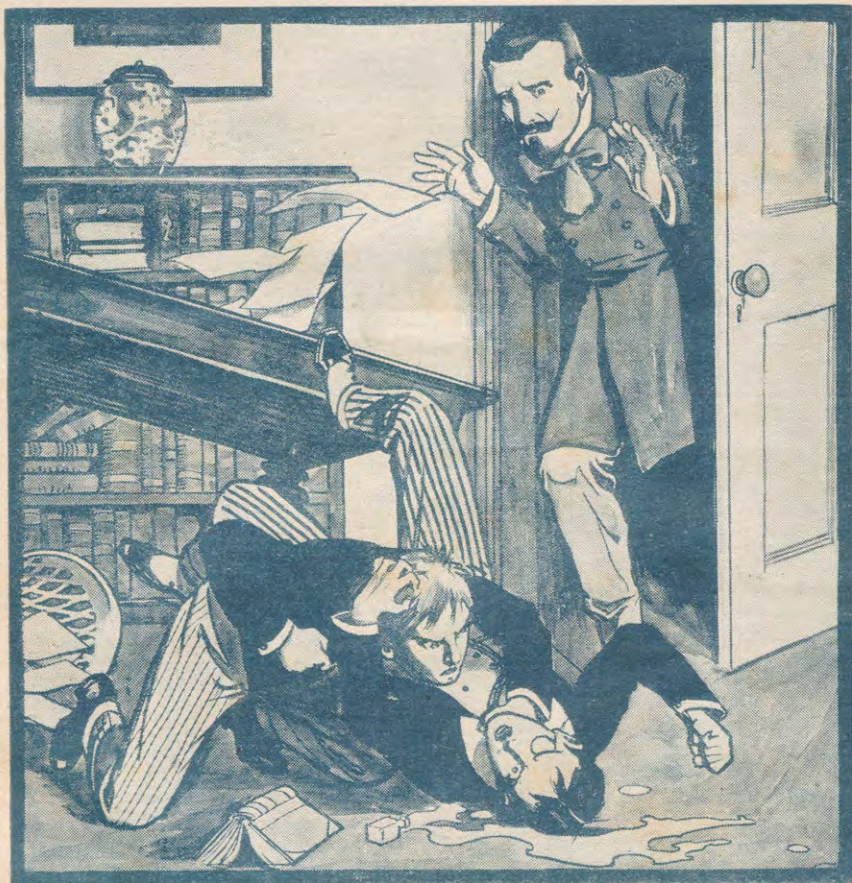


TO NEWSAGENTS.

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A SCRAP IN MOSSOO'S STUDY!

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LOOKING FOR TROUBLE!

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

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Trouble in the Class!

"BLAKE, death boy—!"

"Shush!"

"Yaas, but—!"

Jack Blake hurriedly.

looking this way?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's,

was about to inform Blake, in frigid tones, that he refused to be called an ass. But he refrained. Mossoo's eye

was turning upon the two, and Mossoo's eye had an unaccustomed gleam in it.

"So Arthur Augustus contented himself with a slight sniff, and relapsed into silence for the present.

Monsieur Moray, the French master of St. Jim's, was taking the Fourth in the French lesson.

Now, the Fourth Form at St. Jim's were as patriotic as any Form in the school; and, being patriotic, they had a proper regard for a great Ally, represented at St. Jim's by Monsieur Moray.

But there was no denying that some of the juniors found the French lesson a bore.

Moreover, Mossoo was such a kind and patient little gentleman, and so averse from inflicting punishment in any shape or form, that the fellows had dropped into the way of taking it easy with him.

Even fellows who were keen on their work, like Blake and Julian and Clive, did not always give Mossoo the attention he was entitled to, unconsciously relying upon his well-known good-nature.

Slackers like Melliish and Trimble slackened in the French class as they never had an opportunity of slacking elsewhere.

Mischievous fellows, like Cardew or Levison, sometimes amused themselves with gently pulling the French master's leg. Mossoo never having the slightest suspicion when his Gallic leg was being pulled.

It was, therefore, somewhat hard on the Fourth Form to find Monsieur Moray in a very bad temper that afternoon.

When Trimble failed to remember whether a table was a boy or a girl, as Trimble put it—masculine or feminine, as Mossoo expressed it—Trimble was talked to very sharply. When Reilly projected an ink-ball at Figgins, of the New House, and made Figgy give a sudden yelp, Reilly received the pointer on his knuckles, much to his surprise. A mild word of admonition was usual in such cases from Mossoo. Reilly sat sucking his knuckle in great astonishment and indignation.

But Cardew came in for the severest vials of wrath. Cardew was one of the keenest fellows in the Form. But for the purpose of making Mossoo snort, as he put it, he affected impenetrable stupidity. Mossoo was taken in at first, till he caught Cardew winking at Levison and Clive, his study-mates. Then Cardew was called out before the class and caned.

This warned the Fourth that Mossoo

was not to be trifled with that afternoon, and most of the juniors backed up, and paid attention.

Not so Cardew.

Cardew did not like being caned, and he was red and exasperated. He had started worrying Mossoo in a spirit of idle mischief. He continued it now maliciously. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy bestowed several warning frowns upon Cardew; and frowned still more when Cardew failed to take the slightest notice of those frowns.

It was perceptible to Arthur Augustus that Mossoo was in a worried and troubled frame of mind that afternoon. He was so troubled, from some cause best known to himself, that worry had the effect of making him snappish and irritable.

It was really no time for Cardew's little jokes.

But Cardew persisted. The warning frowns of the great Gussy soon wasted upon him.

With great skill, Cardew projected a pen nib into the air, so that it dropped precisely upon the bald spot on top of Mossoo's head.

Mossoo started, a bead of sweat, and glomed upward.

He was under the impression that some fragment of plaster must have fallen from the ceiling, and smitten his unprotected bald spot.

His surprised expression as he gazed upward, made it very difficult for the class to keep grave. There was a snigger from some directions.

Monsieur Moray looked round sharply.

"Zis is not a matter for to laugh," he said severely. "I zink zat zis ceiling he want attending. Silenced in zis class!"

There was stifling silence in the class, and the lesson went on. Cardew was looking about him for another handy missile.

Arthur Augustus sat frowning.

He did not approve of japing the French master when he was evidently in a worried and troubled frame of mind.

But Mossoo's eyes glittered at him as he whispered with Blake, and he was silent.

"Zero is too much whisper in zis class," said Mossoo. "Zis next garcon zat vixper viz him-if sallah have ze cane. I will have ze oclair in zis class!"

And Mossoo turned to the black-board.

"Blake, death boy—!"

"Dry up!" murmured Blake.

"Mossoo will be down on you like a ton of bricks in a tick!"

"I wofusse to allow Cardew to continue his wotten game, Blake!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Dway pass zis note along to him."

Blake grunted, and passed the note. Arthur Augustus had written down an admonition to the thoughtless wink, in his well-known fatherly style. Blake passed it to Digby, and Dig, passed it to Horries, Horries to Clive, Clive to Figgins, and Figgins to Levison, who handed it to Cardew.

Arthur Augustus' noble eye followed it.

The French master's back being turned, Cardew unfolded the slip of paper, and looked at it. He grinned as he read it. It ran, in Arthur Augustus' elegant hand:

"Stop japing Mossoo at once, you rotter."

Cardew looked round and caught D'Arcy's eye. He twisted the missive into a little pellet, and suddenly projected it from finger and thumb at the sender across the class. Cardew's aim was good, and before Arthur Augustus knew that his missive was being returned, it caught him on the nose with a sharp shock.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, startled.

Mossoo spun round.

"D'Arcy! You talk again, isn't it?"

"I-I—!"

"Is it you zat speak, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Take two hundred lines of ze Homiade, zen!"

"Oh, gwent Scott!"

"You are van sad boy, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus sat crushed. This was a pleasant reward for his high-minded interference on behalf of the French master!

"Blake, vy for you laff?"

"Wa-a-s! I laughing, sir?"

"You vas! Take feefty lines!"

"Oh!"

"I keep order in zis class. I zink."

Cardew jumped up.

"If you please, sir—"

"Sit down viz you, Cardew!"

"It was my fault, D'Arcy spoke, sir. I threw a pellet at him," said Cardew.

"Oh! Zen you are a bad, disorderly boy, to throw ze zings about in ze class."

Arthur Augustus sat crushed. "You are van young rascal! D'Arcy, you need not take zen lines. Cardew, come here!"

Monsieur Moray picked up Mr. Latham's cane from the desk. He was fed up with Cardew's misplaced humour. Cardew stepped out, his eyes glinting. He had been caned once already.

"Hold out ze hand viz you!"

Swish!

It was a hard cut, and it made Cardew wince.

"The four zo ether hand!"

Cardew looked on in silence. Mossoo was being unusually severe, and then he held out his other hand. Mossoo gave a swipe at it, and Cardew withdrew it quickly. The cane missed the mark and met with no resistance, and Mossoo stumbled forward. He regained his balance, amid the cries of the juniors, and turned a flaming face on Cardew.

"You—you vicked boy! Hold out ze hand!" he thundered.

Cardew held out his hand again, and the Frenchman made quite a vicious swipe at it.

Cardew jumped suddenly back. Again the cane whistled through the air in vain. There was a chortle from the Fourth. They could not help it.

Monsieur Moray's face went crimson.

The junior was deliberately making him look ridiculous before the class, and Mossoo's own leg had had a narrow escape from that last swipe.

"Cardew!" he shouted.

"Yes, sir," said Cardew coolly.

"Zat is a trick, n'est-ce-pas? I will cane you mooch more. I zink you are ze vorst boy in ze class!"

"Sorry, sir. I don't understand."

"Vat?"

"Would you mind speaking English, sir?"

The juniors simply gasped. Mossoo was already speaking English—the best English he knew. Cardew's nerve took their breath away.

Monsieur Morny gazed at the junior speechlessly for a moment; then he acted. Doubtless he considered it a time rather for actions than for words.

He seized Cardew by the collar, spun him round, and laid the cane about him with great vigour.

Whack—whack—whack—whack!

"Yaroo!" roared Cardew.

He had succeeded in ridiculing Mossoo, but the ridicule was on the other side now.

There was a roar of laughter from the Fourth-Formers as Cardew hopped and jumped and twisted in vain endeavours to escape the lashes of the cane.

Whack—whack—whack!

"Now go back to ze place and keep ze ordair!" gasped Mossoo, casting the junior from him.

Cardew almost limped to his place. The lesson went on without any more little jokes from Ralph Reckness Cardew. He sat with a white face and burning eyes, silent and savage, till the class was dismissed.

CHAPTER 2.

Surprising a Secret.

"TOM, old chap!"

Tom Merry stared.

The Terrible Three of the Shell—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther—were chatting after lessons in the big doorway of the School House when that affectionate remark was made to Tom Merry.

As it came from Baggy Trimble of the Fourth, Tom Merry did not look delighted. In fact, he frowned as well as stared.

"Eh? What's that?" he said.

"I say, old chap—"

Tom Merry pointed to the stone steps outside.

"See those?" he asked.

"Eh? Yes! Why?" said Trimble, in surprise.

"Do you want to go down those steps head first?"

"No, you ass!"

"Then don't call me 'old chap' again!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here, you know—"

"Oh, seat!"

"I say, Monty, old man—"

Monty Lowther raised his boot, and Baggy Trimble backed away. His sudden affection for the chums of the Shell did not seem to be appreciated.

"Harry, dear boy—"

"Are you calling me 'Harry'?" demanded Manners.

"Yes, old chap!"

"Then don't, if you don't want a thick ear, you cheeky toad!" said Manners, with a glare.

And the Terrible Three turned their backs upon Baggy. Baggy Trimble was not a person whom they delighted to honour.

"I say, don't get your backs up, you know," said Trimble, apparently not at all rebuffed. "You might help a chap!"

"No tin to spare," said Tom Merry tersely. "Ask us again after the war!"

"Tain't tin this time," said Baggy Trimble. "Tin ain't much good when you ain't allowed to buy more than one slice of cake at the tuckshop. Mossoo has been an awful beast this afternoon, you chaps! He licked Cardew no end!"

"Let's hope it did him good," said Lowther. "Are you worrying over Cardew's troubles, you fat bouncer?"

"No fear! But he's done worse than that—he's given me fifty lines! That's serious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't do them, you know," said Trimble confidentially. "I'm going to fag for Knox. There's pickings for a chap who fags for Knox, you know. He don't quite keep to the food regulations!"

"For goodness' sake go and fag for Knox, then, and give us a rest!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Shell fellows were not going to do his lines.

Blake & Co. were coming down from Study No. 6, and Trimble stopped them.

"You fellows busy?" he asked.

"Just going down to cricket," said Blake. "Get out of the way!"

"I'd take it as a great favour if one of you chaps could do my lines—only fifty," said Trimble persuasively.

"Bai Jove! I wogard that as feahful cheek, Twimble!"

"You see, Gussy—"

"I wogard it as cheek on your part to address me as Gussy, Twimble! Come on, you chaps!"

The four Fourth-Formers walked on, and as Trimble did not get out of the way they had no resource but to walk over him. At least, they did not try any other resource. Trimble was somewhat dusty when they had passed.



D'Arcy takes a kick at the silk topper.

(See Chapter 3.)

"But what about my lines?" said Trimble. "I think one of you fellows might be friendly and do them for me!"

"Well, of all the cheek!"

"You're awfully clever at—French, Tom Merry—"

"Thanks!" said Tom, laughing. "I'm not doing your lines, you cheeky porpoise!"

"But I've got to take them in at tea-time," persisted Baggy; "and I want to fag for Knox, you know. It means a bit of a feed, and I don't want to waste it—war-time economy, you know. Will you do my lines, Manners?"

"I'll give you a thick ear!" growled Manners.

"Will you do them, Lowther?"

Monty Lowther's reply was not in words. He fastened his finger and thumb upon Trimble's fat ear, and led him along the passage to the stairs. There he bumped the astonished Fourth-Former on the lowest stair; and, leaving Baggy sitting there in a state of great surprise, he stroled back to the doorway.

Baggy Trimble rose, gasping. It had been made pretty clear to him that the

"Rotters!" gasped Baggy, as he picked himself up. "Yah! Cads! Now, who the merry thump is going to do my lines? I say, Julian, will you do fifty lines for me?"

"After the war," said Julian cheerfully; and he walked on.

Baggy Trimble snorted. He reflected, and started for Levison's study. He found Levison, Cardew, and Clive there. Levison and Clive were seeking to persuade Cardew down to the cricket-ground; but Cardew's face was angry and stullen, and he was in no mood for cricket.

"I say, you know," said Trimble, "I've got a job for you, Levison!"

Levison stared at him.

"You make a regular biznez of writing lines for chaps," said Trimble. "Well, I've got fifty for you to do."

"Go and eat coke!" said Levison.

"Oh, I'm going to pay you, same as Grundy does!" sneered Trimble. "One-and-six a hundred, isn't it?"

"I don't do Grundy's lines now!"

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enapped Levison. "I don't do any-
body's! Get out!"

"I suppose that means the price has
gone up!" said Trimble loftily. "Well,
I'll give you a bob for the fifty! I'm
short of money just now, owing to lend-
ing my last quid to Talbot, but I'll settle
to-morrow. That's good enough, I
suppose? I want the lines by tea-time.
Yarrooh! Wharrer you up to, Levison?"

It was an unnecessary question. Levison
was kicking him out of the study. Baggy
Trimble fled down the passage, helped
for some distance by Ernest
Levison's boot.

"Oh, the rotter!" groaned Trimble,
stopping to take breath on the landing.
"Oh, the cad! I say, Talbot!"

Talbot of the Shell gave him a good-
natured nod. Talbot was civil even to
Baggy Trimble.

"Hallo! What is it?" he asked.
"Will you do fifty lines for me by tea-
time?"

Talbot laughed.

"No, I won't. Ta-ta!"

And he went on his way.
Baggy Trimble rolled dolorously into
his own study. In Mossoo's present
ratty state of temper he could not
venture to leave the lines over. The
chance of a feed in Knox's study had to
be missed.

Groaning, Baggy settled down to write
the impot himself, with perfectly Hun-
nish feelings towards Monsieur Adolphe
Morny.

Trimble was not a quick writer, and
he laboured long over his fifty lines from
the Henriade. But they were finished,
at last, and he rolled away to the French
master's study with them.

He tapped at the door and opened it.
For a moment he could not see the
French master in the study. Then he
discerned Mossoo's bald spot over the
back of an armchair near the window.

"Mon Dieu! Zis is very hard!" The
French master was talking to himself,
quite unaware that the door of the study
had opened. "Vat sall I do for ze
money? I must have ze money, but vat
sall I do?"

Baggy Trimble's eyes glistened.
He understood now why poor Mossoo
had been so disturbed that afternoon.
The unfortunate gentleman was in
financial difficulties. Trimble could
understand that that was a worry; he
had been there himself.

He did not make any sound to betray
his presence. Most fellows would have
been unwilling to surprise secrets in this
way; but Baggy was Hunnish in his con-
ception of a sense of honour.

But the draught from the open door
warned Mossoo. He rose suddenly and
looked round. His sallow face crimsoned
at the sight of the junior.

"Trimble!" he exclaimed.
"Yes, sir! My lines, sir."

"How long have you been zere,
Trimble?"

"Only a second, sir," said the ver-
acious Baggy. "Just opened the door,
sir! Didn't you hear me knock?"

"I did not, Trimble. You hear me
speak viz myself, isn't it?" said the
French master, with almost a haggard
look.

"Did you speak, sir?"
"You did not hear me, Trimble?"
"Oh, no, sir!"

"You may lay ze lines on ze table and
fo, Trimble, sir."

Trimble deposited his lines, and went.
He grinned as he rolled down the pas-
sage.

"Hard up!" he muttered. "Poverty-
stricken old boulder! Yah!"

Which was the total amount of sym-
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pathy that Baggy Trimble could spare
for the unfortunate Mossoo.

CHAPTER 3. No Collection.

"B A I Jove!"

"What's the game, Fatty?"
"Where did you get that hat?"
Quite a number of glances were
turned upon Trimble of the Fourth as
he came into the Common-room that
evening.

The fat Fourth-Former carried a shiny
silk hat in his fat hand.

Why a fellow should bring a silk hat
into the Common-room was a mystery.
Certainly he had no need of one there.

Baggy Trimble smiled genially at the
surprised juniors.

"Bai Jove! That is wathah a nice
hat," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy,
turning his eyeglass upon it. "Your
taste is impovwin', Trimble. That is
weally a very decent hat."

"But what on earth have you brought
it here for?" asked Tom Merry.
"That's for the collection," said
Trimble.

"Eh? You're making a collection?"
"Exactly!"

"What's the good of a collection to
you, when tick is limited by law?" asked
Monty Lowther. "You can't spend the
money on grub."

"Look here, you know—"
"And how much do you think you'll
collect?" grunted Gore of the Shell.
"You won't get anything but a thick ear
from me!"

"And another from me, you fat,
cheeky duffer!" growled Grundy.
"And another from me, budad!" said
Reilly.

"Good!" said Lowther. "That'll
make three thick ears for Trimble.
Would you like a fourth, Trimble?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Now, look here," said Trimble.

"This isn't for myself, of course. I suppose
you don't think I want your money.
I should refuse the offer with scorn, if
you made it."

"Which is likely to do—I don't
think!" grinned Levison.

"It's a patriotic collection," explained
Trimble. "I suppose you fellows believe
in backing up our Allies?"

"Have our Allies applied to you to go
round with the hat?" asked Herries.

"Ahem!" said exactly. "But every
French chap is an ally, isn't he? Suppose
a French chap is fearfully hard up,
what? Then it's our patriotic duty to
raise a collection, isn't it? Well,
Mossoo's right on the rocks."

"Mossoo!" exclaimed Clive.
"Yes, rather! Hard up, you know;
fairly up against it," said Trimble. "I'm
going to raise a collection for Mossoo."

"You young ass!" exclaimed Talbot.
"If Mossoo hears of it, he will scalp you!"

"Oh, he's bound to be pleased!" said
Trimble. "I know he's awfully stony,
and moaning and groaning about it, you
know."

"I fail to see how you can know any-
thing of the sort, Trimble!"
"The fact is, Mossoo confided to me

"Wha-a-ai?"
"He spoke to me rather confidentially

"Ha, ha, ha!"
There was a roar in the Common-room.
Baggy Trimble's gifts as a Prussian were
wonderful; but though his lying was ex-
tremely reprehensible, it was sometimes
entertaining. The idea of Monsieur
Morny confiding his financial difficulties
to Baggy Trimble was too much for the
juniors. They yelled. Baggy Trimble
blinked at them in surprise.

"Look here, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You utter a ass, Twimble—"

"Well, perhaps he didn't exactly con-
fide the matter to me," said Trimble
cautiously. "Perhaps I happened to
overhear him, by accident—"

"You eavesdroppin' young wotah!"
"I may have gone into his study, and
I may not," said Trimble mysteriously.

"He may have been groaning over his
money troubles, and he may not."

"You have been spyin' on Mossoo, you
fat wascal!"

"I repudiate the insinuation with
scorn, D'Arcy! You may be capable of
that sort of thing—"

"Bai Jove!"
"But I'm not. It was quite by acci-
dent, of course. Besides Mossoo saw me
before I could hear any more."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But there's the fact," said Trimble.

"Facts have to be dealt with, you know;
that's being efficient. I'm an efficient
chap. While you slackers have been—
been slacking, I've decided what to do;
that's being efficient. I'm going to raise
a collection for Mossoo. I hope to raise
five pounds, at least. I shall present it
to him with the compliments of the
School House. See?"

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Tom
Merry. "You know you wouldn't have
the cheek to take money to Mossoo. Dry
up!"

"Under the cires, Tom Merry—"
"I refuse to do hand out anything",
Twimble. I refuse to do anything well
wath that this is a tick."

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"If you waste any money, you will try
to dodge the food regulations with it,
you fat boundah. Waf's!"

"I despise such insinuations, D'Arcy.
Now, as captain of the Shell, Tom Merry,
it's up to you to begin. How much?"

Trimble held out the hat.
Tom Merry took it, and jammed it on
Trimble's head. The fat junior gave a
howl, and jammed on very tightly.

There was a howl in the Common-room
as Baggy struggled to extricate his head
from the hat. The nap of the handsome
silk topper was somewhat ruffled in the
process.

"You—you rotter!" gasped Trimble,
as the hat came off at last. "I despise
you, Tom Merry! I refuse to give you
unpatriotic. I refuse to ask you're to
contribute. How much, Cardew?"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Cardew.

If the collection had been a genuine
one, Ralph Cardew was not feeling very
amiable towards the French master just
then, and he would not have been likely
to contribute.

"How much, Levison?"
"Rats!"

"I say, Clive, as a Colonial, it's up
to you to set an example to these chaps.
The colonies always set an example to
the old country you know, or where
should we be? How much?"

"Mine's a thick ear," said Sidney
Clive, laughing. "Come and take it,
Baggy; you're welcome."

Baggy did not come and take it.
"I say, D'Arcy—"

"Wats!"
"Now, look here, D'Arcy, it's up to
you; the nobility ought to set a patriotic
example." Trimble held out the hat to
the Honourable Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy; you're welcome.

Now, then, shall out!"
Arthur Augustus did not shell out. He
took a running kick at the silk topper,
and it flew out of Trimble's hands, and
sailed almost up to the ceiling.

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Trimble.

"Pass!" yelled Blake, as the topper
came fluttering down.

"H, h, h, h!"
Lowther passed, and Blake received

the topper, and sent it across to Manners, who passed again to Digby. Digby passed again to Trimble, catching him upon his fat little nose with the topper.

"Yarrog!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, crickey!" gasped Trimble. "You—you rotters! You've ruined that hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Serve you right, you fat wascal!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I do not approve as a wule of damagin' a fellah's clobber, but undah the circe, Twimble, you deserve to lose your toppah!"

"Jolly lucky it isn't mine!" said Trimble.

"Bai Jove! Isn't it yours?"

"No fear!"
 "You uttah young wottah, did you bowwow that toppah?"

Trimble grinned.

"Yes, rather!"

"My aunt! Whose is it?" demanded Blake.

"D'Arcy's!"

"What!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

A well of merriment came from the juniors. The face of the Honourable Gussy was extraordinary in its expression.

"Mum-mum-mine!" he stuttered.

"Yes, yours. You see—"

Trimble got no further. The swell of St. Jim's made a wild rush at him, and Baggy fled, with a roar.

The fat junior disappeared at express speed through the doorway, with Arthur Augustus raging on his track.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it!"

"Good old Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the merry juniors continued to pass the topper, which certainly was not likely to gather about the noble head of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 4.

Below the Belt.

THERE was no collection in the School House for the unfortunate Mossoo. Such an idea would certainly never have occurred to anybody but Baggy Trimble, and to Trimble only as a method of raising the wind.

However hard pushed Monsieur Morny might have been for that necessary article, cash, he could scarcely have accepted a whip-round from his junior pupils. Indeed, Mossoo's ears would have burned if he could have known that his difficulties were the subject of discussion in the junior Common-room.

Trimble's attempted collection naturally made Mossoo's financial stringency a matter of discussion. Most of the fellows felt sympathetic.

It was known that Mossoo's people had lived in the region of France occupied by the unspeakable Hun, and that they had escaped to Paris with nothing but the clothes they stood in. That had come out long ago, and it was pretty well known that most of Mossoo's salary went to assist his needy relatives over the Channel. There had been talk about Mossoo before, and a certain paw-ticket.

The juniors sympathised heartily with Monsieur Morny, and wished him well. But there were a few fellows, like Trimble and Mellish and Racke and Crooke, who found amusement in the idea of the French master being stony and worried for cash.

Cardew of the Fourth was not exactly a fellow of that kind, but assuredly he did not waste any sympathy upon Mossoo.

Cardew's angry, passionate nature had been roused to bitter resentment by the

scene in the Fourth Form-room. He could neither forget nor forgive the licking Mossoo had given him before the class.

The fact that most of the fellows were down on him for badgering the worried master only made him the more obstinate. Both Levison and Clive lacked him on the subject in No. 9 Study, but they found their study-mate in a bitter and sulky mood.

Cardew was a good deal of a puzzle to the juniors of the School House. He had good qualities, there was no denying that; but there was a curious taint of reckless blackguardism in his character, which sometimes came to the top. He could not forget the humiliation his lofty pride had suffered in the scene in the Form-room. And he had no secret in his own study of his intention to make the French master "sit up" for it.

"You can let him alone!" growled Clive, when Cardew mentioned the matter. "Mossoo is a good sort enough!"

"He hasn't licked you!" sneered Cardew.

"I haven't badgered him in class!"

"Rot! We always pull his leg!" said Cardew.

"I've seen Levison doing it often enough!"

"There's a limit," said Levison.

Cardew laughed sardonically.

"You weren't always so careful about the limit, Levison! I've heard from Mellish about something that happened here—Mossoo pawning things to send money to his relations. Wasn't it you who found out about the paw-ticket, and told all the fellows?"

Levison flushed crimson.

It was part of the punishment of Levison's former way of life that reminders were constantly cropping up of the past he would gladly have forgotten. Levison was very different now from the Levison of the past; but the past was there, and was not quite forgotten.

"Oh, let that drop!" said Clive, quite sharply. "What does it matter what Levison did before you came to St. Jim's, Cardew? It's like you to rake it up, I must say!"

"Thanks!" yawned Cardew.

"And I'll speak out plainly, too," said the South African junior. "Mossoo's a good sort, and you asked for all you got the other day. If there's any scheme to make him sit up, you can leave me out of it. If you want to go for Herr Schneider, I'm your man. He's a Hun. But Mossoo's all right!"

"You can refuse your help when I ask for it!"

"Well, don't ask for mine, either," said Levison. "Let Mossoo alone!"

"Rats!"

Cardew walked out of the study with that Levison shrugged his shoulders, and Clive looked angry.

Life in No. 9 Study was not all harmony, though there was at bottom a sincere friendship among the three strangely-assorted juniors.

"There'll be a row in this study some day!" growled Clive.

"Oh, let him rip!" said Levison.

"It's only his temper. He'll get over it. Come down to cricket!"

Clive nodded, and his face cleared. His anger never lasted long.

But the opposition in his own study determined Cardew to keep on the way he had marked out for himself. The grandson of Lord Reckness had learned a good many lessons since he had come to St. Jim's, but he had a good many still to be learned.

When the next French lesson came round, the Fourth-Formers wondered whether Mossoo would be ratty again. Most of them determined to be very dutiful, now that they knew—from

Trimble—what was the matter with his nerves.

Mr. Latham left the class, and, as it happened, there was an interval of a few minutes before Mossoo came in. He had paused to speak to the Form-master in the passage. Cardew stepped out of his place.

He calmly took the chalk Mr. Latham had used in the last lesson, and stepped quietly to the blackboard.

The juniors watched him, grinning. They supposed that Cardew was about to draw a caricature on the board—a sufficiently impertinent proceeding, but regarded as humorous from the junior point of view.

But it was not a more or less artistic picture that the Fourth-Former intended to chalk on the board.

He dashed down a sentence, and as he stepped back the whole Form gasped as they read what he had written on the board. It was a simple French exercise, but it had a point in its reference to the unfortunate Mossoo's financial position.

It ran:

"Avez vous de l'argent dans les poches?"

The juniors stared at the chalked exercise.

"Have you money in your pockets?" said Jack Blake, translating.

"What have you written that for, Cardew?"

"Bai Jove! Wub that out at once, Cardew!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus wrathfully.

"You uttah cad!"

"Shame!" growled several voices.

Cardew's face flushed a little. The taunt conveyed in the sentence was plain enough, and it was an unworthy one.

Perhaps Cardew resented as he heard the disgusted murmurs of the juniors, for he made a movement towards the blackboard again. But it was too late. Mossoo was at the door, and Cardew had barely time to drop into his seat when the French master entered.

Monsieur Morny was very quiet and grave, but he was not bad-tempered. He gave his class a kind smile.

"I think I keep you waiting a meenit, isn't it?" he said. "I am sorry for zat. Nos grooms. Now it is zat ve will begin!"

The Fourth Form were breathless with expectancy.

At any second the French master's eyes might fall upon the insulting sentence chalked on the blackboard.

The juniors waited for the explosion.

They had little doubt that Mossoo would understand the allusion.

They had not long to wait.

Monsieur Morny turned towards his desk, and as he did so, his glance fell on the blackboard.

He stood quite still.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room.

Monsieur Morny had read the sentence, but he was still looking at it, as if it mesmerised him.

What was he going to do?

The French master turned at last to the breathless class. His sallow face had become quite pale, with a little spot of red burning in either cheek.

"Someonevun have written on ze board, n'est-ce-pas?" he said, in a quiet and trembling voice.

Silence.

"Who have written zat?"

There was no reply.

"I zink zat some gargon he wish to insult me," said Monsieur Morny.

"I zink zat boy has a bad heart! I will say no more."

He took the duster and deliberately wiped out the chalk. Then, without any further reference to the matter, he plunged into the lesson.

Monsieur Morny was not ratty that

afternoon. His manner was very subdued, and at times his brow wrinkled in deep thought, and he seemed to forget that he was instructing the Fourth Form in the mysteries of his native language. But there was no ragging in class. The juniors were respectful and attentive, and the looks some of them cast upon Cardew showed pretty plainly that he had something to expect when lessons were over. The quiet dignity with which the French master had dismissed the insult went straight to the hearts of the juniors, and even Cardew felt a twinge of repentant shame. But he had something more than his conscience to reckon with—after lessons.

CHAPTER 5.

Despised by the House!

"WOTTAH!" Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with that remark, and with his noble nose highly elevated, the swell of St. Jim's passed Cardew in the passage after lessons.

"Cad!"
"Rotter!"
"Worm!"

Blake and Herries and Digby jerked out those epithets, as they followed Gussy.

Cardew stood with a crimson face. "Sneaking Hun!" said Dick Julian, passing him.

"Reptile!" chimed in Reilly.
"Purse-proud cad!" remarked Keruish.

"Blackguard!" said Lumley-Lumley. Nearly every fellow in the Fourth had something to say to Cardew. They left him standing with crimson cheeks and eyes sparkling with rage.

Blake & Co. had been inclined to give him a more drastic punishment, in the form of a ragging. But the open contempt expressed so plainly by all the Form, was a sharper punishment for Cardew's proud spirit than a ragging would have been. He turned to Levison and Clive, with a bitter look.

There had been repentance in Cardew's heart, which was not really ungenerous. But open condemnation had the effect of rousing all the evil in his nature.

"Haven't you anything to say?" he sneered.

"Nothing!" said Levison curtly. "You know what I think, I dare say!" And with that he walked away.

"I've something to say," said Clive, his eyes gleaming at his study-mate. "You've taunted Mosso with his poverty. Only a purse-proud cad would do that! You've made the whole Form despise you. I never imagined you could be so rotten mean!"

Clive followed Levison. Cardew drove his hands deep into his pockets. He had been in disgrace with his Form before this. But it looked very serious this time.

Even Mellish and Trimble, taking the cue from the others, had passed him with a sneer. It was a luxury to Mellish and Trimble to feel that they were entitled to despise anybody.

Cardew went out into the quadrangle at last. The Terrible Three came up to him there.

"I've heard about your rotten trick, Cardew," said Tom Merry. "I want to tell you what I think of it. Only a cad would have done it!"

"Only a rotten cad!" said Lowther.
"Only a rotten measly cad!" said Manners, with emphasis.

Cardew's hands clenched convulsively. The chums of the Shell turned their backs on him and walked away.

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Figgins & Co., of the New House, passed him a few minutes later. Figgins, Kerr, and Patty Wynn gave him glances that brought the blood surging to his cheeks again.

Cardew strode towards them. "What have you got to say?" he said, between his teeth. "You confounded New House cads—"

"Don't talk to us!" said Figgins disdainfully. "You must rub it in about poor old Mosso being hard up, must you? You purse-proud rotter! Do you think you're any the better for having a wad of fivers in your pocket-book? You're not fit to clean Mosso's boots!" Cardew struck out, full at Figgins's face.

The blow did not reach the mark. The New House Co. collared the School House junior, sat him down forcibly on the ground, and walked away.

Cardew staggered to his feet, crimson with fury.

"Here he is!"
Half a dozen Third Form fags came up. Evidently the story of Cardew's insult to Mosso was spreading. Wally D'Arcy minor—and Manners junior, Joe Frayne and Levison minor, and two or three more of the fags surrounded Cardew. Wally pointed an indignant and somewhat grubby forefinger at him.

"Look at him!" he said.
"Look at 'im!" repeated Joe Frayne.

"Rotter!"
"What did you do it for, Cardew?" said Levison minor. "What did you do such a rotten, caddish thing for?"

"Because he's a howling cad!" said Reggie Manners.

"Yah!"
"Clear off, you cheeky little imp!" shouted Cardew, infuriated by this last humiliation. It was altogether too much to be ragged in the open quad, by a gang of inky-fingered fags.

"Yah!"
It was not an elegant exclamation, but it was intensely annoying. Cardew made a fierce rush at the fags.

They scattered before his charge, but only to yell from a distance:

"Puppy!"
"Cad!"
"Yah!"

Cardew strode towards the house. He did not want any more of this. But outside the School House he ran into Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn of the Shell.

"Here comes the cad!" said Grundy. "Cardew, you sneaking rotter—"

"Ain't you ashamed of yourself?" demanded Wilkins.

"If we had you in the Shell, we'd scrag you!" said Gunn.

"Scrag him, anyway!" said Grundy, who was always for drastic measures.

"Scrag the purse-proud rotter! Fancy chucking a man's poverty in his face—especially a good sort like old Mosso! Collar him!"

Cardew dodged into the house. He did not want a handing from three big Shell fellows.

He was breathing hard now. A Form ragging would have been nothing to this. The thought that he was scorned by his schoolfellows was the bitterest blow his pride could have received.

In the hall he found Baggy Trimble. Trimble immediately assumed a most tremendous sneer. As a matter of fact, Baggy Trimble did not quite see what all the fuss was about, but he was not going to lose the opportunity of expressing lofty scorn. And as Cardew had refused to lend him any money, though he had plenty of it, Baggy was glad of the chance to get his own back in this way.

"Rotter!" said Trimble. "I wonder you ain't ashamed of yourself, Cardew, I do, really! I'm going to use my influence in the Form to have you sent to Coventry! You're a disgrace to the Fourth—ye yarroocoooh!"

Contempt from Baggy Trimble was a little too much.

Cardew seized Baggy's fat little nose between finger and thumb, and compressed his grip mercilessly.

"Goog-goog-goog!" came in agonised accents from Trimble. "Led dol Yoogh! Burr! Grrrrrrrr!"

"Cardew! Mauva' garçon!" It was Monsieur Merry's voice. "Zat you release Trimble at once!"

Cardew gritted his teeth, and released Trimble, who clasped his nose with both hands.

Mosso had come along the passage at a most unlucky moment.

He fixed a stern glance upon Cardew's sullen face.

"I am shock at zis!" he said severely. "Know you not zat it is wrong to bully a boy zat is so smaller as yourself, Cardew?"

Cardew's eyes blazed. It was too much to bear. The junior who had stood up face to face to Cutts of the Fifth was no coward, and the undeserved charge stuck him to the quick.

"Look here—" he began furiously. "Zat is no' ze way to speak to me, Cardew. Silence, viz you!"

"He was b-b-bullying me, sir!" wailed Trimble. "He's hurt my nar-nose! I was only telling him how much I despise him, sir, for chalking on the board—"

Mosso flushed.

"Zat vill do, Trimble! You must not tell ze tales, Cardew, zat was a mean action, and if your schoolfellows ze despise you, you must expect zat. If you touch Trimble vunce more, I report you to Monsieur Railton."

He passed on, and Cardew, choking with rage, turned to the stairs. Trimble ceased to writhe with anguish, and chortled.

"Yah! Rotter!" he called out.

Cardew did not look back. He went on to his study, and closed the door after him with a slam. He was sitting in the armchair with a black brow when Clive and Levison came in to tea. They did not speak to him.

Cardew gave them a sullen, savage look under his brows.

"So you're keeping this up against me?" he said at last.

Clive looked at him.

"I'm not going to apologise to Mosso?" he asked.

"Apologise to Mosso!" Cardew ground his teeth. "I'm going to make him sit up, hang him!"

"Then you needn't trouble to speak to me again!"

"Do you say the same, Levison?"
"Oh, please yourself!" said Levison.

"You did a caddish thing, and you ought to apologise for it. If you won't, you won't, and there's an end."

Cardew gave his study-mates a dark look, and went out of the study, slamming the door. He did not come back to tea.

CHAPTER 6.

Arthur Augustus Chips In.

"A FIVAH!"
"Corn in Egypt!" said Blake and Herries and Digby, with one voice.

"Yaas, watah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking very pleased. The crisp five-pound note rustled in his slim fingers with a musical sound that was quite unaccustomed in Study No. 6 in these days.

Lord Eastwood, Gussy's respected

pater, had been growing remarkably careful with money in the latter days of the war. Perhaps he thought Arthur Augustus could do without remittances, as his share of the general national sacrifice. Arthur Augustus bore it with noble patience. Indeed, he had confided to his friends that, for the sake of seeing the Huns thoroughly licked, he would be content never to look upon a fiver again.

Still, he was very pleased to see a fiver once more.

There were many ways of using it. A few little luxuries for tea could be allowed—with due regard to the restrictions imposed by the Food Controller. Such articles as were not restricted could grace the festive board, and would make the war-bread go down a little more pleasantly.

"Spreads in the study would be in wathah bad taste, considerin' that everybody is gettin' short of grub," Arthur Augustus remarked. "But there are some things a chap can still buy as much as he likes of—"

"Beer, Frimense," suggested Blake.

"And whisky!" remarked Dig.

"And champagne!" suggested Herries.

"It is really vevy odd that those articles are still offahed for sale," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, I should not touch the wotten stuff in any case; but even if I were a terrific drinkah, I should be villin' to dvink only watah for the duviation of the war."

"With a little tea and sugar and milk with it," agreed Blake. "Water's a very good drink with those along with it."

"Wats! Now, pway let us think it out gey seriously, about the things we can get without waskin' actin' like food-bogs, deah boys. We will have Tom Mewey and Mannahs and Lowthah and Clive, if they will come without Cardew. Of course, they will bring their own bread, if they want any—likewise sugah. Have we any sugah?"

"Not a merry lump!"

"I'm afraid we can't get any sugah at the tuckshop," said Arthur Augustus ruefully. "Can we ask fellows to a spread without any sugah for the tea, Blake?"

"Certainly you can!" said a voice at the door, as Mrs. Lowthah looked in. "I can tell you a dodge for sweetening the tea, if you like."

"Pway do, deah boy!"

"Call in a cabinet-maker," said Lowthah seriously.

"A— cabinet-makah!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"What use would a cabinet-maker be?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wealdy do not see—"

"You see, a grocer can only make the tea sweet," explained Lowthah. "But a cabinet-maker can make a whole dining-room suite."

"Yes, uttah ass!"

"Well, I like that!" said Lowthah. "That's the best thing I've done for the Comic Column of the 'Weekly,' and I'm letting you hear it first."

"Pway keep all the west for the Comic Column, Lowthah! If you would

care to come to the spread without any sugah, Lowthah, we shall be vevy pleased to see you and your friends."

"Rely on us!" said Lowthah affectionately. "Never shall it be said that Study No. 10 refused a feed in war-time! Never! Perish the thought! By the way, did you know that Macdonald of the Fourth was in the Flying Service?"

"Wats!"

"Fact!" said Lowthah. "If you ask him where he was born, you'll find that he's an Ayr-man."

And the humorist of the Shell walked on, leaving Study No. 6 to digest his latest pun.

"It must be feahful for Tom Mewey and Mannahs, sharin' a study with Lowthah," remarked Arthur Augustus. "We get his feahful puns in the 'Weekly,' but those poor chaps get them every day. Now, help me make up a list of things, deah boys. We must get as good a spread as poss, but we must be vevy careful to avoid anythin' like food-hoggin'."

Blake & Co. set their wits to work upon that task, and a list was drawn up. Then Arthur Augustus slipped the fiver into his pocket, and took the list, en route to the school shop, while Blake and Herries and Dig cleared up the study a little for the gathering.

Baggy Trimble met Arthur Augustus in the lower passage, with an expansive smile. Baggy had already scented the fiver.

"Hallo, old chap!" said Trimble lovingly.

"Wats!"

"I say, Gussy—"

"Pway do not address me as Gussy, Twimble!"

"Look here, you know," said Trimble, as D'Arcy was passing him in his most stately manner, "I'm backing you up about poor old Mossoo, you know. I think it's fearful for the poor old beast to be hard up—"

"I must request you, Twimble, not to speak of Monsieur Morny in that mannah!"

"I'm down on Cardew, you know, for ragging him," said Trimble, cudgelling his fat brains for some means of ingratiating himself with Arthur Augustus, and getting an invitation to No. 6. "I think it's a rotter, you know. In fact, I remonstrated with him about playing tricks in Mossoo's study—"

Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Is Cardew playing tricks in Mossoo's study?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes!" grinned Trimble. "I've been watching him—I— mean, I happened to notice him. Of course, I'm down on him. I follow your lead, Gussy. By the way, if you want anything cooked in Study No. 6, I'm your man. 'I'd do anything to oblige a chap I really like—"

"Is Cardew in Mossoo's study now?"

"Oh, yes! If you're standing a spread—"

Arthur Augustus strode away. His eyes were gleaming under his knitted brows as he made in the direction of Monsieur Morny's study.

Trimble blinked after him discontentedly. He had referred to Mossoo to obtain favour in Gussy's noble eyes, for the sake of the spread. But the swell of St. Jim's evidently took a serious view of the matter—the young man, as Baggy saw things.

D'Arcy reached Mossoo's study, tapped at the door,

in case Mossoo was there, and opened it. Cardew was in the room.

He started and spun round as the door opened.

His startled look showed that he fancied for a moment that the French master had caught him. He breathed more freely as he saw Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the doorway.

"Oh, it's only you!" he said.

"Well, what do you want?" snapped Cardew.

"What are you doin' heah, Cardew?" demanded the swell of the Fourth sternly.

"Find out!"

"I have come heah to find out, Cardew."

"Go and eat coke!" said Cardew savagely. "What are you meddlin' for?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply, but he advanced into the study, with a grim brow. Cardew had a bottle of gum in his hand, and he had taken the French master's slippers from under the arm-chair.

It was pretty clear what he intended to do. Arthur Augustus pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said briefly.

"When I've finished what I came here to do," said Cardew coolly. "Not before!"

"I shall not allow you to play tricks on Mossoo, Cardew!"

"Rats!"

"If you do not immediately leave this study, Cardew, I shall eject you by force!" said Arthur Augustus, his eyes glittering.

Cardew laughed.

"I give you one minute, Cardew!"

said the swell of St. Jim's, breathing hard through his nose.

"If you want Mossoo to come in and catch scrapping in his study?" grinned Cardew.

"I am quite indifferent on that point, Cardew, so long as I pwevent you from playin' wotten tricks upon a gentleman whom I respect highly!" said Arthur Augustus. "Are you goin'?"

"No," said Cardew mockingly. "I'm not goin'!"

"Then I shall thow you out!"

"Go ahead!"

Arthur Augustus wasted no more time in words. His noble blood was at boiling-point. He fairly hurled himself upon Cardew.

Cardew met him, grip for grip. There was a terrific struggle.

Arthur Augustus whirled Cardew to the door; but Cardew was strong, sturdy, and determined. He whirled Arthur Augustus back again, and they crashed into the table. The table rocked, and a cascade of books and papers went to the floor.

"Oh, you wottah!"

"You silly ass!"

"Bai Jove! I will give you a feahful thwashin', Cardew!" panted Arthur Augustus.

"A bit above your weight, I think!" grinned Cardew.

"I will show you, you wottah!"

Both the juniors were excited now, and the scrap became energetic. There was hard and hasty pummeling on both sides, but they got no nearer the door. The folly of such a combat in the French master's study—to which Mossoo might return at any minute—was forgotten by both. They were thinking only of struggling and punching, and certainly they put their best into it.

They did not hear a step in the passage, they did not see a startled and astounded face that looked in at the open door.



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"Mon Dieu! Vat is zis?"

Monsieur Morny had returned.

Crash!

The struggling juniors went down, and Arthur Augustus rolled over the gumbottle, which Cardew had dropped. The gum was flowing out on the carpet, and Arthur Augustus mopped it up with his elegant jacket as he rolled.

Cardew fell on him, but Gussy's fist drove on his chest, and pitched him off. Arthur Augustus sat up in the gum.

"Ow! Gwoogh! Bai Jove! Mossoo!"

Monsieur Morny strode into the study. The two crimen and dusty juniors scrambled to their feet.

CHAPTER 7.

Mossoo Is Too Impartial!

"G ARCONS! Young rascals! Vat is all zis?" shouted Monsieur Morny.

"Gwoogh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You come to fight viz yourselves in my study!" shouted Mossoo, scarcely able to believe the evidence of his senses. "I am shook—I am amaze! Impudent garcons! I punish zis severely!"

"Oh, deah!"

Cardew grinned.

Monsieur Morny naturally did not guess for a moment what was Arthur Augustus' noble motive in being there. He found two juniors fighting in his study, and the room in disorder, and naturally he was angry.

He seized a cane from the table.

"Hold out ze hand, Cardew!" he thundered.

Cardew held out his hand calmly.

Swish! Swish!

"Now you, D'Arcy! You may go viz you, Cardew! D'Arcy, hold out ze hand at once!"

Cardew left the study. He lingered in the passage, however, to see how Arthur Augustus would get on. The idea of Gussy being fanned by Mossoo, considering why he was there, made Cardew chuckle.

"You hear me, D'Arcy?" thundered Mossoo.

"Yaas, sir."

"Zen hold out ze hand!"

"Undah the circe, sir—" Arthur Augustus paused.

He could not tell Mossoo that Cardew had come there to play a trick, and that he had come there to stop him.

Such a course savoured both of sneaking and of imitating "Good Little Georgie," the hero of the pious story-books.

Mossoo naturally did not understand. He swished the cane in the air.

"Vill you hold out ze hand, D'Arcy. You had boy?"

"Weally, Mossoo Morny, you are labahin' undah a misapprehension!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I came heah with a vey good motive."

"I find you fighting in zis study, isn't it?"

"Yaas, but—"

"Vunce more, vill you hold out ze hand?"

"Certainly, sir, if you insist; but I beg to assah you that—"

Arthur Augustus got no further.

Mossoo's patience was exhausted. He seized the swell of St. Jim's by the collar.

Whack! Whack!

"Yawoogh!" roared Arthur Augustus, as the cane descended on his shoulders.

"Oh, cwums! Yoop!"

"Now go viz you!" panted Mossoo. He pushed Arthur Augustus into the passage, and closed the door after him with a slam. Then he rang for the page to clear up the disorder.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

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"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cardew.

"You cacklin' wottah—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps you are sorry for meddlin' now! Mossoo seemed to be awfully grateful—what?"

"Mossoo misundahstooed the posish—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He regarded you with contempt, Cardew!

Arthur Augustus strode away, leaving Cardew still chortling. Jack Blake met him as he came breathlessly upstairs.

"Hallo! Been in a dog-fight?" he asked.

Herries and Dig looked out of Study No. 6. They blinked at the dusty, gummy, and dishevelled swell of the Fourth.

"What's happened to you?" roared Herries.

"Gwoogh! I can't stop to talk now. I am howbilly gummy! Some of the howwid gum has gone down my neck! Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed on, to get to the dormitory. He was badly in need of a wash and a change. His remarkable appearance had drawn attention from all sides, and quite a crowd of fellows followed him to the dormitory, greatly interested.

Arthur Augustus tore off jacket and waistcoat, collar and tie, gasping the while. He had had most of the gum on.

"What on earth have you been doing?" demanded Tom Merry. "Wasting gum in war-time, Gussy?"

"Unpatriotic!" said Monty Lowther solemnly. "If the war lasts ninety years, the last lap may depend on the last bottle of gum, Gussy!"

"Oh, wats!"

"We may need all the gum we can get, to help us to stick it out!" added Lowther.

"Pway don't make rotten puns now. Lowther! I have had a fearful time!" gasped D'Arcy. "Mossoo is wathah hasty!"

"You haven't been scrapping with Mossoo?" yelled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Certainly not, you ass! I found that wottah Cardew playin' twicks in his study, and went to stop him. Mossoo caught me fakin'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' watevah to cackle at! Cardew was goin' to put that gum in Mossoo's slippahs. As it was, he dropped it, and I willed in it—"

The juniors shrieked.

"Oh, Gussy!" said Blake, almost weeping. "You'll be the death of me yet, I know you will! Why were you born so funny?"

"I do not regard the matkah as funny in the least, Blake! I regard it as howwid. Of course, I could not sneak about Cardew, and so Mossoo supposed I was playin' some twick or othah in his study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And instead of listenin' to my explanation, he whacked me with his cane, and slung me out! Actually slung me out by my neck, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wesspect Mossoo vey much, but I must say that he is wathah an ass. I shall nevah get this gum out of my hair. Gwoogh!"

"We'll all lend a hand with a scrubbing-brush," said Lowther.

"You will do nothin' of the sort, you ass! I do not see what you fellows are gwinnin' at. I see pothin' watevah myself to gwain at."

But the other fellows did. And they not only grinned—they yelled. They sat on the beds and roared, while Arthur Augustus washed and scrubbed and

combed and finally rested himself to a state of cleanliness. He was very pink when he had finished, and had changed into another jacket.

"Don't forget the fiver," said Blake. "You've left the fiver in your jacket, you duffer!"

"Bai Jove! Yaas."

Arthur Augustus picked up the gummy Eton jacket, and felt in the pocket for the banknote. He felt very carefully, and drew his hand out—empty! A very peculiar expression came over his face.

"Well, why don't you get it?" asked Blake.

"It is not there, Blake."

"Wh-a-t?"

"The fivah is gone!"

CHAPTER 8.

A Terrible Suspicion!

"G ONE!" shouted Blake and Herries and Digby, with one voice.

"Yaas!"

"Well, you ass!"

"You chump!"

"You frabjous duffer!"

"I wefuse to be called a fwabjous duffah, Blake! The beastly thing must have dropped out while I was scwappin' with Cardew in Mossoo's study. I only just slipped it into my pocket, you know, to take down to the tuckshop. I will go—" Arthur Augustus paused. "Oh, I do not care to present myself in Mossoo's study. You may as well go, Blake."

"Well, I suppose it's about his study somewhere," said Blake. "Better get it back before it's swept away."

"Yaas, wathah! The study was wathah upset. I suppose Toby will be called in to set it to rights. He may sweep it up."

"My hat! I'll buzz off, then."

Jack Blake hurried downstairs.

He tapped respectfully at the French master's door. Mossoo's tone was unusually sharp as he called out:

"Come in! Entrez viz you."

Blake entered.

"Toby, the page, had tidied up the study, though there were still very visible marks of the gum on the carpet. Monsieur Morny was looking disturbed and irritable.

"Vat is it?" he asked enphatically.

"If you please, sir, D'Arcy dropped a banknote while he was here!"

"Vat? Vat?"

"A five-pound note, sir," said Blake. "He must have dropped it here while he was scrapping with Cardew, sir. Would you mind my looking for it?"

Monsieur Morny made an irritable gesture.

"Zere is no banknote here," he said. "You may see! If it was drop here ze garcon—Toby—he have sweep it away. You better go and ask zat garcon if he have seen it."

"Very well, sir."

As the study floor was quite clear it was evident that the banknote, if it had been dropped there, was no longer there. Blake left the study.

"Got it?" asked Herries and Dig together in the passage.

"No! Toby's done up the study."

"My hat! It can't be gone for good," exclaimed Dig, in dismay.

"I'm going to see Toby."

Blake descended to the boot-room, where he found Toby. That youth was busy at the knife-machine, and he gave Blake a grin.

"You've just done up Mossoo Morny's study, Toby?"

"I ave, sir," said Toby, "and he give me sixpence. Hanbody else would ave made it a shillin'."

"Shillings are scarce in war-time, Toby," said Blake. "Buy War Loan with the tanner, old scout, and keep it for your old age! Did you pick up a five-pound note?"

"Hey?"

"D'Arcy dropped a fiver in the study. Have you seen it?"

"I ain't, Master Blake," said Toby. "Which if I 'ad, I should have handed it to Mossoo Mornay at once, shouldn't I?"

"You might have swept it away without seeing it."

"I ain't done any sweepin'" said Toby. "I picked up all the things that was upset, and mopped up the gum with a duster. I 'adn't any broom there at all."

Blake looked perplexed.

"You're sure?" he asked.

"Course I am, Master Blake!"

"You didn't bring any rubbish or anything away from the study at all—dust, or anything in a dustpan?"

"Notin' at all, Master Blake."

"All serene, Toby."

Blake left the boot-room. He met his chum in the upper passage, and reported. There were four very grave faces now.

"Gussy must have dropped it somewhere else," said Herricks. "Where on earth did you drop it, Gussy, you ass?"

"It must have dropped in Mossoo's study, Hewwies. It could only have come out of my pocket when I was wollin' o'vath with Cardew on the floor."

"Toby's seen nothing of it," said Blake abruptly. "It couldn't have been there when he came in to tidy up. Let's have a look along the passage."

"But it is impossible—"

"Let's look, anyway."

The chums of the Fourth made a careful survey of the passage, from the French master's door to the stairs. They

extended the survey up the staircase, and to the Fourth-Form dormitory. A number of fellows joined in the search, and they arrived in the dormitory, and searched there round D'Arcy's wash-tubs, and in vain. Then the gummy Btons, discarded by the swell of the Fourth, were taken in hand, and every pocket examined, though Arthur Augustus insisted that it was impossible that the fiver could have got into another pocket. The search was vain.

"Well, my hat!" said Blake at last, tired and exasperated. "The dashed thing isn't here! Where can it have got to?"

There was a chuckle from Baggy Trimble, who had helped in the search. Baggy felt sure that if he found the fiver, he would make one of the guests at the spread in Study No. 6. Unfortunately he had not found it.

Blake glared at him as he chuckled.

"What are you gurgling about, you fat image?" he demanded.

"I know what I know!" grinned Trimble.

"You howlin' ass, Twimble, what are you drivin' at?"

"I know where that fiver is."

"You do!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Well, where is it?"

"Mossoo's got it."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

A dozen started faces glared at Baggy Trimble. Trimble chuckled again. He was quite sure that he had solved the mystery.

"You fellows ain't very bright," said Trimble patronisingly. "I really thought it at once. I knew you wouldn't find it. Of course Mossoo's got it!"

"Mossoo?" said Blake czedily.

"Mossoo?" shouted Tom Merry.

Another chortle from Trimble.

"Yes, of course! You all know how

jolly hard up Mossoo is. He don't know what to do for money. D'Arcy dropped the note in his room, or thinks he did. Mossoo slung him out. How do you know he didn't pick his pocket while he had his hands on him?"

"Bai Jove! You young—"

"Anyway, the banknote was left in Mossoo's study, and it had vanished before Toby got there to clear up!"

grinned Trimble. "Banknotes can't vanish into thin air, can they? Mossoo's got it."

"You slandering young villain!" roared Manners. "Are you accusing Mossoo of stealing?"

"You uttah young wotlah!"

"Shut up, you fat Hun!"

"Dash it all, though, it does look queer," said Kerruish. "The banknote ought to be found. It's true about Mossoo being hard up."

"We know that; but he wouldn't steal, you ass!" said Tom Merry. "Only a fat idiot like Trimble would have thought of such a thing."

The juniors looked at one another.

Baggy Trimble's suggestion, in spite of themselves, gave them a chill of doubt and uncertainty. Was it barely possible that Mossoo, driven hard by want of money, as they knew he was, had seen the banknote on the floor, and taken it?

It seemed incredible! But there was the possibility, at least, and certainly the banknote had vanished.

"It's all rot!" said Levison at last.

"Might as well suspect Toby of picking it up and keeping it!"

"Just as likely, or more likely," said Tom Merry. "Might as well suspect one of the fellows here present of having found it, if you come to that!"

"Trimble, for example!" grinned Lowther.

Baggy jumped.

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"Why, Lowther, you rotter, you—
you—"
Trimple gasped.

"Well, don't you be in such a dashed hurry to suspect other people!" said Monty Lowther. "You're more likely to be it than Mossoo any day!"

"Oh, crumbs! I haven't—I didn't—I wasn't—"
stuttered Trimple.

"Look here, the banknote's got to be found!" said Tom Merry resolutely. "It must be still in Mossoo's study, and it's got to be found there. We'd better go and explain to Mossoo that we can't find it, and ask him to let us search the room!"

The juniors hesitated a little. It was not an agreeable task to face the irritated French master with a proposition to turn his study inside out. But for Mossoo's own sake it ought to be done. It was quite certain that in a short time Trimple's yarn would be all over the school, and that every fellow who disliked Mossoo would be inclined to credit it.

The juniors exchanged glances, and after a pause the Terrible Three and Study No. 6 started. They reached the French master's door, the rest of the fellows waiting at the end of the passage.

Tom Merry tapped and opened the door.

Monsieur Morry was standing at the table.

An addressed envelope lay on the table, and Monsieur Morry was folding a letter.

Upon that letter the eyes of all the juniors fixed as if it hypnotised them; for Mossoo was folding a banknote in the table, and even from the doorway the juniors could see the figure "5 5" on it.

Mossoo spun round with an irritable exclamation, slipping the banknote into the folded letter as he turned.

"Vat is it now?" he exclaimed. "Vat do you want? You will keep on to come and worry me, isn't it?"

"I—we—we—" Tom Merry stammered.

The sight of the banknote in Mossoo's hands had almost deprived him of the power of speech.

"He's got it!" came in a thrilling whisper from behind them.

Baggy Trimple was blinking past them into the study, with distended eyes. Fortunately, Mossoo did not hear that whisper in the passage.

"We—we came—" stammered Blake helplessly.

"Mon Dieu! Take feefy lines of ze Henriade, each of you, and leaf me in ze peace, isn't it?" exclaimed Mossoo.

The juniors crowded away from the door. It did not seem much use to search the study now.

Mossoo angrily closed the door after them.

CHAPTER 9. Good Old Gussy!

"B A I Jove!"

"Oh, it's rotten!"
Tom Merry & Co. gathered in the Common-room. The other fellows had joined them there. A dozen or more juniors were interested in the search for the banknote, and there was keen curiosity on the subject.

Tom Merry & Co. were simply floored. Their first thought, perhaps, would have been to keep the miserable man's guilt a secret. They were more inclined to mercy than to justice. But that was impossible. Baggy Trimple had seen it all.

And there seemed no possible room for doubt.

Mossoo's "hard-ness" was no secret. Baggy Trimple's absurd scheme of a col-lection had drawn enough attention to THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 484.

that. Yet now he was suddenly in possession of a five-pound note, immediately after the one had been lost in his study!

The banknote had undoubtedly been lost in his study—it could not be found; but Mossoo, who was known to be hard-up, had been spotted in the act of sending a five-pound note away by post!

Even Arthur Augustus could not hold out against evidence like that. His face was pale and miserable. He respected Mossoo, and he sympathised with him, and he was a terrible shock to him. Mossoo's need of money was probably more bitter and urgent than the juniors had supposed. But theft! It was too sickening to think of!

"Oh, it's howwid!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

He did not seem to feel the loss of the five itself.

"He, he, he!" came from Trimple.

"Shut up!" roared Blake, glaring at Baggy.

"It's rotten!" said Tom Merry. "But—"

He broke off. He was seeking for something to say in defence of the French master; but he could find nothing.

"What about the five?" said Herricks, hesitating.

"Well, it's gone," said Digby. "But Gussy's not going to lose it for good."

"What do you say, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry hesitatingly.

Arthur Augustus raised his eyes to his chums.

An expression of great firmness had come over his face.

"Mossoo did not take my five, dear boys!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"It looks remarkably suspicious, I admit, but I respect Monsieur Morry too much to think him capable of bonin' a chap's cash. I feel that circumstances have made matters look black against him, but I refuse to believe for one moment that he had it!"

"But we saw it in his fist!" howled Baggy Trimple.

"Gussy!" murmured Blake.

"We saw a five-pound note in Mossoo's hand," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"The fact that it was in Mossoo's hand is evidence that it was his own!"

"Oh!"

"I admit that I was knocked ova' at first," said Arthur Augustus, colouring.

"But I am ashamed of havin' allowed the suspish to entah my mind for one moment. Mossoo is incapable of such a wassally action!"

The juniors looked at Arthur Augustus and at one another.

"Do you mean to say that the five in Mossoo's fist wasn't your five?" asked Levison.

"Yaas."

"But we know Mossoo's hard up. Where could he have got a five?" said Levison.

"Only the other day Trimple heard him—"

"Twimble is an exaggerativ' beast, anyway! I would not hang the Kaiash on Twimble's evidence!"

"Look here, D'Arcy, you know—"

"Well, that's right enough," said Jack Blake slowly. "But—but your five was lost in Mossoo's study, Gussy. Where is it?"

"A fiver disappears in Mossoo's study, and Mossoo suddenly comes into possession of a fiver, after being hard up!" said Levison. "I must say it looks pretty clear!"

"Looks like it to me," agreed Clive.

"I am convinced that Mossoo is the victim of wotten circumstances, because I am quite sure he is incapable of such a wotten act!" said D'Arcy firmly. "I shall therefore let the matter drop!"

There was a sardonic laugh from Cardew, who had been listening without

offering an opinion himself. He broke in now.

"If that fiver wasn't your five, D'Arcy, there is no harm in going to Mossoo's study to search for your fiver. It's still there, of course!"

"I am not askin' you for advice, Cardew!"

"Well, Cardew's right there," remarked Lowther. "If what you think is correct, Gussy, your five is lying about Mossoo's study somewhere, and there's no harm in going to look for it!"
Arthur Augustus' colour deepened. All eyes were upon him.

"I prefer to let the matter drop!" he said at last.

"And lose the fiver?" asked Cardew.

"Yaas."

"When you believe it's simply lying about Mossoo's study, not yet picked up?"

"No reply."

"It's pretty clear what D'Arcy really thinks," said Cardew coolly. "He thinks Morry has his fiver!"

"Are you castin' doubt on my word, Cardew?" asked Arthur Augustus quietly, but with a glitter in his eyes.

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"Not at all! You are trying to make yourself believe that Mossoo is innocent because you don't like to suspect any body of a mean action. That's what I mean. These fellows know it, too. You don't want anything more said about your lost fiver, in case it should be proved that Mossoo stole it!"

"I refuse to discuss the matter with you, Cardew! The thing dwops heah. I am suah, dear boys, that you agree that the boss said about such an unpleasant affair the besth. Afiah all, it was my fiver, and I have a wight to lose if I like. I apologise to the gentlemen I asked to the study spread, which will not now come off!"

"All serene!" said Tom Merry. "I dare say you're right, Gussy. I hope you are, anyway. Least said, soonest mended, at all events!"

"Hear, hear!"

Cardew broke in.

"I don't agree!"

Tom Merry gave him a contemptuous look.

"And who are you, anyway?" he snapped. "Mind your own business, and don't shove your nose in where it's not concerned!"

"Or you may get it pulled," said Masters.

"I don't agree!" repeated Cardew coolly. "Monsieur Morry is a thief, and a thief ought to be shown up. I think we ought to go to the House-Master about it."

"It's for D'Arcy to do that, if anybody does," said Dick Julian, "and D'Arcy has decided what to do."

"I should not do that, even on the advice of my friends," said Arthur Augustus, "and I shall certainly not do it on the advice of a fellow I despise!"

"Well, what I think is—"

"Cave!" murmured Brooke of the Fourth.

A neat figure in a frock-coat appeared in the doorway of the Common-room. It was Monsieur Morry.

A dead silence fell on the juniors. Monsieur Morry evidently did not know that he had been the subject of discussion. He gave the juniors a kind smile. He had a letter, sealed with big blobs of red sealing-wax, in his hand.

"Mes garçons, I come here viz you to ask you little favour," said Monsieur Morry, "I wish verree much to catch you Post-office viz zis lettair, and zo time he come close to end. Zis lettair I want to be recommande—vat you call registered. Will some good boy go to zo

village upon ze velocipedo—I mean ze bicycle—for to catch ze post pour moi!"

The juniors stood rooted to the floor. There was little doubt in any mind but Arthur Augustus' that the letter in the Frenchman's hand contained the stolen fiver. And Mossoo, ignorant of the hideous suspicion, was asking them to take it to the post—and send it away beyond the hope of recovery! It was a strange situation, and the juniors looked red and discomforted. It was then that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rose to the occasion, with the generosity which was part of his character.

He stepped towards the French master, while the other fellows stood dumb.

"I shall be vewy pleased to go, sir!" he said respectfully.

"Zank you, mon garcon," said Monsieur Morny, with a somewhat curious

Blake and Herries and Dig. looked at him with curious inquiry.

"Posted it?" asked Dig.
"Yaas, deah boy. I have just taken the receipt to Monsieur Morny."

"Oh!" said Blake.
And nothing more was said.

CHAPTER 10.

Cardew on the War Path!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW smiled sarcastically as he came into No. 9 study that evening. Cardew seemed to have found some consolation for the unpopularity his persecution of the French master had brought upon him.

Levison and Sidney Clive were working at their prep, and they did not look up as he came in. Cardew sat down to work without a word. But

"Think of our morals!" said Cardew sarcastically. "Why, when I came to this school, I was fairly floored by the high moral tone I found here. It took me some time to get my breath back—honour bright! I thought I had dropped into a Sunday School by mistake. I told you so, Levison."

"You talked silly rot," said Levison. "It's a habit of yours, it seems."

"Sober as a judge!" said Cardew. "The high moral atmosphere got on my nerves a bit, I admit it. I pulled round. Chap can get used to anything. I've got used to it. And now, you want me to let that high moral atmosphere be contaminated by a thief—without sayin' anything! You're askin' too much!"

"Look here, cut off the gas, and tell us what you're drivin' at!" said Clive abruptly. "You've got your knife into Mossoo because he licked you for being cheeky, and you're thinking of using this rotten affair against him. Is that it?"

Cardew coloured a little. The direct speech of the Colonial junior had a somewhat discomposing effect upon him.

"It's D'Arcy's affair, and he's let it drop," said Clive. "Nobody else has a right to say anything. If you meddle in it, Cardew, you'll have the fellows down on you more than they are at present, and that's enough; I should think!"

"Mind your own bizney, Cardew, and let it alone," said Levison.

Cardew's lip curled.
"The man's a thief!" he repeated. "I don't like pickpockets myself. He might have one of my banknotes next, by gad!"

"Oh, don't drag your dashed money into it!" growled Clive. "I'm fed up with your banknotes, for one!"

Cardew's eyes gleamed.
"Shush!" said Levison. "No scrapping in No. 9! Look here, Cardew, cut it short. What's your game?"

"I'm goin' to show up that thief!" said Cardew coolly.

"There's absolutely no proof that he's a thief!" exclaimed Clive angrily. "The more I think over it, the more I'm inclined to agree with D'Arcy."

"Something wrong with your thinker, then, I should say. If he's innocent, I suppose he can prove it. The matter's not going to drop. I'm going to make it the talk of St. Jim's from end to end!"

"You'd better not!"

"That's my intention! He laid his hands on me," said Cardew, his eyes glittering. "I said at the time I'd make him repent it." Now I find he's a thief, and every decent fellow ought to be up against him. I'm goin' to show him up an' get him kicked out of the school. The Head wouldn't keep a thief here, if he knew. Mossoo's goin', an' I'm goin' to see that he goes. That's the programme! Are you backing me up?"

"You'll get no backing in this study!" said Clive scornfully. "What you'll get if you keep on, is a House ragging!"

"I'll risk that! What about you, Levison?"

"I'm down on you, all along the line," said Levison at once. "Let Mossoo alone. There's no proof against him. If D'Arcy doesn't choose to act, it's nobody else's bizney. I'm against you, and so will everybody else be, except perhaps Trimble and Racke and that lot."

"Then I'm goin' it alone!" said Cardew, shrugging his shoulders.

"Better think first!"

"Rats!"
Levison and Clive left the study.

Ralph Cardew did not show up in the

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The fags surrounded Cardew.
(See Chapter 5.)

look. It was little more than an hour since he had caned D'Arcy and turned him out of his study. "You are a good boy. Here is ze letair. You will be careful of zat letair, D'Arcy, because there is money in him."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Je to remercie—again I zank you!" Monsieur Morny walked away, leaving the sealed letter in Gussy's hand. The swell of St. Jim's did not look at his comrades. He walked down the passage into the quadrangle. From the doorway of the School House Tom Merry & Co., in silence, watched him wheel his bicycle down to the gates.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry, at last.

"Doesn't our Gussy take the merry biscuit?" said Blake, in affectionate admiration. "Who'd have played up, like that a-berping Gussy? Good man!"
Arthur Augustus jumped on his machine, and peddled away to Rylcombe. When he came back, tea was ready in Study No. 6, a very frugal tea.

when prep. was over he spoke. Clive had risen to go down, without looking at Cardew—relations were still strained in No. 9 study.

"Hold on a minute," said Cardew. The South African junior turned back.

"You haven't apologized to Mossoo yet," he said. "I think I asked you not to speak to me again till you'd done so."

"I'm not likely to apologise to a thief," said Cardew, with a sneer. "You know he's a thief, Clive."

"I hope he isn't," said Sidney Clive shortly.

"You hope he isn't, but you know he is," smiled Cardew. "What do you think, Levison?"

"Nothing. It isn't my business," said Clive.

"It's my business, however," said Cardew coolly.

"Yours!" said Clive. "How do you make that out?"

"The man's a thief. A thief ought to be shown up, and kicked out of the place. Consortin' with thieves isn't good for nice young fellows like us."

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

Common-room that evening. He had no friends there now, and glum looks and silence did not please him. But the fact that the whole House was down upon him was an added incentive. He needed courage to keep on as he had started. He believed Monsieur Morny guilty, and he would show the thief up; and if the fellows did not like it, they could lump it. Cardew had plenty of courage; and it did not dismay him to find himself alone against the House.

There was a French lesson on the following day, and many curious glances were bestowed on Monsieur Morny by his pupils. The French master seemed to be in very good spirits, as if a worry was off his mind. He was very kind and patient, even with Trimble, whose obtuseness was extremely exasperating, and whose laziness was more exasperating still.

The juniors could not help observing the change in Mossoo's mood. Neither could they help drawing conclusions from it. Doubtless the immediate trouble on poor Mossoo's mind was removed now that he had been charged a five-pound note to the relatives who looked to him for succour. Some of the fellows knew that Mosgo's relatives, ruined by the invasion of the Prussian savages, had escaped to Paris, and afterwards removed to London.

They could imagine the ruined family, poor and frugal, struggling hard to make both ends meet in the great city where the expenses of living had increased so terribly during the war. Their wants must have been a heavy strain upon Mossoo's salary, liberal as that was.

If ever there was excuse to be made for a thief, it could be made for Monsieur Morny. Not that the juniors were disposed to excuse a thief, by any means. Whatever the cause, whatever the motive, a theft was a theft, the meanest and basest of petty crimes. Yet, in Mossoo's case, the doubt as to his guilt, added to the force of extenuating circumstances, D'Arcy never wavered in his firm belief in the French master's innocence.

The fellows found themselves regarding Mossoo only with compassion.

D'Arcy had firm faith in his honour—yet he had refused to take any further action in the matter of the lost banknote—a tacit confession that he was not at ease in his mind. But Arthur Augustus was quite remarkable that day for the extreme respect with which he treated the Frenchman.

Only Cardew was obdurate. To Cardew's mind the man was a thief; whether his people were necessitous or not, he had no right to send them stolen money. He refused to admit the least doubt of the poor gentleman's guilt. The fact that Mossoo had laid hands upon Cardew's lofty person was probably at the bottom of his fixed belief. It was not logical, but it was very like Ralph Reckness Cardew.

After lessons Cardew came out by himself. His study-mates had said nothing of his declared intentions, but they avoided him. There was to be no doubt as to their opinion of his line of conduct.

Cardew did not seem to note it. He sauntered out into the quadrangle by himself.

After a time Monsieur Morny came out to take his accustomed promenade under the old elms.

Cardew was lounging under the elms, and he strolled away as the French master came along.

Monsieur reached the trees. He raised his eyes because he had upon a cardboard placard that was affixed to the trunk of one of the elms.

He stared blankly at it. Upon the placard was daubed with a brush, in large letters:

LOST IN A STUDY!
A £5 NOTE!
QUI L'A TROUVE?

CHAPTER 11.
Accused!

MONSIEUR MORNÉ gazed at the placard on the tree, and rubbed his eyes, and gazed again.

There was no doubt as to whom the insulting reference indicated. The fact that the last sentence was written in French pointed the allusion.

"Mon Dieu!" murmured the French master.

Several fellows had spotted the placard from a distance. They looked on, almost breathless, wondering what the French master would do.

"By gad, that's plain enough for him!" muttered Crooke of the Shell. "He's bound to take some notice of that, Recke."

Recke grinned and nodded. Monsieur Morny still stood motionless before the placard. He seemed unable to believe his eyes, or to credit the meaning of it that forced itself upon his mind. "Mon Dieu!" he repeated dazedly.

"Mon Dieu!"

"He's getting steam up!" murmured Mellich.

Cardew looked on from a distance, with his hands in his pockets, smiling. Fellows were gathering to the scene. The fact that Mossoo stood rooted to the ground, staring at the tree, and that half a dozen fellows were staring at him, could not fail to draw attention. "Terrible!" they said, on their way to the cricket-ground, paused, and came up, and Study No. 6 joined them.

"What's on?" asked Tom Merry, addressing Crooke.

Crooke jerked his thumb towards Mossoo.

The captain of the Shell went a little nearer the French master, and his face crimsoned as he read the words on the tree.

"My hat!" murmured Lowther. "Who could have done that?"

"Lost in a study—a £5 note—who has found it?" said Blake, reading out the placard. "Well, that's straight talk! Who did it?"

"Cardew, I suppose."

"The cad!"

"Thanks!" yawned Cardew, who was standing near.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglasses upon Cardew, his eye glittering with wrath behind it.

"Did you write that, Cardew?"

"Yes."

"And placed it there for Mossoo to see?"

"Oh, yes!"

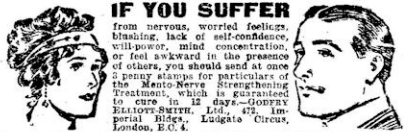
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"Then you are an uttah, wevolutin' cad, Cardew!"

"Blake, deah boy, will you hold my jacket?" D'Arcy's voice trembled with rage. "I am goin' to give that disgusting cad a fearful thrashing."

"Shush!" murmured Blake.

Monsieur Morny looked round at last. His face was white. He beckoned to the juniors to come closer, and they reluctantly advanced. Monsieur Morny pointed a trembling finger at the notice on the tree.

"Ous voyez! You see zat!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Wat does zat mean?"

Silence!

"Hier—zat is yesterday," continued Monsieur Morny. "Blake come to me and say zat a banknote he is lost in my study, and I send him to ask Toby. Is it zat ze banknote have been find, Blake?"

"No, sir," said Blake reluctantly.

"Zen he is still to lose himself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has zat mattair been reported to ze Housemaster?"

"N-n-o, sir."

"Zat quoi—vy not?"

Silence again.

"Zat banknote he is lose," went on Monsieur Morny. "Bon! He is lose in my study! Zere is a sentence in my language—qui la trouve? Zat is as much as to say zat I, Adolphe Morny, find him!"

The juniors' faces were crimson. Cardew was smiling.

"It is as much," resumed Mossoo, his voice rising—"as much as to accuse me—mon Dieu!—of to steal zat banknote vich lose himself."

"Pwaj accept our assurance, sir, that we think nothin' of the sort," said Arthur Augustus. "We are well awaah, sir, that you are incapable of such a fearful and mean action."

"I zank you, D'Arcy. But somevun he zink so."

"Ahem! Some witten cad—"

"Zat notice he is put up zere for me to read him, n'est-ce-pas? Zat is to accuse me of to be un voleur—a thief. Moi, un voleur! C'est incroyable! Is it so zat mes garcons zink de me zat zere?"

"Somevun who zink zat vicked zing he put up zat card for me to see viz me eyes, isn't it?"

"Only a wevolutin' cad would have done such a thing, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "We uttably despise him, sir!"

"Je te remercie, mon enfant. Mais—mais—but zat zis cannot end here! I am accuse—moi! Accuse of to steal banknote! I take zis paper, and I go to ze Housemaster. Non, I go to ze Head! Doctaire Holmes sall say vezzer I sall be insult like zis!"

With a trembling hand the French master removed the placard from the tree, and walked away towards the School House.

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"He must be innocent!" he said.

"He couldn't have the nerve to talk like that if he had the banknote."

"Dashed play-actin'!" sneered Cardew. "He was bound to take notice of it, an' go to the Head about it. If he hadn't, it was as good as admittin' it!"

"The juniors could not help seeing the former of that remark." But Monsieur Morny's words, uttered more in sorrow than in anger, had made a deep impression upon them.

"Well, the fat's in the fire now," said Monty Lowther. "You'll have to face the music, Cardew."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not afraid of that! I'm willin' to point out to the Head that he don't want a thief here. I expect you fellows to stand by me."

"Us stand by you?" exclaimed Tom Merry. "You confounded checky cad, do you think you're going to get any help from us?"

"You uttah wottah—"

"Why not? You're bound to tell the truth, I suppose. Tellin' lies wouldn't be in keepin' with the high moral atmosphere you have set up here. You know Mossoo stole the five, and you're bound to say so."

"You know nothing of the sort," said Tom Merry quietly. "I believe Gussy was right all along, and that there was a mistake. I can't believe that Mossoo was acting just now. And accusing a man of theft without any proof is rather too thick—for me! You can have the credit of that for yourself, Cardew."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Here comes Kildare," said Blake.

The captain of St. Jim's came out of the School House.

"Merry!" he rapped out.

"Yes, Kildare."

"All the Fourth and the Shell who belong to the School House are to get into the Common-room. Tell them so."

"Right ho!"

"I understand that the Head's going to speak to you," said Kildare. "What have you been up to, you young rascals?"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Well, buck up!" said the St. Jim's captain.

The word was passed round to the School House juniors. Evidently Monsieur Morny had been to the Head, and Dr. Holmes had taken the matter in hand. Tom Merry & Co. and the rest of the School House juniors gathered in the Common-room.

"Blessed if I see this!" growled Herries. "I don't see why Mossoo should jump to it that School House chap stuck that placard on the tree. More likely to have been a New House chap really, considering."

"It's because the banknote was lost in the School House," said Tom Merry. "It belonged to a School House chap. It's an affair of our House. I fancy Mossoo suspects who put the card on the tree, too. He would be a silly ass if he didn't guess that it was Cardew."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The juniors waited uncomfortably for the Head.

Dr. Holmes came into the room, and Monsieur Morny followed him in. The French master was looking pale and harassed. The Head was stern and angry—sterner than the fellows had ever seen him look before.

Some of the juniors glanced at Cardew. But the delinquent did not seem uneasy. He stood with a slight smile hovering over his lips as the Head swept the silent juniors with his glance.

CHAPTER 12.

Cardew Faces the Music!

DR. HOLMES held up the placard for all to see. There was a grim silence in the Common-room.

"My boys," said the Head, "Monsieur Morny has been insulted by the unknown person who has written this placard. He thinks it implies a reflection upon his honour, and has placed the matter in my hands. I can scarcely believe that any boy would be base enough to make such an insinuation against a gentleman whom we all respect so highly. It appears that a School House boy lost a banknote in this House yesterday? The boy will stand forward."

Arthur Augustus stood out.

"It was you, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Where did you lose the banknote?"

"In Monsieur Morny's study, sir."

"Kindly explain how you came to do such an extraordinary thing as to lose a banknote in a master's study!"

"I—I was scwappin'—"

"You were—what?"

"Ahem! Fightin' with a chap—"

"In a master's study!" thundered the Head, aghast.

"Yaas, sir. I cannot explain how I came to be fightin' in Monsieur Morny's study, but that would be smakin', sir, but I asahh you—"

"Never mind that, D'Arcy. The matter in question is the loss of the banknote. You think you dropped it in the study?"

"It must have slipped out of my pocket there, sir. I missed it immediately afterwards."

"You have reported the loss to your Housemaster?"

"N-n-o, sir."

"You know that you should do so, D'Arcy?"

"Ya-as, sir."

"Then why have you not done so?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply. It was a difficult question to answer.

"Is it possible, D'Arcy, that you have said nothing about your loss, because you entertained a foolish and unworthy suspicion of Monsieur Morny?"

"Certainly not, sir! I sawed all these fellows that Monsieur Morny was uttably incapable of anythin' of the sort."

"I am glad of that, D'Arcy. Yet the fact that you did not report the loss seems to indicate something of the kind."

Arthur Augustus was crimson and silent.

"Some boy—at least one—appears to entertain such a suspicion, and has practically accused Monsieur Morny. I order that boy to stand forward, if he is here present."

The Head paused a moment, but no one came forward.

"Unless this censor is a coward as well as a slanderer, he will come forward and substantiate his charge!" said the Head, with bitter contempt.

Cardew walked out before the juniors. Whatever he was, he was not a coward. Dr. Holmes' glance fixed on him.

"It was you, Cardew?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have dared—"

"I thought the matter ought to be made public, sir. I fully expected you to be called into it. I think a thief ought not to stay at St. Jim's!"

"Cardew! You venture to accuse Monsieur Morny?"

"Yes, sir!"

A gasp of deep-drawn breath came from the juniors. Cardew's coolness amazed them. Monsieur Morny was scarlet now. The Head seemed at a loss.

"You are doubtless aware, Cardew, that you will be expelled from the school for making such a charge against a master!" he said, at last.

"Not if it's proved, sir," said Cardew.

"Dare you suggest that it may be proved?"

"Certainly, sir!"

There was unwilling admiration in the looks turned on Cardew. Few fellows would have been so icily cool in such a situation.

"It is my duty to hear your supposed proofs," said the Head. "Monsieur Morny's honour is beyond question; but you may say what you have to say. Proceed."

"D'Arcy's banknote was lost in Monsieur Morny's study," said Cardew calmly. "Toby was called there shortly afterwards to tidy up, and he saw no—"

nothing of it. It must have been picked up."

"Is that all?"

"Oh, no, sir. Some fellows went to Mossoo's study to ask permission to search for it. They found Mossoo in the act of fastening it up in a letter, which he afterwards gave to a fellow to post for him."

"Cardew!"

"Those are the facts, sir."

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Monsieur Morny.

The Head seemed almost dazed for a moment. In all the course of his scholastic career he had never come upon a fellow quite like Ralph Reckless Cardew.

A junior who had the nerve to stand forward and accuse a master of theft, with perfect coolness and tranquility, was something entirely new in his experience.

"Have you now finished, Cardew?"

"Yes, sir."

"Monsieur Morny was seen placing a banknote in a letter, it seems. Who saw him?"

"Merry, and half a dozen other fellows."

"Merry!"

"Yes, sir, we saw that," said Tom reluctantly.

"And you fancied that the banknote in Monsieur Morny's hands was the banknote D'Arcy had lost in his study, Merry?"

"We—we—we didn't know what to think, sir," stammered Tom. "D'Arcy maintained that it was nothing of the sort."

"D'Arcy appears to be gifted with more common-sense than his school-fellows," said the Head drily. "Cardew, what reason had you to suppose that the banknote in Monsieur Morny's hands was not his own property?"

"We knew he was hard up, sir," said Cardew coolly.

"Boy!"

"It was no secret, sir. Every fellow in the House—and in the New House, too, I dare say—knew that Mossoo was hard pushed for money."

"Mon Dieu!"

"I am sorry to see that a master's private affairs are discussed in this ill-natured way among his pupils," said the Head. "I am sorry, and I am both surprised and shocked."

The juniors looked red and discomfited. Their feelings towards Ralph Cardew were quite Hunnish at that moment. He had brought this wretched scene upon them. They could not tell the Head that it was Trimble who had started the talk about the French master's affairs.

"But even supposing your surmise was correct, Cardew, you had no right to suppose that Monsieur Morny was anything but a gentleman of the highest honour and integrity, as I well know him to be!"

"Zank you, sir!" murmured poor Mossoo.

"It is outrageous," pursued the Head angrily, "that Monsieur Morny's purely private concerns should be discussed among you, and that this base charge should compel me to speak of them myself! For Monsieur Morny's sake, however, I am compelled now to mention that yesterday afternoon I personally handed him a five-pound note, as an advance on his salary!"

"Oh!"

It was a general gasp in the Common-room.

Even Cardew flinched a little.

"Mes garçons!" said Mossoo, more in sorrow than in anger. "Could you, zen, suspect me of such a zing? My poor famille zey have lost ezervizing by zo Boches—zose dastard Chermans! Doctair

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 484.

Holmes was soo verree good zat he give me zat five pounds in advance upon my salaire for ze next term. I tell zat good doctaire zere is a difficulty, and he insist upon helping me in zat way. But zat you should suspect me—"

"His voice broke.

"You need make no explanations to the boys, Monsieur Merry," said the Head. "Such of them as entertained this ridiculous suspicion will, I am sure, be thoroughly ashamed of themselves!"

"Oh!"

"Have you anything else to say, Cardew?"

Cardew's face was troubled now. The wind had been completely taken out of his sails.

Not for an instant had it occurred to him that the French master had acquainted the Head with his trouble, or that Dr. Holmes might have advanced him a part of his salary for the ensuing term.

None of the juniors had thought of such a circumstance.

Yet it was simple enough.

And with the discovery that the five-pound note which had been sent off by registered post had been handed to Mossoo by Dr. Holmes, the whole miserable suspicion fell to the ground.

That had clinched the matter. Apart from that, there was no evidence whatever that D'Arcy's banknote had been found at all.

Cardew's assurance was gone now. But, to do him justice, it was less the prospect of severe punishment that weighed upon him as the knowledge that he had falsely accused an honourable man.

There was a long and painful silence in the Common-room. The Head waited for Cardew's reply; but the reply did not come.

CHAPTER 13.

Cleared Up at Last!

"D'ARCY!"

"Yaas, sir."

"Your banknote, it appears, has not been found. If it was, indeed, lost in Monsieur Morny's study, it is there still. Three of you will kindly go and search for it—you, Merry, and Blake. The rest of you will remain here!"

"Very well, sir," said Tom Merry.

The Head swept out of the Common-room, and the three juniors followed him. Monsieur Morny followed more slowly.

They entered Mossoo's study.

The room was as tidy and neat as a new pin, and it seemed difficult to suppose that a lost banknote could be lying about it unheeded. Dr. Holmes rang the bell for Toby.

"Toby, you tidied up this room yesterday for Monsieur Morny?"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not see a banknote?"

"No, sir."

"In what state did you find the study?"

"There was a lot of books an' papers about the floor, sir, and a bottle of gum upset over 'em, sir."

"You collected up the papers?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did you do with them?"

"Put 'em back on the table, sir, in a 'cap," said Toby. "Mossoo told me to, sir."

"Very good! You may go. Are these the papers, Monsieur Morny?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"Have you examined them since they were collected and replaced?"

"No, monsieur. I have not zink about it."

"Merry, kindly turn over those papers

one by one, and examine each one carefully," said the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

The captain of the Shell proceeded to do so. Evidently the Head supposed that the dropped banknote might have been picked up carelessly among the scattered papers. It was possible enough, as Tom had to admit.

He turned over the papers carefully. There were several sheets of French exercises, prepared for the Second and Third Forms, and several more of notes made by Mossoo on the lessons. Two or three French newspapers were among them also. All the papers were dabbed more or less by the gum.

A sudden exclamation left Tom Merry's lips as he turned over a folded copy of the "Figaro."

"My hat!"

"Well, Merry?"

Tom held up the folded newspaper. Adhering to it, stuck close, was a banknote!

The gum had fastened the two tightly together. It was not surprising that Toby, gathering up the loose papers, had failed to see it.

"Ah!" said the Head; and Mossoo's worried face lighted up. "That is doubtless your banknote, D'Arcy!"

"Yaah, wathah, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "I was fairly wollin' in the gum, and I had to change my clothes aftahwards. The fivah drowped in the gum, of course. I weally ought to have suspected that it might have been stuck to somethin'!"

"The paper must be damped, and the banknote can be detached," said the Head. "I am glad that the note is recovered!"

"Take ze papair viz you, D'Arcy," said Monsieur Morny. "I am done viz him."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You may return to the Common-room," said Dr. Holmes.

Tom Merry and Blake and D'Arcy returned, Arthur D'Arcy taking with him the newspaper to which the lost note was closely gummed.

He held it up as he entered the Common-room.

"Look at that, dear boys!"

"The merry liver!" ejaculated

Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Cardew.

Arthur Augustus bestowed a lofty smile upon the juniors.

"I do not wish to wub it in," he remarked. "It would be fah frown me to make such a wemark as 'I told you so'! But weally I must point out to you fellows that I said all along—"

"Be-wow!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"I'm jolly glad the note's found," said Blake. "That idiot Cardew upset the gum, and that chump Gussy rolled in it, and mixed it up with Mossoo's papers and his silly carcase—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"And there you are!" said Blake. "I don't think you care to be in your shoes now, Cardew!"

"Wathah not, bai Jove!"

Cardew shrugged his shoulders. He had made a bloomer, there was no mistake about that, and the time had come to answer for it. The suspicion against the French master had melted away like snow in the sunshin.

Dr. Holmes entered with Mossoo, and there was silence. The Head surveyed Ralph Cardew sternly.

"You are aware now, Cardew, that D'Arcy's banknote is found?"

"Yes, sir," said Cardew quietly.

"I trust, Cardew, that you will have the grace to apologise to Monsieur Morny before you leave the school!"

Cardew paled a little. Leave the school! He had known that it must come to that if he did not prove his charge, and his charge had been scattered to the four winds.

Monsieur Morry came forward, his brow very troubled.

"Monsieur le doctair!" His kind voice trembled a little. "Is it zat I may speak, and ask zat garcon shall be pardon? Ze injatry he have done is injatry to me, and I forgive him wiz all ze heart. I sulfair veeer mooch if zat boy he is sent away because of me. I beg—"

Dr. Holmes hesitated. He had felt it to be due to the injured master to expel his accuser from the school, as undoubtedly it was; but probably he was not sorry to find it possible to take a less drastic step. He gave the Frenchman a very kindly glance.

"If you make this request, Monsieur Morry—"

"Viz all ze heart, sir!" "You hear, Cardew? At Monsieur Morry's request, I shall allow you to remain in the school. Your punishment will be a flogging. You may follow me to my study!"

Cardew drew a deep breath as the Head rustled out of the room. He hesitated a moment, and then came up to the French master. Some strain of good in his curious nature had been touched by Mosso's generous kindness.

"Monsieur Morry," he said, in an even voice, "will you pardon me? I've treated you like a rotten cad, and—and I'm ashamed of it! I hope you will forgive me, sir!"

Monsieur Morry beamed. "Zat is enough, mon garcon," he said. "I forgive you wiz all ze heart!"

"Thank you, sir!" "And Cardew, with a tranquil face, followed the Head to his study to take his flogging."

"We all beg your pardon, Monsieur Morry!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "We— we never really believed it; only—only we're all sorry, sir, that we didn't have as much faith in you as D'Arcy had!"

"Zank you, my boy! Zat is all over now, and I zink of him no more," said Monsieur Morry gracefully.

"Thwee cheeals, deah boys!" ex-

claimed Arthur Augustus, as the French master left the Common-room.

And they were given with a will, making every echo of the old School House, and they rang very pleasantly in the ears of Adolphe Morry.

Levison and Clive found Ralph Reckness Cardew in No. 9 Study a little later. His face was a little pale.

He greeted them with a somewhat wry smile.

"I've been through it," he remarked. "Jolly good of Mosso to put in a word for me, wasn't it?"

"I should say so!" said Levison. "You didn't deserve it!"

"Agreed!" Cardew looked whimsically at Sidney Clive. "I've handed Mosso his apology, Clive. Am I restored to the honour of your friendship?"

Clive laughed. "I'm blessed if I know what to make of you, Cardew," he said. "Sometimes I think you're the biggest cad at St. Jim's, and then again you play up like a really decent chap. Anyway, we're friends again, of course!"

"Hear, hear!" said Levison. "And in No. 9 Study, at least, all was calm and bright."

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's — "D'ARCY MINOR'S BOLT!" — by MARTIN CLIFFORD.)

NOTICES.

Correspondence.

L. E. Oliver, 3, David St., North Carlton, Melbourne, Australia, with boy readers of any age above 15.

Jas. Prudden, 111, Camberwell Rd., Upper Hawthorn, Melbourne, Australia, with boy reader at Luton.

C. E. Armstrong, 11, Beach Parade, Dromedra, Geelong West, Victoria, with any boy readers in British Isles, Canada, or U.S.

H. Irvine, Box 434, Dunedin, New Zealand, with boy readers 16-17, British Isles or elsewhere.

Miss Eola Ruessell, Norseman, West Australia, with girl readers 16-19.

THE CRITICS BE HANGED!

By MONTY LOWTHER.

(Editorial Note.—Somebody seems to have been saying things which have put our esteemed contributor's back up. Monty does not really think that he is another Homer or Shakespeare, I may add.—T. M.)

When Mr. Homer published his Most famous work, the Iliad, There's nothing much more sure than this—

Each shrieking ass and silly cad Who scribbled criticisms for Contemporary Attic rags

Said: "Homer's style is very poor!" And sneered: "Note how his story drags!"

Then Mr. William Shakespeare's work—Quite meritorious, too—"King Lear," For instance—did those heathen Turks,

The critics, praise it? No dashed fear!

They said: "See here, Bill, this won't wash!"

Old Lear's talk is mostly rant; Cordelia's part is awful bosh.

Pray, Bill, be less extravagant!"

And Virgil really "wasn't half The poet that he thought himself";

Horatius Flaccus—mostly chaff, Not worth a place upon the shelf;

Keats "wouldn't do"; they doubted

Scott; Scorned Willie Wordsworth (so do I!);

Jumped hard on Milton: classed as rot! Old Browning; thought Carlyle a guy.

And critics really don't improve With tin's talk, as other people do.

The world is on the upward move; I think the critics should move, too.

But no! They're like their dads—run down

To-day's great genius, to exalt The classics—men of proved renown—

Same chaps with whom their dads found fault!

I never brag. I quite admit Bill Shakespeare's value. Even I—

Except when feeling extra fit— Can't kick our old friend Bill. But

Why Should every ass combine to praise Him and old Homer, Milton, Scott—

Whom asses brayed at in their days— And Bray at US? I call it rot!

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"D'ARCY MINOR'S BOLT!"

By Martin Clifford.

For a long time past frequent requests for a story dealing mainly with the Third Form have been reaching me. Next week's fine yarn meets them. The irrepressible Wally D'Arcy plays the chief part, and falls upon trouble. He is accused of theft, and his father, Lord Eastwood, is asked to come and take him away. Wally is innocent, but he will not face his father while under such a charge, and he bolts. After that interesting things happen—but I have no intention of giving away the whole story!

A ST. JIM'S GALLERY.

Will the many readers who have written to me on this subject try to be as patient as possible? I hope to start the series some time before long; but it is not easy to start. The artist has to get forward with his work, you see; and the articles themselves entail a vast amount of labour. It is not simply a

matter of sitting down and writing so many hundred words about Tom Merry or Jack Blake. That would be quite an easy thing to do after one had read only a dozen or two yarns. But there is much more in it than that. The man who writes such a series as this must know the stories from the outset, must have studied the characters till he feels almost as though he has lived with them; and even then memory will play him false at times. Now the number of men of whom all this holds good may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and leave a finger or two over! And the fact that a man is capable of doing a thing does not mean that he can be induced to do it. He may be capable, and yet unable—through pressure of other work. So have patience! As soon as may be, but not for a few weeks yet, I fear.

TWO GEM READERS.

I had a letter the other day from a lady reader of this paper. She is a Russian, though no one would guess it from her letter; she writes better English than most of us. She tells me

of a very pleasant little experience she had lately which concerns the GEM so intimately that I think the story of it well worth a place on this page.

"I had occasion to ask the way the other day of an errand boy," she says, "and he most politely raised his cap, and walked with me to the end of the street to put me in the right direction. I noticed that he was reading the GEM. I told him I enjoyed those stories, too; and he said: 'Do you, miss? They're great, aren't they?'"

There is no reason at all why an errand boy should not be a gentleman in every way that really matters. I think this reader of my paper is a gentleman, and I am glad to know that he is also a gem reader. I should not mind wagering that Arthur Augustus is one of his favourite characters!

Your Editor

EXTRACTS FROM

"Tom Merry's Weekly" & "The Greyfriars Herald."

A BARGAIN IN BULLSEYES!

By DONALD OGILVY.

NOBODY but Tom Brown would have thought of such a dodge.

Tom Brown is a New Zealand chap, and as keen as a razor. Fisher T. Fish prides himself on being cute, and never getting left, as he calls it. He says that a galoot would have to get up very early in the morning to pull the wool over his eyes. But Tom Brown did it, as easy as falling off a form.

Fishy is a tremendous talker, when he is given his head. He likes talking about stocks and shares, and rot like that; and he is never tired of telling us how his poppa corners things, and makes whacking profits by putting up the prices after he has cornered them. Fishy calls that business, though we call it something else in the Remove.

All the chaps remembered how Fishy tried his hand at cornering things himself once, by buying up the local supply of socks, when the fellows had started a sock fund for the soldiers. Fishy didn't make a success of that. But Fishy never says die. He is always looking out for a chance to make money out of somebody. One evening he was swanking about the whacking profits he would have made out of the war, if only he'd been grown up, when Tom Brown came into the Common-room.

Brown was looking awfully serious. "Pretty bad news for you chaps, especially Bunter," he said.

"I guess—," Fishy was going on. "Oh, dry up, Fishy!" said Bob Cherry. "What's the news, Brown?"

"More war prices," said Tom Brown. "There was a yelp from Billy Bunter."

"I say, they're not raising the price of tuck again, are they? It's too bad! Look here, if this goes on I shall join the Stop-the-War party."

"What is it this time?" asked Wharton.

"Bullseyes," said Brown. "Billy Bunter groaned. Bunter is specially fond of bullseyes; and since the food restrictions came in, he makes up with bullseyes for a lot of other things he's not allowed to have. Most of the fellows like bullseyes, too, so they were interested in Brown's news."

"I've just read it in the 'Times,'" said Tom Brown. "I was looking over old Prout's 'Times.' What do you think? Owing to the scarcity of sweet-stuffs, bullseyes are going to be five shillings a pound."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

"Rotten!" groaned Bunter.

"I say, that's rather thick!" said Bob Cherry. "The thickfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh sadly. "There will be no more gorgefulness for the esteemed Bunter."

Fisher T. Fish strolled to the door, and disappeared out of the Common-room.

But nobody specially noticed Fishy just then, except Brown!

"I say, you fellows, something ought to be done," said Bunter. "Why don't they appoint a Bullseye Controller?"

"And fix a maximum price!" said Bolsover major. "That's what I'd do."

"Then the bullseyes would follow the potatoes off the market," grined Vernon-Smith; "and you wouldn't be able to get any at any price."

"I—I say, lend me ten bob, Wharton!" said Bunter.

"Make it ten pounds," said Wharton.

"Look here, somebody, lend me some tin!" gasped Bunter. "The school shop ain't closed yet. Mrs. Mimble can't have heard of this, if it's only in to-day's paper, and I can get a supply in before she puts up the price."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow, you know," said Bunter. "But that will be too late; Mrs. Mimble will know by to-morrow. I say, Browney, lend me a quid."

"Ask me another," said Browney. "Lend me a quid, Bob Cherry—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Half-a-quid, then—five bob!" said Bunter, almost tearfully. "I'll hand you my postal-order immediately it comes, of course."

"I shall be getting my old-age pension by then, thanks!"

"Look here, you rotter— I say, Toddy! Will you lend me a quid, Toddy, and I'll let you have some of the bullseyes."

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" said Todd.

"But the news certain?" asked Wharton, looking rather suspiciously at Tom Brown. He knew Tommy of old.

"It's in the 'Times,'" said Tom. "You've actually read it there?"

"Yes."

"Well, that settles it," said Skinner. "Dashed if it wouldn't be a good idea to buy up a few bullseyes, anyway! I don't see why a chap should wait till to-morrow for the price to be raised."

"Jolly good idea!" said Bolsover major. "Half a dozen fellows started for the door."

"Hold on! Don't all go at once!" said Skinner. "We don't want old Mimble to smell a rat. One at a time. I'll go first."

"No, you jolly well won't!" said Bolsover major. "You'll go second. I'm going to have a bob's worth."

"Look here, Bolsover—"

"Look here, Skinner—"

"I tell you, I'll give you a pink eye if you get out of this room before I come back!" roared Bolsover major. "You wait for me!"

And Bolsover major trumped out. Skinner looked very annoyed, but he waited. After all, there was no hurry. Mrs. Mimble had a good stock of bullseyes. There was a good sale for them at Greyfriars, especially among the fags.

Of course, it was a good idea to buy a few before the price went up. But there would be enough to go round.

"Ain't you going for any, Browney?" asked Snop.

Tom Brown shook his head. "No. I don't think I'll trouble."

"But you like bullseyes—"

"Oh, yes!"

"You'll have to pay more to-morrow, you ass, when Mrs. Mimble hears about the rise."

"I'll chance it."

"Well, I'm going to have a tanner's worth, anyway," said Snop.

"Lend me a quid, Wharton!" wailed Bunter. "I want to get in enough for two or three days."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Here's Bolsover!"

Bolsover major came back into the Common-room, with a very red face. He looked wild.

"Got 'em?" asked Skinner.

"No!" howled Bolsover. "Sold out!"

"Sold out?"

"Yes. Not a blinking bullseye left in the shop!" shouted Bolsover. "Fishy's been there."

"Fishy?" shouted all the fellows.

"Yes. The scheming rotter's bolted off at once, and bagged the lot!" shrieked Bolsover major. "Mrs. Mimble told me. Fishy came in and ordered all the bullseyes she'd got in the place, and she lent him a big bag to carry 'em away in. He's paid, three pounds down for the whole lot."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, my word! Fishy isn't so much gone on bullseyes, that I've ever noticed," said Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "He must be going to have a terrific feed."

Fisher T. Fish strolled into the Common-room just then.

He was smiug.

"Hallo, you galoots, what's the excitement about?" he asked.

"What have you bought all Mrs. Mimble's bullseyes for?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, you've yeard of that already, have you?" yawned Fishy. "Nothing wrong in that, I suppose? They haven't passed a law yet against buying bullseyes. I guess I haven't heard of the appointment of a Bullseye Dictator."

"But what do you want 'em for?" asked Nugent. "You can't eat three pounds' worth of bullseyes in a whole term."

Fisher T. Fish smiled.

"I guess I've done it to oblige you fellows," he explained.

"How do you make that out?"

"You see, Mrs. Mimble would have put up the price to-morrow when she heard the news. I guess we cut our eye-teeth early in Nook York. I waded in and roped in the whole supply before Mrs. Mimble knew. Savvy? Any of you fellows who want bullseyes can come to me for them."

"Well, that's jolly decent of you, Fisher," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow. Will you let me have some now, and I'll hand—"

"Oh, crawl off, you fat clam! No tick."

"Of course, you're going to hand them out at the old price, Fishy?" asked Tom Brown.

Fishy chuckled. "See any green in this yere optic?" he asked. "I guess if you want bulseyes, you'll have to pay the market price for 'em. Five shillings a pound, of course."

"Oh, my hat!"
"Oh, you—you—"
Fishy laughed outright. He was almost bursting with satisfaction at his cuteness in cornering the bulseye supply in that way.

"I guess I might let you have them at four-and-eleven," he said, "because at four-and-eleven, you know. So you needn't think of walking down to Uncle Clogg's for 'em, or waiting till Mrs. Mimble has a new lot in. They'll charge you five shillings. My dear innocent galoats, the minute Tom Brown told us what he'd read in the paper, I spotted the chance! That's what comes of being raised in Noo York, and cutting your teeth early."

And Fishy fairly gloated. "Oh, you cute rotter!" said Skinner. "I jolly well hope that the news will turn out to be wrong, after all."

"I guess not. Browney saw it in the 'Times,'" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess that's a real reliable paper. I calculate I don't take chances. Ha, ha! Jever get left?"

"And you've bagged the whole supply of bulseyes in the school?" said Tom Brown.

"Yep!"
"Paid cash for them?"
"Sure!"
"Rather rotten for you if the news turned out to be unfounded," remarked Tom Brown. "You'll be landed with a

heap of bulseyes you don't want, and you'll be stony for a long time to come. What would you do with them?"
"Eh? The news is all right," said Fishy. "You said you'd read it in the 'Times.'"

"So I did."
"Well, then—"
"But I didn't mention that I wrote it there myself—"

"Eh?"
"With a pencil—"
"What?"
"On the margin—"
"Oh, crumbs!"
"And then read it," finished Tom Brown.

There was a gasp all right. Fisher T. Fish's face was worth a guinea a box, at least, as it dawned on him how the New Zealander had been pulling his Yankee leg.

"You—you—you—" Fishy seemed almost to have lost his voice. "You—you wrote it—in the paper—with a pencil—and—read what you'd written yourself?"

"Exactly! Here it is," said Tom Brown calmly, taking a folded "Times" from under his jacket.

We all stared at it. The "Times" has a wide margin, and on that margin Tom Brown had written, in pencil: "Tom Brown says the price of bulseyes will be raised to five shillings per pound."

Fisher T. Fish looked at it with his eyes almost bulging out of his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Jever get left, Fishy?"

"Then—then it ain't news at all!" gaped Fishy.

"Not at all!" assented Tom Brown. "I told you the exact facts; I'd read it in the 'Times.' I should have expected a cute Yankee to guess that I had written it there myself. Why didn't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You—you—it was a plant, then!" shrieked Fishy. "You—you wumgrump, you knew I'd go and rope in all the bulseyes, and—and spend every blessed cent I've got in my pockets, and—and—
Oh, Jerusalem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
The howl the Remove fellows gave could have been heard all over Greyfriars. Fisher T. Fish almost wept.

For a fortnight after that, Fisher T. Fish was stony broke, and he was making frantic attempts to get fellows to buy bulseyes of him—at the old price. But the fellows wouldn't.

In a couple of days Mrs. Mimble had a new stock in, and everybody who wanted bulseyes, went to the school shop for them.

Fishy was left with three quids' worth of bulseyes on his hands, and not a stiver in his pockets. He had spent his last penny in raising the three quids for that business deal.

Fishy looked like a Hun those days. Only Billy Bunter was willing to take any of the bulseyes off his hands—and he wanted them on tick, so there was nothing doing.

Mrs. Mimble refused to take them back, except at a big reduction; she didn't want them. Fishy got into the way of going about the school-asking fellows if they wanted bulseyes, and offering to deliver them in the studies free of charge if they'd only buy. But the fellows wouldn't; and at last Fishy was driven to peddling them cheap among the fags. How much Fishy lost on the deal he never let out—a pound, at least, I should say. And I think that the next time he goes in for a business speculation, he won't rely on information from Tom Brown!

THE END.

SKIMPOL'S SCORE.

By CLIFTON DANE.

I.
THE Common-room does not see much of Skimpy. That great genius seldom thinks it desirable, or finds it possible, to indulge in the kind of light conversation which goes on amongst us there.

But now and then he blows in, trailing in the wake of Talbot. Skimpy really thinks no end of Talbot, and I do believe he cherishes hopes that there will come a day when Talbot will put away childish things, such as footer and cricket, and go in—like Skimpy—for science and Professor Balmcrumpet.

"I should say that is a bit unlikely, though."

He came in with Talbot that evening, looking more absent-minded than ever.

We were talking cricket. There was a junior match with Greyfriars coming off in a day or two, and the team list had just been posted. There had been a little discussion about that. Not much, because those of us who were left out knew pretty well that the right men had been chosen, and, of course, those who were in the list were dead sure of it.

If we did not want to argue the case, they certainly didn't.

"It's all rot to say that anyone who chooses can play cricket decently!" remarked Levison.

"Who says it?" asked Tom Merry.
"The great cricketer, like the poet, is born, not made," said Monty Lowther blandly.

"Were you a carpenter's job?" inquired Kangaroo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Everybody laughed. It was a palpable hit for Lowther. He is quite a fair cricketer; but he is not, and will never be, a great one.

"You can make a moderate cricketer out of most chaps—not all," said Tom Merry. "Some are quite hopeless, anyway. Who was saying that anybody who chose could play cricket decently, Levison?"

"And what did the chap who said so mean by decently?" said Blake.

"Waa, wathah!" said the one and only Arthur Augustus. "Theah is ewicket an' ewicket, you know, deah boy."

"So there is," agreed Digby. "Tom Merry's sort is cricket, or old Talbot's, or that chap Wharton's. Yours is some of the 'an' crickety, Gustavus—the other kind, you know!"

"Oh, dry up, Gussy!" said Levison. "We didn't gather here for a solo performance on the jawbone of an ass! As a matter of fact, Gore is the chap who maintains that any fellow can play decently if he chooses."

"Why doesn't Gore, then?" inquired Lowther blandly.

Gore looked unpleasantly at our tame humorist.

"I could play a jolly sight better than you if I fagged at it hard enough!" he

growled. "It's all a question of that. As for what standard of play I'm thinking of, I should say any chap who can field tolerably, isn't an absolute wash-out as a bowler, and wouldn't stagger humanity by making double figures, would about fit the definition."

It was a fair enough definition, too. And Gore was right in what he meant—that by practising hard most fellows could reach that moderate standard. Not all. But then, he had not meant all, it seemed.

"Well, there are some chaps who would never travel that far," said Talbot.

"Yes, I know that. Levison didn't understand me—or didn't choose to!" Gore replied. "There's Grundy, f'rinstance."

"Wha-a-a-at!" roared the great George Alfred.

"I said 'Grundy.' Are you deaf?"

"You—you— I'll wipe up the floor with you! It's bad enough that I should be kept out of the eleven because Merry don't know a good man when he sees him, without— Oh, look out for yourself, Gore, for I'm coming for you!"

But half a dozen of us got between.

"This is a friendly discussion, not a political meeting, Grundy," said Lowther.

"Lemme get at him!" howled Grundy.

But we wouldn't.

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"Such as Grundy," went on George Gore, holding safe, "or Skimmy. I don't say Grundy's the only one. In fact, I think that Skimmy may be even a trifle more absolutely hopeless than Grundy."

Grundy gave a bull-bellow of rage. That did not surprise us. But we were a bit surprised when Skimmy said mildly:

"I think you are wrong, Gore. I have no desire to institute invidious comparisons between myself and Grundy. I have often heard him say that he is a player of high skill; and I have no reason to cast doubts upon his veracity." We howled at that. George Alfred ought to have felt no end pleased. It seemed that there was one fellow among us who believed that he could play cricket!

But he did not appear to be a bit better pleased with Skimmy than with us.

"Potty!" he said, touching his forehead significantly. "I'm sorry for him. Poor chap!"

"Skimmy says he believes Grundy can play cricket. Grundy says Skimmy must be potty," remarked Lowther, with a sad shake of the head. "I fear that Grundy is right! The evidence to me seems clear."

"Bai Jove, yass!"
"I fear that your notions of what constitutes evidence have no true scientific basis, Lowther," said Skimpole. "But let us leave that point, as a matter not bearing directly upon the argument. My contention is—"

"That Grundy can play cricket. He, he, he!" cackled Mellich.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to remark that there was a living wall between Grundy and Mellich.

"Not at all. As I have already said, that is no part of the present argument. I contend that anyone can succeed in becoming a cricketer of some ability—I do not mean a—J Jessop!"

"I should think you mean a Jessop, old chap," said Talbot.

"Thank you, Talbot! That is the name. What I mean is that by approaching the game in the true scientific spirit—by the careful and earnest study of such matters as the trajectory of the ball's flight, the effect of the impact of the bat upon the ball at varying angles—"

"Not to mention the number of hairs in a cow's tail, and the distance between the First of April and the top of St. Paul's!"

"That, Lowther, is more buffoonery!" said Skimmy, with dignity.

"Do you mean that you could play if you chose to try?" howled Gore, who is always a bit down on Skimmy in public, though I believe they get along together better than one might expect in the study."

"Certainly Gore!"

"My word! If you'll believe that, you'll believe anything! Look here, you potty old piffler, I'll bet you a pound to a penny that you never make a double-figure score so long as ever you're at St. Jim's!"

"I never bet, as you know, Gore!" replied Skimmy severely.

"Well, hardly ever. And if ever, then on purely scientific principles," put in Lowther.

Skimmy stood and blinked as we roared. I suppose his great scientific mind had quite forgotten that little flutter with Weeks.

"If you ever do it, I'll give you a quid—there!" snapped Gore.

"Let me understand you aright, Gore, please! If—"

"Oh, cheer it, Skimmy! If you don't catch on we do, and everybody here is a witness. Gore will have to shout out if his miracle—"

"Is forthcoming," chipped in Lowther. "Don't miss such a chance as that! Tommy! It's your little one; but in these dull times—"

"What are you burbling about, old ass?"

"Shell out if Fourth-coming—see?"

"We groaned. Lowther's puns are really too, too!"

"Gore's quid's as safe as house!" said Herries.

And that was what we all thought.

II.

"HALLO, Todd!"
I took the fellow for Peter Todd, whom we all know pretty well. Peter Todd is one of Wharton's best men both at cricket and football.

But this wasn't Peter, it seemed. I had noticed a kind of—well, rather vacuous look about his face before he spoke. But Peter Todd can look like that when he chooses, although he is just about as sharp as they make them—this side of the water, anyway.
"I beg your pardon," said the boy with the blue-and-white Greyfriars cap. "There—there is some slight mistake, I think. I have not the pleasure of knowing you. And I am not Peter. I am his cousin."

"Oh, you're Alonzo, are you? I'm Dane."

"Very pleased to meet you, Dane," said Alonzo, beaming at me no end graciously, and seeming quite pleased to find me polite. But we believe in being polite to visitors at St. Jim's, you know; and if I thought Alonzo a bit weird it wasn't the time or place for telling him so.

"Are you looking for anyone?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes. I am looking for Skimpole—Herbert Skimpole, you know. I have a great desire to have a chat with him. That, indeed, was my chief reason for coming over with the team."

Which explained what had puzzled me. For one wild moment I had imagined that Wharton had given Alonzo Todd a place in his team.

"I'm sure Skimpole will be delighted," I said.

And so I was. Skimpole had never had a real disciple at St. Jim's. Alonzo was meek and mild enough to sit at the feet of any wild man, and I did Skimmy just enjoy it, though it was only for one brief summer afternoon!

I took the harmless, decent ass along, and he had a warm welcome. Before I had got to the door on my way out, though, I heard the ominous name of Balmcrumpet. But I don't suppose I could avoid meeting Alonzo Todd. He would enjoy Balmcrumpet at second-hand, no doubt.

On the stairs I met Gore and Gibbons and Boulton. It did not occur to me to wonder where they were going. None of them was exactly nuts on cricket.

I hurried off to Little Side. The Greyfriars fellows were putting in a few minutes' preliminary practice. Just as I came up Cherry drove a ball back hard and high to Nugent—the sort of catch a chap must try for in a match, but had far better leave alone at the nets.

Though perhaps that's being wise after the event. I don't know that it would have occurred to me but for what happened to Nugent.

He tried to make the catch. He gave a sharp exclamation of pain, and reeled, going deathly white. Blood was pouring from his right hand.

"Why, what's the matter, Frank?" cried Chery. "I say, though, old chap, I'm frightfully sorry!"

"It wasn't your fault, Bob," said Nugent at once.

He could hardly speak, and I think we all saw that he was crooked for the day. The ball had somehow split his palm, and the webbing between two fingers as well. It must have been painful, and any fellow can see that Nugent is not the toughest sort. He has as much pluck as anyone, I am sure; but things do knock one chap out more than they do another.

Some of us bound up his hand, and found him a seat in the pavilion.

Wharton was very worried, and he is one of those who show it, too. It was partly about Nugent, but chiefly about their being a man short. They had come with a reserve, it appeared. I don't know why.

"We'll have to play a man short," Wharton said, frowning.

"There's Lonzy," suggested Peter Todd. "I don't say the old ass is any use, mind you. But 'A. Todd, bowled A. N. Y. Body, 0,' looks a bit better on paper than a man short does."

"Lonzy would do his best, I know," said Wharton. "But—"

"The difference between Lonzy's best and his—or anyone's—worst being represented algebraically by x, then x equals 0," said Field—the chap they call Squiff.

"But on paper—and our matches always are in the papers—"

"We don't play on paper, though," said Wharton, with just a suspicion of a snap. But I could see his eyes on Frank Nugent, who really looked very queer, and I understood. Those two are great chums—regular David and Jonathan bizney.

The suggestion Tom Merry made then was a generous one, and no end sportsmanlike, though some fellows did say afterwards he was wrong.

"See here, Wharton, if you've got to play an absolute passenger, we'll play one, too! That is if any of my team will stand down for Skimmy."

"Skimmy!" echoed a dozen voices.

"He's the best match for Todd's cousin that I know of," said Tom. "It really levels things up. Who's on?"

"Now, then, Gustavus!" said Blake.

Everybody looked at D'Arcy. He was not much to look at that day. His classic features were swollen, for he had been awake nearly the whole of the night before with raging toothache. But it had eased up a bit during the morning, and, of course, he did not want to stand down.

"Gwooh!" he said.

And his hand shot up to his face. He did not even see that we were looking at him. He had not heard Blake.

"What's the matter, old scout?" asked Tom.

"It's that wretched tooth of mine, Tom Mexwy! I—I— Oh, really, I hate lettin' the side down, but I wergot to say that I am quite unable to do justice to my abilities to-day, an' if—"

"Rough luck, old chap! Never mind, let's get someone else."

"I'll should—gwooh!—stwongly recommend Clive, Tom Mexwy."

"No; I'll play Skimmy."

"Bai Jove! Is that wallyed for a fearful insult? Oh, wallyed—"

"Nothing of the sort, Gussy. Wharton's got to put in a rank duffer, through the accident to Nugent, and I've arranged to leave out a really tip-top

player so as to let in Skimpy, and level things up."

That pleased Gussy, of course. And, in spite of his gnawing tooth, he was beaming when I went off to fetch Alonzo Todd and Skimpy.

III.

I DID NOT have to go to the study in which I had left the gentle Alonzo and the brainy Skimpy in order to find them.

They were standing in a noisy, glibly helpless manner down the middle. I saw they, "but at first sight, I really fancied them" "it"—small "I," please, not It! For they had the aspect of a curious two-headed beast with both its mouths bound up in such a manner that it could not roar. Though, for that matter, it looked much more like beating than roaring! With all due respect to Alonzo Todd, there are points of resemblance between him and a sheep; and one old Skimpy is not exactly hostile.

"What on earth are you two about!—chaps playing at it," I asked.

It was all right to call Skimpy an ass, of course; but it lacked politeness, however true it might be, in the case of a visitor.

"Gerrugh!" said one head.

"Yowwwww!" said the other.

This was not explanatory. But a big one's mouth tied up tightly with a handkerchief is rather in the way of explanation. And I had eyes. I could see that this was no scientific experiment.

It was easy to guess that Gore & Co. had been at work.

I untied their victims. This had been the way of it. Skimpy's right arm had been drawn behind him, and Alonzo's left twisted likewise. These two arms were then bound together. The other arms were tied down to the respective sides to which they belonged. Then Skimpy's right leg had been fastened to Alonzo's left. And their mouths had been kept from murmuring—or, at least, from anything more than murmuring—by handkerchiefs. I thought of the Siamese Twins, of course. You might have labelled these two the Scientific Twins.

It was it was quite a workmanlike job. But it was not the kind of thing that should have been done to any guest. Gore & Co. would hear further about this!

Skimpy is really quite a right-minded old ass about some things.

"I thank you, Dane," he said, in his precise old-fashioned way. "I rejoice to see that you are not in sympathy with this outrage. For an outrage it is! I can hear it for myself; but it humiliates me to think that my friend Todd—"

"Do not worry on my account, my dear fellow," said Alonzo. "Indeed, though the joke was a rough one, and, I will confess, not to my liking, the good offices of our friend Dane have nullified its effect, and it will be easy to forget it."

You fellows can say what you like. I say that these two, though you may call them bony asses and other pet names, are at least gentlemen—which is more than I should care to say for the fellows who had victimised them. Each of them thought more of the other than of himself. Gore and Gibbons, in similar plight, would have been ready to rag each other bald-headed as soon as they were free.

I told Skimpole and Todd what my ground was. They gasped. But they were not as unwilling as I had expected they might be. The loss of all the scientific chat that they had planned was a big one, of course. But Skimpy showed surprising alacrity in consenting; and Alonzo said, in his mild, good-tempered way;

"It is always a pleasure to me to do what Wharton asks, for he is ever considerate. I may say that Uncle Benjamin approves highly of Wharton. I trust that I may be of some use to the team in Nugent's voluntary absence, and if I am lucky enough to kick a goal no one will be more pleased than myself, I assure you, Dane."

It did not seem a very likely thing for him to achieve, all things considered. But perhaps it was not much unlikely than his getting a run!

It is not those two weird figures in flames who are especially liable to get to that. If I had left them to it they might have got chatty about philosophy or geology or something, and forgotten all about the match. And Skimpy, though he believed he had some flannels somewhere, had no notion where they were. I borrowed what I could—anything to get something like that, even at the risk of giving something like one to the owners of the borrowed plumes. Boots were an easier matter. And Skimpy took along a bat of Talbot's which he offered to lend to Alonzo when his turn to bat came.

There was a burst of cheering when they came on the field together. I kept in the background, not wanting to spoil the procession. The cheering was desperate, no doubt. But, bless you, they never suspected that. The two images beamed, and Alonzo doffed his cap.

IV.

IT WAS NOT one of St. Jim's best days. Fatty Wynn was a trifle off colour with the ball, and Wharton and Cherry made quite a long stand. Later on, Vernon-Smith and a South African chap named Delaney dashed up runs fast, and the total was very near 200. But, in the end, it was the bowled first ball, Skimpy's strong one hard drive with his shins. He did not stop anything else; but whether that was prudence or sheer incapacity there was no evidence to prove.

Our fellows made a wretched start. It was not until Figgins joined Talbot that any good going. Those two played up in great form. But then there was another slump, and when the eighth wicket fell, we were 49 behind, with only Fatty and Skimpole to come. Leivison was in, and batting jolly well—so did as a rock when caution was needed, but not forgetting to come down hard on anything loose.

He did not seem to think it was all U. P. but we did.

Fatty surprised us. You would not call Fatty a bat, you know, though he is a top-notch bowler. He stone-walled with real judgment, and Leivison went on collecting runs quite nicely.

The score crept up. There was plenty of time for the run to be made if the men still to be got out could make them, but no chance of a second innings meaning anything to the result.

Those two stayed together nearly three-quarters of an hour, and added 30 runs in that time. Fatty made only five of the 30; but he had done splendid service, and we cheered him to the echo as he scudded to the pavilion, out at last.

If only there had been a bad batsman to come instead of Skimpy! For Skimpy was not merely bad, he simply was not a batsman at all!

I don't think he realised that. His corrugated brow only meant that he was wishing he had given cricket a little of his scientific study he had talked about. I am jolly sure that Skimpy's skill to do something effective was good enough.

It was Talbot who saw that he put pads and gloves on, and saw that the gloves were put on right ends up. The players puzzled Skimpy. From a prac-

tical and scientific point of view, he said, he considered them beneath contempt.

He walked slowly out, with Talbot's heaviest bat under his bony right arm. The enthusiastic Alonzo—who really regards our Skimpy as a great man—gave him a shrill cheer. The rest of the field gave him a grin.

Alonzo had been put at mid-off. He had stopped nothing so far, and Bob Cherry, in the long-field behind him, had been pretty hard worked. But Alonzo looked more disappointed than Cherry.

"Aren't you going to take guard, duffer?" asked the umpire—a Fifth Form chap.

"I have them on already, thank you," replied Skimpy, looking down at his pads.

"You've got the wrong side of your bat in front," said Brown, the New Zealand fellow—a rank desert. He was keeping wicket for Greyfriars.

"I prefer it that way, if you have no objection," answered Skimpy.

Some of ours maintained afterwards that the Greyfriars chaps must have known about Gore's offer to Skimpy, and that they wanted him to win the sovereignty. I am not sure, for a margin of 20 runs is not a lot to give away a double-figure score out of—not when you have a chap like Leivison, who is like a hawk to swoop on the ball and rake in fours. But mixed, that—eh? Never mind, I'm getting near the end.

Vernon-Smith was bowling, and he simply lobbed Skimpy the kind of ball that asks to be hit for 4. Skimpy made a wild swipe, and missed it clean. It just missed the wicket. Another of the same sort—another wild, blind swipe at it—Skimpy tumbled over himself, and Brown whipped off the balls. But Skimpy had tumbled partly inside the crease, and it was not out.

He looked at Brown rather reproachfully. No doubt he thought that attempted stumping a treacherous proceeding after the New Zealander's civility. Or perhaps he wondered why it was done at all. I don't suppose Professor Balmy crumpled had ever defined stumping.

Now Vernon-Smith had come to the last ball of his over. He sent a ripping fast one, dead on the middle stump, intending to finish off the affair.

But it didn't! Skimpy kept his bat still. The leather hit it, and went away through the slips for 4.

"I think that, on the whole, a really fast ball affords more scope to my style of hitting," Skimpy said affably to Brown.

Brown grunted. Greyfriars were beginning to feel anxious. For now Leivison had the bowling, and only 20 were required for victory.

Leivison got the first ball from Delaney, who had just gone on, away beautifully. He had only meant to run 2, for there was no chance of 4; but Skimpy forced his hand by continuing to run, and I must say the old chap did leg it. Leivison had a narrow squeak of a run out, and Skimpy had the bowling again!

Delaney did not offer him soft ones. He sent down a fast one, with a nip in from the off. I don't believe Skimpy even saw it. But it hit his bat, and went away past short-leg.

"Come on," yelled Leivison. Skimpy peered down the pitch as if for dear life, turned, and started to peck back.

"No!" Skimpy paid no heed to the cry. Very likely he did not understand.

Leivison would not move. He was annoyed. But it was good tactics, too.

(Continued on page 20.)

SKIMPOLE'S SCORE!

(Continued from page 19.)

For the fieldman had to chuck at the far wicket instead of the near one.

It was Field, the Australian, and he is a dead shot. It looked all up with Skimpy. But Squiff missed by an inch, and the ball sped on.

Levison would not run, even then, though Skimpy implored him to.

"We must surely have some runs there, Levison!" he protested.

"We've got 'em!" said Levison coolly. "That's a liver for you, Skimpy."

"Dear me! I fear I do not catch your meaning. Certainly I did promise; but I have only scored five as yet."

But he had scored 9, for that over-throw had gone to the boundary—rough on Squiff, as it was so near a clever throw out.

Levison could only score two more off what was left of the over. That Afrikaner chap can bowl! He kept our man tied up.

Then Skimpy stood up to face Vernon-Smith again. He put the pottiest catch to point, and Bull put it on the floor. Rather as if he meant to, we thought; anyway, he did not look properly repentant.

We only wanted 6 now. But they counted Skimpy as good as dead, I suppose.

"Hurrah! There goes your quid, Gore!"

Skimpy had scored a single, and reached double figures! It was a pure accident, but it did Gore. And serve him right!

Now only 5 were wanted, and Levison faced Vernon-Smith, and slammed hard. The ball scudded straight for Alonzo at mid-off. And there was some powder behind it, I can tell you.

Alonzo saw it coming. He gave a yell—it might have been of fear—it might have been of triumph; but I think it was a mixed sort of yell, not to be analysed, even by such a scientist as Skimpy.

He threw out his hands—it might have been in despair, or it might have been in an attempt to make the catch—but that seems scarcely feasible, for when he had made it, Alonzo was quite the most surprised person on the ground.

But he did make it. That ball ought by right to have gone clean through him. But he stopped it with his body, somewhere in the region of the lowest waistcoat button but one, only he had no waistcoat on, and he clutched that portion of his anatomy, and hugged the ball to him, yelling:

"Yarooop!"

"Howzat, umpire!" howled the field.

"Out!"

Then Alonzo slid gently to the ground, and lay there moaning.

But he bucked up at once when he learned that he had won the game for his side.

"Have I really?" he asked, beaming. "Certainly I did my best, and none can do more. But, my dear Cousin Peter, I am not at all sure that it is not a gross inaccuracy to say that I caught the ball. It was rather that the ball caught me, and that in an extremely painful manner."

"Never mind that, old scout! You've won the match for Greysfriars!"

"But are you sure it is quite fair? Because if it is not so considered, I should be willing to try it over again—though I must, in candour, inform you that I cannot promise to repeat the feat. I can but do my best."

Greatly to his relief, his noble offer was refused. I heard him apologising to Levison a little later.

"That's all right, old chap," said Levison, with his half-cynical grin.

"You haven't hurt my feelings half as much as I did yours, though I'll own it's a bit irritating to have the game snatched out of one's hands by a giddy miracle!"

Gore did not want to shell out, and it very nearly came to a question of a House meeting about it.

For quite obviously Skimpy had won that quid. We were all witnesses to the offer. The fact that it had been won by a succession of ghastly flukes was of no consequence at all.

Gore cashed up at last, grumbling. Skimpy went to Tom Merry a day or two later.

"I apprehend, Merry," he said, "that I shall be required regularly in the cricket fifteen after this?"

"No, old chap; I don't think I'll trouble you," said Tom, keeping a straight face by a great effort.

Skimpy gave a deep sigh of relief. "I am very glad," he said simply. "I could hardly have refused had you insisted. But it would have made regrettable inroads on my time, and I must have spent the sovereign won from Gore on the purchase of the necessary implements. Gore wishes it to be devoted to a 'teed'—as he terms what I should rather describe as an orgy. I shall buy Professor Balmcrumpet's latest work, however, and I really think a few shillings may well be laid out in the purchase of a small present of a similar kind for that very nice fellow, Alonzo Todd. Something rather more elementary, you know. Todd is a willing learner, but not as yet far advanced. By the way, Merry, can you tell me how my score came to be ten? I hardly expected to get as many at my first attempt, and Gore says an over-throw—I do not quite grasp his meaning—ought to count as bytes."

"That's where Gore and the laws of the game disagree," said Tom.

"Tell our dear friend Gore that it was not a bye, but a sell—for George Gore!" chuckled Lowther.

THE END.

GREYFRIARS LIMERICKS,

By A.N.O.N.

His appearance is certainly odd;
But he's wide—don't try on him your
"ced"!

His pluck's without flaw.
He's a dab at the law.
And at games and in classes, is Todd:

There's a chap at Greyfriars named
Bunter,
Who of grub's a most wonderful
shunter.

If Lord Devonport learned
—About him, it's interned
He'd be—oh—else "sliced" as a grunter:

From the far land of Hind he did bring
His queer English, which knocks every-
thing.

You heard in your puff,
But he's O.K.—enough
Said about Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

A fellow of courage and muscle,
Who can well hold his own in a tussle.
Who plays up, never flagging—
Yet is quite free from bragging—
Can you guess his cognomen? Why,
Russell!

He can give or can take a good buff
Without losing his temper; and if
There's a jape on he's in it.

I fancy he'd win it—
The first prize for japing—would Squiff!

He's just like a cow with the crump.
He mooches about with a droop
To his shoulders. He sneers,
Funks, lies, sneaks; but—cheers!

He's no twins—that's one merit in
Snoop!

It's no wonder the chaps are snootish
Of one who so oft tried to dish
Them out older than the wine.

Now we want some good proof
Ere we swallow the statements of Fish!

He's more ready to smile than to frown.
It's not much in his line to be down.

You can always depend,
As a foeman or friend,
On the straightness and pluck of Tom
Brown!

When great Horace gives orders he's
gotter
Toe the line and obey them. His
"moter

"Jeh, Dien" might be—
That's "I Serve" for, you see,
He's Horry's sworn henchman, is Potter!

It is said he may sometimes be seen
Out alone; but this chap's always been,
When our path he has crossed,
One of three. He is bossed
By Horace the Coker, is Greene!

From bullying he's not averse—he
Dearly loves to hear weaklings cry
"Merry!"

He's a blade. But he's tough
—And no funk. There's good stuff
Hidden somewhere in Bolsover, Percy!

In the Fifth he is next in command
To Blundell, that potentate grand,
Who can't stand any sauce.
Blundell rides the high horse;
And he follows his leader, does Bland!

Whenever you chance to epy
Cecil Temple the great, somewhere nigh,
This fellow you'll find.
If he showed he'd a mind
Of his own, he'd surprise us, would Fry!

Some faces care for nothing but grub,
And some are all burble and blub.
Without cracking him up,
I may say he's a pup
Of bread better than these, Samson
Tubb!

To Mr. Newsagent.

Please keep for me a copy of the
GEM LIBRARY each week until further
notice.

(Signed),