



A NEW SERIES FEATURING ARTHUR  
AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, THE "SWELL" OF ST. JIM'S

# D'ARCY'S DAY OFF



Martin  
Clifford

1/6

D'ARCY'S DAY OFF!

### ***Our Cover Picture***

"Gussy!" gasped Wally.

"He's off!" gasped Levison minor.

Arthur Augustus was not quite off! He landed astride the horse's neck, his cap flying through the air.

But that scene lasted only a moment.

The next, Arthur Augustus shot off the horse to land with a resounding splash far out in the shining waters of the Ryll.

"Gussy!" shouted Wally.

"Gwoooooogh!"

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Martin Clifford



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# 1

## Inky !

“WALLY! You young wascal!”

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, uttered that exclamation in startled tones.

He had not expected to see his young brother, Wally of the Third, in Study No. 6. He had come up to the study for his bat, to join Tom Merry and Co. at the nets, thinking of anything but his minor in the Third Form.

True, D'Arcy minor sometimes came to Study No. 6: sometimes to get first-aid when he was “bottled” in Latin, sometimes to borrow a half-crown from his long-suffering major. But on Saturday afternoon, a half-holiday, Wally might have been expected to be seeking the open spaces with his inky-fingered comrades of the Third.

But there he was!

And his occupation was peculiar.

Wally of the Third was standing at the open window of the study. In his hand was a large tin jug. That jug was filled almost to overflowing with fluid: apparently ink mixed with water. And Wally was leaning out over the window-sill, his eyes on the path that ran by the wall below.

It was no wonder that Arthur Augustus was startled. For there could be no doubt—not a possible probable shadow of doubt—that Wally was watching for someone to pass on the path, with the fell intention of up-ending that jug over the passing head. There was no other imaginable explanation of the scene that met Arthur Augustus's startled eyes.

“Oh!” ejaculated D'Arcy minor, he, too, startled by the unexpected voice behind him. He stared round. “Oh! You, Gussy!”

"Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus strode into the study, with a frowning brow. "You young wascal, what are you up to in my study?"

"I thought you were at the cricket—"

"I came up for my bat— I forgot it—"

"You would!" snorted Wally. "Is there anything you don't forget?"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Well, there's your bat, in the corner—take it and go!" said Wally, "and as you're so jolly good at forgetting things, forget that you saw me here."

Arthur Augustus did not even glance at his bat. His eyes, and his eyeglass, remained sternly fixed on his minor.

"What are you goin' to do with that jug of ink, Wally?" he demanded.

"Guess!" suggested Wally.

"You are waitin' there to tip it ovah somebody."

"What a brain!" said Wally, admiringly. "Guessed it in one! Now run away and play cricket, like a good little boy, and don't worry."

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the kind, Wally! I shall certainly not allow you to play so outwageous a twick in my study!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, indignantly. "Put that jug down at once."

"Bow-wow!" said Wally.

"Gussy!" came a howl from the direction of the staircase. "Are you coming? Gone to sleep in the study?"

"That's Blake," said Wally. "They're waiting for you, Gussy! Cut off. You ought to put in a spot of practice, if you're going over to Carcroft on Wednesday to play cricket."

"Nevah mind cwicket now, Wally! I wefuse to allow you to cawwy on with this outwageous twick!" said Arthur Augustus. "If you have a wow on with some othah fag in your form, you can punch his nose, but you cannot smothah him with ink, you young wascal."

Snort from Wally.

"Think I'd tip this lot over a man in the Third?"

he exclaimed. "Don't be an ass, Gussy, if you can help it."

"Coming, Gussy?" came another howl from the distance: in George Herries' voice this time.

"Can't you find your bat, fathead?" came Digby's voice.

Blake and Herries and Digby seemed to be getting impatient. Arthur Augustus put his head out of the doorway.

"All right, you fellows," he called back. "I will be along in a minute."

Then he turned back to his young brother, at the study window.

"Wally, you young wagamuffin, if you are thinkin' of thowin' that howwid stuff ovah a fellow not in your form—"

"Tain't that!" snapped Wally. "and look here, Gussy, he may be along the path any minute now, so shut up. Leave a fellow alone. I tell you I'm going to get him with this jug of ink, and give him something else to think about than worrying a fellow over a rotten translation."

Arthur Augustus fairly jumped.

"Wally!" he gasped. "You mad young ass! Are you waitin' there for a beak to pass undah the window?"

"What about it?" yapped Wally.

"You must be off your wockah! You will be sent up to the Head! You will be flogged—you might be sacked—"

"I'm not going to call out to Selby and tell him that I'm here," said Wally, sarcastically. "How's he to know?"

Wally peered from the window again. But apparently the path below was still vacant, for he withdrew his head, with a grunt. He stared across the study at his horrified major.

"Look here, Gussy, join your pals and get off to the cricket!" he snapped. "You'd better be out when this happens—Selby may spot which window it came from, and may think you did it, if you're spotted about the place."

"Are you weally such a weckless, diswespectful young wuffian, Wally, as to think of tippin' ink ovah your form-master's nappah?" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Sort of!" agreed Wally. "Selby's been in one of his tempers this morning. Reggie Manners has lines, and Levison minor Extra School, and Joe Frayne lines, and I've been caned, and given a translation from Eutropius—and I can jolly well tell you that we're all fed up with Selby—fed up to the chin!" Wally's eyes gleamed, under knitted eyebrows. "Selby ain't a little duck like your form-master Lathom—he's a beast—"

"I wefuse to allow you to descwibe your form-mastah as a beast, Wally."

"Oh, rats!"

"If you say wats to your eldah bwothah, Wally—"

"More rats!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy breathed hard.

"You are askin' me to smack your cheeky head, Wally," he said. "Howevah, I will twy to be patient. You should wemembah, Wally, that if your beak is wathah watty at times, you young wascals in the Third are weally enough to make any beak watty. In any case I shall not allow you to dwench your beak with that jug of ink. Put it down at once."

"Go to sleep and dream again," suggested Wally.

"I insist!" said Arthur Augustus, firmly.

Wally peered from the window again, and a gleam came into his eyes. He whispered hurriedly over his shoulder.

"Shut up, Gussy! He's coming! Quiet!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy acted promptly. Evidently Mr. Selby, master of the Third Form at St. Jim's, was coming along that path. Equally evidently, Wally of the Third was going to tip that jug of ink over him as he passed below. There was no time to lose! Arthur Augustus jumped at Wally with the swiftness and activity of a kangaroo, grasped him by the shoulders, and dragged him by main force away from the window.

There was a yell of exasperation from Wally of the Third.



"Leggo, you fathead."

"I wefuse to let go, Wally! Give me that jug!"

"I won't!" roared Wally.

"Then I shall take it away!"

"You silly ass—"

"You diswespectful young wascal—!"

"Leggo!"

Mr. Selby, taking his walk on the path under the study windows, little dreamed of the narrow escape he was having!"

There was no doubt that Selby, master of the Third, was a tart gentleman, with a heavy hand in his form-room. Perhaps there was no doubt, either, that the St. Jim's Third required a rather heavy hand to keep them in order! Arthur Augustus sympathised with his minor: it was not pleasant to be caned, still less pleasant to be given a Latin translation to do on a half-holiday. But slopping a jug of ink over a beak's head was simply unthinkable. Nothing would have induced Arthur Augustus to permit his reckless minor to carry on with such a project. He was going to take that jug of ink away from the reckless fag.

Wally, on the other hand, was not going to part with it, if he could help it. He resisted manfully. A wave of watery ink, from the jug, splashed on the study carpet.

"You're making me spill it!" howled Wally.  
"Leggo!"

"Wats!"

"Oh, you fathead! I tell you—"

"Give me that jug at once!"

Arthur Augustus clutched at the jug. Wally struggled.

"You silly chump, he will be gone in a tick—I shall be too late for him! Will you leggo? I tell you he will be gone—"

"All the bettah, you weckless young wuffian! Now—Oh, cwikey!" yelled Arthur Augustus, as the jug, grasped by both, suddenly tipped over. Such an accident might really have been expected, when two fellows struggled for the possession of a jug of ink! But Arthur Augustus did not seem to have expected it! He

uttered a yell of dismay and horror as the jug suddenly up-ended, and the contents shot out in an inky flood over his beautiful, spotless flannels—far from spotless the next moment!

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!" gasped Wally.

"Oh, cwikey!"

"You've wasted the lot now—you silly ass, you've got it instead of old Selby—"

"Bai Jove! I—I—I—Look at my flannels!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Look! Bai Jove! Look at my flannels!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Wally, as he looked.

"Bai Jove! You young wuffian, I will give you a feahful thwashin'—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally, apparently amused, dodged out of the study, laughing. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not feel like laughing. He stood and gazed down at the beautiful flannels, drenched with ink, in horrified dismay.

Three fellows looked into the study doorway.

"What's the row here?" asked Blake. "What's young Wally been here for—I just saw him—why—what—oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at my flannels!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Herries and Dig.

"There is nothin' to cackle at, you asses! My flannels are wuined! I shall have to change again before I can come down to the cwicket—"

"Oh, come as you are, old man," grinned Blake. "You look a picture."

"Wats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake and Herries and Dig started for Little Side without their aristocratic chum. It was quite a while before Arthur Augustus joined them there. And when he came, at last, he was not in his sunniest temper. Arthur Augustus was a quite affectionate major, but had he fallen in with his minor just then, there was little doubt that he would have bestowed upon his young brother a most unbrotherly kicking.

## Monty Lowther asks for it!

"HERE'S luck!" said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners looked at him.

Neither of them could see where the "luck" came in. In fact, just then the luck of the "Terrible Three" was out.

It had been a glorious afternoon in late summer. It had tempted the chums of the Shell to extend a long ramble. Manners had brought his camera, and had secured some very satisfactory snaps with great satisfaction to himself. All was merry and bright, but for the circumstances that juniors had to answer to their names at calling-over in the House at a fixed time, and that they had left it rather late. So, rather fatigued as they were, they stepped out briskly: but with little hope of getting in before Mr. Railton called their names in hall.

True, they were only a mile from the school, as the crow flies. But they could not follow the example of the crow, as they were on the wrong side of the river Ryll. Had they been on the other side, they could have trotted by short cuts. But there was no short cut across a wide and gleaming stream, which barred them off from St. Jim's.

They had either to walk down to Rylcombe to cross the bridge, or walk up to the spot opposite the school boat-house, and yell across for some fellow to fetch them over. They had decided on the latter. Every minute they hoped to see some St. Jim's fellow in a boat on the Ryll, who would have given them a lift across. But their luck was out: no doubt because it was so near calling-over, and fellows who had been out in boats had gone in.

It looked as if they were going to be late, which meant lines from Railton, or—awful thought!—Extra School on the next half-holiday. Which was a contingency not to be thought of calmly: for next Wednesday was the day of the return match with Carcroft School, and Tom Merry had to go over to Carcroft with the junior team, though the skies fell.

So when Monty Lowther came to a halt with the announcement "Here's luck," his two friends stopped, reluctantly and impatiently, and gave him looks of somewhat disgruntled inquiry.

"Come on, Monty!" said Tom. "We're late already."

"Put it on!" said Manners.

"I said here's luck!" answered Monty Lowther. "Look at that canoe!" Once across, and we can cut in on time. What?"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, doubtfully.

"Um!" said Manners, still more doubtfully.

A little canoe was tied up to a willow on the bank. A double-bladed paddle lay in it. No doubt it had an owner, but there was no sign of that owner to be seen.

The spot where the Shell fellows had halted was a green, grassy meadow, sloping down to the river. There was no building in sight save a little bungalow in the far corner of the meadow: one of the little holiday bungalows not uncommon in rural spots. Probably the canoe belonged to the dweller in the bungalow.

Borrowing a craft that belonged to some person or persons unknown was not an idea that would have occurred to Tom Merry or Manners. Perhaps Monty Lowther's brain was more active. Perhaps it was a little too active! At any rate, he came to a halt and pointed to the canoe, evidently quite satisfied with the idea of using it to ferry across the Ryll.

"Lots of time to get in, if we cut across that dashed river," said Lowther. "We'll hit St. Jim's before the bell rings."

"Somebody might hit us, if he caught us bagging his canoe," remarked Manners, dryly.

Monty glanced round.

"Nobody about," he said. "Why not?"

"Rot!" said Tom, decidedly. "We can't bag a man's canoe without leave. Anyhow it wouldn't take more than one of us."

"Two could cram in," said Monty Lowther. "Land one on the other side, and the other comes back for the last passenger. What?"

"Rotten idea," said Manners. Perhaps Harry Manners had rather stricter ideas on the subject of the rights of property than his more volatile chum. "Let's cut on, and yell across to the boat-house—"

"The fellows will all be gone in—"

"The boat-keeper will be there. Come on!"

"We shall be late."

"Later still if we stay here chattering instead of pushing on. We want to use our legs, not our chins."

"Well, we shouldn't be so jolly late, if you hadn't kept on stopping with that dashed camera—"

"Look here—"

"Peace, my infants, peace!" interposed Tom Merry. "Look here, Monty, we can't bag a man's canoe just like that—"

"Where's the harm?" demanded Lowther. "Think it will hurt the thing to run it across the water!"

"No, of course not. But—"

"Blow your butts! Like to get Extra School on Wednesday for cutting roll, and stand out of the Carcroft match, like Gussy did last time?"

Tom Merry glanced round.

"Might cut across to that bung, and if it belongs there, ask leave," he suggested. "Man might give us leave—"

"And suppose he didn't?"

"Well, if he didn't, we couldn't borrow his canoe—"

"Exactly! So we won't chance it! Look here, Jump in and paddle Manners across, and come back for me," said Lowther. "We could do it in a few minutes—better than standing here jawing."

"Better not," said Manners, shaking his head.

"Well, I'm in the team for Carcroft—I'm not risking Extra School on Wednesday. I'm going."



"You can't leave a man's canoe on the wrong side of the river, Monty!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Have a little sense."

"He will get it back all right," said Monty Lowther, cheerfully. "I suppose he will be able to look across and see it, won't he? He can walk round by the bridge and paddle it home, can't he? If he's holiday-making here, he's got lots of time, and we haven't."

"Well, of all the nerve—!" said Manners.

"Monty, old man—!" urged Tom.

"Rot!" said Monty Lowther, decisively. "Only holiday-makers take that bungalow, and a holiday-maker can take a walk, in this beautiful rural scenery. I'm going, anyway."

Lowther, evidently, had made up his mind. He stepped towards the canoe, and cast loose the painter. Then he gave his chums a last inquiring look.

"Coming?" he asked.

Tom Merry and Harry Manners exchanged glances.

If they borrowed that canoe to cut across the Ryll, it had, evidently, to be left on the further side. Possibly no great harm would be done: but it was much too lawless a proceeding for Tom Manners—if left to their own devices. But the fact that Monty Lowther had made up his rather thoughtless mind left them little choice. Monty was thinking chiefly of the awful possibility of Extra on Wednesday, and the discovery of the little canoe under the willows seemed to him a windfall. Manners shook his head again: but Tom Merry gave a reluctant nod.

"You're a silly ass, Monty—!" he said.

"Thanks! Hopping in?"

"You can't do it," said Manners. "When the man misses his canoe—"

"Won't he see it across the water?"

"Yes, but—"

"Can't he walk round by the bridge and collect it?"

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, wash out the buts! I'm not going to be doing French verbs on Wednesday instead of playing cricket at Carcroft, I know that. Coming or not?"

"If you're set on it—!" said Tom, at last.

"Set like glue!"

"Oh, all right, then! Hold it while we get in! Come on, Manners—this Co. sinks or swims together," said Tom.

"One fool makes many," grunted Manners.

"Buck up and don't jaw," advised Lowther. "Might have been across by this time, if you'd given your chin a rest. Hop in, and I'll hold the dashed thing—room for two if you cram a bit."

The canoe was built for one man: and it was rather a "cram" for two schoolboys. However, Monty Lowther held it steady, while Manners stepped in rather gingerly, and Tom followed him, picking up the paddle. Monty gave them a shove off, almost capsizing the light little craft.

"Buck up," he said, "chuck Manners out and come back for me, Tom! Paddle away, and make it snappy."

Tom Merry nodded, and plied the canoe. The canoe shot out across the Ryll's shining waters, the paddle flashing in the sunset. Monty Lowther stood on the bank watching it.

Tom lost no time. What would happen, if the owner of the canoe turned up during the transit, he could hardly imagine. Now that he was committed to the venture, he was extremely anxious to get it over. The canoe crossed the shining water swiftly.

It bumped on the opposite bank, and Manners scrambled out, on to the tow-path. Tom Merry immediately shoved off again, to return for Monty Lowther. Manners waited on the tow-path. Monty Lowther waved an encouraging hand to Tom Merry, as he came paddling back.

"Buck up!" he called out. "Put it on! We want to get clear of this before somebody turns up and wants to know what the dickens we're doing with his canoe. Put your beef into it, old man, and—Oh, my hat!"

Monty Lowther broke off, suddenly, as a hand fell on his shoulder from behind, and a sharp and angry voice rapped out:

"You young rascal!"

Monty had been watching the canoe. Having, naturally, no eyes in the back of his head, he had not seen a stout gentleman emerge from the bungalow in the meadow, and come tramping, or rather waddling, down to the bank. That stout gentleman seemed to grow quite excited at what he saw—which, perhaps, was not surprising. He grabbed Monty Lowther by the shoulder, and Monty spun round in dismay, and stared at a red and angry face.

"Oh!" gasped Lowther.

"Oh!" repeated Tom Merry, staring from the canoe.

"Oh!" murmured Manners, on the opposite bank.

Tom, in the canoe, Manners, on the other bank, were out of reach of the angry owner of the canoe. Monty Lowther was not only within reach, but in his grasp. And as he stared at that red, wrathful face, and at a large, plump hand raised to smack his head, it dawned on Monty that it was not, after all, so very lucky that he had spotted that canoe and decided to borrow it.

Smack!

The large, plump hand descended, and the yell that Monty Lowther uttered, as it contacted his hapless head, woke almost every echo in the woods and meadows along the rippling Ryll.

### 3

## On Time !

SMACK!  
"Oh!"

Smack!  
"Wow!"  
Smack!

"Stoppit!" roared Monty Lowther, struggling frantically. "You fat old ass, stoppit! I'll hack your shins! Yaroooh!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Tom Merry.

Manners, on the further bank, shrugged his shoulders. It was, in Manners' opinion, just what might have been expected. A man who found a parcel of schoolboys larking about with his canoe on the river could hardly be expected to take it smilingly. Monty had asked for it, and he was getting it!

There was no doubt at all that he was getting it! If the plump gentleman had been angry already, calling him a fat old ass had no diminishing effect on his wrath. Rather it intensified it.

He smacked and smacked at Monty's head.

"You young rascal! I'll teach you to play about with my canoe!" he spluttered. "Take that, and that, and that—Oh!"

Monty Lowther had to "take" them—and his head was fairly singing with smacks. In sheer desperation he hooked the fat gentleman's leg, and tipped him over in the grass.

There was a heavy bump as the plump gentleman sat on Sussex. He had to let go, as he sat down, and Monty Lowther jumped actively away out of reach.

"Ooooh!" spluttered the fat gentleman. "By Gad! I—I—I'll—ooooogh!" He heaved and scrambled to his feet.

Monty Lowther backed warily away.

"Keep your paws to yourself," he snapped. Five or six hefty smacks on his head had deteriorated Monty's usually sunny temper. He had no politeness to waste on the smacker. "You old ass! We're not damaging your silly canoe—only borrowing it to get across—Keep off!"

He dodged a rush.

Five or six smacks did not seem to have satisfied the canoe-owner. Monty was more than satisfied with that number. Luckily, he was easily able to dodge the stout gentleman. The red-faced man had too much weight to carry to be able to keep his end up in a dodging contest with an active schoolboy.

Monty dodged and hopped and jumped like a kangaroo, the stout one labouring after him rather like a hippopotamus. He came to a breathless halt after a minute or two of it, Monty still out of reach.

"Oooogh!" he gasped. "I—I—I'll—you young hooligans!"

"Oh, pack it up!" snapped Lowther.

"Larking about with my canoe—I come down to push out in my canoe, and find a gang of young rascals larking about with it—"

"All the better for you," retorted Lowther. "You'd sink it! You don't want a canoe—you want a barge! Or a battleship!"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped the stout man: and he made another breathless rush at Monty Lowther, who skipped out of the way.

"Shut up, Monty," called out Tom Merry, from the canoe.

The stout one, giving up Lowther as inaccessible, turned his attention to Tom. He gave him a glare that a gorgon might have envied.

"Bring that canoe here at once!" he roared. "Do you hear me, you young ruffian? Give me that canoe."

"Coming!" answered Tom. "Sorry we borrowed it, but you see—"

"Steer clear, Tom," called out Lowther. "Do you want that old ass to smack your silly head, you chump?"



"Hand over that canoe!" roared the stout gentleman. He waddled to the very edge of the bank to receive it. It was only too clear what he was going to do as soon as Tom was within reach. The head-smacking process was scheduled to recommence with promptness and despatch.

But Tom was wary.

Certainly, he was sorry that the canoe had been borrowed, especially as the owner had cut up so very rusty about it. He could have kicked his unthinking chum for that bright idea. All the same, he did not want his head smacked. He was not going within reach of those large, plump hands if he could help it.

He paddled up the river, well off the bank, to land at a safe distance. Monty Lowther kept pace with him on shore.

"Hi! Stop! Come back here!" roared the red-faced man.

Tom was not likely to heed that injunction.

"By gad! I—I—I'll—!" spluttered the stout man, and he came waddling up the bank, to meet Tom when he landed.

But he had little chance of putting on the necessary speed. Tom, at a safe distance ahead, ran the canoe to the grassy bank, where Monty Lowther was ready for him.

Lowther grasped at the canoe as it came within reach.

"Don't get out!" he panted.

"Fathead!" hooted Tom. "Get out of the way, you ass! Hook it!"

"We're using this canoe—"

"Oh, you ass! Do you want to borrow a man's canoe, under his nose, with him yelling after us?" howled Tom.

"Yes, I jolly well do. Think I'm going to have my head smacked for nothing?" howled back Lowther.

"It wasn't for nothing—you asked for it—"

"I'm going over in that canoe."

"You're not, you ass! Look here—oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry, as Monty Lowther settled the

matter by plunging headlong into the canoe, sending it spinning out from the bank with the impetus of his plunge.

"Look out!" yelled Manners, from the other bank.

"Monty, you ass—!"

"Tom, you fathead—"

The canoe rocked wildly on the Ryll, shipping water, and very nearly capsizing. But it was well out of reach when the stout gentleman came puffing and blowing to the spot the juniors had left behind.

He shook a plump fist at them.

"Bring that canoe back!" he roared.

"Come and fetch it!" roared back Monty Lowther.

"Look here, Monty—!" gasped Tom.

"Oh, pack it up! Paddle across, and don't waste time."

"We can't—!"

"I can, if you can't! Gimme that paddle."

Lowther hooked the paddle from Tom's hand.

"You silly owl!" roared Tom. "I tell you the man's got to have his canoe—"

"He can fetch it back, if he likes! Or he can go and eat coke! Or chop chips! Shut up!"

Lowther paddled. Tom Merry gave him a glare almost as gorgonic as that of the stout gentleman. But neither glare had any effect on Monty Lowther. His head was singing from repeated smacks, and so far from thinking of handing over the canoe, he was quite pleased with the idea of giving the stout man a long walk to get it back. He paddled across the Ryll unheeding: and as a struggle for the paddle would certainly have capsized the canoe, and left both the juniors plunging into deep water, Tom had to let him have his way.

The stout gentleman on the bank seemed to erupt like Vesuvius as he saw his canoe careering across the river. He roared, he yelled, he spluttered, he brandished fat fists, and almost danced in the grass, in his fury. But beyond those physical jerks, he could do nothing more.

"You young villains! Come back! Bring that

canoe here! If I could swim I'd come after you, by gad! Bring back that canoe!"

His voice followed the St. Jim's juniors across the Ryll. Luckily for them, he could not follow his voice! He was left brandishing fat fists and roaring, as Monty Lowther paddled the canoe in to the other bank.

"You mad ass!" Manners greeted, as Lowther jumped ashore.

"Oh, rats!" snapped Lowther.

"You potty fathead!" gasped Tom Merry, as he scrambled out of the canoe. "You ought to be jolly well kicked."

"We're across!" said Lowther. He rubbed his head. "If that old elephant had smacked your head as he did mine—"

"Serves you jolly well right!"

"And then some," said Manners.

"Oh, chuck it," growled Lowther. "We're in time for call-over, if we put it on. Are you fellows going to stand there slanging a chap, or are you coming?"

"We've got to make the canoe safe—"

"Oh, let it rip! That old ass can chase it down the river, as a change from smacking a fellow's head."

"Fathead!"

Tom Merry secured the canoe. The stout man watched them from across the Ryll, still brandishing fat fists. He could see that his canoe was safe: but the prospect of walking a mile, round by Rylcombe Bridge, to recover it, did not seem to comfort him.

However, the Terrible Three were done with him now, and with his canoe. They cut off by a track through Rylcombe Wood, the shortest cut to St. Jim's, and put it on. They needed all their breath for the run, so Tom and Manners were unable to tell Monty Lowther what they thought of him. No doubt Monty knew without being told.

Three breathless juniors arrived at St. Jim's just as Taggles was coming down to close the gates. They joined the crowd heading for hall for calling-over. They were on time, at all events: and the dread possibility of Extra on Wednesday faded out.

"Bai Jove! You fellows look wathah wed," remarked D'Arcy of the Fourth, as they went into hall, in the School House. "What have you been up to?"

"Snuff!" answered Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Looking for trouble, and finding it," said Manners. "If a stout old gent trickles in to-morrow asking for three fellows to be whopped, we shall be the chaps he wants."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Let's hope he won't," said Tom. "You'll jolly well get kicked, as well as whopped, if he does, Monty."

"Bow-wow!" said Monty.

They went to their places, and answered "adsum," when Mr. Railton called the names. They were on time for roll, at any rate: and they could only hope that no stout old gent would trickle in inquiring after fellows who had borrowed his canoe.

## 4

### Cricket!

"GUSSY, old man—"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Just a minute—"

"I am afwaid that I have not a minute to spare, Wally! Weally, you should not butt in when cwicket is goin' on."

"I'm bottled—"

"Now, then, Gussy!" roared Jack Blake, "are you going to bat, or are you going to stand there till lock-ups chewing the rag with that silly fag?"

"Pway cut off, Wally—"

"I shall get into an awful row with old Selby—look

here, it's only nets, and you can hike along to the nets any old time," said D'Arcy minor. "Come up to the study and give a man a hand, see? Selby's got to have it by seven."

It was after class on Monday. Tom Merry and Co. were at the nets. It was, as Wally of the Third remarked, "only nets." But it was a little more important than Wally of the Third seemed to suppose. With the Carcroft match due on Wednesday, Tom Merry was keeping his men up to the mark. St. Jim's had to send the best junior team they could over to Carcroft: and as it happened, one of the best men in the team was away: Talbot of the Shell having gone home on leave; and as misfortunes never come singly, Figgins of the New House had a crooked wrist and was out of it. Whatever might be Wally's worries with his form-master, they certainly could not weigh much in the balance against the claims of cricket. It really was a most injudicious and inauspicious moment for Wally to bother his long-suffering major.

"Well, pewwaps—!" began Arthur Augustus, hesitating. It was one of Gussy's amiable weaknesses that he could never say "No": least of all to his young brother.

But if Gussy couldn't, other fellows could! Tom Merry caught the swell of St. Jim's by the shoulder.

"Get a move on," he said.

"The fact is, Tom Mewwy—"

"Fatty Wynn's waiting for you! Get to the wicket, fathead."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!"

"Look here—!" said Wally.

"Wally seems to be in a wow with his beak, Tom Mewwy," explained Arthur Augustus. "He has some wotten twanslation to do—"

"Cut off and get on with it, Wally," said Tom. "You ought to know better than to butt in here."

"You see, old Selby—!" began Wally.

"Bother old Selby! Come on, D'Arcy."

"Pway do not dwag at a fellow's arm like that, Tom Mewwy. Go up to the study, Wally, and I will come up as soon as I am thwough," said Arthur Augustus.

Wally grunted. With Mr. Selby's frowning brow in his mind's eye, and a translation from Eutropius hanging over his head, he was rather disposed to consider his own affairs a little more urgent than junior cricket practice, or even junior cricket matches.

However, there was no help for it: Tom Merry's word was law on the cricket ground: and Arthur Augustus took his gleaming bat to the wicket. Fatty Wynn, of the New House, the best junior bowler at St. Jim's, was waiting for him: and Tom, with two of his best bats unavailable on Wednesday, was anxious to see how Arthur Augustus would stand up to it. If he could stand up to Fatty's bowling, he could stand up to anything they were likely to produce at Carcroft—at all events the junior captain hoped so. Spots of bother in the Third Form hardly mattered in comparison.

Wally of the Third stood looking on for a few minutes, and then strolled away with his hands in his pockets, and a frown on his brow. Possibly it occurred to him to get on with that troublesome translation unaided by his major. If so, that idea was banished from his mind when he fell in with his friends, Levison minor and Reggie Manners and Curly Gibson, in the quad: for Reggie Manners was the happy possessor of half-a-crown, which was to be expended in ginger-pop; and it was hardly to be expected that Wally would stand out of that on account of a translation which, after all, his major could do for him in time for Mr. Selby.

Nobody on the cricket ground gave the fag a further thought, not even Arthur Augustus, affectionate and dutiful major as he was. Cricket was cricket: and lesser things were dismissed from mind. And indeed Arthur Augustus, at the wicket, was worth watching. With all his elegant ways, the swell of St. Jim's was one of the best bats in the School House, and at the moment he was at the top of his form. On the occasion of the last match with Carcroft, Arthur Augustus had unfortunately been in "Extra," and unable to play; and he had been seriously missed from the side, though

St. Jim's had pulled off a win. On the present occasion, with Talbot and Figgins unavailable, D'Arcy was wanted more than ever, and he was wanted at the very top of his form: and Tom Merry, watching him, was delighted to see that that was just where he was.

Fatty Wynn sent down some quite deadly bowling. But Arthur Augustus disposed of it with ease and grace, and his sticks never seemed in danger.

"By gum!" remarked Tom, to Manners and Lowther, "Gussy will be a rod in pickle for Carcroft on Wednesday. Just look at him!"

"A thing of beauty and a joy for ever!" agreed Monty Lowther. "Let's hope that he won't land himself in Extra again."

Tom gave quite a jump.

"If he does, I'll lynch him before we go over to Carcroft," he said. "But even Gussy wouldn't be such an ass."

"Fatty can't touch his wicket," remarked Manners.

"Not in his jolly old lifetime," chuckled Tom, "and if Fatty can't, they won't find it easy at Carcroft. Fatty's the best bowler in the Lower School here."

"Bar one!" drawled a voice behind the chums of the Shell: and Tom glanced round at Cardew of the Fourth, who had just arrived with his friends, Levison and Clive.

"Bar none!" said Tom, rather shortly.

"Sez you!" smiled Cardew. "Will you play me at Carcroft on Wednesday if I bag that wicket?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes," he answered at once. "I haven't decided yet whom to put in in Figgy's place! If you're such a bowler, in you go."

"Thanks!" said Cardew. "Chuck that ball over, Kerr."

Kerr had just fielded the ball, to return to Fatty Wynn. He looked round, and Tom signed to him to send it to Cardew. Kerr whizzed it over like a shot, and Cardew, who had his hands in the pockets of his flannel bags, did not look like catching it. But a hand



flashed out like lightning and captured the whizzing ball.

"Good man!" said Tom. "Get on with it."

Cardew strolled on in Fatty Wynn's place. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy glanced at him and smiled. He did not think that he was in much danger from Cardew, after going through the ordeal with David Llewellyn Wynn satisfactorily. But Cardew was a good bowler, and there was a very determined gleam in his eyes now. He was going to down that wicket, if he could.

The first ball was a slow, and Arthur Augustus knocked it away. Digby fielded it, and returned it to the bowler, who caught it with his left hand, apparently carelessly—Ralph Reckness Cardew liked to give his performances an air of nonchalant carelessness. He transferred it to his right, took a little run, and bowled again: and this time the ball came down like a bullet from a rifle.

But it did not catch Arthur Augustus napping. There was a clack of willow meeting leather, and the ball dropped dead on the pitch.

Cardew compressed his lips.

Monty Lowther winked at Tom, who smiled. Cardew of the Fourth was not a good loser. He had gone on to bowl with the idea of out-classing Fatty Wynn: but brilliant as he was at his best, he was not in point of fact the equal of the Welsh junior.

Four more balls Cardew sent down, making a full over: and into each of them he put all he knew. It was good bowling, and Tom Merry nodded approval as he watched it. But it was not good enough for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who dealt with it as he had dealt with Fatty Wynn's, and whose wicket remained still intact.

"Here you are!" called out Herries, who had fielded the ball.

Cardew did not heed him. He shoved his hands into his pockets, and walked off. Levison called to him, but he did not turn his head: and Sidney Clive shrugged his shoulders. Monty Lowther winked again.

"Anybody got his back up because his fireworks

didn't come off?" he inquired, and some of the cricketers laughed.

Arthur Augustus came away from the wicket.

"Tired?" asked Tom.

Arthur Augustus raised his noble eyebrows.

"Certainly not, Tom Mewwy! I could go on till lock-ups. But my minah is waitin' for me in my study—"

"Blow your minor!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"O.K.," said Tom. "You're in great form, Gussy, and worth your weight in gold on Wednesday. Mind you keep it up."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And don't get into Extra, as you did last time, or we'll boil you in oil, and strew the churchyard with your hungry bones, before we go over to Carcroft!" said Monty Lowther.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus, cheerfully: and he left the ground, leaving the other fellows to carry on, and ambled away gracefully to the School House—the service of his minor at last.

## 5

### Quick Work!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY

glanced round Study No. 6 in surprise. It was nearly an hour since he had bidden his minor wait for him there, and he had expected to find Wally in the study in an impatient state.

But the study was vacant when he came into it. Either Wally had tired of waiting and gone, or he had not yet arrived.

"The young ass!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

He frowned. He had put in some hard batting, but

he would gladly have gone on longer, had he not remembered that his minor was waiting for him in the study. And his minor wasn't.

He was tempted to go back to the nets, and leave Wally of the Third to his own devices. But brotherly affection, and concern for the scamp of the Third Form, prevailed. Wally was, apparently in a spot of trouble with his form-master, as he had been on Saturday: and it was only too probable that he had not yet touched, on Monday, that translation which had been due on Saturday—and that was not the kind of thing that would do for Mr. Selby.

Arthur Augustus looked out of the study doorway. He called to a fat junior who was loafing in the passage.

"Seen my minah, Twimble?"

Baggy Trimble looked round.

"No, and don't want to," he answered, politely. Baggy, evidently, was not interested.

"Bothah!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he withdrew into the study again.

Wally had not come up. Arthur Augustus wondered whether he might have done that translation, after all, on his own. But it did not seem probable: and a few moments later he had conclusive evidence on the subject, in the shape of a little volume that lay on the table, and caught his noble eye. It was the book of Eutropius, as used in the Third Form, and it was open, with a heavy pencil-mark scored round the passage beginning "*Dum bellum in Numidia contra Jugurtham.*"

Evidently that was Wally's book, and he had left it in Study No. 6, before coming down to the cricket field in search of his major.

Arthur Augustus frowned at it.

He was more than willing to help a young brother who was "bottled." Often and often he lent Wally a helping hand. Arthur Augustus was no whale at Latin, but he was, of course, a good deal ahead of his young brother in a lower form, and very useful to a thoughtless young scamp who was liable to leave everything

till the last moment—or a little later! But, obviously, he could not help Wally through that troublesome translation unless Wally was present—and Wally was not present.

"Bothah!" repeated Arthur Augustus.

Selby, it was plain, wanted that translation. It seemed that he had let D'Arcy minor off on Saturday: but it was extremely improbable that he would let him off a second time. Wally had certainly seemed worried about it when he tackled his major at the nets, though it also seemed that he had not given it much thought since then.

It was really exasperating. There was Arthur Augustus, prepared to go through that passage in Eutropius with Wally—but there was no Wally! And Wally had said that the translation was due in Selby's study at seven.

"Bothah!" said Arthur Augustus, for the third time.

He sat down at the table at last, and took pen and paper.

His custom was, when he helped his minor with Latin, to go through it with him, construing together. Wally, probably, would have preferred the easier method of Gussy doing the entire translation, and handing it to him to copy out. But that method was not permitted, either by the rules, or by Gussy's conscience. A fellow could help another with his work, but was certainly not permitted to do it for him and let the fellow palm it off as his own. Apart from infraction of the rules, it savoured of deception, and was not good enough for Arthur Augustus. But time pressed, and Arthur Augustus decided to get the translation ready, and go through it with Wally when the fag did at last turn up.

Perhaps it was just as well that he so decided: for Eutropius, though not presenting so many difficulties to Gussy as to his minor, was not easy going for him: and it was a good twenty minutes before he had that passage rendered into English.

However, it was finished at last, and Arthur Augustus glanced at the study clock. It indicated ten minutes to seven.

"Oh, the young ass!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Selby had fixed seven o'clock for the delivery of that paper. Wally had said so. Yet now, within ten minutes of time, with a licking hanging over his head, the scamp of the Third had not turned up.

Arthur Augustus was debating in his mind whether to go in search of him, when there was a patter of running feet in the passage.

A breathless fag burst into Study No. 6.

"Oh! Here you are!" gasped Wally.

"You young ass—!"

"No time for jaw," said Wally, breathlessly. "I didn't notice the time—"

"You ought to have noticed the time, Wally! It is an hour since I told you to wait for me in the study—"

"How could I know how long you'd be?" demanded Wally. "Young Manners of my form was standing ginger-pop, and I wasn't going to be left out—"

"I pwesume that you have not been scoffin' gingah-pop all this time, Wally."

"Well, the fellows were larkng about," admitted Wally. "I tell you I didn't notice the time. It's all your fault for not coming when I asked you. I left the book here—"

"I could not turn down the cwicket, Wally."

"Well, I couldn't kick my heels in this study while you were handing out catches at the nets—"

"You cheeky young wascal, I did not hand out any catches—"

"Never mind whether you did or not. Now we're here let's get on—goodness knows how we shall push it through before seven. Selby said seven. He will be a tiger if I don't take it in, after letting me off on Saturday. You know Selby! He jawed me on Saturday—"

"It would have served you wight if he had whopped you, Wally, as you were goin' to thwow a jug of ink ovah his nappah if I had not stopped you—"

"Got those bags cleaned yet?" grinned Wally.

"Weally, you young wuffian—"

"Don't waste time chinning. We've got to push

through! Here's the book—I've marked the passage—Oh!" Wally stared at the translation on the table. "You've done it, old chap! Oh, you're a good sort, Gussy! Time enough now—I shall only have to copy it out—"

"Nothin' of the kind," said Arthur Augustus, severely. "I cannot do the twanslation for you, Wally. We must go thwough it togethah, but it will come much easiah now that I have worked it out, and we may still be in time—"

"May!" mimicked Wally. "'May' won't do! I've got to be in time, or take the thickest licking ever handed out in the Third. I've just got time to copy it out in my fist—"

"That will not do, Wally! You can't take a twanslation to your beak without knowin' a word about it. I can help you, but I cannot give you a twanslation to pull your form-master's leg—"

"Don't jaw, old chap!"

Wally sat down in Arthur Augustus's chair, grabbed a pen and a sheet of paper, and started copying out the translation.

Arthur Augustus's brow grew stern.

"I tell you, Wally, that that will not do!" he exclaimed. "It would be pwactically a deception if you handed that papah to Mr. Selby as your own, without havin' gone thwough it and worked it out—"

Scratch! scratch! scratch!

Wally's pen raced over the paper. Perhaps, if he had been a little less pressed for time, Gussy's conscientious scruples would have weighed with him. But it was already five minutes to seven: and Wally was thinking chiefly of the cane in Mr. Selby's study.

"I wepeat, Wally, that this will not do!"

"Shut up, old chap!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Quiet!"

Scratch! scratch! scratch!

Arthur Augustus stood looking at his minor, as the pen raced, and scratched, and scrawled. It was true that Wally had barely time to copy out the paper and

get it down to Selby's study. Arthur Augustus debated in his noble mind whether he could, for once, stretch a point: he certainly did not want his minor "whopped" in Selby's study. But he shook his head. Really and truly he could not let Wally hand over a translation that was not his own, and of which he understood hardly a word.

"Wally, deah boy, be weasonable," he said, gently. "It is vewy stwictly against the wules for a chap to do anothah chap's papah for him."

Scratch! scratch! scratch!

"There would be a wow if it came out, Wally."

Scratch scratch!

"And it is not wight," said Arthur Augustus. "It is not at all the wight and pwopah thing to do, Wally."

Scratch!

"We must go thwough that twanslation, Wally, and you must work out the Latin," said Arthur Augustus, firmly. "You must at least have a shot at it. I insist upon it, Wally, even if you are late for Selby. You need not have been late if you had come up soonah. Now, Wally—!"

Scratch!

"Do you heah me, Wally?"

If Wally heard, he heeded not. His pen did not pause for a second. He gave his major no attention whatever, till the last line was written. Then he threw down the pen, and jumped up.

"That's done!" he gasped. "Just in time! There goes seven."

A chime came from the direction of the clock-tower.

"Just done it!" gasped Wally. "I'll cut down—"

"I wefuse to allow you to do anythin' of the kind, Wally! You must wisk it with Selby—"

"Oh, don't be an ass—!"

"You must go thwough the Latin at least once—"

"Rats!"

Wally stretched out his hand to the scrawled sheet on the table. Arthur Augustus caught him by the shoulder, and twirled him away.

"I wepeat, Wally—"



"Leggo, you ass!" roared Wally. "Do you want me to be licked in old Selby's study? Don't play the goat!"

"I wepeat—"

"There goes seven!" shrieked Wally. "Leggo!"

"I wepeat—!—Oh, cwikey! You young wuffian! Wow!"

Arthur Augustus staggered, as his minor gave him a sudden shove in his waistcoat. The next moment he was grasping at Wally again. But a moment was enough for the scamp of the Third. He snatched up the paper from the table and bolted out of the study.

"Wally!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He jumped to the door. He had a moment's glimpse of Wally, cutting along at top speed, with a paper crumpled in his hand. Then the fag vanished down the staircase.

"Bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

Wally was gone!

He turned back into the study, with a frowning brow. It could not be helped now, and Arthur Augustus had to make up his mind to it. But as his glance fell on the study table, D'Arcy gave a jump, or rather a bound.

"Oh, cwumbs!" he gasped.

He gazed at a paper on the table in horror. It was a paper written in a scrawling, untidy hand. He had expected to see his own translation there, which Wally had copied. But it was Wally's copy that lay there. In his haste the fag had snatched up the wrong paper!

"Oh, scissahs!" breather Arthur Augustus.

Wally had left his copy in Study No. 6. He had bolted off to Mr. Selby's study with the translation written in his elder brother's elegant hand. He had not looked at it, in his haste: and if he did not look at it before he arrived in his form-master's study—!

"Bai Jove!" breather Arthur Augustus. "The young ass! There will be a wow about this!"

Exactly what would happen, if and when Wally handed the wrong paper to Mr. Selby, he did not know. But he knew that something would happen, and that it would be something emphatic! In fact, there was going to be a row!

## By Whose Hand?

MR. SELBY frowned.

"Come in!" he snapped.

Mr. Selby often snapped. Only too often there was a frown on his brow. He was not conscious of being bad-tempered, and certainly he never intended to be harsh or unjust. In the opinion of his form he was a Tartar. Possibly only a Tartar could have handled the Third. Tartar as perhaps he was, he had let D'Arcy minor off with a caution for the non-delivery of that translation on Saturday. Certainly he was not prepared to let him off again. Seven o'clock on Monday was the time limit: and if D'Arcy minor did not hand over that translation on time, the thunder was going to roll. Even Wally could not have contended that he had not had time to get it done. He had had ample leisure to translate that passage and a dozen more, if his youthful mind had not been occupied with other matters that seemed to him more urgent, or at least more interesting.

When seven sounded from the clock-tower, Mr. Selby's brow grew very grim indeed. But as the last stroke died away, there was a hurried patter of feet outside, and the frowning brow cleared a little. Mr. Selby was annoyed: but if that troublesome member of his form had turned up at the very last moment, with his task done, all was well. He snapped "Come in" as there was a tap at his door, and Wally of the Third entered, breathing in jerks after his race down the stairs, and with a sheet of paper crumpled in his hand.

Mr. Selby regarded him with a grim look. He did not approve of a boy rushing into his study, out of breath, at the latest possible moment. However, the

boy had come, and the paper in his hand indicated that he had done his task.

"Well?" rapped the master of the Third.

"Mum-mum-mum—!" gasped Wally. "Mum-my translation, sir."

"You should not have left it so very late, D'Arcy minor."

"Oh! Yes, sir! No, sir! I—"

"Neither should you appear in your form-master's study out of breath, as if you had been running a race."

"Oh! No, sir! Yes, sir! I—"

"However, you may hand it to me," said Mr. Selby.

Wally handed it, in great relief. He did not mind Selby's bark, so long as he did not bite!

Mr. Selby took the paper and frowned at it.

"You should keep your papers clean and neat, D'Arcy minor," he said. "You should not crumple them in this careless way."

"I—I picked it up in rather a hurry, sir—"

"You should not have been in a hurry."

"Yes, sir! I—I mean, no, sir."

"I trust," said Mr. Selby, "that your translation is satisfactory, D'Arcy minor."

"Yes, sir," said Wally, meekly. He had no doubt of that, as it had been done by a Fourth-form man, and he had only had to copy it out. "I—I think it's all right, sir."

"We shall see!" grunted Mr. Selby, and he smoothed out the crumpled sheet on his writing-table, to read it over.

Then he stared.

Wally, watching him, wondered, with an inward tremor, what was the matter. Only too plainly something was!

Selby stared at that paper with a fixed stare. Thunder gathered in his brow. Often had Selby looked thunderous: but never had Wally of the Third seen such thunder in his brow before. His eyes seemed to pop and glitter at that unlucky paper. Indeed, he seemed scarcely able to believe his eyes, for a moment or two.

"Upon my word!" articulated Mr. Selby.

Wally quaked.

Something was the matter! Had that ass Gussy made some awful bloomer in the translation—something too awfully bad even for a fag? Unless that was it, Wally could not begin to guess what it was.

For a long minute, the master of the St. Jim's Third had his eyes glued on that paper. Then he lifted them to Wally, with a look that made the hapless fag feel as if ice was slipping down his back.

"D'Arcy minor!" rumbled Mr. Selby.

"Yee-e-es, sir!" moaned Wally.

"You did not write this paper."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Wally.

"You dare to tell me that you wrote this translation, with your own hand?" thundered Mr. Selby.

"Yes, sir!" gasped the bewildered fag. Having no idea, so far, that he had snatched up the wrong paper in his major's study, he could not make head or tail of his form-master's question.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Selby. "This almost passes belief! Such deceit—such unscrupulous deceit—and such folly! Do you suppose that I am not acquainted with the handwriting of a boy in my own form, D'Arcy minor? Could you suppose for one moment that you could delude me into believing that this paper, written for you by another boy, was in your own hand?"

Wally very nearly fell down!

"But—but it is in my fist, sir—I—I mean my own hand!" he stammered. "I wrote every word of it." He was still thinking of the copy he had written, and almost wondered whether Selby was wandering in his mind.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Selby. "I will not listen to such untruthfulness. No doubt you supposed that I might put the paper aside without looking at it—otherwise, I cannot understand your folly, your stupidity, in attempting to palm off on me a paper written in a hand utterly unlike your own—"

"I—I—I—" Wally could only babble, in his be-

wildered amazement. "I—I—I don't understand, sir! I—I—"

Mr. Selby gave the paper on his table a thump.

"I know the hand in which this is written," he said. "I have seen it, though the boy who wrote it is not in my form. Your brother will be called to account for this, D'Arcy minor."

"Mum-mum-my brother, sir!" stuttered Wally.

"This paper, D'Arcy minor, is written in the hand of D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. Your brother has done your tack for you, and you have sought to palm it off on me as your own! You had not even the cunning, apparently, to copy it out in your own hand, as you might easily have done. I shall take this paper to Dr. Holmes, and your brother will answer for it to his head-master."

Something like the truth dawned on Wally's mind, at that. He leaned over Mr. Selby's table, and looked at the paper. Then all was clear.

"Oh, my only aunt Jane!" breathed Wally.

It was no wonder that that translation, written in the elegant hand of D'Arcy of the Fourth, had produced a thunderous effect on Mr. Selby. Wally knew now that, in his haste to escape Gussy's clutching hand, he had snatched up the wrong paper in Study No. 6, and bolted with it. He had not had time to look at it as he raced down to Selby's study—neither had he thought of doing so. Now he looked at it—too late!

The fat was in the fire now!

Mr. Selby rose to his feet. He was angry—intensely angry. But he was shocked, too! It looked to him, like a deliberate attempt at deception—and an insult to his intelligence, into the bargain: for certainly only a very dull-witted and unobservant man could have failed to note the difference in the handwriting.

He picked up the cane from his table. He pointed to the translation with it.

"D'Arcy minor! You did not write that paper!"

"Oh!" gasped Wally. "No, sir! I—I thought I had—I mean I thought it was my copy—I mean—"

"Your brother wrote it for you."

"Gussy was only helping me, sir," groaned Wally. "He never meant—"

"You brought that paper, written by your brother, here, in the hope that I should believe that you had written it."

"I—no—yes—I mean—"

"You fancied your form-master so dull, so unobservant, so stupid, in fact, that he would not notice that it was not in your hand!" said Mr. Selby, grimly.

"Oh! No! No!" panted Wally. "It wasn't that, sir—I—I never meant to bring that paper—I—I had a copy, but I brought that one by mistake—"

"That will do!" said Mr. Selby. "I blame you less for this than I blame your elder brother, D'Arcy minor—"

"It was all my fault, sir," groaned Wally. "I—I made him—I—I pestered him to help me, and—"

"As your elder, he knew much better than you how serious such a matter is. I shall cane you, D'Arcy minor! I shall take your brother's paper to the head-master, who will deal with a boy who is not in my form."

"If—if you please, sir—I—"

"Bend over that chair!"

"It—it wasn't Gussy's fault, sir—"

"I have told you to bend over that chair, D'Arcy minor."

"If you'd let me explain, sir—"

"Bend over at once!" Mr. Selby almost roared. "Upon my word! Do you dare stand there and bandy words with me, D'Arcy minor? Bend over that chair!"

Wally of the Third bent over the chair. To do him justice, he was thinking less of the whopping that was coming, than of the ghastly "row" in which he had landed his hapless major.

But he was soon fully occupied with the whopping! Mr. Selby gave him six: and he laid it on hard. No doubt he considered that it was a case that called for severity. At all events, he did not spare the rod! Wally of the Third had had a good many "whoppings" in his time, and probably deserved them, but this was

the toughest of his experience.

He almost crawled from the study, when Mr. Selby dismissed him at last. And then the master of the Third, with the offending translation in his hand, proceeded to Dr. Holmes's study, to lay that very serious matter before the head-master. Wally had paid the penalty—Arthur Augustus's was yet to come: and it was not likely to be long in coming.

## 7

### D'Arcy is Wanted!

“WHEREFORE this thusness?”

Monty Lowther asked that question.

“What's up?” inquired Jack Blake.

“Understudying a boiled owl?” asked Herries.

“Lost a pound note and found a threepenny bit?” asked Digby.

“Have a ginger-pop, and forget all about it!” said Tom Merry, laughing.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not reply. Neither did his clouded brow relax. A cheery crowd of juniors in flannels came into Study No. 6 and found him looking as if most, if not all, of the troubles of the universe had gathered on his slim shoulders. And their playful remarks seemed to afford him no comfort or consolation. He only gazed at them sadly.

“Brace up, old man,” said Blake, encouragingly. “We've brought in some ginger-pop! Through with your minor?”

“Oh! Yaas.”

“Had a bit of a struggle with jolly old Eutropius?” asked Blake. “Well, it's over now! Cheer up.”

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy showed no sign whatever of cheering up. He seemed plunged into the depths



of pessimism. Cheery company, and ginger-pop, seemed unable to relieve him.

"Look here, is anything the matter?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Anything serious?"

"Yaas."

"Oh!" said Tom. Faces in the study became grave. If Arthur Augustus was in serious trouble, the matter was altered. Though into what serious trouble he could have landed, since he had left them on the cricket field an hour ago, they could not imagine.

"Well, give it a name!" said Tom. "If you're in a spot, old chap, perhaps your pals can help."

Arthur Augustus shook his head sadly.

"Well, what is it, anyhow?" asked Blake.

"It is feahfully wotten, you fellows! I am expectin' to be called up to the Head ewevy minute."

"The Head!" exclaimed Manners. "What on earth for?"

Faces were graver still now. It was undoubtedly a serious matter to go up to the Head! It did not often happen to a fellow: but when it did, it was certainly serious.

"What the dickens have you been doing?" asked Lowther.

"It was that young ass Wally—!"

"Might have guessed it!" growled Blake. "That young scamp wants kicking."

"Weally, Blake—"

"But I don't see it," said Blake, puzzled. "Wally only wanted help with a translation, didn't he?—and you've helped him lots of times before."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"Oh, cough it up!" grunted Blake.

"You see, Wally wasn't heah, and I w'ote out the twanslation, and when he came up there was only just time for him to copy it out—"

"Look here," said Manners, "that's not the game, D'Arcy. If that's what the row's about, you've asked for it."

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Has it come out?" asked Tom.

"Yaas, wathah! You see, I insisted on the young ass goin' thwough the Latin, as he ought to have done, but he was in a huvwyy, and he copied out the papah without even lookin' at the Latin, and—and—"

"You ought to have stopped him," said Manners.

"Oh, pack that up, Manners," snapped Blake. "How did it come out, Gussy?"

"I twied to stop him, you see," explained Arthur Augustus. "I was goin' to make him go thwough the Latin, at the wisk of bein' late for Selby, but he snatched up the papah and bolted."

"Cheeky little scoundrel!" said Blake. "But if that's all, what are you looking like a boiled owl for? You're not to blame, if it's your jolly old conscience that's worrying you."

"He snatched up the w'ong papah, Blake."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Tom Merry. "You don't mean to say that the young ass took your paper to Selby in mistake for his own?"

"Yaas."

"He never looked at it—?" exclaimed Lowther.

"You see, I was gwabbin' at him, and he gwabbed it up and bolted like a wunaway horse! He had only time to get to Selby's study—the clock was stwikin'—and he thought he had the wight papah—"

"Great Christopher Columbus! Did he hand the translation written in your fist to Selby?" gasped Tom.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Phew!"

"I hope Selby gave him a jolly good licking!" growled Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Bet you he did!" said Herries.

"Poor old Wally has had six," said Arthur Augustus. "He looked vewy sick when he came up to tell me. I knew alweady, as I had missed the papah. But Wally told me that Selby has taken it to the Head! He thinks that Wally was twyin' to palm it off on him as his own."

"Well, so he was," said Manners. "At least, he was going to palm off a copy of it, which comes to the same thing."

"I suppose it does," said Arthur Augustus. "Mow-ally, I suppose it comes to much the same thing. But if he had taken his copy, it would have been all wight for me! Now it is all w'ong."

"By gum!" said Tom Merry. He ran his fingers through his curly hair, and wrinkled his brows. "You're in a spot, Gussy, and no mistake. But you can explain to the Head—he always gives a fellow a hearing. The Head wouldn't jump on a fellow without giving him a chance to speak."

"Selby would not listen to Wally—"

"The Head isn't Selby!" said Blake. "You'll have a chance to explain that you were only a silly ass—!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"After all, you only meant to help your minor with the Latin, and that's allowed," said Lowther. "We all help one another in the studies. If the Head thought you deliberately did the stuff for Wally, and tried to take Selby in with it, he would come down pretty heavy. But you can explain how it was."

Manners whistled.

"Looks a bit suspicious, the translation being written out in Gussy's hand," he said. "What the dickens did you write it out for, Gussy? You ought to have gone through the stuff with Wally, if you were helping him, and he ought to have written it as you worked it out."

"Yaas, I know: but Wally was late, and I thought I would get it all weady to save time when he came up—"

"Yes, that's the sort of ass you are!" remarked Blake. "You'd better tell the Head that you're the biggest ass inside St. Jim's, or outside."

"Wats!" Arthur Augustus fixed his eyeglass on Manners of the Shell. "What do you mean, Mannahs, by sayin' that it looks suspicious?"

"Just what I said," answered Manners.

"If that implies that you do not take my word on

the subject, Mannahs—" said Arthur Augustus, stiffly.

"Fathead!" said Manners. "I take your word all right, because I know what an ass you are: but does the Head?"

"Oh, he knows," said Blake. "Gussy's been up to him before, and he can't have missed that."

"Hardly," agreed Herries, thoughtfully.

"Weally, you fellows—!"

There was a tap at the half-open door. Toby, the House page, looked in. There was sudden silence. Evidently, the summons had come.

"Master D'Arcy to go to the Head's study," said Toby.

"Thank you, Toby!" said Arthur Augustus. "Is Mr. Selby with the Head, Toby?"

"Yes, sir!" Toby paused. "And both of 'em looking pretty solemn, sir!" he added, no doubt by way of a good-natured warning of what was to be expected.

Arthur Augustus rose from his chair.

"I had bettah go at once," he remarked. "It is fearfully wotten—goodness knows what the Head may think. Howeveh, if it is a floggin', I suppose I can stand it. I wealise that I have asked for it, and I shall waise no objections."

With that, Arthur Augustus walked out of Study No. 6, leaving the fellows there gazing at one another. It was quite possible that a flogging was looming ahead, and the matter was certainly serious, very serious indeed: but it was hard not to smile at Gussy's last remark. If the Head decided on a flogging, he was not likely to listen to any objections that Arthur Augustus might have raised! However, it appeared that the swell of St. Jim's had resolved not to raise any: so that question was not scheduled to arise!

"It will be all right!" said Blake, uneasily. "The Head isn't a Tartar like Selby and he's got heaps more sense! He's a wise old bird, and he will see just how it was! It will be all right for Gussy!"

And Gussy's anxious friends could only wait and hope that it would be all right for him!

## Let Off Lightly!

MR. HOLMES was looking severe, if not, as Toby had said, solemn, when Arthur Augustus entered his study. Evidently, the Head was taking this matter very seriously. Mr. Selby was standing by the table at which the head-master sat, and his brows were knitted in a deep frown. Only too clearly, Mr. Selby was taking the worst possible view of the matter: and no doubt he had imparted that view to the Head.

"You sent for me, sir?" said Arthur Augustus, meekly. He was quite calm, but he could not help his heart sinking a little as he entered the dreaded apartment. Kindly old gentleman as Dr. Holmes certainly was, few fellows were glad to hear a summons to see him in his study.

"Yes, D'Arcy," said the Head, in a deep voice. "Mr. Selby has placed a matter before me with which I must deal. It appears that your brother, who is in Mr. Selby's form, was given a translation, and that you did the work for him, giving him a paper which he attempted to palm off on his form-master as his own. Such an act of deception—!"

"No, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, firmly.

"What? What? You do not deny that the paper handed to Mr. Selby by your brother was written by you?" exclaimed the Head. "Mr. Selby is acquainted with your handwriting, and is positive on the point."

"There is no doubt whatever on that point, sir," said Mr. Selby, with a contemptuous glance at the swell of St. Jim's. "D'Arcy major's handwriting is quite well known to me. I have seen it on exercises in which

he has helped his brother in my form. He has assisted his brother very frequently."

"To that there is no objection, Mr. Selby."

"Not at all, sir! I mention it only to make it clear that I am well acquainted with the hand in which D'Arcy minor's paper was written."

"Precisely," said the Head. "It is clear that you wrote the paper, D'Arcy, and if you deny it—"

Arthur Augustus coloured hotly.

"I twust, sir, that I should not think of denyin' what is twue," he exclaimed. "Certainly I w'ote that papah."

"But you have said—"

"I did not mean Wally to take that papah to Mr. Selby as his own, sir! I nevah thought of such a thing. Neithah did my bwothah, sir! Of course, we should have known that Mr. Selby would see that it was not in Wally's hand, if we had thought of doin' such a thing."

"But your brother did take the paper to Mr. Selby, D'Arcy."

"He certainly did, sir," said Mr. Selby, "and he handed it to me and asserted that he had written it."

"That makes the matter clear," said the Head.

"Weally, sir—"

"If you have anything to say, D'Arcy, I will hear it," said Dr. Holmes, patiently. "But be brief."

"Yaas, sir! I was goin' to help Wally with his twanslation, which is always allowed, sir—"

"Yes, yes: but—"

"As Wally had gone off somewhah, I w'ote out the twanslation," continued Arthur Augustus. "I was goin' to go thwough the Latin with Wally when he came in, and as there was not much time, I thought I would have the twanslation weady, which would make it easier and save time. But that young ass—"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean my young bwothah, sir—!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I think you had better say what you mean, D'Arcy," said the Head, dryly.

"Oh! Yaas, sir! Wally wushed in almost at the last minute, and instead of goin' thwough the Latin, he copied out the papah, as he was afwaid of a wow with Mr. Selby if he was late, sir! It was vewy thoughtless of him, sir, but Wally is only a fag, and—"

"Never mind that! D'Arcy minor has been punished by his form-master, and is no longer concerned," said Dr. Holmes. "It is you with whom I have to deal, D'Arcy, and you need make no excuses for your brother."

"Vewy well, sir! I felt that I could not allow Wally to act in so unthinkin' a way, sir, not wealisin' how sewious it was, and I gwabbed him—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I—I took hold of his shouldah, sir, to keep him in the study, but the young ass—I—I mean my young bwothah, sir—he got away, snatched up the wong papah, and bolted with it. That is how it happened, sir."

"Oh!" said Dr. Holmes.

Mr. Selby did not speak.

"I think I understand," said the Head, slowly. "Your brother did not intend to hand your paper to his form-master, but his own copy of it, and in his haste he made a mistake with the papers."

"Pwecisely, sir."

"What do you think of this, Mr. Selby?"

"I am bound to say, sir, that I find it hard to credit such a tale. But in any case, if D'Arcy wrote out the translation for his brother, it is immaterial whether D'Arcy minor brought me the actual paper or a copy of it—in either case there was the same deception."

"That is certainly true," said the Head, "but D'Arcy states that he did not mean his brother to bring you his translation—either the paper itself or a copy of it—he made the translation merely as a help in working through the Latin with his brother."

"So he states, sir," said Mr. Selby, with a curl of the lip. "Any boy found taking part in such a deception might, I imagine, make the same statement."



"Weally, Mr. Selby—"

"Do not address me, D'Arcy," snapped the Third Form master. "You will address yourself to your head-master."

Dr. Holmes looked very thoughtful.

"It seems clear, Mr. Selby, that D'Arcy minor made a mistake with the two papers, and that there was no intention of palming off his brother's paper as his own," said the Head.

Mr. Selby gave a rather reluctant nod. He did not like being put into the position of having jumped to the worst possible conclusion. But the thing was clear enough, and he had to admit it.

"The matter is not, therefore, so serious as it seemed at first," said Dr. Holmes. "What we must ascertain now is, whether D'Arcy did the translation intending it to be copied out and taken to you as his brother's work."

"Obviously, sir, he did!" said Mr. Selby.

"Nothin' of the kind, sir—!" interrupted Arthur Augustus. "I assuah you, sir, that I should wegard such an action as a deception, of which I twust that I could nevah be guilty. Neithah would Wally, if he had stopped to think—"

"That will do, D'Arcy."

"Vewy well! I twust that Dr. Holmes will take my word on the subject, if you do not!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

"I certainly do not," said Mr. Selby, sourly. "It is perfectly clear to me that you wrote out the translation for your brother to bring me a copy of it, and that it was only by the accident of D'Arcy minor bringing me the wrong paper that your deception has come to light."

"Weally, sir—!"

"That is my opinion, sir," said Mr. Selby, looking at the Head, and taking no further notice of the swell of the Fourth. "D'Arcy's statement is quite incredible to me. On his own showing he allowed his brother to make a copy of the paper—with what intention, sir, but to deceive me?"

"Bai Jove! I—I—"

"I have no more to say, sir, excepting that my work in my form will become extremely onerous, if Fourth-Form boys are permitted to write out papers for Third-Form boys."

Dr. Holmes compressed his lips a little. Mr. Selby, in his annoyance and irritation, was allowing rather more acerbity to escape him, than was welcome to the august ears of his Chief.

"Certainly nothing of the kind would ever be permitted, Mr. Selby," said Dr. Holmes. "But I take the view that D'Arcy has acted in a thoughtless manner, and that what he has stated here is quite correct."

"Indeed, sir!" said Mr. Selby, breathing hard.

"Precisely," said the Head, calmly.

"Then may I ask, sir, why do you suppose D'Arcy allowed his minor to make a copy of his paper, if not to bring it to me as his own work?"

"Weally, sir, I did not intend—"

"Silence!"

"I wepeat that I nevah meant—"

"Say no more, D'Arcy," interrupted the Head. "I accept your statement, but you have acted very thoughtlessly, very carelessly, and caused Mr. Selby a great deal of trouble and waste of time. I believe what you have said: but you should certainly have taken care that your brother did not make a copy of your paper, knowing what he intended to do with it. You have acted thoughtlessly, carelessly, and foolishly, D'Arcy."

"Weally, sir—"

"A deliberate deception—!" said Mr. Selby, between closed lips.

"I do not take that view, Mr. Selby."

Mr. Selby almost trembled with anger. His resentment was all the deeper because he could not venture to express it to his Chief.

"Am I to understand, sir, that this boy, D'Arcy, is to escape punishment for what he has done?" he asked, in a choking voice. "A flogging—!"

"No such severe measures are called for, Mr. Selby," said the Head, quietly. "D'Arcy! You will be gated

for two half-holidays this week. Now you may leave my study."

Mr. Selby choked. In his narrow, suspicious mind, his own opinion was as firmly fixed as ever. A young rascal in his own form, and another young rascal in another form, had combined to deceive him—one had been punished, and the other was to escape—the other, who, in Mr. Selby's opinion, was the more culpable of the two! That was how Mr. Selby looked at it, so perhaps it was no wonder that the Head's decision almost made him forget the respect due to his Chief.

"Dr. Holmes!" he articulated. "I—I—"

"I have decided the matter, Mr. Selby! D'Arcy, I have said that you may go."

Most fellows, in such circumstances, would have been glad to get out of the study as quickly as possible. But Arthur Augustus did not move towards the door. He stood where he was, and the Head, surprised and displeased, frowned at him.

"If—if—if you please, sir," faltered Arthur Augustus.

"You may go!" said the Head, his voice rising a little.

"Yaas, sir! Thank you, sir! But—"

"Leave my study, D'Arcy."

"If—if you will let me speak, sir—"

"There is nothing more to be said, D'Arcy! Go!"

"I—I mean about the gatin', sir," stammered Arthur Augustus, in dismay and confusion, "I—I can't stay in gates on Wednesday, sir—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You see, sir, I—"

"Upon my word! D'Arcy, leave my study! Go! If you utter another single word, I shall cane you severely! Go!"

And Arthur Augustus went.

## Unpopular !

"YOU ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!"

"You fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You born idiot!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You—you—you—Oh, there isn't a word for you!" said Tom Merry. "Ass! Fathead! Chump! Burbler! Blitherer! Br-r-r-r-r!"

It was quite a chorus in Study No. 6 in the School House. Six fellows, in that study, told Arthur Augustus D'Arcy what they thought of him, all at once, with emphasis, and with many repetitions.

While Arthur Augustus was with the Head, Tom Merry and Co. had been anxious and worried. They had wondered uneasily what view the Head might take of the affair of that hapless translation. They knew the view Mr. Selby would take, and that if the matter had been in his hands, what was likely to happen to Arthur Augustus. But they hoped better things of the Head, for whose serene wisdom every fellow at St. Jim's had a profound respect. Still, with a "beak" you never could tell: and while they hoped for the best, they feared the worst: and they were very anxious to see D'Arcy again, and learn how the cat had jumped, as it were.

But when they did see him again, a change came o'er the spirit of their dream, to use the poet's words.

They were glad, of course, that he was not to be flogged, which he certainly would have been, had the Head shared Mr. Selby's view. They were glad that Dr. Holmes, seeing as they had hoped precisely how

the matter stood, had let Gussy off lightly. And but for the fact that the Carcroft match was due on Wednesday, nobody would have cared a bean that Arthur Augustus was "gated" for the two half-holidays that week.

But that fact made all the difference.

Two of the best bats, Figgins and Talbot, were already lost to the team. They could not afford to lose another. But they had to.

And so, when Arthur Augustus announced the result of his interview with the head-master, anxiety and concern changed immediately to wrath: and half a dozen voices addressed Arthur Augustus, in terms which he could only regard as opprobrious.

"Weally, you fellows, I did not ask the Head to gate me on Wednesday," said Arthur Augustus. "In fact, I was about to point out to him about the cwicket, but he wefused to heah a word. I would much wathah have taken six on the twousahs than a gatin', in view of the Carcroft match. But—"

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Isn't it Gussy all over?" said Tom. "Last time, when Carcroft came over here, he had to get into a row and get bunged into Extra School! This time he has to get gated! Isn't it Gussy all over?"

"Just Gussy!" said Blake.

"Just!" agreed Herries.

"He would pick this special time for getting into a row with Selby," said Blake. "Last time it was a row with that relation of his, Cardew. Cardew's on his best behaviour now, so Gussy had to look round for somebody else to get into a row with, and he selected Selby—"

"I did nothin' of the kind!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, indignantly. "I nevah had the wemotest ideah of gettin' into a wow with Selby—"

"He wouldn't be satisfied with a row with our own beak, Lathom," continued Blake. "Not even with Railton, the house-beak! He had to pick Selby, because he's all acid and would be bound to make all the

trouble he could. Selby would have got him a flogging, if he could! Pity he didn't, as it turns out."

"Awful pity!" said Herries, with a nod.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Gated!" said Tom Merry. "Figgy's crocked, and Talbot's away, and we can't afford to lose a batsman! So he goes and gets himself gated! Last time it didn't matter much, but this time—"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!"

"You ought to be jolly well kicked!" roared Tom. "We're weak in batsmen, and you're one of the very best bats, and at the top of your form now—"

"I am awah of that, deah boy, and it wowwies me feahfully! But—"

"Couldn't you get gated any other day but Wednesday?" hooted Tom. "Did you have to pick out Carcroft day?"

"I wegard that question as widiculous, Tom Mewwy! I think—"

"Oh, don't gammon!" snapped Tom. "You think? You couldn't!"

"I considah—"

"It's that young ass Wally that's caused it all," growled Blake. "If that young villain puts his nose into this study again, I'll pull it for him."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Well, Gussy's out of the cricket now," said Tom, with knitted brows. "I shall have to sort out some other man. Oh, you ass, Gussy! You fathead! You've let us down."

"That is wathah a howwid way of puttin' it, Tom Mewwy—"

"Isn't that what—you've done?" hooted Tom. "Couldn't you take care to steer clear of rows, just before a School match—especially after what happened last time? Are we to chuck away School matches, because that dashed minor of yours is too jolly lazy to do his own work?"

"It is quite wight and pwopah for a chap to help his young bwothah with his lessons, Tom Mewwy—"

"It's quite right and proper for a cricketer to be

available when he's wanted in School matches. Bother your young brother! Selby gave him six, did he? I hope he laid them on hard."

"It was not weally Wally's fault—"

"Then it was yours! Anyhow, that cuts no ice—never mind whose fault it was—that doesn't help. You're out of the cricket on Wednesday."

"Yaas, wathah, but—"

"They ought to have their silly heads knocked together, the pair of them," said Blake. "Between them they've landed us like this! Gussy had better stand out of the cricket for good, I think. He's never there when he's wanted."

"Bai Jove! I—"

"Something in that," growled Tom Merry. "Cardew's been barred from the cricket, because he might let us down—and now Gussy—I suppose it runs in the family. I couldn't play Cardew because he's unreliable—but it's a fat lot of use relying on D'Arcy—"

"I weally think—"

"Oh, rats!" said Tom. "You ought to have started thinking a bit sooner, if you can think at all, which I don't believe! You've let the team down, you fat-head, and you ought to be kicked."

With that, Tom Merry strode out of Study No. 6, his brows knitted. For once his sunny temper had failed him a little.

"By gum! Tommy's got his back up!" murmured Monty Lowther, and he followed Tom from the study, with Manners.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. He looked at Blake and Herries and Dig. "I twust that you fellows do not agwee with Tom Mewwy that I have let the team down."

"Right on the wicket," answered Blake. "What else have you done?"

"Just that!" said Dig.

"Exactly!" said Herries.

"A man can't help gettin' gated, you know—!"

"A man can help playing the giddy ox, and getting Selby's back up, and getting hiked off to the Head!" snorted Blake. "Why didn't you kick Wally out of



the study instead of getting mixed up in his rows with his beak?"

"Wats!"

There was a step in the doorway, and Wally of the Third looked in. Blake and Herries and Dig gave him almost deadly looks.

"Twot in, Wally," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust you are not still feelin' that whoppin'?"

Wally gave a wriggle.

"Oh, I'm pretty tough," he said. "I ain't making a fuss about a whopping. But how did you get on with the Head, Gus?"

Wally of the Third was not much given to thinking. But evidently he had not forgotten his major's spot of trouble and was anxious to know how it had turned out.

"Oh, that's all right," said Blake, sarcastically, before Arthur Augustus could reply. "Gussy's let off lightly—only gated for two half-holidays."

"Good!" said Wally.

"Jolly good," agreed Blake, still sarcastic. "It will happen to keep him out of the Carcroft match on Wednesday, where he's badly wanted—but that doesn't matter—not a bean! All that matters is doing your Latin for you, instead of taking you by the scruff of your neck and slinging you out of the study."

"Look here—!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Bang their heads together!" said Herries. "That's what they've asked for, so let them have it."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Good egg!" said Blake. "Let's—!"

"I wefuse to have my head banged togethah—I mean I wefuse to—yawoop! Wefuse me—bai Jove—Oh—!"

"Here, chuck it," roared Wally. "Look here—oh, crumbs!"

Jack Blake laid vigorous hands on Wally of the Third. Herries and Digby grasped Arthur Augustus. They were whirled together, and two heads came into contact with a sounding concussion.

Crack!

"Yawoooooooooh!"

"Wow!"

"There!" gasped Blake. "Now go and eat coke, the pair of you!"

With a swing of his arms, he sat Wally down on the floor of the study. Herries and Dig sat Arthur Augustus down, bumping him hard.

Then Blake and Herries and Dig walked out of the study: leaving major and minor sitting on the carpet, spluttering for breath.

"Oh, cwikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, my only aunt Jane!" gasped Wally.

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"Oh, scissors!"

And they rubbed their heads, and gasped in chorus.

## 10

### The Only Way!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY,

the next day, wore a worried look.

Other things, of course, he wore also. But it was the worried look that was most conspicuous:

He was deeply troubled in mind.

On the following day, the match at Carcroft School was due. Arthur Augustus, whose batting should have been a tower of strength to his side, was out of the team. A fellow couldn't be in two places at once. As he had to remain within gates at St. Jim's on Wednesday afternoon, obviously he couldn't wield the willow at Carcroft School, ten miles away on the Sussex coast.

He had been in Extra when Carcroft had come over to St. Jim's: but that had not mattered so much, for then Talbot and Figgins had been available. Now they

were not, and the St. Jim's junior eleven really could not spare its most brilliant bat. It was a blow to the whole team, as well as to Gussy personally: it was quite likely to make all the difference between victory and defeat: and it was exasperating all round.

If Gussy had been crooked like Figgins, or called home like Talbot, it would have come to the same thing so far as cricket was concerned, but it would not have been so bad. For there was absolutely no reason why Gussy shouldn't play, except that he had landed himself into an altogether unnecessary row. He had proved as unreliable as Cardew, whom Tom Merry would not play because he was too unreliable. He had, in fact, let the side down: unintentionally, of course, but a fellow was expected to be available when he was wanted for a School match: and Gussy might have been available, if he had had, as Blake expressed it, as much sense as a bunny rabbit.

It was a great worry on Gussy's noble mind.

During the morning, he pondered over it, rather to the detriment of his lessons. In the Fourth-form room Mr. Lathom was rather sharp with him: and ended up by giving him a hundred lines. That did not affect Arthur Augustus very much: he was thinking of cricket, and sharp words and lines from Lathom passed him by almost unheeded.

He found no comfort in the company of his chums. Blake and Herries and Dig had told him what they thought of him, but they told him over and over again.

Other fellows added their quota. Kangaroo, of the Shell, pointed out that he was the silliest ass that ever assed about. Figgins, of the New House, told him that he was the biggest idiot in the School House: which, Figgy added, was saying a lot. Quite a number of fellows, in fact, seemed quite unable to contact Arthur Augustus that day, without passing some disconcerting remark. They all seemed to agree that he had let St. Jim's down, and that he had done it because he jolly well chose to be the biggest ass ever.

It was really very unpleasant for Arthur Augustus, who would not willingly have let down even an enemy,

had he possessed one: and was certainly incapable of letting down his friends, if he could have helped it.

He began to wonder whether it could, after all, be helped!

Following this line of thought, he pondered over it in the form-room in the afternoon, and was once more in hot water with his form-master. Lathom, after the manner of school-masters, expected attention to lessons in his form-room: which Arthur Augustus was unfortunately unable to give, in the trying circumstances! Gussy came out after class the richer by another hundred lines. But he gave no more heed to the second hundred than to the first. What were lines, at such a time?

Having thought it out, and made up his noble mind, he looked for Tom Merry, after class, and found him in the junior day-room.

Tom gave him a rather grim look as he came up. Really, he could not feel anything but grim, when his best batsman was out of the Carcroft match for no adequate reason whatsoever.

"Tom Mewwy—!" began Arthur Augustus.

"Don't waste time on me," said Tom. "Doesn't your minor happen to want you to do a translation for him? There's lots of time before prep for another row with Selby."

Manners and Lowther smiled, and Arthur Augustus breathed rather hard.

"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you have not got your back up ovah what could not be helped," he said, with dignity.

"Trustful chap, Gussy," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Oh, rot," said Tom, crossly. "It can't be helped, I suppose, but jaw won't do any good. I've got to find another man, now you've let us down—"

"I did not mean to let you down, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, mildly.

"What you meant doesn't matter much! It's what you did," grunted Tom.

"I have wesolved, Tom Mewwy, not to let you down, as you wegard it. I shall play at Carcwoft to-mowwow."

Tom Merry stared.

"You're not let off gates?" he asked.

"Wathah not! But—"

"Are you going to argue it out with the Head?" asked Tom, sarcastically. "Tell him that you're not satisfied, and ask him to think again!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I think it will have to be Cardew," said Tom, thoughtfully. "He's keen enough, but nobody can depend on him. Still, we can't depend on D'Arcy, if you come to that. I think—"

"I wepeat, Tom Mewwy, that I am goin' to play at Carcwoft to-mowwow," said Arthur Augustus.

"And how, when you're gated?" demanded Tom.

"I shall come all the same."

"Ass!"

"I am quite sewious, Tom Mewwy! In the very urgent circumstances, I shall diswegard gatin', and come ovah to Carcwoft all the same."

The Terrible Three gazed at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

It was quite unlike the swell of St. Jim's to think of kicking over the traces in this manner. And the "gating" had been imposed, not by his form-master, or even his house-master, but by the head-master himself—the majestic Chief! Disregarding a direct command from his head-master was about the last thing of which Gussy might have been expected to think. Apparently, however, that was the very thing of which he was thinking!

"Well, my hat!" said Manners. "Dreaming, old man? Think a pre. wouldn't hook you off the brake as soon as you stepped on it, when you're gated by the Head's order?"

"I have thought of that, Mannahs. I shall not twavel with the team, explained D'Arcy. "You will all go off without me, as if I were stayin' in gates. Then I shall slip out quietly and follow on."

"You won't!" said Tom.

"And why not, pway?"

"Because you're gated! It's tough enough, but the Head's the Head, and you're not going to cheek him."

"I do not wegard it as cheekin' the Head, Tom

Mewwy! I twust I am uttably incapable of cheekin' my head-mastah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, warmly. "I should wegard anythin' of the sort as the vewy worst of form."

"What do you call it, then?" grunted Tom.

"I am goin' to play cwicket, because I am wanted in the game. I am not goin' to let the side down. That is what I call it. It is the only way, as that chap says in some play or othah."

"Have a little sense, old chap," said Monty Lowther, soothingly. "You can't walk out on the Head like that."

"It would mean a flogging," said Manners. "Might mean the sack—head-masters are rather important persons, Gussy, though you don't seem to have thought of it."

"Pway listen to a chap!" said Arthur Augustus, patiently. "I have thought it all out, and it is as easy as fallin' off a form! It is not as if I had been bunged into Extwa School, as it was last time. Gatin' is a vewy diffewent mattah. Why, if we were playin' at home, instead of goin' ovah to Carcwoft, I could play cwicket just the same, gated or not."

"What a useful reflection!" snorted Tom Merry. "We happen to be playing the return game at Carcroft, not at home."

"I am awah of that, Tom Mewwy! What I mean is, I shall not be missed till call-ovah at tea-time—and lots of fellows miss tea woll. A gated chap has to stay in the school on a half-holiday, that is all—if it were Extwa School, it would be diffewent—but it isn't! Of course, I shall not walk out of gates wight undah Taggles' eyes!" added Arthur Augustus, who could be sarcastic, too. "That is not what I am thinkin' of. I shall slip out quietly ovah the wall in the corner when nobody is about—"

"I can see you doing it!" said Tom. "You'd pick a moment when Kildare, and Darrell, and half a dozen other prefects, were looking at you!"

"Weally, you ass, I wish you would not talk wot!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, hotly. "You have known



me long enough, I think, to be awah that I am a fellow of tact and judgment—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I shall get a chap to wheel out my bike, and leave it in the wood," explained Arthur Augustus, who had evidently been doing some solid thinking. "Aftah you have gone, I shall slip out quietly, with nobody seein' me—"

"You mean with half St. Jim's seeing you?"

"No!" roared Arthur Augustus. "I don't mean anythin' of the sort, Tom Mewwy. I mean that I shall slip out quietly with nobody seein' me, pick up the bike, and wide aftah you. It is only ten miles to Car-cwoft, and I shall be there as soon as you are."

"By gum!" said Monty Lowther. He seemed to be a little impressed, if Tom Merry was not. "It would work, Tom."

Snort from Tom.

"After all, Gussy's wanted in the game, Tom," said Manners.

Another snort.

"I twust, Tom Mewwy, that you will wealise that this is a vewy good plan, and will pwevent me fwom lettin' you down, as you are pleased to descwibe it."

"Rot!" said Tom. "First of all, you'll be seen getting out, and lugged back by a prefect. Next, if you're not lugged back, you'll puncture your bike and arrive late. If you don't do that, you'll run into something—if there's anything at all on the road, you're the man to run into it. Last, but not least, you're gated, and you're not going to get a flogging for cheeking the Head. So pack it up and forget all about it."

"Look heah, Tom Mewwy—"

"Rats! Know where Cardew is:"

"Nevah mind Cardew now—"

"I'm going to play him, fathead! He's a good man when he chooses, and I shall have to take a chance with him."

"I do not object to your takin' Cardew ovah in weserve, Tom Mewwy, in case I may fail to pull it off," said Arthur Augustus, "but I object very stwongly



to your givin' him my place in the eleven."

"Object away!" said Tom. "No harm in that, that I can see! If you want to play in cricket matches, Gussy, you'd better take care not to be gated. I wonder if Cardew's in his study."

"Most likely, if he's got any cigarettes!" said Lowther.

"Oh, rot!" grunted Tom. That reminder of Cardew's manners and customs was rather unwelcome to a skipper who had decided to play him in a cricket match. "I believe he's chucked that rot lately—he told me so, anyway—"

"Um!" said Manners.

"I have not yet finished speakin' to you, Tom Mewwy," exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as the junior captain turned towards the door.

"You have!" answered Tom, over his shoulder, and he walked out of the day-room, leaving Arthur Augustus frowning, and other fellows smiling.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "Tom Mewwy weally seems to have his back up, you fellows! Howevah, it will make no diffence, of course. I shall play at Carcwoft to-mowwow."

"Whether Tom likes it or not?" asked Manners, staring.

"Tom Mewwy could hardly wefuse to play me, when I am on the spot, Mannahs. And I shall certainly be on the spot. That is as fixed and settled as the laws of the Thingummies and the What-do-you-call-'ems," said Arthur Augustus, firmly: perhaps referring to the laws of the Medes and Persians. "I am quite wesolved on it, and I shall be at Carcwoft to-mowwow aftahnoon, and I shall play in the match, and help to beat Carcwoft! And that," added Arthur Augustus, in a tone of finality, "is that!"

And there was no doubt that the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy meant every word he said. It only remained to be seen what was to come of it.

## Cardew Obliges!

"CARDEW, deah boy."

Ralph Reckness Cardew grinned.

That Wednesday morning, quite a number of fellows grinned, at the mere sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Nearly every junior in the School House, and a good many in the New House, knew what were Arthur Augustus's plans for that day: and seemed to be entertained thereby.

Most of the juniors were thinking about the Carcroft match in the afternoon. Gussy, too, was thinking about it. But what Gussy was thinking about it, added a little gaiety to existence in the Lower School.

D'Arcy was gated, by order of no less a personage than the head-master himself. It was, therefore, quite impossible for D'Arcy to go out of gates that afternoon.

But, impossible as it was, D'Arcy was going to do it.

A fellow who was going to "cut" gates against orders, would have been well-advised to keep his intention rather a secret. But that spot of wisdom had not occurred to Arthur Augustus.

Perhaps the fact that fellows had taken the view that he had "let down" the team by getting gated, urged him to reassure them on the point. Or perhaps, being anything but secretive by nature, he just talked without thinking. Anyhow, everybody knew what his game was: and though no fellow was likely to "give him away" it seemed not unlikely that something might reach the ears of authority, and that a master's or prefect's eye might be on him when the time came. In which case D'Arcy certainly would not arrive at Carcroft that day.

But even if he did arrive, he was no longer in the team. Tom Merry, taking a chance with Cardew, had assigned the place to him. Cardew had been assiduous at games practice: he had shown many signs of turning over a new leaf: and Tom was giving him a chance, hoping for the best. Certainly he would have preferred to play D'Arcy: but that he regarded as impossible, if Gussy did not. So the place was Cardew's: and that was that.

That would have settled it for most fellows. But it did not seem to make any difference to Arthur Augustus. His plans remained unchanged. No doubt he relied on Tom feeling that he couldn't leave him out if, indeed, he was on the spot at the right time. Anyhow, the fact that he was out of the eleven, and that Cardew was in it, in his place, was apparently regarded by Arthur Augustus as a trifle light as air.

After third school that morning, he came up to Cardew in the quad: greeted, as afore-mentioned, by a grin. But Arthur Augustus did not grin: he was very serious indeed.

"Still thinkin' of takin' a day off, and telling the Head to go to sleep and dream again?" asked Cardew.

"I am certainly thinkin' of takin' a day off, Cardew, as you express it—but I twust I am incapable of impertinence to my head-mastah," said Arthur Augustus, stiffly.

"Better think twice," suggested Cardew.

"I have thought the mattah out vewy carefully, Cardew, and made up my mind. The fellows have been sayin' that I have let the side down. I shall show them that I have done nothin' of the kind. I am vewy sowwy to have to disweward the Head's instwuctions, and I twust that he will nevah heah of it: I should be extwemely sowwy for Dr. Holmes to suppose me a weckless and diswespectful ass like you, Cardew—"

"Eh?"

"Howevah, that is not what I want to speak to you about. I want you to do somethin' for me, Cardew."

"You put it so nicely!" said Cardew. "What can a reckless and disrespectful ass do for you?"

"I have asked Hewwies and Dig, and they say that they won't have a hand in it," explained Arthur Augustus. "They think I shall get into a wow. That is why I am askin' you, as you wouldn't care whethah a chap gets into a wow or not."

"Oh, my hat! Carry on!" gasped Cardew.

"I want my bike taken out, and left in the wood, weady for me aftah dinnah," explained Arthur Augustus. "If I wheel it out myself, I might be spotted—and I am gated, you know. Will you take the bike out for me?"

Cardew's grinning face became grave.

"Look here, D'Arcy, don't be an ass," he said. "You can't cut when the Head himself has gated you. Do you want to be flogged in hall for cheek to your head-master?"

"Pway do not argue, Cardew! I have thought the mattah out and decided."

"Look here—"

"Wats!"

"But what's the good?" asked Cardew. "Tom Merry can't play you, even if you are at Carcroft. The team's full up."

"That is all wight," said Arthur Augustus. "You will natuwallly wesign the place to me again, Cardew, if I am on the spot."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"You are not vewy much of a sportsman, Cardew, if you don't mind my mentionin' it. But natuwallly you would not stick to a place in the eleven when a bettah man is available."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I am vewy glad you are going, as accidents may happen," said Arthur Augustus. "I hardly think anythin' could go w'ong with my plans: still, somethin' might, and in that case, of course, you will play, if I am not there. I should not object to that, of course."

"Thanks!" said Cardew, sarcastically.

"Not at all!" said Arthur Augustus. "That will be all wight! But if I turn up, as I expect to do, of course you will stand down."

"I can see myself doing it!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Well, as you won't turn up, we needn't argue about it," said Cardew, laughing.

"I shall certainly turn up, Cardew: and Tom Mewwy certainly will play his best bat, if available. I twust that you will enjoy the afternoon, lookin' on and seein' me knock up the wuns. It is vewy lucky that we are much the same size, and that your flannels will fit me—"

"What?"

"I shall have to get out very cautiously, you know, and I cannot take a cwicket bag with me—it would excite wemarks," explained Arthur Augustus.

"It might!" chuckled Cardew.

"And if I changed into flannels aftah dinnah, of course it would be noticed, and somebody might guess—"

"I fancy somebody would!" said Cardew, with another chuckle.

"I shall have to be vewy careful, of course. Selby is vewy watty, and might keep an eye on me: and the pwefects know that I am gated. But it will be all wight if you lend me your flannels at Carcwoft."

"Oh, gad!"

"You won't want them, as you won't be playin'—"

"Carry on!" chuckled Cardew. "You don't know how funny you are, Gussy."

"I am quite unawah of anythin' funnay in my wemarks, Cardew. This is a sewious mattah. You see, I shall stwoll in the quad aftah dinnah with a book, and sit down to wead undah the elms. That will look all wight. When the coast is quite cleah, I shall slip out vewy cautiously, and go aftah the team on my bike. But it all depends on the bike, you see. I should awwive vewy much too late if I walked it, and I should have to wait too long for a twain if I walked to Wayland. No good awwivin' too late, is it?"

"Not quite!" grinned Cardew.

"But it will be all wight on the bike. Will you take it out for me, Cardew, and leave it in the wood?"

"If I don't—?"

"Then I shall ask some othah fellow. But I have asked seveal alweady, and they seem to fight shy of it," confessed Arthur Augustus. "I twust you are not goin' to wefuse to oblige me, Cardew."

"It all depends on the bike!" said Cardew, thoughtfully. "If your bike wasn't available, it would be washed out."

"Yaas, wathah."

"I'll take it out for you."

"Vewy many thanks, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, gratefully.

"Not at all," said Cardew, airily, and he walked away to the bike-shed, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy much relieved in his noble mind. A few minutes later Cardew was running Gussy's handsome bike out into the road, where he disappeared with it.

Arthur Augustus did not see Cardew again till the dinner-bell was ringing. Then he sighted him, coming to the House with Levison and Clive, and bore down on him.

"Is it all wight, Cardew?" he asked.

"Right as rain!" said Cardew, with a nod.

"You've left my bike in the wood?"

"Yes, rather."

"I am vewy much obliged to you, Cardew. It will be all wight now when I cut out aftah dinnah. Exactly where have you left it?"

"In the wood," said Cardew, blandly.

"Yaas, I know: but pwecisely where?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I do not want to have to hunt for it, you know. Tell me exactly where you have parked it, so that I can go stwaight to the spot."

"I'll tell you that when we come back from Carcroft."

"Wha-a-a-t?"

Arthur Augustus blinked at his relative. His noble brain was not rapid on the uptake, and he did not catch on.

Levison and Clive were staring. This was the first they had heard of the matter.

"What's this game?" asked Ernest Levison. "You haven't been taking D'Arcy's bike out for him, Cardew, to help him dodge gates?"

"He wanted me to, and you know what an obligin' chap I am," said Cardew.

"Rot!" grunted Clive. "D'Arcy's an ass, and if you help him cut gates, you'll land him in a row with the Head. You shouldn't have done it."

"A chap likes to oblige—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Rubbish!" said Levison.

"Pway do not butt in, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy much obliged to Cardew. But where have you parked the bike in the wood, deah boy? It is no use tellin' me when you come back from Carcwoft—I want the bike to get ovah to Carcwoft on. Where is it?"

"In the wood, as I said."

"Yaas, but where in the wood?" asked Arthur Augustus, impatiently.

"Echo answers where!" said Cardew.

"You uttah ass, I must know exactly where the bike is, if I am to wide it ovah to Carcwoft pwesently," exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"But you're not going to!" said Cardew, coolly. "There's nothing for you to do at Carcroft, as you're not in the eleven—and you're not going to land yourself with a Head's flogging with my help. I've done what I said I'd do—taken out your jigger and parked it in the wood. I never said I'd tell you where I'd parked it, did I?"

"Bai Jove!"

"I'll tell you when we come back from Carcroft, after the match, see? You can't play the giddy ox without your bike—and that bike stays parked in the wood where I've left it—and that's that! Come on, you men—we shall be late for tiffin at this rate."

Cardew went into the House with Levison and Clive, leaving Arthur Augustus rooted to the earth, staring after them. Too late, it dawned upon him that Cardew had been pulling his noble leg: so far from aiding



and abetting him in cutting gates, he had taken measures to prevent him from doing so. His plans for that afternoon depended on his jigger: and his jigger was no longer even in the bike shed: it was outside the school, hidden somewhere in the wood: where, he had not the faintest idea.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, at last. "The wottah—the wat—Oh, cwikey!"

He breathed hard.

More than once, Arthur Augustus, in the kindness of his heart, had taken a hand in his relative's affairs, striving to keep him from kicking over the traces, much to Cardew's irritation. Now his relative had done the same for him: and sad to relate, Arthur Augustus did not feel grateful in the least: he felt intensely exasperated. Cardew had, perhaps, saved him from a Head's flogging: but his only desire was to punch Cardew's head, and punch it hard! Arthur Augustus's feelings were deep, as he went in to dinner—with quite a lot more thinking to do, if he was going to carry out his plans for that afternoon.

## 12

### Left Behind!

"ROUGH luck, Gussy, old man."

Wally of the Third was sympathetic.

D'Arcy minor had his own occupations mapped out for that half-holiday, and he was not wont to bother his head much about other fellows: even about his major. But for once Wally was rather concerned. He did feel that he was responsible more or less for his major's disaster: and it smote him a little, when he saw Arthur Augustus, with a clouded and thoughtful

brow, watching the cricketers piling into the motor coach that was to take them over to Carcroft to play cricket.

The cricketers looked bright and cheery enough. Tom Merry was more or less satisfied with his selection of Cardew to fill Gussy's vacant place: and Cardew, undoubtedly, was as keen as mustard. Jack Blake was sorry, indeed, that his aristocratic pal was left out: but he was thinking chiefly of the runs he was going to knock up. The rest of the team: Lowther, Levi-son, Manners, Harry Noble, Clive, Kerr, Wynn, and Redfern, were all in great fettle. True, Manners and Clive were hardly up to the form of Talbot and Figgins, whose places they filled: and Tom was by no means sure that Cardew would adequately replace D'Arcy; still, it was a good team, and full of beans. Certainly no member of the team expected that Arthur Augustus would be playing that afternoon: though Arthur Augustus himself declined to have any doubt on the subject.

"It's tough, old chap," added Wally. "All Selby's fault! Look here, as you're sticking in this afternoon—"

"I am not stickin' in this aftahnoon, Wally."

"You're gated."

"In the cires, I am not allowin' that to make any diffewence."

"Oh, don't be a goat, old chap," remonstrated Wally. "Look here, you can't cut, and you jolly well know it. I say, what about making Selby sit up for getting you gated?"

"Wats!"

"I'd have had him with that jug of ink on Saturday if you hadn't butted in—!"

"You are a diswespectful young wascal, Wally."

"Might work it to-day!" suggested Wally. "Wouldn't it serve him jolly well right for getting you gated on a match day?"

"Wats!"

A jug of ink over Mr. Selby, even if practicable, was no present help in time of need, from D'Arcy's point

of view at any rate: though no doubt it would have solaced his minor.

Tom Merry looked round, and waved his hand to Arthur Augustus.

"Cheerio, Gussy!"

"Cheewio, deah boy! I'll be seein' you."

"Fathead!" was Tom's reply to that and he clambered in. Six or seven other fellows were packing in with the cricketers, including Herries and Dig and Figgins. Others were wheeling out their bikes to follow the brake over to Carcroft.

The cricketers rolled away.

Arthur Augustus could not help feeling a little forlorn as they disappeared. But for the unhappy episode of Wally's translation, and its consequences, he would have been packed in with a jolly crowd of cricketers, enjoying every minute of that golden afternoon. Still, he was going after them, in time to play. On that point his resolution was adamant.

"Well, they're gone," said Wally. "I say, Gussy, what about inking old Selby—?"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Better than mooching about doing nothing, old bean. I was going out with Manners mi. and Levison mi, but if you'd rather—"

"Pway don't be a young ass, Wally. I have got to get ovah to Carcwoft and I cannot take my bike. I want you to wun down to Wylcombe for me. You can go on your jigger."

"Oh!" said Wally. He was sympathetic. He was willing to do what he could, after the damage he had done. Still, a half-holiday was a half-holiday, and he looked a little apprehensive. "I say, young Manners and Levison—"

"Nevah mind them now. I want you to take a note to Lavery's livery-stable."

"What on earth for?" asked Wally. "You can't go riding this afternoon, when you're gated."

"I am goin' to wide ovah to Carcwoft, Wally. It is only ten miles, by the woad, and I can cut off two or thwee by takin' the bwidle-paths. I shall awwive soon

aftah they get there."

"Oh, my only aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally, blankly.

He stared at his major.

It was not uncommon for D'Arcy, who was a keen rider, to hire a horse from Lavery's stable on a half-holiday. But it was certainly very uncommon for a fellow to ride a horse over to another school for a cricket match—especially if that fellow was gated.

But it was, as Arthur Augustus had remarked earlier, the only way. His aristocratic intellect had been at work on the subject during dinner, and he had thought it out. Why not?

Wally seemed to see reasons why not, if his major didn't. He whistled.

"I will write a note for you to take, Wally, and Lavewy's man will bring the horse and wait for me in the field—"

"You can't do it, old chap."

"Pway do not argue, Wally. I am goin' to do it. I do not wequiah advice fwom a youngah bwothah," added Arthur Augustus, with stately dignity.

"Oh, don't be a goat, if you can help it," yapped Wally. "I jolly well know that you've been asking fellows to sneak out a bike for you, and they jolly well won't land you in a flogging, and I wouldn't, either, if you asked me—and I jolly well won't have a hand in it, so there."

"You young wottah—!"

"You old ass!"

"You are the cause of all the twouble, you young wascal. I insist upon your goin' down to Lavewy's stable with a note—"

"You can insist till you're black in the face, and I jolly well won't go," retorted Wally. "You'll be copped, and the Head will be in a bait, and you'll be flogged—"

"I wegard that as impwobable, Wally, but even if I had a floggin', it would make no diffewence. I am not goin' to let down the side."

"Oh, rot!" said Wally. "Even if you ain't seen getting out, you'll be missed—it's certain to come out."

I tell you you can't cheek the Head like that! He's a good old boy, but he wouldn't stand for that. It means a flogging in hall—and think I'm going to land you in it?"

"Look here, Wally—!"

"Forget it," said Wally.

And to settle the matter, Wally of the Third walked away, and joined Manners minor and Levison minor in the quad. The three minors went out of gates together: and Arthur Augustus was left on his own.

He breathed hard.

In his dire need, there was not a single helping hand! Nobody was going to help Arthur Augustus to a Head's flogging: not even his own minor! A less determined fellow than the Honourable Arthur Augustus might have given up the idea. But Arthur Augustus was a stickler! Fellows had said that he had let down the side! He was going to show them that he hadn't—though the skies fell!

He went into the House.

Time pressed, if he was to get to Carcroft in time to play. That time-saving invention, the telephone, occurred to his mind. It was, in fact, the last shot in the locker, and Arthur Augustus was going to borrow a phone—if he could. Mr. Railton was visible in the quad: ocular evidence that he was not in his study. Arthur Augustus felt that he had to take the risk of being caught there, and he headed for the house-master's study.

Just as he arrived there, Mr. Selby's door opened, and the Third-Form master came out. Arthur Augustus stopped just in time. Mr. Selby came down the passage, and gave him a glance of very expressive disfavour. Then he stopped to speak.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir," answered Arthur Augustus, quietly. He wondered, in dismay, whether Selby suspected that he had designs on Mr. Railton's telephone. But it was not that.

"Something has reached my ears, D'Arcy, which seems to be very much discussed among the juniors,"

snapped Mr. Selby.

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, indeed!" said Mr. Selby, "and I feel it my duty to warn you, D'Arcy, that if you should disregard your head-master's commands, and go out of gates to-day, you will be called to a very severe account."

Arthur Augustus stood silent. Mr. Selby often heard things that were not intended for his ears: and evidently he was suspicious.

"You have been awarded a very lenient punishment for what I can only regard as an act of deception, D'Arcy—"

"Weally, sir—"

"Do not interrupt me, D'Arcy! So far from being grateful for this, I have reason to believe that you have some intention of disregarding the head-master's orders. If you should do so, D'Arcy, I shall certainly ascertain the fact, and you can expect nothing less than a flogging."

With that, and without waiting for a reply, Mr. Selby walked on, and went out of the House.

"Bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

He stood for some moments in rather troubled thought. Selby, only too plainly, was annoyed by what he considered the undue leniency of D'Arcy's penalty: and apparently he was going to keep an eye open, to make sure that Arthur Augustus did not dodge that penalty. Arthur Augustus realised that that added to the risk he was taking.

But if he hesitated, his hesitation was brief. He set his lips, opened the door of Railton's study, went in and shut the door behind him. A moment more, and he was dialling Mr. Lavery's livery-stable at Rylcombe.

His talk on the telephone did not take long. Mr. Lavery, naturally, had not the remotest idea that he was being telephoned by a St. Jim's junior under sentence of "gates." He had supplied a mount for D'Arcy more than once before, and he was ready to supply one again. In a couple of minutes it was arranged for a groom to bring the steed to Giles's field, where D'Arcy

would meet him and take over: and Arthur Augustus put up the receiver and left Railton's study—fortunately without meeting his house-master.

He strolled in the quad, with his heart beating rather fast, but his mind more firmly made up than ever. After a few minutes he sat down on one of the old benches under the elms. There he was in full view: and he noticed that Mr. Selby, walking in the quad with Mr. Lathom, gave him a sour glance in passing.

He sat it out, patiently, till Selby was at a distance. Then he rose and sauntered with a casual air under the elms. Finally he disappeared in a certain corner where the old trees screened the school wall. Once safely out of sight, he made a jump at the wall, caught the top, clambered over, and dropped into the road. After which, he headed for Giles's meadow, where Lavery's groom waited with the horse. A quick trot down to the Ryll: a quick trot along the tow-path to the bridge—and then a gallop across country to Carcroft—that was the plan: and if he was missed at St. Jim's, and a terrific row awaited him when he returned, that could not be helped.

The die was cast!

## 13

### Wet!

“YOUR major, Wally,” said Reggie  
Manners.

“Wasn't he gated?” asked Levison minor.

“There he is, all the same!”

“Oh, my only aunt Jane!” ejaculated Wally of the Third.

The three fags stared.

Wally and Co. were on the tow-path, by the Ryll, some little distance from the school. Wally had prob-



ably forgotten, by that time, his major's idea of getting a horse from Lavery's stable, to ride over to Carcroft. If so, he was reminded of it now, as a schoolboy came careering along the tow-path on a very active and apparently very fresh steed.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the saddle: and evidently he had carried out that plan, somehow, without Wally's assistance—for there he was, riding alongside the river, obviously heading for the bridge, to cross and ride over to Carcroft School.

The horse seemed very fresh. With a polite consideration for other people using the tow-path, Arthur Augustus had intended, though pressed for time, to proceed alongside the river at a gentle trot till he reached the bridge. But he seemed to find some difficulty in holding in the horse, which was full of beans, and seemed to want to stretch its limbs in a gallop.

"Oh, the ass!" said Wally.

"He's cut!" said Reggie. "Silly ass! I can jolly well tell you that our beak is shirty with him, and will see that the Head gets to know."

Wally frowned.

He was only too well aware that Mr. Selby was "shirty" with his major, and that Gussy's escapade was likely to have serious consequences for him. It was practically certain to come out, and D'Arcy would be up before the Head again, with a result easily to be guessed.

"Oh, the ass!" repeated Wally.

"Must be a chump!" said Manners minor. "Just asking for it! That gee looks as if it might bolt with him, too. Your major all over, Wally!"

"You shut up about my major!" growled Wally.

"Well, he's the prize ass, as you know jolly well," said Reggie. "Taking a day off, I suppose, as if there wasn't any head-master in the school at all. He will get toco for this."

"Look here, he ought to cut back," said Frank Levison. "If he hasn't been missed yet, it will be all right! No good talking to him, though, I suppose!"

Wally gave an expressive snort.

"I'm going to talk to him!" he snapped. "He ain't going to get a Head's flogging if I can stop him! Look here, line up and stop him!"

"That horse is trying to get his head," said Reggie. "We don't want him thumping into us! Better stand clear!"

"Better rats!" yapped Wally. "I'm going to turn him back, if I can. I tell you he's booked for a flogging, if he keeps on, and I ain't standing for that."

And Wally of the Third, standing in the middle of the tow-path, facing the approaching rider, waved his hands and shouted. Levison minor and Manners minor joined him and waved and shouted, too. Arthur Augustus, becoming aware of the three fags ahead, gave them a stare: but he had time for only a brief stare: the horse claimed all his attention. Already a little out of hand, and now startled by the waving and shouting in front of him, the animal began to prance and cavort in quite an alarming manner.

The tow-path was not very wide: and on one side was a thick wood, on the other the rippling Ryll. There was not much room for prancing and cavorting, and for some moments Arthur Augustus looked like being tossed out of the saddle headlong, to land in the grass.

But he kept his seat, with a strong grip on the reins, and shouted to the fags ahead.

"Wally, you young ass! Weggie, you little idiot! Shut up and get out of the way!"

"Go back, you ass!" roared Wally.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort! I wefuse to—oh, cwikey! Oh, cwumbs! Oh, bai Jove!"

"He's bolting!" gasped Reggie Manners. And Reggie himself bolted, into the wood close at hand, as the horse came thundering down the tow-path.

"My only aunt Jane!" breathed Wally.

"Oh, cwikey!" came from Arthur Augustus.

Gussy could ride. But that horse was fresh, and now startled, and it was quite out of hand. With its head tossing, and D'Arcy striving in vain to pull it in, it

thundered on.

For a moment, it looked as if it would thunder down on Wally and Frank, but it swerved towards the stream.

"Oh, cwumbs!" came a gasp from Arthur Augustus.

He wrench on the reins, on the very margin of the Ryll. The horse halted suddenly on the edge of the stream, and that sudden halt did it. Arthur Augustus flew out of the saddle, over the horse's head.

"Gussy!" gasped Wally.

"He's off!" gasped Levison minor.

Arthur Augustus was not quite off! He landed astride the horse's neck, his cap flying in the air, with a wild grasp round the head of the mount. But that thrilling scene lasted only a moment. The next, Arthur Augustus shot off the horse, to land with a resounding splash far out in the shining waters of the Ryll.

Splash!

Almost a waterspout marked the spot where Arthur Augustus struck the river. He vanished from sight under flowing water.

"He's in!" stuttered Levison minor.

"He can swim all right," gasped Wally. "But—oh, crikey!"

The horse, for a moment, stood staring at the splashing water. Then, as if relieved and rather pleased to have got rid of its rider, wheeled round, and, with tossing head and dangling reins, dashed off at a gallop up the tow-path, the way he had come.

Far out in the shining Ryll, a head rose to the surface, and a wet eyeglass gleamed in the sunshine.

"Gussy!" shouted Wally.

"Gwooooooogh!"

For some moments, in a dazed state, Arthur Augustus splashed and floundered wildly, and his head ducked under again. But he was a good swimmer, and he pulled himself together, and swam. An eddy of the current swept him out into the river, and carried him along: but he was swimming.

"He's all right!" gasped Wally. "Only a ducking—better than a Head's flogging, anyway! He will have to go back now."

Reggie Manners scrambled out of the trees by the tow-path.

"Is your major going to swim to Carcroft, Wally?" he grinned. "Looks like playing cricket, don't he?"

"Not a lot!" grinned Wally.

Arthur Augustus was going down with the current, as he swam, and the three fags kept pace on the tow-path. But the swell of St. Jim's was slanting towards the further shore, and at length he caught a willow branch on the bank, and dragged himself out.

Drenched and dripping, he stood on the grassy bank, and Wally and Co. stared across the river at him, grinning.

"I say, feeling wet, D'Arcy major?" yelled Reggie.

"Gussy!" yelled Wally. "Get back to the school as fast as you can, you old ass! You'll get into a fearful row if you're missed."

"Cut back, D'Arcy," shouted Levison minor.

Arthur Augustus paid no heed to those injunctions. He stood wringing the water out of his drenched clothes, and did not even glance across the Ryll at the three fags.

"Well, he will have to get back now," said Wally. "He can't go over to Carcroft like that! Come on, you men."

And the three fags went on their own way. Arthur Augustus, stranded on the river bank, drenched from head to foot, and, his mount having disappeared into space, certainly did not look like getting over to Carcroft to play cricket: and Wally and Co. had no doubt that it was the end of his escapade. Which, in Wally's opinion at least, was a jolly good thing: and he rambled away with his friends, leaving his major to his own devices.

## Arthur Augustus to the Rescue

“HELP!”

“Oh, cwumbs!” ejaculated Arthur Augustus D’Arcy.

He stared round at the river.

Arthur Augustus was rather in sad case. Soaked to the skin by his dip in the Ryll, he had had to spend some time in wringing water out of his clothes, and time was precious. Getting dry was a hopeless proposition, and his wet clothes were most uncomfortable. His best guess, undoubtedly, was to cut back to the school and get a change without delay. But it was not of that that Arthur Augustus was thinking.

He had set out for Carcroft, to play cricket. He was going to get to Carcroft, and play cricket—if he could! A change of clothes had to wait till he could get into Cardew’s flannels there!

But determined, not to say obstinate, as he was, Arthur Augustus realised that the cards were against him. His mount had vanished, on the other side of the river. If he were going to get to Carcroft, he had to get there on Shanks’ pony, unless he could borrow a lift on the way—which he optimistically hoped to be able to do. So he set off tramping down the river bank, to reach the road at Rylcombe Bridge: as resolved as ever. He was passing a little meadow, in the corner of which a holiday bungalow stood, when a cry from the river reached his ears, and caused him to look round across the shining stream—with perhaps a spot of irritation. Arthur Augustus was not the fellow to pass unheeded a cry for help: but at the

present moment, with every second precious, he certainly did not want to be delayed.

"Oh, cwumbs!" repeated D'Arcy, as he looked out on the shining water.

Far out on the Ryll, he saw a stout—a very stout—gentleman, in a canoe that seemed a good many sizes too small for him. Arthur Augustus had never seen that stout gentleman before: though Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had. The stout gentleman was so stout, and the canoe so light and fragile, that it really looked risky for the plump one to venture out on the water in it at all. And evidently he had hit trouble.

At a little distance from the rocking canoe floated a double-bladed paddle. Apparently the canoer had lost hold of it, and it had slipped out of his reach. Apparently, also, he had made frantic and injudicious endeavours to reach it, with the unhappy result that the canoe had capsized, and the stout gentleman was now clinging to it wildly, in the middle of the river. It was a somewhat solitary spot, and there was no one in sight on either bank, till Arthur Augustus came tramping along—and no doubt the sight of him was very welcome to the popping eyes of the stout man, who promptly yelled for help.

"Help!"

Arthur Augustus gave his damp eyeglass another rub, jammed it in his eye, and stared at the shipwrecked man in the water.

Evidently the man could not swim. He clung to the overturned canoe as his only means of support, and it just kept him afloat. But getting away to either bank was beyond his powers.

"Help!"

"Hold on!" called back Arthur Augustus. Perhaps it was rather superfluous counsel: for the stout one was certainly not likely to let go, if he could help it.

"You young idiot!"

"Eh?"

"Haven't you any sense?"

"Bai Jove!"

Between damp and danger, the stout gentleman did

not seem to be in a good temper!

"Do you want me to drown?" he yelled.

"Certainly not," answered Arthur Augustus. "Hold on—"

"Do you think I'm going to let go?" yelled the stout man. "Can't you see I'm holding on for my life?"

"Yaas, wathah! But weally—"

"Help me, will you? Cut across to my bungalow, and get a rope, and throw it out to me. Do you hear?"

"Oh, cwikey!" moaned Arthur Augustus.

Really it was too bad! A rapid walk to the road at the bridge, and a lucky lift on some passing vehicle, might yet have landed him at Carcroft in time for cricket. This delay made it look almost hopeless.

But there was no help for it! Arthur Augustus certainly did not want the stout gentleman to drown, even for the sake of knocking up runs against Carcroft! It was up to him to render aid.

"Don't stand there gaping!" came a yell from the river. "Will you go and fetch a rope from my bungalow, and throw the end to me? Or do you want me to drown before your silly eyes?"

"Weally, sir—"

"Hurry, will you?"

"Vewy well!" sighed Arthur Augustus. "I will go at once! Hold on—I will wun like anythin'."

He turned, to cut across the meadow towards the bungalow. But a gasping, gurgling, spluttering howl from the river turned him back.

"Oh, cwikey!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

The canoe was rocking away on the current. But, for the moment, there was nothing to be seen of the man who had been clinging to it. He had lost his hold and gone under.

Arthur Augustus gazed at widening circles on the water in horror. But in the midst of those circles, a red plump face came up, and a plump hand sawed the air. One frantic splutter, and both went under again.

A moment more, and there was a splash in the Ryll as Arthur Augustus dived in from the bank.



A drowning man under his very eyes was more than enough to drive all other thoughts from D'Arcy's mind. Cricket at Carcroft vanished from his thoughts. He did not even stop to think. He tossed off his jacket, and plunged in to the rescue.

It was fortunate for the stout gentleman that the St. Jim's junior was a good swimmer. Otherwise that holiday by the sunny Ryll would probably have been the last he would ever have taken.

With rapid strokes, Arthur Augustus cleft the water, shooting out almost like an arrow. He reached the stout man as he came up a second time: but the red face now was white, and only a feeble gurgle came from him. Arthur Augustus's grasp was on him before he could go under again, and he was able to gurgle in breath with his head above water.

"All wight!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "I've got you."

"Groooogh!"

"Hold on to me—"

"Urrrrggh!"

"Oh, cwikey! Don't dwag me down," panted Arthur Augustus, as the drowning man clutched at him frantically.

"Urrgh! Help! Urrggh."

"Urrrrgh!" added Arthur Augustus, as the man's struggles dragged him under.

But up he came again, still with his grasp on the stout gentleman. Luckily the stout gentleman ceased to struggle, some glimmering of remaining sense warning him that it would be fatal to both. But he held on to Arthur Augustus like a limpet to a rock, as the swell of St. Jim's swam.

The current carried them down the river, and as Arthur Augustus cast an almost wild glance round, the bank seemed terribly far away. But he swam gamely, contriving to slant across towards the bank as the current carried them on.

His wet clothes, and shoes full of water, dragged him down. The stout man was an utterly helpless burden. Arthur Augustus was a good swimmer, and

hard as nails, and packed with pluck: but his strength was ebbing, and for many long and terrible minutes it looked as if he would never make it. He hardly knew how he did, at last, reach the bank, and grasp at a trailing willow branch.

But he did, and he held on to the willow for a long minute to recover his breath and a little of his strength. Then, with a last effort, he scrambled on the bank, dragging the stout gentleman out of the water. And then they both collapsed in the grass: and for long, long minutes lay there, too exhausted to stir or to speak.

## 15

### Facing the Music!

“GURRRRRRGH!”

That was the stout gentleman's first remark as he sat up in the grass. Arthur Augustus raised himself on his elbow, and looked at him dizzily.

He lay in a pool of water in the grass. He was utterly spent. Seldom had the swell of St. Jim's felt so utterly used up.

“Bai Jove!” he murmured, faintly.

The stout gentleman dabbed his wet face, and blinked at him. Arthur Augustus blinked back.

“You've saved my life, boy!” said the stout gentleman. He seemed in a very subdued frame of mind. “You're a good swimmer.”

“Oh! Yaas.”

“Sensible lad! Every boy ought to learn to swim,” said the stout gentleman. “Wish I had! Silly thing to go on the water when you can't swim.”

Arthur Augustus was of much the same opinion. But politeness made him forbear to say so. Really and truly, a gentleman of such extensive weight, in so fragile a canoe, who couldn't swim, had been asking for trouble.

"You're a schoolboy?"

"Yaas."

"Not one of those young rascals who larked about with my canoe the other day," said the stout gentleman, peering at him.

Arthur Augustus shook his head. He was not aware that any young rascals had "larked about" with the canoe: but if any young rascals had, certainly he was not one of them.

"They left my canoe on the other side, and I had to walk round by the bridge to get it!" The stout gentleman frowned at the recollection. "Never mind them! You're a brave lad!"

"Not at all, sir!"

"Don't contradict me! You are a brave lad—a credit to your school, whatever it is. You've saved my life."

"I did my best, sir—"

"I tell you you saved my life," snapped the stout gentleman. He seemed rather a positive stout gentleman. "You might have been drowned yourself! I wonder that you weren't! I'm grateful."

"It is all wight, sir," said Arthur Augustus. He sat up in the grass. "Bai Jove, I feel wathah washed out! No cwicket to-day!" He could not help a sigh.

Even Arthur Augustus, determined as he was, realised that this episode had put the lid on, as it were.

The luckiest lift on the road could hardly have landed him at Carcroft in time to play now. That Tom Merry had filled his place, that Cardew was about the last fellow in the world to stand out to oblige him, might seem a trifle light as air: Arthur Augustus had wasted hardly a thought on such considerations as that. But circumstances had been too strong for him. Even if he could get to Carcroft, he would be in no condition to play a hard game

of cricket when he got there. The game was up, so far as cricket at Carcroft was concerned.

It was a bitter pill to swallow. But there it was: and Arthur Augustus had to get it down.

"Cricket!" repeated the stout gentleman. "You were going to play cricket this afternoon?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Well, you can play cricket some other day, I suppose."

Arthur Augustus smiled faintly. Evidently the stout gentleman did not realise what a serious matter a cricket match might be. No doubt he regarded it as on a footing with a game of marbles.

"What's your name?" asked the stout gentleman, dismissing the unimportant subject of cricket.

"D'Arcy, sir."

"My name is Grimes."

"I am vewy happay to make your acquaintance, Mr. Gwimes," said Arthur Augustus, politely.

"I did not say Gwimes. I said Grimes."

"Yaas, I heard you, Mr. Gwimes."

The stout gentleman stared at him. However, he let it pass this time. He clambered slowly to his feet.

"Feel that you can get about?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah," Arthur Augustus, in his turn, clambered to his feet.

"You're tired out," said Mr. Grimes.

"Just a little—"

"More than a little! Do you think I cannot see that you are tired right out?" the stout gentleman snapped.

"Vewy well, sir, just as you like."

"You are soaked with water. So am I. Lucky we're not both still in the water, what? Come along to my bungalow and dry your clothes."

"I shall be vewy glad to, sir."

The current had swept them some distance down the river. They started to walk up the bank, going very slowly, squelching water as they went. Arthur Augustus's face was clouded.

Certainly, he could not regret that he had stayed

to help the stout gentleman in the water. It was an undoubted fact that he had saved a man from drowning. That, no doubt, outweighed a lost game of cricket. But it was a blow, all the same.

He had disregarded an order of his head-master. He had gone out of bounds, regardless of that order. If it came out—and it was fairly certain that Mr. Selby would see that it did come out—he was booked for a “row” with the Head. That would not have mattered so much if he had reached Carcroft and helped St. Jim’s to win there. But the whole thing had been a ghastly farce. Carcroft and cricket were washed out; and he had to face the consequences of a reckless action for absolutely nothing at all. Even the usually cheery and sunny Gussy could not help feeling dispirited. Also, he was, as the stout gentleman declared, tired out. He dragged himself wearily along the river bank.

They reached the spot where he had dived in, and he retrieved his jacket. Then they crossed the meadow to the bungalow.

Arthur Augustus was very glad to get his clothes dried, at any rate. The stout gentleman, who was apparently camping on his own in the riverside bungalow, lighted a big oil-stove, and sorted out a blanket for Arthur Augustus while his clothes were drying before it. Then he went into the bedroom for a change for himself: leaving Arthur Augustus sitting in the blanket, watching his clothes steaming, and reflecting on the disasters of that disastrous “day off.”

He wondered how the cricketers were getting on at Carcroft. He hoped, at least, that Cardew was playing a good game in his place—but he could not feel at all sure of that. The fellows had said that he had “let down” the side—he had been determined to show that that he hadn’t, even to the extent of risking a Head’s flogging. And this was the outcome!

“Wotten!” murmured Arthur Augustus.

It was a relief when his clothes were dry at last, and he was able to get into them again. The Carcroft excursion being a wash-out, it was clear that the sooner he got back to St. Jim’s, the better—there was still

just a bare possibility that he hadn't yet been missed.

So he declined the stout gentleman's hospitable invitation to stay to tea, and took his departure. Mr. Grimes shook hands with him very cordially when he left: there was no doubt that the stout gentleman was very grateful, and had a high opinion of the school-boy who had plunged into the deep waters for him: and he told Arthur Augustus impressively that if ever George Grimes could do anything for him in return, George Grimes would be very glad to do it. But that was no help, and Arthur Augustus was not feeling either merry or bright as he took his homeward way, leaving George Grimes to go in search of his drifting canoe.

It was rather a long walk back to St. Jim's, by way of the bridge and the village of Rylcombe. At Rylcombe he called in at Lavery's, to tell them about the horse, and was relieved to hear that the runaway had already found its way home. Then he tramped away by Rylcombe Lane for the school. Near the gates he came on a fat junior, who grinned at him.

"You're for it, D'Arcy!" said Baggy Trimble.

"Weally, Twimble—"

"Where have you been?" asked Baggy, curiously. "The fellows thought you'd cut for Carcroft—but here you are! You must have been an ass to cut! You're for it now, you know."

"Pewwaps I have not been missed yet, Twimble."

Baggy chuckled.

"You've been missed all right," he said. "Old Selby was asking fellows questions when I came out—he jolly well knows you ain't in gates."

Arthur Augustus felt his heart sink a little lower.

"But I say, what did you cut for, if you ain't gone to Carcroft?" asked Baggy. "Just to get Selby's rag out? If that was it, you've done it all right—he, he, he!"

Arthur Augustus walked on, leaving the fat Baggy grinning. Baggy had stated that Mr. Selby knew that he was out of gates: but there was still, he hoped at least, a chance: and he did not walk in at the old



gateway. He clambered over the wall in the secluded corner where he had clambered out, and dropped within: and then, with as casual an air as he could assume, strolled under the elms, and finally sauntered towards the School House. If, after all, he had not been missed, he was in gates now, and in the public view: and it would be all right! But alas for that faint hope!

"D'Arcy!"

He turned his head, as an unpleasant voice rasped. And he breathed very hard, as he met the sharp eyes of the master of the Third. But he faced Mr. Selby quite calmly.

"Did you call me, sir?"

"I did!" rasped Mr. Selby. "Where have you been since dinner, D'Arcy?"

No answer.

"Do you hear me, D'Arcy?"

"I heah you, sir," answered Arthur Augustus, calmly.

"Then answer me immediately," snapped Mr. Selby, harshly.

"Pway excuse me, Mr. Selby," said Arthur Augustus, politely. "But I am answahable only to my own form-mastah. I shall be vewy pleased to weply to questions fwom Mr. Lathom, if he asks me."

Mr. Selby looked at him, a glint in his eyes. That dignified answer was, in Mr. Selby's opinion, sheer impertinence.

"You refuse to answer me, D'Arcy!" he rapped.

"Very well! I am quite well aware that you have been out of gates, in disrespectful defiance of your head-master's commands, and I shall immediately report this to Dr. Holmes."

"You will do as you think best, sir!" said Arthur Augustus, calmly: and he went into the House.

There was no hope left now. He was "for it," as Trimble had told him, and he had to face it. Mr. Selby, probably, lost no time in going to the Head: Arthur Augustus lost no time in getting a change of clothes, feeling very rumpled and grubby after his adventure in the Ryll. He was spotless and elegant, and feeling rather better, when he came down after



changing: but it was only to hear his name called by Kildare of the Sixth!

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, Kildare."

"I've been looking for you, you young ass! You're to go to the Head's study at once."

"Vewy well, Kildare."

And Arthur Augustus, with a deep breath, started for the Head's study, to face the music there.

## 16

### The Penalty!

TOM MERRY and Co. were looking and feeling, very cheerful, as they rolled home to St. Jim's after the match at Carcroft School. It was quite a merry party that arrived in the summer sunset.

It had been a tough game. With three of his best men, Talbot, Figgins, and D'Arcy, out of the team, Tom had felt that prospects were dubious. But St. Jim's had won that game, by the narrow margin of a single run: so all was well after all. Manners had put up a good game, much to Tom's satisfaction: Clive had done well: and Cardew, of whom nothing but the unexpected was to be expected, had played the game of his life. D'Arcy's place had, after all, been adequately filled: his relative had done as much for the side as anyone would have expected Arthur Augustus to do. And if a single run was not much of a margin, it was a margin, anyway: and the cricketers came home in a cheery and contented crowd.

Blake and Herries and Dig had half-expected Arthur Augustus to turn up at Carcroft while the game was

going on: and it was a great relief to them that he had not. Knowing their Gussy, they had hardly supposed that he would give up the idea: but apparently he had done so, for nothing had been seen of him at Carcroft. Now they were eager to give him the good news that the side had not, after all, suffered from his absence, which they had no doubt would be a relief to his noble mind.

They found him in the junior day-room. He was sitting in the bay window, with a very thoughtful and subdued expression on his face. A dozen fellows came in, in a crowd, and Blake yelled across to the swell of St. Jim's as he saw him.

"Hallo, there you are, Gussy! O.K., old man—we whopped them."

Arthur Augustus looked up.

"Bai Jove! Did you fellows pull it off after all?" he asked. He seemed slightly surprised.

"Did we?" chuckled Tom Merry. "Sort of, Gussy!"

"Just did it!" said Monty Lowther.

"Just!" said Manners.

"A win's a win, whether it's by a run or half a dozen wickets," said Levison.

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "Did Cardew play up all wight?"

"Right as rain," said Tom.

"I am vewy glad to heah it," said Arthur Augustus.

"You nevah know, with Cardew, but I am vewy glad he did. I am sowwy that I had to let you down aftar all, Tom Mewwy—I would have come ovah if I could—"

"That's all right, old chap," said Tom. "Thank goodness you had sense enough not to cut after all."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!"

"I couldn't have played you, old fellow, if you'd cut—"

"I should have insisted upon playin', Tom Mewwy, if I had awwived at Carcroft in time," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, that jolly old question doesn't arise, as you never came," he said. "And thank goodness you

didn't! I should have hated to come back after the match to hear that you were up for a flogging."

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Thank goodness you had a spot of sense, for once in your life, old man," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Cardew's gone to get your bike in, D'Arcy," said Levison, laughing. "Aren't you glad now that he shoved it out of your reach?"

"I am not, Levison."

"Well, you ought to be," said Clive. "Can't you get it into your head that you'd be up for a flogging if you'd cut?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am only too well awah of that!" said Arthur Augustus, with a sigh. "It is a vewy how-wid pwospect."

"Well, you're well out of that, old chap," said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Anything the matter?" asked Manners. His eyes were keenly on D'Arcy's face, and he thought he read there that something was amiss.

"Yaas wathah."

"Oh, my hat!" said Blake. "Can't we take our eyes off you for an afternoon without you landing in the soup? What have you been up to now?"

"More translation for your minor?" asked Herries, with a snort. "Getting old Selby's rag out again?"

"You didn't cut out of gates after all, did you?" asked Dig, in alarm.

"Yaas."

"Oh!" exclaimed all the cricketers together. As Arthur Augustus had not turned up at Carcroft, they had taken it for granted that he had abandoned that reckless idea. They realised that they had taken too much for granted.

"You did cut?" exclaimed Blake.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Oh, you ass!" exclaimed Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"But you never got to Carcroft!" exclaimed Tom.

"You utter ass, did you cut gates just to get into a row

with the Head?"

"Gussy all over!" groaned Blake. "Has it come out?"

"Yaas! That vewy unpleasant person, Selby, seems to have been watchin' like a cat, and he spotted me, and weported me to the Head!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Oh, rotten!"

"But if you cut, why didn't you get to Carcroft?" asked Dig. "You didn't do it just out of fatheadedness, did you?"

"There was a whole chaptah of accidents, Dig, and it was impossible for me to get to Carcroft. How-evah, that does not mattah so vewy much now, as it appeahs that Cardew did not do so vewy badly in my place."

"But what's the verdict?" asked Tom. "Have you been up to the Head?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And what are you going to get?"

"No need to ask that!" grunted Blake. "A fellow who cheeks the Head is asking for it, and will get it!"

"I certainly did not mean to cheek the Head, Blake! But I wegwet to say that that is how the Head appeahs to wegard it, and he came down vewy heavy."

"Flogging?" asked Tom.

"Yaas."

"Oh, you ass!" groaned Blake. "When?"

"Aftah third school to-morrow, in hall, with all the House pwesent!" sighed Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't think that I blame the Head, deah boys. The fact is, I wealise, on weflection, that I have asked for it." Arthur Augustus gazed solemnly at the juniors, and shook his noble head. "It was vewy important for me to get to Carcroft to play cwicket: but a head-mastah is a head-mastah, and it is fwightfully bad form to diswegard his ordahs. Although without intendin' it, I cannot help feelin' that I have failed to tweat the Head with pwopah wespect, which is a vewy sewious mattah, and I twust that the wesult will be a warnin' to you fellows—"

"Us!" howled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! Always wemembah," said Arthur Augustus, impressively, "that a fellow has to toe the line at school, and wespect those who are placed in authowity ovah him."

"Pity you didn't think of that a bit earlier," remarked Lowther, sarcastically.

"Bettah late than nevah, Lowther!"

"So—it's a flogging!" groaned Blake.

"Yaas! It is wathah tough, but it cannot be helped, and I twust I shall go thwough it with dignity," said Arthur Augustus. "I am glad, at any wate, that you fellows have beaten Carewoft, though it is wathah surpwisin' as I was not there! That is all wight, at all events."

But the other fellows did not feel it quite like that. The satisfaction of beating Carcroft was quite dashed by the news they had received on their return: and faces that had been merry and bright were clouded now. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was up for a flogging, and that evening there were many clouded faces in the School House at St. Jim's.

## 17

### The Last Chance!

"ROTTEN!" said Tom Merry.

"Putrid!" agreed Lowther.

"Rough luck!" said Manners.

The Terrible Three made those remarks in break the following morning. Usually they came out in break with cheery faces: but no friend of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could feel cheery that morning, with the knowledge of what impended after third school.

Arthur Augustus was walking in the quad, with a

calm but subdued cast of countenance. The Shell fellows glanced towards him as they came out. Arthur Augustus, undoubtedly, was feeling his unfortunate position very keenly: but he was still contriving to keep up the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere! He had to go through with it: and he was going through with it—he hoped—with dignity! Whether he would be able to sustain a dignified attitude under the Head's birch was a matter of much moment to Gussy, but of very little to his friends. They were feeling very dismal.

"It's rotten!" repeated Tom. "Of course, he's asked for it. He couldn't expect anything else. But—"

"But—!" sighed Lowther.

"I wonder—!" said Tom, slowly. "Gussy's such an ass—"

"The limit in that line," agreed Manners.

"I mean, he never got to Carcroft after all," said Tom. "He changed his mind and came back. If he had sense enough to tell the Head so, it might have made a difference. But had he?"

"Has he ever any sense?" said Lowther. "Mush't expect too much of Gussy."

"Of course, if he'd carried on, and stayed out of gates till we came back from Carcroft, it would be a bit too flagrant," said Tom. "But a fellow who kicks over the traces, and then thinks better of it and chucks it, is entitled to consideration—if he made it clear! If the Head knew that—Look here, let's ask Gussy whether he put that to the head! It mayn't be too late now."

"Let's!" agreed Lowther.

The faintest ray of hope was welcome. The Terrible Three bore down on Arthur Augustus, under the elms.

"Look here, Gussy—!" began Tom.

"Pway don't talk about it, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I am keepin' cleah of Blake and Hewwies and Dig because they can talk about nothin' else. I would wathah let it dwop."

"Listen to me, ass! Did you tell the Head that,

after cutting yesterday, you thought better of it and came back?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, jolly well hike off to his study and tell him now!" exclaimed Tom. "If he knew that, it would make a lot of difference."

"I can hardly tell Dr. Holmes anythin' of the kind, Tom Mewwy, as I did not change my mind and come back," explained Arthur Augustus.

"But you did!" howled Tom. "You never got to Carcroft—you came back to the school. You changed your mind—"

"Nothin' of the sort! Since I have welfected on the mattah, I wealise that I did w'ong in disobeyin' the Head: but at the time I was quite wesolved to go on to Carcroft, and certainly should have done so, but I could not let even the Carcroft match stand in the way of savin' a ddownin' man."

"A what?" ejaculated Tom.

"A which?" howled Lowther, while Manners stared.

"A ddownin' man," explained Arthur Augustus. "The silly ass had upset himself in a canoe, and I had to go in for him. He would have been ddowned if I hadn't. Even the Carcroft match was nothin' to that, of course, and I felt that I had no choice in the mattah."

The Terrible Three stared blankly at Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. This was the first they had heard of his adventure of Wednesday afternoon. With other, and more urgent, matters on his mind, Arthur Augustus had not thought of mentioning it. It was only in explanation to Tom that he mentioned it now.

"A man in a canoe!" repeated Tom.

"Yaas, on the Wyll."

"You went in for him?"

"Of course I did, as he was ddownin' and yelling for help. It was vewy iwvitatin', as I should still have had time to get ovah to Carcroft but for him. But I could not leave him to ddown, I suppose!"

"You saved a man from drowning!" gasped Manners.



"Yaas."

"Oh, you chump!" howled Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, if you wegard a fellow as a chump for savin' a man fwom dwownin'—"

"You fathead! Didn't you tell the Head that?"

Arthur Augustus raised his eyebrows.

"Why should I tell the Head?" he asked.

"Oh, you ass!"

"I nevah thought of it," said Arthur Augustus. "But if I had, I see no weason why I should mention it to the Head."

"Who was it?" asked Tom.

"He told me his name was Gwimes. Wathah an ass, I think, to load himself into a little light canoe, when he was so vewy fat and heavy, and he could not swim, you know—"

"Fat man in a canoe on the Ryll!" exclaimed Lowther. "Must be the same old johnny we saw on Saturday, Tom—"

"Chap who kicked up that shindy about his canoe," said Manners, with a nod.

Arthur Augustus gave the Shell fellows a severe look.

"Bai Jove! I twust that you chaps are not the fellows he told me had been larking with his canoe!" he exclaimed.

"We are—we is!" said Lowther. "So he came to grief in that canoe, did he—no wonder, when he's twice as fat as Billy Bunter. And you fished him out, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"He must have been in danger, if he couldn't swim," said Tom. "You must have saved his life, Gussy."

"He said so," answered Arthur Augustus. "It was not much, weally, for a fellow who could swim: but he was goin' down like a stone, you know—"

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Tom. "Then if you hadn't cut gates yesterday, that stout lad would be at the bottom of the Ryll now."

"I suppose so," said Arthur Augustus. He did not seem to have looked at the matter in that light before.

"Bai Jove! Although I am vewwy sowwy that I was lackin' in pwopah wespect to the Head, I cannot weally wegwet that I went out of gates, as it wesulted in savin' a man's life, you know. The poor chap would certainly have been ddowned."

"And you never thought of mentioning it to the Head?" yelled Lowther.

"Certainly not."

"Can't you see that it would have made a difference?" shrieked Manners. "Think the Head would give you toco, after you saved a man's life?"

"I nevah thought of that—"

"You wouldn't!" hooted Tom. "It would give you a pain to think of anything at all."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Now cut off to the Head's study and tell him!" said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Cut off!" hooted Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Can't you understand that it's practically certain to get you off the flogging?" howled Tom Merry.

"Wats! I shall certainly not go bwaggin' to the Head about goin' in for a ddownin' man. What do you take me for?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"What? I take you for the biggest idiot going—the howlingest ass that ever howled!" yelled Tom.

"And then some!" said Lowther.

"Completely crackers," said Manners.

"I wefuse to stand heah listenin' to such vewy op-pwobwious wemarks," said Arthur Augustus, stiffly. "As I have alweady wemarked, I wealise that I deserve toco, for havin' lacked pwopah wespect to my head-mastah: and I shall certainly not twy to get off by swankin' about a thing that any fellow would have done in my place."

"Look here—!"

"Wats!"

And Arthur Augustus put an end to the discussion by walking, or rather stalking, away. He left the Terrible Three looking at one another with extremely ex-

asperated looks.

"Oh, the ass!" said Tom.

"Oh, the chump!" said Lowther.

"Oh, the burbler!" said Manners.

Tom Merry breathed hard.

"There's a chance," he said. "That stout lad knows that Gussy saved him from drowning—if he came here and told the Head—Surely he would, if he knew that the chap who saved his life was up for trouble—"

"Any man would, I should think," said Manners. "He seemed rather a crusty old cove, but—"

"But how's he to know?" asked Lowther. "It's only a few minutes now to third school, and after that, Gussy's for it."

"I'm going to let him know," said Tom. "It's a good mile and a half, and we're not allowed out of gates in break, but we've simply got to let him know—it's Gussy's last chance. I'm going!"

"It means a row, cutting third school with Linton—"

"Let it!" said Tom.

"O.K. Let's chance it," said Lowther.

"I'll go! No need for all of us to get Extra from Linton."

"Rats! Come on, Manners."

When the bell rang for third school, three members of the Shell Form failed to turn up in their form-room. There was a rather portentous frown on the brow of Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, as the lesson proceeded without them. Linton was prepared to give Tom Merry, Manners and Lowther, the keenest edge of his tongue when they arrived late.

But they did not arrive late. They did not arrive at all. While third school was going on at St. Jim's, the Terrible Three were going down the Ryll in their boat, pulling hard and fast, heading for the holiday bungalow down the river, to see the stout gentleman there, and enlist him, if they could, in the cause of the junior who had fished him out of the water. It meant lines,

or Extra School, or perhaps "six" from their form-master's cane, for cutting a whole school: but that could not be helped. They dismissed the consequences from their minds, and devoted all their attention to making the boat fairly fly down the rippling waters of the Ryll.

## 18

### Painful Interview!

MR. GRIMES stared.

Then he frowned.

And then he grinned.

These Combined Operations were caused by the sight of three schoolboys in a boat, one of whom was tying up at the willows, at the foot of the meadow in which the holiday bungalow stood.

Mr. Grimes stared, because he was surprised to see those three schoolboys, who had "larked" with his canoe a few days ago, landing in his meadow. He frowned, as he remembered the trouble they had given him, walking round by the bridge to recover his canoe. And he grinned, in anticipation of giving them what, in his opinion, they richly deserved, now that they were fairly walking into his hands.

Mr. Grimes was in the little garden of his bungalow when he sighted them, in the fresh, sunny morning. He stood looking over the fence at them, hardly believing that they would gratify him to the extent of coming within reach. Yet that was evidently the programme: for after Tom Merry had tied the painter to a willow branch, the three jumped ashore, and started to cross the meadow towards the bungalow.

Mr. Grimes, sure now of his prey, surprised as he

was, stepped into the little building, and picked up a flexible Malacca walking-stick. Stick in hand, he stepped out again, and, holding his hand with the stick in it behind him, awaited the arrival of his unexpected visitors.

The three juniors from St. Jim's came up at a trot. The gate was open, and as they came in, they "capped" Mr. Grimes in quite a respectful manner.

That, however, cut no ice with the stout gentleman. What they wanted with him, unless they were there for another "lark," he could not guess: but he knew what they were going to get! There was one school-boy in that vicinity towards whom the stout gentleman felt deeply and cordially grateful: but there were three about whom he yearned to lay a stick—and now he was going to lay it!

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther eyed him as they came. They remembered that the last meeting had not been exactly friendly, and, but for pressing need, they certainly would have steered clear of the stout gentleman. But they were rather reassured by the smile on his plump face. They did not guess that that smile was evoked by his happy anticipation of laying the Malacca round the three young rascals who had larked with his canoe!

"Good-morning, sir!" said Tom Merry, politely.

"Oh! Good-morning!" said Mr. Grimes. "Nice to see you again! I didn't quite expect it, but I'm very pleased."

"We've come—!"

"Yes, I see you've come!" agreed the stout gentleman. "Looking for a chance to lark with my canoe again, what?"

"Oh! No! You see—" stammered Tom.

"Oh, yes, I see," assented the stout gentleman. "Anything else you'd like to lark with? I quite enjoyed that walk round by the bridge on Saturday to get my canoe back. I hope you'll enjoy the run I'm going to give you in exchange."

"The run?" repeated Tom.

"Of course, you can run or not, just as you like,"

explained Mr. Grimes. "I expect you will, when I get going! That's for a start."

Whop!

A fat hand suddenly whipped out from behind a fat back, with a stick in it. Tom Merry gave a roar as it landed on his jacket.

"Oh! What—I say—oh—my hat—!"

"Here, look out!" gasped Lowther.

Three schoolboys jumped back. A stout gentleman jumped after them, lashing out with the Malacca. Tom Merry caught a whop across his collar, Manners one on his arm, and Lowther one on his back, as they dodged for the gateway. After them rushed the stout gentleman, brandishing the Malacca.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom. "Look here, Mr. Grimes—"

"You old ass!" roared Lowther.

"Hook it!" gasped Manners.

Really, there was nothing to do but "hook it," with the stout gentleman charging after them with brandished stick. They cut down the meadow towards the boat: but Tom Merry turned before reaching it, while his comrades cut on, and made an attempt to explain.

"Hold on, Mr. Grimes! We came here to—!"

"Take that!"

Tom had to jump away, or he certainly would have taken it. Evidently it was useless to attempt to reason with the stout gentleman, within range of the stick. Tom rushed after his comrades.

After them charged the stout gentleman, grinning breathlessly, and evidently eager to give them more. The Terrible Three were only a few yards ahead as they tumbled breathlessly into the boat. Manners and Lowther grabbed up an oar each to push off in haste, while Tom dragged at the painter. But the painter was not yet loose when the stout gentleman arrived, and the Malacca went into action again.

Whop! whop! whop!

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Keep off, you fat old ass!"

"Oh, scissors!"



Tom wrenched the painter loose, and Manners and Lowther shoved at the bank with the oars. The boat rocked out on the Ryll, Mr. Grimes reaching over and landing a last whop with the Malacca as it went, which elicited a wild howl from Monty Lowther. Then the juniors were out of reach.

The stout gentleman, standing on the grassy bank, grinned at them. He seemed to be in high good-humour now. He had simply yearned to lay a stick round the three schoolboys who had "larked" with his canoe. Why they had come to his bungalow and practically asked for it, he did not know: but he was quite pleased that they had!

He waved the stick at them from the bank.

"Now get off!" he hooted. "Let me find you here again, and I'll give you some more—plenty more where that came from! I'll teach you to come larking round a man's bungalow."

"You old ass!" roared Monty Lowther, rubbing places where the Malacca had landed.

"You silly goat!" yelled Manners, also rubbing places.

"Shut up, you chaps!" gasped Tom Merry. "Remember Gussy—"

"That silly old ass—"

"That podgy old goat—"

"Quiet, I tell you." Tom Merry stood up in the boat, panting for breath. "Look here, Mr. Grimes, will you listen to a chap—?"

"You young rascal!"

"Yes, but look here—"

"Let me catch you here again—"

"Do listen," urged Tom. "It was a chap from our school who pulled you out of the water yesterday."

"Oh, was it?" said Mr. Grimes. "Well, that was a good young chap, and a brave lad, too, plucky as they make 'em, and if he wanted to lark about with a canoe, I'd make him a present of it, and glad! But you young rascals—"

"He's in trouble!" said Tom.

"Sorry to hear it," said Mr. Grimes. Evidently he



had a kind and grateful recollection of the service D'Arcy had rendered, for his fat face became quite concerned, and he ceased to brandish his stick. "Very sorry! Brave lad, he was—might have been drowned along with me, he might: took the risk of it, he did. But you didn't come here to tell me that, I s'pose?"

"Just what we came for," answered Tom. "You can help him."

The stout gentleman blinked at him.

"Me help him?" he said. "'Course I'd help him if I could, but what the dickens do you mean, young shaver? What sort of trouble is he in?"

"He was out of bounds yesterday when he jumped in for you," explained Tom. "He's up for a flogging."

The stout gentleman gave a whistle.

"That's tough," he said. "Considering what he did while he was out, they might go easy! Might have been drowned, I tell you, saving a man's life."

Tom Merry's face brightened. Manners and Lowthere, though still rubbing places, ceased to glare wolfishly at the stout gentleman. After all, a few whops from the Malacca did not matter very much, if they succeeded in their mission. And they looked like succeeding now.

"That's why we came," went on Tom. "D'Arcy's up for a flogging for cutting gates, but it ought to count, his saving a man's life—"

"I should say so!" exclaimed the stout gentleman. "I'd pat him on the back, instead of whacking him, if I was his schoolmaster."

"Will you come up to the school and tell the Head what happened?" asked Tom. "He doesn't know—D'Arcy wouldn't tell him: but if you told him—"

"If it would do any good—"

"I'm sure it would!" exclaimed Tom. "You say that D'Arcy saved your life, Mr. Grimes—well, you can save him a flogging, if you'll take the trouble—if you'll come, we'll pull you up the river in this boat, and you'll be in time before D'Arcy goes up for a flogging."

"So that's what you came here to tell me?" said Mr. Grimes.

"That's it."

"Why didn't you tell me before I started in with the stick, then?" snapped Mr. Grimes. "If I'd known you was friends of his, you could have sunk the blinking canoe if you'd liked."

"Did you give us time to tell you?" hooted Monty Lowther.

"Eh? Oh! Perhaps I didn't—!" admitted the stout gentleman. "Seeing you come up, the young rascals that larked with my canoe—"

"Well, what about it?" asked Tom, interrupting. "Will you come?"

"Will I not?" said the stout gentleman.

That, evidently, was an answer in the affirmative. And the Terrible Three pushed the boat in to the bank, and Mr. Grimes stepped into it. The gunwale sank almost to the water as it received his weight. Never before had the Terrible Three pulled their boat with such a cargo. But they pulled hard, and the boat made good speed, weighty cargo and all: and three breathless juniors, and a red faced stout gentleman, arrived at St. Jim's a few minutes before the fellows streamed out of the form-rooms after third school.

## A Surprise for Arthur Augustus !

"D'ARCY!"

"Yaas, Kildare."

"Head's study at once."

"Vewy well, Kildare."

Kildare of the Sixth gave the swell of St. Jim's a commiserating glance, as he turned away. Arthur Augustus drew a deep, deep breath. Blake and Herries and Digby looked as dismal and dispirited as if they had made the painful discovery that life, even at St. Jim's, was hardly worth living!

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Blake.

"It's all wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I can stand it."

"Oh, you ass!" moaned Dig. "If I'd known you were going to be such an ass, I'd have stayed in yesterday and held on to your ears."

"Weally, Dig—"

"But I say, what does the Head want D'Arcy in his study for?" asked Herries. "It's a flogging in hall, and D'Arcy's wanted in hall, not in the Beak's study."

"Jaw first, perhaps," said Blake. "You'd better cut in, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah! It would be vewy bad form to keep the Head waitin'," agreed Arthur Augustus, and he walked away to the House: leaving three dismal friends behind him, whose faces reflected nothing whatever of the bright sunshine that streamed down on the old quad.

"Rotten!" repeated Blake, dismally.

"Oh, rotten!" grunted Dig. "Poor old Gussy!"

"Poor old fathead!" sighed Herries.

Three Shell fellows came out of the House. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had been called on to explain their absence from third school to their form-master. But they did not look as if the interview had troubled them much. Their faces were bright: and they cut across at once to speak to Blake and Co.

"Where's Gussy?" exclaimed Tom.

"Just gone in to see the Head!" answered Blake. "The Beak's sent for him, for some reason, instead of seeing him in hall."

"Oh, good!" said Tom.

"What's good about it?" grunted Blake. "Poor old Gussy's up for a flogging just the same, I suppose."

"I hope not," answered Tom. "We've got news, old man. Gussy never thought of mentioning it—he's that kind of ass!—but he saved a man from drowning while he was out of gates yesterday—"

"Eh?"

"And we jolly well cut third school, to get the man here to see the Head. Linton's let us off, now we've told him. And the man's jolly well with the Head now—fat johnny named Grimes—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Blake, blankly. "That ass, Gussy—that goat, Gussy—that fathead, Gussy—isn't it Gussy all over? Why, this may get him off."

"Bank on it!" said Tom, confidently.

Arthur Augustus's friends could not quite "bank" on it: but they were feeling hopeful, as they listened to what the Terrible Three had to tell them of the stout gentleman and of D'Arcy's adventure on the Ryll while they were playing cricket at Carcroft. But Arthur Augustus, as he made his way slowly to the Head's study, was not feeling hopeful. Why the Head had sent for him, before the "execution" in hall, he did not know: but he did not draw hope from the circumstance. But he was quite calm and composed, as he arrived at the headmaster's study, and tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

Arthur Augustus entered the study. His manner was

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very respectful: but it was calm, and it was firm. He had to go through it: but he was going through it with dignity! If "dignity" was saved, that would be some consolation, at least, for the Honourable Arthur Augustus!

Dr. Holmes was not alone in the study.

A stout gentleman, with a red face, was seated there, also: and Arthur Augustus glanced at him in surprise. He recognised the stout gentleman, whom he had dragged out of the Ryll the previous day. But how and why he was in the head-master's study at St. Jim's, was quite a mystery to Gussy.

"That's him, sir!" said the stout gentleman, with a nod and a grin to Arthur Augustus. "That's the lad!"

Dr. Holmes was frowning. That frown did not seem, to Arthur Augustus, to indicate hope! But he faced his head-master composedly.

"You sent for me, sir!"

Dr. Holmes fixed his eyes upon him.

"You foolish boy—!" he began.

"Weally, sir—"

"Mr. Grimes—this gentleman is Mr. Grimes—informs me that yesterday afternoon, when you were out of gates contrary to orders, you saved him from drowning in the Ryll!" exclaimed the Head.

He rapped the words out sharply.

"Yaas, sir!" answered Arthur Augustus, meekly.

"That's what he did, sir," said Mr. Grimes, with another nod. "Touch and go it was for both of us. Always fond of the water, I was, but never learned to swim a stroke! It was me for the bottom of the river, but for that lad's pluck, sir!"

"I am very glad that a boy of this school was of such assistance to you, Mr. Grimes—"

"He was that, sir! Saved a man's life!" said the stout gentleman. "Come down here for a holiday, I did. Last holiday for me, if it hadn't been for that young shaver."

"It was very kind of you to call and acquaint me with this, Mr. Grimes. I had no knowledge of it whatever."

"Don't mench, sir," said Mr. Grimes.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Why did you not tell me this?" exclaimed the Head, sternly.

"I nevah thought of it, sir—"

"My eye!" said Mr. Grimes. "He risks his life to get a man out of deep water and he never thought of it! My eye!"

"I mean, it had no connection with the mattah, sir—"

"You are a foolish boy, D'Arcy—an absurd boy! Your conduct yesterday was inexcusable—it amounted to a direct defiance of your head-master's authority—!"

"I—I nevah meant it like that, sir—!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"Probably not! But that was what it amounted to, and I had no choice but to award you a severe punishment. But had I known that you had risked your life to save a man from drowning while absent from the school, do you suppose for one moment that I should have punished you at all?" exclaimed the Head.

"Oh! W-w-wouldn't you, sir?"

"Certainly not! If I had known of your act, I should of course have taken it into consideration. You should have told me that you had saved a man from drowning while you were absent."

"I am vewy sowwy not to agwee with you, sir—"

"What?"

"It would have sounded wathah like bwaggin', sir, and there was nothin' in it, weally—only what any fellow would have done in my place," said Arthur Augustus, firmly. "I nevah thought of mentioning it, but if I had thought of it, I certainly should not have done so to get off a whoppin', sir."

"Upon my word!" said the Head.

"My eye!" murmured Mr. Grimes.

"You will not be punished for your foolish and disrespectful escapade yesterday, D'Arcy! In view of



your brave action in saving this gentleman from the river, you will be pardoned."

"Oh, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, involuntarily.

His aristocratic face brightened. He understood now why he had been sent for to the Head's study before the flogging. The flogging was "off." He had been prepared to go through it with dignity! But undoubtedly it was a tremendous relief not to have to go through it at all.

"You may leave my study, D'Arcy!"

"Thank you, sir! I twust you will allow me, sir, to expwess my wegwet for havin' disobeyed your ordahs yesterday, sir. Havin' weflected on the mattah, I have wealised that I acted vewy w'ongly in doin' so, and I am vewy sowwy indeed, sir," said Arthur Augustus, earnestly.

The Head's face relaxed into a smile.

"Very well, D'Arcy! You may go!"

"Thank you vewy much, sir."

And Arthur Augustus went. He went like a fellow walking on air! His face was as bright as the morning sunshine when he walked out into the quad.

"WELL?"

Tom Merry and Co. asked that monosyllabic question all at once.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"It is all wight, deah boys," he said.

"Flogging off?" asked Blake.

"Wight off!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom.

"Hurra!" ejaculated Herries.

"Lucky bargee," said Monty Lowther. "Gussy asks for these things—goes round begging for them—and doesn't get them!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Just gets up on his hind legs and begs for them," agreed Manners, "and then gets off! Lucky ass!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Jolly good luck, anyway," said Tom.

"Yaas, wathah! Weally, a most unexpected and wemarkable stwoke of luck," said Arthur Augustus. "There was a man in the Head's study—man named Gwimes—"

"Was there?" grinned Tom Merry, and the other fellows chuckled.

"Yaas, and I was vewy surprised to see him there. As it happens, I fished him out of the Wyll yestahday, while I was out of gates," explained Arthur Augustus. "It was nothin', weally, only it pwevented me fwom gettin' acwoss to Carcwoft—and that weally doesn't mattah vewy much aftah all as Cardew turned up twumps in my place, and—"

"What was the man doing there?" asked Monty Lowther, with a wink all round at the other fellows.

"It was vewy unexpected," said Arthur Augustus. "He seemed to be vewy gwateful at the time for bein' fished out of the wivah, but of course I nevah expected to heah anythin' more about it. But for some weason or othah he came heah this mornin' and told the Head about it. Isn't that vewy wemarkable?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows, I wegard it as vewy wemarkable and vewy lucky—"

"Lucky enough!" chuckled Tom Merry. "But not frightfully remarkable, old tulip, as we went down to his bungalow and fetched him here in a boat, for that special purpose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! Then that accounts for it," said Arthur Augustus. "It has all turned out all wight: and I twust, as I have alweady wemarked, that it will be a warnin' to you fellows always to welflect befoah you act, and wemembah that a fellow at school is bound to obey his head-mastah in all circumstances, even if

a cwicket match is at stake! Always wemembah that—!"

"Oh, bump him!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—Leggo—oh, cwumbs! Wow!"

Bump!

It was rather a hard bump. But it was, after all, a very happy ending to D'Arcy's day off!

THE END

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