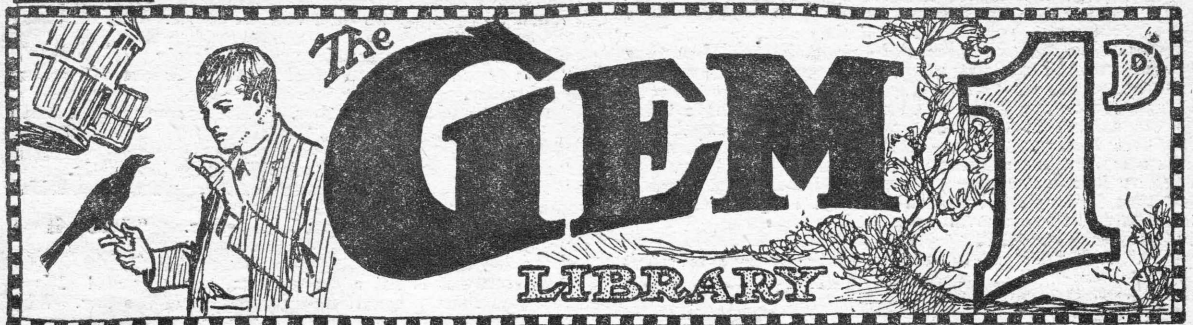


Are You In a Cricket Team? If You Are, See Page 28.

Every

Wednesday.



Complete Stories for All, and Every Story a Gem.



D'ARCY, THE SUFFRAGIST!

A splendid, new, long, complete school tale dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

The Cause.

THE Shell had just been dismissed after morning lessons, and Tom Merry was coming down the Form-room passage when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy spotted him. D'Arcy bore down upon him at once.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy—" he began.

Tom Merry halted, with a cheerful smile. It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's that afternoon, and a bright spring day, so the captain of the Shell had every reason to be cheerful.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

"I twust you have nothin' on this aftahnoon, Tom Mewwy?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus was looking unusually serious, and it was easy to see that some thought of exceptional importance was working in his mighty brain.

Tom Merry looked astonished.

"Yes, rather," he said. "If it doesn't rain I shall have my cricketing flannels on—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"And if it does rain," continued Tom Merry, "I shall have my overcoat on."

"Weally—"

"And in either case," said Tom Merry seriously, "I shall have my socks on."

"I wish you would be sewious, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I was alludin' to engagements, not to articles of attire, as you know vewy well. Have you got anythin' on for this aftahnoon, or can you come?"

"That's accordin'," said Tom Merry. "If you are standin' a particularly stunning feed, I can come. If you are going to give a song recital, I regret that my multifarious social engagements will not allow me to accept your kind invitation."

"Pway don't wot, deah boy! It isn't a feed—"

"Then I regret that my multifarious—"

"It's an extremely important mattah, howevah—"

"I regret that my multi—"

"Will you be sewious, you ass? I am makin' up a partay to go ovah to Wayland for the pwoocesah.—"

"The what?" demanded the Shell fellow.

"The pwoocesah."

"What on earth's a procesah? Manners, old man, have you got your Latin dictionary with you?" asked Tom Merry, as his chums Manners and Lowther came down the passage from the Shell Form-room.

"It is not a Latin word, you ass!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Oh, good! Have you got your Greek dick, Lowther?"

"It isn't Gweek, you fathead!"

"It isn't English," said Tom Merry. "What does it mean?"

"You know vewy well what a pwoocesah is," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy warmly. "A pwoocesah, you know."

"Oh, a procession!" said Tom Merry. "I see! So there's a procession in Wayland this afternoon? A circus?"

The swell of the Fourth sniffed. Evidently he would not have troubled his head about anything so trivial as a circus procession.

"Certainly not, Tom Mewwy. It's a Suffwagette pwoocesah."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The Feminine Liberty League are havin' a pwoocesah," said D'Arcy. "They are takin' up Suffwagism in Wayland, you know. They have got extra police ovah from Abbotsford in case of disturbance. They expect a lot of windows and things to be bwoken, and policemen punched, you know, and that kind of thing. It will be wathah an excitin' thing, I think, and—"

"We're on!" said Monty Lowther immediately. "This is better than cricket practice. There is a sweet and æsthetic joy in seeing policemen punched that appeals to me more

Next Wednesday:

"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY!" AND "SIR BILLY, OF GREYHOUSE!"

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than anything else. Have the Suffragettes given an undertaking to punch the policemen?"

"Of course not, you ass! But if they start bweakin' the shop windows, the policemen will stop them, and then they will get punched and scwatched, you know. They are goin' to bweak all the windows in Wayland until they get the vote. I wegard it as our duty to be on the scene. I have taken up the mattah of votes for women," announced Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I have weflected on the mattah, and I have come to the conclusion that they are quite in the wight. I have witten an article on the subject for the next numbah of 'Tom Mewwy's Weekly' which will fill pwactically the whole numbah fwom covah to covah."

Tom Merry chuckled. "I don't think!" he murmured. "You'll have to cut it down to the length of a short and snappy paragraph, Gussy, and I'll put it in the comic column."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I should uttably wefuse to have my article on Woman's Suffwage put in the comic column!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Howevah, nevah mind that now. My ideah is that we ought to go ovah to Wayland and see the pwocesh, and help the women if necessary."

"To punch the policemen?" asked Lowther. "Weally, Lowthah—" "Well, I don't mind punching a policeman," said Tom Merry thoughtfully, "but I couldn't undertake to scratch them or bite their ears. That's understood."

"You uttah ass!" "We'll come!" said Tom Merry cheerfully. "It will be funny, anyway."

"It is a sewious and important mattah, Tom Mewwy. I am callin' a meetin' this evenin' in the Form-woom to discuss the mattah, with a view to educatin' opinion at St. Jim's on the subject. I shall make a speech—"

"Good!" said Lowther. "I'll come, and bring some eggs."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Ordah will be maintained at my meetin'," said D'Arcy. "Any fellow bweakin' the peace will weceive a feahful thwashin' on the spot."

"Which spot?" asked Lowther. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't be an ass! If you are comin' ovah to Wayland with me, pway meet me at the school gates at half-past two. Blake and Hewwies and Dig are comin', and Figgins & Co. of the New House, and Weddy. They are all interested in—"

"Punching policemen?" "No, you ass! In the gweat question of Woman's Suffwage. I suppose you fellows haven't thought about it so fah?" asked D'Arcy.

"Mea culpa!" grinned Tom Merry. "I admit that I've given more thought to cricket and footer so far."

"It's a gweat and burnin' question—"

"A burning question?" asked Lowther. "Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you ought to ring up the fire brigade to attend to it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the humorist of the Shell with a withering look. Monty Lowther smiled serenely, apparently not at all withered.

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah!" Lowther nodded.

"You can regard me in any character you please to assume, my dear fellow," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will explain the first pwinciples of the mattah to you," said Arthur Augustus, deciding to ignore Monty Lowther's humorous efforts. "In the first place, why should we have votes if women don't have votes?"

"But we haven't any," said Tom Merry. "Schoolboys don't vote."

"I was weferrin' to our sex as a whole," said D'Arcy. "When we grow up we shall vote, of course. Why shouldn't women vote?"

Monty Lowther appeared to reflect deeply.

"You cannot answah that!" said Arthur Augustus triumphantly.

"I can!" exclaimed Lowther. "Because one rode a horse and the other rhododendron."

"What?"

"Isn't that your answer?" asked Lowther innocently.

"You twightful ass!" shrieked D'Arcy. "I was not askin' you a widdle, you fathead!"

"My mistake," murmured Lowther. "Isn't it a conundrum?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course it is not a conundrum, you silly ass! It's a gweat and burnin' question—the question of the day. Why shouldn't women have votes?" demanded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Votin' is witin' your name on a slip of papah and puttin' it into a box. If women want to wite their names on slips of papah and put them into boxes, why shouldn't they? I pause for a weply."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Should there be taxation without wepresentation?" continued Arthur Augustus sternly. "The women have to pay taxes, and they are not wepwesented. If you collect the tax fwom anybody, you ought to give that person a vote."

"Then I ought to give Blake a vote," said Lowther solemnly.

"What?"

"I collected the tacks from his tool-chest, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry and Manners.

That was too much for the patience of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He made a rush at Monty Lowther, and the humorist of the Shell dodged behind Tom Merry and Manners in great alarm. Manners' foot somehow got into Arthur Augustus's way, and the swell of St. Jim's stumbled over it and sat down on the floor.

"Ow! Ah! Bai Jove!"

The Terrible Three walked on, leaving the champion of woman's suffrage sitting on the floor, gasping for breath. By the time Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had recovered himself, the chums of the Shell were gone.

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus Has An Exciting Time.

Q UITE a little crowd were gathering at the gates of St. Jim's soon after dinner.

Blake and Herries and Digby and D'Arcy, the chums of Study No. 6 in the Fourth—Figgins and Kerr and Wynn and Redfern, of the New House—and the Terrible Three, of the Shell, were all there, and a good many other fellows.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was in a state of deadly earnestness on the subject of the procession by the local branch of the Feminine Liberty League. When Arthur Augustus took up anything, he took it up seriously; and he was just now a most ardent champion of women's rights. But it must be confessed that most of the other fellows regarded the matter from a humorous point of view. They wanted to see the procession, chiefly from a desire to witness a row, and perhaps to take part in it.

The cause of women's suffrage had penetrated even into that quiet countryside, and the market town of Wayland had learned much on the subject. Votes for women were making great progress there. There was a branch of the Feminine Liberty League, presided over by a warlike lady named Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott, ably seconded by her daughter, Miss Gloxiana Jellicott.

Windows had been broken, pillar-boxes had been raided, policemen had been scratched and even bitten—in fact, there were all the signs of progress.

The wretched tools of a corrupt Administration—thus Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott described the local bobbies—had been made to feel that their employment was no sinecure.

Local tradesmen had learned to put up their shutters when Mrs. Jellicott & Co. "procheshed" through the town, and insurance companies had done a brisk business—chiefly in paying out for smashed plateglass.

Meetings had been held in the market square, with boeing ad lib. and all kinds of disturbances. Thus did the gentle Suffragettes prove their capacity for taking over the administration of affairs out of the hands of a poor old played-out masculine sex.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was dressed in his best, in honour of the occasion. Nothing could have exceeded the glossiness of his silk topper, unless it was the brilliance of his boots, or the elegant crease in his trousers. His fancy waistcoat was a marvel in the way of a colour scheme. And the swell of St. Jim's wore a prominent rosette of pink and green—pink and green being the colours of the Feminine Liberty

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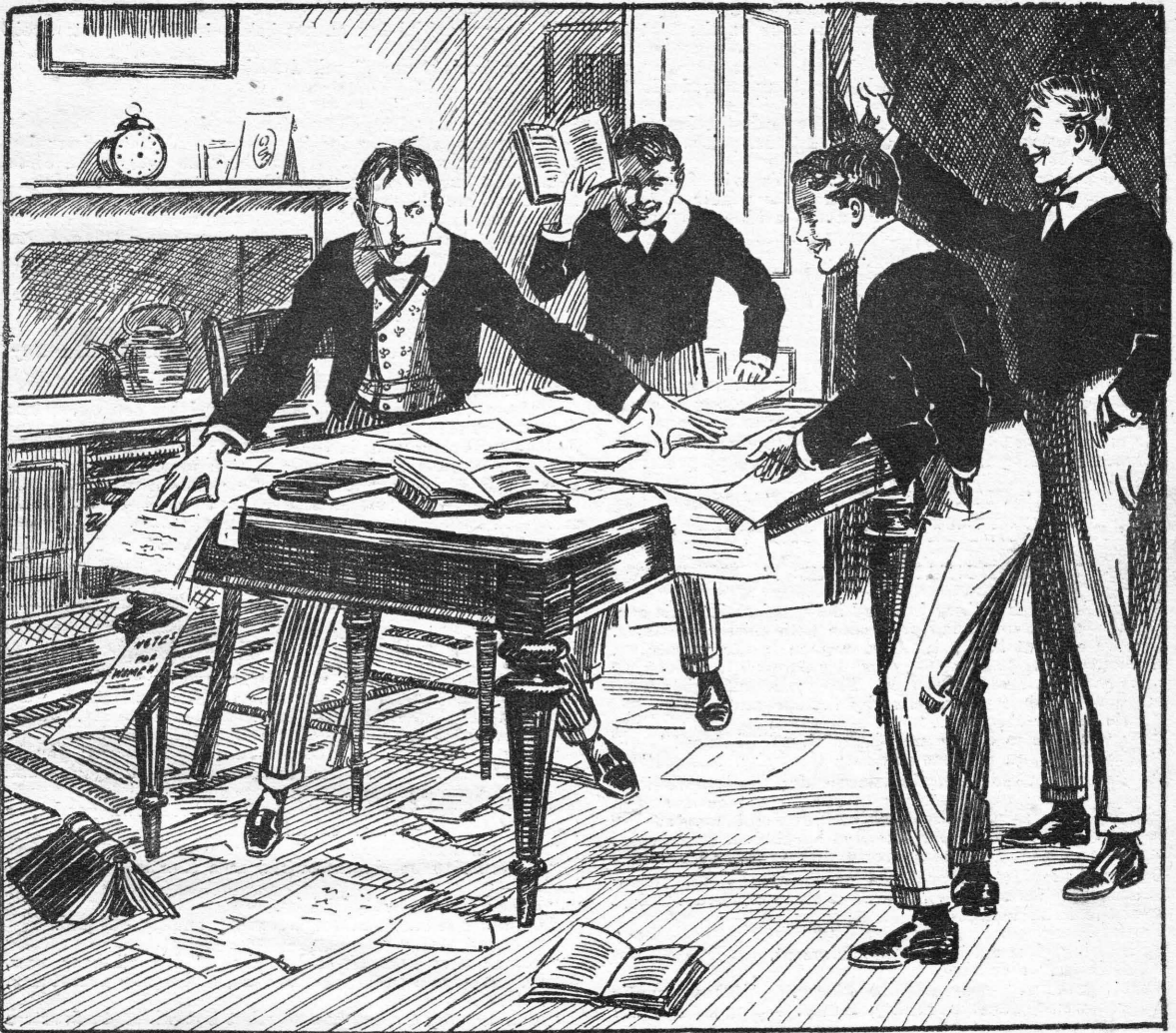
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COUPON.

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(See column 2, page 26 of this issue.)

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Arthur Augustus jumped up as his chum collected up a handful of the pages that comprised his speech. "Let my speech alone, you fwabjous ass," he roared. "Can't I have it to clean out the frying-pan?" demanded Blake. (See Chapter 3.)

League. Pink suited the complexion of Mrs. Jellicott.

"Weady, you fellows?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, glancing over his flock through his famous monocle.

"Quite ready!" said Tom Merry solemnly. "Lead on Macduff!"

And the party started.

They walked down the lane, and turned into the footpath through the wood to Wayland.

Three youths in mortar-board caps were sighted on the footpath, and Tom Merry & Co. recognised Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor, of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School.

"Grammar cads!" said Blake, of the Fourth. "We've got a few minutes to spare to bump them."

"Hear, hear!" said the St. Jim's fellows heartily.

"Weally, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I trust you will not think of wastin' time on such wubbish as wows with the Gwammah cads now! The meetin' is bein' held in Wayland at three."

Gordon Gay & Co. had caught sight of the St. Jim's fellows, and halted. Gordon Gay held up his hand in sign of peace.

"Pax, you chaps!" he said. "Are you going over to see the Suffrage procession?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So are we," said Gordon Gay, laughing. "It will be funny. What on earth are you wearing those colours for, D'Arcy?"

"They are the colours of the Feminine Liberty League."

said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy loftily. "I sympathise with the cause."

"Oh, my hat!" said Gordon Gay.

"D'Arcy is a Suffragist," explained Tom Merry. "He is going to take up the cause, and get votes for women as soon as he gets into the House of Lords."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus disdained to make any rejoinder. He walked on with his aristocratic nose high in the air.

As soon as the juniors reached Wayland they could see the signs of the coming procession.

Half the shops had their shutters up, and there were an unusual number of policemen in the streets, most of them grinning. The wretched slaves of a corrupt Administration—to quote Mrs. Jellicott again—evidently were not properly impressed with the seriousness and importance of the great movement.

It was market day in Wayland, and there were unusual crowds in the old town, which was the reason why the Feminine Liberty League had chosen that day for their demonstration.

In the market square the throng was dense.

The St. Jim's juniors elbowed their way on cheerfully, with the three Grammarians. Loud voices demanded to know whom they were shoving—really superfluous questions, as the persons shoved could not possibly have been in any doubt upon the point.

The party took up their position outside the Hotel Royal—the grand new hotel of Wayland.

"We shall have a jollay good view here, deah boys," said

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "and we shall be on the spot to chip in if necess."

The juniors chuckled.

"This is where we punch the bobbies," murmured Monty Lowther.

"If there is any wuffness displayed towards the hewoincs who are standin' up for their wights, I twust you will help me defend them," said D'Arcy loftily.

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Merry. "We will fight the whole town, if necessary, rather than allow a hair of their heads to be hurt. There are only about a thousand people here, so we shall have to tackle, say, a hundred each. We ought to be able to manage that!"

"Weally, you ass—"

There was a shout.

"Here they come!"

"Boo!"

"Yah!"

"Huwway!"

There was a swaying in the throng, and shouts and yells and booing as the procession came winding along towards the market square, where the speeches were to be made.

Banners of pink and green floated above the heroic damsels who were marching in the cause of liberty and progress:

"VOTES FOR WOMEN!"

"NO PEACE TILL WE GET THE VOTE!"

"WE MEAN BUSINESS!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed the oncoming procession with keen enthusiasm. There were about half a hundred women in the procession, and about ten or twelve men carrying banners, and looking for the most part very sheepish. The male Suffragists were greeted with ironic pleasantries by the spectators.

"Pore Mister Henpeck!"

"Do you 'ave to do the washing at 'ome, guv'nor?"

"Why ain't you at 'ome minding the baby, mister?"

At the head of the procession strode Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott—a lady with strong features and a firm mouth and a decidedly firm chin. Miss Gloxiana Jellicott was at her side—a young lady who had inherited her mother's firm chin. They glanced at the grinning crowd with supreme disdain.

Opposite the Hotel Royal the procession halted. There was a sudden whiz in the air, and a stone crashed through one of the hotel windows.

Crash!

Splintering glass rattled on the pavement.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Those gentle creatures won't want defending, Gussy. You had better defend the men."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash, crash!

Missiles were flying at the windows now. Mrs. Jellicott & Co. had evidently selected the big new hotel as a special object of their favours. A missile that was badly aimed knocked Arthur Augustus's silk hat off, and the swell of St. Jim's gave a gasp.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"We'd better get out of this," agreed Blake; "we're just in the line of fire. Where are the giddy police?"

The juniors scrambled away in the crowd. The women were in deadly earnest, but they were not good shots, and the people on the pavement were in greater danger than the hotel windows.

The pavement in front of the hotel was soon cleared of them.

Crash, crash!

Policemen pushed their way through the surging crowd to the spot. People shoved and pushed, Suffragettes shrieked and screamed. Pandemonium seemed to have broken loose in the old high street.

Crash, crash!

Stone followed stone, and window followed window into ruins.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the only person who remained in the line of fire.

He was scrambling after his silk hat.

Stones whizzed round him on their way to the windows, and one caught him on the ear, and another on the shoulder, and another on the leg.

The swell of St. Jim's yelled with pain.

Further on, at the corner, his chums were yelling with laughter.

"Pway don't chuck things at me, deah gals!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I am a sympathisah, you know!"

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice was lost in the din.

Stones continued to fly, and D'Arcy hopped to and fro

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like the proverbial hen on hot bricks in his efforts to avoid them.

"Run for it, Gussy!" yelled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hop it, Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus ran for it. He was a sympathiser; but stones were no respecters of persons. The swell of St. Jim's abandoned the pursuit of his topper, and ran. He joined his friends breathless at the corner. Behind him the windows were crashing away merrily. Policemen were making arrests, and struggling and dishevelled damsels were being borne away by the wretched slaves of a corrupt Administration.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "My toppah's gone!"

"Jolly lucky your head isn't gone with it!" yelled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha! Are you still a giddy Suffragist, you ass?"

"Yaas, wathah! I consider—"

"Hallo, they're coming this way!" roared Gordon Gay. "I'm off!"

Whiz! Whiz! Crash!

Blake gave a roar as a stone knocked his cap off. The crowd were roaring and rushing and swaying. Miss Gloxiana Jellicott was struggling in the arms of a burly policeman, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made a rush to the rescue. Tom Merry and Blake caught him in their arms and whirled him off his feet, and rushed away. The swell of St. Jim's struggled furiously in the grasp of the juniors.

"Welease me, you silly asses!" he shrieked. "I am goin' to the wescue!"

"You're jolly well not!" grinned Blake. "Do you want to be arrested, and have the Head come and bail you out?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I insist upon bein' weleased—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Arthur Augustus was borne away in spite of his efforts. The juniors did not release him until they were well outside Wayland, on the road home to St. Jim's. D'Arcy was set upon his feet, gasping and breathless.

"You uttah wottahs!" he shrieked. "I wegard you as wank outsiders! I came here to defend the Suffragettes, and you have pvented me."

"Lunatics have to be restrained for their own good, you know," Monty Lowther explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a lunatic. I am goin' back—"

"Collar him!" shouted Blake.

And the schoolboy Suffragist was promptly collared.

"Welease me—"

"March him home!" said Blake. "It's all over now, Gussy. They're arrested by this time, and a jolly good thing, too! I've lost my cap."

"I've lost my topper, you ass; but I'm willin' to devote a toppah to the good of the cause!"

"Bring him along!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, vainly resisting, was walked home with two juniors holding each arm.

CHAPTER 3.

A Very Important Meeting.

"NOTICE!"
A great meeting will be held in the Fourth Form room at seven precisely. Chair will be taken by A. A. D'Arcy, Esq., of the Fourth Form. Discussion will be allowed, and all questions asked will be cheerfully answered.

"Subject.—'Votes for Women'"

"All are invited. After the meeting, all present will be asked to join the St. Jim's branch of the Feminine Liberty League.
Signed, A. A. D'Arcy."

That paper, in the elegant handwriting of the swell of St. Jim's was pinned upon the notice-board in the School House.

Fellows read it and grinned; and large numbers of them made up their minds to be present at D'Arcy's meeting.

The fact that the swell of St. Jim's had taken up the cause of woman's suffrage had become known all over the school by this time, and it had caused many chuckles in both houses.

"We'll jolly well go to the meeting," said Figgins, of the New House. "Mind you chaps don't forget your pea-shooters!"

And Kerr and Wynn, and Redfern and Lawrence and Owen promised that they wouldn't.

The meeting was likely to be an excitable one. The New House fellows were coming over for a rag; and the School House fellows would probably not be very keen on keeping order. It was highly probable that the meeting would be

dispersed by the prefects before the subject of female suffrage had been properly threshed out.

Blake and Digby and Herries took their study-mate's new departure in a humorous spirit. When Blake & Co. came in to tea in the study with a bundle of supplies from the school shop, Arthur Augustus had the study table fully occupied. Books and papers were spread over it, and the swell of St. Jim's was writing away at express speed. Every now and then he paused, and rubbed his chin or chewed the handle of his pen, to help on his thoughts; and then the pen raced on again.

He did not look up as his chums came in. He was too busy.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Is that an imposition you're doing, Gussy? I didn't know you'd had lines. What have you been doing?"

"It is not an imposish, deah boy!" replied D'Arcy, without looking up from the thickly-covered page.

"Doing exercises?" asked Digby.

"Certainly not!"

"Then what is it?" Blake demanded.

"I am w'itin' out my speech."

"Your—your what?"

"My speech," said D'Arcy calmly. "I am goin' to make a speech at the meetin' this evenin', explainin' fully the whole question of female suffrage. I am w'itin' it out, you see, to awwange all the points of the argument, and to have my notes weady."

"And are you going to make the audience listen to all that?" exclaimed Blake, glancing with a grin at the sheets of written paper.

"It will not take me vewy long—about two hours."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to cackle at in that wemark, Blake."

Blake chuckled.

"Well, if the fellows listen to you for two hours on end, Gussy, there will be only one reason for it."

"And what is that, deah boy?"

"You will have talked them asleep in the first five minutes. Otherwise, they won't stand it."

"I weward you as an ass, Blake."

"Done with that table, Gussy?" asked Herries briskly. "We want tea, you know."

"I have not done with the table, Hewwies, and I am not likely to have finished with the table for some time," said D'Arcy. "I should pwefer you fellows to have ter in Hall this time. I'm afraid I can't be bothahed with you in the study now."

"Yes; I can see us having tea in Hall while you write out that silly rot about silly Suffrage!" growled Herries. "Take that rubbish off the table, and don't play the giddy ox!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Put it away, and clean out the frying-pan, Gussy," said Blake. "We've got herrings here—good fresh herrings. What do you think of that?"

"I uttably wufuse to clean out the fryin'-pan, Blake, and I cannot let you have the table," said D'Arcy firmly. "Pway wun away."

"Get off that table!" roared Herries.

"Wats! The burnin' questions of the day can't be postponed because you youngstahs want tea," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm surprised at you, Hewwies! I suppose you don't want me to open the meetin' without my speech weady, do you?"

"Blessed if I see that it makes any difference," said Herries. "I don't suppose the fellows will listen to it, you know."

"Hewwies, you ass—"

"But it will make a lot of difference if we don't have tea," said Digby. "Now, get off the table, Gussy. Look here, do you want that speech to be really useful?"

"Yaas, of course!"

"Good! Then lend it to me to light the fire with!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Good; and I'll have the special notes to wipe out the frying-pan!" said Blake heartily.

Arthur Augustus jumped up as his chum collected up a handful of the written sheets.

"Let my speech alone, you fwabjous ass!" he roared.

"Can't I have it to clean out the frying-pan?" demanded Blake.

"Of course not, you awful fathead!"

"Then take it away and bury it," said Blake. "Clear the table, Herries, old man, while I light the fire. If Gussy doesn't take his rubbish off, you can tip the table up, and it will slide off."

"Good!" said Herries, taking a grasp with both hands upon one end of the study table.

"Upon the whole, I will clear the things off," said D'Arcy. "Pway don't be a beastly ass, Hewwies. It's simply wotten of you fellows to intewwupt me like this, before I have finished the speech."

"It will get you used to it!" grinned Blake. "You'll be interrupted in the Form-room before you've finished the speech, I can tell you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall wufuse to be intewwupted." Arthur Augustus sat down in the armchair, and took a blotting-pad and a sheet of paper on his knee. "I can get on here all wight if you fellows don't talk. You don't mind if I wead it aloud as I wite, do you—it fixes it on my mind bettah. Undah the pwesent wotten cires, with all wemen excluded fwom the polling-booths, is it a wondah that sweet and gentile ladies take to bweaking windows and settin' fire to pillah-boxes? Should not we do the pwecise same thing undah similar cires? Did not our forefathers wallow in mud and blood for liberty? Gentlemen, the vote must be given, and I call upon all fellows here to say—"

"Where's the matches?"

"Pway don't intewwupt me, you ass, when I'm pwactisin' my speech. I call upon all fellows here to say—"

"Have you seen the matches?"

"To say that they will work and fight for the cause of justice and truth. Shall we not give to the supewiah half of cweation the pwivileges that are enjoyed by mere men? Shall we deny to our wives and sweethearts—"

"You—you blessed polygamist!" exclaimed Blake, aghast.

"How many wives and sweethearts have you got?"

"You uttah ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shall we deny to our wives and sweethearts the wights due to them, even considahed merely as the equal of men? I call upon you to answah the question—"

"Where are those blessed matches?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not know where the matches are, and I do not care where the matches are!" bawled Arthur Augustus, quite forgetting, in his exasperation, the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. "I wufuse to take the slightest intewest in the wotten matches. Pway shut up!"

"Yes; but where are the matches?"

"I call upon all pwesent to answah the question—the burnin' question—"

"It isn't a burning question yet," said Blake.

"It won't be a burning question till I find the matches. I—"

Arthur Augustus rose and strode out of the study with his papers and blotting-pad. Evidently the swell of St. Jim's found it hopeless to compose his speech while his chums were getting tea in the study.

Blake & Co. chuckled, and went on getting tea.

CHAPTER 4.

Sad Fate of a Great Speech.

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther were also gathered round the festive tea-table in their study in the Shell passage. The Terrible Three were discussing D'Arcy's latest wheeze, with many chuckles, as they had their tea. There was a tap at the study door, and the subject of their discussion came in, with sheets of papers in one hand, and a blotting-pad in the other, and an exasperated expression upon his face.

"Hallo, Gussy!" said Tom Merry. "Come to tea?"

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy, but I'm afraid I've no time to think of tea just now," said D'Arcy. "Would you fellows mind if I wite out my speech here? The silly asses in No. 6 are talkin' all the time, and puttin' me out."

"Go ahead," said Tom Merry cordially. "Perhaps we can help you. What is it all about?"

"I am twyin' to make it eloquent," said D'Arcy. "How do you think this goes? Fwiends, Englishmen, and countwy-men—that's in Shakespeare's style, you know—"

"Go hon!"

"Fwiends, Englishmen, and countwy-men, lend me your eahs," said D'Arcy. "I was thinkin' of beginnin' it like that."

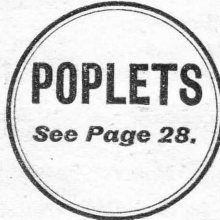
"Jolly good start," said Monty Lowther. "I like it, especially the eahs. Go on."

"I am here to-night to make an appeal to you for the sake of your wives and sisters and womenfolk generally!" said D'Arcy.

"My wives, and sisters, and sweethearts?" asked Lowther, in astonishment. "I haven't any. Never had the luck to have any sisters, and I don't remember ever having had any wives."

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NEXT WEDNESDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY!"

"You uttah ass——"

"Oh, good! Are you always as polite as that when you visit a chap in his study, Gussy?" asked Lowther blandly.

"Ahem! I withhold the remark. But you are deliberately misunderstandin' me," said Arthur Augustus. "I am addressin' the male sex in general in this speech, you see. Lots of people have wives and sweethearts."

Lowther shook his head.

"Not nice people," he said. "Wives or sweethearts, if you like; but wives and sweethearts—no, no! I don't like the suggestion, Gussy. It shows a knowledge of the world which is quite out of place in an innocent youth like you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frightful ass!" roared D'Arcy. "You know you are only wottin'. Some chaps have wives, and other chaps have sweethearts——"

"Well, I don't think even that's right," said Lowther obstinately. "One wife or one sweetheart at a time ought to be enough for any reasonable man."

"I refuse to entah into a widdleous discush with you, Lowthah, you wottah! To continue: Gentlemen, has it evah occurred to you that the supewiah and bettah part of humanity has stwuggled on for countless ages without a vote? Can you go home and look your female velations in the face, and welfect that they are not entitled to vote at elections? Can you lend your aid in withholdin' f'rom the deah gals such a little thing as a vote, when they are askin' for it every day? Gentlemen——"

"Hear, hear!" said the Terrible Three.

D'Arcy looked gratified.

"I think that's wathah hittin', don't you, you fellows?" he asked. "It will go home to their minds, and make them welfect—what?"

"You want to make them reflect?" asked Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then I could make a suggestion for doing that quite simply—if I may venture to make a suggestion," said Monty Lowther meekly.

"Pway go on, deah boy," said D'Arcy, with an encouraging smile.

"Why not buy a number of looking-glasses——?"

"What?"

"And pin them on the chaps——"

"What for?"

"To make them reflect!" explained Lowther.

Arthur Augustus looked speechlessly at Monty Lowther for a moment. Then he gathered up his papers and blotting-pad, and departed from the Shell study, without going on with his speech. He was evidently fed up with Monty Lowther's humour. The Terrible Three chuckled.

"Poor old Gussy!" sighed Lowther. "He's in deadly earnest. No good trying to cheer him up, even with the best jokes."

"How do you know?" asked Manners sweetly. "You haven't tried."

"Oh, rats!" said Lowther. Like many humorists, Lowther did not always approve of humour being turned in his own direction.

Arthur Augustus was frowning as he quitted Tom Merry's study. He wanted to find a quiet spot to finish his speech. He looked into the next study, which belonged to Gore and Skimpole, and Vavasour, of the Shell. Gore and Vavasour were out; but Skimpole was there, and he blinked at D'Arcy benevolently through his big glasses.

"Come in, my dear D'Arcy," he said. "I am very glad to see you. I have just finished reading the last chapter of Professor Balmcrumpet's volume on the subject of Determinism——"

D'Arcy groaned. Skimpole was a scientific youth, who took interest in all sorts of abtruse subjects, and inflicted them upon everyone who came within range.

"Excuse me, Skimmay," said D'Arcy. "I looked in——"

"Exactly. Come in, D'Arcy, and pray sit down. I shall be delighted to pass on to you some of the knowledge I have gained from the inestimable man, Professor Balmcrumpet——"

"The fact is, Skimmy——"

"In the first place, you should clearly understand what Determinism is——"

"I looked in to——"

"It is the science which declares that when a thing is as it is, it is not at the same time as it is not—in other words——"

"If I might use your table for a bit——"

"To give you an example, consider the effect of heredity and environment upon——"

Arthur Augustus stepped into the passage and closed the door. There was no refuge in Skimpole's study.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kangaroo, of the Shell, meeting Arthur Augustus in the passage. "Going to the meeting? It's getting near seven!"

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"The fact is, deah boy, I haven't finished my speech yet," said D'Arcy. "I'm twyin' to find a quiet spot where silly asses won't intewwupt me. Do you mind if I use your study?"

"By all means!" said the Cornstalk heartily. "There's only Bernard Glyn in there doing some rotten experiment. Go it!"

"Thanks awf'ly."

Arthur Augustus trotted on to the end study in the Shell passage, which belonged to Noble, Dane, and Bernard Glyn. The last-named was an amateur inventor, and he used the study for his experiments. All sorts and conditions of instruments and implements were to be found in Glyn's study. D'Arcy knocked at the door and opened it, and found the inventor of the Shell bending over a battery. Glyn looked round at him and nodded cheerfully.

"Seen Kangy?" he asked. "I want him!"

"I just passed him in the passage, deah boy; he was goin' the othah way."

Glyn growled.

"The ass! I believe he knew that I wanted him to help me test this battery!" he exclaimed. "You can do it, though, as you're here."

"Weally, Glyn, I looked in to sit down and w'ite out my speech here——"

"You can do that afterwards. Shove the papers on the table, and lend me a hand here—or, rather, both hands," said the St. Jim's inventor. "It won't take you long. You can write out all the speeches you like afterwards."

"Oh, vevy well, deah boy!" said D'Arcy. "Did you make that battewy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Glyn proudly. "Now, I want to test it. You take hold of those two handles—here—and grasp them tightly."

"Certainly, deah boy."

"Leave go when I tell you."

"All wight."

"Ready! Take hold!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took hold of the two handles, and grasped them firmly. Then Glyn bent over the battery and pressed something. Then there was a terrific yell from the swell of St. Jim's.

"Ow! Oh! Yaroo!"

"Let go!" shouted Glyn.

"Ow! I can't!"

"Let go! It's time to let go now!"

"I—I—I can't!" howled D'Arcy. "You've turned the curwvent on, you ass, and I can't let go! Ow! Oh, bai Jove! Yawwoh! This is howwible! Welease me!"

The current was certainly powerful. Arthur Augustus was dancing and hopping, but he could not let go the handles.

The schoolboy inventor watched him with a grin.

"Ow! Oh! Yow! You awful idiot!" roared D'Arcy. "Yow! Yow! Welease me!"

"Sure you can't let go?" demanded Glyn.

"Yawwoh! Yaas! Ow!"

"You see, that's the test," explained Glyn calmly. "If you could let go, it would show that I've got the wrong current. If you can't let go, it's all right."

"Wow, wow, wow! It does not feel all wight!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Quite sure you can't let go?"

"Ow! Yaas! Ow!"

"All right; the machine's perfect, then!" said Glyn, and he cut off the current.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy staggered away from the electric battery, gasping.

"You frightful ass!" he shouted.

"It's all right," said Glyn. "That does a chap good, you know; improves the circulation, and—— Ow, ow! Hands off, you ass!"

Glyn staggered back as the swell of St. Jim's hammered at him furiously. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was exasperated, and he rushed at the schoolboy inventor to take summary vengeance upon him.

Bernard Glyn staggered back, and D'Arcy's fist caught him on the nose, and he rolled against the table with a yell.

"Ow! You ass!"

"There, you feahful wottah——"

Crash!

The study table went over towards the grate. There was a succession of crashes as batteries, wet and dry, were hurled into the grate, with an inkstand and several scientific books and other objects of great value to the schoolboy inventor. And among them went an object of great value to the swell of St. Jim's—nothing less than the written sheets of his great speech.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy, as the overturned table crashed on the fender. "Well, it serves you wight—it was your own fault!"

"You fathead!" roared Glyn. "You have busted up my batteries now!"

"Jollay good thing, too, when you use them to play twicks on fellows!" said Arthur Augustus.

"You—you frabjous ass! You'll have the place on fire!" gasped Glyn, as a flare of flame shot up in the grate. "Look at that! You've knocked all that waste paper into the fire!"

"Waste papah, you frightful ass! That's my speech!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bernard Glyn. "Serve you jolly well right! This is a bit of luck for the fellows at the meeting, and no mistake!"

Arthur Augustus made a wild rush to the firegrate to save his manuscript.

But there was no chance. Some of the sheets had fallen fairly into the fire, and the whole mass was blazing in the grate now. The swell of St. Jim's succeeded in saving two or three fragments of half-burnt paper, and that was all.

He retreated from the blaze, smoky and panting, with the few fragments in his hands.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated. "Bai Jove! My speech is gone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—your silly ass!" said D'Arcy. "I shall have to write it out again now—I shall have to make it up ova again frowm start to finish! Bai Jove! And there won't be time before seven o'clock! Oh, you ass!"

Arthur Augustus clenched his fists again. Bernard Glyn took up a large squirt from a shelf, and filled it with ink. Arthur Augustus made a hasty retreat into the passage, and slammed the door after him.

A few minutes later he looked into Study No. 6 in the Fourth again. There was a pleasant scent of fried herrings in No. 6; and Blake and Herries and Digby were nearly finished tea. Blake grinned at the swell of the School House.

"There's one herring left," he remarked. "Finished the speech?"

"That fwightful ass Glyn has finished it!" growled D'Arcy. "He has knocked it into the fiah, and it is destroyed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at, you duffahs! I shall have to delivah the speech frowm memowry now, with a few notes," said Arthur Augustus. "It is vewy neahly time for the meetin' now. I wegard it as wotten!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dwy up!" said D'Arcy crossly. "I've only got ten minutes to make up my notes in. Now, then, 'wives and sweethearts—howwible injustice—supewiah sex—ahem!—'"

And Arthur Augustus laboured on his notes with great energy, while Blake and Herries and Digby shared the last herring.

And as seven o'clock rang out from the old clock-tower of St. Jim's, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, escorted by his chums, made his way to the Fourth Form-room. There was a large crowd there already, and the entrance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was greeted with a cheer.

CHAPTER 5. A Really Great Occasion.

"HERE he is!" "Henpeck junior!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Panky minor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus bestowed a graceful bow upon his supporters—and otherwise—as he walked up the Form-room.

Certainly, there were a large number of fellows gathered there for the meeting, though whether they had come to support or to rag was a question that remained to be answered.

Arthur Augustus took possession of the high desk that belonged to Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, and laid his notes thereon. Monty Lowther detached himself from Tom Merry and Manners, and approached the high desk.

"Secretary wanted?" he asked.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"All public speakers have secretaries and things to arrange their notes, and so forth," Lowther explained gravely. "I should be honoured."

"You are vewy good, deah boy!"

"Not at all, Gussy! England expects every man to do his duty, as Wellington said at the battle of Bunker's Hill!"

"It wasn't Wellington, you ass; it was Nelson, and it was at the battle of Twalfalga!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am weally suppwised at you, Lowthah!"

"My mistake!" said Lowther blandly. "However, whether it was Wellington or Nelson, the fact is just the same—England expects every man to do his duty, and gets

disappointed lots of times. Now is the time for all good men to rally to the aid of the party. I forget whether it was Wellington or Nelson said that, or whether I saw it in an advertisement. Are these the notes?"

"Yaas."

"Any fivers among them?"

"If you are goin' to be funnay, Lowthah, on an occasion like this—"

Monty Lowther shook his head.

"Certainly not, Gussy! I'm not the kind of chap to poach on another fellow's preserves. On this occasion you are going to be funny, and I sha'n't compete with you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his famous monocle into his eye, and glared at the humorist of the Shell. Lowther, however, was bending over the notes on the desk, and escaped that trenchant glare.

The notes had been hastily scribbled, in D'Arcy's hurry after the accident to his speech, and in some places were hardly decipherable. Monty Lowther wrinkled his brows over them.

"Can't you wead them?" asked D'Arcy.

"Ye-es," said Lowther. "But if you're going to refer to these notes in your speech, Gussy, they ought to be plainer. You ought to have typewritten notes to refer to."

"But I haven't a typewriter, deah boy."

"Couldn't you put the speech off till you could get one?"

Arthur Augustus disdained to reply to that question.

"I'll tell you what," said Lowther. "Where the writing is a bit too thick, I'll rewrite the word over in pencil, in big letters, so that you can't make a mistake."

"Thank you, Lowthah!"

"Not at all. I shall be pleased," said Lowther. "It's an honour for me to act as secretary to a great speaker."

"Speech!" called out Figgins, of the New House, who was with Kerr and Wynn and Redfern and a crowd of other New House fellows. "We're waiting! What time does the show begin, Gussy?"

"You ass, Figgay! It isn't a show!"

"According to the notice in the hall, the performance was for seven precisely," said Redfern.

"Weally, Weddy—"

"It's past seven now!" said Lawrence. "Pile in!"

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus jammed in his monocle a little more tightly, and surveyed the crowd of juniors from the high desk. They were all grinning; but then, they had not grasped the seriousness of the subject so far. D'Arcy's burning words would doubtless impress it upon their minds in the course of time, and they would realise that the whole creation was practically coming to a standstill on account of the voteless condition of the fairer, better, and more valuable half of humanity.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Or wathah, I won't allude to you as gentlemen, as I am so well acquainted with you all—"

There was a yell of laughter.

"Fwiends, Englishmen, and countwymen, lend me your eahs!" said D'Arcy.

And a voice from the crowd took it up.

"I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Weddy, you ass!" shouted D'Arcy. "This isn't a wecitation, you fathead!"

"Ain't you reciting Shakespeare?" demanded Redfern, in astonishment.

"Certainly not!"

"Oh, my mistake! Go ahead!"

"Fwiends, Englishmen, and countwymen, lend me your eahs! We are here this evenin' to examine and discuss a most important question. Gentlemen, you are all aware of what this question is. What is the contwoversy that is shakin' the entire nation, and pushin' aside evewy other question of the day? I wepeat, what is it?"

"I know," said Figgins. "It's the question of the number of counties that should be in the cricket championship."

"You uttah ass, Figgay—"

"Isn't that right?" asked Figgins, in surprise.

"It is not wight."

"Of course it isn't," said Kerr. "What Gussy is alluding to is the Territorial question. Where are the Territorials to come from? That—"

"I wegard you as an ass, Kerr! I am not speakin' of the Tewwitowials. I am alludin' to the great and burnin' question of the day—Woman's Suffrage."

"Hear, hear!"

"Pway pass me my notes, Lowthah!"

"Here you are!" Monty Lowther handed up the

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corrected notes to D'Arcy. "I think you'll find 'em all right now, Gussy. I've made 'em plain."

"Thank you, deah boy."

"Go it, Gussy!" roared the juniors. "Pile in!"

"I'm just pilin' in, deah boys." D'Arcy gave a hasty glance at his notes. "Gentlemen, at the pvesent time of day, with the whole county in an upwoah around us, evewy chap is bound to considah the question—lookin' at the fact that there are actually quite a million more women than men in this county—evewy chap is bound to put it to himself, and to demand an answah to the pwessin' question: Why can't evewy man have three wives? Bai Jove, that's w'ong! Lowthah, you uttah beast, you have been altewin' these notes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors rocked with laughter.

Arthur Augustus made a jump towards Monty Lowther, who disappeared into the crowd.

The humorist of the Shell had altered the notes considerably, and for the better, from a humorous point of view.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose. He faced the audience again, and waved his hand for silence. But it was a long time before there was a lull in the laughter.

"Gentlemen, that was a wotten twick of a silly ass. My notes have been altahed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I did not mean to ask that widiculous question—"

"What ridiculous question did you mean to ask?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean to ask a weasonable question. I wepeat, that undah the pvesent circs., with the county in an upwoah around us, evewy man is bound to put to himself the question, and to demand an answah—why should not women have the vote? Gentlemen, why should not there be blokes for women?" said D'Arcy, reading from his notes again. "Oh, I—I mean votes for women! That beast has w'itten blokes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Votes for women," resumed D'Arcy, as soon as he could make his voice heard. "Gentlemen, what is a vote? You pwoceed to a pollin'-booth, and you w'ite your name on a piece of papah! The piece of papah is put in a box. At an election there are two candidates, and you don't approve of eithah of them. You vote for one or the othah! It doesn't mattah to you which one gets in. The business of the county pwoceeds just the same, whethah one or the othah is playin' the giddy ox in the Houses of Parliament. So fah as any purpose is served, you might as well stay at home. Vewy well. As votin' doesn't make any differece eithah way, it can only be wegarded as a harmless amusement for the people—and a genewal election has the same importance as a circus or a show at a picture-palace. Undah those circs., why should the women of England be deprived of a harmless and necessary amusement? If the ladies wish to attend pollin'-booths and w'ite their names on slips of papah and put them into boxes, why shouldn't they? I wepeat, can you advance a single argument why women should not be allowed this harmless relaxation as well as men?"

"Hear, hear!"

"I have given a gweat deal of weflection to this mattah," said D'Arcy, encouraged by the applause. "I have thought out the whole mattah vewy carefully. I have some w'elations in the House of Lords—"

"Bravo!"

"I have also a couple of poor w'elations in the House of Commons. I may say, therefore, that I have had some opportunities of observin' the bizney."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Government of this country," resumed D'Arcy, "is weally cawried on in the best possible manner. The Government is in the hands of about a dozen vewy respectable families, who are vewy careful to keep mattahs in their own hands, and not to let in outsiders. Genewal elections have no effect on this awangement. Genewal elections only decide which of these families wule the county; and as a wule, they take it in turns. They are all good families, and wule the county vewy well—much bettah than amateurs could do it. As I have wemarked before, elections are only held as a harmless amusement for the people, and to give the man in the sweet a feelin' that he has somethin' to do with the Government besides pay taxes. That is called democwacy—and I approve of democwacy so long as it is not cawried too fah. But to make democwacy complete, deah boys, it is necessary that all people should have the same wights of puttin' their names on bits of paper in ballot-boxes—women as well as men! We cannot wegard this as a fwee county, when women are debarred fwom an amusin' game to which all men are admitted. Let me put a similar case. Suppose women were prohibited fwom attendin' cwicket matches at Lord's?"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The spectators at Lord's have just as much effect on the matches there as genewal elections have on the Government of the county. The cases are weally pweicely similah. But suppose women were shut out fwom the cwicket-gwound—would you call that justice?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Therefore, I appeal to you, as sensible chaps, whethah women ought not to have the vote? It can do no harm, and though, of course, it cannot do any good, eithah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will be a harmless relaxation for the ladies," said D'Arcy. "It will bwing a little change and excitement into othahwise monotonous lives. On pollin' day, women as well as men will woll up and vote, and evewythin' will go on the same as before, just as it does now."

"Hear, hear!"

"My hat! I never knew Gussy could be so eloquent," said Jack Blake, wiping away his tears. "Gussy, old man, you've made out the case beautifully."

"Yes, rather!"

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"I am vewy glad to see that this meetin' appwoves of my views," said Arthur Augustus, beaming. "I may add that if the women want the vote, it is not polite to w'efuse them anythin' they want. If a lady wants your seat in a twain, you give it to her as a mattah of course—and that is a fah more sewious mattah than givin' her a vote. If your female w'elations are fond of sweets, you take them chocolates and things, and they cost money; but a vote would cost you nothin'—only a slightly extva expense for ink and slips of papah on election days—an expense which could easily be borne by a wich county like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That," continued the eloquent speaker—"that is why women get so watty at not havin' the vote! That is why they waid Ministahs, and punch policemen, and bweak windows and set fiah to pillah-boxes and things. No lady likes to be w'efused a weasonable wequest—you cannot expect it. Put yourself in their place. Suppose you were w'efused admission to a football match simply because you were born a ma, instead of a woman? That's how a woman feels when she's w'efused admission to a pollin'-station because she was born a woman instead of a man. Gentlemen, the time has come for abolishin' these invidious distinctions. Gentlemen, it is time that women had the vote!"

"Hear, hear!"

"That is the weason why I have become a Suffwagist. I wegard it as wude to w'efuse the deah cwewatures anythin' they want."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I therefore put the motion to this meetin'," said Arthur Augustus, referring to his notes once more—"that this meetin' of St. Jim's fellows, w'epwentin' one of the oldest and best public schools in the county, are unanimously in favour of evewy woman havin' a goat—I mean a vote. That beast Lowthah again—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I rise to ask the honourable speaker a question," said Figgins. "May I ask the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy whether he is in favour of Suffragettes interruptin' public meetings, and ragging the speakers?"

"Yaas, wathah, until they get the vote."

"The honourable speaker has pointed out that women are entitled to the same privileges as men—"

"Yaas."

"It therefore follows that men are entitled to the same privileges as women—"

"Yaas."

"If Suffragettes are free to interrupt meetings, then anti-Suffragists are free to interrupt Suffrage meetings, and to rag the speakers in the same way—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Therefore, acting upon my privileges as a mere man," said Figgins, "I claim my right of interrupting this Suffrage meeting, and ragging the speaker."

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Weally, Figgins, you ass— Ow—ow—yawoooh!" Figgins & Co. had raised their pea-shooters as one man.

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

Arthur Augustus jumped as the peas smote him on all quarters, and roared:

"Ow! Ow! Stop it, you silly asses! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fire away!" roared Figgins. "We're only acting on our rights, as admitted by the honourable speaker. Volleys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jumped down from the desk and made a rush at Figgins. He clasped the New House junior round



Bulstrode uttered a sharp exclamation, and darted among the rocks. He came back panting, with a cap in his hand. "Skinner's cap!" said Wharton, after a long pause. (For this incident, see "Standing by Skinner," the grand long, complete school tale of Harry Wharton & Co., in our companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

the neck, and they waltzed round the Form-room, amid yells of laughter from the other fellows. Kerr and Wynn caught hold of D'Arcy's ankles, and he was swept off the floor. Blake & Co. rushed to the rescue; and then Redfern and his chums piled in—which was the signal for the Terrible Three to take a hand. In a few moments more there was a terrific row proceeding between School House and New House; and the Form-room was in a state of pandemonium.

In the midst of the row the door opened, and Kildare and Darrel and two or three more prefects came in, with frowning faces and canes in their hands. The prefects did not wait to ask questions. They laid about them with the canes, and the meeting broke up in great disorder; the juniors scrambling over and under the desks and forms, and pouring out of the Form-room amid a terrific din. In a few minutes the room was cleared.

The meeting was at an end; and D'Arcy's resolution had not been put. Whether or not the meeting was in favour of votes for women was never ascertained.

CHAPTER 6.

D'Arcy Receives a Telegram.

TOBY, the School House page, met Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the Fourth Form came out of the class-room the next day. Toby had a telegram in his hand.

"Master D'Arcy!" he said.

"Thank you, deah boy!"

Blake and Herries and Digby gathered round Arthur Augustus with great interest as he opened the telegram.

Funds were low in Study No. 6, and Arthur Augustus had

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY!"

A Magnificent, Long Complete Tale of the Chums of St. Jim's,
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

wired home for some money—a resource that seldom failed him. Arthur Augustus was not careful with money, and his allowance generally ran through his fingers in a very short time; but he had a very generous "pater."

"Good!" said Blake. "That's the kind of governor a fellow wants; pater who wires you tin when you're hard up!"

"Yes, rather!" said Digby. "I've got a couple of aunts and an uncle I'd swap for your pater any day you like, Gussy."

"How much is it for?" asked Herries.
"Bai Jove!"
"Good news, I hope?" asked Blake.
"Yaas, watahah!"

"Oh, good!" said Blake, in great relief. "The last study brew cleared me right out. It's time you stood another one, Gussy; if you can spare the time from votes for women. Feeds for juniors is really a much more pressing question."

"What-ho!" said Herries. "You can lend me a few bob to get some biscuits for Towser, Gussy. Towser has taken a dislike to his grub, and I'm going to change it."
"Bai Jove! This is wippin'?"

"It must be a fiver," said Blake. "You'll have to go down to the post-office to get it, if it's wired, Gussy. We'll walk down with you, in case you meet any naughty Grammarians."
"I can get the biscuits while we're in Rylcombe," remarked Herries.

"Wippin' bai Jove!"
"How much is it for?" demanded Blake.
"Eh?"
"What is it for?"
"Six," said D'Arcy.
"Six quid!"
"Splendid!"
"Hurrah!"

"I fail to undahstand you, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "It is for six o'clock."
They stared at him.
"Six o'clock!" repeated Blake blankly.
"Yaas!"

"The—the telegram is for six o'clock. Are you off your rocker?"
"Weally, Blake—"
"How could your pater wire you six o'clock?" demanded Blake. "If you're not qualifying for Colney Hatch, explain."

"Oh, this telegwam isn't fwom my patah."
"You—you frabjous ass!" said Blake. "Who's it from, then?"
"It's fwom Miss Georgina Jibbs."
"Who on earth's that?"

"A militant Suffragette, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "You must have heard of Miss Jibbs—the young lady who wagged the Pwime Ministah, and bwoked Lloyd George's windows, and set fish to a golf-green."
"My hat!"

"Isn't it wippin'," said D'Arcy enthusiastically.
"Well, I shouldn't think it was very ripping if it were my golf-green," said Blake.
"Wats! I wegard the young lady as a hewoine. She has heard of my bein' a sympathisah with the movement, and she is comin' to see me."

"Coming here?" roared Blake.
"Yaas."
"Oh, crumbs!"

"What a thing it is to be a lady-killer!" sighed Digby. Arthur Augustus gave Digby a withering glance.
"Digby, you ass, I do not approve of that remark. Miss Jibbs is vewy fah fwom wastin' time upon such wubbish. She is a militant Suffragette. I'll wead out the telegwam to you if you like."

"Go it!" said Blake resignedly.

"D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's. Have heard of your splendid work for the movement. Am coming to see you to-day, six o'clock. GEORGINA JIBBS."

"Jollay luckay it doesn't happen in class hours," said D'Arcy. "I should have had to get out of classes somehow. As it happens, she will be comin' at tea-time."

Blake and Herries and Digby did not look enthusiastic. They were not Suffragists, and they would have preferred that D'Arcy had received a remittance from Lord Eastwood.
"We shall have to get her to stay to tea in the study," went on Arthur Augustus. "Of course, it is up to us to do the honahs in first-class style."

"Oh, rats!"
"Weally, Blake, I twust you will not be backward in showin' pwopah politeness to a lady visitah," said D'Arcy severely.

Blake grinned.
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"When she gets there, the cupboard will be bare," he said.
"Have you forgotten that we're out of funds, and there's nothing for tea?"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"
"Time to think of it, I should say," growled Herries.
"And what about Towser's biscuits?"
"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Jolly careless of your pater to leave us in the lurch like this," said Digby. "You'd better send him another telegram."
"Pewwaps he has sent a fivah by post," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "In that case, it will be here to-night. We can bowwow some money of Tom Mewwy."

"I suppose we can," said Blake. "But I don't know about having a militant Suffragette to tea. The windows won't be safe."
"Weally, Blake—"

"It's only Gussy who drops in for these things," said Digby. "You'd better go and raise the wind, Gussy."
"Yaas, that will be all wight. Of course, you fellows will come to tea; you can't be so wude as to neglect a lady guest."

"Oh, we'll be there," said Blake; "especially if there's a good tea!"
And Arthur Augustus went in search of the Terrible Three, to raise the funds for the study brew in honour of Miss Georgina Jibbs. He found the chums of the Shell going down to the cricket-field.

"Hallo, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther genially. "Any more meetings on yet? I want to know very particularly."
"I am vewy glad to see you takin' an intewest in the movement, Lowthah."

"Yes, rather," said Lowther. "Dame Taggles has some old eggs she is sellin' off cheap. If there's going to be a meeting, I was thinking of investing a bob in those eggs. They would be usefuh."
"You uttah ass, Lowthah! Tom Mewwy, I want to speak to you. I am weceiving a vewy distinguished guest at six o'clock to tea, and I have wun out of tin. Can you lend me a sovewei?"

"I've got ten bob, entirely at your service, dear boy," said Tom Merry, laughing.
"I can make it up to a quid," said Manners.
"Thank you vewy much."
"Will a quid do?" asked Lowther. "Gussy is very particular. He won't have anything to do with quids—they must be sovereigns."

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah. I shall be vewy pleased if you fellows will come to tea," said D'Arcy. "I will settle this sovewei to-morrow; I am expectin' a wemittance fwom my governah. The guest I'm expectin' is Miss Georgina Jibbs, a militant Suffragette—the enterpwisin' young lady who wagged the Pwime Minister, you know, and bwoked Lloyd George's windows—"

"Great Scott!"
"She's coming here!" exclaimed Tom Merry.
"Yaas; look at that telegram."
"Then she's at Rylcombe now," said Tom Merry. "That telegram was sent from the village."

"Yaas; pwobably in the neighbourhood to help the Feminine Liberty League at Wayland," said D'Arcy. "It is vewy kind of her to take the opportunity of callin' on me."
"Awfully kind!" grinned Tom Merry. "Oh, we'll come—rather! I've never seen a militant Suffragette at close quarters. I suppose it doesn't bite?"

"Weally, you ass—"
"We'll come," said Manners. "Mind there's a good tea, and don't forget that I like whitebait and anchovies. And I'm rather particular about my brand of champagne."

But Arthur Augustus did not stay to listen to the pleasantries of the Shell fellows. With the twenty shillings in his pocket he made his way to the tuckshop, while the Terrible Three grinned and went on to the cricket-field. Figgins & Co. were in the tuckshop, demolishing jam-tarts—for which Mrs. Taggles was famous. They nodded genially to the swell of the School House.

"Just in the nick of time," said Figgins. "You have come here to stand a feed, I suppose, Gussy?"
"I have not come here to do anythin' of the sort, Figgins," said Arthur Augustus, who had not yet forgiven the New House trio for their outrageous behaviour at the great meeting in the Form-room. "I wegard you fellows as wuffians. If I had time, I should wegard it as my dutay to give you a feahful thwashin'."

ANSWERS

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"Jolly lucky you're pressed for time, then," grinned Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus proceeded to give his orders to Dame Taggles. Figgins & Co. listened with great interest to the list of good things.

"By Jove! that's going to be a good feed," said Fatty Wynn. "Something special on?"

"Yaas, watah!" said D'Arcy. "I am havin' a vewy distinguished guest to tea—Miss Georgina Jibbs, the famous militant Suffragette—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Do you know," said Fatty Wynn confidentially, "I'm rather in favour of Suffragism myself—especially the militant variety. I'd like to meet Miss Higgs—"

"Jibbs, you ass!"

"I mean Jibbs. There's nothing I really approve of so much as militant jibbism—I mean militant Suffragism, and—"

"I'm sowwy I cannot ask you fellows to tea," said D'Arcy grimly. "After your wuffianly conduct yestahday, I cannot twust you to tweat a militant Suffragette with pwopah respect. Thank you vewy much, Mrs. Taggles."

And Arthur Augustus took his parcel and quitted the tuckshop. Kerr stepped to the door. Blake and Herries and Digby had joined D'Arcy, and there was no chance of a raid: Fatty Wynn snorted indignantly over his last tart.

"Fancy leaving us out—especially after what I said," he exclaimed.

Figgins grinned.

"We're not going to be left out," he said. "Gussy's taking that stuff to his study, and the kids will be in the Form-room this afternoon. This is where we have a raid."

"But they'll be out of the Form-room as soon as we shall," said Kerr. "We sha'n't have a chance of getting at Study No. 6."

"You leave it to your uncle," said Figgins. "I can make an excuse for getting out during lessons, I suppose? I'll pitch it to Lathom somehow. And when the esteemed Augustus goes to look for the grub—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Figgins & Co. strolled out of the tuckshop in cheerful humour.

CHAPTER 7.

Thanks from Figgins.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was labouring under suppressed excitement that afternoon in the Fourth-Form class-room.

The honour of receiving a visit from Miss Jibbs, the most militant of militant Suffragettes, was really quite over-powering.

Miss Jibbs was in great request at Suffrage meetings, and her time was valuable. When she was not attending meetings, her days were quite filled up with raiding post-offices and pillar-boxes, chopping up golf-greens, breaking windows, and setting fire to cricket pavilions. She was, in fact, an extremely busy young lady, and so it was a great distinction for D'Arcy to receive a visit from her.

The time spent in Study No. 6 could have been utilised in smashing plate-glass or blowing up the residence of a Minister of State, so Miss Jibbs was really putting aside the great cause for a whole afternoon in doing D'Arcy this honour. The swell of St. Jim's did not fail to appreciate it. He was very anxious to look after Miss Jibbs well while she was at St. Jim's. There would be tea in the study, with carefully selected guests—and any attempt on the part of reckless juniors to rag the honoured guest would have to be suppressed with a stern hand.

D'Arcy was very much preoccupied during afternoon lessons, and he made some answers to Mr. Lathom that surprised the patient gentleman. When asked to name the most famous general of the nineteenth century, D'Arcy absent-mindedly replied, "Miss Jibbs!" And then Mr. Lathom lost patience, and gave him fifty lines. But what were fifty lines to the champion of the greatest-cause of modern times?

During the afternoon Figgins, who was generally in the fittest of fit conditions, came over quite faint, and was allowed by the kind-hearted Form-master to take a turn in the quadrangle for a quarter of an hour. He came back looking quite restored, and, in fact, unusually cheerful, and he exchanged a wink with Kerr and Wynn as he sat down in his place.

Arthur Augustus did not notice that little incident. He had more important matters to occupy his mighty brain.

Afternoon lessons were over at last, and the Fourth were released.

Blake and Herries and Digby were going out into the quad, when Arthur Augustus stopped them in the doorway.

"I twust you have not forgotten, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "No fear!" said Blake. "I'm not likely to forget cricket practice, with the match coming off with the New House next Wednesday."

"I was not alludin' to cwicket practice, you ass! I was alludin' to tea in the studay."

"We'll come in to tea, never fear," said Herries.

"I twust you will not think of comin' in wed and dustay fwom the cwicket to meet a lady," said D'Arcy. "I want you to be in your best clothes, of course!"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Blake.

"Besides, the studay will have to be got weady," said D'Arcy. "We shall have to make it vewy tiday for the visitah, and put up some decowations."

"Couldn't you get Tom Merry to do that—"

"Weally, Blake, I twust you are not goin' to fail me on an occasion like this. I should not wegard it as fiendly."

"I suppose we're in for it," said Blake, with heroic resignation. "All right, Gussy; I suppose cricket's off for this afternoon."

"Pway come up with me, deah boys!"

Blake and Herries and Digby resigned themselves to their fate. They entered Study No. 6. Certainly the study did not look exactly tidy enough to entertain a lady in. The boys' maid had plenty to do to look after the studies, and as soon as her efforts were over, the juniors generally made the studies just as they were before she had started.

Study No. 6 was in a state of disorder, with books and papers lying about, the kettle in the fender, a dead fire in the grate, a football in one corner, and a cricket-bat in the other, a bicycle pump on the table, along with a pea-shooter and a pair of boxing-gloves, and so forth. Arthur Augustus surveyed the study with a sniff.

"I suppose you don't think this is fit to ask Miss Jibbs into?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, blow Miss Jibbs!" said Blake ungallantly.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort—I mean, you are an ass, Blake! Miss Jibbs will be here at six o'clock, so we haven't got much time to waste. Pway set to work and get the studay tiday, and then we'll get tea weady."

"Right-ho!" grunted Blake. "If you have any more Suffragettes to visit you, we'll scalp you, Gussy! Remember that."

The four juniors set to work in the study. Things were put away in their places, the mantelpiece was dusted, and the looking-glass polished. A clean white tablecloth was borrowed from the House-dame, and it certainly looked very nice when it was spread upon the study table. Crockery-ware in Study No. 6 was in a rather disreputable condition—the cups did not match the saucers, as a rule, and most of them wanted handles—and the plates were usually cracked, and the teapot was in a most dangerous state. But on special occasions like this great efforts had to be made. The chums of No. 6 went up and down the passage borrowing crockery-ware—mostly from studies whose owners were on the cricket-field. It was easier to borrow a fellow's crocks when the fellow was out.

The great preparations were finished at last.

Study No. 6 was very tidy, and there was a cheerful fire blazing in the grate, and the kettle was singing.

All was ready for Miss Georgina Jibbs, and the study clock indicated a quarter to six.

"Just nice time to get the tea," said D'Arcy. "Lucky I got all the things in weady. Pway help me to get them out."

D'Arcy opened the door of the study cupboard, and lifted out the big parcel he had placed there after his shopping that day.

He untied the string, and pulled open the paper.

Then there was a yeld.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Hallo! What's the matter now?" asked Jack Blake.

"Oh! The awful wottah!"

"But what—"

"Look there!" roared D'Arcy.

"My hat!"

Inside the parcel, instead of eggs and ham, and cakes and buns, and jam-tarts and other delicacies, appeared several pairs of boots, which had evidently been collected up along the passage, as the juniors knew some of them by sight.

Pinned on one of the boots was a card, and upon that card was written, in a large, sprawling hand that was quite familiar to the juniors:

"Thanks!—(Signed), G. FIGGINS."

"Oh, crumbs!" yelled Blake. "The grub's been raided!"

"The feafuhl wottah!"

"And it's ten to six!" gasped Digby.

"Oh, great Scott!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed to the door.
 "Where are you going?" shouted Blake.
 "I'm goin' to give Figgins a feahful thwashin'—"
 "Ha, ha! You ass! Do you want to be fighting Figgins when Miss Jibbs arrives?" roared Blake. "She'll be here in a few minutes now."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"
 "Coming to tea; and there's nothing for tea," said Herries.
 "Oh, crumbs! Hallo!" He looked out of the window.
 "Here she is!"
 "Bai Jove!"

"It's the station cab," said Herries. "It must be Miss Jibbs; there's a lady in it, and she's got a bonnet like a scuttle, and a face like a kite."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Weally, Hewwies—"
 "Go down and meet your guest," grinned Blake. "Here come the Shell bounders. Perhaps they can help us with the tea."

Arthur Augustus ran downstairs. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came cheerfully into the study.

"Here we are!" announced Monty Lowther. "Has the distinguished guest arrived?"

"She's downstairs," gasped Blake, "and we've just found out that the New House rotters have raided the grub! They've left these blessed boots in the place of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Blake shoved the boots hurriedly under the table. Footsteps were heard in the passage. The juniors all turned to the doorway of the study to greet the distinguished guest. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in escorting the lady.

"Miss Jibbs!" he announced proudly.

CHAPTER 8. Very Militant!

MISS JIBBS looked at the juniors.
 The juniors looked at Miss Jibbs.
 The St. Jim's fellows had their best manners on; and it was fortunate, for otherwise they might have betrayed some little surprise or merriment at the appearance of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's distinguished guest.

Miss Jibbs appeared to be of uncertain age. She was dressed girlishly, and had a great mass of golden hair, which was evidently false at a glance. Big feet appeared under a decidedly short skirt. Miss Jibbs's nose was red, and her cheeks were redder. Had it not been impossible to suspect such a thing of a lady who despised the ordinary weaknesses of her sex, the juniors would really have thought that Miss Jibbs painted. Miss Jibbs had very thick and dark eyebrows, and there was a dark shade on her upper lip that gave suspicion of a budding moustache. Miss Jibbs wore the Suffragette colours very prominently, pink and green, the colours of the Feminine Liberty League, the particular branch of the great movement that she belonged to.

The juniors all bowed gracefully to Miss Jibbs.
 "Pway allow me to introduce my friends, Miss Jibbs," said D'Arcy. "Tom Mewwy, and Mannahs, and Lowthah, and Hewwies, and Digby, and Blake, all interested in the Suffrage movement. This is Miss Jibbs, deah boys, one of the most prominent workers in the cause."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Monty Lowther.
 Miss Jibbs ducked her head.
 "Glad to see you," she said. "I heard about the movement being taken up in this school, and I was very glad of an opportunity of meeting sympathisers here. How many windows have you broken, may I ask?"

"Ahem! None, so fah, deah gal!" said D'Arcy.
 "Ah! You have probably set fire to letter-boxes, then?"
 "Not just yet, ma'am," said Blake.
 "You have assaulted policemen, perhaps?"
 "Hardly ever," said Tom Merry.

"Then you have burned down a cricket pavilion, at least?"
 "I'm afraid not, ma'am."
 "Or cut up a golf green?"
 "Not even once."

Miss Jibbs sniffed.
 "I understood that I should find sympathisers here," she said. "However, I shall give you some instruction in the art of militancy. For instance—"

Miss Jibbs picked up a plate from the table, lifted it into the air, and hurled it at the vase of flowers with which D'Arcy had adorned the mantelpiece in her honour.

Crash!
 The plate smashed on the vase, and the vase toppled over on the floor, and then there was another crash, as it smashed to atoms.

The juniors jumped.
 Miss Jibbs smiled serenely, as if this was quite an ordinary incident with her.

"That is the way you should set to work, my young THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 274.

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friends," she said. "That is the way to win freedom for women—that is the way to bring the base and servile creatures called men to their senses!"

"Bai Jove!"
 "I will give you a further demonstration of militancy."
 "Pway don't, deah Miss Jibbs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in distress. "We are all sympathisers here, I assure you!"

"I will show you how to smash windows!"
 "Pway don't—pway—"

"My hat, we shall have the prefects down on us if we have any window-smashing here!" exclaimed Blake in alarm.
 "We—we're just going to have tea," said Digby. "Won't you sit down, Miss Jibbs?"

"I am afraid I cannot stay to tea," said Miss Jibbs. "I have very little time to spare, and I wish to occupy it in enlightening the minds of the male persons here on the subject of Suffragism. Where is your headmaster?"

"The—the headmaster?" stammered Tom Merry.
 "Yes. Is he a Suffragist?"
 "I—I don't think so."

"Then I will open his mind. I will convince him. Nothing is so convincing as to have your windows broken, and your head bashed with an umbrella. I have no time to lose, as I am due in London to smash Mr. Lloyd George's windows. After that we hope to kidnap Mr. Asquith, and—"

"Wouldn't—wouldn't it be better to settle Lloyd George first, and—leave our headmaster till afterwards?" Tom Merry ventured to suggest.

"While I am here I must utilise my time," said Miss Jibbs; "the cause must not be neglected. If the enthusiasm of the women flags the cause is lost, or, at least, retarded. Take me to the headmaster!"

Arthur Augustus gave a gasp of dismay.
 He had known that Miss Jibbs was a militant. But he had never expected her to be quite so militant as this. He trembled to think of the results if Miss Jibbs began to be militant at St. Jim's.

"Oh, you awful ass, Gussy!" Blake murmured, under his breath.

"My deah Miss Jibbs, won't you have tea with us?" murmured Arthur Augustus, quite forgetting in his agitation that Figgins had raided the tea.

"I have not a moment to lose," said Miss Jibbs. "I cannot stay long, but in that short time I hope to give this school reason to remember my visit, and to reflect upon the great cause of female Suffrage."

"But weally—"
 "Come, come, we are losing time."
 Miss Jibbs stepped out into the passage.

D'Arcy gazed at his friends in utter dismay.
 "I—I nevah weally expected anythin' like this!" he murmured.

"You ass!"
 "You duffer!"
 "You fathead"
 "Follow her!" exclaimed Tom Merry hurriedly. "Goodness only knows what she will do next!"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 The juniors hurried after Miss Jibbs.
 That lady had gone along the Shell passage, quite as if she knew the way. That circumstance did not strike the juniors until afterwards.

Miss Jibbs swept into Tom Merry's study.
 Crash, crash!
 "Here, hold on," roared Monty Lowther, "that's our study! Don't break up the happy home!"

"Votes for women!"
 "But I—I say—" gasped Tom Merry.
 Crash, crash!

Miss Jibbs was hurling the furniture about the study greatly to its damage. The noise brought a crowd of fellows along to see what was the matter. There was a roar in the passage at the sight of the Suffragette breaking up the happy home in Tom Merry's study.

"Who is it?" roared Kangaroo. "Is it a lunatic?"
 "It's Gussy's Suffragette friend!" gasped Manners.

"Oh, my hat!"
 Crash, crash!
 "Stop her!" shouted Lowther. "She's jolly well not going to wreck our study. My hat, there goes the clock! Hold her!"

"Lowthah, you cannot lay hands upon a lady!"
 "She's not going to wreck our study, fathead!"
 "Weally, Lowthah—"

Crash, crash!
 The study was wrecked already. Miss Jibbs surveyed the scene of destruction with satisfaction, and swept out into the passage. The juniors backed away to make way for her.

"Take me to the headmaster!" shouted Miss Jibbs.

"This way!" exclaimed Lowther, grasping the militant Suffragette by the arm.

He led Miss Jibbs away.

"That is not the way, Lowthah," exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, observing that Monty Lowther was leading the lady to the box-room at the end of the Shell passage. But Jack Blake clapped his hand over D'Arcy's mouth.

"Shut up, you ass!" he murmured.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Lowther's going to shut her up in the box-room, and a jolly good thing, too."

"I wefuse to allow—"

But Miss Jibbs had apparently "tumbled" to it that Monty Lowther was leading her astray.

She stopped, and caught hold of Monty Lowther by the collar, and spun him round; and then one of the big feet came into play, and the astounded Lowther staggered along the passage.

"Goal!" roared Kangaroo. "Well kicked!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned the unfortunate Lowther. "If it wasn't a woman, I'd—I'd—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox, the prefect, came striding along the passage. The unpopular Sixth-Former had a frown upon his face.

"What's all this noise about?" he exclaimed. "Why, what—who—who's this?"

"It's Miss Jibbs! The giddy Suffragette!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"What are you doing here, ma'am?" demanded the prefect.

Miss Jibbs swept towards him.

"Votes for women!"

"What!"

"Votes for women! Are you in favour of votes for women?"

"My hat!" said Knox. "No fear. Look here, you'd better clear out of this, or I'll send for the police! I'll— Oh—oh! Yah!"

Miss Jibbs clawed hold of Knox's collar and spun him round, and applied her umbrella to his shoulders. Knox roared, and wrenched himself away, and fairly ran, with the militant Suffragette on his track. The juniors roared, too, with laughter. They were not sorry to see the bully of the Sixth handled by the Suffragette.

"Go it!" shouted Kangaroo. "Pile in, Georgina!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! This is simply awful!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I—I wogard this as simply feahful! What evah can we do, you fellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Must get her out of the school somehow, before the masters see her," gasped Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! This is dweadful!"

"Votes for women!" shrieked Miss Jibbs.

"My deah young lady—"

"Votes for women!"

"Yaas, certainly; but I—"

"Votes for women!"

"I assure you— Oh! Ow! Gweat Scott!"

Miss Jibbs had interrupted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with a prod from the umbrella, which caused him to sit down suddenly in the passage. Then she descended the stairs with the crowd of juniors after her. The station cab was in waiting, and the juniors were hugely relieved to see their terrible visitor make for it.

"She's going!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove! Thank goodness!"

"Let's see her off," grinned Kangaroo. "Blessed if I was ever so glad to see anybody off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors gathered round the cab as Miss Jibbs entered it. The driver was grinning. Miss Jibbs leaned out of the window. Fellows had gathered from all sides to see her, as the news spread.

"Come," said Miss Jibbs, "see me off at the gates. I have something very special to tell you before I go."

"With pleasure!" gasped D'Arcy.

The juniors accompanied the cab to the gates. Outside in the road the driver halted the cab. Miss Jibbs surveyed the crowd of juniors from the window. Never had Arthur Augustus D'Arcy been so glad to see a visitor depart.

"One word more before I go!" said Miss Jibbs.

"Yaas, miss."

"I have a word of advice to give you," said Miss Jibbs.

"Next time you receive a telegram, make sure it's from the right person."

"Eh?"

"And when you receive a visit from Miss Jibbs, don't take her on trust—make sure that her real name isn't Gordon Gay! Drive on, cabby!"

The cab rattled away down the road, and Miss Jibbs, leaning from the window as it went, took off her golden hair, and waved it to the astounded juniors. And then there was a roar from the St. Jim's fellows.

"Gordon Gay!"

The cab rattled on, and disappeared round the corner.

CHAPTER 9.

Not a Bit.

"GORDON GAY!"

"Bai Jove!"

"The—the awful spoofer!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy drew a deep, deep breath of relief.

"Gordon Gay! It's that Gwammah wottah got up as a Suffragette!" he gasped. "We ought to have guessed it!"

"The cheeky villain!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "I suppose we ought to have guessed it. But—"

"But we didn't!" chuckled Kangaroo. "Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors laughed—they could not help it. Gordon Gay, their rival of the Grammar School, had "spoofered" them again—there was no doubt about that. And he had kept the secret till he was safe out of their hands. There was no possibility of visiting vengeance upon the head of the humorous Grammarian.

"Bai Jove! I'm jollay glad!" said D'Arcy. "Of course, I knew vevy well that a weal Suffragette would not act in that outwageous mannah—"

"You didn't know it ten minutes ago!" grinned Kangaroo.

"Of course, you're giving up Suffragism now, Gussy?" grinned Blake.

"Not a bit, deah boy."

"It doesn't make any difference?"

"Not at all. Of course, the weal Miss Jibbs would have acted like a perfect lady," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I wish I had known that it was Gordon Gay. I would have given him a feahful thwashin'!"

"The question is, who's going to set our studies right?" growled Monty Lowther. "Our blessed study is a wreck! Gay picked our room out on purpose, the boulder! I think it is up to Gussy to mend the furniture."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Quite so—and the same in Study No. 6," said Blake. "No good arguing, Gussy; it's up to you. You brought the blessed Suffragette here, and you'll have to repair the damage."

"But I didn't know Gordon Gay was goin' to play that wotten twick."

"That's your business," said Manners. "Now, the sooner you get to work on our study, the better."

"I wefuse—"

"Gentlemen, this is where we persecute the Suffragist," said Tom Merry. "Take hold of his ears, and bring him along."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy— Weally, Blake, you wottah— Weally— Wow! Ow!"

In the grasp of many hands, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was marched into the School House. He was taken into Tom Merry's study, and he surveyed that apartment in dismay. It certainly wanted a great deal of setting to rights. If Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School, had really been the most militant of Suffragettes, he could hardly have done more damage in so short a space of time.

"I weally do not feel equal to dealin' with that, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "I'll tell you what—we'll get Tobay to do it, and I'll staid him half a sovereign out of my fivah."

"You haven't got the fiver yet," said Blake.

"Oh, the govannah is sure to send it, you know."

"And suppose your friends the Suffragettes happen to burn it in the post-office?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That is weally not likely to happen. Lowthah, you ass, I considah—"

"You can considah what you like; but you're going to repair the damage here," said Tom Merry grimly. "You can put it all down to Suffragism, you know, and suffer for the good of the cause. Wire in."

"Weally, you know—"

"If he doesn't wire in at once, we'll pour ink over him, and mix glue in his hair," said Jack Blake grimly.

"Blake, you uttah wottah—"

"Then wire in."

Arthur Augustus gave a despairing glance at his chums. They were in deadly earnest, and there was no help for it.

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Lowther was already uncorking a bottle of liquid glue. The swell of St. Jim's groaned and gave in.

A few minutes later the passage was crowded with fellows watching Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the most elegant junior at St. Jim's, busily engaged in menial occupations.

With his jacket off, his sleeves rolled up, and an apron on, Arthur Augustus rubbed and scrubbed in the study, to clean the ink that had been spilt, and the ashes and cinders that had been scattered on the floor. He collected up broken glass and china, and he wiped ink and water from the fender and polished it afresh. He beat the carpet, and he dusted the shelves. He laboured away gasping, while the juniors roared with laughter in the passage.

And when he was finished in Tom Merry's study, he was escorted by the whole crowd of grinning juniors to Study No. 6, in the Fourth, where similar labours awaited him.

By the time he was finished, Arthur Augustus was on the point of exhaustion. He could not mend the damaged furniture, and the juniors kindly spared him that; at the same time assuring him that it would be done by the village carpenter, and that he should have the pleasure of paying the bill.

"Bai Jove!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I feel awfully tired, and howwibly dirty. I think I will go and have a bath."

"Well, you need one," grinned Blake, looking at his elegant chum, who had almost disappeared under a coating of dust and dirt. "Gussy, my son, let this be a lesson to you. Don't get mixed up in things you don't understand, and don't be a giddy Suffragist."

"Wats!"

And with that ancient and classic reply, the swell of St. Jim's went away for a bath and a change, which he certainly needed very badly.

It was more than an hour before he reappeared; but when he came down again, he was once more the elegant swell of St. Jim's, neat as a new pin from top to toe. His chums looked at him as he came into Study No. 6, and chuckled.

"Behold our Gussy, clothed, and in his right mind once more," said Blake. "Well, Gussy, has this been a lesson to you? Are you going to chuck Suffragism?"

"Not a bit, deah boy!"

"Well, of all the obstinate chumps!" said Herries.

"I wefuse to be chawacterised as an obstinate chump, Hewwies. As a mattah of fact, I am goin' to a Suffrage meetin' in Wayland to-morrow evenin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott has kindly sent me a platform ticket, and I shall certainly go. It will show the public that these mattahs are makin' an impression upon the minds of the wisin' generation."

"You can't attend a meeting in the evening, fathead; not without getting a pass out of gates, anyway."

"I shall ask Kildare for a pass, deah boy!"

"I've a jolly good mind to ask him to say no!" growled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, shurrup!" said Blake. "You make me tired. Look here, if you go on the platform at the Suffrage meeting, we shall be in the audience—"

"I should be vevy glad to see you there, deah boys!"

"And we shall bring our pea-shooters!" added Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I wefuse to allow—"

"That won't make any difference!" grinned Blake. "Now you know what to expect, and you can go to the blessed meeting if you like!"

To which Arthur Augustus rejoined with Spartan brevity:

"Wats!"

CHAPTER 10.

Figgy's Little Wheeze.

FIGGINS, of the Fourth, came into his study in the New House at tea-time the next day, with a grin upon his face. Kerr and Fatty Wynn were there, and Fatty Wynn cast an anxious look at his chief as he entered.

"Got it, Figgy?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!" grinned Figgins.

"Where is it, then?" asked Fatty Wynn, looking Figgins over. "You haven't got it in your pockets, surely; it's too big."

"Eh?" said Figgins, staring. "It's a big idea, certainly; but I don't generally carry ideas in my pockets, fathead!"

"Look here," roared Fatty Wynn, "have you got that steak-pie, or haven't you got the steak-pie, you ass?"

"Blessed if I didn't forget all about it!" said Figgins.

Fatty Wynn simply gasped.

"You forgot all about the steak-pie, Figgins! Why, you went specially over to the shop to get it! You awful ass! How could you possibly forget it?"

"I've heard something," Figgins explained, with a chuckle, "and it put the steak-pie out of my head, Fatty. I've got an idea—a wheeze!"

"Oh, blow your wheezes!" said Fatty Wynn crossly. "I'm hungry! I've got the potatoes baked, and we're ready for the pie."

"Blow the pie! Look here, I've just heard that Gussy is going over to the Suffrage meeting at the Assembly Rooms in Wayland this evening. He's got a platform ticket."

"Great Scott!"

"Mrs. Jellicott has sent one to him as a sympathiser. Gussy is going to sit on the platform with the giddy sympathisers, while the speeches are made."


"The ass!" said Kerr.

"He's several sorts of an ass!" grinned Figgins. "I think it's up to us to help to cure him. He will be getting into trouble with this blessed Suffrage bizney one of these days. He seems to be getting keener and keener about it; and if he started breaking windows, it would be rather serious."


"Ha, ha! I should say so."

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PORTRAIT GALLERY.


No. 2. NEXT WEDNESDAY.
Jack Blake, George Herries,
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.



1

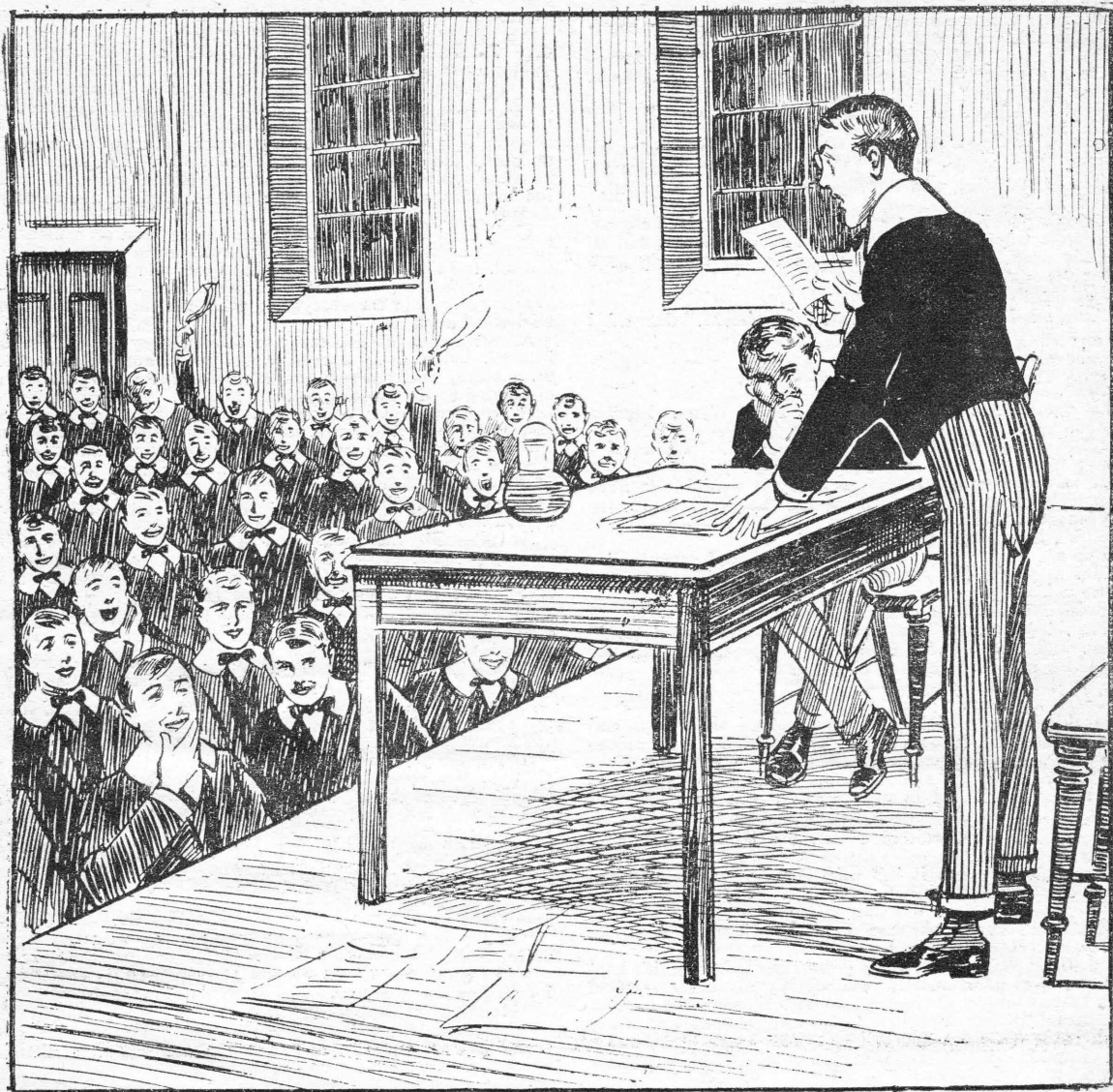


1



3

1. TOM MERRY.
2. MONTY LOWTHER.
3. DICK MANNERS.



D'Arcy gave a hasty glance at his notes. "Gentlemen, why can't every man have three wives? Bai Jove, that's wrong! Lowthah, you uttah beast, you've been altewin' these notes!" The juniors roared with laughter. "Ha! ha! ha!" (See Chapter 5.)

"So it's up to us to cure him; and also to score over the School House in passing," said Figgins. "What do you say?"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr.

"What do you think, Fatty?"

"I think I'd better go and get that pie."

"Bother the pie!" said Figgins. "What do you think of the wheeze, fathhead?"

"Oh, the wheeze is all right," said Fatty Wynn carelessly; "but I'm hungry just now. You can always discuss a plan of campaign over tea, Figgy. I always believe in laying a solid foundation."

"Oh, rats! Look here, some of the School House chaps are going over, I hear, with pea-shooters, to give Gussy a lively time on the platform!"

"Ha, ha, ha! We'll go, too!" roared Kerr.

"Yes, rather! But that isn't all," said Figgins. "As Gussy has to get there at the beginning of the meeting, he has to start early. Of course, he'll go the usual way, taking the short cut through the wood. Now, suppose that three enterprising youths about our size happened to be there—in a giddy ambush on the footpath!"

"Easy enough," said Kerr. "But——"

"But, I say——" began Fatty Wynn.

"Well, what have you got to say?" demanded Figgins.

"We can't possibly go!"

"Why not?"

"Because we haven't had tea."

Figgins snorted.

"You—you blessed prize porker!" he exclaimed. "If you talk to me about grub again, I'll fall on you and squash you, you—you oyster!"

"But I say, I'm hungry!" expostulated Fatty Wynn. "I haven't had anything since dinner, excepting the saveloy and the pigeon pie and the tarts and the cake and the doughnuts. It's dangerous to the health to go hungry for a long time, Figgy, and I've got to keep in form for the cricket match with Greyfriars, you know. You wouldn't like me to be off colour when they come over here, would you?"

"You'll have a thick ear when they come over, if you don't shut up!" growled Figgins. "Look here, my idea is to drop in at old Wiggs's in the village, where we hire the theatrical costumes and things, you know——"

"After tea?" asked Fatty Wynn.

CHAPTER 11.

A Change of Attire.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stepped elegantly over the stile in Rylcombe Lane, and down into the footpath that ran through Rylcombe Wood to Wayland. The swell of St. Jim's was looking decidedly "nobby." His Etons could not have been excelled for cut and quality; his boots were gleaming, his silk hat was highly polished, and his eyeglass shone from afar. The light coat he wore was open to show the elegant Etons beneath it, and the beautiful and spotless collar, and the necktie tied as only Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could tie it.

Certainly, Arthur Augustus would have been an ornament to any platform at any meeting, Suffragette or otherwise; indeed, the sight of him might have softened the heart even of Miss Gloxiana Jellicott, in spite of her oft and loudly-expressed disdain for everything that had the misfortune to be born masculine.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was feeling very pleased with himself, but a little worried about his chums. Blake and Tom Merry and the rest had expressed their determination of coming to the meeting to back him up. That would have been very gratifying, of course, in itself. But they had also mentioned that they were going to bring their pea-shooters and tin-whistles and mouth-organs, and things of that sort, and so Arthur Augustus looked forward to their backing-up with considerable uneasiness.

It was getting dusky in the wood as Arthur Augustus proceeded down the footpath with his elegant saunter.

At nightfall the footpath was generally deserted, and D'Arcy did not expect to meet anybody there, being quite unconscious of the scheme that had been schemed in the study of Figgins & Co., of the New House.

Three juniors, who were lurking in the shadows of the trees beside the footpath, caught the gleam of D'Arcy's monocle from afar.

"Here he comes!" murmured Figgins.

"What-ho!" said Kerr.

"Good!" said Fatty Wynn. "As soon as we've fixed him up, Figgy, we'll get off to Mrs. Murphy's, and—"

"Shurrup!"

Arthur Augustus came on unsuspectingly till he was quite close to the three lurking figures, and then he suddenly caught sight of them. They ran quickly out of the shadows and surrounded him. Arthur Augustus halted, alarmed. He did not recognise Figgins & Co. They had coats on over their Etons, and they had big black masks on their faces—the masks supplied by Mr. Wiggs for amateur theatricals concerning Dick Turpin and gentlemen of that sort. The masks covered up the whole of the faces, leaving only the eyes visible.

"Stand and deliver!" said Figgins, in a deep, deep voice.

"You uttah ass!" said Arthur Augustus. "Do you think I take you for a highwayman, you fidgetful chump?"

"Hands up!" said Kerr.

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort! I know you are Gwammawian wottahs, and that you are playin' a wotten twick! Pway let me pass!"

Figgins chuckled. After his previous experience at the hands of Gordon Gay, it was only natural that Arthur Augustus should take the trio for Grammarians. Figgins & Co. did not enlighten him.

"Hands up," repeated Kerr, in a sepulchral voice, "or die the death!"

"Wats!"

"Seize him!"

"I wufuse to be seized! I— Oh, you wottahs! Hands off! You are wumplin' my clothes!"

D'Arcy's voice rose in a wail of anguish.

But the trio did not "hands off." They seized Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in an iron grasp. The swell of St. Jim's struggled in vain. He could have accounted for one of his assailants, but the three together were too many for him.

"Do you know who we are?" demanded Figgins sternly.

"Yaas, wathah, you beast! You are Gordon Gay, disguisin' your beastly voice! I shall come ovah to the Gwammah School to-morrow, and give you a feawful thwashin'!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Silence! Hearken to me!" said Figgins. "You are a Suffragette!"

"Wats! I am a Suffwagist!"

"It's all the same! You are going to Wayland to uphold a meeting in favour of burning pillar-boxes and golf links!"

"In favah of Female Suffwage, you ass!"

"Same thing! Listen, and I will a tale unfold! This kind of thing has gone too far, and we have taken the law into our own hands to stop it!" said Figgins sternly. "I am Mr. Asquith—"

"What!"

"This is Lloyd George, and this is Winston Churchill! We

"No, before tea!" roared Figgins. "Well, we can get a Suffragette costume there, and lay for Gussy in the wood, and make him put it on."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kerr; and even Fatty Wynn forgot tea for a moment, and grinned. "Good egg! But would he wear it, Figgy?"

"He'd have to, if we took his other clothes away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If he's a giddy Suffragist, there's no reason why he shouldn't dress as one," said Figgins. "We'll fix him up in a blouse and skirt, and Suffragette colours and a bonnet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy's promised to attend the meeting, and of course, wild horses wouldn't make the one and only Gussy fail to keep his word. So he'll have to go to the meeting as a Suffragette instead of a Suffragist!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, what do you think of that for a wheeze?" demanded Figgins.

"Ripping!" said Kerr.

"Only we shall have to get off at once."

"But what about the pie?"

That question, of course, came from Fatty Wynn. Figgins grunted.

"I'll pie you, you fat bounder!" he growled. "Get up!"

Fatty Wynn groaned, and rose to his feet.

"If we're going out before tea, Figgy, we'd better have the potatoes now, without waiting for the pie!"

"Come on!"

"You'll have to get passes out—"

"I've got 'em; I asked Monteith for 'em as I came up."

"But I—I say, I'm simply famished, you know. Wait a minute while I get a sandwich!"

Figgins seized his fat chum by the arm.

"No time to waste," he said. "We've got to get to old Wiggs, and then lay for Gussy on the footpath. All our trouble for nothing if he gets ahead of us."

"But—but I say, Figgy—"

"Come on, Kerr!"

And Figgins rushed Fatty Wynn out of the study, and Kerr grinned and followed. The chums of the New House were soon across the quadrangle, Fatty Wynn casting a longing glance in the direction of Dame Taggles's little shop as they went. He halted in the gateway, still with Figgins's grip on his arm.

"Figgy, old man, wait here for me a minute—something awfully important."

"Yes, I know what it is," said Figgins, with a chuckle.

"You can let the tuckshop alone this time, Fatty. Come on!"

"Oh, dear! Figgy, old man, don't be a beast!"

"Ha, ha! Come on—this way!"

And Fatty Wynn was rushed down the road. Figgins kept his arm linked affectionately in Fatty Wynn's as they walked down to Rylcombe. On the way to Mr. Wiggs's, the tailor's, they passed Mother Murphy's little establishment, and Fatty Wynn made a sudden and desperate effort and broke away. In a second he had disappeared into the village shop. Figgins gave a yell.

"After him!"

Figgins and Kerr rushed into the shop. Fatty Wynn already had a jam tart in each hand, and was devouring them at express speed. He cast a defiant glance at Figgins over the jam tarts.

"Gerraway!" he spluttered, with his mouth full. "Sha'n't be a minute! Gerraway!"

"Out you come!"

"Grooch!"

Fatty Wynn waltzed out of the shop in the grasp of his chums, still with the tarts in his hands. They rushed him down the street.

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Shut up!" snapped Figgins. "There isn't a minute to lose. I tell you, you gormandising bounder! Dry up!"

"Yes; but I say—"

"Cheese it!"

"I tell you, Figgy—"

"Here's Mr. Wiggs!" said Figgins. "Shove the fat bounder in!"

And Fatty Wynn was rolled into the little tailor's shop.

"Look here, you silly asses!" he roared. "I tell you—"

"Oh, dry up, do!" said Figgins, exasperated.

"But I haven't paid for the tarts!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"Oh!"

"I'd better go back and—"

"You better hadn't!" grinned Figgins. "You can pay for them when we come back. Now shut up, and let's get to business!"

And Fatty Wynn finished the sticky remains of the two tarts, and gave up hope.

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have determined to put a stop to these things! You understand?"

"I don't believe a word of it!"

"We are fed up with Suffragette outrages. We cannot make speeches now without being interrupted. It is quite a long time since we had the accustomed pleasure of listening to our own voices. The Government of the country cannot be carried on under such conditions, and we are going to stop it. You comprehend?"

"Wubbish!"

"Hold his hands, Wynn—ahem!—Winston!"

"I've got him, Asquith!" chuckled the fattest of the three.

"Get his coat off, Lloyd!"

"Yes, rather!"

"You uttah wottahs! I don't believe you are such persons at all!" gasped Arthur Augustus, half-convinced by the stern and serious voices. "If you are, I wedard you as wottahs!"

"Strip him!"

"I wufuse to be stwipped! I—"

"Never mind if you hurt him, Winston!" said the leader of the three. "Have his things off!"

"What-ho!"

Arthur Augustus struggled furiously.

But it was in vain.

The three masked assailants were too many for him. They yanked him off the footpath into the shadow of the bushes, in case some belated pedestrian should pass. Then they stripped the swell of St. Jim's of his elegant attire. The unfortunate junior resisted in vain.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, red with wrath and almost speechless with rage, stood in his underclothes—beautiful underclothes of the best quality, but hardly attire sufficient for taking walks abroad.

"Oh, you awful wottahs!" he breathed.

"Your clothes will be confiscated!" said the leader of the trio. "If you wish to take any proceedings for their recovery, you know my address in Whitehall."

"You uttah wottah! I don't believe you are Mr. Asquith at all—"

"Make a bundle of the things, Lloyd George!" said the leader.

"Right-ho!"

The clothes were wrapped up in a bundle.

Then Arthur Augustus was lifted up, and dumped down; and as he sat gasping on the ground, the three assailants disappeared into the darkness of the thickets.

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet.

He could hardly believe that his assailants had really stripped him of his clothes and left him in that state far from home.

How was he to go to the meeting? To go in his present state was unthinkable. To return to St. Jim's was equally impossible. He could not go out of the wood at all until he had obtained clothes of some sort.

He looked round him desperately, in the hope that the raiders might have been only "spoofing," and that they had left the clothes behind, after all.

He caught sight of a bundle lying at his feet, and uttered a cry of relief.

"The wottahs! They were only spoofin'!"

He picked up the bundle and shook it out.

Then he gasped.

The bundle did not contain his own clothes. He shook out a pink blouse and a green skirt and a pair of stockings and a bonnet.

"Gweat Scott!"

In the dim half-light of the wood, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared blankly at those articles of feminine attire.

He understood the scheme of those three rascals now.

He was to don feminine attire, or else remain in the wood in his underclothes—an alternative that was not, of course, possible. He could not leave the shelter of the trees unclad. Suppose he should meet anybody—especially of the feminine persuasion—while he was in his present state? He shuddered at the thought.

"Oh, the wottahs—the awful wottahs!" murmured D'Arcy. There was no help for it. He had to put the things on, and he did! He struggled into the blouse, and drew on the skirt, and fastened it round his waist. It left his ankles in view, and he had to put on the stockings. The raiders had left him his boots, fortunately.

In a few minutes Arthur Augustus was transformed into a young lady.

"Oh, the wottahs," he gasped—"the wottahs!"

He stepped out into the footpath again. What was he to do now? To go to the Suffragette meeting—in feminine attire? He had accepted the invitation to a platform seat, and it really amounted to a promise. But to go in feminine garb—even Arthur Augustus felt that that was impossible.

He reflected. If he went back to St. Jim's dressed as a

girl he would never hear the end of it—that was certain. And then he would have to miss the meeting. But there was another resource. He would get into Wayland, and stop at the first shop to purchase some new clothes, and change there. Then he would be able to attend the meeting after all; a little late, perhaps, but better late than never. It was painful to think of putting on ready-made clothes—of going to a public meeting clad in "reach-me-downs"; of wearing anything that had not been specially designed and cut for his elegant figure. But it was better than failing in an engagement. Even that trial the heroic spirit of Arthur Augustus found itself equal to.

And with his skirt swishing uncomfortably around him, and catching in his legs at every step, Arthur Augustus started. D'Arcy had not looked at the clothes very closely in the dim wood; he only knew that they were girl's clothes. He did not realise that they were in the colours of the Feminine Liberty League, and he had not observed that across the blouse the words "VOTES FOR WOMEN!" had been daubed in large letters, in black upon the light pink material. On the bonnet, too, were rosettes in the Suffragette colours, and a card was pinned upon the side, bearing the legend "I WANT MY VOTE!"

Ignorant of those details, which were certain to draw all eyes upon him as soon as he entered the lighted street, Arthur Augustus walked on to Wayland, thinking only of getting to a ready-made clothes shop and changing as quickly as possible.

CHAPTER 12.

Another Martyr to the Cause.

THERE was unusual excitement in the quiet old High Street of Wayland.

As a rule, that town did not wake up from its drowsiness excepting upon market-days.

But Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott could say with truth and with pride, "Nous avons change tout cela."

The Suffragettes had made things unusually lively of late in the old town.

Since the procession, which had ended in the arrest of a considerable number of the members of the Feminine Liberty League, suffrage for the gentle sex did not seem popular in the town. Somehow or other, people did not seem to see that breaking windows was a right and natural form of protest for unfranchised ladies, and they were most unreasonably annoyed when they found their letters had been burnt in the pillar-boxes.

Of course, the letters would no longer be burnt when Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott & Co. obtained the franchise; unless they decided then that they wanted something else in addition, and that raiding pillar-boxes was the best way to get it. But Mrs. Jellicott & Co. had not got the franchise yet; the Government, for some mysterious reason, was not putting national affairs aside in order to discuss woman suffrage. And until they got the precious vote, Mrs. Jellicott had proudly announced that raids would continue, and that nobody in Wayland should feel certain about getting any letters that were addressed to him, or about finding the railway-station unburnt when he went to catch a train. Which was rather hard on the Wayland people, who certainly hadn't the slightest influence at Whitehall, and who might have lost all their personal correspondence for centuries without a wicked Government learning the error of its ways in consequence.

And the town, which had laughed at first, was now getting angry; and the Suffragettes were being persecuted; for anything directed against Suffragettes is persecution, while anything directed by them against others is, of course, only right and proper, and to be expected.

When Mrs. Jellicott, after being admitted to bail, appeared in the streets of Wayland, she was "booed" most energetically; which she took as a great distinction. It showed that people were having the great question kept before their minds, at all events. But when Mrs. Jellicott's bonnet was knocked off, and a rotten orange broke under her chin, that determined lady, forgetting that the police were the wretched slaves of a corrupt Administration, gladly accepted their protection, and was escorted back to her home, followed by a booing crowd.

And after that Suffragettes who were recognised in the street generally received attentions from a crowd far from polite or gratifying.

People who vainly expected letters that had been burnt in pillar-boxes seemed to be exasperated by it, somehow.

The Suffrage meeting announced for that evening in the Wayland Assembly Rooms was making quite a stir.

There was certain to be a disturbance there, and a considerable number of the wretched slaves of a corrupt Administration had to be told off to keep order.

Miss Gloxiana Jellicott had been booed in the High Street and pelted with eggs only that afternoon, and there was

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still an excited crowd in the street, looking out for fresh sport, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy arrived.

D'Arcy noticed the crowd—and they noticed him.

They did not know, of course, that he was a junior of St. Jim's in an unintentional disguise. They only saw a young woman in Suffragette colours, with "VOTES FOR WOMEN" scrawled on her blouse, and "I WANT MY VOTE" on a card, pinned in a prominent position on her bonnet.

Then the fur began to fly.

A decidedly rough crowd gathered round the junior.

"Here's another of 'em!"

"She wants her vote!"

"Booh! Booh!"

"Yah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned an indignant look upon the crowd.

"Pway keep off, you wude boundahs!" he exclaimed. "I object vewy strongly to bein' shoved. Pway wun off."

"Yah!"

"Booh!"

"I wegard you as wottahs! I—oh! Yow!"

Whiz! Smash! An egg—which, to judge by its scent as it burst, was an heirloom in the family of the owner—smote Arthur Augustus D'Arcy full upon his aristocratic nose.

There was a roar of laughter from the crowd.

"Ow do you like that, miss?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Duck her in the pond!"

"Gwooh!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He dabbed his face frantically with his handkerchief, and gasped for breath. The loving scent of that egg clung to him. It was so strong that it seemed to penetrate his skin, as well as his nose. The swell of St. Jim's felt quite faint.

Whiz!

An orange, in an advanced state of decay, smote the swell of St. Jim's on the ear.

"Gwooh! Oh, you wottahs!"

"Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pelt her! We'll teach 'er to burn our letters!"

"We'll teach 'er to set fire to railway-stations!"

"Yah! Duck her in the horse-pond!"

"Bai Jove! I uttably wefuse to be ducked in the horse-

pond! You fwightful wottahs, gewwway! Help! Wescue!"

"Duck her!"

"You awful asses, I'm not a her!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Yah! Suffragette! Duck her!"

A hand clawed at D'Arcy's bonnet, and it was smashed over his eyes. A chunk of mud splashed into his face, and effectually disguised his features. The swell of St. Jim's made a rush to get through the crowd.

The sight of the Suffragette running was enough for them; the instinct of chase was immediately roused.

The whole crew were howling at D'Arcy's heels in a moment.

"After her!"

"Collar her!"

"Duck her!"

"Gweat Scott!" gasped D'Arcy, as he raced down the street, stumbling wildly in his skirt. "Gweat Scott! This is simply feahful! Oh, deah!"

The crowd swarmed after him and round him. Hands clutched at him on all sides, and he was pushed and shoved and pelted. The swell of St. Jim's backed up against a shop-front and hit out, and one of the roughs went rolling on the pavement. It was a doughty drive for a young lady, and it astonished his tormentors. There was a whiz and a crash as a turnip flew through the air, and crashed into the window in front of which D'Arcy was standing. The glass was shattered, and fragments fell all round the swell of St. Jim's.

"You uttah wottahs!" he roared.

"Duck her!"

"I tell you—"

"Have her bonnet off!"

"Help! Police! Wescue!"

There was a rush of the griming crowd. Arthur Augustus hit out furiously, and two of them rolled over, and then he broke through again. He ran on, with the mob yelling at his heels, till he tripped over his skirt, and fell. He was up again in a moment. He was close to the Assembly Rooms, at the entrance of which six policemen were standing on guard. The crowd surged and roared round him, and Arthur Augustus was jammed against the wall by the press of numbers.

"Help! Ow! Help!"

The despairing yell of the ragged Suffragist fell upon the ears of Tom Merry & Co., as they made their way towards the Assembly Rooms. Tom Merry was the first to sight the unfortunate Suffragist panned against the wall by the pressing crowd, and struggling wildly.

"My hat! There's one of them in trouble!" he exclaimed.

Blake grinned.

"They've caught her going to the meeting," he remarked. "Well, it's their own look-out."

"Can't let a feminine gender be handled like that, though," said Tom Merry. "Let's rescue her."

"Phew!"

"We couldn't possibly get her away," said Herries. "Why, there are hundreds of people round. And it serves her right, for playing the giddy ox."

"We'll rush them," said Tom Merry. "We can collar her, and rush her into the entrance of the Assembly Rooms. When she's once there, the police will see that the crowd don't get at her again."

"Oh, all right!" said Blake resignedly. "Blessed if I came over here to fight a howling mob for a Suffragette, but have your way!"

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Steady the Buffs!" said Tom Merry. "Now then, elbows and heels—follow your leader!"

And the St. Jim's juniors made a determined rush.

They took the crowd in the rear, and their rush cleared a way—as well as a lavish use of elbows and shoulders. They wedged themselves through the crowd, and reached the unfortunate Suffragist, who had sunk on the ground, gasping.

"All right now, miss," exclaimed Tom Merry. "We'll look after you!"

"Gwooh!"

"Lend a hand, Blake."

Tom Merry and Blake caught up the gasping Suffragist in their arms, and made a rush along the wall to the entrance of the Assembly Rooms. The rest of the juniors covered their retreat. The crowd surged and roared and yelled, but they allowed them to pass. Tom Merry and Blake panted into the entrance, the police allowing them in, and they deposited the exhausted Suffragist on the steps.

"You're all right now," gasped Tom Merry. "Good-bye!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Eh!"

"Thanks aw'f'ly, deah boys!"

Tom Merry jumped clear off the ground.

"Gussy!" he roared.

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THURSDAY

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"Gussy!" stuttered Blake.

"Oh, my hat!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet.

"Gwooh! Those wottahs have thrown me into a buttah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at. I considah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What have you got into that rig for?" yelled Blake.

"I didn't, you ass—it was forced on me. I was waylaid in the wood by a set of wottahs. They said they were Mr. Asquith and Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, but I don't believe anythin' of the sort—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They took away my clobber, and I had to dwees in these things—"

Blake and Tom Merry wept with laughter.

"Where have you brought me?" gasped D'Arcy, looking round. "Bai Jove! This is the vestibule of the Assembly Wooms. This is where the meetin' is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Blake. "Well, you were coming to the meeting, weren't you?"

"Not in these clothes!" gasped D'Arcy. "For goodness' sake, deah boys, get me away fwom here befoah I'm seen! Mrs. Jellicott would be fwightfully watty—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I appeal to you, deah boys—help me get away—"

"Can't be done!" said Tom Merry, almost choking. "The mob's outside, simply howling for you. They won't know you're a silly ass disguised as a howling idiot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If they find out you're a masculine gender, they'll only think it's enthusiasm for the cause that's made you dress like that!" panted Tom Merry, with tears of merriment streaming down his cheeks. "You'll be mobbed if you go out. They're going to duck all the Suffragettes they catch wild—"

"Oh, gweat Scott! What can I do, then?"

"Well, you're at the meeting now—better go on as you are—"

Blake shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha! That's right, Gussy! It's all for the good of the cause, you know. Go on as a heroine instead of a hero. You've suffered for the cause, and they'll all welcome you like anything. Go it!"

"Bai Jove! It's imposs— I—"

"Can't be helped now," said Tom Merry. "I tell you, you can't possibly leave the place till you're clothed and in your right mind again. The whole town's simply gone wild over this Suffrage rot, and they'll skin you if you go out! You must stay here."

"B-b-but suppose they see me—"

"They're bound to see you. Pass yourself off as your sister," said Blake, struck with a sudden inspiration.

"You ass, Blake—"

"Hallo! Here's Mrs. Jellicott!"

There was a roar of derision in the street outside, as a closed carriage drew up outside the Assembly Rooms. The police lined up to protect the grim-faced lady who descended, followed by a younger edition of herself, slimmer, but equally grim-faced.

Mrs. Jellicott and Miss Gloxiana Jellicott marched into the Assembly Rooms between two rows of stolid policemen, who had great difficulty in keeping back the surging crowd. If the crowd had got at Mrs. and Miss Jellicott, these two determined ladies would have entered the hall in a state of disorder equal to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's. But, fortunately the police kept them back, and the ladies came in unragged.

Mrs. Jellicott caught sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and bore down upon him.

The sight of the torn dress, the rent blouse, the smashed bonnet, the egg-and-muddy face, moved fierce indignation in the breast of the President of the Feminine Liberty League.

"Ha! Another victim of ruffianism—another martyr of the cause!" she exclaimed. "Come with me!"

"Weally—" murmured D'Arcy feebly.

But Mrs. Jellicott did not stay to be answered. She seldom did. Whenever there was any talking to be done, Mrs. Jellicott was equal to it. She took Arthur Augustus D'Arcy by the arm, and walked him on, unheeding, and they disappeared into the hall. Tom Merry and Blake were left alone. They stared at one another, and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, this is too rich!" sobbed Blake. "Gussy will be the death of me some day—I know that."

Tom Merry wiped his eyes.

"Well, he's at the meeting now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's get back to the other fellows. We've got to get in at this meeting, though the skies fall—if Gussy's going on the platform like that—"

They shrieked at the idea. They rejoined the juniors who were waiting for them on the other side of the cordon of police.

"Is the duffer safe?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Yes—all serene. It's Gussy!"

"Gussy!"

"Yes. Somebody's taken his clothes, and made him put those on—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kangaroo. "That's what Figgins & Co. sneaked out for. I saw them going, and wondered what they were up to."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He says there were three of them," sobbed Blake. "But they gave him the names of Asquith, Winston Churchill, and Lloyd George—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry. "We've got to get in. I wouldn't miss this meeting for a free run at the tuckshop for a month! Use your elbows, and come on!"

And the St. Jim's juniors won their way into the hall, with a noisy crowd—Swarms of people—mostly men—were going in, and their looks and their remarks showed that they did not intend to be a quiet or orderly audience. The meeting was likely to be a stormy one; one reason the more why Tom Merry & Co. wanted to be on the scene.

CHAPTER 13.

Misunderstood.

MRS. JELlicoe JELlicott marched Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in, with a firm grasp upon his arm, which showed that the leader of the Feminine Liberty League had plenty of muscular force.

Arthur Augustus was considerably fluttered and confused by his exciting experiences, and he hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels when he was walked into a committee-room crowded with members and sympathisers of the Feminine Liberty League.

He was surrounded at once by sympathetic friends—ladies young and old, all sorts and conditions of Suffragettes, all indignant at the treatment the junior had received, and all full of sympathy. Like the crowd outside, they took Arthur Augustus for what he appeared to be.

"Look!" said Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott, pointing a dramatic finger at the shattered and battered junior. "Look! Another victim of the lawless violence of our opponents—another martyr to the cause of woman suffrage!"

"Shame!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Horrid!"

"Bravo!"

Those rather mixed exclamations were due to the fact that the Suffragettes present were not quite clear whether they were expected to applaud or to express indignation. Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott was a lady of ruthless determination, and she ruled the Feminine Liberty League with a rod of iron. Other members never ventured to raise their voices against that of Mrs. Jellicott. Traitor and deserter and poltroon were some of the mildest epithets Mrs. Jellicott had in reserve for anyone who differed from her in the slightest degree.

"Behold here the results of the dastardly work of the present Government!" cried Mrs. Jellicott.

"Shame!" chorussed all the members together, sure now that that was the right tack.

"This poor girl—scarcely more than a child—"

"Oh, bai Jove—"

"Shame!"

"This mere child has been mobbed, chased, roughly handled, perhaps permanently injured by a mob of ruffians, encouraged by the deep and dastardly treachery of the vilest Government of modern times—"

"Shame!"

"Gloxiana, take our young friend away and help her to put herself tidy for the meeting—"

D'Arcy started.

"Pway, madam," he began.

"Go with Gloxiana," said Mrs. Jellicott imperiously.

"Yaas; but—"

"Come," said Gloxiana, taking D'Arcy's arm, "we are prepared for this kind of thing; and I can give you a change of clothing, and I will help you to dress."

Arthur Augustus turned crimson all over, from his toes to his forehead.

"Thank you vewy much," he faltered. "But—"

"Not at all! Come."

"But you see—"

"The poor child is hysterical!" said Mrs. Jellicott. "Help her away."

Mrs. Jellicott sailed off, and another charming young lady came to Gloxiana's help, and supported D'Arcy on the other side.

"Come, dear," said Miss Gloxiana kindly. "You will feel better when you have washed off this horrid mud, and changed your clothes."

"Yaas, but—"

"I will help you. Come."

The two sturdy young ladies marched D'Arcy off in spite of his mumbled protests. They whisked him into a dressing-room, and Miss Gloxiana unfastened his blouse. At that dreadful moment Arthur Augustus wished from the bottom of his heart that he had never become a Suffragist. Indeed, at that moment he would gladly have seen the whole Suffrage movement at the bottom of the deepest sea.

He struggled out of Miss Gloxiana Jellicott's strong grasp.

"Pway—pway don't touch me!" he panted.

"Why not?" demanded Miss Gloxiana, in amazement.

"You—you are labouwin' undah a misappwehension," gasped D'Arcy. "I—I am not a Suffragette at all. I—"

"What!"

"I am a man—I mean a boy!" gasped D'Arcy. "I'm a Suffragist, you know."

"Oh!"

The two young ladies stared at D'Arcy as if they would burn holes in him with their eyes.

Arthur Augustus felt as if he would like the floor to open and swallow him up. But the floor showed no sign of obliging him in that way.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Miss Gloxiana, in astonishment and dismay. "And I was going to—ahem!—h'm—I shall certainly not help you now. How dare you play such a trick?"

"I assure you—"

"You have deliberately imposed upon us—"

"I swear—"

"If you swear in my presence, I shall call the police!" shrieked Miss Gloxiana. "You wicked man! You are a spy!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"You are a spy—a traitor! How dare you enter this place in disguise?" exclaimed Miss Gloxiana wrathfully.

"You shall be arrested! I will call the police! I—"

"My dear young lady, pway listen to me!"

"Help!"

"I assure you, on my word of honah—honah bwight, you know—"

"Help! A spy—a man in disguise!" shrieked Miss Gloxiana, opening the door and calling into the passage. "Help! All of you—come here! A man has come in disguised as a woman!"

"Shame!"

"Outrageous!"

"Ha! This is some more of Lloyd George's work!" came the deep, booming voice of Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott.

"I assure you," shrieked Arthur Augustus, "I give you my word of honah that I nevah intended to do 'anythin' of the sort. I was comin' ovah—"

"Take him away!" commanded Mrs. Jellicott. "Hurl him forth! Hurl him forth with the contempt he deserves for his odious treachery! Let him return to Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith, and report that he has failed!"

"My deah madam—"

"Not a word! Take him away!"

"Oh, gweat Scott! I— Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus dodged wildly as three or four very muscular Suffragettes made for him. There was another door to the room, and D'Arcy tore it open and fled, slamming it after him. He did not care where he ran, so long as he escaped from the grasp of the Suffragettes. Those sweet and amiable creatures evidently had no time to waste in giving him a chance to explain. He left them shrieking behind him, and fled along a passage, and found another door at the end of it.

He tore it open and ran through, and found himself in a small room, with tables and a few chairs in it, littered with papers, and unoccupied for the moment. He groped over the door, and found that there was a key in the lock. D'Arcy's brain worked quickly in that desperate moment.

He closed the door, and turned the key in the lock, just as the pursuing Suffragettes reached it on the other side.

The handle was tried, and then there was a terrific hammering on the door.

"Open this door!"

"Villain!"

"Wretch!"

"Spy!"

"Traitor!"

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"Wicked man!"

Hammer, hammer, hammer!

Arthur Augustus gasped for breath. He had a moment's respite. The locked door would keep back his excited pursuers for a few moments, at least. He recovered his breath; and looked about him. There was another door at the opposite end of the room, beyond it there was a loud, booming sound, as of many voices—the roar of a crowd.

"Bai Jove! It must be the sweet on the othah side!" muttered Arthur Augustus, as the noise smote upon his ears. "But—but I can't go out in these clothes. But they'll be through that door, or come wound anothah way. What on earth am I to do? Bai Jove! I weally think I shall give up female Suffrage afah this. It's enough to turn a fellow's hair gwey. Gweat Scott!"

Crash!

Someone was smashing the lock from the other side with a chair. Evidently some of the members of the Feminine Liberty League were very militant, and very muscular. They would be in the room soon—and the terror of falling into the hands of the shrieking, excited Suffragettes overcame D'Arcy's reluctance to face the crowd without. At all events, in the crowd outside he could hit out for himself—and he could not hit the Suffragettes. He made up his mind, hurried across the room, opened the further door, and ran through. Then he staggered back.

Bright lights, many faces, a roar of voices!

That door did not lead into the street, after all! It led into the hall—it was the entrance to the platform, upon the chairs on which many of the members of the Liberty League and their sympathisers were already seated.

The hall was crammed with people—St. Jim's juniors among them. Most of the audience were on their feet, shouting.

"Bai Jove!"

All eyes were turned upon the weird figure that had so suddenly bolted in upon the platform.

There was a yell.

"Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo!"

CHAPTER 14.

Arthur Augustus's Public Appearance.

TOM MERRY & CO. recognised D'Arcy at once as he came upon the platform. They knew the ragged green skirt, the torn pink blouse, the smashed bonnet, the muddy and eggy face. They yelled with laughter at the sight.

"My only hat!" gasped Blake. "He's come on the platform—in that state! He must be off his silly rocker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He doesn't look as if he were enjoying it," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Buck up, Gussy!"

"Speech! Speech!"

The people in the seats on the platform were staring blankly at the weird apparition. The audience yelled and roared. The policemen who were trying to keep order in the swarming hall laughed, too—they could not help it. All but the chums of St. Jim's took Arthur Augustus for a genuine Suffragette, and it was evident that "she" had been in the wars—and plenty of them!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed round him in dizzy horror. If he had known that that door led upon the platform of the hall, wild horses would not have dragged him through it. But he was there now, under the public gaze.

He swung round to flee back the way he had come; but the pursuers were there now. The locked door had not stopped them long, and they were at hand! In the doorway, as he turned to it, appeared the imposing figure of Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott. And D'Arcy backed away from the terrifying lady in dismay. Mrs. Jellicott raised a dramatic and denouncing hand to point at him.

"There he is!" she cried, in stentorian tones. "There he is—the disguised spy—the traitor! The tool of Lloyd George—the emissary of Asquith!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Booh!"

"Yah!"

"Oh, poor old Gussy!" gasped Tom Merry, wiping away his tears. "It's a case of save me from my friends, with a vengeance! They've turned on him!"

"They think he's a giddy spy in disguise!" moaned Blake. "Oh, poor old Gussy! Oh, the dear and sweet, reasonable creatures—they can't have given him a chance to explain."

"Run for it, Gussy!" yelled a voice from the back of the hall—the voice of Figgins. The New House trio were there. They had hardly ventured to hope that the victim of their

little joke would appear on the platform in that strange guise. But circumstances had been too strong for the swell of St. Jim's. He had made his public appearance, after all, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were doubled up with merriment at the sight of him.

"He's been in the wars!" gasped Kerr. "Old Wiggs will want paying for those things—he won't take 'em back now!"

"Ha, ha! It's worth it!" said Figgins. "It's worth a guinea a box to see Gussy like that—there! Ha, ha, ha! Speech, speech!"

"Go it, Gussy!"

Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott had advanced upon the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus was dodging round the chairs on the platform. He was trying to explain at the same moment, but his voice was drowned in the roar of other voices.

"My dear madam, I assure you—I weally assure you upon my word of honah—"

"There is the spy!"

"Seize him!"

"Arrest him!"

"Scratch him!"

"Bai Jove, you know! I—I weally didn't mean any harm. I was comin' to the meetin', and I was waylaid! Oh, deah—pway don't gwab at me, my deah Mrs. Jellicott! I do assuah you—ow—oh—bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wriggled in the muscular grasp of Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott. That lady had cornered him at last, and she held on to him tightly and shrieked for the police.

The swell of St. Jim's shuddered with horror.

He could not, of course, punch a lady, or a female of any sort; but the thought of being handed over to the police on a charge of penetrating into the place disguised as a woman was too terrible!

If Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott had been Mr. Jellicoe Jellicott, Arthur Augustus would have delivered a terrific onslaught, which would have relieved him of his enemy.

But that was impossible.

"Pway release me, ma'am!" he groaned. "I do assuah you—"

"Police!"

A constable was mounting on the platform. Arthur Augustus made a terrific effort, and wrenched himself away from the detaining grasp of Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott.

There was a roar from the St. Jim's juniors in the hall.

"Run for it, Gussy!"

"This way! Hop it!"

Arthur Augustus made a wild leap from the platform, just as the policeman summoned by Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott was reaching him.

The president of the Feminine Liberty League shrieked.

"Seize him! Arrest him! It is a man in woman's clothes! Arrest him, officer! I will charge him! I order you to take him in charge!"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus was among the audience now.

Most of them were yelling with laughter, their sympathy evidently being on the side of the supposed joker who had penetrated into the stronghold of the Suffragettes in feminine guise.

Tom Merry scrambled over and round seats, using his elbows freely, to reach the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's. His chums followed him, and they gathered round Arthur Augustus.

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

"Wescue—wescue!"

"Here we are, Gussy—this way!"

Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott waved her long arms wildly on the platform, shrieking and gesticulating to the constables.

"Arrest him! Take him in charge! Arrest him!"

"Pway help me to get out of this, deah boys!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Bai Jove, it is simply feahful! That woman is a howwid monstah—she is weally! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get into this coat, Gussy!" gasped Figgins, taking off his overcoat and putting it round Arthur Augustus. "It will cover up those things, old chap!"

"Thank you, deah boy!"

"How did you come to be dressed like that, Gussy?" stutted Kerr.

"Thwee awful wottahs waylaid me in the woods and made me change my clothes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who were they?" asked Figgins, as he helped D'Arcy, on with the coat.

"They said they were Asquith and Lloyd George and Winston Churchill—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I didn't weally believe them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on; we shall have to get you out of this!" gasped Tom Merry. "If that bobby gets near you, Gussy, you're a goner. The Head will have to come and bail you out—"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"Bring him along!" gasped Figgins.

The St. Jim's juniors crowded round Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and formed a bodyguard round him as they rushed him to the exit.

Fortunately, the place was in too great an uproar for the policemen to pay much attention to Mrs. Jellicoe Jellicott, who was still shrieking for the disguised intruder to be taken in charge.

Tom Merry & Co. succeeded in getting Arthur Augustus out of the hall, and into a side street. As the crowd was mostly in front of the building, the side street was almost free of them, and the juniors hurried D'Arcy away in safety.

They stopped at last near the railway-station. Arthur Augustus leaned against a wall and panted for breath. He looked a curious sight, with his head bare, his face plastered with mud and egg and perspiration, and the edge of the skirt hanging down under the end of the overcoat.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have nevah been through such a feahful expewience in my life! I weally think I shall have to give up votes for women atah this, deah boys! It's wathah too much of a fag, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see any cause whatevah for laughtah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And how on earth am I goin' to get back to St. Jim's, deah boys?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 15.

Arthur Augustus Gives It Up.

"**W**HO is it?"

"What is it?"

"Great Scott!"

Quite a crowd had gathered round the doorway of the old School House at St. Jim's, as the station cab from Rylcombe drove up and stopped. The dusk of evening had fallen on the quadrangle, and most of the fellows were indoors—excepting those who had passes out of gates. But two or three curious fellows had gathered at the door at the sound of wheels, and the sight of the individuals who alighted from the cab caused a buzz.

The cab was pretty full. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther and Jack Blake poured out, and then they helped out another fellow, who was bareheaded, and was wrapped in a tightly-buttoned overcoat. Under the overcoat the trousers were not visible, but stockings could be seen. Tom Merry & Co. hurried the overcoated figure into the house, amid a roar of inquiry.

"What is it?"

"My hat! It's Gussy!" shouted Reilly, of the Fourth. "Howly mother av Moses! It's the one and only Gussy!"

"Great Scott, Gussy! What's happened?"

The juniors did not reply. They rushed D'Arcy to the stairs, and rushed him up the stairs, to get him away before prefects appeared on the scene. But they had no luck. Mr. Railton, the master of the School House, was coming downstairs at that very moment, and he met them on the first landing. The juniors, in their hurry, rushed right into the Housemaster, and Mr. Railton staggered back against the wall with an exclamation.

"My boys! Pray be more careful—"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Who—what is that?" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Why—what—is that D'Arcy, of the Fourth?"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!" said Arthur Augustus resignedly. "It's I, sir!"

Mr. Railton fixed a stern glance upon him.

"D'Arcy! How dare you go about the House in that ridiculous state?"

"You see, sir—"

"You were hurrying upstairs in order not to be observed, I suppose?" exclaimed the School House master severely.

"Yaas, sir!"

"You—you see, sir—" stammered Blake.

"How did you get into that state, D'Arcy?"

"I was waylaid by a set of wottahs in the wood, sir," said D'Arcy. "It weally wasn't my fault, sir. I was goin' ovah to the town for the meetin' at the Assembly Wooms, sir, and they collahed me in the wood and took away my clobbah, sir—"

"Your what?"

"My clothes, sir. And—and they left me only some gal's clothes, sir, so I had to dwess in them, sir," said D'Arcy. "It

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was vewy howwid, sir; and I was mobbed as a Suffragette in Wayland, sir—which was simply feahful! I have neyah had such an awful experience in my life, sir, I assure you."

Mr. Railton's face broke into a smile.

"This is very absurd, D'Arcy! Have you been robbed of your clothes?"

"I weally don't know, sir, whethah I shall evah see them again. The howwid wuffians were masked, sir, so I couldn't see their faces, and I only know the names they gave me."

"Oh," said Mr. Railton, "they gave you their names, then?"

"Yaas, sir."

"And the names——"

"They said that they were Mr. Asquith, and——"

"What!"

"And Mr. Lloyd George, sir."

"Eh?"

"And Winston Churchill, sir," said D'Arcy.

"D'Arcy!"

"But I don't believe them, sir!" said D'Arcy. "I weally think they must have been wottin', sir."

"Yes; I fancy they were!" murmured Tom Merry; and Blake tried hard not to chuckle.

Mr. Railton tried to frown, but he did not succeed; he smiled instead.

"This is ridiculous, D'Arcy!" he exclaimed. "I suppose it was a foolish joke of some of the New House boys, or perhaps the boys of the Grammar School. It is very absurd. You had better go and dress yourself respectfully at once."

"Yaas, wathah, sir! Thank you, sir. I have had a feahful time, sir."

Mr. Railton smiled and passed on. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was escorted to Study No. 6 by a chuckling crowd.

"Did you speak at the meeting, Gussy?" asked Gore, of the Shell.

"You can go and eat coke, Goah!"

And Arthur Augustus went into his study. Blake lighted the gas, and then there was a sudden exclamation from the swell of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove! Look there!"

Upon the table in the study an elegant array of clothes was spread out—a beautiful Eton suit, and a light overcoat, and a collar and tie—the heap surmounted by a glossy topper.

"My clobbah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"How did they get here?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Asquith and Lloyd George and Winston Churchill must have brought them!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fancy this explains the mystery," said Tom Merry, with a chuckle, as he picked up a card that was wedged in the band of the silk hat.

D'Arcy glanced at the card, and frowned majestically. It bore, in the sprawling hand of Figgins, of the Fourth, the words:

"RETURNED WITH THANKS.
Signed, Figgins & Co."

"Bai Jove! The awful wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I knew all the time that it wasn't Asquith, Lloyd George, and Winston Churchill!"

"Go hon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was those New House wottahs!" Arthur Augustus turned to the door. "Bai Jove!"

"Where are you going?" roared Blake.

"I'm goin' to give Figgins a feahful thwashin'——"

"Not in those trousers!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy halted.

"Bai Jove! Pewhahs I had bettah change my clothes first."

"Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps you had!" yelled Blake. "Take these things up to the dormitory, and get into them, and don't play the giddy goat. And look here, you'd better give yourself a wash in disinfectant. I don't like the scent of that egg!"

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gathered up his beautiful garments, and retired to the Fourth Form dormitory, where he washed and scrubbed himself till even the scent of that clinging egg was abolished. Then he dressed himself and descended. The chums of the School House were sitting round the tea-table in No. 6, enjoying a spread after their adventures. It was a very late tea, but it was all the more welcome on that account. Figgins & Co. were in the study, and they grinned cheerfully at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he came in. D'Arcy bestowed a majestic frown upon them.

"Figgins, you wottah——"

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"Oh, pax!" said Figgins genially. "We did it all for your own good, Gussy."

"You uttah wottah——"

"Order!" said Tom Merry. "Figgy is standing the feed. Honour the guest that is within thy walls, especially when he's standing the spread. Order!"

"And especially when we're all stony!" grinned Blake.

"Wats! My fivah must have awwived by this time——"

There was a roar of laughter in the study. Arthur Augustus gazed round at the juniors in surprise. He did not quite see why his remark should have called forth such an outburst of mirth.

"Weally, you fellows, I do not see any cause for laughah! I weep that my fivah must have awwived by this time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I demand to know what you are cacklin' at. I wegard you as a set of cacklin' asses! I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see," explained Tom Merry, with tears in his eyes, "you won't get that fiver at all. You wired to your pater about it this morning, and he wired back that it was posted, and ought to have reached you."

"Yaas. It must be here by now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not here, and it won't ever be here!" chuckled Tom Merry. "There has been a Suffragette outrage at the post-office in Wayland, and a lot of letters ready for delivery were destroyed. Blagg, the postman, brought what was left of your letter here. There was half the envelope, and a tenth part of the fiver left!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"There it is!" said Blake, jerking his thumb towards a burnt fragment of an envelope that lay on the tea-table.

Arthur Augustus picked it up. He looked very thoughtful as he examined the burnt fragment of envelope and the charred slip of crisp paper, which was all that remained to indicate that a five-pound note had been in the letter. There was just enough of the envelope for the address to be partly made out; but there was not enough of the fiver left for any purpose whatever.

"If your pater's got the number of that note, he may be able to get another one from the Bank of England in the course of a year or two!" grinned Tom Merry. "But just now——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

Arthur Augustus laid down the charred fragment.

"Gentlemen," he said—"gentlemen, chaps, and fellows,— On full considewation, I have decided to dwop the cause of feminine Suffwage, and to let the movement get on the best it can without my assistance."

"Hear, hear!"

"It has occuwved to me that pewwaps I weally haven't enough time to give to it, especially with the cwicket comin' on now!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not see anythin' to laugh at!"

But Tom Merry & Co. did. They roared.

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of the Chums of St. Jim's next Wednesday, entitled "TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY," by Martin Clifford, Order your copy of "The Gem" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

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By R. S. WARREN BELL.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

Sir William Percival Travers, Bart.—to give him his full title—is a slight, fair lad of twelve when he is first sent to "Fighting Greyhouse" by his guardian. His Form-fellows in the Lower Fourth are considerably older than "Sir Billy," as the youngster is soon nicknamed, and he has to put up with a good deal of bullying. His great hero is Wardour, the captain of the school.

One day, towards the end of the Lent term, an epidemic of ophthalmia breaks out at Greyhouse, and in a few days almost half the school are on the sick-list. The school doctor has an anxious consultation with the Head.

"The infirmary is full up, sir; the boys are herded together now like cattle. You must give me all the dormitories in one of the houses.

(Read on from here.)

The Makeshift Hospital!

But, eventually, further accommodation for patients was provided in a totally different quarter.

On the far side of the playground was a Covered Way. Hard by this was the gym. In times of rain you would find the Upper School disporting itself in the gym, and the Lower indulging in gambols in the Covered Way. A Lower School has a habit of avoiding an Upper School, which is a wise habit, for an Upper School has an exacting way with it, and the Lower loves not the boot that is heavy and the hand that is hard.

Well, over the Covered Way was an immense room, now a lumber-room; it was a very old room, full of dust, goal-posts, tattered flags, broken stumps, and old school caps worn green with age and nibbled by mouse and moth. Once, a long time ago, that portion of playground covered in by this dusty chamber was, tradition said, a class-room, but even old Greys, who were now masters at Greyhouse, could not remember when it was used as such.

As a result of the doctor's deliberation with the Head, it was decided not to turn one of the houses into a temporary hospital, but to use this big room over the Covered Way for the purpose. That would keep infection out of the main building.

No sooner settled than seen about. A number of spare beds were carted across the playground by Cripps and the school gardeners. The whole matter was superintended by that stately person, Mr. Saunders, the Head's butler, who wore a gorgeous livery, received visitors, hectorated the other domestics, and wasn't at all a bad sort when he forgot what an important man he was.

So the surplus from the infirmary was lodged over the Covered Way, in the cleaned-up lumber-room, from the barred windows of which the invalids gazed wistfully at their happier comrades below. The matron of the infirmary was already being assisted by several nurses from Pershall Hospital, so in charge of the overflow was placed a fat, good-tempered lady from the cottage hospital in Greyhouse village. There being no patients in the cottage, the doctor sent Nurse Newman along to sit up all night with the patients, and keep a general eye on them. During the day Mr. Saunders, helped by Cripps, saw to their wants in the way of meals and so forth.

"Well, doctor, any fresh cases?" said the Head, one evening.

"Not one," replied the doctor.

With a sigh of relief the Head took a box of cigars out of a drawer which was conveniently near to his hand.

"A small weed, doctor?"

"I never smoke till after dinner."

"Nonsense," said the Head; "tobacco is a recognised disinfectant. I may be catching ophthalmia from your clothes at this moment."

Viewed in this light, the cigar which he was holding out appeared to the doctor an absolutely necessary thing to accept, and so both gentlemen smoked, the Head told anecdotes, and the doctor chuckled. Such was the effect of his welcome news. The spread of the epidemic was checked; so, after all, the thing might be got under by the end of term, which would mean that Greyhouse would break up on the day it had broken up from time immemorial—i.e., the Thursday before Easter—and all would conclude smoothly.

The outlook was decidedly encouraging, but the Head would not have chatted so cheerfully had he known what the night was to bring forth.

Presently the doctor's gig was seen bowling down the drive, and the ophthalmic patients were left to the care of their nurses for another twenty-four hours.

And it was a dull time—oh! a cooped-up, dreary time—for those patients! In the infirmary the afflicted ones roamed from room to room, played draughts and chess, quarrelled, and sighed for the time when their eyes would be well again. The worst of it was they weren't allowed to read.

We are immediately concerned, however, with the makeshift hospital over the Covered Way. The patients confined here had to fall back on much the same amusements as their fellows in the infirmary proper did, and the more unruly spirits proved thorns in the side of Mr. Saunders. After all, ophthalmia is a purely local complaint, and does not hinder the free use of arms and legs, and so boisterous games of high-cock-o'-lorum and dormitory prisoners' base filled the air with dust, and caused many an inflamed eye to smart the worse. Goodness me! The pack of boys cooped up in that old long room were as restless and as fidgety as a dozen ferrets would be if you crammed them into a gladstone-bag.

Tuck of all kinds was, of course, forbidden fruit, and so, naturally, the captives pined for jam tarts, jumbles, hard-bake, and a new sticky, stringy confection which had lately come into favour, called "Daisy's Delight."

But the nimble boy-mind is roughly inventive, and a manner of procuring tuck from the exterior world was soon hit upon.

A small youth, gambolling in the playground below, was hailed in stentorian and commanding tones from a barred window of the dormitory by Hawkins, an over-grown dunce in the Remove. The fellows in the Remove—the Form between the Upper Fourth and Lower Fifth—could neither have fags nor be fagged themselves.

The small youth came at once, for he knew and feared Hawkins, who was as tyrannical as he was thick-headed. In matters pertaining to his stomach, however, Hawkins was particularly quick-witted. It was explained to the small youth that the brush-and-comb bag which would presently

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be let down to him, would be found to contain the sum of two shillings, as well as a list of tuck-shop dainties. He was to unfasten the bag from the string, proceed to the tuck-shop, purchase the dainties stated on the list, return at full speed, reattach the bag to the string, and signal "All Serene," when the bag would be hauled up and the dainties distributed to contributors to the tuck fund.

This illegal errand was successfully performed—the small youth carefully choosing a time to reattach the bag when no monitor was in sight. He was rewarded for his despatch with two jumbles and a stick of Daisy's Delight.

The experiment proved so successful that the small youth was directed, in a note flung to him by Hawkins, to hang about that district whenever he was not in school or at meals—the result being that he became the accustomed messenger of the invalids, and, being rewarded liberally every time for his speed of foot, as well as his saint-like, innocent attitude, whenever a monitor hove in sight, stowed away more sweets than had fallen to his lot during the whole of the term.

The dropping and hauling up of the brush-and-comb bag, and awaiting its return, afforded much excitement to the ophthalmic brigade, and, as sympathetic uncles and big brothers sent postal orders to the imprisoned ones—a sympathetic uncle always regards a five-shilling postal-order as the best sort of medicine for all ailments—there was no lack of purchase money to put in the brush-and-comb bag. The small boy who thus acted as middle-man soon tumbled to the fact that, however dreadful a person Hawkins might be, Hawkins couldn't get at him, and so that small boy grew truculent, and, in spite of all threats of dire castigation, he declined to be rewarded with either jumbles or Daisy's Delight—of which latter commodity he very soon grew heartily sick—and demanded a fee of one penny per journey, which was reluctantly granted him. The invalids were at his mercy; but he well earned his pay.

Once a day arrived the doctor, his camel's hair brush, and his horrid little bottle; once a day you might have heard loud ejaculations of distress in that makeshift hospital. The doctor was thoroughly hardened to his work, and remorselessly pulled down each eyelid and thrust the brush in, for he knew that before the eyes could heal the lotion must be applied regularly.

Hawkins was not only the biggest boy in the room—he was also the biggest coward. One day he howled and blubbered when the stuff hurt him, and another day his fright of the lotion caused him to snatch up a broom and keep the doctor at bay with it. But "Beaky" was not to be terrorised by a mere domestic utensil. He knocked away the broom, grabbed Hawkins by the collar, thrust him, back downwards, on to a bed, and, in spite of the bully's blubbering, applied the lotion by main force. Such were the incidents of this school epidemic. As I have said, the time came when there were no new cases to be reported to the Head. The spread of the ophthalmia had been checked, and it looked as if the term were to end peaceably after all, and that no more worry was in store for the Head. But the Head was to have just one more shock; a fresh entry was about to be made in the Greyhouse log-book.

The Long White Line.

Mrs. Newman, of the Cottage Hospital, and at this time temporary night-nurse to the sick-room over the Covered Way, was not a lady of active habits. She was large and ponderous, and her walk resembled a waddle more than anything else. She was good-tempered, however, and the Greys were glad to have her in the makeshift dormitory, for, as I have explained, when an ophthalmic patient's eyes are once closed fast in sleep, the application of a warm sponge is necessary ere they can re-open.

"Now, young gentlemen," Mrs. Newman would say, when she arrived and found her charges all in bed, "don't forget that I am here when you want me. If any of you wakes up and feels frightened when you can't open your eyes, or wants a drink of water, you've only to say 'Mrs. Newman!' and I'll come at once. Now, just you go off to sleep and don't talk, there's good young gentlemen. I know you don't want to give me any more trouble than you can help."

Mrs. Newman's arrival was invariably hailed with rapture. She was a prime favourite, because she was so easy-going.

"I say, Mrs. Newman!"

"Yes, my dear?"

"Did Petershall beat the village this afternoon?"

"No," proudly; "the village beat 'em by two goals."

Loud cheers from all the beds.

"Yes; and one young gentleman from Petershall sprained his ankle."

"Hard luck!"

"Petershall said that Cobb, the butcher, deliberately tripped him."

Loud denials from all football enthusiasts. Cobb was an excellent full-back, and much respected by Greyhouse.

"And Cobb offered to fight 'em one by one, he was that indignant at the accusation."

Many expressions of approval.

"I say, nurse!"

"Yes, my dear?"

"You'll let us have just one tale, won't you?"

"My orders from Mr. Saunders is," Mrs. Newman would commence in a weak voice, "that there's to be no talking whatsoever, and—"

"Oh, but you don't mind just one tale?" This in a very wheedling tone from Mrs. Newman's pet boy.

"Oh, well," Mrs. Newman would say, settling herself in her easy-chair by the stove; "just this once and never no more."

"Oh, thanks, nurse! You're an awfully good sort, nurse!"

Alas! Mrs. Newman couldn't hold out against flattery, and one tale would follow another until the champion yarn-spinner himself fell asleep in the middle of an exciting story about Mexican desperadoes.

Now on the night when the Head was feeling much relieved by the doctor's favourable news, during a long bout of story-telling everybody in the makeshift hospital dozed off. At last the yarn-spinner-in-chief, noticing the strange silence around him, sat up and very pertinently inquired:

"Anyone awake?"

There was no reply.

"Good-night, nurse!" he muttered, and promptly betook himself to his slumbers. Mrs. Newman did not reply to him, for the simple reason that she, too, was blissfully nodding.

It is extraordinary how a boy will watch his opportunity in order to do something that he ought not to do. A few minutes later, when he was sure that everybody else was sound asleep, Hawkins sat up in bed, reached for his coat, and took a cigarette out of the inside breast pocket; then, throwing off the clothes, he crept stealthily to the stove and lit the cigarette. Then he got into bed again, and proceeded to smoke it. Halfway through, an uncomfortable feeling took possession of him, and so, being aware of what would happen if he did not immediately desist, he chucked the cigarette away and lay down. He had been rendered so drowsy by staying awake thus long in order to break a rule, that he was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

Unthinkingly he had thrown the cigarette-end into a corner of the room where was a miscellaneous assortment of string, boots, caps, and a large amount of that very thin and inflammable paper in which sweetmeats are wrapped. The cigarette-end, in its death struggles, came into contact with the sweetmeat paper, and ignited it, helped in doing so by the slight breeze which came in through the top of an open window.

Soon the pile of paper was burning in real earnest. The flames crept up one of the wooden walls, ran across the ceiling, and extended long fiery fingers in all directions. The fire had now got hold of the rafters, which began to crackle and shed sparks.

Mrs. Newman stirred wearily in her chair. A moment later a whiff of smoke sailed up her nostrils, and then proceeded to tickle her bronchial tubes, so that her throat



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remonstrated with a cough, and the cough awoke her. She started up, and blinked about her.

For some seconds she stood in an irresolute attitude; then, suddenly, the awful fact that the sick-ward was on fire burst upon her dazed mind, and she uttered a shriek. Immediately a dozen fellows who slumbered lightly sat up. The smoke went down their throats and made them cough; they cried out in their terror, for though their eyes were fast closed their other senses were doubly on the alert, and they thoroughly recognised their peril.

Mrs. Newman rolled over to Hawkins's bed—he being the biggest boy in the room.

"Wake up! Wake up!" she cried, shaking him roughly.

"What's the matter?" growled Hawkins sleepily.

A shower of sparks fell on him; he uttered a yell, and sprang out of bed.

And now on all sides there were loud cries.

Alas, their eyes were closed, sealed by the ophthalmia; they could not see; they were blind, helpless—at the mercy of the flames!

Hawkins almost fell down with fright. Then he dashed his hands into his eyes. It was no good, they were fast shut. Shaking with terror he plunged forward; his burly figure crashed against the stove. The pipe which conveyed the smoke through the roof came down with a run, so that the smoke and flames of the stove were added to the general conflagration.

Indescribable panic seized everybody; the poor blind invalids were rushing helplessly about, falling over beds, scrambling up again and charging each other in a wild attempt to escape the awful monster whose hot breath was fanning their cheeks. Mrs. Newman, too terrified to act, sank on to a bed and covered her face with her hands. They could not open the door because Mrs. Newman, knowing the turbulent spirits she had to deal with, had, on coming in that night, turned the key, and then put it in her pocket.

For the moment Hawkins was paralysed, and many were huddled around him, too scared to move. Even those fellows who had sense enough to seek the door felt all the heart go out of them when they discovered it to be locked. They rushed to the windows, and clawed at the bars and broke the glass, and thrust out bleeding hands and arms as they cried for help.

But apparently in vain. Who, at this time of night, was likely to be in the playground? Mr. Saunders, in his own comfortable den, was dozing by the fire; the masters were playing whist in their own common-room; the rest of Greyhouse, with the exception, possibly, of a monitor or two, was snugly a-bed. For it was a cold March night, and the east wind was booming boisterously round the gables and turrets of the old school.

The panic in the makeshift hospital increased. It is bad enough to awake from one's sleep and find the house on fire when one's eyes are sound and well—but these wretched creatures were practically sightless. Judge, then, of their desperation when they found themselves absolutely helpless and at the mercy of the merciless flames.

They cried frantically to Nurse Newman to open the door; but she, convulsed with terror, could not move a finger to help them; their plight was truly awful.

In the midst of the hubbub—when it seemed that all these helpless boys must be burnt to death—there smote upon the straining ears of the despairing patients a rending and crashing of timber.

Oh, joy! Somebody was breaking the door down. Then—God be thanked!—there was hope!

Then, above the cackle and roar of the fire, a familiar voice rang out, in clear, measured tones.

"You fellows—listen! Come over to the door. I am by the door. Look sharp—I am waiting for you!"

The boys fought their way over beds and chairs towards the voice that called them, Mrs. Newman struggling along with the mob. Wardour—for Wardour it was—pushed the nurse into the little landing outside, telling her to save herself. This landing led to another door, beyond which was a flight of iron stairs narrow and steep, leading to the playground.

By this time the fellows in the dormitories on the other side of the playground, awakened by the din and glare, were crowding to the windows. Staring open-eyed at the strange sight, they saw several figures dash across the playground. These were some of the masters who had been warned of the catastrophe by Cripps, for the porter, going on his last rounds, had seen the flames from a window just as he reached the door of Wardour's study. Wardour had immediately darted into the playground, while the porter hastened away to the common-room at the far end of the corridor, where he knew several of the masters were sitting up.

The boys in the dormitories, watching events with strain-

ing eyes, saw the masters hurry up the iron stairway, but as they reached the outer doorway Wardour suddenly appeared and waved them back, speaking rapidly to them as he did so. Then he disappeared.

The onlookers held their breath. It seemed to them that the whole of the sick-ward was one tremendous flame. What did Wardour mean by waving back the masters? Was he going to save all the patients single-handed?

They waited and waited, and presently, after what seemed to them an interminable period, the captain of Greyhouse reappeared on the threshold of the outer door, and this time he was not alone.

For, grasping him by the shoulder, came Hawkins, and grasping Hawkins in the same way came another fellow, and behind him another and another, and thus, each holding and guiding himself by the boy in front, came all the inmates of the makeshift hospital. With Wardour at its head, the long white line felt its way cautiously down the narrow iron staircase. One by one the ophthalmic patients emerged from the doorway, and moved steadily down the steps, each seeming to know that upon his coolness and nerve depended the safety of all those behind him.

Thus, without a single slip or tumble, Wardour led his schoolfellows out of the flaring ward. It was a sight that those watching never forgot—that creeping line—that long, white line of fellow-beings saved from a frightful death by one ready brain.

The line wound slowly down the staircase, and, as the last boy tremblingly placed his bare feet on the cold asphalt of the playground, with a tremendous crash and up-flying of sparks, while huge tongues of fire shot exultingly skywards, the Covered Way and the whole of the makeshift hospital fell down together in a blazing heap.

Mr. Kitt's Sweetheart.

Numbers of people used to attend Sunday evensong in the school chapel in order to hear Mr. Kitt play. The seats next to the wall on each side of the chapel were reserved for visitors, who, before Mr. Kitt came, had seldom appeared in much force. During Mr. Kitt's first term, however, his fame spread over the country-side, and many strangers flocked to the chapel. The fellows took a secret pleasure in watching the younger masters blush when they found their stalls hemmed in by long rows of ladies.

Probably Mr. Kitt enjoyed himself more on Sunday evening than during any other period of his hard-working week; and in spite of the fact that upon this evening, too, he underwent a trying ordeal. The choir and masters robed in the music-room, and then proceeded in stately array down several corridors, across a slice of gravel, and so into the chapel, where they found Greyhouse on its feet awaiting them. Mr. Kitt, as organist, had to precede the choristers by several minutes, and this meant his forming a procession of one and walking up the length of the chapel in lonely glory. The little man, with one side of his hood slipping off his shoulder as he shambled along the aisle like a bashful boy, cut a pathetic and embarrassed figure with those hundreds of eyes upon him—for the pews faced north and south, instead of, as in parish churches, due east.

Kitt was unpopular, so Greyhouse enjoyed his discomfiture—all Greyhouse, that is to say, save a few. As for the visitors, they naturally only saw in Kitt a notable musician—for his reputation as a composer was growing, albeit he still taught the piano for a living. Kitt was destined to make a far greater stir in the world than any of those who surveyed his uneasily progressing figure with amusement not unminged with contempt.

Hidden away in the organ loft, however, Kitt was himself again. Once safely seated on his stool, he lost every atom of self-consciousness. Fellows used to say he composed half his voluntaries as he went along. At first his fingers would wander lovingly over the notes, as if caressing them; then he would draw out stop after stop, and gradually increase the swell and volume of his music until he flooded the air with the magic of his fingers. Then, of a sudden, he would drop back to the purring, crooning tone of his commencement, and so conclude, the music dying softly away and fading into silence. No wonder that, at times, he could command the attention of the most thoughtless; over those who appreciated music, his marvellous art cast a solemn spell.

Sweet Sunday evenings they were, indeed—the air filled with the fragrance of the flowers that grew hard by in the Head's garden; the breeze just rustling the ivy on the chapel's ancient walls—a holy calm possessing everything. After service Greyhouse trailed out in order of Forms, the choir going first. The visitors would sit still, and Mr. Kitt, glad to please his audience, would play on sometimes for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Some of the fellows, too, would linger in the porch until the end, and they were the few that enjoyed Mr. Kitt's friendship.

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"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY!"

You already know, however, that Kitt, though an undoubted genius in his proper sphere, was one of the worst schoolmasters you could find in the country. He could not keep order as well as the youngest probationer, he was very short-tempered, and hadn't an atom of that dignity which often carries a master through a crisis.

Mr. Kitt should never have entered the scholastic profession. He was a musician, pure and simple, and the last man in the world to control and guide schoolboys. He was the most unloved master at Greyhouse, and his especial tormentors—whom he paid out with heavy punishments—never lost an opportunity to retaliate upon him in that inartistic, pointed manner peculiar to the boy who wants to hit back at a person placed in authority over him.

There was a fellow in the Lower Fifth called Hunter—a big, giggling clown, but a footballer of some note. He was in South House. One day he entered the seniors' room with a broad grin on his face.

"An awful joke, you chaps—little Kitt's in love! Can you imagine it?" he exclaimed.

"Who's he in love with?" somebody demanded.

"Oh, a girl over at Meadowdene—don't know her name. Nobody's seen her."

"Well, how d'you know he's in love?" asked another fellow.

"Mother Parkes told me. She said that Kitt's taken to going over to Meadowdene whenever he has a spare afternoon, or even a couple of hours off. She says he brushes himself up, and turns out a regular dandy—spats, flower in his buttonhole, and everything. Takes bouquets over there, too—that's plain evidence."

"Mother Parkes," observed Parfitt, of the Upper Fifth, "is jealous."

"Rot!" said Hunter. "She's not the only one that says so. Several fellows have met him riding his bike or walking over to Meadowdene. Why does he always go to Meadowdene if there isn't some attraction for him there? Tell me that."

Meadowdene was a village two miles off—quite a small place—possessing only a few good houses, as the term is.

"Well," retorted Parfitt, "why shouldn't old Kitt fall in love? I suppose his heart's his own to do as he likes with?"

Hunter was rather damped by Parfitt's cool tone.

"Of course; but it seems so absurd. Fancy any girl looking at Kitt—a red-haired little beast like that!"

"Mother Parkes would be glad enough to have him, at any rate," said Parfitt.

Hunter was rather disappointed by the way the seniors of his House received his news, and was good enough to take himself off soon after this. In his dormitory—No. 3—however, he was a hero, and bullied anyone who didn't laugh when he made a joke. So No. 3 roared and held its sides when Hunter expatiated, in his delicately humorous way, on Mr. Kitt's expeditions.

Hunter and his obedient brother-wags thereafter laid their heads together, and one or two weak fellows among the seniors—who stood somewhat in awe of the burly Hunter—weren't above joining in the jest.

Plans for badgering Mr. Kitt about his ladylove were promptly made. Class-room blackboards were decorated with pictures representing stout little gentlemen pouring passionate vows into the ears of supercilious fair maidens. Sometimes the stout little gentlemen were clothed in armour, sometimes in ruffles and periwigs, wearing swords and shoe-buckles, sometimes in harlequin attire. In various ways Mr. Kitt was given to understand that Greyhouse was aware of his attachment, and it is not to be supposed that he walked up the chapel on Sunday evening feeling more comfortable than of yore. However, he took no notice of the waggeries of Hunter & Co., and it was observed about this time that he did not give so many impositions, but put a greater restraint on his temper.

One day Hunter favoured the seniors with further information on the subject.

"I say," he cried, "news—great news! Kitt's sweetheart has been placed—at least, her house is known. The artist of No. 3 is now at work on it."

"Well, which is it?" demanded Parfitt, with some eagerness.

The love affair of a master was, after all, a matter of interest to the community, particularly to those fellows who, like Parfitt, were growing moustaches, and beginning to appreciate the fascinations of the opposite sex.

"The Vicarage—so it's one of the Croft girls."

"Which one?"

"Can't say yet," leered Hunter. "Only know it is one of them. They're all rather nice, I'm told," he was good enough to add.

(To be continued in next Wednesday's issue of "The GEM Library." Order Early.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 274.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
Every Monday.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl, English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

A. R. King, Mingary, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England or Canada, age 16.

J. Blake, 221, Coursol Street, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 16.

C. Van de Ven, 65, Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda, Melbourne, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers of "The Gem."

S. O'Connor, Minimay, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in the United Kingdom.

J. Gray, Silas Street, East Fremantle, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader intending to emigrate to Western Australia, age 17.

Miss Reenie Morgan, 27, Ackland Street, Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond and exchange picture postcards of Adelaide for card views of Ireland with a boy reader age 16 to 17.

Miss Reta Morgan, 27, Ackland Street, Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond and exchange picture postcards with a boy in America, age 13 to 14.

J. E. Irwin, 35, Enmore Road, Newtown, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers age 15 to 18.

Miss Ruby McDiarmid, Ascot Vale Road, Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with her cousin, Myrtle Archibald. Also with a girl living in or near Moonee Ponds, age 16 to 18, with a view to companionship. One who is fond of tennis preferred.

L. G. Clay, 159, Wellington Street, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers, age 17 to 20, interested in photography, living in Russia, Japan, China, Africa, Turkey, Philippine Isles, and Morocco.

E. B. Hansom, 2478, Park Avenue, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcards.

G. Roe, 2341, Western Avenue, Vancouver, British Columbia, wishes to correspond with readers in Derby, England.

W. Brimicombe, 26, Rushton Road, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl readers.

A. Stores, P.O. Henty, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Isles.

M. Cowie, Eden Terrace, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the United Kingdom, age 17.

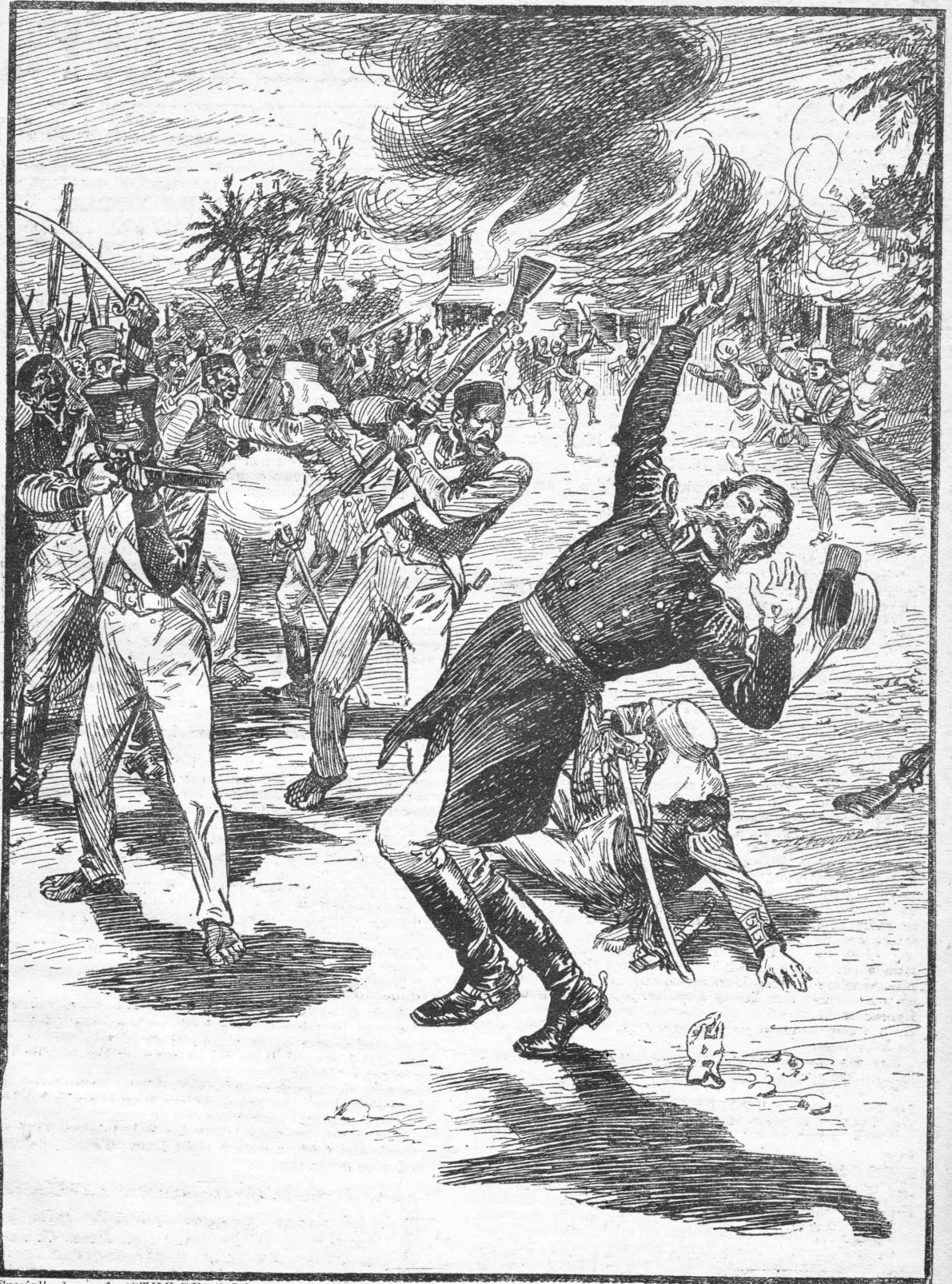
Miss A. Wakefield, Carlisle Road, Westbourne Park, Adelaide, South Australia, wishes to correspond with a boy reader living in England, age 17-18.

Miss Nellie Vaisey, Boambee, Coff's Harbour, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with an English boy reader, age 16-17.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

Our Companion Papers.

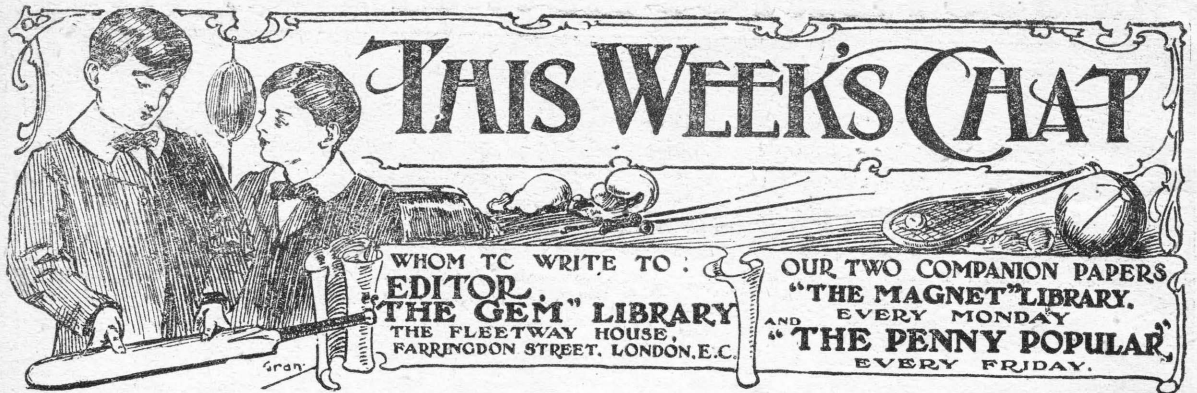
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

FAMOUS FIGHTS FOR THE FLAG. No. 1.

Specially drawn for "THE GEM" Library, by C. H. Blake.

This picture illustrates one of the many acts of undaunted gallantry displayed by the British officers of native regiments in India on the outbreak of the Great Mutiny. Colonel Finnis, of the 11th Native Infantry, stationed at Meerut, with the help of a handful of officers, made an heroic attempt to pacify his rebellious regiment. The maddened Sepoys, however, were past all control, and the gallant little party of whites were shot down without mercy.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
 EVERY MONDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

For Next Wednesday.**"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY."**By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

In our next splendid, long, complete tale of the chums of St. Jim's, Tom Merry & Co. become possessed of a mysterious document under the strangest circumstances. Their chance meeting with a fugitive Italian is destined to have far-reaching consequences, and to lead them on a long quest.

"TOM MERRY'S DISCOVERY"

is a story of thrilling schoolboy adventure which I am sure my readers will fully appreciate.

OUR NEW FEATURE.

This issue of "The Gem" Library contains a grand new pictorial feature—the first of a series of grand battle-pictures which will appear each week under the title of "Famous Fights for the Flag," and which will without doubt appeal to all my readers. These stirring pictures will vividly bring back to my chums the memory of many a thrilling struggle and many a deed of desperate valour performed by Britishers at the call of duty—the call which bade them, as it bids us to-day, to keep the old flag flying!

POPLETS!**The Latest New Competition.**

This week's issue of our splendid companion paper—"The Penny Popular"—is also a "bumper" number, by reason of the fact that it contains—in addition to the manifold attractions in the way of really splendid complete stories, which are always to be found in it—

A WONDERFUL NEW COMPETITION,

which is simply bound to become all the rage.

"POPLETS"

is the name of this great new competition for which many big

CASH PRIZES

are offered every week. All particulars will be found in this Friday's issue of "The Penny Popular." There is going to be a great boom in

"POPLETS."

You don't know how fascinating—as well as remunerative—a competition can be till you have tried the new

"POPLETS"

competition in this week's "Penny Popular"!

FREE SCORE SHEETS FOR NEXT WEDNESDAY.

Next Wednesday I am introducing a novel feature for the especial benefit of my thousands of cricket-playing readers. This will consist of two full-sized scoring-sheets, correctly arranged and ruled for a full two-innings cricket-match. Every issue of next week's "Gem" will contain this special free feature, so that my keen cricketing readers, by buying extra copies themselves and collecting the scoring-sheets from their non-cricketing fellow-readers, will have no need to buy a scoring-book for their cricket-matches this season at all.

HOW TO FORM A NIGGER-MINSTREL TROUPE*(Continued from last week.)***How to Play the Bones.**

Bones can usually be bought at any music-shop. The first thing to do is to get the bones in the right position—that is, place one piece between the first and second finger, and the other between the second and third—then make a sharp movement, turning your fist from right to left, for you must nearly clench your fist. At first it will seem very difficult, but after a little practice you will be able to accompany tunes to great effect. One or two comic songs can be introduced by Tambo and Bones, also duets.

Costume.

The clothes can be all-white flannels, or red waistcoats, blue coats, white trousers and boots, and a coloured collar. The clothes of Tambo and Bones must be funny—wide trousers, big tie, and a coat all patched. The minstrels' faces are made up with burnt cork, Tambo and Bones having one eye left white in the shape of a diamond. The interlocutor must be dressed in a white suit. It adds to the effect if the other niggers have lace ruffles at their sleeves. If one of the members is a conjurer, a little magic can be introduced with good effect, with some comic assistance from Tambo or Bones. To get engagements you should write to all the bazaar organisers, clergymen, clubs, etc. You should ask the following fee:

Half-hour performance, 10s.; one hour, £1; two hours, £1 10s.

These should go towards paying the expenses of any make-up in the shape of grease-paint for the lips, also the wigs. These can be bought at Gamage's, for 1s. 6d., while the grease-paints cost 4½d. per stick. You will find that if you can get a pianist it will be the greatest help possible.

The following is a specimen of a complete act:

1. Alexander's Rag-Time Band (Encore, "Everybody's Doing It.")
2. "Old Folks at Home" (Encore, "Nellie Gray.")
3. Comic Cross-Talk (Tambo and Interlocutor).
4. "Dixie" (Encore, "Rag-Time Goblin Man.")
5. Comic Selections by Tambo and Bones.
6. Conjuring by _____, with the assistance of Tambo or Bones.
7. "Rag-Time Violin."
8. Swanee River.
9. Sketch (a suitable sketch, if not composed for the occasion, can be taken from a book such as the Mohawk, Burgess, and Moore books; published at 1s. 6d.)

The items 1, 4, and 7, should be sung by the troupe; the other songs, "Nellie Gray," etc., should be sung by one person, with the chorus sung by the rest.

I hope these few hints and directions from one who has had many years' practical experience of the work, will encourage some of my readers with talent for entertaining, to form nigger-minstrel troupes on the right lines. To all who may do so I wish every success.)

THANKS.

Will the following readers accept my best thanks for their very helpful and interesting letters:

V. Levy (London), "An Ardent Reader," "A Bashful Girl Reader," "Loyalite of Notts," W. T. (London), "Swinton Reader," Mrs. Lillian Carlton, "Two Girl Guides."

THE EDITOR.