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The **GEM**



2^d

Ripping
**WATER-SQUIRT
WATCH**
and
**8 PICTURES in
FULL COLOUR**
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FREE
in this issue



2
YOU CAN TRUST ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY TO PUT HIS FOOT INTO IT!—

The RUNAWAY!



As the Head of St. Jim's entered the Hotel Royal he came face to face with the newly-appointed interpreter. "D'Arcy!" gasped Dr. Holmes, recognising the runaway in spite of his disguise. Arthur Augustus stared blankly at the headmaster. He was fairly caught!

CHAPTER 1.

Quite a Good Idea!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's wore a particularly bright smile. Arthur Augustus was always, or nearly always, sunny and good-tempered. But on this particular afternoon he was in specially good spirits. And this was somewhat peculiar, too, for the weather was by no means all that could be desired, and it was a half-holiday at St. Jim's.

Jack Blake had been down to look at the footer ground, and had returned in a bad temper. Blake caught D'Arcy's sunny smile as he came into Study No. 6, and it had an exasperating effect on him. A half-holiday with nothing to do did not please Blake. He snorted.

Arthur Augustus was trying on neckties before the big glass, which had been imported into Study No. 6 at D'Arcy's own expense.

He looked round at Blake and smiled, and Blake gave another snort.

"Anythin' the mattah, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus mildly.

"I should think things are the matter!" growled Blake. "The ground's simply impossible!"

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"Never mind!"

"Never mind!" howled Blake. "We can't play footer! As if that isn't bad enough, I find a silly ass here grinning like a Cheshire cheese—I mean, a Cheshire cat—and saying 'Never mind!' Huh!"

"You see, deah boy—"

Herries came into the study, and growled.

"Nothing doing this afternoon!" he said.

Blake echoed his growl.

"Nothing!"

Digby came in. He looked glum.

Such a serious offence as punching the august nose of a Form-master can only result in severe punishment for the offender. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy decided not to wait for the dread consequences of his ill-timed blow—he bunked for the wide, open spaces!

"Beastly weather!" he said. "Nothing to do but to write out lines ready for the next impot, I suppose!"

"What's Tom Merry doing?" asked Blake.

"Saying things!"

Blake grinned.

"That's what I feel like," he remarked. "Schools aren't run on the right lines. Half-holidays ought to be arranged according to the weather. When the ground's fit for footer, there ought to be a half-holiday every day. That's my opinion."

"Jolly good idea, if you could get the Head to see it!" grinned Digby.

Jack Blake snorted once more.

"Oh, you wouldn't catch the Head taking a tip from a junior!" he said. "The masters think they know, you know, but they don't!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And, of course, Gussy must be grinning like a magpie over his neckties instead of sympathising!" grunted Blake.

"I did not know that magpies grinned, deah boy!"

"Huh!"

"You see, deah boys," explained Arthur Augustus, "I've got an ideah for this aftahnoon!"

—READ WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE RUNS AWAY FROM ST. JIM'S!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

The chums of the Fourth did not seem much impressed. Blake kicked a cushion across the study, and Herries sat down in the armchair. Digby looked out of the window and whistled. "I've got a wippin' ideah for the aftahnoon!" repeated Arthur Augustus, with emphasis.

"Well, what's the rotten idea?" asked Blake discontentedly. "Anything's better than nothing! Get it off your chest!"

"It is not a wotten ideah?"

"Didn't you say it was yours?"

"Yaas."

"Well, that settles whether it's a rotten one or not!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Blake! I have an ideah that is weally wippin'!"

"Huh!"

"I do not wegard that as an intelligent wepy, Blake. Howevah, I will come to the point. Have you heard about the new hotel in Wayland?"

"Yes," said Blake. "I know a new hotel's been opened there—quite a swaggar place. But what on earth—"

"Look at that card on the table!" said D'Arcy.

Blake picked up the card and looked at it. It was evidently an advertisement of the new swaggar hotel in Wayland market town.

"Hotel Royal, Wayland," mumbled Blake. "Electric light; rooms with private bath-rooms; terrace overlooking the river; afternoon tea a speciality; interpreter always on duty in the hotel; on parle Francais; Man spricht Deutsch; si parla Italiana." What on earth has this got to do with us, Gussy?"

"Do you see what it says on that card?" said D'Arcy. "'Tewvace ovah-lookin' the wivah. Aftahnoon teas a speciality.' The new hotel is the swaggahest place for miles round. My idea is to take a few fwends, and go there and have a wippin' feed."

The faces of the juniors brightened up at once.

"Now you're talking!" said Herries.

"Fancy old Gussy talking sense like that!" said Digby admiringly.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Jolly good idea!" said Blake. "I suppose we come under the list of your friends, Gussy? Might ask Tom Merry, too. But the place will be frightfully expensive. I've seen those blessed swaggar hotels before. They charge you if you breathe, and charge you double if you don't!"

D'Arcy nodded.

"Yaas, it will be deah; but this is goin' to be a wippin' excursion, deah boys! The fact is, I've had a wemittance fwom my guv'nah, and anothah fwom my Aunt Adelina, and they both awvived by the same post. That was what weally put the ideah into my head. I've got two fivahs—"

"Hurrah!"

"And I wathah think that will see us thwough, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, trying on a tenth necktie. "What do you think?"

"Think? Why, it's simply a ripping wheeze!" exclaimed Blake, rushing at his elegant chum and hugging him ecstatically.

"Ow!" roared D'Arcy. "Mind my collah!"

"Phew! Never mind your collar!"

Arthur Augustus jerked himself away.

"You awful ass! I shall have to

change my collah now; you have wumpled it! Pway don't play the giddy goat! Now, when will you chaps be weady to start for Wayland? I've only got to settle on a necktie, so I shall be weady in about half an hour."

Blake chuckled.

"You won't have to wait for us," he said. "I'll go and gather in Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, if you like. If you've got a tenner to blow, may as well take those Shell chaps. They stood us a decent feed yesterday."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake left the study in great spirits. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had really delivered himself of a good idea at last. Herries and Digby went away in search of clean collars for the occasion, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left alone to try on the rest of his neckties. But he was not left alone for long.

CHAPTER 2.

Plenty of Pals!

"Gussy, old man—"

"I weally think I had bettah decide upon the pink one with the blue spots," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

"I weally think it suits my complexion bettah!"

"Gussy!"

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

He turned round at last.

Two juniors were in the doorway. Kangaroo, otherwise Harry Noble of the Shell, and Reilly of the Fourth. They were smiling sweet smiles, and anyone more suspicious than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy might have surmised that they had visited the study with ulterior motives.

"By George," said Kangaroo, as D'Arcy turned round, "what a ripping necktie!"

"Faith, and it's a scorecher!" said Reilly heartily.

Arthur Augustus looked pleased.

"You weally like it?" he asked.

"Like it?" said Kangaroo. "There's nothing in the wide world like it. I—I mean, yes, rather! It's ripping!"

"And it suits your socks down to the ground," said Reilly.

"We just looked in to see you," said Kangaroo affably. "Are you going to wear that necktie at the hotel feed, Gussy?"

"Yaas; but how did you know about the hotel feed, deah boys?"

"Ahem! I just heard Blake talking to Tom Merry," said Kangaroo. "I hear that you're taking a little party to the new hotel in Wayland for a big feed?"

Free in This Number.

A SPLENDID WATER-SQUIRT WATCH

AND

8 GRAND

STICKY-BACK PICTURES

(IN FULL COLOUR).

MORE FREE GIFTS NEXT WEEK

(See page 7.)

"Yaas."

"And looking for old pals to take with you?"

"Sure, and it's a long time that I've felt mighty friendly towards ye, D'Arcy, dear boy," said Reilly.

"And I'm sure that you won't forget an old chum from Australia," said Kangaroo.

"I shall be vewy pleased if you will come, deah boys! How do you think this necktie agwees with my diamond stud, Kangy?"

"Couldn't be better! When do we start?"

"At thwee o'clock."

"We'll be ready."

"Faith, and we will jist!"

D'Arcy went on tying his necktie. Kangaroo and Reilly grinned and departed from the study. But the swell of St. Jim's was not left alone long. Bernard Glyn of the Shell came in cheerfully.

"I say, Gussy! Could you lend me a necktie?" he asked. "I wouldn't borrow one of anybody else, but I know yours are in perfect taste, you know, and—"

"Certainly, deah boy! Take your choice."

"Thanks awfully! I hear you're making up a little party for the Hotel Royal at Wayland—"

"I've made it up, deah boy, and—"

"And you were just going to send a message to me," said Glyn affectionately. "Now, that's just like you, Gussy!"

"Weally, Glyn—"

"You never forget old pals, do you, Gussy?" said Glyn. "All serene! I'll be ready!"

"You see—"

But Bernard Glyn suddenly seemed afflicted with deafness. He walked away whistling. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned back to the looking-glass with a somewhat thoughtful expression upon his aristocratic face. His little party, by the look of things, would be a big party by the time he started. It was very flattering to learn that he had so many close pals in the School House, but—

"Hallo, Gussy!" said Bishop of the Fourth, looking in from the passage. "Nearly ready?"

"Yaas, deah boy; but—"

"I hear you're making up a little party—"

"Bai Jove! The little party is quite complete, and—"

"I'll come with pleasure!" said Bishop affably. "Shall I have time to go and change my collar? I do want to look decent for the occasion!"

"My deah Bish—"

"Shall I have time?" asked Bishop anxiously.

"Yaas, certainly; but—"

"Then I'll buzz off at once."

"Look here, Bish, I—"

"Not a word, old fellow! It'll be a pleasure. Depend on me. I'll be ready."

And Bishop of the Fourth strolled away.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

He reflected a moment, and then closed the study door and locked it. Two minutes later the handle was turned, and Arthur Augustus smiled. Then there came a knock at the door. D'Arcy did not speak. He tied his necktie with great care.

Knock, knock!

"Hallo, in there! Are you there, D'Arcy?" It was the voice of Buck Finn, the American junior in the Shell.

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"Gussy, old man, I hear you're making up a little party. I guess I'll come, with pleasure!"

D'Arcy grinned, but did not speak.

Knock, knock!

"Gussy, why don't you answer me? I tell you I'll come, if you like!"

Silence!

"Gussy, old man!"

No reply.

"Look here, D'Arcy, you silly ass—"

D'Arcy chuckled.

Buck Finn bestowed a kick upon the door and retired. A minute later there was another knock, and Gore of the Shell spoke through the keyhole. Then came knock after knock, and tap after tap, and a murmur of many voices. It sounded as though half the School House had gathered outside Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus smiled and went on with his elaborate toilet. He donned his beautiful jacket, that fitted him like a glove, and jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and polished his silk hat. Then he was ready to sally forth; but he paused as he turned towards the door. The crowd in the passage was very thick by this time, and it was evident that all the fellows outside intended to come to the little party at the new hotel in Wayland.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "This is a doocid awkward posh!"

He unlocked the study door and threw it open. About fifteen or sixteen fellows were crowded in the passage outside, shoving one another, and looking somewhat excited. But they all put on sweet smiles as the swell of St. Jim's appeared.

"Here he is!" said Levison of the Fourth. "We're coming with you, Gussy!"

"Pway allow me to pass, deah boys!"

"When are you starting?" asked Gore.

"Now, deah boy."

"Good! I'll get my hat."

"Are you walking to Wayland, D'Arcy?" asked Dane of the Shell as the swell of St. Jim's pushed his way with some difficulty through the crowd.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Good! I just wanted a stroll."

"Pway take one, then, deah boy."

And Arthur Augustus went downstairs. Quite a little army was waiting for him at the doorway of the School House. There were Blake, Herries, and Digby, his study-mates, Tom Merry, and Manners and Lowther of the Shell, Kangaroo and Reilly, Glyn and Bishop. They all had clean collars and silk hats, and looked very nice indeed. They stared as Arthur Augustus came along with a crowd of juniors at his heels.

"My hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Where are you taking that army, Gussy?"

"I'm not takin' them anywhere, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "I'm weady now."

"We're going with Gussy," explained Gore.

"He's making up a little party," said Kerruish. "As Gussy's oldest pal, I'm going."

"Same here, I guess," said Buck Finn.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, gently but firmly, "I am sorry to say that I cannot take the whole school. The little party already numbahs eleven—"

"Twelve!" said Kerruish.

"Thirteen, you mean!" said Gore.

"Thirteen's an unlucky number," said Dane. "It's fourteen!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Come on, Gussy," said Blake, "we'll clear off those bounders. We can't take all the hungry fags in the School House!"

"You go and eat coke!" said Gore.

"We're coming!"

Arthur Augustus looked quite distressed. It was a case of "save me from my friends." Fortunately the little party were ready to save him from his host of affectionate pals.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows—charge!"

"Hurrah!"

The little party charged. There was a roar and a scuffle, and the crowd of affectionate friends went scattering away from the charging juniors.

Tom Merry & Co. smote them hip and thigh, and some of them rolled on the floor, and the rest were driven ignominiously down the passages of the School House. Then the little party gathered round Arthur Augustus once more, and marched him out in triumph into the quadrangle.

"Buck up!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Blessed if I knew Gussy had so many pals before! When the news gets to the New House, there'll be a lot more pals from over there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! Buck up!" said Arthur Augustus.

And the little party hurried down to the school gates. In great spirits they took the footpath through the wood towards Wayland town.

CHAPTER 3.

Woe to the Conquered!

"HIST!"

"Hallo—"

"Hist!"

"Well, I'm histing! What's the matter?"

"Shush, you ass!" said Gordon Gay.

"It's the giddy foe!"

A crowd of youths in Grammarian school caps were gathered round Gordon Gay on the footpath in Rylcombe Wood. They were juniors of Rylcombe Grammar School, the deadly rivals of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's. Gordon Gay, the junior captain of the Grammar School, and the leader of the Grammarians in all their alarms and excursions against the St. Jim's fellows, was standing in an attitude of listening, and peering through the brambles. His chums, Wootton major and minor, and Mont Blong, the French junior, and Frank Monk and Lane and Carboy, and a dozen others, were with him. The Grammarians had been at practice scouting in the wood, and Gordon Gay & Co. had wished very much that they might fall in with some of St. Jim's fellows that afternoon, to turn mimic warfare into the real thing.

He was destined to have his wish.

The sound of voices and many footsteps came along the path, through the trees and bushes.

Gordon Gay's blue eyes gleamed.

"Quite a party of them!" he grinned.

"This is where we come in, you chaps. This is where we get level for the raid those bounders made on us the other day. They messed up our dramatic performance, and now we'll mess them up. Cover!"

"Good egg!" said Frank Monk.

"Cover—quick!"

The Grammarians rushed into cover. Thick bushes grew along either side

of the footpath, and there was plenty of cover for the Grammarian juniors.

In less than a minute they were out of sight, and waiting for the enemy to appear.

Gordon Gay kept a wary watch upon the path.

"Not a sound!" he whispered. "Wait till I give the signal!"

"Can you see them?" whispered Monk.

Gay chuckled.

"Yes, a regular gang of them—eleven or twelve."

"Never mind; we shall be two to one!"

"They've all got their best bibs and tuckers on, too," said Gay, peering through the bushes at the advancing party from St. Jim's. "Gussy's a picture. Where on earth are they going, I wonder? Mind you're ready when I give the word!"

"What-ho!"

"Collar the bounders and capture their hats and things," said Gay. "They look like a Sunday-school out for a walk. Something's on, I suppose."

"More than they guess!" grinned Wootton major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush! They'll hear you!"

"All right, I'm shushing!"

The Grammarians waited.

Down the footpath, cheerful and unsuspecting, came Arthur Augustus and his little party. The St. Jim's fellows had, as Gay remarked, their best bibs and tuckers on. All of them were resplendent in beautiful shining toppers and clean collars, and their boots were polished and their jackets were brushed.

The Saints came up unsuspectingly, and they were almost abreast of the ambush when Gordon Gay gave the signal.

"Coo-ee!"

Then forth rushed the Grammarians.

"Look out!" yelled Jack Blake.

"Line up, St. Jim's!" shouted Tom Merry.

But it was too late.

The Grammarians, nearly twenty of them, fairly rushed the St. Jim's fellows off their feet. There was a wild and whirling fight on the footpath, but the odds were too great. The St. Jim's juniors rolled over under the charge of the Grammarians, or went crashing into the bushes. Tom Merry rolled on the ground, lovingly embraced by Gordon Gay, and Blake fell with Frank Monk sprawling over him.

"Buck up, deah boys!" yelled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, forgetting, in the excitement of combat, the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. "Give the boundahs socks!"

"Buck up!"

"Sock it to 'em!"

"Down with the Grammar School cads!"

"Yah!"

Biff, biff, biff!

Bump!

"Hurrah!" roared Frank Monk.

He sat upon Jack Blake's chest and surveyed the field of combat.

The St. Jim's fellows were all down now, with Grammarians sitting on them, one or two to each of the hapless members of the "little party."

Arthur Augustus was squirming under the weight of Wootton major. Alas for his elegant jacket, his beautiful tie, and his spotless collar. His jacket was split up the back, his tie was round his ears, and his collar hung by a single stud. His topper had rolled on the grass, and a boot had crashed upon it.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy.



The grinning Grammarians, depriving their prisoners of their collars and ties and toppers, crowded away down the footpath with their booty. Ruffled and dishevelled, with their hands bound behind them, Tom Merry & Co. looked after them in dismay. "Hear us smile!" exclaimed Gordon Gay. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gawwoff, you wottah! You're wump-lin' my twousahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Victory!" roared Gordon Gay. "This is where we smile! Hear us smile!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's juniors writhed helplessly under the weight of the Grammarians. They had had no chance; the odds had been too heavy for them. It was the turn of Fortune's wheel. This time Gordon Gay & Co. had scored—there was no doubt about that.

"Are you going to surrender?" grinned Gordon Gay.

"No!" roared Blake.

"Wathah not!"

"Then we shall have to tie you up. Mont Blong, go round and take their hankies and tie their wrists up."

The French junior chuckled.

"Zat is ze idea, n'est-ce-pas?" he said. "I zink zat I tie zem up so zat zey not get away in ze hurry, isn't it?"

Tom Merry & Co. began to struggle again. But it was in vain; and one after another they were tied up with their own handkerchiefs. Then the victorious Grammarians released them. The Saints struggled to their feet, looking decidedly dishevelled, and glared at their conquerors.

"To the victors the spoils!" grinned Gordon Gay. "Collect up their toppers and neckties and their collars."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Tom Merry. "We're going—"

"You're going home without your hats or collars or neckties," grinned Gordon Gay, "unless you admit that the Grammar School is top dog!"

"Never!"

"Wathah not, you wottahs!"

"No fear!"

"Then we take the spoils of war!"

And the grinning Grammarians deprived their prisoners of their collars and neckties, and gathered up the toppers, which had all fallen off in the

struggle, and crowded away down the footpath with their booty.

Tom Merry & Co. looked after them in dismay.

"Hear us smile!" exclaimed Gay, looking back. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arey. "This wathah knocks our little party on the head, I think. We can't go to the Hotel Royal without our hats and collars!"

"Blessed lot of ragamuffins we look!" growled Blake, tugging at his wrists.

"Ow! Blessed if I wouldn't rather go to the Hotel Royal than back to St. Jim's looking like this!"

"Ow, the beasts!"

"The rotters!"

The Saints struggled with the bonds upon their wrists, and said things—emphatic things—about the Grammarians. It did not take them very long to get their hands loose; but by that time the Grammarians were far away.

Ruffled and dishevelled, and hatless and tieless and collarless, it was evident that the little party would not go to Wayland.

There was nothing for it but to return to St. Jim's; and they had to make up their minds to it.

It was a disconsolate party that arrived half an hour later at the gates of the old school. There was a yell as they entered the quadrangle. Such a procession had seldom been seen in the old quad.

"Hallo!" roared Gore. "Look at them! They've been through the mill, I should think. Where's your topper, Gussy?"

"Where's your collar, Tom Merry?"

"Where's your tie, Blake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Grammarians ambushed us in the wood!" growled Tom Merry.

"There's nothing to cackle at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore. "I think there is! Ha, ha, ha!"

A good many other fellows seemed to think that there was, too. A howl of

laughter followed the hatless little party to the doors of the School House. They were glad to hide their blushes within the ancient walls of that building.

Half an hour later the Rylcombe carrier stopped at St. Jim's with a huge box, addressed to Tom Merry. It was opened in the Junior Common-room, and a yell of laughter went up as the spoils of war were revealed—a collection of torn collars and ties, and a number of decidedly battered silk hats.

CHAPTER 4.

The Wrong Note!

THE whole School House chuckled over the misadventure of the "little party," whose great feed at the Hotel Royal had not come off. The consignment of collars and ties and silk hats from the Grammarians tickled the School House fellows very much.

The affectionate pals of Arthur Augustus who had not gone with the party were not disposed to let the matter rest.

Even Figgins & Co. came over from the New House to hear the story.

The Terrible Three retired to their study at last, and locked the door to get away from the chipping, and Arthur Augustus and his three study-mates retired to Study No. 6. They were not in a good humour. The afternoon had certainly not been uneventful; but the feed had not come off, and they had been defeated by the obnoxious Grammarians, and they were the standing joke of the House. And even in Study No. 6 they were not secure from the chipping.

Before they had been there ten minutes Clifton Dane and Kerruish looked in, smiling.

"Got over it?" asked Kerruish sympathetically. "Did they take away its ickie necktie, then? Did they send home its ickie silk hat in a box?"

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"Wun away, you silly asses!" shouted D'Arcy.

"You should have taken us," grinned Dane. "We'd have looked after you!"

"If you do not immediately vetiah fwom that door, I shall come and hurl you down the passage!" said D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you goin'?"

"Not just yet," grinned Kerruish. "We're waiting to be hurled."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed at the two juniors in the doorway. There was a terrific collision, and the three of them went whirling out into the passage together. Then the hurling began. A figure came whirling into the study, and landed on the hearthrug with a gasp. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Clifton Dane and Kerruish walked down the passage, laughing. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat on the rug in the study and panted for breath.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "It's worked out the wrong way, Gussy."

"Ow! Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy staggered to his feet.

"The cheeky wottahs! Bai Jove, here comes another one!"

"Oh, lock the door!" said Blake. "I'm fed-up!"

Herries slammed the door and locked it. There was a tap on the door outside, and Gore of the Shell called through the keyhole:

"You chaps had better take me next time. I'll look after you."

"Go away, you silly duffah!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Who goes out to a feed and comes home without his necktie and his hat?" demanded Gore.

"You silly chump—"

Gore hammered on the door. Blake stepped to the door quietly, and unlocked it without a sound, and threw it suddenly open. He had a cushion in his hand, and he delivered a sudden swipe before Gore knew what was happening.

The Shell fellow gave a wild roar and tumbled over.

Blake closed the door again and locked it. They heard Gore saying things in the passage, and then he retired, growling.

D'Arcy chuckled.

"That's a good idea," he remarked. "The next time anybody knocks at this door, I'll open it suddenly and dot him on the nose! Then they'll stop coming!"

"Good egg!"

Tap!

It was a knock at the door again.

D'Arcy made his chums a sign to be quiet, and stepped on tiptoe to the door.

The handle was tried, and then there was a tap again.

"Quiet, you chaps!" said Arthur Augustus softly. "I'll give the wottah a surprise!"

The juniors grinned in anticipation.

Tap!

D'Arcy drew the key back softly, with infinite caution. Then he threw the door open and rushed out, hitting furiously as he did so.

Bliff!

"Ow!"

"Bai Jove! It's Mr. Lathom!"

Little Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, lay on the linoleum in the passage, on his back, gasping.

His spectacles had fallen off, and he was holding his nose with one hand, and a thin stream of red trickled through his fingers.

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The juniors gazed at him, frozen with horror.

D'Arcy was quite pale.

He had smitten his Form-master on the nose before he saw whom it was.

"Oh cwumbs!" murmured D'Arcy, in utter dismay. "Who'd have thought it! Bai Jove!"

Blake groaned.

"My hat! You've done it, now! I—I didn't know Lathom was coming here—"

"What the dickens—"

"Oh!" groaned Mr. Lathom, who was quite dazed. "Ow! My—my nose! Oh!"

He groped for his glasses.

"D'Arcy! You—you have struck me—struck your Form-master! You—you young ruffian!"

"I—I—I—"

"Follow me, sir!" shrieked Mr. Lathom. "Follow me to the Head! You shall be expelled from the school, sir—you shall be flogged, sir! You—you dreadful young ruffian! Follow me!"

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Not a word! Follow me!"

And Mr. Lathom, breathless with pain and fury, rushed away, his gown whisking behind him in the breeze he

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made in his rapid progress down the passage.

He did not look back for D'Arcy; he had no doubt that the junior was following him.

But D'Arcy did not follow him. The swell of the Fourth seemed rooted to the floor.

He had smitten the Form-master in mistake, it was true—but how was he to convince Mr. Lathom of that?

He had certainly smitten very hastily, without looking at whom he was smiting.

And even if he proved that it was a mistake, the fact would remain that he had knocked down his Form-master!

For such an act there was only one possible punishment—a severe flogging and instant expulsion from the school!

D'Arcy gasped.

"Oh deah!" he groaned. "I—I say, you chaps—"

"You—you've done it now!" gasped Herries. "Oh, Gussy, you've put your foot in it this time, and no mistake!"

"I—I didn't know—"

"You'll have to explain," said Blake. "We'll come with you—"

D'Arcy shivered.

"I—I can't face the Head and say I've knocked down my Form-master!" he groaned. "Oh, bai Jove! Was there evah such wotten luck?"

"Wh-wh-what's going to be done?" murmured Digby.

"Gussy, you must go—"

"I—I can't go!"

"But—but—"

"I can't! I—I think I'd better keep out of sight a bit till Mr. Lathom has calmed down!" gasped Gussy.

"That might be a good idea," said Blake. "Keep out of sight a bit, and we'll try to explain. After all, it was an accident!"

Arthur Augustus scuttled along the passage to the upper stairs, and went up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

His chums remained overwhelmed with dismay.

CHAPTER 5.

Unparalleled!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, simply jumped as Mr. Lathom rushed into his study.

The master of the Fourth was generally a quiet little man, very subdued in his manners, and of an equable temper.

But he did not look quiet or subdued now, neither was his temper in the slightest degree equable.

He came into the Head's study like a whirlwind, holding his hand to his nose, and panting for breath.

Dr. Holmes stared at him in amazement.

"Goodness gracious! What has happened, Mr. Lathom?" he ejaculated.

"I—I have been assaulted, sir!" roared the master of the Fourth. "I have been struck by a junior!"

"Good heavens!"

"Look at my nose, sir! It's bleeding! Look!" shrieked Mr. Lathom.

He drew his crimsoned fingers away. The Head looked at his nose in horror.

The nose was not a pretty object at that moment. It seemed to have swollen several sizes larger already. And it was very red! There was a steady stream of "claret" coming from it, and Mr. Lathom's collar was stained with crimson spots.

"Good heavens!" repeated the Head. "Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Lathom, that a boy of this school has struck you—actually struck you upon the nose?"

"Yes, sir!" said Mr. Lathom.

"It is unthinkable—unspeakable—unbelievable! The wretched boy shall be made an example of!" exclaimed the Head, his anger rising at the bare idea of such an act of rebellion. "A Form-master struck in my school! I can scarcely believe that I am not dreaming! Who was the wretched boy, Mr. Lathom?"

"D'Arcy of the Fourth, sir—a boy of my Form!"

"D'Arcy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Amazing! He is not the kind of boy to—to commit such an unspeakable outrage! You—you are sure it was not some other boy?"

"I am quite sure, sir!"

"But—but what was his object in committing the unparalleled outrage, Mr. Lathom? You were punishing him?"

"No, sir!"

"Then what—why—"

"I had gone to his study, sir, to speak to Blake," said Mr. Lathom. "Blake had not handed in some lines he should have given me, and on my way upstairs I stopped at his study. I knocked at the door—and it suddenly opened, and D'Arcy rushed at me and struck me upon the nose, sir!"

"Good heavens!"

"I fell, sir—I was actually knocked down!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Knocked down, sir, by a boy in my own Form!"

"Astounding!"
"I had ordered him to follow me here, sir! He will be here in a moment—I do not wonder that he is slow to come and face you after this—this unparalleled outrage! I demand the severest punishment, sir!"

"He shall be flogged and expelled from the school!" said the Head sternly. "Even that punishment is inadequate. But it is the most I can inflict!"

Mr. Lathom mopped his nose with his handkerchief.

The Head glanced at the door; there was no sign of the culprit.

"D'Arcy does not appear to be coming!" he remarked.

"I ordered him to follow me here, sir!"

"Ahem! After so outrageous an act of insubordination, he may hesitate to obey the order!" said Dr. Holmes.

"Then, pray, send for him, sir!"

Dr. Holmes touched the bell.

Toby, the School House page, appeared in the doorway. He blinked at the Fourth Form master in amazement. He had never seen a Form-master mopping his nose with a crimsoned handkerchief before.

"Ask Master Kildare to step here, please, at once!" said the Head.

"Yessir!" said Toby.

He gave Mr. Lathom another amazed stare and retired.

Kildare of the Sixth entered the study in a couple of minutes. The captain of St. Jim's fairly jumped at the sight of Mr. Lathom.

"Has Mr. Lathom had an accident?" he asked, in amazement.

"He has been struck by a junior, Kildare!" said the Head.

"Is it possible, sir?"

"Yes, Kildare. D'Arcy of the Fourth has had the unparalleled audacity to assault his Form-master!"

"Great Scott, sir!"

"I have sent for you, Kildare, to bring D'Arcy here. Mr. Lathom has ordered him here, but he has not come. Kindly fetch him here—by force, if necessary!"

"Certainly, sir," said the prefect.

And he retired in amazement.

Mr. Lathom held his handkerchief to his nose, breathing hard and sniffing. His fury was not in the least abated.

Ten minutes passed. The Head paced the study in great agitation, while Mr. Lathom sniffed into his handkerchief. The Head was distressed and extremely angry. In all his career as headmaster at St. Jim's such a deplorable act of insubordination had never occurred.

Dr. Holmes set his lips as he waited for Kildare to bring the culprit before him.

The sentence of the rebellious junior would be short and sharp.

Flogging on the spot, and expulsion from St. Jim's the following morning—that was the punishment! And the Head felt that it was not enough. But it was all that he could do.

He waited.

It was a quarter of an hour before Kildare came back—alone.

Dr. Holmes looked sharply at the captain of St. Jim's as he entered the study.

"Where is D'Arcy, Kildare?" he asked.

"I don't know, sir."

"Do you mean to say that you cannot find him?"

"Just so, sir. I fancy he has hidden himself away somewhere. He is not to be found."

"I have asked all the prefects to look for him, sir."

"Very good."

"I have also spoken to Blake, Herries,

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BLACK

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and Digby, sir, who were with D'Arcy at the time this happened," said Kildare.

"They want to speak to you, sir."

"Let them come in," said the Head.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were in the passage already. Kildare stepped to the door and made a sign to them, and they entered the Head's study.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Disappears!

BLAKE & CO. came in looking very troubled and harassed.

They wanted to explain that it had been a mistake—that their unfortunate chum had not had the slightest idea that he was punching the august and never-to-be-sufficiently-respected nose of his Form-master when he delivered that wild drive. But they were very doubtful as to how their explanations would be received. Even if they proved the mistake, it would not alter the fact that the Fourth Form master had been knocked down, and there was no doubt that D'Arcy ought to have looked before he punched.

Dr. Holmes regarded the juniors with a severe glance. He did not know whether they had come as witnesses against the reckless junior who had punched his Form-master, or as fellow-culprits to confess their share in the outrage.

"Well, Blake, what have you to say?" rapped out the Head.

Blake gasped nervously:

"I—I—I—"

"Pray be explicit, Blake! I understand that you and the others were present when D'Arcy committed this outrageous assault upon the person of his Form-master?"

"Ye-es sir."

"Very well. You saw the assault committed?"

"No, sir. We were in the study, and D'Arcy had rushed out—"

"Then why are you here?"

"It was a mistake, sir," said Digby.

"What?"

"D'Arcy didn't mean it, sir; it—it was a mistake."

"A mistake! He struck Mr. Lathom upon the nose by a mistake?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you mean to imply that he intended to strike Mr. Lathom somewhere else?"

"No, sir—oh, no, sir! He did not mean to strike him at all," said Blake. "It was a mistake all through, sir!"

"You are talking nonsense, Blake! I can understand your desire to defend a chum; but you are talking nonsense! How could D'Arcy possibly have struck Mr. Lathom by mistake?"

"He didn't see him, sir."

"What? He is not blind, I suppose?"

"N-no, sir! But—but the door was shut, and—and Mr. Lathom knocked at it, sir, and Gussy—I mean D'Arcy—opened the door suddenly and rushed out and biffed—hit him, sir."

"I am aware of that."

"Chaps have been coming to the study chipping us, sir," Blake explained breathlessly, "and—and we didn't know Mr. Lathom was coming. When he knocked at the door, we thought it was Gore or Levison, or one of the bounders—ahem!—I mean the fellows—and Gussy rushed out and biffed him, without stopping to see who it was, sir. If he'd known it was Mr. Lathom, he'd never have done it, of course, sir."

"Yes, rather, sir!" said Digby.

"Hah! The faintest idea it was old—it was Mr. Lathom, sir," said Herries. "Gussy ought to have looked before he hit out. But—but he can't help being an ass, sir."

"That's it, sir," said Blake. "Why, sir, Mr. Lathom can't really think that anybody in the Fourth would have the

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JUST LIKE GUSSY!

Gussy (optimistically one rainy afternoon): "Ah, well, dear boys, somewhere behind the clouds the sun is shining!"

Lowther: "Maybe. Under the sea there is land, but that doesn't help a fellow when he falls overboard!"

A football has been awarded to G. Styler, 180, Hamilton Road, Longsight, Manchester 13.

NOT WANTED!

Genial Motorist: "May I offer you a lift, sir?"

Absent-minded Professor: "Lift? Lift? No, thank you, I have no use for one. I live in a bungalow!"

A football has been awarded to R. Morrison, Rossville, Walter Street, Wishaw, Lanarkshire.

A SURE SHOT!

First Burglar: "Crikey, Bill, I can 'ear someone comin'!"

Second Burglar: "Gosh! An' all these cups won for shootin'!"

A football has been awarded to D. Lowe, 215, Kingston Road, Teddington, Middlesex.

ALSO RAN!

Tenant: "Do you know the favourite didn't win the two-thirty?"

Landlord: "I'm not interested in racing."

Tenant: "You ought to be—your rent was on that horse!"

A football has been awarded to G. Conway, 56, Hooper Road, Custom House, London, E.16.

A TOUCHING LIKENESS!

Photographer: "Your son ordered this photograph from me."

Father: "It's certainly very much like him. Has he paid for it?"

Photographer: "No, not yet."

Father: "That's still more like him!"

A football has been awarded to G. Clemens, Escalls, Sennen, Cornwall.

SLOW MOTION!

Lady (going up in aeroplane): "Now, don't go more than five miles an hour."

Pilot: "Yes, ma'am."

Lady: "And don't forget to stop at every corner!"

A football has been awarded to L. Parkinson, Denstone College, Prep. School, Rocester, N. Staffs.

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awful cheek to punch his nose if he knew!"

"Besides, we all like Mr. Lathom, sir," said Digby. "We all respect him, sir. If any fellow really punched him, sir, we—we'd scrag him!"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"But it was all a mistake, sir."

"Gussy didn't mean—"

The Head made a sign for the eager juniors to be silent.

The old gentleman was looking somewhat relieved. He did not doubt their statements in the least. In fact, their explanation was the most reasonable explanation that could possibly have been found. It was easier to believe that an excited junior had acted rashly and thoughtlessly than that he had deliberately assaulted the Form-master.

"What do you think of this, Mr. Lathom?" asked the Head.

The Fourth Form master looked up out of his handkerchief.

In spite of his rage, excusable in the circumstances, Mr. Lathom was a good little man, and very just and reasonable as a rule.

"I think the boys are speaking the precise truth, sir," he said. "I know them to be truthful boys. And—and upon the whole, sir, I prefer to believe that D'Arcy acted in this way from foolishness and not with the deliberate intention of assaulting me. It all passed very suddenly."

The Head drew a deep breath of relief.

"Of course, the matter is still very serious," he said. "A Form-master has been knocked down by a junior. I am glad to learn that the assault was not intentional. But I must inflict a very severe punishment for the action, intentional or not."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Lathom.

"But Gussy didn't mean, sir—"

began Blake eagerly.

The Head made a gesture.

"I quite believe that, Blake. I should be sorry to think that the worst boy in the school would intentionally be guilty of such an act. Had the act been intentional, D'Arcy would have been flogged and instantly expelled."

"He'd have deserved it, sir, if he'd meant to punch his Form-master," said Blake. "But he didn't know. It was all a blunder, and—"

"Precisely. Therefore, I shall not think of expelling him from the school, as I had intended under the impression that he had deliberately assaulted Mr. Lathom. I shall, in fact, leave his punishment to Mr. Lathom. His act was foolish and outrageous. If Mr. Lathom considers that he should be flogged, he shall be flogged."

"Oh, sir!"

The juniors looked anxiously at the Fourth Form master.

Mr. Lathom was calmer now.

The pain in his nose was increasing, rather than diminishing; but his excitement was calming down, and he was recovering his temper.

"In the circumstances, sir," he said slowly, "if D'Arcy himself explains that it was a foolish mistake and apologises for it, as I have no doubt he will, I think that a severe caning will meet the case."

"Very well!" said the Head.

"D'Arcy seems to have hidden himself away," said Mr. Lathom. "He is probably in a state of great uneasiness of mind. You juniors had better find him and explain to him, and bring him here as soon as possible."

"Yes, sir—certainly, sir!" said Blake, greatly relieved at the result of his visit to the Head's study.

And the chums of Study No. 6 hurried

away to look for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Others were already engaged in the task.

D'Arcy's misadventure was known all over the House, and the fellows were looking for the swell of St. Jim's everywhere. But he was not to be found.

The Fourth Form dormitory was looked into, then the other dormitories, and then the box-rooms were searched, and the lumber-rooms—nearly every room in the School House. But the swell of St. Jim's was not to be seen.

Blake and his chums hunted high and low for him, growing alarmed as the time passed on without the junior being discovered.

Where was D'Arcy?

That was a question that had to remain unanswered. The School House was ransacked in every recess where the junior could possibly have hidden himself. But it was in vain. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had disappeared.

CHAPTER 7.

Clean Gone!

"WELL, here's a giddy go!" said Tom Merry.

The crowd of disappointed searchers met in the Lower Hall again.

They had been everywhere; they had looked everywhere; they had not left a stone unturned. But they had failed to discover the swell of St. Jim's.

"Where on earth can he be?" asked

Monty Lowther.

"Sure he's not in the House?" asked

Reilly.

"We've searched everywhere," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head.

"He must have gone out of the House, Blake."

"Of course!" exclaimed Blake.

"The young ass has buzzed across to the New House to hide himself, sure as a gun! Figgins & Co. would help him if he told them that he was in trouble."

"Good idea! Let's cut across!"

"Have you found him, my boys?" asked Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, coming down the passage.

There was a general shaking of heads.

"No, sir!" said Tom Merry. "He must have gone out of the House. He doesn't know that Blake has been able to explain to the Head about the—the accident."

"He's afraid he's going to be expelled, sir," said Blake.

"He must be found!" said Mr. Railton.

"We thought he might be in the New House, sir."

"Quite so! Go and see, by all means!"

"Yes, sir!"

And a crowd of juniors rushed across the quadrangle to search for D'Arcy. They rushed excitedly into the New House. There was no sign of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the Hall or passages, and Tom Merry & Co. rushed into the Junior Common-room. Most of the New House juniors were there, chatting before going to bed.

Figgins of the Fourth jumped up at sight of the invading juniors. His only thought was that it was a House raid on an unusually large scale.

"Line up, New House!" roared Figgins.

"Sock it to 'em!" roared Redfern of the Fourth.

"Hold on!" shouted Tom Merry.

"We—oh—we—ow!"

Biff, biff, biff!

Bump!

"Oh—oh!"

(Continued at foot of next page.)

Champions of Speed and Sport!

Snappy Pen Pictures Of The Subjects Of This Week's Grand Free Gifts.

THIS week's issue brings to you the first of the GEM's magnificent gifts—a dandy trick watch and eight ripping sticky-back coloured pictures of world-beating record-breakers. There will be eight more pictures every week for the next three weeks. Separate them by means of the perforated lines and stick them in your picture card album with these interesting details alongside them:

GORDON RICHARDS, WIZARD JOCKEY.—By winning the flat-racing jockey championship no less than nine times, Gordon Richards has proved himself the greatest jockey the world has ever known. The championship is judged by the number of winners each jockey rides in the racing season—Gordon's best effort was in 1933, when 259 of his mounts were first past the post!

For the past three years, no other jockey has got anywhere near Gordon's amazing figures for his total of winning rides—three times running he has topped the 200-winners-a-year mark, which is a feat no other living rider can equal!

But for all his success, Gordon has never put on "side"—he's still the greatest little gentleman in the Sport of Kings to-day.

SIR M. CAMPBELL, FASTEST MAN ON EARTH!—Here, in a different sphere, is another champion of champions. Eight times he has broken the world's land-speed record in his Blue Bird cars, starting way back in 1925 when he slammed the record sky-high with a giant Sunbeam. Last year, on the dried-up salt bed of a lake in Utah, N. America, he achieved his life's ambition by being the first man in the world to reach five miles a minute on land, his average over the flying kilometre being just over 301 m.p.h. Campbell has owned nearly a dozen Blue Birds during his racing career, but the present one is the most historic of them all. Weighing five tons,

it has a 12-cylinder Rolls-Royce aero-engine developing nearly 3,000 h.p.

HORNETS OF THE R.A.F.—Soon as one nation produces a single-seater fighting plane fast enough to chase all rivals out of the sky, another nation produces a new fighter to beat it; but in the Gloster "Gauntlet" the British R.A.F. has a high-altitude day-and-night interceptor scout that will make designers scratch their heads a long time before they can design a plane to beat it. Built for heading off enemy raiding planes, it has the phenomenal climbing speed of 5,000 feet in 2½ minutes, and can reach 20,000 feet in 10 minutes dead. Manoeuvrability is the "Gauntlet's" other very strong point—it can turn almost in its own length. Its Bristol Mercury air-cooled engine gives a top speed of nearly 230 m.p.h. at 15,500 feet, which is the normal height at which raiding bombers would approach their target.

H. OPPERMAN, CYCLIST ROAD-BURNER.—Any of you fellows who ride bicycles will know that it takes plenty of mighty hard pedalling to cover twelve miles of ordinary roads in an hour. "Oppy" Opperman, Australia's star cyclist, has covered the 210 miles return journey from London to Bath and back in 10 hours 14 minutes, which works out at over 20 m.p.h. average for the full distance! He has broken over 100 cycling records in his time, and holds practically every long-distance trophy in Britain. One of his best feats was riding from Land's End to John o' Groats, 865 miles, in 2 days 9 hours 1 minute! It would be pretty good going for a motorist to equal that in a small family car!

MONARCH OF THE "HERRING POND"!—It cost ten million pounds to build the giant s.s. Normandie, world's fastest liner—ten million pounds to capture the trans-Atlantic speed record, formerly held by the German Europa, for

France. The Normandie also holds another record—for size—since she is the largest ship afloat, and will remain so until the maiden voyage of the British s.s. Queen Mary next May. The Normandie's record Atlantic crossing occupied 4 days 3 hours 2 minutes—an average speed of 29.68 knots; or in landlubbers' language, about 35 m.p.h.!

TWENTY-FIVE MILES HIGH!—The balloon shown in this picture, in April, 1935, ascended higher into the upper air than anything made by man has ever done before. It is a Russian-built stratosphere balloon, sent aloft, with scientific instruments aboard its gondola, to find out just what the stratosphere—which begins 40,000 feet above the earth's surface—is like. Fortunately, nobody was aboard the balloon during the ascent, for, at 25 miles high, the gasbag burst, the instruments aboard floating to earth on an automatic-acting parachute provided against such an emergency. The record height for a balloon manned by human beings is 14 miles—set up by two American Army officers last year.

THE THUNDERBOLT MAN!—That's what they call Stanley Woods, the greatest living road-racing motor-cyclist. Wherever he goes, you can bet records will be popped wide-open before the wheels of his amazing speedsters, and there is scarcely a road-racing circuit in Europe where he hasn't broken records. His greatest feat was in this year's Senior T.T.—world's most gruelling motor-bike road-race—which, on an Italian-built Guzzi, he won at 84.68 m.p.h., which was a higher average than the existing lap record. To cap his feat, he stormed round on the last lap at 86.53 m.p.h., beating the previous record lap by 4 m.p.h. Woods also holds the record for the world's fastest average in a road-race—90.98 m.p.h. in the famous Ulster Grand Prix.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST LOCO.—This monster steam-engine is one of the Northern Pacific Railway's "Yellowstone" class—a 320-tonner capable of hauling 4,000 ton loads over the steepest gradients in the Rocky Mountains of North America where it operates. The tender alone weighs another 179 tons fully loaded—for a "meal" that will keep this monster engine going for 100 miles runs into 24 tons of coal and 21,200 gallons of water! The "Yellowstones" are not used for passenger expresses—they haul huge goods trains.

"Yaroooh!"
"Yah!"

There was a terrific struggle in the Common-room. The School House juniors had not had time to explain. The uproar was deafening. Tom Merry & Co., finding themselves attacked, had no choice but to hit out; and perhaps they were not very unwilling to do so.

Monteith of the Sixth, the head prefect of the New House, came striding into the room, with Baker and Webb, two other prefects.

The three seniors had canes in their hands, and they laid about them with vigour and great impartiality.

The yells redoubled as the canes sang and lashed about the excited combatants.

"Yaroooh!"
"Stop it!"
"Chuck it!"
"Yah!"

"Stop the row!" roared Monteith. "What are you School House kids doing over here? I'll report the lot of you to your Housemaster!"

The combat ceased at last. The

juniors could not fight with the prefects laying about them with the canes.

"It—it's all right!" gasped Tom Merry.

"All right, is it?" said Monteith angrily. "What do you mean by raiding the New House in this way, you young ruffians?"

"It wasn't a raid!" gasped Blake.

"What do you want, then?"

"It's all a mistake—"

"Mistakes are cheap to-night," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," said Monteith sharply.

"Tell me what you want here, then, before you're chucked out on your necks!"

"We want Gussy!"

"Gussy's disappeared—"

"We thought he had come over here to hide—"

"That's all, Monteith—"

"It wasn't a raid—"

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Figgins, realising that he had been rather hasty.

"I'm sorry! Of course, I thought that it was a raid when you came tearing in like that."

"Why didn't you explain?" demanded Kerr.

"Explain, you ass!" hooted Kangaroo. "You didn't give us time to explain!"

Figgins chuckled.

"No more we did," he agreed.

"Never mind, there's no harm done. But what's happened to Gussy?"

"Has he been over here?"

"We haven't seen him," said Fatty Wynn.

"But what's happened?" asked Figgins.

Tom Merry explained breathlessly.

"Great Scott!" said Monteith, with a whistle. "I should think he'll have a pretty warm time when he's found. But he's not over here. Somebody would have seen him if he'd come into this House. You School House kids can clear out!"

"We'll look round the House for him," said Figgins. "But I'm pretty sure he's not here. More likely he's bunked into the old tower, or the chapel, if he's trying to keep out of sight. Poor old Gussy! Isn't he always

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putting his hoof into it—what? Fancy biffing a giddy Form-master on the nose!"

Tom Merry & Co. crowded out of the New House. Figgins promised to run across and tell them if anything was seen of D'Arcy.

Blake wiped a red stream from his nose as they returned across the dusky quad towards their own House.

"Better search the quad," he remarked. "Figgy's right. Gussy must have dodged into the old tower, I think."

"Get a torch and let's look," said Manners.

"Right-ho!"

Blake soon procured an electric torch, and the old tower was searched. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not there, nor any sign of him. Then the ruined chapel was searched, even to the crypt.

But there was no trace discovered of the swell of St. Jim's.

The searchers returned disappointed to the School House. Kildare met them at the door.

"Found him?" he asked.

"No, Kildare."

"It's bed-time for you kids," said the St. Jim's captain.

"Can't go to bed till Gussy's found, can we, Kildare?" said Blake.

"You can't sit up all night," said Kildare, laughing. "He will turn up presently of his own accord, I think."

The captain of St. Jim's went to the Head's study to acquaint him with the fact that Arthur Augustus had not been found.

"I say, you chaps, we shan't find Gussy here!" said Blake. "My belief is that the ass has got outside St. Jim's."

"Outside!"

"Run away!" exclaimed Tom Merry breathlessly.

Blake nodded.

"That's what I think," he said.

"I shouldn't wonder, Blake," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "He must have been awfully alarmed, and if he thought he was going to be sacked—"

"He did think so!"

"Then he might have bolted. Poor old Gussy!"

Blake's opinion was soon shared by the rest of the fellows. For though the search went on some time longer no trace was found of the missing junior, and it became pretty certain that he was no longer within the walls of St. Jim's. When the juniors went to bed—at an unusually late hour—nothing had been seen or heard of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 8.

The Runaway!

"BAI Jove! This is about the wottenest fix I have evah been in, I think."

Thus Arthur Augustus

D'Arcy.

The swell of St. Jim's paused upon the dark road as he spoke his thoughts aloud.

Blake was right. The swell of the Fourth had run away from the school. He had not stayed longer in the dormitory than was necessary to obtain a few things for his journey, and then he had quitted the School House by the box-room window, cut across the quadrangle, and climbed the school wall, and dropped into the road.

Then he turned his back upon St. Jim's and tramped away, hardly knowing or caring whither.

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In his state of excitement, running away from the school had seemed the obvious course to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in the circumstances.

Mr. Lathom had assumed that the assault had been deliberate. He was not likely to be convinced to the contrary. The punishment in that case was certain—flogging and expulsion. D'Arcy was not afraid to face the music, so far as the flogging was concerned. But why stay and be flogged, and then submit to the disgrace of public expulsion? It was easier to go while he had a chance.

And so he had gone.

He hardly stopped to think until he was two or three miles from St. Jim's.

Then he paused to rest.

He leaned against the stile at the side of the dark road, with a black field behind him, and shadowy trees round him.

The place was very lonely.

But Arthur Augustus was not afflicted with nerves. He leaned on the stile, breathing hard, and considering his position.

He had run away from St. Jim's.

He still considered that that was the wisest course he could have pursued.

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It was useless to wait till the morning, and then be sent away. But what was he to do now?

Go home?

But his people certainly wouldn't be expecting him home—especially at that hour of the night. By the time he had arrived at Eastwood House all his people would be in bed and asleep—and D'Arcy had a natural disinclination to wake them up in the middle of the night with the news that he had run away from school.

He felt that it would be better in every way for the news to reach them from the headmaster at St. Jim's.

Then he could make his appearance and explain when the ice had been broken.

But suppose his father determined to send him back to the school to take his punishment? It was quite possible. Lord Eastwood was a stickler for discipline. But D'Arcy felt that he would suffer anything rather than that.

Besides, to go home in disgrace—it would be a bitter pill to swallow.

"I'm jolly well not goin' home!" said Arthur Augustus at last—that was the outcome of his reflections on the subject.

But if he did not go home, what was he to do? With home and St. Jim's closed to him, where was he to lay his head?

"I'll wite to the Head and explain, and wite to the guv'nah so that he won't be anxious about me," D'Arcy murmured. "But—but I'm not goin' home, and I'm not goin' back to St.

Jim's to be flogged and sacked. No feah!"

His mind was quite made up on those points.

It only remained to decide what to do. He was well provided with money. He still had the two fivers which were to be expended in that gorgeous feed at the Hotel Royal which had never come off—that feed which was the beginning of all his troubles.

He could easily make ten pounds last him a few days; and he had some smaller money as well.

D'Arcy had not had much experience at fending for himself, but he felt that it was quite possible to live on a pound a day—perhaps less. He had heard of people who lived on less than that. He had, therefore, enough to last him for nearly a fortnight, and in that fortnight—

He would have to look for work.

Strange to say the thought did not alarm him. D'Arcy had, as a matter of fact, often thought of what a curious experience it would be to work for one's living.

The only question was—what kind of work could he do? He had a good education, and could speak French—Public school French—perhaps not quite the French of France. He had some German, too—as much as Herr Schneider had been able to drive into his head. He was weak in maths; but then fellows did not get jobs as mathematicians—he knew that.

"Bai Jove!" reflected Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Public schools don't teach you much in the way of earnin' a livin' when you get fairly up against it as I am now. The only thing I know at all well is languages; but chaps don't get paid for witin' Latin verses, and I couldn't get a bob an hour for talkin' French. Might get a job somewhere as interpwetah, pewwaps—if there was one goin'."

But—

He did not know much about the employment market; but he knew that interpreters were not wanted in crowds.

What was he going to do?

In the midst of his reflections it came on to rain, and he decided upon an immediate move for shelter.

He pushed up the collar of his overcoat about his ears, and jammed his eyeglass a little tighter in his eye, and marched on.

He had not thought of the weather when he ran away from school, and so he had omitted to bring an umbrella.

He peered to and fro in the dark lane, and wondered where he was. A signpost caught his eye, and he struck a match and read it.

"Wayland—one mile."

He was close to Wayland, then.

He tramped on.

He could get shelter in the old market town for the night, and in the morning take the train, and put a wider distance between himself and St. Jim's.

But, after all, why go farther afield?

At St. Jim's, when they discovered that he had run away, they would naturally suppose that he had taken a train for some distant spot, and if a search were made, as was pretty certain, the railways would be investigated. He would be looked for in London, in the nearest town, and inquired for at all the stations.

The authorities would never think that he was lying hidden in a place so near at hand as Wayland.

It would be a good idea to stop there, if he could get work. After all, there

was as much work to be got in the country as in London. D'Arcy had heard that the problem of employment was very acute in London. He had not noticed that it was so in Wayland. In fact, that sleepy little country town, where no one would think of looking for him, was just the place for him.

He would get work there, and rise in the world in the course of time, probably become a great landed proprietor, or else the head of a huge business, with branches in every country under the sun. The prospect cheered him up, and he tramped on towards Wayland in renewed spirits.

The rain came down more heavily. Arthur Augustus' silk hat was dripping now, and his trousers were getting very damp below his overcoat. He looked round for shelter, and espied a shed close by the lane, under the trees.

He groped his way into it, and was glad to hear the rain pattering upon the roof instead of upon his top.

"Bai Jove, this is bettah!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Suddenly he started. There was another sound in the shed besides the pattering of rain upon the thatch overhead. He caught a sound of deep and stertorous breathing. "There was someone else in the shed."

He listened intently. He moved, and his foot touched something soft, and he gave a little cry.

He knew that he had touched a body; whether human or animal he did not know.

"Bai Jove, who—who is there?" called out Arthur Augustus, in a shaking voice.

Silence, save for that laboured, painful breathing.

With a curious flutter at his heart,

the swell of St. Jim's stooped down in the darkness, and felt with his hand for the body. His fingers touched a coat—it was a human being who lay upon the floor of the shed.

D'Arcy caught hold of the coat, and gave it a shake.

"Who are you?" he asked.

No answer.

"Bai Jove, I wish you would speak! Are you hurt?"

Grim silence.

D'Arcy felt his very flesh creep. He groped for the face of the unknown, and his fingers touched it and passed over the unseen features. He felt a moustache under his fingers, and breath on his hand.

Still the man did not speak.

"G-goodness gwacious," murmured the junior, now thoroughly alarmed, "the—the poor chap must be hurt! Bai Jove! I say, deah fellow, I wish you would speak, you know! Who are you? What are you doing here?"

But no reply came from the man who lay at his feet.

CHAPTER 9.

The Interpreter!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY shuddered.

His heart was beating painfully, and his flesh felt like what is described as "goose-flesh." He had a strong desire to rush out of the shed, in spite of the rain. It was not the thought of the rain that stopped him. The man at his feet was evidently incapable of movement or speech—he must be hurt.

Wild thoughts of footpads flashed through D'Arcy's mind.

He remembered the case of a man having been attacked by footpads near St. Jim's, and rendered unconscious. Was this some suffering victim of a dastardly attack?

It seemed only too certain. And perhaps the ruffianly perpetrators were close at hand still. Perhaps lurking in the darkness of that very shed, waiting for an opportunity of assaulting him unawares.

D'Arcy looked round him uneasily at the thought. But in the blackness of the shed he could see nothing; and he could hear nothing but the jerky breathing of the man at his feet, and the patter-patter of the rain.

He groped in his pocket and found a match-box. He struck a match, and as the flame swayed in the wind, he peered round the shed anxiously.

He started as he saw that a figure lay on the ground at his feet. But there was no trace of a lurking enemy.

"Gweat Scott!" he muttered. "What's happened to him?"

D'Arcy struck a second match, and bent down to examine the unconscious man.

The man was a small fellow, not much larger than D'Arcy, though he had a moustache. His face was very red, and a cap with gold lace upon it lay on the ground.

D'Arcy started a little as he saw the cap. It was shaped like those that commissionaires wear, and on the front, in gold letters, was the word: "Interpreter."

Something else struck D'Arcy very much as he stooped over the insensible man. It was a strong odour of spirits.

He could see no trace of an injury, and that, added to the smell of spirits,



As a tap came on the door, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy threw it open, and rushed out into the passage, hitting out blindly and furiously. Biff! "Ow!" Mr. Lathom received his flat tuit on his nose and was knocked flying. In his haste to hit a japer, D'Arcy had biffed the wrong nose!

made him realise that his first impressions had been mistaken. The man was not hurt. He had simply, as honest Cassio has it, put an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains. In a word, he was in a state of intoxication.

The match went out. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rose to his feet, with a sniff of disgust.

"Dwunk, bai Jove!" he murmured. "It's a lie!" said a voice unexpectedly.

D'Arcy's examination had apparently disturbed the intoxicated man at last. The junior heard him dragging himself into a sitting posture.

"It's a lie!" he repeated. "I ain't drunk!"

"Weally, my deah fellah—"

"It's a lie, Mr. Pawker!"

"My name is not Pawkah, deah boy!"

"That's another!"

"Weally, you know—"

"You can sack me if you like," went on the voice in the darkness. "You won't get another interpreter in a hurry at two pounds a week and his grub. Don't you think it?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Lot of use for an interpreter here!" went on the voice scornfully. "How many foreigners do you have here? Half a dozen French commercial travellers a year. Yah!"

"My deah fellah—"

"It's swank, that's what it is! You shove interpreter on the advertisements—*ici on parle Francais!* Pah! *Si parla Italiana!* Bosh! *Man spricht Deutsch!* Piffle! Tea on the terrace! Rubbish!"

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

"Sack me if you like!" continued the voice. "I'm not drunk! I've had a drop, and that's all! Do you hear me? I am practically a teetotaler!"

"This is weally vewy remarkable," murmured the swell of St. Jim's.

"All right, I'm sacked!" said the voice. "Don't pile it on! I'm going! I won't stay in your blessed hotel another minute! Bah!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Hotel Royal, indeed!" said the voice scornfully. "Hotel Rats!"

Then the gentleman who was not drunk relapsed into indistinct mutterings, and finally went off to sleep again. Arthur Augustus understood at last.

He remembered the advertisement of the new hotel in Wayland. There was an interpreter mentioned in that gorgeous advertisement. Truly, an interpreter was not likely to have very much to do in an hotel in a town like Wayland. French commercial travellers sometimes came there, and an occasional German scientist to examine the antiquities in the neighbourhood—that was all. But if there was not much for the interpreter to do, at all events, Mr. Pawker, the hotel proprietor, did not err on the side of paying him too heavily—to judge by the words of the gentleman who was not drunk.

"Silly ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He's got a job, and he's lost it through dwinkin' filthy wubbish; and I can't get a job. I wegard him as a silly ass!"

And there is no doubt that the swell of St. Jim's was quite right upon that point. The interpreter of the Hotel Royal had evidently been the worse for drink when on duty, and his employer had sacked him—probably not missing his services very much.

Arthur Augustus' concern for his companion in the shed vanished now that

he found that the man was merely intoxicated. The junior looked out into the road again. The rain was coming down in torrents, and it was evidently impossible to venture out.

The only alternative was to pass the night in the shed.

That the junior prepared to do. After all, it would save the price of a night's lodging. And in his present circumstances it behoved the swell of St. Jim's to be economical. He might need all his supply of money before he secured a job.

There was a heap of straw close by the cart in the shed, and Arthur Augustus, after carefully removing his topper, crawled into the straw to sleep. He pulled a heap of straw over him, and found himself quite warm. What the time was he did not know; but it was certainly late, and, as soon as he was warm and comfortable in the straw, he dropped off to sleep.

The swell of St. Jim's slept as soundly in the straw as he had been accustomed to do in his bed in the Fourth Form dormitory at St. Jim's.

When he awoke, the sun was shining in at the door of the shed, and the rain had ceased.

Arthur Augustus started up. He rubbed his eyes, wondering for the moment where he was. A yawn fell upon his ears. On the floor of the shed the man in the gold-laced cap was sitting up, and rubbing his eyes, and blinking at D'Arcy.

"Good-mornin'!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Hallo! What are you doing here?" said the other.

"I've been sleepin' here," said D'Arcy.

The man blinked at him.

"You're a schoolboy?" he said.

"Yaas."

"What are you doing out of school?"

"I've left."

"Left, eh?" said the man, rubbing his eyes. "Oh! So have I. I left my job. And where I'm going to get any breakfast is more than I can say. Got the price of a breakfast about you?"

"Yaas."

"Then share with a fellow in distress," said the man. "I want something to drink—I mean eat. I've got the push!"

"Can't you go back to your work?" The man chuckled.

"No fear!" he said emphatically. "Old Pawker would boot me out if I did. I was a little bit squiffy, and I told a German customer that we didn't want any German sausages there. It was the whisky that did it."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus looked thoughtfully at the man sitting on the floor. There was a gleam in D'Arcy's eyes.

He was looking for a job—and this man had just lost one. The job he had lost must evidently be still unfilled. And, in turning over his various qualifications, Arthur Augustus had considered that the role to suit him best would be that of an interpreter.

Was it a chance?

"I say," said D'Arcy slowly, "you were interpretwah at the Hotel Woyal, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was."

"And you can't get the job back?"

"Not going to try!"

"Would you have any objection in my twyin' for it?"

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yaas!"

"My only uncle!"

And the gentleman in the gold-braided cap stared harder than ever.

Arthur Augustus did not see at all why the man should invoke his avuncular relative in this astounded way. There was surely nothing surprising in a fellow looking for a job.

"Never mind your uncle, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "You've done with the job yourself, I undahstand?"

"Oh, yes—or rather, the job's done with me!"

"Of course, I am quite aware that it is contwawy to etiquette among workin' chaps for a fellow to take anothah fellow's job," said D'Arcy. "It's just the same as a doctah takin' anothah doctah's patients, or a dog takin' anothah dog's bone. Of course, I should not think of doin' anythin' of the sort. But if you are weally finished with the job, I should like to have a twy for it."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you caklin' at?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Excuse me," he said. "I'm taken that way sometimes when I wake up in the morning. I get it from my great grandfather. Look here, I'm thirsty—I mean hungry. If you could stand a hard-working chap half-a-crown—"

"My deah chap, I'm lookin' for work myself," said D'Arcy. "If you could help me to get the job, I should be vewy pleased to make it worth your while."

The late interpreter of the Hotel Royal appeared struck by the reflection.

"That's not a bad idea," he said.

"Look here, the pay's two pounds a week, and you have to find your own uniform."

"Yaas."

"But you get your keep—not too gorgeous—and any amount of good advice from old Pawker thrown in."

"Yaas."

"You have to know four languages—English. I suppose you know English—"

"Yaas, you ass!"

"And French—"

"Oh, yaas, my Fwench is first chop!"

"And German—"

"I can handle German all wight."

"And Italian—"

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"Well, I know some Italian," he said.

"You see, I am a tenah, and I sing songs in Italian. I can pwounce it all wight."

The late interpreter grinned.

"I haven't seen any Italians in Wayland, excepting an organ-grinder, since I've been there," he remarked. "So you're not likely to be called upon for Italian very much. *Si parla Italiana* looks well in the ads, but it's not really wanted."

"That's all wight, then."

"And then you have to make yourself useful—help to keep accounts, and take messages, and listen to Mr. Pawker telling you about his early days when he was a waiter in Paris."

"I shouldn't mind that."

"Well, then, you're the man for the job," said the interpreter heartily, "and I'll tell you what—I'll sell you my uniform for half-price, and that will save you a lot of money to start with."

D'Arcy looked, and felt, very grateful.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin' of you, Mr.—"

"Snooker," said the interpreter; "that's my name—William Percy Snooker. The fact is, I've taken a likin' to you, and really, I shan't want my uniform till I get another job. It will be rather large for you, but that doesn't matter—you're rather slight to be an interpreter, and it will make you look bigger."

"That's all wight."
 "You see, if you went and applied for the job in Etons, they wouldn't listen to you," said Mr. Snooker. "They'd think you were a runaway schoolboy."
 D'Arcy coloured.

"Thank you vewy much," he said.
 "How much shall I give you for the clothes?"
 Mr. Snooker reflected.

"Half-price," he said. "I want to do the fair thing. Half-price—that's eight pounds."
 D'Arcy looked surprised. He would not have imagined by the look of them that Mr. Snooker's clothes had cost eight pounds in the first place, or anything like it. He shook his head somewhat sadly.

"Don't you think they're worth it?" demanded Mr. Snooker.

"It isn't that, deah boy; of course, I take your word for that," said D'Arcy simply; and then Mr. Snooker blushed, for some reason. "But I can't afford it. You see, I've only got between eleven and twelve pounds to last me till I get a job, and I might not get this one even with the uniform."

"Fair's fair," said Mr. Snooker. "I'll be reasonable. You hand me a five-pun' note, and the uniform's yours."

"You are vewy good."
 "Not at all," said Mr. Snooker. "If it's a go, I'll take you home to my lodging now, and we can change. You can throw in your own clothes as a make-weight, if you like—I could raise something on them with uncle."

"Bai Jove! Would your uncle weally lend you money for my clothes?" said D'Arcy, in astonishment.

"Uncle Solomon's—three brass balls—vat I do for you shentlemen?" explained Mr. Snooker.

"Oh, I see—a pawnbwokah!"
 "That's it. Now, come along, I'm thirsty—ahem!—I mean hungry."
 "Good!"

And Arthur Augustus, carefully polishing his silk hat on his sleeve, put it on his head, and followed William Percy Snooker out of the shed into the morning sunshine.

CHAPTER 10.

A Change of Identity!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS was in high spirits now.
 The chance of a job had come along sooner than he had dared to hope.

And with the chance of a job came the opportunity of complete concealment—for the uniform of an hotel interpreter would certainly hide the one-time elegant junior of St. Jim's in the completest possible manner. No one would think of looking for D'Arcy of the Fourth under the gold-braided cap of an interpreter at an hotel.

If he could only get the job, he would be all right. And why should he not get it? Why did his father pay big fees at St. Jim's if his French and German weren't good enough for interpreting to customers at an hotel? As for Italian, there was not likely to be much demand for that; and if it was called for, he could rake his memory for all the words he knew. As he knew a considerable number of Italian songs by heart, his vocabulary was really not limited, and he could almost have held a conversation on the subject of tender hearts, starry eyes, blue heavens, and deep, silent seas.

Mr. Snooker led him to a lodging-house near the station in Wayland. He explained to D'Arcy that it was a lodging he had inhabited before he obtained

JUST MY FUN



Monty Lowther Calling!

Hallo, Everybody!

Here's a hot gardening hint for the cold weather: Stay indoors.

Did you hear about the budding air pilot who started by climbing into an aeroplane and finished by climbing out of a tree?

Fatty Wynn writes that, despite his huge appetite, exercise keeps him as fat as a fiddle. Fatter than most fiddles, Fatty!

Gore asks what would make a suitable birthday present for Skimpole. What about a "cuckoo" clock?

Don Bradman is writing cricket articles. The pen is mightier than the sword.

"Tourist Trips Over the Mountains," reads a headline. He should have looked where he was going.

Well, chaps, as the explorer remarked: "When I am far away in Africa surrounded by savages, I shall certainly think of you!"

"The nicotine in a cigar would kill an elephant," says a writer. That should teach elephants not to smoke cigars!

"Insects often die after stinging a man," says Skimpole. Providing the man's aim is good.

his situation at the Hotel Royal. They were soon in a room, and Mr. Snooker proposed breakfast as the first step.

Arthur Augustus was hungry, and he assented at once. He felt even more cheerful than before after he had disposed of bacon and eggs and hot coffee.

Mr. Snooker did not assume the rights of a host in the least; he allowed D'Arcy to pay for the breakfast, which the swell of St. Jim's readily did.

Mr. Snooker was in a very good humour himself. He had drunk something stronger than coffee with his breakfast, early as the hour was; and D'Arcy was not surprised that Mr. Pawker, of the Hotel Royal, had given him the "push," though he was too polite to say so. Mr. Snooker produced some shabby clothes from a bag, and changed into them, and placed his uniform at the disposal of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy stripped off his elegant Etons, and donned the interpreter's uniform.

It was decidedly baggy on D'Arcy's elegant figure; and the junior, who was, very particular about the cut of his clothes, could not help looking dismayed.

But Mr. Snooker was good nature itself—especially after he had had another go at his bottle. He produced needle and thread, and took in some "reefs" in the clothes, and reduced them to a more suitable size. They still looked considerably baggy; but, after all, as Mr. Snooker remarked, an interpreter in an hotel was not supposed to be a swell.

The gold-braided cap was a little too large for D'Arcy, but Mr. Snooker's

Wayland police are looking for a man tattooed all over his body. The "marked" man.

A race of pygmies has been discovered in West Africa. Gnome-man's land.

"The worst feature of our post offices is the ink," complains a reader. But the pens have their "bad points"!

A seventy-year-old hiker lives in Rylcombe. It's never too late to wend.

Wally D'Arcy writes he has written a defective story. "Defective" spelling, Wally!

"The film star acted soulfully in stockings feet," we read. Soulfully, or "sole"-lessly?

Quickly, now: Why did the cauliflower? To rival the "sweet" peas!

D'Arcy says he first became interested in singing in a peculiar manner. We think he still does!

I hear the Wayland Football Club have signed a young Welsh goalkeeper. He should stop the "leak"-age!

The jester bent his head on the block. The executioner swung his axe. "It's all right," said a varlet, rushing in, "the baron has just seen the joke!"

A Hollywood cowboy star is reputed to have shot six outlaws. A "shoot-ing star"!

What's that? Yes? A fire in the Form-room? All right, as the fire chief said—keep it burning till I come!

"Hot"—cha, boys!

ingenuity was equal to that, too. He padded it under the inside lining with strips of paper, so that it fitted D'Arcy like a glove.

"Looks ripping!" he said. "My dear kid, you were born for this kind of clothes. It suits you down to the ground!"

"Good!" said D'Arcy.

He bade a silent farewell to his topper with great regret. But it was evidently useless to think of applying for an interpreter's job in a topper.

He looked in the glass somewhat anxiously.

"Do you think I look wathah young for the job?" he asked.

Mr. Snooker concealed a grin. Mr. Snooker had not the remotest idea, as a matter of fact, that D'Arcy would get the job. He regarded it as a little freak on the part of the young swell which he could turn to his own profit, as he was on the rocks. The uniform, which was not worth more than a couple of pounds, was of no further use to him; and a five-pound note would be very useful.

He had guessed at once that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had run away from school, and he had not the slightest doubt that he would be discovered and taken back the same day. If he chose to amuse himself in the interval at playing at being an interpreter, that was his own business—and a very profitable thing for William Percy Snooker.

"Well, perhaps a little—er—youthful," he said. "But this is the age of young men, you know. I'm a young

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man myself. But a moustache would make you look older."

D'Arcy pursed his lips a little. He did not like the idea of wearing anything so hopelessly out of date as a moustache. But it occurred to him that, besides making him look older, it would have the additional effect of acting as a disguise, and he considered the subject.

"I've worn moustaches in amatuah theatricals," he remarked. "It wouldn't be a bad ideah to stick one on, when I come to think of it."

Mr. Snooker smiled.

"Good egg," he said. "I can easily get you one down the street at the barber's."

"Thank you vevy much!"

"I'll be back in a jiffy!"

Mr. Snooker returned in a few minutes with a blonde, artificial moustache, which he proceeded to fasten to D'Arcy's upper lip.

It felt a little uncomfortable, and the corners persisted in curling into his mouth, but there was no doubt that it made the junior look much older. Added to the uniform and the gold-braided cap, it completely concealed the junior of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy might easily have been taken for a young man.

"Bai Jove, that's bettah!" he said, looking into the glass.

"It's absolutely ripping!" said Mr. Snooker.

"You weally think that I shall pass all wight?"

"It's a dead cert!"

"I trust Mr. Pawkah will engage me," said D'Arcy. "It would be wippin' to get a job like that, wouldn't it?"

"Best wishes," said Mr. Snooker kindly. "Now, you can't do better than be the first in the field, you know. Old Pawker will be advertising for a new interpreter—but you can get in before that advertisement if you go now. That's where you get a pull on all other applicants for the job."

"Yaas, watah!"

Mr. Snooker folded up D'Arcy's clothes.

"There's a little mattah of a fivah," he hinted.

Arthur Augustus had changed his personal belongings to his new clothes. He took out his handsome Russia-leather pocket-book, and handed Mr. Snooker a five-pound note.

"That's all wight, deah boy. And thank you vevy much!"

"Not at all," said Mr. Snooker politely. "The obligation's on my side."

And Mr. Snooker was quite right there.

The arrangements now being completed, Mr. Snooker was in a hurry to be off. He made a bundle of D'Arcy's clothes, for the visit to Mr. Solomon, and bade farewell to the junior.

They parted in the street, D'Arcy again thanking his kind friend.

Mr. Snooker disappeared with his bundle, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his steps slowly in the direction of the Hotel Royal.

It was still very early; the rain had quite gone, and the sun was shining down upon the quaint old streets of the market town.

D'Arcy felt considerably nervous and self-conscious as he strolled along.

The new clothes did not feel quite comfortable, and the moustache gave his upper lip a sticky and tight feeling.

It seemed to him that everyone must

be looking at him in his new attire. But, to his satisfaction, he found that he passed muster without unusual notice. As a matter of fact, he looked an unusually good-looking and youthful hotel interpreter, and nothing more.

He proceeded slowly to the hotel, his confidence growing stronger at every step. He could not help wondering what was happening at St. Jim's just then. He chuckled at the thought of how Tom Merry & Co. would stare if they could see him now.

Probably he had been searched for the night before; probably he was being searched for now. They would inquire for him at all the railway stations near the school—Wayland Junction, among others.

He soon had proof of that. He had to pass the station on his way to the hotel, and, as he came in sight of the vestibule, he caught sight of a well-known figure there.

He started and turned a little cold. It was Mr. Railton.

The Housemaster of the School House had evidently been making inquiries in the station, without result, as his expression showed. He was standing at the station entrance now, looking out into the street with a perplexed face.

His eyes fell casually upon D'Arcy, as the junior passed on the other side of the way.

D'Arcy's heart was beating fast.

Would Mr. Railton recognise him? They were not twenty paces distant from one another, and he knew that the Housemaster was a keen-sighted man. At every moment, as he walked on, he expected to hear Mr. Railton's voice come rapping across the street. But it did not come.

He walked on, and turned the first corner, and breathed deeply with relief.

Mr. Railton had not recognised him. He was thinking of a junior in Etons and a silk hat; not of a young man with a moustache, in an interpreter's uniform and gold-braided cap.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "That was a nawwow shave!"

He blessed his meeting with the "pushed" interpreter of the Hotel Royal, and the exchange of clothes that had saved him from recognition.

But the sight of Mr. Railton had recalled a matter to his mind which he had forgotten in the keen interest of preparing for his new job.

He stepped into a stationer's shop and purchased paper and envelopes, and wrote two letters, which he posted at the first pillar-box he came to.

One letter was to his father, to assure his lordship of his safety; the other to the Head of St. Jim's, explaining the unfortunate mistake he had made in hammering his respected Form-master upon his nose, and explaining that he

had retired from St. Jim's involuntarily, instead of putting the Head to the trouble of expelling him, and adding that he would not be coming back at all.

That matter disposed of, Arthur Augustus arrived at the grand new hotel of Wayland, and marched in, his heart beating very fast.

CHAPTER 11.

Gussy Gets the Job!

THE Hotel Royal of Wayland was a most imposing building. Wayland had been a quiet and quaint old place for many cen-



Arthur Augustus struck a match and held it up, looking as he saw a man in uniform lying insensible on the ground.

turies, and had changed very little since the days of the Plantagenets.

But even the old market town was feeling the change of hurrying, modern times at last. New life was beginning in Wayland; and the new hotel was a symptom of the change. A new hotel on the latest lines, with lift, hall-porter, and interpreter, and a little army of waiters, was a strange and wondrous thing to the older inhabitants.

Mr. Pawker, who had been a waiter in Paris in his younger days, was very proud of that investment of his savings.

Mr. Pawker, like many gentlemen of his profession, dreamed golden dreams of keeping an hotel on the Riviera.

But while Mr. Pawker dreamed of the golden unattainable, he ran his hotel in Wayland on the latest modern lines, including the charges.

The magnitude of the bills at the Hotel Royal would have made the habitués of the Red Lion and the Ploughman's Rest rub their eyes and wonder.

Arthur Augustus, as he entered the spacious hall, with green lounges, and a most imposing porter of huge stature, cast an approving glance round him. It was his first visit to the new hotel, and it was not the way he had intended to come when he started on that unfortunate expedition the previous day.

"Pway can I see the managah?" he

eyeglass, which he had not parted with, and caught the word "Bureau," in gold letters.

He coughed and entered the bureau, taking off his cap.

"What do you want?"

A fat man, in a tight-fitting frock-coat, and with the manner of a grand duke, at least, if not an emperor, was in the bureau.

He stared at D'Arcy.

"Mr. Pawkah, I pwesume?" said D'Arcy.

"Yes."

"I undahstand that you are needin' an interpwetah, sir?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Pawker.

"I have the honah of applyin' for the job, sir," said D'Arcy modestly.

"Oh!" repeated Mr. Pawker.

He gave D'Arcy another hard stare. D'Arcy coloured a little. He wondered whether Mr. Pawker could see that his moustache was artificial, and that he was a junior schoolboy inside the interpreter's uniform.

But Mr. Pawker was not thinking of anything of the sort. That anybody should try to spoof him was a thought that never entered Mr. Pawker's bald head. Mr. Pawker, too, was somewhat short-sighted, though he declined to wear glasses as inconsistent with his great dignity.

Mr. Pawker was on the shady side of fifty-five, and looked it, though he had a happy delusion that he looked forty.

"I twust, sir, that you will find me suitable," said D'Arcy.

"Qualifications?" said Mr. Pawker.

"French, German, Italian, Latin, and a little Greek, sir."

"Testimonials?"

D'Arcy felt an inward thrill of dismay. It had not occurred to him until this moment that he would require a "character" to get a berth anywhere.

"As a mattah of fact, sir, I have not been employed before," he said.

Mr. Pawker grunted, and D'Arcy's hopes went down to zero.

"No experience?" said Mr. Pawker.

"I would twy vewy hard to give satisfaction, sir."

"The clientele of the Hotel Royal could hardly be satisfied with an interpreter totally lacking experience," said Mr. Pawker.

D'Arcy was silent. He did not know that Mr. Pawker's remark was simply a preliminary to offering him half the wages of his former interpreter.

"Vewy well, sir," said D'Arcy, at last, after a silence that seemed to him to last several centuries, "I am sowwy, sir."

And he moved towards the door.

"Stop!" said Mr. Pawker.

Mr. Pawker was a man of few words. It did not befit his dignity, as proprietor of the Hotel Royal, to waste many words upon mere human beings.

D'Arcy turned back, his hopes rising again.

"New to the work, eh?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Quite up to it?"

"Oh, yaas, sir!"

"I can speak French myself," said Mr. Pawker condescendingly. "Bon jour! Comme vous portez vous?"

"Tres bien, merci, monsieur," said D'Arcy.

Mr. Pawker nodded.

"Man spriecht Deutsch?" he said.

That was the whole extent of Mr. Pawker's German.

"Ja, ja, mein herr," said D'Arcy.

Another majestic nod.

"Italian, too?"

"La donna e mobile," said D'Arcy, repeating lines from an aria from an opera, confident that Mr. Pawker would not know it. "Qual pium' al vento."

"Good!"

"Se tu m'ami," went on D'Arcy, more confidently still. "Se tu sospiri, sol per me, gentil pastor."

"The rest don't matter," said Mr. Pawker. "I don't 'ave many Latin customers."

"I suppose not, sir," said D'Arcy, smiling dutifully at Mr. Pawker's little joke.

"You said Greek, I think?"

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy, "a little Gweek."

This statement was quite correct. D'Arcy knew a little Greek—a very little Greek. Greek was not a compulsory subject at St. Jim's, but Arthur Augustus had taken it up once for a few days. He remembered a few lines from a lesson, to be used in case of emergency. The emergency had now arisen.

"Go ahead!" said Mr. Pawker.

"Dariou kai Parysatidos gignontai paides duo," said D'Arcy.

"Good!" said Mr. Pawker, trying to look as if he understood, and quite oblivious of the fact that D'Arcy was telling him that an ancient king of Persia had two sons. "Can you keep accounts?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Make yourself useful?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What salary do you expect as a beginner?"

"I undahstand that the salawy is two pounds—"

"That is for an experienced interpreter, with testimonials."

"Oh!"

"However, I could give you a pound," said Mr. Pawker. "Room and board in the hotel. Take it or leave it!"

"Thank you, sir! I will take it."

"Engaged!" said Mr. Pawker.

"Thank you, sir!"

"You will be required to be on duty from the time the hotel opens till the time it closes, and at any hour in the night when the services of an interpreter are required," said Mr. Pawker.

"Yaas, sir."

Mr. Pawker touched a bell.

"Plummer!"

The gigantic porter entered.

"This is the new interpreter. What's your name?"

"John Wobinson, sir," said D'Arcy, who had selected that name for himself as the least likely to cause doubt.

"Robinson—good! This is the new interpreter, Robinson, Plummer. You can show him his duties when required."

Mr. Pawker took up a newspaper to indicate that the interview was over, and that his time was far too valuable to be further expended upon mere employees.

D'Arcy followed the porter out of the

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the shed uneasily in the flickering light. He started "Gweat Scott!" he muttered. "What's happened

asked, addressing the big porter, who looked down upon him from a vast height.

The porter stared. He had seen hotel interpreters before, but he had never been addressed by one in such elegant and cultivated accents before.

But D'Arcy's uniform, and the word "Interpreter," in gold letters on his cap, showed what he was, or, rather, what he was not, so there could be no mistake about it.

The porter made a haughty gesture, indicating the manager's office.

"Thank you vewy much!" said D'Arcy affably.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put up his

bureau. He was feeling very satisfied. Twenty shillings was certainly not an overwhelming salary, but it was a beginning. If he gave satisfaction his salary might be raised. He did not yet know Mr. Pawker.

The gigantic porter looked him over. "Lift-boy'll show you your room," he said.

"Thank you!"
"Last interpreter was pushed for drinking," said the porter disdainfully. "Do you drink?"

"Certainly not!"

The porter sniffed. He looked D'Arcy over again.

"Ever 'ad this job before?" he asked.

"No."

"Ever been in a job before?"

"No."

"I thought not," said Plummer scornfully. "I thought not. It's a custom for a new interpreter to ask a man if he's thirsty."

"Bai Jove, what a curious custom!"

"Well?" said Mr. Plummer.

D'Arcy thought he might as well conform to the custom, peculiar as it was.

"Are you thirsty?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mr. Plummer emphatically. "I ham!"

"Sowwy!" said D'Arcy.

And he turned away towards the lift-boy, who was grinning.

Mr. Plummer looked after him with a scorn that was not to be expressed in words.

"Will you have the kindness to show me to my woom, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"Oh corks!" said the lift-boy.

"Weally, my la!"

"Where did you dig up that accent?" asked the lift-boy affably.

"Pway don't be cheeky!"

"Oh lumme!"

The lift-boy started for the stairs.

"Shall we not ascend in the lift?" asked Arthur Augustus.

The lift-boy stared at him as if overcome.

"The staff don't use the lift, you silly image!" he replied.

"Oh, bai Jove, don't they?"

"No, they don't! This 'ere way."

D'Arcy followed the lift-boy upstairs.

The stairs reminded him of the Eiffel Tower at Paris, which he had seen in an excursion there. There seemed to be no end to them, but they arrived at their summit at last.

D'Arcy was shown into a tiny room with a short view upon leads and chimneys.

"This 'ere's yours," said the lift-boy.

"Thank you vewy much!"

"Why didn't you stand Plummer a swig?" asked the lift-boy confidentially.

"A-a what?"

"A drink, you ass!"

"Does he dwink?" asked D'Arcy, in surprise.

The lift-boy rolled his eyes.

"Does he?" he murmured. "He's an old soldier!"

"I was not aware—"

"He'll owe you one," said the lift-boy.

"But he didn't say—"

"Oh, you don't know nothing!" said the lift-boy contemptuously. "You're green. Anybody could see you've never been in a job afore. 'Ow much is old Weskit giving you?"

"Who?"

"Old Weskit—old Pawker, I mean, you dumkey!"

"Oh! One pound a week," said D'Arcy.

"More'n you're worth!" commented the lift-boy.

"Weally, young shavah—"

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The lift-boy giggled. D'Arcy's beautiful accent seemed to furnish him with never-ending delight.

"Blessed if I ever saw an interpreter like you before!" he said. "Can you really speak French and German?"

"Yaas, of course!"

"Snooker couldn't. He took in old Weskit. He could jest jaw to French commercials in their lingo, but the only German he knew was 'sauer-kraut,'" said the lift-boy.

"There ain't much for an interpreter to do 'ere."

D'Arcy was glad to hear it.

"Old Weskit's a corker!" added the intelligent youth. "Orlright so long as you butter 'im up, you know. That's a tip."

"Thank you vewy much!"

"No more brains than a rabbit!" said the lift-boy.

"You'll suit him—birds of a feather, you know. 'Ave you ever walked up twelve flights of stairs for nothing?"

"No."

"I don't like it, either."

"Sowwy!"

"Oh, you're a blooming hass!" said the lift-boy in disgust.

It dawned upon D'Arcy at last that the lift-boy expected some recompense for the trouble he had taken.

He felt in his pocket and placed a half-crown in the intelligent youth's hand.

The lift-boy stared at it. He had expected threepence, but Arthur Augustus was still more the swell of St. Jim's than he was an hotel interpreter.

"My heye!" said the lift-boy. "Is it a good 'un?"

"Weally you young wascal—"

"Oh, orlright!" said the boy. "What's your name?"

"Wobinson."

"Mine's Woberts," said the lift-boy, with a grin.

"Vewy glad to make your acquaintance, Master Woberts!"

"Oh crumbs!"

And with that Master Roberts retired.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left to himself in his new quarters.

He sat down upon the edge of the bed.

"Well, I am here, at all events," he murmured. "I've got the job. I wonder what Blake and Hewwies and Dig would say if they could see me now?"

CHAPTER 12.

Arthur Augustus Talks French!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY—alias John Robinson—had secured the "job."

He was installed as interpreter at the Hotel Royal. It seemed almost too good to be true.

True the salary was not magnificent, but a pound a week was, in fact, a pound a week, and board and lodging would be found for him. There was no reason why he should not do very well in his new job.

He remained a little time in his room to gather up his courage, at it were, before descending to face his new world.

Exactly what his social standing was in his new life he did not know.

But at all events he was a member of the staff, and was treated with chummy equality by the lift-boy, Master Roberts. He had a hazy idea that he was at least equal in rank to the hall-porter, but that gigantic individual put him into secondary place by sheer weight.

D'Arcy had felt that it would be judicious to avoid Mr. Pawker as much as possible, in case of awkward inquiries, but he found that he would not be put to any trouble on that account.

Mr. Pawker was far too mighty a personage to trouble himself about an interpreter, and after engaging John Robinson he apparently forgot his existence.

Although Mr. Plummer did not take to the new interpreter, and Roberts, the lift-boy, was somewhat superior, the maids of the hotel all liked John Robinson very much.

Arthur Augustus' graceful manners always made him popular with the ladies, and the maids all pronounced him a dear.

Indeed, the youngest chambermaid had serious thoughts of telling the policeman that she had found that their natures were incompatible, after serious reflection, with a view to installing John Robinson as his successor.

It was D'Arcy's first experience of life below stairs. How he would like it he could hardly determine at first. But one thing was certain, and that was that he would have no choice about the matter.

Although the interpreter of the Wayland Hotel Royal was not an over-worked individual so far as interpreting went, there were plenty of other things to be done, and the interpreter was apparently expected to do them.

D'Arcy was not idle, however, and as he was willing to do everybody else's work as well as his own, he was on the way to becoming quite popular before the first day was out.

When he was not otherwise engaged, it was his duty to be stationed in the hall—partly in case he should be wanted, and partly to show all and sundry that the Hotel Royal really possessed an interpreter as well as a lift, a hall-porter, and everything else necessary in a modern hotel.

Late in the afternoon, about the time when the juniors at St. Jim's would be having their tea in the studies, a telephone bell rang loudly.

D'Arcy did not take any notice of it, as it had not appeared to be among his multifarious duties to answer the telephone. He was thinking about St. Jim's, and wondering whether the chaps were having tea in Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

Mr. Pawker looked out of the bureau.

"Interpreter!"

D'Arcy jumped up.

"Yaas, sir?"

"Wanted here!"

"Certainly, sir!"

"There's a man speaking in French on the telephone," said Mr. Pawker.

"Ask him what he wants. It's a call from London!"

"Yaas, sir!"

The new interpreter took the receiver. He was feeling a little nervous, and his heart was beating fast.

He wished that Mr. Pawker would not stand at his elbow as he was doing.

Mr. Pawker had said that he knew French, and a sudden doubt had smitten D'Arcy as to his own powers now that they were to be put to the test.

"Yaas?" said D'Arcy into the telephone.

A voice came through.

"Allo! L'hotel Royal de Vayland?"

"Yaas—I mean, oui, monsieur!"

"Bon!" The voice ran on quickly, and D'Arcy tried in vain to catch the words.

They were undoubtedly in French, and spoken close at hand he would probably have understood them, but on the telephone it was a different matter.

It is not always easy to understand

(Continued on page 18.)



**Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters to:
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

RECIPE FOR HAPPINESS.

THIS splendid Free Gift Number of the GEM will go into the hands of many thousands of new readers, and to all these I want to extend the glad hand and a warm welcome into the select band of Gemites. The GEM is the oldest established school-story paper in the world and is still the leader in its class. This fact, in these days of fierce competition, has a definite meaning for you as you read these words. No paper could be successful for so long unless it possessed very special qualities for attracting and holding readers, and if all my new friends will read it regularly for a few weeks, they will discover just how attractive it is, by virtue of possessing just a little something others haven't got!

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MORE GOOD NEWS!

What is the ruling passion of practically every boy to-day? The answer is—football! Recognising this, I have decided that, starting with this number, for the rest of the season I will award

SPLENDID MATCH FOOTBALLS

for all the jokes published in the GEM Jester's column. These handsome footballs will be dispatched regularly every week to the lucky winners—so try your hand at winning one by sending me on that good joke you heard at school the other day!

"FIRE-FIGHTERS OF ST. JIM'S!"

This is the title of the thrilling long yarn of Tom Merry & Co. which comes to you in next Wednesday's ripping number. The issue, of course, will also contain eight more free-gift coloured pictures to add to your collection. I am sure that every reader, after seeing those given with this number, will want to collect them all. These splendid pictures of Champions of Speed and Sport will make a grand show in any album, and provide a souvenir you will cherish for many years.

Martin Clifford's next story—a special one for the second Free Gift number—once again shows our popular author

to be second to none as a writer of school yarns. This story opens on an exciting note—a fire breaking out one night in a junior study. As the result of this alarming happening, both Tom Merry and Figgins get the idea of forming an amateur fire brigade, and the rival juniors carefully keep the secret from each other. So it is that two fire brigades are started, giving rise to many amusing situations due to the never-ending rivalry between the School House and the New House. But when, as eventually happens, the St. Jim's fire-fighters are put to the test at a big blaze, they prove their worth in no half-hearted manner.

"THE REBEL OF THE FOURTH!"

Owen Conquest also provides us with another thrilling yarn of the chums of Rookwood, which features again the daring exploits of the "mystery man" of the school. Who is the unknown whose outrages have caused such a sensation at Rookwood? Already suspicion has fallen upon two juniors, who have, however, been proved innocent. Dudley Vane is the next to be suspected—when he becomes the rebel of the Form. Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, is the cause of all Vane's troubles, and when the prefect is knocked senseless by someone unknown, the new boy is suspected—with what result you will see in next week's exciting yarn.

Don't forget that grand match footballs are now being awarded for readers' jokes. If you have sent in a joke, you may be a winner of a football next week. If you haven't sent one yet, then these fine prize footballs should encourage you to do so. Post that pet joke of yours off to-day.

THE THIRD ROUND OF THE CUP.

Once again the all-important Third Round of the F.A. Cup is due to be played. It seems hardly a year ago that one or two teams outside the big Leagues of Soccer—Yeovil, to mention one—were brought into prominence by their fighting displays in the Cup. Other "giant killers," as these small teams are called, have now sprung up to replace those of a year ago. Nearly every season there is a "giant killer" or two, and there can be no denying that they add a little glamour, and not a few sensations, to the most thrilling football competition in the world.

This season Southall, the amateur

club, have set the football world talking by their amazing progress in the competition. They have the honour of being the only amateur club ever to fight their way through to the Third Round of the Cup. It says much for their skill that they played through several preliminary rounds before reaching the First Round proper. Then they were drawn against professional opponents in Swindon Town, and only their most ardent supporters held out a hope of their winning. But they did win—by 3-1!

In the Second Round Southall had to meet professionals again—Newport, the Isle of Wight team. And didn't they give them a trouncing—8-0 was the score! Such was the convincing way Southall, along with Margate, Dartford, and Workington, three clubs also outside the big Leagues, reached the Third Round of the Cup. In their games on Saturday there are many footer fans who will wish these clubs every success. Given a fair share of luck, there's no reason why Southall, at least, shouldn't go a stage farther by beating their next opponents.

A YOUTHFUL GENIUS.

How many boys can boast that they knew the alphabet at the age of eighteen months? Not one in a million. But Roland Fick, of Prince Albert, South Africa, is a boy who can. From an early age he showed promise of being a genius, and he has astonished teachers with his amazing capacity for learning subjects in rapid time. Roland has now reached six, and he can read two languages—English and his native language, Afrikaans. And his taste in books is far in advance of his years. He enjoys literature which the normal boy could not understand until he was fourteen at least. If Roland goes on learning at this rate he will very likely exhaust his teacher's store of knowledge long before it's time to leave school.

A SNAKE DIET!

You've heard about the man who eats frogs alive and attributes to his strange diet his long life? I told you about him a few weeks ago. But have you heard of the man who lives on snakes? He is a young Bengali, of the Punjab Province, India. What's more, he insists on poisonous snakes, and challenges anyone to produce a poisonous snake he cannot eat, offering over thirty-five pounds as a reward. So he must be pretty sure that there's no species of poisonous reptile that he cannot masticate. But fancy eating live, wriggling snakes! Ugh! Give me a nice juicy steak!

Talking about eating, here's the story of two mice who paid the penalty for over-eating. A man living near Amersham found that mice were nibbling at his store of potatoes. One day, when he went to the shed where he kept his "spuds," he was surprised to see two mice in a bottle. They couldn't get out because they were too fat. Yet how had they got into the bottle in the first place? The only answer to that problem is that the mice, after stuffing themselves with potato, had crawled into the bottle, where they had swollen, and so imprisoned themselves.

TAILPIECE.

Mr. Jones: "I'm sorry, Johnnie, to see you have a black eye."

Johnnie: "You go home and feel sorry for your own son—he's got two!"

THE EDITOR.

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PEN PALS COUPON

11-1-35

English on a long-distance telephone. And French, spoken at a record speed, in a far from clear voice, was a puzzle to Arthur Augustus.

"What does he say?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"Wait a minute, sir!"

"Vous avez ecoute—vous comprenez?" came on the telephone.

"Oui, oui, oui!" said D'Arcy.

"Bon! Tout est arrange, donc."

"Oui?"

"Well, what is it?" asked Mr. Pawker.

D'Arcy was desperate. He hadn't the faintest idea what that Frenchman in London had been telephoning about, but it stands to reason that when a man telephones to an hotel, it is because he wants rooms there. D'Arcy decided to risk it.

"The gentleman is comin' here," he said.

"Good! What name?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"Robespierre," said D'Arcy recklessly, giving the first French name that came into his head on the spur of the moment.

"How many rooms does he want?"

"Three," said Arthur Augustus. He felt that he was in for it now, and he might as well give his employer a good order.

"Doesn't he want to know the price?"

"He hasn't mentioned it—so far as I know," added D'Arcy, under his breath. Mr. Pawker smiled.

"Good!" he said, with emphasis.

The voice came through the telephone again, in an impatient tone.

"Allo, allo! Vous ecoutez?"

"Oui, oui!" said D'Arcy.

"Pourquois pas repondre, donc?"

"Eh?"

"Vous n'avez pas repondu—pourquoi pas?"

"Oh deah!"

"Comment?"

"You—you see—I mean vous voyez"

"Comment?"

"Bai Jove, what does he keep on

sayin' 'common' for?" murmured the perplexed D'Arcy.

"What's he talking about now?" inquired Mr. Pawker inquisitively.

"He—he says it's a beautiful day, sir."

Mr. Pawker sniffed.

"Just like these Frenchmen, wasting a business man's time with their blessed furrin politeness," he said. "I knowed them like that in Parree. Ring off if you've finished."

D'Arcy rang off with pleasure. He knew that the Frenchman's last words had been demanding an answer, but as he did not know what the man had said, he could not very well give an answer, and it seemed simplest to ring off.

The next minute the telephone rang furiously.

"Hallo, there he is again!" said Mr. Pawker.

D'Arcy groaned, and took up the receiver.

"Hallo!" he said.

"Parbleu!" came the voice of the Frenchman in London. "Parbleu! Qui est-il—vous etes fou, je crois! Parbleu!"

"What's that?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"He says he must have a—a room with a southern aspect!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Tell him they're all booked in!" said Mr. Pawker. "He can have three rooms looking on the river if he likes."

"Yaas, sir," D'Arcy spoke into the telephone. He spoke the first French that came into his head, which happened to be some sentences from a lesson at St. Jim's:

"Voila, monsieur! Avez vous les souliers de mon grandpere? Avez vous les chapeaux de mon frere?"

He heard a gasp on the telephone. The Frenchman in London was already in a state of surprise. He was probably quite astounded at being asked if he had the shoes of D'Arcy's grandfather and the hats of D'Arcy's brother. "Comment?" he shrieked.

"Oui, oui!" said D'Arcy.

"Je ne peux pas comprendre!"

"Oui, oui! Yes! Parfaitement," said D'Arcy.

"Parbleu!"

"Well, what is he saying now?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"He—he will be delighted with the rooms overlooking the river!" gasped D'Arcy. "And he arrives to-night, at nine o'clock!" D'Arcy's invention, on the spur of the moment, would have done credit to a journalist.

"Nine o'clock?" said Mr. Pawker, in surprise. "There ain't a train to bring him here at nine o'clock. I suppose he's coming in a motor-car. Looks like being a good thing—especially as he hasn't mentioned the price. Is he still speaking?"

"Yaas."

"How these blessed foreigners do keep on!" said Mr. Pawker. "See what he wants!"

"Imbecile!" came through the telephone. "Nom du chien! Je crois que vous avez la une maison de sante."

"Oui, oui," said D'Arcy.

"Comment?"

"C'est bien," said D'Arcy desperately. "C'est bon! Mardigras and Palais Royal! Gay Parree, can-can et vive la republique!"

"Parbleu!"

The stranger rang off.

Arthur Augustus was glad of it. He was in such a state of mental confusion that he hardly knew what he had been saying. It is safe to say that the Frenchman hadn't the remotest idea of what he had been saying. The unhappy foreigner must certainly have supposed that he was talking to a lunatic, and probably felt glad that there was the length of telephone wire between them.

"Well, he's done at last," said Mr. Pawker. "By the way, what's his name, did you say?"

"Jean Paul."

"Eh! You said Robespierre just now."

"Yaas—Jean Paul Robespierre."

"Queer that he should give you all his Christian names," said Mr. Pawker. "But these blessed foreigners are all the same—all jaw like a sheep's head. Well, it's all right. So he'll be here at nine o'clock? Must be coming by car. Three rooms—no price mentioned!"

And a fat smile of satisfaction overspread Mr. Pawker's face. Undoubtedly there would be a bill of the most alarming dimensions for that unhappy foreigner when he had stayed a while at the Hotel Royal, Wayland. Mr. Pawker was so pleased at the prospect that he gave the interpreter an encouraging smile.

"You answered that call very well, Robinson," he said. "I'm quite satisfied with you—quite!"

"Thank you vevy much, sir!" gasped D'Arcy.

And he made his escape from the bureau. He wondered whether Mr. Pawker would have expressed satisfaction if he had known the real nature of that peculiar conversation on the telephone. He wondered, too, who the Frenchman was, and what he wanted. He waited for some time in fear of another ring from the same gentleman, but it did not come.

The unknown traveller was evidently fed-up with the Hotel Royal, Wayland, and had probably decided to go elsewhere.

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CHAPTER 13.

The Interpreter Vanishes!

MR. PAWKER was all attention when nine o'clock came round that evening. He was expecting the arrival of the French gentleman in a motor-car.

Although the Hotel Royal offered shelter to all who came, big guns in motor-cars were especially welcomed, as at all hotels. Mr. Pawker, like a true hotel-keeper, basked in the reflected glory of rich guests. But Mr. Pawker was likely to have a little disappointment this time.

Nine o'clock came, but no Frenchman; and at half-past nine Mr. Pawker looked cross. It was evident that that valuable guest had changed his mind about coming.

"Where did that Frenchy ring up from, Robinson?" he asked D'Arcy.

D'Arcy started.

"I didn't ask him, sir."

Mr. Pawker grunted.

"Must have been a hoax," he said. "He hasn't come. Keep an eye on the telephone in case he rings up again. Maybe only delay."

"Yaas, sir."

It appeared to be the interpreter's duty to answer the telephone, among other things. The bell rang at a quarter to ten, and Arthur Augustus went to the receiver in fear and trembling.

But it was a voice in English that came over the wire, and he breathed with relief. He could deal with that language, at all events. Then suddenly he gave a start as he recognised the voice. It was the voice of Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, and the receiver almost dropped from D'Arcy's hand.

"Is that the Hotel Royal, Wayland?"

"Yaas."

"Mr. Pawker?"

D'Arcy breathed hard. It occurred to him that Dr. Holmes might have heard something of him, and might be going to make inquiries of Mr. Pawker. In that case, Mr. Pawker must not be allowed to come to the telephone.

"I'm speakin' for him," said D'Arcy, disguising his voice as much as he could.

"Who is that?"

"Dr. Holmes, St. James' School."

"Vewy good. Do you wequiah apartments here?"

"No, no!"

"We can let you have three wooms lookin' ovah the wivah—"

"No, no; nothing of that sort. A boy has gone away from my school without permission—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, go on, Dr. Holmes."

"Inquiry has been made at the railway stations, and apparently he has not taken any train. It has occurred to me that he may be putting up in some hotel or inn in the neighbourhood, as he is known to have had a considerable amount of money with him. I am, therefore, making inquiries at all the hotels in the telephone-book. Will you kindly tell me whether such a boy is staying at your hotel?"

In spite of the state of nerves the Head's voice had thrown him into, D'Arcy could not help chuckling. It seemed so curious that the Head of St. Jim's should be asking him if he knew anything about his own movements.

"Pway desewibe the boy, sir," he said. "What name?"

"Arthur Augustus D'Arcy."

"No one has given that name here, sir," said D'Arcy, quite truthfully.

"He might possibly be under an assumed name. He is a lad of nearly fifteen, very well dressed, sometimes wears an eyeglass, and speaks deliberately, and lisps."

"There are no boys at all among the guests at the hotel at the pwesent moment, sir."

"Thank you!"

"I will inform you immediately, sir, if any boy of the description you have given comes here and asks for accommodation, sir."

"Thank you very much! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, sir!"

And D'Arcy hung up the receiver with a sigh of relief. Mr. Pawker, who had been absent for some time, came into the bureau.

"Another telephone call?" he asked.

"Yaas, sir."

"That chap again, I suppose? Does he say why he hasn't come?"

"He says he won't want any rooms here, sir."

Mr. Pawker grunted.

"Them blessed Frenchmen!" he murmured.

As the evening drew on, Arthur Augustus began to feel sleepy. The juniors at St. Jim's were all in bed at that hour, and as it was past D'Arcy's accustomed bed-time, he began to feel very drowsy.

The hotel did not close till the last train in, which was at nearly half-past eleven, and the interpreter was expected to be on duty until then.

Arthur Augustus sat and nodded in his chair in a corner of the hall, while the gigantic porter stared patronisingly into the High Street of Wayland, or chatted with the lift-boy. There was a rattle in the street as the hotel bus—among its other modern appurtenances the Hotel Royal had a motor-bus all

its own—came trundling up to the big double doors.

In a moment Mr. Plummer woke to new life. The motor-bus generally, brought in whatever travellers might have arrived in Wayland by the last train. The big porter swung the doors open and sailed forth to greet the newcomers, if there were any.

There was one man in the bus—a little, foreign-looking gentleman with a dark, olive face and black hair, wearing spectacles and a silk hat. There were boxes and bags piled on top of the bus, showing that the foreign-looking gentleman had plenty of baggage.

The porter and the under-porter and the lift-boy and two sleepy waiters were very busy at once. Boxes and bags crashed down on the pavement; the porter opened the bus door and assisted the little old gentleman to alight.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked out of the double doors of the hotel anxiously. He wished the word "Interpreter" on his cap was not quite so prominent. He dreaded that the new arrival might be a foreigner. It might even be the dreadful Frenchman who had spoken on the telephone from London.

Roberts, the lift-boy, came hurrying in with a bag in each hand.

D'Arcy caught sight of the labels on the bags—Milan, Rome, Paris, London. Evidently it was a foreigner, though what a man from Rome and Milan could want in a sleepy little place like Wayland in Sussex was a mystery.

"What kind of a chap is it, Woberts?" asked D'Arcy anxiously.

The lift-boy grinned.

"Job for you," he said. "Furriner."

"Fwench?" asked D'Arcy, in dismay.

"No, I think something else; what he said to Plummer didn't sound like French. More like Rooshian," said the lift-boy.

"Oh, Gwest Scott!"

The under-porter came in with a big trunk.

D'Arcy tapped him on the shoulder, and nearly overturned him and the trunk, too.

"Look out, you fathead!"

"Pway excuse me. Is it a foweignah, deah boy?"

"Yes—Eyetalian," said the under-porter. "Leave that trunk alone—don't shove a man over!"

Arthur Augustus stood motionless.

If the new arrival had been a Russian, the interpreter might have stood his ground, as he was not supposed to know Russian. But Italian! Italian was one of the languages which D'Arcy was employed at the princely salary of a pound a week to speak.

The Italian gentleman was not likely (Continued on the next page.)

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to speak English, and his amount of baggage showed that he was an important personage.

Arthur Augustus wished that the floor would open and swallow him up. A few lines from an Italian song had satisfied Mr. Pawker, but they were not likely to satisfy an Italian.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What uttally wotten luck! I don't suppose they have an Italian here once in a blue moon, and one must dwop in to-night—just because I've got the job of interpwetah. It's uttally wotten!"

He was moving away when Plummer called to him.

"Interpreter! Robinson!"

"Yaas?"

"You'll be wanted—Italian gentleman just coming in."

"Yaas."

Arthur Augustus made himself scarce as he said the last "yaas."

The little foreign gentleman came into the spacious vestibule of the hotel, his black eyes twinkling behind his spectacles.

Mr. Pawker advanced to meet him with a manner of great empressment.

The Italian gentleman nodded to him.

"Buono sera," he said politely.

"Bony Sarah!" repeated Mr. Pawker affably. "Excuse me, sir I don't speak Italian myself, but I've an interpreter here."

He looked round.

"Interpreter!"

No reply.

"Interpreter!"

The interpreter had vanished.

"Plummer, where is the interpreter? Fetch him at once!"

"E was 'ere a moment ago, sir," said Plummer, looking about him.

"Just a minute, sir. The interpreter will be back in a moment," said Mr. Pawker, speaking just as if his meaning would be clear to his guest, although it was perfectly evident that the stranger had no English.

The Italian gentleman rolled his eyes behind his glasses.

"Si parla Italiana, qui!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Pawker, who knew what those words meant, as he had them inserted in his advertisements. "The interpreter will be here in a moment. Find that interpreter! Do you hear, Plummer? How dare he go off duty without permission?"

"Non importa niente," said the guest.

"Una camera per la notte—o tutto."

"Oh, Great Scott, how does he expect a Christian to understand that lingo?" groaned Mr. Pawker. "I'll skin that interpreter! Interpreter!"

"Ain't to be seen, sir!" said Plummer, coming back.

"I'll sack him! I'll fire him! I'll kick him out! I don't pay him to keep out of sight when I've got foreign guests here!" gasped Mr. Pawker.

"Una camera!" repeated the Italian gentleman impatiently. "Sono stanco!"

"He wants a camera!" said Mr. Pawker, in amazement. "What on earth does he want with a camera? He can't take photographs at night-time!"

The Italian caught the word "camera" in Mr. Pawker's speech, the rest of it being unintelligible to him. He nodded quickly.

"That right?" asked Mr. Pawker.

"A camera?"

"Si, si; una camera, signore."

"Must mean that there's a camera among his bags, sir," said Plummer.

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"I ain't seen one; only bags and trunks, sir."

"Might have left it in the train," said Mr. Pawker. "Go and look for that interpreter, some of you! Find him, and bring him here! Tell him I'll sack him! You have lost a camera?" he added, turning to the foreign gentleman, who was showing great signs of impatience.

The signor nodded emphatically at the word camera.

Mr. Pawker was in blissful ignorance of the fact that the word simply meant a "room" in Italian, and he attacked the English meaning to the word.

"Did you leave it in the train?" asked Mr. Pawker.

The guest looked puzzled.

"Train!" he repeated. "Il treno! Che volete dire?"

"Oh crumbs! Did you leave the camera in the train, or perhaps at the station, sir?"

"Non capisco niente!" exclaimed the foreign gentleman impatiently. "Una camera—una camera! Capisco?"

"Go and inquire for the camera at the station, Plummer! I'll show the gentleman to his room," said Mr. Pawker.

"I'll kill that interpreter! The villain! The scoundrel! This way, sir! The camera will be all right. It will be kept at the lost property office if the porter doesn't find it, sir. This way! Pray follow me! Here is the lift."

The guest seemed satisfied now. He stepped into the lift, and, as he disappeared upwards, the interpreter appeared from behind a door at the end of the hall.

He was gasping.

"Bai Jove, I was well out of that!" murmured D'Arcy. "I trust that person will be gone to-morrow mornin' before I come down! Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 14.

Gussy in Difficulties!

FORTUNATELY, the terrible guest was tired with his journey, and did not come down again that night, much to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's relief. But Arthur Augustus had an unpleasant ten minutes with Mr. Pawker.

Mr. Pawker, as soon as he found his interpreter, told him plainly what he thought of him for being out of the way when he was wanted. Mr. Pawker did not measure his words, and the flow of his eloquence was something wonderful.

He did not leave off until he was out of breath.

"Bai Jove!" was all Arthur Augustus said.

Mr. Pawker waved a fat fist in the air.

"I'd sack you," he shouted—"I'd boot you out, as I did the other waster, only I want you to interpret to Signor Orezzi in the morning! Do you hear?"

"Yaas!"

"Mind you're in sight in the morning, or there will be trouble! Got that?"

"Yaas!"

"Then don't you forget it! What do you suppose I pay you for, if I've got to talk Italian to my clientele myself?" demanded Mr. Pawker.

"I'm sure I don't know!" said D'Arcy meekly.

"The gentleman's lost a camera, and we couldn't get particulars, because you were skulking somewhere instead of attending to business!" snorted Mr. Pawker.

"Mind you're on the spot to-morrow morning, that's all! If you're not, it's the boot!"

"Yaas!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went to bed,

feeling dismayed, and looking forward with great uneasiness to the ordeal of the morning.

How was he to face the Italian gentleman? Apparently, he was not going early in the morning, and D'Arcy would therefore have to talk to him, and translate all his wishes and desires to the staff. The prospect made the unhappy interpreter turn cold all over. He had a little Italian, certainly, but it was of a poetical and lyrical variety. He could have read verses of Dante without great difficulty, and could have translated a song with only a few mistakes. But the Italian words for commonplace things were great mystics to him; and as soon as he had to talk to the Italian signor, it would come out, and it meant what Mr. Pawker elegantly described as the "boot."

But D'Arcy hoped that he would get out of the difficulty somehow. And, anyway, he was sleepy, and so he went to sleep. He dreamed that he was back in the Form-room at St. Jim's, chasing Gordon Gay and Tom Merry round the Form, while an Italian traveller sat on Mr. Lathom's desk and waved Mr. Lathom's cane. From that wild vision he was aroused by the bedclothes being dragged off him.

He started up in bed.

Grey dawn was struggling in through the little window of his garret, and Roberts, the lift-boy, was standing by his bedside, grinning. It was evidently Roberts who had awakened the swell of St. Jim's in so unceremonious a manner.

"Pway don't be a wuff beast, Woberts!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Going to sleep all day?" demanded Roberts.

"It isn't wisin'-bell yet"

Roberts stared.

"The staff 'ere don't 'ave a risin'-bell," he remarked. "It's time for you to get up, and I've been sent to call you!"

"Oh, vewy well!" said D'Arcy, with a sigh. "Thank you vewy much!"

"And when you get up," said Roberts, "I'd recommend you to put that moustache on a bit tighter, young fellow-melad!"

D'Arcy coloured crimson, and his hand flew up to his moustache. It had been pushed nearly off by the pressure on the pillow. Roberts chuckled.

"What's the game?" he queried.

"Bai Jove!"

"I won't give you away," said the lift-boy. "But what's the game? Was it to make yourself look old enough for the job?"

"Yaas, that's it! Pway don't mention it, deah boy!"

Roberts nodded.

"I'm mum, old pal," he said. "That's all right. I'll bet you ain't much older than me, as a matter of fact—what?"

"Pewwaps not, deah boy," said D'Arcy.

"I shall be much obliged to you if you will keep it dark about my moustache."

"Oh, that's all serene!"

D'Arcy rose and dressed. It was not yet rising-bell at St. Jim's, but evidently hotel employees were required to rise early. Arthur Augustus, dressed in his interpreter's uniform, had carefully affixed his moustache, and descended into the great building. He passed a youth laden with newly-polished boots, which he was distributing at the doors of the owners, and came down into the hall.

Mr. Pawker apparently was not yet down, but Plummer was there, very gigantic and gaim.

"Nice mess you got us into, Mr. Interpreter!" he growled.

"Sowwy, deah boy," said D'Arcy politely. "What's the mattah?"

Mr. Plummer grunted angrily. "I've had a fool's dance round the station inquiring for a camera!" he growled. "And the old ass can't have lost one at all, from what they say. Ain't goin' to bother my 'ead about it any more—I can tell you that straight!"

"I wouldn't, deah boy."

"Don't you disappear again," said the porter warningly. "There'll be the push for you if you do. Pawker was wild about it last night."

"Yaas, he told me so," said D'Arcy ruefully.

"He'll do more'n tell you so next time!" growled Plummer. "And so will I, if you gimme the job of talkin' to a bloomin' Eytalian!"

the hotel in person his difficulties commenced.

No. 68 rang at last, about half-past nine in the morning, and Arthur Augustus slowly and reluctantly took his way to the apartment of the Italian gentleman.

He paused in the hall, debating in his mind whether he should pursue his way, or bolt from the hotel, without claiming the salary already due to him for his labours as an interpreter. As luck would have it Mr. Pawker bore down upon him at that moment. He wagged a fat forefinger at the dismayed interpreter.

"No. 68 is ringing," he said. "Answer the bell, and see what he wants, Robinson."

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy.

And he mounted the stairs. He tapped at the door of No. 68 with a

was only too glad to get the question out at all, without bothering about subtle distinctions.

"Dejeuner," said Signor Orezzi, and that being a familiar word, D'Arcy was at no loss. Besides, he had already guessed that the signor wanted his breakfast.

"Si, signore," he said cheerfully. "What will you have? Washabs and eggs, or fwied fish, or kidneys and bacon?"

"Parlate Italiana!" exclaimed the signor.

"Sowwy—I mean perdoname," said D'Arcy.

The signor sniffed. Apparently he was already beginning to have some doubts about the qualifications of the interpreter at the Hotel Royal.

"Cafe latte," he said, "ed il pane e butirro."



"Interpreter! Robinson!" exclaimed the hotel commissionaire. "You'll be wanted—Italian gentleman coming in." "Yaas," murmured Arthur Augustus, and he promptly made himself scarce! He couldn't face the Italian when he only knew a few words of that language!

"Is Signor Orezzi down yet?" asked D'Arcy.

"No. You're to answer his bell when he rings," said Plummer. "Nobody else in the show can understand his lingo. You've to see what he wants for breakfast."

"Yaas."

"No. 68 when he rings," said Plummer.

"Thank you, Plummah!"

Plummer growled and turned away. D'Arcy had his breakfast below stairs, waiting in great anxiety for No. 68 to ring. He had to go through the ordeal, and he had to trust to luck; but he could not help feeling uneasy. He had thought it an excellent "dodge" to earn his living as an hotel interpreter. But the "dodge" was proving somewhat other than a sinecure for him. So long as obnoxious foreigners talked to him only on the telephone, he felt that he could manage. But when they came to

beating heart. A voice replied from the interior.

"Entrate!"

D'Arcy opened the door and entered. The Italian gentleman was in bed. Evidently he followed in England the Continental custom of breakfasting in bed. D'Arcy carried his cap in his hand, but the Italian gentleman caught the word "Interpreter" on it.

"Interpreter!" he said.

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy. "I mean, si, signore."

"Ah! e buono!"

"Yaas, sir. What do you want? Che volete?" asked D'Arcy.

The Italian gentleman looked at him stiffly. D'Arcy had asked the question in good Italian—what did he want? But considering his position as hotel interpreter, and the old gentleman as guest, he should have adopted the polite form of address, in the third person—Che vuole Lei? But Arthur Augustus

"Oh, deah!"

"Pane e burro," repeated the Italian gentleman, "e cafe latte."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Capite?" demanded the signor irritably.

"Yaas. Cafe—that's coffee. What on earth is pahnay?" murmured D'Arcy. "I dare say he means bwead-and-buttah. I know these blessed foweignahs have nothin' but bwead-and-butter for bwakfast as a rule, as they have nothin' fit to eat in their beastlay countwies! Lemme see—you want coffee and bwead-and-butter?"

"Subito!" snapped Signor Orezzi.

"Eh?"

"Subito!"

"Is that somethin' to eat?"

"Subito!" shrieked Signor Orezzi.

"Oh, bai Jove, non ho subito!" said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "We haven't any left. There was a gweat

demand for it yestahday, and we haven't a scwap left in the place. Is there anythin' else?"

"Cafe latte subito."

"Che cosa e subito?" asked D'Arcy. "E qualchecosa di mangiare?"

The Italian gentleman stared at him. Evidently he understood the question as to whether "subito" was something to eat. He burst into a sudden roar of laughter.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, and he laughed, too. He laughed out of politeness, not quite seeing where the joke came in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed D'Arcy politely. "Siete interprete?" demanded the Italian gentleman, pointing to D'Arcy's cap, which he held in his hand.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Si, signore, sono interprete!" he assured.

"Ha, ha, ha! Interprete! E domandate si subito e qualchecosa di mangiare!" roared the Italian gentleman. "Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy rubbed his nose thoughtfully. It was evident that "subito" was not something to eat.

"E qualchecosa di bere?" he ventured.

The Italian gentleman simply shrieked. It was unnecessary for him to answer. Evidently "subito" was not something to drink.

"Bai Jove, if it isn't anythin' to eat or drink, what does he want it for at breakfast-time?" murmured D'Arcy, in perplexity.

"Interprete," giggled the signor, "non e vero."

D'Arcy knew what that meant; it meant that it was not true that he was an interpreter. Evidently the signor had found him out.

"Cafe latte, ed il pane, e burro, subito. Toute de suite," added the traveller in French; and then D'Arcy understood.

He knew that "toute de suite" meant "at once," and evidently "subito" meant the same thing. He understood now why the Italian gentleman had laughed when he asked whether it was something to eat or drink. Signor Orezzi only meant that he wanted coffee and rolls and butter for his breakfast, and that he wanted them at once.

"Si, si, signore!" gasped D'Arcy. "All right—I mean buono! Subito—all sereno!"

Arthur Augustus descended, and gave the order for the Italian gentleman's breakfast with great dignity, thereby greatly impressing the staff in the regions below, as it proved that he did really and truly understand Italian.

CHAPTER 15.

The Return of the Wanderer!

THE interpreter of the Hotel Royal, Wayland, would gladly have avoided further interviews with the Italian gentleman. But it was not to be.

About an hour later there was a call for him:

"Interpreter!"

"Here I am!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What do you want, Plummah?"

"The Eyetalian's in the bureau!" growled Plummer. "He's driving Mr. Pawker nigh raving—and you're wanted."

"Bai Jove!"

With lagging footsteps, Arthur Augustus went into the bureau. Mr. THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,455.

Pawker was nodding and smiling to the Italian gentleman, who was talking in fluent Italian, much to the mystification of the hotel proprietor.

Mr. Pawker gasped with relief as D'Arcy came in.

"Oh, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been? He wants something. Ask him what he wants."

"Buon giorno, signor!" said D'Arcy. He could say "Good-morning!" most successfully.

"Buon giorno!" replied Signor Orezzi; and he grinned as he looked at the interpreter.

"Ahem!" said D'Arcy. "Il tempo e buono, signor?"

"Si, si! Ma dove e il telefono?" demanded Signor Orezzi. "Ditemi il numero della scuola del dottore Olmes."

D'Arcy jumped.

"Holmes?"

"Si, si!" rapped out the Italian gentleman, delighted at being understood.

D'Arcy stared blankly at him. The "scuola" that the foreigner wanted was evidently St. Jim's. "Il dottore Olmes" could be none other than Dr. Holmes, the reverend Head of St. Jim's.

"He wants to telephone to Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's, Mr. Pawkah," said Arthur Augustus, gasping.

"Is that all?" said Mr. Pawker. "Well, you can get the number out of the book, and put him through. I hope Dr. Holmes will understand him. It's more than I can."

"Capite?" demanded the signor.

"Si, si, signore."

"Buono!"

Arthur Augustus knew Dr. Holmes' telephone number. He rang up the exchange, and asked to be put on to St. Jim's, and handed the receiver to Signor Orezzi.

"Grazie," said the gentleman.

He talked rapidly into the receiver. D'Arcy tried to follow what he said, but it was in vain. But evidently Dr. Holmes, at the other end of the wire, understood, for the replies the signor received seemed to be satisfactory.

Signor Orezzi hung up the receiver, with a beaming smile.

"All sereno?" asked D'Arcy.

The signor grinned.

"E buono," he said.

The Italian gentleman spent the next hour or two in the smoking-room smoking strong cigars, and not bothering the interpreter. He was still there when there was the sound of a motor-car in the street outside.

Mr. Plummer swung open the big double doors as a gentleman in a silk hat descended from the car and mounted the hotel steps.

The gentleman entered, and came face to face with the interpreter of the Hotel Royal.

He gasped.

"D'Arcy!"

"Doctah Holmes!"

Retreat was impossible.

The Head of St. Jim's and Arthur Augustus stared blankly at one another. Mr. Pawker came forward.

"What does this mean?" asked the Head of St. Jim's. "Mr. Pawker, what is this boy doing here?"

"That boy, sir?" said Mr. Pawker in surprise.

"Yes. He ran away from my school the day before yesterday, and he has been searched for since, without success," said the Head. "Were you hiding him here?"

Mr. Pawker almost fell down.

"Ran away from school!" he gasped.

"Yes. His name is D'Arcy—"

"He gave me the name of Robinson!" exclaimed Mr. Pawker.

"Dear me!"

"He came here in those clothes, asking for a job as interpreter," said Mr. Pawker. "I must say he's given satisfaction. But I've never seen a school-boy with a moustache before, sir. There must be some mistake."

"The moustache is false," said the Head.

D'Arcy's face was crimson.

"I—I—I am sowwy," he stammered. "As I had left St. Jim's, I—I had to earn my livin', sir, and I got a job here. It is quite imposs for me to return to St. Jim's and be expelled, sir. A D'Arcy could not submit to such a degradation—"

"You foolish boy!" said Dr. Holmes, smiling. "The whole matter has been explained. The night you ran away we knew that the assault upon Mr. Lathom was an accident, and I had no intention of expelling you."

"Bai Jove!"

"I had intended only to cane you for your rashness," said the Head. "Now you have added to your misconduct by running away from the school."

D'Arcy looked very distressed.

"Bai Jove! I am awfully sowwy, sir," he mumbled. "I—I didn't think Mr. Lathom would accept my explanation, sir, and—I thought it best to wun away, sir."

"Ah, caro amico!" exclaimed the Italian gentleman, rushing out of the smoking-room and shaking hands with Dr. Holmes with both hands. Then he glanced at D'Arcy, and chuckled. "Ah, buon interprete! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is very fortunate that I came in my car to take my old friend Signor Orezzi to St. Jim's," said Dr. Holmes. "You will have the kindness to get into my car also, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir," said the swell of St. Jim's meekly.

"Well, this beats Banagher!" exclaimed the astounded Mr. Pawker. "I shall have to engage another interpreter, I suppose."

"I trust you will get an equally satisfactory one, sir," said D'Arcy. "Pway allow me to apologise for leavin' you so suddenly. I will not ask for my salary—I shall not wequiah it. I am vey glad to have given you satisfaction."

And D'Arcy, still in his interpreter's uniform, climbed into the car and drove away with Dr. Holmes and Signor Orezzi, stared after in blank astonishment by Mr. Plummer, the porter, and the lift-boy.

The St. Jim's fellows had been dismissed from morning lessons when the car arrived at the old school.

Tom Merry was the first to catch sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he gave a yell.

"Here he is!"

"Great Scott!"

"What's he doing in those clothes?"

Arthur Augustus descended from the car. Dr. Holmes and Signor Orezzi went into the House, and D'Arcy was surrounded by a crowd of inquiring juniors, and he was forced to tell his story.

His explanation was received with exclamations of amazement and yells of laughter.

Tom Merry wiped his eyes.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "You take the cake, Gussy! Interpreter! Oh, my Aunt Maria!"

(Continued on page 28.)

THE BOY WHO WAS EXPELLED ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE TERM!

SACKED from the SCHOOL!



"Mornington, you are expelled from Rookwood!" exclaimed the Head. "But for the lateness of the hour I would send you away to-night. You will leave the school in the morning!" "But—but—" stuttered Mornington. "Take him away, Mr. Dalton!" said Dr. Chisholm.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

Back to Rookwood!

"BUCK up!" roared Lovell. "Sheer off!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

"Barge those Modern cads!" shrieked Lovell.

It was the first day of term at Rookwood School.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had come back merry and bright after the Christmas holidays. The train from Latcham Junction had disgorged a swarm of Rookwooders at the village station of Coombe—seniors and juniors, Classics and Moderns. From the village, the school bus was to take them on to Rookwood—and though there was a second bus, and even a third, everybody who was anybody, so to speak, was determined to go in the first.

The Fistical Four, of the Classical Fourth Form, would have led the way out of the station, but Lovell had caused a little delay. Arthur Edward Lovell had stumbled into Carthew of the Sixth—who had rewarded him with a lunge of his boot. Lovell, therefore, had lingered to get that unpopular prefect with a snowball from the cover of a stack of baggage on the platform.

Which was happy and satisfactory in its way, but caused Jimmy Silver & Co. to be at the tail, instead of the head, of the swarm of schoolboys pouring out into the old High Street of Coombe.

For which reason Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth were already taking possession of the bus, to the exclusion of Classical fellows.

Some Classical juniors, it was clear, had objected. Peele, Gower, Townsend, and Topham of the Classical Fourth were sprawling in slushy, trodden snow. Smythe of the Shell was chasing his hat, which had been knocked off by a snowball from the bus. Tubby

Muffin, uttering a series of loud squeals, was whirling in the grasp of the three Tommies—Dodd, Cook, and Doyle—on the step of the bus, and as Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived on the scene, the fat Classical was hurled away in a squealing heap.

Arthur Edward Lovell yelled to his friends to buck up, and led a charge. It did not matter twopence whether fellows went by the first bus or the second—except that Classics weren't going to let Moderns get away with it, and Moderns were not going to let Classics get away with it. But it was a case of first come, first served, and the bus was packed with Modern juniors,

their goal, as it were, and defended strenuously. Lovell got on the step—only to go backwards. Catching Jimmy and Raby with his flying arms as he went, he dragged them down in his company. Newcome, the next moment, was strewn across them. Dudley Vane, grappling with Tommy Dodd, got on board, only to find himself packed like a sardine among the Moderns.

"Give 'em beans!" yelled Tommy Dodd. "Kick those Classical cads off! Chuck that fellow out!"

But it was not easy to chuck Dudley Vane out. By sheer force he drove his way into the bus, falling over there in the grasp of three or four Moderns, and struggling with them on the floor. Something like a dog-fight raged in the interior of the bus.

"Rescue!" yelled Vane. Mornington jumped on the bus, and was hurled off again.

Jimmy Silver scrambled up. With his cap gone, his tie flying in the wind, and his coat smothered with mud and snow, Jimmy hurled himself at the enemy. His friends backed him up manfully. But again it booted not. The pack of Moderns kept them at bay, and suddenly there came a roar from Bulkeley of the Sixth:

"Stand clear, there! The bus is starting! Get clear!"

The attack had to back off. The bus rolled away down the High Street, the defeated Classics glaring after it, the victorious Moderns sending back howls of defiance and derision.

"Done 'em in the eye!" grinned Tommy Dodd breathlessly.

"Right in the jolly old eye!" chuckled Tommy Cook.

"Faith, and we've got wan of them inside!" said Tommy Doyle. "Sure I'm tired of sitting on his head! Chuck him off!"

If Tommy Doyle was tired of sitting

Never has a new term at Rookwood opened so sensationally—a junior expelled on the first day of the term! That is the fate of Valentine Mornington, judged guilty of being the "mystery man" whose "crimes" have had all Rookwood guessing!

some of whom yelled defiance at the Classics, while others howled to the driver to get going.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, Raby and Newcome, reached the bus with a rush. With them rushed Dudley Vane, the new fellow in the Fourth, who had been home with Jimmy for Christmas. The five hurled themselves in a bunch at Tommy Dodd & Co. Behind them came more of the Classical Fourth—Mornington and Erroll, Rawson and Conroy, Teddy Grace and Jones minor.

But it booted not! The Moderns were in possession, and they packed

on Dudley Vane's head, there was no doubt that Vane was still more tired of Doyle sitting there! His face was crimson, and he was gurgling for breath as Tommy Doyle shifted, and he was jerked to his feet.

He was the only Classical on the bus—surrounded by grinning and triumphant Moderns. He stood panting and gasping.

"Chuck him off!" howled the Modern juniors.

"Hold on!" grinned Tommy Dodd. "Can't chuck him off with the bus going! Shove his cap down the back of his neck, and—" Tommy Dodd broke off with a yell as Dudley Vane, heedless of the odds against him, reached out and punched his nose hard. "Yoo-hooop!"

Tommy Dodd staggered.

"Collar him!" he gasped.

Six or seven pairs of hands fastened on Dudley Vane.

He struggled fiercely, his eyes blazing with angry excitement. But his struggles were not much use in the grasp of so many hands—neither did the Modern fellows handle him gently. In the unending rows and rags between Classics and Moderns at Rookwood fellows were expected to keep their tempers—even if they occasionally got some rather hard knocks. It was, on the whole, a good-humoured rivalry—more fun than anything else—and a fellow who lost his temper was regarded as rather an outsider. And it was clear that Vane had lost his temper badly.

Tommy Dodd dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. It was streaming red.

"You worm!" hooted Tommy. "Here, pitch him over and keep him on the floor if he can't keep his rotten temper! Jam his cap down his back, and stick your feet on him!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Tommy Cook.

"You rotters!" panted Vane, struggling wildly.

"Oh, shut up!" said Towle. "There's only one rotter here, and he's a Classical!" And Towle jerked at Vane's cap and stuffed it down his back.

Bump! Vane went down on the floor.

"Keep him there!" gasped Tommy Dodd, still dabbing his damaged nose.

"Sure we'll kape the baste there!" chuckled Tommy Doyle. And he planted both his feet on Vane.

More feet were added. In fact, as many were added as room could be found for. Dudley Vane disappeared under boots—most of them muddy. Only his face was left clear—glaring over crimson and furious. But crimson fury only made the merry Moderns roar with laughter.

The bus rocked on to Rookwood School. Again and again the hapless Classical struggled to rise, but the numberless boots pinned him down.

By the time the school was reached, Dudley Vane was more than tired of the journey. Not till the bus halted at Rookwood was he released—then the Modern crowd swarmed out and left him lying—muddy and rumped and breathless.

He sat up, gurgling.

It was a full minute before he was able to follow the crowd out. The bus had stopped at Manders' House, the quarters of the Modern contingent at Rookwood. Vane had to cross the quad to get to the Head's House—the Classical quarters. As he staggered breathlessly away, loud laughter from the Moderns followed him; and as he cast a fierce look back, a snowball

whizzed from Tommy Dodd's unerring hand and squashed on his nose.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from Manders' House.

Vane, gasping, stumbled on. Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth, met him as he stumbled into his own House. Dicky Dalton surveyed the muddy, dishevelled junior with disapproval.

"Vane! Why are you in this state?" he asked. "Is that a proper state in which to arrive at school for the new term?"

"Do you think I got like this on purpose?" hooted Vane.

Mr. Dalton gave him a look.

"Take a hundred lines for impertinence, Vane! And go in and clean yourself at once! Not another word, or I will cane you!"

And Vane, with set lips, tramped into the House.

The Track of the "Mystery Man"!

CRASH!

Jimmy Silver jumped clear of the floor of Mr. Dalton's study.

Richard Dalton fairly bounded from his chair.

It was not yet lock-up. The January dusk was falling deep on Rookwood School; but it was not yet dark, and there were still a good many fellows outside the House when the stone crashed through a pane of the Fourth Form master's study window.

Fragments of glass were scattered all over the study. One or two of them narrowly missed Jimmy as he stood at Mr. Dalton's table. A great, gaping gash was left in the pane, and within, a large jagged stone clumped to the carpet.

"Oh scissors!" gasped Jimmy, spinning round towards the window.

Jimmy, as head boy of the Fourth, was having an interview with his Form-master on the first day of term. But Form matters and school matters, and all other matters were forgotten as the window was smashed in.

Mr. Dalton stared for a second as if petrified; then he rushed to the window and threw up the sash. He stared out into the dusky quad, and Jimmy Silver, at his elbow, stared too.

Figures could be seen in various directions. The voice of Arthur Edward Lovell was heard, booming. A crowd of Classics and Moderns were engaged in snowballing one another till the bell rang, and Arthur Edward was well to the fore.

"Give 'em beans! Sock it to those Modern cads!" came Lovell's roar.

"Barge those Classical ticks!" yelled Tommy Dodd.

The snowballers were at some little distance. Nearer at hand a fat figure could be seen. It was that of Cecil Adolphus Muffin, otherwise known in the Fourth as Tubby.

Tubby Muffin was staring blankly at Mr. Dalton's window. As he was the only fellow near at hand, Richard Dalton called to him sharply:

"Muffin!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Tubby. "It wasn't me, sir!"

Jimmy Silver grinned. Whoever had had the nerve to "buzz" a stone through a Form-master's window, it was not likely to be Tubby Muffin. Nobody was likely to suspect Tubby of such a truculent deed.

"Did you see who broke my window, Muffin?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Muffin. "I felt something whiz by my head, sir, and then your window went. It made me jump, sir. I think it came from behind one of those beeches."

Mr. Dalton was a young and active man. He put his hand on the sill, and vaulted out of the window.

Like an arrow he cut across towards the trees. Three of the ancient and famous Rookwood beeches stood opposite the windows of Masters' Studies at a little distance. It was almost certain that the stone-thrower had taken cover there. Richard Dalton did not lose a second in getting after him.

Jimmy Silver followed his Form-master's example, dropping from the study window. He was at Mr. Dalton's heels as the young master ran across to the beeches.

Swiftly Mr. Dalton reached the trees. His face was pale and set with anger.

But there was no one to be seen under the beeches. Whoever had flung the stone had vanished swiftly in the dusk, Swift as Mr. Dalton had been, the unknown marksman had had a good minute, and he had evidently made the most of it.

"Gone!" muttered the Fourth Form master. He fixed his eyes on Jimmy, who came up, panting. "You saw nothing from the study, Silver?"

"No, sir. I was quite taken by surprise. I—I suppose—" Jimmy Silver broke off; but the Form-master read his thoughts.

"There is no doubt about it, Silver," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "The unknown person who committed a series of outrages in the school last term has recommenced—on the very first day of the new term. I have not the slightest doubt that the boy who threw that stone is the same who wrecked my study, and who later attacked me in the dark, and who assailed Bulkeley one night." Mr. Dalton's lips set hard. "Last term his identity remained undiscovered. This term I am determined that he shall be discovered and expelled from Rookwood."

"I hope so, sir," said Jimmy sincerely enough.

Jimmy could make allowances for a reckless ragger like Mornington, or a practical joker like Putty of the Fourth, but the "mystery man" of Rookwood was quite a different proposition.

Not that Jimmy would have given him away to the beaks. But he would have been glad to see him spotted, and turfed out of the school.

"I must report this occurrence to Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Dalton. "I will see you again another time, Silver."

He walked away to the House.

Jimmy Silver, left alone, sorted a little electric torch out of his pocket, and bent down to examine the ground.

Jimmy was a first-class scout, and there was a good deal of scattered snow under the trees. It seemed to him likely that the unknown prowler had left "sign" behind him.

He was right, for in a few minutes he picked up footprints.

They were not very distinct, but they were distinct enough to show that some fellow had recently been standing behind one of the beeches, facing the study window where the stone had struck.

Jimmy's eyes gleamed.

Last term all Rookwood had been thrilled and excited by the strange and sensational series of outrages in the last weeks of the term. Every fellow, from the captain of the school down to the smallest fag, was intensely keen to know who the mystery man was. And though Jimmy Silver & Co. would not have given him up to official punishment, they would certainly have



Crash! Jimmy Silver jumped clear of the floor, and Mr. Dalton fairly bounded from his chair as the master's study window was suddenly shattered. A large stone came through it, amid a shower of fragments of glass. "Oh, scissors!" gasped Jimmy.

made things very hot for him personally had they discovered him.

This looked like a chance; and Jimmy scanned the indistinct tracks in the snow very keenly. He picked up traces where the fellow had left the spot—unmistakable traces, for the toe-marks were deeply indented in the snow, showing that the fellow had been running.

Jimmy followed on, with the torch gleaming on the telltale track, his face full of excitement.

The fellow had cut away, unseen in the deep dusk, towards the archway that led into Little Quad.

If the tracks led into Little Quad, Jimmy felt that he had him. There were plenty of fellows in Big Quad, which lay between the two Houses; but no fellow was likely to stray away into Little Quad when dusk was falling, and the bell might ring any moment for lock-up. If he found a fellow hanging about there—

There was a sudden rush and a yell:

"Classical cad!"

"Barge him over!"

The light in Jimmy's hand as he followed the track in the snow had naturally caught many eyes. Tommy Dodd and Cook and Doyle spotted him, and as soon as they spotted a Classical they barged him over.

The torch flew from Jimmy's hand, and he rolled over in the snow, roaring.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the three Tommies.

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Jimmy.

"You silly fatheads! Ow!"

He scrambled up breathlessly, only to be barged over again, sprawling.

"Back up, Classics!" came Lovell's roar.

And Arthur Edward came up with a rush. Raby and Newcome, Mornington and Rawson and Oswald came with

him, and the three Tommies were barged over in their turn.

More Moderns came up, and more Classics. Jimmy Silver was in the midst of a shouting, struggling, bargaining mob.

Where his torch went he did not know. It was trampled out of sight somewhere in the snow. And there was no doubt that the mystery man's track was trampled out of sight, too.

Jimmy consoled himself by getting hold of Tommy Dodd and rubbing his face in the snow.

The battle was waxing fast and furious when a bell clanged out through the January dusk, and the merry crowd scattered. Tommy Dodd sat up dizzily with his hand on his nose. That organ had suffered rather severely from Dudley Vane's punch in the bus, and rubbing it hard in frozen snow had not made it feel better.

"Urrgh!" gasped Tommy. "My nose—ow! Jimmy Silver, you tick, I'll come across after roll-call and punch your head! Urrrgh!"

"Do!" called back Jimmy, over his shoulder. "I'll give you some more of the same!"

"You Classical worm!" yelled Tommy.

"You Modern tick!" yelled back Jimmy.

And Tommy Dodd was left with his handkerchief to his nose.

Done in the Dark!

"ROT!" said Tommy Cook.

"Rubbish!" said Tommy Doyle.

Tommy Dodd looked very obstinate.

The three Tommies were in their study in Manders' House—the Modern side at Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd was not so cheery and good-tempered as usual.

His nose was swollen and painful. It was not a thing of beauty, or a joy for ever, and it had a distinct pain in it.

Moreover, it had earned Tommy fifty lines. Mr. Manders, his House-master, had spotted it, called it disgraceful, and "lined" Tommy for showing up in the House with such a proboscis.

"I said I'd go over and punch his head," said Tommy Todd, "and I'm going over to punch his head, see?"

"Better punch Vane's," said Cook. "It was that tick Vane who gave you that boko."

"We gave Vane toco in the bus!" granted Tommy. "I told Jimmy Silver I'd punch his head—"

"Rot and rubbish!" said Doyle.

"Well, I'm going!" roared Tommy Dodd. "Think I'm going to have those Classical ticks making out that I'm funkling going over?"

"Leave it till to-morrow," said Tommy Doyle. "You can't go over to the Classical side after lock-up, and you know you can't! I suppose you're not going to ask Manders for leave to go to punch a Classical chap's head?"

"I'm going to drop out of the lower passage window as we've done a dozen times before!" growled Tommy Dodd. "I told Jimmy Silver I'd jolly well go over and punch his head, and twenty fellows, at least, heard me. Well, I'm going to do it, and you can go and eat coke!"

"Fathead!" said Tommy Cook.

"Ass!" said Tommy Doyle.

"Rats to you!" snapped Tommy Dodd, and he tramped out of the study and slammed the door after him.

He went down the stairs in a determined mood. There was nothing bitter or malicious about Tommy Dodd, the captain of the Modern Fourth—but his nose was sore, and his temper was sorer, and he did want to punch Jimmy's head.

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He had said that he would, and all the fellows in the quad had heard him say so—and the bare idea of being suspected of "funk" by the Classics made Tommy ready to run any amount of risk.

And there was not a lot of risk about it on the first night of term. Certainly, fellows were not supposed to leave their Houses after lock-up. But on the first night there was no prep, and the fellows were out of their studies, if they liked, in the hour and a half devoted on other evenings to that occupation.

Prefects of the Sixth were busily occupied with unpacking and settling down, and not so wary as they became later in the term.

Certainly, Mr. Manders was a very severe gentleman, and likely to deal with a fellow severely for breaking House bounds if he spotted him. But Tommy Dodd was not going to be spotted!

There was a window in a recess in the passage leading to the junior day-room in Manders' House. Tommy Dodd strolled down the passage, and sidestepped into that recess, unnoticed.

It was the work of a minute or less to push up the window-sash and slip out.

Leaving the window ajar for his return, Tommy Dodd scuttled away.

Across the quadrangle, the lighted windows of the Head's House shone through the January dark. But those lighted windows, in the distance, only seemed to make the darkness in the quadrangle thicker.

But a Rookwooder, of course, knew every inch of the way. Near the fountain in the middle of the quad was the

famous old Rookwood beech, a tree with wide-spreading branches, older than the buildings. The path ran under the spreading branches of that mighty tree.

As Tommy came into its black shadow he gave a little start, a faint sound falling on his ears.

He stared round him in the gloom.

It came into his mind at once that some other fellow was out of the House. Possibly that fellow had heard his footsteps and dodged out of sight.

"Hallo! Who's that?" called out Tommy, in cautious tones.

He could hear a sound of breathing close at hand, but could see nothing in the dense blackness.

There was no answer.

But Tommy, as he stared into the darkness, felt a strange, uneasy thrill as the gleam of eyes struck him from the dark. He realised that a face was very close to his own.

He started back with a startled exclamation.

"You silly ass, who are you?" he gasped. "What are you skulking in the dark for, giving a fellow the creeps?"

There was a movement, and he was seized. In the sudden grip of a pair of powerful hands he was forced backwards.

Taken by surprise by that sudden and unexpected attack, Tommy Dodd staggered back, and went heavily to the ground.

His assailant fell with him, still gripping him. A clenched hand descended on him, crashing in his face, and crashing the back of his head on the ground with a force that half-stunned him.

Tommy gave a panting cry.

Who it was that had seized him in the dark he could not begin to guess—whether Classical or Modern, senior or junior. But the strength in that iron grasp seemed too great for a Lower boy.

He struggled almost frantically.

"You rotter!" he panted. "Let me go! Who are you? Leggo! Oh, you rotter—you coward—you brute—"

Another savage blow descended on him, with all the force of a strong arm. With a terrific effort, Tommy almost threw his assailant off.

But not quite. He was crushed down to the earth again, and again the clenched fist struck—and again—and again!

Struggling frantically, dazed by the fierce blows, Tommy Dodd punched blindly at the unseen dark figure over him. Another savage blow crashed his head back on the frozen earth, and his senses scattered.

Stunned, Tommy Dodd lay like a log. He did not hear the sound of running feet, did not know that his assailant was gone. In the blackness under the branches, he lay motionless, stunned and senseless.

The Missing Man!

DUDLEY VANE strolled into the end study, with his hands in his pockets and a smile on his handsome face. He looked quite unlike the fellow who had lost his temper so savagely in the school bus, and who had scowled so blackly at Mr. Dalton in return for his hundred lines. The Fistical Four were in the study dealing with a cake that Jimmy Silver had unpacked, and they gave him welcoming looks.

There had been a little trouble in the end study between Arthur Edward Lovell and the new junior, but that had quite blown over during the Christmas holidays they had spent together with Jimmy Silver.

Arthur Edward had not forgotten, and did not want to forget, how Vane had got him out of a deep rift, where he lay with a damaged ankle, and carried him home on his back. They had come back to Rookwood great friends. And Jimmy, Raby, and Newcome already liked Vane—as indeed most of the Classical Fourth did. If he occasionally had flashes of hot temper, he kept that temper well in control, and generally he was good-humoured, kind, and obliging. And he was a first-class footballer, which counted much in his favour.

"Hallo! You've been a long time taking your lines down to Dicky Dalton!" remarked Jimmy, as the new junior came in.

Dudley Vane laughed. "I've been enjoying Muffin's conversation. It seems that Tubby's left all his Christmas tips at home, by some oversight, and arrived at Rookwood short of cash! Touching, isn't it?"

The Fistical Four chuckled. "Seen anything of Tommy Dodd?" asked Jimmy.

"That Modern tick!" said Vane. "I haven't seen anything of him in the House."

"Well, he wouldn't show up for prefects to see him out of bounds," said Lovell. "He would nip in quietly somewhere if he came over. But, of course, he hasn't—it was only Modern gas!"

"Well, if he leaves it till to-morrow he will forget all about it," said Jimmy Silver. "Tommy isn't the man to bear grudges. I handled him rather forcibly in the quad—the silly ass barged in

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when I was after that rotter who busted Dicky's window, and I was rather waxy!"

"You were after—who?" asked Vane, fixing his eyes on the captain of the Classical Fourth.

"The jolly old mystery man!" grinned Raby. "From what Jimmy says, he might have had him if those Modern fatheads hadn't barged in at the wrong moment. Jimmy was tracking him in the snow, like a giddy blughound."

"He cut off towards Little Quad, after busting Dicky's window," explained Jimmy. "I was trailing him when those Modern asses spoiled it all. By gum, I'd like to spot the rotter!" Dudley Vane laughed.

"He's had a narrow escape, then!" he said. "Who the dickens can the fellow be? He seems to have started his game again pretty early in the term, if it's the same chap."

"Not much doubt about that," remarked Newcome. "It's the same chap all right. I wonder what he'll be up to next. Blessed if I don't think the fellow must be a bit cracked!"

Kit Erroll of the Classical Fourth looked into the end study. Jimmy Silver waved a hand, with a chunk of cake in it, in welcome.

"Trot in, old bean," he said. "Just in time for the cake!"

"Seen Morny?" asked Erroll. "Morny? Not since roll-call. Has that ass gone out of bounds on the first night of term?" grunted Jimmy.

"Well, I can't find him anywhere. It's getting near dorm," said Erroll. "He was talking some rot about going down to the Roke, to skate by moonlight. It means a row if he's not back for dorm."

"What a fellow he is to ask for trouble!" said Jimmy. "He likes breaking rules, just for the fun of breaking them. Dalton will give him six if he bags him. Come and have some of this cake."

Erroll nodded, and came in. But he was evidently worried about his erratic chum, Valentine Mornington. It was one of Morny's ways to break rules right and left, just to make the other fellows wonder at his nerve. There was no great harm, certainly, in skating on the frozen river by moonlight, but breaking school bounds at night was a very serious matter indeed.

The cake finished, Jimmy Silver & Co. went downstairs with Erroll. There they sighted Mr. Manders, the Modern master, in the doorway, speaking to Richard Dalton. Manders was just going, and after he had gone, Mr. Dalton stood in the open doorway, looking out into the dark quad.

"If that ass Morny comes along now—" murmured Lovell.

"He won't let Dicky spot him; he's too jolly wary for that!" said Jimmy Silver.

"I say, I've been looking for you, Jimmy!" It was Tubby Muffin's fat squeak. "I say, what do you think, Jimmy?"

"I think you're a fat ass, old chap!"

"I mean, what do you think's happened?" said Tubby. "Leaving home in a hurry to-day, I left all my money behind me—"

"All the gold and banknotes," asked Raby, "as well as the coppers?"

"I suppose you could lend me a pound or so till they send it on, Jimmy?" suggested Tubby. "I'll tell you immediately it comes."

"Oh, we shall see it coming!" remarked Lovell. "I suppose they'll send it on in a pantechnicon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I could do with five bob. The fact is, I'm short—"

"You are," agreed Jimmy, "and fat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I'm short of money, you fathead—"

"Hallo, what's the matter with Dicky?" asked Newcome.

Mr. Dalton had made a sudden jump out of the doorway down the steps. There was a sound of a calling voice in the quad.

The juniors ran to the door.

"Manders taken a tumble," grinned Lovell. "It's rather slippery—"

"Something's up!" said Jimmy.

They stared out into the shadows. Mr. Manders' excited shrill voice could be heard.

Two figures appeared in sight, with a third sagging between them. Manders and Dalton were helping a junior towards the lighted doorway. A crowd of fellows gathered at the door, with Jimmy Silver & Co. They gazed at that unexpected scene in amazement.

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"It's Tommy Dodd!" gasped Jimmy.

The two masters came up the steps, half leading, half carrying the Modern junior. Tommy Dodd seemed only half conscious. The Classical fellows gazed at him in horror.

His face was dark with bruises. There were streaks of crimson on his cheeks. He moaned faintly as the two masters helped him up the steps and into the House.

"It is Dodd!" exclaimed Mr. Manders, blinking at him in the light. "A boy of my House—out of bounds! But what has happened to him? I stumbled over him, lying on the path under the beech; he appeared to be unconscious—"

"He has been attacked and savagely beaten!" said Mr. Dalton, in a low, tense voice. "Dodd! Can you speak? Tell us what has happened."

Tommy Dodd groaned.

"I—I—I was set on and—and knocked over in the dark!" stammered Tommy. "I don't know who—I—I never saw him—my head banged on the ground and—"

"What were you doing out of your House?" thundered Mr. Manders.

"I—I was coming over to—to see Jimmy Silver."

"Do you know anything of this, Silver?" snorted Mr. Manders, spotting the captain of the Fourth in the Classical crowd.

"Of course I don't!" snapped Jimmy indignantly. "You don't think I'd have punched you in the dark, do you, Tommy?"

"I know you wouldn't, old chap!" groaned Tommy. "It was some beastly brute—I never had a chance. I think I was stunned—"

"You should not have been out of your House!" snapped Mr. Manders. "This is what comes of a reckless disregard of rules, Dodd."

"That is certainly true, Mr. Manders," said Richard Dalton quietly. "But the urgent matter is to discover who has committed this wicked and brutal attack. Mr. Manders, I suggest that you should ascertain immediately whether any boy is missing from your House, and I will do the same here. The boy who attacked Dodd must have broken House bounds."

"Certainly!" said Mr. Manders. "Come with me, Dodd. I will help you back to your House."

"Yes, sir," mumbled the hapless Tommy.

Mr. Manders whisked away again, with Tommy Dodd leaning heavily on his arm. Mr. Dalton shut the door and rapped out an order for the House to assemble instantly in Hall, and then hurried away to the headmaster's study.

There was a buzz of excitement all through the Classical side. Fellows of all Forms crowded into Hall. Dr. Chisholm appeared there in a few minutes, his severe face darker and sterner than usual. With a shuffle of feet and a buzz of excited voices, the Classics crowded in. Roll was to be taken to ascertain whether any fellow was out of the House—and if any fellow proved to be missing, it was obvious that suspicion would fall upon him.

"It's the mystery man again!" whispered Lovell, as the Classical Fourth gathered in their places.

"Must be!" said Jimmy Silver. "And if any fellow's out—Oh, my hat!" he broke off. "Where's Morny?"

"He went down to the river to skate," breathed Erroll. "He's not got in yet—it's still half an hour to dorm! Oh, the ass—they will think—"

"Silence!" called out Bulkeley of the Sixth. "Silence!"

The Head was about to take the roll. There was a breathless hush in Hall as Dr. Chisholm read out the names. "Adsum" came in answer every time—till he came to the name of Mornington.

Then there was no reply. Dr. Chisholm glanced round over the packed Hall and repeated the name in a louder tone:

"Mornington!"

Silence.

The Head went on with the roll. To every other name the answer came. Only Valentine Mornington was missing.

"Mr. Dalton, it appears that a boy of your Form is out of House bounds!" said Dr. Chisholm grimly. "We shall not, I think, have to look farther for the boy who attacked Dodd—the same boy, I am assured, who committed a series of similar outrages in the school last term. Dismiss!"

"Morny, after all!" said Lovell, as the Rookwooders swarmed out of Hall. "So it's Morny who was the jolly old mystery man last term. The fact is, I thought of it more than once."

"You fool!" exclaimed Erroll angrily. "Do you think—"

"Yes, I do," answered Lovell coolly, "and so does everybody else!"

Erroll opened his lips—and shut them again. Whether Valentine Mornington was guilty or innocent, he had condemned himself by his own reckless folly.

Expelled From Rookwood!

MORNINGTON?
 "Hallo, Bulkeley!"
 "Where have you been?"
 "Unpackin'."
 The Rookwood captain's lip curled.
 "You can tell that to the Head!" he said. "Follow me."

Morny looked at him. A score of fellows were looking at Morny. He was back in the House—and to judge by his careless look, it did not occur to him that he had been missed. He had turned up in good time for dorm, and out for the roll-call in Hall, certainly his absence would never have been discovered. As it was, Bulkeley of the Sixth pounced upon him as soon as he was seen.

"You're takin' me to the Head, Bulkeley?" asked Mornington coolly.

"Yes; follow me."
 "But I've only been in the box-room, unpackin'—"

"You can cut that out!" said Bulkeley contemptuously. "Better not tell your legs to the Head. I may as well tip you that it's known that you've been out of bounds."

"What on earth's put that idea into your head?" drawled Morny.

"For goodness' sake, Morny, shut up!" almost groaned Erroll. "Roll was taken at nine, and you were missed."

Mornington was still cool and self-possessed as he followed Bulkeley to the Head's study. There he found Mr. Dalton with the headmaster. His cool aplomb failed him a little under their stern eyes. He realised that the matter was much more serious than a mere reckless escapade.

"You have returned, then," said Dr. Chisholm. "No doubt you are aware that you have to expect, Mornington."

"I suppose I'm goin' to be caned, sir," answered Mornington. "I admit I've been out of bounds."

"You admit that you laid in wait for a Modern junior, and attacked him in the quadrangle, in the dark, and committed a brutal assault worthy only of a boogian of the lowest type!" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm.

"Nothing of the kind, sir! I've done nothing of the sort—"

"Where have you been, Mornington?" asked Mr. Dalton quietly.

"Skatin', sir, on the ice."

"Skating—at this hour of the night!" said Dr. Chisholm contemptuously. "How dare you make such a statement, Mornington!"
 "It's true, sir! I thought it would be rather a lark to skate by moonlight. I—"

Dr. Chisholm raised his hand.

"Mornington! Last term a series of lawless outrages were committed in this school. They have continued on the first day of the new term—first by the breaking of a master's study window, then by this cowardly and brutal attack on a boy of Mr. Manders' House. The culprit is discovered, at last—and will be immediately expelled from Rookwood."

Mornington stared at him blankly.

"But it was not I, sir!" he gasped.

"I never—"

"You need say no more!" interrupted the Head icily. "You were the only boy missing from this House when the outrage was discovered. If you have, indeed, placed yourself under suspicion by a mere reckless and disrespectful disregard of authority, you have yourself to thank. But my fixed belief is that the author of a series of lawless outrages has been discovered. You agree with me, Mr. Dalton?"

"I cannot doubt it, sir!" answered the master of the Fourth.

Mornington looked almost wildly from one to the other.

"But—" he stammered, "but—"

Dr. Chisholm raised his hand.

"Silence, Mornington! You are expelled from Rookwood! But for the lateness of the hour I would send you away to-night. You will leave the school by an early train in the morning!"

"But—" shrieked Mornington.

"Take him away, Mr. Dalton!"

After prayers the following morning Mr. Dalton took his seat in a taxicab, with Valentine Mornington by his side, and Mornington's box on top. And as the taxi rolled out of the gates there were few fellows who did not believe that the "mystery man" of Rookwood was gone.

(Next week: "THE REBEL OF THE FOURTH!"—another gripping yarn in our thrilling mystery series of the Rookwood chums. Don't miss it!)

THE RUNAWAY!

(Continued from page 22.)

D'Arcy escaped into the House and changed his clothes. When he came down from the dormitory he was once more the elegant swell of St. Jim's, and he felt pleased with the change.

He went at once to Mr. Lathom's study. The Fourth Form master looked very severely at D'Arcy.

"So you've come back!" he said.

"Yaas, sir," said D'Arcy meekly. "Dr. Holmes tells me that you know it was a mistake, sir, and I trust you will accept my most humble and sincere apologies for that awful mistake, sir. I am vewy, vewy sowwy."

Mr. Lathom smiled.

"As you are sorry, we shall say no more about it," he said. "But I hope you will be a little more careful in the future, D'Arcy. And that you will never again do anything so foolish as running away from the school."

"Oh, sir!" gasped D'Arcy. "You are a bewick, sir—a weal bewick!"

And so Mr. Lathom dismissed him.

"Not licked?" asked Blake in the passage.

"No. Mr. Lathom is a weal bewick, dear boy. He has forgiven me," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully.

"Ici on parle Français!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "Man sprichst Deutsch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus laughed, too. He could afford to laugh now that he had escaped so well from a very bad scrape.

"It's all right, dear boys," he said "and on Saturday afternoon I hope that you will do me the honour to join me in that little feed at the Hotel Woyal, aftah all! It's comin' off, all the same!"

And it did—and it was a great success.

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