

"THE STOWAWAY OF THE SILVER SWALLOW!"

Featuring the Flying Schoolboys of St. Jim's in a Great New Adventure.

The **GEM** 2^D

THE FOE
IN THE
SKY!





Blake Answers Back!

Jack Blake's here to answer your letters and deal with your queries. Write to him c/o The GEM, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Be as candid as you like—Jack Blake likes a plain speaker, being by nature a John Blunt himself! But keep your letter SHORT, and enclose if possible a photo of yourself for reproduction on this page. No photos can be returned and no replies given by post.

Q. T. W., of Worcester, writes:

Would you answer these questions on draughts?

- (1) Which moves first—Blacks or Whites?
- (2) I'd like to know the correct position of the board.
- (3) What are the ages of Figgins, Wynn, Roylance, Kildare, Levison minor, Piggott, Cardew, and D'Arcy minor?

ANSWER: Hoyle says: (1) Black has first move. (2) The board is placed "so that the bottom corner space on the left hand shall be black." In reply to (3), the ages are: Figgins 15-3, Wynn 15-4½, Roylance 14-9, Kildare 17-8, Levison minor 13, Piggott 14, Cardew 15-7, D'Arcy minor 13½. Okey-doke?

June and Violet, of Rushden, Northants, write:

We admire the way Kerr investigates, but we can never see Monty Lowther's jokes. Can you? Who is your special friend? Where do you live? Who is your favourite among the Cliff House girls? Do you go to church on Sunday, and do you wear a topper? P.S.—Please excuse bad grammar.

ANSWER: Doffing my cap in a graceful bow (I only wear a topper on Sunday, and this is Wednesday), may I thank you two girls on behalf of "Detective" Kerr? I will get him to "see into" some of Monty Lowther's jokes, and solve the "mystery" for you! Gussy, Herries, and Digby rank equally as my bosom pals. My home is in Yorkshire. I like Clara Trevlyn of Cliff House for her outspokenness, but Marjorie Hazeldene is very sweet. At St. Jim's we all go to chapel every morning, Sundays included. P.S.—What's wrong with your "grammar"? I hope she gets well soon!

Michael Scott, of Catford, S.E.6., writes:

1. Please get from Racke the price of his cigarettes.
2. How many times has St. Jim's beaten Greyfriars at footer this season?
3. How far is Greyfriars from St. Jim's?

ANSWER: 1. As I had occasion to punch Racke on the nose for puffing cigarette smoke in my face yesterday, Racke is feeling rather "burnt up" with me at the moment! 2. St. Jim's and Greyfriars have met twice so far. Each side has won one game. 3. Roughly 60 miles.

John Taylor, of Yeoville, Johannesburg, South Africa, writes:

Will you please tell me the ages of D'Arcy, Cardow, Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, the Terrible Three, Levison, Trimble, Grundy, and Kildare?

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Will you ask the Editor for some stories about Gordon Gay?

ANSWER: Though I had no time to examine birth certificates, I extracted this information from the various fellows you mention: D'Arcy, 15-3, Cardew, 15-7, Figgins, 15-3, Kerr, 15-5, Wynn, 15-4½, Merry, 16-0, Lowther, 15-11, Manners, 16-0, Levison, 15-6, Trimble 15-2, Grundy, 16-4, Kildare, 17-8. Gosh, these figures are putting "years" on me! I've passed your request to the Ed., who tells me he is always pleased to consider suggestions, and will bear yours in mind.

Derek Smith, of Warsop, writes:

Could you answer these:

1. Who is the oldest member of your study?
2. Who is the best fighter in the Fourth Form?
3. How many fellows are there in the Fourth?

ANSWER: I could, and here we go:

1. George Herries, 15 years 6 months.

2. Modesty forbids me to print the name, but I did come out top last time we had a contest in the gym.

3. 38.

Write again, old fellow.

Peter C. R. Engening, of Edinburg 7, writes:

I'd like to know if there is going to be a film made of St. Jim's personalities?

These, too:

1. Who is the oldest inhabitant of St. Jim's?
2. Who is the youngest inhabitant?
3. How old is Martin Clifford?

4. What should I do if all the fellows in my class call me "Horace." I can't fight them all at once, can I?

ANSWER: One of the greatest poets of all time was named Horace, but maybe you don't want to be a poet. Ignore the taunt, unless anybody goes out of his way to be obnoxious. Then neatly remove his block with a swift uppercut. Normally fellows soon tire of a joke if they see the victim is taking no notice of it. Having started with the last question, let's continue to work backwards, shall we? Martin Clifford keeps his actual age a secret. The youngest "Saint" is no doubt one of the "babes" in the Second, and I've previously nominated Taggles for the title of "oldest known landmark." No plans at the moment for a St. Jim's film—but you never know, Peter, old man.

THERE'S DANGER IN THE AIR FOR THE ST. JIM'S FLYERS AS THE SILVER SWALLOW WINGS ITS WAY TOWARDS THE SOUTH OF FRANCE! GRIPPING NEW EXTRA-LONG YARN.



The Stowaway OF THE SILVER SWALLOW!

"What——" began the steward as he saw the seven schoolboys bound to their seats. The next moment the dago's grasp was laid on him and the point of a keen blade touched his neck. "Silenzio!" muttered Giuseppe.

CHAPTER 1.

Mysterious Disappearance of a Tie!

"**R**EADY, Gussy?"
 "Pwactically, deah boys!"
 "Only practically!" sighed Jack Blake. "Does that mean an hour, or two hours?"

"Weally, Blake——"
 "Buck up, Gussy!" said six voices in unison. Six cheery youthful faces were looking in at the door of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's apartment at No. 5, Avenue Sarre, in the gay city of Paris.

The St. Jim's Easter trippers were all dressed in their best. It was the last evening in Paris, and Arthur Augustus was taking his friends to a show. Tom Merry & Co. did not require long to change. Arthur Augustus did! So they had to come along and urge him to step on the gas, as it were.

"It's all right," said Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "I'm pwactically

weady. I've nothin' to put on now but my tie."

"Nothing to put on but your tie!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "That won't do for Paris, Gussy! My dear chap, you're not in the South Sea Islands."

"You uttah ass, Lowthah——"
 "It won't do!" declared Monty firmly. "I refuse to go out with Gussy if he puts on nothing but a tie!"

"Pway don't be a funny ass, Lowthah!" hooted Arthur Augustus. "You are quite awah that I mean that I have nothin' else to put on but my tie. It will not take me five minutes."

"Oh, my hat!" said Tom Merry. "Can you really put on a tie in five minutes, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am wathah a quick dwessah, you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"Is that a spot of grease on the back of your dinner jacket, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther.

Their stay in Paris ended, the chums of St. Jim's take off on the second "hop" of their Continental air tour—little knowing that a dangerous and desperate enemy is aboard the Silver Swallow!

by

MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Bai Jove! I twust not!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in alarm.

The swell of St. Jim's spun round from his dressing-table in a vain endeavour to look at the back of his dinner jacket. There was a chuckle from the juniors in the doorway. Arthur Augustus looked, at that moment, like a kitten trying to chase its tail.

"Let's have a look!" Monty Lowther stepped to the swell of St. Jim's and examined the back of the dinner jacket. It was spotless; there was nothing on that jacket—at the moment. But the next moment there was.

Arthur Augustus having his noble back to the dressing-table on which his tie lay, the cheery Monty grabbed that tie. In the twinkling of an eye it was pinned to the tail of the jacket.

"Is it all wight, Lowthah?" asked D'Arcy anxiously.

"No, all black!" answered Monty.

"You uttah ass, I do not mean all white, I mean all wight—"

"Right as rain!" said Lowther, stepping back. "My mistake! Get on with it, Gussy—we're waiting, you know."

"Wight-ho!"

Arthur Augustus turned back to his dressing-table and looked for his tie. He jammed his eyeglass into his noble eye, and looked again. Six fellows watched him with great interest.

"Bai Jove! Where is my tie?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in perplexity. "I am pwactically certain that I laid it here a minute ago. What the dooce has become of that tie? I cannot see my tie here."

It was not surprising that Arthur Augustus could not see a tie that was dangling behind him. But he seemed very much surprised. The sudden disappearance of that tie was really unaccountable.

"Lost your tie?" asked Manners.

"Gussy's always losing something!" said Herries.

"Lost, stolen, or strayed!" murmured Digby.

"Weally, I do not see how that tie could be lost!" said the puzzled Gussy. "I am suah it was here a minute ago."

"Better look round for it!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I don't see it anywhah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, scanning the polished floor through his eyeglass. "It is weally vevy wemarkable."

"You haven't been seeing your banker?" asked Monty Lowther.

"My bankah! No! What has that got to do with it, you ass?"

"Banker takes ties—bonds, you know!" explained Lowther.

"Bai Jove! I weally wight you would not be such a funny ass, Lowthah, at a sewious moment! Pway look wound for that tie, deah boys, and see if you can see it anywhah."

Tom Merry & Co. looked all over the floor for that tie! They did not see it on the floor. Arthur Augustus watched them, in great perplexity. That tie seemed to him to have vanished into thin air. It was really like magic!

"It's not on the floor!" said Tom Merry, shaking his head.

"It's not on the table!" said Herries.

"It's not on the bed!" said Digby.

"It's not on any of the chairs!" said Manners.

"Not on the mantelpiece!" said Blake.

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"Sure you had a tie?" asked Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! It is weally quite mystewious! I assuah you fellows that I had that tie wight undah my eyes only a minute or two ago! I am suah I laid it on the dwessin'-table while I was puttin' in my stud. I quite fail to undahstand where that tie can have got to? Pewayws Pawson had bettah get me anothah tie! Pawson!"

"Sir!" The portly Pawson appeared in the doorway. Pawson was always on the spot when he was wanted.

"Pawson, can you see my tie?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I laid it on the dwessin'-table just here a few minutes ago, and now it seems to have disappaeched in the most wemarkable way."

Pawson could not see the tie. As Arthur Augustus was facing him, he could not possibly have spotted that tie, without an X-ray apparatus.

"No, sir!" said Pawson. "I do not seem to see it, sir! I will get another tie immediately, sir."

"Pway do, Pawson."

Arthur Augustus sat down while Pawson sorted out another tie. He remained seated for the millionth part of a second. Then he leaped to his feet, with a yell like an Indian war-whoop.

"Yawwooh!"

"Found your tie, Gussy?"

"Ow! Wow! No! I have sat on a pin—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus had not found the tie. He had found the pin! He had found it quite suddenly as he sat down.

"Oh ewikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It was feahfully careless for somebody to leave a pin on a chaih! Pawson, pway look for that beastly pin on that beastly chaih, and take it away."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! Wow!" Arthur Augustus wriggled. "Wow!"

"There does not seem to be a pin on the chair, sir!" said Pawson. "Possibly it is sticking in your garments, sir!"

"Oh ewumbs! Pway look, Pawson!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Why—what—what—what is that?"

Arthur Augustus looked quite dazed as Pawson unpinned a tie from the tail of his jacket! He gazed at it!

"Mum-mum-my tut-tut-tie!" he stuttered. "Look at that, you fellows! Can any of you undahstand how that tie could have got pinned on the back of my dinnah jacket! It is weally most extwawordinawy."

"Most!" agreed Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry & Co.

"Bai Jove! Did you pin that tie on, Lowthah, you uttah wottah, when you pwetended there was a spot of gwase on my back?" The truth dawned on Gussy's noble brain at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's guessed it!" gasped Monty Lowther. "What an intellect! Gussy will make them sit up in the House of Lords some day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I weward you as a pwactical jokin' ass, Lowthah!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I have a gweat mind to punch your nose. I considah—"

"I think we'd better leave Gussy to it!" said Lowther. "He won't finish dressing till he's

finished talking, and he won't finish talking while he's got anybody to listen-in!"

"I considah——"

"Your tie, sir!" said Pawson.

"Thank you, Pawson! Lowthah, you unuttewable ass, I considah——"

"Buck up, Gussy!"

"I considah——" hooted Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry & Co., laughing, faded out of the picture. Arthur Augustus sniffed, and proceeded to get busy on his tie.

And five minutes of concentrated attention to that important task produced so satisfactory a result that the smiles returned to Gussy's noble countenance by the time he went down to join his comrades.

CHAPTER 2.

The Happy Widow!

"**L**A veuve——"
"La which?" asked Blake.

"La veuve, deah boys! That's Fwench for widow!" explained Arthur Augustus.

Gussy's friends looked at him. The seven had packed into a large car. Arthur Augustus had told the chauffeur where to go. As the chauffeur spoke English, the juniors did not doubt that they would arrive at their destination—which might have been very doubtful had Gussy had to tell him in French.

Gussy was managing this evening out. That was right and proper, as the St. Jim's party were the guests of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on the Easter air trip over Europe. So far, he had not told them where they were going; only they supposed that it was a show of some kind to wind up their week in Paris. Now he was telling them.

"You're going where?" asked Tom Merry blankly. "What do you mean by a widow, Gussy? Are you taking us to see a widow?"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Beware of widders, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"But what widow?" exclaimed Blake in amazement. "What the thump do you know about French widows, Gussy? What the dickens have you been up to while my eye wasn't on you?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"What sort of a widow?" gasped Dig.

"The Happy Widow, Dig."

"The happy widow!" repeated Tom Merry. "My only hat! What happy widow?"

"In the Wue des Pins, Tom Mewwy."

Gussy's friends gazed at him harder. If Gussy was taking them to call on a happy widow in the Rue des Pins, it looked as if his circle of acquaintances in the French capital was wider than they had been aware. This was the first they had heard of the widow.

"But——" stuttered Blake. "What the thump do you know about widows, Gussy? Mean to say we're going to a widow in the Rue des Pins?"

"Yaas, wathah! I have nevah been there befoah, but I think it will be wathah jollay!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "The suw-wounding, I believe, are not like those in the Etoile quartah—it's in Montmartre. But you can't see Pawis by stickin' to the Wue de la Paix and the Arc de Triomphe. Bai Jove! We get down here, deah boys."

The car stopped at the corner of a street. Tom Merry & Co. poured out and looked about them.

The street in which they had stopped did not

look very prosperous. The side street, round the corner, looked dingy and ill lighted. Gussy was right in saying that it was not like the Etoile quarter. They were evidently in a shabby part of the great city.

"This way, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pway wait for us here, chauffeur! We shall want the cah to go back."

Arthur Augustus started down the side street. His friends followed him, more and more surprised.

The farther they went, the dingier the street grew. Ill-looking men lounged in dingy cafes, or loafed on the unclean pavement.

"Blessed if I like the look of this!" said Manners. "Sort of place to get your pocket picked. Where on earth is Gussy taking us?"

"I have told you, Mannahs! We are goin' to see the Happy Widow."

"The widow may be happy, but the inhabitants we can see don't look fearfully happy!" said Monty Lowther.

"No, it does look wathah wuff!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "But while we are in Pawis, deah boy, we want to see the seamy side, as well as the bright side. We've not fah to go now—the Happy Widow is at the end of this sweet."

"But how do you know anything about her?" asked Tom Merry.

"Her!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "What do you mean by 'her,' deah boy?"

"Eh! I suppose a widow is a her, isn't she?" asked Tom.

"Well, of course, in Fwench, ewevythin' is a he or a her," agreed Arthur Augustus. "They call a hat a he and a dance a her. Le chapeau and la danse, you know! I saw about the Happy Widow in the papahs."

"In the newspapers!" stuttered Tom.

"Yaas, in the advertisements, you know."

"Oh crumbs!"

Arthur Augustus' friends had been surprised before. Now they were quite astonished. It seemed improbable that Gussy had become acquainted with any widow, happy or unhappy, without the knowledge of his pals. But it was still more extraordinary if he was taking them to see a widow whom he had learned through advertisements in the Paris newspapers!

"Is the old ass trying to pull our leg, or what?" asked Dig.

"Weally, Dig——"

"Look here, we'd better turn back!" grunted Manners. "This place is getting more and more crummy at every step."

"Weally, Mannahs——"

"You nearly had your pocket picked in the Bois de Boulogne the other day, Gussy!" said Blake. "Have you got that dashed black box about you? If you have, you're asking for it to be pinched in a place like this!"

Arthur Augustus smiled cheerily.

"That's all wight, Blake! I am takin' ewevy care of that black box since that wotten dago wan us down in Pawis and got aafh it. I am goin' to keep it quite safe for that Amewican chap who asked me to mind it for him. Don't you wowwy."

"Well, if you've got it in your pocket, you won't take it home with you from a slum like this!" grunted Blake.

"But I have not got it in my pocket, Blake! I have nevah cawwied it in my pocket since that dago got aafh it."

"You've left it indoors?" exclaimed Manners. Tom Merry gave Manners a quick look. Tom

knew that Manners suspected Pawson—the useful and incomparable Pawson—of nourishing an undue curiosity with regard to that mysterious black box, which had so mysteriously come into the keeping of Arthur Augustus.

“Yaas! It is quite safe indoors, Mannahs, with Pawson in the place.”

“Oh!” said Manners.

“In fact, I was thinkin’ of handin’ it ovah to Pawson’s care, as he requested; Pawson being so vevy trustworthy!” said Arthur Augustus. “But I tust not do that, you see, as I pwomised the Amewican chap to keep it myself and quite secwet fwom ewevybody.”

“Some secret!” murmured Blake.

“And, of course, I could not wisk that wotten dago gettin’ afiah Pawson for it—that would not be cwicket!” said Arthur Augustus. “I have it in a vevy safe place, where no burglah would think of lookin’ for it, even if Pawson was caught nappin’, you know.”

“And what’s the safe place?” asked Manners. “In a dwawah, deah boy, wolloed up in a shirt! I don’t think any burglah would think of lookin’ for it wolloed up in a shirt, what?” chuckled Arthur Augustus.

“Isn’t he deep?” grinned Blake.

“Yaas, I think I am wathah a deep chap!” agreed Arthur Augustus. “I asked Pawson if he thought a burglah would think of lookin’ for anythin’ wolloed up in a shirt, and he said he was suah not!”

“Oh crikey!” ejaculated Manners.

“What is the mattah, Mannahs?”

“Oh! Nothing!” gasped Manners. “I hope you’ll find it safe when you get back, that’s all.”

“Oh, that’s all wight! Pawson thought it was a safe place, you know. Of course, I nevah mentioned the black box—I asked him his opinion in a genewal sort of way. He thought it would be quite safe wolloed up in a shirt, and I have no doubt he is wight—Pawson is a vevy intelligent chap, and I have vevy gweat weliance on him.”

Manners said no more; but he gave Tom Merry a significant look.

That look said, as plainly as words, that in the opinion of Harry Manners, Arthur Augustus would not find that black box wrapped up in the shirt in the drawer when he got back to No. 5, Avenue Sarre!

As the juniors were to be out for the whole evening, anyone who wanted to search Gussy’s room was at liberty to do so; and in Manners’ opinion, the invaluable Pawson was probably already on the hunt.

But it was no use saying so to Gussy. It was only a suspicion, after all; and Gussy’s faith in his noble pater’s valet, who was in charge of the party, was unbounded.

“Here we are, deah boys!” exclaimed Arthur Augustus as they arrived at the end of the dingy street. “Here’s the Happy Widow!”

“Eh! Where?” demanded Herries.

The juniors looked round them. Three or four female figures were to be seen with dingy shawls over their heads; possibly widows, but not looking particularly happy! The St. Jim’s fellows really began to wonder a little whether Arthur Augustus was wandering in his noble mind!

“This way, old chaps!” said the cheerful Gussy, after surveying his surroundings through his eyeglass, and he led his comrades to a deep entry, over which there was an inscription in painted letters.

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Then the mystery was explained at last.

“LA VEUVÉ HEUREUSE!”

That was what met the eyes of the juniors. It was a building. It was, evidently, to judge by the sounds from within, a cafe-chantant, and to judge by the smells, not a very nice one. It was, in fact, one of those Montmartre cafes where there was singing and dancing for the entertainment of the patrons, and its name was “La Veuve Heureuse”—otherwise, the “Happy Widow.”

“Oh!” exclaimed all the juniors together.

“You ass, Gussy—”

“You fathead—”

“You cuckoo—”

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on his friends in surprise.

“What’s the wow?” he asked. “I should be vevy glad to know why you are applyin’ those wathah oppwobvious expressions to me.”

“You howling ass!” hooted Blake. “You told us you were bringing us to see a widow—”

“Yaas, this is the place,” said Arthur Augustus. “The Happy Widow, you know! A vevy jollay place, fwom what they said in the papahs. Singin’ and dancin’ and acwobatic twicks and things! Bai Jove! It seems a bit smellay, too—I suppose this is not one of the best places—”

“One of the worst, I should think!” grunted Blake.

“Well, we want to see Pawis!” said Arthur Augustus. “You can’t see Pawis by stickin’ to the show places! Staggah in, deah boys.”

And Tom Merry & Co., having now discovered the real nature of the “happy widow” they were going to see, staggered in.

CHAPTER 3.

Not Coffee!

TOM MERRY & CO. looked round them with interest if not with a lot of satisfaction.

They found themselves in a long, low hall, almost filled with round tables, at which the patrons of the Veuve Heureuse sat, drinking and smoking, and watching the stage. At one end was the stage, on which several dancers were gyrating, to the strains of three or four instruments. The atmosphere was thick with tobacco smoke. Two or three greasy waiters, with trays laden with drinks of various kinds, glided about.

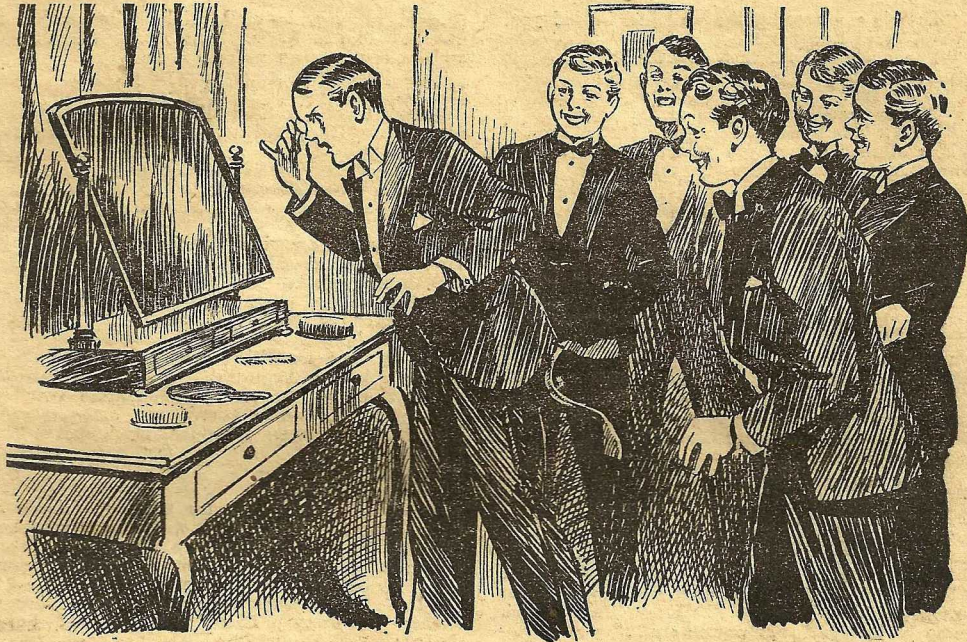
A good many heads were turned to look at the juniors, and some of the patrons of the Happy Widow exchanged nods and smiles. Perhaps they were amused to see that party of foreign school-boys in their midst. There were many such cafes, of varying degrees of class and cleanliness, in Paris; but Arthur Augustus seemed to have struck one of the toughest.

If he wanted a glimpse of the seamy side of Paris before the juniors boarded the Silver Swallow for the next hop, he had certainly come to the right place.

“By gum, this is a bit thick!” murmured Manners. He coughed. Clouds of tobacco smoke were rather worrying to healthy, youthful lungs.

“Yaas, it’s a bit thick, Mannahs—but it’s Pawis, you know!” said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. “We want to see Pawis, old chap! Gwoooogh!” The swell of St. Jim’s coughed, too.

“We want to see it—but I don’t specially want to smell it!” remarked Blake. “But here we are—anybody see a table?”



"Bai Jove! Where is my tie?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as he turned back to his dressing-table. "I am practically certain that I laid it here a minute ago." But it was not really surprising that Arthur Augustus could not see a tie that was dangling behind him!

"Here's a waitah, deah boy! Waitah—I mean, garsong, comey this way!" said Arthur Augustus in French. "We wantey sittey down a la table."

"I wonder if he will guess that one!" murmured Monty Lowther, and the juniors grinned. Gussy's French wanted some guessing!

"Ici, messieurs!" said the garcon, who understood that the newcomers wanted a table, if he did not understand Gussy's French. And he bowed them to a table at the side of the hall, where a couple were vacant.

"Mercy beang!" said Arthur Augustus, probably meaning "merci bien."

"What are you saying mercy be hanged for?" asked Lowther.

"I was not sayin' mercy be hanged, Lowthah—I was thankin' the waitah in Fvench! Sit down, old chaps—bai Jove! What is it, waitah, I mean, garcon?"

"Monsieur desir quelque chose?" asked the garcon.

"No, thanks," answered Arthur Augustus. "We just want to sit and see the show, you know! Nothin' to eat and nothin' to dwink—just the show."

"Comment?"

"Rien!" said Gussy, remembering the French word for "nothing." "Rien, mercy beang."

The waiter stood and gave him a fixed look. Tom Merry & Co. smiled. Arthur Augustus was a little puzzled. Having told the waiter that he did not want anything, he expected the man to go. The man did not go. The juniors certainly did not fancy anything to eat or drink in such a grubby place. But the waiter seemed to take it for granted that they did.

"Voulez vous du vin?" he asked.

"No, thanks."

"Champagne?" suggested the garcon.

"Bai Jove! Does the chap think we want to buy champagne?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Probably he wants to sell it!" said Blake.

"Nothin' at all—rien de rien de rien!" said Arthur Augustus, to make it quite clear.

"Rien de rien!" said the waiter, with quite a disagreeable look. "Mais il faut acheter quelque chose, monsieur."

"What does he mean by that, Tom Mewwy? Have you any ideah what the man is dwivin' at?" asked Arthur Augustus.

Tom Merry chuckled.

"He says it's necessary to buy something, old bean! You see, they make their profits on the drinks in these places. You're expected to mop up something."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that! Bwing us some coffee, waitah—anythin' you like! Aftah all, we needn't dwink the coffee, you fellows! I wathah think we shouldn't like it here!"

"Plait-il?" asked the waiter.

"What the dooce does he mean by play-till, you fellows?"

"He's asking you what you're burbling about, old bean."

"Oh! Bwing some coffee, waitah—I mean, apportez quelque thingummy—"

"Yeuve Clicquot?" asked the garcon.

"Yaas, that will do! Anythin'! Wee, wee, wee!" said Arthur Augustus, and the greasy waiter went away to fulfil the order.

"What are you fellows gwinnin' at?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I do not see anythin' to gwin at."

"There's a mirror on the wall just behind you, Gussy!" said Lowther.

"Yaas; what about that, Lowthah?"

"Look into it."

"What for?"

"To see something to grin at."

"Wats! The Fwench seem vevy fond of namin' things aftah widows, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus. "This place is called La Veuve Heureuse, which means the Happy Widow, and now he is goin' to bwing us some coffee called Veuve Clicquot, which must mean Widow Clicquot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

The waiter returned. He carried a tray which bore a long-necked bottle, and a number of glasses. These he set down on the juniors' table, while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed at him, with his noble eye almost popping through his eyeglass.

"Gweat Scott! The uttah ass has bhwought us champagne aftah all, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

"We shall have to carry Gussy home to-night!" remarked Blake.

"Keep an eye on him!" said Lowther. "It would be really awful if Gussy got run in for being squiffy."

"What would the Head think if he could see him now!" sighed Dig.

"You uttah asses!" hooted Arthur Augustus. "I am not goin' to dwink any champagne. That waitah seems to be a fool! Waitah, what do you mean by bwingin' that wotten stuff?"

"Plait-it?"

"Qu'est-que vous meanez by apporteying that champagne?" demanded D'Arcy.

"Veuve Clicquot, monsieur."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Veuve Clicquot is a brand of champagne, old man!" gasped Tom Merry. "You've ordered champagne, not coffee."

"Oh cwikey!"

"Gussy's going it!" observed Lowther. "You'd never guess this if you saw him at St. Jim's! Gussy's come to Paris to paint the town red."

"I have done nothin' of the kind, Lowthah, you ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"Nothin' of the sort, you duffah. Even if I wanted to paint the town wed, which I certainly do not, I should not be likely to cawwy on in a weckless mannah while I have you fellows in my charge—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I thought the waitah meant some kind of coffee—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, pway do leave off cacklin'. I will pay the chap for the champagne, as he has bhwought it, but I shall certainly not dwink it."

"Cent cinquante-cinq, s'il vous plait, monsieur."

"What the dooce does he mean by song song-kong-song?"

"He means a hundred and fifty-five francs, old bean. You'd better tell him to cart it back and bring some coffee," chuckled Blake.

"Pewwaps I had bettah pay for it, as he seems to think I ordahed it," said Arthur Augustus.

"We can leave it standin' on the table. Don't uncork it, waitah—I mean, ne vous uncorkez pas."

The waiter retired with a hundred and fifty-five of Gussy's francs, and a ten-franc tip, leaving the bottle of champagne and the glasses on the table.

"Well," said Blake, "if anybody who knows

us sees us now, he will think we're having a glorious time in Paris. Mind Gussy doesn't get at that bottle when we're not looking."

"I'll jolly well keep an eye on him," said Herries.

"Don't touch it, Gussy," said Monty Lowther earnestly. "They call it champagne, but it gives you real pain."

"When we get home, the first thing I shall do will be to make Gussy sign the pledge," declared Blake. "But who would have thought he was so rorty?"

"You uttah ass, I am not worty at all! It was quite a mistake. I weally supposed the waitah was speakin' of coffee."

"These quiet chaps are all alike," said Lowther. "Let them loose in Paris, and they break out like this."

"I am not bweakin' out, you uttah ass!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I should wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. The whole twouble awises fwom Fwench people not understandin' their own language. I suppose my accent is too good for them."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus gave his grinning friends a devastating look. Really, it was quite a mistake. Gussy had no intention of breaking out in Paris and getting rorty. His friends seemed determined to believe that he had.

"You uttah, dundah-headed duffahs—" began Arthur Augustus. Then he broke off quite sharply. "Oh cwumbs! That dago!"

CHAPTER 4.

Something Like a Shindy!

"WHAT?"

"Who?"

"Where?"

Tom Merry & Co. were on the alert at once. Nobody, not even Arthur Augustus, knew why Giuseppe Fosco, the Italian, was on Gussy's trail, hunting for that mysterious black box. But they all knew that the "dago" was fearfully keen on it, and that there was very little at which Giuseppe would have stopped to get his thievish, swarthy hands on it.

Once at Eastwood House, and several times since in Paris, the dago had tried it on, and the black box had had a series of remarkably narrow escapes from his clutches.

So D'Arcy's sudden announcement that the dago was at hand caused Tom Merry & Co. to sit up and take notice at once.

"There he is, deah boys, sittin' by that pillah," whispered Arthur Augustus excitedly. "I spotted him comin' in. He has sat down as neah as he can to us to watch us, the spyin' wottah!"

All the juniors looked at the man. He had sat down at the next table, and the waiter was serving him with a flask of Chianti. He had a black felt hat slouched on his head, which hid the upper part of his face. But the lower part, which was visible, was enough to indicate clearly that he was an Italian.

"The wascal!" breathed Arthur Augustus. "If there was a jongdarm here, we could give him into custody, you know. He has bwoken the law by twyin' to gwab that black box."

"Is it the man?" asked Blake.

"You can see that he is the dago, Blake."

"Lots of dagoes in Paris," answered Blake. "Thirty thousand, at least. Only one of them is

after that black box, Gussy. The other twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine are warranted harmless."

"Wats! Hasn't he followed us in?" demanded Arthur Augustus. "He wasn't there when we came in. He followed us in."

"Might be because he arrived later."

"He is sittin' at the next table."

"Might be because it was a vacant one."

"I weally wish you would not persist in talkin' wot, Blake! He is keepin' that hat ovah his face so that we shall not wecognise him. I know him all wight."

The Italian, at a little distance from the juniors, was taking no notice of them. He smoked a cigarette, and sipped red Chianti, and looked at the stage. The brim of his hat hid more than half his face, but there was no doubt that the rest of it might have been Giuseppe Fosco's.

"But——" murmured Tom Merry.

"It is the dago," declared Arthur Augustus.

The man in the slouched hat was seen to give a little start. Evidently D'Arcy's words had caught his ears. But he did not turn towards the juniors. His gaze, under the brim of his hat, remained fixed on the stage.

"You saw that?" breathed Arthur Augustus, in deep excitement. "He heard me, and he knows I've spotted him."

"Hold on!" murmured Manners. "Mightn't have liked the word dago, old chap. Dagoes don't——"

"The question is—what are we goin' to do?" said Arthur Augustus. "He has twined to wob me, and he will twy to wob me again if he isn't wun in. He is that wascal that the Amewican chap called Beppo, who was atiah him to pinch the black box. I am not goin' to be twacked about and wobbled by a wotten dago! We can collah him——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Collah him, and pwevent his escape, and tell the garsong to call a jongdarm!" said D'Arcy firmly. "The soonah he is wun in, the safah that black box will be!"

"This isn't the sort of place for gendarmes to be about," said Blake. "We don't want a row in the middle of a rough old lot like this lot, Gussy."

"Besides, is he the man?" asked Manners.

The man plainly was a dago. Plainly, too, he had come in after the St. Jim's fellows had sat at the next table, and kept his face screened with the brim of his hat. These circumstances convinced Arthur Augustus beyond the shadow of a doubt, after his experience at the hands of that lawless dago, Giuseppe Fosco.

"He's the man!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "And I will pwove it by makin' him let us see his face! Stand weady to collah him!"

"Gussy old man——"

"Stop a minute——"

"Hold on——"

"Gussy——"

Gussy did not heed. He was not losing this chance of securing the dago who had tracked him, and set on an apache to rob him. Gussy stepped quickly towards the Italian, grasped the edge of the slouched hat, and suddenly jerked it off.

"Now, you wascally wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus triumphantly. "You—oh—ah! Oh ewikey! Gweat Scott!"

A swarthy face was revealed by the snatching off of the dago's hat. It was a swarthy, greasy

Italian face, with black eyes and a mop of black hair, but it was not the face of Giuseppe Fosco.

It was a similar face, no doubt, but it was quite another face, as all the juniors could see now that it was revealed. It was not, after all, Gussy's dago. It was one of the other twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

But that face, though not Fosco's, looked at the moment as fierce and savage as Giuseppe Fosco's had ever looked.

It was red with rage, and the black eyes scintillated.

The Italian did not look a nice man. He looked rather a tough character. But even a nice man might have got a little excited at having his hat suddenly snatched off in a cafe by a perfect stranger.

He bounded to his feet, almost gibbering with rage.

"Dio mio! Che cosa e?" he yelled. "Che cosa intendere? Stolto ragazzo, che—che——"

"Bai Jove! I am feahfully sowwy!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in utter dismay. "I took you for anoithah beastly dago—I mean to say—Yawwooh! Keep off, you mad ass, while I explain—— Oh ewikey! Yawwooh!"

A flask of Chianti crashed in one direction, a glass in another as the Italian jumped at Arthur Augustus. He grasped the swell of St. Jim's, and Gussy roared and spluttered in his angry clutch.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Blake. "Gussy's done it now!"

"Done it brown!" gurgled Lowther.

There was a roar of voices in the cafe. Fifty people were on their feet, staring at the scene.

Two or three waiters came hurrying up. There was a buzz of excited French on all sides. Dozens

PURSUIT IN THE DARK

Speed Cop Bertie heard a car drive away into the fog. Mounting his motor bike he shot after it. But the driver of the car knew the road better, and although only going slowly he steadily drew away. A lorry showed ahead and the car ran up the sloping ramp into its black interior. A neat trick, but it's only the beginning of Bertie's troubles in the great thrill story

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of people had seen Gussy's extraordinary action, and could only draw the conclusion that he was spoiling for a shindy. Tom Merry & Co. rushed forward to drag the combatants apart.

But it was not easy. The Italian, in a towering rage, was smacking Gussy's head right and left, and Gussy, though he would have been more than willing to explain and apologise, had no leisure so to do. He could not have his noble head smacked unresistingly, and he hit out, getting in quite a few good ones, while the enraged Italian smacked and smacked.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Stop them!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yawooh! You pottay dago, stoppit!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I keep on telling you I took you for anothead beast—"

Smack, smack!

Arthur Augustus put in a punch that made the enemy stagger. He released his hold, stumbled over the Chianti flask, and sat down on the floor. He bumped and yelled.

"Oh ewikey! Bai Jove, you fellows—"

The Italian bounded up. Three or four other dagoes, apparently friends of his, joined him, and shook fists and hurled abuse at Arthur Augustus. Fifty or sixty other people shouted and bawled. Shindies, probably, were not uncommon at an establishment like the Veuve Heureuse, and the audience seemed to rise to the occasion. Tom Merry & Co. drew round Arthur Augustus, shoved and jostled on all sides. Evidently the public sympathy was on the side of the dago—which was not surprising, seeing how utterly unprovoked was Gussy's raid on his hat!

"Cochons—"

"Ces garçons—"

"Sortez, donc!"

"Le petit est tout gris—"

"Voyez donc ce garçon, tout gris—"

"Bai Jove, if they would shut up and let a chap explain!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It's a frightfully awkward posh—"

"Let's get out!" gasped Blake.

"For goodness' sake, hook it!" exclaimed Manners.

"Oh ewumbs! Here comes that sillay ass again!" The Italian hurtled at Arthur Augustus, clutching at him, and smacking and punching. Tom Merry and Lowther caught him by the arms and dragged him off. Immediately, two or three of his friends joined in the scuffle.

Hustled and hustled, shoved and jostled, amid howls of derision from the crowd, the St. Jim's fellows struggled doorward. They hardly knew how they got out of the Veuve Heureuse.

Fortunately, they got out at last, in a ruffled and rumpled state, gasping for breath. From a crowded doorway, loud boos followed them into the street.

They did not linger. They accelerated, and headed for the corner where the car waited, glad to see the last of the Veuve Heureuse and its denizens.

The chauffeur lifted his eyebrows till they almost pushed up the peak of his cap, at the sight of them—breathless, dusty, rumpled, dishevelled—looking as if they had just got out of a desperate shindy—as, indeed, they had.

"Oh ewikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Pawwaps we had bettah go home, deah boys! I feel in quite a fluttah!"

"Oh, let's make a night of it!" said Blake,

with ferocious sarcasm. "Let's drop in somewhere else, and kick up another row!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Perhaps Gussy would like a fight with a policeman next?" suggested Herries.

"Weally, Hewwics—"

"Hop in," said Tom Merry. "After all, we've seen a spot of the seamy side of Paris—and that's what Gussy brought us out to see!"

And the juniors packed into the car and rolled away. And never had they been so glad to leave anything behind as they were to leave the Rue des Pins and La Veuve Heureuse!

CHAPTER 5.

Not on the Spot!

MANNERS of the Shell smiled rather grimly.

Manners had gone up the staircase as soon as the juniors reached the house in the Avenue Sarre. In the hall, five fellows were gathered round Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, telling him what they thought of him. They seemed to think quite a lot, and all of it uncomplimentary. They told Gussy at great length and with quite a lot of emphasis. Manners left them to it and cut upstairs.

The St. Jim's trippers had been going to have an evening out. Owing to the disastrous outcome of the visit to La Veuve Heureuse, they had returned early—in fact, they had been hardly more than an hour gone, instead of three or four. And Manners was curious to know whether D'Arcy's room was as vacant as he had left it.

It was to D'Arcy's room—not his own—that Manners went, and he opened the door and looked in—greeted by a suppressed ejaculation.

The light was on in D'Arcy's room. Pawson, bald and portly, stood in front of an immense chest of drawers.

In that chest every drawer was open, and a large number of Gussy's almost innumerable garments had been lifted out.

The portly Pawson had a shirt in his hands as Manners opened the door, and he gave a start—almost a bound—as the Shell fellow of St. Jim's looked in—which drew that grim smile to Manners' face.

Manners had more than half-expected it. He had had no doubt that Pawson would search that room as soon as the car had rolled away down the Avenue Sarre with the St. Jim's party. His only doubt was whether Pawson would have got through the search by this time. Evidently—if he really was searching—Pawson hadn't, for there he was!

Pawson generally was absolutely self-possessed. His portly calm seemed unshakable. But it was shaken now for a moment. He was startled, and he looked it. For a second his eyes glinted at the unexpected apparition of the Shell fellow in the doorway.

But if he was startled, or perturbed, Pawson recovered himself immediately. For a second his calm had been shaken, the next, he was the suave, impassive Pawson again—Lord Eastwood's incomparable valet.

"Master Manners!" he said in his smooth voice. "You quite startled me for a moment, sir! I did not expect you back so early!"

"No; we chucked it early," said Manners. He came into the room and sat down in an armchair, to wait for D'Arcy to come up. If Pawson had not found the black box yet, he was not going to find it if Manners could help it.

Pawson hesitated for a brief moment. Then he calmly resumed sorting out shirts. If his occupation was as Harry Manners suspected, he was not giving himself away by quitting it as soon as eyes were on him.

Arthur Augustus' voice floated in at the doorway.

"Weally, you fellows, you're talkin' wot! I do not considah that I was to blame in the slightest degwee! If it had been the dago, we should have had him——"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Burling cuckoo!"

"I weally cannot be expected to know one dago fwom another when he has a beastly hat slouched ovah his beastly face! Pway let the subject dwop!"

"What about bumping him?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"What about booting him?"

"Weally, Dig——"

"You prize ass——"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked into his room. He was rather untidy. He was rather flushed. And he was rather exasperated by Tom Merry & Co. taking the view that he was somehow to blame for the shindy at the Veuve Heurouse.

He glanced at Pawson in surprise.

"Bai Jove! Is that you, Pawson?"

"Yes, sir!" said Pawson smoothly. "If you wish me to retire, sir, I will finish my task another time!"

"Not at all, Pawson! But what are you up to?"

"I am counting your garments, sir, as I fear that some articles have been missing in the laundry," explained Pawson. "As we are leaving Paris to-morrow, sir, the matter must be seen to without delay!"

"You are a vevy dutiful fellow, Pawson," said Arthur Augustus, while Harry Manners smiled.

Pawson was never likely to be long at a loss, and this, Manners thought, was neat. But he did not believe a word of it.

It was, in Manners' opinion, altogether too much of a coincidence, if Pawson had felt it his duty to enumerate Gussy's garments while all the fellows were out, after Gussy had as good as told him that he had hidden the black box in a folded shirt.

"Thank you, sir!" said Pawson. "I try to do my duty, sir!"

"Weally, you do more than your duty, Pawson!" said Arthur Augustus. "I weally wondah that my patah could part with you to come with us on this twip. He must miss you feahfully!"

"I believe that I am useful to his lordship, sir," said Pawson. "It is a very great satisfaction to me!"

"Yaas, of course!" agreed Arthur Augustus innocently. "Pway cawwy on, Pawson—don't let me intewwupt you!"

"Very good, sir!"

Five fellows looked in at the doorway. Tom Merry & Co., it seemed, had not yet finished telling Arthur Augustus what they thought of him. They had followed him up to let him know the rest.

"You ass——"

"You chump——"

"You frumptions jabberwock—— Oh, here's Pawson!" said Tom Merry; and the flow of eloquence was cut off.

"Has anything happened, gentlemen?" asked Pawson.

"Oh, nothing much!" answered Blake. "Gussy took us to a show in the slums, ordered drinks, and got into a fight with a hooligan——" "Nothin' of the kind!" roared Arthur Augustus indignantly. "If that dago had been the wight dago, it would have been all wight!"

"Are you going to pitch into every dago we see on this trip, in case his name happens to be Giuseppe Fosco?" asked Lowther. "Looks as if we're going to have rather a hectic time if you do!"

"Certainly not, you ass! I wegard the suggestion as widiculous!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "Don't hurwy away, Pawson!"

"Thank you, sir, I have now completed counting the garments," said Pawson. "I find that the number is correct."

And Pawson bowed himself out of the room and disappeared down the staircase. Manners winked at Tom Merry, who gave him rather a startled look.

"Vevy dutiful chap, Pawson!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "It would be wathah well to leave anythin' behind when we go, you know—but there's no dangah of that with Pawson about. Vevy welliah chap."

"Very!" said Tom. "But if that jolly old black box was wrapped up in one of those shirts, Gussy, you'd better see that it hasn't dropped out. Pawson must have handled the lot, if he's been counting them."

"Oh, that's all wight, deah boy!"

"Aren't you going to see whether it's safe?" asked Manners. "You've been jolly particular about that black box up till now."

"I am still vevy particulah about it, Mannahs! Havin' pwomised to keep it for that American chap till he asks me for it back, I am bound to be feahfully particulah about it."

"Well, look in that chest of drawers, then——"

"What's the good of lookin' in that chest of dwawahs, Mannahs?" asked D'Arcy, with a puzzled look. "The black box isn't there."

"You told us you'd left it rolled up in a shirt in a chest of drawers!" hooted Manners.

"Yaas, but I wasn't goin' to leave it in this woom, you know, and those wascals know this is my woom! I wolled it up in a shirt in a dwawah in Tom Mewwy's woom, befoah I came down to join you fellows!" explained Arthur Augustus.

"Oh!" gasped Manners.

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

Manners burst into a chuckle. He had taken it for granted that Arthur Augustus had left that little box rolled up in a shirt in his own room. He had no doubt that Pawson had done the same!

Arthur Augustus remained happily unconscious that the black box had had another narrow escape! But Manners of the Shell had no doubt whatever that it had!

CHAPTER 6.

Bright!

"KEEP your peepahs open, deah boys!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark as the St. Jim's fellows came down the steps of the mansion in the Avenue Sarre, in the sunny April morning.

That afternoon they were going back to the aerodrome to get aboard the Silver Swallow, and

continue their flight southward. Now they were going to take a last walk round Paris to have a final look at the Capital of the Universe.

Arthur Augustus, as he came out, looked up the avenue, and down the avenue, and across the avenue, with a watchful and wary eye.

Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, but, unlike Moses, who saw no man, Gussy saw plenty of men—lots, in fact, going up and down the avenue. And on every one that was anywhere near at hand, Gussy cast a wary eye. Gussy was, in fact, so extremely watchful, and so awfully on his guard, that he was warranted to draw the curious attention of anyone within forty rods.

So his friends guessed what was "on," especially as Gussy, while he cast those suspicious and wary glances up and down, and round about, kept his hand in his pocket, carefully clasping something unseen.

"Got it on you?" asked Tom Merry, laughing. "Bai Jove! How did you guess that, Tom Mewwy?" asked Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"As a mattah of fact, you have guessed wight!" said D'Arcy. "I have that black box in my pocket! That is why I want you to keep your peepahs open. That wascally dago may be twackin' us at this vevy minute! If I see him I—"

"Get the right dago this time, for goodness' sake!" urged Blake. "I've told you there are thirty thousand dagoes in Paris. You simply can't scrap with the lot! Twenty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight are left, after the one you kyboshed last night. The Easter holidays aren't long enough to work through the lot!"

"Pwaw don't be an ass, Blake! I shall know that wottah Fosco if I see him—"

"He knows him if he sees him," remarked Monty Lowther, "and he will seize him if he knows him."

"Is that a wotten pun, Lowthah?"

"No; a jolly good one!"

"Wats! Come on, you fellows, and mind you keep your peepahs open! I feel feahfully uneasy with this black box in my pocket when that howwid dago may be wachin' us all the time."

"What the thump are you taking it for a walk for, then?" asked Herries. "Why not leave it tied up in the tail of a shirt?"

"We are leavin' Pawis to-day, Hewwies. We have to leave Pawis—"

"We shall certainly have to leave it!" agreed Monty Lowther. "We can't take it on the plane!"

"Wats! As we are leavin' Pawis, I shall have that beastly black box on my mind—"
"Are you going to park it in your hat?" asked Lowther.

"Bai Jove! No! Certainly not!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, I wish you would not be so twivolous. I shall have that black box on my mind all through the twip south—"

"Safe enough on the plane," said Blake. "Think the dago will be found sitting on the corner of a cloud, like a cherub?"

"But we shall not be on the plane all the time, Blake! We shall be puttin' up in swange places. It will be wathah a wowwy to have the beastly thing in my pocket all the time. It will be all wight when we get to Cannes, and have a house of our own again—but puttin' up in hotels is wiskey, you know, if that wotten dago follows on

our twack. I shall have to cawwy it about, and may be wobbed."

"Is that why you're carrying it now?"

"Yaas."

Gussy's friends gazed at him.

"You see, I might get my pocket picked at Lyons, or Arles, or somewhere," explained Arthur Augustus. "A fellow can't be too careful when it is a mattah of mindin' somethin' he has promised to take care of."

"Let's have it clear!" gurgled Blake. "You can't carry it in your pocket at Lyons, or Arles, in case your pocket is picked. So you're carrying it in your pocket in Paris, where your pocket is ten times more likely to be picked! Is that it?"

"Yaas, old chap!"

"Fan me!" murmured Blake.

Arthur Augustus walked elegantly on with his astonished chums. His eyeglass gleamed to and fro as he went, and his hand never left the pocket in which it was clasping that mysterious black box.

At a corner he stopped, glanced to and fro, and then addressed a sergent-de-ville.

"Pwaw excuse me—"

"Comment?" asked the policeman.

"Bai Jove, I keep on forgettin' to put it in Fwench! Excusez-moi," said Arthur Augustus. "Willez vous have the bounty to directez me to the post office?"

"Plait-il?" gasped the policeman, who was evidently one more of those Frenchmen who did not understand their own language—as spoken by the swell of St. Jim's.

"Le post office—office de post!"

"Make it bureau-de-poste, Gussy," suggested Tom Merry, "and voulez vous may go down better than willez vous."

"Voulez vous have the bonte de—de—de—de me dire, comme gettey to the bureau-de-poste?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

The sergent-de-ville grinned. The words "bureau-de-poste" no doubt enlightened him. The rest seemed to entertain him.

"Mais oui, monsieur!" he answered. "Vous montez la rue, monsieur, alors, vous verrez le bureau-de-poste tout en face."

"Bai Jove! Is there anythin' on my face, you fellows?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously. "A smut on my nose, or anythin'—"

"On your face?" asked Tom Merry blankly.

"Yaas! That chap said somethin' about a face! I don't know what a tooting face means, but if it means that there's a smut or somethin' on my face—"

"Oh crikey! Tout en face means facing you!" gasped Tom. "He said that if you go up this street, you will see the post office facing you."

"Bai Jove! It is weally queeah, Tom, how you seem to tumble to what these chaps mean, when I know Fwench so much bettah than you do, and yet I often get puzzled! Are you just guessin'?"

"Montez la rue, et vous verrez!" answered Tom, laughing. "Go up the street, and you will see!"

"Mercy beang!" said Arthur Augustus to the policeman, who saluted and smiled in his polite French way—his smile broadening to a wide grin as the juniors went up the street.

"Bai Jove! There it is!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, ten minutes later, as they reached the post office. "How do you say wegeristered in Fwench, Tom?"

"Recommande, or charge," said Tom. "A registered letter can be recommended, or charged, just as you like."

"Have you got a letter to register, Gussy?" asked Blake.

"Not at all, deah boy! Come on!"

"Then what the thump do you mean?" demanded Blake. "Have you gone off your rocker this morning?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Oh, give him his head!" sighed Monty Lowther. "There's nothing in it, but give it him!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus marched into the bureau de poste, followed by his wondering chums. Having explored all sections of the long counter where registered letters were not dealt with, he arrived at last at the section where they were dealt with. Then he produced a little packet, addressed and

"Oh, my hat! You've just mentioned it three times!"

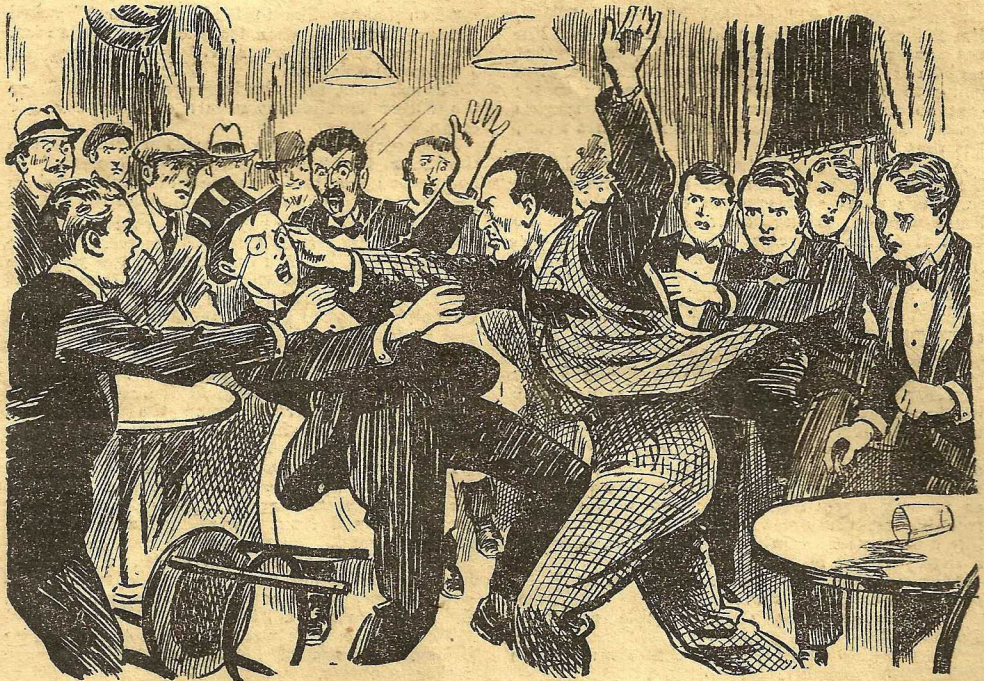
"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Is that it?" hooped Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I shall find this packet at the Villa des Fleurs on my awwival—wegeristered post is quite safe, you know. So I shan't have the wowwy of it on my mind while we are twippin' through Fwance, see? Wathah a bwight ideah, wath?" asked Arthur Augustus.

The mystery of Gussy's mysterious proceedings that morning was explained now! He was registering the black box to Cannes to get it off his hands, and his noble mind, while the party were knocking about in strange places on their way south. Really, it was quite a bright idea.

"Have you told Pawson?" asked Manners quietly.



There was a roar of voices in the cafe. Fifty people were on their feet, staring at the scene, as the Italian, in a towering rage, smacked Gussy's head right and left. "Yawooh!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You pottay dago, stoppit!"

carefully sealed. The address on it was "Villa des Fleurs, Cannes, Alpes-Maritimes."

Tom Merry & Co. gazed at it.

The Villa des Fleurs, at Cannes, was where the St. Jim's trippers were to stop when they reached the sunny South of France.

Now it dawned on them!

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom. "You're sending the black box on ahead by registered post—is that it?"

"Pway don't mention the black box here, old chap! Somebody may be listenin' in this eword, and if he caught the words 'black box,' it would put him on the twack! Safah not to mention the black box at all, you know, if we don't want some wottah to get aftah it."

"Pawson helped me pack it up, Mannahs. Feahfully obligin' chap, Pawson."

"Oh!"

The little packet having been duly registered, and Arthur Augustus having carefully parked the official receipt in his pocket-book, the St. Jim's fellows left the bureau de poste. Manners drew Tom Merry a little behind as they sauntered on in the sunshine.

"When we get to Cannes——" he murmured.

"My dear chap——" remonstrated Tom. He guessed what was coming.

"When we get to Cannes," repeated Manners, unheeding, "Pawson will offer to collect our

correspondence from the post office, including registered packets—"

"Well, old chap, that's his duty," said Tom. "I've no doubt he will."

"And if he does, one registered packet will get lost between the Cannes post office and the Villa des Fleurs!" said Manners.

"Um!"

"You don't think so?"

"Well, old bean—" Tom hesitated.

"I'm a suspicious ass, what?" grunted Manners.

"No, old fellow—I admit some things look a bit queer—especially Pawson rooting over Gussy's things last night—but—" Tom shook his head. "Gussy's pater has no end of faith in Pawson—he's dispatched him specially to take charge of us—and Lord Eastwood knows what he's about—and—"

"And—and—and!" grunted Manners. "Well, I'm not going to say anything to Gussy—but I'm not going to see Gussy done. When that registered packet is collected at Cannes, I'm going to be on the spot, and I'm going to see that no accident happens to it before it reaches Gussy. And that," added Manners, with a snort, "is that!"

And that being that, the subject dropped, and the black box was dismissed from mind as the St. Jim's party sauntered on through the sunny Paris streets, taking their last look at the Capital of the Universe.

CHAPTER 7.

The Foe in the Sky!

"WE'RE off!"

"We are—we is!"

"All plane sailing now!" said Monty Lowther. And Tom Merry and Manners, like loyal chums, dutifully chuckled, realising that this was a joke.

The Silver Swallow taxied along the tarmac and rose as gracefully as a bird. Seven cheery faces looked from the windows at the aerodrome as it sank away from sight; and as the plane rose higher, the great city of Paris spread out like a map, with the winding Seine glistening like a silvery streak in the sunshine.

"Remarkable thing about that river!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove! What's wemarkable about it, Lowthah?"

"Any fellow who falls into that river goes in Seine!" explained Lowther.

"Bai Jove!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "Why does he go insane, Lowthah, just by fallin' in that wivah? That is vevy wemarkable, if tvue. Are you suah about that, Lowthah?"

"Quite!"

"What are you fellows gwinnin' at?" asked Arthur Augustus. "It is wathah sewious if a poor chap goes insane by fallin' into that wivah. But weally, Lowthah, it sounds wathah in-cweddible."

"True as a die!" assured Lowther. "If you fall into the river in London, you go in Thames—if you fall into the river in Paris, you go in Seine—"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

Rawlings, the steward, came in with trays. Tom Merry & Co. sat down to tea, skimming at a height of a thousand feet over the fair land of France. Pawson glided about, making himself unobtrusively useful. Lord Eastwood's man seemed really to enjoy making himself useful, as

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if that were the chief, if not the only, end and aim of his portly existence.

Only Manners ever wondered what, if anything, was hidden behind the placid portliness of Pawson.

Manners was by no means suspicious, but he was rather a more thoughtful and observant fellow than his friends. Once or twice it had struck Harry Manners that Pawson was, so to speak, too good to be true, even before he had spotted Pawson's curious interest in the black box.

But if Manners had his doubts of Pawson he was the only fellow there who had. He had said nothing to anyone but Tom Merry, and Tom could not share his doubts. He was likely, perhaps, to share them if anything happened to that registered packet at Cannes. But that remained to be seen.

"You fellows like to heah the news?" asked Arthur Augustus, when tea was over. "Pawson, pway get out the portable."

"Immediately, sir."

Pawson went into the baggage-room which, on the Silver Swallow, was aft of the passenger cabin.

He returned with the portable wireless. It was the hour for "time, weather, and news" at home, and the juniors were quite interested in picking up the news as they sailed in the clouds.

"The fact is, deah boys, I am wathah keen to heah the news," said Arthur Augustus. "I have had only one lettah ffrom home while we have been in Pawis, and there was no news of that beastly burglah at Eastwood House. It would be wathah wippin' to heah that he had been caught and that the patah had got that diamond back, wath?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Merry.

In the hustle and bustle of their holiday, the juniors had rather forgotten the burglary at Eastwood House, which had occurred just before St. Jim's broke up for Easter.

But they certainly would have been exceedingly glad to hear that Lord Eastwood had recovered the celebrated "Nizam's Diamond," which had been purloined from Eastwood House by some unknown hand.

Hundreds of miles from home, a thousand feet up in the air, they heard the announcer's voice as they might have heard it on the radio in the day-room at St. Jim's.

Most of the news was, as usual, either dull or jittery. Speeches of honourable members were rather soporific, and no fellow in the Silver Swallow cared whether an honourable member was on his legs, or off his legs. Neither were they likely to fancy that a war was just round the corner, from the extracts from foreign newspapers, written by journalists who had to write something or other to fill their columns. But there came, at last, an item that made them all listen keenly.

"A Scotland Yard officer is now engaged in the search for the unknown burglar who purloined the Nizam's Diamond from Eastwood House a fortnight ago. It has been learned that a notorious Chicago crook was seen in the vicinity, and the police are anxious to get in touch with any person acquainted with the present whereabouts of a person known as Chicago Hank."

That was all about the stolen diamond of Eastwood House, but it was keenly interesting to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his friends.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "They don't seem to have wecovah'd the diamond, but

pewwaps they are on the twack. What a vewy remarkable name for a man—Chicago Hank.”

“Some gangster, I suppose!” said Tom Merry. “Looks as if the police think that Mr. Chicago Hank got away with it. I hope they’ll get him.”

“Yaas, wathah! Pwobably they arē keepin’ watch at the ports and all that! Pewwaps the next news will be that they have got him!” said Arthur Augustus hopefully. “Have you evah heard of the bwute, Pawson?”

“Yes, sir!” said Pawson. “I heard the name mentioned, sir, when I was in Chicago some years ago.”

“Bai Jove! Have you been in Chicago, Pawson? I weally believe you have been ewevy-whah!”

“I have travelled considerably in service, sir,” said Pawson.

“Oh, yaas, quite, of course! What sort of a bwute is he, Pawson?” asked Arthur Augustus, and all the juniors gave Lord Eastwood’s man their attention.

The wonderful Pawson seemed to know nearly everything, and to have been nearly everywhere. It was quite interesting to get first-hand news of the crook who was suspected of having purloined the Eastwood diamond.

“Do you think he’s likely to be the man, Pawson?” asked Tom.

“I think it’s vey probable, sir, if he was seen in the vicinity,” said Pawson. “He is a vey dangerous character, and always goes armed, and is said to have shot several persons in his native city. Possibly that was his reason for transferring his activities to England for a time. From what I have heard of him, his chief line is jewel robbery, so it certainly looks, sir, as if Chicago Hank may be the man they want.”

“Pawson knows ewevythin’, you fellows!” said Arthur Augustus, as Lord Eastwood’s man packed the portable and carried it back into the baggage-room. “I weally think you could hardly mention anythin’ that Pawson doesn’t know about!”

Tom Merry glanced round towards the doorway of the baggage-room at the after end of the cabin. A sound from that room reached all the juniors. It sounded like a fall.

“Bai Jove! Has Pawson tumbled ovah?” exclaimed Arthur Augustus. “The plane is wunnin’ quite smoothly. Pawson!”

No answer came from the baggage-room.

“Pawson!” repeated Arthur Augustus, raising his voice a little.

No answer.

Tom Merry & Co. all jumped up at once.

It seemed almost unimaginable that Pawson could have taken a tumble while the plane was running as smoothly as a plane could run; and still more impossible that he had been damaged to the extent of being unable to reply. But something was preventing him from answering Arthur Augustus’ call.

“What the dickens—” exclaimed Tom Merry.

“Pawson—” called Blake.

“What the thump—”

“Bai Jove! What on earth is the mattah with Pawson?” exclaimed Arthur Augustus, and he ran along the cabin in alarmed haste. Something, it was clear, was the matter with Pawson.

“Look out!” yelled Lowther.

“Oh ewikey!”

Arthur Augustus stopped dead. A figure appeared from the doorway of the baggage-room.

Pawson had gone in. But it was not Pawson who came out. There was a glimpse of Pawson—lying inert on the floor, motionless. The man

who appeared from the baggage-room was a swarthy Italian, with black eyes like bright beads—clad in a porter’s blue overall, with a peaked cap.

It was the dago!

CHAPTER 8.

The Stowaway!

“THE dago!” gasped Tom Merry. “The dud-dud-dago!” stammered Arthur Augustus.

The seven St. Jim’s juniors stood transfixed, rooted. They could hardly believe their vision, as they stared in utter blankness at the swarthy face and glittering black beads of eyes of Giuseppe Fosco.

The Italian grinned and bowed; a sardonic grin and a mocking bow. He showed white teeth as he grinned.

The appearance of a grisly spectre on board could hardly have startled the juniors more.

That any man could be secretly on board a soaring aeroplane—that there could be a stowaway on the Silver Swallow—would never have occurred to their thoughts for a moment. They gazed at him, dumbfounded.

Tom Merry was the first to recover. He made a step to advance, his eyes on the grinning, swarthy rascal.

“What have you done to Pawson?” panted Tom.

He could partly see Lord Eastwood’s man stretched on the floor without movement or sound. Pawson was plainly insensible. It was his fall that the schoolboys had heard, though they had not dreamed that a hidden hand on board the plane had struck him down.

“Va bene—va bene!” grinned Fosco. “The poverino, he take one knock on a head—he go to sleep a little! Si, si! Stand back, signorino!”

“You rotten rascal!” panted Tom. “You’ve knocked Pawson out—you ruffian and brute! You—”

“Collar him!” breathed Blake.

“Stand back!” The Italian’s grin vanished and his face tensed, his eyes glittering. His dusky hand shot from under his loose overall, and a long keen blade flashed in the sunlight.

“Are you tired of to live, signorino?”

Tom Merry stopped.

With a swing of his arm, the Italian made circles in the air with the knife. It was a terrible weapon, two-edged, and more than a foot long. That razor-like blade would have sliced like a butcher’s knife—and the St. Jim’s fellows backed from it as it circled.

They were, of course, unarmed. There were seven of them, but twice or thrice the number would have been helpless against that deadly weapon in a fierce and reckless hand.

“Bai Jove!” gasped Arthur Augustus. “You murdewous wascal—”

“Keep clear!” muttered Blake. “We can’t handle the brute with that knife!”

That was plain enough to the juniors. Every life there was at Giuseppe’s mercy if he chose to slash and stab.

Certainly he was not likely to do so if he could avoid it, having only one rascally neck, and probably placing an undue value on it.

But that he was ready to use the knife if attacked was very clear. The juniors drew together in a bunch, watching him, deeply and

savagely angry, but powerless to deal with the swarthy rascal.

The grin returned to Fosco's face.

"Va bene!" he said, with a nod of approval. "One good egg, as you say in your tongue. You lift a hand, and it is to kill! Oh, yes, to kill without one mercy! I, Giuseppe Fosco, have killed many times! Abbiate cura!"

"You wotten wascally wuffian!" said Arthur Augustus, in tones trembling with anger and indignation. "You will not get away from here!"

"Chi lo sa?" grinned Fosco. "Who knows?"

He waved his hand to the seats.

"You sit down all along with yourselves!" he said.

"I wefuse to do anythin' at your ordahs, you wascal!"

"Shut up, Gussy!" murmured Blake. "That blighter's got the upper hand for the minute——"

"I wepeat that I wefuse——"

"It is to obey an order!" smiled Fosco. "All that stand fall under a knife. I have to sit down!"

He made a step forward, the knife circling, flashing in the sunlight as it circled. With deep feelings, the St. Jim's juniors sat down. It went bitterly against the grain to take notice of any order from the swarthy rascal, but it was a pill that had to be swallowed in the strange circumstances.

Only Arthur Augustus remained erect, and that was only till Blake and Digby, grasping his arms, pulled him down to a seat. Arthur Augustus wriggled in the grasp of his chums.

"Wefuse me, you uttah asses!" he panted. "I wepeat that I wefuse to take the slightest notice of that wuffian——"

"Shut up, ass!" grunted Blake.

"I wepeat——" hooted Arthur Augustus.

"Take it calmly, Gussy," said Tom Merry.

"We can't do a thing. It's all right, too—the brute will never get away! He must be mad to have stowed himself on the plane—he can't get off it!"

"Yaas, that is twue!" assented Arthur Augustus. And he sat, his eyes gleaming scorn at the Italian.

Angry and indignant as they were, the juniors were puzzled, too. Giuseppe had the upper hand—his deadly weapon, and his evident intention of using it if he was resisted, gave him the mastery in the passenger cabin of the Silver Swallow. They knew, of course, why he was there, and what he wanted—the black box! But how he hoped to get away with it they did not know.

Evidently he must have contrived to get secretly on board the plane, and had lain hidden in the baggage-room for long hours before he had shown up. He was garbed in a blue overall and a porter's cap, which looked as if he had taken the place of one of the "facteurs" employed to put the baggage on board.

That, perhaps, had not been difficult for the cunning dago to contrive. And having carried in bags and other luggage, doubtless he had parked himself under some of it to escape casual observation; and no one had specially observed that that particular facteur had not left the plane.

Anyhow, there he was! He had remained in hiding till the soaring plane was more than a hundred miles from Paris.

He did not fear anything that the schoolboys could do, but possibly he had had his doubts

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about what Pawson might do. He had taken the chance of knocking Pawson out to begin with. Lord Eastwood's man lay stunned and senseless among the baggage, and Giuseppe was master of the situation in the passengers' cabin.

But the plane was soaring over a thousand feet from the earth. There was no escape from the Silver Swallow. It would land at an aerodrome amid a crowd of officials, mechanics, porters.

It looked to Tom Merry & Co. as if the swarthy scoundrel had trapped himself.

But it did not seem that Giuseppe thought so. He was grinning with triumphant satisfaction.

Giuseppe, with a catlike tread, came along to the doorway at the other end of the cabin, by which the steward might enter.

Rawlings was not likely to come unless called; but he might come. The dago was wary as a wild animal.

Standing there, he turned his black beads of eyes on the juniors again, and gave Arthur Augustus a nod.

"You, little signor—you have what I want," he said. "La scatola nera—the black box. You give him, I think?"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

And he, too, grinned.

It was to save the black box from chance dangers at landing-places, before the party reached their destination at Cannes, that Gussy had dispatched it by registered post from Paris. Never for an instant had he dreamed that it might be in danger on board the Silver Swallow.

That danger had materialised unexpectedly, utterly unforeseen. But the black box was safe!

Giuseppe stared at him, not understanding the amusement of the swell of St. Jim's, or the grins that spread to other faces.

"It is not to laugh!" he snapped. "I ask of you a black box. You give, or I take! Date mi la scatola nera—give me the black box!"

"You wascal!" said Arthur Augustus. "The black box is not on board the plane, and if you want it, you can go back to Pawis and look for it!"

CHAPTER 9.

Where is the Black Box?

GIUSEPPE FOSCO made a movement towards the swell of St. Jim's. The long knife flashed in the sunshine from the windows.

The juniors expected a burst of rage from the Italian at D'Arcy's words. He had run tremendous risks in the attempt to get hold of the black box, and how he hoped to escape was a mystery to the schoolboys. The news that the prize he sought was not on board the plane was a knock-down blow to his hopes and his schemes.

But his swarthy face wore only a mocking grin.

"You give, or I take!" he said. "Capite?"

"I don't know what you mean by capeety," answered Arthur Augustus calmly. "And you cannot frighten me by wagglin' that stickah! I have told you that the black box is not on the plane! Are you deaf?"

Giuseppe chuckled.

"Do you think that I believe?" he jeered.

"No, signorino, you are not dealing with a fool!" Arthur Augustus crimsoned. The Italian, in fact, was not likely to believe the statement that the box was not on the Silver Swallow. He

could not suppose that D'Arcy had left it behind, and that bright idea of sending it on to Cannes by registered post he was not likely to guess. He had not the slightest doubt that the black box was on the plane.

But to have his noble word doubted, even by a greasy, lawless rascal who looked as if he seldom washed, was extremely exasperating to the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

"You putwid outsidah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, with breathless indignation and contempt. "Do you mean to imply that you doubt my word?"

Giuseppe stared at him.

"You tell me one lie!" he said. "Cospetto! I am not a child—I, Giuseppe Fosco! No! Give me the black box!"

"Wats!"

Giuseppe shrugged his shoulders.

"You do not give—I take!" he said. "Non fa caso!"

From under the loose overall he drew a coil of thin but strong cord. He tossed it to Tom Merry.

"You take a cord," he said. "You bind to the seat to make everyone a prisoner."

Tom set his lips. He did not stir.

"Abbate la bonta, signorino," said Giuseppe, "otherwise, I kill! I give no chance to turn a table, as you say in your tongue. No! You are prisoner, or you are dead! It is to take a choose!"

Tom Merry breathed hard.

The knife was almost at his throat; over it, the black beads of eyes gleamed and glittered. As he hesitated, the dusky hand was drawn back a little, and Giuseppe's eyes blazed.

It was bitter enough to obey, but it was madness to throw away his life—and the knife was about to thrust. That the villain desired to get through, if he could, without risking his neck was plain; but it was only too plain, also, that he was ready to use the knife if his safety demanded it. Slowly Tom took the coil of cord.

"You lose time!" snapped Giuseppe. "Andiamo!"

"Can't be helped, Tom, old man," muttered Manners. "The brute won't get away—he can't! Knuckle under, old chap; he's got the whip-hand!"

Tom Merry nodded. Almost choking with rage, he carried out the directions of the Italian.

One by one the juniors were tied to the seats where they sat till only Tom himself was left. Giuseppe gestured to him to sit down; slipped the knife between his teeth, ready for an instant grasp, and took the cord, binding Tom in his place.

Then the knife disappeared under the blue overall, and Giuseppe moved from one to another of the juniors, examining their bonds, tightening knots that Tom had left as loose as he could.

Seven juniors sat in infuriated silence, while the plane soared through fleecy clouds, over towns and villages, fields and rivers, hills and dales, cleaving the blue skies to the south.

The pilots, forward, had no suspicion that anything unusual was going on board the Silver Swallow. The steward, almost within earshot, had none. The very boldness and unexpectedness of Giuseppe's stroke helped its success—so utterly undreamt of was anything of the kind on a passenger plane droning on its way through the sky.

It was useless to think of shouting to the steward. Apart from the probability that a

knife thrust would have silenced a shout, Rawlings would have been of little help. He could not have handled an armed and murderous desperado.

The St. Jim's juniors could only grin and bear it, comforted, at all events, by the knowledge that what the ruffian sought was not on the plane, and that Giuseppe was booked for another dis-appointment.

Leaving the seven schoolboys bound helpless, the Italian stepped back into the baggage-room.

A low moan from Pawson told that he was beginning to recover consciousness, after the sudden blow on the head that had knocked him out. The portly, prone figure of Lord Eastwood's man was seen to stir.

Giuseppe bent over him, with the remainder of the cord in his dusky hand, and bound Pawson's hands together.

Having made sure of Pawson, Giuseppe Fosco came back into the cabin. He proceeded to search Arthur Augustus D'Arcy for the black box.

Arthur Augustus submitted in disdainful silence, his lip curling with scorn. The search was very thorough, but, naturally, unavailing.

"Dove e la scatola nera?" snarled Fosco, when he had finished. "Piccolo furante, dove e la scatola nera?" In his angry excitement he spoke in his own tongue, then, remembering, he repeated the words in English. "Little rascal, where is the black box?"

"I have told you alweady," answered Arthur Augustus calmly. "It is in Pawis, you unspeakable wottah!"

"Non e vero!" hissed Giuseppe. His black beads of eyes shot round at the other juniors. "Sapere voi dove e la scatola nera? Know you where is the black box?"

"Left in Paris," answered Tom Merry quietly.

"One lie—one lie!" snarled Giuseppe.

And he went from one to another, searching the whole party, evidently suspecting that Gussy might have handed over the precious article into the keeping of one of his comrades.

But that search was equally in vain. The Italian stood breathing hard, his eyes glittering like a snake's.

"Il bagaglio," he muttered, at last. "Certo, il bagaglio."

The juniors could guess that "bagaglio" meant baggage, and that the dago concluded that the black box was packed in one of the suitcases in the baggage-room.

He was about to move in that direction—where Pawson, conscious now, was lying on one elbow, watching him with quiet intentness—when there was a step at the forward doorway, and Rawlings came into the cabin.

The steward jumped almost clear of the floor as he saw the seven schoolboys bound to their seats.

"What!" he stuttered.

He broke off at that as the dago's grasp was laid on him, and the point of a keen blade touched his neck.

"Silenzio!" muttered Giuseppe.

Rawlings stared at him with starting eyes. A push of the dusky hand, and the keen blade would have sunk deep. And the steward, amazed and bewildered, did not think of resistance.

The dago forced him to a seat, and bound him to it, arms and legs. Rawlings sat in a state of almost gibbering astonishment.

Giuseppe shot a swift glance through the door—
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way. But it was unlikely that either of the pilots would come aft to the passengers' cabin. The man who was piloting the plane could not have left his place, and the second pilot had no business aft. Now that the steward was secured, Giuseppe had nothing to fear.

He went into the baggage-room with a handful of keys from the juniors' pockets.

Pawson looked at him quietly, intently. Pawson must have had a severe ache in his bruised head, and he must have been amazed, on coming to, to find the Silver Swallow in the power of a stowaway. But his portly face, though pale, retained its calmness.

Pawson could guess that this was the dago of whom he had heard the juniors speaking. He watched him in intent silence.

The dago took no heed of him.

He began to unlock the suitcases, pitching the contents right and left, many of the garments falling over Pawson as he lay. Tom Merry & Co.'s belongings sprawled over the floor in wild disorder.

"The howwid wottah!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Look at the bwute, deah boys—wumplin' a fellow's clobbah like that!"

"He won't find the black box in a hurry!" grunted Blake.

"But look at the shirts he's chuckin' about! Bai Jove, that's my dinnah jacket he's just chuckin' ovah Pawson's legs! Oh ewikey!" Arthur Augustus watched in anguish. "Oh cwumbs! The uttah beast has no respect what-evah for a fellow's clobbah!"

The plane was rising, soaring over the hills. Fleecy clouds flitted by. But the St. Jim's trippers were not looking from the windows now. Their attention was concentrated on the dago. They watched and waited.

Giuseppe's face, when they caught glimpses of it, was set and savage. He was failing to find what he sought, and perhaps the conviction was forcing itself on his mind that it was not there.

"If a fellow could get loose—while he hasn't got that stieker in his claw!" muttered Blake.

"No chance of that!" said Tom.

"Pawson packs a gun—you remember!" muttered Monty Lowther. "If Pawson got a chance—"

"That blighter won't give him one."

"Look at the wottah!" moaned Arthur Augustus. "They're my evenin' bags he's wumplin' now! Does the uttah ass think that a fellow would park a box in his evenin' bags?"

"Cospetto!" came a snarl from the Italian.

"Here he comes!" murmured Manners.

The Italian abandoned his futile search of the luggage at last. He came back into the cabin, his black eyes burning, his swarthy face working with rage. He seemed driven to believe at last that the black box was not on board the Silver Swallow, and in his rage and disappointment, he snarled and showed his teeth like a wild animal. "Piccolo furfante, dov' e la scatola nera?" he hissed, with a deadly glare at Arthur Augustus.

"I have told you," answered the swell of St. Jim's calmly, "it was left behind in Pawis!"

"In Parigi!" muttered the dago, grinding his teeth.

And he stood staring from the windows through fleecy, drifting clouds, in the direction of the city now long, long miles distant, while the soaring plane bore him farther and farther away from the prize he sought. And Arthur Augustus bestowed a cheery wink on his friends, and Tom Merry & Co. smiled.

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CHAPTER 10.

A Narrow Escape for Fosco!

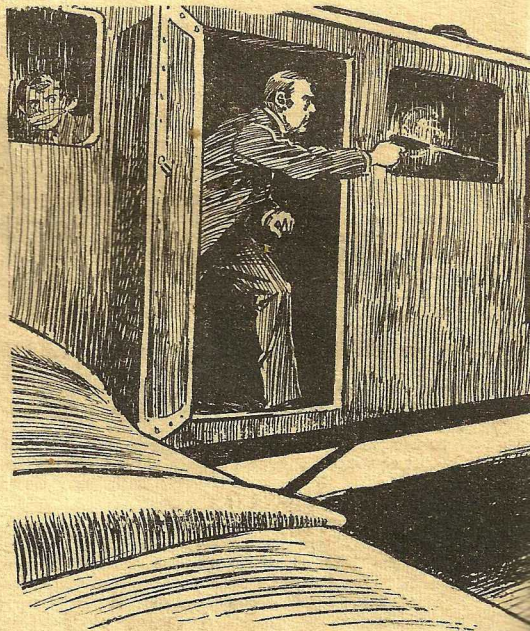
THE dago moved about the cabin like a wild animal in a cage. Tom Merry & Co. watched him in silence. Every now and then, Giuseppe peered into some corner or other, as if suspecting that black box might be hidden about the plane. Again and again, his black, beady eyes turned on Arthur Augustus' countenance with a threatening glare.

But he gave a sudden start as his eyes glanced from a window. The plane was slanting down, and two silver streaks far below leaped to the eyes of the dago—and doubtless he knew that they were the Rhone and the Saone, and that the plane was drawing near Lyons, where it was to descend. His time had been taken up in the vain search for an article that was not there, and he had little time left.

The juniors could only wait and watch. The rascal evidently expected to escape when the plane made a landing. He would not, at all events, take the black box with him. They wondered, as they had often wondered before, what that little box could possibly contain to cause the dago to take such desperate measures to obtain possession of it. He was risking arrest and prison—indeed, it was clear that, if he had been resisted, he was prepared to risk even his swarthy unwashed neck. Giuseppe evidently knew what was in the black box—something, it was certain, of great value—but what it was, Tom Merry & Co. could not even surmise.

He had to go—if he succeeded in going at all—without it! That black box was, for the present, safe in the keeping of the French Post Office.

While the dago raged rather like a tiger in a



Pawson, a second after the Italian had leaped from the Crack, crack, crack! Lord Eastwood's man pumps

cage, and every now and then glared threats at the swell of St. Jim's, he gave no attention to the others, or to the portly man who lay in the doorway of the baggage-room. He seemed to have forgotten Pawson's existence.

But Tom Merry's eyes were on Pawson.

He noticed that Lord Eastwood's man was moving. He rolled over, and partly disappeared from sight, his head and shoulders and his bound hands hidden by a couple of suitcases that the dago had thrown carelessly down after rooting through them.

After that, Pawson lay still again.

But Tom wondered whether he was inactive. Manners suspected that there was a spot of roguery in Pawson; but whether that was so, or not, there was no doubt that he was a man of resource. And all the juniors knew that Pawson carried a revolver; they had made that discovery when he had put a bullet in the leg of the apache who had attacked Arthur Augustus in Paris.

It came into Tom's mind that it was not merely to ease himself that Pawson had changed his position. If he was striving to use his teeth on the cord that fastened his wrists together, that action was invisible to the dago, unless Giuseppe stepped back into the baggage-room.

Tom's heart beat faster at the thought.

If Pawson got loose before the plane landed, the tables would be turned on the desperate rascal who had stowed himself away on the Silver Swallow. Tom had no doubt about that; and he was almost sure that Pawson's teeth were at work on the knots on his plump wrists.

The dago did not even look in his direction. The enraged, disappointed rascal's mind was wholly occupied by the black box, and the desperate risks he had run—for nothing!



was at the door. He leaned out, the revolver in his hand, lets after the fleeing dago, and a sharp yell floated back.

He stopped his savage restless movements at last, and fixed a deadly look on Arthur Augustus.

"Piccolo furfante—little rascal—you leave a black box in Parigi!" he hissed. "You say that you leave a black box in Parigi?"

"I have nevah heard of Pawigi, and don't know what you are talkin' about!" answered Arthur Augustus.

"Fool! You say that a box is left in Parigi, and—"

"I said nothin' of the sort! I told you that the box was left in Pawis!" answered Arthur Augustus.

"Parigi is Italian for Paris, old chap!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Is it? Yaas, if you refer to Pawis as Pawigi, the box was left in Pawigi!" assented D'Arcy.

"You leave it to one that sends?" asked Giuseppe, with glittering eyes on D'Arcy's face. "Always till now you carry, but this one time, you leave a box to one other that carries."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

The black box having been dispatched by post, it was certainly left to "one that carries."

Arthur Augustus had no objection to Giuseppe learning that much. There was no danger of Giuseppe getting it from the post office.

"Yaas!" he answered. "That's wight!"

"E vero?" snarled the dago.

"If you mean is it true, I can only remark that you are a feahful outsiders to doubt a fellow's word!"

"Fool! Imbecile! Stolto!"

"Wats!"

"You leave a box to one who carries, and more, later, he bring a box to you afterwards?" hissed the dago. "Perhaps he send by a post?"

"Yaas! Wegistahed post, if you want to know!" answered D'Arcy cheerfully.

"Va bene! Va bene! Non fa caso, dunque!" muttered Giuseppe. "It is no matter—non fa caso! More later I take afterwards, piccolo furfante."

He glanced from the windows. The plane was descending, and buildings shooting into view.

Tom Merry carefully avoided looking at Pawson for fear of drawing Giuseppe's attention to him. But, without looking at him, he knew that Pawson was stirring slightly.

If only he had got his hands loose! Tom Merry would have given a good deal to see Lord Eastwood's man free to deal with the swarthy rascal, and to see Giuseppe, when the plane landed, marched off between two gendarmes with the handcuffs on his dusky wrists. But Pawson, after stirring a moment, lay still again.

Giuseppe watched from the windows. There was a pucker of anxiety in his swarthy face. He was now thinking rather less of the black box than of making a successful "get-away." He turned his back to the juniors with glittering eyes, and half-drew the knife from under his overall.

"One word, one call, and one more word you do not live to speak!" he said in a hissing voice. "Capite?"

The juniors remained silent. But seven fellows fully intended to shout the moment Giuseppe made for the door.

His game evidently was to drop from the plane when it stopped, and run; and in his present garb, all who saw him would take him for a "facteur." But shouts of alarm from the plane would make a difference to that.

Giuseppe stood glaring, with a threatening scowl, for a few moments. Then he looked from

the windows again, and then hurried out of the doorway forward. He came back with a bundle of serviettes in his hand. Evidently Tom Merry & Co. were not going to be permitted to utter that shout.

One after another he gagged the bound school-boys with the serviettes, and then the steward. It was impossible to resist. But Tom Merry's heart sank as the dago stepped along to the baggage-room with another serviette in his hand to gag Pawson also. If Pawson was loose—

Giuseppe kicked the suitcases out of the way, and Pawson was fully revealed. Tom's eyes fixed on him.

Pawson lay with eyes half-closed, and only partly conscious. His hands were together, the cord round the wrists as he had been left. He did not stir as the dago bent over him.

Tom felt a pang of disappointment.

He had been mistaken. And yet, had he been mistaken? He could not tell!

It was clear that if Pawson had been attempting to get loose, he was not loose yet, and, in that case, as the dago's steps approached him, he would have the presence of mind to "play possum"—to affect to be lying as helpless as the dago believed him to be. Tom could not tell, but he still hoped.

Giuseppe bent, and bound the serviette over Pawson's mouth, gagging him. Lord Eastwood's man made no movement as he did so.

The dago left him without a glance after gagging him. He came back into the cabin, stumbling as the plane gave a sudden dip.

But he took no further notice of the passengers of the Silver Swallow. His whole thoughts were concentrated now on his "getaway." He posted himself by the door, ready to tear it open and leap when the plane came to a standstill.

No hand could be lifted to stop him; no voice could be raised to utter an alarm. And it was a matter of only minutes now.

The dago stood half-crouching, waiting, watching. He did not look at the St. Jim's juniors, or at the steward, or at Pawson. But Tom Merry stole a glance at Pawson, and his heart beat hard as he saw Lord Eastwood's man move. Once more the upper half of Pawson was hidden, if the dago looked around.

Tom was certain now. He felt as certain as if he could have watched Pawson's actions. He had not been loose when the dago came to gag him. He had been getting loose, but he had not yet succeeded. Now he was getting loose—and if he was in time before the landing—Giuseppe's game was up. Tom's heart beat almost to suffocation as the long minutes crawled by.

Bump!

The landing wheels had touched the tarmac.

The juniors heard a quick-drawn breath from Giuseppe. Manners' eyes turned, gleaming, on Tom's, and Tom knew that he, also, had been watching Pawson, and guessed. But the Silver Swallow was taxi-ing now. It was a matter of hardly more than a minute, and Giuseppe had his hand on the door, ready to fling it open and leap.

"Oh!" breathed Tom suddenly.

Pawson moved. The portly legs that were visible from the baggage gathered themselves up, and Pawson was on his feet. The gag was gone from his mouth; his hands were loose. At the very last moment Pawson's teeth had loosened the knots—and he was free!

But the Silver Swallow was at a standstill, and

the door flew wide even as Lord Eastwood's man leaped up.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, utterly amazed to see Pawson free, with a plump hand diving under his coat tails—the juniors knew for what—and coming into the cabin at a run.

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Blake.

The Italian did not see Pawson—he was leaping from the plane.

He landed on his feet, and stumbled, recovered himself instantly, and ran.

Pawson, a second later, was at the door. Holding on with his left hand, he leaned out, the revolver in his right.

Crack, crack, crack! A sharp yell floated back.

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Pawson—Gweat Scott!"

Crack, crack!

Pawson, from the cabin doorway, was pumping bullets after the fleeing dago. There was a roar of astonished voices, and a scurrying of feet crowding up.

"Did you get him?" gasped Tom. "Pawson, did you get him?"

"Pawson—Bai Jove—"

"Only a scratch, I fear, sir," said Pawson, over a plump shoulder. The revolver disappeared into his hip pocket, and Pawson shouted to the staring, buzzing crowd below in French. Then he turned back into the cabin.

"A few moments sooner, sir, and the rascal would not have escaped!" said Pawson. "One shot went very close, I think. They may get him before he gets clear. Pray permit me to release you, Master Arthur!"

CHAPTER 11.

To Arms!

"A WEVOLVAH—"

"Eh!"

"What?"

"I shall wequiah to cawwy a wevolvah aftah this—"

"Help!"

"Weally, Lowthah, I see no weason for that widiculous ecamulation," said Arthur Augustus severely. "I am not thinkin' specially of myself, and that beastly black box, of course, but I have to protect you fellows."

"We shall need some protection if Gussy gets hold of firearms," remarked Digby. "No doubt about that."

"Weally, Dig—"

"And I never made my will before we started," said Blake regretfully. "You ought to have warned a chap that you were going to carry a revolver, Gussy."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Don't get it in a hurry, Gussy!" implored Herries.

"Why not, Hewwies?"

"I should like to write a farewell letter home to my sorrowing family," explained Herries. "Give a chap time to say good-bye to his relations."

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass in his noble eye, and surveyed his friends severely. They were seated at breakfast in the Hotel Perache at Lyons, at a big window that gave a view of the rolling Rhone.

That exciting adventure on the plane had not prevented Tom Merry & Co. from sleeping soundly in comfortable quarters selected by the indefatigable Pawson, in the City of Lyons. They

turned out merry and bright in the sunny spring morning, prepared to put in a day of sight-seeing in the great city of silk manufacture, and to dismiss Giuseppe Fosco, and all his works, from their cheery minds.

But Giuseppe, it seemed, was not dismissed from the noble mind of Arthur Augustus. Gussy, of course, was not thinking of himself. He never did. He was thinking of the necessary protection of his friends. But his bright idea of carrying a revolver for that purpose did not seem to meet with general enthusiasm.

"Pway be sewious, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "Natuwally, I should pwefer the good old Bwitish fist in a swap. But a Bwitish fist is not much use against a dago's stickah. We simply had no chance yestahday on the plane. Next time I shall cawwy a wevolvah, and then let him look out!"

"But there won't be any next time," suggested Tom Merry. "Once bitten, twice shy, you know. There will never be a stowaway on the Silver Swallow again. We'll take jolly good care of that."

"Yaas, that's all wight, so fah as the plane is concerned. I am suah that Pawson will woot ovah it vewy carefully befoah we start again. But that wotten dago is still on the twack, and we may wun up against him any time. I cannot allow you fellows to wun such wisks!" said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"You don't want us to run risks?" asked Manners.

"No, deah boy."

"Then, for goodness' sake, don't buy a revolver. Or, if you do, drop it right into the Rhone before it goes off."

"Weally, Mannahs, I wegard you as an ass! I should not be willed to buy a wevolvah and dwp it into the Whone."

"Well, the Saone would do," said Manners. "Take your choice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats! The fact is, deah boys, I have decided on this," said Arthur Augustus. "In dealin' with armed wuffians a fellow must have arms. If we meet a wuffian with arms in his hands, what can we do without arms?"

"Use our legs," suggested Monty Lowther.

"Pway don't be a funnay ass, Lowthah! This is a sewious mattah. You fellows are twavellin' in a foweign countwy, undah my care——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And next time we meet that wascally dago, I am goin' to be in a posish to give you pwopah pwotecton. That means cawwyin' a wevolvah. There is only one objection," remarked Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"Only one?" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaas. You see, a wevolvah is wathah likely to make a pocket bulge in a wathah ungwaceful mannah. A fellow could hardly cawwy a holstah to pack it in——"

"Oh crikey! Hardly!"

"That means packin' it in a pocket," said Arthur Augustus. "I dislike cawwyin' large articles in my pockets. It is wuff on a fellow's clobbah. But I shall have to make that little sacwifice for your sake, you know. I am bound to pwotect you while you are twavellin' undah my care."

Six fellows smiled at one another. It was true that the dago had had the upper hand on the Silver Swallow. The heftiest of British fists was

at a discount in dealing with the slash of a dago's knife. But they did not think they would be safer if Gussy carried a firearm. Indeed, they fancied that they would be much less safe. In fact, a knife in the hand of Giuseppe Fosco was not nearly so alarming as a firearm in the hand of the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

"We're goin' to walk wound Lyons this mornin'," went on Arthur Augustus. "Pawson says there are a lot of things to be seen here—the Cathedral of Saint-Somebody, and the celebrated Church of Saint-Somebody-Else, and the Hotel-de-What-do-you-call-it?—and lots of things like that, you know. But first of all we must find a shop where they sell arms."

"Bow-wow!"

"I wegard that as a widiculous ejaculation, Blake! I have already inquired of the managah, and he says there is a big store in the Wue Pewwache, where pwactically ewewythin' can be bought."

"We're going to have a look at the quays and bridges on the Rhone. What a day to spend in a shop—especially buying revolvers!" grinned Blake.

"That's all wight, Blake! It will not take vewy long to buy a wevolvah. All we have to do is to twickle into the place, ask them for the arms department, and the twick is done!"

Arthur Augustus polished his eyeglass thoughtfully.

"Speakin' Fwench as I do——" he went on.

"Eh?"

"Speakin' Fwench as I do, it is wathah odd how the natives keep on fallin' to gwasp my meanin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I dare say you fellows have noticed it!"

"Sort of!" chuckled Blake.

"You have wathah a good memowry for Fwench, Tom Mewwy, though you don't quite speak it as I do," said Arthur Augustus. "What is the Fwench for arms?"

"Bras!" answered Tom.

"Bwah!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "Suah, deah boy?"

"Quite!" said Tom, laughing.

"That's all wight, then! If you fellows have finished bwekkah, we may as well get a move on, and put it through."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass from face to face.

"What are you gwinnin' at?" he inquired.

"Oh, nothin'!" said Tom. "Let's get goin'—if you're determined to buy some bras."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah! Come on!"

And breakfast being over, the juniors went to their rooms to get ready for a ramble in the busy streets of Lyons; one of the party in a very serious frame of mind, six other members looking somewhat hilarious.

It was perfectly correct that bras was French for arms. But as les bras happened to mean the human arms, it was rather entertaining to look forward to Gussy's attempt to purchase the same in the stores in the Rue Perrache. Gussy's friends rather expected the shopman to be surprised when he requested to be provided with human arms!

So Tom Merry & Co. walked forth that sunny morning in cheery spirits, and raised no objection to Arthur Augustus heading for the stores, where he hoped to buy a revolver to put in some deadly work next time he met Giuseppe.

CHAPTER 12.

Nothing Doing!

"HERE we are!" said Arthur Augustus. It was a large store, it had many departments, and looked well supplied. Tom Merry & Co. doubted whether deadly weapons were to be purchased there; but that was all right, as they were quite determined that Arthur Augustus was not going to get any deadly weapons into his noble hands. Life was sweet!

"Yes, here we are," agreed Tom. "Carry on, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove! I forget what the arms are called. Did you say bah or bwah, Tom?"

"Neither!" chuckled Tom. "I said bras!"

"Yaas, that's it—bwah! Leave it to me, deah boys—it watah throws me into a futtah if you butt in when I am talkin' Fwench!"

A bowing shopman inquired what the visitors wanted. Arthur Augustus proceeded to explain in French.

"J'aime ai acheter des bras!" he said, which was quite good for: "I should like to buy some arms."

"Oui, monsieur," said the shopman.

He did not look astonished, as the juniors naturally expected.

Arms, in the sense that Gussy meant, should have been les armes. Bras undoubtedly were such arms as Gussy had brought in with him in the sleeves of his elegant jacket. His statement that he wanted to buy the kind of arms that formed part of the human frame ought to have made the shopman jump.

But it didn't. The shopman took it quite calmly and casually, as if he were in the habit of selling such arms!

"Vous avez un department here—I mean ici—where—I mean ou—vous sellez les bras?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Oui, monsieur!"

"Oh gum!" murmured Monty Lowther. "Have they got an anatomical department in this blessed place, or what?"

"Par ici, monsieur!" said the shopman.

"Suivez-moi, s'il vous plait."

"S'il vous plait means if you please, if you fellows don't happen to know," said Arthur Augustus benevolently. "But I don't quite undahstand what he means by sauvez-moi! What does he want us to save him fwom?"

"Suivez-moi—not sauvez-moi!" chuckled Tom. "He doesn't want us to save him—he wants us to follow him!"

"Bai Jove! Wight as wain! Follow on, deah boys! He means that he is takin' us to the department where they sell arms!"

Arthur Augustus followed the shopman, and the rest of the party followed Arthur Augustus. What sort of bras the shopman was going to show them, they did not know, and were quite interested to see. But they did not, like Arthur Augustus, expect to be led to an assortment of deadly weapons.

They were led along a passage and up a staircase. The shopman ushered them into a large apartment, in which all sorts of ironmongery were displayed. There were fenders and fireguards, and scuttles and pots and pans galore, but nothing was to be seen in the nature of arms of defence and offence.

Arthur Augustus glanced round him through his eyeglass with a perplexed expression as the shopman stopped.

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"It isn't ici, is it?" he asked.

"Comment?"

"Pas ici les bras?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Mais oui, monsieur!" said the shopman. "C'est ici la quincaillerie."

"What the dooce does he mean by kong-kay-thingummy, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ironmongery!" answered Tom.

"Bai Jove! Do they keep weolvahs in the iwonnongewy department? I didn't see any arms! Ou are the bras?" asked D'Arcy, addressing the shopman. "Je want to acheter bras?"

"Les bras, oui!" said the shopman, pointing. "Voila, monsieur!"

On a counter were arranged a variety of gas-brackets and other brackets and brass sconces. It was at that collection that the shopman was pointing. The swell of St. Jim's stared at the collection.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry & Co.

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently bras in French meant not only the human arm, but an arm in the sense of a bracket! The shopman had cheerfully led Arthur Augustus to an assortment of gas brackets in the belief that that was what the swell of St. Jim's wanted!

"Bai Jove, what is he dwivin' at?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, greatly puzzled. "Those things are bwackets!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle at the man's stupidity, you fellows! He cannot help bein' an ass, I suppose! Now, looker here, my man, I don't want to buy bwackets!"

"Plait-il?"

"Those things—ces choses-la—are—I mean sont—bwackets! What the dooce do you imagine I want a bwacket for? I have not come here to buy bwackets! I want to see the arms—les bras."

"Voyez les bras, monsieur!" said the shopman, again pointing to the collection of brackets.

"Do you fellows think that bwackets are called bwah in Fwench?" asked Arthur Augustus, as it dawned on his noble brain. "Pewwaps that is it!"

"Perhaps!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Look here, time's passing! Buy a lamp-bracket, and let's get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't be an ass, Tom Mewwy! I shall have to make him undahstand somehow that it is the othah kind of bwah I want! Regardez," said Arthur Augustus to the puzzled shopman.

"Not like that—pas comme ca!"

"Pas comme ca!" repeated the shopman.

"Oui, monsieur! Suivez-moi!"

"Come on, you fellows! It will be all wight this time!"

The juniors followed the shopman across the room. He stopped at another counter, and pointed to another collection of lamp-brackets.

"Voila, monsieur!" he said.

"Oh cwikey! The man doesn't weally seem to have any sense at all! Not that sort—some autre sort! See? Pas comme cela."

"Allons! Par ici, monsieur!" said the shopman in a rather tired voice.

He seemed to find that customer very hard to please in the matter of lamp-brackets. As he had no English, he did not, of course, know that bras was arms in English, and that arms had two meanings in that language. He was still in the happy belief that it was lamp-brackets that D'Arcy wanted—and he led the way to another

extensive assortment of the same in another corner of the quincailleterie.

"Voila, monsieur!" said the shopman, pointing to an imposing array of lamp-brackets. "Comme cela, n'est-ce-pas?" And he gave Arthur Augustus a rather expressive look, as if to ask whether that difficult customer was satisfied at last.

"Oh cwumbs! I am gettin' wathah fed-up with this, you fellows!" said Arthur Augustus. "I suppose you haven't made a mistake, Tom Mewwy—you are suah that bwah means arms?"

"Bras means arms all right!" said Tom solemnly.

"It seems to mean bwackets, too, in this extw-ordinawy language! Still, if we keep on, I suppose he will lead us soonah or latah to the wight kind of bwah! What are you gwinnin' at? There is nothin' amusin' in that shopman bein' such a howlin' ass. I will twy him again! Not like that, my man—I mean pas comme ca—"

"C'est tout, monsieur!" answered the shopman. "Say two!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! Is the man wandewin' in his mind? What does he want me to say two for?"

"Oh crikey! C'est tout means that's all!" gasped Tom Merry. "He means he's shown you his whole stock of—of bras."

"If that is the case, Tom Mewwy, he cannot have the kind of bwah I want, and there is not an arms department in this place at all. If there is not an arms department here, I shall not be able to buy a wevolah. It is wathah exaspewatin', affah wastin' so much time."

"Fearfully!" agreed Tom. "Let's push on and see some of the sights."

"The Rhone's flowing away all this time, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther.

"I will twy once more! Lookez-vous here, my man—I mean, mon homme—I want the department for—I mean, je veux trouvez—gottez-vous that? Je veux trouvez the department for bras—pas comme ca, but the other sort—tout autre, see? Pour tirer!" added Arthur Augustus, with quite a brain-wave. "Tirer means to shoot, doesn't it, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Pwobably that will work the owacle, then! Show me—montrez-moi—bras a tirer!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Oui, monsieur!" said the tired shopman. He led Arthur Augustus along to the end of the counter, and picked up a two-jointed bracket. "Voila!"

Tom Merry & Co. suppressed their emotions. "Tirer," in French, certainly meant "to shoot." But it also meant "to pull out." The shopman was not likely to guess that D'Arcy was asking him for a "bras" to shoot with! Naturally he supposed that the swell of St. Jim's was asking for a bracket that would pull out! So he showed him a bracket that would pull out.

"Oh cwikey!" said Arthur Augustus blankly. "I begin to believe that the chap is cwacked! I ask him for firearms, and he shows me a two-jointed bwacket! I am goin' to chuck this, you fellows! I don't believe they keep arms here at all, and that chap certainly isn't goin' to sell me lamp-bwackets! He can hardly expect to sell me a lamp-bwacket when what I want is a wevolah! We shall have to find anothah place! Come on!"

Tom Merry & Co., grinning, came on. They left the tired shopman staring. Arthur Augustus had an impression that the man must be a little cracked, and possibly the shopman had the same impression of Arthur Augustus.

The St. Jim's party sallied forth. Arthur

Augustus was still thinking of buying a revolver, Arthur Augustus' friends were not!

"Which way do you fellows think we had bettah go?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"This way!" answered Blake briskly.

"Are you suah we shall find what we want that way, Blake?" asked Arthur Augustus, who was thinking of the much-needed revolver.

"Quite!" answered Blake, who was thinking of the quays and bridges on the Rhone.

"Vewy well, deah boy! Staggh along, you fellows!"

And the St. Jim's fellows went for a morning's walk on the banks of the Rhone, where they saw many interesting sights; but Arthur Augustus quite failed to spot an establishment where he could buy a revolver. And he was still in a revolverless state when they went back to lunch.

CHAPTER 13.

Snatched!

"STOP a minute, deah boys!"

"What—"

"I have to go in here!" said Arthur Augustus.

After lunch, Tom Merry & Co. were taking a walk round Lyons to see as much of that city as they could before going on board the Silver Swallow again in the morning.

They did not mind much where they went, except that they were watchful to steer Arthur Augustus safely clear of any establishment that looked like a gunsmith's.

Now they were going to give the Hotel de Ville the "once-over"; Pawson—who knew everything—having told them that it was well worth seeing.



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Passing through the Rue de l'Hotel de Ville, Arthur Augustus came to a halt outside a large building. It was the chief post office of Lyons.

"I have to drop in at the Poste Westante," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I expect there will be a packet for me. You see, I asked my bwothah Wally to send on the 'Magnet' and 'Modern Boy,' so they will be waitin' for me here. There will be a couple of numbahs of each—wathah a tweat, what?"

"Quite!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Did you see that chap?" He gave a sudden jump and spun round, his eyeglass dropping to the end of its cord. Something seemed to have startled him suddenly.

"What?" ejaculated Tom Merry. "Who— which—what—"

"That chap in the black hat—he has been followin' us!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "It is that beastly dago again!"

Tom Merry & Co. stared round. There were a good many people passing and repassing the post office, and amid the throng they had a glimpse of a black slouched felt hat disappearing. "Aftah him, deah boys!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Hold on!" yelled Blake.

He grabbed one of Gussy's arms—Herries grabbed the other. It was possible that the dago had spotted the St. Jim's party in Lyons, and possible that he was shadowing them. But Arthur Augustus was not going to repeat his remarkable performance at the Veuve Heureuse! Not if his loyal chums could stop him!

"Welsee me, you duffahs—he will get away!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "What are you playin' the giddy ox for?"

"Are you sure it's the dago?" demanded Tom Merry. "I don't see why he should watch us about Lyons—he knows you haven't got that black box on you."

"I am quite suah!"

"Did you see his face?" demanded Lowther.

"How could I see his face when he has that hat slouched ovah it? I saw a coffee-coloured chin—he is an Italian—"

"There aren't so many Italians in Lyons as there are in Paris," remarked Blake. "But there must be a thousand or two!"

"He was followin' us—"

"So are about three hundred other people who happen to be coming in the same direction."

"Look here, you sillay ass, I am quite suah that he is the dago, and we can hand him ovah to a jongdarme and get wid of him!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Can you see him now? He seems to have disappeared while you silly asses were playin' the goat."

Tom Merry laughed.

"He's gone, Gussy! It's all right—if he follows us when we come out of the post office we can spot him."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "I am suah—at least pwactically suah—that it was that wottah Fosco. Keep your peepahs open when we come out, and spot him if he follows us again."

And the St. Jim's party went into the post office.

The words Poste Restante over a section of the counter saved Arthur Augustus from the necessity of exercising his French. There a roll of papers was handed over to the swell of St. Jim's, much to his satisfaction. Wally of the Third had not

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forgotten to send on his "Magnets" and his "Modern Boys," to await his arrival at Lyons.

With that packet in his hand, Arthur Augustus walked out of the post office again, followed by his friends.

"Now, you fellows, mind you keep your peepahs open!" said Arthur Augustus impressively as they emerged into the Rue de l'Hotel de Ville. "I am suah that that dago is somewhah awound, and that the wottah is shadowin' us! Look out for a blightah in a black felt hat, and— Yawwooooh!"

Arthur Augustus yelled.

He hardly knew what was happening to him for a moment. There were a dozen or so people near the entrance of the post office, and from among them, a man in a black felt hat suddenly darted.

He crashed into Arthur Augustus, sending him spinning.

And as Arthur Augustus, with a startled yell, sprawled, the man in the black hat snatched the packet of papers from his hand and darted away with it.

Tom Merry & Co. had a brief glimpse of a dark chin that showed under the slouch of the black felt hat, and then the man was gone, cutting round the corner of the Rue des Archers, running like a deer to escape.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Arthur Augustus. He sat up dizzily. "What—who—how—why—which—who was that? I have been knocked ovah! What—oh cwikey!"

"What the thump—" gasped Tom Merry.

"The dago—" exclaimed Blake.

He darted round the corner. But the black felt hat had already disappeared; the dago, if it was the dago, was gone. Blake ran back. Herries and Dig were helping Arthur Augustus to his feet—Tom Merry was picking up his hat. Arthur Augustus spluttered for breath.

"Bai Jove! I have been thwown into quite a fluttah!" he gasped. "What wude wottah was it barged me ovah? I am all dusty—I say, where are those papahs?"

"That fellow snatched them away!" said Tom Merry, in utter wonder. "He looked like the dago, what I could see of him, but what the thump he wanted to pinch those papers for beats me."

"Can't be a 'Magnet' reader!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"He has collahed my papahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! What the thump does he want my papahs for?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake suddenly. "Oh my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! What are you laughin' at, Blake? It is not at all amusin' to have my 'Magnets' pinched like that—"

"Isn't it?" gurgled Blake. "Ha, ha! Oh my hat! Can't you fellows see? That dago was shadowing us—"

"Yaas! But—"

"He knew that Gussy was having the black box sent on from Paris—he got that much from Gussy!" gasped Blake. "Well, shadowing him to the post office, and seeing him come out with a packet in his hand—what do you think he thought?"

"Oh!" gasped Tom Merry.

"He guessed that Gussy had had the black box sent on by post, see?" gurgled Blake. "And he thought Gussy had come to the post office to collect the packet."

"Oh crickey!"

(Continued on page 36.)

THE CHUMS OF THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL ENJOY THEMSELVES AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR NEW MASTER!

The GENTLE SHEPHERD!

By Martin Clifford

Dandy and simpleton, Horatio Shepherd, the new master of Cedar Creek, was born to have his leg pulled—and it's pulled with a vengeance by the japers of the backwoods school!

The New Master!

"GATHER round!" grinned Bob Lawless.
"And listen!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

There was a suppressed chuckle among the fellows gathered in the playground at Cedar Creek School. Frank Richards & Co. were smiling.

Mr. Shepherd, the new master at the lumber school, had just emerged from his cabin. It was upon the new master that all eyes were fixed. Apparently Mr. Horatio Shepherd appealed to the humorous side of Cedar Creek.

He was a tall young man, slim, and rather graceful in appearance, and certainly very good looking. He was dressed with great care, in somewhat expensive "store clothes," and at a glance it could be seen that he set great store by his personal appearance. In the rough-and-ready Thompson Valley that was not a great recommendation for any man.

Mr. Shepherd was newly out from England. He had had a post in a boarding school in Ontario, and possibly had not given complete satisfaction there. At all events, he had transferred the scene of his activities to British Columbia.

Frank Richards, who remembered his earlier schooldays in the Old Country, had been rather interested to hear that Mr. Shepherd was a Public school man. But that weighed little or nothing with the folk of the Thompson Valley. So long as a man could do his work, and did it, they cared little whence he came, or what he had been before he came.

It is possible that Mr. Shepherd had accepted the offer to a post at the backwoods school without being fully aware of the remoteness and rusticity of Cedar Creek. Certainly he did not seem to realise that he was in the backwoods. He dressed with as much care as if about to promenade in a fashionable street in Montreal



Suddenly the Indian made a spring, at the same time giving utterance to a fearful whoop and brandishing his tomahawk. Mr. Shepherd made a frantic bound backwards. "Oh! Ah!" he panted. "Keep off!"

or Quebec, and he spoke with an accent that amused the Cedar Creek fellows.

"Now then, don't gurgle!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Don't let the galoot know that we're pulling his leg."

"He wouldn't guess that in a month of Sundays!" grunted Eben Hacke.

"Shush!" murmured Frank Richards.

Mr. Shepherd came along by the group, and glanced at them in a languid way.

"Good-mornin', boys!" he said.

The new master's voice was slow, almost drawling, and very aristocratic in tone. It was high-pitched, and sounded as if Mr. Shepherd found it rather an effort to speak at all.

"Good-mornin', sir!" answered the boys in chorus, dropping their "g's" in imitation of Mr. Shepherd.

"A very fine mornin'," said the new master.

"Yes, sir; the sun is shinin', the birds are singin', and everythin' is toppin'," said Bob Lawless gravely.

There was an irrepressible gurgle from Chunky Todgers, and the new master glanced at him.

"I hope you like Cedar Creek, sir," said Frank Richards hastily.

"Yaas! A very pleasant quartah."

"It's a quartah where any fellah might like to lingah, isn't it, sir?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yaas," assented Mr. Shepherd. And he walked on gracefully to the schoolhouse.

The schoolboys stared at one another. It really seemed impossible that Mr. Shepherd had not observed that Bob Lawless was making fun of him, but evidently he hadn't.

"Of all the howling asses!" said Tom Lawrence.

"Wrong!" said Bob. "You mean howlin' asses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You should have seen him in the store yesterday," said Gunten, the son of the store-keeper at Thompson. "He told the salesman that he wanted gaitahs of good leathah, and the galoot nearly fainted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"People gathered round to hear him talk, and he never noticed it," chuckled Gunten.

"People will think he's putting on side," said Frank, half-laughing and half-vexed. Frank came from the Old Country, and he was not pleased at a fellow countryman becoming an object of ridicule.

"So he is, isn't he?" asked Todgers.

"Well, not exactly; it's only a way, you know."

"Do they all talk like that in the Old Country?" asked Lawrence.

"Ha, ha! No. But lots do; it's only a way they have."

"Lots of queer English customs, and no mistake," remarked Lawrence. "Hopkins here chucks off all his first 'h's,' and now Shepherd chucks his last 'g's.' He doesn't drop his 'h's,' though."

"Ere, 'old on!" exclaimed Harold Hopkins, the Cockney schoolboy, warmly. "Who chucks his aitches, I'd like to know? If you want your ead punched, Lawrence, you've only got to say so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ain't they a pair?" chuckled Chunky Todgers. "But the Gentle Shepherd is funnier than Hopkins—he does it on purpose."

"Look 'ere—"

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"Hallo, there goes the bell!"

Cedar Creek crowded in to school in a very hilarious mood. The Gentle Shepherd, as the boys had already nicknamed the new master, had added considerably to the gaiety of the lumber school.

Quite an Accident!

MISS MEADOWS wore an unaccustomed frown in the school-room. The Canadian schoolmistress was well aware of the hilarity with which her pupils regarded the new assistant master. It did not make for order in the school, and Miss Meadows found it very annoying.

Mr. Slimmey, the other master, glanced at Mr. Shepherd once or twice from his end of the big school-room.

Mr. Slimmey was a very quiet and undemonstrative gentleman, and the new master had treated him with condescending patronage ever since his arrival. Mr. Slimmey did not quite know how to deal with that, and he gave the new man his head, so to speak. But a slightly impatient expression crossed his face when he heard the new master speaking to his class of Australia, Canada, and the British Empire.

The Gentle Shepherd's class was in a state of subdued mirth, and but for the presence of Miss Meadows in the school-room, the mirth would have been a good deal less subdued.

"That galoot's simply come along to make us joyful," said Eben Hacke, when the boys came out of school. "I guess I'm going to have some fun with him."

Hacke ran off to the corral for a trail-rope. He came back with a rope looped over his arm, a running noose at the end of it.

"Has he come out yet?" he asked breathlessly.

"No," answered Frank Richards. "He's talking to Miss Meadows inside. What are you up to with that rope, Hacke?"

"I guess I'm going to lasso him—by accident!"

"What!" yelled Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only by accident, of course," said Hacke. "He'll never see it. Mind, you galoots, the minute I rope him in, you all drag on the rope, without knowing it's caught him!"

"Here he comes," murmured Chunky Todgers.

The schoolboys looked away from Mr. Shepherd as he came sauntering gracefully out of the porch. Apparently they did not see him coming. Eben Hacke whirled the lasso through the air. He was half-turned away from Mr. Shepherd as he made the cast, and certainly did not look as if he were trying to lasso the master; but Hacke was an expert with the rope. The noose settled over Mr. Shepherd's head and slid down to his waist.

Hacke started running at the same moment, three or four fellows catching hold of the rope with him, and running, too. The rope tautened instantly, and the noose was tight round Mr. Shepherd's slim waist. Before the new master knew what was happening, he was whirled off his feet, and came down with a bump on the ground. There was a wild yell as he landed.

"Yah! What—Great Scott! Yaroooh! Oh begad! Ah! Help!"

With hands and legs wildly flying, Mr. Shepherd was whirled along the ground at the end of the rope. There was a shriek of laughter on all sides.

The laughter brought Miss Meadows into the playground. The schoolmistress stood nearly petrified at the sight of the new master whirling along, heels over head.

"Hacke!" she shrieked at last.

Eben Hacke looked round.

"Yes, marm?"

"What are you doing? Release Mr. Shepherd at once! How dare you!" panted the schoolmistress.

Hacke stared at Mr. Shepherd, who had now come to a halt, and was sprawling on the ground, struggling for breath.

"By gum!" ejaculated Hacke, with a look of astonishment. "It's Mr. Shepherd! Oh dear!"

The schoolboys rushed to the fallen man, and Hacke unloosed the lasso. Mr. Shepherd sat up dazedly.

"Groogh! Hoooh! Yoooop!" he spluttered.

"Not hurt, sir?" exclaimed Hacke. "How ever did you get in the way of the rope, sir? Why didn't you call out?"

"Groooogh!"

"Help him up!" gasped Frank Richards, struggling to repress his merriment. "I hope you're not hurt, sir."

"Groooogh!"

Mr. Shepherd was set upon his feet. His "store clothes" were in a sad state, and he looked draggled and dishevelled from head to foot. He stood gasping for breath, evidently not quite aware whether he was on his head or his heels.

Miss Meadows hurried to the spot.

"Mr. Shepherd, you are not hurt?"

"Groogh! Nunno!" gasped the young man dazedly. "Somethin'—er—caught me; a—er—rope, I think. I was—er—pulled over, by gad!"

"Hacke, how dare you play such a trick!"

"I couldn't guess Mr. Shepherd was going to put his head into the rope, miss," said Hacke. "We often play with lassos in the playground!"

Miss Meadows gave him an expressive glance. She was not inclined to believe that the affair was an accident; but perhaps she deemed it judicious not to inquire too closely.

"I—I am feelin' rather upset!" gasped Mr. Shepherd. "If it was an accident, please do not punish the boy, Miss Meadows! Grooh! I think I will retiah to my cabin!"

And he did. And the Cedar Creek fellows streamed out of the gates, where they could yell without being heard by Miss Meadows.

Bob's Little Scheme!

"I'VE got an idea," said Bob Lawless as the three chums led their horses out of the corral after lessons at Cedar Creek.

"Go it," said Frank.

"Let's ride over to Thompson before we go home," said Bob. "I want to see a man."

"Right you are!"

Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclere mounted their horses, and rode up the Thompson trail, instead of heading for home.

"Who's the man?" asked Frank, as they trotted along under the high branches that overhung the trail.

"Injun Dick," said Bob. "I'm going to spring him on the Gentle Shepherd. I guess Injun Dick will make his hair curl!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank.

"It's too bad making fun of that duffer!" said Beauclere, laughing.

"Oh, rot!" answered Bob. "He was born to

have his leg pulled, you can see that. He knows as much about Canada as he knows about the mountains in the moon; and I reckon that a real Redskin on the war trail will make him hop some! It will be no end funny!"

Frank Richards grimaced at the idea. It was not much use arguing with Bob Lawless when that cheerful youth was on the trail of a joke, and his chums let him have his way.

They arrived at the town of Thompson, and proceeded to look for Injun Dick. Injun Dick was one of the sights of Thompson. He was an Apache Indian, a race not native to Canada. Injun Dick was many a hundred miles from his native hunting grounds.

He had once been a great warrior of the Apache tribe, and he had fought in the last Apache war in Arizona, when the last defence of their hunting grounds by the Red tribes had been broken for ever. The remnants of his defeated tribe had been scattered far and wide, and the warrior had wandered far from his native heath.

That was long ago, and since then the potent fire-water of the palefaces had not left much trace of the warrior about Injun Dick. As a rule, he could be found adorning the rail in front of the Red Dog Saloon with his person, his tattered blanket draped round him with some remnant of his old dignity. His life was spent on the look-out for stray drinks, which often came his way from the compassionate miners or ranch hands.

"Here he is!" said Bob Lawless, as he slipped off his horse in front of the Red Dog.

Injun Dick was leaning on the rail, his old blanket round him, apparently half-asleep. His copper face glistened in the afternoon sun. Half-asleep as he seemed, his eyes opened sharply at the sound of footsteps. The three schoolboys stopped and he blinked at them.

"Injun thirsty," he said.

That was the old Apache's greeting to anyone who stopped to speak to him. Injun Dick had an insatiable thirst.

"Still thirsty?" smiled Bob Lawless.

"Fire-water," said the noble Redskin.

"Never mind the fire-water now," answered Bob.

"I want you to do something for me, Dick. There's a dollar at the end of it."

The Redskin held out a coppery hand.

"Dollar first!" he said briefly.

"No fear!" answered Bob promptly. "I know where your dollar will go, Dicky, and you may be in the calaboose to-morrow. Will you come along to Cedar Creek to-morrow and do something for me?"

Injun Dick looked disappointed, but he nodded.

"Well, listen to me," said Bob. "You used to be a great chief, Dick. No end of a big-gun Injun—eh?"

The Apache's eyes gleamed for a moment.

"Ka-noon-ka great brave!" he said. "Hundred scalps in wigwam. Long ago."

"Just as well that it's long ago," murmured Frank Richards.

There was no doubt that Ka-noon-ka—alias Injun Dick—had lifted a good many scalps in the old days, before his tribe was broken and scattered.

"Well, I want you to play at it to-morrow," said Bob. "Rub up your war-paint a bit, you know, and come along to Cedar Creek as a great warrior. I want you to scare a tenderfoot—make him believe that you're a regular rip-snorter of a Red brave after his scalp, and scare him out

of his five senses. But don't hurt him. Injun savvy?"

"Me savvy."

"It's a new master at our school," said Bob. "I'll point him out to you—a Mr. Shepherd."

"Injun know."

"You've seen him?" asked Frank.

"You bet! See him at store," explained Injun Dick. "Hear talk. Injun know. Wah!"

"Good!" said Bob. "Well, that's the antelope. He generally trots out for a walk along the creek after morning lessons. That's when you'll jump on him to-morrow. Give a yell—same as you used to on the warpath—and chase him. But mind you don't hurt him. It's only a joke."

Injun Dick grinned.

"Injun savvy."

"Then it's a trade?" said Bob.

"All O.K.!" said Injun Dick, holding out his coppery paw again. "Injun work rifle, you bet! Two dollar!"

"I said one dollar."

"Injun say two," answered the Redskin calmly.

"Well, it's worth it," said Bob. "Two dollars, if you give him a jolly good scare."

"You bet! One dollar to-day, one dollar to-morrow."

Bob looked doubtful.

"Well, here you are," he said, handing over the dollar. "Mind, about half-past one to-morrow outside the school."

"Injun savvy."

Bob Lawless added a few more instructions, to which Injun Dick listened with a longing eye fastened on the doorway of the saloon. The moment the schoolboys mounted their horses the Redskin made a dive for the doorway, and disappeared into the Red Dog.

The chums of Cedar Creek rode homeward in a merry humour. They were looking forward very keenly to the morrow.

Injun Dick on the Warpath!

SMILES broke out involuntarily on several faces in the school-room at Cedar Creek during lessons the next morning. Bob Lawless had confided his little scheme to some of his friends, and there was a happy anticipation of Injun Dick's visit.

Mr. Shepherd had no suspicion of the surprise that awaited him after lessons. But a chortle ran round among the schoolboys when they were dismissed.

Miss Meadows glanced along the table at the school dinner with a suspicious eye. She could discern that there was something going on, though she could not guess what it was.

After dinner Mr. Shepherd strolled away from the schoolhouse. He was accustomed to take a stroll after the meal before lessons were resumed, a habit that Bob Lawless had noticed. As he walked gracefully out of the gates the schoolboys exchanged blissful glances.

"Now look out for the circus," murmured Bob Lawless.

"Suppose he tumbles to it that Injun Dick's only a tame Indian, though," said Tom Lawrence.

Bob sniffed.

"That galoot wouldn't tumble to anything. You watch!"

"I tumbled fast enough when Todgers tried to play that game on me," said Hopkins.

"My dear man, you're not a genius, but you've got more brains in your boots than the Gentle Shepherd has in his head," answered Bob.

The schoolboys gathered in a crowd round the gateway to watch, in great anticipation. Through the openings of the timber they could see Mr. Shepherd sauntering along the bank of the creek, smoking a cheroot.

Suddenly the sauntering man stopped. The cheroot slanted down as his teeth lost their grip on it. Mr. Shepherd's eyes were fixed upon a horrid sight that had just dawned upon him.

The bushes near the creek had parted with a slight rustle, and from the opening a fierce red face glared out. It was the face of a Red Indian, but not the "tame" Indian of the kind Mr. Shepherd had seen on the Canadian railways and ranches. The face was aquiline and strongly marked in features, the eyes black and deep-set and glittering. The coppery hue of the face was half-hidden by stripes of black and white war-paint, daubed on thickly. Feathers were stuck in the matted hair.

The master of Cedar Creek stared, frozen, at the terrible vision. The Redskin stared out at him, motionless, with eyes that glittered like a snake's. A coppery hand came into view, grasping a tomahawk.

Slowly the bushes parted, and the Indian crept forth, directly towards the horrified man on the bank of the creek. His motion was slow and stealthy, noiseless as that of an animal creeping on his prey.

Mr. Shepherd stood rooted to the ground. His limbs failed him. Like a bird fascinated by a serpent, he stared without motion at the terrible figure creeping on him. His face was deadly white, and he scarcely breathed.

Suddenly the Indian made a spring, at the same time giving utterance to a fearful whoop and brandishing his tomahawk. Then Mr. Shepherd awoke to life, as it were. He made a frantic bound backwards.

"Oh! Ah! Keep off!" he panted.

"Whoop!"

Brandishing his tomahawk furiously, the Redskin rushed at him. Mr. Shepherd was unarmed, and, believing as he did that this was a savage Redskin on the warpath, it was no wonder that he turned and fled frantically for the lumber school.

Like a deer he ran up the rugged path to the school. His hat flew off as he raced along towards the crowd of schoolboys at the gates. Fast on his track, whooping wildly, came Injun Dick with brandished tomahawk.

Mr. Shepherd had not hitherto displayed any athletic proclivities at the lumber school, but now he showed the Cedar Creek fellows that he was, at least, a first-class man in a foot race. He waved his hands wildly to the boys as he came tearing on.

"Run!" he shouted.

"What? How? What's the row?" called Bob Lawless.

"Red Indians! Run for your lives!"

"Run!" yelled Bob Lawless, choking back his laughter. "Indians, you chaps! Scalp-hunters, you know! Bolt for it!"

The whole crowd joined in the joke. With a yell expressive of terror, the schoolboys turned and bolted in at the gates, Mr. Shepherd tearing in after them. They fully expected to see him bolt for the schoolhouse like a rabbit for

its burrow. But instead of that Mr. Shepherd seized the big, heavy gates and swung them shut. With hurried hands he jammed the bars into place.

Crash!

Injun Dick arrived only a second too late, and fairly hurled himself upon the gate, which shook and rattled under the impact.

Mr. Shepherd reeled back from the gates, panting.

"Into the house—quick!" he shouted.

"What are we to go into the house for?" exclaimed Molly Lawrence.

"Quick—quick! Indians!"

The girl stared at him blankly.

"Indians!" she repeated.

"Come on, Molly!" yelled Bob. "Do you want to be scalped?"

"Scalped? Nonsense!"

"Whoop!"

Over the gate rose a terrifying face in view—the war-painted face of the Apache.

Bob caught Molly by the arms, and rushed her into the porch.

"Who is it, Bob?" she panted. "Is it a joke?"

"You've hit it!" grinned Bob. "But, shush!"

Boys and girls crowded into the schoolhouse. Mr. Shepherd followed them in, and slammed the door and bolted it. Then he stood panting.

It was with difficulty that the practical jokers suppressed their merriment. But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Shepherd had risen in their estimation a little. He certainly was an ass, but he had shown courage. Instead of bolting for safety, as they had expected, he had seen to the safety of the boys and girls first. It was true that they were not in danger, but the Gentle Shepherd was not aware of that trifling detail.

Bang!

The Apache's tomahawk smote the door with a crash that made the splinters fly. Injun Dick had climbed over the gate, and he was raging round the house itself now.

"Great Scott!" panted Mr. Shepherd. "A gun—a gun! Is there a gun? Courage, you youngsters? I will defend you!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

"A gun—a gun!" shouted Mr. Shepherd, as the Redskin whooped outside again.

"What is the matter?"

Cool and calm, Miss Meadows arrived on the scene.

Heroic!

"INDIANS!"

Mr. Shepherd panted out that word in explanation. He expected to see Miss Meadows turn pale and shriek—faint perhaps. Miss Meadows would not have fainted if it had been a real Redskin raid, and certainly she was not likely to faint now. She only looked astounded.

"Indians?" she repeated.

"Yes," panted the new master. "A Redskin raid, Miss Meadows. I was under the impression that this part of the country was quite settled. I have seen only one Indian, so far, but doubtless they are numerous."

"Whoop!"

Crash!

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Lawless to his chums, in dismay. "The silly ass is carrying it too far. I didn't mean all this."

Crash!

"Have you a gun, Miss Meadows? I can use a rifle. For Heaven's sake, find me a weapon before they break in, or all our lives may be sacrificed!"

"What can this mean?" exclaimed the amazed schoolmistress. "Calm yourself, Mr. Shepherd! There are no wild Indians in this section, or within a hundred miles!"

"Madam, I have been attacked by a savage brave in war-paint! I have barely eluded him with my life!"

"Impossible!"

"Can you not hear him?"

Miss Meadows went to the window. In great excitement Mr. Shepherd caught the schoolmistress by the arm and pulled her away from the window. Outside the tomahawk crashed on the door again.

"Miss Meadows, take care! An arrow may enter at the window!"

"Nonsense!" snapped Miss Meadows.

She pulled back the shutter and looked out. Outside, Injun Dick was executing a kind of war dance in front of the house, and giving utterance to a succession of terrific whoops.

Probably the noble Redskin had primed himself for the adventure with some deep draughts of fire-water at the Red Dog; certainly he was in a state of great excitement. In his war-paint Miss Meadows did not immediately recognise him, though she had often seen the old Apache in the streets of Thompson. She stared at the wild figure in astonishment.

"What—who can it be?" she exclaimed.

"Miss Meadows, stand back! If there is a rifle in the house I can bring him down from the window!" exclaimed Mr. Shepherd.

"You will certainly do nothing of the kind, sir!" said Miss Meadows tartly. "The man appears to be intoxicated; but that is no reason for shooting him, and I would certainly not allow it."

"Miss Meadows, the man, as you call him, is a savage Indian, and I barely escaped from his hands with my life!"

"Nonsense!"

"Wha-a-at!"

Miss Meadows threw open the lattice window. The Redskin heard the sound, and turned to the window at once, whooping and flourishing his tomahawk.

Through the window Bob Lawless watched him in dismay. He had never intended this. His scheme had been to scare the new master, and send him bolting for safety; and there he had expected the joke to end.

Injun Dick was overdoing it with a vengeance. Probably the fire-water accounted for that. Or perhaps the Apache was bent on fully earning the promised dollar. He came up to the window raging.

"Whoop!"

Miss Meadows looked at him sternly.

"What are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

"Whoop!"

Mr. Shepherd rushed into Miss Meadows' study, where he remembered to have seen a gun hanging on the wall. He grabbed down the gun and dashed back into the hall with it. In his excitement he did not pause to think whether it was loaded or not.

"Stand aside, Miss Meadows!" he shouted.

"I can get him from here!"

He threw the gun to his shoulder.

"Stop!" shrieked Miss Meadows in great

alarm. "Are you insane? Put down that gun at once!"

Bob Lawless rushed at the new master, grasped the barrel, and forced the gun downward to the floor.

Click!

If the firearm had been loaded the bullet would have found a billet in the pine-plank floor. As it happened, it was not loaded. Miss Meadows was not careless enough to keep loaded firearms within the reach of schoolboys.

Only a click resulted as the trigger was pulled. But the sight of the gun had been enough for Injun Dick, who jumped back from the window with a yell as he saw it levelled. Injun Dick had faced loaded firearms in his time, and he knew that they were dangerous, especially in foolish and reckless hands.

"Where are the cartridges?" shouted Mr. Shepherd.

"The cartridges are locked up, and will remain so!" snapped Miss Meadows. "For goodness' sake, sir, listen to reason!"

But Mr. Shepherd was not in a state of mind to listen to reason.

"Miss Meadows, you do not understand your danger!" he exclaimed. "But I will deal with this Indian. He seems to be alone here. Will you find me some cartridges at once?"

"Certainly not! I—"

"Miss Meadows, do you not understand that he may scalp the stableman or Mr. Slimmey while we are talkin' here?" exclaimed Mr. Shepherd. "I cannot leave them to their fate!"

He tore down the bar from the door.

"Bar the door aftah me!" he shouted. And with that he rushed out of the porch, the unloaded gun in his hands.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Miss Meadows dazedly. "Fortunately the gun is not loaded!" "Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the school crowd; they could restrain it no longer.

"Boys! Lawless! Richards!"

"Come on!" shouted Bob. "Injun Dick may get hurt if he goes for him with that gun!"

"Injun Dick!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Is that Injun Dick?"

"I—I suspect so, ma'am," said Bob.

The schoolboys did not bar the door after Mr. Shepherd, as he had so heroically bidden them. They swarmed out into the playground, shouting with merriment. Quite an exciting scene was being enacted there.

Injun Dick did not like the gun; he did not know that it was unloaded. As Mr. Shepherd headed for him, the Apache fled.

The sight of the Redskin running greatly encouraged the young man, and naturally he determined that the bloodthirsty savage should not escape. He rushed fiercely in pursuit.

"Stop!" he thundered. "Surrendah, or you're a dead man!"

In a moment of less excitement the tenderfoot master would not have expected a savage Red brave to understand English. But, as a matter of fact, the Apache did understand, and he stopped at once.

"No shoot Injun Dick!" he yelled, throwing up his hands as Mr. Shepherd levelled the gun.

"Keep your hands up!" rapped out Mr. Shepherd victoriously. "Mind, I'll shoot if you offer to resist!"

"Injun Dick good Injun!" howled the Apache. "No shoot Injun Dick!"

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"You are my prisonah!" rapped out Mr. Shepherd.

"You bet!" answered the noble Redskin cheerfully.

"Get along in front of me, and keep your hands up!"

"Injun savvy!"

The Redskin marched towards the schoolhouse at Mr. Shepherd's order, followed by the master with the levelled gun. Had the Redskin been really a savage on the warpath, the sight would have been quite impressive. As it was, it made all Cedar Creek shriek with laughter.

Miss Meadows hurried out of the house. Her face was crimson. She was keenly conscious of the utterly ridiculous scene.

"Mr. Shepherd, please put down that gun at once!" she exclaimed. "How can you be so absurd?"

"Absurd, madam!" ejaculated the new master. "I have taken this Indian prisonah!"

"The man is not a savage Indian!" almost shouted Miss Meadows. "He is a disreputable person from the neighbouring town, and is apparently intoxicated. He is perfectly well known here."

"Wha-a-at!"

Mr. Shepherd lowered the gun. The howls of laughter on all sides made some impression at last.

Miss Meadows gave the Indian a stern look.

"Why are you playing this foolish trick here?" she exclaimed.

"Scare fool white man," answered Injun Dick innocently. "Young white chief ask Injun Dick scare fool white man. Wah!"

"What?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Then it is a foolish joke of some boy here! I suspected as much!"

Bob Lawless gave a groan, and shook his fist at Injun Dick from behind Miss Meadows. The unsuspecting Indian had given the game away with a vengeance. But Injun Dick did not understand the shaking of the fist. He looked at Bob with an expression of injured inquiry.

"All O.K.!" he exclaimed. "One dollar for Injun. You pay!" And he held out his coppery hand.

"So it was you, Lawless, who induced the Indian to come here and play this absurd prank?" said Miss Meadows very quietly.

"Only a little joke, ma'am!" groaned Bob.

"I—I didn't mean the silly chump to carry it so far!"

"Go away at once!" said Miss Meadows to the Indian. "At once! Do you hear?"

"Young white chief pay dollar first!" said Injun Dick. "Injun thirsty. Want fire-water."

Bob Lawless pitched the dollar at him. Injun Dick picked it up, grinned, and then, draping his tattered blanket round him, stalked away with great dignity. He left the whole school yelling.

Mr. Shepherd, with a very red face, hurried into the house, trying to keep the gun as much out of sight as possible as he went.

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "There is nothing to laugh at. Lawless, I shall cane you! Follow me!"

Bob Lawless came out a few minutes later rubbing his hands ruefully.

Mr. Shepherd did not take his class that afternoon. He hid his blushes in his own quarters. And quite a number of boys and girls were called over the coals that afternoon for laughing in class!

Next Week: "THE TERROR OF THOMPSON!"



Crack, crack, crack! Knee-deep in water, the second mate fired as the mutineers made a rush down the ladder from the main hatchway. But the rush was stopped more by the sight of the water in the hold than by the second mate's fire, and the mutineers scuttled back to the deck like startled rabbits.

In Search!

DAWN on the Atlantic! Under the glimmering sunrise the Benbow surged on her way. It had been an anxious night on board the school ship, and the dawn was greeted by eyes that had hardly closed during the dark hours.

Dick Rodney had not slept. All through the long night he had watched the sea, and now, as the sun rose higher, he swept the expanse of water with haggard eyes. Only the grey, tumbling waves and a skimming seagull or two met his gaze.

Though he still clung to a faint hope, Rodney had to acknowledge that it was scarcely possible that he would ever see his chum again. It was many hours since Jack Drake had fallen overboard. It was only because the skipper would leave no stone unturned that the Benbow was still searching the sea for the lost junior.

Mr. Packe came along the deck and tapped Rodney on the shoulder.

"You had better go to your hammock, Rodney," said the Form-master quietly. "You have not slept—"

"I couldn't sleep, sir," muttered Rodney. "Do you—do you think there's a chance, sir, that—that Drake—?"

"I fear not," answered Mr. Packe. "Drake was a good swimmer, poor lad, but he could not possibly have kept afloat so long. Captain Topcastle intends to keep up the search through the day. In the circumstances, there will be no lessons to-day. I—I hope we may learn something of Drake's fate."

The Form-master walked on, and Rodney

The SCUTTLED SCHOONER!

By
OWEN CONQUEST

turned his eyes on the sea again. Tuckey Toodles joined Rodney at the rail.

"It's too bad about poor old Drake," remarked Toodles. "I feel it awfully, you know. He wasn't a bad sort, though he had his faults—eh?"

Rodney made no answer.

"Brekker's late," continued Tuckey Toodles. "I don't think they ought to be late with brekker, when a chap gets so jolly hungry in this sea air. I'm famished, you know. Aren't you?"

Grunt!

"Hallo! There's the brekker bell at last!" exclaimed Tuckey Toodles, and he rolled away to breakfast.

Rodney would have remained on deck, but Mr. Packe called him down. At breakfast there was one other face as pale and troubled as Dick

*Shut up in the hold of a sinking ship!
Jack Drake's hours seem numbered
when the mutiny schooner is scuttled
to cheat the mutineers of their spoils!*

Rodney's. It was the face of Vernon Daubeny of the Shell.

Many of the fellows noticed it, and wondered. Daub had been Drake's enemy, and a fight between them had been imminent when Drake had disappeared from the Benbow. It was surprising to see Daubeny taking it to heart like this. But Vernon Daubeny evidently did take it to heart. He ate hardly anything at breakfast, and after the meal was over he walked on deck by himself, looking like a phantom.

His chums, Egan and Torrence, could not get a word from him, and after a time they left him to himself.

There were no lessons that day. The Benbow fellows were all busy watching the sea. In the main crosstrees a look-out was posted with a glass.

But the morning wore away without result. It was high noon when a sudden hail came from the crosstrees. Rodney looked up eagerly. Something had been sighted by the look-out that was invisible from the deck of the Benbow.

"Wreck on the starboard bow!"
Rodney's heart sank again.
Captain Topcastle rapped out an order, and the course of the old ship was changed, heading for the wreck.

Scuttled!

"SCUTTLE the schooner!"
Jack Drake repeated the words dazedly. In the dark and evil smelling hold of the schooner his voice sounded hollow and eerie. He could hardly see his companions—the two mates of the schooner. In the gloom the only light came from the open galley hatch above their heads.

Round that hatch were gathered a crowd of mutineers, with Gaston Dubois and Pierre Dandin, the ringleaders.

Jones, the chief mate, and Gautier had their revolvers in hand, ready to fire if the mutineers made an attempt to descend the ladder into the hold. But they did not make the attempt.

"Scuttle the schooner!" repeated Drake.

"Ay, ay!" answered the chief mate grimly. "That's the only way out. And there's no time to be lost."

"C'est la mort!" muttered the second mate. "Courage, petit!"

"But—but—" stammered Drake.

The chief mate interrupted him.

"No good talking. In five minutes they'll have raised the main hatch, and they'll come at us in a crowd, and then it's Davy Jones for all of us. If we're going, we're all going together—Dubois and his gang along with us. Keep an eye on them, Gautier, while I get to work."

"Mais oui," muttered Gautier.

The chief mate disappeared into the deep gloom.

A head showed for a moment over the galley hatch, and Gautier fired up. But the bullet missed as the head bobbed back.

A savage voice shouted threats in French. It was the voice of Gaston Dubois. Then there was a trampling of feet, and Dubois' voice was heard again, shouting savage orders.

Drake understood enough French to know what he was ordering. Main and fore hatches were to be opened, so that the mutineers could get at the mates in the hold. The attack would not long be delayed.

The junior breathed hard. It was to be death—death like a rat in a trap, shut up in the black depths of the hold. But he said no more. The chief mate would not have listened to him. And, indeed, there was no hope even if Jones had held his hand.

After the aid Drake had given to the two officers of the schooner, the mutineers would not have spared him. Drake did not share the savage satisfaction of the chief mate in dragging the mutineers into his own doom, but he had nothing to say.

Knock, knock, knock!

The sound of hammering came from the blackness. The chief mate was at work.

Drake waited. His heart was beating fast. He thought of the Benbow, of his chum Rodney, and all the St. Winifred's fellows, whom he was never to see again. He had been saved from the sea, only to perish in these noisome depths, and he almost wished that the waves had closed above his head before he had set eyes upon the doomed schooner.

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Knock, knock, knock!

He could hear the mutineers at work above, raising the main hatch, and daylight came streaming into the hold at last.

The voice of Gaston Dubois shouted above. But the mutineers seemed in no hurry to descend into the hold and face two desperate armed men there.

Drake gave a sudden start. There was water about his feet—a sudden spurt of water. The scuttler had begun his work, and already the sea was spurling into the hold of the schooner, through the hole in her timbers.

While the mutineers buzzed excitedly on deck, the chief mate continued his work with grim determination.

Drake waited, sick at heart. The water was swishing round him now, pouring into every nook and cranny of the hold, and some of the cargo was already afloat.

The junior climbed upon a case to keep out of the reach of the rising water. There was no hope in his breast, but instinct urged him to escape the inevitable till the last possible moment.

Gautier gave a chuckle.

"Ca va!" Drake heard him murmur.

The hold was awash now, and Drake knew that the schooner must be settling deeper into the water, and he wondered that the truth did not dawn upon the men on deck. But a sudden yell announced that the mutineers had made the discovery.

There were howls of fury on deck, and a sudden rush was made down the ladder from the main hatchway.

Crack, crack, crack!

Gautier, knee-deep in water, was firing, but the rush was stopped more by the sight of the water in the hold than by the second mate's fire. A man rolled off the ladder and plunged helplessly in the flooded hold. The rest scuttled back to the deck like startled rabbits.

There was a scampering of feet above, and a howling of excited and terrified voices. Then there was a crash as the hatches were closed, and darkness shut in the hold once more. The three in the hold were shut in to die!

Between Life and Death!

"IT'S done!"

Drake heard the voice of the chief mate eerily in the darkness. There was savage satisfaction in his tones. The water was pouring in now.

"They'll take to the boats, I reckon," went on John Jones. "They won't have much time for that, either. But Dubois will never take this schooner to the South Seas, as he counted on."

"We're sinking!" muttered Drake.

"I reckon so. Keep a stiff upper lip," said the chief mate.

There was a wild trampling of feet on the deck overhead. Drake could guess that the mutineers were hurriedly lowering the boats and flinging their belongings into them. The tramping ceased at last. The silence showed that the mutineers were gone. They had abandoned the sinking schooner after battering down the hatches upon the doomed trio in the hold.

In the silence there was no sound but that of the water pouring into the hold. The schooner was settling deep.

As in the grip of an evil dream, Jack Drake clung to the case upon which he had climbed, while the waters washed round him.

He was startled by the sound of heavy blows. The chief mate had mounted the ladder to the little galley hatch, and was wielding his axe upon it. A faint stirring of hope came to Drake. Now that the mutineers had gone, it was possible to venture on deck, if they could escape from the hold.

Crash, crash!

The mate wielded the axe with sinewy arms. Splinters of wood dropped into the water. There was a glimmer of light from above. The blows of the axe had smashed through the galley hatch at last.

Crash, crash, crash!

Mr. Jones laid aside the axe at last and forced his way through the shattered cover of the hatch.

"This way!" he called out.

"Voilà, mon garçon!" Gautier called out to Jack Drake; and he grasped the schoolboy by the arm and helped him to the open hatch.

Drake crawled through and the second mate followed him. A minute more and they were on the open deck.

Drake blinked in the glare of the sunshine. The schooner was deserted by all but themselves. Far away on the sea Drake sighted two bobbing boats. The mutineers had pulled away and were already disappearing in the distance.

Drake looked round him. The schooner was deep in the water, settling down by the head, and the deck was all askant.

Overhead soared the sun of midday, a golden ball in a sky of blue. On the sea there was no sign of a ship.

"How long before she goes down, Mr. Jones?" asked the junior, with a shudder.

The chief mate shrugged his shoulders.

"Ten minutes—or an hour, perhaps," he answered. "There's no telling. Keep a stiff upper lip."

He sat on the combings of the hatchway and lighted his pipe. Gautier moved restlessly about the deck, muttering to himself, far from sharing the stolid calmness of the chief mate.

The schooner was settling down deeper and deeper, and every moment it seemed that the ill-fated ship was about to take the final plunge. The water was washing over the scuppers now.

At every moment Jack Drake expected to see the bowsprit dip under. But it remained above the waves, and the junior realised at last that the schooner was not settling deeper.

The chief mate knocked the ashes from his pipe and rose to his feet.

"She's holding on," he said. "I reckon the cargo's shifted and stopped the water coming in. She may hold on for hours—or minutes!"

He scanned the horizon keenly. Drake saw his look become fixed and earnest, and he started.

"What is it?" exclaimed the junior breathlessly. "Do you see anything?"

"I reckon so! Wait till I get some glasses!"

The mate ran down into the cabin, and came clambering back to the deck with a pair of binoculars in his hand.

Drake watched him, his heart thumping. Was there a chance of rescue, after all?

Mr. Jones was silent for some moments as he gazed. He handed the glasses to Gautier, who gave a whoop of joy as he looked.

"A ship!" exclaimed Drake.

"A full-rigged ship, and bearing down," answered Mr. Jones. He hurried away to fly a signal of distress at the masthead. Then they waited.

Drake's eyes were fixed upon the horizon, where a blur appeared on the sky, shaping at last into a ship's topsails.

The schooner still floated. The cargo, awash in the hold, had shifted and doubtless jammed, or partly jammed, the gashes through which the sea had poured in. Waterlogged, and trembling at every surge of the waves, the schooner still remained afloat. There was hope brightening in every face now.

Drake watched the nearing sails as they became clearer and clearer. It came into his mind that there was something familiar in the aspect of the great ship that was bearing down towards the wreck.

The course of the ship did not bring her directly towards the schooner, and unless her crew sighted the wreck she might pass in the distance, and still leave the three to death.

Drake could have cried aloud for joy as he saw the ship fall off from her course and steer in a direct line for the schooner. The wreck had been seen!

Gautier was rubbing his hands with glee, and Mr. Jones allowed his pipe to go out in his excitement. Drake could hardly keep still. The great ship loomed larger and closer, and then the schoolboy realised what it was that had seemed familiar in her aspect. He gave a sudden shout:

"The Benbow!"

The chief mate glanced at him.

"What's that?"

"The Benbow!" shouted Drake in delight.

"The good old Benbow! Hurrah!"

The Rescue!

DICK RODNEY, on board the Benbow, was gazing towards the wreck idly as the Benbow bore down towards it. Little did he dream that his lost chum was on board the drifting hulk, and even then watching the approach of the school ship with eager eyes.

Most of the eyes on board the Benbow were turned upon the floating wreck. The signal of distress had been seen, showing that survivors still lingered there, and that lives were to be saved.

As the two vessels neared, three figures could be made out on the slanting deck of the schooner—dark dots to Rodney's eyes. But he saw Captain Topcastle start as he turned his binoculars upon the wreck, and the captain called out to Mr. Packe, who joined him hurriedly.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Packe was heard to exclaim. "Is it possible?"

"Look yourself, sir!"

Mr. Packe looked through the glasses and gave a nod.

"Undoubtedly—there is no mistake. Thank Heaven!"

He came along quickly to Rodney.

"Cheer up, my boy!" he said. "Drake lives!" Rodney started.

"How do you know, sir?"

"Captain Topcastle recognised him on this

wreck. He is with two others there. Apparently he is safe and sound!"

"Oh!" gasped Rodney.

"Evidently he was picked up last night by the vessel yonder," said Mr. Packe.

Dick Rodney tried to speak, but he could not—the relief was too great. He leaned on the rail, his heart throbbing. His eyes were fixed upon the wreck, now close at hand. Two men and a boy could be made out on the slanting deck, waving to the ship. And the boy was his chum—his chum whom he had almost given up as dead!

"Drake's alive!"

The words ran through the Benbow from end to end. It brought Daubeny of the Shell to the deck, with white face and startled eyes.

"Drake—alive!" he muttered, in Rodney's ear.

"It's not possible!"

Rodney looked at him.

"He's there," he said, pointing to the wreck.

"They're lowering a boat now to take him off."

Vernon Daubeny stared blankly at the drifting schooner. To do him justice, his first feeling was of immense relief. Jack Drake was living; he was not guilty, as he had believed. That hasty blow in the maintop had not placed the brand of Cain upon his brow.

The wretched junior could have sobbed in his relief. With dazed eyes he watched the Benbow's boat drop into the water and pull for the schooner.

Yes, there was no doubt now. It was Jack Drake who was springing from the drifting hulk into the waiting boat—Jack Drake, whom he had supposed to be lost for ever in the depths of the Atlantic.

The three survivors were taken into the boat, which pulled back to the Benbow, amid loud cheers from the seamen and the Benbow fellows.

It was then that Daubeny's relief and joy were dashed by the feeling of fear for himself. Jack Drake was living! Jack Drake was coming back to the Benbow! And he would speak, and all would be known!

Daubeny turned and crept away to his cabin. There he remained, with white face and palpitating heart, in terror of what was to follow.

He was the only one of the Benbow fellows who was absent when Jack Drake stepped at last on the deck of the Benbow, and was greeted by his schoolfellows.

Burying the Hatchet!

"DAUBENY!"

Egan of the Shell came into Daubeny's cabin, and Daub started with a ghastly look on his face.

"Do they—do they want me?" he gasped.

"I don't know whether they want you specially, but everybody's going," answered Egan. "There's a giddy celebration, and it's a case of all hands. I can't say I ever liked Drake, but I'm jolly glad he wasn't drowned. There's going to be high jinks in the Common-room. Aren't you comin'?"

"What has Drake said?"

Egan eyed him curiously.

"Said—about what?" he asked.

"I—I mean—" Daubeny forced out the words. "About—Hasn't he told how he came to fall overboard?"

"Yes, he explained that to Mr. Packe. He

tumbled off the maintop, that's all. Just what most of the fellows thought."

"Hasn't he—hasn't he said——"

"What?"

"Nothin'."

"Come on, old top," said Egan. "We aren't friends with Drake, but I think we might show up on an occasion like this. I'm goin', anyhow."

And Egan quitted the study.

Daubeny remained alone, moving restlessly about the cabin, a prey to mingled hope and fear.

Drake had not spoken. He had stated that he had tumbled from the maintop, which was quite correct. Of the hasty blow Daubeny had struck there, which had caused his fall, he had apparently said nothing. Would he—could he—keep silent, after he had passed through the valley of the shadow of death? It was impossible, Daubeny thought.

There was a step outside the cabin. Daubeny swung round to the door as it opened. It was Jack Drake who looked into the room.

Daubeny eyed him silently. Why had Drake come there?

"You knew I was saved, I suppose?" said Drake. There was no enmity in his manner, to Daubeny's astonishment.

"I—I knew," muttered Daubeny. "I—I'm glad. I hope you believe I'm glad, Drake?"

"I'm sure of it," said the Fourth Former cheerily. "You never meant to knock me into the sea, I suppose?"

Daubeny shuddered.

"Never. I—I thought you'd gone straight down. If I'd fancied for a minute that you were swimming, I'd have given the alarm. But—but——"

"But you were scared out of your wits at what you'd done, and you didn't give me much thought, I suppose?" said Drake dryly.

Daubeny winced.

"It—it's the truth," he said, with unexpected humility. "I acted like a beast; but if you knew what I've gone through since, Drake, I don't think you'd bear malice."

Jack Drake's face softened. In Daubeny's haggard features it was easy to read what the wretched junior had been through since he had struck that almost fatal blow.

"I suppose you're goin' to tell them?" muttered Daubeny.

"Of course not."

"What?"

"Not a word," said Drake reassuringly. "I suppose you haven't mentioned it?"

"I? Not likely!"

"Then let's keep it dark between us," said Drake. "It's not the kind of thing to be talked about. I'm not going to say a word, anyhow."

Daubeny looked at him, scarcely believing his ears. He could not speak for the moment.

"I came along to tell you it was all right, and nothing said," explained Drake. "Also to ask you to the celebration. We're keeping it up. Come along."

"I—I say, Drake——" began Daubeny, the colour flushing into his cheeks. "I—I say, we used to be friends at one time, but we fell out. I'm sorry. I know it was my fault all along. If—if you'd care"—he hesitated, and then went on—"if you'd care to be friends again, after what's happened——"

Drake looked at him curiously.

"I've had a lesson," muttered Daubeny—"a

(Continued on page 36.)



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Miss K. Loveland, 36, Sea View Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex; girl correspondents, age 20 upwards; riding, reading, yachting and dancing.

D. Collard, Edgehill, Mansfield, Woodhouse, Notts; back numbers of the GEM for disposal.

B. Vincent, 7, Milton Park, Highgate, London, N.6; any age; sport and any subject; anywhere.

Miss P. Davis, 132, Sultan Road, Mile End, Portsmouth; girl correspondents, age 17-21; tap dancing, snaps, swimming, and film stars; anywhere in British Isles.

Miss M. Ward, 84, Cardiff Road, Llandaff, Cardiff, Glamorgan; girl correspondents, age 12-13; sports, roller-skating, reading, schools, dogs, autographs; Switzerland, Canada, S. France.



The Exchange Pen Pals Club, 34, Gladstone Road, Chippenham, Wilts, has now started a Personal Pen Pal Exchange for both members and non-members. There is no subscription, but applicants will be expected to take our magazine each month, price sixpence. Please write for details.

Miss J. Chapman, 9, St. Mary's Hill, Stamford, Lincs; girl correspondents, age 14-16; films, film stars, and books; Canada.

Miss N. Clarke, 34, St. Leonard's Street, Stamford, Lincs; girl correspondents, age 13-16; films, film stars, mystery books and dance music; Canada.

F. Forl, 10, Lamey's Close, Blonhow Street, Marlborough, Wilts; age 13-15; stamps, art; anywhere except United Kingdom.

P. Smith, 20, Luffman Road, Grove Park, London, S.E.12; age 10-15; jazz, films, novelties; anywhere.

The Lion Correspondence Association wants new members; all countries; any age. Write to K. Coulter, 20, Hawthorn Road, Buckthorn Hill, Essex, stating age and subject interested in.

K. Jin, P.O. Box 56, Kuching, Sarawak, Borneo; any age; stamps, photos, music and swimming; anywhere.

"The Terrible Two," 20, Neville View, Osmondthorpe, Leeds 9; pen pals, age 14; South Africa, Australia, and Canada.

R. Malivoire, 8, Chatsworth Drive, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex; age 12; chemistry, stamps; New Zealand.

T. S. Hu, 176, Telok Ayer Street, Singapore, Straits Settlements; stamps; all letters answered.

C. H. Mun, c/o Sungai Besi Mines, Sungai Besi, Selangor, Malaya; stamps, postcards and snaps; anywhere.

C. de Silva, Post Office Bungalow, Dodanduwa, Ceylon; age 15-20; stamps; any part of world except England, India, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand.

A. Windsor, Yaverland Route, Isabelle, St. Peter Port, Guernsey; age 16-17; any subject; Palestine, China, and Australia.

B. Murgatroyd, 3, Crawshaw Avenue, Pudsey, near Leeds; age 11-13; stamps and sports; any British Island, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; all letters answered.

T. K. Kee, c/o T. G. Thong, 23, Telok Ayer Street, Singapore, Straits Settlements; stamps; all letters answered.

R. Brown, 19, Stanley Road, Herne Bay, Kent; stamps; anywhere except Great Britain, Egypt, S. Africa, and Canada; all letters answered.

THE SCUTTLED SCHOONER!

(Continued from page 34.)

lesson I shan't ever forget." He shuddered. "I—if you—"

He broke off, and held out his hand.

"My dear chap, that's all right," said Drake at once, and he grasped the hand of his old enemy cordially enough.

No more was said. The two juniors quitted the cabin together. They came together into the Common-room, where a tremendous celebration was prepared, with Tuckey Toodles in his element as master of the ceremonies.

"Here you are, Drake!" chirruped Tuckey. "Waiting for you, you slacker! I say, it's awfully jolly to have you back. I was quite heartbroken, you know. I ate hardly any brekker this morning—did I, Sawyer?"

"Only enough for three," answered Sawyer major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here you are, Daub," said Drake. "Sit down, old chap."

"I say, isn't your fight with Daub coming off, Drake?" inquired Tuckey Toodles.

"No, it isn't; but a thumping good licking for Toodles will come off if you don't ring off!" answered Drake.

It was a great celebration, and as it progressed Vernon Daubeny looked more like his old self. But from that day he was not quite his old self, and he was all the better for it. The lesson he had had was a terrible one, and it had changed Daubeny a good deal, and it had changed him for the better.

Next Week: "MISCHIEF-MAKERS OF THE BENBOW!"

THE STOWAWAY OF THE SILVER SWALLOW!

(Continued from page 24.)

"But the packet from Pawis was sent to Cannes, Blake, not to Lyons—"

"Giuseppe doesn't know that, fathead! He doesn't know we're only here for a day! He never had time to look at the packet—he just rushed and snatched. And he got it—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Tom.

"And when he gets to a safe spot and examines his prize," gurgled Blake, "and when he finds that it isn't that jolly old black box, but some numbers of the 'Magnet'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The St. Jim's party chortled. There could be no doubt of it. Giuseppe had watched the party going to the post office; he had seen Arthur Augustus emerge, packet in hand, and he had snatched that packet and bolted. Not till he was at a safe distance was he likely to stop and examine the packet he had snatched—and, when he did so, the juniors could imagine what his feelings would be like! Attractive periodical as the "Magnet" was, it was not likely to please Giuseppe when it met his eyes!

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I don't like losin' my papahs, you know, but weally it was worth it to think of that uttah ass pullin' his own leg like that! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Tom Merry & Co.

And the St. Jim's party proceeded on their walk in hilarious spirits. They saw no more of Giuseppe! Probably he had lost their track, or perhaps he was sitting down somewhere reading the "Magnet"—a suggestion that made the Easter trippers roar again.

Next Wednesday: "THE DEAD CITY!"

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