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20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

June 17th. 1922.



W. N. BLYTH (Arsenal F.C.).

FULL STEAM AHEAD AT PEPPER'S BARN!

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

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W. N. BLYTH

The Versatile Forward of the Arsenal F.C.

It would scarcely be correct to suggest that the Arsenal are a really accomplished side in the strictly footballing sense, and since the war they have been struggling hard most of the time to retain their position in the First Division. But throughout the "Reds" have been distinguished as a team of genuine triers, and possibly there is no player more completely typical of this Arsenal characteristic than William Naisbitt Blyth, to give him his full name. In passing, it should be noted that there is no "Blythe" in his name, though it is frequently so in that way in the big newspapers. Blyth has not really been long at Highbury, but he has the distinction of having played in every position in the forward line in the first team, and we should describe him as the sort of player who would never let the side down, no matter where he was asked to play. He is an enthusiastic as he is cheerful all the time.

One might suggest, with a great deal of truth, that it is not all beer and skittles to get a reputation for being a versatile footballer, for a man of this stamp, extremely useful though he is on the books of any club, gets switched about so frequently that he seldom has an opportunity of settling down into a star performer in any one position. Still, Blyth is not of the grumbling sort. He is a product of the Scottish school of football, and this fact can be noted in his play, for he is clever rather than fast; but there are few who can teach him anything in the art of ball control—the first big qualification in a footballer. Born at Dalkeith, when he was a mere boy he gained his first football distinction, playing for Scotland in a junior international match against Wales in 1912. In those days he was an outside-left, and his ability being recognised by several big clubs, he was persuaded to throw in his lot with Manchester City. This was before the war, and in those days Mr. Leslie Knighton was the manager of the Manchester City side. Consequently, when Mr. Knighton got the manager's job at Highbury, he lost no time in securing the services of Blyth. During the war this versatile footballer went to France, and had some thrilling times as a motor-cyclist despatch-rider, but he came through unscathed, and on his return he played for a short time with Third Lanark. Then he returned to Highbury, and seemed to be coming on as an outside-left, when the necessities of the Arsenal compelled him to play him at centre-forward. He was by no means a failure in this position, but unfortunately he has neither the height nor the weight for the centre-forward berth, standing only 5 ft. 6 ins., and weighing less than eleven stone. His most successful season with the Arsenal was that of 1920-21, when he played in one position or another in 39 of the 42 League matches played by his club, and scored seventeen goals. He is still quite young, and if a regular place could be found for him in the Reds team it is more than likely that he would develop into a real tip-top. Shoots well on the run, and knows how to beat opposing full-backs with an artful dribble.

Look out for the TWO REAL PHOTOS which will be presented FREE with next week's GEM.

TWO REAL PHOTOGRAPHS

FRANK ROBERTS

(Bolton Wanderers)

and

BROUGH FLETCHER

(Barnsley)

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Be sure you do not forget!

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER!"

Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

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

THIS WINS OUR TUCK HAMPER.

The Careful Soot.

Jack met a neighbour smoking some fine tobacco sent to him by his son in America. He took out his pipe ostentatiously. "Ha'e ye a match, Sandy?" he asked. The match was forthcoming, but nothing more happened. "I do believe," said Jack, "I ha'e left ma tobacco at home." "Then," said Sandy, after a silence, "ye might gi'e me back ma match." —A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to Jack Yates, 21, Chadwick Street, Rochdale, Lancs.

THE MONUMENT.

This fluted, Doric column, 202 ft. high, was designed by the architect of St. Paul's, Sir Christopher Wren. It was erected in 1677. It stands near by London Bridge, and a superb view is obtained from the summit, which is reached by as many steps as there are days in the year.—A half-crown has been awarded to Alec Morrison, 22, Trafalgar Road, East Greenwich, S.E.

PATS' GLASS EYE.

Mike: "Faith, and why are you not wearing your glass eye, Pat?" Pat: "And why should I? It's no use at all. I gave a pound for it, and, would you believe it, I can see better without it than I can with it?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Doris Deans, Police Station, Tamworth, N.S.W., Australia.

THE MOLE.

The mole is a small burrowing animal about the size of a rat, with short legs and fore feet armed with strong claws for digging in the earth. Moles' underground dwellings are curiously and ingeniously constructed. They do not often leave their homes except to make raids on mice, frogs, snails, etc. The earthworm, however, is the mole's chief item of food.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. E. Scott, Jun., Mirador, Stratford Road, Hall Green, Birmingham.

ONE FOR HIM.

Smarte (prepared for a little fun): "And did you catch any rhododendrons when you were in the tropics?" Seafaring Sam: "Sartinly! 'Undreds of 'em! Why, they're as common in those parts as silly schoolboys are round 'ere."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. K. Whittingham, 17, New Road, Chippenham, Wilts.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON

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No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

THE HEDGEHOG!

The hedgehog is a small animal which feeds upon worms, insects, frogs, and the roots of vegetables. It is covered with sharp prickles, and when in danger will roll itself into a globe of its own prickles. On being placed in water it will at once unfold. One of the most remarkable facts about the hedgehog is that no poison, however violent, will have any effect upon it. Thus it becomes one of the greatest use when in the forests, because of the large number of venomous reptiles it destroys. Several noted naturalists have proved beyond a doubt that the venom of the adder fails to harm it, while one physician recently made experiments with prussic acid without any result.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Annie Ball, 12, Hunt Street, Nottingham.

THE PEACOCK.

Peacocks were first brought from India, and from some islands in the Indian Seas. Travellers who have seen them will say that in their natural state they are more lovely than when tame in our land. They like to live where there are plenty of trees, and in jungles crowds of them keep together. It is a wonderful sight to see a number of these birds with their dazzling tails flashing in the sunshine. Peacocks eat insects, seeds, small fruits, and the tops of some plants. Their nests are just little heaps of grass and straw with a hollow in the centre where the eggs lie. Sometimes a dozen little peacocks are hatched, but their feathers are quite dull, and do not attain their splendour for three years.—A half-crown has been awarded to E. J. Barnes, 5, Grange Street South, Grangetown, Sunderland.

The Companion Papers' Special Free Gifts!

Next Week's Splendid List of Real Photos.

MONDAY.—In the "Magnet" Library will be presented a splendid Photo of **HAROLD GOUGH** (Sheffield United F.C.) IN ACTION on the field of play.

MONDAY.—In the "Boys' Friend" you will find a Grand Free Photo of **BUGLER LAKE**, Bantam-weight Champion of the Imperial Services.

TUESDAY.—In the "Popular" there will be given Free a Magnificent Coloured Plate of the latest type of **GLASGOW AND SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY EXPRESS ENGINE**.

WEDNESDAY.—In the "GEM" Library will be given Two Real Photos of **FRANK ROBERTS** (Bolton Wanderers F.C.) and **BROUGH FLETCHER** (Barnsley F.C.)

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WATCH THE COMPANION PAPERS.

MOST IMPORTANT!

If you have not already done so, place an order with your newsagent for copies of all the above-mentioned papers to be saved for you, and participate in

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!! GRAND FREE GIFTS !!



The St. JIM'S TEASHOP !

A Grand, Long Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co., the Famous Chums of St. Jim's. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Up Against It !—

TOM MERRY ran his hands through his jacket-pockets slowly, carefully, and methodically.

He turned out the contents to the last item.

A varied collection was deposited on the table in Study No. 10 in the Shell.

There was a length of twine, and a fragment of sealing-wax. There was a pencil, and a pen-nib that had seen better days. There was a stray aniseed-ball. There was a penknife, and there were two or three old envelopes, one of them containing a letter which was preserved because it still required an answer. It had been requiring an answer for some weeks, and was getting rather worn at the corners.

But among the varied collection there was only one article that resembled coin of the realm, and that was what Tom would have called a French penny; more correctly, *une piece de dix centimes*.

Tom ran his hands through his pockets again. He was evidently in search of something—something that, equally evidently, wasn't there.

Manners and Lowther watched the turning-out process with interest. They had already gone through a similar process, turning out quite an interesting variety of articles, but not so much as a French penny in the way of current coin.

"Is that the lot?" asked Manners.

"That's the lot!" said Tom.

"Ye gods!" said Monty Lowther dismally.

"We seem to be rather stony!" remarked Tom Merry. He held up the French penny. "Mrs. Taggles has refused this three times, and they've refused it twice in the village. Not much good trying to negotiate it any more. And it wouldn't go far."

"Not very far!" agreed Manners.

"Better give it to a blind man, when you see one," said Lowther. "Charity is a great virtue. But what are we going to do for tin?"

"Echo answers what!"

"As that Indian chap at Greyfriars would say, the whatfulness is terrific!" said Manners, with a faint grin. "We seem to be fairly on the rocks. And we're in debt over the next allowances. I've always warned you fellows against getting into debt."

"Why, you owe most of what this study owes," said Monty Lowther warmly. "You borrowed half a quid for films from Talbot."

"Films are a necessity—"

"Only to an ass with a camera! Suppose we had all the money you've blued on films this term! We should be rolling in it."

"Suppose we had all what you've chucked away on cinemas!" suggested Manners. "We should be wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice."

"Not much good supposing!" said Tom Merry. "The actual fact is that we're stony!"

"It is—it are!" agreed Lowther.

The Terrible Three of the Shell looked at one another. They had a problem to solve—a problem that beat hollow anything in the higher mathematics.

Like the Early Christians, Study No. 10 had its funds generally in common. This arrangement had its advantages, because when one fellow was in funds, the others were in funds. But it had some disadvantages—as in the present serious case.

Manners had renewed his supply of films—which were a necessity of life to Manners, what time Monty Lowther had stood rather expensive seats at the picture-palace in Wayland. Simultaneously, Tom Merry had bought a telescope for the study—a really wonderful bargain in ex-Government surplus stores, which all three agreed was amazingly cheap. It was only a guinea, and the chums of the Shell agreed that it was worth four or five. It was really unfortunate that a few days after the purchase it had had to be disposed of for half-a-guinea, owing to the tightness of the money market.

On reflection, Tom realised that it was not really economical to buy a thing merely because it was cheap. But that reflection came too late to be of service.

Study No. 10 owed for the films, and owed for the cinema seats, and owed for the telescope—all this cash having been borrowed in the Shell. Their next allowances were mortgaged up to the hilt; and their last allowances had long vanished. Well they realised, now, the deep wisdom of that old maxim, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." For they had been lenders, too. Skimpole of the Fourth owed the study a pound; Baggy Trimble of the Fourth owed it more shillings than it could count. These debts, entered on the credit side, might have balanced the account; but unluckily they were "bad debts," only worthy to be written off as irrecoverable.

"We're up against it!" said Tom Merry, breaking a painful silence.

"Looks like it!" said Manners. "I don't want to rub it in, you chaps. But the next time you see a cheap telescope, Tom, leave it with the owner. And the next time there's a specially attractive picture at the cinema, Monty, old man, let it rip!"

"And the next time your silly old camera runs out of films—" began Tom and Lowther together.

Manners waved a chiding hand at them.

"No good arguing!" he said. "We're up against it, and arguing won't do any good. Never saw such chaps for arguing."

"Why, you ass—"

"Why, you chump—"

"Getting excited won't mend matters, either," said Manners, with rather exasperating calm. "My idea is, that we should start an entirely new system in this study. Never lend anything—"

"Good!"

"Never lend Skimpole anything—"

"Right!"

"Never buy a cheap telescope—"

"Rats!"

"And never get into debt," said Manners. "Keep a strict and careful account of all cash resources, and never go over the margin—"

"Except for films!" said Monty Lowther, with sarcasm.

"Especially not for cheap telescopes or seats at the cinema," said Manners. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." Chap should always be careful in money matters. If you don't get into careful habits with money while you're young, you'll grow into a spendthrift. With a new and rigid system of economy—

"How is that going to help us this afternoon?" inquired Lowther.

"I'm thinking of the future—"

"The present is just a trifle more pressing. We can't

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 749.

borrow any money up the passage, because we couldn't settle if we did. Is there anything we can sell?" asked Lowther hopefully.

"There's Manners' camera!" suggested Tom.

Manners gave him a look.

"If this discussion is going to degenerate into mere imbecility—" he began.

"Well, we're stony!" said Tom, with a sigh. "The fact is, we've been goate, and now we've got to take our gruel. Tea in Hall for a couple of weeks—"

"Oh dear!"

"Not a single jam-tart to relieve the barren monotony of the horizon—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Unless—" said Tom.

"Unless what?"

"Unless we earn some money somehow."

Tom Merry's chums stared at him blankly. That final and desperate resource for raising the wind certainly had never occurred to them.

CHAPTER 2.

Wanted—a Wheeze!

"ROTTER!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's the limit!"

"The giddy limit!"

Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, expressed those opinions in dolorous tones, in Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

By a coincidence—not uncommon in the Lower School—Study No. 6 was in the same hapless state as Study No. 10. Such things would happen.

Blake and Herries and Digby had already been in a state of severe scarcity for some days, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, with a recklessness that could not be reprehended too sternly, had paid his tailor. With an utter thoughtlessness and disregard of consequences, Gussy had paid his tailor. The tailor was highly gratified, naturally—he wanted to be paid. In principle, Study No. 6 had no objection to tailors being paid. But the time was ill-chosen for this act of thoughtless generosity.

It reduced Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to the same stony state as his three chums, who were already in the lean financial condition of the Terrible Three. And so now the whole study was falling into the sere and yellow leaf, as it were.

The scarcity of cash was really painful. In Study No. 10 in the Shell a French penny had turned up after careful search. In Study No. 6 in the Fourth there was not so much as a French halfpenny—not even a German mark.

"That idiot Gussy—" said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Oh, don't rag Gussy any more about his merry old tailor," said Jack Blake. "There's no knocking sense into Gussy's head. There's room for it there, of course—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I suppose," said Digby thoughtfully, "we couldn't call on the tailor, and explain that Gussy paid him by mistake—"

"Weally, Dig—"

Blake shook his head.

"The man wouldn't part with the money," he said. "People are awfully keen on money in these hard times. Besides, the tailor was entitled to it, in a way. Gussy owed the account."

"Yaas, wathah! And I think—"

"You don't, Gussy! You can't! But if you've really got a thinker, and it works, think out what we're going to have for tea."

Before Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had time to bring his powerful brain to bear upon that baffling problem, there was a tap at the door of Study No. 6. Three Shell fellows walked in.

Blake smiled at them quite genially.

"Say you've come to borrow some tin!" he said. "You've dropped into the right study at the right moment. We can refer you to Gussy's tailor."

Tom Merry laughed.

"We haven't come to borrow," he said. "We couldn't square if we did—so we're not on the borrowing tack. But if you want three cheerful guests at tea, whose light and genial conversation alone would be worth a spread, and whose elegant manners would give tone to any study, you've only got to say the word."

"My dear chap, we'd be jolly glad to have you to tea—"

"Good!"

"Especially as we shall have tea in Hall—"

"Oh!"

"And there's always enough weepy tea and doorsteps to go round," said Blake affably.

"Fathead!"

"The fact is, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 749.

"somethin' will have to be done. This famine in cash is weally gwowin' quite tewwifyin'. I want some new neckties—"

"Tommy's got an idea," said Monty Lowther, with genial satire. "Give them the wheeze, Tommy!"

"An idea for raising the wind?" asked Blake eagerly. "Go it, old top—let's hear it!"

"I've got the idea," said Tom modestly. "But I admit I don't quite know how to work it. I was thinking of consulting you chaps over tea—ahem!"

"Consult us chaps, leaving out the tea," suggested Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Pway let me heah it, Tom Mewwy. You cannot do bettah than consult a fellow of tact and judgment, you know."

"What about earning some money?" said Tom.

"Gweat Scott!"

"Earning some!" said Blake. "Splendid! My dear chap, where do you dig up these magnificent wheezes? Why, it's as easy as falling off a form. You get a job, I think, as a first step—merely stipulating that the pay is heavy and the work light. Then you draw your salary, and—and there you are. Tip-top!"

"Oh, don't be a funny ass, you know," said Tom. "People do earn money. There's thousands of ways. Thousands of jobs—"

"Millions," assented Blake. "Let's go and look for one at once. Mine's coal-mining."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or driving a motor-bus," said Blake thoughtfully. "I think I should like that—exciting, you know, and a day off to attend every inquest."

"Bai Jove!"

"But there's better jobs, too," said Blake, in the same satirical vein. "Jobs where you draw a big salary for doing nothing. Anybody know how you become a Secretary of State or a Prime Minister?"

"Ass!" said Tom. "Be serious! We've got a half-holiday—and we have two every week. We have hours free after lessons every day. If we could find some sort of work for spare time—I've seen advertisements in the papers, how to make three pounds a week in your spare time—"

"By sending the advertiser a postal-order for ten shillings!" assented Blake. "That's the first proceeding—and the last!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dash it all, we're getting a rather expensive education here," said Tom. "It ought to be worth something in the money market."

"No end," said Blake. "Let's go down to the grocer's in Rylcombe, and offer to write out his bills for him in Latin verse."

"Then the customers would complain of the quantity as well as the quality," remarked Monty Lowther, seeing an opening for a pun. But Jack Blake did not heed Lowther's pun. He was being humorous himself; and he had no time to waste on Shell humour.

"Or we might be taken on at the bunshop," continued Blake. "Gussy, at least, would make a splendid waiter."

"Weally, Blake—"

"He's got the clobber, and he's got the manner," said Blake. "I've often thought what a splendid waiter Gussy would make."

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"When you've done being funny, old top, let's think it out," urged Tom Merry. "Our study is fairly on the rocks—"

"Same here!" said Blake feelingly. "Something's got to be done—or somebody's got to be done. But what—or whom?"

"It's a bit knotty," confessed Tom Merry. "But there must be ways and means. Where's Gussy's tact and judgment? Can't you suggest something, Gussy, instead of twiddling your eyeglass?"

"As a mattah of fact, Tom Mewwy, I was thinkin'. I have often wead of chaps makin' lots of money, but somehow the thing doesn't seem to fit into weal life vewy well. F'winstance, there's that benevolent, white-haired old gentleman who is vewy fond of pickin' up his hat when it's blown off. I've come across him in several books, but I have nevah happened to see him in weal life."

"And you never will!" grinned Blake.

"Then suppose you wush to the wescue when a lovely golden-haired young lady is bein' wun ovah by a bull, or gored by a motah-cab—I mean gored by a bull or wun ovah by a motah-cab. Her fathah wushes up, and pwesses a purse of gold into your hand—which you wefuse, sayin' that the pleasure of wescuin' the young lady is sufficient reward. In the pwesent circumstances, I think it would be justifiable to accept the purse as a tempowawy loan. But"—Arthur Augustus shook his head—"the incident does not seem to me likely to happen."

"Go hon!" said Blake sarcastically.



Bright and cheerful, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emerged from the tuckshop with a heavy basket in one hand. He had taken three steps, when three juniors closed in on him. One of them tilted his hat over his eyes, another jerked the basket from his hand, and the third pulled him down to the ground. (See page 7.)

"Lucky we didn't expect to hear any sense when we wandered into this study," Manners remarked thoughtfully. "It's saved us from a disappointment."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Is that the best you can cough up, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry.

"Not at all, deah boy. As a mattah of fact, I have an ideah."

"Fan me, somebody!" murmured Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Well, what's the stunt?" asked Tom. "It's barely possible that there might be something in it. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings—"

"Bai Jove! I wefuse to be called a babe and sucklin'—"

"What's the wheeze, ass?"

"I do not mind tellin' you, deah boys. Teas!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Teas!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Teas!" repeated six voices, in various accents of astonishment.

The swell of St. Jim's nodded complacently.

"Teas!" he said firmly.

CHAPTER 3.

The St. Jim's Teashop Company.

"TEAS!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy polished his eyeglass, and looked at the six astonished juniors complacently, evidently taken with his great idea—whatever it was.

"Teas!" he said. "I suppose you fellows have noticed it when you've been cyclin' around the country—Teas and Light Wefweshments! Now we have Peppah's barn—"

"Pepper's barn!" repeated Tom.

"Yaas. We use Peppah's barn for our meetin's, and wo

can use it for any old thing we like, as we are payin' for it. That sees us cleah in a vewy important item—went. Peppah's barn is not vewy fah fwom the lane, and there are lots of cyclists use the lane, in this fine weathah. We want a huge, enormous sign on the woof—"

"My hat!"

"Announcin' that teas are supplied to cyclists. Shillin' a time, and you eat and dwink as much as you like, you know. That bwings a wush of custom."

"Phew!"

"My giddy aunt!"

"There are seven of us," said Arthur Augustus. "I am wathah good at cuttin' up bwead. You thwce Shell chaps can wait on the guests. You will have to put on clean collars, and wash your hands—but you can do that for once in a way—"

"Why, you silly owl—"

"Blake can manage the tea urn," said D'Arcy. "Hewwie can be door-keepah, and see that nobody goes out without payin'. Dig can help me in the culinaw department. That gives us a job all wound. Of course, it will be fwightful hard work. But I believe a feahful lot of money is made in catewin'."

"Well, my only hat!" said Tom Merry. "Of all the fat-headed stunts—"

"I wefuse to have my brilliant ideah chawactewised as a fat-headed stunt, Tom Mewwy."

"Of all the potty wheezes!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Hold on, though," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully. "There might be something in the wheeze, though Gussy suggested it. It's a fact that we've got the barn, and there are plenty of seats in it. We could easily knock up some tables—"

"Of course we could," said Arthur Augustus. "Blake has no end of nails in his tool-box."

"A table can't be made entirely of nails!" remarked Blake.

"We could bowwow some planks fwom old Peppah, and make some twestle tables—"

"And what will the Housemaster say if we start a ten-shop a quarter of a mile from the school?" asked Manners. "I weally do not see why he should say anythin', Mannahs. Besides, we shall not mention it to Mr. Waitton."

Blake looked thoughtful. Gussy's suggestion was a startling one, there was no doubt about that. At any other time Blake would not have thought of entertaining it seriously for one moment. But the circumstances were not as usual—there was stony dearth of cash, and famine in the study. Shakespeare has said that desperate diseases require desperate remedies. It was a case of any port in a storm.

"Of course," said Blake slowly, "an idea isn't necessarily fatheaded simply because it's Gussy's."

"Weally, Blake—"

"We might look into it," said Blake, with caution. "You see how the matter stands—we're all stony, and likely to be stony for some weeks. We've got to raise the wind somehow. I know that earning money when you're hard up sounds a bit desperate. But you never know what you can do till you try."

"Something in that!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Let's twy!" said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "We can begin this aftahnoon. Stwike while the iron's hot, you know."

"While the weather's hot, anyhow," said Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But what about capital?" asked Manners practically. Manners was often a practical youth.

"Capital?" repeated Arthur Augustus. Apparently the swell of St. Jim's had overlooked that trifling item.

"If we can't even stand ourselves tea in the study, how are we going to stand a hundred hungry cyclists tea in Pepper's barn?"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothin' to cackle at, you fellows. Difficulties were only made to be overcome, you know. Suppose we get a hundwed cyclists to tea at a shillin' a time. We shall wequiah two-pounds-ten's worth of gwub. Then we shall make a hundwed per cent pwofit. I believe that is wathah good. Of course, it won't be all pwofit, because there will be our time and labah to be paid for—it will be, in fact, our wages. With two hundwed teas, we shall want five pounds' worth of tuck."

"Suppose five pounds' worth of tuck won't fill up two hundwed cyclists?" asked Dig.

"It will have to, deah boy, or else we shall not make our pwofit."

"Good! We'll explain that to the cyclists, so that they won't feel hungry after tea!" suggested Lowther.

"Besides, we can make the tea weakah and weakah, to suit our resources," said Arthur Augustus, who really seemed crammed with brilliant ideas that afternoon; "and the bread can be cut thickah and thickah, you know, with the buttah thinnah and thinnah."

"The merry old cyclists will get thinner and thinner, too, if they come often!" remarked Lowther.

"Wats! Let us get goin', deah boys. The only difficulty is waisin' five pounds in the first place."

"Only that!" said Blake, with deep sarcasm. "A trifle light as air."

"That is all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "I can waise the capital. You see, in our present circes, we should not be justified in bowwowin' money for our own use, as we could not settle within a weasonable time. But we should be justified in bowwowin' the capital for a pwofitable business. That is quite a different mattah. I will bowwow five pounds, and give my witten promise to wepay it in a week. By that time it will be turned into ten by the sweat of our bwows, you know, and that will leave us five pounds to see us through the next week or two."

"Perhaps!" murmured Manners.

"There is no pewwaps about it, Mannahs. I wegard it as a certainty. Lots of people earn money; why shouldn't we? Why," said Arthur Augustus, "if you come to think of it, most people live by earning money by labah of some sort, you know. It is vewy respectable and weally admiwable way of gettin' a livin'."

"Go hon!"

"I am speakin' quite sewiously," said Arthur Augustus. "And I wegard it as a pwivilege to join the noble army of Labah. With my organisin' ability, and you chaps doin' the donkey work, we shall make a vewy great success of this. Latah on, we may turn it into a limited company, if it shows big pwofits—"

"You turn it into a limited company when it shows big losses, as a rule," remarked Lowther. "You haven't studied finance yet, Gussy."

"Wats! I am now goin' to get the capital," said Arthur Augustus. "I will bowwow it from Cardew of the Fourth."

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 749.

He is a distant welation of mine, you know, and he is bound to lend me a fivah if I ask him. I shall explain that it is only for a week."

"Well, we'll all stand for the fiver," said Tom Merry.

"But—"

"I'm off, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy left the study, and Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another. The scheme was beginning to take hold of their minds—they agreed that, at all events, it would be a "lark." They waited rather anxiously for the swell of the Fourth to return.

When D'Arcy came in, he tossed a crisp five-pound note on the table. It was a pleasant sight to the stony juniors.

"Cardew has played up like a little man," said D'Arcy.

"I explained the ideah to him, and he laughed like anythin'." Lewison and Clive laughed, too, you know. I did not mind in the least—they will discovah shortly that the ideah is a wippin' one, and that we are makin' money hand ovah fist. Now let us get on with it, old beans."

And as the matter was now settled, Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to get on with it.

CHAPTER 4.

The New House Raiders!

"**S**HUSH!" breathed Fatty Wynn.

Figgins and Kerr stared.

The three chums of the New House were looking for trouble that afternoon. It was a half-holiday, and Figgins & Co. agreed that it could not be better spent than in ragging the School House. They had looked round the quad for Tom Merry & Co., and looked in vain. The Terrible Three, it seemed, had gone out of gates, and Blake and Herries and Digby had disappeared. Talbot and Kangaroo and a crowd of School House fellows were on the cricket-ground; but on that spot rags were barred. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not to be seen; but the trio learned from Trimble of the Fourth that Gussy had gone to the tuckshop, and had refused, ungratefully, Trimble's kind offer to help him do his shopping. So to the tuckshop behind the old elms Figgins & Co. repaired, to improve the shining hour by pulling Gussy's noble leg, or administering a little harmless and necessary ragging.

David Llewellyn Wynn held up a plump hand to his comrades in warning. From the interior of Mrs. Taggles' little establishment the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could be heard.

"And ten pots of jam, Mrs. Taggles."

"Goodness gracious, Master D'Arcy!"

"Shush!" whispered Fatty to his comrades. "Don't alarm him. Wait quietly till he comes out!"

Figgins chuckled softly.

"Good!" he murmured.

"All's fair in war!" murmured Kerr. "This is where we spoil the giddy Egyptians."

And the chums of the New House hung quietly about the doorway, while Arthur Augustus, in blissful unconsciousness, went on with his shipping order.

"Pwag give me your best jam, Mrs. Taggles—at the lowest pwice, you know."

"But I cannot supply the best jam at the lowest price, Master D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove! Can't you weally? That is wathah awkward. I should like the fellows to have the vewy best jam; but it is vewy important to have it at the lowest pwice. Pewwaps I had better take the cheapest, as money is limited. Aftah all, they are bound to be pwetty hungwy aftah cyclin', so pewwaps they won't notice."

"Do you really want ten jars, Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Fatty Wynn's eyes beamed.

"Standing a terrific feed, I should think," he whispered. "Some topping celebration going on in the School House. I should think. I rather fancy some of that jam is going as far as the New House—what?"

"Looks likely to me!" grinned Figgins.

"What a giddy opportunity!" chuckled Kerr.

Arthur Augustus' cheerful voice ran on. He was giving orders that ran into pounds—whole solid quids! Evidently, the New House juniors considered, a spread on an unusual scale of magnificence had been planned in the rival House.

Fatty Wynn took a cautious peep in at the doorway. Gussy was far too busy to notice him. Quite a mountain of goods was stacking up on the counter in front of the swell of the School House.

"How much does that come to, Mrs. Taggles?"

"Four pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence, Master D'Arcy!" said the good dame in quite an awed voice.

"Pwag put in anothah cake, and make it five pounds. And pewwaps you can lend me a basket or somethin' to cawwy these things away in."

"I will ask Mr. Taggles to deliver them, if you wish."

Fatty Wynn's face fell. If that cargo was consigned to



Manners and Lowther jumped back as Blake took a little run and leaped into the air, landing in the middle of the new table with a crash of boots. In spite of the number of nails he had put into the planks and into the trestles, the table collapsed, and Jack Blake came down on the ruins with a bump. (See page 8.)

the care of Ephraim Taggles, a raid was out of the question. But Arthur Augustus' reply relieved his fears.

"That's all wight, Mrs. Taggles; I can cawwy the lot if you lend me a basket."

"Very well, Master D'Arcy."

Figgins & Co. drew back a little from the doorway. The swell of St. Jim's was about to emerge, laden with tuck to an undreamt-of extent. The raid, if it was successful, would be quite a record in the warfare between the rival Houses of St. Jim's. Figgins generously resolved to ask the School House chums to a spread, if the raided cargo was safely landed in the New House. George Figgins felt that that would be only kind, in the circumstances.

Bright and cheerful, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emerged from the doorway of the tuckshop with a heavy basket in one hand.

He had taken three steps when three juniors closed in on him.

One of them tilted his hat over his eyes, another jerked the basket from his hand, and the third sat him down on the ground.

Arthur Augustus sat down in a state of great astonishment. He swept his tilted topper off his eyes, and blinked round him in bewilderment. Figgins & Co. were already in full retreat with the captured basket.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He leaped to his feet.

"Stop!" he roared. "You New House wottahs! Bwying back that basket!"

Figgins paused a moment to wave his hand in farewell, and then the three raiders hurried on towards the New House.

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus rushed in fierce pursuit.

Gussy had been too busy thinking of his remarkable new wheeze to give any thought to such matters as House raids. Now he saw the whole stock of the St. Jim's Teashop Company disappearing—vanishing from his eyes like a beautiful dream!

"Stop, you wottahs!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. trotted on, with Arthur Augustus racing in breathless pursuit. He gained on the three; though what

he was to do single-handed when he overtook them was a problem he had not stopped to solve.

"Cut on, you chaps!" murmured Figgins. "I'll stop for dear old Gussy."

Kerr and Fatty Wynn rushed on with the basket. George Figgins turned round when Gussy's outstretched hand was almost on his shoulder.

What happened next was a hidden mystery to Gussy. All he knew was that a minute later he found himself sitting in the quadrangle in a breathless state, feeling as if he had run at top speed against a stone wall. George Figgins was disappearing into the New House in the distance.

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus feebly.

"He, he, he!" Baggy Trimble rolled up, grinning. "Perhaps you wish you'd let me help you with the shopping now. He, he, he."

"Ow! Oh deah!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled to his feet. The enemy were safe within their stronghold now, where they had plenty of reinforcements at hand. Arthur Augustus feared no foe, and he seldom stopped to count odds; but he realised that it was useless to pursue the raiders into the New House. He groped for his eyeglass and smoothed his damaged hat in a state of great dismay. The St. Jim's teashop seemed likely to perish before it had fairly started life.

As Arthur Augustus stood gasping for breath the window of Figgins' study in the New House opened, and three grinning faces looked out. Three hands were waved to D'Arcy.

"Thanks!" bawled Figgins.

The swell of St. Jim's hurried towards the window. He stood under it and looked up at Figgins & Co.

"You uttah wottahs—"

"It was no end thoughtful of you, Gussy, to stand us this spread, as we're all stony to-day!" said Kerr.

"I was not standin' you a spread, you howwid boundah!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Your mistake. You were."

"That tuck is not a spread at all—"

"Mistaken again. It is!"

"It is requiahed for a vewy special purpose, and I wequest you to hand it back at once."

"Go hon!"

"You uttah wuffians——"

"You shall come to tea, Gussy!" said Figgins soothingly. "There's lots. Bring a dozen friends, if you like, on condition that you make it pax, of course."

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the kind!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I command you to hand ovah that tuck at once!"

"Well, you shall have a bit to go on with, old bean." And Figgins spun a biscuit down at the junior beneath the window, with unerring aim, and D'Arcy's topper went floating.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the window above.

"Oh cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus made a dive for his topper. Figgins closed the window. The swell of St. Jim's shook a furious but unavailing fist at it.

"He, he, he!" chortled Baggy Trimble.

The next moment Trimble ceased to chortle. For once Arthur Augustus' noble temper was at boiling point, and Trimble's fat chortle was the last straw. He turned upon Trimble and smote him, and Baggy yelled as he sat down in the quad.

Then Arthur Augustus, a little relieved, started for the gates, to head for Pepper's barn and report progress to the other members of the St. Jim's Teashop Company.

CHAPTER 5.

Getting On With It.

TOM MERRY was busy. He had borrowed a brush and a can of paint from Taggles, the porter. The sign of the new teashop was in progress of completion.

Whether the new stunt was a good idea or not, the hard-up juniors had thrown themselves into it with great keenness. If plenty of hard work could make it a success, it was going to be a success. The whole company were determined upon that.

It was a sunny afternoon, and cyclists in good numbers were pedalling along the lane. There was plenty of custom going if it could be secured. Getting the sign done was the first step; and Tom Merry took that in hand. It was not, perhaps, an artistic sign. But the lettering was large, and could be read at a considerable distance. That was the chief requirement. Three boards had been nailed together to make the sign, and the announcement on it covered it from end to end. Tom was liberal with the paint—too liberal, perhaps. Here and there it ran in streaks, and there was a considerable quantity on his hands and a little on his face. But that could not be helped.

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BREAD-AND-BUTTER AND JAM AND CAKE.

A BOB A TIME!

AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE!

Meanwhile, the other members of the company were busy, too. From the barn came a sound of active hammering.

Nails there were in plenty—Blake had a good supply of nails in his tool-box. Planks for trestle-tables had been obtained from Mr. Pepper. Mr. Pepper had almost fainted when he learned what they were wanted for. But the old gentleman was always ready to do business. He had lent the planks—perhaps guessing that the St. Jim's teashop would not have a long career of usefulness. He was only charging for the use of them. Blake explained to Mr. Pepper that as he knew them so well, he could trust them with the planks, for future payment—payment to come out of the St. Jim's teashop profits. Possibly Mr. Pepper was not of a trusting disposition—equally possibly he doubted the materialisation of the expected profits. At all events, a watch had to be left in Mr. Pepper's keeping as security for the cash. That was easily arranged, however. Herries nobly offered his watch—all the more willingly because, as it had ceased to "go," it was not of much immediate use as a timekeeper.

Mr. Pepper lent a wheelbarrow for the transit of the goods for nothing—absolutely for nothing. That was an effort of generosity which probably gave him an internal twinge; but he did it. And the juniors wheeled the planks away cheerily, making several journeys to land them all at the barn. Then they began to hammer together the trestle-tables.

Blake was head carpenter. Blake had a tool-box, and THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 749.

often used his tools in Study No. 6 to execute small repairs—sometimes with rather serious results to the study. Blake had even made a chair once, which would have been a permanent, visible proof of his skill as a carpenter if it had not unfortunately collapsed the first time it was sat upon. Trestle-tables, according to Blake, were mere child's play to him—he could turn them out in finished style in the largest quantities, limited only by the amount of his material.

Herries and Digby were still wheeling supplies on the barrow, while Jack Blake hammered like Vulcan in his most energetic moments, and Manners and Lowther held things for him. After Lowther's thumb had had a narrow escape, they were careful to hold things for Blake at a safe distance. While Tom Merry was still daubing manfully at the sign, Blake had the first trestle-table finished in wonderfully short time. The trestles were nailed under the planks for security. Manners averred that they should have stood on their own, with the planks resting across them, unattached or semi-detached. Blake asked him what he knew about carpentry, and went on regardless.

"There!" said Blake, when the first trestle-table was finished, and he stood rather breathlessly regarding his handiwork. "There! Look at it! Looks something like—what?"

"Something like—what?" said Lowther thoughtfully.

"Yes, that's the question. What does it look like?"

"Eh! A table!" roared Blake.

Lowther started.

"My hat! Now you speak of it, it does look something like a table!" he exclaimed.

"You silly owl——"

"The resemblance is distant, but it's there!" said Lowther cordially. "It's not a twin to a table, or a first cousin to a table, but there's a sort of family resemblance. Say, a fortieth cousin ten times removed!"

"That table," said Blake, with scorn, "is exactly what we want! It's not a silly ornamental parlour-table——"

"It isn't!" agreed Manners, with conviction.

"But it's strong. It will bear the weight of a lot of chaps lolling their elbows on it. It will stand wear and tear," said Blake. "I've put enough nails into that table."

"Almost too many," murmured Lowther. "About half a pound, I think. Do you suppose it will stand if we let go?"

Blake breathed hard.

"I'll show you whether it will stand!" he said. "I'll jump on it. Let go, fathead!"

"Stand clear!" murmured Lowther.

Manners and Lowther jumped back. They were quite keen to see the table put to the proof; but they preferred to be at a safe distance. Blake gave a scornful sniff, and took a little run, and leaped into the air, landing in the middle of the new table with a crash of boots.

If the new table had stood that test, undoubtedly it would have been a fairly strong table. Unfortunately it didn't.

In spite of the number of nails Blake had put into the planks and into the trestles, there was a creak, a groan, and a lurch from the new table, and it went staggering.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Lowther. "Look out!"

Crash!

The table collapsed, and Jack Blake came down on the ruins with a bump. He rolled over, and sat up, and the next instant he leaped off the collapsed table with a fiendish yell. It looked as if he had found one of the nails.

"Yaroooooh!"

"I thought you rather overdid the nails!" commented Lowther.

"You silly ass! I didn't put in quite enough—ow! All through you Shell duffers being impatient—wow! Besides, tables aren't made to be jumped on—it would have stood fair wear and tear splendidly. Grooogh! If you cackle like a pair of silly geese at me, I'll jolly well kick you out of this barn!" roared Blake.

"Shush!" said Monty Lowther soothingly. "Let's get on with the next table, now this one is finished. It is finished, isn't it? It looks it."

Blake suppressed his feelings with difficulty.

"You chaps had better go and handle the wheelbarrow," he said. "You're no good here. A fellow can't work with a pair of clumsy asses hanging about. Go and eat coke!"

Lowther and Manners grinned and strolled out of the barn, leaving Blake to his task. They joined Tom Merry, who was getting on at a great rate with the teashop sign.

"Hallo! Here comes Gussy!" remarked Lowther.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy arrived in the field in a rather breathless state. He had trotted most of the way from the school.

"Where's the grub?" asked Tom Merry, looking up.

"You were going to bring the tuck," said Manners.

"Where is it?"

"I'm awfully sorry——"

"We don't want sorrow, old bean; we want grub!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"It weally wasn't my fault—"

"What's happened?" asked Tom Merry anxiously. "Didn't you lay out the five quids at the tuckshop?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, you got the grub, then," said Tom. "Where is it?"

"Those New House boundahs—"

"What?"

"Figgins & Co., you know—they've waided it—"

"Raided the grub!" yelled the Terrible Three, with one voice.

"Yaas, wathah, and they got it into the New House befoah I could give them a feahful thwashin' all wound and wecapture it."

"Great Scott!"

CHAPTER 6. Gussy Helps!

TOM MERRY laid down his paint-brush, and wiped his brow with the back of his hand. It was warm work, painting a sign in the sunshine. It had the advantage of making the paint dry; but it made the painter rather damp. A blob of paint happened to be on the junior's hand, and he left most of it across his perspiring forehead. Whereat, in spite of the seriousness of the situation, most of the St. Jim's Teashop Company smiled.

"Well, of all the beastly luck!" said Tom. "A House raid just at this time. I'd forgotten there was such a dashed old casual ward as a New House in existence at all. Of course, Gussy was bound to run up against trouble."

"We won't send you, Gussy," said Tom. "You've done damage enough already."

"I wefuse to admit—"

"Besides, we want you to do the commercial traveller stunt, and waylay cyclists on the road, and tempt them into the tea-shop," said Tom. "That's a dodge of some shows, and it's a good one. A cyclist doesn't always know that he wants his tea till he's told."

"Yaas, wathah; and a fellah of tact and judgment is necessary," assented Arthur Augustus. "A decently-dressed fellah, too. It will show that the place is high class and respectable. You fellahs might give an impression that it was a wathah low-down show, pewwaps, with your wathah bad mannahs and your careless attiah."

"You cheeky owl—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You cut off to the New House, and explain to Figgins & Co., Mannahs," said Tom Merry. "Flag of truce, you know; and you can offer to take Figgins & Co. into the stunt, as an inducement to play up. There's no time to lose if we're to do any business this afternoon."

"Right-ho!" said Mannahs.

"Mind you are tactful, Mannahs, in dealin' with those New House boundahs," said Arthur Augustus anxiously. "Pewwaps I had bettah come with you, attah all, and help you out—"

"Muzzle him, somebody!" said Mannahs.

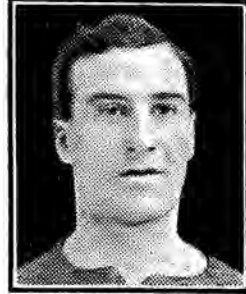
Mannahs ran his bike out into the lane, and started for St. Jim's at great speed. Certainly there was no time to be lost. It was true that it was not yet near tea-time; but Fatty Wynn was not likely to wait for tea-time when there was free tuck about. It was only too probable that the



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"Oh, bound to!" assented Lowther. "It wouldn't have been Gussy if he hadn't. A leopard can't change its spots, you know, or an Ethiopian his jolly old skin; so a D'Arcy is bound to come a mucker if you let him off the chain."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"We shouldn't have left anything to Gussy!" said Mannahs, with a shake of the head. "It was really asking for trouble."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"But the question before the giddy meeting is, what's to be done?" said the captain of the Shell.

"That's answered already; we're done!"

"It wathah looks as if we sha'n't have any tommy to offah the cyclists we are goin' to catch for," said Arthur Augustus. "I—I suppose they would not pay a shillin' a time to come into the barn and—and west."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"We've got to get that grub back," said Tom decidedly. "Force of arms won't do it, as they've got it in their House; we must send a flag of truce, and put Figgins & Co. on their honour. I think they'll play up when they know it's not a spread they've bagged—if that fat villain Wynn hasn't scoffed half the tuck already! We'll send an envoy to make terms with the rotters—don't call 'em rotters, of course."

"Yaas, wathah, that is a vewy good ideah!" said Arthur Augustus, with a nod of approval. "I am prepared to go as ambassador. I have relations in the Diplomatic Service, you know, and I am wathah a diplomat."

"You are!" said Lowther heartily. "You ought to be in the Diplomatic Service yourself, Gussy!"

"Do you weally think so, Lowthah?"

"Yes, or else in a home for idiots! One or the other is the proper place for a fellow with brains like yours!"

"You uttah ass—"

Falstaff of the New House had started already on the captured goods.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy shook his head dubiously. He had his doubts about the success of any diplomatic mission which was not supported by his celebrated tact and judgment. But there was other work for Gussy to do, though he did not join in the painting or the carpentry. Arthur Augustus was not a slacker, but he felt that he was better engaged in organising and giving directions. Moreover, he realised that there must be at least one well-dressed fellow in the party to give the St. Jim's teashop a high tone. So, as he could not begin his commercial travelling before the tuck arrived—in case there should be no food to offer the captured customers—he looked on at the active painter, and offered advice and suggestions.

Tom Merry continued patiently painting the sign and himself and his clothes. He was very warm, and he was rather tired, and the smell of paint troubled him a little. Gnats and flies, too, persisted in hovering round him, and they liked to rest on his damp forehead, and to stick themselves in his hair, and to commit suicide on the freshly-painted lettering. Every time he dabbed a gnat away, he left a fresh smear of paint somewhere on his person or his visage. In the circumstances, advice from a fellow who was looking on, as fresh as a daisy, with his hands in his pockets, was neither grateful nor comforting, especially as the advice was rather critical.

"I am sowwy I did not have time to sketch this out for you, Tom Mewwy," Arthur Augustus remarked. "Then, pewwaps, the lettahs would not look so vewy knock-kneed. I could have sketched it out in chalk without gettin' my fingahs dirtay. Do you think anybody will be able to wead it when you have finished?"

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"You see, if they cannot wead it, it will not be of much use, will it?" said D'Arcy thoughtfully.

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"Run away and play!" said Tom.

"Not at all, my deah chap. I'm not goin' to play while all you fellahs are workin'. I am not a slackah, I hope. On consideration, Tom Mewwy, I suggest paintin' all that out."

"What?"

"Paint it all out, and start again from the beginnin'." said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "Then I will stand ovah you, you know, and give you some tips as you go along, and so it will come out much bettah."

"Fathead! Ass! Burling jabberwock!"

"Bai Jove! I hope you are not gettin' cwooss, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus reprovingly. "I know it is wathah discouragin' to see all your work turnin' out wottenly, but it is wisah to gwasp your nettle, you know. Bettah start again."

"Go and eat coke!"

"I wogard that simply as a wude wemark! I am willin' to devote my time to instwuctin' you how to do it bettah, and I can't say fairah than that, can I?"

A grut took a fancy to Tom Merry's eye at that moment, and in gouging the annoying insect out, he landed a considerable amount of paint in its place. With superhuman self-control, he leid down his brush, sat in the grass, and attended to his eye with his pocket-handkerchief. Arthur Augustus ran on with encouraging remarks.

"That's wathah wotten, deah boy. If you were a little more careful with the paint, you know, you would not get it on your hands, and then you would not get it in your eye."

No reply from Tom Merry.

"I hope you are not gettin' bad-tempered, old chap. You are lookin' wathah excited. Bai Jove! What are you goin' to do with that can of paint, Tom Mewwy?"

Tom jumped up and seized the paint-can.

"I'm going to empty it over the head of a cackling dummy!" said the Shell fellow, with a ferocity that was almost Huanish.

"Great Scott!"

Arthur Augustus jumped back in alarm. He had expressed the hope that Tom Merry was not getting bad-tempered; but it was only too clear now that that hope was ill-founded.

He backed away as Tom lifted the can, and then fled for his life, or, rather, for his clothes. As he glanced back, and saw the infuriated junior in hot pursuit with the uplifted paint-can, Arthur Augustus let out a yelp of terror.

"You frightful wuffian, keep off!" he howled. "Oh, my hat! Oh cwoombs! Oh cwikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lowther.

"Stop him, somebody! Oh deah! Help!"

Arthur Augustus fled wildly round the barn, with the painter in furious pursuit. He made a break across the field, running with a speed that a hare might have envied. Tom Merry halted at last, and shook his fist after the fleeing swell of St. Jim's. Then he returned to his task, comforted by the knowledge that he would receive no more advice from Arthur Augustus.

But it was some time before Gussy returned, and then he came very cautiously. Tom Merry's unexpected and inexplicable outbreak of temper had quite alarmed him, and he was very much on his guard. He did not return to the spot where the painter was busy. In the circumstances, he felt that Tom did not deserve any more assistance from him. He strolled into the barn to help Blake and the carpentry.

The trestle-tables were going strong, all of them standing as completed, perhaps because Blake was not putting them to any more such searching tests as in the first case. Herries and Digby were helping, and the work was getting done. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the finished specimens, and shook his noble head rather doubtfully.

"Do you think these tables will stand the weight of the teacups, Blake?" he asked.

"Ass!"

"That is not an answer, deah boy. Do you weally think so?"

"Fathead!"

"You see, if they collapse with the cwockewy on them, it will be wathah a disastah. We've got all the cwockewy of half a dozen studies heah, and we shall be wathah left if it all goes smash, you know. Of course, I am not an experienced carpentah. But, judgin' by appeawances, I hardly think these tables will stand the stwain."

"Idiot!"

"If you are goin' to be abusive, Blake, it is not much use my givin' you advice," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Howevah, we all want the scheme to be a success. Pewwaps it would be a good ideah to knock these wotten things to pieces again—"

"What?"

"And I will show you how to make them, you know, so that they will stick togethah, and not be so awfully wockay."

Blake seemed to be choking with emotion.

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"It will be wathah a twouble, I know. But, aftah all, if a job is worth doin', it is worth doin' well. You see that, Blake?"

Blake did not st-ite whether he saw it or not. He appeared, in fact, to see red at that moment, and that was all he saw. The next minute Arthur Augustus was fleeing out of the barn doorway, with an infuriated Fourth-Former on his trail with a brandished hammer.

"Bai Jove! The hot weathah seems to be makin' the fellahs awfully cwooss!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as he sprinted across the field a second time. It was fortunate for the adviser-in-chief that he had a good turn of speed. He looked back from the other side of the field, to see Blake brandishing the hammer after him, before he returned to his labour.

Arthur Augustus fanned his heated brow with his silk hat.

"In the cires I shall not help them any more!" he murmured. "If they are goin' to be so howwidly bad-tempered I shall be justified in wefusin' to give them any more advice."

And Arthur Augustus didn't, which was perhaps fortunate for him.

CHAPTER 7.

Figgins Plays Up.

"TROT in, old top!"

George Figgins spoke quite affably. Kerr nodded, and smiled, and Fatty Wynn grinned a broad grin.

Manners of the Shell presented himself at the door of Figg's study, in the New House at St. Jim's, with a handkerchief held up as a flag of truce. The heroes of the New House respected that symbol. Indeed, they were quite genial to the ambassador from the enemy.

"Coming to the feed?" asked Figgins. "Did Gussy give you our message? First-class spread in this study at half-past four. We've got in an unusual quantity of supplies."

"Cheap!" added Kerr.

"Seven pots of jam," said Figgins.

"Ten, you mean!" said Manners warmly.

"Three from ten leaves seven" explained Figgins. "You can do a simple sum like that even in the Shell, I should think. Fatty's put his circumference outside three of them."

"Jolly good, too!" said Fatty Wynn heartily. "I'm ever so much obliged!"

"You fat gorgon!" roared Manners. "Mean to say that you've scoffed three of our pots of jam?"

"It would have been four, only we stopped him," said Kerr. "Fatty's our chum, but we can't have him bursting over our study carpet."

"Besides, we want some left for the party," said Figgins. "I suppose you School House cniaps will be coming?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners proceeded to explain the situation. Figgins & Co. listened with blank astonishment. They had been surprised at the amount of tuck Arthur Augustus had been laying in. But certainly they had not suspected that the School House fellows were entering business as caterers.

"Pulling our leg?" asked Figgins suspiciously.

"Honest Injun!" said Manners. "If it was a spread, and you rotters—I mean, you fellows bagged it, that would be all in the game, and we wouldn't grouse. But you see how the matter stands. We got the capital from Cardew of the Fourth, and we can't square unless we do business. You're bound to hand it over, Figgy."

"But it's a potty stunt," said Figgins, in amazement. "You silly School House asses don't know anything about the catering business."

"Rats!"

"Where will your profits come in?" asked Kerr.

Kerr was a Scottish youth, with rather a keen head for business, and he saw more weaknesses in the catering scheme than had been apparent to the heroes of the School House.

"Easy enough," said Manners. "We buy five pounds' worth of tuck, and sell it to the public for ten pounds. That's five pounds profit. We pay old Pepper a quid, and that leaves four clear. Four pounds will see us through till our allowances come to the rescue."

"Sounds all right," said Figgins, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "What do you think, Kerr?"

Kerr chuckled.

"I think that if the catering business showed easy profits like that, it would be easier than it is to get a meal on the road," he answered. "Caterers buy their stuff wholesale, not retail at a tuck-shop. And they don't make whacking profits even then."

"But if you buy for five pounds, and sell for ten, you make a profit," said Figgins. "That sounds all right."

"Wait till you see the ten!" remarked Kerr.

"Of course, you New House bounders know all about it!"



The pile of cakes on the counter diminished rapidly. Fatty Wynn was finishing off the last one, when Mr. Steggles rapped on the table and called out: "Walter! Cake, please!" "I'm afraid the cakes are finished, sir!" said Manners. "Won't you have some bread-and-butter?" "I said cake, and I mean cake!" fumed Mr. Steggles. "I've paid my bob, ain't I?" (See page 13.)

said Manners sarcastically. As a matter of fact, Manners had had his own doubts, but doubts were not to be admitted in the presence of the enemy. "We've worked it all out pretty well. Two hundred customers at a bob a time will be ten pounds, I think. The profit pays for our labour."

"Dear old chap, I hope your labour will be paid for," said Kerr sweetly. "I rather fancy less than two hundred customers will get through your stock of tuck. But—" "We fancy we know how to run our own business," said Manners, still sarcastic. "But it's up to you to hand over the goods, Figgy—you see that?"

"That's all very well—" began Fatty Wynn hotly. Figgins waved his hand at his fat chum.

"Dry up, Fatty! It's up to us." "You can join in the company, if you like," said Manners. "Put up your share of the capital, and share the profits. It's a chance for you to make some money, too."

Figgins looked at Kerr. In financial matters Figgins left the decision to his Scots chum, which was rather wise of Figgy. Kerr grinned, and shook his head.

"We won't bag your profits—if any," he said. "Keep the cash to roll in—if any. But you shall have the goods; that's only fair."

"I say—" began Fatty Wynn dismally. "Shut up, Fatty!" said Figgins. "But I—I—I say—" "Dry up!"

Figgins began to repack the basket. It was an heroic sacrifice, but Figgins nobly felt that it was up to him. He even went to the length of adding, from the study cupboard, a supply to compensate for the loss of the three pots of jam. George Figgins could always be relied upon to play the game; and now that he knew the facts, he played up manfully. Fatty Wynn sat with a mournful face while the basket was repacked.

"I—I say, leave out one pot of jam, Figgy!" he murmured. "Rats!"

"Well, just one cake—"

"Br-r-r-r!" "Just one slice of cake, then!" said Fatty Wynn, almost tearfully.

"Shush!" The packing was finished, and the basket handed over to Manners.

"We'll see you clear of the House," said Figgins. "Redfern or somebody might take a fancy to that basket. Come on!"

"You're a good chap, Figgy," said Manners; "and look here—we'll stand a spread out of the profits, and you fellows shall come."

"Done!" said Figgins.

Manners was duly escorted out of the dangerous precincts of the New House, and he started for Pepper's barn with the loaded basket, in a state of great satisfaction. Fatty Wynn tried to derive consolation from the prospect of a spread out of the profits of the School House catering business. Kerr found some entertainment in calculating the probable amount of those profits. And as Kerr proceeded with his calculations, Fatty Wynn's hope of a spread sank to zero—and remained there!

CHAPTER 8. Business Begins.

"G O O D!" That verdict was pronounced unanimously by the St. Jim's Tea-shop Company, when Manners of the Shell arrived with the goods. Arthur Augustus could not help being surprised at the success of the negotiation without the aid of his diplomatic tact and judgment; but there it was—it had succeeded. The School House fellows agreed that Figgins & Co. should be invited to a handsome spread out of the profits.

Everything was going swimmingly now. The big room of the barn was well supplied with tables, strong enough at least to support crockery. There were plenty of chairs and stools

to start with. Crockery was fairly abundant, though it looked rather mixed. A big kettle sang away on the spirit-stove; bread-and-butter was cut in great quantities; there were half a dozen teapots ready. Cakes were sliced up, in tempting array. Jam was ready in quantities. There was no urn for the tea, and Arthur Augustus' suggestion of using an old oil-drum that reposed in the cellar under the barn was negatived without discussion. But there were plenty of teapots, borrowed in junior studies. Indeed, taking one consideration with another, as the song says, the St. Jim's Teashop Company were well supplied—for a young business just getting on its feet, as it were.

All they had to do now was to deal with the rush of custom when it rolled in.

Tom Merry's sign was hoisted, with some difficulty, and the remainder of Blake's excellent supply of nails was used in fixing it to the wall of the barn. In spite of Arthur Augustus' doubts, it was quite legible; indeed, it could be read at a considerable distance. The preparations had taken time, and it was now high time for tea, and the seven juniors were ready for a rush of hungry cyclists, who were—or should have been—keen on taking advantage of the munificent offer of as much as they could eat and drink at a shilling a head.

While Tom Merry & Co. were giving the final touches to the preparations, Arthur Augustus proceeded to the lane to do his bit. His task was to direct the attention of passing cyclists to the new teashop—quite an astute stroke of advertising, as the teashop company considered. Arthur Augustus, resplendent in shining silk hat and eyeglass, took up his stand in the dusty lane. That lane was used by a good many cyclists; and if they all came in to tea, it seemed indubitable that a roaring trade would be the result. Having done all they could, the schoolboy shopkeepers could only hope for the best.

Three youthful riders came along the lane, and Gussy recognised Gordon Gay and Wootton major and minor, of the Grammar School. Any customer was welcome, Grammarian or not, and Arthur Augustus hailed them at once.

"Pway hold on, deah boys!"

"Hallo! It's the one and only!" exclaimed Gordon Gay.

"Weally, Gay! Pway stop, deah boys! Yawoooooh!"

The three Grammarians did not stop. But, in passing, Gordon Gay reached out playfully, and knocked Gussy's shining topper off. The chums of the Grammar School passed on, chuckling; and by the time Gussy had fished his topper they were out of sight.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated the swell of St. Jim's.

He dusted his hat and replaced it on his noble brow, and waited for more potential customers.

Half a dozen cyclists passed him, and Arthur Augustus hailed them in turn, pointing out the new teashop.

But they grinned and passed on.

Perhaps they did not take the elegant youth in Etons very seriously, and supposed that it was a schoolboy joke. Or perhaps it was now rather late for tea. Anyhow, they did not listen to the voice of the charmer, but grinned and pedalled on.

Arthur Augustus frowned thoughtfully.

"Bai Jove! The howwid boundahs do not seem to be so vewy keen on tea, even at a shillin' a time!" he murmured. "It is wathah wotten! They don't seem to be takin' a chap sewiously at all. But there is the sign plain enough for them to wead across the field."

Arthur Augustus glanced over the hedge at the big sign nailed on the end of the barn.

He started a little.

There is an old proverb which states that the more haste the less speed. Tom Merry had painted that sign quite legibly, and he had put on paint with a generous hand. In the hurried circumstances there was no time to wait for the paint to dry. But the result was unfortunate. The paint was running down the sign in little streams, and the letters were getting blended together. Already the sign was looking a good deal like a Cubist painter's study in cobwebs. Only by a very keen observation could it be deduced from that sign that there was an establishment at hand which offered unlimited teas at a shilling a head.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "If that awful ass Tom Merry had taken my advice—"

Clink, clink, clink!

Arthur Augustus' glance returned to the road again at once. Another cyclist was approaching.

By the musical sounds that emanated from his machine, it appeared that that machine had seen its best days long since. By the look of the cyclist himself, he had never seen any best days at all. He was a rather rough and knobby-looking gentleman, with "clobber" in keeping with his ancient machine which looked as if it had been picked up for about five shillings—if, indeed, it had not been

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picked off a scrap-heap free, gratis, and for nothing. But there was one attractive thing about that cyclist, from the point of view of an enthusiastic caterer. He looked both fatigued and thirsty.

Arthur Augustus, with an eye to business, stepped into the road and held up his hand.

"Weady for tea, sir?" he called out.

The cyclist slowed down and looked at him.

"Ain't I just!" he answered.

Arthur Augustus beamed. It was a customer at last.

"Pway jump down!" he said. "I am the wepewesentative of the new teashop. As much as you like for a shillin'."

The cyclist alighted. The offer seemed to appeal to him.

"You ain't spoofing?" he asked.

"Honest Injun, sir!"

"Where's the blooming show?"

"Eh?"

"Where's the blinking teashop?"

"Ah! Oh, yaas! Just across the field. I will show you the way. Machines stored fwee of charge," said Arthur Augustus.

The young man wiped his brow, which was streaming with perspiration. He was evidently booked as a customer, and Arthur Augustus beamed on him with unbounded satisfaction.

"Well, I could peck a bit, young 'un," said the gentleman. "Fust time I've took a blooming tour in the country, this 'ere is. Name of Steggle. In the pork line at Peckham. Feller told me you could take a blinking 'oliday cheap in the country on a bike. I've found prices pretty 'igh, though. You can lay to that. Profiteering—wot!"

"At our teashop, sir, you will find the pwices weasonable and the quality first-wate," said Arthur Augustus. "Shillin' for tea, and as much as you can eat and dwink."

"Blow me pink!" ejaculated Mr. Steggle. "That 'ere will soot me. Why, I ain't 'ad a bite since this mornin' at eight o'clock, when I pushed out of Brighton. 'Igh prices there, you lay to that. Where's this 'ere bloomin' palace?"

"Pway follow me, sir!" said Arthur Augustus. "May I have the pleasuah of wheelin' your machine?"

"Crumbs!" said the Cockney gentleman. "You're bloom-in' perlite for a waiter, I must say!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Ang on to it, kiddy, and get moving!" said Mr. Steggle.

"I'm anxious to see that there tea. I'm your man, I am. Bobs are scarce, and I don't deny it; but what I want is a feed, and I can pay for it, wot? Mind that there 'andle don't come off, and don't shake the jigger, or the mud-guard may drop—I've left one on the road, and I don't want to lose t'other. I give fifteen bob for that there bike."

"Did you weally?"

"Every stiver of it," said Mr. Steggle. "Is that the tea-shop? Why, that's a bally barn!"

"Yaas, but—"

"If you're pullin' my leg, young feller-me-lad, and me as 'ungry as a 'orse, you'll get somethin' fer yer trouble!" said Mr. Steggle.

"Oh deah! I assuah you, sir—"

"Well, 'ere we are, anyway," said Mr. Steggle, "and I ain't 'arf 'ungry, I tell you—not 'arf! You can lay to that."

And Arthur Augustus ushered the first customer into the St. Jim's teashop.

CHAPTER 9.

The First Customer.

"OH crumbs!"

Half a dozen fellows ejaculated or murmured that remark as the first customer was shown into the St. Jim's teashop.

Mr. Steggle, with his straw hat pushed on the back of his well-oiled locks, mopped his perspiring brow with a red handkerchief that had yellow spots.

Dust and perspiration made a sort of cloud round Mr. Steggle, almost as if he were a spectre of the mist.

He rather startled the St. Jim's teashoppers. Nor was he better pleased with them than they were with him. He gave a very disparaging glance round the barn.

"This 'ere a teashop?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Tom Merry, with the courteous politeness due to a customer—and a first customer—even if that customer seemed to consist chiefly of dust and perspiration.

"Strike me pink!" said Mr. Steggle.

"I'm afraid that isn't on the menu, sir," said Monty Lowther, with considerable gravity.

"What! I don't foller! Never mind if it's a scrubby show, so long as the grub's good," said Mr. Steggle. "P'raps you're startin' wot? Knowed a bloke what started in the fried-fish line, and 'ad a turn-out worsen nor even this. If you're beginnin' this 'ere gime, I'm the covey what's ready to lend a 'elpin' and—always purvided that the grub's good. And there's my bob!" said the customer generously, and he pitched a shilling upon the plank which served as a counter.

"Thank you kindly, sir!" said Tom Merry.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "And now trot out the grub. Much as a cove can eat, wot?"
 "Yaas, sir."
 "Go on with it, then."
 Mr. Steggle sat down on a chair at a trestle table. He put his hat on one chair and his feet on another. He blew his nose with a loud blast that made Arthur Augustus jump. The swell of St. Jim's looked at his comrades, and they looked at him. Their looks hinted of manslaughter. Mr. Steggle was not really the customer they wanted. But he was a cyclist, and Gussy had gone out to look for cyclists and inveigle them into the new teashop. Gussy had been successful in that, at least. He had inveigled Mr. Steggle into the establishment, and a shilling in hard cash had already been taken. It was a beginning.
 "I'll run out and look for some more, you fellahs!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's.
 "If you do," breathed Blake, "I'll slaughter you!"
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "Let 'em come in of their own accord," said Tom Merry.
 "They can read the sign from the lane. We don't want any more of your prize-packets, Gussy!"
 "The chap seems to be wathah a wuffian!" murmured Gussy. "But he has paid his shillin', you know. That's a beginnin'!"
 Bang!
 Mr. Steggle thumped on the table.
 "Where's that tea?" he bawled.
 "Just coming, sir!" gasped Blake.
 "Urry up, then!"

Manners rushed up with huge plate of bread-and-butter and a pot of jam. Mr. Steggle helped himself liberally, and started. A pleasant smile came over his pimply face. Evidently he was hungry. Lowther brought the tea, and poured it out for the customer. Mr. Steggle emptied the cup at a gulp, and Lowther filled it again.

The customer seemed to be enjoying himself. He had told Gussy that he had eaten nothing since breakfast. To judge by his appetite, he might have eaten nothing for a week, if not a fortnight.

Bread-and-butter disappeared at a marvellous rate. Then Mr. Steggle began on the cake.

He finished a whole cake, which had cost half-a-crown, and then called out, "More cake!"

There was a short hesitation on the part of the waiters. But there was the plain statement that a customer could eat and drink as much as he liked for a shilling. Mr. Steggle had paid his shilling. With a grave and thoughtful face Manners carried him another cake, and Lowther a fresh pot of tea. Tom Merry had an air of painful reflection. The St. Jim's shopkeepers were far from grudging a customer a good tea. But Mr. Steggle had already consumed foodstuffs to the value of seven shillings and sixpence, and he was still going strong. By the time he had finished, it seemed probable that the profit and loss account of the St. Jim's teashop would show the larger items on the loss side.

"This 'ere is good cake," said Mr. Steggle to the waiters affably. He was in high good humour now. "Blest if I know 'ow you do it at the price! There's one thing I'll say for this 'ere teashop, it's got up pretty rough, but there ain't no profiteering 'ere. I will say that. Gimme another cake, please!"

"Bai Jove!"
 "You're sure you care for more cake?" asked Manners.
 "Why, I can do two or three more afore I wind up!"
 "Oh crumbs!"

Manners handed out the cake.
 "Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus to his fellow-shopkeepers. "We shall be wined at this wate! Hadn't I better go and look for some more customers? Pewwaps there are some who are not so feahfully hungry."

"Hold on, fathead!" grunted Blake.
 "Weally, Blake—"

"It can't be done at a bob a time!" said Manners. "It couldn't be done at a quid a time with wolves like this chap! There was something wrong in the calculations."

"Hallo! Here's another giddy customer!" said Herries.
 A fat figure loomed into the doorway. Fatty Wynn of the New House ambled amiably into the teashop. There was a sweet smile on his face. Fatty had given up hope of getting a spread out of the profits of the teashop. But a brilliant idea had occurred to him—to bag a spread out of the losses! So he ambled along as a customer.
 "Going strong, old beans?" he asked.

"Oh, fairish!" said Tom Merry guardedly. "Only one customer in the place at the present moment as—as it happens."

The teashop keepers were suffering from painful doubts. But in the presence of the New House junior they assumed a cheery confidence they were far from feeling. They

were not going to show defeat, at all events, in the eyes of the New House.

"Money rolling in?" said Fatty.
 "Oh, fairish—fairish!" said Tom carelessly. "Not making a fortune, you know. But fairish."
 "Good!" said Fatty. "There's my bob."
 "Eh?"

"I'll begin with cake."
 A shilling clinked on the counter, and Fatty Wynn took a seat. He beamed pleasantly on the School House juniors, who eyed him, and one another. Fatty Wynn's gargantuan appetite was celebrated. Even Baggy Trimble could not beat him. A customer like this would have bankrupted any teashop with fixed prices. There was a hurried whispering among the shopkeepers. But there seemed no help for it. Unlimited tea at a shilling a time was the offer. And this customer, like Mr. Steggle, had accepted the offer. There was nothing for it but to play up.

"Go it!" whispered Tom desperately. "Can't own up before the New House. We're in for it!"

"Up to the necks!" grinned Lowther.
 Fatty Wynn tapped on the table.

"Buck up with that tea, waiter!" he called out.
 "Weally, Wynn—"

"Get a move on!"
 And the waiters hurried to wait on Fatty Wynn, and that cheerful plump youth was soon going as strong as Mr. Steggle—and stronger. And Tom Merry & Co. could only hope fervently that Baggy Trimble would not hear of the St. Jim's teashop in time to become a customer, too!

CHAPTER 10.

And the Last.

"CAKE, please!"
 "Cake this way, please!"
 Tom Merry & Co. were kept very busy. Fatty Wynn and Mr. Steggle seemed to be vying with one another.

The teashop keepers had had a vague idea in their minds of a crowd of customers, each consuming bread-and-butter, and winding up with a slice of cake. There were only two customers, and they were showing no signs of winding up, though they were consuming—not slices of cakes, but whole cakes. Two-and-six each had been paid for those cakes. But a bargain was a bargain; even a bad bargain was a bargain to be kept. Where Mr. Steggle and Fatty Wynn were putting it all was a mystery. They did not seem to be swelling visibly. But it was surprising that they could stock away such quantities of foodstuffs without a break somewhere.

The pile of cakes on the counter diminished, as cake after cake was handed out to the voracious customers. Fatty Wynn and Mr. Steggle kept an eye on the pile. It was evidently a race between them. Fatty was the winner. He had the last cake.

He was eating it rather slowly, when Mr. Steggle rapped on the table, and called out:

"Waiter! Cake, please!"

"I'm afraid the cakes are finished, sir!" said Manners.

"Won't you have some bread-and-butter?"

"I said cake, and I mean cake!" said Mr. Steggle. "I've paid my bob, ain't I? 'Ave I, or 'ave I not?"

"Yes—but the cakes have run out," said Tom Merry.

"We—we—we weren't expecting a—a—a wolf."

"And over a pot of jam, then!" said Mr. Steggle discontentedly. "I've paid for cake, and I want cake! This 'ere looks like a swindle. But I'll fill up with jam."

"You must want a lot of filling up, I think," said Blake sarcastically. "Don't trouble to ladle it out, sir. We don't mind if you swallow the pot as well as the jam."

Unheeding Blake's sarcasm, Mr. Steggle filled up with jam. When he could hold no more he rose to his feet, rather heavily.

"Snah you wouldn't like any more, sir?" asked D'Arcy.

"I'd like some more cake, but there ain't any more cake," said Mr. Steggle, with dissatisfaction. "I sha'n't mention this place to my friends. You don't 'old to what you advertise. It's a blooming catch after all! Profiteering, of course!"

And Mr. Steggle shook the dust of the St. Jim's teashop from his feet, and wheeled away his clinking bike, and vanished over the horizon much to the relief of the St. Jim's Teashop Company. Fatty Wynn smiled, and finished his cake.

"Anything more, sir?" asked Monty Lowther. "There's still a little butter left and a loaf or two."

"Any more jam?" asked Fatty.

"Two pots."

"Hand them over."

Fatty Wynn finished the jam, with a beatific smile. Then

(Continued on page 17.)

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The Story of a Lad's Uphill Fight for Fame and Fortune. By DUNCAN STORM.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last frier laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world of chance. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he outtis up against

A KINDLY STRANGER (John Lincoln), the principal governor of the great school of St. Beowulf's, who had been watching him at the funeral.

The two walk along the road together, and Jim tells his new-found friend that he intends starting work at the brickfields in Dennington. The stranger smiles, and tells Jim it is education he needs first. He then withdraws a piece of parchment from his pocket, and, after signing it, hands it to Jim. It is a free pass into the great school. Jim is to take his chance as a Lincoln scholar at St. Beowulf's.

Jim meets with a warm reception in his new surroundings, but his pluck surprises the band of bullies, who call him a Towny cad, and rush to dip him in the fountain.

Jim is taken before Dr. Brackenbury, the Head of St. Beowulf's, who receives him kindly. The doctor instructs Lionel Sweet, commonly known at the school as "Stickjaw," and in whom Jim has already found a friend, to show Jim the ropes.

(Now read on.)

Counted Out.

STICKJAW'S face was a picture of astonishment as he shook hand with this threadbare recruit.

Little had he dreamed when shepherding this poor little Towny cad across the quad that he was escorting the hundredth boy—one of the powerful Lincoln scholars, who were entitled to wear a gold badge in their caps, and a gold coat of arms on their school blazers. But he had taken a fancy to Jim on sight, and he gripped his hand hard.

"Now be off with you," said the head-master kindly; "and see that he makes a good supper, Sweet."

"Yes, sir! Good-night, sir!" stammered Stickjaw.

In another second the two boys were out in the Abbot's Passage.

"Well, if that doesn't beat cock-fighting!" exclaimed Stickjaw, as soon as they were outside. "Come along, Jim! We've just got time to catch Ma—that's the matron—and to get to the Buttery Hatch for our grub. We can do it nicely."

He hurried Jim along the north wall of the quad.

This was Mr. Teach's House, the Pirate House, Blackbeard's Den, the Spanish Main, or the Buccaneers' Home. It had lots of names amongst the Wolves.

They were half-way along the wall, when a door swung open, and five figures, all rubbing themselves vigorously, emerged into the quad.

These were Slurk and his satellites, who had just finished a painful and warming interview with Blackbeard, and were thoroughly warmed up after their exploit in the fountain.

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There was no chance of dodging, for they ran right into the arms of the bullies.

"Bunk!" called Stickjaw.

But huge hands grabbed them.

"Here's a bit of luck!" snarled Slurk. "Young Stickjaw and his Towny cad. Now we'll put them through it!"

Jim felt his arm caught up and twisted, till an agonising pain shot through his shoulder.

"Shout 'Lincolns, ahoy!'—quick, at the top of your voice!" hissed Stickjaw, in his ear.

Jim needed no second bidding.

"Lincolns!" he shouted, his voice echoing through the great deserted expanse of the quad. "Lincolns, ahoy!"

Bully Slurk, who held Jim, was so taken aback that he released his grip. None but a Lincoln scholar could shout for Lincolns. Yet here was a little Towny cad shouting the call of the Lincolns at the top of his voice.

The shout acted like a charm. There was a buzz and a rush of feet. The buildings round the quad fizzled like a stirred-up hornet's nest.

"Who calls Lincolns?" was the cry, as a crowd of boys came tearing across the quad towards the little group, hemming in the crowd of astonished bullies by a seething, angry mob.

"Who calls Lincolns?"

The cry rose to a muzzing roar.

Aladdin, when he rubbed his wonderful lamp and summoned up the genie, was not more surprised than Jim at the result of his call.

In a few seconds the quad was swarming with Lincoln scholars, their gold cap-badges and the distinctive gold-thread coat-of-arms on the pockets of their blazers shining in the light that issued from the blinded windows.

Blackbeard Teach must have heard it all, for the bullies had caught Jim right under the window of the Pirate's Den, as his room was called.

Behind the curtained window this dreaded master was lighting his pipe and grinning. He had just caned all the bullies soundly. The Lincoln scholars were quite numerous and ugly enough to look after their own. Blackbeard was not going to interfere in what was a proper school row.

A tall, lantern-jawed youth with steady eyes was the first to push his way into the mob and to confront Bully Slurk, who had got Jim by the collar.

"Say, clobber," said the youth, looking very straight into the bully's shifty eyes, "what are you doing with that kid?"

"What's that to do with you?" asked Slurk truculently. "You, a cheeky new boy! Where do you come from, anyway?"

The stranger felt in his pocket, and produced a dry sprig of scented wattle.

"My name is Wobby," he answered sharply—"Jack Wobby. On the hills of Australia in the Never-Never Country back of the Never-Mind River, my father feeds his flocks. But I am called Wobbygong, after a sort of shark that lives off the Barrier Reef."

"Well, look here, Wobbygong," snarled Slurk, "you clear out o' this, unless you want to get hurt!"

A faint smile showed on Wobbygong's hard face.

"Hurt?" he asked innocently. "Why, who's going to hurt me?"

"I am," replied Slurk, working up his pluck with words.

"You going to hurt me?" asked Wobbygong, in tones of simple wonder. "Spare me days! But you must be dilly—you bladder!"

For answer Slurk dealt a vicious blow at Wobbygong's face.

Wobbygong's head was not there when Slurk's fist arrived. But the bully's nose was right on the spot when Wobbygong's fist shot out of nowhere in particular, and hit him like a pile-driver, sending him staggering back into the arms of his admirers.

"A fight! A fight!" shouted the Lincolns.

There was no need to part the combatants. Slurk did not want to fight this five-foot-eight of leather which hit out like a mule's hind legs, whilst Wobbygong's temper was apparently unruined.

"Where's the stajum?" asked Wobbygong, in the tone of a new hand who wants to do the right thing.

"This way, 'Wobby!'" called someone who had already made his acquaintance.

The mob streamed through Dark Alley, which ran between the Buttery Hatch and the dining-hall. They turned through a narrow, arched passage into a big square surrounded by cloisters.

These had once been the cloisters of St. Beowulf's Abbey. Round the walls of the colonnade were placed tablets to the memory of St. Beowulf's boys who had fought their first fights in the open square, and who, later on, had distinguished themselves in greater fights for King and country.

A ring was hastily formed, and Dawson, the senior prefect present, according to custom, stepped into the ring with the shout of "Show cause!"

"He was bullying a Towny kid!" cried a dozen voices.

"Where's the Towny kid?" asked Dawson. Jim was shoved into the ring.

"What are you doing in the college at this time of night?" asked the great Dawson, looking down not unkindly at the little chap with the pinched face and threadbare jacket.

Jim looked up into the prefect's good-humoured face. He knew Dawson by sight. Dawson was not only the hero of the school, but was the hero of the town as well, for he was the finest half-back ever played by St. Beowulf's.

"Please, sir," said Jim. "I am not a Towny kid now. I am a Lincoln scholar!"

"A Lincoln scholar!" exclaimed Dawson incredulously.

A gasp of wonder went up from the ring of boys.

"It's quite true!" piped up Sweet. "I have taken him to the doctor. He has his parchment all right. The doctor sent me along with him to the matron to get his outfit, and Slurk collared him."

"Towny kid or Lincoln scholar," said Dawson, "it's all the same. If the youngster was being bullied, and if this new chap from Australia—what's his name?"

"Wobbygong," put in that worthy quietly.

"If Wobbygong takes his part, there's fair

cause for a fight. So get ahead with it," added Dawson. "There's not much time."

Slurk had stripped off his coat and waistcoat. Wobbygong gave his coat to a dark-faced youth, a Malay from Singapore, called Ali Baba because his real name was unpronounceable.

The two champions faced one another.

"Time!" called Dawson.

Slurk made a rush at his opponent, prepared to take charge of the fight from the beginning. But Wobby stopped his left as easily as if he were playing ping-pong, and got in a couple of heavy body blows that set the bully panting.

Slurk's eyes glittered furtively. With a swift duck and feint, he tried a trick in boxing which he had learned from a celebrated pugilist at the price of two guineas.

But Wobbygong knew the trick, and Slurk got change for two guineas in the shape of a jolt on the left of the jaw that made him see sheet lightning. He rocked on his legs, and made a mad rush at the Australian, who side-stepped him and sent him staggering to the ground.

He was up again in a second, more cautious, because he was beginning to appreciate that this was by no means Wobby's first fight.

Then Wobby took the defensive, stalling him off like a stone wall till time was called. Jim looked on with his heart full of a sweet hero-worship. To him Wobby was the greatest champion on earth. Slurk was panting and puffing; Wobby was as calm as a sleeping infant.

Time was called again. This time Slurk cautiously fought every trick he knew. Then his heart began to fail him, for Wobby, not even taking the trouble to hit him, countered every blow. The bully knew that he had met more than his master, and he played his last card. It was a foul blow, and he dealt it with all his strength.

Wobby, with a slight smile on his leathery face, countered the trick, then hit like lightning, laying his man flat on his back. Then, standing over him, he gazed down as though he were studying an interesting insect, whilst Slurk was counted out.

Todeson, Spodge, Mudd, and Ponder gathered up their champion as Dawson, his face full of curiosity, approached the victor. "I say, you new chap," he said, "what do they call you when you are at home? And where did you learn to use your fists like that? You fight like a pro!"

Wobby smiled. "I learned to use my fists a bit amongst the shearers and the opal miners on father's place," he answered modestly. "I was mostly taught by dad's foreman, Jink Jobson, who was Middle-weight Amateur Champion of Australia. They call me the Wobbygong Kid, but I've never fought with a boy before. There weren't any boys in our part, so I always had to fight men."

"Oh, that's how it is, is it?" asked Dawson, laughing. "Well, you'd better shake hands with Slurk now; he's recovering."

"Must I?" asked Wobby doubtfully. "I don't like the peb or the push of smoozers that he's got round him, and where I don't like, I don't want to shake."

"It's the custom of the school," replied Dawson.

Wobby smiled wryly, and shook hands with the sullen Slurk.

"I'm shaking 'cause I got to," he whispered, "but if you look snake-headed at me like that, I'll take you round the corner where there isn't any shaking hands and I'll push your face round behind your ear. Savvy?"

The words were unheard by any save Slurk, who quivered with anger and fear.

Then Wobby turned away. "Where's the nipper that it's all about?" he asked, looking for Jim. "Come along, kid. We'll take you to the matron now, and get you fitted out. Then you shall have the kipsie in No. 4, next to mine. None of these tugs will spoil your sleep."

With Sweet on one side of him and this new champion on the other, Jim was led off to the matron's room, where he received a full outfit, enough clothing to load the arms of the three of them.

The matron's quick eye caught Wobby's broken knuckles. It was very evident that Wobby had already found his way to the heart of the matron.

"Claude!" exclaimed the matron, agast. "What have you been doing to your hands?" Wobby looked greatly disturbed.

"Auntie," he whispered, "don't call me Claude, please! I've told 'em my name is Jack. As for my knuckles, I fell across a

catliff called Slurk, and he wanted to kiss me hands!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself fighting that horrid boy!" said the matron severely. "Who won?"

Wobby regarded her reproachfully.

"Who won?" he said. "Do you think I'd let a fellow like that play handies with me? Don't forget that Jim here has got to take his founder's sovereign."

The matron produced a pound-note, and off Jim marched with his chums, carrying his outfit piled high in their arms to Dormitory No. 4, where he speedily changed from his threadbare clothes into all the glory of a Lincoln scholar.

"I'll match those twenty deeners of yours with another twenty deeners, Jim," said Wobby, "and we will give the boys a feast to-night that they won't forget in a hurry."

"I've got ten bob, too," said Stickjaw.

"Save your money, Stickjaw," replied Wobby. "This is the fat and greasy time; but presently famine will fall upon the land, and we shall want that ten shillings of yours worse than we've ever wanted anything! Lead on to Mother Gum's, kiddies!"

"Welcome, Jim Ready!"

THE tuckshop, which was part of the school buildings, was doing a roaring trade. Mother Gum, who was in charge, was almost bewildered by the press of trade. Slurk was seated in a corner of the shop, being consoled with raspberry-puffs and ginger-beer by his toadies.

"If you had only kept your hands down, you would have licked him my dear fellow!" Spodge was saying as Wobby elbowed his way to the counter.

"Hush!" whispered Todeson. "Here is the brute!"

"Yes, if he'd only kept the sponge down, he'd have licked me, sure!" said Wobby, who had overheard the remark. "I'm only a poor little lonely feller," he added, "fourteen thousand miles from the old homestead, and if I don't look after little Wobby, nobody else will, and that's the dinkum oil!"

The little crowd of bullies were silent. They were beginning to hate this imperturbable son of the Golden South, with his whimsical, leathery face, and his free-and-easy manner. "Anyone can see that he is an awful cad!" whispered Todeson. "Look at his hands. I reckon he works in a stable when at home."

Wobby's quick ears seemed to pick up the guarded words amidst the babel and uproar of the tuckshop.

He looked at his knuckles, and grinned. "Quite right, Percy!" he said. "I've often worked in a stable. But these marks on my knuckles are the print of your pal's nose!"

Todeson made no answer to this.

"Here you are, ma!" called Wobby to the perspiring Mother Gum.

"Come and tend to your white-headed boy!"

He gave an order that made the bullies look at one another with meaning glances. There was a feast to come in Dormitory No. 4, a feast of magnificent proportions, and they meant to take their share of it.

They watched Wobby and Jim and Stickjaw as they pushed their way out of the crush around the counter.

"Yaw!" said Mudd.

"See how thawse awful cads all get togethaw—yaw! That aw—yaw—Awstralian goes as easy as yaw like to that awful little town boundaw. They must have been on theaw chumps to make him a Lincoln scholar—yaw-haw!"

"I say, Muddy," said Slurk, his furtive eyes turning right and left, "what about cleaning their feast out of No. 4?"

"D'you mean a raid—aw?" asked Mudd, rather uncomfortably.

Slurk shook his head.

"I don't exactly mean a raid," he said. "I don't want to get into a fight again with that brute Wobby. But we could easily cut chapel and drop in there and snaffle the grub and ginger-beer before that gang come up to bed."

This was Slurk's way of indicating that the grub could be stolen.

"I suppose it's all right—aw?" asked Mudd, rather uncomfortably.

"Of course it's all right!" replied Slurk, with an uneasy laugh. "Or it will be all right when we've got the grub safe over in our house."

The bullies then arranged their plans for confiscating the feast from Dormitory No. 4.

In the meantime, Wobby led his chums up to the box-room which adjoined the dormitory. He was now awaiting the arrival of Gumdrop, who was Mother Gum's son, with the load of tuck. Soon Gumdrop arrived, panting, with two big baskets.

"That's the ticket, Gummo!" said Wobby approvingly. "You can stow the provender under Master Jim's bed. Here's a deener for running the rabbit!"

He held out a new shilling, which the harassed Gumdrop accepted eagerly.

"Now, cobbers," said Wobby in a low voice, "you keep cave at the door down the passage whilst I unload some of my luggage. It's me boxing partner!"

The two kept cave whilst Wobby, going into the box-room, dragged out a big canvas sack into the dormitory, and unlaced the neck.

"Come out, Nobby!" he said.

The boys gave a gasp as the head of an animal, very much like that of a donkey, was thrust out of the sack, and two bright eyes looked round with an expression of mild surprise.

"Out you come, old cobber!" said Wobby, turning down the sack.

There was a heave, then a flop on the floor, and there, neatly attired in a school blazer with a school cap perched atop of his head, was a well-grown kangaroo.

"That's Nobby!" said Wobby, with great pride. "Isn't he a peb? Straight off the beach he came! I caught him when he was a tiny little chap, no bigger than a rabbit. I brought him up on the bottle. I had to bring him with me, or he'd have pined away. You see, I've got a letter from dad to the headmaster asking leave to allow me to keep him. I haven't had a chance of giving it in yet, though. Now we'll just put his gloves on before we hide him away, because he's a bit handy with his feet, and he might hurt someone if he wasn't gloved. Come here, Nobby! Gotta have your mitts on!"

Nobby sat up as good as gold whilst his master produced two pairs of boxing-gloves from the sack, and tied them carefully on his paws and on the powerful hind feet.



Jim and Stickjaw gave a gasp as a kangaroo, neatly attired in a school blazer, with a school cap perched upon his head, was brought to light from the sack. "That's Nobby!" said Wobby with great pride. "I caught him when he was a tiny little chap—no bigger than a rabbit."

"Now, Nobby," said his proud master, lifting the white valance of his bed. "Imshée! Begone! Fade away! Hide yourself, and keep hidden. Mind you leave those pies alone under the other bed until you are asked to the party!"

Nobby touched his master's hand with his soft muzzle, hopped solemnly to the bed, stowing himself away under it, and curled his huge tail out of sight.

"Good boy!" said Wobby approvingly, as he dropped the valance, hiding his pet completely. "That's your little kipsie for the night, and don't you go peeping out and giving the show away!"

He took the canvas sack back to the box-room, turned down the lights in the dormitory, and rejoined his chums.

"Nobby will take care of the feast, all right," he said, with a smile. "He knows what's what in the way of belongings, and he won't let anyone touch what he knows belongs to me. That's why I put the gloves on him. He's got toenails that will claw a chap's leg open. Now let us hasten to the buttery. There goes the supper-bell!"

The bell was clanging for supper now, and long lines of boys were forming at the Buttery Hatch, where they were served out with bread and cheese and sandwiches and a large mug of hot milk.

With these they marched into the great hall, with its marvellous timbered roof and solemn portraits of founders and benefactors looking down from their gilt frames on the walls upon the horde of happy, hungry boys. Jim's eyes were shining now. He was so happy that he could hardly eat his supper.

A few hours since he had been but a little wail, hardly strong enough for hard toil. He lifted his eyes gratefully to the portrait of John Lincoln which occupied the place of honour over the great carved fireplace.

It was a fine picture by a great artist, and it showed the explorer attired in his khaki suit and black shirt, gazing over the wide spaces of an African landscape.

The shabby man he had met upon the road and the benefactor of this great school were one and the same man. Jim, sitting like one in a dream, made up his mind that he would do his best to do credit to his selection as the hundredth boy amongst the Lincoln scholars.

There were a few boys sitting at Slurk's table who were eyeing him and his new clothes in a sneering fashion, and Jim felt himself flush under their glances.

"Say, clobber," whispered Wobby in his ear. "You don't mean to say you are showing the red rag for that clique of swell 'Arrys?"

Wobby's sharp eyes seemed to miss nothing.

"I know they are talking about me, that's all, Wobby," answered Jim; "and, Wobby, I'm only a poor boy, all on my own. I was going to look for work in a brickyard when Mr. Lincoln sent me in here this evening!"

"What about it?" Wobby asked.

"Well," replied Jim uneasily, "those chaps

wouldn't think much of another fellow who had to work in a brickyard."

"Dare say they wouldn't," responded Wobby. "But things are diff 'down under." Look here, Jim, my dad's a millionaire squatter down under. He's got sheep, opal-mines, railways, and timber rights till he's stiff with money. I've worked and made bricks with my hands, and baked 'em in the sun. I've sheared sheep and broke horses and split more rails than I ever want to see again. I dare say that bunch of coots would call me 'no class,' especially that tony smoozer who's name is Mud. It's easy to put on dorg over a chap that's poor if you've never done any hard yakker yourself, and those lily-handed softies don't know they are alive yet!"

There was a sudden stir in the hall. The prefects, who were sitting at the high table which ran across the head of the hall, had risen to greet a newcomer, a strapping, fresh-faced youth with enormous shoulders and a finely-poised head.

A murmur ran amongst the tables. It was Buckley, who had arrived late—Buckley, head of the games and captain of the school. It was his last term, and he had been in to see Dr. Brackenbury. He took his seat in the great carved chair, and his supper was brought to him by Collins, the school waiter.

Jim watched him with fascinated eyes. Dawson was a great man, but Buckley's name was known through the county not only as that of the most brilliant scholar turned out by St. Beowulf's for many a long day, but as an all-round athlete and oarsman.

He saw Buckley talking with Dawson, and he shrank back on his seat as Buckley's eyes looked in his direction. Little did he dream that he was the subject of the talk.

Soon there was a bang on the table for silence, and Buckley rose.

"Silence in Hall!" His stentorian voice rang out, echoing amongst the carved rafters overhead, and a silence fell so that a pin might be heard to drop.

Dr. Brackenbury was headmaster of the school, but in Hall and in the playing-fields the word of the captain of the school was law.

"Gentlemen," began Buckley, "I learn that we have amongst us to-night the hundredth boy, a newcomer, and all on his own in the school. I rise to make him welcome amongst us! I learn that his name is Jim Ready—and it's a good name, for it shows that he is ready to take his part and play it well in the life of the old school. Let me tell you—and here the captain's eyes strayed to the table where the bullies were seated—"let me tell you that his friends are my friends, and that I look to the best fellows in the school to make him welcome and happy here: not only whilst I am here, but when I am gone! Now, gentlemen, in time-honoured custom, we drink the health of the hundredth boy of the Lincoln scholars, Jim Ready!" And he lifted his mug.

Jim sat overwhelmed as a thundering shout of his name, five hundred boys rose to their feet, lifting their blue-line mugs on which were engraved the arms of the school.

"Welcome, Jim Ready!"

The shout made the rafters ring and echo again and again. Even the bullies were bound to come to their feet, little as they liked it, and pretend to drink the health of this little Towny cad, as they called him.

There was no need for Jim to make a speech in reply. It was just as well, for his heart was so full that he felt more inclined to cry than to speak, out of sheer gratitude for the closing of this wonderful day.

Wobby watched him with a smile in his grave, quizzical eyes.

"How's that for a reception, little Towny cad?" he asked. "Don't it make you feel

as if you can keep your head and tail up for the rest of your little life? Now you can look Mr. Slurk square in the eye, and turn him the glassy alley if he puts on any of his dorg. You are as good as he is. Soon you will be better, for I'm going to teach you to box, so that you can do some of your own fighting. I'm going to teach you to stick to a horse, and I'm going to teach you to use a stockwhip!"

Jim smiled. Suddenly the handle of the door rattled. "Spare my days!" exclaimed Wobby. "What's this?"

An excited figure burst into the hall. It was wrapped in a gaudy plaid shawl, which covered a huge, silk-lined cape. Resting over its eyes was a wide-brimmed sombrero of felt, and it carried two queer-looking portmanteaux, to which were strapped a couple of fobs.

"It's Guy Fawkes!" muttered Wobby.

The figure was unwinding the shawls. It dropped the portmanteaux with a clatter, then threw off the sombrero, revealing a shock of black hair. The shawl fell back, showing a hook nose and a tremendous, square-cut black beard. The stranger looked round the hall till his eyes lighted on Dawson.

"Ah, Dawsons, my ole cabbage!" he exclaimed. "Ere we are again! We turn up like bad pennies! Volla! Embrace me!"

The stranger made a rush at Dawson, embraced him round the neck with both arms, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"Ah, it is good to be once more in ze ole school!" he exclaimed. "Bucklee, my dear fellow, 'ow do you carry yourself?"

Buckley was then seized and embraced by this queer stranger, whose black eyes were shining with excitement.

"Say, clobber," said Wobby to his neighbour, who was a two-year scholar, "who's this peb? Looks like Guy Fawkes!"

"That's what we call him," said Wobby's neighbour. "That's our French master, Professor Faux de Blanquiere. But some chaps call him Blanco, and others call him Whiskers. He's just come back from Paris. He's been giving lectures at the Sorbonne—that's the Paris University."

"He looks a bit of a lad!" said Wobby. "What's he got those swords for? Not going to kill anyone, is he?"

"He's a great fencer!" said Wobby's friend.

"Is his lid on all right?" asked Wobby, as the professor darted in and out amongst the boys, recognising old pupils, shaking them heartily by their hands, and kissing some on both cheeks.

"Do you mean, is he potty?" asked Wobby's informant. "No, he's not potty. He's an awfully brainy chap at chemistry and inventions. He's just excited now. He's always like that when he gets back from Paris, amongst the boys again."

"Collin!" yelled Monsieur de Blanquiere.

"Yes, sir!" replied Collins, the waiter, hurrying to him.

"Ah, Collin, my good fellow," roared monsieur, "I die for 'unger! Bring me ros' bif—red ros' bif. Bring me pickle. Bring me Woosister sauces. I famish! I die! Moy good Collin!"

"Yes, mossos!" replied Collins, who was apparently quite accustomed to the French master's eccentricities.

Monsieur seated himself at the high table, where the prefects gathered round him. He was evidently a great favourite with them.

He tucked a napkin into his neck, and picked up a knife and fork, and though he had come on purpose to sup in Hall, then he broke into a stream of voluble French.

"What's he arguing about?" asked Wobby, to whom the French language was as yet a sealed book.

"Why, he says he's invented a new flying-machine," said Corke, who understood French well. "It's a new bomber."

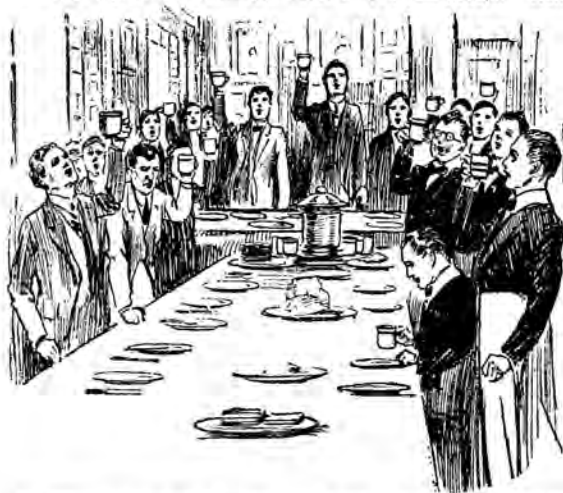
Collins had brought monsieur's supper, and monsieur was tucking into the roast beef as though he had not had a feed for months.

"I ad a good dinnaire on ze boat when we come across ze Channel," he explained to the prefects, "but ze sea, 'e was rough, an' my dinnaire 'e come upstairs. So I am hungree as ze huntaire! Collin!"

"Yes, mossos?" asked Collins.

"Bring me ze box wix my model fly-machine!" roared Monsieur de Blanquiere. "Bring 'im so careful, Collin, my ole boy!"

(See next week's splendid long instalment of this grand serial and read how the French master scares the lads with his great invention. You should get your chums to read this great serial.)



"Gentlemen," said Buckley, "I learn that we have with us to-night the hundredth boy, a newcomer, and all on his own in the school. I rise to make him welcome. In time-honoured custom, we drink the health of Jim Ready!" There was a shuffle as everybody rose to their feet.

The St. Jim's Teashop!

(Continued from page 13.)

he rose from his table. Like Mr. Steggles, he moved rather slowly and heavily. But he was satisfied, and he was in a happy mood.

"Splendid idea of you fellows," he said. "I won't stay any longer now, as I've got to get in to tea—"

"To tea!" murmured Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!"
"But I'll drop in to-morrow, if the teashop's open again," said Fatty genially. "And I'll tell you what—if you raise your prices, I'll pay two bob for my tea. I don't mind. Nothing mean about the New House, you know. I'll roll along to-morrow—if you're open."

It said much for the self-control of the St. Jim's shop-keepers that they did not seize their customer and bump him on the floor and eject him from the teashop with violence. They yearned to do so, but they nobly restrained that deep yearning.

"Always pleased to see a customer again!" said Tom Merry, with resolute politeness. "Good-evening, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Fatty Wynn rolled away; and as the School House juniors watched him go, they saw him halt several times to indulge in a deep chortle. Tom Merry, in silence, picked up a hammer, and went round to the teashop sign. In a few minutes that sign was crashing to the ground.

The teashop keepers heard it with relief. At least, there was no danger now of any more customers coming in. Two were enough; in fact, they had been exactly two too many!

Tom Merry re-entered the barn.

"I think it's about time we closed the shop!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Better do the accounts!" said Monty Lowther. "And perhaps we'd better borrow old Pepper's wheelbarrow again. To get the profits home."

"Weally, Lowthah—"

Tom Merry held up two shillings.

"Takings, two shillings!" he said. "Expenditure, five pounds for foodstuffs, of which we've got some loaves left, and some butter—which is rather lucky, as we're late for tea in Hall. Item—a pound to Pepper. Item—two shillings to Taggles for the paint. Total expenditure—six pounds two shillings; total takings, two shillings; debit, six pounds. It does not strike me that this is the way to get rich quick."

Arthur Augustus rubbed his noble nose thoughtfully.

"There is somethin' w'ong somewhere," he said. "I weckoned it all out vevy carefully; and you fellows know how good I am at figahs. The takin's ought to have been ten pounds, somehow. We appeah to have made a loss on the day's twadin'."

Six members of the St. Jim's Teashop Company were eyeing Arthur Augustus with gathering fury.

"This was Gussy's stunt!" said Blake. "This was how we were going to tide over the lean time till the allowances came."

"Somehow or other, we've got to hand Cardew five pounds!" said Manners.

"And old Pepper a pound!" said Lowther.

"We can give Taggles his two bob!" remarked Digby.

"The day's takings will square Taggles."

"And what are we going to give Gussy?" asked Herries.

"Gussy meant well," Tom Merry said.

"Yaas, wathah! I always mean well, deah boy!"

"And it's time he was cured," said Tom. "Next time he means well, he may stop in time, if we give him a jolly good bumping now!"

"Bai Jove! I—weally—yawwoop! Leggo!" roared Arthur Augustus, as the Teashop Company collared him.

Tom Merry & Co. drifted homeward in the pleasant summer sunset, sadder and wiser juniors. They were still stony; and their liabilities were heavy. But they were no longer thinking of raising the wind by going into business. They had had enough of that—in fact, too much. Arthur Augustus was later in than his comrades; he limped home in a dusty state, and also in a state of great indignation.

Figgins & Co. met the School House juniors as they came in—with smiling faces.

"Had a good day?" asked Figgins.

"Hem!"

"Trade good?"

"Oh, fairish!" gasped Tom Merry. And the teashop keepers hurried on before Figgins & Co. could ask any more questions.

"Shop open to-morrow?" bawled Fatty Wynn.

There was no answer to that inquiry. But on the morrow the St. Jim's Teashop was not open!

THE END.

(Look out for next week's ripping grand long story of the Chums of St. Jim's, entitled "THE STONY SEVEN!" By Martin Clifford. Make sure you order your copy EARLY.)

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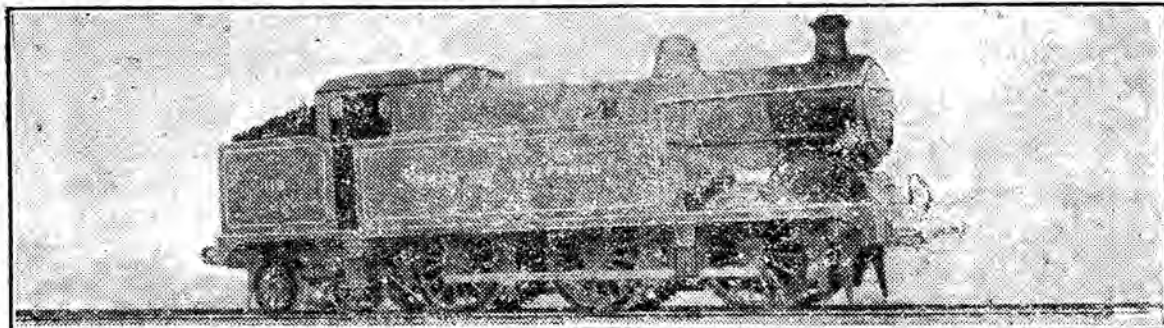
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The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited By TOM MERRY.

St. Jim's Parliament.

Opposition Protest—Lively Scenes.

A SPECIAL sitting of the St. Jim's Parliament was held recently in Pepper's Barn.

It was understood that several of the members had matters that they wished to bring forward.

The first member to catch the Speaker's eye was Ralph Reckness Cardew, but as he did it with a piece of orange-peel, it was decided that the hon. member be suspended, upon which Cardew sauntered out with a pleasant smile, apparently satisfied with the ruling of the Speaker.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy then rose to make a protest upon the matter of dress and deportment in the Lower School. He brought to the notice of the House the fact that some juniors had been guilty of the enormity of wearing toppers that were at least three months out of date, even on Sundays, and that some spectators at a House match had been seen with the school colours instead of their House colours. This he held was entirely wrong.

He did not confine this charge to juniors of his own house, as both houses had been guilty of it, but he thought that the School House were the more reprehensible, considering that they had the inestimable advantage of his personal example always before them.

There was some excuse for the New House, as it was not to be expected that a moth-eaten, out-of-date crew like that would come up to the standard of the School House.

At this moment the speaker was interrupted by members of the Opposition, several of whom made their way to the Government benches, and laid hands upon him. Although disagreeing with much of what Gussy had expressed, Blake & Co. stood by him in principle, and the Opposition contingent met with a rather warm reception.

Reinforcements were quickly forthcoming for them, and the floor of the House was soon the scene of a scuffle that rapidly developed into a House rag. It was discovered that most of the members had attended with a supply of ammunition in the shape of small bags of flour, ink-balls, and weapons such as water-pistols and pea-shooters, and these were brought into play with promptitude and accuracy.

Mr. Speaker, realising the futility of any attempt at restoring order, rose to his feet as a sign that the session was at an end.

He gained the perpendicular just in time to be favoured with the attention of a particularly lusty ink-ball, and forthwith east aside his official dignity and his coat, to join the conflict.

At the close of the "discussion," the discovery was made that Cardew had thoughtfully provided against any danger of the session being unduly interrupted by closing and barring the doors, from the outside, fastening them with a padlock.

Some time later one of the members gained an exit by means of one of the windows, and released the others.

It is understood that there were several other important matters that were to have been considered, but they have all been relegated to a future session.

Pongo.

By Wally D'Arcy.

THERE are dogs and dogs. Only some of them are just tykes. Herries, who shares a pigsty in the Fourth Form corridor along with my brother Gus, has got a piece of animated sausage-meat with a leg at each corner that he feeds and trots about under the impression that he's keeping a dog.

A dog! My giddy aunt! I wouldn't give a jam-roll for fifty of them. You never saw such a lump of ugliness in your life. (I'm talking about the dog, not Herries, but it's equally true about them both. Only Herries is a bit taller, and he generally wears a cap, so you can usually see which is which.)

He calls it Towser, and the only use that the mangy brute ever is for is to chew up Gussy's silly toppers. But what's the good of that? Gus only goes and buys some more.

Now, my dog Pongo is a real dog. You can bet your boots on that. He's worth having, take it from me. Perhaps he isn't very pretty to look at, but you can't have everything, and, anyway, he can do things. Towser is all meat, but Pongo's got the grey matter. You ought to see him snuffing out the rats when we go down to the Rhyll. I'd like to see any rat that Towser could catch. Old Ratty, perhaps, but rats—real rats—Take it from me, old sons, nix with a big N. He's got neither the brains nor the speed.

Pongo is a jolly sight sharper. He's never gone for Ratty, or chewed up any of Gussy's toppers, I'll admit; but if he ever got the chance he'd do it—and a jolly sight better than Towser ever has done, too!

Curly Gibson and I have some fun with him when we take him in Rylcombe Woods. Once Towser was there, and the big brute picked

him up by the back of his neck, and took him off to Herries. Wanted to show his master what a real dog looked like, I suppose. I gave Towser a couple of biffs with half a tree that was lying handy, just to encourage him to mind his own business; but it didn't hurt him a bit. Where there's no sense there's no feeling.

Herries was scared to death, for fear Pongo should turn round on his overgrown lout. He needn't have worried. Pongo isn't too particular what he eats, but he draws the line somewhere.

The best thing to do with Towser is to have him stuffed and put on wheels. I told Herries so before I hiked Pongo off, and then we went rattling.

We collared five in no time, and tied the secret sign in their tails to give to fellows who belong to our secret society, as some of the symbols of membership (and every member has to have one) are getting a trifle ancient, and a bit nifty. That's the worst of dead rats. You can't have 'em very long, or else they get overripe. That's where Pongo comes in. He gets the fresh supplies in for the society. As for the rats Towser catches—why, I'd eat them all myself!

Last week Pongo started out in a new line. We were walking through the woods not far from Rylcombe—there was Levison minor with us at the time—when I heard a bark, and then a lot of squawking, and blow me if Pongo didn't come up trailing a useful-looking chicken in his mouth. I don't know whether he'd killed it himself, or if he'd found it; but anyway I couldn't see any sense in making a song about it.

The thing was dead, and we weren't sure what to do with it. It seemed a pity to waste it, especially after Pongo had gone to the trouble of getting it, so, collecting a few twigs, we made a fire and roasted the thing, feathers and all.

We weren't quite certain whether it ought to be plucked or skinned, and it seemed a lot of lag to do either. And the feathers burnt off, anyway, when they got into the fire.

We ate little bits of it, but I began to think Pongo must have found it, after all, for it tasted jolly queer, and none of us thought much of it.

We buried what was left before we went back to St. Jim's, and Curly Gibson thought it would be better if Pongo stuck to his job, which is rats, and not grown-up new-laid eggs.

We didn't tell anybody about the affair, and we never heard any more of it ourselves; but I should like to know whether Pongo found it or killed it, and whether all chickens have that queer taste when they're roasted with their feathers on.

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EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums,—

I never did hold with keeping a good thing to myself, and I do not intend to begin now. That being so, I am determined to let you have a peep in advance at next week's GEM bill of fare. You will admit it is good—when you hear the news. To start with, the grand photo series is carried on in fit and proper style. You will appreciate, I know, the two portraits I am giving with next Wednesday's GEM. These likenesses are of Frank Roberts (Bolton Wanderers F.C.) and Brough Fletcher (Barnsley F.C.), two first-rate representatives of

football, and they will look well in that GEM album, which I am sure you have secured.

While I am about it, I will just mention that the "Magnet" next Monday will give a real action photograph of Harold Gough (Sheffield United F.C.), while the "Boys' Friend" is adding to its famous gallery of boxers a capital portrait of Bugler Lake, Bantam-weight Champion of the Imperial Services, a man who has won a proud position, and of whom plenty more will be heard.

Maybe it is not really necessary to put in here anything further concerning the mammoth success of the "Popular" coloured plates of railway engines, but I will say this—namely, that the series continues to win more favour—as the letter-bag of our Companion Paper can amply testify.

Just now I mentioned these albums which have been made specially for the sports portraits. These can still be had, price sixpence each, from the GEM

Album Office, 7-9, Pilgrim Street, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. 4, so if you have not already secured one, please hurry up and do so. Send a postal-order for sixpence, or stamps of 1½d. in value to the amount of sixpence.

"The Story Seven" is the title of next week's yarn of St. Jim's. It speaks for itself, just as a good story should. When the Seven are in this lamentable financial strait, they are very much so indeed. You will see the point. If you don't, Mr. Martin Clifford does.

The GEM has a second strong attraction in fiction with its gripping serial of a boy's long fight against fearful odds. Mr. Duncan Storm always arranges to make his readers want to know what's going to happen next. That kind of knowledge is what we are all after, but the best thing about the GEM serial is that you have only to get next week's number to find out. Suffice it that "All On His Own" is a winner!

YOUR EDITOR.

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