

"GUSSY GOES TO WORK!" FULL-OF-LAUGHS LONG YARN
OF THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S INSIDE.

The **GEM** 2^d



WHO DELIVERED NEWSPAPERS WHEN WEARING A TOPPER? WHO BECAME A BARBER'S BOY? THE ONE-AND-ONLY GUSSY!

GUSSY GOES TO WORK!



"Yaroo!" roared the carter, as D'Arcy jabbed the lathering-brush into his eye. "Oh, ow! You careless young fool!" "Gweat Scott!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I'm weally vewy sowwy!"

CHAPTER 1. Very Severe!

"IT'S a wotten posish for a chap!" Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. D'Arcy had been quite silent for fully five minutes—a very unusual thing for D'Arcy. He was leaning gracefully against the balustrade of the School House steps at St. Jim's with a thoughtful wrinkle in his youthful brow.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were there sunning themselves on the steps. They had been watching Arthur Augustus with covert grins, wondering what was the cause of his unusually profound meditations.

"A weally wotten posish!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically.

He polished his eyeglass thoughtfully, jammed it into his eye, and regarded the Terrible Three with a distressful look.

"What's the trouble?" asked Monty Lowther sympathetically. "Has the girl in the tobacconist's refused you?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "It's the patah. He's not playin' the game."

"Oh, these pater!" said Tom Merry, with a nod.

"Chap should be very careful how he brings up his pater," said Monty

Lowther solemnly. "He should look after him carefully in his earliest youth, and guide his erring footsteps in the way they should go."

"I wish you would be sewious, Lowthah. This is a sewious mattah. I've had a lettah fwom my patah."

"Well, that has happened before, and no bones broken," said Manners. "I've known lots of chaps who've had letters from their pater."

"The patah says I'm extwavgant. He has w'itten thwee pages of advice on the subject of extwavgance, and lookin' aftah money and things—and he hasn't sent me the fivah I asked for. I wouldn't have minded the advice so much if he'd put in the fivah, you know. I believe in a chap lettin' his patah wun on. But he hasn't sent me the wemittance, and I'm stony bwoke."

"Horrid!"

"And that's not all," said Arthur Augustus, greatly aggrieved. "The patah says I've ovahwun my allowance so much that he isn't goin' to send me any more money for two whole weeks. That's why I wogard it as a wotten posish. A chap must have money, you know. You can't pay for things without money."

"Go hon!" murmured Tom Merry.

"You can't," said Arthur Augustus, as if he had only lately realised that somewhat important fact. "But that

isn't all, eithah. The patah has been quite wude. What do you think he has called me?"

The Terrible Three assumed very thoughtful expressions.

"Silly ass?" asked Lowther.

"Frabjous chump?" suggested Manners.

"Burling cuckoo?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Weally, you fellows, I twust you do not weally think that Lord Eastwood could make use of such exceedingly slangy expressions as those. Certainly not. He says I'm a weckless young duffah, and that a fellow who will nevah be able to make money should not waste it."

"Your pater seems to be quite a sensible chap," said Lowther admiringly.

"Wats! I do not wogard it as wastin' money to spend it. When I ordah a new toppah, it's for the good of the twade, isn't it?"

"Is that what you do it for?" grinned Lowther.

"Well, no; that isn't exactly what I do it for," admitted Arthur Augustus.

"But it is for the good of twade, all the same. And if I have more new silk toppahs than the othah fellows, it bucks up the hattah's business, doesn't it? As a mattah of fact, I ought weally to be wogarded as a philanthropist. And it weally isn't

SIT BACK AND ENJOY A HEARTY LAUGH OVER THE ADVENTURES OF ARTHUR AUGUSTUS WHEN HE SETS OUT TO BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S WORKERS.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

quite fair of the patah to throw it in my face that I can't make money. He wouldn't weally like it if I left St. Jim's and looked for a job. I could do it, you know. In fact," said Arthur Augustus warmly, "I've a gweat mind to do it, just to show the patah, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for laughtah in that wemark, deah boys. I suppose I am as capable of earnin' my livin', if I choose, as any othah fellow. Look at Bwooke of the Fourth—he supports himself by his work. I've helped him sometimes. There's young Gwimes, the gwocah's boy. Do you think I couldn't put up shuttahs and take them down, and delivah gwocewies quite as well as Gwimes does? It would be a jolly good deal easiah than gwindin' Latin in the class-room."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "I should like to see you carrying Grimes' basket. Ha, ha, ha!"

"And, as a mattah of fact, I've made up my mind," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "You see, I've been bowwowin' money fwom some of the chaps, and I was goin' to settle out of this fivah—and the fivah hasn't come. I can't remain in debt for a fortnight. It's imposs. I shall w'ite a wathah severe lettah to the patah—"

"Poor old pater!" murmured Tom Merry.

"I don't want to be wuff on him, of course, but, weally, this is the limit, you know. I feel bound to w'ite a wathah severe lettah, and I shall tell him plainly that unless he wescinds his resolution and sends me a fivah by return, I shall have no wresource but to twy to earn some money somehow. I am wresolved upon that. And I'm jolly well going to w'ite the lettah now!" said Arthur Augustus determinedly.

"Hear, hear! We'll come and help you," said Monty Lowther cordially. "Pile it on, hot and strong! These blessed paters want putting in their places sometimes, you know."

"Yaas; that's just what I think."

The Terrible Three grinned gleefully as they followed Arthur Augustus into the Common-room, where the swell of St. Jim's sat down with pen and ink and paper before him. D'Arcy chewed the handle of the pen meditatively.

"I shall be glad of your assistance, deah boys, if you can help me," he said, after a short silence. "I want to be severe, you know, without bein' disrespectful. A chap ought to be vewy wrespectful to his patah, even when he is a wovvwy. I think I will begin 'Deah pater,' as usual."

And Arthur Augustus dipped the pen in the ink, and wrote "Dear pater."

The Shell fellows exchanged winks. Arthur Augustus was in deadly earnest, but the Terrible Three persisted in taking the matter humorously.

"Something like this," suggested Lowther: "Dear pater,—I quite agree with you that I am a burbling ass—"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But I cannot help it, being born so—"

"You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "If you are goin' to talk

wot, pway get out! Have you any suggestions to make, Tom Mewwy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom promptly. "Begin like this: 'Dear Pater—'"

"Yaas, I've got that."

"I am sorry you have only too much reason to regard me as a silly cuckoo—" went on Tom Merry solemnly.

"But I don't wegard you as a silly cuckoo, Tom Mewwy," said D'Arcy, in surprise. "I think you are wathah an ass sometimes, but silly cuckoo is too stwong."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners and Lowther.

Tom Merry turned red.

"You fathead! That's what you're to write!" he roared.

"But I'm not w'itin' about you, Tom Mewwy—"

"You—you—you ass!"

"Put it in the third person," suggested Manners. "That's always effective. Something in this style: 'Lord Eastwood's letter has been received, and in reply Arthur Augustus D'Arcy begs to state that his lordship is quite right in regarding the said Arthur Augustus as a frabjous chump—'"

D'Arcy jumped up.

"You silly asses! Clear out!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "If you cannot take a sewious mattah sewiously, I will w'ite the lettah without your assistance. I have a vewy gweat mind to give you a feahful thwashin' all wound."

"All three of us?" grinned Lowther.

"Yaas! And if you don't clear out,

When Gussy's father, Lord Eastwood, stops the supply of fivers to his son, the swell of St. Jim's shows his independence by going to work. But earning an honest penny has its difficulties—as Gussy very soon discovers!

"I shall chuck you out!" said Arthur Augustus truculently. "I give you one minute to get outside the door!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Othahwise, I shall wush upon you and eject you with violence, you twoublesome asses!"

Arthur Augustus never counted the odds. He pushed back his cuffs, apparently without having worked it out in his aristocratic mind how he was to eject three fellows all bigger than himself. The Terrible Three stood in a grinning row, waiting to be ejected.

"Now, are you goin'?" demanded D'Arcy.

"No; we're coming!" grinned Lowther.

They came. And Arthur Augustus suddenly found himself picked up off the floor and struggling in the grasp of the Terrible Three.

"Ow! Welease me, you wottahs—"

Bump!

The swell of St. Jim's was seated violently upon the writing table, and Manners pushed the notepaper down the back of his neck, and Lowther gently anointed him with the ink. Then, laughing, the Terrible Three beat a hasty retreat, leaving Arthur Augustus sprawling upon the writing table and gasping for breath.

"Ow! Bai Jove! The uttah wottahs! Oh dear! Gwoogh!"

Jack Blake of the Fourth looked in at the doorway.

"Hallo! What's the row here?" He broke into a roar as he caught sight of Arthur Augustus' red and excited face, with little streams of ink running down it. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothin' to laugh at, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Those Shell wottahs have been waggin' me, the fwabjous duffahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! I'll give them a feahful thwashin'! Gweat Scott! My hair's all inky! I shall have to go and wash it off! I shan't be able to w'ite to my patah now. Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed out of the Common-room, leaving Blake shrieking. It was not till he had spent a good half-hour in ablutions that the swell of St. Jim's sat down again to write that letter to his noble pater. Then, owing to the perturbed state of his feelings, the letter was, perhaps, a little more severe than it would otherwise have been.

"Dear Pater,—I was surprised and shocked by your letter. I do not really regard this as playing the game. I am hard up. Unless you send me a fiver by return of post, I shall have no resource but to find some means of earning money myself. Wire reply."

"ARTHUR AUGUSTUS."

And that letter was addressed to Lord Eastwood, at Eastwood House, and promptly posted. Arthur Augustus carefully calculated the time it would reach Eastwood House, and he told Blake that he expected the wire in reply about six o'clock. And soon after six the telegram arrived.

Arthur Augustus smiled serenely as he opened it. Several fellows waited to hear what was in it. D'Arcy had told his chums—Blake, Herries, and Digby—of that severe letter to his pater, and they were curious to know the reply.

"Vewy decent of the patah to wire back," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust I was not too wuff on him in my lettah. He is weally a vewy decent sort, you know. Now we'll see what he says."

"Good! Let's see," chuckled Blake.

Arthur Augustus opened the telegram; he looked at it, then he jammed his famous eyeglass into his eye and looked again.

Then he ejaculated:

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, what's the news?" chortled Blake.

"Weally, this is wathah wotten! Look at that!"

Blake looked.

The telegram was short, if not sweet. There were only two words in addition to the address. It ran:

"Nonsense.—EASTWOOD."

Arthur Augustus looked at his chums, and they looked at him. Then they roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus crumpled the telegram into his pocket and walked slowly and sadly away. And Blake, Herries, and Digby yelled in chorus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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CHAPTER 2.

Gussy Means Business!

"BOY WANTED."

Those words in capital letters caught Arthur Augustus' eye as he opened the "Rylcombe Gazette" at the advertisement page.

"Good!" said Arthur Augustus. He was seated by the window in the Common-room in the School House. Morning lessons were over on the day following the receipt of that terse telegram from Lord Eastwood. That morning Arthur Augustus had been very thoughtful, and his noble face had worn an expression of great determination. He was, as he had explained to the grinning Blake, "A vewy wesolute chap" when he made up his mind. And his mind was made up now. He was going to show his sceptical pater the kind of stuff he was made of.

"The patah thinks I'm a useless ass, you know," he said indignantly to his chums of the Fourth. "He weally doesn't think I can do anythin'. I'm goin' to show him!"

"What are you going to show him?" Blake had inquired.

"I'm goin' to show him the kind of stuff I'm made of!" said D'Arcy firmly. "I'm going to work for my livin' for a bit, and show that I can do it. Didn't I twy it once before—and didn't I show what I could do?"

"You did," chuckled Blake. "You showed the stuff you were made of—the same stuff that they make howling asses of."

"Weally, Blake—"

"How are you going to run a job along with lessons?" demanded Blake. "Are you going to get the Head to give you leave while you carry a grocer's basket?"

"I shall ask the patah to wequest the Head to give me leave as soon as it is necessary. It will be up to him to do that, at least."

"Oh crumbs!"

"But, of course, I shall have to get the job first. That may not be vewy easy."

"Probably not," grinned Blake.

"I heah that there are a feahful lot of unemployed," said D'Arcy. "But I think that a wesolute chap ought to be able to get a job, if he twies. The pwopah way to get a job is to wead advertisements in papahs. You look out a job that will suit you, and you go to the man, and he takes you on. It's quite simple."

"Yes; it sounds quite simple," Blake agreed.

"I'm goin' to wead the advertisements in the 'Wylcombe Gazette,' and pick out a job I can do," explained D'Arcy. "I'll jolly well show the patah that I'm not such a useless ass as he seems to think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I fail to see anythin' to cackle at," said Arthur Augustus, with an air of offended dignity.

But Blake & Co. did, and they cackled.

And so it came to pass that Arthur Augustus was ensconced in the window-seat in the Common-room with the local paper, looking for a job. As it was a half-holiday that afternoon, D'Arcy would have time to look for the job—if found. And there was quite a few in the paper.

Butchers and bakers and newsagents and hairdressers wanted boys in Rylcombe and Wayland and Abbottsford, and other places quite near St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus read the column

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carefully from top to bottom, marking the advertisements that met with his approval with a pencil, and nodding with satisfaction over them.

"Bai Jove! There are half a dozen that will suit me down to the g'ound," he murmured. "Mr. Liversedge, the butchah, that's one, and Mr. Pipah, the newsagent. That's wippin'! Boy wanted to take wound papahs out of school hours. I could wun that job and my lessons here at the same time. I shall twy for that. I'll twy the butchah first, as it's bettah wages."

And Arthur Augustus rose from his contemplation of the local paper, and folded it and put it into his pocket with considerable satisfaction.

He walked out of the Common-room with an air of elation.

It gave him a new feeling of independence to realise that he was not useless, after all, and that he had the grit and the ability to take his share in the battle of life, if called upon to do so.

"Hallo! I've been looking for you!" exclaimed Tom Merry, as Arthur Augustus came out into the quad. "You're wanted this afternoon."

"Yaas; I twust I shall be wanted," said D'Arcy, with a smile.

"The footer, I mean."

"Oh, blow the footah!"

"What! Don't you want to play in the House match?" asked Tom Merry, in surprise.

"I am afwaid I shall have to put off twivial mattahs like that when there is important business to be seen to, deah boy."

"My hat! What's on now?"

"I don't mind tellin' you. My patah has cut off my pocket-money, and he weplied to me quite wudely when I told him that I should have no we-source but to get a job. So I am goin' to get a job—just to show him, you know."

"A what?" gasped Tom Merry.

"A job, deah boy."

"Oh, Great Scott!"

"There are quite a lot of boys wanted," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm goin' to twy affah a job this aftahnoon. If poss, one that can be wun out of school hours. Howevah small the wages are, it will be a beginnin', won't it?"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry faintly. "Then—then you won't be able to play footer?"

"Sowwy, deah boy; but that's how it is. I hope I am goin' to get a job this aftahnoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry staggered away. He was almost overcome. Arthur Augustus looked after him through his eyeglass, and sniffed. He intended to show Tom Merry, as well as Lord Eastwood, and the world generally, that he could get a job if he liked, and earn his bread quite as well as Grimes, the grocer's boy, could.

After dinner Blake linked his arm in D'Arcy's as they came out of the dining-room.

"We're going to beat the New House to-day," he remarked. "You'll have to play up, Gussy. Figgins & Co. are in great form."

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"Sowwy, Blake. I shall be out this aftahnoon. Important engagement."

"Yes; I've heard about that," said Blake pleasantly. "We're not going to let you play the giddy goat."

"Weally, Blake—"

"You see, the Head wouldn't allow anything of the sort—even if your pater would—and we're not going to have

the New House chaps chipping us about having a lunatic in our House," Blake explained. "You're going to play footer."

"I wufuse to play footah!"

"Mind," said Blake darkly, "if you try to get out of gates this afternoon, we'll seize you by force, and if you don't come down to the footer ground, you'll be carried."

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus jerked his arm away and walked off. Blake gave him an exasperated look. When Arthur Augustus once got an idea into his head, it was exceedingly difficult for anybody to get it out again. Indeed, opposition only had the effect of making the swell of St. Jim's more determined. But Blake could be as determined as his elegant chum. He did not mean to let the swell of the Fourth play the giddy goat, as he expressed it.

And so when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked down to the school gates a little later he found Blake, Herries, and Digby there, waiting.

They drew up in a line across his path.

"Whither bound?" asked Blake agreeably.

"I'm going to Wylcombe."

"Your mistake; you're going to play footer!" said Blake. "Now, it's time to change. Come on!"

"Pway let me pass, deah boy!"

"Are you going to play footer?" roared Blake.

"Certainly not!"

"Will you come and change?"

"No, I won't!"

"Collar him!" said Blake, exasperated.

"Weally, Blake— Hands off, you wottahs! Chuck it, Dig! Hewwies, you beast! Bai Jove! Ow-ow-ow! You uttah wottahs, welease me!"

But the Fourth Formers did not release him. Arthur Augustus was swept off his feet, and carried kicking and struggling in the direction of the football ground, his arms and legs flourishing wildly in the air.

CHAPTER 3.

A Quick Change!

"HALLO!"

"What's the row?"

"What's the matter with Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Most of the junior players were on Little Side, ready for the match, when Blake and his comrades rushed up to the pavilion with the struggling swell of the School House in their grasp.

A yell of laughter greeted the appearance of Arthur Augustus.

"Gussy says he isn't going to play," Tom Merry remarked.

"He's going to play all right," said Blake, "that's his little mistake. We're going to help him change!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful wottahs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I wufuse to play; I have business to attend to this aftahnoon, most important bisney. I command you to welease me. I will give you a feahful thwashin' all wound. I—ow—wooch!"

With a last struggle and a yell, Arthur Augustus disappeared into the dressing-room, borne in the arms of his devoted chums, leaving the fellows outside roaring with laughter.

Bump!

D'Arcy descended on the dressing-room floor. He sat there and gasped,

in a very dishevelled state. The Terrible Three had followed the Fourth Formers in, to lend a hand if required. They stood with their backs to the door, to cut off the escape of the exasperated swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus scrambled to his feet, crimson with rage.

"Now, are you going to change?" inquired Blake. "We've brought your things here. Here they are, Gussy!"

"I refuse to change!" bawled D'Arcy. "Then we'll jolly soon change you!"

Arthur Augustus made a wild rush at the door. But the Terrible Three blocked the way, smiling. Arthur Augustus hurled himself upon them, and he was seized and gently bumped on the floor.

"No exit!" said Tom Merry pleasantly.

"You uttah wottahs—" panted Arthur Augustus.

"Take your bags off, Gussy!"

"I refuse to take my bags off!"

"Hold him, kids, and I'll soon have 'em off!" said Blake.

"Oh, you feahful wottahs—ow—ow!" Herries and Digby, grinning, collared the unfortunate swell of St. Jim's. His jacket and waistcoat were ripped off in a second or two, and his shirt and collar followed.

"Now, take his shoulders, and hold him while I pull off his bags!" said Blake, breathing hard.

"Good egg!"

"Wefuse me—ow—you are cwumplin' my twousahs, you silly asses—yow!"

The juniors did not heed. Herries and Digby grasped Arthur Augustus by the shoulders and held him fast, while Blake grasped his trousers and pulled.

The trousers came off like a flash; so suddenly that Blake staggered back into the arms of the Terrible Three.

"Good!" gasped Blake. "Now, there's your footer things, Gussy!"

"I refuse—"

"Take his clobber out, Dig. If he doesn't put on his footer things, he'll have to go about the rest of the afternoon dressed like a Hottentot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy made a rush at Digby as he marched off with his clothes. But five juniors closed up in his path and yanked him back. Digby, chuckling, disappeared out of the dressing-room with D'Arcy's clothes crumpled up under his arm. Arthur Augustus stood up in his elegant underclothing and boots, and gasped furiously.

"Oh, you wottahs, you awful wottahs—"

"Will you get into your things?" demanded Blake.

"No, I won't!"

Blake took out his watch.

"I give you three minutes," he said. "If you're not dressed by then, you'll come out as you are!"

"I refuse to dwess!"

"Right-ho! If you don't mind, I don't. But if anybody should see you like that, there may be trouble."

"Oh, you wottah—"

"One minute gone!" said Blake sententiously.

"You—you bwute, you can't take me out without any clobber on!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"You'll see in two minutes' time!" said Blake grimly. "You're coming out into the footer field, clothes or no clothes. Take your choice."

Arthur Augustus cast a wild glance round the dressing-room, but there was no escape. The Terrible Three were at the door, and Herries was at the window, and Blake was watching him. And escape, minus his clothes—that was hardly possible.

"Only one minute left!" said Blake grimly.

"You—you awful beast! I refuse to wegard you as a fwend any longah, Blake!"

"My dear ass, I'm your best friend! I'm going to prevent you from playing the giddy ox," explained Blake. "Now then, only thirty seconds! Open the door, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry grinned and opened the door.

"Come on, Gussy! Will you walk, or be carried?"

"You—you wottah! If you are weally sewious, I will put on these things wathah than outwage the laws of decency."

"Buck up, then! Only twenty seconds left!"

Arthur Augustus fairly jumped into

of the Fourth, the captain of the New House junior eleven.

"Yes; only had to wait for Gussy!" said Blake cheerily. "We've been helping him change. Quite ready!"

"Quite!" said Tom Merry.

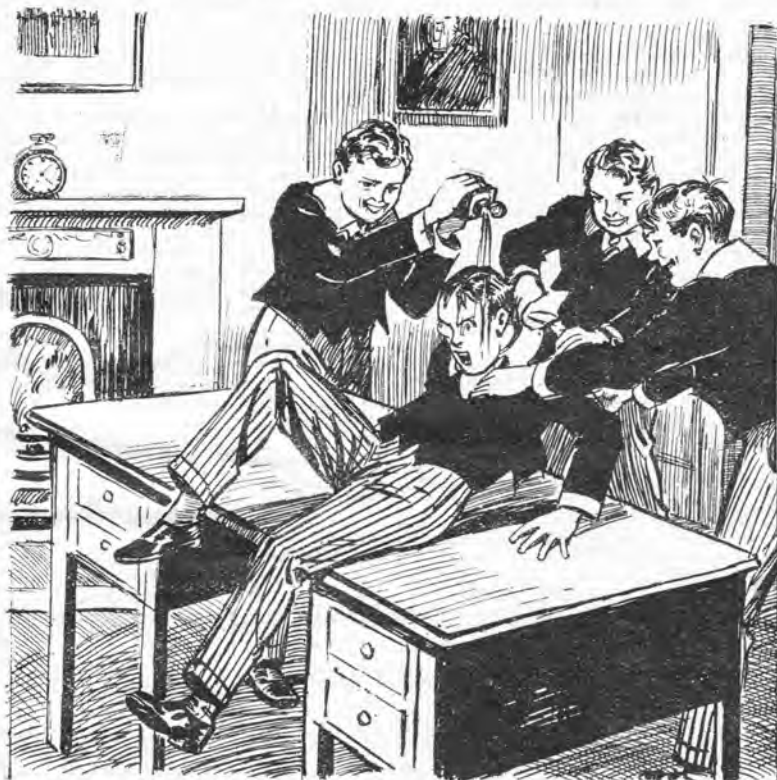
Figgins and Tom Merry tossed for choice of ends. Figgins won the toss, and elected to give the School House the wind to kick off against. The teams lined up, Arthur Augustus still with Blake's grip tight on his arm.

"Now, they're just going to blow," said Blake. "I can't hold you while we play, Gussy. I suppose you're going to play the game—what?"

"Wats!"

Phew! went the whistle, and the ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot. Blake had to let go Arthur Augustus then.

The School House forwards followed up



Bump! The swell of St. Jim's was seated violently on the writing-table, and Manners pushed the notepaper down the back of his neck. At the same time, Lowther gently anointed him with ink! "Ow! Bai Jove! Gwoogh!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

the football clothes; he was quickly dressed.

"Good!" said Blake approvingly.

"Now come on! Figgins & Co. are waiting for us, and it's time to kick off."

"I refuse—"

"Come on!"

The other fellows were already in their football rig. They threw off their coats in the dressing-room, and Arthur Augustus was marched out between Blake and Herries. All eyes were turned upon him as he emerged, with crimson face and gleaming eyes.

Arthur Augustus was in a terrific rage, but his chums seemed unconscious of it. They were in great good-humour themselves, and seemed to feel that they were doing very well for their chum, and looking after him in a really friendly manner.

"You fellows ready?" asked Figgins

the kick-off with an attack, and the ball went skimming up towards the New House goal. Arthur Augustus ran with the rest, but he swerved off towards touch and made a spring over the ropes and fled.

"Come back!" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy, you villain!"

"After him!"

"On the ball!" shouted Tom Merry.

"Never mind Gussy!"

"I—I—I'll boil him in oil!" gasped Blake.

"Come back!" roared Herries.

"Come back, you ass!" shrieked Kangaroo of the Shell.

The play had stopped. Figgins was almost in convulsions with laughter. Only Tom Merry's voice called the Fourth Formers back from chasing

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after the fleeing forward who was making a wild break across the quadrangle.

"You'd better put another man in," gurgled Figgins. "You hadn't really started. Put a fresh man in and begin again."

"Oh, I'll squash him!" said Blake sulphurously. "I'll—I'll pulverise him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was fairly gone. Tom Merry called on one of the School House reserves, and the game restarted. The captain of the Shell was willing to do anything he could to oblige Study No. 6; but, as he explained, they couldn't wait all the afternoon while Blake was arguing it out with Gussy. And Blake, breathing dire threats of what he would do to his aristocratic chum later in the day, gave it up. The match went on and Arthur Augustus was left to his own courses.

CHAPTER 4. Thrown Out!

"BAI Jova! The wotfahs!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had fled at top speed across the quadrangle and rushed into the School House. He rushed up the stairs and bolted into the Fourth Form dormitory and slammed the door and locked it; then he sank upon the bed, gasping.

He expected to hear hurrying footsteps in the passage and hammering at the door, but no such sounds came to his ears. He had not been pursued.

As soon as he recovered his breath he stepped on a chair at the dormitory window and looked away towards the playing fields.

He could see the footballers in the distance, and he saw with satisfaction that the match was going on. The juniors had no time to trouble about him now.

"That's all wight," said Arthur Augustus, greatly relieved. "I'll change and get out before half-time—wathah! It would be just like those wotfahs to look for me then!"

And Arthur Augustus, drawing upon

his ample wardrobe for clothes to replace those taken away from him, soon changed into Etons again.

He dressed himself very carefully, being desirous of making a good impression upon his future employer when he interviewed him.

When he had finished and surveyed himself, with complete satisfaction, in the glass, he unlocked the dormitory door and peered out cautiously into the passage.

The coast was clear.

Arthur Augustus scudded along the passage, down the stairs, and out of the School House. He heard a shout from the direction of the footer field.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

But he did not listen; football had no charms for him that afternoon. He hurried down to the school gates and breathed more freely when he was once safely outside them.

"All wight now!"

And Arthur Augustus started to walk to Rylcombe, in completely restored good-humour.

The coast was clear for him to carry out his great idea. He was going to show Lord Eastwood and Tom Merry and Blake—and, in fact, everybody.

He passed Mr. Sands' grocer shop as he walked into Rylcombe. Grimes was outside, putting tickets on boxes of eggs, and he grinned amiably at D'Arcy. It occurred to the swell of St. Jim's that he could get a little useful information from Grimes.

"Good-aftahnoon, Gwimey!" he said, stopping.

"Arternoon, Master D'Arcy!" said Grimes.

"Do you happen to know where Liversedge's, the butchah's is, Gwimey?"

Grimes stared.

"Yes," he said. "Goin' to buy a beefsteak, Master D'Arcy? He, he, he! That ain't the St. Jim's butcher, you know."

"I am aware of that, Gwimey. I am not goin' to buy anythin'. I am goin' to answah an advertisement," ex-

plained Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Liversedge is in want of a boy, and I am goin' aftah the job."

Grimes almost fell into the box of eggs.

"Oh, my heye!" he said.

"I do not happen to know where the place is," said D'Arcy. "Pewwaps you would have the gweat kindness to diwect me, Gwimey?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Grimes faintly. "It's the little butcher's shop in River Lane. Old Liversedge is rathah a tartar. I—I shouldn't recommend you to look for a job there, Master D'Arcy. He might think as 'ow you was jokin', and 'eave you hout."

"I shall twy, Gwimes. Thank you for your information!"

"Not at all," said Grimes politely. "Oh, my heye!" he added, as D'Arcy's elegant figure went down the village street. "Oh crikey! This beats it! Which they oughtn't to let 'im hout without a keeper."

Unconscious of Grimes' opinion, Arthur Augustus sauntered on elegantly. He turned into River Lane, a narrow and crooked old street that led down to the Rhyl. At the extreme end of the street the river could be seen.

A dozen tattered children played in the street. There were several shops, all of a very poor description, and the most benighted-looking of all was a little corner butcher's shop.

The odour that came from that establishment made D'Arcy feel a little qualmy as he paused outside. Good English meat was evidently not Mr. Liversedge's leading line. On the window board were chunks of queer-looking meat.

Arthur Augustus felt strongly inclined to cut and run; but he nerved himself heroically for his task. It was not like a D'Arcy to give in without a fight. And he went in.

Three or four urchins had gathered round the shop to stare at him. So elegantly clad a youth as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy seldom showed himself in the precincts of River Lane.

Some personal remarks about his silk topper and his high collar followed him into the establishment of Mr. Liversedge.

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle a little tighter into his eye, and surveyed the small, ill-ventilated shop. A fat, red-faced man in a butcher's smock came from somewhere in the gloom beyond.

"What can I do for you?" asked Mr. Liversedge, very politely.

He took D'Arcy for a customer, and he had never had so elegant a customer before. He was all politeness.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon him.

"You are Mr. Liversedge, I pwe-sume?" he asked.

"That's me, sir."

"You are advertisin' for a boy?"

"Yes," said Mr. Liversedge, in surprise.

"I have come in answah to that advertisement, my good man."

Arthur Augustus was not, of course, experienced in looking for a job, or he might never have addressed his prospective employer as "my good man." It really was not the most tactful thing to do.

Mr. Liversedge glared at him. As D'Arcy was evidently not a customer, there was no need to waste politeness on him. And Mr. Liversedge's idea was that the young swell had come there to make fun of him—a pardonable mistake in the circumstances.

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"You—you've come for wot?" demanded the butcher.

"I'm lookin' for employment," explained Arthur Augustus. "I undahstand that you are offewin' five shillin's a week, and board and lodgin' for a boy. I should be vewy glad to take the place."

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Mr. Liversedge. "Get hout!"

"What!"

"Get hout!"

Arthur Augustus jammed his monocle a little more firmly into his eye, regarding the butcher with astonishment.

"But I have come to take the job, my good fellow," he explained. "I—I want to entah your employment, don't you know?"

"You cheeky young himp!" exclaimed Mr. Liversedge. "Don't you come here makin' fun of me! You clear off!"

"But I'm not makin' fun, deah boy," protested Arthur Augustus. "I assuah you that I will make myself usefule. I will do anythin' in weason. F'winstance, you can wely on me to keep the shop clean."

"Wot!"

"It is wathah dirty now," said Arthur Augustus, sweeping round an elegantly gloved hand to point out to Mr. Liversedge the uncleanly state of his establishment. "You can wely on me to altah all that. It is weally not healthy, you know. People must feel wathah ill when they come into your shop in its pwsent state—don't you think?"

Mr. Liversedge did not state what he thought on that subject. He seemed to be at a loss for words. But he was ready for action, though words failed him.

He rushed at Arthur Augustus, seized him with two greasy hands, and whirled him through the shop door.

Arthur Augustus, astonished and indignant, struggled.

"Bai Jove! My good man, weally, I don't compwehend. I— Oh deah!"

He was flung across the pavement into the midst of a little crowd of urchins, who yelled with laughter at the sight. His hat, looking like a concertina, had fallen off in the tussle, and the butcher picked it up and hurled it after him. Arthur Augustus saved himself from falling by clutching at a lamp-post, and then he faced round indignantly.

"You uttah wottah! I shall wufuse to take your wotten job now if you offah it to me!" he exclaimed. "I wegard you as a wotten beast!"

Arthur Augustus recovered his hat, pushed it out into better shape, and jammed it on his head. The butcher had caught up a fragment of ancient steak from the block, and was taking aim. Arthur Augustus had just opened his mouth to deliver a further opinion upon the brutal conduct of Mr. Liversedge, when the fragment came whizzing, and caught him right in the mouth.

"Gwoogh! Ugh! Oh! Gwoogh!" "Take that!" roared Mr. Liversedge. "And now clear off, or I'll come out to yer!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus cleared off.

He had had quite enough of Mr. Liversedge, and it was evident that that job at five shillings a week, with board and lodging, was not for him. A chorus of howls and jeers from the street urchins followed him till he escaped from River Lane. He came out gasping, into Rylcombe High Street.

WHEN THE CANARY VANISHED!



Mr. Bunter: "William, the canary has disappeared!"

Billy Bunter: "That's funny. It was there just now, when I cleaned its cage with the vacuum cleaner!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Jones, 30, Southbourne Gardens, Ilford Lane, Ilford, Essex.

"Bai Jove! What an uttah fwest! That man is a wegulah wuffian, and I'm jolly glad I'm not goin' to have anythin' to do with him. Bai Jove, my jacket is quite gweasy fwom his howwid hands! Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 5.

One of the Unemployed!

IT was some little time before Arthur Augustus fully recovered from his encounter with the pugnacious Mr. Liversedge. He sat on a bench under the old oak-tree in the village street, and scanned the advertisement column of the "Rylcombe Gazette" once more.

He considered carefully the advertisements he had marked in pencil. Mr. Frump, the bootmaker in Wayland, was advertising for a boy. All applications to be made personally between four and half-past that afternoon in his shop at Wayland—side-door.

Arthur Augustus consulted his watch—the beautiful gold ticker that was a somewhat extraordinary adornment for a youth seeking a situation at five shillings a week.

"Just time to stwoll ovah to Wayland, and get there by four," mused Arthur Augustus.

"It's a wippin' affahnoon for a walk, and I shall get the exahcise, anyway, if I don't get the job. And I'll be there quite early, and pewwaps I shall get taken on before the othahs come, if there are any othahs!"

And Arthur Augustus walked over to Wayland.

Wayland was the market town of the district, and quite an important centre. There was an Empire, a picture palace, a first-class hotel, and people were beginning to talk of trolley-buses. The High Street was quite busy. Mr. Frump's bootshop was a corner building, with big plate-glass windows, fronting the High Street, exhibiting a splendid array of boots and shoes. The side-door in the side-street was where the applicants for the job had to present themselves. As four was only just

striking, Arthur Augustus deemed himself in good time. He had not had much experience in such matters.

He was surprised to see a long line of boys of all ages in the side-street.

The line began at the door and extended a good distance down the street, as far as the next turning.

There were big boys and little boys, well-dressed boys and shabby boys, and tattered boys; boys of all complexions, sizes, and sorts.

But there was no boy like Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He was unique.

The swell of St. Jim's paused and adjusted his eyeglass, and looked at the array of youths in great surprise.

"Bai Jove, I wondah what that crowd's collected for?" he murmured. "It can't be swuch an extwaordinawy thin' for Mr. Fwump to take on a new boy. I weally wondah what all those chaps are here for? There must be thirty, at least."

However, that was not the immediate business in hand. It was time to apply for the job, and Arthur Augustus came up to the side-door. A big, red-faced lad of about seventeen was the first in the line, and he looked suspiciously at D'Arcy.

"Whatcher want?" he inquired.

Arthur Augustus looked at him mildly.

"I am goin' to apply for a job here," he explained. "I believe this is the wight door."

The big youth scowled.

"You arter the job?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"Stow it!" said the other incredulously.

"I assuah you it is the fact, my deah fellow," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If you will have the extweme kindness to step aside, I shall be glad to entah."

"You ain't kiddin'?" asked the big youth. "You're reely arter the job?"

"Yaas, certainly."

"Then you'll take your turn."

"My turn?" repeated Arthur Augustus, puzzled. "I don't quite compwehend."

The big youth pointed down the line. "We was all here afore you," he said ferociously. "Think you're comin' at the last minute to shove yourself in front of all of us? Not 'arf!"

"Give him a jolt on the jor, Mike!" said the second in the line.

Mike seemed very much inclined to take that advice. Having been stationed outside Mr. Frump's side-door for a good two hours, he was naturally indignant at a young swell calmly walking in ahead of him. Arthur Augustus was acting in sheer ignorance of the situation, but the other boys were not aware of that.

Mike doubled up a big fist and scowled at Arthur Augustus.

"You goin' to clear orf?" he asked.

"But, I don't quite compwehend. Do you mean to say that all you fellows are here lookin' for the same job?" asked D'Arcy.

"Think we're 'ere for our health?" jeered Mike.

"Bai Jove! I weally beg your pardon," said D'Arcy, quite distressed. "I had no ideah whatevah of takin' an unfair advantage. Of course, I want to play the game. I will take my turn with pleasuah."

"Oh, get horf!" growled Mike.

Arthur Augustus walked down the line.

An elegantly clad youth, with an

eyeglass in his eye, sauntering gracefully along that tattered and anxious line, naturally roused hostility.

To Arthur Augustus it was an adventure, but to most of the boys there it was a serious matter. Jeers and growls greeted Arthur Augustus as he passed along. He did not reply to them, but reached the end of the line and took up his stand there, the thirty-fifth in order.

"Oh, corks, wot a swell!"

"My heye! Look at the toff!"

"Winder-pane, too!"

"Does yer mummy know yer out?"

Arthur Augustus grew a little pink. The remarks were quite unpleasant, and the fellows were beginning to press round him. The last dozen in the line, not having really much hope of getting into Mr. Frump's establishment when the door was open, broke up, and gathered in a little crowd round Arthur Augustus. They were really only too glad to break the monotony of the waiting by ragging the young swell.

"Knock 'is 'at orf, Jim!"

Arthur Augustus backed against the wall.

"Pway don't be wuff beasts, deah boys!" he said mildly. "I am here to look aftah this job, the same as you are."

"Yah!"

"Get horf!"

"You don't want a job!"

"Shift 'im out!"

A dirty hand came up and knocked D'Arcy's hat off. As it fell he caught it just in time, and set it straight upon his head and turned angrily upon the boy who had knocked it. His eyes were gleaming now.

"Look here!" he exclaimed sharply. "I have as much wight to be here as you have, and I wufese to be bullied. If you intahfere with me I shall swike you."

There was a yell of laughter. A big, hulking fellow, with a freckled face, lurched forward and thrust a bulldog jaw within a couple of inches of D'Arcy's face. There was an encouraging howl from the other young rascals.

"Pitch into him, 'Erbert!"

"Wipe 'im round the mouth!"

"Knock 'is 'at orf!"

Arthur Augustus backed away as far as he could from 'Erbert's bulldog jaw. 'Erbert was a head taller than D'Arcy, and a very powerful-looking fellow. And Arthur Augustus did not want a row in the street.

"Pway keep your distance, deah boy!" he said. "Fair play, you know."

"Fair play!" snorted 'Erbert. "I'll give yer fair play. Come on!"

"But I weally don't want to fight you, deah boy!"

"Then get out," said 'Erbert. "We don't want your sort 'ere."

"I wufese to get out!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I'm lookin' for a job."

"Then I'll jolly soon put you out," said 'Erbert.

"Weally, you know—"

Biff!

Arthur Augustus' silk hat went flying under a swipe from 'Erbert's hand. It fell on the pavement, and there was a rush of the boys to have a kick at it. In a moment it was being kicked down the street, like a football. In ten seconds it was a shapeless wreck. Arthur Augustus uttered a cry of dismay.

"Bai Jove! My hat! My toppah!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,510.

You beasts! Gweat Scott! I'll give you a feahful thwashin'!"

And he rushed at the obnoxious 'Erbert, hitting out right and left.

'Erbert was nothing loth. He stood up to D'Arcy, and they were quickly going it hammer and tongs. The boys gathered round in an eager crowd to watch the fight. And the crowd soon grew larger. A cats' meat man halted; a butcher's boy came along and stopped; two or three public-house loafers lounged up. Arthur Augustus and 'Erbert struggled, and pommelled, and fought in the midst of a growing throng of all sorts and conditions of persons.

"Go it, 'Erbert!"

"Nail 'im!"

"Knock the stuffin' out of 'im!"

"Spifficate 'im!"

All the cries were for 'Erbert; there was no sympathy whatever for the "swell." It was, natural enough. The well-dressed public schoolboy was an intruder; he had nothing in common with the other fellows there, and all their sympathy was naturally with the redoubtable 'Erbert.

But 'Erbert, in spite of the encouragement of his friends, was getting the worst of it.

In the first onset his size and strength gave him an advantage, and D'Arcy was badly pommelled, but as soon as he recovered his coolness Arthur Augustus brought his knowledge of boxing into play.

'Erbert had plenty of strength, and plenty of pluck, but he had no science, and the swell of St. Jim's began to knock him right and left.

Thump, thump, thump! came D'Arcy's fists on 'Erbert's face and chin and broad chest, and 'Erbert strove in vain to get through his guard and close with him.

Finally, a terrific uppercut stretched 'Erbert on his back on the ground, and Arthur Augustus stood over him, panting.

"Oh, lummy!" groaned 'Erbert, putting his hand to his nose, which was streaming red. "Oh, my heye! Oh, crickey!"

"I twust you have had enough," said Arthur Augustus, gasping for breath. "I am very sowwy to handle you in this way, but you gave me no choice, you know."

'Erbert sat up dazedly.

"Oh, lummy!"

"Go for 'im!" sang out a voice. "Rush 'im!"

Arthur Augustus backed against the wall in alarm. He had not expected that 'Erbert struggled painfully to his feet.

"Let 'im alone!" he growled. "'E's licked me fair and square. Let 'im alone!"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "You are a sportsman, deah boy."

'Erbert growled again. He was feeling a badly-used sportsman. There was a movement in the line near the door, and Mike disappeared into the doorway. The applicants for the job were being admitted at last.

In a moment the fracas was forgotten. The boys rushed to take their places in the line, with a great deal of pushing, and shoving, and disputing. Several more had arrived during the fight, but they all pushed in front of Arthur Augustus, who found himself still at the end of the line.

The swell of St. Jim's was in a troubled state of mind. His hat was gone, and his clothes were very dusty and dishevelled after that struggle with 'Erbert. He certainly did not look

much like the elegant swell of St. Jim's now. And his nose was swollen, and there was a trickle of red from it, and there was a bruise on his cheekbone.

He was tempted to give up the business altogether, as he realised how unfit he was to present himself before a respectable bootmaker. But he stuck to his guns. He was determined to have a job by the time he returned to St. Jim's.

Mike came out of the side door, scowling. It was evident that he had not been taken on by Mr. Frump. The line moved up a little as the next boy went in. Then a man came out and spoke a few words, and went in and shut the door.

The line of applicants broke up and dispersed.

Arthur Augustus moved up towards the door as the other fellows walked away. The whole crowd of them were dispersing, and Arthur Augustus found his way to the door quite unimpeded.

Some of them looked at him and grinned as they went away.

D'Arcy was puzzled. It struck him as curious that, after waiting so long, all the boys should give it up and clear off. Still, doubtless they knew their own business best, and they had left the field clear for him.

He knocked at the door.

It was opened, and a man stared at him impatiently from within.

"What is it?" he asked sharply.

"Can I see Mistah Fwump?" asked D'Arcy politely.

The man stared at him. Hatless, dusty, untidy, and with a swollen nose, Arthur Augustus did not make his usual excellent impression.

"Wot do you want?" asked the man.

"I am goin' to apply for a situation, in ansawah to an advertisement—"

"It's took!" growled the man.

"You're too late! Clear off!"

"But I've been waitin' here for some time—"

"Didn't you 'ear me come out and say Mr. Frump was sooted?" snapped the man.

"No; I'm sowwy—I didn't."

"Well, be off! The job's took!"

And the door was slammed in Arthur Augustus' face.

"Oh, bai Jove!" said D'Arcy.

He turned disconsolately away. He understood now why the crowd had cleared off. The second applicant had obtained the situation, and the rest were not wanted.

Arthur Augustus rubbed his swollen nose and walked away in a very thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER 6.

Taken On!

MR. PIPER, the newsagent of Rylcombe, was the next name on D'Arcy's list. But the swell of St. Jim's felt that he was somewhat in need of repairs before he presented himself to Mr. Piper. Being unfortunately short of money, he could not purchase a new silk topper to replace the one he had lost. He was reduced to the awful state of buying a cap for a shilling at a ready-made clothes shop.

The clothier kindly lent him a brush, and he brushed himself down; but he was feeling far from elegant or comfortable as he left the shop, with a shilling cap upon his noble head.

He walked slowly and meditatively back to Rylcombe.

His hopes had been considerably dashed by the events of the afternoon.

Getting a job was evidently not so easy as it had appeared at first sight.

It had seemed very simple to select the advertisements that suited him best, apply for the job, and take it. But it was not so simple when it came to be done.

But Arthur Augustus was still determined. When he returned to St. Jim's he wanted to be able to tell his unbelieving chums that he had secured a job. He wanted to be able to write to his pater, explaining that he had taken a situation, and was able to provide himself with pocket-money by his own labours in the future. As he reflected over the matter, during his walk to Rylcombe, it seemed to him that the newsagent's place would really suit him best of all.

He knew that many boys had "jobs" at which they worked before and after school hours, and why shouldn't he do the same as fellows at the County Council school? His education at St. Jim's was first-class and expensive, and it was absurd that it should be a hindrance instead of a help to him. What was the good of a Public school, anyway, if a Public school chap was handicapped instead of helped by the fact that he belonged to a Public school?

"It will be as wight as wain," Arthur Augustus told himself. "I can get up vewy early, before wisin'-bell, and buzz down to Wylcombe on my bike, and take the papahs out, and get back easily in time for bwekkah. I can do the evenin' wourd, if there is one, aftah school hours. It will weally be a healthy exahcise, and I shall get paid for it. I'm quite as elevah as a County Council school chap, I believe, and I don't see why I shouldn't be able to do what they do."

And, with renewed hope, he presented himself at Mr. Piper's.

The village newsagent was not crowded with applicants, as the boot-maker in Wayland Town had been.

Arthur Augustus found no one in the shop when he presented himself. A bell began to tinkle when he opened the door, and he nearly fell down a steep step into the little old-fashioned shop. The bell remained tinkling while the door was open, and Arthur Augustus shut it. A little man came out of the stuffy back-parlour behind the shop.

Arthur Augustus had seen Mr. Piper before, and Mr. Piper had probably seen him; but if he had, he did not recognise him now. The cheap cap, which did not fit, quite changed D'Arcy's look—added to the swollen nose.

"Mr. Pipah!" said D'Arcy politely.

"Yes," said Mr. Piper.

"I undahstand that you want a boy."

"A boy?" said Mr. Piper, looking at him with more attention. "Yes."

"To work out of school hours, Mr. Pipah?"

"Yes."

"I should be vewy pleased to take the place, sir," said D'Arcy.

Mr. Piper scanned him.

"What's your name?" he inquired.

"D'Arcy."

"Oh! Are you at school?"

"Yaas."

"I shall want you to get here at six in the morning," said Mr. Piper. "You'll take down the shutters, sweep out the shop, and put things in order. Then you'll go round with the papers."

"Yaas, sir."

"Then you'll come again after school in the afternoon—at five o'clock," said Mr. Piper. "You can make yourself useful for a couple of hours then."



"Do you know," said the schoolmaster, as one of his boys walked into the class with a dirty face, "you remind me of a gangster."

"A gangster?" repeated the boy.

"Yes; you won't come clean!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to "A Reader," 101, Broadfield Road, Knowle Park, Bristol 4.

"Quite so, sir."

"Are you willing to work?"

"Certainly, Mr. Pipah! As a mattah of fact, I am most anxious to work."

"Well, that's all right," said Mr. Piper, a little doubtfully. "I hope you're not a quarrelsome boy, getting into fights with other lads."

D'Arcy's hand went to his nose.

"Oh, no, sir! I am a vewy peaceful chap. I am sowvy to pwesent myself in this state. I was attacked by a young wuffian."

"Very well, I'll take you on," said Mr. Piper.

Arthur Augustus brightened up wonderfully. He was taken on. It was a job at last.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Pipah!" he said. "I will do my vewy best to give you satisfaction. Now, about salawy—"

"Salary," said Mr. Piper. "How much do you want?"

"I should not expect vewy much to begin with, Mr. Pipah. Suppose we were to say a pound a week to start?"

The newsagent almost fell.

"A—a—a what?" he stammered.

"If you think that is too much, sir—"

"Too much!" gasped Mr. Piper.

"Are you an idiot?"

"I twust not, Mr. Pipah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am inexperienced in these mattahs."

"You must be!" said Mr. Piper.

"I should be satisfied with ten shillings to start with—"

"Make it ten pounds!" said Mr. Piper facetiously.

"Is ten shillings too much, sir?"

"Four times too much!" said Mr. Piper.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"I pay half-a-crown a week—and good pay, too!" said Mr. Piper. "You can take it, or leave it!"

Arthur Augustus was very much inclined to leave it; but he remembered that it was too late that day to look for another job. It was that or nothing. So he decided to take it.

"Vewy well, sir," he said, after a few moments' pause, "I will take it—and thank you."

"I suppose you've got a character," said Mr. Piper.

"Yaas, certainly! I twust I have a vewy good chawactah."

"I mean, have you got a character from your last employer?" snapped Mr. Piper, beginning to get a little impatient.

"Oh, no! I have nevah worked at this business before. But I assuah you that I am a vewy respectable chap."

Mr. Piper smiled.

"Well, you'll do," he said. "It's a risk, but I'll take you. To-morrow morning at six sharp, mind you. You'll ring the side bell."

"Yaas, sir."

Mr. Piper went back into the little parlour. Arthur Augustus left the newsagent's shop with a feeling of elation.

The salary was not high, but it was a job. He had made a start. And it was a job that would run in conjunction with his work at school. His work for Mr. Piper could be done before and after school hours. True, he would not have the satisfaction at first of feeling that he was earning his bread. Half-a-crown a week would not quite run to that. But it was a beginning—the first step on the road to independence.

He might rise in the business; get a rise in wages; or, later on, find another job that paid better. Lots of things might happen now that he had once made a start.

The earlier disappointments of the afternoon were forgotten now. Arthur Augustus felt as if he were walking on air as he made his way home to St. Jim's in the dusk. He had something to tell his chums now.

CHAPTER 7.

Gussy Causes a Surprise!

"HERE he is!"

"Here's the silly ass!"

Many voices greeted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he came into the School House at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. surrounded him in a moment.

Arthur Augustus bestowed an affable smile upon them.

"Hallo, deah boys! How did the match go?" he asked cheerfully.

"We beat the New House," said Jack Blake. "If we'd lost, we'd have slaughtered you!"

"Well, I'm glad you beat them, deah boy," said D'Arcy amicably. "That's all wight. I was afwaid you would get licked as I wasn't playin'. But it's all wight."

"You saved the match for us, Gussy," said Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the Shell fellow in astonishment.

"I did, Lowthah!" he exclaimed. "I fail to see how—"

"By running off and not playing," explained Lowther.

"Oh, you uttah ass—"

"Where have you been?" demanded Blake. "What have you been up to? Have you been to the tobacconist's again?"

"How is Miss Chunn?" chuckled several voices.

Arthur Augustus turned pink. He had fallen in love with Miss Chunn, the young lady at the tobacconist's, a short time before. It had lasted only a short time; but it had been awfully serious while it lasted, and Arthur Augustus had spent quite a little fortune in buying things at the tobacconist's, as an excuse for calling in there and seeing Miss Chunn.

It was, indeed, his regardlessness of

expense at that time which had led to the present trouble with his pater. Arthur Augustus had purchased expensive cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, and all kinds of things, and the money had flowed like water, and it was not surprising that Lord Eastwood had "kicked" at last.

Arthur Augustus was reaping now the reward of his extravagance on that occasion. He was also reaping many jokes and much chipping on the subject.

"Behold, he blusbeth!" said Monty Lowther. "Oh, Gussy!"

"You uttah duffah!" said D'Arcy. "I have not been to the tobacconist's; I have been lookin' for a job."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I have already explained to you that my guv'nah has cut off my allowance, and that I am goin' to earn money myself—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And have you found a job?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yaas."

"What?"

It was a yell of surprise from all the fellows. Arthur Augustus looking for a job was funny enough. But they were not prepared to hear that he had found one.

Arthur Augustus gazed round upon their astonished faces with great elation. He was feeling to the full his triumph.

"You've found a job!" howled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh! Great Christopher Columbus!"

"My hat!"

"What kind of a job?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"A newsagent's," said D'Arcy. "I am goin' to take the shuttles wound for Mr. Pipah, and take the papahs down—I mean, I am goin' to take the shuttles down, and take the papahs wound—"

"Rot!"

"Gammon!"

"Draw it mild!"

"I assuah you, deah boys, that it is a fact. Mr. Pipah advertised for a boy to work out of school hours."

"Oh crumbs! He wasn't advertising for a Public school chap, though!" shrieked Blake.

"I don't see that that makes any difference. I don't see why a chap should be supposed to be a useless ass simply because he belongs to a Public school."

"Do you mean to say he's taken you on?" asked Kangaroo breathlessly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Does he know you belong to St. Jim's?"

"No; I didn't mention that. He knows that I am at school. I suppose it makes no difference what school I belong to?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"The Head won't allow you!" yelled Digby.

"Wats!"

"Your pater—"

"I'm goin' to w'ite to my patah and explain that I've started in a job. It was weally up to me to do it, aftah his wire to me, and I shall ask him to mention it to the Head and explain that it's all wright."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to laugh at. I am quite willin' to work, and I twust I have bwains enough. As a mattah of fact, there is a gweat deal of satisfaction in bein' a useful chap, instead of an idlin' duffah like you fellows—"

"What!"

"Lots and lots of chaps work for their

livin'," said Arthur Augustus, with an air of knowledge. "I've seen 'em doin' it. Why shouldn't I? It will be a vewy valuable experience."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Oh, wats!" said Arthur Augustus. "I'm goin' to begin to-morrow mornin'. Go and eat coke!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away with great dignity, leaving the juniors almost in hysterics.

"Well, this takes the giddy biscuit!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "Gussy is almost too funny to live!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I expect he'll get fed-up on the first day—if one of the masters doesn't spot him playing the giddy goat and stop him at the start," remarked Smith minor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus maintained a very dignified attitude for the rest of that evening. Before bed-time the story was known throughout the House, and all the fellows yelled over it. Arthur Augustus was chipped without mercy; but he maintained a lofty dignity.

When the Fourth Form went up to bed, D'Arcy requested Reilly to lend him his alarm clock.

"What do you want it for?" Reilly wanted to know.

"To wake me in the mornin', deah boy. I have to waise at half-past five."

"Oh, howly mother of Moses!" said Reilly.

"I shall buy one out of my first week's wages," said Arthur Augustus. "Until then I shall be vewy much obliged if you will lend me yours, Weilly."

"Take it, and welcome!" said Reilly, with a chuckle. "But if you wake me up with it at half-past five, I'll sling a pillow at you!"

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus.

And when he turned in, the alarm-clock was at the head of his bed, with the alarm set for half-past five.

CHAPTER 8.

Early Rising!

BUZZ!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stirred uneasily in his sleep.

Buzz-buzzzzzz!

He awoke.

"Bai Jove, what a dweadful wow! What the deuce—"

The alarm clock was buzzing in his ears. Arthur Augustus turned over and raised himself upon his elbow. It was quite dark in the dormitory.

"Gweat Scott! It's that beastly clock goin' off at the w'ong time!" murmured Arthur Augustus sleepily. "It can't be anythin' neah mornin' yet. Nevah mind, the beastly thing will soon wun down."

Buzz!

It was a very powerful alarm clock, and it showed no signs whatever of running down. A sleepy voice came from another bed.

The sound of the alarm clock seemed to fill the whole dormitory.

"Stop that row, will you, you silly ass?"

D'Arcy settled himself to repose calmly.

"Will you stop that clock?" came Jack Blake's voice, full of concentrated ferocity.

Buzz!

Whiz!

A pillow came hurtling through the air, and Arthur Augustus gave a yelp as it descended upon his face. He sat up wrathfully.

"Blake, you wottah—"

"Stop that row!"

Buzzzzzz! ran on the alarm clock.

"Bai Jove, somethin's stwikin'!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

It was the half-hour that was striking from the clock tower.

The alarm-clock was still buzzing away merrily. Arthur Augustus dragged his watch from under his pillow, and struck a match and looked at it.

"Gweat Scott! Half-past five!"

"Stop that row!" shrieked five or six voices.

"All wight, you fellows. I'm gettin' up now."

Arthur Augustus hugged the bed-clothes undecidedly. The match had gone out, leaving him in darkness. There was not a suspicion of a glimmer of sun on the dormitory window. It was half-past five, but not yet dawn.

It was very warm and comfortable in bed; and it was very cold and dismal out of bed. Arthur Augustus wondered whether it was really such a ripping idea, after all, to get a job which made it necessary for him to rise an hour and a half before rising-bell.

Perhaps he might have another ten minutes, then he would get his bike out and scorch down to Rylcombe.

Buzzzzzzzz!

A boot came through the air, and Arthur Augustus roared as it caught him on the side of the head.

"Ow! Yawwooh!"

"Faith, did that hit you?" came Reilly's surprised voice.

"Ow—yaas!"

"Good shot! I didn't think it would. I hoped it would, but I couldn't see you. Faith, I'll try with the pillow now!"

"Weally, Weilly—"

Buzzzz!

With a sort of expiring gurgle, the alarm clock ceased its performance. Blessed silence reigned in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House.

Arthur Augustus rubbed the side of his head ruefully. He no longer felt sleepy. After all, perhaps it was better to turn out. He stepped out of bed.

"Now be quiet!" growled Blake. "If you don't let me go to sleep, I'll get up and slaughter you!"

"Wats! You get up, too!"

"Fathead!"

"Early to bed and early to waise is the way to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, deah boy."

"Shurrup!"

"My deah chap, there's nothin' like gettin' up early!" urged Arthur Augustus. Having once made the effort and turned out of bed, he felt decidedly virtuous, and he wished the other fellows to follow his example. "Don't be a lazy slackah, Blake. Get up!"

"It's not rising-bell yet, you ass!"

"No need to wait for wisin'-bell. Up in the morning's cheerful light, you know!"

"Lot of cheerful light there is now, you burbler!"

"Well, I'm goin' to light the candle, you know. Follow my example and get up!"

"And what am I to do at half-past five in the morning in the dark, you ass?"

"Well, you could take a nice little walk, you know, or—or any old thin', you know. Don't be a slackah!"

"Shut up!"

Arthur Augustus lighted a candle. The light flickered over the white beds and the dark walls, and the furious faces of a dozen awakened juniors.

Arthur Augustus began to dress. He was shivering with cold, and he washed



"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, struggling in the greasy hands of the butcher. "Weally, I don't compwehend—I—" Next moment, Mr. Liversedge flung him across the pavement into the midst of a little crowd of urchins, who yelled with laughter at the sight.

with more shivers in icy water. The candle flickered on his washstand. From various beds came observations that were more personal than polite.

"Put that light out, you silly idiot!"

"Don't make a row!"

"Go back to bed!"

"Stop playing the giddy ox!"

"I'll come and slaughter you if you keep me awake!"

To all of which Arthur Augustus made no reply. He dressed serenely, blinking rather sleepily as he did so. Some of the juniors went off to sleep again. They all tried to; but Arthur Augustus was humming a tune to make himself cheerful, and that humming disturbed the would-be sleepers.

"Sure, and will you shut your silly head?" said Reilly sulphurously.

"Weally, you know—"

"Why don't you go back to bed, you frabjous ass?" snorted Herries.

"I'm goin' to work!"

"Oh, you ass, you idiot, you jossler!"

"I wefuse to be called a jossah, Hewwies. I wegard you as an ass. Bai Jove, my shoes are not here!"

"Shurrup!"

"I can't go without my shoes. I meant to tell Lynn to leave them here. I wondah if your shoes would fit me, Blake?"

Jack Blake made no reply. He was already in the land of dreams again.

"I see that you have a pair of shoes here, Blake. Would you mind my weawin' them for once?"

Only deep breathing came from Blake.

Arthur Augustus took the shoes, and tried them on, and found that they were a little large. But he felt that he could make them do. Only to take them without the owner's permission would never do. It was necessary to wake up Jack Blake and ask his leave. The swell of St. Jim's stepped to Jack Blake's bed, and shook him gently by the shoulder.

"Blake, deah boy!"

Blake's eyes opened.

"Can I have your shoes, old chap—yow—wow!"

Blake did not reply. He just hit out. His fist caught D'Arcy on the point of the chin as he leaned over the bed.

Arthur Augustus went backwards as if he had been shot, and sat down violently on the floor.

"Ow-ow-ow-ow! Gweat Scott! Blake, you beast!"

Jack Blake closed his eyes again, with a seraphic smile.

"Blake, you wottah, you fwightful ass, you beast! I've a jolly good mind to give you a feahful thwashin', only it would make me late for my work. I shall take the shoes now without askin' your permish."

Snore!

"I wegard you as an uttah beast, Blake!"

Snore!

Arthur Augustus picked himself up, and cast a wrathful look at his chum.

Blake was apparently asleep again.

D'Arcy rubbed his chin. He felt jarred. But he postponed vengeance, and blew out the candle, and made his way towards the door in the dark. There was still no gleam of light on the windows.

But as he opened the door he paused, and turned back.

"I say, Digby, old man, are you awake?"

No reply from Digby.

"Dig, deah boy, if I'm inquired aftah before I come back, pway explain that I've gone down to the village. You see, I may be suspected of bweakin' bounds othahwise. Do you heah me, Dig?"

Dig certainly didn't hear. He was fast asleep.

Arthur Augustus felt that he must leave that message behind, and he groped his way in the dark towards Dig's bed. He bumped on Reilly's bed

in the gloom, and there was a sulphurous ejaculation from the Belfast junior.

"Sure, you silly Omadhaun, you blithering blatherskite—"

"Sowwy, deah boy! I didn't mean to wake you."

"You howling ass! You squeaking spalpeer—"

"Dig, deah boy!" Arthur Augustus found a bed he supposed to be Dig's—he could not be sure in the dark—and he shook a sleeper by the shoulder. "I say— Yawwoh!"

"I guess I'm not Dig," said Lumley-Lumley's voice, as he hit out in the darkness. "Glad I've got you!" he added as his fist collided with something. "What was that I hit?"

"Gwoogh! My nose! You beast—"

"Come near again!" said Lumley-Lumley, sitting up in bed.

Arthur Augustus did not come near again. He groped his way to the right bed and found Digby, and shook him.

"Dig, deah boy—"

"Wait a tick!" said Digby, in a concentrated voice. He sat up in bed, grasping the pillow in both hands.

"Where are you?"

"Here I am, deah boy!"

"Just a second. There!"

Biff!

The pillow, wielded with all the force of Digby's two strong arms, smote the swell of St. Jim's, and he rolled over on the floor with a howl.

"Yawwoh! Dig, you ass, what did you do that for? Ow!"

"Come here again," said Digby.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I wegard you as a wottah! Ow!"

Arthur Augustus groped away furiously for the door. He went out of the dormitory and closed the door behind him with a slam that woke up every fellow in the room.

"Oh!" breathed Blake. "I shall

slaughter him some day—I know I shall! He's too funny to live!"

And the Fourth Formers, breathing sleepy threats of vengeance, settled down to slumber again, while Arthur Augustus made his way downstairs.

CHAPTER 9.

Gussy Goes to Work!

THE House was very dark and silent.

Just a glimmer of dawn was visible on the windows now, but only a glimmer.

Arthur Augustus felt a creepy sensation as he went down through the sleepy, silent House.

The School House door was locked and chained. Arthur Augustus could have removed the chain easily enough, but he could not possibly have negotiated the lock, the key being in the possession of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster.

He jammed his eyeglass into his eye and surveyed the door doubtfully.

"Bai Jove, what a frightful lot of difficulties there are in the way of a chap who wants to earn an honest penny!" he murmured. "I'll bet those chaps at the Council schools who go to work in the mornin' don't have all these wotten difficulties. I'm frightfully handicapped by bein' a St. Jim's chap. It weally isn't quite fair!"

There was evidently no egress by means of the door. The earliest housemaid was not down yet, so no other door could be opened. There was nothing for it but to try a window, and Arthur Augustus made his way into the Form-room and succeeded in opening a window, and dropped into the quadrangle outside.

"That's done!" he murmured, with satisfaction, as he breathed the fresh, keen air of the quadrangle.

There was a greyness in the eastern sky that told of coming dawn.

Arthur Augustus hurried round the School House to the bicycle-shed.

There, however, a fresh difficulty awaited him. The door of the bike-shed was fastened with a padlock, and Taggles, the porter, had the key of the padlock.

Arthur Augustus had forgotten that little circumstance.

He looked at his watch. It was already turned ten minutes to six. There was evidently no time to walk to Rylcombe, unless he was to be late on the very first morning of his new employment. And that, of course, would never do.

Taggles had to be aroused, and the bicycle got out.

Arthur Augustus hurried across the dim quadrangle, and reached the porter's lodge.

The lodge was dark and silent. Taggles did not rise until a few minutes before the time for sounding the rising-bell. But he had to be awakened now, and Arthur Augustus rang at the lodge bell vigorously.

For several minutes the bell rang in the lodge unheeded. Arthur Augustus kept it up without ceasing, only too keenly aware how the minutes were passing. There was a movement in the lodge at last, and the window was thrown up and a night-capped head was thrust furiously out.

Taggles glared down upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Wot are you ringin' at that there

bell for?" he demanded. "Is there a bloomin' fire?"

"No, Taggles."

"Is that Master D'Arcy?"

"Yaas; I want the key of the bike-shed."

"Wot?"

"I want my bike out vewy early this mornin', Taggles—a most important mattah," Arthur Augustus explained. "I am sowwy to disturb you. But I must weally have my bike. I will not twouble you to come down and unlock the shed. Just thwow down the key."

"I'll report yer!" roared Taggles.

"Weally, Taggles! I say, Taggles, I—"

Slam!

The window closed with violence, and the night-capped head disappeared. Arthur Augustus looked up at the window in surprise and concern.

"Bai Jove, he doesn't seem to undahstand!" he murmured. "Taggles is wathah a silly old ass! I'm sure I explained plainly enough. I shall have to wing him up again."

And Arthur Augustus recommenced his solo on the bell.

In a couple of minutes the window-sash was flung up as violently as it had been slammed down.

Taggles' infuriated face reappeared.

"Will you go away?" he yelled.

"I want the key of the bikeshed, Taggles."

"You hain't allowed hout at this hour, and well you know it! I'll report yer! Go away!"

"I'm sowwy, Taggles; but it is quite impos for me to go away without the key of the bikeshed."

"Will you clear horf, you young himp?" roared the exasperated and justly indignant Taggles.

"Certainly not, without the key!"

"I'll report yer!"

"Pway thwow down the key fwom the window! You need not twouble to come downstairs. I weally do not wish to bothah you, Taggles."

Clink!

The key descended upon the ground, missing D'Arcy's head by inches. Perhaps Taggles had not meant to miss it at all. The window slammed down.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stooped and picked up the key with a great deal of satisfaction.

"Some people are awful duffahs," he murmured. "Now why couldn't he have thwown the key down without wastin' time, when a chap's anxious to get to work. Bai Jove, there goes six! I shall be late!"

Six o'clock was striking.

"It's weally too bad—the first mornin', too! Wotten!"

Arthur Augustus flew across the quad again. He unlocked the bicycle-shed, and dragged his machine off the stand, and rushed it down to the gates.

At the gates he halted.

He could not get out without the gates being opened. By himself he could have climbed over the wall, but he could not lift the bike over. It was a fresh difficulty. There seemed to be endless difficulties in the way of an industrious youth who was only anxious to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus in dismay. "I—I nevah thought of that. Taggles will have to come down and unlock the gates. Aftah all, it will do him good to wise early. I don't approve of slackin'."

He leaned his bike against the gates, and returned to Taggles' lodge, and tugged at the bell again.

The clang of the bell resounded

loudly through the silent house. It clanged on for some minutes without evoking a reply from Taggles. Then the bed-room window was raised once more, and Taggles looked out with an angry expression on his face.

"You—you—your rascal!" said Taggles. "Wot do you want?"

"I'm afwaid I can't get my bike out without the gates bein' opened, Taggles. I'm weally sowwy to disturb you; but if you'll thwow the key down—"

"And 'ave the gates left hopen-after you?" roared Taggles.

"Then I feah you will have to come down, Taggles."

"I'll—I'll—I'll—!" Words failed Taggles.

"Pway don't waste any more time, Taggles. I am late already."

"Will you go away?" roared Taggles, in a concentrated voice.

"Certainly not!"

"I'll report yer!"

"Pway come down, and don't waste any more time! Mr. Pipah will be vewy dissatisfied with me if I am any latah," said Arthur Augustus anxiously. "You are weally placin' me in a vewy awkward posish, Taggles. Pway huwvy up!"

"You—you—you—!"

"You are wastin' time, Taggles."

Slam!

The window closed again.

Arthur Augustus, burning with indignation, rang and rang the bell. But there was no further sign from Taggles. Evidently he had resolved to ignore the ringing.

"Oh, the howwid wottah!" muttered Arthur Augustus, as he desisted at last from his bell solo. "How on earth am I to get the bike out without the gates bein' opened? I shall be frightfully late if I walk!"

But there was evidently nothing else to be done. The bike could not be got over the school wall by the swell of St. Jim's, unaided. And there was no means of opening the gate. In great wrath, Arthur Augustus turned from the lodge, and, leaving his bike leaning against the gates, he climbed over the wall and dropped into the road, and set off at a run for Rylcombe.

CHAPTER 10.

The First Round!

SEVEN o'clock was striking when Arthur Augustus, breathless and panting, reached the establishment of Mr. Piper.

The shop door was open, and Mr. Piper could be seen there, with a frown upon his face.

He looked grimly at the breathless junior.

"Call this six o'clock!" he exclaimed.

"No; I'm sowwy. It's just gone seven, Mr. Pipah," said Arthur Augustus apologetically. "I'm awfully sowwy! I was delayed by a silly ass!"

"If this 'appens again—"

"It won't happen again, my deah sir," said Arthur Augustus earnestly. "I shall be vewy careful indeed to-morrow mornin'."

"It'll be the sack if you ain't," growled Mr. Piper.

Evidently he was not pleased. Arthur Augustus, with a great effort, refrained from argument. Mr. Piper's expression hinted that he was in no mood to be argued with.

"Pway what can I do now, sir?" asked D'Arcy meekly.

"You can sweep out the shop, and put the things tidy while I go up to

the station for the papers," said Mr. Piper abruptly.

"Yaas, sir," said Mr. Piper put his coat and hat on.

"Where shall I find the bwoom, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus. "And an apwon? I suppose an apwon will be necessary to pprotect my twousahs from dust?"

"Never mind your trousis," said Mr. Piper. "And as for the broom, you look for it till you find it, and learn to use your eyes."

"But surely it would save time if you told me—"

But Mr. Piper was already striding up the village street towards the railway station.

Arthur Augustus looked round him in dismay. It was past seven o'clock now, and he had to be at St. Jim's at eight for breakfast.

At that early hour there were few people astir in the village. Early labourers going to their work passed the shop, and, farther up the street, Grimes was taking down the shutters of Mr. Sands' grocer-shop, and whistling cheerfully and shrilly as he did so.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the shutters of Mr. Piper's shop doubtfully. He had never taken down shutters before, and he hardly knew how to set about it.

He had taken his jacket off and rolled his sleeves back. He was standing on the pavement in his shirt-sleeves, surveying the shutters, when Grimes spotted him.

Grimes was naturally interested in Mr. Piper's new boy, and he came along to exchange a cheery word of greeting.

"Hallo, matey! Why— My heye— Oh crumbs! Is it you, Master D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yaas, Gwimey."

Grimes stared at him like a fellow in a dream.

"You, Master D'Arcy! What are you doin' ere?"

"I'm Mr. Pipah's new boy."

"Wo-o-at?"

"I'm workin' out of school hours to earn some money," Arthur Augustus explained. "Mr. Pipah is goin' to pay me half-a-crown a week. Of course, it isn't vewy much, but it is a beginnin', isn't it?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Pewwaps you could give me a tip how to handle these beastly shuttals, Gwimey, as you're an old hand at the bisney?"

"I'll lend you a 'and," said Grimes.

"Thanks awfully!"

With Grimes' assistance, the shutters were taken down. Grimes was still looking like a fellow in a dream. He returned to his own work as Mr. Sands looked out of his shop with a severe brow.

Arthur Augustus went inside Mr. Piper's small establishment, and found a broom, and set to work. In a few minutes there was a most terrific dust floating in the newsgent's shop as Arthur Augustus swept the broom to and fro over the floor with great energy.

A boy looked in at the door while he was so engaged.

"Please 'ave you got the 'Daily Telegraph' yet?"

D'Arcy paused in his labours and panted, and shook his head.

"Sowwy, deah boy! The papahs haven't com' yet. Mr. Pipah has



gone to the station for them. Would last week's 'Wylcombe Gazette' do? We have that."

"No, it wouldn't," said the boy.

"Sowwy!" said Arthur Augustus. He felt that it was his duty to sell something if he could, and he had heard that it was a salesman's business to get a customer to take something else if the article required was not in stock. "Pewwaps you would like the 'Wayland Times'?" We have that."

The boy stared at him.

"Father wants this morning's paper," he said.

"I'm sowwy! Your fathah will have to wait a little. It is very unfortunate, but there is a twifin' delay this mornin'. Is there anythin' else that would do instead?"

"No, there ain't!"

"Pewwaps you would care to take one of our penny blotters?"

"Wot!"

"Or a—a fountain-pen?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We have here some vewy excellent fountain-pens at one shillin'."

The boy stared at him blankly and murmured "Dotty!" and went out.

"Cheeky little wottah!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy indignantly.

"I was only twyin' to supply him with somethin'. They look to me vewy good fountain-pens."

And he went on sweeping out the shop.

Mr. Piper returned with an enormous bundle of papers, to find his shop newly swept and garnished, so to speak, and Arthur Augustus leaning on his broom, like Hercules resting after his twelve labours.

Mr. Piper sniffed as he came into the shop. Perhaps he thought there was a little too much dust. However, he opened the bundle on the counter.

"Now you get round with the papers," he said. "I s'pose you know your way round this district pretty well?"

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus dusted himself down and put on his jacket.

Mr. Piper was scribbling addresses on the top corners of the papers, in the manner of newsgents, and when

they were ready Arthur Augustus took them and placed them in a canvas bag for carrying them.

There were fifteen morning papers to be delivered. As it was nearly half-past seven now, Arthur Augustus was conscious of a feeling of dismay.

He had to be back at St. Jim's by eight o'clock. He could not miss breakfast and morning chapel, and, above all, he could not be late in the Form-room. The only thing was to hurry as fast as he could.

"This 'Daily Telegraph' is for St. Jim's," said Mr. Piper. "After you've made your round, you can get off, and get here at five o'clock this afternoon. Understand?"

"Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus resolved to finish up at St. Jim's with the "Daily Telegraph" for the Head. He looked over the scribbled addresses on the papers and started off. The first had to be delivered to Mr. Sands, and Mr. Sands received it in his shop. The village grocer knew Arthur Augustus very well by sight, and he stared at him blankly as he came in with his bag of papers and handed one over the counter.

"Your papah, sir," said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, I never!" said Mr. Sands.

Arthur Augustus said good-morning, and hurried out of the shop, leaving the village grocer in a state of great astonishment.

The next address was Dr. Short's. Arthur Augustus arrived at the doctor's house and rang the bell.

A parlourmaid opened the door and looked at him.

"The 'Daily Telewaph,' if you please," said Arthur Augustus, raising his hat politely.

The maid stared at him.

"Why didn't you put it in the letter-box without ringing the bell?" she demanded.

"Bai Jove! I'm sowwy! I didn't know that was the wule," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway excuse me!"

And he raised his hat again and retreated, leaving the parlourmaid in a state of astonishment equal to Mr. Sands.

The next place was Mr. Mopps, the village barber. Mr. Mopps' shop was already open.

D'Arcy remembered that Mr. Mopps was advertising for a boy in the local paper, and he wondered whether he was suited yet. There was no sign of a boy about the place, so the probability was that Mr. Mopps was not suited yet. Mr. Mopps himself was shaving a customer as Arthur Augustus pushed open the glass door and came in.

He turned his head.

"Your 'Daily Sketch,' sir!" said Arthur Augustus politely.

"Well, put it down!" said Mr. Mopps, going on shaving.

"Yaas, sir!"

Arthur Augustus put it down and retired. After Mr. Mopps, he had to walk up to Glyn House with the next paper.

Glyn House belonged to the "people" of Bernard Glyn of the Shell at St. Jim's; and as D'Arcy sometimes went home with Glyn, he was well known there. The footman to whom he handed the paper stared at him blankly, and remained staring till Arthur Augustus disappeared.

Eight o'clock was striking as Arthur Augustus came out into the village street again. And he had a dozen more papers to deliver.

He paused in the road in a thoughtful mood.

"I can't possibly be late for school!" he murmured. "I wondah whethah the people would mind vewy much if I left their papahs till aftah dinnah to-day? I can get out on my bike, and make the wound vewy quickly. Some of these addresses are quite a long way. I shall not have finished them by nine or half-past, I feah. Of course, Mr. Pipah doesn't know I'm at a beastly Public school. Aftah all, it can't make vewy much difference whethah they have their papahs at eight in the mornin' or at half-past twelve. And it's wathah an unhealthy habit weadin' ovah breakfast. I think I had bettah leave it; no good gettin' into a wow at St. Jim's."

And with the remaining papers in the canvas bag, Arthur Augustus started for the school.

He found the school gates open, and Taggles greeted him with a ferocious glare as he came in.

Arthur Augustus frowned at him.

"Taggles, you placed me in a vewy awkward posish this mornin' by wefusin' to come down and open the gates," he said severely.

Taggles snorted.

"I'll report yer!" he said.

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked on to the School House, and astounded Toby, the page, by handing him the paper for the Head.

Toby blinked at it.

"Wot's this?" he asked.

"Dr. Holmes' 'Daily Telegraph,' deah boy! I've bwrought it fwom Mr. Pipah's."

"My heye!" said Toby.

"I'm Mr. Pipah's new boy, you know."

"Oh crikey!" said Toby.

And Arthur Augustus, having placed the remaining papers in Study No. 6 for safety, hurried to the dining-room, where he arrived just as breakfast was finished.

CHAPTER 11.

Levison's Little Joke!

MR. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth, was at the head of the Fourth Form breakfast-table.

He was about to give the signal for the boys to rise, when Arthur Augustus came in, pink and glowing and hungry from his early morning walking.

"Ah! Is that you, D'Arcy?" said Mr. Lathom, blinking at him over his glasses.

"Yaas, sir!"

"Where have you been?"

"I have been out early, sir. I am vewy sowwy that I am late for bwekker, sir. It was owvin' to circs ovah which I had no contwol."

"Had you leave to go out before the gates were opened, D'Arcy?"

"Ahem! I twust there was no harm in it, sir."

"Taggles has reported that you disturbed him to come down at an extraordinary early hour in the morning."

"Taggles is a wathah lazy fellow, sir."

"Ahem! I approve of early rising, D'Arcy, but you must not carry it too far. And you must not disturb Taggles before his usual hour of rising."

"Vewy well, sir!"

"You will take fifty lines for being late at breakfast."

"Oh, bai Jove—I—I mean, all wight, sir!"

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Mr. Lathom rose from the table.

Arthur Augustus had the pleasure of marching out of the dining-room with the other fellows, without any breakfast.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked. "I'm hungry, you know! I shall have to go and get a snack at the tuckshop."

"Oh, you ass! Where have you been?" asked Blake, in measured tones.

"I've been to work, deah boy."

"Taken the papers round?" asked Tom Merry, with a chuckle.

"I did not have time to take them all wound, deah boy. I have nearly a dozen left," explained Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to take them wound aftah dinnah, when I shall be fwee again."

Tom Merry burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Does Mr. Piper know?"

"No. I have not seen him since I left the shop with the papahs. I hadn't time to go back and mention the mattah to him. What are you cacklin' at?"

"So you're keeping Mr. Piper's customers waiting for their morning papers until midday?" roared Tom Merry.

"I do not see that it mattahs vewy much. How-evah, I shall apologise for the delay when I delivah the papahs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for mewwiment, deah boy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors simply yelled. Arthur Augustus surveyed them disdainfully through his eyeglass for a moment, and then walked away, with his aristocratic nose elevated in the air.

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Blake.

"I fancy Mr. Piper will hear from some of his customers during the morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Gussy will hear from him next time he trots into the shop!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

"I fancy so. Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus, however, did not seem to be worried. He did not see that it mattered very much whether the papers were delivered at eight o'clock or half-past twelve, so long as they were faithfully delivered sooner or later. He had a look of satisfaction during lessons.

There had been hitches, of course, but that was only to be expected on the very first day of his new venture. Upon the whole he had been successful, and he had done something towards earning his first week's wages.

During morning lessons, Levison of the Fourth found an excuse for leaving the Form-room, and when he came back there was a grin upon his face. But Arthur Augustus had no eyes for Levison.

He was glad when lessons were over for the morning. He wanted to get the rest of the papers delivered; to have the satisfied feeling of duty well done.

When the Fourth were dismissed from their class-room, Blake pounced upon the swell of St. Jim's immediately.

"Footer practice!" he said.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Sowwy, Blake; I've got the west of my papahs to delivah."

"Do you want to be left out of the House eleven for good, you fathead?" demanded Blake.

"I am afraid I cannot let football intahfere with work, Blake. The sewious things of life must come first."

"Oh, you—you—you—"

"Pway excuss me, deah boy! I must be off!"

"Off!" said Blake. "Yes, I think you must be off—fairly off your rocker, you barmy ass!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus hurried up to Study No. 6 for the bag of papers. He had



"Pway don't be wuff beasts, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus. "You don't want a job?" exclaimed the job-seekers. "You don't want a job?" D'Arcy.

left them on the study table. They were still there, but they were not exactly as he had left them. They had been removed from the canvas bag, and were stuck together in a mass, some practical joker having emptied a bottle of gum over them, and added a bottle of ink.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the damage in great dismay.

"Oh, the wottahs!" he gasped. "The papahs are wuined, and now I shan't be able to take them wound. The feahful wottahs! This will be fwightfully awkward to explain to Mr. Pipah!"

Breathing wrath, the swell of St. Jim's rushed out of the study.

Blake, Herries, and Dig were in the quadrangle when D'Arcy came up to them, the picture of vengeful wrath.

"You wottahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

The chums of the Fourth stared at him.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "What's biting you now?"

"You fwightful outsidahs—"
 "What?"
 "You—you beastly chumps—"
 "What?"
 "Dotty!" said Herries, with a shake of the head.

"My papahs are wuined!" howled Arthur Augustus. "I shall get into a wov with my employah. I may get the sack. Which of you upset the gum and the ink ovah my papahs, you feafuh beasts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Gum and ink! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus' blood was up. He rushed at his chum and clasped him round the neck, and waltzed in a deadly struggle.

Arthur Augustus had quite lost the

still wrathful. "Some silly ass has done it. Was it you, Hewwies?"
 "No, great chief!" grinned Herries.
 "Was it you, Dig?"
 "Not guilty, my lord!" chuckled Digby.

"Then it was one of those Shell wottahs, I suppose," Arthur Augustus looked round, and spotted the Terrible Three walking towards the football ground, and raced after them. "Tom Mewwy, Mannahs, Lowthah—you wottahs!"

The Shell fellows faced round.
 "Hallo!" said Tom Merry genially.

"Did you pour ink and gum ovah my papahs, you wottahs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.
 "I am goin' to thwash the wottah that did it. I want to know which of you beasts it was!" howled Arthur Augustus.

"Perhaps you'd better thrash the whole House, and make sure," suggested Monty Lowther. "You can begin with us!"

"Have you been in my study?" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Yes."
 "Then I'm goin' to thwash you!"

And Arthur Augustus ran at Lowther, hitting out. Three pairs of hands grasped him at once, and he descended upon the ground with force and swiftness.

"Yawwooh!"
 Blake, Herries, and Digby came up, grinning. The Terrible Three had placed their right feet upon the swell of St. Jim's, pinning him down.

"He's dangerous!" Monty Lowther explained. "Came for me like a wild bull because I went into his study yesterday to borrow Blake's Latin dictionary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You—you wottah!" howled D'Arcy. "I asked you if you'd been in my study—"

"So I have."
 "I mean this mornin'."

"You should say what you mean, you know," said Lowther calmly. "I haven't been in there this mornin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You—you—welease me, you wottahs. If it was not you, of course, I'm not goin' to thwash you! Welease me at once."

"I fancy you're not going to thrash us, anyway," chuckled Tom Merry. "But please it wasn't us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was allowed to rise to his feet. He was considerably dusty, and he was very much out of temper.

"The papahs are wuined now!" he exclaimed. "I shan't be able to take them wound, of course. I suppose it was one of you silly asses did it for a wotten joke. Mr. Pipah's customahs will be vewy much annoyed if they don't get their papahs. Mr. Pipah may weceive complaints."

"Ha, ha, ha! I shouldn't wonder."

"He may give me the sack when I go to work this evenin'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Arthur Augustus stalked away wrathfully.

CHAPTER 12.

The Order of the Boot!

AFTER lessons that day Arthur Augustus wheeled out his bicycle.

Quite a little crowd of juniors assembled to see him off.

Arthur Augustus' new occupation was known to all the fellows now, and they took a deep interest in it.

Figgins & Co. of the New House came to see him off at the gates, as well as a crowd of School House fellows.

They made encouraging remarks as he wheeled his machine out of the gateway, and chuckled without cessation. Arthur Augustus maintained an attitude of dignified reserve. He was the cynosure of all eyes, and the St. Jim's fellows persisted in looking upon his new occupation as something entirely humorous, and not serious at all. The fact that he was to receive two shillings and sixpence for his week's labour did not impress them at all.

"Go it, Gussy!" said Figgins encouragingly. "Make hay while the sun shines. As soon as your Housemaster knows you're playing the giddy ox he'll stop you. Pile up the half-crowns while you've got the chance."

"I should wefuse to be stopped," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I suppose a St. Jim's chap has the same wights as a County Council school chap. It's a free country, for wich as well as poor, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I weward you as a set of duffahs," said Arthur Augustus disdainfully. "It would be bettah for all of you if you found honest work to do, instead of idlin' your time away. I despise slackahs."

And Arthur Augustus rode away down the lane, followed by a yell of laughter.

His brow was clouded as he cycled into Rylcombe. He wondered whether Mr. Piper would be very angry. The papers, instead of being delivered late, had not been delivered at all. That made a difference. It was quite possible that some customer or customers had complained; indeed, it was more than possible. It was highly probable. It was really a most unfortunate thing to happen on D'Arcy's first day in his new situation.

He reached Mr. Piper's shop, and leaned his bicycle outside, and went in.

The shop bell tinkled away, and Mr. Piper came out of the little back parlour. Mr. Piper's brow was very grim. It was evident that he was ratty.

"Good-aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus, with rather tremulous affability. "I twust I am quite early this time."

The newsagent glared at him.
 "How many papers did you take round this mornin'?" he demanded. "Didn't I give you fifteen of 'em?"

"Yaas."

"And how many did you deliver?"

Arthur Augustus reflected.

"Five, sir. I am sowwy that I had no time to delivah the west, and I took them to school with me to be delivahed later."

Mr. Piper looked at him as if he could eat him.

"Delivered later!" he snorted.

"Yaas. I suppose it makes no difference what time they get their papahs, sir?"

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status. "I am here to look aftah this job!" "Yah!" "Get b!" "Shift 'im out!" And a hand came up and knocked ey's hat off.

repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. It was too bad that his efforts to earn an honest living should be interfered with in this way. He was resolved to thrash somebody, and Blake's hilarity made him fix upon Blake as the culprit.

"Oh, you wottah!" he panted. "I'll thwash you like—like anythin'! I—Ow!"

Blake fastened a strong grip upon the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus found himself suddenly swept off his feet and bumped down on the ground.

"You ass!" roared Blake, rubbing his nose. "I've a jolly good mind to lick you!"

"You—you wottah! You've mucked up my papahs!"

"I haven't, you frabjeous chump!"

"Oh!" Arthur Augustus sat up. "Do you mean to say that it wasn't you, Blake?"

"Of course it wasn't, you silly duffer!" growled Blake.

"Well, you shouldn't have cackled, then," said D'Arcy, picking himself up,

"What!"

"Unfortunately the papahs have been destroyed, and I was unable to delivah them at all; but I am willin' for the pwice of them to be deducted from my wages."

"Wages!" roared Mr. Piper. "Do you think you are goin' to get any wages out of me, you silly, stupid young bass?"

"Pway don't call me names, my deah sir—"

"You—you young idiot—"

"Weally, Mr. Pipah—"

"Don't you think customers want their papers in the mornin'?" roared Mr. Piper. "First comes Mr. Grumm and says, 'I ain't had my paper this mornin'.' I tell him it was sent out. Then comes Mr. Pysener, the chemist, saying he ain't 'ad 'is paper. Then 'arf a dozen more of 'em, ain't 'ad their papers. You—you lunatic! What do you think folk order papers for if they don't want 'em?"

"It's wathah an unhealthy habit, sir, weadin' ovah bwekker," ventured Arthur Augustus meekly.

"You—you—you—"

"I weally do not see that it makes much difference whethah they have their papahs in the mornin' or at mid-day, sir."

"You—you—"

"Howevah, as they seem to be particulah about such a twifle, I will make it a point to delivah them in futuah—"

"In future!" howled Mr. Piper. "Do you think I'm going to keep such a silly idiot here longer than it takes me to kick him out of the shop?"

Arthur Augustus backed away.

Mr. Piper was in such a towering rage that he looked quite inclined to suit his actions to his words.

"Weally, my deah sir—"

"Get out!"

"But I've come to work."

"You're sacked!" roared Mr. Piper. "Do you 'ear? Sacked! Get off with you!"

"But weally—"

Mr. Piper pointed to the door.

"You get out," he said. "If you ain't gone in 'arf a minute I'll kick you out! Got sense enough to understand that?"

"If you decline to keep me in your employ any longah, of course, you are your own mastah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I considah the loss is yours; but there is the question of salaw to be considahed."

"What?"

"I demand a week's salary in lieu of notice," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I believe that is the invawiable law. I am quite willin' to work, and if you sack me without notice you are bound to pay my wages."

Mr. Piper looked as if he were on the verge of an attack of apoplexy.

"Wages!" he shouted. "When you've lost me three or four regular customers! You—you idiot! You nunskull! You dummy!"

"I wufuse to be called a dummy. I demand my wights," said Arthur Augustus, with all the blood of the D'Arcys boiling in his veins. "I wegard you as a most unweasonable

man, and I considah that your customers are vewy unweasonable, too. I don't see that it makes any difference at all whethah they get their papahs in the mornin' or at midday. It's all wot. Howevah, if you discharge me I must have a week's wages. I do not particulahly want the half-crown, but I am standin' up for my wights—the wights of labah."

"You—you—" Words failed Mr. Piper. He had been through a trying morning with exasperated customers, and his temper had suffered. "Get out!" he gasped.

"I'm waitin' for my salawy."

"By George! I—I'll—"

"I am bound to stand up for my wights. As a membah, at pwesent, of the workin' class I have to considah the wights of labah." Arthur Augustus was very firm. "You must eithah give me a week's notice or a week's wages. You can give me which you like."

"I know what I'll give you!" gasped Mr. Piper. "I'll give you a 'idin'!"

"Pway be calm! Keep off, you ass! Oh, bai Jove!"

Mr. Piper did not keep calm. And he did not keep off. He rushed at his employee, grasped him by the collar, and swung him to the shop door.

Arthur Augustus struggled in vain in the grasp of the irascible newsagent. At the door Mr. Piper swung him round and raised his foot and planted it behind Arthur Augustus with such force that the swell of St. Jim's shot right across the pavement and stumbled into the road.

"Oh, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as he sat down in the gutter.

Mr. Piper brandished a fist from the shop door.

"Now you come back and see what you'll get!" he roared.

Arthur Augustus picked himself up. He was streaming with mud. He groped for his eyeglass and jammed it into his eye. He gazed for a moment at the excited newsagent in the shop doorway and decided at once that it was useless to carry the argument farther just then.

A grinning crowd was already gathering round.

Arthur Augustus dragged his bicycle out into the road, and mounted and pedalled away, Mr. Piper still shaking his fist after him from the shop doorway.

It was the end of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's first job.

CHAPTER 13.

A New Job!

"GREAT Scott! What's happened to your bags?"

"Been under a steam-roller, Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's state, when he wheeled his bike in, attracted general attention. It was evident that the swell of St. Jim's had had a fall in a muddy road.

"Bike accident?" Tom Merry asked sympathetically.

"No, deah boy."

"What's hap-

"Oh, nothin'

much."

And Arthur

Augustus, declining

to answer questions,

wheeled his machine

away to the shed,

and put it up and

went into the School House to change his bags.

The juniors grinned joyfully. They guessed that there had been trouble with Mr. Piper over those papers that had, unfortunately, not been delivered. But the swell of St. Jim's kept his own counsel and declined to enlighten them as to what precisely had happened.

"Sure, you haven't wound up the alarm-clock, D'Arcy darling!" Reilly remarked, when the Fourth went to bed that night.

"I shall not wequiah it again, Weilly, thank you!"

"Faith, and aren't you getting up early in the mornin', intirely?"

"Not to-morrow."

"Not going to Piper's?" yelled Blake.

"No," said Arthur Augustus, driven to the admission at last. "I am not goin' to Pipah's. I wegard Mr. Pipah as a wuff and disweputable man. I am not goin'."

"Order of the boot?" said Lumley-Lumley.

D'Arcy did not reply. He turned in.

He rose at the usual hour on the following morning, when the rising-bell was clanging over St. Jim's. There was a letter from his pater that morning, and Arthur Augustus opened it with some eagerness. If Lord Eastwood had relented, he felt that he could retreat without disgrace from the position he had taken up. Perhaps, secretly, the swell of St. Jim's was growing a trifle fed-up with the difficulties of earning his living. If the noble earl had surrendered, probably Arthur Augustus would have been pleased to go back to a more normal course of life.

But there was no surrender in Lord Eastwood's letter. It was in reply to a severe note from Arthur Augustus, and his lordship was quite untouched.

"Well, what does his nibs say?" demanded Blake, who had been watching Arthur Augustus' face with interest during the perusal of the letter.

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"Weally, Blake, that is a wathah disweputful way of alludin' to my patah!"

"I mean his royal nibs," amended Blake. "What does he say? Has he climbed down from his noble perch and sent you fivahs or tenners?"

"I am sowwy to say not. He says that I can twy to earn money if I like, and that he wil be vewy surpised and pleased if I succeed," said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "He seems to think that it is quite impos, somehow."

"Go hon!" said Blake, with a chuckle.

"Well, I admit it is difficult," said Arthur Augustus. "The pwoblem of the unemployed is a wathah sewious mattah. And a chap is handicapped by belongin' to a Public school. But I am not goin' to give in."

"Like me to make a suggestion about a berth?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yaas deah boy, if you can think of a situation that will suit me."

"Try Colney Hatch," Lowther suggested. "They might take you on, you know, as being in full sympathy with the inmates—being the same sort of chap—"

"If you must make wotten jokes, Lowthah—"

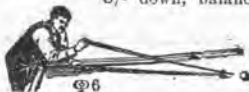
"But I'm not joking," said Lowther in surprise. "It's just the place for you. You'd find some sympathy and fellow-feeling among all the people there—"

Arthur Augustus stalked away.

(Continued on page 18.)

THE GAME EVERY BOY LIKES

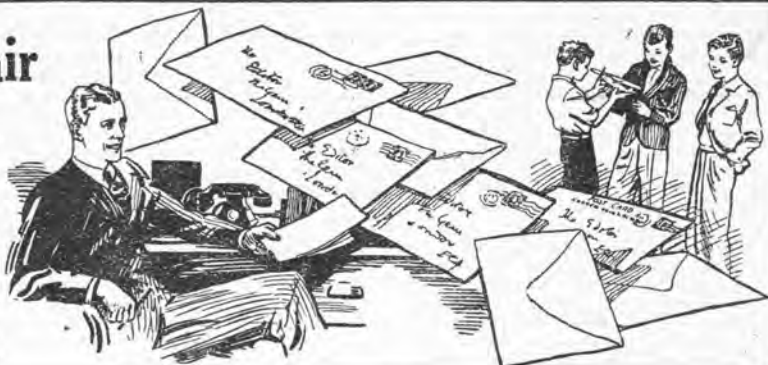
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Let the Editor be your pal—
Drop him a line to-day,
addressing your letters:
The Editor, The GEM,
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HALLO, chums! The GEM Jester mentioned to me this morning that readers have not been sending in so many jokes recently. He says he thinks it's because his face, which used to appear in our pages, has disappeared. But I replied that I thought that ought to encourage readers to send in jokes. However, if any of you know a good joke—one that our artist can illustrate—don't forget to send it along to the above address. Remember that half-a-crown is awarded to the sender of every joke published.

I am receiving many "Pen Pal" notices, but there are still some readers who think that their notices will appear in the GEM the following week. As I have said before, at the very earliest no notice can be published for at least five weeks, owing to the fact that the GEM goes to press that length of time in advance. But as there is a "waiting-list" at present, readers' notices have to take their turn, which involves a wait of more than five weeks.

"LOOKING AFTER LOWTHER!"

Our next great yarn of the St. Jim's chums bears this title, and it tells of a rift in the lute of the Terrible Three. Monty Lowther is to blame, for he allows Cutts & Co., the black sheep of St. Jim's, to inveigle him into a shady scheme for winning money. Tom Merry and Manners try to reason with their chum, but it only serves to rouse all the obstinacy in his nature. That Lowther is risking expulsion is clear to Tom and Manners, if not to Lowther, and they determine to save him from his weakness and folly. Needless to say, looking

after Lowther leads to a lot of excitement and adventure—and ultimately trouble!

You'll enjoy every word of this grand yarn. Next on the programme is:

"THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOLBOY!"

which deals with the further early adventures of the chums of Greyfriars.

Ernest Levison plays a leading part in this thrilling yarn, for it is he who is kidnapped. Foolishly ignoring a warning from Harry Wharton & Co. that two unscrupulous gypsies are lurking in Friardale Wood to rob unsuspecting passers-by, Levison takes the short cut through the wood to the village—and then disappears!

I should like to point out to readers that the Levison featured in this story, and who has been mentioned in one or two previous yarns, is the same character who is in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. Levison went to Greyfriars first, and was later expelled. He then entered St. Jim's, where he has been ever since.

FREE GIFTS!

Have you seen this week's "Magnet"? If not, you don't know what you are missing. In addition to a grand cover-to-cover Greyfriars yarn, called "Billy Bunter's House-Warming!", it contains news of some grand free gifts which are on the way. Get the "Magnet" to-day, and find out all about them.

REPLIES TO READERS.

Mervyn Ohlmus, of Gampaha.—Sorry, the numbers of the GEM you want are out of print.

H. Brown, of Warwick.—E. S. Brooks' "Blue Crusader" yarns have all been published in the "Boys' Friend 4d. Library." But no back numbers of them, or of the "Nelson Lee," or "Monster Library," are now obtainable. If you send a letter to Mr. Brooks, for your other suggestions. I will bear them in mind.

E. Wiblin, of Port Elizabeth, South Africa.—The five best boxers in the Shell Form at St. Jim's are the Terrible Three, Harry Noble, and Clifton Dane.

M. Kearney, Co. Armagh, Ireland.—It is not necessary to write to me if you wish to get in touch with a pen pal whose notice has appeared in the GEM. Write to him direct.

M. Marcus, Natal, South Africa.—Thanks for your letter. Yes, send me your suggestion. The "Pen Pal" notice will appear in due course.

H. Thorpe, Rochdale.—The GEM was first published on March 23rd, 1907.

P. Sagratt, Dovercourt.—Send along your jokes to the above address. There are plenty of half-crowns waiting to be won.

Frank Craven, Bolton.—Next Wednesday's story is just what you ask for!

M. Brand, Kenora, Canada.—The GEM is older than the "Magnet" by nearly a year. Glad you liked "The Toff" series. Talbot will be coming back again in due course.

"Ulster Reader."—The "Jack, Sam, and Pete" stories have appeared in the "Boys' Friend 4d. Library," but they are now all out of print.

That's all for this week, chums. Cheerio!

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.

Rover Scout Joseph E. Vaz, 1, Dundas Court, Penang, Straits Settlements, Malaya; Scouts. Miss Elsie McGuire, 184, Heathway, Dagenham, Essex; girl correspondents, age 14-15; British Isles.

Leslie Robinson, 7, Cliffe End, Holmfirth, near Huddersfield, Yorkshire; age 14-16; music, swimming, sports.

Minoo S. Eilimoria, Pathar Kuva, Salapose Road, Ahmedabad, India; age 16-19; films, physical culture; England, U.S.A., France.

Miss Audrey Devereux, Station House, Battlesbridge, Essex; girl correspondents; age 17-19; sports, swimming, stamps, etc.; Canada, Australia, New Zealand, America.

James Hidditch, 36, Baker Street, Kensington, Liverpool 6, Lancs; age 14-15;

French boy correspondent, South of France; general.

C. D. Hicks, 32, Queen Street, Devonport, Devon; age 19; pen pals; New Zealand, Australia, U.S.A., Canada.

Frank Bindeman, 80, Crown Road, Fordsburg, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa; pen pals; age 13-15; Japan, China, England.

Ernest Hills, 2, Sidney Crescent, Ashford Lodge, Ashford, Middlesex; boy members for correspondence club.

Max Skinner, McHenry Street, Murray Bridge, South Australia, Australia; stamps, cricket, tennis; South Africa, Rhodesia, East Indies, India, Japan.

Miss Rita Partridge, 82, Wrotham Road, Welling, Kent; girl correspondents; age 17-20; any country.

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PEN PALS COUPON
23-1-37

"I wonder what the next job will be like?" grinned Blake. "Poor old Gussy! I know he will be the death of me some day!"

After dinner Arthur Augustus was missing. His chums guessed that he had gone to look for further employment. He had been seen conning over the advertisement columns in the "Rylcombe Gazette." They awaited the result with interest. Arthur Augustus came in just in time for afternoon school.

He was a little breathless, but he was looking quite elated. Tom Merry met him in the Form-room passage and noted his uplifted looks.

"Got it?" he asked cheerfully.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"New job?" chuckled Kangaroo.

"Yaas—and wathah an impovement this time."

"Good egg! What are you going to do? Is it company promoting? Or pushing a truck?" asked the Cornstalk humorously.

"I have been taken on by Mr. Mopps."

"Mopps!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "The barber!"

"The hairdressah, deah boy," corrected Arthur Augustus.

"Tonsorial artist!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what on earth are you going to do for Mr. Mopps?" asked Tom Merry in amazement. "I suppose he won't trust you to shave his customers? There will be some casualties if you do."

"Why not?" asked Lowther. "D'Arcy is an enterprising young shaver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wefuse to be chawctawised as a young shavah, Lowthah."

"But that's what you're going to be if you shave Mr. Mopps' customers," grinned Lowther. "Or perhaps carver would be a better term—or butcher!"

"I think pwobably Mr. Mopps will not give me shavin' to do at first, until I've had some pwactice," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't know whom I shall pwactise on; but if any of you fellows would like your hair cut fwee, gwatis, and for nothin'—"

"No, thanks!" said all the fellows promptly.

"I would cut your hair for nothin', you know," said Arthur Augustus, "as I should be gettin' the pwactice."

"And we should be getting the scissors!" grinned Lowther. "I've got only two ears and I want to keep 'em."

"Well, as a mattah of fact, you could spare a little off each without missin' it," said Arthur Augustus, eyeing Lowther.

Monty Lowther turned red with wrath. He did not like little jokes about himself—like so many humorists. "You let my ears alone, you ass!" he said warmly.

"I am goin' for a half-day on twial," said Arthur Augustus, unheeding Lowther. "That will be to-morrow—Saturday aftahnoon—as it's a half-holiday. If I give satisfaction, Mr. Mopps is goin' to take me on wegularly, and I shall wequest my patah to make it all wight with the Head."

"Yes, I can see him doing it!" grinned Blake.

"That's all wight. My patah says he'll be surprised and pleased if I can succeed in earnin' any money. I am goin' to surprise and please him. To-morrow aftahnoon I shall be workin' for Mr. Mopps and mindin' the shop and lathewin' the customahs weady to be shaved. I shall have to learn to

handle a wazah. I believe a wazah is a wathah dangewous instwument in an inexperienced hand."

"Yes, I believe it is!" roared Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha! I pity the poor chap who gets under your razor while you're learning!"

"Sweeney Todd the Second!" chuckled Lowther.

"The Demon Barber of Rylcombe!" howled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it will turn out all wight. I have explained to Mr. Mopps that if I get the job I shall be able to come permanently. I weally twust I shall give satisfaction to-morrow aftahnoon. I shan't be able to play footah, Tom Mewwy. You must put anoathah chap in the team in my place."

"I've done that already, my son," said Tom Merry coolly.

Arthur Augustus looked a little nettled.

"Oh, have you weally?" he exclaimed. "I don't know that I quite approve of your bein' in such a huwvy as all that."

"Then I shall have to manage to worry along somehow without your approval," said Tom Merry with great fortitude. "I'm not playing a chap who can't be depended on. You won't play for the School House again till you've given up looking for jobs."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I considah that—"

But the bell for classes cut short Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's considerations. The juniors went chuckling into the Form-rooms. Of all Arthur Augustus' nobby ideas, the idea of being a barber's boy was certainly the nobbiest. Arthur Augustus, however, failed to see anything funny in it. He was purring with satisfaction at having secured the job, and having thus escaped once more from the ranks of the unemployed.

CHAPTER 14.

A Crop for Toby!

"I TWUST you fellows are goin' to help me a bit"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that statement in Study No. 6—where Blake, Herries, and Digby had sat down to tea. The swell of St. Jim's had just come into the study, and a large pair of scissors gleamed in his hands.

The chums of the Fourth stared at the scissors.

"What's the game now?" demanded Blake.

"As I am goin' to work for Mr. Mopps to-morrow, I feel that I ought to have a little pwactice. I should be obliged if you would let me cut your hair. Of course, I shan't charge you."

"I shall jolly well charge you, if you bring those scissors near me," said Blake, with emphasis, "and the Charge of the Light Brigade will be a joke to it!"

"Will you have your hair cut, Hewwies?"

"No, I won't!" said Herries, who was famous for directness of speech.

"Ahem! Dig, old man, would you like your hair twimmed?"

"No," said Dig. "I wouldn't!"

"Blake, deah boy, pway let me twim your hair. It's wathah untidy, you know—there's a tuft at the back like a wat's tail. I'll have it off in a jiffy!"

"You come within hitting distance, that's all!" said Jack Blake sulphurously.

"Weally, I think a fellow might expect to be backed up in his own study. Howevah, I will look elsewhere."

And Arthur Augustus walked out of the study with a great deal of dignity.

"Tea's ready, you ass!" bawled Blake.

"I have no time for tea now, deah boy. I am bound to get some pwactice as a hairdressah before to-morrow."

D'Arcy tapped at the door of the next study, and looked in. Reilly, Kerruish, and Ray were having tea there.

"You fellows like your hair cut?" asked Arthur Augustus politely. "I'll do it for nothin'. Your hair needs cuttin', Weilly. It looks vewy waggid."

"Are you looking for a thick ear?" asked Reilly.

"Certainly not."

"Well, you'll find one if you don't hop out of this study sharply!"

Arthur Augustus sniffed and left the study. His next call was paid upon the Terrible Three, in the Shell passage.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther heard his offer of a free hair cut with smiles.

"I've bowwowed these scissahs fwom Mrs. Mimms," said Arthur Augustus. "They are vewy sharp, and I'll have your hair cut off in a jiffy, you know." "To say nothing of our scalps!" grinned Manners.

"I should be vewy careful, of course. Accidents will happen when a barbah is inexperienced, but I would weally do my best not to hurt you."

"Not good enough. Try next door."

"I weally think you might help me out—"

"Why, so we will!" said Tom Merry heartily. And the Terrible Three, with one accord, grasped Arthur Augustus and helped him out—into the passage.

"You uttah asses!" shouted D'Arcy. "I did not mean that way—"

"But we do!" grinned Tom Merry.

And the door slammed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was sitting on the linoleum and gasping like a newly landed fish.

Toby, the page, came along the passage, and he kindly paused to give Arthur Augustus a hand up.

The swell of St. Jim's panted as he gained his feet.

"Bai Jove! I'd wush in and give them a feahful thwashin' all wound, but I'm pwessed for time!" he ejaculated.

"Thank you vewy much, Toby!" His eyes turned with quite a professional look upon Toby's shock head. "I say, Toby, deah boy, how often do you have your hair cut?"

"Once a month, Master D'Arcy."

"I suppose you pay for it—what?"

"Well, I don't get it cut for nothin', sir," said Toby, surprised at the question. "Mr. Mopps does it for me for sixpence."

"Would you like to have it done for nothin'?"

"Hum!" said Toby, puzzled. "I—"

"The fact is, I'm takin' on a job in Mr. Mopps' hairdressin' establishment," Arthur Augustus explained. "I want some pwactice. I should be vewy pleased to cut your hair for nothin', Toby."

"Th-thank you, Master D'Arcy," stammered Toby. "I ain't takin' any—I mean, my 'air don't need cuttin' jest yet."

"It is wathah long, and comes down ovah your eahs," said Arthur Augustus, scanning him. "You had weally bettah have it cut, Toby."

"Thank you, Master D'Arcy, but—I think Mrs. Mimms is callin' me."

"I did not heah her, Toby. Now, look here, I should weally like to cut your hair. You have a vewy wound, thick head, and there is plenty of woom for pwactice on it. And your hair

weally does need cuttin'. Look here, Toby, I'll stand you a shillin' if you let me cut your hair, as well as doin' it for cothin'."

Toby hesitated. A shilling was a shilling; but Toby had some doubts about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's powers as a hairdresser.

"Come into my study aftah tea," said D'Arcy encouragingly. "I'll have some towels and things all weady, and I'll polish you off like anything."

"Very well, Master D'Arcy," said Toby, still very doubtfully.

"That's awwanged, then. I shall wely on you, Toby."

Arthur Augustus returned to Study No. 6 and sat down to tea. The elated smile on his face drew his chums' attention at once.

"Found a victim?" asked Blake.

"I have found a customah, if that is what you mean," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "Toby is goin' to have his hair cut here. As soon as you fellows have done tea, I shall be glad if you will cleah out, as I shall wequiah this study for my saloon."

"Your—your what?"

"My hairdressin' saloon!" said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"So pway buck up with tea."

"Well, you can use this study as your giddy saloon," chuckled Blake. "But we're not going to clear out. We're going to stay and see the fun. Besides, we shall be wanted to staunch the blood when you take Toby's ear off. Lucky we've learned first aid as Boy Scouts. It will come in useful now."

Digby and Herries chuckled; but Arthur Augustus disclaimed to make any reply to such a frivolous remark.

Tea over, the table was pushed back into a corner, and Arthur Augustus prepared to turn the study into a hairdressing saloon. The armchair was pulled out to the middle of the room, and Arthur Augustus ascended to the dormitory for a supply of towels. All was ready when Toby put a rather nervous and uneasy face into the study.

"Come in, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm weady."

"Here comes the giddy lamb to the slaughter," remarked Blake. "Which ear are you going to have off, Toby?"

Toby looked alarmed.

"Pway shut up, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus, with asperity. "If you must loaf aound in my saloon, I must wequest you not to talk silly wot to my customahs. Pway take a seat, sir!"

Toby jumped. He had never been called "sir" before. But Arthur Augustus was only trying to get into the mode of address suitable for Mr. Mopps' establishment.

Blake slipped out of the study, and returned with Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. He had generously resolved that the Terrible Three should not miss a good thing like this.

Arthur Augustus frowned as they came in.

"Do you wequiah my pwofessional services?" he demanded.

"Ahem! Not exactly!" murmured Tom Merry.

"As Shakespeare remarks," said Monty Lowther blandly, "we are simply lookers-on in Vienna!"

"If you are goin' to wemain here you must be quiet. Pewwaps when you see what a wippin' job I make of Toby, you would like me to cut your hair."

"Perhaps!" said Tom Merry. "A large-sizee perhaps—but perhaps!"

"Haircut or shave, sir?" asked D'Arcy, turning his attention to Toby,

who was now in the study armchair, with a towel tucked round his neck.

Toby stared.

"I ain't got nothin' to be shaved, 'ave I?" he asked.

"Merely a pwofessional question, my deah sir," explained Arthur Augustus. "Will you have a shampoo aftahwards?"

"My eye! Can you shampoo 'ere?" asked Toby.

"Of course I can't!" said Arthur Augustus irritably. "You have to ask those questions in a barbah's—I mean a hairdressah's—shop. I am merely pwactisin'. Now, a little more to the wight, please. How do you like it done?"

"Oh, fairly short, please!" said Toby doubtfully.

"Yaas, sir! Partin' same as it is now, I pwesume? Now, please keep your head still in that posish. That's wight!"

And Arthur Augustus clicked the scissors and started. As he had never cut hair before, certainly his hand was inexperienced. But he was liberal with the scissors. With a very few clips he gashed nearly all the hair off one side of Toby's head. Fortunately—or unfortunately—Toby could not see how it was going on. His hair was somewhat thick, but D'Arcy was thinning it marvellously. It fell round Toby's shoulders in showers.

"Wippin' weathah we've had lately, sir!" said D'Arcy, in the professional manner of a hairdresser.

"Ave we?" said Toby. "Seems to me we've 'ad a lot of rain."

"Vewy good for the cwops, sir."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Toby.

"Well, there's one crop that's being ruined," remarked Monty Lowther.

"Indeed! What is that, my deah sir?" asked Arthur Augustus.

Lowther pointed to the page's head.

"Toby's crop!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus frowned at the juniors.

"I must insist upon silence in my saloon!" he exclaimed. "Now, will you turn your head a little to the left, sir? That's wight. I shall polish you off in no time, sir."

"Good old Sweeney Todd!" murmured Lowther.

Click, click, click! went the sharp scissors.

Toby's hair fell round his shoulders in showers. It remained thick in a few places, but to compensate for that, in other spots he was quite bald.

"Short enough, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus, holding a hand-mirror before his victim's face in the professional manner.

Toby looked into the glass. As he saw the reflection of his head a look of horror came over his face. His hair was nearly all gone, only a peculiar-looking crop of tufts being left to show that his skull was not a billiards ball of unusual size.

"Oh lummy!" said Toby faintly. "Is—is that my 'ead?"

"Vewy good cut, sir. Don't you think so?" said Arthur Augustus, with some pride.

"Oh, you—you villain!" howled Toby.

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"What—what—what's the mattah?"

Toby jumped out of the chair and tore off the towel, and fairly danced with rage.



"The 'Daily Telegraph,' if you please," said Arthur Augustus, raising his hat politely. The maid stared at him. "Why didn't you put it in the letter-box without ringing the bell?" she demanded. "Bai Jove!" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"I'm sorry!"

"Look wot you've made me look like!" he roared. "Wot will the 'Ouse dame say? Wot will anybody say who sees me? I daren't answer the bell till my 'air grows again. Oh, you—you silly idjit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle, you fellows! There is nothin' whatevah funny in Toby's wude wemarks. Toby, deah boy—"

"You—you howlin' maniac!" shrieked Toby, and for a moment it looked as if the page would hurl himself upon the amateur hairdresser. "Oh, you—you—I shall 'ave to wear a wig!"

Toby rushed from the study. Arthur Augustus stood with the scissors in his hand, in some dismay. He regarded the shrieking juniors sedately.

"Toby doesn't seem to be quite satisfied!" he observed.

"Go hon!" gasped Blake. "Oh, you—you—you prizepacket! You burbling ass!"

"If any of you fellows would care for a fwee haircut—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They staggered hysterically out of the study; Arthur Augustus was left alone in the saloon, in the midst of Toby's lost hair.

Downstairs, the almost bald-headed page was the centre of great hilarity in the kitchen, and, like Rachel, he mourned for that which he had lost, and would not be comforted.

CHAPTER 15.

The Barber's Boy!

ON Saturday afternoon, while the other fellows were preparing for a football match, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was thinking of much more important things.

He was due at Mr. Mopps' hairdressing establishment at half-past two. And it was with a feeling of importance and elation that he walked down the road to Rylcombe, leaving Tom Merry & Co. to trifle with football. Saturday afternoon was a busy time with Mr. Mopps, and he required an assistant, which was doubtless the reason why he was giving Arthur Augustus a trial. And Arthur Augustus certainly was an acquisition in any hairdressing establishment. His elegant attire and elegant manners were suited for that profession.

Mr. Mopps was shaving a customer when the swell of St. Jim's presented himself. He gave D'Arcy a kindly nod. Mr. Mopps was a very jovial and good-tempered little man.

Arthur Augustus deposited his silk hat in the inner room, and prepared for business.

Another customer in search of a shave having taken his place in the operating-chair, so to speak, Mr. Mopps signed to D'Arcy to watch how he lathered the customer, so that he could perform the same operation on the next customer. Arthur Augustus watched him with keen attention. It seemed to him quite easy and simple. He was anxious to get to work with a razor, but Mr. Mopps wisely did not intend to let him do anything of the sort.

The lathering finished, Mr. Mopps began to shave his man. Another man came in, and Mr. Mopps requested him to take a seat in the second chair.

"Lather!" he said.

"Yaas, sir!" said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. He was anxious to get to work.

He took the brush and loaded it with lather, and started on the customer's

chin. The customer was a market carter, with a big blue chin that had not been shaved for three days, at least.

Arthur Augustus lathered away manfully, and there was a sudden snort from the customer.

"Anythin' the mattah, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Keep that brush outer me nose, you silly young idiot!" said the customer, in sulphurous tones.

"Sowwy, sir! Shan't occur again, sir!"

"Yaroooh!" roared the carter, a minute later, as D'Arcy jabbed the lathering-brush into his eye. "Oh, ow! You careless young fool! Yah!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Mr. Mopps looked round sharply.

The carter had jumped up, and was gouging the soap out of one eye with his knuckles, and with the other he was glaring murderously at the dismayed barber's boy.

"Bai Jove! I'm weally vewy sowwy!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I weally think you must have moved your head, my good man—I mean, sir!"

"Put that brush down, boy!" rapped Mr. Mopps.

"But I haven't finished lathewin' the gentleman, sir!"

"If you come near me agin," said the carter menacingly, "I'll wallop yer!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Put that brush down! One minute, sir, and I'll attend to you."

And Mr. Mopps, having polished off the man under his hands, turned his attention to the carter, and polished him off, and the carter departed, bestowing a glare upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he went.

"You must be more careful, my boy," said Mr. Mopps, good-temperedly.

"Yaas, sir, I will weally. I suppose it wequiah practice."

"Ye-es. Be more careful next time."

Two or three more customers came in. Arthur Augustus started lathering again, and this time, with great care, he avoided jabbing the brush into eyes, mouth, or nose. He felt that he was getting on famously. There was quite a rush of custom for an hour or two, and Arthur Augustus felt that he was becoming more expert. Mr. Mopps gave him a nod of approval.

"Now," said Mr. Mopps, at last, when the customers were all gone, and there was no sign of a fresh one, "I'm going out for a little while. I shall leave you in charge of the shop, my lad."

"Yaas, sir!"

"You can attend to all the customers that come in. You know the price of things; they are all marked. If I am wanted you can run across the street and call me. I shall be at the Red Cow. I—I have to speak to the landlord on business."

"Yaas, sir. Wely on me!"

"But don't come bothering me unless I am absolutely wanted," said Mr. Mopps.

Evidently his labours during the afternoon had made the hairdresser thirsty, and he did not want to be interrupted in his business at the Red Cow.

"Vewy well, sir."

And Mr. Mopps, after bestowing a few more instructions upon Arthur Augustus, quitted the little shop, dodged across the village street, and disappeared into the Red Cow.

Arthur Augustus remained with a very thoughtful expression upon his face. He felt a sense of proud responsibility. He was in charge of the shop—

in sole charge of Mr. Mopps' hairdressing saloon—and he could not help feeling a little elated. He tried to remember every word of his employer's instructions.

"If a customah wants anythin' I'm to sell him a deawah article if I can," murmured Arthur Augustus. "That doesn't seem to me quite playin' the game, but I suppose it's one of the wules of the bisney, and I mustn't set up to judge my employer's methods, I suppose. I suppose it's bettah for a chap to have a bettah article, and, of course, it must be bettah if it's deawah. There wouldn't be any weason for chargin' more for a thing unless it was bettah, of course. And if there isn't anythin' a customer wants, I'm to twy to sell him somethin' else. And if a man wants a shave I'm to tell him Mr. Mopps will be back shortly. I think that's about all."

Full of pride in his new employment, Arthur Augustus set about making the shop look extremely neat and tidy. He was busily engaged when a customer came in—a lad with sixpence in his hand.

"Pway what can I do for you, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus politely.

"Sixpenny shavin'-stick fur farver!" said the customer.

"Vewy good. We have some sixpenny shavin'-sticks, certainly; but we have some fah bettah ones at a shillin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps your patah would pwefere to twy one of those, deah boy!"

"Only got sixpence," said the customer.

"Oh, that is wathah unfortunate. Of course, we can supply a sixpenny shavin'-stick if you weally pwefere it; but I should wecommend the shillin' one. Pewwaps you wouldn't mind wunnin' home and askin' your fathah whethah he would like to twy it?"

"Are you goin' to gimme that sixpenny shavin'-stick, or ain't you?" demanded the customer, showing signs of impatience.

"Oh, certainly, if you put it like that, sir!"

And the sixpenny shaving-stick was handed over, and the customer departed.

Arthur Augustus dropped the sixpence with much pride into the till. It was the first cash he had taken for his employer. He wished it had been a shilling; but, after all, it was cash—real cash takings.

The next customer was a lady of uncertain age, with a red face, and an incipient moustache upon her upper lip. Arthur Augustus bowed to her most politely.

"Pway what can I do for you, ma'am?"

"Do you keep Snook's soap?" inquired the lady.

"I am sowwy we do not, madam. But we have Blookah's soap, which is weally vewy much bettah—vewy much bettah indeed."

"Ow much?" asked the lady.

"Sixpence a tablet, ma'am."

The lady sniffed.

"I want it at fourpence a bar," she replied.

"Ahem! I am afwaid we cannot do it at that price. But I assuah you that Blookah's soap is much better than Snook's. You see, it is more expensive, and, therefore, it is bound to be bettah. I should wecommend you to try Blookah's."

"Well, I ain't goin' to," said the lady.

"I am weally sowwy. Pewwaps there is somethin' else you need!" said

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy eagerly. "I can recommend our wazahs!"

"Wot?" ejaculated the lady.

She was about to leave the shop, but she turned back now and glared at Arthur Augustus as if she would bite him.

"Our wazahs, ma'am," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "We have a splendid wazah at five shillings and a safety-wazah at seven-and-sixpence that I can recommend."

"You impudent young villain!"

"Weally, ma'am, our wazahs—"

Smack!

The lady's broad red hand descended upon Arthur Augustus' ear, and he staggered back and sat down violently in the operating-chair. The lady flounced out of the shop and slammed the door.

Arthur Augustus put his hand to his ear and rubbed it dazedly.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured. "What an exceedingly ill-tempered person! Why should she be angry at my recommending her to buy a wazah for her husband, if she has one? It is weally most surprisin'!"

It did not occur to Arthur Augustus that the lady had supposed him to be making an impertinent allusion to the hirsute adornment on her upper lip. But certainly his recommendation of a razor to a moustached lady was rather unfortunate!

CHAPTER 16.

A Close Shave!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS had a rest for some time. Custom for the day appeared to be over.

Mr. Mopps did not return from the Red Cow. Apparently his business there was being prolonged.

Arthur Augustus busied himself about the shop and practised stropping one of Mr. Mopps' razors. He had several narrow escapes of amputating his fingers, but fortunately escaped with a few small cuts. He had quite got into the way of stropping the razor by the time a customer came in again.

Arthur Augustus welcomed him with a beaming smile. The customer was a fat man with a stubby chin, and looked like a farmer.

"Pway be scated, my deah sir. Shave or haircut, sir?"

"Shave!" said the fat gentleman.

"Yaas, sir. Mr. Mopps is out for the moment, but he will return shortly."

The fat gentleman sat down.

"Like to see the papah, sir?" said Arthur Augustus politely.

"Ain't got much time to spare," said the fat gentleman. "Why ain't the barber 'ere, attendin' to 'is business, hey?"

"He will be back vewy shortly, sir. Pewwaps you would care to see some of these splendid wazahs, sir—five shillings—"

"I wouldn't."

"You might care for our special scented soap at sixpence—"

"Nonsense!"

The customer was restive. When five minutes had passed he rose to his feet.

Arthur Augustus felt himself to be in a difficulty. He did not want Mr. Mopps to lose a customer, but, on the other hand, was the occasion important enough for Mr. Mopps to be called from his pressing business at the Red Cow? Mr. Mopps had impressed upon him that he was not to call him unless it was really important; in fact, unavoidable.

"Pway take a chair, sir," said

SHAKY!

T-t-try
P-p-Potts
P-p-potted
M-m-meats



The skywriter who stuttered!
Half-a-crown has been awarded to K. Kingnorth, 33, Tugela Road, West Croydon, Surrey.

Arthur Augustus at last. "Unless you specially want Mr. Mopps' personal attention, sir, I can shave you."

"I don't care who shaves me, so long as it's done!" said the fat gentleman. "I can't wait here all day and all the evenin'!"

The fat gentleman sat down in the operating-chair, and Arthur Augustus tucked a towel about his neck. Then he began to lather.

He had learned by this time to lather without jabbing the brush into his victim's eyes. He laid on plenty of lather. The fat gentleman's fat face almost disappeared under it. He was lathered up to his eyes.

Then Arthur Augustus stropped the razor.

He was feeling, as a matter of fact, a little nervous. And the fat gentleman would certainly have felt more than a little nervous if he had known that the youthful barber had never handled a razor before.

Fortunately for his peace of mind he did not know it.

"Don't be all night," said the fat gentleman.

"Yaas, sir. A little more to the left, please. That's wight. We are famous for our easy shavin', sir."

And Arthur Augustus began to scrape. He was very, very careful.

It was probably owing to his extreme carefulness that he did not take the fat gentleman's ear off.

As it was, he simply made a cut along the fat cheek, and the white lather was immediately suffused with red.

The fat gentleman jumped and gave a howl.

"You young idiot! You've cut me!"

"Merely a scwotch, sir, I assuah you. Pway keep still. It's all wight; I think you moved your head a twifle. Pway keep still."

The gentleman glared at him over the lather. He had to keep still, because D'Arcy had the razor on his chin, and he was in danger of being decapitated if he struggled. But his eyes spoke volumes.

"Pway keep your chin still. Bai Jove! I'm extwemely sowwy—"

The unfortunate razor had slipped again.

The fat gentleman gave a roar like a wounded buffalo, and Arthur Augustus

started back. The fat gentleman bounded out of his chair.

It was quite a deep cut on his chin this time, and the claret was flowing and mingling with the lather.

The fat gentleman looked at his reflection in the glass, and his face was convulsed with fury.

"You—you—look at my chin!"

"Yaas; it is wathah unfortunate, sir, I admit. But if you will allow me to finish, I hope to make a weally good job of it. I shall pwobably not cut you more than once or twice again, and—"

"I'll give you cut me!" roared the fat gentleman.

He made a rush at Arthur Augustus.

Crash!

They bumped into a chair and sent it flying. Then they staggered against a shelf, and a crowd of bottles came to the floor with a terrific crash. They trampled in the ruins, Arthur Augustus struggling to escape, and the damaged customer bent upon thrashing him within an inch of his life.

The din was terrific. In the midst of the wild confusion the shop door opened, and Mr. Mopps came in.

The hairdresser halted in amazement and horror at the sight of what was going on in his saloon.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "What—what—has there been an accident? What—what—"

"Yawwoh! Help!" yelled D'Arcy.

"My dear sir—"

"Help! Wescue!"

"What has happened, what—"

"Look at my chin!" howled the customer. "That young scoundrel has been tryin' to murder me! I'll smash him—I'll—"

"Yawwooooh! Wescue! Oh cwumbs! Dwagimoff!"

Arthur Augustus tore himself loose at last, and bolted to the end of the shop, panting. The fat gentleman leaned on a table, gasping for breath. Mr. Mopps gazed at him in horror, and then turned a furious look on D'Arcy.

"Have you been trying to shave this gentleman?" he asked.

"Yaas, sir. I—"

"You—you young rascal, you cannot shave, you—"

"I was twyin' to learn, sir!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I suppose ewvery beginnah has to learn, hasn't he? I did not cut him on purpose. Of course, accidents will happen to beginnahs."

"Get out of my shop!" roared Mr. Mopps. "You're sacked!"

"What! Weally, sir—"

"Lemme get at him!" shrieked the damaged fat gentleman, making another rush.

Arthur Augustus dodged him and ran to the doorway.

"You wottah! Mr. Mopps, I am surprised at you. It is your duty to back up an employee against an unweasonable customah. I wefuse to remain in your service. I decline to have anythin' more to do with you. I considah—"

The fat gentleman was coming for him again, and Arthur Augustus, on second thoughts, did not stay to state what he considered. He fled.

Tom Merry & Co. gave a shout as a wild and hatless figure dashed into the gateway of St. Jim's.

"Shut the gates, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "There's a man affah me, a weguhah howlin' lunatic; he

(Continued on page 28.)

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THERE ARE MORE BUMPS THAN APPLAUSE IN THE GYMNASTIC DISPLAY OF THE REMOVE FORM!

THE GREYFRIARS GYMNASTS!

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

Challenged to a gymnastic contest by a team of French schoolboys, Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars are unable to do any training in the school gym, as it is closed for repairs. So they try to get some practice in the Form-room; but Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, comes on the scene and puts a stop to it.

The chums of the Remove return to their study, to find that Billy Bunter has prepared a grand tea for them. As all of them are stony broke, they are curious to know where Bunter obtained the money to buy the food; but he refuses to tell.

Later, Wharton is suspected of playing an ill-natured jape on Herr Rosenblum, but he convinces the German master of his innocence. Returning to his study, Wharton meets Bulstrode. The Remove bully is grinning, and it occurs to Wharton that he may be the culprit, so he questions him.

(Now read on.)

Bunter's Gymnastics!

BULSTRODE was so taken aback for a moment that he could only stare at the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton's eyes were blazing, and his fists were clenched. It needed very little to make him attack the bully of the Remove there and then.

But Bulstrode quickly recovered himself.

"Who says I tied a cord in the German rotter's room?" he asked indignantly.

"Nobody. I asked you if you did."

"What business is it of yours?"

"This—that I've been suspected of it!"

Bulstrode laughed mockingly.

"If you play such tricks on a master, you must expect to get licked," he said.

"I can't say I'm sorry for you."

"But I did not play the trick, and I have not been licked," said Harry Wharton quietly.

Bulstrode stared at him blankly.

"I thought you had just come from Herr Rosenblum's room."

"Yes; and you thought I had been licked, too," said Harry. "But Herr Rosenblum believed my assertion that I was not guilty, and he is still looking for the fellow who did it."

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Hope he will find him," he remarked.

"I believe it was you yourself," said Harry Wharton abruptly.

"Can you prove that?"

"Oh, I should not think of giving you away to the German master," said Harry contemptuously. "You knew that I had been to the room, and you did this to get me into a row, I believe. If I were sure, I should take the matter into my own hands. If I discover that it is the truth, for certain, you can look out for yourself."

And Harry Wharton strode on, leaving Bulstrode standing in the passage, and scowling after him savagely.

"Licked?" was Bob Cherry's first question, as Harry Wharton entered Study No. 1.

Wharton shook his head, with a smile.

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By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

"No. The herr believed my explanation."

"Good!" exclaimed Bob Cherry heartily. "But I wonder who it was played that little jape on him?"

"I think it was Bulstrode."

"Bulstrode? I shouldn't be surprised. But how do you know?"

Wharton explained. Bob Cherry nodded emphatically.

"Bulstrode right enough!" he exclaimed. "But you can't very well wipe up the floor with him without some kind of proof."

"No, I suppose not."

"But if you should know certainly, then the wifefulness should be terrific," observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The door of the study was opened at that moment, and Nugent looked in. He was grinning gleefully.

Having licked a team of French schoolboys at cricket, the Greyfriars Remove think they can do the same to them in a gymnastic contest. But the Remove gymnasts come a cropper—in more ways than one!

"I say, you chaps," he exclaimed, "come along!"

"What's on?"

"Billy Bunter is—but he'll be off pretty soon, I expect, so come on!"

And Nugent ran down the passage. Somewhat mystified, the chums of the Remove followed him into the Common-room. The room was crowded with grinning fellows, and the centre of attraction was Billy Bunter.

Bunter was on the table. He had a chair there, and it was evident that he was trying to balance himself on his hands on the chair, with his feet elevated above. The fellows had crowded round to watch. They knew Billy Bunter's physical culture of old, and they expected disaster.

Bunter glanced round as the chums of the Remove came in. He adjusted his spectacles and blinked at Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's the little game, Bunter?"

"I am giving a small gymnastic display for the benefit of the fellows," explained Billy Bunter. "There will be a lot of balancing and so on tomorrow, at the contest in Friardale Hall, and I thought I'd show you how this should be done."

"Bravo!"

"I am going to balance myself on my

hands on this chair, with my feet in the air," explained Bunter.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"The chief difficulty is that whenever I turn my head upside-down, my spectacles slip over my forehead," said Bunter.

"Why don't you take your goggles off?" asked Skinner.

"Really, Skinner, I couldn't see if I took them off."

"You don't want to see to stand on your head."

"I'm not going to stand on my head; I'm going to stand on my hands, and it's a difficult feat of balancing. However, I am just going to begin. You might watch me, Wharton, and you, too, Bob Cherry. You might pick up a wrinkle or two from me."

"Certainly," said Harry. "Go ahead."

Bunter laid his hands upon the seat of the chair and raised one leg from the table, then the other one followed it. He doubled up his knees, and supported himself for a moment on his hands, with his feet clear of the table. Then he plumped them down again.

"There you are!" he exclaimed, looking round.

"There who is?" asked Skinner.

"I mean, there's the performance."

"The what?"

"The balancing trick I was going to show you—"

"But you haven't shown us yet. You said you were going to begin, and you haven't."

"Yes, I have. That's it."

"What's it?" asked Bob Cherry, looking mystified.

"Weren't you watching me?" asked Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Yes; I was watching you, and I thought you were going to start, but you haven't started yet."

"Really, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"Bunter thinks he has done it. He's raised his tootsies about a couple of feet from the table and thinks—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Nugent, you exaggerate!"

"Well, yes, perhaps I do a little, Bunter—about eighteen inches from the table would be more correct," said Nugent innocently.

"I didn't mean that way!"

"I say, when is the performance going to begin?" demanded Hazeldene.

"Blessed if I'm going to wait here all night for Bunter to start!"

"Really, Vaseline—"

"Oh, I'm off!"

"Hold on," said Billy Bunter. "It is possible that when one is upside-down, with one's spectacles falling off, the true sense of vision is impaired."

"Go hon!" said Skinner. "Upon the whole, I should say it was possible."

"I will now give a second demonstration, and you will note that I shall raise myself in a perfectly perpendicular position with my feet in a direct line above my head."

"Go it, Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove placed his hands on the chair again. His fat little legs rose in the air, and stuck out almost at right angles to his body.

"Is that straight up?" he asked breathlessly.

A SPARKLING STORY OF SCHOOL FUN AND SPORT—STARRING YOUR OLD FRIENDS HARRY WHARTON & CO.



Micky Desmond, in the middle of the bottom row of the pyramid, paused in his efforts to scratch himself, and disaster swiftly followed for the Remove gymnasts. There was a swaying and tumbling and bumping, and the Removites sprawled all over the floor in various directions.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"'Nother yard!" howled Bob Cherry. "Your legs are sticking out like signs on a finger-post."

Billy Bunter made a great effort and got his legs about an inch straighter up. "How's that?"

"'Nother yard or two will do it."

Billy Bunter made another effort, and his legs went higher. But, unfortunately, he lost his balance in making the effort.

The chair reeled over, and Billy Bunter came down with a bump on the table, and rolled off it upon the floor before a hand could be raised to save him.

He sat up on the floor with a dazed and bewildered expression that made the Removites shriek with laughter.

"Wh-wh-what has happened?" he gasped.

"You have!" yelled Skinner. "You went over, you ass!"

"Did I? I feel a few pains in my arms and legs," said Bunter. "Where are my spectacles? They must have fallen off. Lend me a hand, Wharton," he added, as Nugent came towards him with outstretched hand to help him up.

"I'm not Wharton, ass!"

"Oh, is it you, Nugent? I'm rather short-sighted without my glasses."

Bob Cherry put the glasses on Billy Bunter's nose.

"There you are, Owl!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Thank you, Cherry! I have received a nasty shock, and I shall not give any more gymnastic displays this evening."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And, upon second thoughts, Wharton, you needn't count on me for the gymnastic contest to-morrow. It's really hardly worth my while."

"That's all right," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I wasn't counting on you, Bunter."

"I don't suppose any of the French

fellows will be up to my form," Bunter went on, unheeding. "We must be fair and give them a chance. Dear me, I feel quite giddy and I have two or three different pains. Yes, upon the whole, you had better not count on me for to-morrow, Wharton."

And Billy Bunter toddled away to look for some embrocation, followed by a yell of laughter from the Remove.

A Strange Disappearance!

"NOBODY here!"

It was Bob Cherry who spoke, as the chums of the Remove came through the trees on the bank of the Sark on Saturday afternoon.

School was over, and dinner, too, and the Greyfriars Remove had several hours before them—before the time came for meeting the French gymnasts in the village of Friardale.

Owing to the Greyfriars gym being closed for repairs, Harry Wharton & Co. intended borrowing a scaffold-pole from the new building. It was to be used as a horizontal bar, so that they could get in a little practice before the contest.

The new building was in a very early stage of erection, and scaffolding and ladders and ropes lay about in confusion. The chums of the Remove looked quickly about them as they came upon the scene. But there was no one in sight.

"Nobody," repeated Bob Cherry. "Easy enough to run off with one of the poles."

"Not so easy to get it into the study, though."

"Oh, easy enough!" said Bob airily. "We shan't try to carry it upstairs, of course. It wouldn't go into the House, for one thing."

"It would be easier to get it into the room windowfully," Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked.

"Exactly, my inky friend; that's the idea!"

"It won't all go into the study," said Nugent, glancing at the pole Bob Cherry was looking at.

"That's the beauty of it," said Bob. "A lot of it will remain outside the window-sill at an angle."

"Then it won't be a horizontal bar."

"I don't see why a slanting bar won't answer the purpose. Don't start hunting for difficulties, Nugent."

"What I say is—"

"Oh rats! Let's get on with the washing. The Head and the Quelch-bird are both away. Now's our chance!"

"Something in that," said Harry Wharton. "But I'm blessed if I can see what use the pole will be to us when we've got it into the study!"

"You didn't think so before—"

"Well, I was thinking of a short length we could fix up."

"Jolly row you'd get into if you started sawing up their scaffold-poles," said Bob Cherry.

"I didn't mean to saw one up. We might find a short piece."

"I can't see it, anyway. Besides, I don't see why my ideas shouldn't be carried out sometimes!" said Bob Cherry. "I always back you up!"

"Oh, if that's how you look at it, all right!" said Harry, laughing.

"We'd get the scaffold-pole to the study if it were a hundred feet long instead of twenty!"

"It isn't twenty—only about eighteen, I think."

"Let's get hold of it," said Nugent.

"I believe there's a watchman supposed to be about here somewhere, and if he found us walking off a scaffold-pole he might cut up rough."

"Come on, then!"

The juniors picked up the scaffold-pole. It did not take a minute to get it away from the building area into the

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shelter of the trees. Then Bob Cherry paused to consider.

"Can't take it in at the gates," he remarked thoughtfully. "But we can get it over the little gate into the Head's garden, and then rush it into the Close."

"That's about the best idea," said Harry Wharton.

"It is a wheezy good plan!" assented the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Then come on and don't grumble!"

"Who's grumbling?"

"Oh rats! Let's get a move on!"

They carried the pole to the little gate in the low wall of the Head's garden. It was easy to climb the gate and drag the pole over. Then they carried it up the garden path towards the gate that gave admittance to the school Close.

There was the crunch of a step on the path.

"My only hat!" gasped Nugent. "It's the Head!"

The top of the Head's hat bobbed over the rhododendrons. The juniors dropped the scaffold-pole and dodged into cover.

The stately figure of Dr. Locke appeared along the garden path a moment later.

"Quiet!" breathed Harry.

But the juniors hardly needed telling. They crouched behind the rhododendrons with bated breath. The Head's garden was forbidden ground to the juniors of Greyfriars. Juniors found within its precincts were certain of inquests, if not a caning.

"Dear me!"

The crouching juniors peered through the rhododendrons and saw that the Head had stopped in the path. He was adjusting his glasses and looking down at the scaffold-pole lying before him.

"Dear me! This is astounding! How could this pole have come here?"

Dr. Locke looked round him in amazement.

Save for himself, the garden appeared to be quite deserted, and all was silent and still.

The Head stared at the pole again.

"Is it possible that the workmen can have brought this pole here by mistake?" he murmured. "Or is it that some of the boys have placed it here for a joke? In the latter case, I shall certainly see to it that an exemplary punishment is administered."

The juniors heard the muttered words clearly. The Head was not six feet away from them as they crouched in cover.

It did not occur to the Head to look behind the thicket. He stared at the scaffold-pole for a full minute through his gold-rimmed glasses.

"Extraordinary!" he murmured. "I will speak to Mr. Quelch about this!"

The Head turned away and walked back to the House.

"You utter ass!" Nugent whispered fiercely to Bob Cherry. "You said that the Head and Quelch were both away!"

"I thought they were."

"And they were only in the garden."

"Get a move on!" muttered Harry.

"If Quelch comes here he'll look behind the thicket. Besides, he knows all about the gymnastic idea, and he'll guess what the scaffold-pole is for, and who brought it in."

"What are we to do?"

"Get the pole away before they come."

"Buck up, then!"

"We shall have to whisk it off buck-upfully," murmured the nabob. "Mr. Quelch is not far away, and the Head sahib will—"

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"Come on!"

The juniors darted into the path, picked up the scaffold-pole, and ran off with it towards the school wall. There was a sound of voices in the garden.

"Shove it over!" muttered Harry.

The pole was dropped over the wall. If the juniors had followed they would have risen into full view of the two masters. There was a little greenhouse close at hand, and Harry Wharton whipped into it, with his comrades at his heels.

The Head and Mr. Quelch had reached the spot where the scaffold-pole had lain, and in the quiet of the garden Dr. Locke's voice came to the ears of the juniors hidden in the greenhouse.

"It is here, Mr. Quelch—a most extraordinary thing. A scaffold-pole lying in the path. I can only imagine that it is a jest of some of the younger boys."

"A jest that calls for severe punishment, sir," said the Remove master. "But where is the pole you speak of, sir?"

"It is here," said the Head, looking round. "At all events, it was here a few minutes ago," he went on, looking puzzled. "Perhaps it was a little farther on."

They walked on almost to the end of the path, but there was no scaffold-pole to be seen, and no sign of one. The Head looked decidedly puzzled, and a slight smile was working on the Remove master's face. It disappeared as the Head glanced at him.

"This is very surprising, Mr. Quelch. We must have passed the spot."

"We could hardly have passed it without seeing such an extremely conspicuous object as a scaffold-pole, sir."

"It is very strange; let us look back."

They retraced their steps. No scaffold-pole was to be seen. The Head was looking mystified and uncomfortable.

"That is extraordinary, Mr. Quelch," he said again, after a long pause. "I saw it lying here, in full view."

"Perhaps it has been taken away since."

"But I was only a few minutes bringing you to the spot, and there was no one in the garden."

"Very amazing!" said Mr. Quelch. "There may have been someone concealed in the garden, sir, perhaps behind those rhododendrons. He may have taken advantage of your momentary absence to remove the pole."

"Yes, that is possible. It is, in fact, the only possible explanation," said the Head slowly.

The two masters walked away, discussing the strange problem. In the little greenhouse four juniors heaved sighs of relief as their footsteps died away.

"That was a narrow shave," murmured Harry Wharton. "The sooner we get out of this, the better."

"Yes, rather; let's shift!"

They shifted. A minute more and they were over the wall in the school Close, and the scaffold-pole was picked up and carried off.

Preparing for the Contest!

BOB CHERRY was looking very doubtful. It was easy enough to get the pole in at the window of Study No. 1, if the juniors wished.

"But I say," muttered Bob Cherry, "if anything is seen of the scaffold-pole about the school, Quelch will be on to it like a lion."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, and then the Head will know that it was us," he remarked.

Bob Cherry grunted.

"Well, I suppose we shan't be able to carry your idea out, that's all, Wharton," he remarked.

Wharton stared.

"My idea! What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. We shan't be able to carry your idea out, after all. It's no good looking for trouble, you know."

"It was your idea—"

"Oh, don't twist a thing round like that," remonstrated Bob Cherry. "You first made the suggestion of getting a scaffold-pole into the school to use as a horizontal bar."

"Yes, but you—"

"I simply showed you the easiest and most effective way of doing it," said Bob Cherry. "That was all I had to do with the matter. I never really thought much of your idea from the start. But, of course, I had to help you to carry it out. But now, Wharton, you'll have to give it up."

Harry laughed.

"Well, it will have to be given up, anyway," he assented. "The question is—what are we to do with the scaffold-pole?"

"Oh, hide it somewhere!"

"The hidefulness will not be the easy task, my worthy chum!"

"Oh, we can shove it behind the woodshed!" said Bob Cherry. "We can fish it out and get rid of it on some other occasion. Just at present we haven't any time to waste. We ought to be practising gymnastics. We've spent too much time already over your rotten idea, Wharton."

The scaffold-pole was accordingly bestowed behind the woodshed, where it was safe for the present, at least.

Billy Bunter met the chums of the Remove as they came back into the Close. The fat boy of the Remove was beaming.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you come into a fortune, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry, looking at the fat, contented visage of the Owl.

"No, Cherry; but—"

"Has your postal order come?"

"Well, no; but I'm in funds, all the same, and I'm standing treat," said Bunter. "Will you fellows come along to the tuckshop and feed with me?"

The chums of the Remove stared at him.

"In funds again, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Wonders will never cease!" said Nugent. "Whom have you been robbing, Bunter?"

"The robfulness is the only explanation of the fundfulness of the esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

Bunter grinned.

"I haven't been robbing anybody, but I'm in funds, all the same. Look!"

He jingled the money in his pocket and then drew out a handful of silver. Shillings and half-crowns jostled in his palm. The Removes stared.

"Where did you get all that money, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton seriously.

"Well, as a matter of fact, I borrowed it," said Bunter.

"Borrowed it!"

"Certainly! Why shouldn't I borrow it, if I like?"

"But who would lend you money?" asked Bob Cherry. "There's something fishy about this. Nobody at Greyfriars would lend you money like that, unless it was a new fellow who didn't know your little ways."

"Really, Cherry!"

"Was it the new fellow, Levison?"

"No, it wasn't."
 "Then who was it?"
 "I'm not going to tell you," said Billy Bunter. "I don't see why I should if I don't want to. I don't think you ought to be so curious, Cherry. I'm going to pay all this money back when my postal order comes."
 "Oh rats!"
 "The ratfulness is great—"
 "Really, Inky—"
 "There's something fishy about this," repeated Bob Cherry emphatically. "I only hope you've not been getting into trouble, you young ass!"
 "Oh, that's all right, Cherry! Will you fellows come to the tuckshop? It's my treat, you know, and you can order anything you like!"
 Harry Wharton shook his head.
 "Not just now, Bunter, thank you! We've got to practise for the contest this afternoon."
 "You others—"

But the others likewise declined. Billy Bunter walked off to the tuckshop by himself, but he soon found plenty of friends to join him in the feed. The chums of the Remove looked at one another uneasily.

"I can't understand where Bunter is getting that money from," Harry Wharton said slowly. "I'm not going to touch any of it till I know, anyway."

"Same here!" said Nugent. "I'm blessed if I can understand it! Nobody who knows Bunter would lend him money expecting to get it back again. Of course, we lend it to him sometimes, but we know we shan't see it again, and it's only small sums. He must have had over ten shillings just now."

"I only hope there's nothing wrong," said Harry Wharton, with a shade on his brow. "I can't understand it at all. Hallo, here's Meunier!"

Adolphe Meunier, the French junior in the Remove at Greyfriars, came up with a smile. Meunier was to be with Lerouge and the French team who were coming to the contest with the Removites that afternoon.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore that grin?" asked Bob Cherry.

Meunier grinned more widely than ever.

"It is ze time zat ve go to ze village," he remarked. "Ze train it comes in at four ze clock."

Harry Wharton glanced up at the clock tower.

"By Jove, you're right!"

"Ve meets ze train in Friardale zis time," said Meunier. "I goes to ze station to meet zem and bring zem to ze hall, mes amis."

"I zink zat zere be a good audience."

"I expect so."
 "Good! Ve shall see vat ve shall see!"

"Did you work that out in your head?" asked Bob Cherry.

"We'd better get ready now," Harry Wharton remarked. "I suppose half Greyfriars will be there. We haven't had so much chance of getting into form as I should have liked, but it can't be helped now."

And the juniors entered the house. A quarter of an hour later they were in the village of Friardale, preparing for the contest.

French versus British!

"**C**HEL! Ze pleasure is great to meet my friend Wharton ze vun more time!"

It was Henri Lerouge who had spoken.

The little hall in the village of Friardale was filled with spectators. Ad-

mission was free, and many of the villagers as well as the boys of Greyfriars were crowding in for the display. The hall was used by the local athletic club, and Harry Wharton had easily obtained permission to use it that Saturday afternoon.

The Removites were nearly ready when Henri Lerouge and his friends arrived, guided by Adolphe Meunier from the railway station.

The utter licking the French youths had received on the cricket field at the hands of the Greyfriars juniors did not seem to have depressed them much. They were overflowing with good-humour and self-confidence now. As a matter of fact, the contest was on lines which were particularly suited to them, and they had the advantage. They knew it, and meant to make the most of it.

he remarked. "They don't get disappointed!"

"I'm afraid there's something in it this time."

"Oh, don't croak, old chap!"

"I'm not croaking. Only, indoor gymnastics is the strong point of French school kids, and we haven't had time or opportunity to get up to their form."

"Never mind; we'll lick them."

"I wish I felt sure about it."

"Rats! We've got to do it!"

Harry Wharton said no more. Nothing would shake Bob Cherry's confidence but defeat.

In their singlets and shorts, it could not be denied that the English lads made a better show than the French. They were taller on the average, and their limbs were sturdier, and their carriage more erect and determined.



As Billy Bunter made an effort to get his legs higher, he lost his balance. The chair reeled over, and the Owl of the Remove came down on the table with a heavy bump.

Henri Lerouge was as effusive as ever. He shook the hand Wharton held out to him, but he was not satisfied with that.

"Ze pleasure is great!" he went on. "Ah, I must embrace ze friend of my heart. I must kees him!"

Harry Wharton concealed a grimace.

There was no help for it. The French youth embraced him affectionately, and kissed him on both cheeks. Harry had been through it before, and he stood it with good grace.

The other French boys were equally effusive. They were chattering away to themselves at a great rate, and Harry, whose French was very good, understood most of what they were saying, and knew that they were triumphing beforehand over an anticipated victory.

"They expect to knock us into a cocked hat, Bob!" he remarked, as he was changing his clothes for a white singlet and shorts.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Blessed are those who don't expect,"

Their quietness, too, compared favourably with the chattering, gesticulating volubility of the French—at least, to an English mind.

When they appeared in the hall a cheer from the Greyfriars crowd greeted them, and there was another cheer for the foreigners.

The Remove gymnasts were the pick of the Form. Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Hurree Singh were the best. And of the remainder of the team, Hazeldene, Micky Desmond, Skinner, Russell, and Harris were by no means to be despised.

But when the gymnastic display commenced, it was seen that the French lads had the advantage. Their monkey-like activity was amazing, and their nerve was certainly good.

They seemed as much at home on the ropes, bars, or the trapeze as on the ground, and there was no doubt that

they excelled their opponents in that line.

The English lads had heaps of pluck, but they had not the skill, and they simply could not equal their opponents above the ground.

But in their respects they more than held their own.

Lerouge, in his self-confidence, had willingly included boxing and wrestling in the list of events, and in those contests the Greyfriars juniors came in an easy first.

The boxing matches were between Harry Wharton and Lerouge and Bob Cherry and Meunier.

They did not last long.

In the first round Wharton knocked his opponent right and left, and but for the thick gloves Lerouge would have fared very badly indeed.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Lerouge, as he lay on his back at the end of the round, gazing up at the ceiling, amid laughter and cheers. "Vat have happen?"

His seconds picked him up.

"It is zat ze English garcon hit you on ze nose," explained Meunier.

"Helas! I feel as if ze mule did keeck me!"

Lerouge staggered in his backer's arms. He was evidently done.

"Are you going on?" asked Harry.

Lerouge shook his head.

"Zat is ovair," said Lerouge, peeling off the gloves.

Adolphe Meunier then prepared for his fight. He had picked up something of boxing at Greyfriars, and he stood it out for a little longer against Bob Cherry. But in the second round Bob walked all over him, as he afterwards expressed it, and even Meunier did not risk a third.

He owned up that he was beaten, and

the boxing contests closed with easy victories for Wharton's side.

But fortune smiled upon the French contestants on the whole.

There were hearty cheers from the spectators when the French team formed the pyramid—more than a dozen youths supporting one another's weight, and rising one above another, five on the ground, four on their shoulders, then three, then two, and finally Henri Lerouge at the top, with arms outstretched.

The essay of the Removites in the same direction met with disaster.

They had done the same kind of thing in the Greyfriars gym, though not on the same scale, but they had pluck enough to attempt anything.

But skill was wanted more than pluck in a case like this. The first row stood like rocks, and the second were planted pretty firmly on their shoulders; but the third story was wobbly in the extreme, and when Micky Desmond, in the middle of the bottom row, paused in his efforts to scratch his nose, disaster swiftly followed.

There was a swaying and tumbling and bumping, and the Removites sprawled all over the floor in various directions.

A yell of laughter rang through the hall, in which the French youths joined.

Harry Wharton picked himself up, feeling rather dazed.

"My hat!"

Bob Cherry rubbed his legs.

"It was that ass Desmond."

"Sure, and it's no good blaming me!" exclaimed Micky Desmond indignantly.

"It wasn't my fault intirely."

"You ass—"

"I just scratched me nose."

"You—you villain! I'll scratch your nose for you!" howled Bob Cherry, making a rush at him.

"Sure, and I—"

Nugent caught the excited Bob by the arm and dragged him back.

"Hold on, Bob!"

"I'm going to wipe up the floor with that howling ass!" shouted Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience.

"Hold on!"

"I tell you—"

"Sure, and I—"

"You can't have a row here," grinned Wharton. "Keep your wool on, Bob! Micky ought to be scragged, but you can scrag him in the dormitory to-night."

"Well, yes, I never thought of that," said Bob Cherry, calming down a little. "I'll teach the howling ass to stop to scratch his nose when I'm standing on his beastly shoulders."

"Sure, and I—"

"Oh, shut up! I've got an ache in my bones I shan't get rid of for a few days."

"The achefulness of the honourable bones is terrific," said Hurree Singh, rubbing his elbow ruefully. "The sufferfulness of the pain is also extreme."

"Sure, I didn't mane—"

"Never mind what you meant, ass! We know what you did!" growled Bob Cherry. "If I don't wipe up the dormitory with you to-night you can use my napper for a football."

"We won't try the pyramid business again," said Harry Wharton. "We're not quite up to it, and that's a fact!"

And the others ruefully agreed.

But it was some minutes before the French youths stopped cackling and were prepared to go on with the contest.

Billy Bunter's Treat!

"LICKED!"

That was Nugent's expressive comment as the Greyfriars juniors went in to change when the contest was over.

Harry Wharton nodded, and Bob Cherry grunted, and the Nabob of Bhanipur remarked that the lickfulness was terrific.

There was no doubt that the French team had got the best of the gymnastic display. The audience had agreed on that point, and the Removites had to agree, too.

"Still," remarked Hazeldene comfortingly, "they haven't given us such a licking as we gave them on the cricket field."

Bob Cherry brightened up.

"Well, that's true," he said. "We've given them a run for their money, anyway, while the cricket match last week was just a walk-over for us."

"We want practice," said Harry Wharton quietly. "There's no doubt that we've neglected this branch of gymnastics, and the French kids have licked us because they haven't done so. We've got to pull up, that's all."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is great."

"We've come rather a cropper," said Harry. "But we've done our best, and not so badly, considering. Whenever we had a chance we scored, as in the wrestling and boxing. There's nothing to be ashamed of."

The French team were grinning and cackling gleefully over their victory.

Even their politeness, which was great, could not make them conceal the fact that they were bubbling over with satisfaction.



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But they were as effusive as ever to the Greyfriars fellows, and the two parties were on the best of terms during the tea which followed the contest.

The Greyfriars fellows took their setback in a sporting spirit, without complaint or ill-humour, and did not forget that the foreigners were their guests.

The tea was a very pleasant function. And when it was over the Greyfriars party walked to the station with the French team to see them off.

Lerouge embraced Harry Wharton on the platform.

"We have had a great time," he remarked. "I am only sorry zat ze time have come to part. Ve return to La Belle France next week, and I not see you any more. I am sorry."

The train came steaming in. "Perhaps you come to France some day," went on Lerouge. "Zen you come to me, and ve vill have ze good time. Helas! Ve must go."

He embraced Wharton and kissed him effusively, and stepped into the carriage.

The train moved out of the station, and, with a final shriek of "Adieu!" the French team departed.

"Well, they're not a bad lot, and they know something about gymnastics," Harry Wharton remarked, as he left the station with his friends. "But I really wish they wouldn't kiss a fellow!"

"Oh, it's only their little way!" grinned Bob Cherry, rubbing his cheeks. "You have to take it with the rest. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter, looking in finer form than ever!"

Billy Bunter joined them. His fat face was wreathed in a seraphic smile, with a smear of raspberry jam on his mouth.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Yes, we're hungry," said Bob Cherry. "I had hardly a snack at tea-time. I was so busy doing the giddy polite host."

"Same here," said Nugent feelingly. "The samefulness is in my honourable case. In my interior is the aching voidfulness," said Hurree Singh.

"Good!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm standing treat this time. I've got plenty of tin, you know, and it's time I treated you fellows. You've treated me several times."

As Billy Bunter lived and thrived on his share of the study provisions, and never by any chance contributed anything towards their purchase, this was not over-stating the case.

Harry Wharton was silent. He was rather worried in his mind about Billy Bunter. The Owl's possession of funds was so unexpected a happening as to be remarkable, and his refusal to explain where he got the money was very strange. Billy Bunter was not a clever youth, and his ideas as to the rights of property were none too clearly defined. Harry was uneasy on his account.

As they entered the gates of Greyfriars in the dusk, they passed Bulstrode. Bunter nodded to him in the most friendly way, to which the bully of the Remove replied with a savage scowl. But the Owl of the Remove was far too short-sighted to see it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking from one to the other. "Have you been having any trouble with Bulstrode, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him. "Certainly not, Cherry."

"Then what is he scowling at you for?"

"You must be mistaken. I am on the best of terms with Bulstrode," said Bunter, with a grin. "I suppose he meant it for a smile."

"Have you been quarrelling?" "Certainly not. He'd know better than to quarrel with me, I should think."

Bob Cherry stared. "What do you mean, you young ass? Bulstrode could lick you with one finger."

"He jolly well wouldn't, though!"

"What do you mean?"

"I know what I mean," said Billy Bunter, with a mysterious shake of the head. "Don't you ask questions and I'll tell you no lies, Bob Cherry."

"Look here, Bunter! You're getting altogether too mysterious," said Bob Cherry, taking the Owl by the collar and shaking him. "Now, what do you mean?"

"Don't shake me!"

"What do you mean by this mysterious rot?"

"If you shake me, my spectacles will fall off," grunted Billy Bunter, "and then they'll break, and I tell you, Bob Cherry, you'll have to pay for them!"

"Why shouldn't Bulstrode dare to quarrel with you? Why should he be afraid of such a miserable little worm?" said Bob Cherry. "He looked just now as if he would like to wring your neck——"

Bob Cherry broke off as a new idea flashed into his mind. "My hat! Is it Bulstrode you have been getting money from, Bunter?"

"Leave off shaking me!"

"Is it Bulstrode who lent you money?"

"I bet it is!" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"I saw them jawing together just before we went down to Friardale, and Bulstrode was in an awfully bad temper, and he handed something over to Bunter. I wondered at the time what it meant, but I was busy thinking about gymnastics."

"Now then, Bunter, speak up!"

"If you break my glasses you'll have to pay for them!"

Bob Cherry released the wriggling Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter gasped for breath and adjusted his spectacles.

"Cherry, you beast, I——"

"Now then," said Harry Wharton, in a quiet voice which silenced Billy Bunter, "you've got to explain yourself, Bunter."

"I don't see——"

"No need for you to see. You've got something up against Bulstrode, and you've been extorting money from him."

"I haven't!"

"Didn't Bulstrode give you the money you have been spending lately?"

"No."

"Is that the truth?"

"Yes, it is the truth, Wharton. I don't see why you should doubt my word. I never doubt your word. Bulstrode didn't give me the money. He lent it to me."

"You young ass! You got it from Bulstrode?"

"Oh, yes, I got it from Bulstrode! I suppose he can lend me money if he likes, can't he?" said Bunter, in an injured tone.

"Yes, certainly. But in this case he hasn't liked. He has given you money against his will, and you've got to explain yourself!" said Wharton sternly. "I am captain of this Form, and it's my duty to look into this, even if I were not interested in keeping you out of a scrape, you young ass! Why did Bulstrode give you so much money?"

"I'm going to settle up when my postal order comes."

"How much have you had from him?"

"Oh, not much! About a pound altogether."

The chums of the Remove stared.

Billy Bunter, who was always impetuous, and who would spend anybody's money, spoke very airily of a pound. But to the Removites it was a considerable sum.

"You mean to say that Bulstrode has given you a pound?" asked Harry Wharton in amazement.

"Well, no, he hasn't given it to me; he's lent it to me, and I'm to settle up when my postal order comes. I made a particular point of that. I said to him plainly that I should regard the money as a loan, to be repaid when my postal order came."

"And what did he say?" asked Nugent.

"I can't tell you, Nugent. I didn't hear very distinctly, as he only muttered it, but it sounded like a rude epithet."

"He didn't want to lend you the money?"

"Well, he was naturally grateful to me for doing him a service," said Billy Bunter. "He suggested giving me money himself, but I refused. I'm not a mendicant. I'm not going to have people give me money. Of course, I was glad of a loan, and I pointed that out to him. I was willing to accept a loan until my postal order——"

"What service did you do him?"

"Oh, nothing in particular! He was afraid I should speak about having seen——I mean, about him, and he——"

"About having seen what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Do you see that fountain, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter adjusted his glasses.

"Yes, Wharton. I'm rather short-sighted, but I can see the fountain perfectly well, thank you."

"Well, you are going to be ducked in that fountain——"

"Really, Wharton——"

"Unless you own up to the truth in this affair," said the captain of the Remove sternly. "Bob said there was something fishy about it at the start, and it's time the truth was out. Now, what was it you saw Bulstrode do that he paid you for not telling about?"

"Oh, that isn't the way to put it, Wharton! I'm sorry to see you take such a view of the case. I was temporarily hard-up, and Bulstrode lent me a pound or so until my postal order arrives."

"Will you answer my question?"

"Oh, it was really nothing, you know! I saw him go into the German master's room."

Harry Wharton started.

"When?"

"It was when you were doing that gymnastic business in the Remove-room. I saw him go into Herr Rosenblau's room just after he had spoken to you in the Remove-room, and I wondered what he was up to, so I looked through the keyhole——"

"You young rotter!"

"If you don't want me to tell you——"

"Go on!"

"You called me a——"

"So you are—a mean young rotter to spy on anybody. But go on, or you'll get ducked in the fountain. Buck up!"

"Well, he was tying a cord across the floor for the German to fall over," chuckled Bunter. "He came out quite suddenly, and ran into me. I think he was rather annoyed; but I told him I shouldn't think of mentioning the matter to anybody, as that would be sneaking, and it was a good joke, anyway. Then he offered me half-a-crown. But, of course, I wouldn't take it. I told him he could lend me five shillings, THE GEN LIBRARY.—No. 1,510."

if he liked, but I should look upon it simply as a loan, and repay the moment my postal order came."

"And he did?"

"Yes."

"And since then he has lent you more?"

"Well, yes; he has parted with a little on several occasions since. I have pointed out to him that he would get into a fearful row if I gave him away, and that his money is really quite safe, and that I shall repay him directly—"

"That will do."

Harry Wharton turned to his chums.

"It's all clear enough now," he said.

"I knew that it was Bulstrode who played that mean trick on Herr Rosenblum, and tried to throw the blame on me. Bunter was a rascal for not speaking out—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But he is more stupid than anything else, and he doesn't seem to realise that his conduct towards Bulstrode in this matter amounts to blackmail."

"Oh, that's rather an unkind way to put it, Wharton."

"What else would you call it, you young man?"

"You shook me, Wharton, you do really. It seems absurd to me that Bulstrode can't lend me money without your talking about it, and using such horrible expressions."

"Oh, choose it! I suppose it's no good talking to you. How much of Bulstrode's money have you left?"

"About five shillings."

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"About five shillings."

"You are to take it back to him." Bunter's jaw dropped.

"What?"

"You are to take it to him at once, and hand him every penny. Tell him that the rest of the money he has given you will be paid back to him, and that I shall see to it."

"Really, Wharton—"

"Tell him that I know now who was the cad who played that trick on Herr Rosenblum, and tried to throw it on me, and that I am waiting for him behind the chapel. Tell him that if he doesn't come there and meet me, he's a coward as well as a cad."

"Really—"

"And I'll come with you, Bunter," grinned Bob Cherry, "to see that you deliver both the money and the message. You might forget to do both."

"I say, you fellows—"

But Bob Cherry linked his arm in Bunter's and marched him off.

Harry Wharton, Nugent, Hazeldene and the mob walked on, and waited under the trees behind the chapel, where many of the fustian encounters of the juniors were fought out. Harry Wharton's face was sternly set, and his eyes were gleaming. A rough time was in store for Bulstrode—if he came.

But would he come?

The Removites waited.

Bob Cherry came in sight at last round the chapel; but he came alone.

Harry looked at him.

"You gave my message."

"Yes. He won't come."

"Yes. He won't come."

"Yes. He won't come."

"Yes. He won't come."

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"Yes. He won't come."

"Yes. He won't come."

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him stay away, then, if he's a coward," he said. "I have given him a chance to prove that he's not, and I don't care if the affair goes no further."

And the chums of the Removites went into the School House. Billy Bunter met them in the Hall with a lugubrious face.

"I say, you fellows—"

Harry Wharton smiled.

There was no getting Billy Bunter to understand what he had been guilty of.

Wharton tapped him on the shoulder.

"Cheer up, Billy! You'll see some time that you've only been made to do what was right."

"Oh, I dare say you were right, Wharton, and I'm sorry if you think I've done anything wrong," said Bunter.

"But there's a registered letter for you, and very likely it contains—"

"Good!" exclaimed Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Hazeldene together.

Harry laughed as he took the letter. It contained a postal order for a pound from his uncle.

"I say, Wharton, I suppose you'll stand a feed now?"

"Yes," laughed Harry. "Come along, all of you, and we'll celebrate the occasion."

And they did, and once more the fat face of Billy Bunter was wreathed in smiles.

(Another exciting adventure next week of Harry Wharton & Co., introducing Ernest Lavison. Look out for "THE KIDNAPPED SCHOOLBOY!")

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GUSSY GOES TO WORK!

(Continued from page 21.)

chased me all down the village street—

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just because I cut his chin in shavin' him, a 'most unweasonable woffah! I waz gettin' the gates shut. He's comin' up the woad!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. simply howled. They were laughing too much to be able to close the gates.

Arthur Augustus looked out into the road. In the distance a furious figure could be seen, hatless, with a lathered chin, pattering along.

Arthur Augustus made a wild run for the School House, dashed in, and in a few seconds had locked himself up in Study No. 6.

The juniors, almost in convulsions, slammed the gates at last. The fat gentleman came pounding by, and passed the closed gates, evidently without a suspicion that a barber's boy could have taken refuge in a Public school.

He disappeared in the distance.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "This is getting richer and richer! There'll be a warrant out for Gussy soon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They streamed into the School House to look for Arthur Augustus. The door of Study No. 6 was locked, and Blake thumped upon it.

"Who's there?" came a quavering voice from within.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's all right, he's gone!"

The door was unlocked. Arthur Augustus stood panting and gasping in the study.

"Bai Jove! I've had a nawwow escape!" he exclaimed. "The man was

simply furious, for some wenson. I explained to him that a beghinnah was bound to cut a man a bit—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is Mr. Mopps satisfied?" roared Monty Lowther.

"I have refused to remain in Mr. Mopps' service. He was as unweasonable as the fat boundah. As a matter of fact, I am fed up with this," said Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to refuse to work any more. A chap doesn't get any encouragement for tryin' to earn his bread. I am goin' to write to my patah and tell him that I uttally refuse to do any more work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Arthur Augustus did.

(Next Wednesday: "LOOKING AFTER LOWTHER!"—a great yarn telling what happened when Tom Merry and Manners tried to save their chum from being led astray by the black sheep of St. Jim's. Order your GEM early.)

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