

GREAT YARN OF Harry Wharton's Early Schooldays at Greyfriars—Inside!

The GEM

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**GUSSY THE
VENTRILOQUIST!**

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HE THOUGHT HE WAS A BORN VENTRILOQUIST, BUT HIS SCHOOL-
FELLOWS THOUGHT HE WAS JUST DOTTY!

GUSSY THE VENTRILOQUIST!



"I say, is there anybody up there?" called Arthur Augustus up the chimney. "Yaas!" came the reply in a squeaky voice, only too plainly proceeding from Arthur Augustus. The Terrible Three stared at the swell of St. Jim's in amazement. The same dreadful thought came to all of them—that he was out of his senses!

CHAPTER 1. Very Queer!

"GWOUGH!"
"Great Scott!" murmured Tom Merry.
"Gowwoogh!"

Tom Merry looked into Study No. 6 in some alarm. He was in flannels, and had his bat under his arm, and he was passing Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage on his way downstairs, when he heard that strange and alarming sound proceeding from the study. It sounded like the anguished utterance of a Channel passenger in the last stage of seasickness.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth was the only fellow in the study. His studymates, Blake, Herries, and Digby, were already on the cricket ground.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and there was a Form match on between the Fourth and the Shell. Arthur Augustus ought to have been on the ground by this time, along with the rest of the Fourth Form eleven; but he evidently wasn't. He was in the study, apparently busily occupied, and his occupation made Tom Merry's eyes open wide in amazement.

Arthur Augustus was standing before the glass, with his back to the door, so he did not see Tom Merry, and he was too deeply engrossed to hear him. Tom Merry saw the back of his head, and the reflection of his face in the glass; and that expression upon the reflected face was terrific.

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D'Arcy's mouth was wide open, his face was unusually red, but his eyes seemed to be staring out of their sockets, and all his energy was thrown into squeezing out that alarming sound from his throat.

"Gwwwwwoooooogh!"
The captain of the Shell stared at him blankly.

"Gowwwwoop!"
The expression on the reflected face was now agonising.

Tom Merry let the end of his bat fall with a clump on the floor, and the sudden crash startled Arthur Augustus. He swung round from the glass in alarm.

"Bai Jove! I didn't see you there, Tom Mewwy!"

"What on earth are you doing?" Tom Merry demanded in astonishment. "Are you trying to crack the looking-glass?"

"Certainly not!"
"Have you got something in your throat, then?"

"Nothin' of the kind!"

"Then what's the little game?" exclaimed Tom, puzzled, and a little alarmed. "What on earth are you making those faces in the glass for?"

"I was pwactisin'," said D'Arcy with dignity.

"Practising looking like a Guy Fawkes' mask?"

"No, you ass! I was pwactisin' my voice."

"Your—your voice! That gurgle?"

"It wasn't a gurgle!" said D'Arcy indignantly. "I was twyin' to get my

throat wight, so I had to see the reflection in the glass. I am goin' to surpwise the fellows soon."

"You'll surprise them if they see your chivvy like that!" agreed Tom. "Surprise them into convulsions, I should say. What are you driving at, anyway?"

"It's a little secwet at pwesent," said Arthur Augustus. "When I get it goin' bettah, I'm goin' to give you all a surpwise. Pway wun away now. You are intewwuptin' me."

"Time somebody interrupted you!" said the captain of the Shell. "Don't you know we're just going to pitch the stumps, fathead, and you're playing for the Fourth?"

"Bai Jove, I'd forgotten!"

"Forgotten the Form match! Well, you ass!" said Tom Merry in measured tones. "You utter, crass, frabjous, burbling—"

"Pway wing off, deah boy! I shall not be able to play this aftahnoon. You might mention it to Blake that he can put somebody else in my place in the team. I have a wathah important engagement."

Tom Merry grinned.

"Well, I'll tell Blake," he said; "but I expect he'll come here and yank you out by your neck, all the same."

"I should utterly wefuse to be yanked out by my neck, Tom Mewwy!"

"Rats!"

Tom Merry went down the passage, swinging his bat. As he departed he

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD

heard that extraordinary sound from the study once more.

"Gwooh! Gwooh!"

Arthur Augustus was evidently at it again.

"Must be right off his giddy rocker," Tom Merry muttered. "Can't be sane, to make faces and rows like that. Must be quite potty."

There was a blaze of sunshine in the old quadrangle at St. Jim's. Most of the juniors were gathered on the cricket ground already. Tom Merry hurried across, and Manners and Lowther, his chums, greeted him with the chummy remark:

"You fathead! You've kept us waiting!"

"Scerry! I stopped to look at a lunatic," said Tom Merry.

"Have you seen Gussy?" called out Blake, coming out of the pavilion. "We're all here excepting Gussy."

"Yes; I'm sorry to tell you that he's gone quite off his dot," said Tom Merry sorrowfully. "It has come at last."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Blake. "Where is the duffer?"

"In the study. He says you're to excuse him this afternoon, as he's got an important engagement."

Blake snorted.

"I'll excuse him—I don't think!" he remarked. "I'll important engagement him! He's been making a giddy mystery about something the last two or three days—writing silly letters and getting silly answers, and keeping them dark!"

"The ass has been writing to Greyfriars School," remarked Digby. "He had a letter this morning with their postmark, in the handwriting of that fat chap—I forget his name—who came over here once with their eleven—chap in goggles. I know his fist. And Gussy kept the letter dark. He's up to something."

"He can be up to anything he likes, so long as he doesn't cut the cricket," said Blake wrathfully. "Wait a minute! I'll go and fetch him!"

The juniors grinned as Jack Blake started off towards the School House. Blake was skipper of the Fourth Form eleven, and he hadn't the slightest intention of allowing his aristocratic chum to stand out of the match, engagement or no engagement.

The rest of the eleven were ready—Herries, Digby, Reilly, and Hammond of the School House, and Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, Redfern, and Owen of the New House. Plenty of fellows of either Houses could have been found to take Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's place. But Jack Blake didn't mean to be left unceremoniously in the lurch at the last moment like this. He started for the school with wrath in his countenance.

He jumped with surprise as he came hurrying along the Fourth Form passage. From Study No. 6 proceeded a repetition of the sound that had so startled Tom Merry of the Shell.

"Gwooooooh!"

"My only hat! He can't be ill!" exclaimed Blake. "He was all right at dinner. What the dickens—"

He ran into the study in hot haste. Arthur Augustus' face, reflected in the glass, wore an expression of anguished suffering. But it returned to normal as he turned round and gazed inquiringly at Blake.

"What are you up to?" demanded Blake. "We're waiting for you."

"Didn't Tom Mewwy give you my message—"

"Yes."

"Then you are aware that I am not playin' this aftahnoon. I have a wathah important engagement to keep with Buntah—I mean, I have a wathah important engagement—"

"Come on!"

"Weally, Blake, you have heard me wemark that I am not playin'—"

"Are you coming?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then I shall carry you," said Blake determinedly. "You can't stand out of a cricket match simply to make silly faces in the looking-glass. Come on!"

"Wats! Did you hear me as you came in?"

"Of course I did, fathead! What were you gurgling for?"

"I wasn't gurglin'; I was pwactisin'. Where did the sound seem to pwceed fwom that you heard?"

"From your silly head, of course!" said Blake, quite puzzled. "Where should it have seemed to proceed from?"

"You are sure it did not seem to pwceed fwom undah the table?"

Blake looked at him hard.

"I don't know whether you're dotty or whether you're only pretending to be

"Gussy's gone dotty!" So think the chums of St. Jim's when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy begins to make queer noises, pull strange faces, and behave like a lunatic! But it is not quite so bad as that! It's only the result of Gussy's latest stunt—ventriloquism!

dotty, Gussy," he said, "but I know you're coming down to the cricket. Shut up, and come!"

"I wefuse—hallo! Hands off, you wottah! Blake, you ass—weally—yawwooh!"

Blake did not heed. He grasped the elegant form of the swell of St. Jim's, threw him over his shoulder like a sack of coke, and started from the study. The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rang out in wild expostulation.

"Oh! Ow, you wottah! Wefuse me! I shall stwike you, Blake! Gweat Scott! You will bwreak my neck! Bai Jove! Ow, wow!"

Down the passage and the stairs they went at top speed, Arthur Augustus' legs and arms flying wildly in the air. Then out into the quadrangle, followed by a yell of laughter from all the fellows who caught sight of them.

CHAPTER 2.

Bolted!

TOM MERRY & CO. waited for Blake, gazing towards the distant School House in expectation.

Their expectations were not disappointed.

"Here he comes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A yell of laughter greeted Blake as

he came panting on the cricket ground, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sprawling over his shoulder, his arms and legs waving wildly in the air.

"Here's the duffer!" gasped Blake. "I've brought him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

He allowed the panting swell of St. Jim's to slide to the ground. D'Arcy dropped into the grass with a bump, and sat there gasping and groping wildly for his eyeglass.

"Bai Jove! You uttah wuffian!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cricketers, yelling with laughter, surrounded Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's still sat in the grass, too breathless to rise.

"Why, the fathead hasn't changed yet!" growled Herries. "Bundle him in and make him change."

"I wefuse to change."

"Now, look here, Gussy—"

"We're waiting," Monty Lowther remarked. "I don't want to hurry anybody, but it gets dark at night, you know!"

"We're ready," said Blake. "I'll toss with you, Tom Merry. If we bat first, there'll be plenty of time for Gussy to change. If we field, we'll all help him to change, and it'll be done so quick it will make his hair curl."

Tom Merry laughed and tossed the coin.

"Head!"

"Right!" said Tom. "You bat, Gussy, old chap, you've got heaps of time to change."

"I wefuse—"

"Chuck him into the pavilion," said Blake. "You watch the door, Herries, and you go and fetch his togs, Dig."

"Right-ho!"

"If he tries to get away, hit him as hard as you can, where you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! Hands off! Ow—wow—wow!"

Arthur Augustus bumped down into the dressing-room, and Herries closed the door on him and kept watch outside. Blake and Figgins went to the wickets to open the innings. The voice of Arthur Augustus was heard from within.

"Hewwies, deah boy, let go the handle!"

"Rats!" said Herries.

"I weally cannot play to-day!"

"Rubbish!"

"If you chawactewise my wemarks as wubbish, Hewwies, I shall give you a feafuhl thwashin'."

"You'll have to squeeze through the keyhole to do it, then," chuckled Herries. "Get your silly clobber off. Dig will be back with your things in a minute or two."

"I wefuse to take my clobber off. I have a most important engagement for this afternoon, Hewwies. I am meetin' a chap fwom Gweyfwiahs."

"You're jolly well not," said Herries grimly. "You're playing cricket."

Arthur Augustus' voice came pleadingly through the keyhole.

"Hewwies, old man, do listen to weason. As Gweyfwiahs is such a long way off, I have asked Buntah to meet me half-way, you see, and if I don't go, he will be hung up at Lyndale Station waitin' for me."

"Well, he ought to be hung," said Herries unfeelingly. "What are you meeting that fat boulder for, anyway?"

"That's a little secwet."

"Well, you can keep the secret, but you can't keep the appointment," grinned Herries. "You can send

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Gunter—I mean Bunter—a wire, if you like. He'd get it all right at the station."

"I refuse to send him a wire. I'm goin' to see him. It's awfully important. I say, Hewwies, old chap!"

"Seat!"

"You uthah beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice was heard no more. Evidently he realised that it was useless to plead to the stone-hearted Herries. Herries kept watch and ward, with one eye on the door and one on the cricket field. Blake and Figgins were starting the innings, and Kangaroo of the Shell was bowling to Blake. There was silence in the dressing-room.

Digby came back into the pavilion at last, with D'Arcy's cricketing things in a bundle under his arm.

"Here you are!" said Dig.

"Right-ho! Here's your things, Gussy!" shouted Herries.

There was no reply.

"Obstinate ass!" growled Herries. "Call one or two of the chaps here, Dig, in case he makes a rush when we open the door."

Digby called in some of the cricketers. Reilly and Kerr and Redfern came in, and they all stood ready to stop a rush on the part of the swell of St. Jim's when the door was opened. Then Herries threw the door open.

"Now, Gussy—"

Herries broke off, and glared round the room in astonishment. It was empty. The window was wide open, however.

"Gone!" yelled Herries.

"Stole away!" chuckled Kerr. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"He can't be gone far!" exclaimed Dig. "The ass! We'll collar him yet! If he's going out, he must go back to the School House for his hat."

"Come on!" Herries exclaimed.

They started at a rush for the School House; but Arthur Augustus was not there. Study No. 6 was drawn blank, and he was not in the dormitory. His silk topper was seen in its usual place.

"The bounder!" yelled Herries. "He's gone out without his hat. But the silly ass said he was going to Lyndale—that's a thousand miles off, more or less. He can't go there hatless, the howling ass!"

"Let's see if he's gone out," said Redfern.

"Come on!"

They ran down to the gates. Taggles, the porter, was sunning himself outside his lodge.

"Have you seen D'Arcy?" asked Herries breathlessly.

Taggles removed his pipe from his mouth in a leisurely manner.

"Master D'Arcy!" he repeated.

"Yes, yes! Have you seen him go out without a hat?"

"Yes," said Taggles.

"Oh crumbs! How long ago?"

"About six minutes," said Taggles calmly. "P'raps seven. I wouldn't swear to a minute, Master Herries. When I asked 'im if 'e'd forgotten 'is 'at, 'e said 'e would 'ave to drop into the 'atters for a new one before the train went."

"And glad of the excuse of getting a new topper, you bet!" grinned Redfern.

Herries ran out into the road and glared towards the village. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was out of sight. He had lost no time.

"Might catch him at the hatter's," grinned Kerr. "When Gussy gets

among silk hats, he forgets time and space. He might lose the train while he's selecting a topper."

Herries hesitated, but shook his head.

"We're wanted to bat," he said.

"They're yelling now—there's a wicket down. I'm next man in, too."

And Herries darted away for the cricket field. Jack Blake was out for 4 runs. The Cornstalk had disposed of his wicket. Blake looked at Herries in surprise as he came up breathless, with the other juniors at his heels.

"You're next in, Herries," he said. "What have you been chasing about for, you duffer?"

"Gussy's gone!"

"Gone!" yelled Blake.

"He scuttled out of the window, and cleared off without his hat. He's coming to buy a new one in Rylcombe. He told Taggles."

And Herries took his bat, and went down to the vacant wicket, leaving Jack Blake furious.

"Oh, the cheeky bounder!" exclaimed Blake. "The awful nerve—to clear off against his captain's orders! We'll simply massacre him when he comes back."

"He's gone to Lyndale to meet a chap from Greyfriars," said Digby.

"The crass ass! What does he want to meet a chap from Greyfriars for? That's his blessed secret, I suppose! We'll teach him to keep secrets from his uncles, and slope off when he's wanted to bat," growled Blake. "Find young Kerruish. He can play."

Kerruish, the Manx junior, was in the crowd, and he was glad enough to bat in the place of the missing Fourth Former. Kerruish's opinion was that the team was decidedly improved thereby.

But Jack Blake was not to be placated. His authority as skipper had been disregarded, and he intended that the mutineer should suffer for his sins when he returned to St. Jim's. And, to judge by Blake's expression, the punishment would be very severe—at the very least, something lingering, with boiling oil in it.

CHAPTER 3.

In the Nick of Time!

"A NOTHER ginger-pop, please!"

"Yessir!"

"And some more jam tarts—a dozen!"

"Yessir!"

A fat junior, whose little fat nose was adorned with a very large pair of glasses, sat in the buffet of Lyndale Station. He had a school cap pushed on the back of a round, bullet head. Before him on the marble-topped table was the debris of a considerable feed. The fat youth's name was William George Bunter, and he was the ornament of the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars School.

In intervals of "feeding his face" the fat junior glanced towards the doorway on the platform, as if in expectation of an arrival. At intervals, also, he glanced up at the clock. He had been feeding steadily for more than half an hour, and although his appetite was not giving in, he was slackening down a little. Every time the waiter came to Bunter's table there was a perceptible increase of reluctance in his manner, and it was not difficult for Billy Bunter to guess that the man was beginning to get restive.

Bunter's little bill amounted to quite a little sum by that time, and the waiter was not quite satisfied.

Once Bunter had turned out his

pockets, as if in quest of money, and all he had turned out consisted of a penny, a halfpenny, a return ticket to Friar-dale, a chunk of toffee—in which was embedded a pen-nib—and a piece of string. Assorted as those articles were, and useful for various purposes, they would not have been of much value towards settling Bunter's little bill; and the waiter was suspicious that he had to deal with what he would have called a "bilker."

As a matter of fact, he was quite right.

Billy Bunter of the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars was a born bilker, and he was running up a large account, with nothing but a penny and a halfpenny, and the other articles enumerated with which to settle it. Unless the person he was expecting should arrive, Bunter was in a decidedly awkward position.

"The duffer!" Bunter muttered, as the waiter departed for the ginger-beer and jam tarts. "He said four, and it's a quarter-past now. If he doesn't turn up—"

Billy Bunter turned quite cold at the thought, though it was a warm afternoon. He calculated his chances of dodging out of the buffet without being captured, in case of dire necessity. But there was hardly anybody in the place, and the waiter had plenty of time to look after Bunter, and when he was not bringing him refreshments he posted himself in between Bunter and the door, as it were carelessly. He had observed Bunter's glances, and followed his mental calculations with the ease that came of long practice in dealing with all sorts and conditions of "bilkers."

Each time that the unquiet waiter came hovering near the table William George Bunter gave him a fresh order—a fresh order being an equivalent in cash, in Billy Bunter's opinion.

"Oh, the ass!" murmured Bunter again. "Why doesn't he come?"

The waiter set down the ginger-beer and the jam tarts, and waited. Being a waiter, it was, of course, his business to wait; but Bunter would have preferred him to wait somewhere else, and without that significant expression upon his face.

"Thank you!" said Bunter.

The waiter coughed.

Bunter's cheeks grew a little red. He knew what the waiter was waiting for, but it was of no use offering him three-halfpence.

"Lemme see. How much is that?" said Bunter, starting on the tarts, to make sure of them in case of trouble.

"Eight-shillings-and-sixpence, sir."

"Very good. Bring me some buns—make it an even ten shillings," said Bunter with dignity.

"Yessir."

The waiter departed with great slowness, and came back with a plate of buns. He put them down on the marble top of the table.

"Ten shillings altogether, sir."

"Very well; you needn't wait."

Bunter blinked haughtily at the waiter through his big spectacles.

"I'm expecting a friend here," he condescended to explain. "I shall want some more when he comes. I'll settle for it altogether."

"Excuse me, sir, would you mind settling now?" said the waiter deliberately.

Bunter seemed to become suddenly deaf. He cast a hurried glance towards the door. There was no sign of the swell of St. Jim's yet. Would he never come?

"If you please, sir," said the waiter.

"Ten shillings!"

"Yes, exactly. All right!"

"I'm waiting, sir!"

"Oh, the ass!" groaned Bunter inwardly. "Why doesn't he come? I was depending on him. Why doesn't the frabjous idiot come? How on earth am I to get rid of this chap?"

"Ten shillings, please!"

The waiter's manner was growing grimmer and grimmer. He knew now that he had to deal with a "bilk," but he did not know that he had to deal with the ventriloquist of Greyfriars. Billy Bunter's ventriloquism had often been of use to him. It was, as a matter of fact, his being a ventriloquist that had caused this appointment with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of St. Jim's. But the fat junior's curious gift had never been of so much service as now.

"Waiter!"

It was a sharp and angry voice, and seemed to proceed from a stout old gentleman seated in a corner, with a glass of beer before him and a newspaper held up before his face.

"Yessir! Coming, sir!"

The waiter gasped and retreated, and Bunter heaved a sigh of relief. The old gentleman did not look up from his paper. The waiter coughed.

"What can I get for you, sir?"

"Nothing."

"You called me, sir."

"What? Nonsense! I didn't call you! Don't bother!" said the stout gentleman testily, and he plunged again into his paper.

The waiter gasped and retreated, and came back towards Billy Bunter. But he had not reached Bunter when the sharp voice rapped out again.

"Waiter! Waiter!"

The waiter simply gasped and flew back to the stout gentleman.

"Yessir!" he said.

"What do you want?" exclaimed the stout gentleman, glaring over his paper at the unfortunate waiter. "What do you keep on bothering me for?"

"You—you called me, sir!" stammered the waiter feebly.

"I did not call you!" roared the stout gentleman. "And if you bother me again I'll call the manager. Get away!"

The waiter almost tottered away. He glanced at the young lady behind the bar and tapped his forehead significantly, quite convinced that the old gentleman was mad. Billy Bunter grinned, but his grin faded from his fat face as the waiter bore down on him again. Bunter had finished the jam tarts and started on the buns in the interval. As he was not able to pay for anything at all, Bunter thought he might as well go the whole "hog."

"Ten shillings, please!"

"Waiter!" came a snappish voice from the direction of the old gentleman in the corner. But this time the waiter turned a deaf ear. He did not intend to be snapped again.

"I'll have another ginger-pop, please!" said Bunter.

"Not till you've settled for that little lot, you won't, young gentleman," said the harassed waiter, whose temper was beginning to give way. "You pay up!"

"You are impertinent!" said Bunter, with all the dignity he could muster. "I shall complain to your manager!"

"If you don't pay over ten shillings at once," said the waiter angrily, "I'll call the manager myself."

Bunter cast a desperate glance towards the door. Then a fat smile of satisfaction irradiated his face. In the doorway appeared a slim and elegant figure in Etons that were the last word in cut and style, and a silk topper that



Tom Merry looked into Study No. 6 and stared blankly at Arthur Augustus as he saw what he was doing. D'Arcy was standing before the looking-glass, his mouth open and his face unusually red, and all his energy was thrown into squeezing out an alarming sound from his throat. "Gwwwwoooooogh!"

rivalled the sunshine in its lustre. It was D'Arcy at last.

"This way, D'Arcy!" called out Bunter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in. "Glad to see you, deah boy!" he said, shaking hands with the fat junior from Greyfriars. "I twust I haven't kept you waitin'!"

"Oh, don't mensh!" said Bunter. "It's all right now you've come. You'd better have some refreshment, after your journey."

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy!" said D'Arcy, sinking into a seat opposite Bunter. "I will have some gingah-beer and a scone."

"Ginger-beer and a scone, waiter!"

"Ten shillings!" said the waiter, in reply.

Billy Bunter blinked dubiously at Arthur Augustus.

"I've left my money behind, by oversight, D'Arcy," he explained hurriedly.

"Would you mind settling the little bill? I'll send you a postal order for the amount."

"Certainly, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus opened an elegant wallet of Russia leather, revealing a number of banknotes, the mere sight of which made Bunter's mouth water, and brought a great increase of respect into the manner of the waiter. Arthur Augustus extracted a pound note and handed it to the waiter.

"There's your money, my man," said Bunter loftily, "and you can bring me a dozen more jam tarts and two more gingers. You don't mind, D'Arcy? I'll settle for the lot to-morrow—ahem!—or the next day."

"Not at all, deah boy!"

And the waiter slid away with the note, and the order was fulfilled immediately.

And while Arthur Augustus D'Arcy partook of a little light refreshment in his elegant manner, Bunter made a fresh inroad upon the tarts and ginger-beer, growing happier and stickier with every mouthful.

CHAPTER 4.

A Worried Waiter!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY finished his light refreshment and politely waited for Billy Bunter to finish. Bunter was a bad second. But at last he leaned back in his chair with a grunt of contentment.

"I feel better now," he announced.

"Bai Jove! You must have a splendid constitution," Arthur Augustus remarked admiringly.

"Ahem! Now, you wanted to see me—"

"Yaas! Evah since the last time you came ovah to St. Jim's, I've been thinkin' about the ventwiloquism, on and off," said Arthur Augustus. "I have wathah an ideah that I have the gift for it, you know. I've been twyin' accordin' to your instructions in your lettah to me, and I weally think it was wathah successful."

"Holding your throat, as I explained?" asked Bunter.

"Yaas, pwactisin' before the glass."

"Good! And did you make your voice come from where you wanted it?"

"Yaas, I think so. I tried to make it come fwom undah the table, but Blake seemed to think it came from me when I asked him," said D'Arcy, rather ruefully.

"You will need heaps of practice," THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,434.

explained Bunter. "Then, if you've got the gift, you find yourself suddenly able to do it. That's how it was with me. The fellows chipped me no end at Greyfriars when I was starting—and now they chip in when I play tricks on them, the beasts! You must learn to imitate voices, of course! Listen to 'em carefully, and try to reproduce them. I'll keep on giving you instructions by letter—charging you only expenses."

"It's awfully good of you, deah boy!" "Don't mensh!" said Bunter loftily. "I'd do more than that for a fellow I like. You'll find yourself able to ventriloquise all of a sudden, some day. I've been playing a game on this blessed waiter. The rotter thought I wasn't going to pay him, you know. Me!"

Arthur Augustus could not help feeling a little surprised. It seemed to him that the waiter had been right on that point, and Bunter's indignation was a little superfluous. However, he made no remark.

"I'll show you how it's done," said Bunter, blinking round the buffet through his big spectacles. "I'll make that rotten waiter sit up for his cheek."

"Weally, Buntah—"
Gr-r-r-r-r!

It was the growl of a dog, coming from under the table where they sat, and Arthur Augustus pushed his chair back hastily.

"Bai Jove! I didn't know there was a dog here!" he exclaimed.

"There isn't," grinned Bunter.

"Gweat Scott! Was that you?"

"Yes. Shut up, and let me get on!"

"Yaas, but—"

Gr-r-r-r-r! Bow-wow-wow-wow!

"Waiter!" yelled Bunter. "There's a dog here. Turn him out!"

"Yessir! I didn't see a dorg, sir," said the waiter.

"Don't you turn that dog out!" came a snappish voice from the direction of the stout old gentleman's newspaper, behind which he was buried. "That's my dog!"

"The young gentleman objects, sir!"

"I don't care! If you turn my dog out, I'll set him on you!"

Gr-r-r-r-r!

"You 'ear wot the gentleman says, sir," said the waiter helplessly.

"I insist on the dog being turned out," said Bunter. "If it's his dog, let him take it away from under the table."

The waiter crossed over to the stout gentleman. That individual stared at him, greatly incensed at this fresh interruption.

"Excuse me, sir—"

"Well?" snapped the stout gentleman.

"If you want your dog in here, sir, will you call him? The young gentleman objects to him being under his table, sir."

The old gentleman lowered his paper and stared at the waiter across it freezingly.

"I have no dog," he said. "What do you mean?"

"B-but you said it was your dog, sir," babbled the unfortunate waiter.

"What! Are you out of your senses? I did not speak!"

"Oh!"

"My belief is that you are intoxicated!" said the stout gentleman fiercely.

Gr-r-r-r-r!

It was a savage growl under the stout gentleman's chair, and he jumped to his feet in great alarm.

"Take that dog away!" he shrieked.

"Your own dog, sir—"

"It isn't my dog. I haven't a dog. I hate dogs!" shrieked the stout gentleman. "The brute was going to bite me! Take it away!"

"I—I can't see him," stammered the waiter, peering under the table and the chair. "E—e's gone, sir!"

"Nonsense! I heard him there this moment!" exclaimed the stout gentleman, and he seized his umbrella from the table and thrust it fiercely under the chair, and swung it under the table.

"Shoo! Shoo! Get out, you beast!"

"There ain't any dog there," said the waiter helplessly. "The place seems to be 'aunted!"

The stout gentleman stooped and glared, but failed to discover a dog. He gave the waiter a fierce glance, as if he considered that unfortunate individual responsible for both the dog and the disappearance of the dog. He marched furiously out of the buffet.

The waiter tottered to a chair and sank down. Things seemed to be proving too much for him. Billy Bunter grinned, and prepared for further experiments, but Arthur Augustus leaned over the table and tapped him on the arm.

"Pway chuck it, deah boy. It's too wuff on the chap," he said. "It's wotten—I mean, pway chuck it!"

"Well, the beast ought to sit up, for doubting whether I was going to pay him," said Bunter. "I'll teach him to be uncivil to a gentleman. I'll get up a row between him and the girl behind the bar. What?"

"Pway don't do anythin' of the sort," said Arthur Augustus hastily. "Let's get out, deah boy. Waitah!"

"Yessir!" groaned the waiter.

"I am sowwy you have been so wowed," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust you will accept this!"

It was five shillings, and the waiter's eyes opened wide. There was no doubt at all about his accepting it.

"Thank you kindly, sir! Good-afternoon, sir!" said the waiter, much comforted, though still hopelessly puzzled by the mystery of the dog.

And Arthur Augustus marched Billy Bunter out of the buffet before he could play any more tricks.

CHAPTER 5.

Very Valuable Instruction!

BILLY BUNTER grinned as they left the station. They had an hour before they had to catch their respective trains homeward, and in that hour Bunter was to give the swell of St. Jim's personal instruction in the difficult art of ventriloquism. Bunter's idea of giving instruction seemed chiefly to show off what he could do to D'Arcy's admiring eyes.

At Greyfriars, the ventriloquist of the Lower Fourth was very much sat upon. When he played ventriloquial tricks on the juniors, they hammered him without mercy by way of reward. His genius had no scope at all at Greyfriars. Now that he was in a new quarter he was inclined to spread himself.

"I'll give you some samples, old chap," he said.

"Yaas, but I want some instwuction—"

"The best kind of instruction is to watch me do it," said Bunter. "Now, look here! Just you watch!"

Outside the station was a pillar-box—a very large box that was much used. A man was dropping a letter into the opening in the box as the two juniors came out of the station. He was about to turn away after dropping in the letter, when the sound of a deep groan came from the orifice. The man gave a jump.

"Great Scott!" the juniors heard him ejaculate, and he turned back to the pillar-box and tried to peer into the opening.

Groan!

Two or three passers-by heard that groan and a crowd began to collect.

"There's somebody inside the pillar-box!"

"Listen to him!"

"Good heavens! How could he have got in?"



**Have you
heard of
BUNTO
the Boy
Tamer?**

No! In reality, he's Billy Bunter, the fat freak of the Greyfriars Remove, who has run away from school and joined Muccolini's Magnificent Circus. Cowardly and useless as Bunter is, Signor Muccolini would give a year's takings to kick him out. But Bunter's knowledge of his guilty secret compels the proprietor to toe the line. Thrills, fun, and excitement you'll find in plenty in "The CIRCUS SCHOOLBOY!" this week's cover-to-cover story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, appearing now in

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"Help!" came feebly from the pillar-box. "I'm suffocating in here! Help!" The crowd increased in numbers, and there were exclamations of horror and pity on all sides. How the unseen one came into the pillar-box was a great mystery, but if he was there, there was no doubt that he was in very close and uncomfortable quarters. In two or three minutes the crowd was so thick that no one could pass, and a burly policeman came shouldering his way through.

"Pass on! Pass on 'ere!" "There's somebody inside the pillar-box, constable!"

"Nonsense! Pass on!"

"Help!"

The policeman gave a jump. He was a big, red-faced constable. His manner was important, but all the importance faded away from him as he heard the wailing cry from the pillar-box.

"Good 'eavings!" he exclaimed. "It—it sounds as if—"

"Help! I'm suffocating!"

"Stand back there!" exclaimed the constable, waving his hand. "Let me speak to 'im! Now, you in there! 'Ow did you get in?"

"Help!"

"You ain't no right to be in there," said the constable. "It's agin the law!"

"Help! I'm dying! I was attacked last night by a policeman, and put in here in an unconscious state!" moaned the voice.

"Oh lor!"

"Great Scott!"

"What a shocking outrage!" exclaimed the stout gentleman who had been in the buffet, and who was foremost in the excited crowd. "My poor fellow, can you hear me?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"What was the man like who attacked you?" demanded the stout gentleman, with a suspicious glance at the astounded constable.

"A big, fat policeman, with a red face," came in expiring tones from the pillar-box. "I'm fainting! I cannot speak again!"

And, true enough, the voice was heard no more. The throng round the pillar-box cast threatening glances at the big policeman, whose description had been so faithfully given by the unseen speaker.

"It's him!"

"It's that constable!"

"Ruffian!"

"Pway come away, you ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus, dragging Bunter out of the crowd. "Here comes a postman, and when he opens the box—"

The two juniors beat a retreat, Bunter chuckling gleefully. A hundred people or more were crammed round the pillar-box now, and there were two or three policemen. It was time the ventriloquist made himself scarce.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he hurried Bunter away. "I shall be quite satisfied when I can throw my voice about like that, Buntah. Now you can give me some instructions."

"Right-ho!" said Bunter. "Come into the bunshop!"

"But—"

"Forty minutes before the trains go, and they both go at the same time," said Bunter. "Ten minutes to get back to the station. That gives us half an hour. Time for a little refreshment first."

Arthur Augustus stared. He would have supposed that Bunter had already had enough refreshments to last him until he got back to Greyfriars that evening. But, apparently, he was mistaken.



"Lemme see," said Bunter thoughtfully, as he sat down in the bunshop. "I owe you a little loan."

"Pway don't mention—"

"That's all right. I'm expecting a remittance to-morrow, and I'll settle it then," said Bunter. "In fact, I'll meet you here again next half-holiday, if you like, and give you some more instruction. What I was going to say is, you may as well lend me a quid now, and I'll settle it altogether."

"Certainly, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus produced the quid, though he could not help feeling that his ventriloquial instruction from Bunter was growing expensive—especially as he had not received any instruction yet.

That Billy Bunter could dispose of a pound's worth of eatables, after his exploits in the station buffet, seemed incredible to D'Arcy, though he had seen Fatty Wynn perform some wonderful things in that line at St. Jim's.

But Fatty Wynn's powers faded into absolute insignificance beside those of William George Bunter.

For twenty minutes Bunter ate and drank steadily, and there was only a shilling change from the pound-note when he had finished. Then he rose with an effort to his feet. His face was shiny and somewhat sticky. His breath came hard and laboured.

"Now about the instwuction," said D'Arcy gently.

"I—I feel rather—rather fagged," said Bunter heavily. "I think I'd better have a bit of a walk in the open air first."

"Come on, deah boy!"

They quitted the bunshop, and walked towards the station, and Bunter's progress was slow. Even he felt that he had overdone it a little.

"Let's go into the buffet," he said, when they reached the station.

Arthur Augustus regarded him blankly.

"You—you're not hungry again!" he gasped.

"Well, I could take just a snack before I start," said Bunter.

"Gweat Scott! I—I mean, all wight!" They entered the buffet. Billy Bunter expended the last shilling, and slowly devoured the proceeds. Arthur Augustus

watched him as he might have watched some curious animal feed at the Zoo.

"Now I feel better," said Bunter, when the last crumb had vanished.

"Yaas. Now about the instwuction—"

"Ahem!" Bunter looked at his watch. "Train goes for Courtfield in ten minutes. If I miss that, I shan't get back to Greyfriars at all. And you don't want to miss your train to St. Jim's. We've got to get to our platforms, too."

"Yaas, but—"

"Lemme see, we arranged terms for instruction by post," said Bunter thoughtfully. "You pay the exes—"

"Yaas."

"And you hand over a half-guinea for the instruction?"

"Yaas."

"Well, hand it over, then," said Bunter. "You don't mind my mentioning it, do you? Short reckonings make long friends, you know. If you forget it you'd have to send it by post, and I don't want to bother you."

"But I have already handed you—"

"That was a loan," explained Bunter patiently. "I'm going to pay that out of my postal order to-morrow. This is a business transaction."

"Oh!"

Arthur Augustus silently extracted a ten-shilling note and a sixpence, and passed them to Bunter. The fat junior slipped the money into his pocket.

"Thanks!" he said. "Nothing like being businesslike, you know. It saves lots of trouble in the long run. Hallo! Time we ran for the train. We shall lose it!"

"But the instwuction—"

"Good-bye, old fellow!" said Bunter, shaking hands heartily with the swell of St. Jim's. "I've got just time to get to my platform. Drop me a line, and I'll meet you here again next half-holiday, and give you another lesson. Good-bye!"

And Bunter dashed off.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in dismay. Bunter disappeared down the crowded platform.

"Bai Jove! I weally think I might as well have stayed at home and played in the Fourth Form match, and not made the fellows so watty. Bai Jove!"

And somewhat disconsolately, Arthur Augustus found his way to his platform, and climbed into the train for Rylcombe, and settled down for his long journey to St. Jim's. He could not consider his afternoon's excursion, upon the whole, a success.

On the journey home he made one attempt to imitate Bunter's performance in the buffet at Lyndale. There was one other passenger in the carriage, and Arthur Augustus essayed to make the gentleman believe that there was a dog under the seat.

"Gw-r-r-r!"

The gentleman did not look under the seat for the dog. He looked across the carriage at Arthur Augustus, with an expression of concern.

"Are you ill, my boy?" he asked.

Arthur Augustus turned red.

"N-no!" he stammered. "I'm all wight."

"You were making so strange a face," said the gentleman, puzzled, "and you made such a queer, groaning noise."

"Did I?" said D'Arcy feebly. "You—you don't think there's a dog undah the seat, sir, do you?"

The gentleman looked at him fixedly for some moments, and D'Arcy read in

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his eyes the thought that the junior was mad.

The swell of St. Jim's felt his face turning crimson. At the next station the passenger hurriedly changed carriages.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "It doesn't seem to have been much of a success; but if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again! I'm jolly well goin' on twyin' till I'm a ventiloquist like Buntah, and then I'll give them a surprise at St. Jim's."

And that prospect somewhat comforted him, though, as he neared the old school, he felt a considerable amount of uneasiness as to the greeting he would receive from Jack Blake and the rest of the junior cricket eleven.

CHAPTER 6.

Under the Inquisition!

TOM MERRY was the first to spot the swell of St. Jim's when he came into the School House.

Arthur Augustus was looking a little fatigued and dusty after his long railway journey, and he would gladly have escaped to the dormitory to clean up; but it was not to be.

"Here he is!" called out Tom Merry. "Here's the giddy prodigal!"

"Collar him!"

Arthur Augustus made a rush for the stairs. Blake, Herries, and Digby were rushing upon him from the Common-room. They allowed him to reach the Fourth Form passage uncaptured, because they were freer to deal with him there, out of the sight of masters and prefects.

There they ran him down and collared him. Blake and Herries seized him and backed him up against the wall of the passage.

"Now, you ass—"

"Now, you fathead—"

"Pway welease me, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus plaintively. "I am wathah tired, you know—too fatigued altogethah to thwash you."

"Narrow escape for us!" grinned Blake. "But I'm not too fatigued to thrash you, which is more to the point. Do you know you left the eleven in the lurch?"

"I'm sowwy. I told you I had an important engagement. I twust you liked the Shell boundahs, deah boy?"

Blake snorted.

"They beat us by two wickets!" he growled.

"Bai Jove! I suppose it was only to be expected, as I was not there—"

"Rats! If you'd been there they'd have beaten us by six or seven wickets," said Blake. "It's only on principle that we're going to slaughter you for bolting. You've got to learn to obey your skipper."

"In the circus—"

"Where have you been, and what did you go for?" asked Tom Merry. "I hope it isn't another case of falling in love, Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't be an ass! I wefuse to explain! Pway welease me, Blake—"

"You'll explain on the spot," said Blake. "If you've got a good explanation to give, we may let you off with a bumping."

"I wefuse to be bumped—"

"Otherwise," said Blake sternly, "you will be boiled in oil! Now then, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,484.

explain. What have you been meeting that fat Bunter for?"

"I wefuse—"

"You can't keep a secret from your kind uncles," said Monty Lowther, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Gussy, let me implore you—"

"Pway don't be widiculous, Lowthah—"

"We know what Bunter met you for," said Lowther. "He met you to extract cash from you. We know him. But what did you meet him for? You must have had some object, besides lending him money."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Very well," said Blake, with a sigh. "I'm sorry! I would spare him for his tender years, if possible, but he is determined to be made an example of. Bring him into the study."

"I wefuse— Oh!"

Arthur Augustus was brought into the study. The Terrible Three, and Blake, Herries, and Digby all had hold of him, so he had not very much choice about the matter. And five or six more juniors were crowding round to help.

"Lay him on the table," said Blake solemnly. "Gussy, you are to regard yourself as being under the inquisition at the present moment."

"I wefuse to wegard—"

"Lay him out, spreadeagled," said Blake. "This is where the unfortunate victim is put to the torture. Shut the door, Reilly. We don't want the whole giddy House to spot us in the nefarious work. Blindfold the victim."

"I decline to be blindfolded!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, struggling in the grasp of the grinning juniors who held him spreadeagled on his back on the study table. "I wefuse to submit to anythin' of the sort!"

"Are you going to reveal the dread secret?"

"It is not a dwead secwet, you ass, and I wefuse to say a word."

"We all know what a young rotter that fellow Bunter is," said Blake. "We can't have you cutting cricket matches and going out to meet well-known rotters without explaining afterwards to your kind uncles."

"You uttah ass—"

"Blindfold him! The tablecloth will do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwoogh—wooh—wooh!"

"Better be blindfolded, Gussy, and not look upon the fearful preparations," said Blake. "Besides, the inquisition often blindfolded its victims. I trust that we shall not have to torture you to death, but we must do our duty. Put the poker in the fire, Dig."

"The—the poker!" ejaculated Dig.

"Yes, ass! How can we torture him without a red-hot poker?"

"Oh, of course!" Digby thrust the poker into the fire.

Arthur Augustus made another ineffectual effort to break away.

"You uttah wottahs, I know perfectly well that you are only wottin'," came the muffled tones from under the tablecloth. "I wefuse to say a word. I shall thwash you all wound pwesently."

"Is that poker red-hot?"

"Not quite."

"Stir the fire, then."

"You feahful wottahs!" gurgled Arthur Augustus, as he heard the fire being stirred. "If you do not welease me, I—"

"You'll stay where you are," said Blake. "Quite so. Now that poker's hot enough. Where will you have it, Gussy? Name the place!"

"I wefuse to have it at all!" shrieked the swell of St. Jim's. "I know you are only wottin', and you cannot scare a D'Arcy with your wot! I wegard you with despision—I mean contempt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try it on his head," said Lowther. "That's the tenderest spot—the softest, anyway!"

"Good!"

"Don't wriggle your head, Gussy," said Blake, pulling the poker noisily from the fire, and then laying it down quietly in the fender and picking up a cricket stump. "You don't want to get the red-hot iron on your ears, do you? Keep your head still while I torture you, you ass! They never allowed all this fuss to be made in the inquisition! The victims there always played the game!"

"Welease me! I—"

"Will you keep your head still?"

"Certainly not," said D'Arcy, whose head was wagging wildly under the folded tablecloth. "I wegard you as an uttah wottah, Blake! Keep that wed-hot pokah away! I know you are only wottin', but it might touch me by accident. Keep it away!"

"Well, if you won't keep your head still, I'll try it on the tip of your nose," said Blake. "It's your own funeral!"

He tapped the tip of D'Arcy's nose, pulling back the tablecloth for the purpose, with the end of the cricket stump.

A shriek of anguish broke from the swell of St. Jim's. His imagination had been worked on to the extent of making him believe for a second that the red-hot poker had touched his aristocratic nose.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow! Murdah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy broke with a wild bound from his tormentors. They crowded out of the study, yelling with laughter. Arthur Augustus rolled off the table, grasping his nose in his hand.

"Ow, ow, ow! My nose! Oh, bai Jove! You feahful beasts! Ow! I am disfiguahed for life! Ow, ow!"

He rushed to the glass to see the extent of the damage. Then he staggered back as he beheld his noble countenance with no sign whatever of a burn upon it. He gazed at it in astonishment, and then screwed his eyeglass into his eye and stared again.

Then his eye fell upon the cricket stump, and he understood, and gave a gasp of relief.

"The wottahs! I knew they were only wottin'!" he panted. "Bai Jove! And I haven't told them anythin', aftah all! And I'm jolly well not goin' to, bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 7.

Sudden Insanity!

WHEN Blake, Herries, and Digby came into Study No. 6 to do their preparation that evening they fully expected to find the swell of the School House in a state of freezing dignity. They expected to be withered, as it were, with a staring eye behind an eyeglass.

But it was not so.

Arthur Augustus was sitting at the table, at work already, and there was a smile upon his face. Apparently he had recovered from his tortures of the inquisition, and his inward thoughts were so amusing that he could not keep smiles from bubbling up to his noble lips. The juniors were more puzzled than ever. Arthur Augustus evidently

had a secret, and it was one that tickled him immensely, and his study-mates wondered what it could possibly be.

They knew that he had made a long journey to meet Bunter of the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars, and that he had been in correspondence with him for a week or more. That was all they knew. Billy Bunter they had met more than once, on occasions of cricket or football matches with Greyfriars, and they did not like him. With the other Greyfriars fellows they got on exceedingly well; but Bunter was an exception.

The fat junior had once "planted" himself upon D'Arcy for a visit at St. Jim's, inviting himself for the occasion, and he had made all D'Arcy's friends feel very pleased that Greyfriars, and not St. Jim's, had the honour of sheltering him. What on earth D'Arcy could have had in common with that fat little outsider was a great mystery.

"You chaps goin' to do your pwep?" asked Arthur Augustus, his features breaking again into that involuntary smile of inward merriment.

"Yes," said Blake, puzzled. "Nothing funny in that, is there? We generally do our prep in the evening, don't we?"

"Yaas, deah boy!" "Then what are you grinning at?" "Was I gwinnin', deah boy?" "Yes, you were. Where does the joke come in?"

"There isn't any joke, deah boy. Only I hope you won't be disturbed while you're doin' your pwep." "Why should we be disturbed?" asked Herries. "Those New House bounders planning a raid?"

"Not that I am aware of. But—but you might be disturbed by—a dog in the study."

Herries looked round quickly. "Has Towser got loose?" he asked. "Towsah! Nevah mind Towsah!" "Your minor's beastly mongrel knocking about, then? If the mangy little beast comes in here, I'll jolly soon boot him out!" said Herries.

"Wally's beastly mongrel is not here, Hewwies."

"Then what do you mean by babbling about a dog in the study?" demanded the mystified Herries. "My bulldog and your minor's rotten mongrel are the only two dogs about the place, excepting Taggles' mastiff, and I suppose he won't come into the studies."

"My impression is," said Digby, "that Gussy is going off his dot. He's talking out of the back of his neck."

"Weally, Digby—"

"Well, don't talk any more," said Blake, sitting down. "I can't do my prep while you're wandering in your mind, Gussy, unless you do it quietly."

And the chums of the Fourth began their preparation. Once or twice they glanced at Arthur Augustus uneasily. Often and often it had been suggested, by way of a joke, that the noble youth was a little bit off his aristocratic rocker. But really it seemed to the Fourth Formers now that there was something in it more than a joke.

Arthur Augustus' remarks were utterly incomprehensible, and that peculiar smile that flitted at intervals over his face—without any apparent cause—it really did seem very queer. And Blake remembered, too, how oddly the swell of St. Jim's had acted that afternoon in the study—making faces and weird ejaculations before the looking-glass. Certainly it looked as though D'Arcy required looking after.

"Gw-r-r-gh!" The sound burst suddenly from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the silence

of the study, interrupting the labours of the Fourth Formers. It was a kind of imitation of the growl of a dog. Blake, Herries, and Digby suspended their labours to stare at their study-mate in astonishment.

Arthur Augustus' face was twisted up into a fearful expression, as if he were on the point of choking. Blake jumped up and patted him on the back.

"Gussy, what's the matter?" "Are you ill?"

"Certainly not!" said D'Arcy peevishly. "Stop thumpin' me on the back, you silly ass! It hurts, and you are wumplin' my jacket."

"I thought you were choking."

"Wats!"

"What did you go 'Gr-r-r-r!' for, then?" asked Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Is it a trick, trying to imitate Towser?" asked Herries blankly.

"Wubbish! Are you fellows sure that there isn't a dog undah the table?"

"A what?"

"A dog undah the table, deah boys," said D'Arcy firmly. He had made that



horrible sound in the firm belief that it sounded as if it proceeded from under the table. It was most annoying to find that his study-mates jumped to the conclusion that it proceeded from his, D'Arcy's throat.

"Gussy, old man, you'd better go and lie down a bit," said Blake soberly. "Go and lie down in the dorm for a bit; you'll feel better."

"Weally, Blake—"

"It was going out without your hat this afternoon that's done it," said Digby. "The sun was very hot."

"You uttah ass!"

"Perhaps it runs in the family," said Herries. "Are any of your relations potty, Gussy?"

"You fwabjous ass, Hewwies!"

"Well, if you're not potty, what are you doing it for?" asked Blake.

"Weally, you duffah—"

"Well, shut up, and let's get on with the washing!" said Blake, sitting down again. "Don't make that horrible row in your neck again, that's all."

Arthur Augustus sniffed disdainfully.

His first attempt at ventriloquism in Study No. 6 had been a hopeless failure; he had to admit that. Yet it was curious that he could not do it, when that fellow Bunter had done it so easily. He was conscious of possessing ever so much more brains than Bunter of Greyfriars.

Blake, Herries, and Digby glanced covertly at D'Arcy several times after that. They were really uneasy about him. However, preparation was finished without any further sounds of alarm. Then D'Arcy rose.

"Will you come with me to post a lettah, Blake?" he asked.

"Certainly!" said Blake. "I'll take it for you, if you like."

"No; I want you to come with me," said D'Arcy, that inexplicable grin breaking out over his face again.

Blake nodded shortly. He felt that it was better not to let Gussy go anywhere alone, in the circumstances. Arthur Augustus picked up a letter he had written earlier for the purpose, and they quitted the study together.

The House was closed, but they slipped out into the quadrangle to post the letter. The school letter-box was in the wall near the gate. They cut across the quad and reached the box. Arthur Augustus halted there, but he did not seem in a hurry to drop the letter into the orifice. He coughed to clear his throat. The second attempt was coming, in imitation of Billy Bunter's little ventriloquial joke at Lyndale.

"Groan!" Blake jumped almost clear of the ground. That sudden terrible groan from the junior at his side startled him almost out of his wits.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Have you got a pain, Gussy?"

"No; I haven't a pain."

"What did you groan for, then?"

"Oh, wats! Put that lettah in the box, will you?"

Blake took the letter from him and dropped it into the box. Then a voice—which D'Arcy fondly imagined to proceed from the letter-box—exclaimed:

"Ow! You've droppod that on my head!"

Blake jumped away, his jaw falling, and his eyes opening wide.

"On your head?" he stuttered.

"Yaas!" went on the amateur ventriloquist, still believing that his voice proceeded from the letter-box. "Ow! I'm suffocatin'!"

"You look as if you were!" exclaimed Blake, scanning the junior's twisted and anguished face. "Great Scott, Gussy, what is the matter with you? Are you going to have a fit?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Do you feel as if you were suffocating?" asked Blake anxiously. "Come over here to the fountain. I'll swamp cold water over you."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. Didn't it seem to you, Blake, that that voice was somewhere in the letter-box?" asked D'Arcy anxiously.

Blake almost fell down. The opening in the letter-box would not have admitted a rabbit, let alone a human being. D'Arcy's question was proof positive to Blake's mind, at least—that he was not right in his head.

"Someone in the letter-box!" said Blake faintly.

"Yaas."

"Come indoors, Gussy," said Blake gently, taking his chum's arm. "It must be sunstroke. Come on, old chap."

"You uttah duffah! I tell you—"

"Yes, yes," said Blake soothingly. "I know!"

D'Arcy snorted. It was too bad that his ventriloquial efforts should simply

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lead to suspicions that he was insane. And he could not dispel those suspicions without explaining that he was a ventriloquist, which he did not intend to do.

"Come on, Gussy. You know me, don't you?" said Blake soothingly. "I'm Blake, you know; your old pal Jack!"

"Of course I know you, you frightful ass! But are you quite sure there was no one in the lettah-box, deah boy?"

Blake groaned inwardly. That insanity could come on so suddenly and completely as this astounded him. But he had read that it was wise to humour lunatics, lest they should become excited, and D'Arcy showed traces of excitement already.

"Well, well, perhaps there was," he said cautiously. "You never can tell, in—in these pillar-boxes, you know. Some—some fellow may have crawled in for a joke, you know."

"You uttah chump, Blake! You know that is imposs."

"Of course it is," said Blake, determined to agree with everything his insane chum said. "Quite impossible. You're quite right."

"Weally, Blake, I think you are a bit off your chump, the way you talk wot!"

"Yes, a little," admitted Blake. "I can't help it, you know. It takes me like that. Now, come indoors, old fellow!"

Arthur Augustus grunted, but he submitted to being led into the School House again. Blake marched him upstairs, but he declined to go back into Study No. 6.

"I'm goin' to see Tom Mewwy," he remarked.

"I'll come with you," said Blake.

"Wats! You stay where you are!"

And D'Arcy walked up the passage. Herries and Digby joined Blake, and the chief of Study No. 6, in great distress, confided to them that there was no further doubt that Arthur Augustus was quite "potty."

"He gave a horrible groan in the quad," said Blake, in an awed whisper. "And when I dropped the letter in the lettah-box, he said I had dropped it on his head."

"Great Scott!"

"Then he said he was suffocating," groaned Blake, "and his face was twisted up very queerly. But that isn't all. He asked me whether I thought there was somebody in the lettah-box."

Herries and Digby staggered.

"In the lettah-box?" said Digby faintly.

"Yes."

"Must have been pulling your leg," said Herries.

"No; he was in deadly earnest. He's simply as mad as a hatter. It must be sunstroke, I suppose, through going out without his hat to-day. What on earth's to be done?" said Blake.

And the chums of Study No. 6 consulted in troubled whispers upon that knotty point.

CHAPTER 8. The Lunatic!

TOM MERRY had finished his preparation when Arthur Augustus, with a thoughtful expression on his face, dropped into the study. Monty Lowther and Manners had just finished their prep, too. Tom Merry gave the swell of St. Jim's a cheerful nod as he came in.

"Hallo, Gussy! Why the worried look on your chivvy?"

"I'm not wowwied, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I was thinkin' that it would be vewy wuff on anybody who

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happened to be stuck in the chimney, you know."

The Terrible Three stared at Arthur Augustus.

"Stuck in the chimney!" said Tom Merry, with a gasp.

"How can anybody be up the chimney?"

"Are you potty?"

"Just let me see," said Arthur Augustus, and he stepped across the study, and much to the astonishment of Tom Merry & Co., called up the chimney. "I say, is there anybody up there?"

"Yaas!" came the reply, in a far-away, squeaky voice—that is to say, far-away in sound, but only too plainly proceeding from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The Terrible Three backed away from the swell of St. Jim's. The same dreadful thought came to them all—that he was out of his senses.

"You heard that, deah boys?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning to them triumphantly.

"Y-y-yes," stuttered Tom Merry.

"Pwetty cleah that there's somebody up the chimney—what?"

"Oh!"

"I'll twy again," said D'Arcy. "Are you there?"

"Yaas!"

"My hat!" whispered Tom Merry. "Is he rotting, or is he really mad?"

"Help!" went on the amateur ventriloquist, still blissfully hoping that his voice came from up the chimney.

"I'm dyin'! Help!"

"Gussy!"

"What's the matter, old man?"

"Are you ill?"

"Wats! Didn't you fellows heah that voice up the chimney?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Better call Blake," whispered Manners. "He'll have to be looked after. Poor old Gussy! We've often said in a joke that he was potty, but I never really believed it till now."

"Many a true word spoken in jest," said Tom Merry.

"Jest so!" said Lowther.

"Don't be funny now, Monty; this is serious. The poor kid will have to be sent to an asylum, or something. Cut off and call Blake, while we see that he doesn't wander away," said Tom hurriedly. "He may do some damage to himself or somebody else."

"Right-ho!"

Monty Lowther hurried out of the study. Tom Merry and Manners remained near the door.

D'Arcy stared at them through his eyeglass.

"What are you fellows muttewin' about?" he demanded.

"It's all right, Gussy. Sit down, old fellow!"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

Tom Merry and Manners jumped as D'Arcy emitted that fearful sound.

"Did you heah that?" asked D'Arcy. "Ye-e-es."

"Isn't there a dog under the table?"

"A—a—a dog under the table!" faltered Tom Merry.

"Yaas. Didn't you heah him?"

"No—yes—just so. All right!" gasped Tom Merry. "Any old thing—I mean, of course. Sit down quietly, there's a good chap."

"I thought I should surpwise you fellows," chuckled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's workin' bettah than I expected."

"Eh?"

"I can't explain at pwsent, but I'll let you into the sewet latah. I'm goin' to see Weilly now. You fellows can amuse yourselves lookin' for that dog," chuckled the swell of St. Jim's. "I twust you will find him. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Tom Merry and Manners feebly.

"Pway let me pass, deah boys!"

"Won't you wait till Blake comes?"

"Certainly not! Why should I wait till Blake comes? I'm goin' to see Weilly," said Arthur Augustus in astonishment. "Blake isn't comin' here, eithah."

"Yes; Lowther's gone to fetch him," stammered Tom Merry.

"What on earth for, Tom Mewwy?"

"To—look after you, you know."

"Pway don't be an ass! If you don't allow me to pass I shall push you out of the way!" said Arthur Augustus, very much annoyed.

"Better not excite him," whispered Manners.

And the two Shell fellows stood aside and allowed the Fourth Former to leave the study. Very much alarmed, they followed him.

Arthur Augustus made for Reilly's study, in the Fourth Form passage. Reilly and Kerruish were there when he looked in, slogging away at their preparation.

"Gettin' on all wight, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, entering the study and clearing his throat with a little cough, ready for another ventriloquial effort.

"Yes," said Reilly. "Don't interrupt, you gossoon!"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Don't make that row here!" said Kerruish, with a stare. "What do you mean by marching into a fellow's study and making a horrible row like that?"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Sure, and it's off his dot he is!" said Reilly.

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Howly smoke!"

"Why don't you dwive that dog out fwm undah the table, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, with a grin of enjoyment.

Reilly and Kerruish were on their feet now.

They scanned Arthur Augustus' face to ascertain whether he was speaking seriously. If he was pulling their leg they were prepared to eject him from the study on his neck, but—

"You weally ought to dwive that dog out, deah boys! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"He's not rotting!" whispered Kerruish. "He's mad—that's what he is! I've suspected it before. I'm getting out of this. He might go for us."

"Gr-r-r-r-r!"

Reilly and Kerruish rushed for the door.

"It's all wight; he won't bite you!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howly smoke! Come on, before he gets wild intirely!"

"My hat! We might have been murdered!" gasped Kerruish. "He was standing close to the poker, too!"

Arthur Augustus roared with laughter as they fled from the study. He fancied that it was the growl of the supposed dog that had frightened them away.

"Bai Jovel! It's workin' like a charm!" he murmured. "I'll play twicks on all the chaps before I let them into the secwet. They'll nevah suspect that I am a ventriloquist until I tell them. Ha, ha, ha!"

Kerruish peered cautiously into the study, and, with his eyes fastened on D'Arcy in dread, he reached round the door and jerked out the key. Then the door was suddenly slammed, and D'Arcy heard them thrusting in the key on the outside.

"Bai Jove! They're goin' to lock me in! The wottahs!"

Arthur Augustus made a bound to the

door, but the handle was firmly held from without while Kerruish turned the key. D'Arcy thumped on the upper panels.

"Open this door, you wottahs!"

"Safe!" gasped Reilly. "Safe, but jabbers! Now call Kildare!"

"Let me out, you boundahs!"

"Yes, we'll let you out when we've got a strait-waistcoat ready for ye!"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"He'll wreck the study if he gets violent!" panted Reilly. "But it's better to keep him safe. He might turn homicidal; you never know with a lunatic!"

"Thank goodness he's safe!" said Manners; and he called through the keyhole: "Keep quiet, Gussy, old man!"

"I wefuse to keep quiet! Let me out!"

study invaded in that unceremonious manner by juniors of the Fourth and the Shell.

"You cheeky young sweeps!" he exclaimed angrily. "What—"

"Kildare!"

"Quick!"

"Gussy's gone mad!"

"Come—quick!"

Kildare had picked up a cane, but he dropped it again at those excited exclamations.

The juniors were wildly excited, but they were evidently in earnest. The captain of St. Jim's looked at them blankly.

"D'Arcy—mad!" he ejaculated.

"Yes. For goodness' sake, come!" panted Blake. "We don't know what to do with him. He's saying all sorts of extraordinary things, and making

side of Reilly's study door, and the voice of the swell of St. Jim's was audible at a great distance, shrieking through the keyhole.

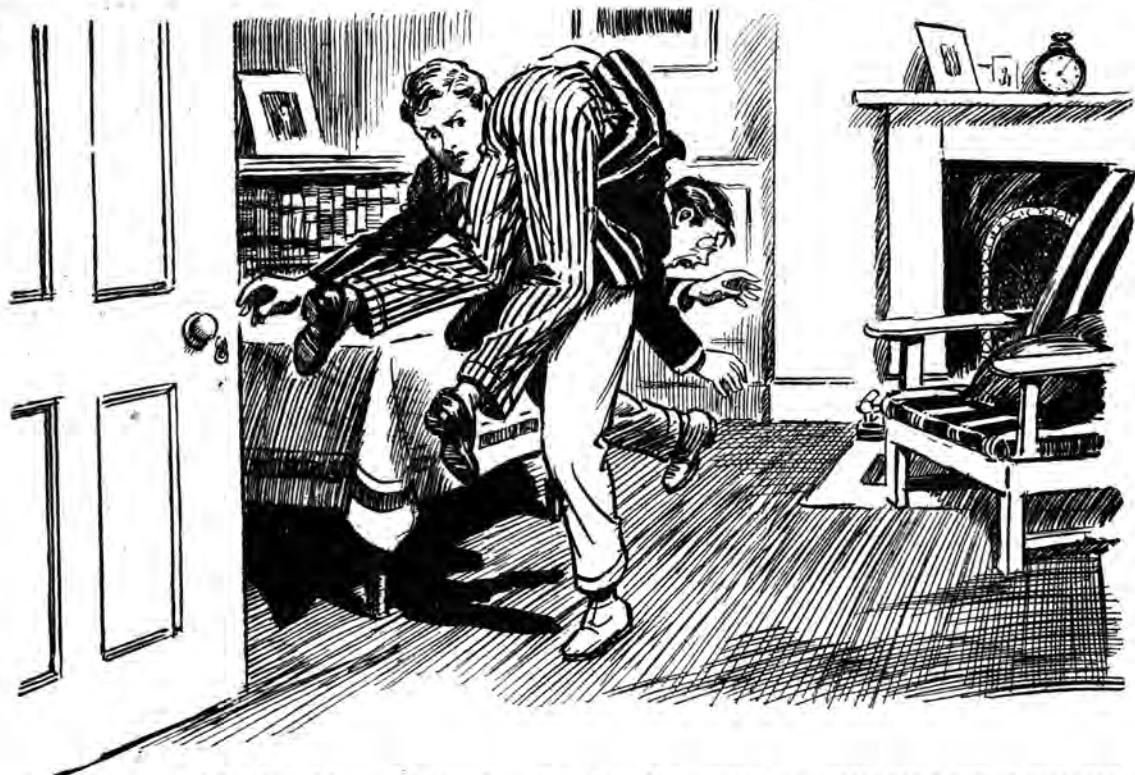
"Let me out, you wottahs! I insist upon bein' let out immediately! I shall thwash you all wound! You uttah wottahs, to play a wotten twick like this! Open this beastly door!"

"Unlock the door," said Kildare quietly.

"But he's mad, Kildare!" said Reilly in alarm. "He might spring at you!"

"I'll chance that. Unlock the door at once!"

Reilly reluctantly turned the key. Kildare threw the door open, and Arthur Augustus was revealed, crimson with excitement and rage. He was about to rush through the doorway, to take vengeance upon Reilly for locking him



Jack Blake grasped the elegant form of Arthur Augustus, threw him across his shoulder like a sack of coke, and started from the study. "You're coming down to cricket!" he exclaimed. "Ow! You wottah!" yelled D'Arcy. "Welease me! I shall stwike you, Blake! Ow, ow!"

"Yes—yes, all in good time!" said Tom Merry. "Don't get excited."

"Look here, I will own up if you like—there isn't a dog here at all."

"Yes—yes, we know!" said Blake. "It's only fancy. You'll get well in time, Gussy, old man. Only keep quiet till we call Kildare."

"You fwightful ass, I wefuse to keep quiet!"

Thump, thump, thump!

CHAPTER 9.

The Secret Out!

KILDARE of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, was chatting with Darrell in his study, when the door was thrown open without ceremony, and five or six juniors rushed in pell-mell.

The head of the Sixth stared at them angrily. He wasn't used to having his

noises like a dog, and calling up chimneys. Do come!"

"Where is he?"

"We've got him locked up in Reilly's study now—it was safest," said Tom Merry. "We were afraid he might do somebody some harm. He's frightfully excited now."

"I think a violent fit is coming on now," said Monty Lowther. "He's shrieking through the keyhole!"

Kildare was simply astounded; but it was evidently his duty to go and see what was the matter, and he hurried from the study with the excited juniors. Darrell followed him. If Arthur Augustus had really gone mad he would require both the prefects to deal with him, probably.

There was no doubt that D'Arcy was, as Lowther had said, frightfully excited. There was evidence of it as they came into the Fourth Form passage. Loud thumping sounded on the inner

in, but the stalwart form of the captain of St. Jim's blocked the way.

"Hold on!" said Kildare.

"Weally, Kildare, I am goin' to thwash those wottahs—"

"Stand back! Now, what's all this about your being mad?" demanded Kildare. "Are you mad?"

"Mad!" repeated Arthur Augustus dazedly.

"Yes. What do you mean by it?"

"I fail to gwasp your meanin'. I am certainly not mad. I weward the question as an insult."

"He seems sane enough," said Kildare. "I suppose the young ass has been pulling your leg, that's all!"

"He's mad," said Tom Merry, with conviction. "You should have seen him in my study. He called up the chimney, and answered himself. Then he said there was a dog under the table."

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"He did!" chimed in Manners and Lowther.

"Sure, he did the same thing to us, and imitated the growling of a dog!" exclaimed Reilly. "You heard him, Kerruish?"

"Yes, rather!"

"He seems to have a dog on the brain!" said Blake. "And he thought there was somebody in the letter-box!"

"He's as mad as a hatter!"

"Quite off his dot!"

"Just you watch him—he'll begin growling like a dog again soon," said Kerruish nervously. "Don't get too near him, Kildare. If he fancies that he's a dog, he may bite!"

"You uttah ass!"

Arthur Augustus made an angry movement towards Kerruish, and the Manx junior promptly dodged back.

"Look out—he's going to bite!" he shrieked.

"Take care, Kildare!"

"Mind his teeth!"

"Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus, overwhelmed with astonishment. "I weally believe you fellows have all gone potty!"

"That's it—lunatics always think other people are mad," said Lowther.

"You silly chump—"

"I think there's some mistake!" said Kildare, laughing. "D'Arcy will have to explain. What have you been talking like an idiot for, D'Arcy? Is it your idea of a joke?"

"As a mattah of fact, I've been takin' the fellows in—"

"Pretending to be mad?"

"Certainly not!" said D'Arcy indignantly.

"Then what have you been making queer noises for, and talking out of the back of your neck?" demanded Blake. "I refuse to explain."

"I'll take him to the Housemaster," said Kildare. "He certainly seems not quite himself, whether he's mad or not. He can't have been doing all that for nothing!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I—I'd wathah not go to the Housemastah. I'll explain, if you like."

"Buck up, then!"

"The fact is—"

Arthur Augustus paused impressively.

"Well?"

"The fact is, deah boys, I am—"

Another impressive pause.

"Mad!" said Blake.

"No, you ass! I wasn't goin' to say that. The fact is, I am—a ventwiloquist!"

"A—a—a wh-a-aat?"

All the juniors gasped out the words together. It was the very last explanation they would have thought of.

The crowd of fellows in and around the doorway stared at Arthur Augustus dumbfounded. Kildare and Darrell burst into a loud laugh.

"I am a ventwiloquist," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I made my voice pwoceed fwom up the chimney, and made a growl like a dog pwoceed fwom undah the table. Do you compwehend now, you duffahs? That's what I've been in communication with Buntah for. He's a wippin' ventwiloquist, and I'm leearnin' fwom him. Now I twust you undahstand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A yell of laughter rang through the passage and the study. The juniors seemed on the point of convulsions. Arthur Augustus was not mad, after all. But that he should fancy that he was a ventriloquist, and that his voice had proceeded from anywhere but his own mouth, was still more astonishing.

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"Oh!" gasped Blake. "My only summer hat! So that's it, is it?"

"Yaas, you duffah!"

"A—a—a ventriloquist! Ha, ha, ha!"

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

"There is nothin' to laugh at, exceptin' the way you fellows have been taken in—"

"Taken in! Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you like to listen to me, Kildare, I will give you a sample. Dawwell, old man, just listen while I make my voice pwoceed fwom the chimney—"

But Kildare and Darrell were staggering away, convulsed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked round indignantly at the throng of grinning faces.

"You uttah asses! I twust you are not witten enough to be jealous of my powahs?"

"You blithering idiot!" shrieked Blake. "Did you think you were ventriloquising? You frajbious ass! It was plain all the time that you were making that row! Oh, my hat!"

"Wats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just you fellows keep this dark, that's all. I'm goin' to play some twicks on the New House fellows to-morrow, and make Figgins & Co. sit up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows elung to the walls and to one another in helpless mirth at the idea of D'Arcy making Figgins & Co. sit up with his ventriloquism. The swell of St. Jim's sniffed disdainfully and walked away with his noble nose high in the air. He left the juniors howling like hyenas.

"So that's it, is it?" sobbed Blake. "Gussy will be the death of me yet! Hallo! What's the row in the study?"

The juniors thronged round the door of Study No. 6 and looked in. Arthur Augustus was making a dreadful face before the glass, and emitting a weird and woeful:

"Gwoogh!"

"He's practising again!" gasped Tom Merry, clinging to the doorpost. "Practising ventriloquism! That's an imitation of a dying frog."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus turned round in exasperation.

"Buzz off, you duffahs! You are intewwuptin' my pwactice. I want to have this perfect to-morrow to work off on Figgins & Co."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy slammed the door. From the closed study came weird sounds—no longer alarming, since the juniors knew the truth, but exceedingly funny.

"Gwoogh! Gwr-r-r-r! Are you there? Yaas! Gwooh!"

CHAPTER 10.

Treed!

F IGGINS & CO. of the New House smiled as they spotted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the quadrangle the next morning.

Arthur Augustus had been up very early, and he had practised his ventriloquism very assiduously in the dormitory, while the others were still asleep. He had wakened them with weird and gruesome sounds, and they had hurled all sorts of threats at him if he did not cease. But he did not cease; he went on his way unheeding.

He was still practising when the Fourth Formers went down, leaving him in possession of the dormitory.

But before brekker Arthur Augustus remembered his intention of working off his new gift upon Figgins & Co., and he appeared in the quadrangle. He was

anxious to take in and surprise the New House fellows with his wonderful powers as a ventriloquist.

By that time, of course, Figgins & Co., who had been down early, had heard a dozen accounts of the previous evening's happenings in the School House. They were quite prepared for Arthur Augustus' new wheeze. They would certainly not have taken him for a ventriloquist, but they might have taken him for a lunatic, as the School House fellows had done, had they not been warned in time. Now, fortunately, the swell of St. Jim's would be able to run on without rousing painful doubts as to his sanity.

Figgins & Co. grinned at one another as D'Arcy bore down upon them, but they became quite grave as he joined them, and looked as unsuspicious as they could. They intended to "rot" the elegant junior, and to pull his noble leg without mercy.

"Nice mornin'!" Arthur Augustus remarked, by way of a beginning.

"Rippin'!" said Figgins. "Hallo! What's that?"

"Gw-r-r-r-r-r!"

It was a growl, in a more or less faithful imitation of the well-known voice of Herries' bulldog. It proceeded only too plainly from D'Arcy's mouth, which was screwed up in an extraordinary manner. But Figgins & Co. did not seem to have a suspicion of that. They did not even look at D'Arcy. Figgins looked behind him, Kerr scanned the vicinity among the elm-trees, and Fatty Wynn turned slowly round in a circle, surveying the ground on all sides.

"Where's that dog?" asked Figgins in a voice of great astonishment. "Didn't you hear a growl, you fellows?"

"I did!" said Kerr.

"Certainly!" said Fatty Wynn. "I heard it quite plainly. Did you hear it, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus gave a grin of great enjoyment. It was evidently working at last. There was no doubt now that he was a finished ventriloquist; quite up to the mark of Billy Bunter of Greyfriars. The New House Co. evidently hadn't the slightest suspicion that he, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, had emitted that growl—evidently.

"Yaas, I heard it, deah boy," said D'Arcy, hardly able to contain his merriment, but trying to keep grave. "Where did you think it came fwom?"

"Must be some silly idiot playing a trick," Kerr suggested.

"Ahem!"

"I can't see any dog anywhere," said Figgins with great solemnity. "It's a mystery. Do you think the quad is haunted, you chaps?"

"Gw-r-r-r-r!"

"There it is again!" exclaimed Figgins in amazement. "And I can't see any dog. Did you hear it that time, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But there isn't a dog near here!" exclaimed Kerr.

"Wathah not! It's a mystewy, isn't it?" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "By the way, you chaps, look at that hollow twee—"

Arthur Augustus indicated one of the elms, which was of great age and partly hollow. The New House Co. stared at it.

"What's the matter with it?" asked Figgins.

"Great Scott!"

"Help me out! I'm shut up in this twee!"

The squeaky, far-away ventriloquial voice proceeded almost visibly from

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, but Figgins & Co. stared into the hollow.

"Who are you?" asked Figgins.

"I'm Curly Gibson!"

"What are you inside that hollow for?" Figgins pursued with owl-like gravity.

"I can't get out! Help me out, Piggy!"

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Figgins. "I can't see to the bottom of the hollow. But he must be there. The voice came from the inside, didn't it, Gussy?"

"Yaas, it was intended to—I mean, yaas."

"Poor old Curly!" said Kerr. "Fancy being shut up in the tree to suffocate! Lucky he's only a School House kid. So it really doesn't matter to us."

"Weally, Kerr, I wegard that as wathah heartless. You fellows ought weally to help him out of that beastly fix, you know," said Arthur Augustus reproachfully. And then he gave a deep and awful groan, which was also supposed to proceed from the hollow tree.

"Poor kid!" said Figgins. "Sounds as if he's dying!"

"See if you can see him, Gussy," said Kerr.

"Yaas."

And Arthur Augustus put his head into the hollow of the tree.

"Are you there?" he called out.

"Yaas," came the reply. "Wescue! I am suffocatin' in the pillah-box—I mean, in this hollow twee!"

"Bai Jove! I— Hallo! What are you at? Leggo my legs! Yaw-oooh!"

Arthur Augustus had been suddenly seized from behind by the New House juniors. In a twinkling his legs were in the air, and, in the grasp of Figgins & Co., he was sliding down head-first into the deep hollow of the tree-trunk.

"Ow! Welease me! Dwag me out!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You fwrightful asses! What are you up to? Yawooh!"

"Aren't you going to rescue Curly?" chuckled Figgins. "Gropo for him! You'll find him if he's there, you know. You heard his agonised cry, didn't you?"

"Yawooh! Let me out! Pull me out, you fatheads! He's not here!"

"Rats! He called for help!"

"You uttah asses! Pull me out! My nappah is wubbin' on this beastly wuff wood! If you don't pull me out, I will give you a feahful thwashin'!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"I don't see how you're going to do that without being pulled out," chuckled Figgins. "However, go ahead, if you think you can manage it!"

It would certainly have been a little difficult. Arthur Augustus had disappeared into the hollow tree, only his elegant feet and ankles, in the grasp of Figgins & Co., being still outside the trunk.

There was room in the hollow for him to twist round right way up, but not till his ankles were released. At present he was groping about him wildly with his hands.

"Have you found him?" asked Kerr.

"You ass! The kid is not here."

"But you heard his voice."

"Wats! Welease me! You fwrightful asses!"

"Release him," grinned Figgins. "Mind you don't fall on your head, Gussy. You don't want to get a collision on your weakest spot."

The New House juniors let go, and D'Arcy slid entirely into the hollow. He squirmed round in the confined

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
Calling!



Hallo, everybody! Old masters should be played with reverence, says the music master. Handel with care!

An American farmer claims to have counted thirty thousand sheep in nine hours. After that he gave up trying to go to sleep.

"Say, only one of us has any brains," said Gore to Blake. "Thanks," said Blake.

Next: If you are going on a walking tour, remember that a large road map will tell you everything you want to know, except how to fold it up again!

"My suit is a good example of the material I put into my suits," said the cheap tailor enthusiastically. "Yes, a shining example!" snapped back the customer.

A reader says he came in after a storm all scratched and bitten. It must have been raining cats and dogs!

As the Frenchman said: "Your English trains are wonderful. Not only do they have special compartments labelled 'Smoking,' but I have also seen 'Sandwich,' 'Reading,' and even 'Bath' written up on them!"

I hear Mellish is contemplating giving a party for the purpose of not inviting the chaps he dislikes!

space and righted himself, and his red and excited face and ruffled hair appeared at the opening in the trunk.

"You uttah wottahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sight of Arthur Augustus exploring the hollow tree had drawn a crowd of fellows to the spot. Fifty grinning faces met the view of the swell of St. Jim's as his crimson face appeared at the hollow.

"What's the little game, Gussy?" asked Monty Lowther. "Have you mistaken yourself for a giddy dryad?"

"He's a blessed woodnymph!" chuckled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't it a bit dusty in there, Gussy?"

"You uttah asses! It is fwrightfully dusty!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"But what did you get inside for?" asked Tom Merry, as the swell of St. Jim's made painful efforts to draw himself out of the opening in the trunk.

"There was a mysterious voice," said Figgins. "Somebody called for help from inside the tree, and Gussy went into the tree to look for him, like the noble fellow he is. It was a devoted action, worthy of the best tradition of the D'Arcy family."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you found him, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus was half-way out of the hollow when Kerr gave him a gentle push, and sent him in again. D'Arcy disappeared into the tree

"Whoever can afford to ride about all day in taxi-cabs?" asks a reader. Taxi drivers.

"No business can afford to carry passengers nowadays," says an authority. What about bus companies?

Skimpole tells me he is taking a course of boxing by correspondence. Ah, the "mailed" fist!

Headline: "Juggler Eats Grass." To keep fit for his sward-swallowing act?

Wayland dairy advertises: "Buy Our Milk: Germ Free." But whoever wants a free germ?

The newly-rich gent was dining at a first class hotel. "Dinner here, sir, is a la carte," explained the waiter. "O.K., wheel it in!" was the reply.

"What is better than doing your holiday task basking on the sands?" asks Reilly. Just basking on the sands, old chap.

Heard the new Hiker's Song? "Give Yourself A Pack On The Back."

Then there was the maiden lady who opened a tin of sardines in front of her goldfish to show them what happened to naughty fish!

They say the fat man at the freak show has hit upon a "swell" way of getting rich!

Young Gibson tells me he has spent three months writing the first 200 words of a novel he has worked out will be 200,000 words long. Have you worked out how old you will be when it's finished?

Wait a sec: "Will you give me a glass of water?" asked the barber's victim. "A little hair in the throat, sir?" inquired the barber. "No," replied the victim, "I just want to see if my throat leaks!"

I'll be seeing you, chaps!

once more, amid a howl of laughter from the juniors. A muffled voice was heard from within the hollow:

"Oh, you wottah! Wow-wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can't come out without Curly," said Kerr. "You've gone in to rescue him, and you're jolly well going to do it!"

The crimson face of the amateur ventriloquist appeared at the opening again.

"You silly ass, he's not here!"

"But we heard his voice!" chorused Figgins & Co. "He was speaking with a D'Arcy accent, but he said he was Curly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There was nothing but the voice, you wotten duffahs!"

"Then bring the voice out," said Figgins. "I don't see how Curly's voice could be there without Curly. But bring out all you can find of it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you silly asses!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "As a matter of fact, I was speakin' all the time."

"You!" ejaculated Figgins & Co.

"Yaas. I am a ventriloquist—"

Figgins & Co. shrieked with laughter.

"Oh, you sublime ass!" yelled Figgins. "Do you think we didn't know it was you? Do you think we didn't see your blessed chivvy working all the time? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! You uttah wottahs, if you have been takin' me in—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins & Co. staggered away almost in hysterics.

Arthur Augustus climbed out of the hollow tree, crimson with exertion and rage, and smothered with dust. He groped for his eyeglass and jammed it into his eye, and stared indignantly and scornfully at the yelling crowd of juniors.

"You uttah asses! There is nothin' whatevah to laugh it! Those beastly wottahs were wottin' me, and they only pwetended to be taken in so as to shove me into that beastly dusty hole. I wegard it as a wotten twick!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I considah—"

"There goes the brekker bell!" gasped Blake. "You'd better go and get a brush down, Gussy. You can't go in to brekker in that state!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus realised that that was very true, and he bolted for the School House, leaving a cloud of dust behind him as he ran, and the juniors followed him at a more leisurely pace, gasping with merriment.

"I should think this would be the end of Gussy's ventriloquism!" Blake sobbed. "I should think even Gussy would be fed-up now!"

But Blake was mistaken. When Arthur Augustus had an idea in his noble head, it was firmly fixed there, and there was no removing it. He came in late to breakfast, looking very red and flustered still, and extremely dignified.

"Going to give it a rest now, Gussy?" asked Blake, when they came out after breakfast.

"Wats! I wefuse to give it a rest!" said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I am convinced that I have the gift. Buntah thinks so, too, and he is a jolly good ventriloquist! All I wequiah is some pwactice—and some more lessons! You will see what you will see, deah boy!"

And that, at least, was undeniable.

CHAPTER 11.

Sweet are the Uses of Advertisement!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY wore a very thoughtful expression that morning in the Form-room.

It was not his lessons that caused the thoughtful expression—indeed, Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, found him so inattentive that he rewarded him with fifty lines.

But Arthur Augustus gave no thought to the imput. He had a more important matter than lessons and impositions to think about. He breathed a sigh of relief when the Fourth were dismissed.

"I've been thinkin', deah boys," he remarked to his chums in the Form-room passage, when the Fourth came out.

"So have I," said Blake. "I've been thinking that we'll get some cricket practice before dinner. Come on, you fellows!"

"I was goin' to say—"

"This way!" said Blake, unheeding; and he walked off with Herries and Digby.

Arthur Augustus sniffed and joined the Terrible Three, who had just come out with the rest of the Shell.

Tom Merry & Co. were also thinking of cricket, but they politely paused to hear what Arthur Augustus had to

say; but Tom Merry held up his hand in warning.

"No more ventriloquism," he said. "You gave me a pain in my ribs last night and another this morning. It isn't good for the health to laugh too much. So keep off the ventriloquism, there's a good chap!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Chuck it up, and come along to the nets, Gussy," advised Manners.

"Wats! All I wequiah is some pwactice," said Arthur Augustus. "I want a weally good instwuctah to develop my gift, you know."

"No doubt about the gift?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Certainly not! Buntah thinks I have the gift; he said so."

"Did he borrow any money about that time?"

"Yaas, as a mattah of fact, he did—which weminds me that I haven't weceived a wemittance frowm him yet!"

"And I fancy you won't!" grinned Lowther. "The gift he was thinking of was the cash, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to believe that Buntah is a mercenary chap. Howevah, I feel that it is no good twyin' to get instwuctions frowm him. It is wathah expensive meetin' him so far away frowm school, and his witten instwuctions do not seem to work out vewy well. I weally think that the best thing I can do is to get a weally first-class pwofessah to show me how it is done!"

"They ought to have it in the curriculum here, instead of Latin or German," said Lowther gravely.

"Yaas, that would be a weally good ideah. Pewwaps you chaps can suggest a way of gettin' a ventriloquist pwofessah's services?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"There are pwobably a lot of them wound about, if one could get at them. It would be wathah expensive to have one down frowm London!"

"Go hon!"

"I was thinkin' of advertisin' for a pwofessah," said D'Arcy. "What do you think of that ideah?"

"Sweet are the uses of advertisement!" said Lowther. "Shakespeare says so, so it must be true!"

"You ass! Shakespeare says: 'Sweet are the uses of adversity'—not 'advertisement'!"

"Did he? Well, of course, he was rather behind the times," said Lowther blandly. "Shove the advertisement in the 'Rylcombe Gazette' or the 'Wayland Times,' Gussy, and you'll have a host of answers."

"You weally think it's a good ideah?" asked Arthur Augustus, much comforted.

"It's the only way," said Lowther solemnly. "I'll tell you what I'll do, Gussy. I've got to go over to Wayland after dinner about my cricket bat—I'm going over on my bike—and, if you like, I'll take the advertisement to the office of the 'Wayland Times,' and ask them to put it in the paper this week. The 'Times' comes out to-morrow."

"I say, that's awfully decent of you, Lowthah," said Arthur Augustus.

"Not at all," said Lowther. "I shall be pleased. You fellows can go down to the cricket. I'm going to help Gussy draw up his advertisement."

Tom Merry and Manners grinned. They could see plainly enough that Monty Lowther was inwardly planning some jape upon the swell of the Fourth, though they could not guess what it was. They walked off to the cricket-ground, and Lowther accompanied D'Arcy to Study No. 6.

Arthur Augustus was feeling very pleased. Being left in the lurch, as it were, by his own chums, it was very grateful and comforting to find a Shell fellow who took his aspirations seriously, and was willing to lend a helping hand.

"Let me see!" said D'Arcy, dipping a pen in the ink. "Somethin' like this: 'Wanted—A pwofessional ventriloquist to give instwuction. State terms.—A. A. D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's.' That all wight, deah boy?"

"Better make it a bit plainer," said Lowther thoughtfully. "Better put in 'Apply personally.'"

"But they could communicate with me by lettah."

"Yes; but then you might make arrangements with some chap who was only spoofing," said Lowther. "Better have the man here and see him, and make him give you a sample of what he can do."

Arthur Augustus nodded assent.

"Yaas, that's vewy thoughtful of you, Lowthah. I'll make 'em apply personally, then."

"And put in 'Saturday afternoon,' as that's a half-holiday, and you'll have plenty of time to attend to them," said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I shall have to cut



"What are you at?" gasped Arthur Augustus, as Figgins' legs! Yawoooooh!! In a twinkling his legs were in the air of the tree-trunk! "Ow! W

the cricket again, and that's wotten, as we are playin' the New House."

"Never mind. It will give the School House a chance to win."

"What!"

"I—I mean it will give the New House a chance," said Lowther hastily. "You can't set a matter of this importance aside simply to play cricket."

"Yaas, quite so. Apply personally on Saturday aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus. "That's all wight, Lowthah."

"Yes; write it out and I'll take it over."

"You're awfully good."

"Oh, don't mensh."

And Monty Lowther left the study with the advertisement in his pocket.

Arthur Augustus called after him:

"What about payin' for it, deah boy?"

"Only about a bob or two; we'll settle that afterwards," said Lowther.

"Wight-ho!"

And Arthur Augustus proceeded to practise ventriloquism until dinner. He was very pleased that Lowther was going over to Wayland. It would have taken up his own time, which he preferred to devote to ventriloquial practice. Had he known the thoughts that were in the mind of the humorist of the Shell, however, it is probable that he would not have been so pleased.

Tom Merry and Manners looked inquiringly at their chum when they met him at dinner. But Lowther's face was inscrutable. After dinner he went round to the bike-shed, and wheeled out his machine. Arthur Augustus had gone to his study to resume practice. Tom and Manners walked down to the gates with Lowther. They were puzzled.

"Look here, what's the game?"

demanding Tom Merry, as they stopped at the gates. "Why don't you come to the cricket?"

Lowther shook his head.

"I'm doing this to oblige Gussy," he said.

"Oh, rats! What's the game, you duffer?" said Manners.

Monty Lowther grinned and took out D'Arcy's advertisement from his pocket. Tom Merry and Manners read it and grinned, too.

"The awful ass!" said Tom. "Are you really going to put that in the 'Wayland Times'?"

"With a slight alteration," said Lowther, taking out a pencil and sprawling the paper on his saddle. "You see, a lot of ventriloquial professors would be a worry, and Gussy would never learn anything. There are a lot more useful things to learn than ventriloquism. Don't you think so?"

"Ye-es, but—"

"Well, I'll give Gussy a chance to learn 'em," said Lowther. And he proceeded to make some alterations in the advertisement.

When he had finished, the Terrible Three read over it with shrieks of laughter. For the advertisement now ran:

"Wanted—Professional instruction in piano, violin, cornet, and voice production. Also in golf, and in the following languages—Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Chinese. Apply personally to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, School House, St. Jim's, on Saturday afternoon."

"That will give Gussy a chance of improving his education," said Lowther. "He will learn Chinese quite as easily as ventriloquism."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "But—but he'll think they are ventriloquial professors when they arrive."

"Yes, that's where the joke comes in," said Lowther serenely. "Probably they will get ratty with him. I think I'd better put in 'expenses paid.' It's not fair that they should have to pay their own fare."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry. "It will be worth watching if some old Johnny starts teaching Gussy Hebrew or Chinese, when he thinks he's going to learn ventriloquism. Those languages will come in useful if ever he goes to Palestine or China, you know, if he learns them accidentally."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I must be off," said Lowther. "I'm going to pay for this advertisement myself, as I've altered it. Gussy mightn't approve of the alteration, though it is really an improvement and something to his advantage. I'm quite anxious for Saturday afternoon. I think I shall have to miss the cricket myself. Ta-ta!"

And Monty Lowther jumped on his machine and pedalled away, leaving Tom Merry and Manners roaring with laughter. Arthur Augustus' interviews with his visitors on Saturday afternoon promised to be very entertaining.

CHAPTER 12.

Where Ignorance is Bliss!

THERE was a letter from Billy Bunter the next day, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy opened it in the presence of all the Co. with a flourish.

The Co. had expressed great doubts whether the fat junior of Greyfriars would settle those little loans, and it was a pleasure to Arthur Augustus to prove to them that it was all right. So he opened the letter to crush them, as it were, by the production of Bunter's remittance.

A change came over his face when the letter was opened. He took out the scrawled missive, but there was no sign of a remittance.

"Well, produce the cash!" said Blake, with a grin.

"Roll out the quid notes," said Lowther.

"Let's see the banknotes."

"Ahem! I wathah think Buntah has forgotten to put in the wemittance," said Arthur Augustus hesitatingly.

"Certainly there isn't a wemittance here. Of course, he has simply forgotten to put it in the envelope."

"Of course! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's have the letter, if there's no remittance," said Lowther. "We'll all help you to read it, Gussy. The writing requires some deciphering, and they don't seem to teach common or garden spelling at Greyfriars School."

And the whole crowd of juniors read the letter along with its owner. There were many chuckles as the letter was read. It ran:

"Dear D'Arcy,—I'm sorry not to be able to send you the little lone you so kindly made me, as I have been dissatisfied about a postal-order. However, I am expecting a handsome remittance shortly from a titled relation, and then I will settle in fool. I shall be glad to meet you at Lyndale on Saturday afternoon, if you like, if you will forward me the necessary exes as before. You really have the gift of ventriloquism, and it is a pity that it should not be cultivated, as you are sure to become a really splendid ventriloquist. If you could put in an extra half-quid with the railway fare, I should be obliged, and I will settle it in fool when I see you.—Your old pal,

WILLIAM G. BUNTER."

"Ahem!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "There is weally nothin' to gwin at, you know. The chap says plainly he has been disappointed about a wemittance. That might happen to anybody. I have been disappointed about wemittances myself. My patah sometimes fails to send me a fivah, even when I have specially witten to ask him for one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Howevah, I do not think I will see Buntah again; it is weally too expensive. And, besides, he talks all the time, and weally doesn't give me any instwuction at all. Upon the whole, I think I will stick to a wegulah pwofessah!"

"Oh-o!" said Blake. "You're going to have a professor, are you?"

"Yaas, wathah! My advertisement appeahs in the 'Wayland Times' this morning, and I expect to have quite a cwoad of ventriloquial pwofessahs applyin' for the job to-morrow aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Oh, my hat!"

"By the way, did you wemembah to ask them to send me a copy of the

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Giggins & Co. suddenly seized him from behind. "Leggo my the air and he was being pushed head-first into the deep hollow w! Wleasse me! Dwag me out!"

papah, Lowthah? I should like to make sure that the advertisement is there all wight."

Lowther looked regretful.

"I didn't ask them to send one," he said. "Never mind; the ad's certain to be in. I made a special point of it, and they promised faithfully it should be in the 'Wayland Times' this morning. There isn't any doubt about it."

"Yaas, that's all wight, then."

Arthur Augustus walked away to write a reply to Bunter, to tell that cheerful youth as politely as possible that he had no further use for his valuable services.

Blake & Co. surrounded Lowther. This was the first they had heard of the advertisement, and they wanted to know something more about it.

"Have you been pulling Gussy's leg, you Shell bouncer?" Blake demanded.

"Shush! I don't mind letting you into it, if you keep it dark," said Lowther.

"Well, it's like your cheek to jape one of Study No. 6!" said Blake severely. "But Gussy has been asking for it, I know, and if it's anything to help shut him up on the subject of ventriloquism, I forgive you. The rows he makes in the study are simply awful, and I'm afraid that he'll permanently damage the inside of his neck, if he keeps on. What's the little game?"

Lowther mysteriously drew a scribbled slip of paper from his pocket and exhibited it. The chums of the Fourth stared as they read it.

"That's the advertisement," said Lowther blandly. "I've edited it, you know, since Gussy drew it up. He's going to have a chance to learn something more useful than ventriloquism. Savvy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But not a word."

"Not a giddy syllable!" chortled Blake. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a number of the School House fellows were taken into the little secret, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remaining in sublime unconsciousness of the fact that there was a jape on. That evening he mentioned to Tom Merry that he would have to stand out of the junior House team on Saturday afternoon.

"I'm sowwy, deah boy," he said feebly. "I know what a blow this is to you, as cricket captain. But, to-morrow aftahnoon I'm expectin' a numbah of visitahs."

"I'll try to survive it," said Tom, with emotion. "It's a fearful blow, but I'll try to bear up!"

"If you are wottin' you ass—"

"Not at all. I shall survive it, I think," said Tom. "As a matter of fact, you have been neglecting cricket so much lately that I'm thinking of leaving you out of the House team for the rest of the season."

"I should uttally wefuse to be left out of the House team for the west of the season, Tom Mewwy," said the swell of St. Jim's, with dignity. "Howevah, I have a more important mattah in hand for to-morrow aftahnoon. I will try to come down to the ground and look on a bit to encourage you."

"You're too good, Gussy," said Tom Merry, with a sob.

"Oh, wats!" And Arthur Augustus walked away with his nose in the air.

The next day Arthur Augustus was in quite a flutter, as he would have expressed it. He had been practising hard at his new art, but he had to admit to himself that his progress had not been striking. He emitted growls and barks which bore a distant resemblance to those of a dog, but the growls and barks

persisted in coming only too evidently from his mouth, and not from the various places where he sought to "throw" his voice.

He would call up the study chimney, "Are you there?" and answer "Yaas," but the "Yaas" quite plainly came from the same source as the "Are you there?" He felt that what he needed was professional instruction to develop his undoubted gift—undoubted, that is, by Arthur Augustus himself. And that afternoon he was to have a variety of competent professors to choose from; and everything in the garden, so to speak, would be lovely.

When Tom Merry & Co. went down to cricket in the afternoon, Arthur Augustus hardly noticed them go. His friend Hammond was being played in his place, but D'Arcy had not even noticed it. Even the great game of cricket faded into utter insignificance beside the new art he was cultivating. After the cricketers were gone, D'Arcy interviewed Toby, the House page.

"I'm expectin' some visitahs this

waited, their expectation being fully as keen as D'Arcy's.

Nearly all the House were in the secret now, D'Arcy himself being one of the very few who did not know of Lowther's change in the advertisement in the "Wayland Times."

Reilly of the Fourth, who was in the doorway, burst into a giggle as a long-haired gentleman in a Homburg hat, with a violin-case under his arm, was seen coming across the quad from the direction of the gates.

"Here comes the first of the bunch," said Reilly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The long-haired young man came into the School House and blinked round him. Toby, the page, hurried up. The gentleman with the long hair, whose collar hinted that he had very little more to do with laundresses than with barbers, handed Toby a card.

"Please take that to Master—er—D'Arcy—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy," he said.

"Yessir. This way, sir!"

And the long-haired young man followed Toby up the stairs to Study No. 6. When he had disappeared from view there was a cackle from the juniors. The circus, as Reilly put it, was beginning.

CHAPTER 13.

A Narrow Escape!

"GEWWOOGH!"

That weird sound was proceeding from Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage, as Toby showed the long-haired stranger up.

The violin professor paused in astonishment.

"Is someone ill here, my lad?" he asked Toby.

"No, sir," said Toby, with a grin. He would have been alarmed himself, but he had heard of Arthur Augustus' latest. "It's all right—only Master D'Arcy. This way, sir."

Toby threw open the study door, and presented the card to the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus turned hastily from the looking-glass, and took the card.

"Gentleman to see you, sir," said Toby.

"Pway show the gentleman in, Toby."

Toby showed the gentleman in and departed. Arthur Augustus glanced at the card, which bore the name, "Ethelbert Toppmoppe," and in smaller type, "Piano, Violin, Violoncello." Then he glanced at the visitor. He could not help thinking it curious that a professor of the piano, violin, and violoncello, should also be a professor of the very separate and distinct art of ventriloquism.

The professor had brought his violin with him, too, and D'Arcy did not quite see what use it was to be in ventriloquial instruction. Fortunately, he had left his violoncello and piano at home.

"Good-aftahnoon!" said D'Arcy graciously. "Pway take a seat, my deah sir!"

Mr. Ethelbert Toppmoppe took a seat.

"You have, I undahstand, called in wewefence to my advertisement in the 'Wayland Times,'" Arthur Augustus pursued.

"Quite so, Mr. D'Arcy. I really think I shall be able to meet your requirements," said Mr. Toppmoppe. "You require instruction from a master in the art?"

"Exactly."

(Continued on page 18.)



aftahnoon, Toby," he said, slipping a half-crown into the willing hand of the page. "You will have some twouble showin' them up to the study; but you won't mind that."

"Not at all, sir," said Toby. "Always a pleasure to do anything for a gentleman like you, sir!"

"Thank you vewy much, Toby. You are a good boy," said D'Arcy, who was considerably younger than Toby, but spoke in quite a fatherly manner. "You will be sure to show my visitahs to Study No. 6, and not take them in to the Head or Mr. Waiton by mistake. They will ask for me."

"Yessir."

"Vewy good!"

Arthur Augustus proceeded to Study No. 6, to wait in state for the first of his visitors. He was too preoccupied to notice that some of the juniors, who might have been expected to go down to the cricket ground to watch the House match, seemed to prefer to stay indoors that sunny afternoon.

They hung about the doorway and the passage and the stairs, as if they expected to see something there more interesting even than a House match. They grinned and chuckled as they

The Editor's Chair

Let the Editor be your pal!
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
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don Street, London, E.C.4.



HALLO, chums! Best things first—that's why I like to start off my chat with a few words about our next programme. Our stories are the best, and so it is natural that they come first in my thoughts and in the thoughts of readers. But I was keener this week to tell you what's on the programme, because our next St. Jim's yarn is really super. I've read hundreds of stories from Martin Clifford's pen, but seldom have I been so enthralled and thrilled as I was by the great yarn which you will have in your hands next Wednesday. Once again this masterpiece shows our own author to be unequalled as a writer of stories not only dealing with school adventure, but for any other type of yarn.

"THE SHANGHAIED SCHOOLBOYS!"

is a story of the sea, telling of the thrilling adventures that befall Tom Merry & Co. when they take a little trip to the seaside. Their troubles commence as soon as they reach the beach, with the result that the St. Jim's chums find themselves shanghaied aboard a tramp steamer bound for America!

They are helpless to do anything, and, under the toughest captain and crew who ever sailed a ship, they are compelled, by a liberal use of the rope's end, to work like the other seamen. It is a vivid glimpse of a new life for Tom Merry, Blake, Lowther, and Gussy, and the hardships and dangers they have to go through tax their courage and endurance to the utmost.

What happens to them further on their voyage in the Ramehunder I will leave Martin Clifford to tell you about, in his very best style, next week. But believe me, chums, this is as thrilling a story as you will ever read.

"THE GHOST OF GREYFRIARS!"

Frank Richards strikes a keynote of mystery in his next gripping story of the chums of Greyfriars. An unknown grub-raider gets busy at night in the Remove studies, and, of course, Billy Bunter is suspected. The next startling

thing to happen is that a ghostly figure is seen in one of the box-rooms! Who is the grub-raider? Is he the ghostly visitant? Harry Wharton & Co., with grim determination, set about solving the mystery, with very exciting results.

The only safe way of making sure you don't miss this extra-good number is to place an order for your copy in advance. There's bound to be a big rush for this issue.

NEW OLD CARS!

A friend of mine, who is a keen motorist, recently returned from Vancouver, Canada, and told me that he was surprised at the number of very old Ford trucks, looking like new, still running about the streets there. He made a few inquiries, and discovered an interesting fact. Those Fords were not old. They were comparatively new, for in Vancouver there is a motor-car factory which specialises in building Fords of 1915 design!

The reason is that twenty-one years ago the Chinese fruiterers in Vancouver changed their horse-drawn carts for Ford trucks, and since then they have kept faithfully to the make and design of motor-car which has served them so well. As you probably know, the Chinese resent changes of any sort, and, consequently, the fruiterers in Vancouver won't look at any other car. When one goes to buy a new Ford, he takes very good care that it is the same in every detail as the 1915 model. He has to pay more for it than a 1936 one would cost, but that doesn't concern him so much as making certain that he's getting a genuine 1915 Ford. Hence the factory where the "old" Fords are assembled every year.

A RECORD FAST!

Two weeks ago I told you about a woman in Minnesota who hasn't eaten

PEN PALS COUPON
25-7-36

for seven years. But her fast pales into insignificance beside that of a Bengali woman. Giribala Devi, who is sixty-eight years old, claims that nothing but water and leaves have passed her lips for fifty-six years!

Married at the age of twelve, she became a widow after a few months, and since then she has taken no normal nourishment. And during her long fast she has never once been ill!

The Indian State of Bengal is also in the news in another direction. An unknown giant has appeared near Siliguri, and the villagers round about are scared out of their lives. A peasant first saw the giant, but little notice was taken of the man's story till he died three days later. Then people went to inspect the place where he claimed he saw the giant. Large footprints, made by a human being, were discovered, and they measured twenty-two inches long, eleven inches wide, and were six inches deep! Judging by the footprints the unknown must be well over twelve feet tall!

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC BY BARREL

The Atlantic has been crossed by liner, sailing-boat, rowing-boat, and flown over, but never has anyone ventured to do it in a barrel. Yet that is what Ernest Biegazski, an ex-Service man in Buffalo, proposes to do! His unusual "craft" will measure nine feet deep by six feet eight inches across. It's certainly an outsize in barrels, but there won't be much room for the voyager by the time it's loaded with the necessities for such a hazardous trip. Biegazski anticipates reaching Europe in forty days, but, just in case things don't work according to plan, he's taking enough food to last him sixty days. Good-luck to him!

TAILPIECE.

Guide: "This castle has stood for six hundred years. Not an alteration has been made and nothing replaced."

Visitor: "H'm! They must have the same landlord as we've got!"

THE EDITOR.

Balthazar J. van Lykloppen, 72, Water Street, Sunnyside, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa; stamps; age 13-16.

R. Bowers, Cambow, Thomson Road, Claremont, Cape Town, South Africa; stamps, cycling.

Miss Elinor Platt, 4, Inglewood Drive, Toronto, Ont., Canada; girl correspondents; age 14-15.

Russell Thompson, 73, Musselburgh Rise, Anderson's Bay, Dunedin, New Zealand; stamps.

Jack Murtagh, 625, Nelson Street, Hastings, New Zealand; eig. cards; old copies of "Nelson Lee Lib."

Miss Joyce Tolson, 6, Carr Manor Road, off King Lane, Chapel Allerton, Leeds 7; girl correspondents; age 14-16; sport.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,484.



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.

Ronald Grant, 19, Merlin Way, Firth Park, Sheffield; age 14-16; wireless, electricity, stamps; overseas.

Miss Alma Harman, 21, Hartley Street, Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia; girl correspondents; 17 up; snaps.

"And the—ahem!—terms—" said Arthur Augustus modestly. "I weally don't know about that. You see, I have no knowledge of the mattah."

Mr. Toppmoppe's eyes gleamed. This was the kind of pupil he was looking for. He made some sort of a living teaching violin, piano, and cello to persons in Wayland and the district. But he had generally found them rather particular on the subject of terms—too particular on that important point, in fact.

"You have had no lessons hitherto?" he inquired.

"Well, yaas, a few ffrom an amateur chap," said Arthur Augustus. "I gave him half-a-guinea a time. But I was not weally satisfied."

Mr. Toppmoppe was accustomed to give lessons at two shillings a time, and his eyes opened a little. But he tried to look indifferent.

"I should be willing to give you instruction on the same terms," he said negligently. "How many lessons would you need? I should recommend one every day to begin with."

"Ahem! I don't think the cash would run to that," said D'Arcy. "Pewwaps if I had one ewery day for a week or so, one a week aftah that would do."

"Certainly. That is a really excellent idea."

"Then it's a go, Mr. Toppmoppe. Pewwaps you could give me the first lesson now," said Arthur Augustus. "I am quite free this aftahnoon—if you are."

"With pleasure!" said Mr. Toppmoppe. "Let me see—is it piano you are studying?"

D'Arcy opened his eyes.

"Piano? No."

"Violoncello, then?"

"Certainly not."

"Very well. If it had been, of course, we should have required those instruments," Mr. Toppmoppe explained pleasantly.

"Yaas, I suppose so," stammered Arthur Augustus, wondering whether his visitor was wandering in his mind. "But in the cires—"

"Very well; we can proceed," said Mr. Toppmoppe, opening his violin case. "I have brought my instrument with me."

Arthur Augustus looked at the violin, and looked at Mr. Toppmoppe.

"Will you wequiah a violin to give me instruction?" he asked.

Mr. Toppmoppe smiled.

"I could scarcely do it without a violin, Mr. D'Arcy," he said.

"Bai Jove, I should nevaah have thought it! But I suppose you know as you are a pwofessah of the art."

"Naturally. Have you a violin of your own? My instrument is a little large for you to handle."

"There's Blake's violin—I could use that, if it is necessary. But—but I had no ideah that a violin would be necessary."

Mr. Toppmoppe looked hard at him. He remembered the queer noise he had heard as he approached the study, and he wondered whether his pupil was quite right in his mind. A boy who made mysterious noises for no apparent reason, and who did not know that a violin was required for a violin lesson, was a very peculiar boy indeed, Mr. Toppmoppe thought.

"I hardly see how a lesson could be given without a violin," said Mr. Toppmoppe dryly.

"Oh, vewy well—I suppose you know."

D'Arcy, in a state of great wonder, took Blake's violin-case and opened it, and produced the instrument.

"Ah! I see you know how to hold the instrument," said Mr. Toppmoppe. "That is something. Now I shall show you how to place the fingers—"

"Yaas."

"Take the bow—so—"

"Ya-a-as."

"Now watch me, and produce the scale in the same way," said the long-haired young gentleman, and he started.

"B-but—" stammered Arthur Augustus. "I am willin', of course, to do exactly what you say, but—but how am I to learn ffrom that?"

"I do not know how you are to learn without it," said Mr. Toppmoppe, puzzled.

"I—I had an ideah that the first instruction would be in thwowin' the voice."

Mr. Toppmoppe started.

"In what?" he said faintly.

"Thwowin' the voice, sir. That's what I want to do most of all. Also in imitatin' the growl of a dog, and makin' the sound appeah as if it comes ffrom somewhere else."

Mr. Toppmoppe looked at him steadily. There was no doubt about it—he had to do with a boy who was not in his right mind.

Arthur Augustus looked worried and a little excited; he felt that there was a misunderstanding somewhere, though he could not guess where.

"Suppose I show you what I can do already?" he suggested.

"Yes," gasped Mr. Toppmoppe, backing away towards the door. "Please do."

"Gw-r-r-r-r-rh!"

"Oh!"

"Gw-r-r-r-r-rh!"

Mr. Toppmoppe, keeping his eyes fixed on the growling junior, hastily placed his violin in its case, snapped it shut, and backed to the door, feeling behind him for the handle. He did not dare to take his eyes off Arthur Augustus, in case the lunatic should spring. He was only thinking about getting safely out of the study now.

"Did that growl seem to you to come ffrom undah the table?" asked D'Arcy.

"Oh, yes! No! Yes!"

"Now I will call up the chimney," said D'Arcy.

"Eh?"

"I will shout up the chimney, and weceive an answer, and you can tell me your opinion, Mr. Toppmoppe."

"I—I—I—" Mr. Toppmoppe's hand was on the handle of the door now, and he was turning it cautiously, hoping to get the door open without the lunatic noticing what he was doing.

If he had to fight for his life, he had only his violin as a weapon. With great relief, he saw D'Arcy turn his back and call up the chimney.

"Are you there?" D'Arcy called; and immediately replied: "Yaas!"

Then he turned round for Mr. Toppmoppe's opinion. To his amazement, he saw the study door wide open, and heard the violinist's footsteps retreating down the passage. He ran to the door and looked out.

"I say!" he shouted. "Where are you goin'? What the dickens—"

Mr. Toppmoppe did not reply. He was making for the stairs. Arthur Augustus scudded down the passage after him. Mr. Toppmoppe heard him coming and fairly ran. He reached the first landing; but D'Arcy, determined to have an explanation of his extraordinary conduct, slid down the banisters, and so overtook him.

"Now then. Weally—" he began. "Bai Jove!"

The excited Mr. Toppmoppe raised his violin-case desperately.

"Stand back!" he quavered. "If—if you come nearer I will strike you down! Keep your distance! Keep off! Hel!"

Arthur Augustus staggered back in amazement.

"Mad! Bai Jove!"

"Yes, I—I know you're mad! Keep off!" yelled Mr. Toppmoppe; and he darted for the lower stairs and fled before Arthur Augustus could recover from his amazement.

He ran through the grinning juniors on the lower stairs and did not pause till he was safe out in the quadrangle, then he paused to mop his fevered brow.

"Good heavens!" he murmured. "What a narrow escape! The advertisement was really very strange; violin, Sanskrit, golf, and such things all together. I might have suspected it was the work of a lunatic, but really—"

He caught sight of D'Arcy's face in the doorway of the School House and hurried away to the gates.

"Sure, the professor hasn't stayed long, Gussy darling!" Reilly remarked. Arthur Augustus gasped.

"He's mad!" he said. "Fancy a mad-man comin' here in answer to an advertisement! He tried to teach me ventwiloquism with a violin—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughin' mattah; the poor chap's quite insane. He bolted ffrom the study when I started thwowin' my voice, and threatened me with his violin when I went aftah him. It's extra-ordinawy! I have had a feahfully narrow escape. Just imagine bein' shut up in the study with a lunatic!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus went back into the House much disturbed in mind. He returned to Study No. 6, in the hope that another applicant for the post would arrive and that he would prove to be in his right senses.

The juniors chuckled gleefully and waited for the next arrival. The advertisement had been so wide in its scope that it was pretty certain that there would be more arrivals. And, in fact, only ten minutes had passed when a fat little gentleman with a silk hat made his appearance, trotting towards the School House.

The Terrible Three were just sauntering across from the playing fields. They had been batting, and, as they had lost their wickets, had come over to see how Arthur Augustus was getting on with his visitors.

Monty Lowther approached the fat little gentleman, raising his cap with much politeness.

"You wish to see D'Arcy, sir?"

"Eh?" The old gentleman put his hand to his ear and bent his head. "I am a little deaf; pray speak louder."

"You want to see D'Arcy?" bawled Lowther.

"Yes, yes. I am Professor Krammer—professor of languages," the old gentleman explained. "I have called in reference to an advertisement."

"This way," said Lowther.

"To-day? Yes, I think it was to-day the advertisement said," replied Professor Krammer. "Yes, certainly it was to-day."

"Will you follow me?"

"No, I have not had tea," said Professor Krammer, again misunderstanding. "However, that is of no importance. Is Master D'Arcy here?"

"I'll take you to him, sir," shrieked Lowther.
 "Oh, yes! Quite so! Thank you!" said the old gentleman, blinking benevolently at Lowther through his spectacles.
 "Thank you, my lad!"
 Monty Lowther led him into the School House.
 "Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.
 "Gussy will have a handful with that Johnny!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 14.

Still They Come!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jumped up to receive his visitor. Lowther showed him into the study and vanished. D'Arcy was glad to see that the old gentleman had no musical instruments about him; apparently it was the genuine article, and Arthur Augustus was accordingly relieved.

"Pwofessah Kwammah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Glad to see you, pwofessah! Will you take a seat?"
 "Not at all," said the professor. "It is, indeed, rather warm, but I did not notice the heat. It is quite cool in here."

It dawned upon Arthur Augustus that his visitor was a little deaf.

"Will you take a seat?" he repeated, raising his voice.

"Thanks, no. I never eat between meals."

"Oh cwumbs!" murmured Arthur Augustus; and he pushed a chair towards his visitor, instead of repeating the invitation orally.

Professor Krammer sat down with a benevolent smile.

"I have called in reference to the advertisement in the 'Wayland Times,'" he explained. "You are—ahem!—rather young to be taking up so serious a study."

"I twust I shall be able to learn, all the same, sir."

"Eh?"
 "I twust I shall be able to learn!" yelled D'Arcy.

"Oh, yes, decidedly. The earlier the better, really, for such a very difficult study," said Professor Krammer. "Of course, it will be many years before you are proficient. I will not conceal that from you."

"Bai Jove!"
 "What languages do you study here, in the ordinary curriculum?"

"Languages?"
 "Yes. French, I suppose, and German and Latin, of course?"

"Yaas."
 "But not Greek?"

"They used to have Gweek," said Arthur Augustus. "But it was dropped for German. It is an extra now for those who want it. I don't. But what has that to do—"

"You say you study Greek?"
 "No, I say I do not!"

"Ah! And you have no grounding in the language?"

D'Arcy shook his head. He found that an easier way of saying no than with his voice to the deaf old gentleman.

"And in Sanskrit, Hebrew, and Chinese—nothing as yet, I suppose?"

"Bai Jove! No!"

"Very well. Everything must have a beginning," said the professor benevolently. "I must say it is very meritorious indeed for a young gentleman of your years to wish to take up such difficult studies. If I may make a suggestion I should recommend beginning with Greek."

"Gweek!"



"Gw-r-r-r-h!" growled Arthur Augustus. "Gw-r-r-r-h!" Mr. Topp-moppe backed away towards the door, feeling behind him for the handle. He dared not take his eyes off D'Arcy in case the lunatic should spring. He was only thinking about getting safely out of the study!

"Yes, you will find that the easiest of the four."

Arthur Augustus stared at him blankly. The first man had wanted to teach him with a violin, and now the second wanted to make him study Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit, and Chinese, the vehicle for the study of ventriloquism. It was simply astounding.

"But I don't want to study Greek!" D'Arcy gasped.

"This week certainly—to-day, if you like," said the professor. "In fact, I am quite prepared to give you your first lesson now."

There was the sound of a chuckle from the passage. The professor did not hear it, but Arthur Augustus did, and he guessed that Tom Merry & Co. were there, listening to that peculiar interview with enjoyment. Arthur Augustus was not enjoying it.

"You have some books, I suppose?" asked the professor, drawing his chair up to the table.

"I have no books on ventriloquism," said D'Arcy. "I have had some lessons from a chap named Buntah."

"Eh?"
 "I haven't any books about it."

"Ah, then you must obtain some," said the professor. "However, we can commence without books."

"Oh, good!" said Arthur Augustus, much relieved, feeling that they were getting to business at last. "I suppose the first lesson will be in throwin' the voice?"

"Eh! The voice? We shall study both the active and the passive, of course. But that will come later."

"I should have thought the voice was active all the time, sir?"

"Eh?"
 "Isn't the voice always active?" shrieked D'Arcy.

"My dear boy, of course not. It is the same as in Latin—indeed, in any

language—there is always an active and a passive voice," said the professor. "For instance, luo, I loose—that is active."

"Oh cwumbs! Blessed if he isn't teachin' me Gweek!" muttered Arthur Augustus. "I suppose ventriloquists are all mad. That is the only explanation. It's utterly imposs that it should be necessary to learn Gweek in ordah to be a ventriloquist. I say," he shouted again, "is that weally necessary, pwofessah?"

"Not now, not now," said the professor soothingly. "We shall come to the verbs later on. We must begin at the beginning; of course. Are you acquainted with the Greek alphabet?"

"The Gweek alphabet! My deah sir, I know the lettahs," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't know more than that, and I forget some of them. But is it necessary—"

"Very good. We will commence with the definite article," said the professor.

"There are thirty forms of the definite article in Greek, but that is not so difficult as it sounds, as many of them are merely repetitions of the others. We will take a simple noun of the first declension for a beginning—"

"But—"

"Xwpa—the professor wrote it down. "Chora—land. Xwpa—hee chora," said the professor, pronouncing it for D'Arcy's benefit. "Hee chora—the land. You see?"

"B-but—"

"That is a feminine noun, nominative case, singular number, and therefore it takes the article—"

"Yaas, but—but I'm not studyin' Gweek," groaned Arthur Augustus.

"What has that got to do with ventriloquism? Bai Jove, you're worse than the othah!"

"Eh?"

"Weally, I do not undahstand," said the professor. "It is naturally a little difficult at first, owing to the difference in the alphabet. But in a short time you will find yourself able to make the Greek letters as easy as the Roman, and to read them as easily. It is merely a question of custom. When you get to the Chinese, you will find your difficulties begin."

"Chinese! Gweat Scott!"

"But we are doing Greek at present. I will send you a list of books you had better obtain—"

"Books on ventwiloquism?"

"Eh?"

"Are you goin' to send me a list of books on ventwiloquism?" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Certainly not. What do you mean? What has ventriloquism to do with learning Greek?" the professor asked in astonishment.

"What I want to know is what has learnin' Gweek to do with ventwiloquism?" groaned the unfortunate student. "I don't know what you are dwivin' at. Will you explain?"

"Eh?"

"I should like you to explain what you mean."

"Certainly, certainly! Now for your first exercise. Until you obtain your books, I will give you half a dozen feminine nouns."

"Oh deah!"

"And the feminine article in all cases and numbers. Note that there are three numbers in Greek—singular, dual, and plural."

"Bai Jove! But—"

"Your first exercise will be to take the noun 'chora,' and decline it."

"I shall certainly decline it. I shall decline the whole bisney!" howled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I decline to have anythin' to do with it. I weally think you must be off your weekah!"

"Eh?"

"You must have come to the w'ong place. I wasn't advertisin' for a teachah of beastly Gweek! I haven't the faintest ideah what you have come here for, unless you have escaped from a lunatic asylum!" Arthur Augustus exclaimed, utterly exasperated, and rising to his feet. "I wefuse to listen to any more of this on any terms."

"Terms!" exclaimed the professor, catching only the last word. "Dear me! I quite forgot to mention about terms. Shall we say half-a-guinea a lesson?"

"But I tell you," gasped D'Arcy, "I don't want to learn Greek! There's no need for you to stay now."

"Certainly. I have no objection to your paying now—in fact, I generally receive my fees in advance," said the deaf gentleman. "If you prefer, you can pay for such lessons separately, or for a whole term in advance. I leave that entirely to you, Master D'Arcy."

"I wish you would leave my study to me."

"Yes; undoubtedly it will be a valuable study for you," agreed the professor.

"Oh cwumbs! I didn't say anythin' of the sort! I say—"

"Very well, if you wish to pay—half-a-guinea, please. But we have not finished the lesson yet."

"Will you go away?" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

The professor heard that, and he rose to his feet in astonishment and indignation. He glared at the junior over his spectacles.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,484.



Pilot: "Well, well, well, old No-Hope Asylum! Many's the happy day I've spent there!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Churchill, 98, Ruskin Avenue, Manor Park, London, E.12.

"I fail to understand you. Am I to understand that you do not require these lessons, Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then you have brought me here for nothing, and wasted my time?"

"You've been wastin' my time, I think," said the exasperated swell of St. Jim's. "Blow your beastly old Gweek! Go and buy it!"

"In the circumstances, I shall refuse to give you any lessons."

"Thank goodness!"

"But you will not be allowed to waste my valuable time like this, young gentleman!" thundered the indignant professor. "I shall accept payment for this lesson."

"Bai Jove! Will you?"

"Pay up, Gussy!" chortled Monty Lowther, at the door. "Better let him go. There are three chaps downstairs waiting their turns."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thwee ventwiloquial pwofessahs?" gasped D'Arcy.

"Yes; and one's got a cornet."

"My hat!"

"And the other two have sets of golf clubs."

"Gweat Scott!"

"And there's a man coming across the quad with a 'cello!" yelled Reilly up the stairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're all insane!" gasped Arthur Augustus, utterly dismayed. "All as mad as giddy hattahs!"

"Sir, you owe me half-a-guinea," said the professor sternly. "Unless you hand me that sum, and apologise for your extraordinary behaviour, I shall go at once to your headmaster!"

"Pay up, Gussy!"

"But, weally— Oh, vewy well! The old johnny has made a mistake; but he is an old chap, and he can have ten-and-six if he wants it," said Arthur Augustus. "There you are, sir! There has been a mistake. I'm sowwy!"

The professor snorted, pocketed the money, and marched out of the study. Toby put his head in at the door.

"Four gentlemen to see you, Master D'Arcy," he sniggered.

"D-don't let them come up!" stuttered D'Arcy, feeling as if his head were turning round. "I can't stand

any more of it! I weally can't! Dwive them away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Blake came hurrying along to the study. His wicket was down, and he was keen to be on the scene. He had spotted a long-haired gentleman with a 'cello in the quad.

"Getting your visitors, Gussy?" he inquired, looking into the study. "Hallo! What's wrong? You don't look happy."

Arthur Augustus groaned.

"I'm fed-up! I—I think I shall chuck up ventriloquism!" he panted. "They're all mad—mad as March hattahs—I mean, hares. They want to teach me ventwiloquism with violins, golf-clubs, and Gweek exahcises!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a chap coming upstairs with a book under his arm!" yelled Manners. "I can't see whether it's Hebrew or Sanskrit."

"And here comes a chap with a cornet!"

Arthur Augustus looked out of the study. As the afternoon wore on, more and more answers were coming to the advertisement. In the lower hall there were now six gentlemen waiting to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in various degrees of shabbiness, with violin and 'cello, and golf-clubs and big volumes.

As D'Arcy looked down he saw two more come in from the quadrangle—one with a cornet, and one with a 'cello. Evidently there was no lack of professors, and equally evidently, to D'Arcy's mind, they were all dotty. He retreated weakly into his study.

"I can't stand any more of it!" he gasped. "That old chap nearly turned my hair grey. I won't see them! They can go and drown themselves!"

"But you must see them!" yelled Tom Merry. "They've come in answer to your ad, and they will want their expenses, anyway. Better take the opportunity and learn the violin, the 'cello, the piano, the cornet, and golf, and Sanskrit, and Greek."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're all dotty! Pway dwive them away! Give them their expenses—give them anythin' they ask for—only don't let them into this study!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It's imposs for me to deal with that cwowd! Dwive them away!"

CHAPTER 15.

Saved!

"DWIVE them away, deah boys!" The juniors shrieked with laughter.

But it was no laughing matter to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The unfortunate swell of St. Jim's felt as though his brain was in a whirl.

The Greek professor had worn him out, as it were. He had not nerve enough to face the rest of the callers. And they were increasing in numbers. A glance from the study window showed him another long-haired and shabby gentleman crossing the quadrangle with a violin-case under his arm.

Arthur Augustus fairly collapsed into the study armchair, and groaned in an agony of spirit.

"They must all be potty!" he gasped. "How can you teach ventwiloquism with a beastly violin?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How can you teach it with golf clubs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or with Gweek exahcises and thin's, and 'cellos and—and— Bai Jove, one

of them will be bwingin' along a gwand piano next!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The chap with the cornet's coming upstairs!" chuckled Blake.

"Dwive him away!"

"Master D'Arcy here?" said the seedy gentleman with the cornet, looking in surprise at the almost hysterical juniors in the doorway of Study No. 6. "I've called in answer to an advertisement in the 'Wayland Times'."

"Don't let him come in!"

"What's that?" ejaculated the cornet-player.

"Ahem! Master D'Arcy is seeing a good many callers this afternoon!" gasped Lowther. "Just wait downstairs a bit, will you?"

"My time's valuable."

"Yes, yes; but wait a bit."

The gentleman with the cornet discontentedly retreated downstairs.

A few moments later another seedy individual with a 'cello came along to Study No. 6.

"I've called in answer to an advertisement—"

"Yes, yes. Go down and wait a bit," said Blake, almost choking; and he fairly "shooed" away the gentleman with the 'cello.

"Don't let 'em come in!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I weally cannot stand any more of it. I feel as if my bwain will turn!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' whatevah to laugh at. They are all mad—mad as hattahs and March hares, bai Jove! It's simply dangewous to have all those dweadful maniacs in the house together."

Blake clung to the doorway, in danger of an attack of hysterics.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Gussy," he gasped. "I'll get rid of the giddy crowd of them if you'll give up ventriloquism. Otherwise, I'll bring the whole gang in here on you at once."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Is it a go?" demanded Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I was thinkin' of giving up the beastly thin', anyway," groaned Arthur Augustus. "I am convinced that all ventriloquists are off their giddy wockahs, aftah this. It must have some peculah effect upon the bwain, I suppose. It's a go! Only, get wid of them, deah boy! Cleah them off, somehow. Pay them anythin' they want! Only, for goodness' sake, don't let that awful croud of cwanks loose in here on me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll save you," chuckled Tom Merry. "We'll have a whip round to raise the exes for them, and Gussy shall stand us a big feed in the study to compensate."

"Yaas, wathah! Anythin' you like."

"Twust to us!" said Monty Lowther nobly. "We'll rescue you, Gussy. Quite sure, though, you wouldn't like to interview personally the lunatic with the 'cello?"

"Yaas, yaas," shrieked D'Arcy.

"Dwive them away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake, nearly choking, dragged the study door shut. Then the grinning juniors hurried downstairs to deal with the crowd of applicants for the post of instructing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in so many varied arts.

The crowd of seedy gentlemen received the unsatisfactory explanation that the advertiser did not require their services. Whereupon, there was an indignant howl for expenses, and when it

was admitted that the claim for expenses would be met, it was remarkable how expensive a thing it seemed to be for a seedy gentleman to walk over from Wayland to St. Jim's.

However, terms were arranged at last, and the visitors departed, with their various instruments, Arthur Augustus watching them go from his study window; and when the last of them had disappeared, he drew a deep, deep sigh of relief.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not become a ventriloquist.

He was quite fed up on that subject. For some considerable time he remained firmly convinced that the practice of the art of ventriloquism had a deleterious effect upon the brain.

He received sudden enlightenment, however, when a copy of his famous advertisement in the "Wayland Times" came before his eye one day. Then he understood. His indignation was great, but it only evoked chuckles in the School House.

Fortunately, by that time, Arthur Augustus was very keen about cricket, and he confided to Blake, on reflection, that, upon the whole, he'd decided that he'd "bettah stick to cwicket and let ventwiloquism alone." And he did. And so Study No. 6 were troubled no more with the weird and wonderful effects of D'Arcy the ventriloquist.

(Shanghaied aboard a tramp—carried away into the Atlantic—shipwrecked! Tom Merry & Co. are in the thick of thrills in "THE SHANGHAIED SCHOOLBOYS!"—next week's super sea story. Don't miss it!)

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AMAZING RIOT BREAKS OUT IN THE REMOVE FORM ROOM AT GREYFRIARS!

HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

When the Beechwood Foreign Academy closed its doors for financial reasons, and Herr Rosenblum came to Greyfriars with his French and German pupils, Dr. Locke, the Head, little fore-saw what would be the outcome of letting the foreign boys join the Remove. For their advent marked the commencement of endless rivalry and rows with Harry Wharton & Co. to decide who shall be top dogs of the Remove.

After many fights, Fritz Hoffman and his German followers break in the door of Study No. 1 to rag Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent; but Bob Cherry and a crowd of Removites come to the rescue, and it is the German boys who get the ragging.

There is trouble over the smashing of the door of Study No. 1, but Harry Wharton & Co. will not tell Mr. Quelch, their Form-master, who is responsible for the damage. Mr. Quelch reports to Dr. Locke, and also complains of the incessant rows between the Removites and the aliens. The Head has a chat with Herr Rosenblum, and he agrees to lend the German the necessary money to reopen Beechwood Academy.

(Now read on.)

Called Before the Head!

WHARTON!" "Yes, Wingate?" The captain of Greyfriars was looking into Study No. 1, where the chums of the Remove were preparing tea. Billy Bunter was laying the table, and Nugent was poking the fire under the copper kettle. Bob Cherry was untying a parcel, which had evidently just been brought up from the school shop.

"You're wanted in the Head's study," said the Greyfriars captain briefly.

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"Hallo, has the herr reported us, after all, then, about ragging the Germans?"

"He wouldn't do that, Bob, after giving an imposition himself."

"No, I suppose not. But what—"

"I fancy it's about what's happened in the study," said Harry Wharton. "You know Quelch wanted to know who busted in the door."

"We couldn't very well give Hoffman away."

"I thought Quelch hadn't finished with the matter," said Nugent, shaking his head. "He's handed it over to the Head."

"The time of payfulness for the little jape has arrived," said Hurree Singh. "But we cannot tell the Head any more than we told the respected Form-master sahib."

"Hardly!"

"It is sneakful to give away the German chaps," said Hurree Singh. "Besides, whoever is saucy to a goose must also be saucy to a gander, as your English proverb says."

"Ha, ha, ha! Where did you learn that English proverb, Inky?" asked Bob Cherry.

"It was written in the copybook of my respected instructor in Bengal."

"Well, are you going, Wharton?" interrupted Wingate.

"Certainly."

"Aren't the rest of us wanted?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Only Wharton was mentioned to me, THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,484.

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

but if any of you others were in the row you can suit yourselves about going along with him," said Wingate.

And the Greyfriars captain walked away.

"Well, we'll come," said Nugent decidedly.

"No need for that," said Wharton quietly. "If it's a licking, one is enough. You stay where you are."

"Rats! We're all coming!"

"Well, only Nugent and I were here when they busted the door in—"

"We were all in the row," said Bob Cherry. "Besides, if it's a licking, and there are four of us to take it, the Head will lay it on more lightly."

"There's something in that."

"Of course there is. Come on, all together."

And the chums of the Remove quitted the study.

They were looking rather serious as they approached the Head's study. It

There's been no peace from rows since the French and German boys joined Greyfriars, but the climax of their rivalry with the Remove comes when a terrific riot breaks out in the Form-room!

was no light matter for a junior to be called into that dreaded apartment.

Harry Wharton knocked at the door and led the way into the study. Dr. Locke raised his eyes and fixed them on the quartet.

"I think I sent for you only, Wharton."

"I am here, sir."

"We have all come, sir," said Bob Cherry diffidently, "as we all had as much to do with the row as Wharton had."

"Indeed! What I wish to know is, how the door of your study came to have the lock broken?" said the Head sternly.

The juniors were silent.

"Was it broken in from the outside by a party of juniors attacking the study?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Who were the juniors?"

Silence again.

"Why do you not answer me?" said the Head quietly.

"It would be sneaking, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Unless the names of the culprits are given to me, I shall have no alternative but to consider you, yourselves, responsible for what has happened, and to punish you severely for the damage done."

Between respect for the Head and a determination not to betray Hoffman and his friends the juniors were in a

difficult position. But they were ready to take a licking rather than sneak.

"We have no objection to that, sir," said Wharton immediately.

The Head compressed his lips a little. "Then you may hold out your hand, Wharton."

He took up his cane. Wharton obeyed and received two hard cuts on either hand. Then each of the heroes of the Remove received the same. The cane stung their palms, but they bore the infliction without a murmur.

Dr. Locke laid down the cane.

"Your pocket-money will be stopped to pay for the damage done," he said. "and I am afraid it will leave you penniless for some time. You have only yourselves to blame for that. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the juniors left the study. In the passage outside they looked at one another with dubious expressions, while they squeezed their smartening hands under their arms.

"By George, the Head has come down heavy this time!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I say, what are we going to do for tin in the next few weeks?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Nugent.

"I'm nearly broke now."

"And I'm stony," said Wharton. "I blued my last shilling in the tuckshop half an hour ago for tea."

"Fortunately, I am still in a somewhat cashful condition," murmured Hurree Singh. "It will be pleasurable to me to stand the treatfulness to my esteemed chums."

"Good old Inky!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, slapping him on the shoulder. "But your pocket-money will be stopped, you know, so you will want to be economical, too."

"What I have is at the servicefulness of my respectable chums," answered Hurree Singh. "If I fall short of the filthy lucre I have that which I can raise money upon pawnfully."

"Eh! What's that?"

Hurree Singh slipped his hand into his pocket and drew out a little case, which he opened, and a dazzling glitter shot from the dark velvet lining.

"My hat! Is it a diamond?"

"Yes, and a very valuable one."

The juniors looked at the stone in amazement. It was a large diamond, beautifully cut, and its value must have been very great.

"Where did you get that from?" asked Bob Cherry.

The nabob smiled.

"I have many like it in the treasury of Bhanipur," he replied. "This one I had set as a tiepin, as you see, but it was explained to me by the respectable Herr Rosenblum that it was not cautionful to wear it in public, as it might tempt the fingers of the thievish persons. It is worth a hundred pounds."

"Well, you'd better keep it out of sight," said Harry Wharton. "It's not safe for a kid to have a stone like that about him. As for pawning it, I fancy no pawnbroker would lend you anything on it, Hurree Singh. He would want to be satisfied first that you had a right to it."

"I am Nabob of Bhanipur—"

"Never mind; pawnshops are barred," said Bob Cherry. "We'll rub along somehow without that. Let's get in to tea."

The chums of the Remove returned to

MORE EXCITEMENT IN THESE LIVELY CHAPTERS OF HARRY WHARTON'S EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.



"Look!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, pointing to the riotous scene in the Form-room. Dr. Locke stared in utter amazement. "Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "I can scarcely believe my eyes, Mr. Quelch! It is incredible—unparalleled!"

their study. Billy Bunter had the kettle on the boil, and he made the tea as soon as they came in.

In spite of their smarting hands the juniors enjoyed their tea in the study. And their late punishment had not the slightest effect so far as restoring peace in the Remove was concerned. For while they ate they discussed further plans of campaign, having for their object the defeat of the alien members of the Form.

Broke!

THE chums of the Remove soon forgot about the caning in the Head's study, but they felt the rest of their punishment for a time. The stoppage of their pocket-money was a serious matter. The charge for repairing the door of Study No. 1, and replacing the broken lock, was a considerable one, and it was probable that the pocket-money of the four chums would be stopped for weeks before the bill was quite paid.

A natural delicacy prevented the chums from acquainting Hoffman with the state of affairs. They had taken the punishment upon their own shoulders rather than give the Germans away, and they felt that they were in honour bound to stick it out, as Bob Cherry expressed it.

"We can't say anything to the Deutschers," said Bob Cherry decidedly, while the chums of the Remove were discussing the matter on Saturday afternoon. "That would spoil the whole thing. We've taken it on, and we must stick it out."

Harry Wharton nodded a full assent. "You are quite right there, Cherry. Not a word to the Germans on the subject."

"Only what are we to do for tin?" said Nugent. "We have now come to the end of Hurree Singh's cash, and we are all stony."

"I am sorrowful that I have no more cashfulness to place at the disposal of my respectful chums," said the nabob.

"My dear chap, you've come to the rescue like a nabob, and that's all right," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, we shall square up later. But the question is, what's to be done now?"

"The pawnful method—"

"My dear chap, the first question the pawnbroker would ask would be where you got the diamond from," said Harry Wharton.

"I should acquaint him with the fact that I am the Nabob of Bhanipur, and that I have many stones in my treasure-chamber in the Indian palace."

"But he might believe that you were romancing."

"If he had the doubtfulness of the veracity of a Nabob of Bhanipur, I should smite him upon the nasal feature with the powerfulness of the right arm."

"That wouldn't improve matters."

"It wouldn't improve his nasal feature, either. Besides, he might call a policeman and have you run in."

"Anyway, it might come out that a Greyfriars fellow had been to a pawnshop, and that would mean a row with the Head," said Harry Wharton. "It won't do, Inky. We must think of something else."

"I have the bowful submission to the wilfulness of the working majority," said Hurree Singh gracefully.

But the "something else" was not easily thought of, and the juniors had to give up the discussion without having thought of any method of raising the wind.

There was nothing for it, as Harry Wharton finally said, but to grin and bear it.

But Hurree Singh's thoughts were busy on the subject.

He was pained by the thought that he could do nothing to help his chums in the hour of need, and his mind was still

running on the idea of pawning the diamond in the village and so raising money.

The difficulties raised by his chums did not change his mind on that point. As for the risk of the fact coming out that a Greyfriars fellow had been to a pawnshop, that would not happen if he were careful.

It would be a good idea to take a friend along with him to prove that he was the Nabob of Bhanipur, and had a right to dispose of the diamond if he wished. But as he intended to keep the pawning secret, at least for the present, he could not ask one of his chums, who had objected to the scheme.

He turned the matter over in his mind as he strolled alone under the old Greyfriars elms, and he was still thinking it over when Hazeldene of the Remove joined him.

The nabob looked at him inquiringly.

"I say, I want to speak to you, Inky," said Hazeldene, in the ingratiating way which had earned him the nickname of "Vaseline" in the Remove. "I'm rather broke to-day—my allowance hasn't come down—"

"I am sorry—"

"Could you lend me half-a-crown till next Saturday?"

"I am regretfully sorrowful, Vaseline, but I cannot," said Hurree Singh. "I wish that I could perform the lendfulness, but I have no cash in the pocket."

Hazeldene looked incredulous. "You're always rolling in money," he said. "You get your allowance to-day, too. Why don't you say at once that you won't?"

"If you imply doubtfulness upon my assertiveness, Vaseline, I shall wipe up the ground dustfully with you."

"Oh, keep your wool on! But—"

"The fact is that I'm in the brokeful condition, because my allowance has been stopped by the respectable and esteemed Head."

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"What for?" was Hazeldene's natural question.

Hurree Singh explained.

"Then why don't you ask Hoffman to stand something?" asked Hazeldene.

"I do not wish to do anything of the sort," said the nabob. "It is a secret from the esteemed German rotters."

"Ha, ha! Well, haven't you anything you can raise money on?" asked Hazeldene practically. "There's a popshop in the village."

"A what?"

"A pawnshop," said Hazeldene, colouring a little.

"That is what I was thinking of," said the nabob. "Will you come with me to raise money at the popping establishment, and I will lend you a pound or two pounds, and will not ask you for the return payfulness?"

Hazeldene's eyes glittered with covetousness at the idea.

"Will I come? Rather!"

"My gratefulness will be very great."

"But what have you to pawn?" asked Hazeldene.

The Indian drew the little case containing the diamond from his pocket. Hazeldene uttered an exclamation of amazement at the sight of the splendid stone.

"Why, that must be worth a heap of money!" he exclaimed.

"It is worth a hundred pounds, my esteemed friend."

"And is it yours?"

"I have many such in my treasure chamber in the city of Bhanipur."

"My hat! I wish I knew the way into that treasure chamber!" grinned Hazeldene. "But, I say, the pawnbroker will want to know all about this!"

"You can bear the witnessfulness that I am really the respectable Nabob of Bhanipur, and honestly the ludicrous possessor of the stone."

"Ha, ha! I suppose I can."

"Then let us proceed swiftly to the shop of the popper."

"May as well try, anyway."

"I will go and get my cap, and I will join you in a few minutes," said Hurree Singh.

"Good! I'll wait for you at the gate."

The two Removites walked away. And barely had they disappeared when two grinning faces appeared round the big trunk of a tree close at hand.

The faces belonged to Meunier and Gaston Artois. The French chums had heard the whole of the talk between Hurree Singh and Hazeldene.

"Mon bleu!" murmured Meunier, grinning expansively. "Vat zink you of zat, my shum?"

"Zey go to ze pawnshop," said Artois. "It would be ze good shoke to take all ze fellows and meet zey coming out and cheer zem."

"He, he, he! Zat would be funny!"

"Let us get ze garcons togezzer, zen." Adolphe Meunier shook his head.

"Zat would be funny, Gaston; but I have ze better idea in my head."

"Ciell! And vat is zat, mon ami?"

"Zey go to ze pop-establishment to pawn ze diamond—"

"C'est vrai! And zen?"

"Suppose, ven zey reach ze pop-establishment, zey no longer have ze diamond?"

Artois stared at his chum.

"But how? In vat vay?"

"Come viz me."

Meunier, chuckling to himself over his idea, led the way towards the

School House. He explained to Artois as he went.

"Ze Indian vill go upstairs to get ze cap. Ve sall find him alone."

"Zat is true."

"Ve sall collair him and take ze case from his pocket—"

"But zen he vill know ze diamond is gone."

"Ve must do it vizout his knowing."

"Good—if it can be done!"

"You vill see. You sit on ze head and rub ze features in ze carpet, and he vill not be zinking of anything at ze time."

"Ha, ha, ha! Zat is right."

"Ve put a marble in ze case instead of ze diamond."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Zen ze pawnbroker have zat offered to him. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Artois.

"I zink ze veeze vill vork."

"I zink so. Ha, ha, ha!"

And the French lads hurried into the House and up the stairs, on the track of the unsuspecting Hurree Singh.

At the Pawnbroker's!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH entered Study No. 1 without a suspicion that the French juniors knew anything about his project, or had any knowledge of the existence of the diamond.

When two mischievous faces looked in at the door he did not observe them, and he did not know the foes were at hand until he heard a sudden rush of feet—and then it was too late.

"Seize him!"

He was grasped and dragged to the floor before he could think of resistance. He went down with a bump, and Gaston Artois sprawled over him, and Adolphe Meunier grasped him round the neck and flattened his princely features on the floor.

"Oh! Ow! Leave off!"

"You vas ze prisoner, zen!"

"I will dustfully wipe up the floor with you!"

"Sit on ze nigger harder, Gaston."

"Oui, oui!" grinned Gaston.

"Will you surrender now?"

"No, I will not surrender to you Frenchful bounders!" gasped Hurree Singh, struggling manfully under the weight of the two juniors.

His resistance did not trouble the French chums much. In the struggle it was easy for Meunier to slip his hand into the pocket where he had seen Hurree Singh replace the case containing the diamond.

Hurree Singh, with his face in rough contact with the carpet, could not see either that the French junior had taken the case or what he was doing with it.

In a few moments it was slipped back into his pocket, and he was totally unconscious of the whole proceeding.

"Now vill you surrender?"

"Never!"

"Zen ve vill tie you up to ze chair and leave you here!" grinned Adolphe Meunier.

Hurree Singh changed his mind. He thought of Hazeldene waiting for him at the gate of Greyfriars, and of the necessity of raising the money for the needs of Study No. 1.

"I—I surrender, you rotters!" he gasped. "You are twofold to one superior in number, and there is no disgracefulness in surrendering to the great oddfulness."

"You confess zat you are beaten?"

"Certainly!"

"Zen ve vill allow you to go," said

Meunier, rising. "Let ze niggair get up, my shum."

And Hurree Singh was allowed to rise.

He got to his feet, looking very dusty and wrathful. He rubbed the dust from his clothes and eyed the French chums indignantly.

"I would inflict upon you the severe thrashfulness if I had time!" he exclaimed. "Another time I will visit you with the condignful punishment."

The French juniors grinned as they walked away.

"He know nozzing of vat I have do," said Meunier.

"He vill go down to ze pop-establishment—"

"Viz ze marble in ze case. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is too funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh came out and gave the French juniors a wrathful look as he passed them. Hazeldene was waiting for him at the gate, and the two walked down the lane together.

"You've been a long time," said Hazeldene.

Hurree Singh explained the cause of the delay.

"Well, it doesn't matter," said Hazeldene. "We had better take care not to be seen going into the shop. There would be a row if it were known at Greyfriars that a fellow had been to the pawnbroker's, I can tell you."

"That is quite rightfully the case, my respectable friend. It is only an emergency of extreme greatness which justifies our action."

The juniors soon reached the village, and entered the pawning establishment quietly and quickly by the side door. A young man with black eyes and very prominent nose asked them what he could do for them.

Hurree Singh, though he was making the sacrifice for the sake of his friends, felt a keen sense of uneasiness at really finding himself inside a pawnbroker's shop.

He coloured a little as he met the eyes of the young man with the prominent nose, and he felt hastily in his pocket for the case.

"I believe that you perform the lendfulness to the needy person?" he remarked. "I am in want of cash."

"Do you mean that you want to pawn something?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, what is it you wish to pledge?"

Hurree Singh handed the case over the counter.

"I wish to raise a loan on that diamond, if you please. It is worth a hundred pounds, but I wish you to lend me only the common or garden ten-pound note, in order to increase the easfulness of the future redemption."

The young man behind the counter opened the case. He looked at what it contained, and then looked at the beaming face of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Then he looked at the stone again. The expression on his face was very grim.

He could only possibly conclude that the two Greyfriars juniors had come into the shop with the deliberate intention of working off a joke on him on his busiest day in the week, and his wrath naturally rose at the thought.

"So you want to raise money on this, do you?" he asked.

"Certainly!"

"And you only want ten pounds?"

"The ten will do, my respectable popping friend," said the nabob. "I wish, as I had the honour of mentioning, to make more easyful the redemption of the popped article."

"I see," said the young man, with ominous quietness. "Wait just a minute, will you?"

"Certainly!"

The young man disappeared, and the next moment he came out from behind the counter and seized the two juniors by the collar—one in each hand.

He was a powerfully built young man, and the juniors were taken too much by surprise to resist, and they were helpless in his hands.

"So you wish to pawn this valuable stone for ten pounds, do you?" said the young man wrathfully. "I'll teach you!"

"What's the matter?" gasped Hazeldene. "If you don't want to lend the money—"

"Return my valuable diamond—"

"Out you go!"

With two strong jerks the young man dragged them to the door, kicked it open, and then slung them out across the pavement.

The amazed juniors went reeling away, and fell sprawling.

They sat up on the pavement and stared at each other, and at the man standing glaring wrathfully at them from the doorway of the pawnshop.

"He is dangerously insane!" gasped the nabob.

"If you come back here, you young rascals, you'll get something worse!"

"He's off his rocker, for a cert!"

"Get away from here!"

"Return my valuable diamond and I will execute the swift departfulness!" exclaimed the nabob, rising to his feet. "You are a rudeful and brutal individual, and I despise you! Return me the diamond!"

"There you are!"

The young man threw the case containing the stone at Hurree Singh. It struck him on the nose and elicited a sharp cry. Then it fell to the pavement. The door of the shop closed with a slam.

Hurree Singh rubbed his nose in rueful amazement. He could not comprehend the conduct of the young man in the least, except upon the suggestion that he was insane. And the young man had looked excited and angry, but hardly insane.

"What does it mean, Vaseline?"

"Blessed if I know, unless he's right off his rocker!" growled Hazeldene.

Hurree Singh glanced at the box on the pavement. It had jerked open in the fall, and the stone had rolled out of it, and the nabob gave a cry of astonishment at the sight of it.

"Look! My diamond is gone!"

"What?"

"This worthlessful stone is put in the place of it," said Hurree Singh, picking up the case and the stone, and regarding both in utter amazement.

Hazeldene gave a snort.

"Oh, I see! That explains it. No wonder he got wild when you offered him a marble and asked him to lend you ten pounds on it, you utter ass!"

"But the diamond was in the case!"

"Rats! You've made an idiotic mistake!"

"But it was in the case when I showed it you under the trees at Greyfriars."

"I know it was."

"And I have the complete certainfulness that I have not opened the case since," said Hurree Singh.

Hazeldene sniffed.

"You must have, and forgotten about it—or else someone has played a trick on you. My hat, I see it now!"

"What do you see, my respectable friend?"

"One of the biggest asses at Grey-

friars," growled Hazeldene. "Of course, that is what Meunier and Artois were up to when they collared you before you came out—they managed to change the diamond for the marble somehow."

"Surely it is impossible."

"Rats!" growled Hazeldene.

"Perhaps it is so—but I do not understand."

"Well, it's all up now and we've had our journey for nothing," said Hazeldene.

"I can take in my watch to the popping gentleman, and obtain the loanful consideration on that."

Hazeldene grinned.

"I don't suppose you'll find him in a very reasonable mood just now, Inky. I'd advise you not to go into that shop again."

"But surely he would not be so rashful as to refuse the good stroke of business," urged the nabob.

"Well, try him, that's all."

"Come in with me."

"No, thanks; I'll wait for you here."

"Very well. I'm sure he will listen to reason when I give him the complete explanation of the extremely great error I have fallen into with regard to the diamond."

And Hurree Singh re-entered the shop.

The young man behind the counter stared at him, apparently hardly able to believe his eyes at the sight of the dusky nabob.

"So you've come back again!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sahib. I wish to make the polite and esteemed explanation—"

"Get out!"

"Please have the esteemed patience, my worthy popping-sahib, until I have made the respectable explanation."

The popping-sahib seemed to have got

quite to the end of his esteemed patience. He rushed round from behind the counter and dashed at the nabob.

Hurree Singh saw that it was dangerous to linger, and that there was no time for esteemed explanations just then. He made a spring for the door.

He had thrown it open again and was just darting out, when the young man reached him and took a running kick. His boot gave the nabob a powerful lift behind, and Hurree Singh landed on his hands and knees on the pavement.

Hazeldene burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha! I thought it would end like that."

The young man of the shop bestowed a glare on the two juniors, and slammed the door, and Hurree Singh rose rather painfully to his feet.

"I consider that popping-sahib is a rudeful and brutal scoundrel," he remarked. "I wish my worthy chums were here, and we would raid the shop and give him what you English call an elevated old time."

"Ha, ha! Come along. Let's return to Greyfriars."

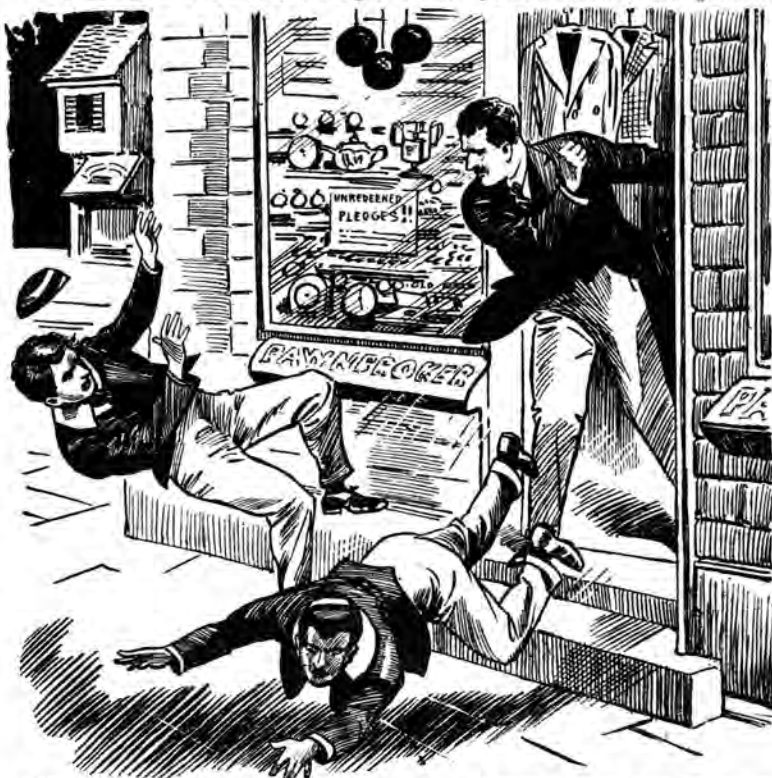
And the juniors walked rather disconsolately back to the school. Harry Wharton met them in the Close, with a rather puzzled expression on his face.

"I've been looking for you, Hurree Singh!" he exclaimed.

"I've been to the esteemed village. What is it?"

"Meunier gave me this to give you," said Harry, extending a small packet to the nabob. "He made no explanation, but just shoved it into my hand, and said it was for you, something that belonged to you."

Hurree Singh took the packet and opened it. He suspected what it was, and he was not mistaken. The opening of the packet disclosed the glittering



"Out you go!" exclaimed the pawnbroker, and with a strong jerk he slung Hurree Singh and Hazeldene across the pavement. The amazed juniors went reeling away and fell sprawling. "If you come back here, you young rascals, you'll get something worse!"

diamond of Bhanipur, and Harry Wharton gazed at it in amazement.

"What does that mean, Hurree Singh?"

And the nabob, his dusky countenance blushing, explained; and Wharton yelled with laughter. And so did the rest of the Remove when Hazeldene told them the story.

A Riot in the Remove!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir."

"I leave you in charge of the class for a few minutes."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch cast a rather doubtful glance for a moment at the Remove as he crossed to the door. A fag had just brought him in a note. It was Monday morning, and the Remove were hard at work in their class-room, English, French and German juniors all grinding away at Latin. The note evidently necessitated the departure of the Remove master for a time, and he was dubious as to how his unruly class would conduct itself during his absence.

"You will be quiet, boys, and continue your work while I'm gone," said Mr. Quelch. "I will send in a prefect in a few minutes to take charge of the class."

"Yes, sir," said a dozen voices.

And the Remove master left the room.

The moment he had done so and the door was closed, a buzz of voices rose in the room—English, French and German were mixed in a babel.

"Shut up, you fellows!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You heard what Mr. Quelch said."

"Who was you?" demanded Fritz Hoffman, with an air of impartial inquiry, as if he really wanted to know.

"I've been left in charge of the class by Mr. Quelch."

"Rats! Rot! Bosh!" exclaimed Adolphe Meunier.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"Did you say bosh to me?" he asked.

"Oui; I said bosh, and I said rats!" said Meunier defiantly.

"Keep quiet!"

"Bah! Keep quiet viz yourself."

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"We shall all get into a row if there's any fighting in the class-room."

"That is extremely correctful," said Hurree Singh. "I request these foreign rotters to shut up their talkfulness."

"You vas vun nigger, Inky!"

"Who cares for te Engleesh peegs?"

"Zat is right, you Sherman rottair!"

"Who vas you call vun rotter, Meunier?"

"You yourself, Hoffman; you vas ze chief rottair, and ze ozzers—"

"I vill punch te nose of you—"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton. "If you two sets of asses begin to row now I will wade in and knock your heads together."

"Ciel! If you vas touch my head I vipe ze floor viz you!"

"Ach! Let him try to knock te head, tat is all!" And Fritz Hoffman, by way of showing his independence, began to whistle in his shrillest tones.

Meunier, not to be outdone, started whistling the "Marseillaise."

Wharton stopped his ears.

"Will you shut up?"

"Non!"

"Nein!"

And the French boys, getting into the spirit of the thing, cheerfully joined in at the top of their voices.

The Germans roared back their national song in stentorian tones. The

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result was a din that could be heard over half Greyfriars.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"They'll have the roof off us soon!" "The only thing to do is start up in opposition," said Hazeldene. "What price 'Rule Britannia'?"

There was a yell of approval. The juniors struck up in a roar, and their voices drowned the fewer foreigners in a deafening din of sound. Harry Wharton had given up the idea of trying to keep order.

The whole Remove was on the war-path now, each junior seeking to make the greatest possible amount of noise, as if for a wager.

There were more English lads than French or German put together, so "Rule Britannia" soon drowned the national songs of the foreigners, and the latter thereupon set to work stamping and beating the desks with rulers to drown the vocal effects of the English juniors.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent.

"There'll be a row!"

"There's one already, I imagine," grinned Bob Cherry.

"My solitary hat!" exclaimed Hurree Singh. "The noise will attract the prefects, and we shall be impositioned without mercy."

"Ha, ha! Don't you know a Hindu song, Hurree Singh?" said Hazeldene. "It will make the thing complete."

"The idea is rippingful!" said the nabob.

And his voice at once added to the din, chanting some absolutely tuneless and incomprehensible lay of Bhanipur.

There was an angry voice at the door as Carberry of the Sixth looked in. He was evidently the prefect sent by Mr. Quelch to take charge of the unruly Remove during the temporary absence of the Form-master.

"Shut up, you young rascals!"

But the Removeites were too wildly excited by this time to heed him. It is quite possible that had Mr. Quelch himself come in then, he would have found it extremely difficult to restore order in the Form-room; and so it was not likely that the Remove would pay much attention to Carberry, the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars.

"Be quiet! Do you hear?" roared Carberry.

It was not easy to hear in the din, and certainly none of the Removeites heeded. The uproar continued without abatement, and wildly mingled snatches of French, German, and English echoed out into the corridors and reached other class-rooms.

"Will you shut up, you young demons?" shrieked Carberry, and he dashed at the Remove, smiting right and left with the cane he had snatched from the Form-master's desk.

Then some of the singers ceased their song and howled with pain instead.

Hoffman received a cut across the cheek, and he snatched at the cane and tore it from the prefect's hand.

Carberry seized him by the collar and dragged him out before the class, and began to box his ears savagely.

This was too much for Karl Lutz, who rushed gallantly to the aid of his leader and seized the prefect round the neck from behind and dragged him to the floor. In his excitement he plumped down upon him and began to jam his features on the hard linoleum. Carberry gasped for help.

Harry Wharton dragged the excited Lutz off his victim, and the next moment was seized by Hoffman. They wrestled and fought, heedless of anyone else.

The chums of the Remove dashed to the rescue, and in a twinkling, English

and Germans were mixed up in a wild affray.

In a case like this, Meunier and his friends sided with the weaker party, and they scrambled to the aid of the Germans, so that the three parties were mingled in a general combat before the amazed Carberry could get to his feet.

The prefect gazed about him in bewilderment.

French, German, and English were fighting like tigers, utterly forgetful of the fact that they were in a class-room, in school hours, and that the Form-master might return at any moment.

A rush of excited juniors sent the prefect flying, and he bumped on the floor, with half a dozen juniors sprawling over him.

By this time the din had attracted general attention, and Mr. Quelch was returning to the Form-room with swift strides. The Remove master arrived in the doorway, and he stood gazing in on the scene in blank amazement.

"Boys!"

He roared out the word.

At any other time the mere sight of Mr. Quelch's angry face would have silenced the Remove and reduced them to obedience. But the juniors had fairly broken loose now. No one paid the least heed to the Remove master's angry voice; most of the excited juniors did not even know he was there.

"Boys! Cease this unseemly riot instantly!"

But the unseemly riot showed no signs of abating.

"Carberry! How dare you allow this?"

"How could I help it?" hooted Carberry, staggering to his feet. "The young hooligans knocked me about and I—"

"Silence! You should not answer me like that!"

"Well, it isn't my fault! They want flogging all round—"

"You can go, Carberry!"

"Jolly glad to!" muttered the prefect as he retreated into the passage.

"Go to the Sixth Form Room and tell the Head that I should be glad if he could come here at once."

"Certainly, sir!"

The prefect hurried away and Mr. Quelch gazed in on the riot in grim silence. His voice had been unheeded by the rioters; it remained to be seen whether the Head's would be unheeded, too.

In a few moments the Head of Greyfriars came along to the Remove-room with swift strides.

"My dear Mr. Quelch—"

"Look!" exclaimed the Remove master, raising his finger and pointing dramatically into the room.

The Head looked, and his face became like a thundercloud.

"Bless my soul! I can scarcely believe my eyes, Mr. Quelch! How did this happen?"

"I was compelled to leave the room for a few minutes, sir, and before the prefect I sent could arrive this riot broke out."

"It is incredible—unparalleled! Boys—boys!"

The Head's voice rang through the class-room.

"Boys! Cease this immediately!"

There was a sudden hush.

"The Head!" gasped Wharton.

And the dreaded word passed round the Remove. The fighting ceased as if by magic.

The Removeites, dusty and dishevelled, and bruised and battered, stood with crimson faces, meeting the angry glare of the Head of Greyfriars, and a silence

that could almost be felt descended upon the room

Farewell!

A PIN might have been heard to fall in the Remove class-room. The Head looked at the rioters, and the rioters looked at the Head.

As Hurree Singh said afterwards, in describing the scene, the terrible nature of the occasion was unparalleled!

"Boys!" The Head's tone was quiet now, but to the ears of the hushed Remove it seemed like thunder echoing through the silent room.

"I can scarcely believe my ears," the Head continued, looking straight at the dusty rebels. "I can scarcely believe my eyes. I have never beheld such a scene of unparalleled hooliganism."

"If you please, sir."

"Silence, Hoffman!"

"S'il vous plait, Monsieur Locke—" "Silence, Meunier! The whole Form has been concerned in this outrageous tumult," said the Head sternly. "Every boy in the Remove will receive a caning after school, and will come to my study for that purpose."

"Certainly, dear sir." "Every boy will write out five hundred lines from Virgil, and will perform this task the next half-holiday, and will remain in during all leisure hours until the task is completed."

The Remove gasped. They had expected something severe, but this was the sledgehammer coming down with a vengeance.

"That is all," said the Head, "and if that does not teach the Form discipline, we will see what severer measures will effect."

The Remove was silent. "Has any one of you," went on the Head, "an explanation to give for this outrageous conduct?"

There was a muttering of voices, but Harry Wharton was the only one who spoke out.

"If you please, sir, we didn't mean any real harm—"

Dr. Locke smiled grimly.

"You don't consider it harmful to riot in the class-room, Wharton?"

"Well, sir, we didn't stop to think."

"The circumstances of the case were too hasty and hurried, sahib, and we were carried away by the excitement of our pedal extremities," explained the nabob.

"Ah! I have one word more to say to you—news that will probably be welcome to members of this Form who came here from Beechwood."

There was a general movement of interest.

A rumour had been spreading about Greyfriars for the past few days that there was to be a revival of the old school at Beechwood, and that Herr Rosenblum would return there with the boys he had brought to Greyfriars.

"I have to inform you," said the Head impressively, "that Herr Rosenblum will be leaving Greyfriars in a few days, and that he returns to his former school as headmaster, Beechwood Academy now being revived."

"Vive Herr Rosenblum!"

"Hoch! Hoch!" It was an enthusiastic shout from the foreign members of the Greyfriars Remove.

The Head's stern brow relaxed a little.

"Does this news please you, my boys?"

"Oui, oui!" shouted Meunier.

"Ja, ja, mein Herr!" exclaimed Hoffman. "Ve sall be glad as efer vas to return mit ourselves to our old school."

"I shall be sorrowful to leave Greyfriars, but it will be pleasurable to see Beechwood," purred Hurree Singh.

"This change will take place in a few days," said the Head. "In the meantime, I hope you will try to live in peace with one another."

"Certainly, sir."

"We'll do our best."

"We shall exert the extreme bestfulness of our ability, worthy sahib."

"Ach! Tat is goot!"

"Ve vill live in peace vis ze Shermans," said Meunier magnanimously.

"I will trust you, my boys."

And the Head turned and strode away.

"Resume your places, boys," said Mr. Quelch; and the Removites sat down and the lesson commenced. But it is safe to say that neither master nor pupils bestowed much attention upon it.

After the school was dismissed, Harry Wharton and his chums met in their study to discuss the new development.

"I'm sorry you're going, Inky," said Bob Cherry. "We ought to give a farewell feed, but it can't be did while we're in this state of stony-brokenness."

"We ought to manage it somehow," said Harry Wharton. "I can take my watch down to Solomon's, in the village—"

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" called out Harry Wharton.

It was Fritz Hoffman who entered. The Remove chums looked rather on the alert, but the German junior showed

that his visit was made in a friendly spirit.

"Dere vill be no more rows," he said, with a wave of his fat hand. "Ve vill live like te lambs in te fold till ve leave Greyfriars."

"We're willing, if you are."

"Ve sall haf plenty of rows ven ve return to Beechwood," said Hoffman, with a grin. "No more at Greyfriars. But tat is not all. Ve haf heard about you losing all your pocket money because of te door tat vas proken."

"What about it, Hoffman?"

The German took a little bag from his pocket and poured out a heap of silver on the table. The chums of the Remove looked at it in amazement.

"What the dickens is all that for?" asked Harry Wharton.

The German junior gave them a beaming smile.

"Ve make te supscription," he said. "Ve pass round te hat."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"No," said Hoffman innocently. "My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vy for you laff? Ve pass round te hat, and make te supscription, vat you Engleesh call fork out all round. You take te cash."

The four Removites shook their heads.

"Can't be did," said Harry Wharton decidedly. "Couldn't think of it."

The German looked rather hurt.

"I tink you should take it—ve proke te door, and—"

"It's impossible."

"But you vas proke—"

"Yes, I know we are." A sudden thought flashed into Harry Wharton's mind, and he went on: "I'll tell you what! We'll take it as a loan to tide us over this stony time, and return you

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a postal order for it afterwards at Beechwood."

"Good! Tat is all right."

"Then it's settled. We'll give a big feed as a sort of farewell feast, you know, and you'll all come."

"Mit pleasures."

And Fritz Hoffman grinned genially and left the study.

"Jolly good sort!" said Bob Cherry.

"Hallo! Here's Froggy."

Adolphe Meunier put his head into the study.

"Vat you zink of vat ze Head say?" he demanded. "Sall ve all live in peace viz ourselves till ve go back to Beechwood?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Zen ve are villing," said Meunier.

"Ve give a big feast before ve go, and ve ask you all to come—you and ze Shermans."

"We're giving one ourselves."

"Zen ve had better make a pool of it, and make it one bigger feed," said Meunier.

"Good wheeze!"

And the idea was adopted. The preparations for the farewell feast occupied the minds of the juniors during the next few days, and left them no time for disputing, to say nothing of the time taken up by the heavy impositions earned by the row in the class-room.

The last few days which the aliens spent at Greyfriars passed quietly enough. There had never been any ill-feeling at the bottom of the disputes,

and the juniors were on their very best behaviour now.

And when the day came for Herr Rosenblum and his pupils to go, the whole Remove marched down to the station to see them off.

The parting was genial on both sides.

"I have enormous affliction of the heart to see you no morefully," said Hurree Singh, his English growing more excited in emotion. "I am departfully sorry to leave the esteemed Greyfriars and my worthy and respectable chums. I shall always regard you rememberfully, and I shall correspondingly write to you from Beechwood."

And the chums of the Remove shook hands with him before he got into the train. He leaned out of the carriage window and shook hands with Harry Wharton again, and left a small object wrapped in paper in his palm.

"Hallo! What's this?" asked Harry in amazement.

The nabob smiled.

"A parting gift from a nabob," he replied. "Do not look at it till I'm gone. Mind, I give it to you—and give it with all my heartfelt esteem—and these respectable chums are honourable witnesses of the circumstance."

"We are!" grinned the worthy and respectable Removes.

"But, I say—"

The train began to move, and Hurree Singh waved his hand.

"You will keep it for my sake, Wharton—you who have been my bestful friend."

And the nabob's dusky face was as earnest that Harry, though he had not the faintest idea of what was in the paper, and suspected that it contained something of value which he would not like to accept, could not but promise that he would keep it.

The train rolled on. The windows were crammed with French and German faces, and waving caps; and from a window beamed the full-moon countenance of Herr Rosenblum, and his fat hand waved farewell.

The Greyfriars juniors waved their caps and shouted.

"Good-bye! Good-bye!"

"Adieu!" came ringing back from the departing train. "Leb wohl!"

And the Beechwood boys were gone.

The chums of the Remove turned to leave the station. Wharton had for the moment forgotten the little package in his hand, but Bob Cherry called his attention to it.

"What the dickens is it, Harry?"

Wharton unfasted the little package.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "I can't keep this. But I said I would; I shall have to keep it now. But what on earth am I to do with it?"

For it was the nabob's diamond that glimmered in the palm of his hand!

(Well, the aliens have departed, but there's no peace for Harry Wharton & Co. In next week's gripping story they are on the track of a ghost which haunts the ruined wing of Greyfriars! Don't forget to order your GEM early.)

PEN PALS

(Continued from page 17.)

Miss Kathleen Mary Melville, 19, Genoa Road, Leeds, 12; girl correspondents; sport, films.

T. Smith, Copswood, 14, Knutsford Avenue, Whalley Range, Manchester; age 10-14; India or Spain; stamps, films, speedway.

Norman C. Vincent, Normandale, 19, Milner Road, Beres, Durban, Natal, South Africa; pen pals; age 16-17.

David Stocks, Railway Department, Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia; pen pals.

H. Yanofsky, 213, St. Joseph Boulevard West, Montreal, Canada; age 14-17; stamps.

Miss Margaret McConnell, 2257, Regent Avenue, N.D.G., Montreal, Canada; girl correspondents; age 17-20.

Miss Viney Simpson, 16, New Brunswick Avenue, Kingsway, St. George, Bristol, 5; girl correspondents; age 16 up; films, books.

Miss Margaret Quinn, 429, Villerey Street, Montreal, Canada; girl correspondents; age 18-21.

Frank Browne, 4, Havelock Road, Gravesend, Kent; pen pals, age 16-18; overseas.

Philip Palmer, 889, Lea Bridge Road, Whipp's Cross, Walthamstow, London, E.17; age 10-12; Brazil, Egypt.

Geoffrey F. Guest, 11, Vincent Avenue, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester; old "Nelson Lee" issues, stamps.

William Middleton, 93, Williams Road, Burnley, Lancs; age 17-25; sports, stamps, aviation, photography.

Leslie Grant, 41, Lambert Street, Ararat, Victoria, Australia; stamps; age 16-24.

Miss Gwen Cracknell, 7, Regent Street, Sandy Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia; age 15-16; girl correspondents; cycling, swimming, dancing.

J. Zimmermann, Queen Melisande's Road, Jerusalem, Palestine; age 14-16; stamps, books.

Tan Thian Chye, 106, Gladstone Road, Penang, Straits Settlements; age 16-19; photography, stamps, sports.

P. R. Case, The Butts, Oughterside, Maryport, Cumberland; age 18-30; British Isles, China, U.S.A.

Oo Hoe Seng, 82, Denison Road, Telok Anson, Perak, Federated Malay States; stamps.

Allan Russell, Heaslop Terrace, Annerley, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia; pen pals.

R. Peake, Jameson House, Prince Edward School, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia, S. Africa; stamps.

Harold Sparrow, Public Hospital, Nelson, New Zealand; stamps.

C. Hooking, 8, Brents Avenue, Durban, Natal, S. Africa; age 15-17; stamps, rugby, cricket, scouting.

A. Kent, 76, Valentine Road, Walthamstow, London, E.; age 12-14; stamps.



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