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THIS SPLENDID NUMBER
CONTAINS A REAL
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PHOTOGRAPH OF—



—JIMMY SEED
(Tottenham Hotspur.)

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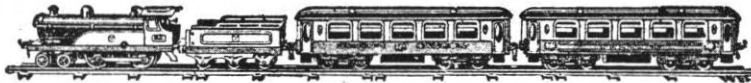
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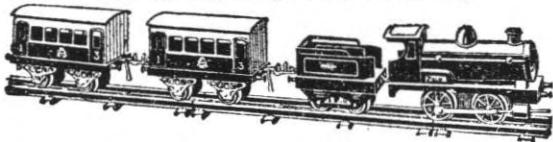
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TRIMBLE in TRADE!



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy Blunders in Buying Baggy's Bargains! Read Our Rollicking, Rousing, Long, Complete School Story.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

The Generosity of Baggy Trimble!

"LIKE a silver penknife, Gussy?"
 "What!"
 "Silver penknife."
 "Bai Jove!"

"I've got one here I'd like you to have," said Baggy Trimble, blinking at the swell of St. Jim's. "Do have it, old chap!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy extracted his eyeglasses from his waistcoat-pocket, adjusted it at the correct angle in his aristocratic eye, and fixed that eye upon Trimble of the Fourth.

He was astonished. It was so unlike Baggy Trimble to give anything away that Gussy could not help being astonished.

Not that the noble Gussy had any intention of accepting a gift from Trimble. That would have been miles—in fact, leagues—beneath his dignity.

But he was interested as well as astonished. Trimble held up the penknife, and it glimmered like silver

in the sunshine in the St. Jim's quad. It looked quite a nice penknife, and it was simply amazing that Trimble was offering it to another fellow in the Fourth. Arthur Augustus, always desirous of thinking the best possible of anyone, revised his opinion of Baggy on the spot.

"Thank you vevy much, Twimble!" he said graciously. "That is vevy kind of you!"

"Not at all," said Baggy. "You see, I want you to have it."

"I am vevy much obliged by the ofah, Twimble! I feah that I cannot accept a pvesent fvwon you; but I am vevy much obliged, all the same! I am vevy glad to discovah that you are not so mean as is genevally supposed."

"Eh?"
 "I have always regarded you as a wank wottah, you know," explained Arthur Augustus innocently.

"You silly ass!"
 "Weally, Twimble—"

"I—I—I mean, all right, old chap!" said Trimble hastily. "I say, just look at the penknife. Real silver, you know, with blades of Sheffield steel; cut anything from a Cheshire cheese to a Gordian knot. The moment I got this penknife, D'Arcy, I thought of you. High-class goods, you know. Just suitable for a fellow like you."

"You are awf'ly good, deah boy! But, weally, I cannot accept it."

"D'Arcy!" came Jack Blake's voice across the quad in stentorian tones.

"Yaas, deah boy!"
 "Tea-time, fathhead!"
 "Wight-ho! I am speakin' to Twimble."

"Bother Trimble!"
 "Weally, Blake—"

"Keep your cash in your pocket, fathhead!" said Blake of the Fourth, coming along to the rescue of his noble chum.

"If you've got filthy lucre to blow, you can blow it on tea in the study!"

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"You are undah a misappwehension, Blake. Twimble's oflahin' me a silvah penknife as a pvesent."

"My hat!" ejaculated Blake.
 "Holy smoke!" said Herries.

And Robert Arthur Digby whistled. All the members of Study No. 6 were surprised, which really was not very complimentary to Baggy Trimble. But it was the first time on record that Trimble had been known to offer something for nothing.

"What's the little game?" asked Herries suspiciously. "Trimble never gives anything away."

"What's the matter with the penknife?" asked Dig, with sarcasm.

"Whose is it?" inquired Blake. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon his chums reprovingly.

"Weally, deah boys, that is not a vevy nice way to speak to Twimble when he is actin' in a genevowus mannah for the

first time in his life!

I am vevy pleased indeed to see this change in Twimble."

Jack Blake took the penknife from Baggy's fat hand, examined it, and sniffed.

"German silver!"

he said. "Rotten blades! Curl up if you use 'em! Made in Germany! That

is the reason why you're giving it away, Twimble?"

"Look here, you know—" began Baggy indignantly.

"Even if the penknife is not vevy valuable, Blake, it is wathah genevowus of Twimble to give it away for nothin'!"

said Arthur Augustus gently. "Even wotten penknives cost money, and Twimble has vevy little money."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Trimble warmly.

"You forget the whacking cheques he gets from Trimble Hall," said Blake sarcastically.

"Pway do not give us any sare, Blake! I wepeat that it is vevy genevowus of Twimble," said Arthur Augustus firmly.

"I have wemarked to Twimble that I cannot accept a pvesent fvwon him. But aftah your wide wemarks, I feel bound to play up, Twimble, I shall have vevy much pleasuah in acceptin' this penknife!"

said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"That's right, old chap!" said Trimble.

Arthur Augustus slipped the penknife into his pocket. He did not want it, and he objected to taking a present from Baggy Trimble. But he felt bound to honour the fat Baggy in the circumstances.

"Well, it's worth about a tanner," said Blake. "What beats me is that Trimble is giving away something worth a tanner! I suppose we're not dreaming. You're really giving it away, Twimble!"

"Practically!" answered Baggy.

"Eh—only practically?"

"Bai Jove!"

"You see, that beautiful silver penknife is worth ten-and-six," explained Trimble calmly. "I'm offering it to Gussy,

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because he's an old pal, for half-a-crown. That's giving it away, isn't it?"

"G'wreat Scott!"

Blake & Co. stared at Trimble, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"Nothing to cackle at!" said Trimble. "No need to pay up this minute, Gussy, if you're short of the ready. You fellows like some gold sleeve-links?"

"Giving them away?" grinned Dig.

"Practically. They're worth a guinea a set, and I'm offering them to you for three shillings."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got some splendid collar-studs, too," said Baggy, fumbling in his pockets. "I'm letting them go at a shilling a piece; worth half-a-crown. First-class rolled gold, you know. Look!"

"Are you setting up as a pedlar?" asked Blake, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I know the game!" exclaimed Dig. "You've seen the advertisements. You send five bob for a lot of articles, and sell them among your friends for what they will fetch. That's the game!"

"Bai Jove!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy found his voice at last. "Twimble, I regard you with contempt!"

"Eh—what's biting you now?" asked Trimble, staring at him.

"I was undah the impresson that you were offewin' me a present."

"So I was—practically!"

"Only practically!" chuckled Blake.

"I suppose you don't think I'm going to give you silver penknives for nothing, D'Arcy!" said Trimble warmly.

"You uttah wottah! I should wefuse to accept anythin' from you, if I was not twicked into it by a misapprehension!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I regard you with wofold contempt! Take away this wotten penknife!"

"Not after you've bought it!" said Trimble.

"Bought it!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, rather! Why, you put it in your pocket!"

"I was undah the impresson—"

"Rot! If you think you're going to sponge on me for a penknife, D'Arcy—"

"Sponge on you!" said Arthur Augustus dazedly.

"Yes, rather! What else do you call it? You've bought the penknife! Hand over the half-crown!" said Trimble indignantly. "I don't mind waiting for the money, if it comes to that. But taking the goods back isn't business! It's yours now, not mine! I'm not buying a penknife from you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake & Co.

"Hallo! What's the little joke?" asked Tom Merry, coming along with Manners and Lowther.

The Terrible Three were going into the School House to tea, but they stopped to inquire the cause of Study No. 6's merriment.

"Trimble's starting in trade as a pedlar, and selling Gussy rotten penknives!" chortled Blake.

"It's a jolly good penknife, worth ten-and-six!" said Trimble. "Are you paying now, Gussy, or giving me your IOU for the amount?"

"I had no intention whatever of buyin' a wotten penknife from you, Twimble!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"But you've done it," said Trimble.

"I wefuse to admit—"

"Gussy thought it was a present!" roared Blake. "Thought Trimble was giving something away for nothing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"I was certainly undah the impresson—"

"Well, I like that!" said Trimble, in disgust. "Here's Gussy, a lord's son, with plenty of money, trying to bag a penknife off me for nothing! What do you fellows think of it?"

Tom Merry & Co. did not state what they thought of it. The expression on Arthur Augustus' noble face was too much for them. They howled.

"You uttah, feafuhl, fabwicatin' wottah, Twimble!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I regard you as the uttatest wottah in the school! Even Mellish is a decent chap compared with you! Heah is your half-crown, you howwid toad, and if you speak to me again I shall give you a feafuhl thwashin'!"

Arthur Augustus almost hurled the half-crown at the fat junior.

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Trimble, as he caught it with his podgy chin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus stalked indignantly away. His chums and the Terrible Three accompanied him, chuckling. Baggy Trimble rubbed his fat chin, and picked up the half-crown.

Contempt is said to penetrate even the shell of the tortoise.

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But in thickness of hide Baggy Trimble could give any tortoise points. It was tea-time, and a half-crown was a half-crown. Baggy Trimble rolled away to the tuckshop in great spirits.

CHAPTER 2.

A Roaring Trade!

TOM MERRY and Manners and Lowther had finished tea when there came a tap at the door of Study No. 10 in the Shell, and Baggy Trimble rolled in.

The Terrible Three waved him away.

"Nothing doing!" said Tom Merry.

"Call next door!" said Monty Lowther.

"Hook it, you fat fraud!" growled Manners.

Baggy Trimble did not heed. He halted at the study table, and grinned cheerfully at the Terrible Three.

"I've got some articles to sell," he said.

"Take them away and bury them!" said Tom.

"Just look at them," urged Trimble. "Immense bargains—practically given away. I've paid a lot of money for these things. Of course, I'm not making any profit on them."

"Not!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Not at all. My idea was to risk my capital in getting a lot of things that the fellows want and letting them have them at cost price," said Trimble. "That's the stunt. Now, look at this lot."

Baggy turned out his pockets on the table.

He had a varied collection of goods.

There were sleeve-links and studs and pocket-knives and corkscrews and fountain-pens and cigarette-holders, and other things. The assortment was varied; but the goods all resembled one another in one respect—they were all of the same quality. And the quality was such that it might have made even a German manufacturer shudder.

"Fine lot—what?" said Trimble. "Practically given away, you know. Gussy had the best of the bunch—that silver penknife. But these pocket-knives are jolly good value. I'm letting them go at three shillings."

"Make it threepence!" suggested Lowther.

"To old pals like you I'll make it eightpence," said Trimble. "Dash it all, as I'm doing this out of friendship, I'll make it a bob! Is it a trade?"

"Take your friendship to some study where it's wanted!" suggested Manners.

"If any!" said Lowther.

"And take all that German rubbish away with you!" added Tom Merry.

"If you're short of tin, you needn't pay on the nail," urged Trimble. "I'll take your IOU—dated, of course."

"By Jove! There's something in that!" said Monty Lowther, with a thoughtful look. "You mean that, Trimble?"

Baggy Trimble beamed.

"Yes, rather! Of course, I wouldn't trust chaps like Mellish, or Crooke of the Shell, or Chowle. But you fellows are good for the money. I'll take your IOU with pleasure!"

"Then I fancy I'll make a selection of the goods," said Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners glared at their chum.

"What the thump do you want that rubbish for?" demanded Manners. "Worth about ten bob the lot, I suppose!"

"Draw it mild!" exclaimed Trimble indignantly. "Shonkey & Co. charge a pound for this assortment—I—I—I mean, I gave ten pounds for this lot at Blankley's Stores, in Wayland!"

"You're not buying any of the trash, Monty!" said Tom Merry. "You can see it's made in Germany, too! Dash it all, we don't want to trade with Huns!"

"You let Lowther alone," said Trimble. "Lowther knows a good thing when he sees it. I'm selling to him on tick, too."

"You see, that's a good offer," said Lowther. "Trimble is willing to take my IOU, with date of payment specified. I sha'n't be spending ready money."

"It comes to the same thing in the long run, ass!"

"Let Lowther alone!" exclaimed Trimble. "Now, you're having one of these pocket-knives at one-and-six, Lowther?"

"Put it aside for me," said Lowther.

"There you are. What about these gold sleeve-links at five shillings?"

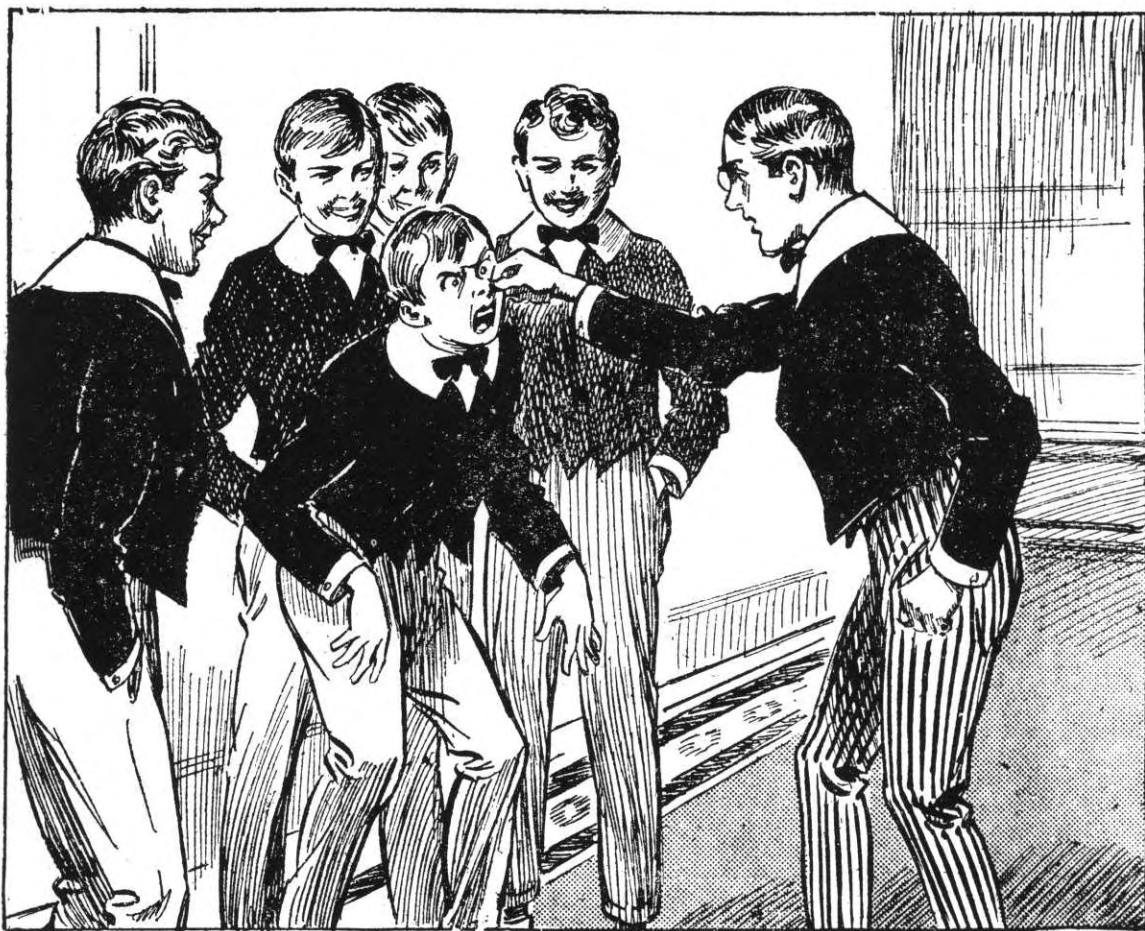
"Right!"

"And these studs at half-a-crown?"

"Good!"

Baggy Trimble's face fairly beamed with glee. It was his first venture as a seller of articles, and so far Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been his only customer. But it looked as if the venture was going to be a success. Study No. 10 was good for the cash, even if the enterprising tradesman had to wait for his money till the next allowances came in.

Baggy displayed article after article, and to each one Monty



"You wotiah!" roared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He made a stride at Mellish, and caught that youth by his rather prominent thin nose. Gussy's noble temper was roused, and he compressed finger and thumb on Mellish's nose like a vice. "Goooog-goooog-goooog!" gurgled Mellish. "Led do by dose!" (See page 7.)

Lowther gave a nod of assent, while Tom Merry and Manners stared on in silence and astonishment.

Lowther was his own master, and at liberty to buy rubbish at absurd prices if he liked. They had given their advice, and Monty had not heeded it. So they let him rip, as it were.

Finding so extremely easy-going a customer, Baggy Trimble allowed his prices to creep up.

Lowther did not mind.

He nodded careless assent to a pocket-knife at seven-and-six which was worth, perhaps, ninepence. He accepted tin sleeve-links at five shillings, and brass studs at five-and-six.

Article after article was set aside, till Lowther's heap was as big as that remaining to the St. Jim's tradesman.

Baggy was bubbling with joy.

"I think that will do," said Lowther at last. "How much does that little lot come to, Trimble?"

Baggy made a rapid calculation.

"Two-pound-ten," he said.

"Right-ho!"

"Lowther, you utter ass!" exclaimed Tom Merry aghast. "That means your allowance for weeks ahead! And the confounded rubbish could be bought off any pedlar for a few shillings!"

"And you don't want it, anyhow!" said Manners.

"Lowther's got an eye for a bargain," said Trimble. "You let Lowther alone. I'll just take your I O U, Lowther, and get off. I've some more business to do before prep."

"Right-ho!" said Lowther.

He tore a leaf from his pocket-book, and dipped a pen in the ink to write out the acknowledgment of the debt. Baggy Trimble watched him blissfully. He blessed his perspicacity in taking heed of Messrs. Shonkey & Co.'s advertisement of "articles for sale." A postal-order for a pound had brought him that valuable collection from Messrs. Shonkey & Co.'s establishment in Houndsditch. Already he had netted half-a-crown from D'Arcy of the Fourth, and now he was to net two pounds ten shillings from Lowther of the Shell. And

he still retained nearly half the articles for further sales. At this rate, Baggy Trimble seemed likely to do well in trade.

"Here you are," said Lowther. "Better look at it, and see that it's in order, Trimble."

Baggy fairly clutched the paper.

He blinked at it, and there came a sudden change over his fat face; for this is what he read:

"I owe Trimble £2 10s. for articles purchased. Date of payment, February 31st, 1990."

Baggy blinked, and blinked again.

"All right?" asked Lowther blandly.

"The—the date!" gasped Trimble.

"I've filled in the date, haven't I?"

"You silly ass!" roared Trimble. "Do you think I'm going to wait till 1990 for my money?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom Merry and Manners simultaneously.

"And there isn't a thirty-first in February!" howled Trimble. "You know there isn't!"

"I know!" assented Lowther.

"Well, then—"

"You left the date to me," said Lowther sweetly. "I call these fellows to witness. Didn't Trimble leave the date to me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners. "He did!"

"But that means that you don't pay at all!" shrieked Trimble.

"That's your look-out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Date this next week, or the week after."

"No jolly fear!" said Lowther emphatically. "Payment is due in 1990—on the thirty-first of February. Look here, I'll do what I can for you. I'll make it January, 1990—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dash it all! As we're pals, I'll make it 1989," said Lowther. "Is that all right?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry and Manners.

Judging by the expression on Baggy Trimble's face, it was not all right!

It dawned upon the fat Baggy at last that the humorist of the Shell had been pulling his podgy leg. He gave Lowther a ferocious glare.

"You silly ass!" he howled.

"Still grumbling?" asked Lowther, in mild surprise. "Look here, I'll make it 1988. But that's the very best I can do for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" snorted Baggy; and he reached out a fat paw to gather up the goods he had sold to Monty Lowther. Payment, even in 1988, did not seem good enough to the St. Jim's merchant.

He gave a sudden yelp, and jerked his hand back as Lowther rapped his fat knuckles with a ruler.

"Leave my things alone!" said Lowther.

"Your things!" yelled Trimble.

"Certainly! I've bought them, haven't I?"

"Bub-bub-bought them!" stuttered Trimble.

"Certainly! These fellows are witnesses. Haven't I bought these goods from Trimble?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Put that paper away carefully, Trimble. If you lose it before 1988, I can't be expected to pay on it. I shall wait it back when I pay, you know."

"You—you—you—" spluttered Trimble. "Look here, I'm taking these things away if you're not buying them."

"But I've bought them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pretty cool, I must say, to want to take my property away, when I've bought it fair and square!" said Monty Lowther warmly. "You can't do trade on those lines, Trimble. It's dishonest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're not going to have my things for nothing!" raved Trimble. "I—I give ten shillings for that lot!"

"Then you can afford to wait, if you're getting two-pounds for ten shillings!" chuckled Manners.

"I—I mean, I gave three pounds—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to take them away!" howled Trimble, making another grab at the stack of articles.

Rap!

"Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monty Lowther rose from the table and yawned. Trimble eyed him wolfishly.

"Now, if you really want that bargain off, Trimble—" said Lowther, appearing to relent.

"Of course I do!" gasped Trimble. "You were only pulling my leg, you beast! I see that now!"

"Better late than never!" agreed Lowther. "Well, I will let you off the bargain on conditions. The first is, that you never try to sell any more articles in this study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The second is, that you give me back my I O U—"

"Here it is, you beast! It's no good!"

"The third is, that we stuff the articles down your back, and then kick you out of the study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you—" gasped Trimble.

Trade was not so good as Baggy had supposed. A minute later he emerged from Study No. 10 in the Shell. His articles were stuffed down his back, and three boots helped him to depart. He departed with a roar that rang the length of the Shell passage. A yell of laughter from Tom Merry's study followed him.

And it was fairly certain that Trimble, the tradesman, would not attempt to do any more business in that study!

CHAPTER 3.

Mellish is too Humorous!

"L END me your penknife, D'Arcy?"

"Wats!"

"That what you call polite?" asked Mellish of the Fourth.

"Wubbish!"

Certainly the manners of Arthur Augustus were not so good as usual.

But Gussy was growing fed up on the subject of the silver penknife which he had purchased from Baggy Trimble the day before.

Blake had borrowed it in the study the same evening to sharpen a pencil. Blake had spent five minutes on the pencil, apparently hacking his way through, but without getting through. He returned the penknife to Arthur Augustus, and some plain, personal remarks along with it.

When Blake used the knife it would not cut. When he handed it back to Gussy it would not even shut!

The task of sharpening a lead pencil was beyond that beautiful German penknife. The larger blade had quite curled with the effort, and lost whatever edge it had once possessed.

Gussy had to replace it in his pocket half-shut. That was rather a dangerous proceeding, as he discovered subsequently when he put his hand in his pocket to grope for a box of matches. He ran his aristocratic thumb on the point of the blade. Fortunately the point was decidedly blunt. But it was sharp enough to make Arthur Augustus utter a pained exclamation.

"Ow! That wotten penknife! Wow!"

After that several fellows asked Gussy to lend them his penknife, and note that they wanted to use it. They wanted to see it and admire it, and remark that Gussy must be an ass to give half-a-crown for it, and to mention that fools and their money were soon parted.

So the silver penknife grew to be an annoying subject. Hence Gussy's sharp reply when Mellish of the Fourth demanded the loan of it. Gussy had had enough chipping on the subject of being "done" by Baggy Trimble.

Arthur Augustus turned his back on Mellish in the Fourth Form passage, and walked away. Mellish called after him.

"Won't you lend me your penknife, D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus paused. If Mellish really wanted the use of the knife Gussy would have been the last person in the world to refuse.

"Do you weally want it, Mellish?"

"Of course."

"It will not cut, you know."

"Let's try."

"Oh, all wight!"

Arthur Augustus handed the silver penknife over to Percy Mellish. Two or three juniors looked on with grinning faces.

"You must have been a duffer to give half-a-crown for that, Gussy!" remarked Dick Julian.

"I did not want to buy it, Julian. Twimble twicked me into buyin' it."

"Catch him tricking me!" grinned Julian. "I've had the offer of a wonderful set of collar-studs for eighteen pence. I'll buy them if you'll give me half-a-crown for them, Gussy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

"I say, this knife is a corker, and no mistake!" said Mellish, holding it up. "Warranted to bend if you try to cut cheese with it, I think. What do you think of the brains of a fellow who buys a penknife like that?"

"Weally, Mellish—"

"You can bend the large blade with your fingers!" grinned Mellish. "Look! Hallo, it's snapped off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, D'Arcy! You don't mind, do you?"

"You uttah wottah, Mellish! You have no wight to bweak my penknife!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

"I'll pay for it full value, if you like," said Mellish.

"I do not wequiah you to pay for it. But—"

"I'd rather," said Mellish. "Full value, too. I really insist."

"Well, as you have bwoke it, pewwaps that is wight and pwopah," said Arthur Augustus. "I will allow you to pay for it."

"Here you are!"

Mellish placed a farthing in Gussy's hand. The swell of St. Jim's turned his eyeglass upon that small coin in astonishment.

"Bai Jove! What does this mean, Mellish? What is this for?"

"Full value for your penknife," explained Mellish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

"I don't think I'm the ass," grinned Mellish. "Why, I've seen German-silver penknives exactly like this at Wayland marked sixpence each. New, too! And you gave Trimble half-a-crown! I've heard, though, that you tried to get it off him for nothing."

"That is not twue, you wottah!"

"Trimble says—"

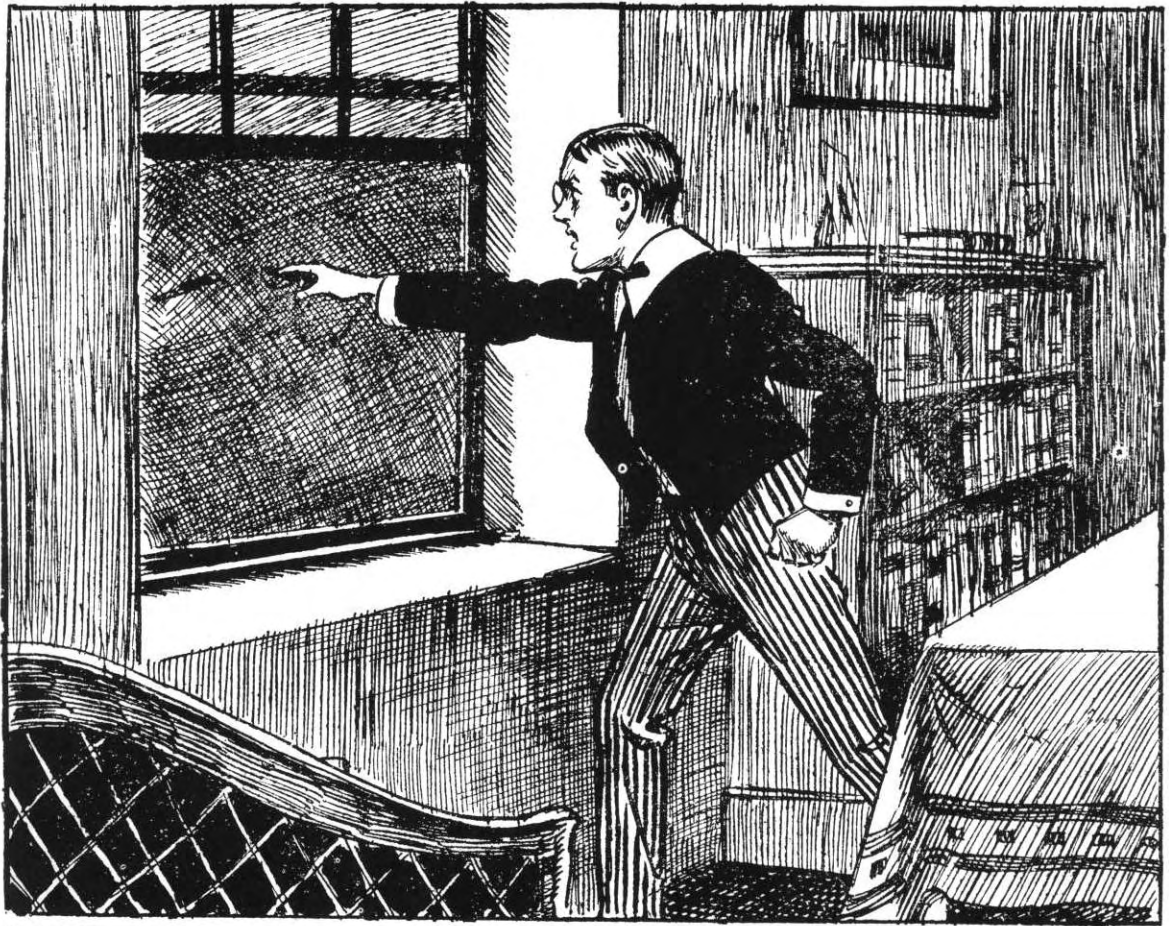
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D'Arcy throw up the window and hurled the obnoxious penknife far into the dusk. "That will get wid of it, at any wate!" he exclaimed. Suddenly a loud, angry howl rang out in the dusky quadrangle. The missile had evidently found a billet. "Oh owumbs!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. (See this page.)

"I wufese to listen to a wepetition of Twimble's wotten caddish remarks! Pway hand me that-knife!"

Mellish chuckled, and tossed the penknife over to D'Arcy. It caught him on his noble chin, and Gussy uttered an exclamation of wrath. It was a malicious trick, and just like Mellish, who had a malicious nature.

"Sorry!" grinned Mellish. "Anyhow, it can't have cut you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You wottah!" roared Arthur Augustus.

He made a stride at Mellish, and caught that youth by his rather prominent thin nose. Gussy's noble temper was roused, and he compressed finger and thumb on Mellish's nose like a vice.

"Gooog-gooog-gooog!" gurgled Mellish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo!" shrieked Mellish, in muffled tones. "Yooop! Grooooch! Led do by dose! By dose! By dose! Ow!"

"There, you wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus, releasing the Fourth-Former's nose at last. "Now, if you wish to put up your hands, Mellish, I am weady for you!"

"Go it, Mellish!" sang out Cardew of the Fourth. "By gad! He's actually goin' it! Wonders will never cease!"

Mellish was not a fighting man, as a rule; but the anguish in his nose spurred him on, and he rushed at Gussy. The next moment there was a fight raging in the Fourth Form passage.

"Hallo!" roared Blake, from the stairs. "This way! A giddy scrap! Go it, Gussy! Give him beans!"

"Pile in, Mellish!" howled Baggy Trimble.

"Bravo! Well hit, Gussy!"

Bump!

Mellish was on the floor. He sat there and spluttered. Arthur Augustus waited for him to rise again. But when he rose Percy Mellish backed away. His short-lived warlike ardour had oozed away. The fight ended as suddenly as it had started.

"Not finished yet, Mellish?" demanded Grundy of the Shell.

"Ow, wow!" mutabed Mellish.

"Mellish is no hog!" remarked Monty Lowther. "He knows when he's had enough."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Percy Mellish scowled savagely, and moved away to his study, holding his nose with his hand—keeping up an elaborate appearance of being more damaged than he really was.

"Call that a fight!" said Baggy Trimble disparagingly.

"It is all your fault, Twimble, for plantin' that wotten penknife on me. I am goin' to thwash you, too—"

Before Arthur Augustus could finish, Baggy Trimble had vanished up the passage, amid loud chuckles from the juniors.

Arthur Augustus gave a sniff, and walked away to Study No. 6.

"Lend us a penknife, Gussy!" called out Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus went into Study No. 6, and closed the door with a bang. It was dark in Study No. 6, and Gussy felt in his pocket for matches to light the gas. He gave a howl as his hand jammed on a broken penknife.

"Bai Jove! That wotten, beastly penknife again!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in great exasperation.

It was the second time he had jammed his noble fingers on that troublesome knife.

He jerked it out of his pocket, threw up the window of Study No. 6, and hurled the obnoxious penknife far into the dusk.

"That will get wid of it, at any wate!" he exclaimed.

A loud, angry howl rang out in the dusky quadrangle. Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Oh, cwumbs!"

He stared from the window. But it was too dark to see

anybody. But undoubtedly that unhappy penknife, hurled from the window of Study No. 6, had alighted upon the head of some unfortunate person in the quad. It occurred to Arthur Augustus rather late, that that method of disposing of an unwanted article was a rather thoughtless one.

He groped again for matches—but on second thoughts ceased to grope. It was possibly a master's head on which the penknife had landed—and if that was the case, it was a case of the least said, the soonest mended! Leaving Study No. 6 in darkness as he had found it, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy slipped out into the passage again, and kept his own counsel.

CHAPTER 4. No Trade!

BUMP!

"Whoooooop!"
Baggy Trimble departed from the study belonging to George Alfred Grundy of the Shell. He sprawled on hands and knees in the Shell passage, and roared.

George Alfred Grundy appeared in the doorway, with a red and wrathful face. Wilkins and Gunn were grinning behind him.

Grundy's hands were full of articles. He had handfuls of all sorts and conditions of articles.

Evidently the St. Jim's merchant had called in Grundy's study on business; and once more was failing to do a thriving trade in the Shell.

Whiz, whiz, whiz whiz, whiz!

Talbot of the Shell gave Baggy a hand up.

"The awful beast!" gasped Trimble. "I—I was offering Grundy some splendid bargains, you know, and—and he suddenly rushed at me, you know—like—like a wild beast, you know—groooh!"

Talbot laughed.

"German goods aren't popular," he remarked.

"Rot!" said Trimble. "They're cheap, ain't they? I say, help me to pick up my things, you fellows."

"Go and eat coke!" was the general reply.

And the juniors retired from the scene, laughing. Only Talbot, who was a very good-natured fellow, remained to lend Trimble a hand.

The varied goods were collected at last, and Talbot turned back to his study. Baggy Trimble followed him eagerly.

"I say, Talbot, are you in want of a pocket-knife?"

"No, thanks!"

"What about some studs?"

"Rats!"

"Some splendid gold sleeve-links?"

"Oh, dry up!" said Talbot. "I don't want any of your rubbish, and the sooner you chuck up this stunt, Trimble, the better. What do you want to bother the fellows for money for?"

"I'm offering them big bargains out of sheer good nature," exclaimed Trimble indignantly. "Look at this corkscrew—"

"Rot!"

Talbot went into his study and closed the door. The door reopened the next moment, and Baggy Trimble put his

READ ALL ABOUT JIMMY SEED, THE FAVOURITE OF THE SPURS F.C.

ONE of the men who have come right to the forefront this term is James Seed, the inside-right of Tottenham Hotspur, who gained his first International cap when England played Ireland in October of the present season. Those people who had watched the progress of Seed since he joined the Tottenham eleven were not surprised at the recognition which has now come his way. There are few more skilful inside men in football of to-day, and there are fewer still with such a capacity for hard work. Indeed, given any sort of luck, Seed is expected to gain many honours in the near future, and he deserves them, for he is of the very best type of professional footballer.

He has had rather an interesting career. Born at Blackhill, in Durham, his first club, following his schoolboy days, was the Whitburn club. Being top goal-scorer for the team, he naturally attracted attention, and Seed was signed on by Sunderland at the end of the 1913 season. At Roker Park he was looked upon as understudy to Buchan; but, although playing consistently for the reserves at inside-right, he got no opportunity of showing what he could do with the senior eleven.

With the West Yorkshires in the war Seed did valiant things on the battlefields of France. "I think Army football improved by play 100 per cent," he told the writer not long ago. Twice he was gassed; but once during the war he turned out for Sunderland. His form was not impressive, and the idea got abroad that the gas had so affected him that he was not likely to make good at football. Hence Seed was allowed to go to Mid-Rhondda, and there during 1919-20 season he scored 38 goals, and helped

the side to the Championship of the Southern League Second Division, the Welsh League, and also to ultimate victory in the South Wales Cup.

While with Mid-Rhondda, Manager McWilliam spotted him, and he joined the Spurs in February, 1920. Promoted to the first team of the Hotspur near the end of that season, Seed immediately settled down as an effective partner to Walden, and, apart from injury which kept him out of a game now and then, has filled the inside-right post regularly ever since. This means, of course, that he is the proud possessor of a Cup-winners' medal, being in the Spurs team which won the trophy the year before last.

There are distinct signs of Buchan's artistry about his play. Standing 5ft. 9½in., he is the tallest forward of the regular five, and with 11st. 8lb. adds needed weight to a line which is certainly not on the heavy side. In Seed's early days at Tottenham an ultra-deliberate way of doing things was noticeable in his play, but he has steadily improved in speed and subtlety, and is possessed of a powerful drive, which has sent the ball past many goalkeepers from a considerable distance out. Perhaps the one thing really useful to lift this fine forward right into the very highest class is the ability to work up to his top speed a little more quickly. At present he is what might be called rather a slow starter, though he is not by any means slow when he really gets going. Still, the ability to burst through in a short sprint would enable him to seize many more opportunities of slipping the ball past opposing goalkeepers. As a close dribbler he has few superiors.

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Clatter, crash, smash, clatter, clang!

Fellows rushed out of their studies to learn what the uproar was about. Trimble sat up and roared. Round him his articles fairly rained.

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Are you hurt, Trimble?" exclaimed Talbot of the Shell.

"Yarooop!" roared Trimble.

Apparently he was hurt!

"What the mewvy thump——" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming along from the Fourth Form quarters.

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Yooop!"

Whiz, crash, clatter! The last of Trimble's "articles" clattered round him as he sat and roared.

"There, you fat rotter!" roared Grundy of the Shell.

"That'll teach you to bring German goods to my study!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy turned indignantly into his study, and slammed the door. The juniors roared with laughter. Trimble's consignment of goods from Messrs. Shonkey & Co. did not seem to be going off like hot cakes. So far, the amateur tradesman seemed to be gathering more kicks than half-pence.

"Good man, Gwundy!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I regard you as gettin' just what you deserve, Twimble!"

"Give me a hand up, you beast!" howled Trimble.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus, usually tender-hearted to a fault, turned his back on the hapless Baggy, and walked away. He had not yet quite recovered from the affair of the penknife.

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fat face in, and blinked at Talbot and Gore and Skimpole.

"I say, look at these, Talbot. I say, they ain't really German goods, you know. Besides, what's the matter with German goods? They're cheap!"

"Want to help the Germans, you bounder?" roared Gore. Trimble sniffed.

"Jever read the papers?" he demanded. "If you did you'd see that the politicians are all busy with schemes to put Germany on her feet again. Well, buying German goods will help. Look at these, Gore——"

Gore did not trouble to look, or to answer. He seized a big cushion, and made a rush at Trimble.

Once more the St. Jim's tradesman bolted out of a Shell study, roaring, scattering his goods as he fled. Gore kicked the door shut after him.

"Oh dear!" gasped Baggy.

He wandered disconsolately away. Trade was not prospering. With the single, solitary exception of the celebrated silver penknife, Baggy had not succeeded yet in parting with any of his "articles." It looked as if Gussy's half-crown was all the hard cash he would receive in exchange for the pound he had sent to Messrs. Shonkey & Co.

Trimble felt discouraged when he returned to his own study, No. 2 in the Fourth. He found his study-mates there, Wildrake and Percy Mellish. They were busy at prep as Trimble ought to have been. But Percy Mellish was dabbling his nose at intervals; indeed, giving his nose more attention than he gave prep. The noble knuckles of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had left their mark on Mellish's nose.

"Mellish, old chap," said Trimble persuasively, "don't you think a fellow ought to back up his own study?"

"Cheese it!"

"Just buy one article to give a fellow the start," urged Baggy. "I can let you have these sleeve-links at a bob, as a friend—"

"Shut up!" roared Mellish.

"I say, Wildrake—"

The Canadian junior looked up from his work with a grin on his sunburnt face.

"Forget it!" he said. "Nothing doing! I guess I shall biff you if you interrupt."

"These splendid pocket-knives—"

"Can it!" snapped Wildrake.

"These gold sleeve-links are wonderful value!"

Wildrake rose to his feet.

"Another word about your German rubbish, and I'll jam the lot down your back!" he said.

"I—I say, Wildrake, old chap, look at this wonderful combination corkscrew and tin-opener—"

"That does it!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Baggy Trimble roared as Wildrake laid wrathful hands on him. For the next few minutes Wildrake was busy, and Baggy was wriggling and struggling and yelling. When Wildrake returned to prep Baggy had most of his assortment of goods down his back, and they felt most uncomfortable there.

"Ow! You awful rotter!" gasped Baggy. "Just because I was trying to do you a good turn! Ow! Wow! I've a good mind to lick you, Wildrake—"

"I guess you can go ahead if you like."

"Yah!"

Wildrake went on with his prep, and Mellish with dabbing his nose. But Baggy Trimble had no time for prep. For quite a long time he was engaged in extracting an assortment of goods from his back, and he looked quite tired when he had finished.

CHAPTER 5.

A Happy Morning with Virgil!

"EQUO ne credite, Teucri—"

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Kindly give the correct pronunciation."

"Yaas, sir; I'm doin' so."

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, was not in the best of tempers that morning. He had been dealing with Trimble, and Trimble always had a rather exasperating effect on a master. Trimble could not, perhaps, help being obtuse; but he could help being an idle slacker. Idleness added to obtuseness had an exasperating effect. Moreover, it was a dismal, rainy morning, and when it rained Mr. Lathom was conscious of the fact that he was no longer young as he once had been. Little rheumatic pains made themselves felt, and a favourite corn of Mr. Lathom's, which had been his constant companion for thirty years or so, became emphatic. On such occasions, it behoved Mr. Lathom's class to be careful. Trimble, on the other hand, had been exceedingly careless; and Trimble had felt the weight of the pointer, and was now rubbing his fat hands dolorously.

Arthur Augustus came next; and Arthur Augustus was very careful indeed. Gussy was a dutiful youth, and always did his prep most assiduously. He was quite prepared to render Virgil's beautiful verses in great style; but naturally Arthur Augustus could not change his remarkable accent all of a sudden—not even when Mr. Lathom's pet corn was giving trouble.

Gussy's beautiful accent, which his chums agreed was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, had never worried Mr. Lathom before. Now it seemed to worry him.

"You can read, I suppose, D'Arcy," said Mr. Lathom, very crossly. "Look at your book."

"Yaas, sir, certainly! I t'wust I can wead Latin," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Equo ne credite, Teucri!" said Mr. Lathom.

"Yaas, sir; that's what I said. Equo ne credite, Teucri!" said Arthur Augustus innocently.

There was a chuckle in the Fourth Form. It died away immediately, as Mr. Lathom's eye glittered round the class.

"D'Arcy's absurdity is not a laughing matter!" said Mr. Lathom. "D'Arcy, I insist upon a correct pronunciation!"

"Weally, sir—"

"Repeat these words after me!" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"Equo ne credite, Teucri."

"Certainly, sir! Equo ne credite, Teucri."

"D'Arcy!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Yaas, sir."

"You must not lisp in speaking Latin. Unless you repeat those words with the correct pronunciation, D'Arcy, I shall punish you!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked steadily at his Form-master.

"Weally, Mr. Lathom—" he began.

"I am assured, D'Arcy, that you are not so stupid as you pretend to be—"

"I should be vevy sowwy to be considered stupid, Mr. Lathom," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "May I suggest, sir, that you are wathah impatient this mornin'?"

"What?"

"I am awah, sir, that you do not feel so well as usual on wainy mornin's," said Arthur Augustus. "But weally, sir, that is no weason for waggin' your class. Don't you think so, sir?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake.

The Fourth Form looked at Mr. Lathom. That gentleman's face was a study. Mr. Lathom sometimes gave his class little homilies, for their good. But he had never expected to receive a homily from a member of his Form.

But really, there never was any telling what to expect, where the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was concerned.

For some moments the Fourth Form master was speechless. When he found his voice at last, it came forth in a roar.

"D'Arcy! You utterly impertinent boy! Step out before the class!"

"What for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"I will step out, sir," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "But I must remark, sir, with all respect, that I regard this twreatment as unjust."

Mr. Lathom made no reply to that. He grabbed his cane from his desk, and spun round towards D'Arcy, his eyes fairly gleaming over his spectacles.

"Hold out your hand, D'Arcy!"

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

"Now you may return to your place, D'Arcy," said Mr. Lathom, breathing hard. "You will write out two hundred lines from the second Æneid, beginning with 'Laocoon ardens—'"

"Vewy well, sir," said Arthur Augustus, squeezing his hands in anguish. "But I considah—"

"Go to your place!" thundered Mr. Lathom; and Arthur Augustus jumped, and went.

"Mellish, you will go on where D'Arcy left off!"

Percy Mellish licked his lips. His prep had been done carelessly, as usual; indeed, even more carelessly than usual.

as his damaged nose had occupied so much of his attention. He had hoped against hope that Mr. Lathom, in his present mood, would not call upon him to construe. But his luck was out.

"Mellish, I am waiting!" said Mr. Lathom, in a grinding voice.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Mellish.

"Go on, at once!"

"Equo ne credite, Teucri!" gasped Mellish. "Don't trust the horse, Trojans— Quidquid—oh dear!—quidquid—"

"Why have you stopped, Mellish?"

"I—I haven't sir! Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentis—quidquid—quidquid—quidquid—"

Mr. Lathom transfixed him with a glittering eye.

"For what reason, Mellish, are you incessantly repeating a single word from the verse you are to construe?"

"I—I—I—"

"Is it possible, Mellish, that you cannot render that verse—that exceedingly well-known and oft-quoted verse—into English?"

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"Have you not prepared that passage, Mellish?"

"Oh, yes, sir! Certainly!"

"I give you one minute, Mellish, in which to construe," said Mr. Lathom, in a voice like the rumble of thunder.

Quidquid!" gasped Mellish. "Whatever—"

"You may continue."

But Mellish couldn't continue. He stammered and gasped.

"Very well," said Mr. Lathom—"very well indeed!"

Obviously, Mellish, you have neglected your preparation. It is my duty, Mellish, to deal severely with incorrigibly idle boys who deliberately neglect their preparation. You will stand out, Mellish!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" howled Mellish.

"If you utter another ridiculous sound in this Form-room, Mellish, I shall cane you again!"

Percy Mellish controlled his feelings with an effort.

"You will write out two hundred lines of the second Æneid, Mellish. I shall expect the lines to-morrow. You may take your place."

After that the Fourth Form were as good as gold. Mr. Lathom was fairly on the war-path now, and not for a term's pocket-money would any fellow in the Fourth have caught his fiery eye.

It was rather a relief when lessons ended. If they had continued much longer there really was no telling what might have been the result of the throbbing of Mr. Lathom's corn!

CHAPTER 6.

Straightforward!

TOM MERRY & CO. came along from the Shell-room after morning lessons with cheery faces. They found some Fourth Form fellows in the passage whose faces were not cheery.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was rubbing his noble hands, and Blake and Herries and Digby were sympathising. Percy Mellish also was rubbing his hands, and Baggy Trimble was speaking to him. But Baggy wasn't sympathising. He was only trying to sell his study-mate a fountain-pen.

"Trouble in the family?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Lathom's been on the war-path," said Blake. "We've had a merry morning. Gussy was bound to look for trouble just when Lathom's corns were giving him jip. It wouldn't have been Gussy otherwise."

"Weally, Blake—"

"The awful beast!" said Mellish. "Two hundred lines and a licking for mucking up a construe! What do you think of that?"

"Hard cheese!" said Manners. "It was coming down heavy!"

"I'll make him sorry for it somehow!" muttered Mellish.

"Weally, Mellish, I twust that you are only makin' that remark thoughtlessly," said Arthur Augustus, in his most fatherly manner. "Mr. Lathom has certainly exceeded the limit this mornin', but we must remember that, as a wule, he is vewy good-tempered and considewate."

"Oh, rats!"

"Pway do not say wats when I speak to you, Mellish! It is wude and ill-wued. I wepeat that we are bound to tolewat Mr. Lathom when he goes off the deep end on ware occasions. As a wule he is all wight. The poor old gentleman's corns give him a lot of twouble in wet weathah. We ought to be thankful that we haven't any corns."

"Lathom ought to call in a farmer's man," said Lowther. "Bai Jove! What good would a fahmah's man be, Lowthah?"

"To reap the corn, of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

"I think this ought to be suggested to Lathom," said Monty, shaking his head. "A Form master has no right to go around with arable feet, growing corn, and worrying his pupils. Feeling bad, Mellish?"

"Yes!" snapped Mellish.

"It was a bit thick for mucking up a construe," said Lowther. "But I'll tell you what. Suppose the licking was for the last time you smoked in the study and weren't found out. Then you can consider that you've only got what you deserve. Catch on?"

"You silly ass!" snarled Mellish. And he stalked away.

Baggy Trimble followed him, fountain-pen in hand.

"It's really topping, Mellish," said Baggy. "Worth a guinea a box—I mean, worth a guinea. A splendid fountain-pen, with check-action and ball-bearings complete, and only four bob—I say—Yoooop!"

Baggy sat down in the passage as Mellish smote. Trimble in trade was still not prospering.

Percy Mellish was very far from sharing the Honourable Arthur Augustus' benignity towards the Fourth Form

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master. Mellish had certainly deserved the caning more than D'Arcy had, but he was feeling infinitely more bitter about it.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dismissed the matter from his noble mind as soon as the pain was gone from his palms. He was only reminded of it by the fact that he had lines to do. After dinner, as it was a half-holiday, he proceeded to his study to write the lines.

Mellish was similarly engaged in Study No. 2.

Two hundred lines was a fairly long task, and long before he had finished Mellish was loafing about with a scowling face, thinking not of finishing his task, but of revenge upon the Form master.

His task was still unfinished when Mellish left the study and wheeled his bicycle out of gates. Trimble spotted him as he went, and called to him:

"Done your lines, Mellish?"

"Not yet."

"Find it pretty slow work?"

"Yes!" growled Mellish.

"What you really need for doing lines is a fountain-pen," said the St. Jim's merchant. "And I'll tell you what, I'll let you have this splendid Shonkey fountain-pen for three-and-six. You save half your time on writing lines. What do you say?"

Mellish did not say anything. He ran his bicycle into Baggy, and the front wheel crashed on Baggy's fat knees.

Baggy was sitting on the cold, hard ground, and roaring as Mellish mounted his bike and rode away towards Wayland.

The hapless merchant picked himself up and rolled back into the quadrangle disconsolately. With all his efforts as a salesman, Baggy had succeeded, so far, in parting only with the silver penknife that had been 'planted' on D'Arcy of the Fourth—and there had been so many jests about that penknife that it had become celebrated, and was a standing warning, as it were, to any fellow who might have been disposed to deal with the St. Jim's merchant.

Every fellow who had seen that penknife, or heard of it, was quite decided to give Trimble's 'articles' a wide berth. And nearly everybody had either seen it or heard of it by that time.

"I say, Levison—" Trimble ran down Levison of the Fourth in the quadrangle. "Looking for a bargain?"

"Go and eat coke!" was Ernest Levison's reply.

"You care to look at a combined tin-opener and cork-screw, Clive?"

"No!" grunted Clive.

"Anything I can do for you, Cardew?" asked Baggy persuasively.

"Yes, rather!" said Cardew.

Baggy brightened up.

"Good man! Give it a name!"

"Clear off!" said Ralph Reckness Cardew. "That's all you can do for me at present. But I'd like you to do it—sharp!"

"Yah!"

"You fat fraud!" said Levison. "D'Arcy's thrown away the penknife you sold him. It was no good."

"Thrown it away?" exclaimed Trimble.

"Yes. He told me so when I asked him to lend it to me," said Levison, with a grin. "We can't even pull his leg about it any more."

"What a silly ass!" said Trimble, in disgust. "He could have sold it to somebody. He could have palmed it off on his minor in the Third, f'rinstance. Sure he's thrown it away?"

"Yes, you fat rascal!"

Baggy Trimble rolled on to the School House. He inserted his fat face into Study No. 6, where Arthur Augustus was grinding through lines.

The swell of St. Jim's looked up, and sternly pointed to the passage with his pen.

"Get out, you fat wotah!" he said.

"You wouldn't care for a fountain-pen to do your lines with?" asked Baggy. "Saves a lot of time, you know."

"I weally do not think, Twibble, that your wotten wubbish would save any time. I wegard you as a swindlah!"

"Well, I like that!" said Trimble. "You're not satisfied with that silver penknife I sold you?"

"Certainly not. It was German wubbish!"

"Well, I'll take it back and return your money," said Baggy. "Can't say fairer than that."

"Bai Jove!"

"I hope I'm honest and straightforward," said Trimble, with dignity. "Hand it over, and take your half-crown." And Baggy Trimble fumbled in his pocket, in ostensible search of a half-crown that certainly was not there.

Arthur Augustus' stern brow relaxed.

"Bai Jove! I seem to have done you injustice, Twibble, and I am sowwy!" he said. "That is certainly a vewy straightforward offah. But I cannot return the penknife, as I have thwown it away."



"You say you are innocent, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton quietly. "Well, look at this penknife. I am given to understand that it is your property. It was found here by Mr. Lathom, and is plainly the instrument with which the damage was done. Is it your property or not?" "Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy, as he recognised the broken blade. "Yaas, sir, it is!" (See page 12.)

"Well, you must be an ass!" said Trimble. "Sure you couldn't find it again?"

"Imposs."

"Well, I've made a fair offer," said Trimble. "Can't say I'm not straightforward. Here's your money if you return the goods. I came specially to ask you."

"I am vewy much obliged to you, Twimble, and I wetwact the wathah hard things I have said to you," said the unsuspecting Gussy.

"Hallo, Gussy! Ready to come down to the football?" asked Levison of the Fourth, looking into the study.

"Sowwy, deah boy—still fifty lines to do."

"Trimble here!" ejaculated Levison. "You're not letting him sell you any more swinding articles, surely!"

"I am afraid we have been wathah unjust to Twimble, Levison. He has just ofahed me the money back if I return the knife."

"I—I say—" gasped Baggy, edging to the door. Levison burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, it's not five minutes since I told him you'd thrown it away!"

"Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus jumped up in great wrath. His noble leg had been pulled again, and he was wrathy, though really his noble leg was anybody's to pull.

Trimble dodged doorward, but Levison filled the doorway.

"I—I say," he gasped, "that—that's a mistake! It—it must have been somebody else you told, Levison. I—I say, D'Arcy—"

"You feahful fabwicatin' wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "You were offahin' money back because you knew I had thrown the wubbish away!"

"I—I—I didn't—wasn't— Leggo!" howled Baggy.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Would you mind kickin' that wottah as fah as the stairs, Levison?"

"Pleased!"

"Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

Arthur Augustus settled down to lines again as Trimble's yells died away in the distance.

It was half an hour later that the lines were finished. Then Arthur Augustus gathered them up, and took his imposition to Mr. Lathom's study. The Fourth Form master was out of doors, and Gussy laid the imposition on the table, with a paper-weight on it, and departed. Then, in great relief, he hurried down to Little Side to join Tom Merry & Co. at football.

CHAPTER 7.

An Amazing Accusation!

KILDARE of the Sixth came up the Fourth Form passage with a rather grim expression on his face. He stopped at the door of Study No. 6, knocked, and threw the door open.

Quite a merry party were gathered in that famous study. Blake & Co. were at tea, and entertaining three visitors from the Shell—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther.

The seven juniors rose to their feet as the St. Jim's captain came in.

"Pway twot in, Kildare, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "Put some more watah in the teapot, Blake. Kildare has come to tea."

"You young ass!" said Kildare. "You're wanted."

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Nothing wrong?" asked Tom Merry.

"Something very wrong," answered the captain of St. Jim's. "D'Arcy seems to have asked for a flogging, and there isn't much doubt that he's going to get it. Come with me, D'Arcy!"

Arthur Augustus did not immediately obey. He fixed his monocle in his noble eye, and gazed at the captain of the school, loftily and inquiringly.

"I twust you are jestin', Kildare," he said.

"Don't be a young ass! Come along!"

"But what's the row?" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "What has Gussy done?"

"I have done nothin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps

Mr. Lathom is not satisfied with my impot. Pewwaps some of the lines were w'ritten wathah huwiedly. But that is not a floggin' mattah."

Kildare looked at him rather curiously.

"You went to Mr. Lathom's study while he was out this afternoon?" he asked.

"Yaas, to take my lines."

"Well, Mr. Lathom wants to see you about it. Come along."

"Vewy well, Kildare."

The prefect stepped into the passage, and Arthur Augustus followed him. He turned in the doorway to give his comrades a reassuring nod.

"It's all wight, deah boys," he said. "Don't wowwy. There certainly cannot be any question of a floggin'. I must remark that I think Kildare is talkin' out of the back of his neck."

"Follow me, you young ass!" snapped Kildare.

"I am followin' you, deah boy."

Kildare strode away towards the stairs. Arthur Augustus followed him, with his head erect and his noble nose in the air, undismayed.

But there was dismay behind him in Study No. 6.

Tom Merry & Co. looked at one another, quite forgetful of the spread on the study table.

"What on earth can be the matter?" asked Tom.

"Something's up," said Manners. "I suppose poor old Gussy has been playing the ox again."

"Wasn't he in a row with Lathom in the Form-room this morning?" asked Monty Lowther.

Blake nodded, with a worried look.

"Lathom was ratty, and Gussy jawed him—you know Gussy," he said. "But he was caned for it, and that's all over. Nothing since then but the lines, and lines ain't a serious matter."

"I—I suppose—"

Tom Merry paused.

"What?" asked Blake.

"Well, Gussy wouldn't be ass enough to play any trick on Lathom, in return for the caning, would he?" said the captain of the Shell doubtfully.

"Not likely!" You heard him high-faluting afterwards," said Blake. "He forgave Lathom, you know."

"Well, something's up, and something jolly serious, to judge by Kildare's chivvy," said Herries. "I think we'd better go down."

"We'll see Gussy through, anyway," said Dig.

Leaving the spread unfinished on the table, the six juniors left the study and hurried downstairs. They overtook Kildare and D'Arcy in the passage outside Mr. Lathom's study.

Arthur Augustus glanced round serenely.

"It's all wight, deah boys. Don't wowwy!"

Blake caught his arm.

"Be careful, Gussy. If Lathom's ratty, don't cheek him."

"I twust, Blake, that I shall nevah be guilty of the bad form of cheekin' a Form mastah."

"Fathead! You cheeked him in the Form-room this morning!"

"That is quite an ewwah, Blake. I explained to Mr. Lathom—"

"Well, don't explain to him any more, old chap," said Tom Merry.

"That weally depends on circs, deah boy. You see—"

"Come, D'Arcy!" said Kildare. "You other fags had better keep clear."

Kildare tapped at Mr. Lathom's door and entered, followed by the culprit. The juniors caught a glimpse of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, in the study with Mr. Lathom. Both the masters looked grave and stern, and it was evident that something very much out of the common had happened.

Kildare closed the door; but Monty Lowther's foot was in the way, and it remained slightly ajar. Arthur Augustus' pals meant to know what the trouble was, and they were prepared to interrupt the meeting, if Gussy began to put his aristocratic foot in it.

Arthur Augustus, quite unlike his comrades, showed no sign of dismay or alarm. His conscience was clear, and his face expressed only a slight surprise and patient toleration.

He stood before the two masters with his head erect.

It was Mr. Railton who addressed him.

"You know why you have been sent for, D'Arcy?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Then you confess?"

"Confess!" repeated Arthur Augustus blankly. "I do not quite compwehend, Mr. Wailton. Am I accused of anythin'?"

The Housemaster frowned.

"You have just stated that you know why you have been sent for, D'Arcy," he said sternly.

"Of course, sir. I was sent for because Mr. Lathom wished

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to see me," said Arthur Augustus innocently. "At least, I pwesume that that is the case."

"Do you say, D'Arcy, that you do not know what has happened in Mr. Lathom's study during his absence this afternoon?"

"If anythin' has happened, I am quite unawah of it," said Arthur Augustus. "Nothin' happened that I know of while I was heah."

"You admit that you were here?"

"Natuwally. I should not be likely to pwevawicate, I suppose," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"I trust not," said Mr. Railton, with a cough. "But a person who is capable of acting, as someone has acted in this study, would scarcely hesitate at a falsehood, I think. I warn you, D'Arcy, before you speak, that the evidence against you seems perfectly clear."

"Perfectly!" said Mr. Lathom.

"D'Arcy, you entered Mr. Lathom's study this afternoon during his absence, as you have admitted. Your imposition was found on the table. Did you, while you were here, commit an act of vandalism—an outrage worthy only of a hooligan? Did you deliberately cut and damage Mr. Lathom's Virgil?"

"Bai Jove!"

"There is the volume, D'Arcy! Look at it!"

Arthur Augustus turned a blank stare upon the volume. It was Mr. Lathom's own very special Virgil—not a common or garden Virgil, so to speak. It was a magnificent volume, bound in calf, and it contained not only the *Æneid*, but the *Georgics* and the *Eclogues*, with notes in Latin by the learned gentleman who had spent thirty years in the classic shades of Oxford preparing that edition, and had lost his hair and most of his eyesight on the task. And that bald, blinking, and deeply-learned gentleman had presented that valued volume to Mr. Lathom, with his own learned and indecipherable signature in it.

That was the volume that had been damaged—that valued, that highly-prized volume, which a Fourth-Former would have said was worth at least sixpence to use as a pearl-pearl; but which was invaluable in the eyes of its owner—a pearl of price, and far above rubies.

It had been cruelly damaged.

There were gashes of a knife on the thick calf binding, and several of the pages had been gashed across.

Arthur Augustus started and coloured a little as he saw it. It was, as Mr. Railton had said, the act of a vaudal.

Only a hooligan would have gratified malice by damaging a book; Arthur agreed with Mr. Railton there. And to damage a rare and highly-prized book was particularly brutal.

Obviously it was an act of revenge.

Arthur Augustus coloured, and his colour deepened as he turned back to face Mr. Railton and his Form master.

"Am I suspected of that howwid, disgustin', and wascally action, sir?" he asked, with a tremble in his voice.

"You are!" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"Weally, sir—"

"You deny it, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Railton.

"I wefuse to take the twouble to deny it."

"What!" thundered the Housemaster.

But thunder did not terrify Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He drew himself to his full height, and returned the Housemaster's angry look fearlessly.

"I wefuse to weply to such an accusation," he said steadily. "I wegard it as an insult!"

"Very well," said Mr. Railton quietly. "If you are innocent, D'Arcy, I can excuse your indignation. Now, look at this penknife. I am given to understand that it is your property. It was found here by Mr. Lathom, and is plainly the instrument with which the damage was done. Is this knife your property, or not?"

Mr. Railton held up a German-silver penknife, of which the larger blade was broken off short.

"Bai Jove!"

"Is that your knife, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas!"

CHAPTER 8.

Guilty or Not Guilty!

TOM MERRY & CO., in the passage, exchanged startled looks of dismay. They had not been able to surmise what was the "row" when they followed the swell of St. Jim's to his Form master's study. Certainly they had surmised nothing like this.

Their looks were aglast.

They waited in painful apprehension for what was to follow. They did not even know what to think of the matter.

There were some moments of silence in the study. Mr. Railton laid the broken penknife on the table.

"That knife, D'Arcy, was found by Mr. Lathom on his rug," he said quietly. "Obviously it was dropped there by



Three pairs of hands closed on Grundy of the Shell as he rushed at Arthur Augustus. "I'll smash you!" roared Grundy. "Pway let him come on, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I am perfectly pweared to thwash Gwunday!" But Blake & Co. held Grundy back. (See page 16.)

the person who slashed the book with it. That it was the instrument used is clear, for a fragment of the paper was caught in the knife—the blade apparently closed in being used for a reckless slash. The knife is yours."

"Yaas, sir."

"I am glad that you do not deny it, at least."

"I should not be likely to deny what is twue, sir."

"On finding the knife, Mr. Lathom called in Kildare of the Sixth, who recognised the knife," said Mr. Railton. "It has been seen in your possession, and appears to be well known."

"Quite so, sir. It is a wotten German knife, sold to me by a spoofin' wottah! I wemembah Kildare seein' it."

"I was bound to mention the circumstance to Mr. Lathom, D'Arcy," said Kildare, looking very curiously at the Fourth-Former.

"Yaas, I undahstand that, Kildare. It was your dutay as a pwefect, as I am well awah."

"I scarcely expected you to admit ownership, D'Arcy; though doubtless you are aware that, the knife being well known for some reason, inquiry would have elicited the facts," said Mr. Lathom.

"This is the second time to-day you have tweated me with injustice, Mr. Lathom. You have no wight whatevah to suppose that I would not admit the ownahship of the knife when it was my pwopahity."

"D'Arcy!"

"Any fellow in the School House, or the New House, eithah, will tell you that I do not tell lies," said Arthur Augustus, with superb dignity. "And I weally expected you to know it, sir."

"Boy!"

"A Form mastah, sir, should be a judge of chawactah," said Arthur Augustus. "I am vevy much surprised, Mr. Lathom, to find you capable of makin' such a mistake. I had thought much bettah of your judgment."

Kildare coughed, and Mr. Railton echoed his cough. Mr. Lathom seemed at a loss for words.

Arthur Augustus seemed almost too much for them.

"A truce to this!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "D'Arcy, you

deny having damaged Mr. Lathom's Virgil with your knife?"

"Certainly! I mean, I wufuse to take any notice of such an accusation. It would be beneath my dignity."

"How do you account for your knife being found here, and having been used to slash the book?"

"I do not account for it, sir."

"What?"

"It is for you, sir, to account for it," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I twust that it will pwove a clue to the guilty party."

"If this is sheer impudence—" began the puzzled House-master.

"Pway excuse my intewwuptin' you, sir. I have nevah been guilty of the wotten bad form of bein' impertinent to a mastah. I am not beginnin' now."

"I understand, D'Arcy, that Mr. Lathom had occasion to punish you in the Form-room this morning."

"Yaas, sir. Mr. Lathom was watah hasty."

"Never mind that. You were punished, I have no doubt whatever justly. Have you done this thing in revenge for your punishment?"

"Imposs, sir, as I have not done it at all!"

"May I speak, sir?" asked Kildare. And as the House-master nodded, Kildare went on. "Had you lent your knife to another boy, D'Arcy?"


"No, Kildare."

"Oh!" said the prefect. And he was silent.

"I must take the evidence as I find it, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton. "You were punished in the Form-room this morning, and had the insolence to tell your Form master that the punishment was unjust. During your master's absence, you entered his study and left your lines here. The book was slashed with your knife, which was dropped and overlooked. You cannot expect your denials to carry weight."

There was a tap at the door, and Jack Blake pushed it wider open, and inserted a red face.

(Continued on page 16.)



The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

EDITORIAL.

By Tom Merry.

I don't very often get the chance of writing an article for the "News"—or, perhaps, it would be better to say that I don't often get the job of doing so. Because it's no great privilege for an editor to spread himself out in his own pages, and, for my part, I only do it now and again when I've got an odd space to fill up, and can't get anyone to do it for me. There's quite enough work in editing the paper, without writing it as well, although few, if any, of the fellows realise it. However, they are going to get the chance in the future, and that is the reason that I am writing this short article.

The fact is that I am going to try an experiment in connection with the "News." I've been editing it ever since its inception, more than a year ago, and I'm beginning to feel that I should like a rest from the duties. Besides, I think that a change of editorship would do the paper good—sort of buck it up, give somebody a chance to bring fresh ideas to the job, and so on. The difficulty is that when I broached the subject before a special meeting of the Staff in Study No. 10, nobody would undertake the task. They all seem to think that an editor has the easiest job of anyone on a paper, but they all fight shy of taking it on. It was Cardew who suggested a scheme that seemed to meet with general approval. He professed himself willing to undertake the Editorial chair for one week only, and proposed that other juniors, whether members of the staff or not, should volunteer to do the same. It is a compromise, certainly, and not exactly what I wanted, but it seems quite reasonable, and it will at least give me an occasional rest, even if it does not entirely free me from the obligation of Editorship.

When the scheme was announced to the school in general there was quite a rush for the honour of being the first temporary editor, so much so, indeed, that we had to decide the matter by drawing lots. As a result the job went to Wildrake's address, and, accordingly, he has made himself responsible for this issue. I trust that it will appeal to all readers of the "News," and I take this opportunity of announcing that in future a goodly proportion of issues will be produced under the direction of other members of the Shell and Fourth. Whether I shall be able to persuade any of the Sixth to lend their names to the undertaking remains to be seen, but it would certainly be a distinct attraction to have an issue produced by half a dozen prefects under the editorship of Kildare, wouldn't it?

Then, again, fancy an edition edited by Baggly Trimble or Joe Frayne. Some edition! However, I have been permitted to glance over the proofs of this number, and I must say that I don't think Wildrake has any reason to be in the least ashamed of his essay at editorial duties. I shall be pleased to hear from readers concerning both this issue and the scheme in general, and if there is any special demand for an issue directed by any particular junior, I shall be only too pleased to make arrangements accordingly. In the meantime, look out for the next issue, which will be conducted by one of your favourite characters.

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MY HOLIDAY IN THE WEST!

By Monty Lowther.

The other day I received an invitation from Wildrake to spend a week-end with him at the Boot-Leg Ranch, and I, naturally, accepted. I was surprised to find that the Head raised not the slightest objection to the idea. Indeed, he seemed quite keen on it. He said that it would be a great relief to be spared my jokes, if only for a little while. I had not the faintest recollection of ever having joked with the Head, and as I looked at him in astonishment he handed me a couple of large revolvers, saying that no doubt I should find them very useful. I thanked him and returned to Wildrake, who was waiting at the gates, and we set out. I have no memory of the journey, but we certainly arrived at the Boot Leg in due course.

Here I had tea, and changed into cowboy garb, after being introduced to Wildrake's pater, who told us to be careful, as there was a band of Indians on the war-path. I suggested that the best thing to do would be to keep off the war-path altogether, and resolved that, as I did not know which it was, I would, when alone, keep to the main road, or else ride on the grass and avoid all paths.

After tea we went to where the ponies are kept, but although Wildrake rode one with seeming ease, and attempted to persuade me to do the same thing, I refrained, being of the opinion that they are a little too playful for a serious person like myself. I didn't want to be thrown from the saddle, and then rolled on. Not me!

The ranch is surrounded by a wire fence, miles long, which is kept in repair by the cow-punchers who ride round—they call it "riding fences"—with a coil of wire, and clippers and things, for that purpose. The compound was full of steers, and, when we got inside, one of them, making a violent dislike to the colour of my shirt, or something of that kind, "steered" straight for me. My horse was of the same opinion about the matter as I, and didn't stay to argue the point. We went round and round the compound, with the steer following, and all the punchers yelling, while Wildrake followed behind, whirling a lasso. Suddenly he threw it, and the coils came whizzing out from his hand. But in the excitement of the moment he misjudged the distance, and the coils, instead of settling over the head of the steer, fell straight on to my shoulders and tightened round my arms. I was jerked out of the saddle, and came to the ground with an awful bump, with the steer bearing down on me. I yelled out, and fought to get my arms free, only to become tied up in the rope.

Then something struck me on the shoulder, and I woke up, to find myself on the floor of the Shell dormitory, all tangled up in the bedclothes, with Tom Merry shaking me by the arm.

I suppose the affair was due to the fact that I had been talking to Wildrake about the Wild West and this issue of the "News" just before I went up to bed, but the dream was certainly a very realistic one. I do not think I shall accept any more dream invitations!

BAGGY IN THE WILD WEST!

Imagined by
Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Wildrake has asked me to give my idea of what would happen to Baggibus if the fat clam should ever happen to get transplanted to the Wild and Woolly West.

Well, we will suppose that he has managed to wangle his way across the country—to the Boot Leg Ranch, let us say. On second thoughts, we will say nothing so unlikely. I cannot believe that even Baggly would be so foolish as to go anywhere he would run the risk of meeting anyone who knew him. Let us be charitable and permit him to start life afresh. He has arrived, we will suppose, at the Fatted Hog Ranch. If there is such a place, I am certain that the name would appeal to him and fire what little imagination he has. There will be cowboys standing about, discussing both cows and boys, most probably. Baggly will by now have seen plenty of cowboys and have got more or less used to the sight of them, but it is impossible that the cowboys should have previously seen anything like Baggly, and still more impossible that they would ever get used to him.

Baggly will seek out the foreman and ask for a job. This gentleman, after recovering from the astonishment occasioned by the discovery that the latest addition to the local scenery is human, will ask Baggly what he can do. His recital of his accomplishments will occupy the rest of the morning, at the conclusion of which Baggly will wake up to the fact that he is talking to thin air, the outfit, or whatever they call themselves, having faded out of the landscape in an unobtrusive manner. Finally he will get a job on a ranch—most probably as a picket-post to tie horses up to—and his first desire will be to instruct his new companions in the art of cowboying. He will show them how to ride, to shoot, and so on.

He will begin to hear things. People will find their conversations becoming public property in a most remarkable manner. They will find their grub disappearing, and they will be called upon to cash remittances from relations—always in advance. Being a coarse-grained, suspicious crowd, they might even express doubts with regard to the existence of these ornaments of Debrett—which they will allude to as the "stud-book" most probably—and their insinuations will wound the sensitive feelings of Baggibus. They will begin to wonder how he manages to sustain his competency if he limits himself to his fair share of the grub, and they will examine his boots in an endeavour to ascertain the reason for his spurs falling off so frequently—always just outside a door. Then they will hold a meeting and compare notes, and—but I will not suppose any more. I have heard that they practise summary methods of justice in the West, and the subject is too painful for my pen. I strongly advise Baggibus to stop on this side of the "herring-pond," where he is at least tolerated.

**THE BUCK-JUMPER
OF CROSS 6 RANCH!**

By Jack Blake.

(In order to understand this story it is necessary to suppose that D'Arcy has left St Jim's, and is employed on a ranch in Western Canada.)

The Blue Indian Saloon, in the main street of Carsonville, was filled with a riotous gang of cowboys who had just come down from the Cross 6 Ranch.

Six-Gun Steve had just succeeded in playing the chorus of "Baby Doll," when a shout arose outside.

"Here comes the broncho-buster of Cross 6!"

Steve looked up with a scowl as a figure came through the doorway. It was that of a slim young man, attired in the height of fashion, with silk shirt, patent leather riding-boots, ermine chaps, silver spurs, Russian leather gauntlets and belt, and diamond-studded revolvers. In his eye glimmered a monocle, and he looked neither to the right nor the left as he strode forward to the bar.

"I should be vewy much obliged if you would give me a gingah-beah, deah boy!" he said.

There was a shout of laughter from the cowboys, and Six-Gun Steve rose to his feet with a sneer.

"Say, cut it out!" he said roughly. "None o' yer slops 'ere! Take yer lickie like a man, Gussy! Maybe you'll take on a little job in the broncho-bustin' line?"

"With pleasuah!" smiled Gussy readily. "Twot out the nag!"



The mustang came to earth with a crashing jar, but Gussy was still on its back.

The company followed the two out of the saloon to where a particularly vicious-looking mustang was tethered by a rope in a compound. D'Arcy surveyed it for a few moments, then, walking quietly across, flicked his handkerchief across its eyes, and, taking advantage of its momentary blindness, the next instant he was in the saddle. Then the circus commenced. With a quick slash of his knife, Gussy severed the lead-rope, and the spectators scattered. Gathering its feet together, the pony suddenly sprang into the air, its back arched like a bow. He came to earth with a crashing jar, but Gussy was still on its back. Then it went through its repertoire—side springs, dancing on its hind legs, then attempting to crush its rider's leg against a fence, finishing off by laying down on the ground and rolling. At the end of the performance Gussy was still seated on its back, calm and unruffled, while the pony was breathless and exhausted.

Jumping to the ground with a smile, Gussy removed his Stetson hat, and bowed in response to the shouts of approval that came from the assembled cow-punchers, while Six-Gun Steve, who had spent the past year training the mustang in the hopes that it would settle the account of the popular broncho-buster of Cross 6, crept away cursing.



**How I Would Run
St. Jim's**

By

KIT WILDRAKE.

I GUESS there'd be some fun in this old shack if I was the boss of the outfit. Excitement—well, I just reckon there'd be about enough to make a stampede at a round-up look as tame as a pet coyote eating out the hand of a reservation Redskin. All the old beavered galoots whose job is to corral ideas into the brain-pans of the young lads of the village would be rustling down into this ranch to get a line on my methods of training the bunch. Ark, believe me, it's a lead-pipe cinch that they'd take the home trail with more notions to the square inch in their grey matter than they'd ever been guilty of harbouring before.

Mind you, I don't say everything would be done according to Hoyle. Not on your life! We'd start out with a fresh lot of ideas altogether—fresh, that is, so far as this Old Country is concerned. No more Latin, no more maths, no more—well, the whole darned programme, or whatever the nixicomplid names for it is, would just go by the board. Sure enough thing that! The first night of Dr. Wildrake's boss-ship would see a darned big camp-fire in the quad, to be followed by a general round-up of every Caesar and Latin grammar and dic. in the ranch-house, together with every text-book on everything, and a complete clear out of all the bookcases in the studies, with the exception of yarn-books, and so on; and they'd all be branded, more or less permanent, in the fire. And would the bunch stand for it? Say, did the duck swallow the June bug?

Then we'd start out in real plumb earnest. First of all, there'd be some alteration in the place. I reckon Big Hall would make a bully riding-school, with all the desks and old truck shifted out. And we'd sure need it, too, for there are some tenderfoots in this outfit that don't savvy which end of a broncho to grub-stake.

And what fooling use in a gink unless he can ride? It's all Columbia to a sour orange, that unless he learns early in life he'll one day find himself being pitched over the ears of a twenty-year-old cayuse, that'd let a one-legged breed stand on his head in the saddle, all because he doesn't know how to grip with his knees and let the horse do the worrying. So the first thing to attend to would be horsemanship, and every fellow would have to stay in the Third-Form till he'd passed out in that. The quad would make a fine exercising ground for chaps who had just passed out of the riding-school, and Big and Little Sides would be just the ticket for camping grounds. You can bet your boots none of the fellows would be allowed to sleep under a roof for nine months of the year.

Rising-bugle would go at six o'clock, and "stables" at a quarter past. Then brekker as soon as the bags had been attended to, and you can bet that we'd have no Mary Anns to rustle the chuck. Every chap would have to do his own share in that department, as a fellow who can't look after his own grub-stake is about as useless as a tenderfoot who can't sit a horse.

Then the school would divide up into sections—riding-school, tracking-class, lariat-throwing, gun-practice, and so on. I should make a gun-range up against the sanny. It's so darned handy in case of accidents. There would be special classes for that gang of rustlers, Racke and Trimble and St. Leger, and so on. I'd hire a roughneck from Tumbleville to put them through their paces. They'd have the job of riding-fence in their spare time, and keeping the reservation-wire in good order. Gangs would be sent out to the farmers in the neighbourhood to help keep their stock in trim and properly branded. There'd be monthly contests in

roping steers, and the fellows who topped the bill would be appointed as foremen, with about the same duties as the prefects have nowadays. They'd be allowed to tote guns, but more or less for show, as if we started shooting up the district in a promiscuous manner it wouldn't be calculated to make the place too all-fired popular. Of course, after the farmers had had their annual round-up, the outfit would be allowed to go down into Wayland and paint the place at least a pale vermilion, the same being both a relaxation and a blamed good advertisement for the ranch.

I know this article is getting itself tangled up in its own head-ropes, but I'm no Guy de Mapassing at the writing game, and, anyway, so long as it stops short of pulling the stake out of the ground and wandering over the border, you'll be able to get a line on my ideas and allow for the back-trailing at times.

The things I should specialise in would be buck-jumping and lariat-throwing. They're so darned important, it puzzles me more than a bit how anybody manages to get through the world without knowing anything about them. Of course, you're liable to break a few bones while you're picking up ideas about the first, but it's rare that a gink breaks his neck, and then it's generally his own fault—plumb carelessness. Anyway, I've never known anybody to do it more than once, so it never becomes a habit.

I reckon I'd have to import a few Redskins to take charge of the tracking-class. They're the lads for the job, though I dare say they'd cause a bit of a sensation in the district. They'd be a shock for anyone who happened to meet 'em in full war-paint late at night in Rylecombe Lane. They'd put the breeze up old Taggles, too!

I guess I'd keep old Kildare on as sheriff, with Darrell as deputy. They're just the sort of boys we want, and there'd be no bulldozing while they were about. Knox is the sort of horse-thief that would have the choice of getting out pronto or taking his chance of finishing up on a branch of one of the elms with a rope necklace. Tom Merry would have charge of the Junior Camp. Gussy would make a first-chop storekeeper, and he'd be able to give advice to his customers about the latest style in chaps and Stetsons.

Only give me half a chance, and see what would happen. This is only the bare bones of the scheme. I'd turn Sussex into a stock-farm, and found a Chair of Raunching at Oxford and Cambridge.



Roping in steers.
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"TRIMBLE IN TRADE!"

(Continued from Page 13.)

"Mr. Railton—" he began.
 "If you can throw any light on this affair, Blake, you may speak," said the Housemaster.

"That's Gussy's—I mean D'Arcy's—knife, sir, but it was not in his possession to-day," said Blake.

"Indeed! If that is the case, it puts a new complexion on the matter. Why do you suppose that it was not in D'Arcy's possession?"

"Because he threw it away, sir, before to-day."

"What?"

"Quite wight! I thwew it away the day befoah yestah-day," said Arthur Augustus, with a nod.

"You did not mention that circumstance to me, D'Arcy."

"You did not ask me, sir."

"Are you certain, Blake, that D'Arcy had thrown the knife away before to-day?"

"Quite, sir."

"You saw him do so?"

"Well, no, sir."

"Then how do you know?"

"D'Arcy mentioned it to me, sir."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Railton. "D'Arcy's statement, in the present circumstances, carries no weight."

Tom Merry's face appeared next in the doorway, after Blake's.

"It does with us, sir," said Tom. "We're all quite certain that D'Arcy never played that dirty trick with Mr. Lathom's book."

"I was not aware that there was an audience in the corridor," said Mr. Railton coldly. "You juniors may retire."

"But don't you see, sir," exclaimed Tom eagerly, "D'Arcy threw away the knife, and somebody else must have picked it up, and—"

"There is no reason to suppose so. Can you suggest the name of any boy who, having picked up a knife, would use it to do this wicked damage to Mr. Lathom's property?"

"Well, no, sir."

"Did you, or any of your friends whom I can hear outside, actually see D'Arcy throw this knife away?"

"N-n-no, sir."

"Then you know nothing about the matter, and you may go. Kindly close the door on those juniors, Kildare."

The door closed on Tom Merry & Co.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes on D'Arcy. That lofty youth met his gaze calmly and fearlessly.

"D'Arcy, I can only conclude that you slashed Mr. Lathom's very valuable volume, in a mean spirit of revenge for a punishment inflicted in the Form-room," said Mr. Railton.

"I am sowwy, sir."

"Do you mean you are sorry for what you have done?"

"Not at all, sir, as I have done nothin'. I am sowwy you should entahtain such a vevy unworthy suspicion."

"I am shocked and grieved at this, D'Arcy," said Mr. Lathom. "It is possible that I may have erred on the side of severity this morning. But no right-minded boy would have taken so spiteful and wicked a revenge as this."

"I quite agree with you, sir. The fellow who damaged your book was a wotten cad, and I twust he will be discovered."

"He is discovered already, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton sternly. "The whole matter will be reported to the Head—"

"I am glad of that, sir. Dr. Holmes is a gentleman of tact and judgment, and I feel that I can wely on him to get at the twuth."

"Dr. Holmes, D'Arcy, will be requested to administer a flogging for this wicked outrage. You may go."

"Vevy good, sir! I am quite convinced that Dr. Holmes will do nothin' of the sort. I wely upon him to see fair play."

And with that, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked out of the study—leaving two masters and a prefect fairly gasping. The swell of St. Jim's had quite taken their breath away.

CHAPTER 9.**To Be Or Not To Be!**

"HERE he comes!"

"Here's Gussy!"

There was a buzz in the junior Common-room in the School House.

Most of the School House juniors were gathered there, in

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excited discussion of the affair that was now the talk of the school.

That Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would be flogged when the matter came before Dr. Holmes, was a foregone conclusion.

He had been found guilty by his Housemaster and his Form master, sitting in council. That would be enough for the headmaster. The flogging would follow as a matter of course.

Whether D'Arcy had "done it" was a moot question.

Every fellow in the Fourth remembered the scene in the Form-room, and most of the fellows believed that D'Arcy had "taken it out" of the Form master for his punishment.

The penknife really settled the point.

D'Arcy was the very fellow to leave a glaring clue behind him, if he played a trick; all the House agreed on that.

As for his declaration that he had thrown the penknife away, his word was good enough for most of the fellows. But Mellish of the Fourth suggested that perhaps he had picked it up again after throwing it away—and that seemed probable enough.

Gussy's word was generally supposed to be as good as gold. But if a fellow had earned a flogging, he was not likely to own up to what he had done.

Only D'Arcy's intimate friends were convinced of his innocence; and they were convinced only because D'Arcy denied his guilt. But they agreed, with great exasperation, that Gussy had done everything possible to bring suspicion upon his noble head.

That, of course, was what was to be expected of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The outrage, as the masters called it—the jape, as the juniors called it—was not like Gussy. But a fellow, in a state of exasperation, smarting under a sense of injustice, might do a thing that, in the ordinary way, he would be incapable of.

That was how it was, in the opinion of a crowd of fellows; and only their firm faith in Gussy's word prevented Tom Merry & Co. from thinking the same.

Anyhow, though Gussy evidently did not realise it, the flogging was a settled thing; that was certain. And most of the fellows were keen to know how Gussy was going to take it. So when the elegant form of the swell of St. Jim's appeared in the doorway of the Common-room that evening, there was a buzz, and all eyes were turned upon him.

Certainly Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not look like a fellow found guilty of a mean and rascally action, and condemned to a humiliating punishment.

He walked into the room with his usual airy grace, his head erect, and his face perfectly calm and equable. Mellish—rubbing his nose, which still bore signs of damage—grinned. His thought was that D'Arcy's lofty pride would soon be taken down a peg or two; a prospect at which the charitable Mellish rejoiced.

"Here he is!" chortled Trimble. "How does it feel, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass inquiringly upon Baggy Trimble.

"How does what feel, deah boy?" he asked.

"Going to be flogged!" chuckled Baggy.

"You are labahin' undah a misappwehension, Twimble. I am not goin' to be flogged," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"He, he, he!"

"What an awful ass!" said Gore of the Shell. "Fancy a fellow leaving his knife behind for Lathom to pounce on!"

"Just like Gussy!" remarked Mulvaney minor.

"Yes, that's so."

"It was a rotten trick!" said Grundy of the Shell. "I must say D'Arcy ought to be flogged for it!"

"You are makin' a mistake, Gwunday. The fellow who damaged Mr. Lathom's wubbishy old book ought to be flogged. But I am not the fellow."

"Rats!" said Grundy.

"If you doubt my word, Gwunday, I can only wequest you to put up your hands," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"Want a lickin' to-night before you get a flogging to-morrow?" grinned Grundy. "I'll oblige you, if you like."

"I shall certainly administah a feahful thwashin' to any person who is wottah enough to doubt my word."

"Well, here's little me, for one!" said Grundy. "Ow! Would you, you rotter! Yow!" George Alfred Grundy staggered back, as a set of aristocratic knuckles clumped on his nose. "Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—"

Three pairs of hands closed on Grundy of the Shell, as he was rushing at Arthur Augustus. Blake and Herries and Dig, with savage looks, clumped Grundy down on the floor.

"You shut up, anyhow!" said Blake, between his teeth.

"I'll smash you!" roared Grundy.

"Pway let him come on, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I am perfectly pwepared to thwash Gwunday."

Grundy struggled to his feet and rushed at Arthur Augustus. Blake & Co. promptly piled in again, and Grundy was dragged

over. This time the chums of Study No. 6 held him and tapped his head on the floor.

Rap! Rap! Rap!
 "Yow-ow-ow!" roared Grundy.
 "Are you going to shut up now?" asked Blake savagely.
 "Isn't the trouble bad enough without a silly fool butting in?"

"I—I—I'll smash you!"
 "Chuck him out!" suggested Tom Merry. "I'll lend a hand."

"Good egg!" said Lowther.
 Six pairs of hands closed on Grundy, and he was hurled out of the Common-room, and sprawled in the passage outside.

He came back with a rush like a bull, and was promptly collared again and hurled forth.

This time he stayed outside. Even Grundy realised that he had had enough. Jack Blake looked round with gleaming eyes, as if in search of someone to hurl after Grundy. And Crooke and Mellish, and one or two other fellows, decided not to make some remarks that they had been going to make.

"What about Trimble?" said Herries.
 "Trimble?" repeated Blake.
 "Yes; it's all Trimble's fault."

"How is it my fault?" howled Trimble in angry alarm. "I didn't ask Gussy to cut up Lathom's rubbish, did I?"

"It couldn't have happened, but for Trimble trying to make money out of the fellows by selling them rotten articles," said Herries, who had apparently reasoned it out to his satisfaction. "If he hadn't sold Gussy that rotten German penknife, it wouldn't be evidence against Gussy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I don't see anything to cackle at," said Herries. "It's all Trimble's fault, and I'm going to kick him."

"Yaas, wathah! That is quite a good ideah, Hewwies, old about. Kick him hard!"
 "Yoooooop!"

Baggy Trimble escaped from the Common-room with George Herries' boot close behind. He dropped several "articles" as he fled, and Herries picked them up and hurled them after him; and there was a dismal howl from the St. Jim's tradesman, as a fountain-pen landed on the back of his head, and a combined tin-opener and corkscrew on his fat neck.

After that fellows who believed Gussy was guilty, in spite of his denials, decided not to air their opinions in the presence of his chums. That was, perhaps, some slight satisfaction to Study No. 6, but it did not lift the weight of worry that weighed upon their minds. For howsoever faithfully and loyally they stood by Arthur Augustus among the fellows, that could not alter the fact that on the morrow he was to be called up before the Head and flogged. And the only member of Tom Merry & Co. who did not believe that the flogging would take place was Arthur Augustus himself—and he was to have a rude awakening on the morrow.

CHAPTER 10.

A Surprise for Arthur Augustus!

JACK BLAKE gave a dismal groan. It was echoed by Herries and Digby. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked sympathetic and lugubrious. Six of the cheeriest juniors at St. Jim's looked, that bright winter's morning, as if all the woes of the universe had landed on their youthful shoulders.

Only Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked merry and bright. The swell of St. Jim's was sauntering in the quadrangle with his chums after breakfast, and he displayed, to the wondering gaze of scores of fellows, a lofty and unperturbed serenity.

He even smiled at the lugubrious faces of his chums. "Buck up, deah boys!" he said. "It's all wight, you know."

"Oh, you fathead!" said Blake.
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "You fabjous ass!" sighed Herries.
 "Weally, Hewwies—"
 "If you weren't going to be flogged to-day," said Digby sorrowfully, "I'd jolly well punch your silly head, for worryng your old pals like this!"
 "Weally, Dig—"

"I—I suppose nothing can be done?" said Tom Merry doubtfully. "Of course, we all believe in Gussy, though nobody else seems to."

"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that there are vewy few fellows at St. Jim's wotten enough to doubt a fellow's word."
 "Oh, don't be an ass," said Tom crossly. "If we didn't know you were a born idiot, we should believe the same as the other fellows, and Railton, and Lathom."

"I hope Mr. Waitton has come to a bettah fwame of mind by this time," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I fully expect him to apologise shortly for his vewy unworthy suspicions."

"Ass!"
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Somebody did it, if Gussy didn't!" said Manners. "But who? Who could have picked up that rotten Trimble penknife when that silly owl chucked it away? I've asked nearly everybody in the Shell."

"The fellow who got hold of the knife and ripped Lathom's blessed book wouldn't be likely to admit it," said Lowther.

"I suppose not. It's rotten! Gussy's going to be flogged, and he didn't do the trick. Might as well have done it if he's going to be flogged for it."

"Weally, Mannahs—"
 "It's a come-down for Study No. 6, for a fellow belonging to it to be flogged," said Blake gloomily.

"But I am not goin' to be flogged, deah boy!"
 "Fathead!"

"Weally, you know, I wely on Dr. Holmes havin' more common-sense than Waitton or Lathom. I shall give him my word that I know nothin' about the affiah. I twust that will end the mattah."

Tom Merry & Co. could only groan.
 They did not in the slightest degree share Arthur Augustus' lofty view. There was no doubt whatever that Gussy was booked for a flogging—and all the time the real culprit was undiscovered. That was the bitterest of all. Somewhere in the School House was the fellow who actually had slashed that precious edition of Publius Virgilius Maro—if a fellow could only have spotted him. But a fellow couldn't! So far as Tom Merry & Co. could see, there was not even a vestige of a clue.

Some fellow, so far as they could see, had picked up the penknife Gussy had thrown away, and used it to slash the Virgil. Only loyal friendship could make them believe that that theory would hold water.

For it was an amazing coincidence that the very fellow who had picked up that rejected penknife was the very fellow who was "out" for revenge on the Fourth Form master. The coincidence was a little too amazing to be believed in by any fellow who was not already determined to trust Arthur Augustus against all evidence.

Indeed, Gussy's chums were rather staggered themselves, and almost wondered whether, after all, Gussy had "done it." But that they could not believe—though who had done it, and how the rascal had come into possession of the tell-tale penknife was a mystery they could not fathom.

Cardew joined the dolorous group in the quad. There was a rather curious expression on Cardew's face.

"Mr. Railton's sent me to tell you you're wanted, D'Arcy," he said.
 "Thank you, Cardew."
 "I'm sorry you're in for it," said Cardew. "You look pretty chirpy, considerin' what you're goin' to get."

"I am not goin' to get anythin', Cardew, exceptin', I hope, an expression of wegwet fwom Mr. Waitton for his ewwah."

"You'll see that it will be all wight, deah boys," he said, and he walked away cheerily to the School House.

Tom Merry & Co. followed.
 D'Arcy walked with head erect between Mr. Lathom and the Housemaster. He was still lofty and serene; though evidently Mr. Railton had not uttered the expected expressions of regret.

The Head's door opened, and closed on them. In a dismal group Tom Merry & Co. waited in the corridor. They knew how the interview with the Head must end; they knew that they themselves would have believed a fellow guilty on the same evidence. They waited anxiously for the door to open.

It opened at last. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came out of the study alone, and walked down the passage. The juniors closed round him. Arthur Augustus was still lofty, still calm; but his look had changed. There was astonishment in his face—great astonishment, mingled with scorn. He looked calmly at the anxious crowd.

"Well?" asked six voices, in a breath.
 "It is vewy wemarkable, deah boys."
 "What's happened?"
 "Dr. Holmes has wefused to take my word," said Arthur Augustus more in sorrow than in anger. "He has decided to administah a floggin'. I am so surprised that I weally think I must be dweamin'. The Head seemed quite watty when I told him that his sentence was unjust."

"Oh, you awful ass!" gasped Blake.
 "Weally, Blake—"

The bell for lessons called the juniors away. That day there were dismal faces at St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus remained loftily calm; but Arthur Augustus' pals worried and could not be comforted.

THE END.
(Read how Cousin Ethel's thoughtfulness saves D'Arcy from a flogging and disgrace, in next week's splendid school story entitled: "COUSIN ETHEL TO THE RESCUE!")



A Boxing Story You Will Enjoy Reading!

CHAPTER 1.

A New Friend—Dark Suspicions.

THE big motor-lorry bumped sharply as it swerved over the railway-bridge, and a round object rolled from its precarious perch in the rear of the van on to the long grass.

There was a yelp and a snuffle, and another object launched itself from the same narrow resting-place. It, too, sprawled forward, but being more prepared for the shock, recovered itself, and an amazingly grimy rough-haired sheepdog revealed itself.

He trotted back to where the first object had fallen, and, thrusting his muzzle forward, licked at a hand which had just been raised to its owner's forehead.

"Gee winks, Bill, that was some bump!" Billy evidently thought so, too, for he squatted in the thick grass and snuffed his sympathy.

"Still, no bones broken!" Very leisurely the speaker arose to his feet, and stretched his arms above his head. He was a ragged, tattered youngster, with a cheeky, freckled face, and a shock of red hair.

He had boarded that particular lorry just outside Banbury with the fond hope of being carried to London. It had been very comfortable under that loose tarpaulin sheet, and he had forgotten the precariousness of his perch, with the result that he had dropped off into a half doze, which the swift swerve and bump had rapidly broken.

If Ginger Dan had any other name, he did not know what it was. A waif of the high-ways, he was half gipsy, half vagrant, and the only friend in the world he had was seated at his feet in the presence of Bill, the lurcher sheepdog.

A keen, clever forager was old Bill, the sort of animal who could nip over a fence and remove a chicken without so much as permitting a squawk to arise from that feathered throat. As for rabbits, Bill's pace was distinctly deceiving, for he could trundle himself over the ground with greyhound-like speed when it came to the point, as many furry victims testified.

But it was getting winter-time now, and Ginger Dan, knowing the need of secure shelter, had decided to head Londonwards in common with the others of his type.

There was a space of waste ground just back of Clapham Common, where derelict caravans and certain old Army huts had been dumped by a disgusted Army contractor. It was towards that no-man's land that Dan was heading now, for he knew that there would be room for him and his dog there.

"Where the dickens are we, Bill?" Bill did not know, and obviously did not care. He arose, stretched himself, and awaited the decision of his young master. Finally Dan decided to follow the spume of dust that was all that was left of the lumbering furniture-van.

It was getting dusk now, and he footed it along the grass beside the road at a fair pace.

He was hungry, but that was nothing

unusual. He was also thirsty, but a brook which he met with removed that want, and also helped him to make a slight toilet.

Finally, somewhere about seven o'clock, Dan found himself walking along beside a high wall, and, as he neared the gateway, the murmur of voices came to his ears, youthful voices, and obviously angry ones.

Dan halted and listened. The voices were coming from the other side of the wall, and Dan, being blessed with an amazing bump of curiosity, decided that it was necessary for him to inquire into these occurrences.

"You wait here, Bill!" he said to the dog.

A quick leap and a monkey-like wriggle saw him over the top of the wall. Below him, facing each other, were a couple of youths about his own age. One of them, a broad-shouldered, heavy-jowled fellow, was leaning forward in a threatening attitude, and his voice, very harsh and strident, came to Ginger Dan's ears.

"You've got to do what I tell you, or I'll make you pay for it."

"But I can't do it—I can't, Howard! Uncle Dick has forbidden us to go anywhere near the Crown Inn again, and I'll get into trouble if I'm seen there."

"Who's going to see you? All you've got to do is to take this letter, and hand it over to Sam Drake, and wait for an answer!"

The burly shouldered speaker reached out and grabbed the other youngster by the arm, twisting it forcibly.

"You hear me? You've got to deliver this letter!"

"I say, don't—don't! You're hurting—you're hurting me!"

The slimmer figure seemed helpless in the grip of the broad-shouldered, towering bully, and in the quick struggle which followed, he was soon brought to his knees.

"Are you going to take the letter or are you not?"

"All right, Howard, I—I'll take it! Give it to me!"

With a half sob, the slimmer youngster arose to his feet, nursing his wrenched arm. The other, with a short laugh, slipped his hand into his pocket, and produced an envelope.

"You sheer off right now! I expect Sam Drake will be up at the inn waiting for you. Don't forget you've got to bring an answer."

They turned and beaded towards the trees on the right. Ginger Dan watched them until they had vanished, then, with a puzzled look on his face, he slid from the wall and dropped into the road again.

"Just as well you weren't with me, Bill," he said to the dog. "I don't think you'd have sat still and watched that rotten bit of bullying! But I find it isn't always advisable to interfere in other folk's business. Not in private grounds, anyway, where you can be locked up for trespassing!"

By
Capt.
MALCOLM
ARNOLD.

Dan is a waif of the road—but he can use his fists! When his chance comes, he jumps in with both hands!

He moved on up the road, and presently he came to a high gateway with a lodge on the left. Just as he passed the gates a figure appeared on the drive, and came out into the roadway.

Ginger Dan glanced at it, and recognised the ruffled countenance of the slimmer youth, who had been bullied by his companion. The youngster moved off up the road at a quick pace, and Ginger Dan and Bill followed him.

Quarter of a mile up the road, they reached the outskirts of a little country town, and finally Ginger Dan saw the youngster halt outside the lighted windows of an inn.

When Dan reached the inn, the youngster was seated on a wooden bench beside the lighted porch.

Dan had a chance to see the face now, and he rather liked it, although it was thin and delicate-looking. There was a troubled expression on the countenance, and it was evident that the youngster was ill at ease.

Dan shuffled up to the form, and seated himself at the other end of it. Bill, after a preliminary look at the second seated figure, had settled himself, dropping his nose between his paws.

"Nice night, ain't it?" Dan remarked.

"Not so bad!" came the reply.

"What town is this?" Dan asked.

"Staplevalle."

Dan sidled a little nearer to his slim companion.

"Any place here where they gives a night's lodging and grub away free?" he asked.

A chuckle came from the listener.

"I don't think there are many places like that in the world, are there?" he said.

Dan laughed, and his companion, eyeing the grimy, freckled face, decided that there was something very taking about that smile.

"There's only one place I know of," said Dan, "and that's 'choky.' I don't want to go in there!"

"Are you hungry?"

"Not very," Dan said. "I did have some grub, but I've left it on a blinking van, and goodness only knows where it is now!"

"A van?"

"Yes."

Dan explained the catastrophe, and how he had left his pack under that sleep-inducing tarpaulin.

"Hard luck!" said the listener. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, I'll be all right! Something always turns up for me!" said Dan, the optimist.

The stranger slipped his hand into his pocket, and produced half-a-crown.

"If—er—this—this could be any good to you," he began.

Dan hesitated.

Not that he was above taking money from a stranger; indeed, Dan's ideas on financial assistance were extremely elastic. He regarded the world in general as peopled with enemies, from whom it was his right and duty to receive as much assistance as possible. "Can I do anything for it?" he asked at last.

He thought that this might give the youth a lead, but it failed in its object.

"No; that's all right!"

Dan took the half-crown, spat on it, and slipped it into one of the many pockets of the strange assortment of garments which he wore.

"Mebbe they'd give me a bit of bread and cheese here?" he remarked, rising to his feet.

"Oh, yes, they could do that!"

Dan slipped into the low-roofed passage and found himself in a sandred bar parlour of the inn. He crossed boldly to the bar, rapped on the counter, and, when the rosy-cheeked maid came forward, voiced his wants.

"Chunk of bread and cheese, miss, and a glass of milk," said Dan.

There were three other men in the bar, two of them hulking-looking fellows, and the third, a lean, wiry lad, some two or three years older than Dan. The latter was wearing a sweater, and Dan noted that he was also wearing a pair of running-pumps.

There was something about the look of the trio which made Dan place them at once. He knew all professions, did Ginger Dan, and the marks of these men's trade were unmistakable.

"Bruisers!" Dan thought, eyeing the gnarled ear of the man nearest him.

The girl brought his food. He paid for it, pocketing the change, then slipped out of the inn again and seated himself beside his companion.

Bill shared in that repast, receiving the

ANSWERS
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crust and a portion of the milk. Dan had just completed the meal when a wheezy Ford car swung round to halt in front of the inn, and a stout figure in a check suit stepped out of the vehicle.

Dan's companion arose to his feet, and, as the stout man came into the light from the porch, he stepped forward.

"Hallo, Mister Ralph Westerbrook! How are you this evening?"

The stout man spoke in a gruff, would-be-hearty manner, but there was something wrong in his tone.

The youngster produced the letter which Howard had given him, and handed it to the man.

"Howard asked me to give you this, and he—he wants an answer."

The burly man took the note, glanced at it rather suspiciously, then, stepping into the porch, he opened the envelope, and Dan saw the heavy face change as Mr. Sam Drake read the contents. A look of complete satisfaction crossed the fat countenance, and crushing the note into a ball, Sam Drake thrust it into his pocket.

"Very good, Mister Ralph, very good! You can tell your cousin that everything's O.K.!"

He turned and stalked into the inn, and Dan noted that Ralph looked after him with an air of deep dismay.

"Going now?" said Dan.

Ralph had already moved away from the seat as Dan called to him.

"Yes, I'm going back home."

"Well, maybe I'm going your way."

Dan fell into step beside the slim youngster, and Bill, with a doggy moan, followed. For the first hundred yards or so Ralph did not speak, but finally he turned to Dan.

"You don't happen to know that man, do you?" Ralph asked.

Dan shook his head.

"Well, he's—he's a skunk!" Ralph broke out almost involuntarily.

"I don't like skunks!"

Again there was a silence, and the two youngsters plodded on quietly together, then Ralph, obviously at his wit's end, came to a halt.

"Look here!" he said. "I don't know who you are, but I like the look of you. I'm in no end of a mess, and I want someone to help me."

It was only then that Dan broke his silence.

"I guessed that," he said; "for you see I happened to look over the wall when that cousin of yours put the j-u-jitsu grip on you."

"You—you saw?"

"Yes; that's why I followed you."

Ralph stared for a moment through the dusk at the freckled face, then he caught Dan's arm. His fingers tightened on the ragged sleeve, and a murmur of amazement came from his lips.

"I say, by James, you've got some muscles!"

And indeed, under that tattered sleeve there were muscles of steel, and Dan, bending his arm, allowed the great biceps to rise like a ball.

"Phew! You must be as strong as a bull!"

"Oh, I'm strong enough!" Dan returned.

"Look!"

Before Ralph was aware of his intention, Dan grabbed the youngster just under the arms. Next minute Ralph was high in the air over the ragged vagrant's head; then, as gently as he was lifted, Ralph was placed on the roadway again.

"My hat!"

Ralph's gasp was half-admiration, half-awe. Dan chuckled.

"You've got to be pretty strong when you're on the roads," he said. "All sorts of fellows try to put it across you, and you've got to be able to hold your own."

Ralph leaned forward.

"Can you—can you box?"

"I can scrap a bit," said Dan.

Ralph came nearer to him.

"Did you ever hear of a chap called Battling Sid Blake?"

"No; can't say I have!"

"Well, he was in the inn while you were there, along with his two seconds."

"Oh, you mean that chap with the running-pumps on? I remember him all right."

"Well, it's like this, Dan. Mr. Sam Drake is Battling Sid's manager, and there's going to be a fight at the town hall at Staplevalle on Saturday. My uncle, Captain Westerbrook, has arranged the programme, and we have a local chap called Tom Berry, who's been matched against Battling Sid."

Ralph Westerbrook was all eagerness now. He had gripped Dan by the arm. They moved on, pacing down the dark roadway together, with Bill trotting contentedly at their heels.

"Tom Berry is a good boxer, and my uncle thinks he'll win, and so do a lot of other people about here. I know there's been a heap of betting going on over the event, and I'm afraid that my cousin Howard is playing a double part."

"Can't say I liked the look of him," said Dan.

Ralph drew a breath through his set teeth.

"He's a bully, but he's too strong for me," he returned. "Uncle has caught him at one or two fishy tricks already, and has warned him that if he is seen associating with Sam Drake again he would be thrown out. That's why he made me take the letter to-night."

"What's at the bottom of it all?" Dan asked.

"I'm not quite sure," Ralph returned; "but I think that Howard is going to get at Tom Berry. I believe the fight will be squared, and all the folk in these parts will lose their money."

"More fool they for betting on fighting," said Dan. "I've got no time for people who chuck their money away on that sort of game."

"Neither have I," Ralph said. "But it seems a shame that Howard and that skunk Sam Drake should play a rotten trick on everybody."

He turned towards the freckled-faced vagrant by his side.

"Tom Berry's coming round to our place to-night. Uncle's got a gym rigged up, and he's been training there. I wonder if I could manage to slip you in and let you meet uncle?"

"Don't mind slipping in anywhere, so long as I get a supper and a roof," said Dan.

"All right, leave it to me. I can fix you up a bed in the garage, and the gym is next door to it. By James, I don't know if we'll be able to work anything, but I've got an idea at the back of my mind that something will come out of this."

CHAPTER 2.

Foul Play—A Dark Horse!

GINGER DAN was seated on the edge of the cot in the little room above the garage when a low whistle, sounding from the foot of the stairs, brought him to his feet.

Bill had been accommodated on a strip

of ragged blanket near to the bed, and Dan turned, nodding his head to the dog.

"You just stay right there, Bill," he said.

"You've got comfortable lodgings, and don't go and lose 'em."

The dog looked after his master, but made no effort to follow him, and Dan, hurrying down the flight of stairs, found Ralph Westerbrook waiting for him in the doorway.

"Come along, Dan!" Ralph said. "Uncle has just gone into the gym along with Berry. I've told him about you, and it's all right."

Dan followed his friend across the dark space and into a galvanised-roofed shed, which was lighted by a couple of powerful electric lamps, and was laid out as a small gym.

There was a roped-off space in the centre, and on a seat near to the ring was a broad-shouldered, military-looking man in a dinner-jacket suit. He was smoking a cigar, and, as Dan and Ralph entered, he rose to his feet.

"This is Dan, uncle," Ralph said, introducing the waif.

Captain Westerbrook, after a long, hard glance at the grimy, freckled face, nodded.

"Pleased to meet you, Dan!" he said, in a kindly voice.

Dan touched his forehead.

"Same to you, sir," he replied, and the captain laughed.

"Ralph has been telling me that you are something of a pocket Hercules, eh," said Captain Westerbrook, "and that you can box a little?"

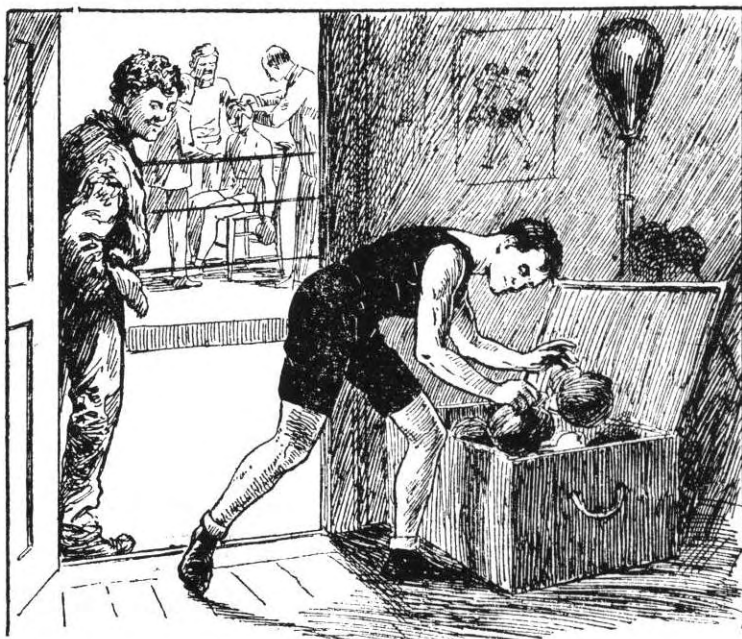
They chatted together for a few moments, and Captain Westerbrook put one or two shrewd questions to Dan, which he answered readily enough.

Presently the door of the dressing-room opened, and Dan saw a sturdy, well-knit youngster come out in a sweater and shorts. He was followed by an older man, and behind them came Howard. He was also in a sweater and gym shoes, and was carrying a pair of boxing-gloves.

Captain Westerbrook introduced Dan to the newcomers, and it seemed to Dan that Howard's eyes fixed on him in a rather hard stare. Dan returned the look with one of his usual open smiles.

"You can look after my nephew, Howard, Dan," said the captain. "He's going to have two or three rounds with Tom Berry. This is the last night of Berry's training, for he meets a very tough nut in the person of Battling Sid on Saturday, and I just want to see how he shapes."

Howard withdrew a pace, shaking his head.



As Howard slipped away towards the dressing-room, Dan sidled after him. He watched Howard stoop over a box and fumble in it for a moment, then he dropped one of his gloves into it, lifting out another deftly.

"I don't want anyone to look after me, uncle," he said. "I can do all that for myself."

Captain Westbrook's brows drew together in a half-frown, but he did not make any comment, and Howard, sliding under the ropes, seated himself in one corner and began to draw on his gloves.

Tom Berry went across to the opposite corner, where his older companion proceeded to help him to adjust the gloves on his hands.

Dan was leaning against the ropes, and suddenly Ralph saw him slide under them and go across to Howard.

"Might as well let me do that much for you, mister," Dan said, reaching out for the tapes.

It seemed to Ralph that Dan took a very long time over it, for finally Howard snatched his hands away from Dan's fingers, and pushed the wail aside.

"That's all right! Don't bother about me," he said.

It was rather a heavy thrust, and Dan dropped back a pace against the ropes. The freckled face went hard for an instant, then it cleared again into its usual wide grin.

"Right-ho, Mr. Howard! No offence, I 'opes," said Dan.

He glided out of the ring, and came up to where Ralph Westbrook was standing.

"I told you he was a beast," Ralph said. "I should not bother about him, if I were you."

Dan's eyes were curious as he looked at the youngster.

"Oh, I ain't offended, Ralph!" he said. "In fact, I'm very interested in cousin Howard—and his gloves!"

There was a significance about the latter part of the sentence which Ralph missed.

Captain Westbrook, who had gone into the dressing-room for a moment, reappeared now and came towards the ring.

"Are you ready, Berry?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, then come along, Howard! Just let's see what you can do."

The two youngsters went out and shook hands, then dropped into a guard.

Dan saw at once that Howard was by no means inexpert at the game; he had a good guard, and seemed a powerful, hefty sort of fellow.

The two boxers began to spar, and presently Howard made a quick attack. Berry contented himself with countering and smothering the blows for some time, and gave ground round the ring.

"Should not do that if I were you," Dan muttered to himself.

It was obvious, however, that Tom Berry, the local lad, did not want to put out all his strength against his rival; for, after all, Captain Westbrook was Berry's patron, and this black-haired, scowling youth was Westbrook's nephew.

The captain himself seemed to realise that, for his quiet voice sounded.

"Go along, Tom! Howard's quite able to

look after himself. Get into your work, lad!"

Berry's manner changed then, and he began to fight back. He was a fairly good boxer, with a long reach and a good left, but to Dan, who had been in many training camps, he lacked that quick footwork which marks the real professional pug.

The heavy padded gloves did very little harm, and the two boxers pommelled each other with right good will.

So far, Howard had been using his left glove only for punching, keeping his right for guards and counters.

Dan was watching every move of the practice bout, and half-way through the first round he saw Howard slip a swift right-hook over on to Berry's chin.

The blow was by no means well delivered, and there was not much beef behind it, but Berry staggered under the impact, and, as he fell into a clinch to steady himself, Dan noted that the skin on his chin had been grazed slightly where the blow had landed.

The round came to an end, Berry walked to his seat, and the elder man looked after him.

Howard dropped into his corner, and Dan, snatching a towel, proceeded to wave it in front of him.

Presently the towel seemed to slip out of Ginger Dan's hand, and, in reaching for it, his fingers closed over Howard's right glove, which lay along the ropes. It was only a momentary touch, and Howard moved the glove away at once.

"Don't fuss about me, I tell you!" he said. "I'm quite all right."

This ungracious way of accepting seconding did not seem to ruffle Dan in the least. He dropped the towel over his shoulder and slipped under the ropes with a quiet smile.

The second round started, and Howard took the battle into Berry's quarters immediately.

Three or four wild swings of the right just missed their target by inches, then, in a corner of the ring, Howard brought off another terrific swing. His bunched fist caught Tom Berry just above the eye, and the local boxer fell back against the post for a moment.

Howard tried to smash his right into the face again, but Berry ducked, and they clinched, swaying back into the centre of the ring.

"Here, stop a moment—stop a moment!"

Captain Westbrook's voice sounded, and, darting under the ropes, he ran into the ring, separating the combatants.

A stream of blood was pouring from Tom Berry's brow, and a gasp of dismay came from Ralph.

"I say! That's jolly serious!"

Tom Berry was hustled into his corner, and Captain Westbrook and the other man examined the injury carefully.

Howard had crossed to his own corner, and was waiting there with folded arms.

"I'm afraid that's settled you, Berry,"

the captain said, at last. "You've a very nasty cut there."

"No, sir, I'm all right—I'm all right!"

"Oh, no, you're not! What do you say, Smith?"

Smith, Tom Berry's trainer, shook his head.

"I reckons the captain's right, Tom. It's blinking hard luck on you, lad. That's a nasty cut, and will require a stitch or two to get it right."

It was, indeed, an ugly wound, for the skin had been cut for an inch or two, and the blood was pouring down Tom Berry's face.

Howard, slipping the gloves between his knees, drew them off, and, tucking them under his arm, he came across the ring.

"I—I'm very sorry," he began. "I—I hope I haven't hurt you?"

"That's all right, Mr. Howard," Tom Berry said; "accidents will happen."

He looked very pale and distressed, and Harry Smith's face indicated that this feeling was shared.

Ralph had darted into the dressing-room, and he returned presently with some sticking-plaster and bandages, and Captain Westbrook carried out a rough first-aid to the luckless local boxer.

"Better take him along to see Dr. Parkin at once," he said to Smith. "It's most unfortunate, for, of course, the slightest blow on the wound will open it again, and that means a big handicap on Saturday."

Dan seemed to be very interested in Howard. He had watched the heavy-jawed fellow, and now, when Howard slipped away from the ring towards the dressing-room, Dan sidled after him. He saw Howard stoop over a box and fumble in it for a moment. One of his gloves was dropped into the box, and another glove was lifted out of it deftly.

Then Howard came back to the little group round Tom Berry.

"Can't understand how it happened, uncle," Howard Westbrook said. "I didn't think I was punching very hard, and the gloves are quite all right."

He held them up for inspection, and the captain examined them.

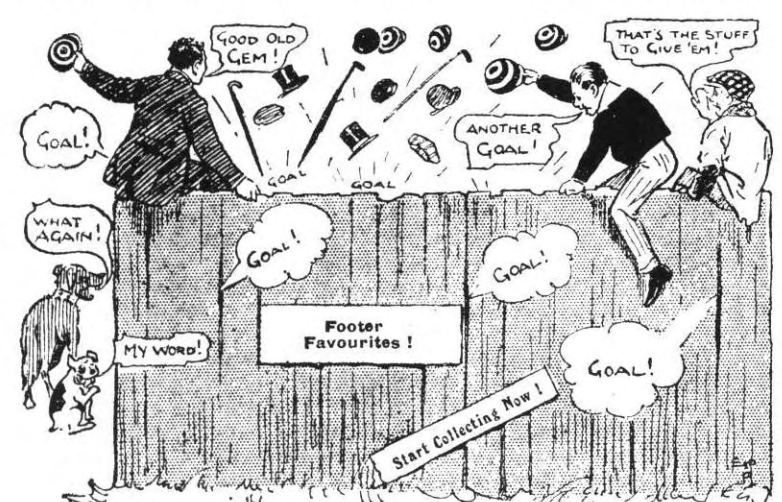
"Yes; they seem all right," he agreed.

Tom Berry and the trainer disappeared into the dressing-room for a moment, then reappeared in their everyday clothes, and left the gym.

"It's very bad luck," Westbrook said to Dan, "for with that injury to his eye, I'm afraid Berry has no chance against this fellow, Battling Sid Blake, on Saturday."

Ralph looked at Dan, and the freckled-faced youth shrugged his shoulders.

"He'll have a nasty black eye by to-morrow morning, sir," Dan said. "And it'll show up proper in the ring on Saturday. Battling Sid will make a mark of that eye of his."



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He shuffled his feet for a moment. "I suppose you ain't got the chance of putting anyone else in Berry's place?" he asked.

Captain Westbrook laughed. "Oh, yes; I could put in anyone else I liked," he said. "But there's not anyone in Staplevale who has a snowball's chance against this fellow Battling Sid."

Dan stretched his supple arms. "I'm in Staplevale, ain't I, mister?" he said. "What about trying me out?"

Howard, who had been seated on a chair beside the ring, arose now and came forward.

His uncle turned to him. "Do you mind giving this chap a round or two, Howard?" he asked.

Howard looked at Dan, looked at the ragged clothes and the distinctly cheerful countenance, and—fell into the trap. For some reason or other, Howard seemed to resent Dan's presence there in the gym; perhaps it was because he seemed so friendly with Ralph.

"Just as you like, uncle!" "All right! Go along, Ralph; take your friend into the dressing-room and get him ready."

Dan shook his head. "I don't want no sweater, mister. I'm all right as I am."

He began to remove his nondescript clothing. There was a coat, a couple of waistcoats and two shirts; all of them of a very ragged description. Howard's nose was tilted into the air as Dan completed his undressing and stood at last in a warm, woolen undervest.

"Carry all your wardrobe with you, I suppose?" he sneered.

Dan nodded. "You bet! I find it easier," he returned. Ralph brought a pair of gloves to Dan, and the waiif slipped them into position. Captain Westbrook had taken Howard's gloves, and he helped his nephew to adjust them over his wrists.

"Glad he ain't gone back to that box," Dan whispered to Ralph; a whisper which Ralph could not understand.

Ralph provided Dan with a pair of light gym shoes, removing the heavy Army boots which the waiif wore. Then, at a signal from Captain Westbrook, Dan and Howard faced each other in the ring.

Howard was champion of his school, and was by no means a bad boxer, but he seemed to be incapable of doing anything against that red-haired, quick-moving waiif.

For three long minutes Ginger Dan led Howard a grim dance. Again and again the long, supple arm would shoot out, tapping Howard on chest and shoulder and head. The quick, slipping footwork and amazing dexterity of the counters and head-work kept Howard guessing all the time.

Finally the black-haired fellow lost his temper, and, throwing all science to the winds, went for Dan hammer and tongs, trying to smash through that amazing guard.

Dan gave ground for a moment or so, then, realising Howard's intention, he blocked one vicious swing, and, measuring the distance, sent in a left hard on Howard's throat.

It did not seem a very powerful punch but its effect was amazing, for Howard, staggering against the ropes, tilted clean over them and landed on his back with a thud which knocked all the wind out of his body.

"Hope I ain't hurt him, sir?" Dan said. Ralph had run to his cousin's assistance, but Howard was already drawing himself to his feet.

His face was bloodless, and, with an angry snarl, he snatched the gloves from his fists, throwing them on to the floor.

"I've had enough of this!" he rapped out. "I believe it—it's all a plant, and—and Ralph worked it on me!"

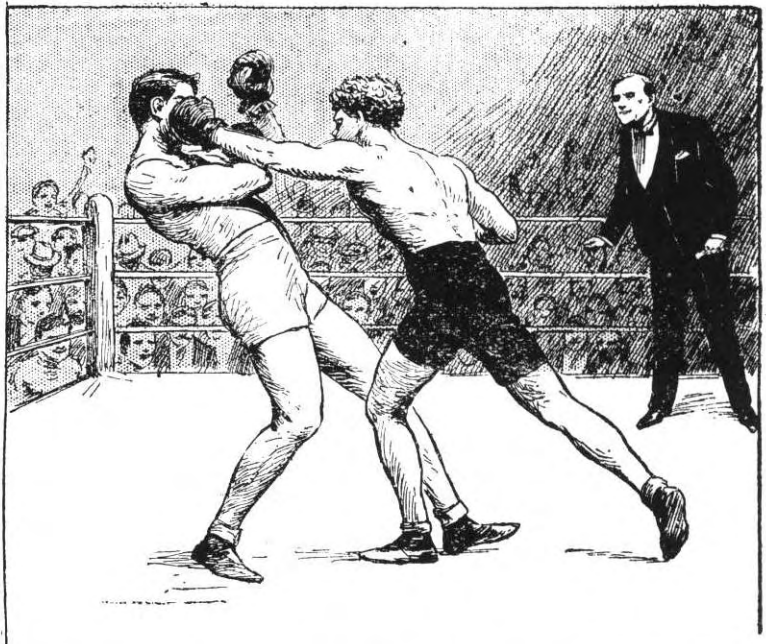
"Nonsense, Howard! You're talking through your hat!" Captain Westbrook retorted quietly. "You had better go back to the house, if you are going to show your temper like this. Go along; clear out!"

Howard hunched his shoulders, and, with a final, evil glance at Dan, stalked off out of the gym, banging the door behind him.

Captain Westbrook went across to Dan, and put his hand on the waiif's shoulder.

"I'm quite satisfied," he said. "We'll keep this secret between us. If you're ready to meet Battling Sid Blake on Saturday, you'll be a chance."

He nodded to his nephew. "Bring Dan across to the study after he's



Two fierce rallies brought the audience to their feet. From a clinch, Dan broke away, then, as Battling Sid launched at him again, Dan swung a shattering left full into his rival's battered face, felling him to the floor!

had a clean up," he said. "We'll have a chat over things."

As soon as the captain had left the dressing-room, Dan crossed to the locker where Howard had dropped the glove. He found it, and brought it over to Ralph.

"Feel that!" Dan said. He was indicating the padded part, where the knuckles of the hand rested. Ralph ran his fingers along the leather, and a quick gasp of surprise broke from his lips; for the padding had been worked into a hard ridge, which lay across the leather like an iron band.

"An old trick," Dan commented, "and a darned rotten one! You can cut a fellow's face open with a glove like this if you know how to use it."

"Then you—you think that Howard did it on—on purpose?"

"Not much doubt about that," Dan returned soberly. "He meant to mark Tom Berry, so that Battling Sid would have an easy job on Saturday. A punch on Tom Berry's eye in the first round would have blinded him, and he would have been an easy victim then."

Ralph took the glove and slipped it under his coat.

"You leave this to me, Dan," he said. "Uncle will hear the truth about Howard at last!"

CHAPTER 3.

Dan's Great Fight!—Victory!

THE town-hall at Staplevale was filled to overflowing, and prominent among the spectators was Mr. Sam Drake and his group of followers.

Mr. Drake had been very busy that day laying the odds against the local man. Something had happened to Berry, although what it was no one could quite say. He had vanished from his cottage, and rumour had it that he had been staying with Captain Westbrook over the Friday night; but nobody was absolutely certain.

The preliminary events in the programme were fixed to start at eight o'clock, and the main contest of the evening was billed to take place at nine-fifteen. At nine o'clock the ring in the centre was cleared, and the M.C. appeared with a slip of paper in his hand, and began to make his announcement:

"A ten-round contest between Battling Sid Blake, of London, and Captain Westbrook's nominee— Here the M.C. halted, and glanced round the assembled audience. "I have to announce that, owing to a slight accident, our lad, Tom Berry, is unable to take the ring; but Captain Westbrook

has found another to take his place—Ginger Dan, of Nowhere."

"Eh? What's that—what's that?" Sam Drake arose from his seat with an angry gesture, and the M.C. turned and looked full into the red, wrathful countenance.

"The matter is entirely in order," he called. "And Captain Westbrook's nominee is here now, ready to take the ring."

There was a stir from the dressing-room on the left, and a group of figures appeared, to walk down the passage between the seats. A ginger-haired youngster was in their midst, and he climbed on to the platform, slipping under the ropes.

The M.C. pointed to him. "This is Captain Westbrook's nominee, Ginger Dan," he announced.

Perhaps it was the cheery smile which crossed the freckled face and the grin which accompanied the awkward bow that brought the audience round. In any case, a cheer was raised in one corner of the building, and it went from lip to lip until it developed into a roar of approval.

Sam Drake dropped into his seat again, and muttered for a moment to the man on his left. It was obvious that he had been taken completely aback, and the scowl on his face indicated his thoughts.

After a little delay, Battling Sid and his seconds appeared, and the foxy-looking, tough boxer glanced hard across the ring at the ginger-haired, cheery youngster opposite him.

The preliminaries were carried out; then "Time!" went, and the two lads stepped out to face each other.

The fight that followed was one of the finest that Staplevale ever saw.

Battling Sid Blake, a tried boxer, knew just what was expected of him, and he waded in to register a quick victory. But he found himself faced by a lad who could swallow punishment by the cartload, and come up for more.

If Battling Sid had been wiser, he would have played with his man, instead of trying to overwhelm him by sheer strength of arm.

In the first round, Battling Sid went for his young, unknown opponent hammer and tongs, and under the fierce fusillade Dan gave ground. He took a terrific drubbing, and it seemed as though Battling Sid could do just what he liked with the red-headed, square-shouldered youngster.

Now and again the professional pug would drop back a pace and grin savagely; then he would close, and a terrific hurricane of blows would rain on Dan's head, body, and shoulders.

The audience had been taken somewhat aback by the sudden announcement made by the M.C., and now, when the fight was in progress, and they were watching Ginger Dan receive what looked to them like a severe dressing-down, murmurs began to pass from lip to lip.

The gong which brought the first round to an end saw Ginger Dan turn, and, hurrying to his chair, sprawl there, while Smith and Ralph, and another second attended to him.

Captain Westerbrook was in a seat close to Sam Drake, the bookie, and that individual leaned forward and grinned across at the man in evening-dress.

"Like to make a little bet, Captain Westerbrook?" Sam's raucous voice broke out. "I'll give you three to one that your man doesn't last another three rounds!"

Westerbrook turned quietly. "Done!" he said. "Take that bet in pence. Your man doesn't happen to have stuffed gloves to-night, Drake!"

The bookie fell back in his seat, his jaw dropping, and the look which came into his furtive eyes made Captain Westerbrook turn away and smile grimly to himself.

His shot had told, and there was a hard look in the captain's eyes as he raised them towards the ring again.

He saw Ginger Dan's mop of crisp curls emerge from under the huge sponge which Smith was using. The freckled face was still smiling, although there were one or two ugly bruises on it, and Dan's cheery eye caught Captain Westerbrook's gaze. The wail of the road smiled, and Captain Westerbrook caught his breath sharply.

"By James, you're a game lad, and you're not nearly done yet!"

"Seconds out! Time!"

Into the ring again went Dan, and the same grim, slogging tactics were carried on by Battling Sid, but it just happened that this sort of fare was what Ginger Dan was well accustomed to.

In his days on the roads he had often dropped into training camps, where, for the sake of a few shillings, he had stood up as a chopping-block for many would-be

champions; and this hard training stood him in good stead now.

Battling Sid's blows hurt, but did not harm, for Dan was always just able to check them or time them so that, although they landed easily enough, the sting was taken out of them.

And yet it was a case of always beating a retreat with those terrible fists of the pro battering at him on rib, chest, and head.

Round and round the ring they went, Sid's fox-like face intent and furious as he tried all the tricks that he was master of. Yet, although he pommelled Dan unmercifully, never once did he send that sturdy figure off his feet.

And towards the end of the second round, while they were in a clinch, Dan swung one punch on Sid which made that stubborn fellow jerk his head towards his seconds in the corner.

There had been plenty of sting and strength behind that punch, and, when the round came to an end, and Sid was being attended to by his seconds, he mentioned this blow.

"Don't you fellows make any mistake!" he muttered. "That boy's got a punch behind him!"

"Punch be hanged! Why don't you knock him out?"

Sid spat into the basin. "Knock him out! Why, what have I been trying to do the whole time but that, you confounded idiot?"

And so for five terrible rounds the battle waged, and at the end of that time Ginger Dan's youth and stamina came to the front.

In the sixth round Dan, bruised but indomitable, found his second wind, and began to fight back at his opponent.

Two fierce rallies, which brought the audience to their feet, marked the opening of the round, and from a clinch Dan broke away to distance; then, as Battling Sid launched at him again, Dan swung a shattering left full into his rival's battered face.

It was a pile-driving punch, and Battling Sid rocked under the impact. Dan leaped in,

and a right hook, beautifully timed, went home on the point of Battling Sid's jaw.

Battling Sid went down with a thud on to the canvas-covered boards to roll over on his back; and Ginger Dan, falling back a pace, heard the steady count of the timekeeper.

"Eight, nine, ten!"

The vast town-hall seemed to ring to the roar of delight which went up as Dan walked back to his corner, and over his shoulder the wail caught a glimpse of Mr. Sam Drake.

The bookie had risen to his feet, and was leaning under the ropes, glaring at Dan. Dan bent his head, and the quiet whisper which came from his lips was heard by Drake alone.

"Didn't have to use a ridged glove, either, Mr. Drake!" Dan whispered; and the bookie slunk away.

In a third-class compartment a very tired but very contented youngster was leaning back in the corner as the train drew out of Staplevalle on the following Monday.

He was still wearing his tattered garments, but there was a little wad of Treasury-notes tucked away in one of the inside pockets, and Ginger Dan, bruised and battered though he was, smiled a smile of perfect contentment as he waved his hand to Ralph Westerbrook.

There had been a painful scene in Captain Westerbrook's study on the previous evening, where Howard, confronted by that faked glow, had been forced to confess the evil plot he had concocted with the rascally Drake.

The train swung on, and Dan, settling himself in his seat, closed his eyes.

"I don't mind if I'm bumped off another old furniture-van," he murmured to himself.

"Strikes me them bumps are lucky!"

And Bill, in the guard's-van, with a huge mutton-bone to console himself with, no doubt endorsed that sentiment.

THE END.

(Next Week's Splendid Complete Story is entitled: "THE MASKED FOOT-BALLER!" You are sure to enjoy this splendid soccer yarn.)

OUR EASY "ONE WEEK" FOOTBALL COMPETITION. OPEN TO ALL!

READ THE HISTORY OF THE CHELSEA FOOTBALL CLUB AND WIN A B.G.M. NEY PRIZE.

First Prize £5. Second Prize £2 10 0. & 10 Prizes of 5s. each.

The graphic contains several text elements and icons:

- Top row: $P \frac{1}{G}$, a book labeled "HISTORY", a football, and a card labeled "NO".
- Second row: "EVER ED IN 2", a man's profile, and "SU CH".
- Third row: "HOME TEAM'S MARVELLOUS SCORE 21 GOALS", "sudd NnS AAA CHIL", and a goal.
- Fourth row: "IN 1904", a stadium, "did", "Xist: NOW", and "300,000".
- Fifth row: "of", "BA Nth AST", "LL SI AST", "THE", a globe, and "HA VE".
- Sixth row: "HOD of T", a man's profile, "SUPERB ROLLS-ROYCE FOR SALE", and a car.
- Bottom row: "H", "froud RE", and a question mark.

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Chelsea Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears under the puzzle, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Chelsea" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, December 7th.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

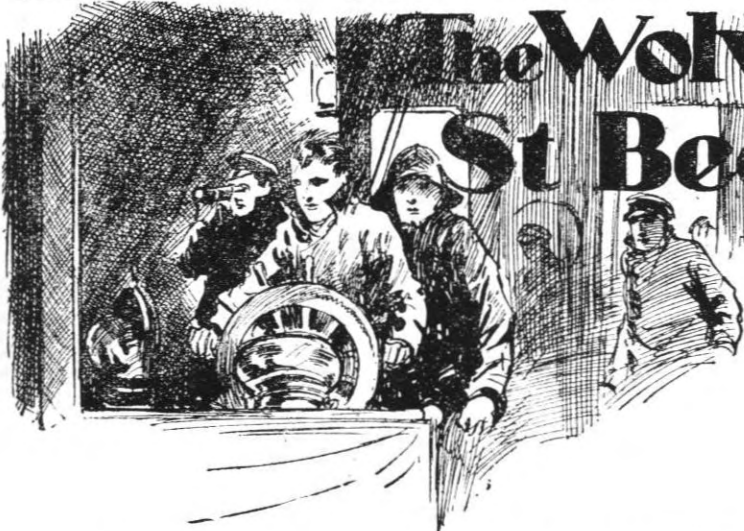
I enter "CHELSEA" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

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ANOTHER THRILLING INSTALMENT FOR YOU, BOYS!



The Wolves of St Beowulf's!

There Are Reels of Thrills
and Breathless Situations
in this Gripping Yarn.

By
DUNCAN STORM.

Introduction.

JACK WABBY, JAMES READY, SWEET, and a Chinese named LUNG, chums together in the great school of St. Beowulf's, in company with JOHN LINCOLN, one of the governors of the school, and VISCOUNT WAFFINGTON, a relation of the Countess of Castlewood, are instrumental in capturing a gang of international burglars. At a private landing-stage, with a number of bags containing the supposed treasure, the little party await the arrival of the Trois Freres, a small craft which has been chartered to smuggle the ill-gotten gains out of the country. The crew aboard the vessel think only of the treasure, and pay little attention to the party as they board ship.

Safely aboard, Lincoln offers to pilot the vessel, whilst the crew go down in the cabin to make merry.

The robbers then open the bags, and discover that they have been deceived. They prepare to attack the Englishmen, only to find that they are locked in the cabin and made prisoners. They manage to gain an exit from the engine-room, however. A fierce fight then ensues, but the robbers are soon overcome.

After a most excitable journey, the Trois Freres reaches Barham Harbour, where Mr. Lincoln hands over his little haul to the safe keeping of the harbour officials. After that the boys return to High March Castle, where John Lincoln tells them of his intention of taking them on a world tour at some future date. At the school a few days later Waff calls upon Ready to have a friendly chat.

(Now read on.)

A Surprise for Lady Castlewood!

SLURK snarled as he noticed the plainly dressed, friendly-looking boy who stood in the school quad talking to James Ready so modestly.

"There's that little towney cad Ready," he said, "importing some of his back street friends into the school. I've a good mind to chuck that kid out! What's he doing here?" "Look out, Slurk!" whispered Sponge. "There's Blackbeard knocking about. You'd better leave them alone."

This was true. The flutter of Blackbeard's gown was visible at the top of the quad as he passed towards Dr. Brackenbury's quarters, where he was to hear of the great expedition for the first time.

Jim and Waff were going off through a series of passages and smaller quads which lay in the direction of the kangaroo's quarters.

"Come on, chaps!" said Slurk, when he had watched Blackbeard safely out of the way. "Let's put it across that kid Ready and his little cad pal. We'll teach the beggar to come walking in and out of St. Beowulf's as though the place belonged to him!"

Followed by his gang, he majestically stalked off in the wake of Jim and his chum. Slurk did not hurry. He meant to catch them in the Slaughterhouse, a small and retired courtyard of the school where there were no inquisitive windows, and where many of the smaller and less important fights were brought off.

The Slaughterhouse was a favourite bullying-ground of Slurk's, as it was free from observation, and the kids of the Lower School generally gave it a wide berth.

As Jim and his chum were crossing it, they heard steps behind them. Slurk was hastening to fall upon his prey.

Jim half-turned, and was seized roughly by the shoulder.

"Hallo, you young towney cad!" said Slurk, with an evil grin. "No good shouting for Lincoln Scholars here! What do you mean by bringing this young towney cad into the school without permission?"

Jim looked at Slurk. Then he looked at Waffington. He saw Slurk's mistake, and could hardly keep from laughing.

"Don't you grin at me, you cheeky young pup!" snarled Slurk.

"No, don't you grin at him, you cheeky young pup!" muttered Jack Johnson, the nigger, who always echoed what Slurk said. Waffington's face had turned very red. He did not know exactly who Slurk was.

"Collar that kid, Sponge!" ordered Slurk. "We'll run him out by the collar and the seat of his pants! We'll teach him to come butting in, trespassing here!"

Waff's face was a picture.

"Come on, you dirty little back street towney cad!" said Sponge. "We are going to chuck you out of the school premises. You've no business here, you know."

"But I'm here by invitation!" exclaimed the astonished Waffington.

"Who's invitation?" demanded Sponge.

"Dr. Brackenbury's," replied Waff quickly. A guffaw of laughter greeted this statement.

"Come now!" said Sponge, with greasy bonhomie. "Don't make me laugh, you guttersnipe, or I'll swallow my false teeth. Come hither, my street Arab, and I will show you how we treat your sort at St. Beowulf's!"

He stretched out his hand to grab Waffington by the collar.

Viscount Waffington had suffered a good many things in his life. He had been spoiled by his mother whilst she had lived. He had been spoiled by his aunt, and he had been most badly mauled by the stable-boy who had taught him boxing.

But, always secluded in his gorgeous nursery, he had never had a rough hand laid on his collar or on the seat of his trousers before. And just as Sponge reached for these holds on him, he woke up from his momentary fit of astonishment.

With a swift twist and a turn he freed himself. The blood of many generations of Waffingtons rose at the insult. His fist shot out in a blow which Wobby would have described in his graphic Australian tongue

as "the real dinkum dirty left," and Sponge took a jolt in the jaw which laid him on the ground.

Waff had turned a little white about the corners of his mouth, and his eyes were blazing as Jack Johnson, the nigger, eager to distinguish himself in Slurk's eyes, rushed forward.

"Hi, you dirty cad!" puffed Jack Johnson. "What you mean hittin' ob a gentleman like dat?"

Waff looked at the black youth. His friend, the stable-boy, had been quick to teach him that it is about as much good to hit a nigger's head as to hit a bank safe, for they are both about as thick and as hard.

He looked contemptuously at Jack.

"My word!" he exclaimed. "A nigger!" and he kicked Jack with a football back on the shins.

Jack Johnson was finished. He rolled over on the ground howling.

"Kill um!" yelled Jack. "He hab broke my laig!"

Waff smiled amiably. "I'll break your other 'laig,' Quashie, if you put one of your black hands on me!" he said.

Slurk's face was a picture as he saw two of his champions thus laid low by a mere towney cad.

He strode forward, his face purple with passion.

"Here, you young swab!" he growled, "Do you know who I am?"

"No," replied Waff steadily. "But if you don't take your face away I'll hit it."

"I'm Slurk!" yelled Slurk, expecting to see the towney cad shrink at his disclosure.

"How do you do, Mr. Slurk?" replied Waff, and before he knew what had happened, Slurk saw stars dancing in front of his eyes as his nose flattened under a hearty punch from the towney cad's ready fist.

Slurk staggered back under the jolt, his hands to his nose, just as Wobby, Stickjaw, Lung, and Lal, searching for Jim, entered the Slaughterhouse.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Wobby. "What's this?"

Then, with that quickness of mind which distinguishes the sons of the Golden South, he took in the situation.

"Hallo, kid!" he cried, grasping Waff by the hand. "So you've come up with old auntie in the barrer and found your way to the school all right? How are they all at 'ome up the old alley, my peb? And what are you doing stouthing the nobby nuts of this academy for young genies?"

"He struck me!" exclaimed Slurk wildly. "He struck me!"

"It strikes me that he has struck you, too," answered Wobby grinning. "Why, Slurk, the kid's tapped your claret! You have got the red nose that blooms like a red rose!"

"He shall pay for it!" snarled Slurk. "It's a fight!"

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"It's a fight!" echoed Jack Johnson, who was sitting on the ground nursing his shins. "Hallo, old Cherry Blossom, has he put it across your shins as well?" asked Wobby genially. "Well, if it's got to be a fight, it's got to be a fight, Slurk," he added. "But this kid is not your class."

"He's good enough to lick, anyway!" replied Slurk insolently. "I'll teach him to come butting into the school. He's a pal of that young towney cad, Ready."

Wobby winked at Waff. "I'm afraid you've got to fight this tug, clobber!" he said. "What's your name?"

"Carpenter!" Waff answered. "What's your street?" demanded Wobby. "Waffington Street," replied Waff, mentioning a street of small house property in Barham which bore his name.

"I told you so!" exclaimed Slurk triumphantly to his chums. "This dirty little tyke is a proper back-streeter! Who knows but that he has come into the school to steal?"

"Steady on, Slurk!" exclaimed Wobby, his eyes growing hard. "'Steal' is an ugly word, and I'm this kid's second. If you say any more loose stuff about stealing, I shall be his first and Jim will take a hand for me."

The bullies had formed a ring. They were disappointed by Wobby's appearance on the scene, but there was still a chance of the sport they loved.

Waff looked small in his clothes. He was just about the sort of live bait that Slurk could take on with a sure chance of an easy victory. But Waff looked a great deal larger when he slipped off his coat and waistcoat and rolled up his shirt sleeves.

"Tap him on his breastbone, Waff!" whispered Wobby. "That's just where he can't stand it! Never mind his face! Play on his wind! He smokes too many fags, and his bellows are his weak spot."

Waff stepped forward.

"Ready?" said Wobby. Slurk had closed his enormous fists with a grin of anticipation. He hit heavily, but Waff, slow and doughy though he looked, seemed suddenly as quick as an eel.

He dodged the blow, and returned it with a hundred per cent interest.

Smack, smack! Two smashing blows sent Slurk staggering back with a cough.

Waff had landed his punches on what Wobby called the "woodbine patch."

The bullies looked aghast to see their champion thus barged off by a kid, who, notwithstanding his size, seemed to be able to put extraordinary weight behind his blows.

"Bit of a champion, isn't he, tugs?" asked Wobby genially. "I expect they taught him down that little old back street at home! If you live up the cuts, you've got to learn to look after yourself. There's lots of bullies down the courts!"

The bullies stared at Wobby, and Sponge

flushed a brick-red under Wobby's biting sarcasm.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Wobby in delighted tones. "He's stopped one!"

Slurk had reeled under a tremendous punch in the jaw. Waff had lighted up under a heavy punch in the eye, and was beginning to get busy.

"Time—time!" shouted the bullies.

"There's no 'Time!' in this game," objected Wobby. "Slurk was going to give the kid a licking and to chuck him off the school premises. You don't lick a kid in rounds. You lick him, and chuck him out!"

Slurk was going visibly groggy, for Waff was giving him no rest. His long arms were flying wildly, whilst every punch from Waff was going home.

"Time!" yelled the bullies, seeing that their champion was getting the worst of it from this extraordinary back-street boy.

"There's no 'Time!'" shouted Wobby. "Any chap trying to back his barrow into this scrap will have to do with me. Bravo, Carpenter! Sock him another like that, and he'll keel up!"

Slurk's eye was rolling wildly. He was no longer on the attack, but on the defensive, using every dirty trick that he knew. But for every dirty trick Waff had a counter, and his blows were going home like sledge-hammers.

All of a sudden the boys became aware of a group of people who had entered the little courtyard.

"Crumbs!" muttered Wobby. "It's the Head and Blackbeard and auntie!"

There was a faint scream in the background.

"Waffington!" cried the voice of Lady Castlewood. "Waff, my poor darling! What a that horrid boy doing to you?"

It was not a question of what the horrid boy was doing to Waffington, it was Waffington who was doing for the horrid boy. And as Waff's loving aunt rushed forward to separate the combatants, or, at any rate, to shelter her darling boy from the last futile punches of the wavering Slurk, Waff saw his chance.

Considering that Waff's aunt was nearly on the scene, and that Blackbeard and Dr. Brackenbury were hurrying forward, Waff put in his knock-out very neatly.

Down went Slurk, helpless and done to the world. Lady Castlewood caught the battered and bruised Waff into her arms, fully persuaded that he was killed.

"My darling boy!" she exclaimed. "What has happened? Who is this horrid boy?"

She pointed to Slurk, who lay panting on the ground.

"He says his name is Slurk, auntie," replied Waff cheerfully; "and he called me a dirt-little towney cad, and was going to chuck me out of the school because I said I had come to see Jim Ready. He pushed a fight on to me!"

"Dreadful person!" exclaimed the countess,

dabbling her nephew's face with a tiny lace handkerchief. "And who has won?"

"I have," replied Waff with a grin. "If you want to see any more fighting, auntie, I'll take on one of the other chaps, if you like. But they are all as soft as putty! They are rag-puffers and bun-eaters!"

Lady Castlewood shuddered. "No, my dear!" she exclaimed. "I don't want to see you fight again. But how did you learn to fight?"

"On the quiet, auntie," answered Waff, grinning. "A chap has got to take care of himself some time or another, and you kept me so tight in the nursery that I had nothing to practise on. So I went outside, and I learned to tackle a chap like this one!"

And he pointed to the discomfited Slurk. "You brave child!" exclaimed Waff's aunt, beginning to feel a new glow of pride in her nephew. "Why, this horrid boy is ever so much bigger than you are!"

"He's bigger, auntie!" explained Waff, to Wobby's intense delight; "but it isn't size that tells in a scrap. It's quality. This chap is full of buns and ginger-beer. A kid could eat him who was properly trained!"

Slurk's face was a picture as he heard himself thus lectured on by the supposed towney cad who called a countess and a governor of St. Beowulf's "aunt."

Foolishness, dismay, and fear were the only expressions that chased across his ugly face. And only fear was left when Dr. Brackenbury strode up, followed by Blackbeard and the other gents, their gowns floating majestically behind them.

"Get up, Slurk!" said the doctor briefly. Slurk staggered to his feet.

"What is the meaning of this disgraceful scene?" demanded the doctor sternly.

Selecting the Party!

HERE was no doubt that Dr. Brackenbury was very angry. He was very proud of the discipline of his school, and prided himself on the general tone of the place which forbade bullying. And here, just as he was escorting the Countess of Castlewood round the school, the countess, who was one of the governors and trustees, and almost its strongest supporter, he had come upon Bully Slurk, attempting to put the nephew of this esteemed lady through the hoop, being under the impression that he was fair game, just some poor little towney who had strayed in from the outside.

It was plain that Slurk had not had the best of the bargain as he stood up before the angry doctor with a nose like a tomato and a pair of eyes that were beginning to show the colours of the rainbow.

"What does this mean, Slurk?" asked Dr. Brackenbury sternly.

"I—I didn't know, sir!" stammered Slurk, so frightened and upset that the truth dropped out of him naturally for once in a way. "I thought he was just a towney—a pal of Ready's!"

Dr. Brackenbury's face was a picture. "You mean that you thought he was just a boy of humble circumstances?" he demanded.

"Not exactly that, sir!" stuttered Slurk, seeing where the doctor's words were leading him.

"What exactly, then?" snapped the doctor. Slurk was silent. He had no answer. He was cornered.

"I can see it quite clearly, Slurk," said the doctor. "You were unaware that this boy was Viscount Waffington. Because he came to visit James Ready and other friends he was made in the school, you and your friends jumped to the conclusion that he was a boy who could be maltreated at your pleasure. And in this fashion you uphold the credit of St. Beowulf's!"

Slurk was silent. His companions were beginning to tremble. There was a swishing in every word the doctor spoke.

"But luckily," continued the doctor, "Ready's young friend seems to have proved that he can hold his own and teach a useful lesson amongst a gang of bullies—yes, sir—a gang of low-down bullies who would disgrace any public school! Go to my room, all of you, and wait for me there!"

Slurk and his friends slunk off to wait their punishment in the grim little ante-room which adjoined the Abbot's Room, and which, according to the superstitions of St.

(Continued on page 26.)



"I'm Slurk, I am!" yelled the bully expecting to see Waffington shrink at his disclosure. But before he knew what had happened, Slurk saw stars dancing before his eyes as his nose flattened under a heavy punch from Waff's ready fist.



Address all letters: The Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

My Dear Chums,—

There is a real treat coming in the new story of St. Jim's which will appear in next Wednesday's GEM. You will find cousin Ethel figuring in her accustomed popular style in this yarn. I am convinced there will be a rousing welcome for the tale.

"COUSIN ETHEL TO THE RESCUE!"

That is the title of the remarkably fine story of St. Jim's appearing in the next issue of the GEM. It carries on the stunning series which shows Trimble trading merchandise. You know what Trimble is in business, or what he calls business. Here you see Baggy figuring as meanly as ever. He is a poor little toad, but it is charitable to suppose he cannot help being what he is.

Anyhow, in next week's story, cousin Ethel comes forward in connection with that knife episode, and in her clever, practical, sympathetic way, Miss Cleveland helps to set things right. Cousin Ethel was popular before. She will be more admired than ever now, especially by Gussy. They do say that a knife may cut a friendship, unless you take certain precautions. It is another pair of sleeves here.

REAL GLOSSY AUTOGRAPHED PHOTOS!

Our series will bear talking about. Next week you will have

JAMES SEDDON OF THE BOLTON WANDERERS F.C.

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GEM only! There has never been such a splendid opportunity. Sport lovers are making the most of a really great chance.

Next week's short, snappy detective story, featuring Anthony Sharpe, the famous investigator, will be

"THE HOUSE ON THE MOOR!"

This yarn is a corker, bang full of mystery and amazement. It relates some curious and weird things which take place in that house of secrets.

THE WINTER GAME!

No copy of the GEM would be complete these days without something dramatic about football. Read "The Masked Footballer!" next Wednesday. It is fine! It is a fascinating bit of romance, and the game is well played. That footballer who hides his features has jolly good reasons for concealing his identity, you may be sure.

DUNCAN STORM IN HIS STRIDE!

Without hesitation, I will say that the new instalment of this mighty serial, "The Wolves of St. Beowulf's!" is stronger, and with deeper interest than usual. You find next Wednesday the beginning of the great adventure, and great it is. Look out for it!

THE THING TO REMEMBER!

I am going to ask all my chums to take careful note of the fact that Christmas is pretty close on us, and that the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" is the best present possible. The "Annual" is packed with magnificent stories, useful articles, chirpy features of every sort about St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood, and a perfect whirl of pictures, many of these in colours.

And, while mentioning the other schools, just pause a second and glance at what our Companion Papers, the "Magnet," the "Popular," and the "Boys' Friend," are doing.

The "Magnet," in its brilliant coloured cover, looks simply superb, and its budget of fiction is unsurpassed; the "Popular" runs it a dead-heat, and the "Boys' Friend," with its wonderful new programme of stories, and those coloured photographs of footballers—as fine a series of portraits as anyone could desire—has added to its laurels tremendously.

A BIT ABOUT OURSELVES.

There is one notably important fact I wish to impress upon all my chums who read the Companion Papers. My weeklies are all special—and they have carried on a really magnificent tradition for years. The GEM, the "Magnet," the "Popular," and the "Boys' Friend," have never departed from this tradition—giving the finest and most dramatic stories—never wavered in their high purpose, nor jeopardised, by ultra-extravagant sensation, the real aim which is part and parcel of any story paper of repute.

This ambition is to give week by week the yarns which appeal to everybody. I publish rousing tales of adventure, and yarns of school life calculated to stir the pulses. The genuine story written by an author of talent, takes the reader out of himself, causes to vanish for a spell all the worries and vexations of the passing day. A yarn is of little worth unless it can accomplish this kind of magic-carpet miracle, transporting a fellow far away from the humdrum moment, carrying him into some bright scene of school life, or to the distant tropics where pioneer adventurers are finding their way through unknown lands.

I am rubbing these facts in concerning the work achieved by the Companion Papers, not so much as a reminder to my old supporters, but just for the benefit of the new readers who are coming in week by week by the thousand. There are only about three ways of knowing a thing—by instinct, by observation, by being told. My chums have the advantage of all three in this matter, for the Companion Papers are before their eyes to endorse what I have just said.

YOUR EDITOR.

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"THE WOLVES OF ST. BEOWULF'S!"*(Continued from page 24.)*

Beowulf's, was used in the old times as a torture-chamber for refractory monks.

The countess was nearly weeping over the victorious Waffington.

"My poor darling!" she exclaimed. "Just look at your eye! You have not hurt it so much since you knocked it against the mantelpiece at home!"

"Look here, auntie," said the embarrassed Waff, "I didn't really hit my eye against the mantelpiece, I hit it up against a light-weight boxing-glove on the day that Bumble, the bailiff of the Home Farm, was laid out by the donkey."

"Yes, I remember when Mr. Bumble was kicked by the donkey," said his aunt. "But what has that to do with it?"

"I was the donkey who kicked him!" said Waff proudly. "It's no good, auntie, you trying to pretend that I'm a helpless kid any longer. I've been fond of boxing for years, and I've licked every man on the estate!"

"Every man on the estate!" exclaimed his aunt, aghast. "Oh, Waff, you don't mean to say—"

"I do, auntie! I've knocked out the coachman, the chauffeur, the head gardener, the

two under-gardeners, the team men down at the farm, and Bumble," replied Waff. "They were all I had to practise on. You don't realise how I've grown, auntie!" pleaded Waffington. "Feel that arm!"

Waff proudly offered his aunt a bicep that would have done credit to a coalheaver.

"That's not a kid's arm, is it?" he asked. His aunt looked very sad. At the same time there was no doubt that she had a sneaking pride in Waff. She was glad that he had licked Slurk so handsomely. Even Dr. Brackenbury and Blackbeard Teach could not help smiling as they watched the contending expressions on the good lady's face.

It was the expression of a hen foster-mother who has brought up a duckling, and sees it take to water for the first time.

"It must be heredity!" sighed his aunt. "Your great-grandfather is said to have fought a person who navigated a Thames barge for twenty rounds when he was at Oxford, and I know your ancestor, Sir Giles de Waffington, plied a good sword at Crey! I fear that you have grown up unawares, my poor boy, and your old aunt has kept you too long in leading-strings! But it is nearly all over now!"

The good lady wiped her eyes on the tiny lace-edged handkerchief with which she had been trying to clean up Waff's marred face.

"Now, boys," said Dr. Brackenbury, "you are due on the football-field. After the match the school-bell will ring, and all the boys will assemble in Hall. Mr. Lincoln is

coming, and will have an announcement of great importance to make."

The boys saluted, and went off, bearing the victorious Waff with them.

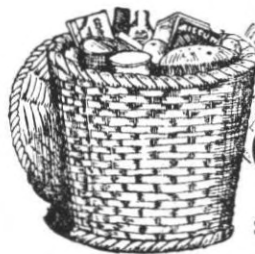
"I know what he is going to say," said Waff. "He is going to announce which boys he is taking on the trip. I can see, too, that auntie knows all about it, and she has consented to me going as well. My word, what a lark!"

With all the cheerful selfishness of youth, Waff did not spend much time in considering the wretch that it was going to give his good old aunt to let him go off on such a perilous adventure.

John Lincoln had disguised nothing from his old friend when he had asked her to allow Waff to go with him. He was going to take his six selected boys into his own adventurous life, and the life he led they would lead also. His many enemies would be their enemies, and amongst his vast interests, whilst he had been taken up in the work of the Great War, there had arisen many false stewards and many new fees who sought to cripple his work.

The boys had not a care for what was coming as they cheered their House. When the match was over, they trooped with the rest of the school to the Hall in response to the summons of the great bell.

(Who will be chosen for the party in the Great Adventure? Next week's splendid thrilling instalment is bound to surpass all previous ones. Look out for it.)



My Readers' Own Corner

Send Your Latest Ribtickler to Me!

**TUCK HAMPERS AND MONEY PRIZES AWARDED FOR WIT!
(If You Are Not a Prizewinner This Week, You May Be Next.)**

All Attempts in this Competition should be Addressed to: *The GEM, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.*

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper:— VERY FISHY INDEED!

A gentleman sent his negro servant to buy some fresh fish. Reaching the shop, he took hold of a fish and began to smell it. "Here, you rascal!" exclaimed the fishmonger angrily. "What are you smelling my fish for?" "Me no smell your fish, massa," replied the negro, "me talk to him." "Well, and what did you say to the fish?" asked the fishmonger, smiling. "Me ask him news at sea, that's all, massa," answered the negro. "And what did he say?" asked the fishmonger. "He say he don't know," came the reply. "He no been dere dese tree weeks!" —A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious tuck, has been awarded to G. Silk, 7, Port Royal Street, Southsea, Portsmouth.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON The GEM LIBRARY.

No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.

WHY NOT?

"Seems a decent little house of yours," said a man to his friend the other day, "but why call it 'The Cloisters'?" "Well, I dunno," replied the one addressed, "but it's 'cloister' the sea, 'cloister' the shops, and 'cloister' the station. I really don't know what else ye could call it." —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss M. Brooke, 22, Mount Terrace, Ecclehill, Bradford, Yorks.

SEEMED LIKE MONTHS!

A train started one Saturday from one of the principal towns in the Midland Counties for the scene of an important football match. This train, as is sometimes the case, went very slowly, and had numerous stoppages. After a time the train reached a station called March, and was brought to a standstill. An official strutting up and down the platform was shouting: "March! March!" One of the passengers, who was a bit of a wag, put his head out of the carriage window, and calling to the official, shouted: "What's that?" "March!" answered the official. "Ah, well, it may be March now," answered the despondent traveller, "but it was October when we started!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. Nicholas, 6, South Road, Preston Park, Brighton.

MOST CONFUSING!

An American lady left her husband in their room at a London hotel while she did some shopping. She returned later, but the many doors and numbers confused her. She fixed on one as her room, then knocking, called: "I'm back, honey—let me in." There was no answer. "Honey, honey, let me in," she called again, knocking harder. "Honey, it's me—please, honey." Still silence, then suddenly a man's voice, cold and full of dignity, came from the other side of the door. "Madam, this is not a bee-hive; it's a bath-room!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to E. J. Barnes, 5, Grange Street South, Grangetown, Sunderland.

ROUGH ON THE HAM!

A young man entered a grocer's shop with the light of a great determination in his eyes. "You remember that ham I bought here yesterday afternoon?" he demanded, without any waste of polite remarks. "Well, it was bad!" "Pardon me, sir," said the grocer icily, "that ham was quite fresh." "No, it wasn't," persisted the customer, still more fiercely, "it was bad!" "How could it be?" snapped the grocer. "It was only cured last week." "Perhaps that explains it," the young man retorted quickly. "I expect it's had a relapse!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Percy Lynch, 8, Greenhough Street, Ancoats, Manchester.

PROOF!

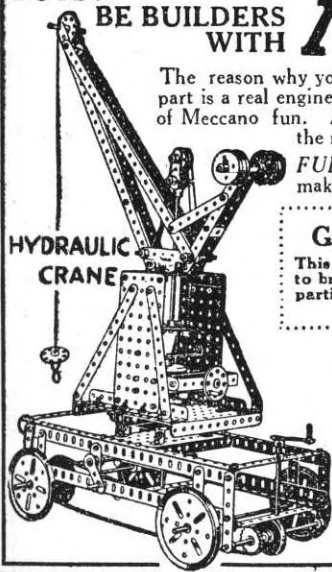
During a football match in the North, a spectator persisted in making loud remarks about the conduct of the referee. At last the official went up to him, and said: "Look here, my man, I've been watching you for the last fifteen minutes." "Ah thowt so," came the scathing reply. "Ah thowt so. Ah knew varry weel tha' wasn't watching t' game!" —Half-a-crown has been awarded to Fred Huggins, 1, Somerton Road, Newport, Mon.

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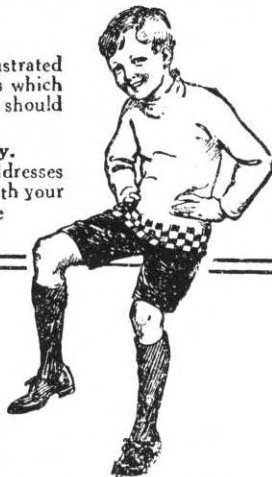
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