

THE STONY SEVEN!

by
Martin Clifford



"Stony broke" is a state not uncommon to the cheery chums of St. Jim's, but for once, how to "raise the wind" provides a pretty problem—a problem which, when tackled, leads to more trouble raising than "wind raising"!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

NO LUCK FOR LOWTHER!

"I've got it!"

Monty Lowther fairly burst into Study No. 10 in the Shell, with excitement in his face, and gasped out the words.

There were six juniors in the study; and they all stared at Lowther. They had been looking very thoughtful, not to say glum; but as Monty made his breathless announcement their faces brightened up wonderfully.

"You've got it?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Yes!"

"Thank goodness!" said Manners, in tones of deep relief.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin' news!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Then it will be all wight?"

"Right as rain!" said Monty Lowther cheerily.

Blake and Herries and Dig exchanged glances of satisfaction. The news really was exhilarating.

For quite a long time—it seemed like ages to them—the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. had been in the sad and forlorn state slangily described as "stony."

Study No. 10 in the Shell and Study No. 6 in the Fourth had fallen into the sere and yellow leaf.

The last copper was gone—and the allowances were mortgaged ahead.

One or two remittances that had dropped in had been used to settle up small debts. But the big debt remained—the sum of six pounds, which weighed upon the minds and the spirits of the stony seven.

How the wind was to be raised to square the account was still a deep mystery to Tom Merry & Co., although they had tried many ways and means—from gardening to French translations.

Six of the stony juniors had been holding a consultation on the subject in Tom Merry's study. Their consultations were frequent; indeed, the stony juniors held almost as many conferences as if they had been great statesmen with nothing to do but to exercise their chins.

And then came Monty Lowther, bursting into the study with the news that he had "got it."

No wonder the conference brightened up.

"I weally think this meetin' ought to pass a vote of thanks to Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It will be no end of a welief to get cleah of that howwid debt."

"Hear, hear!" said Dig.

"And we'll jolly well let it be a warning to us," said Tom Merry. "No more debts for me, after this."

"No fear!" said Blake emphatically.

"Wathah not!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am glad to see that you youngstahs are takin' this lesson to heart——"

"Bow-wow! Lowther, old man," said Tom Merry, "you're a jewel. I was beginning to think that we'd never raise that awful six quid."

"But how have you done it, Lowther?" asked Blake. "Have you had a terrific remittance?"

"Remittance?" said Lowther.

"Oh, no!"

"Then how——"

"How did you get it?" asked Herries.

"I was trotting around under the elms, thinking it over, and all of a sudden it came to me!" said Lowther jubilantly.

"Wh-a-a-t?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Are you off your rocker?" roared Blake. "I suppose it couldn't come to you of its own accord, could it?"

"Eh! Of course!" said Monty Lowther, with a stare. "Naturally!"

"It—it came to you of its own accord?" babbled Blake.

"Of course! Suddenly flashed into my mind."

"Flashed into your mind!" shrieked Tom Merry. "How the merry thump could six pounds flash into your mind?"

"He's potty!" said Herries. "Simply potty! I've seen signs of this in Lowther before. The way he makes puns——"

"Six pounds!" said Lowther blankly. "What do you mean? I didn't say I had six pounds, did I?"

The glum expression returned to half a dozen faces. Evidently there had been a misapprehension.

"You burbling ass!" said Blake. "You said you'd got it!"

"Yaas, wathah, Lowthah! You distinctly said you had got it!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Oh, I meant the idea!"

"The what?"

"The idea—how to raise the wind, you know," said Lowther. "I haven't got the money—I've got the idea."

"Fathead!"

Six voices pronounced that word in tones of utter disgust. The hopes of the stony juniors had been raised,

only to be dashed to the ground again. Monty Lowther appeared to think that his idea was practically as good as the money; but it was obvious that the six fellows in the study did not agree with him, not the least little bit.

"Bai Jove! I weally think Lowthah ought to be swagged!" said Arthur Augustus. "He made us think he had the tin, and it turns out to be only one of his wotten wheezes."

"Collar the silly owl!" growled Herries.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Lowther. "You haven't heard the wheeze yet. It's a stunt that will see us through."

"Wats!"

"Rubbish!"

"We don't want to hear it," said Blake morosely. "We know your Shell wheezes. Poof!"

"Look here, you cheeky Fourth-Form ass!"

"Wag him, deah boys!"

"Hold on," said Tom Merry. "Give the silly chump a chance. If his idea's any good, we'll try it. If it isn't, we'll bump him!"

"Yaas, that's fair!"

"It's the stunt of the season," said Monty Lowther impressively. "I wonder I never thought of it before. It came into my head all of a sudden while I was thinking the thing out. We've tried several schemes for raising the wind, but they've come to nothing. Now, this idea is the real article—the real gilt-edged thing. You fellows know how I play the banjo?"

"The—the banjo?"

"Yes. You know how I play it?"

"Like a nigger playing a tom-tom," said Blake. "We know!"

"You silly ass!" roared Lowther.

"You know I play it awfully well.

And you know how I can make up?"

"Make up?"

"Yes—you've seen me play nigger parts."

"But what the thump has that got to do with it?" demanded Manners.

"Lots! That's the idea! Nigger minstrel, you know—song and dance, and pass round the hat!" said Lowther. "Catch on?"

The assembled juniors simply blinked at Monty Lowther. They could scarcely believe that he was serious.

"Nigger minstrel!" said Blake faintly. "Pass round the hat! Great Christopher Columbus!"

"Bai Jove! I weally feah that Lowthah's bwain is givin' way."

"Well," said Tom Merry, "of all the potty rubbish——"

"Give a chap a chance," said Lowther hotly. "Made up as a nigger minstrel, I'm going to give a performance in the quad——"

"In the quad!" shrieked the juniors.

"That's it! Of course, the fellows won't know it's little me. I shall dawn on them suddenly, you know, made up as Uncle Bones, with banjo complete. I've got the things in the property-box. I shall rig up in the wood-shed after lessons. I give a song and dance in the quad—the fellows crowd round—tumultuous applause—coppers and tanners and bobs rain into the hat—and—and there you are!"

Jack Blake rose to his feet. His expression was grim. He looked round at the conference.

"Lowther made us believe he'd got the quids!" he said. "It turns out to be a stunt—the kind of stunt they'd think of in Colney Hatch on their very bad days. Lowther's asked for it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Collar him!"

"But listen——" yelled Lowther, in great wrath and indignation.

But the juniors refused to listen. Apparently they considered that they had heard enough. They collared the unhappy propounder of ripping wheezes, jerked him off his feet, and bumped him on the study carpet. The dust rose from the carpet and a wild yell from Monty Lowther.

"Yoop! You silly asses——"

"Give him anothead!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow! I'll—I'll—— You silly chumps, it's the catch of the season. I'm going ahead, anyhow, and you'll see—— Yaroooooooh!"

Bump!

Monty Lowther landed on the carpet for the third time, and then he was left. The meeting broke up, and the hapless Monty was left feeling as if he had broken up, too.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

GOING IT!

TOM MERRY and Manners grinned a little when they met their chum in class that afternoon.

Monty Lowther frowned at them.

He was still very much ruffled by the unflattering reception his amazing wheeze had met with. But that unflattering reception had not made any difference to his resolve. He was going ahead just the same, after lessons that day—he was determined on that. If his comrades in misfortune did not choose to back him up, he would "go it" alone.

In the interval between the bumping in the study and afternoon class in the Shell room, Lowther had been busy.

There were signs on his fingers of how he had sorted out his greasemarks and lampblack, and even as he entered the Form-room—in the awe-inspiring

presence of Mr. Linton himself—Monty Lowther was humming a coon song that he had been running over to refresh his memory.

When Monty Lowther was "on a stunt" he was often forgetful of time and space and other considerations. He was very unwilling to come into class at all that afternoon; he would have preferred preparing in the study for his great enterprise. Naturally—at least, Lowther would have called it naturally—he could not put this important business out of his head for the sake of such minor considerations as geography and English grammar! What did geography and English grammar matter to a fellow who had the stunt of the term in his active brain, and who was going to save six stony comrades from stoniness in spite of themselves?

Nevertheless, Mr. Linton—quite unaware that more important matters were on hand—persisted in geography and English grammar, in the obstinate and regardless manner common to Form-masters.

When Monty Lowther, absent-mindedly as was natural in the circumstances, told Mr. Linton that America was discovered by Uncle Bones, Mr. Linton stared—and the master of the Shell was still more astonished to hear that Sir Francis Drake was celebrated for playing the banjo.

There was a sound of swishing in the Form-room next; and Monty Lowther, as he rubbed his palms, was brought back to common earth again, as it were, and tried to give up his thoughts to geography.

In English grammar Mr. Linton had another surprise.

The juniors were directed to write each a sentence of his own composition or from memory, and parse it, the papers being handed in to Mr. Linton



More or less melodiously, the nigger minstrel, to the accompaniment of his banjo, began to sing. "Go it Uncle Bones!" exclaimed the juniors, greatly enjoying the situation. But little did most of them realise that the minstrel was Monty Lowther!

afterwards. While they were so engaged, the master of the Shell took a well-earned respite, nodding at his desk in the drowsy summer's afternoon. But he woke up as sharp as a needle when the papers were handed in, and he stared as he looked at Lowther's. Monty had chosen the beautiful sentence:

"Honey, little Honey, you're my Honey-honey-hoo!

When I strum upon de banjo I'm a-strummy-umming you!"

"Honey: Proper noun, voc. case, fem. gen., sing. num.

"Little: Adj. of quantity.

"Honey: Prop. noun, voc. case, fem. gen., sing."

Mr. Linton did not trouble to finish reading the parsing exercise. He called Monty Lowther up to his desk.

"Do you call that a sentence suitable for a grammatical exercise, Lowther?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Monty.

"Our opinions differ on that point," said Mr. Linton coldly. "It is not a sentence at all, Lowther, but a fragment of imbecility."

"Oh!" said Lowther.

"I fear, Lowther, that you are not thinking of your lessons this afternoon."

"Oh, sir!"

"You will write down another exercise for parsing from my dictation."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Take this sentence; it is from Fielding, and it will be useful to you, Lowther, to study this master of prose; it will help to correct your taste, which I fear is bad. 'An author ought to consider himself, not as a gentleman who gives a private or eleemosynary treat, but rather as one who keeps a public ordinary, at which all persons are welcome for their money.'"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lowther involuntarily.

"Eh? What did you say, Lowther?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"Have you written down that sentence, Lowther?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Very good. You will stay in after lessons, and parse it, and bring me the result to my study before tea-time."

"Oh!"

"You may go to your place, Lowther."

Monty Lowther went to his place, a sadder if not a wiser Shell fellow. For the remainder of the afternoon he tried to keep his thoughts fixed on the pearls of wisdom that fell from Mr. Linton, and to drive away all consideration of his new stunt, and his banjo, and Honey-honey-hoo!

When the class was dismissed, Monty Lowther had to remain in the Form-room to parse that sentence from the master of prose given him by his kind Form-master to improve his taste.

Tom Merry and Manners gave him sympathetic glances as they went out, which was all they could do for him.

They went down to the cricket-ground to put in some practice before tea, expecting Monty Lowther to join them there when his detention task was done.

But Monty Lowther did not appear.

Kildare of the Sixth was putting in some of his valuable time coaching the juniors, so Tom Merry and Manners did not go in search of their chum. They were leaving the cricket-ground more than an hour later, when Baggy Trimble of the Fourth met them, full of excited news.

"Come on, you fellows!" bawled Trimble.

"What's up?"

"He, he, he! There's a nigger minstrel in the quad!" chortled Trimble. "You can hear his giddy old banjo from here! Taggles can't have seen him come in, or he'd have chucked him out. He, he, he!"

Tom Merry jumped.

"A nigger minstrel——"

"In the quad!" yelled Manners.

"Giving a song and dance!" chuckled Trimble. "I say, they'll chuck him out on his neck. Awful cheek, you know——"

Tom and Manners exchanged a glance of dismay, and then they rushed on. Monty Lowther, evidently, was "at it."

He was carrying out his great stunt. Undoubtedly he had "made up" in the wood-shed, as he had planned, as soon as his detention was over—and his chums, occupied at cricket, had been unable to restrain his enthusiasm. The sound of a banjo and a voice greeted the juniors as they ran up, mingled with roars of laughter from a crowd gathering in the quad.

"Bai Jove, you fellahs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's——"

"Shurrup!" whispered Tom hurriedly.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Don't give it away, ass!" muttered Manners.

"I was not goin' to give it away, Mannahs. But weally——"

Blake and Herries and Dig came up, grinning. They could guess who the nigger minstrel was.

But outside the half-dozen juniors, nobody guessed. Certainly Monty Lowther's nearest relation would not have recognised him just then. The crowd was already thick round the performer, and Tom Merry & Co. had to shove a way forward.

Pong, pong! Tang, tang! went the banjo.

On the ground stood a large silk hat, ready for contributions. What looked like a Christy minstrel was strumming on the banjo and singing melodiously.

The chums of the School House blinked at him. Was it Monty Lowther, after all?

The minstrel had a face as black as the ace of spades; his mouth was widened with chalk until it seemed to extend almost from ear to ear; his head was covered with black fuzzy hair. His trousers were striped with red on white; his cutaway coat was sky-blue. His tie was large and flowing, and rivalled in colour the well-known coat of Joseph. If it was Lowther of the Shell, he was marvelously got up.

He was singing, more or less melodiously, the following refrain to the accompaniment of the banjo:

"Honey, little honey, you're my
honey-honey-hoo!
When I strum upon de banjo I'm
a-strummy-umming you!
Oh, my hunky little honey,
Though my features may be
funny,
I've a great big heart, my honey, and
it beats for you-oo-oo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Uncle Bones," sang out Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Bai Jove! The awful ass!"

The minstrel proceeded to his dance, which he performed with some grace. Tom Merry stared towards the façade of the School House, expecting every moment to see a master issue forth to inquire into this extraordinary scene in the quadrangle. The minstrel accompanied his dance with castanets, and the juniors cheered him. It was the first time they had seen such a show in the sacred precincts of the school quadrangle.

"Bai Jove! Now he's goin' wound with the hat!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "And here comes Wailton."

Mr. Railton issued from the School House as the minstrel ceased his dance, picked up the big silk hat, and walked round the circle holding it out. Quite a shower of coppers fell into the hat, with some sixpences and a shilling or two.

"Better cut off, uncle," whispered Talbot of the Shell, as he dropped a shilling. "There's a beak coming along."

"And here comes Taggles!" said Gore.

Taggles, the porter, was coming up from the gates, with a stick in his hand, greatly scandalised. Uncle Bones blinked round as Mr. Railton made his way through the throng.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed the Housemaster sternly.

"Good-afternoon, sah!" said the minstrel. "You like to see me gib song and dance, massa?"

Tom Merry almost held his breath. "Certainly not!" exclaimed Mr. Railton sternly. "You should not have come in here. Itinerant entertainers are not allowed to enter the school grounds. Taggles, you should not have admitted this man."

"I never did!" exclaimed Taggles

hotly. "He never come in at the gates, sir! Must 'ave legged it over the wall, sir."

"That is very odd," said Mr. Railton. "However, see him off the premises at once, Taggles."

"You leave 'im to me, sir!" said Taggles, and he dropped a heavy hand on the minstrel's shoulder. "Now then, you vagabond, you come alonger me!"

"I'se comin' when I'se finished takin' de collection, boss," objected the minstrel.

"You're coming now!" grunted Taggles, and he tightened his grip and marched the coloured gentleman away to the gates. And half St. Jim's followed them in a grinning crowd.

THE THIRD CHAPTER NOT SO BLACK AS PAINTED!

"**H**OUTSIDE!"

Taggles the porter gave the black gentleman a twirl in the gateway, and sent him into the road spinning like a top.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Uncle Bones.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, you clear hoff!" said Taggles, pointing an admonitory forefinger at the minstrel. "You 'ook it! You 'ear me?"

The minstrel heard, but, like the dying gladiator of old, he heeded not.

Having reached the middle of the road, opposite the wide gateway, he stopped and put his hat on the ground, and began to strum the banjo again. Taggles stared at him in great wrath.

"Are you a-goin'?" he roared.

Ping! ping! pang! pong! went the banjo.

"You rapscaillon, 'ook it!" shouted Taggles.

Pong! pong! pong!

"Let him alone!" chuckled Car-

dew of the Fourth. "The road's free to him, Taggles!"

"Hear, hear!" chortled Figgins of the New House. "Go it, Uncle Bones!"

"On the ball!" roared Grundy of the Shell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There, in full view of the scandalised and outraged Taggles, the black gentleman proceeded to do another dance in sheer defiance. The gateway swarmed with cheering juniors.

Taggles brandished his stick at the coloured gentleman.

"Will you 'ook it?" he roared.

"Go it!" yelled Figgins.

"Play up, darkey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Railton had gone back to the School House. Taggles was left alone to deal with the strolling performer whose absurd performance was detracting from the scholastic dignity of the ancient foundation of St. Jim's. Taggles brandished his stick in vain.

"He's doin' no harm, old bean," said Cardew. "In fact, he's amusin' us! It's no end amusin' to think that the fellow thinks anybody could want to see a show like that! I'm goin' to give him a half-crown for his nerve!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go away!" roared Taggles.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Knox of the Sixth came hurrying down to the gates. The juniors made room for the Sixth-Form prefect to pass.

"Taggles, what the thump do you mean by allowing a rowdy scene like this at the gates!" exclaimed Knox. "Mr. Railton's sent me——"

"He won't go!" gasped Taggles.

"I've 'owled at 'im till I'm 'oarse, and he won't go!"

"I'll jolly soon shift him!"

Knox strode out of the gates. He was head and shoulders taller than the minstrel, and it looked like an easy task for him.

"Hook it, uncle!" shouted Dick Julian.

But Uncle Bones had no time to hook it. Knox fairly rushed him down and seized him by the collar.

"Now, you rascal!" exclaimed the bully of the Sixth.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Bai Jove! I wondah Knox doesn't wecognise Lowthah's voice, you know," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Let him alone, Knox!" shouted Tom Merry. "He can give a show in the road if he likes."

"I'll show him if he can!" grinned

Knox, all his bullying instincts roused by the fact that the coloured gentleman was evidently not a match for him physically in any way.

And Knox proceeded to shake the unfortunate minstrel till his teeth rattled as loudly as his castanets had done.

"Leggo, you rotter—yow-ow—let go, I tell you! I'll hack your shins!" yelled the minstrel.

"By gad! I—I know that voice!" stuttered Knox. "Why—what—what— Great pip!"

Knox gave a yell of astonishment as the fuzzy wig came off in the tussle, disclosing what was evidently a boy's head, with dark brown hair. The minstrel tore himself away—so forcibly that his coat split down the

"Houtside!" exclaimed Taggles the porter, whirling the nigger minstrel into the road. "You clear hoff, you rapsallion!" "Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Uncle Bones.



back, the collar remaining in Knox's grip. And through the gash in the back of the coat an Eton jacket could be seen.

"My hat!" shouted Figgins. "It's a kid—it's a schoolboy, got up! Who on earth is it?"

"A Grammarian on the jape!" said Levison.

"I know his voice!" said Clive. "I think it's——"

"Lowther!" roared Knox.

"Oh, you rotter!" gasped Lowther.

Knox clutched at him again. He was grinning now. The bully of the Sixth was always glad of a chance to be down on the Terrible Three.

"You won't hook it now!" grinned Knox. "You'll come in with me, my pippin! Precious games for a St. Jim's fellow!"

"Bai Jove! All the fat's in the fiah now, deah boys!"

"Looks like it!" grunted Tom Merry.

In Knox's muscular grip, Monty Lowther was marched in at the gates. Taggles almost fell down with astonishment as he peered into his blackened face and made out Lowther's features.

"Master Lowther!" he stuttered. "Nice goings hon! My word! Ain't you jolly well ashamed of yourself, Master Lowther, got up like this 'ere?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Monty.

"Come on!" growled Knox, jerking at the junior's shoulder. "I'll take you to Mr. Railton—just as you are."

"Look here, Knox——"

"This way!" said Knox, in great enjoyment. "We'll see what your Housemaster thinks of this, you rowdy young blackguard!"

"Lowther on the pierrot stunt!" chortled Crooke of the Shell. "Give him a penny, Racke! Here's a ha'-penny for you, Lowther!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Spare a copper for a St. Jim's chap down on his luck!" howled Baggy Trimble. "Give him a penny, somebody! He, he, he!"

Monty Lowther's face was crimson under his dark complexion—though the crimson could not be seen. Tom and Manners gazed at him almost speechlessly. Monty's hare-brained scheme of "raising the wind" for the stony seven did not look like being a success, financial or otherwise. The "stoniness" of the seven was already a standing joke in the Lower School; and Monty's amazing stunt was likely to give it a new advertisement. The whole crowd of juniors yelled with laughter as they followed Knox and his prisoner towards the School House.

Three or four mischievous fellows tossed coppers into the big silk hat which Lowther still held in his hand. He held his wig in the other hand—it was the property of the School House Dramatic Society, and was too valuable to be lost. The aspect of the blackened junior, with a hat in one hand and a fuzzy wig in the other, and Knox's grip on his shoulder, was striking enough, and it made the St. Jim's fellows howl.

"Look here, Knox!" gasped Lowther, as they reached the School House steps. "There's no need to take me in like this——"

"Just where you're mistaken!" chuckled Knox. "You're coming in just exactly like that!"

"You rotter——"

"Knox——" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Shut up! Get out of the way!"

"Bai Jove! Here's Linton!"

Mr. Linton appeared in the doorway. The master of the Shell stared at Knox, and then at the minstrel.

"Knox! For what reason are you bringing this—this disreputable character into the house?" he exclaimed.

"It's Lowther, sir!"

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"Lowther of your Form, sir!" said Knox. "He's been playing the banjo and begging——"

"I've not been begging!" yelled Monty Lowther furiously. "I've been passing round the hat for a song and dance, and earning the money!"

Mr. Linton fairly gasped.

"Lowther! You—you foolish, disreputable, extraordinary young rascal! How dare you?"

"I'm taking him to the Housemaster, sir," said Knox.

"Quite right. I will accompany you," said Mr. Linton.

Knox marched his prisoner on to the School Housemaster's study, and Mr. Linton brought up the rear with a brow of thunder. It was clear that the master of the Shell did not approve of this method of raising the wind by an impecunious junior. A chuckling crowd was left in the corridor—but Tom Merry and Manners did not chuckle. They were filled with too much alarm for their enterprising chum.

"The uttah ass!" said Arthur Augustus. "Cawwyin' on, you know, aftah I told him the ideah was no good! But it is partly your fault, Blake."

"What?" ejaculated Blake. "How's that, fathead?"

"Yaas, wathah! I was willin' to waise the wind by poppin' my tickah, you know, and if you had not waised objections to——"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake——"

ST. JIM'S JINGLES

GERALD KNOX

(the bully of the Sixth)



A LANKY lout is Gerald Knox,
A bully overpowering;
Stands nearly six feet in his socks,
Above the small fry towering.
And woe betide the junior boy
Who dares to be defiant;
It doesn't pay him: to annoy
This big and burly giant!

I've said sufficient to disclose
That Knox is not a hero;
For he believes in biffs and blows,
His patron saint is Nero.
That twisted saying, "Might is right,"
Is Knox's favourite maxim:
Surely his conscience, in the night,
Reproaches and attacks him?

He takes no joy in healthy sport,
Or open-air attractions;
Nor strives to win a good report
By true and upright actions.
To the "Green Man" by stealth he goes,
Or else the "Crown and Anchor";
And there his strategy he shows
At games like nap and banker.

At periods, in his shady past,
He's squandered cash on horses,
To find himself in debt at last,
Then bitter his remorse is.
When Fancy Man or Fairy Elf
Have failed to win their races,
In Queer Street he has found himself—
Most undesired of places!

His chum and crony, Gerald Cutts,
A bird of kindred feather,
With the tall prefect swanks and struts;
They sally forth together
On many a doubtful escapade
And shady expedition;
Some day disclosures will be made,
Then awkward their position!

We do not love you, Gerald Knox,
Your ways are dark and sinister;
And if this brainy bard could box,
A thrashing he'd administer!
Towards the ropes he'd make you reel,
And castigate you fully;
That is the proper way to deal
With you, you blustering bully!

"Hark!" chortled Trimble.

From Mr. Railton's study came the sound of a swishing cane, and it was accompanied by a loud howl.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

NOT A SUCCESS

MR. RAILTON looked astonished when his study was invaded by Knox of the Sixth, a nigger minstrel, and the master of the Shell. He was still more astonished when he learned the identity of the nigger minstrel. He gazed at Monty's blackened face as if he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Lowther!" he exclaimed. "Is it possible?"

Uncle Bones stood before his House-master, the picture of dismay. This was not how he had planned his wonderful wheeze to turn out. The amateur minstrel had intended to gather a harvest of coin of the realm for his entertainment, and to retire with the same to a secluded spot—where Uncle Bones would disappear and Lowther of the Shell take his place once more. But the programme had gone awry. Mr. Railton's wrathful and astounded stare made the unhappy minstrel quake.

"Yes, it is Lowther!" gasped Mr. Linton. "Lowther, of my Form, Mr. Railton. It is incredible—unheard of! But it is true!"

"Lowther, what does this mean?"

"M-m-m-mean, sir?" stammered Lowther.

"Why are you disguised in this extraordinary manner, with your face blackened?"

"I—I—I'm a m-m-minstrel, sir!" groaned Lowther.

"A what?"

"A nigger minstrel, sir!" groaned Lowther.

"There is no harm in such an entertainment being given in the proper

place, at a proper time, Lowther. But you have appeared in the open quadrangle in this absurd guise——"

"He was collecting money, sir," said Knox.

"Is it possible, Lowther," exclaimed Mr. Linton, "that you have played this astounding prank from so sordid a motive as that of pecuniary gain?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lowther involuntarily.

Mr. Linton's way of putting it was most unpleasant.

"Where is the money?" snapped Mr. Railton.

"In—in—in the hat, sir! I was passing round the—the hat! Nigger minstrels always pass round the hat, sir!" said Lowther feebly.

"Turn it out upon the table."

Clink, clink, clink!

Mr. Railton counted the money. There was quite a stack of coppers, a good many sixpences, and some shillings.

"Dear me! A total of nineteen shillings and sixpence!" said Mr. Railton. "Mr. Linton, will you take charge of this sum and place it in the poor-box in the hall?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Linton.

Lowther suppressed a groan. Nineteen-and-six was not the sum he had hoped to raise—and that he might have raised if he had been left alone. But it would have helped the stony seven. Now it was destined to help the poor—certainly a very worthy object, but scarcely comforting to Monty in the circumstances.

"How to deal with this reckless, absurd, extraordinary boy, I hardly know," said Mr. Railton. "I trust that this foolish prank is chiefly due to want of reflection. But you will agree with me, Mr. Linton, that a somewhat exemplary punishment is called for."

"Most decidedly!" said the master of the Shell, with emphasis.

"If—if you please, sir——" stut-tered Lowther.

"What have you to say, Lowther?"

"There—there was no harm done, sir!" groaned Lowther. "Nigger minstrel business is a quite respectable way of earning money——"

"I think that will do, Lowther. Mr. Linton, as this absurd boy is in your Form, I will leave him in your hands. There is a cane on my desk. Will you hand the cane to Mr. Linton, Knox?"

Knox performed that service for Mr. Linton with alacrity and pleasure. The master of the Shell took a business-like grip on the cane. His expression showed that he was not going to risk spoiling Monty Lowther by sparing the rod.

"Hold out your hand, Lowther!"

Swish!

"Wow!"

"Silence, boy! The other hand!"

Swish! Mr. Linton put his beef into it.

"Yarooogh!"

"Lowther! How dare you utter such objectionable ejaculations in your Housemaster's study!" exclaimed Mr. Linton angrily. "Hold out your hand again!"

Swish!

"Wooooooop!"

"I think that will be adequate, Mr. Railton." The Housemaster nodded assent. "Lowther, you may go! If you should ever play such a prank again——"

Mr. Linton paused, and left the rest to Monty Lowther's imagination.

The hapless minstrel almost limped out of the study, hat and wig in hand, banjo under his arm, and trying to rub his hands in spite of those paraphernalia. A loud chortle greeted

him as he emerged into the corridor.

"Here he comes!" roared Gore.

"When did you wash last, Lowther?"

"He, he, he! They don't wash in No. 10!" chortled Trimble. "What a face! What a neck!"

Tom Merry relieved his chum of hat and wig and banjo, and drew him away in time to prevent him from committing assault and battery upon the howling juniors. Study No. 6 followed them upstairs to the Shell passage. They were grinning—they could not help that. Tom and Manners tried hard not to smile.

Monty Lowther glared at them.

"I did my best!" he growled.

"What a best!" murmured Blake.

"I raised nineteen and six, anyhow!" hooted Lowther.

"Bai Jove! Where is it, deah boy?"

"Railton's bagged it for the school poor-box."

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

"Is that a laughing matter?" yelled Lowther angrily.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Funniest thing I've ever struck!" grinned Blake. "This is going to help us out—I don't think! Don't you fellows fancy it's about time you gave up thinking of wheezes? Leave it to Study No. 6."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Lowther.

"Go and get a wash!" suggested Herries. "You want it! The fellows are saying that that's your natural complexion, because you never use any soap!"

"You silly ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, get out!" roared Lowther, and he seized the banjo and made a rush at Study No. 6.

Blake & Co. fled, chortling. Lowther gave Tom and Manners a morose

stare, and seemed disposed to give them the benefit of the banjo.

"Awfully funny, isn't it?" he snorted.

"Well, now you mention it, it is rather!" assented Manners, with a grin.

"You silly owl!"

"Better go and change, old man," murmured Tom Merry. "Get that jolly old complexion off——"

"Fathead!"

Monty Lowther tramped away to a bathroom, not in a good temper. And Tom Merry and Manners smiled—audibly—when he was gone.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

A CRISIS!

"GWEAT Scott!" "Fiver?" asked three voices in eager unison.

"No!"

"Oh, rotten!"

It was a few days after Monty Lowther's heroic—but unsuccessful—attempt to raise the wind. The stony seven were as stony as ever; and Lowther, fertile as he generally was in wheezes, had not propounded any new scheme so far. He appeared a little fed up since the ghastly failure of the minstrel stunt, and, as Jack Blake put it, "since then he had used no other."

On this especial day there was a half-holiday, and the midday post had brought a letter for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. There was a crest on the envelope, which indicated that it was a letter from home; and Blake and Herries and Digby had gathered eagerly round their noble chum as he opened the letter. For sometimes there was a crisp five-pound note in Lord Eastwood's letters to his second son; and such a remittance, in present circumstances,

would have been a terrific windfall.

But in this imperfect universe it is uncommon for things to arrive just when they are wanted. There was no banknote in the letter; there was not even a currency note; but there was evidently news of a much less gratifying nature.

"Oh, come on!" said Blake resignedly. "If there isn't a remittance, no need to read the letter now."

"A chap's pater ought to dub up if he sends a chap a letter," said Digby argumentatively. "I'm really surprised at your pater, Gussy."

"This lettah is wathah important, howevah," said Arthur Augustus. "It nevah wains but it pours, you know. Misfortunes nevah come singly, bai Jove!"

"What's the matter now?" asked Herries.

"The patah is comin' down to St. Jim's to see me."

"No harm in that," said Blake. "Nothing to pull a long face about. He's bound to spend some time with the Head, and he will have a train to catch. Probably won't worry you for more than half an hour."

"Weally, Blake!"

"Perhaps only a quarter of an hour," said Dig encouragingly.

"I twust," said Arthur Augustus, in his most stately way, "that I shall nevah look upon a visit fwom my fathah as a wowwy. You young-stahs are wathah thoughtless."

"Can it!" said Blake.

"But the howwid fact is, deah boys, that Lord Eastwood is comin' down this aftahnoon."

"Oh!"

"He mentions that he is goin' to take the opportunity of havin' a good talk with me."

"Ah!"

"Particularly on account of what



"Hold out your hand, Lowther!" said Mr. Linton, taking a business-like grip on the cane. Swish! "Yar-oooh!" yelled Lowther. His effort to "raise the wind" was having painful results!

he is pleased to wefer to as my extwavagance."

"Hem!"

"He is wathah surpvised at my askin' him to send me a fivah——"

"What rot!"

"When he sent me one only a fortnight ago."

"The one you wasted paying your tailor!" said Herries.

"He thinks it a good ideah to have a little talk with me, and for that weason he suggests havin' tea in the study with me."

"My hat!"

"And he will awwive here at four o'clock——"

"Dear man!"

"And aftah payin' his wespects

to the Head, he will come to tea in Studay No. 6."

"I wish now," said Blake reflectively, "that I hadn't chucked away that last sardine. It was getting old. It didn't look nice. But we ought to have something to offer to a belted earl when he comes to tea."

"Weally, you ass!"

"I suppose he won't be thoughtful enough to bring a hamper with him?" suggested Dig.

"It is certainly not pwobable, Dig, that Lord Eastwood will think of bwingin' a hampah in the twain with him."

"And that's one of our hereditary legislators!" said Blake. "Fancy

a chap making laws for a nation and not having foresight enough to bring a hamper when he comes to tea in a junior study!"

"I twust you are not alludin' to my patah as a 'chap,' Blake?"

"Bloke, then!" said Blake.

"I stwongly object to my patah bein' chawactewised as a bloke."

"Oh, make it cove, then!" said Blake. "Fancy the old cove——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard your wemarks as unseemly, Blake!" said the swell of St. Jim's severely. "Pway wing off! The question is what is goin' to be done? Studay No. 6 is bound to be hospitable. Besides, aftah givin' me a feahful wigg'in' the patah genewally shells out. If we get thwough the tea all wight, and the deah old patah keeps in a good tempah, it is extwemely pwob that the wesult will welieve us of all our financial difficulties. That is what Shakespeare would chawactewise as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished.'"

"Hear, hear!" said Gussy's chums heartily.

"But we have got to play up, somehow," said Arthur Augustus, "and the howwid mystewy is, how are we goin' to stand a weally wippin' tea when we are bwoke to the weawy wide?"

Blake rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I give that one up!" he said. "Ask us an easier one."

"Couldn't we take tea in Hall?" said Herries.

"Wathah not! Besides, I should not like him wigg'in' me before all the fellahs. There is only one we-source," said Arthur Augustus; "I shall have to pop the tickah."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, you duffahs——"

"If I catch you near a pawn-

broker's," said Blake impressively, "I'll give you the licking of your life!"

"Wats!"

"That's barred!" said Digby decidedly. "There would be a row if you were seen going into a pawnshop, you fathead!"

"I shall have to be vewy careful not to be seen, Dig."

"Very likely they wouldn't lend money on a gold watch to a school-boy!" said Herries. "I believe pawnbrokers are not supposed to deal with minors. Might think you'd pinched it, too."

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"Don't talk rot, Gussy, old chap," said Blake. "We'll think of some way before tea-time. As a last resource, we might raid some grub in the New House."

"I feah, Blake, that there is nothin' for it but poppin' the tickah!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking his head.

"You won't be allowed, old bean!" grinned Blake. "If you haven't sense enough to keep out of trouble, your old pals will manage it for you. I dare say something will turn up by tea-time."

"Wats!"

"Look here, Gussy——"

"Wubbish!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away, in deep thought—evidently thinking out ways and means of "popping" his celebrated gold "ticker." Blake looked for the Terrible Three in the quadrangle.

"Anything turned up?" he asked, when he found them.

Three heads were shaken.

"Lowther had any more brain-waves?" inquired Blake sarcastically.

"Go and eat cokel!" grunted Monty.

"Well, Gussy's pater is coming to tea," said Blake. "Just like a thoughtless old nobleman to drop in in a time of famine. You fellows got any suggestions to make?"

"If you'd backed me up in my nigger-minstrel stunt," began Lowther, "it might have turned out better——"

"My dear man, your wheezes never could turn out anything but rank failures," said Blake kindly. "It was quite benevolent of you to raise nineteen-and-six for the deserving poor; but it didn't help us much. Feel inclined to sell your camera on this special occasion, Manners?"

"No!" answered Manners, with Spartan brevity.

"I'll tell you what——" said Tom Merry thoughtfully.

"Go ahead!"

"If you succeed in getting a good tea in the study, we'll come!" said the captain of the Shell. "That's all I can suggest."

"Fathead!"

Evidently there was nothing doing; and six members of the stony septette realised that it was very probable that Lord Eastwood's tea in Study No. 6 would be a frugal meal—very frugal. But the seventh and greatest member was thinking the matter out deeply; and his resolution was fixed to raise the necessary cash by pledging his gold watch to a gentleman whose business it was to give loans on such articles.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

"POPPING THE TICKER" I

TOM MERRY & Co were not, during the next hour or two, thinking of their noble and distinguished comrade, the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. There was a cricket match going on on Big Side, and Kildare was

batting against the New House. Kildare was always worth watching at the wickets, and the juniors gathered to watch him. The great question of raising the wind was left over for the present. In point of fact, there was "nothing doing," and Tom Merry remarked that it was no good worrying about a state of affairs that could not be helped; and his chums agreed with him. So they watched the senior House match, and in their deep interest in the game they forgot all about Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his wonderful scheme for easing the financial stringency.

Meanwhile the swell of the Fourth was not losing time. House matches did not appeal to him in the present circumstances.

His noble pater was coming at four o'clock, and there was to be tea in Study No. 6. To own up to the noble earl that he was stony—that there was even nothing for tea—was really impossible. Such a statement would give Lord Eastwood additional grounds for his intended lecture on economy and extravagance. Besides, Gussy wanted to "do" his noble pater well—he wanted the visit to be a success. It was perfectly easy—so long as the ticker was adequately popped! Upon that course Arthur Augustus was inexorably resolved; but he would have been glad of some expert advice as to how it was done. After all, it could not be a very difficult matter, Gussy considered. You walked into the pawnbroker's, handed over your watch, stated that you wanted twenty pounds lent on it, and the pawnbroker did the rest. So far as Gussy could see, that was all there was about it.

But it was needful to take care. For most certainly the Head and the Housemaster would have been

severely down upon any fellow known to have visited a pawnbroker's in quest of funds. Quite rightly so, Gussy admitted—his own case being a special one, and not coming under ordinary rules!

Then there was the horrid possibility that a pawnbroker might not lend to a schoolboy—might not even do business with minors at all. Arthur Augustus believed that he looked fairly grown-up for his age—he was conscious that he had a stately and impressive manner—but, looking into the glass, he could not consider that he looked twenty-one. This was another difficulty to be overcome.

But troubles were only made to be met and conquered. Arthur Augustus' powerful brain did not fail him.

While the rest of the Co. were watching the cricket on Big Side, Arthur Augustus dropped into Study No. 10 in the Shell, where the property box of the Junior Dramatic Society was kept. From that box Gussy abstracted an artificial moustache—a rather large and bushy moustache of a ginger colour. With that handsome adornment on his upper lip, Gussy considered that not only would he pass for over age, but his identity as a St. Jim's fellow would be sufficiently disguised. It would make him safe all round.

With the false moustache in his pocket and a raincoat on his arm Arthur Augustus walked out of the School House and headed for Rylcombe. He had looked out the trains in the time-table. There was no pawnbroker in Rylcombe; and Wayland was too near the school for safety. Gussy had decided on Abbotsford, where he would be unknown. He caught the local train to Abbotsford with ease, and sat down in a state of complete satisfaction with himself and his little scheme.

If his chums missed him, and looked for him now, it would be too late. D'Arcy was quite pleased at having escaped without any trouble or argument. Not that he would have allowed trouble or argument to influence him. He prided himself upon possessing the firmness of a rock when once his noble mind was made up.

He alighted from the train at Abbotsford and looked at his watch. He had half an hour to find a pawnbroker and carry through the transaction before the train left for Rylcombe, which would land him at St. Jim's again in ample time to receive his distinguished visitor at four o'clock. Half an hour, surely, was enough time in which to negotiate a loan upon a gold watch!

The swell of St. Jim's strolled elegantly along the ancient High Street of Abbotsford, looking for three golden balls, the sign of the professional gentleman with whom he desired to deal.

He did not find any such sign in the High Street, though he walked from one end to the other and back again.

A red-faced gentleman, with a straw in his mouth, was supporting a post outside a public-house a little farther on, spitting across the pavement at regular intervals. Somewhat gingerly D'Arcy approached him for information. The red-faced gentleman was more accommodating than Arthur Augustus anticipated.

"Up this 'ere street and first to the left," he said. "You'll see the three pips——"

"The—the what?"

"Three brass balls," said the red-faced gentleman. "Shop at the corner. In at one door and out at the other—wot! Ha, ha! Mind you don't lose the ticket, Charley!"

"Thank you very much!" faltered

Arthur Augustus. And he started up the side street. "Bai Jove! I wondah why that chap called me Charlay? He is a vewy obligin' man, but I wish he would not bweathe wum ovah a chap."

A few minutes more, and Arthur

ated carelessness. As he passed it he made a sudden dive and vanished. A swing door closed behind him and he was swallowed up.

As Arthur Augustus lingered and hesitated at the corner, he saw the stout gentleman emerge from the



Somewhat gingerly, Arthur Augustus approached the red-faced gentleman. "Can you diwect me to the pawn-bwokah's shop?" he asked. "Up this 'ere side street and first to the left," answered the red-faced man. "But mind you don't lose the ticket, Charley!"

Augustus was at the corner shop, which had an entrance on two streets, perhaps for the convenience of customers who did not wish to be observed paying their visits to the establishment. A stout gentleman, with a little bundle in his hand, was strolling past the door with an air of exagger-

other door and hurry away; this time without his bundle.

"This is the place, I pwesume," murmured Arthur Augustus. "It does not seem to take vewy long. Now for it!"

He stepped into the doorway, felt in his pocket for the ginger moustache,

and, after a cautious glance to and fro, fixed it on.

He blinked at his reflection in the shop window, and smiled. Certainly that bushy, ginger moustache made a startling change in his appearance.

Emboldened by the idea that he was no longer recognisable as a St. Jim's fellow, Arthur Augustus pushed open the swing door and entered the stuffy little shop.

In spite of himself the colour deepened in his cheeks as he came up to a counter, where a young man with a well-developed nose and a shiny complexion was examining the interior of a watch. It was a hot afternoon, and doubly hot in the stuffy little shop, and the shiny young man was in his shirtsleeves, the cuffs of which looked somewhat grubby. He looked up at D'Arcy with glistening black eyes, and started a little. Perhaps the ginger moustache had its effect upon him. Certainly it stood out from Gussy's smooth, boyish countenance as boldly and startlingly as a full-grown beard could have done, and equally certain it did not look in the least as if it belonged to the countenance.

"Good-aftahnoon!" said Arthur Augustus.

"'Afternoon!"

The shiny young man's eyes turned to the watch he was examining.

"I am sowwy to intewwupt you," said Arthur Augustus mildly, "but I wish to pop a tickah."

"Eh?"

"Pway, where do I pop it?"

"What?"

"Pop it."

The shiny young man gazed at Arthur Augustus. Then he pointed to the door.

"Stow it!" he said. "No time for larks!"

"My deah sir, I am not larkin'. I

have come here to pop a tickah, and I should be vewy much obliged if you would tell me where I do it. I undahstand that it has to be popped here."

"Come orf!" said the shiny young man. "If you want to put a watch in, 'and it over. Time's money!"

Arthur Augustus detached his beautiful gold watch from the chain, and silently passed it over to the shiny young man. That gentleman stared at it, opened it, and stared inside, and then stared at Gussy with a very peculiar expression on his face. It was a handsome and valuable watch, worth more than twenty-five guineas, which, added to the glaring false moustache, perhaps naturally made the shiny young man suspicious.

"'Ow much do you want on this?" he asked guardedly.

"Ten pounds, please."

"I shall 'ave to show it to the guv'nor."

"Vewy good; but pway lose no time, as I have to weturn by twain to—to where I came fwom, and I have only a few minutes left."

Without replying, the shiny young man disappeared through the doorway at the back. Arthur Augustus heard the sound of a telephone receiver jerked off the hooks, and there was a murmur and a voice. The shiny young man, apparently, was telephoning to his governor.

It was some minutes before he came back into the shop, and he came back without the watch.

"Well," said Arthur Augustus.

"'Ave to wait a few minutes for the guv'nor," said the shiny young man affably. "Sit down, please."

"I am in wathah a huwwy."

"No doubt—no doubt!" grinned the shiny young man. "You would be! But 'old on a few ticks."

Arthur Augustus sat down. He was feeling worried now. Only a few minutes remained to catch the train back to Rylcombe. He was doubtful if it could be done. The next train was in half an hour, which would make him late for his pater. It was a great worry. But, after all, it was useless to go without the loan he had come for. His uneasiness did not escape the notice of the shiny young man, who seemed to be entertained by it. The shop door opened and there was a heavy tread. Arthur Augustus did not glance round. He supposed that it was another customer who had entered. There was an oily chuckle from the shiny young man.

"Good-afternoon, sergeant! There he is, and 'ere's the watch!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

AWFUL FOR ARTHUR AUGUSTUS!

A HEAVY hand fell upon the shoulder of the swell of St. Jim's. He gave a convulsive jump.

A portly police-sergeant stood over him.

"So this is the bird!" said the sergeant.

"That's him!" chuckled the shiny young man. "False moustache and all! Swell nob, I reckon. Smart-looking kid for a game like this, sergeant. Know him?"

"Can't place him for the minute," said the sergeant, staring into Arthur Augustus' bewildered face. "One of the pickpockets that come down for the races, I should say."

Arthur Augustus wondered whether he was dreaming.

"Taking him to the station?" asked the shiny young man.

"What-ho!" answered the sergeant. "You come alonger me, young feller!"

He jerked Arthur Augustus off the chair.

"Gweat Scott!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "Wha-a-at is the mattah? Pway wemove your hand fwom my shouldah, sir!"

"So that you can do a guy!" chuckled the shiny young man. "Ha, ha! That's good!"

"I weally do not undahstand you!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "If you are not goin' to make a loan on my watch, pway weturn the watch to me. I shall have to find anothah pawnbrokah's."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the shiny young man.

The burly sergeant grinned.

"Cut it out, and come along!" he said.

"I fail to undahstand. Where do you wish me to come?" inquired the amazed swell of St. Jim's.

"Eh? To the station, of course!"

"I was about to weturn to the station," said Arthur Augustus. "But, as I weally do not know you, I see no weason why I should go to the station in your company."

"A cool 'and!" said the shiny young man. "Never 'eard of the stone jug afore, 'ave you?"

"I have seen a good many stone jugs—at least, earthenware," answered Arthur Augustus. "I do not quite follow what—"

"He, he, he!" chortled the shiny young man, evidently very much entertained.

"Look 'ere, you come along to the police-station, and not so much gas!" said the sergeant.

Arthur Augustus gave a jump as if the sergeant had applied an electric wire to him.

"The police-station!" he stuttered.

"Kim on!"

"Gweat Scott!" Again D'Arcy of

the Fourth wondered whether this was some amazing and fearful dream. "Why do you want me to go to the police-station? Pway explain yourself, my good man!"

"On 'spicion of stealing that there watch!" growled the sergeant.

"Bai Jove! How could a fellah steal his own watch?"

"P'r'aps it's your own!" sneered the sergeant. "P'r'aps not! P'r'aps that isn't a false moustache sticking on your dial."

Gussy's hand went to his ginger moustache, which he had quite forgotten. His face was crimson.

He realised at last that his attempted disguise, and his obvious uneasiness of manner, had impressed the shiny young man with the belief that he was a youthful pickpocket trying to pawn a stolen watch. He realised that the shiny young man had kept him waiting while he telephoned to the police-station for the sergeant. Poor Arthur Augustus' head fairly swam.

"Pway wait a moment!" he gasped, as soon as he could find his voice. "I assuah you, officah, that it is my watch! I was goin' to pop my tickah because I wanted to waise the wind, you know."

"P'r'aps!" said the sergeant.

"I assuah you—— Pway, do I look like a wobbah?" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's indignantly. "I assuah you, sergeant, that you are makin' a vewy sewious mistake."

"Does it well, don't he!" grinned the shiny young man.

But the distress and amazement in Gussy's face had an effect on the police-sergeant. He did not want to make a mistake, and he decided to question this surprising youth before he marched him off to the station.

"Name?" he jerked out.

"My name is D'Arcy."

"Make it Plantagenet!" implored the shiny young man, with a chortle of great enjoyment. "Do make it Plantagenet!"

"Where do you live?"

D'Arcy hesitated.

"I wathah object to statin' that," he said. "You see, I should get into a wow with my headmastah if it were known that I was poppin' a tickah!"

"Where do you live?" snapped the sergeant.

"Is it weally necessawy for me to acquaint you with my place of wesidence?"

"You'd better!" said the sergeant grimly.

"St. Jim's!" said Arthur Augustus reluctantly. "The school, you know, near Wylcombe."

The sergeant eyed him very keenly. The shiny young man, whose knowledge of the world seemed confined chiefly to the seamy side, obviously did not believe a single word of D'Arcy's statements. But the sergeant was a keener man. His grim expression relaxed.

"Why were you wearing a false moustache?" he demanded.

"I—I did not want to be wecognised goin' into a pop—pawn-bwokah's," faltered Arthur Augustus.

"You young idiot!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Gammon!" remarked the shiny young man. "A clear case, I think. Artful—very artful!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as artful!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "And I ordah you to weturn my watch to me at once! Undah the circs, I shall not pop it at all."

"I rather think you won't!" said the sergeant grimly. "Now, young



Gussy gave a convulsive jump as a heavy hand fell on his shoulder. A police-sergeant stood behind him. "So this is the bird?" said the sergeant. "That's him!" replied the pawnbroker. "Gweat Scott!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Wha-a-at is the mattah?"

man, it's possible you're telling me the truth, and that you're nothing but a silly young idiot, after all. But it's suspicious, very suspicious. You say you're a schoolboy of St. Jim's. Well, in that case, your headmaster will bear you out. As I'm just going off duty I'll take you to the school, and we'll see. I can't let you go unless you prove what you say, and for the present I'll take charge of the watch."

D'Arcy gave a gasp.

"My headmastah will be awf'ly waxy!" he stuttered. "Weally, I would wathah weturn to St. Jim's alone."

"Do you prefer the police-station?"

"Gweat Scott! No."

"Then you had better come with me," said the sergeant. "If you're speaking the truth I don't want to be hard on you. It's thick, but it may be the truth. I'll give you a chance."

"Thank you vevy much!" said Arthur Augustus faintly. "I—I—I shall be vevy, vevy pleased if you will come to the school with me. Oh gad!"

"Come on, then!"

The sergeant nodded to the shiny young man, who shrugged his shoulders and winked his twinkling black eye. Arthur Augustus left the pawnbroker's in the burly officer's company, and walked down the street

with him. His face was crimson as many curious glances turned on the pair. The watch, still unpopped, reposed in the sergeant's pocket. But Arthur Augustus was not thinking of "popping" now. Wild horses would not have dragged him into a pawnbroker's again. His ginger moustache was in his pocket now; he was only too glad to get it there. At the railway-station it seemed to Arthur Augustus that all Abbotsford was out that afternoon, and all staring at him. He almost wept with relief when he was seated in a carriage with the sergeant opposite. Even there two or three passengers kept glancing at him and his burly guardian.

At Rylcombe the old porter fairly blinked at the sight of Arthur Augustus in company with a police-sergeant. In the old High Street there were curious stares on all sides. From the very bottom of his heart Arthur Augustus wished that he had never thought of popping his ticker. But who could have foreseen this awful outcome of so apparently simple a proceeding?

But the worst was yet to come.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

A SURPRISE FOR HIS LORDSHIP!

"SEEN Gussy?"

Blake jerked at Tom Merry's arm as the captain of the Shell stood on Big Side, watching the cricket.

"No." Tom turned his head. "Isn't he here?"

"The ass seems to have gone out," said Blake, with a worried look. "And his father's come."

"Gone out!" said Manners. "He knew his pater was coming."

Monty Lowther gave a sudden chuckle.

"Has he gone to pop the ticker?"

"I shouldn't be surprised," grunted

Blake. "I forgot about him, watching the blessed cricket! We've looked all over the school for him, and he's not to be found. And Lord Eastwood spoke to me before he went in to see the Head; told me to tell Gussy he would come up to the study at half-past four."

"Jolly nearly that now!" said Tom.

"And I can't find him anywhere!" growled Blake. "He must have gone out. I wish I'd put him on a chain, blow him!"

The Terrible Three left Big Side with Blake. The great question of funds was still unsettled—tea in the study for his lordship was as deep a problem as ever. But at least Arthur Augustus ought to have been on the spot to greet his noble pater. As he was absent, it was up to D'Arcy's chums to play up and entertain Lord Eastwood till his hopeful son turned up again.

"He can't be long," said Tom thoughtfully. "He knew his father would be here at four. I suppose he's gone off somewhere and lost a train. He can't have forgotten. Seen anything of him, you fellows?" he added, as Herries and Digby came up in the quad.

"Not a trace of him," said Herries. "Must have gone out of gates while we were watching Kildare."

"Here's the old gent!" murmured Digby.

Lord Eastwood's tall and spare figure appeared in the doorway of the School House. There was a slight frown on his lordship's brow. He had been up to Study No. 6, and, instead of finding there a dutiful and affectionate son, he had found that celebrated apartment vacant. He had come down again, puzzled and a little annoyed. He came out into

the quad to meet Tom Merry & Co.

"Where is Arthur?" he asked.

"We—we're just looking for him, sir!" stammered Tom Merry.

"It is very extraordinary! He cannot have gone out, I presume?"

"I—I—I——"

There was a howl in the distance—the howl of Baggy Trimble.

"Oh, my eye! Gussy and a copper! He, he, he!"

Tom Merry & Co. spun round like humming-tops. Trimble's howl was followed by a buzz of voices that grew into a roar. Fellows on all sides were rushing towards the gates.

Tom Merry wondered whether it was a mirage, as he caught sight of Arthur Augustus, with a burly police-sergeant by his side, just within the gates. Taggles had come out of his lodge in amazement, and already thirty or forty fellows had gathered round. There was a sharp exclamation from Lord Eastwood. He had seen his son.

"Upon my word! That is Arthur!" he ejaculated. "What—whatever has happened?"

He strode away towards the gates; and Tom Merry & Co., after exchanging a look of utter, dismal dismay, followed him at a run. What had happened they could not even surmise; but they knew that the unhappy Gussy, somehow or other, had "done it" now!

"Arthur!"

"Oh cwumbs! It's the patah!" groaned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The hapless swell of St. Jim's had hoped that Taggles would identify him to the satisfaction of the sergeant before his father could learn of the awful disaster. But that hope was ill-founded. The tall, spare form of Lord Eastwood towered over the crowd of juniors, who respectfully

made way for the peer of the realm.

The sergeant saluted Lord Eastwood respectfully. It was borne in upon his mind now that Arthur Augustus was, in point of fact, owner of the watch he had attempted to "pop," and was nothing worse than, as he would have said, a young idiot!

"What does this mean, Arthur?" asked Lord Eastwood in a deep voice. "Why are you here with this officer?"

"I—I—I——" stuttered Arthur Augustus.

"What has happened, officer?"

"You know this young person, sir?" asked the sergeant.

"He is my son. I am Lord Eastwood," said the old gentleman, with dignity.

"Excuse me, sir—the circumstances were suspicious. This young gentleman was found attempting to pawn a valuable watch——"

"P-p-p-pawn!" faltered his lordship.

"Yes, sir. And as he was disguised with a false moustache, and——"

"What?"

"And seemed very uneasy, the pawnbroker's young man thought it was fishy and telephoned for me," explained the sergeant. "You see, we get a lot of pickpockets come down to Abbotsford for the races, sir."

"P-p-pickpockets!" said his lordship dazedly.

"As he stated that he belonged to this school, I brought him 'ere, sir, instead of taking him to the police-station. Never give the public trouble if we can help it, sir."

Lord Eastwood looked at the honest sergeant and looked at his hopeful son. Arthur Augustus fervently wished that the earth would open and swallow him up. But the earth didn't, and Gussy had to endure that

basilisk gaze from his astonished and scandalised parent.

"If you answer for him, sir, and answer for this here watch being his property——" said the sergeant, taking the famous gold ticker from his pocket.

"Certainly!" gasped his lordship. "I gave my son that watch myself on a birthday."

"Very good, sir!"

The sergeant handed the watch to Arthur Augustus. Then he saluted Lord Eastwood again and turned away.

Lord Eastwood made a sign to Arthur Augustus to go in, and the swell of the Fourth limped away with his friends, looking and feeling in the deepest depths of woe and dismay. Lord Eastwood lingered a few moments to speak to the sergeant again in the gateway, and the Abbotsford officer slipped something into his pocket when he finally departed. Then the peer followed his hopeful son across the quad. The crowd of St. Jim's fellows strove hard not to chortle until Gussy's noble parent disappeared into the School House.

Arthur Augustus went up to Study No. 6. His chums went with him—they did not look forward with enjoyment to the coming interview with Gussy's pater—but they felt that they were bound to stand by a comrade in misfortune. So the whole of the stony seven were in the study when Lord Eastwood arrived.

Silence as of the tomb fell upon Study No. 6 as he entered. His face was grim and stern; the juniors hardly dared to look at him. Arthur Augustus was quite limp.

"So," said Lord Eastwood, after a painful silence, which seemed to the juniors to last about a century—"so, on the occasion of my visit to the

school, Arthur, I find you attempting to pawn a watch——"

"I—I——"

"And being brought back to the school in custody of a police-officer——"

"Oh deah!"

"Have you any explanation to offer?"

"I—I—I twied to pop the tickah——"

"To—to what?"

"To—to pawn the watch, to—waive the wind—I mean, to waive some money, for—for tea!" babbled Arthur Augustus. "The—the fact is, we—we—we are stonay——"

"You are what?"

"Bwoke!"

"What?"

"I—I mean hard up——"

There was another painful silence. Then Lord Eastwood made Tom Merry & Co. a sign to leave the study. Six dismal juniors filed out, leaving the hapless Gussy alone with his justly-incensed parent. They did not envy Arthur Augustus just then.

They remained in a deeply-troubled group at the end of the passage in dismal silence. What was going to happen they could not tell. Whether his lordship would request the Head to administer a flogging, whether he would take Gussy away from St. Jim's, whether he would administer severe chastisement with his own noble hands, they simply could not guess.

They wondered what was passing in Study No. 6, and they felt deeply for Arthur Augustus. It was nearly half an hour before the study door opened, and Lord Eastwood emerged.

He passed the group of juniors and went down the staircase, evidently departing. There had been no tea in the study, after all. The juniors



"What does this mean, Arthur?" asked Lord Eastwood as the police-sergeant marched Gussy in at the gates. "I—I—I—" stuttered Arthur Augustus. "Excuse me, sir," said the sergeant. "This young gentleman was found attempting to pawn a valuable watch!"



waited till, from the corridor window, they saw Lord Eastwood's tall form crossing the quad towards the gates. Then they hurried along to Study No. 6, eager to hear the worst.

Arthur Augustus looked at them, and nodded. He did not seem so downcast as they had expected.

"Well?" said six voices, at once.

"It was awful, deah boys!"

"What's happened?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"I have had a feahful lecture!" said Arthur Augustus. "I must say the patah was quite in the wight—I can see that, you know. As a wule, I am not wholly satisfied with the way

the patah looks at things, but on the pwesent occasion I must admit that he was wight. His first ideah was to wequest the Head to give me a tewwible floggin'—

"Oh!"

"Then he seemed to think that I had bettah be taken away fwom the school, where I seem to have wathah weckless and thoughtless fwriends—"

"Oh! Oh!"

"Then he gave me a weally impewial jaw. And then," said Arthur Augustus, "I explained the whole mattah."

"Why didn't you explain first, fathead?"

"Weally, deah boy——"

"And then——"

"Then he made me pwomise not to go to a pop-bwokah's again; and I told him steam cwanes and twaction engines would nevah dwag me within sight of a pawnbwokah's, if I could help it! So he gave me a little more jaw, and wang off."

"And that's all?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Thank goodness!" said Tom Merry. "You've got off cheap!"

"Yaas. I am only sowwy that, time bein' gone in jawin', the deah old patah was unable to stay to tea," said Arthur Augustus. "He twusts that this will be a lesson to me—as if I needed a lesson, you know! But, now I think of it, I do weally twust that it will be a lesson to you fellahs!"

"Why, you cheeky ass——"

"By the way," added Arthur Augustus innocently, "I forgot to mention one thing—the patah handed me six pounds to square up the money we owe, so that we shall not be in debt."

"Forgot to mention that!" roared Blake. "Oh, you dummy!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"All clear now!" said Dig.

"Yaas, wathah! And he gave me a pound ovah, so we shall be able to have tea in the studay, deah boys——"

"Hurrah!"

Lord Eastwood's visit to St. Jim's had been a success, after all!

Tom Merry & Co. cleared off their burden of debt within the next five minutes, and within the next ten they were sitting down to a gorgeous spread in Study No. 6. And never was tea in the study so thoroughly enjoyed as it was by the seven chums of St. Jim's—no longer the stony seven.

THE END

Feeding-Time for the Seal

THE animal world is full of good trenchermen, but when it comes to good, honest, stick-out-your elbows-and-get-down-to-it feeding there are very few creatures that can give points to a seal. A New York zoo keeper who tried to find out exactly how much one of his charges could eat had to give up when his supply of sixty pounds of raw fish vanished without seeming to take even the edge off the seal's appetite. On another occasion, a London Zoo seal happened to be "just handy" when a keeper left the supply of fish for the whole fish-eating community of the Zoo unattended. When the keeper returned a few minutes later, there wasn't a single fish-tail left!

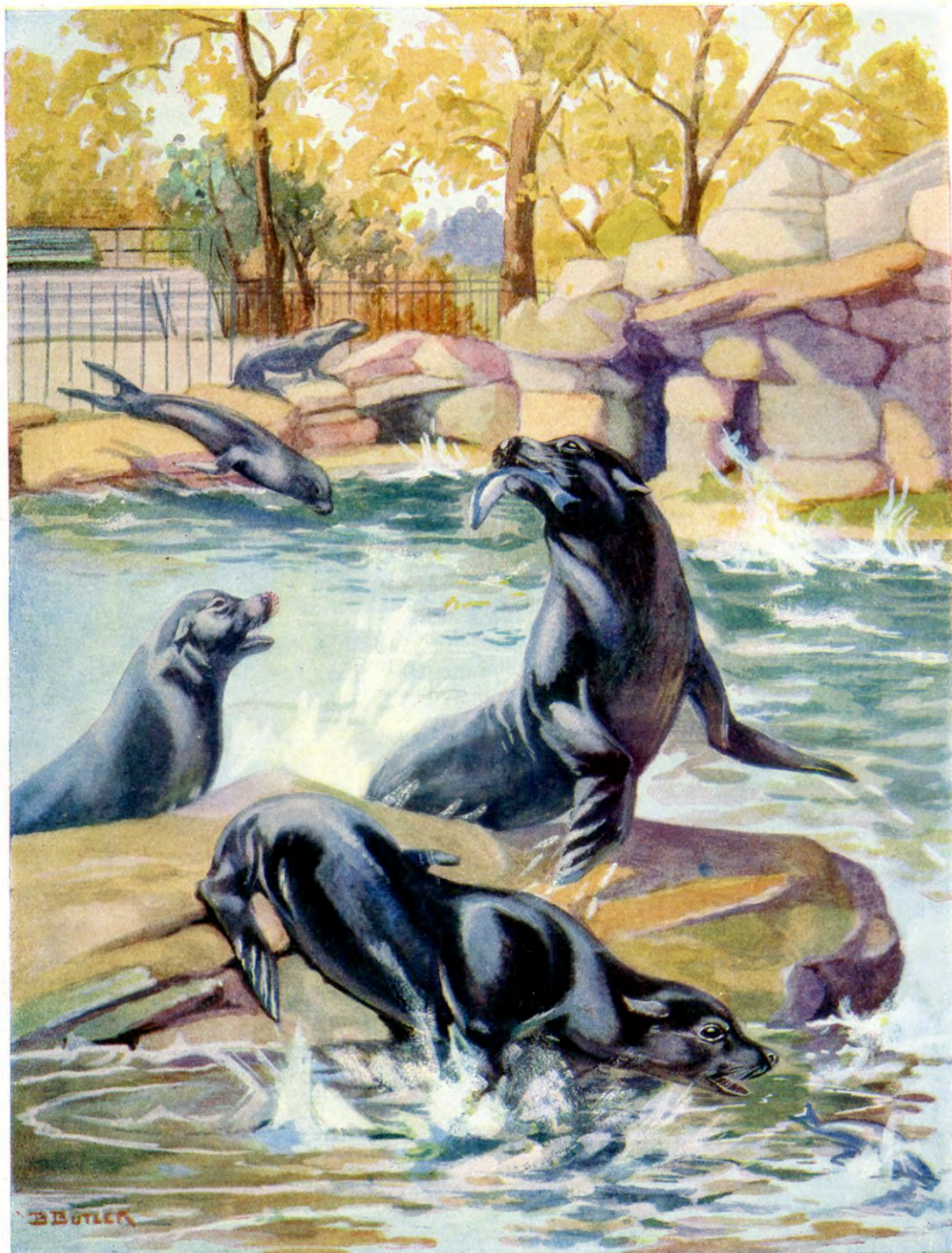
But it isn't the amount they eat that makes seals at feeding time a sight which draws crowds to their enclosures at the Zoo. It is the amazingly skilful way they catch fish in mid-air, and the manner in which they dash through the water at terrific speed to get at a distant tit-bit.

Seals are very clever, and can be trained to do the most extraordinary tricks. One circus seal-trainer has taught his pets to walk a tight-rope while balancing big balls on their snouts, to play "God Save the King" by blowing into a series of trumpets tuned to appropriate notes, and to applaud one another's feats in the ring by clapping their fins together.

These circus seals take such an interest in their job that if one of them makes a mistake all the others make reproachful noises, or try to cover up the defect by starting to perform tricks of their own.

Seals are such swift swimmers that they can usually only be captured on land.

FEEDING-TIME AT THE LONDON ZOO



HA

WELL CAUGHT!

Specially painted for "Holiday Annual" by Miss B. Butler.

Facing page 224

"FORGIVE VS. GUS!"

By Jack Blake.

(Of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.)



SPEAK, Gussy, speak! Forgive
Your pals, who acted for the best;
For you are always overdressed
And will be while you live!
Did you think it a cheek
For us to take your Sunday hat
And jump on it till it was flat?
Speak, Gussy, speak!

We did not know you would
Turn nasty when we gave away
Your purple socks the other day;
We did it for your good!
It's true we took your clo'
To make a guy for bonfire night,
But we believed it was all right;
We did not know!

You might have guessed that when
We took a dozen pairs of bags
To act as manacles and gags
To bind the New House men,
We did it for the best;
We thought that you would understand
They were the nearest things to hand—
You might have guessed!

We thought it fair to use
That muffler thing you love so well,
For we believed you'd let a pal
Take that to clean his shoes;
For nothing else was there,
Except your fancy summer clothes,
And Dig and Herries collared those—
We thought it fair.

We had to take your suit,
(The one you call a perfect fit),
And let old Towser play with it
To pacify the brute;
We thought for old times' sake
You would be glad to help your friends,
And never miss the odds and ends
We had to take.

Forgive us, Gus, despite
Your lovely ties! (Alas, no more!)
We used them in a tug-of-war
In dorm the other night;
No longer make a fuss!
Let's have your tact and judgment, pray;
Your fiver, too, that came to-day—
Forgive us, Gus!