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*'Arry Ammond
awaits his
Housemaster!*

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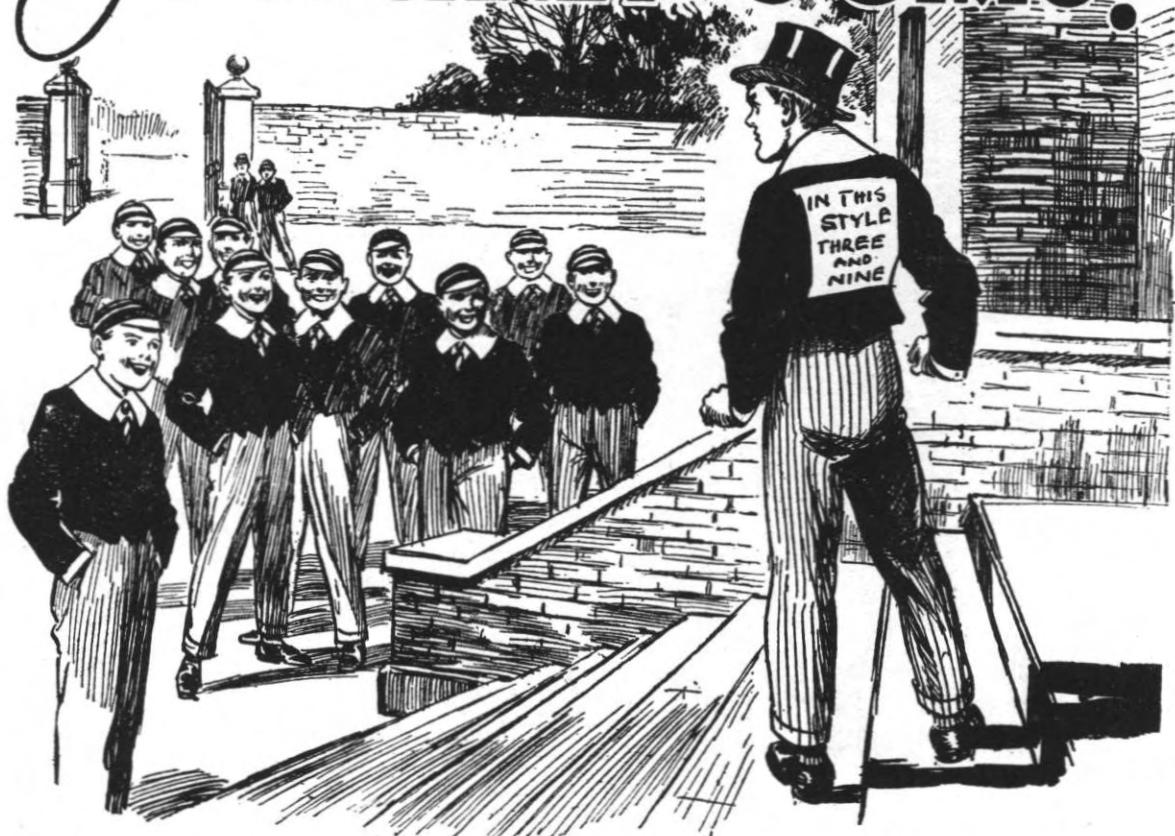
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THE COCKNEY NEW BOY WHO WAS NOT WANTED AT ST. JIM'S!—

A COCKNEY at St. Jim's!



Quite unconscious of the placard adorning his back, Hammond swung round angrily as a group of juniors at the foot of the School House steps burst into a roar of laughter. "What's the matter wiv you?" he demanded. "Quite appropriate," grinned Gore. "Three-and-ninepence. Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 1.

The Cockney Arrives!

HE walked into the School House at St. Jim's as if it belonged to him.

Some of the fellows spotted him at once, and, as a new boy, he was favoured with curious glances. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form, put up his famous monocle in order to survey him with more accuracy. But the newcomer did not seem at all abashed. New boys in a big school sometimes—if not always—suffered from shyness, a slight uneasiness at finding themselves alone among crowds of fellows they did not know.

But this particular new boy did not suffer from anything of the sort.

He stood with his thumbs in the arm-holes of his pullover, surveying the place, with a critical expression upon his cheerful, sandy-coloured face.

He was evidently taking stock of St. Jim's, and "sizing up" the school and the fellows he could see.

And some of the fellows grinned. Tom Merry smiled broadly. The coolness of the new "kid" tickled him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not smile. The new fellow's attitude worried him.

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And there were other things about the new boy that worried D'Arcy as well as his attitude. He was dressed in Etons, but he wore a red-and-white check pullover. There was a diamond pin in his tie, and it was quite a big diamond. His hair, which was curly and somewhat sandy in colour, glistened with oil. And all those things worried Arthur Augustus D'Arcy considerably.

They did not worry the new fellow himself. He was evidently in a state of the most complete self-satisfaction—a state so complete, indeed, that some

of the fellows felt an immediate desire to take him down a peg or two. Even fellows who were not given to ragging new kids, as a rule, felt a desire to take a rise out of this cool and extremely self-satisfied individual.

The newcomer was not handsome. He had a somewhat bony face, and his nose was what the French politely call *retroousse*—inclined upward. His mouth was large, and it was ornamented with a good-natured grin.

Having surveyed the School House Hall, he walked across to the nearest group of fellows, who had been talking football before he came in, but who were now not talking at all, but were staring at him.

"This 'ere is St. Jim's, eh?" said the newcomer.

"It are!" said Monty Lowther of the Shell solemnly.

"And this 'ere 'Ouse is the School 'Ouse—wot?"

"Quite right again!" said Lowther, with equal solemnity. "This 'Ouse is the School 'Ouse, and this is the 'all where you 'ang your 'at!"

There was a chuckle from the other fellows.

It seemed to surprise the newcomer, who apparently had not noticed any-

When 'Arry 'Orace 'Ammond, as he calls himself, came to St. Jim's his striking appearance and quaint mode of speech made him an object of ridicule and scorn among the juniors. But you can't keep a cheery Cockney down, as 'Arry 'Orace demonstrates—with a ready wit, undaunted courage, and a hard pair of fists!

—MEET 'ARRY 'ORACE 'AMMOND IN THIS SPARKLING LONG STORY.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

thing funny in Monty Lowther's pronunciation.

"I'm 'Arry 'Ammond," said the new boy confidentially. "'Ammond's 'Ats, you know!"

"Wh-a-at!"

Even Monty Lowther was taken aback. The other fellows stared at Harry Hammond almost open-mouthed. The deliberate way in which he shifted his h's out of his words sounded as if he did it on purpose; and yet he was evidently unconscious of it. And what Hammond's hats might be the fellows did not know.

"I'm a noo boy!" 'Arry 'Ammond went on cheerfully.

"Oh, you're a new kid, are you?" said Tom Merry good-naturedly. "What Form are you going into? Do you know yet?"

"No. I got to see a man—Railton, I think 'is name is."

"That is our Housemaster."

"That's right—right on the dot!" said 'Arry. "The 'Ousemaster. Knowed 'is name a long time afore I ever thought of comin' 'ere. We supply 'im with 'ats."

"You do!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yes; 'Ammond's 'Ats, you know—'Ammond's 'Igh-class 'Ats. All one price—three-and-nine!"

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly. "I wefuse to believe anythin' of the sort! I wegard it as an insult to Mr. Railton to suggest that he weahs three-and-ninapenny hats!"

Hammond chuckled.

"'Ammond's 'Igh-class 'Ats, all one price, three-and-nine, are our special line," he explained. "But we have other qualities to suit all heads and all purses. We supply Mr. Railton with our special twenty-five shilling topper, same as supplied to the nobility and gentry. But it was the 'igh-class 'ats at three-and-nine that made the fortune, you bet your life—wot?"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, retreating from the lively newcomer. "What a vevy dweadful person!"

The juniors were grinning. 'Arry 'Ammond was certainly the most peculiar new boy that had ever "happened" at St. Jim's. That a fellow who spoke as he did should be admitted to any Form at all was surprising; but evidently he was to be admitted, for he had come. Taggles was carrying in his trunk at that moment.

"Well, of all the no-class bounders that ever came along, I think that bounder takes the giddy biscuit!" exclaimed Crooke of the Shell.

And for the first time since he had been at St. Jim's, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was inclined to agree with the cad of the Shell.

"This is wathah dweadful, isn't it, deah boy?" he murmured to Jack Blake.

Blake grinned.

"What's the matter with him, Gussy?" he asked. "If you take him in hand a bit, as you did young Frayne, you'll soon lick him into shape!"

D'Arcy shuddered.

"It would be quite imposs to have anythin' to do with him, deah boy. Look at his pullover!"

"Well, it's a little gay," admitted

Blake; "but he'll have to leave that off if he stays here."

"Wegard the way he puts his thumbs into the armholes of his howwible pull-over!" said D'Arcy, in great distress.

"Horrible!" grinned Blake. "But if you take him in hand——"

"Imposs!"

"How on earth did such a merchant ever get to St. Jim's?" murmured Manners. "I hope I'm not a snob, but that fellow does seem the giddy limit!"

"It must be a mistake," said Crooke of the Shell. "He's probably a new boot-boy, and he's pretending to be a new chap for a joke!"

Crooke made that remark perfectly loud for the new boy to hear.

Harry Hammond turned on him at once.

"Don't you give me any chin-wag!" he said. "I'm a peaceable chap, but I ain't takin' any of your old buck, I warn yer!"

"Don't speak to me!" said Crooke loftily. "The best thing you can do is to go to a County Council school."

"Bin there," said Hammond cheerfully. "Not so much as I orter, but as much as I could. 'Ammond's 'Ats didn't always sell as they do now, you know."

"Some new-rich bounder!" remarked Gore. "His pater's made money, and planted the young hopeful on St. Jim's to have him made into a gentleman. Won't be much of a success, I fancy."

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"No, it don't seem always a success, do it?" said Hammond, staring at him. "I s'pose you are another of the failures—what?"

Gore turned crimson, and the other fellows laughed loudly. It was one to the new kid, as Jack Blake remarked. Evidently he knew how to take care of himself, as far as words went.

"If you give me any of your cheek——" began Gore.

"Well, you've given me some of yours," said Hammond; "but I ain't lookin' for trouble. P'r'aps someone will tell me where the 'Ousemaster is?"

"Do you really mean to say that you've got the cheek to come to this school, you awful outsider?" asked Crooke.

"Wot's that?" demanded Hammond, doubling his fists and starting towards Crooke. "Wot did you call me?"

"Rotten outsider!" said Crooke, with a sneer.

"Let him alone, Crooke!" said Tom Merry.

"I'm not touching him," said Crooke. "I wouldn't touch him with a barge-pole if I could help it. But he may as well know our opinion of him. Look here, young hatter, or whatever you are, you're not wanted in a school like this! It isn't the kind of place for you. The best thing you can do is to go back to the hat-shop."

"No business of yours, I suppose?" said Hammond.

"Blessed if I know what the Head means by admitting you!" said Crooke, with a scowl. "I think the fellows ought to join together and protest against such an awful outsider as this being allowed in the school! I consider that we ought to say—— Yarooooh!"

Smack!

Crooke staggered back as the new boy's open hand smote him across the face. Harry Hammond tore off his jacket and hurled it upon the floor, spat upon his hands, and squared up to the big Shell fellow in a very warlike attitude.

"Come on!" he shouted. "I've given you a wiper on the kisser, and now you come on and take wot's coming to yer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Go it, Crooke!"

Crooke backed away. He was nearly a head taller than Hammond, but he did not like the warlike looks of the new junior at all.

"We can't fight here!" he muttered. "We shall have all the masters down on us in a shake! And I'm not going to fight a low guttersnipe!"

"You should 'ave thort o' that afore you let your chin wag so much!" said Hammond, flourishing his fists. "Put up, your dukes, you rotter!"

"Go it, Crooke!"

Crooke made a furious rush at Hammond, and the next moment he was sprawling on the floor, and Hammond was dancing round him excitedly, calling upon him to get up and have some more.

Never had such an extraordinary scene been witnessed before in the old Hall of the School House at St. Jim's. And as Crooke gasped on the floor, and Hammond danced round him, and the other fellows roared with laughter, Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, came down the passage, and stopped to stare at the scene in astonishment.

CHAPTER 2.

Hammond Makes Himself At Home!

"WHAT is this?" asked Mr. Railton.

He strode forward and laid a heavy hand upon the shoulder of the excited Hammond, who was flourishing his fists and dancing round the fallen Crooke.

"Cease these absurd antics at once, boy!" exclaimed the Housemaster.

"What do you mean? Who are you?"

"I'm 'Ammond," said the new junior cheerfully. "Who are you?"

"I'm the Housemaster of this House!" said Mr. Railton, in an awe-inspiring voice.

"Then you're the cove I'm lookin' for," said Hammond coolly.

"Cove!" murmured Mr. Railton.

The Housemaster had never been called a cove before, and it took his breath away.

"I 'ope it ain't agin the rules to wipe a cheeky blighter round the mug!" said Hammond. "If it is, I'm sorry, old sport!"

The juniors simply gasped. That any human being should venture to address Mr. Railton as an old sport passed their wildest imaginings. The floor ought to have opened and swallowed up the audacious Hammond. or
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an earthquake should have come along, or, at least, a flash of lightning.

"Boy!" gasped the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir! I'll 'elp 'im up, if you like!"

And Hammond grasped the still sprawling Crooke by the collar, and jerked him to his feet with a single swing of the arm.

Some of the juniors noted how little effort it cost him, though Crooke was a good weight, having much more fat than muscle about him. The queer Cockney kid was evidently strong enough.

"Groogh!" gurgled Crooke. "You're ch-choking me! Leggo my collar, you low blackguard!"

"Crooke, kindly moderate your language!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

Crooke panted. He was so infuriated that he had lost some of his usual fear of the Housemaster, and his rage burst out.

"Is that low cad going to belong to St. Jim's, sir? It's a shame. He isn't fit to be boot-boy at this school!"

"Silence, Crooke! That is a matter for the Head to decide, not for you! If you say another word I shall cane you!"

And the infuriated Shell fellow was silent. Mr. Railton turned to Hammond again, a slightly troubled wrinkle in his brow.

"Are you Harry Hammond, the new boy?" he asked.

"'Arry 'Orace 'Ammond, sir," said the new junior cheerfully—"that's me!"

"Kindly come to my study!"

"Cert'nly, sir!"

Mr. Railton walked away to his study, and Harry Horace Hammond followed him, winking one eye at Tom Merry & Co. as he went.

The door of the Housemaster's study closed behind them both. The juniors stared at one another.

"Well, if this doesn't put the giddy lid on!" said Jack Blake, with a deep breath.

"Takes the whole cake factory!" said Monty Lowther. "Jolly breezy kind of a kid, isn't he? Not troubled with shyness, or diffidence, or anything of that sort."

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"He can hit, too," said Tom Merry.

"Look at Crooke's chivvy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a disgrace to the school!" growled Crooke dolorously. "We're coming to something at St. Jim's, I must say."

"Rotten!" said Levison of the Fourth.

"Disgusting!" said Mellish.

"I must say it's a bit thick," remarked Manners. "The kid isn't quite up to our style. They ought to have taken the edge off him before they sent him here."

"What on earth was the Head thinking about to take him in?" asked Gore.

"Better ask him!" suggested Kangaroo of the Shell.

Gore snorted.

"I twust," said Arthur Augustus, looking round, "that no one here regards me as a snob—"

"Certainly not!" said Blake kindly.

"We regard you simply as an ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I twust I am not a snob. But I weally think that chap is the limit. Did you observe the way he was standing with his beastly thumbs in the arm-holes of his beastly pullover? It was howwid!"

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"I nearly fainted!" said Monty Lowther gravely.

"He's just the kind of fellow who would dig you in the ribs when talkin' to you," said D'Arcy, with a shudder. "I twust I am not a snob, but I feah I shall not be able to stand that person. I twust he will altah his mind and go away. St. Jim's is weally not the place for him!"

"Here comes Railton!" murmured Kangaroo.

Mr. Railton came out of his study with a thoughtful frown on his brow and walked on without looking at the juniors. He went to the Head's study. The new boy was left in the Housemaster's room.

Levison of the Fourth ventured to open the door of the study when the Housemaster was gone, and the fellows looked in. Harry Hammond was standing before the Housemaster's fire, and he had a cigarette between his lips. He nodded coolly to the amazed juniors in the doorway.

"I'm dreaming!" murmured Blake. "Smoking—and in the Housemaster's study!"

"The howwid boundah!" said D'Arcy in disgust. "Smokin'—at his age!"

"You'd better put that out, kid!" said Tom Merry good-naturedly.

"W'y?" asked Harry Hammond.

"Smoking isn't allowed here!"

"W'y, 'ere's a cigar-box on the table!" said Hammond, jerking his thumb towards Mr. Railton's own box of cigars.

Tom Merry laughed.

"There's a slight difference between a Housemaster and a junior kid," he said. "Mr. Railton can do as he likes."

"Wot's sauce for the goose is sauce for the bloomin' gander, ain't it?" said Hammond.

"Cut it out!" urged Tom Merry. "You don't know the rules, but I'm telling you. Mr. Railton will jump on you if he finds his study smelling of smoke."

"Thanks!" said Hammond. "I can take a tip, and I'm much obliged to yer."

And he tossed the half-smoked cigarette into the grate.

"Is Railton going to let you stay?" demanded Gore.

"I s'pose so."

"It's a rotten shame!"

"Looking for a fat nose like your pal?" asked Hammond undauntedly.

"I'm ready to give you one if I 'ave much of your lip!"

"You beastly outsider—"

Hammond came across the study in a bound.

Gore backed away hastily. He was not afraid, but he did not want to be caught fighting in the sacred precincts of the Housemaster's study.

Tom Merry discreetly drew the door shut, and the juniors melted away. And while Harry Hammond remained in the study, awaiting the return of the Housemaster, there was only one topic among the juniors of the School House—and that was the new boy and his weird and wonderful manners and customs.

CHAPTER 3.

A Surprising New Boy!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was in his study when Mr. Railton arrived there.

The frown upon the Housemaster's brow caught his attention at once.

"What is wrong, Mr. Railton?" the Head asked.

"The new boy has arrived, sir."

"Ah! Hammond?"

"Yes."

"You are not pleased with him?" asked the Head, understanding the Housemaster's look.

"Well, he seems an honest and good lad enough, so far as I can see—but—"

"But not quite suitable for this school?" asked the Head, with a smile.

"Exactly, sir!"

"What are his faults?"

"A dreadful manner of speech, for one thing, an utter ignorance of our ways here, and a total want of respect for his masters," said Mr. Railton.

"Faults that good training can amend," suggested the Head.

"Quite probably, sir; but, meanwhile—"

"I quite understand, Mr. Railton. But unless you should find that the boy has serious faults—viciousness, or anything that cannot be tolerated—I wish to give him a chance. He is a little out of the common run of St. Jim's boys, I am aware. Until quite lately he worked in his father's hat shop in a poor quarter of London. Mr. Hammond has made a large fortune in hats, I think, and is now very rich indeed. His natural desire is to give his son a good education—the best that money can buy."

"A natural and praiseworthy desire, certainly," agreed Mr. Railton. "But surely the boy might have obtained such advantages without coming here."

"True; but it is not only education he requires—he needs polish of manner far more than book knowledge, I understand."

"That is indeed true!"

"The fact is, Mr. Railton, I have been specially requested by one of the governors—Sir John Tressady—to take this lad into the school. Sir John is interested in a charity organisation in Bethnal Green, and Mr. Hammond has given no less than ten thousand pounds towards it. Sir John desires to do what he can for Mr. Hammond's son in return. He has seen the boy and pronounces that he is a good and honest lad, with some little peculiarities due to want of training and education. He has, in fact, promised Mr. Hammond that he will see his son installed at this school, and he asked me as a favour to allow the boy to come. Upon Sir John's assurance that there is nothing whatever against the boy, excepting the little peculiarities I have mentioned, I consented to take him in to see what could be done."

Mr. Railton nodded.

"I understand, sir. And it is your wish that he should be in the School House?"

The Head smiled.

"Yes. As I think that you, Mr. Railton, will probably understand and sympathise with him more than Mr. Ratcliff might, if I placed him in the New House."

"Thank you, sir! In the circumstances, I will do my best."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Railton."

And the Housemaster quitted the Head's study.

He returned to his own quarters in thoughtful mood. What Mr. Railton was chiefly thinking of was the chipping, and perhaps persecution that the Cockney would have to endure at the hands of the other juniors. Certainly a good number of fellows would make a set against such an addition to the School House, and the new junior was likely to find his path a thorny one.

Mr. Railton entered his study and sniffed.

There was an acrid odour of tobacco, and a half-smoked cigarette in the fender. The new boy was sitting in the Housemaster's armchair eating toffee.

"Hammond!" rapped out the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you not know that you should rise when your master enters the room?"

"No, sir."

"You know it now?"

"Certainly, sir! I beg your pardon," said Hammond, rising to his feet.

Evidently the boy, whatever his faults, was anxious to do what was right as soon as he knew it.

"You should not sit down in my armchair, Hammond. It is disrespectful."

"Most comfy chair in the blooming room, sir," said Hammond, in explanation.

"You must not say blooming, Hammond. It is a vulgar expression."

"Very well, sir."

"Have you been smoking here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Boys at this school are not allowed to smoke. It is a silly and unhealthy habit."

"Very well, sir. One of the blokes told me it wasn't allowed, and I chucked the fag away, sir," said Hammond.

"Very good! Don't use the word bloke. It is not English."

"Sorry, sir!"

Mr. Railton could not help smiling.

"I must examine you a little now, to ascertain what your capabilities are. I understand that you have been prepared to take your place in the Fourth Form here?"

"That's it, sir. Three months' cramming ever since the old man got the quidlets."

"And before that?" asked Mr. Railton, forbearing to take any notice of the "old man" or the "quidlets."

"I was at a County Council school for a bit, sir, but not much. I 'ad to 'elp farther a lot."

"Well, we will see," said Mr. Railton.

And he sat down to examine the new boy.

The result astonished him.

The boy had attended a County Council school, and had had three months' cramming to prepare him for entrance at St. Jim's. Mr. Railton expected to find him a monument of ignorance. But he was agreeably disappointed. The keen, sharp intellect of the Cockney had mastered in a short time what would have taken the average St. Jim's boy whole terms to learn.

He had a good grasp of French, though his accent in French was horrible. He had a working knowledge of Latin, though he pronounced it somewhat as he pronounced English. He had a smattering of German—quite enough to enable him to hold his own in the Fourth Form. In

mathematics he surprised the Housemaster more than in anything else, for in that branch of knowledge he was quite up to anybody in the Fifth Form at St. Jim's, and far ahead of the cleverest of the juniors. History and geography were also more than satisfactory.

"You have certainly made the most of limited opportunities, Hammond," said Mr. Railton. "I must congratulate you. I hope you have come here with the intention of working hard."

"I 'ope so, sir."

"Your knowledge of English grammar is very good, Hammond, but in speech you have very much to learn. You are, doubtless, aware of that."

"I've bin told so, sir."

"Ahem! Doubtless you will come to notice it in time. You will be put into the Fourth Form, Hammond."

"Yes, sir."

"I shall assign you to Study No. 5, with Bates and Smith minor. You will try to get on peaceably with your study-mates, I trust. I think I have observed that you have already quarrelled with some lad here."

"He give me too much of his lip, sir."

"You must take chaff, and that kind of thing good temperedly, Hammond. You must remember that you are new here, and strange to the ways of the school. If you are a quarrelsome boy, you will have endless trouble on your hands. Please try to be peaceful."

"Cert'nly, sir!"

"You may go, Hammond."



It seemed to Bates and Smith minor that an earthquake happened. Hammond grasped them both at once, and Bates was whirled over and sent sprawling on the floor, and Smith minor was swung bodily into the air and thrown on to the tea-table. They had roused the wrong customer in the Cockney schoolboy!

"Yes, sir."

Hammond walked out of the study, and burst into a shrill whistle in the passage.

Mr. Railton called him back.

"Hammond, you must not whistle indoors."

"Why, sir?"

"You must not ask a master the reason why. You must do as you are told without question," said the House-master.

"Oh, orlight, sir!"

And Hammond walked away, without whistling.

CHAPTER 4.

Not Desired!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS wore a worried look.

The chums of Study No. 6—Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and Digby of the Fourth—were at tea in their study. Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther of the Shell were with them, partaking of the hospitality of Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus was standing the feed; but he was looking much less cheerful than his guests. There was evidently something on the mind of the swell of St. Jim's.

He passed the eggs when Tom Merry asked for the jam, and he poured out tea into the sugar-basin, instead of Digby's cup—proofs that his thoughts were wandering.

"What's wrong with the noble Adolphus?" Monty Lowther inquired at last. "Has the order gone forth reducing the height of junior collars to less than six inches?"

"Don't be a silly ass, deah boy!"

"Gussy, is thinkin' about the new kid!" chuckled Blake. "He can't get over Hammond's h's, or, rather, his want of them, and his sticking his thumbs into his pullover."

"That isn't all, deah boys."

"What's troubling his ickle mind, then?" asked Lowther sympathetically.

"Suppose that awful boundah is put into the Fourth Form?" said D'Arcy.

"It's likely enough. What about it?"

"He might be put into this study, then."

"Well, that would be rotten," agreed Blake.

"I weally could not stand that person at close quartahs, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "He affects my nerves, you know. He gwates on me howbively. I twest there is nothin' snobbish about me. But if he should be put into this study, I should have no rescourse but to change out!"

Tap!

"Come in!" sang out Blake.

The study door opened, and Harry Horace Hammond presented himself, with his usual broad grin adorning his large mouth.

Arthur Augustus shuddered. It seemed as if his dread forebodings had been realised already. The new junior nodded cheerily to the tea-party.

"Hallo, young shaver!" said Blake.

"Same to you, and many of 'em!" said Hammond affably. "This ere is the Fourth Form passage, ain't it?"

"It are!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove! Do you mean to say that you have been put into the Fourth Form, Hammond?" said D'Arcy faintly.

"Well, I didn't mean to say it, but I 'ave," said Hammond. "Wot's the 'arm—eh?"

"Oh, gweat Scott!"

"You're not shoved into this study, are you?" asked Herries.

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"That depends on the number," said Hammond. "I can't make out the bloomin' number over the door; they want repainting, I must say!"

"What's your number?"

"Five."

"Oh, good! That's next door," said Blake.

And Arthur Augustus sighed a deep sigh of relief.

"You call this 'ere little garret a study—eh?" asked Hammond.

"Why, you cheeky young sweep—"

"No offence, on'y tryin' to learn the nimes of things," said Hammond.

"Oh! Yes; this is a study."

"You coves 'ave tea in your studies—eh?"

"We does!" said Lowther.

"Well, that's a bit of orlight!" said Hammond. "You stand it yourselves—eh?"

"Yes; we buy the grub at the tuckshop. If you want tea, you'll find the school shop in the corner of the quad!" said Blake, as a hint to Hammond to clear out. "You can have tea in Hall, if you prefer it, though. Only you're too late for that to-day."

"Might arsk a cove whether 'e's 'ungry, I should say!" said Hammond in an aggrieved tone.

Blake hesitated. Study No. 6 was famous for its hospitality. But, considering the view Arthur Augustus took

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of the new boy, Blake did not care to ask him to tea.

"Well, we'll ask that with pleasure," said Monty Lowther. "Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

"Then I should recommend a visit to the tuckshop!"

Hammond grinned.

"I reckon I don't want to plant myself 'ere if I ain't wanted," he said.

"Next door, you say? Orlight!"

And Hammond stepped back into the passage and closed the door. Blake shook his head solemnly at his aristocratic chum.

"Gussy, I'm surprised at you!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I couldn't ask him to your feed, but it was up to you. He's a new kid, and he has nowhere to lay his giddy head. It was up to you to ask him to tea."

"Wats!"

Hammond turned away from Study No. 6 with undiminished cheerfulness. He could see that his arrival at St. Jim's was not received with enthusiasm by the fellows there, but it did not seem to trouble him very much.

He moved along to the next study—No. 5. The room happened to be empty, so Hammond was able to take possession unopposed. He glanced round the study with a somewhat disparaging eye, and sat down on the table and whistled.

"My heye! Don't look very cheerful to begin with," he reflected. "I suppose them young toffs don't want nothin' to do with me, 'cause I'm 'Arry 'Ammond, of Bethnal Green, and the governor

made his money out of 'Ammond's 'Igh-class 'A's. Well, I suppose I shall survive it, even if they don't want me. I've paid my footin' 'ere and they can go and eat coke! My 'at, though, I'm 'ungry!"

And Hammond decided at once that a visit to the school shop was the order of the day, and he forthwith proceeded in search of it. In the quadrangle he came upon Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, and he spoke to him as coolly and calmly as if a Sixth Former and a prefect were a mere ordinary human being.

"I syc, can you tell a cove where the shop is?" he asked.

Kildare jumped.

"What—what did you say?"

"I'm lookin' for the shop," Hammond explained. "I'm 'ungry! Where is it?"

"Who are you?" asked Kildare.

"'Arry 'Orace 'Ammond of the Fourth Form."

"Oh! The shop's over there," said Kildare, pointing.

"Thanks, old sport!"

Hammond walked away, leaving Kildare staring after him blankly. The head of the Sixth had seen all sorts and conditions of youngsters arrive at St. Jim's, but he had never seen anything quite like Harry Horace Hammond before. The Cockney schoolboy seemed to be in quite a class by himself.

CHAPTER 5.

Hammond Finds a Friend!

FIGGINS & CO. of the New House were in the tuckshop, discussing ginger-beer and football, when Harry Horace Hammond arrived.

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn had not seen the new boy yet, but they had heard of him. All St. Jim's had heard of him by this time. They looked at him as he came into the shop, and guessed who he was.

"This 'ere tho tuckshop, I s'pose?" said Hammond.

Figgins & Co. grinned.

"Quite right!" said Figgins. "Goat! first time. You're the new kid!"

"Yes."

"Name?"

"'Ammond—'Arry 'Orace 'Ammond."

"Form?" asked Kerr.

"Fourth."

"That's our Form," said Figgins graciously. "We have the honour to welcome you into the Fourth Form, Master Harry Horace Hammond."

"Good hegg!" said Hammond. "I ain't seed you before—"

"We belong to the New House," Figgins explained. "You are a School House chap. That old casual ward yonder is the School House. I hope you'll have a high old time at St. Jim's, my son."

"Thanks," said Hammond. "I must say you're more polite than the fellers in my 'Ouso."

Figgins looked astonished.

"You don't mean to say that they haven't greeted you with open arms, and welcomed you like a long-lost brother?" he demanded.

"They ain't done nothin' of the sort," said Hammond, a little ruefully.

"They don't seem to want me, 'cause I'm 'Arry 'Ammond of Bethnal Green. Seems to me that they put on a lot of side 'ere. I'm pally with plenty of chaps in Bethnal Green, and the right sort of blokes, too, but I don't seem likely to get a pal 'ere."

Figgins smiled genially. He had

(Continued at foot of next page.)

Add these full-of-facts notes, along with the free gift pictures which they describe, to your collection of CHAMPIONS OF SPEED AND SPORT.

DRIVER SPARSHATT.—He is the ace speedman among British engine-drivers. It was he who drove the London and North-Eastern express loco., "Papyrus," over the 268 miles between Newcastle and London in 3 hours 51 minutes. For more than twelve miles of the way his train was travelling at over 100 m.p.h., and for a short burst it actually touched 108! When Driver Sparshatt brought his train triumphantly into King's Cross he had hit the British rail speed record for six!

DURATION-RECORD GLIDER.—Ten years ago no one would have believed it possible that, one day, men would be able to remain for an hour in the air in engineless planes. Yet skilled sail-plane pilots have already stayed "up topsides" for a great deal longer than that. The record flight was achieved by John Neilan, who went up at 8.15 one morning last July, and by guiding his super-lightweight machine into rising currents of air, succeeded in flying for 13 hours, 7 minutes!

In the same month another pilot broke the distance record by gliding 98 miles from Dunstable to Holkham, on the Norfolk Coast. Only the presence of the sea prevented him going farther still!

SUBMARINE XI.—Britain's crack battleships all boast names, such as "Nelson" and "Queen Elizabeth"; yet the crack submarine of the fleet is called simply XI.

Built at the cost of over £1,000,000, XI is a real under-water battleship. She is

over a hundred yards long and her 6,000 horse-power Diesel engines can drive her at nearly 20 knots on the surface and 9 knots when submerged. With a full crew of 110 men, she can remain under water for two and a half days!

CAPTAIN R. PUGNET.—When the mighty French liner, "Normandie," steamed majestically into New York harbour, while the sirens of near-by vessels saluted her achievement in winning the Blue Riband of the Atlantic, the man on her bridge was Captain R. Pugnet.

Starting his career in a windjammer, Captain Pugnet had commanded in turn all the largest French liners: and it had always been his ambition to capture the Atlantic record for France.

But, in his early days, he little guessed that one day the 3,000 miles of ocean would be crossed in the amazingly short time of 4 days, 3 hours, 2 minutes, which the "Normandie" ultimately attained last year.

STANLEY WOODS WINNING THE T.T.—Just what the Derby is to horse-racing, the Tourist Trophy races held in the Isle of Man are to motor-cycle racing—the classic event of the season.

Last year Stanley Woods, an Irish rider, won the Senior race at an average speed of 84 m.p.h., passing J. Guthrie as they came in sight of the finishing post. Woods had picked up 26 seconds on his rival in the last lap, and he finished the race with only a thimbleful of petrol left in his tank!

RAYMOND MAYS' SHELSLEY WALSH RECORD.—With crack racing cars competing in difficult races lasting for anything up to twenty-four hours, it is strange that in the most thrilling event of all lasts only 40 seconds.

This is the famous Shelsley Walsh hill-climb, held every summer in Worcester. The hill is a thousand yards long, and race drivers compete to see who can get his car from the foot to the top in the shortest time.

A year ago the record for the hill was held by Whitney Straight, who took his Italian Maserati racer over the course in 40 seconds dead. Last summer, however, Raymond Mays, driving a new British machine called the E.R.A., streaked away from the start at such a speed that he knocked 1.5 seconds off Straight's time.

One of our pictures shows Raymond Mays steering his E.R.A. into the difficult S-bend halfway up the hill. This bend provides spectators with all the biggest thrills, for drivers, striving desperately to split seconds off their times, often go round it in a series of hair-raising skids.

JIM ALLEN.—Six years ago Portsmouth signed on a new player from Poole Town—an unknown youngster by name Jim Allen. To-day that same Jim Allen is centre-half for Aston Villa and also an English International.

His rise has been sensational; his reputation as a member of the Portsmouth team grew so fast that when Aston Villa bought him in 1935 they had to write Pompey a cheque for £10,735—the highest transfer fee ever paid!

intended to rag the new fellow a little, but his kind heart smote him. Whether St. Jim's was a suitable place for Harry Horace Hammond or not, it was hard lines upon him that he couldn't find anybody there to pal with.

Figgins realised that.

"Oh, you'll pull out all right!" he said, not quite with conviction, though. "You're a bit strange in the place at first, that's all. You'll find a lot of fellows quite decent in the long run."

"I 'ope so," said Hammond. "Anywy, I ain't down-hearted. I bin through worse things than this 'ere, afore the old man made 'is money out of 'Ammond's 'Igh-class 'A's. Pr'aps you young gents would like to join me in a feed? I know I ain't your class, and I ain't sayin' that I am, but you'll find me orlright in my wye, an' I've got plenty of dough."

Figgins & Co. grinned.

"My dear chap," said Fatty Wynn, quite cordially, "we'll join you with pleasure."

"Shurrup!" whispered Kerr.

But Fatty Wynn was firm.

"I don't believe in being snobbish," he persisted. "What's the matter with the chap? I'm surprised at you, Kerr!"

"We're not going to chum with him," growled Kerr, in an undertone. "And if we're not going to chum with him, we can't take his grub."

"I don't know about chumming with him," said Wynn, "but I'm willing to be friendly with any chap who—"

"Who can stand a feed!" sniffed Kerr.

"Who's decent?" said Fatty Wynn calmly. "You two can hike off, if you like. I'm not going to turn my nose up at a chap because he drops his h's."

Dame Taggles surveyed the new boy in some astonishment. But she was all smiles as he took a five-pound note out of a Russia-leather pocket-book. Evidently the heir of Hammond's High-class Hats was well supplied with that very necessary article, cash.

"Chynge that, please, ma'am?" asked Hammond.

"Certainly, sir."

"You blokes joinin' me?" asked Hammond.

"Thank you very much, but we've an appointment," said Kerr, very politely, and he took Figgins' arm and walked him out of the tuckshop.

"You got an appointment, too?" asked Hammond, with a sniff, looking at Fatty Wynn.

"No fear!" said the fat Fourth Former promptly.

"Good hegg! What'll you take?"

It appeared that Fatty Wynn was prepared to take many things. Hammond having requested him to call for anything he liked, the fat Fourth Former proceeded to do so. Mrs. Taggles was kept very busy.

"I say, you must be pretty flush with tin, Hammond!" Fatty Wynn remarked, as he finished his cold chicken, and started on tongue.

"'Bout the only thing I've got that's any good 'ere," said Hammond. "The old man give me twenty quid when I left 'ome."

Fatty Wynn's eyes opened wide.

"Twenty pounds."

"Yes."

"My hat! I wish I had your governor for my uncle," said Fatty Wynn feelingly. "Do you get an allowance as well?"

"Three quid a week reg'larly."

"Oh crumbs! You can live on the fat of the land if you like. Why, your pater must be rolling in money," said Wynn, in astonishment.

"'E is," said Hammond, "and made it all out of 'Ammond's 'Igh-class 'A's, too. It's a limited company now, you know, and the governor is the managing director. We ain't always been rich."

Fatty Wynn smiled. He could guess that.

"We've 'ad some 'ard times," said Hammond confidentially. "I used to 'elp father in the 'at shop. I can iron an 'at with anybody in London. I've knowed wot it was to be 'ungry."

"Oh, that's awful!" said Fatty, with a shudder.

"But that's all over now, you bet your 'at!" said Hammond. "We're simply rollin' in it now. An' I like the chynge, I can tell you. The old man sent me 'ere to pick up wot I 'aven't 'ad a chance of pickin' up at 'ome. Can't say I like it so well as some, but I'm goin' to do my best to please 'im."

"Quite right!" said Fatty Wynn. "Some tarts now, please, Mrs. Taggles. You must come and have a feed in the New House to-morrow, Hammond."

"Glad to," said Hammond. "I shan't git much chance of feeding with anybody in my own 'ouse, the wye things look."

Fatty Wynn felt an inward misgiving. If this fellow was going to be cut by everybody in his own House, he was exactly a desirable sort of fellow to ask over to the New House, and Fatty wondered how Figgins and Kerr would take it. But Fatty Wynn glanced at the pile of tarts, and determined that he

at all events, wouldn't be a snob, and he started on the tarts with quite a glow of self-appreciation.

Hammond had finished eating by this time, but he watched Fatty Wynn with wonder and admiration as the fat Fourth Former kept on.

Cakes and tarts and doughnuts vanished fast. But at last even Fatty had to cry halt.

He had a somewhat shiny look upon his plump face, his eyes had assumed a fishy glimmer, and he had a most uncomfortable feeling of tightness in the region of the waist. He clambered down off the stool with some difficulty.

"Not taking any more?" asked Hammond.

"No, thanks," said Fatty. "I say, you've done me jolly well, and I'm much obliged to you. I haven't had such a jolly good feed for a long time."

"I 'ope you'll come an' 'ave tea in my study when you feel inclined," said Hammond. "Study No. 5 in the School 'Ouse."

"Thanks awfully! I say, I'll walk round with you, if you like, and show you about the school," said Fatty generously.

"Here, I've been looking for you!" exclaimed Redfern of the Fourth, a New House fellow, entering the tuckshop. "Come on, you boulder!"

"Hold on, Reddy!"

"Rats! You're wanted! Rehearsal of 'King John'!"

"Oh, you'll excuse me, Hammond, won't you?"

And Fatty Wynn rolled out of the tuckshop with Redfern.

Harry Hammond was left alone. He sighed a little. It had not occurred to Redfern that the new boy would like to witness the rehearsal for the sake of the company—indeed, he had hardly looked at Hammond at all. He marched Fatty Wynn off to the New House, and Hammond could not help sighing a little as his only friend vanished.

"Ow much?" he asked Mrs. Taggles.

"Three pounds twelve shillings and threepence halfpenny," said Dame Taggles, with great exactness.

"Oh, that's a bit of a chynge from fried fish and taters for twopence in Bethnal Green Road!" said Hammond.

"All right; and us the chynge."

And Harry Hammond put his change in his pocket and strolled out of the tuckshop, wondering what kind of life he was going to lead at St. Jim's, and whether he would make any friends there.

CHAPTER 6.

To Dog!

STUDY No. 5 was occupied when Harry Hammond returned to it.

Bates and Smith minor of the Fourth Form were there having tea, and they stared at Hammond as the Cockney schoolboy came in.

"Hallo, young shaver! What do you want?" Smith minor inquired.

"This 'ere is my room," Hammond explained. "These 'ere is my books. I jest put them in 'ere, you know."

"You're making a little mistake," said Smith minor pleasantly. "This isn't your study. The proper place for your sort is the boot-room, and I dare say Toby will be very pleased to see you. It's at the bottom of the kitchen stairs. Good-bye!"

Hammond grinned.

"I'm stayin' 'ere!" he remarked.

Both Smith minor and Bates rose to their feet. They hadn't any intention

of having this queer boy "planted" on them if they could possibly help it. They had heard all about him, and they did not want him in their study.

"Now, I don't want to hurt you," said Smith minor generously. "I'm a good-natured chap. I give you two seconds to get on the other side of the door."

"And I give you one!" said Bates.

"But this 'ere is my study!" objected Hammond. "I ain't wantin' to shove myself in where I ain't welcome, but there you are! Mr. Railton 'ave put me in 'ere."

"There's an empty study up the passage," said Bates. "It's rather a hole, and it's not used, and you can have it for the asking."

"If it's rather a 'ole, I'm certainly not goin' to ask for it!" said Hammond. "I 'ope you ain't goin' to cut up rusty, but 'ere I stay."

"You can take one end of him, Smithy, and I'll take the other," said Bates.

"Right-ho!" said Smith minor.

They started towards the Cockney schoolboy. Harry Hammond was still grinning. They were two to one, but

I'M FELIX-
SEE ME
EVERY WEEK
IN
MODERN BOY!



he was not afraid. His early youth in the Bethnal Green Road had been varied by many a desperate encounter, and he had learned to fight almost as soon as he could walk. His private opinion of the St. Jim's juniors was that they were a "soft lot." He was as hard as nails himself, as the juniors were destined to discover.

"Now, you let me alone!" said Hammond. "I'm a peaceable chap, I am. I don't want to scrap with nobody. You keep your 'ands off!"

"Out you go!" said Bates.

And they seized him.

Then an earthquake happened—at all events, it seemed to Bates and Smith minor that it was an earthquake, or at least a cyclone. The Cockney grasped them both at once, and Bates was whirled over, and went sprawling on the carpet, and Smith minor was swung bodily into the air, and thrown on to the tea-table.

There was a terrific crash.

Harry Hammond stepped back and surveyed his handiwork with a grin.

Bates sat up on the carpet blinking; Smith minor sat amid the smashed tea-things on the table, with tea and milk and treacle flowing round him.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bates.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Smith minor.

"Want any more?" inquired the Cockney. "Lots more if you're a-lookin' for trouble. But I 'ope you'll 'ave more sense."

"Why, you—you hooligan!" roared Smith minor. "You've smashed up our tea-things!"

"Kick him out!" gasped Bates.

"Come on!" said Hammond. "I'm ready!"

Bates rose to his feet, and Smith minor slid off the table. Treacle was clinging to him, that delicacy having been provided by the juniors for their tea. Bits of broken cups and saucers stuck in the treacle that was lathered over Smith minor's trousers.

"Look here," roared Smith, "we're not having you in our study, you ruffian! You've smashed our crocks!"

"I warned you to keep your 'ands off, didn't I?"

"Get out!"

"Rats!"

"You'll be chucked out if you don't go!"

"Bosh!"

Smith minor and his study-mate exchanged glances. It was simply impossible to allow a new kid to handle them like that and remain to gloat over his victims. And they made a rush at him together.

The next moment there was a wild and whirling struggle in the study.

Smith minor and Bates grasped the new boy together, and exerted all their strength. They knew how tough he was now, and they did their best.

But even for the two of them Hammond was no mean match. The three, looking as if they were tied in a knot together, staggered to and fro in the study. They rolled heavily against the tea-table, and sent it flying into the grate, and there was a crash of tea-things. They bumped on the book-shelf, and brought it down with a shower of books. And still the new boy was no nearer to the door.

They came down in a heap at last and rolled on the floor, and then Bates found himself undermost, with Smith minor sprawling across him, face downwards, and Harry Hammond sitting on Smith minor's shoulders, keeping him there.

The two undermost juniors struggled frantically and roared.

"Lemme gerrup!"

"You're squashing me!"

Hammond chuckled.

"You ain't gettin' hup till you've promised to be 'ave," he said, "and if you wriggle I'll bump your silly 'eads on the floor!"

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Gerroff!"

The study door opened, and a senior—a fellow with clear-cut features and keen eyes, and very well-dressed—looked in.

It was Cutts of the Fifth.

"Hallo! What's this rumpus?" asked Cutts, bursting into a laugh. "Are you ragging the new kid, you young rascals?"

"Looks like it, don't it?" grinned Hammond. "Want to pitch me outer my own study. But they've woke up the wrong customer."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cutts. "Look here, Knox!"

Knox of the Sixth, a prefect of the School House, was behind Cutts. He grinned as he looked into the study.

Bates and Smith minor were crimson with fury. It was bitterly humiliating to them to be caught in such a position. And they were helpless to escape from it—the Cockney had them down, and was keeping them there—and they wriggled and squirmed in vain.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Knox. "You'd better let that new kid alone, you young sweeps! He's too much for you!"

"Make him gerroff!" mumbled Bates. "I'm being squashed!"

"Get up, Hammond! It's all right. They shan't touch you again," said Knox. "I'm a prefect. I came here to see if there was any ragging going on."

Hammond rose to his feet, and Smith minor and Bates wriggled up, very dishevelled and dusty. They gave the Cockney furious glances. They had had the worse of the tussle, but they would have renewed it instantly if the prefect had not been there.

"I didn't want no row," said Hammond. "They set on me. This 'ere is my study, ain't it?"

"Of course it is!" said Knox genially. "Now, look here, Bates and Smith! I've got my eye on you! The new kid is not to be ragged. Do you hear? I'm not going to permit anything of the kind."

Bates and Smith minor blinked at Knox, almost forgetting their rage in their astonishment. Kildare or Darrell of the Sixth might have spoken like that—without exciting surprise. But Knox, the bully of the Sixth, the black sheep of St. Jim's—what did he mean by it?

Knox was just the fellow to take the lead in ragging a new kid, and especially in starting a snobbish set against a fellow like Hammond. To see him posing as the champion of the oppressed was simply astounding.

And Cutts, too, the blackguard of the Fifth—what did he mean by standing up for such a rank outsider as this bounder from Bethnal Green?

Smith minor and Bates simply stared at the two seniors. They could not understand it at all, unless both Knox and Cutts had suddenly gone absolutely "potty."

"You hear me?" rapped out Knox. "Oh!" gasped Bates.

"If they worry you any more, you come and tell me at once, Hammond," said Knox. "I'm a prefect, and have to keep order among the juniors, you know."

Hammond did not know what a prefect was, but he realised that he was a person of some authority.

He nodded. "Thank yer kindly," he said. "But I reckon I can look arter myself. I could 'andle those two blokes as easy as rollin' off a log!"

"Could you?" muttered Bates, between his teeth. "You wa't, you bounder!"

"Remember that I shall keep an eye on this study!" said Knox threateningly. "If there's any more ragging, you'll hear from me! Hammond is not going to be badly treated!"

Smith minor and Bates looked whole volumes of fury, but they said nothing. Knox was not the kind of fellow to be argued with.

"I—I s'ye," faltered Hammond, "you're very kind! I don't know wot you should take this 'ere trouble about me for. The other blokes don't seem to."

"I'm doing my duty as a prefect," said Knox loftily. "Besides, I think you're a fine little fellow, and I like

you. You come to me if you're in trouble at any time, and I'll set you right!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"You needn't call me sir—my name's Knox. If you like to run along to my study now, I'll give you some tips about your work, and about doing your preparation."

"I'm much obliged, sir—I mean, Knox."

And Hammond gladly followed the two seniors from the study.

A swift look passed between Knox and Cutts as the latter closed the study door.

"By the way, young 'un," said Cutts smoothly, "perhaps you'd like to drop into my study this evening—Study No. 1, in the Fifth Form passage. You won't find things very cheery in your own quarters—and I'm going to have a bit of a supper, and some fellows you'd like to meet. Would you care to come?"

Hammond's pleasure and gratitude was only too visible in his face.

"Jes' what I should like," he said. "I'll come with pleasure!"

Cutts nodded pleasantly and walked away, and Hammond gazed after him. The good-looking, well-groomed Fifth Former was an imposing personage to Hammond's eyes. He did not know that Gerald Cutts was the most unscrupulous black sheep that could have been found at St. Jim's or any other Public school.

Cutts represented everything that Harry Hammond lacked, and he admired him with an awed admiration. That handsome, elegantly dressed, splendid chap had asked him to his study, to meet some friends—and just after a pair of grubby juniors had tried to pitch him out of his own study, because they did not consider him good enough company for them!

No wonder Hammond was elated as he followed Knox the prefect to his study—there to receive much inexpressible kindness at the hands of the bully of the Sixth!

CHAPTER 7.

A Friend in Need!

TOM MERRY came along the passage, and paused outside Study No. 5.

The door was open, and he could see into the study, and he saw a scene of devastation.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming from the opposite direction, stopped, too, surprised by the scene of wreckage.

"Bai Jove, they've been having a wuff time here!" Arthur Augustus remarked, turning his eyeglass upon the interior of the study.

"Looks like it!" grinned Tom Merry. "What was it, Bates—an earthquake or a tornado?"

"It was that blessed Cockney!" growled Bates.

"That bounder from Bethnal Green!" snorted Smith minor.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, turning his eyeglass round the study. "But why didn't you stop him, deah boys?"

Smith minor and Bates looked a little sheepish. They did not like to confess that the Cockney, single-handed, had been too much for them!

"You didn't stand by and watch him doing it, surely?" said Tom Merry.

"No, we didn't!" growled Bates.

"I should certainly have ejected him

(Continued on the next page.)



Make the Jester Smile and Win a MATCH FOOTBALL!

Send your Joke to The GEM Jester, 1, Tallis House, John Carpenter Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

ROUGH ON RASTUS.

Pete: "Were yo' an' Rastus cool and collected after de explosion?"

Sambo: "Shure! Ah was cool, and Rastus was collected."

A football has been awarded to L. Percy, 24, Stow Hill, Treforest, S. Wales.

SAFE.

First Burglar (in alarm): "Say, Bill, we've gone an' broken into the 'cavy-weight champion's' ouse!"

Second Burglar: "Aw, don't get scared! He won't fight for anything under a thousand pounds!"

A football has been awarded to J. Courtley, 17, Thorntree Avenue, Brambles Tarm, Middlesbrough, Yorkshire.

FANCY DRESS.

Tom Merry: "Have you heard, Monty? Cousin Ethel is going to the fancy-dress ball as Joan of Arc, Maid of Orleans."

Monty Lowther: "That's funny! I'm going as Noah's Ark, made of cardboard."

A football has been awarded to D. Reid, Lynton, Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe, Northampton.

DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES.

Shop Assistant: "This, sir, is the very latest thing in life-saving belts."

Customer: "Is it reliable?"

Assistant: "Well, sir, we've sold many, and no customer has come back to complain."

A football has been awarded to N. Carmichael, 21, Britannia Road, Northam, Southampton.

MISSING.

Shopkeeper (to workman): "You don't mean to say you're opening up this part of the road again after just filling it in?"

Workman: "Well, sir, this is our last 'ope of findin' the foreman!"

A football has been awarded to C. Costello, 44, Hartland Road, West Ham, London, E.15.

ACCURATE.

Carpenter: "What was the length of that floorboard I told you to saw off?"

Apprentice: "Two lengths of my rule, this piece of string, and my pocket-knife."

A football has been awarded to P. Dunk, 1, Erica Cottages, Grove Road, Hindhead, Surrey.

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from the study if I had been in your place, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head.

Bates snorted.

"Perhaps you could do it, and perhaps you couldn't, you fathead! We tried to, and we couldn't. He's as tough as anything!"

"Bai Jove! You didn't let him handle both of you?"

"How could we help it?" roared Bates. "We did our best. As for you, the Cockney could knock you into a cocked hat with his little finger!"

"Wats! If he had made a disturbance in my study, I should certainly have given him a fearful thwackin'!"

"The blighter ought to be sent back to Bethnal Green!" growled Smith minor. "We're not going to have him in our study!"

"Bethnal Green seems to have been a bit too much for you, though!" grinned Tom Merry. "Why can't you let him alone? He seems a decent kid enough, and quite inoffensive if he's left alone. And Railton put him in the study, you know."

"And we're going to boot him out. We should simply have smashed him if Knox and Cutts hadn't interfered!"

"Knox and Cutts!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "Rather a new dodge for them to stand up for a kid like Hammond! I should have thought Cutts, at least, would be down on him more than anybody else—he's that sort!"

"Well, I'd have thought so, too," said Bates. "He's asked him to supper in his study this evening—I heard him through the door."

"Cutts has asked that outsidah to suppah!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Yes. And Knox has taken him to his room now, to give him some tips about his school work," said Smith minor, with a sniff.

"My hat! They must be rather less rotten than we've always believed, to take all that trouble about a new kid," said Tom Merry, in great surprise. "Of course, it's Knox's duty as a prefect to stop ragging, and to help a kid if he needs it, but I've never noticed Knox breaking his neck to do his duty before!"

"Wathah not!"

"Perhaps he's turning over a new leaf, and taking up duty instead of playing nap at the Green Man!" said Tom, laughing. "It would be a big change for Knox. Anyway, he did quite right in standing up for the kid if you were ragging him—though, to judge by the state of the study, the kid can look after himself."

"Oh, rats!" said Bates. "We'll tackle him again when Knox isn't hanging about. We're not going to have that rotten outsider here!"

"Rot!" said Tom emphatically. "You've got to have him here, and it would be only decent to show him a bit of civility!"

"You mind your own business, you Shell rotter!" said Bates. "I jolly well wish you had him in the Shell. You might like him in your own study."

"Well, I should be civil to him!"

"You can be civil to him now, if you like, but I'm not going to be. I'm going to make him sit up!"

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "It made me shuddah, Tom Mewwey, to think that fearful outsidah might be put in my study. We've I sympathise entirely with Bates."

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"Yes; you always were an ass!" agreed Tom Merry.

"Weally, you wottah—"

Tom Merry smiled and walked away. The new kid was nothing to him, of course—was not even in the same Form—but Tom's kind heart had been touched by the thought of the new-comer's loneliness in the big school. He would have gone out of his way to show some little kindness to Hammond, if the opportunity occurred; and he had already made up his mind to nip in the bud some schemes that Gore and Crooke were laying for ragging the Cockney.

Arthur Augustus, whose sympathetic heart was always easily moved by any kind of distress, might have been expected to take the part of the new kid. But the Cockney had got on the noble nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy felt that he could not stand him, so Hammond had no help to expect from that quarter.

Tom Merry came into his study in the Shell passage, and found Manners and Lowther there, at work at their preparation.

Lowther looked up.

"I hear there's been a row in the Cockney's study," he remarked.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, I've just looked in; the place is wrecked. That kid grew up pretty tough in the hat-shop. Bates and Smith minor tried to chuck him out, and they looked as if they'd been wrestling with a lawn-mower!"

"He will have a hard row to hoe," said Manners thoughtfully. "This really isn't the place for him. It's too sudden a change after Bethnal Green. Bates and young Smith are only the same as the others—nobody will want to have anything to do with him."

"Offside!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"How do you mean? I'll bet you he doesn't make a friend in the House, and I'm sorry for it, too; he's a good kid in some ways, I think."

"He's had an invitation to tea in a Fifth Form study already."

"Gammon!"

"Fact!" said Tom Merry.

"Who is it, then?"

"Cutts."

"Oh, Cutts! Has the new kid got money?" asked Manners—that being the most natural question in the world on hearing that Cutts had taken notice of a new kid.

"Rolling in it, I believe," said Tom Merry. "It seems that Hammond's pater has made a pile of tin out of Ammond's 'Igh-class 'A's, all at one price—three-and-nine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, Cutts will help him to spend it," said Lowther, with a curl of the lip. "A nice little game of nap in the study—sixpenny points—a nice evening with Cutts & Co., and nothing in your pocket when you say goodbye. I know the rotter!"

"I suppose that's it. But it's rotten if Cutts is allowed to take that kid in, and welsh him!" said Tom Merry seriously. "He welshed me once, and he's done it on lots of kids that had plenty of tin. He ought to be stopped!"

"He won't be stopped unless the Head finds out, and Cutts is too jolly careful for that!" said Manners. "Even if a fellow sneaked, there's no proof. It would be his word against Cutts, and Cutts knows how to keep in the master's good graces. He does hardly any work, but he's so jolly clever that he's always at the top of

the class, and he makes the masters believe he's a swot. Whereas, really, if they only knew!"

"Lucky for Cutts they don't! But look here! If that inexperienced kid is going to be taken in, isn't it up to us to give him a tip?" said Tom Merry uneasily. "Blessed if I like to see him being led like a lamb to the slaughter!"

"Better mind our own business. Besides, if he loses his money it'll be a lesson to him, and I dare say there's a lot more in Ammond's 'Igh-class 'A's!"

"Yes, but—"

"Besides, he wouldn't listen to you if—"

"He seems a sensible little chap," said Tom Merry. "He might. Anyway, I'm jolly well going to speak to him—it would only be decent. He's all alone here, and it's up to somebody to give him a word of advice about things!"

"Always a giddy good Samaritan!" groaned Lowther.

"Oh, rats!"

"You've got your prep to do," said Manners, as Tom Merry turned towards the door.

"Blow the prep!"

And Tom quitted the study.

CHAPTER 8.

Coming to Blows!

HARRY HAMMOND came away from Knox's study feeling very cheerful.

He was of a cheerful nature, and he had not allowed his uncomfortable reception at St. Jim's to affect his spirits.

But even if that had been the case, the kindness he had received from the senior would have cheered him.

Knox did not look like a kind-hearted fellow certainly, but he had treated Hammond very well, and given him very valuable tips that would have been useful to a new boy. Also, by his authority as a prefect, he made it possible for Hammond to live a quiet life in his own study. For however much Bates and Smith minor might bluster and threaten, they would not really venture to act in opposition to a prefect's orders when they knew that the prefect's eye was upon them.

And Cutts, too—the magnificent Cutts—he had taken notice of the Cockney and had been kindness itself. Hammond's opinion of the St. Jim's fellows was rising. All of them, evidently, were not snobs or bullies. Fatty Wynn had been kind to him, but he could not help thinking that the feed had had something to do with that. But he could not possibly see any ulterior motives for the kindness of Cutts and Knox, and so he was cheered by it, and was duly grateful.

"Hallo, kid! I was looking for you!"

It was Tom Merry's cheerful voice as Hammond passed the window-seat in the passage.

The captain of the Shell gave him a pleasant nod.

"'Allo!" said Hammond, stopping.

"Lookin' for me, was you?"

"Yes," said Tom.

Hammond laid down his books on the window-seat and pushed back his cuffs.

"Well, I'm ready," he said. "Come on, I dessay I can give you a wipe round the kisser the same as I 'ave to the other blokes."

"Wh-what!"

"Put up yer dukes!" continued Hammond. "I tell yer I'm ready. Watcher waitin' fer?"

Tom Merry burst into a roar.



"Are you going to hand back that money?" asked Cutts threateningly. Hammond grasped the heavy iron poker and swung it in the air, and there was a fierce gleam in his eyes. "And off, you gang of sharpers!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Hammond eyed him suspiciously. "Wot's the game?" he asked. "P'raps if you'll tell me the joke I'll larf, too. And p'raps I'll dot yer on the smeller. Now, then!" "I wasn't looking for you to fight you," Tom Merry explained amicably. "I wanted to speak to you." "Ho!" said Hammond. "That's different. Sorry I was mistaken. I ein't the bloke to cut up rusty over nothin'. Wot is it, then?"

Tom Merry waved his hand to the window-seat.

"Squat down!" he said. "I want to talk to you, Hammond."

Hammond sat down. "I'm Tom Merry of the Shell," the junior explained. "I don't know you, but as you're a new kid I thought I'd speak to you—"

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," said Hammond. "But wot's the matter? You ain't called me a Cockney, or a blighter, or a houtsider yet."

"And I'm not going to," said Tom Merry quietly. "I want to speak to you in a friendly way and tell you something, as you don't know the ropes here."

"Thanks!" "You're going to supper in Cutts' study."

"Yes; splendid chap, ain't he?" said Hammond enthusiastically. "He's asked me, jest as if I was as good as 'e is, an' I ain't!"

"I fancy you're a good deal better, as a matter of fact," said Tom Merry dryly.

Hammond chuckled. "Gammon!" he said tersely.

"I hardly know how to begin," said Tom Merry. "It sounds like speaking of a chap behind his back, which is always rotten; but if Cutts were here

I'd say just the same—in fact, I'm quite willing to come into his study and say it before him, if you like."

Hammond rose to his feet.

"You're goin' to say anythin' agin Cutts?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then I don't want to 'ear it! 'E's a good sort!"

"Look here!" said Tom Merry impressively. "There are some things that are not allowed in this school, but are done on the quiet by fellows who ought to be sacked. Smoking is one of them, and playing cards for money is another. I want to warn you, if you go to Cutts' study, not to be drawn into playing nap for money stakes. Any fellow found doing it will be kicked out of the school, to say nothing of the thing being wrong in itself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you laughing at, you ass?" demanded Tom Merry, somewhat nettled.

"Oh, my 'at! W'y, I've played nap ever since I could walk and talk!" said Hammond. "Played it fur cherry-stones when I 'adn't any spondulics, an' played it fur money when I've 'ad any. Growed up on nap and bakker an' shave-ha-penny, I did."

"But it isn't right," said Tom Merry, somewhat taken aback.

"W'y isn't it?"

"Gambling is wrong and rotten and no class," said Tom Merry warmly. "Besides, it's forbidden here, and, as I said, any fellow gambling would be sent away from the school at once if he were found out."

"But they ain't always found out, I s'pose?"

"No; some are too clever, like Cutts."

"Wot's good enough for Cutts is good enough for me, I reckon," said Hammond. "I don't see nothing wrong

in it. We 'ave different ideas in Bethnal Green, I s'pose. You blokes 'ere don't see nothin' wrong in jumpin' on a newcomer simply 'cause he ain't quite like yourselves, and tryin' to down him, two to one. The lads in Bethnal Green would call that no class. You see, we're different."

"Well, I thought I ought to give you a tip, that's all," said Tom Merry awkwardly. "I suppose it won't do any good, but there you are. I felt I ought to do it. Cutts swindled me once, and that's my reason."

"I reckon that's a lie," said Hammond.

Tom Merry flushed crimson.

"What—what did you say?"

"Cutts is a gentleman, and I don't believe 'e would swindle nobody," said Hammond. "I know 'e's been very kind to me when the other blokes are all down on a poor chap for no fault of his own, and I won't 'ear nothin' said agin Cutts, so there!"

Tom Merry controlled his temper with difficulty.

"You had better choose your language a bit more carefully, or I shall be down on you as well as the other fellows," he said.

"I don't care! I'm ready for a scrap, if you're looking for trouble," said the Cockney schoolboy independently. "I dessay you mean well, an' I dessay agin that you're a-tryin' to pull my leg. How'd I know? But I know one thing dead certain—that I ain't 'earin' nothin' said agin Cutts."

"Well, you're a young ass, and I suppose it was no use speaking to you," said Tom Merry. "You'll find out for yourself before long—when your money is in Cutts' pocket."

"I tell you I ain't 'earin' nothin' agin Cutts!" exclaimed Hammond.

fiercely. "And if you says another word I'll pull your nose!"

"Why, you cheezy little rotter—"

Tom Merry broke out indignantly.

"Cheezy rotter yourself!"

"I've a good mind to—"

"Rats!"

Tom Merry clenched his hands. He was very angry now, but he held himself in check. Harry Hammond had enough trouble in store without a licking from the captain of the Shell to start with. But Hammond mistook his intentions, as was natural enough, and he rushed in at once, hitting out.

Tom Merry caught a set of knuckles that seemed as hard as iron, and he caught them with his nose, and he staggered back, and sat down violently on the seat.

He was up again in a moment, springing at Hammond. In a second they were going it hammer and tongs.

"Hallo! What's the row?" shouted Monty Lowther, stepping out of the study. "Tommy! Why, what— My hat! Lend a hand here, Manners!"

The chums of the Shell rushed to interfere. Lowther grasped Tom Merry, and Manners laid hold of the Cockney, and they were dragged forcibly apart.

Hammond was panting as he clasped his hand to his nose, and Tom Merry put up his fingers to his eye, which felt as if it had been knocked right into his head.

"Now, cheeze it!" said Lowther soothingly. "Is this the way you befriend a new kid, Tommy? I'm surprised at you!"

"Well, he cheeked me," said Tom, cooling down a little. "But—"

"Want some more, cocky?" asked Hammond. "There's lots more where that came from. We know 'ow to scrap in the Bethnal Green Road, I promise you."

Tom Merry walked away without replying. He was sorry that he had quarrelled with the new boy, and he did not want it to go any further. If Hammond had shown any sign of "crowing," the Shell fellow would have started again, but the Cockney only gave a good-natured grin and sauntered away.

Lowther and Manners marched Tom into the study.

"Didn't I tell you to mind your own bisney?" Lowther demanded severely.

Tom Merry grinned ruefully.

"Well, you did and I wish I'd done it now—but I meant well!"

"Never mean well, my son; it's a dangerous habit," said Lowther solemnly. "You'd better get a beef-steak for your eye, or you'll have a purple glory by to-morrow morning. And leave the giddy Cockney alone."

And Tom Merry decided that he would.

CHAPTER 9.

A Little Game.

CUTTS of the Fifth was sitting at the table in his study when Knox came in later in the evening. The Sixth Former glanced round the room.

"Our guttersnipe friend not arrived yet?" he asked.

"Not yet," grinned Cutts.

"Who's coming besides?"

"Prye of the Fifth."

"Good! Quite a nice little party," said Knox. "What's it going to be?"

"Nap."

"Quite sure about the tin?" asked Knox, a little anxiously. "The fellow is simply a frightful outsider—a regular little rat of the slums."

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I've been talking to him in my study; he talks horribly. Blessed if I feel I can quite stand him, even if he is gilded! But are you quite certain about the gilt edge?"

"Do you think I should have spoken to the little cad if I hadn't been?" asked Cutts contemptuously. "I know all about him. As soon as I heard that he was coming to St. Jim's I counted on him to make up what I've lost on the races. He's simply rolling in money. His father gave ten thousand quid to Sir John Tressady's charity scheme in Bethnal Green; that's how he got admitted here. Hammond's High-class Hats is a limited company now worth thousands. The brat changed a fiver at the school shop this afternoon, and spent nearly all of it there. He's rolling in money. We may make ten or fifteen pounds out of him this evening."

Knox's eyes glistened.

"My hat! That's worth while!"

"I should say so!" said Cutts. "When we've squeezed the little cad dry we can drop him fast enough; and, anyway, we needn't recognise him at any time when we don't want to. If he has a constant supply of cash from home it will be a regular income for us."

"I'll have the little beast to tea in my study," said Knox.

Cutts shook his head.

"No, you won't," he said coolly. "I've taken you into the game, and it's got to be played fair and square. No skinning the pigeon for your own benefit. Prye and I have got to be present every time and take our whack, and we'll do the same by you. That's fair."

Knox chuckled.

"I'm agreeable. I suppose it will be easy enough; he won't be up to our form."

"A guttersnipe like that!" said Cutts contemptuously. "Of course not!"

Prye came into the study, followed by Harry Hammond. They had met in the passage.

"Here's our friend," said Prye genially. "I met him in the passage and introduced myself."

"Come in, Hammond," said Cutts.

"Make yourself at home."

"Thanks, Master Cutts!" said Hammond.

"Not Master Cutts; I'm Cutts to my friends," said the Fifth Former. "And I hope we're going to be friends, Hammond."

Hammond flushed with pleasure.

"I 'ope so, Cutts," he said. "I know I'd like it well enough. I don't know 'ow to thank you for bein' so sportin' to me."

"I've taken a fancy to you," said Cutts. "I like your looks. Now, look the door. Prye, old man, in case any inquisitive beast should poke his nose in. You see, Hammond, we have to do some things on the quiet here—Head's a strict old beak—but we manage to amuse ourselves all the same."

"I see," said Hammond.

"Ever played cards before?"

"What-ho!"

"Know how to play nap?"

"Played it ever since I was born," said Hammond; "and shove-na'penny, too."

"I'm afraid I'm not acquainted with the game of shove-halfpenny," said Cutts, with elaborate politeness. "But we'll have a little game of nap, if you care for it."

"Like a bird."

Cutts produced the cards from a drawer of the table, and a box of cigarettes.

"Smoke?" he inquired, as the three seniors helped themselves.

Hammond hesitated. He had fallen into the habit of smoking cigarettes in his early home, but since learning that it was against the rules of St. Jim's he had manfully made up his mind to smoke no more. But he did not wish to be standoffish as he would have called it, nor would he appear to reprove the admired Cutts by declining to do as Cutts did.

"Thanks!" he said, and accepted the cigarette, and Cutts gave him a light.

Then they sat down to the cards.

"Of course, a junior kid won't have much tin to lose," said Cutts pleasantly. "We understand that. We usually play for small points ourselves, just to make the game interesting, but if you'd prefer to play for—counters—"

"No fear!" said Hammond. "I've got lots of money."

"But we shouldn't like to win your few shillings, you know—"

"My governor gives me all the money I want," said Hammond, blissfully unconscious of the fact that the Fifth Former was leading him on. "I've got over fifteen quid in my pockets now, and I can 'ave all I choose to ask for."

"Not really!" exclaimed Cutts, with a look of astonishment.

"Look 'ere!"

And Hammond took out three five-pound notes, several pound notes, and a heap of silver. The three seniors caught their breath. They had expected that the rich hat-maker's son would be a pigeon worth plucking, but they had hardly anticipated such a prize as this. They exchanged involuntary glances of satisfaction and greed.

"Oh, that alters the case!" said Cutts airily. "You can afford to pay up if you lose."

"What-ho!"

"Better than we can, I dare say," said Knox genially. "I expect young Hammond will get out with all our cash in his pockets."

And the three seniors laughed heartily. That suggestion, the exact reverse of what they intended, struck them as comical.

"Well, let's get to business," said Cutts, shuffling the cards. "Shall we make it a sixpenny point, or a shilling?"

"Just as you like, fur as I'm concerned," said Hammond.

"A shilling a time, then," said Cutts.

And they proceeded to play.

Three fellows, much older than their intended victim, and acting in collusion with utter unscrupulousness, had no doubt whatever about their ability to "skin" the unfortunate pigeon. They regarded the result of that little game as a foregone conclusion. It would only be a matter of an hour or so before all the heap of wealth in front of Hammond was transferred to their pockets.

But they reckoned without their guest.

Young as Hammond was, he had all a Cockney's almost miraculous keenness of wit, and he was, as a matter of fact, much sharper than the sharp and unscrupulous Cutts himself. And in his peculiar early life he had played cards for money very often, and he knew the game much better than the black sheep of St. Jim's, though they prided themselves very much upon their knowledge of what was what.

To the surprise of his kind hosts Hammond won.

They had allowed him to score in the first few rounds to encourage him, but after that, thinking that it was time for the skinning process to commence, they set to work in earnest.

But the Cockney schoolboy continued to win.

He lost sometimes, and when he lost he paid out with cheerful alacrity; but his luck was good most of the time, and the faces of his entertainers became more and more serious as the game proceeded.

Cutts & Co. began to exchange very curious glances.

Hammond was quite unconscious of the feelings of the rest of the party. He was enjoying himself. He sipped Cutts' lemonade, smoked Cutts' cigarettes, and won Cutts' money with great cheerfulness.

Longer and longer grew the faces of the three young rascals.

The hawks had invited the pigeon into their study to pluck him; and the hawks were undergoing the plucking instead of the pigeon. It was a complete reversal of the intended programme.

Prye rose from the table at last; his cash was mostly in the pile before Hammond.

"Not done?" asked Cutts.

"Yes," said Prye with a scowl, which he vainly tried to repress. "I'll smoke a bit, and look on."

Prye smoked and looked on—behind Hammond's chair. But the signals he had intended to convey concerning Hammond's cards were not conveyed. For Hammond, though he did not suspect Prye's intention, was cautious by nature, and it was not possible for Prye to see the cards over his shoulder.

Cutts was growing desperate by this time.

He had not added cheating at cards to his other accomplishments, so far; but at that moment he bitterly regretted his carelessness in not having provided himself with a pack of marked cards for the entertainment of the schoolboy Cockney.

By acting in collusion the three rascals had not the slightest doubt that they would succeed in "skinning a raw and ignorant lad."

But it was only too clear they had met more than their match in this cheerful denizen of the Bethnal Green Road.

Knox rose from the table in a state of exasperation he could hardly conceal. Cutts continued the "little game" with Hammond alone.

The black sheep of the Fifth was growing reckless now. In the hope of getting back the cash that had flowed freely over to Hammond's side of the table, he doubled the stakes. Hammond cheerfully consenting. He had a little luck, and his spirits rose; but it changed again, and his recklessness threw away his chances. He suggested five shilling points, and Hammond agreed, and almost immediately won on nap, which meant that Cutts had to hand him twenty-five shillings, which cleared Cutts out to the last sixpence.

Cutts rose to his feet.

"Finished?" asked Hammond, rising, too.

"Yes," said the Fifth Former, between his teeth.

Hammond glanced at him in surprise. He had been too interested in the game to notice Cutts' expression before. Now he could not fail to note the sullen anger and resentment in the Fifth Former's looks. He felt uneasy at once.

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
Calling!



Hallo, everybody! "What is a cheap substitute for petrol?" asks Blake. Shoe leather.

You can now have Soccer lessons by gramophone, I hear. "Playing" the game.

"Music will do a lot for you," says a professor. Well, I met a goal-keeper who attributes his being able to pick up a football in one hand to learning the five-finger exercise when very young.

A racing cyclist who has taken up golf loses a lot of balls. He just can't get his "ball bearings."

A heavyweight boxer I know tells me he is O.K. Some boxers are just the reverse.

One way of losing control of your car is to miss the instalment on it.

I hear swimming lessons are now given in the Army. They've been saying "Fall in!" for a long time.

A "GEM" reader says he has been laughing steadily for nearly two years. This feature has been published just about that time.

Some shepherds will not have a dark animal in their flock. They bar, bar, black sheep.

"I syc, I've 'ad all the luck!" he remarked. "I dessay it'll turn round another time, you know."

Cutts glanced at his companions. They had lost six or seven pounds among them, as well as several IOU's that Knox and Prye had added before they retired from the game. And to let Hammond depart with their money was a thing they never dreamed of. He had come there to be skinned, and, at all events, he should not depart from the study with their cash in his pocket.

Hammond was already stowing the money away.

"Not quite so fast with that cash!" said Cutts grimly.

Hammond started.

"Wotcher mean?" he asked.

"I mean," said Cutts deliberately, "that you've cheated in the game, and that you're going to hand back that cash!"

And Knox and Prye, taking their cue from their leader, chimed in:

"Yes, rather!"

CHAPTER 10.

Shown Up!

HAMMOND turned crimson. Knox had stepped between him and the door instinctively.

There was no escape for the junior, if he had thought of it. But he was not thinking of that.

He was beginning to understand now as he looked at the angry, scowling faces of the three seniors. He remembered Tom Merry's warning. He had refused to listen to a word against Cutts. And if he had lost his money, Cutts would have remained as genial as ever, and the Cockney's admiration for him would have continued unimpaired. But Cutts a winner and Cutts a loser

"You've got your trousers on inside out, Jock!" said McTavish. "Och aye!" replied Jock. "I'm saving the outside for best!"

The cool, calm business man stared steadily while the river flooded his office to a depth of three feet. "Well," he said, reaching for his hat, "I guess we've gone into liquidation!"

"If you are a motorist, you should aim at a brightly-painted garage," says a writer. Lots of motorists hit them without aiming at them.

Story: "Do you know who lives in the haunted house?" asked the American visitor. "Yes, sir," replied the rustic. "Mr. Waltham, he lives there, but he's dead at present!"

A new hope for the England Test XI is the Kylecombe postman. His "slow delivery" is already well known.

Red-haired boys are supposed to be handy with their fists. Yes, they have to be.

Remember that to drop a hint is tactful, but to drop an aitch is rude.

Said the boarder: "Did you ever see anything so unsettled as the weather?" Said the landlady: "Well, there's your bill."

Stop Press: Five pound notes are made by a secret process, I read. But they don't print the process.

Last Shot: The irate old gentleman found his car obstructed by a hand-cart piled with shrimps. "Make way, there!" he yelled. "Don't you know I've got M.P. after my name?" "Gercha!" came the shrimp man's reply. "So has every one of these bloomin' shrimps!"

Chin, chin, chaps!

were two very different persons. Without the slightest scruple, the blackguard of the Fifth intended to take back the money he had lost.

"Cheated?" repeated Hammond.

"Yes!"

"That's a lie!"

Cutts made a threatening gesture.

"Don't give me any of your cheek, you guttersnipe! Hand back that money at once, and get out of my study!"

"I'll get outer yer study fast enough!" said Hammond angrily. "But if you say I didn't play the game fair, you're a liar!"

"Give him a larruping!" said Prye.

"Knock his cheeky head off!" growled Knox. "The low-down, low-bred guttersnipe! He's hardly fit for a decent fellow to touch, though!"

"There ain't any decent fellers 'ere to touch me!" said Hammond defiantly.

"Are you going to hand back that money?" asked Cutts furiously, striding towards the junior.

Hammond glanced quickly round. Then he made a spring towards the fender, grasped the heavy, iron poker, and swung it in the air. His teeth had come hard together, and there was a fierce gleam in his eyes.

"Ands off!" he said.

Cutts halted, in spite of himself. Blackguard as he was, he was no coward; but he did not want a blow from the poker. And the desperate look of the Cockney schoolboy showed that he would hit, and hit hard.

"Put that poker down!" said Cutts in a suppressed voice, trembling with rage.

"Rats!"

"You guttersnipe!"

"You East End rotter!" said Knox.

Hammond laughed.

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"You're callin' me some pretty names," he said. "I'll tell yer wot I think of you, too! You're a gang of sharpers—that's what you are!"

"You—you—" "I was warned afore I came 'ere," said Hammond fearlessly. "I wouldn't 'ear a word agin you, Cutts, and I punched the feller wot tried to give me the advice. I thought that much of you. Now I know what you are—a sharper! You 'ad me 'ere to win my money, and you're cuttin' up rusty 'cause you ain't collared the boodle! That's you!"

Cutts ground his teeth with rage. It was true enough, but that did not make it any the more pleasant to be slanged by this unspeakable outsider.

"I don't want to bandy words with you!" said Cutts. "Hand over the money, and go!"

"I ain't 'andin' it over!" said Hammond coolly. "I've won it in a fair gime—fair as fur as I'm concerned, anywe. I don't want yer money! I got lots of my own. You can 'ave yer money back—if you beg my pardon for callin' me a cheat! I'm not standin' that!"

Cutts hesitated.

Rascal as he was, he had felt that it was impossible to demand his money back without giving some reason, and, therefore, he had made the accusation. But, after all words cost him little, and he was anxious to get rid of his truculent guest without a disturbance. A struggle in the study would bring very inconvenient attention in that direction.

"Very well," said Cutts. "I withdraw what I said, on the condition that you lay our money on the table and clear out!"

"I'll do that," said Hammond. "I don't want your dirty money! I reckon you can't afford to lose a few quid, anywe!"

And he counted out the money, and laid it on the table.

Cutts unlocked the door, and Hammond tossed the poker into the grate, and walked out of the study.

The door was closed after him. Then the three rascals looked at one another.

"Well, this is a go!" murmured Prye.

"That's the pigeon you were so sure of plucking, Cutts!" said Knox, with a sneer. "We've given ourselves right away with him. And what have we got for our trouble?"

"How was I to know he was above our weight?" snarled Cutts.

"It was a bit thick, taking the money back!" muttered Prye. "He won it fairly enough!"

"You needn't take yours, if you don't want to!" sneered Cutts.

But Prye's scruples did not extend so far as that. The trio sorted out their money and pocketed it, and parted in the worst of tempers. Gerald Cutts' scheme for making an income out of the Cockney was completely knocked on the head now, and it was a bitter disappointment for the three sharpers.

Hammond's face was clouded as he went down the passage.

For the money he cared nothing; he had more than he wanted of that. But his ideal had been shattered. His admiration of Cutts had been deep and sincere, and it was quite gone now. The splendid, imposing senior who had been so kind and cordial to him—he knew him for what he was worth now—a common sharper, who had made friendly overtures to a fellow he despised at heart, for the sake of getting his money.

Hammond, owing to his peculiar training, had a knowledge of the world much greater than usually fell to boys

of his age; but this discovery was a shock to him. And his opinion of St. Jim's was at the lowest ebb.

Fellows who affected to regard him with contempt and disgust were not above being friendly with him for the sake of his money, and were not at all scrupulous about the way they laid hands on it. That was what Hammond was thinking.

"I ain't bin 'ere a 'ole day yet, and I'm fed up with the place," he muttered. "Snobs and bullies and swindlers, that's what they are!"

He met the Shell fellows in the passage, going up to their dormitory. He grinned a little as he noted that Tom Merry's eye had assumed a purple hue.

He came directly up to the captain of the Shell, who looked at him very grimly. Monty Lowther made a warning sign to him.

"You clear off, young Sikes. You are superfluous."

"I dunno what that means," said Hammond; "but I ain't lookin' fer trouble. I want to beg your pardon for punchin' your eye, Merry."

"Oh!" said Tom.

"You was right," said Hammond; "they was a gang of swindlers, and they 'ave give 'emselves away. I'm sorry I cut up so rusty, that's all."

And Hammond walked away before Tom Merry could reply.

"Not a bad sort, after all," said Tom, as the Shell fellows went up to their dormitory. "It was decent of him to own up. But that won't mend my eye, the silly young ass!"

CHAPTER 11.

A Fight in the Dormitory.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came up the stairs of the Fourth on his way to the dormitory. He was a little late for bed, and was in a hurry; and he was passing Hammond without glancing at him, when Hammond jerked him by the sleeve.

The swell of St. Jim's drew back quickly.

"Pway don't gwab me like that!" he said.

"S'pose I ain't good enough to touch you!" sneered Hammond resentfully.

"Well, if you choose to put it that way, you are quite wight," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I should not have said so, but it is a fact."

"I was goin' to ask you the wye to the dormitory," said Hammond.

"I am goin' there, and you are at liberty to follow me," said Arthur Augustus. "Thanks kindly, me lord!"

Arthur Augustus frowned and walked on majestically. Harry Hammond grinned his huge grin, and fell into step behind him, imitating his lordly gait as he marched up the dormitory passage.

Arthur Augustus did not look back, and he was quite unaware of the little joke, till a roar of laughter from the open doorway of the dormitory warned him.

Blake, Herries, and Digby

were looking out for him, and they saw him marching up the passage with Hammond strutting after him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy was puzzled for a moment, and then he turned his head, and caught the Cockney in the act. His face went crimson with anger.

"You cheeky wascal!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Wot's the matter?" asked Hammond innocently. "I s'pose I can walk up the passage if I likes, can't I?"

"You were pokin' fun at me, you feahful wottah!"

"It's up to me to imitate a gent like you," said Hammond. "I'm only a common Cockney from Bethnal Green Road, and I'm tryin' to learn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus crossly. "There is no occasion whatevah for mewwiment. I wegard this person as a cheeky cad!"

"Same to you, and many of 'em," said Hammond cheerfully.

"You uttah wottah!"

"Rats!"

"If you say wats to me, you outsidah, I shall have no wesource but to administah a feahful thwashin'. I wathah think that's what you want."

"Rats!" said Hammond calmly.

Arthur Augustus was pushing back his cuffs as a preliminary to administering the fearful thrashing when Kildare of the Sixth looked out of the dorm. Kildare was there to see lights out, and he was not disposed to await the convenience of Arthur Augustus.

"Come on!" he said sharply. "If you



As Arthur Augustus, his face bruised and battered, strode in with a cane in his hand.

start rowing in the passage you'll be licked!"

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Sharp's the word!"

Arthur Augustus relinquished his warlike intentions, and went into the dormitory. Harry Hammond followed him in.

The Fourth Formers went to bed, and Kildare put out the light and left the dormitory.

Arthur Augustus was in a wrathful mood. He had tried nobly to overcome his prejudice against Hammond, for he had a horror of being anything that could be called snobbish. But he simply could not help it. Hammond worried his nerves. As he confided pathetically to Blake; he simply could not stand the chap. And to be cheeked by him was having insult added to injury.

But D'Arcy was not quarrelsome, and he would have allowed the matter to drop if a mischief-maker had not been keen to make the trouble worse. It was a chance for Levison of the Fourth, and Levison did not let it slip.

"You getting up, D'Arcy?" he called out.

"I am not gettin' up, Levison."

"That's right—stay where you are!" chuckled Levison. "You're safer in bed."

"I fail to compwrehend you, Levison."

"That new chap is a regular fighter," explained Levison. "He licked Smith minor and Bates, the two together, in their study. He would simply wipe up the dormitory with you if you tackled him!"

"He didn't!" howled Smith minor and Bates simultaneously.

"He jolly well did, and wrecked the study, too, when you tried to turn him out," said Levison. "I should like to see him handle Gussy. There wouldn't be much left of Gussy!"

"Weally, Levison—"

"You stay in bed while you're safe, Adolphus!" said the cad of the Fourth tauntingly.

"If you mean to imply, Levison, that I am afraid of that wottah—"

"Rotter yourself!" said Hammond cheerily. "Don't you call me nimes, or I'll get up and thump you, anywyo!"

"You outsidah—"

"I told you to shut up!" said Hammond grimly. "You call me nimes jes' once more, an' I'll 'ave you out on the floor afore you can say 'Crikey!'"

"My tongue would be incapable of pwnouncin' such a howwible, vulgah expwession as cwikey! I could not possibly uttah it, you feahful outsidah— Yawwooh!"

Hammond had kept his word.

He had jumped out of bed, and now his grasp was upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the swell of St. Jim's found himself rolling in his bedclothes on the floor of the dormitory.

"Bai Jove, you feahful beast! Yow!" roared D'Arcy, as he bumped on the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus struggled wildly out of the bedclothes. His wrath was flowing over now. It was impossible to forgive the outrage of having the Cockney's hands actually laid upon him.

The swell of St. Jim's scrambled wildly to his feet, panting with wrath.

"You feahful wottah!" he yelled. "Where are you? I'm goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Kim on, then!" said Hammond coolly.

"Shut up, Gussy!" said Blake, slipping out of bed. "You hadn't any right to call him names. Don't start scrapping now."

"I am goin' to thwash him. Where are you, you wottah?" howled D'Arcy.

He made a blind rush in the darkness in search of Hammond. He collided with someone, and grasped him at once, and began to pommel furiously.

"Take that, you wottah! Take that—and that—and that— Bai Jove, is that you, Blake?"

"You silly idiot!" shrieked Blake. "Leggo! 'I—I—I'll smash you! I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Levison.

"I—I'm awfully sowwy, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I took you for that feahful wottah in the dark! Where is the feahful beast hiding himself?"

"I ain't 'idin'," said Hammond. "I'm waitin' for yer! If somebody'll get a light, I'll wipe up the floor with yer in two shikes!"

Several fellows were scrambling out of bed, and lights soon glimmered in

the dormitory. The juniors were all excited now, and not at all averse to seeing a "scrap" between the swell of St. Jim's and the obnoxious Cockney.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in spite of his elegant manners and customs, was a great fighting-man when his temper was roused, and it certainly was roused now to boiling point. The juniors had little doubt that the Cockney would be knocked into a cocked hat, with the exception of Smith minor and Bates, who had some doubts on the subject.

"Don't make too much row, or we shall have the prefects here!" said Kerruish.

"Sure, and we don't want the illigant scrap interrupted," said Reilly. "Shove a bolster along the door, so they won't see the light from the passage."

Blake and Digby were trying in vain to pacify their chum. D'Arcy refused to listen to the counsels of peace. He declined to put off the matter till the morning. Nothing but immediate satisfaction was of any use to the swell of St. Jim's.

"I'm goin' to thwash him, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus obstinately. "I have twiced to beah with him, but now he has laid his wascally hands on me, there is nothin' to do but to give him a feahful thwashin'!"

"Or to take cne!" grinned Levison.

"You shut up, you rotter!" growled Blake. "I'd wipe up the floor with you for two pins, and I will, anyway, if you don't dry up!"

"I'm ready!" announced Hammond. "If D'Arcy ain't comin' up to the scratch, I'll get back to bed. It's cold waitin' 'ers!"

"I'm weady, you wottah!"

"Then walk up, and not so much of your chin-wag!" said Hammond.

Arthur Augustus rushed at him.

It seemed a foregone conclusion that the Cockney from Bethnal Green was bound to crumple up under the assault of the scion of the noble house of D'Arcy—at least, it seemed so to Arthur Augustus.

But it did not happen.

D'Arcy's lashing fists were swept into the air, and the Cockney's right came out like a hammer, catching the swell of St. Jim's right upon the point of the chin.

Arthur Augustus went over backwards, his feet going clear off the floor, and he came down with a terrific bump.

"Ow!"

"My hat!" murmured Blake. "That chap can hit! Gussy has woke up the wrong passenger!"

"Sure, and he has!" said Reilly. "But he's not beaten yet. Get up, Gussy darling, and pile in! Never say die!"

Arthur Augustus sat up dazedly on the floor. His hand was to his chin, feeling whether it was still there. It felt as if it wasn't.

"Bai Jove!" he muttered. "What a feahful whack! Howevah, I shall thwash him!"

And he staggered to his feet.

"Hold on!" said Blake. "If this is going on, we'll have it in order—rounds and rests, according to rules. Hold on, Gussy!"

"Yaas, deah boy!"

Blake sorted out his watch from under his pillow. The eager juniors formed a wide ring, and the two combatants occupied the centre of it.

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...ing on the floor, the door was thrown open and Kildare ... he said, "what does this mean?"

Digby constituted himself D'Arcy's second. Hammond glanced round the dormitory. Was there any fellow in all that crowd who would care to act for him? He did not think so. But he was mistaken.

Levison came forward—he had his own reasons.

"I'm your second, kid," he said affably.

"Thanks," said Hammond.

"Ready?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I'm waitin'!"

"Time!"

CHAPTER 12.

A Licking for Gussy!

"**T**IME!" Arthur Augustus started at once.

He was anxious to get the combat over, to get the cheeky Cockney well thrashed, in order partly, perhaps, to convince himself.

Hammond was a tougher customer than he had anticipated; but the swell of St. Jim's was as brave as a lion, and he would never have dreamed of backing out, even if he had been certain of defeat.

And D'Arcy was sturdy, and he was a good boxer. In the first round, at least, he fully held his own.

A good many heavy blows came home on Hammond's face and chest, but the Cockney bore his punishment without the slightest murmur. It was evident that he was "hard" all through.

They rested for a minute after the round, Blake timing them.

Arthur Augustus was breathing very heavily as he sat on the edge of the bed. It was a cold night, but exertion had made him warm, and he was crimson. Digby fanned him with a slipper.

"Time!"

D'Arcy jumped up at once and stepped into the ring. The Cockney was equally prompt. In the second round, Arthur Augustus had the advantage most of the time, driving the Cockney round the ring under a shower of blows. But just at the finish Hammond's left came out, and Arthur Augustus was fairly swept off his feet, and he landed on the floor with a crash.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake.

"Poor old Gussy!" groaned Digby.

"Time!"

"That's the Bethnal Green left," said Hammond coolly.

Digby picked Arthur Augustus up. The swell of St. Jim's was quite dazed. He had had several fights on his hands during his career at St. Jim's, but he had never received so terrific a drive before. Apparently the youths in the Bethnal Green Road were trained to be hard hitters.

"Feeling pretty bad, old chap?" murmured Digby sympathetically.

"Yaas, wathah!" gasped D'Arcy.

"That was a weally tewwifid dwive, deah boy. I should neevah weally have thought that that wotthah had it in him."

"Better chuck it—what?"

"Wats!"

"He's awfully tough!" hinted Digby.

"He is a wathah tough custumah, I am aware," said Arthur Augustus. "But I weally think I can thwsh him. Anyway, I am goin' to twy. I shan't leave off so long as I can stand up-wight, deah boy."

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"Time!"

The third round was very rough on D'Arcy. After that knock-out blow, he was very groggy, and it was only his indomitable pluck that kept him going. He stood up bravely to the Cockney, and he was knocked all round the ring. Before the third round ended, it was evident to all—except D'Arcy—that he was beaten.

But the swell of St. Jim's refused to recognise the fact. He kept on till the call of time, and then Digby had to support him to the nearest bed to rest.

"Call it off now!" whispered Dig.

"Wats!"

"Now, look here, Gussy—" urged his chum.

"I wefuse to call it off," said Arthur Augustus, in a tone of finality. And he reeled into the ring at the call of time.

His friends were watching him anxiously now. They did not like to see their elegant chum handled in this way; but they could not, of course, interfere. So long as Arthur Augustus chose to continue, so long must be his punishment.

If the Cockney had chosen, he could have damaged his opponent terribly, as the fight was taking place without gloves. But the juniors observed that in the fourth round he was content with defending himself, and did not hit out. Several opportunities occurred of knocking out the swell of St. Jim's, but the "Bethnal Green left" did not come into play again.

"Pile in, Hammond!" exclaimed Levison. "You're not half licking him!"

But Hammond took no notice of his second's advice.

The round was nearly over when Arthur Augustus made a fierce effort and attacked hotly. Then Hammond had to hit out, and the swell of St. Jim's rolled on the floor with a gasp. And at the same moment the door was thrown open, and Kildare of the Sixth strode in, with a cane in his hand, and a dark frown upon his face.

There was no time for the Fourth Formers to dodge back into bed. In the excitement of the fight they had forgotten prefects and everything else. They were fairly caught in the act. Not a fellow there was in bed.

The juniors started as the door opened. And they stared grimly at the captain of the school, who stared grimly at them.

"Well," said Kildare, in measured tones, "what does this mean?"

"Gwoogh!"

"Get up, D'Arcy!"

"He can't!" said Levison maliciously.

"He's been licked!"

Blake drove his elbow into the ribs of the cad of the Fourth, and Levison yelped. Then Blake and Digby raised D'Arcy up.

Kildare looked at his bruised face frowningly.

"You have been fighting, of course," he said, "and without gloves! You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"We haven't any gloves here," said Blake awkwardly.

"Fighting in the dormitory—after lights out!" said Kildare. "Who's the other? I can see that D'Arcy is one."

"I'm t'other," said Hammond cheerfully. "I'm sorry I've 'it 'im so 'ard, but I 'ad to; 'e came fer me, you know."

"Hold out your hand, Hammond." Hammond eyed him.

"Wot for?" he demanded.

"I'm going to cane you and D'Arcy for fighting in the dormitory after lights out!" said Kildare sternly.

"Agin the rules, is it?" said Hammond.

"You must know that it is. Hold out your hand at once!"

"No 'urry, cocky," said Hammond coolly. "You ain't a master, I suppose? Does the boys cane one another at this 'ere school?"

"I am a prefect," said Kildare: "the head prefect of the House. If you don't know our ways, it is time you learned them. This caning will help you learn. Hold out your hand at once, or I shall thrash you over the shoulders!"

"My 'at!"

"Do you hear me?"

"Keep yer wool on, cocky! If you've got the right to cane me, according to the rules, I ain't kickin' agin it!" said Hammond. "I only wanted to know. There's me 'and!"

He held out his hand, and the cane came down with a swish.

Hammond made a grimace, but he uttered no cry.

"Now the other!" said Kildare sternly.

Swish again!

Then the captain of St. Jim's turned to D'Arcy. The latter was sitting on the edge of the bed, gasping for breath, and evidently utterly exhausted. One of his eyes was closed, his nose was swollen, and his mouth looked a little sideways.

Kildare hesitated. D'Arcy, of course, deserved a caning as much as his antagonist, and as Hammond had been caned, Kildare could not very well let D'Arcy off. But it went against the grain to cane him in his present state.

"I'm weady, Kildare!" murmured Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Well, I must cane you," said Kildare. "You look as if you'd had punishment enough already, you young ass! But I've caned Hammond, and fair's fair. Hold out your hand!"

"Oh, don't mind me!" grinned Hammond. "Let 'im off and give me a couple more—I can stand 'em better than 'e can!"

Kildare stared at him.

"Don't be funny with me!" he exclaimed sharply.

"I ain't bein' funny," said Hammond. "Let 'im alone and give me some more an' call it square, if you're bound to cane somebody!"

The Cockney was evidently in earnest. Kildare looked at him hard.

"Very well—hold out your hand!" he said abruptly.

Hammond promptly held out his hand, and the cane swished in the air. But it did not descend upon the outstretched hand.

Kildare smiled instead.

"You're a good kid!" he said. "Get into bed, you young rascal! Every boy in this dormitory will take a hundred lines for taking part in this row, and will write them out in the Form-room to-morrow afternoon. Now, turn in!"

And the Fourth Formers turned in. "If there's any more disturbance here to-night, I shall report it to the

(Continued on page 18.)



**Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

HALLO, chums! A star item on our programme for next Wednesday is the first story of Owen Conquest's ripping new Rookwood series. I have had scores of letters from readers praising his series which ends in this number, and so the obvious thing for me to do was to give you "the mixture as before." Next week we start off on another great new series, and the first yarn is called

"THE ROOKWOOD MAN-HUNT!"

It deals with the exciting adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. and one Slog Poggers, who is the sort of man no one would like to meet on a dark road late at night. Poggers trails Dr. Chisholm to Rookwood with the object of relieving him of his wealth, and in this he is successful. But, unfortunately for the footpad, his highway robbery happens on the night Jimmy Silver & Co. choose to break bounds to go skating on the ice. This rather complicates matters for Poggers, and leads to endless excitement for all Rookwood. Make sure you don't miss this thrilling story of our grand new series.

"THE COCKNEY TURNS UP TRUMPS!"

Having met 'Arry 'Ammond, the cheerful Cockney from the East End of London, I'm sure all readers would like to read more about him. Martin Clifford has therefore provided us with another powerful story of the St. Jim's Cockney, in which you will read of his further lively experiences. In this yarn he incurs the enmity of Ernest Levison, whose revengeful scheming makes things very unpleasant for 'Arry. But the Cockney, after passing through a time of trouble, with his friendship for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hanging in the balance, eventually turns up trumps.

The "Jester" has another selection of readers' prize-winning jokes which have earned magnificent Match Footballs for the lucky senders, and Monty Lowther, in his usual bright and breezy style, will add his fun to the programme. Don't forget to order your GEM early.

LUCK!

Good and bad luck comes to all of us in turn, but some folks seem to be harder hit by misfortune, while others get more smiles than frowns from the gods. Here are two stories, one telling how luck favoured a prospector, and the other describing how a small fortune was won and lost in a moment.

When a man named Caldwell went prospecting for tin near Alice Springs, in Australia, he little guessed how soon he was to strike lucky. He was surveying the ground prior to starting operations, when he spotted a rabbit scratching something out of its burrow. The object was about the size of a small ball, and, curious to see what it was, Caldwell went across to the rabbit hole to inspect it. Much to his surprise and delight, it was a piece of tin. Now, as the result of that lucky find which the rabbit unearthed, he is in a fair way to becoming wealthy out of his tin-mine!

Not so lucky, however, was the De Reyes family who live in Havana. The news that they had won £1,400 in a national lottery made them wildly excited and happy. But fickle Fate, which had brought them a fortune so swiftly, just as swiftly snatched it away again. The tickets which had been purchased in the lottery were found to

be missing, and there began a frantic search for them. Too late, a member of the family discovered where they were. Their pet nannygoat had taken a liking to the tickets and was chewing them up! Before it could be caught the tickets had been swallowed—and so £1,400 went west!

A PLUCKY PIGEON.

Pigeons played an important part in the Great War, carrying urgent messages, but no pigeon served his country in this capacity more faithfully than John Silver, a bird that belonged to the U.S. Intelligence Service. He was the most famous of the winged messengers. John was a plucky bird, and the story of how he got the name of the one-legged pirate in "Treasure Island" is one example of his courage. He was conveying an important message to headquarters when the Germans opened up a heavy barrage. A shell burst near him, and John was hit. With a leg blown away and many of his feathers torn out, he began to fall. But recovering himself just in time, he regained height again, and flew off on his journey. In a state of exhaustion, and covered in blood, he arrived at headquarters, and delivered the message. After that adventure he was called John Silver, a name that stuck to him until he died at the age of eighteen.

A GOLDEN GOAL!

With the Cup-ties now in full swing many clubs who have had a lean year financially, will be striving to enrich their coffers by going a long way in the National Cup competition. Just how much money a club can make in the Cup depends on how far the team goes, but to reach the Final must mean at least twenty thousand pounds to a club.

Sometimes just one goal will mean the losing or winning of many thousands. This story of the scoring of an all-important goal will serve to illustrate this. The Arsenal were playing Manchester City in the 1932 Cup Semi-final. The two teams were level pegging, with only two or three minutes to go, when the Arsenal forward line broke away. The ball came across to the left wing, and Bastin, the famous international, with almost the last kick of the game, scored. That goal, which put the Arsenal in the Final, meant ten thousand pounds to them!

TAILPIECE.

Binks: "Money talks."
Jinks: "All it says to me is goodbye!"

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS COUPON
1-2-36



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

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P. Everatt, Cottingham Memorial Club, Cottingham, East Yorks; stamps.

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Miss R. A. Culvorhouse, Flat 5,240, Great College Street, Camden Town, London, N.W.1; girl correspondents; age 16 up; U.S.A.; swimming, films.

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Housemaster!" said Kildare, as a final warning.

And he turned out the light and departed.

But there was no more disturbance in the Fourth Form dormitory that night.

Arthur Augustus was finished. He knew that he was licked, and bitter as that knowledge was, it was useless to dispute a self-evident fact. But it was long before the swell of St. Jim's slept. The effects of the "Bethnal Green left" were painful in the extreme, and the junior lay awake for long hours, aching, before sleep at last sealed his eyes.

CHAPTER 13.

Levison's Friendship.

MR. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth, looked very curiously at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at the breakfast-table the next morning.

The aristocratic countenance of the swell of St. Jim's was shocking to look at. One of his eyes was black, and the other was purple, his nose was swollen, and his lip was cut. Seldom or never had the swell of St. Jim's been seen in so parlous a state, even after the most terrific rag with the New House fellows. But the Form-master made no reference to the matter. Kildare had reported it to him, with the fact that the combatants had been duly punished, and Mr. Lathom let it pass.

But the results of that fight in the dormitory were very uncomfortable for all concerned. Kildare had imposed a long imposition which was to be written out that afternoon, a half-holiday. As usual, there was a football match on in the afternoon, and the imposition interfered with it very considerably. Darkness set in so early in the mid-winter days that the matches had to be started as early as possible, and now there was an imposition to be ground off before the fellows were free.

The match that afternoon was between the Shell and the Fourth, a Form match, and Blake, Herries, Digby, D'Arcy, and Reilly were in the Fourth Form team, the rest being made up of New House fellows—Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Rodfern, Lawrence, and Owen. The latter six were not concerned in the detention, as they had not, of course, been mixed up in the row in the School House dormitory overnight.

Figgins & Co. grinned when they saw D'Arcy in the Form-room in the morning, after lessons; but Figgins looked serious when he learned of the detention.

"All through that blessed outsider!" growled Herries, rather unreasonably. "What the deuce did he want to come to St. Jim's for?"

"Did he begin it?" asked Figgins.

"Well, no; Gussy began it, I suppose," said Herries reflectively. "Still, it wouldn't have happened if he hadn't come here bothering us."

"Seems to me a very decent chap!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Good enough for the New House, I dare say!" grunted Herries.

"Oh, rats!" said Figgins promptly.

"If he isn't good enough for the School House, we wouldn't have him for a boot-boy on our side!"

"Well, I think he's all right," said Fatty Wynn loyally. "I made his acquaintance yesterday, and I liked him all right. What does it matter if he does drop his h's? He's all right!"

"Stood you a feed, I suppose?" jeered Levison.

Fatty Wynn coloured a little.

"Suppose he did?" he demanded. "Have you got anything to say about it? Looking for a pair of eyes to match Gussy's?"

And Levison did not rejoin, having a very wholesome respect for Fatty Wynn's hitting powers.

Unreasonably, but perhaps not un-naturally, the School House juniors

agreed that it was all Hammond's fault that they were detained.

After dinner the School House portion of the Fourth Form had come into the Form-room again to grind out lines.

Tom Merry looked in on them while they were so engaged.

"Buck up with that rot," Tom Merry urged. "It'll be dark before we finish if we don't play pretty soon."

"Faith, and we're bucking up!" said Reilly dismally. "Sure, Kildare is a beast entirely!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"You were kicking up an awful row last night," he said. "We heard you from the Shell dorm. Why couldn't you leave the scrap till the morning and have it out in the gym?"

"Gussy was too keen on it," growled Blake.

"He's not quite so keen now," remarked Levison.

Just then Kildare came along to the Form-room.

"Out of the Form-room at once, you Shell kids, unless you want to do lines, too!" he exclaimed. "You know you should not talk to a detention class."

"Right-ho! Keep your wool on!" murmured Lowther; and Tom Merry & Co. departed, leaving the hapless Fourth Formers to their work.

It was done at last, and the juniors were free to depart. The other fellows were waiting for them on the football ground impatiently.

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me this afternoon, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, with as much dignity as was possible with two black eyes and a swollen nose and a thick ear. "I do not feel quite up to playin'."

"My hat! You don't look up to it, either," said Kerr.

"Wats, deah boy!"

"I'll play Smith," said Blake, who was skipper of the Fourth Form team. "Somebody find him and bring him here. You'd better take a rest, Gussy."

"Lookin' for a footballer?" asked Hammond, who had come down to the ground in company with Levison.

Blake stared at him.

"I've got all I want, thanks," he said. "Orl right; I'll watch."

And Hammond took a place by the ropes to watch the match.

Levison remained with him, showing the new junior a friendliness that puzzled those who observed it. Levison was just the fellow to be more snobbish than any other boy in the House, and he had a malicious nature that led him to join in any scheme of persecution. But he was certainly very chummy with Hammond. And the Cockney school-boy, who remembered that Levison had offered to be his second in the fight in the dormitory, was grateful for his kindness.

After his experience with Cutts of the Fifth, however, Hammond could not help feeling a little suspicious, and he was quite prepared for Levison to show the cloven hoof at any moment. But for the present Levison was all cordiality. As they watched the Form match he favoured Hammond with his opinion of the game and the players, and he had not a single good word to say for anybody. Hammond grew a little tired of hearing the endless list of bad qualities that, according to Levison, belonged to Tom Merry & Co., and to the New House fellows as well.

At half-time Levison proposed an adjournment to the tuckshop, and Hammond, though he would gladly have

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watched the match out, consented, and they sauntered away to Dame Taggles' little establishment.

Hammond cheerfully undertook to stand a feed, and Levison "did himself down" remarkably well at the expense of the Cockney.

He paused as they were leaving the tuckshop and lowered his voice to a confidential tone.

"I suppose you couldn't lend me a couple of quid, old chap?" he asked.

Hammond felt a sinking of the heart. He had expected it, and now it had come. Levison's face was not one that inspired confidence, but Hammond had hoped for the best. But he knew now that the junior simply wanted his money.

"Till when?"

"Oh, a week or two—or three!" said Levison airily. "I suppose it's all the same to you; you're rolling in money."

"Tain't all the same," said Hammond moodily.

Levison's eyes glittered a little, and his anger rose as it came into his mind that he had perhaps taken so much trouble over this rank outsider for nothing. The cad ought to be willing to pay for being taken notice of by a decent fellow—that was how Levison of the Fourth looked at it.

"Look here, you've got plenty of tin," he said sullenly. "Your pater's made it out of—What did you say it was—boots?"

"Ats," said Hammond. "Ammond's 'Igh-class 'Ats."

"Yes, hats," agreed Levison. "Well, lend me the price of a few high-class hats, can't you?"

"No," said Hammond, "I can't."

"You mean you won't!" said Levison angrily.

"Just as you like to put it."

Hammond would gladly have bestowed his useless fivers upon any fellow who had shown him any real regard, but he was not at all inclined to part with money to a sponger who was otherwise quite indifferent to him. He wanted to see how Levison would take his refusal, in order to be quite sure of the junior's motives. He was not left in doubt for many seconds.

"Then you can clear off!" said Levison, with a bitter sneer. "I don't want to be seen with you. You rank outsider, there's nothing decent about you but your filthy money, and you don't even know how to spend that. I don't want your company, I can assure you!"

"No; you want my money," said Hammond, with a nod. "I knowed that, though I tried not to think so. You're a dirty cad, Levison!"

"Don't you call me names, you gutter-snipe!"

"Ten minutes ago I was old chap and old fellow," said Hammond. "Now I'm a guttersnipe. There ain't a boy in Bethnal Green wot's as mean an' rotten as wot you are!"

Levison clenched his fists, and so did Hammond. Levison remembered in time how Arthur Augustus had fared at the hands of the Cockney, and he unclenched his fists again.

"Don't talk to me," he said. "It's a disgrace to be seen with a fellow of your kind. Keep out of my way, that's all!"

And Levison walked off with a lofty air of contempt.

Hammond, with a dispirited look, made his way back to the football ground. He watched the finish of the

match and listened to the roar of cheering when the Fourth Formers proved the victors. He watched the fellows come off the field, chatting and talking. But no one chatted to him, no one cast a glance at the lonely boy standing there with his hands driven deep into his pockets.

He was an outcast. Lonely in the midst of a happy crowd. With a heavy heart the Cockney schoolboy turned his footsteps in the direction of the School House.

CHAPTER 14.

Tea With Figgins & Co.

BUMP!

Hammond almost fell as someone, running into him behind, collided with him with considerable force.

He recovered himself and swung round angrily.

It was Levison. Hammond's eyes blazed as he looked at the cad of the Fourth.

"Did you do that on purpose?" he demanded.

"Sorry!" said Levison, backing away. "Quite an accident, I assure you. I wouldn't touch you if I could help it!"

"Well, just be more careful where you're running to, my cove!" said Hammond; and he turned away towards the House again.

Levison chuckled; and several fellows near at hand chuckled, too. In the moment of collision Levison had hooked a card upon the back of Hammond's jacket. The card bore the inscription, in large letters:

"IN THIS STYLE,
THREE-AND-NINE!"

Quite unconscious of the placard adorning his back, Hammond walked on, puzzled by the shouts of laughter that rose from the fellows he passed.

He swung round angrily as a group of fellows at the foot of the School House steps burst into a roar.

Hammond glowered down upon them from the steps.

"What's the matter wiv you?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quite appropriate!" grinned Gore of the Shell. "Three-and-ninence! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not worth it!"

said Crooke.

"Lookin' for another thick ear, you Crooke?" demanded Hammond.

"In that style!" grinned Mellish.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Quite 'igh class!" said Ker-ruish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond looked, for a moment, as though he would charge into the crowd of them, but he changed his mind and turned away and went into the House, followed by a yell of laughter.

The Terrible Three were chatting in the Hall, and they chuckled as Hammond passed them. Blake & Co.

were in the passage, and they, too, chuckled when they saw the placard on Hammond's back.

"Look 'ere!" exclaimed Hammond, exasperated, swinging round upon them.

"I'm fed up with this 'ere!"

"Go hon!" murmured Digby.

"Wot's the cackle about?"

"You," said Blake politely.

"I'll make you cackle t'other side of your mouth if you don't shut up!" said Hammond. "I can lick the rest of you quite as easy as 'im!"

Arthur Augustus flushed.

"Weally, you wottah—" he began.

"You beginnin' agin!" exclaimed Hammond. "Didn't you have enough last night—wot? For two pins I'd wipe up the floor wiv yer!"

Arthur Augustus was already pushing back his cuffs, when his elbows dragged him away. They did not intend to allow him any further scrapping with the formidable youth from Bethnal Green.

Hammond went into the Junior Common-room, and a general chuckle greeted his appearance.

"Three-and-nine!"

"In that style!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond swung out of the room. But wherever he went the same chuckles greeted him, and he tramped up to his study, to be at peace. As he sat down there he felt the card on his back, and put his hand round and pulled it off. He grinned as he saw the inscription on it, as he understood the cause of the laughter that had followed him wherever he went.

He tossed the card into the fire and sat down to his lonely tea. Smith minor and Bates were having their tea in Hall, in order to escape the forced company of the unwelcome addition to their study.

There was a knock at the door, and Fatty Wynn came in.

Hammond glanced at him without a smile. He wondered what the fat Fourth Former wanted to get out of him. He had already learned not to expect friendly overtures without an ulterior motive behind them.

Fatty Wynn nodded to him pleasantly.

"Having tea?" he asked.

Hammond nodded. So that was it,

(Continued on the next page.)

"I take my stand on this—!"
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he reflected. The fat "bloke" wanted another free feed. For the sake of company Hammond was ready to give him one.

"Yes. Sit down and join in," he said.

But Fatty Wynn unexpectedly shook his head.

"No; I want you to come over to the New House to tea," he said.

Hammond stared at him incredulously. "You want me?" he said.

"Yes."

"You don't want me to stand you a feed?"

"No."

"You don't want to borrow any money?"

Fatty Wynn stared.

"Of course I don't!" he said. "What on earth are you driving at?"

"Skuse me!" said Hammond.

"Seems to me that the only fellers 'ere who are willin' to speak to me want my money, that's all! If 'tain't the same with you, I'm jolly glad. I'll come with pleasure, if you want me!"

"Oh, come on!" said Fatty Wynn.

Fatty Wynn did not specially want him, as a matter of fact; but he felt that he was bound to show the Cockney some attention in return for the magnificent feed of the day before.

Figgins and Kerr were indifferent on the subject, so Fatty Wynn had had his way.

The two juniors went downstairs together, followed by a good many curious glances, and crossed the quadrangle in the winter dusk to the New House.

Figgins and Kerr received the visitor with elaborate politeness.

There was a good spread on the study table, and the fire burned cheerfully.

Hammond felt a sense of comfort for the first time since he had been at St. Jim's.

Figgins & Co. chatted cheerfully with him over tea. They talked football chiefly, and they found that the new fellow was quite well up in that subject.

They tried not to smile at his extraordinary pronunciation, and Hammond felt that he was getting on famously.

Here were three fellows, at all events, who were civil to him, without caring whether he was rich or poor. It occurred to him that he would have found his lines cast in pleasanter places if he had been put in the New House instead of the School House.

"I wish I'd been put into this 'ere 'Ouse, instead of the other!" he said.

Figgins nodded cordially. He was very proud of his House, and, of course, it was only right and proper that a new fellow should wish that he belonged to it.

"We're the Cock House of St. Jim's, you know," said Figgins modestly.

"Rather rotten luck to be shoved into that old casual ward over the way!"

"Jest wot I was thinkin'," said Hammond eagerly. "But I s'pose a feller could chynge over if he wanted to?"

"Ahem!"

"I'd git on with you fellows much better than with the blokes in the other 'Ouse," went on Hammond. "Wot do you say?"

Figgins & Co. exchanged hopeless glances. They did not mind being kind to the new fellow, out of good nature. But they did not want him in their House, and, above all, not in their study!

"Fellows never change their Houses," said Kerr, at length, "or hardly ever. Better stick to your show, and make the best of it. You'll find things will come out all right in the long run."

Hammond gave him one quick, keen

look, and dropped the subject. He understood. He was not wanted in the New House any more than in the School House.

Figgins & Co. were kind to him because they were good-natured fellows, and Fatty Wynn had a debt to pay, that was all. Apart from having him to tea on that occasion, they did not want to have anything to do with him.

Hammond understood, and the brightened died out of his face. He hesitated a few minutes, and then rose to his feet.

"Not going yet?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"You haven't had half a feed!"

"I think I'd better be gettin' along," said Hammond. "Thanks for the tea!"

And he left the study without another word.

Figgins & Co. exchanged rather uneasy glances. They knew that the new boy was wounded; but they could not help it. They did not want him, and it would have been hypocrisy to pretend that they did.

"Poor kid!" said Figgins. "He's out of place here! Look here, if he were in this House, I'd look after him a bit. But—but we don't want to get him changed over. We're not called upon to do that."

"Not at all," said Kerr.

"I think the School House chaps might be a bit decent to him," said Figgins. "Gussy or Tom Merry might show him—well, some kindness."

"They've both fought with him already," said Kerr, with a grin.

"It's rather rotten!" said Figgins.

And the Co. agreed that it was rather rotten, but decided that they couldn't help it, and finished their tea cheerfully enough.

"But he's a decent kid in some ways," declared Fatty Wynn, as he negotiated the last tart. "I don't see why he should be put on. I'm jolly well going to look him out, and talk to him a bit, you know."

And Fatty Wynn fully intended to do so. But somehow or another it did not come off.

Being in a different House made it rather difficult, and the Cockney showed an unexpected and unsuspected vein of pride, and would not seek for company where he felt that he was not really wanted, and so Fatty Wynn was not able to carry out his kind intentions.

CHAPTER 15.

Gussy in a Fix!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was in a state of sad distress.

Saturday had come round, and Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday.

There was a football match on—this time St. Jim's were playing against the Grammar School—but D'Arcy was not thinking of that. He had another engagement that afternoon. His Cousin Ethel was coming down to St. Jim's.

Cousin Ethel's rare visits to the school were always looked for eagerly by the juniors who had the pleasure of her acquaintance, and most of all by Arthur Augustus himself.

But on the present occasion his feelings were far from joyful.

He was not in a state to be seen by any lady. The days that had elapsed since the fight in the dormitory had removed, by the process of time, some of the traces of that terrific encounter.

D'Arcy's aristocratic nose had resumed its normal shape, and his mouth had ceased to look as if it were trying to travel up his right cheek. But his eyes

were still of the deepest purple, shot with shades of blue and pink.

To let Cousin Ethel see him with two eyes like that was simply anguish to the swell of St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. were going over to the Grammar School to play Gordon Gay & Co. Miss Cleveland would arrive before they returned.

Arthur Augustus had promised himself a very pleasant afternoon with Ethel, especially as Figgins would be away—Figgins generally contriving somehow to monopolise Cousin Ethel when he was present.

But instead of the pleasant afternoon he had anticipated, D'Arcy was destined to have a time of discomfort.

As a result his feelings towards the Cockney schoolboy were bitter in the extreme, though bitterness was, as a rule, quite foreign to his kind nature.

He stood at the gates of St. Jim's and watched the junior footballers depart for Rylcombe Grammar School.

Hammond was at the gates, too, looking after Tom Merry & Co. He would have been glad of a chance to join the footballers, even as a spectator. But he knew he was not wanted.

Arthur Augustus looked at him, and his purple eyes gleamed. Hammond was unconsciously standing in the attitude that was so offensive to the fastidious eyes of the swell of St. Jim's, with his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat.

Upon a hint from his House-master, Hammond had adopted a waistcoat instead of his gaudy pullover, in which he had arrived at St. Jim's. In fact, he had toned down in many ways during the few days he had been at the school. But he could not learn everything at once, willing and eager as he was to learn.

The scorn that flashed from D'Arcy's eyes brought a gleam into Hammond's.

During the last few days his temper had been sorely tried, and he seemed to have lost some of the overflowing good nature he had brought to the school with him.

"Well, wot's the matter with you?" he demanded.

Arthur Augustus drew back a pace and surveyed him haughtily.

"I do not want to have anythin' to say to you, Hammond!" he said stiffly.

"You'll 'ave somethin' to say, if you turn up your nose at me, you tailor's dummy!" said Hammond.

"Wot have I done? I ain't done no harm to anybody since I came to this 'ere school, an' you're all down on me!"

"I have nothin' to say to you! Pway let me pass!"

"W'y can't you treat a bloke civil and decent?" demanded Hammond.

"W'y, if a strynger came into the Bethnal Green Road, like I come 'ere, the lads wouldn't be down on 'im like you are on me! An' I kin tell yer you'd be jest as queer in the Bethnal Green Road as I am 'ere!"

"I haven't the slightest doubt of that," said D'Arcy dryly.

"You're a snob, that's wot you are!" said Hammond contemptuously.

"I'm goin' to ask the old man to tike me away from 'ere. 'Cause wot? You ain't good enough for me! That's wot the matter is! Spongers and swindlers, some of yer, wot puts on all sorts of airs, an' the rest of yer are snobs! That's my opinion!"

"You are welcome to your opinion, Hammond!" said D'Arcy, with frigid politeness.

"But I twust you will not persist in acquaintin' me with it. I have already remarked that I have no desire for conversation with you!"

"Mighty civil, too, ain't yer?" said Hammond.

"You'd bitch into me this

minnit if you thort you could lick me; you know you would!"

D'Arcy bit his lip. He felt that that was true.

"Vewy well," he said. "I cannot lick you, Hammond. I have twied once, and it was no good. Pewwaps I shall twy again; but not now. I am expectin' a lady visitah, and I do not want to look worse than I do now. You have injahed me enough, I think. I never felt so ashamed of myself in my life!"

Hammond's expression changed at once. D'Arcy fully expected the Cockney to pick a quarrel with him on the spot, but he misjudged the Cockney. Hammond's face was very contrite.

"I sye, I'm sorry!" he said eagerly.

show him some slight sign of kindness; but the elegant junior had been cold and hard as steel.

Hammond walked aimlessly down the lane, tramping through the dead leaves. There was nothing for him to do at St. Jim's, nobody to speak to. Even fellows who were good-natured enough to speak to him civilly had occupations in which Hammond had no part. He might have had Levison's company by paying for it, or Mellish's, but Hammond did not want company on those terms.

With his hands in his pockets and his brow moody, he turned from the lane into a footpath through the fields, and came out on the path beside the Rhyl.

trees and wet fields, and the angry, swollen stream. His thoughts were dark and bitter.

"This 'ere ain't no plice for me!" his reflections ran. "I'm like a fish outer water 'ere, that's wot I am like! I'd 'ave chucked it up at once if it wasn't for the old man! 'E thinks I'll get on orl right 'ere, an' become a toff, as 'e calls it. 'Tain't likely! And I dunno that I'd care to be a toff, either, if bein' a toff is bein' 'ard on a bloke wot 'asn't 'ad any chances!"

His gloomy reflections were interrupted. A graceful girl came down to the plank bridge from the other side of the stream.

Hammond's eyes rested upon her with



Cousin Ethel felt a strong grasp close upon her as she was whirled along in the rushing water. Hammond, holding her and swimming desperately, fought against the current. "Old on to me!" he muttered. "Old on so's I kin use both 'ands!"

"I didn't mean to 'it you so 'ard, you know. But we do 'it 'ard in the Bethnal Green Road when we scrap there. An' you 'it me pretty 'ard, too. You tried to lick me, didn't you?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But I'm sorry you're such a figger now!" said Hammond earnestly. "If I could do anythin'—"

"You cannot do anythin', exceptin' welieve me of your company!" said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "I have already remarked that I wish to pass, and that you are standin' in my way!"

Hammond stepped aside without another word, and the swell of St. Jim's walked slowly away towards the School House.

The Cockney schoolboy drove his hands deep into his pockets, and tramped out of the gates. He had hoped that D'Arcy would relent, and

His path was stopped by a stream that ran into the Rhyl at this point. He did not know the country round St. Jim's yet, and he looked round him for a way to cross the stream.

Some distance up the stream there was a plank bridge, and Hammond turned up the stream to walk towards it. In summer-time the plank was raised well above the water; but recent rains had swollen the stream, and now the water was racing along at a great speed towards the river and lapping over the edges of the wet plank.

"Not so jolly safe, that there!" Hammond remarked to himself.

He could see that the earth where the end of the plank rested was sapped by the water, and that the plank itself shook as the current beat on it.

He leaned against a tree and looked over the surrounding country—leafless

pleasure, so bright and graceful she looked. He wondered whether she was the "lady visitor" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was expecting, taking a short cut across the fields to the school.

He started as he saw her place her foot upon the plank to cross, after an uneasy glance at the swollen water.

"'Ere, you look out, miss!" Hammond called out. "That there ain't safe!"

Cousin Ethel—for it was she—glanced across at him; but she was already upon the plank. She had crossed it many times before, and knew the way well. But before she reached the middle of the plank she understood that the Cockney schoolboy's warning was well-founded. The plank slid under her weight, and she felt it tremble, and stopped in alarm.

Hammond ran down to the water's edge.

"That ain't safe—that there ain't, miss!" he repeated.

Ethel's face was pale now.

"I cannot go back!" she exclaimed. And, indeed, she dared not move, either to advance or to recede, fearful that the least movement would cause the loose plank to turn and precipitate her into the water.

"No, you can't turn back," said Hammond. "Come on gently—and I'll stand ready to catch yer this end, miss. I can't come on the plank—it wouldn't bear two!"

He stood in the wet rushes, holding out his hand to help Ethel as she came within reach. He had forgotten his troubles now—his only thought was to save the girl from the danger she had unwittingly walked into.

Cousin Ethel hesitated a few moments, but it was evidently the only thing to be done. Treading very cautiously, she advanced along the plank.

A sudden cry left her lips.

The plank tilted a little, and her foot slipped on the wet wood. She made a great effort to recover her balance, but it was in vain. Her sudden movement finished the tilting of the plank, and she slipped from it—and there was a heavy splash in the water.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Hammond.

He caught a glimpse of a white, terrified face as the girl was swept away in the fierce current towards the broad river. And in another second there was another splash—and Harry Hammond was in the water, fighting his way desperately to reach the girl before she was swept out into the river.

CHAPTER 16.

Cockney Pluck!

Cousin Ethel felt a strong grasp close upon her as she was whirled along in the rushing water—and her face came up over the surface.

Hammond, holding her, and swimming desperately, fought against the current.

"Old on to me!" he muttered.

"Old on, so's I kin use both 'ands!"

Ethel understood. The danger had not taken away her presence of mind. She clung to the boy who did not know, who was risking his life for a stranger. If he had been a powerful swimmer, like Tom Merry or Figgins, he might have won to the shore before the river was reached. But, though he could swim, he was far from being a good swimmer, and the weight of the girl dragged him down.

The current of the stream rushed them on, and already close at hand rolled the wide and angry Rhyl—and once out in the broad waters their plight would be perilous.

At the point where the stream rushed into the broad river, a willow-tree grew, with wide extending branches drooping out over the water. The outmost twigs dipped into the swollen river racing below.

Hammond's eyes marked it—he had one chance left. He struggled to sweep under the tree—and as he was swept under, he flung up a desperate hand, and caught a drooping branch.

His onward rush was checked.

He swung half out of the water, one hand grasping the drooping bough, the other fastened upon Cousin Ethel. The girl was still conscious, but so overcome by the bitter cold of the water that she could not help herself.

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"Syfo—for a minite!" muttered Hammond, through his chattering teeth. "Old on, young lidy—we'll get out some'ow!"

Ethel did not speak; with all her remaining strength she was clinging to her rescuer.

Hammond's arm was aching, almost cracking with the strain. The hungry current was tearing at him. And under his weight the feeble branch of willow drooped lower and lower into the water, and he heard an ominous crack above.

The branch would not have supported his weight if he could have climbed, and with the helpless girl's weight to bear, that would have been impossible. And the trunk of the tree, with the water lapping round its roots, was a dozen feet from him—a dozen feet of deep and rushing water. To let go his hold for a single instant was to be swept away, and, without letting go, there was no possibility of getting to the shore. And the branch was yielding to his weight.

Lower and lower it came, and there was another loud crack.

Ethel understood.

The brave girl's lips moved.

"It is useless," the girl murmured faintly. "Save yourself."

"Old on!" said Hammond, and that was all.

Crack!

"Elp!" shouted Hammond, with all his remaining strength. "Elp!"

Did he hear an answering shout from the shore?

"Elp!"

"Hold on!"

Crack went the branch again. It could not last many minutes now—even if the exhausted boy's strength lasted so long.

"Hold on! My hat—it's Cousin Ethel—and Hammond! Hold on, for goodness' sake!"

It was from the river that the shout came. A boat was pulling towards them with four or five juniors in it. Hammond's glance went dizzily towards them—he recognised Kerruish and Smith minor, who were looking towards him with white faces; the other three fellows were pulling, and he could only see their backs.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Kerruish. "Hold on, Hammond, we'll have you in a minute!"

The boat shot under the willow. The juniors dragged on the oars. Kerruish grasped Hammond by the collar as the boat shot by, and he was dragged against the gunwale. He let go the branch, and caught the boat's gunwale in his hand.

Smith minor leaned over and caught hold of Cousin Ethel.

"Get the lidy in!" panted Hammond.

The juniors lifted the fainting girl into the boat. Then they seized Hammond, and helped him in—he was too exhausted and frozen to climb in by himself. The boy sank in the bottom of the boat, panting.

"Pull for St. Jim's!" said Kerruish. "Quick!"

The boat rocked out into the river again, and the juniors pulled as if for their lives.

Hammond sat up, his teeth chattering.

"Put yer coat round the lidy!" he gasped. "She's nigh frozen!"

"Good egg!" said Kerruish.

He stripped off his coat and wrapped it round Cousin Ethel, and Smith minor added his muffler.

Ethel thanked them with a look—she could not speak. The boat sped along, and bumped against the landing-raft at the St. Jim's boathouse.

"You know the lidy, you fellows?" Hammond asked.

"It's Cousin Ethel!" said Kerruish.

"D'Arcy's cousin, you know!"

"D'Arcy's cousin?" muttered Hammond.

Kerruish helped Cousin Ethel ashore.

The girl was almost unconscious. A crowd of fellows came dashing down to the raft at sight of her, and many willing hands raised the girl and carried her up to the school.

The fellows would have helped the Cockney, too, willingly; but Harry Hammond did not want their help.

He had recovered sufficiently to help himself, and he jumped lightly out of the boat on to the raft. He gave his rescuers a grim look.

"I'm obliged to yer," he remarked. "I s'pose you 'ave saved my life, pickin' me up; an' I s'pose you think it wasn't worth the trouble—wot!"

"Don't put it like that," said Kerruish awkwardly. "You did a jolly plucky thing in going in for Cousin Ethel; and you'd have been drowned if we hadn't happened to be out for a pull this afternoon. It was jolly lucky we came by. Hammond, old son, you're one of the best, and I'm sorry I've said anything to offend you."

"And—and you're welcome in Study No. 5 after this," said Smith minor, with an effort.

The Cockney sniffed. That grudging recognition was not particularly gratifying to him.

"I reckon I shall stick there, welcome or not," he grunted. "It's my study, ain't it? You can go and eat coke!"

"And you had better go and change your clothes, kid," broke in Gore of the Shell, quite gently for him. "You'll catch cold if you don't."

"What-ho!" said Hammond. And he walked away towards the school.

CHAPTER 17.

Gussy Comes Round!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was sauntering in the quadrangle, thinking about Cousin Ethel and his two purple eyes, when a crowd came in at the gates.

It was time for Cousin Ethel to arrive, even if she had walked from the station, and Arthur Augustus' uneasiness and self-consciousness on the subject of his purple eyes was reaching the point of actual anguish.

The crowd of fellows pouring in at the gates attracted his attention. They were carrying something in their midst, and in a minute more D'Arcy knew what it was.

"Ethel!" he shouted.

He forgot his black eyes now, as he gazed upon the white, unconscious face of the girl.

"Bai Jove! What's happened? Ethel!" panted D'Arcy.

"She's all right; only fainted," said Thompson of the Shell. "We want to get her in quick. Gerrout of the way!"

And Cousin Ethel was carried into the Head's house, where she was placed in the kind hands of Mrs. Holmes.

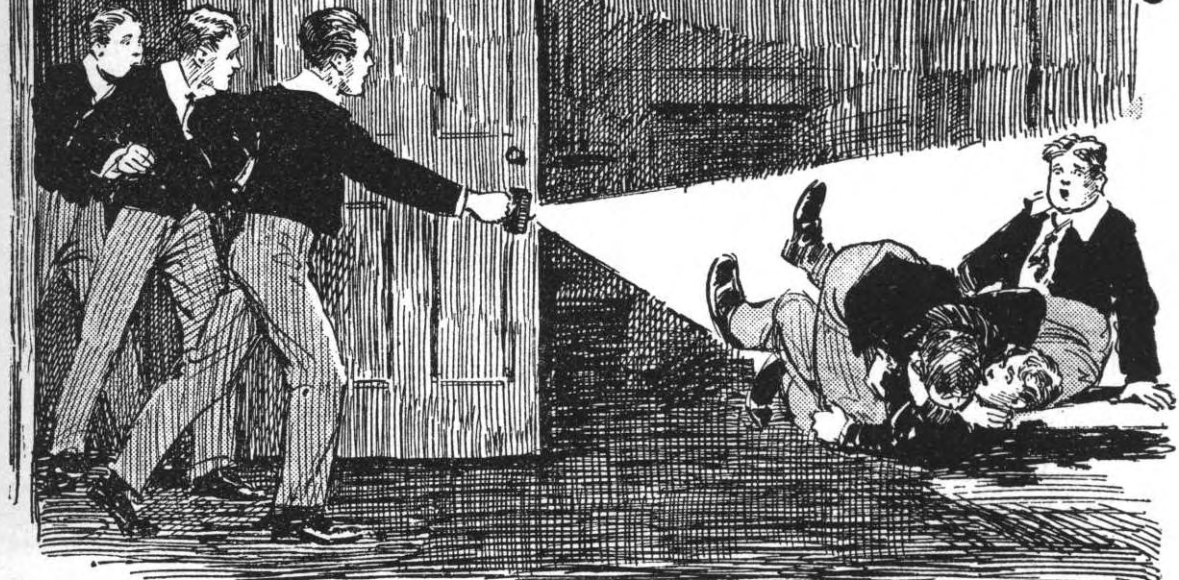
Arthur Augustus hung about the house in a state of anxiety. Hitherto he had carefully avoided allowing the Head's wife to see his black eyes, but now he simply paraded them, so to speak—haunting the house for news of Cousin Ethel.

And a little later there were other eager inquirers. The football team had returned from the Grammar School.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE UNKNOWN RACGER OF ROOKWOOD COMMITS HIS LAST OUTRAGE!

The MYSTERY MAN UNMASKED!



"Help!" screamed Jimmy Silver. "Help! He's mad!" The flash-lamp in Mornington's hand streamed down on Jimmy's attacker. It was Dudley Vane!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

Before the Big Beak!

"VANE!"

"Seen Dudley Vane?"

"Where's that ass got to?"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were looking for Dudley Vane, the new fellow in the Classical Fourth at Rookwood. And they were looking exasperated.

It was after class. Most of the Classical Fourth were to be seen about, but Vane was not to be seen. And it was a most awkward moment for him to be missing, as all the five members of the end study were under orders to proceed to the presence of the Head. And Dr. Chisholm was not a man who could be kept waiting.

"Seen Vane, Morny?" called out Jimmy Silver.

"Not since class," answered Mornington. He grinned. "Perhaps he's not keen on seeing the big beak in the giddy circumstances."

"Oh, rot! Seen Vane, Erroll?"

"Yes," said Erroll. "I saw him going along by Masters' Studies—about ten minutes ago—"

Without waiting for Erroll to finish, the four juniors rushed away towards Masters' Studies. There was a path under the study windows, but nobody was to be seen on it.

"Not here!" growled Lovell.

"The silly ass!"

"Blow him!"

"Well, we can't keep the Head waiting," said Jimmy Silver. "Come on! We shall have to go in without Vane. The howling ass may have forgotten, and gone out of gates."

There was no help for it, and the four juniors ran back to the Head. Already the headmaster must have waited for them a couple of minutes. Keeping him waiting longer was unthinkable.

They ran into the House at top speed.

"Here, look out!" came a startled yell.

Arthur Edward Lovell, in the lead, crashed into a fellow who was looking out of the doorway.

"Vane!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

It was Dudley Vane. He staggered back as Lovell crashed, but actively recovered his footing. Lovell was not so lucky. He sat down, hard and heavy.

"Ow!" gasped Lovell. "You silly fathead—"

"You clumsy ass!" gasped Vane.

"Can't you see where you're running? Aren't you coming to the Head? I've been waiting for you."

Unsuspected, unhindered, the mystery man has for some time startled all Rookwood with his daring outrages. But at last the unknown overreaches himself—resulting in his sensational exposure!

"Waiting for us!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Yes; I was just looking out of the door for you."

Lovell staggered up.

"If we hadn't got to get off to the Head, I'd bang your silly napper on the banisters!" he spluttered. "You bithering chump, we've been rooting all over Rookwood for you!"

"Oh, come on!" said Jimmy hastily.

The five juniors went at a trot for the Head's study. They arrived there rather breathless.

Jimmy Silver tapped at the door, and they went in.

Dr. Chisholm, sitting at his table, gave them a stern glance. He had

waited nearly three minutes—for such utterly unimportant members of the Rookwood community as juniors of the Fourth Form. Mr. Dalton, standing by the window, frowned at them.

"Silver!" he rapped. "You were ordered to come here at precisely—"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "We were—"

"You are late!" snapped Dr. Chisholm.

"Yes, sir; we were—"

"That will do," said Dr. Chisholm icily. "At all events, you are here now."

The five juniors stood before the Head's table, and Dr. Chisholm fixed his eyes on them, coldly, searchingly. Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby and Newcome all looked a little flushed and uncomfortable. Dudley Vane's handsome face was cool and calm. But it was upon Vane's calm face that the Head's eyes seemed to linger. There was a brief silence.

"Now, my boys," said the Head quietly, "you know why you are sent for. Your Form-master and I have discussed the matter, and I have decided to question you personally. I need not tell you that, for many weeks past, a series of outrages has occurred in the school. It has been the talk of Rookwood, and you are aware—"

"Oh, yes, sir!" murmured Jimmy.

"So far," said the Head, in a deep voice, "the unknown author of these outrages has not been detected. He has acted with such extraordinary cunning, as well as audacity, that no clue to him has been found. But—" The Head paused, a rather terrifying pause.

The juniors waited.

"But," resumed the Head, "what happened in the House last night affords, at last, something in the nature of a clue. Fireworks were exploded in the House at a late hour—hurled, in fact, at Mr. Dalton, who was keeping

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watch for the unknown delinquent. It has transpired that fireworks were concealed during the day in the study belonging to you five boys—the end study in the Classical Fourth. This places the study under suspicion. One of you—

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" said Lovell.

"What—what do you mean, Lovell?"

"I mean that nobody in our study had anything to do with it, sir!" said Arthur Edward. "Anybody could have sneaked into our study and hidden a bundle of crackers there till he wanted them—"

"Silence!" rapped the Head. "One of you five boys had fireworks in his possession. It is impossible to doubt it. It cannot be discovered that anything of the kind was in the possession of any other boys—"

BANG!

The Head was suddenly interrupted. From somewhere in the House rang a loud and echoing bang, evidently that of an exploding firework. It was followed by a succession of ringing bangs, like the stuttering of a machine-gun.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! BANG!

The Mystery Man Again!

THERE was a startled shout in the quad.

The dusk was falling, but there were still a good many fellows out of the House when that sudden outbreak of explosions rang far and wide.

"Fireworks again!" exclaimed Mornington. "What ass—"

"In Dalton's study!" shouted Putty of the Fourth.

"It's the jolly old mystery man again, you can bet!" exclaimed Morny.

There was a rush to Mr. Dalton's study window. A crowd gathered under it, staring and listening. Loud banging rang from within the room.

The study had been dark, the light not turned on as Mr. Dalton was with the headmaster. Only a faint glow from the fire glimmered on the panes. But now flashes of blaze lighted the dark. Showers of sparks were flying in the study. Bang, bang, bang! Fizzzzzz! Squish! It sounded like a Fifth-of-November celebration.

"Great pip!" said Oswald. "It's the mystery man up to his larks again! But, I say, those fellows are all with the Head, and everybody was saying that the mystery man belonged to the end study."

"Can't be one of them!" said Erroll. "They're with the Head, and this is going on while they're there."

Bulkeley of the Sixth came running across the quad. He stared at the study window, lighted by showers of sparks from within, and then rushed round to the door.

Mornington approached the window and lifted himself on the broad stone sill. He chuckled.

"I say, the window's an inch open at the bottom," he said. "Some sportsman has been in, or out, by the window. We were too late to spot him, though."

The light flashed on in the study. Bulkeley was there. Outside, the window was crammed with faces, staring in. Fellows craned over one another's shoulders to get a view of the interior of the study. Mornington pushed up the lower sash a little higher.

The banging and fizzing was still

going on. Smoke floated over the study, and a smell of gunpowder. The fire was leaping and blazing, and hot coals had been hurled over the hearth and the rug. They smoked and blazed on the floor. Evidently the explosion of the fireworks had taken place in the grate.

Bulkeley of the Sixth was stamping out hot cinders. There was still an occasional bang and fizz, as the last of the fireworks went off.

Mr. Dalton came striding into the study. After him, slow and majestic, came the Head. And behind the Head trailed five juniors with startled faces.

The conclave in the Head's study had been broken up by the outbreak of explosions, and it had drawn the Head and Mr. Dalton to the spot. Jimmy Silver & Co. followed on. They remained in the doorway of the study, while the Head and the Form-master entered.

Nobody, in the excitement of the moment, noted the sea of faces pressed to the window.

"Bulkeley, what has happened here?" asked Mr. Dalton.

"Fireworks, sir. It looks as if a bundle of them has been thrown into your fire," said the Rookwood captain. "I heard the noise and came in—"

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Chisholm. He coughed. The study was full of smoke.

He stared at the scattered cinders, the fragments of exploded crackers and squibs lying about, then at the five juniors in the doorway. He frowned as he caught Dudley Vane winking at his companions.

"Did you see anyone here, Bulkeley?" asked the Head.

"No one, sir—it was the explosion brought me here—"

"No one in the passage when you came?"

"No, sir."

"This is—is extraordinary!" said Dr. Chisholm. "Mr. Dalton, this outrageous act has been—must have been—perpetrated by the same person—"

"There can be no doubt about that, sir."

"But these boys were in my study—in my presence. None of them can have had a hand in it!" exclaimed the Head.

"It would certainly appear so, sir!" said Mr. Dalton. He compressed his lips.

"Indeed, I have no doubt, sir, that this outrage was timed to take place while the boys were in your presence, in order to clear them of suspicion."

"Indeed!"

The Head raised his eyebrows.

"Some sportsman you men!" murmured Morny at the window.

And the fellows nodded assent. Wild and reckless as the mystery man seemed to be, it was well known that he was a sportsman, so far as that went. Twice suspicion had fallen on the wrong man and each time the mystery man had barged in, in time to see him clear. It looked as if he had done the same thing again.

Dr. Chisholm pursed his lips. He was so intensely angry and exasperated with the unknown ragger who was causing sensation after sensation in the school, that he was reluctant to admit that there could possibly be any good in him. Yet it was clear that, in his own extraordinary way, the fellow had some idea of playing the game.

"He must be found!" said the Head at last. "He must be found and expelled from Rookwood. You are

sure you saw no one in the passage, Bulkeley?"

"Quite, sir!"

"The boy may have entered by the window," Dr. Chisholm glanced at the window, and started at the sight of innumerable faces there. "Why—what—"

There was a scuttling back of the intensely interested audience. But a tentative Mornington stood his ground. Mr. Dalton strode to the window and pushed the lower sash higher.

"Mornington! Have you been here long?" he asked. "Did you see—"

"No, sir," answered Morny. "We all came up when the fireworks started. Nobody was about."

"Was the window open?" asked the Head.

"The sash was an inch up, sir."

"The window is always open at the top," said Mr. Dalton. "And so, as it was not fastened, it would be possible for a boy to push up the lower sash from outside. Doubtless that was what happened."

The Head, with a grim, frowning brow, turned from the window. He coughed again in the smoke.

The five juniors in the doorway looked at him demurely. What had happened was a stroke of good fortune for them. Dr. Chisholm's eyes lingered on them for a moment.

"Mr. Dalton," he said, "it appears that fireworks must have been in the possession of some other, after all—we have proof of it here. These boys cannot have been concerned in what has just taken place."

"I agree, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "And I am glad, at least, that the innocent have been cleared, even by such a ruffianly act as this."

"Oh, quite, quite!" said the Head curtly; and he rolled majestically from the study.

Jimmy Silver & Co looked inquiringly at their Form-master.

"You may go!" said Mr. Dalton.

And they went.

"He's the Man!"

JIMMY SILVER'S face was clouded the following day.

"Uncle James" of Rookwood was thinking, and to judge by the expression on his face, his thoughts were not of a pleasant nature.

Uncle James was worried—deeply worried.

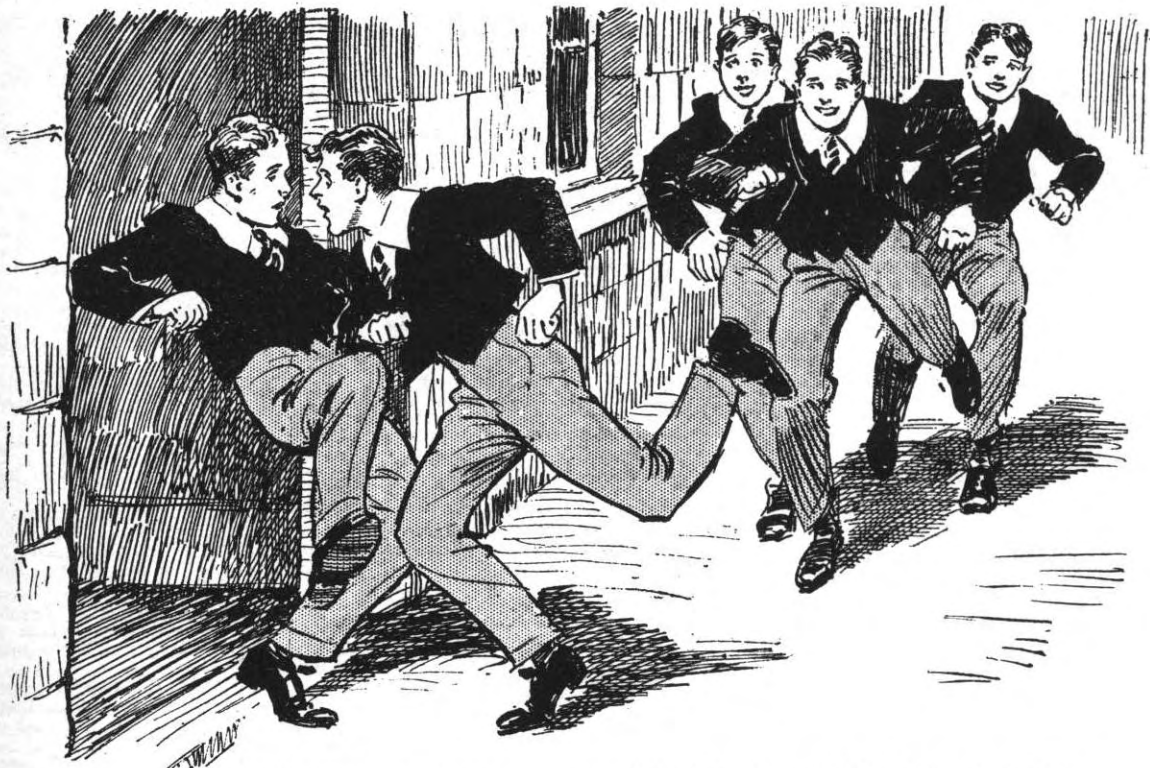
What he was worried about rather perplexed his chums. The end study had been completely cleared. It was agreed, on all hands, that whoever the mystery man was, he was not a member of the cheery circle in that celebrated study. Which ought to have bucked Uncle James.

But it did not. Jimmy seemed quite to have forgotten his customary cheerful maxim to "keep smiling."

Endless discussion was going on on the subject of the mystery man's identity—a greater mystery than ever since the latest outrage.

Most of the Classics concluded that he must be a Modern, because such an awful rotter, if found at Rookwood at all, could only be found in Manders' House. The Moderns, on the other hand, were assured that he was a Classical; for, as Tommy Dodd declared, such a rotter, if found at Rookwood at all, could only be found on the Classical side.

Many of the juniors thought that the fellow must be a senior, while all the



"Here, look out!" came a startled yell. Arthur Edward Lovell, in the lead, crashed into a fellow in the doorway. It was Dudley Vane, for whom Jimmy Silver & Co. had been searching everywhere. Vane staggered back. "You clumsy ass!" he gasped.

seniors were absolutely convinced that such an unspeakable tick was only to be discovered in the Lower School. The discussions did not get them any "forrarder"; nobody seemed to have the faintest idea who the fellow possibly could be. Three times had suspicion fixed—but always in the wrong place. It began to look as if the mystery never would be elucidated, and as if the mystery man would carry on all through the term undetected and undeterred.

Mr. Dalton was rather sharp with Jimmy Silver in class that morning. Jimmy not only "skewed" his con, but he gave random answers, showing only too plainly that his thoughts were elsewhere. Dudley Vane gave him two or three curious glances, and when the Classical Fourth went out in break, the new junior tapped him on the arm.

"What's the trouble, old bean?" he asked.

Jimmy did not answer that question. His face flushed crimson, and with an involuntary movement he drew away from Vane's hand.

Vane gave him a quick, penetrating look.

He did not speak again, but walked on by himself; and Jimmy seemed to breathe more freely with relief.

In third school Vane looked at him—once. Then, compressing his lips, he gave Jimmy no further attention.

At dinner that day the same worried look was visible on Jimmy's face. After dinner, the Fistical Four went out into the quad together. Lovell, Raby, and Newcome expected Vane to join them—but the new fellow walked away, with his hands in his pockets.

Arthur Edward Lovell glanced after him, puzzled.

"Vane got his back up about anything?" he asked.

Jimmy coloured uncomfortably.

"He's got a rather queer temper," said Lovell. "You remember that time he broke out and pitched into Carthew. But I've never seen him sulky before."

Jimmy walked with his chums, with a moody brow. He wondered whether Dudley Vane, with the swift intuition he knew him to possess, had read, or guessed, the dark and troubled thoughts in his mind.

"Look here, Jimmy," said Raby, "what's up? All the morning you've been like a bear with a sore head, and fairly asking Dicky for lines!"

"Penny for 'em, old man!" said Newcome.

"Not worrying about that jaw with the Head yesterday?" asked Lovell. "We're all right with the Head. He knows now that nobody in our study is that blessed mystery johnny!"

"Does he?" murmured Jimmy.

"Look here, cough it up," said Raby uneasily. "I can see that you've got something on your mind, you ass!"

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"I'd better tell you fellows," he said. "I want to know what you think. But, for goodness' sake, let's get somewhere where we can't be heard! It's too fearfully serious to let it get out!"

"What the thump—" ejaculated Lovell.

"Come on!" said Jimmy curtly. And he led the way to the gate of the Head's garden. That was a precinct juniors were not supposed to enter without special leave. But Jimmy had something to say to his friends that he was very anxious for no other ears to hear. He led the way into the garden.

His amazed chums stared at him.

It was clear that Uncle James had something of deep and earnest import to communicate, but they could not begin to guess what it was.

"It's awfully serious, you chaps," began Jimmy. "I think I'd better tell you fellows what's in my mind—"

"Hadn't we better call Vane, then?" asked Lovell.

"Vane!" repeated Jimmy.

"Well, he's one of us," said Lovell. "If it's a matter that concerns the whole study, I don't see leaving him out!"

Jimmy gave him a strange look.

"No," he said, "I don't think we'll call Vane old chap. I'm going to speak to you about Vane."

"About Vane!" repeated Lovell. "What about him? You were looking so jolly serious and mysterious, I fancied you were going to jaw about the mystery man."

"So I am," said Jimmy, in a low voice.

"Well, you've got me beat!" said Lovell. "If you think you've got an eye on that merchant, I expect you're mistaken. But you said you were going to talk about Vane—"

"Vane—and the mystery man," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

Raby and Newcome, quicker on the uptake than Arthur Edward Lovell, gave him startled looks.

"Jimmy!" breathed Raby.

"Jimmy—you ass!" gasped Newcome. Lovell looked from one face to another.

"What the dickens do you mean, Jimmy, if you mean anything?" he asked testily. "What's Vane got to do with the mystery man?"

"He's the man!" said Jimmy Silver.

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From Friends to Foes!

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL gazed at Jimmy dumbfounded. Raby and Newcome stood in amazed silence. Jimmy's face, deeply clouded and troubled, had a look of conviction on it. Lovell broke a tense silence.

"Mad?" he asked. "Vane—the mystery man! You mad ass! The chap who pulled me out of that rift, at Christmas, and carried me home on his back—"

"Who knocked you into it?" asked Jimmy quietly.

"Eh? We never found out!"

"I think I have—now!"

"Jimmy," breathed Raby, "you're potty, old chap! Vane—a splendid fellow—a sportsman down to the fingertips—"

"Everybody says that the mystery man is a sportsman in his own way," said Jimmy Silver.

"A ripping footballer, too!" said Lovell.

"It was when Dalton stopped a football match that the rags started," said Jimmy. "That was the beginning. Everybody thought then that it was a footballer who wrecked Dalton's study."

"Oh, you've got an answer to everything!" grunted Lovell. "But you're talking piffle, all the same!"

"I've thought it over, you chaps," said Jimmy. "It's rotten to think such a thing of a fellow I've liked ever since he came, but—"

"Then stop it!" snapped Lovell. "Take my word for it that you're making an ass of yourself, Jimmy! It was proved yesterday that nobody in our study was the man, or could be. Don't you know what evidence is? Can a fellow be in two places at once?"

"Let Jimmy speak, old chap!" said Raby.

"It was that bang in Dalton's study that put it into my mind," said Jimmy quietly. "Most of the fellows seem to think that the mystery man checked a bundle of fireworks into Dalton's fire while we were all with the Head—"

"So he did," said Lovell.

"I think not," said Jimmy slowly. "You remember, when we were going to the Head, we couldn't find Vane. Erroll saw him near Masters' Studies ten minutes before. We were hunting all over the House for him. But when we came in, he met us in the doorway—"

"I ran into him—"

"Dalton's window was found open at the bottom," said Jimmy. "You men, Vane got into the study by that window, and he left afterwards by the door. He was in the study while we were looking for him outside."

"But the fireworks—chucked in the fire—"

"They were not chucked in the fire," said Jimmy. "I believe the bundle was stacked under the grate to take fire when sparks fell on them. It was bound to happen in a matter of minutes—and as soon as Vane got it ready, he was in a hurry to find us and get to the Head's study. He was proving an alibi for himself—and for us, too, I'll do him that justice!"

"I—I suppose it's possible," said Raby slowly. "But—"

Snort from Lovell!

"If that's all, Jimmy!" muttered Newcome.

"It's not all, old man! Once I got going on it, a hundred things came into my mind—all pointing to Vane—poor chap!"

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"Poor chap?" repeated Raby. "If you're right, he's a dashed rascal!"

"That, too!" assented Jimmy. "But you remember what Dicky told us when he first came. He was ill after a crash in a plane he was travelling in—it upset his nervous system. He recovered all right—he's as strong as a horse. But—it may have left him with some nerve trouble—something that makes it impossible for him to control his temper at times—though at other times he's as decent a chap as you could want to know."

"He's got a temper," admitted Lovell. "That time he flew at Carthew of the Sixth, and kicked him out of the Form-room; but—"

"That," said Jimmy, "got Dicky's eye on him. I know jolly well that Dicky suspected him from that day. Carthew was cracked on the head with a ruler the same night in the dark, and Dalton came straight up to our study—"

"And found that Vane couldn't have done it!" snapped Lovell. "Vane proved that he had been in the end study at nine, when it happened. Muffin had been with him, and noticed the time by the clock."

"Clocks can be wangled," said Jimmy. "He picked out the biggest fool at Rookwood to be with him—and fixed the clock!"

"Oh, rot!"

"I've thought the whole thing out, from beginning to end," said Jimmy miserably. "When did the outrages start? Only after Vane came to Rookwood. There was nothing of the kind before he came. The first was the wrecking of Dalton's study—Vane was ratty, like the rest of us, about the House match being cancelled. Then Dalton was bagged in a sack—Vane wasn't with us when that happened. After that, Bulkeley was mopped over the head with Tubby Muffin's Christmas-pudding—he had caned Vane that day. Then, when you fellows came home with me for Christmas, Lovell had a fat-headed idea of playing ghost to scare Vane—"

"It wasn't a fat-headed idea! I—"

"And somebody played ghost and scared Lovell instead—nobody knew who. Then Lovell had a row with Vane and punched his nose. What happened next? He was knocked head first into a deep rift by a snowball—nobody knew who threw it—"

"But he got me out later and carried me home!" howled Lovell.

"How did he know you were there?"

"He happened to find me—"

"So we thought then," said Jimmy. "I don't think so now. I think, when he was cool again, he repented of what he had done, as he usually does, and came back for you. He's a good chap when that awful fit isn't on him. A sort of Jekyll and Hyde—good and bad by turns."

The Hit of the Month!

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"Rot!" growled Lovell. "Good all through!"

"Then, when we came back this term," went on Jimmy, "there was a row in the school bus, and Tommy Dodd handled Vane, and he had a rough time. It was that night that Tommy was battered in the dark—"

"As if Vane would—"

"Not when he's his right self," said Jimmy; "but when that fit's on him, I'm afraid he would do anything. At other times he's all right. He weighed in to save Morny from the sack. But when something happens to put his back up, I think he broods over it, and then that fearful temper breaks out, and for a time he can't control himself. Jekyll and Hyde—"

"Jekyll be blowed and Hyde be jiggered!" grunted Lovell. "Vane's all right—and you're an ass, Jimmy!"

Jimmy sighed.

"I feel sure of it," he said. "It doesn't amount to proof, I suppose, but there's no doubt in my mind Vane's the man! But I like the chap, as everybody does. I pity him if this awful state of things is due to his accident in the plane, and I believe it is. But what's going to be done?"

"That's an easy one!" said Lovell. "It's all rot, and you'd better chuck it right out of your mind. I'm fed-up with it, anyhow!"

And Arthur Edward, with a snort, tramped back to the quad, still snorting.

"What do you fellows think?" asked Jimmy.

"It—it seems to fit together," muttered Raby. "But—but it's awfully thick, Jimmy!"

"I can't quite get it down!" said Newcome. "Anyhow, for goodness' sake, don't say a word—unless we get real proof, at least—"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Something will have to be done," he said. "But it wants thinking out. Not a word for the present, of course."

And the three juniors followed Lovell back to the quad.

Dudley Vane met them as they walked to the House.

He came up to them, and the three flushed uncomfortably. Raby and Newcome stopped. They were not convinced, or, at all events only half convinced, by what Jimmy had said to them. The fellow, after all, was their friend.

But Jimmy Silver, though he pitied Vane and still liked him, could not speak to him in the old friendly way with such fearful suspicion, or, rather, certainty in his mind. His face crimsoned, and then paled, and he walked on, as if he did not see the new junior.

Dudley Vane glanced after him, and the look that came over his face startled Raby and Newcome. It was a flash of that fierce, ungovernable temper, of which they had seen signs more than once, careful as he was to control it. Leaving them, he darted after Jimmy and caught him by the shoulder.

"What does this mean, Silver?" he asked. His face was white, his eyes glittering, and the most careless eye could have seen that he had to struggle to keep cool. "We've been friends—and now you're cutting me in quad! What have I done?"

It was a question that Jimmy could not answer. Vane came a step nearer to him, breathing hard.

"Will you answer me?" he said, between his teeth.

"No," said Jimmy quietly. "And there's no need, Vane! You know!"

He knew that Vane knew! Dudley Vane stood looking at him for a moment, and then turned away and left him.

Jimmy went into the House, troubled and miserable. He knew the truth now, and Vane knew that he knew! What was to be the end of it?

The Mystery Man's Last Prowl!

"JIMMY, old chap—"

"Oh, cut, Tubby!" said Jimmy sharply.

"You needn't be so jolly ratty because you've got lines!" said Tubby Muffin, in an aggrieved tone. "You asked Dicky Dalton for them. Never saw a chap so slack in class as you were to-day—"

"Buzz away!"

Tubby Muffin cast a blink at the cupboard in the end study, and Jimmy, in spite of his irritation, grinned. It looked as if Tubby knew that there was a box of chocolates in that cupboard, and he had expected to find the end study vacant after prep.

It was rather a disappointment for Cecil Adolphus Muffin.

Raby, Newcome, and Lovell had gone down with Vane—though Raby and Newcome soon wandered away from him. Lovell, determined to show Jimmy Silver, and all whom it might concern, that his faith in the new fellow was unshaken, stuck to Vane, making it a great point to be very pally. Jimmy was left alone in the study, to grind out the lines he had earned by his inattention in Form that day.

And Tubby, after a blink at the cupboard, departed, hoping, no doubt, that Jimmy would be gone down soon, and that he would have another chance. Jimmy Silver scribbled wearily at Latin lines.

It was not because he had lines that he had snapped at Muffin. Lines were not agreeable, but that was not what was worrying Jimmy. He was sure that he had spotted the identity of the mystery man of Rookwood. It was a blow to him—a heavy blow—and it placed him in a painful and awkward position. Could he keep secret what he knew, and allow the strange junior to carry on—from bad perhaps to worse? On the other hand, could he give him away?

Jimmy was intensely worried. It was such a problem as he had never been up against before, and he admitted that he did not know what to do. His thoughts were more on that problem than on the lines he was writing. Suddenly the light went out.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Jimmy, starting to his feet.

He stepped to the door, groping his way by the dimness of an almost extinct fire in the grate. Startled and angry voices came up the passage. Most of the juniors had gone down after prep, but some were still in their studies, and they came groping out of the doorways.

The whole passage was in darkness. Fellows groped about dark studies in search of flash-lamps. Evidently a fuse had gone; but as Jimmy stared from the dark doorway of the end study, he wondered whether it was an accident, or whether the mystery man was at his tricks again, plunging the place into darkness for one of his uncanny japes.

Even as that thought came into his mind, there was a step near him, and he caught a quick-drawn breath. Before he realised what was happening, hands gripped his throat in the darkness, and he was borne backwards into his study.

He went over on his back, taken by

surprise, his assailant falling on him. As he fell, the unseen fellow kicked the door shut, though it did not latch.

The grasp on Jimmy Silver's throat was as strong as a man's. But he knew that it was a boy's—knew, with a shudder of horror, that he was in the grip of the mystery man of Rookwood.

In silence—save for the quick, spasmodic breathing of his assailant, and a shuffling sound as they stirred—they fought in the darkness, Jimmy Silver striving madly to break loose, the mystery man striving to keep him pinned and silent—and succeeding! Jimmy was as strong and sturdy as any fellow in his Form, but he had no chance now. The strange and mysterious junior had the strength of two or three.

Jimmy choked in that deadly grip.

Even in the darkness he could discern two burning eyes that gleamed down at him—eyes that glittered with uncontrolled excitement and rage. He fought as if for his life.

The assailant was going to choke him into insensibility and already his senses were swimming. The fellow was mad—mad for the moment—and Jimmy knew who it was—knew that he might have looked for some attack from the mystery man after he had roused Dudley Vane's angry resentment.

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"THE ROOKWOOD MAN-HUNT!"

He knew that the unhappy boy had brooded over his offence till the black fit came on—the fit that changed him from a kindhearted, decent fellow to an unmitigated ruffian and brute; from the fellow that the end study knew to the lurking rascal who had beaten Tommy Dodd in the dark, and stunned Carthew with a blow of a ruler—the change from Jekyll to Hyde.

Jimmy gurgled in the choking grip on his throat and felt his senses going.

The study door was pushed open.

Neither Jimmy nor his assailant, struggling on the floor, saw the fat figure that groped in the dark study.

Tubby Muffin, with outstretched hands, crossed towards the cupboard.

How and why the lights had gone off Tubby neither knew nor cared, but he knew that it gave him a chance to snaffle the box of chocolates in the end study cupboard.

He groped across the dark room—and gave a sudden, startled howl as his fat legs came into contact with something alive in the darkness.

"Ooooooh!" gasped Tubby.

He sprawled over, grabbing wildly in the dark for something to save him. He caught a collar and dragged somebody over with him.

The deadly grip left Jimmy Silver's throat. He was able to breathe; he panted wildly.

He heard a muttered exclamation—and a yell from Tubby.

"Ow! Stop punching me, you rotter! Help! I say— Yaroooooh!" There was a heavy fall.

The unseen one had struck Tubby down—to escape. He was thinking now only of escape, and escaping detection. He had been interrupted, for the first time while prowling as the mystery man.

But Jimmy Silver, though his senses were dizzy, scrambled up and clutched fiercely at the dark figure scrambling to the doorway, and caught hold.

The escaping assailant turned on him like a tiger, and they grappled and fought madly. They stumbled over Muffin and rolled on the floor, still fighting, and Tubby yelled and howled frantically.

"What on earth's the row here?" Mornington flashed a light into the study. Erroll and Rawson looked on by his side. "You fellows scrappin' in the dark? Why, what—"

"Jimmy!" exclaimed Erroll.

"Vane!"

"Help!" almost screamed Jimmy Silver. "Help! Hold him! He's mad! For goodness' sake, hold him!"

It was Vane. There was no doubt now. The flashlamp in Mornington's hand streamed light on his face.

That face was hardly recognisable as Vane's; it was dark, distorted, convulsed. It almost scared the fellows that saw it. Even as Jimmy shrieked, Vane, with a terrible exertion of strength, broke from his grasp and scrambled up.

He sprang to the door with flaming eyes.

"Vane," panted Mornington, "are you mad? What— Oh, I see it now! Collar him, you men—oh, collar him!"

Three pairs of hands grasped Vane—and even so they could hardly hold him, so terrible were his struggles. He knew now that the game was up; that all was known. And that knowledge seemed to place him beside himself. He struggled like a madman, and they swayed and rocked. A staring crowd gathered in the passage; half a dozen flashlamps illumined the strange, startling scene, when Mr. Dalton came hurrying up from the stairs.

Vane, with a terrible effort, broke away. He stood dishevelled, panting, under the Form-master's eyes.

Richard Dalton's hand dropped on his shoulder, gripping hard. He understood. Jimmy Silver staggered from the study, white, strained, the marks of the choking fingers showing up with terrible clearness on his bruised throat. Mr. Dalton gave him one look.

"Come with me, Vane!" he said very quietly.

Vane looked at him; he looked round at the staring, horrified faces. It seemed as if the mists of fury rolled from his brain, and he came to himself. He gave a sudden shiver, and, without a word, without an attempt at resistance, walked quietly away by the Form-master's side.

"By gad!" breathed Mornington. "Vane—Vane all the time! They've got the mystery man at last!"

Arthur Edward Lovell came into the end study. The light was on again. Jimmy Silver, white and shaken, was resting in the armchair, Raby and Newcome with him and two or three other fellows; Tubby Muffin was munching the chocolates. Jimmy thought that he had earned them. Lovell glanced round the study.

"Seen Vane?" he asked.

Lovell evidently did not know yet.

"He's rather an ass," went on Arthur Edward. "He asked me to keep cave at the corner of Masters' Passage while he went to Greely's study to use his
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phone. I waited a quarter of an hour for him at least. He never came back; must have gone out at the other end of the passage. Forgot all about me, I suppose. What do you think of that for a silly ass?"

"He had his alibi all ready," muttered Ruby.

Jimmy nodded. Evidently, but for the capture of the mystery man, Vance would have rejoined Lovell—a witness that he had been in Greely's study at the time of the attack on Jimmy Silver.

"Eh? What do you mean?" said Lovell, staring. "I say, though, I heard some fellows saying that the mystery man had been nailed as I came up. Anything in it?"

"Lots!" said Jimmy, with a faint smile.

"Oh, good!" said Lovell. "That will clear Vance, then. And convince even a silly ass like you, Jimmy—what? I say, what's the matter with your neck?" He stared at the black bruises on

Jimmy's throat. "Jimmy, old man, you don't mean to say that he—that he—"

"Yes," said Jimmy.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Lovell. "And—and who was it, if they've got him?"

"Vance!"

"Vance!" repeated Lovell. "Mad? Vance was in Greely's study—"

"He was here choking me, when Tubby came in and fell over him," said Jimmy. "Dalton's taken him away. we shan't see him again, I expect."

Lovell stared blankly. He could doubt no further; but it took him some time to assimilate this.

"Well," he said at last, "who'd have thought it?"

"I did," said Jimmy.

But Arthur Edward passed that remark over, like the idle wind which he regarded not. He was silent for a whole minute—which was rather a record for Lovell—and then remarked again:

They found out. Kerruish was full of information, and of admiration, too, for the boy whose devoted courage had saved Cousin Ethel's life. He gave a graphic account of how Hammond had rescued Cousin Ethel.

The juniors listened in wonder, and Arthur Augustus was strangely silent. He spoke at last.

"I have tweated that new kid wottenly. Just because he came from Bethnal Green, and because he does not speak good English, I have had a wotten prejudice against him. I have called him wotten names, and even twied to give him a feathful thwashin'. I have never felt so howidly ashamed of myself before!" said Arthur Augustus in great distress. "I have been a snobbish beast! He has wepaid my wotten conduct by wiskin' his life to save my cousin! I wish somebody would kick me! Yawwooh! Hewwies, you silly ass, you need not kick me so hard, you fwightful duffah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is the chap now, Kew-wish?" asked D'Arcy, backing away from the obliging Herries, with a look that was far from grateful.

"In the dorm, changing."

Arthur Augustus ran into the House. He dashed at top speed up to the Fourth Form dormitory.

Harry Hammond was there. He had towelled himself down, and changed into dry clothes, and looked none the worse for his narrow escape. He was brushing his obstinate sandy hair as smooth as possible when D'Arcy dashed in.

"Who'd have thought it?"

Dudley Vane was gone from Rookwood the next morning.

The Rookwooders knew that he had gone to be placed under medical care, and they hoped—and believed—that he would recover from the nervous malady that had affected him so strangely and so terribly. He had been a strange mixture of good and evil, but the fellows who had been his friends believed that the good was his real nature and the evil accidental.

In spite of all, he was remembered kindly in the end study, though it certainly was a relief to the whole school to have seen the last of the mystery man of Rookwood.

(Next week: "THE ROOKWOOD MAN-HUNT!"—starring Jimmy Silver & Co., in a gripping new series of their adventures. Watch out for the first thrilling story.)

A COCKNEY AT ST. JIM'S!

(Continued from page 22.)

They had come home elated with a victory over the Grammarians; but their joy was turned to consternation at the news of Cousin Ethel's accident.

Figgins was looking like a ghost when he joined D'Arcy in the hall of the Head's house, and the other fellows looked very anxious. But Mrs. Holmes came down at last with reassuring news.

"Miss Cleveland is quite well," the good lady said. "It was only the shock and the coldness of the water that overcame her. She will not come down again to-day, but to-morrow I think she will be quite restored. I hope the brave boy who rescued her has not suffered."

"We don't know anything about it yet, ma'am," said Tom Merry. "Did Ethel fall into the river?"

"The plank bridge gave way when she was crossing it, and she fell into the stream, and the current carried her away towards the Rhyl," Mrs. Holmes explained. "A boy plunged in and saved her—holding on to a branch, I understand, till they were picked up."

"Must have been a plucky chap to go in just there," said Fatty Wynn.

"Was it a St. Jim's chap, ma'am?"

"Yes, Ethel said he was wearing a school cap, but she had never seen him before."

"Bai Jove! Let's find out who it was."



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