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C. M. BUCHAN (Sunderland F.C.).



AT GRIPS WITH THE HIGHCLIFFIANS!

(An Exciting and Thrilling Incident in the Grand, Long, Complete School Story Inside.)

CHARLES M. BUCHAN.

(The Famous Inside-Right of Sunderland and English International.)

It is a truism that a prophet hath no honour in his own country, and the remark could certainly be applied to football. Perhaps no more remarkable instance of this could be found than by referring to the career of Charlie Buchan, the inside-right of Sunderland. This wonderfully skilful player was born within a very short distance of the old Woolwich Arsenal ground at Plumstead, but the people who ran that team in those days preferred to go much further afield than Plumstead for their ready-made footballers. So, although Buchan showed much promise as a footballer in his youth, it was not for the Arsenal that he first signed on as a professional, but for a team which was then in the Southern League, and which played at Leyton.

It was in September of 1910 that Buchan first made his appearance in the Leyton side, and from that date to Easter of 1911 he was developing very rapidly. More than one London club—Tottenham Hotspur and Fulham amongst them—had a look at the young

lad who was getting goals for Leyton, and he once had an interview with the Fulham directors, but no business was done because the boy wanted too much. So while two London clubs were jibbing at a few pounds, the manager of the Sunderland club stepped in, paid a transfer fee of one thousand pounds to the now defunct Leyton club, and secured one of the greatest players the game of football has ever known.

As an exponent of the true art of scientific football, it is doubtful if Charles Buchan has ever had an equal; certainly he has never had a superior in the ranks of professional players.

From the time he went to Sunderland right down to the present he has been regarded as a ball manipulator of the very first order; being able to beat opponents with wonderful body swerves and amazing trickery, and thus proving one of the most difficult of fellows to stop while in possession of the ball. It is also claimed for him that he has scored more

goals with his head than any other footballer of the present day, for his skill is backed with fine intuition, and being tall he is able to get his head to high centres before the opposing full-backs are able to ward off the danger.

In view of these and other good things which could be said for the football ability of Buchan, it may be asked why he has received such a comparatively small number of International caps. The answer to this question is quite simple, and is in the nature of being the biggest compliment which could be paid to a player. Buchan has lived before his time, or to put the matter in another way, he is so clever that when he is placed in a team of strangers he is so unorthodox that they do not understand him, and therefore neither himself nor the team get the best out of his genius. That is the explanation, given by a member of the Selection Committee, of why the Sunderland inside-right has been so frequently passed over when International matches have been played. All the same, Buchan has played for England, both at inside-right and at centre-forward, while he has also played for Sunderland in the latter position in emergencies. Behind all his movements and his schemes on the football field there is evidence of the right sort of brain. At cricket he is also a fairly good performer, and has been known to score centuries in club cricket, while golf is another pastime of which he is very fond.



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

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

A BITTER RETORT.

Francois de Bassompierre was a handsome French soldier and statesman of the seventeenth century. He was greatly trusted by King Henry the Fourth, and one of his missions was to Spain. He told the King of France that on his State entry into Madrid he rode on the smallest mule in the world. "What an amusing sight—an ass seated on a mule!" said the King. "Very good, sire," said Bassompierre; "but please remember that I was your Majesty's representative."—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck has been awarded to E. V. Ralph, 35, Foulsham Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

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NOTHING.

"I say, old man, do you know what nothing is? I've been puzzling my brains over it for weeks past." "Oh, that's simple enough. Nothing is a brimless hat with no crown."—H. J. Buck, 2, Kimberley Road, Leytonstone, E. 11.

A DREADFUL ACCIDENT.

We learn that a dreadful accident happened last night. It was this way. Yesterday morning, about two o'clock in the afternoon, before breakfast, a hungry boy, about thirty years old, bought a custard for a penny, threw it through a stone brick wall, nine feet thick, jumped over it, and broke his left ankle above his right knee, afterwards falling into a dry mill-pond where he was drowned. About forty years after, on the same day, a high wind, the worst gale in history—the oldest inhabitant, who has been blind from birth, said he had never seen anything to equal it—knocked the old churn over, and killed a sow and two dead pigs at a farm where a deaf-and-dumb farmer was talking French to his aunt.—Will Rogers, 20, Nelson Terrace, Brithdir, Glam, South Wales.

AT THE ZOO.

At the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, a strange incident occurred in October, 1894. The snake house was

shut up that night, and in one cage there were several boas; two of these were feeding on a pigeon. When the keepers came in the morning, one of the boas, about 9ft. long, had disappeared. But at a glance at the other reptile, about 11 ft. long, it was seen what had happened. The larger boa (which died six months later) had swallowed his pigeon, and then made a meal off the second pigeon, and the serpent to which it belonged.—B. G. Stoner, 33, Windsor Road, Bexhill, Sussex.

TO MEASURE A RIVER.

Anybody can measure a river without mechanical means. Place yourself at the edge of the stream, stand perfectly still, face the opposite bank, and lower the brim of your hat until it just cuts the opposite bank. Then turn slowly round until the hat-brim cuts some point on the level ground behind you. Mark the spot where the hat-brim cuts the ground, then pace off the distance, and it will be found about the breadth of the river.—A. F. Greene, the Haven, Brands Hill, Colnbrook, Bucks.

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The REFUGEE at HIGHCLIFFE!

A Grand Long Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling of the further exploits of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the runaway from school.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

An Answer in the Negative.

"FEELING down, old beans?"

There was no reply to that sympathetic inquiry. Baggy Trimble's question seemed to have fallen upon deaf ears—though there were six pairs of ears in Study No. 6 just then.

Baggy's ample figure almost filled the doorway of the study. He blinked from one junior to another, without receiving anything like encouragement. Somehow, Study No. 6 did not seem to desire Trimble's fascinating company.

"No news of Gussy yet?" pursued Trimble.

Jack Blake gave a grunt.

"If you mean D'Arcy, no! Cut!"

"Of course I mean D'Arcy!" said Trimble agreeably; "I call him Gussy, as he was my old pal. You won't see him at St. Jim's again!"

Blake and Herries and Digby glared at Trimble! The chums of the Fourth missed their noble chum, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, from his accustomed place. They were exasperated with him for running away from school—their dearest wish was to punch his aristocratic head. But they missed him, and they were anxious about him!

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell were in the study to tea. They shared the feelings of Blake & Co.—and they glared at Trimble.

Six concentrated glares ought to have had some effect, even on Baggy Trimble!

But no effect was perceptible.

Baggy smiled and nodded to the chums of St. Jim's. Baggy was not thin-skinned! It would have been easier to hurt the feelings of a rhinoceros than the feelings of Trimble of the Fourth.

"Hard cheese, what?" he remarked, amicably; "I miss old Gussy a lot—but there you are! He's run away from school, and he's going to be sacked. After all, he was a silly ass, wasn't he?"

Blake breathed hard.

For a good many days he had been calling Arthur Augustus D'Arcy every imaginable kind of an ass; but that was a pal's privilege. Trimble was not to be permitted to do anything of the sort.

"Fancy his clearing off and going over to Greyfriars," continued Trimble; "cheek, you know! The Head won't let him come back now. Official, old beans!"

Blake made a movement to rise. He was worried about his runaway chum. He felt that he might find some relief in kicking Baggy Trimble along the corridor as far as the stairs.

"Hold on a minute, Blake!" said Tom Merry.

"I'm going—"

"If that fat bounder's heard something, let's hear it!" said the captain of the Shell. "I know the Head must be awfully waxy about Gussy clearing off. What do you know about it, Trimble?"

Blake paused.

"Do you know anything, you fat oyster?" he snapped. Trimble nodded cheerfully.

"Lots!" he answered. "You know Mr. Selby went over to Greyfriars to fetch D'Arcy home, and Gussy dodged him there somehow. Selby came back in an awful bait. I heard him say to Mr. Railton—"

"Eavesdropping again, you fat cad!" grunted Herries.

"Let him run on!" said Blake.

"Well, I heard Selby say to Railton that he had no doubt—no doubt whatever—that the Head would expel D'Arcy of the Fourth. So that's official, isn't it?"

"Is that all?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"Isn't that enough?" demanded Trimble. "You won't see Gussy again. Not here, at any rate. That's why I've come to see you fellows specially!"

"That—" said Manners.

"Not you Shell fellows!" said Trimble; "I'm talking to Blake. Gussy's gone—for good. Even if he comes back he'll be sacked. Now, this may turn out quite a good thing for you!"

"What!" ejaculated Digby.

"You're only three in this study now," explained Trimble. "You found Gussy a bit of a trial while he was here. I've often heard you say so!"

Blake scowled. Certainly, he had said so often enough—and equally certainly the noble Gussy had sometimes been a trial to his loyal chums. That did not alter the fact that his chums were anxious about the runaway, and would have given a term's pocket-money to see him safe back at St. Jim's!

"No end of a trial, I should think!" pursued the happy Baggy. "Silly ass, you know—and a bit of a swanker, what? If you don't mind my saying so, you're well shut of him. What?"

The chums of St. Jim's looked at Baggy. They looked at him as if fascinated. They had met in worried consultation over their runaway comrade; and in that worried hour Trimble had "batted" in with these tactful observations. They did not rise to slay him on the spot—they stared at him, and waited for him to run on before they slew him.

Apparently encouraged by their silence Baggy rattled on:

"Now, it's no good feeling down about it, you fellows. Taking one consideration with another, you're lucky to be clear of that silly owl D'Arcy! Jolly lucky thing for this study, I think, when he bunked. What! My idea is that it will turn out all for the best. You're only three in this study now—and I'm going to dig in with you—in Gussy's place, you know!"

"You!" gasped Blake.

"Little me!" said Trimble; "I'm not really satisfied in No. 2. Wildrake is too rough and ready for me—bouncer from the backwoods, you know—and Mellish is always hard up. Now, in this study we should get along fine; and you'd find me a good bit more agreeable than Gussy ever was. The holidays will be along soon, and my idea is for the whole study to come home with me to Trimble Hall for the vacation!"

"Oh!"

"You'll meet some rather decent company there," said Trimble. "My pater's asking the Prime Minister for a jaw about politics."

"Oh!" gasped Blake.

"We'll arrange it all later," said Trimble. "Meanwhile, I shall ask my father to send me fifty pounds—"

"F-f-fifty pounds!"

"Yes, to new-furnish the study. Bit dingy, you know," said Trimble. "Now, don't trouble to thank me—I always was a generous chap. I shall have to make a few conditions."

"Oh!" stuttered Blake, "you'll have to make a few conditions?"

"Yes, that's only reasonable: I want it to be understood that I have the arm-chair!"

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"Won't there be a new arm-chair among the new furniture?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! I mean till the new lot comes. And I sha'n't be able to stand Herries' corner," said Trimble, "that must be understood."

"Anything else?" asked Blake, in a gasping voice.

"Not at present; if I think of anything else I'll let you know!" Trimble rolled into the study. "Now, as I'm going to belong to this show I'll join you at tea. Would one of you fellows mind cutting down to the tuck-shop and changing a fiver for me?"

Trimble felt in his pockets.

Tom Merry & Co. were still staring at Trimble blankly. Trimble felt in one pocket after another.

"Now, where's that dashed fiver?" he murmured.

"Oh, where, and oh, where can it be?" sang Monty Lowther.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Trimble suddenly. "I remember now; I lent it to Levison. Never mind, I'll pay my whack to-morrow. Pass the jam this way, will you, Blake?"

Blake rose to his feet.

"Don't get up, old chap—just reach it over," said Trimble. "I'm glad we've settled this so amicably, you fellows. I think I shall like this study. You'll be jolly glad, really, that Gussy is being kicked out of St. Jim's, and—Yaroooh! Wharrer you up to, you dummy?"

Blake grasped Baggy Trimble by the collar.

Baggy had sat down, and Blake's grasp pulled him over the back of the chair. The chair went spinning, and Baggy came down on the study carpet with a bump.

The roar that came from Trimble echoed from end to end of the Fourth Form passage.

"Now give him the jam!" said Blake, in concentrated tones.

"Yaroooh!"

"Jump on him!" roared Herries.

"Scalp him!" yelled Digby.

"Oh, my hat! Leggo! I—I don't want the jam! Grooooooch!"

"You're going to get it, all the same!" said Blake grimly.

"Mooooo-o-o-ooch!"

Trimble got the jam. He had wanted to take it internally; but it was externally that he took it. He took it with his face, his ears, his neck, and his hair. Blake rubbed it in.

Herries added some ashes from the fender; Dig contributed the contents of an ink-bottle. The Terrible Three of the Shell, feeling that they ought not to be idle when others were so busy, joined in, and gave Trimble the milk and the golden syrup and some gum. By that time Trimble was not nice to touch.

"Now," said Jack Blake, "take it in turns to kick the fat beast, and see which of us can land him in the passage with one kick!"

"Good!"

"Yoop! Help!" roared Trimble.

He leaped to his feet as if he had been electrified. He did not wait for it to be ascertained which of the party could land him in the passage with one kick. He landed there unaided with a desperate leap.

It was sheer ill-luck that Grundy of the Shell was coming along the passage at the same moment. Trimble crashed into George Alfred Grundy, and sent him staggering.

"Where are you running to?" roared Grundy, in great indignation; and he laid his powerful grasp on Baggy Trimble.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why—what—Groogh! You horrid, sticky little beast!" hooted Grundy. "Why, you've smothered me with jam and—treacle! Ow—ooch! I—I—I'll—"

"Yaroooh! Oh! Ow! Ooop! Whoop!"

Tom Merry closed the door of Study No. 6, grinning. His last view of Baggy Trimble revealed that youth putting up a desperate spurt along the corridor, with Grundy of the Shell in ferocious pursuit.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I rather think," remarked Blake, "that Baggy Trimble won't share this study. I hardly think he will want to now!"

And Tom Merry & Co. resumed their tea, and their discussion of the St. Jim's runaway, feeling much more cheerful than before Baggy's visit to No. 6. Baggy had succeeded, at least, in supplying some much-needed comic relief to the situation.

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus at Highcliffe!

RUPERT DE COURCY—known all over Highcliffe School as the "Caterpillar"—yawned.

He was tired.

The Caterpillar was watching a practice game on Little Side at Highcliffe, and, apparently, it was the exertion he was witnessing that had a tiring effect on him.

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He was stretched in a canvas chair, with one elegant leg crossed over the other, and his hands clasped behind his head, a picture of lazy comfort and ease.

The sun blazed down on the cricket ground, and it was very warm. But Frank Courtenay, the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth, seemed full of energy, and he was keeping his men up to the mark; and among them was a player who had never been seen on the Highcliffe ground before—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked warm and pink, but very cheery. He seemed to be enjoying the cricket. Which was a puzzle to the slacker of Highcliffe.

How any fellow could enjoy slogging about in the blazing sun, when he might be reclining at ease in a comfortable chair in the shade of an awning, was a problem the Caterpillar did not attempt to solve.

Courtenay had striven in vain to draw the Caterpillar into the game. The utmost De Courcy would do was to watch—and even that he found fatiguing.

The Caterpillar had yawned six or seven times, and his thoughts had turned lovingly to lemon-and-soda. But as he was too lazy to think of getting it, it was not much use to pine for it. And, instead of yawning, he gave a deep groan when he saw Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe coming along.

Mr. Mobbs wasn't much interested in cricket, but he sometimes looked on at a Fourth Form game when he had nothing better to do.

The Caterpillar hoped that he would not come up to the pavilion. He did not want to quit his comfortable attitude in the canvas chair. Mr. Mobbs, who was always kind and honeyed to the well-connected members of his Form, was not treated with a very great respect by some of those well-connected youths. But there was a fitness of things, and the Caterpillar felt that outward politeness must be observed. Mr. Mobbs, to his dismay, came directly towards him. The Caterpillar closed his eyes. If he was dozing he was not bound to see Mr. Mobbs.

"Well, De Courcy!" said a genial voice at his elbow.

The Caterpillar suppressed a groan, and opened his eyes. He ought to have risen to his feet. But Mr. Mobbs could make allowances for the son of an earl and the brother of a baronet.

"Don't move, my boy!" he said graciously.

"Thank you, sir!" said De Courcy. "I'm rather tired, as a matter of fact. Had a—rather sloggin' afternoon!"

"You must not over-exert yourself at cricket, De Courcy."

"N-n-no, sir! I won't!" said the Caterpillar.

"I see that your friend and visitor, D'Arcy, is playing with the Form," said Mr. Mobbs.

"Yes. Goin' strong, sir."

"An old friend of yours, De Courcy?" asked Mr. Mobbs, his glance following the graceful figure of Arthur Augustus in the field.

"I—I've known him some time, sir," said the Caterpillar dubiously. "It was very kind of you, sir, to get the Head's permission for him to visit me here."

"Not at all," said Mr. Mobbs graciously—"not at all, De Courcy. I like the boy very much—a very good friend for anyone. But is it not a little odd that he should have a holiday from school at this time—before the vacation?"

The Caterpillar did not reply immediately. He had wondered whether Mr. Mobbs would get suspicious.

He did not dream, of course, of telling Mr. Mobbs that Arthur Augustus had run away from his school. Mr. Mobbs had concluded that D'Arcy had been granted a holiday—it was the only conclusion he could come to, in the circumstances, but it naturally puzzled him a little.

"He was at Greyfriars, you know, sir, when we went over to play cricket," said the Caterpillar, at last; "I asked him over here, hopin' that you would be so kind, sir, as to let him stay for a bit."

"Quite so—quite so, De Courcy. I am very pleased," said Mr. Mobbs. "Lord Eastwood is a gentleman whom I respect very highly—very highly indeed—and I am delighted to render ever so small a service to his son."

"You would be!" murmured the Caterpillar.

"Did you speak, De Courcy?"

"It—it's very kind of you, sir!"

"But it is a little odd that D'Arcy should be away from school at this time—"

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Mobbs?" asked the Caterpillar, dragging himself out of his chair by an exertion of will-power.

"My dear boy, don't trouble! Thank you very much!" said Mr. Mobbs, sitting down. "As I was saying, it is a little odd—"

"I'm sure, sir, you'd like a lemon-squash on this hot afternoon!" said the Caterpillar. "Let me get you one, sir."

And, without waiting for an answer, the Caterpillar trotted away, feeling that he was putting up almost superhuman exertions for the preservation of Arthur Augustus' peculiar secret.



"Yaroo!" yelled Baggy Trimble. "Wharrer you up to, you dummy?" Blake grasped Trimble by the collar and pulled him over the back of the chair. The chair went spinning, and Baggy came down on the study carpet with a bump. "Yaroo!" roared Trimble as the contents of a tea-cup went streaming over his fat face. (See page 4.)

The Caterpillar did not return with the lemon-squash. He bribed a fag of the Second Form to convey it to Mr. Mobbs. He then strolled in a different direction, and threw himself on the grass under the shade of a beech, near the cricket ground.

There he hoped to find rest and peace. But again he was disappointed. Three elegant youths strolled up—Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson of the Fourth Form. They greeted the Caterpillar cheerily.

"Not playin' cricket?" grinned Ponsonby.

"Too much fag."

"I agree," said Ponsonby, throwing himself into the grass. "So Courtenay's let you off for once?"

"Yes. Cricket's a fag. So is talkin'."

"That's a hint to me, I suppose!"

"How jolly keen you are, old bird!" said the Caterpillar urbanely.

"Jolly queer that St. Jim's pal of yours bein' here!" said Ponsonby, unheeding. "Why isn't he at school?"

"Answerin' questions is a fag, too."

"It's odd," remarked Gadsby. "He's on a visit, it seems."

"Yes."

"Without any baggage."

"Hasn't he any baggage?" yawned the Caterpillar.

"You know he hasn't."

"Well, if I know it, what's the good of tellin' me?" asked De Courcy. "You're wastin' energy. On a hot day like this, too!"

"You picked him up at Greyfriars, didn't you?" asked Monson.

The Caterpillar nodded.

"What was he doin' there?"

"Playin' cricket."

"On a visit there—what?" asked Ponsonby.

"Looked like it."

"He came over here in flannels along with the cricketers when they got back," said Gadsby. "I noticed that."

"And De Courcy has lent him some of his clobber," said Monson. "He seems to have come on a giddy visit without a shirt to his back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Caterpillar shifted uncomfortably. Mr. Mobbs was puzzled, and Ponsonby & Co. evidently were suspicious. They were "drawing" the Caterpillar for information. They were not likely to obtain any; but that circumstance was calculated to make them more suspicious.

"Anythin' happened to him at his school?" asked Ponsonby.

"What could happen?" yawned the Caterpillar.

"Well, he might have been sacked," said Ponsonby agreeably. "That would account for his wanderin' about in term."

"Has he been sacked?" grinned Gadsby.

"Better ask him. Guard your nose while you're askin'. I believe D'Arcy is a tremendous fightin' man."

"He doesn't look it!" sneered Ponsonby.

"Appearances are deceptive," said the Caterpillar sagely.

"Frinstance, look at you, Pon. You look quite a nice boy!"

"You silly ass—"

"An' look at Gaddy. Does Gaddy look the awful rotter that we, his pals, know him to be? He doesn't. Do you, Gaddy?"

"Look here—" snarled Gadsby.

"And look at Monson," continued the Caterpillar.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Monson. "I jolly well think there's somethin' fishy about this. Looks to me as if D'Arcy has taken French leave from his school, an' you know it, Caterpillar."

The three black sheep of Highcliffe eyed De Courcy sharply. But if they hoped to read anything in his face they were disappointed. The Caterpillar's calm face wore its usual placid, sleepy smile.

"Just like the Caterpillar to bring him in if that was the case," said Gadsby. "Pullin' Mobbs's leg and pullin' the Head's leg. You'd get into a fearful scrape, Caterpillar!"

"Go on, dear boy," murmured the Caterpillar. "Your dulcet voice is lullin' me to sleep. Keep on talkin'."

"Look here, you silly chump—" hooted Gadsby.

"Don't bark! Keep on talkin' as long as you like, but don't bark," urged the Caterpillar. "When you bark like that, Gaddy, you chuck off the results of the expensive education you're gettin' at Highcliffe, an' give away the fact that your pater is a bookmaker."

"You—you—you insultin' beast!" gasped Gadsby. "My pater isn't a bookmaker!"

"Isn't he?" asked the Caterpillar, in mild surprise. "Your dulcet voice sounded just then like a giddy bookie bawlin' the odds at Newmarket."

"I've a jolly good mind to punch your cheeky head!" roared Gadsby.

"Oh, don't!" urged the Caterpillar. "I should have to get up and mop up the ground with von, and it would be

so fatigued in this hot weather. Why not roll away and converse with some chap whose ears ain't so sensitive?"

"Do you want us to keep this dark, Caterpillar?" asked Ponsonby.

"About Gaddy's father bein' a bookmaker?" asked the Caterpillar innocently.

"You—you—" spluttered Gadsby.

"About D'Arcy bunkin' from school without leave. You know what I mean."

"But did he?" asked De Courcy.

"Don't you know he did?"

"My dear man, the things I don't know would fill volumes." The Caterpillar sat up in the grass as a sturdy figure in flannels came over towards him. "Hallo, Franky! Finishec?"

"Yes," said Courtenay, with a smile. "Coming in to tea?"

He paid no heed to Ponsonby & Co. He was not on speaking terms, when he could help it, with the black sheep of Highcliffe.

"Yes, gladly. I wish I'd played cricket now," said the Caterpillar plaintively. "Pon has been borin' me worse than cricket. Good-bye, dear boys! And rely on me, Gaddy. I won't say a word about your pater."

And the Caterpillar sauntered away with Courtenay to join Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, leaving Gadsby crimson with rage, and Ponsonby and Monson grinning.

CHAPTER 3.

The Refugee.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY looked very cheery as he sat down to tea in Study No. 3 with De Courcy and Courtenay of the Fourth.

Both the chums of Highcliffe were a little puzzled by the cheery spirits of their guest.

The fact that he had run away from school did not seem to weigh upon the Honourable Arthur Augustus' mind in the least. Possibly he did not realise the seriousness of the matter.

According to his own view, he had been treated with injustice at St. Jim's, and had retired with dignity from the scene.

That view might satisfy Arthur Augustus himself, and doubtless did; but his friends knew that it was not likely to satisfy anybody else.

And how the peculiar state of affairs was to end was a mystery to them. D'Arcy was welcome at Highcliffe, as welcome as the flowers in May. He generally was, wherever he went. But obviously he could not remain very long in his present refuge.

Mr. Mobbs' loyal devotion to anything that was connected with the peerage had made him grant the Caterpillar's request. Mr. Mobbs felt quite "bucked" at doing anything for the son of a lord. But Mr. Mobbs was surprised, and

Ponsonby & Co. were more than surprised. The facts were bound to come to light sooner or later. Even if they did not, Arthur Augustus could not very well stay many days as the guest of a fellow in the Fourth Form. The circumstances were too unusual.

It was from concern for D'Arcy, mingled with a spirit of mischief, that Rupert de Courcy had brought him to Highcliffe, just in time to escape the search of Mr. Selby at Greyfriars. But what he was going to do with his curious visitor was rather a problem to the Caterpillar.

"We've had a wippin' game, old scout," Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked. "You weally ought to have played, you know."

"My mistake," said the Caterpillar.

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove, you know, we ought to get up a fixture between St. Jim's and Highcliffe when I go back," said Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, you're going back?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Yaas, when things come wight. At pwsent I am bound to wemain wethahed frowm the school. It is a question of a chap's personal dig, you know," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "But it will all come wight in the long run. I feel suah of that. It was awf'ly good of you fellahs to take me in heah. I should not mind stayin' at Highcliffe for good if Blake and Hewwies and Dig could come, and pewwaps Tom Mewwy and old Wildwake and Levison of the Fourth, and pewwaps Cadew and some othah chaps. But there is one thing that wathah wowwies me."

"Your headmaster—" said Courtenay.

"Not at all. I am not wowwyyin' about Dr. Holmes. I am wonderin' what may be happenin' to the chaps while I am away," said Arthur Augustus, with a serious shake of the head. "I am awf'ly afraid that Blake and Hewwies and Dig may be gettin' into all sorts of swapes, you know."

"Oh, I—I see!"

"Without me to look aftah them, they may land in all sorts of twoubles," said Arthur Augustus, "and I am awf'ly, too, that some of the cwicket matches may go to pot. But it weally cannot be helped—you see, I cannot weturn to St. Jim's until mattahs are set wight."

Courtenay and the Caterpillar exchanged a glance. The latter smiled, but Frank Courtenay was grave. He could not help liking Gussy, and he was glad of his pleasant company at Highcliffe. But he wished—from the bottom of his heart that the swell of St. Jim's would do the sensible thing—that is, the sensible thing from Courtenay's point of view.

"But I have an ideah," continued Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to get to Tom Mewwy on the telephone, and see how mattahs are goin' on."

"And whether they're behavin' themselves?" grinned the Caterpillar.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But if you ring up St. Jim's, and a master takes the call, he may ask at the exchange where the call comes from!" suggested the Caterpillar.

Arthur Augustus smiled the smile of superior knowledge.

"I shall wing up the village gwocah," he answered.

"Oh!" ejaculated the Caterpillar.

"The gwocah's boy is a friend of mine—"

"A—a—a friend of yours?" murmured the Caterpillar.

"Yaas—chap named Gwimes," said D'Arcy. "We are quite pally, you know; he is a vewy decent sort. Well, I shall wing up the gwocah, and ask him to send a message to Tom Mewwy, askin' him to come down to the gwocah's shop to take a call. I wegard that as wathah deep stwategy."

"Deep as a giddy coal mine," said the Caterpillar admiringly.

"I shall wing up while you fellahs are at lessons to-morrow mornin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Then nobody will be likely to hear me talkin' into the 'phone, you know."

"But—" said Courtenay.

"Of course, I do not distwust anybody at Highcliffe," Arthur Augustus hastened to explain. "But a still tongue shows a wise head, you know. Chap can't be too careful in keepin' secrets."

"But if you ring up while we are at lessons, won't the St. Jim's fellows be at lessons, too?" asked Courtenay.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

The Caterpillar bestowed a wink upon the ceiling. More than once the Caterpillar had been entertained by the remarkable brain powers of his friend from St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus rubbed his noble nose thoughtfully.

"Of course, I shall have to get at the chaps while they are out of classes," he remarked. "Lucky you thought of that, Courtenay, deah boy. I will wing up the gwocah in the mornin', and send a message to Tom Mewwy that I am wingin' up latah, so that he can come aftah mornin' lessons and be weady at the appointed time. Pewwaps I had bettah walk into Courtfield for a phone."

"Use Mobby's!" said the Caterpillar.

"Bai Jove! Will Mr. Mobbs be kind enough to let me use his telephone?"

"Mobby's kindness is simply unlimited," answered the

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A fat youth, with one leg tied up, was hopping along on one foot, streaming with perspiration, and crimson with wrath and exertion. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "I'd forgotten Trimble!" "Yah! Rotter!" howled Trimble. "Lemme loose! Beasts! Can't you let a fellow loose?" Trimble hopped desperately to keep his footing. (See page 9)

Caterpillar solemnly. "If you'd like to make him a happy man, in return—"

"Of course I would. But I do not quite see—"

"Then tell him you'll mention his existence some day to Lord Eastwood."

"Bai Jove! What good would that do Mr. Mobbs?"

"None. All the same, it would buck him no end. Wouldn't it, Franky?"

"Oh, rot!" said Courtenay.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass in a rather puzzled way on the Caterpillar. He liked that elegant youth without quite understanding him. He was about to speak again, when the Caterpillar rose from his chair and stepped to the door.

"Come in, Monson!" said the Caterpillar, with a mocking grin. Monson, in the passage, stood red and confused.

"If you think I stopped to listen, Caterpillar—" he began angrily.

"Dear man, I don't think—I know!" said De Courcy urbanely.

"You cheeky rotter—"

"Hand me that golf club, will you, Franky?"

Monson of the Fourth hurriedly retired; he did not want the golf club. De Courcy closed the door, and returned to the chair, and looked meditative.

"I hope that fellow hasn't heard!" said Courtenay anxiously.

"All sewene, deah boy—I'm suah he would not listen," said Arthur Augustus placidly.

"I think he'd been there only a minute or two!" said the Caterpillar. "He could only have heard D'Arcy speakin' of the telephone—an' that doesn't matter. Pass the toast, Franky."

But Monson of the Fourth was grinning as he hurried on to Study No. 5, which he shared with Ponsonby and Gadsby.

He found those two sportive youths smoking cigarettes after tea, in the delightful way they had.

"Anythin' up?" asked Ponsonby, noticing his chum's expression.

"D'Arcy's telephonin' to St. Jim's on Mobly's 'phone after mornin' lessons to-morrow," answered Monson.

"Gad! That doesn't look as if he'd run away, as we suspected."

"It looks as if we can know for certain, if we're on hand when he 'phones," chuckled Monson.

And Cecil Ponsonby nodded, and chuckled, too.

CHAPTER 4.

Trimble Wants to Know.

"TOM, old fellow!"

"Scat!" grunted Tom Merry.

Tom did not like "old fellow" from Baggy Trimble. Neither did he desire Baggy's company at that moment. In fact, Tom Merry was quite anxious just then to elude the inquisitive eyes of the Paul Pry of St. Jim's.

But Trimble of the Fourth was not easy to elude. Tom, who was going down to the school gates, quickened his pace. Baggy broke into a trot to keep pace.

"I say, old chap, what's going on?" urged Baggy.

"I am!"

"He, he, he!" Trimble gave a fat chuckle. "He, he! But what's it all about, old chap? You can tell an old pal."

"Rats!"

Tom Merry put on a little more speed. He looked as if he were engaged in a foot race now. But Baggy also put on speed, his fat legs going at a great rate.

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"You can tell a chum!" urged Baggy, who was simply bursting with curiosity. "If it's a feed—"

"Fathead!"

"Well, if it isn't that, what is it?" demanded Baggy.

Tom Merry stopped. He was near the gates now, and he wanted to shake off Baggy before he went out. He gave the fat Fourth-Former a grim look.

"What the thump makes you think there is something on?" he demanded.

Baggy winked.

"I saw Grimes speak to you before dinner," he said. "Tain't usual for the grocer's kid to come nosing round asking to speak to a St. Jim's chap. And then—"

"Oh! You noticed that?" growled Tom.

"Yes; and I noticed you speak to Manners and Lowther on the quiet. I didn't catch what you said—"

"You tried to?" hooted Tom.

"Not at all. I wouldn't, you know," said Baggy. "And then I noticed Manners mooched off and spoke to Blake of the Fourth—whispered, the beast, as if he thought a fellow would listen!"

Tom Merry's expression was growing grimmer.

"You seem to notice a good many things, Trimble," he remarked. "Did you notice anything else?"

Trimble grinned complacently.

"Precious little goes on that I don't notice," he said, with fat self-satisfaction. "I noticed that Blake went round to Herries and Dig, and spoke to each of them on the quiet."

"Anything else?"

"Well, I knew there was something on, from that," said Trimble. "You're all keeping it jolly dark. After dinner I noticed—"

"You take lots of notice of other people's affairs," said Tom. "What did you notice after dinner?"

"Blake and Herries and Digby went out of gates one at a time," said Baggy, with a grin. "After that, Manners went out, and then Lowther. Now you're going out."

"And that's all?" asked Tom.

"That's all," said Baggy. "It shows that you're jolly well up to something out of gates. If it's a picnic—"

"It isn't!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Something you needn't bother your fat head about, you horrid little prying worm!" said Tom.

"Of course I'm not inquisitive," said Trimble loftily. "If you don't want to confide in an old pal—"

Trimble stopped at that point. Tom Merry laid a sudden grasp on him, and sat him down in the quad with a bump.

Having thus relieved himself of Baggy's company, the captain of the Shell hurried out of gates.

Baggy Trimble gasped for breath as he picked himself up. "Ow! Rotter! Ow!"

Baggy Trimble had been rebuffed. Tom Merry's action had indicated, clear enough even for Trimble, that the Shell fellow did not mean to confide even in his old pal Baggy. But that rebuff, forcible as it was, was not enough for Trimble.

Trimble started for the gates, in pursuit.

He was simply burning with curiosity. That Grimes, the grocer's boy at Rylcombe, had brought Tom Merry a mysterious message, and that the word had been passed round mysteriously among half a dozen juniors, Baggy knew. That was only enough to make him want to know more.

Trimble meant to know more, by hook or by crook.

He rolled out of the gateway, and blinked round for Tom Merry. That youth's sturdy figure could be seen in the distance, heading for the village. Baggy rolled in pursuit.

Somewhere out of gates were Manners and Lowther of the Shell, and Blake & Co. of the Fourth. Tom Merry, obviously, was going to join them. For some reason, the chums were keeping their meeting out of gates very dark and mysterious. Baggy wanted to know. He wanted to know so badly that he was prepared to risk another bumping in pursuit of knowledge.

In the lane, Tom Merry glanced back, and he frowned as he sighted the fat form of Trimble rolling on his track.

He stopped for Trimble to come up.

But Trimble did not come up. He did not intend to get within reach of the Shell fellow. He halted at a safe distance.

"What do you want, you fat image?" shouted Tom.

"Nothing, old chap."

"Then clear off!"

"I suppose I can walk down to Rylcombe if I like?" answered Trimble, with dignity. "Have you bought this lane, Tom Merry?"

"Well, pass on!" growled Tom.

"I'm in no hurry."

Tom Merry made a stride towards the fat junior. Baggy promptly backed away, and Tom halted again. He shook a warning fist at Baggy, and walked on. Baggy, grinning cheerfully, followed.

Tom did not look back again.

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At the stile in the lane he entered the wood, and followed the footpath under the trees. Trimble clambered over the stile, grunting, and followed the footpath also. Apparently Tom Merry was meeting the other fellows in the wood. Trimble felt that he was close on the mystery now, whatever it was. Tom turned out of the footpath among the trees, and Baggy, reaching the spot where he had turned off, followed on his track, and suddenly from the thickets a pair of hands seized him, and he pitched forward into the grass.

Bump!

"Ooooooop!" roared Trimble.

And then Baggy gave an agonised gasp, like the air escaping from a badly punctured tyre, as somebody sat on his fat shoulders—not lightly.

CHAPTER 5.

A Talk on the Telephone.

"GERRUP! Yooop! Oooop! Whooop!" spluttered Trimble. "Oh! Ow! Wow! Gerrup! I'm suf-suf-suffocating!"

"Go ahead!" It was Tom Merry's cheery voice. "Suffocate as much as you like! It's a free country."

"Groogh!"

Baggy contrived to raise his head a little and peer round. There was no sign of Blake & Co. Nobody seemed to be in the wood. But Tom Merry was sitting on his fat shoulders, pinning him down.

"Ow! Rotter!" gasped Trimble. "Gerroff! You—you beast! You've been pulling my leg! They—they ain't here!"

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Has that just dawned on you?" he asked pleasantly.

Baggy Trimble squirmed. He realised that the Shell fellow had deliberately led him into the thick green wood to ambush him there. Baggy had walked right into the trap like a fat rabbit.

Tom Merry had taken a whipcord from his pocket. He proceeded to tie one end round Baggy's fat wrists.

Trimble wriggled and squirmed, but his wrists were pulled together behind him and tied. Then the other end of the cord was tied to a fat ankle, with the fat leg bent at the knee. And then Tom Merry, laughing, jerked the fat junior to his feet—or, rather, to his foot. Trimble could stand on only one foot, the other being lifted several inches from the ground by the cord.

He leaned on a tree and spluttered.

"You rotter! Wharrer you up to? Call this a jape?"

"Just that!" said Tom cheerily. "You can follow on my trail if you like, old fat bean, but you'll have to hop it."

"Look here, you rotter!" roared Trimble.

"Good-bye!"

Tom Merry walked back to the footpath. Trimble hopped after him on one foot, roaring:

"Lemme loose, you rotter!"

Tom walked on rapidly. He was late for his appointment already, and he had no time to lose.

"Tom Merry, you beast—"

No answer from Tom, who was vaulting lightly over the stile into the lane.

"Tom, old chap! I say, dear boy! I say, old fellow! Yah! Beast! Rotter! Yah!" roared Trimble.

And then his dulcet tones faded away behind, as Tom Merry strode on swiftly into Rylcombe. By the time Baggy Trimble had contrived to roll over the stile the junior was nearly out of sight. Never had an eager seeker after knowledge been so woefully disappointed.

But Baggy was not beaten even yet. It was clear now that Tom Merry & Co. were foregathering in the village, for what reason was deeply mysterious. Baggy simply yearned to know. Grunting at every hop, the fat junior hopped on towards Rylcombe.

But his pace was slow, in the circumstances, and Tom Merry was soon out of sight.

The captain of the Shell gave no further thought to Baggy Trimble as he hurried on. He reached Rylcombe, and went down the High Street as far as Mr. Sands' grocery stores. In the doorway of that establishment Manners and Lowther of the Shell were loafing, waiting for their chum.

"You're late!" called out Manners.

"Slow-coach!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"I had to get rid of a fat snail that stuck on to me," explained Tom Merry. "It's barely half-past one now, so it's all right."

The Terrible Three entered the shop. Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth Form were there—sampling Mr. Sands' lemon-squash. In the room behind the shop there was the buzz of a telephone-bell going on. Grimes, who was behind the counter, nodded and grinned to Tom Merry.

"That'll be your call, Master Merry!" he said.

"Right-ho, Grimey!"

Tom Merry & Co. passed into the parlour. They had that

little room to themselves. Tom Merry picked the receiver off the telephone. He listened and answered and turned to his chums.

"Trunk call from Courtfield, in Kent," he said. "It's Gussy right enough."

"Good!" said Blake. "We shall have to keep it awfully dark, if Gussy tells us where he is. The Head would like to know."

"And Trimble would!" grinned Tom Merry. "He saw Grimey speak to me this morning, and followed me out on a voyage of discovery."

"My hat! If that fat boulder rolls in—"

"He won't! I've wasted a whipcord on him, and left him hopping."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's found out there's something on, but he doesn't know that the giddy runaway has telephoned," chuckled Tom Merry. "If he did, it would soon be all over St. Jim's. Jolly good of Grimey to take his call and come and tell me. He said that Gussy was to ring up again at half-past one, so this is bound to be our prize fathead. Hallo, there he is!"

A voice came through on the wires:

"Hallo! Is that Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Are you coming back to St. Jim's?" demanded Tom.

"I am not comin' back to St. Jim's!" answered the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. "I weseuse to do anythin' of the sort! I weseuse frow school because I weseuse to take a lickin' for thwashin' Knox of the Sixth, and I decline to weturn unless the Head takes a more weasonable view of the mattah!"

"Fathead!"

"Wats! I wanted to speak to you, you know," said Arthur Augustus. "I thought it would be wathah wisky, in the cires, to wing up St. Jim's. Then it flashed into my bwain to use the gwocah's telephone, you know. Mr. Sands vewy kindly took my call, and said he would send Gwimes with the message."

"He doesn't know you've run away from school, or he wouldn't have," said Tom.

"I have not run away frow school, Tom Mewwy! I should wegard such a pwoceedin' as undignified. I have simply wethahed—"

"Ass!"

"Pway twy to westwain your wathah discourteous mannahs, deah boy. We-membah there is pwobably a young lady at the exchange who can heah you! Moreovah, I have only three minutes, and I do not want to pay for a second call, as I am wathah short of money, so it is necessary to be wathah bwief. What are you laughin' at?"

"Your style of brevity! Go on!"

"Wubbish! Has my patah been to the school yet?"

"Not yet."

"I have w'ritten to him, explainin' why I am unable at pwesent to weturn to St. Jim's. So that it all wight. I should be vewy sowwy for him to be anxious, you know. How is my young bwothah Wally goin' on? I hope he is not gettin' into mischief while I am away."

"Not more than usual!"

"I hope you fellahs are goin' on all wight?"

"Why shouldn't we be?"

"Well, you know what you youngstahs are," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway be careful not to play the giddy ox, you know, while I am not there to look aftah you!"

"You cheeky ass!" roared Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's you who are playing the giddy ox!" hooted Tom.

"Running away from school and worrying your old pals, you champion duffer!"

"I decline to admit that I have run away frow school. Has anythin' happened to Study No. 6?"

"What should happen, you burbler?"

"I have been wathah vewy easy, you know, as I am not there to advise those weckless kids—"

"Fathead!"

"I wegard that simply as a wude wemark, Tom Mewwy!"

"Where are you now?" demanded Tom. "Where did you go after Selby scooted you out of Greyfriars?"

"It would be bettah not to acquaint you with my pwesent quartahs, deah boy. You see, you might be questioned, and I do not want the Head to know that I am at Highcliffe."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom.

"Bai Jove! What are you cacklin' at?"

"So you're at Highcliffe?"

"I pwefere not to tell you, in the cires, deah boy. I am suah that on reflection you will wealise that welicence is wight."

"Oh, you burbling duffer!" said Tom Merry. "So you've rung us up to ask whether St. Jim's can possibly worry along somehow while you are away? Not to tell us you're coming back. I've a jolly good mind to come over to Highcliffe and fetch you!"

"Wats!"

"Here, give me a chance on the 'phone!" said Blake. And he took the receiver from Tom Merry. "Gussy!"

"Yaas, deah boy."

"You're to come back at once!"

"Wubbish!"

"I'll jolly well lather you when you do come back!"

"Wats!"

"You—you image!" Jack relinquished the receiver to George Herries, whose communication with his distant chum was short, if not sweet.

"Gussy, you potty duffer, come back!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

Digby took his turn.

"You howling apology for a silly idiot, if you don't come back we'll scrag you!"

"Weally, Dig—"

Manners put in his bit next.

"You'll get sacked if you don't come home, Gussy!"

"Wubbish!"

Monty Lowther took the receiver. He sang into it:

"Won't you come home, Bill Bailey!"

"Bai Jove! I suppose that is Lowthah! I wegard you as a funny ass, Lowthah! This is a sewious mattah! I considah—"

The considerations of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy were never known for the young lady at the exchange put a sudden extinguisher on. There was silence.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another. Blake sparrd into the air, punching an imaginary head.

"If he was only near enough for a chap to land him on the boko—" said Blake plaintively.

"And he rang us up because he thought we might be getting into mischief without his fatherly eye on us!" said Tom Merry, breathing deep. "We'll give him the ragging of his life when he comes home!"

Tom Merry & Co. quitted the grocer's parlour, and, after giving Mr. Sands their best thanks and Grimes a nod, they walked out of the shop. They discussed Arthur Augustus and his exasperating ways as they strolled back towards St. Jim's, and, with a singular unanimity of opinion, they agreed that their hearts' desire really was to get within

hitting distance of the exasperating and elusive Gussy. But even Gussy was driven from their minds by the sight of an extraordinary figure they encountered in the lane.

A fat youth, with one leg tied up, was hopping along on one foot, streaming with perspiration, and crimson with wrath and exertion.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "I'd forgotten Trimble!"

"Yah! Rotter!" howled Trimble. "Lemme loose!"

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

Trimble hopped desperately to keep his footing. Monty Lowther gave him a playful dig in the ribs, and the fat junior sat down.

"Whooooop!"

Tom Merry, chuckling, untied the whipcord. Baggy Trimble mopped his streaming brow.

"Where have you been, you rotters?" he gasped. "I know you've been up to something! I'm going to tell the House-master about this, Tom Merry!"

"Tell him about this, too!" said Blake genially. And he bestowed a kick upon the fat and perspiring Baggy.

"Yaroooooh!"

"And this!" said Monty Lowther, drawing back his boot.

But Baggy Trimble did not wait for it. He fled.

Baggy's way took him towards the village—probably in the hope of discovering what Tom Merry & Co. had been "up to" there. The chums of St. Jim's walked on to the school, their talk returning once more to the subject of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—and their keen desire to punch that noble youth's aristocratic head.

(Continued on page 12.)

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A Lesson to Bullies:

GILMORE & CO. GET A SHOCK.

By Robert Digby.

GILMORE, St. Leger, and Cutts went on a fishing expedition one afternoon last week. At least, they gave it out that they were going fishing, and they certainly took rods with them.

A number of juniors saw them set out, but paid no particular attention to them. Very few people are interested in the precious trio of Fifth-Formers.

But it so happened that Wally D'Arcy & Co. were also abroad that afternoon. It was a fine sunny day, and the fags were tempted out upon their favourite pastime—rattling with Pongo. There was Wally, Joe Frayne, Curly Gibson, and Levison minor. They went down to the bank of the Rhyll, and followed the river, with Pongo racing ahead sniffing out rats, and barking.

The mongrel discovered more than rodents, however. He led the Third-Formers into a little dell in which were Gilmore & Co., together with three fellows of the same kidney from the Grammar School.

A pack of cards and a haze of tobacco-smoke more than hinted at their occupation, and that they were startled at the intrusion of the fags was unquestionable. Not that Wally D'Arcy & Co. cared in the least. The Fifth-Formers were no concern of theirs, anyway, and they would have passed on if Gilmore had not seen fit to interfere.

Why he did so is doubtful. Possibly he was scared and sought to cover his fear with a show of truculence; or he may have suspected that there was some danger of the fags talking about what they had seen, and deemed it wise to intimidate them; or he may have been merely disposed to vary the allurements of poker with a little safe bullying.

At any rate he rose to his feet with a muttered word or so to his companions, who were not slow to follow his lead. The seniors advanced on the fags, who held their ground manfully, but though Wally D'Arcy & Co. are as plucky as they make 'em, and can be relied upon to give a good account of themselves in a rough and tumble, half a dozen well-grown seniors are apt to be above the weight of four fags.

Pride forbade their turning tail and clearing out, and if they had been in the least disposed to do so, something happened that would have held them back. Pongo went trotting up to St. Leger, and the senior bent down, picked up the dog, and flung him, with a brutal laugh, into a clump of bushes.

Wally, his face white with passion, sprang at St. Leger, and by the sheer force of his attack knocked the senior off his feet.

The others closed in, and that was the end of things, as far as the fags were concerned. Wally yelled out, in the hope that some more juniors might be within hearing, but there was no reply.

St. Leger, trembling with rage, kicked savagely at Wally, who was struggling vainly in the grasp of Gilmore. Cutts took out his knife and lopped off a few whippy branches which he trimmed of their leaves. There was no mistaking the intentions of the bullies.

Suddenly there came an interruption. Gilmore was the first to become aware of it. In his case it was a couple of pairs of hands on his collar, which twisted him over until he was looking into the faces of Tom Merry

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and Manners. There was a rush of feet and some fifteen juniors, in the uniform of Scouts, burst into the glade. The odds were too great even for seniors.

Tom Merry listened to Wally's account of what had happened, with a grim look on his face. It appeared that it had been Monty Lowther who had witnessed the scene in the glade, while out with the Scout Troop, and he had communicated with Tom Merry, who quickly gathered as many of his command as were in touch with him, and came to the rescue.

Then came retribution. The sticks that had been cut for the fags were lying handy, and while the seniors were held down helpless the more lusty of the rescuers took it in turn to wield them. It was a very sad and sorry set of seniors who shortly afterwards crawled out of the glade and set their faces on the homeward trail. They were breathing threats of vengeance as they limped along.

But Wally D'Arcy & Co., continuing their interrupted rat-hunt, cared as little for this, as did the Scouts who had resumed their game in the woods.

Bicycle-Polo.

A NOVELTY FOR ST. JIM'S.

By The Sporting Editor.

THE affair was the outcome of some remarks of Gussy. His elder brother, Lord Conway, is a keen polo-player, and naturally Gussy had a great admiration for the game. He is of the opinion that it would be a fine game for junior school-boys were it not for the expense of the ponies.

Then somebody mentioned the fact that in America the game has been played with motors instead of ponies, which moved another fellow to a memory of having heard

that it was possible to play polo on motor-bicycles.

Monty Lowther suggested that if motor-bikes could be used there was no reason to suppose that push-bikes wouldn't be suitable. Possibly he meant to be humorous, but the idea caught on quite seriously.

In another ten seconds the whole of the Common-room was discussing it as a possibility, and before one had time to take breath a challenge had been issued by the New House, and accepted by Tom Merry on behalf of the School House, to a game of polo on Little Side for the following afternoon. Some feeble footer objected that there were no polo-sticks to be obtained, but he was soon voted down as it was obvious that hockey-sticks would do just as well.

Then came the question of teams. It was necessary to select fellows who not only had bicycles of their own, but could count upon reserve mounts in case their jiggers were put out of action, as it was certain that there would be more than one collision during the game.

Finally Tom Merry, Jack Blake, Cardew, and Gussy were chosen to represent the School House, while Figgins announced that he should turn out himself with Kerr, Redfern, and Owen.

The next afternoon there was a big crowd to watch the game, while the chums of the players were in attendance with spare machines ready to be rushed on to the field.

As soon as the game commenced, Tom Merry gained possession of the ball and passed to Blake, but Figgins was after him like a shot, and raked it into the School House goal with a dexterous twist of his stick. Kerr flashed up and drove it towards the School House goal, but Cardew intercepted and passed it to Tom Merry's direction. Both Figgins and Kerr at once closed in on him, and there was no opportunity for him to pass, so he sent the ball on ahead and followed after it.

Redfern bore down on him, but Tom checked the speed of his machine, and swerved past. The New House fellow attempted to turn quickly, with the result that his machine skidded on the turf, and he sprawled directly in the path of Kerr, who was coming up after Tom. Kerr had to jam both brakes hard on, and with two of their opponents temporarily out of the game, the School House team bore down on the New House goal. Figgins went after Tom Merry, while Owen rode across his path, but by this time Blake had the ball, and with an open goal he made no mistake.

Click! His stick met the ball, which sailed off into the New House goal, and the School House were one up in the opening minute of the game.

Figgins & Co. were determined to level up the score, and they wasted no time once the ball was again in play. Perhaps they were a little too anxious. Anyway, when Figgins was robbed of the ball by Tom Merry, he turned and followed the School House fellow with disastrous recklessness. Kerr was coming up on the other side, and Tom, seeing Figgins put on both brakes after passing the ball to D'Arcy, Figgins, who had not got his bike under such good control, was unable to stop, and he shot past Tom Merry and collided with Kerr. Both of them were flung from their machines, and when they scrambled to their feet they discovered that both bikes had suffered considerably. At any rate, it was impossible to continue the game with them, as they were quite unrideable, and they sprinted for the side of the field and secured new mounts. It had been agreed that unless an accident involved some injury to a player the game should not be held up, so that the School House team were quite justified in

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taking advantage of the absence of two of the opposing team.

Owen and Redfern made desperate efforts to stop the attack, but they were powerless, and the School House notched their second goal.

When the game was resumed it was the School House that suffered disaster. Figgins, hard pressed, passed the ball to Kerr and skinned along to follow him up. Gussy was between Kerr and the goal. He raced over to the New House fellow, just as Tom Merry and Blake were also bearing down on him.

Gussy's best plan would have been to mark Figgins, but Gussy was thinking of the ball. Kerr repeated the trick that Tom Merry had played. He stopped his machine, at the same time passing back to Figgins. Merry and Blake would have been all right—they were quite prepared for this manoeuvre—but Gussy put the lid on it for them. He whirled past Kerr, dashed into Tom Merry and fell off his bike directly in the path of Blake, who, in order to avoid running over him, piled on to the other two machines.

There was only Cardew left to continue the game for the School House, and although he managed to rob Figgins of the ball, Kerr and Redfern were soon up to him, and the latter junior restored the ball to Figgins, who simply trundled it into the opposing goal.

Ten minutes later Mr. Raiton appeared on the scene and stopped the game on the grounds that there was every likelihood of the players receiving some serious injury, and the teams trooped off, with the School House victorious by two goals to one.

Junior Boat Race.

TALBOT WINS AFTER KEEN CONTEST.

By the Sporting Editor.

LAST Saturday the St. Jim's Junior Boating Club were busy on the river. Talbot, as captain of boats, had arranged a race for single-scuttlers, and some sixteen entries were received. Tom Merry was drawn against Figgins, and this was the first heat rowed. It was a close contest, but Tom Merry eventually gained the decision by a quarter of a length.

The next race was between D'Arcy and Grundy. The latter junior had entered in spite of the fact that he is almost entirely ignorant of the art of rowing, and indeed, is not safe in anything more dainty than a tub. In getting into his shell he nearly put his foot through the bottom of the frail craft, and before he could be pushed out into position he had managed to jam his seat in the slides. Needless to say he concluded the exhibition by capsizing his boat in mid-stream, and had to be fished out of the Rhyl by means of a boat-hook. In the circumstances the race was awarded to Gussy.

Talbot finished a length ahead of Blake, and Lowther lost to Noble with daylight between their respective boats. Manners put up a gallant fight against Julian, but he was

outclassed, as was Kerruish, who had drawn against Levison.

The tussle between Kerr and Macdonald provided a very close race—which Monty Lowther said was only to be expected as both were Scotmen. (The point of the joke was not appreciated for a long time by most of the juniors, and Gussy has not seen it even yet.) The judges were doubtful as to whether the race had ended as a dead-heat, or if Kerr had been a few inches in front when the pistol went. Finally, judgment was given in favour of Kerr.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, who was rowing against Herries, bestirred himself to such a purpose that he gained a decided victory by a couple of lengths, a result which dismayed him when he reflected that it meant his rowing again later on.

The consequence was that he took things easy in the next contest, and D'Arcy, who had drawn against him, had the race practically presented to him.

Tom Merry beat Julian, while Talbot and Kerr secured the decision against Levison and Noble respectively.

In the semi-final Kerr and D'Arcy were knocked out, leaving Tom Merry and Talbot to row the final.

Both juniors were feeling the effects of the exertions of rowing through their heats, but they rallied for the final, and it was after a well-contested race that Talbot managed to cross the line a quarter of a length ahead of Tom Merry.

Dreams.

(The Editor of the "St. Jim's News" has asked several St. Jim's celebrities to describe their best, and their worst dreams, with the following results):

TAGGLES:

"Which I dreamt I woz a king—I think they called me 'Erod the Third—and I woz 'avin' all boys in the land drowned at birth. Boys wot was already alive woz kept in their places, and they woz caned severely when they cheeked me, and schools 'ad cells, like prisons, where the young warmints woz kept when they gave trouble. That woz my 'appiest dream.

"The worst one? That woz when I dreamt I 'ad 'orrible snakes and serpents crawling over me and chasing me. I woke up in 'orror, and found that I had fallen asleep in the 'Ead's garden while waterin' the flower-beds, and I was wrestlin' with the water 'ose, thinkin' as 'ow it woz a snake. Wot? I needed more water with it? Why, you himpertinent young himp—!" (Hurried exit of the "News" representative!)

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

"I dreamt that St. Jim's had gone into the hands of different governors, and they made life jolly well worth living. Masters were mere nobodies, and there were no petty restrictions. I was allowed to get up at ten a.m., and have my breakfast in bed, and I had the free run of the tuck-shop. Lessons

were optional, and the Head gave Lathom the sack for whacking me with the cane.

"My most horrible dream was when I dreamt I was shipwrecked on a desert island, and cannibals caught me and set about cooking me to give the whole tribe a feed. Grooooh! I was jolly relieved to wake up and find I was in bed, instead of the stewpot."

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY:

"I dreamt that I issued a challenge to Jack Dempsey to a twenty-round contest, and he accepted. The fight took place at the Albert Hall, and the eyes of the whole world of sport were on me. I fairly made rings round Demp, and knocked him silly in the fourth round.

"Don't talk to me about bad dreams. I've dreamt I fell down Vesuvius, and also that I fell into a giant sausage machine, and got chewed up, but the limit was when I dreamt I got into the hands of a marvellous surgeon who was a Bolshey. He chopped off all my arms and legs, and put my arms where my legs should be, and vice versa. Here, where are you going? I—!" (But the "News" representative had rushed off.)

FATTY WYNN:

"I had a good and a bad dream in one the other night. I was having a lovely feed—pork-pies, rabbit-pies, veal-and-ham-pies, jamparts, and all sorts of tuck. Oh, it was glorious! Then, while I was thinking I was in the seventh heaven, the giddy pies and tarts and things came to life, set about me like a lot of ravenous wolves, and tore me to bits. Nightmare wasn't in it!"

HERBERT SKIMPOLE:

"The most gratifying nocturnal hallucination which I have experienced was one in which I saw myself at the head of the Socialist Community of England. The base tyrannies of Democracy had been overthrown by the enlightened poor, and I was the chief Socialist leader.

"The dream which I consider the most detrimental to my peace of mind was after having read seventeen chapters of Professor Balmcrumpet's 'Treatise on Evolution.' I retired to bed, and dreamt that Darwin's theory was true, and that I was a monkey in its savage state before evolution resolved it into what we now know as man. The nauseating effect on my mind in realising that I had returned to the monkey state was overwhelming, and—!" (But here the "News" representative became overwhelmed, and left Skimpy talking to the air!)

JACK BLAKE:

"It was a jolly fine dream when I imagined myself to be with old Euclid when he was scraping his rotten theorems in the sand. I saw his wife destroy some of them; but I went the whole hog, knowing what the future generations of schoolboys would have to suffer, and smashed up the whole giddy lot of them!

"My worst dream? Oh, that, I think, was a daydream. It happened during Latin lesson, and as a result I got two licks and an imput. from Mr. Lathom."

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,—

Please make a note of it that the GEM photos next week will be the portraits of Tom Boyle (Burnley F.C.), and Jack Ewart (Bradford City F.C.)—two players who have done excellent work, and who have big futures, not a doubt of it.

The "Magnet" is giving a photo next Monday of J. G. Cock (Chelsea F.C.), while the "Boys' Friend" has a likeness of Frank Goddard, the famous heavy-weight.

The "Popular" is keeping up the running with its series of coloured plates of railway engines. They are the best things of the kind out, and everybody is

talking about them, and their immense success.

I have a few words to say about Mr. Martin Clifford's next yarn in the GEM. If you miss it next Wednesday—well, I shall be sorry, but you will be the sorrier, for "Gussy Among the Girls!" is far too full of humour and good spirits to be overlooked. Poor old Gussy is passing through some strangely chequered times. He has not been quite as happy of late as a fellow of his urbane manners and splendid character ought to be. Still, there it is. Good fortune and happiness come and go. Just when you think they have departed for good, in they pop through the window.

In next week's tale we get more than a glimpse of Cliff House, and Miss Primrose, the dignified lady, whose nod, or whose frown are facts to be reckoned with, as readers of the Companion Papers well know. I am not going into the why and wherefore of it all, but Mr. Clifford has a well-knit story, and he brings in that charming personage, Miss Bessie Bunter. She usually turns up in the crowd. Her manners may not be

perfect, but she certainly always manages to create a most vivid impression wherever she goes. Once seen, never forgotten!

Well, Gussy has a bad time. He is a born diplomat, but on this occasion he finds circumstances decidedly embarrassing, and no wonder; but you will understand the situation thoroughly when you get next Wednesday's GEM.

A Maidstone correspondent says "All On His Own" ought to be issued in book form; it is worthy of it! I dare say this can be managed. Much obliged for his hints.

You will be glad to know that the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" will be published on September 1st. It is a record volume—stories of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, as well as articles, jokes, and coloured pictures. Look out for it. The "Holiday Annual" is linked up with the GEM and the other Companion Papers in a very special way, and it also appeals to everybody, young or old.

YOUR EDITOR.
THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 755.

"THE REFUGEE AT HIGHCLIFFE."

(Continued from page 9.)

CHAPTER 6.

Ponsonby's Little Game!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY replaced the receiver on the telephone in Mr. Mobbs' study at Highcliffe school.

He was feeling relieved by his talk with Tom Merry & Co. Matters at St. Jim's, apparently, were pursuing the even tenor of their way, in spite of Gussy's absence. Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three had not, somehow, fallen into hopeless scrapes in the absence of his tact and judgment. Gussy's noble mind was relieved.

He crossed to the study door, never dreaming for a moment that, as he did so, two juniors detached themselves from the outside of the door, and walked quickly away down the passage.

Ponsonby and Gadsby, at the keyhole, had overheard every word that Gussy had spoken into the telephone. They knew now as much as Gussy himself could have told them of the circumstances in which he had left St. Jim's.

By the time D'Arcy came out of the study Ponsonby and Gadsby had turned the corner.

They strolled away to their study in the Fourth, where they found Monson and Vavasour.

Ponsonby chuckled gleefully.

"Well?" asked Monson eagerly.

"We've bagged the whole giddy bag of tricks!" grinned Ponsonby. "The dear boy has run away from school—some quarrel with his Housemaster or the Head. That's why he was at Greyfriars, and why the Caterpillar picked him up and brought him back here with the cricketers. Just a word to his headmaster, and he would be yanked off with a hand on his shoulder."

Vavasour looked uneasy.

"I say, Pon, he's a decent sort of chap," he said. "We've got nothin' against him. You're not goin' to give him away?"

"I'm thinkin'," said Pon coolly, "it would be no end of a catch on Courtenay and the Caterpillar to show them up as harbourin' a fellow who's run away from school. Dr. Voysey would be no end waxy. There would be a royal row, in fact."

"But we don't want—"

"That depends," said Ponsonby. "We know now, anyhow, cwin' to the dear boy obligin' us by shoutin' in Mobby's telephone. But I'm not down on him. In fact, I'm goin' to be pally."

"How's that?" asked Monson.

"We're goin' to have him in the study, an' make much of him," said Ponsonby. "I'm goin' to ask him to tea—"

"Courtenay won't let him come."

"He will have to, if I give him a hint of what I know," answered Ponsonby significantly. "After tea we'll give D'Arcy a good time—our style, not Courtenay's style. I fancy he has a fairly dull time at St. Jim's; but we'll show him life. He looks like a fellow that's well heeled, and can pay for his entertainment."

Gadsby whistled.

"He doesn't look like the sort we want," he said. "Fact is, Pon, I don't believe he smokes or would touch a card. Doesn't look it, anyhow."

"Then it's time he learned," said Ponsonby. "Dear men, we are all rather up against it in the financial line—the youth has dropped in, just in time to replenish the exchequer. We're goin' to pluck him."

"Oh, draw it mild, Pon," murmured Vavasour.

"Courtenay would be as wild as a Hun if he knew it," said Monson.

"All the better. There's a certain amount of entertainment in raising Courtenay's ire!" grinned Ponsonby. "Anyhow, D'Arcy's our game, and he's goin' to toe the line; and if there is any trouble from him or from Courtenay, he goes back to St. Jim's with a hand on his collar. That's the programme!"

Gadsby and Monson grinned, but Vavasour sauntered out of the study without speaking. He was not quite so hardened as the three young rascals he left behind. Gadsby and Monson, perhaps, were not quite so hardened as Ponsonby, but they were quite under the influence of their leader. And Ponsonby, elegant youth as he was, and lofty as were his manners, was as unscrupulous as a young rascal as could have been found in three kingdoms.

Cecil Ponsonby was in a cheery, smiling mood when he went into class that afternoon.

Whether his destined victim should prove a pigeon worth

the plucking or not, Ponsonby had the power in his hands now to make matters very uncomfortable for his old enemies, Courtenay and the Caterpillar, so in any case he was going to score. Which was a satisfactory state of affairs from Ponsonby's point of view.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was out of gates that afternoon on Courtenay's bicycle, taking a long spin while his Highcliffe friends were at lessons. Gussy was not wholly satisfied with this—it seemed a little like slacking—and he had thought of asking to be allowed to share the Form work with his friends. Still, it certainly was very pleasant to wheel through a smiling sunny countryside and along the golden sands in happy leisure.

His homeward way took him near the gates of Greyfriars School, and as classes were now over, he debated whether he should drop in and speak to Harry Wharton & Co. But at Greyfriars it was known that he had run away from St. Jim's, and he decided that a visit would be awkward for his friends there. As he pedalled on he caught sight of a fat figure by the roadside, and a fat voice hailed him:

"I say, Gussy, old bean!"

"Bai Jove! Buntah!"

It was Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove. Arthur Augustus was pedalling uphill and going slowly, and the fat junior of Greyfriars came alongside.

"Jump down a minute, Gussy, old fellow," said Bunter.

Arthur Augustus ground at his pedals.

"Sowwy, deah boy—goin' in to tea," he answered.

"Where are you staying?"

"Good-bye, Buntah!"

Bunter broke into a trot to keep pace.

"Slow down," he gasped. "I say, D'Arcy, slow down a bit, old chap. I say, old fellow, I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

The bike put on speed.

"Gussy, old chap, if you could lend me ten bob— Stop, old fellow! I can't keep pace!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter put on a spurt, and Gussy put on another. The fat junior clutched at the cyclist, missed him, and rolled forward.

Bump!

"Yoooop!" roared Bunter.

Arthur Augustus glanced back. Billy Bunter was sitting in the dust, shaking a fat and furious fist after him.

"Beast!" yelled Bunter.

Arthur Augustus grinned, and disappeared over the hill. It was tea-time when he came into Highcliffe, and three elegant, smiling youths were waiting at the gates.

"Had a good spin, old chap?" asked Ponsonby.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Let me put up your bike," said Monson.

"You're vewy good, deah boy."

"We want you to have tea in our study to-day, D'Arcy," said Ponsonby, linking his arm in Gussy's. "We've put in rather an extra special spread in honour of the occasion. You'll come?"

"Do!" urged Gadsby.

"Bai Jove! You're awf'ly good, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, "but I wathah think De Courcy and Courtenay will be expectin' me to tea."

"Oh, they can let us have you for once," said Ponsonby. "We'll speak to them, of course. They mustn't bag you all the time."

"We want to see somethin' of you while you're here, you know," said Gadsby solemnly.

"You're vewy flattewin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I should be vewy pleased to accept your kind invitation, of course. I will dwop in and speak to the fellahs—"

"Come with us," said Ponsonby.

Arthur Augustus walked to Study No. 3 in the Fourth in company with Ponsonby and Gadsby. Once since his stay at Highcliffe Gussy had had tea in Smithson's study, and he saw no reason why he should not gratify Pon's desire to be hospitable to the stranger within the gates. The Caterpillar was alone in Study No. 3.

"Courtenay not awound, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"Still urg'in' the flyin' ball on Little Side," yawned the Caterpillar. "Ready for tea—what? Let's go and have tea in Hall. It will be another experience for you to see the animals feed."

"D'Arcy's comin' to tea in my study this time," said Ponsonby. "We're baggin' the guest for one time, Caterpillar!"

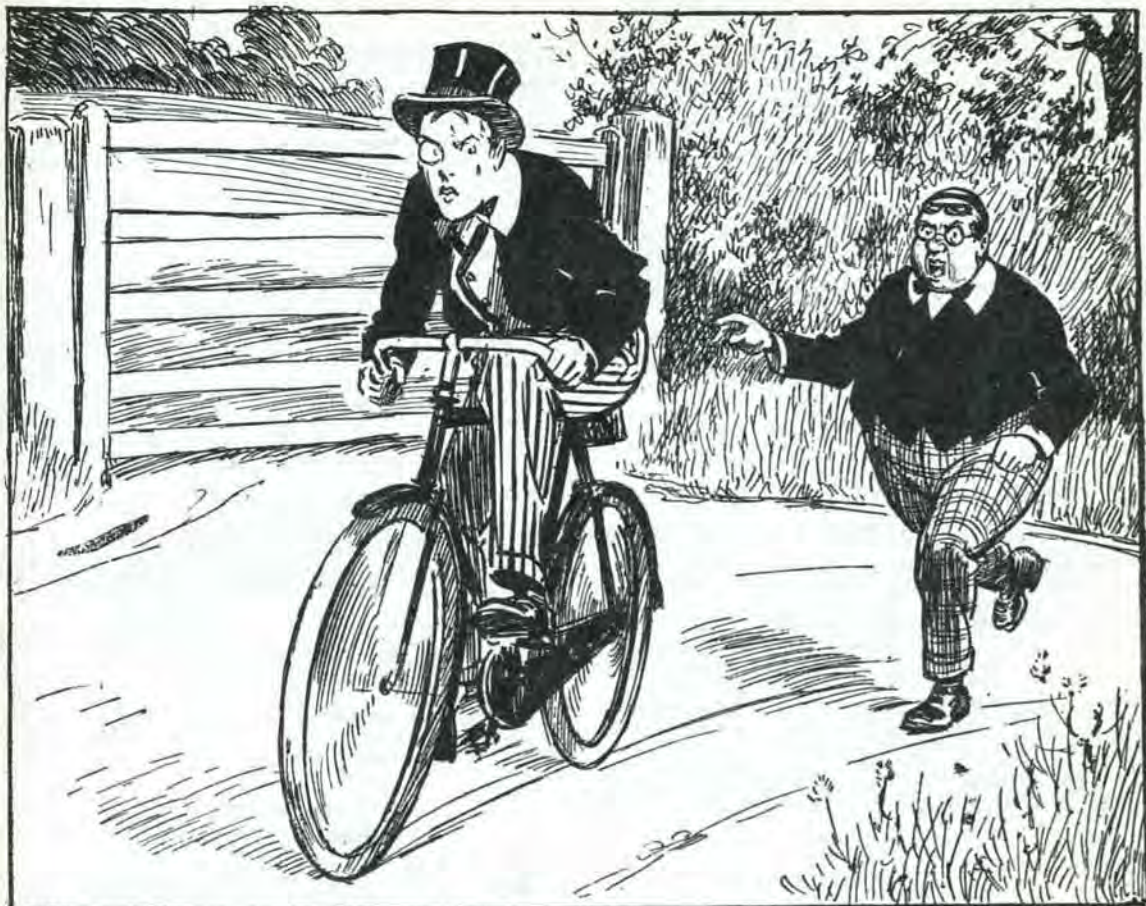
The Caterpillar sat up straight.

"You're not!" he said tersely.

Arthur Augustus looked from one to the other.

"My dear old Caterpillar," said Ponsonby quietly, but with a glint in his eye, "don't be greedy, you know. We want to be hospitable to the distinguished guest. Some fellow may let out that he's a runaway from his own school, and then he may have to go, and we should lose the chance."

"Oh!" said the Caterpillar.



Billy Bunter tried hard to keep pace with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he pedalled on. "Slow down!" he gasped. "Gussy, old chap, if you could lend me ten bob—stop, old fellow! I can't keep pace!" Bunter put on a spurt and Gussy put on another. (See page 12.)

He understood the threat implied in Pon's words, though it was quite unseen by Arthur Augustus.

"Bai Jove! I did not know you knew, Ponsonby," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "How did you know, deah boy?"

"Little bird whispered," said Ponsonby blandly.

He drew Arthur Augustus towards the door.

"Come on, old bean. You don't mind, Caterpillar, for once?"

"If you mind, old fellow—" began Arthur Augustus.

"Not at all!" said the Caterpillar hastily. He was aware that a refusal would be followed by the betrayal of the St. Jim's runaway. "Trot along, and enjoy yourself, old bean! Come back after tea and help me with prep. You're such a nut at Latin that I'm growin' quite to depend on you."

"Wely on me, deah boy!"

And Arthur Augustus walked cheerily away with the triumphant Ponsonby, quite unaware that there had been a wordless battle between Pon and the Caterpillar under his very nose, and that Ponsonby had had the best of it.

CHAPTER 7.

Trouble in Pon's Study.

"SMOKE, old fellow?"

Tea was over in Ponsonby's expensively-furnished study. It had been quite a ripping tea. Pon was lavish on such occasions.

Now Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was reclining at ease in a very comfortable chair, and the nuts or Highcliffe were sitting or standing around in elegant attitudes.

Ponsonby produced a box of cigarettes, rather to D'Arcy's surprise. He had seen nothing of that kind so far at Highcliffe, though a great deal of it went on behind the scenes.

Pon and Monson and Gadsby lighted up, but the swell of St. Jim's politely declined.

Pon had stated to his comrades that he was going to show D'Arcy "life"; but Arthur Augustus was not keen on seeing

life eye to eye with the worthy Pon. There were fellows at St. Jim's who smoked and played surreptitious nap in the studies—fellows like Racke and Crooke—and Arthur Augustus had never concealed his lofty scorn of them. Scorn he could not display in a study where he was an honoured guest, but his refusal of the proffered smokes was very firm.

Pon's eyes glinted for a moment, and Monson grinned. Monson flattered himself that he had gauged D'Arcy's character more correctly than his leader.

"Sure you won't?" said Pon smoothly. "They're really rather good, you know."

"Thank you, no. I don't smoke," said Arthur Augustus.

"Not really?" ejaculated Monson.

"Weally, no."

"Dash it all, you're not a kid," said Gadsby. "Where's the giddy harm in puttin' on a fag?"

"Wathah bad for the wind, deah boy. It finds you out fast enough when you play cwicket or footah!"

"Oh, put on a fag, and don't be a spooney!" said Gadsby.

"Weally, Gadsby!"

"Shut up, Gaddy!" said Pon, with a warning look. "This study is Liberty Hall, and a fellow can do as he likes. Please yourself, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, deah boy. I will!" said Arthur Augustus, in a rather stately way.

Ponsonby ran his hand through a table drawer, and drew out a pack of cards. Arthur Augustus looked a little startled. This reminded him more than ever of Racke and Crooke at St. Jim's.

But Pon's next words relieved him.

"Got the nuts, Gaddy?" he asked.

"Oh, yes!" grunted Gaddy.

"You'll join us in a little round game for nuts, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "We often play wound games at home for nuts, at Christmas, you know. I am wathah good at wound games."

Ponsonby smiled assent, and Gaddy and Monson suppressed their groans with difficulty. This was Pon's way of inveigling

the bird into the net; but it was a terrible bore to his sportive pals to play cards for nuts. But Arthur Augustus was quite pleased with that very innocent form of amusement, and he began to play with zest. He soon found himself winning nuts galore.

For a quarter of an hour Ponsonby & Co. endured it with fortitude. Monson and Gadsby began to give their leader menacing looks, and Pon came down to business at last.

"By Jove, if we'd been playin' for money you'd have made a small fortune, D'Arcy!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

But Ponsonby searched his face in vain for any sign of greed. Gussy's success did not make him regret that he had not been playing for money. It was a fact—a fact that Pon found it difficult, if not impossible, to understand—that Gussy would have objected very strongly to winning any fellow's money at cards.

"Well, suppose we put coppers on the game, just to make it a bit more interestin'!" said Ponsonby.

"Nothin' like gamblin', of course," said Gadsby. "Make it tanners instead of foolin' round with nuts."

"I'm agreeable," remarked Monson.

"Done, then," said Ponsonby shuffling the cards. "Six-penny points. That won't hurt anybody. Cut, D'Arcy!"

"I would wathah not play for money, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway excuse me!"

"It isn't money—tanners!" said Gadsby.

"Yaas, but—"

"Majority's against you, D'Arcy," said Ponsonby genially. "Cut the cards, old fellow."

D'Arcy cut the cards, hesitating. The three juniors were so very agreeable that Arthur Augustus found difficulty in dealing with the situation. Ponsonby began to deal.

"Pway don't deal to me, Ponsonby," said Arthur Augustus. "I will drop out of the game, if you don't mind."

"Oh, come!" said Gadsby. "You're not afraid of losing a few sixpences, surely! Aren't you sports at St. Jim's?"

Arthur Augustus flushed. There was a certain humiliation in being regarded as a "molly-coddle" by these sportive youths, and they were so very nice to him that Gussy hated to hurt their feelings. But with all his little weaknesses, D'Arcy had principles that were founded as on a rock, and no gibe could make him do what he knew to be wrong. He rose to his feet.

"Thank you vewy much for entertainin' me like this, deah boys," he said. "I think I will cut along now."

"Stony!" asked Pon. "My dear chap, we'll lend you some money. It's all only fun, you know."

"I am not stony, deah boy, but I weally object vewy strongly to gamblin'," said Arthur Augustus. "I should not like my fathah to have any groudns for thinkin' that I have fallen into wotten ways through wetirun' from school for a time."

"Rotten ways!" said Ponsonby, knitting his brows. "I hope you do not mean to insult us, D'Arcy!"

"Bai Jove, certainly not!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus in great distress. "Nothin' of the kind. I withdwaw that expression. But I weally think I had bettah cut now. I am only disturbin' you as I am not goin' to join in the game."

"But you are goin' to join in it!" urged Ponsonby.

"I would wathah not, deah boy."

"It goes by votin'," said Ponsonby. "Three to one. You can't stand out against the company, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's lips set firmly.

"I am sowwy, Ponsonby, but I mean exactly what I say," he answered. And he made a movement towards the door.

Ponsonby rose to his feet, his eyes glittering. He could see now that he had failed, and that Gadsby and Monson, angry as they were, were secretly amused by his failure. Arthur Augustus' supply of cash was not destined to replenish the exhausted exchequer in Pon's study. He had had all the trouble of preparing his marked cards for nothing.

"You won't play?" asked Pon between his teeth.

"Thank you, no."

"You sickenin' spooney!"

"Bai Jove! Wha-a-at!"

This was a change of front with a vengeance, and the swell of St. Jim's could only stare and blink at Ponsonby.

"Funky rotter!" said Monson, taking his cue from his leader.

"If you're a specimen of St. Jim's, they must be a pretty crew of molly-coddles!" sneered Gadsby.

Arthur Augustus' eyes flashed.

"There are fe'lahs at St. Jim's who gamble in the studies," he said. "We do not wegard them as bein' a cweedit to the school. We wegard them as awwant blackguards and wottahs!"

"Kick him out!" said Monson.

"I will wethah from this study vewy gladly!"

"Not just yet," said Ponsonby, putting his back to the door, with a very ugly look. "We've not done with you yet, you spooney humbug!"

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"You will kindly allow me to pass, Ponsonby," said Arthur Augustus quietly. "I am sowwy that I entahed this study. I feah vewy much that I was asked heah simply for the purpose of gamblin'. I am sowwy to think so, but I cannot help suspectin' it now."

"Did you think it was for the pleasure of your conversation?" sneered Ponsonby.

"Of all the ghastly bores—" said Gadsby.

"Will you let me pass, Ponsonby?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Not yet! Collar the cad," shouted Ponsonby; "we'll jolly well rag him, and roll him along to Courtenay's study a regular wreck!"

"Good!"

"Bai Jove! Hands off, you wuffians!"

Ponsonby & Co. rushed at the swell of St. Jim's, nothing doubting that they would "down" him in a few seconds.

But a surprise was awaiting them.

They had judged by Arthur Augustus' elegant ways and pleasant manners that he was too "soft" to be anything of a fighting-man. They made a very painful discovery now.

Unwilling as he was to join in a "row" in the school where he was a guest, Arthur Augustus had no choice about it now. He put up his hands as the three young blackguards rushed him down, and hit out with vigour. Ponsonby caught his right, and went over with a crash, and the next moment his left laid Gadsby on the carpet with his leader.

Monson backed off with ludicrous haste as Arthur Augustus faced him, with fists up and flashing eyes.

"Come on, you wottah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"Oh, my hat!" stuttered Monson, and he backed away farther, in great alarm. "G-g-g-get out, you cad!"

"I am goin'—"

Arthur Augustus strode to the door. Ponsonby, sprawling on the carpet, caught at his ankle as he went, and jerked, and the swell of St. Jim's came to the floor with a bump.

"Pile on him!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Oh cwikey!"

And the next moment Arthur Augustus was rolling and struggling on the floor, in a desperate affray with three infuriated young rascals.

CHAPTER 8.

Painful for Ponsonby.

"**W**HERE'S D'Arcy?"

Frank Courtenay asked that question as he came into Study No. 3, in the Highcliffe Fourth.

The Caterpillar looked up from the depths of the big arm-chair.

"Gone out to tea," he answered.

"Not because I'm late, I hope!" said the captain of the Fourth, with a smile, as he dropped his bat into a corner.

"Not! He was asked."

"You could have looked after tea, Caterpillar, you know!"

"So I could and would," answered the Caterpillar; "I was goin' to take him to tea in Hall, as an experience for him. But as he went out to tea, I nibbled a biscuit and let it slide. Tea's a bore, like everythin' else!"

Courtenay laughed.

"It may be a bore, but I'm ready for it now," he said; "I'm going to have a whacking solid tea. You'd better, too. By the way, whom is D'Arcy visitin'? Smithson?"

"N-n-no!" Pon!"

Courtenay started.

"Ponsonby! Caterpillar, you shouldn't have let him go. He oughtn't to enter that study."

"The excellent Pon had the upper hand," said the Caterpillar. "He's found out that D'Arcy has run away from St. Jim's and he's goin' to give him away if we worry him. He told me so, without D'Arcy's understandin' what he was drivin' at. I didn't want the innocent youth to go like a lamb to the slaughter. But it was the lesser of two evils."

Courtenay knitted his brow.

"I don't know about that," he said.

"Well, you know it means a row with the Head, if he learns that we're harbouring a giddy runaway from school," said De Courcy. "The giddy wanderer would be sent back to his school at once, or locked up while his headmaster sent over to fetch him."

"I—I suppose so. It was rather asinine having him here, really, Rupert, in the circumstances. He ought to go back to school, and I'm not satisfied that we're doing right in helping him keep away!"

"It's always right to stand by a fellow who's up against trouble," said the Caterpillar. "Anyhow, we're standin' by him, and if Pon gives him away—and we know he's cad enough—the outlook's bad. We don't want our hospitality to end in D'Arcy being locked in a room while a prefect is sent over from St. Jim's for him!"

"No! But Pon can't be given a free hand," said Courtenay; "I know what the cad wants. A decent fellow

ought never to step into that blackguardly study. I wish you'd kicked, Caterpillar."

"Pon meant business!"

"Very likely. But I'm going for him," said the captain of the Fourth, and he turned to the door.

The Caterpillar sighed. It was his way to follow the line of least resistance; quite unlike his more energetic chum's way.

"I think he's all right, Franky," he remonstrated. "He's straight as a string. If Pon tries to get him into any of his crooked games, he won't take the bait!"

"I think so. But—" Frank Courtenay stood outside the study doorway, hesitating, in painful doubt. To provoke the rascal of the Fourth into betraying the runaway was a serious step, which he hesitated to take, but to leave the unsuspicious stranger in the hands of a gang of unscrupulous young blackguards seemed impossible to Courtenay. As he stood in doubt, there came the sound of a loud commotion along the passage. It proceeded from Study No. 5.

"There's a row on in Pon's study!" exclaimed Courtenay, starting.

"Oh gad!" yawned the Caterpillar. "They're not raggin' the giddy visitor; surely, even Pon would draw the line at that!"

Courtenay did not answer, he raced away along the passage. Rupert de Courcy detached himself from the arm-chair and followed.

The captain of the Fourth hurled open the door of Study No. 5.

He stared blankly at what he saw. Four juniors were wildly mixed in a struggle on the floor—Arthur Augustus, with three assailants, was putting up a record fight.

Courtenay did not wait to speak. He rushed into the study and joined in the scrapping.

Gadsby was collared and hurled across the room, and he smote the wall and dropped, grunting, on the floor. Monson was taken by the collar and dragged away from the St. Jim's junior, and shaken till his teeth rattled.

The Caterpillar was on the scene the next moment.

Ponsonby leaped, panting, to his feet, and found himself up against the fists of Rupert de Courcy.

"Come on, dear boy!" smiled the Caterpillar.

"Stand back, hang you!"

"Dear man, you're my game!" said the Caterpillar. "Come on, or shall I come on? Where's the fightin' fury of the Ponsonbies gone to all of a sudden? You were raggin' for gore a second ago. Now you're backing away and givin' me a lot of trouble to reach your nose—like that—"

"Ow!" spluttered Ponsonby.

"And that—"

"You rotter! I—I—oooop!"

Ponsonby backed desperately into a corner, putting up what defence he could, the Caterpillar following him up mercilessly, hitting out with vigour and amazing speed.

Gadsby had rallied, and he piled on Courtenay with Monson; but the captain of the Fourth easily dealt with the two nuts.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a sad state of disarray, sat up on the carpet, and pumped in breath. He was almost spent.

"Oh cwumps!" gasped D'Arcy. "Oh, ewikey! The uttah wuffians, you know! Oh deah! I'm feahfully wuffed and wumped! Oh!"

Crash! Monson went down—and stayed there. Gadsby, fighting savagely, was driven to the doorway of the study, where he suddenly dodged and fled. In the corner Cecil Ponsonby was still facing a rain of blows from the Caterpillar's ruthless fists. The Caterpillar did not look much like a slacker now. He could wake up to energy when he liked—and he had woke up now with a vengeance.

"You rotter, keep off!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Not the least little bit in the world, dear boy," grinned the Caterpillar. "You're not half licked. Raggin' a guest is rather beyond the giddy limit, Pon, even for you! You're repayin' for it, dear man!"

"I'm goin' to the Head!" yelled Ponsonby, as he reeled against the wall, almost too spent to defend himself further. "That runaway rotter is goin' to be sent back to school!"

"Just what I should have expected of you, old bean," smiled the Caterpillar. "You're payin' for that in advance, old man, now I've got my hand in. That's for your nose!"

"Yaroooh!"

Ponsonby went to the floor with a crash. The Caterpillar looked down on him with a smiling, but deadly glance.

"Get up, you cur!" he said. "You've asked for this—and you're goin' to get full measure! Get up an' take your gruel, you blackguard!"

"Bai Jove! Pway hold on, deah boy!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wathah think he has had enough."

"Not half!" said the Caterpillar tersely. "Are you gettin' up, Pon, or am I goin' to kick you till you do?"

Ponsonby lay and panted. Frank Courtenay caught his chum's shoulder and pulled him back.

"That's enough, Rupert," he said.

"I tell you no. Pon's goin' to give Gussey away—and Pon's got to have full measure."

"I—I won't!" panted Ponsonby. "I—I neve. meant—I—I'll keep it dark—I won't say a word! Keep off, hang you!"

"Can't take your word, Pon."

"I—I swear!" howled Ponsonby.

"Give him a chance," said Courtenay. "Come on, Rupert—come on, D'Arcy. I'm sorry this has happened."

"I am awfully sorry, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, rubbing his noble nose, which was very painful. "I wegwet vewy much bein' mixed up in a wov undah your wov, afiah your genevovous hospotality. I twust you compwehend that it weally was not my fault?"

"Of course! Let's get out of this!"

"Yaas, wathah."

The three juniors quitted the study, the Caterpillar giving Ponsonby a regretful look as he went. He was not satisfied yet, though the badly damaged Pon was much more than satisfied.

Ponsonby dragged himself to his feet, panting for breath, and reeled against the table, and leaned there heavily. Seldom in all his career as a young blackguard had Pon been so severely handled. Monson blinked up at him dismally from the floor.

"What a go!" he said feebly.

"I'll make them pay for it!" said Ponsonby, almost inarticulate with rage. "I'm goin' to the Head—their precious guest will be laid by the heels now! By gad, I'll make them—" He broke off, and dabbed his nose, which was streaming crimson. "I'm goin' to Dr. Voysey now—"

"Dear man!" It was the Caterpillar's cooing voice at the door. "After what you promised! How well I knew you, Pon!"

The Caterpillar took the key from the study door, and inserted it in the outside of the lock.

"Let that key alone!" yelled Ponsonby.

"When I've turned it on you—certainly."

"You rotter, I—I'll—"

"I'm givin' you a chance to stop me from lockin' you in!" said the Caterpillar, holding the door open. "Takin' it?"

Ponsonby did not take the chance; he would not have tackled the Caterpillar again for a fortune. He answered with a curse; and De Courcy drew the door shut, and locked it on the outside, and walked away to Study No. 3 with the key in his pocket.

CHAPTER 9.

Still on the Run.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY looked at his two friends, and shook his head glumly. The row in Ponsonby's study meant that the game was up for the St. Jim's runaway at Highcliffe, and he realised that quite clearly. Courtenay and the Caterpillar realised it, too.

"It's wathah wotten, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I was goin' to take advantage of your kind hospotality for a few days more, you know, but in the eircs it will be impos. I am more sowwy than I can say that I have been the cause of a wov heah."

"That's all right," said Courtenay. "You weren't to blame. I've a pretty accurate idea of the cause of the trouble, though you don't tell me—"

"It—it was a difference of opinion, you know," said Arthur Augustus, colouring a little.

"I understand. You mustn't think that there are many like Ponsonby at Highcliffe."

"Not at all, deah boy. There are two or three gamblin' wottahs of that kind at St. Jim's," said Arthur Augustus.

"Black sheep in evewy flock, you know. But I feah the wottah is in earnest about givin' me away to your head-mastah, and that will mean twouble for you if I am still heah. I shall have to cleah off at once, with vewy many thanks to you for takin' me undah your wov as you did."

"No hurry," said he Caterpillar. "Pon won't go to the Head yet."

"I wathah think he will, deah boy."

"He can't!" explained the Caterpillar. "He's locked in his study, and the key's in my pocket."

"Bai Jove!"

Courtenay burst into a laugh.

"Good egg!" he exclaimed. "That gives us time, anyhow. D'Arcy would you mind very much if I gave you a word of advice?"

"Not at all, deah boy! I should be vewy much obliged."

"Won't you go back to your school?" said Courtenay. "It really is the best thing—and the thing you ought to do."

Arthur Augustus smiled gently.

"You youngstahs do not weally compwehend how the mattah stands!" he explained.

(Continued on page 19.)

YOU SHOULD SEE THAT ALL YOUR CHUMS READ THIS MAGNIFICENT SERIAL!



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

READ THIS FIRST.

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world of chance. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts 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 gets a warm reception from the bullies of the school, but the decent fellows welcome him.

He finds a friend in Wobbygong, a plucky lad from Australia, and the master of a pet kangaroo, Nobby.

Nobby bolts one night, but the boys give chase and capture him. On their return to St. Beowulf's they find that burglars have broken into the school. The ruffians are captured. Wobby commandeers their car, and hides it in the Haunted Barn for future use. Later, Ready is attacked in the Rat Pit by Slurk & Co., but by means of a maroon he signals to his chums for assistance.

(Now read on.)

Paid in His Own Coin.

JIM did not know it; but even now Stickjaw, who had returned, was peering through the keyhole of the gate, urging his friends to hurry up and come along before Jim was caught and half-killed.

Numbers began to tell. Jim dodged and twisted and turned like a coursed hare, but he always had a fresh pursuer up against him. Hands were outstretched to grab him a dozen times, but he managed to avoid them or to twist himself free.

"Twists like an eel!" muttered Slurk. "But we'll soon teach the young swab how an eel feels when it is skinned."

Slurk's cob whistled viciously through the air again.

Jim realised now the truth of the name of the Rat Pit. He stood about as much chance in this place as a rat in a pit with half a dozen terriers. He was growing spent now, and his breath was coming thick and fast. It was plain that he could not carry on much longer; but he meant to fight out to the last. He made for a corner of the Rat Pit and turned, blind and panting, as the bullies closed upon him. Up went his cob, guarding against a savage slash from Slurk. Then, overpowered at last, he went down, buried under the mass of struggling bullies, all trying to get a hand on him.

"Pick him up!" roared Slurk.

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The bullies seized him and frog-marched him to the centre of the Rat Pit.

"Bump him down!" ordered Slurk.

Jim was bumped face downwards on the ground with a bump that seemed to knock the last ounce of breath out of his body. Then Slurk sat on him, whilst two others held his wrists.

"What shall we give him first in the Roman games, gents?" asked Slurk jocularly. "A good arm-twisting will make him nice and lissom. Afterwards, we can follow up with knuckles. Then we will make him sing and dance for us, and we'll finish up with a cobbing that will make him remember us from now till next Christmas! We'll teach a dirty, little Towney cad to come pushing into a school where he is not wanted!"

"Aw, haw, haw—yaas!" chimed in Jack Johnson. "We teach 'im to come buttin' in to school for white an' black gentlemen!"

"Shut up, you nigger!" replied Todeson, who d'd not much like chumming with Jack Johnson. "You keep your oar out of it!"

"Dec'n't yo' call me niggah, sah!" replied Jack Johnson, rolling his eyes. "I am a cullahed gentleman!"

The bullies started with arm-twisting, and Jim, lying helpless in the midst of the evil group, had some idea of the exquisite torture which can be inflicted by experts at this game.

"Squeal, you young rip—squeal!" snarled Slurk, his anger rising as he found his victim in his power.

But Jim had seen a sight that gladdened his eyes.

Over the high wall of the Rat Pit rose the top of a long red ladder. It was the school fire-escape, rearing itself against the outer wall. At second later and something climbed up the ladder in convulsive jumps, hopping on to the crown of the wall, shouldered up by a figure which was undoubtedly that of Wobby.

Wobby stepped on to the wall, and stooped for a moment, examining the boxing-gloves that were attached to Nobby's forepaws and hind-paws. Then he seemed to whisper in the kangaroo's ear.

Nobby, high up on the crown of the wall, seemed to balance himself on his tremendous tail. Then, with a mighty bound, he shot far out in the air, descending with a thump into the arena.

He sat up, and looked around him for a second, his mild bright eyes seeking his master for instruction.

Wobby was busy fastening a long rope to the fire-escape.

"Stoush the tugs, Nobby!" he called. "To the rescue!"

The bullies heard the shout. "Crums! Here's that beastly kangaroo!" cried Slurk. "Cut it, boys!"

But with three tremendous bounds Nobby was amongst them. Slurk was making for the gate, key in hand, hoping to open the padlock and make his escape, but Nobby was after him like a greyhound.

He rose from the ground in a mighty bound, travelling like a Derby winner.

Smack, smack! went his feet as he leaped over the head of the flying Slurk, the bully turning a complete somersault, and coming down to the ground with a heavy thump.

The boxing kangaroo seemed to know exactly what was required of him. He bounded along to the gate, and came to a standstill, balancing himself on his tail, and standing there as sentry, his bright eyes peering inquisitively at the strange scene.

Then up the fire-escape came awarming a whole procession of boys, who spread themselves along the top of the wall of the Rat Pit, looking down on the show below.

Wobby and Lal Singh, Lung, Stickjaw, Soon, the Malay, and Tennessee, the American, slid down the rope into the arena.

The bullies bunched together, pale and scared at the sight of Jim's rescuers. Slurk rubbed his neck, wondering if the kangaroo had broken it for him in that flying leap and with those two lightning punches. Having satisfied himself that his head was still on his shoulders, he turned to meet Wobby as he came striding up, carrying his long stockwhip.

Not a muscle of Wobby's leathery face moved as Slurk turned on him savagely.

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"What's the game?" asked the bully menacingly.

"Just what I was going to ask you," replied Wobby. "What were you doing with Jim down on the ground there, so quiet and sneaky, all looked up in the Rat Pit?"

Slurk grinned uneasily.

"We were just going to have a few Roman games, that's all," he replied, in greasy tones.

"Good!" replied Wobby, smiling, though his eyes were cold and stern. "I heard you was having some Roman games, and I've invited the school to come and join in. I like Roman games, and this little old Rat Pit makes a proper stajum!"

With a sweep of his hand he indicated the crowd of boys who were beginning to spread along the wall in ominous silence.

There was no cheering or fun. The story had gone forth how the bullies had caught young Jim Ready in the Rat Pit, and were going to put him through it behind locked doors. St. Beowulf had no use for this sort of thing. They regarded Wobby curiously as he faced Slurk.

"I like Roman games," said Wobby calmly. "All right, then!" answered Slurk uneasily. "Then we'd better start!"

"Let me see," said Wobby, considering his man, "you were going to make young Jim dance and sing for you, weren't you?"

"That was only a joke!" replied Slurk eagerly. "Pon my word, Wobby, old chap, we weren't going to hurt him!"

"Call me anything you like, but don't call me 'old chap'!" answered Wobby, with an ugly light showing in his cold, grey eyes.

"I've no mind to play 'old chap' to you and your gang of smoozers! So you were going to hurt young Jim?" he asked.

"Pon my honour, we weren't!" replied Slurk, turning rather pale.

"Well, I'm not going to hurt you—much!" replied Wobby, uncoiling the length of that terrible whip of rawhide. "I'm just going to show you how to use an Australian stock-whip to cut out a steer from a mob of wild cattle. You are going to be the steer. First of all, I'll show you that I can use the whip either to hurt you or not."

A yell went up from the boys on the wall as Wobby sent the lash of the long whip flying and whirling round his head in a pattern of serpentine designs. There were thirty-five feet of it, and the Rat Pit was filled with a crackle like pistol-shots as the terrible lash whirled and cracked in the air.

Wobby could hit a sixpence with the point of that whip. He could have cut a man's clothing to ribbons from his body without hurting him. He could also have cut the man to ribbons.

Slurk looked on, his jaw dropping at this exhibition of Bush skill.

Wobby grinned, but his grin was not a pleasant one. He looked up at the crowd on the wall.

"Pebs, Romans, countrymen!" he called. "The circus is now to begin! Mr. Slurk, the famous actor of the goat, is going to do his great act of the mad steer! Let the Roman games commence, an' thumbs up!"

Slurk stood, astounded.

"Here, I say!" he exclaimed. "I'm not going to play the fool for the whole school to look on at! I'm a Fifth Form chap, and there are half the kids of the Lower School sitting up there on the wall!"

"More the merrier!" answered Wobby calmly. "You'll be able to show the Lower School kids what you weren't going to do with young Jim Ready just now. Jump, you smoozin' bully! Jump, you paper pug!"

The whip cracked.

Slurk stood helpless, hardly able to understand the meaning of this strange youth, who spoke so pleasantly, but whose words were so fierce.

"Jump!"

Slurk saw that Wobby was standing over thirty feet away from him.

"Shan't!" he answered.

Crack! went the whip; and Slurk gave a howl and a hop, for the end of it—the very tip—touched up his ankle like a red-hot poker.

"Now skip, and it won't hurt you!" cried Wobby.

Again the whip cracked, and Slurk leaped into the air. The lash cracked under his feet. Then a yell of approval went up from the crowd on the coping of the high wall as they saw their dreaded foe, dancing round the Rat Pit like a dancing bear, leaping every time the whiplash, flying with deadly precision, cut dust puffs from the ground beneath his feet.

Slurk could not stand this long. Drawing the key of the padlock from his pocket, and, cursing the folly which had made him lock himself in the Rat Pit, he made a dash at the padlocked door, hoping to escape.

Nobby, the kangaroo, stood by the door, watching the bully with his mild eyes. Wobby did not even chase his man, and Slurk thought he was going to be allowed to escape.

"Stoush him, Nobby!" called the kangaroo's master.

Nobby balanced himself on his tail, lifted those formidable hind-legs which ended in two full-size boxing-gloves, and beefed out a couple of punches which sent Slurk flying.

The Lower School yelled with delight, in the style of the old Roman arena:

"Habet! Habet!"

This was the only bit of Latin they had ever been able to learn, and as Slurk, pale and dishevelled, picked himself up and ran for his life, he saw a row of grubby hands thrust out on the top of the wall, each showing a thumb turned downwards in merciless derision.

He had only time to make up his mind that he would lick the whole of the Lower School when the time came, before the boxing kangaroo came bounding after him, clearing the ground in tremendous leaps. But Wobby brought his pet to a standstill with a crack of his whip.

"Back to the gate, Nobby!" he ordered.

Somewhat disappointed, Nobby gave up the chase, and hopped back to keep the gate, like a goalkeeper.

Slurk, white with anger at the catcalls and derision of the Lower School, strode up to Wobby, who coiled up his long whip.

"Look here," he stammered, "I'm not going to be bullied like this! It's bullying—that's all it is, with your whips and your beastly kangaroos! I won't stand it!"

"This isn't bullying, Slurk," answered Wobby peacefully. "This is just a little jesting. Bullying is to catch a kid alone, and to twist his arms and to torture him behind locked doors, to give him knuckles and the key, and to make him sing and dance, or kick him till he can't stand! That's bullying. We are only having a few Roman games. I think you talked about putting Jim Ready through the hoop. I am going to put you chaps through the hoop. It won't hurt you, and it will amuse the children!"

Nobby jerked his thumb in the direction of the wall where the Lower School were cheering like mad; for someone had climbed up the fire-escape with a big bundle of boxing-gloves, and half a dozen paper-covered hoops, such as are used in circuses, were being lowered to the arena.

"We'll have the gladiators first," said Wobby. "Then we'll have the chariot-race through the hoops!"

"What d'ye mean?" demanded Slurk.

"There's twelve pairs of gloves, and I'll keep the kangaroo out of the scrap," replied Wobby. "Six of us will take on you and five of your crush of pebs. If you can lick us, you won't have to go through the hoops. If you can't, you go, and you'll sing a song afterwards!"

"All right," replied Slurk, seeing a chance of escape; "I'll take on young Ready!"

"No, you won't," replied Wobby, fixing the bully with his steady eyes. "You'll fight in your class, and you'll take me for a partner!"

What a yell went up from the crowded walls of the "Stajum"

as the six bullies were seen to unwillingly pull on six pairs of boxing-gloves!

The Rat Pit had seen many strange sights, but never had it seen six fights going on at once.

It was a champion spectacle. It was what Wobby called a "mammoth bonanza show."

The kids of the Lower School, who had been eating a lot of sweets at the tuckshop, were nearly sick with excitement and delight at this unexpected feast of sport and justice.

They looked down adoringly upon Wobby, who had provided the show, as pulling on the gloves, he calmly faced Slurk.

A tremendous shout went up for Jim Ready as he, of his own accord, selected the huge nigger, Jack Johnson, for his adversary.

Stickjaw, who had a little account to square with Mudd, selected that youth as his adversary.

Wobby took a swift look round, and a gleam of pleasure showed in his eye when he saw that Jim had challenged the nigger.

"Proper little champée!" he muttered. "Game down to his toes. He'll sock that pimple-headed darkey if he keeps to his bread-basket! Are you all ready, gentlemen?" he asked.

There was no answer—only the deep breathing of the excited kids on the high wall.

"Time!" called Wobby. "No rounds! We fight to a finish!"

He took a punch from Slurk—a treacherous, dirty left, handed in before the word "Time!" was called—without winking. The next moment Slurk measured his length on the ground under a right-handed punch that was like a kick from a horse.

"Get up, Percy!" said Wobby mockingly. "I want to hit your face again for you. I like fanning your head—it's so soft!"

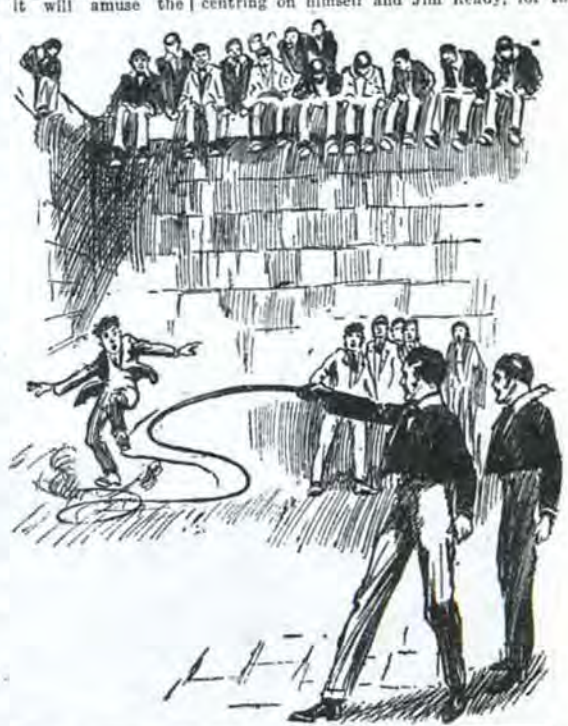
Blind with rage, Slurk was up again, and closed with his antagonist.

"Foul! Foul!" yelled the kids on the wall.

It was indeed a foul; but Wobby only smiled as he broke away and gave Slurk a jolt in the jaw to get on with that would give him time to see how Jim was getting on with his nigger.

Jim was doing splendidly, standing up to Jack Johnson as young David stood up to Goliath.

He knew that the interest of the fight was centring on himself and Jim Ready, for the



Crack! went Wobby's whip; and Slurk gave a howl and a hop, for the end of it—the very tip—touched up his ankle like a red-hot poker. "Now skip, and it won't hurt you!" cried Wobby.

school, sitting on the high wall, was chanting the slogan:

"Wobby, Wobby, Wobby! Ready, Ready, Ready!"

Johnson in a Fix.

NEVER will St. Beowulf's School forget that historical, gladiatorial fight, which took place in the Rat Pit, where Wobby defeated Slurk in two rounds, and after having finished his antagonist, sat on his chest and watched Jim Ready battling desperately with Jack Johnson, the nigger.

Jim had both hands full. As this was a fight, he could not kick Jack Johnson's shins, but must needs stick to the rules of the game.

It was quite a different thing, this fighting over the colour line in the ring, to protecting himself against a black bully.

Jack Johnson was using every nigger trick of fighting. His great line was to use his head like a goat, and to butt Jim in the stomach. It was more like bull-fighting than ring-fighting. Jack Johnson representing the bull and Jim representing the torador.

After the first rush, Jim was wise to this novel form of fighting. He did exactly what a torador would have done under the same circumstances. He watched that black, woolly poll of Johnson's as it charged him, and jumped quickly aside.

"Well done, Jim!" called Wobby, when the third charge had failed, for a roar of applause had gone up from the crowd, who were sitting on the high walls of the Rat Pit admiring this wonderful show.

Jim waited until the nigger was on him, then, running forward, he placed his hands on Jack Johnson's neck as though he were taking a back at leapfrog; then jumped clean over him, sending the redoubtable Jack Johnson ploughing up the ground with his flat nose.

Jack rolled over, and Jim stood over him; the nigger had had enough.

"Thumbs down! Thumbs down!" yelled the fags on the wall. "Old Cherry Blossom is outed!"

Stickjaw had laid out Mudd, and Lung had finished with Todeson. It was victory all along the line.

"You are beat!" said Wobby to the prostrate and panting Slurk. "You pebs have tried bullying, and you've tried fighting, and you are no good at either. If I was you and your mates, I'd give it up and take to keeping silkworms. That's more in your line, my son!"

Wobby got up and allowed Slurk to rise. "Now you've got to play Roman games for the amusement of the kids," he said, with a smile.

"What do you mean—Roman games?" demanded Slurk.

"See those paper hoops?" said Wobby. "You are going to do a kangaroo hunt through them. I start off Nobby, and you pebs are to go after him. He'll jump through the hoops and you must jump through after him. Your game is to touch his tail. It's a sort of circus."

"And what if we won't play?" demanded Slurk.

"I'm ring-master," said Wobby calmly, as he picked up that terrible stock-whip. "The chap who shirks his hoop will get 'one'!" He whistled to Nobby, who came bounding down the length of the Rat Pit, amidst the cheers of the fags!

"Line up behind him!" ordered Wobby.

"Shan't!" replied Slurk angrily.

Crack! went the whip, the long lash flicking through the air.

Slurk leaped, and clapped his hands behind him, as the thong seared the back of his legs like a red-hot poker.

"Don't you push any 'sha'n'ts' on to me, my rooster!" said Wobby. "I'm in charge of the circus now."

Slurk glared at the Australian as if he would liked to have killed him on the spot. But Wobby was grinning and amiable. He signed to the victors in the battle to take the paper hoops, and to station themselves round the wall of the Rat Pit.

Roars of delight went up from the kids of the Lower School as the six bullies fell in behind the kangaroo, discomfited and scowling.

The kids forgot all about the future in the delights of the present. They did not care if they were marked down for future tortures and punishments. This was justice, full and complete. The bullies had turned the Rat Pit into a torture chamber, and their own game had been twisted on them. They held out their hands, thumbs down, shouting to the bullies by name.

"Are you ready?" cried Wobby. "Off!"

The kangaroo understood the word. He had often played this game in Australia. He went off like a Derby winner, flying through the first paper hoop in a splendid thirty-foot bound, then rising again to sail through the second hoop.

Slurk raced after him, but hesitated at the first hoop.

A crack of Wobby's whip behind him, sent him tumbling through it, and Lung, who was holding it, saw that he was spilt duly on his nose.

Jack Johnson leaped after him, the whip cracking close behind him.

Nobby, the kangaroo, seemed to enter the fun of the thing. When he had burst through three of the hoops, he waited for the hunters, who were making a sad mess, to get close behind him. Then away he went again, taking the other three hoops in quick succession, finishing the first lap in grand style.

The audience on top of the great walls of the Rat Pit rocked with laughter, for the hunters were now becoming the hunted, as Nobby, in great sailing leaps, popped through the hoops on the second lap and started to overhaul his pursuers.

Slurk saw his chance of getting out of this unseemly and undignified race.

There was the hole in the wall of the Rat Pit, known as the old Lepers' Squint. He broke out of the running and made a dash for it, thrusting his head and shoulders in at the narrow opening.

The hole in the wall was very small. It seemed impossible for a fellow of Slurk's size to get through that narrow space.

The juniors on the top of the wall saw Slurk dart into the hole like a clown going

through a shop window in a harlequinade. They saw him stick and wriggle, and they yelled with delight. But Slurk was long and lanky, and somehow he wriggled through and was free.

Then Jack Johnson, the nigger, dashing round the Rat Pit with the kangaroo close in chase, thought that where Slurk had passed he could pass also. He made for the hole in the wall, his eyes rolling in his black face. He dived into the narrow hole, wriggled halfway through, and jammed, his fat legs sticking out and waving wildly.

Nobby leaped after him, but his master, with a crack of his whip, called him to heel.

The nigger was stuck tight in the hole.

"Gee whiz!" said Wobby, as he inspected him. "Jack has backed his barrow into a tight corner. Get hold of his legs, boys, and pull him out!"

The boys seized the kicking legs and pulled, but in some mysterious way, Jack Johnson, during his struggles, had managed to twist his body so that he was jammed tight.

"Go round on the other side of the wall, some of you chaps, and see if you can shove him back!" ordered Wobby.

There was a rush to the door of the Rat Pit. The padlock, with which Slurk had secured it, was torn off, and the crowd melted from the high walls down the fire escape.

They all rushed round to the other side to see if they could shove Jack Johnson back. They could see his woolly head in the tunnel of the Lepers' Squint, but they could not reach him.

"Don't yo' pull my laigs!" Jack Johnson was yelling. "Don't yo' pull my laigs! Yo' will pull me in 'av'es!"

"Stop pulling, you chaps on the other side!" cried someone.

The leg-pullers ceased operations, and Wobby ran round from the Rat Pit with rather a worried look on his face.

"He's stuck in the wall, right enough," he said, "and it's six foot thick here, too."

"Question is, how are we going to get him out?" said Stickjaw.

"I guess he'll have to stop there till he shrinks!" said Wobby, with a rueful grin. "We didn't put him there, anyway. He got in of his own accord. Silly chap—might have known that a fat nigger could not get through where Slurk could worm his way."

"He can be fed with a baby's bottle with a long tube!" suggested Hoggins minor, who was a youth of great inventive faculty.

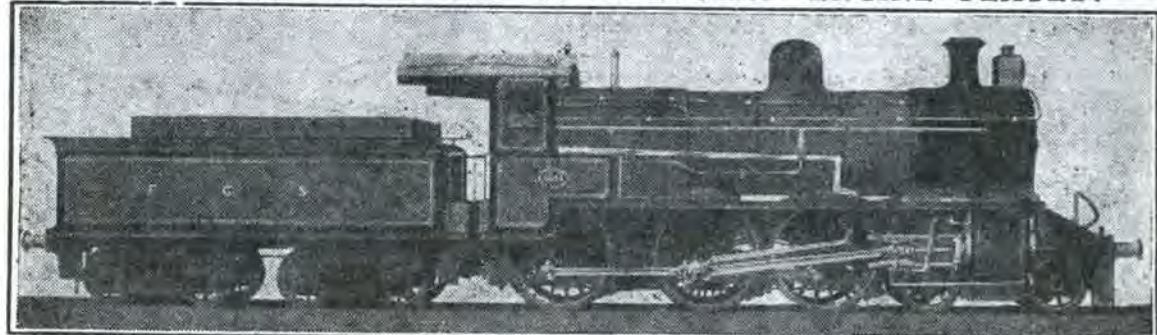
"Go and feed yourself with a baby's bottle!" replied Wobby.

"Or you might pump no end of soft soap into the hole!" suggested Hoggins. "Then he'll slide out!"

"Oh, fade away!" replied Wobby impatiently. "You inventors make me tired! I can see what's holding him. He's got his pockets full of apples and grub, and his coat's turned over. If we break up the grub with a pole we can get him out. Bring a pole, some of you chaps!"

(Read the exciting long instalment of this grand serial next week.)

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THE REFUGEE AT HIGHCLIFFE!

(Continued from page 15.)

"Us—us youngsters!" murmured the Caterpillar. "Oh, my hat!"

And he said no more.

It was an hour later that Ponsonby's study door was unlocked, and the Caterpillar looked in with a smiling face. Ponsonby met his smile with a black scowl.

"There's your key, old pal!" said the Caterpillar, tossing it upon the carpet. "You're free as air, old top. Feelin' inclined for another little scrap? I'd like to finish the job in proper style."

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"I'm goin' to the Head, and you can't stop me," he said. "Your pal from St. Jim's will be chucked into the punishment-room to wait till he's sent for, and you'll be jolly well carpeted for givin' him shelter."

"Dear man!" said the Caterpillar. "My esteemed pal from St. Jim's has been gone from Highcliffe for precisely forty-five minutes, and he isn't comin' back. Go ahead with your sneakin', you worm, and get ready for a record lickin' in the dorm to-night."

The Caterpillar walked away with that.

"Better let it drop, Pon," murmured Monson. "He means business."

"I'm goin' to the Head!"

Ponsonby was too savagely enraged to care for punishment to come. He left the study, and went to the Head. Ten minutes later Courtenay and the Caterpillar were sent for, to receive a very severe lecture from their headmaster—which perhaps they deserved. They hardly knew whether they deserved it or not; but they knew what Ponsonby deserved, and in the Fourth Form dormitory that night Pon received what he deserved at the scientific hands of the Caterpillar.

When Pon crawled into bed afterwards, he wished from the very bottom of his heart that he had let the Caterpillar's guest alone. He looked, and felt, a wreck, on the following day—

and on that day, Courtenay and the Caterpillar were wondering rather anxiously what had become of the St. Jim's runaway.

And on that day, too, there was news at St. Jim's.

Somehow or other, it leaked out that the Head had received a telephone message from Highcliffe the evening before, informing him that his runaway had been harboured at Highcliffe for some days, and had only just left.

"So he was bowled out!" said Blake. "He was bound to be, of course! Blessed if I quite see how he stayed there at all! Born idiots seem to have a way of falling on their feet."

"I say! You fellows heard—"

"Oh, get out, Trimble!"

"D'Arcy's coming back!" chirruped Trimble.

"How do you know he's coming back?" demanded Tom Merry.

Trimble chuckled.

"I notice things," he said loftily. "Kildare and Darrell are gone—they weren't in the Sixth this morning—and I've found out that they didn't sleep at St. Jim's last night! They're gone after D'Arcy, of course."

"Oh!" exclaimed Blake.

"The Head must have sent them off, as soon as he heard from Highcliffe," grinned Trimble. "They may be back any minute now, with that silly ass— Yaroooooh!"

Tom Merry & Co. sat Trimble down with a bump, perhaps to induce him to take a more serious view of a serious matter.

All that day the chums of St. Jim's had one eye, as it were, on the school gates—in the hope and expectation of seeing the runaway junior arrive in company with the two prefects. But that day Arthur Augustus was not seen at St. Jim's—neither did Kildare nor Darrell return—and Tom Merry & Co. could only wonder what had happened. They little dreamed of the amazing adventures that were happening to Arthur Augustus in those very hours!

THE END.

(Of these amazing adventures, next week's grand yarn entitled: "GUSSEY AMONG THE GIRLS!" will tell. Make sure of reading this splendid story, by ordering your copy of the GEM early.)

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