

NEXT WEEK: "HIS FALSE POSITION!" By Martin Clifford.
"WINGS OF GOLD!" By Sidney Drew.

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"CAPTAIN D'ARCY!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of **TOM MERRY & CO.** and **ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY**, of St. Jim's.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.



CHAPTER 1.

Figgins is Just In Time.

"**B**EASTLY!" said Blake of the Fourth.
"Rotten!" said Tom Merry of the Shell.
And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a very sympathetic expression upon his aristocratic face, chimed in.
"Yaas, wathah!"

As a rule, Jack Blake's face was cheery and good-humoured, and Tom Merry's countenance was sunny as the day. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, too, generally looked fully satisfied with himself and with circumstances.

But undoubtedly there was a cast of gloom upon their faces now.

And not only Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy looked gloomy. Other fellows in the Fourth and the Shell shared their glum looks, and fellows in the other Forms, too.

Not that there was anything wrong with Tom Merry & Co. themselves. They were not in the masters' bad books, or at war with the prefects. They had not been gated, they had not been sent in to the Head, and they had no more than the average number of lines. It was all the result of their sympathetic feelings.

Kildare of the Sixth, head prefect of the School House, and captain of the school—Kildare, the handsome, sturdy Sixth-Former, the pride of the school, the finest footballer the old college had ever turned out—Kildare was down on his luck.

That was the reason.

Anybody else in the Sixth Form might have been ever so much down on his luck, and the juniors would not have condescended to take any notice. Tom Merry & Co. had enough to do, keeping the New House fellows in order, without bothering their heads about the private troubles of mere seniors.

But with Kildare it was different.

Kildare was the idol of the school, the pride of St. Jim's, and when Kildare looked thoroughly miserable, many a youthful heart beat in sympathy with his, and his gloom was reflected in other faces.

What was the matter with Kildare was not quite clear. His personal friends, Darrel and Rushden, in the Sixth, doubtless knew. But he had not taken the juniors into his confidence—an omission which they forgave, as they would have forgiven Kildare anything.

Kildare was not the kind of fellow to look disturbed over a trifle; if he had to take a hard knock, he could take it without complaining. When he looked miserable, it was certain that there was something serious the matter. All the fellows felt that.

"He isn't seedy," said Tom Merry. "It's not that. He was playing up in footer practice yesterday, and he was ripping."

"Yaas, wathah!" said D'Arcy, with a nod. "I wemembah he took a splendid goal. I wemembah thinkin' at the time that I could not have done it bettah myself."

"Go hon!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"He had a letter from home this morning," Kangaroo of the Shell remarked. "I remember seeing him take it from the postman."

"Something wrong under the family roof, perhaps," Blake suggested.

"Vewy pwob., deah boy."

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows a little.

"His mater was ill some time back," he remarked. "You remember the time he was called away by a telegram? She may be ill again."

"Poor old Kildare!"

Next Thursday:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!" AND "WINGS OF GOLD!"

"It might be anything," remarked Monty Lowther. "Anyway, I'm sorry to see old Kildare look like this. He hadn't a patch of colour in his face this morning. It's the first time I've seen him really knocked over by anything."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors all agreed that it was rotten, and a common desire was in their hearts to help old Kildare out of his trouble, whatever it was, if they could.

"We ought to back old Kildare up," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked, rather vaguely. "At a time like this, when a poor chap's down on his luck, we ought to back him up, you know."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake.

That was another point of agreement among the juniors of the School House. Old Kildare ought to be backed up, though it was not quite clear what good the backing up would do him—or, indeed, what form it was to take.

"Hallo!" said Monty Lowther suddenly and in a subdued tone. "Here he is!"

Kildare was coming along towards the Sixth-Form passage.

The usually keen and cheerful captain of St. Jim's was looking pale and troubled—so troubled that he had even forgotten to make any effort to conceal it.

His eyes were on the ground, and his hands thrust deep into his pockets. He passed the group of juniors without noticing them, and went into his study, and closed the door.

The juniors looked at one another.

"Poor old man!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He looks like a chap who's been' dunned by a tailah, you know, and hasn't any tin to settle up."

Tom Merry grinned.

"I think it's more serious than that!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, pewwaps so. One nevah knows."

"What's wrong with Kildare?" asked a cheery voice, as Figgins of the New House came up. "I've just seen him in the quad, and I never saw a chap look so down. You kids been worrying him?"

The "kids" looked warlike at once.

As Figgins of the Fourth was a New House boy, it was like his cheek coming into the School House at all, but to come there and demand if the School House fellows had been worrying their worshipped captain was the "limit."

Tom Merry & Co. gathered round Figgins in a circle, their looks expressive of their intentions.

"Hold on!" said Figgins. "I didn't come here for a row."

"Never mind. You can have one, all the same," said Blake.

"Collar him!"

"Yaroo!" roared Figgins.

Figgins began to hit out. But half a dozen sturdy School House juniors had hold of him, and his hitting out was not of much use. All he succeeded in doing was tapping the aristocratic nose of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and then he was pinioned.

D'Arcy staggered back, his hand to his nose.

"Bai Jove!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwo!" There is nothin' whatever to laugh at, you silly asses! Is my nose bleedin', Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Gweat Scott!" D'Arcy dabbed his nose with a cambric handkerchief, and there was a faint trace of red upon it. "Ow! You howwid New House wuffian! Pway welease him, deah boys, while I give him a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, let him—do!" implored Figgins.

Tom Merry pushed back the indignant swell of St. Jim's.

"Keep off the grass, Gussy—"

"I refuse to keep off the gwass. I am goin' to thwash Figgins—"

"Let him!" roared Figgins. "Oh, let him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand back, Gussy! You know how terrible you are when you are wrathy," said Tom Merry. "We cannot allow you to smite Figgins, and strew the hungry churchyard with his bones! There wouldn't be much else to strew it with," he added thoughtfully, with a glance at Figgins's somewhat lanky and slim figure.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins turned very red.

"Tom Merry, you ass—"

"Well, pewwaps I won't be too hard on him," said D'Arcy amicably. "Bump the boundah, and chuck him out—that will be all wight!"

"Look here—" roared Figgins.

"Outside!"

"I came here to speak to Kildare—"

"Like your cheek, you New House rotter!" said Monty

Lowther. "What do you mean by speaking to our captain? Out you go!"

"I tell you—"

"Rats! Help him along!"

Figgins was helped along, struggling desperately. He did not like being helped. He was helped as far as the School House door, several more juniors belonging to that House joining in lending him aid.

At the door he made his last struggle, but it was unavailing. With his collar torn out, his necktie under his arm, and his shirt burst, Figgins slid down the steps of the School House, and sat on the cold, cold ground.

The juniors, crowded on the School House steps, grinned down at him.

"At a time like this," said Blake solemnly, "a chap needs some way of relieving his feelings. I suggest a vote of thanks to Figgins for coming along to be bumped in the nick of time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Carried unanimously!" grinned Monty Lowther. "Figgins, old man—"

But Figgins had not stayed to listen.

CHAPTER 2.

Kildare To Go.

TOM MERRY & CO. were feeling a little more cheerful. The bumping of Figgins of the New House had, as

Blake said, done them good.

Whether it had done Figgins good was another matter.

Figgins, of course, was fair game. He belonged to the New House, and the New House was always at war with the School House—at all events, so far as the juniors were concerned.

The seniors looked with a tolerant eye upon the rivalry which the youngsters were so keen about. Whether at footer, or cricket, or swimming, or rowing, or punching, the School House and the New House were always "up against" one another. Though, as a rule, they managed to remain pretty good friends at bottom, and they were always ready to unite against a common enemy—the Rylcombe Grammar School, for example.

When things were dull at St. Jim's, it was always possible to enliven matters with a House raid; and now that the juniors were concerned about Kildare, it was really kind of Figgins to come along and be bumped in that way, Blake said.

"But about Kildare?" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Suppose we go and jaw to him?" Digby suggested. "It might cheer him up."

The other fellows looked very doubtful.

"We might ask him what's the matter," said Herries.

"Might get kicked out of the study for cheek," said Blake uneasily. "You never know how these blessed seniors are going to take things. A prefect is almost as uncertain a beast as a master."

"Yaas, that's quite twue!"

Tom Merry & Co. had strolled as far as the Sixth-Form passage, and there they hesitated. They would have liked very much to express their sympathy with Kildare, but they were dubious about their reception. He might think their sympathy impertinence, and think they were bothering their heads about matters that did not concern them.

"There goes Darrel," said Blake.

Darrel of the Sixth went into Kildare's study, and Rushden followed him in. The door closed behind them. A minute later North of the Sixth went in.

"Looks like a tea-party," said Blake.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No tea there," he said. "There hasn't been a fag in Kildare's study. It's a jaw of some sort."

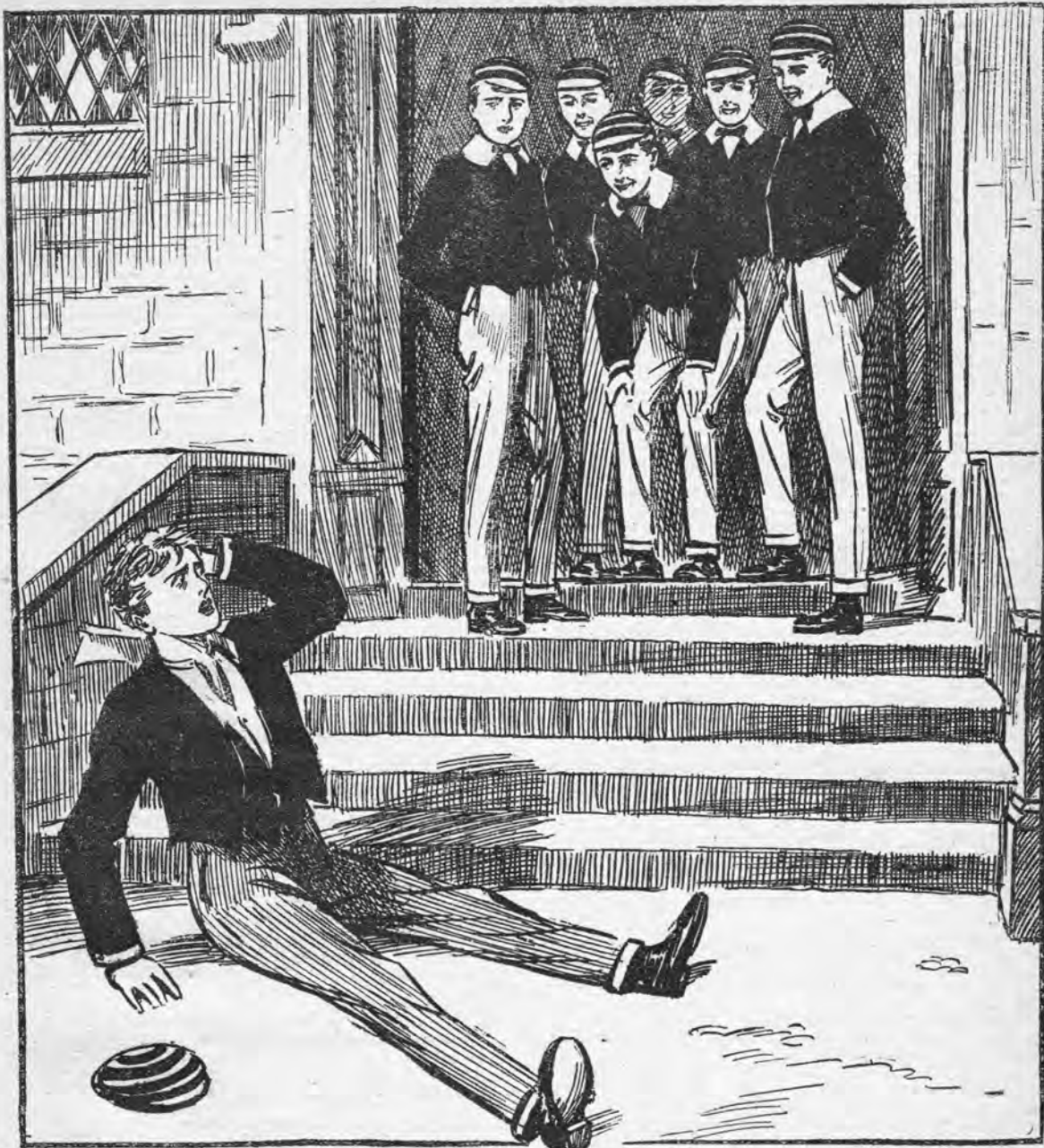
"My hat! Here's Monteith!"

A somewhat slim but well-built senior came up the passage. It was Monteith of the Sixth, the head prefect of the New House. Monteith hardly noticed the juniors. There was a peculiar expression upon his face that struck the juniors at once.

In earlier days, Monteith of the New House had been on very bad terms with Kildare, and it was an open secret that he had tried to oust him from the captaincy of the school. But that was all over now. The two prefects were on the best of terms, and in all important matters connected with the school the St. Jim's skipper consulted the head prefect of the New House as a matter of course.

Monteith's coming made the affair look more like a council—or a "jaw," as Tom Merry called it—than ever.

The New House prefect went into Kildare's study, and closed the door. A couple of minutes later, Baker of the Sixth, another New House senior, came in, and also passed into the study and closed the door.



The juniors crowded on the New House steps, grinned down at the fallen Figgins. "At a time like this," remarked Blake, "a chap needs some way of relieving his feelings, and I suggest a vote of thanks to Figgins for coming along to be bumped in the nick of time!" "Carried unanimously!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. (See Chapter 1.)

The juniors looked at one another.

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus looked very thoughtful.

"I wathah think we ought to look into this," he remarked.

"Eh?"

"I don't like these blessed seniahs consultin' without takin' the Fourth Form into their confidence!" said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "Upon the whole, deah boys, I think I'll go in and see Kildare."

"Ass!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Keep off the grass!" said Blake. "You can't interrupt a Sixth-Form jaw."

"But I feel weally anxious about Kildare," said D'Arcy. "It's almost as if he were makin' his will, or somethin'.

Pewwaps it is the tailah's bill, after all, and they are goin' to make a whip round to help him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard it as extwemely pwob. I wemembah once I was in a fwightful difficulty when the bills for seweral paih of twousahs came in at once, and I was stonay bwoke. Look here, you fellows, back me up, and we'll go and see Kildare, and get at the truth."

The juniors thought it out. They were certainly curious, but they were more concerned than they were curious. Their regard for "old Kildare" was strong.

"Come on, deah boys!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy settled the matter by leading the way.

Tom Merry & Co. followed him.

The swell of St. Jim's tapped at the door of Kildare's study, and opened it. All eyes in the study were turned upon him at once.

**NEXT
WEEK:**

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

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The seniors there were looking very grave, and Kildare, who was standing by the window, was quite white. The fellows had never seen his handsome, ruddy face so bereft of its healthy colour before.

"Pway excuse me, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as the seniors looked at him grimly, and Monteith rapped out a sharp query as to what he wanted—"pway excuse me—"

"Get out!" said Monteith.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass for a moment upon Monteith, and then looked at Kildare. He did not intend to take any notice of the orders of a New House prefect. The authority of prefects extended only over boys of their own Houses.

"Pway excuse me, Kildare—"

"The fact is—," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's like this—," began Blake.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake—"

"You see," said Kangaroo of the Shell, "we're anxious about you, Kildare. We want to know whether you're ill."

Kildare smiled faintly.

"I'm not ill, thank you," he said.

"Oh, good!" said Blake. "That's all right, then!"

"Yaas, wathah! But it appeahs to us that somethin' is the mattah," explained Arthur Augustus. "We are all vewy sowwy that somethin' is the mattah, and we should like to back you up, Kildare, old man."

Monteith frowned.

"You cheeky young beggars—," he began.

Monteith never had the good feeling and tact in dealing with younger boys which Kildare invariably displayed. It was for that reason that Monteith, in spite of many undoubtedly good qualities, was next popular in the junior forms, especially outside his own House.

Kildare made a gesture.

"It's all right, Monty," he said. "The kids don't mean any harm. I may as well tell them, too—the school will all know to-day."

"Oh, just as you like, of course," said Monteith a little sulkily.

"Is something wrong?" asked Tom Merry anxiously.

Kildare nodded.

"Yes," he said, "with me—I mean my people at home. My mother's illness has become worse, and I am going home."

"Going home?"

"Yes."

"But—but not for good?" ejaculated Tom Merry, in dismay.

The juniors all looked blankly at Kildare.

What would the school be like without him?

It would not be St. Jim's without its frank, handsome, popular captain.

Kildare gone!

There was dismay in every junior face there. Kildare's own face softened a good deal, in spite of the trouble in it. It was pleasant to know that he was so liked, that he would be so missed.

"I don't know," he replied. "If the mater pulls round all right I shall come back as soon as she is well. It might be only a few days—it might be a few weeks. But if she does not get better I shall stay at home. She wants me with her, and the doctor says I ought to be there. There isn't danger, you know—it's a question of an illness which may be long or short, according to the turn it takes. But as I may be kept away from St. Jim's for a whole term, I am going to make arrangements as if I were leaving for good. I resign the captaincy—"

"Oh, Kildare!"

"I cannot captain St. Jim's from a sick room fifty miles away," said Kildare, with a slight smile. "I am leaving to-night, and when I am gone a new captain must be elected. It will be better for the election to take place immediately—say to-morrow—but that is for the prefects to decide. If I return to school soon I shall accept the new captain, and stand by him."

"He would resign, and give you your place again, I should think," said Darrel.

"I should not expect that."

"Oh, that's understood," said Monteith. "If I were elected, and you came back, Kildare, I should hand it over to you at once."

"Hear, hear!" said the other seniors.

Kildare nodded.

"Thanks!" he said. "But we can leave that question in the air at present. There's more than one fellow present here who would make a good captain for St. Jim's."

"And—and you're leaving to-night, Kildare?" faltered Tom Merry.

"Yes, kid."

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"I'm awfully sorry!"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm feahfully sowwy, deah boy!"

"It's rotten!"

"Beastly!"

Kildare smiled faintly.

"Thank you!" he said.

The juniors quitted the study. They knew what was the matter now, and they were more sorry than ever for Eric Kildare. But it was evidently a matter in which they could do nothing to help the captain of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 3.

Kildare's Farewell.

KILDARE was leaving!

The news was soon all over the school.

Many of the fellows could not believe it at first—it seemed incredible. Of course, in the lapse of time, Kildare would naturally leave St. Jim's to go up to the university, but until then no one had dreamed of his leaving.

St. Jim's without Kildare—St. Jim's with any other captain—seemed incredible.

It was hard upon the other fellows, hard upon the school, hard upon Kildare himself. The sports would suffer in the absence of the best captain the school had ever had. There was a footer match fixed for the next Wednesday afternoon, and without Kildare the chance of St. Jim's would be much lessened. His going might make a great difference to the school's record for the season.

That was a matter which chiefly concerned the seniors. But the juniors had their own reasons for missing Kildare.

A kinder captain, a more generous helper in all the little difficulties that beset the path of a young lad at a public school, had never existed than Eric Kildare.

He would help the juniors with their footer, he would sometimes referee for them, he would give a helping hand in a difficult exercise—there was no end to his kindness and patience and good temper.

Even the New House fellows, who had once felt a little sore at the captain of the school being selected from the School House, loyally backed up Kildare in every way, and never dreamed of setting up a rival from their own House.

But it was pretty certain that when Kildare was gone the question of where the new captain should be selected from, the School House or the New House, would become very keen. There was no other fellow in the school who had Kildare's influence over both parties.

It was generally felt that Monteith, who was head prefect of the New House, and vice-captain, would succeed Kildare as captain.

But that was a prospect that filled many of the fellows with dismay.

Monteith had good qualities; he was a good footballer, and had a keen head for business, but he was not popular.

The New House fellows probably would back him up to a man, simply because he belonged to the New House, but he was not likely to get a strong following from the School House.

Although not a bully, Monteith had a sharp temper and a bitterly sarcastic tongue, neither of which endeared him to the Lower Forms, even in his own House.

The School House senior with the best chance of election was Darrel. But Darrel had been "crooked" in football practice some time before, and his ankle was still "rocky," barring him from footer. The school captain at St. Jim's was also footer captain, and a captain who could not play football would be quite out of place, and for that reason it was understood that Darrel would not put up for election.

It looked as if it would be a walk-over for Monteith.

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But until Kildare was gone these questions did not occupy the general mind very much, only in the form of faint misgivings.

For the present, the fellows thought of Kildare; and, indeed, it should have been very gratifying to the captain of St. Jim's to see what a blow it was to the whole school that he was leaving it.

The masters felt it almost as keenly as the boys. They realised more clearly than ever before what a helping hand Kildare had been to them in maintaining discipline and keeping up the tone of the school.

"It will be rotten when he's gone!" Jack Blake said dolefully. "Knox and Sefton and those cads will get up on their hindlegs at once."

"And the New House chaps will get their ears up if they get a New House man in as captain," said Manners of the Shell.

"Bai Jove!"

"Monteith's pretty certain to get in," said Kangaroo. "I hear that Rushden of ours is going to put up, as Darrel is crooked."

"Rushden will never pull it off," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He's too easy-going and good-natured. And, as a matter of fact, he's far too easy for such a job as captain of St. Jim's."

"He's a School House man."

"Yes, that's in his favour, but there's precious little else."

"We don't want Monteith."

"Rather not!"

All the juniors were agreed upon that point. They did not want Monteith because he was a New House fellow, and because he was—Monteith.

"But if it's between Rushden and Monteith, Monteith's pretty certain to pull it off," said Glyn of the Shell.

"Wats!"

"Eh?"

"Wats!" repeated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "There is a middle course."

"What's that?"

"I've got an ideah."

"You have?" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in great astonishment. "My hat!"

The juniors chuckled.

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! I've got an ideah—a weally wippin' ideah—and I wathah think that it will save the school from goin' to the dogs, you know."

"What's the idea?" asked Blake.

D'Arcy smiled in an exceedingly knowing way.

"I won't tell you just yet," he replied. "I don't want it to get out now. But we'll have a meetin' in the studay aftah Kildare's gone, and then I'll explain."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"We'll have a meeting, certainly," said Lynn of the Fourth. "We shall have to have a meeting to discuss the election. It seems that it's going to be held to-morrow, and so there's no time to lose."

"The study won't be big enough," said Tom Merry. "We'd better hold the meeting in the Shell Form-room."

"Yaas, that will be all wright. I shall address the meetin'—"

"The meeting will have something to say about that, I expect."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Well, I don't know," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "On the occasion when Gussy has an idea something special ought to be done to celebrate it. You know it's a common opinion here that Gussy never had an idea in his head in his life."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus walked away with his nose in the air.

The juniors were waiting in the passage to see Kildare come out. The station cab was in the quadrangle, and Kildare's box and bags were piled upon it. Very nearly the whole school had assembled to see him off. Figgins & Co. from the New House had come over, with a crowd of other New House fellows—Pratt, and French, and Jimson, and Thompson, and dozens more. And there were no House ragging now. The hatchet was buried; peace reigned in the wigwams of the juniors, so to speak, for the sake of giving old Kildare a good send-off.

The masters as well as the boys had turned out to see Kildare go.

Dr. Holmes—the Head himself—came to the door of the School House to bid him good-bye, and shook hands with him in sight of all St. Jim's, and said that he hoped soon to see him back in his old place at the school—a sentiment which the crowd cheered mightily.

Mr. Raiton, the Housemaster of the School House, and even the sour-faced Mr. Rateliff of the New House, shook hands most cordially with the captain of St. Jim's, and wished him good fortune.

Kildare's face was pale, and some of the fellows thought they saw something glistening on his dark eyelashes as he bade his crowd of friends good-bye.

He was in the cab at last.

As it turned down the drive to the gates the fellows gathered round it in a dense throng, and it had to proceed at a walking pace.

At the gates they said farewell.

They cheered and waved their caps as the cab turned into the road and rolled away towards the railway-station at Rylcombe.

"Good-bye, Kildare!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

"Mind you come back!"

"Good-bye!"

The cab was gone.

The last farewell died away on the dusky road, and the crowd turned back into the gateway of St. Jim's.

Every fellow there had a serious face—everyone felt a sense of loss.

Even fellows like Levison and Mellish, the cads of the Fourth Form, and Crooke, the black sheep of the Shell, looked a little moved.

Taggles, the porter, closed the gates. The boys returned across the dusky quad, to their Houses, and for a long time the only subject under discussion in all the passages and studies was the departure of Kildare, and the probability or otherwise of his returning to the old school to become once more its captain.

CHAPTER 4.

The Eve of the Election!

UPON the notice-board in the hall of either House a paper was pinned, bearing a brief announcement that was intensely interesting to all the fellows at St. Jim's, seniors and juniors alike, and even fags in the Second Form.

The notice in the New House was in the handwriting of Monteith, that in the School House in the hand of Darrel, who was senior prefect now that Kildare was gone.

But the two announcements were identical in wording. They ran as follows:

"NOTICE.

"The post of captain of the school being vacant, owing to the regretted departure of Kildare of the Sixth, an election will be held to-morrow—Tuesday—at 7.30 p.m., in the School Hall, to fill this post.

"The candidates for election are George Rushden of the Sixth and James Monteith of the Sixth. Votes will be taken at 7.30 precisely."

The fellows in both Houses read the announcements with great interest. Figgins & Co.—Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn of the Fourth Form—stood before the notice in the hall of the New House, with a big crowd of seniors and juniors round them.

Figgins's eyes were glistening.

Figgins had the honour and glory of his House very much at heart. He had loyally acquiesced in the last choice of the school, which had made a School House fellow captain. But the dearest wish of Figgins's heart was to see a member of the New House fill the honoured post of captain of St. Jim's.

Kildare was gone, and the post was empty. To honest Figgins it seemed as if there could be no question about the matter now—a New House fellow simply had to be skipper.

Kerr and Fatty Wynn, his chums, fully agreed with him. So did the rest of the New House. There was no doubt that the New House, senior and junior, to the last boy would vote for James Monteith at 7.30 precisely on the morrow.

What made the matter doubtful was that the School House, the older and larger House at St. Jim's, had fully twice as many inhabitants as the New House.

If the School House stood by the School House candidate there was not the slightest doubt that the School House candidate would get in.

But that was not really likely to happen.

Most of the seniors of both Houses were indifferent to the House rivalry—at least, to the extent of selecting the best man and voting for him, whichever House he belonged to. There was little doubt—none at all in New House minds—that Monteith would make a better captain than Rushden. Rushden was good-tempered and good-natured, and a fine fellow enough, but he certainly lacked the force of character necessary for the post. Monteith, on the other hand, had, if anything, too much force of character. Undoubtedly he was a better football captain, and that was a great point. Rushden could play back with great success, but he had never even tried to captain a team, and Monteith had often captained an eleven with brilliant success. Circumstances of that kind weighed very much with the seniors.

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The juniors were more likely to follow the House candidate blindly. But the seniors prided themselves upon weighing the matter sagely and sedately.

Upon the whole, Monteith had a first-class chance. He was certain of all his own House—a third part of St. Jim's in number—and he was certain of most of the Sixth-Formers in the School House, and a large part of the Fifth. Unless something happened to split the vote, he was morally bound to get in. A third candidate, true, would make matters extremely uncertain. But no third candidate was likely to be forthcoming. For it was generally agreed in the Sixth that Rushden and Monteith were to have it out between them, Darrel having declined nomination; and as for the Fifth, there was no one in the Fifth who had the remotest chance of getting elected even if he put up for it—and it was almost unheard-of at St. Jim's for a Fifth-Former to be captain of the school. So far as was known, it had happened once, and then only under very exceptional circumstances, and a long while ago.

"We're pretty certain to pull it off," said Figgins, speaking as if it were an affair that was specially under the care of himself, Kerr, and Wynn—as, indeed, the famous Co. considered that it was.

"I should say so!" Kerr said thoughtfully. "There's no denying that Monteith is the better man of the two. He's not so good-tempered as Rushden, perhaps—"

"No fear!" said Fatty Wynn, whose fat ear was still tingling from a recent application of Monteith's finger and thumb.

"But that's not the point," said Thompson of the Shell. "What the school wants is a skipper who can run things, and Monteith can do that."

"Hear, hear!" said the crowd.

"He can captain an eleven, and beat Topcliffe Seniors on Wednesday," said French. "I don't suppose Rushden can do that."

"Couldn't do it for toffee!" said Pratt.

Figgins shook his head.

"Monteith's the man," he said; "and pretty nearly all the Sixth and the Fifth of both Houses will vote for him, I believe."

"Yes, rather!"

"We are bound to stand by him, anyway, as a New House chap—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hurrah for the New House."

There was no doubt about the unanimity of the New House fellows on that point.

"That's a mere question of House loyalty," said Figgins. "Every chap here is bound to stand by the New House candidate."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hurrah!"

"The trouble is, that the School House is bigger, not greater—"

"No, no!"

"Never!"

"Bigger—more quantity and less quality," said Kerr.

"Hear, hear!"

"And they have about twice as many votes as we have," said Figgins. "That's the difficulty. A lot of the School House chaps will walk up to the poll like so many silly sheep, and vote for Rushden simply because he's a School House chap."

"Shame!"

"Yes, they're asses enough for anything!" said Figgins. "It's no good arguing with most of them—they're simply asses!"

And there was a groan from the crowd expressive of wonder and scorn for the asinine qualities of the School House fellows.

"But isn't it a question of House loyalty with them the same as with us?" asked Fatty Wynn innocently.

There was a roar at once.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"That's quite different!"

"I did think you had more sense than that, Fatty!" said Figgins, more in sorrow than in anger. "I did, really!"

"Oh, Fatty always was an ass!" said Thompson of the Shell good-naturedly. "Never mind, Fatty—"

"But—but I say—" stammered the unfortunate Fatty.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Cheese it!"

"Ring off!"

"Yes, shut up, Fatty, old man!" said Figgins. "You're only making an ass of yourself, you know!"

"But I don't see—"

"Order!"

"Shut up!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 204.

DON'T MISS "THE PARTING OF THE WAYS!" The Splendid, Long, Complete School Story appearing in this week's number of the "MAGNET" LIBRARY, Price One Penny.

"If Wynn can't see the difference between House loyalty and a mere sheer, rotten obstinacy such as the School House chaps are going to show, it's no good arguing with him," said French. "But I think he ought to shut up."

"Oh, all right!" said Fatty. "But—"

"Order!"

"Cheese it!"

And Fatty Wynn relapsed into silence, though he was still a little puzzled.

"Now," went on Figgins, "this is a great occasion—"

"Hear, hear!"

"It behoves us—"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"It behoves us," said Figgins, with a touch of defiance—"it behoves us to buck up, and show the stuff we're made of."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, that's a good word, anyway!" agreed Thompson of the Shell.

"It behoves us," repeated Figgins, with emphasis, taking no notice of the humorous Thompson. "to leave no stone unturned to make this election a win for the New House—ahem!—I mean for the superior candidate."

"Hear, hear!"

"On an occasion like this every chap is bound to do his best, and help to mark the occasion by every means in his power."

"That means a whip round, I suppose, for a big feed?" said Fatty Wynn, finding his voice again. "That's certainly the best way of celebrating anything. I'm sure I should be willing to do the cooking—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Figgins. "Who's thinking about feeds?"

"But you said—"

"We've all got to do some electioneering," said Figgins. "We've got to point things out to the School House chaps, and try to make them see the matter in the proper light. Most of them are silly asses, but we might have a chance to make Tom Merry see reason—he's a sensible chap. And he's got a lot of influence in that old shanty they call a House."

"Good!"

"We'll go over," said Figgins. "I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle! When I've put it to him plainly he must see that Monteith is the only possible candidate."

And Figgins & Co. forthwith marched over to the School House to interview Tom Merry & Co., and try the effect of their persuasive powers upon the School House juniors. They had a difficult task before them.

CHAPTER 5.

A Slight Misunderstanding.

TOM MERRY & CO., in these same moments, were very busy.

After Kildare was gone, and the notices had been posted up about the new election, all thoughts were turned towards the coming struggle, in the School House as well as in the New House.

The meeting proposed by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, to consider his as yet unknown idea, was arranged, though the juniors had but slight intention of listening to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Most of the juniors of the School House made up their minds to be present. Little troubles between the Fourth and the Shell, and between the Middle School and the fags, were quite forgotten in the enthusiasm of the hour.

Wally—D'Arcy minor, of the Third Form—considered that he had quite as much to do with the matter as any other fellow in the House; as indubitably he had, for every fellow in the school had a vote, and a fag's vote was just as valuable as a Sixth-Former's in an election for the school captain. And Wally came along with a crowd of Third-Formers, all ready to yell for the School House candidate and to howl down any possible suggestion of voting for Monteith.

Tom Merry had put a notice on the board, fixing the meeting for eight o'clock, and towards that hour juniors began to stream into the large room on the ground floor which was used as a meeting-place by the Hobby Club and the Junior Dramatic Society and several other societies in the junior Forms.

Tom Merry & Co. were in the hall of the School House, in busy discussion of the coming meeting, when Figgins & Co. looked in.

At the sight of the three New House juniors, who were followed in by Pratt, of the Fourth, and Thompson, of the Shell—New House fellows—the discussion of the School House chums ceased.

Hostile glances were turned towards the five visitors by

some of the fellows, but Tom Merry turned to them in hearty greeting.

"This is ripping of you, Figgy!" he exclaimed.

Figgins looked surprised.

"Is it?" he asked rather blankly.

"Yes. Of course, you don't bear any malice for that little bumping we gave you some time back?"

"Oh, no! It's all in the day's work," grinned Figgins.

"We've given you bumpings enough, I dare say."

"So you have," said Tom Merry cordially—"quite enough. This isn't a time when House rows or little troubles of that sort should be remembered."

"Not at all," agreed Figgins.

"At a time like this," Tom Merry went on, growing eloquent, "all small personal disputes should be buried in—"

"In the garden?" suggested Monty Lowther.

"Don't be an ass, Lowther! In oblivion," said Tom Merry—"all trifling matters should be buried in oblivion, and fellows of both Houses should rally together and stand shoulder to shoulder, for the good of the old school."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Figgins looked surprised and pleased.

"I'm jolly glad to hear you say that, Tom Merry, and jolly glad these chaps agree with you about it," he said.

"It will make things much easier. I agree with every word you've said. It's just what I think myself, and what I've been saying to the chaps in the New House. Haven't I, Kerr?"

"You have," said Kerr.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom Merry heartily. "You agree with me, then, that fellows ought to vote for the candidate according to the fitness of things, and not stick blindly to a chap simply because he belongs to their House?"

"Exactly!" said the delighted Figgins. "Just what I said myself, only I really didn't put it quite so well."

"Then that's all plain sailing, and I move a vote of thanks to Figgins for coming over in this hearty way and assuring us of his support," said Tom Merry.

"Hear, hear!"

Figgins looked a little blank.

"Monteith's your man?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"You're voting for Monteith?"

"Voting for your grandmother!" said Blake. "Rushden is our man, of course!"

"Rushden?"

"Of course!"

"Why, what rot!" exclaimed Figgins indignantly. "What's that Tom Merry was saying just now, then, about voting for the proper candidate, irrespective of the House he belonged to?"

"I mean that, every word. Rushden's the proper candidate, ain't he?" demanded Tom Merry warmly.

"Rats!"

"What!" roared the School House juniors.

"Then you don't mean business about voting for the right man, without considering the House?" shouted Kerr.

"Yes, we do. It's you fellows who are refusing to do that. If you can't see that Rushden is the right man—"

"Bosh! If you can't see that Monteith is the right man—"

"Now, don't be a silly ass, Figgy! There is a time to be funny and a time not to be funny," said Blake severely.

"I don't think I could be so funny as you chaps, if I tried for dog's ages," shouted Figgins. "I came over here to talk sense to you chaps—"

"Why don't you begin, then?" asked Monty Lowther innocently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I—"

"Look here!" said Kerr.

"Figgins, old man, I did think you were a more sensible chap than that," said Tom Merry. "I thought, of course, that you had come over to assure us that you were going to support our man."

"Why, you ass—" roared the exasperated Figgins.

"Look here!" said Kerr. "Monteith's far and away the best candidate. You fellows must admit that yourselves."

"Admit rats!"

"You don't mean to say—"

"Oh, 'nuff said!" exclaimed Kangaroo. "It's time for the meeting. Are you New House chaps going to support our man, or not?"

"Not!" roared Figgins & Co.

"Then buzz off!"

"Look here—"

"Yah! New House duffers! Yah!"

That was too much for Figgins. He lifted his right arm, and smote the mocker, and laid him upon the floor. It was the signal for a rush. A School House swarm poured all over Figgins & Co., and they were swept out of the House and down the steps into the quad, almost in the twinkling of an eye.

Tom Merry came back into the house with his necktie awry, and panting for breath.

"Time for the meeting!" he exclaimed.

"Hurray!"

And the juniors crowded into the meeting-room.

CHAPTER 6.

Shame!

THE meeting was a crowded one, and decidedly noisy. Almost all the School House juniors were there, even to "kids" in the Second Form, and the crowd was dense. Tom Merry, of the Shell, had appointed himself chairman, but the chairman was not likely to be much regarded. On some occasions when meetings were held in that room, prefects would rush in with canes, and lay about them when the noise grew too deafening. But on the present occasion, for many reasons, the juniors felt that they could make as much noise as they liked. In the first place, there was no captain of the school; and in the second, Dr. Holmes had left the school that evening, to pass a couple of days with an old college friend at the seaside.

And to some extent it was at St. Jim's like unto that state in the olden time, when there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

True, there were masters and prefects galore. But the Head was not there, and that meant much. The Head was away, and would not return till after the election of the new captain. And the head-prefect and captain was gone. And the other prefects were unusually nice and civil to the juniors about this time, for every junior had a vote, to use as he liked, and at election times voters have to be gently dealt with. Seniors and prefects who wanted their own special candidate elected did not care about coming down heavily upon any fellow who had a vote; and some, indeed, were canvassing the "sweet voices" as assiduously as Coriolanus of old.

Juniors, for once in a way, felt their value and importance, and they revelled in the new sense of being fellows who mattered.

Tom Merry tapped on the table with a cricket-stump, but he tapped in vain. For a long time there was a buzz of voices growing to a roar.

It was Kangaroo, of the Shell, who obtained the first hearing, perhaps because upon the Australian plains his lungs had grown more powerful and enabled him on this occasion to raise his voice above the general din.

"Gentlemen—"

Buz-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z!

"Gentlemen, Rushden's our candidate!"

Then there was a cheer.

"Rushden! Hurray for the School House! Hurray for the cock-house of St. Jim's!"

Kangaroo waved his hand.

"Gentlemen of the School House—"

"Hear, hear!"

"I take it that all present will vote for Rushden?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Stick to the old House!" roared Blake.

"Stand by the old firm!" yelled Lumley-Lumley.

"Hurray!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Hip, hip, hurray!"

There was no doubt that the vast majority of the meeting, at all events, was in favour of the School House candidate.

Tom Merry rapped on the table.

"Fellows—"

"Hurray!"

"Do let me speak a word!"

"Hurray!"

"It's important! North—"

"Hurray for North!"

"North wants to speak to the meeting about the election."

The door had opened, and North, of the Sixth, had looked in and made a sign to Tom Merry. The matter had been mentioned between them before. The yells and shouts and buzzes died away a little. North was a prefect of the Sixth and a chum of Kildare's, and he was very popular and much respected.

"Go it, North, old man!" said Manners.

"Come here!"

"Stand on the chair!"

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ANSWERS

NEXT
WEEK:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

"Pile in, old man!"

"On the ball!"

North came in, with a dubious expression on his face, as if uncertain how his address would be received by the School House juniors. The juniors observed it, but they did not understand it. There was no reason why North should be dubious, so long as he spoke in favour of the School House candidate. That he would do anything else never even crossed the minds of the juniors as yet.

North stepped upon the chair Tom Merry placed for him, and surveyed the audience. The shouting died away to a murmur, and he had a chance to speak.

"I haven't got much to say," said the prefect, "but I think I ought to put it to you kids. There are two candidates for captain—one a New House fellow, and the other belonging to our House."

"Bravo School House!"

"Bravo Rushden!"

North smiled a little awkwardly.

"But this isn't a House matter," he said. "It's a question of the good of the whole school. We want to elect the best captain we can get, and the election depends a great deal upon the way the juniors vote."

"Hear, hear!"

"We ought to vote for the best man, irrespective of House ties," went on North.

"What-ho!" said Jack Blake, looking puzzled. "But surely you ought to be saying that to the New House chaps, not to us."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Ahem! The fact is," said North courageously, "I am in favour of Monteith."

"Wha-a-a-a-a!"

A bombshell dropped into the midst of the meeting would hardly have surprised the juniors more.

"Eh?"

"What!"

"Monteith!"

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

"You're rotting, of course."

"Yaas, wathah."

"I'm not rotting," said North, flushing a little. "You can't think I'd say anything against Rushden. He's a chum of mine, and we're both chums of Kildare's—"

"Good old Kildare! Hurrah!"

"But facts are facts," said North. "I've told Rushden my opinion."

"And what did he say?" demanded Kangaroo.

"Well, he said I could go and eat coke!" said North, with a grin. "But, look here—"

"You'd better take Rushden's advice, then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" said North. "I want to put the facts before you kids."

"Who are you calling kids?" demanded Wally.

"Ahem! Before you juniors," said North. "Monteith isn't of our House, but he's the better man for the skipper. I don't say he's a nicer chap than Rushden, or even so nice, but he's a football skipper, and a better manager in every way. Rushden's a splendid chap, as I know as well as anybody, but he's not built for a captain."

"Rats!"

"Piffle!"

"No New House bounders for us!"

"Wathah not!"

"I may as well tell you that nearly all the Sixth and practically all the Fifth are pledged to vote for Monteith," said North.

"Shame!"

Tom Merry jumped upon a form.

"Fellows, if what North says is correct—and, of course, we don't doubt his word—the election will be much closer than we expected. But it rests with us to save St. Jim's. It depends on us to make sure that a School House candidate gets in!"

"Hurrah!"

"The cause of the School House, deserted by the seniors, must be saved by the juniors!" shouted Tom Merry.

Frenzied cheering!

North tried to speak again. But lungs of brass would not have been equal to the task. He tried several times, but the cheering of Tom Merry's patriotic sentiments was too tremendous. North descended from the chair. His lips were moving, and he was probably speaking still, but not a syllable could be heard. He was hustled a little as he made his way to the door. Only the respect due to a prefect and senior, once popular, saved him from leaving the room "on his neck."

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Blake slammed the door after him.

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "I move the resolution that this meeting regrets to see that some seniors allow themselves to be led away from their allegiance to their own House, and determines to back up the School House through thick and thin."

And there was a roar of applause which showed that the motion was passed unanimously.

CHAPTER 7.

The Great Idea of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stepped upon the chair vacated by North, and adjusted his eyeglass to a nicety in his eye, and surveyed the meeting. The juniors were still cheering, not because there was anything special to cheer for, but apparently for the exercise of their lungs, and to show how much noise they could make when they really tried. If this latter was their object they succeeded admirably.

Arthur Augustus swept the shouting crowd with his monocle for some minutes, waiting for an interval of silence to make his voice heard.

But an interval seemed a long time coming.

Arthur Augustus's idea, which he had intended to communicate to his friends at this special meeting, had been forgotten by everyone but Arthur Augustus himself. And it really looked as if he would never have a chance to air it.

Even the lungs of schoolboys are not tireless. The yelling died down at last, and then Arthur Augustus made a modest attempt to make his voice heard.

"My deah boys—"

"Hurrah!"

"I have an ideah—"

Monty Lowther held up his hand.

"Silence for Gussy's idea!" he exclaimed. "It's the first he ever had, and he wants to work it off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally Lowthah—"

"Go it, Gussy!" said Tom Merry encouragingly. "Pile in! Is it a dodge for making the New House chaps vote for the right man, or for bringing the Sixth to their senses?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, I think it is generally agreed here that it is quite impos for Monteith, or any othah New House chap, to be captain of St. Jim's!"

"Yes, rather."

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Monty Lowther, with an exact imitation of D'Arcy's own beautiful accent, and there was a roar of laughter.

"But there are many cires, to be urged against Wushden's election," went on Arthur Augustus. "He's a splendid chap."

"Hurrah for Rushy!"

"But there are fellows in the School House more suitable for the bizney."

"Darrel can't put up," said Blake. "He's crooked for the rest of the term!"

"I was not thinking of Dawwel."

"Who then? Not North?"

"Certainly not!"

"Lefevre of the Fifth?" hazarded Digby.

"Oh, wats! Look here, you fellahs, my ideah is a wippin' one! I wergad it as wotten that the captain of the school should always be selected from the Sixth."

"Better than the Fifth!" said Glyn.

"I am not thinkin' of the Fifth!"

"Why, what—"

"Why shouldn't a juniah be captain of St. Jim's?" demanded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy boldly.

It was out now!

It was not easy to silence a numerous meeting of juniors. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had succeeded in doing it.

For a full five seconds sheer astonishment held the juniors dumb.

Then there was a roar!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle a little more tightly in his eye, and surveyed the hilarious meeting indignantly. He did not see anything to excite mirth in the suggestion. But the other fellows did, evidently. They roared!

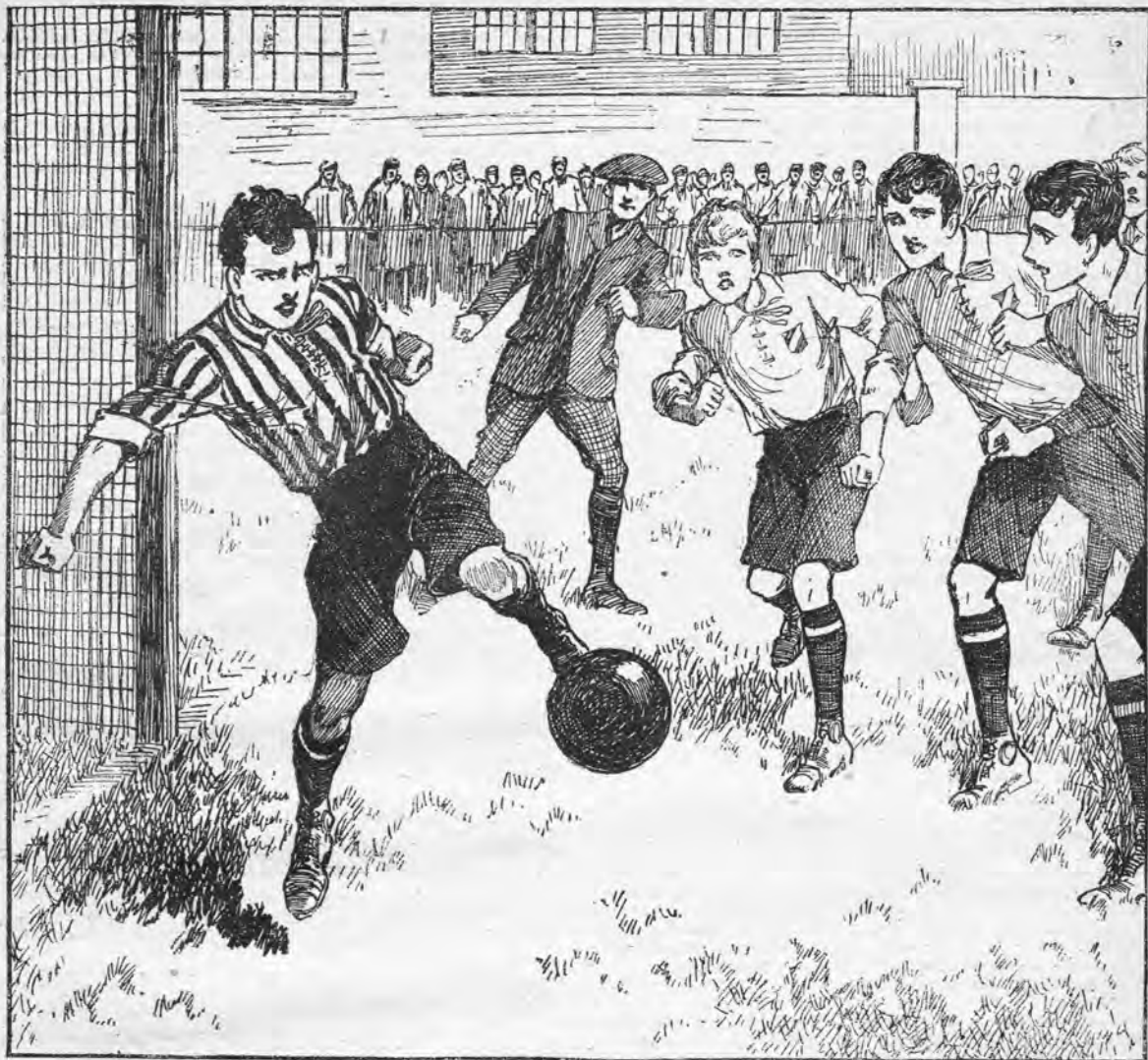
"Look here, you silly asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wergad you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors did not leave off laughing till they were hoarse. Then the tears ran down their cheeks.



Again the ball came up to the Courtfield goal, but the back cleared with a kick that took it past the half-way line. (For the above incident see the grand long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, entitled "THE PARTING OF THE WAYS," by Frank Richards, which is contained in our splendid companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

"What juniors were you thinking of, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry, as soon as the laughter had lulled a little.

"Myself, of course!"

"Of course!" grinned Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Captain Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause whatever for this wibald laughtah," said Arthur Augustus. "It appears to me a wudicrous custom for the captain of the school always to be chosen frowm the uppah Forms."

"Well, there's something in that," Blake admitted. "I dare say a junior could run the show better if he had a chance."

"Quite likely," grinned Tom Merry. "But he's not likely to have a chance."

"Ha, ha! No."

"Why not?" demanded Arthur Augustus warmly. "If you fellows would all back me up I should get in as captain, and I pwomise you I should make things hum—wathah!"

"I've no doubt you would!" roared the Kangaroo. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should see the juniahs had a chance in the first eleven—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should put down faggin' for the Sixth!"

"Good egg!"

"I expect the Sixth would jolly soon put you down," grinned Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be put down. Kildare was a wippin' captain, but Wushden will only be so-so, and Monteith will be wotten. I wegard it as a wippin' thing for St. Jim's to have a juniah as skippah for a change."

"Well, if you had suggested me—" grinned Blake.

"Or me," said Tom Merry.

"Or me," said Wally.

"Pway don't talk out of your silly hats!" said D'Arcy. "There are juniahs and juniahs, of course. I do not say that ewery juniah is fitted to be captain of the school. Fah frowm that! I was speakin' of myself."

"You generally are!" remarked Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Captain Gussy!" murmured Blake. "Gussy, captain of St. Jim's! Oh, hold me somebody!"

"I wegard it as a wippin' ideah, and I dare say you chaps will aftah you have had time to think it ovah," said Arthur Augustus. "What is wequired for captain of the school is a fellow of tact and judgment, a fellow who will always back up the School House, and give the New House chaps the kybosh, and so on. There are othah points, too, such as havin' a decent taste in dwess, and doin' the school cwedit in that way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT
WEEK:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Tom Merry humorously. "If we vote for a junior at all, Gussy, we'll vote for you."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake. "You can have our votes if we vote for a junior at all."

And the meeting grinned assent.

"I fail to see why you should regard the matter in a humorous spirit," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "At all events, I am going to put up for election, and I trust to the good sense of the House, on reflection, to back me up."

"Great Scott!"

And Arthur Augustus walked to the door with his nose very high in the air.

He quitted the room, leaving the meeting almost in convulsions. The idea of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as captain of St. Jim's tickled the least humorous of the fellows. And they had further cause for merriment when the meeting broke up, and they went out into the hall.

For on the notice-board was pinned up a new notice, carefully written out in the elegant handwriting of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"NOTICE.

"A. A. D'Arcy, Esq., of the Fourth Form, having nominated himself as a candidate for the post of captain of St. Jim's, the juniors of the School House are invited to rally round him, and vote for him on Tuesday, at 7.30 precisely.—Signed,
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY."

The juniors read the notice, and laughed till their sides ached. When, an hour or so later, D'Arcy passed the notice-board and glanced at it, there was still a fresh paper pinned up, this one in the unmistakable handwriting of Monty Lowther, of the Shell. The new notice ran:

"A. A. D'Arcy, Esquire, being a candidate for Colney Hatch, the juniors of the School House are invited to rally round and subscribe the cash to buy him a strait-waistcoat.
(Signed) A FRIEND IN NEED."

CHAPTER 8.

A Question of Principle.

THE notice put on the board by A. A. D'Arcy, Esq., had caused considerable mirth in the School House, and that added by Lowther, of the Shell, had caused still more. But curiously enough, the remarkable idea promulgated by A. A. D'Arcy, Esq., caught the fancy of many of the School House juniors, when they came to think it over.

True the captain of the school being selected from the Fourth Form was a quite unheard-of thing. But for that reason it excited great interest among some of the fellows.

Wally, in the Third Form, propounded the question:

"Why not?"

"Why not, indeed?"

There were dozens of reasons that would have convinced a senior at once, but hardly any had any weight with a junior. A senior would have said that the necessary knowledge, gravity, sense of responsibility, and so forth, could only be found in the Upper Forms. But to that any juniors in the School House would promptly have replied with the ancient and classic monosyllable—"Rats!"

It was a matter of custom! True enough, the captain of the school had always been selected from the Sixth, excepting upon one remembered occasion, when a Fifth-Former had filled the post; and that Fifth-Former was at the top of his Form, very near to getting into the Sixth.

But there certainly was no rule on the subject. The candidature of a junior had never been heard of, never been thought of, and even now that it was suggested, it was taken as a joke.

But more and more of the fellows before bedtime echoed D'Arcy minor's question—"Why not?"

Wally felt quite proud of his major. Usually Wally treated his major with a most unminorlike disrespect, and yawned openly when Arthur Augustus gave him little lectures on carefulness in dress, and neatness in personal appearance. Wally was suspected of actually putting additional ink-spots on his collar and wristbands when he visited his brother's study, for the purpose of startling Gussy, as the fags put it. But for once Wally was filled with a whole-hearted respect for his major. Certainly Arthur Augustus had hit upon a new idea, whether it was practicable or not.

And to the Third Form, more than to any other, it appeared indeed practicable.

Wally was disposed to back up his major for once, and Jameson and Gibson said together, in tones of deep feeling:

"What larks!"

Truly, with a Fourth-Former in the position of captain of the school, there would be "larks,"—undoubtedly many larks.

"If it wasn't for old Rushden," said Wally, "I'd vote
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for my major, and I'd make all you beggars vote for him too. But we've practically agreed to vote for Rushden, and we can't go back on a chap, even a Sixth-Former."

"Right enough!" said Frayne.

And the Third Form all thought the same.

In the Fourth and the Shell, especially in Gussy's own study—No. 6—his candidature was the subject of merciless fun. All of which Arthur Augustus bore with stately dignity.

"I regard you fellows as asses!"

That was all he said, and he let it go at that.

The news reached the New House before bedtime, of the wonderful proposition made by D'Arcy at the meeting. Figgins & Co. were stricken dumb for a moment or two. When they recovered their voices, Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn gasped together:

"The cheek!"

"Never mind," said Kerr, after a pause, during which he had thought things out in his keen way. "Let Gussy stand. It's all the better!"

"But it's sheer cheek!" howled Figgins.

"Yes, but very likely a lot of the fags will vote for a junior just for a lark."

"What then?"

Kerr smiled.

"It will split the School House vote, that's all," he said simply.

And Figgins realised that it would.

With parties in a very uncertain state, and the election certain to be a pretty close one, every vote lost to Rushden materially increased Monteith's chances. D'Arcy's candidature, if he obtained any following at all, by turning the contest into a triangular one, would simply ensure the defeat of the School House candidate. For certainly not one of Monteith's followers would vote for him.

"Good!" said Figgins. "But will he get any following?"

"I shouldn't wonder—cheeky kids in the Second and Third, perhaps."

"Jolly good! Our man will get in, then."

"Yes, rather!"

"Come to think of it, it's not such a rotten idea, a junior being captain," said Figgins, in a thoughtful way. "Of course, a junior never has been skipper. But everything has to have a beginning."

"Quite so!"

"If Gussy had suggested you or me, Kerr, it wouldn't have been such an utterly rotten idea, after all."

Kerr laughed.

"But Gussy suggested himself," he replied.

"Yes, that's rot, of course," said Figgins. "If a junior did get in, by any chance, I wonder what would happen? There's no law against it."

"The Head's approval has to be got, and he'd shift the junior out fast enough, I expect," said Kerr shrewdly.

"But the Head's away now, and won't be back before Wednesday," said Figgins. "So he's off the grass, so far as that's concerned."

"Well, I don't suppose the election would be allowed to stand."

"I don't know," said Fatty Wynn thoughtfully. "The Head always makes it a great point to keep clear of these matters, you know. He's very sensitive about being supposed to interfere in fellows' private concerns. He would interfere if some awful cad like Levison, of the Fourth, or Crooke, of the Shell, or perhaps Knox, of the Sixth, got elected, perhaps. But a decent chap like Tom Merry, or yourself, Figg—well, it would be hard for the Head to come down on him."

Figgins grinned.

"Well, we should see some fun with a junior as captain," he remarked. "Imagine Gussy captaining the First Eleven against Topcliffe Seniors on Wednesday afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If there was any chance of a junior getting in, you ought to put up for it yourself," said Kerr. "You'd have a better chance than Gussy. And though we're backing up Monteith now, we haven't entered into any engagement to vote for him; we're free to do as we like."

Figgins shook his head.

"I shall stick to Monteith, though," he said. "So long as we get our man in, that's all right! If it was doubtful about getting Monteith in, that would make a difference."

"Well, there isn't much doubt, if Gussy splits the School House vote."

That was a point which occurred to Tom Merry, of the Shell, and he talked it over with Manners and Lowther. After the first merriment was over which D'Arcy's candidature had excited, the captain of the Shell realised that it was quite possible that a number of the fags might vote for D'Arcy out of sheer mischief. The mere novelty of the idea of a junior as captain of the school would appeal to many of the youngsters, and besides, Gussy was a general favourite

Juniah was captain of St. Jim's, and he has therefore gwaicefully withdwawn fwom the contest. I considah—"

But the fellows did not wait to hear what Arthur Augustus D'Arcy considered. They swarmed away towards George Rushden's study.

Rushden was doubtless expecting the visit. He was standing up, leaning on the mantelpiece, looking rather disturbed in his mind, when a dozen knocks sounded at once on his door. North and Darrel were with him.

"Come in!" said Rushden.

The door was flung open, and Tom Merry & Co. crowded in. Behind them the passage was seething with juniors—crowds of the Shell, and the Fourth, and the Third. Nearly all the juniors belonging to the School House seemed to be bent upon getting as near Rushden's study as they could.

"Hallo!" said Rushden. "What do you kids want?"

He knew well enough.

"We want an explanation!" roared Blake.

"Yes, rather!"

"What do you mean by it?"

"You're not going to resign!"

"We won't let you!"

"It's giving in to the enemy!"

"It's not playing the game!"

"It's mean!"

Rushden flushed, and held up his hand for silence.

"I'm sorry you chaps are disappointed," he said. "I've consulted all the Sixth fellows in the School House, and I've thought it out carefully myself. I should like to be skipper of St. Jim's, but it seems to be the general impression that Monteith is the best man after Kildare."

"Rot!"

"He's a New House chap!"

"His House doesn't matter," said Rushden. "We want the best captain we can get for St. Jim's. I'd rather it were a School House man, but if Monteith's the best man available, let him have it. We ought to think of the school."

"He's not the best."

"It's rot!"

"Darrel agrees with me," said Rushden.

Darrel nodded.

"I've helped Rushden come to this decision," he said. "I think it's for the best. I think Rushden's done splendidly in standing out of the election, for the good of the school."

Darrel was too much respected by the juniors for him to be interrupted. But the looks of the disappointed youngsters showed that for once one of the most popular seniors in the House failed to make the slightest impression upon them.

"So, you see, it's for the best," said Rushden, with rather an effort, for he was a little disappointed himself. "You kids had better stand up for Monteith."

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Now, then, no cheek!" said Rushden.

"Sorry!" said Tom Merry. "We don't mean to cheek you, Rushden. You've been talked over into doing this. I don't blame you, or the chaps who've talked you over, if they think they were acting for the good of the school. I suppose every chap has a right to his own opinion. But I'm not going to vote for a New House candidate, especially for Monteith. I'm going to vote for a School House man."

"Hear, hear!" roared the juniors.

Tom Merry's face was flushed with excitement.

"Hurrah for the School House!"

"Hurrah!"

"Well, you kids can do your bellowing in the passage," suggested North. "We don't want the study windows broken."

"Rats!"

"Oh, buzz off, and be quiet!"

The juniors obeyed the order to "buzz off," but they were far from quiet. In the Sixth Form passage the throng swelled and surged. Tom Merry raised his hand.

"Fellows—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Chaps, the Sixth have betrayed us!"

Groans for the Sixth.

"Even if we get another senior candidate, we can't tell whether he may not desert the cause at the last moment, and leave us dished."

Groans!

"Gussy was right!" shouted Tom Merry excitedly.

"Oh!"

"Gussy said it was time that a junior was captain of St. Jim's, and he was right. A junior wouldn't have been talked over into giving us away to the enemy like this."

"Bravo!"

"Gentlemen, I am going to vote for a junior captain of the school. I invite you all to follow my example."

There was a roar.

"Hurrah! Hurrah for Captain Gussy! Hurrah!"

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CHAPTER 10.

D'Arcy Does His Duty.

THAT was how it came about.

That a School House chap must be elected captain was quite certain to Tom Merry & Co., if the whole show was not to go to the dogs, and other dreadful things to happen. The troubles that would fall upon St. Jim's if a New House fellow became captain could not exactly be specified, but there was not a single School House junior who doubted their reality. And as the seniors could not be trusted to keep the House colours flying, the disappointed and exasperated electors had to turn to the thought of a junior captain.

True, Tom Merry was convinced that he would make a better captain than D'Arcy. Blake thought the same about himself. So did Kangaroo and Manners, and Lowther and Herries, and Reilly and Lumley-Lumley, and Lynn and Digby, and others too numerous to mention.

In fact, it was quite astonishing what a number of excellent captains could be produced from the School House junior ranks, at the shortest notice.

But they had promised Gussy that if they voted for a junior they would vote for him. The promise had been made in joke, without the slightest idea that they ever would vote for the junior.

But it was a real pledge all the same, and binding upon them, now that the unexpected had come to pass.

Besides, it was generally felt that D'Arcy, as the originator of the scheme in the first place, deserved the first chance. It would have been bad form indeed for any other junior in the School House to set himself up as a candidate in opposition to Gussy.

The whole body of School House juniors rallied round the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy took it quite calmly.

He seemed to regard it as no more than his due, and a just tribute to a fellow of undoubted tact and judgment.

The seniors had taken D'Arcy's candidature wholly as a laughing matter. But they had to take it seriously now.

For the School House juniors were a numerous body, and they all had votes. Fifth and Sixth in both Houses would go solid for Monteith, certainly. But the Upper Forms were of course the least numerous. New House juniors were expected to plump for Monteith; but they were not numerous, the New House being so much smaller than the School House. It was very probable that School House juniors, united, would outnumber the whole New House, with the School House seniors thrown in, when they came to the poll.

That prospect was a very pleasant one to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

But it filled the Upper Form fellows with dismay. A junior captain of St. Jim's! The thing was ridiculous—unheard of! The Head would surely forbid it, even if Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were elected.

Many of the Sixth spoke to D'Arcy on the subject. Darrel was the one to whom he listened with most respect.

But to Darrel his reply was the same as his reply to the others:

"I am sowwy you don't like the ideah, deah boy; but I am doin' this fwom a sense of duty."

"But it's rot!" urged Darrel.

"I don't wegrad it as wot."

"How can you imagine that a junior can captain a school?" exclaimed Darrel, irritably for once. "You young ass!"

"I fancy I can captain St. Jim's all wight."

"What about captaining the First Eleven?"

"I think that's easy!"

"What!"

"In fact, I'm lookin' forward to that!" said D'Arcy.

And Darrel gave it up.

When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was doing anything from a sense of duty, wild horses or wild buffaloes could not have made him swerve.

And it was his duty to become captain of St. Jim's if he could. The school needed the best captain available, and D'Arcy was the best available. That was how he worked it out. So it was clearly his duty to go ahead.

And he went ahead.

In all the School House there was hardly a junior who did not intend to vote for the swell of St. Jim's when he came to the poll.

A few fellows like Levison and Mellish and Crooke held out, and said they would as soon vote for Herries' bulldog Tower as for D'Arcy, of the Fourth. But they were generally regarded as outsiders, and despised.

In fact, D'Arcy personally requested Levison and Mellish not to vote for him.

"I should take it as an insult!" he told them, in the presence of a delighted crowd of juniors. "If you wanted

GREAT NATIONS OF HISTORY.

By Eugen Sandow.

Every boy knows that in all periods of the world's history there have been certain nations which have been so superior to their neighbours that they have earned the title of "Great Nations."

Did you ever trouble to think why one nation out of many should come to the front and rule the world for a time? The problem is very interesting, and the boy who thinks about it will find it by no means a "dry" subject.

More than that, I promise that he will find the result interesting to himself *personally*, for reasons which I will presently show.

Every boy should read history. I know some boys look upon it as a "school" subject, and avoid it accordingly, but in reality there is nothing more profitable to read than history. Not only the history of your own country, but the history of other countries, too. There is a lot to be gained, and, apart from the interest and value of the subject, a knowledge of history will prove useful to you throughout life.

The Greeks, the Romans, the Vikings, the Spaniards, the French, and the English have each in turn been masters of the world. How did they attain their power, and why did the first five nations lose it?

In every case we find the nation which rose to power was one which devoted great care to the culture of physical strength and health, and that loss of power always followed when this training of the body was neglected; and easy, luxurious living was adopted.

Now England is the world-wide power, and it is every true English boy's hope that she will remain so; but whether she does or not depends upon the interest which you boys—the coming manhood of this great Empire—take in your health, strength, and fitness.

You can make yourselves strong, able men, worthy of the wonderful British Empire, the future of which is in *your hands*. No boy that takes a pride in the name of "Briton" can afford to be careless about himself; he must do his best to make himself healthy, strong, and successful.

Health and Strength are so greatly dependent upon food that my first piece of advice to any boy is "Feed wisely."

See that your food is of the right kind; this is all-important.

Avoid foods and beverages that are useless to your body; prefer those which will help you to be well and strong. Cocoa is admirably suited to the needs of you growing lads, and my new "Health and Strength Cocoa" (of which you can now obtain wonderful value in a 3d. packet) is a perfected form of this wonderful brain-and-body builder, which is being drunk by hundreds of thousands of young fellows.

I know the value of Cocoa as a help to physical development, because I used it when I was a young fellow, and found it wonderfully useful to me. That is why I advise you now to drink "Health and Strength Cocoa" regularly for breakfast, tea, and supper. I know every cup will help you onward to vigorous, splendid manhood, because every drop of this delicious food-drink helps to build healthy tissue, strong bone, active brain, and steady nerves.

My "Health and Strength Cocoa" is more nutritious, more digestible, and far more delicious to the taste than any cocoa you have ever tried before.

There is no other breakfast beverage which gives you so much nutriment for your body and your brain and nerves as my "Health and Strength Cocoa."

The Cocoa will furnish your system with the rich materials for growth and muscular development, will feed the tissue of your brain, and help you lay the foundation of success by assisting you to sound health and manly strength.

7½d. is the price of a full-weight quarter-pound tin of this delicious, wholesome, and nourishing cocoa, and 7½d. cannot be spent to better advantage in any other direction.

All Grocers, Chemists, Provision Dealers, and Stores sell Sandow's "Health and Strength Cocoa" in 3d. packets, and in ½lb., 1lb., and 1lb. tins, at 7½d., 1s. 3d., and 2s. 6d.; but if you have the least difficulty in obtaining it you can secure a supply direct and post free by sending the necessary amount to Mr. Eugen Sandow, Elephant and Castle, London, S.E.

(Continued from page 12.)

me to be captain, I should think there was something wrong about my being a candidate."

"Well, we jolly well sha'n't vote for you!" said Levison. "Thank you vewy much, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, in his most urbane tone.

The opposition of the cads of the School House increased the swell of St. Jim's chances if anything. Nobody else was likely to take the same side as Levison and Mellish and Crooke. They could vote for Monteith if they liked.

In the Third Form, Wally was a most enthusiastic supporter of his major. Any fellow in the Third who divided against Arthur Augustus would have run the most serious risks of being hammered by Wally afterwards. Even the New House portion of the Third Form felt doubtful.

Wally's powerful personality made itself felt by them, and House feeling was not so strong in the Third as in the Middle Forms. And Wally's electioneering was very vigorous. Jameson, his special chum, was a New House boy, and Jameson did not want to oppose his best chum's wishes for the sake of a prefect who boxed his ears nearly every day.

D'Arcy's chances looked rosier and rosier as the day wore on. But when Mr. Lathom dismissed the Fourth Form after lessons, he signed to D'Arcy to stop behind. Arthur Augustus halted by the Form-master's desk, while the rest of the Fourth filed out. Little Mr. Lathom peered at him over his spectacles.

"I hear that you are a candidate in the election, D'Arcy," he said.

"Yaas, wathah, sir!" said D'Arcy.

"Don't you think it rather absurd for a junior to put up for such a position?"

"Not at all, sir!"

Mr. Lathom coughed.

"Ahem! The seniors will not like it, D'Arcy!"

"Weforms are nevah populah at first, sir," said D'Arcy cheerfully. "When they find that I wan things all wight, they will get used to it."

"Ahem! I hope you have thought the matter out carefully, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir!"

"Very well. I think Mr. Railton wishes to speak to you about the matter in his study, D'Arcy. You had better go there now."

"Vewy well, sir."

A few minutes later D'Arcy tapped at the door of Mr. Railton's study, and the deep voice of the Housemaster of the School House bade him enter.

"You wish to speak to me, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus, very respectfully, but with an underlying tone of determination that was unmistakable.

"Yes, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton. "I cannot approve of your candidature for the post of captain of St. Jim's."

"I am sowwy for that, sir."

"I hope you will withdraw it, D'Arcy."

"I will withdwaw it if you ordah me to do so, sir."

Mr. Railton frowned slightly.

"I cannot order you," he said. "I have no authority to do anything of the sort. The Head is unfortunately absent, and in his absence you are at liberty to do as you choose about the matter."

"You think that he would forbid it, sir?"

Mr. Railton hesitated.

"I don't think he would approve, at all events," he replied.

"I hope he would, sir."

"I think you ought to give up the idea, D'Arcy."

"I am vewy sowwy to appeah to diffah fwom you, sir," said D'Arcy, in real distress, "but I have thought it out vewy carefully. I am actin' fwom a sense of duty, and unless you ordah me to withdwaw, I have no choice but to go on."

Mr. Railton could not help smiling.

"As I have said, I have no authority to order you," he replied, "and if you are convinced that you are acting from a sense of duty, I will say no more."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy quitted the study, with his resolution unshaken.

The Sixth had one more card to play—and they played it—with equal want of result.

Rusden was asked to resume his candidature. Anything was better than the risk of a junior becoming captain of the school. But here Rusden developed an obstinacy that was unexpected in so easy-going a fellow.

"I was told yesterday that I wasn't up to the weight of the job, and that it would be a good thing for me to withdraw," he replied, when he was urged. "I'm not going to make a fool of myself by standing again."

"But to keep out a junior—" urged Knox.

"I'm not a blessed stopgap!" said Rusden angrily. "I was willing to try the job, and do my best, and you fellows

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEEK:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

The fags would sometimes strut about the quad, under the windows of Study No. 6, with shillings stuck in their eyes in imitation of D'Arcy's eyeglass, and they would mimic the accent of the swell of the Fourth with great fidelity and perseverance. But they liked him very much, all the same. D'Arcy was always ready to help anybody with lessons, or in any other difficulty; he would stand up for the weak against the strong, and had more than once had terrific encounters with fellows bigger than himself in defence of some bullied fag. And although the youngsters laughed at D'Arcy's fastidious dress, and his fancy waistcoats, and his eyeglass, and his gold-and-ruby sleeve-links, they were very proud of his handsome appearance all the same. It was only too probable that quite a crowd of thoughtless fags might vote for the swell of St. Jim's, regardless of the consequences.

When the Shell and the Fourth went up to bed, which they did at the same hour—half-past nine—Tom Merry spoke to D'Arcy on the subject.

"About the election, old man," Tom Merry began pleasantly.

D'Arcy turned a glimmering eyeglass upon him.

"Goin' to vote for me?" he asked.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Not exactly," he replied. "Rushden's my man, and he ought to be yours."

"Wats!"

"I want to point out to you, Gussy, that if you get any of the fellows to vote for you, it's splitting the House vote. You see, with two School House candidates in the field, and only one New House man, the New House will be bound to pull it off, because all the New House voters will stick to Monteith like glue."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Well, now you've thought of it, you'll withdraw, of course?" said Tom Merry.

D'Arcy was silent.

"You don't want the New House man to get in, do you?" Manners demanded.

"Wathah not!"

"He will, though, if you split the House vote."

"It would be all wight if the fellows wallied wound me, and got me in," Arthur Augustus remarked.

"But they won't," said Tom Merry.

"Then the wesponsibility is theirs, and I wash my hands of it," said the swell of St. Jim's firmly.

"But you'll withdraw?"

"Certainly not!"

"If you split the House vote—"

"That will be the fault of the splittahs."

"Look here, Gussy—"

D'Arcy made a gesture with his hand.

"It's useless to be obstinate, Tom Mewwy—"

"Obstinate!" roared Tom Merry, exasperated. "It's you who are being obstinate, you silly ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass!"

"Look here, fathead—"

"If you cannot make your remarks without the use of those opprobrious terms, Tom Mewwy, this discuss, had better cease," said D'Arcy, with dignity.

"Look here, Gussy! Are you going to withdraw?"

"Certainly not! If I were merely thinkin' of myself in the mattah, I should withdraw at once, or wathah, I should nevah have put up my name at all. But I have to think of the school."

"What!"

"I am doin' this frow a sense of duty," said D'Arcy loftily. "I weally wegard it as a vewy good thing for a juniah to be skippah of St. Jim's for a change, and I think that the new captain ought to be a fellow of tact and judgment. If this were a merely personal mattah, I should be the last fellow in the world to put myself forward in any way. But I cannot desert my principles."

"Principles!" gasped Tom Merry.

D'Arcy nodded.

"Yaas," he said firmly; "pwinciples!"

And he walked into the Fourth Form dormitory.

The Terrible Three looked after him hopelessly. When D'Arcy mounted the high horse, there was no arguing with him, and the chums of the Shell gave it up.

CHAPTER 9.

A Thunderbolt!

THE next day the talk at St. Jim's was all upon the subject of the election.

The election was to be held at seven-thirty that evening, and there were three candidates in the field—Rushden and Monteith, of the Sixth, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth.

D'Arcy was not taken seriously at all, though by this time a number of irresponsible fags had announced their intention

of voting for him. Two score of votes had been promised to Arthur Augustus by fags in the Second and Third, and D'Arcy had made careful notes of the names in his Russia-leather pocket-book. He hoped that the list would increase greatly during the day.

He was rather exasperated at his chums not taking his election more seriously, and electioneering for him. But they didn't. All their electioneering was done for Rushden, of the Sixth. It was in vain that D'Arcy appealed to their loyalty to their Form, their loyalty to their study. They only laughed.

Between Rushden and Monteith the contest was likely to be closer, and Monteith's chances certainly were enhanced by D'Arcy's action. For a couple of score of votes made a great difference.

But a good many of the seniors in the School House were not displeased at the prospect of the vote being split. For although they would dearly have liked to see a School House man captain of St. Jim's, most of the Sixth realised that Rushden was not exactly the fellow for the position. He was a much pleasanter fellow than Monteith to get on with, but he had not the gift of ruling as captain. That was evident to his best friends. If it had been Darrel, the Sixth would have plumped for him almost to a man. But Rushden, kind and good-natured, easy going and easily led, was not the man to captain a school like St. Jim's, and captain the First Eleven in tough footer matches. Most of the School House seniors backed up Monteith because they had no doubt whatever that he would make the better captain of the two.

That proceeding made the juniors extremely indignant; they were not disposed to listen to argument on the subject. To them it appeared clear that a School House fellow ought to be captain of St. Jim's, and they were prepared to fight tooth and nail to keep the New House candidate out. That was as far as they looked in the matter.

Some of the fellows wondered whether a fourth candidate would present himself; but no one suspected the surprise that was coming.

It was after morning school that the thunderbolt fell upon the School House.

There was a meeting in Rushden's study after morning school; the juniors knew that. Tom Merry & Co. had seen Rushden go into his study with a very thoughtful expression upon his face, and had seen Sixth-Formers drop in by one and two and three. The study must have been pretty well crowded by the time they were all in. The juniors were very glad to see North go in among the others. They concluded that North had changed his ground, and decided to back up Rushden after all. North was Rushden's best chum, and it was considered odd that he should be against him in the election. If the juniors had known the real purport of the meeting in Rushden's study, and the real intentions of North, of the Sixth, they would probably have raided the Sixth Form passage, and testified their indignation by angry yells outside the room.

It was only too clear to them at the finish.

Rushden came out of his study, looking a little gloomy, but with an expression of resolve upon his good-natured face. He had a paper in his hand, which he proceeded to pin up on the notice-board. Then he retired.

There was a rush round the notice-board at once. The fellows who saw Rushden's action concluded that he had written out some stirring appeal to the patriotism of School House electors—some clarion call to crush the rival House.

But he hadn't.

Stupefaction fell upon the juniors as they read the notice. It was written in Rushden's own hand, and they had seen Rushden himself pin it up, so there could be no doubt about its genuineness. They would have doubted it if they could.

"NOTICE!"

"The undersigned has withdrawn himself as a candidate for election. GEORGE RUSHDEN."

The juniors stared at the paper.

"It's impossible!" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath.

"Rotten!"

"Can't be true!"

"He's dooty!"

"He's a silly ass!"

"North and the rest have ragged him into this!"

"He sha'n't do it!"

"We won't stand it."

"It's mean!"

"Rotten! Caddish!"

The voices rose to a roar. Five minutes earlier, George Rushden had been the popular candidate. Now—

"Let's go and see him," exclaimed Blake, exasperated. "He'll have to give us some explanation, anyhow."

"My deah boys—"

"Oh, shut up, Gussy!"

"I wufuse to shut up, Goah. I wegard it as extremely pwob. that it has occurred to Wushden that it is time a

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persuaded me to drop out. I'm out now, and I'm staying out!"

"Look here, Rushy, for the sake of the Sixth—",
Rushden shook his head.

"I'm not going to be made to look a silly goat, for the sake of the Sixth!" he replied. "Besides, the thing's too late now. The juniors have gathered round D'Arcy, and they couldn't in common decency desert him now. They wouldn't do it. Some of them would—not enough to make any difference."

And that was only probable. If Rushden stood now, he would only split the senior vote, and give D'Arcy a better chance. The seniors realised that, and they gave it up, only resolving to turn up at the poll in full force, and leave no stone unturned in the effort to bring Monteith in, and keep the obnoxious junior out.

CHAPTER 11.

The Election.

ELECTION night!
There had been elections before at St. Jim's, and they had always caused excitement. But there had never been such singular issues at stake—never before had so much turned upon an election of a captain of the school.

With two candidates, one a senior and the other a junior, the election was a new thing in the annals of St. Jim's.

Hardly a single fellow was likely to stay away from the poll. Keen-electioneers on both sides urged and drove the fellows into Big Hall as seven o'clock came round.

Figgins & Co. and a compact phalanx of New House juniors marched in by one door, and the School House fellows entered by another. This had been arranged, in order to prevent possible collisions while feeling ran so high. Not that there was any real ill-feeling on the subject between the juniors of the rival houses. But they were highly excited, and somewhat in the state of a powder magazine, requiring only a match to be dropped into it.

If a row once started, there was no telling where and when it might end. The prefects, armed with canes, perambulated the hall to keep order.

The rival juniors exchanged yells and catcalls of defiance across the hall, undeterred by the frowns of the prefects. They had many things to say to one another, chiefly of an uncomplimentary nature.

"Stick to your Form, you young cads!" sang out Blake, implying thereby that Figgins & Co. were morally bound to vote for the Fourth Form candidate.

"Stick to your tailor's dummy!" replied Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Yah! New House cads!"

"School House rotters!"

"Where did you get that pane in the eye, Gussy?"

"Where did you get those calves, Figgy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At which Figgins, who was very sensitive on the subject of his slender calves, showed signs of charging, and was pushed back by a prefect.

The entrance of the masters put an end to the uproar.

When Mr. Railton took his seat at the dais, the juniors ceased to yell and catcall, and contented themselves with whispering and buzzing. Mr. Railton had no part in the proceedings, but he was there to keep order, and Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House, joined him there. Two prefects, one of the School House and one of the New House, had been appointed tellers.

When the votes had been counted, once by each teller, they were to compare notes, and the candidate who counted the greater number of "voices" would be declared duly elected captain of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had come into the hall in the midst of his special chums. Blake and Digby and Herries were round him, and he was also supported by the Terrible Three and Kangaroo and Clifton Dane and Glyn and Reilly. There was no doubt that the

School House juniors were united on the point of getting D'Arcy in. They marched in with him in a sort of triumphal procession.

"Here he is!" roared Tom Merry, waving his handkerchief.

"Here he is!" roared Wally, waving a handkerchief which was not quite so white as Tom Merry's. "Hurray for the People's Candidate!"

"Hurray!"

Mr. Railton held up his hand for silence, and the cheering died away.

The School Housemaster had risen to his feet. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stepped upon the dais, and Monteith passed up the hall, and stood near him there. Monteith's expression was curious. If his adversary had been Rushden he would have shaken hands with him; but a prefect could not acknowledge a junior so far as to shake hands with him before the assembled school. D'Arcy made a graceful bow, but Monteith barely nodded.

"No bad feelin', deah boy, I hope," said D'Arcy blandly.

Monteith frowned.

"You young ass!" he replied.

"Weally, Monteith—"

"Boys," said Mr. Railton, "the election of a new captain of the school, in the place of Eric Kildare, is about to take place. There are—ahem!—two candidates, and I trust that the electors will use judgment in giving their votes."

"Hear, hear!" roared the whole hall.

Mr. Railton sat down. Then Baker, of the Sixth, jumped up and proposed Monteith, a move to which Tom Merry rather precipitately responded by jumping up and proposing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. There was a yell.

"Order!"

But that yell was from the seniors. From the School House juniors came a roar that almost drowned it.

"Bravo!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Railton. "The votes will now be taken. Darrel and Baker, you will kindly take the votes for Monteith."

"Yes, sir."

"Hands up for Monteith!" called out Darrel.

Quite a forest of hands went up. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked round him with an eye that was gleaming rather anxiously through the eyeglass.

The New House to a man voted for Monteith. Every member of the Sixth of either House voted for him. Some of the Fifth who belonged to the School House did not vote at all. They did not want a New House captain, and they did not intend to vote for a junior, so they refrained from voting at all.

The tellers counted, and then compared notes. The result was announced by Baker, who demanded whether the other party wanted a show of hands. The hands for James Monteith numbered ninety-six.

"Want a show of hands?" roared Jack Blake indignantly.

"I should say so! We could beat that total off our heads!"

"Silence!"

Wally gave Jameson of the Third a fierce glance.

"You wait till we get into the Form-room, Jimmy!"

Jameson grinned uneasily.

"Must stick by the House," he replied.

"Show up, the School House!" roared Kangaroo.

"Hands up for Gussy!"

"Hands up for the People's Candidate!"

"D'Arcy and liberty!"

"Hurrah!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Count the votes for D'Arcy, please."

Darrel and Baker proceeded to their task. It was noted that they were longer over the counting, and that augured well for the School House. Darrel's face was quite immovable when they finished, but Baker was looking decidedly glum. They compared notes, and spoke to Mr. Railton, who looked very grave.

He rose to make the result known. There was a breathless hush.

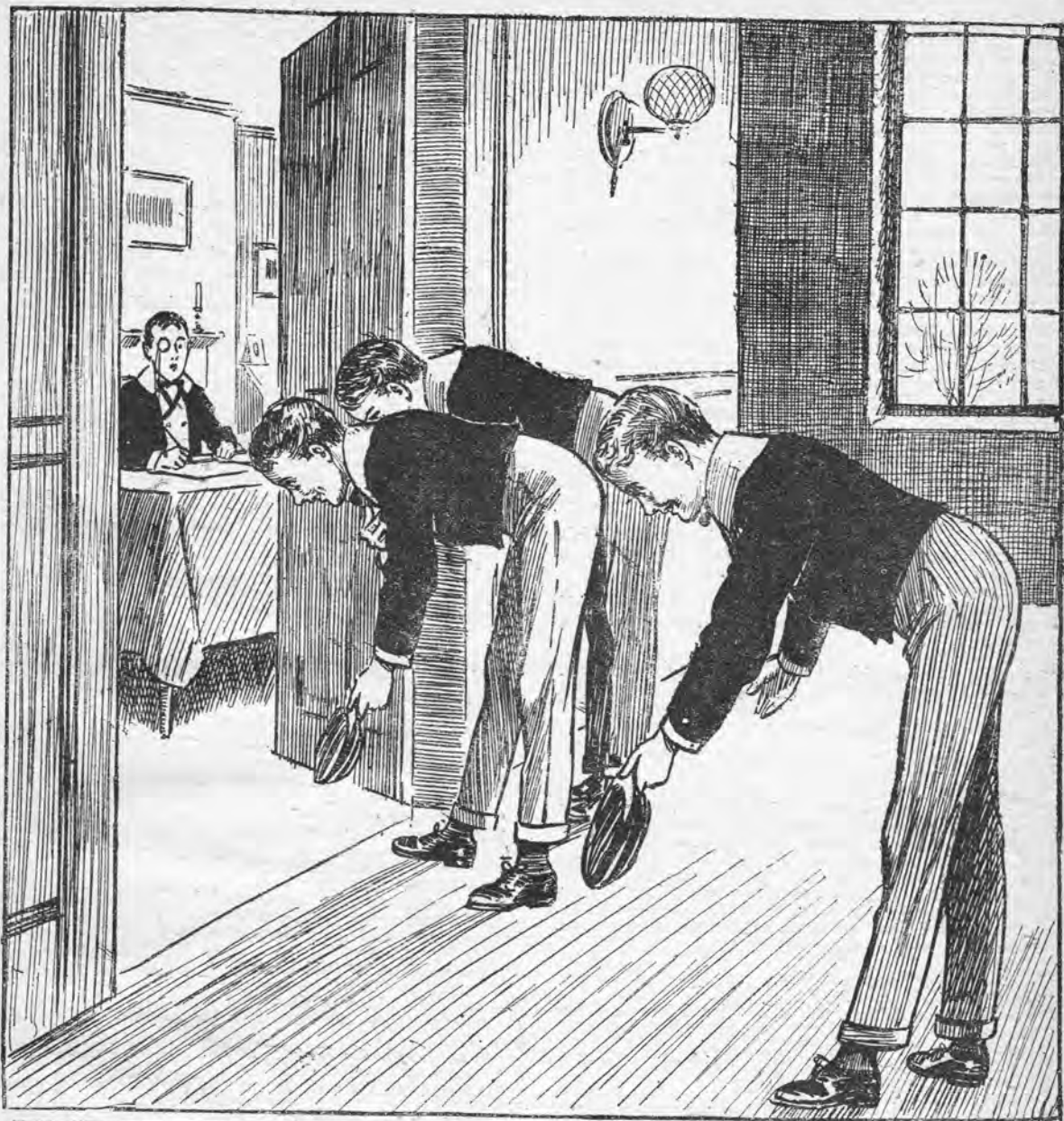
"Boys, the total number of votes for D'Arcy of the Fourth is one hundred and seventeen!"

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The Terrible Three came along the passage, looked in at the open door, and grinned and saluted D'Arcy with great respect. "All hail, mighty Captain!" "Oh, don't be an ass, Tom Mewwy!" "All hail; long may you reign!" said Monty Lowther, who never could be restrained from making puns. (See Chapter 12.)

There was a buzz.

"D'Arcy of the Fourth has a majority of twenty-one votes, and I have therefore no alternative but to declare him duly elected captain of St. Jim's."

It was not an enthusiastic way of putting it. Mr. Railton evidently was not delighted with the result of the voting.

But the School House fellows did not notice or care for that. All they cared for was the announcement itself.

Captain of St. Jim's!

Duly elected!

There was no doubt of it. The impossible had happened. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, was captain of the school.

And the School House juniors burst into a roar of cheering that made the old rafters shake.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

CHAPTER 12.

The New Captain of St. Jim's.

"BAI Jove, you know, I wegard it as wippin'!" That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's modest remark.

But the School House juniors were wildly enthusiastic. Heedless of the presence and the frowns of masters and prefects, they made a rush for the junior candidate and surrounded him.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was raised shoulder-high by the cheering crowd, and the juniors swept out of the big hall with D'Arcy borne above, like a frail craft on the crest of a wave.

"Bai Jove! Weally, you know, deah boys——"

But D'Arcy's protests were not listened to.

D'Arcy was the hero of the hour. He was the captain of St. Jim's—the first junior in the history of the school who had attained to that exalted honour.

It was incredible, but it was true.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was captain of St. Jim's.

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No wonder the juniors hurrahd!

Even the fellows who had been most doubtful about the wisdom of electing a Fourth-Former to that important post gave way to the enthusiasm of the moment in the pride of the knowledge that a fellow of their own standing was college captain.

And after all, why not?

There was no why, as Blake remarked.

D'Arcy was going to inaugurate a new era at St. Jim's. He was going to make a new place of it—perhaps get juniors in as prefects—and then, as Blake said gleefully, they'd let the Sixth and the Fifth see what was what!

"He'll be kicked out when the Head comes back!" said Crooke of the Shell.

Crooke said that, but he had no time to say more. He was downed by a rush of juniors, bowled over, rolled in the passage, bumped till he was breathless, and "chucked" into a corner to recover himself at his leisure. Levison and Mellish saw his fate, and they made no remark of the sort. They kept their sneers to themselves, for private consumption in their study. It was not really safe to say anything against the new captain of St. Jim's at that moment.

As for Figgins & Co. of the New House, after the first disappointment in the defeat of their candidate, they loyally acquiesced in the choice of the majority. Figgins & Co. came along to congratulate D'Arcy, and they were received with open arms by Tom Merry & Co. Since Figgins and his friends were taking it so rippingly, it was no time for House rows, and juniors of both Houses fraternised in great good feeling that night.

"After all, although I'm sorry a New House man didn't get in, I'm rather glad a junior has got it," said Figgins, in his honest way. "Why shouldn't a junior have a chance?"

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Seniors have had things their own way too long," said Thompson of the Shell. "I'm jolly glad for one to see a junior skipper."

"Hear, hear!"

"I must say you're taking it jolly well," said Tom Merry. "You see, it's not New House against School House now; it's the Lower Forms against the Upper Forms, and the Lower Forms have won."

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"Speech!" roared Kangaroo.

"Hurrah! Speech—speech!"

The enthusiastic crowd had carried D'Arcy up and down the passage, then round the quad., and then they halted on the steps of the School House. In the radius of light cast into the dusky quadrangle from the windows and doorways of the School House there was a sea of upturned, excited faces to be seen. D'Arcy, somewhat hustled and breathless, stood on the top step, setting his necktie straight. That characteristic action was the cause of another ringing cheer.

"Hurrah!"

"Speech!"

"Gentlemen—" began D'Arcy.

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, on this auspicious occasion I have but few words to say—"

"Hurrah!"

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Go on!"

"On the ball!"

"Gentlemen, you have elected me captain of St. Jim's!"

"Good old St. Jim's!" roared the crowd.

"The task of choosin' the best man for the job was before you, and you have performed that task with perfect success."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

"As captain of St. Jim's I shall do my best to wun things in the most wippin' mannah possible. I shall not stand any nonsense fwom anybody, but I twust I shall always act like a fellow of tact and judgment."

"Hear, hear!"

"Fellows will be expected to play the game. Anybody not playin' the game will get a feahful thwashin'."

"Hurrah!"

"I have no more to say—"

"Hurrah!"

"Exceptin' that I am vewy gwateful for the honah you have done me, and that I shall take it as a personal favah if ewery gentleman here pwsent will come ovah to the tuck-shop with me and ordah what he likes at my expense."

"Hear, hear!" roared Fatty Wynn. "That's something like a skipper! Monteith wouldn't have done that! Come on!"

And Fatty Wynn led the way.

The juniors, laughing and cheering, followed, and D'Arcy was hoisted upon new shoulders—Figgins's and Thompson's this time—and carried in the crowd across the quad.

Dame Taggles's little shop was soon crammed.

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D'Arcy was borne into the midst of the swarm of fellows there, and he turned a flushed but good-tempered face upon the old dame.

"I am captain of St. Jim's now, Mrs. Taggles—"

"Good gracious, Master D'Arcy!"

"I'm standin' 'treat to these fellows. I have a fivah here fwom my govannah, and if it wuns to more than that, Mrs. Taggles, I twust you will have no objection to puttin' it down to my account, to be settled on Satahday," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

Mrs. Taggles took the crisp and rustling fiver.

"No objection at all, Master D'Arcy."

"Then go ahead, deah boys!"

"Hurrah!"

Fatty Wynn was already going ahead. He had a good place at the counter, and he was helping himself. He looked up for a moment from a pork-pie.

"Jolly lucky the election took place to-day," he remarked.

"Why?" asked Kerr.

"Because Mrs. Taggles's pork-pies are fresh in to-day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try one," said Fatty Wynn.

Outside the shop was a swarm of fellows who could not get in. Good things were passed out to them in the most liberal way. By the time that splendid feed was ended Mrs. Taggles's little shop was like Mother Hubbard's celebrated cupboard—it was looking decidedly bare.

There was no doubt that D'Arcy had begun his term of captaincy well.

When, after the feed, the juniors returned to their own Houses, D'Arcy was a little breathless, but looking very cheerful and happy. Blake slapped him on the shoulder as they went into Study No. 5 to do their prep.

"It's ripping!" he exclaimed. "I'm jolly glad, old fellow!"

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy! I wish Cousin Ethel were here!" said Arthur Augustus.

"I wish she were! Captain Gussy! Sounds well, doesn't it?"

"I think it sounds wippin'!"

The Terrible Three came along the passage, and looked in at the open door of the study, and grinned, and saluted D'Arcy with great respect.

"All hail, mighty captain!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Tom Mewwy!"

"All hail; long may you reign!" said Monty Lowther, who never could be restrained from making bad puns.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you know—"

Knox, the prefect, the bully of the Sixth, stopped in the passage with a scowl.

"Not so much noise there, you kids!"

Tom Merry turned upon him.

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "Do you know that you're talking to the captain of the school?"

"Oh, rats!" said Knox disrespectfully.

"Weally, Knox—"

"You young ass!" said Knox.

D'Arcy drew himself up to his full height. The tall and slim swell of the Fourth was very nearly as tall as the bully of the Sixth, and he was certainly more graceful, and a great deal more dignified.

"What did you say, Knox?" he asked, in a stately manner.

"Young ass!" said Knox.

"Do you realise that you are addressin' your captain, Knox?"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!"

"It is against all the wules, w'itten and unw'itten, for the captain of the school to be chawctewised as an ass," said D'Arcy firmly. "I call upon you to withdwah that remark, Knox, and apologise for it."

"Rats!" said Knox. "Don't play the giddy goat!"

D'Arcy raised his hand commandingly.

"Thwot that wemballious wottah down the passage, you youngstahs," he said.

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry & Co., with one voice.

"If you dare to lay a finger on a prefect—" began Knox.

"Captain's orders!" said Tom Merry. "Out you go!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Knox gave a roar of rage, and began to hit out. But half a dozen sturdy juniors fastened upon him, only too eager to obey the new captain's orders so far as laying hands on the unpopular prefect was concerned. Knox was whirled off his feet, and dragged along the passage, and rolled down the stairs, almost in the twinkling of an eye. A crowd of juniors in the lower hall cheered enthusiastically as Knox was rolled among them, dusty and dishevelled and wild with rage.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had performed his first act of authority as captain of St. Jim's, and there was not a junior in the School House, with two or three unimportant exceptions, who was not prepared to back him up through thick and thin.

CHAPTER 13.

No Nonsense!

ST. JIM'S awoke the next morning in a state of astonishment. One or two fellows said they thought that they must have dreamed it. But they hadn't.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, was captain of St. Jim's!

Before the great man, mere ordinary Fifth-Formers and Sixth-Formers had to bow down; to him even prefects, great and mighty as they were, had to yield obedience.

There was no doubt about it.

There were fellows in the Upper Forms who said that they'd see him hanged first. Indeed, that they would see all sorts of things, which they specified in very loud tones, happen, before they would take notice of a Fourth-Former.

But the juniors of St. Jim's were ready to back up the new captain whole-heartedly. And a curious situation arose. For if the junior portion of the school ever turned upon the senior portion, there was no doubt at all that numbers must carry the day. Authority, in any school, rests upon obedience. Headmasters came big fellows who could send them flying with a single blow, because they are headmasters, and the habit of discipline cannot be broken, and should not be broken.

But now the case was altered. Authority was on the side of D'Arcy. Junior he might be, and undoubtedly was; tailor's dummy he might be, as his few enemies asserted; silly ass he might be, as many declared with emphasis; but whatever he might be or might not be, one fact stood out clear and undoubted above all others—he was captain of St. Jim's, and had the prescriptive right to the obedience of all juniors and all seniors. He was captain of the school, captain of the football club, captain of the boats—in a word, he was captain, and whoever resisted him was rebelling against constituted authority. It was easy for one prefect to keep a whole Form in order when he had authority on his side. But when he backed up against proper authority, he was merely a fellow who wanted putting in his place—and there were scores of juniors ready and willing to put him there.

Upon one point Tom Merry & Co., and Figgins & Co., too, and nearly every junior at St. Jim's, had resolved. The new captain should be obeyed. He should not be treated with disrespect because he was a junior. As juniors themselves, they would take that as a personal insult, and would avenge it.

The more sensible fellows in the Sixth realised that they were in a bad hole, and decided to make the best of it—hoping that the Head would annul D'Arcy's election when he returned to St. Jim's, or that Kildare would come back to the old school and resume his place. D'Arcy made no secret of his willingness to yield the place up to Kildare if the popular captain returned. But as yet no word had been heard from the old captain of St. Jim's, and no one knew what his plans were.

Mr. Lathom looked very oddly at D'Arcy in class that morning. It was the first time little Mr. Lathom had had a captain of the school in his class. Arthur Augustus was comporting himself with a new dignity, which became him well. The other fellows treated him with a marked respect. They realised that if they did not do so, the seniors were not likely to; indeed, the seniors were not likely to in any case.

After morning lessons, Arthur Augustus lingered a few minutes behind the Fourth in the Form-room, to write out a notice, which he pinned up on the board in the hall with perfect gravity.

Seniors and juniors gathered round to read it, with great curiosity.

"NOTICE:

"The members of the First Eleven are requested to attend in Study No. 3, 6th Form, to discuss the Topcliffe match.

"Signed, A. A. D'ARCY, Capt."

Notices signed "Kildare, Capt." had been common enough on the board. "D'Arcy, Capt." was something new. There was a growl from Knox.

"I jolly well shan't attend any blessed meeting of that blessed young ass!" he remarked.

"You needn't," said Tom Merry. "You're not in the first eleven, or likely to be, unless you change your manners and customs."

There was a laugh, and Knox turned red with anger. He made a movement towards the hero of the Shell. A cool, clear voice rang out:

"Knox! Stand back!"

It was Captain D'Arcy.

The swell of the Fourth stepped between Knox and Tom Merry, his form drawn up to its full height, and his eyeglass gleaming in his eye.

"I forbid you to touch Tom Mewwy, Knox! I am not goin' to have any bullyin' in the School House undah my wule!"

The fellows gasped.

D'Arcy did it to the life; there was no hesitation about him. Evidently he took himself seriously as captain of St. Jim's.

"You cheeky young cub!" roared Knox.

"Hold on, Knox," said Darrel quietly. "D'Arcy is captain of the school, for the present at least. It's no good cutting up rusty about it."

"Do you think I'm going to take any notice of a cub in the Fourth?" roared Knox, almost purple with rage.

"You must!"

"Rot! I won't, then!"

"Pway undahstand me," said D'Arcy, with dignity. "I hope I shall tweek ewvery fellow in the school with courtesy and fair play. But I shall not stand any nonsense. If I am cheeked, I shall call upon the pwefects to punish the offendah. If the pwefects wefuse to do their duty, I shall call upon the juniahs, and the juniahs will back me up."

"Yes, rather!" roared the juniors.

Some of the youngsters crowded round Knox in a very threatening way. The bully of the Sixth looked round for support. But the prefects only shrugged their shoulders. They had no intention of backing Knox up. They did not care about submitting to the rule of the new captain, certainly; but they did not intend to begin a conflict with the juniors, themselves hopelessly in the wrong. The juniors were evidently only too ready for strife. Nothing would have pleased them better than ragging the prefects under the orders of the captain of the school. Fags in the Second and Third might have been frowned into obedience. But big, sturdy fellows like Blake and Tom Merry and Figgins were not likely to care for frowns.

"Look here, Darrel," said Knox. "You're head prefect now that Kildare is gone. Do you mean to tell me that you're going to take orders from D'Arcy of the Fourth?"

Darrel nodded.

"Yes," he said. "He's been elected captain of St. Jim's."

"That's all rot."

"It may be; but unless his election is annulled by the Head, it holds good. And I don't see how the Head can annul it, either."

"He'll make the young cad resign, anyway."

"Perhaps; but for the present D'Arcy is captain of St. Jim's. Don't play the fool, Knox." Darrel lowered his voice. "Do you want to start a general row between seniors and juniors?"

Knox bit his lip hard. He saw that the Sixth would not back him up, especially as Darrel had sided against him, and he had no more to say. Indeed, he was sorry he had said so much, for if the juniors ragged him, he was likely to have a lively time. Some of them were moving forward to collar him, but D'Arcy waved them back.

"It's all wight," he said. "Let him alone, Dawwel, I am obliged to you for havin' put the mattah so clearly. I shall expect all the pwefects in No. 3 in ten minutes."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked away with great dignity.

"Bravo, Gussy!"

D'Arcy went into Kildare's old study, which he had decided to occupy on occasions like this. It would certainly have been infra dig. if the prefects had been called upon to attend a meeting in a Fourth Form study. To Kildare's old room they could take no exception; and D'Arcy, firm as he was to maintain his rights as captain, was careful to be delicate and considerate upon all possible points.

One by one the prefects and other Sixth-Formers concerned in the Topcliffe match dropped in. Most of them hardly knew what to do, but they had followed Darrel's lead, and Darrel had accepted the peculiar situation like a sensible and cool-headed fellow.

Arthur Augustus bowed gravely to the seniors as they came in, in turn. They nodded in reply; some of them grinned, but their grins died away under the elegant junior's look of chilling dignity.

"All the membahs of the team here?" asked D'Arcy, looking round through his eyeglass, as he stood in an elegant attitude by the mantelpiece.

"Yes," said Monteith shortly.

Monteith was feeling very sore about the result of the election, and he hardly took the trouble to conceal it.

"Vewy good! Pway be seated."

"About the Topcliffe match—" began Rushden.

"I was just comin' to that, deah boy."

"Of course," said North, a little uneasily, "you are going to ask Monteith to captain the team for the match."

D'Arcy shook his head.

"I twust I shall nevah ask anothah fellow to do my dutay for me, when I am perfectly able to perform it myself," he replied.

"You—you don't mean—"

"You can't mean—"

"Look here!"

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEEK:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

"Who's going to captain the first eleven?"
D'Arcy adjusted his monocle carefully in his eye, and replied, in the coolest of tones and without the flicker of a muscle:
"I am!"

CHAPTER 14.

Some Changes in the First Eleven.

"YOU are!"
"Yaas, wathah!"
"You are!"
"I have already remarked, yaas."
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not see anything to be excited about. But the prefects in Kildare's study looked excited and dismayed. Of course, Arthur Augustus was acting strictly within his rights as captain of St. Jim's. He had the right and the power to captain the first eleven. And since he had full confidence in his ability to do so, why should he delegate the task to another? Why, indeed?

Darrel, the senior prefect, had made up his mind to take this queer business in a businesslike way. But even Darrel was disturbed.

"D'Arcy," he exclaimed heatedly, "you can't mean it!"
"Why not, deah boy?"
"Come now, you can't captain a senior team—"
"My deah Dawwel, that is where you are quite mistaken. I have long been convinced that what the first eleven wants is to be bucked up by havin' some juniahs in it."
"What?" yelled the seniors.
"The first eleven ought to be wewpewesentative of the whole school, in my opinion," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I am thinkin' of puttin' in two fellows of the Shell, and two of the Fourth, besides myself."

"Oh!"
"That will make it a more wewpewesentative team."
"My hat!"
"Poor old St. Jim's!"
"Nice day for Topcliffe!"
D'Arcy frowned.
"I have not the slightest doubt that we shall beat Topcliffe," he replied. "Look at this papah! I have sketched out the eleven already. Fatty Wynn of the Fourth in goal—"

Darrel's face cleared a little.
"Wynn of the Fourth kept goal for the Sixth once before, and did it jolly well!" he exclaimed. "I don't complain about that."

"Vewy good! I wespect your judgment vewy much, Dawwel, and I am glad you agwee," said D'Arcy. "Backs, Lefevre of the Fifth and Wushden."
"That's all right!"
"Halves, Bakah and North, of the Sixth, and Thompson of the Shell."

"Ahem!"
"In the fwont line, Tom Mewwy of the Shell, Blake of the Fourth, myself, and Monteith and another seniah. I leave him to you."

Darrel whistled.
"Well, it's a team that might win," he said. "Only your front line will be rushed all over the ground by Topcliffe seniors."

"Wats!"
"Eh?"
"Excuse me, Dawwel—I mean I don't agwee! I wathah think that a team with juniahs in it will do St. Jim's gweat cweedit."

"Rot!" said Monteith.
Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the head prefect of the New House.

"Weelly, Monteith, that is not the way to address your captain."

"Rot!" repeated the New House prefect. "The election was ridiculous, and if the fellows took my advice they'd take no notice of it."

"I don't see how that can be done, without special orders from the Head," said Darrel, "and the Head won't be here till to-night or to-morrow."

"We are prefects," growled Monteith.

"Pway listen to me, Monteith," said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. "I am captain of St. Jim's, and I shall not allow my authority to be disputed. If the Sixth wefuse to back me up as in dutay bound, I shall call upon the juniors for assistance, and they will back me up. If there is any wesistance to pwopah authority, I shall call upon the Lower Forms at once, and upon you will west the wesponsibility of pwovokin' a wow between Lower and Uppah School."

Monteith gritted his teeth.

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"It won't come to that," said Darrel hastily. "You're elected, D'Arcy, and we shall treat you as captain unless the Head annuls the election."

"I should submit to the Head's ordahs cheerfully," said D'Arcy. "At pwesent, howevah, I am skippah, and I have given ordahs for the Topcliffe match. I will now pwocceed to post this list up in the hall."

And the swell of St. Jim's quitted the study. He left the seniors looking at one another in silence.
"Well, this beats the deck!" said Baker, at last.

Monteith laughed angrily.
"Better give the young cub a hiding, and end it!" he said.

"It can't be done!" said Darrel quietly. "He's captain of St. Jim's, and the juniors would back him up. We don't want a general riot between the Sixth and the Lower School, in which the Sixth would get the worst of it."

And all but Monteith agreed with Darrel. Monteith was still feeling sore over his defeat in the election.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pinned the paper up in the hall, and the notice-board was immediately surrounded by a crowd of eager readers.

There was a chirrup of satisfaction from Jack Blake. He slapped the captain of St. Jim's on the shoulder very heartily.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed. "Your front line is splendid, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed D'Arcy. "What do you think, Tom Mewwy?"

"Ripping!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I could suggest a slight improvement," said Kangaroo thoughtfully.

"What is that, Kangy, deah boy?"

"Put me in as centre-forward," grinned the Cornstalk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Kangy—"

"Nothing like selecting the best man available," suggested Kangaroo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus did not deign to reply. His own name was down as centre-forward. Upon the whole, the list gave the Lower School great satisfaction. There were five juniors, so the seniors still had a majority. But it was unheard of for five juniors to have played in the first eleven. The seniors, of course, were expecting a wholesale licking from Topcliffe, excepting Darrel and one or two others. Darrel saw that D'Arcy had well selected his team, and he would not have been surprised at a victory. He thought that such a team might pull off a win once, but not twice.

But D'Arcy had no doubts.

Needless to say, there was a big crowd on the ground when the time approached for the Topcliffe match.

Topcliffe seniors were a strong team, and the St. Jim's fellows were very curious to see how D'Arcy's mixed eleven would face them.

Mr. Raitton, the Housemaster of the School House, was to referee the match, and there was a somewhat peculiar expression upon his face when he came down to the field.

His opinions on the subject of the remodelled first eleven he kept to himself, but it was probable that he shared the views of the Sixth Form.

Topcliffe arrived in a brake, and Yorke, their captain, expected to be greeted by Kildare.

He was somewhat surprised when an elegant Fourth-Former came up to him with a polite bow to greet him.

"Hallo!" he said. "Where's Kildare?"

"Left, deah boy!"

"Oh! Sorry! Who's the skipper, then?" asked Yorke.

"I am."

Yorke laughed.

"Don't be funny, kid!" he replied. "Where's the skipper?"

D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and gave Yorke of Topcliffe a lofty glance.

"I am not bein' funnay!" he said, with dignity. "I wepeat that I am captain of St. Jim's. My team is quite weady!"

"Is this a jape?" asked the Topcliffe captain, turning to Rushden.

Rushden coloured, and grinned uneasily.

"No!" he said.

"But that kid isn't your captain?"

"He's been elected captain."

"My hat!"

"My men are weady!" repeated D'Arcy, with dignity.

"My only hat!" repeated the Topcliffe captain.

And he walked on the field apparently in a dazed state. St. Jim's won the toss, and elected to kick off. There was a breathless hush round the field as the whistle rang out and the match commenced.

CHAPTER 15.

A Win for St. Jim's

TOPCLIFFE seniors were grinning as they began that remarkable match.

Probably they regarded the remodelled first eleven of St. Jim's in a comical light. But they soon woke up to the fact that the eleven, mixed as it was, was quite up to their form.

Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy certainly were rather light, against the big Topcliffe fellows, but they were very nimble and very quick. And the St. Jim's goalkeeper was a marvel. With Fatty Wynn in goal it was never easy to score, and Fatty Wynn was in his best form now, and ready for anything.

Topcliffe made two or three rushes up the field, and Yorke slammed the ball in twice, but each time Fatty Wynn fisted it out with perfect ease, and the St. Jim's crowd roared approval.

"Well saved!"

"Bravo, Wynn!"

"Yass, wathah! Bwavo, deah boy!" said the St. Jim's captain encouragingly.

Yorke wrinkled his brows.

"That kid in goal is up to snuff!" he remarked to the next forward. "We can walk over the team, I think, but it won't be easy to beat that young porpoise."

But it was not so easy to walk over the team, either.

Tom Merry, who was playing outside-right for St. Jim's, captured the ball, and bore it along down the touch-line, and as the Topcliffe backs closed on him, he sent it in to Jack Blake, who centred to D'Arcy just as he was tackled.

Blake rolled over under a charge with a bump that shook every ounce of breath out of his body. But D'Arcy had the ball, and was speeding on with only the goalkeeper to beat.

With his eyeglass jammed in his eye, and his cheeks glowing pink, the swell of St. Jim's sped on, and the Topcliffe goalie grinned, and prepared to receive boarders.

D'Arcy's right foot whisked out, and the goalie sprang to save, and D'Arcy changed his feet with lightning quickness, and kicked into the further corner of the net.

The ball missed the goalie by a yard or more, and lodged in the net, and the Topcliffe custodian ceased to grin.

There was a frenzied yell from the St. Jim's crowd.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Bravo, skipper!"

"My only hat!" said Yorke, as the Topcliffians lined up again, after the goalie had tossed out the leather. "We shall have to keep an eye on that young bouncer."

"Bravo, Gussy!"

"Hurrah!"

D'Arcy lifted his cap most gracefully, and bowed to the acclamations of the crowd. Then the ball was kicked off again.

Topcliffe fought hard to equalise during the remainder of the first half, and they succeeded just before the whistle went. Yorke put the ball in, and when Mr. Railton blew his whistle the score was equal.

"One to one!" said Jack Blake, when the teams moved off the field for their brief rest. "I don't think the old eleven would have done any better."

"Wathah not!"

Rushden laughed.

"Very likely not," he said. "We've got off cheaply so far."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass upon Rushden.

"Weally Wushden—"

"I mean we've had a lucky escape," Rushden explained.

"I only hope the second half will turn out as well for us."

"I refuse to regard it as a lucky escape," said D'Arcy.

"I regard it as good play and good leadership."

"Rot!" said Monteith.

"Weally, Monteith—"

"Oh, cheese it, Monteith!" said Baker. "That's not the way to speak to a skipper."

"I'll speak as I like."

"You'll do nothin' of the sort!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you uttah anothah impertinent wemark, Monteith, I'll ordah you off the field!"

Monteith laughed mockingly.

The whistle was about to blow, and the altercation went no further. But Monteith was scowling as he lined up with the Saints.

Phip!

The ball was rolling again, and the second half commenced with vigour. Topcliffe were trying kick-and-rush tactics, and they succeeded in breaking through the St. Jim's defence more than once, but Fatty Wynn in goal was always up to the mark.

Again and again the leather was slammed in upon the fat Fourth-Former; but no matter how it came, he always sent it whizzing out again.

A good save by Fatty Wynn sent the ball out to mid-field, and Arthur Augustus captured it and sped off down the centre.

Tackled by the enemy's halves, he passed out to Monteith, who was at inside-left. Monteith kept the ball, and ran on, hoping to score, D'Arcy keeping pace with him down the centre.

Both the Topcliffe backs closed on Monteith, and the smallest fag in the crowd round the ropes could see that Monteith should have centred to his captain.

D'Arcy had scored once before from a similar pass, and he had every chance, while if the winger kept the ball he had not the ghost of one.

But Monteith did not pass; he dribbled the ball on

"To me!" shouted D'Arcy.

The prefect did not heed.

"Do you hear?" shrieked the swell of St. Jim's. "To me!"

"Pass!" roared the crowd.

"Pass, you duffer!"

"Pass, you ass!"

"Pass—pass!"

But the New House prefect did not pass. His lips set obstinately over his set teeth, and he rushed on with the ball and kicked from a distance as the backs rushed on him. The kick was hasty and ill-judged, and the ball bounced against the goalpost and shot off into play again. A second later, one of the backs had cleared, and the play surged away into mid-field.

D'Arcy was pale with anger.

Monteith's direct disobedience and indiscipline had cost his side an almost certain goal; and worse than that, it had given the foe a chance.

For the Topcliffians were rushing the ball on; the St. Jim's forwards were nowhere. And before the defence could rally, shots were being rained in on Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn was splendid, but he was not invincible. A shot found the net, and there was a yell from Topcliffe.

"Goal!"

Yes, it was goal! Monteith bit his lip hard. He felt that he had gone too far, and his captain did not mean to leave any misapprehension upon the point.

Arthur Augustus strode up to the New House prefect, his eye gleaming behind his monocle, and his hand raised.

"Monteith!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled the prefect.

"Get off the field!"

"What!"

"I ordah you off the field!" said D'Arcy, his voice trembling with anger. "You have thrown away a goal, and given the enemy one. You are worse than useless in the team! I'll finish the match a man short. Get out!"

"You young fool—"

"Go!"

Monteith clenched his hands passionately. He had provoked his junior captain too far, but he did not mean to obey such an order as this.

"You cheeky cub!" he said, between his teeth. "I sha'n't stir a step!"

"Get off the field!"

"Oh, rot! Hold your tongue!"

"If you don't get off, Monteith, I'll have you thrown off!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Blake, Tom Mewwy! See Monteith off the ground!"

"Get off, Monteith!" said Mr. Railton sharply. "How dare you remain when your captain has ordered you off?"

Monteith glared at Mr. Railton, but he could not dispute a referee's order, and he could not argue with a Housemaster. He thrust his hands deep into the pockets of his football shorts, and tramped off the field, his face black with rage.

Tom Merry whistled softly.

"Man short, Gussy!"

"Bettah than playin' that cad, deah boy."

"Oh, right-ho!" said Blake.

D'Arcy lined his team up again. The Topcliffe fellows met the kick-off with careless coolness. They had not the slightest doubt of winning now. They were a goal up, and the home side were playing only ten men.

But the great game of football is full of surprises, and that game was more surprising than most.

Fatty Wynn in goal was a tower of strength. He saved with machine-like precision, and every attack of the Topcliffians, however hard pressed, was stopped when it reached the citadel manned by the Welsh junior.

And when Rushden, who had been moved into the front line, scored, there was a roar of relief and delight from St. Jim's.

"Goal!"

"Equal now!" grinned Jack Blake. "Now for the odd goal!"

Both sides fought hard for that odd goal. Two to two was the score, and there were yet ten minutes to go.

A determined attack by Topcliffe put the St. Jim's goal in danger, but Fatty Wynn was not found wanting. The attack petered out, and then the Saints swept the leather goalwards in their turn. Tom Merry kicked for goal on the stroke of time, and the goalie was beaten by a hair's-breadth. To the immense delight of the Saints, on the field and off, the leather lodged in the net.

Phip!

The shrill note of the whistle was almost drowned by the roar that broke from the crowd.

"Goal! Hurray! St. Jim's wins!"

"Hurray, hurray!"

St. Jim's had won!

CHAPTER 16.

The Revolt of the Prefects.

THE enthusiasm of the juniors of St. Jim's, after the defeated Topcliffians had departed, knew no bounds. They had won!

A match which had been regarded as a tough one by Kildare, had been won, with a junior captain and three junior players in the first eleven.

It was enough to make the juniors enthusiastic.

The seniors looked at the matter in a different light. They felt that St. Jim's had been very lucky not to be beaten crushingly, and though they were glad enough of the victory, they realised that it strengthened D'Arcy's position, and made all the more difficult the problem of getting rid of the Fourth Form captain.

But questions of this sort did not trouble the juniors. They had won. Their captain had been vindicated in the eyes of all the school, and they rejoiced.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked as serene as ever. In the midst of the enthusiasm and excitement he was careful to preserve the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. But he could not disguise the fact that he was very pleased. His captaincy of St. Jim's had started well; there was no doubt about that.

Monteith was sulking in the New House. The prefect could not get over the humiliation of having been ordered off the field by the junior skipper. He had brought it upon himself, but he could not forgive it.

Needless to say, there was a celebration of the glorious victory.

Tom Merry & Co. pooled their funds for the purpose, and a big feed was held in Study No. 6, to which, of course, came Figgins & Co., from the New House.

Arthur Augustus was the hero of the hour.

Even Figgins & Co. by this time were willing to overlook the fact that the swell of St. Jim's belonged to the School House, and to remember only that he was a junior in the Fourth Form, like themselves.

It was a glory for the Fourth Form which they could fully understand and appreciate. They were ready to back him up all along the line. House rows were a thing of the past—just now, at all events.

That there was a buzz of voices, and, in fact, a great deal of noise in Study No. 6, goes without saying. But a little fact on the part of Knox, the prefect, would have kept him from interfering. But doubtless he was glad of a chance of girding at the new captain of the school.

There was a sharp rap on the door while the merriment in Study No. 6 was at its height, and a fag of the Second Form put his head in, with a cheeky grin.

"Knox says you're to stop that row, or he'll come up to you!" said the fag, and vanished. He did not care to remain near Study No. 6 after delivering that message.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned red with wrath.

In olden times, certainly, Study No. 6 had received messages like that many a time, and they had found it expedient to obey the orders of a prefect.

But the case was changed now. D'Arcy, at all events, was no longer under Knox's orders, but Knox was under his. The impertinence of the message was unbounded.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy at last.

"The cheek!" said Figgins indignantly. "Fancy sending a message like that to the captain of the school!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Make an example of him, Gussy."

D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye.

"I shall certainly speak to him very severely," he said.

"Go and tell Knox to come to me at once, Lowthah!"

Monty Lowther hesitated.

The captain of St. Jim's certainly had a right to send a Shell fellow on messages, if he liked, but that was an aspect of D'Arcy's captaincy which struck Lowther as less agreeable

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than the aspect he had hitherto observed. Besides, the bearer of such a message to Knox, the prefect, would be putting his head into the lion's den.

"Oh, I say—" began Lowther.

"Pway go at once, deah boy!"

"Yes, buzz off!" said Blake. "Mind he doesn't get a chance at you with a ruler, that's all."

"Oh, I say—" began Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah, I hope you are not goin' to begin settin' a bad example to the seniahs," said D'Arcy severely.

"Ahem!"

"Oh, buzz off!" said Digby.

Monty Lowther ceased to argue, and quitted the study. He made his way to the Sixth Form passage, and cautiously approached the door of Knox's study. Although he was backed up by all the authority of the captain of St. Jim's, Lowther knew better than to venture within reach of the bully of the Sixth when he delivered his message.

Knox's door was shut. Lowther tapped at it, and opened it. There was a sound of voices in the study, and Lowther saw Knox in consultation with Sefton, of the Sixth, and North and Pelham and another prefect. Knox looked at him savagely.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"I've got a message from the captain," said Lowther, keeping his hand upon the handle of the door, ready to slam it and bolt at a moment's notice.

"From that cub D'Arcy, do you mean?" asked Knox harshly.

"From the captain," said Monty Lowther firmly—"from Captain D'Arcy. You're to go to his study at once."

"What?" yelled Knox.

"You're to go to his study immediately, and report yourself."

"My—my—my only aunt!" ejaculated North.

Knox made a spring towards the door.

Slam!

Monty Lowther sped at top speed down the passage. Knox dragged the door open, but the active Shell fellow was already at the end of the passage. He fled for the Fourth Form quarters at top speed.

He burst breathlessly into Study No. 6. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was just raising a cup of tea to his lips, and as Lowther threw the door open and rushed in, he started, and spilt hot tea on his trousers.

"Ow!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—"

"Sorry!" gasped Lowther. "You should be more careful. Captains of public schools oughtn't to soil their trousers in that reckless way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus, mopping his trousers with his handkerchief. "I must say that I wegard you as a silly ass! But is Knox coming?"

"He was when I lost sight of him!" gasped Lowther.

"Is he after you?" exclaimed Figgins.

"Yes, rather!"

D'Arcy put away his handkerchief. At such a moment as this, when his authority as captain of St. Jim's was assailed by a reckless rebel, he could forget even his soiled trousers.

"Vewy well!" he said. "We shall see!"

And Arthur Augustus stepped into the open doorway of the study and waited.

But Knox did not appear. He did not care to pursue Lowther as far as the junior passages.

D'Arcy waited in vain, with the light of battle gleaming behind his eyelass.

"He isn't coming," said Kerr.

"Wathah not!"

"He wouldn't care to venture here, I expect," said Tom Merry.

"If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, deah boys, Mahomet must go to the mountain," said D'Arcy.

"Gussy—"

"Knox has wefused to obey his skippah's ordahs," said D'Arcy. "It is my duty to punish Knox."

"Eh?"

"I am now going to his studay. You fellows can follow and back me up if you like."

"But, hold on—"

"When it is a question of my authowity as captain of St. Jim's at stake, deah boys, I cannot hold on. I must ewush this impertinence on the part of the pwefects. This sort of thing must be nipped in the bud, you know."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked out of the study with a stately tread. The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, Gussy's right," said Tom Merry.

"Of course he is!"

"And we're going to back him up," declared Herries.

"Yes, rather."

And the chums of St. Jim's followed D'Arcy, Figgins & Co. quite as keen as the School House fellows on backing up the junior captain. And a crowd of other fellows, seeing them march and learning what was on, joined them. Quite a little army marched into the Sixth Form passage, and some of the more prudent and thoughtful of the juniors had caught up walking-sticks or cricket-stumps or rulers, in case there was trouble.

D'Arcy knocked at the rebellious prefect's door. D'Arcy might be angry, but he was always polite.

"Come in!" roared Knox.

D'Arcy opened the door and walked in.

Knox glared at him.

Behind D'Arcy the juniors crammed themselves in the doorway and in the passage, which was simply a sea of heads.

"What!" yelled Knox. "You!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You've got the cheek to come here——"

"I have come here to receive an explanation of your impertinent message, Knox, or else an apology!" said D'Arcy, with perfect calmness.

And he jammed his monocle a little more tightly into his eye and surveyed the half-dozen prefects in the study without turning a hair.

CHAPTER 17.

The Hand of Authority.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, the captain of St. Jim's, was as cool as a cucumber, but he was the only cool fellow in the study. Knox and his companions were raging. Knox and Sefton were bullies at the best of time; but even North and Pelham and Jones major were furious at the way things were going. Both Pelham and Jones had been left out of the first eleven to make room for juniors. Monteith had just come over to see Knox, to urge upon him the advisability of resistance to the new rule, and he was in the study, and his thin, hard face was very bitter. The looks they cast upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were terrific. D'Arcy met them with majestic calm.

"Did you hear me, Knox?"

"I—I heard you!" gasped Knox.

"You sent me—your captain—an insolent message. I ordered you to come to my study, and you refused. I expect an apology."

"Are you going to stand that, Knox?" said Monteith, with a sneer.

D'Arcy turned upon Monteith at once.

"No impertinence, Monteith!" he exclaimed. "Go back to your own House at once!"

"What?"

"I give you two minutes to leave the School House!" said D'Arcy.

Monteith sneered.

"And if I don't go?" he inquired.

"I shall order the prefects to throw you out."

The half-dozen prefects burst into angry laughter.

"Do you think we shall do it?" asked North.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you're mistaken; we sha'n't do anything of the sort!" shouted Pelham.

"Will you refuse to obey your skippah?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Vewy well! I call upon the school to back me up!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with stately dignity. "The juniors, at all events, are not lost to all sense of what is right and propah. Chaps, please clear out this study, and put these fellows in their places."

"What-ho!" roared Blake. "Come on!"

The juniors needed no more.

Long had they been eager to try conclusions with Knox and Sefton, and they were by no means unwilling to come down heavily upon the other prefects. The time had come to show that a junior was as good as a senior any day.

Tom Merry & Co. rushed into the study.

"Get out!" roared Knox.

"Hurray! Down with the cads!" shrieked Wally of the Third.

"Biff the bounders!"

"Bump 'em over!"

The rebel prefects hit out desperately. A dozen juniors were knocked sprawling, and others stumbled over them—but there were swarms of them. The prefects were overwhelmed, as by the tide—the juniors were innumerable. They crowded into the study until there was no room to move, hardly room to breathe, certainly no space to struggle. The seniors were dragged down, and upon each of the sprawling prefects three or four juniors rolled and clutched.

In five minutes the struggle was over, and the rebels were extended upon the floor, with two or three juniors sitting upon each senior and keeping him down.

Gasps and groans came in a kind of chorus from the fallen rebels. There was no doubt that they were conquered.

"Hurray!" roared Wally.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, adjusting his eyeglass with one hand, and dabbing red from his nose with his handkerchief held in the other. "Blake, Tom Mewwy, Mannahs, take Monteith and dwop him out of the window."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hold on!"

It was Darrel's voice. The prefect had forced his way through the crowd, and his face was very excited.

"Hold on, you kids——"

D'Arcy turned his eyeglass calmly upon Darrel.

"I am sowwy, Dawwel, but I cannot allow you to intahfere here. No one but the Head has a wight to intahfere with the captain of the school—and, unless Kildare returns to St. Jim's, I am captain of the school. Pway wetime."

"But I tell you——"

"I am sowwy, I have no time to listen, Dawwel——"

"But Kildare——"

"Eh?"

"Kildare's come back!" roared Darrel.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

For a moment even the swell of St. Jim's was taken aback. From the passage rang a loud cheer, ringing loudly from D'Arcy's most ardent supporters.

"Hurray! Kildare! Hurray!"

A stalwart form came striding up the Sixth Form passage; Kildare's handsome face looked into Knox's study.

"Kildare!"

"Bai Jove!"

The old captain of St. Jim's nodded and smiled.

"Yes, here I am," he said. "I've come back."

"For good?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yes, for good."

"Hurray!"

For a moment there was a struggle in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's breast—but only for a moment. He had pledged himself to resign the captaincy if Kildare returned to claim it, and he was a fellow of his word. And perhaps the swell of St. Jim's had a slight misgiving already that the task he had taken on was a size too large for him—though he certainly would never have faltered in the path of duty. It was only for a moment that the swell of St. Jim's was silent; then he joined in the cheer.

"Huwway!"

The dusty and dishevelled prefects were allowed to rise. They were so much relieved by the return of Kildare that they felt hardly angry.

"Kildare, deah boy, I am vewy glad you've been able to come back, ahtah all!" said the swell of St. Jim's. "I twust your matah is bettah!"

"Thank you!" said Kildare. "She took such a turn for the better to-day that the doctors has every hope of a quick recovery. Under the circumstances, and considering how things were going on here, according to a letter I had from—never mind whom—I've come back."

"Vewy good! You are aware that I am captain of St. Jim's now——"

"Yes," said Kildare grimly, "I'm aware of that."

"I wesign the captaincy into your hands again with a gweat deal of pleasure," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gracefully. "I twust you will keep up the practice I have estab-lished of playin' juniors in the first eleven; and I shall always be glad to offah my services. I twust also that you will keep an eye on the prefects, and not let them grow cheeky. I have had quite a lot of twouble, keepin' them in their place."

And, with that parting word of advice and a graceful bow, the late captain of St. Jim's retired from the study and departed with his friends.

"Well," said Blake, as they crowded into Study No. 6 again, "you're not skipper any longer, Gussy; it was a short life, but a gay one."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"There's a lot of the feed left," Fatty Wynn remarked.

"We may as well finish that."

"Ha, ha, ha! Good egg!"

And they did!

Kildare remained, and filled his old position; and even D'Arcy admitted that the school thrived under his sway. But for a long time the juniors recounted with great gusto the thrilling incidents that had occurred under the short but eventful rule of Captain D'Arcy.

THE END.

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CHAPTER 1.

Tells of an Extraordinary Bird Shot by Lancelot Morton, and of the Excitement it Caused on Board the Good Yacht Foamwitch.

PROFESSOR Ludwig von Haegel was puffing and panting like a little locomotive, and blowing out steam in clouds. The only visible portion of the professor's face was his red and shining nose. Smoked spectacles concealed his keen, grey eyes, and the fur hood enveloped the rest of his face and his big, round, brainy head. He was perched on a mass of ice, dangling his short, fur-clad legs, and trying to light his pipe.

A breeze that had sent the mercury scuttling down to nine degrees Fahrenheit hooted and whistled through the jagged hummocks of the southern ice. A jagged berg offered a light shelter, but the professor's thick gloves rendered it difficult to grip and strike a match, and when he did succeed a spiteful gust extinguished a flicker of flame before he could apply it to his tobacco. Losing his temper at the fortieth fruitless attempt, the professor danced on the matchbox savagely, and shook his fist at the unheeding wind.

"Ach!" he cried. "You are ein unmannerly pig! Dot is so. You haf for me no gindness. Der elements are never gind, and so I gannot smoke. Shaf! Dey vill geep me vaiting altogether yet. I do nod gare. Vat is it dot Shakespeare say about der madder?"

The professor always flew to Shakespeare for consolation when he was ruffled. The little stout German was one of the most brilliant scholars of his age. The universities of the world had been glad to honour him. Off-hand, he could not have told how many letters he was entitled to write after his name, for they were legion. His books on geology and mineralogy were standard books. If he were given a tooth, claw, or a fragment of fossilised bone, Professor von Haegel would take pencil and paper and draw the animal, bird, or fish of which the relic once formed a part, and write a scientific name beneath long enough to break the jaw of anyone who was not a professor of palæontology.*

And here, instead of in a crowded lecture-hall containing hundreds of eager students, sat Professor Ludwig von Haegel, in an atmosphere that would have made a Polar-bear shiver, and lost to all but the music of the immortal poet. Anyone who had climbed the berg under which the learned scientist squatted, would have seen how the professor happened to be in such an extraordinary place. In a channel of open water that was now becoming swiftly covered with thin ice, lay a steam-yacht. She was two miles away, and moving gently. The yacht was the Foamwitch, the joint property of Maurice Fordham and Lancelot Morton—two healthy and wealthy Britons, who had learned to love and admire the professor at the University of Bonn, where they had studied.

Filled with the truly British love of adventure, Morton and Fordham had sailed from Melbourne, to voyage along the southern ice, and to obtain specimens of the animals, birds,

* "Palæontology," the science of things which existed long ago.—Ed.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 204.

DON'T MISS "THE PARTING OF THE WAYS!" The Splendid, Long, Complete School Story appearing in this week's number of the "MAGNET" LIBRARY, Price One Penny.

and fishes that haunt those chill and desolate regions. To their intense delight, the professor, who had come from Europe to preside over the great meeting of the Royal Society of Australasia, had accepted their invitation to sail with them. The expedition had been highly successful. The cold-storage room was loaded with specimens, waiting to be stuffed or otherwise preserved at leisure; and William Tooter, first mate, and formerly man-o'-war's man, had already hoisted the Blue Peter as the signal of departure to warmer climes.

Fordham and Norton had pushed on a little further with the guns, leaving the professor busy with a very large magnifying-glass and a very small piece of Antarctic moss. Von Haegel was not built for scrambling over ice and through snow-drifts. If there was a hole to fall in, he always fell into it; if there was anything to trip over, he tripped over it; if there was anything to smash, he always smashed it. The majority of people considered him one of the cleverest men of the age; those who knew him personally considered him the clumsiest. He had broken no less than five valuable cameras during the voyage, and he had come within an ace of breaking his short neck five hundred times.

Von Haegel read on, wagging his gloved forefinger now and then as he found some passage that pleased him. Behind the spectacles his eyes beamed with pleasure.

"Ach!" he murmured. "Dot is goot, it is vunderful, it is sublime! Der more you dink ob it, der more sublime it is! And here it say, 'Alarums vithin.' Der attack on der vortress is about to begin, and—"

Bang!

The report of a gun brought the professor to his feet with a bound. Then the sound of an excited voice came shrilly down on the wind:

"Missed him, by Jove! Lance—Lance! Mark over—mark over! La—ance! Mark over!"

Bang—bang!

"Well shot, old chap—well shot!"

Something fell with a heavy thud. A man, wrapped to the eyes in furs, dashed round the berg, loading his gun as he ran.

"Vot is dot? Vot is it, Maurice?" puffed the professor.

"I don't know! A whacking great bird of some kind. Lance has dropped him. Found him, Lance?"

"Yes, my boy!" cried a second voice, in tones full of wonder. "Good luck! Come and look at this!"

Lancelot Morton was lying at full length on a flat hummock of ice, staring downwards into a crevasse some nine feet deep and twenty feet wide. They ran forward. The bottom of the crevasse was covered with snow.

For a moment there was silence—a silence born of wonder and admiration. Then the professor uttered a guttural cry. A bird lay outstretched on the snow, its wings extended, and its beak and back pushed forward. It was practically dead, but its muscles still quivered, and at every quiver ripples of golden light flooded upwards, dancing, pulsating, trembling like liquid fire; and then the great beak opened and closed again with a ringing snap.

"Great Scott! It's got teeth!" said Fordham. "A bird with teeth!"

It had teeth—teeth as white and sharp as any dog's. Morton lowered himself, and dropped into the snow beside it. The radiant glow of its plumage almost dazzled him. Gold seething in a crucible never gleamed so much. The next instant the excited professor rolled over the ice like a bundle, and plunged headlong into the deep snow. He sank waist deep, and his podgy legs waved in the air.

"Pull him out, Lance," laughed Fordham. "If he doesn't break his spine, it won't be for the want of trying."

"What, is he at it again?" chuckled Morton. "Come out!"

He seized the great man by the legs, and hauled him up. The professor snorted a good deal, shook himself, and knelt down. He had lost his spectacles, but he only used them as a protection against the glare of the snow, for his sight was perfect. His grey eyes began to sparkle.

Fordham sprang down, and both men waited, quivering with suspense.

"Yes, yes?" said Morton at last. "Don't keep us on thorns. What is it?"

"Mine dear Lance, dot is der mystery. I do not know," said the professor quietly—"I do not know—I do not know."

"Not know?"

Morton and Fordham stared incredulously. The wisdom of all ages was crowded into Von Haegel's massive brain.

"And der is no man in der world to name dot specimen," added the professor. "I tell you, mine dear lads, dot the existence of such ein creature is not dreamed of. Ach! How I dremble mit excitement! Lance, vill you light mine pipe and gif it me? Mine hands shake. It is marvellous—it is prodigious—it is sublime! Gif me mine pipe. Danks! Danks!"

The professor blew out clouds of smoke, and produced his tape-measure. Fordham dotted down the measurements. The beak was nine and a quarter inches long, the neck twenty-eight inches, and the full length of the bird from its beak to the end of its curious tail was almost seven feet. At full spread the wings measured exactly thirteen feet. Each beautifully feathered wing terminated in a horny hook similar to those found in the bat tribe. The tail was jointed like the lizard's, and broad feathers spread out on either side in two parallel rows, leaving the upper and under surfaces bare. The feet, set far back, were vivid scarlet, webbed and sharply clawed. The eyes were enormous, ghastly, and staring. Von Haegel pulled open the book, and then bent closer.

"Dere are ninety-four teeth," he said, "in the lower mandible, and eighty-six above."

"Is it a bird at all?" asked Fordham.

The professor shrugged his shoulders.

"It is a vertebrate creature," he answered. "It has der articulated, or jointed backbone. It has der blumage—ach, did ever mortal eyes see such blumage? It is half a bird and half a lizard. I gannod tell more till I dissect it. I can only tell you dis, mine dear lads—we shall set the world on fire!"

Morton was no mean naturalist. He began to inspect for himself. The tail was certainly reptilian, and so were the toothed beak and the long, sloping body.

"It reminds me something of a pterodactyl,"* he said.

"Shaf! But it has der true wings. Ah, but you are not so far wrong, Lance! It is half a bird and half a lizard—a link between the reptiles and der birds. And where did it come vrom? Ach! Ve shall freeze! Vetch der sledge—vetch der sledge!"

Fordham scrambled out, and climbed the berg. He stood on the summit, letting his handkerchief flutter in the breeze. A few minutes later a boat dropped from the Foamwitch, and moved across the channel.

For its size, the bird was not heavy. They hoisted it up. Fordham took the almost empty game bag, and Morton carefully swung the prize across his back, its tail and neck dangling over his shoulders.

The excitement had turned Von Haegel's nose a glowing purple. He was fished out of the crevasse, and came puffing after him, uttering the most extraordinary noise, and waving his fat, podgy arms in his usual eccentric fashion. Enthusiasm blazed in his eyes, and his thoughts were far away—away in the mysterious eras, ages and ages before the first man appeared on earth, before even the mighty mastodon trod the steaming plains and roamed the primeval forests that have given us the coal we burn.

"It is wonderful, prodigious, sublime, marvellous!" he gasped. "And where did it come vrom?"

Fordham had seen the creature first. It had come winging over his head at a terrific pace. The sudden appearance of the flying monster had startled him. His right barrel had missed fire, and the bird was forty yards away before he sent a charge of shot from the choice barrel hurtling after it. The shot must have reached the bird. With both eyes shut, Ford-

ham could not have missed such a huge target. But the charge was helpless to stop such a thick-feathered, tough-skinned creature at the range. Luckily, Morton was on ahead, and the bird had passed over him to meet its fate.

Thick clouds were scurrying up from the south as they hurried down to the boat. Fordham glanced up at the sky uneasily. He was a good sailor, and a fair judge of the weather.

"We'd better rush for open water, Lance," he said. "It looks like blowing."

"And feels like it," answered Morton. "Just give the sparrow a hitch up for me, before it slips or freezes. That's better! Thanks! Keep your eyes on Von Haegel, or we'll lose him."

"Never! He's got both his optics glued on this canary. You'll never lose him while you stick to that thing. Joking apart, though, Lance, this bit of loot has made him feel queer all over."

"Where did it come from?" repeated Morton. "I'd give something to know that."

Just then the tuneful sounds of a mouth-organ drifted over the hummocks. The musician was playing a lively music-hall air. Three men emerged from an icy hollow, and the two parties came face to face.

The musician was a little rat of a man, with black and beady eyes. His name was Joseph Jackson, but he was better known as "Shoreditch Josh," for he was a true Cockney, and he was proud of it. Behind him marched William Tooter, first mate. Tooter was the hairiest man outside a freak-show. He simply ran to hair of pale-straw colour, which bristled all over his head and face in a most remarkable manner. One of his eyebrows would have made a respectable moustache for an ordinary individual. He also had a very gruff voice and a hot temper, and a fist as hard as iron.

The third man was Teddy Morgan, of Melbourne, a big-chested, burly Colonial, the yacht's chief engineer.

"Gee-whizz, sir! What have you got?" cried Morgan.

"Something you can carry, Teddy," said Morton. "We don't know what it is."

"It must be a blinkin' heagle," remarked the mate. "I never seed feathers shine like them!"

"I fink he's an overgrown canary," grinned the Cockney. "Not 'arf, I don't! Yer 'ad better like 'im away, Mr. Lance, afore the Smacker eats 'im. 'E smells 'im. Nah, Smacker—nah! 'Ere come aht then, an' jump on 'is chest!"

Jackson had a wicker-basket slung over his shoulder by a strap. The basket accompanied him everywhere. He opened it, and a cheeky little game bantam hopped out, uttering a defiant crow.

"Push 'is fice in!" said Jackson. "He ain't much bigger nor you, cocky; so go an' chase yerself rahnd 'is features a bit!"

The bantam did not need a second bidding. It hurled itself at the corpse, and began using its spurs on the creature's head, to the great delight and admiration of its owner.

"Ach, no—ach, no!" puffed Von Haegel. "You vill spoil der specimen. Put in ter paskot again dot teufel of ein fowl. And you shall carry de prize, Chackson, mit great care."

"It'll blow a blinkin' gale presently, sir," said Tooter to Fordham; "and that'll set some of the ice adrift. The barometer's a-goin' down fast, sir. I think we ought to shift, sir, or we'll get shut it."

"Hurry up there!" said Fordham.

The wind increased, and a few whirling snowflakes announced a sudden and dangerous rise of temperature. There was a ringing cheer as the yacht came slowly round, and turned her prow to Northward-ho. Five months had passed since she had steamed out of Sidney. She was homeward bound at last, and hearts grew light at the thought.

Fordham handed over the wheel to William Tooter, made a note of the readings of the barometer and the thermometer, and went below. The owners of the Foamwitch had spared neither money nor brains in fitting out their yacht. Comfort had been carefully studied, but not luxury. There was a laboratory, and also an excellent dark-room for photographic purposes, which latter was forbidden to the professor. Von Haegel was clumsy enough in daylight, but in darkness he was unbearable.

Fordham made for the laboratory. The unknown specimen had been spread out on the table. Lance Morton, with a cigarette between his lips, was giving a scalpel an edge on an oil-stone. Von Haegel had thrown off his great bear-skin coat, and donned a big apron.

"Hallo!" said Fordham. "Who is going to do the carving?"

"Lance," answered Von Haegel. "I want him to open der crop of him, and we shall know. But where is der erop? If der creature has deeth, he will not need a gizzard to grind up his vood. Chust there, Lance. Where I have mine vinger. What does he eat?"

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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

* A winged saurin, or lizard, of vast size. It had batlike wings, and roved the pre-Adamite air.—Ed.

Morton blew aside the dazzling feathers, and made one swift, skilful incision. He had rolled up his sleeve. The big magnifying-glass trembled in Von Haegel's grasp.

"Quick—quick!" he gasped impatiently.

Morton withdrew his bloodstained hand. He unclenched it, and placed a heap of brownish substance on the table. Fordham, who disliked dissections, lighted a cigar. A second handful was placed beside the first.

"Is dot all?"

"Every scrap."

Von Haegel heaved a deep and disappointed sigh. He flattened out the mass and peered at it.

"Ach!" he said. "Dot was ein pity. Der bird—der reptile-bird—has vound much to eat. This is der grit he grinds his vood mit. But what is it he shall eat? He has der grop, he has der beak, and he has der teeth. Himmel! What is—is—"

He bounded to his feet with a cry.

"Der vater! Der vater!" he shouted. "Ach, der vater! Der vater! Bring it, and ein gamel's-hair brush!"

Morton dashed for a basin. The professor had dashed to the porthole. His hair, always short and stubby, stood up on end like a hedgehog's bristles.

"What have you found?" asked Fordham.

"Der vater, I say!" roared Von Haegel. "I—I do not know, but I dink—I dink— Ach, Himmel! No; it gannob be true! I must not hope it is true!"

"But—"

"Der vater! Der vater!"

Lance Morton held the basin. In the professor's shaking right palm lay an object about an inch in diameter. Von Haegel dipped the brush into the water, and began to wash the object carefully. He drew in his breath with a long hiss.

"Tell me what is dot, Lance?" he said, in a trembling voice.

"Part of a shell."

"Yes, yes. But vot shell—vot shell?"

"I should say the shell of a nautilus, though how the dickens a nautilus came in these latitudes I—"

"Look at it again—again!" panted the German. "Were you not mein pest scholar? Have I taught you so much for dot? Look again—look again!"

"Hang it! I'll bet money it's a nautilus!" said Morton.

"You are wrong, mein dear Lance!"

"Then what, in the name of goodness, is it?"

Von Haegel, his eyes aglow, looked into each eager young face in turn.

"Dot is part of a shell of an ammonite," he said.

Morton and Fordham remained motionless and rigid. They could not doubt. Who could have dared to doubt the word of the greatest palaeontologist of the age? And yet it seemed preposterous and incredible. Except for one extremely rare species, found in the Indian Ocean, the ammonite has been extinct for countless years. Its fossilised shells are in every geological cabinet, but the harmless ammonite has gone for ever, like the plesiosaurus and the other awful monsters of the pre-Adamite age.

"You—you are sure?" said Morton. "It isn't a joke, Herr Professor?"

"No, no! I would not choke. It is der true ammonite, Lance—der ammonite of der past. And from where came it—from where came dot? What lies there?"

He pointed across the room to the south, towards the ice-bound regions of mystery.

"What lies dere, mein lads?"

Fordham shook his head. A blaze of the aurora Australis flooded the room, and the plumage of the nameless creature seemed on fire. Von Haegel leaned against the table silent.

"Ach!" he murmured at last. "If you could only speak, wings of gold—if you could only speak! Ach, Himmel! If you could only speak!"

"You think it came from the South, professor?"

"Where else? I know it came from the South!" said the German. "Ach, I wish I had never seen it! I hate it! Cover it up from mein sight, Maurice! I hate it—I hate der ice dot keeps me back! Ach, if you could speak, wings of gold!"

At that moment someone passed the door. It was Jackson, and, in a high and squeaky voice, he sang:

"I knows enough ter brike 'is 'awt,
But I ain't a-goin' ter tell!"

Fordham and Morton burst in a roar of laughter. Von Haegel's eyes twinkled.

"Shaf! Dot was der point," he said, "and it did choost vit in. But it is wrong, for it is not der knowing dot will break mein heart. We cannod gross der wicked, derrible ice. We shall never know. I shall go to bed, and read mein Shagsbeare!"

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The professor went to bed, and stayed there four days. On the fifth he appeared on deck, looking pale, and almost thin. Then he set to work to write the history of the voyage. The last lines were written as the Foamwitch glided into the beautiful harbour of Sydney.

CHAPTER 2.

Lance Morton Receives a Queer Visitor—The Secret—A Marvellous Invention.

The discovery of the "bird-lizard" set geologists and naturalists frantic. From Sydney the stuffed remains went to London, from London to Paris, from Paris to Berlin, and from Berlin to New York. It was discussed, written about, and lectured upon.

Fordham and Morton were made honorary members of a score of learned societies. They had never heard such a roar in scientific circles. Scientists seldom agree on most subjects, but there was a considerable amount of agreement on this occasion.

The bird-lizard was not adapted to withstand extreme cold, or to exist among the ice; nor was it adapted for long flights. Its wings were placed too far forward for long aerial journeys. It was a swimmer, and probably haunted shallows and reed-beds, and the eyes, strongly guarded by transparent plates, proclaimed it a diver also. With the exception of two small districts, civilised man had patrolled the face of the earth. The regions which still defied him were the Arctic and the Antarctic Poles. It is practically admitted that the mysterious magnetic point known as the North Pole is covered by a frozen sea, and that ice-encumbered land forms the flattened disc of the earth at its sudden extremity.

A deeper mystery shrouds the Antarctic than the Arctic zone—a realm of blazing volcanoes and awful desolation, of raging flame and bitter cold.

Clearly enough the bird-lizard was not to be found in any part of the explored globe. A creature of such size and beauty could not be overlooked. The eyes of the scientific world were fixed longingly on the grim ice-wall of the South. How wide was the barrier, and what was beyond it?

Professor Von Haegel's theory was generally accepted, simply because no one put forward a more feasible one. He considered that in the vicinity of the Antarctic Pole there was a warm, or, at least, temperate district, and that the bird-lizard had strayed or been blown north by some violent gale.

So great was the excitement that towards the end of October two English, a French, a German, and two American expeditions went on their way to attempt to solve the riddle.

It was a bleak October day, and a dismal drizzle was falling. Little Jackson sat on Fordham's gun stool. The drive was nearly over, and the flags carried by the beaters could be seen through the almost leafless hodge. Now and again Morton's unerring gun cracked about fifty yards lower down.

Presently Lance Morton himself came sauntering along, with the faithful hairy Tooter at his heels.

"How goes it, old chap?"

"Twenty-seven brace that journey," said Fordham, "and five hares. How did you get on?"

"Thirty-four brace of partridges and nine pussies," answered Morton.

"What a ghastly afternoon it's turned out, Maurice," said Morton. "I have had about enough of it. The beaters must be soaked. Shall we have one more drive, or turn it up? How do you feel?"

"Sick of it!" answered the Squire of Netbrook. "I only want to shoot one more thing, and that's Jackson's bantam. Send the cart along, Jackson, before the birds get wet, and tell the head-keeper we've finished. Where's Von Haegel? Hasn't he succeeded in shooting himself or somebody else? Hallo! Here's the dogcart! Find the professor, Tooter! I expect he's fallen down the rabbit-hole!"

The groom brought them their overcoats. Tooter failed to find the professor at once. He was finally discovered under a haystack with a volume of Shakespeare, a large, flat flask, and a sandwich-box, refreshing body and mind at the same time. He climbed into the dogcart, and they drove rapidly across the park to Fordham's beautiful house, Netbrook Lodge.

Morton had just dressed for dinner, and was descending the stairs, when he saw the footman ascending.

"A gentleman to see you, sir."

Lance took the visiting-card from the salver; his forehead wrinkled. The name seemed familiar.

"Redland—Matthew Redland?" he muttered. "I seem to remember that handle, somehow. Where is he, Foster?"

"In the library, sir."

"Thanks!" said Lance. "I wonder what the dickens he wants?"

Morton opened the door of the library. A stunted man was standing with his back to the fire. A bullet head without a vestige of neck was deep between his broad shoulders, and his lank, black hair was parted in the middle. He was clean-shaven. His quick, restless eyes met Lance's blue ones, and Lance remembered.

"Great Scott! It's Mad Mat!" he cried, holding out his hand. "How are you, Redland? Jove, I'm glad to see you! Where have you put yourself these last five years? You look fit. Sit down, and have a sherry and bitters before dinner! Tell me all about it. Made your fortune?"

"Easy—easy!" said the visitor, with a slight Yankee drawl. "You're as bad as a blizzard, Morton. Give me time to breathe. I've been knocking about the States mostly, and getting kicked round in my usual way. I was with Edison for a bit."

"The great inventor?"

"The identical," answered Redland. "Look here, Morton, I've brought back that seventy pounds you lent me so kindly when I was broke at Bonn. You were always one of the best in the world. Do you know, that money saved me from—gaol?"

"Rats! Don't talk such rot!"

"By thunder, it did, though, Morton! I was a young fool to start cooking the accounts, but I did it. When you lent me the dollars I made things straight again."

"Oh, have a drink!" said Lance huskily. "Don't let us dig up anything nasty now, old chap! We always got on all right, though you didn't seem to hit it with the other students. How go the inventions? What a chap you were for messing about with chemicals and scrap-iron! Have you done anything with that flying-machine?"

Redland's quick eyes roved round the room. At Bonn he had been dubbed "Mad Mat." The majority of students had despised and shunned their dwarfed and distorted companion. He had lived a solitary existence, and he had always been shabby and short of money. Morton alone had felt sympathetic towards him, but even he sometimes doubted his sanity. Redland appeared crazed on the subject of aerial navigation, and spent most of his time locked in his room.

"So I told you about the flying-machine?"

"My dear chap," answered Morton, "you seldom talked of anything else; in fact, you raved! Try one of these cigarettes. When I look back, I remember you promised to make me a millionaire. I hope you have made yourself one, Mat, or that you are on the road to it."

"And you?" asked Redland.

"Oh, I'm pretty well off for money! I came in for my uncle's estate unexpectedly. I don't want this cheque, Mat, unless you are certain you can spare it. Any time will do. I see you're giving me interest. Hanged if I'll take it! I'm no moneylender!"

"But you lent me the money when I stood faced with ruin," said Redland, "and if I made you a millionaire ten times over, I should still be in your debt."

"Please don't be an elaborate ass, Mat!" pleaded Lance. "How did you find me?"

"I went to your club, and they told me you were down here with Fordham. I came on my motor, and I came to fulfil my promise."

"To make me a millionaire?" laughed Morton.

"To make you a millionaire, Lance! Don't think me raving mad still. I'm pretty sane these times. Will you come down the drive with me? It has dried up, and you won't want boots. I've got something to show."

Lance whistled doubtfully. The request was an odd one.

"Come!" said Redland.

"You're a queer stick!" said Morton. "To be brutally frank, Mat, you go about things in an extraordinary fashion, and always did. Why this air of dark mystery? Well, I'll go!"

He unfastened the French window. The rain had gone

and stars twinkled through the hazy night. The moon was a silver sickle hanging above the trees. They crossed the balcony, and went down the steps to the terrace.

"How far?" asked Lance.

"Only to the pathside. I left the motor there."

"More mystery, Mat. Why didn't you take it into the garage?"

"Live and learn," answered Redland. "It's in here."

It was a powerful machine. Redland turned on the dazzling lights.

"Now, give me a hand," he said. "It's heavy, Lance. I want it on the grass there."

Lance seized one end of a long wooden box, and helped to lift it down.

A key clicked sharply in the lock, and a blaze of light came from the open box. At each end were four electric bulbs.

"What in the thunder have you got there—a torpedo?" gasped Lance.

"Look, but stand back!"

There was a quivering, trembling sound. A moment later a cone-shaped object hung suspended in the light three feet from the ground. It remained there, buzzing hoarsely for a few seconds, and then leapt into the air. Open-mouthed, astounded, Lance stared into the gloom.

Fr-r-r-r-r-r-r!

The curious shivering noise grew fainter. A shaft of light broke the gloom, and began to move towards the house, three hundred feet above the ground. It vanished for an instant, only to appear again. The boom of the dinner gong was heard in the dining-room.

Professor Ludwig Von Haagel flattened his nose against the wet window to look at the weather. He staggered back, tripped over a rug, and, to save himself, clutched at a picture. Picture and professor collapsed together.

"My stars!" cried Fordham. "What will the man be doing next? How did you manage it?"

"Ach, Himmel!" gasped the professor. "It was ein gommet, or it was ein thunderbolt! Ach! Look, Maurice—look!"

A white gleaming ball of fire was falling swiftly as Fordham sprang to the window. He dashed the window open.

Fr-r-r-r-r-r-r!

What was the meaning of that extraordinary phenomenon and the extraordinary sound? As the two men stood peering wonderingly into the dusk, Lance Morton, pale with excitement, leapt into the room.

"Professor! Maurice!" he shouted. "We are going! We are going!"

"What the—Where, you maniac?" gasped Fordham.

"To the land of the Wings of Gold! Hurrah!"

"To der land—to der—Himmel! Der lad is demented!" panted Von Haagel. "How shall we go to der—Shaf! We gannod vly! How then shall we go to der—"

"In an airship, you wretches!" screamed Lance. "We are going, going, going! Maurice, let me hug you! Do you see it? Look, man! Do you see it now?"

Fr-r-r-r-r-r-r!

A beam of light stabbed downwards, cutting the hazy gloom like a silver knife. There was a sudden glare. Before their astonished gaze a cone-shaped object hung motionless forty feet above the window.

"Himmel!" gasped Von Haagel. "Der model of ein aeronef!"

"Yes, an aeronef!" cried Lance. "The little brother of the one we are going to build and call Wings of Gold!"

The light went out.

"Dinner is ready!" said the voice of the footman.

(To be continued.)

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"WINGS OF GOLD!"

which will be continued in next Thursday's number of

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Do not fail to place an early order with your newsagent as there will be an unprecedented demand.—EDITOR.

NEXT
WEEK:

"HIS FALSE POSITION!"

A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 204.

DEEP SEA GOLD

The Concluding Chapters of a Story dealing with the Adventures of Captain Flame and Dick Dauntless on board a Wonderful Submarine Motor-Car

... By ...

REGINALD WRAY.

The Previous Chapters of "DEEP SEA GOLD," specially re-written for this number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY.

Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde, chums of Weltsea College, are bathing in the sea early one morning, when they are suddenly seized by enormous octopus-like tentacles and dragged swiftly down beneath the surface of the water.

They are pulled aboard a submarine motor-car, and are soon introduced to Captain Flame, the captain of the Octopus, as the strange craft is named.

The crew consists entirely of boys, with whom Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde are soon on good terms.

They make for that dreaded mass of floating weeds known as the Sargasso Sea, and there, stuck fast in the midst of the weeds, they find both the Morning Star and the tug that had been sent out to aid her. While investigating, the Octopus is attacked by a body of Tankas—huge men who dwell in the crater of an extinct volcano. They defeat these, and invade this underground world.

After destroying the castle in the underground world, Captain Flame returns to his home, "The Islands," and quells a rebellion of the prisoners.

The Octopus then makes for England, and home. Captain Flame stops in the Straits of Gibraltar, where Dick Dauntless witnesses the imposing ceremony of the crowning of Captain Flame as King Paul I. of Kravonia. When they leave the battleship, on which the ceremony took place, captain Flame says, "And now, my lad, back to the Octopus. We have stirring days full of peril before us."

(Now go on with the story.)

When the Sea Ran Blood.

"Am I permitted to congratulate your Majesty—" began Dick, when he was interrupted by Captain Flame's upraised hand.

"Until I am crowned again in my own capital, I remain Captain Flame to you and those with you," he declared. "It is my wish that you should forget all you have just seen. The ceremony was but an informal one, to satisfy the demands of my future subjects, who would not acknowledge me as king until the ancient crown of Kravonia had been put upon my head."

Dick bowed, and as each had sufficient to occupy their minds, they did not speak again until the Octopus was reached.

As Dick Dauntless entered the conning-tower with the inventor, and saw him seat himself at the steering-wheel, as calmly as though nothing out of the common had occurred, he found it difficult to believe that the impressive ceremony he had witnessed on board the warship was anything but a strange dream.

"Stand by!" cried Captain Flame down the speaking-tube. Then, as the order "Full speed ahead!" was given, Dick felt the Octopus tremble as she sped over the ocean bed, whither he could only guess.

Three days later the Octopus, having passed up the English Channel into the North Sea, crept ashore on the sandy dunes that separate the little fishing village of Caister from the sea.

It was night, and unseen even by a wandering coastguard the submarine made her way to where a handsome motor-car awaited at the end of the hard road leading to the village.

Here all save Dick Dauntless and Jack Orde alighted, for their sojourn on board the Octopus was ended.

Farewells had already been said, and soon, each bearing a draft on a London bank for a large sum of money, which constituted his share of the treasure Captain Flame had wrested from the grip of the ocean, in his pocket, they entered the car, and, with many a shouted word of farewell, and many a backward look of regret at the Octopus, were driven off to their several homes.

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"Loyal hearts and true! British boys to the core! May I ever be surrounded by similar brave hearts!" said Captain Flame, as, with Dick Dauntless on one side, and Jack Orde on the other, he watched the car disappear in the distance.

Though the object of their landing seemed to have been achieved, Captain Flame appeared in no hurry to leave the spot, but, glancing at his watch, looked towards where the long beach stretched to Great Yarmouth.

Presently six tiny specks appeared in the distance, which, as they drew nearer, evolved themselves into as many men.

Ten minutes later the new-comers had halted with military precision before the inventor, and raised their hands to their peaked caps in salute.

"You are welcome, friends!" was Captain Flame's greeting. "Dauntless, these men will take the place of those we have just lost. You will still be my second in command, Orde acting under you."

Then, turning to the new-comers, he spoke long and earnestly to them in a strange tongue.

What he said Dick could not understand, but that the words were welcome to his hearers was shown by the kindling looks upon their faces.

Then he ceased speaking and led the way into the Octopus. The doors were closed, the engines reversed, and the submarine car plunged into her native element once more.

Whither Dick Dauntless was bound he did not know, his only guide being the compass, which pointed now north, now east, now south, then north again, then back to east, until he had entirely lost count of his bearings.

Presently their speed slackened, and for a week they seemed to be wandering backwards and forwards in a narrow sea filled with shallows and dotted with islands.

Now and again the Octopus would creep close in shore, and Captain Flame or one of his foreign crew would be absent from the car for some considerable time.

Yet nothing happened, and Dick Dauntless was beginning to feel bored to death by the monotony of their existence, when one morning he was alarmed by a deep, reverberating roar immediately above his head.

The next moment the ringing of electric bells throughout the car sounded the alarm.

Hastening to his post at the conning-tower, Dick found Captain Flame there before him.

The inventor's face was flushed, his eyes flashed with almost unearthly brilliancy, but the hand which grasped the steering-wheel or played with the levers by his side was as steady as a rock.

He turned to Dick with the nearest approach to a hearty laugh the boy had ever heard from his lips.

"The game's commenced, Dick. My fleet is attacking the Northerners. Can you not hear the guns?" he cried excitedly.

The question was almost a needless one, for the water around them was shaken by the constant explosion of heavy ordnance above their heads.

"What part are we to take in the fight, sir?" asked Dick.

"That of lookers-on for the present," replied the King of Kravonia. "Our time will come. It would be fatal to my plans if our foes so much as suspected the Octopus's existence."

"And what if your fleet is defeated, sir?" asked Dick.

Captain Flame laughed aloud.

"That is impossible!" he declared confidently. "The ships are the best money can buy, the men are the best the world can show."

"Then they are British sailors," declared Dick confidently. Captain Flame smiled.

"Spoken like a true Britisher!" he declared. "It is true. All the officers and the greater part of the men on my ships hail from your unconquerable little island—Ah! First blood to us!" he added abruptly, as, split in twain by some mighty shell, a torpedo-boat destroyer, with the gaudy Northern flag fluttering from her stern, sank beneath the waves, her boilers exploding with a terrific report when half-way between the surface and the bottom of the sea.

And now expended shells hurtled like strange fire above their heads, whilst, peering upwards, they could see the huge hulks of the contending warships passing and re-passing in a swirl of foam as they cleaved their way through the water.

It was a stirring yet an awful sight, for soon the sea-bed over which the Octopus crawled was littered with the wrecks of gallant ships and the bodies of the slain.

Presently Dick saw, high overhead, a long, round, glistening object like some enormous fish, cleaving the water straight towards the black, rounding hull of what could only be a battleship.

Barely had he time to realise that he was witnessing the attack of a torpedo on a doomed vessel, ere the fearful missile reached its mark.

There was a terrific explosion, a smother of surf and foam, and through the magnifying lenses of the conning-tower Dick

caught a momentary vision of a huge rent in the enormous hull where the torpedo had struck home.

Then, so suddenly that he could scarcely believe that another monster ship had appeared upon the scene, the stricken vessel swept round, and with a last gallant, despairing effort plunged her huge iron ram into the side of the opposing ship.

It was a fearful sight.

The bursting boilers surrounded the two leviathans with steam-tinged bubbles, and the dark, writhing forms of the fifteen hundred men who comprised their crews could be seen swimming frantically to escape being drawn down into the vortex.

The next minute the Octopus had shot swiftly away to avoid being crushed beneath the tremendous weight of the sinking ironclads.

But events were moving too swiftly for the horrified boy to dwell long upon each detail.

Already the bottom of the sea beneath where the fiercest part of the fight was being waged was littered with the wrecks of sunken ships, some of which bore the green and gold Kravonian flag, but by far the larger number the Northern colours.

Gradually the harvest of death grew less, as the battle, drifting towards the east, showed that the Kravonian fleet had proved victorious, and that their foes were in full flight.

An hour later Dick, bearing a despatch from Captain Flame to Admiral Dauntless, entered one of the torpedo-boats, and sped swiftly to the surface.

The surface of the sea presented a scarcely less terrible sight than the bottom had shown.

Close at hand floated four battered and shattered wrecks, three of which had been Northern battleships, and a Kravonian cruiser, now scarcely kept afloat by their water-tight doors.

Suddenly from the bridge of the nearest wreck leaped forth a spurt of flame, and a quickfiring shell plunged into the water within a yard of where Dick floated in his strangely-constructed vessel.

In a moment he had thrown open the sliding roof, and, springing up, waved the Kravonian flag.

He was but just in time, for the other vessels, alarmed by the approach of what they deemed a hostile torpedo, were training their guns upon him.

Steering close to the nearest wreck, Dick inquired for Admiral Dauntless.

"That is his ship engaging the forts of Blomstadt yonder—the one with the shattered funnel and the crippled fire-control station," replied the officer from the bridge.

Dick waited to hear no more. Closing up the concave top of his small craft, he sped in the direction of the vessel indicated, taking care, however, to insert a steel rod, from which the small Kravonian flag fluttered, to a socket in the front of his boat.

Ten minutes later he had reached the King of Kravonia's side, for such was the name of Admiral Dauntless's flagship, and was clambering up the accommodation ladder, which had been lowered directly his strange craft had been sighted.

A blood-stained bandage wound round his forehead, Admiral Dauntless received his son on the quarter-deck of the King of Kravonia, whose huge twelve-inch guns were now and again hurling shells into the strongly-fortified island, behind which the remnant of the Northern navy had taken shelter.

"Thank Heaven, father, you are safe!" cried Dick, grasping the admiral's hand.

"And better still, my lad, the Northern navy has been practically destroyed," replied the admiral. "They cannot now send reinforcements to their troops in Kravonia by sea, and the way is long, perilous, and exhausting by land."

"Then I suppose Captain Flame will land immediately?" suggested Dick.

"Not until Blomstadt has fallen. It is too near to Kravonia to be left in our rear."

As his father took Captain Flame's despatch from his son's hand and hastened below to peruse its contents, Dick Dauntless glanced over the waters to where the strongest fortress in Europe was answering from its thousand guns the steady fire of the victorious Kravonian fleet.

Now and again one of the King's huge guns would belch forth its message of death, sending a huge shell carrying death and destruction amongst the defenders of the Northern fortress.

Each time Dick felt as though the fearful force of the explosion had dislocated his whole frame.

Indeed, so deafening, so terrible, was the explosions of the guns that he was glad when, armed with a letter containing a full account of Admiral Dauntless's victory, he re-entered his torpedo-boat, and had plunged once more into the silent depths below.

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NEXT WEEK: "HIS FALSE POSITION!"

In the Harbour.

Slowly and cautiously the submarine car picked her way down the narrow though deep channel which formed the entrance to the semi-circular basin round which the fortifications of Blomstadt had been built.

Marching in a darkness scarce relieved by the feeble glitter of their headlights, for they dare not turn them full on lest their beams should attract the attention of the vigilant Northerners, Dick Dauntless and four of the Octopus's crew preceded the car, from the conning-tower of which Captain Flame was steering up this veritable channel of death.

The slightest incautious movement would warn their foes of their presence, and the Octopus and all on board her would be blown to a thousand pieces by the numerous contact and electric mines with which the entrance to the harbour was freely sown.

It would have been a comparatively easy task to have cut the wires, and thus have rendered the electric mines harmless, but to have done so would have been to have called the attention of the defenders to their presence, and that must be avoided at any cost.

Besides, Captain Flame had need of the enemy's mines for another purpose.

Searching every inch of the way, Dick and his four men moved cautiously onward, pausing now and again to sever a pair of wires and reconnect them in such a way that, until the explosion of the mine was actually attempted, it would be impossible for the engineers to discover that the wires had been tampered with.

The mines thus rendered harmless were lifted by the Octopus's tentacles and carried inside the car.

With the contact mines Dick's mode of procedure was different. As they reached the mushroom-shaped anchor by which they were moored to the bottom he had simply removed the pin which connected the chain with the anchor, and, drawing the mine through the water, had attached it to the ring bolts on the submarine car's rounding hull.

For two hours they worked slowly and with untiring patience, until at length they returned to the Octopus with every mine that had protected the harbour in their possession.

The last mine secured to the submarine car, she returned to the open sea, leaving Dick Dauntless and his comrades to finish the work allotted them.

As the water deepened Dick and his men ventured to increase the light from their headlamps.

Presently they came to where eight battered and shot-pierced destroyers—all that was left of the huge flotilla on which the Northerners had so confidently depended for the defence of their coast—lay at anchor in a long line across the harbour.

Working noiselessly, each man drew from behind his back a number of heavy links.

With these they fastened the chains to each other until the whole of the eight destroyers were securely fastened together.

This done, Dick left a man on guard over the anchors, another some fifty yards further on, with himself at the further end of a long line reaching from the moored destroyers to the harbour mouth.

Thus having a trail to guide the Octopus on her return to the harbour, Dick seated himself on a mass of weed-covered granite, which had probably fallen from some passing barge when the forts were being constructed, and became lost in thought.

Presently he started, and looked anxiously towards the harbour. The beating of a screw had fallen on his listening ears.

At first he feared lest one of the destroyers had been ordered to slip out of the harbour and reconnoitre the hostile fleet. If so, their labour would be in vain, for it would be impossible to prevent the fact that they were all fastened together from being discovered.

But a moment's reflection showed him the unlikelihood of this supposition.

Hastening back whence he had come, he ordered his men to extinguish their headlights until he gave the word for them to be illuminated again, then moved cautiously in the direction of the approaching sounds, which grew louder and louder each moment.

Presently he saw a huge rounded mass gliding towards him over the muddy bottom, and realised that, unknown to Captain Flame, or he would have warned him of its presence, the Northerners had a submarine in the harbour, which was creeping out to attack the unsuspecting Kravonians.

(This story will be concluded in next Thursday's number of "The Gem" Library, One Penny.)

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OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



Next Week's Story.

In next week's splendid, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled

"HIS FALSE POSITION."

Martin Clifford once again proves himself a past-master of the art of writing a school story that really interests and thrills, leaving a lasting impression on the reader's mind. My chums may rest assured that in

"HIS FALSE POSITION,"

they have a really fine and powerful story in store for them next week, which it would be well to make certain of by

ORDERING "THE GEM" IN ADVANCE.

Replies in Brief.

G. B. Y., Broadway, S.W.—Thank you for your letter and suggestions. As far as I know, the horizontal bar seen attached to some lamp-posts is there to provide a convenient rest for a ladder when the lamp needs attention.

Gordon R., Workington.—Many thanks for your letter and contribution, which latter may come in very handy. As a matter of fact, I am pleased to say that I have no lack of material for Our Readers' Column—indeed, my chief difficulty is to find room for all that I would like to put in.

Stanley R. D., Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Your trouble is quite a common one, and arises from the fact of your mind being in a too-excited state when you retire. Do you spend the last hour before bed quietly with a book or engaged in some other restful occupation? Brisk exercise, which should include deep breathing, is also conducive to slumber, while the power of will should also be brought into play to produce a composed state of mind.

Our Correspondence Exchange.

F. Taylor, 42, Kilshaw Lane, Hooley Hill, Manchester, England, would like to correspond with a girl reader in the Colonies (age 16).

Frank Green, care of Mrs. Beautiman, 55, Brunswick Street, Stockton-on-Tees, Durham, would very much like to correspond with a girl chum, about 16 years of age, living in France.

Alfred E. Fox (age 17), of 7, Harford Street, Hall Road, Norwich, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, about 16 or 17.

Will any Colonial reader of THE GEM be kind enough to correspond with George Peters (and chums—A. Gurr, A. Oram, P. Whitmore, C. Whitmore) at 66, Earlwood Road, Redhill, Surrey?

A. C. Walker, of 56, Long Street, Bloemfontein, South Africa, wishes to exchange picture-postcards with a girl chum in Ireland.

Edward Bellairs, of 36, Manor Park Road, Harlesden, N.W., wishes to correspond with a girl reader of THE GEM who lives in Kensington, and who is 15 years of age.

Making a Copygraph.

A fifteen-year-old reader of Plumstead, Kent, who tells me that he is the editor and publisher of a paper called "The Weekly Message," writes to ask how he can make a number of copies of his paper without going through the laborious process of writing each one out by hand. As I have quite a number of letters from readers asking much the same question, I have decided to publish particulars of the preparation and management of a copygraph.

A copygraph is very simple to make, and a very useful article to those who want to print a large number of draw-

ings, letters, leaflets, etc., without the aid and consequent expense of a printer. First of all, obtain a good, strong biscuit-box—the body is used for melting the ingredients, and the lid for the tray.

The ingredients you will require for a graph of medium size are: Glycerine (common), 18oz.; water, 12oz.; sulphate of barium, 6oz.; powdered loaf-sugar, 3oz.; and Nelson's gelatine, 3oz.

Having obtained the ingredients, mix them together, and place them in the biscuit-box, putting them on one side for twenty-four hours in order to get them well mixed. After that you must put the box on the kitchen stove—do not let the flames reach the box, or you will soon melt the solder that keeps the box together—for two or three hours, until the contents have melted. Well stir the mixture until it is reduced to a thick, creamy-looking liquid, and then pour it into your tray (the top of the box).

If there are any bubbles on the surface of the graph, get rid of them by piercing them with a red-hot needle.

In half an hour's time the mixture will be set and ready for use. When you want to make use of your graph, write your letter, or whatever it may be, on smooth paper—using the special ink supplied by most stationers at about ninepence a bottle—and let it dry without using the blotter. Lay the paper face downwards on the graph, and leave it for a minute or so, then remove it by lifting it carefully by the corner, when you will see that a reversed copy of the letter remains on the graph.

Without loss of time take another sheet of paper, lay it upon the writing, rub lightly with your finger, and remove it after four or five seconds. An exact copy of the writing will be transferred, and, by repeating the process, you may take off any number of copies.

When you have finished with the machine, wash it well in cold water, dry, and put it away until again required.

Helpful Letters Acknowledged.

Among the great number of letters received recently, containing helpful hints and suggestions, those sent by the following are particularly worthy of mention: Ted L. Weymouth; J. Tidbury, Stamford Hill; H. Goldberg, Stoke Newington; R. D. P., S. Shields; W. H., Co. Down, Ireland; Jack C. P., Upton Park; H. S., West Bromwich; Eric C., Thornton Heath; E. M., Cardiff; A. L. B. K., Anerley; P. B. and J. S., London, N.; C. Perry, Bristol; Gordon S. G., Cambridge; E. B., London, N.; C. C. E., Fulham; B. Richards, Llandaff North; H. H., Huddersfield; T. T., Liverpool; Miss L. B., Earlsfield, S. W.; H. Collett, Bath; P. R. A., Newcastle; B., Acton; C. Daniel, Wood Green, N.; Florrie T., Ramsgate; "Gemite," Sidcup; R. D. and T. B., Bangor, Ireland; H. Fairbrother, Manchester; Harry N., Hull; "A Very Old and Constant Reader," Wantage; A. Belbringer, Kingston-on-Thames; E. O., Forest Hill; W. H. A., Windsor; Merry, London; "A Seventeen-Year-Old Reader," Sheffield; "Punch," Fulham, S. W.; R. Woods, Brixton; "Finchleyite," Finchley; M. W., Blackburn; "Two Loyal Girl Chums," "A Girl Reader," Bristol; A. R. B., Cambridge; David D., Putney; Miss Dorothy Grace, Hammer-smith; Miss Dorothy Kent, Falmouth; P. Frazer, Dublin; J. Steward, Leicester; "An Interested Reader," Birmingham; A. Clarke, Bournemouth; H. Walker, Forest Gate; F. T., Ireland; George May, Rotherhithe; "A Girl Reader," London; Miss Vivienne Stuart, Peckham; E. Elliot, Clapton; N. G., Ontario, Canada; "Mick," East Finchley; M. G., Shepherd's Bush; R. Vickery, Cardiff; "A Regular Reader," Dunstable; R. L., Streatham; A. Sykes, Leeds; "Welshman," H. A., Windsor; "Constant Reader," J. L. M.; F. W. T., Bath; J. Fraser, Inverness; W. B. B., London, W.; "Two Gemites," Stratford; Frank C., Douglas, I. O. M.; Alfred T. Scott, North Shields; Ray A., and Aggie M., Newcastle-on-Tyne; "Complete," Grimsby."

THE EDITOR.