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"HOP IT!"

(A humorous incident from this week's grand school story of the Chums of St. Jim's.)

A ROLICKING LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY

The SCHOOLBOY JOURNALIST!

by
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Gussy is Mysterious!

"ONE, two, three, four! Bai Jove!"
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye and surveyed the four gleaming toppers that stood in neat array on the armchair. Then he turned to look upon his three chums who sat at the study table in Study No. 6, writing lines.

It was a withering look, and it should have brought those three heads up with a jerk. But it did not. Jack Blake dipped his pen into the ink and gave a snort. Digby jabbed his pen into Herries' hand.

"Ow! You fathead!" said Herries wrathfully.

"Sorry! Thought it was the ink, you know. Same colour!" said Digby affably.

Herries sucked his hand, and D'Arcy turned the searchlight of his gaze upon him.

"Hewwies!"

"Hallo!"

"I only make four!"

"Add one more," said Blake. "But don't stand there burbling, Gussy. Cricket practice in a few minutes, you know, and we've got to hand these giddy lines in to Mossoo. What's the future of rompre? Blessed if I can see what these Froggies want with irregular verbs, anyway."

"Wompwai," said Arthur Augustus helpfully. "But there is a mattah of gweatath importance, deah boy. Where is my fifth toppah?"

"Bless your topper!" said Blake. "What do you want with five, anyway? You can't wear them all at once, one on top of the other, like an old-clothes man."

"I should utterly wefuse to do anythin' of the sort, Blake. I wegard the suggestion as widic!"

"Good!" said Blake. "But don't talk. Think yourself lucky Mossoo didn't pounce on you to give the present subjunctive of aller, as he did us. Sit down in the armchair."

"My toppahs are in the chair, deah boy—"

"Then sit on the toppers," said Blake cheerfully. "Do anything. Go and stand on your head. Only don't talk."

Arthur Augustus turned again to his beloved toppers and recounted them.

"One, two, three, four!"

Digby looked up with a glare.

"Will you dry up?" he roared. "If you can't count beyond four, go and buy some beads, Gussy! That's the fifteenth time you've bumbled one, two, three, four."

"He's taking to nursery rhymes in his old age," said Herries, dashing down the imperative of "vouloir," and then flinging his pen at the wall. "Now, Gussy, say it over to me and I'll tell you if it's right. One, two, buckle my shoe; three, four, knock at the door."

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

"I wegard you as an ass, Hewwies," he said, "and I believe one of you wottahs has taken my othah toppah. I wegard you as fwiends; but it is not the act of a fwiend to play twicks with a fellow's clobbah."

Jack Blake tossed his pen across the room, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a howl.

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"Oh! Bai Jove! Something stung me!"

"Only my pen," grinned Blake, as he blotted his work. "Merely that, and nothing more, you know. Thank your lucky stars it wasn't a wasp."

Lucky stars it wasn't a wasp. But Arthur Augustus did not thank his lucky stars. He stared at his waistcoat in horror. It was a beautiful waistcoat, that would have put Jack's celebrated coat of many colours to shame. And now it was marred by a spot of ink; a small spot, but a spot, nevertheless.

"Wuined! Uttahly wuined! I wegard you as a careless ass, Blake. Now I shall have to change my waistcoat. I shall probably be late for my appointment."

Three pairs of eyes became focused upon the swell of St. Jim's. He had succeeded in arousing his chums' interest at last.

"Appointment? What appointment?" asked Blake. "You're coming down to cricket practice."

"I'm afwaid not, deah boy. I have an appointment of the gweatest importance."

Arthur Augustus peeled off his jacket.

"My hat! I might have guessed you hadn't got yourself up like that to play cricket," said Jack Blake. "Don't say Cousin Ethel's coming—or, rather, do say it."

"To the best of my knowledge, deah boy, Cousin Ethel is not comin'!"

"Then why this thusness?" asked Digby. "Why this fine raiment, and why are you going to wear four toppers all at once?"

"Weally, deah boy, I am not goin' to wear four toppahs—only one, and the wight one has been stolen."

"A white topper," said Herries. "My hat!"

"Not white, deah boy. Wight one."

They stared at him, and Blake grinned.

"Good old Gussy. Lucid as ever. Not the white one, but the wight one—see, you chaps? Gussy's setting up as a bookmaker. White topper and what not."

"Or a motor-tyre advertisement," nodded Digby. "Oh, Gussy."

Arthur Augustus removed his waistcoat, folded it lovingly, and then surveyed the others that he had piled in a small heap.

"Hush!" said Blake. "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party! Gussy's picking winners."

"I wegard that we mark as vulgar, Blake. Since you have wuined my waistcoat I must select anotheah. Pewwaps the pale lavendah one with gwey bars is the best."

"Depends!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! But on what, deah boy?"

"On whether you're going to welsh after the first race," said Blake. "A lavender waistcoat and a white topper might be a bit noticeable, you know, and we don't want our Gussy to be put behind iron bars."

"You uttah ass! I tell you I am not goin' to a bookmaker. I'm goin'—"

In a most mysterious way Arthur Augustus stopped short and cast an anxious look at his chums.

"Well, as long as you're going, of course, that's all right," nodded Blake. "But it's a pity about this white topper. I wouldn't like you to lose that."

"I said the wight toppah!" shrieked D'Arcy. "The cowweet one. This one has too cur lay a bwim. The latest

FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S.



To Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, prepared as he is to talk for hours on anything connected with "clobber," the opportunity of writing on his pet subject in a Society paper is far too good to be missed. But there is a deep-laid plot behind the opportunity for which the unsuspecting swell of St. Jim's does not bargain!

style, you know, have a flattah bwim altogether. That one is last yeah's. I couldn't go and see my editah in last yeah's toppah!"

There was a sudden silence. Arthur Augustus went pink, and his chums stared at him blankly.

"Your whatter?" said Blake. "Don't say you're keeping an editor as well as a white topper. What editor, and which? The editor of 'Tom Merry's Weekly'? If you go to Tom Merry looking like a back-number of 'Things We Have Seen in Savile Row,' there'll be trouble."

"I was not wefewwin' to Tom Mewwy. Pewwaps I did not mean to say editah."

"Perhaps you didn't," agreed Blake. "But you said it, and you've got to explain what you mean."

"I wefuse to explain; it is a confidential interview, and I do not intend to let anyone at St. Jim's know that I am goin' to w'ite articles."

"What!"

"Which!"

Arthur Augustus gave a cough. The secret had apparently leaked out already, and he adjusted his waistcoat in silence, and then stood before the mirror to make quite sure that Beau Brummell would have no reason to turn in his grave.

"Dig," said Blake, "catch hold of that topper. The one with the year before last's lining."

Digby grinned and took the topper in a far from gentle grasp, so that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wheeled from the mirror in horror.

"Digby! Put that toppah down. You are wufflin' the nap!"

"Good!" said Blake heartlessly. "I'll wuffle your nap in

a minute if you don't explain. Now, Dig, every-time he refuses to answer, stroke that topper the wrong way."

"Weally, Blake, I wefuse to answer. Dig, you uttah wottah."

Digby gave the topper a loving stroke, and the hat, which had once been Arthur Augustus' pride, took on the appearance of an indignant cat.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard through his nose and pushed back his cuffs.

"We have been fwienids till now, Digbay, but if you do not hand ovah that toppah immediately I shall have no wecourse but to give you a feahful thwashin'."

"Never mind the thrashing, old top," said Blake. "What's all this about editors and writing? Have you taken to doing nursery rhymes for 'Tiny Tots' in your old age?"

"I wegard the suggestion as utterly widic. As a matrah of fact, deah boy— Dig, you wottah, put down that toppah!"

There was a note of anguish in Arthur Augustus' voice, but Robert Arthur Digby was heartless. He grinned broadly and hovered his fingers over the shiny nap.

"You're going to see an editor?" said Blake.

"I wefuse to answer."

"You'll get bumped."

"I should wefuse to be bumped!"

"Are you going to tell us where you're going? We can't allow you to keep secrets from your elders, Gussy. It isn't done, you know. I warn you that if you don't speak we'll push in the lid of those toppers one by one."

"Bai Jove! I wegard you as an uttah wottah, Blake, and I'm surpwised at your pwysin' into pwivate secrets in

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this way. If a fellow is asked to write articles for important newspapers I fail to see—

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake doubled up, Digby dropped the hat, and Herries roared.

"Weally, deah boys—"

"Oh don't, Gussy!" gasped Blake. "Write articles for—ha, ha!—important papers. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Gussy," said Digby, in reproach. "Make it easier, you know."

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy surveyed them haughtily and then took his valuable "ticker" from his waistcoat pocket.

"Bai Jove! I shall be late. Oh deah! I shall have to weah one of these toppahs after all. Pewwaps, howevah, I can hold it behind me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah, you wottahs! I have a most important appointment with my editah."

But Blake & Co. evidently did see cause for laughter—they roared. Whereat Arthur Augustus snatched up the nearest topper and hurried from the study.

CHAPTER 2.

The Secret Out!

TOM MERRY of the Shell buttoned up his blazer with a determined air, and picked up his cricket bat from where it rested against the school wall. It was time to begin cricket practice, past time in fact, but Jack Blake & Co. had not appeared.

"Come along, Monty. Wake up, Manners!" said Tom. "We've got to go and rout out those slackers."

"Rout on!" yawned Monty Lowther, and pulled his cap down further to shade his eyes. It was pleasant leaning against the wall in the School House doorway and Monty Lowther was not inclined to move. Moreover, the humorist of the Shell was engaged in the amusing pastime of concocting a humorous limerick.

"Don't be a lazy ass, Monty. Time for practice in two minutes."

"Right-ho! I'll be there. Call me early, call me early, mother dear," said Monty Lowther. "Take Manners. He's not doing anything important."

Manners, who was removing a print from a photographic frame, shook his head.

"I can't leave this. You run along, Tommy. One word from you, and they'll hop along at once. Take Monty, though! I can see he's going to hatch out one of his limericks soon."

Lowther chuckled.

"Listen to this—"

"Tell it to me as we go along the corridor," offered Tom Merry. "I can bear it inside better. I'll promise not to laugh, too."

"Chump! It's jolly funny," said Lowther, with a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Tom Merry appreciatively.

Lowther stared at him.

"You silly duffer! You haven't heard it yet."

"That's merely joy of anticipation," said Tom. "I'm burning to hear it. Come and rout out those slackers."

Lowther sighed, disengaged himself from the wall, and entered the School House in company with Tom Merry. It was a pleasant afternoon, but not hot. Just the afternoon in fact for cricket practice. The School House had a match with the New House in sight so that practice was necessary, for the season was early yet, and arms were not sufficiently loose, and eyes were not really "in." Besides Tom Merry & Co. had booked the nets, and if they did not appear in time it was very probable that they would be "bagged" by someone else. Such a thing was not to be tolerated, and Jack Blake & Co. would have to be dragged from their study by force if necessary.

As captain of the junior school Tom Merry was naturally thinking of cricket; but Monty Lowther's mind was absorbed by limericks.

"Listen, Tom. 'There's a fellow who's shockingly fussy—'"

"Gussy!" nodded Tom. "Jolly good rhyme. Beats me how you think out these things, Monty."

"Ass! That's only the first line. This is the second. 'Who creases his bags and what's wuss he—'"

"Well, what's wuzzy?" asked Tom. "This is getting interesting, Monty. Hallo! Talk of angels!" he added.

"Here's the one and only in all his glory."

"I didn't say wuzzy. Why don't you let a chap finish. I said, 'He creases his bags, and what's wuss he. Would yell out and holler, at a speck on his collar. His name you have guessed it is—Gussy.'"

"Bai Jove!"

Monty looked up, and shaded his eyes.

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"Ow! Spare a chap's eyesight, Gussy!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Time you changed, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "Cricket practice in a few minutes, you know. Where's Blake?"

"In the studay, deah boy. Pway let me pass."

But they did not let him pass; they barred the way.

"Is he changed yet?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah. But I'm in a feahful huwwy."

"Meeting the girl in the bunshop?" asked Lowther.

"Not at all. I wegard that wemark as bein' in the worst of taste, bai Jove!"

"Well, you've been giving her moony looks," said Lowther.

"When the heart is young and the head is empty," as Shakespeare said."

"What! I don't think Shakespeare ever said anythin' so utterly widic. I wegard Shakespeare as wathah an ass, you know, but not quite such an ass as that. It sounds more like your own, deah boy."

Lowther glared.

"Peace, my infants!" said Tom Merry, pacifically. "Hurry up and get changed, Gussy. You can enter for the fashion parade to-morrow. Time for cricket now, you know."

"Oh don't egg him on," said Lowther. "Let our ducky little batsman take his own time."

Arthur Augustus placed his monocle more firmly in his noble eye, and fixed a look of stern disapproval on the humorist of the Shell.

"I wegard ducky as a vulgar expression, and I have no time to waste on cwicket, Tom Mewwy, deah boy. I have a feahfully appointed impartment—I mean important appointment with my editah"

"Great Scott!"

"My hat!" gasped Lowther. "With your very own editor, Gussy?"

"Pway let me pass, deah boy."

"Not with that hat," said Lowther. "Couldn't dream of it. The escutcheon of the D'Arcys shall never be sullied in such a way."

Gussy whipped off his hat and looked at it. He gave a gasp of horror.

"Oh, the wottah! This is Digbay's—"

He turned to hurry back to the study, but Lowther held him by the arm.

"Whoa, there! I've got a limerick you can sell to your editor, you know. I don't know who he is, but if he takes anything you write—"

"Pway welease me. I'm afwaid your litewawy style is not of the class for our papah," said D'Arcy.

And he hurried off, leaving Lowther and Tom Merry to look at each other blankly.

"It's the sun," said Tom Merry. "That's what it is, you know. Gussy's never strong in the head, poor chap. His editor!"

But Lowther chuckled.

"There's something fishy in this," he said. "Perhaps I'd better hold his hand and go with him, Tom."

"Perhaps you'd better not. You're coming down to cricket, my son."

And Lowther was marched in the direction of Study No. 6. They met Jack Blake & Co. half way there, however, and Jack Blake lobbed a cricket ball to Tom Merry, who drove it back down the corridor. The chums of Study No. 6 looked in good humour. The lines for Mossos were finished, and the French verbs could in future be as irregular as they chose.

"Seen Gussy?" asked Blake.

"Yes; what bee has the duffer got in his bonnet now?" asked Tom. "He was babbling about editors."

Blake chuckled.

"Gussy's going to be a journalist," he said. "He's got an appointment with an editor, and he's going to write important articles. Of course, someone's pulling his leg."

"Of course!" said Lowther.

"Not you?" asked Blake. "We don't allow our Gussy's leg to be pulled."

But Lowther shook his head.

"I might have thought of it," he said. "Only I didn't. But where does the joke come in? Do you mean someone's just kidding him to go and worry an editor?"

"He'll get thrown out," said Digby. "That's why I tried to persuade him to wear his third best topper."

"Perhaps it's an editress," chuckled Lowther. "Oh my hat! Articles on How to be Shingled though Shorn."

"Shush, here he comes."

"Stop him!" whispered Blake.

They barred D'Arcy's path, as the swell of St. Jim's came down the passage, and a frown crossed his noble brow.

"Pway let me pass, deah boys. I'm feahfully sowwy I can't come down to cwicket, Tom Mewwy, and I twust you will be able to get someone to bowl stwaight. Some othah time I'll give you a few tips."

"Thanks awfully. But I'm going to give you a tip," said Tom Merry, and he wagged a finger seriously. "Now listen, Gussy! Someone's pulling your leg. No editor is likely to take your articles."

"Bai Jove! Have you let my secwet out, Blake?"

"Hardly. I should say you let it out yourself, babbling about editors. But Tom Merry's right for once. We can't let you go and interview editors. Take off that clobber, and get into flannels!"

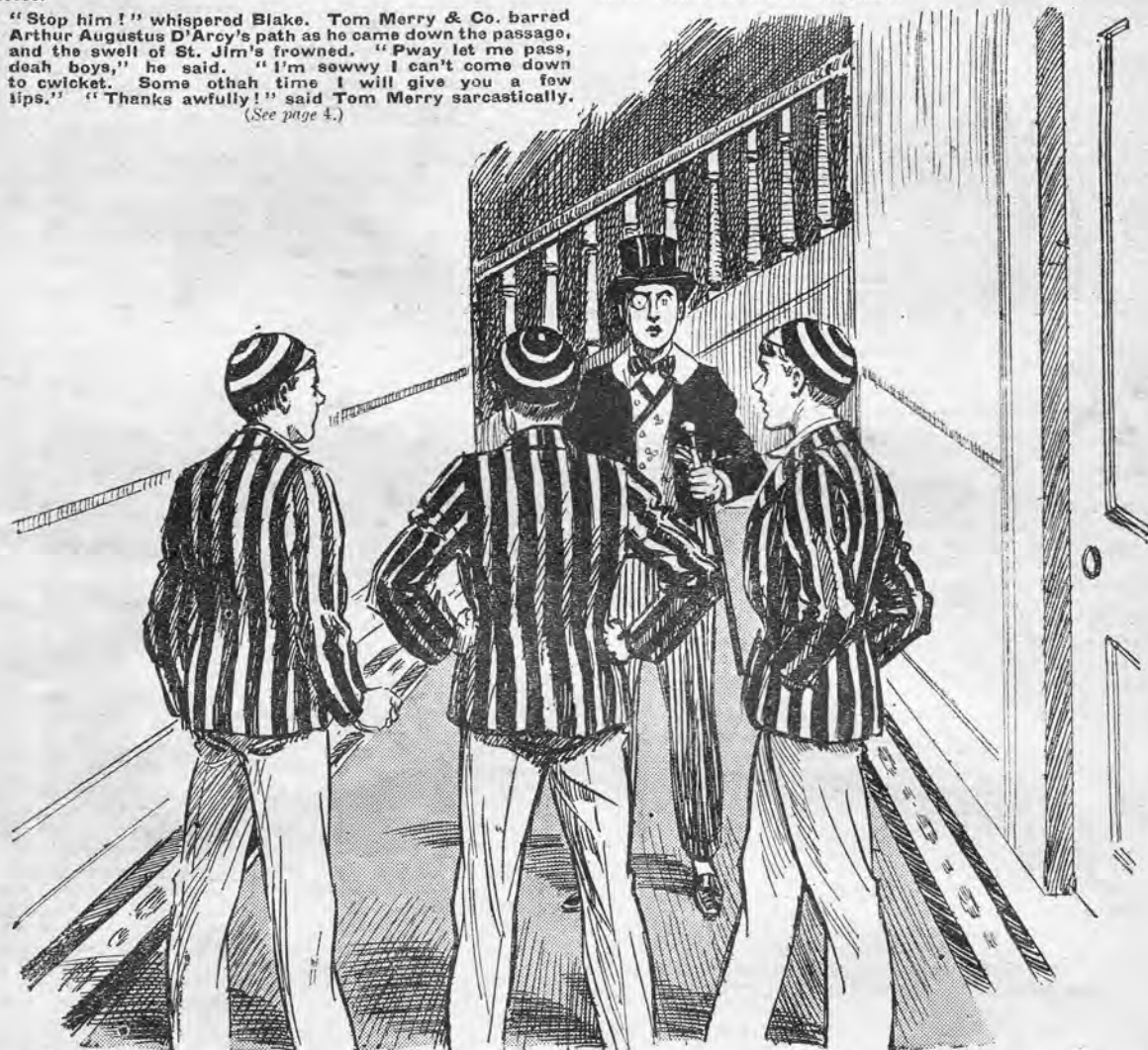
"Wats! I cannot disappoint the editah, deah boy."

"You won't. He's got enough people to throw out all day long as it is," said Lowther. "An editor's life is one long throw-out, you know. All throughout the day."

"I wegard that as a wotten pun, deah boy. Pway let me pass. If you do not I shall be compelled to use force."

"Stop him!" whispered Blake. Tom Merry & Co. barred Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's path as he came down the passage, and the swell of St. Jim's frowned. "Pway let me pass, deah boys," he said. "I'm sewwy I can't come down to cwicket. Some othah time I will give you a few tips." "Thanks awfully!" said Tom Merry sarcastically.

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"He warns us," said Lowther. "Consider yourself warned, you chaps. Oh, Gussy. Be not so hard! We're only trying to save you."

"I wefuse to be saved. If you do not wemove yourselves fwom my path, Lowthah, I shall have no wecourse but to administah a feaful thwashin'!"

Lowther shuddered.

"Not that I love a fearful thrashing less, but that I love Gussy more," he said dramatically. "Try not to pass, brave Lowther said, or you'll get shot out on your head."

"Just a minute," said Tom Merry. "What are the articles to be about, Gussy? Fancy waistcoats?"

"Pewwaps. Pewwaps not! Pewwaps when my article appeahs fellows will be bettah dwessed. Pewwaps you will learn, Tom Mewwy, that a blazah is nevah worn with a collah down."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"So that's it. Fashion Notes."

"Pewwaps—pewwaps not!" said Arthur Augustus, in the best manner of the seers of old. "I wefuse to make any

comment, deah boy. But possibly Blake will not weah those wretched bags!"

"You leave my bags alone!"

"I would not touch them in any cires, deah boy. But when my articles appeah, I twust you will wead them diligently. They will be wead in ewevy quartah of the globe, you know."

"My hat! You'll have the Maoris creasing their noses," said Lowther. "And cannibals refusing to eat missionaries off a knife. Gussy, the great reformer!"

Arthur Augustus took out his "gold ticker," and looked at it, then became a man of action. He had changed his topper and all was ready for the fray. To keep an editor waiting was, as he knew, an unpardonable crime, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had never been guilty of such a base breach of etiquette.

Since his friends would not make way they had to be shifted, and Arthur Augustus grabbed his gloves, and stick, and his hat, lowered his head, and rushed.

He met Blake with his shoulder, and bumped Lowther's nose with his elbow, while Herries staggered back on to Tom Merry's toes.

"Ooooh, my nose!"

"Get off my chest!"

But Arthur Augustus had gone. He turned back at the head of the stairs and gracefully waved a gloved hand, before disappearing from sight. The swell of St. Jim's had gone to keep the appointment with his editor!

CHAPTER 3.

Baggy, the Beau Brummell!

BAGGY TRIMBLE, of the Fourth, grunted. It was rarely indeed that he did not grunt. The slightest exertion on his part always seemed fraught with danger, and considering his bulk, it was not surprising that movement caused him so much distress.

At the moment, Baggy Trimble was dressing, and his fine raiment, vied with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's for splendour. Considering that the raiment was mostly D'Arcy's, that was not surprising. The Fourth Form dormitory was deserted, but every now and then Trimble glanced fearfully towards the door, lest it should be opened. He had a particular reason for not wishing to be under observation just then.

"Bother," he grunted, as he pulled the two ends of one of Grundy's collars across his throat.

Baggy Trimble had a fat neck, and the only other fellow with a size in collars that was likely to be of any use, was George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell. What Grundy would have said had he known that one of his collars was being brought to such base uses did not bear thinking upon; but Grundy did not know; for the Shell dormitory had been empty when Trimble had gone upon his tour of exploration.

"I wish some of these silly asses would have reasonable clothes," grunted Trimble.

His face was red with exertion, and his grubby fingers were not improving the collar. But at last it was pulled together and the stud fixed. So far, so good! There remained the tie.

There was a good selection of ties before Baggy, and most of them were D'Arcy's. The swell of St. Jim's had a splendid selection, so that he was, Baggy judged, not likely to miss one or two.

"I've got to be quick, too," muttered Trimble. "Mustn't let that chump, Gussy, in ahead of me!"

The fixing of the collar had overcome him to such an extent that he had decided upon a half-time interval. The trousers had been a tight fit, almost necessitating the use of a shoe-horn; but they were on, even though they were D'Arcy's. Baggy was reminded of the trousers when he sat down; for there came a most ominous sound that caused him to jump up with alacrity.

He snorted, and at the moment, thought the most bitter things about the swell of St. Jim's.

"The silly ass!" he growled. "Why couldn't he have decent-sized clothes. Now, what time did that chap say?"

Baggy fumbled in the pocket of the trousers and brought out a crumpled letter, which he had stuffed there a moment before. The letter had become crumpled and dirty in Baggy Trimble's possession, even though he had only discovered it in Study No. 6 that morning. It was a discovery that Baggy Trimble had no right to make, but Baggy often went on the prowl, and no fish was too small for his net.

When, searching in Study No. 6 while the occupants were out of the way, Baggy had found that envelope, he had quivered with excitement at the thought that it might contain a fiver. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy frequently had fivers, and Baggy saw no reason why he should not borrow it and pay back later. Later, in Baggy's philosophy, was the day that never came. There had been no fiver in the envelope, but there had been a letter which had interested him.

That letter in his hand, he stood up, frowning, cooling the while from his exertions.

"He, he, he!" he sniggered. "Fancy asking D'Arcy to write articles! The chap hasn't got the brains of a chicken. I'm the man for that!"

The fat Fourth-Former blinked at his reflection in the mirror, with a fat smirk.

"Now, I'm the aristocratic sort of chap that might be the son of an earl!" he muttered—"especially in togs like these. My hat! I wonder if they'll pay me in advance?"

In that letter which Baggy Trimble had purloined there was indeed mention of articles to be written for a paper called "Society Snapshots," and what appealed to Baggy even more, mention of payment for them. The swell of St. Jim's was offered the chance of contributing to "Society Snapshots"—that was the gist of the letter.

It was true the letter was addressed to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; but that was, in Baggy's estimation, a somewhat trivial point. The man who wrote the letter did not know D'Arcy by sight, for he said distinctly that the name was well known to him. Why, then, reasoned Baggy, should not he go himself as D'Arcy? Why not, indeed, if there should be payment in advance? It would be a joke, if the worst came to the worst.

Baggy Trimble was not a youth of great imagination, and he was unable to think very far ahead of the immediate present. So far as his plan went, he saw himself marching up to Mr. Ivor Hunch, the writer of the letter and the editor of "Society Snapshots," and announcing himself as the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. So far, so good. There would be some talk of articles and payment, and then a cash sum down.

The fact that he would be an impostor and fraud did not weigh heavily upon Baggy Trimble's conscience. If any-

thing serious came of it he could always suggest that it was a "joke." Baggy's conception of a joke was elastic enough to cover anything up to forgery, and even robbery with violence.

"He, he, he!" he sniggered. "Anyway, they'll believe I'm D'Arcy—an aristocratic-looking chap like me. And when Gussy goes to them they'll boot him out. I'll jolly well tell them a skinny chap's coming as an impostor!"

His sense of humour was tickled at the idea of the real Arthur Augustus D'Arcy being kicked out; and, so far as Baggy could see, the matter would end there. He himself would write articles if necessary, and the fact that he could not spell seemed to him no deterrent. With D'Arcy's name at the head of them, articles ought to be worth something in a Society paper, argued the fat Fourth-Former; and it would be a splendid "joke" to take a fiver or so a time when his only aristocratic connections were figments of his fertile imagination.

So Baggy reasoned; and he dressed with care. As to being anticipated in his visit by Arthur Augustus, he was not perturbed. For there was a cricket practice that half-holiday, and he argued that D'Arcy would be wanted there. In any case, D'Arcy was a lazy duffer, and would miss the train.

Baggy hastened himself with his dressing. The jacket he wore belonged to Monty Lowther of the Shell; but, happily, Monty Lowther was unaware that it had been purloined.

Finally, he crowned the effect with the topper for which D'Arcy had searched in vain; and, with great satisfaction, stared at his reflection in the mirror.

"Top hole!" he murmured. "I ought to get some cash out of this."

With considerable caution he went to the door of the dormitory and looked up and down the passage outside. There was, of course, always the chance that D'Arcy might be in the offing; and Baggy thought it wiser to go down by the servants' staircase and out through the back door. The kitchen staff were not working in the afternoon, and his escape would, therefore, be easy. By a circuitous route he reached the road, and set out for Rylcombe Station some minutes ahead of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

If Trimble had suspected that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sauntering along the lane behind him he might not have been quite so easy in his mind; but he did not suspect, and, therefore, he strolled up and down the platform station of Rylcombe in great self-satisfaction. For the afternoon it was he who was to be Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. But, alas! there were to be two of them.

As D'Arcy did not appear by the time the train arrived, Baggy took his seat very cheerily, and reached Wayland Junction in good fettle.

It was a fine afternoon, and Baggy Trimble walked down the High Street of Wayland with rather a swagger. Baggy was given to swaggering; and, with D'Arcy's top-hat on at a jaunty angle, Monty Lowther's jacket stretched almost to bursting-point across his extensive frontage, so to speak, he felt fit to kill. Perhaps D'Arcy's trousers were somewhat on the tight side, giving Trimble a moment of anxiety occasionally; but a fellow could not have everything when his wardrobe, as it were, was ready-made.

Once Baggy paused before a shop-window and adjusted his tie. The tie was cleaner than the fingers, and, by one of the all-powerful laws of Nature, some of the grubbiness was transferred to the tie. Of course, Baggy had a smart pair of gloves to cover the dirtiness. Gloves were dearer than the soap, but as the gloves belonged to Herries, the expense was no object. Fortunately, Herries had large hands. There had been occasions when Trimble could have found fault with the largeness of Herries' hand, especially when they were in contact with his ear; but at the moment he felt that there were advantages in all things.

"Um!" said Baggy, surveying himself in the shop-window. "Not so bad—eh, what?" And he swung the gilt-headed stick.

From behind him came a yelp.

"Ow! You silly duffer!"

Baggy gave a jump and blinked round, to find Figgins of the New House standing on the kerb, rubbing his arm.

"You blithering idiot!" said Figgins. "You banged my elbow with that stick! Might have put my eye out with it!"

Baggy twiddled the stick airily and elevated his fat little nose in disdain.

"Fellows shouldn't stand on the kerb like that," he said. "Serve you right!"

"Why, you fat toad!" snorted Figgins. "For two pins I'd knock that topper off!"

"Better not," advised Kerr. "Gussy might object."

Baggy blinked at Figgins, Kerr, and Fatty Wynn. What they were doing in Wayland he did not know, but he had no desire to carry on a conversation that showed signs of becoming personal.

"See you fellows later," he announced. But he hesitated and eyed Figgins warily.

"I suppose you haven't got ten bob on you, Figgy?" "I haven't! And if I had, I wouldn't lead it to you. Does Gussy know you've got his bags on?"

"They're my bags, you duffer!" said Baggy indignantly. He swung his stick, and a howl came from Kerr. But Kerr was not standing that treatment. He snatched the stick and made as though to snap it across his knee. But in time he noticed the knob of it.

"Hallo! This is Gussy's, too!" "It's mine!" hooted Baggy. "Hand it over, you rotter!" "Right! You can have it!" said Kerr. "There you are." Thwack!

"Yoooooop!" Trimble gave a wild yell and leaped into the air, and the New House trio grinned.

"You beast!" howled Trimble. "I don't mean like that!" "Like that, perhaps?" "Yow! Yaroooooh!"

"Well, you asked for the stick!" chuckled Kerr. "And no one can say I'm not a generous chap!" "I shouldn't do it again, though," advised Figgins. "Those trousers won't stand another. They've got as much as they can put up with now."

"I'll hang on to this, though," said Kerr, "in case I see Gussy." But he looked at the stick, and Figgins looked at it, too. Figgins was not at all keen on the idea of walking round Wayland with that cane, and he said so.

"Well, if anything happens to it, Baggy, Gussy will know you had it last. Here it is," said Kerr. "And where are you going?"

"Mind your own business!" Baggy snatched the stick and strolled away down the High Street knowing that Figgins & Co. were watching him. Consequently he did not at once turn into the high building that was his destination; but waddled on and halted in a shop doorway.

Baggy Trimble's manner was, to say the very least, suspicious, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, kept their eyes upon him.

"Wonder what his game is?" mused Kerr. "He's up to something. What shop's that where he's been standing?"

"Looks like a music shop," said Figgins. "But Baggy's not going to buy music. He's out after bigger game, I should say."

The three New House juniors therefore stood and watched. They had time to spare, for they had come into Wayland in order to see the principal of the publishing firm of MacLevy & Hunch, and Mr. Ivor Hunch, although willing to see them later, had said that he had an important appointment at the moment; a client being due to arrive.

The high building which housed the firm of MacLevy & Hunch, was not far from where Baggy stood, and to the surprise of the New House trio, the fat junior rolled towards it.

"He thinks we're not looking," whispered Kerr. "My hat! He's going into our place—I mean, into the place where MacLevy & Hunch are!" "Phew!"

George Figgins looked rather alarmed. "You don't think he's on to our scheme?" he asked anxiously.

But Kerr shook his head. It seemed to him most unlikely that Baggy Trimble should know their reason for being in Wayland. The fact was, that Figgins & Co. had decided to publish a school magazine that should rival and out-shine the School House production, not merely by its contents, but by the manner of its production.

Messrs. MacLevy & Hunch had inserted an advertisement in the local paper, announcing that they printed at cheaper rates than other people, and in superior fashion. That advertisement had caught Figgins' eye, and started an idea in his mighty brain.

"Tom Merry & Co. have no truck with Baggy," said Kerr,

in explanation. "And, anyway, they can't have got on to the idea."

"Well, Baggy isn't likely to publish a mag himself," said Figgins, with a chuckle.

"Hardly!" agreed Kerr. "But there are other firms there. He may be going to see someone else. It's not our bizney, really, anyway. If this fellow Hunch doesn't buck up with his appointment, I shall get fed-up with waiting."

"You still think Hunch is a fraud?" asked Figgins.

Kerr nodded, and smiled.

"I'm afraid I do," he said. "If it is a trick, we steer clear; these fellows have a way of laying traps, you know, and getting people to pay more than they intend to in the long run. If it is a trick, the whole scheme's off!"

"Of course, but we'll see," said Figgins. "Meanwhile, let's give him time. Don't want to prejudice the chap and say he's a fraud, just because he does things cheaper than other people. Let's go and have an ice while we're waiting."

"Hear, hear!" said Fatty Wynn. "Jolly good idea, Figgy! You do get 'em sometimes. This way, you chaps. I know a ripping place."

Fatty Wynn knew all the places where ices were to be obtained in Wayland, and he led the way. Figgins and Kerr, owing to the heat of the afternoon, being only too glad to follow.

CHAPTER 4.

Under False Colours!

LABOURING under the happy delusion that he had fooled Figgins & Co. completely, Baggy marched from hiding to where the tall commissionaire stood outside the offices that housed Messrs. MacLevy & Hunch. Baggy's, or rather, D'Arcy's appointment was with Mr. Hunch. The commissionaire eyed Baggy curiously as the fat youth turned to him, his small nose in the air.

"My man!" Baggy said loftily. "I wish to see Mr. Ivor Hunch!"

"Huh? Mr. Hanch? What name?"

Baggy swelled so much with pride that the fancy waistcoat nearly ended its career there and then. He fumbled in his pocket as though for a card, and then flicked his gloves in the air.

"The Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—don't forget the Honourable," said Baggy Trimble.

The commissionaire looked at him for a moment and then disappeared, while Baggy strutted up and down. Had the swell of St. Jim's

heard that method of announcement, he would probably have collapsed; but, fortunately for Baggy, he could not hear.

A minute later, the fat Fourth-Former was being shown to an office several floors up, the commissionaire having telephoned through to inquire if Mr. Hunch was in.

Mr. Hunch was a stout man with a fat, rather oily face, and small beady eyes that gleamed as they fixed on the fat Fourth-Former.

"The Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy!" he said, with a look of oily satisfaction.

"That's me," said Baggy, and his shifty eyes took in Mr. Hunch at a glance. They might, indeed, have been father and son by appearances, and Baggy gave a grunt of satisfaction. There was nothing about Mr. Hunch that suggested penetrating vision, keen insight, and cautiousness. Rather did he appear likely to over-reach himself with his grasping cupidity.

That was how Baggy weighed it up, but he was not so pleased when he tried to sit down. There was a suspicious sound, and he hurriedly rose.

"Take a chair, Master D'Arcy," suggested Mr. Hunch expansively, shifting his huge cigar from one side of his mouth to the other.

"I'd rather stand," said Baggy, "for the moment. Well, here I am, Mr. Hunch—got your letter, you see."

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"Do sit down," said Mr. Hunch. "We do business petter, hey? A cigarette?" He chuckled and winked an extremely knowing wink.

Baggy Trimble looked at the box of cigarettes and then at Mr. Hunch. Had Arthur Augustus been there he would have waxed indignant, and the sun might have gone down on his wrath. But Baggy had no scruples whatever. He took a cigarette, stuffed it into his fat lips, and then accepted a light from Mr. Hunch. So far, Baggy felt, so good.

"About those articles," he began, with a look at the clock, and another at the door. He wondered when the next train was due in from Rylecombe, so he wanted to get the business through as quickly as possible.

"Yes, yes, about der articles," said Mr. Hunch. "Your name, my dear boy, is of great commercial use. You are der son of Lord Eastwood."

"The Earl of Eastwood," said Baggy hurriedly. He meant to get his money's worth, or rather D'Arcy's.

"The Earl of Eastwood," agreed Mr. Hunch, rubbing his hands. "Just so, my poy. Well, I am prepared to take some articles of yours. Gossip, you know. Just gossip!"

"Rather!" said Baggy. "I know the sort of thing. And how much?"

"That depends. Perhaps five pounds," said Mr. Hunch, shifting his cigar back to its original position. "Of course, we should make a few alterations, very little alterations. Just to make 'em snappy, you know."

"Oh, quite!" said Baggy. "Well, I'm game!"

"And if you know anything about racing——"

Baggy smirked.

"You bet! I'm a knowing bird with horses, Mr. Lunch!"

"Mr. Hunch!"

"I mean Mr. Hunch. Of course, I didn't mean Lunch—I was thinking of tea," said Baggy pointedly. "If we went out and had tea we might chat it over."

Mr. Hunch thought it was early for tea, and he had not missed lunch, either. He had had a very good lunch. But if Baggy thought he needed some tea to set him working, Mr. Hunch was all in favour of the idea. He thought he could see he had a "soft thing" in Baggy.

"By the by," he said, as he pressed a button to summon his office-boy. "You have brought der five pounds I mentioned? Just a deposit, you understand, for der book. Those articles will look well as a book."

Baggy coughed.

"As a matter of fact, I've left the cheque-book on the grand piano," he said. "Awfully sorry, Mr. Hunch. But an I.O.U.—"

Mr. Hunch shook his head sadly. He thought it ought to have been clear that he was not a waste-paper merchant.

"No, I must have der money now, for der publishers to-day," he said, and stroked his nose thoughtfully. He did not add that they might not be there to-morrow, but that was what was in his mind.

He looked rather worried, too, and his frown was anything but friendly.

"Quite an oversight," said Baggy. "But look here. Suppose you knock a pound a week off the articles. I'll take four pounds in advance now!"

Mr. Hunch stood up.

"Vat?"

"Fuf-four pounds," said Baggy anxiously. "Naturally, I shall expect money in advance, and I shall tip you a few winners, you know. You ought to be glad."

Mr. Hunch breathed through his nose. But he calmed down and managed a smile as the office-boy entered.

"My hat and coat, and tell Mr. MacLevy that I have gone to fat a calf," he said that quietly and not for Baggy's benefit. Aloud he added, "I am going to tea with an important contributor!"

Baggy Trimble's fat chest swelled as Mr. Hunch made that announcement—but if the fat Fourth-Former could have read that gentleman's thoughts as he did so, it is probable that most, if not all, of his self-satisfaction would have vanished on the spot.

Messrs. Hunch & MacLevy were not a firm of long-standing. At least, not in their new name. They called themselves Literary Agents, and Mr. Hunch was editor of "Society Snapshots," a paper which had yet to issue its first number. It was, if anything, a particularly movable firm that never settled long, but wandered to fresh fields and pastures new at a moment's notice, if necessary.

Baggy Trimble, even though he had no money with him at the moment, looked well provided with cash, thanks to Gussy's wardrobe and, with his borrowed name, he also sounded prosperous. The fact that he did not immediately step into the spider's parlour was a mere nothing. Many a fly is nervous and shy at the outset and Mr. Hunch, weighing Baggy up, decided that a good tea would just about do it.

"I should mention nothing of dis to your father," he warned. "A little surprise, eh?"

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"Rather!" said Baggy. "And, I say, Mr. Hunch!"

"Hunch!"

"Well, Hunch, then. I say, the fellows are apt to rag at school. You know what fellows are." Baggy eyed Mr. Hunch shiftyly, a look which Mr. Hunch returned with interest; he was even shifty. "And the fact is," Baggy went on, "some of them might come here pretending to be me. There's a skinny sort of chap who swanks about no end. You want to be careful of him. He's called D'Arcy rather a lot. I wouldn't like you to be taken in!"

"Me? Taken in?" Mr. Hunch laughed. "No, no, my friend, I'll be ready for him. Yes, yes. He will go out quick. Very quick!"

Baggy smirked and swaggered out after Mr. Hunch into the High Street. He ceased to swagger when he caught sight of the slim figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the distance.

"I say, buck up!" he said earnestly to Mr. Hunch. "I'm in a hurry. Here's the Metropole. How about this?"

The last vision Baggy had as they entered the vestibule of the Metropole Hotel, was of Arthur Augustus arguing with the commissionaire, and he heaved a sigh of relief. Things might not come right in the end, but it was the present that mattered to Baggy. Mr. Hunch prided himself on his cuteness, and there was no doubt whatever, that if he got out of that tea under ten shillings, he would be a very clever man!

CHAPTER 5.

D'Arcy the Second!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY smoothed on his gloves, tilted his hat to the correct angle, and strolled across the quadrangle of St. Jim's. He glanced casually at the cricket nets where a few seniors were trouncing the bowling of some fags. He looked up at the clock-tower, nodded to himself, and swung his malacca cane jauntily.

Arthur Augustus was feeling jaunty. It was not every fellow who received a special commission from a real live editor to write articles for his paper. It was not every fellow who could write such articles, of course. But Arthur Augustus was one of them. True, his efforts in that direction in the class-room had only resulted in caustic remarks from Mr. Lathom, together with a liberal use of red ink. But that was not how things were done professionally. It was possible that there would be much usage of blue pencil in the editorial office when D'Arcy's articles were accepted—if ever they were.

But such heavy thoughts did not weigh upon the noble mind of Arthur Augustus. He looked up at the sky and found it fair. He looked at the playing-fields which were green and pleasant. Already the swell of St. Jim's saw his name in great headlines, saw crowds gathering round the bookstalls to get their copy of "Society Snapshots."

As he reached the gates, he glanced at Taggles, the porter, and Taggles, with an eye to a possible tip from the aristocrat of the Fourth, touched his hat and actually took his pipe from his mouth. Taggles inwardly reflected that you never know your luck. A fellow who was walking about smiling might easily feel in a generous mood.

"Afternoon, Master D'Arcy! Nice afternoon!"

"Yaas, wathah, Taggles!"

"Anything I kin do for you, Master D'Arcy? Always ready to oblige a generous young gent——"

"I was wondering if you ever wead 'Society Snapshots,' deah boy?"

Taggles blinked.

"I takes in 'Tipster's Topics,' Master D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus shuddered and shook his head.

"Bai Jove! It's nothing like that. But I should stongly wecommend you to take that papah in the future, Taggles. A weally fine papah, you know! Only the finest contwibutahs."

"Ho indeed!"

Taggles resumed his seat and grunted. He did not want to take in any paper or to be taken in by them, for that matter. And he was not at all interested in Society.

"Theah are heaps of useful things a fellow can learn frowm well-informed contwibutahs, you know."

"Ho!"

Taggles was obviously not a kindly subject, but Arthur Augustus persevered. After all, from small beginnings one could work up. Taggles could do with a little improvement in his personal attire, although, of course, the subject was too delicate and too personal to be immediately broached.

He wore trousers that were undeniably baggy, and looked to some extent like Oxford bags. His waistcoat, too, was not "fancy" but fearsome. Besides, it had sleeves to it. Of course, Taggles could hardly be expected to strut about in the manner of a glass of fashion

or even a mould of form. But there was no harm in trying.

"Vewy useful tips for a fellow about his twousahs," said D'Arcy.

"What's wrong with me trousers?" demanded Taggles, eyeing with contempt Arthur Augustus' immaculately-creased and pressed nether garments.

D'Arcy fumbled in his pocket and Taggles brightened. "Take this coin," said D'Arcy, "and buy a copy of next month's 'Society Snapshots.' Not this month's, wemembah, but next month's. You may keep the change," he added gracefully. "And I twust you will sit in fwont of your lodge weadin' it."

Taggles looked at the half-a-crown, scratched his head and then looked at the immaculate Arthur Augustus as that youth sauntered out of the school gates.

"Dotty!" said Taggles. "Still, it's a good un!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy ambled to the station in leisurely fashion, since haste tended to spoil the repose

Baggy Trimble paused to survey himself in a shop window and swung his gilt-headed walking-stick. "Ow! You silly duffer!" Baggy gave a jump as a yell sounded behind him, and he blinked round to find Figgins of the New House rubbing his arm. "You blithering idiot!" said Figgins. (See Chapter 3.)



that stamped the caste of Vere de Vere. Had he hurried, he would have caught the train; as it was, he arrived just in time to see it steaming from the station.

However, with money burning in his pockets, he did not give the matter a second thought, but hired a taxi, reaching Wayland just as Trimble was making his exit with Mr. Hunch.

Having paid the taxi-man D'Arcy turned to the tall commissioner who eyed him thoughtfully.

"What name?" said the commissioner, when D'Arcy had announced that he wished to visit Messrs. MacLevy & Hunch.

"D'Arcy!"

The commissioner looked at him and then laughed.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Weally! I desire to see Mr. Hunch, and I see no cause for laughter."

But the commissioner outside the offices of Messrs. Hunch & MacLevy had a hearty laugh, and he roared at Arthur Augustus as though this was the greatest joke in the world.

"I wegard you as a wottah," said D'Arcy. "Pway take a message to Mr. Hunch."

"Haw, haw!" laughed the commissioner. "So you're Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas wathah! Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. I have a special appointment with my editah!"

The commissioner shook his head.

"Well, we've had one. And he was the Honourable Master D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his monocle and gave the commissioner a cold stare that should have withered him on the spot. But its only effect was to increase that burly individual's amusement.

"I wegard that statement as absurd," said D'Arcy.

"Pway let me pass. I do not wish to be wuff, but if you do not stand aside, I shall be compelled to use force."

The commissioner stared at the swell of St. Jim's.

"You'll what?"

"Use force!"

Arthur Augustus was slim, but his figure was deceptive. Many a fellow at St. Jim's had had the shock of his life when he had met D'Arcy's left. Even George Alfred Grundy, of the Shell, a mighty fighting man, did not go out of his way to encounter that left. But the commission-

aire, standing six foot, broad and muscular, grinned cheerfully.

"You'll get hurt if you start any games, young feller-me-lad, and the crease will go out of them lovely bags. Run away and play."

Arthur Augustus went pink, and he pushed back his cuffs. He danced round the commissioner in warlike manner.

"You uttah wottah! Put up your hands!"

Several passers-by stopped, and there were chuckles as the commissioner leaned forward and tipped D'Arcy's hat over his nose.

Arthur Augustus fairly snorted with rage. He removed his hat, peeled off his gloves, and then handed them to a small boy.

"Pway hold those, deah boy. And pewwaps this stick."

The boy took them gladly.

"Better take your coat off, guv'nor," he said. "It won't do it much good when you're rilling in the gutter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd apparently regarded the affair as a great joke.

"Now," said D'Arcy. "Put up your hands! I wegard you as a wottah. Take that!"

"That" was no light blow, and it took the commissioner rather off his guard. He staggered slightly, as a liner might in meeting a fishing smack. He recovered his balance a second later. He did not condescend to fight Arthur Augustus, however, but grasped him by the waist and raised him on high.

"Bai Jove! Welease me, you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The swell of St. Jim's might not see anything to laugh at, but the onlookers evidently did. They roared.

Arthur Augustus struggled vainly though furiously while the commissioner looked for a suitable spot to throw him.

"Tuppence you can't land him in the Stores' doorway over the road," said someone, and there was another guffaw from the crowd.

A more humiliating position for the scion of the D'Arcys could not have been imagined. A D'Arcy had fought at Hastings; a D'Arcy had led the attack at Agincourt; while in the Field of Cloth of Gold it had been a D'Arcy who had taken the first prize in the Concours d'Elegance. No wonder D'Arcy went crimson.

"Wescue—wescue, St. Jim's!"

In Wayland that cry was not likely to be of much avail, for even on half-holidays it was not crowded with St. Jim's fellows. But fortunately for D'Arcy, Figgins, Kerr and Wynn were there. Having consumed their ices, Figgins and Kerr were now dragging their chum away from a pastrycook's shop opposite when the cry went up, and they released him at once.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Kerr, looking round. "Baggy's in trouble!"

"No, it's Gussy!" gasped Figgins, glancing across the road. "My giddy aunt—look! Come on, Kerr!"

"Right! Come on, Fatty!"

"Coming," said Fatty, "in a minute, you chaps!"

And he dashed into the pastrycook's for a steak-and-kidney pie while Figgins and Kerr ran across the roadway.

The commissioner might have thrown Gussy then, but the rescue came in time. Kerr tackled the man, and Figgins caught Arthur Augustus by the arm.

"Wescue—ow!"

He was rescued well enough, for he landed out of the commissioner's arms on the pavement with a bump, while Figgins collapsed beside him. Kerr was now in custody, the commissioner had him by the ear.

"Wescue!" said Arthur Augustus, and tucking in his head, charged like a battering-ram at the commissioner, who toppled over backwards in the doorway with a grunt. It looked then as though there might be a riot; but the small boy with D'Arcy's hat, stick, and gloves, gave the warning, dropping his precious burden and bolting.

"Oh, Gussy!" said Figgins. "Fancy starting street rows at your age!"

"I'll give you in charge for assault and battery," sported the commissioner, when he had regained some of his breath. "A-comin' 'ere under false pretences—"

"Bai Jove! Figgay, deah boy, tell him who I am—"

Figgins looked rather surprised, but he obliged.

"He's a tame ass," he said. "No harm in him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wottah! Tell him my name!"

"Gussy," said Kerr. "The noble scion of the house of D'Arcy. If all the heirs die off he'll be one day sleeping in the House of Lords, or giving the Lord Chancellor a 'feahful thwashin'!"

The commissioner's jaw dropped.

"You—you're Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The one and only Gussy!"

They had just answered when the local policeman came into sight, and Kerr, with great presence of mind, slipped a half-crown into the commissioner's hand.

A minute later the three of them were in the building, followed a second later by Fatty Wynn.

"So you got more grub, you fat tub!" said Kerr wrathfully. "After we told you not to."

"But I say," Fatty Wynn protested, "I thought Gussy might be in trouble, you know. Nothing like a steak-and-kidney pie for pulling a fellow round."

"It's pulled you round often enough," admitted Figgins, "or made you round, anyway. But I say, Gussy—Whoa there—"

Arthur Augustus, who had started to mount the stairs, turned back.

"Yaas, deah boy?"

"Whither bound?"

"To see my editah, deah boy."

Figgins and Kerr looked at each other.

"Hunch and MacLevy?" asked the leader of the New House, turning to Arthur Augustus again.

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"Yaas, wathah," answered the swell of St. Jim's in surprise. "But I fail to see how you are awah of that fact, Figgins."

Figgins, instead of answering, gave his chum another look and received a shake of the head in response. What the meaning of their mysterious looks were Arthur Augustus could not guess.

Naturally, he did not know that they were wondering whether his visit to Messrs. Hunch & MacLevy was in any way connected with their scheme; but he looked so innocent that suspicion was allayed.

"Go ahead, Gustavus," said Figgins. "But don't exhaust Mr. Hunch, and you'd better cover up that waistcoat or you'll blind him."

Arthur Augustus surveyed the New House trio frigidly, and then, setting his jacket into position, he marched on to the sanctum where Mr. MacLevy was presiding in the absence of his senior partner, or perhaps more truly, his chief confederate.

But of any confederacy Arthur Augustus had not the slightest suspicion. He was not given to suspicions. The soul of honour himself, he was inclined to credit all others with good intentions, and to take kind offers at their face value. He would not even have suspected Mr. MacLevy of duplicity.

Mr. MacLevy, in fact, was all joy and jollity. As befitted a contrast in partners, he was tall and slim, but with a well-developed nose that indicated his Hebraic extraction.

"Master D'Arcy?" he said genially. "Delighted to meet you."

Arthur Augustus had been going to say a word or two about his reception by the commissioner, but on second thoughts he decided to get to business at once.

"I trust I am not late for my appointment, Mr. MacLevy."

"Not at all. Not at all. Pray be seated, Master D'Arcy. A delightful afternoon! Delightful!"

"Yaas, wathah! I was wathah surprised to get your lettah, Mr. MacLevy. I had no ideah I was so well known."

Mr. MacLevy looked politely incredulous.

"If it is not impertinent, Master D'Arcy, I may say that you are the talk of Wayland. Many a time I have heard men ask who you were—and particularly the name of your tailor."

Arthur Augustus was not above a little mild flattery. He pulled down his waistcoat and flicked a speck of dust from his jacket sleeve.

"Then pewwaps I may be able to use my influence in the district. I cannot help feelin' that there is woom for impvovement. I actually saw a fellow weawin' turned-up twousahs with a double-bweasted jacket."

"Disgraceful!" said Mr. MacLevy, moving hurriedly out of sight behind the desk. "Appalling! Well, Mr. D'Arcy, I am convinced that now is the time for all good men—that is to say," he corrected himself, "now is the time for men of good taste to use the power of their personality and the force of their influence to sway the minds of men into smoother channels so far as sartorial matters are concerned."

Mr. MacLevy smacked his lips and noted the good effect of these words.

"Yaas, wathah! As a mattah of fact, more fellows now are payin' attention to their clobber than last yeah, you know. It might be wathah a wippin' ideah to win a special paper, and give away fwee patterns for fancy waistcoats. Designs, you know—"

"Oh—ah—er—yes!" said Mr. MacLevy. "Quite—quite! But these articles of yours will appear in 'Society Snapshots,' a paper which I need hardly add, Master D'Arcy, is read by all cultured and refined people. Your articles will be read the world over!"

"Yaas! I want to be wead!" nodded Arthur Augustus.

Mr. MacLevy started.

"You want to be wed? But you are rather young," he ejaculated, unable to hide his amazement. "May I ask the name of the happy lady?"

CHAPTER 6.

Thrown Out!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS' monocle fell from his eye, and he blinked at Mr. MacLevy as if he could hardly believe his noble ears. His beautiful accent was always getting him into traps like this.

"Bai—bai Jove! I said wead!"

"Just so," said Mr. MacLevy, scratching his head and then nodding. "Wedding bells and so on?"

Arthur Augustus crimsoned.

"Bai Jove! I'm afwaid you misunderstood me. I did not mean wed in the sense of mawwed; but wead like a book."

Mr. MacLevy, who could read Arthur Augustus like a book, saw that clearly enough now, and he laughed.

"I see what you mean. Read, yes. My little mistake,

Ha, ha, ha! My little mistake! I must toddle off to see the Duke of— Well, perhaps I ought not to mention names, but you may guess. He is doing a series of snappy racing articles for me."

"Bai Jove! I twust I shall not have to mention wacin'." "Oh, no, no! That will be all right. You will write your articles, and, of course, they may need sub-editing here and there—here and there, to make them suitable for the Press, you know."

"Yaas, wathah! I don't mind that, of course. But be suah the pwinters are vewy careful with the manuscripts. It would be howwid if the pwinters gave the measurement wound the knee as twenty-two instead of twenty-one-and-a-half."

Mr. MacLevy looked stern. "Any printers guilty of such gross negligence and carelessness would be sacked on the spot! On the spot! Yes. Master D'Arcy, we are very strict here! But you have nothing to fear on that point, nothing at all. Just turn in your articles, and they will be printed and a proof sent to you for correction. By the way, here is some Indian ink."

If you care to sign on this cardboard strongly, you understand, it can be reproduced at the foot of your article. And if you have brought that photograph I requested—"

The photograph was there. It showed Arthur Augustus in all his glory, and Mr. MacLevy nodded with approval.

He looked at D'Arcy measuringly. He had twinkling eyes, and a queer sense of humour; but apart from his eyes he was serious enough now.

"There is still the matter of your book to be discussed, Master D'Arcy. I think I mentioned that an initial deposit of five pounds would be necessary—"

"Yaas, wathah! I have been thinkin' of titles, you know. How about 'The Glass of Fashion,' or, pewwaps, the 'Mould of Form'?"

"Or the 'Observer of all Observers'?" nodded Mr. MacLevy. "Well, we can talk of that later. At present, I must pay the registration fees, and so on. I'm sure your book will be very readable. We shall print the articles, you understand, in book form."

Anyone else might have been inclined to ask how much
(Continued on next page.)



Q. Where are the Martello Towers?

A. These, Tom Berry, of Winchester, are small circular forts which are situated at intervals along the east and south-east coasts. Originally they were built as defences against the threatened invasion of England by the great Napoleon. The name given them is supposed to be that of a certain fort in Corsica, which was captured by our troops in the year 1794.

Q. What are the greatest monuments in the world?

A. The mighty pyramids near Cairo in Egypt. The most wonderful of them is the Great Pyramid of Cheops, which was designed to last for ever and protect the remains of one of the Egyptian kings. Already seven thousand years have passed since this great pyramid was built, and it seems as though time has hardly damaged it at all. The height of it is greater than St. Paul's in London, and it



Thousands of years old—but still standing: The Pyramids in Egypt.

is said that 100,000 slaves helped in its construction. How they got the huge blocks of stone into position is still a mystery, and the lining blocks of granite inside are fitted so perfectly that you cannot insert the blade of a penknife between them. No wonder the pyramids are named among the Seven Wonders of the World!

Q. What is a sphenodon?

A. This, Charlie S., is a lizard of New Zealand. Its great peculiarity is that it has an extra eye which is near the middle

of its forehead, though it is not believed to have good sight with it. Some scientists believe that even man himself in the dim, bygone ages had a central eye which later became separated into two.

Q. What is the best way to make a coat last?

A. Obviously, Billy H., by making the trousers and vest first.

Q. Who was the scorer of the greatest number of centuries in first class cricket in one season?

A. No trouble at all, Ted Widgeon. I am always pleased to receive such an appreciative letter from a sportsman, even though it contains more than thirty questions. The one above, which is of general interest, I answer herewith: The scorer in question was good old Jack Hobbs. He knocked up sixteen centuries in 1925.

Q. How does one tie a bowline?

A. I am glad that Alfie Washburn has asked me this question, because it gives me a chance to prove my nautical knowledge. The three diagrams will show him and all others interested how to tie this useful knot in a better way than can be explained by words.

Q. Where is the Patent Office?

A. The Patent Office, London, W.C.2, would find it, Ernest Muttley. Thank you for enclosing the diagram of your patent spiral pin for the easy removal of winkles. Whether after you have registered the patent you will make a fortune with it I cannot say. I am a scholar, not a prophet. I should, however, think you would have an equal chance of so doing with the fellow who has just invented a folding motor bike that by the addition of rollers can be used by mother as a mangle on washing day.

Q. Who were the Horse Marines?

A. Franky Webb, of Manchester, in an interesting letter written on the paper lid of a jam jar, states that after telling some chums how he had won the hundred yards egg-and-spoon race in nine seconds flat, was told to tell it to the Horse Marines. "But I do not know their address," complains Franky. The Horse Marines, Franky Webb, were the 17th

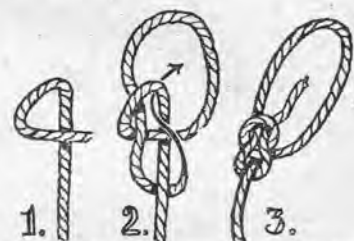
Lancers. The regiment obtained the nickname through once having done duty as marines on board the British frigate, H.M.S. Hermione, during passage to the West Indies in the year 1796. By the way, Franky, may I make a request of you in return? Would you mind next time removing all the blackberry jam from the pot cover before inditing your next epistle?

Q. Why is Aldgate so called?

A. This well-known district in the East End of London is so called because one of several gates, or arches, built during the Roman occupation stood there. It was from these various gates at Aldgate, Moorgate and other places, that the great roads built by the Romans wound their way from London in ancient times.

Q. Who was Gorgonzola?

A. No, William, you were somewhat mistaken in putting in your council school examination paper that Gorgonzola was a great Italian general who led the troops against the Kurds shortly after the fall of Greece in Turkey. Gorgonzola never led any troops—except to say harsh words. It is, in fact, a cheese, William, and I expect you have often seen it in captivity in grocery shops.



A "knotty" problem: How to tie the bowline, in three phases.

Q. Why can a bird fly?

A. Again I hear a chorus of yells: "Because it has got wings." True, but listen—there is more in this than meets the eye, as the pup said when he fell down the drain. Having made a profound study of birds besides almost every other subject under the sun, I can give you no less than six other reasons. 1. Besides having wings, a bird is built for flight by having a peculiarly light body and small legs. 2. It has large lungs. 3. Its body has air spaces, such as in the bones, which are thus rendered lighter than in the case of animals. 4. The torpedo shape of its body is especially useful for flight. 5. It has feathers which are oiled to keep off the rain and so prevent weight of water hampering it. 6. It has huge muscles in proportion to the size of its body.

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pay would be given for work done, but Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not likely to harbour such a sordid consideration. He was concerned more with the prospect of reclothing the world. A new Sartor Resartus, but written with a chattier vein than Carlyle had even been able to muster. A better world would commence with the day of publication. Turned-up trousers would be furtively turned down, and men who had worn their trousers more or less than twenty-one and a half inches round the knee would go crimson with shame, and hurry at once to the nearest tailor.

That was how Arthur Augustus looked at the matter; but Mr. MacLevy's view differed slightly. In fact it differed in most respects.

"I have here an agreement which you must sign. Just a mere agreement," said Mr. MacLevy lightly. "They have these things. A mere matter of form, and I'll get you the receipt for the five pounds."

Arthur Augustus, having signed his name on the piece of cardboard, signed with equal readiness the sheet of paper that Mr. MacLevy pushed to him.

"You won't want to read all that," said the man, patting Arthur Augustus on the back. "Too small print for one thing, and full of technical terms. There's the receipt for the five pounds, Master D'Arcy, and let us have the articles as soon as you can. Soon as you can, you know."

"Yaas, wathah. Pewwaps the book-jacket had bettah be black with white lettewin', you know. A tasteful covah, good paper, and first-class pwintin'."

"The book?" Mr. MacLevy seemed to have lost his interest in the book. "Oh, yes! Something like that. Something to catch the eye. Green, with blue lettering."

"Bai Jove! I wathah fancy that would be too bwight!"

"H'm! It might be an extra charge for special lettering. Still, you'd make it out of the circulation. You ought to get a few thousand out of it."

"Gweat Scott!"

"So what is a little initial outlay?" Mr. MacLevy asked.

It might have occurred to Arthur Augustus to wonder why Mr. MacLevy, keen business man that he was, did not pay for publication himself, and so receive the thousand profit. D'Arcy, however, was rather too dazed thinking of the thousands to worry about such a consideration. He was not a business man. Besides, was it not an accepted fact that literary folk, amongst which he was now to be numbered, were careless in such matters, temperamental, artistic, and scorning the glittering coin that tempted the MacLevys so irresistibly?

"Then everything is all wight?" asked the swell of St. Jim's.

"Everything!" said Mr. MacLevy, bowing low. D'Arcy took his departure and halted outside the door to adjust his hat. But a thought struck him, and he returned to the room, opening the door after waiting for a reply to his knock.

There was no reply, for a very good reason. Mr. MacLevy was engaged in leaning back in his chair roaring helplessly with laughter.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Bai Jove! Weally, deah boy!"

"Ho, ho—" Mr. MacLevy, conscious of D'Arcy's presence, sat up in confusion. "Oh—er—just a joke I read here—just a joke—"

"Oh, I see!" nodded Arthur Augustus, without the least suspicion that he was the joke. "I came to see if you could tell me the approximate date of publication of my book."

Mr. MacLevy nearly had hysterics.

"The— Oh, yes, the book! September the 31st, very probably."

"Thank you! That will be after the vac."

And Arthur Augustus, somewhat puzzled still by the laughter, went his way thoughtfully. Later it might dawn upon him that there were only thirty days in September. But at the moment he was busy with his thoughts—thoughts of glaring headlines—fame—and the astonishment and wonderment of St. Jim's. A Chinese proverb warns us that a transaction is not completed until it is to the satisfaction of all concerned; but the reverse, alas, is not true. This transaction was as yet to the satisfaction of all concerned; but it was by no means completed.

But so radiant was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, that Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, who were waiting on the stairs, nudged each other as he approached.

"The great Gussy!" murmured Figgins.

"The one and only!" said Kerr, in an awed voice.

D'Arcy adjusted his monocle and surveyed them.

"Theah is a wathah wippin' book to be published this yeah, deah boys. I twust you will buy it."

"The 'Holiday Annual'?" asked Wynn.

"Not at all. That is a wippin' book; but I was not wewewin' to that. I was wewewin' to Sartor Wesartus."

"And the same to you," said Figgins. "I'm surprised at you, Gussy," he added sternly, "using such language!"

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"It's Latin, deah boy, for the Tailah wetailahed."

"You shouldn't trust these retail men; go straight to the wholesaler and cut out the middleman's profit," said Kerr sagely.

"Weally, deah boy, I fail to undahstand. Oh, you are wottin', you wottah!" The swell of St. Jim's looked the Scottish junior up and down. "You have vewy much to learn fwom such a book. It is to be w'itten—ahem!—by a fellow who knows what he is w'itin' about."

"Oh," said Figgins, in a tone of disappointment. "I thought you might be going to write it!"

"Weally, Figgay—"

"It's one of Carlyle's!" chuckled Kerr.

"This isn't!" said D'Arcy. "And I wegard your wemark as wude, Figgay. I'm feelin' too warm now, otherwise I should feel bound to administah a feahful thwashin'! How-evah, this is a bettah book than Carlyle's, you know. Pewwaps you will have a pwesentation copy sent to you."

"This is too much," said Kerr faintly. "Oh, Gussy. Autographed by the author?"

"Pewwaps, deah boy!"

"I feel quite touched," grinned Figgins.

"Better than being touched to buy a copy later on, though," said Kerr, with a shake of the head. "Although a first edition of this sort ought to be worth pots in years to come. Seriously, though, Gussy. You're not really writing a book?"

"Pewwaps, deah boy—pewwaps not!"

Kerr looked rather thoughtful then. He had an old head on young shoulders, and there were times when his friend George Figgins regarded him as something of a marvel.

When Augustus, with a light, airy wave of the hand had departed, Figgins looked at his chum.

"What's wrong, Kerr? No harm in Gussy's bringing out a book, if some idiot is ass enough to publish it?"

"That's just it," said Kerr. "I remembered reading a case of someone paying for a book to be published, and then discovering that they had only paid part of what they had agreed—the agreement being in small print on a complicated form; and as they could not pay the rest they forfeited their deposit."

"Oh, but Gussy wouldn't be such a chump—"

"Wouldn't he? Candidly, I've had my doubts about this MacLevy firm, you know."

"But they can't play any tricks with our mag," said Figgins. "They're going to print it for us. We're going to pay them. Where's the trick?"

"Exactly. Where's the trick?" asked Kerr. "That's what I mean to find out, my son. I'm beginning to smell a rat."

"But, look here," said Figgins, "I don't see anything in it. Do you, Fatty?"

"Eh?"

"I said, do you see anything in it?"

"Well, I haven't looked yet," said Fatty Wynn. "But there's supposed to be some kidney and some steak—"

"Oh!"

"And some gravy, too," said Fatty Wynn innocently.

"You silly chump!" howled Figgins.

"Oh, I say, Figgay!"

Figgins snorted.

"You blithering blitherer! Oh, come on, Kerr! All this chump can think about is steak-and-kidney pies!"

And George Figgins mounted the stairs, Kerr following, while Fatty Wynn, the steak-and-kidney pie under his arm, brought up the rear. At the head of the stairs they held a serious consultation. If Kerr's suspicions were correct, then they had no wish for their magazine to be printed by Mr. MacLevy. It was, as Figgins had said, hard to see what tricks that astute gentleman could play; but that would not prevent the tricks being played.

"You'd better go," decided Figgins, stroking his chin. "We don't all want to blow in, of course. I might dot the chap on the nose. But you've got tact, Kerr, and a jolly good head."

Kerr nodded thoughtfully, and then went across the corridor to see if Mr. MacLevy were there to be interviewed. He was, and Kerr disappeared from sight.

Figgins and Fatty Wynn wandered away down the stairs; but a few minutes later sounds of voices came from Mr. MacLevy's room, and they exchanged looks.

"Hallo! Kerr's giving him gyp," said Figgins. "This looks like trouble."

"Hope he tells the rotter what he thinks," said Fatty Wynn. "My hat, Figgay! What's that? Hark!"

Crash!

"You swindler—"

Figgins and Fatty Wynn heard their chum's voice raised in anger, followed by sounds of struggling, and they leaped up the stairs three at a time.

"My hat! They're scrapping! Here, this is where we butt in," said Figgins, pushing back his cuffs.

But it was not Figgins who butted in. It was Kerr who

was butted out. The door of Mr. MacLevy's room being flung open for the purpose.

Just as Figgins and Fatty Wynn rushed forward that door opened, and Kerr came hurtling forth like a bullet from a gun.

Biff!

Over went Figgins, with Kerr on top of him, and Fatty Wynn went back against the banisters, to go sliding down to the floor, with a gasp like a punctured balloon.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Figgins. "My jaw!"

"My elbow!" groaned Kerr.

Kerr's collar was wrenched almost off, his tie was under one ear, and his nose was swollen. But Kerr was not beaten. He jumped up and ran at the door.

Figgins and Fatty Wynn joined in, but it was no good. The door was locked, and there was no admittance, even on business. There was no doubt that the three juniors meant business, either.

"The rotter!" said Kerr. "He's an absolute swindler! I bowled him out. I pretended to poke fun at Gussy, and the chap practically admitted he was swindling him. Then he saw that I'd got him measured, and he ordered me out. Naturally, I refused to go, and then—"

"Then he buzzed you out!"

"He—not he!" said Kerr witheringly. "He couldn't throw out a chicken. He got some hefty chap in the other room to do it. My giddy aunt! He ought to have the police on him. One thing, we can warn Gussy!"

"Rather! No sense in staying here," nodded Figgins. "You'll want a brush-up before we get back for tea."

"Still, I got him on the boko!" said Kerr, with a faint smile. "Not that a chap could miss it, of course; but he'll have something to remember me by."

And, with that rather faint consolation, the three chums left the building, their hopes of splendidly printed magazines gone. But they could still warn Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and that they meant to do as soon as possible.

CHAPTER 7.

Awkward for Trimble!

BAGGY TRIMBLE ambled along the lane towards St. Jim's, with a well-fed, satisfied expression on his face. The tea that Mr. Hunch had "stood" him had been excellent. What was more wonderful was the fact that Mr. Hunch had "stood" Baggy at all. But then, he had been labouring under the happy misapprehension that Baggy was the pigeon that had arrived for plucking.

During tea they had talked business, and Baggy had agreed to write articles. He saw no harm in that; also he had agreed to accept a fiver for each article, which seemed even better. Of course, it might leak out that he had been an impostor, but he thought it unlikely that Mr. Hunch would take any action. Even if he wrote no articles and received no pay, he had had a tip-top tea, which was something.

At the moment Baggy held Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's hat in his hand, and his waistcoat was unbuttoned. Grunting and puffing, he rolled up to the school gates at last. He found his way barred by Blake, Herries, and Digby of the Fourth. Funds were low, and the three juniors were waiting for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. They stared at Baggy as he came up.

"Baggy in fine raiment," said Digby. "But whose? That fat rotter's been burgling a wardrobe!"

"I say, you chaps," said Baggy, as he limped painfully nearer, "make way for a fellow."

The juniors did not make way. Their looks were suspicious and anything but friendly, and Baggy blinked at them uneasily.

"Can't come into school with a waistcoat undone!" said Blake severely. "My hat! You don't mean to say you've been walking down the lane like that?"

"Oh, I say, you know, it's hot! Besides, I've had a good tea," said Baggy plaintively.

"I can see that," nodded Blake. "But why did you bring that napkin home with you? That's stealing, Fatty!" Trimble stared.

"This isn't a napkin; it's a waistcoat!" he snorted.

"Whose hat is that?" demanded Herries.

"Mine, you know. I'm always a fellow to have good hats. Nothing cheap or shoddy about me." Digby snatched the hat and looked inside.

"Gussy's!" he remarked. "Thought so! I'd better take charge of this."

"Look here, you rotter——"

"And whose is the waistcoat?" asked Blake, with interest. "My hat! I know it. That's Gussy's, too."

Baggy Trimble bestowed a ferocious glare on the chums of Study No. 6.

"Are you going to let me pass or not?" he demanded.

"Not!"

"You—you rotters! I'm jolly hungry! I've walked miles and miles. I had to come part of the way by bus to dodge that rotter D'Arcy!"

"Oh, you've been dodging Gussy?" asked Blake. "I don't wonder, if you've been wearing his wonderful wardrobe. Is that his jacket?"

"No!" roared Baggy. "Mind your own business!"

Baggy made a valiant effort to pass through the gateway, but in vain.

"Look here," said the fat junior anxiously, "Gussy will be along in a minute!"

"Good!"

"You know what a funny chap he is," whined Baggy. "He may not like my having his hat. Of course, it was an accident. I thought it was mine naturally."

"Naturally!" chuckled Blake. "Well, we'll help you out with the explanations. But I'm looking at that jacket. It seems familiar. That button off the cuff, you know. I seem to remember that being pulled off."

"Same here!" nodded Digby. "And I think I know whose it is. Lowther!"

He looked towards the tuckshop and called Monty Lowther, who was there sampling ginger-beer. Lowther came at the call, and Baggy Trimble gave a gasp of dismay.

"I say. Don't be cads, you know," he urged. "I want my tea."

But Blake did not move. He held Trimble by the arm and Monty Lowther came towards the group at the gates.

"Hallo, Baggy!" he exclaimed cheerily. "Do your waistcoat up, old top, and wipe the jam from your mouth—not on the waistcoat. Use the sleeve of your jacket. Much more refined, you know."

(Continued on next page.)

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"I've got an appointment," said Baggy. "Let me pass. Blake, you rotter."

"Roll him on the ground," suggested Monty Lowther. "That'll teach him not to walk about like that. Can't have a St. Jim's fellow doing that. After all, there is a limit. And Baggy's it."

"If you roll me on the ground, you'll spoil the jacket," warned Baggy. "And don't blame me if—I m-mean—" Lowther jumped.

"You awful burglar!" he howled. "That's my jacket. Take it off."

"I can't—"
"Take it off," howled Lowther. "Hold him, Blake, while I get that jacket off."

Baggy Trimble backed away; but he had no chance to escape. He struggled wildly, until a prod in the chest finished his resistance, and Monty Lowther peeled off the jacket.

Baggy Trimble in his shirt sleeves looked a queerer figure than ever.

"May as well have Gussy's waistcoat," said Blake. "Get it, Dig."

Digby obtained possession of the waistcoat and Baggy Trimble gave a frightened howl.

"Ow! You awful cads! Gimme back that waistcoat!"

"They're Gussy's trousers," said Monty Lowther thoughtfully, shaking his head.

Baggy Trimble gave a gasp of terror at that, and made a run at the group in the gateway. Then he drew back, as he saw Kildare of the Sixth walking across the quadrangle. If Baggy Trimble entered the school without waistcoat or jacket there would be trouble.

"Still, you've got a pretty pair of braces," said Lowther. "Whose are they?"

"You leave my braces alone," hooted Baggy, in alarm. "How can I go into the school like this?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You rotters. I can't go in like this."

"Then we ought to be publicly thanked," said Lowther good humouredly, now that he had his jacket. "We've done a good turn for the day, you men. Never again can Baggy darken our doors."

Baggy Trimble blinked in horror up and down the lane, and then glared at the fellows in the gateway.

"Here comes Gussy," remarked Digby. "I hope, for Baggy's sake, he doesn't recognise his bags. Come on, you fellows."

Baggy danced with excitement and agitation.

"You rotters. Bring me some clobber. How can I come in like this?"

"I never was good at riddles," said Blake. "But I'll think out an answer and send you a postcard if you like. How can Baggy enter the school like that?"

"Only by waiting until it's dark," chuckled Digby, "and climbing the wall."

"I can't wait here until dark. I'm jolly hungry!"

"Well, eat your braces," said Lowther humorously. "One pheasant makes a good meal, but surely, Baggy, your appetite could make do with a brace!"

And the four juniors strolled into the quadrangle and made for the tuckshop in anticipation of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's arrival. Arthur Augustus came at his own pace, but he came.

He did not, however, enter the school. He stared at Baggy Trimble and stared yet again, as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

"Lend me your jacket, Gussy," implored Baggy Trimble. "I say, be a sport. How can I go into the school like this?"

"I regard you as a woffah, Baggy. Bai Jove! Suppose some gals come by while you are standin' about in your bwaces!"

"Do you think I'm doing it for fun?" hooted Baggy.

Arthur Augustus sniffed. Even fellows less fastidious than he might have found fault with Baggy's attire.

"I regard you as a wank outsider, Twimble, and I've a good mind to give you a fearful thwashin'. Put your coat on at once."

"You—you—think I shouldn't put it on if I had it?"

"Bai Jove! You surely have not been walkin' in the lane without a jacket or a waistcoat?" gasped the swell of St. Jim's in horror.

Baggy Trimble gave it up. He was speechless. He had for one desperate moment, thought of snatching the jacket from D'Arcy's shoulders; but even desperation could not give the fat Baggy enough courage for that.

"Look here, Gussy, don't leave me like this!" urged Baggy. "Bring me a coat and jacket, there's a good chap. I'd do the same for you, you know."

But Arthur Augustus gave him a withering glance and walked in, through the gateway.

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Baggy Trimble looked after him and groaned afresh. How he was going to enter the school at all, he could not guess. To enter in his present state was quite impossible, but there seemed no alternative, unless someone took pity on his condition. Of course, his position might have been worse; for Arthur Augustus might have reclaimed his trousers.

Fortunately for Baggy, Ralph Reckness Cardew was passing.

"I say, Cardew, old top!"

"Hallo, Baggy! Cooling yourself, what?"



Just as Figgins and Fatty Wynn rushed forward the door was flung open, and Kerr came hurtling forth like a bullet from a gun. Biff! Over went Figgins with Kerr on top of him, while Fatty Wynn went back against the rail and slid down to the floor with a gasp like a punctured balloon. "Oh crumbs!" "My jaw!" "My elbow!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Nunno! Some rotters have taken my things, you know. I can't go in like this, can I?"

"No. That's one good thing about it. Everything has its blessing in disguise," said Cardew affably. "When you get tired you can play draughts on that shirt. So long!"

"But, I say," howled Trimble. "Don't be a cad! I've got to get in somehow. I can't get in like this, you know. You might get some clothes for me. Don't desert an old pal!"

"Oh, gad! Pal!" said Cardew with a whimsical smile. "Friend of my bosom, and all that, what? Dear old Baggy. I'll get you some clobber if you'll wear it."

"Of course I'll wear it," Baggy snorted.

"Good man! Here goes!"

Cardew disappeared from sight, and Trimble hid behind a bush in the lane just outside the gates. He was only just in time, for a few seconds later Dr. Holmes came in sight down the lane and went in at the gates, passing within a few feet of the palpitating Baggy.

It was ten minutes later that Cardew reappeared with a bundle of clothing under his arm.

"Here you are, dear man," he said. "Best I could manage. A jacket, a topper, and a dicky."

Baggy Trimble glared at the garments and then at the slacker of the Fourth. Whose they were he did not know, but it was only too obvious that they had not been worn for years.

"Don't worry," said Cardew. "They don't really belong to anyone. A fellow of your high principles wouldn't like to wear another chap's clothes; but these came out of the woodshed."

They looked as though they might have been thrown away by some tramp. The coat was ragged and musty, having been discarded by Taggles some years previously and used for the purpose of cleaning up in the woodshed. The hat may have been a thing of beauty in days gone by, but now looked more like a concertina. As for the dicky, Baggy almost wept as he gazed at it.

"Best I could manage," said Cardew. "Don't look the gift-horse in the mouth, or the gift dicky in the stud hole, Baggy. Take them, old bean."

He thrust the garments into Trimble's arms and departed, while Trimble, horror-stricken, stared at them. He had to choose between wearing those garments or entering the school in his shirt-sleeves and braces. Neither course appealed to him, but one of the two had to be chosen.



Very gingerly he put on the coat, and turned up the collar. The dicky he hurled across the road, and the hat he kicked so mightily that it took him three minutes to disengage his foot again.

When Trimble entered the gates at last Taggles came forward at the run.

"No tramps allowed! Houtside!"

"You silly ass!" roared Trimble. "Yah!"

He bolted towards the School House for all he was worth, and it seemed to him that the quadrangle was crowded.

"Borrowed glory again," chuckled Talbot of the Shell.

"Good old Baggy!"

Straight through the doorway Trimble charged, sending Darrell of the Sixth staggering back, and then leapt the stairs two at a time.

By the time he reached the Fourth Form dormitory Baggy was practically exhausted, and it took him many minutes to recover.

His breath regained, he once more dressed himself in his

own clothes, and rolled down the stairs, meeting Darrell on the way down.

The prefect gave him a grim and suspicious look.

"Trimble, was that you who bumped into me?"

"Me?" said Trimble, with an air of sorrowful surprise. "Oh, Darrell, I wouldn't do a thing like that! But there was a tramp fellow," he added cunningly.

Darrell regarded him searchingly.

"H'm!" he said. "Well, it's lucky for you I'm not certain. But, as it is, there's someone wants you on the phone in the prefects' room. It seems important, so you'd better go. Another time, let people know you can't use the telephone."

"Oh, I will!" said Baggy. "Probably it's my uncle, the duke."

"And probably not! His name is Hunch!"

Baggy Trimble gave a satisfied smirk. His last instructions to Mr. Hunch had been that if he wanted to communicate he was in no circumstances to write—for then D'Arcy would receive the letter—but was to ring up the school and ask for a fellow named Trimble, and to say it was urgent.

According to Baggy, Trimble was a friend of his in the Sixth who could get telephone calls put through.

It had seemed to Baggy a cunning scheme, and one without weak points. The fact that he was being rung up at all suggested that Mr. Hunch was still deceived.

There was no one in the prefects' room, and Baggy went confidently to the telephone.

"Hallo! Is that Master D'Arcy?"

"Yes. Speaking," said Trimble. "Mr. Hunch?"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy. You'll send in those articles, won't you—racing tips, and perhaps a few cutting remarks about people at the school, remember?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And, by the by," said Mr. Hunch. "Just as you said, a thin fellow came to see my partner, and called himself D'Arcy."

Baggy jumped.

"Oh, he did, did he?" he said.

"Yes; but, of course, we saw through him. Not a word to him, however."

"No fear!" said Baggy, with enthusiasm. "Trust me! Of course, that chap Gussy—I mean that skinny fellow, is a rank impostor. I'll come and collect the cheques."

"Yes, do, please."

Baggy rang off, and rubbed his fat hands with delight. Everything in the garden was lovely, so far as he could see. He had tricked Mr. Hunch. D'Arcy had been given the cold shoulder—according to Mr. Hunch—and now, all that remained was to receive cheques, and, of course, write the articles.

Writing articles seemed a mere nothing to Baggy. He dashed one off that evening, a gem of its kind, which, if it were printed as written, would keep proof-readers working solidly overtime. But, of course, it would not be printed as it was. Perhaps it would not be printed at all. For at the moment when Baggy was writing his article, Messrs. MacLevy and Hunch were in conference.

"Two birds with one stone," said Mr. MacLevy.

"Two pigeons. Couldn't have been better!" concurred Mr. Hunch. "Dis fat fool thinks he's tricking us. But a fine scapegoat, hein?" He closed one eye and chuckled.

Mr. MacLevy chuckled, too. He thought it would be a clever fellow who "put one over them," and certainly it would not be either of the Masters D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 8.

No Fiver!

WHEN Arthur Augustus D'Arcy entered the tuckshop he found it crowded. Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby were there, and the chums of the Shell, too, all awaiting him.

"Hallo, Gussy!"

"Hail!"

"All hail!"

The juniors in the tuckshop bowed deeply as D'Arcy entered, giving him the effusive welcome that a man of wealth merited when there was, as it were, a shortage of corn in Egypt.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boys! But I have seen a vewy distwessin' sight. Twimble without a jacket or waistcoat."

"Horrible!" said Jack Blake. "But fellows will do these things."

"I wegard it as wevoltin'. Fortunately," added D'Arcy, "all these things will be altered soon."

"Good!" said Lowther. "You don't think Trimble ought to walk about in braces?"

"Weally, Lowthah! I regard that question as widic. Of course he ought not to!"

"Then I'll go and take his braces off," offered Lowther. "I can't have a fellow with a five-pound note offended—not at tea-time, anyway."

"No, fear!" said Digby. "Come and tell us all about it, Gussy. We've been waiting years for tea."

"I'm sowwy, deah boys, but I have had a vewy busy aftahnoon, you know."

"Give Gussy a chair," said Blake, with a wink. "All the best for Gussy, you chaps. What shall we say for tea, Gussy?"

"Well, I'd weally like some mewingues, Mrs. Taggles," said D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's. "Some nice cweamy ones, please."

"And some tarts?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! It's a pleasure to know a chap with a fiver," said Blake. "Especially when we're all on the rocks. We've asked Tom Merry to tea with you, Gussy."

"I'm glad of that, deah boy. I have a good deal to say, you know. On the whole, I think I had bettah form a committee before I hold the meetin'."

"I'll hold the meat, if you like," said Lowther affably. "What are you going to hold the meat in? Not that it's the time of day to eat meat, of course."

"Bai Jove! You misunderstand me, deah boy. I said meetin'. A crowd of fellows, you know!"

"Good!"

Funds in Study No. 6 of the Fourth were regarded as common property. A remittance from home for any member of that celebrated apartment was "whacked out" for the benefit of the whole study, as a matter of course.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was generous to a fault, and, with a fiver in his possession naturally he "stood" the feed.

Mrs. Taggles made out the bill. Jack Blake presented it to the swell of the Fourth with a flourish.

"Thanks, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus fumbled in his pockets, and brought out a sixpence.

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake stared at the sixpence, and then at the bill.

"Won't do, my son; roll out the fiver and get it cashed. It won't be safe until it's changed, you know."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus again. He reddened slightly, as he found six pairs of eyes fixed on him. "I'm awfully sowwy, deah boys, but I haven't got a fivah!"

For a moment there was silence in the tuckshop.

"You had one when you went out," said Blake, as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Yaas, wathah! But I have paid that in advance, you know!"

"In advance? Not buying a house or a car?" asked Lowther.

"Wathah not! The fact is, deah boys, I'm bwingin' out a book."

"A what?"

"A book—a book about clobbah, and I have paid the fivah in advance."

"That piece of intelligence seemed to take the juniors' breath away. And then the storm broke loose."

"Well, of all the blithering idiots—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Of all the burbling duffers—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Gussy takes the bun!"

"Hear, hear!"

The juniors in the tuckshop stared at Arthur Augustus incredulously. He had been known to do some queer things in his time. He had even become "engaged"; but he had not previously written a book. Of course, he had blued a fiver before then, but not quite in that way.

"So you're stony?" snorted Jack Blake.

"Yaas, wathah. I'm vewy sowwy—"

"Not so sorry as we are," said Blake. "What are we going to do for tea, you ass? And how about that new bat you were going to buy?"

"And the birthday present for your cousin Ethel?" demanded Digby.

Arthur Augustus started.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured in distress. "I'd forgotten that, you know. That's wathah wotten. Howevah, pewwaps I can get it on cweedit. It was vewy necessary to pay five pounds in advance."

Jack Blake sniffed.

"That's gone for good," he said. "You don't mean to say you've let yourself be swindled like that?"

"Weally, Blake. I wegard that suggestion as asinine. If you mean to suggest that I have no business acumen at—"

"I do."

"Then I wefuse to discuss the mattah furthah," said D'Arcy stiffly. "When my book appears you will alter your

tone, I fancy. Yaas, wathah," he added with satisfaction. "And when the woyalties come wollin' in—it is quite pwobable that I shall make ten thousand out of the book."

Herries yelled, and Blake sat down heavily on the nearest chair, while Tom Merry nearly choked himself with ginger-beer.

"Ten thousand?" said Lowther. "Ten thousand what? You're not going to cut up this book into paper patterns for waistcoats, surely? It's got to be a mighty book, anyway, to get ten thousand out of it?"

"You uttah ass! I mean ten thousand pounds. I wead of a chap the othah day who made five thousand, you know. Just a novelist chappie, too."

"Only that," said Lowther, "and nothing more. My hat! And what's the book about, Gussy?"

"Clobbah, deah boy. I'm goin' to tell the world how to dwess, you know. Pwobably I shall make more than ten thousand pounds, but that will be enough."

"Oh, my hat. Quite sure that's enough?" chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus fixed his monocle more firmly in his noble eye and surveyed his hilarious chums with a look that should have frozen them on the spot.

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah. The time is wipie for such a book. Fellows are gettin' more and more careless in their clobbah ewevy day!"

"What ho," said Lowther, "and you've actually paid five pounds in advance?"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm w'itin' a sewies of articles for a vewy important papah, you know, and I shall get good pay for it, too."

"What's the paper?" asked Blake. "'Comic Capers'?"

"Not at all. 'Society Snapshots,'" said D'Arcy, with immense dignity. "One of the most influential papers on the market."

"I've never seen one," said Blake.

"Bai Jove! Nor have I, deah boy. The man at the newsagent's stall hadn't a copy. It's pwobably a new papah."

"Very new," said Tom Merry dryly. "Are you sure it does exist?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy! Of course it exists! I have seen the editah himself."

"And paid him five pounds," said Lowther. "Anyway, he exists, even if the paper doesn't. There's some consolation in that."

"I wegard you as a set of wottahs. You are castin' aspersions on the word of a gentleman you have neval met—Mr. MacLevy."

"My hat!"

"Is that his name?"

"Yaas, wathah! Of course, I expect a certain amount of opposition and pewwaps jealousy—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But I shall wise above it all. I have begun one article already. I am not sure how to address it, though. If you like, I'll wead it to you."

"Spare us, spare us," pleaded Lowther, dropping on to his knees. "What have we done to deserve this?"

Arthur Augustus sniffed and rose from his chair.

"We rescued your topper and waistcoat from Baggy," said Digby. "Here they are. The fat lard tub had a pair of your bags on as well, but we thought we'd let him keep them for the time being."

Arthur Augustus took the topper in one hand, and the waistcoat in the other. Then, in dignified silence, he left the tuckshop.

For some moments after his departure Tom Merry & Co. looked at each other without speaking. They knew how easily the innocent and trusting swell of St. Jim's was spoofed, and they had not the slightest doubt that he was being taken in.

"Poor old Gussy," said Blake at last. "Always putting his foot in it. Who's pulling his leg now?"

But Monty Lowther chuckled.

"I think we ought to rally round and help," he said. "Most of these gossip writers begin: 'My dearest ones—' or 'Darlingests—' I don't see it can be hard to do that, and if Gussy wants a helping hand—"

Jack Blake, however, shook his head.

"This is worrying me," he said. "I can see that our Gustavus is mixed up in a swindle. Who'd publish a book of his? He'll never see that fiver again, and we can't have him blueing fivers like this."

"Rather not," agreed Tom Merry. "But it's too late now. The next thing we shall learn is that the mighty pen of D'Arcy is staggering the world."

"Perhaps," said Manners, "and perhaps not. My idea is that the paper doesn't exist, and that Gussy has heard the last of that editor. But it will be a lesson to him—"

"Rather! A lesson never to go about without his keeper," said Blake. "And now what about tea?"

"We've got three sardines and half a loaf of bread," offered Tom Merry. "It's not likely to go far among the six of us, but it's the best we can do."

Half a loaf being better than no bread at all, Tom Merry's invitation was accepted, and the juniors made for Study No. 10 in the Shell passage. Only Arthur Augustus was absent from the festive board and that, not because he had not been invited, but because he was far too busily engaged at that moment to worry about tea. Indeed, judging from the rate at which his pen travelled across the paper before him in his study, the swell of St. Jim's was likely to be oblivious to his surroundings for some time to come.

CHAPTER 9.

Fifty Pounds Wanted!

"IT'S no use talking," said Jack Blake. "Not a bit of good. It's two days since the duffer started his tricks, and he's been mooning ever since."

"Let him rip, then," yawned Herries.

Afternoon lessons were over, and the junior school had been at cricket practice for some minutes. Tom Merry was batting, and Jack Blake was waiting his turn for an over.

"Drag the duffer out to practice," frowned Kerr. "I tell you, Blake, we know the sort of fellow MacLevy is. We went there on business."

Jack Blake grinned.

"Fatty Wynn writing a book on cookery?"

"No."

"Figgy doing one on how duck's eggs are made by the New House?"

"You silly chump!" said Kerr. "We can leave that to you School House wasters!"

Jack Blake chuckled.

"Well, if you've been bitten by the same Levy bird, I suppose you must have been dabbling in journalism."

Kerr did not volunteer an explanation, for the New House magazine was something extra special, and therefore something secret. Until funds were in a more healthy state it could not be printed, for there was no one else locally who offered the cheap rates of Messrs. MacLevy and Hunch.

"I don't see what we can do, though," said Blake thoughtfully. "The silly chump, Gussy, has been mumbling to himself for days. He got fifty lines this morning for saying that George III. was a monarch worthy of praise because he had a good taste in waistcoats, and really started the fashion."

Kerr chuckled.

"I know. And when Lathom asked what was the chief service of the Press, he said that it kept the trousers in crease and prevented bagginess at the knees. I heard him."

Jack Blake gave a grunt.

"So did I. And Gussy's going to put in a special chapter in his book about schoolmasters setting their pupils a good example sartorially."

It was funny enough in its way, of course, and the Fourth Form had roared with laughter at Mr. Lathom's face when the full power of the Press had been revealed to him. They had not laughed so heartily, perhaps, when an avalanche of lines had fallen in consequence. But then, everything had its disadvantages.

"What I don't see," frowned Blake, "is where the catch comes in—Yow!"

Jack Blake gave a sudden roar and jumped clear of the ground as a ball hit him on the shin.

"Fathead!" said Figgins scathingly. "Why didn't you hold it?"

Kerr roared with laughter.

"That's where the catch comes in," he said. "But you can't expect a School House fellow to hold it."

"I'll hold you in a minute!" said Jack Blake, as he ruefully rubbed his leg. He hobbled towards Kerr, but his leg forced him to halt.

"Better put some embrocation on that," advised Tom Merry. "We don't want you laid up for the match, Blake. There's some in my study if you haven't got any."

"I have. Why couldn't you look where you were hitting, you chump?"

"I did, my son. You should be more lively in the field. It won't do in the match if you go to sleep standing up like a horse."

Blake sniffed and turned towards the New House, and Kerr, who was genuinely concerned about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, went with him to Study No. 6, where the scratch of a pen and the occasional rustle of paper warned them that the aristocrat of the Fourth was hard at work.

D'Arcy glanced up as they entered and made a motion of the hand.

"Pway don't intewwupt, deah boys. I'm wathah busy. I must get this article off vewy quickly."

"You posted one yesterday," said Blake. "It isn't a daily paper, is it?"

"Wathah not; but you do not understand Pwess mattahs. Blake. I'm expectin' the pwoofs of my othah article pwetty soon, you know."

"Oh, good! Better let me read it through," offered Kerr. Arthur Augustus fixed his monocle and stared at Kerr suspiciously.

"I'm afwaid, Kerr, you might start wottin'. That uttah ass Lowthah left a widiculous article heah, and I vewy nearly sent it off."

Blake grinned.

"You don't mean to say Lowther's setting up as an expert, do you?"

D'Arcy sniffed.

"He said that the latest fashion in Eton jackets is a pale shade of mauve; and that it never did to approach a top-hat suddenly, as the shock was likely to raise the nap, and a good deal of stwokin' and soothin' would be needed. I weward that as uttably widic."

(Continued on next page.)

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Blake chuckled.

"Still, it would help towards your comic article. It is a comic article, isn't it?"

"Not at all, deah boy. Listen to this."

Arthur Augustus cleared his throat, looked at Blake and Kerr with a somewhat patronising kindness, and then fixed his gaze on his sheet of paper. Kerr cocked his head on one side in the manner of an intelligent dog hearing his master's voice, while Jack Blake folded his arms resolutely and took on a stolid appearance of stoicism that would have done credit to an Early Christian martyr.

"Let's hear the worst," he said. "Read on, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah! Of course one has to begin these articles in a bwright, intewestin' way, you know, like the weal gossip writers do."

"My hat! You've picked up some inside knowledge lately, Gussy," said Blake sarcastically.

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy! I wathah pwide myself on bein' quick on the uptake, you know. Howevah, to pwoceed. It begins: 'Gentlemen, I am pleased to notice that since my first article there has been a marked improvement in the appearance of your twousahs—'

"My hat! That's quick work!" said Kerr. "How does your article mark a fellow's trousers, Gussy? It's not printed with marking-ink, is it?"

"Bai Jove! Wathah not! But you see, I'm suah there will be a most marked improvement. I was wathah scathin' in the first article, you know. Quite cuttin'—"

"One has to be good at cutting to make a mark as a clothes expert," nodded Blake. "But go on, Gussy, I'm all ears. Don't leave off in the most exciting part like the serial writers, you know."

"As a mattah of fact, I do, deah boy. That's anothah twick of the twade. I left off last week in the middle of describin' a new style of collah that had come on to the market, you know. Wathah clevah—what?" he chuckled.

Kerr roared with laughter.

"I'm glad you appreciate it," went on the swell of the Fourth, with a beam of satisfaction. "And there ought to be a wush for the second issue—what?"

"They'll bring it in as manslaughter," warned Blake, "if there's too much rush at the bookstalls."

"It's certainly risky," said Kerr. "Besides, if the queue outside the bookstalls holds up the traffic, they run you in for that."

"Bai Jove! I hardly think so, deah boy," said D'Arcy, after consideration. "But listen! There is a vewy intewestin' bit heah about twousahs: 'Always wemembah that there should be two waistbelts to a pair of well-cut twousahs, and that the width at the knee should exceed the width at the ankle. The twousah should hang in a gwaceful curve, nawwow at the waist and bulgin' slightly after—'

"Like Baggy's. They bulge just after the waist-line," said Blake.

"Weally, deah boy, I did not mean that kind of bulge at all. It's wathah a twicky point, and I'm thinkin' of havin' some photogwaphs taken. Of course, I could hardly be taken in my twousahs—"

"Wouldn't do to be taken without them," said Blake.

"You uttah ass! I meant someone else should weah them. I was thinkin' of you, deah boy. Your face could be hidden, you know."

Blake gasped, and Kerr chuckled.

"You silly ass!" snorted Blake. "What's wrong with my face?"

"Nothin', deah boy. Pway don't imagine that I think your face would not photogwaph well. That's the twouble, weally. The fact is, and I twust I am not hurtin' your feelin's, but I do not wegard you as a fellow able to cawwy clothes, you know, Blake. Of course, after one or two of my articles have appeahed—"

Blake sniffed.

"Now don't be an ass, Gussy. I know you can't help it to a certain extent, but you don't really think anyone's going to print those articles?"

"A pwoof is on its way now!"

"Then someone's crazy," said Blake, "or else they mean it to be a comic feature, and didn't tell you, so that it should be really comic. You're never so funny as when you don't try."

"Bai Jove! If you cannot tweek the mattah sewiously, Blake, I shall have no alternative but to weiah."

Arthur Augustus gathered up his papers and might have stalked in indignation from the study, but at that moment Toby, the page, appeared in the doorway.

"Master D'Arcy," he said.

"Yaas?"

"Which this 'as just come for you from the printers," said Toby, handing a package to the swell of the Fourth. "And there ain't no reply."

He waited until Arthur Augustus had found a stray sixpence and then departed, grinning, while the aristocrat

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of the Fourth, with a triumphant look at Blake and Kerr, tossed the packet lightly on the table.

"I must wequest you to go now, deah boys. I shall be vewy busy with my pwoofs."

"We'll help," offered Blake. "Open it."

As D'Arcy was burning to open that packet, he could not wait to argue. He opened it with his usual care, while Blake and Kerr patiently waited.

He drew out some proofs and a letter. The proofs he dropped on to the table, but the letter he read through.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "Weally! Bai Jove!"

Kerr gave Blake a quick look, for Arthur Augustus' tone suggested that something was very much amiss.

"What's wrong, Gussy?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Oh, change the record," implored Blake. "What's the matter, you ass?"

"But I'm wathah surprised, you know," said the swell of the Fourth, lowering the letter. "Of course, I didn't wead the agreeement wight through."

"You couldn't," said Kerr. "What have you put your signature to? I knew there was a catch in it!"

D'Arcy shook his head.

"There's no catch, deah boy. I wefuse to take your uttally pwejudiced view. The fact is, I ought weally to have wead the agreeement. It appeahs that I must send a cheque for fifty pounds—"

"What?"

"A cheque for fifty pounds," said D'Arcy, while Kerr blinked, and Jack Blake stared as if he could hardly believe his eyes.

For a moment there was silence. Then Kerr spoke: "Gussy," he said seriously, "listen to me. I knew there was a trick in it, and now I can see what it is. You've got to send fifty pounds towards publishing the book."

"Yaas."

"That's about the full costs, and probably a little more if they do it as cheaply as they can, on poor paper and bad binding. You've paid five pounds deposit?"

"Yaas."

"Then if you don't send the fifty pounds in a certain time, you forfeit the deposit, and there's no book. Isn't that it?"

Arthur Augustus nodded his head slowly and Jack Blake groaned.

"Yaas, deah boy. I must find the money by to-morrow, you know. Appawently, I signed that in the agreeement—it's a pity I didn't wead it, weally!"

"A great pity!" snorted Blake. "That's blued your liver, and it's the end of the book, too."

"Wats!"

"What? You don't mean you're going to send fifty pounds?" gasped Blake. "You must be off your rocker!"

But Arthur Augustus was adamant.

"A fellow's word is his bond. I have signed my name to an agreeement and I must cawwy it thwough, you know."

"But fifty quid; it's a trick!" said Kerr fiercely. "MacLevy gave you to understand that you paid an initial five pounds, then got royalties."

"Yaas."

"Well, if you pay for the publication of the book there won't be royalties in the ordinary way. You get the profits."

"Then it's bettah," smiled Arthur Augustus. "I'm afwaid, deah boy, you're not a business man. You don't understand the power of the Pwess."

"I understand the power of a fellow like MacLevy, when he gets an innocent like you," said Kerr. "Only too well."

"I wegard you as a wude boundah, Kerr, and I wefuse to discuss the mattah furthah. I shall make immense pwofits out of this book, and fifty pounds is not a large sum."

"Not for you," agreed Blake sarcastically. "That was your last sixpence you gave Toby. Going to write to your pater for the fifty quid?"

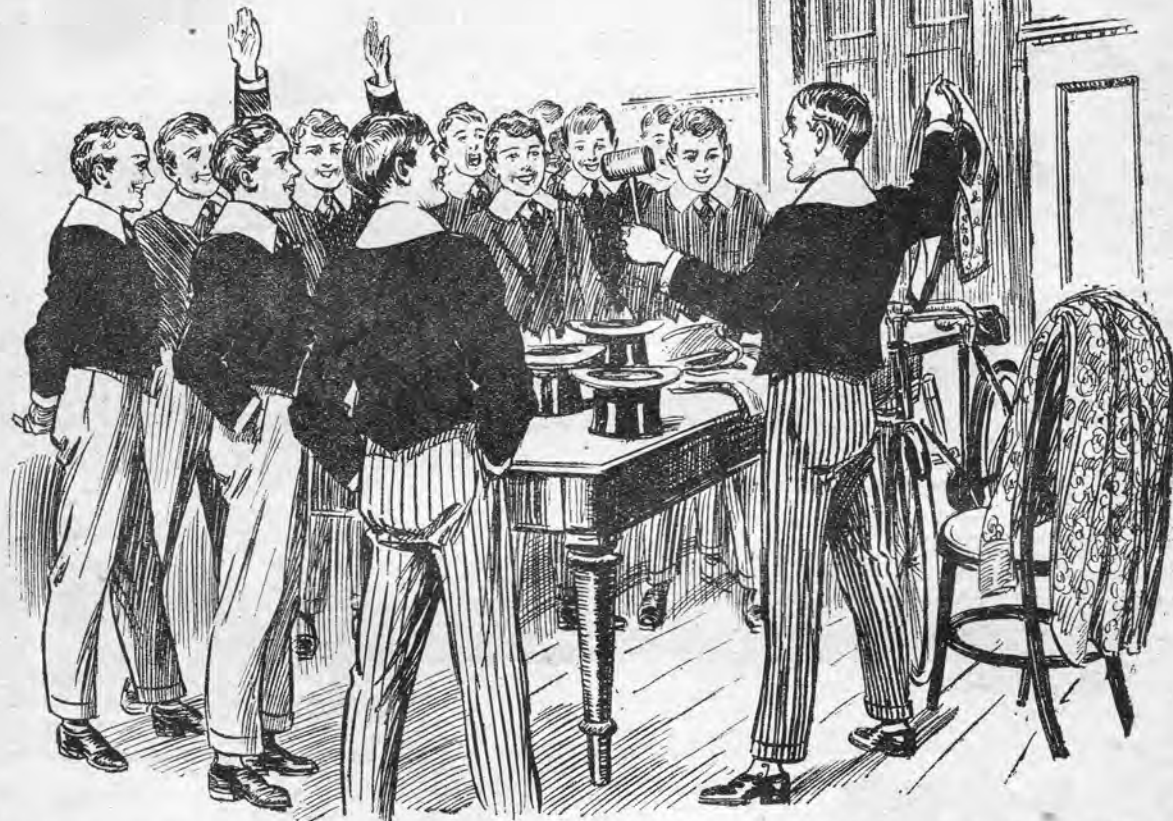
"Pewwaps. Although," said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head, "I'm inclined to think the patah's a bit old-fashioned, you know. He doesn't understand pwogwess and that sort of thing. He might not approve."

"He might not," agreed Kerr. "It's a good thing if he doesn't. If you take my tip you'll go and have a chat with that fellow MacLevy. Just bring in the police tactfully, you know—"

"The patah would nevah agwee to legal pwoceedin's, deah boy. Besides, I have given my word. My word is my bond."

"Oh, my hat! If Gussy starts mounting the high horse, that's the end," said Blake. "But there's one good thing. You can't raise the fifty quid, Gussy!"

"Any offish for the set of seven fancy waistcoats, one for every day of the week?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, surveying the crowd of juniors. "One farthing," said Tom Merry, and there were many faint chuckles. The swell of the Fourth stared. "Pway don't talk wot, deah boy! Any advance on—er—a farthin'?" (See Chapter 10.)



"You're not going to try?" frowned Kerr.

"Yaas, wathah!"

For two or three minutes Kerr and Blake stayed to argue, although they were well aware that arguments were not likely to have any effect on Arthur Augustus, once he had made up his mind. But there was one huge obstacle in his way, the fifty pounds. And if that sum was not forthcoming by the morrow, then Mr. MacLevy would regretfully be compelled to sever business connections with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, but not, of course, with his fiver. It would have been easier to make Mr. MacLevy part with a tooth than a five-pound note.

But that the swell of St. Jim's had yet to learn.

CHAPTER 10.

No Reserve!

CRICKET practice was finished, and Blake, having returned to the cricket field after massaging his leg, found the fellows drawing stumps.

"I'll slay that ass, Gussy, if he doesn't come down to practice," warned Tom Merry. "Or else drop him from the team. What's he been doing all the afternoon?"

Blake informed him and Tom Merry chuckled.

"Poor old Gussy! I often think he was born to be bitten, you know. If it weren't for chaps like Gussy, how could MacLevy & Co. live?"

"I'll give MacLevy a thick ear, if ever I meet him," said Blake wrathfully. "That's a whole fiver gone west! Think of it, and Gussy's guv'nor won't be sending him another for ages!"

"Good; then he can't squander it on riotous waistcoats," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "And the book won't be published. That'll spare St. Jim's from being ridiculed, won't it?"

That was not a great deal of consolation to the chums of Study No. 6, and they went in to tea moodily, expecting to find Arthur Augustus busily engaged on his work.

But when they reached the study the door was ajar, and D'Arcy was not there.

"My hat! What's this?" said Digby.

Pinned on the door was a notice in the well-known handwriting of their noble chum, and Blake & Co. gasped as they read the notice.

"Auction," spluttered Blake. "An auction of personal possessions. Well, my hat!"

"Gussy's going to hold an auction!"

In a moment a crowd had gathered round the door, and there were many chuckles as the juniors read the notice. There was also wrath supplied by Blake & Co.

"The burbling duffer's going to sell his stuff to raise that fifty quid," said Blake, with a whistle of dismay.

"We can't stop him," grunted Herries. "Anyway, it'll clear a good deal of litter out of the study, and perhaps we can find room for Towser there."

"I'll wring Towser's neck if he comes near the study," said Blake darkly. "But something's got to be done about this!"

"I call it a good idea," said Mellish. "D'Arcy has got one or two useful things, you know."

"Splendid!"

"I say. When does the auction begin?"

The notice, however, gave all particulars for those who were close enough to read it.

NOTICE!

An Auction of the personal possessions of
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY
will be held in the Junior Common-room immediately after tea. All are requested to attend. Unworn hats, waistcoats, jackets, etc. No reserve.

"After tea! Rally along, you chaps!" said Levison. "If Gussy's hard up, we've got to help him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Poor old Gussy's on the rocks!"

"We might," suggested Cardew, "take a selection of fancy waistcoats and make a Persian rug, Clive, dear man."
 "Wonder if he's selling his new bike?" Clive exclaimed.
 "That ought to be worth something."

"Yes, if anyone's got the necessary cash."

It seemed as though D'Arcy's auction would be a success, and Blake looked at Herries in sorrow, and then pushed past the crowd into the study. Arthur Augustus was not there; nor, indeed, were the proofs, but on the table was a slip of paper which presented an inventory of all the articles that D'Arcy possessed.

"If he sells the lot he'll have to take to walking about in sackcloth," chuckled Digby. "The champion ass! What's his idea?"

Blake closed the door and then explained just what the idea was.

"And we've got to put the kybosh on it," he said firmly. "If Gussy gets that fifty pounds it will be blued on the book. Then, as likely as not, Mr. MacLevy will retire, and that's the last that will be heard of him, the book, or the fifty quid."

"He'll probably start up as MacIsaacs in another town," said Digby. "But, I say, what a blessed innocent Gussy must be."

"It's the book. The duffer really thinks he's starting a campaign," sighed Blake. "And he's got the fixed idea that, as he's signed the agreement, he must ladle out the fifty quid, point of honour. What he ought to ladle out is a thick ear."

"But how are we going to stop the auction?"

"We're not!" said Blake, knitting his brows into a frown. "Listen to your uncle. The auction's going to be held, and it's not going to raise anything like fifty pounds."

"Oh! Well, I don't suppose it would," said Herries, who was rather dense at times.

"It's going to bring in about fivepence an article," said Blake, "and no more."

"But, I say," protested Digby. "Heaps of the fellows are keen to buy things, you know. They won't agree to that!"

"They will, when I've explained matters. Of course, there will be a few outsiders who'll try to spoil the wheeze, but we shall agree, anyway, to let Gussy have the things back after the auction."

It sounded a good enough idea, and Digby chuckled, while Herries, who was just beginning to get the hang of it, smiled broadly.

Jack Blake was not a fellow to let the grass grow under his feet, and he went with all possible speed to the other studies and explained matters. Then he paid a visit to the Shell corridor where another notice had been placed, and finally paid a visit to the New House.

Having given his assurance that he was on a peaceful errand, he was allowed the run of the corridors there.

The prospect of pulling Arthur Augustus' elegantly-trousered leg, was too pleasing to be ignored, and there was a rummaging after the smallest coins of the realm in order that cash payment could be made for all goods.

Had there been a reserve, of course, the plan could not have succeeded, since the swell of the Fourth would then have set a minimum price on each article, and if the price had not been reached there would be no sale. In the circumstances, the bicycle was as likely to sell for fivepence as anything at all.

That D'Arcy would receive the shock of his life was certain; but then, he had been receiving shocks all his life, and, as Blake said, ought to have been used to them by this time.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, all unconscious of the splendid work that had been put in on his behalf, returned some time later to Study No. 6 with a worried frown on his noble brow.

"Good old Gussy," said Blake. "We're backing you up at the auction."

"Splendid, dear boy! But have you seen my pwoofs?"

"Your whatters?" asked Digby.

"The pwoofs of my article," said D'Arcy anxiously. "Some wottah appeals to have taken them. In my huvwyy to get the auction through in time I left them on the table, and they have gone!"

"The power of the Press," said Digby flippantly. "Those proofs know they have to be in by a certain time. Perhaps they've walked back of their own accord."

"Bai Jove! Pway don't be widic, dear boy! This is a vewy sewious mattah, you know. I hope someone is not showin' the pwoofs wound the school!"

That was the most likely fate of the proofs, and the three juniors chuckled.

"That would be wotten, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus, in great distress. "In no circumstances should the genewal public know these things in advance. You see, inside people like myself—"

"Meaning we're outsiders?" demanded Blake.

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"Not at all, dear boy. Only in the othah sense. I was not speakin' in that sense."

"Or in any sense," said Blake. "Hurry up with your tea, Gussy, you've got to get your things together!"

"They are already togethah. They are piled up in the Common-woom, and I have taken the liberty of lockin' the door."

Arthur Augustus started his tea then, and Blake and Herries and Digby exchanged winks, and now and again chuckled in a mysterious manner.

Tea was soon finished, and when Arthur Augustus reached the Common-room he found a crowd awaiting round the door that exceeded all his expectations. It hardly seemed possible that so many of them would be interested in top hats, fancy waistcoats and art neckties. But they were, apparently, not merely interested, but eager, too!

"Buck up, Gussy!"

"Open the door and begin!"

The door was thrown open and Arthur Augustus led the way in. At the end of the Common-room were piled top hats in neat boxes, fancy waistcoats, jackets, ties, boxing-gloves, a cricket bat, pads, gloves, and a trunk which Toby, the page, had been persuaded to bring down from the box-room.

The juniors crowded into the room, and seeing the "lots," became keener than ever.

"Get a move on, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pway silence, dear boys! Where is the mallet?"

"Use your head, old top," suggested Lowther.

But D'Arcy found the mallet and stood behind a suitable table, a solemn look on his face, as he surveyed the crowd.

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally. Pway be quiet, dear boys! Gentlemen, I am offewin' some weally splendid garments for sale. They are of the vewy latest cut and style, and can be worn anywhere without fear of diswedid, you know."

"Hurrah! Three cheers for credit!" said Lowther.

"I didn't mean that sort of diswedid, Lowthah. And as a mattah of fact, the sale will be on cash basis!"

"Good! I've got tuppence-halfpenny," said Lowther.

"Wats! First, dear boys, I am offewin' the fancy waistcoats. They are pwiced at two guineas, you know. Unused and vewy smart. Any offah for the set of seven, one for evewy day of the week, with a little alteration of pattern for Sunday?"

"One farthing!" said Tom Merry

There were many faint chuckles, and Arthur Augustus stared.

"That is uttally widic, dear boy. Pway don't wot! Any advance on—er—a farthin'?"

"Two farthings," said Lowther.

"You uttah ass. This is vewy sewious. Pway make a start. Shall I say seven pounds, dear boys?"

"Say what you like," said Blake. "But you don't want to buy them yourself, and there's no reserve. You can't blame those chaps for wanting to get them as cheaply as possible."

"Weally! But a halfpenny is uttally widic. Any advance on a halfpenny?"

There was a shaking of heads, and Arthur Augustus gasped.

"You wottahs! I believe you're waggin'. Any advance on a halfpenny—"

Silence.

"Goin', goin' for a halfpenny, seven splendid waistcoats," said Arthur Augustus, with tears in his eyes.

Rap!

The hammer came down, and Lowther solemnly paid two farthings and took the waistcoats.

"The next is this bicycle, dear boys. A splendid jigga with three speeds, the vewy best make, special bwakes and new tyres. Half pwice, dear boys—say twelve-pounds-ten. What offahs?"

"Threepence!" said Blake.

"You uttah wottah, Blake!" shouted D'Arcy. "This is a wag!"

"Thought you said it was a bicycle," rebuked Lowther.

"Do make up your mind, Gussy."

"Any advance on threepence?" said D'Arcy, choking with wrath.

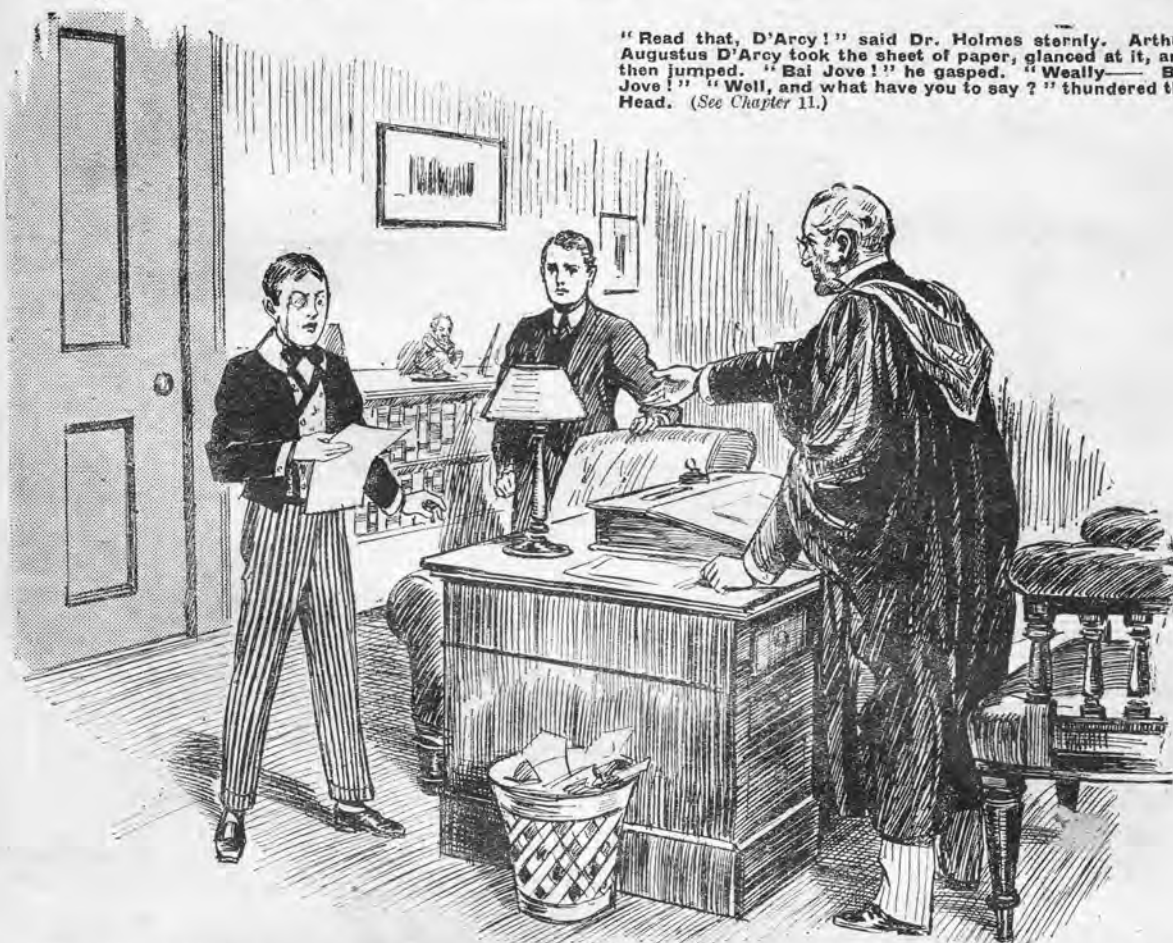
"Threepence halfpenny!" said Herries.

Arthur Augustus nearly fell to the ground. He had entered the auction-room feeling that he ought to get very nearly his fifty pounds. It had not occurred to his mighty brain that the fellows were hardly likely to carry huge sums of money; but even if it had he would have expected them to give promissory notes. Mr. MacLevy could scarcely refuse promissory notes signed by St. Jim's fellows.

"This is uttally widic, you know. This weally wippin' jigga. I am afwaid threepence ha'penny, you know—"

"Fourpence!" said Blake.

"Read that, D'Arcy!" said Dr. Holmes sternly. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took the sheet of paper, glanced at it, and then jumped. "Bai Jove!" he gasped. "Weally—Bai Jove!" "Well, and what have you to say?" thundered the Head. (See Chapter 11.)



"Fourpence farthing!"

The bidding became brisker after that, and the market stiffened. But it closed at sixpence, and the splendid bicycle went to Tom Merry for that princely sum. Lowther obtained a cricket-bat for twopence. Digby paid three-halfpence for three top-hats, while Manners was delighted at the purchase of a much prized camera for a farthing. It was a bargain at the price, having cost twenty pounds.

"How much have you got now?" asked Blake anxiously, after the sale of a few more articles. "As much as you wanted, Gussy?"

D'Arcy had a pink spot in either cheek as he counted the money.

"One-and-ninепence," he said.

"Throw in your gold ticker," said Manners. "I'll start the bidding—you're sure it doesn't go wrong?"

"Wathah not, deah boy, but pewwaps I'd better keep it," said Arthur Augustus, not wishing his magnificent gold watch to change hands for ninepence.

"Twopence for it," said Manners.

"Threepence," offered Cardew; but that closed the market. It did not, however, produce Arthur Augustus' watch. He was fairly bubbling over with wrath now.

"I believe you're waggin'," he said fiercely. "I believe you wottahs awwanged to make the pwices low."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs.

"I command the wingleadah to come here," he said. "I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'. I have parted with my personal possessions for one-and-ninепence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You waggin' wottahs!"

Arthur Augustus leaped off his stand, and damage might have been done, and even blood shed had not the door of the Common-room been opened at that moment.

Kildare of the Sixth pushed his way through the crowd, his face dark with anger.

"D'Arcy! Is D'Arcy here?" he demanded.

There was silence at once, and Arthur Augustus pulled down his cuffs and went forward. The fellows were ready enough to rag him and laugh at him, but when he was in trouble that was another story.

"I say, Kildare," protested Blake, "we're all in this, you know."

"All in it?" said Kildare wrathfully. "You mean you young bounders have all contributed to this—this tosh?"

Then they saw that Kildare held a sheet of paper in his hand. It was the missing proof of D'Arcy's celebrated article. That Kildare had read the article was evident; that it had made him angry was only too apparent. But the juniors were puzzled.

The article might be absurd, but they did not see why it should make Kildare tower in mighty wrath, as it seemed to be doing.

"You are to go to the Head at once, D'Arcy. You hear me? How dare you give tips for horse races?"

"What?"

"And libel prominent people in the district."

"Bai Jove! There must be a mistake, Kildare."

"I hope there is," said Kildare. "These articles are all over the school. You'd better explain that to Dr. Holmes."

And Arthur Augustus, like a fellow in a dream, followed Kildare out of the room, wondering how it was possible to read into a fashion article tips for horse-racing! It did not seem at all possible, and yet Kildare was not a fool, and he had obviously read the proof. Gussy felt there was a mistake somewhere, and he was not wrong.

CHAPTER 11.

Trouble Ahead!

DR. HOLMES, the headmaster of St. Jim's, sat in his study staring at a sheet of paper. Goggling at it would have been a more accurate description, though it could hardly have been applied to such a stately personage as a headmaster; but it came as near to goggling as his responsible position allowed.

But certainly that article, which had been openly displayed on the school notice-board a few minutes before, was enough to make any headmaster goggle. In large type there was the name of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. There was a photograph of him, too, complete with monocle, and in Etons. How Mr. MacLevy had obtained possession of that no one could tell—unless, as was the case, it had been supplied by his contributor. Further, there was a specimen of Arthur Augustus' signature which Dr. Holmes knew well. From his point of view there was not the slightest doubt as to

who had written that article—except for the matter it contained.

"I have heard that Woolly Dog is regarded as a certainty for the Wayland Selling Plate," said one paragraph. "I am backing it pretty heavily myself—but that is between ourselves. Of course, my brother, Lord Conway, is entering his horse Al Soran, but the family does not favour its chances."

Dr. Holmes compressed his lips. He was aware that Lord Conway was D'Arcy's brother, and that he did own such a horse. It was possible, therefore, that D'Arcy took an interest in racing; but for a schoolboy to make his misdeemeanours public in this blatant way was, in the Head's view, simply outrageous.

It was one of the proofs that the Head had in his hand, and there were the usual errors in it; but that made it only the more realistic. There was no printer's name, no name of the publisher; but that it was intended for a paper was quite evident.

A tap came at the door, and Dr. Holmes knitted his brows as Kildare entered, followed by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The swell of the Fourth looked serious.

"You wanted to see me, sir?"

"Read that, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus took the proof, glanced at it, and then jumped.

"Bai Jove! Weally!" he gasped. "Bai Jove!"

"Well, and what have you to say?" thundered the Head. "How dare you contribute such scurrilous matter to such a paper as this! And how dare you place it on the notice-board for the whole school to see! Answer me!"

"Bai Jove! Weally I—I'm afraid there is some mistake!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "This is most surprisin'! I did not w'rite this. Some uthah wottah must have w'ritten it undah my name!"

Lowther's name occurred to D'Arcy, but he could not believe Lowther would play such a trick as that. It was not funny; it was caddish.

"It appears under your name, D'Arcy. How do you account for that?"

Arthur Augustus cleared his throat and explained, while Dr. Holmes listened in amazement.

"You—you mean to tell me, D'Arcy, that you actually contemplated publishing a book?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah! You see, I thought I would waise the fifty pounds by auction. I have auctioned my cycle and my clobberah."

"And you have sent the fifty pounds, or as much as you raised?"

Arthur Augustus' face worked.

"I only waised one-and-ninepence," he explained. "You see, the fellows—I mean my cycle only sold for sixpence."

Kildare smothered a chuckle, and the Head's lips twitched. "Otherwise, you would have sent the money? I am glad that some of the other boys are wiser than you, D'Arcy. An agreement signed by you is not binding, and is made at the publisher's risk. I will see that man as soon as possible."

"Yaas, wathah, sir! Pewwaps he would make a slight wederation in pwice—"

"Silence, D'Arcy! I shall not allow you to publish such an absurd book. As for the article, I intend to find out the whole history of this. There are some things here that seem libellous—for instance, the statement that Major Thresher plays a very poor game of bridge, and doesn't know a club from a spade."

"Bai Jove! I twust you do not imagine, sir, that I would indulge in offensive remarks of that sort."

"I sincerely trust not, but I shall make it my business to find out who has."

"My articles were wathah good litewawy efforts, sir! I feah someone has been playin' a wotten joke, you know—"

D'Arcy remembered Trimble, and what the commissioner had said about another person using his name, and he jumped. But he said nothing. If Dr. Holmes discovered anything about Trimble, he was more than welcome to do so.

Dr. Holmes rose to his feet.

"You have acted very foolishly indeed, D'Arcy, and I fear you need a lesson. I forbid you ever to enter into such an enterprise as this again. Fortunately, you did not raise the necessary fifty pounds; and to-morrow afternoon you and I will visit this firm. Now hold out your hand."

Arthur Augustus started. Was it possible that Dr. Holmes was going to study the interests of fashion and advance some money?

The next moment, however, his hopes were dashed to the ground, as the Head took hold of a cane.

Swish, swish, swish!

Arthur Augustus, rubbing his palms, left the room in a dazed state of mind, to be met in the corridor by his chums.

"Well," said Blake, "how did you get on?"

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"Bai Jove! Some wottah has w'ritten an article in my name and put it on the notice-board for all the school to see. I explained ewewythin' to the Head, and I wathah expected him to give me a little encouwagement."

"And did he?" grinned Blake.

"Wathah not! He gave me threee stingahs."

But Jack Blake & Co. did not seem very sympathetic. They chuckled.

"By the way," said Blake, as they made their way towards the Fourth Form passage, "who did write those articles, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I don't weally know, deah boy. But I fancy it was Twimble."

"Trimble?"

"Yaas, wathah! The commissioner at Wayland said that somebody had been there in my name; and you wemembah Twimble had my clobberah on that day."

"So he had," nodded Blake. "You mean that the fat ass posed as you? But how did he get away with it?"

"I cannot say!"

"Well, it's queer!" admitted Digby. "But possibly, you know, MacLevy and Hunch did not want good articles."

"They wouldn't have commissioned Gussy to write them if they did," agreed Blake. "The proofs they sent were libellous."

"Yaas, wathah! I might be pwosecuted, you know—"

Blake jumped.

"My hat!" he gasped. "Suppose they say that Trimble has defrauded them—"

Digby chuckled.

"Baggy probably thinks he'll get some money for the article. He'll be rolling up there in his glory."

"A little shock for Baggy if he gets blamed for those articles," said Blake. "I don't envy him his reception."

"Bai Jove! Wathah not! Pewwaps if Majah Thweshah sees that remark about his bwidge he may go to see Mr. MacLevy."

"I should think he will," said Herries. "And if MacLevy blames it on to Baggy—"

"Mum's the word!" warned Blake. "Trimble mustn't know this. Let him think he's still going strongly."

"Yaas, wathah!"

The chums of Study No. 6 passed round the word to their chums; and so it was that Baggy Trimble, in blissful ignorance that matters had come to a head, sat in his study writing an article for "Society Snapshots," and hoping that when he called on Mr. Hunch on the morrow he would receive a cheque. It certainly seemed as if Baggy was booked for a disappointment.

CHAPTER 12.

Bowling Out Baggy!

BAGGY TRIMBLE chewed his penholder thoughtfully. Writing did not come easily to Baggy Trimble, and the cheques for which he had hoped had not come at all.

He had heard of the proofs that D'Arcy had received from Messrs. MacLevy & Hunch, and he felt that he would have to act very quickly indeed if he were to get the cash.

It seemed to him that Mr. Hunch was a poor business man. For had he not distinctly agreed not to post things to the school in D'Arcy's name?

Thus it was that on the day following D'Arcy's interview with Dr. Holmes, Trimble sat busily in his study writing. Baggy had been excluded from D'Arcy's auction; and, keen though his prying ears were, he learned nothing of what had happened in the Head's study. That was kept secret.

"Of caws, we keep a hole crowd of servants at my people's place," wrote Baggy laboriously. "And we shall have the Prime Minister and several dukes staying their. I dare say I shall get a tipp from some of my rich relations. Their's a fine fellow named Trimble at St. Jim's, whose people are very classy, relc aristocrats—"

Baggy wrote on in a similar vein for some minutes; and then, glancing at the clock, decided that he had written enough. The blotting-paper came into action, and, having inserted his article into an envelope, he hurried up to the dormitory to change.

Strange to say, he had no difficulty in finding D'Arcy's clothes. After his previous adventure he had rather expected that they would be hidden away. To his surprise it seemed as though they were laid out in readiness. A more astute fellow would have suspected a trap, but Baggy was only pleased. Collars, ties, boots—everything was to hand, and while he dressed, Jack Blake & Co. and the chums of the Shell waited below.

All unconscious of impending trouble, Baggy rolled down-

stairs and swaggered out through the hall and across the quadrangle, with no one to say him nay.

He halted for a moment as Dr. Holmes' car went through the gateway ahead of him, but when he saw a shining "topper" in the passenger's seat, he did not connect it with D'Arcy, nor when he glanced back and saw several juniors behind him in the quadrangle did he guess that they were going to cycle to Wayland.

Yet so it was!

Baggy's happiness increased with every step towards Rylcombe, and when at length he rolled out of Wayland Station, he began to feel that he really was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

At the moment of his arrival Mr. Hunch was in conference with Dr. Holmes and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Trimble was kept waiting below.

Had he been allowed to mount the stairs he would have placed his fat ear to the door and listened. But he was given no chance, the burly commissioner keeping a watchful eye upon him.

Meanwhile, upstairs, Mr. Hunch was having a merry time. The Headmaster of St. Jim's was not a man for trifling, and he said always what he meant.

"But there is some mistake," Mr. Hunch assured him. "This young gentleman is not Master D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove! Weally!"

"This is D'Arcy," said Dr. Holmes stiffly. "Are you the man who engaged this boy to write articles for a Society paper?"

Mr. Hunch bowed.

"I engaged a Master D'Arcy, but not this young shentleman. No, no, a stout young shentleman. There is some mistake."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared at Mr. Hunch.

"My partner's mistake," he smiled. "But everything has now been put right, hein?"

Dr. Holmes surveyed him grimly.

"Not quite! I must know who wrote these articles, and I demand a guarantee that there will be no further business done with St. Jim's boys."

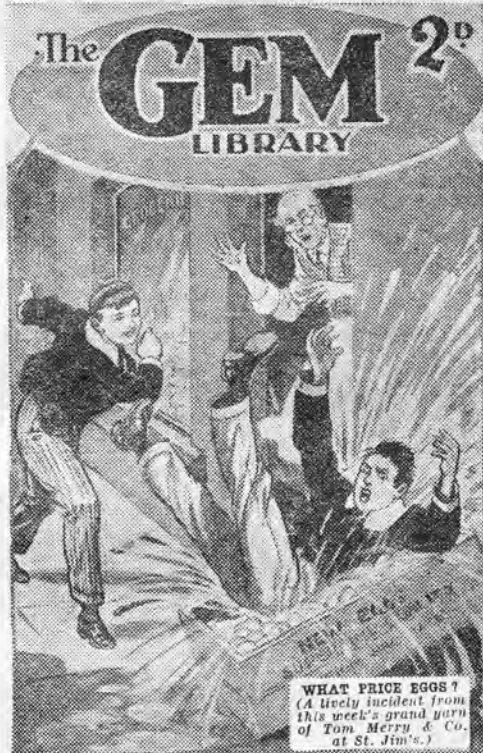
"Of course. A mistake," said Mr. Hunch. "I do not know who wrote der articles, unless it was der young shentleman who said he was D'Arcy, a fat boy."

There was nothing further to be gained at that interview, but Dr. Holmes concluded it while D'Arcy was outside the room. What the headmaster said the Swell of St. Jim's did not know, but it was very much to the point, and Mr. Hunch looked almost green at the end of it.

The headmaster was just outside in the corridor when a message came up that "Master D'Arcy" has called.

"Show him up," Mr. Hunch said grimly. "Dr. Holmes, perhaps you will wait, hein?"

Dr. Holmes and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went into a side room, and Baggy Trimble, full of self-importance and



CARDEW'S OBLIGATION!

What would you do if a fellow who had saved your life came to your school? Make a pal of him of course!

That's what Cardew of the Fourth tries to do when Wrayson turns up at St. Jim's, but Cardew finds it mighty difficult to keep up, for Wrayson is absolutely the giddy outside edge in new boys. He's other things besides as you will find out when you read

"THE IMPOSTOR!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD:

next week's enthralling yarn of Tom Merry & Co.

Order Your "GEM" Early, Chums!

"But I was engaged to write the articles, my dear sir. I gave my photograph."

Mr. Hunch smiled surprised.

"Ha. Den dere has been a mistake," he said affably.

"That is why the wrong photograph has been put in. I have just given the sub-editor a good talking to."

Dr. Holmes set his lips.

"D'Arcy has apparently signed a contract and paid a deposit of five pounds," Mr. Hunch. "I think that it would be advisable for you to refund that sum. If not, I will put the matter in the hands of my solicitors."

Mr. Hunch raised his hands imploringly.

"Shentlemen, shentlemen," he said. "Let us do business as friends. We do not talk of solicitors."

"Nevertheless," said Dr. Holmes, "I am talking of solicitors. Either D'Arcy has paid to you a five pound note or not."

"I haf no agreement with dat young shentleman."

"I have the number of the five pound note," said Dr. Holmes.

Mr. Hunch changed colour and then smiled feebly.

"My partner. My partner has made a mistake. The young shentleman gives his word of honour he paid der five pounds?"

"Yaas, wathah, Mr. Hunch!"

Mr. Hunch went to the safe, and apparently much to his surprise found an agreement signed by D'Arcy. He also found five pounds which he handed over.

assurance mounted the stairs. Behind him came a man of fiery face and bristling moustache.

"Master D'Arcy," bowed Mr. Hunch. "You have come about your articles."

"Yes, rather!" said Baggy. "I want my cheque you know. I can't write articles for 'Society Snapshots' for nothing."

The man with the fiery moustache gave a sudden roar and clasped Baggy Trimble by the collar.

"Ow! leggo!" roared Baggy.

"So you are Master D'Arcy?" said the man. "Let me tell you that I am Major Thresher, sir, and that a libellous article for which you are responsible has come into my hands, fortunately in time for me to nip it in the bud, begad!"

Needless to say Baggy did not see anything fortunate in that circumstance; he regarded it as distinctly unfortunate.

"Oh!" he roared. "Ow, leggo!"

But Major Thresher did not let go. He caught Baggy firmly by the collar and twirled him round. Then he raised the stick in his hand and brought it down, not once but many times. Once again Baggy was discovering that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

"Ow! Yoooop!"

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

Mr. Hunch raised his hand deploringly, as Major Thresher

(Continued on page 28.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,064.

ARRESTED IN THE MIDDLE OF A MATCH! That's the unhappy position in which young Dick Dare finds himself as a result of his implacable enemy's rascally scheming. But even so, Dick keeps a stiff upper lip!



The LUCK of the GAME!

RICHARD RANDOLPH

A GRAND NEW CRICKET STORY, DEALING WITH THE ADVENTURES OF A BOY WHO LOVES THE GREAT SUMMER GAME, AND IS A MASTER AT IT, TOO.



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Driven to rebellion by the tyranny of an overbearing manager, young Dick Dare is sacked from his job in an insurance office and decides to apply at the Markshire County Cricket Club ground for a place on the staff. A born cricketer, he is engaged by Mr. Ainsley, the man who has brought Markshire to the forefront of cricketing counties, and whose life Dick had saved a few days before. In his new job at the county ground, the youngster makes two bitter enemies in Leonard Urwine, the Markshire captain, and Herbert Blair. As a result of Urwine's plotting Dick is waylaid by Slogger Batts, an ex-bruiser, and forced into a fight. Batts is knocked out, his head crashes against a kerb, and he is taken to hospital in a dangerous condition. The next day sees the start of Markshire's match with Lancashire, and Dick, with the knowledge that it may be his last match for the county, bowls wonderfully. Meanwhile, the news of the tragic result of Dick's fight has reached John Ainsley. "I can only hope that this affair may not lead to police court proceedings," he says, after a long talk with the young cricketer.

(Now read on.)



Arrested for Manslaughter!

"I'd rather not, if you don't mind, sir," said Dick to Reggie Westland. He had been offered the chance to go in first wicket down. At another time he would have caught at it; but the interview with Mr. Ainsley had dashed his spirits.

"As you like. We'll say No. 5 then. I want you to have an opportunity to show what you can do. And, see here, Dare, don't worry about that blackguard! Even if it comes to the worst, no reasonable person can hold you to blame."

That was comforting. But Dick knew that John Ainsley did hold him blameworthy; and, though he valued Westland's opinion, he could not put it before Mr. Ainsley's.

Westland and Rayner went in to open the innings. If anyone had imagined that there must be something wrong with the wicket, because the champion county side had gone so cheaply, it was soon made plain that the notion was a mistaken one.

McDonald bowled his fastest and best; but his deliveries never rose more than stump high, which showed that the pitch was not fiery. Richard Tyldesley's seductive slows got no help from it. Watson and Iddon were quite innocuous; and, though Sibbles bowled well, and slowed the pace for a time, he could not get a wicket. All five of the regular bowlers had had a good spell each before the first wicket fell, and the Lancashire total was passed a full hour before that happened.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,064.

The score was 171 when Westland left for a changeless 87. Rayner went on to get his century, and, after that, the amateur colt, Reeve, and Balkwill put on runs fast. It looked as though Lancashire must be hard put to it to save defeat.

Reeve, who made 52, left ten minutes before time, and Dick joined the crack, who was well on his way to three figures. But within ten minutes of their coming together stumps were drawn—Markshire 337 for three.

The spectators, filing off the ground, were more than well pleased. Gregory Balkwill, who was more popular with the crowd than with his comrades—possibly because the crowd did not know him as well as they did—had had a great day, and looked a certainty for the coming test game. Dick Dare, whom the Marchester folk had taken to their hearts, had bowled finely, and was still not out. He was expected to do big things in company with Balkwill on the Thursday.

As the long, lean all-rounder and Dick walked to the pavilion together, Balkwill asked:

"What had Slogger Batts against you, Dare?"

The tone of the question was not specially friendly. It might have seemed almost hostile to anyone inclined to be suspicious; and Dick, knowing nothing of Balkwill's intervention on his behalf with Mr. Ainsley, having been treated coldly by the crack when others were showing him warm friendship, might have been excused if he had taken it to be so.

He did not do that. Balkwill puzzled him, yet he could not help liking Balkwill.

"Couldn't have had anything," he replied. "I never saw him before, to my knowledge."

"Or even heard of him?" queried Balkwill, who knew the Slogger well.

"No. I haven't been very long in Marchester, you know."

"Ah!"

That was all. Balkwill was wondering. He had his own reasons for distrusting Leonard Urwine, and he knew that no trick was too dirty for the man who had pretended to be his friend and patron. It had been a bad day for Gregory Balkwill when he first came under Urwine's influence.

Dick called at the hospital before he went back to Kingsland Street. He heard nothing consoling there. The Slogger was still unconscious. There was talk of an operation being necessary to save his life. But the man who told him that tried to be consoling.

"Don't you worry, my son! Seems he asked for what he got, and most of us can't see where you're to blame. You get your hundred to-morrow, without troubling about that one."

But Dick could not help troubling about "that one."

"Everybody at the office is talking about your bowling," Andy told him.

Dick merely grunted. His triumph of the day seemed a small thing in view of the fact that a man lay very near to death because of him. A man of little value to the world—and Dick could not help what had happened—but,

all the same, it weighed upon him, and he could not forget the look on John Ainsley's face.

He was at the ground an hour before the time for play next morning, and got some net practice. Balkwill lounged up five minutes before the nets were cleared away, and watched him.

"You'll have to do better than that when you go in with me, Dare," he said, with a slight touch of acidity in his voice. Dick knew that he was shaping badly. Simple deliveries had found his stumps, and he seemed unable to keep the ball down.

But somehow that speech of Balkwill's braced him, and when he found himself in the middle again he was all right.

The game had been in progress half an hour, and 40 runs had been added, Balkwill reaching three figures and Dick carrying his score to 27, when there fell upon the ground a sudden hush.

Someone signalled from the pavilion. Dick saw two blue-uniformed men there, and a chill struck to his heart.

Westland came out.

"I'm sorry, Dare," he said; "but they've sent to arrest you!"

"Is Batts—" began Dick, white to the lips.

"He's dead," said Westland quietly. "Bear up, old fellow. It wasn't your fault!"

And in sight of the crowd Reggie Westland thrust his arm under Dick's, and walked with him to the pavilion.

A Reprieve!

THE men in the blue uniforms were Inspector Brown and P.-c. Inwood, both of whom Dick knew.

"It's a rotten business, Mr. Dare," said the inspector kindly. "But we can't help it, and the chief constable wouldn't hear of your remaining at large after word came through from the hospital. I don't know about bail; it might be accepted, or it might not."

But Dick was thinking less of his own plight than of the man they said he had killed.

"Is it certain?" he asked.

"About Batts? I'm afraid there can't be any room for hope. But I wouldn't think too much about him if I were you."

Inspector Brown knew Slogger Batts too well to sorrow for him, and the distress on the young face moved him to speak in a way hardly consistent with what might have been expected of him officially. But he stiffened suddenly as he glanced round and saw that Leonard Urwine had heard.

There was a gleam of spiteful satisfaction on Urwine's face. His scheme had worked out far better than he had dared to hope. He had counted on spoiling Dick's chance of playing in the Lancashire game. It looked now as though there was very little prospect of Dick's ever playing for Markshire again.

That Slogger Batts had met with his death mattered nothing to Urwine. His callous selfishness was proof against the least feeling of regret. He had never anticipated this. But he felt that it was all for the best. Only he and the Slogger had known of the bargain made, and with the Slogger dead it could never leak out.

The inspector had no liking for Urwine, and knew more about him than Urwine realised. This is often the case when a man poses as perfectly respectable among those who are so, but has another side to his life. The police are not blind. They see, but say nothing. He goes on till he steps over the line of the law. Then it may come out how much they knew of him before—or it may not, for everything depends upon what has to be proved against him.

Brown was aware that the county captain and Slogger Batts were not strangers to one another. He had not the slightest idea that Urwine was at the bottom of this trouble. On the face of it there was no reason to suspect that the Slogger was moved by anything but the tendency to play the bully that had several times brought him into the police court.

But before such as Urwine the inspector would not speak freely, though he had not in the least minded Westland's hearing.

"You must come along," he said.

"All right," answered Dick. "Are you going to handcuff me?"

"Lord, no! Just come along with us. I say, I only hope the crowd isn't going to give trouble!"

That last sentence was spoken at large, not to Dick personally.

It looked as though there might be trouble. The seats all round the ground showed almost empty, and their

occupants of a few minutes since were gathering between the pavilion and the gates.

Someone had guessed what had brought the police. The word had gone round that Batts had pegged out, and that Dick Dare had been called from the wicket to be taken to the police station. Half at least of the throng felt only curiosity; but among the other half were many who hotly resented the arrest.

"Couldn't they wait till he was out?"

"Anyway, what's he done to be arrested for? Hit a blackguard who assaulted him! That's all there is to it. They can't punish a fellow for that!"

"They didn't ought, but you never know. Give him a cheer, to let him know what we think about it!"

"Buck up, Dare! You never meant to do it, an' they can't gaol you for it!" roared a leather-lunged fellow.

And at that the cheering rolled. The crowd swayed as it cheered. For a moment an attempt to rescue the supposed victim of police tyranny seemed imminent.

Inspector Brown placed himself in front of Dick, and tried to make his voice heard. But a storm of hissing and jeering prevented anything he said from reaching the ears of the throng.

Then Dick did what those who saw understood at once. And what he did made John Ainsley, watching by Robert Frost's side at a window near, grip the secretary's arm, unknowing that he gripped.

For Dick thrust one arm through an arm of the inspector and another through that of Inwood. And at once silence fell upon the crowd.

"It's all right," said Dick, his voice trembling a little, but raised high enough for all to hear. "Jolly good of you to back me up. But Inspector Brown and P.-c. Inwood are only obeying orders. If they are wrong—and I'm not saying that—it's not their fault, any more than what I did was mine—not so much, perhaps!"

That was Dick Dare's first public speech. It was simple and boyish enough, but it rang true, and it went to the hearts of those who heard.

At once a way was made for him and his guardians, and they passed along it amid cheering.

"That's a lad!" said Gregory Balkwill to Walter Toplady.

Balkwill, with the whole Lancashire team, had left the field.

"Thought you didn't like him," returned Toplady.

"Can you think?" snorted Balkwill. "But, of course, you can't! The fast bowler always wants it here."

And he put his hand above his eyebrows, much as one does when screening one's eyes from the glare of the sun. Toplady did not reply to that, except by an indignant look.

A taxi waited outside the gates. Into this Dick and the two men in blue got. Within five minutes they had reached the head police station, which was in the same building as the magistrate's court.

The officer at the desk took down the charge against Dick—a mere formality this. Then, expecting to be hauled off to a cell, Dick was left several minutes in the dingy office. Inwood had disappeared as they entered, and the inspector had gone after the charge had been taken. The man at the desk with the big book before him, a stranger to Dick, gazed out of the window above the boy's head at the blue sky. There came to Dick's ears the cooing of pigeons in the yard behind.

It was all so suddenly peaceful and quiet after those strenuous minutes on the ground that Dick felt his nerve giving way. Why didn't they do something? It was silly to keep him sitting here.

Then Inspector Brown came back in a hurry. It seemed that the stipendiary magistrate was still sitting, though it was past his usual hour for leaving the court. Something had detained him. Dick could be charged at once. Inspector Brown appeared to think that that was all to the good, and Dick was prepared to accept his view of the matter.

"You'll be remanded," said the inspector. "Inwood will give his evidence, and there won't be any need to call anyone else to-day. In the morning, no doubt, the friends who were with you will be in court."

Dick followed the inspector through a long passage into the court. He entered by a small door near the magistrate's raised seat; and at the same moment John Ainsley and Robert Frost came in by the public door.

That surprised him. He could not think why they should be there.

At the moment there was no one else in the court except a few officials. But the arrival of Ainsley and Frost had not passed unnoticed, and people began to come in—a mere trickle at first, and then a steady stream.

The magistrate, a severe-looking man of fifty-five or so,

listened to the constable's evidence, and acceded to the inspector's request that the case might be remanded. Meanwhile, John Ainsley had made his way to the front.

"I trust that your honour will allow bail?" he said.

"Do you offer it, Mr. Ainsley?"

"Yes—to any amount you may consider necessary!"

Dick had not expected this. But he was very glad to know that Mr. Ainsley did not condemn him utterly.

The magistrate hesitated. It was known that he did not readily grant release on bail in serious cases.

While he was still undecided a constable came in and spoke to the inspector.

"Your worship!" said Inspector Brown loudly.

"Yes? One moment, inspector. Mr. Ainsley, I regret to—"

"But there's been a mistake at the hospital, your worship! They've just rung up to say that Batts is not dead, though he's in a very critical condition."

Dick's heart gave a great bound, and a mist came before his eyes.

There was hope still, then!

"Indeed? That alters materially the aspect of the case. While the man lives the charge of manslaughter would be absurd. For any lighter charge I do not consider bail necessary. A gross mistake has been made somewhere, and I hope the hospital authorities will have it made clear to them that their methods are most unsatisfactory. The prisoner is discharged!"

The people who had crowded in clapped. The magistrate frowned.

"Hope you'll be back in time to finish your innings, lad?" whispered the kindly inspector.

A Bad Afternoon!

"I'M going back at once, Dare," said Mr. Frost. "You had better come with me."

Dick looked round for John Ainsley, but that gentleman had passed out of sight.

The secretary had a taxi in waiting. He and Dick got in. As it moved away there sounded a cheer. Public sympathy was most unmistakably with Dick.

But the boy buried his face in his hands. His head was swimming. He had borne up well, but the joyful shock of hearing that the Slogger was still alive had broken him down.

The journey was but a short one. They were within a hundred yards of the County Ground when Mr. Frost laid a hand on Dick's shoulder.

"Buck up, Dare!" he said. "The game isn't over yet, and we may have need of the best you can do before it is."

Dick recognised the kindly intention. Mr. Frost wanted to call upon the pluck that he knew was there. But there are some situations which are too much for anyone. Dick could have gone back braced up to play his best had he known that Slogger Batts was dead. It was the uncertainty as to whether the fellow would live that unnerved him.

He lifted a face so ashen that the secretary was quite shocked.

"Don't take it so hard, my boy!" he said. "It may turn out all right, and in any case you are guiltless of the least intent of real harm. The thing might have happened to me—to anybody!"

But it was to Dick Dare it had happened, and naturally it was Dick Dare who felt it.

Things You Want to Know

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"I'll do all I can, sir," Dick said.

"If you don't feel fit—"

"Oh, I don't mean to cave in! It's not that. But I can't get the thought of that chap out of my mind."

To find that it was not yet lunch-time came to Dick as quite a surprise. It seemed to him hours since he had left the ground. Actually it was little more than an hour; but in that short space of time much had happened. The score had been taken past the 400, but wickets had fallen fast before McDonald, bowling at a great pace. Armley and Edmead were in together, and the board showed 411 for eight.

Then Armley's middle stump went flying. But as the Lancashire men began to move off the field Westland and Mr. Frost came out of the pavilion together, and they halted.

Major Green met the Markshire captain and secretary. In a few words the latter explained the situation.

"The question is, Green, whether you agree to Dare's resuming his innings," said the captain. "If you do object—"

"But I don't—of course I don't! Let the lad come in again. We have heard something about this trouble, and none of us blame him."

So Dick hurried on his pads, helped by Toplady and Armley, for his hands shook so that he could not buckle them himself, and walked out like one in a dream.

A great burst of cheering greeted him. He stopped short. Afterwards he realised that he had been within a hair's-breadth of turning back and running for the pavilion. Why should they cheer him?

But then he recognised in it the same kindly feeling that had caused Mr. Frost's words, the ready aid of his comrades when the pads had been too much for him, the pat on the shoulder Westland had given him. They wanted to show that they were on his side. But he could not get out of his mental vision the face of Slogger Batts as he lay senseless in the light of the street lamp, with the back of his head smashed.

He took guard. McDonald ran up to the crease. Dick's stumps were spreadeagled. He never once got a sight of that ball.

Something like a great sigh came from the crowd. It was succeeded by another burst of cheering. After all, the home side led by over 300 runs, and that was surely good enough!

"It was pretty awful, I suppose, Dick?" said Edmead, joining him on the way in.

"Yes, Alan. Just about the limit," Dick answered.

He said no more, and Edmead asked him no further questions.

Lancashire had nearly half an hour's batting before lunch, and Hallows and Watson, without risking anything, scored 28 runs in the time. Dick was not put on to bowl, and no ball came his way in the field.

At lunch he could eat nothing. The food he tried to swallow was like sawdust in his mouth, and he pushed his plate away. He asked for a big cup of black coffee, and drank it almost at a draught.

"You'd better have a drop of brandy, Dare," said Balkwill.

"I'd rather not," answered Dick.

"Oh, well, you may be right. I should in your place; but you and I are two very different people."

"Brandy's no good for the boy!" growled Toplady.

Dick was sure of that. But he was also sure that the crack had meant nothing but kindness. More than ever did Balkwill puzzle him.

When they filed out after lunch he found the long fellow by his side.

"Nothing in this world matters as much as people think it matters, Dare," said Balkwill, speaking so that no one else should hear.

That did not comfort Dick a bit, for he could not believe it. But he knew it was meant for comfort. It set him wondering what had made Gregory Balkwill feel like that, and why it was that Balkwill had so small a share in the comradeship of the team. He seemed always apart. Yet the other men did not appear to dislike him.

There followed an afternoon that was one of the worst of Dick's life.

He could do no good at all. That sure pair of hands of his—so sure that at Yarnley it was said Dare never missed a possible catch—could do nothing right. He fumbled like a duffer. He had three chances—only one of them easy, but the other two of a sort that he would not have missed at any other time—and he put them all on the floor.

Put on to bowl, he could not get a length, and from a couple of overs 27 runs were hit. It was kindness as well as judgment to take him off. Westland wondered whether it would not be kindness to suggest that he should leave the field. He was plainly unfit for cricket.



The crowd swayed round Dick Dare, and for a moment an attempt to rescue the young cricketer seemed imminent. Inspector Browne placed himself in front of Dick and tried to make his voice heard above the uproar. (See Page 25.)

The first wicket sent up 103. Then Hallows and Ernest Tyldesley seemed to have taken root. None of the bowling troubled either, though each gave Dick one chance in hitting out. Before they were parted the deficit had been wiped off. Then Hallows left for a splendid 157, and Make-piece joined Tyldesley.

All through that long, hot afternoon, Dick, trying all he knew to concentrate his attention on the game, could not help seeing the coarse face of Slogger Batts as he lay in the light of the lamp. It was no comfort to him to know that the Slogger was a worthless bully, that the Slogger had brought upon himself what had happened. After all, bad lot though Slogger Batts was, he was a human being, and it was horrible to think of his lying between life and death at the hospital.

When stumps were drawn Lancashire had evened up matters. It might be too much to say that they had got on top; but they had been every bit as much the superior team on the second day's play as Markshire had been on the first. Having got a grip on the game, they would not easily let go. The third day's play would produce either an easy win for them or a desperate struggle.

Which would it be?

Dick went straight back to Kingsland Street when play was over. Andy had come in, and after the interchange of a few words, they ate their evening meal in silence.

At half-past nine the bell of the front door rang.

"Alan," said Andy. "Sure to be. I'll let him in."

He went to the door. But it was not Alan Edmead. It was Gregory Balkwill, to whom Andy had never spoken before, though he knew him by sight, of course.

"Dare in?" asked Balkwill rather gruffly.

"Yes," said Andy. "Like to see him?"

"That's what I came for. Hallo, Dare!"

Dick had heard his voice, and had come into the hall.

"Hallo, Balkwill! Come inside, won't you?"

"No, thanks. I only looked in to say that Batts has taken a most decided turn for the better."

"Oh, that's fine! It's no end good of you to bring me word, Balkwill! Won't you come in? We can offer you a cup of coffee, if nothing better."

"I'll take it, but I shan't stay. See here, Dare, what you have to do is to go to bed and get a good rest."

"I really think I can after what you've told me," Dick said.

Balkwill smiled—a queer, enigmatic smile. He drank a cup of coffee, lighted a fresh cigarette—there was always a

cigarette between his lips when he was off the field, except at meals—and went.

Dick's head had hardly touched the pillow that night before he was asleep. He slept till Andy awakened him.

On the way to the ground Dick looked in at the hospital, hopeful of even better news.

"Batts? Oh, there's no change!" was the reply to his query.

"Since last night, you mean? I heard he was much better then."

"That's more than I did. Wait a moment. I'll make sure."

Dick waited, much puzzled. But the acute depression that had been upon him yesterday had worn off after his night's rest. He was better able to bear things.

The man with whom he spoke used a speaking-tube. Then he turned to Dick.

"He's just about as he was from the first. There's hope—that is something. But he's no better."

Balkwill was not on the ground when Dick got there. It was his way to turn up, cigarette between lips, about a quarter of an hour before the day's play began. No one had practised harder than Gregory Balkwill in the days when his name had been to make. He seemed to think now that he needed very little net practice, which was perhaps a less mistaken view than some might consider, for he got plenty of much more valuable practice in the middle.

When he did turn up, Dick tackled him at once.

"Can't make it out, Balkwill," he said. "You told me Batts had taken a decided turn for the better; but at the hospital—"

"Got a good night's rest, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did. But—"

"Want to win this match, don't we?"

"Yes, of course. But I shouldn't think—"

"Don't bother to. Not worth while. And don't get on your ear. We're needing you to-day. You were about three-halfpence in the pound yesterday, my boy!"

There seemed no more to be said. Balkwill had come to Dick's diggings with a lie on his lips. Yet behind the lie was something that partly redeemed it, as Dick vaguely felt. And he was not sure that the crack had been moved entirely by his desire that Markshire should win that day.

(With the shadow of a charge of manslaughter still hovering over him, Dick Dare finds it hard to concentrate on cricket. But at all costs he is determined that he won't let Markshire down. Read all about his second innings in next week's rousing instalment, chums!)

"THE SCHOOLBOY JOURNALIST!"

(Continued from page 23.)

desisted at last and tossed the fat junior aside as though he were a sack of flour.

"And what is more," said the fiery man, "if that article is printed—"

"A mistake," Mr. Hunch hastened to assure him. "A mistake—my dear sir."

"You are the editor of 'Society Snapshots'?"

Mr. Hunch's teeth chattered.

"I am der—der—office b-boy," he spluttered. "Der editor is out—"

Mr. Hunch was not a man of great courage; he had planned that if certain people were libelled under D'Arcy's name he might earn a good sum of money by suppressing the paper; D'Arcy's father, the Earl of Eastwood, being presumably glad to have such articles under the family name spared from publicity.

Alas for his plans! He had libelled the wrong man.

"I will see the editor," said Major Thresher. "Ah! The other gentleman. You are the editor of 'Society Snapshots'?" he demanded as Mr. MacLevy appeared in the doorway.

Mr. MacLevy gave a yelp of terror and dodged behind the table.

"Nunno!" he gasped. "My partner is the editor—"

"I'm not," wailed Mr. Hunch. "He is!"

Baggy Trimble gave one look at the scene where the gallant major was taking toll for the slur on his name, and bolted for the stairs.

As he did so, the door of the adjoining room opened and Dr. Holmes and D'Arcy appeared.

"Trimble!" said Dr. Holmes, with a thunderous brow. "You will return with me at once to St. Jim's. Wretched boy! You have used D'Arcy's name for a scandalous purpose."

"Ow! I haven't. I wouldn't. I couldn't," yelped Trimble. "Oh dear—I'm d-dying—"

Arthur Augustus gave him a look in which compassion and scorn were equally mingled.

"I regard you as a despicable wogue, Twimble."

"Oh dear, I didn't mention old Thresher," wailed Trimble. "They jolly well knew it wasn't you all the time. They must have done. Oh dear—"

"Trimble! Control yourself, boy," said the Head sternly. "Return with me to the school. I will deal with you there."

"Oh crumbs! Oh lor! It wasn't me, sir," mumbled Trimble. "I couldn't look like D'Arcy if I tried."

"Enough!"

And Baggy Trimble, quaking and shivering, descended the stairs with Dr. Holmes, while Tom Merry & Co., outside, watched the procession.

"My hat!" said Blake, when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy joined them. "We've been listening. Was Thresher slaughtering Baggy?"

"Yas, wathah! The same wottah who put that pwoof on the notice-board must have sent one to Thresher! Poor old Baggy!"

"Rats!" snorted Blake. "Whoever got hold of those proofs did you a good turn. MacLevy and Hunch have been shown up, and that fat swindler Trimble will get his deserts."

"I don't think Twimble could have written those articles," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I think MacLevy wrote them himself."

"Likely as not," said Kerr. "But the Head will find that out when he cross-examines Baggy. But I wouldn't like to be in Baggy's shoes."

"They're not his," said Blake. "They're mine. But never mind; come and have some ginger pop, Gussy. I suppose you got your fiver back?"

"Yas, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, then," said Jack Blake grimly, "you can refund the one and ninepence out of that fiver and take back your jigger and clobber. The best thing you can do now is to forget all about MacLevy and Hunch and stand us a feed."

The swell of St. Jim's sighed regretfully.

"Pewwaps you are wight, deah boys."

"Of course we are," said Tom Merry. "Ladle out the fiver and drown your giddy sorrows in ginger pop."

And greatly to the relief of his chums, the swell of St. Jim's proceeded to follow that excellent advice.

Never would the world see the mighty works of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Fellows would continue to wear baggy trousers, and turn ups with double breasted jackets. But perhaps, as Blake remarked, it was all for the best.

THE END.

(Now turn to page 23 and read the particulars of next week's grand yarn of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.)

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