

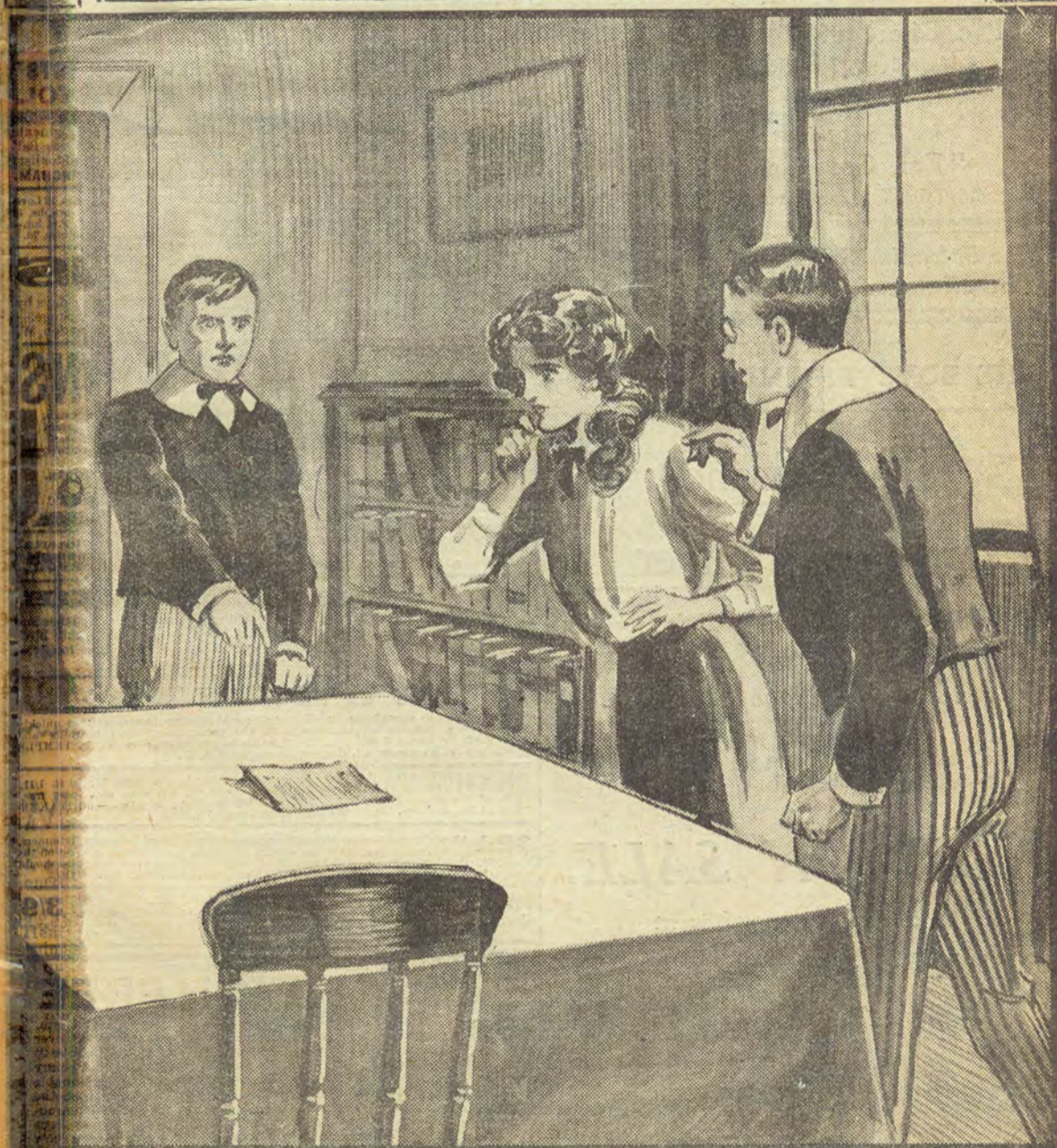
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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"I give you a chance to take back what you have said!" said D'Arcy sternly. "Otherwise, it will be impossible for me ever to speak to you again." "I don't want you to!" snapped Hammond. And Arthur Aspinwall turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, his head very erect. (See Chapter 10.)

CHAPTER 1.

The Bellini Green Left.

MY "M" Hammond of the Fourth uttered that ejaculation as he came into the junior common-room in the School House at St. Jim's.

A grinning crowd of juniors were gathered before a paper pinned on the wall, and the chuckle with which they greeted Hammond showed that the notice pinned on the wall had some reference to himself.

Henry Horace Hammond—yes, "Eury" Green "Ammond," as he himself pronounced his name—was a new boy at St. Jim's, and quite out of the ordinary run of new boys.

His father's rise to fortune, by means of the marvellous sale of "Hammond's High-class Hair," had been very sudden. The obscure hatter of Bellini Green had become the wealthy Mr. Hammond of Grosvenor Square, and Henry Horace had been sent to St. Jim's.

The Gentry schoolboy was picking up the ways and customs of St. Jim's at a great rate, with all the Latin facility of a London lad. But there seemed to be one thing that he could not possibly pick up, and that was the troublesome separate, so far from picking that up, he dropped it on his nose.

"Here he is!" murmured Master Lovell of the Staff—"I mean, 'see' he is! Read this 'see notice,' 'Ammond.' It's rather interesting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond flushed a little as he pushed his way through the crowd of juniors. He was a little sensitive on the subject of his terrible pronunciation. He looked at the notice pinned on the wall of the common-room, and his face deepened.

It was written in the handwriting of Lovell of the Fourth, and it ran:

"LOST!"

"Is in the School House, a large number of 'Y's. Anyone finding the same is requested to return them to 'Eury' 'Ammond, Study No. 5, who is greatly in need of them. Of no use to anybody but the owner."

"My 'at!" said Hammond.

"Then give another!" chuckled Crooks of the Staff.

"Did anybody lose anything else?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't sell this 'see a joke!" said Hammond, looking round.

"Why can't you leave my blossoming 'Y's alone?"

"You leave 'em alone yourself, don't you!" chuckled Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Aspinwall of the Fourth Form came into the room. He looked round through his intense spectacles, and quoted Hammond.

Next Wednesday:

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!" AND "SECRET SERVICE!"

No. 305. (New Series). Vol. 2.

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"Hammond, dear boy, I'm looking for you," said Arthur Aspinwall.

"Yes I am," said Hammond.

"But I see! What is that wall?"

Arthur Aspinwall turned his eyes upon the wall on the wall, and he frowned indignantly. Arthur Aspinwall had not liked Hammond when he first came. He had confided to Black and Morris and Digby, his chosen in the No. 5, that Hammond was on his nerves. And he had attended all the School House later on by making friends with the "boulder" and chattering with him. And, as Arthur Aspinwall, D'Arcy never did anything by halves, he and Hammond had become great chums. And Arthur Aspinwall was therefore greatly indignant at any aspersion cast upon his Chummy pal.

"Lewison, you wretch, you did this!" he exclaimed, with a wonderful look at the end of the Fourth.

Lewison smiled.

"Yes—trying to do Hammond a service," he explained.

"You're not the only chap who's going to help Hammond."

"I suggest you to a wretch, Lewison."

"Go on!"

"And I should recommend my friend Hammond to give you a healthy thrashing!"

Lewison chuckled.

"Your friend Hammond would not see up against something if he tried it on," he remarked. "Besides, I'm doing him a service. He's in want of his k's, isn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond strode towards the paper on the wall, and raised his hand to tear it down.

Lewison of the Fourth promptly intervened, and pushed him back.

"Hands off!" he said—"I mean, hands off! You keep your hands off that three paper!"

The jocular yell at Lewison's imitation of the Cockney's accent. The way Hammond turned his eyes into it was a source of never-ending delight to the School House fellows. Hammond's fellows would enter into conversation with him, merely for the sake of hearing him do it, to imitate him afterwards.

"You go! to tear that paper up!" said Hammond.

"I say, I'm a paper, dear boy," murmured Arthur Aspinwall, in distress. "All his friendship for Henry Hammon could not keep him from shivering when Hammond called a paper a paper."

Hammond looked surprised.

"I did call it a paper," he replied.

"Paper, dear boy."

"Yes, paper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond singly could not detect the difference in the word. He resembled the celebrated French professor who was told that "difference" was pronounced "différance" and not "différence," and who thereupon inquired what was the difference between difference and différance.

"However, it's very witty to make witty jokes about a chap's way of speaking," said Arthur Aspinwall. "Pity that that paper down, Hammond, and come along!"

"You go!"

Lewison of the Fourth glanced himself before the paper. Lewison was not a fighting man, or a pole, but he was bigger than the Cockney, and he had no objection to the task of winning a clear victory.

"Hands off!" said Lewison humorously.

Hammond nudged him severely in the eye.

"You go! to tear up that paper!" he said.

"You're going to leave it alone!" said Lewison.

"You'll stand aside!"

"You'd better put me aside!" retorted Lewison.

"I'll only warn you that if you don't 'up it'!" said Hammond, his eyes beginning to glaze. "I'm about fed up with this!"

"Up it, Lewison," murmured Monty Lovelace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lewison stood his ground. Hammond pushed back his eyes, and spat upon his hands. That preliminary to a combat made the jokers roll again. Nobody at St. Jim's had ever been seen to spit upon his hands before commencing a fight; but Hammond's ways were not their ways.

"You're not going to 'up it'?" demanded Hammond.

"No! I'm not going to 'up it'!" said Lewison. "I'm going to stick 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Through him, dear boy!" said Arthur Aspinwall encouragingly.

"He is really an awful lout, you know, and you can throw him easily."

Hammond rushed straight at Lewison. The end of the Fourth put up his hands, and hit out vigorously. But his blows were swept up, and Hammond's left came with a crash upon his chin. You late Lewison remembered that he had seen Hammond deliver that left drive before—the "Redhead" Green's chin. Hammond called it. It crashed on Lewison's chin, and he was fairly knocked off his feet, and he crashed against the wall behind him.

"Crack!"

The back of Lewison's head banged on the wall, and he rolled over on the floor. He lay there dazed and gasping.

"Oh!" he groaned. "Oh! You beat! You've crushed my skull!"

Hammond dropped his hands, and looked on with an air. Although he was quick to anger, he was a thoroughly good-natured fellow, and he did not want to hurt even Lewison, though the Fourth-Fourth's blows had raised him some pain that anything else he had encountered at St. Jim's.

"I say, I'm sorry," he exclaimed. "I didn't mean to 'up it' 'em, and I shouldn't 've stood so close to the wall. I say you took it well!"

Lewison sat up with a groan, and pressed his hand to the back of his head.

"You rather—you rather!" he muttered.

"Really thing to do?" said Cousin of the Shell. "Just like that East End fighter!"

"I didn't mean to go for you to do it!" said Hammond. "And he wouldn't get away, would he? I've said so 'em I've said!"

Lewison staggered to his feet. He had had a very pleasant crack on the head, and it made him feel sick and dizzy.

"Do you want any more?" said Hammond, peering up his hands again indignantly.

Lewison grunted his assent.

"Hang you," he said—"hang you, you beastly Cockney! You ought to be kicked out of St. Jim's and sent back to the place you belong to!"

And Lewison moved away unsteadily, his hand still to the back of his head. As a matter of fact, he was not sorry for an excuse not to continue the combat, since that single experience of the "Redhead" Green's chin. Hammond stepped quickly to the paper on the wall, took it down, and tore it into half a dozen pieces, and threw them into the common-room fire. Not a hand was raised to stop him.

"That's right, dear boy," said Arthur Aspinwall. "Now we'll go for our little treat!"

And Arthur Aspinwall D'Arcy linked his arm in Hammond's, and they walked out of the common-room together.

CHAPTER 2.

D'Arcy's Little Party.

THE MERRY of the Shell was waiting on the School House steps.

Black and Digby of the Fourth were with him.

The jokers, generally an unusually elegant set, found that they observed one thing that they had their hands on—on which showed that they were honest upon an expedition of unusual importance. As a matter of fact, they were going to tea at the vicarage. Tea at the vicarage was a somewhat common function, and the jokers did not care for it. Tea in the study at St. Jim's was a much more cheery and cozy affair. But D'Arcy's Cousin Eriel was staying at the vicarage, and that made all the difference.

Where Cousin Eriel was, Tom Merry & Co. were always glad to go. And when Arthur Aspinwall had mentioned that afternoon that he was asked to tea, and that he could bring some friends with him, there was keen competition to be in the party.

Arthur Aspinwall was a very popular fellow in the School House, but even before had it appeared that he had so much friends.

Black and Morris and Digby were his steady ones; Tom Merry and Monty and Lewison, the Twinkle Toes of the Shell, were his great friends. And it appeared, on this

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"My 'at!" said Hammond when he had finished reading the notice on the board. "There goes another 'h'!" chuckled Gooey. "Did anybody hear it drop?" (In Chapter 1.)

mission, that Kenneth of the Shield, and Bailey of the Fourth, and Kenneth, and Ray, and Bates, and Smith mean, and quite a number of other fellows, looked upon Gooey as U'Any's old pal.

Over in the New House, too, he seemed to have friends. Figgins, Kew, and Wynn, it seemed, were his oldest chums; and Robben and Owen and Lawrence had always regarded him as the friend of their collective bosom. Indeed, if Arthur Argus had taken with him that afternoon all the devoted friends who claimed the rights of dear Gooey, he would have had an invading army into the vicarage, which would have severely taxed the accommodation there.

But Arthur Argus got his feet down Gooey. His own studymates and the Terrible Three he could bear, and he drew the line at all others. Figgins of the New House, almost with tears in his eyes, pointed out that he had always regarded Gooey as the apple of his eye, but Gooey was otherwise.

"As a matter of fact, Figgins, duck her," Gooey observed—"as a matter of absolute fact, you have a wash and soap of wondrous my cousin as beat, pure cousin, and wondrous her, and I don't really quite like it."

And Figgins was left out in the cold.

But there was one fellow whom Arthur Argus intended

to take, in spite of certain uneasy looks he noticed on his cousin's face when he announced his intention, and that person was Henry Horace Hammond of the Fourth.

Time Harry & Co. were far from being snobs, and they liked Hammond personally, but they could not help having some doubts as to his success as a visitor at the vicarage.

When Mrs. Bluffon, prim and stately, would think of Henry Horace was a great question.

But U'Any disregarded friendly hints. Hammond was his friend.

That was enough for the well of St. Joe's. To be ashamed of his friend was impossible. It would have been bad form.

True, Hammond had most decidedly got on U'Any's side since at first. In spite of their friendship, he sometimes got upon them still. But Hammond had proved that he was what U'Any called "the right sort."

The Cuckoo accident had risked his life, and almost lost it, in rescuing Cousin Edsel from death in the waters of the Bath; and that act of heroism had made Arthur Argus feel ashamed of his prejudice against the new boy.

He had offered his friendship to the lonely lad, and Hammond, who had a deep and unyielding admiration for the noble Gooey, had jumped at it.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!"

CHAPTER 3.

Hammond Disregards Himself.

BILLY HUTTON, the vicar's nephew, was in the vicarage garden when Tom Merry & Co. arrived. He was giving his best dog a run, and Arthur Augustus eyed the bull-dog curiously as he came up the road. His own building, as D'Arcy often said, had no impact whatever for a fellow's business; and D'Arcy did not like buildings at close quarters for that reason. And he looked quite amazed at the pup come sniffing about his feet.

"Paw call him off, dash boy," said Arthur Augustus, "it would sterve with my trousers if he snuffed them, you know."

"It's only his place," said Billy Hutton cheerfully. "He likes sniffing things. He sees Mrs. Cleveland's cat when she comes down here in the cage, the little tigger."

And Billy Hutton chuckled, evidently very proud of that achievement of his bull-dog pup.

"That's a fine dog," remarked Hammond, when he was presented to the vicar's nephew.

Billy Hutton could not help smiling. He appreciated the compliment to his dog, but he was surprised by the peculiar accent of the St. Jim's fellow.

"Yes, he's a good 'un," said Billy. "Know anything about dogs?"

"Well," said Hammond. "I 'ad a bulldog myself at 'ome, and he was a beauty. You should 'ave seen the way he 'sported on a row and came in and snuffed a 'ot one."

"What?"

"I 'unter 'ave 'em be'ind the counter," continued Hammond, "and a 'ere 'oked in one day and snuffed a 'at-'one of our 'epherals 'is at three-and-sixpence. 'E was going to sell it for a 'anner for 'is, of course. Taddy-'ead was my dog's name—'e made one jump—and you should 'ave seen the 'lakes 'oppe it, with Taddy 'olding on to his tail."

"I should have liked to see it," gazed Billy Hutton.

"It was a right, you bet, Taddy 'eek," said Hammond. "It was the real beauty, you know. But that there dog of yours is a good 'un, too. Come over, dog."

"Mind, he'll snap you if you touch him," said Hutton. Hammond shook his head.

"Dogs never snap at me," he said. "Dogs know a fellow who likes dogs. Look 'ere."

He reached the bull-dog, and the dog turned over to be tickled. Hutton looked on in surprise.

"Never seen him like that before," he said. "He generally likes it, he's tickled. Nearly like Mrs. Cleveland's puss."

"What?" exclaimed Figgins, with a frown on his face at the bull-dog.

"The dog?"

"Nearly—not quite," chuckled Hutton. "But he generally likes. You try him, D'Arcy. I'll bet you he tips your hand."

Arthur Augustus drew back. He evidently had no desire whatever to get the matter to the test.

"You try him, Tom Merry?"

"Rats!" and Tom Merry politely.

The justice was on his side, Billy Hutton looked rather doubtful as Hammond as he went, and spoke to Mistry Llewellyn, who was one of the crowd.

"Who's that chap?" he asked.

"Henry Henry Hammond, son and heir of Hammond's Highgate House?" replied Mistry Llewellyn solemnly.

"Rather a queer name for St. Jim's—what?" asked Hutton.

"Yes, O King."

"But he's a good sort," said Hutton, with conviction. "I like him. Fellow who can get on with dogs like that is all right."

"One of the best," said Llewellyn. "He's the chap who pulled Miss Cleveland out of the river, you know."

"Oh, that's the chap? And he dropped all his k's in the river?" Hutton wanted to know.

And Llewellyn chuckled, and followed his friends.

Cousin Ethel was with Mrs. Hutton when the justice came in. She greeted Hammond in a very friendly way. Never had the girl forgotten how she had held on to her in the bitter waters of the river when all hope seemed gone, and it had seemed that they must go down to death together. The fact that Hammond dropped his k's, and turned his k's into 's was not likely to weigh much with the girl who owed her life to his courage and devotion.

Mrs. Hutton, too, was very kind to Hammond when he was presented to her, and Cousin Ethel explained that he was the boy who had saved her in the river.

But the vicar's lady could not help being astonished when Hammond spoke.

"It wasn't nothing," Hammond said, when the good lady complimented him upon what he had done as that celebrated occasion. "Any Mike would have done the same. Couldn't worry well stand by and see a jolly drowned?"

"Ahem! Yes, indeed, of course!" stammered the vicar's lady.

Arthur Augustus felt his cheeks grow a little pink. He could not help wondering whether his friend would ever grow out of that facile way of speaking. But he was loyal to the vicar, and he at least thought Hammond when they had tea, and made it a point to show that they were great friends.

Hammond felt rather left out of the chatty talk at tea.

He looked at Cousin Ethel with eyes full of honest admiration, and wished that he could talk to her as Figgins was doing. Ethel Cleveland seemed interested in everything that Figgins said, though really, as a member of her, Figgins was not a brilliant conversationalist. But Ethel was too kind and careful to neglect one of the guests, and she made a point to speak sweetly and kindly to Hammond.

Hammond found the talk to his liking, and he had an original mode of eating it. He produced a large pocket-knife from his pocket, a wonderful knife, which contained one number of blades, and a cork-screw and a screw-driver, and several other useful things, and was attempting to cut a cucumber-looking implement. He opened the largest blade, cleaned up his eyes, and put himself with a flourish on the end of his pocket-knife. Mrs. Hutton politely said nothing, and all the other guests refrained from saying anything, too. But when Hammond poured his tea into a tureen Arthur Augustus felt for a moment as if he would faint.

But Arthur Augustus was a gentleman to the finger-tips. As he saw Billy Hutton's eyes turn upon Hammond's tea-carrying arm with a twinkle, the swell of St. Jim's salary and industry poured his own tea into his saucer, following Hammond's example. It was the very culmination of self-control.

Cousin Ethel had seen immediately that Hammond felt a little awkward and out of place, and she had entered herself as usual to put him at his ease, with much success. That the Cuckney gentleman was soon full of confidence. He took the pocket-knife and the tea in the saucer, and as his courage rose, Hammond talked quite freely, and told stories of the hat-shops in Bedford Grove, and especially on his father's rise to fortune by means of Hammond's Highgate Hats, all one piece, three-and-sixpence, they made Mrs. Hutton open her eyes wide, and Billy Hutton almost choked in his eagerness to keep from looking into a yell of laughter.

"That's the way it was done," said Hammond. "Bless your soul, my dear, I ain't always been so clever, you bet your Sunday!"

The vicar's wife was hardly likely to let it all, especially her Sunday hat. She was quite open-minded.

"Do you like St. Jim's?" Cousin Ethel asked, to steer the conversation into more appropriate channels.

"Was 'it?" said Hammond. "Course, it's a bit quiet after the Bedford Grove Road."

"The what?" murmured Mrs. Hutton.

"The Bedford Grove Road, mum. That was where we 'ad the shop."

"There is a place called Bedford Grove," Arthur Augustus explained.

"And a jolly fine place, too," said Hammond. "I 'unter 'ave a good time, you know. The lady was all right. After the shop was closed I 'unter play pitch and toss outside the corner pub."

"The what?"

"Hammond is welcome to a public-house, ma'am, a place where intemperate spirits are sold," Arthur Augustus added, in explanation.

"Goodness gracious! What a dreadful, dreadful boy!" Mrs. Hutton murmured to herself. "How can such a dreadful person have been admitted to St. Jim's?"

It was then that the vicar, returning from some parental chat, looked in at the door. Hammond was sitting with a paper full of tea in one hand, and holding in the other his pocket-knife with a chunk of cake on the end, ready to be transferred to his mouth. And his hair, laid very demurely on the nose.

"It's a blessing good tea, please!" pitch and toss," he was explaining. "Then we must play chess—yes, yes. How played chess—yes, yes, yes."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the vicar.

The explanation left his lips in spite of himself.

"It is—who is this boy?" he continued, as he attracted into the room.

Hammond looked at him.

Then he glanced at the frowning faces of the ladies, and understood that he had been guilty of some terrible breach of propriety, though what it was he did not know.

His face flushed crimson, and he fell suddenly silent. In his agitation the tea slipped over his nose, and descended in the vicar's room.

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"I'd look," he said.

"Yes, that was a blessed fuke, wasn't it?" remarked Fatty Wynn, as he tossed the ball out.

"There's going to be some more fukes like that!" grinned Tom Merry.

And he looked very elated as he walked back to the center. In spite of the fact that they were playing a team of slacks and pushers, the School House had scored the first goal in the first ten minutes of the match. And Hammond had done it—Hammond, the Cockney, the brawler from Bethnal Green! Tom Merry had doubted whether he was up to Fidelity School form; but his eyes had been opened now. He had to acknowledge that there were very few junior players in the School House, or all St. Joe's, who could put on a pure like Hammond's, or shoot with such deadly accuracy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was simply chivvying with joy. His Cockney team had not shown up to advantage at sea in the struggle, there was no doubt about that; but he was sure at least on the home field, and he was likely to prove a credit to his House so far as the great winter game was concerned.

Arthur Augustus's judgment was vindicated. He had told the fellows that Hammond was a ripping player, and they all admitted it now. Some of them, perhaps, were not convinced at being outside and outside by the Bethnal Green brawler, but they were all glad that they had such a real in point for the New House.

And when the game restarted, Figgins & Co. did the Cockney nothing the business of making him very specially. Hammond was so likely to have such a chance again, if Figgins & Co. could help it, but there was the team goal, at all events. The Cockney had broken his duck for the School House, and started the scoring.

The game went on lively, and Hammond showed no falling off in his form, though such a chance did not come his way again. He was like lightning on the ball when it came his way, and his pace was wonderful. His passing was as quick and accurate as his shooting for goal. The news that a new player of remarkable business was playing for the School House drew a good many spectators round the field, and there were many excited remarks as the Cockney was watched at work.

Levinton and his friends were among the rest, and Levinton's face was very dark as he looked on.

He had refused to play in the team because the Cockney was in it, and undoubtedly that had grounded the lad he disliked; but Levinton was a little sorry for it now.

If he had been playing last-ought, he would certainly have taken care that Hammond did not distinguish himself quite so much. It would have been easy for him to get into the winger's way and spoil some of his chances.

"My hat, that chap can play!" Mellich remarked, noting the speed on Levinton's face, and having an agonized desire to rub it in. "They won't miss you, after all, Levinton!"

"Naturally not to play that outsider!" said Levinton.

"Well, he looks like winning the match for them."

"Oh, yes! He'll crack up soon."

"He doesn't look like cracking up," said Mellich, with a mischievous grin. "My word, what a pace! Look at him now—just ground lightning!"

"And look at that pace!" said Crocker, joining Mellich in belting Levinton. "See, he's put it across to Tom Merry, and the New House chaps simply couldn't do anything. Merry will score that in!"

"Heavens!" cheered Mellich.

Hammond had retired to Tom Merry, and the captain of the Shell kicked; but this time Fatty Wynn was all there. The ball came out from a set for, and Thompson of the Shell cleared, and the teams went off to the half-way line again.

"His stuff, that Cockney, and no mistake!" remarked Crocker.

Levinton drove his hands deep in his pockets and strolled away, leaving his two kind friends chivvying. Never had his dislike of the Cockney schoolboy been so deep and bitter as at that moment.

The first half ended with the score unchanged—one up for the School House.

And, considering what they had anticipated, after their slack in scoring up their eleven, Tom Merry & Co. had reason to be proud.

"Didn't I tell you he was a ripping player, Tom Merry."

dash boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as he pulled a lemon.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, that's the most surprising thing about it," he remarked.

"Really, you say—?"

"He's certainly jolly good," said Blake heartily, "and I'm jolly glad we've got you in the team, Hammond. Your footer is as high-class as your bats."

"Ha, ha, ha."

Hammond grinned good-naturedly. He was happier at that moment than at any time before he had come to St. Joe's. It had surprised him to find that his good team in house was received with so much satisfaction by the rest of the team. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pleasure was a joy to him. At least he had done something of which his friend could justly be proud, and that made their friendship a little less one-sided.

In the second half Figgins & Co. backed up with great energy.

To be beaten by the School House was at their full strength would be too serious, as Figgins impressively told his fellows, and the New House footers had to be up with the backs of their hands determined to do or die.

The New House kicked off, and followed up the kick-off with a wonderful attack, which brought them right up to goal, and Figgins succeeded in sending the ball in.

The score was level.

Then followed a storm battle for the odd goal.

The teams were so keen that it looked like being a draw, and certainly there was not much chance of more than one goal being captured.

The minutes ticked away, and the struggle went on, with out success to either side. Fatty Wynn was a giant in goal, and he stopped several shots that came near materializing; and at the other end Clifford Diner put up a splendid defense when he was called upon. The game swung up and down the field, and both goalkeepers were kept pretty busy in fact.

It was in the last five minutes of the match that the victory was decided.

The School House were pressing home a last attack, when Fatty Wynn knocked the ball out, and Owen cleared off towards the touchline. The ball would have gone into touch—there seemed to be no one near enough to have a chance with it—but Hammond's eye was on the ball, and he reared for it. Almost on the touchline his foot intervened, and, with perfect accuracy, the leather passed back to center. Tom Merry had not expected it, but he was ready, and he slammed it in before Fatty Wynn knew it was coming.

"Goal!"

The fellows round the ground roared out a cheer. Tom Merry's task had been very after that splendid pass. All the credit was due to Hammond, and Tom was the first to admit it.

The whistle went. The match was over, and the players streamed off the field.

Figgins, a little chagrined at his defeat, perhaps, but a thorough sportsman at the same, clapped Hammond on the back.

"That was ripping!" he said. "If they all play like that in London, it's a wonder!"

"Bethnal Green," said Hammond, with a grin.

"Yes; if they all play like that in Bethnal Green, we shouldn't have much chance against a team of you!" said Figgins. "It was lovely!"

"Yess, wot!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wish those that you won't want to have Hammond out of the team again, Tom Merry."

"No hay!" and Tom, promptly. "I'll carry him on to the ground if necessary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly glad to play!" said Hammond. "I didn't think as we'd get you into the team at all, and it was good of you."

"He drops goals as easily as I," grinned Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the School House fellows went on in a state of great satisfaction. Hammond had saved the match for them, and for the time, at least, the Cockney schoolboy was very popular.

"Well, how many goals were you kicked by?" asked Monty Lowther, when he came out after his detention in the Form room.

"And Tom Merry chuckled as he replied:

"We beat them by two to one."

"My hat!" said Lowther. "Who else then?"

"Hammond took the first, and I took the second from a set for, as you say. But it was really Hammond's goal."

"The latter!"

ANSWERS

THE NEW LIBRARY—No. 355

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Our Companion Papers.

THE PENNY POPULAR, Every Friday.



After the match, Figgins, a little chagrined at his defeat, but a thorough sportsman all the same, stepped forward on the back. "That was ripping," he said, "if they all play like you in Regional Green, we shouldn't have much chance against a team of 2/6!" (No chapter 1.)

The ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot. Figgins & Co. made a smart attack at once, and brought the leather into the School House hall, and pressed on in a sharp attack upon Figgins.

With some of Tom Merry's best men out of the team, the defence was not so strong as usual, and the attack came right up to goal, and Clifton Dace, the Canadian jumper, was called upon to save again and again. But the Canadian defended splendidly, and the ball did not find a running place, and Kargers received it from him and cleared at last, sending the leather out to midfield with a tremendous kick. The New House fellows fell back at once; but the School House forwards had a chance now, and one of them was upon the ball like a lightning flash.

There was a shout as the winger was seen with the ball, speeding down the touchline at a pace that beat the New House fellows hollow.

"Hammond!" gasped Tom Merry.
"Bever!" yelled Arthur Anglin.
The forwards rushed on, ready to take a pass. The New House defence had fallen back to stop Hammond; but the ball was nowhere, and he seemed to wind round the back like magic.

He gave a glance to center; but Tom Merry was not up enough to take a pass, and Ray was far behind. There was nothing for him to do but to rush in and shoot, or miss the chance, and he decided at once. He came down on goal like lightning, and Fatty Wynn, all eyes and hands and feet, was ready to receive him; but he was not quite ready for a ball that passed him like a lightning flash.

Pop!

"Oh, my Aunt Jessica!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

There was a gap from all the players.

"Goal!"

And then a shout:

"Bravo, Cuckoo!"

CHAPTER 7.

Something Like a Footballer!

TOM MERRY clapped Hammond on the shoulder rather warmly.

"Ripping!" he exclaimed. "Top work! You wonder, why didn't you tell us you were a ghizy International?"

"Yes, wasn't? Oh, good you—good man!"

Hammond grinned broadly.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 36.

Another Schooling, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. John's. Order Early.

"Wait! Shall I tell Hammond you want him, Tom Merry?" asked Arthur Augustus generously.

"Well, what do you think my?" asked Tom Merry, looking round at the other boys.

"Might give him a chance, if he can play," said Digby.

"You haven't much to choose from, anyway. He couldn't be any worse than Mellick, for instance, if you played him—or Hammond."

"That's quite as nearly everybody who's any good is out," said Tom. "Go and walk your friend in here, Gussy, and we'll talk to him like a family of Dutch uncles."

"Yess, waitah!" said Arthur Augustus joyfully. And he rushed off in search of his Cuckoo clock.

CHAPTER 6. Leslie Declines.

HARRY HAMMOND came into the common-room, where the footstools were discussing the sad state of affairs, with Arthur Augustus's arm linked in his as usual. Hammond was looking a little excited. Many a time had he looked on while the St. Jan's juniors were playing, and longed to make one of them. Even at present he was not wanted—because like Lesion and Crocker and Mellick drove him away by their looks and remarks. Much as he liked football, and well as he played it, Hammond had made up his mind to give the game up while he was at St. Jan's, so as to keep clear even of practice, to avoid the scornful looks and sneers of the snobs of the school. And as the message brought by Arthur Augustus of Jerry came to him as a surprise and a joy.

His eyes were gleaming, and his rugged face looked almost handsome as he came in, so changed was his expression.

"You want me, Merry?" he asked. "Master Gussy says so."

Tom Merry eyed him doubtfully. He was pretty well built, and he certainly was very strong, as he had proved by the terrible lunge with which he delivered the famous Bedford Green left. He was sharp and keen as a razor, and very quick and active upon his feet. He looked like a fellow who could play if he were born here. But Tom Merry had not met him before, and he was dubious. Figgis & Co. were at the top of their form. And the school House team eleven that afternoon was rugged enough, without taking a totally untried player in to make.

But Tom Merry had agreed to do it, and he was not the fellow to go back on his word. So he nodded as cheerfully as he could in reply to Hammond's question.

"Yes, you can play better!"

"As a duck swims!" was Hammond's counter-question.

"Yes!" Then you're a gully footie—eh?"

"Well!"

"Played a bit!" asked Jack Binks.

"Every chance I ever got," said Hammond.

"Well, that sounds better," said Tom Merry approvingly.

"Of course, you wouldn't be up to public school level, but

if you do your best—"

Hammond checked involuntarily.

"What are you mulling at?" Tom Merry demanded.

"I reckon I'm up to your level 'ere, that's all. We've got lots who plays in the park but could make rings round

you."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, a little nettled. "I didn't know you were leading! Internationally in Bedford Green! All the better!"

"Right, eh?" said Hammond. "You see?"

"Plenty of gas, whether there's any better or not," remarked Binks.

Hammond reddened.

"Sorry!" he said at once. "I didn't mean to gas. But

Merry said I wasn't up to public school form—and if you

play public school at me, I join Bedford Green back at you!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Quite so," he said. "I beg your pardon, Hammond. We

get into a way of looking on ourselves as the salt of the earth, you know. Only one of our little ways."

"Yess," said Arthur Augustus, with a nod. "I have heard Cress of the Fifth Week that the population of this

country is composed of two kinds—St. Jan's fellows and outsiders. I would not go quite so far as that myself."

"Well, to get back to our question," said Tom Merry. "Will

you play for the House team this afternoon, Hammond?"

"Like a bird."

"Shall we do you usually play?"

"Foremost! Inside or outside, just as you like."

"Then I'll have you in as outside-right," said Tom Merry.

"That can you!"

"Right—! I'm your man!"

Tom Merry looked at him.

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Tom Merry looked at him.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Tom Merry looked at him.

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Tom Merry looked at him.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Tom Merry looked at him.

"Good egg! Get into your football things," said Tom Merry. "I'll go and speak to Lesion, and tell him we want him."

Hammond hurried off to change, and other fellows who were playing followed his example. And Tom Merry looked for Lesion.

He found the end of the Fourth changing with Crocker and Mellick outside the lockers. The three of them reported Tom Merry with a few lines saying that he had come up. But the captain of the Third took no notice of their looks.

"Would you like to play in the House eleven this afternoon, Lesion?" he asked.

Lesion looked surprised.

"I? You want me?"

"Yes."

"Somebody else cracked?" asked Lesion, with a sneer.

"Nonsense, or I shouldn't ask you," said Tom Merry calmly.

"I suppose you wouldn't expect me to have got a

man like Binks or Knapton to make room for you. I'm a

man short, and if you care for the place, there you are!"

"Well, I'd like to play for the House team, of course,"

said Lesion.

"You're in. Is that settled, Lesion?"

"Yes, yes, yes. But you are eleven enough, and you

can't get a good game when you choose. I'll put you in."

"Right!"

Lesion left his friends, and walked away with Tom Merry.

He did not care for football; but he was, as Tom Merry said,

a good player when he chose. And, although he did not

care for the game itself, he wanted to be able to say that he

had played for the House eleven. It was a distinction worth

prizing.

Arthur Augustus met them as he came out of the School

House of football rig with a coat and a cushion on.

"Hammond will be down in a minute, thank you," he

reminded. "We're ready. Is Lesion playing?"

"Yes."

"Shall we be in and get changed, Lesion?"

"Hold on!" said Lesion, with a glitter in his eyes, speak-

ing loudly, as several fellows came along to join Tom Merry.

"Did you say that Hammond is playing?"

"Yess, waitah!"

"Is that the fact, Tom Merry?"

"Haven't you heard Gussy say so?" demanded Tom Merry

cheerfully.

"You're playing that East Ender in the House team?"

"Yes."

"Then you won't play me?" said Lesion lightly. "I

decline to play in the same team as that terrible out-

side!"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed.

"Come out, then," he said loudly. "We don't want

you!"

"Yess, waitah!" said Arthur Augustus, his eyes flashing.

"Cheer up, you snail-worms; and if you speak downheart-

edly, say I've heard Hammond again, I'll knock you down, but

not!"

Lesion walked away, a scowl on his lips.

Harry Hammond had come out of the House in time to

hear what was said. He brought a dark cloud to his face.

"Look you, Tom Merry!" he said. "If you'd rather play

Lesion than me, I'll stand out. I'm quite willing."

"I wouldn't play Lesion now on any terms, not even if

we had to play a man short," said Tom Merry promptly.

"And it won't be so bad as that. I'll find somebody."

Richard Ray of the Fourth was depressed, after some

thought, and hesitated for a moment. He was glad enough

to find himself chosen, as a member of fact. The eleven

being complete, Tom Merry & Co. made their way down to

the lower ground. Figgis and his men were already on

Little Bide, putting a ball about. The School House team,

owing to the series of misfortunes that had befallen them,

were late.

"Hallo! How you are at last!" sang out Figgis. "I

was beginning to think you'd forgotten all about the match!"

"Been making changes in the team—eh?" said Kerr.

"Yess, we've had bad luck," said Tom Merry. "But

we've gained a man in head you, Figgis. We're ready now;

come, we'll be late!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Figgis. "And if you had us,

I'd get the better. Stand or bust!"

He led to the School House to kick off, and the sides lined

up. Fatty Wynn of the Fourth rolled into goal in the New

House side. Fatty Wynn was a goalkeeper of great renown,

and he was in great form today. Figgis & Co. looked

rather nervous at Hammond. They had little to do with

the House, as the fellows called him, as he was not in their

eleven; but they feared a great deal about him, and there

were often stories to see him in the House team. They

did not think that he was likely to prove dangerous, how-

ever.

the same. I reckoned that I'd never get a pal 'ere, only blime what wasted my money—'ang the money! I'd got good jobs in the Bethnal Green Road when I 'ad any money."

"You surely don't think I want your money, dear boy?"

"No, I know you don't," said Hammond. "I wish you did—I'd like to do something for you, arter all you've done for me. But that's jist it. You're the only chap worth a haire's worth to me, and if you was to get disgusted with me, and drop me, I think it would take all the 'rest out of me; and, at the same time, I don't want to 'ang on to you if you don't want me."

"Hammond, dear boy, you are worth a difficult chap to deal with. Don't tell my name about it, and don't worry. I'm your friend as long as you want me."

"That's for life!" said Hammond. "Delight! I won't let no man, only I was looking so heavily miserable, and—"

"Come out for a little walk in the good, dear boy, and I will cheer you up," said Arthur Augustus.

Hammond hurried down the passage. He did not want to be caught listening. His eyes were gleaming with a malicious light. As he heard Hammond's muffled notes, a shudder had rushed into his facile brain—a shudder that would soon repay the Bethnal Green landlord for that knock down blow in the common room.

"My chance at last!" muttered Leeches.

His face was quite bright as he entered Gatty's study with the impetuous. The Fifth Form looked at him curiously, and murmured half-jestingly a "hello!" he asked.

Leeches laughed.

"No! but think I've a way of getting my own back on that East End cat," he said.

And Gatty, of the Fifth, replied quite cordially:

"Good luck!"

CHAPTER 8.

Man Wanted.

TOM MERRY ran his fingers through his curly hair and groaned.

It was Saturday afternoon.

New House and School House were meeting in a House match that afternoon. Tom Merry, as junior football striker of his House, had all the terrible responsibilities of the House match on his shoulders. The rivalry between the two Houses at St. John's was keen, and in nothing so keen as in football. The senior House matches were very lively contests. Kidder, of the School House, always strutting away as one to beat Mervin, of the New House, and winners. But it was even hotter with the juniors—Tom Merry & Co. would have scored mountains to beat Figgins & Co. of the New House, and Figgins & Co. would have attempted the wildest impossibilities in order to score off Tom Merry & Co. of the School House.

And on this particular Saturday afternoon Tom Merry was in despair.

The worst of bad luck had befallen him.

Figgins & Co. were at the top of their form. And the School House junior strikers had gone to rack and ruin.

In the first place, Mervin had hurt his ankle and couldn't play, and Leathley was detained for the afternoon, owing to a suspension inflicted in the Forenoon. Leathley had thought it rather better to draw a comic figure of Mr. Linton, the Master of the House, on the blackboard. The figure was indeed funny, and the Master himself had enjoyed the joke; but his unfortunate jest was that Mr. Linton had enjoyed it so much and enough Leathley in the art, with the result that Master Leathley was detained for the half-holiday, with five hundred lines of Virgil to keep him busy.

And that was not all. Horrie, of the Fourth, couldn't, or wouldn't, play that afternoon. Toward, the famous building, was away. When Toward was off school, nothing else in the wide universe mattered to Horrie. He sneered at the mere suggestion of football.

Fiddling while Rome was burning wasn't in it with playing football while Toward was sick. His friends had made desperate attempts to cheer the row. Blake proposed having the building shot. Dyer suggested having him drowned. Arthur Augustus declared that Toward would get up just as well while Horrie was playing football. Horrie replied only with scornful snorts.

Tom Merry asked him anxiously whether he intended to spend the afternoon sitting beside Toward and holding his hand, or whether he was going to read to him. Whomst, Horrie only sneered more scornfully than ever. He was going to look after Toward, and he wasn't going to play football, and that was the long and the short and the beginning and the end of it.

And even that was not the sum of an unfortunate factor

captain's misfortune. Really bad gone out on his bike with Lumber-Lumber and Buck. When Tom Merry thought of them, and went to look for them to tell them they would be saved, they had gone.

And so the team was in rags and tatters, as Tom Merry said pathetically. Poor old Gatty, of the Sixth, was a good footballer, when he liked, but he was very short one of his chemical experiments in the end street, and he had spoiled his suit, and refused even to answer a provocative note through the lockers.

"None sort of team we shall have to meet Figgins & Co. with!" groaned Tom Merry. "They will walk all over us."

"I mean to play up like a scorpion!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked.

"That will make it all right," said Blake anxiously.

"Remember let Gatty write the New House all on his housecoat!"

"I will, Blake!"

"And so you're making up the team?" asked Kangaroo, otherwise Harry Noble, of the Sixth, the Cornish junior.

Tom Merry stared his last. Clifton Dace in goal, the Cornish junior, was a first-rate goalkeeper. Kangaroo and Smith were at half. Blake and Keworth and Dyer.

Forward, Tom Merry, D'Arcy, and three more of importance.

"What's the matter with me in the front line?" demanded Blake.

"Patience, my son. Somebody's got to play half, and you can do it, and others can't. Got to put you where you're most useful."

"Well, that's all right," said Blake. "So you want three more forwards?"

"Yes."

"Might try Mervin—his's pretty good."

Tom Merry smiled, and wrote down Mervin in the place of one of the interposition marks.

"What about Gatty?"

"He's gone out."

"Lumber goes play, if he chooses," said Blake heartily.

"Because if I like asking him—but I suppose I must," said Tom Merry. "He's not reliable—but I suppose he'll do his best for the House. But that leaves us a most short-hand and I'm stuck."

"The blessed team will be a thing of shreds and patches, anyway," said Mervin. "If I hadn't hurt my face—"

"But you have hurt your silly face," groaned Tom Merry.

"I really wish you'd put it off till tomorrow, if you were bound to get yourself cracked. But these blessed things always come together."

"Yes, well! May I make a suggestion, Tom Merry?"

"No harm," said Tom, his face implying that he did not think that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's suggestion would be a very sensible one.

"Why don't you play my friend Hammond?"

"Yes, I know I would be sorry to lose that," groaned Blake. "Go and tell your friend Hammond, Gatty."

"I wish to do anything of the sort. I was engaged to go last night up to Tom Merry to give my friend Hammond a chance."

"He can't play!" said Tom.

"Yes, well! He plays all right; I've seen him at practice."

"Of course, Gatty is a toppling right of a fellow's form at practice," said Dyer, with heavy sarcasm.

"I repeat that that is no. Dig, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you follow, look a Jewish interest in my friend Hammond, you would have observed that he is a very good footballer."

"He hasn't been seen much of practice," said Tom Merry.

"If he's keen on the game, why does he keep away from it?"

"The school wouldn't see pleased to see him there, dear boy. Hammond is a very sensitive chap, and he feels out of it. It is quite easy for a footballer to hurt a chap's feelings."

"I don't see how he can have played much, in a better's shop in Bethnal Green," said Blake.

"Nothing against him, Gatty, so don't get on your blood high knee. But facts are facts, even if you don't like 'em."

"Hammond has told me that he played splendidly every Saturday afternoon for the Bethnal Green Wanderers, dear boy."

"I wonder what kind of facts they played?" said Mervin, with a snarl.

"Give him a chance, Tom Merry," urged D'Arcy. "Anyway, you've got to share somebody in, and you have only weak substitutes to choose from now."

"But he'll let the side down," said Tom anxiously.

"Wait! I tell you, he's a pretty good player. He's very fast, too, and he kicks like an angel."

"I've never seen an angel kick," said Blake. "How is it done, Gatty?"

shower upon D'Arcy's knees, making through the beautiful tresses. His position, with the shock of cake on the end of it, remained half raised to his mouth.

But Arthur Augustus did not heed the cooking. He stood up gallantly, loyal to his friend, and never turned a hair.

"This is Henry Hammond, my friend Hammond, sir," he said. "Hammond, dash boy, this is Mr. Horton, the coach."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Horton.

The police himself together, and shook hands with Hammond. But Hammond did not say a word. He could not. What he had done he did not know. But he realized that he had put his foot in it in some terrible manner, and he bitterly wished that the floor would open and swallow him up. But the floor did not oblige him in that way, and Hammond had to sit in a state of dumb misery till the jokers took their leave.

"You were an ass to take Hammond there, Gary?" Blake murmured, when they were back at St. Joe's.

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and sneezed it upon Blake with a withering look.

"If you have any doubt to entertain my friend Hammond, Blake, I trust you will not entertain him to me!" he said sadly.

And he walked away with his aristocratic nose high in the air.

CHAPTER 3. Levinson Has An Idea!

CUTTS of the Fifth looked into Levinson's study in the Fourth Form passage.

Levinson's study-mates—Lansley Lansley, Rank, and Mellich—were not; but Levinson was there with a bad headache. He had not got over his mishap in the common room, when he had knocked his head against the wall after receiving the "Redhead Green" letter.

Cutts looked at him curiously.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Headache," growled Levinson. "I've got an awful bump on my head. That filthy outside policeman picked me up and beat against the wall."

Cutts grinned.

"You'd better let young Hammond alone," he said. "He's not stiff. Hammond is rather more than your weight, Levinson."

"More than yours, too," said Levinson, with a sneer.

"What do you mean?" demanded Cutts, frowning.

"Oh, I know how you and Kent and Pyle had him in your study the first day he came here, to get his money off him at once," said Levinson, with a shrug of the shoulders; "and instead of watching him you got lost. You've had your knife stuck in him ever since. You don't like the deal any more than I do. Oh, how my head aches! I'll make him open for \$5, somehow."

"Well, he seems to have made you open," said Cutts.

"You're quite right. I don't like the young cuss, and I could—"

"You could give him a jolly good licking," said Levinson.

"You're in the Fifth."

"And have a crew of blunder jokers prancing round me," growled Cutts. "But we'll see. But I didn't come here to talk about Hammond. I've got two hundred lines from old Ruffell, and I want you to do them."

"Ruffell is an ass," said Levinson snidely.

"Good! I'll write him, as I'm rather short of the now."

"You'd better see, or they won't be done," said Levinson.

Cutts assented. The black sheep of the Fifth had jolly no mouth in the end of the Fourth. He took a half-crown from his pocket, and laid it on the table.

"There you are, you Ruffell!" he said. "Mind you make it exactly like my writing. I thought old Ruffell looked rather suspiciously at the last lot."

"That's all right," said Levinson.

And Cutts continued to sit there when you've done them."

Levinson, gazing to himself, for his head was aching badly, drew a sheet of paper, paper towards him, dipped a pen in the ink, and began to write. What he wrote was not in his own hand, but in a close imitation of Cutts's clear, small writing. Levinson had the dangerous gift of being able to imitate any hand, and he frequently turned a more or less honest penny by writing lines for other fellows, who were too idle to write their impositions themselves, and who would effort to pay him for his trouble. He made quite a small income out of Cutts, of the Fifth, who had plenty of money, and always had too many engagements to have him time for him.

The lines ran swiftly under Levinson's facile pen. And when they were written, it would have puzzled Cutts himself to say that they were not in his hand.

THE GUN LIBRARY—No. 20.

Lansley Lansley, of the Fourth, came into the study while Levinson was so engaged. He glanced at Levinson.

"What's the trouble now?"

"Not much," said Levinson.

Lansley Lansley glanced at the sheet.

"That's Cutts's ink," he said.

"Yes."

"I guess you'll get into trouble with that gift of yours some day," said Lansley Lansley, with a curl of the lip.

"You'll get to signing somebody else's name on a cheque, if you keep up that kind of thing! I'll advise you to check it."

"When I want your advice, I'll ask you for it," said Levinson.

And Lansley Lansley sneered, and said no more.

Levinson finished the lines, and left the study. He had to pass No. 3 on his way to the stairs, and he passed as he heard the sound of voices within. He recognized the voice of Henry Hammond. The bouncer had evidently come back from his visit to the vicarage. But Hammond's voice had not its usually assured tone.

"It's a warty kind of you, Master D'Arcy," Hammond was saying, and his voice sounded husky; "but-but it ain't no secret."

"What's the matter, dash boy?" D'Arcy's voice was very bland. "I usually wish you would not call me Master D'Arcy."

"You know how well that the fellows here are all equal, and my friends call me Arthur, or Gary."

"I ain't fit to be your friend, D'Arcy."

"Was, dash boy?"

"You shouldn't've taken me in the vicarage. You meant it to be kind, and it was kind, but I've only disgraced you."

"Bosh!"

Levinson's eyes glowed. He glanced up and down the passage; there was no one in sight. And he drew nearer to the study door to hear the rest of that interesting conversation—very interesting to the end of the Fourth. He and his group often listening at a door. Scrupulous were not in Levinson's line.

"I don't know rightly what was wrong," Hammond went on dolefully. "But I know as you I put my foot in it. All the better, was ashamed of me."

"Yes."

"Mr. Horton was obliged to see with a new theme—you ain't sorry that?"

"My friend is good enough to go anywhere, dash boy?"

"And I don't know what was wrong, that's the worst of it. Goodness knows, I've tried to learn and do my best."

"Well, as a mistake of fact, dash boy, if you don't mind my mentioning it, it is not a custom to put one's tea into a stomach."

"It makes it cool to drink," said Hammond, in surprise.

"Yes; but-but it isn't done, you know. And fellows don't, as a rule, eat cake with a pocket-knife; it's rather vulgar to eat with a knife at all."

"I won't quarrel with you, said Levinson. "I don't see why, but I'll take your word for it, Master D'Arcy. I wish you'd tell me things."

"Well, I'm telling you now," said D'Arcy good-humoredly.

"You ain't ashamed of me?"

"Certainly not!"

"It wouldn't be anyone's if you was," said Hammond.

"I know I ain't your class. I ain't of the chance to be. But if you stick to me, Master D'Arcy, I feel as 'em I shall be the first to stick it out and do my best. If you was to go back on me, I think I should stick it all up. I couldn't stick it any longer."

"You made I have any back of that, dash boy. I'm not the kind of chap to go back on my friends."

"But I don't want you sticking to me out of charity and kindness, either. I don't want to be a burden on nobody."

"I'm sticking to you out of friendship, dash boy."

"And not only 'cause I pulled your weight under the river? That wasn't nothing, you know."

"It was a very great deal, Hammond; but that isn't the only reason. I think you are the right sort—one of the best."

"You really think so, Master D'Arcy?"

"Yes, without."

"And you're going to stick to me, after I made awful Messers to-day, and disgraced you?"

"Was?"

"I ain't suspicious," said Hammond, "but-but when I first came here, Cutts, of the Fifth, took me up, and I thought it was a kindness tell. But I found that he only wanted to win my money at cards."

"Yes."

"Then Levinson was very friendly, and it turned out that he wanted to borrow money. Mellich and some others was

"Money talks," said Hammond, pulling out his pocket-book. "I'll share before the game, if you will. Two quid."

"Well, I dare say you'll beat me," said Cutts.

"I can't say."

"Prye will hold the stakes," said Cutts, taking out a five-pound note and five coins. "Here you are, Prye."

"Oh yes," said Hammond promptly. "If Arty can 'hold the stakes'."

"What do you mean, you young scoundrel?" demanded Prye angrily.

Hammond looked at him steadily.

"I mean with I say," he replied.

"Do you mean to say you can't trust me to hold the stakes?" the Fifth-Former exclaimed severely.

"I remember how you did me in Cutts's study once," said Hammond. "I'll play Cutts for ten quid if D'Arcy holds the stakes."

Cutts made a sign to his angry companion.

"It's all the same, Prye," he said. "If Arty can hold the stakes, he can be depended on not to stick to them."

"And can't I?" demanded Prye.

"Oh, bother!" said Cutts. "Have you got, D'Arcy. Take ten of it."

"Yes, we'll do it," said Hammond, handing over the money.

And Arthur Augustus received ten pounds each from either party, and placed the money carefully in an inside pocket.

Hammond was quite well aware that the Fifth-Formers would not pay up if they lost, but Cutts, who was certain of winning, had no objection to D'Arcy holding the stakes. In case of a *hale*, he would have professed to place them in Prye's hands, but he did not think there was really any chance. That the Cuttses' money, then, was really *his* money. Then the Cuttses' money, then, was really *his* money. Then the Cuttses' money, then, was really *his* money. Then the Cuttses' money, then, was really *his* money.

Hammond gave a *non-sensical*, and Cutts began to *snore*. He did not expect the *junior* to play again if he lost ten pounds on that game, so he had no object in pretending to play *heavily* and making it a close finish. He played his best, as much *theory* in a single hour.

Arthur Augustus watched that *board* with growing dislike. He felt that he was in the position of a *lathery* *garden* to Hammond, and that he ought to have *left him out* of this.

There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that Hammond would lose his ten pounds, and the stakes would have to be handed over to Gerald Cutts.

But Hammond looked quite cool.

He checked his eye carefully, and assumed the position of the *balls*. Cutts had left him a difficult shot, and he fully expected the Fourth-Formers to *sniff* it, and leave it to him to come again. Then Cutts intended to run out on a single ball.

But Hammond did not *sniff* it.

He made a *canon*, and Prye exchanged a quick glance. Hammond had brought off a *canon* that Cutts, with all his skill, could not have made. And in doing so, he had left the red just over a *padding*.

Hammond grinned.

"Not so *easy*," he remarked.

"But *yes*, that was *wippen*!" said D'Arcy. "Play up, *dash boy*!"

"You must have played a lot, unless that was a *hale*," said Cutts, taking his *bat*.

"I can't say."

"Oh! *Quite* out of hand, I suppose?" sneered Cutts.

"Yes, I suppose I'm a *rather* old *snuff*," said Hammond.

"You do mark for the *green* at the *Three* *Feathers* in the *Bottom* *Green* *River*, you see, and they *order* back one up for a *green*. And I get a lot of *padding* when the *table* *won't* *bring* *me*."

"Oh!" said Cutts, rather *blatantly*.

"Oh!"

The red rolled into the pocket, and the white came off the *padding*, rolled back, and clanked upon *your*—Cutts's *ball*.

"Yes, I *sniff*," said Hammond calmly.

"*Harvey!* *Pike* is, *dash boy*!"

"Don't *cheat*! *Oh* *yes*! out of the *wood*!" said Cutts, beginning to get *decidedly* *sniffy*.

"I'll give you another *hale*," said Hammond. "Check the red up."

Red was spotted, and Hammond played again. Red rolled into one of the *middle* pockets, and while into the *other*.

"*See!* *See!* *See!*!"

Cutts's face was long now. He began to wish that he had

never

seen

Hammond.

"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"

Every Wednesday

One Penny

13

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"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"

Every Wednesday

stand the awful blunder. Why, Hammond gets on all his seven. But to talk about him—

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Mellich.

Harry Hammond, as he came round the corner of the house, felt as if a dagger had been driven to his heart.

He could not help exclaiming that the juniors were wrong.

Their voices were quite audible before he turned the corner, and when he came round, their backs were towards him, and apparently they did not see him.

That they were talking about him and D'Arcy, he knew, of course, at once. And evidently, so it appeared to Hammond, they did not know that they were overheard by the junior they were discussing.

Hammond's face went quite pale, and he stopped dead.

"I've a good mind to speak to Hammond about it," Levinson ran on. "D'Arcy has no right to treat him as he does. If he can't stand the chop, why can't he drop him? But to scold him in the study as he does—"

"I don't think dry-playing the game," said Mellich.

"No, it's just well said!" Of course, Hammond must be a silly creature to think like D'Arcy could possibly share with him, according to make him of him.

"I expect they're right," said Hammond bitterly.

Levinson and Mellich swung round. Both looked surprised. Levinson assumed a wounded and contemptuous expression.

"Listening, eh, you Bethel Green boundary?" he sneered.

"I couldn't slip 'em' was you was wrong," said Hammond.

"You was speaking loud enough for anybody to hear."

"Well, listeners never hear any good of themselves," said Levinson.

"Is it true?" asked Hammond.

"Is what true?"

"Was you was saying—that Master D'Arcy is only pulling my leg, and isn't really pulling with me at all?" said the junior miserably.

Levinson gave a hoarse laugh.

"If you wasn't a born idiot, you'd see it for yourself," he said.

"What do you think a fellow like D'Arcy, a fool's son, can see in a rank outsider and hound like you? Why, he shouldn't every time you stick your thumb in the armpits of your waistcoat!"

"I won't do it no more," said Hammond.

"Not that I want to interfere," said Levinson. "You're out of place in this school, and I've said so all along. But I say it all plainly. I wouldn't pretend to make friends with you."

"You'd 'ave made friends with me once, if I'd 'ave had you money," said Hammond.

"You don't say any a word like Master D'Arcy. Whether he's friendly with me or not, he's better than you—you ain't better than the dirt under 'is feet. You shut up!"

And Hammond walked away, slowly and miserably, into the School House.

Levinson chuckled like a fiend.

"I fancy we've got a spoke into their wheel!" he murmured.

"Looks like it," said the amiable Mellich.

And the two ends of the Fourth felt very well satisfied with themselves.

Harry Hammond went into the School House looking blackly depressed.

All the light had gone out of his face.

Was D'Arcy indeed false, as Levinson had said? If Levinson had said him so, Hammond would have repelled the suggestion with scorn. But he had heard the talk by accident—at all events, he believed so. That Levinson had pleased it all he did not suspect, sharp as he was.

After all, how could a fellow like D'Arcy, fastidious to the

Tag Line: Lament—No, No.

finger, feel anything like friendship for such a rank outsider as Hammond felt himself to be?

He remembered now—his prepossessions sharpened by pain—that D'Arcy had sometimes had a queer look on his face when the Cuckery schoolboy stood in his favorite attitude, with his thumbs in his waistcoat armpits. It had never even occurred to Hammond that there was anything offensive in that.

If such a trick could get on the nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, how could he feel friendly towards the fellow who was full of his more serious faults of taste? It was incredible.

Hammond had feared, more than once, that it was only this that induced D'Arcy to stick to him—because he had pulled Cuckery out of the clasp, and he felt bound to be grateful. That would have been bad enough. But if D'Arcy spoke of him scornfully among his own friends—

The mere thought was like a physical pain.

"Bad Jove! You're looking' worthier downhearted, dash he!" exclaimed a cheery voice.

Hammond started, as D'Arcy himself stopped before him in the hall.

Arthur Augustus was greeting him as cheerily as ever. Was it possible that there was no more to be said about that calm, friendly face? Alas! in the matter of morals, Hammond had only too thoroughly learned the lesson of sweet-and at St. Jim's his experience had not been much better. Cuts, of the Fifth, had taken him up, the first day he came, and Hammond had been immediately grateful for his kindness, until he found that Cuts had only wanted to cheat him at cards. To all outward appearance, Cuts was as much a gentleman as D'Arcy was. If the one had proved false to the mark, why not the other?

The miserable, lowering look on Hammond's face struck the soul of St. Jim's, though he was not particularly observant, as a rule.

"Anything' the matter, dash he?" he asked.

"No!" said Hammond shortly.

"I've been looking' for you. You's wendy in the study?"

"Thanks! I'm going to have tea in my own study."

D'Arcy looked at him sharply then.

"My friends are expectin' you," he said quietly.

"Your friends won't miss a Bethel Green boundary very much," said Hammond bitterly.

"I might put my thoughts into my waistcoat, you know."

"You wasn't suppose me, Hammond," said D'Arcy, after a moment. "I feel that somebody has been tryin' to make trouble."

Hammond was silent.

"Is that it, dash he?"

"No!"

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Something' is the matter," said D'Arcy firmly, "and I insist upon knowin' what it is. I want you to tell me at once, Hammond."

Hammond broke out passionately.

"If you don't like me, Master D'Arcy, well do you say so! I didn't say you was to be friends with me, did I? I wanted to, but I never asked you. I always knew you was too good for me. I knowed I wasn't fit to be your pal."

But—The boy's voice broke, and he could not go on.

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed. Hammond was very near to "blowing," and the swell of St. Jim's had a deep and colored horror of a scene, and there were other fellows in the hall who were glancing towards them already.

"Pray come with me, Hammond, dash he!" said D'Arcy, very quietly, and he drew Hammond along the passage and into one of the deep window recesses.

"Now, dash he, I insist upon knowin' what's the matter. Somebody has been speakin' to you and tryin' to make mischief."

"No, they ain't."

NEXT WEDNESDAY:

THE GHOST HUNTERS!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

PLEASE ORDER EARLY!





As the Visor opened the door, Hammond was sitting with a saucer full of tea in one hand, and his knee, laid
 voice dominated the room. "It's blooming good fun, playing tricks and tom," he was explaining to Mrs. Blotton.
 "Then we must play sherry-spongy too, Ever played sherry-spongy, mum?" (the Chapter 12)

"But something's happened?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"It ain't no good talkin'," said Hammond doggedly. "I ain't good enough for you. I know it. I won't trouble you no more."

"I want you to know what you have heard?"

"I tell you it ain't no good!"

"Was it Lavinia?"

"He didn't say nothing to me," said Hammond hotly. "You don't think I'd listen to a word like that if he ran you down, do you? But I happened to 'ear 'em they was saying."

Lavinia and Mollish. They didn't know I was by. They said—

"You are quite sure they didn't know you could hear them, you young man?" asked Arthur Augustus, more in surprise than in anger.

"Hammond, mum!"

"Well, I don't see how they could 'ave known," he said. "I was mump' round the corner of the 'Ouse, and I 'eard them before I saw them."

"Listen to me, Hammond. Mollish once made awful trouble in the school by tellin' tales to the fellows about our snouts. He made us all quarrel—till we found him out. Lavinia is worse than Mollish. I wuvah think they know you were there, and talked for you to hear them?"

Hammond felt a load taken from his heart.

"I guess that's possible," he said.

"And now tell me when they were wuvah, dear boy."

"They—they was wuvah' that you was only spongy' me—that you make fun of me to your friends," said Hammond, in a choking voice.

Arthur Augustus's eyes gleamed.

"And did you believe it?"

"I—I know as I'm not good enough for you, Master D'Arcy," said Hammond humbly. "I—I was—was struck all of a wup, and—"

"You don't believe it now?"

Hammond hesitated; but he could not doubt the frank, honest face of the avuncle of St. John's.

"No, I don't believe it," he said. "I—I'm sorry, D'Arcy; but—but I can't 'elp knowin' that I ain't fit for you to speak to—"

"Wellish! I'll go and look for Lavinia now, and give him a fustid' thrashing!"

Hammond caught his arm.

"Let him alone, Master D'Arcy; he ain't fit for you to touch. There's no 'ere done—only I was fustid' down in the mouth about it, that's all."

"The wuvah ought to be thrashed!"

"He ain't worth it. Let's go and 'ave tea," said Hammond.

"Very well, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus, yielding the point. "Farewell you're right. But, wuvahsh, if anybody says anything again, you're not to believe it—till you are to come straight to me and tell me about it!"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

"If you tell me Master D'Arcy again, I'll punch your nose."

And Hammond grinned; and they went up to tea in Study No. 6, and the hearty welcome the Cockney schoolboy received drove the last doubt from his mind.

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CHAPTER 11.

The Scheme!

LEWIS LUMLEY came into his study in the Fourth Avenue passage a few days later, and as he did so, he passed his hand over a sheet before him upon the table. Lewis Lumsley had eyes in suddenly for a boy's pump he had forgotten, and Lewis had not expected anyone to enter at that moment. His sudden action caught Lewis's keen eye at once.

"Hello! What's the little game?" he asked.
 "And your own business?" said Lewis merrily.
 He slipped into his pocket the sheet upon which he had been writing.

"Many of your gaily begonia?" asked Lewis Lumsley pleasantly. "Where have you got your new one?"

"I'm making a poem for the 'Weekly,' if you wish to know," smiled Lewis.

Lewis Lumsley laughed.
 "Glad!" he said coolly. "I guess that's too thin. Look here!"

He picked up a sheet of paper, upon which lines were clearly written. It was part of an old inscription written out by Arthur Langston D'Arcy's own hand, and, evidently passed from one owner to another.

"Glad!" he said coolly. "I guess that's too thin. Look here!"

"Suppose I am?" said Lewis merrily. "What business is it of yours? I suppose I can do D'Arcy's paper, for him if I like."

"I didn't know you were on such terms with him; but I suppose he's paying you for it, same as Otto does," said Lewis Lumsley, a little scornfully. "Well, I guess it's one way of making pocket-money."

"My words aren't selling in money like yours," said Lewis merrily. "My father doesn't know how to get up anything comparable on the Stock Exchange, you see!"

"And my paper doesn't, either," said Lewis Lumsley, with a glimmer in his eyes. "And if you want a thick one, Lewis, you've only got to repeat that remark!"

"Can't you send your own business?" What are you saying to me?"

"I guess I don't care a Continental and cent, what you do! I mean in the very money," said Lewis Lumsley. "But I guess you'll get bored out some day with that game of yours of buying papers. I'm surprised at D'Arcy letting you do it for him. But I guess it's his business, and I've no call to interfere. Go and eat cake!"

And Lewis Lumsley picked up his bicycle-pump and entered the study, leaving the door ajar behind him. Lewis drew a deep breath.

"Lucky the leaves didn't see it," he muttered. "It would have been a clean heart-out. Let him think I'm doing an impost, for D'Arcy, the fact!"

And Lewis chuckled.

He drew the paper from his pocket again. It was not an impost, he was writing, as Lewis Lumsley would have seen it if he had seen that paper.

But Lewis was fated to be interrupted that afternoon. He slipped the paper into his pocket again as the study door opened. Pretty Mellich came in, holding his handkerchief to his nose. There was a stain of red on the handkerchief.

Lewis looked at him. Mellich was his pal, certainly; but a famous cynical philosopher has declared that there is always something gratifying in the misfortune of one's friends. That was true enough of fellows like Lewis. He glanced to be looked at the swollen nose held in the stained handkerchief.

"How coming into a wall?" he asked.
 "Oh," grinned Mellich. "No; it was that head hammer!"

"Hammer again! What did he punch you for?"

"He's as friendly with D'Arcy as mine, after all the trouble we took with that little nose the other day," said Mellich.

"I just put a question to him—whether D'Arcy could stand his work with his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, and the best he got. I got his left on my nose. Oh!"

"The Sheffield Green left!" grinned Lewis.

"I think I shall leave him alone," said Mellich deliberately.

"I hate the best, but he's too tough for me!"

"And for you, when it comes to nose-punching," said Lewis. "I've tried that, too, and I don't want any more

of the Sheffield Green left. But there are many ways of killing a rat than choking it with cream!"

Mellich's eyes glowed.

"You've got a way?" he asked.

"I think so. You couldn't hit him harder than by making him account with D'Arcy. I happen to have heard them talking one day, and I know how Hammond feels about that."

"But we've tried that,"

"I'm going to try again, and in a way that D'Arcy won't be able to resist," said Lewis, with a grin.

"And what's the way?"

"It's a gaily matter, you might let it out," said Lewis. "I'm not going to tell you, but if you keep your eyes open, you'll see a rift in the tape before long."

"Good enough," said Mellich. "I don't want to know the particulars, but I'll do anything I can to help you to make that rift in the tape. The rest is your business, to patch a Public School chap's nose. I'll think of it."

Then Mellich uttered an exclamation.

"Hello! What are you doing with D'Arcy's paper, here?"

Lewis caught up the little half sheet, and examined it into the fire.

"That's finished with," he said.

Pretty Mellich looked somewhat alarmed.

"I—I say, Lewis, if it's anything of that sort, you'd better be careful. You remember how you got bored out the time you wrote something in Hamlet's hand, and—"

"No risk this time," said Lewis. "Even if it came out, it's not a matter that would be shown up by the masters. But I'm going to be fully careful, all the same."

"Don't tell me anything about it," said Mellich nervously. "I wish you both, but I don't want to know anything about it."

"I'm not going to tell you anything, whether you want it or not," said Lewis coolly. "You've given me away more than once. Don't of and let me finish!"

And Mellich looked off promptly, still holding his nose. He was impatient for Lewis's return, but he had a great dislike of Lewis. The last-hand whom he was wrong sometimes, and Lewis's schemes had not always been successful.

Lewis changed his quarters, as Mellich left the study, and set to work again, with his little pen.

It was some time before he was finished.

But when he rose from the table at last there was a pile of verminous paper on his face, and he left the study with a sheet of newspaper, carefully written upon, hidden in his pocket.

Back his study-mate, passed him in the passage, and glanced at him. Back noted at once the unusual satisfaction in Lewis's face.

"Hello! what's come, with here you been playing now?" asked Back politely. "How Lewis?"

"Go and eat cake!" replied Lewis, with equal politeness.

And he walked away, whistling.

CHAPTER 12.

A Bitter Blow!

SINCE Mellich and Bates were in Study No. 2 when Harry Hammond brought in. Back of them, Mellich was his eyes, and Bates was his eyes. There had been trouble in Study No. 2 when Hammond was first placed there. Smith and Bates did not like the "Corkery" being "planted" on them, as they expressed it. But their feelings had changed somewhat of late. Hammond's gallant remark of "Corkery" had shown that he was a "good fellow" at all events, and the janitor naturally admired him. His gallant remark was satisfying, too, and his plentiful flow of money made an abundant taste in No. 2. And then D'Arcy's study-friendship made the other fellows think better of Hammond.

If the word of the French made a pal of him, he was good enough for the rest. Upon the whole, Smith and Bates were inclined to tolerate the "buccard," especially as he was such a useful fellow.

But still, they had never said anything of the sort of the question. Bates still had an uncomfortable feeling in his nose when he thought of his first and only encounter with the "Corkery."

And though Hammond could have killed both of them with perfect ease, there was never a trace of "corking" about him, and they had to admit that that was decided.

"Hello!" said Smith merrily, quite amiably. "How are the High-School Hags getting on?"

"Still one prize—cheese and wine!" said Bates.

Hammond laughed. He did not mind being clipped about the High-School Hags, all one prize—cheese and wine. The other Hammond, like a compass, had shown a stream of gold from the High-School Hags. And with all their little jokes about the Hammond Hags, there were quite a number of St. John's

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fellows who would have been very glad to have a similar business in their family possession, producing a similar income.

"I'll tell you what," said Bates. "My Sunday tupper is a bit of mine. It's never been the same since the day *Shirley* left you at it. You might write to your father and tell him your studymate would appreciate a new high-top tupper."

"Good egg!" said Hammond. "I'll do it, if you like."
"Not a chance-and-since, you know," said Bates.
"I'll make the deal send you a special twenty-five shilling Potentially tupper—your special tupper," said Hammond.

"And one for me," said Bates. "I've just had a quantity of seven-and-a-half for a new tupper, and if you get me one from your father we'll have a head with the three half—seven-and-a-half."

"Done!" said Hammond.
"Looking for something?" asked Bates, quite gravely, as the Cuckery glanced round the study.

"Yes, the book D'Arcy lent me. Have you seen it?"
"What was it?"
"Baldwin Cruise."

"Yes, it's on the floor," said Bates. "There, by the end-stone."

"Thanks!"
Hammond picked up "Baldwin Cruise." Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had discovered the previous day that Hammond had never read that great book, and he had promptly lent him a copy to read. Hammond was half through it now, and quite interested in the adventures of the unfortunate Cruise and his Man Friday.

"Don't forget the tupper," said Bates, as Hammond left the study.

"Right-o!" said Hammond.

Just useful thing, having a tupper better in the study-
after all, chuckled Bates, as the door closed on Hammond. "After all, he's not a bad sort."

"Not at all," said Bates. "That's a jolly good idea about the tea."

And the two juniors felt quite kindly towards the rank senior.

Hammond shuffled away with his book under his arm: the way looking very cheerful that afternoon.

The closed the hall came between him and his shoes had rolled away, and down there no thought of distress had entered Harry Hammond's mind.

Just now D'Arcy had gone out, to ride over to the vicarage on his bicycle to see Cousin Ethel. He had asked Hammond to go with him, but Hammond had a tupper of the vicarage since his last visit there, and he turned himself on the ground that he wanted to read "Baldwin Cruise."

At the end of the Fourth-Fourth passage in the winter term there was always a fire in the large, old-fashioned grate, and it was a very comfortable room to sit in with a book and read, while the wind was howling through the broken old tree outside.

Most of the fellows were out of doors, and Hammond had that comfortable corner to himself now. He closed the fire, and threw a look at his watch, and turned himself down on the old sofa, and pulled out the volume of "Baldwin Cruise" which he had taken with him, and settled down for an enjoyable read.

He had left a bookmark at the point he had reached in the book, and he started on from that point. He turned the leaves steadily, reading on till he came to a place where a sheet of paper had been placed in the book. Apparently it was a torn fragment of an old letter, placed there as a bookmark by one of the fellows in study No. 4.

He glanced at it curiously as he did so. It was a half-sheet of newspaper, written upon, apparently a portion of a letter which had been, after all, been given. It was in the delicate handwriting of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Hammond knew the hand of the son of St. John's well enough.

There was nothing surprising in the fact that D'Arcy should have thrown away a half-sheet of an old letter, and that it should have been picked up by Bates as a bookmark. Hammond attached no importance to it at all, till, as he glanced at the half-sheet, he could not help seeing a few words that were written thereon.

"—of course he is a horrid outsider, and the way he speaks grates on my nerves—"

Hammond's expression changed.

He laid the book down, and held that fragment of paper in a trembling hand.

D'Arcy must have written that. And to whom was he referring?

Who was there at St. John's in whom that description could possibly refer, excepting Harry Hammond, of the Fourth Form?

Hammond knew that he ought not to read on. It was only

a fragment of a letter, thrown carelessly away, but it was not intended for his eyes.

That he could not help it.

A sudden cold pain had gone to his heart. At the sight of those words in the handwriting he knew so well, his blackest, bitterest doubts had returned.

He remembered the talk he had heard between Lerrison and Mellich. He had been satisfied at the time that they had planned for him to overthrow them. But that was his mistake in that, after all?

Was it true, after all, that D'Arcy was only leading him, making fun of the rank outsider and braggart who was enough to think that the son of Lord Eastwood could possibly be his friend?

That had turned out like that. Why not D'Arcy?

Hammond read all that was written upon the paper. It began and ended abruptly, as if continued from an earlier sheet, and finished upon another that was lacking.

"—of course he is a horrid outsider, and the way he speaks grates on my nerves. But after the way he pulled you out of the river I feel bound to take notice of him. He has no friends at St. John's, so he is not the kind of fellow anybody wants to speak to, and I feel that I must stick to him, though how I shall be able to stand him much longer I really don't know. He acted in a horribly disgusting way at the carriage the other day, drinking tea out of his master's cup."

There it ended.

That was all. But it was enough—more than enough.

The letter seemed to be written in fire, so dreadfully distinct did they stand out to the dismayed eyes of the unfortunate junior.

There were tears in Hammond's eyes, bitter, hot, swelling tears.

He understood it all.

It was, after all, only because he felt that he was bound to be grateful to the fellow who had saved his cousin's life that D'Arcy was friendly to the "Baldwin Cruise" braggart. That was like George to sacrifice himself on the altar of gratitude. And all the time that he paid, with Hammond his faithful services were repaid by the outsider's errors in speech and nonsense. How could it be otherwise?

And his position was growing worse. The wretched Cuckery was a bookish snob, and he did not know how he could stand in any longer.

So that was what he had been writing to Cousin Ethel about Hammond!

The letter had not been sent, after all. That was evident, for here was a fragment of it, apparently thrown away, and carelessly picked up to serve as a bookmark.

D'Arcy, of course, had not known that one of his study-mates had been using such a bookmark when he thoughtlessly laid the volume down.

Or who it resembled. For Hammond's mind was working with bitter and miserable confusion now—so that he could not D'Arcy himself had put that fragment of letter there, and deliberately let him know the volume so that he should find it, as a means of getting rid of him without a word of explanation!

If he wanted to be rid of the Cuckery a feeling of common decency would prevent him from dropping him openly, after taking him up, but by that means he could make the pretence they understood how matters stood, and make him drop the friendship of his own accord.

That was probably it. But whether D'Arcy had placed the fragment there on purpose, or whether it had come there by chance it amounted to the same thing.

D'Arcy did not want him or his friendship.

He did not like to say so, but there it was. He wanted to be rid of the Cuckery altogether who humiliated and disgusted him. It was time that Hammond understood how matters were, and let him alone.

The reference to the move at the vicarage cut Hammond like a knife. Yes, he had acted badly there—like the outsider he was, as he reflected bitterly. And that reference made it impossible for him to suspect that there was any trick in it, even if the thought of it had crossed his mind, which it had not. For only the fellows who had gone to the vicarage knew how bad Hammond had acted. Lerrison, for instance, could not be supposed to know anything about it.

Hammond sat with the fragment of paper in his hand, his eyes dimmed with bitter tears as he gazed at it.

It was the finish.

He felt inclined to go to D'Arcy—to approach him—to ask him why he could not have spoken out plainly, instead of deceiving him, and concealing his designs under an appearance of politeness and cordiality. But what was the use? After knowing that talk of Lerrison and Mellich, he had written to D'Arcy, and the swell of the Fourth had smoothed matters down. Besides, he was not going to ask Hammond: he had a kind heart, and he did not want to hurt Hammond's

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Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, his head very erect.

Hammond looked after him dubiously. He was glad that he had broken it off, that he had said what was in his mind. At all events there would be no further discussion, no more hypocrisy, no more groans. A lame friendship was no good to him. He was glad to have done with it. And yet, as Arthur Augustus walked away, without a glance back, the Cockney schooling was left with a dizzy sense of direction.

CHAPTER 14.

Disenfranchised.

TOM MERRY opened his eyes wide. It was morning, and the St. Joe's fellows were going into the Form-room.

The Shell and the Fourth came along the passage in a crowd, to separate into their respective rooms, and the Fourth Three stopped for a few moments to chat to Blake & Co. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wandered down the passage, as if dazed, as Harry Hammond came from the opposite direction. They did not speak.

Neither did they look at one another. Arthur Augustus's eyes took on a stony, unseeing stare, and Hammond, long accustomed to concealing his feelings, averted his face and walked into the Fourth Form-room.

That the two fellows, who had been such chums, were no longer on speaking terms was plain to all who saw, and a good many fellows saw.

Little tiffs and disputes between friendly fellows were not uncommon, of course, and naturally attracted very little attention, as a rule. But the friendship between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Cockney had existed on much warmer, and so many fellows had speculated as to how long it would last, that their breaking off was a matter of general concern.

Quite a number of fellows had resented D'Arcy's friendship with the Cockney, regarding it as a sort of slight to themselves. As Cooke of the Shell had remarked, D'Arcy had hardly a civil word for him, and he had endless chances to waste on a Bellied Green hound.

Tom Merry was sorry to see what he saw, but some of the juniors grinned.

"Seems to be a rift in the giddy lot," Cooke remarked, with a chuckle.

"Gussy's come to his senses at last, and finds that he can't stand him," I suppose," said Melton.

"Not speaking to the lower—eh?" Levinson asked.

D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass, and regarded Levinson with a frown.

"Did you address me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did!" growled Levinson.

"Then pray do not do so again."

And Arthur Augustus turned his back on the rest of the Fourth.

Gave of the Shell had no better luck with Hammond when he addressed his curious inquiries in that direction.

"I notice you don't speak to Gussy now, Hammond," he remarked, following the Cockney into the Form-room.

"Do you?" said Hammond.

"Yes. Have you quarrelled?"

"Find out."

"Well, you couldn't expect a chap like Gussy to stand you," Guss remarked.

"I suppose I couldn't," said Hammond. "But it's no business of yours, Guss, that I can see."

"Are they all as unmeasured as you are in Bellied Green?" said Guss, with a sneer. "D'Arcy's dropped you like a hot potato, and wrote you right! Not that it's a decent thing for him to do, after making such a fuss of you."

Hammond's eyes gleamed.

"Don't say a word about Master D'Arcy to me, Guss, or you'll get a wise answer to the end!" he said severely.

"In gods, what a flow of language!" said Guss, and he retreated into the passage.

Tom Merry was really concerned about the matter. He had known Hammond, and he had been glad to see D'Arcy championing the Cockney in his chivalrous way. He knew how much it meant for Hammond, too, and he could hardly think that the Cockney had been the one to break off; though, on the other hand, it was very unlikely that D'Arcy had deserted a chum. It was most likely the outcome of some misunderstanding. Tom considered, and he resolved to put in a word to get matters right if he could. So he tapped the wall of St. Joe's on the chimney and tickled him.

"What's wrong?" he demanded.

"Nothing."

"Rats!" said Tom.

"Really, Tom Merry—"

"You've quarrelled with Hammond?"

"We are on such an 'expensive' terms," said Arthur Augustus briefly. "They don't establish in the match, do they?"

"That's just what I'm going to do, though," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "It's rough on Hammond, dropping him like this, and it really isn't like you, Gussy."

"I have not dropped him."

"You don't mean to say that he has dropped you?" demanded Tom, in astonishment.

"I don't mean to say anything."

"Now, don't prevent the high horse, Gussy!" said Tom Merry impatiently. "Hammond is looking awfully down in the mouth. When have you done it, he?"

"Hammond has looked me, if you want to know all about it."

"Oh, come!" said Tom incredulously. "Draw it mild, you know!"

"He has accused me of speaking 'antagonistically.'"

"My hat!"

"For that reason, it is impossible for me to regard him as a friend. I was greatly tempted to give him a healthy thrashing," but I refrained. But it is quite impossible to speak to him again. Besides, he doesn't want to."

"Did he say so?"

"Oh," said Tom Merry, and he gave it up. If matters were in that state, there did not seem to be any use in his professing his good offices. The matter was beyond him. Probably the two had found that they could not pull together—and, indeed, they were very ill-matched, the fastidious Arthur Augustus and the rough and ready Cockney.

"But I say, what will Cousin Ethel think?" Tom added, after a pause.

"Cousin Ethel," repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes, I suppose you haven't forgotten that Cousin Ethel is coming over to tea to-day?" demanded the Shell fellow.

"I suppose you won't ask Hammond, under the circumstances?"

"Of course I won't!"

"Ethel will ask after him."

Arthur Augustus looked worried.

"Yes, I suppose so," he answered. "It's wretched worse. Ethel is very grateful to the household for putting her out of the window, and she will be distressed to know that we are so unkind friends. But I can't help it. It is utterly impossible for me to have any more to do with him. I am sorry, but there it is, you know."

And Arthur Augustus went into the Form-room.

He sat beside Hammond in class, and it had been his intention to give the Cockney little bits during lessons. Mr. Lathams, the master of the Fourth, had sometimes come down on them for talking in class. But there was no talking between them on this particular morning. They seemed to be quite unaware of one another's existence.

Arthur Augustus maintained an aristocratic calm, but Hammond was visibly depressed.

He was not so adept at controlling his feelings. His manner, in fact, betrayed the reproach that stung the roots of Vere de Vere. He was utterly miserable, and he could not make a secret of it, even though he noted the mischievous look it elicited in Levinson and Melton and a few others.

Levinson and Melton were distinctly amused. The cheery Cockney had lost his only chum, and was put in his place at last. Fellows who had been civil to him because he was Gussy's friend would not take much trouble about him now. And if he continued to look as he looked at present, his welcome face would become a standing joke in the House. Levinson, as he sat in his place, amused himself with drawing a distorted face, with exaggerated lines, rolling down the cheeks, upon a page of his exercise book. The fellows who saw it grinned and chuckled. Levinson was clever at drawing, as at nearly everything else, and he let out Hammond's distress wonderfully, but with an exaggeration that made it comic.

The chuckles of the fellows near Levinson drew Mr. Lathams' attention at last, and he cast a severe look in Levinson's direction.

"Levinson, you are talking!" he said severely.

"Oh, no, sir," said Levinson. "I haven't uttered a word."

"Then what is the cause of all that unseemly movement in the Form-room?" Mr. Lathams demanded severely.

He came over towards Levinson.

"Show me your book!" he said. "You have been writing something."

He took the book, and found the absurd picture of Hammond. He gazed at it in great astonishment.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed. "This is a very clever likeness. You would be a credit to your class, Levinson, if you were not so incomparably idle and mischievous."

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY.

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!"

"Thank you sir!" said Levison demurely.

"You have your gifts to hand, Levison. This is a recognition of one of your *Four-Farmers*."

"Oh, no, sir. Only a *librarian*."

"You have despised Hammond crying."

"Yes, sir. His father goes to thinking, you know."

"And Levison replies: 'It's quite a job to see Four-Farmers!'"

That's why I've drawn him like that out of these kindnesses, sir, as a libel."

Hammond turned a flaming face towards Levison.

"It's a lie!" he blurted out.

"Hammond!" said Mr. Latham severely.

"It's a dirty lie!" shouted Hammond, quite forgetting where he was. "I ain't never blundered, and I wouldn't go far to do it. It's a lie!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake. "Now for the *Four-Farmers*!"

"Hammond, that is not language to use in the presence of your *Four-Farmers*," said Mr. Latham sternly. "You must control yourself!"

"Oh, I ain't got no manners," said Hammond bitterly.

"You only a *Four-Farmers* boy, sir. I'm a *Four-Farmers* boy. But I don't tell lies like the young gentlemen 'ere, that's one thing!"

"I shall punish you if you say another word, Hammond!"

"I don't care. After what I've 'ad, a little more don't matter," said Hammond. "I don't care if you can say so."

Mr. Latham looked at him sternly. He was greatly inclined to raise the boy, taking him at his word. But Mr. Latham was a kind-hearted gentleman, and he could see the lines of pain and distress deeply grooved in the lad's face, and his heart melted.

"I don't want you, Hammond," he said. "You will take a hundred lines, and please do not say any more. The *Four-Farmers* is no place for such outbursts. As for you, Levison, you will be detained two hours after lessons for making this outburst in class. You should be ashamed of yourself."

"I'm sure I meant it kindly, sir," said Levison.

"I cannot quite believe that, Levison. Take it and choose it like the five at one."

"Very well, sir."

The fellows were continually looking at Hammond during the remainder of morning lessons. His eyes were burning, and his heart was heavy. His outburst had been in bad form, he knew, but he could not help it. He liked and respected Mr. Latham, and yet he had spoken disrespectfully to him. Nothing seemed to go right now with the unfortunate Coker.

When lessons were over, and the *Four-Farmers* streamed out, there was no class to join the Coker in the passage. Arthur Argus walked away with a stout face, and Hammond, with a nervous, painful glance after him. Then he walked away by himself.

CHAPTER 12. Cousin Ethel Chips In.

"COMING out for a run, kid?" asked Levison-Lendy kindly, when the *Four-Farmers* came out which lesson he did they were over.

Hammond shook his head. He understood that Levison-Lendy meant to be kind; but he did not want kindness just then. "He did not want anything."

"I got him to do," he said softly.

Levison-Lendy laughed cheerily.

"That's all right—go Levison to do 'em," he said.

"Levison will do them for a couple of bob a hundred—he does them for Coker and his fellows."

Hammond shook his head and walked away. He went to his study—he wanted to be alone.

He was utterly wretched, and he was glad that Smith senior and Blake had gone out for a spin on their cycles, and left him the study to himself.

He began doing his lines wearily enough.

Levison-Lendy looked into Study No. 5, where preparations for tea were going on, on a rather unusual scale. Cousin Ethel was coming to tea, and had a dozen juncos were busy in making the study look nice and tidy. Tom Merry had brought several bunches of flowers in, and they looked quite artistic, stuck in jam-jars on the mantelpiece and the shelf.

Levison had kindly raised several stories for cockspawes, and Mamma was making her guests busy at all sorts. Blake was now making his guests busy as if it were not a mistake for all kinds of reason, and he was telling to converse certain tell-tale signs from the tablecloth. Arthur Argus was superintending the arrangements through his fingers, and he was not looking so happy as was usual when Cousin Ethel was coming.

"Pretty busy—oh!" said Levison-Lendy.

The *Four-Farmers*—No. 20.

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"Yes. You can lead a horse if you like, dear boy."

"I guess I'm going out. I've tried to take Hammond out, but he's got the blues. What have you been doing to him, Gertie, you speak?"

"Well, Levison—"

"He doesn't like my company," groined Levison-Lendy.

"I've done my best. But I don't like to see him down in the mouth like that. He ain't a bad sort."

"If you fellows can finish this, I'll get my tea done," said Arthur Argus. "I've got to hand them to Mr. Latham before tea."

"More lines?" said Levison-Lendy. "You should bring your papers to my study. I've just advised Hammond to, but he won't."

"If you'd like to do them, dear boy—"

"Oh, I wouldn't," said Levison-Lendy promptly. "Levison will. He does them as you look a hundred—but you know that as well as I do, so he does yours."

"I've looked at him."

"A discovery of that wretched trick of Levison's, and I should certainly not let him do my lines," he said. "It is all every well before a day with his lines out of friendship, but to imitate another fellow's hand as a practice in writing!"

"Well, I like that from you," said Levison-Lendy. "Only yesterday Levison was doing an impression for you."

"Yes."

"Look here," said Levison-Lendy, a little testily. "Don't gossip now. I'm not going to give you away, you see?"

"I repeat that Levison has not done any lines for me, and I should certainly prefer to allow him to do so," said D'Arcy.

"Gossip!"

"You speak wretchedly!"

"Here, no sign now," said Blake, intervening, as Arthur Argus made a dash towards Levison-Lendy. "You don't want a black eye to show to Cousin Ethel."

"I prefer to allow Levison to not double upon my word, Blake."

"Yes, shut up, Levison, old man!" roared Tom Merry. "If you want to be useful, lend a hand getting this blessed ink off the tablecloth!"

"Well, what is Gertie doing plain here for?" said Levison-Lendy. "I tell you, I've Levison something his handwriting yesterday, and he said it was for an impression, he was doing for Gertie."

"It was a wretched one," said Arthur Argus indignantly. "And if Levison was practicing my handwriting, it was for some wretched trick!"

Levison-Lendy whistled.

"Oh, I never thought of that!" he roared. "I didn't see why he should do, as there didn't seem any reason for it. Sorry!"

"It's all right, dear boy," said D'Arcy, mollified at once.

"An apology from one gentleman to another is enough. I'll speak to that wretched one again, though—I won't have him making my hand. I remember a wretched trick he played on Levison like that."

"You can let Levison alone now," said Blake. "We've got to get ready for Cousin Ethel. Get your blessed lines done, and write it!"

"Yes, dear boy!"

Arthur Argus had his imposition finished, and taken in to Mr. Latham, in time to go down to the gates and meet Cousin Ethel when she walked over from the vicarage. Miss Cleveland was looking very sweet and graceful as she came up the road. Arthur Argus raised his silk hat in his impulsive manner.

"Good-bye, dear boy," he said. "Come right in!"

And Arthur Argus raised his fair countenance above the tablecloth under the previous eyes of a great many fellows.

"Where is your friend Hammond?" asked Cousin Ethel.

"You are usually inconsiderate."

D'Arcy flushed unaccountably.

He had expected the question, but he hardly knew how to answer it.

"Ah—oh!" he said.

Ethel looked at him.

"You see—"

"You see—"

"I want you did not want to see Hammond, Ethel."

"Of course, I want to see him," said Ethel, at once. "You don't think I have forgotten that he saved my life, do you?"

"Yes—I mean so—but when?—the last is—"

"You have not been speaking with Hammond recently, Arthur," said Ethel severely. "You quarrelled with Figgins once, I remember, over nothing. Are you growing to be a quarrelsome boy?"

"Oh, we'll, Ethel—"

"It isn't nice of you, Arthur, when Hammond sent my life," said Ethel.

"But-but I couldn't help it, Ethel."

"You lost your temper? Well, then, go to Hammond and tell him you are sorry, and bring him to see in the study," said Ethel brightly. "You must be careful how you treat Hammond, Arthur. He isn't like the other boys, and he is very sensitive."

"But-but I haven't quarrelled with him, Ethel, dear girl. He's quarrelled with me," Arthur Augustus explained unconvincingly. "He—he called me names, you know—and—undoubtedly my word, you know, and—and I could not stand that, could I?"

Ethel looked very grave.

"But I'm sure it must be all a mistake."

"Frequently so—but he called me a hah, Ethel."

"Oh, Arthur?"

"He did, really, Ethel."

"But remember how he has been brought up," said Ethel. "Perhaps he did not really understand what he was saying. Arthur, it may make all the difference in the world to Hammond if you speak with him."

"You're very sorry, but what then?"

"You very someone has been making mischief, Arthur, let us go to Hammond and ask him. He will tell me."

"Oh, Ethel, what an idea, you know?"

"What? you, Arthur?"

"I'll do anything you like, of course," said D'Arcy submissively. "But, really, as we are not on speaking terms, I don't see how I can go to his study."

"But I am on speaking terms with him, and I ran, go; and you can come with me, as I could not go alone," said Ethel firmly.

"You? I never thought of that!"

And, instead of going into study No. 5, the cousins stopped at the door of No. 5, and Cousin Ethel knocked gently.

"Come in."

Arthur Augustus opened the door. Hammond was there alone, and he rose from his seat at the table as they came in. His face was pale, and there was a line in his forehead, and his eyes shone with unexpected gloom.

"What do you want?" he enquired at sight of Arthur Augustus; and then, as Ethel appeared, he exclaimed, "Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Cleveland. I didn't see you."

Ethel held out her hand, and Hammond took it awkwardly.

"I have come here to speak to you," said Ethel.

"I'm sure it's a very kind of you, Miss," said Hammond, awkwardly and unconvincingly.

"I want to know why you and Arthur are on bad terms, and to set it right," said Ethel winningly. "I know it is all a mistake, and I am going to clear it up. You won't mind telling me about it, will you?"

"I'd do anything for you, Miss Ethel," said Hammond, with deep feeling. "But I don't go to say anything again D'Arcy. I don't want to be better to me nor I deserve it."

"If you have anything against me, Hammond, I request that you will state it to my cousin," said D'Arcy, in his stolid manner.

"I ain't got nothing to say."

"Come!" urged Ethel. "There is something. What is it?"

"Master D'Arcy can tell you," said Hammond bitterly. "And you know well enough, Miss Cleveland, if you think of what he's wrote to you."

"Written to me?" enquired Ethel, in astonishment.

"Yes, I suppose he wrote it in another letter, after checking away the first one," said Hammond.

"Arthur has written nothing to me about you," said Ethel.

"I suppose he thought better of it, then," said Hammond.

"I'm sure that's why he checked the letter away."

"What letter?"

"Master D'Arcy knows."

"What letter was it, Arthur?"

"D'Arcy asked him."

"Hammond is tickle in within, dear girl. I have never referred to him at all in any letter that I know of, whether printed or not printed."

"Hammond's your friend."

"You say you stand there and say that—in Miss Cleveland, too?" he enquired, in a fierce burst of indignation. "I've seen the letter!"

"If you can produce any letter, Hammond, in which I have referred to you—in all events, in a disrespectful manner—I will admit that I am a rascal and a wretch. Otherwise, I shall feel bound to give you a healthy thrashing for making a liar's statement."

"There cannot be such a letter!" exclaimed Ethel, beginning to get a little angry herself. "It is very wrong of you, Hammond, to say such a thing! I suppose I was mistaken in you, after all."

"You are, dear girl."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Hammond fiercely. "Master D'Arcy says so. I'm sure. I'll show his own handwriting, too! Look at that!"

He dropped the crumpled letter from his pocket, and threw it on the table.

Arthur Augustus picked it up quietly, and examined it out. Cousin Ethel looked at it, and gave a little cry.

"It is your writing, Arthur?"

"It is my writing," he admitted.

"You admit you wrote it?" cried Hammond.

"I never wrote that!" D'Arcy said.

CHAPTER 16.

All Severe!

HAMMOND burst into a wonderful laugh.

"It's your writing, but you never wrote it!" he exclaimed. "Go on! Fill it on! I'll show you'll see next to I wrote it—in your hand!"

"No, dear boy, I shall not say that you wrote it," said D'Arcy gently. "I have a very strong suspicion you wrote it, however."

"I can contradict all the wrong things you have said, Hammond, as I can contradict how that certain letter must have been sent, as you believed that I wrote it."

"But you did, you did!" shouted Hammond. "I suppose there isn't a larger in this 'ere school, as well as then and speakers and newspapers, is there?"

"Where did you get this letter, Hammond?"

"It was in the book you lent me—used as a bookmark, I suppose."

"There was no bookmark in the book when I lent it to you, Hammond. I got it out of a box, where it had been for weeks. It hadn't been touched since you came to St. Joe's. The last time that book was used, you hadn't come to the school, in a lot of a letter's value, so you could not have been used as a bookmark."

"But—but—" stammered Hammond, bewildered.

"I presume you left the book in your study when you were not working?"

"Of course I did."

"And anybody could have got at it who wanted to?"

"I'm sure."

"Yes, that's it. There is a wretch who has tried to make trouble between us before, Hammond, dear boy."

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and it happens that he has the gift of 'insolence' any fellow's handwriting. He got Bessie into awful trouble now by insolence his hand, and was nearly rebuked for it. And it happens that Loomley-Loomley now has penmanship in his study, pretence his handwriting. Loomley-Loomley mentioned it to me.

"Oh," said Hammond, "Loomley," asked Ethel.
"Yes, Loomley."
Ethel was silent.

"The wicked, wicked boy! He must have written this, and placed it in the book for Hammond to find there!"

"Yes; he must have been overwriting to know what he had written there, I suppose."

"Oh, certainly," said Hammond. "Or was I to guess? I'd never have dreamed that there was such a chap in this 'old school.' Or could I know?"

"Of course you couldn't, dear boy, and for that reason I forgive you. I understand now why Loomley was looking at my writing pretence. If you could doubt my answers," said Loomley, with great dignity, "you can ask Loomley-Loomley to tell him."

"I-I don't doubt you, Master D'Arcy," stammered Hammond. "Oh, the matter! I-I never guessed-I couldn't guess."

"But it is all cleared up now," said Ethel, with a happy smile. "I knew that there was some mistake. Arthur, you must forgive Hammond for his surprise now; he had good reason for this. He could not possibly know about Loomley's weakness."

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"I forgive him," he said graciously. "However, I must ask for an apology for his written expressions used towards me."

Hammond's eyes were wet.

"I'll apologise," he said. "I'll ask your pardon on my knees if you like, D'Arcy. I ought to have known that you wouldn't do a thing like that; only—only there it was in your own hand, and you see—"

Hammond's voice broke.

"It's all right, dear boy," said D'Arcy, holding out his hand frankly. "An apology is quite sufficient from my gentlemanly standpoint. Give me your fist, and we'll say no more about 'unacceptable' to Loomley."

Hammond grasped his hand with a grip that made Arthur Augustus wince.

"I'm sorry," he murmured. "You can kick me if you like, Master D'Arcy."

"Wait! I'm glad to kick somebody else," said D'Arcy. "It's all right now. I'm sorry I was weak with you, Hammond, but you really made me quite sorry, you know. Ethel, dear girl, be's ready in No. 4."

They left the study together, and D'Arcy opened the door of No. 4. There was a chorus of welcome for Ethel from Tom, Harry & Co.

"Paw excuse me a few minutes," said Arthur Augustus.

"I've got to speak to a chap. Come on, Hammond."

Ethel asked no questions.

While Hammond and his counselled them were absent, Ethel explained to the Co. how matters had gone; and Patsy—who was there, of course—that it was just like Cousin Ethel, and all the other fellows agreed.

It was ten minutes later when D'Arcy came into the study with Hammond.

There was a cut on his lip, and a slight swelling upon his forehead now, and one of his noble ears was perceptibly discoloured. Also, his knuckles seemed to be swollen out from recent use.

The Co. asked no explanation, and Cousin Ethel appeared not to notice anything. But Hammond confided to the fellows in turn, in deep whispers, that if they wanted to see a fellow who was simply knocked into a cocked hat, they need only stop along the passage and glance into Loomley's study.

Once past the end of the Fourth had discovered that the head of Loomley's study, and then going off again; and he had made the additional discovery that the way of the Loomley's study is back with the further discovery that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's knuckles were very hard.

In Loomley's study the end of the Fourth was groaning over the punishment of his sin, convinced at last that his peculiar gifts were far from being a blessing.

But in study No. 4 there was a joyous party.

Baldie had to carry a glowing cross together in that famous apartment, and the happy face of all was that of the Goshawk who'd been carrying the cross.

THE END.

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THE CORINTHIAN

(Continued Chapter.)

By BRIAN KINGSTON.

There were three among the phlegma crowd who preceded the meeting of trouble into the bar, when renewed, follow the same line as the rounds slowly fought. Something was wrong, and quiet stories of previous incidents in Billy Power's career loudly exchanged.

"Mr. Jackson, will you do me a favour?" cried Sir Patrick Breen, leaving Vancour for a moment, and entering the ring, which was being taken down. "There's something wrong with my man. I cannot say what, I am entirely ignorant, but this gentleman is fighting as though he wished to lose. To ensure he does not run away between here and Harry Common, will you take him in your own springs? If you will do this for me, there will be assurance I am in no way implicated."

"No one would suppose it, Sir Patrick," Jackson replied. "But you have raised the opinion of other gentlemen, and it is mine also. With pleasure will I take Power with me."

And this he did, thus preventing Power from obtaining a much desired communication with the Fourth Brother, whom he believed quite capable of inspiring to put him the balance of the evening's work.

Not did Sir Patrick accompany Breen in the drive to Harry Common. He went in a barrow, with the referee, Sir John Breen, and D'Arcy Vancour. The conduct of his man had aroused his suspicion; he remembered Power's curious question outside the Woodman, and he frankly declared it as his opinion that Power had no intention of fighting fairly.

"So much do I feel this to be correct," he said warmly. "That I am willing to agree now to pay Mr. Breen the amount of my wages. If, gentlemen, any disapproving reference is at work, this proposal should satisfy you, as I intend, that I have no knowledge of it."

They hastened to among him of their entire confidence, but Mr. Curran insisted the fight should be continued. And Mr. Breen could only reply to the referee, "as he said." His man had asked it. Between the astounding discovery of his own, and the commencement of the interrupted fight, the Fourth had learned much to D'Arcy Vancour, and all that the deadly Corinthian had had to tell him concerning his, gave him food for thought. For once Vancour had broken through his rule to limit his interest wholly to his own affairs; he had withheld nothing. From the reason for his fine entry into the prize-ring to the subtle motive actuating his determination to defeat Billy Power, Sir Patrick knew all, and beneath his calm, indifferent exterior, the better had a heart torn with emotion.

But expelling the remorse felt for his own selfish conduct, was the pride that he felt for his. There was a son of whom he was justly proud.

Many a startling excitement had the prize-ring afforded, but never anything approaching that which marked the commencement of the fight between Ned Hurley and Power.

Before again interruption, old Bill Gibbons re-entered the ring, and again the two contestants faced each other at the scratch. And quickly it was made evident to the crowd only too willing now to be engaged, that Billy Power meant playing the game that had previously disgusted and annoyed them. To the nearest point it was plain that he had no intention of fighting to win.

Amused, the spectators as Sir Patrick Breen approached the referee, and perhaps concluded the man whom he had backed in his second game. And Mr. Curran announced that in those circumstances he could no longer retain his post.

In the midst of sudden anger and confusion, the time-keeper announced the termination of the half-minute's rest, and again the fighters approached the scratch. And from a light blow, Power went down almost levels of exhaustion.

Picked up by his furious opponent, he pretended to collapse, and failed to answer the call of "Time."

Ten minutes later he was on his feet, grinning in the face of those who were lazily expected to break into the ring. The yell of "Come! First! Glad to see that!" With scathing reference, he admitted the referee was right.

"You're Ned Hurley's father," he shouted, pointing at Sir Patrick, "and I have been paid so that his son absolutely has."

(To be concluded next Wednesday.)

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NOTE!

The author has, for obvious reasons, to conceal his real identity under the pen-name of Agent "No. 55." Concerning his position, I am allowed to say no more than this: that if his real name were revealed it would cause something like consternation in Diplomatic and Secret Service circles.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

A Secret in the German War Office.

"YOU are not satisfied, Herr von Markow?" The speaker looked across at his companion with an expression almost challenging in his blue eyes. He was a man seeming middle age, fresh-coloured, with several scars, signs of his student days, marking the smooth surface of his plump, good-humoured, and somewhat rascally-looking face. "Markow" would have been a good word to describe his general appearance, and, no doubt, it would have pleased him.

Actually, he was chief of the German Secret Intelligence Department, and the extent of his knowledge of what they believed to be their own private secrets, naval and military, would have considerably astonished the governments and rulers of other European nations. He held the rank of general, and his name was Carl von Zepher.

His companion in the plush-furnished room—the private chamber of the German Minister of War—was no stranger to the question. Slender built, elderly, with a massive head and lined, hair-curling face, he sat staring absently at the vast litter of papers, documents, among which was a large-scale military map of England, scattered about the table at which he sat.

The question was repeated, and Herr von Markow, German War Minister, looked up slowly, staring at Zepher from under his bushy eyebrows.

"The scheme is most excellent," he said slowly. "The Kaiser himself has most heartily approved," he added, after a short pause, and a pensive expression came into the haggard features of his companion.

The latter sat up, smiling grimly, putting his lately fair moustache with a large white band.

"There is in it of the men I have suggested to carry it into operation of whom you do not approve?" he asked anxiously.

"I am not certain. You know him, Herr Zepher, better than I do," the War Minister replied.

The chief of the Secret Intelligence Department promptly replied:

"I know him perfectly; he is my last man. The only man to whom I would entrust an execution of as great importance. Consider his record, Herr Kriegsmann. It is one of the greatest names. He is a man who obtained in the place of England's latest paper-Dreadnought. Why, to Krieg it is that we owe the revelation of those last tremendous elements of our enemy across the North Sea, which are for our Fatherland's foundation and defeat. He himself even suggested the outline of this, to which our Kaiser has agreed, whereby the English—"

"It is of the danger I think," interrupted Von Markow.

This time Zepher laughed aloud, but softly.

"Danger? Oh, Herr Minister, Krieg is one who laughs at danger. He danger for long years he has lived. But his brain is cool, his eyes—"

Again the War Minister interrupted sharply.

"It is not that Krieg's danger of which I thought," he said, frowning. "But of danger to Germany. If this man fails, if our plans be discovered, if it become known to England what is the work this man has to do, what of our country, then? What will be said? What of the honour of our country, of the Kaiser himself?"

"But see," and Zepher, with a superior smile, leaned forward, and laid a plump hand on the minister's arm.

"But see, Herr von Markow. Krieg does not fail. To him is failure unknown. But if, in spite of all, an accident—may not even occur—Germany is safe. Our good Krieg, seeing other things, is a foolard."

"Better Gott!" And the minister was so astonished that he jumped from the chair. "And yet—"

Zepher smiled. Very deliberately he actually wished in all the German Empire. He was a vulgar fellow, this Zepher, originally a policeman, and inclined to brutality. Markow was in his fat face as he closed his eyes, but behind the veil was the suggestion of something sinister and terrible.

"Ah, yes," he said softly. "A scandal in Krieg. Nay, an accident even, therefore a havoc of all governments, a failure of all wars. So that if it should be that his—his despatch, shall we say, of our good neighbour's very

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military arrangements for Germany's benefit should be made. "But, dear Herr, to whom shall we entrust it? Is it not our most sacred duty to our glorious Kaiser? And I say our King is most worthy."

How von Markow understood. A swift change made him his type. He smiled as one relieved.

"We will see Herr King," he said.

General Zaphel stretched out his arm, touched a bell, and two seconds later one of the three doors leading into the War Minister's room suddenly opened.

"Direct the gentleman in the private waiting-room to come here immediately, please," said Zaphel to the clerk who appeared in the doorway. As the door closed he turned to the minister.

"You are that whatever misfortune befall England, whatever unexpected events take place in her dockyards, barracks, or elsewhere, and supposing that anything happens to the great King the American will certainly be his liberator, he will, in a few words. And King is a man who never speaks more or less than he should. Of King I am proud. But he cannot, more than anything will happen. He is too clever. These English look will never expect. Ah! But it would be good to see the face of their Cabinet did they know that King has told me what he has; that their great secrets are secret no longer; that we, too, know how to prepare some little surprises for our good friends. Hm-m-m, but coming to this England."

He was still standing when one of the doors opened, and the individual whose presence General Zaphel saw so lately was shown into the room.

"Herr Krugmeister, the best of my good wishes!" exclaimed Zaphel, smiling benevolently, and waving a hand in the direction of Krug.

Von Markow eyed the man attentively, for he had not seen him before. Krug seemed a man about thirty years of age, and the first impression of the War Minister was his ingenuousness. Not that Krug was small and moon-looking. On the contrary he was about middle height, well built, and broad-chested, somewhat stiff in his movements, but of eyes, and full of hair and complexion. But there was absolutely nothing about the man that called for a second glance. Inasmuch as similar to him could be seen during a transient stroll along the Friedrichstrasse, across very little distance walk upon London's busy streets, and may be found loitering or dining in Apperley's shop.

A strong point in the man's favour, thought Von Markow. Krug was dressed in an ordinary business man's blue serge suit, had no gloves, and carried a Hamburg hat in one hand. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles. Having bowed profoundly he sat down.

Without any preliminary the Minister of War plunged into the matter that brought the three men together.

"Your secret report of the disguised preparations England is making against the possible invasion of an enemy has been brought to me by General Zaphel," he began, speaking very rapidly. "If the aggression of England should at any time drive our country into conflict with her you are of opinion these secret preparations would be to our serious disadvantage?"

"That is so, Herr Minister," Krug answered.

"And General Zaphel reports also a scheme by which the advantage of our enemy would be reduced," went on Von Markow, in a business-like manner.

He knew to what he had agreed. He was perfectly well aware that he was confiding the secret to accomplish an act which, even in the time, should have been so carefully as it was possible, and the danger being at present, at least, was nothing better than a distinctly outrageous upon honesty, good faith, and common humanity, yet by words of the minister as easily as though uttering his own. For Von Markow was of the school of Bismarck, and held that in war all is fair, that to gain the desired end—success of one's country—any means are to be used.

Yes, Germany and England were not at war. But no man could say where the long threatening war clouds might burst, and that day, swayed by Germany's army and navy with so great longing, should arrive. And Germany should win—must win. So that and were the long years of preparation and organizing. Why should not Germany make success as certain as victory, using any means in its power? It would be foolish of the Reichstag not to do so.

So agreed Lord Von Markow, Minister of War. And in Germany were thousands of men who thought as he.

As an individual Von Markow was a man of the strictest honour; makes no mistake about that. As Germany's War Minister it was his duty to place his country in such a position that, so far as humanity may command success, success was assured.

Deutschland, Deutschland, aber alles! Germany on top of

That was Von Markow's religion. And the end justified the means.

The German Empire first—unknown. By fair means or foul.

In that sentence was crystallized the perfection of the bulk of the great German nation.

Such was the spirit that sent Ludwig Krug from his two hours' interview with the German War Minister with something to carry through a project that should indeed "stagger humanity."

Well, however, in a way excited, in an hour, he strolled along Unter den Linden, that fine thoroughfare, lined with the people of Berlin have every right to feel proud. A man of extraordinary pigmylike temperament, the interview just terminated, and the minutes before him had made no impression upon him. He was entirely self-absorbed.

First about eyes behind his "spec," assuming to be interested in nothing, but missing nothing within range of vision. He had crossed a narrow street, the last before the Friedrichstrasse crossed the Linden, when he caught sight of a man walking upon the opposite side of the road.

Krug slightly quickened his pace. The man whom he had seen was one whom he knew—who knew him, and who he desired to remain in ignorance of his—Krug's—presence in Berlin.

His eyes on this person, Krug stopped off the left to cross the narrow street, thus falling in with a large customer that was looking from its into Unter den Linden. The chauffeur did not see Krug. Krug's face was midway between both street and ground when the hind wheel of the car struck his leg. The shock was not a severe one, but the man was off his balance. Slightly he spun round, his arms jerked into the air, and, with a half-turn, he came down heavily upon the pavement.

CHAPTER 2. A Strange Meeting.

As Krug hit the pavement, from the chauffeur of the still moving car came a low cry of alarm. Not until he saw the poor figure did the man realize the accident he had caused. A woman who had been walking two yards in the rear of Krug advanced slowly. Two men came in from each side of the car suddenly springing to their feet, shouting, and wildly waving their arms. The car came to a standstill.

Not half a dozen persons had witnessed the accident; those who had, seemed puzzled with dismay. Then a couple ran towards the fallen man, at whom the moving chauffeur was staring vacantly.

But the first to reach Krug was a tall lad who had been intensely watching the exhibits behind the glass front of a motor-car company's show-rooms adjoining the narrow street. Hearing the scream of the frightened woman, he swung about hastily, saw the fallen Krug, and at once rushed to him to render assistance.

Reaching the prone figure, the lad stooped, guided it by the shoulders, and turned it gently upon the back. As the last man came into view, a shout rang the Good Samaritan.

"Good Samaritan! You're his friend!" he shouted.

And good enough reason, for he had seen Ochsner for nothing, for he was looking upon the face of his own employer, the "boss" of the office of Queen Victoria Street, where he appeared regularly six days every week at nine o'clock, but from which he was now absent, taking a well-earned annual holiday.

"Mr. Miller! Well, I'm pleased!" he ejaculated. Then he knelt down, lifting the immobile man and resting his head upon his knee.

"Water! Get some water! Oh, confused!" he cried, looking up to the several faces of the three or four persons who had gathered round. "Why the deuce can't they speak English! Bringers in two words—and hardly!" he added, his warty countenance with the German language falling back.

"Wasser—wasser, Brantwein!" shouted a pedlar, middle-aged German, but making no effort to get the attention himself.

One of the men in the car descended and hurried to the group.

"The poor fellow!" he said in English, although obviously a German. "But it was an accident. Do you know him, sir?"

"Yes, very well. Where's that water?" Jerry cried impatiently.

A cask of water was brought by someone from a beer-hall near at hand, and a white-capped, up-to-the-teeth policeman arrived simultaneously. Bending down, the official began to question Jerry.

"Don't speak your blessed language!" rejoined the lad, who had gazed at the offered water cask, and was pouring some of the contents upon the unconscious man's forehead, upon which a dull pink bloom was already rising.

"Schwanda!" the policeman roared to himself; and Jerry Osborne bowed him, but took no notice of the complimentary apoplexy-retention for the Englishman's contemptuous reference to the Teutonic language.

"The gentleman is English," struck in the man from the mob.

"That to me already is known!" growled the police-officer in very fair English.

"And he is acquainted with the gentleman here," continued the other.

"Aah, good!"

And then the officer straightened himself, and shouted a peremptory order to the gathering crowd, directing them to keep back.

"You to me what has happened will tell," he went on, again addressing Osborne, who had put down the water-bask, and was getting to work with a glass of brandy which some person who had not lost his head had procured. "What was your name?" And he pointed Jerry's arm.

"Oh, go to Joviality!"

He wasn't giving the official any attention, so failed to see whether his remark was entered in the notebook the policeman had procured as any part of his memorandum. He was doing his best to bring Muller back to sensibility, and was rewarded for his efforts by a spontaneous twitching of the eyelids. With the brandy he moistened the man's lips, and applied some of the spirit to the temples and behind the ears.

Muller's eyes no other sense did Jerry Osborne know him. - was looking pretty bad, his face the colour of raw dough. The fall had been a severe one, he having evidently dropped flat upon his forehead, without any chance of getting and his hands to save himself. His spectacles had fallen off, the fragments lying on the pavement. Jerry had noticed them, and the sight somewhat surprised him. He had been quite sure that his employer's sight was in any way affected.

Of the crowd, none was looking Jerry any assistance, their attention being taken up by the police-officer, who, having signalled his assistants, was busily engaged in collecting evidence of the accident, evidently preparing the circumstances of the Englishman's fall.

At length a stream ran through the injured man; his eyes opened and shut spasmodically. His lips moved, and, believing he was trying to say something, Jerry brought an ear to his mouth.

But it was only an incomprehensible gibberish that issued in a weak whisper from the pallid, death-stricken lips.

"Klone-Klone-must be the first-November, Edelf!" This-or words that seemed to sound much the same-was what Jerry seemed to catch from the quivering whisperings.

Mechanically the lad repeated them, as well as other proper names the semi-conscious Muller, seemed trying to pronounce; but he could make neither head nor tail of the faint, rambling sounds.

By this time a second police-officer had appeared on the scene, and the original officer thought it time to turn his attention to the second principal actor.

"You need not trouble now," he told Jerry, pointing at Muller and striking his head. "You to me will what you know tell."

"That isn't much," Jerry replied quickly, surveying Muller into the face of the second officer. "I was standing looking in window when I heard a scream, and saw this man lying on the pavement. That's all I can tell you."

"But me. What you do?"

"Why, I saw that he appeared to be hurt, and so I went to pick him up."

"And how came he-what you say?-how he fell down?" demanded the officer, peering round over his back.

"What was it knocked him down? Didn't see. Might have been the monster that was close by."

"You say, Englisher, that the monster the man knock down?"

"Didn't say anything of the sort!" rejoined Jerry promptly. "I said it looked as though it might have been the monster that knocked him over. I repeat, I saw nothing until he was actually on the ground. The rest—(Hullo! The man's gone!)"

It had vanished while he was attending to Muller, and the occupant who had spoken to him in English had evidently gone away in it.

"Should have thought they'd have kept him," the lad said to himself. And then to the officer: "Well, there's no more. I can tell you, so I'll be going."

"Aah, but you must, Jorgling!" interposed the police-

man, speaking so slowly that the impulse came to Jerry to knock him down. "You the man here but said you know—ah?"

"Yes, I do know him," Jerry replied shortly.

And he was turning away, when he felt the officer's grip on his elbow.

"You too fast was, Jorgling," said the man. "You with me will come to the policeman—the police-officer, you say. You a witness of the great importance."

"But you let the ship who caused the accident go, and you want me—!" bawled Jerry indignantly.

"Kammon no!" the policeman said shortly.

And Jerry Osborne, well aware that of all the silly things it is possible for a foreigner in Germany to do the silliest is to get into a row with the police, followed—in a bad temper—the constable to the nearest police-station, whether Muller was already being revived upon an ambulance.

"Hullo!" Jerry said himself indignantly. "Almost wish I'd left Muller alone."

It was anything but pleasant, this interruption to his holiday. He had arrived in Berlin only the evening before, and there seemed a fair prospect of his holiday—the first part, anyway—being spoiled just because it had happened that he was acquainted with a man who had been unlucky enough to meet with an accident.

And then he fell to going over in his mind the circumstances of the case. Muller had surely been drunk. They might have been double Dutch, for all the sense he could make of them.

At the police-station Jerry was further cross-examined. The statements he had made to the policeman were read over to him, corrections and additions made; he signed the form on which all was written out, and then he found he was through.

Not a bit of it! He had to give his name, age, and other personal information: when he had arrived in Berlin, how long he meant staying, and the name and address of the hotel where he was staying; from where he had come, and to where he was going after leaving Berlin. The official was polite enough, although the information had to be given, and Jerry gave it, although with a bad grace.

Finally, when he remembered the whole business was faded, he was informed that he was not to be wanted at any time; that, in consequence, he might not leave Berlin on any consideration; that every time he left his hotel he was to inform the policeman where he might be found in the event of the police requiring him.

To assist him to remember these provisions, the official thoughtfully presented him with the various pains and penalties awaiting those who failed to give required assistance to the police in the performance of their duty.

Jerry went back into the street feeling extremely rebellious, and with the determination to give no more assistance while in German soil to anybody, no matter what might happen.

CHAPTER 3.

Back to England.

Jerry Osborne had thought his computer with the Berlin police nearly ending; he was to find it more than that.

Two days after the accident an officer came to his hotel and informed him he was wanted at the police-station. There he was met by an official of some rank and a bearded gentleman whom he learned to be a surgeon.

"Hullo, Osborne," said the former, speaking in very good English. "There's something important we have to ask you to do. It is of the most serious who was injured by the accident—the gentleman who was hurt. He can talk again, but his mind is not all right."

"An injury to the brain," put in the other gentleman. "You may now know him, Mr. Osborne?"

"Well, I should," Jerry answered. "To tell the truth, it is in his office in London where I am employed."

"Yes," said Mr. Muller. "Mr. Queen Victoria Street, London," said the police official. "That is right. We find a card on him, but no other papers. Most strange! Did you know where he stays in Berlin?"

"No, indeed. He was in Berlin. When I left on my holiday five days ago, Mr. Muller was supposed to be gone to the North of England."

"Aah, so! And his business?—the way he got a living?"

"He is an agent for copyrights—copyrights—the Dumas, Wagner, Lerouge's, and a few others."

"Ah. And you know, Mr. Osborne—where in London he lives?"

"I could never find out," said Jerry, wondering what on earth all this questioning meant.

He did not have to wait long. The surgeon began to speak to him, and it appeared that nothing less was wanted of Jerry than that he should take charge of Mr. Muller, and see him safely back to his home in London.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 25.

Another Splendid Large, Complete Bound Tale of the Mystery & Co. at No. 20, St. Martin's Lane, London.

"There is no fear, Herr Osborne," the surgeon assured him. "Herr Muller is not dangerous at all, though it is his habit that is born by the accident. He is quite well, but his memory is affected. He recalls nothing—his name, his business in Berlin. He cannot say where he is—the just master and master, and always remains. No doubt he is a stranger in Berlin. But in London, some place he knew well, that his memory will come back again, and he will tell you the story. I will give you some of a medical man in London to whom you report the case, if you wish to go. But have no fear, Herr Osborne, the unfortunate gentleman is not troublesome. Will you, as one knowing him, take him home?"

What else could Jerry do but say yes? The surgeon and the police officer overhauled him with thanks.

That afternoon Jerry sent his employee at the Friedrichstrasse station in charge of a police-officer and put him in one of the seats reserved for those in a first-class carriage at the Friedrichstrasse.

In the eve, were for the first time on his forehead, nothing was the matter with Muller. But he asked just at a very dark and gloomy child. Wherever Jerry suggested to him he stayed readily enough, but without speaking a word. Jerry he treated as an absolute stranger. It was very plain that in some way his brain had been affected by the fall. His volitional as naturally made no reply when asked to, though he understood what was said to him, and with hands limp on his knees, remained staring straight in front of him. Occasionally he muttered to himself in German. It was no gay business for Jerry, and more than once he thought regretfully of his spoiled holiday.

Returning to the compartment from a stroll along the corridor, Jerry found one of the best attendants leading over Muller. At Jerry's command the man turned aside to him, a queer look in his eye.

"You are the Herr Osborne travelling with a friend?" he asked glly. "I tell you, friend Osborne is here. Will you go now? It is already said for."

Jerry took his charge into the "waiting wagon," where he found arrangements had already been made by the Berlin police—for their meal. Muller ate and drank heartily, but said not a word.

When they returned to their seats, he sat as before, will nothing. Jerry began to pay attention. Presently he said to him:

"Kiss—yes, he will be the first—the last—Numbert—last—last—write Muller," Muller repeated, in a low voice again and again, just as a parrot repeating words learned, staring vacantly in front of him.

"Why that's the not he was talking before," said Jerry to himself. "What on earth does he mean? Kiss—Kiss! Now where the deuce have I heard the name before? Some familiar."

But he couldn't place the name; nor, listening intently to his companion's mutterings, could he hear anything that might enlighten him.

Again and again the monotonous repetition went on until the sound of a low, tremulous voice got to Jerry's ears.

At length a change was necessary, and an attendant found Jerry when the other train came in, and showed him to reserved seats. An odd thing happened.

Getting out to purchase some food, Jerry saw the attendant he had found leading over Muller talking to an attendant on the other train. Then he saw the fellow turn and indicate the compartment where Muller and he were located.

"Police keeping an eye on it all through," he told himself. I cannot see a likely suggestion.

At dinner, the Dutch waiter, Jerry took his charge into Muller's compartment, sitting in front, answering readily enough, but without the slightest interest, the remarks made to him, but otherwise remaining silent.

When they returned to their compartment, Muller went to sleep in one corner, and Jerry, strolling into the corridor, got into conversation with a foreign-looking individual, who seemed curious for information as to the one passage from Flushing.

He was then engaged for nearly half an hour, during which a man, looking very like a heavy-weight professional pug, must have entered the corridor from the other end and entered into Jerry's compartment. He was sitting close to Muller, who was no longer asleep, a quizzical expression on his heavy face, apparently finding Muller's pains and talking the while in a low, intense voice. He ceased again, looking at Jerry as he entered.

"Here, what's the matter?" the English lad demanded, alert and suspicious at once.

A long installment of this splendid New Berlin next Wednesday, when some startling developments may be made for as a result of Jerry Osborne's strange case.

See Our Library—No. 28.

"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PERRY POPULAR" Every Friday.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondence in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonies sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondence is required—boy or girl's English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two stamps, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 8 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two stamps will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column need not send in the addresses direct. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

W. A. Law, Box 33, Port Louis, Trinidad, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 16-17.

A. V. Schofield, 2, Carter Street, Penzance, Ayrshire, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a reader living in Canada or South Africa, age 21-22, with a view to exchanging stamps.

E. Leroy, 27, Beach Street, Hartford, Conn., New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcards.

J. Bunker and A. Bell, 50, Marine Avenue, Fort George, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, wish to correspond with girl readers over the age of 20 years.

E. Brown, 23, King Avenue, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with an English girl reader, age 17-18.

E. Ryan, 175, Ligonier Street, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers in Malta, Gibraltar, and the Falkland Islands.

Miss R. Brauer, care of Mr. W. Monaghan, Perth Road, Albany, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in U.S.A. or England, age 14-16.

J. C. Fiallo, Brisbane Road, Torong, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 14-17.

G. Gidley, "Clifton," Colver Street, Murrumbidgee, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in England or Wales, age 12-14.

Miss R. Barlow, 110 Street, Mount Clarence, Albany, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 15-17.

Ginsburg, 14, Minglung Road, Shanghai, China, wishes to correspond with girl readers, age 15-17.

A. R. Cox, Little Manly, Queensland, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in Western Australia.

R. M. D. Marjoribanks Street, Wellington, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 11-13.

H. J. Dixon, 814, Queen West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl readers, age 15-18.

H. Deane, 110, North Water Street, Galt, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in Australia interested in postcards, age 15-18.

M. Turner, Windfall Villa, New Road, Yala, Gwynedd, Central Wales, wishes to correspond with readers.

Charles, 5, Hart Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps and postcards, age 14-16.

C. Fisher, St. Leonards, Torquay, Devonshire, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with boy readers living in Shanghai, age 14-15.

E. F. Hamilton, 14, Charles Street, Kingston, Jamaica, B.W.I., wishes to correspond with a girl reader.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

GRAND NEW SERIES OF FOOTBALL ARTICLES!



WHEN anybody asks for advice as to how to become a good referee, I always feel strongly tempted to say "Don't." The fellow who takes to refereeing a football match has indeed chosen a thankless sort of task at best. I have had some, and I know.

I have tried to improve the correctness of my decisions on a crowd of players, and also on a crowd of partisan supporters, many of whom can only see what is done by one side. The spectators are excited, and if the match is of any importance the players are by no means calm. For everything which happens the poor referee is blamed. If one side loses they surely ever do so because they deserved to lose on the run of the game; they lost because they had to play the other side and the referee as well. That is the story.

It is all in the game, I suppose, and above certainly comes with the lot of the referee, no matter how good he may be. Still, in spite of all my warning, there are still some people who will want to know what they must do to become referees and what is the best way to go about making themselves efficient for the task.

I have always considered that referees are born, and not made. By that I mean that temperamentally some people are fitted for successful refereeing, while others—no matter how well they know the rules—would never prove good referees. Let me explain further. The one great essential in a referee is that he should have that peculiar faculty which inspires the confidence of others. We have referees to-day who give decisions in such a way that, however correct they may be, there is sure to be somebody who never feels quite certain about them.

On the other hand, we have fellows who are refereeing our big matches, who give even wrong decisions with such an air of confidence, that in spite of themselves the players and the audience feel that the referee is right. You, the first essential in a referee is a "presence"—a personality which inspires confidence—then knows how to treat other fellows—who is liked with a double class of what we call tact.

Before we, then are big teams to-day whose players simply mould their methods according to the particular official in charge. If they know the referee is a honest sort of individual, they just take liberties, and as a result, there is a sort of the daily side of the game indulged in then there is a strong referee is no duty—a man who will stand on his heels, but who puts his foot down firmly on any attempt at questionable tactics.

Enough of the temperamental side of the referee, however—although, as I said, I am convinced that many of our referees are failing, not because they do not know the rules, but because they are absolutely unfitted to have control over

men who are excited and often highly strong. You must have the right temperament, however. In that case you will even about the crying need in football today is for efficient referees. Some of them in the very first class to-day are only "put up with," because better men cannot be found.

The first step is to learn the rules—orders, charts, and all that sort of thing may be had for the asking—or for a copy or two—at any of the offices of the County Football Associations. Every position will be found in these, and the charts give all sorts of ideas as to how the rules of the game are meant to be interpreted by the law-makers.

Examinations are, of course, held periodically, but I can assure the reader that it is no good his going to one of these referees' examinations unless he knows something about football. I have seen some of the papers, and the questions are such that they cannot possibly be modified through. Moreover, in addition to the written questions which have to be answered, there are others which are given on the spot by the examiner which he has to answer on the spot of the moment.

Still, a thorough knowledge of the rules of Association football is not difficult to obtain—they are, after all, fairly simple and straightforward. It will be realized that advance has to be made step by step, which he has passed the examination. Future games will be given to this young referee for a start, and on the way he begins those will descend on it whether the more serious and bigger contests come his way.

We will suppose that you have got to your first match stage—how are you to act? The best advice which can be given in a general way is rendered by a weather-beaten referee who said: "Don't try to please everybody—or anybody—but yourself." Listen to your only chance of success. Give a conscientious opinion on everything you see—never mind how the players argue or what the man in the crowd says. You are the judge of what happens on the field of play and no one else.

In the big matches the referee has a couple of tactical lessons to which he can appeal on points which he does not see clearly, but in junior games tactical lessons are a luxury—and consequently, when he is on trial, the young referee will have nobody to depend on but himself. Don't take a high hand with the players; but on the other extreme don't argue with them. There is no reason why you should not tell them what a free kick or that sort of thing is given for, but if you begin to argue you are lost as soon as lost.

And when you are in possession of the whistle don't jump to the conclusion that the spectators have come to hear you sound it—they have come to see the football, and the referee is only a sort of accessory. My meaning will be quite clear to those who know football at all. The aim of the referee should be to keep the game going—there must be no unnecessary blowing of the whistle for questionable offences which mean neither advantage nor disadvantage for either side. I could go on for a long time yet, on this referee's subject, but my space is gone.

A last word—whatever else you do, don't lose your head—keep cool. It is the secret of success in a referee.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 20.

Another Specialized Long, Complete School Year of Ten Harry & Co. of St. John's, Great Britain.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE—



WHICH TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR, "THE GEM" LIBRARY
 THE PLEASANT HOUSE,
 BARNHURST STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS:
"THE MAGNET LIBRARY,"
 EVERY FRIDAY
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
 EVERY FRIDAY

For Next Wednesday

"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"
 By Martin Clifford.

In the splendid, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. for next week, entitled as above, quite an epidemic of "ghosts" sets in at the old school. After Tom Merry has dealt with a "spook" case in characteristic fashion, Mervyn Lewin, on the same track, goes into serious trouble. After that a regular "ghost" case sets in, while mysterious raids on private property take place.

Tom Merry & Co. assisted by Hammond, the Cockney plumber, take up the matter in earnest at last. Ultimately an astounding capture is made by

"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"

which results in the "ghost" disappearing from the scene of action altogether.

FROM A FULHAM READER.

In the following letter, a Fulham club asks for the reproduction of letters readers to burn a "Gem," "Magnet," and "Penny Popular" club in his district.

"10, Little Road,
 Fulham, S.W."

"Dear Editor.—Reading a good deal on the 'Reader's Page' relating to the 'Invisible Trio' by readers themselves, I thought I would like the liberty of writing to you about them. I have read pretty all the numbers published, and hope to be able to enjoy many more. My father reads them as well, and he says he fully endorses the private order parents give them. I always give my copies on to my readers in the hope of gaining new readers, and find it often works well.

"I should very much like to join a 'Gem' or 'Magnet' Club in this district. Should there not be one at the present moment, would any of your readers mind how who are thinking the same kindly write to me and arrange meetings in order to discuss the question? It may not seem a favorable time to start a club, but we have the latter means with us, and in the club evenings members could meet and discuss their literature, play games, etc. In the brighter months we could have excursions, rowing, etc.

"I hope you will agree with me that the burning of such a club will do much to spread the fame of the Trio in every way, as one of the club's aims will be that of obtaining new readers and members.

"Trusting I have not taken up too much of your valuable time, I remain, yours truly,

"G. A. WHITE."

Thanks for your letter. I am particularly pleased, Master White, to hear of the approval with which your father looks on "The Invisible Trio," for I would never advise a club to read these or any other papers against his father's wish. I think your idea of forming a Fulham League an excellent one, and wish you every success.

ANIMAL CINEMA ACTORS.—No. 5.

Paul J. Rainey's Adventurous Journey.

Only a few years ago hunters of big game in Central Africa and other countries were wont to describe their adventures and experiences by writing books or giving verbal accounts

there. Now, however, as big game hunting expeditions in made under a cinema camera's lens accompany it, for the purpose of taking films of the expeditions. Paul J. Rainey is a well-known hunter of big game, and when he was ready for this great expedition there were plenty of camera men willing to risk life and limb to secure with fascinating films as he promised them. The cost of fitting out the expedition was enormous. In addition to the band of white hunters, the camera men, and an immense, large band of native guides had to be hired out from time to time to carry the baggage and equipment of the party.

The hunter took with him two packs of dogs, one of which were called "leading" and the other "following" dogs—I will describe how they are used later. Apart from the expenses of fitting out the party by having to look a way through the dense tropical foliage, they found, as they ventured farther and farther from the dominions of the white man into parts where no European has ever set foot before, the natives were strongly antagonistic to the introduction of the cinematograph camera. They could not understand it, and so they feared it. After months of arduous travelling the party had advanced 200 miles beyond civilization, and were deep in the jungle. Then they began to get to work.

Organized hunts took place daily, and the camera men, mounted on horseback, with his cinema camera upon the saddle before him, was never far away from the operations. During a hunt, after a long and tiring hunt, the hunt was at last brought to an end, and we were to imagine, as it were, many things. The camera men, thinking the hunt was done, leaped from the saddle, and camera in hand, walked up to the lion, desiring to secure a film of him at close quarters before life expired. When he was within about eight feet of the lion the operator commenced turning the handle.

Suddenly, without any sign or warning, the lion gave a low growl, and the next moment gave a leap and landed but a couple of feet from the cinema camera man, and prepared for another spring. Just as the operator was coming up, however, one of the lions leaped his rifle, and, with a splendid marksmanship, shot the lion close through the forehead, immediately ending the operator's life.

Mr. Rainey called very much upon his wonderfully-trained leading dogs. One pack of these were trained for trailing down wild animals, whilst the other was of the true fighting breed, and would, as a matter of fact, tackle anything that ever crossed the jungle. In one instance the lion got away, but the trailing dogs tracked it right down to its lair. When they had done this much, they quietly stood aside and allowed the fighting dogs to attack the lion. Then ensued a very fierce and wild fight. The lion fought bravely, but the dogs were so quick he could get a line in with his powerful jaws, whenever the dogs were hamstringing their teeth in every part of his body. After a long fight the dogs succeeded in killing the lion.

The camera men filmed the whole incident, but if you see the film, you would actually be shown very little from this fight. It was decided that much of it must be cut out of the pictures, as it was too gruesome for exhibition at public places. In all, I believe, they took some 25,000 feet of film, which would take about eight hours to show, but in the end the picture was cut down to about 1,500 feet of film.

(Another interesting
 cinema article next
 Wednesday.)

The Editor



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

POOR CAT!

Little Boy (to lady): "Please, ma'am, may I have my arrow? It has gone in your garden."

Old Lady: "Why, certainly, my little man! Whereabouts is it?"

Little Boy: "I—I—I think it is sticking in your cat!"—Sent in by R. L. Snell, Great Yarmouth.

STILL CURIOUS.

Little Willie was a source of great worry to his nurse. To put it in a nutshell, he was curiosity itself.

"You had better keep quiet, or something will happen to you," said his nurse one night, after having answered endless questions. "Curiosity once killed a cat."

This made a deep impression on little Willie, and, remarkable to relate, he was actually quiet for the space of five minutes! Then, with a thoughtful frown on his manly brow, he turned to his nurse.

"I say, nurse, what was it the cat wanted to know?"—Sent in by W. Phillips, Hendy.

WHAT HO!

"Johnny, you have been a naughty boy all day! You can just go off to bed without any supper!"

"Well, mother, what about that medicine I've got to take after meals?"—Sent in by P. Heys, Bolton, Lancs.

NOT GROWN UP YET.

It is told of a certain bishop that while dining at the house of one of his friends he was pleased to observe that he was the object of marked attention of the son of his host, whose eyes were firmly riveted on him.

After dinner the bishop took the opportunity of having a few words with the lad.

"Well, my lad, you seem to be interested in me."

"Yes, sir," answered the lad, with a glance at the bishop's knee-breeches. "But won't you mamma let you wear trousers yet?"—Sent in by D. J. Meredith, Victoria, Mon.

IF—?

Having recounted her parcels for the seventeenth time, and reassured herself for the twenty-second time that she had her ticket all safe in her reticule, the old lady in the black-beaded bonnet thrust her head out of the window of the carriage.

"Porter!" she called.

The passing trunk-tugger paused politely.

"Porter," repeated the old lady, "does this train stop at Waterloo?"

"Well, mum," he mused, "if it don't, you jest look out for the biggest bump you ever had in yer life!"—Sent in by Miss Ivy Hobden, Sussex.

HIS IDEA.

Some Americans were visiting a school in Wales, and the teacher invited them to question the scholars. One of them accepted the invitation.

"Little boy," he said to the rosy-cheeked lad, "can you tell me who George Washington was?"

"Yes, sir. He was an American general!"

"Quite right!" exclaimed the visitor, highly pleased. "But can you tell me anything remarkable about that man?"

The little boy thought hard for a moment.

"Yes, sir!" he said proudly. "He was remarkable because he was an American, and he told the truth!"—Sent in by G. McGregor, Edinburgh.

STILL PUZZLED.

As the celebrated soprano began to sing, little Johnnie became greatly excited over the gesticulations of the orchestra conductor.

"What's that man shaking his stick at her for?" he demanded of his father.

"Sh-h! He's not shaking his stick at her."

"Then what in thunder's name is she hollering for?"—Sent in by H. North, Carnarvon.

CLEAR DEFENCE.

Magistrate: "You are found guilty of knocking down the plaintiff and robbing him of everything except a gold watch. What have you to say?"

Prisoner: "Had he a gold watch?"

Magistrate: "Certainly."

Prisoner: "Then I put in a plea of insanity!"—Sent in by W. G. Harnett, Portsmouth.

VERY FISHY.

She was a fisherman's daughter, and wore her hair in a net. The city youth came round to court her, and here are a few things he said:

"My love, you hold first 'plaice' in my heart. Although I 'flounder' about in expressing myself, my 'sole' wish is that you will save me from becoming a 'crabbed' old bachelor. I shall stick to you closer than a 'limpet,' and from you a 'wink'll' be the rod to guide. Together we'll 'skate' o'er life's rough rocks, and when I look at your hand I shall say, 'Fortune smiled upon me when I put "her-ring" there.'"

And the lady dropped her eyes and sweetly murmured:

"You giddy kipper!"—Sent in by J. Hunter, Yorks.

Farmer (at the National Gallery): "Why, these are the same pictures I saw last year!"

Attendant: "Quite likely, sir."

Farmer (indignantly): "Then it's a swindle! They told me that the pictures were changed twice a week at all the leading picture-houses!"—Sent in by G. Green, Manor Park.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

"If you please, mamma," said Clarence, aged ten years, "will you kindly lend me a pencil?"

"But," exclaimed mamma, "I left a pen and ink for you to do your lessons with on the nursery table! Why don't you use that, instead of pencil?"

Clarence hesitated.

"Don't you think that the GEM is rather a good paper?" he said at length.

"Of course I do!" replied mamma. "But——"

"Well, you see," the lad explained, "I want a pencil to write and ask the Editor how to remove ink-stains from a carpet."—Sent in by T. Alker, Wigan.

NOT THIS TIME.

In a small country church, not long ago, a little child was brought forward to be baptised. The young minister, taking the little one in his arms, spoke as follows:

"Beloved hearers, no one can tell the future of this child. He may grow up to be a great astronomer like Sir Isaac Newton, or a great labour leader like John Burns, and it is possible that he might become Prime Minister of England. Now"—turning to the mother of the child—"what is the name of this child?" he inquired.

"Mary Ann," was the timid reply.—Sent in by J. Bagnall, Berwick-on-Tweed.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

By Order of Chancery

*A Thrilling, Long, Complete Tale Dealing with the
Further Amazing Adventures of*
SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.



The man swiftly passed a big gladstone bag to the driver of the waiting hansom, sprang in, and was quickly driven away. Sexton Blake, whose cab was not thirty yards away, gave an exclamation of satisfaction. "We are in luck!" he said. "That is Gordon Falconer's house, and that man was his valet, Shakerly."

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Contains

**3 MAGNIFICENT LONG,
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**IN CASH PRIZES
EVERY FRIDAY.**

SKIMPOLE'S LOVE AFFAIR

*A Splendid, Long, Complete School Tale of the Adventures
of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.*

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



The Shell fellows dragged the amateur poet into the room, and landed him, gasping, on the floor. A closer view of his face sent them almost into convulsions. "Black, but comely!" grinned Monty Lowther.