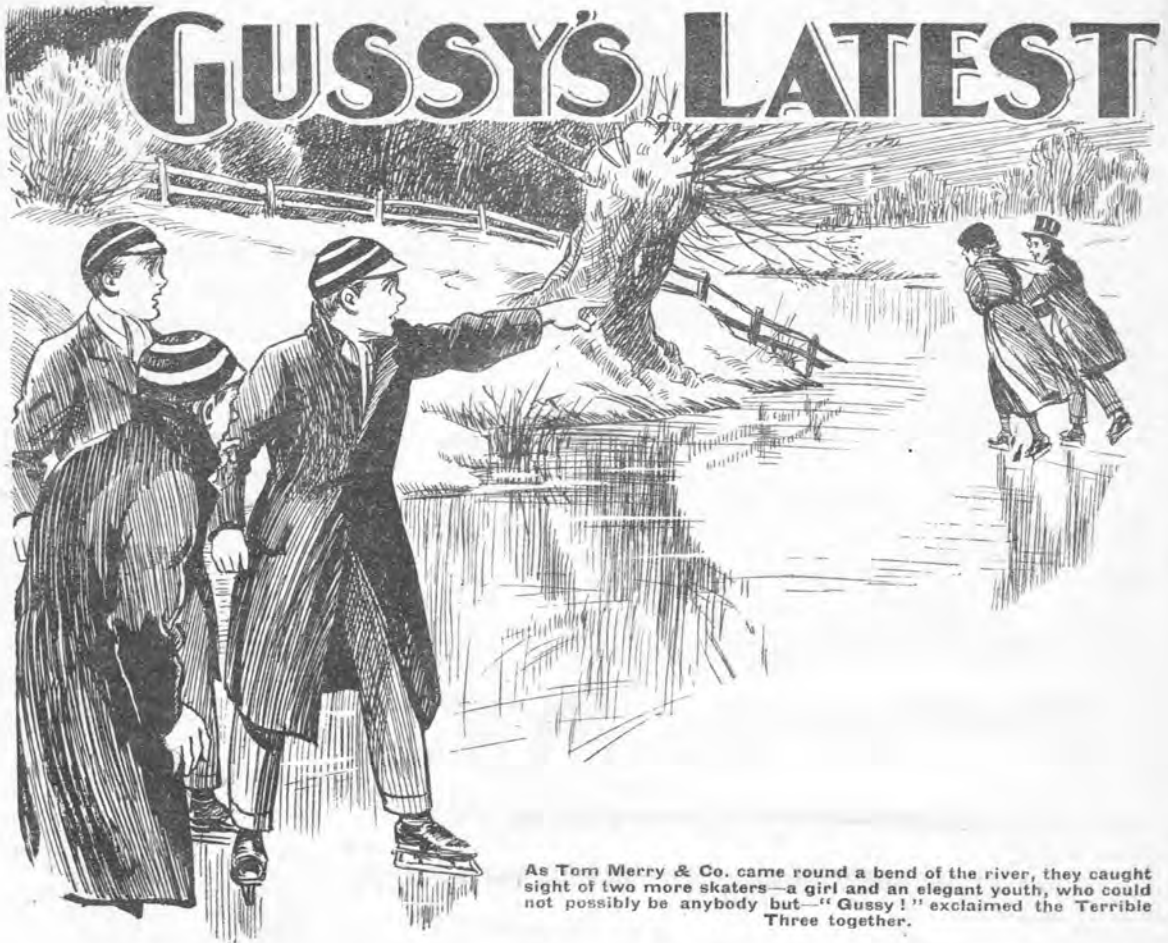


SCREAMINGLY FUNNY ST. JIM'S AND GREYFRIARS STORIES INSIDE!



WHY DID ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY WASTE HIS MONEY ON UNWANTED CIGARETTES, CIGARS, AND TOBACCO? HE WAS IN LOVE!



As Tom Merry & Co. came round a bend of the river, they caught sight of two more skaters—a girl and an elegant youth, who could not possibly be anybody but—"Gussy!" exclaimed the Terrible Three together.

CHAPTER 1.

Left in the Lurch!

"Gussy!"
"D'Arcy, you ass!"
"Where's that chump Gussy?"

Blake, Herries, and Digby of the Fourth were asking those questions right and left, up and down the School House at St. Jim's.

As their inquiries remained unanswered, they grew more and more emphatic.

"Where's that ass Gussy?"

"Where has that giddy fathead got to?"

"Anybody seen a tame lunatic?"

Nobody had, apparently. Blake, Herries, and Digby were pink with indignation. For a quarter of an hour or more they had sought their noble chum, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, but they found him not. In all sorts of likely and unlikely places they had sought him; but Arthur Augustus seemed to have melted into thin air.

The Terrible Three of the Shell—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—were standing in the doorway of the School House, looking out into the wintry dusk in the quad. They looked round as they heard the emphatic inquiries of Blake & Co.

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"Gussy missing?" asked Tom Merry. Blake snorted.

"Yes. The frabjous ass has disappeared—vanished—bunked! We're going to scalp and slaughter him when he turns up!"

"What does it matter?"

"We want him," said Blake and Herries in chorus. "We haven't had tea. We're stony in Study No. 6! Gussy had a fiver!"

The mystery was explained.

In the famous apartment known as Study No. 6, in the Fourth Form passage, funds were to a great extent in common. At all events, when one fellow there had money, the others were always sure of tea. Just at present Study No. 6 was in the state of Egypt of old when passing through the lean years. The arrival of a fiver for Arthur Augustus had relieved the strain and promised an end to their famine. And, lo! The swell of St. Jim's had disappeared from human ken, taking the fiver with him.

No wonder Blake & Co. were boiling with indignation. The Terrible Three fully sympathised with them. As a matter of fact, funds were low in their study, too, and they would cheerfully have lent their aid in "blueing" that fiver. They felt that Arthur Augustus had done them an injury as well as his studymates.

"But where can he have gone to?" said Monty Lowther.

Another snort from Blake.

"Blessed if I know! We've been from end to end of the School House, and he isn't inside it!"

"Must have run over to the New House to see Figgins," suggested Manners.

"Herries has been over there asking. He hasn't been seen in the New House."

"In the tuckshop, perhaps—"

"I've been there," said Digby. "Mrs. Taggles hasn't seen him."

"In the gym—"

"We've looked in the gym."

"Then he must have gone out!" said Tom Merry.

Snort again from Blake.

"Of course he must have gone out, as he isn't in the giddy school! What does he mean by going out, and specially by taking our fiver with him? He knows the study is in a state of stoniness—and it's too late for tea in Hall, too. Nothing to eat at all, excepting some of Herries' dog-biscuits—"

"My hat! Does Herries eat dog-biscuits?" asked Lowther innocently.

Herries glared.

"They're my biscuits for Towser, you ass!"

"At a time like this," said Blake, as if the fate of an empire, at least, was trembling in the balance—"at a time

A HUMOROUS LONG YARN, STARRING THE SWELL OF ST. JIM'S, WHICH WILL KEEP YOU CHUCKLING FROM START TO FINISH.

LOVE AFFAIR!

By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD**

like this, the ass goes out, without a word where he's going, or when he'll be back! Simply disappears!"

"Rotten!" said Tom Merry.

"Rotten isn't the word!" said Blake. "But when he comes back, we'll give him such a slaughtering that he won't do it any more! I suppose all we can do now is to come and have tea with you chaps!"

The Terrible Three grinned.

"You're as welcome as the flowers in May!" said Monty Lowther. "But there's only one sardine, and that was left over yesterday, because it was a little—ahem! The cat has declined it once!"

"As a matter of fact, we were coming to visit you, seeking what we might devour," Tom Merry explained.

"Then we're all in the same boat," said Blake. "Well, if we had Gussy's fiver here, we'd see you through with it. I'd spend Gussy's fiver to the last bob to see a chap through a bad time. But the image has vanished and taken the fiver with him."

"If isn't like Gussy to be mean," said Digby. "But, really, if it was anybody else, I should suspect him of having gone off to have a feed by himself."

"Oh, impossible!" said Tom Merry. "That isn't like Gussy."

"No, I know it isn't. But what the dickens has he vanished for, and taken the cash with him? Besides, he owes me a quid. I lent him a whole remittance yesterday. He might have let me have my quid out of the fiver!" said Digby.

"I should say so!" exclaimed Blake. "That quid would have seen us through tea. I simply can't imagine what the little game is!"

"He's been rather queer lately," said Herries thoughtfully. "I've noticed it for some days. On Saturday he stood out of the footer match, and went for a walk by himself. A chap who would do that must be a bit queer!"

"And he always seems to be buzzing off to Rylcombe now," said Digby. "I suppose he's gone to Rylcombe this time, though goodness knows what for!"

"And he had a letter this morning, and turned very red when I asked him what it was," said Blake reflectively. "Of course, I was thinking that it might be a remittance from one of his giddy aunts. He's got dozens of them, and they all send him quids. But it wasn't."

"It's a queer bisney," said Tom Merry. "Can our noble and esteemed Gussy be getting himself into trouble?"

"Well, he isn't ass enough to get into any blackguardly games, like Levison, or Cutts of the Fifth," said Blake. "I'll say that for Gussy—he's nine kinds of an ass, but he's as straight as a giddy die! But why has he buzzed off now?"

"It's a mystery. The question is—" began Herries.

"Where has he gone to, and why?"

"Ye-es; but I was going to say, where are we going to get our tea? I'm hungry."

"Same here!" said Digby pathetically.

"Better begin on Towser's biscuits," chuckled Monty Lowther.

But the juniors did not smile. They were too hungry.

"Let's go over and see Figgins," said Jack Blake desperately. "After all, Figgy is a good chap, though he's a New House bouncer. We'll tell him House rows are off, and we've come over for a feed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently there was nothing else to be done. The six juniors—the Terrible Three had thrown in their lot with Blake & Co.—crossed the quadrangle in the dusk, and walked into the New House. Some of the New House juniors who spotted them hurled rude epithets, for the fellows of the rival Houses seldom met without chipping, and sometimes fisticuffs. But Tom Merry waved his hand in sign of peace.

"We've come to see Figgins on important business," he said. "It's pax."

And the School House fellows made their way to the Fourth Form passage, and knocked at the door of Figgins' study.

"Come in!" sang out Figgins of the Fourth.

They marched in.

Figgins, Kerr and Wynn, the famous Co. of the New House, were at tea.

*Not once but many times has
Arthur Augustus D'Arcy fallen
for the charms of the fair sex.
His latest love affair adds
greatly to the gaiety of St. Jim's!*

The table was frugally spread. Apparently funds were not in a flourishing condition with Figgins & Co.

There were several slices of bread-and-butter, and some empty eggshells, and some decidedly weak-looking tea in the teacups. The visitors looked at the tea-table, and their hearts sank.

"Hallo! Come right in!" said Figgins. "What's on?"

"Nothing!" groaned Blake. "We came over to look for a feed to save us from sudden death."

"Gussy's vanished with the study funds, and left us to perish!" exclaimed Digby.

Figgins grinned.

"Oh crumbs! I'm sorry; we're in the same state. But sit down and pile in. You're welcome to share what there is. There are three slices of bread-and-butter, and two lumps of sugar, and a nut. Pile in, and don't spare the tommy!"

The School House fellows looked at Figgins & Co., and at those slim supplies, and perhaps they felt that three slices of bread-and-butter, two lumps of sugar, and a nut would not go far among six hungry fellows, so they shook their heads.

"Thanks, Figgy!" said Tom Merry,

with emotion. "You're generous to a fault; but we won't rob you like that. Good-bye!"

And the visitors departed, leaving Figgins & Co. grinning. They returned to the School House with only one consolation—the prospect of waiting for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to come in, and then ragging him in the most thorough-going manner.

CHAPTER 2.

A Startling Discovery!

CALLING-OVER was proceeding when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form put in an appearance at last.

When the fellows went into Hall for the roll-call, he was not to be seen, and the chums of the School House began to think that he was going to miss calling-over.

But just as they took their places in the Hall, and Mr. Raiton started on the list of names, the swell of St. Jim's came hurriedly in.

He was flushed and breathless, and had evidently been running. He panted a little as he took his place among the Fourth, and he gasped "Adsum!" when the Housemaster called his name.

His friends regarded him with grim looks.

Arthur Augustus did not appear to notice them. His thoughts were evidently elsewhere. He did not even nod in reply to Hammond, the Cockney schoolboy, who greeted him with a cheery nod. He did not notice Jack Blake's glare. He did not notice anything. When the names were all called, and the assembly dispersed, D'Arcy walked out of Hall by himself.

"My 'at!" said Hammond, in great surprise.

Blake & Co. were more than surprised. They were exasperated. It was bad enough for Arthur Augustus to walk off with the study funds, and leave them to forage up and down the School House for tea. But to forget all about the matter, as if it were of no importance—not even to ask them how they had managed—that was adding insult to injury. The chums of the School House exchanged deadly looks as they started on the track of the swell of St. Jim's. To judge by their facial expressions, there was a high old time in store for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"The image!" said Blake, in measured tones. "Not so much as a question whether we've found any tea."

"Must be dotty," said Herries. "Where is he gone?"

"Gone up to the study, I think. We're going to slaughter Gussy, you chaps. Will you come and lend a hand?"

"Certainly!" said the Terrible Three together.

They were as much exasperated as Blake & Co.

The six juniors proceeded to Study
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No. 6, where they found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He was sitting in the armchair, looking into the fire.

Apparently he was deeply interested in studying the glowing embers, for he did not move or look up as the juniors crowded in.

They gazed at him in wonder. He continued to gaze into the fire, a slight wrinkle of thoughtfulness on his noble brow, and his thoughts evidently far away. Jack Blake came behind the chair, and bent down over him, still without being observed. But Arthur Augustus had to observe him when he gave a sudden yell in his car:

"Hallo!"

"Bai Jove!"

The startled junior jumped—so sudden that the top of his head came into violent contact with Blake's chin. He gave a yell, and Blake staggered back with a wild roar, clapping both hands to his chin in anguish.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my chin! Oh crumbs! Yaroooh!"

Arthur Augustus spun round, and gazed at Blake in surprise and anger. He rubbed the top of his head with one hand, and with the other jammed his famous monocle into his eye.

"You uttah ass, Blake! You have hurt my nappah!"

"Ow! You clump! You have dislocated my chin!" groaned Blake.

"What did you shove your silly chin on my nappah for, you fidgetful ass?" demanded Arthur Augustus. "Why did you yell in my eah like a Wed Indian? You have thwown me into quite a fluttah."

"I'd throw you into the quad for two pins!" groaned Blake.

"I should uttably wefuse to be thwown into the quad. I twust you fellows will wun away and let me be quiet. I want to be alone."

"My hat!"

"You—you—you unspeakable fat-head!" said Blake, still rubbing his chin. "You apology for a burbling jabberwock! You tailor's dummy! You howling jossah!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as a howlin' jossah. I considah—"

"Where have you been?"

"Out!"

"What have you done with the fiver?"

"The fivah! I have spent it."

"Spent it!" roared the juniors, all together.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Do you know that we haven't had any tea?" demanded Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's expression changed.

"Bai Jove, haven't you weally?" he exclaimed.

"You knew we were all stony," said Digby.

"I forgot, deah boy!"

"You forgot!" howled Blake. "You forgot! You walked off with all the study funds in your silly pockets, and forgot that we hadn't had any tea."

"I'm awfully sowwy! I weally forgot all about it," said Arthur Augustus, in distress. "I apologise most sincerely."

"We had to scout about the House begging for grub," said Herries, incensed. "These Shell chaps are stony, too, and we couldn't get anything from Figgins & Co. Two of us got tea with Kangaroo, and one with Reilly, and the rest with Hammond. That's what we had to do, and we all got it jolly late. And you were walking off with a fiver

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all the time—and spending it on yourself—By Jove!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Disgusting!" said Digby. "I shouldn't really have thought it of you, Gussy. Why, even Fatty Wynn doesn't forget his chums when he's in funds!"

"Weally, Digby—"

"Rotten!" said Blake. "You never know a fellow till you've found him out, I suppose!"

"We're surprised at you, Gussy!" said Tom Merry, with a solemn shake of the head.

"Shocked!" said Monty Lowther.

"Disgusted!" said Manners.

Arthur Augustus looked from one to another of the juniors as they made those remarks in turn, his noble face growing more and more crimson, till at last it looked like a well-boiled beetroot. He seemed at a loss for words.

"I say, weally, you chaps!" he stammered at last. "Surely you don't think that I have been havin' a feed by myself, and leavin' my pals in the lurch? Surely you are quite aware that I am incapable of doin' anythin' of the sort?"

"Then what have you been doing?"

"I—I—"

"Where have you been?"

"Out!"

"We know you've been out, fathead! But where?"

"In—in Wylcombe."

"And what have you been doing in Rylcombe?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply.

"What have you spent the fiver on?"

No answer.

"Have you had a feed?"

"Feed! No."

"Haven't you had tea?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Tea! No."

"Then you're hungry, too—what?"

"Hungwy! No!"

"Oh, he's potty!" said Herries. "Must be quite potty. Now I come to think of it, I think I've seen it coming on for some time."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Look here!" said Blake. "We're not going to have you keeping silly secrets from your kind uncles. Where have you been? And what silly game have you been up to?"

No reply.

"Are you going to explain?" roared Blake.

"Imposs."

"Do you mean that it's a secret?"

"Yaas."

"You're keeping secrets from the study?" demanded Blake, Herries, and Digby, in concert.

"And from your kind uncles of the Shell?" said Monty Lowther, with a reproachful shake of the head.

"I am sowwy," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "But I cannot satisfy your curiosity upon that point. As a mattah of fact, I do not approve of curiosity. I weward it as bad form. I can only recommend you not to be inquisitive."

The juniors looked at the swell of the Fourth as if they would eat him.

"It's no good arguing with the silly ass," said Blake. "This is a case where bumping is the only possible argument. Bump him!"

"Hands off, you duffahs! Weally—Yawwooh!"

Six pairs of hands closed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in various parts of his person, and he descended upon the study floor with a loud concussion.

Bump!

"Ow! You wottahs! My twousahs! Ow!"

Bump, bump!

"Yawwooh!"

Arthur Augustus struggled wildly in the grasp of his persecutors. His collar burst, his tie came off, and his jacket curled round his ears. But suddenly the juniors let go, as if the swell of St. Jim's had become, all at once, red-hot. Arthur Augustus sprawled gasping on the floor, and round him were scattered several articles that had dropped out of his pockets in the struggle. The juniors gazed at them blankly. One word broke from all of them at once, in various tones of surprise and consternation.

CHAPTER 3.

Gussy Declines to Explain!

"CIGARS!"

Cigars they were—dozens of them—beautiful Havana cigars, with nice gold bands.

The chums of the School House could not have been more astonished if a snake had curled out of D'Arcy's pocket.

"Cigars!" exclaimed Blake.

"Havanas!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Snokes!"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus sat up, dishevelled and breathless. He stared at the cigars, and he stared at his chums. His face could not grow any redder, or he would probably have blushed.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

The juniors were all serious now. D'Arcy's keeping his reasons for visiting Rylcombe a secret they had hitherto regarded simply as some of his "rot," as Blake would have expressed it. But the sight of the cigars changed all that. It let in the light upon his mysterious excursions, and upon his refusal to explain.

Was it possible that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was on the downward path—that he was following in the footsteps of Levison of the Fourth and Cutts of the Fifth? It looked like it. Why, even Levison contented himself with cigarettes. And here were cigars—Havana cigars of expensive brand. If Arthur Augustus had taken to smoking, he was certainly going the "whole hog."

D'Arcy rose to his feet, breathing hard, and smoothing down his rumpled garments. There was a painful silence in the study. Jack Blake broke it.

"This has got to be explained, Gussy!" he said grimly.

"Sowwy—"

"You've been buying these cigars, of course?"

"Natuwally!"

"Got any more about you?"

"I am sowwy that I must decline to answah that question, Blake."

"Oh, don't trouble!" said Blake grimly. "We'll soon see. Collar the silly ass, and turn out his pockets, you chaps!"

"Blake! You wottahs! Hands off immediately! I wefuse to have my pockets turned out! I weward this as wank impertinence! I considah—Oh, you feahful wottahs!"

The juniors did not heed his expostulations. The Terrible Three seized him, and held him powerless, while Blake, Herries, and Digby coolly turned out all his pockets, turning out the lining to make sure that they were emptied.

And they stared in astonishment at the articles that were brought to light,

There were more cigars—quite a dozen of them, and most of them shilling ones. There were several packets of cigarettes. There were boxes of matches. There was a large and handsome pipe. There were several packets of tobacco of various brands. Arthur Augustus could not have laid in a more extensive supply of smoking materials if it had been his fixed intention of committing suicide by smoking himself to death.

The articles were piled on the table, and they made quite a heap. Then Arthur Augustus was released. He stood frowning with wrath.

"Now, Gussy," said Blake, and he was very serious, "we want to know what this means!"

"I wefuse to say a word!"

"You've been buying all this stuff at Rylcombe?"

"Yaas."

"What for?"

"That's my bisney!"

"You've taken to smoking?"

"Certainly not! I should wegard it as wotten bad form for a fellow of my age to smoke."

"Do you mean to say that you have bought all this stuff without intending to smoke any of it?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I don't mean to say anythin'."

The juniors looked at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and they looked at one another. Arthur Augustus was always truthful. It seemed impossible that he could be telling an untruth. But it seemed more impossible that he could have spent several pounds upon smoking materials without intending to smoke them. It was scarcely possible to believe that, unless they believed at the same time that Arthur Augustus was insane. And he was not insane. He was very angry and excited, but he was in his senses.

"Now, look here, Gussy!" said Blake, after a painful pause. "We're all your chums, and we feel bound to look after you, especially as you were born a silly ass, and can't help it! We're not going to let you go to the dogs. This kind of thing is all very well for Levison or Mellish, but it's not good enough for Study No. 6. If you didn't buy these things to smoke, what did you buy them for?"

"I'm sowwy, I can't explain."

"You mean you won't," said Blake sharply.

"Yaas. You can put it like that, if you like."

"Then something's got to be done. Do you know you'd get into a fearful row if a prefect discovered you with all that rubbish?"

"Yaas; I wegard that as very pwob."

There was a tap at the door, and Levison of the Fourth looked in. Levison had no business in Study No. 6; he was not on visiting terms there. He had heard excited voices, and he was curious to know what was going on, that was all.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said. "Can you lend me a German die? Why—what—Oh, my hat!"

The cad of the Fourth broke off in blank astonishment as he caught sight of the pile of cigarettes, cigars, and tobacco on the table.

"Clear out!" said Blake angrily.

Levison gasped.

"Oh crumbs! Is it a smoking party? You've got a jolly lot of stuff, I must say. I don't mind having a smoke with you. But, I say, you have kept it dark all this time, I must say. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off!" roared Blake.

He made an angry movement towards Levison, and that youth promptly

backed out of the study and slammed the door. The juniors heard him laughing as he went down the passage.

It was an interesting item of news for Levison. It had always been Levison's private opinion that Tom Merry & Co. were humbugs; and that, under the careful appearances they kept up, they were no better than he. Now he had proof of it, and he enjoyed it.

"It'll be all over the House in two minutes now," said Blake helplessly.

"Better get that stuff out of sight before any other prying rotter sees it," said Tom Merry uneasily. "Lock it up somewhere till you get a chance of taking it out and chucking it into the river."

"Bai Jove! You fellows can see now the harm you've done by your beastly curiosity. We shall nevah heah the end of this now!"

"All your fault, you silly chump!" said Blake angrily. "What did you bring it into the school for?"

"I decline to weply."

"It means a flogging for the whole study if it's found here!" growled Blake. "I suppose I'd better lock it up."

He piled the offensive articles into his desk, and locked it. It was a relief to all the juniors to get it out of sight.

"And now, Gussy, we want to know what this means," said Blake.

"I am sowwy I cannot satisfy your curiosity."

"And you say you haven't taken up smoking?"

"Yaas, wathah! If you doubt my word, Blake—"

"But you must have been to the tobacconist's to get that stuff."

"I should hardly go to the gwocah's for it."

"The tobacconist's is out of bounds."

"I am aware of that."

"Then you've broken bounds, you ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass."

Blake clenched his hands. He was greatly inclined to "wade in" and give his aristocratic chum the licking of his life, there and then. But he restrained himself. He was very angry indeed, but he realised that that was not really an effective method of dealing with Arthur Augustus.

"If you don't explain," said Blake at last, "we can only think one thing—that is, that you've taken to rotten, blackguardly ways, like Levison and Cutts."

"If you hold such an opinion of me, Blake, I shall wefuse to wegard you as a friend."

"I don't specially want to be regarded as a friend by a fellow of Cutts' stamp, and that's what you seem to be now," said Blake unpleasantly.

"I have assuahed you—"

"Tell us what you bought the stuff for."

"I cannot."

"Then you know what we think."

Arthur Augustus stood very erect.

"Am I to undahstand that you doubt my word, Blake?"

"Yes!" rapped out Blake savagely.

"Then I shall dwop your acquaint-ance."

"Drop it, and be hanged!"

"That is suffish!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity. And he turned upon his heel and walked out of the study.



Suddenly the juniors let go of the swell of St. Jim's as if he had become red-hot. Arthur Augustus sprawled on the floor, gasping, and round him were scattered many cigars which had dropped from his pockets in the struggle. The juniors stared at them in surprise. "Cigars!" exclaimed Blake. "Oh, Gussy!"

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"Come back, you silly idiot!" growled Blake.

Arthur Augustus slammed the door.

CHAPTER 4.

Strange Behaviour!

IT was a mystery!

Tom Merry & Co. puzzled over it a good deal that evening, but without reaching any solution.

What was the matter with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy?

Cutts of the Fifth prided himself upon being what he called a "wild beggar" and a "gay dog" and a "blade." But Arthur Augustus was not that kind of fellow. Surely it was impossible that Arthur Augustus was taking to bad paths?

Yet how could the juniors possibly suppose that he had spent pounds upon tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes unless he intended to smoke them? And if he did not intend that, he had spoken untruthfully in denying it. It was not like Arthur Augustus—but when a fellow, hitherto straight, "lets go" at one point he is only too likely to let go at others.

Smoking was strictly forbidden at St. Jim's—and, moreover, it was regarded as bad form by the boys themselves. If Arthur Augustus had really taken to it, and had denied it, he was clearly in a bad way. And it required great faith in him to believe his denial.

But Arthur Augustus vouchsafed no word of explanation. He declined to speak to Blake again at all that evening. Blake had ruthlessly doubted his word—and Arthur Augustus could not possibly forgive that. From Blake's point of view, the only possible alternative to doubting his word was regarding him as an irresponsible lunatic; and Arthur Augustus would not have liked that, either. What did his silence mean? The juniors simply could not make it out.

Meanwhile, the matter was not confined to the chums of the School House. That unlucky glimpse Levison of the Fourth had obtained of the smoking supplies was the beginning. Levison talked far and wide of what he had seen. He was only too glad of an opportunity of showing up the giddy models, as he called them. All the juniors in the School House soon knew all about the smokes, and Study No. 6 were chipped about it till their tempers grew very sore and irritable.

Most of the fellows declined to credit that Arthur Augustus had purchased that enormous supply entirely for himself. They declared that Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three were going to have a "smoking party" all together, only Levison had happened to spot them.

Arthur Augustus, when questioned on the subject, declined to say a word, excepting that all questions regarding his personal affairs amounted to dashed impertinence.

There was a great deal of "dashed impertinence" rife in the School House that evening.

Blake & Co. soon lost their tempers on the subject. They could not deny that the smokes were there. And they felt uneasy lest the talk on the subject should soon reach the ears of the seniors. As soon as a prefect came to hear of it there would be an inquiry, perhaps a search in the study.

They knew how their old enemy, Knox, the prefect, would jump at such an opportunity, for instance; and even old Kildare would regard it as his duty

to look into the matter if he heard of it. But there was no chance of getting rid of the obnoxious stuff that night.

A junior would be cased if he were found with a single cigarette in his possession. The chums simply shuddered to think what would happen if they were found to have a large supply of smoking materials.

Naturally, they felt very sore towards Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Relations were strained in Study No. 6 that evening.

But D'Arcy did not seem to mind. His thoughts were elsewhere.

When the Fourth Formers went to bed, he did not say good-night to Blake. Digby and Herries did not say good-night to D'Arcy. They were too annoyed. There was a ripple of laughter and joking in the dormitory on the subject of the smokes. Pointed allusions were made to fellows on the downward path and the road to ruin. Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth told a solemn story of a fellow who had started by smoking a cigarette and finished up as a politician—a terrible example of a hopeless fall—amid yells of laughter.

Kildare looked rather curiously at the juniors when he came to see lights out in the Fourth Form dormitory.

"You seem very jolly here to-night!" he remarked, rather suspiciously.

"It's Gussy!" explained Kerruish. "He's making us die of laughing! He's such a funny merchant!"

"Weally, Kewwuish—"

"Sure, and it's on the films he ought to be!" chuckled Reilly.

"Weilly, you ass—"

"Well, turn in!" said Kildare good-humouredly. "No larks here to-night, or I shall be down on you!"

The captain of St. Jim's naturally suspected that some jape was on to account for the merriment of the Fourth Formers. The juniors stayed awake later than usual that night, chatting joyfully on the subject of smokes and drinks, and bets and sweepstakes, and other things Study No. 6 might naturally be supposed to be interested in, in the light of Levison's discovery.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was sitting up in bed when Jack Blake awoke. Blake looked at him curiously. D'Arcy had his blankets tucked round him for warmth, for it was a cold winter morning. His knees were up under the coverlet, and he had a pocket-book on his knees, and was scribbling with a stump of pencil.

"That a betting-book, D'Arcy?" called out Levison.

D'Arcy started, and turned red.

"Certainly not, you ass!" he exclaimed indignantly.

"What is it, then?"

"Mind your own bisney!"

And Arthur Augustus turned out of bed, and promptly concealed the pocket-book from sight in an inside pocket of his jacket.

But when his chums spotted him again a little later, walking in the quadrangle before breakfast, the book and pencil were in his hands again. He was evidently deeply engaged in some meditation. Blake snorted and passed on, but Digby and Herries stopped to speak to him. D'Arcy came out of his reverie with a start.

"Bai Jove! You startled me, you fellows! I say, Hewwies, can you tell me a whyme for dyin'?"

"For what?" howled Herries.

"Dyin', deah boy."

"Who's dyin'?"

"Nobody that I know—I want a whyme!"

"Lying!" suggested Digby.

"Wats! That's no good!"

"Frying!" suggested Herries.

Arthur Augustus sniffed, and walked away. Those prosaic rhymes evidently did not meet with his approval. Herries and Digby exchanged glances.

"He's making up poetry!" said Digby helplessly.

"A contribution for the 'Weekly,' perhaps," said Herries.

"Yes; or else he's going off his rocker!"

There was a German lesson in class that morning, and Arthur Augustus was very absent-minded—so much so that Herr Schneider was down upon him several times. Herr Schneider was not an amiable gentleman. Arthur Augustus was soon richer by a hundred lines from Goethe, but he did not seem to mind. And at the end of the lesson Herr Schneider quite lost his temper. The juniors had to write down the conjugations of "gehen," meaning to go. When Herr Schneider looked at D'Arcy's paper, he simply gasped.

"'Lieben'!" he read out. "'Ich liebe, du liebst, er liebt. Ich liebe dich—ich liebe dich—ich liebe dich—' D'Arcy, you stupid poy, vat is tat?"

All eyes were turned upon D'Arcy. He had written down the verb "to love" instead of the verb "to go"; and instead of conjugating it in order, he had covered his paper with such sentences as "Ich liebe dich—" "I love thee." No wonder Herr Schneider was astonished!

Arthur Augustus' face was crimson. He did not appear to realise what he had done until the German master pointed it out to him.

"Vat does tat mean, D'Arcy?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"It is a choke—hein?" demanded Herr Schneider.

"N-no, sir!"

"Den vy have you written tat nonsense, after?"

Arthur Augustus was silent, but his face was burning.

"Simply off his rocker!" murmured the astonished Blake.

"You do not answer, D'Arcy! I tink tat is a sheeky choke! You vill hold out your hand mit you!"

Whack, whack!

"Yow-ow!"

And Arthur Augustus' face was more serious than ever for the remainder of morning lessons.

CHAPTER 5.

The Way Out!

TOM MERRY came hurriedly out of the School House soon after dinner that day, looking for Blake.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were punting a footer about to keep themselves warm when Tom ran up.

"Blake, chuck that! There's going to be trouble!"

Blake grunted.

"What's the matter now? Gussy again?"

"It's those blessed smokes! Knox has got hold of the yarn. I don't know whether Levison's told him—I shouldn't wonder—anyway, he knows. Reilly heard him say to Kildare that he wanted him to go with him to Study No. 6 to make an investigation there. You know what that means."

Jack Blake drew a long face.

"Have they gone?"

"No. Kildare's on the footer ground; he wouldn't come in. He told Knox he'd see to it when he came in, Reilly says."

"Good egg!" said Blake, with a deep

breath of relief. "There's time! We must get rid of the blessed things somehow! Where's Gussy?"

"Give it up! He's gone off somewhere."

The chums of the School House held a hurried consultation. That Knox had heard of the smokes was certain. He wished to take Kildare, the head prefect of the School House, with him to make the investigation, so that there should be no possible doubt on the subject.

Knox undoubtedly thought that he had caught Study No. 6 this time. And Blake & Co. could not help thinking so, too.

"What on earth's going to be done?" asked Digby. "If we take the rubbish away now we may be stopped with the blessed things in our pockets!"

"Knox will be keeping his eyes open, too," said Herries. "If he sees us going out of gates he'll be down on us like lightning."

"We're all in it," said Monty Lowther. "It will come out—if Knox doesn't know it already—that we were in your study when Levison spotted the smokes there. We shall all be called before the Head. Not much good Gussy telling him that he bought all that rubbish without intending to smoke."

"No fear!"

"No good getting rid of it, either," said Manners quietly. "Kildare will ask us whether it was there, and I suppose we can't lie about it."

Blake groaned.

"Oh, that silly chump! Why can't he go off his silly rocker without getting us all into trouble with it? It will look rotten, too, if we say it was all Gussy's doing—as if we were trying to sneak out of it ourselves."

Tom Merry ran his fingers through his curly hair as an aid to thought. He looked up at the leafless elms and round at the gym and the two Houses as if seeking inspiration. But there was no inspiration to be had.

Figgins & Co. came sauntering towards them, and Tom Merry turned to them desperately.

"Give us some advice, Kerr, old man. You're a blessed Scotsman; you ought to be able to think a way out."

Kerr grinned.

"Quite at your service," he said. "What's the trouble?"

The juniors hurriedly explained, all of them speaking at once. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn listened in amazement.

"Well, that beats the band!" said Figgins, with a deep breath. "Fancy old Gussy taking to the road to ruin in his old age!"

"The utter idiot!" said Fatty Wynn in unspeakable disgust. "Pounds' worth of smokes! Think of the grub he could have got for the money! Oh, the awful ass!"

"But we want to know what to do," said Blake. "Give us a tip, Kerr; you're splendid at thinking things out."

"Yes, go it, Kerr!" said Figgins encouragingly.

Figgins admitted freely that Kerr had most of the brains of the Co.

"All serene!" said Kerr. "I think there's a way out."

"Good egg!" chorused the School House juniors in great relief.

"What's the way? Quick!" said Blake.

"It's Herr Schneider's birthday to-day," said Kerr.

The juniors stared at him.

"You crass ass—"

"You howling duffer—"

"Blow Herr Schneider—"



"Hang his birthday—"

"You frabjous ass—"

Kerr held up his hand for silence.

"Let Kerr go on," said Figgins admonishingly. "Kerr's the chap to think things out. I'll bet you Kerr knows what to do."

"Give us a chance," said Kerr. "Look here, it's old Schneider's birthday. What price a lot of respectful and admiring juniors going to him in a body and making him a handsome birthday present?"

"You—you—you fearful idiot!" shrieked Blake. "What's the good of talking about Schneider and birthday presents when the prefects may be down on us any minute?"

"Talk about Nero fiddling while Rome was burning!" howled Herries. "Why, you silly ass—"

"Schneider is a terrific smoker," resumed Kerr, with unmoved calmness. "He's always got a pipe going in his study, and he's been seen smoking cigars in the library and even in the Form-room. He makes the whole place reek with tobacco."

"What on earth—"

"Oh, he's dotty!"

"So what could be more natural," said Kerr, "than for a party of juniors who wanted to make him a birthday present to buy him a lot of smokes—cigars and things—"

"Oh!"

"You say there's a pipe, tobacco, cigars, and cigarettes. Well, that would make a handsome birthday present for any smoky old German," said Kerr. "The only thing is to make haste and present it to him before the prefects get hold of it. It would be a bit too late then to say it was for Schneider."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Good old Scotty!"

Jack Blake fairly hugged Kerr.

"I'll never call the New House a lunatic asylum again!" he exclaimed. "Come on, you chaps! There's old Schneider in his study now, smoking like a giddy furnace! You New House chaps come, too; we'll make the present from the lot of us—it will look better."

"That is, if Gussy won't object to his property being given away," added Kerr.

Blake snorted.

"Let him object! Come on!"

The juniors hurried to the School

House. Blake unlocked his desk, and the cargo of smokes was hurriedly hauled out. The extent of the supply made Figgins & Co. open their eyes wide.

"Gussy must have intended to have a big burst with this lot!" said Figgins.

"He says he never intended to smoke them."

"Then he won't mind the stuff being given away," grinned Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no time to be lost. Manners, glancing from the study window, announced that Kildare was coming towards the House with Knox of the Sixth.

The smokes and the pipe were hastily gathered up, and shoved into a bag, and Tom Merry & Co. tore downstairs, and ran for Herr Schneider's study. Tom knocked at the door, and opened it without waiting to be bidden, and the party of juniors poured in.

Tom Merry closed the door behind them quickly. For the moment they were safe. Kildare and Knox would not think of looking for them in the German master's study.

CHAPTER 6.

Knox is not Pleased!

HERR SCHNEIDER jumped up in astonishment at the sudden invasion of his study. He had been smoking his pipe peacefully, and reading a German paper with calm enjoyment. But the sudden crowding into his study of nine flushed and excited juniors startled him out of his tranquillity. He jumped up and blinked at the party over his spectacles, in surprise and annoyance.

"Vat is all dis?" he exclaimed. "Vat do you mean, tat you rush into my study like wild Indians mit yourselves? I tink—"

"Excuse us, sir—"

"I tink tat I do not like such chokes," said Herr Schneider. "I tink tat I canes you all round, before. Merry, hold out your hand!"

"If you please, sir—"

"We've come to—"

"It's your birthday, sir—"

"We've brought you a little present, sir—"

"Many happy returns of the day, sir!"

The juniors all spoke at once. It was necessary to get the explanation out before the German master commenced operations with the cane. Herr Schneider looked astonished, but he laid down the cane, and his frown vanished. He had never supposed that he was sufficiently popular among the juniors for a party of them to distinguish him in this way. He could not help feeling gratified.

"Indeed! Tat alters to case!" he said benignantly. "I have misunderstood you. So you tink of te old Sherman master's birthday—hein?"

"Why, of course, sir!" said Monty Lowther.

"We know how much we owe you, sir," said Blake. "I'm afraid we sometimes give you trouble in class; but we don't mean to."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"You—you see, sir," said Tom Merry, "as soon as Kerr mentioned that it was your birthday, we—we decided—"

"We've all come together, sir," said Manners. "We wanted you to understand that we're all together in this."

"Certainly, sir!"

"We've got a little present, which we hope you will accept, sir," said Jack Blake. "Knowing how fond you are of smoking, sir, we thought that—that we couldn't do better than bring you these things—"

He turned out the contents of the bag upon the table. Herr Schneider's round, blue eyes opened wider and rounder as he saw the birthday present. He had wondered what form the present would take, but he had certainly not expected it to take that form. Yet he could not help being pleased. He was a hardened old smoker, but his salary as a German master did not allow him to indulge freely in the luxury of expensive Havana cigars. The sight of nearly twenty Larranagas, Coronas, and Bocks brought a grin of pleasure to his plump face.

"My tear poyls—" said Herr Schneider, much moved.

"We hope you will accept the things, sir—"

"With our kindest regards, Herr Schneider—"

"And best wishes for a happy birthday, sir—"

"And many of 'em, sir—"

Herr Schneider looked at the precious gifts, and turned them over. Some of the packets of cigarettes were expensive, some cheap. Some of the tobacco was good, some was decidedly bad. The collection had evidently been purchased without much judgment. But, after all, junior schoolboys could not be expected to have much judgment in such matters. The intention was good, and some of the smokes were decidedly good. And the pipe was a beauty. Herr Schneider's face grew quite angelic.

"My tear poyls," he said, "I cannot say how gratify I am. Dere is nuz-zings tat I shall like petter as tat."

"So glad, sir!"

"We thought you'd be pleased, sir."

"Of course, we don't know much about these things, sir; but we hope you'll like some of them, sir."

"But I fear tat tay must have cost a great deal of money, mein poyls."

"Oh, that's nothing, sir!"

"D'Arcy had a fiver, sir, and he was quite willing to spend the lot."

Herr Schneider looked a little grave. "But you must have proken pounds to get dese tings," he said. "I am afraid tat tat was not right, mein poyls."

"Ahem!"

"H'm!"

"You—you see, sir—"

"But tat can be forgiven, since it is tat you vish to do honour to your Sherman master," said Herr Schneider. "If tere is any question about it, I vill explain to your Housemaster." He put a Corona into his mouth, bit off the end, and lighted it, and blew out smoke with great enjoyment. "Mein tear poyls, I tank you from the pottom of my heart!"

"It is a great pleasure to us, sir," said Tom Merry. "You can't imagine, sir, how much you've pleased us by accepting this little present."

Which was very true, indeed.

And the juniors retired from the study, leaving Herr Schneider in a state of beatific pleasure, and inclined to modify the opinion he had held for a long time—that all boys ought to be drowned at birth.

They grinned with glee and triumph as they went down the passage.

"Safe out of that awful scrape!"

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chuckled Blake. "Now Knox can do his giddy worst. Let him rip!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It isn't often you can get out of a beastly scrape, and give pleasure at the same time to a harmless and necessary German master—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here the young rascals are!" exclaimed the voice of Knox of the Sixth from the staircase. "Here they are, Kildare!"

"Hallo! Looking for us?" asked Blake, in great surprise. "Do you want us, Kildare?"

Kildare looked over the banisters with a frowning brow.

"Yes; I've been to your study," he said. "Come up here at once, all of you! Not the New House fellows—the others."

"Right-ho! So-long, Figgy!"

Figgins & Co. strolled away, and the six School House juniors went cheerfully upstairs, and followed Kildare and Knox into the study. They did not dread the results of a search there now.

Kildare surveyed them frowningly. Knox's information had been so positive that the head prefect had felt compelled to believe him.

"Now turn out those smokes!" said Kildare sternly.

"Smokes?"

"Yes! At once!"

"What smokes?" asked Blake.

"Have you got any smokes about you, Dig?"

"No fear! Have you, Herries?"

"Certainly not!" said Herries.

"Have you, Lowther?"

Monty Lowther shook his head solemnly.

"Sorry, Kildare, I haven't!" he said politely. "If you want a smoke, you'd better ask Knox here. He's more likely to have a cigarette in his pocket."

The juniors smiled and Knox scowled. "They're lying, of course," said Knox savagely. "I know that they've got a pile of cigars, cigarettes, and tobacco in the study. From what I hear, it's the talk of the House."

"Is there anything of the kind in this study, Blake?"

"No, Kildare!"

"Look in the desk," said Knox.

It was not difficult for the juniors to guess, then, that the prefect had obtained his information from Levison of the Fourth.

"Open your desk, Blake!"

"Certainly!"

Blake unlocked his desk, and threw up the lid. There were certainly no smokes of any kind there. There were a few boxes of matches; nothing more suspicious.

"I'm glad!" said Kildare, with relief. "I thought it was impossible, Knox. I told you so. These kids are not that sort!"

"They've hidden them somewhere," said Knox, biting his lips. "I'm certain of what I say. They had the things here last night. Why, smell at this desk! It niffs of tobacco!"

Kildare's brow grew stern again.

"That is so! Blake, have you had any cigars or tobacco here at all?"

"Yes," said Blake, at once.

"What did I say!" exclaimed Knox triumphantly.

"Then you have been smoking?"

"No fear! Spoil our form for footer if we did!" said Blake promptly.

"We're not quite such mugs as that!"

"They had the stuff here, but didn't smoke any," said Knox, with a sneer.

"They can tell that to the Marines!"

"Has there been any smoking in this study at all, Blake?"

"No, there hasn't—"

"Or in your study, Tom Merry?"

"Certainly not, Kildare!"

"Then what have you done with the tobacco and things, and what did you bring them here for?" demanded Kildare sharply.

Blake's face set obstinately.

"If Knox says we've been smoking, let him prove it!" he said. "I'm not going to say a word! If you want to know what's become of the smokes, you can go and ask Herr Schneider!"

"The German master!" exclaimed Kildare, in surprise. "What can he possibly know about it?"

"Ask him!"

"Don't bandy words with the young rascals!" said Knox. "This is only a trick of some sort. Old Schneider can't know anything about the matter."

"Now, look here, kids—" began Kildare.

"I think we've said enough," said Tom Merry quietly. "We give you our word, all round, that we haven't been smoking, and never had any intention of smoking. If you want to know what's become of the smokes, go and ask Herr Schneider. That's only fair. If he doesn't satisfy you, you can pick on us afterwards."

Kildare hesitated.

"Well, that's only fair," he said. "Wait here till I come back!"

"Right-ho!"

Kildare left Study No. 6. He was only gone five minutes. He was grinning when he looked into the study again.

"It's all right, Knox," he said. "All the stuff's in Schneider's study."

"What!" howled Knox.

"But when you kids want to make a master a birthday present again, I recommend you to get something a little less questionable," said Kildare. "That's all."

"It was that ass Gussy—"

"You see—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Kildare. "Come on, Knox! The matter's closed."

"But—I say—"

"I tell you the matter's closed!" said Kildare impatiently.

The head prefect's word was law. Knox gave the juniors a savage look, and followed Kildare out of the study. And Tom Merry & Co. laughed.

CHAPTER 7.

An Important Engagement!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into Study No. 6 and regarded the juniors with surprise in his glance.

Tom Merry & Co. were still laughing, and they could have been heard at the end of the passage.

"Bai Jove! What's the joke, deah boys?" asked D'Arcy.

"Knox is," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "By the way, we've handed Herr Schneider your handsome birthday present."

"What!"

"He was very pleased with the pipe, and he likes the cigars no end," said Jack Blake.

"Gweat Scott!"

"And we handed them to him just in time, before they were found here, and we were accused of smoking," added Digby.

Arthur Augustus stared, and then his face broke into a smile.

"Bai Jove! Did Knox get on to them, then?"

"Somebody told him."

"Levison, the wottah, I suppose. Bai Jove! That was a wippin' ideah for

gettin' wid of the wubbish! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you want to get rid of it?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! It was dangewous to keep such stuff in the study, and I hadn't the faintest ideah what to do with it."

The juniors glared at him in astonishment.

"Oh, this beats the giddy band!" said Blake. "He's wasted a fiver on buying stuff at a tobacconist's, and then his only trouble was to find some means of chucking it away! You'd better spend your next fiver on a strait-jacket, Gussy."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! And, now I wemembah, I am not on speakin' terms with you, Blake. Pway do not address me."

"Fathead!"

"I wefuse to reply."

"Chump!"

"I will not uttah a word—"

"Look here, you burbler—"

"I decline even to open my lips."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, and Arthur Augustus looked surprised. He did not see where the laugh came in.

"I wegard you as cacklin' asses," he said crossly. "I shall not uttah a word of any sort to you, Blake, until you have made a pwofound apology."

"Frabjous chump!" said Blake. "That's all the apology you'll get out of me!"

"Then I decline to wegard you any longah as a fwient—"

"Time to get ready for the match," said Tom Merry, as two o'clock sounded from the clock-tower of St. Jim's. "Come along and change!"

"Bai Jove! I forgot to mention—I shan't be able to play this aftahnoon, Tom Mewwy!"

"You want to miss the match?"

"Yaas. Put in my fwient Hammond; he's a splendid playah!"

"I'm going to put him in, anyway," said Tom Merry. "But if you want to stay out, you can go and eat coke or buy cigars, or whatever you dashed well like. I'll put in Kerruish, and I've a jolly good mind to keep him there, and leave you out for the whole of the term!"

"I should wefuse to be left out for the whole term. I have a wathah important engagement to-day—"

"Another mysterious visit to Rylcombe—eh?" asked Blake suspiciously.

Arthur Augustus looked at him fixedly, but did not reply.

"Did you hear me, ass?" roared Blake.

"Yaas."

"Well, answer, then, you burbling jabberwock!"

"I wefuse to answah. I am not on speakin' terms with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll be on fighting terms with me soon if I have much more of your silly rot!" said Blake, thoroughly exasperated. "I've never been quite so near to wiping up the floor of this study with you!"

"I should wefuse—"

"Oh, go and chop chips!" snorted Blake.

And he strode out of the study, followed by the other fellows. It was time to change for the House match, and a House match was of far more importance than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his little mysteries.

Tom Merry lingered behind for a moment to speak to D'Arcy. He was really concerned about the swell of St. Jim's.

"Look here, Gussy," he said, "you

can speak to me like an old pal, you know! What is this little game? What are you up to?"

"I am sowwy I cannot explain, deah boy."

"Are you getting into some trouble?"

"Certainly not. I was nevah so happy in my life!"

"You're not going to buy any more smokes to-day?"

"I am not suah. Pwobably yaas. Fortunately, my patah has played up. I sent him a wiah last night, and I have weceived a wemittance this mornin'. I was quite out of funds. It would have been doocid awkward!"

"Come on, Tommy!" shouted Lowther.

And Tom Merry nodded to D'Arcy and ran off, feeling very much puzzled and mystified.

The mystery of Arthur Augustus seemed to be growing deeper and deeper. Why he should wire to his father for an extra remittance, and spend it in smokes, and then want to have the smokes thrown away, was a puzzle past Tom Merry's powers of solving.

But the juniors forget about Arthur Augustus as soon as they were

it was somewhat gratifying to see that Levison agreed with his secret thoughts.

"Yaas, that's so," he assented. "I am weally sowwy. I'd have played for Tom Mewwy if I could possibly have contwived it; but I have a vewy important engagement for this aftahnoon, so it was impos."

"Cousin Ethel coming?" suggested Levison.

"Oh, no!"

"Going for a little excursion, I suppose?"

"Yaas."

"I'll come with you, if you like, D'Arcy. I've got nothing special to do this aftahnoon," offered Levison.

"Thank you vewy much, but I must go alone."

"Oh, I see! You're going to meet somebody."

"Bai Jove, what a splendid pass!" said Arthur Augustus. "Bwavo, Ker! Bai Jove! Figgins will score! Huwway!"

Levison grinned. Arthur Augustus evidently did not intend to reply to his question.

"Got a smoke about you, D'Arcy?" Levison asked, when the cheers for Figgys's goal had died away.

"Certainly not!"

"Oh, I thought you were a smoker now!" said Levison. "Great fun, don't you think?"

"I think nothin' of the sort. I wegard it as wotten bad form!" said Arthur Augustus stiffly. "And, upon the whole, Levison, I pwefere that you should not address me!"

"Go hon!" said Levison.

Arthur Augustus moved away. He was keeping one eye on the clock-tower. At three o'clock he turned and walked briskly off the football ground. Levison and Mellish exchanged glances, and strolled away towards the gates after him.

"We shall spot the little game now!" murmured Levison, with a chuckle.

"Bet you two to one he's going to the tobacconist's!"

"We'll jolly well see, anyway!" said Mellish.

And as Arthur Augustus sauntered gracefully down the lane, Levison and Mellish strolled on his track, and it never occurred to Arthur Augustus to look round.

CHAPTER 8.

Most Mysterious!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS sauntered down the old High Street of Rylcombe.

In the lane he had not once turned his head, and Levison and Mellish had found their path quite easy in following him unobserved.

But once in the village, Arthur Augustus became more cautious.

As he was passing the Green Man he paused, put up his eyeglass, and slowly and carefully surveyed the High Street.

He was quite leisurely in his movements, and Levison and Mellish had ample time to draw out of sight behind a wagon halted in the street.

"Has he seen us?" Mellish whispered.

"No. He never looked back. He's just looking round now to see whether there are any St. Jim's chaps about before he goes in—"

"Goes in where?"

"The Green Man, perhaps!"

"Oh, my hat! That awful pub!" said Mellish, with a low whistle.

"Looks like it. No, he's going on," said Levison. "Let's get on the other

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on the footer ground. Figgins & Co. of the New House were in great form, and Tom Merry's team had plenty to do to hold their own against them.

Arthur Augustus came down to see the beginning of the match—either from a sympathetic interest, or from a desire to see all his chums safely occupied before he started on his mysterious excursion.

"Not playing to-day?" Levison of the Fourth remarked, joining him at the ropes.

Arthur Augustus gave him a glance of great disfavour. He suspected Levison of having given Knox the information about the smokes in the study.

"No!" he said shortly.

"Hard cheese on the School House," said Levison solemnly. "Not much chance for our side to pull the match off without you!"

Arthur Augustus thawed a little. He was thinking just the same himself and

side of the road. We can dodge into a shop if he looks across. He takes his time about it!"

The two young rascals chuckled and crossed the street.

Arthur Augustus, having taken his leisurely survey, and apparently being satisfied, was sauntering on again. Once more he paused, and the two spies dodged into the doorway of Mr. Wiggs, the tailor; but this time Arthur Augustus did not look round. He had only paused to flick a speck of dust from the sleeve of his beautiful coat.

The next time he stopped, it was outside the plate-glass window of Chunn's, the tobacconist's.

"That's his game," whispered Levison.

Arthur Augustus put up his eyeglass again, and took another survey. Levison and Mellish were in the doorway of Bunn's teashop now, and out of sight. Arthur Augustus was satisfied. He disappeared in at the door of Chunn's shop.

"There he goes!" said Mellish. "Out of bounds! All tobacconist's shops are out of bounds! If a prefect spotted him now—"

"Well, we've spotted him," said Levison. "After this, even he can't have the awful nerve to pretend that he doesn't smoke. Blake got rid of that stuff somehow out of their study, and D'Arcy has come down here for a fresh lot!"

"Plain as daylight!" said Mellish.

"And we'll jolly well make him hand out some to us!" said Levison, with a chuckle.

"Good egg! We'll make it halves!"

"Here he comes!"

Arthur Augustus came out of the tobacconist's. His face was a little flushed. He walked quickly down the street.

Levison and his companion were about to leave the doorway of the shop and follow him, when he halted. D'Arcy gazed into a shop window, as if deeply interested. As the shop was an ironmonger's, and the window displayed chiefly an assortment of agricultural implements, it was not likely that the swell of St. Jim's was really interested. He was evidently marking time—for what?

The shadowers soon saw. D'Arcy stared into the ironmonger's window for five minutes, and then walked back to the tobacconist's shop and disappeared inside.

The two watchers were decidedly astonished.

"Forgotten to get matches perhaps?" hazarded Mellish.

In about five minutes D'Arcy came out again. This time he walked as far as the local chemist's, and stood staring for some minutes at the coloured glass jars in the window. Levison and Mellish watched him, intently curious to see what he would do next.

After regarding the chemist's window with great attention for some time, D'Arcy retraced his steps to Chunn's, and entered again.

Levison and Mellish were utterly mystified by this time.

Arthur Augustus had entered the tobacconist's three times within a quarter of an hour, and had spent the intervals staring into shop-windows—for nothing.

"Must be off his dot!" said Mellish.

"Looks like it. Let's get out of here; old Bunn is watching us from the cash-desk. Let's get opposite Chunn's."

They left the teashop doorway and moved cautiously along the street. A little farther along was a big oak-tree

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in the village street. There they halted, in good cover, and watched the doorway of the tobacconist's on the other side.

In a few minutes Arthur Augustus came out.

The flush on his face had deepened, and his manner seemed a little agitated as he walked up the street.

Levison and Mellish did not stir. They expected him to return, and he did. Before ten minutes had elapsed, D'Arcy was back at the tobacconist's again.

The two watchers exchanged amazed glances.

"That's four times he's been in," said Mellish.

Levison rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "This beats it," he said. "What's the little game?"

"Blessed if I know. They must think he's mad, coming into the shop every two minutes," said Mellish in amazement.

"He must buy something every time," said Levison. "He can't go in there for nothing."

"But what's his game? Why can't he buy what he wants at once, and have done with it?"

"Goodness knows. Here he comes again."

Arthur Augustus came out of Chunn's and sauntered down the street. This time he went as far as the railway station, and sauntered to and fro in front of the station for twenty minutes or so. But as if attracted by a magnet, he came back at last towards the tobacconist's and disappeared inside.

"Mad!" said Mellish.

"Fairly off his rocker," said Levison. "I can't understand it. I thought it must be something to do with the races. They say Chunn runs a betting business. He might be waiting for a wire about a horse. But—"

Mellish shook his head.

"He'd have got it by this time, I should think."

"Yes, I suppose it isn't that. But what is it?"

"Ask me another! I think he's potty!"

Out came D'Arcy again, and up the street he went. Levison and Mellish hardly troubled to follow him with their eyes this time; they knew he would come back. And he did. Ten minutes later he disappeared once more into the tobacconist's.

For two whole hours it continued, and by that time Arthur Augustus had certainly been in and out of the tobacconist's a dozen times or more.

If he had made a purchase every time, he must have accumulated a considerable supply of smokes.

At last, when Levison and Mellish were getting thoroughly tired of their vigil, Arthur Augustus also appeared to be tired.

His walk was brisker as he left the tobacconist's, and he strode away in the direction of St. Jim's with a decided air.

"He's going back to the school," said Levison shrewdly.

And they followed.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked directly on, and did not look back once before he arrived at St. Jim's. Levison and Mellish followed him in at the gates and across the quadrangle to the School House.

The football match was over, and Blake & Co. could be seen chatting with the Terrible Three in the school tuck-shop.

But Arthur Augustus did not glance towards them.

He entered the School House and went up to Study No. 6, and Levison and Mellish arrived in the Fourth Form passage after him, in time to see him close the door.

"Come on," said Levison, with a grin. "We know what he's got about him, and we're going halves. We'll have a smoke in the box-room afterwards."

"Good egg!" chuckled Mellish.

And they hurried on to Study No. 6, opened the door without knocking, and walked into the study.

CHAPTER 9.

Not Half!

"BAI JOVE!"

Arthur Augustus uttered that ejaculation as the two juniors came unceremoniously in.

Upon the study table was a pile of cigars and packets of cigarettes. The elegant junior had evidently just turned them out of his pockets, probably with the intention of packing them out of sight somewhere.

He started and turned an angry glare upon the two Fourth Formers.

"How dare you entah my study without knockin'!" he demanded wrathfully.

"Did you want to put the smokes out of sight?" grinned Mellish.

"We've caught you!" Levison remarked.

Arthur Augustus' eye gleamed behind his eyeglass.

"You uttah wottahs!"

"Oh, come off!" said Levison coolly.

"We don't spend the afternoon going in and out of a tobacconist's, anyway!"

D'Arcy's brows contracted.

"You feahful cad! Have you been watchin' me?"

"Oh, we happened to see you!" said Levison carelessly. "Didn't we, Mellish?"

"Yes, about a dozen times!" grinned Mellish.

"You uttah cads!"

"Miss Chunn must have thought you dotty!" said Levison. "Why on earth couldn't you have bought all the smokes you wanted at once, instead of going in and out a dozen times for them?"

"Mind your own bisney!"

"I wonder what Kildare would say if he happened to look into this study now?" remarked Mellish.

"Bai Jove!"

"Blake couldn't make Herr Schneider a second birthday present, what?"

"Bai Jove! Pway get out of my study. I wegard you as a disgustin' spy. If you do not wetiah frow my quartahs immediately, I shall thwow you out!"

And Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs in a businesslike manner.

"Hold on!" said Levison coolly.

"We didn't come here simply to jaw. You've been breaking bounds and buying cigars. We're willing to keep the secret for you."

"I decline to wequest any favah at your wotten hands!"

"You'd like me to mention the matter to Knox?" chuckled Levison.

"He was awfully ratty to-day over Blake diddling him. He knows very well the stuff wasn't bought with the intention of handing it to Herr Schneider. He would like to run into this second cargo."

"You can sneak if you like. You have already done so once, I believe."

"Knox happened to hear me talking to Mellish," explained Levison. "The same thing might happen again, of

course. A fellow isn't bound to keep disgraceful secrets like this."

"The othah fellows know nothin' about this."

"They'd have to prove that."

Arthur Augustus wrinkled his brows. He would have risked any punishment himself rather than ask a favour at Levison's hands. But he realised that the discovery of the cigars in the study would mean trouble for Blake, Herries, and Digby, as well as for himself.

"You feahful cad!" he said. "Why can't you mind your own business?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I only want fair play," he remarked. "Halves! That's fair!"

"What?"

"Halves!" said Levison and Mellish together.

uttah wottah like you! I should have no objection whatevah to givin' you the cigars, but I wegard it as w'ong of you to smoke. Besides, they will make you ill."

"Rats! That's my business, I suppose?"

"Well, yaas; I suppose it is," said D'Arcy, after a moment's thought. "I am certainly not your fathah confessah. If you choose to smoke, I can only wegard you as a wank outsidah, and have no wight to intahfere with you."

"Are you going to give us half?"

"You can take the lot, if you like."

"What!"

"As a mattah of fact, I shall be vewy much obliged if you will wemove the wubbish fwom this study!"

Levison and Mellish stared blankly at

relief when the last of them disappeared into the pockets of the two cads of the Fourth.

"Now, pway get out!" he said.

"What-ho!" said Levison, with a chuckle. "We're finished here! You can buy as many more smokes as you like, Gussy—we'll get rid of them for you!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Mellish.

And they departed in great satisfaction.

Ten minntes later Jack Blake came into the study. He sniffed, and cast a suspicious glance at his studymate.

"You've been having tobacco here!" he said. "It niffs! Have you been buying smokes again?"

Arthur Augustus did not reply.

"Do you hear me?" roared Blake.



Pigott smoked on, regarding the sufferings of his companions with callous enjoyment. Four ghastly and horrible wrecks groaned and moaned about him, with horrid and unimagined torments going on inside them. "Oh crumbs!" murmured Mellish, hanging on to the window ledge. "And some silly idiots call this enjoyment! Ow!"

"I don't quite compwehend you. What do you want half of?"

Levison pointed to the cigars on the table.

"I can't afford to smoke cigars," he said. "I'd like to, but the cash won't run to it. You've got a dozen there. Halves!"

Arthur Augustus' face cleared.

"Oh, is that all you want?"

"That's all."

"I do not approve of boys smokin'!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "It's vewy bad form, and it's howwid for the health while a chap is still gwowin'!"

"Well, I like that, considering that you must smoke like a chimney yourself!" said Levison, in amazement.

"You uttah wottah! I do not smoke!"

Levison stared at him.

"What have you bought all this stuff for, then? Are you going to stick the cigars round the study walls for ornaments?"

"He, he, he!" cackled Mellish.

"I certainly wefuse to explain to an

the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus was evidently in earnest. He was pushing the smokes across the table to the two young rascals as he spoke.

"You must be mad!" gasped Levison at last. "Why, these Coronas cost eighteenpence each, and the Larranagas a shilling, I know. I've fetched them for Cutts when he's been putting on style. You paid good money for them, and now you don't want them?"

"Certainly I don't want them."

"Then why did you buy them?"

"Pway attend wholly to your own affairs, Levison, and leave me to attend to mine!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

Levison and Mellish crammed the cigars and cigarettes into their pockets. They had never dreamed of reaping such a harvest. They looked forward with great enjoyment to smoking eighteenpenny cigars. Arthur Augustus watched the disappearance of his supply of smokes with unmistakable satisfaction. He breathed an audible sigh of

"I have already remarked to you, Blake, that until you apologise for doubting my word, I cannot wegard you as a fwend!"

Jack Blake gave him a concentrated glare.

"Have you been buying smokes again?" he demanded.

And Herries and Digby, who had followed Blake in, glared interrogatively at the swell of St. Jim's.

"I wefuse to weply!"

"Go through his pockets!" said Blake.

"I wefuse to allow—"

But D'Arcy's refusal made no difference. The three juniors collared him and turned his pockets out, in spite of his wild resistance. They felt that it was their duty to look after Gussy, and they meant to do their duty—without standing on ceremony. But nothing of an incriminating nature was discovered in the elegant junior's pockets. He was

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not quite so elegant, however, when the three juniors had finished with him.

"Nothing there!" said Blake, in relief. "He hasn't been playing the giddy ox again, after all!"

"You uthah wottahs!" said D'Arcy. "I wegard you—"

"Bump him for giving us so much trouble!" said Herries.

"Good wheeze!"

"Leggo! I wefuse to be bumped! I considah—I— Hands off— Yawoooh!"

"Bump, bump, bump!"

"Ow! Bai Jove! Gweat Scott! You awful bwutes! Yawoooh!"

Blake, Herries, and Digby strode out of the study, slamming the door after them. Arthur Augustus sat up on the carpet and gasped. It was several minutes before he rose to his feet; he had to get his second wind.

"Ow!" he groaned. "The wottahs! I've a good mind—ow!—to go aftah them and give them a feahful thwashin' all wound! Ow! I shall certainly dwop their—ow!—acquaintance! Ow-ow!"

CHAPTER 10.

Great Enjoyment!

"MY treat!" said Levison, with a princely air.

Quite a little party had assembled in the upper box-room. There were Levison and Mellish, and Crooke and Gore of the Shell, and Pigott of the Third. The five young rascals were going to enjoy themselves—or so they believed.

It was not often that Levison stood a treat. He was exceptionally careful in looking after his money. But this time he had obtained his supply very cheaply. It was not a feed; it was a "smoking party." Cigars and cigarettes obtained for nothing could be dispensed with a generous hand.

"Well, what have you got?" asked Gore, not very graciously. "If you've asked me here to smoke cheap fags—"

"I've got some smokes better than you've ever had in your life," said Levison. "If they are too strong for you—"

"Rats!" said Gore, with a curl of the lip. "I can smoke anything—even a pipe!"

"What do you think of those?"

Levison laid a handful of cigars on an empty trunk.

There were exclamations of surprise and admiration from the guests. Gore picked up one of the cigars—a long Corona, with a scent that would have delighted the heart of a smoker old enough to appreciate it.

"My hat, this is gorgeous!" he exclaimed.

"You must have given eighteenpence for that smoke," said Crooke, with a stare.

Crooke was the son of a millionaire, but he had never thought of giving eighteenpence for a smoke.

Levison smiled in an airy manner.

"It's my treat," he said, "mine and Mellish's. We haven't spared any expense to make a decent thing of it, have we, Mellish?"

"Not us!" grinned Mellish.

"And those Larranagas!" ejaculated Pigott of the Third. "Why, they are a shilling in Rylcombe; I've fetched them for Cutts!"

"My dear kid, don't count on what they cost," said Levison. "It's our treat, and we want to do the thing decently."

"Well, I must say you're doing that!" said Crooke, with a deep breath. "You must have spent a lot of money on these things."

"Oh, never mind the money!"

"I thought you were a mean chap, Levison," confessed Crooke. "I take it back now. This is really handsome of you!"

"Thanks! Pile in!"

"What-ho!"

"You'd better leave the cigars alone,

Piggy. They'll be too stiff for you. Try the cigarettes," said Levison.

Pigott of the Third sniffed. Pigott sometimes fagged for Cutts of the Fifth, and performed little commissions for him, and he had learned many of the bad habits of the Fifth Former. He was a hardened young rascal, as a matter of fact, and had a tougher inside than any of the older fellows there. His undergrown frame and yellowish complexion hinted that he was not at all new to smoking.

He selected one of the big Coronas and lighted it with a flourish, after snipping off the end in quite a masterly manner, as he had seen Gerald Cutts do.

If any of the other fellows had doubted their inward powers of dealing with big cigars, Pigott's example would have dismissed their doubts. The little rascal was soon blowing out great clouds of smoke.

Crooke and Gore, Mellish and Levison, lighted up.

Levison had opened the window of the box-room; but in spite of a current of air, the room was soon blue with smoke. Five big Coronas all going at once produced a great deal of smoke, and the inexperienced young rascals smoked very quickly.

Levison, indeed, finished his cigar in five or six minutes. He was conscious of a slightly giddy sensation in the head, but he was delighted, and a little surprised to find that his inside was apparently normal. He was evidently a better smoker than he had supposed. He picked up a Larranaga, bit off the end, and lighted it.

"I say, isn't this ripping?" said Crooke.

"Gorgeous!" said Gore.

"We owe a vote of thanks to Levison and Mellish!" grinned Pigott. "Cutts would have come to this if you'd asked him. He can only get cigars like these when he's in funds!"

Levison was proceeding more slowly with his second cigar.

The giddy sensation in his head was increasing, and there was a feeling of lightness inside his body, as if he were about to rise and float away along with the smoke. It was a very queer feeling. He moved a little, and the first movement sent a strange and terrible shudder through him. As a matter of fact, he was now feeling the effects of the first cigar. His head began to swim, and a fearful feeling rose in his chest, higher and higher. His face went a sickly white, and then slowly changed to a peculiar art shade in green.

Crooke lowered his beautiful Corona, half-smoked. His complexion matched Levison's. Gore was still puffing away, but more slowly. Mellish rose to his feet, and walked towards the window. Under pretence of looking out, he slyly dropped the cigar into the ivy. Only Pigott was still smoking with apparent satisfaction.

"How are you getting on, Levison?" asked Crooke, in a curious, uncertain voice.

Levison did not reply. He dared not speak. He dared not move.

He knew what would happen if he did.

"G-good smokes, aren't they?" groaned Gore.

"J-jolly good!" murmured Crooke. "I-I don't believe in quite finishing a cigar, you know. They lose their flavour as you get to the end. I've heard Cutts say so."

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"Just what I think," said Gore, suddenly dropping his cigar as if it had become red hot. "Never overdo even a good thing, you know!"

"Gro-oogh!" said Levison. Piggett burst into a demoniacal chuckle. He was smoking slowly and with enjoyment, his meagre and stunted body being habituated to nicotine. The little rascal had known what to expect to happen to the less-experienced smokers. He grinned at them like some dwarfish imp through the cigar haze.

"You're looking a bit queer, Levison!" he remarked, with ghoulish glee. "Feel a bit rocky inside, what?"

"N-no!" stuttered Levison. "Right as rain, eh?"

"Ye-e-es! Groogh!"

"Bit fishy, I think. Never mind, think of fat pork and oysters!" said Piggett heartlessly. "Groogh!"

Levison made a sudden jump from the box he was sitting on, and spun towards the fireplace. Disaster overtook him before he reached it. Levison, instead of crossing the box-room, might have been crossing the Channel on a particularly rough and stormy day to judge by what happened.

The sight of Levison's awful fate finished the others. There was a weird and unearthly gurgle from Crooke, and he sank back against the wall, his face white as a sheet, and his chest rising and falling convulsively. Gore stared at him with unseeing eyes, with horrid and unimagined torments going on in his interior.

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Mellish, who was hanging on to the window ledge with convulsive hands. "Oh, goodness gracious! Oh, my hat! I—I say, some silly idiots call this enjoyment! Ow! A fellow must be mad to smoke cigars! Ow! Groogh! Ger-roo-oo-ogh!"

"Groogh!"

"Oh, my aunt! Oh, crumbs! Yow-ow-ow!"

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw-aw!"

Levison fell across the box he had been sitting on, face downwards, and groaned in agony of spirit. He lay, helplessly heaving and groaning. The box-room seemed to be swimming round him.

Piggett smoked on, regarding the sufferings of his companions with callous enjoyment. He was amused. Four ghastly and horrible wrecks groaned and moaned about him. Piggett finished his cigar and rose to his feet. Piggett had habituated himself to nicotine at the expense of ruining his constitution. He could not run, or box, or stick to work, or play footer—but he could smoke. He looked upon himself as an extremely doggish man of the world, and he regarded his companions with scorn.

"Have another cigar?" he jeered. Gurgle, gurgle!

"Groo-hoo-hoo!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

Piggett threw away the stump of his cigar.

"Well, you don't seem a jolly party," he remarked. "I think I'll be getting off. You chaps had better pull yourselves together before you show yourselves downstairs. If anybody sees your faces now, you'll be spotted at once. So-long—and thanks awfully, Levison! Quite a treat, I assure you!"

And Piggett walked out, whistling. For half an hour nothing was heard in the box-room save low, anguished gurgles and groans. The jolly party regarded one another with savage animosity. Each fellow felt inclined

to slaughter all the rest, if only he had had the strength to move. Crooke was the first to recover sufficiently to pick himself up. He rose slowly and cautiously to his feet, heaving and moaning.

"I'm g-going," he murmured. "I'll butcher you presently, Levison. You did this on purpose, you beast!"

"Oh, I feel awful!" moaned Mellish. "I—I never thought it would be like this! I—I think that cigar must have been poisoned!"

"I've been on the Channel," said Gore. "It was a wild day, but it wasn't anything like this. I—I shall never be well again, I know that! I feel as if I were g-going to die! I wish I could see you hung first, Levison. I—I'd give anything I possess to see you hung!"

Levison only groaned. Four miserable, white-faced, shaking wrecks crawled out of the box-room at last. And the traces they left behind them indicated that anything but a jolly party had been there.

CHAPTER 11.

The Order of the Boot!

"GREAT Scott! Are you ill, Gore?"

Tom Merry, quite alarmed, uttered that exclamation as he met Gore in the Shell passage.

George Gore did not reply. He scowled ferociously, and went into his study and closed the door.

Tom Merry was amazed. "There's something wrong with Gore," he said, as he entered his study, where Lowther and Manners were getting tea. "Looks as if he's had a bad dose of sea-sickness."

Monty Lowther chuckled. "I've just seen Crooke," he remarked. "He looks the same. I asked him what was the matter, and he said he was going to kill Levison."

"Has Levison done something to them?" said Tom, in amazement.

"Levison's looking just as sick! He's in his study now. Lumley-Lumley asked me to come in and look at him and Mellish. He said it was worth seeing."

"And was it?"

"It was! Never seen such a pair of awful scarecrows. Mellish said it was all Gussy's fault. Levison said he hoped Gussy would be expelled as soon as he was found out!"

"What on earth has Gussy been doing, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha! I fancy he's been passing smokes on to Levison."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Awful thing to see the one-and-only Gussy on the downward path, and leading other fellows on the road to ruin, isn't it?" said Manners.

"Well, it's rather rotten," said Tom Merry, with a frown. "If D'Arcy has taken to doing rotten things himself, he might leave other fellows out of it. I should have thought that that lot would have been more likely to lead Gussy astray; but it seems that he's been the giddy tempter this time!"

The Terrible Three were considerably puzzled. After tea they dropped into Study

No. 6, where Blake & Co. were at the tea-table. There was a supply of good things on the table, showing that the financial famine was over at last in No. 6.

Arthur Augustus was sitting very stiffly at the table. He had not forgiven his study-mates for the rough handling he had received that afternoon, and he was still not upon speaking terms with Jack Blake.

"What have you been doing, Gussy?" demanded Tom Merry severely.

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass, and regarded Tom Merry with an inquiring stare.

"I do not quite comprehend you, dear boy," he replied.

Monty Lowther wagged an accusing forefinger at him.

"You've been leading dear little innocent boys into your bad ways!" he said.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Crooke, Gore, Levison, and Mellish," said Manners. "All of them on the rocks—half dead, and wishing they were quite—all through you! What do you mean by spreading your riotous habits through the House in this way?"

"You uttah ass—"

"Hallo! Gussy been smoking again?" asked Blake.

"I have nevah been smokin'—"

"You gave smokes to Levison & Co.," Arthur Augustus grinned.

"Yaas. Levison said 'Halves!' and I told him he could have the lot. I twust he has twied one of the stwongest cigars, and cured himself of playin' the giddy ox!"

"He looks as if he's been on a bad Channel crossing," said Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you've been bringing smokes into the school again, Gussy?" said Blake, with a glare at the swell of the School House.

"I decline to weply to you, Blake."

"Have you been bringing smokes into the study?" demanded Herries.

"Yaas."

"What for?"

"I was goin' to throw them away, but Levison spotted me. He was goin' to sneak about it, as he did before, so I let him have the wubbish."

"And if he had sneaked we should all have got into a row," said Digby.

"Yaas, pewwaps. I should have been weally sowwy. Howevah, I should have apologised."

"Which would have set matters quite right again, of course!" grinned Tom Merry.

"An apology from one gentleman to another is quite suffish," said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Well, Levison & Co. deserved all they got," said Jack Blake. "But we're

(Continued on the next page.)

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not going to have this kind of thing going on. Whether you've taken to smoking, or whether you've gone potty, I don't care. You're not going to bring any more of that muck into this study. We try to be respectable, and we can't have you disgracing us like this. I want you to promise never to buy any more smokes."

"Wats!"

"You've got to give your word," said Blake.

"I have nothin' to say to you, Blake."

Blake snorted.

"I've got something to say to you, though. You've got to give us your word not to go to the tobacconist's again, or we shall pitch you neck and crop out of the study, and keep you out."

"You can hardly turn me out of my own study, Blake."

"I think we can, and if you complain to the Housemaster, you can tell him the reason!" hooted Blake.

"I am not likely to do that. I should thrash you if you attempted anythin' of the kind," said D'Arcy warmly.

"Get out of the doorway, you Shell chaps," said Blake grimly.

The Terrible Three stood aside with cheerful smiles. Blake, Herries, and Digby rose to their feet. D'Arcy rose, too, rather hurriedly.

"Now, I trust you chaps are not goin' to play the giddy goat!" he said remonstratingly.

"You are going to promise to keep clear of the tobacconist's—"

"I wefuse!"

"Outside, then!"

"Wats! I tell you— Oh!"

Three strong pairs of arms grasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at once, and, in spite of his violent struggles, he was ejected from the study—right on his neck.

He rolled in the passage, and jumped up, gasping for breath and red with rage. He rushed back furiously into the study, his fists clenched, and his arms going like the sails of a windmill.

"You uttah wottahs! You wank outsidahs! I will thrash you all wound! Yawwoh!"

Arthur Augustus fully intended to thrash his studymates all round, but he had overlooked one rather important circumstance—he was by no means a match for three study juniors.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were ready for him, and they seized him as he rushed in. The Shell fellows looked on smilingly; they were not needed to interfere. They were simply spectators of the scene. Blake, Herries, and Digby whirled Arthur Augustus off his feet, and rushed him out into the passage again, and sent him spinning along the linoleum. Arthur Augustus looked all arms and legs as he went.

Blake panted as he came back into the study.

"Now, if he comes back again—"

He did come back again, but only as far as the doorway. He stood there, wild and dishevelled and breathless.

"You uttah waseals! I am not goin' to be turned out of my own study! I vegard you as wank bwutes! I'm comin' in!"

"You'll go out on your neck if you do!" said Blake.

"You feafful wottah—"

"Collar him!"

Arthur Augustus had come inside the study. Instantly he was seized by three juniors and hurled forth again. This time he did not return. It was beginning to dawn upon his noble mind that

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he was not quite up to such unequal warfare.

"Bai Jove! The beasts! I have been thwown into quite a fluttah!" he gasped. "Tom Mewwy, deah boy, I think I will do my pwep in your study this evenin'. I wefuse to occupy the same quartahs as those feafful wuffians!"

"No, you won't," said Tom Merry promptly; "not unless you promise to keep clear of the tobacconist's. I think Blake is quite right."

"I vegard you as impertinent, Mewwy."

"Go hon!"

The Terrible Three walked away, grinning. Arthur Augustus panted, and dusted himself down amid grins and chuckles from the fellows who had witnessed his ejection from Study No. 6. Then he went to Study No. 5—the room belonging to Hammond, Bates, and Smith minor—and Harry Hammond, his Cockney chum, took him in with pleasure. And for the rest of that evening, Arthur Augustus did not look into Study No. 6; neither did he exchange a word with his old chums, nor with the Terrible Three. The swell of St. Jim's was very much upon his dignity.

CHAPTER 12.

More Trouble!

TRouble in Study No. 6 was rare.

True, the four chums of the Fourth were not always very polite to one another, and strangers hearing their mode of speech would never have supposed that they were affectionate chums. But they were, all the same, and there was seldom or never any real trouble in the study.

But apparently it had come at last.

The next day all the School House knew that D'Arcy had been turned out of his own study, and that he was not on speaking terms with his old chums.

When he came upon Blake & Co., he passed them with chin uplifted, and his aristocratic nose very high in the air.

With the Terrible Three, too, he was on the worst of terms. He cut them as mercilessly as he did his old friends in the Fourth.

His dignity had been terribly ruffled—and to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy his personal "dig" was the first and foremost of all possible considerations.

But though D'Arcy no longer regarded them as friends, the chums of the School House were as concerned as ever about him. They had lost patience with him, and perhaps that was not the most judicious way to treat a fellow whom they suspected of having taken the wrong turning. But they did not mean to let him go his own way unmolested. As Blake remarked, when he recovered his good temper, Gussy was too good a little ass to be allowed to go to the bow-wows at his own sweet will.

There was undoubtedly something amiss with D'Arcy. He neglected his work and his prep, and was in frequent trouble with Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth. He neglected



"Look! Here I have the deadly blade that shall end the jacket and displayed a huge carving-knife to the horrified rival!"

footer practice, and was quite unconcerned when Tom Merry scratched his name out of the House eleven. He fell into pensive moods, plunging into brown studies, and he would come to himself with a start, and answer absent-mindedly if anyone spoke to him.

It was all very puzzling, and it confirmed the juniors' suspicions that the swell of St. Jim's was getting himself into trouble of some kind. On Thursday and Friday, too, he made visits to Rylcombe, getting passes from the prefects. And he did not explain in the slightest degree what he went there for—even to Hammond, the friend he was mostly with now. Harry Hammond's friendship was a blessing to Arthur Augustus since his break with his old chums.

Hammond, the Cockney schoolboy, regarded the swell of St. Jim's with deep and undying admiration, and everything that Arthur Augustus did was right in his eyes.

D'Arcy was back just in time for calling-over on Friday evening, and after calling-over he went up to Hammond's study. Bates and Smith minor had raised no objection to that new addition to the study. As a matter of fact, they were rather proud of having Lord Eastwood's son in their study. Hammond was in Study No. 5 just now when D'Arcy came in, the other two fellows being downstairs.

Arthur Augustus sank into a chair, looking a little tired.

"Had a long walk?" asked Harry Hammond.

"Only to Wylcombe, Hammond."

"You've been a long time gone."

"Yaas. I spent wathah a long time in the village," said D'Arcy, the colour coming into his cheeks for some reason. Hammond looked at him curiously.



life of my rival!" exclaimed Herries; and he opened his eyes of Arthur Augustus. "I am desperate! He is my enemy!"

"I 'ope you ain't brought any more smokes back with you, Master D'Arcy," he said. "'Course, 'tain't no business of mine; but that really ain't good enough for you."

"Yaas, I have, though."

Arthur Augustus rummaged in his pocket, and laid a handful of cigars on the study table. Hammond stared at them.

"Ow much did that little lot cost you?" he said.

"I weally don't know. Five or ten shillin's, I think."

"You're not going to smoke them?"

"Certainly not! I do not smoke!"

"Look 'ere, D'Arcy! Some of the blokes say as 'ow you're goin' off your rocker," said Hammond. "Wot's the good of buyin' cigars and not smoking them?"

"Surely it would be worse to smoke them, Hammond?"

"Well, yes, judgin' by the way Levison looked the other day," said Hammond, with a chuckle. "But that ain't the point. Why buy them?"

"I have a weason."

"Can't you explain to an old pal?"

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"I should weally like to explain, Hammond. I have felt for some time a pwessin' need to confide in somebody. But—"

"Go ahead!" said Hammond encouragingly.

"But I feah that you would not comprehend."

"Well, I ain't got your brains, but I'd try," said Hammond loyally.

"I don't mean that, Hammond. I mean, I feah that you are wathah too young to undahstand," explained Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head.

Hammond stared at him, as well he might. Considering that he was

several months older than the swell of St. Jim's, he was naturally surprised by that statement.

"I am older than you are, D'Arcy," he ventured to hint.

"Yaas; but some fellows are oldah than their years," Arthur Augustus explained.

"I've weally had lots of expwience. I wegard myself vewy much as a man of the world, you know. And, of course, you're weally a kid, Hammond."

Hammond grinned.

He had spent all his youth in a shop in Bethnal Green, where he had learned more of real life and human nature than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was likely to learn if he lived to the respectable age of Methuselah. But he was too faithful a pal to explain that to Arthur Augustus.

"Still, I'll do my best to understand," he said. "Jest you tell me about it, wot-ever it is, and I'll do my best."

There was a long pause. Arthur Augustus was debating the matter in his mind. Evidently he had a strong desire to speak, but for some unknown reason he hesitated. To Harry Hammond's surprise, the colour deepened in D'Arcy's face till he was perfectly scarlet. The Cockney schoolboy felt a momentary uneasiness.

"Crikey, D'Arcy, you ain't been doin' nothin' wrong, surely? 'Course, if you 'ave, I'll stand by you—that's settled, anywe. But—"

"Thank you, deah boy! But I have certainly been doin' nothin' w'ong, exceptin' bweakin' bounds to go to the tobacconist's. I am sowwy to do that, but you see that, as the shop is out of bounds, I cannot go there without bweakin' bounds."

"But why go there?"

"That's what I'm goin' to explain. Have you ever been there, Hammond?"

"I've glanced into the shop," said Hammond.

"Yaas. And what did you see there?"

"See there?" repeated Hammond, in surprise. "Lemme see. Same as you usually see in a tobacconist's shop, I suppose. There was stacks of cigar-boxes, and packets of cigarettes on the counter, and a light burning for customers, and Miss Chunn sitting on the counter talking to young Chipps, the auctioneer's clerk, and rolling 'er heyes—"

Arthur Augustus jumped up, as if he had received an electric shock.

"Hammond!"

"Yes?" said Hammond.

"You are alludin' to an estimable young lady in a vewy diswespectful mannah—"

"I didn't mean to," said Hammond honestly. "I 'ope I shan't never speak of any woman with disrespect, D'Arcy. There ain't no harm in Miss Chunn rolling her eyes, as I can see. 'Sides, she's rather spooney on that young man Chipps; they walk out together!"

"Hammond!"

Arthur Augustus' noble face was like a thundercloud. His nose was quivering, his eyes were gleaming, his lips

tightly set. Hammond gazed at him in surprise and alarm.

"What's the matter, D'Arcy?"

"The mattah!" Arthur Augustus' voice trembled. "We have been fwends, Hawwy Hammond, evah since you came to St. Jim's. Well, we're goin' to be fwends no longah! I wefuse to call a chap a fwend when he speaks in that mannah of a young lady whom I wespect and admire! That is all! I shall not visit this study again!"

Arthur Augustus stalked blindly to the door. Hammond jumped up in alarm.

"D'Arcy—Gussy—I say—"

Slam!

Arthur Augustus was gone, leaving Hammond overwhelmed with dismay.

CHAPTER 13.

Light at Last!

"GET your skates, Gussy!" Blake spoke as the juniors came out of the dining-room after dinner on Saturday.

The Rhyl was covered again with a sheet of solid ice, and even footer was neglected that afternoon for skating.

Arthur Augustus gave a start, and looked quickly at Blake.

"Skates!" he repeated. "I don't want my skates yet. I—I mean, I weally don't know why you should suppose that I am goin' skatin', Blake!"

"Ass!" said Blake politely. "We're all going skating, and I suppose you're coming, too. The ice is first-rate."

"I'm sowwy I cannot come."

"Fathead!"

"And I should be vewy much obliged, Blake, if you would wemembah that I am not on speakin' terms with you!"

D'Arcy walked away with his nose in the air. Jack Blake breathed hard through his nose. He was, as he had already remarked several times, getting fed-up—up to the chin. Already he had seriously debated with Digby and Herries whether it wouldn't, upon the whole, be a good idea to give D'Arcy a terrific hiding.

"Potty as ever!" growled Herries.

"Why can't he come skating like everybody else? Do you know where Gussy is going, Hammond?"

Hammond shook his head. Hammond had been looking quite glum all the morning.

"I don't know nothin' about it," he said. "He won't speak to me now."

"What!" shouted Blake. "Has he quarrelled with you, too?"

Hammond nodded dolorously.

"Yes. He came to my study yesterday evening, and left a lot of cigars on the table. He lost his temper about nothing, fur as I could see, and stamped out and slammed the door. He hasn't spoken to me to-day."

"What did you do with the cigars?" asked Herries. "I took 'em out this mornin', broke 'em up, and threw the pieces away," said Hammond. "I didn't know what else to do with 'em. They couldn't stop in my study, of course. I wish I knew what was the matter with D'Arcy."

"Going off his silly rocker, that's all!" said Digby.

Hammond sighed. There was a dog-like fidelity in his nature, and he felt the estrangement from Arthur Augustus far more than the chums of Study No. 6 did.

A large crowd of juniors went down to the frozen river. The Rhyl was

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frozen for miles, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther started off upon a long skating run together. They dashed along at a good speed on the gleaming ice, the keen wind bringing the colour to their cheeks.

St. Jim's and the crowd of skaters disappeared behind them. They passed under the old stone bridge, and over the frozen pool, and down the wider reaches of the river.

Here and there, as they sped on, they passed skaters and sliders—fellows from the Grammar School and villagers, and country fellows galore. But past Rylcombe the river was more solitary.

"My hat! This is ripping!" Tom Merry exclaimed. "We can put on speed here. We've got the ice all to ourselves."

"Yes, rather!"

They rushed on.

As they came round a bend of the river, between the great leafless trees that overhung the banks at this point, they caught sight of two more skaters—a girl with a flowing scarf and an elegant youth, who could not possibly be anybody but—

"Gussy!" exclaimed the Terrible Three together.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The chums knew that Arthur Augustus had declined to go down to the skating with the rest of the fellows. They understood the reason now.

They slid in towards the bank, and slackened down. Arthur Augustus and his companion were in the middle of the ice, and neither of them observed the three Shell fellows.

The Terrible Three exchanged looks of helpless astonishment.

"So that's Gussy's engagement!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"But—but who is she?" said Manners.

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows in an effort to remember.

"I've seen her before somewhere," he said. "I can't remember—but I'm sure she belongs to this neighbourhood."

The chums of the Shell looked on blankly. Arthur Augustus remained quite unconscious of them. His companion was a girl of about twenty-three. She had a fat, pleasant face, a prominent nose, and a healthy colour.

The Shell fellows were sure that they had seen her before somewhere, but where they could not recall.

It was Monty Lowther who suddenly remembered, and he signified the same by bursting into a suffocated chuckle.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Oh, hold me up!" spluttered Lowther. "Oh crumbs! Those cigars!"

"Cigars!"

"Those giddy smokes!"

"Smokes!" yelled Tom Merry and Manners. "What do you mean, fat-head?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther went off into a sort of convulsion. Tom Merry and Manners started towards him with wrathful looks, but Lowther waved them off.

"Peace, my infants—peace! I've solved the giddy mystery!"

"What do you mean, you duffer?"

"You don't know that young lady?"

"I've seen her before; but where, I don't know—in Rylcombe, I think," said Tom.

"Exactly! In Rylcombe High Street."

"Yes?"

"In the tobacconist's."

"What?"

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"Miss Chunn!" booted Lowther. "Miss Chunn, the tobacconist's girl! Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Manners gasped.

"Bai Jove! I know her now!" ejaculated Manners. "Of course, it's Miss Chunn—Ann Jane Chunn. I believe her name is. I've seen her walking with young Chipps, the auctioneer."

"Miss Chunn!" gasped Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther gurgled.

"Now do you know why Gussy bought the cigars?"

"Oh crumbs! He bought them at Chunn's!"

"Exactly! Levison and Mellish have been telling a yarn about watching him there. He goes in and buys a cigar and comes out again and goes in to buy another cigar. Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but why?"

"Don't you see?" yelled Lowther. "Gussy's in love again!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"He's been in love two or three times to my knowledge!" gurgled Lowther. "There was Cousin Ethel, and then the Head's niece, and then Glyn's sister. He's always doing it. This time it's Ann Jane Chunn. And Gussy has been buying all these unholy smokes as an excuse for going into the shop to make her acquaintance and talk to her."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And he's made the best of his time!" chuckled Lowther. "Behold him now, taking the fair damsel out to skate. He'll be flopping down on the ice soon to propose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's skate up and be introduced," said Manners.

"No; let's get back and tell the other fellows," said Lowther. "We've all got to take this in hand. I'm glad it's nothing worse. I was really beginning to believe that Gussy was following in Cutts' footsteps. But he's only in love."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll hold a meeting—all Gussy's friends—and consider what's to be done," said Monty Lowther. "He's got to be stopped before he gets flogged for going to the tobacconist's. And we can't have a School House chap making such a giddy ass of himself. When the New House fellows get hold of it, it will be the joke of the school!"

The Terrible Three, rippling with laughter, gazed after D'Arcy and Ann Jane. Whether that young lady was aware that Arthur Augustus was in love with her they did not know. Probably she regarded Arthur Augustus as a nice boy who was a little silly, and had no objection to being amused by him. And Mr. Chipps being occupied at the auctioneer's office that day, she had allowed Arthur Augustus to take her out to skate. They skated on down the river, and a bend hid them from the sight of the Shell fellows.

The Terrible Three skated back at top speed to St. Jim's.

They had no doubt that they had penetrated the mystery. The fact that Arthur Augustus had paid endless visits to the tobacconist's, and that he had purchased all sorts of smoking supplies without any intention of smoking them, had seemed quite inexplicable, but it was explained now. Arthur Augustus was in love! And now that they thought of it, there were many little circumstances that confirmed their belief. Arthur Augustus' pensive moods, his absent-mindedness and abstraction, his blank refusal to explain anything, and his secret slipping away to skate with Miss Chunn—all pointed to the same conclusion.

Once more the susceptible heart of the swell of St. Jim's had been touched. Once more he was the victim of the arrows of the blind little god.

The chums of the Shell quaked with laughter as they skated. And when they reached home, and Blake, Herries, and Digby were taken aside and enlightened, there were three more hysterical chucklers.

CHAPTER 14.

Hearts Bowed Down!

TOM MERRY met Arthur Augustus when that elegant youth came back to St. Jim's.

Tom Merry was standing on the steps of the School House, in the gloom, watching for him.

When Arthur Augustus came up, Tom touched him on the arm lightly.

"I want to speak to you, Gussy," he said in a mysterious whisper.

D'Arcy regarded him coldly.

"I am afraid that I cannot reciprocate the desiah Tom Mewwy," he replied. "In the pwesent cires, it is imposs to wegard you as a fwien'd."

"I must confide in somebody!" said Tom, with a break in his voice. "Gussy, don't refuse! You're the only fellow I could possibly tell. You would understand; the others wouldn't. But you are such a fatherly chap, I feel I can tell you."

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, forgetting for once that he was on bad terms with the captain of the Shell.

"Come out into the quad, where the other fellows can't hear us," said Tom.

"Certainly, deah boy! If there's any twouble, you can't do bettah than ask my advice. I must say that I wegard myself as a fellow of tact and judgment."

"That's why I'm going to confide in you, Gussy!" said Tom, in a broken voice.

"Wight-ho, my deah chap!"

Tom Merry led the swell of St. Jim's into the deep dusk under the elm-trees. They were quite alone there, and safe from eavesdroppers. But Tom Merry did not seem to be in a hurry to begin.

"It's wathah cold here, Tom Mewwy," Arthur Augustus ventured to suggest.

"Is it?" said Tom vaguely.

"Yaas. And there's wathah a wild wind blowin'."

"A chap doesn't notice little things like that when he's in love!" said Tom Merry in a deep and thrilling voice.

Arthur Augustus started violently.

"In—in—in what?" he stammered.

"Love," said Tom Merry. "Gussy, what would you think if I told you that I were in love—deeply, wildly, tragically, passionately, awfully, and frightfully?"

"Bai Jove!"

"You're the only chap at St. Jim's who can sympathise with me," murmured Tom Merry. "You have been in love yourself several times, haven't you?"

"Ahem! I—I—"

"I must confide in somebody," said Tom, taking D'Arcy by the arm. "Swear never to reveal the secret, Gussy!"

"Yaas, certainly. But—"

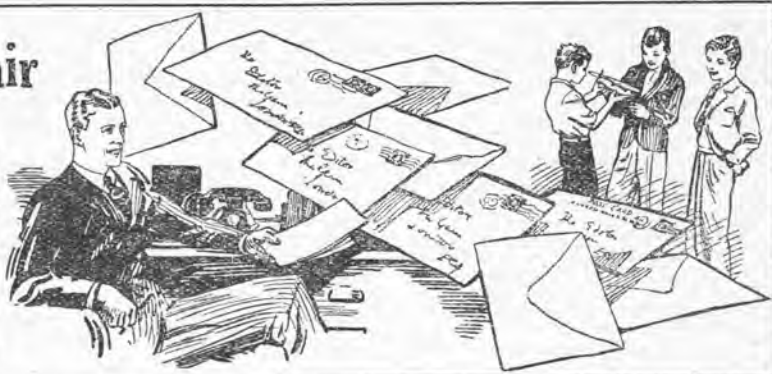
"She is older than I am," said Tom Merry. "But that doesn't make any difference, does it, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, deah boy! In fact, I think that when a chap's about our age, the wight age for the lady is about twenty-thwee," said D'Arcy at once.

(Continued on page 13.)

The Editor's Chair

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



HALLO, Chums! There's nothing like making a good start to the New Year, and that is what the GEM has done. I know all readers will readily agree with me when I say that the old paper has kicked off in fine style. Both last week's and this week's stories have made the bell ring, so to speak. And next Wednesday you will find Martin Clifford and Frank Richards in first-class form again. The St. Jim's story bears the title:

"THE SWOT!"

and deals with the efforts of George Figgins to win a scholastic examination. On the footer field or the running track Figgis is in his element, but his best friends would have to admit that he is not distinguished in the Form-room. So it comes as a big surprise to Tom Merry & Co. when they learn that the New House leader has entered for the Bishop's Medal, a very difficult exam for juniors. At first Figgis is not taken seriously, and his swotting is continually interrupted by ragging and inquisitive juniors. But he has set his heart on winning the exam, for he is determined to prove that he can shine at school work as well as on the sports field.

How Figgins fares in his efforts, and the excitement which emanates from his eagerness to swot at every odd moment, makes a powerful long yarn of fun, footer and adventure which all readers will enjoy immensely.

"THE GREYFRIARS GYMNASTS!"

Readers will greatly enjoy also Frank Richards' next grand yarn of the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co.

Having wiped up the cricket field, so to speak, with the French schoolboys, the chums of the Remove are now faced with the much more difficult task of meeting them in a gymnastic contest. Harry Wharton & Co. are more used to outdoor sports, and they realise the necessity for practice in the gym if they are to make any sort of show against their French opponents, who are strong at gymnastics. But unfortunately the gym at Greyfriars is closed for repair, and the Remove chums have to adopt other means of getting some training. This leads to a good deal of fun and excitement—and finally trouble!

Look out for this grand yarn next Wednesday—but don't forget to order your GEM in good time.

THREE GRAND SCHOOL YARNS!

I have received many letters from

readers praising the St. Frank's yarns in the "Schoolboys' Own Library," and I thank them for writing to me. I should like to mention that another splendid story will be on sale to-morrow, January 7th. This tells of a thrilling rebellion at St. Frank's, with Nipper & Co. putting up a gallant fight against their tyrant headmaster. The yarn is called "Rebels of the Remove!"—No. 288.

Two other grand school yarns also appear to-morrow. "Billy Bunter Gets the Boot!"—No. 286—deals with the humorous adventures of the Owl of the Remove, who is "sacked" from Greyfriars and refuses to go! "Tom Merry & Co. Declare War!" is the title of No. 287, and I am sure all GEM readers will be keen to read this gripping story about their old favourites. It also introduces Gordon Gay & Co., of Rylemba Grammar School, and naturally there is no little ragging between the rival schools.

Don't forget, chums, these three numbers of the "Schoolboys' Own Library," price 4d. each, will be out to-morrow.

Chin, chin!

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS

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

Miss Hilda Wilson, 72, Avenue Leopold, Hoboken, Belgium; girl correspondents; age 14-15; radio stars, dance music.

Ernest Dingle, 73, Colomierie, St. Helier, Jersey, Channel Islands; age 18-19; radio, stamps, literature; overseas.

Edward Rogers, Tristan, Houghton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire; members for Universal Correspondence Club.

Miss Winnie Rix, 3, St. John's Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight; girl correspondents; age 15-16; tennis.

Miles Percival, Grey Street, Glen Innes, N.S.W., Australia; age 16-17; camping, fishing, match brands, shooting.

Arthur Briggs, 32, Eton Street, North Perth, Western Australia; age 13-16; stamps.

Harold Lean, P.O. Katamatite, Victoria, Australia; stamps; Pacific Islands.

Erie Lean, P.O. Katamatite, Victoria, Australia; stamps; British Empire.

J. Tarlish, Dryie House, S.A.C. School, Cape Town, South Africa; age 14-17; stamps.

George Ralsin, Meyerton College, Meyerton, Transvaal, South Africa; age 15-17; stamps, boxing, wrestling, etc.

Glen Bamber, "Voltaire," Blackpool Rd., Lea, Preston, Lancs. Members for the Boys' Only Club.

Desmond G. Allen, 94, Hanson's Bridge Rd., Erdington, Birmingham; age 10-11; South Africa.

Fred Dumbrell, 52, Victoria Road, Redhill, Surrey; stamps; Canada, South Africa.

Miss Peggy M. Whitehouse, Mon Abri, Well Grove, Hove Edge, Lightcliffe, nr. Halifax, Yorks; girl correspondents; age 15-17; riding, swimming, hockey, radio, films.

K. Newton, 65, Sealecotes Lane, Beverley Road, Hull, Yorks; age 12-16; stamps; overseas.

Miss Molly Ferguson, 241, Holmlea Road, Cathcart, Glasgow, S.4; girl correspondents; age 14-15; sports, dancing. Australia, Africa.

Miss Molly Hall, 36, Ravensworth Road, Kensal Rise, London, N.W.10; girl correspondents; age 14-20; dancing, swimming, baseball, polo.

Douglas Peel, 13, Newfields Square, Braunstone Estate, Leicester; age 16-17; autographs, football, sports generally.

John Snow, 50, Gopsall Street, Leicester; age 15-16; autographs, chess, any sport; overseas.

Richard Ager, 122, Duke Street, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada; London and the Empire.

Miss Ivy Ameye, 41, Ashley Street, Glasgow, C.3; girl correspondents; age 15-20; dancing, sports, films; overseas.

Miss Ellie Harkins, 30, Fleet Street, Belfast; girl correspondents; age 16-17.

Stuart Agg, Warrandyte Road, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia; Africa, South Seas.

Lim Eng. Sui, 47, Club Road, Ipoh, Perak, Federated Malay States; films, music, swimming.

Miss May Jones, 56, Winchester Street, Taunton, Somerset; girl correspondents; age 21-30.

Evelyn Phelan, 427, Stuart Avenue, Outremont, Montreal, Canada; girl correspondents; age 12-16; stamps, sports.

John W. Porter, Prince George, British Columbia, Canada; age 12-15; basketball, skiing, swimming.

Roy C. Cornwall, 12, Golding Road, Cross Roads, Jamaica, British West Indies; age 15-17; French, Nature, stamps.

Michael J. Fitzgerald, Tuwa, Bushwood Road, Mowbray, Cape Town, South Africa; age 11-13; cricket, soccer.

Sooboo Pillay, 8, Carr Street, Ford-hnrg, Transvaal, South Africa; pen pals in Australia, Canada, London, India, Italy, Japan, U.S.A.

D. Jones, 81, Grove Road, Hitchin, Herts; age 12-14; France, South Africa; stamps.

B. Watts, 12, Canbury Avenue, Kingston-on-Thames; Schoolboys' Own Library.

Miss Ruby Tasker, 130, Wincheap Street, Canterbury, Kent; girl correspondents; age 14-18; stamps, coins.

Douglas Peel, 13, Newfields Square, Braunstone Estate, Leicester; age 16-17; autographs, sports, radio.

Cecil W. Nash, Bitterby, Cranbrook, Kent; age 10-13; books, films, Canada.

Miss Olive Dorothy Rigby, 10, Newland Drive, Wallasey, Cheshire; girl correspondents; age 15-20; South Africa, Australia, U.S.A., New Zealand; hobbies.

J. Whye, 661, Querbes Avenue 6, Outremont, Province Quebec, Canada; stamps.

Wilfred Loshbough, 302, Cumberland Street, Apt. 4, Ottawa, Canada; stamps, GEMS.

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PEN PALS COUPON

9-1-37

A peculiar sound came from Tom Merry, and D'Arcy suspected for a moment that he was choking back a chuckle. But as he peered at Tom Merry's face in the dusk, he saw that it was long and solemn.

"How curious!" said Tom. "That is exactly her age, Gussy! And what do you think her name is—her sweet and poetical name?"

"I am sure I can't guess, deah boy."

"Ann Jane," murmured Tom Merry. D'Arcy jumped.

"Ann—Ann what?" he ejaculated.

"No, not Ann What; Ann Jane," said Tom in a whisper. "She serves in the tobacconist's shop in Rylcombe. You know, Chunn's shop?"

"Yaas, wathah—I-I mean, I've seen it."

"Perhaps you have seen Ann Jane?"

"Bai Jove, I should jolly well say so! Look here, Tom Mewwy—"

"But she loves another!" said Tom, with a sob.

"Yaas, I twust so!"

"What! You twust so! You want her to throw herself away on young Chipps, the auctioneer, instead of waiting fifteen years for me?" asked Tom indignantly.

"Chipps! Who's talkin' about Chipps!" asked Arthur Augustus sharply.

"I am. She loves Chipps," said Tom Merry. "They walk out together on Sundays. He buys her chocolates. I want your advice, Gussy. Chipps is my rival. Would you advise me to kill him?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Or would it be better for me to hire a motor-car and carry her off in the dead of night?" whispered Tom Merry.

"You uttah ass—"

"What!"

"I—I mean, you are talkin' wot, you know! As a mattah of fact—it's wathah awkward to say so, aftah your confession—but—that young lady is already pwivate pwoperty, in a mannah of speakin'."

"Yes. That young bounder Chipps is—"

"Blow your Chipps! I'm not thinkin' of Chipps! To tell you the twuth, Tom Mewwy, I am in love with Miss Chunn myself!"

"You?"

"Yaas. I did not intend to tell anybody; but since you have made this weally awkward confession, I am bound to put you out of your misewy at once by tellin' you the twuth. I adore her!"

"Traitor!"

"I wufuse to be chawactewised as a twaitah!"

"Beware!" hissed Tom Merry. "Beware! Ere you shall be my successful rival, I will strew the hungry churchyard with your bones! Beware!" And the captain of St. Jim's rushed away.

"Well, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "This is vewy remarkable! I nevah suspected Tom Mewwy of bein' such a silly ass, bai Jove!"

And the swell of St. Jim's went thoughtfully towards the School House. Before he reached the House, however, the figure of Monty Lowther loomed up in the gloom.

"Is that you, Gussy?"

"Yaas. But—"

"Come with me!" Lowther caught Gussy by the arm. "Not a word! I've got something to tell you—something I must tell you! Never mind our little differences now. This is a matter of fearful importance. Come into the silence and gloom of the whispering trees, and I will a tale unfold."

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Arthur Augustus, very much surprised, allowed Lowther to march him under the trees again. Lowther tried to speak, but his voice broke into sobs.

"Gweat Scott!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, very much surprised and distressed. "What is the mattah, Lowthah? Has Knox been lickin' you?"

"Knox! Licking! Think you that such trifles, light as air, could cause this heartrending emotion?" said Monty Lowther mournfully. "Look at me, D'Arcy! Regard me! In me you behold a victim of an all-devouring passion! I love, but I am not loved! Advise me! What shall I do? Shall I seek rest and forgetfulness 'neath the icy waters of the river, or shall I seek the life of my rival?"

"Look here, Lowthah—"

"Her name is Ann Jane!" groaned Lowther. "Perhaps you have seen her. She sells cigars at a tobacco-shop in Rylcombe. Have you seen the dainty way she lights a cigarette for a chap? Have you marked her graceful manner of handing you the change? Have you—"

"If you mean that you are in love with Miss Chunn—"

"Exactly."

"Then I wogard you as an ass! As a mattah of fact, I am goin' to pwopose to that young lady myself, and ask her to wait ten years for me—"

"Traitor!" hissed Lowther. And he vanished into the darkness.

Arthur Augustus walked into the School House in a very disturbed frame of mind. He was not surprised that the other fellows had also been smitten with the manifold charms of Miss Chunn.

Indeed, the surprising thing, in D'Arcy's opinion, would have been if they had not been so smitten. But it was extremely awkward for the despairing lovers to choose him as a confidant. In the circumstances, he felt that he could hardly be expected to sympathise with them and wish them luck.

Manners was lounging on the staircase, and the moment he saw D'Arcy, his face became long and serious. He hurried towards the swell of St. Jim's.

"I've been waiting for you, Gussy!" he exclaimed. "I could not have waited much longer."

"Why not, Mannahs?"

"My heart is burstin'!" Manners said tragically. "Can you hear it beat?"

"Certainly not!"

"It is like a hammer. It has beaten like that," said Manners, sinking his voice to a tragic whisper, "ever since I first saw her!"

"Great Scott! Who?"

"Ann Jane. She—"

"Mannahs, do you mean to say that you are in love with Miss Chunn?"

"Hear me!" said Manners, dramatically raising his hand. "Hear me! By yon eternal stars, by the misty regions of space, where unknown worlds roll and whirl. I swear—"

"Pway lowah your voice, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus hastily. "You are makin' the fellows stare this way!"

"Let them stare!" said Manners brokenly. "Let them stare! Soon, perhaps, they will be staring at my emaciated corpse. I love—"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"I love—madly, insanely, pottily, dottily, I love—"

"I wish you would confide in somebody else, Mannahs," said Arthur Augustus, a little testily. "I am weally the last fellow in the world you should confide in. In the cirms, I have no

weresource but to decline your confidences."

"But you can advise me. You are an old hand at this sort of thing."

"Nothin' of the sort! I scorn the suggestion! I wogard you as an ass! Pway let go my arm!"

And Arthur Augustus jerked his arm away, and fairly ran upstairs to escape any further confidences from the love-lorn Manners.

CHAPTER 15.

Half a Dozen of Them!

JACK BLAKE was in the Fourth Form passage, leaning against the wall, and evidently waiting for Arthur Augustus. He started eagerly towards the elegant junior as he came up.

"Thank goodness you've come, Gussy!" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah?"

"I've something to tell you. Come into the study."

"Has somethin' happened to Hewwies or Dig?" asked Arthur Augustus at once.

"Worse than that."

"Bai Jove! But, weally, Blake, as we are not on speakin' terms—"

"Come!"

"Yaas, that's all vewy well, but—"

"Come!"

Blake dragged Arthur Augustus into Study No. 6. He closed the door, and Arthur Augustus waited uneasily. Blake's face was tragic.

"Have you ever been in love, Gussy?" he said, with a sob.

"Oh cwumbs!"

"If you have, you can sympathise with me. Yet how can you guess the all-consuming, volcanic love that I feel for the adorable Ann Jane?"

"Ann Jane?"

"Yes, the incomparable Ann Jane—the divine Miss Chunn—"

"I wufuse to listen to another word!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I wogard it as your awful nerve to fall in love with Miss Chunn! You are welcome to admire her frowm a distance, but I distinctly wufuse to allow you to fall in love with her!"

And Arthur Augustus tore open the study door and marched out, and slammed the study door behind him.

Blake collapsed into the armchair, choking.

Digby was in the passage. He took D'Arcy's arm, as the swell of St. Jim's was marching past him without seeing him.

"Gussy, old man, I've been waiting for you. I want you to advise me."

D'Arcy stopped dead.

"I twust you are not in love, too, Dig?" he asked, jamming his eye-glass into his eye, and regarding Digby wrathfully.

"How did you guess?" said Dig solemnly. "Did my face betray it?"

Has the canker of secret passion emaciated my features and written lines upon my brow?"

"You are lookin' much the same as usual; and, in fact, in a state of disgustin' health!" snapped Arthur Augustus.

"Ah, the pain is here!" said Digby, laying his hand upon his heart. "Here is the agony, also the anguish—"

"Then I should advise you to consult a doctah," said Arthur Augustus.

"Pewwaps you are suffewin' frowm heart disease, though it is more likely to be indigestion."

"It is love, the all-pervading, all-devourin'—"

"Wats! You are too young to think

of anythin' of the sort! I wegard you as a widiculous ass! Pewwaps you will tell me that it is Miss Chunn you are in love with?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, niterly exasperated.

"How did you know?" asked Digby. "Ah! You have seen her? You have beheld the rosy light of her divine countenance? You have noted the magic roll of her optics?"

"Oh, wats!"

"Hear me—"

"I wefuse to heah you!" shouted D'Arcy.

And he stalked away.

But Herries was waiting for him farther along the passage. Herries was leaning against the wall, his face in the shadow, and he did not seem to see D'Arcy. But he groaned deeply as the swell of St. Jim's came by. D'Arcy involuntarily halted.

"What's the mattah, Hewwies?" he asked, with concern.

Herries started and looked up. His face was dreadfully white, and as it was in the shadow, D'Arcy could not see that the whiteness was produced by a liberal application of chalk. As it was, the pallor startled him. Herries was, as a rule, a particularly robust and healthy young person.

"Gweat Scott! Are you ill, Hewwies?" asked D'Arcy, in alarm. "You'd bettah see the House dame, Mrs. Mimms will give you some wemedy."

"There is no remedy for what I suffer from," said Herries faintly.

"What is it, for goodness' sake?"

"Love!" groaned Herries.

Arthur Augustus gave a kind of war-whoop.

"What!"

"Love! I am in love. My heart is torn, my breast is rent, my life is broken and busted and bent," said Herries, breaking into poetry.

"Hewwies, this is widiculous! A fellow of your age has no wight to think of such things!" said D'Arcy, with great severity.

"Ah, you know not love!" said Herries sadly.

"Yaas, I do, though. But that—that's different, you know. I think you must be ill, Hewwies. You ought to see the doctah."

"Can't thou minister to a mind diseased?" said Herries wildly. "Yah! Throw physic to the dogs. I'll have none of it! I love! J'aime! Ich liebe! Amo! Gussy, I must tell someone. I will tell you! You shall hear the wild outpourings of a broken heart!"

"Nothin' of the sort, Hewwies. I wefuse to heah anythin' of the kind. I advise you to have a little more sense."

"Listen!" said Herries darkly. "I have a rival!"

"Weally!"

"There is a fellow in this school who is after Ann Jane—"

"Ann Jane!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"That is her name—oh, name sweeter than Desdemona or Juliet!" said Herries. "And her other name is sweeter still—the melodious name of Chunn!"

"Oh, gweat Scott, this is weally too thick!"

"I want you to help me, D'Arcy. You know what it's like. You have been in love with Cousin Ethel and the Head's niece, and Glyn's sister, and the girl at the draper's—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"You must help me! Listen! I have a rival. I know him not; but he has been into the cigar-shop and bought cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, just as an excuse for speaking to my Ann Jane!"

"You have no wight to call her your Ann Jane!"

"I must find him! You must help me find him! When I have found him," said Herries, in a thrilling whisper, "I shall take him quietly into a dark corner and slay him!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Keep the dark secret," said Herries, "and help me to find the chap. Can you guess who it is—he is a St. Jim's chap, I know that, and has bought a lot of cigars and cigarettes and things! Look! Here I have the deadly blade that shall end the life of my rival!"

Herries opened his jacket a little, and D'Arcy's horrified eyes discerned a huge carving-knife. "I am desperate! He is my rival! He dies!"

"Hewwies, you must be off your wockah!"

"Love is madness!" said Herries. "Did not Romeo rave and ramp? Did not Othello jump and stamp? Did not Antony—"

"Nevah mind those chaps, Hewwies. Take that howble knife away. You are a feahful ass. In the cires—"

"Ah, I have a suspicion!" exclaimed Herries, glaring at him. "You are my rival! Those cigars—those cigarettes—that tobacco—traitor!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Die! With these hands—with this trenchant blade—flee not! I will slay you!"

Herries made a ferocious jump towards Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's gave him a terrified look, and bolted into the nearest study, and slammed the door. Herries hammered at the door furiously. The key turned in the lock.

"Go away, you awful wottah!" came

D'Arcy's voice from within. "Go away!"

"Come forth!"

"I wefuse to come forth!" shrieked D'Arcy. "Go away, you murdewous lunatic! Oh! Help! Somebody take that knife away from him! Wescue!"

There was a sound of retreating footsteps. Herries was gone. But it was fully ten minutes before Arthur Augustus ventured to open the door of the study and look out. It happened to be Tom Merry's study, but the Terrible Three were elsewhere. There was no one in the passage; and D'Arcy stepped out of the room and breathed hard.

"I must tell the fellows! We must get hold of him and get that knife away. Oh, bai Jove! What a feahful state of affairs!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "If he goes on like that he will have to be shut up in a lunatic asylum, bai Jove!"

D'Arcy hurried down the passage to search for Blake & Co. There was a light under the door of Study No. 6, and a clink of teacups and saucers, and a sound of cheery voices within. Arthur Augustus opened the study door and gazed in.

Quite a merry tea-party had assembled there. Blake, Herries, and Digby, Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. Herries' face was still very pale—he had not rubbed off quite all the chalk. He still had the carving-knife, but he was cutting bread with it. The tea-party all looked round at D'Arcy's astounded face. They did not look at all love-lorn now, not at all despairing or tormented.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Come in!" said Blake cheerily.

"We've got poached eggs on toast, and jam—strawberry jam. What's the matter, Gussy?"



Miss Chunn removed her veil and her hat, and with the hat came the hair. A highly-coloured face was revealed, but the features of Kerr of the Fourth were easily recognisable now that the veil was gone. "You—you wottah—you—you—" Words failed the infuriated Arthur Augustus.

"That ass Hewwies—"

"Come in!" yelled Monty Lowther. "We've all recovered now. It's time you recovered, too, Gussy! Come and have tea and we'll drink the health of the divine Ann Jane in strong tea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at them, and the truth slowly dawned upon his mind. Somehow or other, they had discovered his secret while he was away from school that afternoon, and they had waited for his return with a jape ready planned, and they had been pulling his noble leg in concert all the time. Arthur Augustus gazed from one face to another, and met only cheery smiles and chuckles.

"Oh, you awful wottahs!" he gasped at last.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frightful outsiders!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "Why shouldn't we be in love as well as you? You haven't taken out a patent, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I love, thou lovest, he loves!" grinned Digby. "J'aime, tu aimes, il aime!"

"Ich liebe, du liebst, er liebt!" howled Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Slam!

"Come and have tea!" yelled Blake.

But Arthur Augustus did not come and have tea. He strode away down the passage, in a white-heat of indignation, with yells of laughter ringing in his ears. But all the suddenly recovered admirers of Ann Jane finished the toast and poached eggs and jam with complete satisfaction.

CHAPTER 16.

In the Wars!

THE secret was out now!

Tom Merry & Co. had not meant to tell, but such a secret could not be kept. Fellows had heard whispers and chuckling remarks from one to another, and the first mention of Ann Jane was enough for Levison and Mellish, who had watched Arthur Augustus' peregrinations on that famous afternoon. A quarter of an hour later the School House knew that Arthur Augustus was in love with Miss Chunn.

It was so utterly absurd that the juniors simply yelled over it. It was the richest item Levison had ever been able to impart to eager hearers.

The story ran through the School House like wildfire. The next day it was all over the New House, too.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was the cynosure of all eyes. That was as it should be in a way, but he did not like his present conspicuousness. He was furious. And he had a secret idea that, since all the fellows seemed to regard his infatuation as ridiculous, there was, perhaps, something really ridiculous in it.

When he appeared in the quadrangle, grinning juniors asked after Ann Jane. They asked him if Ann Jane had consented to wait twenty-five years for him, and whether she had agreed to stop growing older while he grew up. They wanted to know when the banns were to be published, and who was to give the bride away, and whether all the Fourth Form would be asked to the wedding.

Reilly demanded to be best man—an honour that was disputed by a crowd of other fellows. Arthur Augustus fled wildly from the questioners; but he

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could not get away from them, and that day he had five separate fights on his hands.

As Arthur Augustus sometimes related, in confidential moments, his ancestors had often fought in shining armour for fair ladies, in the great days of chivalry. But his fights on account of Miss Chunn were less romantic. The D'Arcys of old could trounce a scurvy knave, and come up smiling afterwards. But Arthur Augustus, after trouncing a scurvy knave, came up with a swollen nose, or a thick ear, or a darkened eye.

During the next day or two he accumulated signs of battle, till Mr. Lathom, his Form-master, dropped on him at last, and gave him a severe lecture on the subject of quarrelsomeness, and a hundred lines to drive it home.

That day the current number of "Tom Merry's Weekly" came out, and there was a new column in it, that had never been there before. It was headed, "Births, Marriages, and Deaths," and at the top of it appeared the notice:

"D'ARCY—CHUNN—"

Then followed a glowing account of the wedding, written in Monty Lowther's best style.

The fellows roared over the announcement, and when it was brought to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's notice, he went to look for Monty Lowther, and there was another fight.

And when Arthur Augustus started on his next walk to Rylcombe, quite a little army marched after him.

Arthur Augustus saw them swarming out of the school gates, and he stopped in the lane, his face going crimson.

The juniors stopped, too, waiting for D'Arcy to lead the way. He came striding back towards them, his face furious.

"What do you wottahs want?" he demanded.

"Want?" said Gore of the Shell.

"We're going for a little walk!"

"To Rylcombe," added Levison.

"Just going to drop in to see Ann Jane," put in Kerruish.

"Faith, and it's buying some cigars I'm after!" said Reilly.

"I wufese to allow you to go there, you feahful wottahs! I wegard this as wotten bad taste!"

"You haven't bought Chunn's shop, by any chance?" asked Smith minor, in surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or taken out a monopoly of Rylcombe High Street?" chuckled Bates.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus glared at them, and clenched his fists. But evidently he could not "whop" fifteen or sixteen fellows. If he started it, the whopping was likely to be on the other side. So he walked off again furiously. And the army marched on his track. It was only too evident that they meant to follow him to the tobacconist's, and enjoy the fun there, and Arthur Augustus gave it up.

He turned and walked back to St. Jim's, much to the disappointment of the juniors. They encouraged him

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

is a question that is often asked, and if you are thinking of toffee then "Palm" is a name which suggests to you one of the finest sweets that you can buy. Just consider the ingredients for a moment; pure cane sugar, rich English milk, "Palm" butter and energy-making glucose. Even home-made toffee has a strong rival in "Palm" Toffee. When you call at your local "tuck shop" for your next weekly supply of sweets, don't forget to ask for "Palm" Toffee.

loudly to go on; they asked him whether Ann Jane wouldn't be ratty; but Arthur Augustus heeded not. He marched back to the school, and retired to Study No. 6, where he locked himself in.

His visits to the tobacconist's ceased. He could never get out without at least a dozen watching fellows following him, and he shrank from a ridiculous scene occurring at Chunn's.

He consoled himself by pouring out his heart in rhymes; but, unfortunately, his pathetic poem fell into Levison's hands. Whether he had carelessly dropped it, or whether Levison had obtained it from his pocket, it was never known; but, certainly, one afternoon there was Levison in the quadrangle, reading out the poem to a group of delighted juniors.

"Oh, why are you far away?"

Oh, why is it ever thus?

Beloved and beautiful, stay, oh, stay!

I dream of you nightly, and think by day;

Love surely was made for us!"

The juniors roared as they listened. There was a great deal more of the poem, but Arthur Augustus came up before any more could be read. As soon as he discovered what Levison was reading, he rushed straight at Levison, hitting out, and there was a struggle for the possession of the poem. It was torn to fragments, and the fragments were carried off by many hands, and both D'Arcy and Levison emerged from the combat with black eyes.

And that poem was never delivered into the fair hands of Ann Jane.

"The silly ass is just obstinate," Jack Blake remarked to Tom Merry, after a few days. "I believe he's getting fed-up with the rot himself, but he won't say so. I suppose what he really wants is a good licking!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"I've got an idea," he replied. "If Gussy wants to see the divine Ann Jane, why shouldn't he? He can't go to Chunn's any more, because the fellows crowd after him, but suppose Ann Jane came here!"

Blake stared.

"She wouldn't," he said. "She's a nice girl enough, and Gussy ought to be ashamed of himself for getting her name joked about in this way!"

"I know she wouldn't; but suppose she did?"

"Well, it would make Gussy wish he'd never been born, I should think!" chuckled Blake. "If a young lady came here and claimed him before all the chaps—ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, then, that's what's going to happen. You see, Gussy is a dreamy duffer, and never thinks of things as they are in real life. If Ann Jane came here and claimed him, it would bring it home to him, and he would understand that he's been playing the giddy goat! Don't you think so?"

"Yes; but she won't. It would be an awful fix for Gussy!"

"She will! Or if she won't, her double will!"

"Her double!" ejaculated Blake.

Tom Merry chuckled gleefully.

"You know how well Kerr plays girl parts in the theatricals. His Lady Teazle was a regular corker. With a blonde wig, and a high colour, he could play Miss Chunn down to the ground."

Blake roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you think of the idea?"

Blake hugged the captain of the Shell.

"Ripping! Gorgeous! First chop! Spilling!"

"Then we'll go over and see Figgins & Co. about it."

Five minutes later they crossed the quadrangle, and there was a consultation in Figgins' study, punctuated with yells of laughter.

CHAPTER 17.

Nice for Gussy!

TAGGLES, the porter, was surprised.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and there was a football match in progress between the Fourth and the Shell. There were a good many fellows in the quadrangle when the visitor arrived for D'Arcy.

Taggles stared at her blankly when she asked for Master D'Arcy.

It was the first time in his experience that a young lady had ever presented herself at the school, and asked for a boy in the Fourth Form.

"I—I dunno about this," said Taggles in surprise. "Are you a relation of Master D'Arcy, miss?"

"No."

"May I ask what your business is?"

"I wish to see him."

"But—but I dunno—"

Taggles did not know, but apparently the visitor knew, for she walked past the porter and went into the quadrangle, leaving Taggles staring after her blankly and rubbing his chin. The young lady, who was smartly dressed and wearing a short veil, was spotted at once in the quadrangle.

"My hat!" roared Gore. "It's Ann Jane!"

"The Chunn-bird!" yelled Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can any of you boys tell me where Master D'Arcy is?" asked the lady sweetly.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Gore. "He's on the footer ground. He's playing. But he'll come off like a shot when he knows you're here, miss."

"Will you show me the way, little boy?"

Gore snorted. He did not like being called a little boy. But he was only too glad to show the way. Indeed, twenty fellows had already grouped themselves round the young lady, eager to show the way. It was like a little army marching upon the football ground.

Arthur Augustus was playing that afternoon, for the Fourth against the Shell. It was close upon half-time, and the game was going strong. Figgins was taking the ball down the field, and Clifton Dane, in goal, was watching him, when the young lady and her escort came in sight. A yell from the spectators announced the arrival of Miss Chunn, and there was a loud call for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

D'Arcy was following Piggy's run, ready to take a pass, but he stopped abruptly, and glared round. The sight of Miss Chunn seemed to paralyse him.

"Play up!" roared Blake.

"Bai Jove! It's—it's—it's Miss Chunn!"

"Never mind who it is. You're playing footer now."

"Come off, Gussy!" bellowed Gore.

"Here's a visitor for you!"

"Gussy, you're wanted!"

"Don't be rude, Gussy, and keep a lady waiting."

"Gussy—Gussy! This was, Gussy!"

"Oh ewmbs, this is weally most awkward!"

The ball shot past D'Arcy, and was captured by Tom Merry and rushed off.



"Are you positive you put the cat out last night?"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to H. Scott, 90, Blackrock Street, Bradford, Manchester 11.

Jack Blake caught Arthur Augustus by the shoulder and shook him.

"Can't you play?" he roared.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Keep your silly eyes open—"

"It's Miss Chunn—"

"I don't care if it's Miss Chunn or Miss Bunn, or Miss Gunn!" howled Blake. "You'd better get off the ground."

"Yaas, wathah! I agwee with you."

And Arthur Augustus ran off. Manners dropped out of the Shell team and walked off the field. It had been agreed between the two skippers.

Arthur Augustus hastily donned his coat and muffler, and ran up to the crowd surrounding Miss Chunn.

"Oh, Arthur!" exclaimed the young lady.

D'Arcy crimsoned. Miss Chunn had never called him Arthur before; indeed, during his visits to the tobacconist's that young lady had seemed to regard him with a good-humoured and amused toleration. He did not even know that she was aware that he was in love. He had dreamed of the day when she should call him Arthur. The day had come, but rather unfortunately. It was not exactly what he desired, to be hailed as Arthur before a crowd of grinning juniors.

"Good—good—afternoon!" stammered Arthur Augustus, in great confusion.

"Call me Ann Jane!" murmured the young lady, in a low voice.

"Oh, weally—"

"You are glad to see me here, Arthur?"

"Oh, yaas—yaas, wathah! But—"

"We are glad to see you, Miss Chunn," said Levison. "It's a great honour to see you here. The Head would be pleased if he knew."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you are going to show me your dear little study, Arthur dear?" asked the young lady.

"Oh ewmbs! Yaas, wathah! Pway come this way!"

Arthur Augustus' face was like unto a freshly boiled beetroot as he walked across the quadrangle with Miss Chunn. Fellows of all Forms stared at him. He saw Kildare of the Sixth fasten a very peculiar glance upon him; Cutts & Co. of the Fifth stood and yelled with laughter; fags of the Third and Second came round in dozens.

Arthur Augustus led his guest into the School House, and up to Study No. 6. "Oh dear, what a pretty little room!" murmured the young lady, as Arthur Augustus showed her into the study. "Dear me! Do you always keep your boots on the table, and the frying-pan on the mantelpiece?"

"I must weally apologise for the state of my quarters!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "The othah fellows are untidy beasts, you know."

He tried to shut the door, but Gore had his foot in the way. Arthur Augustus gave Gore an expressive glare, but Gore did not mind. The swell of St. Jim's shrank from a personal encounter in the presence of Miss Chunn.

"Please don't shut the door, Arthur!" said the lady coyly. "Let all your friends come in. Please don't close the door! I am very shy!"

"Oh ewmbs!"

It occurred to Arthur Augustus that certainly it was not a good idea to shut the door. So the door remained open, and some of the juniors came in smiling. They were enjoying themselves, though Arthur Augustus was not.

"Don't mind us, Gussy!" said Levison. "We want to help you to look after Miss Chunn. By the way, I saw Knox go into Mr. Railton's study just now."

D'Arcy shuddered.

"Pewpaws you would like me to show you wount the school, Miss Chunn?"

"I think I should like to rest a little first," said the lady, sinking into the armchair, with her back to the light. "You do not want to get rid of me, Arthur?"

"Certainly not, deah gal! But I—I—"

"Come and sit beside me, Arthur."

"B—but—"

"Won't you sit beside me, dear Arthur?"

"Ya-as, with pleasuah, you know!"

Arthur Augustus—not looking at all as if it were a pleasure—sat beside the young lady. A hand stole into his. An hour ago Arthur Augustus would have considered himself in the seventh heaven to sit and hold Ann Jane's hand. Now he would almost as soon have sat and held a red-hot poker.

"How nice to sit with you and hold your dear hand, Arthur!" Miss Chunn murmured.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Are you happy now, Arthur dear?"

"Ya-as, fwightfully! B—but—"

"Doesn't he look happy?" grinned Gore. "You must not mind his blushes, Miss Chunn. Gussy is rather shy, aren't you, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus gave Gore a homicidal look. He had never felt so utterly and supremely ridiculous in his life. The crowd in the study was growing thicker and thicker. Fellows were swarming in from all quarters, and struggling to get a sight of the swell of St. Jim's sitting hand-in-hand with Miss Chunn. Manners edged his way to the front of the crowd with his camera.

"Keep still!" called out Manners, as he took aim. "Smile, Gussy! Don't look as if you were going to your execution. Smile!"

D'Arcy jumped up frantically.

"Mannahs, you villain, you dare!"

Click!

"Got you!" said Manners. "I'm afraid you've spoiled the picture by moving, though. Why couldn't you sit still and smile?"

"You—you uttah wottah—"

(Continued on page 28.)

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A CHALLENGE TO GREYFRIARS!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Through Adolphe Meunier, the French junior in the Remove at Greyfriars, a contingent of schoolboys from France challenge Harry Wharton & Co. to a cricket match. The latter are not slow to accept the challenge, being fully confident that the Remove cricket eleven can lick the Gallic visitors.

Wishing to give the French schoolboys a good impression of Greyfriars hospitality, the Removites do things in style in welcoming them. Harry Wharton & Co. meet them at the station with a motor-coach, and then they drive to Greyfriars, where Billy Bunter has prepared a grand feed for the visitors.

Meanwhile, all Greyfriars are eagerly awaiting the start of the great match.

(Now read on.)

The Match!

"**V**HARTON, mein friend—" Hoffman tapped Harry Wharton on the arm outside the cricket pavilion. The captain of the Remove cricket eleven turned round with a smile.

"Hallo, Hoffs! What is it?" "I wishes to know if I plays in te elefen?" said Fritz Hoffman. "If I plays, I changes into mein flannels, ain't it?"

Harry Wharton considered a moment. He would never have thought of playing the German in a serious match, but against the French team, from what he had seen of it, there was no reason why the youth from Germany should not distinguish himself.

"I comes into te elefen, ain't it?" said Hoffman eagerly. "Vat you tink, Wharton?"

"I'll ask the others," said Wharton. "Stumps aren't pitched till half-past three, and I'll let you know."

"Goot! I fetches mein flannels!"

"I suppose he may as well come in, Nugent!" Harry Wharton remarked. "He won't be much in the way, will he?"

Nugent grinned. "No, that's all right. I've been jawing to Lerouge, and what he and his friends know about cricket could be written on the back of a stamp. My idea is that this match is going to be funny."

"I suppose they can play?" said Bulstrode.

"Yes, I suppose so—after a style."

"Sure! And see the way they hold a bat," grinned Micky Desmond of the Remove. "They've got a brand-new set of cricketing things, but the way they handle them—faith, it's a scream!"

"The playfulness of the game will be humorous," the Nabob of Bhani-pur remarked. "If we do not get the goodful game, we will obtain the mirthy laughfulness."

"Where's Bob Cherry and Hazeldene?"

"They've not turned up yet."

Harry Wharton frowned. As a cricket captain he had to see that his men were on the ground in time, and he did not like the absence of two of them. Hazeldene was not usually a playing member of the Form eleven; but Harry was going to give him a trial in this match, where there was little to risk.

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By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

The French lads had come in hungry after the train journey, and they were enjoying Billy Bunter's cold collation. They seemed to be in no hurry to get ready for the match—apparently having the idea that any time would do. Harry Wharton decided to wake them up, and entered the pavilion where they were eating.

"You captain the side, don't you?" he asked Meunier, the French junior of the Remove, who had fixed up the match.

Adolphe Meunier nodded his head.

"Oui, mon ami. It is agreed zat I shall be ze captain, as I have played more of ze cricket zan my cousin, Lerouge."

"Well, it's getting near time to go in. Will you get your men ready?"

"Certainment! Is zere any hurry?"

"Well, no; only the sun sets at night, you know, and it's rather difficult to play cricket after dark," said Wharton sarcastically. "I don't want

There is really only one team in it when the Remove Form plays a French schoolboy eleven. But what the game lacks in excitement is fully made up for in fun!

to hurry you fellows in any way, but it's nearly four already."

"I see. I vill speak to Lerouge."

Meunier spoke to Lerouge, and the French cricketers began to prepare in a leisurely way for the field. Harry Wharton looked out of the pavilion for Bob Cherry, and sighted him at last.

Bob Cherry and Hazeldene were coming up to the pavilion, and with them was a fair slim girl whom Harry knew very well—Marjorie Hazeldene.

Harry lifted his cap as they came up.

"You're late, Bob. Get into your things. You, too, Hazeldene."

"Right-ho!" said Hazeldene, disappearing into the pavilion.

Bob Cherry followed him more slowly.

"Glad you have been able to come over, Miss Marjorie," said Harry brightly. "You will see a game that will be worth watching."

The girl smiled.

"I understood from my brother that you were playing a foreign team."

"That is correct."

"Will it be a very hard match, then?"

Harry laughed.

"No; very easy, I think. I imagine these chaps just about know a bat from a stump, and that's all. I rather think it will be funny."

"My brother is playing, isn't he?" asked Marjorie, smiling.

"Yes. We're giving him a trial in

the eleven. If he turns out all right, I expect he will play for the Remove in the regular matches."

"I am so glad."

That was all Marjorie said, but her tone expressed much. She knew how Harry Wharton had helped Hazeldene into the right path. It was not so long since Hazeldene—or Vaseline, as the juniors had contemptuously named him—had been known as the cad of the Remove. A helping hand from a strong resolute character like Harry Wharton had done wonders for him. And Harry was keeping on the good work by trying to make a cricketer of Hazeldene.

Bob Cherry came out of the pavilion in spotless white. He had made the change in record time.

"You'll have a good view here, Miss Marjorie," said Harry, placing a seat for the girl. "I hope you will enjoy it. You will have a good laugh, anyway. I expect. There goes four o'clock."

Four chimed from the clock-tower of Greyfriars.

The Greyfriars fellows were crowding down to the junior cricket field. Many of the seniors, as well as the Lower Form fellows, came along. They were curious to see how the French team would shape at the English game.

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, accompanied by Mrs. Locke, came down to see the start of the match, out of compliment to the foreign visitors.

Fritz Hoffman gave Harry Wharton a nudge. The cricket captain of the Remove had forgotten all about him. The fat German was arrayed in white, and looked fatter than ever.

"Is it zat I plays mit te game, Wharton?"

Harry nodded good humouredly.

"Oh, yes, Hoffman, you can come in."

"I thanks you. I gifs te French pounders te good licking, ain't it?"

Hoffman had a bat under his arm. Some irreverent juniors asked him what he was going to do with it, but Hoffman loftily took no notice. He meant to perform wonders with that bat.

"I say, Meunier, are you ready?" asked Harry Wharton, with laboured patience, as the hand of the Greyfriars clock pointed to ten minutes past four.

"Oui, certainment! Ve are reazy."

"Then let's toss for innings."

"Certainment!"

But Henri Lerouge came forward, his face wreathed in polite smiles.

"Tousands pardons!" he exclaimed. "Mes amis—"

"What is it?"

"Vat is it zat you do viz penny?"

"Toss for choice of innings."

"Zat is not so. Ve not toss."

"What do you mean?"

"Ve yield ze choice to our esteemed friends," he said. "You vas make ze choice to please yourselves, mes amis."

Harry Wharton laughed rather impatiently.

"This isn't a case of politeness, Lerouge."

"Oui, oui, la politesse."

"We've got to toss for innings. It's the game."

"Oh, if you insist, zen!"

"Yes, of course."

"Oh, zen I leave it to you, mon ami,

READ ALL ABOUT THE FUNNIEST CRICKET MATCH EVER IN THIS AMUSING STORY OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S EARLY SCHOOLDAYS.



Lerouge hit out wildly at the ball without seeing it. The ball whipped in and knocked back the off-stump. At the same moment the other stumps were spreadeagled, knocked at all angles by Lerouge's bat!

and you do zat vich you like," said Lerouge.

Meunier won the toss, and elected to bat first. The French cricketers were chattering away at a great rate in the pavilion. They seemed to think that there was plenty of time, anyway, while the Greyfriars cricketers were watching the sun pass the elms, and wondering whether there would be time for a single innings at this rate.

"They're batting first," Harry Wharton remarked. "Good! I expect there will only be three innings in this match."

"And two of them won't take long," Bob Cherry said, with a laugh.

"Not likely."

"Let's get into the field. This game will last till midnight, I expect, if we don't get started."

The Greyfriars cricketers streamed out of the pavilion, and a cheer from the fellows round the ropes greeted them. They took up their positions, and Bob Cherry was given the ball for the first over, and then they waited for the batsmen to appear.

Meunier and Lerouge were to open the innings, but they did not seem in a hurry to do so.

As a matter of fact, Lerouge had secured an introduction to the pretty English girl sitting beside the Head's wife in the pavilion, and was relating to her some tale of marvellous exploits in the realm of sport, while Meunier was exchanging reminiscences with an old schoolfellow in the team.

"So zat is how ve played cricket in France, Mees 'Azeldene," said Lerouge. "Ve beat zem by two hundred runs."

"Did you really?" said Marjorie, with a charming smile, though she had not been able to understand ten words of the French youth's description of that wonderful game he had played in his native land. "That was splendid!"

"Oui, oui! I zink zat you will see us

victorious zis time, though the victory, perhaps, not so easy."

"Perhaps not."

"I zink— Did you call me, mon ami?"

Bob Cherry had come off the field, and was glaring at him.

"Yes, I did!" growled Bob. "Are you going to bat, any of you, or are you not? We're not particular; but if you're not going to bat, we may as well change our duds."

"Is it zat I have kept you wait?"

"Yes; I rather think it is!"

"A thousand apologies!" exclaimed Lerouge.

"Never mind the apologies! Send your men in."

"Mees 'Azeldene, I take my leave. I am desolate to leave you, but duty calls me to ze wicket. Mon ami, I am coming."

"Come, then, and buck up!"

"Adolphe, mon cousin, are you reazy?"

"I am quite reazy, Henri."

"Then let us go."

"Certainment! Let us go to ze wicket."

And the two French boys, with bats under their arms, sailed out of the pavilion, and bent their steps towards the wickets.

The Greyfriars fellows cheered them. They were nothing if not polite to their guests. Meunier and Lerouge stopped before they reached the wickets, and raised their caps in acknowledgment of the cheer.

"My only pyjama hat!" grunted Bob Cherry. "I wonder if this giddy game will ever get started!"

"Here, they're at the wicket now!" laughed Harry Wharton.

"About time, too!" Nugent remarked.

And Bob Cherry went on to bowl against Lerouge's wicket.

Cricket!

BOB CHERRY gripped the cricket ball hard. He meant to make matchsticks of Lerouge's wicket, if only to punish him for keeping the game waiting. But the batsman was not ready. He was suddenly seen to lean his bat against the wicket and start off towards the pavilion.

"Here, where are you going?" shouted Harry Wharton.

Lerouge looked back.

"Did you speak viz me, mon ami?" he asked.

"Yes. Where are you going?"

"I go to ze pavilion."

"But what for?"

"I forget to put on ze batting gloves."

"Oh, my hat! Buck up, will you?"

"Certainment!"

The French cricketer disappeared into the pavilion. The English boys looked at one another.

"My hat!" said Hazeldene. "This is getting too rich!"

"The richfulness is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "It would be a great jokefulness if the sun set before the first ball had been bowled in the esteemed match. I am afraid that this cricketful game will never be played."

"Looks like it!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, here's the image again!"

Lerouge was seen leaving the pavilion. He did not go to his wicket, however, but came straight towards Harry Wharton.

"Well, what's the trouble?" asked the Remove captain.

"It is zat I have lost ze glove," said Lerouge. "Can one of you lend me ze glove to replace ze vun zat I have lost?"

"What's that sticking out of your pocket?" asked Nugent.

"Parbleu, it is ze glove zat I have

lost! I remember now zat I place him zere ven I am talking to ze charming Miss 'Aeldene."

"Are you ever going to the wicket?" "I goes immediately. I zanks you for pointing out ze glove vich I have lost."

And Lerouge went to the wicket. The wicket-keeper handed him the bat. He seized it and gave a flourish, and Micky Desmond, who was keeping wicket, jumped back just in time to avoid being brained.

"Arrah, then—"

"Did I strike you viz ze bat?" asked Lerouge, with great solicitude.

"No!" growled Micky. "Why couldn't you let me get clear before you started those gymnastics, though? You nearly caught me on the coconut!"

"A thousand apologies!"

"Sure, it's all right! Look out for the ball!"

Lerouge looked out for the ball.

"Do you want centre?" asked the umpire.

"Non, non!" said Lerouge, who did not know what that meant. "I am reazy, mon ami!"

And he flourished his bat.

Bob Cherry gripped the ball again. He took a little run, and sent down the ball like a 4.7 shell.

Lerouge's bat swept a circle in the air, and hit nothing but yielding atmosphere, and there was the crash of a falling wicket.

Lerouge stared at the scattered stumps in amazement.

"Vat is ze mattair?" he asked.

"Out!"

"Eh?"

"You're out!"

"But I vas not looking for ze ball at zat moment. I zink zat is vat you call a trial ball, mon ami!"

"You are out!" rapped the umpire.

"I appeal to ze captain. Vas it not a trial ball?"

"Oh, I don't care!" said Harry Wharton, with a quiet wink at the umpire. "Make it a trial ball."

The ball was tossed back to Bob Cherry. Lerouge resumed his place at the wicket. He gripped his bat in a businesslike way, and looked carefully for the ball. Bob sent down a slow this time, but Lerouge never saw it.

Crash!

Lerouge hit out wildly at the ball without seeing it. The ball whipped in and knocked back the off-stump, and the other stumps were spreadeagled at the same moment, knocked over by Lerouge's bat.

"How's that?" yelled Bob Cherry unnecessarily.

"Out!"

"Sure, and was that a trial ball, darling?" grinned the wicket-keeper.

Lerouge gazed at the wrecked wicket.

"Oui, I zink zat is out," he said.

"Unless ze wicket fall by accident, I zink zat is out!"

He seemed to have a lingering doubt as to whether the wicket had fallen by accident. But the umpire was uncompromising, and the French youth carried out his bat.

Ducrot was the next man in. He was a little dark fellow, and he came to the wicket with a considerable amount of swagger. He seemed to wish the eyes of the universe to be turned upon him, to behold his performances at the wicket.

"Better look out for that chap, Bob," grinned Nugent; "he looks dangerous."

Bob Cherry grunted.

"The dangerousness of the esteemed as is only equalled by his conceitfulness!" purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

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"It will be a jokeful wheeze to send him out with the duckful egg!"

Ducrot swaggered to the wicket and took his middle, and looked towards the bowler. Bob Cherry took hold of the ball. He did not take the trouble to run. He simply bowled. But it was quite enough.

Ducrot's wicket went to pieces, and he stared at it in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole crowd burst into an uncontrollable yell of laughter at the sight of the batsman's face.

The Head smiled in the pavilion, and Marjorie's face was wreathed in smiles, while the field rang with merriment.

"He can't understand it yet," murmured Nugent. "It will dawn on him presently that he is out!"

Ducrot took another look at the wicket, as if still puzzled, and then put his bat under his arm and walked off to the pavilion.

"The match is rather late," Wingate observed to a friend. "But they're making up for lost time now, and no mistake!"

And his companion grinned.

"It looks like duck's eggs for the French chaps all along the line."

"Yes; unless the Remove is merciful."

Nevers was the next man in. He was a quiet fellow, and did not swagger. He stood at the wicket, however, with both legs completely covering the stumps, and evidently knew as much about cricket as he did about flying.

"You had better take centre!" grunted the umpire.

Nevers looked at him innocently.

"I stands all right at ze wicket," he said. "If I stands in front of it, I stops ze ball better zan if I stand at ze side!"

"Oh, my hat! You'll be out leg before wicket."

"Zank you! Are you out if you stand viz legs before ze wicket?"

"Well, rather, if the ball hits your legs."

"Zen I stands away."

"That's better!"

"Zank you ver' moosh! I have not played ze cricket ver' moosh," said the French boy, with unnecessary candour.

The umpire did not need telling that.

"Play!"

Bob Cherry bowled. Nevers made a jump at the ball, hitting out with the bat, and in some mysterious way the willow met the leather. There was a clack, and the ball flew on its way—not far, though, as it landed in Harry Wharton's outstretched hand at mid-wicket.

Up went the leather from Harry's hand, to be caught again as it came down.

"How's that?" asked Harry Wharton.

It was necessary to appeal to the umpire, as the French youths did not seem to know when they were out.

"Out!" said the umpire promptly.

Nevers looked astonished.

"Did you say zat it vas out?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"But I did hit ze ball viz ze bat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I did hit ze ball viz ze bat!" repeated Nevers indignantly. "Yet you say zat it is out! I did hit the ball—"

"You're caught out!"

"I am not caught! No vun has caught me!" said Nevers, in surprise. "I have not even run from ze wicket, and I am not caught!"

"Oh, my only aunt! The ball's caught!"

"Yes; I see zat garon take him in ze hand. If he not interfere, ze ball would

have gone a great vay, and I take ze runs!"

"Ha, ha, ha! The ball was caught, and so you're out! Do you understand? When the ball's caught from the bat, you're out!"

"Oh, is zat so?" said Nevers, more cheerfully. "I have not played ze cricket ver' moosh! Zen I go away from ze wicket?"

"Yes; I rather think you do—and the sooner the quicker!"

"Certainement! I am quite reazy to go if I am really out. But I have not played ze cricket ver' moosh, and I did not know."

And Nevers walked away, with the bat under his arm.

Villefort was next man in. He seemed to have some slight knowledge of the game, for he stopped the rest of Bob Cherry's over without being bowled, caught, or knocking his wicket over with his bat. The conclusion of the over was greeted with cheers by the French boys in the pavilion. They seemed to think that Villefort had done wonderfully well, and, in comparison with the rest of the team, he probably had.

No runs had been taken so far and the French team were three down for a big round O, a score that made the Greyfriars fellows smile.

The field crossed over and Hoffman, who had been fielding at long-on, where Harry thought he would be most out of the way, nudged the Remove captain in the ribs.

"Mein friend Wharton—"

"Hallo! Get into your place!"

"I tinks tat I should powl now—"

"Eh? You think what?"

"Tat I should powl."

"What on earth does he mean by pole?" asked Harry Wharton. "Can anybody guess what he's driving at?"

"The meaningfulness of the esteemed idiot's remark is not clearful," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Let him explicate."

"I means tat I powls mit te pall!" exclaimed Hoffman rather excitedly. "I takes te pall and powls."

"He takes the pall and poles," said Wharton dazedly. "Do you mean that you're tired, and want to go off the field?"

"I takes te pall and I powls!" shouted Hoffman. "Tat is plain enoff. I takes te pall and I powls at te wicket mit meinself after."

Harry Wharton comprehended at last. "Oh, I see! You mean you want to take the ball and bowl!"

"Ach, ja! I takes te pall and I powls."

"Can't be did. You see, lives are valuable just at present, and I can't have any of the field brained till after the match."

"But I tinks—"

"You can tink as much as you like, or tinkle for all I care, but you can't bowl. You take the ball for the next over, Hazeldene."

"Right-ho!" said Hazeldene gratefully.

Meunier was to receive the bowling now, and he was about the most dangerous of the French team, having picked up some cricket during his residence in an English school. But even Hazeldene, though his bowling was not likely to be of a high order, felt pretty certain that he was a match for Meunier.

Marjorie looked on with renewed interest as her brother went on to bowl. Harry's motives in putting Hazeldene on were mixed. He wanted to give Hazeldene a chance to show what he

could do, but at the same time, he thought he might as well give the French team a show by putting on a weak bowler. It would be only courtesy to the visitors to allow them a chance of knocking up a few runs.

Meunier shaped better at the wicket than Lerouge, Ducrot, or Nevers had done. He stopped Hazeldene's first ball, and his second, and hit out at the third. The ball whizzed away, and the fieldsman lazily ran after it, and Meunier started to run. He crossed Villefort and one run was gained, and then they started again.

"Quick!" shouted Meunier.

The French boys ran well. They could not play cricket, but they seemed to have a good pace when it came to simple running. The second run was almost completed when a shout of warning came from the pavilion.

"Look out, Meunier!"

Meunier dashed on with his bat outstretched. The fieldsman had not exerted himself. But Fritz Hoffman, inspired by national rivalry, was on his mettle. He had captured the ball and was dashing in to run out Meunier. Heedless of the wicket-keeper, he meant to throw that ball in and take a wicket himself, if only to show what he could do in the fielding line, since he was not allowed to bowl.

Meunier's bat clumped on the crease, but a trifle like that made no difference to the excited German. He rushed on and crashed the ball into the stumps.

"Oudt!" he roared triumphantly.

Meunier glared at him.

"Vat is zat?"

"Oudt!"

"Bosh!"

"I say tat it is oudt!" roared Hoffman. "I have knock down te wicket, and tat is oudt. I appeals to te umpire."

"Not out!"

"Vat?"

"Not out!"

"I knocks down te wicket!" yelled Hoffman excitedly. "I prings in te pall and I hits it in te wicket, and I knocks it down. You say tat tat is not out?"

"The bat was on the crease—"

"I cares not. Te wicket goes town, and te patsman is out. I hits te pall on te wicket, and I have taken tat wicket. I says—"

"Get out!"

"I says—"

"Clear off, you Sherman idiot—"

"You French peast!"

"Sherman peeg!"

"French pounder!"

"I zink zat I teach you ze lesson—"

"I tink tat I—"

"Cochon!"

"Peast!"

And without more ado the old enemies rushed upon one another, and in a moment they were rolling on the cricket pitch in deadly strife.

Fun on the Field!

"H A, na, ha!" The fieldsmen were doubled up with laughter, and a shout of uncontrollable laughter rang round the cricket field. Hoffman and Meunier rolled on the grass, gasping and pommelling furiously.

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Of all the funny cricket matches I have ever heard of, this takes the cake!"

"Collar the asses and stop them!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, let them have it out!" said Nugent. "It will do them both good."



The French cricketers seemed to be in no hurry to get ready for the match, apparently having the idea that any time would do. Harry Wharton entered the pavilion hurriedly to wake them up. "Will you get your men ready, Meunier?" he said. "It's rather difficult to play cricket after dark!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is great. The fightfulness of the worthy and esteemed lunatics is terrific," remarked the nabob. "Suppose we bestow the thrashfulness with a cricket stump, and perhaps—"

"Good idea!" exclaimed Wharton. "The bat will do."

He picked up Meunier's bat and commenced to tap the struggling combatants, with no gentle hand, with the end of it.

Hoffman and Meunier roared. But it was not easy to separate them. Dr. Locke was on his feet in the pavilion now, with a frowning brow. Marjorie was looking alarmed. But Harry's drastic measures had the desired result. Hoffman and Meunier rolled apart and picked themselves up.

"Ach! I am hurt pefore!"

"Ciel! I am very hurt!"

"You pair of asses!" exclaimed the Remove captain wrathfully. "You ought to be kicked off the field. Hoffman, you can take yourself off!"

"Vat you say?"

"Get off the field!"

"But I am playing in te game!"

"You're not playing any longer. A fieldsman who attacks a batsman gets kicked out. You're not in the team now. Get off the ground!"

Hoffman's face fell. He rubbed a bruised nose and looked dismayed. But Meunier was a generous enemy.

"Permit zat he remain, mon ami," he said. "It was my fault as moosh as Hoffman's, for I did lose my tempair."

"Well, if Meunier overlooks it—"

"I do zat, viz ze good heart."

"Then you can stay on the field, Hoffman; but mind, nothing of the sort again," said Harry Wharton warningly.

"Tank you, Wharton. I vas a little hasty perhaps. Meunier, I pegs your pardon, and I tanks you also. Ve vill be friends for te day."

"Ciel! I am quite reazy to be friends."

"Ferry goot!"

Meunier took his bat, and Hoffman handed him his cap.

"I vas wrong," said the German boy. "You vas not out."

But Meunier's Parisian politeness was not to be outdone.

"I concede ze point," he said. "I am out."

"Nein, nein; you vas not out!"

"Oui, oui; I vas out."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You're worse when you're polite than when you're rowing! Get back into your place, Hoffman. Meunier, you're not out. Let's get on with the game."

Hoffman went back into the long field. Meunier gave in and took his place at the wicket again. The fieldsmen, still grinning, took their places, and the game was resumed.

Meunier knocked up four more runs for the over, and was caught out by Bob Cherry off the last ball, so that the French team were now four down for 6.

Hurree Jamset Ram sigh took the next over, against a little dark lad named Mercier. Mercier's wicket fell to the nabob's first ball, and the second sent La Roche out with a duck's egg to his credit. The third ball accounted for a third wicket, and there was a cheer round the field for the hat-trick. But against opponents like the French team the hat-trick was not such a wonderful achievement.

Brisot, the next man in, stopped the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,508.

other three balls of the over, and then the field crossed again. The French team were seven down for the same 6 runs that Meunier had hit. As the field crossed, Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, made a sign to Harry Wharton, and the Remove captain went over to the ropes.

"You are skittling them out pretty fast, Wharton," the captain of the school remarked, with a smile. "You might go easy a little now."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I was just thinking the same myself, Wingate."

"Suppose you were to put Hoffman on to bowl? They might be able to knock up a few runs, and you could give them that satisfaction without exactly letting them know it."

"Good! Hoffman shall have the next over."

"That's right."

Harry Wharton walked back. Nugent had the ball in his hand, and was going to the bowler's wicket. Harry tapped him on the arm.

"Chuck it to Hoffman!" he said.

Nugent stared.

"You're going to let that howling ass bowl?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing, "because he's an ass."

"Oh, I see!" said Nugent. "Well, I suppose we may as well give our friends the enemy a chance."

"That's the idea."

"Here, Huffy, catch!" exclaimed Nugent, throwing the ball to the German junior. "Well, you ass, I didn't tell you to catch it with the side of your head!"

Hoffman rubbed his ear ruefully and

picked the ball up from the grass. He looked inquiringly at Harry Wharton.

"Is it tat I powl te pall?" he asked joyfully.

"That's it!" said Harry. "Go in and win, Huffy! You are going to bowl this over, and we expect great things of you. Remember that Germany expects every man to do his duty."

"I tinks tat I takes te vickets after, ain't it?"

And Hoffman went on to bowl. Villefort prepared to receive it, and the crowd looked on with great interest. They knew that Hoffman's cricket was a great deal like that of the French team, and so the developments were looked for with great curiosity by the grinning crowd round the cricket field.

"Now look out for fireworks!" murmured Nugent.

"The fireworksfulness will be terrific!" Hoffman was evidently in deadly earnest. He took a long run, and turned himself into a sort of catherine wheel, and the ball whizzed from his hand.

There was a fiendish yell from Bob Cherry, who was fielding at point.

"Ow! Ow-wow!"

Bob was seen suddenly to dance in the air, and then to hop on one leg and clasp the other with both hands.

"Ow! Ow-wow!"

"He's got the ball!" shrieked Nugent. "Ha, ha, ha! Hoffman mistook him for the wicket. My only hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

Hoffman was gazing at the hopping Bob Cherry in amazement. Villefort was grinning. Nugent picked the leather up from the grass at Bob Cherry's feet.

"Oh, that villain has nearly broken

my leg!" groaned Bob Cherry. "Take him off before I brain him with a cricket stump!"

"Vere did tat pall go?" demanded Hoffman.

"It went on my calf, you howling lunatic!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Tat is impossible! I trow it at te vicket."

"You—you—you—"

"Give Huffy the ball again," said Harry, tears of laughter in his eyes. "Get on with the washing!"

"I say, you're not going to let that demon bowl again, are you?" asked Bob Cherry, aghast.

"Yes, certainly! Look out this time!"

"Well, if he's going to bowl, I'm jolly well going to change places with cover-point!" exclaimed Bob Cherry determinedly.

"That you're jolly well not!" said Hazeldene, who was at cover-point. "I'm not going to be brained to save you!"

"Then we'll both field there—or, rather, a little farther off. It doesn't matter where we field in this giddy match."

"Ha, ha! You're right!"

Hoffman had the ball again, and the fieldsmen all crowded back out of danger.

Hoffman was bowling from the pavilion end, and the tears of merriment were in Marjorie's eyes as she watched him. Even the severe face of the Head had relaxed into something very like a grin.

But Hoffman's bowling, though not dangerous to the batsmen, was dangerous to everybody else within reach. His second ball flew wilder than the first, and went whizzing away towards Wingate. Wingate was standing by the ropes at almost right-angles from the pitch, but the ball had reached him.

He fielded it as Nugent approached the ropes.

"Here it is!" laughed Wingate, tossing him the ball. "Tell Wharton to take that idiot off!"

"Ha, ha! Certainly!"

Nugent returned with the ball, and gave the school captain's message to Wharton, who received it laughingly.

"I was thinking the same," he remarked. "He's too dangerous. I say, Hoffman, you can get into the long field."

"Vy I not powl te pall vunce more?"

"We can't spare you from the field. Anybody can bowl, but there's only one chap in the team who fields as you do—and that's yourself. Go into the long field and stop there."

"I tinks tat I rader powl te pall."

"And I think I'd rather you fielded; and as I'm captain of this team, you'd better go, unless you are looking for a thick ear."

And Hoffman went.

"You had better take the ball again, Hazeldene," said Wharton. "Go easy with them. They ought to be allowed to knock up a couple of dozen runs or so, to save their face, you know. We shall walk all over them, anyway."

"Right you are!" said Hazeldene.

The Greyfriars bowling and fielding was extremely slack for the rest of that innings. The French score went up to 20, and there is stopped. The last wicket fell, and the innings was over for 20 runs, half of which would not have been scored if the home team had exerted themselves, as everybody but the French players knew very well.

"I zink zat ve do better in ze next innings," Lerouge remarked to Meunier.

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"Zere vill be plenty of time to play ze match out."

He was quite right there. The innings had not lasted half an hour. Harry Wharton did not keep them waiting for the commencement of the Greyfriars innings.

The Winning Side!

THE Greyfriars innings opened with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Hazeldene. The latter was to receive the bowling. Hazeldene was the weakest player in the team, and if the French players had a chance of taking a wicket it was his. And Harry Wharton wanted to give them all the chances he could.

Hazeldene, however, meant to do his best. A fellow could not be expected to give his wicket away under a hundred pairs of eyes to please anybody. That was carrying politeness too far.

"Vill you take ze first ovaire, mon cousin?" asked Adolphe Meunier, tendering the ball to Henri Lerouge.

The French team had taken up their places in the field, many of them looking more like lost sheep than fieldsmen.

"Ah, non; I leave zat honair to you, mon ami!" said Lerouge.

"Non, non! Ze honair is for you!"

"Non, mon cousin; it is for you."

"I insist—"

"Zen if you insist, I yield, mon cousin," said Lerouge, taking the leather. "I vill bowl against ze wicket."

"Go it!" yelled a score of impatient voices.

And Lerouge went on to bowl. The crowd were impatient. The French batting had been fearful and wonderful, and the Greyfriars crowd were eager to see what kind of bowling they would put up.

Lerouge fixed his eyes on Hazeldene's wicket. He was bowling from the pavilion end, and he turned to take his cap off to Marjorie. Then he turned round again, grasped the ball with a businesslike air, took a little run, and delivered the ball.

Then he stood gazing with wide-open eyes, to see what became of it. Hazeldene was rather curious on that point also. Lerouge had released the ball too soon as he brought his arm over, and the ball had fallen behind him.

Meunier picked it up with a grin, and tossed it back to the bowler.

Lerouge tried to catch it, but it slipped through his fingers and fell to the ground. He stooped and picked it up, amid a general grin.

The French bowler looked very determined now. He meant to show the English cricketers what he could really do. He sent down the ball with all his strength, about the easiest ball the batsman had ever had to deal with. Hazeldene grinned and swiped it away towards the boundary, and the batsmen ran.

"Well hit!" shouted the Greyfriars juniors.

The French fieldsmen were blundering after the ball. Several of them ran, and one or two of them ran into each other in their excitement. Five runs had been taken before the ball came in, and then it came in so fast that it went whizzing right across the field, missing the wicket by half a dozen yards.

The batsmen went on running.

The ball was fielded at last, and the breathless batsmen stopped. Nine runs had been taken in all, and now Hurree

Singh was at the batting wicket, with a grin on his dusky face.

"How do you like the game, Miss Marjorie?" asked Harry, who was standing beside the girl in the pavilion.

Marjorie's eyes were dancing with mirth.

"It is very interesting," she said. "I have never seen cricket like this before. I am glad I did not miss the game."

"There goes Lerouge again," grinned Bob Cherry. "He'll get one of the fieldsmen out this journey."

Lerouge was bowling again. The ball whizzed dangerously near Meunier's head, but he ducked in time. It was a very wide wide, as Bob Cherry remarked.

When the bowler handled the ball again there was a look upon his face that seemed to say that he meant to do something really effective this time.

And he did! He turned himself half-over in the delivery of the ball, and his foot slipped and he went down with a bump on the turf.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lerouge sat up, looking dazed.

"Vere is ze ball?" he murmured.

"There it is, in your hand!" grinned Hazeldene. "You didn't let go!"

"Sacre bleu! I zink you are right!"

The bowler regained his feet and his place. He bowled again, more carefully this time. There was a terrific yell from Meunier.

The ball had grazed his head, carrying off his cap and depositing it on the grass. Meunier clapped his hand to his head, and Lerouge gazed at him in consternation.

"Helas! I have injured my cousin!" he exclaimed. And he dashed away towards Meunier. "Adolphe, have I injured you ver' moosh?"

"Non, non!" said Meunier, rubbing his head. "It is nozzing, Henri!"

"I am afraid you are hurt, Adolphe."

"I assure you zat it is nozzing, Henri."

"You take ze heavy veight from my heart viz zat assurance, Adolphe."

"Pray go on viz ze bowling, Henri."

And Lerouge went on with the bowling. The fieldsmen crowded back out of danger, considering it best, in the circumstances, to field very deep.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder where the next ball will go? This is getting too funny."

He soon knew. Lerouge doubled himself up and delivered the ball, but he let go of it at the wrong moment, and it flew away behind him, and shot right into the pavilion. Lerouge stood, looking dazed and wondering where the ball was. A yell from the pavilion enlightened him.

"Dear me!"

Dr. Locke started to his feet. His hat had been whipped off his head, and the Head was looking startled and shocked.

"Dear me! What has happened?"

"It was the ball, sir," said Bob Cherry, nearly choking. "It must have flown in the wrong direction, sir."

"Dear me! It is positively dangerous to sit here. My dear, I think we had better miss the rest of the match."

Mrs. Locke thought so, too.

"And you, Miss Hazeldene—"

"Oh, I will see it out, I think!" said Marjorie. "You know, sir, lightning never strikes twice in the same place."

The Head laughed, and quitted the pavilion hurriedly with his wife. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton placed themselves so as to shield Marjorie from any possible danger from Lerouge's bowling. The ball was tossed out, and the over was finished at last, and then Ducrot took the ball.

He had to bowl against Hazeldene, and he came on with the same swagger as he had shown in the batting. He threw up the ball to show how easily he could catch it, and there was a gust of laughter as it slid from his clumsy fingers and fell to the ground. Ducrot turned red.

"Ah, I fetches him out zis time!" he exclaimed.

And he threw the ball right at Hazeldene instead of at his wicket. The beaming expression on Ducrot's face showed that he did not mean any harm. He evidently regarded this as the simplest means of getting the batsman out.

The ball caught the astonished batsman on the side of the head, and Hazeldene gave a yell.

Ducrot gave a crow of delight and danced beside the wicket.

"Ceil! I have got him!"

"You villain!" yelled Hazeldene.

"Hang it! You did that on purpose."

Ducrot beamed.

"Zere!" he exclaimed. "Zat is ze true chivalry of ze English character. My opponent is generous. He admit zat it was not ze accident."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton.

"How is zat, umpire—out?"

"Yes, rather!" growled Hazeldene.

"Catch me batting against any of you lunatics any more!"

And he walked off to the pavilion.

"Zat is out!" crowed Ducrot. "Come on, ze rest of you, and I soon get you out!"

"You're not allowed to throw the ball!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, choking with laughter, as he came out to the pitch. "You mustn't throw it, especially at the batsman."

"Vat I do viz it, zen?"

"You bowl at the wicket, of course."

"But it is easier to hit ze batsman zan to hit ze wicket."

"Oh, try to explain to him, Meunier!"

Meunier explained, and the delinquent bowler at once rushed off to apologise to Hazeldene. The game had to wait till he returned, but Hazeldene did not come back to the wicket. He preferred to be considered out.

Harry Wharton went in next. Between them Harry Wharton and Hurree Singh knocked up the runs in fine style, the bowling being absolutely powerless against them and the fielding quite as incompetent. The French fellows had no chance whatever, and when the total reached a hundred runs, Harry decided to declare.

"Ze runs are more zan us so far," Lerouge remarked to Meunier. "But ve change all zat in ze second innings."

Meunier had his doubts, but he did not say so. The home innings had lasted just as long as was required to pile up the runs, and there was plenty of time ahead.

The French cricketers went in for a second time, and in this innings they certainly began to score. Perhaps it was kindness on the part of the bowlers, but whenever they succeeded in hitting the ball at all they took a run or two for it. But, with every possible assistance from the fielding side, the French team only succeeded in bringing up their total to 55.

The second Greyfriars innings was not wanted. Harry Wharton's eleven had won by an innings and 45 runs, and the famous match was over.

The crowd laughed and cheered as the heroes of that curious game came off the field. The French lads seemed to be very well satisfied with themselves, in spite of the defeat, and the home team

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were satisfied, and as there was general satisfaction all round.

But they all had reason to be satisfied, at all events, with the tea Billy Bunter had prepared for the distinguished guests.

The spread was large and attractive, and the cricketers were hungry enough to do it full justice.

The time for the return of the French juniors to town came all too soon. Even Hoffman and Mennier were quite friendly for the rest of the day, and pledged each other in ginger-pop.

And when the time came for departure, the motor-coach arrived, and as many of the Greyfriars juniors as could crowd into it accompanied the French cricketers to the station.

At the station Lerouge had something to say as he shook hands for good-bye with Harry Wharton.

"You beat us at ze cricket," he said. "It is ze English game, and perhaps you play him a little better than we do."

"Oh, no, not a bit of it!"

"Yes," said Lerouge, "I zink zat you play him perhaps a little better. But

we are staying some weeks in zis country, and we like to meet you again—not at ze cricket, but at ze gymnastics. We zink we give you fun for your money in zat line, mon ami. Will you meet us like zat?"

"Will we? Rather!" said Harry Wharton, heartily. "We'll meet you at anything—you like, old son, and whenever you like. What do you say, chaps?"

"And the chaps said "Rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" added the nabob emphatically.

"Zen it is settled," said Lerouge, with a smile of satisfaction. "I not zink zat you find ze task so easy, but we shall see. I will write to you about ze events, and we will make ze arrangements. Now I zank you for your hospitality, and I depart in ze train."

"Good-bye, old chap!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Adieu, mon ami!"

The French lads clambered into the train, and the doors slammed. Then the guard waved his flag, and they were off.

"Good-bye!"

The windows were crammed with heads and waving handkerchiefs as the train steamed out of the station, and the boys of Greyfriars waved and shouted back. The train disappeared down the line.

"Some more fun over this new deal, leggo," I expect," Nugent remarked as they walked back to Greyfriars. "I dare say their gymnastics are on a level with their giddy cricket."

"The probabilities are great. It will be the easy walk-over for our esteemed selves," remarked the Nabob of Blankfur. "We shall dust up the ground wifely with the honourable rotter."

Harry Wharton was rather thoughtful. He was not so sure about it. But the rest of the juniors anticipated with easy confidence the next meeting with the contingent from La Belle France.

(More fun and excitement next week with the claims of the Nabob. Don't miss reading "THE GREYFRIARS GYMNASTS!")

GUSSY'S LATEST LOVE AFFAIR!

(Continued from page 21.)

There was a heavy tread in the passage and a surging of the crowd.

"Cave!"

The stalwart form of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, appeared in the study doorway. The juniors crowded back. Arthur Augustus stood as if turned to stone. The young lady in the armchair seemed quite self-possessed.

Mr. Railton gazed at her and gazed at D'Arcy, his brow was terrific.

"D'Arcy!"

"Ya-as, sir?"

"Who is this young lady?"

"Miss Chunn, sir!" stammered D'Arcy.

"You know perfectly well that junior boys are not allowed to have lady visitors—above all, without asking permission!" said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Miss Chunn, I'm sorry, but—"

"It's all right, sir," said Miss Chunn, with a startling change of voice. "This is only a little joke on Gussy, sir."

"W-what!"

That voice seemed to electrify Arthur Augustus. He could not believe his ears at first. He turned an infuriated look upon the young lady.

"You—you wottah! You—you—"

Words failed him.

The young lady rose from the armchair. Miss Chunn removed her veil and her hat, and with the hat came the fair hair. A highly coloured face

was revealed, but a sight of the high colour, the features of Kerr of the Fourth were easily recognizable now that the veil was gone.

Mr. Railton looked at him blankly.

"Kerr!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Kerr demurely. "It's only amateur theatricals, sir. I'm practising."

"Oh, I see!" said Mr. Railton, his face breaking into a smile. "I understood—Knox certainly said—"

However, no matter! There is no harm in amateur theatricals, but you should not appear out of doors in feminine attire, Kerr."

"Very well, sir."

And Mr. Railton left the study.

Arthur Augustus gazed at Kerr.

"Kerr, you wottah! You spoofah! You beast! I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a thunderous roar from the passage. "Go it, Arthur! Go it, Arthur dear! Ha, ha, ha!"

Kerr fled: he dashed down the passage with his disguise under his arm, chuckling, and Arthur Augustus dashed furiously on his track.

The swell of St. Jim's overtook him as he reached the stairs and collared him, and they closed. There was a howl of laughter from the crowd as they rolled down the stairs together.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Arthur dear!"

"Go it, Ann Jane!"

The two juniors stopped on the first landing, rolling over. Arthur Augustus was pommeling away frantically, and Kerr was pommeling, too.

Half the school seemed to be collected on the stairs and in the passage, cheering on the combatants. Kerr tore himself away at last, with his skirt in

shreds and his wig in fragments and his hat in tatters. He dashed on to the School House, Arthur Augustus set up on the stairs gasping. His face was almost in rags, and one of his eyes was black now. The combat had been terrific while it lasted.

Arthur Augustus staggered up, amid a hail of laughter. He stared furiously at the crowd of yelling juniors.

"You uthah wottahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wotten beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy stalked away, furiously. Study No. 6 and locked himself in, but for a long time outside the study there sounded the bells of the School House fellows, laughing like hyenas.

Whether that ridiculous scene in the study had made Arthur Augustus realize that he was playing the "giddy ox," as Blake expressed it, or not, certainly that was the end of D'Arcy's latest love affair.

From that day forth there were no more pensive moods, no more regrets, and no more visits to the tobacconist in Rylcombe. Arthur Augustus had been cured, and after a day or two, during which time his dignity slowly recovered from the wounds it had received—matters were restored to their old footing in Study No. 6. Which was a very satisfactory result to Gussy's latest love affair.

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