

THRILLING STORY OF THE CHUMS OF ST. FRANK'S IN CHINA—Within.

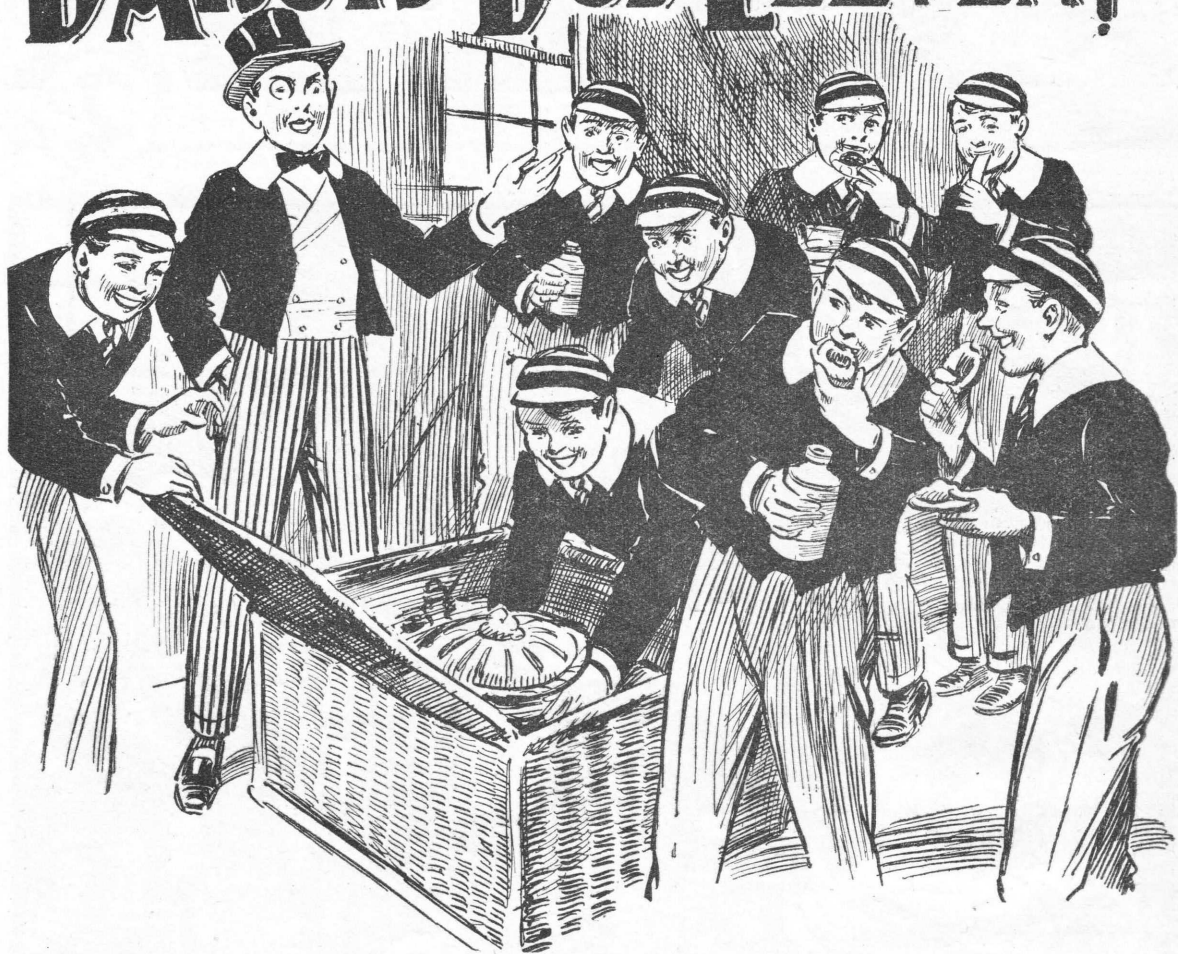
The GEM

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D'ARCY'S DUD ELEVEN!



"No feed—no football!" says Gussy's eleven. So like a good captain Gussy stands treat—only to discover that his players are a better team of feeders than footballers!

CHAPTER 1. Just Like Gussy!

"I WANT you chaps to keep next Saturday aftahnoon open."
"Eh?"

"I want you chaps to keep next Saturday aftahnoon open."
"What?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you must have heard my remark quite distinctly. Howevah, I will wepeat it. I want you chaps to keep next Saturday aftahnoon open."

The "chaps" whom Arthur Augustus D'Arcy addressed all stared at him in a rather disconcerting manner.

There were a group of them chatting together in the quadrangle at St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House, and the ornament of the Fourth Form, had strolled up and joined them, and shot his remark into the midst of the conversation.

"You want what?" said Tom Merry.

"What?" said Jack Blake. "You want what?"

"Say it again," said Digby. "You want what?"

"Sing it over again to me," implored Monty Lowther.

"Now, what is it that you want, Gussy?"

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and looked

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round at the circle of faces. He appeared to be a little puzzled.

"I want you to keep next Saturday aftahnoon open," he said. "I twust I make myself cleah. I have an engagement for you—an important engagement."

"Go hon!"

"It is the twuth, Monty Lowthah, and I object to havin' my wemarks weceived in that fwivolous mannah."

"Saturday afternoon, hey?" said Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Saturday afternoon!?" repeated Tom Merry.

"Certainly, deah boy! I fail to undahstand the widiculous way in which you are all weplyin' to my wemarks," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "I weally cannot help suspectin' that you are all off your wockahs."

"Saturday afternoon!"

"I object to havin' my words wepeated in that pawwot-like fashion, Hewwies."

"Ass!"

"Eh?"

"Duffer!" said Tom Merry.

"What?"

"Chump!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Lunatic!"

"I decline to be chawactewised as a lunatic. I think

By Martin Clifford.

you are all wavin'!" exclaimed the astounded swell of the School House. "What do you mean by it?"

"Hallo, what's the trouble here?" asked Figgins of the New House, coming up and joining the group of juniors, who seemed to be growing excited. Kerr and Wynn, his inseparable companions, were with the great Figgins.

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Figgins.

"I am bein' tweated with the most unpawalleed wude-ness by these wottahs," he said.

"Go hon!"

"The ass suggests that we should keep next Saturday afternoon open for him," said Tom Merry, in measured tones. "He has an engagement for us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The dummy!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins——"

"The frabjous ass!" said Kerr, with emphasis.

"Kerr, deah boy——"

"The piffing duffer!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Weally, Wynn——"

"And what's the important engagement you've got for us?" demanded Tom Merry. "You had best tell us before we bump you in the mud."

"I should uttahly wufese to be bumped in the mud."

"What's the engagement?" roared Jack Blake.

"It is a most important one. I have been ovah to Highcliffe School on my bike to see a chap I know there—a wrelation of mine in the Fourth."

"Well?"

"I had tea with him and some fellows. They were talkin' football, and the Highcliffe juniors think that they could walk all over the St. Jim's juniors."

Blake snorted.

"That's nothing new. Highcliffe are a cocky set, and they think they can do anything. They've never been seen to do it."

"Yaas, wathah! But weally the way their junior captain, Ponsonby, was talkin' made me feel watty, you know. He seemed to take it for granted that we couldn't play footah. When I told him we could walk all over Highcliffe and not half twy, he patted me an the shouldah and gwinned. Yaas, it's a fact, deah boys; he gwinned in my face."

"I suppose you slew him on the spot," said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Pway be sewious, Lowthah! The long and the short of it is that I assumed the wight of issuin' a challenge to the Highcliffe juniors. I am awah that not holdin' any official posish in our junior club I was exceedin' my wights to a certain extent, but I could not help takin' the bwaggin' wottahs on, you know."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Tom Merry. "We'll meet them with pleasure, and walk all over them."

"What-ho!"

"Yaas, I thought you would approve of my action, deah boys. That's why I asked you just now to keep Saturday aftahnoon open."

"Saturday aftahnoon!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Do you mean to say that you've challenged Highcliffe to meet us this week, and on Saturday aftahnoon?" roared Tom Merry.

"Yaas, deah boy! You see, Highcliffe have no othah date open the whole season. Ponsonby said they were booked wight up. There's a fixture fallen through for Saturday aftahnoon, howevah, and he could let us have that day, so I took it."

"You frabjous dummy."

"I wufese to be called a fwabjous dummay!"

"We can't play them on Saturday aftahnoon."

"We must, deah boy. They'll think we're funkin' the match if we don't meet them."

"All your fault!" howled Blake. "We can't meet them!"

"We must!"

"Ass!"

"Ponsonby already thinks that we shall send some excuse instead of meetin' them," said Arthur Augustus. "He thinks we shouldn't have the ghost of an earthly against them, you know. He fully expects us to cwawl out somehow. If we do, the way they will bwag will be somethin' feahful!"

Tom Merry grunted.

"Yes, you ass, and it's your fault."

"But we're goin' to meet them and give them a feahful lickin' at footah, Tom Mewwy."

"We'd give them a licking right enough if we meet them," said the hero of the Shell; "but we can't meet them on Saturday aftahnoon."

"But they have no othah date open."

"Then we shall have to scratch."

"Impossible, deah boy! There would be no holdin' them if they had a chance of swankin' like that."

"Can't be helped."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I shall insist upon meetin' them on Saturday aftahnoon. What is your objection?"

"Ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"We're meeting the Grammar School on Saturday aftahnoon!" roared Tom Merry. "It's a regular fixture, and we can't possibly put it off."

"Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy's face fell considerably. It was evident that, in the excitement of that football talk at Highcliffe he had forgotten all about the Grammar School fixture.

"Bai Jove! You know, I nevah thought of that," he said.

"Oh course, you wouldn't," said Lowther. "That is what comes of lettin' you go out without a chain."

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"We meet Frank Monk's team on Saturday, and we can't possibly put it off," said Tom Merry, with a frown.

"Highcliffe will have to crow, that's all."

"Bai Jove! That will be awfully wotten!"

"Yes; it was like you to get into this sort of a fix."

"Weally, deah boy——"

"I suppose nothing can be done?" said Figgins. "It wouldn't do to raise a second eleven to meet Highcliffe, would it? They're mostly swank, you know, and don't really play much of a game at footer."

Tom Merry pursed his lips thoughtfully.

"Well, if we broke up the eleven, and filled out two teams with recruits, we should send out two weak elevens instead of one strong one," he said. "The result would be, I expect, that we should be licked by the Grammarians and licked by the Highcliffe set as well."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If we scratch Highcliffe, they'll never fix another date—they'll be too glad of the chance to crow," said Lowther.

"Besides, if they have all their dates full, they couldn't meet us. Ours are full up to the end of the season now."

"And so are Monk's, I expect," said Tom Merry, frowning. "There's a chance, though, that Monk may be willing to postpone. He may have another date open."

"Well, it's a chance."

"To-day's Wednesday," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "It's a bit late to give notice, but I think I'll spin over to the Grammar School on my bike before tea and speak to Monk."

"Yaas, wathah, and I'll come with you," said Arthur Augustus. "I have returned fwom Highcliffe wathah earlier than I intended, and I have nothin' to do."

"Rats!"

"Weally——"

"You've caused enough trouble for one aftahnoon," said Tom Merry. "You can stay here. Blake can come with me, and two of us will be enough."

"But it may be necessary to wesson with Fwank Monk, and put it to him staight, you know. What you weaquah is a fellow of tact and judgment. I weally think I had bettah come."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And the juniors stalked off, discussing the unfortunate situation as they went, and leaving Arthur Augustus looking after them through his monocle. The swell of the School House shook his head decidedly.

"I wathah think I can't let them go alone," he murmured. "They will make a mess of things, I expect. I will get out my bike again, and wun ovah to the Gwammah School and explain mattahs to Fwank Monk before they awwive."

And in two minutes Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was pedalling away up the lane.

CHAPTER 2.

Ragged!

"MY hat!"
 "The check!"
 "The nerve!"
 "Look at him!"
 "Phew!"

The exclamations burst from a group of juniors in the playground of Rylcombe Grammar School in various tones of surprise, astonishment, and indignation.

They were caused by the sight of a cyclist pedalling coolly in at the open school gates.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy might have been riding into the quad at St. Jim's, to judge by the perfect nonchalance of his manner.

He seemed to have forgotten that he was upon hostile ground. As a matter of fact, the swell of St. Jim's was so busy thinking about the football fixture that he had forgotten everything else. He was in a hurry to be ahead of Tom Merry and Blake, to explain the matter to the Grammarians with the necessary tact and judgment.

Between St. Jim's and the Grammar School the war was never ended—at least, among the juniors—and rows were never ceasing, though sometimes a truce was called, for the purpose of transferring the rivalry to the football or cricket field.

At football and cricket the two schools claimed to have wiped each other practically out of existence, and certainly both claims could not be correct. The probability was that honours were divided.

The forthcoming football match was looked forward to with eagerness on both sides, each team being quite certain that it would rush the other off the field and add to the list of triumphs.

But until the Saturday afternoon upon which the teams were to meet, the rival schools were on the same terms as usual, and a Grammarian who should have been reckless enough to venture into the St. Jim's quadrangle would have expected to be frog's-marched, at least.

Hence the astonishment of the Grammar School youths when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was seen coolly pedalling on the bicycle through the gateway.

"The cheeky worm!" said Carboy in amazement. "He has come here to look for trouble, of course."

"He will find it, whether he's looking for it or not!" chuckled Lane.

"What-ho!" said Frank Monk, the junior captain. "Let him come in, and yank him off his bike as soon as he's inside. We'll show him that he can't swank around on our ground in this way."

Ting-a-ling!

"He's ringing his bell!"

"The check!"

"The nerve!"

Arthur Augustus was actually ringing his bell for the Grammarians to get out of the way. It was too much!

With one accord the Grammarians rushed upon the cyclist and seized him in the grasp of many hands, and jerked him off his machine.

The cycle curled up and reposed on the ground, and Arthur Augustus was whisked away in the hands of the Grammar School juniors.

"Ow!" gasped D'Arcy. "Oh!"

"Collar him!"

"Bring him along!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then, you St. Jim's worm——"

"Ow! Welease me at once!"

"Yes—I don't think!"

"If you do not immediately welease me, Lane, I shall swike you. Fwank Monk, I shall give you a feahful thwashin'. Do you hear?"

"Yes, I think I hear," said Frank Monk, chuckling. "I'll risk it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Bring him along!"

"I came here to tell you——"

"Shove him this way!"

"I came here to——"

"To have the frog's-march!" grinned Carboy. "Take his other ankle, Lane!"

"Right-ho!"

"Ow! I wefuse to have the fwog's-march! I wegard you as a set of wuffians! I came here to explain——"

"Now then, start!"

"Ow! Welease me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus could only gasp now as the Grammarians marched him round the playground in the frog's-march.

They did not bump him very hard, only sufficient to take

his breath away and ruffle and disorder his garments—a punishment more severe to Arthur Augustus than physical pain would have been.

The swell of St. Jim's struggled furiously in the grasp of the Grammarians; but it was useless.

He had not the slightest chance against so many. The Grammar School youths rushed him round the quad at a breathless rate.

"Cheeky young bargee!" growled Frank Monk. "We get all sorts of cheek from Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins and the rest, but I really think this takes the cake—buzzing in here, under the eyes of the whole lot of us."

"Yes, rather!" said Lane. "Bump him!"

"Hurrah! Bump him!"

"Ow! Weally, I protest! You are makin' my twousahs howwibly dirty! You are wufflin' my hair, and soilin' my collah."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help! Ow! Gwoogh!"

"Give him another!"

"Come on, right round the quad."

"Hurrah!"

And right round the quad went the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's; right round, till he was opposite the gateway again, at the point where the frog's-march had started.

"Now then!" exclaimed Frank Monk. "Stop a minute!"

"Oh, give him another round!" exclaimed Hanks.

"Stop, I tell you. Gussy!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Are you sorry for your cheek?"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Are you willing to go on your hands and knees and beg pardon of the whole company here assembled?" demanded Frank Monk, with great solemnity.

"Certainly not, you wottah!"

"Then round you go again!"

"I wefuse to go wound! I——"

"Bring him along!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Look out!"

"St. Jim's rotters! Look out!"

And the frog's-march suddenly ceased as two St. Jim's caps were seen in the gateway.

CHAPTER 3.

D'Arcy is Not Consulted!

TOM MERRY and Jack Blake had arrived.

As they rode up to the gates of the Grammar School they heard the uproar from within, and guessed that something was on, but what it was they were far from guessing.

"Seem to be enjoying their little selves," remarked Blake, as he jumped off his machine and leaned it against the gate. "What a fearful row!"

"I wonder what's on?"

They looked into the quad.

For the moment they could see only an excited crowd of Grammarians, who appeared to have some struggling object in their midst.

Then there was a yell.

"St. Jim's rotters! Look out!"

The Grammarian crowd opened, and a rush was made towards the gate. Then the two juniors from St. Jim's could see what it was that had been the centre of the struggle.

It was a disordered, dusty, dishevelled figure, which was scarcely recognisable as that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the elegant junior of the School House at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry and Blake stared at it blankly.

"Gussy!"

"My hat!"

"Help!" gasped D'Arcy. "Wescue, deah boys!"

"Phew! What a figure!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Collar the cads!" shouted Frank Monk.

Tom Merry help up his hand.

"Pax!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, rats!"

"Pax, Monkey! We've come over on business about the football match."

"Oh, all right!" grunted Frank Monk. "I thought you had come over looking for trouble, as D'Arcy did. He found it."

"Ha, ha, ha! He looks as if he's found it."

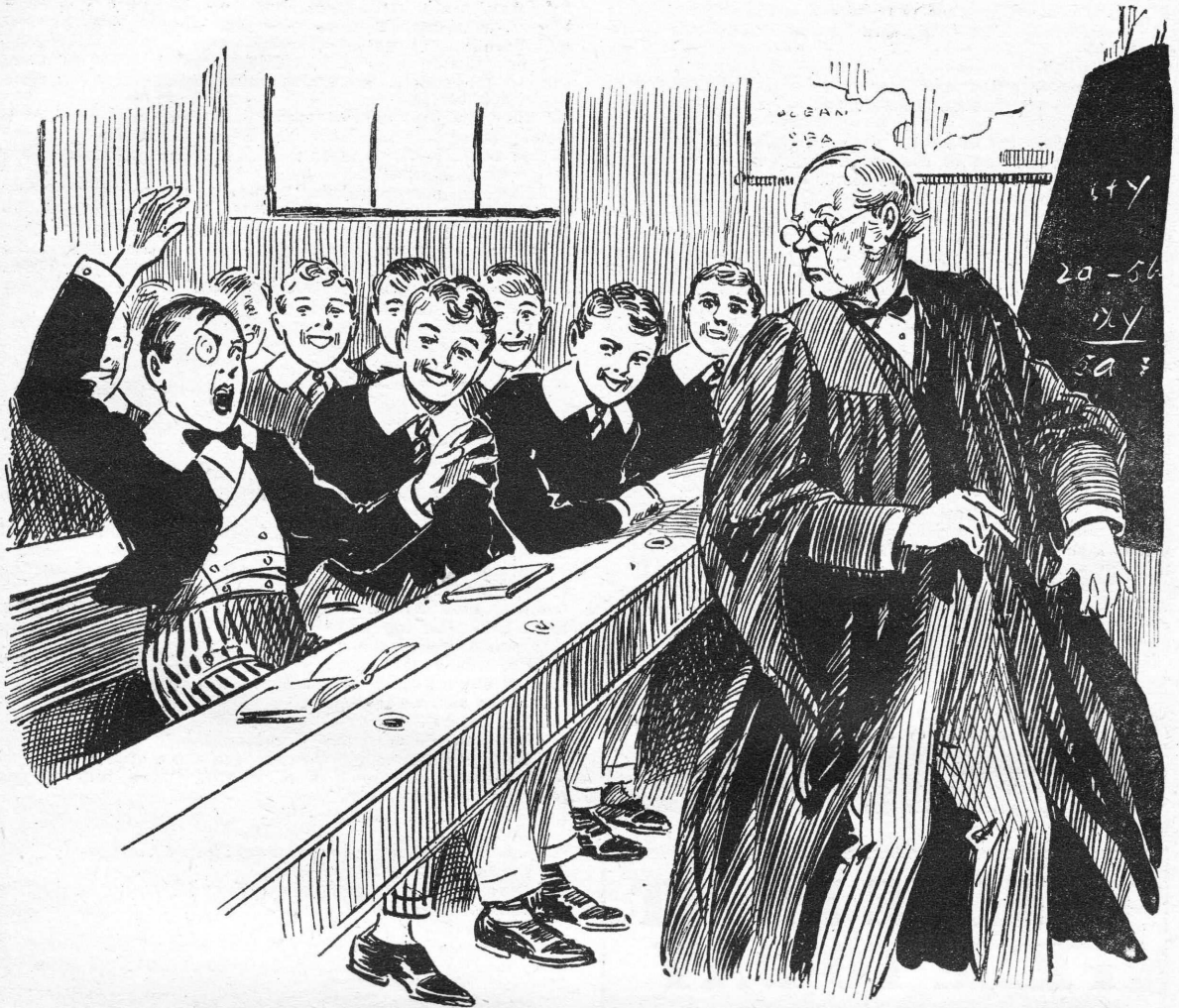
D'Arcy groped for his eyeglass and jammed it into his eye.

"I did not come ovah lookin' for twouble!" he exclaimed.

"I came to discuss the footah match, as I felt that I could not leave it safely in your hands, Tom Mewwy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to laugh at. I have been tweated with the gwossett diswespect. I am now goin' to thwash Fwank Monk."



"Pinch Gussy, somebody," whispered Blake. "Certainly!" said Hancock, who sat next to the swell of St. Jim's. He promptly obliged, and D'Arcy jumped in his seat as he came out of his reverie. "Ow! Bai Jove!" he gasped. "Ow—ow!"

"Want another frog's-march?" grinned Monk.
 D'Arcy looked round at the crowd of Grammarians, who were quite ready and willing—in fact, eager—to give him another round, and changed his mind.
 "Upon the whole, Fwank Monk, I will thwash you anothah time!" he exclaimed.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I have been tweated bwutally! My collah is torn, my hair wuffed, and my clothes weally wuined."
 "Well, what could you expect?" demanded Carboy. "You came sailing in as if you owned the place, and never explained."
 "You didn't give me time to explain."
 "Oh, rats!"
 "If you say wats to me, Carboy—"
 "Oh, you'd better get home, Gussy," said Tom Merry, laughing. "By Jove, you'll make quite a sensation when you return to, St. Jim's in that state."
 "What-ho!" chuckled Blake.
 "I wefuse to return to St. Jim's in this state."
 "That's all right," grinned Monk. "You can come and clean up in our quarters. Now, if you chaps have come over to talk business, you can come into my study while Gussy is cleaning up in the dorm."
 "I weally think the mattah ought to be left in my hands, Tom Mewwy. You wequiah tact and judgment in a case like this."
 "You've been so jolly successful so far, too," remarked Blake.
 "That was due to hastiness and a silly misundahstandin' on the part of these Gwammah School wottahs."
 "These what?" asked Carboy.
 "These Gwammawians," corrected D'Arcy. "Now, if you leave it to me—"
 "Rats!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "More rats!"
 And Tom Merry walked into the House with Monk, followed by D'Arcy in a state of simmering indignation. Carboy showed Arthur Augustus to the doorway, to lend him a friendly hand, and Lane and Frank Monk took Tom Merry and Blake into their study. There was a fragrant smell of tea and buttered toast, and a boy looked up from the fire with a glowing face.
 "Just ready!" he said.
 "So are we," said Frank. "Bumping Gussy has given me quite an appetite. Shove some more water in the pot, Plunkett, and make some more toast, there's a good chap. You kids will join us, of course?"
 "What-ho!" said Tom Merry.
 And they sat down to tea.
 When they had been provided with big cups of tea and plates of toast, Frank Monk came to business.
 "Now, what is it?" he asked.
 "Ripping!" said Blake.
 Monk stared at him.
 "Eh? What?"
 "It's ripping!"
 "What's ripping?" demanded the perplexed Grammarian.
 "The toast," said Blake innocently.
 "You ass! I meant, what is it you've come over for—the business? I thought everything was settled with regard to the footer match."
 "Well, yes," said Tom Merry, setting down his teacup. "But the best laid schemes, you know, go rocky at times, as the poet remarks."
 "I don't think the poet puts it exactly like that," grinned Frank Monk. "But I understand. What has gone wrong?"

"We're booked to come over here and play you at three o'clock Saturday afternoon," said Tom Merry, consulting his notebook.

"That's it."

"Well, we've got another match on Saturday afternoon, owing to Gussy's beautiful management. You know Highcliffe School?"

"Yes, a cocky set of bargees," said Frank Monk. "They think they're the salt of the earth, and look on themselves as a brigade of James's on the footer field, but as a matter of fact they're pretty soft."

"Well, Gussy was over there to-day, and they made him waxy with their swank, and he challenged them for Saturday afternoon, of course forgetting all about our fixture," said Tom Merry. "Now, if we make excuses, Highcliffe will crow fearfully, and there will be no holding them in."

"I imagine so."

"Now, if you could help us out I know you would," said Tom. "What do you say? Could you possibly put the match off to another date, old chap?"

Frank Monk wrinkled his brows thoughtfully, and shook his head.

"I can't!" he said honestly. "I would if I could, but we're booked right up, and we've refused matches because we had no dates open. We would scratch if you like, of course, but—"

"But that's not to be thought of," said Tom Merry quickly. "I don't mean that at all. We wouldn't miss the match with you for anything, if Highcliffe crowed like a whole farmyard. I thought something might have fallen through, perhaps, and you might have a vacant date—"

"I wish we had, but we haven't."

"Then the only thing we can do is to play both matches on Saturday somehow," said Tom Merry. "Gussy has agreed to play Highcliffe on their own ground, and we shall have to go over there. The fixture with you is to come off here at three. Could you alter it?"

"Right-ho!" said Monk instantly. "Anything you like. We'd make it two, if that would suit."

"What about coming over to our ground?" said Tom Merry.

Frank Monk nodded.

"Certainly! We'll start immediately after dinner on Saturday, and get to your ground in time to kick-off at two."

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"I say, that's awfully good of you, Monky!" said Tom Merry gratefully. "If we save the journey over here it will be a lot, as we have to make the trip to Highcliffe. It's no joke to play a football match immediately after another the same afternoon, and the less travelling we have to do, the better."

"We'd do anything we could, of course. But look here. You're easily top of Highcliffe in form, but after playing us you won't be fit to meet them. It stands to reason your men will be blown."

"We shall have to risk it."

"Highcliffe will lick you," said Monk, with a shake of the head. "Then they'll crow worse than if you scratched."

"I don't think so. We'll win if we burst a boiler," said Blake. "And if we lick them just after playing your team, even Highcliffe will have to sing small."

"Well, yes, that's so; but—"

"We shall have to take our chance," said Tom Merry. "If we kick off at two with you, we shall be finished about three-forty. I hope there will be light enough for the Highcliffe game after."

"There jolly well won't," said Frank Monk. "You must make it earlier. Look here, we could get over to St. Jim's and kick off at half-past one if we tried. That would allow you to finish at ten-past three."

"Jolly good!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily. "It's awfully decent of you to meet us in this way. We'll give you a good game."

"And we'll give you a good licking if we can," grinned Monk.

And the discussion and the toast being finished at the same time the juniors rose to depart. It was at that moment that Arthur Augustus came downstairs, looking much the better for his clean-up, and Tom Merry and Blake met him as they quitted Monk's study.

"I'm weady now," said D'Arcy. "We'd better talk the mattah ovah with Fwank Monk, deah boys, and see if we can make an awwangement."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah."

"Well, you see, as a matter of fact, the matter's discussed and settled," exclaimed Tom Merry. "It's time to get back to St. Jim's now."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Come on!"

"But what have you awwanged?"

"I'll tell you as we go along."

"That is hardly satisfactory, Tom Mewwy. It may be necessary for me to revise the awwangement, you know?"

"Go hon!"

"Pway do not huwvy off like that, Tom Mewwy!" exclaimed D'Arcy, following the hero of the Shell from the House. "Weally—"

"Good-bye, Monk, old man, and many thanks!"

"Not at all. Good-bye!"

"Tom Mewwy—"

"Here's your bike, Gussy."

"Yaas, but—"

"Jump on, then," said Tom Merry, mounting his machine and pedalling away. "It's time we got back."

"Stop, you wottah!" bawled D'Arcy. "I may have to revise the awwangement—"

"Come on, Blake!"

"Right-ho!"

"Wottahs—"

Tom Merry and Blake were riding away cheerfully. D'Arcy gazed after them for a moment, and then gazed at the grinning Grammarians. Then, with an air of extreme dignity, he mounted his machine and pedalled after the departing juniors.

CHAPTER 4.

Interruptions!

"I'VE been thinkin', deah boys—"
"Oh, draw it mild, Gussy!"
Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, you know, you shouldn't put such a strain on a fellow's credulity," expostulated Blake. "What I say is, draw it mild."

"I wefuse to weply to that uttahly fwivolous wemark," said D'Arcy with dignity. "I have been thinkin'. You awwanged with Fwank Monk yesterday—"

"Exactly. Is that kettle boiling, Dig?"

"Nearly."

"You awwanged with Fwank Monk yesterday to have the match earliah on Saturday, and to go ovah to Highcliffe aftahwards."

"Precisely. Where's that tea canister?"

"Now, I've been thinkin'—"

"The tea canister!"

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake."

"Yes, I suppose I am. Where's the tea canister?"

"I don't care a wap where the tea canister is. I wufuse to take the slightest intewest in the tea canister."

"But I want to make the tea."

"I was speakin' about the footah match on Saturday——"

"Yes; but the tea canister——"

"Here it is," said Herries. "I remember putting it in Gussy's hat-box for safety, as that worm Mellish was scoutin' round for tea when he was fagging for Knox."

"What!" exclaimed D'Arcy. "In my hat-box!"

Herries nodded.

"Yes; and the marmalade, too. I knew Mellish would collar them if he had half a chance. Knox always licks him if he doesn't get a good spread at tea-time, and he hardly ever gives him the tin to get the things."

"You—you uttah ass——"

"Well, I suppose you didn't want a beastly prefect to scoff our marmalade?" said Herries indignantly, as D'Arcy tore open his hat-box.

"Hewwies! I wegard you as an uttah ass! Bai Jove!"

D'Arcy grabbed the tea canister out of his silk hat. Then he grabbed the marmalade jar. Unfortunately, it had been overturned, and half the marmalade was deposited in the silk lining of the hat.

D'Arcy stared at it speechlessly.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Herries. "Where's the rest of the marmalade?"

"You feahful ass! It's in my hat!"

"My hat! Your hat!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, hang!" said Herries. "I stood it carefully upright. You must have been shifting that hat-box, or something. Now half the marmalade's wasted."

"You—you uttah ass! I wasn't thinkin' of the marmalade. My hat is wuined!"

"Well, we didn't want your hat for tea, and we did want the marmalade," growled Herries. "It's a curious thing that your silk hats are always causing trouble of some sort. My dog Towser was caught in the House the other day, because he was worrying one of your toppers up and down the passage."

"Hewwies——"

"See if you can scrape the marm out. I don't think it ought to be wasted. It will do for you, anyway."

"I don't know wethah to wegard you as a dangewous lunatic, Hewwies, or to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Take your choice," said Herries. "Scrape out the marmalade first. We haven't any too much to go round."

"This was the silk toppah I bought in Pawis——"

"Then it's time you had a new one," said Blake.

"You've had that for four weeks. Tea's ready."

The juniors sat down to tea, with the exception of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He was scraping the marmalade out of his silk topper—not to save the marmalade.

"I shall have to have a new linin' put in that hat," he said at last, as he took his place at the table. "I wegard Hewwies as a dangewous lunatic."

"Good! Pass the cake!"

"Speakin' about the Gwammah School match——"

"I wasn't speaking about the Grammar School match," said Blake. "I was speaking about the cake. Shove it over this way."

"There it is. Now, about the match——"

"Pass the bread-and-butter, Gussy."

"Certainly, Dig. About the Gwammah School match——"

"Pass that knife."

"Here you are. Now, about the——"

"Pass the sugar."

"The sugah is on your side of the table, Blake."

"Dear me, so it is! Pass me a plate, then."

"I wegard these continual intewwuptions as fwivolous. I wufuse to pass you anythin' more. Now, about the Gwammah School match, I've been thinkin'."

Jack Blake gave a groan.

"I suppose we're bound to have it. What is it?"

"I hardly wegard that as a pwopah spiwit in which to weceive my remarks, Blake. Howevah, to wesume. I have been thinkin' that it's not a good wheeze to play two footah matches in one aftahnoon. Of course, I could stick it out all wight, but you chaps would be bound to get feahfully fagged."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"That is not an intelligible wemark, Blake. I've been thinkin', therefore, that it would be a good ideah to waise a second juniah eleven, and I will captain it."

"Go hon!"

"And take it ovah to Highcliffe to beat Ponsonby."

"My dear ass——"

"I wufuse to be called an ass——"

"Tom Merry is junior football captain. Tom Merry decides. He decided to play the two matches in one afternoon, and there you are!"

D'Arcy rose from the table.

"Then I had bettah speak to Tom Mewwy about it."

"Yes, rather."

"Vewy good. I will speak to him."

And D'Arcy departed from Study No. 6. Blake thoughtfully helped himself to D'Arcy's cake, which the swell of St. Jim's had forgotten in his interest in the football match. He chuckled softly as the door closed behind Arthur Augustus.

"It's Gussy for wheezes!" he remarked. "I think I can guess the reception he'll get in Tom Merry's study!"

And Herries and Digby said:

"What-ho!"

CHAPTER 5.

Declined—Without Thanks!

"BAI Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had nearly reached Tom Merry's study when a junior came very quickly out of the adjoining room, bolted along the corridor, and ran right into him outside Tom Merry's door.

It was Skimpole of the Shell, the junior who was very short-sighted and always in a hurry, and extremely dangerous to meet in a passage or on the stairs.

Arthur Augustus staggered against Tom Merry's door.

"Dear me!" said Skimpole, blinking at him through his spectacles. "I'm sorry! Oh!"

The door was ajar. D'Arcy's weight, as he fell against it, hurled it open, and the swell of the School House rolled headlong into the study.

There was a yell within.

Monty Lowther and Manners were playing chess, and Tom Merry was sitting on the corner of the tea-table, watching them. Manners gave a jump as D'Arcy rolled in, and his sleeves swept pieces and pawns from the board.

"You ass!" roared Lowther.

"It wasn't my fault!" shrieked Manners. "That duffer——"

D'Arcy jumped up.

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy, deah boys!"

"You shrieking ass!"

"I wufuse to be called a shwiekin' ass! I have apologised for my unintentional intewusion, and between gentlemen that should be sufficient," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

"You frabjous cuckoo!"

"You burbling idiot!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

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

"Not that it really matters," said Manners, calming down a little. "I had you mate in three, Lowther."

"Oh, don't be funny!" growled Lowther. "Unless you're as blind as you're silly, you must have seen that I had you mate in two!"

"Well, of all the duffers——"

"Of all the idiots——"

"Didn't you see that my queen——"

"Didn't you see that my rook——"

"Blow your rook!"

"Blow your queen!"

"Look here——"

"Look here——"

"Oh, shut up!" bawled Tom Merry. "When you start arguing about chess I can't stand you!"

"I had him mate in three!"

"I had him mate in two!"

"Bosh!"

"Rot!"

"Yes, you're both right, it's all bosh and rot," agreed Tom Merry. "Now shut up! The game's over, and you can massacre Gussy for upsetting it!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"I was going to call in on you chaps," said Skimpole, blinking into the study. "A sudden idea struck me in connection with the Grammar School football match."

"Bai Jove! That's what I've come here to speak about, you know."

"Well, go into Skimpole's study and you can talk to each other about it," said Tom Merry. "I consider that a good suggestion."

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Not at all, Merry. I have a good suggestion to make. It appears that you have arranged to play two matches in one afternoon."

"Yaas, wathah! Now, I considah——"

"I think it would be better to form two teams, and send one over to Highcliffe, the other to the Grammar School."

"Yaas, wathah! That's what I was goin' to say."

"I have not played very much football," said Skimpole, blinking round the study. "I am perfectly willing, however, to captain the second team to play Highcliffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Skimpole, you are an ass!"

"Really, D'Arcy, that remark is almost rude. You see, although I have practised football very little, I shall play the game well, because it really depends upon the intelligence, and I have always maintained the mastery of mind over matter. The mastery of mind over matter is shown as much in football as anything else."

"Go hon!"

"I shall, therefore, be perfectly willing to captain a second team against Highcliffe, and I have no doubt you will jump at the offer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause for merriment in my remark."

"Well, I'm not a good jumper, so I shan't jump at the offer," grinned Tom Merry. "But if you want to be really obliging, I'll tell you what you can do, Skimpole."

"Yes. As you know, I wish to be always obliging. It is the duty of a sincere Determinist, as I am, to be always obliging."

"Well, perhaps it would be asking too much, though," said Tom Merry thoughtfully.

"Not at all, Merry."

"Well, if you would like to do me a favour——"

"Certainly——"

"Well, then, go straight down the passage——"

"Yes."

"Downstairs——"

"Certainly——"

"Across the quadrangle as far as the gates——"

"That is easy enough. What else?"

"Nothing else."

"Eh?"

"Stay there," explained Tom Merry. "That's all."

"Stay there," blinked Skimpole, in perplexity.

He could not catch on. He was a deeply serious youth, and had never been known to see a joke. The other juniors in the study were all grinning, and Skimpole blinked round from face to face in search of a clue to the general merriment.

"I hardly think I understand you aright, Merry," said the genius of the Shell slowly. "As a sincere Determinist, it is my duty to be obliging, and I should be very happy indeed to do you any little favour. Pray explain. I am to proceed along this passage, and descend the stairs——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

"And then cross the quadrangle from the School House to the gates——"

"Exactly."

"And then——"

"Stay there!"

"But what purpose would that effect?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see in what way that would oblige you, Merry," said Skimpole, perplexed. "I fail to see the cause of this laughter also!"

"Oh, I can show you that!" said Lowther, taking the genius of the Shell by the back of the neck and marching him towards the glass. "Look in there!"

"I am looking in."

"Can't you see the cause of the laughter, then?"

"Certainly not!" said Skimpole, blinking at his own reflection. "I fail to see the drift of your remarks, Lowther."

"My only hat! Look! Can't you see the face of a silly idiot?" howled Lowther.

"I can see your face over my shoulder, if that is what you mean."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Good for Skimmy!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard that as funnay, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther turned red.

"What's all that silly cackle about?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha! Look in the glass!" yelled Manners. "You'll see the cause of the laughter, you know. The face of a silly idiot. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you chumps——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really," said Skimpole, "I cannot help thinking that you have taken leave of your senses. I fail to see any cause for this merriment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"To come back to the original subject, are you perfectly willing for me to form a second eleven to play Highcliffe?"

"No! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You do not refuse?"

"Yes, I do, old chap!"

"Then, as a sincere Determinist, it will be my duty to

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resist tyranny," said Skimpole. "I shall form the second eleven, and play Highcliffe on my own account."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The right of the individual must always be maintained. Professor Loosetop says in his book on Determinism——"

"Outside!"

"Nothing of the sort. He says that——"

"Travel!"

"He says that——"

"Chuck him out!" roared Manners.

Three pairs of hands were laid upon Skimpole. He struggled, but he had no chance. The strong grasp of the Terrible Three was upon him, and he was hurled forth. He rolled along the linoleum, sliding along the passage on the smooth surface, and blinking in a state of great astonishment.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I quite approve of hurlin' out that feahful bore. Fancy any chap talkin' Determinism without being paid to do it. But to come to bisnay, deah boys, about that football match——"

"Oh, that's all settled!"

"Not at all. I have decided to waise a second eleven to play Highcliffe on Saturday. I do not considah that we ought to wisk the school colours by playin' two matches in one aftahnoon."

"Are you junior football captain, by any chance?" asked Tom Merry blandly.

"No, but natuwall'y you will, as a weasonable human bein', yield to supewiah judgment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard it as a wippin' weeze to waise a second eleven, undah my lead. Then I should wesign my place in your eleven, of course."

"Well, that would give us a better chance against the Grammarians, certainly," Tom Merry remarked, in a thoughtful way.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"But I'm afraid I couldn't trust you to lick Highcliffe, Gussy. Your offer is, therefore, declined with thanks. Good-bye!"

"But——"

"Fare thee well!"

"Pwaj don't be wicidulous. I will explain my views on the subject fwom the wevy beginnin'——"

"That you jolly well won't," said Tom Merry promptly. "Go and explain them to Blake."

"He wefuses to tweat the mattah with pwopah sewiousness."

"I'm not surprised. Still, he's bound to stand it. Run away and play!"

"My opinion is——"

"Order!"

"I considah——"

"Rats!"

"Undah the circs——"

"Outside!"

"I wefuse——"

"Chuck him out!"

"I wefuse to be chucked out! I absolutely—— Ow! You wottahs! Lowthah, welease me at once, or I shall lose my tempah and stwike you! Mannahs, you are wumplin' my collah, you howwid wuffian! Tom Mewwy—— Ow!"

Arthur Augustus was ejected, and the door slammed behind him.

The swell of St. Jim's picked himself up in the passage, a little dishevelled and extremely indignant. He rushed at the door of the study. It was locked. A chuckle came from within.

D'Arcy put his head down to the keyhole.

"Tom Mewwy, I wegard you with uttah contempt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I look upon you as a wank outsiders! I—— Ow-ow-ow! Gwoooogh!"

Fizz!

A stream of ink from a squirt came through the keyhole, and it caught Arthur Augustus fairly in his open mouth.

He staggered away from the door, spluttering and muttering, with the ink running down over his chin and streaming upon his immaculate white collar.

"Ow! Yow! Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You howwid wuffianly wottahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And D'Arcy, bestowing a final kick upon the door, rushed off in search of a bath-room and a toothbrush.

CHAPTER 6.

Gussy Makes Up His Mind!

"Gussy!"

Jack Blake whispered the name in the Fourth Form class-room the following morning.

As a matter of fact, the boys were supposed to be silent and thoughtful in the class-room. But this, as

Blake would have said, was mainly supposition. Mr. Lathom was a patient, good-tempered, and short-sighted Form master, and the Fourth Form were not kept in strict order, by any means.

"Gussy!"

D'Arcy made no reply.

His eyes were fixed upon the blackboard upon which Mr. Lathom was making mysterious inscriptions with a piece of chalk. But he certainly did not see either the blackboard or Mr. Lathom. He was thinking.

"Gussy!"

The Fourth Form master turned his head a little.

"Dear me! I am sure someone is talking!"

Blake snorted softly.

"Do pinch Gussy, somebody!" he whispered.

"I—I don't know, sir."

"Was it a very sharp pain?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Ah, it was probably rheumatism! You must have been getting your feet wet, perhaps, and neglecting to change your boots afterwards."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You are sure your feet are not wet at the present moment, D'Arcy?"

"Quite sure, sir!"

"Very well. Tell me, however, if you feel this pain again, and I think it will be better for you to have medical advice."

"Yaas, sir."

Mr. Lathom turned to the blackboard again. Arthur



"Here, hold this handle for a minute," said Glyn. "Certainly, deah boy!" said Gussy. "With pleasuah!" D'Arcy grasped the handle, and the next moment a wild yell rang through the study and Arthur Augustus danced convulsively. "Ow! Ow! Leggo!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Glyn.

"Certainly!" said Hancock, who sat next to the swell of St. Jim's, and he promptly obliged.

D'Arcy came out of his reverie with a gasp.

"Ow! Bai Jove! Ow-ow!"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Weally, Hancock—"

Mr. Lathom turned round again.

"I must insist upon silence in the class," he said mildly.

"D'Arcy, I am certain I heard you speak."

"Yaas, sir. I—I felt a sudden pain, sir."

"Indeed! Are you ill?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom, quite concerned. "What sort of a pain was it, D'Arcy? I trust it was nothing serious."

"Oh, no, thank you, sir! It is quite gone now."

"Where was it?"

"In the leg, sir," said D'Arcy.

"H'm! Was it anything like rheumatism?" added Mr. Lathom, who sometimes had twinges of that himself, and naturally felt sympathetic for others in like case.

Augustus was crimson, and the whole class were trying to suppress their giggles.

"You uttah ass, Hancock!" whispered D'Arcy, as soon as the Form master's attention was taken away again. "What did you pinch me for?"

"Blake wants to speak to you."

"Weally, Blake—"

"I asked him to wake you up," explained Blake. "I thought you were going into a trance, or something of the sort."

"I wefuse to cwedit that you believe anythin' of the sort."

"You see, I wanted you to pass this toffee on to Fatty Wynn, who is dying of hunger. I couldn't make you hear."

"I will pass on the toffee, Blake, but I twust you will not bothah me with any more of your wemarks. I was thinkin'," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "The matter of the new eleven is weighing on my mind vevy much."

"The which?"

"The new eleven, which is goin' to meet Highcliffe."

"But no new eleven is going to meet Highcliffe," said Jack Blake in amazement.

"You are mistaken, deah boy. As you and Tom Mewwy fail to see weason, I have decided to take the mattah into my own hands."

Blake could only stare.

"I am formin' a new junior eleven," said D'Arcy. "I shall take it ovah to Highcliffe and lick the Ponsohby crowd. You othahs can play the Gwammah School, as originally awwanged."

"You cheeky young ass!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Are you going to pass that toffee, or are you not going to pass that toffee?" asked Fatty Wynn, in a sulphurous voice.

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy," said D'Arcy, who had been absently holding the packet of toffee in his hand all the time. "Here you are, deah boy!"

Mr. Lathom turned round.

"What is that you are passing to Wynn, D'Arcy?" he asked.

"Bai Jove!"

"Give it to me at once!"

"Oh deah!"

Mr. Lathom took the toffee.

"Ah! You have been warned before of devouring sweetmeats in class, Wynn. D'Arcy, I am surprised to see you encouraging Wynn in his gluttonous habits in the classroom. This toffee will be confiscated, and you will take twenty lines each."

"Bai Jove!"

Fatty Wynn did not say anything, but his looks said volumes.

"Where's that dummy?"

Fatty Wynn asked the question as the Fourth Form came out after morning lessons. The fat Fourth-Former was looking decidedly warlike.

"Steady on, Fatty," said Figgins, grinning. "Gussy didn't mean it, you know. It was only the little way he has."

"I'm going to squash him!"

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Oh, here you are! You utter lunatic! You frabjous burbler! I was perishing with hunger, and the toffee would have saved me—"

"Well, you see—"

"I had hardly any breakfast," said Fatty Wynn, with a glance round for sympathy. "Only eggs, and a couple of rashers, and a pork-pie, and a slice of cold pudding, and the tarts, and the chunk of cake. I was famishing in the classroom, and—"

"You must have been," said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And that idiot—"

"I wefuse to be called an idiot!"

"That howling jackass—"

"I decline to be chawactewised as a jackass!"

"That frabjous ass—"

"I uttably wefuse—"

"That shrieking dummy gave Lathom the toffee! I'm going to squash him!" And Fatty Wynn pushed back his cuffs in a very businesslike way.

"Vewy well, Wynn. Undah the circs, I do not see that I have any weseource but to thwash you," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, collar him!" said Figgins.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Leggo!" yelled Fatty Wynn.

"Rats!" said Figgins cheerfully.

Figgins and Kerr seized Fatty Wynn by the arms and marched him off forcibly. Blake and Digby did the same for the vainly protesting Arthur Augustus.

"You uttah asses!" said D'Arcy, when they released him at last, Fatty Wynn having been marched into the New House. "I shall have to thwash Wynn. It is a mattah of dig with me now. I wefuse to let the mattah dwop."

"We'll jolly well let you drop if you don't!" said Blake.

"Wats!"

"Stop him!" roared Blake, as the swell of St. Jim's rushed off towards the New House, evidently bent upon avenging his offended dignity upon the plump person of Fatty Wynn.

"Stop him!" shouted Digby.

The Terrible Three were strolling out into the quad, and they saw D'Arcy running. They strolled into his path.

"Stop him, Tom Merry!"

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry.

D'Arcy halted as Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther lined up to dispute his further progress.

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"Pway get out of the way, deah boys!" he exclaimed. "I am goin' to thwash Wynn!"

"Rats!"

"It is a question of dig."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Got him!" gasped Blake, coming up breathlessly, and inserting two fingers into the back of D'Arcy's collar. "Got the duffer!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Now then, you'll agree to keep the peace, or down you go into the mud!" said Blake warningly. "What is it to be?"

"Upon the whole, I will let Fatty Wynn off," said D'Arcy. Blake released him, with a chuckle.

"Good!"

"But I am afwaid that, undah the circs, it will not be possible for me to wegard you as fwjends," said D'Arcy, putting up his eyeglass. "You are a set of boundahs! Howevah, I have to speak to you on the subject of footah."

"Why, that's all settled!" said Tom Merry. "It was all finished when we chucked you out of the study last evening."

"It was not settled! I have decided to waise a second eleven."

"Go hon!"

"And play Highcliffe!"

"Rats!"

"You can play the Gwammah School without me. I will take my eleven ovah to Highcliffe. Are you agweecable?"

"Not much!"

"And why not?"

"Well, you'd be licked, you see. The Highcliffe chaps are not first-chop form, but they're strong enough to lick any second eleven we could raise out of the junior Forms here. We've got all the best players in the junior team now. And, as a matter of absolute fact, Gussy, you're not an exactly ideal football captain. If it were choosing a necktie or a silk hat, I'd rely on you to the last shot in the locker. But footer—"

"I wegard your wemarks as fwivolous! As I wemarked, I have decided!"

"Nobody else has a say in the matter, I suppose?" suggested Lowther.

"No, deah boy; I have made up my mind!" said Arthur Augustus. "As I bwrought ovah the challenge fwom Highcliffe, it is my place to find an eleven to lick them. I am goin' to do it. Howevah, I don't want to have any wov on the subject. I suppose that if I waise an eleven that can beat yours, Tom Mewwy, you will be willin' to agwee to my takin' it ovah to Highcliffe to meet Ponsohby?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

"That is agweed, then?"

"Certainly!"

"Vewy good! I will now pwocced to wecwuit the eleven," said D'Arcy, with a great deal of dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see no cause for wibald laughtah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy swept the juniors with a scornful glance through his eyeglass, and stalked away. He left them chuckling.

"Gussy's in earnest," remarked Manners. "My only hat! I shall be glad to see the second eleven when he raises it."

"What-ho!" grinned Blake. "There are some chaps we keep as reserves, and they can play footer, but I don't think they will play for Gussy."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"Lemme see," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "We have Merry, Manners, Lowther—the pick of the bunch—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn; Blake, Herries, Digby, Kangaroo, Dane—as Gussy was leaving himself out. Dane will be glad to play in his place."

"I should think so!"

"There are some good players left—Glyn, Reilly, and Macdonald, anyway. Not enough to make up an eleven to play Highcliffe. Besides, we want Glyn, Reilly and Macdonald as reserves. I shall make some changes in the team before it goes over to Highcliffe. Any fellow who is damaged or fagged will be replaced, so I can't let Gussy have any of my reserves," grinned Tom Merry.

"Not much!"

"Hallo, Skimpole!"

The genius of the Shell came up, blinking in the bright winter sunshine.

"Found your team yet, Skimmy?" asked Tom Merry.

"No!" answered the Determinist of St. Jim's. "I am sorry, Merry, but I have not been able to."

"There's Gussy over yonder, under the elms," said the junior captain of St. Jim's. "Why not go and join his team?"

"I think I will, Tom Merry," said Skimpole. And he walked away.

CHAPTER 7.
Shocking!

"Glyn, deah boy!" Bernard Glyn, the lad from Liverpool, did not look round. He was busy in his study—the end study in the Shell passage. Glyn was a youthful inventor, and the contrivances he originated in the end study had caused a great deal of amusement—and some trouble—in the School House. His electric walking-sticks, and chairs that closed like a vice upon the sitter were well known among the juniors, though strangers were sometimes taken in by them still.

"I say, Glyn!"

"Get out!"

"Eh?"

"Buzz off!"

"I want to speak to you."

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

"It's important!"

"Bosh!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy felt for his eyeglass, jammed it into his eye, and surveyed Bernard Glyn with a disdainful expression. The manner of the Liverpool lad could not be said to be either polite or encouraging.

Glyn was busy. He had what appeared to be an oblong box covered with American cloth on the table, and from the box two handles protruded. An insulated wire connected the box with a battery under the table.

"Weally, Glyn, I must regard you as a wude beast!" said D'Arcy. "I came to ofah you a gweat distinction!"

"Go and offer it to somebody else, then!" howled Glyn. "Can't you see I'm busy!"

"It's about the footah on Saturday."

"Rats!"

"I am waisin' a second eleven to meet Highcliffe, while Tom Mewwy's eleven goes ovah to the Gwammah School."

"Poof!"

"I ofah you a place in the team!"

"Go and eat coke!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy grew crimson. He advanced into the study, and pushed back his beautiful white cuffs.

"I shall be sowwy to intewwupt you, Glyn, but I am goin' to thwash you. Will you kindly stop that wot—"

"Outside!"

"Wats!"

"Get out, you idiot!"

"I wufuse to be called an idiot! Are you goin' to put up your hands?"

"You utter duffer!"

"That's a beginnin'!" said D'Arcy, giving the Shell fellow a gentle tap on the ear. "Now, pway put your hands up, deah boy!"

Bernard Glyn gave a roar.

"You fearful ass! I can't leave this now. Here, hold this handle for a minute, while I connect the wire!"

"Certainly, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, who was always obliging, even in his most hostile moments. "With pleasuah!"

"This handle! Quick!"

D'Arcy grasped the handle. The next moment a wild yell rang through the study, and Arthur Augustus was dancing convulsively.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bernard Glyn.

"Ow! Yow! Bai Jove! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus tried to let go the handle. But he could not. His hand clung to it, in spite of himself.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

He understood now that Glyn had made him take hold of that handle, and had then turned on a powerful current of electricity to punish him for his interruption of the experiment, whatever it was.

And he could not let go!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Glyn.

"You howwid wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Help! Wescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! Help!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry Noble, rushing into the study.

And then he saw D'Arcy clasp the handle and dancing, and he yelled:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped the Cornstalk. "This is funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Help! Wescue!"

Half a dozen fellows were looking into the study now.

(Continued on page 12.)



Do you know a good joke? If so, send it to "THE GEM JESTER," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.). Fine footballs are awarded every week for the two best jokes received, and a half-a-crown is paid for every other joke that appears in this column.

A NEW EXCUSE.

Boss (to office-boy): "What do you mean by arriving at this time in the morning?"

Office-boy: "Well, you see, sir, I couldn't sleep any longer! A football has been awarded to B. George, 1, Coxwell Road, Ladywood, Birmingham, 16.

NOT ENOUGH LIGHT!

An Aberdonian purchased a wireless set, but after a few days he returned it to the dealer.

"What is the matter with it?" asked the dealer.

"The set's awricht," said the Aberdonian, "but I couldna read by the lamps inside!"

A football has been awarded to W. Moffat, 340, Dundyvan Road, Coatbridge.

VALUE FOR MONEY.

Teacher: "Now, Brown, if a shilling was divided between six boys, what would each one get?"

Brown: "The GEM, sir!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to G. Hine, 153, Borough Road, Wallasey, Cheshire.

SAFE FROM THAT STRAP.

Mother (in crowded bus): "Tommy, doesn't it hurt you to see your father holding on to a strap?"

Tommy: "Only at home!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Houston, 6, Ealand Crescent, Batley, Yorks.

BOTH PUT OUT!

First Actor: "Was your landlady put out when you couldn't pay your bill?"

Second Actor: "Yes—and so was I!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Jordan, 81, The Ring, South Yardley, Birmingham.

A DOUBLE MISTAKE.

A passenger on an American express train discovered that there was one black shoe and one brown shoe beneath his sleeping berth in the morning, so he called to the negro attendant for an explanation.

"Well," said the attendant, "ef dat don't beat all! Dat's de second time dis morning dat mistake's happened!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to M. Young, 38, Bouverie Road, Stoke Newington, London, N.16.

HE HAD EATEN HIS ROCK!

Teacher: "Smith, spell Llandudno."

Smith: "I can't, sir."

Teacher: "But you spelt it right in your essay on 'My holiday'."

Smith: "Yes, sir—but I've eaten my rock now!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Voller, 47, Bursledon Road, Bitterne, Southampton.

NOT LOST!

"Captain," said the cabin-boy, "is a thing lost when you know where it is?"

"No, you fool!" came the answer.

"Well, sir, your silver teapot's at the bottom of the sea!" Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Bellamy, 23, Roscoe Street, Scarborough.

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They roared with laughter at the curious antics of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Wescue!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shocking thing, ain't it?" gasped Hancock.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you get out of the study, make it pax, and not come back again, if I let you go?" demanded Bernard Glyn.

"Certainly not! I am goin' to thwash you!"

"I'll turn it on a little stronger, then!"

"Ow!"

"How do you like that?"

"Yow!"

"A little more?"

"Yawwooh!"

"Are you going to clear out, then?"

"Yow! Yaas, wathah!"

"And not come back?"

"Yaas!"

"Make it pax?"

"Yaas!" wailed D'Arcy. "I'll—I'll do anythin', only shut off that fearful thing. Pway don't be a beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Glyn shut off the current. D'Arcy let the handle go, and staggered to a chair, and collapsed into it. There was perspiration in big drops on his aristocratic brow. Fellows in the doorway were shrieking.

"Perhaps you won't interrupt an experiment again, Gussy," grinned Glyn. "I'm making a new dodge for my mechanical man, and you came in at the wrong moment, you see."

"I regard you as a wank outsiders!"

"Well, you are an insider at present, but please get outside. You're an awfully nice chap on the other side of the door, with the door locked," said Glyn.

"Weally, Glyn—"

"Outside, Gussy. I'm busy!"

"I regard you with uttahn contempt. I uttahnly wefuse to have you in my eleven, Glyn," said Arthur Augustus, and he stalked out of the doorway of the end study, shaking the dust of that apartment from his feet, so to speak.

Bernard Glyn grinned and went on with his work. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away in search of recruits. His first attempt towards recruiting the second eleven had not panned out very well; but he was not cast down. In the passage a bony youth ran up to him, and caught hold of a button with bony fingers. It was Skimpole, of course.

"Ah, I've been looking for you, D'Arcy. I hear that you are forming a second junior eleven to meet Highcliffe!" exclaimed Skimpole breathlessly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I am taking up football—not from any predilection towards childish games, you understand, but because I wish to demonstrate in my own person the mastery of mind over matter," explained Skimpole. "I suppose you are willing to let me captain the eleven?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Have you any objection?"

"Well, yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, with heavy sarcasm. "I fancy that if I thought the mattah out vevy carefully, I could find a slight objection somewhere."

"I do not see why. However—"

"As a mattah of fact, Skimmay, I am captainin' the team myself, and that's settled!"

"Oh, very well! Will you be playing centre-back?"

"Centre which?"

"Centre-back," said Skimpole, who had not devoted as much time to studying football as to studying Determinism, or other varieties of nonsense. "I think I should be able to play best as centre-back."

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, do you accept me as centre-back?"

"You uttahn ass, there are only two full-backs, and how can one be centre?" demanded the swell of the School House.

Skimpole rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I suppose I have made an error. I do not pay much attention to these foolish games. Perhaps what I was thinking of is the half-forward."

"The what?"

"The half-forward. Will you play me as half-forward?"

"You shwiekin' ass, there isn't such a thing! Pway go back to Determinism, Skimmay—it's a thing that suits your waviety of intellect—and leave football alone."

"Nonsense. What place will you take yourself?"

"Centah-forward."

"Well, I will be with you—say, next to centre-forward."

"That would be inside-wight or inside-left, stupid!"

"I am willing to take the inside-right, if it is left to me."

"Eh! If it is wight, it won't be left, you ass!"

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"I mean, if it is left to me. However, I am quite willing to take the left-wing, and that will be all right."

"I am afraid you are gettin' wathah mixed, Skimmay. In any case, I shan't play you in the Second Eleven. When I waise a team to play Colney Hatch or Bwoadmoor I will give you a place with pleasuah—as centre-back, half-forward, or thwee-quarth goalkeepah. But until then you stick to Determinism!"

"Really, D'Arcy—"

But D'Arcy marched on.

Skimpole blinked after him through his glasses, and shook his head sadly.

"Dear me," he murmured, "this is really shocking! I cannot attribute D'Arcy's conduct to personal jealousy—he is above that. My doubts as to his sanity are strengthened. How sad—how very sad, his brain seems quite gone!"

And Skimpole shook his head again.

CHAPTER 8.

Recruiting!

"GORE, deah boy!"

Gore of the Shell looked round. He was standing on the School House steps, apparently waiting for something or somebody, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy called up.

"Hallo!" he said.

Arthur Augustus wasn't on particularly good terms with Gore. The fellow who had always been called the cad of the Shell was certainly much improved lately. D'Arcy, however, though he never bore malice, could not forget caddish actions in a hurry. Still, he was ready to "tolewate" Gore, as he expressed it; and as he caught sight of the big Shell fellow, it struck him that he would make an excellent recruit for D'Arcy's eleven. Gore had lately taken very kindly to football.

"Gore, deah boy, I'm goin' to make you an offah."

"Good!" said Gore, with a grin. "If it's a fiver, I'll take it. If it's a gold watch, I'll think about it. If it's one of your tenor solos, you can keep it!"

"Weally, Goah!"

"Have you seen Tom Merry?"

"He was in the quad some time ago, Gore."

"I'm waiting for him," said Gore. "I wanted to speak to him. What is it you've got on your mind, though? You can go ahead."

"You've heard that I'm waisin' a second eleven to take to Highcliffe?"

Gore chuckled.

"I think the whole school has," he remarked.

"Vevy good! Will you join it?"

"Join what—the eleven?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"What for?"

"To play Highcliffe, of course."

"Ask me again on the Fifth of November!" said Gore. "Hallo, here's Tom Merry! Merry—I say, Merry, I want to speak to you!"

"Weally, Gore—"

"Merry! I say, Tom Merry!"

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry, halting by the School House steps. "What's the trouble?"

Gore descended the steps.

"I want you to put me down as a reserve for the Grammar School match," he said. "I hear you will be making some minor changes in the team after playing the Grammarians before going over to Highcliffe. Do you think I'm good enough?"

It was very different from Gore's old way of talking to Tom Merry. The hero of the Shell nodded with a smile.

"Certainly!" he said. "We have four good reserves—Reilly, Glyn, Pratt of the New House, and Macdonald. I'll put you down, too. I may make five changes, though I expect there will be only two or three. It's according to how the Grammar School match works out. I'll do my best for you."

"Thanks!"

And Tom Merry strolled on in one direction and Gore in another. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked after them alternately, and his very eyeglass seemed to glitter with indignation. Tom Merry suddenly turned back.

"Gussy, old man—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"We're going to practise together shortly, the whole team. Are you in the team for the Grammar School, or are you out of it?"

"I have informed you, Tom Mewwy, that I am captainin' a new team to meet Highcliffe, and, therefore, I shall not be able to play in the Gwammawian match."

"You have fully decided?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

(Continued on page 14.)

GATHER ROUND HERE WITH YOUR EDITOR, CHUMS!



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

HALLO, chums,—This week I am quoting extracts from two letters recently received from very enthusiastic readers—letters that are typical of so many that I get from my chums. The first comes from James T. West, of Streatham, S.W.16, and this is what he writes:

"I have been reading the GEM for one year, and I feel that I must congratulate you on the marvellous and exciting stories of St. Jim's which appear in it each week. It is not often that you can get a good gem cheap, and a fellow who is not buying this bargain doesn't know what he is missing. I have read other school books which are very good, but none of them quite come up to the GEM."

This is the other letter, which comes from Albert F. Barnes, of Hackney, N.1, who is a comparatively new reader:

"I take this opportunity of congratulating you upon the incorporation of "The Nelson Lee" with the GEM, and must say that it is a real good twopennyworth of reading, with stories suitable for people no matter what the age."

Thanks, James and Albert, for your very nice letters. I feel that it is only fair occasionally to quote such letters in my chat, for they show the general feeling of readers towards the GEM.

"THE PRISONER OF THE MOAT HOUSE!"

Next week's ripping yarn of the chums of St. Jim's is one of the super-thriller type with a big-surprise ending. The story centres around a sinister old house, which is surrounded by a moat. Gussy is going past it when suddenly he is thrown a packet which contains a letter appealing for help. The writer of the letter says he is a prisoner, and pleads for the finder to rescue him. Needless to say, the chums of St. Jim's take up the hunt, and their thrilling night adventures at the old Moat House makes a story you will

enjoy throughout—with a twist at the end that will come as a surprise to you!

HANDY IN AN OPIUM DEN!

After their thrilling adventures, the chums of St. Frank's are having a fine time in Yang Fu, but you can be sure it is not long before Handforth is up to something. He wants to explore the mysteries of an opium den! And there's no stopping Handy once he gets an idea. What happens to him you will read in the next powerful chapters of

"ST. FRANK'S VERSUS FOO CHOW!"

In our next exciting picture-story Mick the Mountie is sent out by himself to track down a gang of rustlers. His nerve-tingling adventures are one continuous thrill. The laughs for next Wednesday are, as usual, supplied by readers themselves. The Jester has sorted out another batch of funny jokes, for which the senders will receive footballs and half-crowns. In conclusion—here is a hint for you—there is a magnificent surprise coming along, which will create the biggest stir ever known in the long history of the old paper! But of that more anon!

A FLIGHT FOR SIXPENCE.

A certain air-taxi firm advertise flights at sixpence per mile. One day the chief instructor of the firm was working on a plane on the aerodrome when he was approached by two small boys. He turned to ask them what they wanted, and one boy said: "We want sixpennyworth of taxi-ing!" For a moment the instructor was taken somewhat aback, and the boy went on. "Your advertisement says air-taxis sixpence per mile. We want to taxi; we've seen it done. You know what I mean, an aeroplane taxis across the aerodrome before it takes off." The instructor realised that this was true enough, so he got out a plane, and the two boys joyfully climbed in. The pilot took off, flew

for a mile, and landed on the drome again! And that's how two cute youngsters got a flight for sixpence each!

INTERESTING NEWS?

Have you seen the wonderful offer made by Nestlé's? If you turn to their advertisement on another page of this issue, you will learn how to obtain five Free Coupons, as well as a fine booklet showing the many gifts they offer. How would you like a table-tennis set, or a fine model speed-boat?

There are dozens of wonderful toys and games like these in their Free Gift Book. Fill in the coupon and start collecting right away.

HATS OFF TO BOBBY!

Bobby Landells is a sixteen-year-old boy from Blyth. His family were badly in need of money, and Bobby decided that he must do something about it. He walked all the way to London and started looking for a job, but without much luck. Then one day he was coming from the hotel in the East End where he had been living, and he passed the Blackfriars Ring. Something prompted him to go back and ask there for a job, and he was told that there was a job for any boy who could box. He went inside and was looked over by a professional pugilist, and it was arranged that he was to have a fight, and get thirty shillings if he won. All through that fight he remembered how badly his parents needed that money, and he fought for all he was worth. Eventually he ran out the winner, and the crowd were told by an official just why Bobby had fought. So touched were the crowd by his pluck, and so pleased at the splendid fight he had put up, that in a moment money began to shower into the ring, hurled from all parts of the audience. Altogether Bobby was presented with £8, so he kept enough for his fare home, and wired the rest to his people. Bravo, Bobby!

THE WHEEL-LESS TRAIN!

A young Russian inventor has just designed the very latest thing in trains. To start with it has no wheels, and on that account it does not require rails. It is shaped like a cigar, being very completely streamlined, as are all the cars of the train. Each car will be one hundred and twenty feet in length, with a weight of forty tons, and seating for one hundred and ten passengers. The train runs on two huge ball bearings, which fit into concrete grooves along which the train runs. These ball-bearings are driven by electric motors which are mounted inside them. It is hoped that the train will be capable of a speed of about a hundred and eighty miles an hour. At present experiments are being carried out with a model on a three-mile track near Moscow.

THE EDITOR.

R. J. Braae, 44, Currie Street, Ware Road, Hertford, wants correspondents interested in wireless, electricity, or mechanics.

W. R. Sheffield, 2, Trafalgar Avenue, Ladypool Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, wants correspondents overseas; ages 15-16.

L. Richings, 33, Quarry Park Road, Peverell, Plymouth, wants a correspondent overseas; age 13-14.

J. Masters, 594, Kingsbury Road, Erdington, Birmingham, wants a correspondent in Germany.

Miss V. Moren, 47, Westgate Street, Gloucester, wants girl correspondents; ages 12-16.

Miss Elvira Delle Piane Tylesias, Potosi No. 60, Carrasco, Montevideo, Uruguay, South America, wants girl correspondents.

Wm. Leitch, 87, Mansfield Place, Torry, Aberdeen, wants to hear from readers who have collected back numbers of the "Nelson Lee."

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PEN PALS

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

E. S. Andrews, 129a, Lordship Lane, East Dulwich, S.E.22, wants correspondents in Australia, keen on stamps, and Tom Merry & Co.

J. H. Birch, Avenue Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, wants correspondents in U.S. and Canada, interested in cycling, aeroplanes, and all sports; ages 16-17.

Albert Raymond Waite, 17, Austen Avenue, Balby, Doncaster, wants correspondents interested in boxing, wrestling, or electricity; ages 9-10.

D'Arcy's Dud Eleven!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Vewy good!"
 And Tom Merry walked away whistling. Arthur Augustus remained on the School House steps, thinking deeply. He would have been glad of both Glyn and Gore for his famous eleven, but they were evidently not to be had. The time was short, and he had not secured a single recruit so far for the new team.

Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, was coming over to visit St. Jim's on Friday evening, and D'Arcy wanted to have his team in readiness then for the Highcliffe skipper to see. At present, however, the team consisted wholly and solely of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Mellish came up the steps, and D'Arcy signed to him to stop. Mellish wasn't much of a footballer, but if he would join it would be a beginning, and others might follow his example.

"Mellish, deah boy, I want to speak to you."

Mellish grinned.
 "How many have you got so far?" he asked.

"Eh?"
 "I'm not joining any amateur teams, thank you!"

"Weally, Mellish—"
 "I'll tell you what, though," said Mellish. "If you like to stand a big feed you could get the fellows to join, especially if you promise them another after the match."

"Bai Jove!"
 "I'd join myself on those terms."
 "I should not like the fellows to back me up from base motives like that," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

Mellish shrugged his shoulders.
 "Then I fancy you won't get a team," he said.

"Of course, I wish to tweek my men generously," said D'Arcy. "There is weally nothin' mean about me, you know."

"Now you're talking!" said Mellish heartily.

"I should be most happy to meet the fellows over a decent feed, and talk the matter ovah with them," said Arthur Augustus. "It would be a pwopah and suitable occasion for a discuss."

"Good!"
 "Pewwaps you would be good enough to help me wecwuit on those terms, Mellish."

"Yes, rather! A feed when we meet, and a specially big one after the match, whether we win or not."

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "Good! You could get half the Fourth Form to join on those terms, to say nothing of the Shell," said Mellish heartily. "Suppose you go and see to the grub. It will take some time. I'll speak to the fellows—I'll guarantee that after afternoon school we'll have a mass meeting—say, in the woodshed."

"Vewy good!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy felt in his pockets for the latest fiver from his "governah," and strode away towards the school shop.

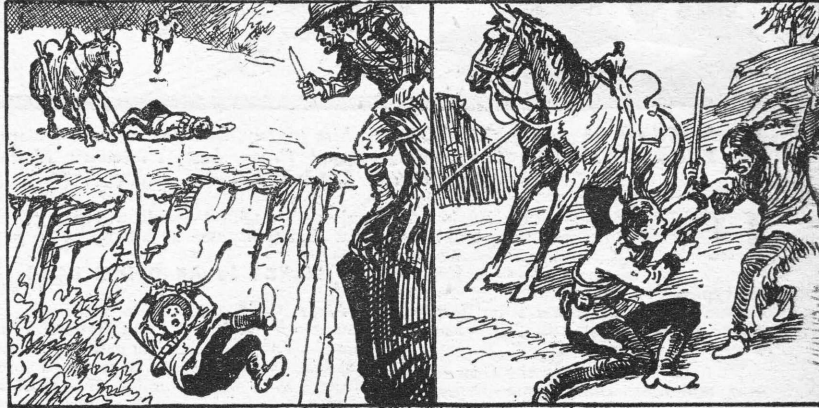
During school in the afternoon, a number of notes were passed along the desks with the information that the writers were anxious to attend the meeting in the woodshed, and that they were very willing to join the new eleven.

Arthur Augustus' bosom swelled with pride.

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Mick Ray, a young recruit of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police led by "Killer" Gaston. The two Mounties get on the trail of Larry is suddenly shot from behind, and an outlaw appears.



As Mick felt himself falling, his grip instinctively tightened on the rope attached to the pommel of his horse. Down, down into space, with the outlaw's mocking laughter ringing in his ears!

On the other side of the ravine the Indian who had shot Larry came running forward. But Larry had been only momentarily stunned, and his fist flashed out, to the surprise of the Indian.



Reaching safety, the Mounties secured their prisoner to a tree after Larry had dressed himself in the Indian's clothes. "That's a good idea, Mick," he said. "We'll get into Gaston's stronghold yet!"

While Mick crouched behind a box near the entrance to the outlaws' stronghold, Larry, disguised as the Indian, moaning on the ground and pretending to be wounded. The ruse worked!



They lay hidden until nightfall, and then crept down upon the bandits' quarters. "Guess we'll get ready for the big job we're pulling off to-night!" they heard "Killer" Gaston say.

Near the shack the Mounties had covered a narrow gully, and across Larry stretched a rope. "Now for Mick!" he whispered. And Mick deliberately fired his gun into the air!

(Mick goes out after rustlers next w

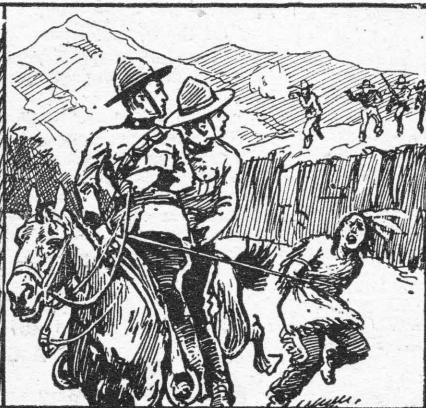
MOUNTIED!

OF THE WILD WEST!

sent out with Larry Hawkins to bring in a gang of outlaws and Mick is crossing a ravine to their hide-out when he starts to cut the rope from which Mick is suspended.



he whirled round; a lightning shot the outlaw who had tried to kill and a few seconds later Mick was up the ravine, suffering only minor injuries.



Fortunately Mick had fallen against some bushes, saving his life. Now the two Mounties roped the half dazed Indian and rode away swiftly, for Larry's shot had attracted the other outlaws.



unsuspecting sentries lowered across the river and rushed forward. Suddenly Mick sprang from hiding, gun drawn. "Hands up!" he snapped, and the outlaws were trapped!



Swiftly the two Mounties roped the sentries and then crossed the plank. They were in the outlaws' stronghold at last! "Now we'll round up the rest of the gang!" cried Mick.



reports attracted the outlaws, who rushing up in a body. One by one they were stripped over the rope—and plunged near-by pool of water. "We've got the gang, buddy!" whooped Larry.

Don't miss his thrilling adventures.)



The outlaws were bound together, and eventually the Mounties arrived back at Fort Lacqui with their prisoners. "Good work!" said the sergeant. "And now, Mick, I've got another job for you!"

He had often felt that he was a born leader of his fellows, and here was his secret conviction being borne out at last, by proofs.

It really seemed that he had only to exert his natural genius for command to take the leadership of the juniors away from Tom Merry and Blake and Figgins.

But Gussy would not do that.

So long as he succeeded in raising an effective eleven to meet the Highcliffe team he would be satisfied, and after a glorious victory he was prepared to retire modestly into the background again.

He was thinking more of his new eleven than of his work that afternoon, with the result that Mr. Lathom gave him fifty lines, and the German master fifty more.

But little cared the swell of the School House for lines. He had already received the names of twelve adherents, and Mellish had whispered to him that there were a crowd more all ready to join.

Eagerly D'Arcy waited for the hour of dismissal to come; and even more eagerly his followers waited.

D'Arcy was anticipating forming his eleven and giving them some combined practice in the gym, under his own masterly leadership, and the recruits were anticipating a feed in the woodshed, which was much more important in their eyes.

As it was necessary, as a preliminary, to beat Tom Merry's team before they could be allowed the responsibility of meeting the Highcliffians, the recruits took the football part of the matter more or less as a joke; but the feed was a serious business enough. They were all ready to take that seriously.

When the welcome dismissal came at last, D'Arcy was the richer by a hundred lines, but he did not give the circumstance even a thought.

He hurried out of the class-room, and Blake & Co. watched him with a grin—watched how his followers gathered loyally round him, prepared to march anywhere under his leadership, especially to the woodshed.

"I think we're all here, deah boys," he remarked.

"Yes, here we are," said Mellish.

"Pway follow me."

"What-ho!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good!"

Arthur Augustus walked on with stately steps, putting on his silk hat as he went, and the recruits for the D'Arcy eleven followed him.

Blake nudged him in the ribs as he passed.

"All are welcome, I suppose?" he asked affably.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I am sowwy to say no, Blake," he replied. "On the pwesent occasion I am entahtainin' only the membabs of my eleven."

"Is that the kind of arithmetic you learn in the Fourth Form?" asked Tom Merry. "You've got twenty chaps in your eleven."

"Thq west are weserves, of course."

"Of course, it's only a joke about other fellows not being admitted," said Lowther.

"Not at all, deah boy. I am quite sewious." D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon the grinning footballers of the junior eleven. "If any of you fellows like to play in my team instead of Tom Mewwy's, you can come along."

"Rats!"

"Vewy well. By the way, you wembabh your pwomise to withdwaw your objections to my team playin' Highcliffe, if—"

"If your team licks mine," said Tom Merry, laughing.

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"Well, you haven't much time," said Tom Merry. "It's too late for a match to-day, and to-morrow is Saturday, and we're too busy to-morrow."

"Better ask the Head to let us off morning school to-morrow," suggested Blake. "He would be sure to do it if Gussy asked him."

"Pway do not be fwivolotus, Blake. I was thinkin' that we might play in the gym. We should have plenty of woom there, and it would be all wight for puttin' the match to the test, at all events."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Tom. "A little practice in the gym will do us no harm."

"Vewy well. We'll meet you at seven."

"Good!"

"Ponsonby is comin' ovah fwom Highcliffe, you know, to settle about these new awnggements, and he can see the match. It will amuse him."

"My hat! It will—if he has any sense of humour," grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy gave Lowther a glance of disdain and marched off with his followers, who were showing signs of impatience.

That impatience, however, was by no means displeasing to Arthur Augustus. It showed that they were keen, he thought. So they were—about the feed in the woodshed.

They marched straight to the woodshed. D'Arcy took out his watch.

"The grub will be here in five minutes, deah boys," he remarked. "I ordahed it to be delivered aftah we had awvived, in case any of the wottahs should waid it."

"Awfully thoughtful of you, Gussy," exclaimed Kerruish.

"Hallo, here's the grub!"

Taggles, the porter, came in with a large box on his shoulders. Taggles was looking amiable for once. However, he grunted as he put the box down.



THE KID FROM TEXAS

It was a dangerous task, even for the iron-nerved Rio Kid, to get the Donna Estrella and her father safely across the plains to the Mexican border. Don Guzman Carrero and his men hemmed them in on all sides, but the boy outlaw from Texas stuck to his promise and fought out his desperate, single-handed battle to the last!

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BOYS' FRIEND
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"It's 'eavy!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! Open the box, deah boys."

D'Arcy slipped a shilling into Taggles' horny hand, and the school porter departed.

The recruits opened the box willingly and readily enough. The array of good things within made every mouth water.

It was close upon tea-time, and the juniors had a whole afternoon's hunger, as it were, and ready to be let loose on the contents of the box.

"By Jove!" said Mellish. "This is good! I think D'Arcy is about the best football captain the Fourth Form could possibly have."

"Or the Shell, either!" said French.

"What-ho!" said Kerruish. "This is ripping! My only hat! There's enough to cut and come again, and no mistake."

"Pway go ahead, deah boys!"

The dear boys accepted the invitation.

They went ahead.

D'Arcy had certainly not done things by halves in laying in the provisions for that memorable feed. There was enough for everyone—in fact, too much! In a few moments there was only one sound heard in the shed—the steady munching of active jaws.

CHAPTER 9. A Great Feed!

"GOOD!"

"Ripping!"

"Pass the tarts!"

"Shove the patties over this way!"

"Jelly for me—try the jelly!"

"These pineapples are ripping!"

Such were the remarks that punctuated the silence of the woodshed, as the juniors began to find time for talk.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the scene with beaming smiles.

He ate very little himself. He was not a great eater. But the others did enough for him. Large as the supply was, it showed a considerable diminution in the course of ten minutes.

"I twust you find ewevythin' to your satisfaction, deah boys," said D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather!"

"What-ho!"

"Absolutely ripping!"

"Vewy good! Now about the football—"

"By George, yes; I'd forgotten the football!" said Kerruish, with frankness. "You were saying something about a second eleven, or something, weren't you?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and gave Kerruish a look which certainly ought to have withered him up. But Kerruish was exploring the mysteries of a pork pie, and did not even see it.

"Weally, Kewwuish—"

"This is a ripping pie!"

"About the football, deah boys. I am goin' to form up the eleven aftah the feed, and we are goin' to play Tom Mewwy's eleven in the gym at seven."

"Good! Beef this way."

"And ham!"

"Tarts! Tarts! Tarts!"

"I twust that we shall form a weally wippin' eleven, and give Tom Mewwy's eleven a weally feahful thwashin'," said Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, rather! Pass the pineapple."

"It is uttah wot to say that there is no matewial in the Form to make up a team vewy nearly as good as the wewulah juniah one!"

"Ham this way—and beef!"

"Butter!"

"Cake!"

"Pway listen to me, deah boys—"

"Certainly. I was asking you for cake, Mellish."

"Here you are! I'll try those puffs, I think."

"They're ripping, and there's plenty of them. Were you speaking, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah, Hancock, I certainly was speakin'! I was goin' to say that, though the new eleven would not be quite up to the form of Tom Mewwy's team, still, with me as skippah, I think things will turn out all wight."

"Ha, ha, ha! I mean yes, of course!"

"When you have finished the feed I will allot the places in the eleven," said D'Arcy. "All those who cannot get places will be kept on as weserves."

"I hear there's to be another feed after the match."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I suppose the reserves join in it as well as the players?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"Pray don't be so particular on those points, young Yates," said Mellish, with a shake of the head. "You'll make D'Arcy think that we're thinking more of the feed than the football."

"Oh, no!" said Yates, shaking his head in turn. "I'm sure D'Arcy would not think anything of that sort of us."

"He knows how keen we are," said Kerruish.

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, in the innocence of his heart. "I can wely on you chaps to back me up like anythin'."

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

"When you have finished—"

"Well, I think I'm done," said Mellish.

"Yes," said Hancock, with a sigh. "These things can't go on for ever."

Arthur Augustus rose to his feet.

"Now, jump up, deah boys, and we'll awwange about the team."

The juniors showed no great alacrity in jumping up. However, they rose slowly, one by one, to their feet.

"Now, I think I shall wely upon you to keep goal, Kewwuish."

The Manx lad shook his head.

"Really, D'Arcy, you're awfully good, but I'm a bit out of practice. I don't want to shove myself forward in any way. I think, perhaps, it would be safer to have me in the reserves."

"Vevy well; you ought to know," said D'Arcy. "Pway stand aside."

Kerruish sat down on the bench and grinned. As a matter of fact, the juniors were all keen to get into Tom Merry's eleven; but when it came to D'Arcy's eleven, they were equally keen to get into the reserves.

"You will be inside-left, Smith."

Smith shook his head.

"I will if you think so, D'Arcy; but I think I should be better in the reserves. You see, I don't want to push a better man out."

"Vevy well, go aside with Kewwuish."

Smith minor sat down beside the Manx junior. They grinned at one another.

"You will be centre-half, Mellish."

"I'm a bit out of condition," said Mellish. "I really think I ought to be in the reserves. I shouldn't like to let the side down, you know."

"Oh, vevy well!"

Mellish joined the reserves. D'Arcy's eyeglass glimmered over the grinning juniors, and rested upon Hancock.

"Hancock, deah boy, I shall put you down as outside-right."

Hancock looked alarmed.

"I say, D'Arcy, I hardly think I'm up to that!" he exclaimed anxiously. "I think you had better take me on as a reserve."

"Weally, Hancock—"

"You see, it would be very painful to my feelings to think that I was keeping some better player in the back-ground," explained Hancock.

"Oh, all wight! Perkins, I shall make you outside-right."

"Better make me a reserve," said Perkins, shaking his head. "I want to play, ever so much, of course, but am I quite up to it, do you think?"

"But I can't make you all reserves," said D'Arcy, with a puzzled look. "A football team can't consist wholly of reserves, you know. There must be eleven playahs."

"Yes, that's unfortunate," said Yates.

"I know I'm jolly well not going to be one of them!" murmured Mellish, slipping out of the woodshed. "I'd rather risk missing the next feed."

"Mellish! Mellish!"

But Mellish seemed to be deaf.

"Pway don't leave the meetin' till the mattah is settled, deah boys!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, looking a little anxious. "You see, it's an awfully important matter, because I have awwanged to meet Tom Mewwy's team in the gym at seven o'clock, and Ponsonby of Highcliffe will be lookin' on."

"Perhaps it would be better to postpone the whole matter," said Smith minor.

"Yes, a good idea," corroborated several voices.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"In a few weeks' time, you see, D'Arcy—"

"We have to play Highcliffe to-morrow, deah boys. I shall now pwoceed to select the team, and I twust you will not bothah your captain by any more false modesty," said the swell of the School House, with great dignity.

And D'Arcy proceeded to make his selection. The elegant junior could be firm when he liked. He picked out ten fellows for the team, and the rest breathed great sighs of relief when they found they were to be only reserves.

The members of the team exchanged rueful glances.

After the feed, and with the prospect of more to come, they could not, for very shame's sake, refuse to keep to their bargain. But they were not happy.

CHAPTER 10.

Something New in Soccer!

TOM MERRY looked round the gym. There was a smile upon the face of the hero of the Shell.

It was close upon seven o'clock, and he was expecting D'Arcy to turn up with his eleven any minute now.

Tom Merry had been doing the honours of St. Jim's for a visitor.

It was Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe—the Upper Fourth. He was the same age as Tom Merry, and a little taller and slimmer. He had a languid air, which reminded one of Arthur Augustus; but a good look at Ponsonby revealed the fact that he had not, as D'Arcy had, the sterling stuff under his outward graces.

Ponsonby evidently had an excellent opinion of himself, but it was probable that he shared it with no one.

"So this is the gym," said Ponsonby.

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "There will be something worth seeing in here soon. We've got an indoor football match taking place."

"Really?" said Ponsonby.

"Yes. If you care to see it, you will have time before you have to get back to Highcliffe," said Tom Merry.

"I should like to see it awfully," said the Highcliffe fellow.

"I haven't seen any of you chaps play footer."

"This will be something extra special," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "It will give you a good idea of what we shall show you to-morrow."

"Really!"

"I think we've made all arrangements about the match to-morrow," Tom Merry remarked thoughtfully. "It's understood that we get over to Highcliffe at three-thirty."

"And we'll be quite ready to kick-off," said Ponsonby. "But, really, you know, you'd do better to scratch the match."

"Not at all!"

"It will be a hopeless licking for you!"

"We shall wriggle a bit at first, though, I suppose," Manners remarked sarcastically.

"Really, you know—"

"Here they are!" shouted Blake. "Here's the new eleven!"

They all glanced towards the door. Tom Merry and his men were all in football garb, ready, and the ground—somewhat reduced, of course—had been marked out with chalk lines on the floor of the gym.

D'Arcy and his merry men marched in, also clad for football.

The swell of St. Jim's had his monocle in his eye, of course.

He spotted Ponsonby, and came over towards him.

"How d'ye do, deah boy?" he said languidly. "Glad to see you! I'm weady for the match, Tom Mewwy, if you are."

"Quite ready!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Pway twot out your men, then! I suppose Ponsonby is goin' to see the match?"

"Really, yes," said Ponsonby.

"Vevy good! You will see somethin' of what you have to expect to-morrow," said D'Arcy. "Pway who is goin' to wefewee, Mewwy?"

"Lefevre of the Fifth says he will."

"That's right," said Lefevre, coming up. "I don't mind if I do."

"Thank you vevy much, Lefevre!"

Tom Merry and D'Arcy solemnly tossed for choice of ends. Tom Merry won, and awarded the kick-off to his elegant rival.

The elevens ranged up. Tom Merry's eleven looked decidedly businesslike, though they all had smiling faces. D'Arcy's eleven seemed somewhat uneasy. Some of them looked at the door of the gym as though they would have liked to bolt.

Lefevre blew the whistle, and D'Arcy kicked off.

"On the ball!" sang out Blake.

Arthur Augustus followed up the ball gallantly. There was a rush of Tom Merry's team, and the swell of St. Jim's was surrounded. His backers were sent whirling in all directions.

Smith minor sat down, and Robinson sat on him. Grey fell across both of them. Yates caught hold of another fellow round the neck and clung to him. Arthur Augustus was shifted off the ball in a twinkling.

Tom Merry rushed it goalward.

The fellows standing about the walls of the gym shrieked with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Goal!"

"Goal! Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only hat!" gasped Lefevre of the Fifth. "What blessed sort of match is this I'm refereeing?"

Tom Merry sent the ball in without effort.

Hancock had not been able to stop him. Indeed Hancock did not know the ball was coming until a goal was scored.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goal! Goal!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Really," said Ponsonby. "Is this what you call football at St. Jim's?"

Tom Merry overheard the remark.

A gleam of fun came into the eyes of the hero of the Shell. He spoke in a low voice to his followers as they lined up after the goal.

"Gussy's duffers can't touch us, kids! Keep a goal ahead so that they will be licked, and otherwise play the giddy goat. Ponsonby wants to take back a funny account to Highcliffe! Let him! We'll undeceive them on their own ground to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good wheeze!" grinned Figgins.

"What-ho!" agreed Blake.

And the juniors proceeded to "play the giddy goat."

D'Arcy's eleven could have been swept off the floor in a few minutes if Tom Merry & Co. had cared to do it.

It was not that they were particularly bad players. They were all right in their way, but the official junior team naturally included all the best players in the Lower Forms, and what were left were naturally nowhere up to their form.

Besides that, they knew they had no chance, and that alone was enough to take any wild hope that they might have entertained of victory, and to make them fumble the game.

Moreover, they were not in good training, having just finished a good feed, and Tom Merry's eleven were trained to the very highest pitch.

Naturally, the beginners were walked over.

But Tom Merry & Co. had mercy upon them.

So long as they got no goals, he was willing to allow them to amble up and down the gym, and kick the ball in all sorts of impossible directions.

The Merry players, too, performed all sorts of wild antics, falling over one another, skying the ball without rhyme or reason, getting into one another's way, and falling down with loud bumps, and so forth.

Ponsonby looked on, with a curling lip.

It never crossed his mind that he was being "rotted."

And his politeness could hardly restrain him from audible expression of his scorn for the fumbling football of the St. Jim's juniors.

This was the team he was to play on the morrow.

These were the fellows who had the astounding nerve to suppose that they could come over to Highcliffe and meet his team, after playing one match with the Grammar School in the afternoon.

It was astounding—unheard of!

Ponsonby wondered whether he could scratch the match. It was really too humiliating to have to meet such players on the football field.

The match did not last the full time.

Before the first half was over two-thirds of D'Arcy's eleven were on the sick list, and the rest were staggering about like fellows in a dream.

Only one goal had been scored—the goal kicked by Tom Merry in the first few minutes of the match.

At half-time Lefevre was not visible. He was disgusted by the display of the players, and he walked off and left them to themselves.

D'Arcy was quite willing to go on, but even he could not fail to see that his followers were more fit to go to bed than to go on playing.

"I wesign the match, Tom Mewwy," he said. "I am wathah afwaid that my men are no good, you know. It's no good goin' on."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Just as you like, Gussy. We're enjoying it, and we'll play it out to a finish, if you like."

"Thank you vevy much; but, upon the whole, I think this will do."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I see nothin' to cackle at! I have not had time to twain my men, you see; that is the weal explanation. If I had had time to twain them, it would have been all wight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howevah, undah the pwsent circs, it is evidently no good twyin' to play Highcliffe to-morrow with a wotten team like this!"

"Go hon! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Upon the whole, I will take my place in the eleven, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,340.

Tom Mewwy, and we will play the Highcliffe fellows afwah the Gwammah School, as owiginally awwanged," said D'Arcy, as he walked off the ground.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"Can't be did, Gussy!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You see, I've given your place to Dane now. Unless Dane chooses to give it up, I can't possibly turn him out to make room for you again."

"Of course, Dane will be willin' to give it up."

"Dane won't be doing anything of the sort, Gussy!" said Clifton Dane cheerfully. "I'm in the eleven, and I'm sticking in it, thank you!"

"Weally, Dane—"

"Dane will play the Grammar School," said Tom Merry decidedly, "but you shall take his place for the Highcliffe match, Gussy. I will make several changes for the second match, and that will be one of them."

"I do not see how it would be consistent with my dig to allow Dane to keep my place for the Grammah School match, Tom Mewwy!"

"Well, as a matter of absolute fact, I wasn't thinking of your dig, but of the game," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"Yaas; but you see—"

"I intended to play Dane for the first match, and one of the reserves in his place for the second. You can have the place for the Highcliffe match, if you like. It's a good offer, and you can take it or leave it."

"A fellow has to considah his dig, howevah. What do you think, Blake? Do you think I can accept Tom Mewwy's offah consistently with my dig?"

Blake nodded solemnly.

"Well, it's an important matter, and really requires thinking out," he remarked; "but, offhand, I should say that it would be all right."

"What do you say, Dig?"

"I fully endorse Blake's remarks on the subject."

"And you, Hewwies?"

"Eh?" said Herries.

"You are lookin' extwemely thoughtful, deah boy," said D'Arcy, noticing the heavy frown on Herries' brow. "Have you thought it out?"

"Yes," said Herries.

"And what do you think?"

"I think it must be the fish."

"Eh, what? I fail to comprehend, Hewwies."

"I think it must be the fish. As for the rabbit, half of that was given to young Wally's mongrel, and he's all right after it. It must have been the fish."

"What on earth are you talkin' about, Hewwies?"

"Eh? Towser, of course!"

"Towsah!"

"Yes. He's been seedy to-day, you know. You asked me if I had thought it out," said Herries, in wonder. "I was just turning the matter over in my mind when you spoke."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry.

"You uttah ass, Hewwies!" said D'Arcy. "I wasn't askin' you about the wotten health of a beastlay bulldog! I asked you whethah I could accept Tom Mewwy's offah with wegard to football mattahs, consistently with my personal dig."

"Eh? Oh, blow your dig!" said Herries.

And he hurried away to see Towser. D'Arcy cast an expressive glance after him, and then looked round at the grinning faces of Tom Merry & Co.

"Upon the whole, deah boys, I think I will accept Tom Mewwy's offah," he said. "I will allow Dane to wetaim my cap for the Gwammah School match, and will play Highcliffe afterwards. I am doin' this for the sake of the side."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "Well, Ponsonby, did you find the play interesting?"

"Very!" said Ponsonby. "I say, are you bent on playing us to-morrow?"

"Certainly!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, very well! It's time I was off now, I think," said the Highcliffe skipper, looking at his watch. "I'll get my bike."

And a few minutes later Ponsonby was pedalling home to Highcliffe, firmly convinced that the morrow's match with St. Jim's would be a farce, and that Tom Merry & Co. would be knocked sky-high, or higher.

CHAPTER 11.

The Great Day I.

SATURDAY afternoon was bright and keen and cold—an ideal day for football. The juniors of St. Jim's thought of little but the coming matches during the morning.

Two football matches in one afternoon was a tall order,

Tom Merry Puts the Saints Ahead!



Boof! The ball flashed from Tom Merry's boot straight for the corner of the goal. The Grammarians' goalie dived full length in an attempt to save, but the ball just eluded his outstretched fingers. "Goal!" yelled the St. Jim's crowd. The Saints were leading two to one!

as Blake described it, but the junior team of St. Jim's were quite keen to undertake them. The real struggle would be with the Grammarians. If Frank Monk and his men were once safely beaten, they had little doubt about Ponsonby & Co. Though it was no light task to undertake playing even a weak team directly after a struggle with a strong one.

Frank Monk had done everything he could to meet Tom Merry's wishes. He had agreed to get his team over to St. Jim's, instead of Tom Merry & Co. making the journey to the Grammar School. And he had said that he would get there as early as possible, and warned Tom Merry to be ready for him.

The St. Jim's footballers were ready the moment they had eaten their dinner, making a sparing meal on purpose. Fatty Wynn was consoled by the assurance that there would be ample opportunity for another feed on the way to Highcliffe.

Monk did very well, for at one o'clock the charabanc containing the Grammar School team rolled in at the gates of St. Jim's.

It was crammed with Grammar School youths, eager for the tussle, and confident of victory—just as confident as the Saints were, in fact.

Tom Merry greeted his old enemy cordially, and no time was lost in making the preparations for the match.

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of the School, having nothing particular on for the next two hours, had consented to referee the match. This was an honour that the juniors could fully appreciate. A goodly number of fellows gathered round the ground to watch, and among them was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant ways and his wonderful taste in ties and waistcoats, was a keen footballer, and he had always had a place in the Junior Eleven, and he had deserved it. It was not very agreeable to the swell of St.

Jim's to be a looker-on on this occasion. He turned the matter over in his mind, and then strolled up to the St. Jim's team, who were standing in a group waiting while the Grammarians changed.

"Dane, deah boy—"

Clifton Dane looked round with a grin. He knew what was coming.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

"I've been thinkin', Dane—"

"What with?" asked the Canadian, with an air of gentle interest.

"Eh? I fail to undahstand you, Dane. With my bwain, of course!"

"Oh, I didn't know you had one!"

"Weally, Dane—"

"Well, I only judged by appearances, of course," said Dane.

D'Arcy allowed that remark to pass without comment.

"I've been thinkin', deah boy, that it's a bit wisky leavin' me out of the team for this match. Tom Mewwy gave you my cap for the eleven."

"Yes. Now, if he had given me your silk hat—"

"Pway don't be fwivolous! Undah the cires, Tom Mewwy would not feel justified in turnin' you out and puttin' me in again."

"Exactly!"

"Upon the whole, I shall not insist upon his doin' so."

"Thank you for nothing!"

"Howevah, I've been thinkin', and it has occurred to me that you might pvefer to give up the place to me again, for the good of the side."

"Go hon!"

"You see, you take as much intewest in the honah and glowy of the school as I do, and you want us to beat the Gwammah boundahs, you know. Now that I have pointed it

out to you, I twust you will see the pwopwiyety of yieldin' the point."

"Strange as it may seem, Gussy, I don't."

"Weally, Dane—"

"I'm freezing on to this cap," said Clifton Dane, laughing. "But, look here, I'll tell you what. I don't like you being left right out of it, so I'll tell you what you can do. You can look on and cheer whenever I get a goal."

"Weally—"

"Hallo, they're ready!"

And Clifton Dane walked away, leaving D'Arcy shaking his head sadly. He walked back to his place, and found himself between Gore and Kerruish in the crowd.

"Hallo, Monk's won the toss!" said Gore.

"And we're kicking off," said Hancock.

"Good!"

"I don't know about being good," said Kerruish. "There's a pretty good bit of wind, and we're playing against it."

Pheep!

It was the whistle.

The ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot, and in a moment more Saints and Grammarians were mingled in a keen tussle.

"Bwavo!"

So shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as a fine rush against the wind by the Saints finished in Figgins slamming the ball into the net.

"Goal!" roared the crowd.

"Hurrah!"

"Bai Jove! Bwavo! Bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus clapped his hands till his lavender gloves split.

There wasn't a trace of ill-feeling in the heart of the swell of St. Jim's. If he couldn't be kicking goals for St. Jim's himself, the next best thing was for somebody else to be kicking them, and he cheered and clapped with his whole heart.

It was first blood to St. Jim's.

But the Grammarians looked as if they meant business when they lined up again.

Kildare blew the whistle, and they kicked off, and were at it again hammer and tongs.

If Ponsonby of Highcliffe had been present he would have seen some football that would have made him open his eyes; something very different from the farcical display in the gym the previous evening.

The St. Jim's juniors were playing up like a League team.

Tom Merry was a born leader, and he had trained his men splendidly, and they were in a condition of absolute fitness seldom attained by a junior team.

The Grammarians were in fine form, too; but, upon the whole, a keen observer would have said that they were outclassed by St. Jim's.

"Goal!"

It was a goal by Frank Monk this time.

Then the whistle went for half-time, and the players retired for a brief rest with the score level.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy strolled round during the interval. He gave Tom Merry a pat on the back, and Tom turned round and stared. He was digging a penknife into the side of a lemon, and he suspended that operation for a moment to stare at D'Arcy.

"Jollay good, Mewwy!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Eh?"

"You're playin' up well."

"Well, if you're not disappointed with us, Gussy, we haven't lived in vain," said Tom Merry solemnly. "You're sure you're satisfied?"

"Yaas, upon the whole, pewwaps there is some slight improvement I could suggest. It could only be cawwied out by permish of the Gwammah skipper and the wewewee, howevah."

"Oh, go ahead! You know how valuable your suggestions are."

"Yaas, wathah! I was thinkin' that pewwaps Dane might pwefere to wethah now, and allow me to take his place for the second half."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail uttally to see any weason for wibald laughtah! It is a sewious mattah, I think, considewin' that it is an important match."

"My dear ass—"

"I wefuse to be called an ass."

"Dane, what do you think of Gussy's suggestion?"

"Oh, rats!" said Dane.

"If you say wats to me, Dane—"

"Rats!"

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Arthur Augustus began to push back his cuffs. At the same moment a squirt of juice from Tom Merry's lemon—whether by accident or design—caught him under the chin.

There was a shriek from D'Arcy.

"Ow! Gwoogh!"

"Why, what's the matter now?" asked Tom Merry innocently.

"Gwoogh! My neck's wet, and my collah! .You careless ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall have to go and change my collah now," said Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "Pway do not commence the second half till I come back."

And he dashed off towards the School House.

Tom Merry chuckled at the idea of delaying the second half of the match till D'Arcy returned in a clean collar. The whistle went after a short five minutes, and the teams turned to their work again.

It was ten minutes before D'Arcy came back. His collar was irreproachable. He turned his eyeglass upon the field and frowned.

"I wewasted Tom Mewwy to wait till I weturned," he remarked. "I weward this as wathah uncivil of him. How is the score, Gore?"

"Same as ever," said Gore.

"Good!"

The score remained the same as ever, too, for some time. The Saints were trying hard to get ahead, but the Grammarians were on their mettle, too.

The struggle was very keen for some time. First in the St. Jim's half, and then in the visitor's half, up and down the touchline it swayed and ebbed.

With the wind behind their backs now, the Saints had a better chance, but the Grammarians' defence was splendid.

And the Grammar School lads were soon attacking, too, and they found their way through the St. Jim's defence, and Fatty Wynn was called upon again and again to save.

But Fatty Wynn was quite equal to the task.

Humorous fellows had declared that Fatty Wynn was played as goalkeeper because it was impossible for a ball to pass between the posts while he was standing there. This was a libel, for Fatty, plump as he was, was far from filling up the width of the goal. But, all the same, it seemed almost impossible to pass him. He seemed to be all hands, feet, or head, as the occasion required. The most difficult shots—hard, or fast, or slow, or anything else—were stopped with the same accuracy by the imperturbable Welsh junior. There was a good-natured grin on his chubby face all the time.

The struggle swayed back to the Grammarians' end of the field.

Tom Merry & Co. made a combined attack upon the visitors' goal, and pressed it home heavily and hotly.

Again and again the ball was rushed in, until at last—boof!—Tom Merry slammed in a lightning shot. The Grammarians' goalie dived full length in an attempt to save, but the ball just eluded his outstretched fingers.

Then St. Jim's yelled:

"Goal!"

St. Jim's juniors were two to one.

After the display that had been given all through the second half, it seemed very unlikely that the Grammar School would equalise.

But Frank Monk and his followers made desperate efforts when the game restarted. There remained only ten minutes to play, and they ticked away rapidly. More than one glance went up to the great clock of St. Jim's, visible to all on the football field. Kildare was seen to glance at his watch.

Prudence would have suggested to Tom Merry to pack his goal, leave matters where they were, and simply prevent the Grammarians from scoring till the finish. That he could easily have done.

But Tom Merry was a sportsman to his finger-tips.

It was not a league match, with points in a great competition depending on a victory; and even had it been, Tom Merry would have been a sportsman all through. He did not need the yells of exasperated spectators to tell him to "play the game!"

The St. Jim's team played hard for more goals, and they looked like getting them. But Fortune was smiling now on the Grammarians at the finish.

Carboy got away with the ball, and streaked through the St. Jim's juniors like lightning. For once Fatty Wynn was found wanting. The ball grazed his finger-tips as it shot in.

"Bai Jove!" gasped D'Arcy. "Goal!"

"Goal!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Gore. "The whistle?"

Pheep!

The whistle it was.

The match was over.

The Grammarians had equalised, after all, at the finish, and the match was a draw.

Tom Merry clapped Frank Monk on the shoulder as they walked off the field. Monk looked at him with a cheerful grin.

"Jolly good, old chap!" said Tom Merry. "Jolly good!" "Same to you," grinned Monk. "It was one of the best matches we've had, I think. It was a fight to a finish, and no mistake. I say, how do you feel like playing a second footer match this afternoon?"

Tom Merry laughed. "Oh, we shall be all right! The Highcliffe crowd are not your mettle. It's a big order, but I think we shall carry it through. We're going to try hard, anyway."

CHAPTER 12.
Off to Highcliffe!

TOM MERRY had made all his arrangements beforehand, and he always made his arrangements too carefully for anything to go amiss in any matter of importance. As soon as the match was over, the St. Jim's juniors changed, packed up their football garb, and boarded a charabanc that was already in waiting.

The Junior Eleven and the reserves all got into the charabanc. The changes in the team could be made en route. The Grammarians' charabanc rolled out of the gate after them, and accompanied them down the road towards the village. When it turned off towards the Grammar School, the Grammarians all stood up to wave their caps and give their late opponents a parting cheer.

"Good luck!" shouted Frank Monk. "Good-bye!" And they parted.

The St. Jim's team rolled on rapidly to the station, arriving in good time for the train.

Tom Merry took seventeen third-class tickets, and the crowd bundled into the train in adjoining compartments.

"Well, we're off!" exclaimed Tom Merry, settling down with a sigh of relief in a corner as the train buzzed out of the station.

"Yaas, wathah!" "I say, I hope you haven't forgotten it!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn anxiously.

"Forgotten what?"

"The grub!"

"What grub?"

"Look here, Tom Merry, don't be funny. You know we were going to have a meal in the train going to Highcliffe. We can't play Highcliffe in a state of hunger. I ate hardly anything at dinner."

"Ha, ha, ha! I was watching him," said Kerr. "He ate only enough for three."

"Well, that was moderate for Fatty," said Tom Merry. "Didn't you think of bringing any grub yourself, Fatty?"

"Only a couple of dozen sandwiches and a bag of tarts," said Fatty Wynn. "I hadn't time to get any more. Figgins rushed me into the charabanc so quickly."

"Well, I've got a bag of sandwiches I asked Mrs. Mimms for," said Tom Merry. "We only want a snack all round. Feed after the match. I rely on you to see that Fatty doesn't blow himself out, Figgy, and get out of form."

"What-ho!" said Figgins. "I'll keep an eye on him. I'm going to stop him at the sixth sandwich."

"Look here, Figgy—"

"The sixth sandwich, my boy!" said Figgins firmly. "You can gorge when we get home to St. Jim's. Six now is the limit."

"But I'm hungry."

"Well, that ought to take the edge off your appetite, anyway," grinned Monty Lowther. "I suppose you want a whole bakery and a couple of bullocks to make you feel really full."

"I'm hungry," repeated Fatty Wynn. "I'll tell you what I had for dinner—"

"Oh, don't, old chap! Life's too short to hear the list," said Lowther.

"There's your six sandwiches," said Figgins, jerking the bag away from Fatty Wynn, and allotting the provisions. "Not a bit more."

"Look here, Figgins—"

"I'm looking after you, my son. I'm standing in loco parentis on this occasion," said Figgins. "That's Latin, and settles it."

Fatty Wynn grunted, and started on the sandwiches. The other fellows had a couple each, but six seemed all too few to the Falstaff of the New House.

He made them last as long as he could, but they were gone before the train rolled into the station at Highcliffe.

"Here we are!" exclaimed Tom Merry at last.

(Continued on next page.)

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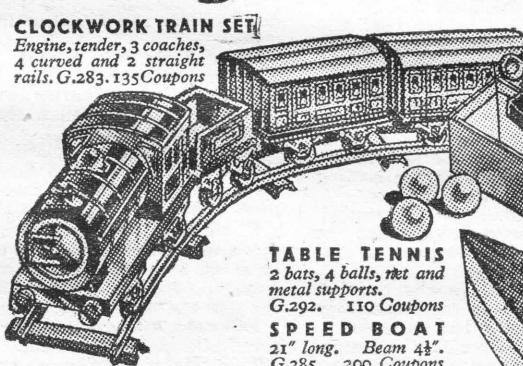
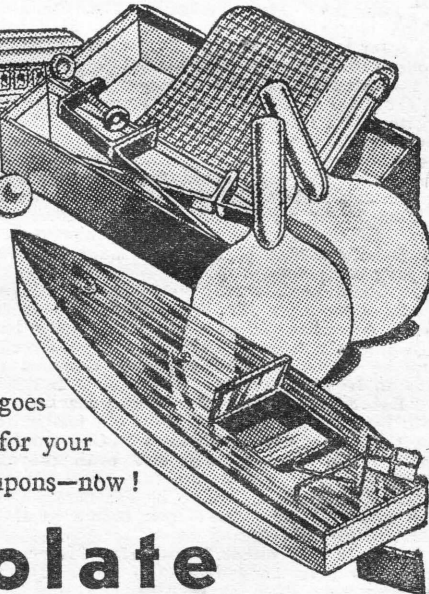


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The train stopped.

Tom Merry & Co. poured out upon the platform, and Tom led the way to the exit.

Highcliffe was only a few minutes' walk from the station, as he knew. Fatty Wynn lingered behind on the platform. Figgins looked round for him.

"Fatty, come on!"

"All right!" called back Fatty. "I'll catch you up in a minute."

He had stopped at an automatic machine.

Figgins darted back.

"You'll jolly well catch us up now!" he exclaimed. "No blessed chocolates until after the match!"

"Look here, Figgins—"

"Come on!"

"I tell you—"

"Come on!" roared Figgins.

He rushed Fatty Wynn along the platform at a speed that made the plump junior's head swim. He rushed him right out of the station, and did not release him till they were in the High Street of Highcliffe.

"Now, march right on!" said Figgins severely. "If you stop at a grubshop or an automatic machine, mind, you'll get it where the chicken got the chopper!"

"I'm jolly well going—"

"Exactly. Go!"

And Fatty Wynn went.

The juniors, carrying their bags, walked along the road towards Highcliffe School. On the way, Tom Merry apportioned the places of his team. All the members of the team, and the reserves as well, had come along, for those who were not to play were eager to witness the match.

It did not take Tom Merry long to decide what changes he would make.

Dane, Digby, and Manners were left out; D'Arcy and Reilly and Macdonald taking their places. These were the only changes Tom Merry made. The three juniors dropped had been most fagged by the previous match, and it was an advantage to put fresh men in their places. And they acquiesced cheerfully.

There were quite a crowd of Highcliffe fellows at the gate of the school as the juniors of St. Jim's walked up.

They greeted their visitors with smiles.

"Glad to see you!" said Ponsonby, as he shook hands with Tom Merry. "So you've come."

"Come!" said Tom Merry. "We arranged to come, didn't we?"

Ponsonby laughed.

"Yes; but I half expected a wire."

"A wire!" said Monty Lowther. "Why a wire?"

"You see," said Ponsonby, "we thought you might think better of it. However, I'm glad to see you, and we'll try to show you what Highcliffe football is like. Mind, you mustn't blame us for results!"

Ponsonby & Co. wore superior smiles.

They did not seem to be exactly discourteous to their visitors—far from it. But they were self-assured and cocky by nature. And Ponsonby had brought home a glowing account of the football he had seen at St. Jim's. And so the Highcliffe team could not help regarding the coming match as a farce. And they showed it in their manner.

Tom Merry noted the superior smiles, and he smiled, too. He felt that there was a surprise in store for the Highcliffians, and he meant to make that surprise as surprising as possible.

It would be distinctly amusing to see the change that would come over the Highcliffe countenances when they found out what sort of a team they really had to tackle.

A junior master of Highcliffe was refereeing the match, and he seemed smitten, Tom, with the idea that the thing was to be a walk-over.

"Bai Jove," Arthur Augustus remarked, as he changed into his jersey, "I am beginnin' to feel quite exasperated by those silly asses, you know! One would think, from their looks, that nobody else evah played a game of footah!"

"It will be their turn to be exasperated soon!" grinned Kangaroo. "They don't look to me as if they were in form to play a slogging game."

"Nor to me, either," said Tom Merry. "Mind, we're going to play hard from the start. Don't give 'em a second's rest. Rush 'em off their feet, and keep them going till their heads spin. That's the wheeze!"

"Yaas, watah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want to watch their faces," grinned Tom Merry. "I like and respect a chap who is licked after a hard try, but these cocky duffers want taking down a peg, and want it badly. I don't believe they can play football for toffee, with all their swank!"

"Same here!"

"I have seen their play," said Arthur Augustus; "I

wegarded it as wotten, you know. I offahed to put Ponsonby up to a few points, both in dwibblin' and kickin', but he wefused in a way that I could only considah wude!"

"Well, we'll put him up to a few points now! No rough play, of course, you fellows; everything perfectly fair and above board, only let it be hard and fast, and don't give the swankers a moment's rest."

"What-ho!" said the whole team heartily.

Ponsonby looked in.

"You fellows ready?"

"Quite!" And they went out into the field.

Tom Merry smiled as he noted the crowd round the ground. Nearly all Highcliffe seemed to have turned up, seniors as well as juniors. They all wore smiles. It was perfectly clear that they fully expected to see Tom Merry's eleven swept off the field in the course of the first few minutes after the kick-off.

"I wegard it as iwwtatin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I shall be vewy pleased to give these swankahs a feahful lickin'."

The St. Jim's juniors won the toss, and Tom Merry chose to kick off against the wind. Ponsonby looked at him, and they all looked at him, and then the Highcliffe junior skipper spoke:

"I say, Merry, if you don't mind my mentioning it—"

"Certainly. Go on."

"You've played football before, I suppose?"

"Several times," said Tom innocently; and his followers chuckled.

Tom Merry had played more football than Ponsonby had ever thought or dreamt about.

"Well, about the kick-off. You are playing against the wind."

"Oh, yes!"

"It would be an advantage to have the wind behind you, and it's your choice!" urged Ponsonby.

"Oh, never mind!"

"But you're giving the game away."

"Well, the fact is, I want to give you chaps a chance," said Tom Merry. "The wind against us won't make much difference to us, you know."

Ponsonby gasped.

"Really, Merry—"

"We're ready, if you are."

"Oh, all right!" said Ponsonby. "Kick-off!"

The Highcliffe players exchanged grins. Tom Merry fumbled with the ball purposely, in order to give them something more to grin about. He knew that they would not be grinning soon.

Ponsonby captured the ball, and the Highcliffe forwards got away in line. They ran the ball right up the field, amid cheers and laughter from the big crowd round the ropes.

Fatty Wynn was in goal, with twinkling eyes.

He looked over the Highcliffe crowd with the glance of an experienced goalkeeper, and he was pretty well satisfied that there was no fellow there who could send in a shot that he couldn't save.

And so it proved. The ball came in from Ponsonby, and then from Monson, and then from another Highcliffe forward, and Fatty Wynn saved it each time with ease and grace, hardly troubling to stir himself.

From the third attempt he sent the ball out to the St. Jim's forwards. Tom Merry thought it was time to begin business, and he captured the ball, calmly taking it away from the foot of a Highcliffe half, and dribbled it away towards the home goal.

Ponsonby & Co. raced after him. They might as well have raced after a Derby winner.

Tom Merry simply walked away from the Highcliffe forwards and halves, and dribbled the ball round the feet of the backs, and slammed it into goal.

The goalkeeper wasn't quite prepared for that shot. As a matter of fact, he had been lounging about his goal, exchanging joking remarks with the fellows behind concerning the St. Jim's style of play.

He woke up too late to the fact that there was danger.

The ball was in the net!

"My hat!" gasped Ponsonby.

The crowd looked curious. The Highcliffe team looked at one another oddly. Then the St. Jim's juniors grinned.

"One up!" said Blake, as he walked back to the centre of the field. "Look at Ponsonby's face. It's as good as a picture."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

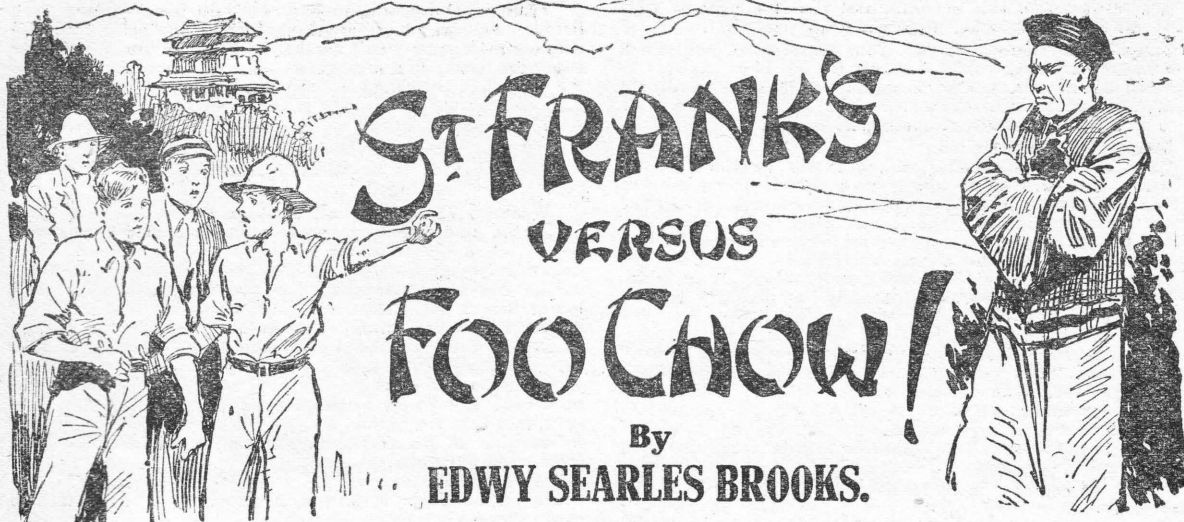
Ponsonby kicked off.

Again the Highcliffe forwards were allowed to get away with the ball, but they did not get it as far as the visitors' goal this time. Herries, at back, stopped it, and sent it out to midfield, where Monty Lowther took possession of it.

Lowther's long legs covered the ground in fine style as

(Continued on page 28.)

READ WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HANDFORTH GOES SHOPPING IN CHINA!



THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dr. Foo Chow, a war lord of Inner China, kidnap Yung Ching, of St. Frank's, his object being to compel the boy's father, Yung Li Chang, to surrender up the rich province over which he rules. A holiday party from St. Frank's come to the help of Ching and eventually rescue him after they have fallen into the hands of Foo Chow. War then breaks out between Foo Chow and Yung Li Chang. The St. Frank's party escape and sail in their steam yacht for Yang Fu, Foo Chow's capital, which has been taken by Li Chang's army. The St. Frank's juniors then prepare for a trip ashore.

Handforth & Co. Ashore!

"WHAT-HO!" said Archie Glenithorne, holding on to the doorpost, and gazing down at his ruined clothing with acute consternation. "I mean to say, wreckage and debris—what? Gaze upon the ruins, laddie! Take stock of your frightful handiwork!"

Handforth gave Archie a casual glance.

"I suppose you're going to make a fuss over a trifle?" he asked tartly.

"Good gad! A trifle! I mean——"

"Of course, it's a trifle!" interrupted Handforth. "Just a few splodges of orange, that's all. You needn't even change. There's nothing to worry about in one or two trifling stains."

Archie reeled off, completely at a loss for adequate words, and, with the help of Phipps, he proceeded to array himself in fresh triumphs of sartorial art.

In Study D, as Handforth & Co.'s cabin was popularly termed, since it so closely resembled that famous St. Frank's apartment, Edward Oswald was on the best of terms with his chums. The arguments were forgotten—the quarrel was over. Brisk preparations for going ashore were in progress.

Church and McClure were only too glad to accept their impetuous leader in his new frame of mind.

"Ready?" asked Handforth, at length. "Buck up, my sons! And don't forget your cash. We've got to buy all sorts of souvenirs. Where's my jacket? Church, you fat-head, where's my jac— Hallo! What the— Great pip!" he gasped. "Look at this!"

He had found his jacket, and he was gazing indignantly at a small splash of orange-pulp on one of the lapels.

"Must have been done when you chucked that squiffy orange at Archie," said McClure. "A kind of rebound, I suppose."

"But look at it!" hooted Handforth. "My jacket's ruined!"

His chums nearly fainted.

"You told Archie, five minutes ago, that he was making a fuss over a trifle, and his whole 'suit was spattered from head to foot!" said Church, staring. "Now you're making an awful fuss over one tiny spot!"

"But—but this is my coat!" roared Handforth.

"Well, if you feel that way about it, you can just imagine poor Archie's sensations," grinned McClure. "Perhaps you'll have a bit of care next time."

Handforth stared at the stain reflectively.

"H'm! Perhaps you're right," he admitted. "I suppose it was a bit rough on Archie. Next time I see him I'll apologise."

And Handforth was as good as his word. Which, of course, put everything right with Archie on the instant,

for the scion of the noble house of Glenithorne had never been known to resist an apology.

His Excellency, Yung Li Chang, smiled reassuringly.

He was seated in Nelson Lee's cabin, with the school-master detective and Lord Dorrimore. He had but recently come out to the Wanderer from Yang Fu, with the good news that Yung Ching, his son, was safe in his hands.

"You need have no fear, gentlemen, that any further dangers will beset you," he said impassively. "At any moment I am expecting news of further victories. My armies are completing their great task, and the enemy is on the run. Dr. Foo Chow and his cowardly dogs stand no chance whatever against my victorious invaders."

"Well, it's cheerin' to hear you speak with such confidence," said Lord Dorrimore, as he took a fresh cigarette. "An' in the meantime, we can regard Yang Fu as safe—eh? No possibility of hittin' trouble if we go ashore?"

"The city of Yang Fu is now entirely under my control," replied the great war lord. "Moreover, the population itself is delirious with happiness. It is not my habit to boast of my achievements, but I can safely claim that this entire territory is now freed from a hateful bondage. The people know it, and they acclaim me as their liberator. The last of Foo Chow's supporters have been banished or put to death. All are friends here now."

Mr. Nelson Lee nodded.

"Yes, I am quite convinced of that, your excellency," he said thoughtfully. "And it is a great relief to know that the members of our party can go ashore without fear of treachery or danger. But we cannot overlook the grim fact that Foo Chow's men hold the canyon, which is the only way to the sea. While Foo Chow retains that grip, our yacht is helpless!"

"That's frightfully cheerin'," remarked Dorrie.

"Have no doubt that my triumphant army will prevail," said Yung Li Chang. "I am well aware that the only passage to the sea lies through the canyon, where a vast rock barrier has been constructed—a barrier that can be raised and lowered by the strength of men. But ere long—perhaps even now—this last stronghold of Foo Chow's will be wrested from him."

"An' then we can think of sailin' for home?" asked his lordship.

"Yes. And although I shall regret your departure, I strongly urge it," replied Yung Li Chang. "This whole province will soon be under my supreme control. I have freed these people from the yoke of Foo Chow's slavery, and it is my wish to govern the territory with the same methods that I am now governing my own province. At any hour we may expect to hear the good news."

The Chinese conqueror ross.

"You will excuse me?" he asked smoothly. "I have urgent business to attend. Pray assure me that you will grace my banquet this evening, and it is my express wish that all the younger people should be present."

"That's jolly decent of you, your excellency," said Lord Dorrimore. "You can count on us all bein' there. A theatre afterwards, you said, didn't you? That's toppin'! But don't your Chinese theatres carry on for a week or two at a time, in one continuous performance?"

Yung Li Chang smiled.

"Possibly you will be interested in the novelty," he replied. "You will be at liberty to retire from the theatre at any moment you desire. And now, gentlemen, I must crave your indulgence."

He bowed himself out, and after he had gone, Nelson Lee and Dorrie glanced at one another.

"You think it'll be O.K., old man?" asked his lordship. "I'm doubtful, Dorrie—infernally doubtful," replied Nelson Lee, frowning.

"Why?"

"Because Foo Chow is a vindictive, revengeful fiend," replied Lee. "Do you think he'll let us escape from this hotbed of war, if he can possibly prevent us? No. He'll strain every nerve and sinew to exact a terrible vengeance. My main fear is that he will destroy the canyon, and thus make it impossible for the Wanderer to ever reach the open sea."

"Well, of course, that'll be deucedly fearful to have the poor old tub corked up in this river, but that won't prevent us from gettin' out of China," said Lord Dorrimore. "Why, Yung Li Chang will provide us with an escort, an' see us all safely up country, where we can discover a railway train, or somethin' thrillin' like that."

Lee shook his head.

"It sounds too easy, Dorrie," he replied. "Foo Chow has been too quiet, and, frankly, I don't quite credit this story of his utter and complete downfall. I have a persistent fear that he is preparing a coup. Not that we can do anything but trust to luck."

"Well, let's go on trustin'," smiled Dorrie, rising to his feet. "Yang Fu is quiet, anyhow, an' it's a relief to have things in a peaceful condition for once. The boys are gettin' ready for goin' ashore, by the look of it," he added, glancing through the open window. "It doesn't take long for good news to spread. I suppose it'll be quite safe to let 'em loose?"

"Quite," agreed Lee. "Otherwise, I would never consent to such a step. Yung Li Chang's soldiers are in full possession of the city, and the people, too, are friendly towards us. The one fact that we are the personal friends of the liberator makes us safe. We are all regarded as almost sacred, including the boys and the girls. Oh, yes, we shall be quite secure."

Dorrie went out, and found practically all the St. Frank's fellows and the Moor View girls eagerly waiting for the word to go down the ladder into the waiting boats. The yacht was lying in mid-stream, and as the river was broad, it was some little distance to the crowded shore.

"I say, sir, is it true?" asked Church eagerly, as he caught sight of Dorrie.

"Is what true, young 'un?"

"That we can all go ashore?"

"Absolutely official," smiled his lordship. "All restrictions are over, thank goodness! What's the good of comin' on a holiday trip if we can't enjoy ourselves? But you'd better go easy with your money. These Chinese merchants price their wares accordin' to the looks of their customers, an' the native money in one street may be worth double its value in another. I can tell you that shoppin' in China is somethin' like a nightmare."

"How about gettin' our cash, Dorrie?" asked Dick Hamilton.

"Why, we've got plenty, Dick," put in Mary Summers.

"Plenty of English money, but we need native cash before we can buy anything," replied Dick. "These Chinese merchants won't accept any other currency but their own. At least, that's what I've always heard."

"An' you're probably right, although they might make an exception to us," smiled Dorrie. "You see, we're all in a special category. We're the personal pals of Yung Li Chang, the great war lord, an' that makes us frightfully important. But, to be on the safe side, you'd better get your money exchanged."

"Where, sir?" asked half a dozen voices.

"You'll find the special exchange bureau for our use. You'll see a big board in full sight when the boats reach the landin'-stage," replied Dorrie, "with the word 'Money' at the end of it. So you can't make a mistake. You'd better hire a few dozen coolies to carry the stuff. They'll swarm round you in myriads as soon as you get ashore. There's nothin' in the world like these Chinese coolies. But you'll soon find out."

Dorrie's advice was necessary, for none of the fellows or girls quite knew how to go on once they were ashore. The very fact that they could go freely was ripping enough, but to be able to go shopping was simply wonderful. The girls were particularly eager.

"We'd better have a fixed time for coming back to the boats," said Dick Hamilton practically. "Five o'clock ought to be all right."

"Good!" agreed Reggie Pitt. "That'll give us nice time to look round, buy a few things, and get back in good time for a cup of tea. Then we shall have comfortable time for dressing. This evening's banquet begins at seven o'clock."

"A jolly good programme!" was the general vote.

So two of the Wanderer's boats, well filled, soon put off, and delivered their human freight upon the landing-stage. All the members of the party were eager and full of high spirits.

"Odds crowds and multitudes!" ejaculated Archie, as he adjusted his monocle and gazed round. "I mean to say, good gad! The whole dashed populace appears to have gathered at the fountain, as it were. I mean, we're simply surrounded by solid battalions of the lads of the village."

"Well, Dorrie warned us," grinned Alf Brent, Archie's chum.

"Yes, but dash it— I mean—"

Swarms of coolies were pressing round the party, all of them shouting at once, gesticulating and grinning. It was clear that they were seeking to be employed, and they regarded the holiday party with obsequious deference.

"This sort of thing is all very well, but cut it out!" said Handforth grimly as he pushed his way through the shouting coolies. "Come on, Mac! You, too, Churchy! Let's make for the curio shops first. I want to buy something for the mater."

"What about the money?" asked Church.

"I've got plenty of money," replied Handforth crisply. "Bags of it! My hat! We haven't had a chance to spend a giddy penny ever since we started on this trip!"

"Well, we're pretty flush, if it comes to that," put in McClure. "But our English money isn't any good here, you see. We've got to exchange it for cash."

Handforth gave his chums a withering glance.

"If English money isn't good enough for these Chinks, they'll feel the weight of my fist!" he said darkly. "Just leave it to me!"

A Question of Cash!

SOMEHOW, Handforth & Co. became separated from the other members of the shore party. Even the girls had disappeared among the throngs, escorted by their schoolboy companions.

But for once Handforth did not seem to mind being parted from Irene Manners. His brain was full of other things.

The scene on the water front was animated in the extreme.

In addition to the crowd of coolies, there were endless children, and also the inhabitants of the quaint-looking junks and sampans. Here, on the river front, were any number of these primitive craft, each having its own little population.

The air was heavy with sundry smells, none of them particularly pleasant; but this was no time to notice such details. The sun was beating down with tropical heat, and the dust was flying.

"There's the exchange office," said Church, nodding toward a building some distance away. "See the board?"



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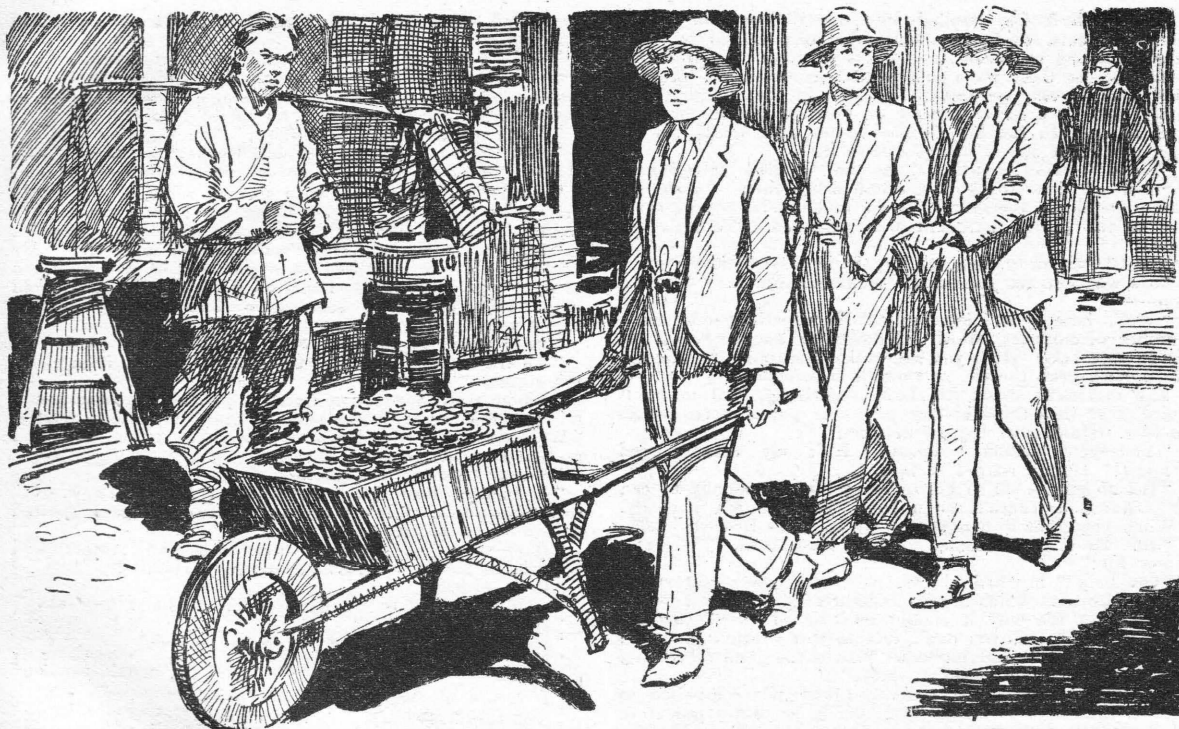
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"Mind you don't lose any money!" laughed Church, as Handforth pushed the laden barrow along the uneven streets of Yang Fu. The three juniors were going shopping—with Chinese money! "My only sainted aunt!" exclaimed Handforth. "Fancy exchanging good English notes for these washers!"

Better go and get our notes converted into cash, then we shall be on the safe side."

Handforth stared.

"Don't you call our notes cash?" he asked.

"Of course they're not cash!"

"Then what are they?" demanded Edward Oswald.

"Well, they're notes," said Church. "I suppose they'd be regarded as cash at home; but you don't seem to understand. This is a different kind of cash."

"I know—Chinese cash," nodded Handforth. "Well, these Chink merchants have got to accept English money, or I'll know the reason why! By George! If English money isn't good enough—"

"You—hopeless ass!" growled McClure. "It's not a question of being good enough. These Chinese don't understand English money, that's all. They can't read our writing, and they'd look upon a pound currency note as a piece of wastepaper. If we're going to buy things, we shall have to use cash."

"Of course," said Church, nodding.

Handforth breathed hard.

"Of course we shall use cash!" he snorted. "You don't think I'm going to ask these merchants to let me have things on tick, do you?"

"You're looking at the wrong sense of the word," said Church, exasperated. "Cash—cash! In China cash isn't plural, like it is with us. Cash is a coin. See?"

"A coin?" repeated Handforth, staring.

"We say we've got ten pennies, but the Chinese say they've got ten cash," explained Church patiently. "My only hat! I thought you knew all this! A Chinese copper cash is a rummy little coin with a hole in the middle of it. Haven't you seen the people carrying 'em about, on strings? There's a Chinaman over there now, with two strings of cash hanging over his shoulder."

Handforth looked and started.

"I thought they were washers, or something," he said, with a sniff. "You fathead! If you think I'm going to cart that sort of coinage about, you'd better think again."

"But you won't be able to buy anything," said McClure.

"Oh, come on!" interrupted Church. "We'd better hire some of these coolies."

"What on earth for?" demanded Handy.

"To carry our cash, of course."

"Hire coolies to carry our money!" repeated Handforth, in astonishment. "Are you dotty? Can't we carry our own money?"

"Humour him!" said McClure despairingly.

"Eh?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Look here, Arnold McClure, if you start any of your rot—"

"You pig-headed, obstinate lunatic!" roared McClure. "Don't you know that twenty of these cash coins go to the penny? That means 240 for a shilling! How much money do you reckon to spend on this trip?"

"Oh, about a fiver!" said Handforth.

"Good!" said McClure grimly. "Then you can carry your own money—and I hope you'll enjoy it!"

"What the dickens—"

"You'd better have a few special pockets made," went on McClure, with heavy sarcasm. "For five quid you'll get twenty-four thousand copper cash—and the rate of exchange may be better than that."

"Twenty-four thousand!" echoed Handforth, staring. "Do you mean to say that in order to buy five quids' worth of things I've got to cart thousands of those washers about? You fathead! I'll use English money, and avoid all that giddy trouble. Come on!"

Church and McClure gave it up, and decided to give Handforth his head. He never learned except by experience! The other fellows were already providing themselves with the necessary cash, and coolies were carrying the ridiculous money about for them. The problem of Chinese currency is serious enough in the great coastal ports where Europeans abound, but it was even more difficult here, in the heart of Inner China, where English money was absolutely unknown. Chinese currency is nearly always an insuperable problem for the stranger. It would not be so bad if trading was carried on by means of money which represented a reasonable sum. But this is not the case.

Of course, the recognised unit in China is the tael, but there are endless varieties in use, and its purchasing value is different in almost every locality. Again, there is no such coin as the tael—it is merely a weight of silver. The average Chinese merchant would accept nothing but the absurd copper cash, so the Chinese shopper is always in difficulties regarding the carrying of his or her money.

McClure's assumption that a shilling was worth 240 cash was probably wrong; the chances were that it was worth half as much again, or double. Indeed, Chinese currency may be worth one price in the morning, and a totally different price in the evening.

Not that this mattered to the holiday party. The novelty of the experience was amusing enough, and not many of the fellows attempted to haggle or bargain with the merchants, who, consequently, reaped a rich harvest.

Handforth & Co. strolled into one of the hot, stuffy, narrow streets, where the sunlight was excluded by matting stretched overhead from roofs to roofs. In this particular street there were endless little curio shops. And in the next street, perhaps, there would be nothing but shoes, and in a street farther on nothing but fancy silks, and so on. In the big Chinese cities each trade has its own particular street, and keeps to it.

"Good!" said Handforth, as he finished selecting a number of beautifully lacquered ornaments. "Just the things to please the mater. How much?" he added, turning to the portly merchant who presided. "What's the price?"

The Chinaman grinned, and spoke in his own language. "He wants to see your cash," grinned Church. "We told you—"

"Well, here it is," interrupted Handforth, producing a number of currency notes. "How many do you want, old son? One—two? Here you are—take 'em yourself. Choose! Only don't grab the lot, or there'll be trouble!"

The merchant shook his head vigorously, and made it quite clear that these oblong pieces of paper were useless to him. Handforth argued in vain.

"You—you blessed heathen! Isn't my money good enough?" Handy roared at last.

"It's no good—you've got to bring him the money he can understand, or there'll be a riot!" said Church uneasily. "When you're in Rome, you've got to do as Rome does."

"But we're not in Rome!" roared Handforth. "We're in Yang Fu!"

"Oh, help!" moaned Church, with a hopeless gesture. "English money has always bought me anything I want, and I don't see why it should be scorned here!" argued Handforth. "And you can't talk to this overfed heathen! He just sits there and jabbers. What's the good of coming out shopping, unless we can shop?"

In the end Edward Oswald was reluctantly compelled to confess that he was wrong. Of course, he didn't put it in this way—he indignantly characterised the entire Chinese race as a set of lunatics. Then he marched his chums back to the river front, and they went into the money exchange. And here they were successful in getting five pounds' worth of cash.

The actual amount was staggering, and the weight tremendous. To count those strings of queer little copper coins—which Handforth insisted upon calling washers—was impossible. But there must have been anything between 25,000 and 30,000! They were carried out by coolies, and deposited on one of the clumsy, cumbersome native wheelbarrows. These were about the only wheeled vehicles in the whole Yang Fu, and even these had probably been copied from the Northern provinces.

"My only sainted aunt!" said Handforth, as he regarded the wheelbarrow. "Why, all those washers would be worth ten or twenty quid at home! Of all the dotty ideas—exchanging good English notes for this junk! Grab hold, you chaps!"

"Eh?" said Church and McClure. "Grab hold! We're going shopping!"

"But what about these coolies—"

"We don't want to be bothered with coolies," said Handforth firmly.

"Well, if it comes to that, we don't want to be bothered with this wheelbarrow!" snorted Church. "We can hire a dozen of these men for about fourpence! What's the idea of making Mac and I—"

"I don't trust these coolies—and we don't want to be watching 'em all the time," interrupted Handforth obstinately. "We'll take the wheelbarrow in turns—and you chaps can have the first shot!"

But Church and McClure weren't "having any," and the obstinate Handy had to push the barrow himself.

"Mind you don't lose one, Handy!" laughed Church. So the populace of Yang Fu was treated to the sight of Handforth marching along the crowded, uneven streets with a wheelbarrow laden to overflowing with money. And the shopping campaign began.

The City of Revelry!

CHURCH breathed a sigh of great relief. "Thank goodness!" he said fervently. "There goes the last of that fearful coinage. I'll never come shopping in China again as long as I live!"

"Hear, hear!" said McClure, with feeling.

They were both fed-up—to use their own expression, fed-up to the neck. They had been in street after street, and shop after shop, and all the while the sun was blazing down pitilessly—the heat being merely intensified by the screens of matting overhead. For in these narrow alleys—they could scarcely be called streets—there was very little air; and, what with the stagnant atmosphere and the jostling crowds, McClure and Church were well-nigh

exhausted. But Handforth seemed to thrive on the humid conditions.

"Got all the parcels?" he said, as they wended their way in the direction of the river-front. "Good man! We haven't got half the things we actually need—shopping in these poky little places takes an awful time!"

"There's another day to-morrow," said Church casually. "And there's a part of one left to-day," declared Handforth. "We'll get all these parcels on to the boat—"

"Good!" said McClure, with intense relief. "I thought you were going to say something else! It's nearly five o'clock, anyhow. Tea! Did you hear, Churchy? Tea!"

"I heard you the first time," said Church dreamily. "My goodness, I never realised how the idea of a cup of tea can get hold of a chap! I can do with a bath, too—a cold bath, with the water somewhere about twenty degrees below zero."

"That would be ice, you ass!" said McClure. "All the better!" breathed Church. "I'd melt it in about ten seconds!"

"When you chaps have finished gassing, perhaps you'll let me finish what I was saying!" said Handforth tartly. "We'll deposit these parcels in one of the boats, and then go and get another load of cash."

"What!" gasped his chums. "A smaller load this time—about three quid's worth," said Handforth. "There are one or two things I spotted as we came along—"

"But—but we've got to be on board by five!" interrupted Church, in alarm. "Orders, you know, Handy!"

"Blow orders!"

"And we've got to get dressed for the banquet—"

"Blow the banquet!"

"Irene will expect you to escort her—"

"Blow Irene!" said Handforth firmly. "Eh? I—I mean—"

"If that's all you think about her—"

"You fatheads, you trapped me into saying that!" roared Handforth. "Irene—eh? Oh, well, I did promise to escort her to the banquet, didn't I? H'm! I suppose we shall have to leave the rest of the shopping until to-morrow. All the same, I don't see why—"

But at this moment, much to the relief of Church and McClure, they encountered Tom Burton and Jerry Dodd and Fullwood and Buster Boots, and a group of other juniors. Handforth's chums managed to acquaint the fellows of their leader's wavering intentions, and he was forthwith hustled into one of the waiting boats before he could fully make up his mind.

Once on board, however, he resigned himself to the inevitable—particularly as he suddenly realised that a dip in the swimming bath would be a most agreeable preliminary to tea in the lounge.

"By George, we'll make that water boil if we all jump in at once!" he said, as they prepared for the plunge. "And we can get those other souvenirs and things to-morrow—"

"If we're allowed ashore," remarked Dick Hamilton.

"Eh? You silly ass—"

"Well, there's a doubt about it, Handy," said Dick. "Haven't you heard the good news? It isn't absolutely official yet, but some messages have come in to the effect that Foo Chow's army is completely routed, and that the canyon has fallen."

"Great Scott!" gasped Handforth. "The canyon's fallen?"

"Yes!"

"And you call that good news?" roared Handforth, in alarm. "Why, if the canyon's fallen, we shall be bottled up here for good—"

"I don't mean it's fallen literally, you chump!" grinned Dick. "I've never known such a chap for taking things literally! The canyon's fallen—which means to say that Foo Chow and his army have been whacked. They've been driven out, and the river is clear for us to reach the sea."

"I say, is this true?"

"It's ripping news!"

"Absolutely, laddies!"

There was a loud buzz of excited comment. "Don't count on it too much, though," added Dick Hamilton warningly. "I've told you that it's not official, but Mr. Lee is satisfied that it's true. And we're making all preparations for a start down the river at dawn."

"Dawn!" said Handforth, with a start. "What about my shopping?"

"Oh, I'd forgotten that!" said Dick. "Of course, I shall have to tell Captain Burton to delay lifting the anchor until you're ready."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Handforth was so animated at the thought of starting the trip for freedom at dawn that he forgot his shopping expedition. Without question this latest item of news was cheering.

But could it be relied upon?

It was so difficult to believe anything that was not actually before their eyes. Only the previous day an official report had come in, positively stating that the rocky canyon had fallen absolutely into the hands of Yung Li Chang's victorious army. It was an established fact—a positive truth.

And then another report had completely knocked it on the head, for it was only too obvious that Foo Chow had recaptured that all-important pass.

What guarantee was there that a similar catastrophe would not happen now? Victories in a Chinese civil war are very different from victories in any other war. They are liable to be turned into defeats at an hour's notice.

"I'm sure I don't know what to believe, Dorrie," said Nelson Lee, as they discussed the news. "If only we can accept this latest report as authentic, our troubles are practically over. But I can't help fearing that Foo Chow is keeping something up his sleeve."

Lord Dorrimore laughed.

"I'm inclined to think you've got a bee in your bonnet about Foo Chow," he replied. "It all depends upon his sleeves, anyhow. If he's wearin' native costume, he might have anythin' up it, from a revolver to a cannon!"

"I wish you'd be serious, old man!" growled Nelson Lee. "It is all very well to be easy-going, but Foo Chow is not a man tamely to give up the fight, and let us escape. He blames us for his disasters in the field. He knows that he can never recapture his lost territories—and so he will concentrate upon revenge."

"Wise words, Umtagati, my father!" rumbled a voice.

They turned, and found Umlosi with them. The huge African chief—Lord Dorrimore's most faithful companion in many a fight—was looking solemn and troubled. And yet there was a certain gleam of anticipation in his dark eyes.

"Hallo, here's old Moore, with his almanack of predic-tions!" grinned Lord Dorrimore. "We can always trust you to make some gloomy prophecies, Umlosi, old son. What is it this time? Rivers of gore? Dead an' dyin' strewn in heaps?"

"Thou art pleased to be amused, N'Kose!" growled Umlosi. "But methinks thou wilt regret thy levity ere long. The words of Umtagati are wondrously chosen."

"Go up one, Lee, old scout!" smiled Dorrie.

"It is well that we should prepare for fighting," went on Umlosi, his manner becoming mysterious. "For have I not had my dreams? Have I not seen disaster? Take no heed of these yellow dogs and their promises of safety, Umtagati."

"But they are our friends, Umlosi."

"And yet that cannot alter their nature," said Umlosi shrewdly. "Mayhap they are friendly—'tis not for me to question their sincerity. But they are yellow, even as those whom we regard as enemies are yellow. I have seen strange things, my master. Let us not celebrate ere the victory is won."

"Somethin' in that," admitted Dorrie, nodding. "He's got these Chinese taped, anyhow. It is a bit of a job to get at the truth, an' no mistake."

He turned and looked at the city—which was becoming more and more animated as the evening approached. Revelry was afoot. The entire population was bent upon a great celebration. And Dorrie wondered if all this was but a false index of the true situation.

No Banquet for Handforth!

DANGER seemed to be a very remote possibility, however, when Yung Li Chang's guests went ashore from the Wanderer soon after six-thirty.

The yacht was brilliant with light from stem to stern, and, seen from the promenade deck, the city of Yang Fu was like a dreamland paradise.

The soft Eastern night had fallen, warm and rather mysterious. And from every part of the city there came the glow of coloured lanterns, and without cessation there were the spitting detonations of exploding crackers.

The whole city was celebrating. Seen in this light, with only the native paper lanterns to illuminate the streets, the place was very wonderful. And the very idea of warfare seemed ridiculous.

"I'm half sorry we're going to this banquet," said Doris Berkeley, as she and the other girls stood at the top of the ladder, all looking radiant in their summery evening frocks. "It would be ever so much more jolly to walk about the streets, enjoying the mysteries of the East."

"It sounds very romantic, but I'd rather enjoy the mysteries of a good dinner," said Ena Handforth practically. "Perhaps you won't be so keen when we get ashore, Doris. These places always look better from a distance, you know."

"Yes, I suppose they do," admitted Doris. "Ready? It's our turn to go down into the boat."

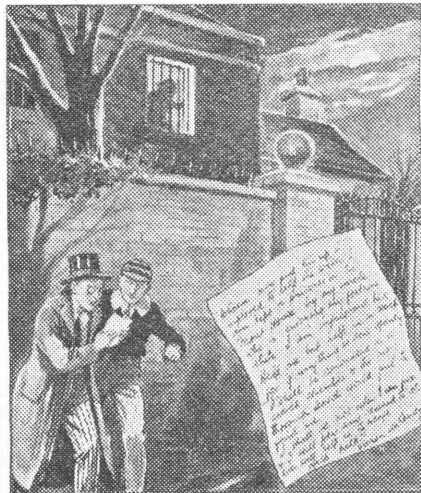
Mrs. Beverley Stokes, of course, was in charge of the girls. Yung Li Chang was preparing to break all the rules of Chinese etiquette in honour of his British guests. For, of course, in China, the presence of ladies at a banquet is regarded as nothing short of outrageous.

But for the sake of these distinguished visitors, the great Chinese war lord was prepared to sacrifice his native custom. After all, his own son was a pupil of St. Frank's, and he was more or less Westernised. Quite a number of local mandarins, however, would probably be rather shocked—although they would never dare to query the decisions of their supreme ruler. For Yung Li Chang was nothing less.

Captain Burton had been invited, but he had gruffly declined, preferring to remain in charge of his beloved yacht. Not an officer or a member of the crew was leaving her deck.

Somehow, in spite of all these friendly surroundings, the Britishers could not help feeling that treachery might be afoot somewhere. Their host and his retinue were above suspicion of course, but Yang Fu was a very big city.

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To walk to a banquet in China is not to be thought of, even if one's host lives only a hundred yards away. And when the Wanderer's party reached the landing-stage, a glittering array of sedan-chairs was in attendance, all with their gorgeously arrayed carriers.

The ladies were accommodated first, and Handforth felt that the whole thing was very much of a swindle. He had been anticipating a pleasant walk with Irene through the lantern-hung streets.

"Well, they won't get me into one of those silly boxes!" he said firmly. "In fact, I'm not going to the banquet at all."

"We shall miss you, Handy," said Church carelessly. "Still, we wouldn't think of persuading you," added McClure.

"You needn't try to persuade me—and you won't miss me, either!" retorted Handforth. "You're not coming with me, my lads. Blow the banquet! I'm going to slip off and do a bit of exploring."

(Handy in an opium den! That's what he gets up to in next week's stirring chapters of this popular serial. Don't miss his adventures.)

D'ARCY'S DUD ELEVEN!

(Continued from page 22.)

he beat man after man with ease. Then he passed to Tom Merry, with a cheerful grin.

Tom received the leather, and sent it whirling into the net before the Highcliffe goalie knew what was happening.

"Two up!" laughed Blake. "Oh, my only chapeau!"

The Highcliffe fellows were looking decidedly serious now. It began to dawn even upon Ponsonby that the St. Jim's juniors had been rotting them, and that the visitors, as a matter of fact, outclassed them hopelessly.

And then the Saints had their anticipated amusement of watching the faces of the Highcliffe swankers.

It was, as Blake said, as good as a cinematograph.

The first half was played out, and it finished with St. Jim's leading five goals to nil. The Highcliffians had never had a look in from the first.

The second half of that terrible match seemed to the Highcliffe team, afterwards, like some evil dream.

St. Jim's simply walked over them. They were rushed and whirled in all directions till their very senses were swimming, and they had left off counting the goals piled up by Tom Merry & Co.

Goal after goal fell to the St. Jim's score, and the faces round the field were growing longer and longer, while Ponsonby & Co. gasped and puffed and laboured in vain after the nimble-footed fellows from St. Jim's.

The whistle went at last, and a burst of heavenly music

could not have been so welcome to the Highcliffe ears as that shrill blast.

They staggered off the field. The score stood at eleven goals to nil—a score that made the Saints shriek with laughter.

There was something strained in the manner of Ponsonby & Co. as they said good-bye to the visiting team. It was not to be wondered at.

"You must give us a return match, you know," said Tom Merry affably.

"Oh—er—yes!" said Ponsonby.

But inwardly he registered a vow that wild horses should not drag him upon a football field with Tom Merry & Co. again.

The St. Jim's juniors returned home in high spirits. Fatty Wynn was made happy with a big bag of sandwiches and a dozen tarts in the train. St. Jim's took a keen interest in that match, and half the school was waiting to hear how it had gone. Tom Merry & Co. were bombarded with questions as soon as they arrived. And when they answered, yells of laughter arose that could be heard all over St. Jim's.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eleven goals to nil!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And it was a long, long time before St. Jim's ceased to chuckle over the Highcliffe match.

THE END.

(Thrilling—amazing—is next week's gripping yarn of the chums of St. Jim's. Watch out for "THE PRISONER OF THE MOAT HOUSE!"—but order your GEM early.)

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