

A REAL ACTION PHOTOGRAPH OF MAX WOOSNAM FREE IN THIS ISSUE!

The

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20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

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**ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY IS RESCUED BY UNKNOWN FRIENDS!**

*(An Exciting Incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)*

## MAX WOOSNAM.

(A Splendid All-round Athlete, and Masterly Player of the Manchester City F.C.)

**I**N the very last match of last season, Max Woosnam, playing at centre-half for Manchester City against Newcastle United, received a serious injury, breaking a bone in his leg. Consequently, at the time of writing these notes it is not definitely known whether he will be fit to take his usual place on the football field when the new season opens. If the broken leg should prevent Max Woosnam from playing football during the coming season, then Manchester City will indeed be the poorer for the absence of a masterly player, while if by any chance the injury should mean the final retirement of this man from the game, then football will lose one of its finest ornaments.

There are precious few amateurs who turn out nowadays with the biggest clubs, but Woosnam is one of them. He is more than merely a good footballer though. He has, in fact, been described as the Admirable Clifton of sport, being a fine all-round athlete such as we have not known since the time when C. B. Fry was at the zenith of his fame. Last summer he captained the England team

at lawn tennis, but, of course, the injury sustained at football has prevented him from taking part in the game at all seriously during the present summer.

Ever since he was a boy all games have seemed to come alike to this wonder-man of sport. He was the public school batsman of 1911, twelfth man for Cambridge at Lord's in 1912, and gained blues for golf, soccer, lawn tennis and real tennis, while he has also been known to play cricket and to take a hand at polo when the opportunity has presented itself. Sport comes so naturally to him that there cannot be the slightest doubt that he would have been a master at any game upon which he had found time to concentrate; but it is a remarkable fact that while he has gained successes in so many directions, he has always considered games as a pastime, and not as the main object in life.

On the football field last season Maxwell Woosnam helped Manchester City to many successes as captain of the side, and he also gained a new honour in being chosen to

captain England in an International match proper, though he had previously played for his country in amateur Internationals.

On September 6th next, "Max," as he is known to everybody in the sporting world, will be thirty years of age, having been born at Liverpool on September 6th, 1892. So far as soccer goes, it is interesting to recall in passing that it was as a centre-forward that he first promised to make a name for himself while at Winchester, but later, at Trinity College, Cambridge, he developed as an inside-right. From there he went to the centre-half position, and in the season of 1913-14 he captained a combined Oxford and Cambridge team against Chelsea, at Stamford Bridge. His play on that occasion so impressed the Chelsea people that they offered him a place in the side whenever he cared to play, and he did appear in one or two games for the Pensioners at left half-back, though he was a stranger in that position. Then came the war to interrupt the playing career of most people, Max Woosnam included.

When the conflict was over he secured a business appointment in Manchester, and threw in his lot with Manchester City. Since then he has proved a veritable tower of strength. There may be better fellows at passing the ball to his colleagues, but there is no greater centre-half in the stopping direction than Woosnam, who is a fine type of man, and never seems to tire, staying it through the most strenuous of games with colleagues who give much more time to training than he does. Everybody who has the best interests of sport at heart will join in wishing him a complete recovery.

## "My Readers' Own Corner."

Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If you do not win a prize this week, you may next!)

### This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

#### THE NUT WEEVIL.

Most people have cracked a bad nut, and wondered how it came like that. It may have surprised them when they were told that the mischief had been done by a small insect called a nut weevil. When the nut was very small, this little beetle came along, and bored a hole, and poked an egg into it. Soon after a tiny white grub emerged from the egg. The grub at once started eating the kernel, leaving nothing but a black powder. Then it changed into a chrysalis, out of which a nut weevil made its appearance in due course. A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to Geoffrey C. Manning, 296, Coronation Road, Bristol.

#### THE LOCUST.

The locust is about as thick as a man's thumb. It has wings, and it arrives in clouds on any locality, millions of locusts darkening the sky like a cloud. In South Africa the Dutch farmers dread the pest, and with reason, for the locusts devour up whole fields of carefully cultivated crops in five minutes. They lie in myriads on the ground, and will crawl up you if you happen to be out in the open. The locust is a dangerous pest in every way. In appearance they resemble grasshoppers, but are, of course, ever so much larger.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Ronald Ford, 12, Ardwick Terrace, Ardwick.

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#### THE THOUGHTFUL MAN.

A gentleman was visiting a friend's house one night, and as a very severe storm arose, the host begged his guest to remain the night. The visitor accepted the invitation with gratitude, but soon

#### "CAN YOU HEAD 'EM?"



See Particulars of Our New and Novel Competition on Page 11.

Big Money Prizes Offered!

after he was missed. Hours later he returned. He was drenched to the skin, and when asked what had happened, he replied: "Well, you see, I thought I had better get home and tell my wife that I should not be home to-night, as the weather was so awful." Half-a-crown has been awarded to James Lawrie, 45, Gordon Square, Wallsend-on-Tyne.

#### WINTER QUARTERS FOR FLIES.

It is an old question as to where flies spend the winter. Some people say the insects hibernate in walls that are near some heating apparatus. But here is an instance as to where flies go which may cause some surprise. In Carmarthen, the market clock was being repaired. When examination was made of the machinery of the clock, myriads of flies were discovered. They were all seemingly fast asleep—thousands and thousands of them—all amongst the wheels of the clock. Half-a-crown has been awarded to Harry Davies, 27, Parcmain Street, Carmarthen, Wales.

#### STRICT DUTY.

A railway director rebuked a ticket-collector who allowed him to go through the gate without producing his pass. "No matter if you do know who I am," said the director, "I am entitled to ride free only when I am travelling with that pass. You don't know whether I have it or not." The ticket-collector asked to see the pass. "That's right," said the director. "Here—why—where—well, I must have left it at the office." "Then you'll have to pay the fare," responded the collector.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to S. Rowley, 102, High Street, Clapham, S.W. 4.

# The RUNAWAY at ROOKWOOD!



A Grand Long Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the runaway from school, just manages to evade capture at the hands of Mr. Dalton, one of the masters at Rookwood School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.  
Cornered!

"H E'S coming!"  
"Oh, what fearful luck!"  
Tom Merry of the Shell and Jack Blake of the Fourth uttered those exclamations simultaneously, in suppressed tones.

Their luck was out. There was no mistake about that. The two juniors were far from their own quarters. To be exact, they were in a Sixth Form study, where they certainly were not supposed to be. And the study belonged to Gerald Knox, the bully of St. Jim's, which made matters all the more awkward if the enterprising juniors should be discovered there.

The coast had been quite clear when Tom and Blake had trod cautiously down the Sixth Form corridor, and entered the study. They had made sure of that. It was very necessary to be careful when the juniors went on the war-path against the high and mighty Sixth.

But they had not been two minutes in the study when footsteps were heard approaching the door. The startled juniors blinked at one another across the table.

Blake, who had taken Knox's clock from the mantelpiece with the kind intention of filling it with ink and gum, hastily replaced it. The clock ticked on cheerily, though its cheery tick had come so very near to being stopped for ever. Tom Merry, who had Knox's slippers in one hand, and a box of tacks in the other, shoved the tacks hurriedly into his pocket and dropped the slippers on the rug.

They were there to rag Knox for his many sins. Knox was a bully. He was, in the opinion of the juniors, at least, a rank outsider, and he was the original cause of the trouble which had led Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth to run away from school. If ever a prefect of the Sixth had asked for a ragging, Knox had, and he was going to get what he had asked for. At all events, he had been going to get it, but the footsteps at the door interrupted.

Voices were audible as well as footsteps. Knox's voice, silky and deferential, showed that he was addressing a master.

"Certainly, sir! Will you step into my study?"

"Very well." That was Mr. Railton's voice.

Tom Merry and Blake looked almost horrified. To be caught ragging in Knox's study by Gerald Knox would have been bad enough. But to be caught there by their House-master, too—

Blake was the first to act. He made a hurried sign to his comrade in distress, and plunged into the corner alcove where the bed was. The Sixth Form did not occupy a dormitory like the other Forms at St. Jim's. Each Sixth Form room was study and bed-room combined. Knox's bed was in an alcove, shut off in the day-time by rather handsome curtains.

"Quick!" breathed Blake.

He jerked the curtain aside, and sprawled over the bed. Tom Merry was quick to follow.

The curtain fell in place behind them just as the door-handle moved under Knox's hand on the outside.

The two juniors squirmed across the bed and down against the wall on the other side. They left the coverlet rather rumpled by their hurried passage across it. But it was unlikely that Knox would pull back the curtains and glance there, especially when he had a visitor. They could only hope, anyhow, that he wouldn't.

Breathing hard, but as silently as they could, the two juniors lay low, hidden from sight for the present at least.

The door was wide open now, and Mr. Railton had entered the study, respectfully followed by Knox. The two hidden juniors were thankful that they had not had time to begin the rag, after all. Now there was nothing about the study to excite suspicion. They had only to lie low till Knox and the Housemaster were gone, and then emerge, and either resume the rag or escape, as circumstances should dictate.

Knox closed the door.

"Won't you sit down, sir?"

Mr. Railton sat down.

"You are not occupied this afternoon, Knox, I think?"

"Not specially, sir," said Knox. "I had one or two little engagements, but I am quite at your service, if there is any thing—"

"All the other House prefects will be in the senior cricket match," said Mr. Railton. "I have asked Kildare, and it appears that you are the only Sixth Form prefect of the School House not included in his team."

"Ye-e-es, sir" mumbled Knox. Tom Merry and Blake exchanged a grin. Knox was not likely to be in Kildare's eleven for the match with Rylcombe seniors that afternoon after his rotten "display" in the House match, the occasion when his trouble had arisen with D'Arcy, owing to that youth's too candid criticism of Knox's form.

"I have arranged to umpire in the match," continued Mr. Railton. "Otherwise I might find time to go over to Rookwood myself. As the matter stands, Knox, I am engaged for the afternoon, and all the other School House prefects are engaged with the exception of yourself. I do not care to ask a New House prefect to act for me in the circumstances."

"If there is anything I can do, sir, I hope you will not pass me over for a prefect of the other House," said Knox.

"It would be a slight, Knox, which I am unwilling to inflict," said Mr. Railton. "I shall, therefore, ask you to visit Rookwood School this afternoon, to fetch back the foolish boy who has run away from St. Jim's."

"D'Arcy of the Fourth, sir?"

"Yes."

"I—I understood that D'Arcy had run away to a distant quarter. He was heard of at Greyfriars, in Kent," said Knox.

"Kildare and Darrell were sent for him, Knox. Perhaps you have not heard what they reported on their return," said Mr. Railton. "They succeeded in finding D'Arcy and bringing him back, but he escaped them at Wayland Junction, and it has transpired that he took the train to Lexham. It occurred to me that the thought might have entered his reckless mind, as he is apparently determined to keep away from school, of visiting Rookwood, where he has friends. Accordingly, I suggested to the Head to telephone to the headmaster of Rookwood."

Knox looked interested. His interest was equalled by that of the two juniors huddled behind the bed in the alcove.

Tom Merry and Blake had no desire whatever to play the eavesdropper, but circumstances were too strong for them. To reveal their presence was to request a licking, and for lickings they did not yearn.

"And the young rascal is at Rookwood, then, sir?" asked Knox.

"It appears so. Dr. Chisholm, the headmaster of Rookwood, answered the inquiry in the affirmative."

"Then his recapture should be an easy matter," said Knox, with a glint in his eyes. "I am quite at your service, sir."

"The Head has requested Dr. Chisholm to have the boy detained until he is sent for," said Mr. Railton. "Of course, he must be fetched away as quickly as possible. If you will undertake this duty, Knox—"

"Most certainly, sir!"

"Your expenses, of course, will be met," said Mr. Railton. "You will give Dr. Holmes' respects to Dr. Chisholm, and bring the boy away without any delay. If he should be so foolish and ill-advised as to resist your authority, you may hire a car to make the return journey, in order to save any unpleasant scenes at the railway-stations and another possible escape of the reckless lad."

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Railton rose.

"That is all, Knox. I am very much obliged to you."

"Not at all, sir."

After a few more words the Housemaster quitted the study. Knox stood with a grave and composed face, watching him go. But when the door had closed behind the Housemaster the bully of the Sixth broke into a chuckle.

"By gad! I'll make the young hound sorry for having laid hands on me!" he muttered aloud. "This is a chance, and no mistake!" A sneer crossed Knox's hard, thin face. "The only prefect left out of the cricket—that's why my estimable Housemaster asks me! I could see that he'd rather have asked even a New House prefect, only he couldn't very well do it. I wonder why the brute doesn't like me—I butter him enough, and thick enough, I think. Anyhow, he had no choice about sending me; and if I don't make that young scoundrel sorry for himself this afternoon—"

The bully of the Sixth finished with another chuckle.

He sat down at the table, and, feeling sure that the Housemaster would not return, lighted a cigarette while he scanned a time-table. When the smoke was finished he rose in great good-humour, and strolled out of the study. Knox of the Sixth was promising himself a happy afternoon.

## CHAPTER 2.

### Going for Gussy!

"COAST'S clear!" murmured Blake.

"Let's cut!" said Tom Merry briefly.

The two juniors emerged from the bed alcove.

Then they looked at one another.

"Here's a go!" murmured Blake. "So Gussy's at Rookwood—"

"As we suspected," said Tom.

"And Knox is going after him! Poor old Gussy! Let's get on with the ragging," said Blake.

The captain of the Shell shook his head.

"Let's cut," he said. "We couldn't help hearing what they said; but we don't want to give it away that we've been here. Come out!"

"But—" began Blake reluctantly.

"We've got to put a spoke in Knox's wheel this afternoon," said Tom. "No time for rags now, old chap. Hook it!"

"Oh, all right!"

Tom opened the door cautiously, and peered into the passage. The corridor was empty, and the coast was clear. The two juniors stepped quietly from the study, and walked away with an air of assumed carelessness. At the corner of the passage they passed Darrell of the Sixth, but he only nodded to them in passing.

They were glad, however, to get to a safe distance from the Sixth Form quarters. In the Common-room passage Manners and Lowther of the Shell were waiting anxiously.

"Caught?" asked Manners.

"Booked?" queried Lowther.

"Not likely," said Blake loftily, while Tom Merry shook his head.

"But we saw Knox going to his study, and old Railton was with him," said Manners. "We thought you'd be nabbed for certain."

"It was a jolly near thing," said Tom. "But it's all right—and we've got some news. Where are the Fourth Form kids?"

"In the Common-room."

"Come on, then!"

Tom Merry and his comrades entered the Common-room, where they found Herries and Digby of the Fourth.

"Hallo! Done your little rag?" asked Herries.

"No; nothing doing, as it happens."

"I thought you'd make a muck of it," said Dig, shaking his head. "Now, if I had gone instead—"

"Bow-wow!" interrupted Tom Merry. "We've got news that is better than a ragging. Gussy is at Rookwood—"

"We guessed that!" said Lowther.

"Yes, ass; but that isn't all. The Head's telephoned and found it out for certain, and asked the beak at Rookwood

to lay Gussy by the heels until he can be called for, and brought home, this side up with care."

"Poor old Gussy!" said Herries. "Well, it's time he chucked playing the giddy goat. From what I hear, he bunked into a girls' school when Kildare was after him. Goodness knows what he'll bunk into next!"

Tom Merry nodded.

"But Knox is being sent to fetch him home, as all the other prefects are in the cricket to-day," he said. "And Knox will make it hot for Gussy with a chance like that!"

"Bound to!" assented Herries. "Well, we can't stop him, can we?"

"That's just what I was thinking," said Tom Merry. "Knox will be starting for Rookwood immediately after dinner, I expect; and we—"

"Well, we—" said Manners.

"We're going to stop him," said Tom Merry resolutely.

"Phew!"

"Stop a prefect sent by a Housemaster!" said Blake, with a whistle. "I say, that's a fair-sized order!"

"Gussy ought to be brought home," said Manners decidedly. "Knox was the cause of all the trouble, but he oughtn't to have run away from school. That's the limit. He ought to be yanked home!"

"I know that, ass!" said Tom. "But Gussy's not going to be marched out of Rookwood with Knox's paw on his collar, and all the fellows grinning, and bullied all the way home by Knox into the bargain. Rookwood's a good distance from here, but it's a half-holiday, and if Knox can fetch Gussy home, we can!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Blake.

"Us!" exclaimed Lowther.

"Little us!" said Tom Merry serenely. "Of course, we can't all go—the railway fares are too steep. But two or three of us can go—"

"Gussy won't give in for us," said Dig.

"He will have to," said Tom coolly. "You see, things will be pretty rotten for Gussy when he does come back, but the Head will go lightly if he comes back of his own accord, instead of being dragged home by a prefect. Well, we're going to make him come back of his own accord."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he won't come, we'll hang on to his ears and make him," said Tom. "He doesn't know what's good for him, but we do, and we're going to save him from his own fatheadedness, you know."

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Blake. "If we're late for calling over we can stand it for once. But what about tin?"

"That's the giddy question. Let's pool resources, and then select who's to go—as many as the money will cover."

"Good!"

There was a general "shelling out" on the part of the juniors, and all their financial resources were piled on the Common-room table. Fortunately, two or three of them were in funds. But the whole sum, when carefully counted, amounted to no more than thirty shillings. Tom Merry looked rather serious.

"That won't see more than one of us through, with Gussy's fare to pay!" he remarked.

"He won't come for one of us!" said Blake decidedly. "You know what an obstinate mule he is. There'll be a fight at every station on the way home!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, you giddy misers! Countin' up your guilty gold?" asked a cheery voice, as Cardew of the Fourth strolled into the Common-room with Levison and Clive.

"Just in time, you fellows!" grinned Blake. "You can ladle out some of your wealth!"

"What's the idea?" asked Levison of the Fourth.

Tom Merry explained. The chums of Study No. 9 grinned.

"Jolly good idea," said Levison. "Gussy will get into a fearful row if he has to be yanked home by a prefect. Two or three of you will be able to persuade him to come."

"If I get within reach of the silly owl I'll persuade him fast enough!" said Blake grimly.

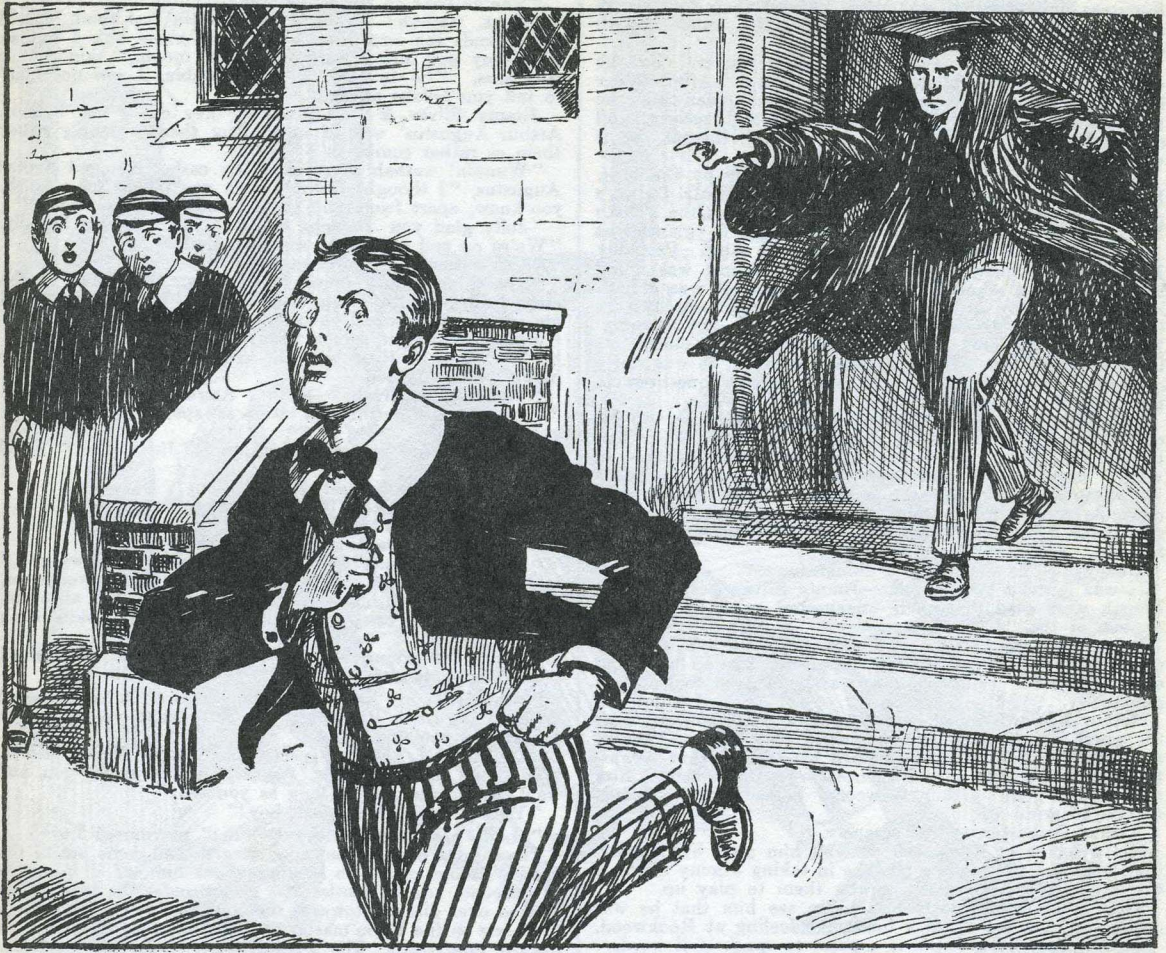
Levison turned out five shillings to the pool, and Clive added three half-crowns. Ralph Reckness Cardew took out his purse.

"May I svank to the extent of a pound note?" he inquired.

"Ha, ha! To the extent of two, if you like!" said Tom Merry. "If there's any change left after the trip it shall be handed back to you."

"There you are, then!"

Cardew dropped a couple of pound-notes on the little pile—there were a dozen more in his purse. Tom Merry counted the "pool" with satisfaction. Kit Wildrake strolled in while he was doing so, and, hearing what was on, the Canadian junior added when he called a dollar. It was a case of "all hands to the mill," and contributions were welcome from all quarters.



At the sight of the open doorway looking out into the quadrangle, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made a sudden movement, jerked his shoulder away from Mr. Dalton, and made a bound for the open air. "Stop!" shouted the Rookwood master. The St. Jim's junior did not dream of stopping. He cleared the School House steps with a bound, and sprinted for the gates. (See page 8.)

"That'll see us through," said Tom. "Two of us can easily go on this, and something left over, as well as seeing Gussy through. Now the question is, which two?"

That was a question that required considerable debate. The Terrible Three of the Shell felt that they themselves ought to take the matter in hand, in order to ensure complete and perfect success. Blake and Herries and Digby, however, doubted very seriously whether success was possible if Shell fellows had a hand in the affair. The debate was still going strong when the bell rang for dinner, and it had to be adjourned.

After dinner the debate was resumed, and as there was no time to waste now, it was settled by the simple expedient of dropping six slips of paper, with names on them, into a hat. The first two drawn were to be the names of the envoys to Rookwood. Talbot of the Shell was called on to draw.

The first slip bore the name of Jack Blake, and that youth nodded with satisfaction and relief.

"It will be all right now," he remarked. "Doesn't matter much about the other."

Talbot smiled and drew the second slip. "Tom Merry!"

"Good!" said the captain of the Shell. "I'll see that Blake doesn't make a muck of the bizney."

"Why, you cheeky ass—" began Blake.

"There goes Knox!" said Herries, with a nod towards the gravel path that ran down to the gates.

Knox of the Sixth, with a cheery smile on his face, was starting.

"No time to lose now," said Tom. "Hurry up!"

The two juniors did not require long to get ready. In three minutes they were trotting down the lane after Knox; and they overtook him before he reached the village. And when Knox of the Sixth took his ticket at the station, Tom Merry and Blake followed him up and took tickets also; and the same train bore them to Wayland Junction.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Refugee at Rookwood!

"TRY the-pudding, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was hungry.

The runaway of St. Jim's had breakfasted very lightly that morning, and at an early hour.

Now he was seated in the old dining-hall at Rookwood School, and he hardly needed pressing by the hospitable juniors of Rookwood.

Certainly, a good many Rookwood fellows were surprised to see him there. Gussy was, in fact, a little surprised himself.

But it was a case of any port in a storm.

Quite resolved not to return to St. Jim's until he could return in all honour—with a flourish of trumpets, as it were—the runaway schoolboy had no choice but to keep on the run. Home was closed to him by the simple circumstance that Lord Eastwood would have sent his hopeful second son back to St. Jim's immediately had Arthur Augustus turned up at Eastwood House.

Captured by Kildare and Darrell, Arthur Augustus had been brought back to Sussex; but he had dodged and fled, and the night had been spent in a little inn near Lexham. It was in thinking over affairs on the following morning that Gussy thought of Rookwood and remembered that he was not far from Jimmy Silver's school.

To drop in there for lunch seemed a natural proceeding.

Funds were running short—Gussy had to husband his supply of that very necessary article, cash. Lunches cost money. Now, on the last occasion when Rookwood had visited St. Jim's for cricket, the chums of Rookwood had mentioned to Gussy that they would be no end pleased to see him again, any time or anywhere. They liked Gussy, as most fellows did. So finding himself in the neighbourhood of Rookwood and lunch-time approaching, and financial

resources limited, what was more natural than that Gussy should bethink him of Jimmy Silver & Co., and drop in at Rookwood?

His immediate concern was lunch—or dinner. But he was glad to see his Rookwood friends again. After dinner he was going to think out his next step; meanwhile, he was enjoying a good dinner and congenial society, and sufficient for the moment was the dinner thereof, as it were.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were surprised a little by the visit. But they were all hospitality. Jimmy had asked Mr. Dalton's permission to bring a friend to "commons," and the Fourth Form master had assented at once, though he glanced at Arthur Augustus rather curiously along the table. Probably Mr. Dalton wondered what a St. Jim's fellow was doing so far from his school in term-time. True, it was a half-holiday that day, at both schools, but obviously D'Arcy had not been at lessons at his own school in the morning. Mr. Dalton wondered, perhaps, but he asked no questions; though, if the runaway's visit was prolonged, it was fairly certain that Mr. Dalton would begin to ask questions in the most serious manner.

But Arthur Augustus was not thinking of taking up his quarters at Rookwood—not definitely, at least. He had been routed out of Greyfriars, at Highcliffe he had put in several days, but he had been routed out again; at Cliff House School, he had been caught. Rookwood was a desirable refuge, but Arthur Augustus felt that it was not secure for a prolonged stay, even if a prolonged stay were feasible. And that was doubtful.

Meanwhile, he enjoyed his dinner.

It was quite a good dinner—Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth were glad that their unexpected guest had arrived on one of the "fat" days.

Quite excellent mutton, and nice potatoes, and a lovely cabbage had consoled Arthur Augustus for a light and early breakfast. Plum pudding was handed on to his plate generously.

Arthur Edward Lovell helped him. Lovell could see that the guest was hungry, and he helped him liberally, almost as liberally as Tubby Muffin helped himself. Arthur Augustus cleared the plate, and then George Raby helped him again; and then Arthur Newcome helped him to blanc-mange to wind up.

Arthur Augustus smiled serenely.

His welcome at Rookwood cheered him after his wanderings. He had not made a mistake in taking Jimmy Silver & Co. at their word and relying on them to play up.

They were so obviously pleased to see him that he was comforted, and had quite a home-like feeling at Rookwood.

Other fellows, too, made it a point to speak civil words—Errol and Conroy, and Oswald and other members of the Fourth. Arthur Augustus was feeling quite at home before the dinner ended.

After dinner Arthur Augustus walked cheerily out of Hall with the Fistical Four of Rookwood—Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome. Other fellows nodded and smiled to him cordially; but the Fistical Four took possession of the honoured guest, as it were.

They walked round the quadrangle after dinner and strolled under the old beeches, chatting. Then they sat down in a cheery row on one of the oaken benches under a big, shady beech-tree. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy leaned back against the trunk of the beech, and was happy.

"By the way, what are you doing in this part of the world?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell. "Just run over to see us?"

Lovell was rather curious, for certainly the distance was very considerable for merely a friendly visit, and besides, what had become of morning classes at St. Jim's?"

Arthur Augustus coloured slightly.

"I am goin' to explain to you fellahs," he said. "Pew-waps you will excuse me if I do not tell you ewewythin'."

"My dear chap, tell us nothing," said Lovell at once. "We're not inquisitive." But he could not help looking puzzled.

"I must tell you somethin', though," said Arthur Augustus. "I should not like you to regard me as secretive. For certain reasons, I am no longah at St. Jim's."

"You haven't left?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Not exactly, deah boy. But I have been away some little time, on my own, you know."

"My hat!" murmured Lovell, and all the Fistical Four blinked at the swell of St. Jim's blankly.

"For your own sakes, deah boys, I shall not confide the whole cires to you," explained Arthur Augustus. "You see, when a chap weties from his school on a question of dignity, his headmastah and housemastah are likely to take the wediculous view that he has run away from school."

"Oh!"

"When I was puttin' up at Highcliffe—"

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"You've been to Highcliffe?"

"Yaas, wathah! When I was puttin' up there, I told my fwiends the cires, and when it all came out, I wathah feah' they got into a wow for takin' me in," said Arthur Augustus. "So in case of any twouble, I am not goin' to tell you fellahs anythin'."

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned; they could not help it. Arthur Augustus' way of not telling them anything struck them as rather comic.

"Wunnin' wathah short of weady cash," resumed Arthur Augustus, "I thought I would stick you fellahs for a lunch, you know, apart from bein' vewy glad to see you again."

"Jolly glad you thought of it!" said Jimmy heartily. "We're no end pleased to see you, anyhow."

"Yes, rather!" concurred the Co.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys. Of course, in the cires, I am bound to cleah off fairly soon, but I have enjoyed my visit to Wookwood vewy much indeed!"

Jimmy exchanged a look with his comrades.

"We might fix it up with the beaks to put you up for the night!" he suggested.

"Thank you, Silvah!" Arthur Augustus shook his head. "I will not wisk gettin' you into a scwape, as I did the chaps at Highcliffe."

"But when are you going back to St. Jim's, then?" asked Raby.

"When mattahs are set wight."

"When is that likely to be?" queried Newcome.

"I weally do not know."

"And in the meantime—" said Jimmy Silver.

"In the meantime, deah boy, I am on my mewwy own," said Arthur Augustus. "Wathah a peculiar posish, you know, which would be wathah bad for some fellahs. It is all wight, of course, in my case, as I am quite equal to lookin' aftah myself."

"Hem!" murmured Jimmy. Privately, he entertained some doubts upon that point.

"Now, what are you fellahs doin' this aftahnoon?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I must not intewwupt your wewalah avocations, you know."

"Oh, there's nothing special on!" said Jimmy Silver.

"That's all right, old son. We're jolly glad to see you, and we'd like you to stay as long as you can."

"You're vewy good, deah boy!"

"Hallo, here comes Dicky Dalton!" murmured Lovell.

The master of the Rookwood Fourth had come out of the School House, and was looking about him, as if in search of someone. As he spotted the group under the beeches, he crossed over directly towards them. The five juniors rose to their feet as the Form-master approached; four of them with inward misgivings. The Fistical Four could see that Mr. Dalton's face was unusually grave and severe, and they wondered whether he had an inkling of what they had just learned from their guest.

Jimmy Silver & Co. could sympathise with a fellow in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's peculiar position; but they were aware that a Form-master was likely to take a very severe view of it. Running away from school was too serious an offence for a master to sympathise with the delinquent.

Mr. Dalton halted before the group of juniors, and his eyes rested on the swell of St. Jim's sternly.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, with respectful politeness.

"Dr. Chisholm has received a telephone message from your headmaster, Dr. Holmes!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Dr. Holmes inquired of him whether you had visited this school to-day, D'Arcy!" pursued Mr. Dalton, with increasing severity. "Dr. Chisholm inquired of me, and I informed him that you were here. It appears from your headmaster's statement, D'Arcy, that you have run away from school."

"Not at all, sir."

"What! Your headmaster has told Dr. Chisholm so."

"He is mistaken, sir!" said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Mistaken!"

"Yaas! I should wegard wunnin' away from school as a vewy undignified pwoceedin'. I have simply weties from my school for a time, sir, for vewy good reasons."

Mr. Dalton coughed.

"You will have the kindness, D'Arcy, to follow me to Dr. Chisholm's study at once."

"Certainly, sir; I shall be vewy pleased to see Dr. Chisholm, if he is desiwous of makin' my acquaintance."

Mr. Dalton coughed again, and led the way. Arthur Augustus, with a smile and a nod to his friends, followed the Form-master. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

"Well, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver.

And the Fistical Four watched Arthur Augustus disappear into the house with Mr. Dalton.



"So you're caught at last, you young scoundrel!" grinned Knox. "I'm not giving you a chance to get away from me, my pippin! To begin with, take that!" "That" was a sudden smack on the head which sent Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rolling in the bottom of the taxi. The junior gave a yell. "You uttah wuffian!" he cried. (See page 13.)

#### CHAPTER 4.

##### Held by the Enemy.

**A**RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was cool and collected, and quite cheerful, as he stepped into Dr. Chisholm's study.

"Here is the boy, sir!" said Mr. Dalton.

"Very good!"

Dr. Chisholm looked at D'Arcy very curiously over his pince-nez. He was curious, and he was very stern.

"Good-aftahnoon, sir!" said Arthur Augustus cheerily.

"You are D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. James' School," said the Head of Rookwood.

"Yaas, sir."

"Your headmaster telephones to me that you have run away from school, and he has asked me to detain you here—since you are here—until you can be sent for."

"Gweat Scott!"

"I have undertaken to do so," said the Head of Rookwood. "I understand that a prefect will be sent over as early as possible to fetch you, D'Arcy. Until then you will remain within the school gates."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his head proudly.

"I am sowwy to disagwee with a gentleman of your yeahs, sir," he said respectfully but firmly. "But I cannot consent to do anythin' of the kind."

"What?"

"I have wetired fwom the school, sir, for vevy good weasons. My yahs, sir, were boxed by Knox of the Sixth!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "I felt bound to administah corporal chastisement to Knox of the Sixth, by means of a horsewhip, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Instead of understandin' and sympathisin' with me, sir, my House-mastah wequiahed me to submit to punishment,"

said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I wefused to do anythin' of the kind."

"Upon my word!" said Dr. Chisholm, while Mr. Dalton looked very curiously at the swell of St. Jim's.

"For that weason, sir, I wetired fwom St. Jim's. I wefuse to weturn there until my House-mastah decides to tweek me with justice, and with the wespact that is any fellah's due."

Dr. Chisholm glanced at Mr. Dalton. That gentleman smiled, and then coughed.

"I will offer no opinion, D'Arcy, upon the circumstances in which you quitted your school," said Dr. Chisholm grimly. "I shall simply detain you here until you are sent for, as is my duty."

"I am sowwy, sir, but I cannot consent."

"Your consent will be neither asked nor required," said the Head of Rookwood, still more grimly. "I have undertaken, at Dr. Holmes' request, to produce you in safety when you are called for, and I shall take measures to that effect."

"I shall wefuse to wemain, sir."

"Mr. Dalton, will you have the kindness to conduct this lad to the punishment-room, and lock him in?" said the Head.

"Certainly, sir!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, sir—" burst out Arthur Augustus indignantly.

Dr. Chisholm raised his hand.

"I trust, D'Arcy, that your detention here will be of short duration," he said. "I understand that a Sixth-Form prefect will be sent for you by the earliest possible train. Kindly go now with Mr. Dalton."

"I wefuse!"

Dr. Chisholm shrugged his shoulders, with an expressive glance at the Fourth Form master. Mr. Dalton dropped his hand lightly on Arthur Augustus' shoulder.

"Pray come with me," he said gently.

"Weally, sir—"

"This way, my boy!"

Mr. Dalton drew the St. Jim's junior from the study. In the corridor Arthur Augustus halted, breathing hard.

"Come, come!" said Mr. Dalton, kindly enough.

"I wepeat, sir, that I wefuse to be kept a pwisonah heah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, his voice trembling with indignation and excitement.

"I am sorry, my boy. But after your headmaster's request to Dr. Chisholm, you must see that there is no other resource."

"I wepeat that I wefuse—"

"You will not compel me to use force, I hope," said Mr. Dalton quietly, and his grasp tightened on the junior's shoulder.

He led Arthur Augustus away to the stairs. The junior went with him, his face almost crimson with wrath. Gussy was able to make allowances for Dr. Chisholm; in the circumstances, that gentleman could scarcely act otherwise than as he was doing. That did not, however, alter the fact that Arthur Augustus was determined not to be taken back to St. Jim's.

A struggle with the athletic Form-master was out of the question. But D'Arcy had no intention whatever of submitting.

He walked quietly with Mr. Dalton, and the Form-master relaxed his grasp. They reached the staircase—in full view of the open doorway on the quadrangle. And at that moment Arthur Augustus made a sudden movement, jerked his shoulder away from Mr. Dalton, and made a bound for the open air.

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Dalton.

Arthur Augustus did not dream of stopping. He cleared the School House steps with a bound, and sprinted for the gates.

"There he goes!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell.

Mr. Dalton appeared in the doorway, waving his hand.

"Stop that boy!" he shouted.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were suddenly deaf. They watched the pigeons in the quadrangle, as if suddenly and engrossingly interested in those birds.

Arthur Augustus raced past, heading for the gates.

"Stop that boy!" roared Mr. Dalton, dashing in pursuit.

Unfortunately for Gussy, there were a good many Rookwood fellows between him and the gates. Bulkeley and Neville of the Sixth were there—and they looked round at the Form-master's shout.

"Stop him!" panted Mr. Dalton.

The two Sixth-Formers closed up in D'Arcy's path.

"Stop!" called out Bulkeley.

Arthur Augustus did not stop.

He rushed right on, panting and desperate, and strove to dodge round the two big seniors.

But he strove in vain.

They swung round on him, and Neville succeeded in getting a grasp on his arm. In an instant Gussy lowered his head, without stopping to think, and butted Neville.

His head was bare—he had not paused to put on his hat. Arthur Augustus' cranium crashed on Neville's waistcoat, and the Rookwood prefect gave a gasping yell, and crashed to the ground.

The fugitive had disposed of one opponent. But as he reeled from the shock Bulkeley's grasp descended on his collar.

It was a grip like iron. Arthur Augustus struggled furiously, but he struggled in vain.

"Wow! Welease me! Wow!" he panted. "Bai Jove! I'll hack your shins! Welease me, you wottah!"

Bulkeley, with a grim smile, held the struggling junior at arm's length till Mr. Dalton came up.

"Thank you, Bulkeley!" said Mr. Dalton quietly.

"I pwotest—" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"This boy has run away from school, and is to be detained until his headmaster sends for him," explained Mr. Dalton. "Please take him into the House, and up to the punishment-room, Bulkeley!"

"Certainly, sir."

"I wefuse—" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Come along, you young ass!" said Bulkeley good-humouredly.

With that grip of iron on his collar, Arthur Augustus' refusal did not count for much. He was marched along by the stalwart prefect, Mr. Dalton bringing up the rear—and after Mr. Dalton came a buzzing crowd of excited Rookwooders. There was no escape for the St. Jim's runaway now. Into the House and up the big staircase he was marched, with Bulkeley's grip on his collar, and Mr. Dalton following close behind.

Mr. Dalton unlocked the door of the punishment-room—seldom used at Rookwood, and now about to have a very unlooked-for tenant.

Bulkeley marched Arthur Augustus in, plumped him down in a chair, and went back to the doorway.

Arthur Augustus sat and gasped.

"I am sorry for this, my boy!" said Mr. Dalton kindly. "I trust you will not have long to wait here."

"Gwoooogh!"

"I will send you any refreshments you may like," said Mr. Dalton.

"I want nothin' but my liberty, sir!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"I am afraid I cannot give you that," said the Form-master dryly, and he retired from the room and locked the door on the outside. Arthur Augustus followed him to the door and rapped on it.

"I pwotest against this twreatment!" he shouted.

"Very good!" said Mr. Dalton.

And he put the key in his pocket and walked away—and the St. Jim's runaway, a prisoner within strong stone walls, was left to consider himself—at his leisure.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Three on the Track

"HOW?" said Jack Blake.

And Tom Merry remarked:

"Echo answers how!"

The two juniors were seated in a third-class carriage of the express. Farther along the train, Knox of the Sixth was in a first-class smoker. As Knox's expenses were being paid for the journey, he saw no reason for travelling third-class. With Tom Merry and Blake the case was different—also, they wished to keep out of the prefect's sight. So they contented themselves cheerfully with the humble third.

At Wayland Junction they had carefully dodged Knox, and they were sure that the Sixth-Former did not know they were at hand. It was very necessary to keep him in that state of blissful ignorance.

The two juniors were, of course, going out of bounds—a very considerable distance out of bounds. Rookwood was only within bounds on the occasions of matches with that school. It was in Knox's power, as a prefect, to order them back to St. Jim's if he had seen them—and undoubtedly the bully of the Sixth would have exercised that power, whether he suspected their object or not. And a refusal to obey would have entailed very serious consequences later.

Now they were in the express for Rookham, which was quite near Rookwood. So far all had gone well, so far as avoiding Knox's observations was concerned. But that was not all that was required.

Somehow, Knox had to be stopped from going to Rookwood, and Tom Merry and Blake were to arrive in his place. Arriving along with Knox was not much use.

Tom Merry had said that they were "going to stop" Knox. Blake had agreed that they were going to.

But now that it actually came to doing it, all sorts of difficulties presented themselves. Both the juniors realised that it was easier to declare, in an airy way, that they were going to do it, than actually to do it when the time came.

Meanwhile, the express was rushing on. The journey was a fairly long one, and the juniors had time to think over their plans.

The unfortunate part was, that thinking did not seem to help them towards a solution of the problem.

Collaring Knox and pitching him out of the train at some station was the plan that appealed to their taste and personal feelings most keenly. But that obviously was out of the question. The storm that would have ensued at St. Jim's was not to be faced.

Whatever was done had to be done by strategy. Both Tom Merry and Blake had great faith in their strategic abilities. Yet it certainly seemed that their strategy was failing them now.

"How?" said Blake, for about the thirtieth or fortieth time.

"We've got to clear that cad off of the road. But how?"

"There's a way," said Tom. "Where there's a will there's a way, you know. Can't have that bully marching Gussy off from Rookwood with a claw on his collar."

"But how?"

"Blessed if I know!" confessed the captain of the Shell.

Deep reflection on the subject ensued. In the course of that deep reflection another consideration occurred to Tom Merry, and he looked a little worried.

"From what he heard, the Rookwood beaks expect a prefect to arrive for Gussy, and the howling ass is being detained there until a prefect comes for him," he said.

"That's so."

"Then—will they hand him over to us? We shall have to see the Head before they hand him over. I—I suppose the Rookwood Head isn't likely to take us for prefects."

Blake grinned.

"Hardly!" he assented.

"Then—even if we dish Knox on the way—suppose they won't let Gussy come off with us?"



Jack Blake whistled.

It was a consideration that might have occurred to the juniors earlier. For it was only too possible that matters might turn out exactly as Tom suggested. If Dr. Chisholm expected a Sixth-Form prefect, was he likely to let the St. Jim's runaway depart with a couple of juniors, who, for all he knew, might be friends of the runaway intending to help him to escape?

Blake looked rather blank.

"Well, you are a champion ass, Tom, and no mistake!" he said.

"How's that?" demanded Tom warmly.

"Why didn't you think of that before?"

"Well, why didn't you, if you come to that?" demanded Tom.

"No good jawing," said Blake, changing the topic. "We sha'n't get any forrader. That's all you Shellfish can do—just argue. Looks to me as if we're up against it."

"It does look like it," agreed Tom thoughtfully. "The Rookwood beaks won't hand him over, I'm afraid. Of course, if he was loose about the school, we could bag him. But it stands to reason he'll be shut up indoors somewhere."

"Not much doubt about that—punishment-room most likely."

"We can't burgle Rookwood in broad daylight and collar him under their noses," said Tom dismally.

"Not quite!"

There was a long silence. Each of the envoys had ample food for reflection now—new food for reflection. The expedition had been undertaken rather hastily—all its aspects had not been duly considered. Tom Merry and Blake considered them now, while the express raced on towards Rookham.

"What about Jimmy Silyer?" said Blake at last. "He's a good chap, and a friend of ours. He would help—if he could."

"How could he help?"

"Oh, let's think it out!"

There was another long period of rather dismal reflection. Station after station whizzed by the express windows.

"No good showing up at Rookwood if Knox is there," said Tom, after a long time. "But—suppose Gussy left with Knox—"

"That dishes us."

"Not at all," said Tom. "We're two to one—and we know Knox is a funk. Suppose we nabbed him leaving Rookwood, and got Gussy away from him?"

Blake brightened.

"That sounds better!" he said. Then his face clouded again. "But we can't handle Knox like that. I'd like to. But what would the Head say—and Railton? They've sent Knox, and if we handled him and took Gussy away—why, it would mean a flogging at the very least!"

"I know! If it was after dark, we could rush Knox without his recognising us—"

"Fat lot of good thinking of that, when it won't be after dark!" said Blake sarcastically.

"The Rookwood chaps might help," said Tom. "If we could get into touch with Jimmy Silver—"

"We couldn't!" said Blake. "Not without turning up at Rookwood—and we can't do that without Knox spotting us."

"What about the telephone?" asked Tom.

"Is Jimmy Silver's study in the Fourth on the telephone?" inquired Blake, evidently in a sarcastic mood.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom. "We could ring up the school from Rookham, and ask to speak to Jimmy Silver."

"You'd have to give a reason."

Tom Merry grinned.

"I could give a reason. I could say Jimmy was wanted to speak to his Uncle Tom."

"Ha, ha! But would Jimmy Silver understand that his Uncle Tom was his Uncle Tom Merry of St. Jim's?"

"Chance it!" said Tom. "If he doesn't catch on, no harm done. If he does, I get a talk with him, and if he can help us, he will, I know that. We can't handle Knox without getting into a frightful row at St. Jim's—but Jimmy Silver and his pals might chip in. We could meet them outside the Rookwood gates and fix it up. Half a dozen Rookwood chaps might put sacks over their heads and lay for Knox in the lane—"

"Might be something in that!" admitted Blake.

"Rookham!" came the shout of a porter, as the train slowed down. "Change for Latcham, Coombe, and Rookwood School!"

"Here we are!" grunted Blake. "Keep back, and don't let Knox spot you!"

The two juniors alighted, with their eyes very much on the alert. There were a good many passengers on the train, and the juniors kept at the back of the crowd, and dodged into a waiting-room. From a window they watched Knox of the Sixth stroll along to the exit and disappear. Waiting till he had had plenty of time to clear, they left the platform themselves, and came out into the High Street of Rookham.

"There he goes!" said Blake, jerking his head towards a taxi that was buzzing down the street. "Doing it in style."

The juniors lost no time. Tom Merry looked for a telephone box, and in a few minutes he was ringing up Rookwood School. A deep voice answered him on the wires.

"Is that Rookwood School?" asked Tom, making his own voice as deep as he could.

"Yes; Dr. Chisholm speaking."

Tom Merry felt an inward tremor.

"May I speak to Silver of the Fourth Form?" he asked. "Pray excuse me, but it is a rather important matter, or I should certainly not have dreamed of troubling you."

"Junior boys are not allowed to use the school telephones," came the frigid response. "Unless the matter is very important—or a relative is concerned—"

"The—the fact is—"

"Who is speaking?"

"Would you have the kindness, sir, to inform Silver that his Uncle Tom desires to speak to him?" asked the St. Jim's junior, without directly replying to the question. Tom could only hope that the Head of Rookwood was not likely to think

of the slangy use of the word uncle. It was indeed not likely. To Dr. Chisholm's majestic mind an uncle was an avuncular relative; merely that and nothing more.

"Oh, very good! If you will hold the line, I will send for Silver!" said the Head of Rookwood courteously.

"Thank you very much!"

And Tom, in great relief, held the line, and waited for the voice of Jimmy Silver.

#### CHAPTER 6.

#### Jimmy Silver Plays Up!

"NOTHING we can do!"

"Nothing!"

"It's hard cheese!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "The young ass fairly walked into a trap, coming here!"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

The Fistical Four were standing below the window of the punishment-room—a little window, high up in the block of buildings. They were prepared to wave their hands encouragingly to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, if that hapless wanderer showed his aristocratic face at the window. It was all that they could do, sympathetic as they were.

But Arthur Augustus, plunged in dismal reflections in his temporary prison, did not look from the window.

The Fistical Four were quite worried. They liked Gussy—and it was through visiting them, as an honoured guest, that he had fallen into this trap—like the fly walking into the spider's parlour, in fact. As the sunny afternoon wore away, and they realised that a St. Jim's prefect was drawing nearer and nearer, to take Arthur Augustus home an ignominious prisoner, their sympathy deepened. But there was nothing they could do. The runaway was booked!

Tubby Muffin came along, and called to Jimmy Silver, interrupting their talk.

"You're wanted, Silver. Head's study!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Silver. "What's the matter now?"

Muffin grinned.

"Only a telephone call," he said. "The Head called me in and told me to fetch you. Your Uncle Tom's on the phone asking for you."

"Gammon!" said Jimmy. "I haven't an Uncle Tom."

"Somebody larking," said Lovell, "or perhaps the Head didn't catch the name—you've an Uncle John, anyhow. Better go."

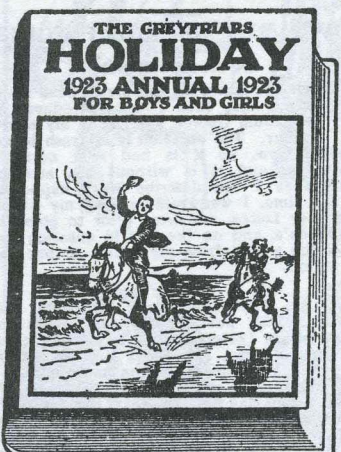
Jimmy Silver nodded, and went into the School House. He presented himself in the Head's study.

"Your—hem—relative has requested permission to speak to you," said Dr. Chisholm, indicating the receiver, which was off the hooks. "You may—hem—take the call, Silver."

"Thank you, sir!" said Jimmy. He went to the telephone, and Dr. Chisholm busied himself with his papers.

(Continued on page 12.)

### The Best Book of The Year!



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# The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

## One Year Old.

### SPECIAL ARTICLE BY YOUR EDITOR.

**T**WELVE months old this week. That is what the calendar says. But it really is a year since we published our first number in the GEM, or is it merely a few short weeks ago? It seems far more like the latter. My contributors "smothered" me immediately after the first issue appeared, and I have had so little rest since that weeks just ticked off unnoticed. Even at the time of going to press I am left with piles and piles of unread stuff on my hands, shortage of space preventing my using it.

The demand for "Tom Merry's Weekly" to appear, as well as the "St. Jim's News," has given me considerable food for thought. Of late I have tried to strike a happy medium by introducing some small illustrations, together with Monty Lowther's comic columns. On this occasion I have returned to real news, with the pick of my first contributors to supply it for you. Cardew, who is a curious compound of craft, laziness, and ability he will not use, has done many things to help me. Up to the present, he claims to have seven or eight "articles" to his credit. But if by articles he means adding satirical comments to ludicrous phrases in the Trumble perpetrations he submits, I emphatically do not! By subtracting these, his number is reduced to about four. The yarn of the motor-bike night-riders which he wrote last February was, however, a splendid piece of imaginative fiction, and I will pass over his peculiar manner of rendering editorial assistance to his colleagues.

I was firmly determined—in spite of my continued leniency—that on every special occasion Ralph Reckness Cardew should not escape my grasp. Neither should he elude me by turning in a re-dished-up episode of some other fellow who can't send in publishable copy first time. This goes badly against the grain, and Cardew kicks—kicks badly. Nevertheless, he has to give way eventually, and without the aid of thumbscrews and the rack (no pun intended, Aubrey) I can just induce him to send in something at the last moment before going to the printer.

Cousin Ethel is, of course, far and away our leading contributor. She has sent in sixteen articles altogether since the "St. Jim's News" commenced. Of this number fifteen have been published. It is a creditable record, of which our fair contributor can be more than proud. Quite a large number of readers have written to me and asked whether it would not be possible for Miss Cleveland to have an article published every week. It isn't possible, for more than one reason. The second largest contributor chances to be Harry Noble, who has eight articles published. I really come in between, but, on account of my being editor, exclude myself. Should Cousin Ethel have written an article every week, as my enthusiastic readers suggested, her number would have been well over forty this week. These would have displaced a considerable amount of other stuff, and, on the whole, would have been rather bad editorial management on my part to have made such a distinction. Miss Cleveland's articles are extremely good, as we all know, and, moreover, being reminiscences of the glorious past St. Jim's is dropping behind it, are always particularly welcome to those who revel in

reading of the early adventures experienced by our humble selves.

This being the first anniversary of the "St. Jim's News," it would obviously be incomplete without one article from Miss Cleveland's pen. I suggested the subject of my motor escapade to Cressy Lodge, and the way in which she has recalled it exceeded my most sanguine hopes. Let me know what you think of it.

TOM MERRY.

## Special Birthday Article.

### HOW I MET GEORGE FIGGINS.

By Cousin Ethel.

**I**T was the last week in July, a good many terms ago, that I was introduced to my chum George Figgins by my cousin Arthur. The occasion is as fresh in my memory now, as if it had only occurred yesterday, and it is without the smallest effort that I can describe what happened. At the time, I was residing with my people at Cressy Lodge, sometime prior to going to St. Freda's, and on the day in question was expecting a visit from my cousin Arthur and his chums.

At St. Jim's Founder's Day had just dawned. This was the day of days at the great Sussex College, and a day which came but once a year. The boys were free from the time they arose in the morning until the going down of the sun at night. On every other day in the year the boys are never allowed to go for more than three or four hours without "Absence," which is a calling-over in the Common-room or school hall by the masters in charge of the respective classes. Therefore, with the longest whole-day holiday of the year in front of them, the boys quickly prepared to be off and away to enjoy their liberty. Figgins and Kerr were off for an excursion on their motor-cycles—Figgins having a comfortable sidecar attached to his, in which he was taking Fatty Wynn.

Tom Merry had received an invitation from his aunt, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, asking if he and his chums would come over and participate in a picnic in the grounds of Laurel Villa at Huckleberry Heath. Arthur had, meanwhile, persuaded his father to send over a six-seater Daimler with a chauffeur for the purpose of driving them over to Cressy Lodge for the day.

Knowing how great an occasion it was in the history of the old school, Lord Eastwood had capitulated, and early on the morning of Founder's Day, a big motor-car in charge of a smartly-attired chauffeur was seen waiting at the bottom of the School House steps.

### OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday.  
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday.  
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday.  
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday.  
 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly.

By co-operating their arrangements, so to speak, Tom Merry and Manners, together with Blake and Herries, and my cousin Arthur (Monty Lowther and Digby had not arrived at St. Jim's when this occurred.—Ed.) decided that the five should drive to Cressy Lodge, pick up their sixth passenger—myself—and then drive back ten miles to Huckleberry Heath to enjoy the picnic arranged for Tom's chums by Miss Priscilla Fawcett.

It was a splendid programme—undoubtedly, but, like a good many other programmes arranged by boys, was likely to go awry in places where it would least be expected to.

Thus, for instance, when George Figgins & Co. tricked Lord Eastwood's chauffeur, and locked him in an empty box-room, so that my cousin's party should not pass them on the road and howl at their inferior way of travelling; you will not be surprised to learn that Tom grasped the situation they were in quicker than Figgy thought he would.

The chauffeur had left his peaked cap and white coat in the car. Being a good driver, and attired in the chauffeur's "rig," Tom easily passed muster, and got the car through the gates without a soul being any the wiser.

When Tom had amply repaid the New House trio for their jape, things worked themselves according to schedule. The car arrived at Cressy Lodge, and Arthur introduced his four companions—boys whom I know now as well as if they were my brothers. Then away to Laurel Villa we hied. I was delighted to meet Miss Fawcett, the trim, old governess, with her Victorian ways and tender attachment to her darling "Tommy." The picnic which followed was undoubtedly a great success, if the way the goodly viands disappeared from human ken was any criterion. When it was getting dusk a move towards departure was made.

It was then, and only then, that a startling incident was discovered. Every spare can of petrol had been removed from the car, and the tank had been emptied dry. I was beginning to feel alarmed, and wondered if I should be able to get home, when the boys were further astounded by the unexpected appearance of three St. Jim's juniors (Figgy & Co.) at the gate. The boys were very demure and affable. When Tom asked them if they knew anything about the missing petrol, made peculiar comments upon the weather. Upon Tom Merry informing the tallest boy how serious it was, as there was a lady in the case, he sedately replied:

"Just so. You see, I saw the chap with your petrol, and I thought the young lady might like a lift home in my sidecar. Fatty Wynn will abdicate in favour of Miss Cleveland."

Choking back his wrath, poor Tom was inevitably compelled to introduce three perfect young gentlemen—who smiled and bowed, and raised their caps to me.

The tall one, who really was a perfect gentleman, struck me as being one of the nicest boys I'd ever met!

The end of the story is a matter for a few words. I stepped into the sidecar, and Figgy drove away. After we had gone, I have a fairly shrewd notion that the petrol very quickly came to light. As far as I was concerned, it was an unaccountable accident, but I have another shrewd notion that as far as George Figgins was concerned, it was an accident which had been deeply planned and just as skillfully carried out. Boys are very artful!

George dropped me at Cressy Lodge, and I thanked him very warmly. I remember that he blushed a good deal! This was my first meeting with George Figgins.

ETHEL CLEVELAND.

## EDITORIAL CHAT.

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

My dear Chums,—This week I am able to place before you a new and novel competition. You will see by reading the rules what an easy chance you have of winning big money prizes.

Carefully study the heads, then fix them to which you think is their correct figure. That, and that only, is all you have to do. I should like all my readers to go in for this easy and fascinating competition. Set to work right now.

Faithful to the August traditions of his noble House, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—he would act just the same in July, December, or any other month, as well as August—returns to the historic school which he adorns. The reason for his going back need not be explained here. It is quite sufficient to say that Gussy went in response to the dictates of his manly heart. He could not have done otherwise—being Gussy. D'Arcy's motives are always worthy of inspection through a super-powerful microscope. His actions are flawless, as we all know.

Taking all these considerations into account, you will say that the forthcoming yarn by Mr. Martin Clifford is topping. It is called "The Return of the Runaway," and when you have read it, you will feel a trifle warmer towards Gussy, reader than ever to excuse him when he will butt in with prolix remarks, and still more eager to salute him as a hero. I can let it go at that.

It is not too late for a word of advice about the Gem Albums for the portrait series. To make the whole collection complete and put the photos in a handy form, you really need one of the sixpenny albums which were designed expressly for this purpose. Send a postal order, 6d. to the Manager, the Gem Album Office, 7-9, Pilgrim Street, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, and you will receive an album by return.

On another page you will see a representation of the new volume of the "Holiday Annual," which will be published on September 1st. I have had occasion to mention the "Annual" before, but there are several fresh points concerning the magnificent book which I should like to touch on. This year's "Holiday Annual" has developed in heaps of interesting details; There is more real fascination about it, more of the true holiday element, and a much finer budget of fiction. We have tales of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, and also gripping sport and adventure yarns. I know one of the numerous reasons for the popularity of the famous "Annual"—it is that you can pick it up at any old time, and whatever your mood, and get interested right away.

The "Holiday Annual" came, was seen, and it conquered. Perhaps it is not necessary to hark back to the time when the book was a bit of a newcomer, feeling its way. It jumped into success, and now it stands as an old friend, without which no holiday season would be really complete.

Our Companion Paper, "The Popular," is scoring in its usual style with the splendid series of coloured plates of railway engines. Don't miss this excellent feature.

YOUR EDITOR.

# THE GREAT HEAD 'EM COMPETITION!

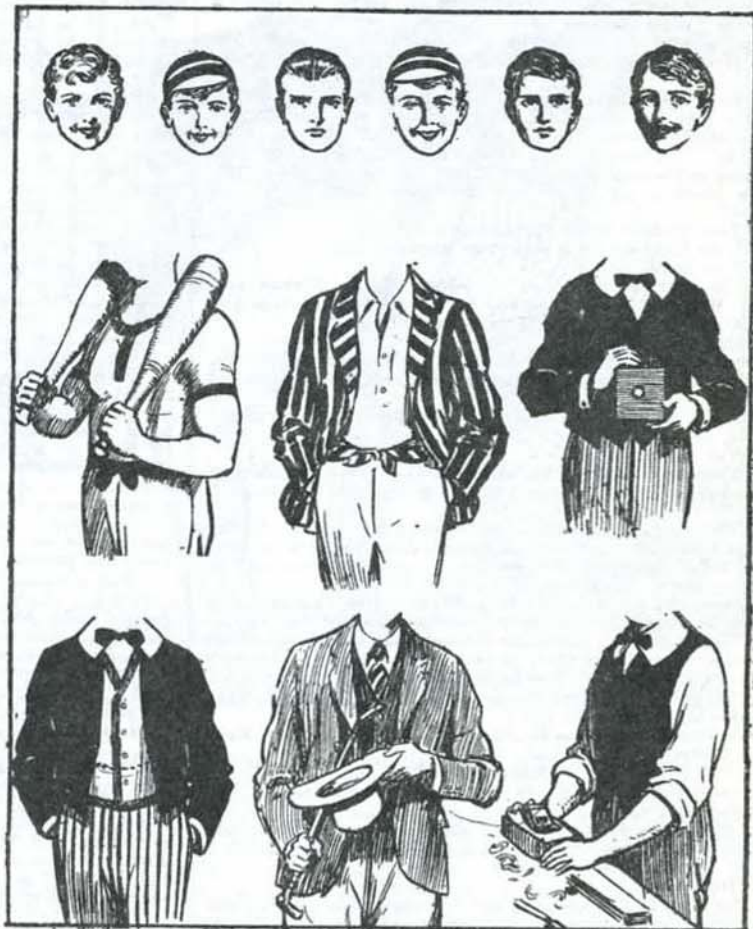
## Try and Win One Of Our Splendid Money Prizes in This New and Novel Competition!

No Entrance Fees!

And Quite Simple!

**FIRST PRIZE £5.**

Five Prizes of £1 each and 10 Prizes of 10s. each.



### WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

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

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

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

For example, Head No. 1 is obviously Kit Wildrake, of the Fourth. Now, which of the six "bodies" is most likely to belong to Wildrake? Well, he is known to be an expert horseman—and one of the figures is carrying a riding-whip, is it not? So there you are. It is a question of putting two and two together right through the competition.

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

When you have worked out the first set

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**"THE RUNAWAY AT ROOKWOOD!"***(Continued from page 9.)*

"Hallo! Who's there?" asked Jimmy into the transmitter.

"Is that Jimmy Silver?"

"Yes."

"Tom Merry speaking, from Rookham!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jimmy involuntarily.

"Your Uncle Tom, you know!" said the St. Jim's junior, with a chuckle.

Jimmy Silver did not chuckle, however. He was only too painfully conscious that the Head would hear every word he uttered on the phone, and that if the real facts respecting his "uncle" came out, there would be trouble for somebody.

But Jimmy was quick-witted. His answer was suited for the Head's ears, and also conveyed necessary information to Tom.

"Very well," he said. "Dr. Chisholm is kindly permitting me to take the call, but I must be brief, as I am afraid I am disturbing him."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom, understanding that Jimmy was talking in his headmaster's presence. "I catch on, old infant. You needn't say anything. Is Gussy there—D'Arcy, I mean?"

"Yes—uncle," added Jimmy diplomatically.

"Is he detained for a prefect to come for him?"

"Yes, uncle."

"I'm zfter the prefect—a cad named Knox. Blake's with me. We want to see you and fix something up. Will you meet us outside the gates if we come on?"

"Certainly, uncle!"

Tom Merry realised that he must make the arrangements, as Jimmy could say nothing that his headmaster might not hear.

"If we wait in the lane, say a hundred yards from the gates, will that do?"

"Yes, uncle."

"Then we'll come on as fast as we can," said Tom Merry. "Awfully obliged, Silver. You're a good chap. I'll ring off now."

"Thank you very much, uncle!" said Jimmy Silver, for the Head's benefit. "I am quite well, and the match with Bag-shot takes place next Wednesday. I really hope you will be able to come. Good-bye!"

Jimmy Silver replaced the receiver on the hooks. He breathed rather fast as he passed the Head on his way to the door. But Dr. Chisholm did not even look up from his papers. He was not likely to give much thought to Jimmy's talk with his uncle, when he was busy with Latin prose for the Sixth. The Fourth-Former breathed more freely when he was safe outside the study.

He hurried out of the House, and rejoined Lovell and Raby and Newcome in the quad.

"Well?" said Arthur Edward Lovell.

Jimmy Silver breathlessly explained. A grin passed round among the Co.

"We'll do anything we can," said Lovell. "It won't take them long to get on here from Rookham if they catch a train. Let's get out of gates."

"Right-ho!"

The Fistical Four strolled out of gates. They went down the road, in the direction of Coombe, and sat on a stile to wait, in a cheery but rather thoughtful row. What Tom Merry and Blake wanted they could not guess; but they were ready to "play up" if they could help. It was clear that the St. Jim's juniors were "after" Arthur Augustus, though what their intentions were remained a mystery.

The Fistical Four had been waiting some time, when a taxicab buzzed past them, with Knox of the Sixth sitting in it. It turned in at the gates of Rookwood.

"That's the giddy prefect!" said Jimmy Silver. "I remember seeing his chivvy when we were over at St. Jim's. That's Knox!"

"If those kids don't buck up, he'll be gone with D'Arcy before we see them," remarked Raby.

"Well, they're bound to give Knox some tea after a long journey," said Jimmy sagely. "It will take a bit of time. He's got a long way to go home, you know!"

The four Rookwooders waited. As Tom Merry and Blake were evidently coming on by train, they had to come to Coombe, and the juniors watched for them in the direction of the village. It was nearly half an hour after Knox's taxi had passed that two figures came in sight, coming along from the village at a trot.

"Here they are!" exclaimed Lovell.

And the Fistical Four jumped off the stile to greet the two juniors from St. Jim's. Tom Merry and Blake came to a rather breathless halt. Greetings were brief; there was little time to waste.

"Seen anything of Knox?" exclaimed Blake.

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"He passed half an hour ago."

"Then he'll be leaving soon—any minute, perhaps," said Tom Merry. "Every giddy second's precious now."

"But what's the game?" asked Jimmy Silver. "We'll do anything we can to help. But what's the stunt?"

"You know D'Arcy's run away from school, of course?"

"Yes," grinned Jimmy, "we know that. And he ought to go back."

"He's going back," said Tom Merry. "We're going to take him. But Knox of the Sixth is a rotten bully; he was the cause of all the trouble. He means to give poor old Gussy a high old time going home, and most likely report him for resisting, and all that—making it as bad as he possibly can for him."

"He looked that sort, I thought," assented Jimmy.

"Of course, you see how much better it would be for D'Arcy if he came back of his own accord, without being yanked home by a prefect. We're going to make him do it if we can get him away from Knox," explained Tom Merry.

The Fistical Four chuckled.

"Good idea!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "D'Arcy's a good chap, but he doesn't know enough to go in when it rains!"

"That's just it. We're taking care of him," said Blake. "He will get into a frightful row, anyway; but going back of his own accord will make it easier. Besides, we know that Knox means to get up trouble on the way home, and put all that down to his account; it might even end in expulsion, if Knox has his way. But can you fellows help us rescue him from Knox?"

Jimmy Silver looked grave.

"Honest injun, you'll land him at your school if you get him away from the prefect?" he asked.

"Honour bright!" said Tom Merry.

"Then we'll help. It won't be easy," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "Knox will come back in his taxi; it's waiting at the school for him, as it hasn't passed here going back. We shall have to get D'Arcy out of the taxi somehow."

"We don't want to get you fellows into a row, of course," said Tom hastily. "I had an idea of sticking on sacks, or something, so that Knox wouldn't see your faces. This is a rather lonely lane."

"Good egg!" said Jimmy Silver. "We can fix that. We can borrow some sacks at the farm across this field; we know the people."

"Half a dozen, and we'll all take a hand," said Tom.

"Good! We're all in it!" said Raby. "Buck up and get the sacks, Jimmy! And you fellows had better get over the stile, and keep behind the hedge. You don't want to be spotted about here."

"Right-ho!"

The juniors took cover behind the hedge, and Jimmy Silver cut away to the farmhouse. Tom Merry watched the road anxiously, but with a relieved mind. Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, had played up as he hoped they would—like really good fellows. And though undoubtedly there was trouble in store for the St. Jim's runaway when he arrived at St. Jim's, the intervention of his friends would reduce that inevitable trouble to the lowest possible minimum, and that was the best that could be done for Arthur Augustus. As for the noble Gussy's own views on the matter, Tom Merry and Blake had no time to consider them—they were far too busy with other considerations.

**CHAPTER 7.****Knox's Triumph!**

**A**RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was roused from a rather dismal state of meditation by the sound of a key turning in the lock.

He rose to his feet as the door of the Rookwood punishment-room opened. There was a gleam behind Gussy's eyeglass, and his fists clenched. Incarceration had not changed his determination in the least. He was quite resolved that he was not going back to St. Jim's—wild horses should not drag him there till matters were set "right." He was prepared to put up a struggle for freedom, if there was any chance. But it was Mr. Dalton—who entered the room, and Arthur Augustus unclenched his fists and unbent his noble brows. Punching the Form-master was not "good form"; and besides, it would have been useless, for the athletic young man could easily have picked up Arthur Augustus and carried him away under one arm.

Mr. Dalton's manner was kind, though a little severe. Knox had explained matters downstairs—not in Gussy's favour.

"A prefect of your school has called for you, D'Arcy," said Mr. Dalton. "He will take you away with him."

"I shall refuse to go, sir."

Mr. Dalton decided not to hear that reply.

"Knox, the prefect, is having tea now," he said. "The Head has instructed me to see that you have your tea before you start. It will be brought to you here."



Taggles was about to close the gates when Tom Merry & Co. rushed up with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Taggles blinked at D'Arcy, and smiled grimly. "Glad to see you agin, Master D'Arcy," he said. "Thank you vewy much, Taggles!" returned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Would you have the kindness to make these uttah wottahs release me? Oh cwumbs!" D'Arcy was hurried on! (See page 15.)

"I have no objection to tea, as it is tea-time, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I wepeat, howevah—"

But Arthur Augustus' repetition was interrupted by the entrance of the school page with a well-laden tray. The tray was set on the table, and the page retired, Mr. Dalton following him and relocking the door.

Arthur Augustus sat down to tea.

It was quite a nice tea, and a sufficient time had elapsed since lunch for Gussy to do it justice. And as he had no intention of going to St. Jim's if he could help it, it was a matter of doubt when and where he would get his next meal. So he piled into a substantial tea with an energy worthy almost of Fatty Wynn.

His meal, however, had been finished some time when the door reopened, and Mr. Dalton appeared again.

"You have finished your tea?" asked the Form-master.

"Yaas, sir!"

"Then come with me. Here is your hat!"

Arthur Augustus hesitated. But Mr. Dalton, kind as he was, was obviously prepared to take him by the collar if he did not go. So he went. Bulkeley of the Sixth joined them on the staircase, with a slight smile on his face. He was there to see that the recalcitrant junior did not attempt to bolt. In the lower hall Knox was waiting, and he grinned as Arthur Augustus came in sight. But the grin was only momentary. At Rookwood it was Knox's cue to play the steady, dutiful prefect, who had a painful duty to perform, and wished to perform it with as much kindness as was consistent with the necessary firmness.

"Are you ready, D'Arcy?" he asked, quite politely.

"I am not weady to go with you, Knox!"

"Don't be foolish, D'Arcy!" said the prefect chidingly.

"Your headmaster is very angry with you. Please do not think of giving any trouble on the way home. It will be all the worse for you in the end, as you must know. I have come to take you back. I appeal to your self-respect not to make any unpleasant scenes on the journey!"

"You must surely realise that your prefect's advice is good, my boy," said Mr. Dalton. "You have done wrong; now

be sensible, and make the best of it. Bulkeley, will you see him into the cab?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard. But resistance, at present at least, was out of the question, and he allowed himself to be led to the taxi by the Rookwood Sixth-Former, and placed in it. Knox followed him in. Mr. Dalton gave the directions to the chauffeur, and the taxi rolled away.

Arthur Augustus glanced from a window; a good many Rookwood fellows watched the taxi depart, but his friends, Jimmy Silver & Co., were not to be seen. The school gates were left behind, and the taxi headed for Coombe, through which village it had to pass on its way back to Rookham. Knox had not spoken a word hitherto; but now that they were fairly away from Rookwood, and his victim was completely at his mercy, the bully of St. Jim's allowed his gloating satisfaction to appear.

"So you're caught at last, you young scoundrel!" he said.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on Knox, with a look of lofty scorn.

"I wefuse to weply to a wemark couched in such extwemely oppwobwious language," he answered calmly.

"You got away from Kildare and Darrell!" grinned Knox. "You won't get away from me, my pippin! I'm not giving you a chanee. To begin with, take that."

"That" was a sudden smack on the head, which sent Arthur Augustus rolling in the bottom of the taxi, and his hat flying. The junior gave a yell.

"You uttah wuffian!"

"That's a beginning!" grinned Knox, looking down at the dazed junior. "You'll get some more like that, dear boy."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus struggled up, his eyes blazing. His intention was to hurl himself upon Knox, and take immediate vengeance. But the bully of the Sixth was reckless now in his brutality. Whatever happened on the way back to St. Jim's, Knox had his tale ready—an attempt to resist and escape on the part of the prisoner. As D'Arcy struggled up,

the bully hit out at him, and the heavy blow sent the junior almost dazed to the bottom of the cab again. He lay there and gasped, and Knox grinned down at him.

"Like to try it on again?" chuckled Knox.

"Ow, wow!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"I'm getting you in order at the start!" chuckled Knox.

"I'll thrash you at every station on the way home if necessary. I fancy I'll make you sorry for yourself, and jolly glad to see St. Jim's again at the end of the giddy journey!"

"You wotten coward!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You did not dare to stwike me when I went for you in your studdy at St. Jim's with a horsewhip! You wan howlin' wound the table!"

Knox's brow blackened. That reminder of his "funk" did not please the bully of the Sixth.

Smack, smack, smack!

He leaned over Arthur Augustus, and boxed his ears right and left. It was on account of a box on the ear—an ineradicable insult to his lofty dignity—that Gussy's whole trouble had started. Now he had a dozen of the same, and much more hefty boxes. He struggled frantically, but he could not even get to his feet, and the bully of the Sixth handled him easily.

Knox did not leave off "boxing" until he was breathless. Then he sat up again, grinning gleefully, and Arthur Augustus lay in a huddled and breathless state.

The taxi-driver glanced over his shoulder once or twice, aware that something was going on in the cab. As he became aware of precisely what was going on, he frowned. Arthur Augustus made an effort to get off the floor, and a sounding cuff sent him sprawling there again. Then the taxi-man, turning his head, called out:

"Nuff of that, sir! Let that kid alone!"

Knox stared through the glass. The awful cheek of the taxi-man angered him. But he decided not to hear what the driver had said—and also not to cuff Arthur Augustus any more. He did not want trouble with a taxi-man—it was really too undignified—besides, the chauffeur was a hefty man who could have knocked Knox into a cocked hat if he had wanted to.

Knox sat back in his seat, lofty and dignified—and Arthur Augustus sat up on the floor and gasped for breath. And the taxi-man drove on towards Coombe—till all of a sudden the brakes jammed on, and the taxi came to a halt.

In the middle of the lane, which at that point was narrow and thickly shadowed by overhanging trees, a figure stood with uplifted hand—a signal to halt. It was a strange figure—a fellow with a long sack downwards over his shoulders, reaching to his knees. A slit was cut in the sack to enable him to see and to breathe. The taxi-man fairly blinked at that amazing apparition. As the figure was in the middle of the road, earnestly signalling to him to halt, he halted.

"What's this 'ere?" demanded the taxi-driver.

Whatever the taxi-man was thinking, certainly he was not thinking of disciples of Dick Turpin. But that, it seemed, was what he had to look for. For as the taxi stopped, and just as the perplexed driver called out, five figures in sacks rushed out of the cover of the hedge, and in a twinkling both doors of the taxi were torn open, and the vehicle was invaded on both sides.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Out of the Frying-pan Into the Fire!

**K**NOX of the Sixth wondered whether he was dreaming. But he had little time for wondering.

Almost before he knew what was happening three of the sacked figures had collared him, and he was dragged headlong into the road.

He crashed down in the dust, and two of the figures sat on him—one on his head, and the other on his chest.

Knox did not lift a finger in self-defence. He had no chance against the odds, for one thing; and his "funk" was uppermost, for another. In the hands of the sacked imitators of Dick Turpin, he was like clay in the hands of the potter.

The taxi-driver blinked round him in wonder. There was nothing to stop him from driving on; but naturally he did not drive on, with his fare lying pinioned on his back in the road.

"What's this here game?" gasped the chauffeur.

"Help!" panted Knox.

The fellow who had stopped the taxi came quickly to the side of the driver's seat.

"All serene!" he whispered. "Only a lark, old top! Don't you worry!"

At the same moment a voice whispered from another sack into the ear of Arthur Augustus.

"Jump out, Gussy!"

"Tom Mewwy!" breathed Arthur Augustus, in blank amazement.

"Shut up, you ass! Quick!"

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"Bai Jove! Thank you vewy much for wescuin' me—"

"Get a move on, ass, and don't jaw!"

"Weally, you know—Ow!"

A grip on his collar, and a knee in his back, helped Arthur Augustus out of the taxi before he could say anything more. He staggered in the road and spluttered.

A hand gripped his arm and led him through the hedge.

"You can drive on, chauffeur!"

There was a sharp signal whistle, and all the sacked figures rushed through the gap in the hedge, leaving Knox sprawling breathless and dazed in the road.

The bully of the Sixth sat up, panting; the chauffeur looked at him with a grin.

Knox spat out a curse.

"Who were they—did you see?" he panted.

"Some larky young coves!" grinned the driver. "They ain't 'urt you—not so much as you was 'urting that lad in the taxi, I reckon. Friends of his'n, I s'pose."

"Mind your own business!" howled Knox, red with rage.

The driver grinned in a most irritating manner. It positively looked as if he enjoyed Knox's reverse.

"Gettin' in?" he asked. "I want the fare as far as Rookham in any case. Gettin' in or stayin' 'ere?"

Knox staggered to his feet, and glared round in search of his assailants. They were gone—and his prisoner was gone. It was not much use to think of pursuing them; it would have been too dangerous to find them! Knox wondered savagely who or what they could possibly have been. He was too far from St. Jim's to think of Tom Merry & Co.—and if his assailants were Rookwood fellows, why should they have interfered? And what remote possibility was there of identifying them? Were they schoolboys at all—or some gang of hooligans, paid perhaps by D'Arcy to help him out like this? Knox's brain was in a whirl; he simply couldn't account for what had happened; he did not even know whether D'Arcy had been rescued by the sacked crowd, or whether he had taken the opportunity to make his escape. All he knew for certain was that his prisoner had vanished.

"Goin' on?" asked the driver at length.

Knox stepped into the cab, scowling blackly. It was of no use returning to Rookwood—D'Arcy certainly would not be there. Still less use hunting for him among hedge-rows and standing corn. Knox was beaten, and he knew it, and he realised that there was nothing for it but to return to St. Jim's empty-handed.

In a furious temper, the bully of the Sixth drove back to Rookham to take his train.

Meanwhile, the party in the sacks had not lost a moment. Jimmy Silver led the way, and they dodged by a path behind hedges into the shelter of the wood near at hand. Arthur Augustus was guided by a hand that never left his arm. He did not realise at once that he was not merely being guided, but guarded against escape. That knowledge was to come later.

Among the trees the six juniors threw off the sacks, revealing Tom Merry and Blake, and Jimmy Silver & Co. The six juniors grinned gleefully at one another.

"Worked like a giddy oracle!" chuckled Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Like a jolly old charm!" chortled Blake. "Hallo, Gussy, old top! Feeling well after your merry travels?"

"Bai Jove! I am feelin' wathah dizzay, deah boys—that wotten wuffian was pitchin' into me in the taxi, till the divvah chipped in, like a weally decent chap," said Arthur Augustus. "I am awfully obliged to you fellahs!"

He groped for his eyeglass.

"But how on earth did you get here?" he asked. "I nevah dwamed of seein' you. Silvah, deah boy, you have played up in a weally wippin' mannah—you and your friends. I trust you will not get into any twouble at your school ovah this."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We shall take jolly good care of that," he answered. "Your giddy prefect doesn't know us from Adam—but in case of any inquiry, the sooner we show up at Rookwood and prove an alibi the better. "We'll get rid of the sacks and buzz off, if you fellows—"

"Better!" agreed Tom Merry. "We're no end obliged, old chap!"

"Oh, don't mench!"

The juniors shook hands and parted; Jimmy Silver & Co. losing no time in getting back to Rookwood by devious paths. Tom Merry and Blake and the rescued prisoner were left in the wood. Arthur Augustus polished his eyeglass, set it in his eye, and scanned Blake and Tom Merry. He was glad to see his old friends once more.

"You fellahs came all this way to wescue me fwom Knox?" he asked.

"Just that!" said Blake.

"It was awfully good of you," said Arthur Augustus.

"Wasn't it?" agreed Blake. "You see, we happened to know that Knox was coming, so we came along, and the

Rookwood fellows gave us a helping hand, like real bricks, as they are. I wonder who Knox thinks raided his taxi."

"Bai Jove! I weally think he will nevah be able to guess!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "I certainly should nevah have dreamed of seein' you fellahs heah. I am only sowwy that we have to part again."

Tom Merry's eyes met Blake's, and Jack Blake grinned. The parting was not, to be so soon as Gussy supposed.

"Nothing to be sorry about, old bean!" said Blake cheerily. "You see, we're not going to part."

"Bai Jove! You fellahs have not wun away fwom school, have you?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Why shouldn't we follow your example?" chuckled Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I should be vewy much shocked if you have been guilty of such a thoughtless and disrespectful action as wunnin' away fwom school."

"You would!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! I twust you have not acted in such a vewy weckless and undutiful mannah!"

"Well, my hat!" said Blake. "After running away yourself—"

"I did not wun away, Blake! I wotired—"

"Can it!" said Blake tersely. "As a matter of fact, Gussy, we haven't run away from school—not being giddy goats like you, you know! We've come to take you home."

"Weally, Blake!"

"The Head's no end waxy with you, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "The best thing for you is to come home of your own accord. Catch on?"

"I decline to do anythin' of the kind!"

"Well, there's no time to argue," said Tom. "We've got to get back to St. Jim's as early as we can. Call-over's a goner, anyhow! Take his other arm, Blake!"

"Welease me!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in angry astonishment, as his arms were captured and held by his devoted friends.

"Kim on!" said Blake.

"Do you mean to say that you did not come ovah heah simply to wescue me fwom Knox, but with the widiculous ideah of takin' me back to St. Jim's!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Right on the merry wicket!"

"Then you have your twouble for your pains," said Arthur Augustus, "for I most distinctly wefuse to return with you!"

"Mean that?" grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And we mean this!" said Blake cheerily. And with a grip on Gussy's arms that could not possibly be resisted, the two juniors marched off their captave.

## CHAPTER 9. For Gussy's Good.

"YOU uttah asses!"

"Go it!" said Blake.

"You cheekay chumps!"

"Pile it on!" said Tom Merry.

"Oh, wats!"

The three juniors were in the train. For about the hundredth time, Arthur Augustus was expostulating.

He had walked to Rookham between his devoted comrades, no choice being left him in the matter. He had made one futile attempt at resistance. And he had been duly bumped.

After that he walked quietly, simmering with indignation and wrath, but unresisting. It was in vain that he offered to give Tom Merry and Blake a "feahful thwashin'" one after the other. The offer was declined; and tackling the two together Gussy had found to be too large an order. The two juniors meant business. Since Arthur Augustus could not see what was wise, he was to be saved from himself.

"You see," Tom explained patiently, "we shouldn't have been justified in interfering with Knox at all, if we weren't going to take you back. We want you to come back of your own accord. It's the best thing for you. And that's that!"

"You do not undahstand. Tom Mewwy!"

"Bow-wow!"

"I cannot return to St. Jim's until mattahs are set wight."

"Br-r-r-r-r-r!"

At Rookham Junction the juniors waited for the express—the next express after the one by which the defeated Knox had already departed. They held on to Arthur Augustus, at the risk of a "scene" on the platform which would have drawn general attention. Fortunately, Arthur Augustus shrank from a "scene." Besides, resistance was useless; for scene or no scene, Blake and Tom Merry would not have let him go. It was pure friendship, certainly; but Gussy felt rather like that ancient gentleman who prayed to be saved from his friends!

The express bore them away together, and at every station Arthur Augustus felt an arm slipped through his.

A hundred times, at least, Arthur Augustus tried the effect of his eloquence upon his chums. But they were stone-deaf to the voice of the charmer.

In the summer dusk they reached Wayland Junction, and alighted; and Tom Merry, remembering how on a former occasion the runaway had dodged the prefects at that station, linked his arm in Gussy's when he left the train. Blake linked on to the other arm.

With suppressed feelings, Arthur Augustus walked out of the well-known station between his friends, and took the path through the wood for St. Jim's. In the wood, amid the gathering shadows, he cast longing glances to right and left.

But there was no escape for him. The three juniors came out of the wood into the Rykcombe road, and headed for St. Jim's, of which the grey old tower could be discerned in the dusk above the tree-tops. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, so long a runaway, was nearly home at last.

"Hallo!" shouted a voice in the lane.

Manners and Lowther, Digby and Herries, came racing up. They surrounded the returning trio.

"Got him!" exclaimed Dig, with great satisfaction.

"Hurrah!" chortled Herries.

"Knox has come back!" grinned Monty Lowther. "He came in scowling like a demon in a giddy pantomime!"

"I heard him spinning some yarn of his cab being stopped by a gang of hooligans!" said Manners. "Anything in it?"

"Ha, ha! A little!" chuckled Blake. "Haven't they taken call-over yet?"

"No; it's late. Railton's umpiring in the senior match, and it's not over yet. Time to get in," said Manners.

"We've been hanging about to see you—if you came. Jolly glad you've come."

The juniors hurried on to the school. Arthur Augustus was speaking—emphatically. But Arthur Augustus was not heeded. But at the gates of St. Jim's Tom Merry & Co. halted.

"Now, Gussy—" began Tom.

"Go and eat coke!" snapped Arthur Augustus.

"You can see you're booked," said Tom. "Will you walk in of your own accord, and give yourself up? Can't you take the advice of all your friends that it's the best thing to do?"

"I am not likely to take advice fwom a partay of un-thinkin' youngstahs."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Blake.

"I insist upon bein' weleased!"

"Oh, yank him in!" growled Herries. "If he don't know what's good for him, we do, and that settles it!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"For the last time, Gussy—" urged Tom Merry.

"Wats!"

"Come on, then!"

Taggles was about to close the gates when the party pushed in. Taggles blinked at Arthur Augustus, and smiled grimly.

"Glad to see you agin, Master D'Arcy!" he said.

"Thank you vewy much, Taggles! Would you have the kindness to make these uttah wottahs welease me— Oh, cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus was hurried on. The dusky quadrangle was full of fellows, streaming towards their houses. The cricket-match on Big Side had ended at last, and the cricketeers and the crowd that had watched the game were coming in. Mr. Railton walked with Kildare of the Sixth. There was a general exclamation when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was seen.

"D'Arcy!" repeated Mr. Railton, as the name was caught. "I understood that Knox failed. Has the boy returned of his own accord?"

"Looks like it, sir!" said Kildare. "There he is, anyhow, with his friends."

"I am glad that he has repented of his folly," said the Housemaster. "It will make matters easire for him." He stepped towards Tom Merry & Co. "D'Arcy, I am glad to see you here again! Go to my study, and wait for me there!"

Mr. Railton passed on with the cricketing crowd before the swell of St. Jim's could reply. Tom Merry pulled D'Arcy's arm.

"Come on, old son!" he said. "You can see now that it was for your own good, can't you?"

"Wats!"

"Oh, jerk the obstinate mule along!" said Blake.

"I wefuse— Ovv!"

Arthur Augustus was walked into the School House in the midst of the Co. They walked him to Mr. Railton's study, and Lowther opened the door, and Arthur Augustus was pushed into the room.

"Now be as nice as you can to Railton, when he comes!" urged Blake.

"Wats!"

(Continued on page 19.)

YOU SHOULD SEE THAT ALL YOUR CHUMS READ THIS MAGNIFICENT SERIAL!

By  
DUNCAN  
STORM

## A STORY OF A LAD'S UPHILL FIGHT FOR FAME AND FORTUNE.

## THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Later, he learns of the scoundrel's intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country. He plans to capture the plunder. At the dead of night, he and his pals quietly dress, and climb the box-room chimney. Seating themselves comfortably on the top, they take a bird's-eye view of the dim moonlit country round the school.

(Now read on.)

## The Hideous Mask!

THE five boys sat on the top of the great chimney-stack, taking a bird's-eye view of the sleeping school, the roofs of which were silvery in the dim moonlight.

Wobby looked round him with the eye of a commander.

It was a misty night with promise of rain. In fact, it was just the sort of night he would have chosen for the party's excursion in search of the buried treasure.

His companions, long since, had discovered that Wobby never communicated his plans. "Follow your leader" was Wobby's motto.

He had hardly condescended to explain to them why he had led them up through the chimney to the crown of one of the largest of the old-fashioned chimney-stacks of St. Beowulf's.

Here they were perched up in the moonlight, like a bunch of owls, with Wobby gazing round him enjoying the panorama like a tripper to the Monument.

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"Who—who!"

Jim Ready ducked as a large white owl, which was probably chasing sparrows amongst the ivy, swept close past his head, staring at him with great, round eyes as though wondering what sort of night-birds were these lined up on the chimney.

"Howl!" said Lung laconically. "Him no good bird!"

Wobby awoke, as if from a reverie.

"Come on, chaps!" he said in low tones. "This is a classy view from here. If it was only daylight you could see this little old country all cut up into tiny fields for miles and miles around. But the carriage awaits us. We will get us to the ground. Wait a mo', till I find the stairway amongst the ivy."

He groped about with his foot, looking for the iron cramps that were built in the outer wall of the chimney-stack to assist the men who repaired the roofs, and looked after the telephone wires and lightning conductors of the great range of buildings.

Presently he found the topmost iron, and commenced to descend.

"Don't make a noise, boys, else we'll wake the babies!" he whispered. "And don't let go of the top iron until you have found the lower one. Jim, give me your foot, and I will guide it for you!"

Jim swung his foot over the abyss and Wobby caught it and placed it in position safely on the iron.

"You do the same for Stickjaw!" ordered Wobby.

Stickjaw flourished a leg over the void and Jim, who had descended a step or two, guided his foot to the first iron.

Soon they were all clinging to the face of the great ivy-covered chimney-stack, whilst the owl swooped round and round the chimney, hooting like a foghorn.

"That owl is a fool!" muttered Wobby, who had gained the leads safely. "See me, next time he comes round!"

He took-off his cap and wrapped it round his hand like a boxing-glove. The next time the great white bird came swooping round the chimney, Wobby landed it a punch on the beak which made it turn three somersaults in the air. Then, with a final whoop, it fitted away into the night.

"If there had been black chaps about instead of all these sleeping beauties in the college," said Wobby, "that bird would have put us away. It seems to me that nobody takes any notice of sounds in this queer old country—except the sounds of telephone bells and dinner bells. All the same, boys, step quietly. There may be some pebs still awake in this sleepy hollow!"

They had all reached the leads of the school building safely, and Wobby led them along the lead-lined guttering till they reached the fire-escape.

He paused here a moment, listening intently, but not a sound disturbed the silence of the sleeping school.

It was all plain sailing now. Down the fire-escape they went and made for the shrubberies.

Wobby led his little expedition brilliantly, and all went well till they were passing the outhouse, where Nobby the kangaroo was confined in the loose-box.

Wobby came to a standstill, as in the interior of this old stable there sounded a bang like the report of a distant cannon.

"What dat?" whispered Lal Singh with a start.

"What dat!" echoed Wobby bitterly. "Why, 'dat' puts the lid on if we aren't careful. Nobby's reared us and he's whacking the loose-box with his tail to attract our attention. That's a trick of his. He'll keep it up until someone comes. He knows we're out on the Starlight Game, and he wants to come with us—the dirty dog! Hark!"

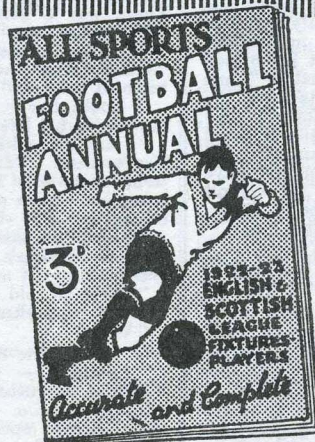
Bang!

Another thump came from the interior of the stable, louder than the first.

"That settles it!" said Wobby. "I didn't want to take him with us. It'll make a crowd in the car. But we'll have to put up with him!"

Wobby had the key of the stable in his pocket, and needless to say, he had taken the precaution to see that the lock was well oiled. He never allowed any lock that he used to squeak for want of oil.

He stepped into the darkness of the stable. In the loose-box, Nobby, the boxing kangaroo, was bounding around in the straw, wild with delight at hearing his master.

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Thump, went his tail against the partition again.

"Shut up, you idiot!" muttered Wobby. "D'you want to give all your coppers away, you squealin' rat!"

At once Nobby was silent. Propped up on his tail, he waited his master.

"Come in, you chaps! Shut the door after you!" called Wobby in low tones. "I've got to look to this peb's gloves. If we come across any tugs-to-night and he gives one a kick in the waistcoat, without the gloves on, we might be pulled up for manslaughter, and that won't do. Give us your tootsies, mate!"

His soft intelligent eyes beaming in the lamplight, Nobby held up his tremendous hind leg with its dangerous claws, to be gloved in heavy boxing-gloves, just like some little kid holding out his hands to be dressed for a walk.

It was plain that he was full of excitement. "The kangaroo!" said Wobby, assuming the pose of a lecturer, "is like us chaps, he's a nocturnal animal. He likes being out o' nights better than the daytime. That is why Nobby is red-hot to come out on the toot with us to night. If only he knew what he was in for, he'd vote to stay at home! Still," added Wobby thoughtfully, "it's just as well that none of us know what we are letting ourselves in for."

He slipped the four gloves over the kangaroo's paws and carefully made them fast.

"Now," he said, "people in these parts are talking a lot about Spring-Heel Jack. We'll give 'em something to talk about!"

He opened a corn-bin in the loose-box and drew out a huge shape of light wicker covered with a sort of canvas.

"What's that?" asked Jim.

"Half a little mo' and I will show you!" said Wobby.

He slipped the wicker-shape over Nobby's head.

"Crums!" exclaimed Stickjaw starting back.

"My hat!" gasped Jim.

"Nice little effect, isn't it?" said Wobby, standing back and flashing the torch on the hideous mask which he had slipped over Nobby's head. "I nearly scared the wits out of a thousand mile district with that mask, and Nobby. He got away into the woods with it on one night when I was larking with him, and the next thing I heard of him was that all the blacks in the district had packed up and gone, for they said that old Bingley Ginge was loose on the war-path. A mounted policeman saw him flitting through the blue gums, and he had fits!"

"Who's Bingley Ginge?" asked Jim.

"Why, he's the bush devil that's supposed to catch niggers o' nights and eat 'em up!" said Wobby admiring his pet in the hideous mask. "This is really a devil mask from the Kingsmill or the Gilbert Islands. The niggers do their dances in masks like these."

The mask, indeed, was a hideous spectacle, a huge face with staring eyes and white ears, which Wobby had made more hideous by touching up with luminous paint.

"Well," said Wobby, surveying his pet. "I guess if any of these hayseeds about here catch a sight of Nobby in his Sunday hat they'll get the joes, and keep to their houses for the next six months. You won't meet a soul about, and that is what we want. Now, open the door, boys, and we'll get away!"

"Aren't you going to put Nobby on the string?" asked Stickjaw.

Wobby shook his head.

"I've got the lead with me," he said. "But there's no need to tie Nobby up. He's the White-Headed Boy to-night. He knows he's coming out on the toot with us, and he won't leave us. He'll stick to us like grim death to a nigger. The other night when he legged it he was off on his own. He was fed-up with being tied up in his sack. I've got the sack here, in case we should want it."

Wobby pushed open the stable door, and, thrusting his head out cautiously, listened intently.

"It's all right, boys," he announced, after a moment or two; "the coast is clear! We steer down by Muck Lane, through the woods to the Haunted Barn. Then we get out the Rolls-Ford and off we go!"

#### Visitors at the Barn.

THE boys pushed their way through the shrubberies, Wobby giving them an example in moving quietly through thick greenery, which he had learned himself from the wild blacks of the Australian Bush.

Soon they were in the woods, the kangaroo

bounding softly before them, turning now and then to see if they were coming along, for all the world like a well-trained and polite fox-terrier.

"Crums! Don't he look a peb?" chuckled Wobby.

Nobby indeed looked horrible. The hideous mask was nearly three feet high and two feet wide, painted on a sort of coarse gauze, through which the wearer could see perfectly well.

With his huge tail and queer, bounding movements, Nobby might well have scared the most matter-of-fact person in the world into thinking that the once-famous Spring-Heel Jack was abroad that night.

As they moved through the woods Wobby was intent on business. Under his arm he carried his boomerang of heavy blackwood, and his eyes were on the move all the time, like the eyes of a hunting native.

Soon he gave a low hiss, which his companions had already learned was the signal to stand and be still.

They came to a stand, and Nobby, who evidently knew the signal, seated himself on his tail, as though he were taking a rest on a camp-stool.

High up in the branch of a tall oak Wobby's keen eyes had caught sight of a couple of roosting pheasants.

"Pheasants!" he whispered, pointing upwards.

"Yes; but they don't belong to us!" said Stickjaw, who had old-fashioned ideas about game.

"Git on!" replied Wobby scornfully. "Birds belong to anyone that can hit them. We'll want a couple of pheasants for a dormitory supper soon. I'll cook 'em out here in the woods, and we'll burn the feathers and no questions will be asked. Stand back, nuggets all!"

Wobby threw himself back till his spine was nearly an arch. The boomerang whistled from under his arm, and the two pheasants fell with a heavy thud to the ground, followed by the magic weapon.

"There you are, nuggets!" said Wobby triumphantly, retrieving the plump birds. "There's a nice feed for No. 4. I know where to put the stick round a few wild-ducks when we want 'em. We'll have a proper old tuck-in when the birds are right! In the meantime, I'll hang 'em up in Robin Hood's larder."

"Robin Hood's larder" was a hollow tree, and here Wobby hung up his birds, arranging a trap that would disconcert any predatory animal that might come after them.

The boys were astounded by their lawless friend. He had taken two minutes to lay in a brace of pheasants. They were now on their way again, with that hideous figure fitting in front of them.

"I'll do the cooking out here!" exclaimed Wobby. "The nuggs will have to be content with cold pheasant. I'd cook 'em in the dormitory, but they'd stink the school out if we tried that. So I'll just roll 'em up in two nice little balls of clay, nigger fashion, and you'll all say that you've never tasted pheasant like it before!"

They were now ascending the last ridge before they reached the valley of Juicy Brook, where the Haunted Barn was situated.

It was characteristic of Wobby that he slipped ahead of his companions to spy out the land before he advanced on his objective.

It was well that he did so, for, as he parted the branches, and gazed down into the little valley of the river, he gave a start. Then he slipped his hand into his pocket, and brought out a powerful pair of binoculars to get a nearer view of the sight which had disturbed him.

Lying on his stomach, he looked through them, and saw, seated right in front of the door of the Haunted Barn, and cooking at a small fire, three tramps of the real Weary Willie type.

With a low hiss he called his companions to him.

"Three sundowners camped right in front of our barn!" he whispered. "They are going to make a

doss-house of it, and get their little kipsies amongst the reeds that are stored this end of it. If they set their bedclothes alight with their pipes it's good-bye to the old Rolls-Ford and the barn as well!"

"Perhaps they are burglars!" whispered Stickjaw.

Wobby took another squint through his glasses.

"Not they!" he answered. "They are proper Weary Willies and Tired Tims—the same all over the world. They are going about looking for work, and taking jolly good care that they don't find any. Maybe they've seen the police about on the roads, and they've sheered into these woods to have a quiet night. We've got to start them out of that, or we can't get our car!"

"How are we going to do it?" asked Jim.

"You leave that to me and Nobby!" replied Wobby. "In six minutes from now you won't see those tugs for dust. They'll be travelling faster than they've ever travelled in their lives. You stay here till the turn is over!"

Wobby gave Nobby a pat on the head, and disappeared like a shadow into the woods, followed by his pet.

Not a leaf stirred as the two moved forward. Nor did the boys, as they lay in cover, hear a branch move in the silence of the woods. All they knew was that Wobby and Nobby had disappeared after their right as quietly and completely as if the earth had swallowed them up.

The hush of the woods was unbroken, save by the dripping of the leaves and the voices of the tramps on the far side of Juicy Brook.

They could hear sometimes what these three wanderers were saying.

They were in a merry mood, for they had succeeded in cozening a corner of cooked bacon from a charitable parson, they had stolen two loaves from a baker's cart, and they had collared two tame rabbits out of the hutch of a poor little boy who had been left alone in the house whilst his parents had gone to a neighbouring town to see the movies.

The rabbits, with some onions which they had collared from a rustic's shed, were now stewing in a big biscuit-tin over the fire, and a black bottle was passing freely round the three ruffians.

"They call this the 'Aunted Barn,' said one, who was talking louder as the bottle circulated, "but I ain't going to lose any sleep over any 'Aunted Barn.' I once slept in lodging where a man had 'anged 'isself. But I never saw no ghosts!"

"I did read a bit in the paper that said as 'ow Sir Conan Doyle—'im what wrote 'Sherlock 'Omes'—believes in ghousts; and Sir Oliver Lodge, too!" said the second tramp.

"Gawn!" replied his companion. "They are borny! Man must be borny to believe in ghousts. It's these silly country jossings what gives a place a bad name out o' some old mother's story—and they are ready to believe anything. I ain't afraid of ghousts, I ain't!"

The boys, as they crouched in their hiding-place, could hear every word distinctly. The men were arguing now, and had raised their voices.

"Well, I once met a party what had seen a ghost!" said the third man. "Is 'air turned white in a single night, it did. He'd never say what he saw, though!"

"Cause 'e never knew what 'e did see!"



Lying on his stomach, Wobby looked through the powerful pair of binoculars, and saw, seated right in front of the door of the Haunted Barn, three tramps cooking at a small fire.

replied the first speaker—"seein' that he never saw anything at all! Why, I wouldn't be afraid of a million ghosts! Ghosts can't hurt you! Stands to reason, if they are only transparent smoke, they can't punch yer or bite yer! Crumbs! What's that?"

From the darkness of the woods behind the Haunted Barn sounded a weird, long-drawn shriek, which echoed through the woods like the cry of a lost soul.

"Oh!" gasped the second tramp. "Wot's that?"

"Why, it's a stoat got 'old of a rabbit!" replied the first speaker bravely. "I've often 'eard 'em sing out like that! You Townies don't know the noises of the country!"

"Well, I wish there wasn't any stoats about 'ere!" replied the third man, in quavering tones. "I don't like 'em. The things ought not to be allowed!"

"That's nothink!" said the first speaker, taking a pull at the bottle. "'Ere 'ave a drop of Rolling Wave. You want a bit o' Dutch courage, you do, Darkey! Why, I remember, in the war-time, when I was working in them munition works—"

A second terrible shriek broke the silence of the woods.

If any of the tramps had visited the distant Solomon Islands, they might have known that it was the death howl of the Malay head-hunters—the howl which is calculated to strike terror into any evil spirits which may be lurking round to seize the corpse of the defunct.

This time there was no talk of rabbits and stoats. The three men had jumped to their feet and were staring round them.

One of them held up a dimly burning candle-lamp, whilst another hastily threw a bunch of fir-cones on the fire to raise a blaze.

"Stoat!" cried one. "That ain't no stoat! Never heard such a 'orrid row in my life!"

Crack!

Something that flew and whistled through the air smashed the upheld lamp to smithereens. The three tramps stood frozen with fear as a strange figure with a terrible face, which glared and jibbered at them, came leaping out of the woods, bounding towards them in leaps that cleared bushes eight feet high.

"Op it!" shouted one, recovering his tongue at last. "This is a bit of no good!"

There was a yell and a rush. The tramps did not worry to look to their corner of cooked bacon or their stewing rabbits.

With a dismal yell they dashed into the woods, making uphill above Juicy Brook as fast as they could travel.

The boys listened till the sounds of their rush died away into the next dip of the woods. Then a low call from Wobby told them that they might come forward to the spot where the terrible masked figure of the kangaroo was hopping round the deserted fire.

Wobby turned round the corner of the Haunted Barn grinning all over his face.

"That put the breeze up those pebs!" he said, as he picked up his boomerang.

"They'll run till they've run the woods, and they won't come back to-night to ask questions. Keep quiet, chaps! I want to listen!"

He laid his ear to the ground by the hill-side.

"They are still running," he announced, after a moment or two. "Now we'll get the old car out and make her walk."

The rusty hinges did not make a sound as the heavy doors were swung open, for Wobby had oiled them into silence.

The party pushed out the car, and Wobby started her up and switched on the lights.

"All aboard!" he ordered.

"What about Nobby?" asked Stickjaw.

"Let him run!" said Wobby. "I'll show you how a kangaroo can travel when he wants to. We can take him into the car later on. He'll run with us all right. Hold on, nugs!"

### On the Track!

**T**HE car started forward with a jerk, and the boys, crouching low in her as she flew through the tunnels of the woods, had now and then a glimpse of that sinister, masked figure, leaping through the air at the side of the car.

The boys knew that Wobby was fearless, but as the car whipped and lurched over the rough logging road, they began to fear that he was tired of life.

Indeed, Lung sat down on the floor of the car and gave himself up for lost.

"Wobby pottee!" he said. "Him too much sauce. Him bleak our necks!"

The car kept the road as it twisted and wound through the dark, silent woods, and presently it lurched out on the highway, still hanging together.

"Wonderful what these cars will stand!" cried Wobby cheerfully.

"It's wonderful what we are standing!" protested Stickjaw. "Cheese it, Wobby, or you'll kill the lot of us!"

"Don't you worry, my lad!" replied Wobby cheerfully. "You just leave yourselves to me. I'll bring you through all safe and Sir Garney-o! Now, see old Nobby travel!"

Trees, bushes, and telegraph-poles slid by as in a dream. The car was whirling along a good tarred road now, with Nobby bounding along at its side, keeping pace all the time.

Now and then the frisky kangaroo would make a side-jump into a field and would fly over hedges and ditches like a hurdle-racer.

"Wobby's off his head!" roared Stickjaw into Jim's ear as they buzzed down the hill towards the bridge at Muggs' Mill. "He's quite silly! We've let ourselves in for a nice thing!"

The car shot up the steep bank of the bridge. They heard a yell from the miller, who was working all night, as he saw them fly by with Nobby bounding after them.

"Spring-Eel Jack! It's Spring-Eel Jack!" yelled the miller. "Look out fo' yo'selves! 'E's arter you!"

The car slowed down soon after this, as a lamp was waved some hundred yards ahead of them.

Wobby whistled, for he knew the police were out to stop cars, and he did not want to be stopped.

He could now see the policeman who was waving the light like a Jack o' Lantern, and he whistled to Nobby, who was flopping along behind the car to go ahead.

"Hoy, stop!" called the policeman.

Wobby slowed up, as if in obedience to the call.

The policeman stood in the roadway, ready to receive the car. Just at this moment Nobby came frisking round from behind, his grinning mask gleaming in the lamp-light.

"Oh!" gasped the policeman.

As Nobby bounded towards him the man in blue dodged aside, then made for the hedge of his cottage, flying over it in a style that Nobby himself might have envied. The boys heard a crash on the other side as Robert descended into his cucumber-frame.

When a policeman jumps into his own glass frame, it is a sure sign that he is badly rattled.

"Come on, Nobby!" muttered Wobby, as he set the car going again. "That's where the mask comes in!" he added, as the car again raced along the smooth highway. "Nobody will be able to swear that a kangaroo is inside it. Half the chaps that see it won't have the pluck to say they have seen it. They'll talk of Spring-Heel Jack, and any magistrate that hears of it will say that it is all nonsense."

The car buzzed on.

"Hang on tight, lads!" called Wobby from the driving-seat. "There's a police car at Hangman's Copse and another at Two Bridges. This is where we leave the road!"

The car lurched and jolted, like a ship at sea.

They had left the road and were on the short grass of the downs. The kangaroo seemed to go mad as he felt the grass that was so much like his native heath under his feet. He frisked round the car like a terrier, leaping forward with great bounds into the misty night and then rushing back again.

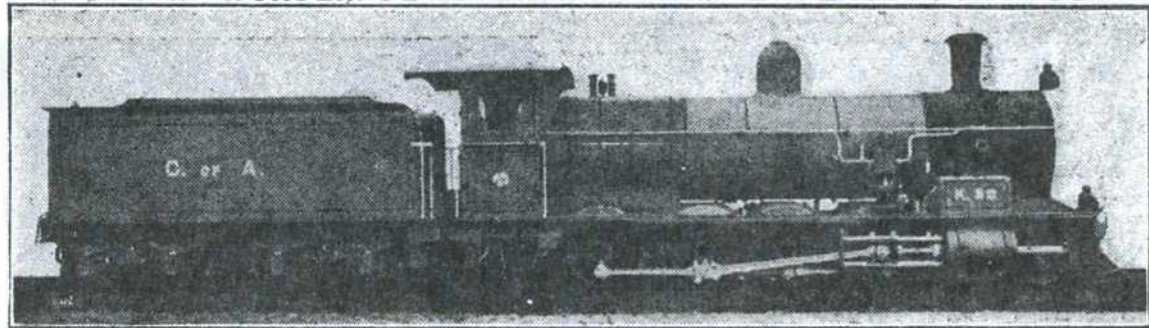
The car then dragged up a long, long slope. As a matter of fact, Wobby was driving her up the long sweep of Smuggler's Beacon.

The engine kicked and the car lay over at a dangerous angle as she crossed the slope at a high speed, leaving her wheel tracks plain on the dew-crusted grass.

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**THE RUNAWAY AT ROOKWOOD!**

(Continued from page 15.)

"Oh, you fathead!"

Blake drew the door shut. Talbot of the Shell, and Wildrake, and Cardew and Clive and Levison joined Tom Merry & Co. in the passage—with other fellows, eager to hear what had transpired at Rookwood. The juniors sagely decided to keep near the Housemaster's door till Mr. Railton came. Once the door opened, and D'Arcy peered out; but seeing a dozen grinning faces in the passage, he closed the door again sharply.

Ten minutes later Mr. Railton arrived, and he gave the juniors a nod. They melted away respectfully, but remained at a little distance, anxious to know what was to happen to the returned runaway.

Mr. Railton opened his study door, and went in. He turned on the light, and a moment or two later put his head out of the study.

"Merry!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Did not D'Arcy go to my study as I directed him?"

Tom Merry started.

"Yes, sir; we took him—I mean, he certainly did! He's there now, sir; he must be!"

"He is not here!" said Mr. Railton quietly.

Tom Merry ran forward.

"But—but we were watching the door!" he stammered.

He stared into the study. The window was wide open, the cool evening air blew in from the quadrangle. Tom Merry's face was a study as he looked at that open window.

There was no sign of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the room. But the open window told its own tale.

"Gone!" stuttered Tom Merry blankly.

"Kindly ascertain whether D'Arcy is still within the school precincts!" said Mr. Railton grimly.

Tom Merry & Co. rushed out into quadrangle. Up and down and round about they sought for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. They sought him, but they found him not. The swell of St. Jim's had vanished; and when Tom Merry & Co. returned, baffled, into the School House, their feelings were too deep for words.

THE END.

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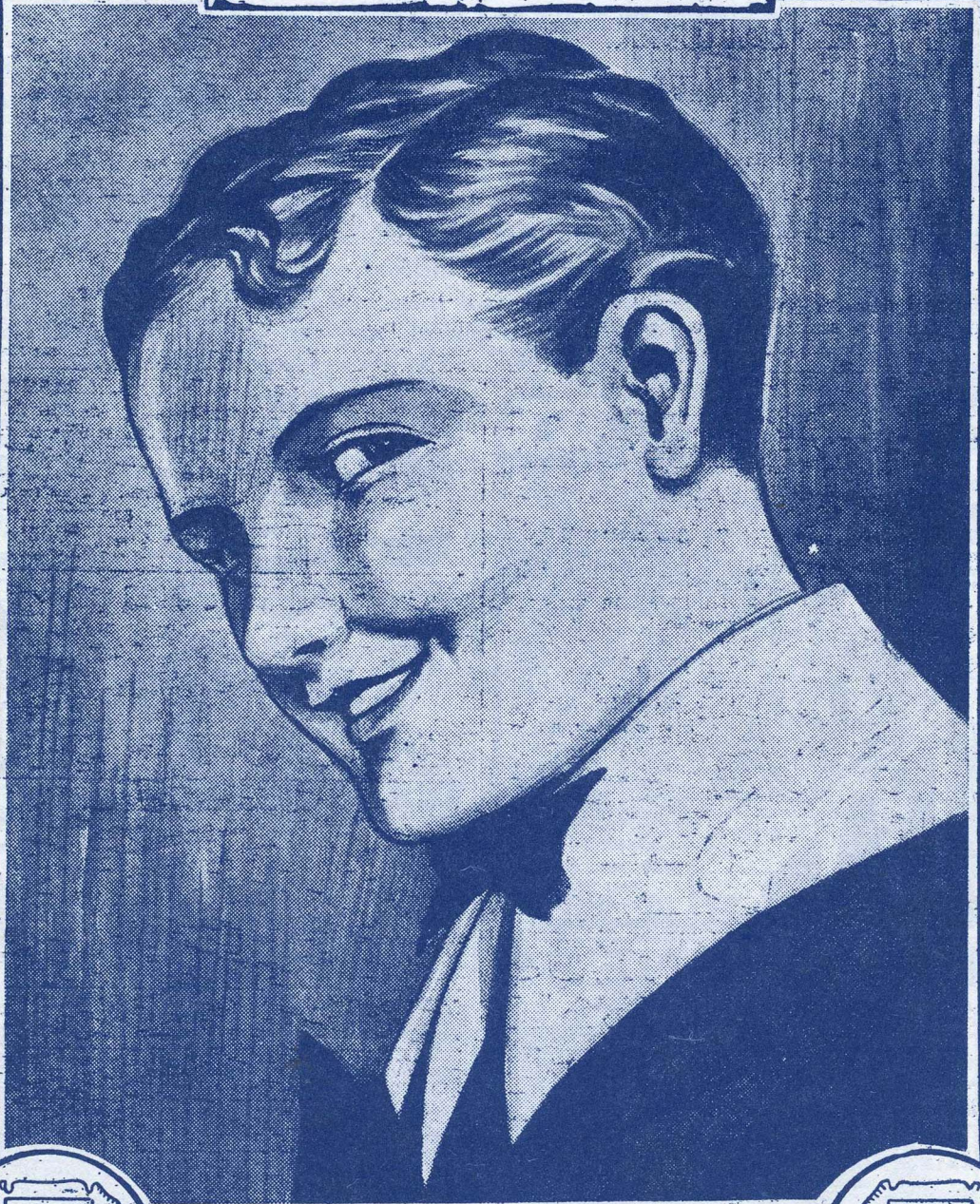
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