

The GEM LIBRARY 1^D/₂

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20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

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UNEXPECTED HELP FOR GUSSY!

(An Amusing Incident from the Grand Long Complete School Story Inside.)

"My Readers' Own Corner."

Half-a-crown is paid for each contribution printed on this page.

If your name is not here this week it may be next.

Patient Study of Small Things.

A young artist once called upon Audubon, the great student of birds, to show him some drawings and paintings. Audubon examined the work, and said he liked it all very much. "There are defects, though," he said. "Look at the legs of this bird. They are painted nicely, and the scales are exact in shape and colour, but you have not arranged them correctly as to number. 'I never thought of that,' said the artist. "Quite likely," replied Audubon, "but you want to be accurate. Now, upon this upper ridge of the partridge's leg there are just so many scales. You have too many. Examine the legs of a thousand partridges, and you will find the same number of scales." The lesson shows how Audubon became great by the patient study of small things.—A. Bramwell, 5, Douglas Place, Bordesley Green, Birmingham.

A Slight Misunderstanding.

The village blacksmith, having injured his hand, paid a visit to a local doctor to have it seen to. "Fetch that phial off the surgery table, John," said the doctor to his assistant after he had examined the hurt. "No, you don't!" shouted the excited blacksmith. "If this hand has got to come off, you'll use a knife or an axe, but I aren't going to have it filed off."—Wm. G. Hull, 1, Princes Court, Brick Lane, Bethnal Green, E. 2.

Particular.

Manager (to customer who has hundreds of caps around him): "My dear sir, what kind of cap is it that you want?" Customer (adjusting his monocle): "Ah, you see, I've just bought a motor-bicycle, and I want a cap with the peak at the back."—R. Cockburn, 15, Claremont Gardens, Leith, Scotland.

Hard to Please.

The boss was in a towering rage. Everything had gone wrong that day, and he had broken his spectacles. "Look at these disgraceful figures!" he roared at his trembling assistant. "That 9 is exactly like a 7!" "But it is a 7, sir," said the assistant. "Then why does it look like a 9?" howled the irate chief.—P. O. Callaghan, 28, South Main Street, Cork, Ireland.

Playing for Safety.

"Doctor," said the patient miserably, "my complaint is very serious. Sometimes my mind is a complete blank, and my memory is always failing me." "In view of the peculiar nature of your illness," said the doctor, "I must ask for my fee in advance."—Willie Spivak, 437, Burrows Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Quite True.

There's a cad in the Fourth named Racks.

Who likes to do nothing but slack.

When it comes to a fight, his motto is fight.

For he knows he'll be stretched on his back.

At St. Jim's there's a bully called Knox.

Who longs for fresh ears to box.

His face is a fright; to look at him right.

You'd get the most startling of shocks.

—John S. Mangan, 116, McClifford's Estate, Mount Brown, Dublin.

Think It Out.

Man (boasting of the size of his family): "I've got ten sons, and they've all got a sister." His Friend: "Good gracious! Then there's twenty of you?" "No; only eleven."—Miss Barbara Langley, 5, Bult's Cottages, Bult's Farm, Hanworth.

A Famous Printer.

It was Aldus Manutius, of Venice, who in the latter part of the fifteenth century first used those sloping Roman letters which we call italics. The books printed by him, called Aldine editions, are much sought after by collectors. Aldus was the most famous printer of Italy, if not of the world. His first volumes of the new type was a Virgil, published in 1501. As the price of this book was only about two shillings of our money, Aldus may justly be considered a pioneer of cheap literature. Should you ever come across an old book on which is printed a dolphin twined about an anchor, with the name Aldus, be sure you do not light the fire with it, for the dolphin is the Aldine mark, and the book is valuable.—Geo. McConnell, 143, George Street, Paisley, Scotland.

Sold Again.

I was walking down the street the other day, and I met Brown, who keeps a grocery store. He bet me thirty shillings that I could not carry a 5lb. bag of salt round the corner and back again without laying it down. I took on the bet, carried the bag round the corner, came in again, and laid it on the counter. "You've lost," said Brown. "How so?" "Didn't you just lay the bag down?" "I offered the same bet to a stranger," he entered the shop, but he brought the salt back and hung the bag on a nail. He won.—J. Dunlop, Clydevale, Balclutha, Otago, New Zealand.

Sarcastic.

Two old chums met in the street and exchanged greetings. One asked the other how his allotment was getting on. "Fine," was the reply. "I've grown a cabbage that has spread all over the field and pushed down the fence." "Some cabbage!" said the other. "By the way, I have been busy—just finished building a boiler so big that if I dropped a hammer into it on Saturday, I would just hear it reach the bottom when I got to work Monday." "What have you built it for?" "Oh, to boil your cabbage in!"—F. L. Barber, 34, Prince of Wales Road, Custom House, E.

Smart.

Willie: "Pa, teacher says we are here to help others." Pa: "So we are, my lad." Willie: "Well, what are the others here for?"—Arthur W. Keighley, 17, Moorwell Place, Eccleshill, Bradford, Yorks.

Mean.

Mrs. Green: "Who is that woman you just bowed to?" Mrs. Brown: "She's my next-door neighbour." Mrs. Green: "But she never returned your bow." Mrs. Brown: "No; she never returns anything."—A. Cater, 217, Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey, S.E. 1.

Notwithstanding.

This was the word which a class of small boys had to use in a sentence. One boy wrote: "Father wore out his trousers, but notwithstanding."—Miss Ruth Upstone, 35, Vicarage Avenue, Derby.

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Part 1

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling how D'Arcy tried to do two things at the same time, and of the unexpected result.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Grimes Takes a Hand.

"IT'S the one and only!"
"Dear old Gussy!"
Gordon Gay and Jack Wootton, of Rylcombe Grammar School, made those remarks simultaneously. They grinned as they made them.

The two Grammarians were strolling along the footpath in Rylcombe Wood, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, came in sight.

It was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday at both schools. Gordon Gay and Jack Wootton were probably out looking for trouble, but Arthur Augustus certainly wasn't. The swell of St. Jim's was arrayed in the nattiest of coats, the shiniest of toppers, the most beautifully creased trousers, and the most glittering of boots. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Arthur Augustus when he really took a little trouble with his elegant clobber.

He stopped as he saw the Grammarians. He could read the signs of mischief in their smiling faces. The chums of the Grammar School closed in on him.

"Coming to meet us, old top?" asked Gay.
"I was not comin' to meet you, Gay," said Arthur Augustus. "I warged the meetin' as wathah unfortunate. Pwaj let my hat alone."

Arthur Augustus jumped back as a playful hand tilted his topper. The topper rolled off on to the footpath, and Arthur Augustus jumped after it. A foot came in his way, and Arthur Augustus sat down with a bump.

"Clumsy!" said Gordon Gay.
"Bai Jove! You Gwammawian wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"May we play footer with your topper, Gussy?" asked Gordon Gay politely.

"Bai Jove! Certainly not, you feahful wuffian!"
"He says we musn't!" grinned Gay. "Sit on his head until he agrees, Wootton."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Augustus resisted manfully as the two Grammarians collared him and flattened him down in the grassy path.

"You feahful wottahs!" he spluttered. "You are wumplin' my coat! You are disawwagin' my necktie! Gwooooh!"

"If we weren't such nice chaps we should rumple your nose, and disarrange your features," said Gordon Gay. "You are getting off cheap, you St. Jim's boulder! May we play footer with your hat?"

"No!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Yawooh! Wescue!"

Arthur Augustus shouted for rescue, in the faint hope that some other St. Jim's fellow might be rambling in the wood near at hand. A youth with a rugged, sunny face, and a basket on his arm, was coming up the footpath, and he grinned at the sight of the swell of St. Jim's in the clutches of the Philistines. It was Grimes, the grocer's boy of Rylcombe. But as Arthur Augustus shouted for rescue, Grimes hastened his steps and broke into a run.

"Ere, chuck it!" called out Grimes.

Gay and Wootton looked round quickly.

"Only the giddy grocer," said Gordon Gay, laughing. "Pass on, Grimey, and don't chip in where you're not wanted."

"Pwaj lend me a hand, Gwimes, old chap!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "These feahful wottahs are wuinin' my clobber!"

"You bet!" said Grimes.

Grimes put down his basket, spat on his hands, and advanced on the Grammarians with a warlike look.

"My hat!" said Gordon Gay. "The giddy grocer's or the warpath! Knock him into a cocked hat, Wootton, while I sit on Gussy and keep him in order."

"Leave him to me," said Wootton.

"Mop him up, Gwimes!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Wotto!" said Grimes.

Jack Wootton rushed on the grocer's boy, nothing doubting that Grimes would be put to flight in very short order.

But he was mistaken. Grimes was a fighting-man, and he met Wootton's rush coolly, without giving ground, and a hard set of knuckles came unexpectedly on Wootton's nose. The Grammarian went spinning backwards, and landed on his back in the grass with a gasp.

The next moment Grimes had hold of Gordon Gay's collar, and Gay was jerked away from the swell of St. Jim's.

Another moment, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was on his feet, his noble fists clenched, and the gleam of battle in his eye.

"Back up, deah boy!" he exclaimed. "Lick the boundahs!"

"I'm on!" said Grimes cheerfully.

Wootton jumped up, and Arthur Augustus tackled him at once, while Grimes engaged with Gordon Gay.

Gay was a great fighting-man, but rather to his surprise he found Grimes a tough adversary. For a few minutes a terrific scrap raged on the footpath.

Then Gordon Gay dropped his hands and jumped back, bursting into a laugh.

"Hold on!" he said. "Chuck it, you fellows! Enough's as good as a feast! You don't want to take back a black eye to show Mr. Sands, Grimey, old scout."

Grimes grinned.

"That I don't!" he assented. "But you ain't ragging Master Gussy—not while I'm around."

"Master Gussy sha'n't be ragged, you ferocious grocer!" grinned Gordon Gay. "The dear infant shall depart without a hair of his head being hurt, or even his hat!"

"All sewene, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, as Wootton dropped his hands. "I warged you as a pair of vewy thoughtless and mischievous youngstahe, but I do not want to thwash you—"

"You couldn't, fathead!" said Jack Wootton.

"Weally, Wootton—"

"As!"

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Order!" said Gordon Gay. "Grimes will get into a row if he goes home looking like a giddy prize-fighter. Pax, my sons! Gussy, old top, here's your hat—still a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Come on, Wootton! Tom Merry's around somewhere, and we'll look for him and give him beans!"

And the two Grammarians walked on up the footpath. Arthur Augustus examined his shining topper very anxiously, and carefully polished it with his handkerchief. Grimes rubbed his nose, which needed attention really more than Gussy's hat. It had received two or three very hefty punches in the brief combat.

"Bai Jove! Is your nose damaged, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, when he was able to transfer his attention from his topper to less important matters.

"Nothing much, sir," said Grimes cheerfully. "Not more'n Master Gay's, I think."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 736.

"I am vewy much obliged to you for comin' to the wescue, Gwimes," said Arthur Augustus.

"Not at all, sir."

"Those young vascals are not bad fellows, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "But they are wathah thoughtless youngstahs, and they would have wumped and wuined my clobbah wuthlessly. Of course, I should have given them a fealful thwashin', but my clobbah would have been wumped all the same. I am weally vewy much obliged to you, old chap!"

There was genuine gratitude in Gussy's voice. A fellow who saved him from having his elegant clobber rumped was a fellow whom Gussy delighted to honour. Had Grimes saved his life, it would scarcely have been a matter of greater import, in Gussy's estimation.

"Goin' my way?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Going back to the shop, sir," said Grimes.

"That's my way, as far as the woad," said Arthur Augustus. "I will cawvy your basket for you, Gwimes, and give you a wescue."

"Oh, my 'at!" said Grimes, almost overcome by the sight of the elegant son of Lord Eastwood shouldering his grocery basket.

Gordon Gay and Wootton had disappeared—looking for Tom Merry of St. Jim's and more trouble! Arthur Augustus and Grimes walked down the footpath together, chatting cheerily—the grocery basket on Gussy's aristocratic arm.

CHAPTER 2.

The New Recruit.

HOW'S the footbah goin' on, deah boy?"

Grimes made a grimace.

"We're rather andicapped," he said. "You see, most of my team are in jobs, and they can't always get away. We don't ave the chances in our matches that you chaps do, Master D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus nodded thoughtfully.

"Yaas," he assented. "That's wathah wuff!"

"Pilcher's out of the team now, for a bit," said Grimes, with rather a glum look. "His guv'nor can't let him off Saturday afternoons now. And he's our best winger."

"Yaas, wathah! I have seen Pilchah playin'," said Arthur Augustus. "He is remarkably good at outside-wight!"

"Best of the bunch!" said Grimes. "We shall have to get on somehow without him. Of course, we've got reserves, but not a man fit to put in Sidney Pilcher's place. We sha'n't wind up the football season very well at this rate. But it can't be helped."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's walked on in silence for some minutes. He was thinking.

Grimes glanced at him rather curiously, but did not interrupt the thoughts that were passing in Gussy's powerful brain.

Arthur Augustus spoke at last.

"You have done me a vewy gweat favah this aftahnoon, Gwimes!" he said at last.

"Oh, that's nothing, sir!"

"I wégard it as somethin', deah boy! I have got an ideah," said Arthur Augustus. "You know that I am a pweety good wingah?"

"Yes, rather!" assented Grimes.

"How would you like me to play for your team while Pilchah is unable to turn up?"

Grimes jumped.

"You, sir?" he ejaculated.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"My 'nt!" said Grimes.

"I think I am as good a man as Pilchah in the fwoht line," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, yes, sir! But—"

"I should be vewy pleased to play for you, Gwimes, if you would like me," said Arthur Augustus. "I can always turn up on a Saturday aftahnoon, you know. It's a half-holiday at the school."

"I know, sir. But—"

"But what, deah boy? If you do not want me, of course, please say so quite frankly!"

"Tain't that, sir!" said Grimes. "I'd be jolly glad to 'ave you, and to wégard the other chaps. But what would your headmaster say, sir, if you came playing with the village kids?"

"He wouldn't say anythin', deah boy. My headmastah is not a snob."

"Nunno, sir! But you—you're the son of a lord, sir, and—and we're grocers' boys and butchers' boys, and—"

"My patah is not a snob, eithah, Gwimes."

"Nunno! But—but the other fellows—" stammered Grimes. "They'd think you was letting yourself down, sir—"

"Wubbish!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 736.

The two had almost reached the road by this time. On the stile at the end of the footpath sat a fat figure—that of Baggy Trimble of the St. Jim's Fourth. Trimble blinked at them, and his little round eyes almost bulged from his fat face at the sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form, carrying the grocery basket on his arm.

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble. "I say, Gussy, have you got a job at the grocer's? He, he, he!"

"Weally, Twimble!"

"Suppose Mr. Railton should see you chumming with a grocer, and carrying his basket!" giggled Trimble.

An expression of great severity came over Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's aristocratic features.

"Twimble! You unspeakable little fat wottah—" "Oh, draw it mild!" said Trimble.

"I wégard you with disgust!" said Arthur Augustus warmly. "If you considah, Twimble, that there is anythin' dewogatory in cawwyin' a grocwey basket, you are insultin' my fwiend Gwimes. You are a shockin' boundah, Twimble! Gwimes, deah boy, would you mind kickin' Twimble for me! He is an awful wottah, and unless he is kicked at least once ewvery day, he becomes weally intowleable."

"Cert'nly, Master D'Arcy!" said Grimes. "Here, you keep off!" roared Trimble.

Trimble slid off the stile in a great hurry, and dodged into the road. Grimes and Arthur Augustus crossed the stile.

"Come heah, Twimble, you fat wottah!" called out Arthur Augustus. "Gwimes is goin' to kick you—"

"Yah!" was Baggy Trimble's elegant reply. And as the grinning Grimes made a movement towards him, the fat Fourth-Former took to his heels, and vanished up the road towards St. Jim's at great speed.

"This is where we part, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, laying down the basket. "Now, is it fixed up about the footbah?"

Grimes hesitated. "You see, sir, what the other chaps would think, from what Master Trimble was sayin'!" he murmured.

Arthur Augustus shook his head. "Twimble is a wank outsideah," he explained. "There are vewy few fellows at St. Jim's like Twimble. I am goin' to kick him—when I return to the school—not that he is worth it, you know, but it will do him good. I shall feel vewy much offended, Gwimes, if you allow Twimble's caddish wemarks to make any difference."

"Um!" said Grimes doubtfully. "Of course, if you do not want me in your eleven, deah boy, you have only to say so!" said Arthur Augustus, with a touch of dignity.

Grimes hastened to reassure him. "Jolly glad to 'ave you, sir! I was only thinkin' of you! Why, with you at outside-right, it may save the rest of the matches now Pilcher's got to stand out! If—if you really mean it, sir—"

"Of course I do, deah boy! I am not in the habit of talkin' idly, I hope," said Arthur Augustus. "Is it a go?"

"It's a go, sir!"

"Then I shall turn up on Saturday to pwactise with your team, Gwimes!"

"Right-ho!" said Grimes. "Three o'clock on the village green, sir!"

"Wely on me, deah boy!"

And with a pleasant nod, Arthur Augustus quitted Grimes, and walked off gracefully up the road to the school.

Grimes blinked after him rather dubiously, and scratched his head in a very thoughtful way. Then he picked up his basket and went on to the village. There was no doubt that Grimes was pleased with the new recruit for his depleted eleven; but he had his doubts about how the other fellows at St. Jim's might take the matter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had no doubts. Indeed, he did not even think of mentioning the matter when he arrived at St. Jim's. He had other matters to think of—he had to remove the last traces from his elegant clobber of his tussle with the Grammarians, and then he had to kick Trimble for his own good. The latter task occupied a considerable time—for although it was for his good, Baggy Trimble did not want to be kicked; and he kept very carefully out of the way of the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus sought him up and down the School House, but he sought in vain; Baggy Trimble, like Brer Fox, was lying low.

CHAPTER 3.

Looking for Trimble.

TOM MEWWY, deah boy!" "Trot in, Gustavus!" said the captain of the Shell, with a smile, as the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy appeared in the doorway of Study No. 10.

"Just in time for tea!" said Monty Lowther. "Lo and behold, a royal feast is spread in the noble halls of the Shell! Roll in and take a pew, Adolphus."

"Ham and tongue, and three kinds of jam," said Manners. "Wade in!"

The Terrible Three of the Shell were hospitality itself. But Arthur Augustus shook his head, with a smile.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys! I have not come to tea. I am lookin' for Twimble."

"Not likely to find that fat worm in this study," said Manners.

"You see, I heard you had a spweed on, and so I wathah thought Twimble would be hangin' wound," explained Arthur Augustus. "He has a vewy remarkable scent for a spweed."

The Terrible Three grinned.

"He was hanging round," said Monty Lowther, "but I persuaded him to travel farther on. With a few well-chosen words and a fives bat, I induced him to depart."

"Bai Jove! I have been lookin' for Twimble ewewywhah!" said Arthur Augustus. "It is weally too bad!"

"Want the fat bounder specially?" asked Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"No accounting for tastes! Trimble isn't generally much sought after—except when he's been raiding a study cupboard."

"You see, I am goin' to kick him."

"Oh!"

"He has been wathah wude to my fwiend Gwimes, and I feel it is up to me to kick him a little. I have been lookin' up and down and wound about, but he seems to have disappeared."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther. "Perhaps he knows what you've got in store!"

"Yaas, it is poss," assented Arthur Augustus. "I weally felt suah I should find him heah when I heard that you had a spweed goin' on. Howevah, I shall have to look farthah."

And the swell of St. Jim's travelled on, leaving the chums of the Shell chuckling.

Arthur Augustus' inquiries for Trimble had undoubtedly reached the ears of that fat youth, and he was keeping very carefully out of the way. But Gussy was not to be denied. He went from study to study in quest of Baggy Trimble. Every study was drawn blank, and at last the swell of St. Jim's returned to his own quarters—No. 6 in the Fourth Blake and Herries and Digby were finishing tea there.

"Late, as usual!" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Better late than never," said Jack Blake cheerily. "You're in time for the fourth wash-out of the teapot, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"And there's nearly half a loaf left," said Digby. "The butter's gone. Likewise the eggs. You don't mind, do you?"

"Weally, Dig, I do not quite see how I am to have tea with dwy bread and the fourth wash-out of the teapot," said Arthur Augustus, gazing at the tea-table, which had been very nearly cleared by three hungry juniors.

"You never know what you can do till you try," said Blake encouragingly. "You can have weak tea and bread, or, for choice, you can have bread and weak tea. Just take your choice, and rip in."

"Weally, Blake—"

Arthur Augustus sat down to tea. His three chums grinned at him with cheery faces. Having just declined the invitation to No. 10, Gussy did not feel disposed to return there and share in the fat of the land. But he was hungry after his afternoon's walk, and the bare tea-table was rather dismaying. It required all the noble self-restraint of the Honourable Arthur Augustus to avoid making remarks on the subject. But he preserved the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, as he munched a dry crust and sipped almost colourless fluid from his teacup. Blake & Co. continued to grin, their grins became chuckles, and finally they howled.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass, and regarded them with inquiry.

"Where does the joke come in, deah boys?" he asked.

"It came in at the door a few minutes ago," explained Blake. "Now it's sitting in your chair."

"Weally, Blake—"

Blake rose and crossed to the cupboard, and brought out a plateful of ham and beef. He set it before his noble chum.

"Bai Jove! That looks wathah nice," said Arthur Augustus. "But I undahstood from your remarks that you had scoffed all the tuck."

"There's no telling what you understand, with that terrific brain of yours," remarked Blake. "Only pulling your silly leg, you know."

Arthur Augustus started on the ham and beef. It was grateful and comforting in the circumstances.

"I weally do not see the point of the joke," he remarked. "I twust that you fellows do not suppose that I should cut up wusty because all the gwub was gone?"

"Not at all. Just wanted to watch your face!" said Dig.

"Bai Jove! You fellows are wathah thoughtless kids," said Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head. "Howevah, I excuse you. I have been lookin' for Twimble, you know. I am goin' to kick him for bein' wude to old Gwimes. He made some vewy personal remarks because I was cawwvin' Gwimes' basket for him."

"You were carrying Grimes' basket?" ejaculated Blake.

"Yaas. He wescued me from some Gwammawian boundahs who were goin' to play football with my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at in playin' football with a fellow's hat, deah boys, especially when it happens to be a fellow's best toppah. Gwimes came along just at the wight moment, and I was vewy grateful to him. I suppose that bwute Twimble knows I am goin' to kick him—I mentioned it to Mellich in asking aftah him—and he is keepin' out of the way. It is weally a fag huntin' Twimble up and down the House like this. Vewy inconsideate of Twimble, I think."

Blake chuckled.

"Awfully!" he agreed. "But you can catch him in his study at prep. He's bound to turn up for prep."

"Yaas, wathah! That is a vewy good ideah. I will dwop in at No. 2 when they are at prep!" said Arthur Augustus. "I feel bound to kick him. He will grow up into a vewy ill-mannahed beast if he is not cowwected occasionally, and kickin' is the only thing he seems weally to undahstand."

And when Blake & Co. started prep in Study No. 6, Arthur Augustus—leaving his own prep over for the time—rambled along the Fourth Form passage to Study No. 2 to look for Baggy Trimble and carry out his kind intentions with regard to that ill-mannered youth.



"As you're goin' my way," said Arthur Augustus, "I will cawwy your basket for you, Gwimes, and give you a wust." "Oh, my 'at!" said Grimes, almost overcome by the sight of the elegant son of Lord Eastwood carrying his grocery basket.

CHAPTER 4.

Baggy is Near! Bagged.

"If that beast D'Arcy comes in—"

"Eh, what's that?" asked Wildrake.

Study No. 2 were at prep—Baggy Trimble, Percy Mellish, and Kit Wildrake, the Canadian. Or, more properly speaking, Wildrake was at prep, Mellish was loafing through his work, and Baggy Trimble was sucking toffee and putting off the evil hour.

"If that beast comes in," went on Trimble, "I want you fellows to stand by me. You could lick D'Arcy, Wildrake."

The Canadian laughed.

"Possibly," he assented. "But I guess I'm not going to take it on, my fat pippin. What is Gussy on your trail for?"

"Nothing," said Trimble. "He's been going up and down the House saying he is going to kick me. Of course, I should take him in hand and lick him, only—only I'm rather tired to-day. I'll hold your jacket, for you, Wildrake, if you'll sling him out of the study when he comes."

"My dear chap, I shall be jolly glad to see him kick you," answered Wildrake. "You can do with it!"

"Yah! I say, Mellish—"

"Nothing doing!" grinned Mellish. "Not taking any! I'm not scrapping with Gussy on your account!"

Trimble gave a snort.

"Well, I'll chuck him out," he said. "Let him come in here, that's all, and I'll fairly walk over him! I'll show him whether he can stalk me up and down the House, blow him!" There was a step in the Fourth Form passage as Trimble finished speaking, and the fat junior gave a start. He thought he knew that step, and it was approaching No. 2.

Baggy Trimble jumped up.

"If—that's D'Arcy—" he spluttered.

"We'll watch you walk over him," said Mellish.

"I guess it will be a sight worth watching," assented Wildrake.

But Baggy seemed to have given up already the scheme of walking all over the Honourable Arthur Augustus. He made a dive under the table.

"Don't tell him I'm here, you fellows!" he breathed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a tap at the door, and it opened. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stepped in and glanced round the study through his eyeglass.

"Bai Jove! Hasn't that fat wotah turned up for pwep?" he asked.

"What fat rotter?"

"That howwid beast, Twimble."

There was no sound from the "horrid beast" crouching under the study table. He palpitated in silence.

"It is weally vewy pwovokin'," said Arthur Augustus. "For howahs and howahs I have been lookin' for Twimble, and askin' fellows if they have seen him. The howwid wotah seems to have disappeared uttaly. I am goin' to kick him, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose he will turn up soonah or latah," continued Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "Do you fellows mind if I wait heah for him?"

There was very nearly a groan of dismay under the table. But Baggy Trimble managed to suppress it in time.

"I guess not," said Wildrake. "Take a pew and wait as long as you like."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Mellish.

Both the juniors seemed to be rather enjoying the peculiar situation. Baggy Trimble was not enjoying it. He was feeling rather cramped under the table, and already Mellish's boot had knocked on his nose, and Wildrake's had butted him in his fat ribs. But Baggy sat tight, feeling that it was better to endure the ills he had, than fly to others that he knew not of, as the poet expresses it.

"Thank you, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus unsuspiciously. It did not even cross his noble mind that Trimble was in the study.

He sat down in the armchair by the fire, and rested his feet on the fender.

Wildrake and Mellish went on with their prep, grinning. They wondered how long Baggy would keep in concealment. It was certain that he must be growing cramped. There was not much room under the table, and Baggy was a good size. Moreover, Mellish made it a point to stretch out his legs occasionally, and every time he stretched them his boot came in sharp contact with a crouching fat figure. There was a sudden gasp from Baggy as the toe of a boot butted into his podgy neck.

Arthur Augustus glanced round.

"Bai Jove! Is there a dog in the studay?" he asked.

"I guess not."

"I am snah that I heard some animal sniff undah the table," said the swell of St. Jim's.

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"Sounded to me more like a pig than a dog," said Mellish. "Bai Jove! There is not likely to be a pig in the studay, I suppose?" said Arthur Augustus, in surprise.

"There's an ass, anyhow," said Mellish, "sitting in the armchair at this very minute."

"Weally, Mellish—"

"Shurrup!" said Wildrake. "How's a galoot to work with you fellows chewing the rag?"

"I weally beg your pardon, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "You are quite right. I will not talk any more. I twust that beast Twimble will not keep me waitin' long, as I have my own pwep to do, and I do not want to get into a wov with Mr. Lathom in the mornin'. It is wathah wotten of him to be wastin' my time like this!"

"Is that what you call not talking any more?" inquired Wildrake.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus relapsed into silence. Under the table, Trimble suppressed a howl as Mellish's boot caught him in the neck again.

The fat junior was beginning to feel pins and needles in his fat legs. He felt that he could not stand it much longer, but Arthur Augustus showed no signs of departing. He sat on, and Trimble ventured to peer out from under the table at last.

As D'Arcy was facing the fire, and the door was opposite the fireplace, there was a chance of escape, with great caution. Baggy, feeling Mellish's boot on his fat ear, resolved to take the chance. With great care he crawled out on the carpet on his hands and knees.

There was a sudden chuckle from Mellish as he observed him. Arthur Augustus looked up.

Baggy was just behind the armchair now, so Gussy did not see him, though he was quite visible to Mellish and Wildrake.

Mellish chortled, and Wildrake grinned.

"Bai Jove, you chaps seem to be enjoyin' your pwep," said Arthur Augustus. "You're doin' Virgil, aren't you?"

"Correct!"

"I have nevah wegarded Virgil as a humowous w'itah," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows seem to have found somethin' funnay in him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble, not daring to move, remained crouching behind the armchair. Wildrake and Mellish roared. The unsuspiciousness of Gussy and the terror of Trimble struck them as comic.

"Pway pass on the joke, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, more and more astonished. Never since he had been a schoolboy had Gussy found anything in P. Vergilius Maro to cause an outbreak of merriment like this. "What part are you doin' now?"

"It's about Dido standing a spread to Aeneas," said Wildrake.

"That isn't funnay. I wegard it as wathah a bore," said D'Arcy. "I have always been surprised that Dido allowed Aeneas to bore her with such a long-winded yarn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble moved at last, and tiptoed towards the door. Mellish's eyes were upon him, and Mellish was gasping with merriment. Arthur Augustus followed the direction of Mellish's glance at last, and suddenly beheld Trimble.

"Bai Jove!"

"Ow!" gasped Baggy.

"Gweast Scott! He was heah all the time!" roared Arthur Augustus. Like a jack-in-the-box he leaped from the armchair.

Trimble leaped for the door at the same moment. He tore it open and fled into the passage, just dodging Tom Merry & Co., who were coming along towards the stairs. Like a hunted hare Baggy went up the passage past the astonished three.

Like a cork from a ginger-beer bottle Arthur Augustus shot out of the doorway of Study No. 2 in pursuit.

Crash!

"Why—what—who— Yaroooooh!"

"Bai Jove!"

"You thundering ass—"

"Yoooooop!"

It was a terrific collision. The Terrible Three went staggering, and D'Arcy, reeling back from the shock, was strewn on the floor. He sprawled there and spluttered.

"You silly ass!" roared Tom Merry. "Can't you look where you're going?"

"Gwooooh!"

"What do you mean by charging into fellows like a giddy battering-ram?" shrieked Manners.

"Ooooh!"

"Bump him!" howled Lowther.

"Gwoogh! Oh! Leggo! I—I— Oh, you awful uffians! Yah!"

Bump!
The Terrible Three went on to the staircase, leaving Arthur Augustus in a bumped and breathless state.
"Oh cwumps!" groaned Arthur Augustus, as he picked himself up dizzily. "Oh deah! That wottah Twimble! Those awful wottahs! Gwooooh! Ow! Wow! Ooooooh!"
Arthur Augustus limped away to Study No. 6. He decided to give Trimble up. The pursuit of that elusive youth was too exciting. He postponed the long overdue kicking till "dorm," and he determined that when Baggy was cornered in the dormitory, whence there would be no escape, the kicking should be, in the words of the poet, frequent and painful and free.

CHAPTER 5. Kicking Trimble.

KILDARE of the Sixth shepherded the Fourth Form off to their dormitory at half-past nine. Baggy Trimble was not in the crowd of juniors that marched up the staircase. Arthur Augustus looked round for him in vain.

"Bai Jove! That feahful wottah cannot be dodgin' dorm!" said Arthur Augustus. "He is bound to turn up for bed. It is weally vewy exaspawatin'. As a wule it is vewy difficult to keep Twimble at arm's length, and it seems equally difficult to get him within kickin' distance. Bai Jove, I shall kick him vewy hard for givin' me all this twouble, the howwid, fat, inconsiderate beast!"
"Hallo, here he is!" exclaimed Blake, as the juniors entered the dormitory.

Baggy Trimble was already in bed.
"Bai Jove! Twimble!"
Snore!
"Fast asleep!" grinned Herries.
"I will jollay soon wake him up! Twimble!"
Snore!
"Now then, turn in!" called out Kildare. "Back in a few minutes!"

The prefect left the dormitory, and Arthur Augustus crossed to Trimble's bed. He shook the fat junior by the shoulder.

"Twimble, you wottah!"
Snore!
"Wake up, you howwid boundah!"
Snore!
"Bai Jove! He is sleepin' like a dashed pig!" said Arthur Augustus. "I have nevah heard even Twimble snore so fwoightfully befoah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try a wet sponge down his neck!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.
"Yaas, wathah!"
Trimble woke up suddenly.
"Here, keep off, you beast!" he roared.

"Bai Jove! He was awake all the time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Twimble, will you have the kindness to turn out of bed?" demanded Arthur Augustus sternly.

"Wha-a-at for?"
"I cannot vewy well kick you while you are in bed, Twimble. I am goin' to kick you for wudeness to my friend Gwimes!"

"I—I'll fight you to-morrow," said Trimble. "I've been going to lick you for a long time, D'Arcy. You're too cheeky! To-morrow I'll meet you in the gym and thrash you. I want to go to sleep now!"

"I am not goin' to take the twouble of dwawin' you like a dashed badgah to-morrow, Twimble. Turn out!"
"I won't!" roared Trimble.

"Then, bai Jove—"
"Cave!" called out Wildrake. "I guess I can hear Kildare's fairy foot-steps!"

"Turn in, Gussy!" chuckled Blake.
"Bai Jove! I will kick him aftah lights-out!" said Arthur Augustus. And he made haste to turn in. Prefects of the Sixth were not to be argued with when they were waiting to extinguish the lights.

Kildare turned out the light in the Fourth Form dormitory and retired. Two minutes later, Arthur Augustus was out of bed again.

"Now, Twimble, you wottah—"

Snore!
Arthur Augustus groped for a match-box, struck a match, and lighted a candle-end. The Fourth-Formers sat up in bed, evidently prepared to enjoy the entertainment. Baggy Trimble still snored; but a powerful grip on his fat shoulder rolled him out of bed. Trimble jumped clear, and backed away.

"Go it, Gussy!" sang out Blake.
"Now, Twimble, you wemembah actin' with uttably wotten wudeness towards my friend Gwimes this aftahnoon—"

"Blow Grimes!" said Trimble, with unexpected defiance.
"Yah! Rotten grocer! Yah!"

"I weally wish I had my boots on!" said Arthur Augustus, breathing hard. "But I shall give you a vewy severe kickin' all the same, Twimble!"

"Go it, Gussy!"
"Stand up to it, Trimble!"

Baggy Trimble turned as if to flee. By doing so, he placed himself in a really favourable position for a kicking.

For once Arthur Augustus was vengeful. He chased after the fat junior, and kicked with terrific energy.

Crash!
"Yaroooooh!"

The next moment the Fourth Form were treated to an unexpected and amazing sight. Arthur Augustus was hopping on one leg, and clapping the other foot with both hands, uttering ejaculations of dire anguish.

"Wow-ow-ow-ow! My toe! Oh cwumps! My big toe! Yooooop! I believe it is weally bwoken! Yow-ow-ow-wooooo!"

"He he, he!" cackled Trimble. "Kick again, old fellow—kick away! He, he, he! I've got a wooden platter in my pyjama! He, he, he!"

"Yawwoop!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus hopped frantically to his bed and sat down, still clapping his damaged toe.

He was quite "hors de combat." His terrific kick had landed on the thick wooden plate that Baggy Trimble had placed as defensive armour—and Gussy was hurt! He felt as if his big toe had been driven back about as far as his ankle.

The juniors roared—and Arthur Augustus roared, though in quite a different way. Trimble chortled.



"Trot in, Gustavus!" said Tom Merry with a smile, as the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus appeared in the doorway of No. 10. "Just in time for tea!" "Thank you vewy much, deah boys! I have not come to tea. I am lookin' for Twimble. He's been wude to my friend Gwimes, and I'm goin' to kick him!"

"That's why I turned in early," he remarked complacently. "I was all ready for you, old scout!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Oh, my toe! Gwooooh! You howwid fat beast! Wow!"

"You can have another kick if you like," said Trimble liberally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh cwmbs! Oh deah! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus did not feel disposed to take a penalty kick. He was too busy with his hapless toe. He rolled into bed, still groaning, and Trimble, chortling, followed his example.

"Gwooooh! Oh! Ow! I will give you a feahful thwashin' to-morrow, Twimble! Oh deah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"He, he, he!" cackled Trimble.

"Oh wats! Oh deah! Oh, my toe! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus was the last to sleep in the Fourth Form dormitory that night. For quite a long time his toe occupied his thoughts and kept him awake. Kicking Trimble for his own good had proved a thankless task.

CHAPTER 6.

A Double Engagement.

THE next day Baggy Trimble kept a wary eye open for the swell of St. Jim's. But it was not the way of Arthur Augustus to let the sun go down on his wrath—and the next day he seemed to have forgotten Trimble—much to that fat youth's relief. The affair of Trimble had, however, quite banished from Gussy's noble mind the arrangement he had made with Grimes, and he did not think of mentioning it to his chums. It was not till Saturday came round that Arthur Augustus was reminded of it. Blake and Herries and Digby were discussing a bike spin for the half-holiday; it was a fine spring afternoon, and Gussy was told to get into his Norfolk. Then he remembered his engagement.

"Bai Jove! I shn't be able to come with you fellows!" he said.

"Why not?" demanded Blake. "Of course you'll come! Do you think we can trust you out of our sight?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"We're starting in an hour," said Herries, "that will give you just time to change your clothes, won't it?"

"Weally, Hewies—"

"We'll come and help!" suggested Digby, with sarcasm. "The four of us, putting our beef into it, could get you changed in an hour, I think."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Why don't you want to come?" demanded Blake. "Do you want to take your best topper out for a walk?"

"Not at all, deah boy! I have an engagement in the village," explained Arthur Augustus.

"Cut it out!" said Blake. "You spend too much time in the bunshop, Gussy. Clara's father will be coming along to ask the Head about your intentions one of these days."

"I wufuse to listen to your wibald jokes, Blake. I am not goin' to the bunshop, as it happens."

"Well, your tailor can wait!"

"I am not goin' to see my tailor. I am goin' to see Grimes."

"Oh, bother Grimes!" said Blake. "What the merry thump do you want to see Grimes for?"

"I am goin' to put in some footah with him and his friends."

"Footer with the village kids!" ejaculated Blake.

"Yas, wathah!"

"Taken on a job as coach?" asked Herries, with a grin.

"As a maffah of fact, deah boy, I think they will be all the bettah for a little coachin' from me," said Arthur Augustus.

"You see, I am wathah friently with Grimes. He is a verry good sort, and he wescued me from feahful pewil the othah day."

"Rescued your hat, you mean."

"Wats! One good turn deserves another, you know. In the pvesent circe, I am goin' to stand by old Grimes, and—"

"My dear old ass, run along and coach the village kids, if you like," yawned Blake. "After all, if you don't come on your bike, we shan't have to carry you home."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Let's get ready," said Digby. "We can start a few hours sooner, if we don't have to wait for Gussy to change his clobber."

"By the way, I don't think I've mentioned to you fellows—"

—began Arthur Augustus.

"Got a new hat?"

"No, you ass! I have awwanged to—"

"Buy a new necktie?"

"No!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I have awwanged with Grimes."

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"Oh, bless Grimes!" said Blake. "Grimes is a good sort, in his way; but it's barely possible to have too much Grimes. Run away and play, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

But Blake & Co. marched off to get their bicycles ready, and Arthur Augustus lost the opportunity of making his belated communication. Not that he regarded it as a matter of importance.

A little later Arthur Augustus, with a coat and muffler over his natty football clobber, walked down to the village green. He found Grimes & Co. already there, minus Sidney Pilcher, the winger, of whose valuable services the village team had been deprived.

Grimes & Co. greeted Arthur Augustus very cordially.

Most of them were very pleased to welcome the swell of St. Jim's into their ranks. In spite of his elegant manners and customs, Arthur Augustus was a good player, and he was never left out of Tom Merry's eleven on important occasions. He could always be relied upon to keep his end up on the wing.

"Jolly good of you to come, sir," said Grimes.

"Not at all, deah boy—verry pleased," said Arthur Augustus. "Pilchah is still out of the eleven—what?"

Grimes nodded regretfully.

"Yes. We shn't have him in the match next Saturday," he said.

"I will try to fill his place with cvedit, deah boy."

Grimes rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Will that be all right?" he asked.

"Yas, wathah!"

"Well, if you say so, I suppose it's so," said Grimes. "If you can play for us next Saturday, Master D'Arcy, we'll be jolly glad. You're sure Tom Merry won't mind?"

Arthur Augustus raised his eyebrows.

"Why should Tom Mewvy mind?" he asked.

"Well, I thought he might," said the perplexed Grimes.

"Not in the least, deah boy— Besides, if Tom Mewwy minded, I should request him to go and eat coke!"

Grimes grinned.

"Well, if you're sure it's all right, sir—"

"Quite all right."

"Then it's a go," said Grimes.

The footer practice on the village green lasted an hour or so. Arthur Augustus showed himself in great form, and there was no doubt that Grimes & Co. were well satisfied with their new recruit. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was an acquisition in any junior football team, and undoubtedly he filled excellently the place of the missing Pilcher.

After the practice they parted on the best of terms, and Arthur Augustus walked home to St. Jim's.

But Grimes, pleased as he was, still looked a little perplexed as he walked away with Craggs.

"I s'pose it's all right, as he says so!" Grimes remarked.

"He ought to know. But he generally plays for his school, and as our match next Saturday is with St. Jim's, I thought— But I s'pose he knows best."

"Ought to," said Craggs.

"Yes, I s'pose it's all serene. Jolly glad to 'ave him in the team, anyway."

Grimes & Co. naturally did not know the Honourable Arthur Augustus quite so well as his chums at St. Jim's knew him. They were not aware that the swell of St. Jim's was a trifle absent-minded.

They would have been very much surprised to learn that the noble Gussy had entered into the arrangement to play for Rylcombe, totally oblivious of the fact that it might—in fact, would—clash with his prior engagements.

In the aristocratic brain of Arthur Augustus there was room for only one idea at a time.

He had quite forgotten that the next Saturday's match was between Rylcombe and St. Jim's juniors, and that, as a matter of course, he would be down in Tom Merry's team to play.

Grimes in supposing that Gussy knew best, was really taking a little too much for granted.

During the following days the coincidence might have occurred to Gussy's powerful brain, but he was very busy in thinking of other matters. A series of happenings kept him from giving any thought to the football match at all. In the first place, on Sunday he took a long walk with Wildrake. On Monday some heinous and felonious person introduced gum into his best topper. On Tuesday he was burdened with lines by Mr. Lathom. On Wednesday his cousin Ethel paid a visit to St. Jim's, and on an occasion like that all minor matters faded over the horizon. On Thursday there was a "rag" on the Grammar School. On Friday there was another rag, this time with the New House at St. Jim's. And so all through that busy week, Arthur Augustus gave no thought to the morrow, as it were; and then came Saturday, the interesting date on which the noble Gussy was booked to play on both sides at the football-match.

CHAPTER 7.

A Divided Duty.

TOM MERRY had posted up the list for the Saturday match on Friday, and a good many fellows had looked at it with interest. Arthur Augustus did not happen to look at it. He had joined in the rag on Figgins & Co. of the New House that day, and there was a slight swelling on his noble nose. That damage had to be attended to, and it was attended to with great care and for a long time, and Gussy was satisfied at last that it would not show, or that if it showed it would not show "very much." With such an important matter on his mind, Arthur Augustus was not likely to think about looking at papers on the board. It was on Saturday, when the Fourth Form came out after morning lessons, that Tom Merry's list came to Gussy's lofty notice.

Jack Blake glanced at it in passing, and nodded with approval. As the St. Jim's junior team was playing an outside eleven, the team was drawn from both Houses, selected from the players who had shown up best in recent House matches. Grimes & Co., though they had some difficulties in keeping their footer up to the mark, were a good team, and they played quite as hard as the "Saints," though perhaps not quite so scientifically. Tom Merry liked "old Grimes," very well, but he did not want to risk being beaten by the villagers—that would have been too terrible a come-down for the school. So he had selected quite a powerful eleven to meet the Rylcombe Village fellows.

Blake found himself in it, and was satisfied. One of his chums was in it, too—D'Arcy; and though Blake would have been pleased to see Herries and Dig also there, he felt that Study No. 6 couldn't expect to bag four places. If "J. Blake" had been missing from the list, Blake certainly would have felt that Tom Merry was losing his grip, and that as a football skipper he was on the wane. Fortunately, "J. Blake" was there, so Tom Merry retained his place in Blake's estimation.

"That's all right, you fellows," Blake remarked. "Sorry you two chaps are not in, but everybody can't play in a game."

"Too many New House chaps," said Herries.

"Well, perhaps that's so," admitted Blake. "Four of the New House is a good allowance. Still, Wynn is a corker in goal, and Figgins isn't bad in the front line, and Kerr and Redfern can play."

"I know somebody who's as good as Fatty Wynn in goal," Blake smiled.

"Not quite, old chap," he said.

"Nearly, but not quite."

"Rate!" said Herries.

"Anyhow, Herries is coming home with me this afternoon," said Digby.

"So Fatty would have to keep goal, anyway."

"Talbot of the Shell's playing," went on Blake. "That's all right. I don't think much of the Shell as a rule, when it comes to football. But Talbot is a good man. So is Kangaroo. Levison is good—quite good, though perhaps not quite up to Study No. 6 form."

"Rate!" said the cheery voice of Ernest Levison over Blake's shoulder.

"Tommy himself, of course, we expect to see!" continued Blake. "But I'm not so sure about Lowther. Still, I suppose Tommy couldn't leave Lowther out without a row in the study."

"He's left Manners out!" remarked Levison.

"Yes—that's a good thing about Tommy—he'd leave his own grandfather out to make the team better," said Blake. "I dare say Manners will go wandering with his camera, and like it ever so much better than kicking goals for St. Jim's. What are you blinking at, Gussy?"

"Was I blinkin', Blake?"

"Well, staring like a stuck pig, then," said Blake. "What's the matter with you, image?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy certainly was staring at the footer list, though perhaps not exactly like a stuck pig.

His eyeglass was screwed into his noble eye, and there was a serious and rather startled expression on his face.

"Bai Jove!" he said.

"What's the trouble?" asked Levison.

"Tom Mewry has my name down."

"Of course he has!" said Blake. "Fathead as you are in everything else, old scout, you can play, after a fashion, on the wing. Couldn't play less than two from Study No. 6, anyhow. It would be chucking the game away!"

"Yaas, but—"

"You've got to pull up your socks this afternoon, Gussy. Grimes is no end of a dear old merchant, but we've got to put the village in its proper place. They've been rather crowing because they licked a St. Jim's chap—though it was only Racke—and I had to punch Craggs myself to show him there was somebody here who could put up a fight. If they licked us at footer they would be too proud of themselves. If you don't play the game of your life, Gussy, I'll scalp you!"

"Bai Jove! It's weally vewy awkward—"

"If you'd rather stand out, I'd take your place like a shot!" said Clive.

"You're a half," said Blake. "Tommy wouldn't put you in the front line in Gussy's place. Besides, Gussy's going to play. What are you wandering in your mind about, you glass-eyed image?"

"I wufuse to be alluded to as a glass-eyed image, Blake. I veward it as a wudicrous expvression. I was just thinkin'—"

"Rot!" said Blake. "You couldn't! Besides, don't you begin thinking—might lead to a nervous breakdown or something. That would crock you for the match."

FERDY GOT ANOTHER BRAIN WAVE. THIS WAS NO LESS THAN THE APPLICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES TO THE GAME OF FOOTBALL.



HE SPENT NEXT DAY IN ERECTING A PLATFORM, A BLACKBOARD, AND SOME SEATS FOR THE AUDIENCE.

"NOW," SAID FERDY, "I PROPOSE TO APPLY THE PRINCIPLES OF

BILLIARDS TO FOOTBALL, AND WILL DEMONSTRATE HOW, BY PUTTING ON PROPER SIDE, WHEN KICKING THE BALL, GOALS CAN BE GOTT BY MAKING THE BALL CANNON OFF THE HEAD OF ONE OPPOSING PLAYER TO THE HEAD OF ANOTHER AND FROM THENCE LAND RIGHT INTO THE NET.



HE DECIDED TO GIVE A LECTURE AND INVITE THE ST. JIM'S TEAM. HE PERSUADED HIS LANDLORD TO LET HIM HAVE THE USE, FOR THE OCCASION, OF AN OUTHOUSE WHEREIN THE SAID LANDLORD USUALLY CHAINED UP HIS DOG 'CROUCHER' WHEN NOT IN USE.



BUT AT THIS POINT 'CROUCHER' SAW AN INTRUDING RAT AND THE LECTURE CAME TO AN ABRUPT END.

FERDY'S SCHEME FALLS THROUGH. ALAS, SO DOES FERDY HIMSELF!

"Weally, you ass—"
 "Come on, you fellows!" said Blake. "Let's go and punt a ball about before dinner."

The juniors streamed out into the quadrangle, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy still regarding the footer list with a perplexed expression.

He felt that the position was awkward.

It had dawned on his noble brain all at once that Grimes' match that Saturday afternoon was with St. Jim's. He had promised to play for Grimes—and he was down to play for St. Jim's! It was decidedly awkward! Gussy was a good footballer—one of the best—but the finest player going could not have contrived to play for both sides at once.

Arthur Augustus shook his head thoughtfully.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "This is wathah an awkward posish. Of course, I'm bound to stand by Gwimes. And I cannot vewy well refuse to play for my own team on a vewy important occasion like this! Bai Jove! I suppose that is what Gwimes was thinkin' about when he asked me if I was suah it was all wight! I weally wondah it nevah occurred to me. But, affah all, a fellow can't think of evewythin'."

Arthur Augustus wandered out into the quadrangle at last in a thoughtful mood.

He was still in a mood of deep thought at dinner.

There was a problem on his noble brain, and as yet Arthur Augustus did not see his way out. After dinner he looked for Tom Merry, and found him in the quad with Manners and Lowther.

"Get out your shooting-boots, Gussy!" was Tom Merry's greeting. "We want two or three of your best goals this afternoon."

Arthur Augustus looked distressed.

"It's wathah wotten!" he said. "You see, old scout, I sha'n't be able to play for you this afternoon."

"Rot!"

"It's so, deah boy."

Tom Merry looked at him.

"We want you," he said. "If you're not fit, I can let you off, of course. St. Jim's isn't really hard up for men. But I shall want a jolly good reason. If you're going mooching round the bunshop instead of playing, I've got only one word to say—cut it out!"

"Bai Jove! That is three words, Tom Merry!"

"Clara," said Monty Lowther seriously, "can survive one Saturday afternoon without seeing you, Gussy."

"Weally, Lowther—"

"Gordon Gay will fill your place—at the bunshop," said Lowther. "Clara has a glad eye for him, as well as for you. She has two, you know."

"Wats! I have a pwior engagement, Tom Merry."

"What rot!" said the captain of the Shell. "We want you to play in the match, fathead!"

"I shall be playin'!"

"Well, that's all right, then!"

"But—"

"No 'buts' about it that I can see," remarked Tom. "If you're playing, you're playing, and there's an end!"

"Not in this case," said Lowther. "There's seldom an end when Gussy gets his chin going."

"Pway dwy up, Lowthah, you ass. You see, Tom Merry, I shall be playin' in the match—"

"All right, then."

"On the othah side—"

"Eh?"

"I have offahed to play for Gwimes while his best wingab, Sidney Pilchah, is unable to turn up."

"What!" roared Tom Merry.

"It's wathah unfortunate. I quite ovahlooked the fact that the villagahs had a fixture with us," confessed Arthur Augustus.

"You frumptious ass!"

"Weally, Tom Merry—"

"You footling chump!"

"Bai Jove!"

"So you've undertaken to play for the giddy enemy against your own school!" howled Tom Merry.

"Not at all, deah boy!"

"Isn't that what you've just said!" exclaimed Tom warmly.

"Not pwecisely. You see, I quite ovahlooked the fact that I should be playin' against my own school."

"What a brain!" murmured Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

Tom Merry's face was a study.

"You're our best man at outside-right," said Tom. "We want you. But I can put in another man, if necessary!"

"Yaas, wathah! There's weally a crowd of chaps to choose from—not so good, of course, but I am suah you can find a substitute. Then it will be all wight."

"All wrong, you mean! You're not going to play against St. Jim's."

"I have undabtaken—"

"Fathead!"

THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 736.

"I cannot let Gwimes down, you know," said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "It is a pwior engagement, you know."

"And what about your prior engagement with us?" hooted Tom Merry. "What about that, fathead?"

"It is priorer," said Monty Lowther, inventing a new comparative on the spot. "Priorer, in fact."

"Yaas, but—"

"Forget it!" said Tom. "You're playing for St. Jim's, if you play at all. If you stand out, I'll give Wilkins of the Shell a show. But you're not playing against St. Jim's."

"I have agreed—"

"Disagree, then!" growled Tom Merry.

"You see, I have engaged—"

"One engagement cancels another," said Monty Lowther. "You were a member of St. Jim's junior club before you ever heard of Grimes."

"Yaas, but—"

"That's settled," said Tom.

"Yaas, it is settled. I am goin' to play—"

"For St. Jim's!"

"No, deah boy, for Gwimes."

And with that, Arthur Augustus walked away, feeling that there was nothing more to be said.

CHAPTER 8.

Arguing With Gussy!

JACK BLAKE of the Fourth breathed wrath. He breathed it deeply. He lived, moved, and had his being in deep wrath, as it were.

The wrath of Achilles, so eloquently sung by Homer, was a mere passing breeze to that of Jack Blake of the Fourth.

Achilles, in his wrath, retired to his tent and sulked. Blake of the Fourth took much more active measures than that.

As soon as he heard the news—that Gussy was playing for Grimes & Co. against St. Jim's—Blake's first proceeding was to give a very good imitation of Vesuvius in eruption. Then he looked for Arthur Augustus. Dig and Herries went with him. They found the noble youth in Study No. 6, with a thoughtful but very determined expression on his aristocratic face.

"Idiot!" was Blake's opening. It was not polite, but it expressed his feelings to some extent.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Playing for Grimes!" roared Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You're not!" hooted Digby.

"There is weally no alternative, deah boy. Undah the cirs, I can't play for St. Jim's."

"Tom Merry's already put Wilkins of the Shell in your place!" howled Blake.

"That's all wight."

"It's one up against this study."

"Aw'fly sowwy, but in the cirs—"

"And you think you're going to play for Grimes, against your own school!" shrieked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Do you call that playing the game?" roared Herries.

"Yaas!"

"You—you—you footling, frabjous, burbling bandersnatch—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Haven't I brought you up to play footer?" demanded Blake. "Haven't I taught you all you know?"

"Not at all, deah boy. That is a vewy sewious ewwah. I doubt if you would be much of a footballah, but for my coachin'."

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Blake.

"The matzah is settled," said Arthur Augustus. "It's an awkward posish, but these things will happen, you know. I forgot all about Gwimes playin' against St. Jim's—when I agreed to play for him. I cannot vewy well let him down. You see, his is weally the weakah team of the two, and so I am bound to stand by him."

"You unspeakable jabberwock!" said Blake. "What sort of a footballer do you call yourself, when you may be playing on the other side any time your team wants you for a match?"

"Bai Jove! That is puttin' it in a wathah wotten way. I do not look at it in that light, Blake."

"Tom Merry does. He's not likely to give you a chance again in a School match, if you let him down like this."

"That will be wathah wuff for the School matches," said Arthur Augustus. "It means a record of defeat, I feah."

"You fathead! Are you prepared to be dropped out of the St. Jim's team, just to keep this idiotic arrangement with that fathead Grimes?"

"Yaas!"

"Lucky for you you've got some pals to look after you, then," said Blake grimly. "We're not letting you do it."

"I am sowwy, Blake, but I cannot allow you to chip in. I wepard it as bein' up to me to play for Gwimes."

"You can't do it!" bellowed Herries.
"Fway don't wear at me, Hewwies. I have told you a lot of times how I object to bein' woreat at!"
"You—you—you—" spluttered Herries.

"The mattah is settled," said Arthur Augustus. "I am weally sowwy. On anothah occasion I will be wathah more carefult—"

"There won't be another occasion, if Tom Merry chucks you out of the team on your silly neck!" hooted Blake.

"Can't be helped, deah boy. I'm not goin' to let Gwimes down."

"Try banging his head on the wall!" suggested Dig thoughtfully.

"Bai Jove! I— Leggo, you wuffians!" roared Arthur Augustus, as his exasperated chums seized him.

But the three Fourth-Formers did not let go—they were too infuriated for that. Gussy was going to be saved from disaster in spite of himself, and Blake & Co. were prepared to take drastic measures.

In the grasp of his three devoted chums, Gussy was jerked to the study wall, where his noble head was duly banged.

Bang!
"Yawwooooooop!"

"Now are you playing for Grimes?"

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Bang!
"Now are you—"

"Welease me, you feahful wuffians!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "I will give you a feahful thwashin' all wound! Oh cwumbs!"

Bang!
"Yecooooop!"

Grundy of the Shell looked into the study.

"The village kids have turned up," he said. "You fellows had better get down to the footer. I say, that idiot Merry has put Wilkins in D'Arcy's place—though I offered! Fancy that!" And Grundy walked on, sniffing.

"Welease me!" howled Arthur Augustus. "I've got to get down and see Gwimes—"

"Are you sticking to it?" howled Blake.

"Yaas!"

"Even banging his head doesn't do him any good!" gasped Blake. "Jever hear of such an obstinate ass?"

"Gwoogh!"

"Try bumping him!" said Digby. Robert Arthur Digby was full of resource that afternoon.

"Good!"

"You feahful wottahs— Oh cwumbs!"

Bump!

"Now are you chucking it up?" yelled Blake.

"Oh deah! Wats! Ow!"

Levison of the Fourth passed the door.

"You'll be late!" he called in, and vanished.

"Will you welease me, you feahful boundahs!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"I wepeat that I am goin' to play for Gwimes. I wefuse to wemain heah. Welease me at once!"

Bump!

"Oh cwumbs!"

"Now are you going to play for the enemy?" roared Blake.

"Yaas!"

"Try inking him!" said Digby, evidently not yet at the end of his resources for meeting the difficult occasion.

"If you venchah to touch me with that ink— Oh cwumbs! Gwooooooh!" spluttered Arthur Augustus, as the ink-bottle was up-ended over his noble napper.

"Now, you image—"

"Now, you frumpious chump—"

"You feahful wuffians! I am goin' to play for Gwimes—"

"There's no time to argue with you now," said Blake, breathing deep and hard. "We've got to get down to the ground."

"So have I, you ass; Gwimes will be lookin' for me, I don't want you to argue with me, you wuffian. Welease me at once!"

"Take the key out of the door, Dig!"

"You bet!" said Dig.

"Catch on, you drivelling jabberwock?" asked Blake grimly. "You're going to be locked in!"

Digby, grinning, slipped the key into the outside of the lock. Blake and Herries released the swell of St. Jim's, and followed Dig to the door.

Arthur Augustus made a gallant charge at the doorway.

The next moment, four juniors were mixed up in a terrific scrum. When they separated, Arthur Augustus was lying breathless on the hearthrug, and Blake and Herries and Digby crowded out of the study, and the key was turned in the door.

D'Arcy scrambled up.

He staggered to the door, and dragged it. Blake slipped the key into his pocket.

"Ta-ta, Teresa!" he called out; and the three juniors tramped away.

"Open this doah, you wottahs!"

Blake & Co's footsteps died away down the Fourth Form passage.

Thump! Bang! Thump!

On the inside of the door, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy beat a wild tattoo. But the door did not budge. The swell of St. Jim's was a prisoner in Study No. 6—and instead of playing on both sides in that football match, it looked as if he would play on neither!

CHAPTER 9.

Help From Trimble!

TOM MERRY shouted to Blake, as the latter appeared on the football ground, in rather a breathless state.

"Hurry up! Waiting for you!"

Grimes gave Blake a nod as he came up. The footballers were ready. Rather to Blake's surprise, as he glanced over the Rylcombe crowd, he saw that there were eleven footballers.

"Is D'Arcy about?" asked Grimes, as Blake came up.

"Not just at this minute," said Blake, with a breathless grin. "He's got rather an important engagement, which may keep him for about ninety minutes."

"Oh!" said Grimes.

He looked puzzled.



Arthur Augustus chased after Trimble, and kicked with terrific energy. Crash! "Yawwooh!" The next moment the Fourth Form were treated to an unexpected and amazing sight. Arthur Augustus was hopping on one leg and clapping the other foot with both hands. "Oh cwumbs!" he gasped. "I believe I've broken my toe!"

"You see, Master D'Arcy was going to play for us!" he said.

"Was he?" asked Blake, with an air of polite interest.

"Yes. It was very kind of him to offer, as Pilcher was standing out of our team," said Grimes. "He fixed it up with you fellows, of course?"

"I'm afraid he forgot to do that," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Always happy to lend you a man, Grimey; but Gussy forgot to mention it."

"Well, it's all right," said Grimes. "It turned out that Sidney was able to get this afternoon off, so I've brought him along. I was going to tell Master D'Arcy that it was all right—after thinking it over, I reckoned he'd rather not play against St. Jim's, though he was sticking to his arrangement with me. I—I couldn't help thinking that—that perhaps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Where's Gussy now, Blake?" asked Tom Merry.

"In the study."

"What on earth is he doing in the study, when there are two football teams he's engaged to play for?" asked Monty Lowther.

"The key's in my pocket," explained Blake.

"Oh!"

Grimes grinned.

"I'm rather glad I brought Pilcher along," he remarked.

"We'd have lent you a man, of course," said Tom Merry.

"Anybody but Gussy," said Blake. "In the circumstances, Gussy had to be muzzled. Let's get going!"

"But—but D'Arcy—" said Grimes.

"D'Arcy's all right. He was tattooing on the door when I came away—I dare say he will find it amusing."

The sides lined up, and Arthur Augustus was dismissed from the minds of his comrades.

Grimes gave him a few moments' thought—he was rather distressed about the fate of his recruit. But there was nothing that Grimes could do.

In spite of Gussy's assurances, Grimes had felt a little dubious about the arrangement, and he had jumped at the chance of bringing Pilcher along with him, in order to release the swell of St. Jim's from his thoughtless engagement. He was glad now that he had done so.

In a few minutes the footballers were going strong, and even Grimes forgot all about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Meanwhile, that youth was in Study No. 6, in a frame of mind that could not be described in words.

Knowing nothing about Sidney Pilcher having turned up for the match after all, Arthur Augustus naturally supposed that the villagers were a man short. There were plenty of St. Jim's fellows who would have offered to fill the vacant place in the village team; but that was no satisfaction to Arthur Augustus. Grimes depended on him, and he was failing Grimes—owing to Blake's drastic measures. It is a

great thing to have a devoted pal; but on this occasion, pally devotion had been carried much too far, in Gussy's opinion. He raged in the study—in his righteous wrath quite forgetting the repose which stamps—or should stamp—the caste of Vere de Vere.

He thumped on the door till he was tired. Several fellows came along to ask what he was kicking up such a row about, but they only chuckled when they heard his breathless explanation through the keyhole.

"Serve you right!" was the reply he usually received.

As there was no key in the lock, it would have been a difficult matter to release Arthur Augustus. But nobody wanted to release him. The general opinion of the School House fellows was that Arthur Augustus had got what he had asked for. Only once did Arthur Augustus have a glimmer of hope, and that was when he heard Baggy Trimble's fat chuckle outside the door. Asking favours of Trimble was not pleasant; but it was a case of any port in a storm.

"Twimble!" called out Gussy.

"He, he, he!"

"Pwag get the key and open this door, Twimble."

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble. "You kicked me last week, D'Arcy. You know you did! He, he, he!"

"Bai Jove! I will kick you again, you fat little wottah!"

"How will you do it through the door?" inquired Trimble.

Arthur Augustus controlled his wrath.

"I will give you five shillin's to get the dooah open, Twimble!" he breathed through the keyhole.

"I hope I'm not the kind of fellow to do a thing like that for money!" answered Trimble.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"As it happens, I'm short of tin, owing to lending Figgins of the New House my last ten-bob note, in my thoughtless, generous way," said Trimble. "If you cared to lend me ten bob till Figgins squares, D'Arcy—"

"I will make it ten shillin's!"

"Cash down?" asked Trimble cautiously.

"Yaas, you fat wottah!"

"If you call me names, D'Arcy, I shall decline to mix myself up in the matter at all!"

"I—I—pwag get the key somehow, Twimble, and open the dooah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It will be in Blake's ova-coat-pocket most likely, and he will have thrown it off. They're playin' now, I suppose."

"Started long ago," said Trimble cheerily. "I say, Gussy, shove the ten-bob note under the door."

"Aftahwards—"

"If you don't trust me, D'Arcy, I'm afraid—"

"I will put it undah the dooah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Good—I'm waiting!"

It was the last resource; and Arthur Augustus did not hesitate. He extracted a ten-shilling note from his purse, and squeezed it under the study door. There Trimble's fat fingers closed on it.

"Thanks, old bean!" said Baggy. "I say, D'Arcy—"

"Yaas?"

"I don't want to dun Figgins for that ten bob. Would you mind this standing over till next week?"

"Yaas—no—anythin'!"

"Right you are, old pal!"

"Pwag huwuy up, Twimble! Get the key—"

"I'm off!" said Trimble. "I suppose you don't mind if I call in at the tuckshop for a few minutes?"

"You fat wottah!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I have given you ten bob to let me out of this study. Go and get the key at once."

"Well, if you're really in a hurry—"

"Huwuy up!"

"Oh, all right!" yawned Trimble.

The fat junior rolled away, and Arthur Augustus waited with burning impatience for his return. Trimble evidently was not so pressed in the matter as the hapless Gussy was. It was a quarter of an hour before Gussy heard his returning footsteps.

"Open the dooah!" he called out hurriedly.

"Sorry, old bean—"

"What?"

"It was just half-time when I got on the ground," said Trimble, "and Blake saw me looking at his coat. The tuckst kicked me!"

"Oh, deeah!"

"You kicked me once for just happening to glance at your coat when you left it off," said Trimble. "You said I was spying."

"I—I—"

"Perhaps you won't misjudge a fellow another time," said Baggy virtuously. "I say, these tarts are good!"

"What?"

"I thought I'd drop in at the tuckshop. It doesn't make any difference, as I've not got the key, does it?"

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"Go and get the key, you fat villain!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"You see—"

"You fat wottah! You—you tallowy beast!"

"If you're going to be personal, D'Arcy, I've got nothing further to say to you," said Baggy, with dignity. "Good-bye!"

"Bai Jove! Don't go away, Twimble! I say— Oh, cwmbs! The beast has gone!" groaned Arthur Augustus.

Baggy Trimble had retired to his study to devour his prey at his leisure, as it were.

Arthur Augustus raged.

It was already the second half, and, so far as Gussy knew, Grimes was playing a man short. Even at the eleventh hour the accession of Grimes' new recruit might have saved the situation for Grimes, so far as Gussy knew. In sheer desperation, the swell of St. Jim's opened the study window and looked out at the ivy. At any other time he would not have dreamed of attempting such a descent. But it was neck or nothing now, and Gussy was desperate.

But again his luck was out. Mr. Railton and Mr. Lathom were walking and talking in the quad, and Mr. Railton observed the head and shoulders of a reckless junior protruding from the high window. The Housemaster stopped, in angry surprise.

"D'Arcy!"

"Oh! Yaas, sir?" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Leave that window at once! How dare you climb out on to the sill! You utterly foolish boy, go in, and take a hundred lines!"

"Oh dear!"

Arthur Augustus limped away from the window. His last resource had failed him.

It was the most spirited youth in the school who walked about the study for the next half-hour. There was a sound of a voice at the keyhole then.

"I say, D'Arcy!"

"You wotten wottah, Twimble!"

"I think I could get a key to fit this door," said Trimble.

"I really think I could, Gussy."

"Get it, then, you wottah!"

"Hem! You've lent me ten shillings—"

"Never mind that."

"But I do mind it, D'Arcy. I'm rather particular in money matters, you know. Talbot of the Shell owes me fifteen shillings—"

"Wats!"

"My idea is this," pursued Trimble. "You lend me another five, and take the fifteen when Talbot squares—wats?"

"Bai Jove! If you think I am goin' to bwibe you again, you measly fat boundah—"

"I'm sure I could find a key—practically sure. You see—"

"Wun away, you fat wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"If I could get at you, I would give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Yah!"

That was Trimble's last word. He rolled away, disappointed, and Arthur Augustus resumed pacing the study, a good deal like a lion in a cage. The study clock indicated four-fifteen, and he knew that the match was over. And there came a tramp of feet and a buzz of cheery voices in the passage.

CHAPTER 10.

All Serene.

TOM MERRY & CO. crowded round the doorway of Study No. 6 as the door was unlocked and thrown open. The game was over, and the footballers had come in hungry for tea.

"Hallo! Sticking indoors on a fine afternoon like this!" exclaimed Blake cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus fairly glared at his chum. After what had happened, Blake's remark was really insult added to injury.

"Haven't even got tea ready!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Didn't you know we were coming to tea?"

"You feahful wottahs—"

"Phew!" ejaculated Monty Lowther. "Is that the D'Arcy brand of politeness in greeting visitors at tea-time?"

"You awful wottahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I have been locked in this study for two howahs—"

"Lucky to get off with two hours," said Blake. "Some day you'll be locked in for longer than that, if you keep on in the same way, and the oom will be a padded one."

"You—you—you attah wottah, I wufuse to weply to that wemark. I wegard you as a wuffianly beast!"

"Hear, hear!" said Blake.

"I wegard you as a wotten wuffian!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"This is Gussy's gratitude to his old pale for looking after his interests," said Blake to the Terrible Three. "Nice, isn't it? Makes a fellow feel that it's no good being a real pal."

"You have caused me to let Gwimes down—"

"Good!"

"I have failed to keep my engagement—"

"Hurrah!"

"And Gwimes owes his defeat to-day to me personally, on account of your wotten twicks!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"I shall nevah be able to lock Gwimes in the face again."

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

"It is not a laughin' mattah!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"It was uttaly wotten that Gwimes should be heafen in this match, attah I had undahtaken to play for him."

"Ha, ha!" shrieked Blake. "You see, Gwimes wasn't beaten."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gweat Scott! You don't mean to say that the village has won!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in astonishment.

"Just that," said Tom Merry, laughing. "Amazing, but true. Three goals to two!"

"Bai Jove!"

"The merry Pilcher turned up, after all," explained Blake.

"I was sorry afterwards that I didn't let you play for them."

"Oh! If you are sowwy—"

"Of course. If you'd played for them, instead of merry old Pilcher, we should have beaten them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

The cheery footballers crowded into the study. The villagers had won the match—quite unexpectedly so far as Tom Merry & Co. were concerned. But the St. Jim's footballers could afford a defeat every now and then, and they bore it cheerfully. And they were thinking chiefly now about tea. Grimes & Co. had gone home with a victory, although Arthur Augustus had failed them!

"I am vewy glad that Gwimes has not suffahed, though the wusult is weally vewy wemarkable, in the cires," said Arthur Augustus, at last. "If Gwimes had been beaten, Blake, I should have given you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Lucky for you he won, then!" remarked Blake cheerily.

"Wats! And if Pilchah turned up, attah all, I should not have played for Gwimes, anyway, so why did you not come back and welsease me from the studey?" demanded Arthur Augustus hotly.

Blake grinned.

"Forget all about you, old top!" he answered.

"Bai Jove!"

"Can't remember every little thing, you know," said Blake amiably. "Trifles are apt to slip the memory. Now, what about tea?"

Later that evening Arthur Augustus looked into Tom Merry's study, with a very thoughtful expression on his noble countenance. The Terrible Three smiled at him.

"I am wathah sowwy, Tom Mewwy," said D'Arcy. "On weflection, I feel that I was wathah thoughtless in engagin' to play for Gwimes, though he did not need me, attah all. You have booked a fothball defeat though my thoughtlessness, I feah."

"How's that?" asked Tom.

"If I had been playin' for St. Jim's, it would have made wathah a difference in the wusult, of course."

"Yes, that's so," agreed Tom. "They beat us by one goal. They might have beaten us by two!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Or three," suggested Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Or four," remarked Manners.

"Wats!"

There was a slam as Arthur Augustus departed.

THE END.

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THE NEW HOUSE SIXTH AT HOME.

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Note.—The two previous articles on the School House Sixth, by Edgar Alfie Jones, were very popular. In fact, Jones did very well for a beginner; his description simply sparkled with incident all through. But I sent him to the New House seniors, so I have left the job in the capable hands of another.—Tom Merry.)

A Request.

"FIGGINS!"
"Hallo?"
"I suppose you haven't got such a thing as a spare copy of the 'Holiday Annual' knocking about, have you?" I asked, after inserting myself inside Study No. 4.

"Your supposer is quite correct—I haven't," said Figgins.

"Sorry, old chap!" said Figgy. "I'd try Redfern next door. If I were you. He might have one."

"Right-ho!" I replied cheerfully.
I tried the handle first. It opened at my touch. Then I tried Redfern.

"A—Holiday Annual?"
Dick Redfern paused reflectively, and then crossed to the cupboard.

"Which one would you like?" he asked.
"I've got three here."

"The thickest," I said promptly.
The scholarship fellow handed over the newest of the three—the 1922 issue.

"There's rather a good wheeze of Bernard Glynn's in it," remarked Redfern. "And there's a land yarn about Talbot. I'd read it, if I were you. Talbot came a bit before your time, and the facts would be jolly interesting."

"Thank all the same," I said. "But I don't want it to read."

"Don't want it to read?" repeated Redfern. "Well, what the Dickens—"

"I want it for another purpose," I explained.

"What other purpose could there be than to read it?" asked Redfern, staring.
"The purpose of self-defence," I responded coolly.

Dick Redfern thought for a few seconds, and then took a stride towards me.

"Do you think you're going to fight with my books?" he roared. "Hand it back at once!"

I grinned, and held up my hand quietly. "No need to get alarmed, old chap!" I said. "I've been asked to pay my commitments to the Sixth Form studies, and I think it safer to go prepared."

"All right," grunted Redfern. "But don't forget—if that book gets damaged, you pay for another."

"I'll pay for fifty," I said cheerfully, and closed the door.

I made my way along to Study No. 8—my "doin's." Mall and Lyons were out, so I was able to slip the "H.A." inside my trunk immediately.

I am boy scout, you know, and my motto's "Be prepared—when you're caught bending!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 736.

The First Victim.

In a cheerful frame of mind I made my way to the sacred precincts of the Sixth. Study No. 1.—Occupant, Arthur Wells. Whenever I have cold meat or fish for dinner, I never find it necessary to ask for sauce. My own natural reserve comes to the rescue, and as I turned the handle of Study No. 1 I inwardly resolved to be quite liberal and generous with it as I sampled the Sixth. Wells was at home.

I gave a slight sniff to let him know I had arrived. He looked round with a delightful sowl.

"Yes?"
He did not seem, in the least encouraging. "Here we are, then!" I warbled.

"So I observe," said Wells. "What is it?"
"Been digging any wells lately?" I murmured innocently. "Struck any water—had any wells or cockles for supper—"

I broke off. Wells made a stride sideways, and grabbed at his cane.

Then he made a stride forward, and grabbed me. But did I resist? Non, non, monsieur! I waited.

There was a sound of sweet music—the swishing of a cane through the air.

Book!
"Hold that!" growled the senior.
Book, book, book!

He continued to wallop me for about five minutes. When at last he released me he spun me across the study and glared at me, gasping for breath.

"That's for your impertinence!" he said grimly, though a trifle perplexed at my rot yelling blue murder. "Now get out!"

I got out.
In the corridor I took in a deep breath and grinned. I could afford to grin, for the joke was quite on my side.

Study No. 2.—Unoccupied.

Study No. 3.—Occupant, Albert Gray, a prefect. Taken on the whole, this fellow was altogether too decent to march in upon and start saucing. I entered his study in a manner quiet enough for Batelliff, and waited respectfully. Gray greeted me with a smile.

"Well, kid?" he asked kindly, looking round from the comfortable armchair in which he was sitting. "What's the trouble?"

"No trouble," I replied. "Tom Merry asked me to pay a visit to the Sixth Form studies and describe what I saw—"

"Indeed!" said Gray. "Well, whose study would you say looks the nicest in appearance?"

"Why, this one, of course!" I replied, diplomatically.

Gray returned to the book he was reading, a smile on his face.

"There's a tin of peaches in the cupboard, young Thurzman, I think," he remarked. "You're quite welcome to them—"

I saluted knowingly, and quickly collared the tin of Californian choiceness before Gray changed his mind. Then, after bowing half a dozen times, I made my way to the next apartment.

A Narrow Escape.

Study No. 4.—Occupant, Harold Hall.
"Is everything all right here?" I demanded, immediately I set foot in the study.

Apparently everything was all right—the place was empty.

"Might as well make myself at home, though!" I murmured. "After all, there's no reason why a chap shouldn't make himself comfortable."

I closed the door, and walked over to the cupboard I opened it, and glanced inside. A very tempting array met my gaze—but, alas!

Footsteps sounded outside. I quickly closed the door and dived under the table. Tramp, tramp, tramp! The sound of elephantine boots came to my ears, and from under my four-legged refuge I could see six large boots.

"In my cupboard; I'll show you if you like—" the voice of Harold Hall was saying. The three seniors went round the table, and I promptly crawled out the other side. The door was open—I wriggled across on all fours; I was not detected, and with a gasp of relief drew myself out into the corridor. I was free!

Study No. 5.—Occupant, James Garston Monteith. Head prefect of the New House. Tremble, reader, tremble! We enter the sanctum of the gentleman of many moods. He might be as meek as a lamb, as harmless as a fag, but it is also possible that he might be looking for somebody to kill, to wreck his vengeance upon—there was no knowing Monteith! One always had to run those risks when one dared to enter his study.

I entered the apartment with a stiff upper-lip, a stiff neck, and a stiff "Holiday Annual" in my bags. I was prepared for emergencies, at all events. Monteith was in the study, all right—he was in his big armchair. He was asleep.

"'Twould be a pity to wake him," I mused, "but I will at least make sure he doesn't stay there all night!"

A Surprise for Monteith.

A plan had just entered my wonderful brain. A metal water-bottle, used for picnics, was the cause of it. A large fire was burning in the grate, and a kettle of boiling water was perched on the top.

I quietly pulled the cork from the bottle, and half-filled it with water. I placed the kettle down on the fender, and rammed the cork tightly into the bottle. Then I balanced it on the top bar of the grate, and pointed the neck at Monteith's boots, a yard away.

In about a couple of minutes the water would boil, and the cork would travel. If it hit Monteith's boots there would be little doubt about his waking up.

With catlike tread, I took my leave. Monteith slumbered on. Oh, where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise!

Study No. 6.—Occupant, George Webb—a prefect.

"Hallo!" said he.

"Hallo!" said I.

"What do you want?" said he.

"Anything you care to give away?" said I.

"Well, thick ears don't cost very much," said Webb reflectively. "You can have as many of those as you care to cart away—"

"Nothing doing!" I said, opening the door.

"I'll look in again, next week, p'raps—"

I hastily closed the door.

The Explosion.

Study No. 7.—Occupant, Douglas Harrington.

Harrington was at home, and he was in his armchair. Queer how these old fogies have such a liking for armchairs, isn't it?

The senior looked up as I entered.

"Just the fellow I wanted!" he commenced. "If you'll wait a minute, young Thurzman, I'll just write out a note I want you to give your brother—"

"Any old thing?" I yawned, bumping down into his armchair.

"I won't keep you two—"

Bang!

"My hat! What the—"

(Continued on page 19.)

THE ISLAND OF PLEASURE

Our Magnificent Story of Daring and Adventure.

READ THIS FIRST.

Donald Gordon and his brother Val leave St. Christopher's School, in company with Tommy Binks and Septimus Todd, a junior master, commonly known as "Scat," to join their uncle, who is on a big plantation in the Solomon Islands.

Captain Targe, in charge of the schooner Wittwake, learns of the party's quest. He plans to abandon the boat and leave them to their fate, with the intention of overthrowing the wealthy plantation owner and obtaining hold of his land. Taga, the black cabin-boy, hears of this, and warns the party. Unknown to the villainous captain, he places the boys in one of the ship's boats, and the boys are about to make their escape when Anna, the captain's daughter, taking the opportunity of getting away from the harsh treatment of her father, joins them.

Not long after the party has been treated on their perilous journey a severe storm breaks out. The party are thrown from their boat, but, luckily, get washed up on the "Island of Pleasure."

Cast on the island, they at once set about preparing their new home, refreshing themselves with various eatables which they find growing there. The regular disappearance of Val and Taga each afternoon arouses the suspicion of Tommy. After a laborious journey of investigation he espies them returning to the camp in a canoe. He joins them, and the party are nearing their quarters when they are startled by the sudden appearance of a schooner out at sea. A sudden fear enters the hearts of the party as they recognise the Wittwake.

(Now read on.)

The Mysterious Light.

"LISTEN!" said Scat, holding up his hand in warning.

He and Don had reached the edge of the jungle, and in front of them lay a cleared space, dotted here and there with low scrub and covered with immense patches of thick-growing bushes.

It was Scat's suggestion that Don had taken this afternoon stroll south of the camp, and it had been a revelation to the leader of the little party to see the way Scat had developed himself into a real jungle tracker; for the tutor had led the way right through the mass of tangled trees and creepers without once halting to find his path. Here and there Scat had left his mark by blazing a tree, and it was by these simple signs that the lanky fellow had worked.

Don listened for a moment, then a quiet, steady sound came to him.

Cluck, cluck, cluck!

It was a real familiar home-sound that for a moment brought a lamp to the leader's throat.

Scat turned, his long face wreathed in a smile of sheer delight.

"Just like a farmyard, isn't it?" There was no mistake in that note. Somewhere in the bush ahead of them was a creature that was clucking away like a real barn-door fowl—the soft, steady monotone that a contented broody hen makes when mothering her chicks.

"Come along, Don!" said Scat. "I never had time to investigate before, but I'm sure there is some sort of fowl in there."

They began to work their way through the low bushes, and presently Scat, who was a yard or so ahead, made a warning sign to Don and dropped on his hands and knees. The tall leader followed suit, and found himself creeping down a tunnel-like opening through the heart of a bush; then he reached Scat's side, and the tutor pointed ahead.

Under a patch of scrub, in a spot where the sun had managed to break through, was a scraggy bundle of feathers of a bird, sunning itself and dusting its plumage on the dried, brown earth.

"It is a hen all right," said Don, "but what a funny-looking bird!"

It seemed all legs and head, with a body just a little larger than a Leghorn, and there was also a hint of game in its tough legs and the carriage of its head.

"I know what it is," said Scat excitedly. "It is a real scrub-fowl. They are to be found all along the coast of Queensland, and are natives of this part of the world."

As they knelt in their hiding-place they saw several scrub-fowls appear from the bushes, and soon they were able to count nine or ten of them. Most of them were hard at work scraping for food, and once from a thicket several tiny chicks came out, quaint balls of feathers down.

"Anna will be pleased," Don whispered to Scat. "We'll have to collar one or two of them if we can."

"I have got a better idea than that, Don," said Scat. "I'm just remembering things. I would like to find one of their nests."

He rose cautiously to his feet, followed by Don, and they began to work their way through the clump of bushes again.

Presently Scat gave Don a signal to halt. There was a moment's pause, then the tutor dived forward into a bush; a loud squawking followed, and Scat arose triumphantly to his feet, bearing in his hands a plump, struggling bird.

The deft way in which he twisted the neck of his captive and put an end to its struggles made Don grin, for not many months ago Scat would have been horrified if anyone had asked him to take on such a job; hunger and the needs of the body are rare taskmasters, and Scat's smile of contentment as he looked down at the dead bird was good to see.

"We'll have it b-baked," he said. "It is quite a youngster, and has a jolly plump breast."

The bird was tucked under Scat's belt and the way through the thicket was resumed. At last they found themselves under the lee of a warm, brown bank of earth, and here Scat began a search.

"They always build their nests where the sun can reach them," he explained to Don. "But the fellows are mighty cute, and—Hullo, wait a minute!"

He stopped short, grabbing Don by the arm.

Something was moving in front of them, and presently out from a heap of brown cast-off ferns emerged a scrub-fowl.

Don and Scat slipped behind a friendly tree and watched the creature. It looked to right and left; then, satisfied that it was not observed, it commenced to work swiftly, collecting pieces of leaves and twigs, which it arranged over its place of exit.

"Got you, my friend!" Scat observed. "That's nest, 'll—I'll bet a quid!"

Five minutes later the unsuspecting bird, having completed the task of hiding its nest, went off to join its companions in the bushes; and Don and Scat, emerging from their hiding-place, crossed to the mound.

It had been very cunningly contrived, for the bird had made use of a depression in the hard earth, and over this hollow had been heaped a pile of half-rotting leaves and earth.

Scat set to work to remove the pile, and Don noted that there was quite a fair amount of heat under the rotting leaves.

"They're lazy beggars, scrub-fowls!" Scat said over his shoulder. "All they do is to lay their eggs under leaves and let the sun do the hatching. It is really a natural sort of incubator that they build, but you can see that this is a comparatively new one; the hen hasn't completed laying yet, otherwise it would have been sealed up and left."

When the nest was opened ten eggs were discovered, and the size of them amazed Don. They were much larger than the ordinary barn-door fowls' eggs; yet the creature responsible for their laying was by no means a hefty bird.

Scat took off his battered hat and pro-

ceeded to fill it, testing each egg as he did so.

"They're quite all right," he said. "Not one of them is added, so far. You see, the incubation process doesn't really start until the nest is closed down. We'll have fried eggs for breakfast to-morrow morning. Why haven't got any bacon!"

He replaced two of the eggs in the nest; then he and Don started to repair the damage they had done. Scat worked with considerable care, and, when they had completed their task, the nest seemed as safe as ever.

"No good spoiling the job," Scat commented. "I dare say if we come back here in another couple of days we'll get some more eggs. In any case, I think it might be worth while to wait until this batch is hatched out. We might try to collar them and see what we could do in the way of taming the chicks."

"Not a bad idea, Scat," Don agreed.

A mark was placed on the bank of brown earth so that the nest could be easily found; then Scat and Don continued their investigations, and presently they discovered two other nests. On examination the second of these was found to be hot inside, and the entrance was hermetically sealed, indicating that it would not be safe to remove the eggs, which were already well on their way to becoming chickens.

This third nest was also marked, and Scat's delight made Don grin.

"I told you this island was a wonderful spot," the tutor observed. "There's everything on it that we could wish to have. By James, Don, I wouldn't mind spending the rest of my life on it!"

"I wouldn't go as far as to say that," Don returned slowly, "but we certainly have been lucky, and we all ought to be thankful."

They searched for the blazed trail again, and began to move back through the jungle.

The slanting rays of the sun warned them that it was getting on to dusk, and, on reaching a small stream that trickled through the jungle, they halted to have a rest and a meal of bananas and baked breadfruit, which Anna had supplied them with.

On the other side of the stream was a tall tree of the chestnut type, which stood up from the lower growth of the jungle; and while they sat on the edge of the bank a loud, whirring noise sounded. Looking up through the branches of the tree, the two youngsters saw a great cloud of blue-tinted birds come down and circle round the tall chestnut-tree, to finally settle in the upper branches amid much calling and fluttering of wings.

"Pigeons!" said Scat. "If only we had a gun!"

There seemed to be several hundreds of the birds, for the upper branches of the tree were black with them settling for the night.

"They migrate at intervals," said Scat, diving into his book-bag. "Once upon a time there were millions of them all over Queensland, but their numbers have been thinned now, for they used to be slaughtered in great quantities. They make splendid eating, I believe."

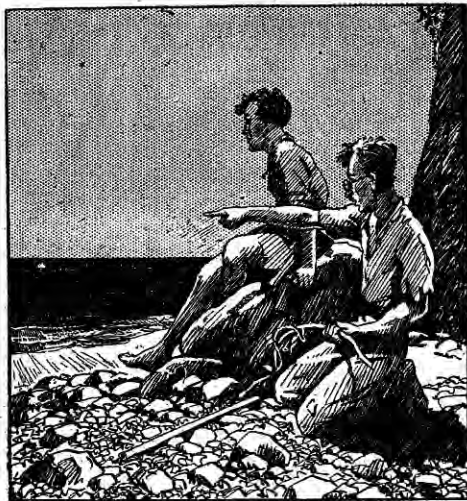
"We'll have to take your word for it, Scat," Don remarked, with a regretful sigh, "for we certainly haven't the slightest chance of getting at them now."

"We'll have the chance some day, Don," Scat observed; "and, in any case, I'm going to mark the tree so that we shall know it again, for these birds invariably choose the same tree year after year."

And so the great tree was also blazed before Scat and Don resumed their journey. A patch of bamboo was reached presently, and Scat laboriously removed a couple of long, thin, knotted canes, one of which he handed to Don.

"Here are a couple of weapons to start with," he said, blowing, old chap. I

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The lanky tutor pointed seaward where the surf was breaking gently over the reef. A light, a mere pin-point, had appeared there, and as Scot and Don watched it they saw it move slowly along the reef. "What is it?" asked Scot in a breathless whisper. "What does it mean?"

haven't thought much about k-killing, so far, but you have started me off now, and we'll see what we can do."

Just before they cleared the jungle, Scot, who had been keeping a sharp look-out, made for a gnarled thicket of thorns, and, not without receiving several ugly scratches, managed to remove a branch of it, along which three-inch thorns were growing.

"If we can only get little tufts of some soft stuff, and attach it to the ends of these thorns to make darts, we'll have our armoury complete!" he chuckled.

"Bully for you, Scot!" Don said, nodding his head to his companion. "I can tell you that you're the real success of the island, so far. We need to check you a bit at school, but we ought to take our hats off to you now!"

"Nonsense!" said Scot, obviously pleased with the compliment. "I'm only making use of stuff I've read about. I'm all right pottering round the jungle, Don, but when it comes to planning out things, there's only one fellow in it, and that's yourself!"

He fell into pace beside the sturdy, broad-shouldered youngster. They emerged on to a stretch of sand, and commenced to walk along the beach, heading for home.

"There's something worrying you, Don," Scot remarked. "I don't care for butting into anyone else's business, but—well, I can't help seeing that you are bothered! Why should you sit up half the night? What is it all about?"

Don was silent for a moment.

"To tell the truth, Scot, it is something that Anna told me," he said at last. "There was no need for me to repeat it to any of you fellows, but I think we were jolly lucky to get away from the Wittwakes as we did. That scoundrel, Captain Targe, meant to do for us, and I think that Anna has explained why."

He turned to Scot.

"Nothing will make me believe that Anna is really Targe's daughter," he added; "but she thinks she is. That, of course, makes her position a very difficult one. We all trust her, as you know, but she doesn't want the others to find out the truth about her father."

"And what is the truth?" asked the tutor.

Don shook his head.

"I can't tell you everything," he said; "but I believe that Captain Targe was after my uncle's plantation. He wanted it for his own purposes. I think that something must have happened to my uncle—something that we know nothing about. In any case, there is no doubt that Targe meant to get rid of us all, and we have Targe to thank for that miraculous escape. If we hadn't got away

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in the boat when we did, we would not be alive now!"

"But I don't see why that's worrying you at present!" put in Scot.

Don shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm worried," he admitted. "You see, I have, I think, judged Targe's character pretty accurately, and I think he is the kind of man who wants to make absolutely sure before he is satisfied! He knows all these islands, and must have had a rough idea of the spot where we parted company with the Wittwakes. My opinion is that he is searching for us now, sailing from island to island, trying to locate us."

"And so it is the Wittwake that you keep watch for?"

"Yes, I feel that, sooner or later, Targe will appear, and I don't want to be caught napping. During the daytime it is all right, for there is always someone at the camp who could spot the Wittwake if it turned up, but at night it is different,

so somebody must keep watch."

"Then, in that case, in future there will be two of us," Scot said slowly. "I am going to take share and share about with you, old chap, now that you have let me into your secret. You need rest the same as any of us, and I am hanged if I am going to let you watch alone!"

"I did it because I didn't want to alarm the other chaps," Don explained. "There's no reason why I should worry them needlessly."

"That's all right," said Scot. "You and I will keep this little affair to ourselves, but from now we're going to take share and share about watching."

Scot stretched out his hand, and Don shook it; so the compact was made. Half an hour later they clambered over the outcrop of rocks, and the voice of Anna hailed them from the dusk below the cliffs.

"Come along!" she called to them. "I have been waiting for you. No one has been here for hours, and I was getting frightened." She came out of the shadows of the small shelter—a slim, graceful figure.

Scot slipped the dead bird from under his belt, and held it out to Anna.

"Here you are, Some Girl!" he said. "We're late, but we've brought something for you—a real, plump chicken, for the pot to-morrow morning."

"And eggs," said Don, tendering the fished hat.

Anna's annoyance vanished at once, and she laughed merrily.

"You wait until I have made you an omelet," she said. "We shall have a feast!" "Haven't the others arrived yet?" Don asked.

"No, not a sign of them. It is too bad of them all to clear off and leave me alone! I wanted some wood for the fire, and Targe said he would bring some."

"That's all right, Some Girl!" said Scot. "I'll go and get you a bundle!"

The lanky fellow set out on his task, and Don, after laying aside the bamboo rods and the branch of thorn, strolled down to the edge of the beach, and seated himself on the warm sand.

He knew about Val and Targe, for the native had told him about their find, the stranded catamaran along under the dark cliffs; and it had been at Don's suggestion

that his younger brother and Targe had worked in secret, so that they might be able to bring their craft round into the reef-guarded bay, and give the others a pleasant surprise.

Val had assured Don that the catamaran was almost ready for its journey, and they hoped to bring it round that afternoon.

Don, with his chin in his hands, stared along the quiet bay, watching the spur in the distance round which the catamaran would have to appear.

Dusk settled, and it was the silvery voice of Anna that roused the young leader from his musing.

"Supper ready, Don!" the girl called. "I'm sure you must be famished! Come along!"

It was broiled mullet and baked yams that formed the evening meal, and the yam portion of it was Anna's surprise for that day. She, in her turn, had been doing a little prospecting, and had discovered the long, vine-like growth that betrayed the presence of the thick, sweet tubers in the soil.

"There's a great patch of it," Anna declared, "just above the cliff on the left. I am so sorry that Targe is not here, for I know he loves yams, and it was a kind of special treat for you all."

Don and Scot did ample justice to the food, and, after chatting together around the embers of the fire, Anna slipped off to her little shelter, while Don and Scot crossed to the boulders, and seated themselves there.

Scot was busily engaged on removing the long thorns from the tough branches, and Don set to work to prepare one of the rods as a blowpipe.

The quiet murmur of the sea breaking on the reef and the faint rustling of the wind in the tree-tops behind them, were the only sounds that broke the silence.

Presently the moon came sailing over the dark jungle, pouring its silvery beams along the quiet beach.

Scot glanced along the cliffs, with its dark shadows, then on up to where the hill arose to the left.

"I wonder what can have happened to those beggars!" he commented at last. "It ought to be a rule that they must come back in time! It gets a fellow on the fidgets when they don't appear."

Another thorn came away in his hand, and he placed it carefully in the little row by his side.

"These will make dandy darts. We can use two or three feathers from that old scrub-fowl we captured," he remarked. "I have worked out a scheme for fixing them on. There is plenty of gum in the jungle, and I'll use some and make use of it for sticking the feathers into position. After all, a blowpipe is one of the earliest weapons, and I don't see why we fellows should not be able to use it in time."

He held out one of the thorns and touched the point gingerly.

"They're as tough as steel," he observed, "and ought to be good enough to bring down a bird."

Don had already cleared one blowpipe, and he raised it now, peering through it.

It was a straight tube, some five or six feet in length, which gave every promise of being a workable weapon for the chase.

"We'll have to get busy on the ladder presently," Don declared, "for the rainy season will soon be with us, and we'll require a good store. Targe tells me that for a couple of months this island is visited by terrible storms, and we won't have the chance of looking for food then."

Scot nodded his head towards the hut under the cliff.

"I didn't care to mention it before, Don," he said, "but I'm rather afraid that if a big storm did strike the island our old hut would be carried away. For, you see, the beach almost reaches to the cliff, and—well, I found a patch of dried seaweed close to where Anna's cooking place was built."

"Seaweed up there, Scot?"

"Yes, Don. I didn't say anything to the others. I thought it might have been carried up there by one of us; but I have changed my opinion now, and I'm sure in the storms the sea comes over the reef there and rushes right up the beach here to the cliff."

"By Jove, that's rather bad news, old fellow!" Don declared, with a quick, indrawn breath. "It may mean that we'll have to shift our camp, and all our labours here will have been wasted."

"Oh, perhaps it won't be as bad as that," said Scot slowly; "but I thought it best to let you know."

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

His news had a subduing effect, and for a long moment the two friends sat in silence, Don staring in the direction of the solid hut that had been so laboriously built by himself and his chums.

It seemed almost incredible that the sea could reach that solid structure, but Don knew that Seat was no alarmist, and his discovery was a momentous one.

"Hallo! I say, Don, look—look!" Seat's warning whisper roused Don from his reverie.

The lanky tutor was kneeling up, and he pointed seaward to where the surf was breaking gently over the reef.

A light, a mere pin-point, had appeared there, and as Seat and Don watched it they saw it move slowly along the reef.

"What is it? What does it mean?" Seat asked in a breathless whisper.

Don rose to his feet.

"It may be Val and Taga," he said. "I haven't mentioed it to you, but I expected them to come round this afternoon and give us a small surprise. Taga found a native catamaran wrecked under the cliffs on the other side of the island. He and Val have been working on it during the afternoons to put it to rights."

"A catamaran—eh?" said Seat, his eyes on the moving light. "But why should they land on the reef, Don?"

He turned, and put his hand on his companion's arm.

"Besides," he added, "neither Taga nor Val had any matches. And where did they get the light from?"

Already Don had realised that the appearance of the light was a mystery which neither Val nor Taga's presence could explain.

He glanced back over his shoulder towards the cliff. Thanks to the shadow thrown by the tall slope, the hut and Anna's dwelling were completely hidden; the fire had also gone out by now; and Don knew that it would be impossible for anyone on the reef to detect that humble camp.

"Look here, Seat," Don said, "I'm going to investigate. As you say, neither Val nor Taga had any means to making a light, and that light seems to me to be one from a lantern, for it burns steadily."

"But what are you going to do, old chap?"

Don was already moving away from the outcrop of rocks, and the two chums paced down the beach to the edge of the sea.

Don slipped out of his ragged shirt, and tightened the belt around his waist. The precious axe which Don always carried was lashed securely to the belt.

"I'm going to swim out to the reef," said Don. "After all, it is not very far, and I have been there before."

"But, I say, old chap, it is dangerous. I don't—I don't like the idea of your going."

Seat was a good swimmer, but the distance to the reef was rather too far for the lanky tutor, although it would not have taken much for him to try.

Don seemed to read the thoughts that were passing through Seat's mind, for he turned and shook his head.

"Oh, no, Seat; it is a one-man job," he commented. "Besides, we mustn't leave Anna here alone. It is up to you to look after her."

There was a moment's silence. Both of the watchers on the beach caught a glimpse of the light again, just where the coral reef broadened. It was some fifteen or twenty yards wide, a pitted here and there with deep pools in which the sea-water lay. When the sea was rough it broke over the reef in solid sheets; but now, with the tranquil ocean, the waves did little more than murmur as they rustled through the intersections of the coral growth.

"You will be careful, won't you, Don?" was Seat's last, anxious warning as Don waded down into the warm sea.

The tutor, standing on the edge of the beach, watched the phosphorescent waves as they eddied away from the powerful head and shoulders of the swimmer. Then Don vanished at last, and Seat, with a heavy heart, seated himself to await his companion's return.

Taga's Bluff.

"ARE you sure—quite sure—that it is the Wittywake?"

Tommy, gripping the side of the crazy native canoe, jerked out his question to Val. Taga, standing upright in the slender craft, was peering in the direction of the vessel. The native turned, and gave Tommy a nod.

"Yes, that fella ship am de Wittywake all right."

The sudden appearance of that enemy bark had brought panic for a moment, and the three youngsters stared at the vessel as it came sailing towards the island.

There was only a gentle breeze blowing, and every sail was set, so that the spars of the Wittywake were covered with canvas. It was lying over as it came in on the tack, and the sun above full on the tack, a beautiful picture; but to the watchers from the catamaran it was a shadow of impending danger.

"We must get back, Taga!" Val breathed. "Perhaps they haven't seen us yet!"

Taga dropped into the centre of the canoe, and Val followed suit.

The catamaran lay very low on the water, and there was just a chance that Val's hope was correct; but by this time they had worked the catamaran out some mile and a half from the shore. It was Tommy who made the next clever suggestion.

"Don't see how we're going to get in without them seeing us, old chap," he said to Val. "They will be able to cover about three miles to our one. Even if they haven't seen us now, they will when they come closer in."

He leaned forward, nodding to his chum.

"Why not let Taga stay in the canoe and you and I do a dive for it now?" he suggested. "After all, it won't seem so strange if Taga is found alone in the catamaran. I don't think it is Taga they are after, but Don and you and the rest of us. What about leaving Taga to make bluff of it, if he can?"

In its way, it was a shrewd suggestion, but Val was reluctant to put it to Taga. The native, however, seemed to gather the gist of Tommy's remark, for he turned, his brown face widening into a grin.

"Dat good idea," he said. "Him fella captain no bother about Taga. Taga no count anyhow. You fellows get away, swim for shore, and leave Taga to fix things."

The schooner was drawing nearer and nearer, and it was obvious that neither Val nor Tommy had any time to waste.

"All right, Taga," returned Val. "If you feel that you can handle the affair, we'll let you do it; but don't take any risks, old chap, and remember that we'll wait for you."

And so it came about that a few moments later Tommy and Val slipped over the end of the canoe into the sea, and began to swim ashore.

By this time the catamaran had worked inshore to within half a mile of the black expert swimmers by now, thanks to their morning dip at the camp, they covered the distance without much trouble, wading out on to a shelving ledge, and hurrying on under the cliffs.

They found a deep opening, in which they stepped, then halted and turned towards the sea. They saw the catamaran moving swiftly out, with Taga swinging the paddle for all he was worth. Already the light craft had covered some considerable distance, being almost two miles out from the cliff.

"He's a plucky beggar, that," Tommy said to Val. "You see what he's trying to do—he wants to draw those fellows as far as he can away from here, and, by James, he's doing it, too! Look, there's the Wittywake!"

The schooner was in full view now, and had shifted on to another tack, so that it was heading down directly along the cliffs.

It had reached to within a few hundred

yards of where the catamaran floated, and presently they saw the vessel swing round into the wind and lie to, with flapping canvas. They could hear the reports of the sails as they rattled against the spars, and they saw Taga paddle the catamaran round under the hull of the schooner and vanish.

Then began a long and grim wait. Neither of the youngsters spoke as they sat in their hiding-place staring at the schooner.

The dusk was settling, and at last, unable to stand it any longer, Val arose to his feet.

"I can't stick it, old chap," he said to Tommy. "I'm worried to death over old Taga. If that brute, Targe, has done anything to him, I'll never forgive myself!"

He made as though to step out from his hiding-place, but Tommy caught his arm.

"Better be careful," the stout youngster remarked. "If we were to show ourselves now, we might only spoil Taga's bluff. We can't do anything for the moment."

He was watching the schooner, and his hand tightened on Val's arm.

The faint creak of block and tackle came to them across the still sea, then the Wittywake sheered off, and they saw the sails begin to fill again as the schooner started to move out from the cliffs.

"There is the catamaran," said Val. "They have cut it adrift."

The squat shape of the native canoe came into view, dancing in the wake of the vessel; then, in a few minutes, a gap appeared between it and the Wittywake.

"It is empty," said Tommy, staring at the canoe.

Val drew a deep breath.

"Yes, it is empty," he muttered, "and they are taking Taga away with them. By James, Tommy, I'm afraid we allowed that poor beggar to sacrifice himself. We know what a beast Targe is; it would have been better for us to have stuck together."

The breeze was from landward, and under its urge the schooner made good progress. Within half an hour it had covered some three or four miles, and Val and Tommy walked down to the sea and stood there watching it.

The tide was coming in. It was Tommy who noticed that fact first, for the catamaran was drifting nearer and nearer to the shore, and presently the stout youngster turned and nodded to Val.

"What about collaring the catamaran again?" he suggested. "We could reach it now."

The Wittywake was a mere black smudge on the skyline, and the gathering dusk had almost hidden it from view.

"We could make the camp by the time the



Tommy watched the schooner, and his hand tightened on Val's arm. The faint creak of block and tackle came to them across the still sea. The sails began to fill as the schooner started to move out from the cliffs.

moon comes up," Tommy urged. "I want to get back and let Don know what's happened. He's got the best head of any of us, and will be able to advise us."

So it came about that, ten minutes later, Val and Tommy tackled another long swim that saw them reach the crazy native craft.

Val was the first to climb on board, and as he drew himself into the canoe, his hands came in contact with something that lay in the bottom.

"Here, Tommy, quick—quick!"

Tommy's stout shape came rolling over the side of the canoe, and he crawled to where Val was kneeling.

Lying in the bottom, tied hand and foot, was the unconscious figure of Targa, roped up in a cruel way. For a moment the two youngsters thought that he was dead; then Val, putting his hand on the native's heart, felt its slight beat.

"Quick—help me to release him!" Val breathed.

With fingers and teeth, they set to work undoing the knots, while the catamaran drifted peacefully on the sea. Presently the bonds were removed, and Val and Tommy commenced to rub Targa's numbed limbs.

Tommy scooped up a couple of handfuls of sea-water and dashed them into Targa's face, and a thin, gasping breath came from the young native's lips. He stirred, then raised his head and peered through the darkness for a moment.

"All right, Targa; you're quite safe now, old chap," Val said, a heartfelt relief sounding in his voice.

Targa drew himself into a sitting position, holding on to one side of the canoe for a moment; then another deep breath came from him.

"I thought I was a gonna that time," Targa said. "That bad fella, Ralph, gave me a thump on head, and I no remember much more."

Tommy had moved away to another portion of the canoe, and something rattled as he touched it with his foot. Reaching down, Tommy felt the object, and raised it in his hand. It was a lantern of the small ship variety.

"Where did you get this, Targa?" he called. Targa looked in his direction, and Val saw a smile cross the drawn, bruised face.

"It was that stuff got me into trouble," he answered. "I jest happened to see a cousin fella on board the Wittwyake, and I asked him to give me some tackle. You find some matches and other things along there, if you look. My cousin fella dropped dem into the catamaran when he thought no one else was looking, but that skunk, Ralph, find 'em, and he told Targa."

Then, while Tommy searched in the bows of the canoe and discovered a knife, a packet of matches, and a small bag of coffee, Targa told the story in his broken English.

He had been ordered to come on board the Wittwyake by Targe, and had been put through a searching cross-examination. He had told Targe that the boat had been upset in a storm, and that he was the sole survivor, having swum for hours until he reached the island. It was the sort of yarn that was quite likely to be true, and Targe had seemed to accept it without comment.

Ralph had been on board along with Targe, and it was in the latter's cabin that the cross-examination had taken place; then Targa had been ordered for'ard while Targe and

his confederate discussed the affair. Targa had picked out his cousin among the crew, and had managed to whisper a few words to the native, with the result that the articles had been lowered into the catamaran by Targa's cousin.

Finally Targe had reappeared, and had ordered Targa back into the catamaran. "He thought I no do any harm on this island," Targa said. "It a long way from any other island, and he reckon I never be found. I pretended to be afraid, and asked him to keep me on board the Wittwyake; but he kicked me, and ordered me to get out. But when I go to get in canoe, that bad fella, Ralph, see the stuff that my cousin put there, and he tell other fellows to tie me up. I fight dem, and get clump on the head, and I no remember any more."

Val drew a deep breath. "The brute!" he said. He meant you to drift in that catamaran until you were dead, Targa. He's a murderer, and, by James, he'll have to answer for what he did some day!"

Targa leaned across to Val. "He cunning beggar, that fella, Ralph!" he said. "I don't think him believe me, and mebbe he Wittwyake only go as blind. Fella captain he believe me, but Ralph, no! He told me that I was lying, and that he guessed I knew where you fellas were. The last thing he said before he ordered the crew to go for me was: 'When your friends do find you you will no speak to 'em—you will be dead.'"

The callous action retold in such simple language by Targa horrified his two listeners, and Tommy, from the other end of the canoe, gave an angry snort.

All this time the catamaran had been quietly sailing inshore; but now Val and Tommy took up their paddles again, and presently Targa followed suit, and the long homeward journey began.

When the moon arose they were within a mile or so from the coral reef, but they found that they had headed seaward and had to turn inward now.

They paddled for about twenty minutes, then Val, who was in the front of the canoe, suddenly halted and raised his hand.

"There's something over there," he said. "It looks like a boat. Wait a moment!"

As they listened they heard quite clearly the creak of oars in rowlocks. It was coming from the direction of the reef, and a moment later Targa's quick eyes solved the problem.

"Over there, Val!" he whispered. "Boat—I see him!"

A second later a light appeared, by which they caught sight of a couple of shadowy shapes climbing on to the reef.

"It is a boat from the Wittwyake," Val breathed. "They have played a trick on us; they must have turned in their tracks and come back. She's lying out there somewhere just out of sight, and they have come ashore in the boat. He must follow."

A long three or four minutes' work at the paddles saw the catamaran glide under a thick outcrop of coral, and it was drawn on to the rough, broken surface; then Targa and Val and Tommy climbed on to the reef. Ahead of them some two or three hundred yards away showed the glimmer of light—a light that moved up and down as its bearer moved along the rough, jagged top of the great coral barrier.

(Look out for next week's grand long instalment of this magnificent serial.)

EDITORIAL.

My Dear Chums,—

Among the big treats in store must be mentioned a new series of yarns of St. Jim's dealing with Cutts—the unpopular Cutts who attacked Cardew on the latter's first day at the school. Mr. Martin Clifford has never done better stories than these dealing with the Fifth Form, so look out for them. They reveal a mystery of the Fifth Form, and show how Kit Wildrake and Tom Merry solve it. This splendid series starts next week.

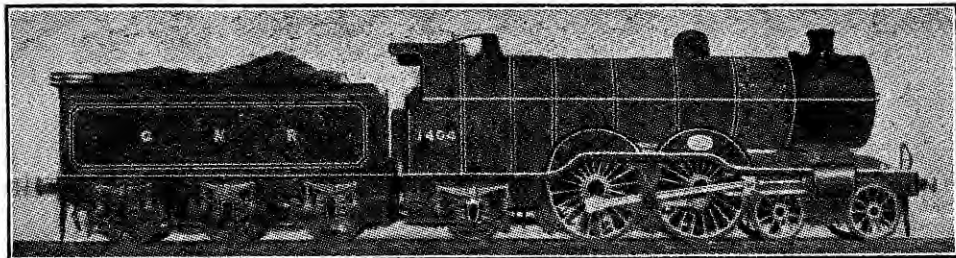
One of Mr. Clifford's strong points is his power of making a character live. In that you have everything. Sometimes correspondents write and ask me to let them know what is happening behind the scenes, what fellows are like at their own homes, and so forth. But the clever author, though he cannot possibly plunge into a crowd of outside details, is able to show by character something of the whole picture. It is just like a talented artist painting a picture. The painter knows very well that if he packs any amount of small detail into his canvas he will spoil the picture for good and all. He will make it so that the spectator cannot pick out the subject. The real artist shows the main idea and suggests all the rest with a line or two.

Now, it is just precisely the same in a story. Mr. Martin Clifford, student of humanity, and learned fellow as he is, knows exactly how much to put in. He never did a better portrait than that of Ralph Reckness Cardew. Do you remember that story, some months back, when Cardew tried to ease his grandfather's anxiety, though the lad was in the deepest trouble himself? That's Cardew—Cardew, mocking, bitter, sarcastic, but as true as well-tempered steel. But they are a good crowd all round at St. Jim's, and show what life is. In reviewing the St. Jim's fellows, you are inclined to cut up rough with D'Arcy at times, but Gussy is a fine gentleman, even if he is not the man to take on a secret expedition. I believe there were more laughs over the spoiled plot in which the Grammarians were to figure as heroes—and didn't than were accorded any of the recent yarns, topping though they have been.

Next week's grand long story of Tom Merry & Co. will prove one of Mr. Martin Clifford's finest yarns. So make a point of ordering next week's "Gem" early!

YOUR EDITOR.

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Thurzman Takes a Hand!

(Continued from page 14.)

"W-w-w-h-a-a-a-t w-w-w-a-a-t?"

A most terrific explosion sounded. Harington looked upwards at the ceiling, in terror of it falling.

"Sounded like Wayland Gasworks!" I suggested.

There was an opening of study doors along the corridor; everybody was quite alarmed. I was a bit alarmed myself, I don't know why. But I know I inwardly wished I was back in the Fourth Form. I began to shiver, and a faint idea fixed itself in my mind that this was going to be the last study I should visit.

Two seconds later that faint idea became a grim fact, for the study door had opened, and James Garston Monteith entered!

I gazed at him in horror—his appearance held me thunderstruck! He was not limping—the cork had not hit his boots. The cinders must have shifted and the bottle moved, for the cork had flown out and caught Monteith full in the eye.

(I think we had better call this THE END. Redfern says Thurzman will come out of the sanatorium on Saturday.—Tom Merry.)

Letters I Have Received.

By Tom Merry.

"LEIVISON'S ADMIRER."—French, Owen, and Dick Redfern are generally considered the best-looking trio in the New House. Figg's has a rugged, good-looking visage, and Kerr's appearance is likeable. Harry Noble, Reg Talbot, and Jack Blake are probably the best-looking in the School House. Who

is the best fighting-man in the Shell? Ask someone else! In the New House Fourth Blagden can claim to have no superior. Dick Redfern runs him pretty close, though. George Alfred Grundy might prove to be better than Blake after a long encounter, but do not forget that Grundy is slightly above the weight of the Fourth. Actually he is old and big enough to enter the Fifth. Who do I like the best out of Joyce Digby, Phyllis Macdonald, and Constance Owen? Well, I like them all, as far as that goes, but not in the same way that George Figgins does cousin Ethel or young Cardew Levison's sister. It is very nice of you to speak so highly of Cardew and Levison. There is plenty more of them to come, you can be sure.

R. G. G. (Romsey, Hampshire).—James Monteith is all right nowadays. He is quiet and reserved, and rarely to the fore, but is straight-going enough.

Both Pander and Fingo have long since left St. Jim's. Whom do I think is the biggest cat and rat in St. Jim's? The biggest bully is undoubtedly Knox. But one would have to go a long way to find a more hardened young cad, for his age, than Aubrey Racke. Speaking of which have you witnessed lately at St. Jim's. Aubrey has firmly got an idea into his head that he is a hero editor. Since the "St. Jim's News" appeared he has made two great ventures to drive us out of existence. The first was "Racke's Mail," and it appeared just after I published an article of his in the "News" on how to spend a thousand pounds. Aubrey had several thousand copies printed, but, fortunately for us, they were all suppressed by the Head. The second thing Racke tried was called "All the Winners." It was more or less a racing rag, and, to further his hare-brained scheme, he actually tried to get a tape-machine installed in a box-room at the school. The

idea was nipped in the bud by Mr. Ralton, and Racke narrowly escaped the request to quit! Mr. Ralton made a visit to this young blade's study the other day, and a general eviction scene followed. An eighty-pound roll-top desk was sent back to the makers, and typewriters and typist, whom Racke had had the nerve to engage, were dismissed and cleared out. Everybody is wondering what Racke's next great enterprise will be. Skinner and Peck are both young cads. You say you are going to write to me one day, congratulating me on the success of the "St. Jim's News"? Kildare and Monteith will appear in our portrait-never before long, my chum. Mr. Ratcliff never showed an amiable spirit towards the Housemaster on our side. Both Mr. Kidd and Mr. Ralton were sportsmen, and Mr. Ratcliff heartily dislikes anybody that way inclined. Nobody missed Malcolm, because he did not stay on at St. Jim's.

ALWYN W. DUNN (Northumberland).—Mr. Ralton came to St. Jim's as a Housemaster after Clavering School was shut down. Harry Manners is quite above the average with regard to his abilities with the camera. Mr. Ratcliff takes the Fifth Form at lessons.

DOIS SAUNDERS (Aldershot).—No, I have never been really ill—nothing worth falling an illness, at all events. Reg Talbot and Marie Rivers were sportsmen, and the central figures in countless storms. I should think you must have missed a lot of them. No, I cannot remember my parents, and do not know whether I ever had any brothers or sisters. I know I am an orphan, and under the charge of Miss Fawcett. I tried to swim the Channel last summer, but failed. Might make another effort this year. Where shall we go next Christmas? I'm! That is rather a long way ahead, is it not? Perhaps we might go abroad—how knows?

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