cheery bluejacket. "Going to use the fly-dusters?"

"Yes, sir! Me and Craddock is going to have a turn, an' so are some o' the others. We've a good few who're handy with their docks, and we'd like the Victorious to have a chance for the Fleet trophy."

"That's sporting! Would you mind us looking on?" said Ned eagerly.

"Proud to have you, sir! We're just going to start."

Encouraged by the permission, the two middies went to the lower deck, for they did not wish to intrude on the men if they were not wanted. The lower deck was pleased to have them, however, and Ned in particular was welcome anywhere.

It was not on all the vessels that the lower deck would have any chance of boxing-practice after dinner, but the Victorious was a "happy" ship, and those men keen enough on the gloves to use them after the meal were free to do so in their forty minutes' rest, if they chose.

The midshipmen enjoyed the sight of half an hour's brisk sparring, four couples of the men being engaged, and some terrifically hard slogging was witnessed, besides some very pretty scientific boxing.

Brinkman was sent flying about six yards by one clip under the ear, and landed on his back; but he was as hard as nails, and did not seem to mind. There were one or two men quite in the first class, for the Victorious prided herself on her crew's sparring abilities. The boys watched till it was all over.

"That was worth seeing!" said Ned, as they made for the gun-room. "I didn't know such a lot of boxing was done in the Fleet now. That seaman-gunner had a capital style, though a bit slow with his right. Makes one itch to have the gloves on again."

"What! Are you a boxer?" said Jinks, with interest.

"Yes; I'm awfully keen on it. Boxing's ripping fun. You've never done learning. My governor taught me almost as soon as I could stand up. He used to be pretty good in the old days—there weren't many in the wooden Navy to touch him. Ralph used to pummel me a lot, too, when he was home on leave."

"I know your brother was a crack hand," said Jinks. "You've picked up a notion or two at the game—eh? If the gloves are what you like, you'll get plenty here. We're all keen!"

"What! In the gun-room?"

"The subs in the gun-room and the snotties in the school-room. There's going to be some sparring to-night."

"This is topping! Who's your best man?"

"Keppel's good, so's Mayne. But Wexton is more of a boxer than any of 'em—with the gloves on. He doesn't like getting hurt, but he's a tricky fighter, and can slog hard."

"That chap?" said Ned, in surprise.

"Yes. You'll have a chance to try some of 'em to-night; we'll start you in. Don't say anything about being able to box—let it be a surprise."

Ned had grave doubts whether his boxing would be much "class" in the Fleet. How Ned overrated the skill of the gun-room, and the curious result it had, will be seen. All the middies but two were off duty in the first dog-watch, and, there being no instructions below, they prepared for the first bout of sparring they had indulged in since the Victorious left Sheerness six weeks before.

"Clear the room!" said Keppel, slinging the sets of boxing-gloves into the middle. "Never mind about a ring. We shan't want the ropes up till we have our regular competition in three days' time. Who's first in? Mayne and Acland. Go it, you cripples!"

The first pair stripped to their shirts, faced each other with the gloves in a most business-like way. Mayne led with hammer-and-tongs assault, and got home twice heavily on Acland's nose, the latter replying with a swift jab on Mayne's ribs, and a right-hook hit under the ear that made his rival stagger.

Ned watched with keen enthusiasm, saying nothing, but feeling as happy as a clam. The boxers showed some really brisk slogging, and cared nothing for punishment; but their science was not what Ned had expected. Still, they were as fit as fiddles and in wonderfully good wind, and they hammered away till both were dead-beat, neither getting much advantage on points.

"Good enough!" said Keppel. "You'll do very well in

the second class, Acland. Let's see a bit more style. Howard, you take on Wexton."

The sallow Wexton pulled on his gloves with grim zest, and looked as if he meant to enjoy himself. Howard was the quietest of all the middies, a big, fair-haired youngster, rather a friend of Ned's, but who came to the fore very little. It appeared he was a good boxer, though not up to Wexton's form.

Howard held his own for a minute or so, and then began to suffer pretty severely under Wexton's rapid and cuppingly-placed left-hand drives.

Ned, who felt convinced that Howard would make the better boxer if he only fought with his head, grew more and more excited. At last he burst out with the advice that he could no longer keep in.

"Lead with your right, and come in at him under the guard!" he cried to Howard. "You'll double him up. Don't keep slapping with the left! Close in on him!"

Howard suddenly took the advice, and Wexton got a jolt on the ribs that shook him up. But Howard had not the science to follow up properly, and a minute later he was winded and knocked out.

"That was better," said Ned. "You'd have done him if you'd gone in with your right again, and then off—"

"You've a mighty lot to say, as usual!" cried Wexton, turning angrily to Ned. "I suppose you're here to teach us the game."

"Oh, I'm only a country boxer!" said Ned, drawing back, feeling he had had no business to interfere. "I've had no particular experience. Don't want to teach anybody anything. Sorry I spoke."

Wexton looked him over with a sudden light in his eye. Hardy was only a bumpkin from Hampshire, and had no Fleet science. He would almost certainly be easy work. Here was a chance to take him down.

"Why don't you put the mittens on yourself," said Wexton, "instead of gassing about it?"

"Well, I—you see—"

"Oh, if you funk it, keep out!" sneered Wexton. "And keep your head shut!"

"Funk it!" exclaimed Ned, flushing crimson. "Here, give me the gloves!"

"Put your hands up!" growled Wexton.

"Go ahead, and let's see what you can do, Hardy!" said Keppel.

"Wexton's a long way above Hardy's mark, old chap," said Acland, shaking his head. "Rare chest and arms on him the lad's got, though," he added, as the new middy peeled.

The two faced each other, and Wexton's confidence increased to arrogance as he scanned Ned with his eye, for he thought the latter's way of squaring up looked very raw. Wexton made no bones about it, but sailed right in with an attack that was meant to make short work of his rival.

"You've got him, Wex," said a voice from the back.

"Go it Ned!" cried Jinks.

To the surprise of everybody Ned guarded Wexton's assault with perfect ease, and, refusing to allow himself to be driven back, positively played with his opponent, turning every blow aside, without once troubling to hit back. He was not quite so quick on his feet as Wexton, but it did not take the middies twenty seconds to see on which side the real skill lay.

"By Jove! We've got a new slogger here!" said Keppel. "This'll do the mess a bit of good."

Wexton, enraged at the cool way in which he was being handled, made a second attack. Then Ned took the offensive, and the next thing the spectators knew, Wexton received one lightning right-hand drive on the "mark" that sent him flying backwards, to land in a sitting position, and bring his head with a pretty sharp crack against the wall.

"My Sam! That was a hit!" said Keppel. "Coming on again, Wex?"

But Wexton had had enough. They helped him to his feet, and Ned stepped forward looking rather concerned.

"Hope I didn't hurt you, Wexton?"

"It was a trick!" cried Wexton. "Foul punch! He got me under the belt!"

"Don't talk rot!" said Keppel sharply. "It was a perfectly fair blow—we all saw it."

"I say it was a cad's trick!" cried Wexton.

And, almost crying with rage, he tore his gloves off, flung them down, and rushed out of the room.

(Things look bad for Ned on the Victorious. Wexton has got his back up and will do anything to get even with Ned! Watch out for next week's thrilling instalment of this great sea yarn!)

EASTWOOD SHIELD LEAGUE.

CLAREMONT SCORE SAINTS!
MASSACRE AT BANNINGTON!

By "Old Boy."

WITH the end of the season in sight, four matches only left to play, and their rivals of Greyfriars, St. Frank's, and Rookwood running them close for the leadership, St. Jim's were very eager for points in their return fixture with Teddy Baxter & Co., of Claremont.

There was some doubt as to the fitness of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had received a nasty hack on the shin during the last match, but Gussy insisted in no uncertain terms that he was ready for the fray, and Tom Merry, not without misgivings, included him as usual.

"Sure your leg is all right, Gussy?" asked Tom, as they changed.

"Wight as wain, deah boy!" responded Arthur Augustus cheerily.

"If you get another crack on the same spot, you'll wish you'd let Julian play instead," remarked Jack Blake, lacing his boot.

"Wats! I certainly shan't desert the team in its hour of need," answered D'Arcy finally.

Claremont had brought a business-like combination, and they led off with a rush.

Baxter went through, but Figgins stopped him, and the ball went out to the Claremont right. D'Arcy, a little over-eager, came dashing back to tackle the Claremont winger, and they collided—hard. D'Arcy went down, the winger on top of him—and a wild howl advertised the fact that Gussy's injured shin had met with disaster again!

"Ow! Wow! Bai Jové!" gasped Gussy, as he was helped up.

Tom Merry nobly refrained from saying "I told you so!"—but Jack Blake was not so kind-hearted! Gussy hobbled at outside-left when the game was resumed—Claremont attacking in dangerous manner. Before the Saints' defence had settled down, Baxter darted in close and netted with a regular pile-driver which left Fatty Wynn helpless.

St. Jim's buckled to, but Claremont had the bit between their teeth, and were not to be denied. They swept through again, and Merrivale at inside-right took

RESULTS.

Matches played Wednesday.

ST. JIM'S .. 7 CLAREMONT .. 3
Merry (3), Blake, D'Arcy (3) Baxter, Merrivale, Weston

Teams.—ST. JIM'S: Wynn; Figgins, Kerr; Reiter, Noble, Lowther; Talbot, Levison, Merry, Blake, D'Arcy. CLAREMONT: Peters; Towers, Trevelyan; Maltravers, Raymond, Marsh; Kennedy, Merrivale, Baxter, Weston, St. Clair.

GREYFRIARS .. 8 BAGSHOT .. 0
Wharton (3), Todd, Nugent (2), Cherry, Vernon-Smith

HIGHCLIFFE .. 4 ST. JUDE'S .. 2
De Courcy, Courtenay (3) Raleigh, Lane

REDCLIFFE .. 1 ST. FRANK'S .. 2
Mills Nipper (2)

ROOKWOOD .. 5 RYLCOMBE G.S. 1
Dodd (3) Gay

Silver (2)

Matches played Saturday.

BANNINGTON G.S. 0 ST. JIM'S .. 11
Merry (6), Julian, Talbot, (2), Noble, Lowther

ABBOTSFORD .. 0 ROKWOOD .. 9
Silver (3), Lovell, Dodd (3), Erroll, Grace

CLAREMONT .. 2 BAGSHOT .. 3
Merrivale, Baxter, Pankley, Putter, Poole

RYLCOMBE G.S. 4 REDCLIFFE .. 3
Gay (3), Tadpole, Stoker, Foreshaw, Judd

ST. FRANK'S .. 3 HIGHCLIFFE .. 1
Nipper (2), Tregellis-West, Courtenay

ST. JUDE'S .. 2 GREYFRIARS .. 6
Fox, Raleigh, Hurree Singh, Penfold, Wharton (4)

LEAGUE TABLE TO DATE:

	P.	W.	D.	L.	F.	A.	Pts.
St. Jim's	20	15	3	2	57	28	33
Greyfriars	20	14	3	3	74	24	31
St. Frank's	20	14	2	4	63	27	30
Rookwood	20	14	2	4	69	39	30
Rylcombe	21	12	3	6	64	39	27
Highcliffe	20	10	5	5	50	34	25
Redcliffe	20	7	2	11	39	39	16
Bagshot	20	6	4	10	35	57	16
St. Jude's	20	9	7	11	26	63	11
Claremont	21	2	5	14	38	67	9
Abbotsford	20	1	7	12	26	85	9
Bannington	20	1	3	16	14	82	5

the leather first time right in front of goal. Fatty Wynn leaped, but he might as well have grabbed at the moon. The ball spun in the top of the rigging—and the visitors were two up!

Before they had had time to recover from this, Claremont once again swarmed around the home citadel and a flashing drive from Weston from ten yards' range beat Wynn all ends up! Three goals against them in the first five minutes!—It was more than enough to shake even the steadiest of sides, and never was the Saints' famed coolness put to a sterner test.

The Claremont rushes were stemmed, and the St. Jim's forward line came into the picture. Gussy, forgetting his injury, dashed down the wing and centred for Tom Merry to reduce the lead with an unstoppable drive. That goal broke the fluence, so to speak, and the Saints came again with a rush. Blake leaped in close to head a second, and a few minutes later D'Arcy, running in from the wing, sent in a cross-drive which beat the Claremont goalkeeper, Level!

Although he was obviously in pain, Gussy spared nothing in his efforts on the St. Jim's left. Once again the leather came out to him, and he aped away, beating the wing half, and drawing the back before centring to Jack Blake. Blake shot, the goalkeeper fisted out, and Gussy, running in, got to the ball with his head. Like a flash it pipped under the bar—and St. Jim's were in the lead!

During the interval D'Arcy's leg was bandaged afresh, but he insisted on resuming against Kildare's advice. Almost at once he was in the thick of he-fay again, and a brilliant run along the touch-line gave Tom Merry the opening from which he netted the Saints' fifth. Claremont were losing pace now, and Tom Merry got his third with a great shot from thirty-five yards out. The match was safe, but D'Arcy, too, was hankering after a third goal, and just before time he was rewarded with a chance in a melee in front of goal. The swell of St. Jim's sidestepped a back and drove the leather well home—the seventh and last for St. Jim's!

"Gussy, you're a giddy hero!" ejaculated Tom Merry after the match—and there was not one dissenting voice. Gussy certainly had played the game of his life.

SPURPROOF TENTS. Model X.



Made from lightweight proofed material. Complete with three-piece jointed poles, pegs, guy lines, and brown valise. Weight 5 lbs. Size 6 ft. x 4 ft. 6 in. x 3 ft. 6 in. 10/6 With 6 in. wall and 3 in. eave. Accommodates three boys. Postage 9d. Extra lightweight in Egyptian Cotton. Weight 3½ lbs. 15/.

Send for beautiful Illustrated Camping List, post free. GEO. GROSE & CO., 8, NEW BRIDGE STREET, E.C.4.

OUTFIT FREE!

Album, 60 different Stamps, Mounts, Pocket Case, Perf. Gauge, Pair Montenegro. Send 2d postage for approvals.—LISBURN & TOWNSEND (U.S.), LIVERPOOL.

BE TALL

Your Height increased in 14 days, or money back. Amazing Course, 5/- Send STAMP NOW for Free Book.—STEEBING SYSTEM, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

MAGIC TRICKS.

etc.—Parcels, 2/6, 5/6. Ventriloquist's Instrument. Invisible. Imitate birds. Price 6d each, 4 for 1/-—T. W. HARRISON, 239, Pentonville Rd., London, N.1.

BLUSHING,

Shyness, "Nerves," Self-consciousness, Worry Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Booklet Free privately—L. A. STEEBING, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

300 STAMPS FOR 6d.

(Abroad 1/-). Including Airpost Barbadon Old India, Nigeria New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, L.S. Stourbridge.



MY GREAT OFFER

Write for my free Bargain Lists of the best ALL-BRITISH Cycles. 14 DAYS' APPROVAL. CARRIAGE PAID. Cash price £3.15.0. Or terms. All accessories FREE.

2 WEEKLY

Edw. O'Brien THE WORLD'S LARGEST CYCLE DEALER, 117 COVENTRY



The "MONARCH" Camera

Large Rep. De-Luxe & ALL ACCESSORIES. "Guaranteed to Produce perfect Large Photos, size 3½ x 2½ ins. Fitted Best Quality Bi-Convex Lens Viewfinder etc. Camera and outfit complete for £2.1/10 only. No more to pay! Thousands Testimonials! W. J. Thomas, Esq., writes: "Developed and printed photo; think it as good as if taken with a £3 camera." Big List of Bargains Post Free! THE LEEDS BARGAIN CO. (U.S.), 159, Mount Street, Leeds.

STAMMERING. STOP NOW!

Cure yourself at 1/6d. FRANK B. HUGHES, 26, Hart Street, LONDON, W.O.1.

INCREASED my weight to 11½ st. from 10½ st. E. & S. 18½ to 16½. T. F. 21.5 to 21.10. Ross System is Genuine. Enrol TODAY! Fee 22 2d. Particulars 1/6 stamp.—F. ROSS, Height Specialist Scarborough.