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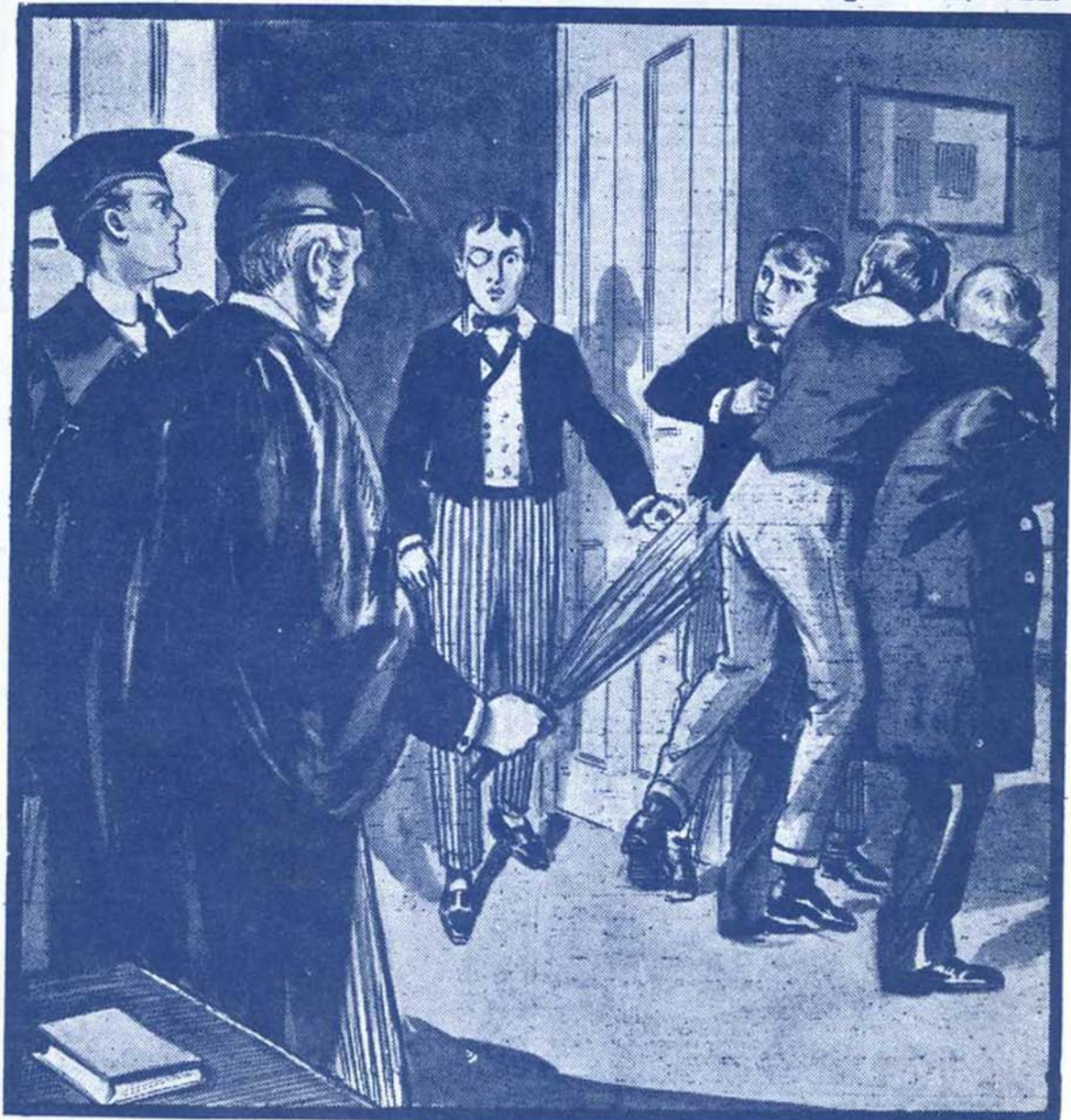
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# The RETURN of the RUNAWAY!



A Grand, Long, Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in order to save his chums from a licking, returns once again to the old school.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### A Happy Prospect for Two!

**T**OMMY'S wanted!" D'Arcy minor, of the Third, put his cheeky face into Tom Merry's study with that announcement. He grinned cheerily at three rather worried-looking juniors.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were supposed to be at prep; but they were not giving prep much attention.

More serious matters than prep occupied their youthful minds.

"Wanted?" repeated Tom Merry, looking round at Wally of the Third. "Who wants me?"

"Mr. Railton."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Rub something on your paws, old biscuit!" said Wally of the Third. "You're in for it! Railton's got a glitter in his eye that I don't like. He wants Blake, too! I've told Blake! Nice job for me, isn't it, rooting round the house hunting for you fags?"

And Wally of the Third walked away, whistling a shrill whistle that rang—not musically—from end to end of the Shell passage.

Tom Merry rose reluctantly to his feet. He had half-expected that summons to his Housemaster's study, and wholly dreaded it. But now that it had come, there was nothing for it but to face the music.

"Booked!" he said, with a grimace.

"How the thump does Railton know?" growled Monty Lowther.

"He doesn't know; but he guesses."

"Keep as mum as you can."

"You bet!"

Tom Merry left Study No. 10, and started for the stairs. On his way he passed No. 6 in the Fourth, and at the doorway of Study No. 6 three juniors were standing in rather excited consultation—Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth Form.

"Hallo! Here's Tom!" exclaimed Dig, as the captain of the Shell came along. "D'Arcy minor's told you?"

"Yes," said Tom. "Coming, Blake?"

Blake gave a grunt.

"I suppose so," he said. "A Housemaster expects a fellow to come when he sends for him. Cheeky—but he does! Think he knows anything about our trip to Rookwood?"

"Looks like it!"

"And—and Knox—"

"Sho'ldn't wonder. Keep mum, if you can, about Knox," said Tom Merry. "It's all Gussy's fault! When I see Gussy again the first thing I shall do will be to punch his silly nose!"

"Oh, won't I ornament his giddy features when I see him again!" said Jack Blake, breathing hard.

"Better cut off," advised Herries. "Railton hates to be kept waiting. But I don't see how he can know anything. Mind you don't give yourselves away if he doesn't."

"Teach your grandmother!" grunted Blake.

Tom Merry and Blake went down the staircase together—not in the highest of spirits.

They passed Knox of the Sixth in the lower passage, and Knox gave them a vicious look. Knox had had a very unpleasant adventure that afternoon; and Tom Merry and Blake knew more about it than Knox did. They wondered dismally whether he suspected.

Tom Merry tapped discreetly at the Housemaster's door, and the two juniors entered the study. They found Mr. Railton with a grim expression on his face. It was clear, at a glance, that he was angry—very angry; and they could only hope against hope that they were not the objects of his wrath.

The Housemaster fixed his eyes sternly upon the two juniors as they stood meekly before him.

"Merry! Blake! I have sent for you—" Mr. Railton paused. "A short time ago I saw D'Arcy of the Fourth in your company."

"Yes, sir," answered Tom Merry.

"I was under the impression then," said Mr. Railton, "that that foolish and reckless boy, who has been missing from school for so long, had repented of his folly in running away, and had returned of his own accord."

Tom and Blake were silent. That was exactly the impression they had wanted Mr. Railton to have, if all had gone well. All hadn't gone well, however.

"Under that impression," continued Mr. Railton, "I sent D'Arcy to my study to wait for me. He escaped by way of the window. This drives me to the conclusion that he did not return to St. Jim's of his own accord."

"Hem!" murmured Tom Merry.

"This afternoon," went on the Housemaster, "I sent Knox of the Sixth to Rookwood, the Head having learned that D'Arcy had taken refuge at that school. Knox brought D'Arcy away from the school. He was taking him to the station, when, according to his report, he was suddenly attacked by a number of persons whose faces were concealed by flour-sacks, and in the confusion D'Arcy escaped."

"Is—is that so, sir?" stammered Blake.

"It is so, Blake."

"Hem!"

"In those circumstances, it was surprising to see the runaway boy here later. If he had escaped from Knox, with the intention of returning and giving himself up, as I supposed, the matter would not have been so serious. But he has fled again; so it is fairly clear that he was compelled to return to St. Jim's. I saw him in your company. I have learned that you two boys were absent from the school the whole afternoon, and returned barely in time for evening call-over. I wish to be informed whether you know anything of this matter."

"Hem!"

"In a word," said Mr. Railton, "were you aware that a Sixth Form prefect was being sent to Rookwood to fetch D'Arcy, and did you go over to Rookwood yourselves?"

Tom Merry and Jack Blake exchanged a hopeless sort of look. It really was wonderful how Mr. Railton jumped to conclusions in this way. The trouble was that the conclusion he jumped to was the correct one.

Mr. Railton waited for an answer.

"You had better be quite frank," he said at length. "I think you realise that this matter is more serious than D'Arcy himself appears to understand?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then kindly answer my question."

The juniors exchanged another glance.

"We went over to Rookwood, sir," admitted Tom Merry.

"We— It was a half-holiday, you know, sir, and we thought we—we'd run over."

"With what intention?"

"The idea was to get Gussy—I mean, D'Arcy—to come back of his own accord, sir, instead of being yanked—I mean, brought—by a prefect."

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"Very good," said Mr. Railton. "Certainly I should not blame you for that. You saw D'Arcy?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"After he had escaped from Knox?"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"And he consented to return?"

"Well, we persuaded him, sir," said Blake cautiously.

"We—we—we managed to persuade him."

"You mean that he did not consent to return?"

"Well, as we had hold of him, sir, he—he couldn't very well object," murmured Blake. "He came, anyhow. We thought it was all right as soon as he was shoved into your study, sir."

"And the attack on Knox?" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"According to Knox's statement, he was attacked by six or seven persons, disguised in sacks. He supposed that they were tramps, or footpads. I think I shall be nearer the facts in supposing that they were schoolboys."

"Hem!"

"Only you two boys, I think, went over to Rookwood?"

"Yes, sir; only us two."

"You were members of the party that attacked Knox, and enabled D'Arcy to escape from him?"

"Hem!"

"I believe you have friends at Rookwood?" said Mr. Railton. "The other members of the party, doubtless, were your friends there?"

"Hem!"

"I require a plain answer, Merry!"

"Well, yes, sir!" said Tom desperately. "We—we thought it—it would be better for Gussy to come back of his own accord, so—so we helped him away from Knox, and brought him back. Knox was the cause of the whole trouble in the first place. D'Arcy would never have run away from school but for him—"

"That is neither here nor there, Merry. I have no doubt your intentions were good!" said Mr. Railton sternly. "But nothing can excuse an attack upon a Sixth Form prefect—"

"Knox wasn't hurt, sir."

"Only frightened," said Blake.

Mr. Railton coughed.

"It comes to the same thing. He was prevented from carrying out his duty, imposed upon him by the Head."

"We carried it out for him, sir," ventured Tom Merry.

"Not precisely, Merry. If D'Arcy had returned with Knox, measures would have been taken to secure him. Under the impression that he had returned of his own free will, I sent him to my study, expecting to find him here when I came in. He escaped by the window in the interval. His escape, and the fact that he is still a runaway from school, are entirely due to your intervention."

Tom Merry and Blake were silent. They had not looked at it quite like that before; but there was no doubt that Mr. Railton was stating the exact facts.

"You do not know where D'Arcy is now?" asked the Housemaster.

"No, sir; only that he's cleared out," said Blake dismally.

Mr. Railton compressed his lips.

"Very well," he said. "You realise, I presume, the harm you have done by your intervention in matters that did not concern you? I am afraid that when the circumstances are reported to the Head, he will decide upon administering a very severe punishment. I scarcely think that he will consider anything short of a flogging adequate."

"Oh!"

"You have yourselves to thank for it," said Mr. Railton.

"You may go now."

Tom Merry and Blake quitted the study. In the corridor they gave each other a grim look.

"A flogging!" murmured Tom.

Blake sparred in the air, hitting at an imaginary countenance there.

"If Gussy was only in reach!" he gasped.

The two juniors went back to their studies dismally. They had acted for the best—so they felt assured. All would have gone well if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been amenable to reason. But he hadn't been!

That evening, Tom Merry of the Shell, and Blake of the Fourth, were the dimmest fellows at St. Jim's. The thought of the coming interview with the Head, and the probable flogging to follow, haunted their minds. And their chief desire, their most powerful yearning, was to get within reach of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and punch his nose.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Any Port in a Storm.

"WOTTEN wain!"

The farmers wanted rain, and quite a large number of persons dwelling around St. Jim's were glad to see it coming on. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form, did not share their gladness.

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Arthur Augustus, not being an agriculturist, had no use for rain—especially that evening.

If it had been a warm summer evening, as really it ought to have been, Arthur Augustus could have camped out in a field, or rolled himself in hay, and passed the night fairly comfortably. At all events, he believed that he could.

But, with a steady downpour from a sky that seemed all too liquid, such a proceeding was obviously impossible.

So Arthur Augustus groused at the rain.

He was tramping along a lane which had been dusty, and was now fast becoming very muddy indeed.

He was a good mile from St. Jim's, and did not know whether his unceremonious departure had been discovered yet. He did not care much. He felt safe from pursuit in the rain and gloom, and that was all he cared about in that direction.

The adventures of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy since he had run away from St. Jim's had been many and various. Twice he had come very near to capture, and to an ignominious return to the school—and punishment. But his luck had held good.

When Tom Merry and Blake had brought him back from Rookwood, and he was put into the Housemaster's study, the game really seemed up. But the lofty soul of Arthur Augustus had risen to the occasion. He had escaped by the window. Mr. Railton had found his study in the same state as Mrs. Hubbard's celebrated cupboard. But though he had escaped once more, the runaway junior realised that matters were growing desperate.

He was almost at the end of his cash resources, for one thing. Arthur Augustus had rather vague ideas of the value of money. But he was clearly aware of the fact that a fellow couldn't pay his way without pay, and that if a fellow couldn't pay his way, his way was likely to bristle with great difficulties.

He did not care to venture into a railway-station near St. Jim's, lest a telephone message should have warned the station-master to keep an eye open for him. Likewise, the price of a railway-ticket would have exhausted what remained of his cash.

So he "legged" it manfully.

But Arthur Augustus had had a tiring day, and he was fatigued. And the rain, having once made up its mind to begin, went on with a deadly and increasing persistence. It gave Gussy's topper a thorough wash; it trickled over his elegant jacket; it even trickled down his noble neck.

Possibly, in those disheartening moments Arthur Augustus thought of the warm and cosy study at St. Jim's, of supper in the study, and a circle of cheery faces, and his resolution wavered.

But if it wavered it did not break.

He was satisfied that he had had good cause for retiring from St. Jim's in the first place. That good cause still remained—as good as ever. And his motto was, "No surrender!"

"Wotten wain!" murmured Arthur Augustus a dozen times. "It weally might have kept fine! Where is a fellah goin' to find sheltah? Beastly, wotten wain!"

He tramped on. He found himself skirting a brick wall, over the top of which drenched trees shed liberal drops upon him. He drew close to the wall and halted. It was some slight shelter, at least. Arthur Augustus wiped his eyeglasses, and jammed it into his resolute eye. Back to St. Jim's was out of the question. But where was a fellow to go?

Then the fact dawned upon him that the wall against which he was sheltering was the wall of Rylcombe Grammar School.

At that hour the Grammar School was locked up. The Grammarians were at prep in their studies. No light glimmered through the gloom to the eyes of the St. Jim's outcast.

"Bai Jove! If those fellahs knew I was out heah in the wain, they would wush to give me some sheltah!" murmured Arthur Augustus, thinking of Gordon Gay & Co., of the Grammar School Fourth.

He pondered for a few minutes. Certainly he did not want to get Gordon Gay into trouble through befriending a fellow who had run away from school. Arthur Augustus was very particular upon that point. But a shelter from the rain—somewhere to lay his weary head for the night—that was not much to ask.

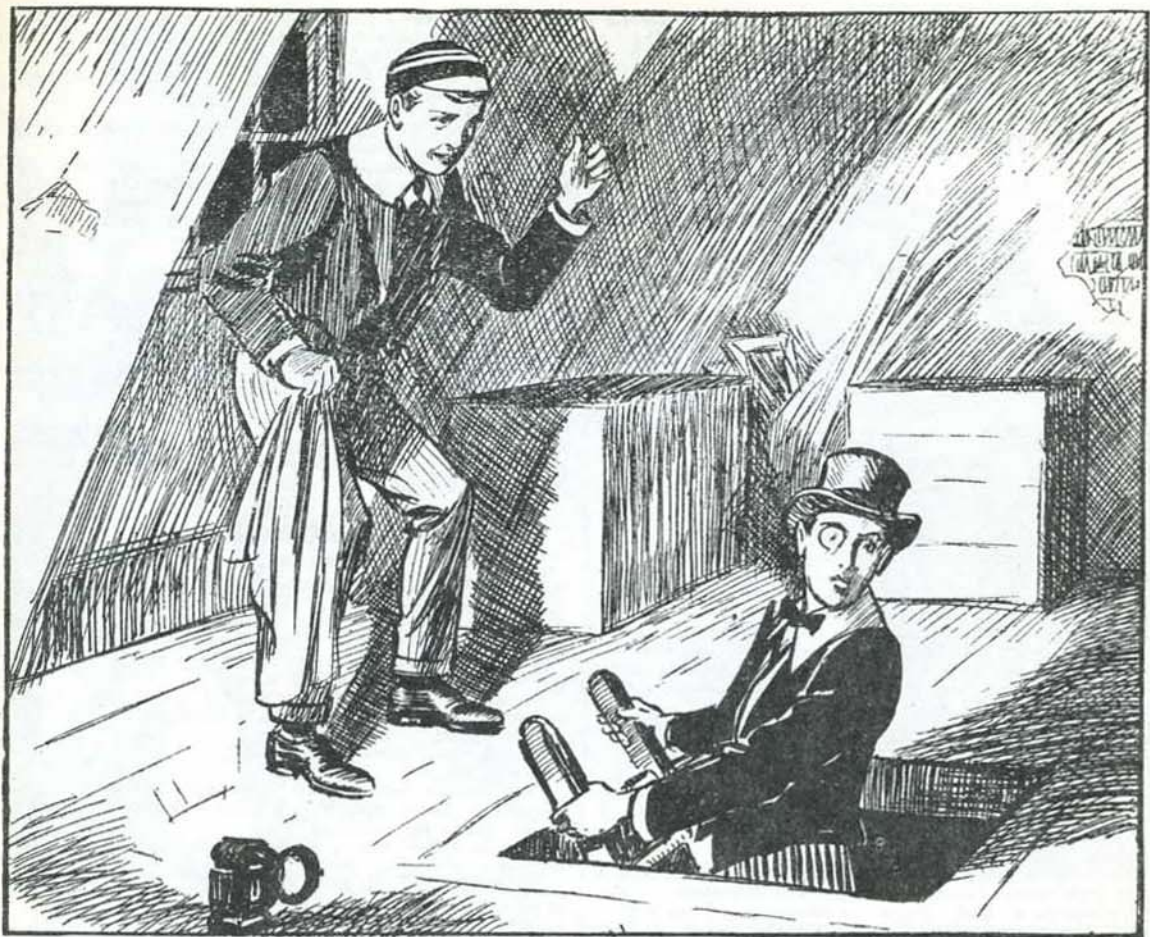
His mind was made up at last. With the aid of a buttress and a drooping branch, he climbed the wall, and dropped inside.

There he peered round him in the gloom.

He could make out several lighted windows in the house now, and a glimmer from the porter's lodge. That gave him his bearings.

Tom Merry & Co. had been round and about the neighbouring Grammar School often enough—for matches with the Grammarians, or on friendly visits, or on warlike raids. So Arthur Augustus knew the lie of the land fairly well.

He trod away quietly in the gloom, through the dropping



Gordon Gay climbed up into the loft, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed. Gussy's heart sank a little as he glanced round his refuge. It was extremely confined as to space, and it was dusty with the dust of years. "Aftah all, it's a shehtah," he exclaimed, courageously. "I can wost heah till the mornin'." "We'll get you some of our camping stuff," said Gay, "and make you up some sort of a bed." (See page 7.)

rain. And the sight of a row of lighted windows—the windows of the Fourth Form passage upstairs—comforted him. At that hour the fellows would be at prep in their studies. If he could attract the attention of Gay, or Wootton major, or Frank Monk, he was sure that he would be given a shelter somewhere at last.

He stopped under the window of Gordon Gay's study, at the end of the glimmering row.

He had a vague hope that Gay might look out of his window, and then he would call to him; but Gay was not likely to put his head out of the window on a rainy night. Arthur Augustus waited in vain. Once or twice a shadow moved across the lighted window.

The Swell of St. Jim's groped at last, and caught up a handful of gravel. It was the only way—at the risk of attracting attention from others as well as Gay.

Clink, clink, clink, clink!

The gravel rattled on the window-panes above, and Arthur Augustus, dripping in the rain, watched anxiously for the outcome.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### A Little Misunderstanding.

THREE heads were bent over the table in the study belonging to Gordon Gay of the Grammar School Fourth. The heads belonged to Gay himself and to his study-mates, the two Woottons, major and minor. All three of the juniors were busy; prep claimed their attention. Not that the merry Grammarians were specially keen on prep. They weren't! But Mr. Adams, their Form-master, had to be reckoned with; and Mr. Adams had an exasperating way of expecting fellows to prepare their lessons during the hour and a half devoted to evening preparation. And a Form-master, like a horse, likes to be given his head! So the three Grammarians were hard at work at Latin

prose—trying to make a dead language live, as it were. They did not quite succeed in making it live, only in making it give feeble signs of life. But they were content to miss the beauties of the classics, so long as they did enough to satisfy Mr. Adams in the morning. Gordon Gay had remarked to his chums, that, later on, when they went home to Australia, they weren't likely to meet many Latins to talk to—especially dead ones! Which was indubitably true. So the cheery trio were quite satisfied to have merely a nodding acquaintance with the language of Virgil and Cicero.

Nevertheless, the amount of knowledge they were acquiring needed work, and so they were naturally annoyed at an interruption—especially such an interruption as the clattering of pebbles on their window.

Clink, clinketty-clink!

Gordon Gay looked up.

"What's that?" he ejaculated.

"Some thundering ass lobbing stones at our window from the quad!" said Harry Wootton. "Monkey and his lot, I suppose."

"The silly asses!"

Gay returned to his work, and there was a silence in the study, broken only by such remarks as "Hang this stuff!" "Where's the giddy dic'?" Several minutes passed, and then:

Clink, clink, clink!

Gordon Gay breathed hard. Mr. Adams, who believed in making his boys work, had given the Fourth a section of Livy to prepare. Now, Titus Livius is not an easy author at the best of times. With some practical joker rattling gravel on the study window all the time, Livy was harder than ever, the task of disentangling what really happened in the Carthaginian War from Livy's masterly prose became next door to impossible.

"If that silly ass doesn't chuck it—" breathed Gordon Gay.

"He is chucking it," said Jack Wootton.

"What?"

"The gravel, I mean."

"You funny ass! Go to the window and give him a yell, instead of giving me potty jokes."

"Keep your wool on, old top," said Wootton major soothingly.

"Fathead! Give him a yell, or lob him an inkpot."

Wootton major threw up the lower sash, and was about to put out his head, when a dash of rain caught him. He jerked his head back at once.

"Stop that larking, you silly owl down there!" he roared. And without waiting for a reply he slammed down the window to keep out the rain.

"It's raining," he remarked, as he came back to the table.

"Fancy a silly ass standing out there in the rain to lark with us."

"Hope he'll catch cold!" growled Wootton minor.

The three Grammarians resumed their task. But barely a minute had elapsed when the clinking of gravel started on the panes again.

It was too much! The Grammarian trio started to their feet, breathing wrath and vengeance.

"Can't stand that!" said Gay. "If the funny merchant won't stop, we'll jolly soon stop him."

"Yes, rather!"

Gay strode out of the study with his chums at his heels. The house was locked up, and there was no egress to the quad by the School House door. But that did not stop the three chums. They concluded, as a matter of course, that they were being ragged by a Fourth Form fellow of the Grammar School—at all events by a Grammarian—who must have got out by a window. Gay hurried downstairs with his comrades, and turned into a dusky passage near the Form-rooms, and stopped at a window. He opened it softly and silently.

"I say, it's jolly wet outside!" mumbled Wootton minor.

"Run back quick and wrap yourself in cotton-wool!" suggested Gordon Gay sarcastically.

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, follow me out, then, and keep quiet. We'll rush that ass before he knows what's happening, and jolly well roll him in the mud."

"Good!"

"He must be pretty wet by this time, anyhow, and a little wetter won't hurt! Never heard of such a silly game. Come on!"

Gay climbed over the sill and dropped outside. A gust of rain caught him, and he gasped.

"Oh, my hat! It's wet!" stammered Wootton major, as he followed.

"Rain often is!" remarked Gordon Gay, still sarcastic.

"Oh, get on, old chap, and don't give us any sarc. You talk too much."

"Fathead!"

After that exchange of compliments the Grammarians started, keeping close to the School House wall, till they reached the corner. Turning the corner, they sighted the row of lighted study windows above; and below Gay's window, in the rain, still a dim figure, in the very act of tossing up another handful of gravel.

"That's the merchant!" murmured Gay. "Can't make him out. Monkey, I suppose, or Lane or Carboy! Rush him!"

"You bet!" chuckled the two Woottons together.

Clink, clink, clink!

The gravel rattled on the study window above, and as the pebbles fell back there came a rush in the dark, and the three Grammarians collared the shadowy figure.

"Oh!" came in a startled gasp.

Bump!

The dim form went down—hard! A silk hat flew into the darkness, and there was a howl.

"Roll him over!" chuckled Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yawooh! Gwoogh! Oh, cwumps!" howled Arthur Augustus, in utter dismay and consternation, as he was rolled in soaking gravel. "Stoppit! Yoop! Oh, ewikey!"

"My only hat!" stammered Gordon Gay. "It's a St. Jim's chap! I know that too! It's the gidly one and only!"

"D'Arcy!" howled Wootton major.

"Give him another!"

"Bai Jove! Welease me! Oh, you awful wottahs! Yoop!" howled the swell of St. Jim's, as he struggled in the grasp of the Grammarians.

"Fancy a silly ass coming a mile in the rain for a silly jape like that!" gasped Harry Wootton. "Give him a lesson."

"Yes, rather!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-woop!" wailed Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Gordon Gay suddenly. "It's jolly odd. I heard from some of the St. Jim's chaps that D'Arcy had run away from school!"

"He's come back, that's clear!" grinned Wootton major.

"Give him another roll."

"You feahful wottahs—"

"That will do!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "Let him sit up and take notice. Think you've had enough, Gussy?"

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Arthur Augustus breathlessly. He struggled to his feet. "You uttah wottahs!"

"Shouldn't come over here japing us at prep," grinned Wootton minor. "Feeling rather wet, old bunny?"

"Gwoogh! I am feahfully wet and mudday. Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha ha!"

"I did not come heah to jape you, you uttah wuffians!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in breathless wrath and indignation. "I was twyin' to atwact your attention, to ask you for sheltah for the night."

"Oh, scissars!"

"But now you have acted like feahful wuffians, I wese to do anythin' of the kind. I weward you as feahful wottahs! Go and eat coke!"

And Arthur Augustus clutched up his drenched hat, jammed it on his noble head, and marched off, full of wrath and dignity. And Gordon Gay & Co. stared after him in blank astonishment.

## CHAPTER 4.

### A Lodging for the Night.

"MY only Aunt Belinda!" murmured Gordon Gay.

He blinked at the retreating figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He was too astonished to do anything else, for a moment or two. But as the swell of St. Jim's was disappearing into the rainy gloom, Gordon Gay roused himself to action.

He made a sudden rush in pursuit of the St. Jim's junior, and overtook him, clutching him by the shoulder.

"Gussy, old bean—"

"Welease me, you feahful boundah!"

Gay jerked him to a halt.

"Can it, old bean—can it!" he said soothingly. "We thought it was a jape, honest Injun. Mean to say you're really looking for a shelter?"

"I was lookin' for a sheltah, Gay," answered Arthur Augustus, with calm dignity.

"I heard you'd run away from school," said Gay, slapping at him in the gloom, greatly puzzled.

"You were misinformed, deah boy."

"Then why aren't you at St. Jim's now?" asked Gay.

"I have wotired with dignity from the scene, until I shall weevie justice from my Housemastah."

"Oh, I—I see! You haven't run away, only bunked!" said Gay humorously.

"Weally, Gay—"

"But if you're in want of shelter, you've come to the right shop," said the Australian junior cheerily. "Whether you've run away, or only bunked, I don't care a rap! You're not going out in the rain, unless you're setting out for St. Jim's."

"I am doin' nothin' of the kind."

"Best thing you could do," hinted Gay.

"Wats!"

"Then we'll fix you up somehow," said Gay, his good-nature overcoming the considerations of prudence.

Wootton major and minor had come up, and they looked at one another as Gay made that remark. But they nodded in acquiescence. It was quite probable that such a step might lead to trouble for them, but they felt that it was up to them to lend a hand to a fellow in distress. In their opinion, Arthur Augustus combined the mentality of a donkey with the obstinacy of a mule; but there was no doubt that he was in distress.

"If you weally mean that, Gay—"

"Certainly, old rabbit!"

"You are weally vevy good, deah boy. But I vevy particulahly do not desiah to get you into any twouble with the powahs, you know," said Arthur Augustus anxiously. "I suppose it is quite well known heah that I have wun away—I mean, wotired from St. Jim's—and if I were seen—"

"You'd be nobbled, and sent back to St. Jim's at once," said Wootton major. "If we take you into the house the game's up."

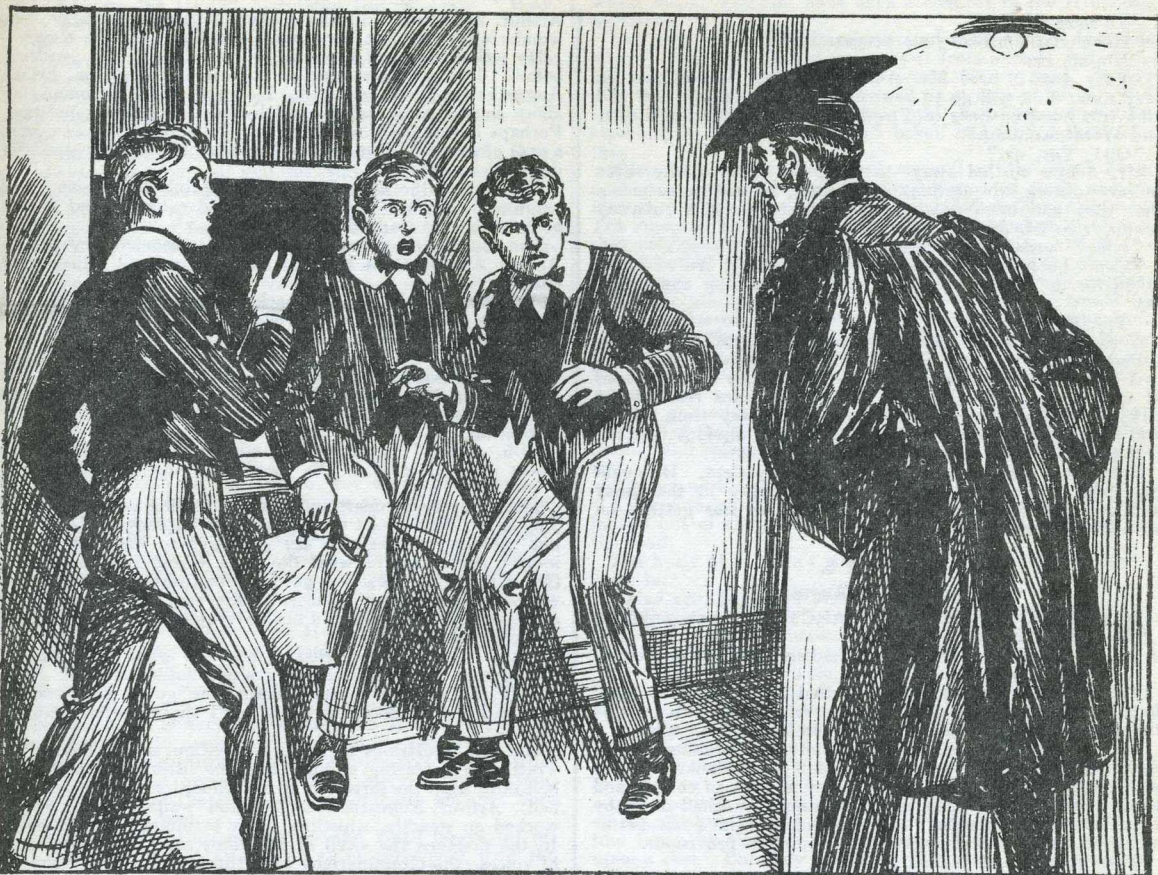
"Yaas, wathah!"

"There's the gardener's shed," said Gay. "You could lie low there for a bit, Gussy. It's out of the rain, anyhow. And we could snuggle in some things to make you comfy."

"Good!" said Wootton minor. "The loft over the shed isn't used. Gussy would be safe there."

Arthur Augustus gave the Grammarians a grateful look.

"Thank you vevy much deah boys," he said. "But you must be vevy careful not to get mixed up in the affair, you



A light was suddenly turned on in the passage, and Gordon Gay & Co. jumped round to meet Mr. Adams' penetrating eye. "Another nocturnal excursion, my boys!" said the Fourth Form master genially. "What have you in that bag, Gay?" "Wha-a-at bag, sir?" "T'is one you are trying to conceal behind you," said the Form-master. (See page 13.)

know. If I am wouted out, I shall not mention you, of course."

"Right as rain!" said Gay cheerfully. "Come along! This rain is a bit too thick to be nice."

He muttered a few words to his chums, and they cut off to the house. Gay led Arthur Augustus away through the rain and gloom, and they reached the gardener's shed—a little wooden building at the lower end of the kitchen garden. The door opened at Gay's touch, and they groped in, and Gay struck a match.

Arthur Augustus shook the raindrops from him and glanced round.

The shed was fairly well filled with the gardener's belongings—roller and lawn-mower, spades and forks and rakes and hoes, and other implements. In one corner was a broad and almost perpendicular ladder, leading into the little loft over the shed, only a few feet high, with a slanting roof under the slates.

"That's the spot," said Gay, as the match went out. "Safe and dry, if not comfy. What do you say?"

"I shall be vewy thankful, deah boy."

"Right-ho! Wait a tick while I get a bike lamp."

Gordon Gay hurried away, leaving Arthur Augustus standing alone in the darkness, shivering. He returned in a few minutes with a bicycle lamp, and, after closing the door carefully, lighted the wick. He led the way up the steep ladder to the loft, and Arthur Augustus followed.

Perhaps Gussy's heart sank a little as he saw his refuge. It was extremely confined as to space, and it was dusty with the dust of years. Spiders scuttled in the unaccustomed light. There was a little window that was closed, and the air was stuffy. Gay opened the window wide, keeping the light away from it. There were two or three old boxes, some empty cans, and one or two broken implements in the room, thrown there carelessly out of the way, and some old, musty sacks.

"Aftah all, it's a sheltah," said Arthur Augustus courageously. "I can wesi heah till the mornin'."

"We'll get you some of our camping stuff," said Gay. "A

few ground-sheets and old Army blankets will make you a bed of sorts."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And some grub," added Gay.

"You are takin' a gweat deal of twouble, deah boy."

"Bow-wow! Keep the light away from the window, of course," said Gay. "If it were seen it would lead to somebody asking questions. I'll stick one of these sacks up for a curtain."

By the time Gay had finished arranging the sack, Wootton major and minor came clambering up the ladder from below. They were heavily laden with "stuff" that the Grammarian chums used in holiday camping. A bundle was unrolled, revealing three ground-sheets and a couple of brown blankets and some other articles, and another package disgorged such supplies of "grub" as the juniors had been able to collect hurriedly.

"We shall have to cut," said Wootton major. "It's close on dorn, and if we're missed—"

"Think you can fix up all right now, Gussy?" asked Gordon Gay, rather anxiously.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then good-night, old top!"

"Good-night, deah boys, and thanks awf'ly!"

The three Grammarians scuttled down the ladder and left the shed. They were considerably wet by the time they clambered into the window they had left open. As they dropped inside, one after another, and were about to make for the stairs, a voice came startlingly through the gloom:

"Your names, please!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Gordon Gay, as he recognised the voice of his old form-master.

Mr. Adams peered at them in the gloom of the passage. "Your names!" he rapped out.

"Gay, sir!" mumbled the captain of the Fourth.

"Wootton major, sir."

"Wootton minor, sir."

"You have been out of the house after lock-up?"

"Ye-ee-es, sir."

"Have you finished your preparation?"

"N-n-no, sir."

"Very good!" said Mr. Adams quietly. "You must be very wet. You will go to your dormitory at once. You will take two hundred lines of Virgil each, Gay, Wootton major, and Wootton minor."

"Oh! Yes, sir."

Mr. Adams rustled away—to the great relief of the three juniors—asking no questions. Certainly, he had no suspicion that they had been out of the house to assist a runaway junior from St. Jim's.

"Nice!" groaned Gordon Gay.

"Can't be helped," said Wootton major. "We've really asked for it. Lucky he doesn't suspect anything about that ass."

"Yes, that's so. Come on."

Gordon Gay & Co. proceeded to their dormitory—it was rather necessary to get out of their wet clothes. When the rest of the Grammarian Fourth came up, they said no word of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The three chums realised the risk they were taking in sheltering a runaway from school, and they did not shrink from it; but it was obvious that the less that was said about the matter, the better.

But it was some time before Gordon Gay slept. He could not help thinking of the St. Jim's runaway in the dusty loft over the shed, and wondering how he was getting on with the spiders.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Nice for Arthur Augustus!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was not enjoying himself.

After the Grammarians had left him, he proceeded to camp in the loft.

The Grammarians had done all that they could for him; but, in the circumstances, it was scarcely possible to provide the unexpected guest with all the comforts of a home.

Arthur Augustus was hungry—and after taking off his drenched jacket, and wrapping himself in a blanket, he sat down on a box to supper. Half a loaf, a hunk of cheese, and a tin of tongue, provided an ample supper, washed down by lemonade from a bottle. The swell of St. Jim's felt better when he had made a deep inroad upon the provisions.

Then he prepared to turn in.

He arranged the sacks by way of a mattress, spread the ground-sheets over them, and covered himself with the blankets, after carefully putting out the light.

He was tired enough to sleep; and the night, though rainy, was not cold. He was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

When he awakened, it was with a queer tickling feeling on his noble nose; and as he rubbed it drowsily, he dislodged a huge spider. The spider went into the blankets, and Gussy shuddered from head to foot. He rolled out of bed and groped in his pocket for matches—but there were no matches. That was an item the hospitable Grammarians had omitted—a fellow would not think of everything at a moment's notice.

"Oh, cwumbs!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

He thought of the warm, clean, comfortable bed in the Fourth Form dormitory at St. Jim's. But it was rather too late to think of that now. As he had made his bed, so he had to lie upon it—literally.

In the darkness he groped for the blankets, and shook them vigorously, hoping against hope that he thereby dislodged all the spiders that might have taken a fancy to them. Then he turned in again.

Whether a brigade of spiders crawled over Arthur Augustus in the night is not certain; but Arthur Augustus felt as if a whole army corps of those unpleasant creatures had made a home in his bed.

He woke up at intervals of a quarter of an hour or so, feeling himself the centre of a universe of spiders.

Spiders mingled in his dreams—huge spiders crawled and twisted through his disturbed imagination.

It was such a night as Arthur Augustus had never experienced before; horrid was a mild word for it. He even came to the point of wondering whether he had acted wisely, after all, in "retiring" from St. Jim's on a question of dignity.

Even Knox of the Sixth was not quite so horrid as spiders at close quarters!

Never had Arthur Augustus been so glad to see the sunrise. Dawn came glimmering round the sack at the window at last, and Arthur Augustus turned out thankfully.

He removed the sack, and squeezed his head and shoulders through the little window, to take a survey of his surroundings. He had an extensive view of a kitchen garden, with potatoes and cabbages all a-growing and a-blowing. Fortunately, the rain had stopped; the vegetables looked drenched, but bright sunshine came from a blue sky above. A rainy morning would have finished the gloom that was settling upon

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Arthur Augustus; but the bright sunshine "bucked" him wonderfully. He felt his courage and his resolution revive.

He jerked his head back, as he caught sight of a gardener below. The gardener came on towards the shed, and Arthur Augustus remained very still. He heard the man rummaging about in the room below, and listened in great trepidation. Perhaps it was the dust in the loft, or perhaps it was merely a case of nerves? But Arthur Augustus felt an uncontrollable desire to sneeze!

A sneeze in the little loft would certainly have been heard below; and Arthur Augustus struggled valiantly and desperately with that impending sneeze.

The man below moved about, and it seemed centuries to Arthur Augustus, as he held back his sneeze with mighty efforts.

At last it would be held back no longer. It escaped—all the more powerful, from its repression.

"Atchoooooo-choo-chooo-c-hoooo!"

Slam!

Luck was with the St. Jim's runaway. The gardener was just leaving the shed, and he slammed the door as Gussy's prolonged sneeze rang out. The gardener went his way, unsuspecting.

"Oh, cwiskey!" murmured Arthur Augustus, wiping the water from his eyes. "Oh, cwumbs! Now, I wondah how I am goin' to cut?"

The night being over, and the rain having stopped, Arthur Augustus' next move was, naturally, to move off. It was not necessary to wait to say good-bye to his kind hosts—indeed, the sooner he went the safer it would be for Gordon Gay & Co. But the school gardener had settled down to early work—he was hoeing potatoes within easy sight of the shed, and Arthur Augustus could not have quitted the shed without revealing himself at once.

"Bai Jove! Doesn't that feahful ass want any bwekkah this mornin'?" murmured the exasperated swell of St. Jim's. "Why the mewwy dickens doesn't he go in to bwekkah? If I had any bwekkah to go in to, I should certainly go in to it."

But the industrious gardener worked on, unconscious of the wrathful eye glaring at him from the little loft window. A bell rang from the direction of the school buildings—the rising bell. Arthur Augustus watched and waited; the gardener worked on steadily, whistling softly to himself as he worked. In the distance the swell of St. Jim's soon heard the sound of voices—the Grammarians were turning out. He wondered whether Gordon Gay would venture to give him a look-in before brekker. That question was soon answered—he observed Gordon Gay strolling towards the shed, with an air of exaggerated carelessness. And at the same time the gardener glanced across at the distant clock-tower and ceased work, and came back towards the shed with his hoe, still whistling. Arthur Augustus backed hurriedly from the window.

"My eye!" He heard an exclamation outside. "That winder's open—now what young raskil has been pranking about 'ere, and opening that there winder, lettin' in the rain?"

"Oh, cwumbs!" breathed Arthur Augustus faintly.

It was the gardener's voice, and evidently the gardener had observed the little window open in the loft—and was coming up to close it!

D'Arcy heard his footsteps below, and then the voice of Gordon Gay—bright and cheery.

"Hallo, Spuds! Good-morning, old bean!"

"Good-morning, Master Gay!"

"What are you monkeying on that ladder for, Spuds—gymnastics?"

"Some young rip has been in that there loft, leaving the winder open, Master Gay."

"My dear chap, I'll cut up and close it if you like," said Gay cheerily. "You're not so young as you used to be, Spuds, and that ladder's a bit steep."

Arthur Augustus held his breath.

"Thank you kindly, Master Gay." The gardener stepped back from the ladder. "Sure you fasten it safe, sir."

"Safe as houses," said Gay.

Arthur Augustus breathed again.

The Australian junior mounted the steep ladder, and as his head came up through the opening in the floor, he closed one eye at Arthur Augustus, whose startled glance met him.

Gay stepped into the loft and crossed to the window. He laid his finger on his lips as he passed D'Arcy; but the swell of St. Jim's understood the necessity for silence. Gay closed the window with plenty of noise, and snapped the catch.

Then he went back to the ladder, and with another wink at Gussy, he descended.

"Much obliged, Master Gay!" said the gardener. "It's through leavin' the door unlocked, you know—some young scamp comes in larking. I'll lock it up safe enough this time."

"Oh, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, in the loft.



"L-l-lock up the shed!" ejaculated Gordon Gay. "Why, surely that's not necessary, Spuds?"

"Looks as if it are, Master Gay."

"Lot of trouble when you want to come in and out for your tools!" urged Gay.

"Not so much trouble as 'aving young rascals larking about," said the gardener. "There goes the breakfast bell, Master Gay. You'll be late."

In a state of considerable dismay Gordon Gay left the shed, and the gardener followed him out, and locked the door, and put the key into his pocket. Gay glanced up at the little window, but D'Arcy was cautiously keeping back from it. Gordon Gay started for the house, and the gardener, a few minutes later, walked away, and when Arthur Augustus ventured to the window again, the coast was clear.

But the coast being clear was of no use to the St. Jim's runaway now. There was only one door to the shed, and it was locked. The little window of the loft was too small for even the slim swell of St. Jim's to squeeze through. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was a prisoner, and Spuds, the gardener, went in to breakfast, in blissful unconsciousness of the fact that he had captured the St. Jim's runaway.

## CHAPTER 6.

### The Sword of Damocles.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. were not feeling particularly merry and bright that morning at St. Jim's. Immediately after prayers there was an interview with the Head, for Tom and Blake—to which they repaired, with the sympathy of their chums, Herries and Digby, Manners and Lowther, were anxious enough to hear the outcome of that dreaded interview; but the anxiety of the two chief delinquents was even keener. The two juniors looked downcast as they stood before the Head; and Dr. Holmes surveyed them severely over his glasses.

Mr. Nulton had acquainted the Head with the circumstances of the case; it was only for the headmaster to deliver judgment. His expression was not promising. The flight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had caused the Head great worry and anxiety, not to mention wrath, and his recapture would have lifted a weight from the old gentleman's mind. That recapture had been prevented by Tom Merry's intervention. It was natural that the Head should not quite see that Tom had acted for the best.

"I am sorry for this, my boys," the Head began, in his kind way. In that, at least, he was in agreement with the culprits; they were sorry, too!

"I hope it is now clear to your minds that you have acted with very thoughtless and harebrained recklessness?" said the Head.

"Hem! Yes, sir!"

"D'Arcy, after giving us so much trouble, is still at large," said Dr. Holmes. "His father is naturally very anxious and annoyed. I naturally share his feelings. I fear that only severe punishment will be adequate to your offence."

The juniors feared it, too!

"In short," said Dr. Holmes, "I feel compelled to administer a flogging, which I regret very much."

Still the headmaster and the culprits were in agreement to some extent. He regretted it; and undoubtedly Tom Merry and Blake regretted it, too—very keenly indeed!

"You are not aware whither this foolish boy has fled again?" asked the Head.

"No, sir!"

"That is a pity," said Dr. Holmes. "I am reluctant to administer so severe a punishment, and if the harm you have done could be remedied, I should be able to reconsider it. It is possible, at least, that D'Arcy may be brought back to the school to-day—probable, I think. In that case, I shall be able to deal with you more lightly. If D'Arcy does not return to-day, however, you will understand that after prayers to-morrow morning you will both be flogged. You may go."

The two juniors went.

"Twenty-four hours to live!" grunted Blake, as they went down the corridor. "I wonder if they will catch that born idiot to-day?"

"Let's hope so!" said Tom. "I think very likely the silly owl would turn up if he knew what he had landed us in for. But, of course, he's far enough away by this time."

They joined their chums in the quadrangle. There was a rather excited discussion, till they were called in to classes. Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and Study No. 10 in the Shell shared an intense longing to punch the noble head of the Honourable Arthur Augustus. A flogging was a serious matter—it was a good deal of a disgrace, and it was decidedly painful. The juniors did not blame the Head; he was only doing his duty—according to his lights, as Blake put it. A headmaster couldn't reasonably be expected to see things in a proper light—the juniors agreed on that. Headmasters, at their age, had long outlived the sturdy common-sense that was to be found in the Fourth Form and the Shell! So Tom Merry & Co. weren't down on the Head for his decision—

which would, perhaps, have been a comfort to the Head had he known it.

But they were intensely exasperated with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his stunt of running away from school; and, turning his old pals' hair grey with worry, as Dig said. It was true that Dig's hair, as yet, showed no streaks of silver. But there was no doubt that Gussy's loyal chums were worried—especially as their efforts on his behalf had landed them like this.

That morning, it was noted, several of the Sixth-Form prefects were absent; and the juniors guessed easily enough that they were out of gates, looking for Arthur Augustus. The runaway being again in the neighbourhood of St. Jim's, that neighbourhood was being searched for him, and it was probable that notice had been given at the railway-stations. The escape of the runaway for a second time was doubtful; and Tom Merry & Co. could only hope that he would be captured—for his own sake and for theirs. If he came back that day, the flogging was to be rescinded—and so Tom Merry and Blake, at least, were simply yearning to behold once more the aristocratic countenance of the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

After morning classes, Tom Merry spotted Kildare and Darrell, of the Sixth, coming in at the gates, looking rather muddy and rather cross. He ventured to question the great men.

"Seen anything of D'Arcy, Kildare?" he asked.

Kildare shook his head and walked on with Darrell. Tom looked out of the gates. Knox of the Sixth was coming up the road.

The bully of St. Jim's gave Tom an unpleasant grin as he came in.

"Had your flogging?" he asked.

"Not yet, old bean," answered Tom cheerily. "That's a pleasure in store. Thanks for your sympathy."

"I hope the Head will lay it on hard!" grunted Knox.

"Dear man!" said Tom. "You're so kind! You haven't found D'Arcy, have you? I hope you haven't been mobbed by any more footpads done up in flour-sacks, Knox!"

And Tom beat a retreat after expressing that hope. Knox of the Sixth looked quite dangerous.

After dinner the Co. held another consultation—trying to put their wits together, and guess where Arthur Augustus might possibly have taken refuge. They were prepared to wheel out their bicycles and run down the fugitive, and bring him home by the hair and the ears, if only they could hit upon a clue. But they couldn't! Whether Arthur Augustus was twenty miles away, or within a stone's throw of the school, they could not guess; but the fact that the prefects had hunted for him in vain, showed that, if he was near at hand, he was lying very low indeed.

Afternoon lessons that day were a worry to Tom Merry & Co.

It was after classes, when the Terrible Three were strolling in the quad, that they sighted Gordon Gay of the Grammar School coming in at the gates. They closed in on the Grammarian at once. Rragging the Grammar School fellow would have been a relief to their feelings.

But Gay held up his hand in sign of peace.

"Pax, old pippins!" he said. "I'm a giddy ambassador. You fellows have lost something, haven't you?"

"Eh? Not that we know of?" said Tom.

"Hasn't your donkey strayed?"

"Our what?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Do you mean—have you seen—"

"Gussy?" exclaimed Manners.

Gordon Gay nodded.

"Mum's the word!" he said. "I want to see Blake, and you fellows, too. Better not speak here, there's Trimble trying to listen already!"

The Terrible Three conducted Gordon Gay into the School House in a state of considerable astonishment. They marched him into Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and Blake and Herries and Digby were called in; and then Gay proceeded to explain.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Nothing Doing!

**G**ORDON GAY sat in the armchair in Study No. 6, and told his astonished hearers of what had happened at the Grammar School. Tom Merry & Co. were relieved to hear that the St. Jim's runaway was so near at hand. But the situation was a peculiar one.

"You see, he's a giddy prisoner," said Gay. "The gardener's shed is locked up—I've been trying dodges all day to get the key off Spuds—but he's suspicious, and he's not taking any. He doesn't guess that we've got your stray donkey locked up in the loft, of course. But he's got the key safe, and Gussy's a jolly old prisoner. Waving our paws to him at the window doesn't do him much good. I reckoned

(Continued on page 12.)

# The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

## School House v. New House

### SWIMMING IN THE RHYL.

By The Sporting Editor.

ON Wednesday evening an inter-House team race took place in the Rhyll. It was quite an unofficial affair, and was the outcome of a challenge thrown out by Figgins.

The course was two hundred yards long, between the boat-houses and a point level with Little Side. Two diving-rafts had been towed into position, one at either end of the course.

The School House, and New House were represented, respectively, by Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Talbot, Julian, and Figgins, Kerr, Redfern, Owen.

Darrell and Baker consented to act as judges, one on each raft.

Tom Merry, matched again Figgins, beat the New House leader by three or four yards, but in spite of this lead Blake lost rather badly to Kerr, who released Redfern a good fifteen seconds before Blake's arrival at Talbot free.

Redfern made the most of his lead, with the result that although Talbot gained on him he managed to give Owen a good five seconds start on the School House in the last lap.

Unknown to the School House Juniors, Owen had been putting in a lot of practice of late, and the improvement in his swimming was something of a revelation to them. He ploughed along with a "crawl" stroke that took him along at a fine rate.

Julian was coming up hand-over-hand, in a powerful trudgeon, but there is no doubt that, with the advantage he had in getting away five seconds in advance, Owen would have pulled it off if he had been able to keep up his pace throughout. But the "crawl" is a very exhausting stroke, and the New House fellow began to realise that he had over-estimated his ability in attempting to keep it up for two hundred yards. Fifty yards from the raft he reverted to the side-stroke, and at once Julian began to gain on him.

The excited factions on the bank were yelling encouragement to their champions, and there was a roar from the School House as Julian drew level. Owen at once made a desperate effort to spurt, but he had shot his bolt, and five yards from the raft Julian passed him and gained the victory for the School House by a narrow margin—indeed, Darrell declared that it was within an ace of being a dead heat. Certainly the race was anybody's up to the last stroke.

## A Warning to Fags!

By Darrell of the Sixth.

PEW! I've been dropped into the cart with a vengeance. Talk about chickens coming home to roost, and all that kind of thing. When I jollied old Kildare into writing an article for young Merry's paper, I didn't realise what I was letting myself in for. The young beggars have been chasing me round now, and, of course, in view of the fact that I backed them up before, old Eric is backing them up now, and he seems to think it's a mighty fine joke, too.

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Goodness knows what I'm going to write about. Naturally, there are all sorts of things that happen in the Upper School, but I'm blessed if I can see what I can put down for publication in a magazine run by juniors without sacrificing the dignity of the Sixth. And if I do that Kildare will be down on me like a hundred of bricks. What a life! I see young Merry seems to be roping the whole of the school in to write for his rag. I suppose old Taggles will be asked to try his hand at journalism before long. I have even seen contributions by the Third, including that little beggar D'Arcy minor.

I wish D'Arcy minor would spend a little less time writing articles and a trifle more on keeping my study straight. I don't know what is coming over the fags lately; they're getting slacker and slacker. It's about time a pretty firm hand was stretched out in their direction. I notice that D'Arcy doesn't even put a duster over my place now. The result is that there's dust everywhere—on the table, the books, the window-ledge; in fact, all over the room.

But the climax came yesterday when I found, at tea-time, that the tea had been made with water that hadn't boiled, as a result of which the leaves were swimming about on the top of a teaspoonful of cold water. The cloth was a filthy rag that looked as if it might have been used as a towel by the whole of the Third after a fight with ink-bottles—that is, if they ever do use towels, which I very much doubt.

I'd told D'Arcy to get a special spread ready, as I'd invited Rushden to tea, and so I was jolly wild when I came in and saw the state of things.

Rushden grinned and shrugged his shoulders when he followed me into the room.

"What's the use?" he said. "My study's just the same. It doesn't matter what you say to the young sweeps. They're all alike."

"Oh, are they?" I grunted. "Well, we'll just see if we can't make one of them a bit different, at any rate."

I went to the door and yelled out for D'Arcy.

About a minute passed, and there was still no sign of him. I gave one more yell, and then set out in search with an ash-plant in my hand. I found him just coming out of the Third Form Commou-room. I grasped him by the ear and led him back to the study. Then I shut the door.

"D'Arcy," I said grimly, "I've been yelling my throat out for you in the corridor, and at last I had to set out and fetch you. Why didn't you come at once?"

"I didn't hear you, Darrell," he said. "I was busy at the time."

"Oh, were you? And may I ask what was the nature of the business that made you so conveniently deaf?" I inquired.

"Oh, chuck it, old bean!" said this amazing infant. "Don't talk like old Selby! We get enough of that in the Form-room. It ain't funny, you know!"

Rushden had his handkerchief out, trying to look as if he wasn't laughing, and I got a good grip of the ash-plant as I twisted D'Arcy round.

"Now, my lad!" I said sternly. "Perhaps you'll tell me what you were doing in the Commou-room when I called you."

"If you really want to know," he answered, "I was playing put and take with Gibson and Frayne."

"Well, you can play it here with Rushden and I," I told him. "Put this study straight and take away the rubbish from my fireplace. What do you mean by leaving the place in such a mess?"

"I'm sure it isn't my fault," he went on calmly. "I do my best to make you tidy, but it's no blessed good! I suppose you can't help it. Anyway, what are you howling about now?"

"Didn't I tell you I was bringing back Rushden to tea, and I wanted an extra special spread?" I said, shaking him. "And what do I find? The room is in an unholly mess, and no tea ready. Dust everywhere—even on the table."

"Dust?" he echoed, staring. "Do you mean on that plate?"

"Of course I do."

"That isn't dust. It's a tea-cake!"

"Tea-cake?"

"Yes; and well toasted, too!"

"In that case, you can eat it yourself, my son, and I hope you're of the same opinion about it when you've finished. You can also drink that mess in the teapot, after which you'll set to work and turn out this room, dust it thoroughly, clean up the rubbish, and set another tea—and a tea, this time. I'll give you half an hour for the job, and there'll be trouble if it isn't done! You understand?"

"Yes, Darrell."

"Good! And now Rushden and I will witness your consumption of the stuff you call toasted tea-cake, and you won't start on the study until every scrap has gone—all time counting into your half-hour. So the sooner you commence the better."

I don't know how he managed to eat it, but eat it he did, though the sight made us nearly sick. Then we cleared, and at the end of the half-hour came back to discover the study looking spick and span.

If the improvement doesn't continue, I shall adopt the same treatment on future occasions, so it behoves Master D'Arcy and his ink-fingered confederates to profit by the lesson, as I am assured that other study-owners are prepared to take a leaf out of my book.

## FOOTBALL!



**MUST  
BE  
WON**

No Goals — No Entrance Fee. Scottish and Irish Readers may enter. For full particulars see this week's

## ANSWERS

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**"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."**

A Splendid Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck is awarded to the sender of what the Editor considers the most interesting paragraph. Half-a-crown is awarded for each other contribution accepted.

(If your name is not here this week it may be next.)

**This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.**

**A FRIENDLY HINT.**

A concert in aid of a charity had been arranged, and all the local stars were booked to appear. Miss Elsie Hand, the favourite soprano, was announced to sing, and before she began apologised for her cold. Then she started with "I'll hang my harp on a willow tree-e-e-oh!—on a willow tree-e-e-oh!" Her voice broke on the high note each time. She tried twice more. Then a voice from the back of the hall said: "Try 'angin' it on a lower branch, miss."—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to Miss Connie Basford, 61, Caldmore Road, Walsall, Staffs.

**THE VOYAGE.**

A bargee was laboriously pulling his craft up the Thames. The lounge on Vauxhall Bridge contemplated his efforts with a sneer, for the barge did not seem to move more than a foot a minute. "Hi, mate!" shouted the lounge to the bargeman, who looked up. "Bring me back a parrot!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Williams, 34, Market St., Hanley, Staffs.

**OBSCURING THE VIEW.**

The inhabitants of a certain very small village are exceedingly proud of the place. One day an express train chanced to stop for a moment at the little station. Seizing his opportunity, the stationmaster, ticket-collector, porter, signalman, etc., hurried to speak to a man who was looking out of the window of a first-class carriage. "What do you think of this town, sir?" he asked. "Isn't it splendid?" "I can't see it," said the passenger. "There's a cow standing in front of it."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. W. Maddock, 150, Manor Road, Leyton, Essex.

**THE MOOSE.**

This animal is also known as the elk, and inhabits the northern parts of both continents. It is rather larger than a horse, and its flesh has more the flavour of beef than venison. The tough skin is made into parchment, leather, lines, and cords. The sinews yield thread and glue. The horns serve for handles to knives and awls. The shank bones are employed as tools to dress leather with. A particular portion of the hair is employed by Indian women for embroidering garments.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Lambert, 95, Elm Street, Plumstead, S.E. 18.

**TUCK HAMPER COUPON**

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**THE GREAT HEAD 'EM COMPETITION!**

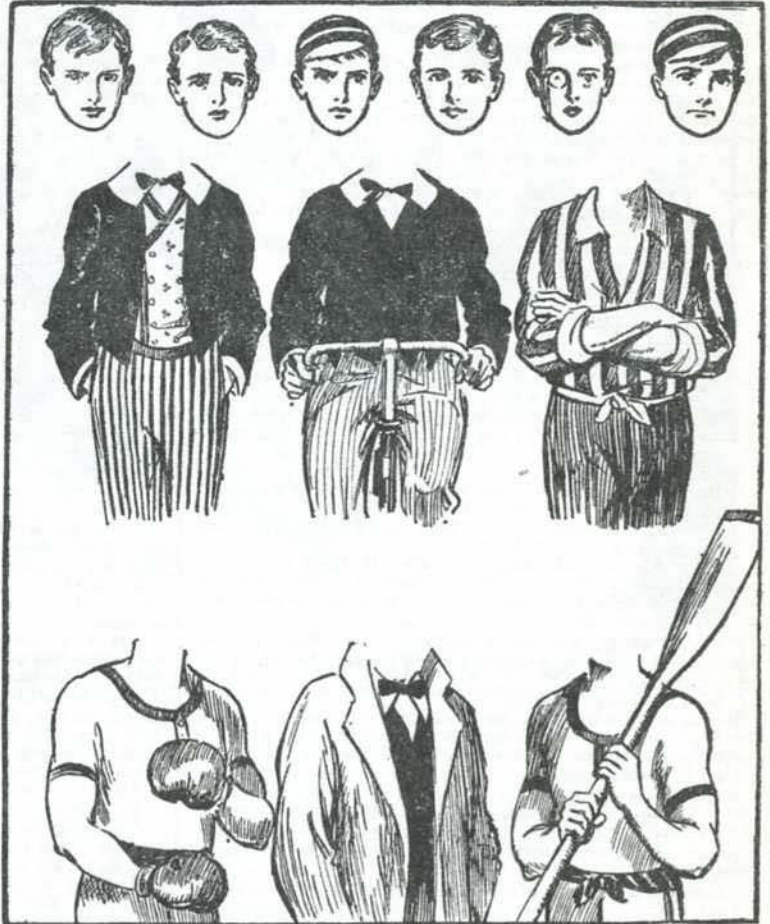
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**FIRST PRIZE £5.**

Five Prizes of £1 each and 10 Prizes of 10s. each. Picture Set Number Two.



**WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.**

Above you will find the figures of six well-known characters which appear at intervals in our grand, long, complete stories of the chums of St. Jim's. Together with these are six heads which have been detached from the aforementioned figures.

All one has to do to become the happy recipient of one of our splendid money prizes is to cut out and affix each of the heads to their correct figures.

These heads are easily recognisable to old readers of the GEM, and new readers have only to make a careful study of the illustrations appearing in the forthcoming issues of this splendid school story paper to become equally well acquainted with the world-famous Tom Merry & Co.

It is a question of putting two and two together right through the competition.

This is the second set of pictures in this novel competition, and another will appear each week for two more weeks, making a total of four sets of pictures in all.

When you have worked out the first two sets of pictures to your satisfaction, keep them by you, then carry on with each of the other sets of pictures as they appear until your four sets are completed.

You will be instructed how and where to send in your attempts for this easy competition immediately after the appearance of the fourth set of pictures.

If this competition doesn't appeal to you, why not give one of your chums the opportunity of competing for one of our big money prizes?

Readers may send in as many attempts as they like, but only complete sets will be admitted.

The first prize of £5 will be awarded to the competitor who succeeds in submitting sets of pictures which are exactly the same or nearest to those now in the possession of the Editor. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of any or all of the prizes; but the full amount will be awarded.

It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor be accepted as final and legally binding.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

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## THE RETURN OF THE RUNAWAY!

(Continued from page 9.)

I'd come over here and consult you fellows about what's to be done."

"Just like Gussy to land himself like that!" remarked Manners.

"Oh, just!" said Blake.

"He won't hear of coming back to school," resumed Gay, "and, of course, we're standing by him. After dark we can get a ladder to the window and talk to him—not before, or we'd be spotted. Of course, our headmaster would have brought him back here at once if he knew. Best thing for him, too—only he doesn't see it, and we can't give him up."

Tom Merry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

Blake gave a chuckle.

"He must be getting pretty thoroughly fed up with that loft by this time," he remarked.

"I imagine so," assented Gay. "We did our best for him. Of course, we couldn't foresee the gardener locking him in; that shed's never locked, as a rule. It's really Gussy's fault for leaving the window wide open and warning Spuds that somebody had been butting in there. I was thinking that one of his pals might come over and talk to him at the window, and persuade him to come home, like Bill Bailey in the song. Then we could ask openly for the key and let him out—once he's seen, of course, he will have to come back to St. Jim's."

"Lot of good trying to persuade the ass!" growled Blake. "But it's all right; we'll make him come!"

Gay shook his head.

"That's barred!" he said.

"How is it barred, you Grammarian ass?" demanded Blake warmly.

"I've been speaking to you in confidence, of course," said Gordon Gay serenely. "We're standing by Gussy, ass as he is. I haven't come here to give him away. If you fellows could persuade him, for his own good, to come back, well and good. Otherwise, you can't act on what I've told you—you must forget it!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"That's right enough!" he said. "But it's pretty hard cheese. You see, Blake and I helped him to get away from Knox, and we're booked for a flogging to-morrow morning if Gussy doesn't come back to-day!"

"Hard cheese, old chappies!" said Gay. "But we're bound to stand by Gussy, as we told him we would. Suppose you come over and try the effect of your giddy eloquence on him."

"That's all we can do, I suppose," said Tom, looking round at his comrades, and there was a general nod of assent.

Gordon Gay rose.

"Who's coming?" he asked.

It was settled for Tom Merry to go; and the captain of the Shell was soon on his bicycle and riding away with the Grammarian junior. They reached Rylcombe Grammar School in record time.

Wootton major and minor met them at the gates.

"All serene, so far," said Wootton major, with a nod to Tom Merry. "Nobody's spotted Gussy—he's still a giddy prisoner. He must have run through his grub by this time, though."

"Something's got to be done!" remarked Wootton minor.

Tom Merry strolled away with the three Grammarians to the kitchen gardens. Spuds, fortunately, was not at work there; and the juniors were able to approach the gardener's shed. The two Woottons remained on watch at a little distance, to give a signal whistle in case of danger, and Tom Merry and Gay came under the loft window. Their approach had evidently been seen by the prisoner within, for the little window opened, and the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came into view fifteen feet above.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy!" he called down.

"Gussy, you silly old owl!" was Tom's polite greeting.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"How are you getting on up there?" asked the captain of the Shell, with a smile.

"It is wathah howwid, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"There are evah so many spidahs!"

"Are you coming back to St. Jim's?"

"No!"

"Going to camp there for the rest of your life?"

"Wats!"

"Now, look here, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, in his most persuasive tones. "You've got to chuck this rot!"

"What vot, deah boy?" inquired Arthur Augustus calmly.

"This silly stunt of yours."

"I am afraid that I cannot discuss the posish with any fellah who regards my conduct as a sillay stunt."

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Tom Merry breathed hard. It was fortunate for Arthur Augustus that his noble nose was out of the Shell fellow's reach.

"Look here, Gussy," said Tom, playing his trump card, as it were. "Blake and I are booked for a flogging for helping you away from Knox yesterday. If you don't come back to-day, we're to be flogged in the morning."

"Bai Jove!"

"So play up like a little man and chuck this rot!" urged Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I am vewy sowwy, Tom Mewwy, that you have got into twouble by buttin' into this mattah—"

"What?"

"But I cannot return to St. Jim's until I weceive justice."

"Fathead!" roared Tom.

"Shush!" murmured Gordon Gay. "Don't tell the whole giddy school, old chap."

"I am awflly sowwy, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, "but my return is imposs in the pvesent circs. Howevah, I should be vewy glad to return if it were poss. Will you take a message ffrom me to Mr. Waitton?"

"What's the message, ass?"

"I wufuse to be addresssed as an ass, Tom Mewwy."

"What's the message?" howled Tom.

"That is bettah. P'way tell Mr. Waitton that I am willin' to return, on condish that bygones are allowed to be bygones. I considah that I was quite justified in horse-whippin' Knox for his insolence, and I cannot consent to be punished for it. I am wpreared to make a fvesh start, without wufefence to any old twoubles, if Mr. Waitton is willin'. That is my message, deah boy."

"You silly owl!" gasped Tom. "Do you think I could give a Housemaster a message like that, or that he would listen to it if I did?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Will you come back, you utter ass?"

"Nothin' doin', deah boy!"

"Then we're to take our flogging to-morrow, while you go on playing the giddy ox!" demanded Tom Merry warmly.

"I am awflly sowwy, deah boy! But I cannot allow you to chawactewise my actions as playin' the gidday ox!"

"Look here, Gussy—"

"Wats!"

There was a sharp whistle in the distance. Arthur Augustus hurriedly retired from the window, and Tom Merry and Gay, with equal haste, walked away from the shed.

Spuds, the gardener, came along, and cast a suspicious glance after the two juniors before he unlocked the shed and went in.

"If he's caught on—" murmured Tom, watching the Grammar School gardener from a distance.

But Spuds had not caught on. He came out of the shed in a few minutes, and carefully locked the door after him before he went away. Tom Merry walked back to the bicycle with Gay. His mission had been a failure; Arthur Augustus being prepared, apparently, to spend the rest of his natural life as a fugitive from school.

"Well?" said Gordon Gay at last, with a faint grin.

Tom Merry frowned.

"Nothing doing!" he said. "We'll give him the ragging of his life when he does come back! That's all!"

"Awful ass, isn't he?" grinned Gay. "We'll find some way of letting the duffer loose to-night; can't burgle the shed in daylight. Ta-ta!"

Tom Merry rode back to St. Jim's in an exasperated mood. His chums were equally exasperated when they heard his report. But there was nothing to be done—save to anticipate the flogging of the morrow and to make infuriated promises about what should happen to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy when he did return to St. Jim's, if ever he did! Tom Merry & Co. were wraithy; and the sun went down upon their wrath.

### CHAPTER 8.

#### Gussy's Resolve!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was not feeling in the brightest of spirits as the sun went down.

The little loft was stuffy and dusty and spidery; more uncomfortable quarters had never sheltered the elegant swell of St. Jim's. He was anxious—extremely anxious—to get out; but getting out was, for the present, quite impossible. He was worried by what he had learned from Tom Merry—of the prospective flogging which hung, like a sword of Damocles, over the heads of his chums. That thought gave Arthur Augustus more worry than his own unpleasant situation—exceedingly unpleasant as that was.

When darkness fell, he waited and hoped for a visit from the Grammar School trio. Gay had called up to him that, somehow or other, they would get him out after dark.

It was obviously impossible for the swell of St. Jim's to



D'Arcy raised the pickaxe and started on the lock. He put his beef into the blows. Crash, crash, crash! Slowly but surely the St. Jim's junior hacked it away, till the big lock—still locked—hung loosely. The door was practicable at last. Breathing hard, and with his noble brow bedewed with perspiration, Arthur Augustus threw down the pickaxe. (See page 14.)

remain much longer a prisoner in the loft, and getting him out required rather desperate measures; but the Grammarians had to take the risk of that.

Gay's scheme was to bag a ladder late in the evening, and get up to the window with a selection of tools from his tool-chest, and somehow enlarge the little window-frame to a sufficient extent for Gussy to squeeze out. It was certain that damage would be done, but Gay did not see how that was to be avoided.

As the long minutes followed one another, Arthur Augustus waited with growing anxiety.

That Gay would keep his word he was certain—unless unforeseen things happened to prevent it. As it happened, Gordon Gay had reckoned without his Form-master. The incident of the previous night had, perhaps, made Mr. Adams more wary than usual. At all events, when three hopeful Grammarians, with a bag of tools, sought an obscure window at nine o'clock, and prepared to make their exit, the light was suddenly turned on in the passage, and they jumped round to meet Mr. Adams' penetrating eye.

"Another nocturnal excursion, my boys!" said the Fourth Form-master genially.

Gordon Gay & Co. could only blink at him. Never had their Form-master dropped on them at so unfortunate a moment.

Mr. Adams was smiling quite pleasantly. He seemed to see something humorous in the situation.

"My dear boys, you seem to have a very remarkable fancy for roaming in the quadrangle after lock-up," he said.

"Oh!" gasped Gay. "Yes, sir!"

"Have you forgotten that it is against the rules?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"What does that bag contain, Gay?"

"Wha-a-at bag, sir?"

"The one you are trying to conceal behind you," said the Form-master pleasantly.

"Oh dear!"

Gordon Gay handed over the bag; there was no help for it. Mr. Adams glanced into it, and raised his eyebrows in surprise as he saw that it contained tools.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "For what imaginable reason were you taking a bag of tools out of the house at this hour, Gay?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Gay, while the two Woottons stood dumbstricken. "You—you see— I—I—I— Hem!"

"Very lucid!" agreed Mr. Adams. "You may take these tools back to your room, Gay."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Have you finished your preparation?"

"Yes, sir; finished early."

"Very good! You will remain in your study till bedtime, and will occupy the time in writing out the first book of Virgil."

"Oh dear!"

"I will not ask what absurd prank you may have had in view," said Mr. Adams kindly. "But I will mention that you will be wise to give it up. If you should, by any chance, think of leaving your dormitory to-night, the punishment will be very severe!"

Gordon Gay & Co. almost limped back to their study. Gay threw the bag of tools into a corner with a crash.

"Done!" he remarked.

"We're accumulating a fair amount of lines on dear old Gussy's account!" growled Wootton minor. "Why don't his people send him to a home for incurable idiots? That's his real place!"

"Can't be helped!" said Gay. "The game's up for to-night—no breaking dorm bounds with Adams keeping his giddy eagle eye open! Gussy will have to stick it till morning."

"We can't burgle the shed after daylight and let him out!" "We shall have to chance it," said Gordon Gay desperately; "or else garrotte old Spuds, and bag the key!"

And the chums of the Fourth settled down to lines—an opportunity for becoming more closely acquainted with the classic beauties of P. Vergilius Maro, for which they were not in the slightest degree grateful.

When they turned in, in the dormitory, there had been no opportunity of communicating with Arthur Augustus, and there was to be no opportunity till morning. They could only hope that Gussy was bearing it philosophically.

In those same hours, Arthur Augustus was finding his philosophy put to a very severe test.

He waited and watched in the loft over the gardener's shed, until the striking of eleven warned him that it was futile to expect to see the Grammarians that night. Then he gave it up, in a very unenviable frame of mind.

He did not blame Gordon Gay & Co., being well aware that the Grammarians would not have abandoned him if they could have helped it. It was just what he described as his "wotten luck"—that was all!

Certainly the runaway's luck was out.

He had finished his provisions, and he was hungry. When he turned into his blankets, his thoughts were of spiders; and when he dreamed, he dreamed of unnumbered spiders—dreaming and waking, spiders haunted his thoughts—and, what was worse, his blankets!

Arthur Augustus had tried many refuges since his flight from St. Jim's; and they had varied, but none of them had been so extremely uncomfortable as this, the latest.

The night seemed so long that he almost began to wonder whether the sun had disappeared from the solar system altogether, leaving the Temperate Zone in a state of Arctic night.

But dawn came along at last. Everything comes to an end, and that long, long, spidery night ended. A tired, hungry, and, it must be admitted, rather dirty and grubby junior crawled out of the blankets, and posted himself at the little window to watch for succour. But, like Sister Mary, he was a long time seeing anyone coming.

But at last Gordon Gay appeared in the office, and Arthur Augustus, in great relief, waved a glad hand to him.

Gay stopped under the window, and waved back.

"Slept well, old bean?" he called up.

"Hem! Fairly, deah boy," answered Arthur Augustus. "I—I slept all right all the time I wasn't awake, you know. I—I say, old chap, how am I gettin' out of this? It's howwid to give you a lot of twouble, but I weally should like to get out of this howwid—I mean, this place."

"Couldn't get along last night," explained Gay. "The Adams bird spotted us, and put the stopper on. I'm afraid he's got a special eye on me now, and it's risky showing up here at all. If Adams has got an eye on you your game is up, of course. Can't get a ladder along now, but— You'll have to break out, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! How?"

"Smash the jolly old lock open with one of the spades downstairs," said Gay. "It's the only way." "Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "But—but that will cause a wov, old fellah."

"You can't do it without a noise, that's a cert!"

"I mean, a wov for you fellahs. The beaks will know that somebody has been in heah. There will be an inqwivy, and—"

"Must chance that," said Gay, shrugging his shoulders. "You can't stay up there all your life. I'm sorry you got bottled up like this, old chap. Rotten bad luck, and no mistake! Hallo, here comes old Spuds! I must clear. Wait till he's gone before you begin on the lock." Gordon Gay vanished.

Arthur Augustus closed the little window hastily. Every now and then he took a peep out, and had the pleasure, or otherwise, of seeing the Grammar School gardener at work. But the industrious Spuds went in to breakfast at last, and the coast was clear.

Then Arthur Augustus prepared for action.

He descended the ladder into the shed, and made an examination of the lock on the door. It was a large, hefty, old-fashioned lock, and evidently wanted a lot of breaking open. Gussy contemplated it for some minutes, not hopefully.

But there was nothing else to be done. He realised that. If the noise brought the gardener to the spot it couldn't be helped. He could only hope that the subsequent inquiry into the damage would not implicate Gordon Gay & Co. Having made up his mind at last, the swell of St. Jim's proceeded to work.

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He selected a pickaxe, and started on the lock. He put his beef into the swipes with the pickaxe.

Crash, crash, crash, crash!

The shed echoed and rang with the sound of Gussy's hefty blows. But the lock seemed little the worse for some time.

The woodwork round it, however, multiplied signs of damage. Slowly but surely the St. Jim's junior hacked it away, till the big lock—still locked—hung loosely. The door was practicable at last. Breathing hard, and with his noble brow bedewed with perspiration, Arthur Augustus threw down the pickaxe.

"My eye!" It was a voice outside the shed. "What the thump! What the thunder! Some blinking tramp in that there shed—"

It was the voice of the gardener.

"Oh cwumbs!" murmured Arthur Augustus faintly.

It was neck or nothing now! If he was cornered in the shed the game was fairly up. He set his hat on his head firmly, jammed his eyeglass into his eye, threw open the staggering door, and made a rush for it.

"Hi! You 'old on! Stop!" roared Spuds, as the swell of St. Jim's came speeding out.

Arthur Augustus did not lead. He missed the indignant gardener's clutch by a hair's breadth, and ran for his life, with Spuds shouting behind him. A few seconds more, and he was making a wild break across the quad. How he got over the school wall Arthur Augustus hardly knew. But he knew that he was rolling in the dust on the road, and a moment later he knew that his topper had fallen off as he clambered, and remained within the precincts of the Grammar School. But it was no time to think of that now. He picked himself up, and fled.

Hatless and breathless, the swell of St. Jim's ran for it, and vanished from the indignant eyes of Spuds, the gardener, glaring after him over the wall.

It was not till he was in the bosky shades of Rylcombe Wood that Arthur Augustus halted to take breath.

He sat on a projecting root, panting for breath, and trying to think what he was to do next. Once more the world was before the St. Jim's runaway—the wide world. But, somehow, since his latest adventures, the wide world had lost some of its attraction. And a worrying thought was in his mind, haunting him. It was getting near the time now when Tom Merry and Blake were to receive their flogging on his account. It was quite true, according to Gussy's view, that those two thoughtless youngsters had asked for it by butting into the affair in their thoughtless way. Still, a flogging was a flogging; and he was the cause of it, and it worried him.

And he wanted a bath; he wanted it badly.

Whether it was that pressing need for a bath, or the almost equally pressing need of a breakfast, or concern for his comrades at St. Jim's, that moved the runaway to a new resolution, probably Arthur Augustus himself hardly knew. Probably his motives were mixed. But, at all events, when the fugitive left the shelter of the wood, his footsteps carried him, not out into the wide, wide world, but directly towards the gates of St. Jim's.

## CHAPTER 9.

### Good Old Gussy!

"BLESS Gussy!"

"Bother him!"

Tom Merry and Blake made those remarks emphatically. Their feelings were shared by Manners and Lowther, Digby and Herries, and quite a number of other fellows.

The hour had come!

Before morning classes the two delinquents were to repair to the Head's study, there to be "hoisted" by Taggles, and to receive the punishment due.

The runaway had not returned. His whereabouts were unknown, to the school authorities, at least, and Tom Merry and Blake, being held responsible for that state of affairs, were "booked."

Mr. Railton called to them, with a severe countenance.

"Merry! Blake! You will follow me at once!"

"Yes, sir," groaned Blake.

"Hard lines!" said Talbot of the Shell, as the two hapless juniors followed the Housemaster. Many sympathetic glances were cast at the two sufferers, if that was any help.

Mr. Railton marched the two juniors into the Head's study, where Dr. Holmes was prepared to deal with them. The birch lay on the Head's table, ready for action.

Dr. Holmes' face was severe in expression. There was no hope to be read in his usually benignant countenance.

"You have sent for Taggles, Mr. Railton?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Very good!"

Ephraim Taggles, the school porter, coughed discreetly at the door, and entered. There was quite a genial expression on Taggles' face. Occasions like this were rare at St. Jim's,

and perhaps Taggles enjoyed them on account of their rarity. At all events, it was clear that the respectable Taggles derived some little satisfaction from the performance of his painful duty.

Dr. Holmes took up the birch.

"I am sorry for this, my boys," he said quietly. "Believe me, it is as painful to me as it can be to you."

Tom Merry and Blake made no answer to that. At the bottom of their hearts they doubted the statement.

Anyhow, they would willingly have spared the Head that pain. They would have let him off with the greatest of pleasure.

"Merry first!" said Dr. Holmes.

"Now, then, Master Merry!" smiled Taggles.

Tom Merry resisted an almost overpowering desire to punch Mr. Taggles' smiling, cheery face. There was no help for it, and Tom was duly "hoisted."

At the same moment there was a loud shout in the quadrangle outside the windows of the Head's study.

"Here he comes!"

"Great Scott, Gussy!"

"The giddy one and only!" roared Grundy of the Shell. "He's come back!"

"Hallo, Gussy! When did you wash last?"

"Where's your hat?"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, lowering his birch, "is it possible that—that kindly glance from the window, Mr. Railton—"

The Housemaster had already stepped to the window. Full in his view was the noble figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—hatless, dusty, grubby, untidy—but unmistakably Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. He was surrounded by a crowd of fellows, all exclaiming at once. Herries was shaking a fist under his noble nose.

"Pwaw allow me to pass, deah boys!" came Arthur Augustus' calm voice. "I am in wathah a hawwvy to see the Head."

"They're getting the flogging now!" roared Herries.

"Bai Jove! I twust I am not too late!"

"You silly ass—"

"You frabjous owl—"

"You burbling jabberwock—"

Unheeding those complimentary remarks, Arthur Augustus broke into a run and broke through the crowd and vanished into the School House. The next minute he was tapping at the door of the Head's study.

Without waiting to be bidden to enter, Arthur Augustus threw open the door and marched in.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon him. The Head, birch in hand, blinked at him. Blake gave him a ferocious glare. Tom Merry, still hoisted, stared at him. There was a moment's silence in the study.

Arthur Augustus broke it.

"I have returned, sir!" he said gracefully.

"I—I see that you have returned, D'Arcy!" gasped the Head. "I am glad to see that you have, apparently, repented of your insubordination and reckless disrespect—"

"Not at all, sir!"

"What?"

"I cannot regard my conduct as disrespectful, sir," said the swell of St. Jim's calmly. "I felt justified in wetirin' ffrom the school where I did not weceive justice. In horse-whippin' Knox of the Sixth, sir I was simply punishin' the awful cheek of a wuffian who had the audacity to box my yahs, sir. I have not wepented in the least, as I wegard myself as bein' in the wight."

"D'Arcy!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"With all respect to you, Mr. Waitton, I cannot wecede ffrom that posh!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "It was my intention to weinain away ffrom St. Jim's until I weceived justice heah. I have we returned because I learned that these two thoughtless youngstahs are goin' to be flogged on my account, for buttin' into mattahs they are too young to undahstand."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head.

"For that weason, sir," said Arthur Augustus firmly, "I have we returned to St. Jim's, and as I am heah, sir, I twust you will ovahlook the weckless conduct of those two unthinkin' fellahs—"

"You—you—" began Blake, forgetful of the august presence in which he stood.

"Silence!" said the Head. "Taggles, you may put Merry down."

"Yessir!" grumbled Taggles.

He relinquished his victim, much to Tom's relief. Arthur Augustus' return had been in time, after all.

"I twust, sir—" recommenced Arthur Augustus.

"Silence! Merry and Blake, as the boy you so thoughtlessly aided to escape has returned, I shall not administer a flogging," said Dr. Holmes. "You will be punished, but I shall leave that to your Housemaster, who will deal with you later. You may leave my study."

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Tom Merry.

The two juniors left the study, lingering a little at the door. They were anxious about Arthur Augustus now. For days and weeks they had yearned to see him back at St. Jim's, so that they could punch his noble head. But now that he was back, wrath gave place to anxiety, for it was only too evident that the returned runaway was "for it."

Mr. Railton closed the door on them, and they had to go. At the corner of the corridor they found Herries and Dig, Manners and Lowther, waiting for them, with a crowd of fellows.

"All serene!" said Tom. "We're out of it—except for lines, I expect. But poor old Gussy—"

"I—I wish he hadn't come!" grunted Blake uneasily. "The Head was looking like a—a giddy gorgon! Gussy's going to have the time of his life!"

"Well, he's asked for it!" said Levison of the Fourth. "If he gets off with a flogging, he's lucky!"

"He came back to get us out of it," said Tom. "It was awfully decent of him, and just like Gussy!"

"Just!" said Blake. "Good old Gussy! He can't help being a born idiot, and he's one of the best! I—I say, can you fellows hear anything?"

Heads were bent to listen. There had been a murmur of voices from the Head's study; now that was succeeded by another sound.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

The sound was regular, rhythmic. It was a sound as of someone beating a carpet with steady strokes. But it was obviously not a carpet that was being beaten.

The juniors listened again with painful intencness.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Then the voice of the returned runaway was heard:

"Yawwooh! Oh! Oh cwumps!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"He's going it!" said Grundy, in an awed voice. "But I say, they can't be going to sack Gussy! The Head wouldn't lay it on like that if there was the sack to follow."

Tom Merry nodded.

Undoubtedly the Head was laying it on. Arthur Augustus, in acting as he had done, was quite convinced that he had been in the right. But he was certainly being dealt with as if he had been in the wrong.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"Wooooooop!"

"Poor old Gussy!" murmured Blake. "He asked for it, begged and prayed for it, in fact. But—poor old Gussy!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Tom Merry & Co. listened with pained faces. All the punches and raggings and bumpings they had promised Gussy, during his absence, disappeared from their minds now. Arthur Augustus had erred, but he was suffering for his error—there was no mistake about that. For once, the Head of St. Jim's felt that it was his duty to be severe, and he did not spare the rod.

The swishing ended at last.

The Head's door opened. A faltering figure came limping out, with pale but fearless face.

Not a word was spoken. Arthur Augustus was surrounded by his chums, and marched away, in silent sympathy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was absent from the Fourth Form room that morning. But he turned up to classes in the afternoon, silent, thoughtful, considerably subdued. After lessons there was a spread in Study No. 6, to welcome home the wanderer; and by that time Arthur Augustus had sufficiently recovered to smile again.

"It was simply feahful!" he confided to his chums. "I nevah dweamed that the Head was such a hefty old athlete, you know. I think he was wathah tired when he wange off. I know I was. I have been thinkin', deah boys of cleahin' off ffrom the school again—"

"What!" ejaculated the dear boys.

"As a pwotest against that floggin', you know—"

"Why, you—you—"

"But on second thoughts," continued Arthur Augustus, "I shall do nothin' of the sort."

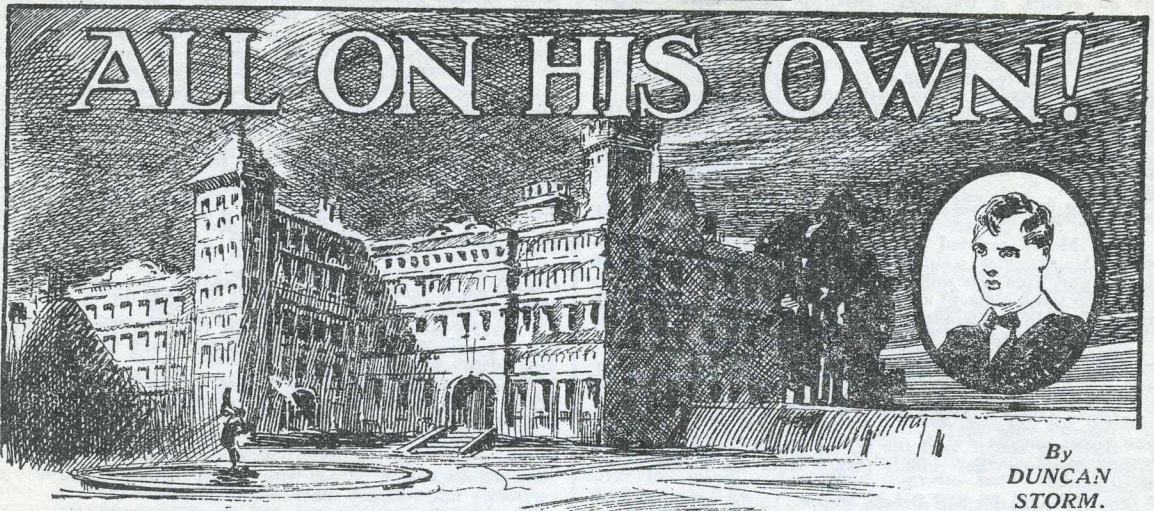
"Second thoughts are best!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! The fact is, deah boys, that on reflection, I feel that it is wathah a diswespectful pwoccedin' to wun away ffrom school—I mean wetre ffrom school without permission. Although I was in the wight, you know, I have come to the conclusion that a fellah ought not to wun away ffrom school. And I twust," added Arthur Augustus calmly, "I twust this will be a lesson to you fellahs!"

THE END.

(There will be an extra special, long complete story of the chums of St. Jim's next week, entitled: "LEVISON'S PAST!" by Martin Clifford. This is the kind of story you have been wanting, so be sure that you order your next week's GEM early.)

SEE THAT ALL YOUR CHUMS READ THIS SPLENDID STORY!



# ALL ON HIS OWN!

By  
**DUNCAN  
STORM.**

## THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

**JIM READY**, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world of chance. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts up against

**A KINDLY STRANGER** (John Lincoln), the principal governor of the great school of St. Beowulf's, who had been watching him at the funeral.

The two walk along the road together, and Jim tells his new-found friend that he intends starting work at the brickfields in Dennington. The stranger smiles, and tells Jim it is education he needs first. He then withdraws a piece of parchment from his pocket, and, after signing it, hands it to Jim. It is a free pass into the great school. Jim is to take his chance as a Lincoln scholar at St. Beowulf's.

Jim gets a warm reception from the bullies of the school, but the decent fellows welcome him.

He finds a friend in Wobbygong, a plucky lad from Australia, and the master of a pet kangaroo, Nobby.

Nobby bolts one night, but the boys give chase and capture him. On their return to St. Beowulf's they find that burglars have broken into the school. The ruffians are captured. Wobby commandeers their car, and hides it in the Haunted Barn for future use.

Later, he learns of the scoundrel's intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country. He plans to capture the plunder. At the dead of night, he and his pals quietly dress, and gain their exit by the box-room chimney. They get the car out from the Haunted Barn, and with Wobby at the wheel, are soon driving up the long sweep of Smugglers' Beacon.

(Now read on.)

## Pursued!

**W**OBBOY had switched off the lights. He steered by the ghostly figure of Nobby, the kangaroo, which was bounding close in front.

"Where Nobby can go, we can go!" he said. "I've often let Nobby pilot me through the bush like this, and he never let me down, except once when we came on the open mouth of an old gold mine, where the boys had turned it in and left the hole a hundred feet deep. Nobby jumped, but the car went down in the hole, and I was only just able to jump out of it in time. You haven't got any gold-mines on these downs, I reckon." "We've got chalk-pits," replied Stickjaw. "We'll take a risk on them!" answered Wobby calmly.

They were getting high in the world now and the mist was thickening around them. Suddenly Wobby slowed his engine, and, peering through the misty night, listened.

The mistbanks were driving in from the sea, and there were spaces of clearness between them.

Wobby thought he heard the sound of another engine on the dark downs.

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He was not deceived.

Far away down below them through a sudden clearing of the mist, he saw the glare of bright headlights and heard the drone of a powerful car.

"Boys," he shouted, "we are chased! That is the police car from Hangman's Copse chasing us up. That cop who jumped into his greenhouse had a telephone in his little cottage. We've got to get whilst the going is good. It's us for Martleberry Waste, where the mist is thick. If the cops care to take Martleberry Waste in a thick mist at full steam, they can have us!"

"But supposing we lie still and hide and let them get past us?" suggested Jim Ready.

"It's plain you don't know much about tracking, Jim, my boy!" answered Wobby. "Our wheels are leaving a track on this dewy grass that even a London cop can track. They'd just run us straight down. Come into the car, Nobby!"

Nobby leaped into the car and crushed himself down amongst the boys. He was wet and streaming with dew from his passage through the bushes and trees.

B-r-r-r-r-r!

They could hear the hum of the pursuing car more plainly now. It was about a mile behind them, and sounded as if it was coming up the long slope in grand style.

Wobby put on speed, and soon the car was flying uphill, bumping and lurching in a way that nearly made the boys seasick.

They were nearing the top of the downs now, and close above them an increased darkness showed that the clouds were hanging low on the nighty crests. Behind they could hear the steady vibration and hum of the pursuing car. She was gaining on them fast.

Wobby looked back. He could see the blur of the powerful headlights through the mist.

"They've got the legs of us, lads!" he said. "They mean to have us, for they sure think that we are some more of the burgling gang. These are no country slops, either; they are the Scotland Yard Flying Squad!"

Presently a faint hail sounded through the fog.

"Stop, you rascals!" "Keep low in the car, boys!" cried Wobby. "They may shoot!"

But no shot came from the following car, which was rapidly closing on them.

The boys seemed to be up on the roof of the world now, for Smugglers' Beacon was a well-known landmark, fifteen hundred feet above the level of the sea.

A shout went up from the car behind. Her headlights now showed in a great white blur in the fog.

"May as well stop!" shouted a voice.

"May as well stop, Punch Baker! We've got you now. You can't get off the ridge. Stop, and hand over the stuff!"

Wobby and his chums knew what this meant. The Scotland Yard men were assured that in their car were the confederates of the gang who were already under arrest, and that, having recovered the plate which had been buried after the burglaries at Taniivy Castle and Lord Bradbury's place, they were trying to get clear of the country with their plunder.

"We've got into it with both feet!" muttered Wobby, as he drove on. "If we get caught, there will be too many explanations to be made, and we may get the dirty kick out from the school. Supposing we try on the yarn that we were trying to recover the plate? They'll say then that we wanted it on our own, so that won't do. We've got to get out of this somehow!"

Wobby made a close study of his maps. He knew that they were travelling along the narrow ridge of Smugglers' Beacon. If he turned to the left and ran down the long slope of the hill, the other car would surely catch him, for the slope was a gradual and easy one right away to the coast. The mist, too, would be thinner down there. If he followed along the ridge of the beacon, he would come to a thick copse of firs known as Jumbler's Ring. This was no doubt where the detectives hoped to bring him to a standstill.

Then, somewhere to his right, was the Smugglers' Punchbowl, where very few drivers would care to drive down the almost precipitous slopes of the Punchbowl by day, let alone in the thick fog of to-night.

Seven hundred feet in half a mile was the run down into the Punchbowl, an enormous hollow, two miles in circumference. From this there was a straight run out on to the downs again and a clear road to Martleberry Waste.

It was not a motor-track; it was a toboggan-slide.

"Hold tight, boys!" said Wobby, turning in his seat. "These tugs have nearly got us. Take her one way out, though. I'm going to take her down the Punchbowl!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Stickjaw. "We'll never reach the bottom, Wobby! A movie actor broke his neck down there in broad daylight!"

"Never mind the movie actor!" replied Wobby. "You trust to old Wobby! Here goes!"

The other car was very close behind them now, as they could discern, in the mist behind, a white glare of headlights.

Wobby, with a swift turn, went off at right-angles to his course, and, looking back, had a glimpse of the other car as it shot forward on their track and then came to a stand.

"You'll kill yourselves, Baker!" shouted a voice.

Wobby's only answer was a derisive yell.

The car rushed forward. Jim and his chums clung tight to the seats and sides as a yawning abyss seemed suddenly to open before them. Then, with a rush and a roar,

**ANSWERS**  
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:



they shot down into the Smugglers' Punch-bowl, leaving the astonished detectives on the cloud-capped crown of Smugglers' Beacon.

### The Find!

**H**AD it been daylight, and not a thick, misty night, a good many cinema firms would have paid money to have filmed that Ford motor-car with its load of five boys and a boxing kangaroo as it raced down the cloud-wrapped crown of Smugglers' Beacon into the yawning abyss of the Smugglers' Punch-bowl.

The Punchbowl was an enormous freak of Nature in these chalk downs. Two miles was its mighty circumference, and seven hundred feet was the fall of its chalk slopes, which were as steep as the roof of a house.

Yet, as the carload of detectives and police pushed him hard at the top of the beacon, the calm and cool Wobby made no ado of turning sharp to his right, and plunging down in to this chasm.

He knew that the police car would not follow him. Even movie detectives, who are paid princely salaries to break their necks, would have balked at this toboggan slide.

Detectives in real life are just as careful of their necks as other people. They know they have only one neck to break.

It might have been said that the carload of Scotland Yard experts and police, who were busily engaged in tracking the burglars of Lord Tantivy's and other residences, were entirely taken aback when the car, which they thought within their reach, suddenly took this desperate dive.

They had been certain that the car was driven by one Punch Baker, a specialist in motor burglaries and a daring driver. But they could hardly think that Punch Baker would have taken this desperate dive off the crown of Smugglers' Beacon, daring though he was, and due for seven years' penal servitude if he were caught.

They listened breathlessly for the smash, as, from their halted car, they heard the flying Ford race down into that terrible gulf. But no smash came. There was a rush and a race, like the swoop of an aeroplane, then, from faraway down below, came a shrill and derisive cheer.

"Well, if that don't beat the band!" exclaimed the head of the Flying Squad, as he leaned on his steering-wheel and listened with straining ears. "They've got down all right. And did you notice those cheers? Those are not men—they are boys! I'll bet my life that wasn't Punch Baker who shouted back to us before they went over the edge! Listen to them!"

Cheer after cheer sounded faintly in the distance, and the pursuers could hear the Ford coughing noisily away into the night.

"Well, gentlemen," said the detective at the wheel, "I set some value on my life, if you don't! A hundred drivers of the best might take a car down the Smugglers' Punch-bowl on a night like this, but I doubt if one would reach the bottom except as scrap iron! Those were boys in that car—schoolboys. Only schoolboys could do such a thing without breaking their necks!"

"What are you going to do about it, Travers?" asked another detective in the stranded car, rather sourly.

"I'm not going to do anything about it!" replied his chief. "Whoever the young rascals are, they have led us on a blind trail. Now they are eight miles ahead of us, for we would have to go right away back round Hangman's Copse to get on their track again. I'm for going back to patrol the road!"

"But what about overhauling that school—St. Beowulf's?" asked the detective. "It would be worth while ringing up their headmaster to ask if all his boys are in bed."

"Not me!" replied his leader. "If they are St. Beowulf's boys, they may be the same crowd that arrested the burglars the other night. They are smart boys, those! I have got all their names, and at their head is an Australian young gentleman, who can use a boomerang like a native. If we start messing about on his track he may give us a taste of the boomerang, and that would be worse than coming to close quarters with Punch Baker!"

The others laughed pleasantly. "Now we will just have a look at their trail," said Mr. Travers thoughtfully.

He climbed from the car, and, taking the powerful headlight from its bracket, he followed like a hound along the trail which the Ford had left.

Presently he came upon a patch of chalky marl, where the print of the tyres from the fugitive car was left as clean and clear as an impress of a seal on wax.

The detectives gathered round these marks whilst their chief took various patient measurements. Then, kneeling down, he examined the ground with a powerful magnifying-glass under the rays of the lamp.

He rose from his knees at last, a look of satisfaction upon his face.

"It is Punch Baker's car, right enough!" he said. "The mystery deepens! What are these young rascals doing with Punch Baker's car—this mysterious car that was on the ground the night of the burglary at Lord Tantivy's place, the night that Lord Bradbury's place was burgled, and, again, when the Countess of Castlewood lost her jewels?"

His companions did not answer. Well, they knew that Mr. Travers had made no mistake about the print of those tyres. He was an expert in the reading of motor-tracks, and his research in this direction had helped to bring no less than three murderers to justice.

"I'm going to look a little further into this, gentlemen," said Mr. Travers. "Stand by the car whilst I follow the track down into the Smugglers' Punchbowl."

His companions obediently went back to the car, and Mr. Travers, swinging the heavy brass headlight, followed up the trail where the car had taken off into the Punchbowl.

He whistled with astonishment as he followed the track over the short dew-encrusted grass of the slope, which was so steep that he could hardly keep his own footing.

"No," he muttered to himself, "Punch Baker is a bold rascal, but he would never have the pluck to drive down here. Only a suicide club or a gang of schoolboys would do such a thing!"

Down he went, following the track all the way. There were places in which the car seemed to have bumped right off the earth altogether.

"Those Fords are good little cars!" muttered the famous detective. "Hanged if I don't buy one myself after this! This particular car must have been as surefooted as a goat, or she'd have turned turtle long before this!"

He bent down and shuddered over an enormous blur in the track.

"Ah-h-h! That was a dirty slip!" he muttered. "The young devils! The young devils! I hope my boy doesn't do this sort of thing at school!"

The good-hearted Mr. Travers felt better when the tracks steadied again. He seemed to be living that rush again in spirit with the young daredevils who had taken it.

He was more than half-way down the slope when he got what he was looking for.

"Good!" he muttered.

There on the grass lay a crumpled object—a schoolboy's cap.

The detective picked it up, and examined it with satisfaction. It bore the badge of St. Beowulf's School—the distinctive badge which was only worn by the Lincoln scholars.

The detective looked inside the cap, and there, half obliterated by grease and wear, he read the faint outline of an inked verse.

A gleam of amusement flickered in his grim eyes as he held the cap close in the glare of the lamp, and deciphered the inscription:

"This little cap belongs to me,  
And fits no head but mine,  
So don't you sneak my little cap,  
Or there will be a shine!  
I'm very fond of punching heads,  
If your fat head I see  
Stuck in this little cap of mine,  
I'll get a puncture from me!"

(Signed)  
"JACK WOBBY."

"That's some lad!" muttered the detective as he spelled out the words which had been done in the marking-ink served out to Master Wobby for the purpose of marking

his laundry. "I'd better not wear his cap, or I'll get my head punched—sure!"

He laughed to himself, and then turned to the track again, staring hard for a while.

continued. "It is evident that Master Wobby was at the wheel of Punch Baker's car when it scooted down here!" he continued. "It is evident that Master Wobby is taking a leading hand in this game somewhere, and playing a hand against Scotland Yard. Good luck to him! I'm not going to interfere unless it be in the way of protecting him and his chums. They are playing a rather dangerous game in crossing Punch Baker's trail in his own car!"

Mr. Travers slipped the cap into his pocket, slowly commencing to climb that tremendous slope again, thinking deeply as he went.

It took him a long time to climb to the top. By this time the Ford car must have had a start of his powerful machine of at least fifteen miles, allowing for the start that Wobby had gained by his perilous short cut.

A casual observer might have thought that the chief of the flying squad, to judge by his leisurely movements, was giving Wobby and his friends all the law that he could allow.

When he reached the top of the Smugglers' Beacon again, he found his companions stamping round their car in the mist, chilled and impatient.

"What have you found, Travers?" asked one impatiently.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Travers cheerfully. Apparently he did not think it worth while to mention the school cap that nestled in the inside pocket of his overcoat.

### A Strange Sight.

**W**E must now return to the boys and the car, not to speak of Nobby, the boxing kangaroo.

Nobby had been in a few tight corners in his short, but eventful life with Wobby, his young master. If Nobby had only known it, he was never in a tighter place than when the Ford car plunged down into the abyss of the Smugglers' Punchbowl.

He sat tight amongst the boys, who clung round his neck, and the car swooped down that awful hill like a nose-diving aeroplane.

Jim Ready certainly thought that their last hour had come. So did Stickjaw.

"Crums!" he shouted in Jim's ear, as the air roared past their ears with the speed of the car. "We are sure done for this time. The car is travelling faster than ever."

Swoosh!

Down they swooped into one of the great chalk folds of the Punchbowl. The car then did a sudden slide sideways, just like an aeroplane that strikes a pocket.

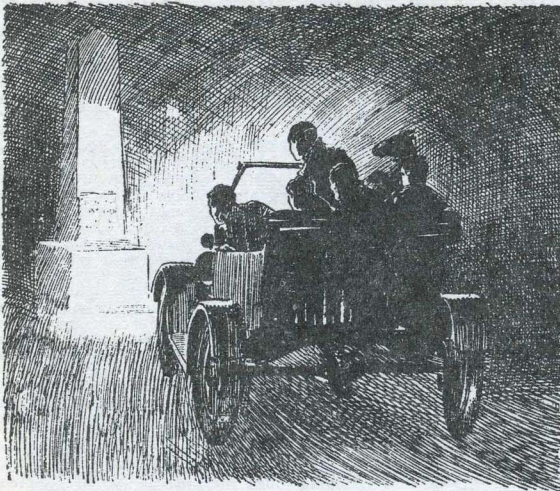
By some miracle, Wobby held her right side up. There were three more mighty downward swoops. Then they shot forward over level ground at a tremendous speed, and slackened as they met the gentle slope which led out of the Punchbowl.

Wobby, perhaps more surprised than his companions to find that he had safely accomplished this perilous scot downhill, let loose a loud cheer in which his companions joined.

It was a cheer of rejoicing to find themselves safe and sound.



Far away down below, through a sudden clearing of the mist, the boys saw the glare of bright headlights, and heard the drone of a powerful car.



Wobby clapped on the brakes of the car as a great white shape slid up out of the fog in front of them—a shape that looked like a phantom, but which was a solid monument of stone.

"Hurrah, boys!" cried Wobby. "We've still got all our lives before us. Give the coppers another cheer. We've got 'em beat!" They cheered the discomfited carload of police, whom, it seemed, they had left up in the clouds on the top of Smugglers' Beacon. "Anybody got my cap?" asked Wobby. "It went overboard coming down the slide!"

"Don't you worry about your cap!" replied Stickjaw. "You ought to thank yourself lucky that you haven't got your fat head knocked off!"

"I was only thinking that it might make a trail for those cops," replied Wobby, "although I don't suppose they will worry about coming down into the Punchbowl

"To show everyone where we are?" replied Wobby. "Not me! There are funny clearings in the sea mist that's drifting across country, and maybe those 'tecs are keeping a look-out on the top of the Beacon still. The guide-book says you can see six counties from the top of the Beacon on a clear day, and they might see one little motor light easy enough!"

Stickjaw's peevishness wore off as the car sped lightly over the carpetlike turf of the Downs; and he began to get over the jar of that mad swoop into the Punchbowl.

Wobby appeared to be driving carefully and at a proper speed, always keeping in a north-westerly direction.

after us. They'll get back on the road."

He drove on over the gradual rise in the ground, heading away to the north-west.

"Where are you taking us to, Wobby?" asked Stickjaw, after they had run a mile or two over the short grass.

"Never you mind," replied Wobby calmly. "You'll find out where you are when we get there. I am steering a compass course across the Downs."

"Well, don't you steer us into any more Punchbowls!" replied Stickjaw, whose nerves were rather shaken by their recent experience.

"Well, I brought you through all right, didn't I?" replied Wobby, in rather aggrieved tones. "You might have something to say if I'd spilled the bus. As it happens, you've nothing to complain about."

"Why don't you switch on your lights?" asked Stickjaw.

Wobby. "Not me! There are funny clearings in the sea mist that's drifting across country, and maybe those 'tecs are keeping a look-out on the top of the Beacon still. The guide-book says you can see six counties from the top of the Beacon on a clear day, and they might see one little motor light easy enough!"

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Here Wobby was playing his strong suit. Any other boy in St. Beowulf's, left with the steering of that car, would have promptly lost himself in the vast folds of the chalk downs, which, in this district, were confusing to all but the shepherds.

Wobby had been trained to keep the track in the thick bush of Queensland, where it is a case of turn round three times and catch who you may. He had never been across this country before, but he had studied his course by the ordnance map, and he had got the lay of the land in his head.

The only things that were likely to misdirect him were the helps of civilisation, automobile signs and finger-posts; but there were none of these on the Downs.

Now and then he would take a sharper dip than usual, and the boys would brace themselves, thinking that Wobby had taken a turn into another Punchbowl.

The mists were shutting down thick again, and away to their right sounded the plaintive piping of a curlew.

"We are getting on the edge of the grass now, lads!" announced Wobby genially. "I think we are somewhere near Goodman's Hanger. There's a stone memorial here on the Downs put up over a famous horse that belonged to one of the nobby toffs of these parts, a colonel or a major. I read about it in the guide-book when I was mugging up our trail. And, by George, here it is!"

Wobby clapped on his brakes with a slam, and Jim's head met against Stickjaw's with a crack that made them both see stars, whilst Nobby, the kangaroo, was nearly thrown out of the car.

A white shape had slid up out of the fog towards them—a shape that looked like a phantom, but which was a solid monument of stone.

The bonnet of the car touched the stone with a light bump as it came to a standstill, but luckily no harm was done.

"There!" said Wobby, with great satisfaction. "That's what I call navigation in fog. We've come twenty-five miles across country, and here we are, right on the spot to tie in!"

(Look out for next week's exciting instalment of this powerful serial.)

## EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums.—

After a trying time, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy has returned to the fold. He has had a good run, and none are more pleased than his two staunch chums, Tom Merry and Jack Blake. It was only the swell of St. Jim's timely return that saved them from disgrace and a birching. Arthur Augustus, learning of the stern measures to be taken by the Head, felt for his chums. It was not possible for D'Arcy to allow anyone to suffer for his misdeeds, so he returned, heedless of the consequences.

I gather from the many letters from my readers that this series of stories dealing with the runaway of St. Jim's, has proved a great success, thanks to our esteemed friend, Mr. Martin Clifford, who never fails to please.

This famous author goes even one better—if it is possible—in next week's splendid yarn, entitled: "Levison's Past." This is the kind of story you have all been asking for. Levison, who we all know, was once a junior at Greyfriars. He got into black books there, and left. Later, he was taken in at THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 758.

St. Jim's, and for a time curried favour with the cads. Since then he has learned the error of his ways, and has reformed. Now Ernest Levison is one of the very best, and his friends number many. His dark days of the past have been forgotten by all save Baggy Trimble, who is not much to boast of himself, is he? You will think less of him when you read "Levison's Past."

By the way, the great new "Head 'Em" competition has caught on. I want all my readers to go in for this, it is ever so simple, and the money prizes are well worth winning.

You have still time to obtain one of our splendid photo albums, in which to house your wonderful collection of football photographs. The price is only sixpence. Address your requests to "Photo Album Dept., 7 & 9, Pilgrim Street, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4." I can fully guarantee your being pleased with your purchase.

Showers of congratulatory letters reach me concerning our wonderful serial, "All On His Own," which is undoubtedly Mr. Duncan Storm's greatest masterpiece. This popular schoolboys' author can always be expected to come up to scratch. There will be another splendid long instalment of this grand serial next week.

I need hardly remind you that the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" will make its appearance on September 1st. It is to be a record number, too. Filled with the finest of stories, articles, jokes and other splendid features. Therein

you can meet your chums of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood School. There is sure to be an unprecedented rush for this magnificent new volume, so my only advice to all of you is to see that your newsagent reserves you a copy right away. I have to impress upon you the necessity of ordering early, as so many readers of the Companion Papers were disappointed at not being able to get copies of last year's issue. Be one of the first to order. It is far the best in the long run.

My chums are full of suggestions for the further improvement of the GEM. Did I hear someone say there was no room for improvement? Thanks! I hope my Cardiff chum is fully satisfied with the GEM Portrait Gallery. I will bear his idea in mind.

Meanwhile, look out for next week's wonderful number of the GEM, containing, among many other good things, set number three in our easy competition.

YOUR EDITOR.

## OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday.  
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday.  
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday.  
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday.  
 THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"  
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*(There will be another Splendid Art Portrait Study next week.)*