

The **GEM** 1 ^{1d}/₂

No. 586. Vol. XIII. May 3rd, 1919.



RATTY JUNIOR!



RATTY'S NEPHEW IN THE WARS!

3-5-19.

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent, Long, Complete School Story contained in this Number.)



Ratty Junior!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story
of TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER I.

Just Like Ratty!

"Figgins! Kerr! Wynn!"
Jameson of the Third, a New House flag, piped out those names in quick succession as he came on the cricket-ground.

Figgins & Co. did not heed.
"They were busy just then—too busy to take note of a Third Form flag."

George Figgins was at the wicket, and Fatty Wynn was bowling to him; and Kerr was looking on with keen interest, very proud of his chums—the best batsman and the best bowler among the New House juniors.

Tom Merry, of the School House, was looking on with interest also. As junior cricket captain, he was delighted with the form Fatty Wynn was displaying, though he belonged to the rival House. Fatty Wynn was a rod in pickle for the School House in the coming House matches; but he was also a rod in pickle for Greyfriars, when they came along to play St. Jim's, which was more important.

"Well bowled, Fatty!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as Figgins barely saved his sticks.

"Good men both," said Kerr.
"Yass, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "Bai Jove, you know, I should have found it wathah difficult to stop that ball."

"Not to say impossible!" grinned Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"
"Figgins! Kerr! Wynn!" shouted Jameson of the Third, *crescendo*.

"Go it, Fatty!"
"Now, then, Figgy, keep your eyes peeled!"

"Figgins! Kerr! Wynn!" roared Jameson of the Third, *crescendo*, a *con fuoco*, to express it musically.

Tom Merry looked round.
"Cheese it!" he remarked.

"Yass, wathah! Dwy up, Jameson," said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglasses disapprovingly on the New House flag. "What are you wearin' at, you young houndah! It is verry disturbin' to be wear'd at."

Jameson snorted.
"Ratty's sent me for them," he explained, "and if they don't hop it here'll be trouble in the family. Figgins—"

"You're wanted, Figgy!" called out Tom Merry.

"Oh, rot," answered Figgins, without looking round.

"Your Housemaster—"
"Bless him!"

And Figgins devoted his attention to the matter in hand, Jameson of the Third indulged in a snort.

"Figgins—" he began again, molto *crescendo*.

"Dwy up, Jameson."

"Kerr—"

"Cheese it!"

"Wynn—"

"Somebody hand me a bat," said Jack Blake of the Fourth. "I'll dry him up!"

Jameson dodged.
"Ratty wants you!" he roared. "Now you know! Ratty said I was to fetch you!"

Figgins had seen the ball whizzing, and he did not seem inclined to come off. It was only practice, but Figgins of the Fourth was very keen on it. When Figgins was playing cricket, he was blind and deaf to other things—even to a message from Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House.

But Tom Merry interposed.
"Mr. Ratcliff's temper was never good, and it was certainly not likely to improve by waiting. A Housemaster's behests had to be obeyed."

"Come off, Figgy!" called out Tom Merry.

"You, too, Fatty! Your Housemaster wants you! You get on, Blake!"

"Yass, wathah! It would wathah be wathah disrespectful to keep your Housemaster waitin', dear boys."

"Come on, you two!" called out Kerr. Jameson of the Third dived his hands into his pockets and walked off whistling.

to join D'Arcy minor and the fags in another part of the field. His duty was done, and if Figgins & Co. liked to ask for a licking by keeping their Housemaster waiting that was their business.

Kerr called to his chums again, and Figgins and Fatty Wynn gave it up, and came off, both frowning. George Figgins was feeling greatly exasperated.

"Isn't it just like Ratty!" he demanded. "Why can't he give a chap a rest? Can't a chap play cricket sometimes without Ratty nosing after him?"

"What have you been up to?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"Nothing. I suppose it's a row; but we haven't done anything," said Figgins, with a grunt. "I punched Clampe's nose this afternoon, but I suppose he hasn't taken his nose to Ratty."

Fatty Wynn rubbed his plump hands.

"It's a licking of course," he said.

"What's a licking when Ratty wants to see a chap. If he lays it on, and spoils my bowling for this afternoon, I'll—"

"Fawwaps it is not a lickin', dear boys," suggested Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hopefully. "Watty may be goin' to ask you to tea."

These expressive grunts came from Figgins & Co. Evidently they did not think that likely.

"Come on," said Kerr. "The longer you keep him waiting the worse he is. I'd like to swap Housemasters with you, Tom Merry."

Tom Merry laughed.
"No fear! We're sticking to Railton," he said. "Wouldn't take Ratty at a gift, old man. Better hurry."

Figgins & Co. left Little Side with dolorous looks.

A summons to their Housemaster's study was not pleasant at any time. Mr. Ratcliff had a sharp temper, an acid tongue, and a ready cane. And at this particular time Figgins & Co. were very keen on cricket. It was a half-holiday; it was fine and sunny, and the big matches were coming along shortly; and Figgins & Co. naturally wanted to be in great form to shine in those matches.

It was, as the exasperated Figgins remarked, just like Ratty to interrupt cricket practice in this way, and cast the cloud of his unpleasantness over a happy afternoon.

"Must be a licking!" remarked Fatty Wynn, as they progressed slowly and reluctantly towards the New House.

"Might be detention!" groined Kerr. Figgins gave a loud snort.

"I'm not going to be detained! My hat! He can lick me if he likes, but if he detains me, I shall cut it, no not going to miss cricket this afternoon!"

The trio did not look happy as they entered the New House and proceeded towards Mr. Ratcliff's study. Chowie of the Fourth met them in the passage, with a grin. Chowie was not a pleasant youth, and he did not like Figgins & Co.—hence his grin.

"Ratty's sent for you—I heard him tell Jameson ten minutes ago or more," he remarked. "You've kept him waiting."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"He's looked out of his study twice," said Chowie. "Scowling like a demon. You're in for it."

"Oh, rats!"

"Of course, I'm sorry!" said Chowie; with a still broader grin. "You showed my cigarette down my back yesterday, Figgy. So I'm verry sorry you're going to be licked. He, he, he!"

Chowie was evidently amused; but Figgins was not in a mood for Chowie's pleasantry—far from it. He took the chuckling youth suddenly by the collar, and there was a loud crack, and a louder howl, as Chowie's head tapped on the wall.

"Yooop!" roared Chowie.

A door flew open, and a thin, acid face looked along the corridor.

"Figgins!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff.
 "Oh!" gasped Figgins.
 He released Chowie as suddenly as if that youth had become red-hot.

"What are you doing, Figgins?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff.

"Come go my study at once!"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Figgins.

It was undoubtedly a licking now, the unfortunate Figgins considered, and he rubbed his hands in painful anticipation as he led his claims on to the House-master's study.

Chowie rubbed his head, and grinned after them.

"I'm jolly glad!" he breathed. "Do you hear, Figgie? I'm jolly glad you're going to get it—jolly glad! Yah!"

And Chowie departed hastily lest George Figgins should turn round. But George Figgins didn't.

The members of the New House marched into the study, and lined up before the House-master's table, and stood meekly awaiting their doom.

CHAPTER 2.

Mr. Ratcliff Asks a Favour.

"H E M!"

Mr. Horace Ratcliff coughed slightly.

He was cycling the three juniors, who seemed a little puzzled. Perhaps the gloomy depression in their faces struck him.

To the surprise of the juniors, his cane was not in his hand; neither was it lying ready on the table. This was an unaccounted oversight on the part of Mr. Ratcliff.

"Figgins!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Is anything the matter with you?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Or with you, Kerr—or you, Wynn!"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"I've sent for you, Figgins—"

"I'm ready, sir!" said Figgins, holding out his hand.

Figgie supposed that that was the next step, and he held out his hand at once, to get it over as soon as possible. But Mr. Ratcliff only stared at his hand, as if it were some zoological specimen submitted to his inspection.

"You do not appear to understand me, Figgins." A crusty smile appeared on the House-master's face for a moment.

"I did not seem for you to cane you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Figgins.

His hand dropped to his side at once, and his cheeks crimsoned.

"I really do not see why you should suppose so," said Mr. Ratcliff tartly.

"Perhaps, however, it is a guilty conscience. If you have some serious fault upon your conscience, Figgins, which you feared had come to my knowledge by—"

"Oh, no, sir; not at all, sir!" gasped Figgins hastily.

"Very well. I have sent for you, Figgins—"

Mr. Ratcliff paused, wondering why on earth Mr. Ratcliff had sent for him if it was not to be a caning or a "dinking."

"Are you busy this afternoon, Figgins?"

"I'm playing cricket, sir."

"Ah! That is a matter of no moment, fortunately."

Figgins & Co. involuntarily exchanged a glance. Cricket was a matter of no moment to Mr. Ratcliff, who disliked games, and, indeed, exercise of any sort. It was a matter of very considerable moment to Figgins & Co.

"As you are not busy this afternoon,"

resumed Mr. Ratcliff, blissfully unconscious of the feelings of the three juniors.

"I intend to ask you to do me a service."

"With—with pleasure, sir!" mumbled Figgins.

"I am glad you are pleased to do me a service, Figgins. It is of course your duty. I require someone to go to Wayland Junction this afternoon—"

The unhappy trio suppressed their feelings. Going to Wayland Junction meant taking up most of the afternoon. Cricket faded into the background.

"I must therefore place a small sum in your hands to be expended in entering into my nephew and yourselves at the buffet," said Mr. Ratcliff, with extraordinary graciousness.

"Hear, hear!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn involuntarily.

"Oh—what? What did you say, Wynn?"

"I—I—I meant very good, sir!" stammered Fatty.

"Oh! Now, I think I have told you all that is necessary," said Mr. Ratcliff.

"As you are fortunately unoccupied this afternoon, I am sure it will be no inconvenience to you. You will meet my nephew, and perhaps refreshment with him, and bring him to the school, and I hope to see some good friends. That is all, my boys."

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Figgins.

"I must not forget the item of cash, however," said Mr. Ratcliff, with a smile.

As he inserted his finger and thumb into a pocket apparently in quest of a coin.

Fatty Wynn wondered whether it was going to be a quid or a half-quid. He felt that even Fatty couldn't make it less than the latter. But Fatty was mean. He was known to be awfully close with money, and it was possible that he would make it only five shillings.

Fatty's mind was still fluctuating between a pound and five shillings when Mr. Ratcliff laid a shilling on the table.

"There!" he said.

There was quite an unctuous tone in Mr. Ratcliff's voice as if a school boy who was doing a generous thing and knew it.

Figgins & Co. gazed at the shilling.

"That is all, my boys," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Now you may go."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" gasped Figgins.

"You are forgetting the money, Figgins!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff, as Figgie was backing to the door, leaving the princely sum still untouched on the table.

"Oh, tho—the money!" ejaculated Figgins.

"Oh, yes, sir; certainly! The money."

He picked up the money, and the three juniors quitted the study. They looked at one another as Kerr closed the door.

"Hadn't we better ask him if he's sure he can spare so much?" asked Fatty Wynn, in deep and sulphurous tones.

"Oh, don't voice on it," said Figgins despondently. "We needn't start yet; we can have a look at the cricket for a bit, anyhow. Come on!"

And Figgins & Co. walked back to Little Side—Figgins still carrying the "money" in his hand.

CHAPTER 2.

Up to Gussy!

"L ICKED!" asked Tom Merry, with great sympathy.

Figgins' voice on it. Figgins looked so gloomy when they came on Little Side that the juniors naturally concluded that there had been a licking.

But Figgins shook his head.

"No!" he answered gloomily.

"But Jove! You do not look very well."

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cheerful about not being licked. Figgins!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Ratty's jawings are nearly as bad as his lickings," observed Manners, with a shake of the head.

"It wasn't a jawing," said Figgins.

"Ratty was in a good temper."

"He's had it in his head."

"That is very remarkable, Figgins. What could possibly have put Watty into a good temper?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if Ratty's in a good temper, and it isn't a licking or a jawing, what is there to grouse about?" asked Tom Merry cheerily. "Let's get on with the cricket. Kidfare is coming along to see us at it."

"Can't!"

"We're booked!" said Kerr. "Ratty's got a nephew, and the young beast is coming to St. Jim's."

"Ha! Jove! How do you know he's a beast, Kerr, when you have never seen the chap?"

"Ratty says his nephew is like him!" explained Kerr.

"Oh!"

"We're asked to meet him at the junction, shepherd him to the right train, bring him to St. Jim's, and shake hands with him, and generally fold him over our wrists and weep over him," said Fatty Wynne. "Ratty said it was lucky we weren't occupied this afternoon—only playing cricket, you know!"

"I regarded that as a stably assurance of Watty!"

"And he's showed the fellow into our study," said Figgins desperately. "Fancy having your own Housemaster's nephew in your study! And he's like Ratty!"

"We don't want anybody showed in our study—but Ratty's nephew! My hat!"

"That's the limit!" granted Kerr.

"Woolly, I should regard that as the very outside edge!" asserted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and generally told him all right—you've got to get out of the three of you to go. We want Wynne to bowl, too, Cousin! you go alone!"

Figgins considered.

"Well, Ratty didn't say specially that all three were to go," he remarked. "If he does not take it for granted we would—but it's possible to take too much for granted in this uncertain world. You can keep Fatty—even Fatty won't miss this glorious spread at Wayland buffet with—"

Fatty Wynne assented with a snort.

"As you can keep Kerr," continued Figgins. "I'll go alone, and chance it. I'll take this large sum of money with me, but I can carry it unaided, by exerting my strength. As for Master Bartholomew, I've a jolly good mind to take him by the neck when I meet him and rub it nose on the reality. I'm sure that that's what he really wants."

"Bai Jove! That would be wathah wuff, Figgins."

"It's rotten!" growled Tom Merry.

"We wanted you, Figgins. I wanted Kidfare to see you batting, too. I—I suppose it wouldn't do for some other fellow to meet young Ratty?"

"To these a volunteer!" asked Figgins, looking round.

There was unanimous silence. Plainly nobody wanted to leave cricket for the pleasure of meeting Bartholomew Ratcliff at the station.

Any other chap would do, I should think," said Figgins thoughtfully. "He can fold Bartholomew to his heart's content and weep over him as well as I could. Ratty's given us this job as a sort of treat—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But we're not going to go, that I can see—so long as somebody goes. I suppose it doesn't matter who meets young Ratty so long as the young rat is met," argued Figgins. "Whoever offers to go can have this shilling to spend on riotous living."

"I do not approve of this, Figgins," said D'Arcy, with a severe look. "You are wathah bound to be wathah civil to your Housemaster, though I do not deny that he is a wathah unpleasant character. I advise you to be wathah decent to young Watty, and make much of him."

"Br-r-r!"

"You see, dear boy, he will get his first impression of St. Jim's from the fellow who meets him at the station."

"I trust him," said Figgins, "that that is not the spirit in which you will greet your Housemaster's nephew!"

"It is, old top!" answered Figgins.

"I do not approve—"

"Then I'll tell you what!" exclaimed Figgins, as if struck by a specially bright idea. "I trust you, you go, Gusey!"

"Woolly, Figgins—"

"Gusey's the man!" said Kerr, with conviction. "The new fellow ought to be given a good impression of our polished manners and delightful customs. Gusey's the man for that."

"Yes, that is every true, Kerr," remarked the swell of St. Jim's unobtrusively. "But—"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Jolly good idea!" he said heartily. "We want Figgins, Gusey, and—ahem!—of-course, we want you, too, but we can spare you for the sake of making a really good impression on a Housemaster's nephew."

"Yess, but—"

"Thanks so much, Gusey!" said Figgins.

"But I have not said—"

"I'm not obliged," old fellow!"

"But I have not—"

"Here's the shilling!"

"Yess, but—"

"Now, you get on the pitch, Figgins," said Tom Merry. "We've wasted a lot of time already over your bloated Housemaster. And here come Kidfare's Men!"

"Woolly, Tom Merry—"

With Arthur Augustus broke off. He gazed at the backs of the cricketers, who were moving off from the spot, and he gazed at the shilling George Figgins had pressed into his hand. He seemed rather bewildered.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "It seems to be taken for granted that I am going to Wayland to meet young Wathah, and I have certainly not agreed to anything of the sort. It is wathah remarkable the hasty way these youngsters jump to unwarrantable conclusions!"

But it seemed that it was up to the unfortunate Arthur Augustus. Figgins was already looking for the wickets. The swell of St. Jim's remained in thought for a few moments, and then followed the New House junior.

"Figgins!" he called out.

"Good-bye, old chap!" answered Figgins, without turning his head.

"I am goin' to meet young Wathah!"

"That's right! Hurry; you may be late."

"I should prefer—"

"Buck up, Gusey!" called out Tom Merry. "You're stopping the play."

"But I should prefer—"

"Never mind what you'd prefer, old top!" said Monty Lowther. "This is a case of duty. When duty calls, to brass walls, you know—"

"Yess; but I should prefer—"

"I hope you're not going to be selfish, Gusey," said Manners of the Shell seriously.

"I hope not, Manners!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "It appears to be taken for granted that I am goin' to Wayland to meet young Wathah. But I should prefer—"

"What you'd prefer, old chap, doesn't count!" said Tom Merry. "Be a good boy, and run along."

"Yess; but I should prefer to know what train—"

"Eh!"

"What train young Wathah is comin' by befoah I start for the station," yelled Arthur Augustus, succeeding in getting it out at last.

"Oh! Ah! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, of course. What train, Figgins!"

"Half past three, Wayland Junction!" shouted Figgins.

"Very good. How shall I know him, Figgins, as he is a swangah to me?"

"By his ugly mug! He's like Ratty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, corky!"

In a rather doubtful frame of mind Arthur Augustus started dutifully for Wayland, to wait at the junction for a stranger whom he was to recognise, according to Figgins, by his "ugly mug."

CHAPTER 4.
Under Escort!

"O H, what a little bit of luck!" sang Gordon Gay softly.

"What a little bit of luck for little us!" remarked the companion—Woolton major.

The two juniors of Rylcombe Grammar School were strolling along the footpath in the wood when an elegant vision dawned upon their sight. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, clean as a new pin from head to foot, and sporting the best straw hat of summer.

Arthur Augustus was on his way to Wayland, and taking the short cut through the wood. The short cut was taken to save time; but from the looks of the two merry Grammarians it was clear that the short cut was not likely to save time, after all.

"The one and only!" said Gordon Gay, grinning. "What a happy meeting!"

The two Grammarians stopped, and Arthur Augustus stopped. He jammed his walking stick into his eye, and surveyed Gay and Wootton doubtfully. The juniors of the rival schools seldom met without "ragging." But Arthur Augustus was not looking for a rag at present. He did not want to arrive at Rycomb in a dilapidated state to meet the distinguished newcomer.

"Good afternoon, dear boys!" he said. "Top of the afternoon, old scout!" said Gordon Gay affably. "Fancy meeting you!"

"Only fancy!" said Wootton major, cheerily. "Just when we were wondering how to kill time."

"Taxi!" said Arthur Augustus, holding up his hand. "No wage, please. I am going to the station to meet a new chap, and I am in wathah a huwry."

"New chap for St. Jim's?"

"Yaas."

"There's a new chap coming to the Grammar School this afternoon, but we ain't troubling to meet him at the station."

"You waste too much politeness on your new chaps, Gussy."

"This is a wathah special new chap, Gay—a nephew of one of our Housemasters. Wootton majah, if you touch my straw hat I shall punch you!"

"You're really going to the station to meet a new chap?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You're not going to the tailor's? Then you haven't been engaged as a dummy to put in the window?"

"I regard that question as sinine, Gay, and I refuse to wreply to it!"

"And you're in a hurry!"

"I have already said so."

"If he's in a hurry, Wootton, we ought to help him along," said Gordon Gay.

"Beside, he may meet some rough, nasty boys in the wood, who might tip his hat off—like that!"

"Oh! Ah! You wuffian!"

"Or jerk his tie out—like that!"

"Yawwooh!"

"So we'd better escort him, and see him safe through. Take his arm, Wootton."

"I refuse to have my arm taken, and I decline your company!" shouted Arthur Augustus, clutching his hat with one hand and his necktie with the other. "I regard you as a pair of wuffians!"

"You won't take my arm!" asked Gay, in a pained tone.

"Certainly not!"

"All refuse! I'll take yours."

"I shall strike you! Leggo! Release me at once, you feahful wottahs! I have no time at present to give you a feahful thwack!"

"How lucky—for you!" chuckled Gay. The two Grammarians had taken Gussy's arm, one on either side. Against either of the cheery Grammarians the swell of St. Jim's could have given a good account of himself, but two were too many. He struggled to release his arms, but he struggled in vain.

Keeping a strong grip on his arms, the cheery Grammarians walked him on along the footpath towards the distant Wayland road.

"Will you release me?" breathed

he kept pace, running between the two grinning Grammarians.

"We're helping you on."

"You feahful wuffian! I do not want to be helped."

"Never mind what you want, old top. We're Good Samaritans, and we're going to help."

The Grammarians increased their speed, putting it on for all they were worth, still keeping Arthur Augustus' arms in a tight grip. The swell of St. Jim's panted on between them at great speed. His straw hat was floating behind at the end of its cord, and his cyglasses floated, too.

It was not an easy run at top speed with his arms held on both sides, but



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy leaned on the stile and gasped. "Oh! Gwoogh! You uttah wottahs—"

"Can we help you over the stile now we've helped you through the wood?" asked Gordon Gay. (See Chapter 4.)

Arthur Augustus, panting with his unavailing exertions.

"We're exerting you, old chap."

"I do not desiah your escort."

"We bestow these favours unasked on nice boys, whom we really like," answered Gordon Gay blandly.

"I repeat that I am in a huwry."

"Really in a hurry!" asked Gay thoughtfully.

"Yaas. I have only time to get to the junction for the wain. I was wathah delayed changin' my necktie beech I started."

"Then we'd better run for it," said Gay.

"Buck up, Wootton! Gussy musn't miss his appointment."

The two Grammarians broke into a rapid run. Arthur Augustus stumbled, and ran with them. He had no choice about that.

"Will you release me!" he yelled, as

Arthur Augustus had to manage it somehow. He wasted a considerable amount of breath in telling the Grammarians what he thought of them, but those cheery youths only chuckled.

Gussy's only comfort was the fact that he was being run in the direction in which he wished to go. The chums of the Grammar School were only being playful, and did not want to make him miss his engagement.

Panting for breath, and streaming with perspiration, Arthur Augustus arrived at the stile on the Wayland road, some distance from the town, and there the Grammarians released him. Arthur Augustus leaned on the stile, and gasped.

"Oh! Gwoogh! You uttah wottahs!"

"Can we help you over the stile, now we've helped you through the wood?"

asked Gordon Gay.

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"Hands off, you wotab!?"
 "Take his other leg, Wootton. We must help him over the stile."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was leaning on the stile as he pumped in breath. But as the merry Grammarians seized him again he spun round and hit out.
 "Oh unexpected drive caught Gordon Gay on the chest, and he rolled in the grass of the footpath."

"Oh!" he spluttered. "Ow!"
 "Now, you wotab!" shouted Arthur Augustus, whirling upon Wootton major.
 "Now, you come on!"

"Oh, you cat!" ejaculated Wootton, jumping back.
 "I am goin' to give you a fearful thrashing!"
 Wootton major put his hands up in defence, and backed away. He did not want to hurt the superb Gussy, and he was a good-natured, though the swell of St. Jim's was in a towering state of wrath.

"Mercy!" he exclaimed.
 "I am goin' to thrash you—"
 "Help!" gasped Wootton.
 Gordon Gay sprang to his feet, and ran to the station, putting up his hands. A wink passed between the two Grammarians. They retreated back up the footpath, Arthur Augustus following them in a terrific onslaught.

It was not till they had covered quite a considerable distance that Arthur Augustus realised that the Grammarians were retreating for the sole purpose of leading him on and pulling his noble leg. This discovery explained the ease with which he was driving back the two sturdy juniors.

"When the fact dawned upon him, Arthur Augustus halted.
 "You utiab wotab!" he gasped.
 "Come on!" grinned Wootton major.
 "We'll go all the way back to Rylcombe Lane, if you like, old top!"

"Wats!"
 Arthur Augustus turned and strode away, heading for the Wicket. The merry laughter of the Grammarians followed him as he went.

He reached the stile again, and clambered over into the road—where he paused to wipe his brow with his handkerchief, and set his teeth straight with the aid of a pocket-mirror. He had finished that necessary renovation when the sound of a clock chiming in Wayland caught his ear.

"Great Scott!"
 It was half-past three. He was just a goodly hour from the station—and it was half-past three! At that very moment Mr. Ratcliff's nephew would be stepping out of the express at the junction!

"Oh, those fearful wotab!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Pew-pew-pew-pew!" he whistled, "wotab of me to waste time thrashing them! I wotab for got about young Watty! Bai Jove! If I miss him—"

The swell of St. Jim's started for Wayland at a run. He could only hope that Master Bartholomew, finding no one to receive him at the station, would wait until someone turned up. If Mr. Ratcliff had told him he was to be met there, he would doubtless do so—otherwise—

Arthur Augustus put on speed, hoping for the best.

CHAPTER 5.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS TAKES CHARGE!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came breathlessly into Wayland Station.
 The station seemed quiet and deserted; the passengers who had come by the half-past three train had cleared off. The swell of St. Jim's called to a porter.

"Fway has the twain come in yet?" Arthur Augustus was aware that although the war was over there was still a considerable amount of war-time about the railway service, and he hoped that the three-thirty had not yet arrived, though it was a quarter to four.

"Beguiled, sir," answered the porter, "Bai Jove! There it is not!"
 "Just coming in!"
 "Thank you vevy much!" said D'Arcy, in great relief.

He obtained a platform ticket and went on, in time to see the train coming up the line from Abbotsford. The swell of the Fourth was a great relief, and for once the lingering war-time influence on the train had come in useful. In the hurry of the moment it did not occur to Arthur Augustus that the three-thirty had come and gone, and that he had arrived in time for the three-forty-five.

"Gussie, Gussie, I am awfully sick of luck!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he recovered his repose of manner on the platform. "It would wotab have been too bad to leave young Watty stranded at the station aftah undakin' to meet him head. It is all those Grammars, and I am a right sick of it, but he was not aware whether the stranger's name was Ratcliff or not. Figgins had spoken of him as 'young Ratty,' because he was Mr. Ratcliff's nephew; but his name might be Smith, or Jones, or Robinson, or Cholmondeley, for that matter."

When Master Bartholomew was the son of Mr. Ratcliff's brother, or of Mr. Ratcliff's sister, Gussy naturally had not the faintest idea.

"Figgins is an utiab ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "He ought to have the name of the chap is named Wot-cliff, not. However, I will ask him whether he is the new chap, and that will be all wight."
 The train stopped, and Arthur Augustus turned his eyesless scrutinisingly upon the passengers who alighted. They were mostly Wayland tradespeople, with a number of soldiers on leave from Abbotsford Camp; and there was only one boy in the whole number. He was a rather timid-looking lad in Etona, with a coat over his arm, and he blinked round him in a rather uncertain way through a pair of large spectacles.

"That is the chap, I suppose," murmured Arthur Augustus. "He is certainly the only schoolboy present. He does not look vevy ugly—I should hardly have taken him for a relation of Watty. He looks vevy Watty's relations are not all like him."

Arthur Augustus approached the uncertain-looking youth in his most graceful manner. The swell of St. Jim's was at his very best in showing polite attention to a shy new boy. More than one new fellow at St. Jim's, leaving school and entering the great school, had been comforted and cheered by a little polite kindness from the thoughtful Gussy.

He raised his straw hat gracefully as the youth in Etona blinked at him.
 "Good-affoon!" he said.
 "Good-goo-goo-goo," answered the young man, Etona unexpectedly.

"What?"
 "G-g-g-goo—"
 "Bai Jove! I am sorry, but I fail to comprehend your remark."
 "G-g-g-goo-afternoon!" gasped the stranger.

Arthur Augustus comprehended that the new boy was afflicted with a stutter;

Arthur Augustus's kind heart was interested at once.
 "You are the new chap?" he asked.
 "Yes."
 "I have come to the station to see you, Guss boy."

"You are vevy kik-kik-kik—"
 "Bai Jove!"
 "Kik-kik-kind."
 "Kik-kik-kind," answered Arthur Augustus. "I will allow me to introduce myself—I am D'Arcy of the Fourth. I understand that you are comin' into the Fourth Form!"

"Ye-o-ee."
 "Vevy good, May I inqush whether your name is Wot-cliff?"
 "Mum-mum-mum-mum—"
 "Bai!"

"M-m-m-my name is Bib-Bib-Duh-Babbage."
 "I am vevy pleased to meet you," said Arthur Augustus. "I suppose you did not expect to meet your uncle head?"

Master Babbage shook his head, with a surprised look.
 "Nunno!" he stammered.
 "Figgins was requested to meet you head, Guss boy; but he was detained by a vevy important affair, so I have come instead. I am goin' to take you to the school."

"Th-th-thank you!"
 "Not at all, Guss boy!"
 "My bu-bub-bub-bub—"
 "Bai Jove! Your what?"
 "My Bub-bub-box—"

"I will look aftah your box, Babbage. I presume it is labelled for Wylcombe. We are going by the local train. Fway come with me, it comes at five minutes to four, so there is plenty of time, though your twain came in late."

"Th-th-thank you!"
 Arthur Augustus led the way to the bridge over the line, to the local platform. Master Babbage accompanied him mockly, evidently very pleased to be met at the station and taken charge of.

The swell of St. Jim's was more expansively gracious than usual; the new boy's affliction in speech, and his shyness and uncertainty, appealed to his kind nature. He was prepared to take any amount of trouble for Master Babbage, and to land him at St. Jim's this side up, with care, so to speak.

The local afternoon train from Wayland Junction to Rylcombe was not extensively patronised. There were only two or three passengers waiting on the local platform when Arthur Augustus arrived there with his charge.

One of them was a rather tall, thin youth, in an overcoat and silk hat, who glanced at the two schoolboys as they came over the bridge. He had a thin, sharp face, a thin, sharp nose, and very sharp teeth that showed a narrow and greenish tint. He did not look god-natured; and a grin that was not at all good-natured came over his face as he heard Master Babbage speaking to D'Arcy. The new boy's stammer seemed to afford entertainment to him.

"Th-th-thank you, the r-r-right put-put-platform for Rylcombe!" Master Babbage was asking.
 "This is wight, Guss boy."
 "I dud-dud-dud—"
 "Oh!"

"I dud-dud-dud-don't want to make a mum-mum-mistake, you know," gasped Master Babbage.

"I assure you it is all wight. I know this station vevy well," answered Arthur Augustus reassuringly. "You wely on me, Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus uttered that ejaculation as a smigger came from the thin youth in the overcoat. Master Babbage cast a sidelong glance at the smigger, who had heard such smiggers before in connection with his stammer. Arthur

much like Mr. Ratcliff. "You're going to dig in our study, you know, in the New House. Best study in the cock-houses of the school, you know."

"Dats!"

"Dats! Take the stranger in, Figgy!" said Monty Lowther.

"Did you blue Ratty's—ahem!—I mean, our respected Housemaster's vast wealth on the gentle stranger at Wayland Gassy?"

"Babbago's twin came in wathah late, deah boy, and thero was no time, so we stopped at Mrs. Murphy's in Wylongbe. The whole sum has been wecklessly expended," said Arthur Augustus, with a smile.

"Good! If Babbago has any room left, there's ton in the study—it's nearly tea-time," remarked Figgins. "I suppose he ought to see Mr. Ratcliff first—"

"Ratty's out," said Redfern.

Arthur Augustus gave Redfern a wathing glance. In the presence of the Housemaster's nephew it was not in accordance with delicacy to allude to Mr. Ratcliff as Ratty.

"I mean, Mr. Ratcliff has gone out with Mr. Lathorn," he said. "They've been gone half an hour. Babbago can see him when he comes in."

"All serene! 'Nother ginger-pop, Babbago!" asked Figgins kindly.

"Trot out your very best, Mrs. Taggles, for this distinguished youth."

Master Babbago negotiated the ginger-pop with evident satisfaction. There was a lingering expression of surprise on his simple face, as if he had been far from expecting the kind attentions he was receiving.

"How do you get on with your uncle, kid?" asked Fatty Wynn, by way of cheery and agreeable conversation.

"Mum-mum-my uncle!" he repeated.

"Yes. How does he treat you?"

"Mum-mum-my uncle—very kikk-kik-kind," stammered Babbago. "I am very ful-ful-fond of him."

"Oh, my hat!" said Wynn.

How Mr. Ratcliff's nephew could be fond of his uncle was a mystery to David Llewellyn Wynn. It was possible, of course, that Mr. Ratcliff had some hidden good qualities. In that case, it was certain that they were remarkably well concealed.

However, nobody was inclined to "run down" the uncle to a nephew, and Mr. Ratcliff was not made a topic.

Arthur Augustus, having cried over his charge due to Figgins of the Fourth, departed for Study No. 6 with his chums; and Babbago was left in the hands of Figgins & Co.

As cricket was over, those cheery juniors were quite willing to bestow a little time on the Housemaster's nephew. And, as he was going to be their study-mate; they felt that it was up to them to be hospitable.

A considerable amount of the Co.'s pocket-money passed over the counter, and Figgins & Co. were all carrying parcels when they emerged from the school-shop with the new boy.

"This way to the New House," said Figgins.

Babbago blinked at him.

"Bab-bub-bub-but—" he began.

"What?"

"Oughtn't I to see-mum-mum-see the head-mum-mum-master?"

"Well, you can if you like," said Figgins.

"You see, Ratty—I—I—I mean, Mr. Ratcliff is Housemaster in the New House."

Babbago seemed a little perplexed, but he assented, and Figgins & Co. marched him into the New House. Chowie of the Fourth was standing on the steps, and he looked very curiously at the new boy.

"That the new kid?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Figgins curtly.

"Come on, Babbago!"

Figgins did not like Chowie of the Fourth, who was too smoky for his taste.

But Chowie interposed. He came up to the new junior with a very agreeable smile.

"Jolly glad to see you," he remarked.

"I'm glad you're coming into my Form. I'd like to have you in my study, too. My name's Chowie—"

"You are kikk-kik-kik—"

"What?" exclaimed Chowie.

"Kik-kik-kik—"

"Kick!" repeated Chowie, staring at him.

"Kick whom? What do you mean?"

"Kik-kik-kind," stammered Babbago.

"Very kik-kind. I am mum-mum-mum-mum obliged to you."

"Oh, don't mench!" gasped Chowie.

"I hope we shall be jolly good friends."

George Figgins gave a snort and led Babbago on into the House. Chowie's attempt to get on friendly terms with the Housemaster's nephew disgusted the honest Figgy. It had not even occurred to Figgy to "suck up" to the new boy because of that relationship; but it had occurred to the more cunning Chowie.

A Housemaster's nephew was likely to be a favoured person—at least, when the Housemaster was Mr. Ratcliff. He might be, as the sapient Chowie said to himself, worth knowing.

And Chowie ambled away to tell Clampo of the Shell about the new kid—

Leslie Clampo being one of his smoky pals.

"He's a corker!" Chowie told his chums. "Stutter like one of 'em, and has 'em like a kite. Not so ugly as Ratty, though. But it will pay to pull his leg, and get chummy terms with him, I think. He can stand his stutter."

"Quite!" assented Clampo. "Let him stutter all he wants, so long as he keeps us on the right side of 'Ratty.'"

"But he's a corker, and no mistake," said Chowie. "A real corker—quite the outside edge of the limit in corks!"

The "corker" had been coerced to Figgins's study by that time, and was cocooned in the armchair, and the Co. were busy with tea. Figgins & Co., without giving a thought to his possible influence with the Housemaster, were kindly hospitable; and the new junior seemed to be finding himself quite at home at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 7.

FLAKING!

"SWEET-LOOKING merchant!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners glanced in the direction to which their chum's gaze was turned.

The Terrible Three were sauntering down Wylongbe Lane in a cheery row. They were chatting of cricket, and the coming matches with Greyfriars and Rockwood, but they were keeping their eyes open. They wore, more or less, on the war-path.

Arthur Augustus had related his experience with the Grammarians, a fact which, with great indignation, and the Terrible Three had agreed that Gordon Gog and Wootton major ought to be boiled in oil. And as they had nothing special to do after tea, they strolled out of the gates with the intention of keeping an eye open for the two wicked Grammarians.

Not that they had any unfriendly intentions; if they met Gordon Gog they only meant to bump him a little and stuff his cap down his back, by way of showing that St. Jim's was top dog.

The Grammarians, however, did not come into sight; but near the village they came upon the merchant Monty Lowther strolling to and fro.

It was in a sarcastic vein that Monty described the merchant as "sweet-looking." The merchant, as a matter of fact, looked anything but sweet.

He was a fellow about their own age, rather tall and thin, and wore an overcoat with a silk hat—which looked a little scratched. His nose was sharp, and it was prominent; and it was made more than usually prominent by damages recently sustained. It was a little swollen, and it was very red, and it appeared to be rather sore.

If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been there he would have recognised the youth as his adversary of Wayland Station; but to the Terrible Three he was quite unknown, though Manners remarked that there seemed to be something familiar about his features.

The damaged youth was plainly in a temper, anything but sweet. He was scowling as he strode along, and his eyes glittered unpleasantly under his knitted brows.

An exhibition of bad temper on a public highway struck the chums of the Shell as absurd, and they smiled as they glanced at the merchant.

As he came nearer, the stranger glanced at them, and stopped as soon as he was near enough to speak.

"This road right for St. James' School?" he asked.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Keep right on," he answered.

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"Is it far?"
 "Less than a mile."
 The youth in the
 green coat grunted.
 "Couldn't send a
 trap or anything for
 me, of course?" he
 suggested. "He-r-r!"
 Then he looked at
 Tom Merry again,
 who was regarding
 him with some
 amusement. "You
 belong to the school?"
 "Yes. We're in the
 Shell. Going to St.
 Jim's!" continued
 Tom, feeling called
 upon to make some
 remark.

"I shouldn't ask
 you the way if I
 wasn't!" snapped the
 stranger.

"Oh!" said Tom.
 The captain of the
 Shell was strongly
 inclined to add to the
 damages already in-
 flicted upon this
 brusque young per-
 son's nose; but he re-
 frained. Tom had a
 sunny temper, and he
 could make allow-
 ances for a fellow
 whose nose looked as
 if it had had trouble
 with the hind hoof of
 a mule. Probably it
 caused its owner con-
 siderable trouble in
 convenience.

Monty Lowther
 chimed in.

"You're not a new
 fellow for St. Jim's,
 by any chance, I sup-
 pose?" he asked.

"Why shouldn't I
 be?"

"Your manners, my
 young friend, are
 not quite up to the standard we require
 at St. Jim's," answered the humorist of
 the Shell solemnly. "A little more
 polish is indispensable."
 "Oh, don't be a fool!"

"W-h-a-t!"

"I don't want any of your cheek!"
 said the stranger, with a glare at Monty
 Lowther. "If you belong to St. Jim's,
 as you say, it won't pay you to cheek
 me. I can tell you!"

"Look here, my nosy young friend,"
 said Lowther, "I don't know who you
 are, and I don't want to; but we rule
 like you in the quad at St. Jim's!
 Would you like me to begin here!"

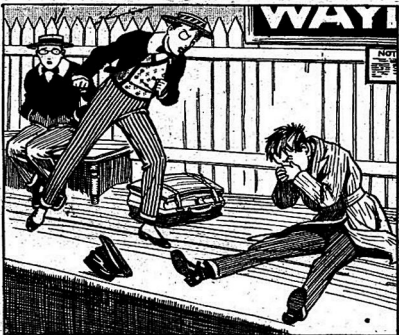
"Shut up, Monty, and come on!" said
 Tom Merry. "This isn't the row we're
 looking for."

"Well, the cheeky ass!" growled
 Lowther. "What does he mean by his
 silly chinwag, I'd like to know? He's the
 kind of fellow that's all the better for
 a dot on the nose. Somebody has seen
 the already."

"Peace, my nosy infant!" said Man-
 ners. "Let's get on. As for you, young
 person, take away your nose and your-
 self! You are a blot on the landscape,
 and not pretty to look at! Vanish!"

The nosy youth gave the three juniors
 a early stare, apparently not quite
 knowing what to make of them. His
 temper, already bad, was not improved
 by the remarks.

"If you belong to St. Jim's, one of
 you can carry my bag to the school," he
 said. "I've carried it far enough!"
 The Terrible Three blinked at him.



Bump! The offensive sniggerer sat down on the platform, and clasped his nose with both hands. It was oozing red. "Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Carry your bag!" repeated Tom Merry.

"Yes, and sharp!"
 "Wandering in his mind, I suppose,"
 said Monty Lowther, in wonder. "Does
 the brass badge think we are going to
 fag for him?"

"You're not going into the Sixth at
 St. Jim's, by any chance!" asked Man-
 ners, with deep sarcasm.

"I'm going into the Fourth," growled
 the nosy young gentleman, "and I say
 again that I don't want any cheek!"

"Cheek!" repeated Tom Merry.
 "What do you call it, then, for a Fourth
 Form kid—and a new kid at that—to ask
 Shell fellows to fag for him? Are you
 off your dot?"

"Where does the benighted person
 come from?" asked Monty Lowther, ad-
 dressing space. "In what obscure cor-
 ner of the universe was he reared?"

"Are you going to carry my bag?"
 Tom Merry laughed. This, from a
 new junior, seemed such brazen impu-
 dence that the captain of the Shell was
 rather amused than angry.

"Give it to me, then," said Lowther.
 Monty held out his hand for the bag.
 "What do you mean?" began Man-
 ners hotly. "Monty, you are—"

Monty Lowther closed one eye at his
 chums as he took the bag from the
 unpleasant stranger.

"Careful with it," said the latter.
 "I sha'n't get my box from the station
 to-night; I expect. Do you know?"
 "Probably to-morrow-morning, great
 chief!" answered Lowther humbly.

"Unless the railway directors are speci-
 ally informed that it is your box, and
 not the box of a common mortal. In
 that case, they may order a special car
 to be run to St. Jim's to deliver it."

"You silly ass! Get on with that
 bag!"

"Certainly!"

Monty Lowther got on with the bag.
 His way of getting on with it was to
 toss it in the air, and punt it as it came
 down. The bag flew along the dusty
 road and crashed.

There was a yell of wrath from the
 nosy youth.

"You silly idiot! What are you up
 to!" he roared.

"Getting on with your bag."

"You—you—you stop it!"

Monty Lowther followed up the bag,
 helping it onward with a tremendous
 kick. It was not, fortunately, a heavy
 bag, and Monty Lowther was quite a
 good footballer. Certainly it was rather
 heavy for use as a footer, but Lowther
 was putting a good deal of vim into his
 kicking.

The nosy youth stared at him in
 speechless rage for a moment or two
 as if he could hardly believe his eyes.
 Tom Merry and Manners burst into a
 roar of laughter.

For some reason, utterly inexplicable
 to the Terrible Three, this new fellow,
 whom they had never even heard of
 before so far as they knew, expected to
 be treated as a person of consequence by
 St. Jim's juniors. Why he should ex-

proof it was a deep mystery, but evidently he did. And Monty Lowther was kindly showing him how unformed his expectations were.

The bag went spinning along the road. Lowther following it up with powerful kick after kick, and Tom Merry and Manners shooting with laughter as they watched him.

The nosy youth, with a gasp of rage, rushed in pursuit.

"Go it, Monty! Ha, ha, ha!" Monty Lowther "went it" cheerfully. He had a good turn of speed, and though he had the bag to negotiate, he kept ahead of the panting, perspiring youth in the overcoat. That young person made efforts to overtake him to rescue the bag, but it was pretty clear that Lowther would not be overtaken till he chose.

"Stop, you fool!" panted the Explosive pursuer. "Stop! I'll report this to my uncle!"

Monty Lowther chuckled as he heard that. Who the nosy youth's uncle might be he did not know or care; but he was not alarmed by the unknown avuncular creature.

Crash! went the bag again, landing after a long kick, and after it went Monty Lowther, feet as a rabbit. After him panted the weedy youth in the overcoat, his face crimson with rage and exertion, and his damaged nose glowing red-hot under cover.

"Oh, my hat, be remembered." "I say, Manners, who can that queer merchant be?"

"Goodness knows!" grinned Manners. "He hasn't got much change out of us, anyway, whoever he is!" "I hope he isn't coming into the School House, if he's really a new chap for St. Jim," remarked Tom. "Fitzgibbon & Co. will be welcome to him in their show."

"What's he?" "He seems to think he can tag St. Jim's chaps," chuckled Tom. "Blasted if I know why. May be a relation of one of the members. My hat! If Blasty's rasher hadn't already come, I should think this was the chap."

"Looks as if he might be. But Ratty junior has come."

Monty Lowther had almost disappeared in the direction of St. Jim's, with the bag ahead; and the unhappy youth in the overcoat was still following after him.

"My as well follow on," said Manners. "No sign around here of the giddy Grammararians. I want to see that merchant's face when he recaptures his bag."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Merry and his chum followed on at a trot, rather curious to see what would happen when the nosy young gentleman came up with Monty Lowther. But the merchant of the Bell was evidently intending to carry his little joke as far as the school gates; and to judge by his gasping and grunting, the nosy young gentleman was likely to be in a state of collapse by that time.

CHAPTER 8.

A Mistake Somewhere!

WHAT BOAST!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gentleman came up with Monty Lowther more tightly into his eye, and gazed from the gates of St. Jim's along the dusty road glowing in the sunset. There was an expression of great astonishment upon the aristocratic features of the great Gussy.

Blake and Herries and Dig were in the old gateway. Study No. 6 were loafing there after tea, feeling entitled to loaf

a little after their exertions on the cricket field that afternoon.

Blake looked round lazily as Arthur Augustus ejaculated.

"Anything up, Gussy?" he asked. "Bal Jove!"

"What's the row?" "It is really very remarkable," said Arthur Augustus. "I really couldn't think that Lowther must be without all his wits, you know. Fancy kicking a bag along the wood like a football, you know!"

"What?" "Gussy's three chums joined him outside the gateway, and they looked along the road at the peculiar scene upon which Arthur Augustus's remarks were made."

A locked bag was whizzing and bumping along the road, propelled by the foot of Monty Lowther. A youth in an overcoat could be seen running, and behind him two further figures were visible.

"Must be off his chump, I should think," remarked Herries, in wonder. "I should say that bag was damaged."

"Yaas, wathah!" "Look out!" exclaimed Blake.

Lowther was quite near now, and a final kick landed the bag right at the gateway. The juniors dodged in time. Arthur Augustus, unfortunately, dodged a moment too late. There was a loud yell from the seat of St. Jim's as the whizzing bag smote him on the knees, and he sat down in the road.

"Bal Jove! Yawwooh! Oh!" "Well stopped!" shouted Monty Lowther in great admiration.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Bal Jove! You-ow!" "Thanks no, old top!" said Lowther, coming up panting. "So good of you to stop the footer for me!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up. "You utter ass!" he gasped. "Look at my bag! I am fearfully dastly! I regard you as a dangerous maniac, Lowther!"

And the swell of the Fourth proceeded to dust down his precious "bags" in great wrath and indignation.

"What's the name of this game?" inquired Blake. "What are you kicking a bag about the road for, Lowther, you prize ass!"

"I'm fagging," explained Lowther. "Fagging?"

"Yes! See that chap?" Lowther jerked his head towards the toiling figure in the overcoat, that was now drawing nearer. "That's a new kid for St. Jim's, and he says he's going into the Fourth, and he ordered me to bring his bag to the school."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Yes; so I obeyed orders, like a good little boy," said Lowther. "I've brought his bag for him. He doesn't seem pleased, but I gather that he is rather a bad-tempered chap, anyhow."

"Is he potty?" asked Blake, in wonder. "A new kid ordering an old hand to carry his bag! He's not even a senior. Must be barmy in the roof!"

"I'd have supposed up the road with him," grunted Herries. "Yaas, wathah! Great Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus suddenly, quite ceasing to dust his dusty garments. "It's that nosy chap!"

The swell of St. Jim's fixed his eyes in astonishment upon the nosy young gentleman as he came up. He recognized the impertinent snigger of Wayland Station.

"What chap?" asked Blake. "The fearful boundish I punched at Wayland, you know. I mentioned to you that I had occasion to punch the nose of

an impertinent boundish who was wude to Wally's nephew."

Blake whistled. "You didn't tell us it was a new chap for here," he said.

"I was not aware of it, Blake. Any you rush that that impertinent, sniggering boundish is comin' to the school, Lowther!"

"Well, he says so," answered Monty; "and he certainly wanted his bag brought here."

"Bal Jove! I really do not know what St. Jim's is comin' to. If that howrid boundish is put into the School House, I have a great mind to go to the Head and protest. He actually sniggered at young Babbage, you know, because the poor chap was stummin'! and he even sniggered at me when I warned him that he was asking for trouble."

"Slay him!" said Blake. "Slay him dead, he has dared to snigger at Gussy! Let the hungry stones be strewn with his bones!"

"Weally, Blake—" "Boil him in oil!" said Digby.

"We're not going to have new kids sniggering at Gussy. We can all do that ourselves!"

"Weally, Dig—" "The nosy young gentleman came pinking up, and he leaped on the stone pillar at the gateway and gasped for breath. Tom Merry and Manners came up at a gentle trot. Monty Lowther greeted his nosy acquaintance with a cheery smile.

"There's your bag, sir!" he said. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let it be carried up to the house, Mr. Parker!" asked Lowther. "You fool! My name's not Parker!" gasped the new junior.

Lowther raised his eyebrows. "You are not Nosy Parker?" he inquired. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bal Jove! To judge by appearance, you should be calling yourself a Nosy Parkah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

The new junior stared at him. "You!" he exclaimed. "You! So you belong to the school, do you!"

"Yaas, wathah!" answered Arthur Augustus. "And I am sorry to see that you appear to do so, too. You recognize me, I see!"

"Hang you!" "Bal Jove!" Arthur Augustus came a little nearer to the nosy young gentleman. "Parkah; or whatever your name is, pray allow me to give you a warm'n'. You appear to be a wathah cheeky and ill-natured young person, and—"

"Go it, Gussy!" said the Terrible Three admiringly.

"And you appear to have been very badly brought up, young Parkah," continued Arthur Augustus, unheeding. "You allowed yourself the liberty of sniggering at young Babbage because that chap is afflicted with a stummin'! I desire you to understand that that kind of wudness and bad taste will not do for St. Jim's. I shall keep an eye on you!"

"My name is not Parker!" shrieked the new junior.

"I do not care a wap wathah your name is Parkah or not; but if I choose to address you as Parkah, I shall address you as Parkah. And I wudlike you to wery well remember that you will land yourself in trouble if you persist in wudness and bad manners at this school. I shall keep an eye on you, and if you make yourself obnoxious to young Babbage I shall make

it a point to give you a foul thrashing!"

"Bravo, Gussy!" "Let's be rippin', with his sevenbally summer!" exclaimed Blake enthusiastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Wendly, Blake—"

"You haven't told me whether you want me to take your bag up to the House, young Parker," remarked Lowther. "I shall take it in the same way. I'm not tired. Don't mind me."

"We'll all lend a hand!" grinned Digby.

"Or a foot. Say the word, Nosey Parker!"

"Yaa, wathah!"

The noisy young gentleman gave the merry jang a bitter look, and picked up his bag. Apparently he did not want any more fagging service. The bag was looking damaged enough already.

"I shall report this to my uncle," he said, between his teeth. "You can cackle now, hang you, but you'll cackle a bit differently then!"

"I really do not see what your uncle has to do with it, young Parkah. I presume that your relative has not become Head of St. Jim's," remarked Arthur Augustus sarcastically.

"My uncle is a Housemaster here, and you can rely on me to see that you're made to sit up!" said the new junior scornfully.

"A—a Housemaster!" exclaimed Blake in astonishment. "Your uncle a Housemaster here?"

"Yes!" grunted the new comer.

"He can't be a relation of Ratcliff's!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Impossible! And—and I suppose Ratty hasn't two nephews coming here?"

"That is weally vewy imporb, Tom Merwry. Probably this unpleasant boundah is tryin' to pull our leg."

"Are you a nephew of Mr. Ratcliff's?" asked Manners, staring at the sour face of the new junior blankly.

"Mr. Ratcliff is my uncle, certainly," was the sneering reply. "Perhaps you're sorry now you've checked me, you cads!"

"Not at all. But I don't quite catch on," said Tom Merry. "We understood that one nephew of Mr. Ratcliff was coming, and he's come. Is Babbage your cousin, then?"

"Impos. Even that howwid boundah would not sniggh at his own cousin for stamashin'. Besides, they did not know one another at the station."

"Babbage?" repeated the cheery nephew of Mr. Ratcliff. "I've no relation of that name. What are you driving at?"

Tom Merry looked blankly at him.

"No relation named Babbage!" he repeated.

"No."

"But—but Babbage is Mr. Ratcliff's nephew."

"My uncle has no nephew named Babbage. I'm his only nephew that I know of. I'm my name's Bartholomew Ratcliff!" growled the noisy youth, surprised in his turn. "What are you getting at? If any fellow's come here calling himself Mr. Ratcliff's nephew, he's an impostor!"

"Bai Jove!"

As a momentary silence fell upon Tom Merry & Co., Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was a study. Master Bartholomew Ratcliff stared from face to face sourly, evidently not understanding the state of affairs. Then he turned in at the gates, and strode away with his bag.

"Gussig!" begged Tom Merry.

"Gussig! Wha-e-at have you done!" howled Blake.

"I—I— Weally, you fellows, I—I—"

"Who's the chap you dug up somewhere, and brought to the school?" asked Blake. "Who is he? What is he? Which is he?"

Arthur Augustus blinked at them.

"I—I— Weally, I—I met him at Wayland Junction."

"Did he say he was Mr. Ratcliff's nephew?" shrieked Lowther.

"There was no need for him to say so, Lowther."

"Didn't you ask him?"

"I asked him if he was the new chap, and he said he was. Naturally, I concluded that he was Watty's nephew from that. I did not know Watty's nephew's name. Figgins did not tell me."

"Did he come by the three-thirty?"

"The train came in late, you fellows!" Arthur Augustus pouted. "Bai Jove! That Nosey Parkah chap was on the local platform at the time, I wemembah now!

We found him there aftah woomin' the bwidg. Pevwaws the train wam't late, aftah all. Pevwaws there was another train at three-forty-five, and that was the one I met."

"Perhaps!" gasped Blake. "Oh, my only hat!"

"But—but weally—"

"It's some stray kid, and Gussy has kidnapped him," yelled Lowther. "He may be for St. Jim's, and he may not. Layth, layth, for the Grammar School, for all we know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But surely the chap wouldn't be such an ass—"

"Why not? Gussy told him he'd come to meet him, I suppose, and, naturally, the woidd think he came from his school."

"Oh, crum!"

"Oh, deah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"I—I—I wemembah now that Gordon Gay mentioned that a new kid was coming to the Gwammah School this afternoon. I'd for the Grammar School."

"Phew!"

"And Gussy's begged him!" yelled Manners. "Gussy's begged a giddy Grammarian, and brought him here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It is not a laughin' matter, you fellows! Weally, it is a vewy unfortunate mistake—vewy disconcertin' erwaul indeed. I fail to see any weason at all for this upwoawis newwiment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

Tom Merry & Co. clung to the gate, and shrieked. Arthur Augustus regarded them in surprise and wrath. He could not see anything at all to laugh at. But the other fellows evidently could.

CHAPTER 9.

A Surprise Packet for Mr. Ratcliff.

REDFERN looked into Figgins' study in the Fourth Form passage in the New House. Tea had been over in the cosy apartment, and Babbage was looking very cheery and comfortable under the influence of the kind hospitality of Figgins & Co. Babbage had not talked much—there were impediments in the way of conversation in his case—but he had done full justice to the tea, and was very pleasant and cheerful. Figgins & Co. rather liked the quiet, inoffensive youth, and they were feeling very thankful indeed that Ratty's nephew had turned out so harmless.

"Ratty—ahem!—is Mr. Ratcliff in yet, Reddy?" asked Figgins.

"That's what I've come to tell you," answered Redfern. "He's been in some

time, I believe; and he's just asked me if Figgins had come in with his nephew yet."

"Oh!" said Figgins. "Right-ho! Thanks for coming. I suppose he can't mind as having given Babbage his tea!"

"Mr. Ratcliff seems to think you fellows went to the station for him," said Redfern, with a grin.

"Ahem! We were going, only Gussy took it on," explained Figgins. "Gussy managed it all right. We were rather busy with cricket this afternoon, you know. I don't see why Rat—Mr. Ratcliff should mind."

He tapped the new boy on the shoulder.

"Come along, Babbage!"

"Are we g'g-g'g-g'g?"

"En!"

"G'g-g'g-going to see the Head?"

"Nunno! the Housemaster. It's all right. Come on!"

"I'm kik-kik-kik-coming," said Babbage. "I thought I should have to sus-see the Head."

"That's all right. You've got to see your uncle first."

"Babbage!"

"Mum-mum-my uncle!"

"Yes. He's downstairs."

"Bub-bub-but I dud-dud-dud't understand. Is my uncle here?"

"Of course he is, fathead! Come on!"

Babbage, looking a little bewildered, accompanied Figgins & Co. from the study. The three old hands and the new boy proceeded down the stairs, and Figgins tapped discreetly at the door of Mr. Ratcliff's study.

"Come in!" came Mr. Ratcliff's somewhat acid voice.

Figgins opened the door, and Babbage was ushered into the room.

Mr. Ratcliff glanced at the juniors, not unkindly. He seemed rather surprised at the sight of Babbage.

"Ah, you have returned, Figgins!"

"Yes, sir," murmured Figgins.

"How do you brought my nephew to the school?"

Figgins stared, as well he might. As Babbage was standing within a few feet of the New House master, the question seemed rather superfluous.

"Yes, sir!" stammered Figgins. "He—he's here, sir!"

"Well, where is he? Why have you not brought him to me?"

Figgins could only gasp.

Kerr and Patty Wynn wondered whether this was a dream.

Unless they were dreaming, the only explanation seemed to be that Mr. Ratcliff had taken leave of his senses.

"What is this boy?" continued Mr. Ratcliff, with a gesture towards Babbage, who was blinking at him in perplexity.

"This—this boy, sir!" stammered Figgins.

"Yes. Who is he?"

"He's—he's—he's B-B-Babbage, sir!"

George Figgins seemed to have caught the new boy's little difficulty with speech, so awkward was he.

"Babbage?" repeated Mr. Ratcliff.

"I did not know that a boy of that name was expected."

"Wha-at?"

"He cannot be intended for this House, or Dr. Holmes would certainly have mentioned him to me," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Doubtless he is intended for Mr. Hilton's House."

"En!"

"But where is my nephew?"

Figgins gazed helplessly at his charges. So far as he knew, Mr. Ratcliff's nephew was standing within a few feet of Mr. Ratcliff's sharp nose. This, at least, was the person he had received from Arthur

Augustus D'Arcy as Mr. Ratcliff's nephew.

Mr. Ratcliff seemed surprised, as well as the juniors. He began to knit his brows.

"What does this mean, Figgins?" he snapped. "Where is my nephew Bartholomew?"

"He—he—ho is here, sir."

"Where?"

"Here!" spluttered Figgins helplessly.

"Why do you not bring him to my study, then?"

"B-b-but I've brought him!" gasped the astounded Figgins. "Here ho is, sir!"

He tapped Babbage on the shoulder. Mr. Ratcliff stared at him, and his eyes began to water.

"Is this a foolish joke, Figgins?" he asked, in a voice like a knife.

"J-j-joke!" babbled Figgins.

"Yes. This person, you say, is named Babbage?"

"Yes, sir, your—your nephew, sir!"

"What do you mean?" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "My nephew is named Bartholomew Ratcliff."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Figgins, for the last time, where is my nephew, whom I instructed you to meet at Wayland Junction?"

"Is—is—isn't this your nephew, sir?" stammered Kerr.

"This is not my nephew. What do you mean? Have you taken leave of your senses?" thundered the House-master. "I do not know who this boy is. I have never seen him before."

"G-g-great Scott!"

"Surely it is not possible that this boy has passed himself off on you as my nephew?"

"We—we thought—"

"Bless my soul! If the boy has told you he is my nephew he is an impostor—a rascally impostor!" exclaimed the House-master. "As you did not know Bartholomew by sight, I can excuse you for being deceived, if this boy has actually stated— But it is extraordinary! Was not my nephew at the station, then?"

"We—we—"

"You met the train, I presume?"

"We—we— The facts evidently had to come out now. "We—" Figgins gasped. "D'Arcy, sir—D'Arcy—"

"What has D'Arcy to do with it?"

"D'Arcy offered to go and meet your nephew, sir, and bring him to the school as—we were wanted, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff frowned darkly.

"Figgins! After my instructions to you, you omitted to go to Wayland Junction and meet my nephew!"

"We—we thought D'Arcy would do just as well, sir," stammered Fatty Wynn. "He—his was quite keen on it, sir."

"Nonsense! However, if D'Arcy met this boy, and this boy informed him that he was my nephew— But it is impossible! This is a trick of some kind! Boy—Mr. Ratcliff thundered at the startled and terrified Babbage—who asked—"

"I—I—I'm Bub-Bub-Bub-Bub—"

"What!"

"Bub-Bub-Babbage, sir."

"He—he stutters a little, sir," stammered Figgins. "Not his fault, sir."

"Silence! I will deal with you presently, Figgins. Boy—Babbage, if that is his name, did you inform the junior who met you that you were my nephew?"

"N-n-n-nunno!" gasped the unfortunate Babbage. "I dud-dud-did! I—I-I never dud-dud-did! I—I-I don't understand. I—I—I'm Babbage!"

"I know you are Babbage!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "I desire to know more of you. If you balked yourself off on D'Arcy as my nephew, you are an impostor! I doubt if you are a new boy for this school at all. Probably your motive is robbery—"

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Figgins.

"Oy!" gasped Babbage. "I-I-I suspect, I—Mum-mum-my name is known to the headmaster, sir. Dr. Monk—"

"What!"

"Dr. M-M-Monk expects me, sir!"

"Dr. Monk!" ejaculated Mr. Ratcliff. "The headmaster of this school is Dr. Holmes! What do you mean? You have mentioned the name of the headmaster of a neighboring school—Rycombe Grammar School—"

Babbage jumped, while Figgins & Co. stood petrified. It dawned upon them that a dreadful mistake had been made by the incomparable Gussy.

"Rycombe Grammar School—Rycombe Grammar School!" stammered Babbage. "Isn't this the Gug-Gug-Grammar School?"

"What!"

"I—I-I thought this was the Gug-Gug-Grammar School!" spluttered Babbage, in bewilderment. "I—I-I'm gig-gig-going to the Gug-Gug-Grammar School! Dr. M-Monk expects me! Oh d-d-d-dear! That slow Dud-Dud-D'Arcy asked me if I was the slow dud-fud-fellow, so I supposed that he belonged to the school—So—I—I— Oh d-d-d-dear! Where am I!"

"You are at St. James' School!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "Bless my soul! That utterly stupid boy D'Arcy has brought you here by mistake! You must be as incredibly stupid as D'Arcy to fall into such an error! If you belonged to this school I should care you!"

"Oh, d-d-dear!" gasped Babbage.

"Figgins!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Where is my nephew?"

"I—I—I don't know, sir!" gasped Figgins. "I—I-I thought this chap was your nephew, sir. D'Arcy handed him to us. He thought so. Oh, my hat!"

"Then my nephew has not arrived here!" exclaimed Mr. Ratcliff. "This absurd mistake arises, Figgins, from your neglecting the duty I assigned to you. That boy must go to the Grammar School at once. Boy—fool, leave this room!"

The unfortunate Babbage limped to the door. Probably, after a sight of Mr. Ratcliff, he was glad to find that this was not his school, after all.

"What is my nephew's name?" thundered Mr. Ratcliff. "Where—where— Ah! What is that?"

"That" was a voice, audible in the passage as Babbage opened the study door.

"Which is Mr. Ratcliff's study, please?"

"That is my nephew's voice!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "He has arrived, it appears."

"That's it!" replied a junior voice in the corridor.

A lean youth in an overcoat, with a bag in his hand, appeared in the study doorway. Figgins & Co. blinked at him. If this was the genuine Ratty junior, they did not like his looks.

"Come in, Bartholomew!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "I am glad you have arrived safely, after all. What—what is the matter with your nose, Bartholomew?"

Figgins & Co. exchanged a quick glance, & slipped quietly from the study while the uncle was greeting the nephew. They hoped to escape Mr. Ratcliff's eye, and his memory. They heard the voice of the cheery Bartholomew as they glided away.

"I've been ill-used by a boy belonging to this school, uncle. Look at my nose!"

"Nice boy!" murmured Figgins, in the passage. "Smoking already, before he's fairly set foot in the place! Babbage! Where are you, Babbage, you babbling image, you babbling burbling Babbage, you babbling babbler? What do you mean by taking us in and pulling our leg?"

"I dud-dud-did! I—I-I want to go to my school!" cried Babbage dolefully.

"I dud-dud-didn't want to come here! I've got to get to the Gug-Gug-Grammar School! I shall be late! Oh d-d-dear! Where's the Grammar School?"

Figgins took the hapless youth by the arm and led him out of the New House. It was not much use being angry with Babbage; he really was in a fix. And certainly it was high time that the misguided youth started for the Grammar School.

CHAPTER 10.
Very Ratty!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"Heally, you fellow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I really consider—"

Tom Merry & Co. roared. They simply could not help it. The idea of Arthur Augustus going forth to meet Mr. Ratcliff's nephew, bagging the wrong person, and punishing the nose—by mistake—of the fellow he had really gone to meet, was too much for them. They almost wept.

"I was really a most unfortunate crows!" said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "I do not see any reason for all this movement. That chap Babbage seems to be a feeble ass—"

"He wasn't the only ass there!" gasped Blake.

"Nor the bigger one of the two!" chuckled Lovthrope.

"Wate!"

"Hallo! Here's the merry Babbage himself!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Figg, old man, you're got the wrong pig by the ear—"

Figgins & Co. came down to the gates with the hapless Babbage. That youth was blinking in quite a dazed way, as if he did not quite know whether he was on his head or his heels. The happenings of the afternoon had quite bewildered him.

"We've found that out!" groaned Figgins. "I believe there's going to be an awful row. You idiot, Gussy—"

"You will see," hooted Fatty Wynn.

"Hui Goo! I—"

"What did you bring this image here for, you duffer?" demanded Kerr. "You handed him to us as Ratty's nephew!"

"I really thought he was Watty's nephew, and he didn't say he wasn't—He ought to have said he wasn't—"

"I don't suppose he'd ever heard of Ratty," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Still, he really might have said he wasn't—"

"I want to go to the Grammar Sch-Sch-School!" stammered Babbage. "I dud-dud-didn't belong to this school at all! It's a nice mistake! I want to gig-gig-gig-gig-go!"

"Well, you're going, old infant!" said Figgins. "Tain't your fault, and I won't punch your nose, though goodness knows I feel inclined to punch somebody's nose! We'll take you to the Grammar School, if you hurry up. If you go alone I dare say you'll get in the hospital, or join the Army, or something! You're such a sensible chap, and know your way about so well—"

"Haro you seen young Ratty!" asked Manners.

Figgins sneaked.
"Yes; he's showing his nose to his uncle now. Somebody's given him a prize case!"

"Yaas, wathah! I am not at all sorry to see young Watty a prize case!"

"Oh, it was you, was it? Trust you to get your foot in it in every possible way!" roared Kerr.

"Weally, Kerr—"
"We're all in young Ratty's black books," grumbled Monty Lowther. "His lordship is displeased with us Alas!"

"I regard the fellow with uttiah contempt—"

"We left young Ratty sneaking to old Ratty!" said Figgins. "They're a pair. Hallo, young Jameson! What do you want?"

Jameson of the Third came up grinning.

"Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, D'Arcy wanted in Ratty's study?" he asked. "I've been looking for you. I say, Ratty's got a cane in his hand!"

With that cheerful information Jameson walked off, still grinning.

Figgins rubbed his hands.

"I—I thought he might let it pass!" he murmured. "But—but—well, we're for it! Babbage, you'll have to go on flogging on your own—"

"We'll see this chap along to the Grammar School," said Tom Merry good-naturedly.

"Good man! Come on!" said Figgins. And the New House Co. turned back with glum looks.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed them rather slowly. The Terrible Three walked Master Babbage out of gates, to see the hapless youth safely landed at the Grammar School before he came to further mishaps.

Mr. Hatchiff was standing, came by hand, when the four juniors entered his study. Master Bartholomew was rubbing his nose.

The noisy young gentlemen grinned

at Figgins & Co. and Arthur Augustus—a decidedly unpleasant grin.

The likeness between uncle and nephew—Ratty senior and Ratty junior—was quite striking now that they were seen together; and it was pretty clear that in many of their charming relatives resembled one another.

Ratty junior was apparently looking forward to seeing a licking inflicted. Ratty senior was looking forward to inflicting it.

Master Bartholomew raised a thin forefinger to point to the lofty face of Arthur Augustus.

"That is the boy who assaulted me, uncle!"

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"You have attacked, assaulted, and injured my nephew—"

"I was not awah, Mr. Watchiff, that this young person was your nephew," said Arthur Augustus with quiet dignity.

And I did not assault him! I regarded it as my duty to administer chastisement, and I did so. I am perfectly prepared to explain the matter to my House-mastah, Mr. Wailton, or to the Head!"

"I shall cane you, D'Arcy—"

"You are not my House-mastah, sir!"

"Boy! Hold out your hand!" thundered Mr. Hatchiff.

"I regret to say, sir, that I consider it my duty to disregard your order!" said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am unamenable to my own House-mastah! I wish you good-evening," Mr. Watchiff!"

With that the swell of St. Jim's walked out of the study.

Mr. Hatchiff made a stride as if to follow him, but he stopped. Arthur Augustus was acting within his rights; he did not come within the New House master's jurisdiction. But there were other victims at hand. Mr. Hatchiff stopped, and turned to Figgins & Co.

"All this has been caused, Figgins, by your neglect of my instructions," he said. "My nephew has been assaulted—"

His bag has been kicked about the road, apparently by a New House boy. That matter I shall inquire into. At present I shall deal with you. Hold out your hand, Figgins!"

Figgins obeyed without a word. He went through the following inflictions stoically. There was no help for it. Master Bartholomew looked on, smiling cheerfully. Figgins & Co., so far, had given him no cause of offence; but he seemed to find something entertaining in their punishment.

Kerr went through it next, and then Fatty Wynn. Mr. Hatchiff was breathing hard when he had finished. He was not an athlete; but he had put a good deal of energy into that licking.

He pointed to the door with his cane. "You may go!" he snapped. Figgins & Co. went. They went down the corridor with their hands under their arms, squeezing them hard. Their feelings were too deep for words.

Tom Merry & Co. came in just in time for locking-up, and looked in at Figgins' study in the New House. They found three juniors there with dismal faces, rubbing their hands.

"Had it bad?" asked Tom.

"Awful!"

"Poor old chaps! We've landed Babbage at the Grammar School—"

"Bother Babbage!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Wow!"

It was some time before Figgins & Co. recovered; but they recovered at last. And in the interval their remarks were not loud, but very deep, on the subject of Ratty Senior and Ratty Junior!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"THE SNEAK OF ST. JIM'S!"—by Martin Chford.)

THE STATION CAB. By Robert Donald Ogilvy.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! I didn't know vehicles were allowed inside the gates!"

Bob Cherry's remark naturally drew the eyes of the Famous Five towards the gates. Through them, at a very leisurely pace, came the station cab and cab which are usually to be found outside Friar-side Station.

"Nobody seems to be driving it, either," remarked Harry Wharton, as the cab steadily approached. "How's that, I wonder?"
"The old driver died of old age, and fallen off a roof," suggested Johnny Bull indignantly. "It was a rascal when I came, and he's aged forty years since."
"Then you've been here forty years,"

Johnny" grinned Bob. "Ain't it time you were moved up into the Upper Fourth?"

"Shurrup! Here comes the jolly old cab!"

"Hurrh!"

The vehicle came to an abrupt stop in the quad, pretty near by Harry Wharton & Co. In fact, it was the sight of the Famous Five obstructing its path that had put it into the driver's head to halt.

Several of the fellows near approached curiously.

"Hobbers, an' g'wah have we here, entelery?" demanded Micky Desmond, mirroring the intruder disparagingly. "Pshaw ever is it?"

"A cab, I think," remarked Nargat.
"And the party in front of it is a horse!" Squid interposed so lustily.
The proletarian quadruped thus unlooked,

looked round at the fellows in a way which it possibly thought was beamingly affable. It was the usual type of station horse—scruffy body and legs, and a big face like a floor-bag.

"Hallo! Has this thing run away?" demanded Blinzer, coming up with Stott.

"It didn't run, that's certain," said Warton, with a laugh. "Not 'it' was evidently strayed."

"There's nobody inside, anyway," remarked Stott, peering through the window.

Quite a crowd had gathered round the cab now, and the old horse began about the most ridiculous manner. He was evidently under the delusion that he was the object of our admiration. In case he reads

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his chronicle, I can distinctly assure him that the man's name is—

"Cave!" cried Bob suddenly. "Here comes Quechly!"

"And here's Frouty!" warned a voice from the other side of the road. "Get out of the way!"

Mr. Quech and Mr. Frout approached from opposite directions. Both had been attracted by the unusual sight of a cab skidding on the road. Frout's car, however, was naturally the intention of both to upbraid the caddy for his audacity.

"Skinner and Stott suddenly put their heads together, and began chuckling spasmodically.

"Wherefore those sunny smiles, Skinny?" asked Bob.

"Skinner's sunny smiles changed to sunless scowls.

"Mind your own blincy, Cherry! Go ahead, Stott!"

William Stott, seeming to have much difficulty in keeping a straight face, allowed his way through the crowd.

Skinner also broke away, but in a different direction. For Skinner went to meet Quechly, and Stott was bound for Frouty.

"Oh, Mr. Quech!" began Skinner, with a super-serious face.

"Oh, Skinner! What is that cab doing in the quadrangle?" demanded our Form-master.

"Mr. Frout has driven it in, sir!"

"-Mr. Frout?"

"I—I think he must be—er—wandering in his mind a little," said the humorist unhelpfully. "He actually thinks you drove it in, and he keeps shouting what you mean by it! I'm sure something's wrong with him, sir."

Mr. Quech looked hard at Skinner; but without more ado, he swept towards the station cab.

Meanwhile, Stott had approached the Fifth Form master in the manner, you know.

"If you please, Mr. Frout," he began anxiously, "will you come and see to Mr. Quech?"

"I'm on my way to give that impudent caddy a dressing-down!" said Mr. Frout, with asperity. "What does Mr. Quech want with me?"

"It's Mr. Quech who's driven the cab into the quad, sir," stammered Stott. "I'm afraid he must be a trifle insane, Mr. Frout. It seems to think that you brought it in, sir, and that you're all kinds of names!"

"-It?" exclaimed Mr. Frout, turning very red. "I brought it in?"

"Yes, sir," said Stott meekly.

"Does the name surprise you, Mr. Quech? Are you making no mistake, boy?"

"You'd better see for yourself, sir."

"Most certainly shall! Goodness gracious!"

The respective natures of Messrs Frout and Quech have little in common, and there are many points on which they disagree. Each one is quite prepared to believe almost anything of the other.

They reached the cab almost simultaneously. They were, of course, on opposite sides of the vehicle, the absence of a caddy naturally suggested to both that someone else had driven the horse in the cab.

Mr. Quech opened the door on his side, and Mr. Frout opened the door on his.

"-Mr. Quech?"

"I wish to know, Mr. Frout, why you have been so absurd as to drive this vehicle into the quadrangle?"

Mr. Frout glared. Stott's story was obviously true.

"You know well enough, Quech, that you yourself drove this cab!"

"-What? How dare you, Frout!"

The fellows around were nearly splitting themselves with laughter.

"-It is the most foolish thing," exclaimed Mr. Frout. "You say you realize the dignity that your position as a Master here requires!"

"-It is the most foolish thing," exclaimed Mr. Frout.

"-You are not accountable for your actions, sir, or you would not take up this attitude of the body out at last."

"I'll not bark up with you!"

Mr. Frout simply glowered through the window.

"-You are not accountable for your actions, sir, or you would not take up this attitude of the body out at last."

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is and half out of the cab. "I will have you punished for that! My goodness!"

Though the motion was anything but swift, Mr. Mobbs dared not trust his rheumatically limber articulation.

They were well past the school by now, and moving merrily along the country road, with hedgers in full spring blossom that Mr. Mobbs could not resist.

The cab came to an abrupt head in the road, and when they had swung round it Bob drew the reins suddenly.

Mr. Mobbs had not expected this sudden stoppage, and the consequence was that he again found himself in an irrelevant posture on the roadway.

He bounced up furiously, and, approaching the caddy, waved his hat wildly.

Bob got leisurely down from the box, and again did something that was utterly unexpected by Mr. Mobbs.

He placed a big hand over the Higbelleff master's eyes, and swiftly snatching the weather-bat from his own hand, jammed it down on the head of Mr. Mobbs.

It was a hat that for the Higbelleff master's rather small and shiny head, and came right down and fixed tightly over his eyes—completely obstructing his vision.

This was the one thing that Bob wanted, for Mr. Mobbs had had many and varied experiences of the Tynnos Five of Liverpool, and he was not likely to be taken in.

Of course, it was just as essential that he should not see that the hoggis caddy was still in Etoha; though this would scarcely be so important as Mr. Mobbs' being completely hidden inside the hoggis overcoat.

Bob pinned the master's elbows to his sides, and jammed him against the side of the cab. This was easily effected, as Mr. Mobbs was a small and weedy man, and Bob was a strong and muscular youth.

Thus the Higbelleff master was perfectly helpless, though he kicked out violently. He calmly evaded the latter thrusts, however, by keeping his body at arm's length from Mr. Mobbs.

"This state of things lasted but a short time.

Suddenly Bob, who had been listening intently all the time, heard ponderous steps, and he was then struck out of his reverie, approaching round the bend. He had not needed to listen intently to hear that.

Bob picked up the master as soon as if he and were huddled back to back to the space between the box and the footboard.

As Mr. Mobbs struggled to rise—in this "cross space"—was no easy matter, for he was rather heavily and respectably dressed himself of the greatcoat and flung it over Mr. Mobbs.

Then he took a flying leap over the ledge.

He began to be just in time. The old caddy appeared round the bend, red as a beetroot and puffing like a furnace.

His top-hat had toppled off further down the road, but he was too concerned about the loss of his cab to bother about such a trifle.

It gave a roar of satisfaction and rage combined as he saw his treasured cab just in front.

Mr. Mobbs had scrambled up and knocked his hat from his eyes, but not from his head.

And as the caddy came up with him he was just shaking off the greatcoat in a manner which suggested at once, to the caddy, that he had been himself of that garment.

"Villain! Rogue! Thief!" bawled the caddy. "I've caught you, ha!"

Mr. Mobbs simply glared at him. He made no sign that he was the man who had driven the cab and jammed the hat over his eyes, using him so outrageously. The absence of hat on the part of the caddy practically proved that he was not.

Poor Mobbs could do nothing but stammer and stutter.

And now, you, old robber," said the caddy, "I'll have my cap in a grip of iron, 'fore comin' erlong with me to the police-station; You'll steal no more cabs for a long time, I bet."

III. ADMAN! Scoundrel! Imbecile! Ruffian!

Mr. Mobbs looked out these words as a trap for the

his brain was in a whirl. That a man should take him as a fare, refuse to pull up at the destination, then attack him and jam his hat over his eyes, and then, second the Ham! But on the top of all that to accuse him of trying to steal the cab was positively incredible!

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:

THE MAGNET. THE BOY'S FRIEND. THE GEM. THE PENNY POPULAR. CRICKETS. Every Monday. Every Monday. Every Wed. Every Friday. Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

For Next Wednesday:

"THE SNEAK OF ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford.

How do you like Ratty's nephew? Nice, pleasant sort of person, isn't he? In next week's magnificent, long complete story of school-life Bartholomew Ratcliff continues to make himself thoroughly unpopular. Taking refuge in the fact that his uncle is a House-master, he becomes a tale-bearer and an informer, and the long-suffering Figgins & Co., though temporarily baffled by the fact that they can't only up against Ratty senior but against Ratty senior as well, determine to make it warm for the detestable worm who earns the reputation of being

"THE SNEAK OF ST. JIM'S!"

A DUEL ON THE TELEPHONE!

Your Editor writes Mr. Martin Clifford.

Editor:—Hallo: Is that Mr. Martin Clifford?

Mr. Clifford:—Yes?

Editor:—This is the Editor of the GEM speaking.

Mr. Clifford:—You silly chump! You've dragged me out of bed and down three flights of stairs to answer this head-on letter. You will till I come up to The Flitway House! I—I'll burst you!

Editor:—Good old Grundy! Look here, old man, I wouldn't have trouble you but it's really important! It's about the "Penny Popular." You know that great secret we planned between us?

Mr. Clifford:—It won't be a secret much longer if you shoot the odds like that: Lower your voice, man! I'm not Tom Dutton of Glaston!

Editor:—Is that a snarl whizzer? I wanted to ask you if I could let the cat out of the bag this week and tell my readers what the new stunt is.

Mr. Clifford:—Certainly not!

Editor:—But my readers—

Mr. Clifford:—Rises your readers!

Editor:—You're right, you're right, talk like that! You're dependent on those readers for your daily bread, remember!

Mr. Clifford:—I was only blushing 'em: Do they want jam with it? Tell 'em to poison their little souls in patience for another week. Then you can unfold the giddy mystery.

Editor:—The "Penny Pop" will suffer—

Mr. Clifford:—And so will my kidneys hanging on here much longer! I was up till three o'clock this morning writing a GEM yarn, and I'm sleepy!

Editor:—But look here—

Mr. Clifford:—Here! I'm going back to bed!

Editor:—Here, hold on! I wanted to ask you—

HALLO! SILENCE!

SO THE GREAT SECRET IS STILL A SECRET—TILL NEXT WEEK!

BOY AND GIRL FRIENDSHIPS.

I have always been a strong advocate of healthy friendship between boys and girls. At the same time, I do not agree with Kenneth R., one of my Liverpool readers, when he says—

"Surely it is all right, Mr. Editor, for a fellow and a girl to 'walk out' together without the girl's parents knowing anything about it. But the parents, you know, must lecture the girl and try to put a stopper on the whole business."

All the same, Kenneth R., I think the parents of girls have every right to know with whom she is keeping company. Girls are sometimes apt to form undesirable acquaintanceships, and the advice and guidance of their parents is necessary to prevent serious results. Besides, it stands to reason that a fellow cannot extract much benefit from his friendship with a girl who hoodwinks her parents.

MARY PICKFORD'S PICTURE.

There is a superb art plate of Mary Pickford, given inside every copy of "The Picture Show," on the great new paper for people who go to the pictures.

It is the prettiest photograph that Mary has ever had taken.

Three other pictures are to be given away in this grand new paper—Gwen Nares, Mae Marsh, and Pauline Frederick. Make sure of getting all these pictures by ordering your copy of "The Picture Show" to-day.

No. 1 is now on sale everywhere. Price two pence.

"The Picture Show" is packed with pictures and news paragraphs of your favourite film stars.

SPRING POETS—AND OTHERS!

I do not look to the weather to tell me that spring is here. Sufficient for that purpose is the mighty mass of poems which pour into my sanctum from the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof.

The spring poet is an abomination. I dislike him intensely. Listen to this extraordinary ditty from the pen of Herbert Finch, of Chester:

"O Spring, thou has arrived once more!
Loose may you rain, sweet Spring!
The football roll upon the goal,
I write my Willow King
And saili fourth unto the wicket
To join my Gemite chumms at cricket!"

Isn't it enough to make you weep? There are fifteen more verses; but sufficient unto the day is the pile thereof. Well, Master Finch, you are a very funny bird!

NOTICES.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted.

Miss Muriel Orlin, The Poplars, Huddersfield Road, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, Yorkshire, with readers anywhere, She would like to hear from her old friends, A. Penny, of Stockport.

Mr. Pilewick, Edgely Hoike, 11, Ruster Street, Blackpool, wants good second-hand footballs. Any reasonable price paid and postage.

S. F. Bush, 1005, Davie Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, wants book on wrestling giving illustrations of the Westminster and Cumberland throws.

Back Numbers.

W. Trencer, 33, Sea View Avenue, Liphon, Fitzroy-street, GEM, 210, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Harvey Wallbridge, Hutley's Cottages, Paris Street, Glaston, Channel Islands—my reader interested in "Write True!"

D. B., 63, Portland Road, Paddington, W., GEM containing "Your Editor at St. Jim's," Asher Sterling, 28, Osborn Street, Whitechapel, E. 1.—very early copies of "Magnet" and GEM. Write first.

Robert Taylor, 6, Thornley Avenue, Smithills, Bolton, Lancs.—"School and Sport," "The Gem," "Write True!" "Through the Ages" 2B; also any GEMs or "Magnets" before 2B0.

A COMING CHAMPION.

Schoolboy's 152 Goals!

The captain of the Central Park (East Ham) schoolboy football team is a very remarkable young gentleman.

His name is Billy Williams, and he plays in the position of centre-forward.

His goal-scoring record in the football season just passed is an extraordinary one, his total goal tally for the season being 152. On one occasion he netted the ball eighteen times in one game.

"I'm my great ambition," says Billy Williams, "is to play centre-forward for a senior league club."

It certainly looks as if Billy will realise his ambition!

H. A. H. (YOUR EDITOR).

Yet the man was obviously in earnest—deadly earnest. He must be stark, raving mad; that was all Mr. Mobbs could think.

"But when you said that you were talking to my captive friend," that I had someone to drive the cab to the station while I rode inside with you? A fellow like you wants to be killed! You're dangerous!"

Mr. Mobbs drew. He was somewhat of opinion that the other was the more dangerous.

"So long as you are going to take me to the police-station," he said at last.

"I have," said the caddy, with emphatic grimace.

"Very well."

The young fellow relished to hear this. All the station he could explain his identity, and so on to it that this caddy was marched off straightforwardly to a lunatic asylum.

"What's somebody come crying?" growled the caddy. "Hallo! Here's anybody that might be able to drive, anyway. Here's a mind, young shaver!"

"The young shaver" addressed pulled up and viewed the scene with great surprise.

The young shaver had scarcely sufficient reason for being so greatly surprised, for he had seen the man at the West Cherry, Esq.

"Hallo! Anything wrong?"

"Only this here bloke been tryin' to make off with my cab."

"You've got nothing of the sort?" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs.

"You might be able to prove him a liar, my lad," said the caddy to Bob. "I have you here, and he's calling you a thief. You've come from the same direction as it came."

"Wasn't it coming along the road a few minutes ago, rather quickly?" inquired Bob indignantly.

"That's it," said the caddy eagerly. "Did you see what sort of a man was drivin' it?"

"I can't see," said Bob reflectively. "I think the driver was a greatcoat, and a slouch-hat, something like the one he's wearing."

"And he indicated Mr. Mobbs."

"More precise indeed than that, you old robber!" roared the caddy. "Don't you see, my lad, that this fellow was tryin' to steal my cab?"

"I'm suspiciously like it," agreed Bob.

"Liar!" choked Mr. Mobbs, dashing the slouch-hat to the ground, and glaring at the caddy with his face aflame. "You put that on an' go!"

"The caddy touched his forehead significantly, and Bob grinned.

"Cheer! You know who I am? Mr. Mobbs?"

Bob nodded, and looked meaningly at the caddy.

"Then—then tell this fellow that it is all right. You know I am incapable of—or stealing a—cab?"

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Mobbs, I don't know anything of the sort!"

"What?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Mobbs, if I regard you as a suspicious character."

Mr. Mobbs was inclined to fly at him, but the caddy held him back.

"Can you drive a horse, my boy?" asked the caddy.

"What?"

"A horse!" roared the caddy furiously, not liking the dubious way Bob glanced at the animal on either side of the shafts.

"Oh, I'm thirty-four! I've had a bit of practice!"

"That's all right, then. I'm going to ride inside with this fellow! Drive away—to the police-station!"

Bob fell on the verge of an explosion as he mounted the box once again. He had a bit of difficulty in turning the cab round, but he did so, and he drove away at a modest pace back along the lane.

Inside the cab, with the fuming Mr. Mobbs sitting by his side, it was not long before the young shaver observed a heading lying on the opposite seat.

"That your property?" demanded the caddy.

"It is certainly my property," returned Mr. Mobbs icily; "and, if you're not altogether innocent, you would remember that I was carrying it when you took me as your driver."

The caddy did not attempt to reply to this, having long since been assured of the other's innocence. Instead he asked:

"The bag contains stolen values, I presume?"

I have already mentioned that the bag was destined to place Mr. Mobbs in an unfortunate position, and, of course, it has already done so. But the incident in the lane was not precisely what I meant in the first instance.

Mr. Mobbs was glad that the bag was not empty, for he could be remembered, it contained only an assortment of papers—a few lines received from the Highcliffe bankers as impositions, and a number of geometrical diagrams, which he had drawn at the station, had intended to examine during the afternoon. But among them there might be something that would establish his identity, something that would identify the caddy when the cab came along a second time, and they stared in surprise at Bob in the driving-seat.

"What on earth—" began Pon.

Bob grinned amiably, and flicked his whip at them playfully. The tip of the lash caught Pon's aristocratic nose, and brought tears to his eyes at the smart.

"Don't cry!" murmured Bob as he passed by. "Just suck it up!"

Bob pulled up at the police-station.

As the caddy came out, the manly came out of the interior, holding Mr. Mobbs tightly by the wrist with one hand and grasping the handle with the other.

"You've got nothing of the sort?" inquired the driver, who had been turning things over in the cab.

On cool reflection the caddy did not seem to be a lunatic. He was something worse than that, thought Mr. Mobbs.

He was a scoundrel, and the whole thing was a cunning scheme planned by him, and Mr. Mobbs had no intention of falling for it.

It was clear to Mr. Mobbs that the man's aim was to make out a case against him, by which it would be proved that he—Mr. Mobbs had stolen the money, and that the caddy was entitled to compensation.

It was a cunning plot, but Mr. Mobbs resolved to see to it that he would follow what he was made of.

There was an official behind the desk in the station, and a couple of policemen lounging by.

"I want this man to be placed under arrest, sir," began the caddy abruptly, "for attempting to steal my cab. This boy here is the thief."

"There is not an atom of truth in the accusation!" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs, white to the lips. "I engaged this man to drive me to Highcliffe."

"Liar!" retorted the caddy.

"Be quiet, knave!" roared Mr. Mobbs.

"Order, there!" said the man behind the desk, and he kindly stated that what occurred you have to make against this gentleman. "I will hear you after, sir."

"Well," began the caddy, "I left my cab at the stand in Priardale for a few minutes while I—anyway, it was only out of my care for about ten minutes. When I came back it was gone."

"I was just about for a bit I came upon this fellow driving it away down the lane. When he saw me he got going at a pace too fast for me, and I lagged behind."

"But what?"

"I considered such bartered falsehoods; and the inspector looked dubious.

"He'd actually put on my old weathered coat, with a slouch-hat pulled over his eyes, and he was wearing a greatcoat, a thing that a real caddy would hardly do in fine weather like this. The cab was going to Highcliffe."

"—was running after it."

"The cab had stopped when I came up," said the caddy to the inspector, "and this fellow was sitting in it, and he was wearing my hat! Deny that!"

He exclaimed, turning upon Mr. Mobbs.

Mr. Mobbs was so astounded by Bob's evidence that he looked perfectly crestfallen. He could only stammer:

"I—I—"

"Were you," demanded the inspector, "or were you not, wearing this man's hat when he reached you?"

"I was wearing his hat—"

"That is enough!"

"The hat belongs to him," said the rabby, placing that object before the inspector. "I, for one, am interested in what it might hold. This is yours?" queried the inspector.

"It is!"

Nevertheless the inspector opened it, and the caddy and the two policemen drew closer to examine its contents.

On the top were a number of sheets of foolscap, covered with a peculiar writing.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the inspector. "This looks like German writing to me. What do you make of it?"

One of the policemen looked closely at the characters.

"That's German, right enough," he pronounced, casting a look of dark suspicion upon Mr. Mobbs. "I don't understand it, but I can see it is German!"

Mr. Mobbs' face went very red, and made the rest more suspicious of him than ever.

"Those are German lines—" he began.

"We can see they're German lines," said the inspector.

"Let me see!" roared the caddy excitedly, after another drive into the bag. "Plans, by jinn! He's a spy—a traitor! Plans by the man!"

Bob grinned as he looked over the man's shoulder. The "plans" were merely simple propositions in geometry, done by schoolboys.

"This man's a danger to the community!" howled the caddy. "—He—! Hallo! He's gone!"

Mr. Mobbs had fled. He could stand the strain no longer.

"After him!" howled the patriotic caddy. "He ought to be banged! I'll nab him; or I'll bust in the attempt!"

The caddy touched out of the little station, and Bob followed more or less leisurely.

Poor Mr. Mobbs was scuffling down the road as hard as he could go.

Mr. Mobbs turned back, and nearly gave a howl when he saw that the caddy was after him.

"He couldn't possibly manage to reach Highcliffe!"

Mr. Mobbs was not the least wrong.

He jumped, and whined, and snorted, and howled, and fell on the point of crawling up after a few stevedores yards had been covered.

Just then there came the rattle of wheels over the cobble stones beside him. It was the station cab, hounding him like Frankenstein's monster.

He almost collapsed at the sight of this. It was the last straw. Bagface was evidently "running" away again.

But sudden and desperate idea struck the spent Highcliffe master. It was his only hope.

With his last ounce of strength he clambered on to the box—the first time for years he had jumped on to anything in motion!—and rattled the reins.

Bagface increased his speed, and the rate of the caddy for the second time that day, dragged Bob.

Mr. Mobbs heaved a mighty sigh of relief as he shook off the caddy. He heaved another big sigh as Highcliffe school came in sight.

But when he saw Mr. Mobbs dancing the waltz in magnificence when he found he couldn't make Bagface stop.

He jumped up in his seat, waved his arms wildly, and shouted for all he was worth, as he rattled past the gates of Highcliffe.

Fox & Co. were still there, and goodness knows what they looked like when they saw the thing go by.

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