

Wishing You A Gem Of A Christmas!

The GEM 2d



An "Exciting" Incident from "D'ARCY'S DOUBLE!" Inside

THE JAPE THAT SENT AN INNOCENT JUNIOR HOME IN DISGRACE!

D'ARCY'S DOUBLE!



D'ARCY MEETS HIS MATCH! "Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Who—what—!" "Good—affahnoon, deah boy!" said Gussy's double, raising his hat.

CHAPTER 1. Fairly Caught!

"**Q**UIET!"
"Weally, Blake—"
"Quiet, you ass!"
"I wefuse—"

Jack Blake's hand closed forcibly over the mouth of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the remark D'Arcy had been about to make died away in a faint gasp.

"Quiet, you fathead!" whispered Blake. "You'll give the alarm! Quiet, you fellows! Don't make a row, Tom Merry! Keep your feet still, Lowther! Quiet!"

"Seems to me that you're making more row than anybody else," observed Tom Merry.

"Quiet, you ass! You'll alarm the Grammar School cads!"

Blake hissed out the words with intense earnestness. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jerked his head away from Blake's detaining hand, and glared in speechless indignation at his chum. The rest of the juniors were very quiet.

There were eight or nine of them in the party, under the heavy branches of Rylcombe Wood. Jack Blake and D'Arcy of the Fourth, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell—the chums of the School House at St. Jim's—and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the Fourth Form and the New House—deadly rivals of Tom Merry & Co., excepting when they united with them for the purpose of taking the warpath against Rylcombe Grammar School—as they were doing on the present occasion.

"Weally, Blake—" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy burst out at last.

"Quiet!" said Tom Merry.
"Shut up, Tom Merry!" muttered Blake.
"Yaas, wathah!"

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"Better all shut up," suggested Kerr, who was famous for his practical common sense. "Suppose we all keep quiet—especially Blake?"

"Yes, especially Blake," agreed Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah—especially Blake!"

Blake snorted.

"Well, if you want the Grammarians to hear us—" he began resignedly.

"Blessed if I think there are any Grammarians in the wood at all," said Figgins. "I haven't seen any, for one."

"Bai Jove! No!"

"And I haven't heard any," said Tom Merry.

"I haven't either."

"Blake has been dreaming," Monty Lowther suggested.

And the St. Jim's juniors chuckled, and Blake glared.

"I tell you I saw three of them sneaking into the wood, carrying bundles," he said. "They were Gordon Gay, the Cornstalk chap, Frank Monk, and Carboy."

"Sure?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Going to have a feed, perhaps," Fatty Wynn remarked, smacking his lips. "I don't see why they couldn't have a feed in the woods."

"You wouldn't!" said Manners.

"Look here, you School House fathead—"

"Well, you New House porpoise—"

"I'll jolly well—"

"I'll—"

"That's it," said Jack Blake sarcastically, "start a House row now, with Grammar School chaps in hearing! Go it!"

"Ordah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass severely upon Fatty Wynn and Manners. "Ordah, deah boys!"

"I know jolly well what they had in the bundles," said Blake, with conviction. "You know Gordon Gay's always getting up some theatrical bisney or other. I believe they're

SPARKLING LONG STORY OF ST. JIM'S AND GRAMMAR SCHOOL RIVALRY!

out here for a rehearsal, and perhaps they're going to dress the parts. If we take care, we can take them by surprise—if New House chaps don't jaw and alarm them."

"Look here——"

"There you go again! That's one thing I've always noticed about you New House chaps," Blake remarked, in a reflective sort of way. "You must jaw!"

"Peace, my sons!" said Tom Merry pacifically. "Peace in the wigwam! If the Grammar School cads are here——"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Shut up! I can hear them! Listen!"

"To be or not to be, that is the question!
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them!"

The well-known lines, recited in a clear, boyish voice, came clearly through the trees. The St. Jim's juniors grinned at one another. Well they knew the voice of Gordon Gay of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School, the leader of the Grammarian juniors in their frequent alarms and excursions against the "Saints."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "That's Gordon Gay, wight enough!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on!" said Blake softly.

The incipient House row was forgotten already. School and New House were like brothers when it was a question of raiding the Grammarians. With all the caution they had learned as Boy Scouts, the St. Jim's juniors trod softly through the wood in the direction of the ringing voice of Gordon Gay.

Jack Blake held up his hand as a sign to stop. In the glade before them, as they peered through the thickets, three strange figures were to be seen. Three ancient Danes, but of somewhat moderate size for Danes. Gordon Gay had the garb of Hamlet on, and Frank Monk was in the guise of Horatio, and Carboy was clad as Laertes. Horatio and Laertes were gazing very admiringly upon their leader as he spouted the famous words.

"Jolly good!" said Monk.

"Ripping!" said Carboy.

"Well, don't interrupt, then!" said Gordon Gay.

"But that the dread of something after death,
That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of!"

"Oh, good!" murmured Blake. "But we'll give him something to stop all that! Come on, you fellows!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We're ready!"

And with a shout the St. Jim's juniors rushed from the thicket, and Hamlet, Horatio, and Laertes were collared and rolled over in the grass.

CHAPTER 2.

Not so Funny for Gay & Co.

"Ow!"

"Oh!"

"St. Jim's cads! Ow!"

The Grammarian juniors yelled as they went down. But they had no chance. They struggled in vain in the grasp of many hands.

Each of them was deposited upon his back in the grass, and upon each chest a St. Jim's junior sat.

The three Grammarians gazed up at their grinning captors in boundless rage.

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon Gordon Gay. "I wathah weckon we're not goin' to do anythin' of the sort, you know."

"No fear!" grinned Figgins.

Gordon Gay gasped.

"You—you bounders!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean by interrupting a peaceful rehearsal? Lemme gerrup! Take that fat beast off my chest!"

"Look here——" began Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wathah think you're done this time, deah boys," said

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "As a mattah of fact, Gay, deah boy, I have nevah weally made it up to you for the time you had the feahful cheek to disguise yourself as me, and made me look wiculous. Undah the circs——"

"Rats!" said Gay. "I never made you look ridiculous. Nature did that!"

"Weally, Gay——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway let Gordon Gay get up, Wynn, while I thwash him——"

"Hold on, Gussy!" said Blake. "Thrashings are off. We're going to confiscate their clothes, and send them home to the Grammar School in Shakespearean costume."

"Bai Jove! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Grammarians exchanged looks of dismay. They could imagine the howls of laughter that would greet them in the Grammar School when they marched in at the school gates as Hamlet, Horatio, and Laertes.

"I say——" began Frank Monk.

"Rats!" said Blake, gathering up the garments the Grammarians had discarded. "We'll take charge of them. You shall have them back by parcel post to-morrow."

"Don't you dare take our clothes away!" yelled Frank Monk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll—we'll smash you!" roared Gordon Gay.

"Bai Jove! I don't see how you'll do the smashing, undah the circs," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But you are welcome to twy, deah boys."

"Gimme my duds!" yelled Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The discarded garments were carefully gathered up. Then the three Grammarians were rolled over in the grass, and tossed into a mass of bushes, and the St. Jim's fellows retreated, bearing the raided clothes with them.

The faint sound of a laugh floated back through the wood to the ears of the enraged Grammarians.

Gordon Gay scrambled out of the thicket. He rushed in the direction taken by Tom Merry & Co., and then he paused. It was not much use to pursue the Saints—three were not likely to be able to effect much against so many. The Grammarians would only be looking for a licking, and it was certainly impossible for them to get their clothes back unless the Saints chose to give them up. Which was not likely to happen.

Frank Monk and Carboy scrambled out of the hedge, looking considerably ruffled and furious.

"Are we going to let them get away with our togs?" demanded Monk furiously.

Gordon Gay burst into a laugh.

"Well, I guess we are!" he said. "I don't see how we're to prevent it, anyway."

"Let's get after them, and——"

"Get licked?"

"Well, I suppose it's not much good," said Frank Monk, pausing.

"I suppose not!" said Gordon Gay. "Let's get back to school."

"Like this!" roared Monk and Carboy together.

Gordon Gay shrugged his shoulders.

"Not if you can think of any other way out of it," he said; "I can't!"

Frank Monk and Carboy couldn't, either, when they thought it over. But to return to the Grammar School in Shakespearean costumes! They raged for a few minutes; and then, making up their minds to it, they tramped away savagely through the wood.

As they came out into the lane that led to the Grammar School, two or three people caught sight of them, and there was a yell of laughter. It was not often that fellows were seen in the quiet lanes of Rylcombe in the costume of Shakespeare's heroes.

With red faces, Gordon Gay & Co. tramped on to the Grammar School.

The great red brick building burst upon their view, and they came upon a group of juniors in the gateway. Harry and Jack Wootton, Lane, Carpenter, and Tadpole, and several other fellows were there, and they all broke into hysterical laughter at the sight of the three unhappy rehearsers.

"Buck up!" muttered Gay. "Run for it! We shall have to run the gauntlet till we get in!"

And the three heroes ran.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where are your duds?"

"Behold Hamlet!"

"To be or not to be, that is the question."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three rehearsers, grimson and furious, dashed across the quad. They reached the House, and on the steps ran almost full-tilt into Mr. Adams, the master of the Fourth. The Form-master stared at them blankly.

"What is this?" he gasped.

"Ahem!" said Gordon Gay.

"H'm!" muttered Frank Monk.

"You see——" explained Carboy; but he got no further.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Adams. "What is the meaning of this ridiculous masquerade, Gay? Do you mean to say that you have been actually out of doors in that absurd costume?"

"You see, sir——"

"Ridiculous! You will take five hundred——"

"Somebody took our clothes, sir, while we were rehearsing Shakespeare in the wood, sir," Gordon Gay interposed hurriedly, before the word "lines" could come out.

Mr. Adams started; then a smile overspread his face.

"H'm! Very unfortunate for you," he said. "I hope you will recover your clothes."

"Ye-es, sir; I—I think we shall, sir," stammered Gay.

"Go and take those absurd things off at once."

"Ye-es, sir."

The victims of the little joke of Tom Merry & Co. hurried up to their dormitory. They glared at one another as they dragged off the costumes.

"Nice go this is—I don't think!" growled Frank Monk.

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"Well, they had us fair and square!" he said.

"Rats! It's beastly!"

"Oh, be a sportsman, Monkey!"

"That's all very well!" yelled the exasperated Monk.

"But what will the fellows say? We shall never hear the end of this."

"Not till we've got level with the giddy Saints, I know," grinned Gordon Gay.

"And how are we going to do that?" growled Carboy.

Gordon Gay smiled serenely.

"You leave it to your uncle," he said.

To which Frank Monk and Carboy replied simultaneously:

"Rats!"

But the Cornstalk junior only chuckled. Gordon Gay could take a joke as cheerfully as he could perpetrate one, which is saying a good deal. And already a scheme had been hatched in his fertile brain for scoring in his turn over the juniors of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

An Invitation for Gussy!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY chuckled.

He was seated in the Junior Common-room in the School House at St. Jim's the same evening.

Preparation was over, and the juniors were chatting before going to bed. Tom Merry and Manners of the Shell were playing chess. Monty Lowther was looking on, giving advice to both players alternately, by which he was reducing both of them to a state almost of frenzy.

Blake, Digby, and Herries of the Fourth were talking football. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been apparently buried in reflection for some time, and he had emerged from his brown study with that sudden chuckle.

Jack Blake turned his head round to look at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Broken anything?" he asked.

"Weally, Blake——"

"I'm sure something went off," said Blake, eyeing the swell of St. Jim's suspiciously. "Didn't you hear it, Dig?"

"Yes, rather!" said Digby.

"Didn't you, Herries?"

"Yes," said Herries. "It was a sound like a clock running down."

"You uttah asses!" said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass indignantly upon his chums of the Fourth Form. "You know perfectly well that I was laughing."

"Oh, were you?" said Blake. "I dare say you were, now you mention it. You are quite sure you haven't broken anything?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake! I was thinkin' of the wippin' way I have done the Gwammah School cads to-day."

Blake stared at him.

"The ripping way you've done the Grammar School cads!" he exclaimed. "Well, of all the nerve! It was my idea from start to finish."

"Weally, Blake——"

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"You nearly spoiled the whole thing by making a row," said Blake.

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy! Of course, I was at the bottom of the whole thing. I——"

Blake turned excitedly to the Terrible Three.

"I say, you Shell chaps, whose idea was it to collar the Grammar School cads in the wood?" he yelled.

"Mine!" said Tom Merry promptly.

"Eh?"

"Rook to king's second," said Tom Merry, addressing Manners. "I think that busts you, old man."

"I should have moved the bishop," said Lowther judiciously.

"I dare say you would," agreed Tom Merry; "but I'm playing chess."

"Look here——"

"The Gwammah School cads will be awfully watty about it," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I don't know whethah I was a little too severe on them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You ass! You had nothing to do with it, except to nearly muck up the whole thing by jawing at the wrong moment," said Blake, with indignation.

"Pway don't split your infinitives, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "It wowsies me. I always did object stwongly to a split infinitive."

"Ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. I wathah think that Gordon Gay will be feelin' inclined to kick himself, and us, too," said D'Arcy, with another chuckle. "I must say you backed me up all wight, deah boys. I must say that."

"Well, my hat——"

"Letter for Master D'Arcy," said Toby, the School House page, putting his shock head into the Common-room.

"Bwing it here, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Thank you vewy much. Give him a shillin', Blake, please."

"Haven't one," said Blake. "Will a ha'penny do?"

"Weally, Blake—give him a shilling, Dig."

"Only got tuppence," said Digby cheerfully.

"Give him a shillin', Hewwies."

"Stony!" said Herries tersely.

"Bai Jove! It's too bad! Now I shall have all the twouble of extwactin' money fwom my pocket," said D'Arcy; and he rose and groped in his trousers pocket for a coin.

Blake glared at him.

"You nine kinds of an ass! Do you mean to say you've got money on you all the time?"

"Yaas, wathah, but it's a feahful fag gettin' up, and I'm feelin' completely exhausted aftah my exertions this aftahnoon, in downing the Gwammah School cads. Here you are, Toby; and mind you don't spend it in wiotous living."

"Thank you kindly, Master D'Arcy."

Toby took the shilling and departed. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was always generous in his tips. He was the only junior at St. Jim's who expended shillings in that princely way.

"Who's the letter from, ass?" asked Blake. "Quite sure it isn't for me? I'm expecting a remittance from my Aunt Jane."

"It's fwom Fwank Monk."

"The Grammar School bounder?"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, turning the letter over in his hands. "I wondah what the boundah can have to say to me? Fwewwaps he wants me to let him down more lightly next time?"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Open the letter," said Blake. "That's the way to see what he wants."

"Yaas, that's wathah a good ideah."

Arthur Augustus slit the envelope with a little silver-handled penknife, and took out the letter. It was in the big, bold handwriting of Frank Monk.

"Dear D'Arcy,—Will you come over and see us tomorrow, Wednesday afternoon? My sister Phyllis is coming to tea, and we particularly want her to see you. If you could get here immediately after dinner, we should take it as a great favour, and we would do our best to give you a good time."

"Always yours,

FRANK MONK.

"Bai Jove! I regard that as a nice lettah," said D'Arcy, "especially considewin' the way I waggad them to-day."

"The way I ragged them, you mean."

"Wats!"

"I suppose it's some jape," said Kangaroo.

Blake shook his head.

"Oh, no; Frank Monk wouldn't jape Gussy after getting him there on a friendly visit. Gussy will be safe enough personally. But Monkey may have some motive, all the same."



Rears of laughter broke out as Gay & Co., crimson and furious in the Shakespearean costumes, reached the gates of the Grammar School. "Run for it!" exclaimed Gay. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the juniors. "Behold Hamlet! To be or not to be, that is the question. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake, his motive is quite plain enough. He wants some fellow of tact and judgment to help entahtain Phyllis."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"There's something else in it," said Tom Merry, who had left the chess-table to hear the letter read—"something more than that. They won't jape Gussy, after inviting him there; that wouldn't be cricket. But they've got something on; you can bet your best Sunday boots on that."

"I guess so," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. "But what's the little game?"

D'Arcy nodded thoughtfully.

"Yaas, it's quite poss," he remarked. "Pewwaps they want to get me out of the way while they waid the school."

"What!" roared the juniors.

"My hat!" shrieked Tom Merry. "Why should they want to get you out of the way? What good would you be if you stayed?"

"Weally, Tom Mowwy—"

"Of all the cheeky asses—"

"You chaps bein' left without a leadah, natuwallly they would have an easy time waggin' you," said D'Arcy loftily. "I wecommend you to keep your eyes open, so as not to be done bwoown while I am away."

The juniors glared at him. D'Arcy's opinion of himself was a very considerable one, but the idea that the Grammarians would take the trouble to entice him out of the way while they raided St. Jim's was a little too rich.

"Well, you chump!" said Blake, in measured tones.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Faith, and are you going to accept the invitation?" asked Reilly.

"Yaas, wathah! If Fwank Monk wants me to entahtain his sister, I should be wantin' in politeness to decline."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' whatevah to gwin at," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity. "I shall now pwoceed to wite a weply to Fwank Monk acceptin'. Pnow excuse me, dear boys, as I have to catch the post, or he won't get my weply in the mornin'."

And the swell of St. Jim's walked away.

He left the juniors grinning and busily discussing the letter. That there was something under that invitation everybody but D'Arcy suspected, but what it was they could not guess. Frank Monk & Co. would certainly not jape

the guest within their gates. But what could be their motive for getting him away from St. Jim's? If they had intended any raid, D'Arcy's presence at St. Jim's would not have hindered them in any way. It was a puzzle, and Tom Merry tried in vain to solve it.

CHAPTER 4.

Gordon Gay's Scheme!

WEDNESDAY was a half-holiday at both the Grammar School and St. Jim's.

Gordon Gay & Co. had intended to play the St. Jim's juniors at footer that afternoon, but there had been too much rain of late. The ground was in no condition for play, and the match had been scratched.

As a rule, the scratching of a footer match would have made the heroes of the Grammar School look decidedly doleful. But on Wednesday morning Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, Carboy, and Lane seemed to be in high spirits. They grinned to one another in the Form-room in the morning, and whispered to such an extent that Mr. Adams, the Form-master, was "down" upon them more than once.

"If there is any more talking in class I shall detain the boys concerned this afternoon," said Mr. Adams at last.

That was enough.

From that moment Gordon Gay & Co. were as silent as oysters. In spite of the fact that football was "off," they evidently had very strong reasons for not wishing to be detained that Wednesday afternoon.

Gordon Gay breathed a sigh of relief when lessons were over, and the Fourth Form of the Grammar School trooped out into the flagged passage.

"My only hat!" Gay ejaculated. "Adams gave me quite a turn! Suppose we had been detained—"

"Horrible!" said Monk.

"All serene now, though! Come up to my study."

"Can't get to bisney till after dinner," said Monk.

"No; but we can get the things ready."

"Right you are!"

And the four juniors tramped upstairs.

They were grinning gleefully when they came down to dinner.

Immediately that meal was disposed of they made for the staircase.

"Aren't you coming out, Gay?" asked Jack Wootton, stopping Gordon Gay on the stairs. "It's turning out beautifully fine, and we could take a cycle run."

Gay shook his head.

"Can't be did!"

"Something on?" asked Jack Wootton.

"Yes, rather! Come and help."

"Oh, all right!"

Five juniors crowded into Gordon Gay's study. Tadpole of the Fourth, who was an amateur artist, had the window already blocked up with an easel and was painting away in wonderful colours. Gordon Gay jerked the brush out of his hand, Monk took the palette, Lane seized the easel, and Wootton the canvas. Carboy grabbed the artist himself. Artist and art were deposited in the passage. Tadpole sat there gasping and blinking.

"Dear me!" he ejaculated. "This—this must be a sudden attack of insanity. Gay—"

"It's all right, old son!" said the Cornstalk. "We want the study for a bit, that's all."

"But I was painting—"

"Never mind."

"But I really do mind, Gay. It is too bad. Let us argue the point—"

Slam!

The sudden and forcible closing of the study door put an end to Tadpole's expostulations. He rose to his feet, gathered up his various properties, and drifted sadly away. From within the study came the sound of many chuckles.

Gordon Gay was in great humour. Jack, Wootton was mystified, especially when he saw his chum take out a box of make-up and drag bundles of clothes out of the cupboard.

Gordon Gay was a born actor, and he frequently amused his Form-fellows by impersonations.

"What's the joke?" asked Jack Wootton.

"It's a little jape on St. Jim's, my son," said Gordon Gay, with a chuckle, "in return for their little jape yesterday. Gussy's coming over for the afternoon, when Monk's sister is here."

Wootton looked serious.

"Hang it all, Gay, you're not thinking of japing a chap you've invited?" he exclaimed.

"Of course not, ass!"

"Then what's the game?"

"We're going to jape the other chaps at St. Jim's."

"A regular ripping, royal jape!" chuckled Frank Monk.

"But how—"

"Do you remember my making up as Gussy once?"

Wootton laughed.

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, that's what I'm here to do now," grinned Gordon Gay. "While Gussy the First is here, Gussy the Second will be at St. Jim's—giving them a high old time."

"My hat!"

"Hand out the duds, Franky."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wootton.

"Gussy will be here, without a suspish, as he would say in his wonderful language," said Gordon Gay. "I shall be at St. Jim's as Gussy. And I reckon the fellows there won't have a suspish, either."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They'll give it to you in the neck if they find you out," said Wootton.

"But they won't find me out."

Gordon Gay's hands were busy while he was talking.

He had taken off his outer garments, and he dressed himself in a brand-new Eton suit, fresh from the tailor, with a fancy waistcoat which would have put the celebrated coat of Joseph to shame.

Gay was very much of D'Arcy's build, and already, as far as form went, he was the double of the swell of St. Jim's—the fancy waistcoat, the delicate and brilliant shoes, the wonderfully creased trousers all smacked of the swell of St. Jim's.

Then his hands were busy with the make-up.

He stood before a glass and worked swiftly.

Frank Monk sorted out silk hats and ties and eyeglasses. Gordon Gay had a very extensive wardrobe for the purpose of amateur theatricals, and he had everything that he needed for the impersonation of the aristocratic Fourth Former of St. Jim's.

His chums grinned as they helped.

It was a huge jape—quite the biggest thing the chums of the Grammar School had ever undertaken—and if it succeeded it would be the biggest score they had ever made over the rival school. And Gordon Gay meant that it should succeed.

It was not only in make-up, but in the play of the

features, of which the schoolboy actor was a master, that he succeeded in his impersonations.

When he turned from the glass and jammed a monocle into his eye the Grammarian juniors shrieked.

It was D'Arcy's double who was looking at them.

"Gimme a topper!" grinned Gordon Gay.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only hat! It's ripping!"

"Bai Jove!" said Gordon Gay, in a masterly imitation of the languid drawl of the swell of St. Jim's. "Bai Jove, deah boys, I wathah think this will knock them. What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway give me a nichah tie than that, Monkey, deah boy. You weally do not imagine I can weah a tie with only seven colours in it, do you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gordon Gay was finished at last.

The change was wonderful.

His complexion was paler, his hair was nicely parted and brushed back, his eyebrows were darker, his mouth seemed a little smaller, and his whole expression was altered. The monocle, upon a black cord, gleamed in his eye. The hat was stuck on his head at exactly the tilt of D'Arcy's topper. He encased his hands in lavender kid gloves, and flicked a speck of dust from his immaculate trousers.

"My only chapeau!" gasped Frank Monk. "If I didn't know it was Gay, I should think it was Gussy or his ghost. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Grammarians yelled with laughter.

"No time to lose," said Gordon Gay. "Gussy the First will be here in half an hour, now, at the latest. Mind you fellows give him a good time."

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha, ha!"

"And mind he doesn't leave before half-past four at the earliest," said Gordon Gay. "By that time I shall have made the Saints sit up, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Monk. "The station cab's at the door, and you can get away without many of the chaps seeing you. This way!"

He unlocked the study door.

Gordon Gay & Co. descended. There was a shout from a group of juniors in the passage.

"St. Jim's cads!"

"Yah!"

Frank Monk held up his hand.

"Courtesy to visitors!" he said severely.

"Rats! Look here—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gordon Gay. "My hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors stared at him, stupefied.

"My word! Gordon Gay!" gasped Harry Wootton.

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha, ha! And if it takes you in it will take in the Saints!" chuckled Gordon Gay. "Not a word, mind. Keep it dark!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

And Gordon Gay slipped downstairs into the waiting cab and bowled away. He left a crowd of juniors roaring with laughter at the door of the Grammar School—and anticipating with great glee the arrival of the real and genuine Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Meanwhile, at St. Jim's, Blake and Herries and Digby were walking down to the gates with the genuine Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth.

D'Arcy raised his silk hat very gracefully there, and left his chums, walking down the lane by himself.

The afternoon had turned out quite sunny and bright, and it was a pleasant walk. The swell of St. Jim's felt his spirits rise. He was really going to have a very ripping time, and he arrived at the Grammar School quite contented and cheerful.

Frank Monk & Co. were at the gates waiting for him. They all took off their caps very politely as D'Arcy came up. D'Arcy raised his topper in the graceful manner for which he was famous.

Frank Monk bowed low, and D'Arcy bowed. Monk bowed again, and the swell of St. Jim's, not to be outdone, bowed a second time most gracefully. A chuckle was heard somewhere, but when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced round every face was perfectly sober.

"Jolly glad to see you, Gussy," said Monk.

"The pleasuah is on my side, deah boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha—I mean, exactly—that is to say, not at all! Come in!"

"I trust you fellows have quite forgotten the way I downed you yesterday," said the swell of St. Jim's, as he walked in between Monk and Carboy. "Of course, we nevah bear malice on either side."

"Certainly not!" said Monk.

"Of course, we shall down you some time!" said Lane.

D'Arcy smiled.

"I wish you luck, deah boys," he replied. "You will find

it wathah difficult to pull the wool ovah my eyes, I think. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Monk & Co., very heartily. "I don't think I am vey easily taken in, you know."

"Oh, hardly! Ha, ha, ha!" And the Grammarians marched D'Arcy into Monk's study in great state. The table was already laid, and the supplies were certainly on a generous scale.

"Gordon Gay here?" asked D'Arcy. Monk shook his head.

"No, he's unavoidably detained elsewhere," he said. "Sorry! Did you want to see him?"

"Oh, it's all wight!" "My sister will be here in good time for tea," said Monk. "Vewy good!"

Miss Phyllis, when she arrived, was very sweet to Arthur Augustus. The girl had not the faintest idea that D'Arcy had been enticed to the Grammar School for any special reason. Gordon Gay & Co. had kept their own counsel upon that matter.

But Miss Phil liked D'Arcy, and as D'Arcy liked Miss Phil quite as much, they got on very well together, so that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was booked for a very pleasant afternoon.

Frank Monk & Co. and Frank Monk's sister did their very best to entertain him, and the swell of St. Jim's was easily entertained.

The time passed very swiftly and pleasantly. D'Arcy was in the greatest spirits.

But it is probable that he would not have been quite so easy in his mind if he had known what was passing at St. Jim's in these same moments.

CHAPTER 5.

A Fall for Three!

TOM MERRY & CO. were lounging on the steps of the School House some little time after the departure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy upon his visit to the Grammar School.

They were debating the possibility of getting up a game, after all, on the footer ground.

"We might kiosk the ball about a bit, at all events," said Tom Merry. "Don't like wasting an afternoon."

"Let's go and have a row with the New House bounders," suggested Monty Lowther.

"I've got some negatives to develop," said Manners thoughtfully. "Perhaps you fellows would like to come down into the vault and help me? I believe you've got sense enough to hold the lamp, Lowther, if you try very hard."

"I dare say," assented Lowther. "I know jolly well I haven't got the inclination, though. Let's go and take Figg's footer away."

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the New House were kicking a football about in the quad, and several times they had brought it very near the School House, as if to challenge Tom Merry & Co. to make a raid upon it. And the Terrible Three of the Shell were seldom slow to accept a challenge.

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry. "Better than developing rotten negatives, anyway! Those Fourth Form bounders are doing lines, aren't they?"

"Yes. I'll call Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, and——"

"Hallo!" "What's the matter?" "Look!"

Tom Merry pointed to the distant school gates. "My hat! Gussy!"

An elegant figure had entered at the gates of St. Jim's. It needed only a glance at the elegant trousers and Eton coat, the glossy boots, the shining silk topper, and the eyeglass, to tell who it was.

"Gussy—he's come back," said Manners. "Were the Grammarians only japing him, after all?"

"Hallo, Gussy! Is the tea-party off?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy the Second strolled up to the School House. Whether it was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy or his double the keenest eyes could hardly have told, even if a suspicion had been aroused. And the chums of the Shell certainly had no suspicion.

The elegant junior paused on the steps of the School House, and jammed his eyeglass a little tighter into his eye. As a matter of fact, his heart was beating very fast, though outwardly he did not show a sign of it.

Gordon Gay was undergoing his first severe test. If he passed the eyes of the Terrible Three, he was quite safe from detection, and it was soon quite clear that the Terrible Three were unsuspecting.

"Hallo, deah boys!" "What have you come back for?" asked Tom Merry. "Is the feed off?"

"Did they find that your face was likely to worry Miss Phyllis, Gussy?" asked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——" It was D'Arcy's voice to the life.

"What's up?" asked Tom Merry. "I hope nothing's gone wrong at the Grammar School, kid."

"Pway do not allude to me as a kid, deah boy."

"Well, goat, then, as you're growing up," amended Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have declined to wemain at the Gwammah School," said the elegant junior. "I do not feel inclined to entah into a discuss of the mattah, howevah."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I fail to see any weason for wibald laughtah."

"I thought perhaps you had come back to give me that fearful thrashing," said Monty Lowther. "I was trembling. Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy eyed him through his monocle. "Yaas, wathah! Upon the whole I think I had bettah give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Go it!" "Vewy well!"

The eyeglass dropped to the end of its cord, and the elegant junior laid violent hands upon the humorist of the Shell. If Lowther had known that he was dealing with Gordon Gay, the champion athlete of the Grammar School, and a pastmaster of all the tricks of ju-jutsu, he would have known what to expect. As it was, he was astonished.

He was dropped in a sitting posture on the steps, and slid down them to the ground, where he alighted in a puddle left by the recent rain. There was a splash.

"Oh!" roared Monty Lowther. "Oh! My bags!"

"You asked for it, deah boy!" "You—you bounder!"

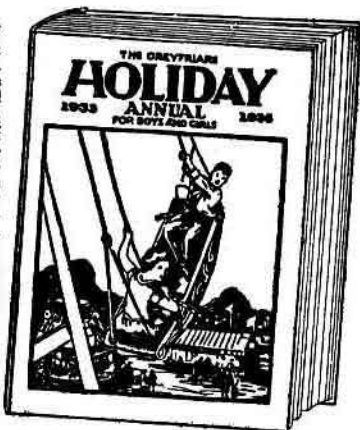
Monty Lowther jumped up and rushed up the steps, and closed with the swell of the School House. In another moment, without knowing exactly how it had happened, he found himself sitting in the puddle again, and this time he was not quite so quick to rise.

"My hat!" he ejaculated.

Tom Merry and Manners stared at the elegant junior in amazement. They knew that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was something of an athlete, and he had sometimes astonished

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his chums by unexpected displays of strength and activity. But they never dreamed that he could handle a Shell fellow in this way.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Why—Hallo! What's the joke? Hold on!"

"Pway follow your friend, deah boy!"

"But I—I— My hat!"

Tom Merry went whirling down the steps. He rolled over Lowther, who was just rising, and the two of them splashed into the puddle together.

"Ow!"

"Yaroo!"

"Mannahs, deah boy!"

"Here, you keep off!" roared Manners. "I— Oh!"

Manners went rolling down to bump into Tom Merry and Lowther. There was another splash in the muddy puddle. D'Arcy the Second turned upon the steps and raised his silk hat to the muddy and raging trio.

"Au wevoir, deah boys!" he said, and walked into the House.

Tom Merry struggled to his feet.

"Well, my only hat!" he ejaculated, in boundless astonishment.

Manners and Lowther were silent. Words failed them.

CHAPTER 6.

Shocks for Study No. 6!

"DONE at last!" ejaculated Jack Blake.

And in his relief he pitched his pen across the study, where it stuck into a beautiful picture belonging to Digby, and hung by the broken nib.

"You ass!" exclaimed Digby. "You've spoiled my picture. I gave two bob for that, and the man I bought it of said it was a real Rembrandt."

"Yes, it must have been at the price," agreed Blake. "I'm done. If Lathom gives me any more lines on a half-holiday, I'll—I'll—"

"You'll what?" sniffed Herries.

"Writo them," said Blake blandly. "You two duffers done? I'm sick of sticking indoors. Let's go and have a row with the New House fellows, if we can't get any footer."

"Right-ho! I'm finished!" said Herries. "I was thinking of taking Towser for a little run."

"Oh, blow Towser!"

"I wonder how Gussy's getting on," said Digby, as he laid down his pen, and blotted the last sheet he had written. "My hat, talk of angels!"

The study door opened, and an elegant figure lounged in. A silk hat was carefully deposited on the table, and an eyeglass was turned upon the chums of the Fourth.

"Hallo, deah boys!"

"Hallo!" said Blake. "You're back early. Couldn't the Grammar School cads stand you any longer?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I suppose he's been singing a tenor solo to them," said Digby. "Any casualties, Gussy?"

"Weally, Digby—"

"My hat, he's changed his necktie while he's been out!" said Herries, looking at the elegant junior. "Did you borrow that tie from Gordon Gay?"

"It certainly belongs to Gordon Gay, Hewwies."

"Dear me!" said Blake reflectively. "Now, we're going to have Gussy worrying for the rest of the afternoon. It's too beastly!"

"If you're lookin' for a thick ear, Blake—"

"My hat, what's that row?" demanded Herries.

There was a rush of footsteps in the passage. The Terrible Three, muddy and furious, rushed into Study No. 6.

"Where is he?" roared Tom Merry.

"Where's the bounder?"

"Where's the fathead?"

"Bai Jove, stand by me, deah boys!"

"What-ho!" was the simultaneous reply of Blake & Co. The Terrible Three rushed right at Arthur Augustus. Blake, Herries, and Digby rushed to his side. Whatever the swell of St. Jim's had done, Fourth Formers were bound to stand by one another in their own studies against Shell fellows.

In a moment a wild and whirling fight was raging in Study No. 6.

Blake closed with Tom Merry, and they crashed against the table and sent it flying, and with it the newly finished impositions and the inkpot, and the state of those impositions were such that Mr. Lathom would have been shocked if they had been presented to him.

Blake and Tom Merry fell over the upturned table, and Lowther and Digby fell over them. Manners and Herries added themselves to the heap, and there was a wild mass of waving arms and legs amid the ruins.

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The elegant junior had dodged round the table and avoided the rush of the Terrible Three, and as the other fellows were one to one, he was left unattacked.

But he did not remain idle.

He caught up an ink-bottle from the mantelpiece and scattered its contents, with wild waves of the hand, with equal impartiality over Shell fellows and Fourth Formers.

Then he collared the ashpan from the grate, and upset it over Tom Merry, and, incidentally, over Blake as well.

"Ow!" roared Tom Merry.

"Groogh!" gasped Blake.

"Go it, deah boys! Go it!"

"You chump!"

"You frightful ass!"

"Huwwah!" roared the swell of St. Jim's, seizing an armful of books from the bookcase, and hurling them in a shower over the excited combatants. "Huwwah! Go it!"

"Stop, you ass!"

"Oh, you fathead!"

The elegant junior, apparently in wild excitement, dragged out the crockery from the cupboard, and it crashed upon the floor. Then he jerked over the bookcase, and the end of it jammed through the study window.

Then he dashed out of the study caught the key from the lock, and slammed the door. There was a click outside.

The study was a wreck.

Blake & Co. and the Terrible Three left off fighting by mutual agreement. The wild excitement shown by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy puzzled and alarmed them.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry, caressing a swollen nose.

"This place looks a picture. Has Gussy gone mad?"

Blake groaned as he wiped ashes from his eyes and nose.

"I don't know. I think you fellows have. What did you rush in like a gang of prize lunatics for?"

"That frabjous ass rolled us down the steps!" roared Manners. "We'll slay him!"

"Ow! My eye!"

"Ow! My nose!"

"Yow! Ow!"

"Pax!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "There's something wrong with Gussy. We thought he was on the warpath, and we came here to slay him, and it looks to me as if he's off his rocker. Where has he gone?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"It isn't like Gussy to dodge a fight," said Digby, mopping ink from his face with his handkerchief. "Ow! I'm smothered, you fatheads!"

"It was Gussy who chucked the ink about!"

"And the ashes!"

"And bifed the bookcase through the window!"

"He's dotty!"

Tom Merry dabbed a red stream from his nose with his handkerchief and went to the door. He was really alarmed for the swell of St. Jim's. He dragged at the door, but it would not come open. He realised that it must be locked on the outside.

"We're locked in!" he roared.

"What!"

"Great Scott!"

"He's locked the door on the outside!"

"My only chapeau!"

Blake tried the door, but it was evidently locked. He looked through the keyhole, but the keyhole was empty; the key had been taken away. Even if anyone passed along the passage, which was unlikely on a half-holiday, the juniors could not be released.

They stared at one another in dismay. Blake's wrath rose as he hammered on the door.

"Hi!" he roared. "Come and open this door!"

"My hat! You'll have the prefects here!" exclaimed Manners. "Draw it mild!"

"But we've got to get out!" said Blake excitedly. "We'll slay that chump! This is one of his ghistly japes! I'll scalp him!"

"He's off his rocker!" said Herries.

"Rats! He's taken his hat with him," said Blake. "He was cool enough. It's just a rotten jape on the lot of us, and we'll scalp him!"

"Yes, rather!"

"We've got to get this door open!"

"But we can't," said Digby. "Since we had the new lock put on there's not another key in the passage that will fit it!"

"Phew!" said Tom Merry.

"If this is the Fourth Form brand of humour, I'm fed-up with it!" said Monty Lowther. "I'll make an example of that ass!"

"Look at our study!" groaned Blake. "Everything busted! My word!"

"It's rather thick, I must say. Never heard of a fellow busting up his own study in this way," said Manners.

Blake panted.
 "I'll scalp him!" he said. "I'll break him into small instalments! I'll—I'll— Oh, wait till I get at him, that's all!"

"But how are we to get out?"

"Goodness knows! Look at my impot!"

"Oh, blow your impot! How are we to get out of this rotten study?" roared Tom Merry.

"You shouldn't have come in, ass! I don't care a rap how you're to get out. The question is, how am I to get out?"

"Look here, Blake——"

"Rats!"

"If you want a thick ear——"

"Gr-r-r-gh!"

"I'll jolly well——"

"No, you won't!"

"Yes, I will!"

No more was said. Fourth Form and Shell were equally excited and exasperated, and in a moment more they were fighting, and the locked door was forgotten as the juniors trampled and rolled in deadly combat amid the wreckage of the study.

CHAPTER 7.

Not Nice for Knox!

GORDON GAY chuckled softly.
 His campaign in the School House at St. Jim's had opened well.

As he went down the passage he heard the renewed sound of conflict in Study No. 6. The chums of the Fourth and the Terrible Three were going it strong.

While the Terrible Three were thus engaged, it was certain that they would not be able to look after their own quarters. Gordon Gay, who had paid many a friendly visit and otherwise to St. Jim's, knew the lay of the land well enough. He coolly opened the door of Tom Merry's study and walked in.

Skimpole of the Shell was there. Skimpole had come there to borrow a dictionary, to look out the meaning of a word of eight syllables which occurred in the luminous pages of Professor Balmcrumpet. Skimpole was a long-word merchant himself, but that special long word was a "corker," as Blake would have put it, and for once in a way Skimpole was driven to have recourse to a dictionary. He was blinking over the pages of the "dic," when the supposed Arthur Augustus came in.

"Hallo, Skimmay, deah boy!"

"Ah, it is you, D'Arcy!" said Skimpole, blinking through his spectacles at the elegant junior. "You have returned, then? Perhaps you will allow me to make an attempt to cultivate your mental faculties, instead of wasting your time with a number of riotous youths?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I am truly glad to hear you say so. Shall we take the subject of Determinism, or the equally interesting and important subject of evolution?" asked the genius of the Shell, with a beaming smile. "Shall I give you a lecture upon the entrancingly interesting topic of the origin of species, tracing the descent of man from a rotten apple

floating in a sea of mud in the glare of the sun of a geological age——"

"Ugh!"

"My dear D'Arcy, the subject is of intense interest and importance. I know that a large number of people of ordinary intellect contrive to live very comfortably without knowing whether the human race dates back six thousand or six million years; but consider—— Dear me! What are you doing, D'Arcy?"

D'Arcy grasped Skimpole by the shoulders and plumped him into Tom Merry's armchair. Then he jerked the curtains down from the window, and proceeded to tie the genius of the Shell there. Skimpole was too astounded to resist.

"D'Arcy—my dear D'Arcy——"

"It's all wight, deah boy. I believe that ewevythin' is the result of hewidity or environment. Isn't it?"

"Yes, certainly; but——"

"Well, deah boy, I am enviowed by a howlin' idiot, and my hewidity makes me tie him up. It's all wight!"

"But, really——"

"Pway don't wesist, deah boy, or I shall punch you on the nappah, and I might hurt my knuckles, you know."

Skimpole could only gasp. The curtains were twisted round him and knotted, and then he was a helpless prisoner. He blinked at D'Arcy II through his big spectacles like one mesmerised.

The actions of the elegant junior were certainly peculiar. He turned the table over, recklessly upsetting papers, books, and ink, and then pitched out the contents of the bookcase upon the heap.

To that he added the mantel ornaments, and then the eatables out of the cupboard, standing the jam and honey jars upside down, so that the contents would trickle over the rest of the things in the heap.

"Dear me!" gasped Skimpole. "I really do not under-



One at a time Monty Lowther, Tom Merry, and Manners were sent bumping down the steps of the School House, to land in a heap in a muddy puddle. Then D'Arcy the Second raised his silk hat to the raging trio. "Au wevoir, deah boys!"

stand the reason of these proceedings, my dear D'Arcy, unless you have suddenly taken leave of your senses."

"It's all wight, deah boy!"

"But, really—"

"Good-bye!"

"You—you are not going to leave me like this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy II walked out of the study and closed the door. He strolled away down the passage, calling in at a few of the studies in passing, to upset the tables and disarrange the furniture generally.

He had a clear field, for as it was a half-holiday and a fine afternoon, the juniors were all out of doors.

The disguised Grammarian descended the stairs, and as he entered the lower passage a disagreeable voice shouted to him:

"D'Arcy! D'Arcy!"

Gordon Gay turned his head.

Knox of the Sixth was on the lower stairs waving his hand to him. The junior hesitated. He knew Knox. He was a senior and a prefect, and the worst bully in the School House. It was a favourite trick of the Sixth Form bully to fag juniors on a half-holiday, at a time when, of course, fagging was especially irksome.

"Yaas, deah boy. What do you want?"

"I want a fag!" said Knox.

"Oh wats!"

"Are you coming?"

Gordon Gay looked round. But there was no escape from the Sixth Former, and he submitted to the inevitable, with the best grace he could. But it occurred to him that his fagging would not benefit Knox very much.

"Come to my study," said Knox. "You've got to get tea for me and two others, and mind you do it well!"

"All wight, deah boy!"

"Don't call me deah boy!" said the prefect sharply.

"All wight, deah boy—I mean—"

"Get a move on!"

D'Arcy II followed the bullying prefect to his study. There was a bundle of groceries on the table, and Knox pointed to it.

"Unfasten that bundle!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

D'Arcy II unfastened the bundle and turned out groceries of all kinds—a large bag of eggs, rashers of bacon, and other things. Knox evidently intended to do himself very well that afternoon.

"You're to cook these, and have them ready in exactly half an hour," said Knox impressively. "I'm going to fetch Sefton and Bolter, and we shall see how you are getting on when we come in. Mind you do well!"

"Weally, Knox—"

"Don't talk to me! Hold your tongue!"

And Knox left the study.

Gordon Gay chuckled quietly. He imagined that the bullying prefect would be surprised when he returned. The Grammarian set to work at once.

He lighted a fire and proceeded to cook the bacon. He cooked it in a way that would certainly not have pleased Knox. He piled the bacon upon the fire, and it was soon burning and frizzling away merrily. The study was filled with the odour of cooking and burning bacon.

Then Gay deposited bread-and-butter and cake and jam on the fire, building them up so that they added to it.

He surveyed his handiwork with considerable satisfaction. The bag of eggs he kept—he had other uses for that.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and an angry voice:

"My hat! That young hound's burning the bacon!"

It was Knox's voice. Gordon Gay drew a sharp breath. He stepped quickly behind the study door with the bag of eggs in his hand. He felt for the key in the door, but there was none. He would have to depend upon his legs for safety when the pinch came. The study door, as it opened, completely concealed him from sight.

Three seniors rushed into the study—Knox and Bolter, and Sefton of the New House. They halted, staring in amazement and rage at the sight of the food for the feed blazing away merrily upon the fire.

Knox went quite pale with fury.

"The—the young hound!" he gasped. "Where is he?"

Sefton grinned.

"He's gone," he said. "He wouldn't be likely to stay here after that, I should think!"

"I—I—I'll—"

"There he is, behind the door!" roared Bolter.

Gordon Gay jumped out.

The three seniors made a rush for him. The lithe junior skipped into the passage. An egg was in his hand, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,402.

and Gordon Gay, in the cricket season, was the best bowler in the Grammar School junior team.

Squelch!

The egg caught Knox under the chin and burst, and the prefect staggered back with a wild yell.

Biff! Squash!

Another egg, and then another whizzed through the air, and Bolter and Sefton caught them, one with his eye, and the other with his nose.

Then Gordon Gay sprinted down the passage.

Three seniors, yelling with rage, and with broken eggs streaming over them, rushed madly in pursuit.

But they were not likely to catch the fleet-footed Cornstalk.

Gordon Gay dashed out of the School House, and fled for his life.

In a twinkling he had disappeared round the school buildings, and Knox & Co. halted, panting, outside the School House, dabbing their faces with their handkerchiefs. Yells of laughter greeted them from the other fellows in the quadrangle.

They returned into the House, breathing fury.

"I—I—I'll squash him for this!" hissed Knox. "I'll have him up before the Head! I'll teach him to pelt a prefect! I'll go and complain to the Head now!"

And he did!

CHAPTER 8.

Gordon Gay's Getaway!

GORDON GAY halted, breathing hard, behind the School House.

He had escaped the pursuit of the prefects, and for the moment he was content to rest upon his laurels and recover his breath.

Taggles, the school porter of St. Jim's, came round the corner, and stopped and looked at the disguised junior.

"Nice goings hon!" said Taggles severely. "Nice goings hon, Master D'Arcy! I saw yer!"

"Go hon!"

"Which you'll be flogged for this," said Taggles; "and a good thing, I says! All boys oughter be drowned, that's what I say! Ho!"

Gordon Gay laughed.

"Weally, Taggles—"

"What 'ave you got in that bag, Master D'Arcy?" asked Taggles suspiciously.

"Eggs!"

"Heggs!" repeated Taggles.

"No!" said Gordon Gay blandly. "Eggs!"

"Don't you start a-throwing of them heggs at me!" said Taggles. "I'll report yer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Taggles gave him another suspicious look. Taggles' opinion was that all boys ought to be sentenced to instant execution, as painfully as possible. Naturally, Gordon Gay considered that Taggles ought to be punished for holding such an opinion, and Fate had delivered the offender into his hands.

Crash! Squelch!

Taggles gave a roar.

An egg had broken on the back of his neck, and as he turned his head another squelched in his ear.

"Yow!" roared Taggles. "Ow! Groogh! Ugh! Oh, you young rip! Ow! I'll report yer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll report yer! Ow! Ow!"

Squelch, squelch!

Taggles fairly ran, with eggs smashing all over him. He was in a decidedly eggy condition when he escaped. Gordon Gay with only half a dozen eggs left, sauntered away in the direction of the New House. He took a cautious look round the corner of the building; but Knox & Co. were not in sight.

"Hallo, Gussy! You've come home, then!"

Gordon Gay looked up.

Figgins & Co. were at their study window looking out. They favoured him with a grin. They had not the slightest doubt that it was the real and genuine Arthur Augustus D'Arcy whom they were gazing upon.

"Hallo, deah boys! Would you like some eggs?"

"Eggs!" repeated Fatty Wynn. "Are they good?"

"Quite good!"

"Do you mean to say that you're giving them away?"

"Yaas."

"For nothing?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'll have them, then! Ooch!"

"Here you are!" said Gordon Gay blandly.

Fatty Wynn had the egg, certainly, but not as he had

thought of having it. It caught him under the chin, and burst over his neck and collar and tie.

"Yaroooh!" roared Fatty.
 "Look here!" howled Figgins. "I— Oh! Yah!"
 An egg burst on Figgins' nose. Then another squelched on Kerr's ear. The three heroes of the New House disappeared from their window in an amazingly short space of time.

There was a shout from the doorway of the New House. Monteith, the head prefect of the House, had seen D'Arcy's action with blank amazement. That a junior should venture to play such a prank under his very eyes amazed the prefect.

"D'Arcy!" he shouted.
 "Hallo, deah boy!"
 "Come here, you young rascal!" exclaimed Monteith, striding towards him. "I— Oh!"
 Squelch!

An egg, deftly aimed, burst just on the end of Monteith's rather long and pointed nose.

He staggered back, choked and gasping. Gordon Gay hurled his last egg, and caught the prefect under the chin. Then he fled. It was time, for Figgins & Co. were pelting down the stairs inside to take summary vengeance upon him.

The disguised junior disappeared past the elms.
 "I reckon I'd better leave the House for a bit," murmured Gordon Gay, with a chuckle.

He dropped into a walk, and strolled upon the footer field. There were no matches on, but some of the Fifth had turned out for practice, in spite of the state of the ground. Lefevre of the Fifth and several more were punting a ball about. The disguised junior strolled upon the footer field with his hands in his pockets, and his silk hat on the back of his head. He was certainly not in the garb for footer, but he meant to take a hand in the game, all the same.

Lefevre lifted the ball with a powerful kick, and it dropped near Gordon Gay. In a flash the Grammarian's hands were out of his pockets, and he was on the ball.

"This way!" shouted Lefevre, thinking that the junior was intending to return the ball to him from a desire to make himself useful.

But D'Arcy II had no intention of returning the ball. He kicked it away towards the edge of the ground, and then followed it, and dribbled the leather away in great style. Lefevre looked after him in blank amazement, and so did the rest of the Fifth players.

"Bring that ball back!" roared Lefevre.
 There was no reply.

The elegant junior dribbled the ball away, taking a devious course towards the gates of St. Jim's.

Gordon Gay realised that it was time that his campaign there came to a close. He had woke up both the New House and the School House like nests of hornets, and it was time he beat a retreat. It would put the finishing touch to his exploits to carry off the footer from the Fifth Formers.

Figgins & Co. had rushed out of the New House, and they caught sight of the junior in the distance, and raced towards him. Lefevre and the other Fifth Form fellows were rushing in pursuit. From the School House came Knox and Sefton and Bolter. They had seen D'Arcy II from the window. After them came a crowd of juniors—Tom Merry & Co., who had succeeded at last in getting out of Study No. 6.

The half-dozen juniors looked very much the worse for wear, and they were all utterly exasperated. If they had arrived within hitting distance of the elusive junior it would have gone hard with him. Gordon Gay realised his danger and he made direct for the school gates, still dribbling the footer.

"Stop him!"
 "Bring that ball back!"
 "Stop!"
 "After him!"

Quite a crowd raced on the track of the fleeing junior. Gordon Gay had a good start, and he was very swift. Right through the old gateway of St. Jim's he dribbled the Fifth Form ball at a speed the pursuers could not beat. He dashed out into the road and ran on towards the village, with the ball still merrily speeding before him.

"He must be dotty!" gasped Blake. "Where is he going?"

"Off his rocker!" said Monty Lowther.
 "He must be caught."

The crowd dashed out of the school gates. Gordon Gay was already a great distance down the road. Seniors and juniors dashed frantically towards him. Gordon Gay turned round in the lane and set the silk topper more firmly on his head. He allowed the ball to rest, calculated

(Continued on the next page.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke that appears in this column.

SPEEDING TO BE SPANKED.

As the small boy came running round the corner he collided with an old gentleman.

"Dear me!" said the latter. "Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"I'm running home!" panted the boy. "Mother's going to spank me."

"But do you mean you want to be punished?"

"No; but if I'm not back before father, he'll do it!"
 Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Webb, 94, Rosemary Crescent West, Goldthorn Hill Estate, Wolverhampton.

TALKATIVE.

Bobby: "Dad, am I made of dust?"
 Father: "I think not, otherwise you'd dry up now and again!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Pritchard, 41, St. Mary's Street, Wallasey, Cheshire.

NO APPLAUSE.

Artist's Friend: "What did the editor say about your humorous drawings?"

Artist: "When he saw them he clapped his hands—"
 Friend: "Splendid, old son!"
 Artist: "Er—over his eyes!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Banks, 5, Grove Lane, Didsbury, Manchester.

THE WAITER'S WAY.

Diner: "I want two eggs and a slice of ham."
 Waiter (yelling down to kitchen): "Send up two cackles and a grunt!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. McKenzie, 93, Borough Road, Birkenhead, Cheshire.

OH, YEAH!

Guide: "This is the Leaning Tower of Pisa."
 American: "Pisa? No, it doesn't sound like the name of the guy who built my house, but it's like his work!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Peckham, 24, Manor Road, New Milton, Hants.

TOMMY'S HEIRLOOM!

Teacher: "What is an heirloom?"
 Tommy: "I don't know, sir."

Teacher: "It is a piece of personal property which passes from a father to his eldest child."

Tommy: "Well, heirloom is the funniest name I've ever heard for a pair of trousers!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Craig, Ohai, Southland, New Zealand.

THE ARTIST'S TOUCH.

Moggs: "I'm sure our Johnny will be a great artist some day. He is top of his class for drawing."

Bloggs: "Yes, he'll be an artist right enough. He's that already. This morning he drank our milk and drew a cat's paw on the doorstep!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Benson, Q.E.H., Berkeley Place, Clifton, Bristol 8.

the distance, and kicked. The ball sailed through the air and dropped in the midst of the St. Jim's crowd. It was wet and muddy, and it plumped full upon the chin of Knox, the prefect, and bounced off, grazing Sefton's nose; then it dropped to the ground, and Monty Lowther stumbled over it and fell, and Tom Merry fell over him.

There was a laugh from Gordon Gay in the distance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After him!" shrieked Blake.

But Gordon Gay was running again at a speed few could equal. He dodged into a by-lane and cut across a field, wound through the wood, and soon threw his pursuers off the track. As they had no suspicion of his real identity they did not know that he intended to make for the Grammar School. When Gay came out into the road again near the gates of the Grammar School there was not a single St. Jim's junior in sight.

The junior chuckled.

He tramped on towards the Grammar School, while at a distance, hidden by the trees and the windings of the lane, the St. Jim's fellows returned to St. Jim's. They were in a state of utter amazement.

What had come over D'Arcy that afternoon? Where was he gone? The full extent of the damage he had done was revealed when the fellows returned to St. Jim's and compared notes. The Terrible Three found Skimpole in their study, tied to the chair with the curtains, and the place a wreck. Half the studies in the Shell and the Fourth had been upset. Knox, the prefect, was raging, and he had already complained to the Head, and Dr. Holmes had directed that D'Arcy should be sent to him at once.

"He'll be expelled for this!" said Gore of the Shell.

"My hat!"

"He must have gone dotty!"

"Right off his rocker!"

"But where has he gone now?" said Tom Merry, completely puzzled. "He can't intend to stay away from St. Jim's."

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake. "I suppose he'll come back. We shall have to wait till he does, and then—"

"Then we'll squash him!" said Manners.

And the St. Jim's fellows waited for D'Arcy to come back.

CHAPTER 9.

D'Arcy Meets His Match.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the genuine, had in the meantime thoroughly enjoyed his afternoon at the Grammar School.

Frank Monk & Co. and Phyllis Monk did their best to entertain him, and they succeeded. After tea D'Arcy sang a tenor solo, and the Grammarians listened to it with perfect gravity. When the time came to part Arthur Augustus was feeling very jolly and contented. The whole crowd of Grammarians accompanied him to the school gates to bid him good-bye.

They had kept him at the school till half-past four—which was the time agreed upon with Gordon Gay.

D'Arcy shook hands affably with the Grammar School crowd and raised his silk hat in his graceful way to Miss Phyllis.

"I twust we shall see you chaps ovah at St. Jim's soon," he said.

Frank Monk grinned.

After what had happened at the rival school that afternoon he did not think that Grammar School juniors were likely to be popular there for some time.

"Thanks very much!" he said. "We'll come with pleasure!"

"And Miss Phyllis, I twust?"

"Certainly!" said the girl, with a bright smile.

And D'Arcy took his leave.

He walked gracefully away down the road and turned into Rylcombe Lane, sauntering on towards St. Jim's.

"A jolly wippin' aftahnoon!" he murmured to himself. "Miss Phyllis is a wippin' gal, and those Gwammah School boudahs are not so bad. Ewana Monk seems to have quite a taste for music. I'm wathah sowwy Gordon Gay wasn't there; he's a musical chap, and I think he would have enjoyed that solo. Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus uttered that exclamation suddenly.

He had caught sight of a figure in the lane coming towards him, and the sight almost took his breath away.

For the stranger was an exact reproduction of himself. The same elegant clothes, the same fancy waistcoat, the same monocle, and the same features, to all appearance.

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The newcomer caught sight of him at the same moment, and paused and raised his silk hat in a graceful way.

Arthur Augustus mechanically raised his hat in return. He jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly into his eye and gazed at him.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy again.

"Good-aftahnoon!" said the stranger affably.

"G-good-aftahnoon!" stammered D'Arcy.

"Wippin' wathah, considewin'," the stranger went on.

"Bai Jove!"

"Nice wathah for a beastlay walk, don't you know!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Does your mothah know you're out, deah boy?"

"Look here," exclaimed D'Arcy—"who are you?"

"I wegard that as a wude question."

"Who are you, you boundah?"

"Undah the circs, I wefuse to weply."

"You uttah ass—"

"You shwiekin' fathead—"

"Bai Jove—"

"Bai Jove!"

"I know you now!" shouted D'Arcy. "You are Gordon Gay! You have been playin' some of your wotten twicks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gordon Gay.

"You uttah wottah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! You have been disguisin' yourself as me again!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's. "I'll give you a feahful thwashin'—"

Gordon Gay grinned and dodged past him.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" he said.

And he sprinted on towards the Grammar School. Arthur Augustus dashed in pursuit. But at the speed Gordon Gay was going it was clear that D'Arcy would not overtake him until the school was reached, and that made the swell of St. Jim's pause. He did not wish to rush back in warlike guise into the school where he had just been entertained as an honoured guest.

He paused in the lane and shook his gloved fist after the retreating form of the disguised Grammarian.

"You uttah wottah—" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come back and be thwashed, you wascal!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vewy well, Gordon Gay, I will thwash you anothah time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus gave it up. He swung round and continued his walk towards St. Jim's in a considerably ruffled state of mind.

He could not help wondering what Gordon Gay might have been doing in that disguise. The direction he came from indicated that he had been to St. Jim's. What had he done there? He had undoubtedly taken in Tom Merry & Co. in some way.

That reflection brought a smile to D'Arcy's face.

He had warned Tom Merry & Co. that the Grammarians would "down" them if he—D'Arcy—were absent. And if they had been japed by the disguised Grammar School junior it only bore out D'Arcy's warning. It was a clear proof to Tom Merry & Co. that when the swell of St. Jim's was absent they were no good.

D'Arcy arrived in sight of the old school. A group of juniors stood in the gathering dusk in the gateway, evidently waiting for him.

There was a shout as the swell of St. Jim's came in sight.

"Here he is!"

"Here's Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys, here I am!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in surprise. "Are you waitin' for me? Anythin' gone w'ong?"

"You rotter!"

"You wrecker!"

"You chump!"

"You ass!"

D'Arcy stared in amazement at the excited crowd of juniors.

"Wecally, deah boys—" he began.

"You dangerous ass!"

"You escaped lunatic!"

"You burbling duffer!"

D'Arcy's eye gleamed with indignation through his monocle.

"I wefuse to listen to these oppwobwious expressions!" he exclaimed. "What is the mattah? Are you all off your silly wockahs?"

"You're off yours, I think!" growled Blake. "What did you wreck our study for?"

"Blake—"

"What did you wreck my study for?" yelled Tom Merry.

(Continued on page 14.)

COME RIGHT INTO THE OFFICE, CHUMS, FOR—



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

HALLO, CHUMS!—As this grand number is on sale just before the holidays, I will take the opportunity of wishing you all again a very Happy Christmas. I am sure the GEM will play its part in making your holidays as enjoyable as I sincerely wish them to be.

Before you read the next issue of the GEM we shall be in 1935. What has the New Year in store for us? That no one can tell, but I do know that there are some wonderful stories coming along—and very shortly. In three weeks' time a stupendous new programme starts in the GEM. I won't say any more about it now, except to tell you this. The GEM has enlisted the services of that popular author, Frank Richards, whose stories in the "Magnet," our companion paper, are world-famous. He is writing an entirely new and unusual series of school stories for us, which will appear in addition to our St. Frank's and St. Jim's stories. Watch out for further news!

"FIGGY'S DARK HOUR!"

George Figgins, the leader of the New House, is one of the most popular fellows at St. Jim's, and fully deserves to be. But in next week's powerful yarn poor old Figgy discovers how fickle popularity can be. In a very short while, due to an unfortunate circumstance over which

he has no control, he finds himself scorned by most fellows except his close chums. Tom Merry & Co. stand by him when he is up against it, but they cannot change the unhappy plight in which Figgy finds himself. This great yarn is one of Martin Clifford's very best, and it's a real winner with which to start the New Year.

"HANDFORTH THE GHOST-HUNTER!"

Christmas fun, ghost-hunting and treasure-seeking—all are featured in the next gripping chapters of our exciting Yuletide serial. Handforth is determined to solve the mystery of the ruined Handforth Towers. Who is the unknown who haunts the eerie old house? And does the sea chest in the secret crypt contain treasure? Handy and his chums set out to solve these problems next week, and experience the thrills of their lives!

YULETIDE BARRED.

Did you know that Christmas was once declared to be illegal? It's a fact. When Oliver Cromwell was Protector, Yuletide festivities were barred by law.

PEN PALS COUPON

29-12-34



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Miss P. Edgar, 18, Esk Bank, Longtown, Cumberland, wants girl correspondents interested in St. John ambulance work and anaesthetics.

Miss Nani F. Daver, The View, Hornby Villard, Worli, Bombay, India, wants girl correspondents.

Edwin Britton, 16, Percy Street, Prahran, S.1, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wants correspondents; age 15-17; cricket, fishing, shooting; British Isles or America.

Brian Hall, 13, King Street, Kroonstad, Orange Free State, South Africa, wants correspondents; age 14-15; boxing, model aeroplanes.

Claude Vezar, 17, Strang Street, Kroonstad, Orange Free State, South Africa, wants correspondents; age 14-15; model boats and aeroplanes.

Donald Frame, 70, Esselen Street, Hillbrow, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa, wants a pen pal in America; age 14-15.

Ralph Boswell, 32, Symond Street, Kroonstad, Orange Free State, South Africa, wants correspondents; age 14-15; stamps, pets, woodwork.

Christmas was considered to be a superstitious festival, and Cromwell ordered all important towns throughout the country not to observe it. This naturally raised a storm among the people, and Cromwell knew that the new law would not be kept. So he ordered all markets to be opened on December 25th to prevent people engaging in Christmas festivities. But the people strongly objected, and powerless to enforce such an extraordinary law, Cromwell had to give in.

THE COLDEST CHRISTMAS.

So cold that people couldn't go out! Such is the Christmas that was experienced in this country in 1860, and it is said to be the coldest one on record. On Christmas morning the temperature in London was seventeen degrees below freezing point! But in the country the temperature was lower still—fifteen degrees below zero! Forty-five degrees of frost was registered, and great damage was done to crops and vegetation. It was so cold that the moustaches of men froze stiff, and to go out from the comfort and warmth of the fireside was like stepping into the Arctic. No wonder the streets were deserted. B-R-R-R!

THE GHOST IS LAID!

Another ghost has been laid—or rather, the "ghost" himself confessed. Unexplained manifestations occurred in a house in Madrid. An eerie voice was heard in one of the rooms, but no one could discover whence it came. So much prominence did the haunted house get that the police decided to take a hand and put paid to the ghost. Night after night they kept a watch and heard the voice of the ghost, but where it came from had them guessing. At last there came a letter to the police, and in it the writer confessed that he had been in the chimney of the next door house and had found a way of throwing his voice through the chimney into the "haunted" house!

HEARD THIS ONE?

Stage Manager (in pantomime rehearsal): "But you laughed in the death scene. You mustn't do that."

Actor: "With the salary you give me I can only meet death with joy!"

THE EDITOR.

Miss Joy Leadbeater, Station House, Normacot, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, wants a girl correspondent interested in railways and photography; age 13-15.

Henry Wasor, 33, Herrligstr, Zurich 9, Switzerland, wants correspondents in British Isles; age 15-17; ice hockey, films, stamps, swimming. Also correspondents in the British Empire, and U.S.A.

Miss Marie A. Pouyat, 7, Central Road, Kenecot, Half Way Tree, P.O. Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies, wants girl correspondents; age 18-25; stamps, films, books, needlecraft.

Bill Spragg, 602, 40 Avenue, N.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, wants correspondents anywhere; age 19-25; postcards, souvenirs, newspapers, photography.

John J. Laing, Rosbrien House, Rosbrien, Limerick, Ireland, wants correspondents; age 14-16; England, Ireland, U.S.A.; films, acting, wireless, model planes, stamps, cars.

K. Sampson, 4, Parade Street, Penzance, Cornwall, wants to hear from stamp collectors; British Colonies and foreign countries.

Warren Carey, 3, Central Road, Half Way Tree, P.O. Jamaica, West Indies, wants correspondents interested in stamps and old magazines; age 13-16.

J. E. Humphries, 4, Charlemont Road, Clontarf, Dublin, Ireland, wants correspondents in England, U.S.A. and Australia; age 19-22; Rugby football, cricket, films, amateur dramatics, amateur journalism.

Cecil Brought, 9a, Market Place, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, wants pen pals; age 17-20; Great Britain, India, any country; GEMS, films, radio stars.

D'ARCY'S DOUBLE!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Weally, deah boy—" "And tie Skimmy in the chair with the curtains?" shouted Manners. "Weally, Mannahs—" "And all the studies along the passage," shouted Gore. "What did you wreck them for, you burbling idiot?" "Bai Jove!" "And pelt Knox with eggs—" "And Figgins—" "And Bolter—" "You burbling jabberwock—" "You fearsome ass—" A light broke upon D'Arcy. He understood now what Gordon Gay had been doing in disguise at St. Jim's. "Bai Jove! That Gwammah School wottah!" he ejaculated. Kildare of the Sixth, captain of St. Jim's, came striding through the crowd. "Is that D'Arcy?" he asked brusquely. The captain of the school was looking very grim. "Yaas, wathah, Kildare!" "You are to come to the Head at once!" D'Arcy started back in dismay. "The—Head?" he stammered. "Yes, immediately!" "B—but—" "Come on!" said Kildare, dropping his hand upon the shoulder of the swell of St. Jim's. "I am to take you at once, you silly young duffer!" "Weally, Kildare! Wh-what-am I to see the Head, for?" "Knox has complained about your burning the food in his study and pelting him with eggs," said the captain of St. Jim's. "Bai Jove!" "I should think you were out of your senses to treat a prefect in that way," said Kildare sternly, knitting his brows. "You might have the excuse that Knox ragged you; but there's no excuse of that sort in the case of Monteith. You pelted him with eggs, too, and he has laid the matter before the Head." "Bai Jove!" "What did you do it for?" demanded Kildare. "I—I—I didn't!" "What?" shouted Kildare angrily. "I didn't do it, deah boy." Kildare's grasp tightened upon the shoulder of the elegant junior. He was very angry. He had no suspicion of the real facts of the case, and D'Arcy's statement seemed to him to be a merely impudently untruthful denial. "Come with me at once!" he said harshly. "But weally—" "Come!" And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was marched off to the Head's study.

CHAPTER 10.

The Head's Sentence!

DR. HOLMES was sitting in his study with a stern frown upon his brow. The Head, as a rule, did not take any notice of junior escapades. The Form-masters and the prefects dealt with them. But the present case was out of the common. Knox had complained, and Monteith had complained, and the Head had to take notice of the matter. And as he



No. 48. Vol. 1. (New Series.)

Week Ending December 29th, 1934.

ST. JIM'S SPOTLIGHT THESE NAMES MAKE NOISE

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR

Bernard Glyn's new home-made radio set, on which he has spent most of his spare time for some weeks! It is a magnificent set—a five valve, seven-stage, superhet. It has automatic volume control, visual tuning, and a static suppressor. Added to this it has special super-selective circuits, and a splendid high-fidelity loud-speaker. It's a grand set. Would you like to hear it? You would? So would Glyn—because for the life of him, he can't get it to work!

JACK BLAKE AND HIS JAZZ BAND have taken the junior school by storm. Critics say that their performances sound more like a storm than a jazz selection. Blake and his band gave a special programme in the Common-room, and they gave us such popular numbers as: "When The Moon Trips Over The Mountains," "Indian Love Hysterics," "Oh, You Nasty Man" (dedicated to Mr. Ratcliff), "Sausage and Mash"—a very "hot" number—followed by a special number inspired by the sight of Skimpole after football practice—"Little Man, You've Had a Dizzy Day," and the fags' song—"Lazybones." The programme was rounded off by that popular number: "Cut It Short!"

A GRAND CRUISE

is planned by Bernard Glyn, of the Shell. He will call first at Genoa, then Naples, Syracuse, Alexandria, and Port Said. From thence to the mystic East—to Jaffa, Haifa, Beyrout, Rhodes, Istanbul—then back via Brindisi, Venice, and Trieste. Unlike the usual steamship cruise, Glyn's is to be a flying cruise, in a magnificent six-engined flying-boat, the plans for which he has just evolved. Glyn estimates the construction of his wonderful flying boat will take only a few weeks—but his chums, Kangaroo and Clifton Dane, estimate that it will be uncompleted in months, years, or possibly a lifetime! So don't make your plans to join Glyn in a hurry, boys!

HERE'S MUSIC FOR YOU

Robert Digby has been working on a musical composition in seven "movements," which represent: 1. The clang of the rising bell. 2. A cold shower (with realistic gasps from members of the orchestra). 3. The din of knives, forks, and spoons at "brekker." 4. The drone of Mr. Latham's voice in class. 5. The squeals of Percy Mellish being caned for a misdemeanour. 6. Cries of delight at the word: "Dismiss!" Digby says he is undecided as to what the seventh "movement" shall represent—either the "boomph" of a football, or the "clack" of a cricket ball. Blake, however, suggests it should be the "rip" of Digby's musical score as it is torn in twain and makes its final "movement" into the wastepaper basket!

DO YOU NEED MORE KICK?

My football boots will give it to you! I guarantee my football boots will put plenty of kick into any junior in ten seconds! How do I know? Because I shall be wearing them! —George Figgins, New House.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther Calling



Hallo, everybody! Did you hear about the wireless fan who sent a bad egg to the B.B.C. to have it relayed? I hear you can now get the shape of your nose altered for a nominal sum. Gore of the Shell still does it free! "The very sight of a golf course makes me tired," says Mr. Ratcliff. Is it the "yawning" bunkers? "A racing puntot must be a good loser," says Levison. He ought to be—look at the practice he gets! News item: A Scotsman is walking from Aberdeen to Melbourne in wooden clogs. He can't think of a cheaper way of getting there! Just a moment. "What is it easiest to get when it is raining?" inquires Blake. Wet, of course! Then there was the gentlemanly boxer who said: "Excuse my glove!" before knocking his opponent out. "Can you recommend a good plain cook?" asks a reader. What about a chef on an air liner? Crooke says the chances against forecasting twenty correct football results is several millions to one. About the same as Crooke's chances of playing for the junior footer eleven. Our advice to the "fast" set: More chaste, less speed! Fatty Wynn fears that with the rush of modern life we are rushing our meals. More haste, less feed! I hear Lefevre of the Fifth rather fancies himself as an artist. He says he painted such a realistic cobweb on the study ceiling that the maid spent half an hour trying to sweep it off! Did you hear of the Eastern executioner who had a nervous breakdown? He had been "taking life" too seriously. Like the engine-driver who was fed up—he was always "seeing red." Now cut this out: Never steal apples—or the empty branch may be "taken down" in evidence against you! Then there was the chimney sweep who said he felt he was coming to himself. That was after his seventh consecutive wash! Old Isaacs in Rylcombe told me a man bought a parrot from him. He came back in a month and said: "Here t-t-this b-b-beastly b-b-bird a-a-stutters!" As they say in America: "You want Jayville! Turn right at the fourth tooth-paste sign, and then left at the fifth tobacco ad!" D'Arcy has just looked in to say that dancing on board ship is great fun. Yes, rough weather soon sets the ball rolling! A Wayland bands man had his music stolen. Somebody "stole a march" on him! They say he kicked up no end of a "tune," demanding that P.-o. Crump should "waltz around" at "jazz" speed and bring in the "fox" at the "trot." Joe Frayne in the Third had a winning ticket in a charity draw. Asked why he chose the number 17, he said he dreamed of the number four four nights running, and four fours were seventeen, so he took that ticket! Then there was the Scotch baker who kept a wood-pecker to peck holes in his crumpets. A "crump" "pet"! Owl! As the angry colonel bellowed: "I ordered a hot mustard bath—not custard!" See you next Wednesday, lads!

THIRTEENTH GOAL LUCKY —FOR SCHOOL HOUSE SLIPPERY SHIELD GAME

By Tom Merry

The second game out of the three for the House Shield, played at Eastwood House in the Christmas holidays, began in conditions quite unlike those of the first. The first match was played in snow, but this time the ground was as hard as granite, and a layer of ice coated the field, making it as slippery and treacherous as it could well be. But Figgins was eager to get the game played, and having first dished out knee pads to all members of the teams, I agreed.

The first thrill came early on—Lord Conway, our referee, slipping and coming a terrific "purler" in the midst of an attack. Conway made light of his mishap—but his example was swiftly followed by various members of both elevens. Gussy went down full length in front of goal, and slithered clean into the net, bobbing the ball in with his head, to give School House the lead.

From the re-start, Figgins loped through and put all he knew into a mighty drive. Figgys' legs flew from under him, and he finished up on his back—but the ball was spinning in the net, and the scores were level, 1-1. Blake came a cropper and had to retire while his elbow was bandaged, and Kerr of the New House came down and damaged a knee. Figgins, however, would not hear of calling the game off, and naturally School House were not backing down, whatever the conditions. Though it was dangerous to attempt too much speed, Gussy put in a great run along the touchline, and crashed the leather home, giving us the lead, 2-1. A few moments later Lowther netted from close range. New House then came into the picture, Herries in our goal slipping and leaving French an easy goal. A little later the same thing happened again—Pratt levelling the score at 3-3.

The second half found us more at sea than ever. Figgins alone seemed to revel in the slippery going—though he had his share of bumps and bruises! Figgins went through solo to net a fourth for the New House, and French put them still further ahead. When "tatt" added their sixth, we of the School House began to look grim. The conditions might be a joke, but the game would count in the series of three—and if New House won, the shield was already theirs!

D'Arcy gave us hope with a snap goal from close range, and I seized a pass from Blake to pop in our fifth. It was a hard fight for the next goal—but again I was successful in taking a high pass from Noble and smashing it home. The last few minutes were fraught with thrills—Herries saved gallantly point-blank from Figgins, and then Noble ran through and unselfishly put the ball across to me, and I took a simple chance, banging the leather into the net. We had won, 7-5, by being just a little more "slippy" than our opponents. Whoever wins the next game will hold the House Shield.

ST. JIM'S AMUSEMENT GUIDE

Monday, 7.30: Lecture: "What do YOU know about Bimetallism?" by Herbert Skimpole. All seats vacant—before and during the lecture!

Tuesday, 7.45: "Why New House is Cock House"—a public speech by George Figgins—with interruptions by School House men.

Wednesday, 7.45: "Why New House is the Crook House"—a public speech by Tom Merry—with interruptions by New House men.

Thursday, 6.30: Tom Merry's production of "As You Like It"—as Shakespeare himself would have liked it. We hope it will be as YOU like it!

Friday, 8.0: "Longer Hours in Class?"—a paper to be read by Mr. Ratcliff. Every junior is (unofficially) requested to bring a musical instrument with him—and to play it out of tune!

Saturday, 6.30: Grand Non-stop Variety Programme in the Junior Common-room. The following "star" artistes will appear (with luck): Herries (cornet solos), Lowther (comedian), Manners and Kerr (chess exhibition game), Blake (juggler), D'Arcy ("quick-change" artiste), Figgins (acrobat), and Wynn (eating through a pile of pies).

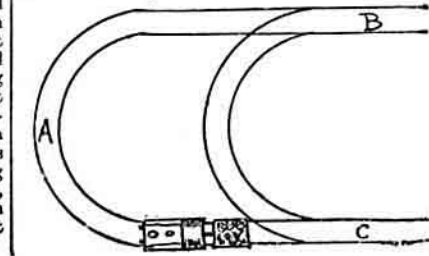
OUR FANTASTIC FOOTBALL FORECAST

Matches to be played next Wednesday. The teams in heavy type should win, if the match is not drawn, and providing they are not unexpectedly beaten.

- PRESTON VILLA v. Glasgow Palace. BLACKBURN HOTSPURS v. Darlington Orient. CHICAGO CITY v. Clapton Disunited. ASTON THURSDAY v. Milwaukee Rangers. Our forecasts are guaranteed never to come unstuck, by gum!—Monty Lowther.

CALIBAN'S PUZZLE CORNER

Can you shunt like a railwayman? Test your skill on this problem: The coal truck pulled by the engine here has got to be taken to the siding at B and then the engine is to go to A. The engine can go backwards or forwards, but must not leave the rails, of course. The points are indicated.



know that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was, as a rule, a quiet and well-conducted youth, he had investigated the matter carefully already, before D'Arcy's return.

Knox had told him that the junior had wrecked a whole passage, and the Head himself had paid a visit to the Shell and the Fourth Form quarters, to ascertain the extent of the damage that had been done. The extent of it amazed him.

There was no doubt that D'Arcy had done it. The juniors were far from wishing to tell tales, but there was no concealing the fact that the raiding had been done by the swell of St. Jim's.

The Head's anger rose. Japes were all very well, and excusable in a thoughtless junior, but this was going altogether too far. And attacks upon prefects—that was unpardonable!

Dr. Holmes waited for D'Arcy in a very grim humour.

Kildare tapped at his door at last, and brought the swell of St. Jim's in. The Head fixed his eyes upon D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus stood silent.

He knew, of course, that all the damage that was done at St. Jim's had been done by the Grammarian, disguised as himself. It had occurred to him at first that his way out of the scrape was quite easy; he had only to state the facts.

But upon second thoughts, Arthur Augustus realised that he could not state the facts. For that would be merely to transfer the blame from his shoulders to Gordon Gay's. The Head would certainly not overlook such a raid on the part of the Grammarian.

He would make a formal complaint to Dr. Monk, the Head of the Rylcombe Grammar School. Gordon Gay would certainly be severely punished.

The reckless junior had carried out the jape, apparently without a single thought as to the probable consequences. He had certainly not intended to get D'Arcy into trouble with the Head.

But that was what had happened. Either D'Arcy had to take the consequences of all Gordon Gay's erratic actions, or he had to betray the Grammarian.

And that was impossible! Many things were permitted by a schoolboy's code of honour, but if there was one thing that was severely barred, it was "sneaking."

And the statement of the culprit's true identity, and the inevitable punishment of Gordon Gay to follow, would undoubtedly come under the heading of sneaking.

D'Arcy, with all his little foibles, would have been expelled before he would have done anything dishonourable.

He could not "sneak." It followed that he was bound to keep silent. He had to take the consequences of what Gordon Gay had done. He braced himself to face the "music."

The Head regarded him with a frown. He thought to himself that one never really does know of what a boy is capable. He would never, certainly, have suspected the swell of St. Jim's of the wild freaks he had been guilty of that afternoon.

"D'Arcy," he said at last.

"Ya-as, sir?"

"Have you any explanation to offer?"

"No, sir."

"You have acted in an utterly outrageous way this afternoon, D'Arcy."

The Fourth Former was silent.

"You have done a great deal of damage, and you have treated the prefects with utter disrespect," said the Head.

"Oh, sir!"
 "And you have no excuse to offer?"
 "No, sir."
 "No explanation to make?"
 "No, sir."
 "I hardly understand this, D'Arcy. Are you ill?" asked the Head, looking at him keenly over his glasses.
 "No, sir."
 "Very well. You understand, D'Arcy, that outrageous freaks of this kind cannot be allowed to pass unpunished!" said Dr. Holmes sternly.
 "Yaas, sir!"
 "I hardly know how to deal with you," said Dr. Holmes slowly. "You have always borne a good reputation in your Form, D'Arcy, and Mr. Lathom speaks very highly of you—"

"Thank you, sir!"
 "I hesitate, therefore, to sentence you to a public flogging, which I should certainly inflict upon any boy who had done as you have done, if his record had not been so good."

Arthur Augustus shuddered. The picture floated in his mind for a moment—of himself hoisted upon the back of the school porter, of the birch descending, of the sea of faces surrounding, and he shuddered. But even if that had been the sentence, he would not have faltered. He would not have betrayed Gordon Gay.

"I shall not flog you," said the Head, and I cannot expel you for this; it is hardly serious enough for that, serious as it is. Lines, however, will not meet the case; neither will a caning."

D'Arcy brightened up. The Head had run through the various forms of punishment, and as there remained none that D'Arcy knew of, he began to hope that he would escape with a lecture. But Dr. Holmes' next words nipped that hope in the bud.

"I have decided what to do, D'Arcy," went on the Head. "You have acted outrageously—inexcusably! I shall send you home."

D'Arcy started.
 "Oh, sir!"
 "I shall not expel you from the school," said the Head. "But I shall send you home for a time, to consider yourself. You will remain away from the school for some weeks; and I shall write a full explanation to your father of the reason for my actions."

"Oh, sir!"
 "Before you are allowed to return, you will be expected to write a full apology to both the prefects whom you have treated with disrespect."

D'Arcy was silent. He was ready to apologise when he was in the wrong, and his grateful apologies on the slightest occasion had become a standing joke in the Lower School at St. Jim's; but to apologise for something that he had not done at all was a peculiar duty.

"You may go now," said the Head. "I shall write to your father immediately, and Lord Eastwood will expect you home to-morrow morning."

"When—when am I to leave St. Jim's, sir?" faltered D'Arcy.

"You will leave the school to-morrow morning, immediately after breakfast. If you have any preparations to make, you can make them to-day."

"Thank you, sir!"
 "I am sorry for this, D'Arcy. I am surprised and shocked at your conduct, and I hope that at home you will reflect upon what you have done, and realise that your punishment has been very lenient. You may go."
 D'Arcy went, with drooping head.

His punishment certainly had been very lenient, in comparison with what it might have been. But it hit the swell of St. Jim's very hard, all the same. He was banished from school—banished from his old associates and his old associations.

To go home in the holidays when everybody was holiday-making was one thing; but to go home by himself, when all others were at work, was quite another.

To mope about at Eastwood while his old comrades were in class, or playing footer, or skating at St. Jim's—that was a hard punishment.

D'Arcy's face was very gloomy as he left the Head's study.

His friends were waiting for him in the passage. They surrounded him as he came out. The resentment of Tom Merry & Co. had quite subsided. Now that D'Arcy had been taken before the Head, they felt only sympathy, though they were still at a loss to account for his strange actions of the afternoon.

Blake clapped his elegant chum upon the shoulder.

"Well, what's the verdict?"

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"I'm bein' sent home."
 Jack Blake's face fell.
 "Not—not sacked!" he gasped.
 "Oh, no; sent home for a few weeks as a punishment!"
 "Banished! By Jove!" said Monty Lowther.
 "Yaas!"
 "That's rough, old chap!" said Digby sympathetically.
 "But what on earth did you want to play those mad tricks to-day for?"
 "Oh, wais!" said D'Arcy peevishly.
 "You wrecked your own study and mine, too," said Tom Merry. "Blessed if I can understand what you did it for!"
 "Oh, wot!"
 "Pelting Figgins & Co. with eggs was all right," said Blake. "But why did you pelt Monteith? You know that you mustn't handle prefects that way."
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "Were you off your rocker?" asked Kangaroo.
 "Wats!"

And that was all the explanation D'Arcy vouchsafed to the juniors. He did not intend to tell them the facts. Something might leak out, and D'Arcy would never have it that the Grammarians should say that he had sneaked. The swell of St. Jim's kept his own counsel, and Tom Merry & Co. were left to wonder.

CHAPTER 11.

D'Arcy is Downhearted!

BANISHED from school!
 D'Arcy's sentence was soon known all over St. Jim's.

Most of the fellows were sorry. Even those whose studies had been wrecked, apparently without provocation, were sorry to hear that D'Arcy was to leave St. Jim's.

His chums of Study No. 6 were doleful. They might chip D'Arcy, they might rag him, they might make fun of his little weaknesses; but they liked him all the same, and they knew very well that, with all his foibles, Arthur Augustus' nature was full of noble qualities.

The rag of that afternoon could only be accounted for by supposing that D'Arcy had lost his head. Perhaps something had happened at the Grammar School to exasperate him.

But no one bore resentment now.
 Knox, the prefect, was gleeful; but he was the only one. Monteith of the New House had reported the junior's conduct to the Head, but he was sorry now that he had mentioned it. Kildare would have licked him, and said nothing about it.

There were glum faces in the School House that evening. Tom Merry & Co. helped D'Arcy to pack. It was not known how long he would be away, or whether he would return that term at all. And he had to take all his belongings with him.

His boxes, trunks, bags, and hatboxes were innumerable. He packed box after box, and trunk after trunk, with the assistance of the chums of the School House.

The swell of St. Jim's had already telephoned for a motor-car to take him away in the morning. The station cab was not quite gorgeous enough for D'Arcy. And the luggage would need a separate vehicle to itself, too.

After the packing was done, Arthur Augustus returned to Study No. 6 with a gloomy expression upon his aristocratic face.

He glanced round his old quarters through his eyeglass. Study No. 6 had many drawbacks, no doubt; but D'Arcy had spent many a happy hour there, and he was sorry to go.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were equally glum. They had their preparation to do, but they were not doing it. They had no heart for work that evening.

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Blake, at last.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Why did you do it, old man?"

Arthur Augustus was silent.
 "I say, old chap!" said Herries hesitatingly. "It's beastly for you to go like this. I—I—I'll let you have Towser, if you like, to take with you. He'll remind you of St. Jim's."

"Weally, Hewwies—"
 "You can have him," said Herries heroically. "Of course, I shall miss him. But I know you'll take care of him, Gussy."

Herries spoke earnestly. To possess Towser, the bulldog, seemed to his owner the height of human happiness. Mahomet tells us of seven heavens, each more delectable than the preceding one, but Herries could have told Mahomet of an eighth—the possession of that remarkable bulldog, Towser. Parting with Towser was to Herries like parting with a tooth. But he was a true chum. He would have parted with Towser with a heavy heart but cheerful face to comfort D'Arcy in his banishment.

But D'Arcy shook his head. As a matter of fact, nothing would have induced him to take charge of that dreadful bulldog.

"Not at all, Hewwies, old man," he said hesitatingly.

"I wouldn't wob you like that."

"You can have him, Gussy—"

"I weally could not take him, Hewwies. It would be too wuff on you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I will take the will for the deed, Hewwies, old man."

There was a knock at the door, and Skimpole of the Shell blinked into Study No. 6.

His eyes lighted upon D'Arcy.

"Ah, you are here!" he exclaimed. "I have been looking for you, D'Arcy. I hear that you are leaving the school."

"Yaas, Skimmay, deah boy."

"I quite forgive you for your exceedingly rough conduct this afternoon," said Skimpole gently. "You were doubtless driven to it by the combined influence of your heredity and environment. I wish to make you a farewell present, D'Arcy, if you will accept it."

"You're vevy kind, Skimmay—"

"I mean to be kind, D'Arcy," said Skimpole, beaming through his spectacles. "I wish you to accept this volume."

And he held out the famous volume of Professor Balmycrumpet, that eminent authority upon Evolution, Determinism, and several other "fions" and "isms."

D'Arcy looked at it in dismay. He would almost rather have had Herries' bulldog.

"Weally, Skimmay—" he began.

"It will do for you to read while you are at home," he said. "In the hours of solitude, you can open this book and study the important questions of the evolution of the human race. You will learn, by the study of this volume, that there is not a single reasonable argument in favour of the theory of evolution, which will show you how wonderful a brain it must have been that invented the theory. You will learn—"

"My deah Skimmay—"

"Pray take the volume, my dear D'Arcy. It is somewhat heavy—"

"My word, it is!" murmured Digby.

"But it contains wonderful wisdom. Professor Balmycrumpet clearly proves, in chapter 357, that the human race developed from a lower type, of which no trace remains to be discovered upon the earth. Traces have been discovered of every other organic being, but no trace of the missing link between man and the low animals, which might indicate to a common mind that there never was any such link. But not to a scientific mind, my dear D'Arcy. The total absence of evidence is regarded as a conclusive proof of the truth of a theory by a mind which has a truly scientific training."

"Weally—"

"By the study of this volume you will learn—"

"I couldn't wob you of it, Skimmay. Pway keep the volume. It is much bettah suited to your intellect, deah boy, than to mine."

"But—"

The Terrible Three came into the study, and Skimpole was interrupted. Monty Lowther seized the amateur scientist of the Shell by the collar and jerked him into the passage, and tossed the great volume of Professor Balmycrumpet after him.

"Run away and play!" he said.

"Oh, really, Lowther—"

Monty Lowther closed the door of the study. Skimpole picked up his wonderful volume and wandered down the passage.

"Anything we can do for you, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"Blessed if I don't feel quite downhearted at your going!"

"Thank you vevy much, deah boy."

"It's beastly!" said Manners. "But why did you do it, Gussy?"

"Oh wats!"

"Can I help you?" asked Lowther. "Brush your hat, or something?"

"Weally, Lowther—"

There was a knock at the door. Figgins & Co. of the New House came in. Blake reached towards a ruler. But Figgins held up his hand pacifically.

"Pax!" he exclaimed. "We've come to see you, Gussy, old man; we don't mind that pelting a bit. We wish you weren't going."

"Yes, rather!" said Kerr. "It's rotten!"

"Beastly!" said Fatty Wynn. "You gave me an egg in the eye, you ass, but I don't mind a bit. Look here, we've got up a bit of a farewell feed—"

"And we want you all to come," said Figgins.

D'Arcy was quite moved.

"You are vevy good!" he faltered. "I don't feel much inclined for a feed now, deah boys. I'm feelin' wathah down in the mouth, you know, but I'll come with pleasuah."

"Oh, we'll come!" said Tom Merry.

And the juniors walked over to the New House, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in their midst.

They crowded into Figgins' study. The study looked very bright and cheerful, with a good fire burning, and the light glimmering on a white cloth and shining crockery.

Fatty Wynn had prepared a really handsome feed. Fatty Wynn could always be relied upon to do well in that line.

It was a good feed, and the juniors did the best they could to appear cheerful. But a cloud hung over them all.

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Blake, at last. "We shall miss you frightfully, Gussy."

"Yaas, deah boy! And I shall miss all of you."

"Why did you do it?" asked Tom Merry. "Blessed if I can understand it now! It was so unlike you, Gussy."

D'Arcy hesitated.

"Look here, we're all friends here," he said, looking round. "If you will promise, on your word of honah, not to bweathe a syllable about it, I will explain."

"Honour bright!" said the juniors, all together.

"Vevy well! I didn't do it at all!"

"What!"

Blake looked at his chum anxiously. For a moment he thought that his chum's brain was wandering.

"I didn't do it at all, deah boys!"

"What on earth do you mean?" said Figgins uneasily.

"Why, we saw you!"

"You didn't see me, deah boy. I was at the Gwammah School all the aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus.

"What!"

"Gussy!"

"It's a fact, deah boys! You've been done!"

"Done!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "What do you mean? Done by whom?"

"The Gwammawians!"

"What?"

"It was Gordon Gay!"

"Gordon Gay?"

"Yaas, wathah! Don't you wemebah that he disguised himself as me once before, and took you all in, and the Gweyfwiahs chaps, too? It was Gordon Gay, and I nevah knew till I met him in the lane, as I was comin' back."

There was a dead silence in Figgins' study.

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry at last.

"That accounts for it!" said Blake slowly. "My hat!"

"Well, Gussy, you image—"

"Why didn't you tell the Head?"

"Weally, deah boys, if you welfect for a moment, you will see that it was quite imposs for me to tell the Head and get Gordon Gay into a fealful wov."

"Oh!"

The juniors sat silent. They understood now.

"And—and you're keeping it dark to shield Gordon Gay?" burst out Tom Merry at last.

"There's nothin' else to be done. Dr. Holmes would complain to the Head of the Gwammah School, and Gay would get it in the neck. They've done us, deah boys; but we can't allow them to say that St. Jim's sneaked!"

"By Jove, no!"

"No, that wouldn't do," said Kerr thoughtfully. "But if—"

"But if Gordon Gay knew the trouble you'd got into he'd own up like a shot!" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! But we can't tell him; it would be as bad as sneaking."

"I—I suppose so."

"I've explained to you, deah boys, so that you will know the facts, and not think that I was waggin' you," said D'Arcy. "I felt that I owed it to you to explain, aftah all. But not a word, mind! Not a whispah outside this study!"

Blake drew a deep breath.

"It's rotten hard on you, Gussy!"

"Yaas. But it can't be helped, deah boys. I shall have to stand it."

"He's a giddy hero!" said Blake. "I—"

"Oh, wats!"

But the juniors persisted in regarding Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as a hero. And a hero undoubtedly he was.

CHAPTER 12.

Good-bye to St. Jim's!

THE clang of the rising-bell awoke the juniors of St. Jim's in the morning, and they turned out in much less than their usual spirits.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking very serious, but quite calm and firm.

He did not repent of the resolution he had taken. He was bound to act as he had done, by his code of honour, and he did it without finching.

Breakfast was a doleful meal for the chums of the School House.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was to depart before morning lessons commenced, and a crowd of fellows meant to see him off.

There was a buzz when the motor-car, ordered by telephone overnight, was seen to drive up to the School House, with a most imposing chauffeur.

"My only hat!" said Gore. "Gussy is going in style, and no mistake!"

A trailer was towed behind the motor. That was for the luggage. The car drew up outside the School House.

Taggles, the school porter, began to carry out the trunks. Some of the fellows lent him a hand. D'Arcy's luggage was somewhat bulky for one man to negotiate.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood on the steps of the School House, with his monocle jammed into his eye, superintending the removal of his luggage.

Some of the masters were at their study windows. Everybody at St. Jim's was interested in the departure of the ornament of the Fourth Form. What would the Fourth be like without the one and only Augustus? That was what Blake said, and many of the juniors echoed his sentiments. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would certainly be missed.

"I've a jolly good mind to send a wire to Gordon Gay!" muttered Blake.

Arthur Augustus turned a severe glance upon him.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Go it!" said Herries.

"It is my pwewogative to say what shall be done in the matth," said Arthur Augustus, with considerable dignity. "I decline to allow anything of the sort."

"You're a blessed quixotic ass!" murmured Blake, as the swell of St. Jim's descended the steps and approached the waiting motor. And he followed Arthur Augustus, to make one more appeal to the elegant junior.

D'Arcy stepped into the car. His usually pleasant face wore a stern expression. There was no sign of wavering.

The chums gathered round the car could see that he was determined to go through with what he had undertaken.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Monty Lowther approached the car.

"I'm sorry you're going, Gussy!" said Tom Merry sympathetically.

"So am I, deah boy; but—"

"I shall jolly well lay the facts before the Head myself!" burst out Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Rats!"

"I insist upon your keepin' quiet, Blake!" retorted Arthur Augustus, with some asperity.

"Why should he?" demanded Herries.

D'Arcy turned a withering gaze upon Herries. His bearing was very dignified.

"Because it is my pwewogative, Hewwies," he said. "I am convinced I am actin' for the best!"

Jack Blake snorted. Arthur Augustus glanced at him.

"I wish to part fwends, Blake," he went on. "But if you don't atlah your mannahs I shall dwive off without sayin' good-bye!"

Digby took out his handkerchief and pretended to wipe his eyes. The crowd of prefects who were watching the proceedings seemed to be enjoying it—Knox especially. Monty Lowther was wearing a puzzled look.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood it for a moment only.

"Dwive off, dwivah!" he ordered indignantly.

"Am I to go without the luggage, sir?"

"Bai Jove, I had forgotten that!"

"I shouldn't bother, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther, with a grin.

D'Arcy, apparently, did not hear the joker of the Shell's remark. His monocle jammed hard in his eye, he was regarding the interior of the car.

"I fail uttably to see how all my luggage can be cawwed in this car, dwivah," he said.

"You might carry it on your knee, Gussy."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should vewy much wegwet to have to thwash you, Lowthah, before I go—"

"Ass! Can't you see the trailer for the luggage behind here?"

"Bai Jove!"

For the first time, Arthur Augustus saw the trailer that was to carry his luggage standing behind. The vision seemed to afford him infinite pleasure. For one gloomy moment he had had visions of piled up boxes round him in the body of the car.

The juniors grinned as he turned in their direction again. Both sides were equally at some loss what to say. Tom Merry felt very sorry that D'Arcy was going. Jack Blake

would have liked to drag Arthur Augustus forcibly from the car, and detain him, whether he liked it or not. Herries and Digby probably understood what was passing in Blake's mind, and could have been counted on to assist.

But the masters were all watching at the windows. The thing was impossible. Kildare would be about, too, and would soon put a stop to such a proceeding.

A gloomy silence fell on all the juniors. Monty Lowther came to the rescue.

"You'll write home, Gussy?" he said.

"I twust I shall nevah forget St. Jim's, deah boys," replied Arthur Augustus, with feeling.

"Ha, ha, ha! I bet he won't!"

D'Arcy glared at Knox for a moment. He and the other juniors were glad to see that very few of the prefects shared Knox's sentiments.

"My beastlay luggage is a long time comin', deah boys," remarked D'Arcy, as if nothing had happened. "I wondah what Taggles is doin'?"

And as though Blake might be Taggles' special custodian, Arthur Augustus turned his monocle on the Fourth Former. The juniors grinned.

"What are you looking at me like that for?" growled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

Crash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Taggles had suddenly appeared at the door. Evidence of Taggles' proximity would perhaps be more correct, for a large trunk came through the doorway at that moment, and fell to the floor.

"An' I says as it's busted 'eavy!" came the voice of the porter in explanation.

"You howwid wuffian, Taggles! How dare you throw my twunk about like that?"

"Look here, Master D'Arcy," began Taggles, vainly trying to lift the heavy trunk, "you can't kid me there's only socks and shirts in this."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Lend a hand, kids!" cried Tom Merry.

And in half a jiffy, as the saying is, D'Arcy's trunk was on the luggage trailer with numerous hatboxes and portmanteaux.

"It's not damaged in any way, Gussy."

"Thank you, Tom Mewwy! Pway be more careful, Taggles, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

Taggles looked very sympathetically at the swell of St. Jim's. In common with most people at the school, he was sorry that D'Arcy was going. He was a strong pillar in Taggles' source of income. The school porter took his cap off and mopped his forehead before going into the School House again.

"I'm sorry you're going, Master D'Arcy," he said hesitatingly. "I shall miss you very much, Master D'Arcy. It's the likes of you that makes a place worth keepin'; an' if you only saw 'ow sorry the missus is, too, you'd—"

"Buck up with the rest of the trunks, Taggy," said Herries.

"My honly 'at, yes!" said Taggles. "I beg pardon, Master D'Arcy!"

And the St. Jim's school porter disappeared into the School House.

D'Arcy was about to recall him for a tip, when Tom Merry came forward to speak to him.

"Is there really no other way than this, Gussy?" he asked.

"None, deah boy, as far as I can see—"

"And that's not very far," interrupted Jack Blake disgustedly.

"Chuck it, Blake!" said Tom Merry. "It's no use getting your hair off about it, anyway."

"Well, tell me, did you ever see such a blithering idiot?" asked Blake.

The juniors could not help grinning. But the monocle dropped quickly from Arthur Augustus' eye, and he was tugging at the door handle in a moment.

"You leave me no alternative but to administah a severe thwashin', Blake," he said. "Pwepare to defend yourself, deah boy."

Blake watched the swell of St. Jim's as he vainly tried to open the car door. It resisted all his efforts.

"How stwange!" he murmured. "I can't open the beastlay door!"

"I'm holding it; you see," explained Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Make it pax," suggested Manners.

"I wefuse—"

"What's the matter with the trunks, then?"

The point of Monty Lowther's remark was made plain by Taggles reappearing at the School House door staggering under another trunk. D'Arcy's grievance with Blake

was forgotten in concern for his property. Taggles groaned under the trunk.

"Pax or trunks is all the same, if you ask me, Master Lowther," he panted. "All I know is that I'd swap places with that old feller Hatlas willingly if this 'ere wasn't for Master D'Arcy. Talk to me—"

D'Arcy looked concerned as his second trunk nearly had a nasty side-slip.

"Beggin' your pardon, Master D'Arcy," said Taggles, after Tom Merry & Co. had assisted him again, "that's the last one, I think."

"Vewy good, Taggles."

"Thank you kindly, Master D'Arcy!" said Taggles, as a generous tip was slipped into his hand. "Which you're a gentleman, sir."

Jack Blake grasped the hand of Arthur Augustus.

"I am sorry, old son," he muttered. "I—I know you can't do anything else but what you're doing. It's rotten all the same. Don't mind what I said."

no suspicion of its disastrous results to D'Arcy. If Gordon Gay had known that, he would not have hesitated for a moment to own up. But he did not know, and the juniors of St. Jim's could not tell him. They were bound to play the game.

The chums of the Fourth looked very downcast that morning, and they were careless enough with their lessons. But Mr. Lathom was very patient. He understood what they were feeling like, and he was considerate.

When the Fourth Form came out, Blake & Co. escaped without lines, though they had certainly earned them over and over again.

It was bright and sunny in the quadrangle, but the faces of the chums of the School House were not bright. Blake glanced up at the clock tower.

"Gussy's home by this time," he remarked.

"And facing the noble lord, his governor," Digby remarked.

"Poor old Gussy!"



There was a chorus of hearty good-byes from the juniors as the big car with Arthur Augustus and his luggage drove off. D'Arcy leaned from the window and raised his silk hat. The swell of St. Jim's was going—sent home in disgrace for something he had not done!

"Of course I don't, Blake, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, giving his chum's hand an affectionate grip.

"It's all wight. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

The car moved off. Arthur Augustus raised his silk hat to the crowd outside the School House. There was a cheer from Tom Merry & Co., and hearty good-byes from the whole crowd, as the car rolled out of the gates of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, was gone!

CHAPTER 13.

Gay Learns the Truth!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was gone!

Jack Blake, when the Fourth Form were in class, looked at the vacant place formerly occupied by the elegant figure of the swell of St. Jim's, and a dark cloud came over his face.

D'Arcy was gone—banished from school!

The Grammarians, doubtless, were chuckling over the success of their jape upon St. Jim's, but they had, of course,

Blake made a restless movement.

"Oh, it's rotten!" he said. "I hate to hang about the place. I expect Gussy to come down the passage every minute, or to jaw in the study. Let's get out."

And the chums of Study No. 6 strolled out of the school gates. Blake, as a matter of fact, had some hope that they would fall in with the Grammarians. It would be some comfort to pommel Gordon Gay & Co.

Blake's wish was granted. Three Grammar School caps came in sight in the lane, and in a moment more Blake & Co. were face to face with Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, and Carboy. The juniors halted.

Gordon Gay and his comrades burst into a laugh. As a matter of fact, they had been looking for the Saints.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake frowned.

"Well, what are you cackling at?" he demanded.

"Who's been done brown?" roared Gordon Gay.

"St. Jim's have!" yelled Carboy and Monk.

"Ha, ha, ha! Hear us grin!"

And the "grin" of the Grammarians could have been heard for a considerable distance across the fields.

"You chumps!" yelled Blake.
 "Did Gussy tell you he'd had a nice afternoon?" grinned Frank Monk. "We did our best to entertain him, and he seemed pleased. Was he just as pleased when he got back?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Don't you think I did it well?" asked Gordon Gay blandly. "Where is Gussy now?"

"Find out!"
 "Did the chaps slay him for what I did in the afternoon?" chuckled Gay. "I can just imagine you chaps piling on him before he had time to explain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Have you untied Skimmy? Has Figgins got the flavour of eggs out of his nose? Ha, ha, ha!"
 Blake could stand no more. He rushed straight at the Grammarians, and in a moment his arms were locked round Gordon Gay's neck, and he was rolling in the dust with the hero of the Grammar School.

Digby and Herries tackled Monk and Carboy at once, and three fights were quickly in progress. There was a cloud of dust in the lane.

"Yah! St. Jim's cads!"
 "You Grammar School rotters!"
 "Go it!"
 "Give 'em socks!"

The fight was terrific. When the juniors separated at last, they were all looking very dusty and damaged. Gordon Gay dropped his hands and stepped back.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast," he said. "I think we can call it a draw."

"I'm going to lick you!" said Blake.
 "But what's the row?" said Gay. "It isn't like you to bear malice because you've been japed, Blake."

Blake hesitated.
 "It's because of Gussy," he said. "But—but you're right. Never mind! I'm off!"

And he swung away, followed by Herries and Digby. Gordon Gay rubbed a discoloured eye, and looked after him very thoughtfully.

"Something's upset them," he said. "It's not only the jape. Can they have gone for Gussy and damaged him before he had time to explain? It would be like some of those St. Jim's asses. I wonder—"

"Don't see that it matters," yawned Carboy.
 But Gordon Gay looked very thoughtful as he walked away with his chums. They stopped at the fountain in the village to bathe their injuries with the aid of their pocket handkerchiefs. The encounter had been a severe one.

And Gordon Gay was still thinking. It occurred to him that, after all, he had done a great deal of damage at St. Jim's, which would not come under the head of junior ragging.

If Knox or Monteith had cut up rusty, matters might be made very unpleasant for Augustus D'Arcy.

Taggles, the school porter of St. Jim's, was coming down the village street, and Gordon Gay caught sight of him. He waved his hand to Taggles.

"Stop a minute!" he exclaimed.
 Taggles was quite willing to stop a minute. He was near the entrance of the Red Cow, and if he could by any possibility extract a tip from Gordon Gay, he could revisit that ancient hostelry. He had already expended D'Arcy's parting tip at the Red Cow.

"Good-harternoon, Master Gay!" said Taggles, touching his cap.

"Dry weather!" suggested Gordon Gay.
 "Which you're right, Master Gay."
 Gordon Gay fumbled in his pocket, and Taggles watched the motion of his hand with fascinated eyes.

"Any news at St. Jim's, Taggy?" he asked.
 "Only that Master D'Arcy's gone, sir."
 Gordon Gay jumped. Monk and Carboy uttered sharp exclamations.

"D'Arcy gone!"
 "Yes, sir. He went this morning," said Taggles. "As you say, sir, it is dry."

Gordon Gay dropped a shilling into Taggles' willing palm.
 "Gone on a holiday, I suppose?" he asked.
 "Ho, no, sir! Gone 'ome!"

"Somebody ill?"
 "Ho, no, sir! He's been sent 'ome!"
 "Not expelled?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Sent 'ome, sir, which is much the same thing," said Taggles. "Sent 'ome in disgrace, sir. I would never 'ave believed it of Master D'Arcy, sir, if I 'adn't seen it—such carryings on! He pelted me with heggs, Master Gay—me—with heggs!"

Gordon Gay could not help laughing. He still had in his mind's eye the picture of the St. Jim's porter tearing round the House, with the eggs whizzing after him.

"Did he really, Taggy?"
 "E did," said Taggles, with asperity. "An' he pelted

Monteith and Master Knox, which they is both prefects. And the damage he did! You'd never believe it. Thank you kindly, sir. I don't drink, as a rule, but I'll drink your health for once, young gentlemen, breaking my rule."

"Sent home in disgrace!" said Gordon Gay, as Taggles stumped away towards the Red Cow. "And he can't have explained, then, that it was I all the time."

Frank Monk looked perplexed.
 "That accounts for Blake being so ratty," he said. "But why didn't Gussy explain?"

Gordon Gay shook his head.
 "What should we have called him if he had given me away?" he said.

"H'm! Sneak, I suppose."
 "But Gussy was never a sneak!" said Gordon Gay.
 "But it's rather thick being sent home in disgrace!" said Carboy.

"It's rotten!" said Gordon Gay. "I never thought; but if I'd known, I wouldn't have had it. But it's not too late now."

"What are you going to do?" asked his two chums together. "Where are you going, Gay, you ass?"

"I am going to St. Jim's. You can excuse me to old Adams if I'm not back in time," said Gordon Gay.
 And without another word the hero of the Grammar School strode away.

CHAPTER 14.

All Serene!

"MY only hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"What—"
 "Look there! What cheek!"
 "Grammar School cads!"

"Yah!"
 The juniors of St. Jim's had reason to be astonished. After what had happened, Gordon Gay might have been expected to give St. Jim's a wide berth. But there he was, walking in at the gates with as much coolness as if the whole school belonged to him.

"Grammar School cad! Yah!"
 Gordon Gay grinned.
 A dozen fellows rushed up to collar the presumptuous Grammarian and bump him hard for his temerity. But Gay held up his hand.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.
 "That's all very well!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully.
 "You didn't want any pax yesterday afternoon, you bouncer! Look here—"

"Bump him!"
 "Collar the cad!"
 "Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "Let's see what he's come for. What do you want, Gay?"

"I want to see the Head."
 "The Head!" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

The astonished juniors allowed the Grammarian to pass. Gordon Gay mounted the steps of the School House. He rang, and when Toby the page appeared he tapped that astonished youth on the shoulder.

"Take me to the Head!" he said.
 "I'll take your name in, sir," said Toby.
 "Tell him it's very important—in connection with Master D'Arcy."

"Very well, sir."
 Toby departed, leaving Gordon Gay standing in the hall. A crowd of juniors gathered round him in a few minutes. Most of the fellows were surprised to see a Grammarian there, and more astonished at his asking to see the Head.

A suspicion of his errand occurred to Tom Merry. If Gordon Gay had learned of D'Arcy's plight, it was the most natural thing in the world for him to come there.

"What do you want to see the Head for, Gay?"
 "Business!"
 "About Gussy?"
 "Yes."
 "Then you know?"
 "Yes, I got it from Taggles," said Gordon Gay.
 Toby returned.
 "The 'Ead will see you, Master Gay," he said. "This way."

Gordon Gay followed the School House page to the Head's study. Dr. Holmes was not alone there. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, was in the room. Both of the masters looked curiously at Gordon Gay as he entered, his cap in his hand.

"You wish to see me?" said Dr. Holmes. "You are from Rylcombe Grammar School, I believe!"

"Yes, sir. I'm Gay of the Fourth Form there."
 "What is your business with me?"
 "It's about Gussy, sir—D'Arcy, sir, I mean," said Gordon Gay, colouring. "I—I've heard to-day, sir, that

he's been sent home in disgrace for what happened yesterday."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"I've come here to own up and clear him, sir," said the Cornstalk junior.

The Head looked puzzled. Mr. Railton fastened a very keen glance on the Grammar School junior. Gordon Gay met their eyes firmly.

"I do not understand, I confess," said the Head. "There is no doubt that D'Arcy was the culprit. He did not deny it."

"Besides, he was seen," said Mr. Railton.

"Excuse me, sir—he wasn't!" said Gordon Gay. "I was seen!"

"You?"

"Yes, sir. It was I who japed the fellows here. I was made up as Gussy, sir," said Gordon Gay. "It was just a jape, sir."

The Head of St. Jim's looked blankly at Gordon Gay.

"Do you mean seriously to tell me, Gay, that you made yourself up to impersonate D'Arcy, and that you played those absurd tricks in this school?" he asked. "Impossible!"

"It's true, sir!"

"But—but—"

"Then where was D'Arcy all the time, Gay?" asked Mr. Railton quietly, his eyes never leaving the junior's face. "He was at the Grammar School, sir. Monk and the fellows had him to tea, to keep him out of the way while I japed the other chaps."

"This—this is extraordinary!" exclaimed the Head. "It is very difficult to believe that a boy of your age could have so much skill in impersonation."

Gordon Gay smiled.

"I've impersonated lots of people, sir," he said. "The other fellows here have seen me made up as Gussy before, and they never spotted me. They'll bear witness if you like, sir."

"I suppose your schoolfellows will attest that D'Arcy was really at the Grammar School yesterday afternoon?" said Mr. Railton.

"Certainly, sir."

"It is extraordinary!" murmured the Head.

"I have heard of this boy before, and his peculiar gifts," said Mr. Railton. "There is a boy in the New House here—Kerr—who is very much the same way. I believe that this boy's word may be relied upon, sir."

"But it—it is amazing!" gasped the Head. "Then D'Arcy did not know that you were playing those pranks, Gay?"

The Grammarian junior burst into an involuntary chuckle.

"Excuse me, sir—no! If he had known, he would have hammered me."

"Ahem! And you say that you came here disguised as D'Arcy, and perpetrated those unheard-of pranks?" asked the Head. "And why?"

"Oh, it was a jape, sir! We're always japing one another. Perhaps I went a bit too far this time," said Gordon Gay thoughtfully.

"Upon my word, I should say you did!" said Dr. Holmes, smiling in spite of himself. "But if this simple explanation would have cleared up the matter, Gay, why should D'Arcy have refused to make it? That is very extraordinary."

"He wouldn't give me away, sir. Gussy is a good little ass—ahem—I mean, Gussy is the soul of honour, sir, and he wouldn't do anything to get another chap into trouble."

"H'm! That is straining a point of honour a little too far, I think!" said the Head. "However, I do not blame D'Arcy. Better for a boy to be too honourable than not honourable at all! But—but this is all very extraordinary. I suppose I must take your word, Gay—especially as you offer me evidence of it."

"The chaps at the Grammar School will bear out all I've said, sir, and the fellows here have seen me made up as D'Arcy," said Gordon Gay.

"Very well, I accept your assurance. But why have you come here and told me this? You must know that you will be severely punished for perpetrating such an outrageous prank in a school you do not belong to!" the Head exclaimed, his voice rising.

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"I shall certainly report your conduct to Dr. Monk, and I trust that he will flog you severely!" said the Head.

"Very well, sir," said Gordon Gay meekly.

"You surely admit that you deserve a severe punishment?"

"I suppose I do, sir."

"And you will receive it. You may go."

"Thank you, sir."

"One moment, if you will excuse me, sir," said Mr. Railton. "You wish Gay to explain why he came here to tell you this."

"Yes, indeed," said the Head, fixing his eye upon Gay. "You knew that by clearing D'Arcy, Gay, you would be taking the punishment upon yourself."

"I couldn't let Gussy be sacked because of what I had done, sir," said Gordon Gay simply. "I had to come and own up. As for the punishment, I can stand it. I'm not afraid of a flogging."

Dr. Holmes hesitated.

"When did you hear about D'Arcy being sent away?" he asked.

"Half an hour ago, sir. I met Taggles in the village, and he told me."

"And you came directly here, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have acted in a manly way, Gay. Upon the whole—the Head paused—"upon the whole, Gay, I do not see the necessity of inflicting any further punishment in this affair at all. I shall not report your action to Dr. Monk."

"Thank you, sir! You are very kind!" faltered Gordon Gay. "I hope you will believe me, sir, that I—I never meant to cheek you in any way by coming here yesterday. I suppose it was all jolly thoughtless; but if I had thought about you being displeased, sir, I wouldn't have done it."

"Very well, Gay," said the Head good-humouredly, "we will say no more about it."

And Gordon Gay left the study, feeling considerably light-hearted—lighter than when he had entered the study.

Tom Merry & Co. met him in the Hall.

"Well?" they demanded, in one voice.

"I've owned up."

"And—"

"And nothing!" said Gordon Gay cheerfully. "Your headmaster's a brick—simply a ripping, first-class brick! He's going to overlook it!"

"Jolly lucky for you!" said Tom Merry. "If you hadn't come here on Gussy's account, we'd bump you for your cheek!"

"What-ho!"

"As it is," said Tom Merry, "we'll invite you to the feed when Gussy comes back. He'll come back at once now, I suppose, and we shall celebrate. And you can come; but come in your own proper person this time. We've had enough of D'Arcy II."

And Gordon Gay grinned, and said that he would.

Needless to say, the banishment of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from his old haunts at St. Jim's did not continue.

His silence might be considered quixotic, but he certainly was not to be punished, as he had done nothing to merit punishment. And the same day a telegram arrived at Eastwood from the Head of St. Jim's:

"All explained. Return to school at once.—HOLMES."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, showing the telegram to Lord Eastwood. "Bai Jove, patah! Look at that!"

Lord Eastwood read the telegram, and looked grimly at his son.

"Well," he said, "perhaps you will kindly explain."

"Certainly, patah. I was sent home yesterday because I was supposed to have done somethin' which I hadn't done—"

"Well?"

"And the chap who had done it didn't know about it, so he couldn't own up, and I couldn't give him away. It would not have been becomin' to a D'Arcy to act in such a mannah, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Quite so, Arthur. But now—"

"I suppose Gordon Gay has heard of it and owned up," said the swell of St. Jim's thoughtfully. "I am to go back. Pewwaps, a'fah all, I needn't have brought so much luggage away with me, but I can take it back all wight."

The following morning Arthur Augustus D'Arcy arrived at St. Jim's in great state, luggage and all, and he was given a tremendous welcome.

And the feed, which took place in Tom Merry's study, under the skilful superintendence of Fatty Wynn, was first rate; and Gordon Gay & Co., who came over to join it, had a really good time. And the rival juniors forgot that they were rivals, and joined heartily in celebrating the return of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from his banishment.

THE END.

(Next week: Another grand yarn of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled "FIGGY'S DARK HOUR!" Watch out for it, boys!)

MORE GRAND CHAPTERS FROM OUR POPULAR CHRISTMAS SERIAL.



HANDFORTH the Ghost-Hunter!

BY EDWY SEARLES BROOKS

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Edward Oswald Handforth, at the invitation of his uncle, takes a party of St. Frank's juniors and Moor View School girls to Handforth Towers, in Norfolk, for the Christmas holidays. To their astonishment, the Towers is a bleak, deserted, and creepy old mansion! They are welcomed by Rodd, the wizened old butler, for they learn that Handforth's uncle is away. After a hearty supper the girls go to bed, but the boys remain chatting in the dim old dining-room. As the midnight hour strikes a weird wail is suddenly heard. The juniors learn from Rodd that it's the Lady of the Tower, a ghost. They retire to bed, all feeling nervous, and after several uncanny happenings Handforth goes to see if the girls are safe. But he cannot find them! In his search he falls through a rotted floor; but Willy, his brother, comes to his help. The two boys then discover a secret crypt, in which there are a big chest and a skeleton! Next moment they see a ghostly face looking down at them from the opening through which they entered the crypt! The unknown disappears, and Handforth and his minor decide to return to bed, for they cannot open the chest. But suddenly loud voices and footsteps are heard in the hall below, and all the juniors are awakened. A voice bellows out: "Where are you, my lads?"

Light At Last!

NIPPER stared. "Who—who's this human dynamite explosion?" he asked.

"It's Uncle Gregory!" grinned Willy.

He ran downstairs, and at the foot stood General Gregory Bartholomew Handforth, D.S.O. He was a big, bluff old soldier of the true Handforth type. His red face, with its huge white moustache, was wrinkled with a wide smile. His eyes were twinkling merrily.

"Good lad, Willy!" he said, thumping Willy on the back with so much force that the unfortunate fag nearly collapsed. "Well done! Good lad—good lad! We played them a good joke, didn't we?"

"You bet we did, Uncle Greg!" grinned Willy.

Handforth reeled as he came downstairs.

"Joke!" he said dazedly.

"Joke!" repeated the other juniors on the landing.

General Handforth burst into a roar of laughter. For half a second Willy feared that the whole house was going to collapse.

"Steady, uncle!" he chuckled.

"It's pretty ancient, my lad, but these old walls will stand more than my laughter," bellowed the general. "Handforth Towers has withstood the storms of centuries. Well, boys, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,402.

what are you going to do with me? A fine way to treat guests, eh? But I expect you'll forgive me!"

They all came crowding down now, too amazed and relieved to have any feelings of resentment. The blaze of light from the numerous lamps was also cheering after the darkness and the candle-flickering.

"What—what does it mean, Uncle Gregory?" asked Handforth, as he grabbed at the general. "We've had an awful time!"

"Good! Just what I wanted!"

"Eh?"

"I was determined to test your nerves, my lads!" thundered the general, with another burst of laughter. "Don't boys like ghosts and mystery at Christmas-time? Egad! I thought I'd give you a taster! You can always trust Uncle Gregory to enjoy a good practical joke!"

"Ods swindles and frauds!" murmured Archie Gienthorpe. "Then—then we've absolutely been hoaxed, what?"

"Absolutely!" chuckled Willy.

"And the Lady of the Tower—"

"That was me!" said Willy, grinning.

"You!" howled his major. "Then—then you were in this swindle?"

"Poor old Ted, I was the chief conspirator!" said Willy calmly. "I was the chap who put the idea into Uncle Gregory's head!"

"He was—egad, he was!" said the general. "This lad is going to be a terror when he grows up, mark my words!"

"If you ask me, sir, he's a terror now!" said Reggie Pitt. "But we don't mind him—and we forgive everything. We're too jolly pleased to do anything else! But who ever would have believed that he was spoofing?"

"If we had had any sense we should have known!" said Nipper. "Willy, you're a young terror—but you have my congratulations!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Willy cheerfully.

"Wait a minute!" stormed Handforth. "Wait a minute! Have—have we been japed ever since we entered this house?"

"Every minute of the time!" said General Gregory, with a chuckle. "I'm glad to see you looking so happy, though. I was half afraid you'd all seize me, egad, and throw me into the snow! Good lads—fine lads! Hanged if you're not taking it in the spirit I hoped for!"

"Just a minute, uncle," said Handforth. "I've always understood that Handforth Towers was a jolly fine mansion with a great park and electric lights and—"

"So it is!" interrupted Willy. "But you're thinking about the place where Uncle Gregory lives."

"Then—then isn't this Handforth Towers?" gurgled Edward Oswald, a light bursting upon him.

"It is—and it isn't!" replied Willy calmly. "You see,

this is the old Handforth Towers—the ruined one. Uncle's real home is half a mile up the road. That's the genuine Handforth Towers, and it was built by Uncle Gregory's grandfather, or somebody, about seventy years ago. A real mansion, you know, with everything tip-top. This place here has been shut up for years."

"My only hat!" said Handforth blankly.

"But—but why did we come here?" asked Church.

"Because there weren't any cars at the station—and because I led you here," replied Willy blandly. "Without me the thing couldn't have been done. As a matter of fact, Ted, I was down here at the beginning of the week, and Uncle Greg and I fixed up the jape."

"And—and what about Rodd?"

"Rodd and his wife, of course, were in the know," said Willy. "They did pretty well, didn't they?"

"And what about Ena?"

"Oh, Ena!" interrupted General Handforth. "She's asleep—and so are the other young ladies. Egad, boys! How they laughed!"

"Laughed!" gurgled Handforth. "Were they in the know, too?"

"My dear chap," protested Willy, "you don't think we'd play the ghost on Ena and the girls, surely? They had supper with us, just to keep up appearances, and then Mrs. Rodd took them out, and escorted them to a back door, where a motor-car was waiting. Within ten minutes they were at the Towers, safe and sound."

"Well, I must say you did it completely," smiled Nipper. "No wonder we couldn't find the girls when we searched for them."

General Handforth laughed heartily.

"Well, boys, I gave you until two o'clock," he said. "Egad, I didn't mean to keep you here all night! And I gave Willy full instructions that if any of you were really badly scared, he was to tell the truth about it. At the first sign of real trouble he would have let the cat out of the bag. But I'm infernally pleased to know that you lasted out the time. Boys, you've got nerve!"

"So has Willy, sir!" said Reggie Pitt feelingly.

"I just want to ask something," said Handforth, in a thick voice. "What about that rummy scream we heard?"

"That was Rodd—through a specially constructed tube," said Willy. "We practised it for an hour the other day before we got it perfect."

"Something grabbed my ankle—"

"Oh, that!" said Willy. "A cord, stretched from skirting to skirting, Ted! I worked it from one of the rooms; but when you had a look you couldn't find it, because I had withdrawn it by then. I suppose it felt just like somebody grabbing you when you felt it against your ankle and couldn't see anything."

"But it happened downstairs as well—"

"Of course it did," nodded Willy. "Anything that happened without an apparent reason you can put down to Uncle Gregory and me. We faked up strings in different places, knowing that they couldn't be seen in the gloom. We made one or two boards loose, so that they operated different catches. I'll bring you here to-morrow, and show you the whole bag of tricks. That vase was knocked off the mantelpiece by one of my little gadgets—"

"Yes—but what about the ghost?"

"Easy!" said Willy. "Here she is!"

He went into a corner of the hall, and from behind an old piece of furniture he took out something which somewhat resembled an umbrella. It was covered with gauze, but when Willy opened it, it took on the shape of a human figure. In the brilliant light it seemed ridiculous.

"All I did," said Willy, "was to slip out of my bedroom, and find a position on the landing where the ghost would look most effective. I flopped on the floor, and held this thing up over me, and from the corridor entrance you could see right through it. Don't forget the gloom made all the difference—it looked like the real thing. And at the crucial moment I touched the catch and whirled it round, and dropped it through the banisters. And Rodd was down below, waiting to hide it up."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" said Handforth.

"It only shows you how a perfectly simple thing can look supernatural," said Nipper soberly. "The imagination does the rest."

"But there wasn't any imagination about my minor's face!" snapped Handforth. "He was as pale as a ghost himself when we found him—"

"Well, my dear chap, I had to make it look real," said Willy. "Of course, I faked up my face before I started on the job—gave it a proper pallid look, you know. And then, after you had tucked me in bed, I managed to wipe it off without you noticing me. That's how I recovered my usual colour so nicely."

"All I can say is that you're the limit," smiled Reggie

Pitt. "But it was such a ripping practical joke that we can't help admiring you."

"And now that we've had our little fun," said General Handforth, "I can promise you a merry Christmas."

And the St. Frank's party was so happy at the turn of events that there was no thought of being resentful.

Rodd himself was in evidence now, and he was a very different man, too.

Although he was still old and wizened, that mysterious look had gone from him, and he was smiling with genial contentment. He was more upright, too—and less like an old miser. He had been acting a part as his wife had been. For Mrs. Rodd, in reality, was a kindly, gentle old soul, as the girls were ready to assert.

Very soon there was a tremendous bustle afoot.

The St. Frank's party rushed upstairs to those gloomy bed-rooms, and they didn't mind the shadows now. The old house had lost its terrors. They hastily dressed, and were soon ready. In all the previous excitement they hadn't had time to wonder regarding their trunks and suitcases, which, of course, were waiting at the Towers, ready for them.

Then in three cars the juniors started off, and when they reached the road they continued their way in the direction of the village. Then they turned into another drive—this time a beautifully kept one, and presently came to the modern Handforth Towers.

And it was the kind of mansion that Handforth had pictured—a fine place, blazing with electric lights, and full of servants. And here were the Christmas decorations that everybody delighted to see.

"Well, boys, I'm not going to keep you up," said their host, with a twinkle in his eye. "It's getting on for three, and you can go off to bed as soon as you like; and you won't be called until midday; just in time for luncheon—eh? But there's plenty of cold snacks in the breakfast-room, if you'd— Egad! That haunted house must have given you an appetite."

The juniors lost no time in attacking the cold snacks. And Rodd waited upon them again—but in a very different manner now. Everybody was feeling happy and contented—with the possible exception, perhaps, of Edward Oswald Handforth. He felt that his dignity had been slighted.

And he was not very cordial when Willy drew him aside.

"I don't want to speak to you, my son," he said coldly. "It doesn't matter what you want," said Willy. "We've got to have a little chat. You're not bearing malice, I suppose, because of that ghost jape?"

His major grunted.

"It's not a question of malice, you young ass," he replied, frowning. "I don't believe in malice, anyhow. But I think it's thick—thundering thick!"

Willy grinned, and bit into a sandwich.

"But look here!" he said, in a lowered voice. "Although we've explained everything, there's something that's still a mystery—something that Uncle Gregory and I didn't plan at all."

"What do you mean?"

"That skeleton and the chest," murmured Willy impressively. "And that ghostly face. Didn't you notice how startled I was?"

"But—but wasn't all that in the jape?"

"Great Scott, no!" breathed Willy. "And don't talk so loud, you ass! We've got to keep this to ourselves. There's something rummy about it—something more mysterious than I like. When I saw that queer-looking figure, I nearly had a fit."

"Didn't you fake it—honour bright?"

"Honour bright!" said the fag earnestly. "I haven't any more idea of what it was than the man in the moon!"

Handforth took a deep breath, and glanced round at the others.

"Shssh!" he warned. "Willy, my lad, this is my discovery. We'll say nothing about it for the present, but we'll organise a ghost hunt, and this time it won't be a lot of fakery, but the real thing. By George, a genuine ghost hunt!"

And after that they went to bed. But, although they were happy and comfortable under the hospitable roof of the real Handforth Towers, it seemed distinctly probable that there would be some more excitement before the Christmas holidays were over.

Boxing Night at Handforth Towers!

WILLY HANDFORTH entered his major's bed-room breezily.

"Ted," he said, "I want you to do me a favour."

It was now the evening of Boxing Day, and very near tea-time. Handforth's Christmas party had contrived to

have a great time after that jape, and the holidays so far had been one long round of pleasure.

Handforth Towers was filled with guests, prominent among whom were Lord Dorrmore, Nelson Lee, Mr. Barry Stokes, the St. Frank's Housemaster, and his wife. General Handforth had spent lavishly in entertaining his Christmas guests, and the Yuletide party under his roof was a glorious success.

The St. Frank's juniors and the Moor View girls had spent the morning tobogganing and skating, for the whole countryside was covered in snow. Now Boxing evening had arrived, and all the girls and boys were looking forward eagerly to the fancy dress ball.

Edward Oswald Handforth, who was just straightening his tie in front of the mirror, turned round and frowned as his minor addressed him.

"If you're going to ask me for five bob—" he began coldly.

"Don't worry—I'm rolling in cash," said Willy. "Uncle Gregory has tipped me so much that I'm like a miniature Rockefeller! No, it's not cash—I want you to lend me your dagger."

"My which?"

"Your dagger!" said Willy. "Aren't you going to appear as Porthos at the ball to-night? Well, there's a dagger in your outfit, and I don't think you need it. So hand it over."

"Oh!" said Handforth. "You're talking about Church and Mac and me dressing up as the Three Musketeers?"

"Church and McClure may be all right as Athos and Aramis," said Willy, "but I'm afraid poor old Porthos is going to be a bit messed up."

"I'm appearing as Porthos," said Handforth curtly.

"Exactly," said Willy. "That's why he's going to be messed up. But don't let's argue over trifles. Where's that dagger? Just hand it over, and you'll get rid of me. Refuse to hand it over, and I'll haunt you like the Lady of the Tower!"

His major pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said ominously. "It's nearly tea-time, and I haven't finished dressing. I'm expecting the gong to sound every minute—"

"There it goes now!" said Willy cheerfully. "All the more reason for you to hand over that dagger without quibbling."

"You young ass, that dagger is a part of the equipment!" snorted Handforth. "The impersonation wouldn't be complete without it. And what do you want a dagger for, anyhow, you dangerous young beggar?"

"I've only got five," said Willy, "and I want six."

"Six!" gasped his brother.

"Yes."

"Six daggers?"

"Oh, chusee it, Ted," said Willy impatiently. "You know jolly well that I'm appearing as a Pirate Chief! And, naturally, I want my belt to be stuffed with daggers, don't I? I don't like odd numbers, so I want yours to make up the half-dozen!"

Edward Oswald fairly gaped. He knew that his minor was a cool customer, but this request was about the finest example of unadulterated nerve that Handforth could remember.

"You—you awful bounder!" gasped Handforth. "Get out of this bed-room! Church! Mac! Come and help me to pitch him out!"

Willy could see that for once his luck had failed him. He went towards the door, and waved his hand.

"All right—don't bother!" he said. "I know when I'm whacked. All the same," he added, as he went out, "I'll have that dagger before the evening's over!"

"Cheeky young ass!" said Church. "A Pirate Chief, indeed! I'm glad we know, Handy. If he starts any of his tricks, we shall be able to spot him. He's bound to be up to a lot of games."

The fancy dress ball was to be a masked one, and all the guests were taking particular care to keep secretive about their costumes. It would spoil half the fun if they talked beforehand. Unmasking was always the best part of the evening.

At tea-time, the forthcoming ball was the one topic of conversation.

Handforth found himself in one corner of the lofty reception hall with Nipper and Reggie Pitt. Irene Manners, Doris Berkeley, and Mary Summers were there, too.

"I wish it was dinner-time, you fellows!" Irene was saying. "We shan't start any of the fun until after dinner."

"The time'll soon be here," said Mary cheerfully. "I wonder if any of the fellows will be able to spot us, Irene?"

"They won't spot me!" said Irene, with conviction.

"O-ho! Don't you be so jolly sure!" grinned Handforth.

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"I don't know about the other girls, Renie, but it won't take me two ticks to pick you out from the rest of the crowd."

She looked at him in alarm.

"You wretch!" she cried. "Has somebody told you about my fancy dress?"

"Of course not!" laughed Edward Oswald. "But it doesn't matter to me what you'll be wearing. Do you think I can mistake your walk, and your mouth, and everything? Your mask will only cover the upper part of your face—"

"Oh, then you don't know?" asked Irene. "That's good! So you're going to spot me, are you, Ted? I dare you!"

"I'll not only spot you in two ticks, Renie," said Handforth, "but, what's more, I'll kiss you under the mistletoe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boaster!" laughed Mary. "If you're not careful, you'll kiss the wrong girl!"

"No fear!" replied Handforth. "Irene has challenged me, and I'm going to accept it!"

"Then I'll add to that challenge," said Irene laughingly. "You can go ahead with your little plan—recognise me, and take me under the mistletoe! And as soon as ever you do it, I'll give you all the rest of the dances!"

"Spoken like a sportsman!" smiled Doris.

"By George!" said Handforth eagerly. "You mean that?"

"It's official—spoken in the presence of all these witnesses," replied Irene merrily. "I can wear any costume?"

"That's a bargain!"

"You'll have to work fast, Ted, old son!" said Mary. "Just a minute—let's get this straight!" put in Edward Oswald. "Supposing I spot you, Irene? Have I got to unmask you then—"

"No fear!" replied Irene indignantly. "Why, that would be a fine game! You would simply go to every girl and unmask her until you'd found me! No, you've got to make sure of me, take me under the mistletoe, and if you win, every dance is yours from that minute onwards."

Reggie Pitt shook his head.

"This is going to be a bad business!" he said solemnly. "Before the ball has been in progress ten minutes, Handy will have kissed every girl there is!"

There was a roar of laughter at Reggie's prediction.

"He'll have a job," smiled Mary. "If he grabs me, I'll soon let him know I'm not Irene!"

"You needn't worry!" said Handforth, with calm composure. "I shan't make any mistake at all—I shall twig Irene first off, and win every dance. That'll make some of you other chaps wild, won't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nobody took him seriously, and as someone came along with a suggestion about parlour games to fill up the time between tea and dinner, the subject was dropped. But not for very long.

The six schoolgirls enjoyed the parlour games for an hour, and then Doris hinted that she wanted her companions alone in her bed-room. They had two bed-rooms between them, as a matter of fact. Within five minutes they were by themselves.

"What's the idea, Doris?" asked Ena. "You know what Ted is. As soon as he finds we've gone, he'll start making inquiries—"

"Never mind about Ted!" interrupted Doris briskly. "I've got an idea. Girls, this opportunity is too good to be missed!"

"Which opportunity?"

"Why, that boast of Ted's that he'll twig Renie at once, and kiss her under the mistletoe," continued Doris, "her dark eyes sparkling with fun. 'What a chance to play a joke on him! Don't forget, Renie can wear any costume she pleases—'"

"I'm going to be an Irish Colleen," said Irene, with a nod.

"That won't do!" interrupted Doris firmly. "The Irish Colleen is good, but we can't afford to take any chances. We've got to fool Ted as he's never been fooled before. It's Boxing Night, and we want all the fun we can get."

"What's the idea?" asked the other girls eagerly.

"Well, first of all, we've got to have an accomplice," said Doris. "And there's one fellow—"

"Fellow?"

"Fellow!" said Doris firmly. "There's one fellow who will be a great and glorious success. In other words, Ena, that impish young brother of yours, Willy."

Ena started, and shook her head.

"Never!" she declared. "I wouldn't conspire with Willy for anything in the world! Hasn't he been playing tricks on us ever since we came here?"

"That doesn't matter—he's a sportsman!" broke in Doris. "And there a point that we've got to remember. He's



"There's something that's still a mystery," said Willy to his brother, as the juniors had a late snack. "That skeleton and the chest and the ghostly face we saw." "But wasn't all that in the jape?" asked Edward Oswald. "Great Scott, no!" replied Willy. "We've got to find out what it all means!"

almost exactly your size, Renie. He's just about the same height, the same slinness, and everything."

Irene Manners started. "What are you suggesting?" she asked. "Can't you guess?" chuckled Doris. "We'll drag Willy into the plot, and get him to swap costumes with you. Just picture Willy as an Irish Colleen, with wavy hair!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Doris, you're a terror!" said Irene. "I believe Willy could do it, but why should Ted go for the Irish Colleen? He won't have any reason to suspect—"

"Don't go so fast—that comes in later on in the plot," said Doris gently. "First of all, we've got to find Willy. And here's the important point—we've got to know what his fancy dress is!"

"Because you've got to wear it, Renie," said Mary. "But—but it may be something dreadful!" protested Irene. "You know what Willy is!"

"Well, let's fetch Willy, and hear what he says," replied Doris hastily. "Don't jump to conclusions. If you'll wait here, I'll run down and collar him. Promise you won't go away?"

They promised, and Doris ran off. She located Willy in a corner of the drawing-room, where he appeared to be engaged upon an earnest task. He was sitting on Chubby Heath's back, and pushing the unhappy Chubby's face hard against the floor. Juicy Lemon was standing by as referee. "Now!" said Willy firmly. "Do you agree to help—"

"Just a minute, Willy," said Doris, seizing him by the shoulder. "I expect you're planning some terrible mischief, but you can leave it for a bit. I want you at once—and it's important."

Willy looked round and released his victim. "Ted again, eh?" he asked. "What's he done—fallen out of one of the upper windows into a snowdrift, or something?"

He went off with her, and was rather puzzled when she led the way upstairs. But Doris took care to choose her time—so that nobody saw them going. Within a minute Willy was whisked into the presence of the other girls. "I've got him!" said Doris triumphantly.

"Here, steady!" exclaimed Willy, backing away in alarm. "What's this—an organised plot?" "You needn't worry—it's not a plot against you, Willy,"

said Doris. "We want your help in a glorious jape against Ted."

A serene smile came over Willy's face. "I'm yours!" he said promptly.

"First of all, we want to know what costume you've planned to wear for the carnival?" said Irene eagerly. "Quickly, Willy!"

But Willy looked dubious. "I say, chuck it!" he protested. "You know as well as I do that we're keeping our costumes a secret. I'm not giving the show away! You girls can never keep secrets, and you'll tell everybody—"

"No, we won't," put in Doris. "Look here, Willy, here's the game in a nutshell. We want you to wear Irene's costume, and to lend her yours. Don't you see? Ted will mistake—"

"Enough!" said Willy, as his quick brain grasped the situation. "My costume is yours, Irene. By Jingo, what an idea! Where is the genius who thought of it? I'm booked to appear as a Pirate Chief."

Irene Manners reeled. "A Pirate Chief!" she breathed helplessly. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The other girls held their sides with laughter. "Yes, a Pirate Chief," said Willy. "You'll look ripping, Irene!"

"This was meant to be!" said Doris, her eyes sparkling happily. "A Pirate Chief, Renie! If there is one boy's costume you could wear safely, without fear of being spotted as a girl, it's this one! Think of it—sea boots, and a long coat, and a blued chin—I suppose a blued chin is included, Willy?"

"Rather!" said Willy. "And a fierce black moustache, too!"

"Help!" murmured Irene. "But it'll be all the better," urged Doris. "We'll get Willy to help us with your make-up. Do you think Ted'll ever spot you?"

Irene suddenly looked startled. "But—but we've forgotten something!" she gasped. "Oh! Ted probably knows about Willy's costume—and he'll think that I'm Willy!"

"That," said Doris sweetly, "is just what I am relying on!"

Wily Willy!

IRENE MANNERS sat down abruptly on the bed "That's what you're relying on?" she repeated breathlessly.

"Of course!" said Doris. "Willy, I hope Ted knows that you've got a costume as a Pirate Chief?"

"Of course he does," replied Willy. "And as you say, it'll help the joke along famously. I tried to borrow another dagger from him, but the bounder wouldn't part. It doesn't matter now—five'll be enough for Irene."

"I—I don't think I shall need five," said Irene, shaking her fair head.

"Here's the Irish Colleen costume," went on Doris, producing Irene's fancy dress. "You'd better take it now, Willy, and smuggle it away. There's everything in the box—the whole outfit, complete. We'll take yours, and as soon as Renie is all dressed up, we'll call you in to help with the face decorations."

"There's one thing certain," grinned Willy. "Ted will get the shock of his life at that ball."

Soon afterwards Willy went down, so that his absence would not be commented upon. He took the precaution of going down by means of the back staircase. He had left the Irish Colleen costume upstairs, locked in a cupboard. Handforth had a habit of barging into his minor's bed-room, and Willy didn't want any hitch.

It was even decided that he shouldn't tell Chubby Heath or Juicy Lemon—for, although they were loyal to him, they would probably give the whole thing away by giggling at the wrong moment. He would let them think that he was still the Pirate Chief, and he complacently concluded that Irene would probably get a few shocks.

Just before dinner, and after everybody had smartened

themselves up, Willy singled out his major, and gave him a mysterious wink.

"Just a minute, Ted," he said softly.

"Eh?"

Willy repeated the mysterious wink, and Handforth stared.

"Want you outside?" murmured Willy, with a nudge.

"Something important. Come on—sneak out without the others seeing."

Handforth's curiosity was aroused, and he followed Willy out into the lounge hall, and they seated themselves in a deep nook, where there were comfortable cushions. The staircase was just behind them.

"What's the big idea?" asked Handforth suspiciously.

"By George! If you've dragged me out to ask for that dagger again—"

"No, it's not the dagger," interrupted Willy. "As a matter of fact, it's about that ghost hunt we've planned for to-night—after the ball. I suppose it's all fixed?"

Handforth nodded and lowered his voice.

"Yes," he murmured, "but I've only told a few of the chaps—Nipper and Reggie Pitt and one of two more. Somehow the asses didn't seem to show much enthusiasm. They thought I was pulling their leg."

"That's what I thought," whispered Willy. "Well, I suggest that you leave them to me. I'll tip them the wink. Look out!" he added cautiously. "Don't speak for a bit. Somebody coming downstairs."

Irene and Doris were descending, just at the back of the two juniors, and apparently unaware of their presence. Handforth, without the slightest hint of suspicion, kept silent, waiting for the girls to pass down.

"I'm dreadfully worried about that wig," Irene was saying confidentially. "It's dark, you know, with lots of curls, and it might clash with my fair hair."

"We'll fix it up," said Doris promptly.

"But are you sure that it's right for an Irish Colleen to have dark curls, reaching to her shoulders?" asked Irene, with a dubious air.

"What does it matter?" asked the other girl. "It's only a fancy dress costume, after all, and—"

She broke off suddenly. "Shssh! Mustn't talk now!"

They had got down into the hall, and Willy grunted.

"Good thing we stopped talking," he said. "It would have been all up if the girls had heard us discussing that ghost hunt. They would have told Uncle Gregory, and he would have put his foot down."

"Yes," said Handforth, in a peculiarly detached voice.

Willy looked at him out of the corner of his eye, and saw that his major was staring straight in front of him, with a gleam of excitement in his eyes.

"Now, about our plans—"

began Willy.

"Dark curls!" murmured Handforth breathlessly. "Eh?"

he added, with a violent start. "Plans? What plans?"

"Why, that ghost hunt—"

Blow the ghost hunt!" said Edward Oswald, his voice thick with emotion. "Clear off, you young bounder! What do you want to bother me with that affair for? We're not starting till after the ball."

"Oh, all right!" said Willy, with a great appearance of annoyance. "If you like to be so jolly snappy about it, I'll leave you to yourself."

He stalked off, and when, a minute later, he strolled past Irene and Doris, he gave them a cheerful wink. Words were quite unnecessary. That wink told them all they wanted to know.

"Willy's a marvel!" declared Doris, with frank admiration.

"It was his idea to entice Ted out on to that seat in the nook, and to hush Ted into silence as we came down the stairs. I wonder how he did it?"

"Goodness knows," said Irene. "But Ted has bitten. In fact, he's swallowed the bait, hook, line, and everything. He knows—or thinks he knows—that I'm going to appear in the fancy dress ball as an Irish Colleen."

"What a lark!" murmured Doris happily.

But Handforth, who had no idea of these sinister schemings, was overflowing with delirious joy. Although people were always pulling his leg, he never profited by his lessons.

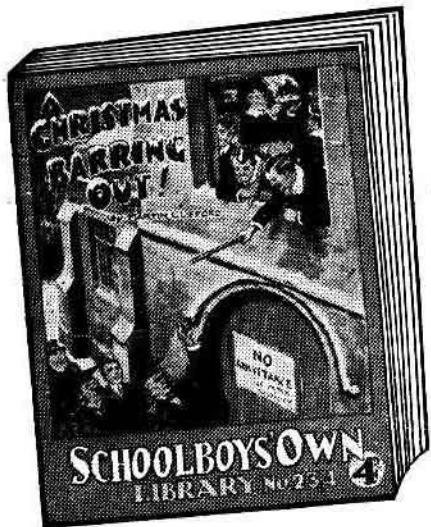
After dinner, with everybody in the happiest of moods, there was a rush to dress. The ball was timed to start at approximately nine-thirty. And dressing, of course, was a preliminary piece of fun.

Everybody was as secretive as possible.

Most of the guests had kept their costumes dark, as it were—but Nipper and Tommy Weston and Tregellis-West knew how each other would be dressed, but they took care to tell nobody else. The same with Handforth & Co. And Willy, and his two chums of the Third, had their own little secrets.

Half the fun would consist of concealing their identity until the time came to unmask. Not that there was anybody in the party who had any doubts regarding Handforth and

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Church and McClure. Everybody knew that they would be the Three Musketeers. Church and McClure had done their best, but Handforth had defeated them. By one or two incautious remarks he had got people talking, and, in the end, it was openly confessed that they would be Porthos, Athos, and Aramis.

"It's a pity we haven't had time to get these giddy costumes changed," remarked Church, as he took out his fancy dress and looked at it. "I was rather keen on spoofing the chaps. But they all know I'm to be Athos."

"It is too late!" growled McClure. "You can't get fancy dress costumes at a minute's notice, especially up here, miles and miles from any big town. It doesn't matter much, though, we shall still have plenty of fun."

Handforth nodded gaily.

"Yes, I shall be dancing with Irene all the evening," he said, with a happy smile.

"You seem pretty sure of yourself," said Church, with a stare.

"I am sure."

"Sure that you can spot Irene before the first dance?"

"I'll spot her as soon as ever she comes downstairs," grinned Handforth. "I'll waltz her off to the mistletoe, and give her that kiss."

"Well, we've always said you were an optimist, Handy, but this time you've beaten your own record," declared McClure. "Why are you so positive? How do you know you'll be able to see through her disguise?"

"Because—" Handforth paused. "I've got eyes, haven't I?" he added vaguely.

"We've all got eyes, but it's not so easy to detect people at a fancy dress ball," replied Church. "For all you know, Irene may appear dressed as a ballet girl, or a Spanish dancer, or a newspaper, or something."

"Rats!" said Edward Oswald. "I shall spot her!"

He was very cautious. He did not want his chums to know that he had accidentally received a clue. At least, he thought he had actually received it. And when his chums continued the subject, he thought it advisable to switch off to another line.

"I was having a word with Willy about our plans for to-night," he said. "Don't forget that we're starting off as soon as the ball's over."

"Starting off where?"

"For the old Towers, of course."

His chums stared at him.

"My hat!" ejaculated Church, as he proceeded to get into a part of his costume. "Have you still got that affair on your mind? You're dotty, Handy! We can't go on that ghost hunt to-night!"

"Why not?"

"Because it'll be so late, for one thing," said Church. "The ball won't be over until two o'clock the earliest. And after dancing for over four hours, we shan't feel particularly like trudging through the snow, and exploring that old place, shall we?"

Handforth compressed his lips.

"We're going, anyhow," he said coldly. "I have made up my mind, and there's an end of it."

"Cæsar has spoken!" said McClure solemnly. "Better chuck it up, Church. After he's had every dance with Irene he'll be too tired to do any ghost-hunting."

So they dismissed the subject, and hurried on with their dressing. Handforth was particularly keen to get down, for he wanted to be in the ball-room, waiting, when Irene appeared. There was a bunch of mistletoe hanging handily over in one corner of the room, not far from the windows, and Handforth had already decided upon this bunch for his own particular purpose.

So the Three Musketeers presently marched downstairs.

They came with a clattering of spurs and a clanking of swords. And undoubtedly they made an impressive picture—which would have looked better, perhaps, if Handforth had had his sword on the right side, and his hat in correct position. It was not so impressive back to front!

"Bravo!" thundered out the enormous voice of General Gregory, as he stood in the hall, watching. "Splendid, Edward! A fine picture, egad!"

"I'll bet you wouldn't have known me if the chaps hadn't been talking, uncle!" said Handforth. "By George! What are you supposed to be?"

"Can't you see that I'm an officer of the Roundheads?" roared his uncle. "But you'd better fix that wig of yours a bit more securely, my lad. It doesn't look any too safe. You're Porthos, aren't you?"

"Of course I am, uncle!"

"Then where's your beard?" demanded General Handforth. "Where's your moustache? Up you go, and put them on! The other musketeers have got them, so why not you?"

Church grinned.

"The fact is, he's got a challenge to kiss Irene under the

mistletoe," he explained, "and a beard and moustache might hinder things."

The general roared with mirth, and went into the library to join Lord Dorrimore and Nelson Lee, and one or two other gentlemen guests.

Handforth found that he had come down much too early. He was still red over Church's explanation, and it embarrassed him all the more because it had been perfectly true. He vowed that he would get even with Church.

He hovered near the bottom of the staircase, and the library door was still half-open. His uncle's booming voice came out, and he was talking on a subject which interested Handforth exceedingly.

Handforth Puts His Foot In It!

IT was only after a few moments that he gathered the trend of the conversation, for his thoughts had been elsewhere. His eyes were searching the staircase—waiting for the first sign of that Irish Colleen.

But the general's words temporarily distracted him. "Yes, Mr. Lee, it's been a long search, and I'm still unsuccessful," he was saying. "But I'm not giving in—I'm still a trier!"

"Have you no clue as to the actual spot where the treasure is buried?" came the voice of Nelson Lee.

"None, except that it was hidden somewhere in the old towers, or in the grounds," replied the general. "So, you see, it has been a difficult task. I have had experts on the spot, but, egad, they're not worth their money! I can do better myself!"

"Treasure!" murmured Handforth. "That's funny! I wonder—"

"This old ancestor—a fine old sea dog he was—buried this treasure centuries ago, so the records have it," continued the general. "But, confound him, he didn't leave any details. It makes it hard for us to locate the exact spot."

Handforth didn't listen to any more—mainly because some of the guests were now coming down the stairs, and he did not want them to think that he was deliberately listening to his uncle's conversation—although, of course, there was nothing private about it. If it came to that, the general would need sound-proof walls if he wished to speak privately.

But Handforth had heard quite enough.

"Quick, you chaps!" he said to his chums, as he led them clankingly into the ball-room. "I've just heard something, and perhaps you'll agree to come on that ghost-hunt stunt now!"

"Oh, goodness!" groaned Church. "He's on that subject again!"

"A treasure!" murmured Handforth tensely. "Didn't you hear what Uncle Gregory was saying? An old ancestor of ours, so the legend goes, buried treasure in the old Towers! My sons, we've got it!"

"Got what—the treasure?" asked Church.

"Listen to me, my lads!" Handforth whispered. "I haven't told you this before, but I'll tell you now. You remember the night in the old Towers? Well, Willy and I came upon a peculiar crypt—a kind of dungeon place. But, mind you—not a word! And in that dungeon we found an iron-bound chest, with a skeleton lying across it!"

His chums were impressed.

"I say, is this really a fact?" asked McClure. "An oak chest, by Jupiter, and a skeleton! But—what about the ghost?"

"The ghost appeared after we had found the chest," replied Handforth solemnly. "I don't quite know what to make of it, but it's fishy. That's why I'm so keen on an investigation. Why shouldn't we go there now? Why not get up a party—"

"But—but what about the ball?" asked Church, aghast.

"Bother the ball!"

"Then what about your kissing Irene under the mistletoe?"

Handforth started.

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"By George, yes!" he gasped. "I mustn't forget that! Blow the treasure!"

Handforth was famed for the manner in which he would change his mind at a moment's notice. And now, once again, much to the satisfaction of his chums, he completely dismissed the ghost hunt, and gave all his thoughts to the ball.

"By George!" he said, looking round. "Perhaps the girls have come down while we've been talking!"

"It's more than likely," agreed Church.

But they still had the ball-room very much to themselves, except for a few other juniors. But the guests were appearing now in threes and fours—clowns, pierrots, Chinamen, and a miscellaneous assortment of picturesque characters. The colours were dazzling, and the whole scene was brilliant and gay.

The ball-room was a great apartment, with brilliant electric lights, and endless decorations. Carnival balloons were soaring everywhere.

"By jingo!" breathed Church. "Here they are!"

But Handforth was staring, fascinated.

At last! A group of girls had appeared, chattering gaily, and laughing. They were arm-in-arm—Pierrette, Spanish Dancer, Geisha girl, Irish Colleen, and— But Handforth had no eyes for the others. There she was—the Irish Colleen.

Edward Oswald's chums turned upon him, grinning.

"Well?" said Church. "Where is she? Ten to one you don't spot her, Mr. Smarty!"

"He couldn't spot her if he had eyes like a hawk!" grinned McClure.

"Don't be dotty!" said Handforth, with supreme confidence. "I'll tell you which is Irene. There she is—in the green-and-red—the Irish Colleen, my lads!"

Church and McClure concentrated their gaze upon the Irish Colleen.

"I wouldn't swear to it," said Church, shaking his head.

"By George!" said Handforth. "Who could mistake her? You asses! There's no chance of being wrong! Just look at that exquisite poise!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Church.

"And those graceful ankles!" went on Handforth enthusiastically. "Did you ever see another pair of ankles like those? I'd know Irene anywhere by her ankles! And her walk, too—that wonderful, graceful walk! Yes, by George, I've spotted her!"

At that moment the Colleen made a move which caused Handforth's heart to jump into his mouth. She was detaching herself from the other girls, and strolling innocently across towards the mistletoe.

"My hat!" breathed Handforth, his heart thumping.

He could not afford to miss a chance like this!

He ran forward, seized the Colleen, and dragged her forcibly towards the mistletoe. The other girls stood watching, their eyes gleaming with amusement. Handforth was evidently going to do it!

The Colleen struggled hard, and tried to escape from his bear-like embrace. But it was impossible for her to do so. Handforth was determined, and he pulled the Colleen right under the mistletoe.

"Now I've got you!" he said triumphantly.

And then he delivered a full kiss—a beauty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The girls nearly shrieked themselves into hysterics with merriment, and most of the St. Frank's fellows laughed heartily at Handforth's piece of nerve.

"Like the fellow's sauce!" said Tommy Watson. "How the dickens does he know that it's Irene?"

"He must have guessed, I suppose," chuckled Reggie Pitt. "Hallo! She doesn't seem to approve of it, though!"

Slap!

The Irish Colleen, to Handforth's blank amazement, had

pulled herself free from his embrace after that kiss. And then, with a gasp of indignation, she had slapped Handforth's face with such force that it sounded like a clap.

The unfortunate Porthos staggered back aghast.

"Why, what—"

He stared. The Colleen was running away—holding an arm up in front of her face as though she wanted to conceal the redness of it in front of all those people! And Handforth went pale.

"But—but it was Irene!" he breathed dazedly.

For an awful moment he wondered if he had made a mistake. But no! He couldn't have made a mistake! He suddenly jumped to the truth. She had slapped his face like that because he had dragged her under the mistletoe. By George! Irene evidently thought that he wasn't supposed to kiss her until she walked beneath that magic sprig of her own accord.

"Oh, corks!" groaned Handforth. "Now I've done it!"

His former joy turned into dismay. He was hardly conscious of the fact that most of the people in the ball-room were looking at him. He didn't hear the orchestra striking up for the first dance. He only knew that he had offended Irene.

And then he saw the Pirate Chief.

Seeing the Pirate Chief wasn't sufficient to make him go suddenly hot all over—it was the Pirate Chief's attitude which had that effect. For the blue-chinned sea rogue had strutted across his path, and was cackling derisively. His very posture was indicative of scorn and ridicule. And at such a moment it was more than Handforth could stand.

Something had to happen—either he had to burst, or he had to smash Willy into pulp! And he went for that Pirate Chief with such a rush that there was no chance of escape.

"You rotter!" shouted Handforth. "I'll teach you to cackle at me!"

Before the Pirate Chief could even hazard his intention, Handforth had whirled him right off his feet. And there was another roar as this unexpected development took place. The girls nearly fainted into one another's arms.

Handforth rushed his burden across the floor of the ball-room. The Pirate Chief kicked and struggled, but it was of no use. His efforts—which, after all, were not quite so violent as Handforth had expected—did not avail him. Church and McClure, greatly amused, rushed after him. They thought it just as well to rescue the unfortunate Willy at once. They hadn't the faintest inkling of the truth!

"I'll teach you a lesson, my lad!" said Handforth thickly. "By George!"

He had suddenly noticed an open window—a french window, which led out on to the snow-covered terrace. The lounge hall was very hot, and somebody had probably opened the window to let a little fresh air in. It was a fine chance for Handforth. He dashed through, and was across the terrace in four strides. And now he stood against the balustrade, with the lawn stretching away, on a lower level, immediately in front of him, on the other side of the stonework, was a deep snowdrift.

"You'll laugh at me, will you?" roared Handforth. "All right, this will cool you off a bit!"

He gave a tremendous heave, and the Pirate Chief was tossed out of his arms, to fall with a scream into the thick snow. That scream caused Handforth to start violently.

He looked down, and then everything seemed to swim in front of his eyes. The Pirate Chief was sitting in the snow until it almost came up to his neck. The mask had fallen off, and in spite of the blue chin and the grotesque moustache, Handforth could make no mistake, for the wig had become dislodged, too, and some fair, bobbed hair was visible.

"Irene!" he said chokingly.

(Poor old Handy's being led a dance—and it's not over yet. Don't miss next week's fun and thrills.)

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