

THE FIRST CHAPTER The Only Way !

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the St. Jim's Fourth, spoke with emphasis.

" Now, look here, Gussy!" urged Blake and Herries and Digby, with one voice.

"I wepeat, wats!"

"Look here, fathead -- "

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Blake! And I wefuse to wemain within gates this aftahnoon."

" I tell you-"

"I wegard Mr. Lathom's action, in gatin' this studay, as extwemely highhanded, and, in fact, unjust!" said Arthur Augustus hotly. "I have an appointment in Wylcombe this aftalmoon, and I am wesolved to keep it. That settles the mattali."

" But-" Wats!"

There was a little excitement in Study No. 6, in the School House at St. Jim's

Blake & Co. were endeavouring to induce their aristocratic chum to see reason. Arthur Augustus decidedly declined to see reason, or anything like it.

His noble mind was made up.

"I have a vewy particulah appointment," he said. "It is wotten bad form

The Famous Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his Chums, in a Rollicking Story of School Life at St. Jim's

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD

to fail to keep an appointment. I am we solved to keep that appointment. I assuah you, deah boys, that wild horses will not keep me away fwom Wylcombe this aftalmoon."

" Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake---"

"Look here-" bawled Herries.

" Pway do not woar at me, Hewwies. I have mentioned more than once that I dislike bein' woared at."

"You-you-you-" gasped Herries.

"Pway let the mattah dwop. I am goin', and that ends it."

Arthur Augustus spoke in a tone of finality. The swell of St. Jim's prided himself upon possessing the firmness of a rock. His comrades characterised it rather as the obstinacy of a mule.

Whether it was the firmness of a rock, or the obstinacy of a mule, there was no doubt that Arthur Augustus meant what he said.

"Oh, bump him!" exclaimed Blake, in great exasperation. "It's no good talking to him. Bump him!"

" Weally, you ass---"

Tom Merry, of the Shell, looked into Study No. 6 with a smiling face. He had heard the argument going on-indeed, it would have been difficult for any fellow passing along the passage to fail to hear it.

- "Gently does it, old scouts!" said the captain of the Shell cheerily. "What's the little trouble? Tell your Uncle Thomas."
 - "That ass Gussy—"
 "That chump Gussy—"
 "That fathead D'Arcy—"

Blake & Co. started to explain, in chorus.

"One at a time, old beans," said Tom Merry. "Gussy, you bad man, what have you been doing this time?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy-"

"We're gated!" howled Blake. "The whole study's gated for this half-holiday. Lathom's gated us for ragging Trimble. He's waxy! And that ass—that fathead—says he's going down to Rylcombe all the same."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry looked severe.

"Naughty!" he said. "Don't you know better than to disobey the orders of your Form-master, Gussy! I'm surprised at you."

"Yaas; but--"

"Take my tip, and don't do it," said Tom. "Lathom's a good little ass, but he's bound to cut up rusty if you go out of gates after he's gated you. Be good!"

"You do not fully compwehend, deal boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "We wagged Twimble for his own good, and no fellow but Twimble would have yelled so much for bein' bumped. Twimble had bowwowed my Sunday toppah, and we bumped him for it, which was quite wight and pwopah. Mr. Lathom did not know how the mattah stood when he gated us. I wegard it as a dutay to wag Twimble when he meddles with othah fellows' clobbah."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Quite right; the more Trimble of the Fourth is bumped, the better," he agreed. "But Form-masters can't be expected to understand these things. Their minds are a bit limited."

"I have a vewy important appointment in Wylcombe," went on Arthur Augustus

warmly.

"Perhaps if you mentioned that nicely to Lathom—" suggested Tom Merry.

Blake gave a snort.

"Do you think Lathom would think it important for Gussy to see his tailor?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, my hat! Is it an appointment with a tailor? Is that important?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Yas, wathah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I see nothin' to laugh at, Tom Mewwy. Mr. Wiggs is makin' a new waistcoat for me, and I have pwomised to call this aftahnoon and twy it on. I was also goin' to speak to him about some pwops for the Juniah Dwamatic Society. That does not mattah vewy much, of course; but I am bound to keep my appointment."

"You can't, old man, if you're gated."

" Wats!"

"Be reasonable, old chap! Lathom would get his rag out no end if you cleared off," urged Tom Merry.

" Wubbish!"

"What's a fellow to do with such an ass?" exclaimed Blake. "We can't let him cheek Lathom." .

"I wefuse to wegard my pwoceedings as cheekay, Blake. I am simply exahcisin' my wight to do as I dashed well choose on a half-holiday."

"Fathead!" roared Herries.

"I have alweady wequested you, Hewwies, not to woar at a fellow."

"Gussy, old man-" urged Digby.

"Wats! I am goin' now," said Arthur Augustus. "Pwobably Mr. Lathom will know nothin' about the mattah; but if he should learn of it, I shall not have the slightest hesitation in answerin' for my conduct. Now I am goin."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked to the door of Study No. 6.

But he did not reach the door.

Blake & Co., as if moved by the same spring, jumped at him, and grabbed him, and jerked him back into the study.

"Bai Jove! Welease me, you wottahs!"

roared Arthur Augustus.

"Don't roar at a fellow!" chuckled Blake.

" Ha, ha, ha!"

" Put the key in the outside of the lock, will you, Tommy?"

"Certainly!" said Tom Merry. "Anvthing to oblige an old pal like Gussy."

"You feahful wuffians-"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus sat down in the study armchair, landed there by his faithful

chums, with a concussion that took away his noble breath. As he sat and gasped, Blake & Co. whipped out of the study, slammed the door, and the key was turned in the outside of the lock.

Arthur Augustus scrambled breathlessly out of the armehair.

"Good-bye, little bird - good-bye!" sang Blake, in the passage.

" Let me out at

once!"

"Will you promise not to break bounds?"

Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to do

anythin' of the kind! I am goin' to keep my appointment with my tailah."

"I think not! Good-bye!"

"You uttale wottale!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake slipped the key of Study No. 6 into his pocket.

"It's the only way, as the johnny says in the play," he remarked. "Gussy's a pal, and we're bound to sit on him when he wants to go off at the deep end. Come on, you chaps, and let's get some footer."

"Open this door, Blake!"

"Good-bye!"

"Tom Mewwy-"

"Take it calmly, old man. Why grouse?"

"Bai Jove! I-I--" spluttered the

prisoner of Study No. 6.

Tom Merry and the three Fourth-Formers walked cheerily away, to join in a pick-up game on Little Side. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy-thus ruthlessly restrained from keeping an important



unds?''
"Bai Jove! Welease me, you wottahs!'' roared Arthur Augustus
"No!'' roare! D'Arcy. Bump! Arthur Augustus sat down in the study armchair with a concussion that took away his nobic breath. (See this page.)

appointment with his tailor-remained in Study No. 6, with feelings that could not have been expressed in any known language.

THE SECOND CHAPTER Wally Works the Oracle!

NYBODY at home?"

It was nearly an hour later that D'Arcy minor-otherwise Wally, of the Third-came along the Fourth Form passage and tapped at the door of Study No. 6.

That hour had been spent by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in dismal solitude.

His devoted chums, determined to save

him from himself, as it were, had locked him in the study, to keep him safe till teatime. It was, as Jack Blake had said, the only way. But Arthur Augustus was far from feeling grateful for that kind devotion

For ten minutes or more he had thumped at the door; but he had thumped in vain. The studies were deserted on a half-holiday, and there was no one to hear. Only Baggy Trimble had rolled by, and he had departed with a fat chuckle—Trimble, mindful of a recent bumping, was not disposed to help. Moreover, as the key was gone, it would have been a matter of some difficulty to release the prisoner.

Arthur Augustus gave up thumping the door at last, and paced the study for some time, in a state of towering wrath.

He sat down at last.

It seemed that he was booked till teatime—and Arthur Augustus, who was a gregarious youth, was soon tired of his own company. Certainly, his school-books were at hand, and he could have improved the shining hour by "mugging" up Latin, or exploring the mysteries of mathematics. But he was not in a mood for extra studies. He was in a mood chiefly for punching the noses of his devoted pals; but those noses, fortunately, were far out of his reach.

He remembered his HOLIDAY ANNUAL, and decided to pass the weary time in perusing that entrancing volume. He remembered, next, that he had lent his HOLIDAY ANNUAL to Lowther of the Shell.

Really, Gussy's luck seemed to be out that afternoon.

There was rather a shortage of reading matter in Study No. 6; but there was a copy of the "Wayland Gazette," a local paper which Blake sometimes bought for the football reports.

The hapless Gussy was reduced to the "Wayland Gazette" to pass the time while he waited for release.

He read the football reports twice, he glanced over the advertisements, he even read half-way through the leading article! Then he alighted upon the reports of pro-

ceedings at the Wayland County Court—a branch of activity in which Gussy was not in the least interested. But it was a case of any port in a storm.

The proceedings taken by Mr. John Hodge, against Mr. William Wurzel, whose donkey had strayed into Mr. Hodge's field, were not highly exciting to read about. For interest, they really could not compare with the HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

Indeed, to Arthur Augustus' unsophisticated mind, it seemed that the dispute between Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel could have been better settled over a friendly mug of ale at the Wayland Arms, than before his Honour at the County Court.

But Mr. Hodge was assisted by Mr Grabb, solicitor, of Wayland, and Mr Wurzel was assisted by Mr. Gobble, another solicitor, also of Wayland.

That made all the difference.

Whatsoever the outcome to Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel, there was no doubt that Messrs. Grabb and Gobble would score by the matter being settled in the County Court instead of at the Wayland Arms.

Mr. Hodge, in an angry and unhappy moment, had taken legal advice—after which the hapless Hodge found himself only a pawn in the game.

It was probable that by the time Mr. Hodge and Mr. Wurzel escaped from their legal advisers they would have incurred costs in excess of the value of the strayed donkey, and of the field ravaged by the donkey.

Arthur Augustus read through the report of the proceedings in a very perplexed state of mind, wondering that so trivial a matter should take up so much of the valuable time of two legal gentlemen. Gussy's knowledge of law was limited.

The County Court reports in the Wayland paper being exhausted, Gussy turned to the football reports again—and then came a thump on the study door, and the voice of his cheery minor.

Arthur Augustus hurled the "Wayland Gazette" across the study, and jumped up.

"Bai Jove! Is that you, Wally ?"



Mr. Wiggs was politely conducting his valued customer to the shop door. As he opened it, Arthur Augustus jumped back as if he had seen a rattlesnake. It was a much less dangerous creature than a rattlesnake that he saw—but almost as alarming. It was Mr. Lathom, master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's ! (See Chapter 3.)

"Yes, old chap! Let a fellow in."

"The door is locked, deah boy."

"Unlock it, then, fathead."

"It is locked on the outside, Wally. That wuffian Blake has locked me in the studay and taken away the key."

"Ha. ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! What are you laughin' at,

Wally?"

"You, old bean!" said the fag cheerily. "Never mind. I was calling on you to borrow half-a-crown! You can slip it under the door."

"Weally, Wally-"

"We're having a spread in the Third Form room," explained Wally. "Young Manners and Levison minor are standing half-a-crown each, and I'm not going to do less. Only I'm stony, you see. Can you lend me half-a-crown, Gussy?"

"I am locked in this studay, Wally

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"A half-a-crown can be slipped under

the door-that's all right."

"You are an unweflectin' young boundah, Wally. The important mattah is for me to get out of the studay. If you let me out I will lend you half-a-cwown with pleasuah."

Wally of the Third whistled.

He was quite prepared to help his major out of the scrape, if he could; and he was seriously in need of the loan of half-acrown. But he did not quite see how he was to render Gussy that service, as the

key was gone.

"I have an important appointment to keep at Wylcombe, Wally, and there is still time, if you will take my bike out for me, and welease me fwom this studay. Pewwaps you can find a key to fit the lock."

"Suppose I get something and bust in the lock," suggested Wally.

"You uttah young ass!" exclaimed

Arthur Augustus.

"Who's got the key? A chap I could lick?" asked Wally.

" Blake has it."

"Hem! I don't think I could lick Blake—not without a lot of trouble. Hold on, though! Blake's playing footer—I saw him," said Wally. "Where did he put the key?"

"I could not see what he did with the key thwough the door, Wally. But I suppose he put it in his pocket."

"Good! Then it will be in his jacket in the changing-room."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, that is vewy pwob."

"Wait a tick, old bean."

Wally's footsteps were heard retreating towards the staircase. Arthur Augustus waited anxiously.

In a few minutes his minor returned.

Click!

Evidently Wally of the Third had obtained possession of the key. It clicked in the lock, and the door was thrown open.

Wally's cheeky, cheery face grinned in

at his major.

"There you are, Gussy—free as air! Where's that half-crown?"

"Heah you are, deah boy—but take my bike out for me. I might be noticed wheelin' it out."

"What would that matter, fathead?"

"I am gated."
"Oh, all right!"

Wally of the Third, richer by half-a-crown, departed, to wheel his major's bike

out of the bike-shed to the road beyond the school walls.

Arthur Augustus closed the door of the study after him, locked it, and slipped the key into his pocket. There was a genial grin on his noble countenance as he walked away to the stairs.

As Blake & Co. had locked the study door, they could find it locked when they came in to tea—a just punishment for their high-handed proceedings towards their noble chum, in Gussy's opinion.

Blake, no doubt, would be puzzled to find the study key missing from his pocket; and he could puzzle over the mystery of its disappearance until D'Arcy returned from Rylcombe. That was quite a cheering reflection to Arthur Augustus.

With great caution Arthur Augustus strolled into the quad, and slipped out of gates, careful not to come under the eye of Mr. Lathom, the Form-master who had "gated" him.

But Mr. Lathom did not appear in the offing, fortunately—or unfortunately, perhaps—and Arthur Augustus gained the high-road, and was soon pedalling away cheerfully towards Rylcombe. On Little Side, Blake & Co. were "urging the flying ball," satisfied that Arthur Augustus was safe till tea-time, and never suspecting for a moment that the noble bird had flown.

THE THIRD CHAPTER Something Like a Brain Wave I

" BAI Jove!" It wa

It was a dismayed ejaculation.

Mr. Wiggs looked surprised.

The important appointment had been kept; the waistcoat, now in the process of construction, had been tried on, and pronounced satisfactory, so far. The really important matter being disposed of, Arthur Augustus had referred to the less important matter of certain "props" required by the Junior Dramatic Society of St. Jim's—Mr. Wiggs being the local costumier as well as tailor and several other things. Now Mr. Wiggs was politely conducting his valued customer to the shop door—

but, as he opened it, Arthur Augustus jumped back as if he had seen a rattle-snake.

It was a much less dangerous creature than a rattlesnake that he saw—but almost as alarming. It was Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Mr. Lathom, obviously, was in Rylcombe that afternoon, a circumstance that naturally had not occurred to Gussy's mind. He had been thinking about his important appointment, not about the possible movements of Mr. Lathom.

But there he was!

He had not seen D'Arcy. He was pacing up and down outside the shop, and for a moment or two Gussy supposed that his Form-master knew that he was there, and was waiting for him to emerge.

But he observed that Mr. Lathom glanced occasionally at the entrance of the railway-station, which was near at hand.

Apparently the Form-master was waiting for a train to come in—doubtless having walked down to Rylcombe to greet some expected visitor.

It was quite a natural thing for Mr. Lathom to do; but it was extremely disconcerting for Arthur Augustus.

How long Mr. Lathom intended to pace up and down the street in front of the shop D'Arcy could not guess. But so long as he paced there, the junior who had broken bounds was a prisoner.

Arthur Augustus was quite satisfied with his action in breaking bounds, in the circumstances. His noble conscience was clear. But he was well aware that Mr. Lathom would not be satisfied. And he did not want his excursion to be followed by a caning from his Form-master, or a Head's licking. Very much indeed he did not want that.

"Oh, deah!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's.

Mr. Wiggs eyed him curiously.

"Pway close the door, Mr. Wiggs."

Mr. Wiggs closed the door, still more surprised. Arthur Augustus coloured under his curious look.

"The fact is, Mr. Wiggs, there is a chap in the stweet whom I do not desiah to meet," said Arthur Augustus.

" Dear me!" said Mr. Wiggs
I twust he will be gone soon."

"Pray wait as long as you like, Mr. D'Arcy," said the sartorial gentleman politely. "May I give you a chair?"

"Oh, deah!"

Mr. Lathom had paused in his walk, and was looking in at the window—where there was an array of shirts, neckties, socks, and such articles. The dreadful idea came into Gussy's troubled mind that Mr. Lathom was thinking of filling up the period of waiting for the train by doing a little shopping. If he stepped into the shop—

The truly great mind always rises to an emergency. It was at this anxious moment that Arthur Augustus experienceed something in the nature of a brain-wave.

"Mr. Wiggs-pewwaps you can lend me

an old coat-"

"Certainly, sir, if you desire. The weather has turned very cold to-day," assented Mr. Wiggs.

"And please give me one of the moustaches which I have ordahed for our dwamatic society, Mr. Wiggs."

" Eh?"

"I am goin' to put it on."

" Oh!

"There is a wathah twoublesome person in the stweet whom I desire to avoid," said Arthur Augustus. "I wathah think he will not wecognise me in an old coat and a moustache. I shall look yahs oldah."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Wiggs.

Possibly Mr. Wiggs had a lurking suspicion that some weakness was developing in Gussy's aristocratic intellect, his request was so very extraordinary.

But the swell of St. Jim's was too good a customer for, Mr. Wiggs to refuse.

The artificial moustache was produced, and Arthur Augustus affixed it to his upper lip, standing before Mr. Wigg's glass to note the effect.

Certainly it made an enormous difference. The astonished Mr. Wiggs handed him a coat, rather too large for him, and at Gussy's request added a cloth cap—the junior's immaculate topper being received into Mr. Wiggs' temporary safe keeping.

The reflection in the glass was now that of a rather stout young man of about

twenty-five.

Arthur Augustus grinned at it.

"That is all wight! Thank you, Mr. Wiggs—good-aftahnoon."

"Good-afternoon, sir!" gasped Mr.

Wiggs.

Tinkle!

The shop-door opened, and the bell tinkled. Arthur Augustus' brain-wave had been acted on only just in time. It was Mr. Lathom who stepped into the shop.

Arthur Augustus' heart beat fast, as he hurried out, almost brushing his Formmaster as he passed.

Mr. Lathom glanced after him. Arthur Augustus knew, without looking, that the St. Jim's master had glanced after him. Did he suspect?

With a thumping heart, Arthur Augustus hurried across the pavement, drew his bike from the kerb where it was standing, and

mounted.

The pedals flew round, and Arthur Augustus fairly flew down Rylcombe High Street.

Greatly to his relief, no authoritative voice called after him—apparently he had escaped unsuspected, owing to his disguise.

But he pedalled on fast.

He was anxious to get into the lane that led to St. Jim's, where he would be able to remove his disguise unseen—a proceeding that was impossible in the High Street.

With quite a whiz of speed, the swell of St. Jim's pedalled into the lane, and dashed off in the direction of the school.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated suddenly.

D'Arcy jammed on his brakes.

Ahead of him appeared a man with a barrow, at a turn of the lane. The barrow was piled with such articles as tin kettles, saucepans, and crockery. The itinerant merchant to whom it belonged was wheeling

it from a field path into the lane—right into the middle of the lane, regardless of possible traffic.

The brakes were jammed on too late.

Crash!

The barrow, wheeled fairly under Gussy's front wheel, came into terrific col-

lision with the bicycle.

The barrow, which was of light construction, rocked and reeled, and kettles and saucepans and tin pots of all kinds scattered and clanged into the road. There was a crashing of breaking crockery-ware.

But Arthur Augustus hardly saw what

happened.

The bicycle, with the front wheel buckled, went spinning, and Arthur Augustus, when he next knew what was going on in the universe, found himself sitting on the grassy bank beside the lane, with his damaged bicycle curled up at his feet.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER Shell Out !

"L" It was not, of course, Arthur Augustus who uttered that startled ejaculation. He was incapable of it.

It was the gentleman to whom the bar-

row belonged.

He was a thickset, squat gentleman, with a rather stubby set of features, and a stubbly chin somewhat in need of the razor. His face, which looked as if it seldom wore an amiable expression, was red with rage. He left his rocking barrow in the middle of the road, and instead of picking up his scattered pets and pans, he strode over to the dazed swell of St. Jim's, and brandished a large fist over him.

"Knocking over a man's barrer!" he

roared.

"Oh, deah!"

"Knocking over a man's barrer, I say!"

"Bai Jove! I feel vewy much shaken!" gasped Arthur Augustus. He groped for his eyeglass, set it in his eye, and blinked up at the enraged merchant.

"What the thump do you mean by

wheelin' your bawwow undah my bike, who-

ever you are?"

"What do you mean by running your jigger into my barrer?" demanded the merchant, in his turn.

D'Arcy staggered to his feet.

"I did not wun into your bawwow," he exclaimed indignantly. "You wan your bawwow into my bike. If it had been a motah-cah, you would have been wun ovah, as you deserved for your wecklessness."

The merchant glared at him.

"Look what you've done!" he roared. "Smashed up my goods! Who's goin' to

pay for them crocks?"

"Weally, I do not know," said Arthur Augustus. "I am much more intewested to know who is goin' to pay for the damage to my bike."

"Blow your bike!"

"Vewy good; blow your bawwow. then."

" Look 'ere-

"Oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus picked up his machine. The wheel was buckled, and evidently it needed considerable repair before it could be ridden again. Arthur Augustus had the happy prospect of walking it back to the school.

" Bai Jove, this is wotten!" he exclaimed. "You de serve to be made to pay for this damage,

mv man."

"Lummy! You run into my barrer

"I did not wun into your bawwow. You wan your wotten bawwow into my bike!" roared Arthur Augustus, in his

anger and indignation forgetting, for the moment, the repose which stamps-or should stamp—the caste of Vere de Vere.

The merchant eved him evilly.

He seemed tempted to settle the dispute by an application of his horny knuckles to Arthur Augustus' aristocratic nose. Arthur Augustus backed away with his damaged machine, and detached the pump therefrom. to use as a defensive weapon if needed.

"Keep your distance, my man!" he said icily. "I warn you that I shall hurt you

if you attempt any violence."

"Who's paying for that damage?" roared the merchant.

"The accident was entirely your own fault," said Arthur Augustus. "But if you are a poor man, I should be sowwy to see you put to a loss. I do not admit wesponsibility in the vewy least, but I will give you five shillings, if you like."



The brakes were jammed on too late. Crash! The barrow, wheeled fairly under Gussy's front wheel, came into terrific collision with the bicycle. Kettles and saucepans and tin pots of all kinds clanged into the road, (See Chapter 3.)

Snort!

"What's the good of five shillings?"

demanded the merchant.

"I think it would pwobably covah your loss," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not know the value of these things, but they cannot weally be vewy expensive articles. Still, if you tell me that five shillings will not covah the loss, I will make it ten."

The itinerant merchant eyed him, and his manner became a little less bullying.

"Now you're talking!" he said. "I'll go over the damage, and I'll tell you what you're let in for, young man."

"Weally, you know-"

"I won't keep you waiting long."

Arthur Augustus waited impatiently. He was anxious to get on his way, and get rid of the false moustache and the old coat and cap. But he had not long to wait.

"This 'ere will cost you five quids!" said the merchant.

" Bai Jove!"

It was the fate of Arthur Augustus, with his generous heart and polished manners, to be misunderstood and underrated by mean natures.

He was not in the least to blame for the accident, and indeed should have had a claim against the merchant for the damage to his bicycle.

But his offer to compensate the fellow for his loss had simply given the man an impression that he was "soft," and could be bullied into parting with money.

That was the Wayland merchant's impression—and never had an impression been more mistaken.

Arthur Augustus' eyes flashed with indignation.

"You wascal!" he exclaimed.

" What?"

"I do not believe that your whole stock is worth any such sum. You are tryin' to impose on me."

"Look 'ere---"

"I wefuse to bandy words with a wogue!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hotly. "I wefuse to give you anythin at all—

even a shilling. I wegard you as a swindlin' wascal."

The bullying expression returned to the merchant's surly face at once.

"You ain't paying up for this 'ere damage?" he demanded.

"Not a shilling! Not a penny!"

"Then you'll 'ear more of this, young man! There's justice in this 'ere country for a pore man! I'll County Court you."

"Wats!"

"Name!" roared the merchant. "Give me your name and address, or I'll foller you 'ome and find out."

"I have no desiah whatevah to conceal my name and addwess," said Arthur Augustus, with haughty contempt. "My name is D'Arcy, and my addwess is St. Jim's—the school up the woad."

"Well, Mister D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, you'll 'ear more of this, if you don't square

while you've got the chance."

"I will give you nothin'," said Arthur Augustus grimly. "I am not wesponsible for the accident, which was brought about by your own čarelessness, and I wegard you as a wogue. Go and eat coke."

"Look 'ere-"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus wheeled away his damaged, crackling bike. The merchant stared after him savagely. Like the dog in the fable, he had snatched at the shadow and lost the substance.

" Make it two pun!" he shouted.

"Wats!" was D'Arcy's reply, over his shoulder.

"I'll County Court yer."

"I wegard you as a widiculous ass, as well as a wogue, and I wefuse to have anythin' more to say to you."

"You'll 'ear of this agin."

" Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus marched on, out of hearing of the raucous voice of the itinerant merchant.

He was glad to be rid of him.

The swell of St. Jim's wheeled on his bike, to a secluded spot at a good distance, little dreaming that he was ever to hear of the stubbly gentleman again, or in what remarkable circumstances. Secluded from view, D'Arcy took off the false moustache, rolled up the cap and coat into a bundle on the bicycle, and wheeled on the bike towards St. Jim's—arriving there in his own proper person, resembling very little the young man who had walked out of Mr. Wiggs' shop under a Form-master's nose, and who had crashed into the barrow in Rylcombe Lane.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER No Entrance!

Tom Merry peeled off his jersey in the changing-room in the School House. The pick-up had lasted till dusk, and the juniors had come in rather late for tea. In their keen interest in the great game of soccer, Blake & Co. had rather forgotten their aristocratic chum, locked up in Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage.

Blake, pausing in a state of deshabille, was giving Herries his opinion on "barging," and Herries, with a jersey half over his head, was retorting with his opinion of Blake's opinion—while Digby was scraping mud off his neck—and the three Fourth-Formers had not yet remembered Gussy. It was Tom Merry who thought of

him first.

"What I think, Herries, is this-

"What you think, old man, doesn't

count," Herries was retorting.

"Blow this mud!" Dig was remarking at the same time. "That New House ass, Figgins, rolled me right over, like a clumsy owl."

"What about Gussy?" asked Tom

Merry.

"Gussy! Oh, my hat! I'd forgotten Gussy!" ejaculated Blake. "He's all right in the study, though."

"Can't have enjoyed his afternoon!"

grinned Manners of the Shell.

"Well, he asked for it. He ought to be glad he's got pals to look after him when he wants to go hunting for trouble," said Blake. "We've saved him from a Head's licking very likely."

"Likely enough," remarked Levison of

the Fourth. "I saw Mr. Lathom start for Rylcombe, and if D'Arcy had gone down there, he would very likely have run into him."

"Jolly lucky we locked him in, in that case," said Herries.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Better let him out, though. It's too late now for him to go hunting for trouble out of gates," he said.

Blake nodded.

"Yes—we'll let him out, if he makes it pax. The fact is, we're bound to open up the study, as we want our tea—and the stuff is in the cupboard. But we'll make it pax through the keyhole first. Gussy may be waxy—fellows are so unreasonable, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Having finished changing, Blake & Co. headed for the Fourth Form passage. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther went with them, as the Terrible Three were "teaing" in Study No. 6 that afternoon. At all events, that was the arrangement—and they were not yet aware that tea in Study No. 6 was rather inaccessible.

Thump!

Blake announced his arrival by a heavy thump on the door of the study.

"Here we are, Gussy!"

There was no answer from Study No. 6. Dusk was deepening, and lights were now on in the School House; but no light gleamed under the door of No. 6. D'Arcy, if he was there, was apparently sitting, like the heathen, in darkness.

Thump! Baug!

"Gussy!"

" Fathead!"

" Ass!"

"Must have fallen asleep," said Tom Merry, as no answer came from the locked study.

"Sulking, perhaps," suggested Monty

Lowther.

Blake sniffed.

"Old Gussy doesn't sulk! He may be on his jolly old dignity."

"Where's the difference?" asked

Another sniff from Blake.

"Can't expect a Shell ass to see the difference," he replied. "Can't expect anything from the Shell but idiotic questions."

Thump! thump!

"Gussy, old man!" Blake shouted through the keyhole. "Can't you speak, you image? We're making it pax."

No reply.

"Is it pax, old man?" called out Digby. "We don't want to have to bump you, you know."

Silence.

"Well, he won't answer," said Blake.

"We'd better go in."

Blake groped in the pocket where he had placed the key of Study No. 6. His hand came out empty.

"Hallo! Where's that key?" h

exclaimed.

"Lost it?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm not the sort of ass to lose a key,"

snapped Blake.

"My mistake—I thought you were every sort of an ass!" said the captain of the Shell blandly.

Blake groped in his other pockets.

"Look here, somebody's been larking." he said. "The key isn't here. One of you chumps bagged it?"

The juniors shook their heads.

"Did you leave it in your pocket?" asked Manners.

"Of course I did! Do you think I should carry a study key along with me under my arm to play footer?" asked Blake crossly, "or do you think I should take it round in my teeth, like a dog with a bone?"

Blake's temper seemed to be deterio-

rating.

"Well, it must have dropped out when you changed," said Tom Merry, with a laugh. "You'll find it in the changing-room."

Blake was not disposed to admit that he was any more likely to drop a key than to lose one. However, the key was not there—and there seemed no other way of

accounting for its absence. So he gave a grunt, and strode away to the stairs.

Herries and Digby proceeded to talk to D'Arcy through the keyhole, without the remotest suspicion, so far, that the study was untenanted.

No reply came from Study No. 6; but the silence was attributed to the lofty dignity of Arthur Augustus, in a state of offence at the way he had been treated by his devoted chums.

"Gussy, old man, don't play the goat!" said Herries. "You know jolly well that we shut you up for your own good."

"Saved you from a licking, old scout," said Digby. "Old Lathom's in Rylcombe this afternoon, and he would have spotted you safe as houses."

"Can't you speak, fathead?" hooted

Herries.

"Look here, Gussy, you sulky image."

"Deaf, you ass?"

"Dumb, you chump?"

Tempers seemed to be rising. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther leaned in a cheery row on the opposite wall, and looked on, smiling. From the superior point of view of the Shell fellows, these little disputes in the Fourth Form were entertaining.

Thump! thump! bang!

"Can't you answer, you born idiot?" roared Herries.

"By gum, we'll jolly well rag you when Blake comes back with the key!" hooted Digby.

Levison, Clive, and Cardew came along the passage, on their way to No. 9. They paused to look on, with interest.

"What's the name of this game, dear men?" asked Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"That fathead Gussy is sulking, and won't answer," growled Herries. "I'm jolly well going to punch his head when I get in."

"I'm jolly hungry," said Dig. "When is Blake getting back with that key? Oh.

here he is!"

Jack Blake came up the passage, with a frowning brow. He came without the key, however. That key, if he had only known it, was in the pocket of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, just then busy wheeling a damaged bike along Rylcombe Lane.

"Get the door open, old man," said Herries.

"Can't! The key's gone."

"Didn't you find it in the changingroom?" asked Tom Merry.

"İt wasn't

there."

"Where the thump did you drop it, then?"

Blake snorted.

"I didn't drop it anywhere. Some thumping ass has been larking. It must have been bagged from my pocket when I lett

my jacket in the changing-room."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Tom.
"Then Gussy is a giddy prisoner until the key turns up!"

"Bother Gussy! I'm not thinking about Gussy! I'm thinking about my tea."

"Same here!" said Dig, with deep feel-

ing.

"I want to know who played that little joke with the key," growled Blake. "I'm going to give him a thick ear and a prize nose for his little joke. Was it one of you silly owls?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned

Lowther.

"Well, it must have been somebody who knew that the key was in my pocket," said

Blake suspiciously.

The Terrible Three grinned. Their impression was that Blake had lost the key—an impression that was shared by Herries and Dig. Blake, indeed, would have



Arthur Augustus detached the pump from his damaged machine, to use as a defensive weapon, if needed. "Keep your distance, my man!" he said icily. "I warn you that I shall hurt you if you attempt any violence!" (See Chapter 4.)

thought so, too, had the key been in anybody's pocket but his own. That made all the difference.

"I say, it's jolly odd that D'Arcy doesn't answer," said Clive. "He can't be asleep in the armchair, after all this shindy."

"Sulking!" growled Blake.

"Does he sulk?" asked Monty Lowther, with an air of surprise. "I thought you said—"

"Never mind what you thought—if you can think at all!" snapped Blake. "Look here, I want that key."

Sidney Clive tapped at the study door.

"D'Arcy, old man!" he called out.

No answer.

"Oh, he won't speak, he's on his jolly old dignity," grunted Herries.

"I-I suppose he can't be ill, or anything."

"What rot!" growled Blake.

"Well, it's jolly odd."

Blake & Co. looked at one another. Really, it was very odd that Arthur Augustus did not answer—if he were in the study. A number of fellows were gathering, interested by the siege of Study No. 6—and Baggy Trimble proceeded to make a cheerful suggestion.

"Perhaps he's dead!" suggested Baggy.

" What!" roared Blake.

"You silly owl!"

"Shut up!"

"Well, you locked him in," said Trimble argumentatively. "He called to me when I passed the study, but I couldn't let him out. He may have tried climbing out of the window."

" Eh?"

"If he did, ten to one he fell and broke

his neck," said the cheerful Baggy.

The next moment there was a terrific yell in the passage, as Jack Blake grasped Trimble, and jammed his bullet head against the wall. That was Blake's way of testifying his thanks for Baggy's enlivening suggestions.

"Ow! Wow! Yaroooh!" roared Trimble. "Leggo! Wharrer you at, you

beast? Ow!"

"Got any more suggestions to make?" demanded Blake ferociously.

" Yaroooh!"

Trimble had no more suggestions to make. He was busy for some time afterwards rubbing his head.

"Perhaps-" began Levison of the

ourth.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"I was going to suggest—" went on Levison mildly.

" Rot!"

" But I think-"

" Rubbish!"

Levison laughed.

"All the same, it occurs to me that D'Arcy may have called out to some fellow passing, and that that fellow may have bagged the key from your jacket, and let him out."

"Oh!" ejaculated Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry.

"That's it, of course. Gassy isn't in the study at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rot!" said Blake. "If the door had been unlocked, the key would be in the lock, wouldn't it? Gussy couldn't have locked the door on the inside if he were outside—and if he locked it outside, the key would be here."

"Unless Gussy walked it off!" grinned

Cardew.

"He wouldn't."

"Looks as if he did."

"Oh, you're a silly ass, Cardew!"

"Thanks, old bean! Same to you, and many of them."

"It's pretty clear," said Tom Merry.

"May be clear to you," said Blake obstinately. "That's the kind of intelligence you've got in the Shell, I believe."

"Look here, Blake-"

"Oh, rats!"

Blake was quite fixed in his opinion; not because it was a specially well-founded opinion, but because it was his opinion. It was, so to speak, a poor thing, but his own!

"Look here, old man, Gussy can't be

in the study," said Dig.

" Rot!"

"Somebody let him out, and he's walked off with the key," said Herries.

" Rubbish!"

"Look here, Blake---"

" Piffle!"

Blake thumped on the door again.

"D'Arcy, you silly owl, speak up! Answer, you silly image! I'll jolly wel! mop up the study with you!"

No reply.

"He's not there!" said Manners.

" Fathead!"

Blake breathed hard.

"I tell you he's gone, and taken the key!" howled Herries. "It's just as Levison said."

"Levison's a silly ass, and you're another!" hooted Blake. "I tell you be hasn't! If Gussy's gone out and taken that key, I'll eat the key, and Gussy, too—so there!"

" Bai Jove!"

It was the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—and the juniors in the passage spun round, to stare at the swell of St. Jim's, as he came elegantly along the passage from the stairs.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER Tea in Study No. 6

A RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY jammed his celebrated monocle into his noble eye, and regarded the crowd of juniors. They stared at him—Blake looking at him as if he could, as he had declared, eat him!

"Gussy!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"As large as life, and twice as natural!" chuckled Lowther. "Looks as if he wasn't in the study, after all, Blake."

" Ha, ha, ha!"

"You — you — you image!" gasped Blake.

"Weally, Blake-"

"Where have you been?" shrieked Blake.

"I have been to Wylcombe, Blake, as I mentioned to you that I should, to keep a vewy important appointment with my tailah," answered Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Where's the key of the study?"

demanded Herries.

D'Arcy smiled.

"Heah it is, deah boy."

"You-you-you took it away with

you?" hooted Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! You locked me in, so I locked you out," assented D'Arcy. "One good turn deserves anothah, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake seemed to be in a speechless state. He glared at his noble chum with an expression that an angry lion might have envied.

"Play up, Blake!" grinned Monty Lowther.

" Eh?"

"Weren't you going to eat the key, and D'Arcy, too, if-""

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

Blake strode into Study No. 6, Herries having unlocked and opened the door. Apparently he was not going to make good his rather hasty words!

"Twot in, deah boys," said Arthur

Augustus to the Terrible Three. "You are teain' with us, I think."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You've kept us waiting," he said.

"Yaas, wathah—that serves you wight," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "You were a partay to that cheekay infwingement of my personal liberty this aftahnoon. If my young bwothah Wally had not come along and let me out, I should have been pwevented fwom keepin' a vewy important appointment. I should be vewy angwy with you, but I excuse you as bein' wathah thoughtless youngstahs."

"Oh, my hat!"

The grinning crowd in the passage broke up, and the guests went into Study No. 6. Blake, in a state of suppressed wrath, was lighting the fire, and Herries and Digby sorted the good things out of the study cupboard. Tom Merry & Co. made themselves useful, as guests generally did in junior studies—Tom filled the kettle at the tap in the passage; Manners sliced the loaf; Lowther went to No. 10 in the Shell for extra crocks.

Tea was soon going on in Study No. 6—and hot tea and toast and poached eggs had an ameliorating influence on the hungry juniors. Blake forgot that he was angry, and said no more of mopping up the study with his aristocratic chum. He even asked Arthur Augustus whether he had been "spotted" out of bounds.

"Not at all, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus cheerily. "I am wathah a

cautious chap, you know."

"You were jolly Jucky," said Tom Merry. "It turns out that Mr. Lathom was in the village this afternoon."

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"Yaas, wathah! I met him."

"You met Lathom?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Then he knows you went out of gates?"

"Not at all; you see, I was equal to the occasion. Bein' a fellow of tact and judgment, you know—"

"Oh, can it," said Blake. "How did you dodge Lathom in Rylcombe, fathead?"

"Weally, Blake-"

"He's rather a short-sighted little ass," remarked Herries. "Mean to say you met him and he didn't see you?"

D'Arcy chuckled.

"He saw me all wight! I walked out of Mr. Wiggs' shop wight undah his nose."

"Then how-"

With great enjoyment, Arthur Augustus proceeded to explain the remarkable dodge by which he had escaped recognition by Mr. Lathom.

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, my hat!" said Blake, at last, "I always knew you were a bit balmy in the crumpet, Gussy! But this is the limit!"

"Weally, you ass-"

"I wish I'd been there with my camera!" sighed Manners.

" Ha, ha, ha!"

- "I wegard it as a jollay clevah stunt," exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly. "I hardly think that you fellows would have thought of it."
- "Right on the wicket!" agreed Blake. "It needs an intellect like yours to think of a stunt like that. Suppose Lathom had recognised you, and reported you to the Head for walking about Rylcombe in a false moustache."
- "Oh, my only sainted aunt!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What would the Head have said?"
- "Mr. Lathom did not wecognise me, so it is all wight," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Everythin' went off all wight, except that I had an accident comin' home, and damaged my bike—or wathah, it was damaged by a vewy impudent, dishonest wascal."

And D'Arcy related the incident of the itinerant merchant and the barrow.

- "Gussy all over!" commented Blake.
 "Some fellows are born to trouble as the giddy sparks fly upwards. So you were seen out of gates, after all."
- "That wascally fellow is not likely to weport the circumstance to my Formmastah, Blake."

"Nunno! But suppose he comes after you for damages to his jolly old barrow?

Then it will come out that you were out of gates this afternoon."

Arthur Augustus chuckled.

- "That is all wight! You see, I was still disguised when it happened, and the fellow can't know that I am a schoolboy at all. He could not possibly wecognise me if he saw me without that moustache and that old coat and cap."
 - "But suppose---"
- "It is no good supposin' things, Blake. You can wely on a fellow of tact and judgment to look aftah himself."
 - "Suppose---" said Tom.
 - "Wubbish, deah boy."
 - " But-" said Dig.
- "My deah chap, if I see that wascally man anywhah neah St. Jim's, I shall give him a feahful thwashin'," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am wathah sowwy that I did not thwash him on the spot. Still, as he was twice as big as I am, pewwaps it would have been wathah a twouble,"
 - "Perhaps it would!" chuckled Tom.
 - " Ha, ha, ha!"
- "My idea," said Blake, "is that we'd better go to the Third Form-room and lynch Wally. What right had he to let out our tame lunatic when we'd locked him up safely for the afternoon?"
 - "You uttah ass!"
- "Next thing to happen will be that merchant coming along and claiming damages for his barrow," said Blake, with conviction. "Then it will come out that Gussy was out of gates, and that he was sporting a false moustache, and so on. It will be a Head's licking, at least. Well, Gussy can't say that his pals didn't do their best for him."
 - "He can't!" agreed Herries.
- "We locked him in," said Dig. "We couldn't do more. You'll admit that yourself, Gussy."

To which Arthur Augustus' reply was monosyllabic:

" Wats!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER The Lawyer's Letter!

S HAKESPEARE has told us that "the evil that men do lives after them." Certainly, even the most careless action is fated to produce its consequences, which may come home to roost, as it were, in the most unexpected ways. Thus it was with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. A careless kick may start a snowball rolling downhill-and it may be an avalanche by the time it lands in the valley.

By breaking bounds on that Wednesday afternoon Arthur Augustus had started the ball roll-

ing—and the matter was by no means ended, as he supposed, when he sat down to tea in Study No. 6 with his friends.

The matter, indeed, if Gussy had only known it, was very far from ended—very far indeed.

Gussy's disregard of his Form-master's authority remained undiscovered—rather to the surprise of his friends. Mr. Lathom evidently had not recognised the moustached young man who had brushed by him in Mr. Wiggs' shop. The moustache was now disposed in the "property-box" of the junior Dramatic Society; the old coat and cap returned to Mr. Wiggs. Arthur Augustas D'Arcy went on the even tenor of his way, unconscious that the affair was not yet ended, and that a sword of Damocles was suspended over his aristocratic head.

Yet so it was!

When, to while away the idle minutes



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, celebrated monocle jammed into his noble eye, regarded the crowd of juniors. They stared at him—Blake looking as if he could eat him! "Where's the key of the study?" demanded Herries. (See Chapter 6.)

when locked in Study No. 6, Arthur Augustus had carelessly read of the "proceedings" in Wayland County Court, and the legal arguments of Mr. Gobble, solicitor, on the subject of strayed donkeys, he had little dreamed that he would ever hear personally from the said Mr. Gobble, or make any nearer acquaintance with Wayland County Court or his Honour who presided therein.

Yet it was Mr. Gobble, and the Arm of the Law, that loomed over Gussy's unsuspecting and innocent head. That false moustache, which had given Arthur Augustus the appearance of a young man instead of a schoolboy, was to have its consequences.

On the following day, D'Arcy had dismissed the matter from his mind, as a thing finished and done with.

There were plenty of other matters to occupy his thoughts—such as the waistcoat which was to come along from Mr. Wiggs.

and a new silk hat of which he was contemplating the purchase, and the approaching football matches with Greyfriars and Rookwood.

So when a letter arrived for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on Friday morning, he was far from connecting it in his mind with the incident of Wednesday afternoon.

The letters were generally placed in the rack for the St. Jim's fellows to take in the morning break; and it was on coming out from second lesson that D'Arcy found the missive.

Blake jerked it down from the rack and threw it to him.

"Here you are, Gussy; one for you."

"Thank you, deah boy! I twust that this is a wemittance fwom my patah," said Arthur Augustus.

"It's not from Lord Eastwood-it's

typed.'

"Oh! Pwobably a bill fwom Blankley's at Wayland, for the new tyre for my bike," said Arthur Augustus, his interest in the epistle diminishing at once.

He glanced at the letter.

It was addressed in rather an unusual manner: "Mr. D'Arcy, St. James' School, Sussex," in typewriting.

It looked like a business letter, and D'Arcy had no doubt that it was from Blankley's Stores, especially as the postmark was Wayland.

He slit the envelope with his little pearlhandled penknife—no earthly consideration would have induced Arthur Augustus to open it by jamming in his thumb—and drew out a folded sheet.

He opened the folded sheet, and found that it was a typed letter.

"Bai Jove! This doesn't look like a bill!" he remarked.

"Perhaps it's a reminder that you haven't paid a few bills!" suggested Blake. "You often forget little things like that."

D'Arcy did not answer.

His eyes were glued on the letter, and an expression of the greatest astonishment had come over his face.

He did not seem to hear Blake, and he

did not heed the curious glances of his chums.

The typed letter held him spellbound.
"Anything wrong, old chap?" asked
Digby, at last.

D'Arcy broke silence.

"Bai Jove! The wogue!"

" What?"

" The wascal!"

" Eh?"

"The weptile!"

"Who?" yelled Blake.

"The wuffian!"

"Great pip! What---"

"The wank outsidah! I will not pay him a shillin'."

" Pay whom?" roared Herries.

"Not a penny!"
"But what—"

"Not a farthin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "I wefuse to pay the scoundwel anythin." I would not even give him a German mark."

"What on earth-"

"The scoundwel!"

"Well, I don't know what's in that letter," remarked Blake. "But I think it's just as well that the Housemaster didn't look into it. The beaks look at the letters sometimes."

"The Housemastah would not be likely to look at my lettahs, Blake. I am not a fellow like Wacke or Cwooke, who might be gettin' all sorts of things by post. I am twusted!" said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Well, what's in the letter?"

"Yes, let's hear it, old chap!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble, who was looking on with the keenest interest; the circumstance that the matter did not concern him in the very least making Baggy extremely keen to know what the mysterious missive contained.

"Wats! Go and eat coke, Twimble."

"But what is it?" howled Blake.

"Pway come out into the quad, deah boys, and I will show you the lettah," said Arthur Augustus. "I do not wish this wascally wapscallion's impudence to be talked all ovah the school."

"Oh, my hat!"

D'Arcy slipped the letter into his pocket, and walked out of the House with his friends.

Baggy Trimble, burning with curiosity, followed on.

The chums of Study No. 6 walked across to the elms, as a secluded spot where they could examine the letter unwatched by inquisitive eyes.

Trimble rolled after them.

"Now," said Blake, stopping at one of the old oaken benches under the elms, "buck up and let's have it before the bell rings."

"There's that cad Trimble!" said

Herries.

" I-I say-"

Three pairs of hands grasped the inquisitive Trimble. The chums of the Fourth did not waste any words on him. It was a time for action, not for words.

Bang!

Trimble's bullet head smote the trunk of an elm. The concussion did not damage the elm; but it seemed to damage Trimble, for it elicited a frantic yell from him.

" Yaroooh!"

Bang!

"Whooop! Yow-owooop!"
"Now hook it!" said Blake.
"Ow! wow! ow! Yoooogggh!"
Baggy Trimble fled for his life.

"Now hand out the giddy epistle," said Blake, and the juniors sat down in a row on the oaken bench for the perusal.

"It's a lawyer's lettah, deah boys-"

" Wh-a-t.!"

"Containin' a thweat of legal pwoceed-in's---"

"Great pip!"

" Look !"

Arthur Augustus handed the letter over, and Blake & Co., in a state of breathless surprise and dismay, perused it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER Legal Proceedings !

A RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY sat bolt upright, his eyeglass screwed firmly into his eye, a stern and grim expression on his aristocratic countenance. Any other Fourth Form fellow, having received a lawyer's

letter containing a threat of legal proceed-

ings, might have been dismayed.

There was no doubt that Blake & Co. were dismayed, though they were not the recipients of the letter. Not so Gussy! His feeling was scornful indignation, and he was not in the least dismayed or frightened. While his comrades perused the letter, D'Arcy repeated the word "weptile" to himself several times, apparently finding comfort in it.

Blake & Co. read the letter together, with blank faces. It ran:

MESSRS. GAMMON AND GOBBLE.
Solicitors.

13, Sharp Street,

Wayland.

Dear Sir,—We have been consulted by our client, Mr. William Hooker, of Migg's Mews, Wayland, with reference to the accident in Rylcombe Lane on the 13th inst.

Our client states that you, while riding a bicycle at a dangerous speed on a public highway, crashed into his barrow, upsetting the same, and spilling the contents, causing damage to the extent of £4 19s. 6d.

Our client's claim is for this amount, and unless we receive from you a remittance for the sum of £4 19s. 6d. by Saturday, the 16th inst., proceedings for the recovery thereof will be taken without further notice or delay.

Yours faithfully,
GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

Jack Blake read that precious epistle through twice, and then looked hopelessly at Herries and Dig. Herries and Dig returned his look with equal hopelessness. They were, as they might have expressed it, knocked into a cocked hat. Much trouble had been gathered up by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at various times, owing to that characteristic of his which he described as the firmness of a rock, and his chums as the obstinacy of a mule. But this, as it were, put the lid on.

"Proceedings!" said Dig faintly "That

means the County Court, doesn't it?"?

"It means some court or other," said Herries, with an air of wisdom. "I don't know what court, but some court where an old codger sits in a wig."

"There's a court called the High Court," said Blake. "I think that's where they wear wigs. But I don't know whether

there's a High Court in Wayland."

"Jolly low court, if this kind of spoof goes on in it," said Dig, with a feeble

attempt at humour.

"Must be a County Court," said Blake decidedly. "Couldn't be a High Court case for upsetting a barrow. I believe there's a cash limit of some sort in these things—under so much you go to a County Court, and over so much you go to the High Court. In High Courts you have barristers in wigs; in County Courts you have solicitors with bald heads. I think that's the chief difference."

"But what's going to be done?" asked

Herries helplessly.

"Looks to me as if Gussy is going to be done," said Dig, with another attempt to relieve the strained situation with a little humour.

Blake frowned. It was no time for humour.

"Don't you be funny, Dig. This is a jolly serious matter. This man Hooker, mentioned in the letter, must be the man Gussy upset on his bike the other day."

"The thirteenth instant!" said Herries.

"That was Wednesday."

- "I did not upset the man, deah boys—he upset me," said Arthur Augustus, with calmness.
- "How are you going to prove that?" asked Dig.

"I twust my word will be sufficient, Dig."

"Rot!" said Blake. "They don't take people's word in courts of law. Lawyers are an awfully fishy lot; they don't believe anything unless it's sworn."

"I am pwepared to swear to the twuth,

Blake."

"Oh, yes; but the other party will swear, too," said Blake. "He must be a rogue, or he wouldn't be making the claim at all, if the matter happened as you've told us."

"I twust, Blake, that you do not doubt my word, whatevah the judge in the County Court may do," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Of course not, ass," said Blake irritably. "But what I believe doesn't count. I must say that you are a rare egg for land-

ing yourself in trouble." "Weally, Blake"

"I've heard about these people, Gammon and Gobble," said Blake, staring at the letter. "I've seen them in the local paper—they do a lot in the County Court. One of those shady firms of solicitors who will take up anything if there's any money in it."

"Bai Jove! They must believe this man Hooker's statement, Blake, or they would

surely not act as his legal advisers."

Blake snorted.

"Lot you know about the law! They'll get about half of what Hooker gets out of you, if he gets anything, and that's all they jolly well care about."

"If that is the case, Blake, it is a shockin' state of affaihs, and they are weally worse weptiles than Hookah himself."

"Better tell the judge that!" said Blake sarcastically. "It would get a verdict in

your favour-I don't think."

"The man is a wascal!" said D'Arcy. "He wushed his bawwow wight into my bike, you know. I put on the bwakes, but it was too late. And only some cwockewy was bwoken—pwobably a few shillin's worth. This claim for four pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence is actually dishonest."

"That's got to be proved, and his word is as good as yours," said Blake. "If he has a solicitor to speak for him, the legal johnny will turn you inside out, and make you contradict yourself a dozen times."

"Wats!"

"We locked you in the study to keep you out of mischief, and this is what comes of it," said Blake, more in sorrow than in anger.

"If you had not locked me in the studay, Blake, it would not have happened at all. I should have walked to Wylcombe if I had started earliah. As I was late, I went on my bike."

"You're bound to argue, of course," said Blake. "Never heard of such a chap for arguing."

" Weally, Blake "

"What about getting legal advice?" asked Dig, struck by a bright thought. "Gussy could go to Gammon and Gobble as well as this man Hooker."

Blake sniffed.

"Lawyers don't act for both sides at once," he said. "They whack out a case with another firm, to make more trade."

"Well, there's other solicitors in Wayland—there's Grabb & Co.," said Dig.

"Gussy can go to Grabb's."

"And pile up legal expenses!" said Blake derisively. "Gobble on one side, and Grabb on the other, would play battledore and shuttlecock with Gussy."

"Then what's going to be done?"

"Goodness knows!"

"The man is a wascal," said Arthur Augustus. "Although he was uttahly in the wong, and to blame for the acci-

dent, I offahed him ten shillin's for his

loss."

"That did it!" grunted Blake. "It made him think you were a soft ass with money to chuck away. If you'd kicked him instead, you'd never have heard from this giddy lawyer."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"There's another thing," went "If they Blake. make a case of this, they may or may not spoof you out of the money; but it's a dead cert that Mr. Lathom and the Head will hear of it. Then it will come out that you were out of bounds on Wednesday."

"Yaas, that is wathah wotten."

"But Gussy can't pay these rogues!" exclaimed Herries excitedly. "Dash it all, a fellow oughtn't to pay money he doesn't owe. It's wrong."

"Besides, has Gussy got the tin?" asked

Dig.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"At the pwesent moment, deah boyc, I have about fifteen shillin's," he said.

" That's that!" grunted Blake.

"It makes no diffewence, deah boys. If it were a hangin' mattah, I would not allow these weptiles to fwighten money out of me," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wegard this pwactically as blackmail—and I shail not hesitate to tell the judge so."

"That might mean chokey for contempt

of court, or something of the kind."

"I am bound to tell the twuth, Blake."

"We won't lock you in the study—we'll tie you hand and foot, if you think of going to the County Court," said Blake darkly,

"Weally, Blake "



Trimble's bullet head smote the trunk of an elm. The concussion did not damage the elm; but it seemed to damage Trimble, for it elicited a frantic yell from him. "Yarooh!" (See Chapter 7.)

Blake rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I don't believe you can sue minors at all," he said. "You're a schoolboy, rising fifteen—I don't believe you can be sued."

"But Gammon and Gobble must know the law, as they live on it," said Herries. "They think Gussy can be sued."

Blake jumped.

"That giddy moustache!" he exclaimed.

" What?"

"You remember that howling ass had fixed himself up with a false moustache to spoof Lathom," exclaimed Blake. "Of course, that rogue Hocker took him for a young man over twenty-one—and he's told Gammon and Gobble so. They can't know he's a schoolboy here. Most likely they think Mr. D'Arcy, of St. James' School, is a Form-master, or a secretary, or the Head's clerk, or something."

" Gweat Scott!"

Herries and Digby stared. Then they

grinned.

"That's it!" said Dig. "I say, doesn't that let Gussy out! If they can't sue him, it's no good Hooker going into court and telling lies, is it! Fancy his face, when Gussy walked in, in Etons."

Blake chuckled.

But he became grave again at once.

"Only the Head would know, and what would he say—and do? It would come out that Gussy broke bounds on Wednesday."

Clang!

"Hallo, there's third lesson," said Blake, rising from the bench. "We shall have to think this over, you chaps."

"I have decided what to do, deah boys."

"Oh, my hat! And what's that?"

"I wegard this man Hookah as a wascal, and I considah that his solicitors, in takin' up such a case, have acted like wascals also. I feel bound to tell them so, and point out to them that their conduct is unworthy of their pwofession," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps a word in season may induce them to weflect on the wascality of their conduct, and cause them to take to some more weputable method of gettin' a livin'. I feel bound to speak to them plainly."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The bell's stopped," said Herries.

And the juniors rushed for the School House, and Arthur Augustus' complicated legal affairs had to be dismissed, while attention—more or less—was devoted to third lesson with Mr. Lathom.

THE NINTH CHAPTER Looking After Gussy!

"Warland one-two-one, please!"
Arthur Augustus spoke into the receiver.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther stared.

The scene was the prefects' room in the School House, where there was a telephone. The Sixth Form were at games practice, and for the present the Prefects' Room was deserted by its rightful owners. Monty Lowther had taken advantage of that circumstance to visit the sacred apartment, with the playful intention of spreading the contents of a bottle of gum, mixed with purple marking-ink, in an armchair specially favoured by Knox of the Sixth. Tom Merry and Manners had followed him there, with the intention of dragging him away by main force—it being the opinion of Monty's chums that they had enough trouble with Knox of the Sixth without asking for any more.

The Terrible Three were, therefore, in the room, when they were surprised to see Arthur Augustus walk in, and take the receiver off the telephone, which was supposed to be used only by those great men of the Sixth who had been appointed prefects.

D'Arcy did not see the Shell fellows for a moment, but he discerned them as he waited for his number, receiver in hand.

"You fellows heah?" he said. "Pway don't make a wow—I am goin' to telephone."

"'Phone away," said Lowther cheerily.
"I'm going to put some gum and purple ink in Knoxev's chair."

"You're not!" hooted Tom Merry and Manners.

" Look here-"

"You look here-"

"Pway don't make a wow, you chaps —leave it till aftah I've 'phoned," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm gettin' my numbah."

"Buck up, then," said Lowther.

"I shall not be vewy long tellin' off those

scoundwels, deah boy."

"Eh? What? Telephoning to scoundrels, are you?" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "What sort of jolly old acquaintances have you been making outside the school?"

"I am not acquainted with the scoundwels personally, Tom Mewwy. But pway excuse me—they're speakin'."

D'Arcy gave his attention to the instrument; the Terrible Three watching him with interest and amazement. Monty Lowther even forgot his intended jape on Gerald Knox.

"Is that Wayland one-two-one?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Messrs Gammon and Gobble, solicitors?"

" Mr. Gammon's clerk speaking."

"Pway ask Mr. Gammon, or Mr. Gobble, to come to the 'phone. Mr. D'Arcy speaking."

"'Ang on, please."

A deeper and more rasping voice came along the wires.

" Hallo! Well?"

"Is that Mr. Gammon or Mr. Gobble?"

"Mr. Gobble speaking. Is that Mr. D'Arcy, to whom we wrote a letter on account of our client Mr. Hooker?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Very good. If your remittance is received at this office by to-morrow morning, the matter closes."

"My wemittance will not be weceived at your office to-mowwow mornin', Mr.

Gobble."

"I cannot say, for the moment, whether my client would object to a day or two's delay. However——"

" My wemittance will not be weceived at

your office at all, you wascal."

" Eh?"

"I have wung you up, Mr. Gobble, to tell

you that I wegard you as an unscwupulous wogue."

"What?"

"If you are any judge of chawactah, sir, you must be fully aware that the man Hookah is a wascal—he looks it all ovah," said Arthur Augustus, warm with indignation. "And befoah askin' me for such a sum as four pounds nineteen and sixpence, it was your duty to ascertain whethah Hookah had weally suffahed such a loss. His loss was weally only a few shillings, and it was entirely his own fault."

"Our client states-"

"It was up to you to vewify his statement befoah sendin' a demand for money to me, Mr. Gobble."

"Upon my word! We are solicitors in this office, Mr. D'Arcy, not judges of the County Court."

" Wats!"

" Eh?"

"My opinion is that you are the kind of wascal who will take up any kind of case so long as you can make some pwofit out of it."

"Upon my word!"

- "I do not believe you care twopence whethah Hookah is twyin' to swindle me or not, so long as you get your wotten fees!" howled Arthur Augustus excitedly, into the transmitter.
- "That is a matter for the court to decide, Mr. D'Arcy. This language—"

"Wascal!"
"Sir!"

" Wogue!"

- "No doubt you are aware, sir, of the difficulty of proving the utterance of injurious expressions on the telephone. If you venture to repeat these expressions verbally, in the presence of witnesses, or in writing, you will very quickly hear from us," said Mr. Gobble.
- "I should disdain to set foot in your office, which I wegard as a den of thieves, or I would wide ovah to Wayland and tell you what I think of you!" retorted Arthur Augustus. "But if you think I am afwaid to expwess my opinion othahwise than on the

and post it to you."

"I trust that you will do so, Mr. D'Arcy! I fervently hope that you will venture to do so."

" Wogue!"

"I certainly hope-"

" Weptile!"

Mr. Gobble rang off. Whether he recognised these epithets as suitable descriptions of himself, or not, he seemed to have had enough of them.

"Sneakin' wascal!" went on D'Arcy. "Are you there, you wottah? Are you there, you weptile? Bai Jove! He has wung

off!"

D'Arcy jammed the receiver on the hooks.

"My hat!" gasped Tom Merry, in surprise and consternation. "Gussy, old man -what-what-what-

"What's this game?" yelled Manners.

"I am sowwy I cannot stop now, deah boys, as I want to catch the post with a lettah to Gammon and Gobble."

Arthur Augustus walked out of the prefects' room. Tom Merry & Co. stared blankly at one another.

"What can it all mean?" stuttered Tom Merry. "Has Gussy landed himself into

trouble with a firm of solicitors?"

"Looks like it," grinned Lowther. "Let's go and look for Blake-he will have to muzzle Gussy, if the dear boy's going to write libellous letters to lawyers. Lawyers ain't safe to play with."

"What-ho!" grinned Manners.

And the Terrible Three rushed away in search of Blake & Co. When they found them, there was another rush to Study No. 6 -where the juniors found Arthur Augustus sitting at the table, pen in hand, with a stern frown on his brow.

He waved the pen at them.

"Pway don't come in now, deah boys. haven't finished w'iting this lettah-

"Do you think we're going to let you finish?" roared Blake.

" Weally, you know--

Tom Merry glanced at the unfinished letter It began:

telephone, I will certainly put it into writing & A RACE TO SAVE A LIFE!

RARLY in the reign of King Charles the news of the capture and impending doom of Captain Peters, the "hightohyman," who for two years had harried the country's highways.

At the trial, the captain had implicated an alleged confederate, one Mountjoy, wellknown by sight to the St. Jim's boys, an l hitherto regarded as a man entirely above suspicion. It may be imagined, therefore, how tongues wagged, on the day that both were to suffer the extreme penalty of the law in the market-place of Wayland.

These thoughts were uppermost in the minds of Lovat, Fraser and Gregory, of the St. Jim's lower school, as, taking a beforebrekker stroll down Rylcombe Lane, they came upon a riderless horse. A second glance revealed the horse's owner, half in and half out of the ditch, blood on forehead and hands, clothes slashed to ribbons. Feebly he waved a roll of parchment, tapetied, and, as they saw when they stooped over him, sealed with the Royal Seal.

"Take it!" he gasped. "Wayland-at once! Life or death! Mountjoy is innocent!

Take it—the reprieve!"

Disjointedly he explained how horsemen had ambushed him on his journey from London, but had taken fright at some alarm and ridden away like the wind. They had wanted the parchment which he now pressed into Lovat's hand.

"The reprieve! They wanted it-to

alter-name-to Peters!"

Now Lovat was a junior of resource, and a boy of action. Almost before his companions had grasped the situation, he leaped into the saddle, and disappeared in a whirl of dust down the road. How Lovat brought the reprieve to the foot of the scaffold as the hangman's noose dangled over Mountjoy's head is now a matter of history. And in the St. Jim's museum is a treasured item -a schoolboy's jacket, pierced with three bullet-holes, as evidence of a last determined attempt by Captain Peter's friends to wrest the reprieve into their own hands.

Dear Sir,—Referring to our conversation on the telephone, I repeat that you are a reptile and a rogue—

That was as far as Gussy had got. He was not destined to proceed any farther.

Blake grabbed up the letter, and tossed

it into the study fire.

Then six pairs of hands were laid on Arthur Augustus.

He was jerked out of his chair, yelling.

It was no time for half-measures. Obviously, Arthur Augustus had to be saved from himself. In the grasp of his comrades he was swung up over the study carpet.

Bump!

"Yawooop!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"You're going to promise us not to write any letters to anybody without special permission," said Blake.

"I wefuse---"

Bump!

"Oh, cwikey!"

"Promise?"

" Nevah!" yelled Arthur Augustus. Bump!

namb i

"Oh, cwumbs! Leggo!"

"We'll keep this up as long as you do," said Blake. "Give him another."

Bump!

Arthur Augustus was of the stuff that heroes are made of. He stood it manfully till the sixth bump on the carpet.

Then-with what breath he had left-he

gave the required promise.

Messrs. Gammon & Gobble never received from Mr. D'Arcy a written confirmation of the conversation on the telephone!

THE TENTH CHAPTER Gussy's Way!

"Workying, old scout?"

W Tom Merry asked that question, as he came on Arthur Augustus after morn-

ing classes on Saturday.

Tom's impression was that any fellow who had received a lawyer's letter threatening proceedings in the County Court would naturally be somewhat perturbed thereby. So he was sympathetic.

But the swell of St. Jim's shook his head.

" Not at all, deah boy," he answered.

"Hem! It's rather serious, isn't it?" asked Tom, "Blake seems to think so."

"Yaas, it is wathah a wowwy," said Arthur Augustus. "It is vewy shockin' to find that there are such wogues as this man Hookah in existence. I wondah how he can possibly have been bought up."

" Oh!"

"His mowal twainin' must have been feahfully neglected, you know," said Arthur Augustus seriously.

"Looks like it," grinned Tom.

"He has actually made a false statement, with wegard to the value of the things that were bwoken when he wan the bawwow into my bike," said Arthur Augustus. "Fancy a man makin' a false statement for the purpose of extortin' money."

"Beastly!" agreed Tom.

"But the wemarkable thing is, that the law should be at the service of such a wogue," said D'Arcy. "I should have thought that it was the pwovince of the law to lock him up somewhah."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I am thinkin' out what steps to take, you know. As you sillay duffahs pwevented me fwom w'itin' to those wogues Gammon and Gobble, I think pewwaps I ought to call on them."

"You ass---"

" Weally, Tom Mewwy-"

"Keep clear of them," urged Tom. "The whole thing may be let drop. Unscrupulous people will bung a solicitor's letter at a chap to rattle him—and if he won't be rattled, they let it go at that. Even a rogue jibs at telling whoppers on oath, you know, in a court of law—might get put in chokey for it. If matters are as you say—and, of course, they are—then Hooker would be committing what they call perjury—a jolly serious thing. Most likely he wouldn't dare go so far as that. Looks to me as if that rotten letter was simply sent to scare money out of you—you having given Hooker the impression that you were—ahem!—a bit soft."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Possibly, deah boy! I weally do not see

why he should suppose me to be soft, howevah."

" Hem!"

"But if that is the case, deah boy, isn't it a feahfully shockin' thing that Gammon & Gobble should w'ite such a lettah!"

"Well, they're a shady firm," said Tom.
"I believe they've got a rather juicy reputation in Wayland. Black sheep in every flock, you know. They're not all like your pater's jolly old family solicitor, you know, Gussy."

"If evah I become Lord Chancellah---"

" Eh?"

"If evan I become Lord Chancellah, I shall make a law that any man who sends a solicitor's lettah demandin' money shall be bound to take the case to court whethal he wants to or not," said Arthur Augustus.

"Good!" said Tom. "Make a note of that—you might forget it by the time you

become Lord Chancellor."

And Tom Merry joined in punting a footer, leaving Arthur Augustus to meditate upon his legal affairs, and upon the changes he would make, for the better, if—and when—he became Lord Chancellor.

Blake & Co. were very far from sharing Gussy's equanimity. The letter from Gammon & Gobble caused much perturbation

of mind in Study No. 6.

But when Saturday passed without anything further being heard from that delectable firm, Blake & Co. were relieved, and the matter faded a little from their minds. It faded still more on Sunday; but on Monday it was revived.

For on Monday there came another letter for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the typed superscription of which announced whence it

came.

The letter was taken up to Study No. 6 to be opened, and the Terrible Three were called in. Six anxious faces surrounded Arthur Augustus as he opened the letter.

Only the noble countenance of Arthur Augustus himself was calm and equable. If Mr. Hooker was, as Tom suspected, simply seeking to scare Gussy with the arm of the law, he was not succeeding. Arthur Augustus might be a little "soft" in some

respects; but he certainly was not to be frightened.

"It's from those rotters," said Blake.
"They're keeping on, you see, Tom Merry.
I fancied they would."

"Let's see what they say."

Seven juniors read the letter together.

MESSRS, GAMMON AND GOBBLE. Solicitors,

13, Sharp Street, Wayland.

Sir,—We have seen our client with regard to the statement made by you on the telephone, and he informs us that the facts are not as stated by you.

He informs us that the accident was caused wholly by you, and further that he refused the sum of 10s. offered by you in compensation for damage to his property, the amount of his loss being approximately £5.

Unless, therefore, we receive by return of post your remittance for £4 19s. 6d., proceedings will be taken without further notice, and we shall be glad to learn the name and address of the solicitors who will accept service on your behalf.

Yours faithfully,

GAMMON AND GOBBLE.

"Getting thick, isn't it?" said Blake.

"Thicker and thicker!" said Digby.
"Gussy's for it!" said Herries dismally.
"Look here, if we had a whip round, we could raise the tin, and get Gussy out of this."

D'Arcy shook his head decidedly.

" Not a shillin', Hewwies."

"But you can't go to the County Court, you ass!"

"I would go to the Old Bailey, if necessawy, wathan than allow that wascal to dwaw a shillin' fwom me."

"Oh, dear!"

"These wogues are actually impertinent," said Arthur Augustus, tapping the letter with his noble finger. "They say that the facts are not as stated by me. That is the same as sayin' that I have been speakin'

untwithfully. No gentleman would use such language."

"They're rank outsiders, of course,"

said Tom Merry. "But-

"But what's going to be done?" groaned Blake.

"I have alweady decided, deah boy, am goin' to give that man Hookah a feahful thwashin'."

"Fathead!"

"I am also goin' to call at 13, Sharp Street, Wayland, and buy a horsewhip on my way there-

"What?"

"The pwopah way of dealin' with these wogues is with a horsewhip," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "That is what I am goin' to

"Oh, erumbs!"

"I am goin' to horsewhip both Gammon and Gobble. and I twust it will bying them to a pwopah sense of their wascality."

"Great pip!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another.

What was going to be done in this extraordinary affair they did not know. But they knew what was not going to be done. They knew that Gussy was not going to call on Messrs. Gammon and Gobble with a horsewhip-not while he had so many devoted friends to hold him back by the hair of his noble head.

"They have asked for it, you know," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "They have had the unpwecedented insolence to cast doubt on my word. Horsewhippin' is the only possible wesource now."

"Oh, crikev!"

" Pewwaps you fellows would like to come with me," suggested Arthur Augustus. "Gammon and Gobble's clerks and messengers and things might interfere."

"They might!" gasped Blake. "I fancy it's harely possible that they might."

"In that case, deah boy, you fellows



unscrupulous wogue, a sneakin' wascal! Are you there, you wottah?

Are you there, you weptile?'' (See Chapter 9.)

can thwash them, while I am thwashin' Gammon and Gobble."

" Stand by us in this, you Shell chaps," said Blake appealingly. "We're going to watch Gussy, of course; but he might dodge us-you know that lunaties do get away from their keepers sometimes."

"Weally, you uttah ass---"

"You watch him, too," said Blake. "Mind, he's not to be allowed outside the school gates alone."

" No jolly fear!" said Dig.

"Blessed if I don't think we'd better put Towser's chain on him," said Herries. "Weally, Hewwies—"

"We'll play up," said Tom Merry. " Rely on us to grab him if he tries to start horsewhipping Gammon and Gobble."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy-"

"Isn't he enough to turn a fellow's hair

grey?" said Blake. "If he gets out of our sight, he will do something that the Head will have to go and bail him out for."

" Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah, deah boys. I have been insulted by these wapscallions."

" Go hon!"

"I am goin' ovah to Wayland aftah lessons-"

"Are you?" said Blake. "Wait and

see, old pippin."

"I wefuse to be westwained in my liberty of action, Blake," said Arthur Augustus hotly.

notry.

"You can refuse as much as you like, old bean; but you'll be jolly well restrained all the same," chuckled Blake.

" Wats!"

D'Arcy dropped the letter into his pocket and walked out of the study. His noble

mind was made up.

But the minds of Tom Merry & Co. were also made up—and neither the firmness of a rock, nor the obstinacy of a mule, was likely to avail Arthur Augustus much on this occasion.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER No Exit!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was a popular youth.

His company was often sought after.

He had many friends—and even fellows who were not his friends liked him, and liked to walk in the quad, with him. So it was but rarely that he was left to himself.

But it is safe to say that never, since Arthur Augustus had adorned St. Jim's with his presence, had his company been so carefully cultivated by his friends as it was after the receipt of the second letter from Messrs. Gammon & Gobble.

Blake & Co. haunted him like shadows; and when Blake & Co. were not nigh, the Terrible Three of the Shell took their places.

Even in the study, Gussy was not left alone—as if his friends feared that he might climb out of the window, or vanish up the chimney.

If he walked in the quad., at least two of

the juniors walked with him, impervious to cold and indignant looks.

Had Tom Merry & Co. been training to become detectives, they could not have done their shadowing more conscientiously.

How the queer affair was to end, they did not know and could not guess; but it was a fixed certainty that Arthur Augustus was not going to call on Messrs. Gammon & Gobble with a horsewhip.

No doubt they had, as Gussy declared, asked for it; but rather too much trouble would have followed giving them what they had asked for.

When D'Arcy went to the bike-shed after dinner that day, Blake and Dig followed him there. When he lifted his machine from the stand, they gently but firmly replaced it.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard, and left the building without his bike.

When he walked down to the gates, he found the Terrible Three chatting in a group there.

Tom Merry and Lowther took his arms. regardless of resistance, and walked him away from the gates.

Expostulations, even the threat of a fear-

ful thrashing, did not move them.

Gussy was safely landed in the School House, and left there.

He wore a frown in the Form-room that afternoon.

But his mind was still made up. After class he donned hat and coat and went down to the gates again.

Blake & Co. were after him at once. They

caught him half-way to the gates.

"We want you in the study, old chap." said Blake affectionately.

"I wefuse to come into the House, Blake!"

"Help him along, you chaps."

"Will you welease me, you cheeky asses?" demanded D'Arcy, breathing deep with wrath.

"Not quite, old bean! Shove on there." D'Arcy walked back towards the House, securely held by the arms. His noble countenance was crimson with wrath.

"I warn you," he said, in a suppressed

voice. "I warn you, you cheekay chumps, that if you force me into the House. I shall call out to a pwefect."

" Mean that?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Right-ho—this way!" said Blake cheerily; and the juniors turned away from the House door, and walked Arthur Augustus away to the wood-shed.

"Trot in," said Blake.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort."

Bump!

Arthur Augustus landed on the floor of the wood-shed, assisted there by his loyal chums.

Blake put the key outside the lock, closed

the door, and locked

"Call for you at tea-time, Gussy."

"You fwightful

" Good-bye!"

" You feahful bwute

Blake & Co. walked away.

The wrathful voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed them from the wood-shed. Judging by his remarks, his feelings towards his loyal chums, just then were even more intense than towards Messrs. Gam-

mon & Gobble. But Blake & Co. did not mind. If it relieved Gussy to blow off steam, they were prepared to let him blow off as much as he liked, and they cheerfully left him to it.

At tea-time, six juniors strolled round together to the wood-shed, with smiling faces. Blake tapped on the door.

"Ready for tea, Gussy?"

"I wefuse to answah you, Blake! I wegard you as a wottah!"

" Not ready for tea?"

"I am quite weady for tea; but I decline

to uttah a single syllable to you, you wottah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake unlocked the door.

"Tea's ready, old man," he said affectionately. "We've got sosses and chips; we know you like them."

"Wats!"

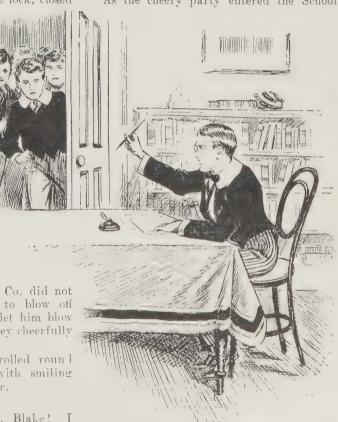
"This way, old fellow," said Herries. You're going away from the House."

"I am goin' out, Hewwies."

"I think not!" murmured Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not go out. He went in. With six juniors gathered round him, he had no choice in that matter.

As the cheery party entered the School



The juniors found Arthur Augustus sitting at the table, pen in hand, with a stern frown on his brow. "Pway, don't come in now, deah boys—I haven't finished w'iting this lettah!" (See Chapter 9.)

House, Kildare of the Sixth passed them, and glanced at them.

D'Arcy opened his lips—and closed them again. The study was better than the woodshed.

His manner was full of chilly dignity as he sat down to tea in Study No. 6. He was offended.

After tea the pressing attentions of his comrades relaxed, as the school gates were locked, and it was too late for Arthur Augustus to pay his threatened visit to the solicitor's office at Wayland.

Possibly reflections came with the night; for on the following morning Arthur Augustus loftily informed his chums that he had decided to treat Messrs. Gammon & Gobble with the contempt they deserved, and to take no further notice of their impertinent existence.

"Good!" assented Blake. "Give 'em all the contempt you like—tons of it—lorry-loads of it, old man. That's the stuff to give 'em. You won't have to be bailed out by the Head for giving 'em that."

" Wats!"

Messrs. Gammon & Gobble never knew what a narrow escape they had had! Possibly Gussy's escape had been narrower!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER Illegal Proceedings I

Tom Merry & Co., during the following days, gave some rather worried thought to the arm of the law that was extended towards the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus went on the even tenor of his way, his noble equanimity quite unperturbed. But his comrades could not help feeling rather perturbed on his account.

To a junior of the Lower School, naturally, the law was a mysterious thing, which moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

Whether Arthur Augustus, as a minor under age, could be sued in the County Court, or whether his father, Lord Eastwood, was the "goods," so to speak, that Messrs. Gammon & Gobble should have "gone for"—these were questions deeply

debated in Study No. 6 in the Fourth, and No. 10 in the Shell.

Tom Merry was of opinion that minors couldn't be sued, only their parents or grardians in their stead. Manners, however, declared that a fellow's parents could only be sued for "necessities"; and knocking over an itinerant merchant's barrow could not possibly be called a "necessity."

There were many differences of opinion; but all the juniors agreed upon one point, that Arthur Augustus was a first-class ass, and that he was destined on all occasions to gather up any trouble that might be going.

When the long-expected remittance arrived from D'Arcy's pater, Herries was of opinion that Gammon & Gobble had better be paid before the matter went any further. Herries had an idea that Gammon & Gobble, in the seclusion of their dusty office, were piling up bills of costs for Gussy to pay, and he remembered having read somewhere that lawyers always got their costs somehow or another.

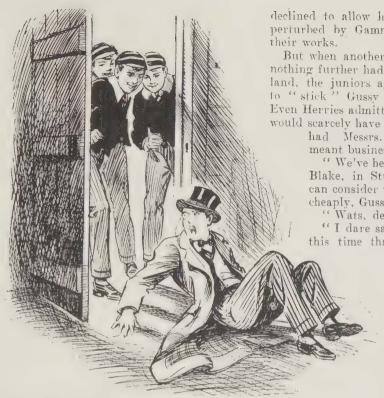
Dig suggested that something should be paid—ten bob, or so, Dig suggested. To which Arthur Augustus rejoined that, if his pater had sent him five hundred pounds instead of five, not a sixpence of that sum should have found its way into the unscrupulous hands of persons whom he designated as "weptiles."

Arthur Augustus was once more displaying the firmness of a rock; and for once his chums were doubtful whether to regard this as the obstinacy of a mule.

D'Arcy, at all events, had his way, and the communications from Messrs Gammon & Gobble were used for the useful purpose of lighting the fire in Study No. 6. Six juniors, however, were in rather apprehensive expectation of further and still more alarming communications from that quarter.

But on Saturday came the football match with Greyfriars, and that, of course, banished Gammon & Gobble, and their client, from all consideration.

No "process" had yet been served on "Mr. D'Arcy, of St. James' School "—and Tom Merry opined that they had "chucked"



Arthur Augustus landed on the floor of the wood-shed, assisted there by his loyal chums. Blake put the key outside the lock. "Call for you at tea-time, Gussy!" "You fwightful wuffians! You feahful bwutes!" (See Chapter 11.)

it. Herries, however, spoke of the "law's delays," of which any fellow could read in Shakespeare, and he declared that a processserver might drop in at any moment with an official paper for Gussy.

It was a rather alarming idea.

Should such a fearsome person arrive at St. Jim's, asking for "Mr. D'Arey," it was really impossible to imagine what would happen afterwards.

At the very least, D'Arcy's breaking of bounds would transpire-which probably

meant a Head's licking.

But whether Gussy would have to go to the County Court, and what would happen if he did, nobody knew.

It was quite an anxious time for all concerned—excepting Gussy. Arthur Augustus declined to allow his lofty serenity to be perturbed by Gammon & Gobble and all

But when another week had passed, and nothing further had been heard from Wavland, the juniors agreed that the attempt to "stick" Gussy had been "chucked." Even Herries admitted that the law's delays would scarcely have delayed so long as this.

had Messrs. Gammon & Gobble meant business.

"We've heard the last of it," said Blake, in Study No. 6, "and you can consider that you've got off jolly cheaply, Gussy."

"Wats, deah bov."

"I dare say they've found out by this time that you're only a silly

schoolbov, and that's why they've chucked

"Imposs.! Thev cannot have found out anythin' of the kind, Blake!"

"Why not, ass?"

"Because I am not a sillay school. boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "That description only applies to the othah fellows in this

studay." This with an air of conviction.

"You cheeky ass!" roared Blake.

"Pway do not woar at a fellow, Blake! I have told you lots of times that I dislike bein' woared at."

And Arthur Augustus walked rather quickly out of Study No. 6-just in time to escape a whizzing cushion.

Tom Merry & Co. agreed that the alarming episode of Messrs. Gammon & Gobble was at an end--and they were very relieved to think so.

They did not expect to hear any more from the Wayland firm or their "client"; but, as a matter of fact, they were not quite done with Mr. William Hooker.

On the following Wednesday, Arthur Augustus walked out of gates to pay another important visit to Mr. Wiggs—this time on the important subject of neckties. His chums were to follow him, a feed at Mrs. Murphy's tuckshop in the village being generally agreed upon as an excellent method of disposing of what remained of Gussy's liberal tip from his pater. Having finished his important business with Mr. Wiggs, Gussy was to join Tom Merry & Co. at the village shop.

But as he sauntered elegantly along Rylcombe Lane, D'Arcy's eyes fell upon a shabby figure seated on the stile half-way

to the village.

He knew the stubby features, the stubbly

chin, the surly countenance at once.

It was Mr. William Hooker—this time minus his barrow. He was sucking at an empty pipe, and looked even more "up against it" financially than on the previous occasion when Gussy had had the misfortune to fall in with him.

D'Arcy frowned as he sighted Mr. Hooker. He slackened his pace, debating whether he should speak to the shady rascal, and tell him what he thought of him and his rascally proceedings, or whether he should treat him, like Messrs. Gammon & Gobble, with lofty and unregarding contempt.

The merchant stared at him very

curiously.

D'Arcy's appearance was very different from what it had been at the previous meeting; but there was a dawning of recognition in Mr. Hooker's surly face. Without the moustache, and in his own natty overcoat, D'Arcy looked unlike the young man, as Mr. Hooker had taken him to be, who had collided with the barrow a few weeks before. Nevertheless, Mr. Hooker half-recognised him, and stared at him very hard.

D'Arcy returned his stare with cool con-

temnt

"You'll know me agin!" jeered Mr. Hooker, as the swell of St. Jim's came nearer.

"Yaas, wathah, you wascal!"

"What?"
"Wogue!"

"My eye!" said Mr. Hooker, staring at him. "I know your blinking voice, and I

know your blinking face, but—— I s'pose you're a blinking relation of that blinking bloke who knocked over my blinking barrow."

"I did not knock over your bawwow—you wan your wootten bawwow into my bike,

as you are perfectly well awah."

"You!" ejaculated Mr. Hooker. He stared blankly at the swell of St. Jim's.

"You was got up with a moustache on. So you are the bloke, are you?"

Mr. Hooker slipped from the stile.

He knew D'Arcy now, and perplexed as he was, he had no further doubt. He pushed back his dirty cuffs.

"You!" he said. "You knocked over my barrer! Where's my blinking barrer

now, hay?"

"Weally, you cannot expect me to know anythin' about the whereabouts of your bawwow," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway step aside and allow me to pass."

"I don't think!" said Mr. Hooker, with emphasis. "I don't think, young feller-melad! I've 'ad to sell that barrer."

"That is no bizney of mine."

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Hooker. "I 'ad to pay twelve-and-six for legal advice, and three and six each for two blinking letters to be wrote. And what come of it? Nothing."

"Bai Jove!"

"And 'ad to sell my barrer to pay!" exclaimed Mr. Hooker excitedly. "No use going further with it, says Mr. Gobble. Leastways, not without placing us in funds for the purpose, says he."

Arthur Augustus's face broke into a grin.

The outstretching of the arm of the law had caused great perturbation in Study No. 6 at St. Jim's; but apparently Mr. Hooker's own experience had not been a

happy one.

"Serve you wight!" said Arthur Augustus. "You were twyin' to extort money fwom me, you wogue, and if you have lost your own, it serves you wight. Now let me pass. I desiah to have nothin' whatevah to say to a person of your chawactah."

"I dessay!" said Mr. Hooker. "I dessay! Only I ain't done with you yet, young feller-me-lad! I'm done with blinking lawyers, I am—but I ain't done with you! See that there ditch?"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the deep ditch by the roadside, swollen with recent rain.

"Certainly 1 see it," he answered.

"Like to be ducked in it?" asked Mr. Hooker.

" Certainly not!"

"Then I'm sorry for yer," said Mr. Hooker, with ferocious humour. "'Cause that's jest what's going to 'appen to you."

And the hulking fellow advanced on Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy backed away.

" Hands off, you wuffian!"

"I don't think."

"Bai Jove! I—— Oh, cwumbs!"

Mr. Hooker was upon him with a rush. Obviously he expected to overwhelm the elegant schoolboy without any difficulty. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was made of tougher material than Mr. Hooker supposed.

He stood up to the rush, and hit out, and there was plenty of force in Gussy's arm.

His knuckles crashed on Mr. Hooker's bulbous nose, and the merchant staggered back with a howl.

But it was only for a moment. The next he was clutching at the swell of St. Jim's, and D'Arcy was struggling in his grip.

"Now, in you go!" gasped Mr. Hooker.
"Oh, my hat! Welease me, you wuf-

fian!"

"In you go!"



In the excitement of the struggle, neither heard or heeded the sound of footsteps in the lane. Half-a-dozen juniors had spotted the scene from a distance, and were racing to the spot. (See Chapter 12.)

But it was not so easy to pitch Arthur Augustus in. He struggled hard, resisting every inch of the way, and Mr. Hooker was quite breathless by the time they drew close to the flowing ditch.

In the excitement of the struggle, neither heard or heeded the sound of footsteps in the lane.

Half a dozen juniors had spotted the scene from a distance, and were racing to the spot.

Tom Merry & Co. were taking it very easy, as they strolled down to Rylcombe, thinking it probable that Arthur Augustus would be detained for some time with Mr. Wiggs' selection of neckties. But they ceased to take it easy as they discerned, from a distance, the swell of St. Jim's in combat with a hulking ruffian.

" Put it on!" exclaimed Blake.

And the six juniors "put it on," fairly racing towards the stile.

Fast as they came, however, they were

only just in time. Arthur Augustus, still resisting manfully, had been whirled to the very edge of the flowing ditch, and Mr. Hooker was exerting himself to hurl him in. Undoubtedly he would have succeeded; but at the psychological moment, Tom Merry arrived, a little ahead of the rest.

Tom grabbed the merchant by the collar, and dragged him backwards from the ditch, Arthur Augustus with him.

"No, you don't!" he gasped.

"Wescue, deah boys!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Here we are!" chuckled Blake.

" Collar him!"

" Mop him up!"

Crash!

Mr. Hooker, gasping and spluttering, went sprawling into the road, and two or three of the juniors sat on him to keep him there.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER Just Like Gussy!

A RTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY gasped for breath.

He leaned on the stile, and gasped, and gasped again. From Mr. Hooker, sprawling on his back in the lane, came a series of emphatic objurgations. His language was not pleasant; indeed, much of it would undoubtedly have been considered, by Messrs. Gammon & Gobble, as actionable!

"Cheese it!" said Blake, taking hold of Mr. Hooker's hair, and tapping the back of his head on the earth. "That's enough! Ring off!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Keep that bwute safe, deah boys,"

gasped Arthur Augustus.

"We've got him," grinned Blake. "Safe as houses! I keep on telling you to shut up, my man."

Bang!

Mr. Hooker's head smote the road again, and he yelled with anguish. After that hint, he decided to shut up.

With Blake sitting on his chest, Herries holding one wrist and Dig another, and Monty Lowther standing on his legs, Mr. Hooker was not in a position to argue the

point.

"But what's the jolly old row, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry. "Can't you step outside the school gates on a half-holiday without getting into a shindy?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy---"

"Oh, it's Gussy all over," said Blake. "He goes round asking for trouble, you know."

"Begging and praying for it," assented

Dig

"Weally, you fellows---"

"Will you let a blinking bloke gerrup?" came in a fierce hiss from the prostrate Mr. Hooker.

Bang!

" Whooop!"

Again Mr. Hooker subsided into silence, with an expression on his face that was

positively Hunnish.

"Dear old Gussy!" said Lowther. "One day he goes out and butts into a merchant on a bike—now he goes out and picks up a shindy with a tramp! What will he do next, I wonder?".

"I wonder!" said Blake, shaking his

head

"Wats! This is the same man—this is the wogue Hookah," said Arthur Augustus. "He pitched into me, and was goin' to thwow me into the ditch if you fellows hadn't come up. Oh, deah!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip! This is Hooker, is it?" exclaimed Monty Lowther, staring at the enraged rascal. "Gobble's giddy client!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"The chap who was taking legal proceedings," chuckled Blake. "He seems to have decided on illegal proceedings, after all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let a bloke gerrup," said Mr. Hooker, changing his threatening tone for a whine. "I'm sorry I laid 'ands on the young gent. I was ratty, I was, owing to being rooked by them blinking lawyers. I've 'ad to sell my barrer, and what's a blinking bloke to do without a blinking barrer? I ask you."

"You seem to have got off better than the Gobble man's client, Gussy," chortled Blake,

"You haven't had to se! to sell the "!

"Ha ta fall!

" Weally, Blair____

"So he a going to a solid the second the grander of directions in the second
" Hear hear "

Table attachers a second of the second of th

" Leave on a school of a self of M History of a self of the self o

* Polonin

"Could be L'ere—vou chuck it! Yooon!"

Rolling Assum Asg D'Arry in the r

ditch had seemed quite a attractive idea to the irate Hooker. But for himself, the ditch had no attractions—quite the reverse. He struggled irantically as the St. Jim's juniors rolled him over.

'Ow! Ow! 'Ands off!' he roared.

"Elp! I'll 'ave the lor of you!"

"Haven't you had enough law yet?" asked Monty Lowther.

Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll him in, and chance Gammon & Gobble!" chuckled Blake.

" Oh! Yow! 'Elp!"

The resistance was of no at art. He was rolled nearer and nearer, and finally pitched in.
Solash!

" Oggoooch !"

Mr. Hooker went headlong into four ices



He was rolled meaner and nearer, and finally pitched in. Splash! Mr. Hooker want headons into four feet of fouring water, with a foot of mud at the bottom. Les Cooper 18

of flowing water, with a foot of mud at the botton.

He splashed right under, and came up streaming

All the ierocity was taken out of Mr. Heeker by that ducking in cold wate.

He plunged to the bank, and d aggrehimself out by the grass, and collar a gasping stat

"Give him another—what?" asked

" Circlescoper

his noble eye, and fixed it upo deenched, moddy rascal. Mr. Hooker go iged water and mud from his eyes, ar blinked at him disma

"I twust. Hookah, that you was " "



Arthur Augustus dropped a pound note and a ten-shilling note into the muddy hand of the merchant. Mr. Hooker stared at him blankly. "My cye!" was all he could say. (See Chapter 13.)

you have been vewy pwopahly punished for your wascality!" said the swell of St. Jim's severely.

" Ooooch !"

"I twust that it will be a lesson to you."

" Ow!"

" I wegard you-"

"Ow! Grooogh! Look at me!" groaned Mr. Hooker. "I'm nearly drowned! Look at me! Don't jor at a bloke."

" Weally, you cheekay wottah-,"

"Ring off!" chuckled Blake. "The good man's had his medicine, and he seems quite tame now. T'ain't fair to give him chin-wag, too."

"Weally, Blake---"

"Come on," said Tom Merry, laughing. "There won't be time to go to your giddy

tailor's now, Gussy! Let's head for Mrs. Murphy's.''

"Let's!" agreed Blake. "Come on!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on towards the village, leaving Mr. Hooker sitting, a dismal and disconsolate figure, on the grass by the roadside. Arthur Augustus had a thoughtful expression on his noble face, and once or twice he glanced back over his shoulder at the dismal figure of the merchant. He halted at last.

"Comeon, Gussy!"

"You fellows keep on," said Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to speak a word to that person."

" He's had enough chin-wag, old chap."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus hurried back along the lane towards Mr. Hooker. The dismal rascal blinked up at him with Jack-lustre eyes.

"Can't you let a bloke alone?" he

groaned.

"I have not weturned to slang you, Mr. Hookah," said Arthur Augustus quietly. "You mentioned to me that you had had to sell your bawwow."

"'' 'Ad to let it go for a pound," mumbled Mr. Hooker.

"I pwesume that that interferes wathan sewiously with your gettin' your livin' as a woadside merchant?"

"Course it does! 'Ow's a bloke to carry round his pot and pans without a barrer?'

"Could you wepurchase it for a pound, Mr. Hooker?"

"Course I can't! Thirty bob would do it; but where's a bloke to get thirty bob?" groaned Mr. Hooker.

Arthur Augustus hesitated for one

moment.

"I have thirty shillin' left fwom a wemittance I lately weceived," he said. "If your bawwow is necessary to your gettin' a livin', Mr. Hookah, you are welcome to it."

" Eh ?"

"Heah you are!"

'Arthur Augustus dropped a pound note and a ten-shilling note into the muddy hand of the merchant.

Mr. Hooker stared at him blankly. "My eye!" was all he could say.

"I am afrwaid, Mr. Hookah, that you are a vewy gweat wogue and wascal," said Arthur Augustus. "I can only twust that you will twy at least to be more honest in the future."

And Arthur Augustus hurried after his comrades.

Mr. Hooker picked himself up, and stood staring after him, in a state of astonishment from which he was a long time in recovering.

D'Arcy rejoined the Co., and they walked into Rylcombe together. Tom Merry & Co. were grinning; they had witnessed the transaction between D'Arcy and Mr. Hooker, and it did not surprise them in the very least. They had given up being surprised by any of Gussy's proceedings—even his legal proceedings!

"Here we are!" said Blake cheerily, as the party arrived at the door of Mrs.

Murphy's tuckshop.

Arthur Augustus halted suddenly.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.
"What's the matter now?"

"I am afwaid that the spwead is off, deah boys!"

"What!" howled six voices.

"You see, I gave that man Hookah all I had left out of my patah's wemittance

" Eh ?"

"And what about the feed?" bawled Herries.

"I nevah thought of that."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You've walked us all down to Rylcombe at tea-time, and—and—and there isn't any feed!" gasped Blake.

"Yaas. You see-"

"And what are we going to do?" howled Blake.

"Walk back again, deah boy."

" What!"

"That appears to me the only thing to do, in the circs. I twust," added Arthur Augustus hopefully—"I twust that we shall not be too late for tea in Hall!"

Tom Merry & Co. gazed at Arthur Augustus speechlessly for some moments. Then, as if moved by the same spring, they seized the ornament of St. Jim's, and sat him down on the doorstep of the tuck-shop with a terrific concussion.

"Yawoooop!"

"There!" gasped Blake. "Now give him another—"

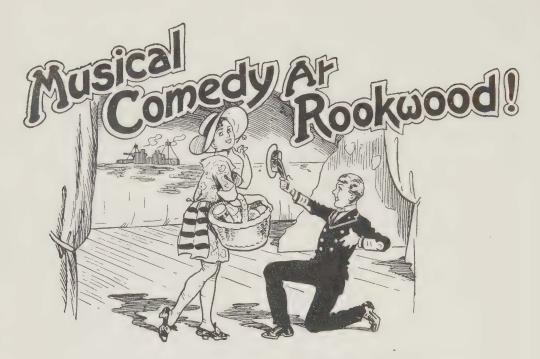
Bump !

"Oh, cwumbs!"

And Tom Merry & Co. walked back to St. Jim's, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to follow at his leisure.

THE END





Grand Performance of "H.M.S. Pinafore." By JIMMY SILVER.

The Concert Hall was packed to everflowing on Saturday evening, when the Classical Juniors' Operatic Society gave a fine performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's famous musical comedy, "H.M.S. Pinafore." Admission was free; but heavy charges were made, nevertheless by Tommy Dodd & Co., of the Modern Side. They charged so persistently at the door that we were obliged to admit them!

It was a great mistake to admit the Modern bounders. We might have guessed that they were bent on a "rag." However, they trooped to their seats with innocent faces—though I did not fail to notice that their pockets were bulging suspiciously, as if they contained ammunition! I had no time to make them turn out their pockets, because I was urgently wanted behind the scenes.

Loud cheers greeted the raising of the curtain; and our jolly Jack Tars, wearing Oxford bags which had been dyed a deep blue, chanted their opening chorus. There were no untoward incidents until they came to the line,

"When the balls whistle free o'er the bright blue sea!"

And then missiles began to whistle free from the hands of the Modern bounders. They were in the front row, and, rising to their feet, they bombarded the performers with bad eggs, cabbages, rotten apples, and other unwelcome missiles. There was a wild stampede through the wings on the part of the jolly Jack Tars, who had just been singing that they stood to their guns all day!

When I came on to the stage, in the rôle of the hero, I made an indignant appeal for

order. Evidently my words carried weight, for the Moderns suffered me to sing my opening song without hindrance. But there was more trouble when Arthur Newcome, in the rôle of "dear'little Buttercup," came tripping on to the stage with a basket of wares on his arm. Probably it was the first time that Buttercup had performed in short skirts and an Eton crop! Poor old Newcome hasn't much of a voice; in fact, his voice is his only vice! No sooner did he start croaking his song, than the Moderns sprang to their feet, and peppered him with their pea-shooters.

Newcome stuck it out like a hero. Under a bombardment of peas, which rattled on the stage like hailstones, he sang his song to the bitter end—with slight variations!

"They call me the—ow!—Buttercup,
Dear little—yow!—Buttercup,

Though I could never tell why. Yarooo!
But still I'm called (Ow, you beasts!)
Buttercup,

Dear little (Chuck it, you rotters!)
Buttercup,

Sweet little—ow-ow-ow!—Buttercup,



They jerked the trap-door open—and I vanished below.
It was the crowning outrage !



The Modern bounders bombarded the performers with bad eggs, cabbages, rotten apples . . . there was a wild stampede from the stage!

The crowning outrage occurred when I was singing my farewell song to the captain's daughter (Lovell.) With fitting emotion, I warbled the lines:

"Farewell, my own! Light of my life, farewell!"

Instantly I disappeared from view! And there was a howl of irrepressible merriment from the audience. The fact is, I had been standing on a trap-door, which opened downwards. A couple of Moderns were underneath the stage. They jerked the trap-door open at the appropriate time, and I vanished below—to be caught in their arms.

That, as I say, was the crowning outrage. It was decided, there and then, to eject the Moderns from the Concert I all, and the play was held up while a free-fight took place. After a wild and whirling scrap, Tommy Dodd & Co. were cast for h on their necks. Then the play proceeded, without further interruption, to its triumphant conclusion. We have promised to give another performance next Saturday, and any Modern bounder who has the nerve to seek admission will be given the bumping of his life!

THE END

