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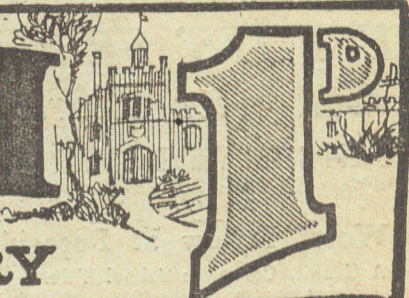
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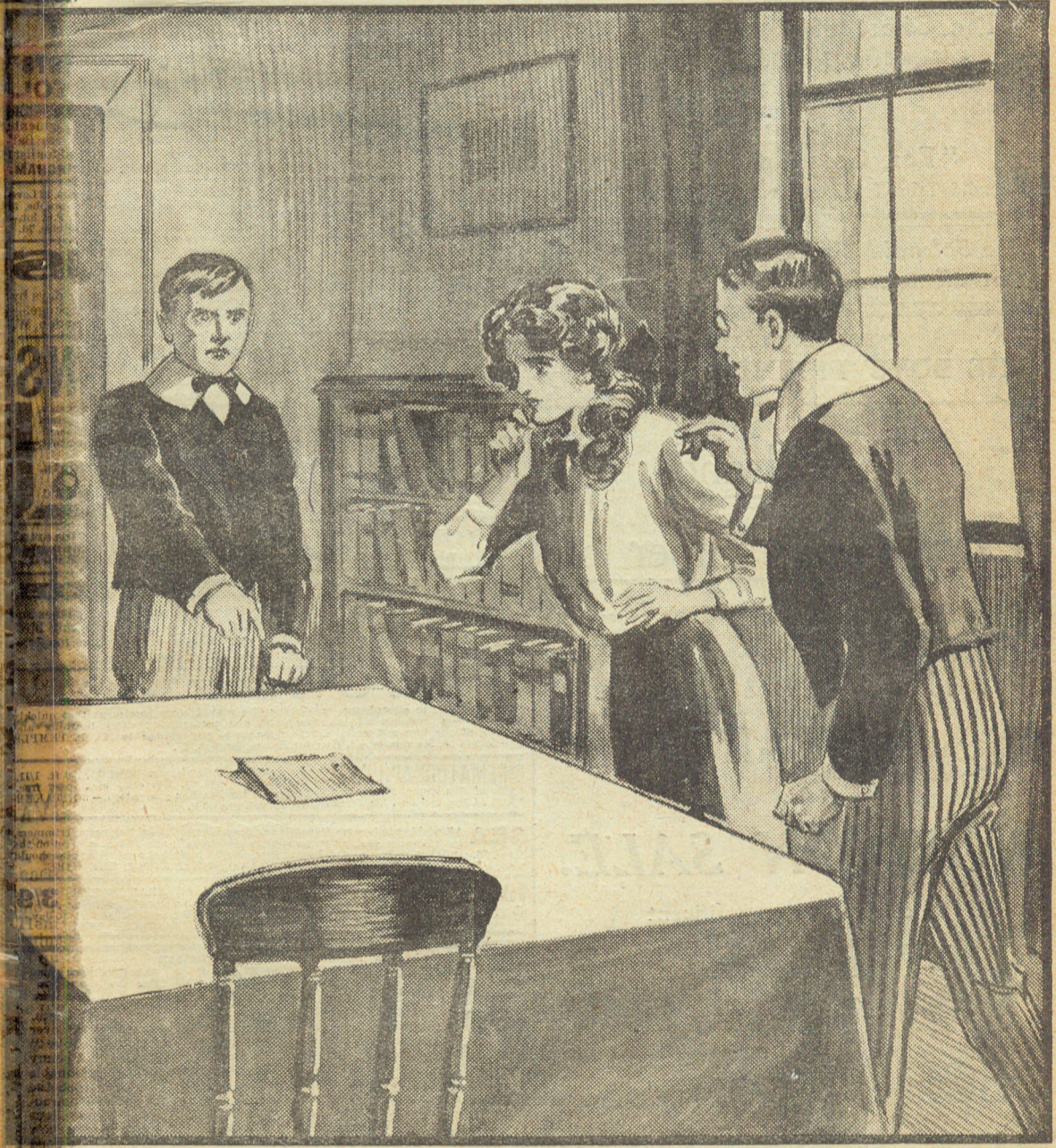
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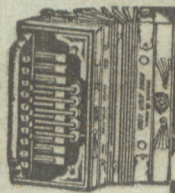
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PARTED CHUMS!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale Dealing with the Adventures
of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's:

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



"I give you a chance to take back what you have said!" said D'Arcy slowly. "Otherwise, it will be impossible for me even to speak to you again." "I don't want you to!" snapped Hammond. And Arthur Augustus turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, his head very erect. (See Chapter 15.)

CHAPTER 1. The Bethnal Green Left.

MY 'at!" Hammond of the Fourth uttered that ejaculation as he came into the junior common-room in the School House at St. Jim's.

A grinning crowd of juniors were gathered before a paper pinned on the wall, and the chuckle with which they greeted Hammond showed that the notice pinned on the wall had some reference to himself.

Henry Horace Hammond—no, 'Eary 'Oence 'Asswood, as he himself pronounced his name—was a new boy at St. Jim's, and quite out of the ordinary run of new boys.

His father's rise to fortune, by means of the marvellous sale of "Hammond's High-class Hats," had been very sudden. The obscure hatter of Bethnal Green had become the wealthy Mr. Hammond of Grosvenor Square, and Henry Horace had been sent to St. Jim's.

The Cockney schoolboy was picking up the ways and customs of St. Jim's at a great rate, with all the keen facility of a London lad. But there seemed to be one thing that he could not possibly pick up, and that was the troublesome aspirate. So far from picking that up, he dropped it on all occasions.

"Here he is!" murmured Monty Leather of the Shell—"I mean, 'ere 'e is! Read this 'ere notice, 'Asswood. It's rather interesting."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond flushed a little as he pushed his way through the crowd of juniors. He was a little sensitive on the subject of his terrible pronunciation. He looked at the notice pinned on the wall of the common-room, and his face deepened.

It was written in the handwriting of Levison of the Fourth, and it ran:

"LOST!"

"In the School House, a large number of 'E's. Anyone finding the same is requested to return them to 'Eary 'Asswood, Study No. 5, who is greatly in need of them. Of no use to anybody but the owner."

"My 'at!" said Hammond.

"There goes another!" chuckled Crooks of the Shell.

"Did anybody hear anything drop?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't call this 'ere a joke!" said Hammond, looking round.

"Why can't you leave my blooming 'E's alone?"

"You leave 'em alone yourself, don't you?" chuckled Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form (also into the room). He looked round through his famous spectacles, and spotted Hammond.

Next Wednesday:

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!" AND "SECRET SERVICE!"

"Hammond, dear boy, I'm lookin' for you," said Arthur Augustus.

"For I see," said Hammond.

"Bei Jove! What is that rubbish?" Arthur Augustus turned his eyes upon the notice on the wall, and he frowned majestically. Arthur Augustus had not found Hammond when he first came. He had conferred to Blake and Herbie and Digby, his chance in Study No. 5, that Hammond got on his nerves. And he had astonished all the School House later on by making friends with the "bouncer" and chumming with him. And so Arthur Augustus had never said anything by halves, he and Hammond had become great chums. And Arthur Augustus was therefore greatly indignant at any aspersion cast upon his Cockney pal.

"Levison, you wretch, you did this!" he exclaimed, with a wrathful look at the end of the Fourth.

"Yes—Trying to do Hammond a service," he explained. "You're not the only chap who's going to help Hammond."

"I warned you as a wretch, Levison."

"Go on!"

"And I should recommend my friend Hammond to give you a fearful thrashing!"

"Levison chuckled.

"Your friend Hammond would run up against something if he tried it on," he remarked. "Besides, I'm doing him a service. He's in want of his life, isn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond strode towards the paper on the wall, and raised his hand to tear it down.

Levison of the Fourth promptly interposed, and pushed his back.

"Hands off!" he said—"I mean, 'ands off! You keep your hands off that paper!"

The janitors yelled at Levison's imitation of the Cockney's accent. The way Hammond turned his head it was a source of never-ending delight to the School House fellows. Hammond fellows would enter into conversation with him, merely for the sake of hearing him do it, to imitate him afterwards.

"I'm going to tear that paper up!" said Hammond.

"Pway call it a paper, dear boy," murmured Arthur Augustus, in distress. All his friendship for Henry Horace could not keep him from shivering when Hammond called a paper a pipe.

Hammond looked surprised.

"I did call it a pipe," he replied.

"Papah, dear boy."

"Yes, paper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond simply could not detect the difference in the word. He remembered the celebrated Scottish professor who was told that "difference" was pronounced "diference" and not "diference," and who thereupon inquired what was the difference between difference and difference.

"However, it's very wrong to make wretched jokes about a chap's way of speakin'," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway talk that papah down, Hammond, and come along!"

"I'm gone to."

Levison of the Fourth planted himself before the paper. Levison was not a fighting man, as a rule; but he was bigger than the Cockney, and he had no objection to the task of winning a sharp victory.

"And off!" said Levison heroically.

Hammond looked him squarely in the eye.

"You goin' to tear up that paper?" he said.

"You're going to leave it alone?" said Levison.

"You'd stand aside?"

"You'd better put me aside!" yawned Levison.

"I'll jolly soon do that if you don't 'op it!" said Hammond, his eyes beginning to glaze. "I'm about fed up with 'em!"

"Op it, Levison," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison stood his ground. Hammond pushed back his coat, and spat upon his hands. That preliminary to a combat made the janitors jolt again. Nobody at St. Jim's had ever been seen to spit upon his hands before commencing a fight; but Hammond's ways were not their ways.

"Now, are you goin' to 'op it?" demanded Hammond.

"No! I'm not goin' to 'op it!" said Levison. "I'm goin' to stick 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Through him, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "He is really an awful back, you know, and you can thrash him easily."

Hammond rushed straight at Levison. The end of the Fourth put up his hands, and hit out savagely. But his blows were swept up, and Hammond's left came with a crash upon his ribs. Too late Levison remembered that he had seen Hammond deliver that left drive before—the "Bethnal Green," but Hammond called it. It crashed on Levison's chin, and he was fairly hurled off his feet, and he crashed against the wall behind him.

Crack!

The back of Levison's head knocked on the wall, and he fell away on the floor. He lay there dazed and gasping.

"Oh!" he groaned. "Oh! You beast! You've cracked my skull! Oh!"

Hammond dropped his hands, and looked contrite at once. Although he was quick to anger, he was a thoroughly good-natured fellow, and he did not want to hurt even Levison, though the Fourth-Form end's gibes had caused him more pain than anything else he had encountered at St. Jim's.

"I say, I'm sorry!" he exclaimed. "I didn't mean to 'it so 'ard, but you shouldn't 'ave stood so close to the wall. I 'ope you ain't 'urt!"

Levison sat up with a groan, and pressed his hand to the back of his head.

"You rotter—you rotter!" he muttered.

"Beastly thing to do!" said Creeke of the Shell. "Just like that East End blighter!"

"I didn't mean to go for to do it," said Hammond. "And he wouldn't get aside, would he? I've said as 'ow I'm sorry."

Levison staggered to his feet. He had had a most unpleasant crack on the head, and it made his feet sick and dizzy.

"Do you want say more?" said Hammond, peering up his hands again deliberately.

Levison grimed his teeth.

"Hang you," he said—"hang you, you beastly Cockney! You ought to be kicked out of St. Jim's and sent back to the slum you belong to!"

And Levison moved away unsteadily, his hand still to the back of his head. As a matter of fact, he was not sorry for an excuse not to continue the combat, after that single experience of the "Bethnal Green L.O." Hammond stopped quickly to the notice on the wall, took it down, and tore it into half a dozen pieces, and threw them into the coals-iron stove. Not a hand was raised to stop him.

"Now you might, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Now we'll go to a little treat."

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy linked his arm in Hammond's, and they walked out of the common-room together.

CHAPTER 2. D'Arcy's Little Party.

TOM MERRY of the Shell was waiting on the School House steps.

Blake and Digby of the Fourth were with him.

The janitors presented an unusually elegant aspect. Fellows who observed them could see that they had their Sunday toppers on, which showed that they were bound upon an expedition of unusual importance. As a matter of fact, they were going to tea at the vicarage. Tea at the vicarage was a somewhat solemn function, and the janitors did not yearn for it. Tea in the study at St. Jim's was a much more cheery and cozy meal. But D'Arcy's Cousin Ethel was staying at the vicarage, and that made all the difference.

Where Cousin Ethel was, Tom Merry & Co. were always glad to go. And when Arthur Augustus had announced this afternoon that he was asked to tea, and that he could bring some friends with him, there was keen competition to be in the party.

Arthur Augustus was a very popular fellow in the School House, but never before had it appeared that he had so many friends.

Blake and Herbie and Digby were his study-mates; Tom Merry and Mazzoni and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were his great friends. And it appeared, on this

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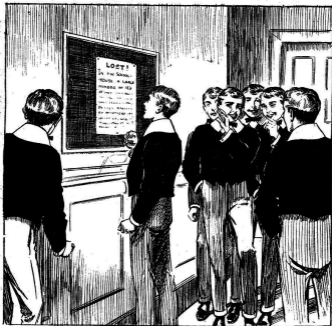
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"My 'at!" said Hammond when he had finished reading the notice on the board. "There goes another 'h'!" chuckled Crook. "Did anybody hear it drop?" (The Chapter 1.)

occasion, that Kangaroo of the Shell, and Reilly of the Fourth, and Kervish, and Ray, and Bates, and Smith minor, and quite a number of other fellows, looked upon themselves as D'Arcy's old pals.

Over in the New House, too, he seemed to have friends galore. Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, it seemed, were his oldest chums; and Redfern and Owen and Lawrence had always regarded him as the friend of their collective houses. Indeed, if Arthur Augustus had taken with him that afternoon all the devoted friends who claimed the rights of dear pals, he would have led an invading army into the vicarage, which would have severely taxed the accommodation there.

But Arthur Augustus put his foot down firmly. His own study-mates and the Terrible Three he could take, and he drew the line at all others. Figgins of the New House, almost with tears in his eyes, pointed out that he had always regarded Gussy as the apple of his eye, but Gussy was obdurate.

"As a matter of fact, Figgys, dear boy," Gussy observed—"as a matter of absolute fact, you have a wretched cool way of regardin' my cousin as bein' your cousin, and monopolizin' her, and I don't weally quite like it."

And Figgins was left out in the cold.

But there was one fellow whom Arthur Augustus intended

to take, in spite of certain uneasy looks he noticed on his chums' faces when he announced his intention, and that person was Henry Hercules Hammond of the Fourth.

Tom Merry & Co. were far from being snobbish, and they liked Hammond personally, but they could not help having some doubts as to his success as a visitor at the vicarage.

What Mrs. Hutton, prima and stately, would think of Henry Hercules was a great question.

But D'Arcy disregarded feebly his bias. Hammond was his friend.

That was enough for the swell of St. Jim's. To be adjoined of his friend was impossible. It would have been bad form.

True, Hammond had most decidedly got on D'Arcy's noble nerves at first. In spite of their friendship, he sometimes got upon them still. But Hammond had proved that he was what D'Arcy called "the right sort."

The Cockney schoolboy had risked his life, and almost lost it, in rescuing Cousin Wadd from death in the waters of the Nile—and that act of heroism had made Arthur Augustus feel advanced of his prejudices against the new boy.

He had offered his friendship to the lovely lady, and Hammond, who had a deep and unflinching admiration for the noble Gussy, had jumped at it.

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!"

So they had become great pals. And if Hammond was good enough for Gussey, he was good enough for anybody; that was how the swell of St. Jim's looked at it. It was a case of "Love me, love my dog." Hammond's sterling qualities—a brave nature and a kind heart, rarely contrived, say little peculiarities of manner and speech. D'Arcy thought so; and, in his lofty way, he naturally expected everybody else to think so.

"All ready, dear boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he came out with his arm linked in Hammond's.
Arthur Augustus did not often link his arm in anybody else's, but he often appeared like that in Hammond's company. He wanted all St. Jim's to see that he was upon terms of the friendliest kind with the Cockney.

"All ready!" said Tom Merry.
"Waiting for you," said Mamma.
"Whoa's Hercules!"
"Can't come," said Blake. "Towner's off his feed, and Hercules is looking after him."

"Well, there will be enough of us," said Arthur Augustus. Louthan!

"Here I am," said Mopsy Louthan, coming out of the Solihull House. "And so, Mamma!"
Arthur Augustus passed. His eye-glass turned upon Hammond. The Cockney schoolboy was looking quite at his ease. D'Arcy had asked him to come with him, and Hammond had been very flattered at the invitation, and had cheerfully accepted it. But he looked upon tea at the vicarage with doubtful feelings. In the presence of so awful a personage as the vicar's wife, Hammond felt that his coolness might desert him. Arthur Augustus had given him a hint to dress in his best for the occasion—and Hammond had done it. But Hammond's best was not exactly in the best taste.

Arthur Augustus looked at him, and the noble heart of the great Gussey sank a little.
Hammond's waistcoat was gorgeous and expensive, and it shined in hue the celebrated coat of Joseph. And there was a diamond in his tie—a real diamond, certainly, and very big and valuable—but so big and bright that it almost seemed to talk. Hammond had unfastened pocket-money—much more than Arthur Augustus, who was the son of a noble lord. But he had not yet learned how to spend it.

"Pwae excuse yo, Hammond, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus. "Would you mind steppin' up to the study for a minute?"
"Cert'ly," said Hammond.
"Don't be late," said Tom Merry. "Young Billy Horton will scoff at me 'kase if you're late."
"Right-ho!"

Hammond followed Arthur Augustus up to Study No. 5. He wondered what was wanted. Arthur Augustus was a little pink, and his manner was hesitating.

"I trust you will excuse me, Hammond, dear boy," he began.
"Who's the gine?" asked Henry Horace.
"You will not regard me as an impertinent if I make a remark?"

Hammond grinned.
"Fire away," he said.
"That—about—that waistcoat—"
"Prize, ain't it?" said Hammond, with a proud look downward at the blazing article of attire. "You don't often see such colours—red?"
"Thank goodness; no—I mean—about—the fact is, Hammond, if you are wash you don't mind my speakin'—as an old hand, you know—"
"Go 'ead."

"The fact is, it's wathin a custom heah for fellows to dress quietly," explained Arthur Augustus. "As a new boy, you don't know the wopen yet, so I am wash you will set your intentions it, as an old hand."
"You don't like my waist?" asked Hammond, his face falling a little.
"It is weally beautiful," said Arthur Augustus hastily. "But—but it isn't quite the thing for an afternoon tea-party, you know."

"Right-ho," said Hammond. "I thought you'd like it, you know. But I'll change it if you say the word."
"Pwawp you will permit me to lend you one," said Arthur Augustus. "I have several heah that are weally quite wippin', you know."
"Thanks," said Hammond.

And the waistcoat was changed, and Hammond certainly looked considerably less conspicuous.
"That's right," said Hammond resignedly.
"That's right, dear boy—if you don't mind my remarkin'—"
"It's a real stone," said Hammond eagerly. "Cost twenty quid."

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D'Arcy coughed.
"It's not considered quite the thing heah for young fellows to wear expensive jewellery," he explained. "Only boyslike do that, you know."

Hammond looked set the tiepin with a sigh. He was very proud of his big diamond.

"Right yer?" he said. "Anythin' to oblige?"
"Wash are you gloves, dear boy?"
"In the brezza pocket."

"Would you mind puttin' them on?"
"Ain't comin' in gloves," said Hammond. "Ain't used to 'em, you see. But I'll do anythin' as you tell me, Master D'Arcy. I know you know what's wot, and I don't."

"You are an awfully good chap, Hammond. I was afraid that you would regard me as an impertinent. That's all wright—come on!"

And Arthur Augustus led his friend downstairs. The juniors glanced over Hammond with more approval; he certainly looked more respectable now. Hammond, who was as keen as a snare, noted what they were thinking—but it did not comfort him. He had a wretched feeling that he was not good enough for his company—and he had a servative nature that low respected.

He had come to St. Jim's as cool as a cucumber—and when he had to deal with cads and scobs like Lewson and Cooke, he was full of confidence—he was a better fellow than they were, and he knew it. Hostility did not hurt him. But kindness penetrated his armour, so to speak. He had been jessed with goodness when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had asked of what a fellow should be like, had offered him friendship. But he had had time to think since then. D'Arcy's friendship was an invaluable boon for him—but what was he for D'Arcy?

That was the thought that worried him. If he had felt that D'Arcy was ashamed of him, it would have been like a dagger to his heart.

And how could D'Arcy help being ashamed of a fellow who dropped his h's, who called a paper a piper, without being able to detect the difference in the pronunciation—who hated wearing gloves, and never felt comfortable in a silk hat? All these were little things—but life is made up of little things. Tom thought that he might be a burden upon his noble friend and was a growing pain to Hammond. He tried manfully to fall in. D'Arcy's ways of writing and speaking and thinking; but he had to acknowledge that he failed miserably sometimes.

One of the noblest traits in D'Arcy's character was an unassuming faith in human nature. It was the easiest thing in the world to take him in, simply because he could not suspect anybody of meanness. Hammond's experience of human nature had been much wider than D'Arcy's, and nobody could possibly have taken him in. Before he had come to St. Jim's, he had picked himself upon his sharpness. But now he was being stingily have exchanged it for D'Arcy's simple faith, if he could have done so. In his early days that sharpness had been necessary—but now it made him feel on a lower plane.

There was a slight cloud upon Hammond's face as the party of juniors walked over the quadrangle towards the gates. Figgins, of the Fourth, was loitering in the doorway. Figgys had his Sunday topper on, and elegant gloves on his hands, and his tie was tied quite straight. He unusual a circumstance, naturally made Tom Merry and Co. look at Figgys.

"Comin', eh?" said Figgins.
"Yas."
"Givs my kind regards to Cousin Ethel, won't you?" said Figgins.
"Yas, dear boy."

Tom Merry took pity upon the miserable Figgins. Figgys was the last fellow in the world to ask for an invitation; it was Cousin Ethel's presence at the visitage that attracted him there. Tom Merry exchanged a wink with Louthan and Mamma, and they nodded approval.

Hercules can't come, on account of Towner." Tom Merry scratched. "I think we ought to take a New Home chap with us. Cousin Ethel will expect to see one of them."

"Heally, Tom. Mamma—"
"Now, Gussey, play up like a little man!" whispered Tom Merry.

"But weally—"
"Be a sport, you know."
Arthur Augustus made an effort.
"Figgys, dear boy, I shall be weally pleased if you will join us," he said.

Figgys's face brightened up, like the sun coming out through the clouds.

"I'm verry glad to," he said. "You're a brick, Gussey."
"Verry well, dear boy—wot's wot?"
And Figgins, trotted along, his honest, rugged face beaming like a full moon.

CHAPTER 3.

Hammond Distinguishes Himself.

BILLY HUTTON, the vicar's nephew, was in the vicarage garden when Tom Merry & Co. arrived. He was giving his bull-pup a run. Arthur Augustus eyed the bull-pup anxiously as he came up the path. Heron's building, as D'Arvy often said, had no respect whatever for a fellow's trespass; and D'Arvy did not like bull-dogs at close quarters for that reason. And he looked quite alarmed as the pup came sniffing about his feet.

"Pway call him off, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus, "I would stonily wish my tweezers if he nipped them, you know."

"It's only his play," said Billy Hutton cheerfully. "He likes nipping things. He ate Miss Cleveland's umbrella this morning—simply tore it to shreds, the little beggar."

And Billy Hutton chuckled, evidently very proud of that achievement of his bull pup.

"That's a fine dog," remarked Hammond, when he was presented to the vicar's nephew.

Billy Hutton could not help staring. He appreciated the compliment to his dog, but he was surprised by the peculiar accent of the St. Jim's fellow.

"Yes, he's a good 'un," said Billy. "Know anything about dogs?"

"Well—" said Hammond. "I had a bulldog myself at 'ome, and he was a terror. You should 'ave seen the way 'e 'itched on a cow's ear case in and scratched a 'at one day."

"Who-ot?"

"I master 'ave 'im 'e'nd the counter," exclaimed Hammond, "and a cow liked in one day and scratched a 'at—one of our 'igh-class 'Ats at three-and-nine. 'K was going to sell it for a tanney for beer, of course. Teddy—that was my dog's name—'s made one jump—and you should 'ave seen the bloke 'oppyt it, with Teddy holding on to his nose."

"I—I should have liked to see it," gasped Billy Hutton.

"It was a sight, you bet your Sunday socks," said Hammond. "'E was the real breed, you know. But that three dog of yours is a good 'un, too. Come 'ere, doggy."

"Mind, he'll snap you if you touch him," said Hutton.

Hammond shook his head.

"Dogs never snap at me," he said. "Dogs know a fellow we likes dogs. Look 'ere!"

He fetched the bull-pup, and the dog turned over to be tickled. Hutton looked on in surprise.

"'Never seen him like that before," he said. "He generally likes it, he's touched. Nearly bit Miss Cleveland yesterday."

"What?" exclaimed Figgins, with a ferocious glare at the bull-pup.

"'Bul' Jove!"

"'Nearly—out quite!" chuckled Hutton. "But he generally likes. You try him, D'Arvy. 'E'll bet you he nips your hand."

Arthur Augustus drew back. He evidently had no desire whatever to get the matter to the test.

"You try him, Tom Merry!"

"'Rats!" said Tom Merry politely.

The janitor went on into the house. Billy Hutton looked rather curiously at Hammond as he went, and spoke to Mesty Leather, who was last of the crowd.

"Who's that chap?" he asked.

"'Honey Hovee Hammond, son and heir of Hammond's High-class 'Hats!" replied Mesty Leather solemnly.

"'Rather a queer codger for St. Jim's—what?" asked Hutton.

"'True, O King!"

"But he's a good sort," said Hutton, with conviction. "I like him. Fellow who can get on with dogs like that it is all right."

"One of the best," said Leather. "He's the chap who pulled Miss Cleveland out of the river, you know."

"'Oh, that's the chap? Did he drop all his 'k's in the river?" Hutton wanted to know, if he noted.

And Leather chuckled, and followed his friends.

Cousin Ethel was with Mrs. Hutton when the janitor came in. She greeted Hammond in a very friendly way. Heron had the girl forgotten how the old had held on so long in the bitter waters of the river when all hope seemed gone, and it had seemed that they must go down to death together. The fact that Hammond dropped his 'k's, and tossed his 's's into 'e's, was not likely to weigh much with the girl who owed her life to his courage and devotion.

Mrs. Hutton, too, was very kind to Hammond when he was presented to her, and Cousin Ethel explained that he was the boy who had saved her in the river.

But the vicar's lady could not help being astonished when Hammond spoke.

"It wasn't nothing," Hammond said, when the good lady complimented him upon what he had done on that celebrated occasion. "Any bloke would have done it, mate. Couldn't werry well stand by and see a lady drowned!"

"Ahem! Yes, indeed, of course!" stammered the vicar's lady.

Arthur Augustus felt his cheeks grow a little pink. He could not help wondering whether his friend would ever grow out of that horrible habit of speaking. But he was loyal to the case, and he sat beside Hammond when they had tea, and made it a point to show that they were great friends.

Hammond felt rather left out, as Mrs. Hutton was doing. Ethel Cleveland seemed interested in everything that Figgins said, though really, as a matter of fact, Figgins was not a brilliant conversationalist. But Ethel was too kind and tolerant to neglect one of the guests, and she made a point to speak sweetly and kindly to Hammond. Hammond found the cake to his liking, and he had an original mode of eating it.

He produced a large pocket-knife from his pocket, a workaday kind, which contained any number of blades, and a cork-screw and a tin-spooner, and several other useful things, and was altogether a most handsome-looking implement. He opened the largest blade, chopped up his cake, and fed himself with chunks on the end of his pocket-knife.

Mrs. Hutton politely saw nothing, and all the other ladies refrained from seeing anything, too. But when Hammond poured his tea into his saucer Arthur Augustus felt for a moment as if he would faint.

But Arthur Augustus was a gentleman to the fingertips. As he saw Billy Hutton's eyes (seen upon Hammond's ordinary-looking saucer with a twinkle, the wool of St. Jim's colony) and solemnly poured his own tea into his saucer, following Hammond's example. It was the very culmination of self-sacrifice.

Cousin Ethel had seen immediately that Hammond felt a little awkward and out of place, and she had hurried herself as once to put him at his ease, with great success, that the Cockney schoolboy was soon full of confidence. Hence the pocket-knife and the tea in the saucer. And as his courage rose, Hammond talked quite freely, and told stories of the bull-pup to Bethel Green, and especially on his father's visit to fortune by means of Hammond's High-class 'Hats, all one price, three-and-nine, that made Mrs. Hutton open her eyes wide, and Billy Hutton shower chunks in his embarrassment to keep from breaking into a yell of laughter.

"That's the way it was done," said Hammond. "Bless your 'eart, mate, I ain't always been in clover, you bet your Sunday 'at!"

The vicar's wife was hardly likely to bet at all, especially her Sunday hat. She was quite speaking.

"Do you like St. Jim's?" Cousin Ethel asked, to steer the conversation into more appropriate channels.

"'Wat 'o!" said Hammond. "'Course, it's a bit quiet after the Bethel Green Road."

"'The—the what?" murmured Mrs. Hutton.

"'The Bethel Green Road, mate. That was where we 'ad the shop."

"'There is a place called Bethel Green," Arthur Augustus explained.

"'And a jolly fine place, too," said Hammond. "'I master 'ave a good time, you know. The lads was all right. After the shop was closed I master play pitch and toss outside the corner pub."

"'The what?"

"'Hammond is woffering to a public-house, mate, a place where intemperate spirits are sold," Arthur Augustus added, in explanation.

"'Goodness gracious! What a dreadful, dreadful boy!" Mrs. Hutton murmured to herself. "How can such a dreadful person have been admitted to St. Jim's?"

It was long then that the vicar, returning from some parochial duty, looked in at the vicar. Hammond was sitting with a saucer full of tea in one hand, and holding in the other his pocket-knife with a chunk of cake on the tip, ready to be transferred to his mouth. And his knee, long since dominated the room.

"'It's blawving good fun, playin' pitch and toss," he was explaining. "'Then we master play shove-'sney, too. Ever played shove-'sney, mate?"

"'Good heavens!" exclaimed the vicar.

"'That conclusion left his lips in spite of himself.

"'Who—who is this boy?" he exclaimed, as he advanced into the room.

Hammond looked at him.

Then he glanced at the flushing face of the janitor, and understood that he had been guilty of some terrible breach of propriety, though what it was he did not know.

His face flushed crimson, and he fell suddenly silent. In his agitation the tea slopped over his saucer, and descended in a

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"I had luck," he said.

"Yes, that was a blessed fuker, wasn't it?" remarked Fatty Wynn, as he tossed the ball out.

"There's going to be some more fukers like that!" grinned Tom Merry.

And he looked very elated as he walked back to the centre.

In spite of the fact that they were playing a team of shorts and patches, the School House had scored the first goal in the first ten minutes of the match. And Hammond had done it—Hammond, the Cockney, the bomber from Bethnal Green! Tom Merry had doubted whether he was up to Public School form; but his eyes had been opened now. He had to acknowledge that there were very few junior players in the School House, or all St. Jim's, who could put on a pose like Hammond's, or shoot with such deadly accuracy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was simply chattering with joy. His Cockney chaps had not shown up to advantage at ten in the morning; there was no doubt about that; but he was sure at home on the footer field, and he was likely to prove a credit to his House so far as the great winter game was concerned.

Arthur Augustus's judgment was vindicated. He had told the fellows that Hammond was a ripping player, and they all admitted it now. Some of them, perhaps, were not overjoyed at being outside and outside by the Bethnal Green bomber, but they were all glad that they had such a rolf in the pucks for the New House.

And when the game restarted, Figgins & Co. did the Cockney schoolboy the honours of marking him very specially.

Hammond was not likely to have such a chance again, if Figgins & Co. could help it; but there was the first goal of all events. The Cockney had broken his duck for the School House, and started the scoring.

The game went on keenly, and Hammond showed no falling off in his form, though such a chance did not come his way again. He was like lightning on the ball when it came his way, and his pace was wonderful. His passing was as quick and accurate as his shooting for goal. The news that a new player of remarkable keenness was playing for the School House drew a good many spectators round the field, and there were many amazed remarks as the Cockney was watched at work.

Levinson and his friends came among the rest, and Levinson's face was very dark as he looked on.

He had refused to play in the team because the Cockney was in it, and undoubtedly that had wounded the lad he disliked; but Levinson was a little sorry for it now.

If he had been playing inside-right, he would certainly have taken care that Hammond did not distinguish himself quite so much. It would have been easy for him to get into the winger's way and spoil some of his chances.

"My hat, that chap can play!" Mellich remarked, noting the score on Levinson's face, and having an advisable desire to rebuke it in. "They won't miss you, after all, Levinson."

"Heastly not to play that outsider!" said Levinson.

"Well, he looks like winning the match for them."

"Oh, yet! He'll crack up soon."

"He doesn't look like cracking up," said Mellich, with a malicious grin. "My word, what a pace! Look at him now—just getting lightning."

"And look at that pass!" said Crook, joining Mellich in baiting Levinson. "See, he's put it across to Tom Merry, and the New House chaps simply couldn't do anything. Merry will shove that in!"

"Beasts!" choraled Mellich.

Hammond had centred to Tom Merry, and the captain of the Blue kicked; but this time Fatty Wynn was all there. The ball came out from a fat lot, and Thompson of the Blue cleared, and the team went off to the half-way line again.

"Hot stuff, that Cockney, and no mistake!" remarked Crook.

Levinson drove his hands deep in his pockets and stalked away, leaving his two kind friends chuckling. Never had his dislike of the Cockney schoolboy been so deep and bitter as at that moment.

The first half ended with the score unchanged—one up for the School House.

And, considering what they had anticipated after their ill-luck in making up their eleven, Tom Merry & Co. had reason to be elated.

"Didn't I tell you he was a ripplin' playah, Tom Merry,"

deak boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, as he sucked a lemon.

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, that's the most surprising thing about it," he remarked.

"Woolly, you are——"

"He's obviously jolly good," said Blake heartily, "and I'm jolly glad we've got you in the team, Hammond. Your footer is as high-class as your bats."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond grinned good-naturedly. He was happier at that moment than at any time since he had come to St. Jim's. It had surprised him to find that his good form in footer was received with so much satisfaction by the rest of the team. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pleasure was a joy to him. At last he had done something of which his friends could justly be proud, and that made their friendship a little less one-sided.

In the second half Figgins & Co. backed up with great energy.

To be beaten by the School House not at their full strength would be too rotten, as Figgins impressively told his fellows, and the New House footballers lined up with the looks of fellows determined to do or die.

The New House kicked off, and followed up the kick-off with a terrific attack which brought them right up to goal, and Figgins succeeded in scoring the ball in.

The score was level.

Then followed a stern tangle for the odd goal.

The tangle was so keen that it looked like being a draw, and certainly there was not much chance of more than one goal being captured.

The minutes ticked away, and the struggle went on, without success to either side. Fatty Wynn was a giant in goal, and he stopped several shots that came near materialising; and at the other end Clifton Dene put up a splendid defence when he was called upon. The game swung up and down the field, and both goalkeepers were kept pretty busy in turn.

It was in the last five minutes of the match that the victory was decided.

The School House were pressing home a hot attack, when Fatty Wynn knocked the ball out, and Owen cleared off towards the touchline. The ball would have gone into touch—there seemed to be no one near enough to have a chance with it—but Hammond's eye was on the ball, and he raced for it. Almost on the touchline his foot intervened, and, with marvellous accuracy, the leather passed back to centre. Tom Merry had not expected it, but he was ready, and he shoozed it in before Fatty Wynn knew it was coming.

"Goal!"

The fellows roared the ground round out a cheer. Tom Merry's task had been easy after that splendid pass. All the credit was due to Hammond, and Tom was the first to admit it.

The whistle went. The match was over, and the players streamed off the field.

Figgins, a little disgraced at his defeat, perhaps, but a thorough sportsman of all the same, clapped Hammond on the back.

"That was ripping!" he said. "If they all play like that in Limehouse—it is Limehouse!"

"Bethnal Green," said Hammond, with a grin.

"Yes; if they all play like that in Bethnal Green, we shouldn't have much chance against a team of you," said Figgins. "It was lovely!"

"Yes, wethah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wethah think that you won't want to leave Hammond out of the team again, Tom Merry."

"No fear!" said Tom, promptly. "I'll carry him on to the ground if necessary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly glad to play!" said Hammond. "I didn't think so 've you'd put me into the team at all, and it was good of you."

"He drops goals as easily as he's," grinned Dicky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the School House fellows went on in a state of great satisfaction. Hammond had saved the match for them, and for the time, at least, the Cockney schoolboy was very popular.

"Well, how many goals were you kicked by?" asked Monty Lowther, when he came out after his detention in the Form-house.

And Tom Merry chuckled as he replied:

"We beat them by two to one."

"My hat!" said Lowther. "Who shot them?"

"Hammond took the first, and I took the second from a pass by-gone man. But it was really Hammond's goal."

"The Hatter!"

ANSWERS

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After the match, Figgies, a little chagrined at his defeat, but a thorough sportsman all the same, stepped Hammond on the back. "That was ripping," he said. "If they all play like you in Betsford Green, we shouldn't have much chance against a team of yours." (See Chapter 7.)

The ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot. Figgies & Co. made a smart attack at once, and brought the leather into the School House hall, and pressed on in a sharp attack upon Wood.

With some of Tom Merry's best men out of the team, the defence was not so strong as usual, and the attack came right up to goal, and Clifton Duro, the Canadian junior, was called upon to save again and again. But the Canadian defended splendidly, and the ball did not find a resting-place, and Kangaroo received it from him and cleared at last, sending the leather out to midfield with a tremendous kick. The New House fellows fell back at once; but the School House forwards had a chance now, and one of them was upon the ball like a lightning-bolt.

There was a shout as the winger was seen with the ball, speeding down the touchline at a pace that beat the New House fellows hollow.

"Hammond!" gasped Tom Merry.
"Bravo!" yelled Arthur Angustus.
The forwards rushed on, ready to take a pass. The New House defence had fallen back to stop Hammond; but the halves were nowhere, and he seemed to wind round the backs like a tiger.

He gave a glance to centre; but Tom Merry was not up enough to take a pass, and Roy was far behind. There was nothing for him to do but to rush in and shoot, or miss the chance, and he decided at once. He came down on goal like lightning, and Fatty Wyon, all eyes and hands and feet, was ready to receive him; but he was not quite ready for a ball that passed him like a lightning-bolt.

"Plop!"
"Oh, my Aunt Jermina!" ejaculated Fatty Wyon.
There was a gasp from all the players.
"Goal!"
And then a shout:
"Bravo, Cockney!"

CHAPTER 7. Something Like a Footballer!

TOM MERRY clapped Hammond on the shoulder enthusiastically.
"Ripping!" he exclaimed. "Top notch! You youngster, why didn't you tell us you were a giddy International in disguise?"
"Yess, watah! Oh, good man—good man!" Hammond grinned bashfully.

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"Wah! Shall I tell Hammond you want him, Tom Merry?" asked Arthur Augustus pleasantly.
 "Well, what do you boys say?" asked Tom Merry, looking toward the other lads.
 "Might give him a chance, if he can play," said Digby.
 "You haven't much to choose from, anyway. He couldn't be any worse than Mellish, for instance, if you played him—or Skempole."
 "That's quite so—nearly everybody who's any good is out," said Tom. "Go and walk your friend in here, Gussy, and we'll talk to him like a family of Dutch apples."
 "Yess, wathah," said Arthur Augustus joyfully.
 And he rushed off in search of his Cockney cousin.

CHAPTER 6.
 Levison Declines.

HARRY HAMMOND came into the common-rooms, where the footballers were discussing the sad state of affairs with Arthur Augustus's arms linked in his axils. Hammond was looking a little excited. Many a time had he looked on while the St. Jim's juniors were playing, and longed to make one of them. Even at practice he was not wanted—follows like Levison and Crooke and Mellish shove him away by their looks and remarks. Much as he liked football, and well as he played it, Hammond had made up his mind to give the game up while he was at St. Jim's, and to keep clear even of practice, to avoid the scornful looks and sneers of the sports of the school. And so the message brought by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came to him as a surprise and a joy.

His eyes were gleaming, and his ragged face looked almost handsome as he came in, so changed was his expression.
 "You want me, Merry?" he asked. "Mister Gussy says

Tom Merry eyed him doubtfully. He was pretty well built, and he certainly was very strong, as he had proved by the terrific lunge with which he delivered the famous Bethnal Green left. He was sharp and keen as a razor, and very quick and active upon his feet. He looked like a fellow who could play if he knew how. But Tom Merry had not seen him play, and he was dubious. Figgins & Co. were at the top of their form. And the School House juniors eleven that afternoon was ragged enough, without risking a totally untried player in its ranks.

But Tom Merry had agreed to do it, and he was not the fellow to go back on his word. So he nodded as cheerfully as he could in reply to Hammond's question.

"Yes. You can play footer?"
 "Can a duck swim?" was Hammond's counter-question.
 "Oh! Then you're a giddy footer—oh!"
 "Well—oh!"
 "Played a bit?" asked Jack Blake.
 "Every chance I ever got," said Hammond.
 "Well, that sounds better," said Tom Merry approvingly.
 "Of course, you wouldn't be up to public school form, but if you do your best—"

Hammond chuckled irresolutely.
 "What are you chuckling at?" Tom Merry demanded.
 "I reckon I'm up to your form 'ere, that's all. We've got lads who plays in the park but could make stags roared some of 'em."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, a little nettled. "I didn't know you were budding International in Bethnal Green! All the better—'it's the right."

"Right eh?" said Hammond. "You see?"
 "Plenty of gas, whether there's any footer or not," remarked Blake.

Hammond reddened.
 "Sorry!" he said at once. "I didn't mean to gas. But Merry said I wasn't up to public school form—and if you was public school at me, I jam Bethnal Green back at you!"

Tom Merry laughed.
 "Quite so," he said. "I beg your pardon, Hammond. We got into a way of looking on ourselves as the salt of the earth, you know. Only as of one little way."

"Yess," said Arthur Augustus, with a nod. "I have heard Curtis of the Fifth remark that the population of this country is composed of two kinds—St. Jim's fellows and outsiders. I would not go quite so far as that myself."

"Well, to get back to our matter," said Tom Merry. "Will you play for the House team this afternoon, Hammond?"
 "Like a bird."

"Where do you usually play?"
 "Anywhere—inside or outside, just as you like."
 "Then I'll throw you in as outside-right," said Tom Merry.
 "That suit you?"

"Right—oh! I'm your man!"
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"Good egg! Get into your footer things," said Tom Merry. "I'll go and speak to Levison, and tell him we want him."

Hammond hurried off to change, and other fellows who were playing followed his example. And Tom Merry looked for Levison.

He found the end of the Fourth chatting with Crooke and Mellish outside the tuckshop. The three of them regarded Tom Merry with a far from loving gaze as he came up. But the captain of the School took no notice of their looks.

"Would you like to play in the House eleven this afternoon, Levison?" he asked.

Levison looked astonished.
 "If you want me?"

"Yes."
 "Somebody else crooked?" asked Levison, with a sneer.

"Naturally, or I shouldn't ask you," said Tom Merry calmly. "I suppose you wouldn't expect us to leave out a man like Blake or Kangaroo to make room for you. I'm a man short, and if you care for the place, there you are!"

"Well, I'd like to play for the House team, of course," said Levison. "If you think I'm any good—"

"You're not in signing position, certainly," said Tom Merry, smiling him. "But you are clever enough, and you can play a good game when you choose. I'll put you in."

"Right—oh!"
 Levison left his friends, and walked away with Tom Merry. He did not care for football; but he was, as Tom Merry said, a good player when he chose. And, although he did not care for the game itself, he wanted to be able to say that he had played for the House eleven. It was a distinction worth getting.

Arthur Augustus met them as he came out of the School House in brown rig with a coat and a sweater on.

"Hammond will be down in a minute, dear boy," he remarked. "We're waddy. Is Levison playing?"
 "Yes."
 "Bettah wad in and get changed, Levison."

"Hail an!" said Levison, with a glitter in his eyes, speaking loudly, as several fellows came along to join Tom Merry.

"Did you say that Hammond is playing?"
 "Yess, wathah."

"Is that the fact, Tom Merry?"
 "Haven't you heard Gussy say so?" demanded Tom Merry sharply.

"You are playing that East Ender in the House team?"
 "Yes."

"Then you won't play me!" said Levison lightly. "I decline to play in the same team as that horrible outsider!"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed.
 "Clear out, then?" he said tersely. "We don't want you!"

"Yess, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, his eyes flashing.
 "Clear out, you wank wotah; and if you speak disrespectfully of my friend Hammond again, I'll knock you down, bad boy!"

Levison walked away, a scowl on his lips.

Berry Hammond had come out of the House in time to hear what was said. It brought a dark cloud to his face.

"Look 'ere, Tom Merry!" he said. "If you'd rather play Levison than me, I'll stand out. I'm quite willing!"

"I wouldn't play Levison now on any terms, not even if we had to play a man short," said Tom Merry promptly.

"And it won't be so bad as that. I'll find somebody."

Richard Day of the Fourth was discovered, after some searching, and invited into the team. He was given enough to find himself there, as a matter of fact. Then, the eleven being complete, Tom Merry & Co. made their way down to the footer ground. Figgins and his men were already on Little Side, putting a ball about. The School House team, owing to the series of amendments that had befallen them, were late.

"Hallo! Here you are at last!" sang out Figgins. "I was beginning to think you'd forgotten all about the match!"

"Been making changes in the team—oh!" said Kern.
 "Yes; we've had a bad luck," said Tom Merry. "But we've raised a team to beat you, Figg. We're ready now; sorry we're late!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Figgins. "And if you beat us, I'll eat the footer. Black or white!"

It fell to the School House to kick off, and the sides lined up. Fatty Wynn of the Fourth rolled into goal in the New House side. Fatty Wynn was a goalkeeper of great renown, and he was in great form to-day. Figgins & Co. looked rather seriously at Hammond. They had little to do with the matter, as the fellows called him, as he was set in the House; but they heard a good deal about him, and they were rather surprised to see him in the House team. They did not think that he was likely to prove dangerous, however.

the same. I reckoned that I'd never get a pal 'ere, only blokes what wanted my money—ang the money! I 'ad good pals in the Bethnal Green Road afore I 'ad any more."

"You surely don't think I want your money, dear boy?"
 "No; I know you don't," said Hammond. "I wish you did—I'd like to do something for you, arter all you've done for me. But that's just it. You're the only chap wot's been decent to me, and if you was to get disgusted with me, and ang me, I think it would take all the 'eat out of me; and, at the same time, I don't want to 'ang on to you if you don't want me."

"Hammond, dear boy, you are with a difficult chap to deal with. Don't talk any more about it, and don't weep. I'm your friend as long as you want me."
 "That's for life!" said Hammond. "O'right; I won't jaw no more, only I was feeling so beastly miserable, and—"

"Come out for a little wen in the quad, dear boy, and I will cheer you up," said Arthur Augustus.

"Right!"
 Levison hurried down the passage. He did not want to be caught listening. His eyes were gleaming with a malicious light. As he heard Hammond's troubled story, a scheme had flashed into his feeble brain—a scheme that would more than repay the Bethnal Green boulder for that knock-down blow in the common room.

"My chance at last!" muttered Levison.
 His face was quite bright as he entered Cutts's study with the imposture. The Fifth Former looked at him curiously.

"Somebody left you a fortune?" he asked.
 Levison laughed.

"No, but I think I see a way of getting my own back on that East End cad," he said.

And Cutts, of the Fifth, replied quite cordially:
 "Good luck!"

CHAPTER 5. Men Wanted.

TOM MERRY ran his fingers through his curly hair and groaned.

It was Saturday afternoon.
 New House and School House were meeting in a House match that afternoon. Tom Merry, as junior football skipper of his House, had all the terrible responsibilities of the House match on his shoulders. The rivalry between the two Houses at St. Jim's was keen, and in nothing so keen as in foater. The senior House matches were very heavily contested. Kildare, of the School House, always striving every nerve to beat Montrose, of the New House, and vice-versa. But it was even keener with the juniors—Tom Merry & Co. would have scored recognition to beat Figgins & Co. of the New House, and Figgins & Co. would have attempted the widest impossibilities in order to score off Tom Merry & Co. of the School House.

And as this particular Saturday afternoon Tom Merry was in despair.

The worst of bad luck had befallen him.

Figgins & Co. were at the top of their form. And the School House junior eleven had gone to rack and ruin.

In the first place, Manners had hurt his ankle and couldn't play, and Lowther was detained for the afternoon, owing to a humorous outbreak in the Form-room. Lowther had thought it very funny to draw a comic figure of Mr. Liston, the master of the Shell, on the blackboard. The figure was indeed funny, and the Shell fellows had enjoyed the job; but the unfortunate part was that Mr. Liston, just across in suddenly and caught Lowther in the act, with the result that Monty Lowther was detained for the half-holiday, with five hundred lines of Virgil to keep him busy.

And that was not all. Hervey, of the Fourth, couldn't, or wouldn't, play that afternoon. Tower, the famous boulder, was unwell. When Tower was off colour, nothing else in the wide universe mattered to Herries. He sneered at the mere suggestion of football.

Fiddling-while Rome was having wasn't in it with playing foater while Towse was sick. His friends had made many suggestions to meet the nick. Blake proposed having the building shot. Digby suggested having him drowned. Arthur Augustus declared that Towse would get on just as well while Herries was playing foater. Herries replied only with scornful snorts.

Tom Merry asked him sarcastically whether he intended to spend the afternoon sitting beside Tower and holding his jaw, or whether he was going to read to him. Whereat, Herries only sneered more scathingly than ever. He was going to look after Towse, and he wasn't going to play foater, and that was the long and the short and the beginning and the end of it.

And over that was not the sum of an unfortunate foater

captain's misdoings. Reilly had gone out on his bike with Lumley-Lumley and Book. When Tom Merry thought of them, and went to look for them to tell them they would be wanted, they had gone.

And as the team was in rag and tatters, as Tom Merry said pathetically, Bernard Glyn, of the Shell, was a good footballer, when he liked; but he was busy upon one of his chemical experiments in the end study, and had he spoiled his ink, and refused even to answer a persuasive voice through the keyhole.

"Nine out of ten we shall have to meet Figgins & Co. with!" growled Tom Merry. "They will walk all over us."

"I mean to play up like anything!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retorted.

"That will make it all right," said Blake sarcastically. "Better let Gussie inside the New House all on his lonesome."

"Waddy, Blake—"

"How is Gussie making up the team?" asked Kangaroo, otherwise Harry Noble, of the Shell, the Constable junior.

Tom Merry showed his list. Gibson Dunn in goal, the Canadian junior being a first-rate goalkeeper. Kangaroo and Smith minor at back. Halves, Blake and Kewish and Digby. Forwards, Tom Merry, D'Arcy, and three sets of intertanga.

"What's the matter with me in the front line?" demanded Blake.

"Patience, my son. Somebody's got to play ball, and you can do it, and others can't. Got to put you where you're most useful."

"Well, that's all right," said Blake. "So you want three more forwards."

"Yes."

"Might try Murphy—his pretty good."

Tom Merry nodded, and wrote down Murphy in the place of one of the intertanga marks.

"What about Goss?"

"He's gone out."

"Levison can play, if he chooses," said Blake hesitatingly.

"Blessed if I like asking him—but I suppose I must," said Tom Merry. "He's not reliable—but I suppose he'll do his best for the House. But that leaves as a team short—and I'm stumped."

"The blessed team will be a thing of shreds and patches, anyway," said Manners. "If I hadn't hurt my nose—"

"But you have hurt your silly foot," growled Tom Merry.

"I really wish you'd get it off to-morrow, if you was bound to get yourself crooked. But these blessed things always come together."

"Toss, waddy! May I make a suggestion, Tom Merry?"

"No harm," said Tom, his tone implying that he did not think that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's suggestion would be a very desirable one.

"Why not play my friend Hammond?"

"Yes, I know it would be something like that," growled Blake. "Go and tell your friend Hammond, Gussie."

"I refuse to do anything" of the sort. I usually regard it as being" up to Tom Merry to give my friend Hammond a chance."

"He can't play!" said Tom.

"Toss, waddy. He plays all right; I've seen him at practice."

"Of course, Gussie is a japping judge of a fellow's form at foater," said Digby, with heavy sarcasms.

"I want that that is so. Dig, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "If you fellows took a proper interest in us friend Hammond, that is, if you would have observed that he is a very good footballer."

"He hasn't been seen much at practice," said Tom Merry.

"If he's been on the game, why does he keep away from it?"

"The coach wouldn't be pleased to see him there, dear boy. Hammond is a very sensitive chap, and he feels out of it. It is quite easy for a snobbish wotnik to hurt a chap's feelings."

"I don't see how he can have played much, in a house's shop in Bethnal Green," said Blake. "Nothing against him, Gussie, so don't get on your bloody high horse. But facts are facts, even if you don't like 'em."

"Hammond has told me that he played regularly every Saturday afternoon for the Bethnal Green Wambles, dear boy."

"I wonder what kind of foater they played!" said Manners, with a snarl.

"Give him a chance, Tom Merry," urged D'Arcy. "Any way, you're got to shove somebody in, and you have only waddy to choose from now."

"But he'll let the side down," said Tom anxiously.

"Waddy! I tell you, he's a jolly good player. He's very fast, too, and he kicks like an angel."

"I've never seen an angel kick," said Blake. "How is it done, Gussie?"

shower upon D'Arcy's knees, soaking through the beautiful trousers. His pocket-knife, with the chunk of cake on the end of it, remained half-stuck in his mouth.

But Arthur Augustus did not heed the soaking. He stood up gallantly, loyal to his friend, and never turned a hair.

"This is Horsey Hammond, my friend Hammond, sir," he said. "Hammond, dash boy, this is Mr. Horsey, the vicar."

"Oh?" gasped Mr. Horsey.

He pulled himself together, and shook hands with Hammond. But Hammond did not say a word. He could not. What he had done he did not know, but he realized that he had put his foot in it in some terrible manner, and he fervently wished that the floor would open and swallow him up. But the floor did not oblige him in that way, and Hammond had to sit in a state of dumb misery till the janitors took their leave.

"You were an ass to take Hammond there, Gussy?" Blake murmured, when they were back at St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus jammed his eyelids into his eye, and looked it upon Blake with a withering look.

"If you have any desire to criticize my friend Hammond, Blake, I trust you will not criticize him to me!" he said stiffly.

And he walked away with his aristocratic nose high in the air.

CHAPTER 3.

Levison Has An Idea!

CUTTS of the Fifth looked into Levison's study in the Fourth Form passage.

Levison's study-mates—Lansley-Lansley, Rook, and Mellish—were out; but Levison was there with a bad headache. He had not got over his mishap in the common-room, when he had knocked his head against the wall after receiving the "Bothmal Green left."

Cutts looked at him curiously.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Headache!" growled Levison. "I've got an awful bump on my head. That fishy outsider Hammond pitched me on my head against the wall."

Cutts gasped.

"You'd better let young Hammond alone," he said. "He's hot stuff. Hammond is rather more than your weight, Levison."

"More than yours, too," said Levison, with a sneer.

"What do you mean?" demanded Cutts, frowning.

"Oh, I know how you and Kass and Pyro had him in your study the first day he came here, to get his money off him at nap," said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders; "and instead of wringing him you got hit. You've had your kibble into him ever since. You don't like the cake any more than I do. Oh! How my head aches! I'll make him open for it, somehow."

"Well, he seems to have made you squint," said Cutts. "You're quite right. I don't like the young one, and if I could——" He passed.

"You could give him a jolly good kicking," said Levison. "You're in the Fifth."

"And here a crew of blessed janitors swearing round me," growled Cutts. "But we'll see. But I didn't come here to talk about Hammond. I've got two hundred lines from old Rookish, and I want you to do them."

And Cutts quitted the room.

"Good! I'll settle later, as I'm rather shy of tin now," said Levison.

"You'll settle now, or they won't be done," said Levison. Cutts scowled. The black sheep of the Fifth had fully his match in the cad of the Fourth. He took a half-crown from his pocket, and laid it on the table.

"There you are, you Shlyock!" he said. "Mind you make it exactly like my writing. I thought old Harry looked rather suspiciously at the last lot."

"That's all right," said Levison.

"Bring them to my study when you've done them."

Levison, growling to himself, for his head was aching badly, drew a sheet of impot. paper towards him, dipped a pen in the ink, and began to write. What he wrote was not in his own hand, but in a close imitation of Cutts's clear, small writing. Levison had the dangerous gift of being able to imitate any hand, and he frequently turned a mere or less honest penny by writing lines for other fellows, who were too idle to write their impositions themselves, and who could afford to pay him for his trouble. He made quite a small income out of Cutts, of the Fifth, who had plenty of money, and always had too many engagements to leave him time for lines.

The lines ran swiftly under Levison's facile pen. And when they were written, it would have puzzled Cutts himself to say that they were not in his hand.

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Lansley-Lansley, of the Fourth, came into the study while Levison was so engaged. He glanced at Levison.

"Lines?" he asked. "What's the trouble now?"

"Not mine," said Levison.

Lansley-Lansley glanced at the sheet.

"That's Cutts's lot," he said.

"Yes."

"I guess you'll get into trouble with that gift of yours some day," said Lansley-Lansley, with a curl of the lip. "You'll get to signing somebody else's name on a cheque, if you keep up that kind of thing. I'd advise you to chuck it."

"When I want your advice, I'll ask you for it," said Levison.

And Lansley-Lansley asserted, and said no more.

Levison finished the lines, and left the study. He had to pass No. 5 on his way to the stairs, and he passed as he heard the sound of voices within. He recognized the voice of Harry Hammond. The bouncer had evidently come back from his visit to the vicarage. But Hammond's voice had not in usually assured tone.

"It's very kind of you, Master D'Arcy," Hammond was saying, and his voice sounded husky; "but—but it ain't no good."

"What's the matter, dash boy?" D'Arcy's voice was very kind. "I really wish you would not call me Master D'Arcy. You know very well that the fellows here are all equal, and my fellows call me Arthur, or Gussy."

"I ain't fit to be your friend, D'Arcy."

"Wah, dash boy!"

"You shouldn't 'ave taken me to the vicarage. You meant it to be kind, and it was kind, but I've only disgraced you."

"Walshah!"

Levison's eyes glared. He glanced up and down the passage; there was no one in sight. And he drew nearer to the study door to hear the rest of that interesting conversation—very interesting to the cad of the Fourth. He had no scruples about listening at a door. Scruples were not in Levison's line.

"I don't know rightly what was wrong," Hammond went on drearily. "But I know as 'ow I put my foot in it. All the fellows was ashamed of me."

"Wah."

Mr. Hutton was surprised to see such a cove there—you can't deny that, Master D'Arcy."

"My friend is good enough to go anywhere, dash boy?"

"And I don't know what was wrong, that's the worst of it. Goodness knows, I'm tryin' to learn and do my best."

"Well, as a jestah of fact, dash boy, if you don't mind my meeterin' it, it is not a custom to peer one's tea into a search!"

"It makes it cool to drink," said Hammond, in surprise. "Yass; but—but it isn't done, you know. And fellows don't, as a rule, eat cake with a pocket-knife; it's rather wicked, as eat with a knife at all!"

"I never never do it again," said Hammond. "I don't see why, but I'll take your word for it, Master D'Arcy. I wish you'd tell me things."

"Well, I'm tellin' you now," said D'Arcy good-humouredly.

"You ain't ashamed of me?"

"Certainly not!"

"It wouldn't be surprisin' if you was," said Hammond. "I know I ain't your class. I ain't 'ad the chance to be. But if you stick to me, Master D'Arcy, I feel as 'ow I shall 'ave the knack to stick it out and do my best. If you was to go back on me, I think I should chuck it all up. I couldn't stick it any longer."

"You needn't have any fear of that, dash boy. I'm not the kind of chap to go back on my friends."

"But I don't want you stickin' to me out of charity and kindness, either. I don't want to be a burden on nobody."

"I'm stickin' to you out of friendship, dash boy!"

"And not only 'cause I pulled your cresser outer the river? That wasn't nothing, you know."

"It was a very great deal, Hammond; but that isn't the only reason. I think you are the right sort—one of the best!"

"You really think so, Master D'Arcy?"

"Yass, walshah!"

"And you're goin' to stick to me, after I made awful blommies to-day, and disgraced you?"

"Wah!"

"I ain't suspicious," said Hammond, "but—but when I first came here, Cutts, of the Fifth, took me up, and I thought 's was a first-class toff. But I found that he only wanted to use my money at cards."

"The catch."

Then Levison was very friendly, and it turned out that he wanted to borrow money. Mellish and some others was

"Yes; the stiddy Hatter! And if we had a few more Hatters like Hammond in the team I'd challenge the first eleven and beat them!" said Tom Merry.

And Arthur Augustus chimed in cheerily:

"Yess, watah!"

CHAPTER 8. The Sharps.

"WE'LL stop back and have tea," said Arthur Augustus jumped off his bicycle outside the Hotel Royal in Weyland.

Hammond followed in the example.

The two strangely-associated chums were cycling home, after a long run through the country, by themselves. It was just like Gussy to select the big, handsome hotel of Weyland for tea. The charge of Mr. Parker, the proprietor of the Hotel Royal, were high; but that did not matter to D'Arcy and Hammond, who were well provided with funds. They handed their bicycles to the porter, and Arthur Augustus led the way through to a room overlooking the river, where there were nice little tables for tea.

"We shall have a very handy break," Arthur Augustus remarked. "This is a watah nice place. I had a job back once."

Hammond opened his eyes.

"A job?" he repeated.

"Yess, I was away from school once, and got a job back," said D'Arcy, with a grin. "I was interpreting, you know, and it was an awful tussle 'twixt to speak foreign language to foreigners. Somehow or other they don't seem to speak the same kind of Fowech that we speak at St. Jim's. I don't know why."

"Somebody in the billiard-room," remarked Hammond, as he passed the clock of the ivory balls came from the adjoining apartment.

"You don't play billiards, doah he?"

"Don't I just?" grinned Hammond. "I had a job once before in a pub, and I used to mark for 'em, and I got a lot of practice. Shall we have fifty up for there's a table?"

Arthur Augustus looked thoughtful. On the billiard-table at home in Eastwood House he was accustomed to play; but—

"I wrealy don't know whether we ought to," he said. "I don't quite know whether the Head would approve of it."

"The 'Ead woul'd know," suggested Hammond.

"But we want play the game, doah he, whether he likes or not," said Arthur Augustus stoutly.

"Yess, I s'pose so," answered Hammond. "But where's the 'arm? It 'oat' mean play for money? We don't want to do that. We could 'ave a game, and go 'arves in payin' for the table."

"I suppose there would be no harm," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "However, there is only one table back, and it seems to be engaged. Let's have tea now."

While they were having tea, a voice they knew was heard proceeding from the billiard-room:

"Forty-six—thirty-eight! I shall beat you, Frye!"

It was the voice of Gerald Cutts, of the Fifth Form.

"You haven't beaten me yet," said Frye.

"Two to one I can run you out in a single break!"

"Dose!"

"Cutts and Prye of the Fifth!" D'Arcy remarked. "They are playing for money, the wotahs! Cutts is a good player, I believe."

They heard the click of the balls as Cutts ran on. Their tea was nearly finished, and curiosity drew them to the door of the billiard-room, to see whether Cutts of the Fifth would make good his boast. Frye was standing with a cue in his hand, looking on, and Cutts was carefully placing a difficult shot. Cutts's ball and cue were in hand, and Frye's ball was near one of the top pockets, as the black sheep of the Fifth had a difficult shot to pull off unless he potted the white. Frye gave a grunt as he saw Cutts carefully taking aim.

"If you play 'Whitechapel,' that don't count," he said. Cutts laughed.

"I'm not going to put you in," he said. "That's all right. Where do I stand now?"

"Sixty."

"Forty to get to run you out," said Cutts.

"You won't do it!"

"Double!"

"Sev."

"Sev'ntys!"

"Cuteh," said Frye.

"Right-ho!"

The ball ran up the table, clicked on the white, and ran down from the cushion and touched the red.

"Not dead yet!" remarked Cutts.

"Flake!" said Frye.

"Bats!"

Cutts glanced round at the two jokers standing in the doorway, both of them looking on with great interest. They knew that Cutts was a reckless gambler, but they had hardly expected him to stake four pounds on the chance of getting his hundred in a single break, starting from forty-six. Cutts handled the cue like a professional, however, and he had a chance.

The jokers expected to receive a snarl from Cutts, but he smiled instead, and nodded to them.

"Hallo, you kids, looking for a game?" he asked.

"No 'arv," said Hammond. "We'll watah you, if you don't mind. I'd like to see you get that 'undred."

"Do you play?"

"Yess, a bit."

"And I know you do, D'Arcy," said Cutts, who, for some reason, seemed to have made up his mind to be very agreeable to the jokers. "I'll play you, if you like, when I've scupled Prye."

"You haven't scupled me yet," growled Frye.

Cutts closed one eye at his companion, the eye that was away from the jokers. Frye understood, and he grinned. The two jokers, both fresh with money, had walked into the billiard-room like gulls into a trap.

"Halves!" murmured Frye, under his breath, and Cutts nodded.

Cutts went on with his break.

But as he passed to chalk his cue he whispered to Frye:

"Our bet's off; better game on. Sevv'ry!"

Frye winked to imply that he did not care.

That little bit of by-play quite escaped Arthur Augustus and D'Arcy, who was never on the look-out for duplicity of any kind. But it did not escape the keen eyes of Henry Hammond, and Hammond was on his guard at once. He did not hesitate when he was whispered, but he knew that there was some scheming between the two rivals of the Fifth. He remembered very clearly the time when he had been incensed with Gerald Cutts's study to play chess, and the Fifth-Former had put up with him because he did not lose.

Cutts went on playing, but his skill seemed suddenly to have deserted him. He made a bad stroke, and grunted.

"Sevv'ry!" said Frye. "You lose!"

As the bet was off, Cutts did not mind losing. The two Fifth-Formers finished the hundred, Cutts playing very poorly.

Arthur Augustus's opinion of Cutts as a billiard-player diminished very much, but Hammond's did not. Hammond was perfectly well aware that Cutts was playing badly as a purpose. He had seen billiard snipers at work before, and he knew their little ways. Cutts would have been very indignant if he had been called a billiard sharper, but at that moment that was what he was, and nothing more or less.

Frye won the hundred, leaving Cutts at ninety.

"Bad Jove, that's bad luck for you!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Nether game, Frye!" asked Cutts.

Frye shook his head.

"No. Give D'Arcy a game. I'll watch."

"Care to play, D'Arcy?"

Now, Arthur Augustus did not like Cutts of the Fifth, and he regarded him as a black sheep, and was disgusted with him accordingly. But he could not help feeling a little doubtful at being asked to play billiards by Cutts. Gerald Cutts was a scoundrel, in the Fifth, and he was the arbiter of elegance in the Upper Form at St. Jim's. Fellows in the Sixth were proud of knowing Cutts. It was a distinction to go for "Sunday walks" with him. He was undoubtedly a headstrong, but he was a very gentlemanly and distinguished headstrong indeed. And billiards, after all, was a harmless game, so long as it was not accompanied by drinking, smoking, or betting.

"Yess," said Arthur Augustus. "Not for money, you know."

"Don't be afraid. I won't corrupt poor giddy souls," grinned Cutts.

D'Arcy reddened a little. It was unpleasant to be supposed to be setting up as superior to other people.

"Fifty up!" asked Cutts. "I'll give you ten."

"I don't think you need give me any," said Arthur Augustus, as he chalked his cue. "I'll play you on equal terms, Cutts."

"Oh, right you see?"

They began to play, Hammond looking on, and Frye looking by the window, looking out on the river. No one would have supposed that Frye had any personal interest in the game, unless his whisper "Halves!" had been heard. As a matter of fact, the arrangement was fully understood that Frye was to have half that Cutts succeeded in extracting from the jokers on the green table.

Arthur Augustus played a boyish game. When the balls were say he scored, but Cutts could have walked round and round him if he had chosen. But Cutts did not choose. He

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ran ahead of D'Arcy, and then dropped behind, and kept steadily behind as the score ran up. He looked a little disappointed.

"I didn't know you were in such form," he remarked.

Arthur Augustus smiled with satisfaction.

"Yes, I'm washed a dab at billiards," he remarked.

Catts concealed a smile.

"Look here, why not have a quid on the game to make it interesting?" he suggested. "I don't mean playing for money, but just a little quid on the game."

The distinction between playing for money, and having a sovereign on the game was not very clear, but according to Catts there was a difference.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I'd wash not, dash boy."

"If you've got so money I'll play you on tick," said Catts.

"What! I have money, but—"

"But you're afraid of losing it," said Frye, getting in a remark. "Well, a kid can't be too careful with his tin."

Arthur Augustus flushed. He did not like to be supposed to be afraid of losing his money. The money was little to him. It was the principle of the thing he was thinking of. But the two others did not seem to understand that.

"I'm not afraid," said D'Arcy, rather warmly.

"Well, say half-a-sovereign," said Catts; "just to make the game worth playing."

"It isn't the money, I'd wash not."

Catts panted.

"Let him alone, Catts," said Frye. "He'd rather spend his money at the naphtha than be a sportsman. After all, he's only a kid."

Arthur Augustus would have liked to explain that it was never had form to play for money, but as Catts and Frye had been playing for money his politeness restrained him: He hesitated. It was said of old that he who hesitates is lost.

"You needn't be nervous about your quid," said Catts, laughing. "You're beating me hollow."

"It isn't that, I— Dash it all, I'll have a quid on the game if you like!"

"Good egg! You're a little sport!"

Arthur Augustus was in rather a worried mood as he proceeded. He was setting against his principles. He rather hoped that he would lose the game, and then he would pay Catts the sovereign, and have nothing more to do with the billiard-table. But Catts read his thoughts as easily as an open book, and Catts took the greatest care that D'Arcy should win that game. He ran his very closely, scoring forty-eight by the time D'Arcy ran out ahead.

"Well, you've beaten me," he exclaimed, and he tossed a sovereign on the table. "There you are!"

Arthur Augustus looked doubtfully at the coin through his goggles.

"I'd wash not take it, Catts."

Catts frowned.

"I suppose you don't mean to insult me, D'Arcy?" he said.

"Certainly not, dash boy," said Arthur Augustus hastily.

"When I lose, I pay," said Frye.

Arthur Augustus reluctantly slipped the sovereign into his pocket.

"Anyway, D'Arcy's going to give you your revenge," said Frye.

"Oh, yes, of course!" said Catts.

D'Arcy had no choice about it. After winning Catts's money he could scarcely refuse to play a second game to give him a chance of winning. But the second game ended like the first, D'Arcy winning run more easily. Another sovereign found its way into his waistcoat pocket, and his trouble increased. He did not want Catts's money, and he did not want to gamble, and in spite of the whole dimmity Catts made, D'Arcy would not help feeling that it was gambling.

"I'll beat you this time," said Catts, with a very determined air.

"You'd like to play again, dash boy?"

"Not pressed for time, are you?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then unless you specially want to leave off a winner—"

"Washly, Catts—"

"Then we'll try our luck again," said Catts. "I'll beat you."

"I wash think you won't," said Arthur Augustus, whose opinion of his own prowess on the billiard-table had been possibly increased by his victories over Catts.

"But you?" said Catts.

"Oh, no!"

"I see. You've got an opinion, but you don't care to back it," said Catts, his lip curling. "Look here, make it worth while. You've won two quid, so you can afford it. I'll put a five on the game."

"Yess, but—"

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"THE HARBET" LIBRARY.

Every Monday.

"A five it is," said Catts; "and if I don't beat you you'll make a good thing out of it. Five to a five—what?"

"Yess," said D'Arcy weakly.

They played that game. D'Arcy led steadily until he had scored forty-two, and then Catts appeared to be favoured by luck. He ran out from thirty-five in a single break.

"Didn't I tell you?" said Catts.

"Yess; that's of all right. It was a wash thing, though."

Arthur Augustus reproduced Catts's two sovereigns, and three of his own, and handed them to the Fifth-Formers. Catts slipped these into his pocket carelessly.

"Now I'll give you your revenge," he said.

"Thanks; I'd wash not play any more."

"Oh, rats!" said Catts. "Surely you're not scared because you've lost a bit? I'll give it back to you if you like." Catts knew very well that the swell of the Fourth would not accept that offer.

"I don't want that, Catts," said D'Arcy stiffly.

"Well, then, try your luck again. I'll give you fifteen in five."

"I won't take any odds, but I'll try you again if you like," said Arthur Augustus, resigning himself to his fate. Catts led steadily from the commencement of this time.

"Looks as if I shall bag your five," he remarked, when his score was at thirty-six, D'Arcy's being twenty.

Arthur Augustus looked startled. He had supposed that the game was for a sovereign, as at first.

"Is this for a five?" he faltered.

Catts smiled.

"Why, of course—same as the last! You don't want to back out because I've ahead, do you?"

"Certainly not! But I didn't understand."

"Didn't you understand that it was for a five, Frye?" asked Catts, appealing to his friend.

"Certainly!" said Frye.

"Oh, all right," said D'Arcy. "Only I haven't five pounds about me, you see. I have only one sovereign left. Could you lend me five, Hammond?"

"Not—" said Hammond. "Forty if you like!"

"All right, then," said D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus played his hardest. He had plenty of money, for a guinea he could not very well afford to lose five pounds, after the three he had already lost. But his efforts were quite useless. Catts ran out easily ahead. The swell of St. Jim's, unable to repress a somewhat disengaged look, produced his last solitary sovereign, and borrowed four of Hammond. The two Fifth-Formers looked curiously at Hammond. They knew that the heir of Hammond's Right-class Hair had plenty of money, but they were surprised when they saw him take out a Russia-leather pocket-book and extract one five from a bunch of others. The two swells exchanged a hurried, greedy glance. They had done very well out of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, but Harry Hammond was evidently a more valuable player to back.

"Noting game, D'Arcy?" asked Catts.

"No, thanks. I think I'll be getting along. Come on, Hammond!" said D'Arcy, a little heavily.

"Hold on!" said Catts. "Perhaps your friend would care for a game?"

"Betish not, Hammond, dash boy," murmured Arthur Augustus, alarmed at the prospect of seeing Hammond's banknotes pass over to Catts. "Let it alone."

"Well, I'll play a game, if you don't mind, D'Arcy."

"Not, washly."

"Now, don't be selfish," said Catts. "You've had your game, D'Arcy. Let Hammond have his."

"All seven."

And Hammond took a cue and chalked it with a business-like air.

CHAPTER 5.

One Too Many For Catts.

OUTS of the Fifth was in great spirits. He had a five-pound note and three sovereigns in his pocket that did not belong to him, and he felt that his afternoon in the billiard-room had turned out a most profitable one. True, he had to divide afterwards with Frye, but it meant a good thing for both of them already, and with Hammond he expected to do still better. His object was to make the justice state recklessly upon the game.

"What are we going to play for?" he asked.

"Anything you like," said Hammond.

Catts laughed.

"Oh, don't you take too big risks," he said. "I please sometimes."

"You can't plunge too deep for me," said Hammond.

"Suppose I said ten quid?" suggested Catts.

"Then I'd see 'Dess!" said Hammond.

"Gummo!"

"Money talks," said Hammond, pulling out his pocket-book. "I'll stake before the game, if you will. Ten quid."

"Well, I dare say you'll beat me," said Cutts.

"I hope so."

"Prye will hold the stakes," said Cutts, taking out a five-pound note and five coins. "Here you are, Prye."

"Oh, no!" said Hammond promptly. "D'Arcy can hold the stakes."

"What do you mean, you young sweep?" demanded Prye angrily.

Hammond looked at him steadily.

"I mean what I say," he replied.

"Do you mean to say you can't trust me to hold the stakes?" the Fifth-Farmer exclaimed fiercely.

"I remember how you did me in Cutts's study once," said Hammond. "I'll play Cutts for ten quid if D'Arcy holds the stakes."

Cutts made a sign to his angry companion.

"It's all the same, Prye," he said. "D'Arcy can hold the stakes. He can be depended on not to stick to them."

"And can't I?" demanded Prye.

"Oh, bother!" said Cutts. "Here you are, D'Arcy. Take care of it."

"Yes, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus received ten pounds each from either party, and placed the money carefully in an inside pocket.

Hammond was quite well aware that the Fifth-Farmer would not pay up if they lost. But Cutts, who was certain of winning, had no objection to D'Arcy holding the stakes.

In case of a fluke, he would have preferred to place them in Prye's hands; but he did not think there was really any danger. That the Coxeter schoolboy, this rank outsider from the East End of London, could beat him in the game of which he was a master, Cutts did not dream for a single moment. True, he had had lessons at the time when he and his friends had intruded Hammond into a little game of nap, and Hammond had coolly cleaned them out. But billiards was a different matter.

Hammond gave a rise-in-haunt, and Cutts began to score. He did not expect the junior to play again if he lost ten pounds on that game, so he had no object in pretending to play badly and making it a close finish. He played his best, and made thirty-six in a single break.

Arthur Augustus watched that break with growing dismay.

He felt that he was in the position of a fatherly guardian to Hammond, and that he ought to have kept him out of this.

There was not the slightest doubt in his mind that Hammond would lose his ten pounds, and the stakes would have to be handed over to Gerald Cutts.

But Hammond looked quite cool.

He chalked his cue carefully, and scanned the position of the balls. Cutts had left him a difficult shot, and he fully expected the Fourth-Farmer to snuff it, and leave it to him to score again. This Cutts intended to run out on a single ball.

But Hammond did not snuff it.

He made a cannon, and Cutts and Prye exchanged a quick glance. Hammond had brought off a cannon that Cutts, with all his skill, could not have made. And in doing so, he had left the red just over a pocket.

Hammond grinned.

"Not so daisy!" he remarked.

"Bei Jove, that was wippin'!" said D'Arcy. "Play up, dear boy!"

"You must have played a lot, unless that was a fluke," said Cutts, blenching his lip.

Hammond nodded.

"Yes!" he said simply.

"Oh! Quite an old hand, I suppose?" sneered Cutts.

"Yes, I suppose I'm a rather old hand," said Hammond.

"I used to mark for the gent at the Three Feathers in the Bethnal Green Road, you see, and they often took me on for a game. And I got a lot of practice when the tables wasn't being used."

"Oh!" said Cutts, rather blankly.

Click!

The red rolled into the pocket, and the white came off the cushion, rolled back, and clicked upon spot—Cutts's ball.

"Fwo, I reckon," said Hammond calmly.

"Howway! Pike in, dear boy!"

"Don't chortle till you're out of the wood!" said Cutts, beginning to get decidedly ratty. "That was a fluke!"

"I'll give you another fluke," said Hammond. "Chuck the red out."

Red was spotted, and Hammond played again. Red rolled into one of the middle pockets, and white into the other.

"Six! Bei Jove!"

Cutts's face was long now. He began to wish that he had

not allowed D'Arcy to hold the stakes. Hammond ran on cheerfully, potting the red again and again with perfect ease. The score was at forty now, and Hammond had left the balls quite easy. Red and white in again, and the tally jumped to forty-six.

"Looks like my fifty, don't it?" remarked Hammond.

Cutts set his teeth. It looked remarkably like being Hammond's fifty. There was no doubt about that.

"I'll give you your fivepence, Cutts, quite cheerfully."

That was no comfort to Cutts. He did not want to lose another ten pounds on another game. He hadn't it to lose, at a matter of fact, even if he had wanted to.

Red dropped in again, and the score was fifty-nine. A cannon finished the matter.

"That does it, I think," said Hammond, dropping the end of his cue with a clasp upon the floor.

"Yess, wathah! You take the stakes, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of relief and satisfaction.

Cutts and Prye exchanged furious looks. But they could not think of taking the stakes by force. That was impossible.

The money would have resisted, indeed, Hammond was keeping hold of his cue, evidently with the intention of using it as a weapon if anything of the kind was attempted. He had not forgotten his previous experience at the hands of Cutts & Co. And a row and a scuffle in the billiard-room of the Hotel Royal was not quite feasible.

"I didn't know you were a billiard champion, you young coter," Cutts growled.

"Weedly, Cutts, you have no right to apply such an expression to my friend Hammond."

"You're a pair of young duffers, both of you," said Cutts.

"You utter wathah—"

Hammond chuckled.

"Let him run on," he said. "He can't help know I was a champion—but I jolly well knowed that he was one! He wathahed me, D'Arcy, pretends to play better to lead me on."

"Bei Jove!"

"And then I wathahed in to get your money back," said Hammond coolly. "I ain't going to keep it. You've lost eight rattr—two they are!"

"Weedly, Hammond—"

"Cutts, I've only lost two quid of my own money, and he can't run on but it's like a quid he's got Hammond, throwing two sovereigns on the table. If he don't like to take 'em, he can leave 'em for the marker."

Cutts picked up the sovereigns.

"Get one of hers," he said, between his teeth.

"You bet! I don't care your korrer," said Hammond. And he walked off with Arthur Augustus.

"Ere's your money, old pal," he said.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"It's not mine, Hammond, dear boy—it's yours, I can't take it."

"You've got to take it," said Hammond. "It's yours. I tell you. I only played 'em to win your money back for you. I don't play for money here—not at all, since I've come to St. Jim's. I said I wouldn't—and I won't."

"But weedly, Hammond—"

"He wathahed you," Hammond explained. "He could have beaten you as easily as I beat him, if he'd liked. Didn't you see how well he played when he was playing?"

"Yass, I noticed there was a difference," said D'Arcy, the truth beginning to dawn upon his mind. "I'm afraid he was wathahing me."

"And so I spoofed him," chuckled Hammond. "It's your money—take it, or I'll give it to the blooming waiter!"

And Arthur Augustus consented at last to take his money back, and the two juniors returned their blades and pads away from the Hotel Royal—Cutts and Prye looked after them down the wipers of the billiard-room with glances that were simply ferocious.

CHAPTER 10.

Levison Misses the Mark.

"I'll ratter!" said Levison.

"Rotten!" agreed McField.

"I don't like the outside, any more than anybody else does," Levison went on. "We don't want East End blighters at St. Jim's."

"Of course we don't," echoed McField.

"Bei then, I say so plainly," said Levison vehemently. "I don't want friends with a chy, and laugh at him behind his back. You wouldn't, either."

"Of course, I wouldn't. And I must say I'm surprised. I never thought that D'Arcy would do it, either."

"Well," said Levison thoughtfully. "I've all know D'Arcy was spoofing in pretending to be friendly with him. He can't

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stand the awful blunder. Why, Hammond gets on all his nerves. But to talk about him—

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Mellich.
 Harry Hammond, as he came round the corner of the house, felt as if a dagger had been driven to his heart.

He could not help overhearing what the juniors were saying.

Their voices were quite audible before he turned the corner, and when he came round, their backs were towards him, and apparently they did not see him.

That they were talking about him and D'Arcy, he knew, of course, at once. And evidently, so it appeared to Hammond, they did not know that they were overheard by the junior they were discussing.

Hammond's face went quite pale, and he stopped dead.

"I've a good mind to speak to Hammond about it," Levinson ran on. "D'Arcy has no right to treat him as he does. If he can't stand the chap, why can't he drop him? But to mimic him in the study as he does—"

"I don't think it's playing the game," said Mellich.
 "No, it jolly well isn't! Of course, Hammond must be a silly chump to think that a chap like D'Arcy could possibly chum with him, excepting to make fun of him—"

"I s'pose that's right," said Hammond bitterly.

Levinson and Mellich swung round. Both looked surprised.

Levinson assumed a scornful and contemptuous expression.

"Dwining, eh, you Bethsal Green bouncer?" he sneered.

"I couldn't 'cip 'ezus' wot you was saying," said Hammond.

"You was speaking loud enough for anybody to hear."

"Well, listeners never hear any good of themselves," retorted Mellich.

"Is it true?" asked Hammond.

"Is what true?"

"Wot you was saying—that Master D'Arcy is only puffin' my leg, and ain't really pally with me at all!" said the Cockney miserably.

Levinson gave a scoffing laugh.

"If you weren't a born booby, you'd see it for yourself," he said.

"What do you think a fellow like D'Arcy, a loof's son, too, can see in a rank outsider and bouncer like you? Why, he shoulders every time you stick your thumb in the armpits of your waistcoat!"

"I won't say it no more," said Hammond.

"Not that I want to interfere," said Levinson loftily.

"You're out of place in this school, and I've said so all along. But I say it out plainly. I wouldn't pretend to make friends with you."

"You'd 'ave made friends with me once, if I'd 'ave lost you money," said Hammond.

"I don't see how I can say a word again Master D'Arcy. Whether he's friendly with me or not, he's better nor you—you ain't better than the dust under 'is feet. You shut up!"

And Hammond walked away, steady and miserably, into the School House.

Levinson chuckled like a gnom.

"I faggy we've put a spoke into their wheel!" he murmured.

"Looks like it," said the amiable Mellich.

And the two cops of the Fourth felt very well satisfied with themselves.

Harry Hammond went into the School House looking blackly depressed.

All the light had gone out of his face.

Was D'Arcy indeed false, as Levinson had said? If Levinson had told him so, Hammond would have repelled the suggestion with scorn. But he had heard the talk by accident—at all events, he believed so. That Levinson had played it all he did not suspect, sharp as he was.

After all, how could a fellow like D'Arcy, invidious to the

300

finger-tip, feel anything like friendship for such a rank outsider as Hammond felt himself to be?

He remembered now—his perceptions sharpened by pain—that D'Arcy had sometimes had a queer look on his face when the Cockney schoolboy stood in his favorite attitude, with his thumbs in his waistcoat armpits. It had never even occurred to Hammond that there was anything offensive in that.

If such a trifle could get on the nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, how could he feel friendly towards the fellow who was full of far more serious faults of taste? It was impossible.

Hammond had feared, more than once, that it was really pity that induced D'Arcy to stick to him—because he had pulled Cousin Ethel out of the river, and he felt bound to be grateful. That would have been bad enough. But if D'Arcy spoke of him scornfully among his own friends—

The mere thought was like a physical pain.

"Bai Jove! You're lookin' wathah downhearted, deak boy!" exclaimed a chery voice.

Hammond started, as D'Arcy himself stopped before him in the hall.

Arthur Augustus was greeting him as cheerily as ever. Was it possible that there was such a thing as duplicity behind that calm, friendly face? Alas! in the early days of struggle, Hammond had only too thoroughly learned the lesson of distrust—and at St. Jim's his experience had not been much better. Cutts, of the Fifth, had taken him up, the first day he came, and Hammond had been inordinately grateful for his kindness, until he found that Cutts had only wanted to cheat him at cards. To all outward appearance, Cutts was as much a gentleman as D'Arcy was. If the one had proved false to the core, why not the other?

The miserable, lowering look on Hammond's face struck the swell of St. Jim's, though he was not particularly observant, as a rule.

"Anythin' the matter, deak boy?" he asked.

"No!" said Hammond shortly.

"I've been lookin' for you. You's waddy in the study."

"Thanks! I'm going to have tea in my own study."

D'Arcy looked at him sharply then.

"My friends are expectin' you," he said quietly.

"Your friends won't miss a Bethsal Green bouncer very much," said Hammond bitterly.

"I might put my thumbs into my waistcoat, you know."

"You wathah surprise me, Hammond?" said D'Arcy, after a pause.

"I feel that somebody has been tryin' to make trouble."

Hammond was silent.

"Is that it, deak boy?"

"No?"

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothin'."

"Somebody's in the muck," said D'Arcy firmly.

"And I insist upon knowin' what it is. I request you to tell me at once, Hammond."

Hammond broke out passionately.

"If you don't like me, Master D'Arcy, wot do you say so for? I didn't see you as bein' friendly with me, did I? I wanted it, but I never asked you. I always knew you was too good for me. I knowed I wasn't fit to be your pal. But—"

The boy's voice broke, and he could not go on.

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed. Hammond was very near to "blabbing," and the swell of St. Jim's had a deep and inked horror of a scene.

And there were other fellows in the hall who were glancing towards them already.

"Fwag come with me, Hammond, deak boy," said D'Arcy, very quietly, and he drew Hammond along the passage and into one of the deep window recesses.

"Now, deak boy, I insist upon knowin' what's the matter. Somebody has been speakin' to you and tryin' to make mischief."

"No, they ain't."

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As the Vicar opened the door, Hammond was sitting with a saucer full of tea in one hand, and his keen, loud voice dominated the room. "It's blooming good fun, playing pitch and toss," he was explaining to Mrs. Barton. "Then we might play shove-'openny' too. Ever played shove-'openny', ma'am?" (See Chapter 1.)

"That something's happened?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"It ain't no good talkin'," said Hammond doggedly. "I ain't good enough for you. I know it. I won't trouble you no more."

"I been upon knowin' what you have heard?"

"I tell you it ain't no good!"

"Was it Lerrin?"

"He didn't say nothin' to me," said Hammond hastily. "You don't think I'd listen to a cove like that if he ran you down, do you? But I 'appened to 'ear was they was ayeing, Lerrin and Mellish. They didn't know I was by. They said—"

"You are quite sure they didn't know you could hear them, you young ass?" asked Arthur Augustus, more in sorrow than in anger.

Hammond started.

"Well, I don't see how they could 'ave knowed," he said. "I was comin' round the corner of the 'Ouse, and I 'eard them before I saw them!"

"Listen to me, Hammond. Mellish once made awful trouble in the school by tellin' tales to the fellows about one another. He made us all quarrel—all we found him out. Lerrin is worse than Mellish. I wuvah think they knew you was there, and talked for you to hear them!"

Hammond felt a load taken from his heart.

"I s'pose that's possible," he said.

"And now tell me what they were ayein', deah boy."

"They—they was sayin' that you was only speakin' 'em—that you make fun of me to your friends," said Hammond, in a choking voice.

Arthur Augustus's eyes gleamed.

"And did you believe it?"

"I—I know as I'm not good enough for you, Master D'Arcy," said Hammond humbly. "I—I was—was struck all of a 'cap, and—"

"You don't believe it now?"

Hammond hesitated; but he could not doubt the frank, honest face of the reeve of St. Jim's.

"No, I don't believe it," he said. "I—I'm sorry, D'Arcy; but—but I can't 'elp knowin' that I ain't fit for you to speak to—"

"Wubbish! I'll go and look for Lerrin now, and give him a feablin' thrashin'!"

Hammond caught his arm.

"Let him alone, Master D'Arcy; he ain't fit for you to touch. There's no 'arm done—only I was feelin' down in the mouth about it, that's all."

"The uttah worth ought to be thrashed—"

"He ain't worth it. Let's go and 'ave tea," said Hammond.

"Very well, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, yielding the point. "Peevages you're right. But, wemember, if anybody says anythin' again, you're not to believe it—at least, you are to come straight to me and tell me about it!"

"Yes, Master D'Arcy."

"If you call me Master D'Arcy again, I'll punch your nose!"

And Hammond grinned; and they went up to tea in Study No. 6, and the hearty welcome the Cockney schoolboy received drove the last doubt from his mind.

CHAPTER 11.

The Schemer!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY came into his study in the Fourth Form passage a few days later, and as he did so Levinson passed his hand over a sheet before him upon the table. Lumsley-Lumsley had run in suddenly for a bicycle pump he had forgotten, and Levinson had not expected anyone to enter at that moment. His sudden action caught Lumsley's keen eye at once.

"Hello! Who's the little game?" he asked.
 "Mind your own business!" said Levinson severely.
 He slipped into his pocket the sheet upon which he had been writing.
 "More of your giddy gormerias?" asked Lumsley-Lumsley pleasantly. "Whose hand are you practicing now?"
 "I'm making a poem for the 'Weekly,' if you wish to know," smiled Levinson.
 Lumsley-Lumsley laughed.
 "Genuine!" he said coolly. "I guess that's too thin. Look here."

He picked up a sheet of impet. paper, upon which lines were closely written. It was part of an old 'impetition' written out by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—a torn half sheet, evidently passed from some wagsome student.
 "Gum's fit this time—what's Lumsley-Lumsley, with a chuckle. "Are you going to do lines for D'Arcy, then?"

"Suppose I am?" said Levinson carelessly. "What business is it of yours? I suppose I can do D'Arcy's impet. for him if I like."

"I didn't know you were on such terms with him; but I suppose he's paying you for it, same as Cotts does," said Lumsley-Lumsley, a little scornfully. "Well, I guess it's one way of making pocket-money."

"My people aren't rolling in money like yours," said Levinson sulkily. "My father doesn't know how to put up with companies on the Stock Exchange, you see?"

"And my popper doesn't, either," said Lumsley-Lumsley, with a glitter in his eyes. "And if you want a thick ear, Levinson, you've only got to repeat that remark!"

"Can't you mind your own business? What are you spouting on for?"

"I guess I don't care a Continental red cent, what you do! I came in for my popper," said Lumsley-Lumsley. "But I guess you'd got bored out some day with that game of yours of forging impets. I'm surprised at D'Arcy letting you do it for him. But I guess it's his business, and I've no call to interfere. Go and eat cake!"

And Lumsley-Lumsley picked up his bicycle-pump and quitted the study, slamming the door after him. Levinson drew a deep breath.

"Lucky the brats didn't see it," he muttered. "It would have been a clean hole-out. Let him think I'm doing an impet. for D'Arcy, the fool!"

And Levinson checked.
 He drew the paper from his pocket again. It was not an impet. he was writing, as Lumsley-Lumsley would have seen if he had seen that paper.

But Levinson was intent to be interrupted that afternoon. He slipped the paper into his pocket again as the study door opened. Percy Mellich came in, holding his handkerchief to his nose. There was a stain of red on the handkerchief.

Levinson looked at him. Mellich was his pal, certainly; but a famous cynical philosopher has declared that there is always something gratifying in the misfortune of our friends. That was true enough of fellows like Levinson. He grinned as he looked at the swollen nose and in the stained handkerchief.

"Been running into a wall?" he asked.
 "Oh!" gasped Mellich. "No; it was that beast Hammond again! What did he push you for?"

"He's as friendly with D'Arcy as ever, after all the trouble we took with that little nose the other day," said Mellich.
 "I just put a question to him—whether D'Arcy could stand him with his thumbs in his waistcoat armpits, and the beast bit me. I got his left on my nose. Oh!"

"The Bethnal Green left!" grinned Levinson.
 "I think I shall leave him alone," said Mellich dolefully.
 "I hate the beast, but he's too tough for me!"

"And for me, when it comes to nose-punching," said Levinson. "I've tried that, too, and I don't want any more

of the Bethnal Green left. But there are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream!"

Mellich's eyes glittered.
 "You've got a way?" he asked.
 "I think so. You couldn't hit him harder than by making his quarrel with D'Arcy. I happen to have heard them talking one day, and I know how Hammond feels about that."

"But we've tried that."
 "I'm going to try again, and in a way that D'Arcy won't be able to explain," said Levinson, with a grin.
 "And what's the way?"

"It's a giddy secret; you might let it out," said Levinson.
 "I'm not going to tell you, but if you keep your eyes open, you'll see a rift in the jets before long."

"Good enough," said Mellich. "I don't want to know the particular, but I'll do anything I can to help you to make that red ink go. The votes, Ben had better, to punch a Public School chap's nose! The cheek of it!"

Then Mellich uttered an exclamation.
 "Hello! What are you doing with D'Arcy's impet. here?" Levinson caught up the tell-tale half sheet, and crummed it into the fire.

"That's finished with," he said.
 Percy Mellich looked somewhat alarmed.

"I—I, my, Levinson, if it's anything of that sort, you'd better be careful. You remember how you got bowled out the time you wrote something in Bessie's hand, and—well you were very nearly washed. Better be careful!"

"No, not this time!" said Levinson. "Even if it came out, it's not a matter that would be taken up by the masters. But I'm going to be jolly careful, all the same."

"Don't tell me anything about it," said Mellich nervously.
 "I wish you luck, but I don't want to know anything about it."

"I'm not going to tell you anything, whether you want it or not," said Levinson coolly. "You've given me away more than once. Buzz off and let me finish!"

And Mellich "buzzed" off promptly, still holding his nose. He was hopeful for Levinson's success; but he had a great dislike of being mixed up in the underhand schemes of the end of the Fourth. The best-laid schemes go wrong sometimes, and Levinson's schemes had not always been successful.

Levinson shrugged his shoulders as Mellich left the study, and set to work again with his facile pen.

It was some time before he was finished.
 But when he rose from the table at last there was a grin of satisfaction upon his face, and he left the study with a sheet of notes, carefully written upon, hidden in his pocket.

Back his study-table, passed him in the passage, and glanced at him. Roak noted at once the unusual satisfaction in Levinson's face.

"Hello, what rotten trick have you been playing now?" asked Roak politely. He knew Levinson.
 "Go and eat carrots!" replied Levinson, with equal politeness.

And he walked away, whistling.

CHAPTER 12.

A Bitter Blow!

S MITH, minor and Bates were in Study No. 5 when Harry Hammond barged in. Both of them added to his anger civilly. There had been trouble in Study No. 5 when Hammond was first placed there. Smith minor and Bates did not like the Cockney being "planted" on them, as they expressed it. But their feelings had changed somewhat of late. Hammond's gallant rescue of Edwin Ethel had shown that he was a "good plucked 'un" at all events, and the juniors naturally admired pluck. His good humor was unalting, too, and his plentiful flow of money made an abundant table in No. 5. And then D'Arcy's steady friendship made the other fellows think better of Hammond.

If the wroth of the Fourth made a pal of him he was good enough for the rest. Upon the whole, Smith minor and Bates were inclined to tolerate the bouncer, especially as he was such a tactically head-bitter that anything else was out of the question. Bates still had an uncomfortable feeling in his nose when he thought of his first and only encounter with the Cockney. And though Hammond could have licked both of them with perfect ease, there was never a trace of "cowering" about him, and they had to admit that that was decent.

"Hello!" said Smith minor, quite amiably. "How are the High-class Hats getting on?"

"Still one price—three-and-six!" asked Bates.
 Hammond laughed. He did not mind being clipped about the High-class Hats, all one price—three-and-six. The other Hammond, like a conjurer, had drawn a stream of gold from the High-class Hats. And with all their little jokes about the Hammond Hats, there were quite a number of St. Jan's

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fellows who would have been very glad to have a similar business in their family possession, producing a similar tremendous success.

"I'll tell you what," said Bates. "My Sunday topper is a bit of colour. It's never been the same since the day Herrick's holding got at it. You might write to your papa and tell him your study-mate would appreciate a new high-class topper."

"Good egg?" said Hammond. "I'll do it, if you like."
"Not a three-and-nine, you know," said Bates.
"I'll make the deal send you a special twenty-five shilling Pileably topper—our special line," said Hammond.

"And as for me," said Smith miser. "I've just had a requisition of seven-and-six for a new topper, and if you get one from your papa we'll have a fool with the three-half-crown—what?"

"Done!" said Hammond.
"Looking for something?" asked Bates, quite gravely, as the Cookery glanced round the study.
"Yes; the book D'Arcy lent me. Have you seen it?"

"What was it?"
"Robinson Crusoe."
"Yes; it's on the floor," said Bates. "There, by the coal-stove."

"Thanks!"
Hammond picked up "Robinson Crusoe." Another Augustus D'Arcy had discovered the previous day that Hammond had never read that great book, and he had promptly lent him a copy to read. Hammond was half through it now, and deeply interested in the adventures of the unfortunate Crusoe and his Man Friday.

"Don't forget the toppers," said Bates, as Hammond left the study.
"Right-o!" said Hammond.

"Jolly useful thing having a tame batter in the study—after all," chuckled Smith miser, as the door closed on Hammond. "After all, he's not a bad sort."

"Not at all," said Bates. "That's a jolly good idea about the lead, too!"

And the two jokers felt quite kindly towards the rank outsider.

Hammond strolled away with his book under his arm. He was feeling very cheerful that afternoon.

The deed that had come between him and his chum had ruffled away, and since then no thought of distrust had entered Harry Hammond's mind.

Just now D'Arcy had gone out, to ride over to the vicarage on his bicycle to see Cousin Ethel. He had asked Hammond to go with him, but Hammond had a terror of the vicarage since his last visit there, and he excused himself on the ground that he wanted to read "Robinson Crusoe."

At the end of the Fourth-Ferm passage in the winter term there was always a fire in the huge, old-fashioned grate, and it was a very comfortable corner to sit in with a book and read, while the wind was howling through the leafless old trees outside.

Most of the fellows were out of doors, and Hammond had that comfortable corner to himself now. He stirred the fire, and threw a fresh log on it, and settled himself down on the old oaken settee, polished by the tremors of generations of schoolboys. He opened his book and settled down for an enjoyable read.

He had left a bookmark at the point he had reached in the book, and he started on from that point. He turned the leaves steadily, reading on till he came to a place where a sheet of paper had been placed in the book. Apparently it was a torn fragment of an old letter, placed there as a bookmark by one of the fellows in Study No. 6.

He glanced at it curiously as he did so. It was a half-sheet of newspaper, written upon, apparently a portion of a letter which had not, after all, been sent. It was in the delicate handwriting of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Hammond knew the hand of the swindler of St. Jim's well enough.

There was nothing surprising in the fact that D'Arcy should have thrown away a half-sheet of an old letter, and that it should have been picked up to serve as a bookmark. Hammond attached no importance to it at all, but, as he glanced at the half-sheet, he could not help seeing a few words that were written thereon.

"—of course he is a horrid outsider, and the way he speaks grates on my nerves—"

Hammond's expression changed.

He laid the book down, and held that fragment of paper in a trembling hand.

D'Arcy must have written that. And to whom was he referring?

Who was there at St. Jim's to whom that description could possibly refer, excepting Harry Hammond, of the Fourth Form?

Hammond knew that he ought not to read on. It was only

a fragment of a letter, thrown carelessly away, but it was not intended for his eyes.

But he could not help it.

A sudden cold pain had gone to his heart. At the sight of those words, in the handwriting he knew so well, his blackest, bitterest doubts had returned.

He remembered the talk he had heard between Levinson and Mellish. He had been satisfied at the time that they had planned for him to overhear them. But—but was he mistaken in that, after all?

Was it true, after all, that D'Arcy was only fooling him, making fun of the rank outsider and boaster who was stupid enough to think that the son of Lord Eastwood could possibly be his friend?

Gats had turned out like that. Why not D'Arcy? Hammond read all that was written upon the paper. It began and ended abruptly, as if continued from an earlier stage, and finished upon another that was lacking.

"—of course he is a horrid outsider, and the way he speaks grates on my nerves. But after the way he pulled you out of the river I feel bound to take notice of him. He has no friends at St. Jim's, so he is not the kind of fellow anybody wants to speak to, and I feel that I must write to him, though how I shall be able to stand him much longer I really don't know. He acted in a horribly disgusting way at the carriage the other day, drinking tea out of his saucer,

where it stood.

That was all. But it was enough—more than enough.

The letter seemed to be written in fire, so beautifully distinct did they stand out to the dazzled eyes of the unfortunate junior.

There were tears in Hammond's eyes, bitter, hot, scalding tears.

He understood it all.

It was, after all, only because he had felt that he was bound to be grateful to the fellow who had saved him cousin's life that D'Arcy was friendly to the "Bethel Green boaster."

That was the *game* to sacrifice himself on the altar of gratitude. And all the time that he paid, with Hammond his feeblest services were ranked by the outsider's errors of speech and manners.

How could he be otherwise? Considering his training, how could he stand Hammond? And his patience was giving way. The wretched Cookery was a boaster's open book, and he did not know how he could stand it any longer.

So that was what he had been writing to Cousin Ethel about Hammond!

The letter had not been sent, after all. That was evident, for here was a fragment of it, apparently thrown away, and carelessly picked up to serve as a bookmark.

D'Arcy, of course, had not known that one of his study-steps had been using such a bookmark when he thoughtlessly lost it without Hammond's consent.

Or who it possibly for Hammond's mind was working with lower and miserable suspicion now—was it possible that D'Arcy himself had put that fragment of letter there, and deliberately lent him the volume so that he should find it, as a means of getting rid of him without a scene of retributions?

If he wanted to be rid of the Cookery a feeling of conscious decency would prevent him from dropping him openly, after taking his up; but by that means he could make the puppy boy understand how matters stood, and make him drop the friendship of his own accord.

That was probably it. But whether D'Arcy had played the fragment there on purpose, or whether it had come there by chance it amounted to the same thing.

D'Arcy did not want him or his friendship.

He did not like to say so, but there it was. He wanted to be rid of the Cookery schoolboy who hampered and disgraced him. It was time that Hammond understood how matters were, and let him alone.

The reference to the scene at the vicarage cut Hammond like a knife. Yes; he had acted badly there—like the outsider he was, as he reflected bitterly. And that reference made it impossible for him to suspect that there was any trick in this, even if the thought of it had crossed his mind, which it possibly for only the fellows who had gone to the vicarage knew how Harry had acted—Levinson, for instance, could not be supposed to know anything about it.

Hammond sat with the fragment of paper in his hand, his eye dimmed with bitter tears as he gazed at it.

It was the finish.

He felt inclined to go to D'Arcy—to reproach him—to ask him why he could not have spoken out plainly, instead of deceiving him, and concealing his distaste under an appearance of politeness and cordiality. But what was the use? After hearing that talk of Levinson and Mellish, he had spoken to D'Arcy, and the swell of the Fourth had smoothed matters over. Doubtless he was sorry for the rank outsider; he had a kind heart, and he did not want to hurt Hammond's

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feelings. He was a fine fellow, after all—not so bad as Cutts. But his friendship was a delusion and a snare, just as Cutts's had been.

Hammond groaned under his breath. It was all over now.

And that paper—what should he do with it? He crumpled it in his hand, to throw it into the fire. That was the best thing to do with it. But he thrust it into his pocket instead. He would keep it as a reminder—to look at, and bitterly condemn, if he was ever inclined to trust Arthur Augustus or any other St. Jim's fellow again. On all sides of him the unfortunate boy seemed to see false smiles, duplicity, cordially hiding a cold heart, graceful manners covering cynical indifference.

The book had fallen to the floor. Hammond stood by wearily; he was not inclined to read now. He seemed to have grown old, with heavy troubles upon his young shoulders. The sun had been blotted out for him. His friendship with D'Arcy had made so much difference to him. The fellow he admired most of all at St. Jim's—his ideal. It was as if a god had descended from Olympus to offer him friendship, and so long as D'Arcy stood by him he could face the gods and voters of others with a light heart. But now it was as if the ground had been cut away from under his feet.

Falsity—falsity on all sides! It was different with his old pals in the Bethel Green Road. There his friends had been rough and steady, but he had never known a hypocritical pretence of friendship.

He felt a sudden longing to be away from St. Jim's—away from the well-dressed, well-mannered crowd—back among the people he loved, the people he could trust.

He stood with clenched hands, his eyes still wet when Arthur Augustus came down the passage, fresh and cheery after his spin.

CHAPTER 13.

A Broken Friendship.

HARRY HAMMOND looked at the swell of St. Jim's as he came along the passage.

Cheery, airy, graceful, immaculately-dressed, as usual. His eyes glared in the firelight. Hammond felt bitterly how far above him the swell of St. Jim's was. How could he ever have imagined that such a fellow could really be his friend. What a fool he had been!

"Gettin' on with 'Webberson Cussow'—what?" asked Arthur Augustus cheerily. "How is Max Friday gettin' on, old chum?"

The same cordial manners and cordial voice, contrasting strangely with the lace crumpled up in Hammond's pocket. A snarl of disgust and dislike surged up in Hammond's breast.

What was that false friendship worth—what was the value of gentle manners covering a false and selfish heart? Why should he be so humble about himself? He looked D'Arcy's point, but he had a truer heart and a manlier nature; he would never have acted as D'Arcy had acted!

He raised his head, and his eyes gleamed.

"There's your book," he said, "you can take it!"

"Finished it, dear boy!"

"No."

"Don't you want to?"

"No."

D'Arcy gave him a quick look, struck by the sudden abruptness of his tone, and the lowering of his brow. A slightly unpleasant expression came over D'Arcy's face. How often had Hammond to tax him on the subject of his friendship, and how his doubts dispelled by fresh assurances?

"Somebody's wrong again, dear boy!" asked D'Arcy.

"No."

"Lesson been sayin' things!"

"No."

"You seem wathin' wussy about somethin', old fellow," said Arthur Augustus patiently. "You know, we agreed that if anybody tried to make trouble between us again, you were to tell me all about it. It looks to me as if somebody has been at it again. You are cattin' 'up wussy about somethin'."

Hammond was silent.

"Won't you tell me what's the matter?" asked D'Arcy.

"Nothing."

"Well, if nothin' the matter, that's all right," said D'Arcy amiably. "Aren't you goin' to finish readin' 'Webberson Cussow'?"

"No."

"You seem to have wathin' a limited vocabulary just now, Hammond. Can't you say anythin' else but 'No'?"

"Yes; I could say 'oops of things,'" said Hammond—"I could say 'cuss' and 'cuss!' But I ain't goin' to. I only got w' I deserve!"

THE GUY LITERATURE.—No. 306.

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"I don't quite comprehend. Will you kindly explain?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, in a very stately manner.

"Wot's the good! I don't want to speak to you agin! That's all!"

"Indeed!"

"I ain't good enough for you, you know," said Hammond; "and, to come to the fact, you ain't good enough for me! D'Arcy retorted.

"I have never considered that you were not good enough for me, Hammond, and I decidedly wish to admit that I am not good enough for you! I regard myself as being good enough for anybody in this coll. If you have any fault to find with me, I request that you will state it."

"I don't like liars!" said Hammond deliberately. D'Arcy stood very still.

"I don't like 'arrogant'" said Hammond. "I don't like 'egotism!'"

"I pulled your cousin out of the river," said Hammond. "That wasn't any great shakin'. Any lad in the Bethel Green Road would've got you in for 'er—they wouldn't,' are stood by to see a young fella drowned. P'raps the fellows at St. Jim's would, and that's why you make so much fuss of it! It wouldn't be thought so 'dacious' much of where I come from! P'raps you young gentlemen 'ad' are stood by and watched 'er go under. I shouldn't be surprised! But I didn't 'do nothin' in it to make a song about—I didn't! And I don't want you to put up with me 'cause of that! No!"

"You have wounded me considerably on this matter, fellow, Hammond. It is wathin' unpleasant to have to be always aware of your friendship. It is bad form. Fellows can be great friends, but they never talk about it. That kind of thing ain't done."

"You see, I don't know your ways 'ere!" said Hammond bitterly. "When I come from a chap 'as a pal, and knows he can rely on 'im 'En it's different. A feller is all right to your face, and talks 'bout his best friend your back! Wot do you want to protest for! You don't want any of my money—I know you ain't that sort! You're better's Cutts, anyway. Wot do you keep it up with a black wot grates on your nerves?"

"I have never said that you grate on my nerves, Hammond!"

"That ain't true!"

"What!"

"I know I don't speak good English," said Hammond, with bitter passion. "I'm only a horribble consider, and I can't speak properly! But I 'oped as my meanin' was plain, if I can't pronounce my kin'!"

Arthur Augustus's lips set hard.

"You have accused me of speakin' untruthfully, Hammond!"

"Got that at last!" said Hammond.

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I do! I ain't a liar myself!"

"You imply that I am a liar!"

"Yes."

Arthur Augustus made a stride towards him. His anger was passed now, and his eyes were gleaming. Hammond clonched his hands, too.

"I've a good mind to give you a fistful 'thowable'!" said Arthur Augustus, boasting hard. "But I feel sure that somebody has been makin' mischief."

"I found you out, that's all!" said Hammond. "I know you've been footin' me. You say you can't stand me much longer. Well, I won't let you stand me!"

"I swear said so!"

"You did!"

"Somebody has told you so!"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"I do know!" said Hammond.

His hand went into his pocket, and closed on the crumpled letter.

With that letter he could confound the swell of St. Jim's, and force him to own that he had lied.

But his hand ached again.

What was the use?

D'Arcy would probably deny that he had written the letter, and Hammond became the contemptuous cur of the lip which would greet a confession that he had read a letter not intended for his eyes.

"You are mistaken, Hammond," said D'Arcy slowly, "or you have been taken in. I give you a chance to take back what you have said. Otherwise, it will be wrong for me even to speak to you again."

"I don't want you to!"

"Very well. That is enough."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, his head very erect.

Hammond looked after him daily. He was glad that he had broken it off, that he had said what was in his mind. At all events, there would be no further deceits, no more hypocrisy, no more gammon. A false friendship was no good to him. He was glad to have done with it. And yet, as Arthur Augustus walked away, without a glance back, the Cockney schoolboy was left with a dreary sense of desolation.

CHAPTER 14.

Downhearted.

TOM MERRY opened his eyes wide. It was morning, and the St. Jim's fellows were going into the Form-rooms.

The Shell and the Fourth came along the passage in a crowd, to separate into their respective rooms, and the Terrible Three stopped for a few moments to chat to Blake & Co. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy snarled down the passage, as Harry Hammond came from the opposite direction. They did not speak.

Neither did they look at one another. Arthur Augustus's eyes took on a stony, unseeing stare, and Hammond, less accustomed to conceal his feelings, averted his face and walked into the Fourth Form-rooms.

That the two fellows, who had been such chums, were no longer on speaking terms was plain to all who saw, and a good many fellows saw.

Little tiffs and disputes between friendly fellows were not uncommon, of course, and naturally attracted very little attention, as a rule. But the friendship between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Cockney had ceased so much completely, and so many fellows had speculated as to how long it would last, that their breaking off was a matter of general interest.

Quite a number of fellows had resented D'Arcy's friendship for the Cockney, regarding it as a sort of slight to themselves. As Crooke of the Shell had remarked, D'Arcy had hardly a civil word for him, and he had endless opportunities to waste on a Bethnal Green boaster.

Tom Merry was sorry to see what he saw, but some of the juniors grinned.

"Seems to be a rift in the giddy lute," Crooke remarked, with a chuckle.

Gussy's come to his senses at last, and finds that he can't stand him, I suppose," said Mellish.

"Not speaking to the boaster—eh?" Levison asked.

D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass, and regarded Levison with a frown stare.

"Did you address me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did!" growled Levison.

"Then pray do not do so again."

And Arthur Augustus turned his back on the end of the Fourth.

Gore of the Shell had as better back with Hammond when he addressed his curious inquiries in that direction.

"I notice you don't speak to Gussy now, Hammond," he remarked, following the Cockney into the Form-rooms.

"Do you?" said Hammond.

"Yes. Have you quarrelled?"

"Find out!"

"Well, you couldn't expect a chap like Gussy to stand you," Gore remarked.

"I suppose I couldn't," said Hammond. "But it's no business of yours, Gore, that I can see."

"Are they all as nice-nursed as you are in Bethnal Green?" said Gore, with a sneer. "D'Arcy's dropped you like a hot potato, and serve you right! Not that it's a decent thing for him to do, after making such a fuss of you."

Hammond's eyes glowered.

"Don't say a word again Master D'Arcy to me, Gore, or you'll get a wise answer the dial!" he said savagely.

"Ye gods, what a flow of language!" said Gore, and he retreated into the passage.

Tom Merry was really concerned about the matter. He liked Hammond, and he had been glad to see D'Arcy championing the Cockney in his chivalrous way. He knew how much it meant for Hammond, too, and he could hardly think that the Cockney had been the one to break off; though, on the other hand, it was very unlikely that D'Arcy had deserted a chum. It was most likely the outcome of some misunderstanding. That considered, and he resolved to put in a word to set matters right if he could. So he tapped the swell of St. Jim's on the shoulder and tackled him.

"What's wrong?" he demanded.

"Nothing."

"Rats!" said Tom.

"Woolly, Tom Merry——"

"You've quarrelled with Hammond?"

"Yes, as you know on speaking terms," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "Pray don't mistake in the matter, dear boy."

"That's just what I'm going to do, though," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "It's rough on Hammond, dropping him like this, and it really isn't like you, Gussy."

"I have not dropped him."

"You don't mean to say that he has dropped you?" demanded Tom, in astonishment.

"I don't mean to say anything."

"Now, don't mount the high horse, Gussy!" said Tom Merry indignantly. "Hammond is looking awfully down in the mouth. What have you done it for?"

Hammond has insulted me, if you want to know all about it."

"Oh, come!" said Tom incredulously. "Draw it mild, you know?"

"He has accused me of speakin' untruthfully."

"My hat!"

"For that reason, it is impos- sible for me to regard him as a friend. I was greatly tempted to give him a fearful thrashing," but I refrained. But it is quite impos- sible to speak to him again. Besides, he doesn't want to."

"Did he say so?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" said Tom Merry, and he gave it up. If matters were in that state, there did not seem to be any use in his performing his good offices. The matter was beyond him. Probably the two had found that they could not pull together—and, indeed, they were very ill-assorted, the fastidious Arthur Augustus and the rough-and-ready Cockney.

"But I say, what will Cousin Ethel think?" Tom added, slyly a pause.

"Cousin Ethel!" repeated D'Arcy.

"Yes, I suppose you haven't forgotten that Cousin Ethel is coming over to tea to-day?" demanded the Shell fellow.

"I suppose you won't ask Hammond, under the circumstances?"

"Of course I can't!"

"Ethel will ask after him."

Arthur Augustus looked worried.

"Yes, I suppose so," he asserted. "It's wretched worse. Ethel is very grateful to the boundah for pullin' her out of the wivah, and she will be distressed to know that we are so long without her. But I can't help it. It is entirely impos- sible for me to have any more to do with him. I am sorry, but there it is, you know."

And Arthur Augustus went into the Form-rooms.

His set hands were dressed in class, and it had been his custom to give the Cockney little tips during lessons. Mr. Lathson, the master of the Fourth, had sometimes come down on them for talking in class. But there was no talking between them on this particular morning. They seemed to be quite unaware of one another's existence.

Arthur Augustus maintained an aristocratic calm, but Hammond was wretchedly depressed.

He was not an adept at concealing his feelings. His masters, in fact, lacked the repose that stamps the counte- nance of Vice. He was wretchedly miserable, and he could not make a secret of it, even though he noted the satisfaction which it afforded to Levison and Mellish and a few others.

Levison and Mellish were distinctly pleased. The dejected Cockney had lost his only chum, and was put in his place at last. Fellows who had been civil to him because he was Gussy's friend would not take much trouble about him now. And if he continued to look as he looked at present, his webstone face would become a standing joke in the House. Levison, as he sat in his place, amused himself with drawing a distressed face, with exaggerated tears rolling down the cheeks, upon a page of his exercise book. The fellows who saw it grinned and chuckled. Levison was clever at drawing, as at nearly everything else, and he hit off Hammond's likeness wonderfully, but with an exaggeration that made it comic.

The chuckles of the fellows near Levison drew Mr. Lathson's attention at last, and he cast a severe look in Levison's direction.

"Levison, you are talking!" he said reprovingly.

"Oh, no, sir," said Levison. "I haven't uttered a word."

"Then what is the cause of all that unnecessary movement in the Form-rooms?" Mr. Lathson demanded severely.

He came over towards Levison.

"Show me your book!" he said. "You have been writing something."

He took the book, and found the absurd picture of Ham- mond. He gazed at it in great astonishment.

"What does this mean?" he exclaimed. "This is a very clever likeness. You would be a credit to your class, Levison, if you were not so incredibly idle and mis- chievous."

"Thank you sir!" said Levison demurely.
 "You turn your gifts to bad ends, Levison. This is a caricature of one of your Form-fellows."
 "Oh, no, sir. Only a likeness."
 "You have depicted Hammond crying."
 "Yes, sir. He's either given to blubbing, you know," said Levison calmly. "It's quite a job to get the Form, sir. That's why I've drawn him like that—out of sheer kindness, sir, as a hint to him."
 Hammond turned a flaming face towards Levison.
 "It's a lie!" he blurted out.
 " Hammond!" said Mr. Latham severely.
 "It's a dirty lie!" shouted Hammond, quite forgetting where he was. "I ain't never blubbed, and I wouldn't go for to do it. It's a liar!"
 "Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake. "New for the Bre-wicks!"

" Hammond, that is not language to use in the presence of your Form-master," said Mr. Latham sternly. "You must control yourself!"
 "Oh, I ain't got no manners," said Hammond bitterly. "I'm only a East End bouncer, sir. I'm a rotten outsider. But I don't tell lies like the young gentlemen 'ere, do I?"
 "I shall punish you if you say another word, Hammond."
 "I don't care. Arty wot I've 'ed, a little more don't matter," said Hammond. "I don't care if you cane me."
 Mr. Latham looked at him sternly. He was greatly inclined to cane the boy, taking him at his word. But Mr. Latham was a kind-hearted gentleman, and he could see the lines of pain and distress deeply given in the lad's face, and his heart melted.
 "I shall not cane you, Hammond," he said. "You will take a hundred lines, and please do not say any more. The Form-room is no place for such outbursts. As for you, Levison, you will be detained two hours after lessons for making this caricature in class. You should be ashamed of yourself."
 "I'm sure I meant it kindly, sir," said Levison.
 "I cannot quite believe that, Levison. Take it and throw it into the fire at once."
 "Very well, sir."

The fellows were continually looking at Hammond during the remainder of morning lessons. His eyes were burning, and his heart was heavy. His outburst had been in bad form, he knew, but he could not help it. He liked and respected Mr. Latham, and yet he had spoken disrespectfully to him. Nothing seemed to go right now with the unfortunate Cockney.

When lessons were over, and the Fourth-Former streamed out, there was no chance to join the Cockney in the passage. Arthur Augustus walked away with a story here and there, and a curious, pathetic glance after him. Then he walked away by himself.

**CHAPTER 18.
 Cousin Ethel Chips In.**

"COMING out for a run, hi!" said Lamsley-Lamsley kindly, when the Fourth came out when lessons for the day were over.
 Hammond shook his head. He understood that Lamsley-Lamsley meant to be kind; but he did not want kindness just then. "He did not want anything."
 "I get lots to do," he said dully.
 Lamsley-Lamsley laughed cheerily.
 "That's all right—got Levison to do 'em," he said. "Levison will do them for a couple of bob a hundred—he does them for Guts and lots of fellows."
 Hammond shook his head and walked away. He went to his study—he wanted to be alone.
 He was utterly wretched, and he was glad that Seath mine and Bates had gone out for a spin on their cycles, and left him the study to himself.
 He began doing his lines wearily enough.
 Lamsley-Lamsley looked into Study No. 5, where preparations for tea were going on, on a rather unusual scale. Cousin Ethel was coming to tea, and half a dozen juniors were busy in making the study look nice and tidy. Tom Merry had brought several bunches of flowers in, and they looked quite artistic, stuck in jam-jars on the mantelpiece and the shelf.
 Levison had kindly raised several stanzas for crockeryware, and Marsson were occupying window-chairs on all sides. Blake was away making the grate look as if it were not a receptacle for all kinds of refuse; and Digby was toiling to remove certain flat-tale spots from the tablecloth. Arthur Augustus was superintending the arrangements through his famous monocle, but not looking so happy as was usual when Cousin Ethel was coming.
 "Pretty busy—oh?" said Lamsley-Lamsley.
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"Yess. You can lead a horse if you like, deah boy."
 "I guess I'm going out. I've tried to take Hammond out, but he's got the blues. What have you been doing to him, Gussy, you rascal!"
 "Wasn't, Lamsley—"
 "He doesn't want my company," grumbled Lamsley-Lamsley. "I've done my best. But I don't like to see him down in the mouth like that. He ain't a bad sort."
 "If you fellows can fetch this, I'll get my knees done," said Arthur Augustus. "I've got to head them to Mr. Latham before tea."
 "More lines!" said Lamsley-Lamsley. "You should bring your input to my study. I've just advised Hammond to, but he won't."
 "If you'd like to do them, deah boy—"
 "Oh, I wouldn't," said Lamsley-Lamsley promptly. "Levison will. He does them at two bob a hundred—but you know then as well as I do, as he does yours."
 D'Arcy looked at him.
 "I strongly disapprove of that wotten trick of Levison's, and I should certainly not let him do my lines," he said. "It is all ervey well helped a chap with his lines out of friendship, but to imitate another fellow's hand as a practice is wotten!"
 "Well, I like that frags you," said Lamsley-Lamsley. "Only yesterday Levison was doing an input, for you."
 "Wotten!"
 "Look here," said Lamsley-Lamsley, a little testily. "Don't nonsense me. I'm not going to give you away, you see!"
 "I repeat that Levison has not done any lines for me, and I should actually welcome to allow him to do so," said D'Arcy stiffly.
 "Garran—"
 "You stink wotten—"
 "Here, no raggs now," said Blake, interposing, as Arthur Augustus made a stride towards Lamsley-Lamsley. "You don't want a black eye to show to Cousin Ethel."
 "I welcome to allow Lamsley to cast doubt upon my word, Blake."
 "Yes, shut up, Lamsley, old man," urged Tom Merry. "If you want to be useful, lend a hand getting this blessed ink off the tablecloth!"
 "Well, when is Guss denying plain facts for!" said Lamsley-Lamsley. "I tell you, I saw Levison practicing his handwriting yesterday, and he said it was for an input, he was doing for Gussy."
 "That's a wotten lie," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "And if Levison was practicing my handwriting, it was for some wotten trick!"
 Lamsley-Lamsley whistled.
 "Oh, I never thought of that!" he ruminated. "I didn't see why he should lie, as there didn't seem any reason for it. Sorry!"
 "It's all right, deah boy," said D'Arcy, smiled at once. "An apology from one gentleman to another is enough. I'll speak to that wotten about it, though—I won't have him insulted by my hand. I wottenback a wotten trick he played on Seath like that."
 "You can let Levison show now," said Blake. "We've got to get ready for Cousin Ethel. Get your blessed lines done, and wite in!"
 "Yess, deah boy?"
 Arthur Augustus had his imposition finished, and taken in to Mr. Latham, as time to go down to the gates and meet Cousin Ethel when she walked over from the vicarage. Miss Cleveland was looking very sweet and graceful as she came up the road. Arthur Augustus raised his silk hat in his inimitable manner.

"All woody, deah gal," he said. "Come wite in!"
 And Arthur Augustus scooped his fair cousin across the quadrangle under the obvious eyes of a great many fellows.
 "Where is your friend Hammond?" asked Cousin Ethel.
 "You are amally incomparable!"
 D'Arcy flushed uncomfortably.
 He had expected the question, but he hardly knew how to answer it.
 "Ahem!" he said.
 Ethel looked at him.
 "You see—" stammered D'Arcy.
 "Yes!"
 "I trust you did not want to see Hammond, Ethel!"
 "Of course, I want to see him," said Ethel at once. "You don't think I have forgotten that he saved my life, do you?"
 "Yass—I mean no—but—thee!—oh! but is—"
 "You have not been quarrelling with Hammond surely, Arthur?" said Ethel severely. "You quarrelled with Figgins once, I remember, over nothing. Are you growing to be a quarrelsome boy?"
 "Oh, woody, Ethel—"

"It isn't nice of you, Arthur, when Hammond saved my life," said Ethel.

"But—but I couldn't help it, Ethel."
"You lost your temper? Well, then, go to Hammond and tell him you are sorry, and bring him to tea in the study," said Ethel brightly. "You must be careful how you treat Hammond, Arthur. He isn't like the other boys, and he is very sensitive."

"But—but I haven't quarrelled with him, Ethel, dear girl. He's quarrelled with me," Arthur Augustus explained uncertainly. "He—he called me names, you know—and—and doubted my word, you know, and—and I could not stand that, could I?"

Ethel looked very grave.
"But I'm sure it must be all a mistake."
"Perhaps so—but he called me a fak, Ethel."
"Oh, Arthur!"
"No, dear, really, Ethel."

"But remember how he has been brought up," said Ethel. "Perhaps he did not really understand what he was saying. Arthur, it may make all the difference in the world to Hammond if you speak with him."
"You're right, but what about—"

"I'm sure someone has been causing mischief, Arthur, let us go to Hammond and ask him. He will tell us."

"Oh, Ethel, what an idea, you know!"
"What's your Arthur?"
"I'll do anything you like, of course," said D'Arcy reluctantly. "But, really, as we are not on speakin' terms, I don't see how I can go to his study."

"But I am on speaking terms with him, and I can go; and you can come with me, as I could not go alone," said Ethel sweetly.

"Yes; I nrvah thought of that!"
And, instead of going into Study No. 5, the cousins stopped at the door of No. 8, and Cousin Ethel knocked gently.

"Come in!"
Arthur Augustus opened the door. Hammond was there alone, and he rose from his seat at the table as they came in. His face was pale, and there was a line in his forehead, and his eyes looked sadly suspiciously glittering.

"What do you want?" he exclaimed at sight of Arthur Augustus; and then, as Ethel appeared, he crimsoned. "Oh, I beg your pardon, Miss Cleveland. I didn't see you!"

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Ethel held out her hand, and Hammond took it awkwardly, "I have come here to speak to you," said Ethel.

"I'm sure it's very kind of you, miss," said Hammond, awkwardly and uncomfortably.

"I want to know why you and Arthur are on bad terms, and to set it right," said Ethel wistfully. "I know it is all a mistake, and I am going to clear it up. You won't mind telling me about it, will you?"

"I'd do anything for you, Miss Ethel," said Hammond, with deep feeling. "But I ain't going to say nothing agin D'Arcy. I deserv' it's been better to me an' I deserv' it."

"If you have anything against me, Hammond, I request that you will state it to my cousin," said D'Arcy, in his staidest manner.

"I ain't got nothin' to say."

"Come!" urged Ethel. "There is something. What is it?"

"Master D'Arcy can tell you," said Hammond bitterly. "And you know well enough, Miss Cleveland, if you think of what he's wrote to you."

"Written to me?" exclaimed Ethel, in astonishment.
"Yes, I s'pose he wrote it in another letter, arter checkin' away the first one," said Hammond.

"Arthur has written nothing to me about you," said Ethel.
"I s'pose 's thought better of it, then," said Hammond.

"P'raps that's why he checked the letter away."
"What letter?"

"Master D'Arcy knows."
"What letter was it, Arthur?"

D'Arcy shook his head.
"Hammond is talkin' in riddles, dear gal. I have never referred to him at all in any letter that I know of, whether posted or not posted."

Hammond's eyes blazed.
"As can you stand there and say that—do Miss Cleveland, too?" he exclaimed, in a fierce heat of indignation. "I've seen the letter!"

"If you can produce any letter, Hammond, in which I have referred to you—in all events, in a disrespectful manner—I will admit that I am a cad and a wascal. Otherwise, I shall feel bound to give you a lesson thorough for makin' a liar's statement!"

"There cannot be such a letter!" exclaimed Ethel, beginning to get a little angry herself. "It is very wrong of you, Hammond, to say such a thing! I suppose I was mistaken in you, after all. We had better go, Arthur."

"Yes, dear girl—"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Hammond fiercely. "Master D'Arcy see 'em bin'!" P'raps 'll deny his own handwriting, too! Look at that!"

He dragged the crumpled letter from his pocket, and threw it on the table.

Arthur Augustus picked it up quietly, and smoothed it out. Cousin Ethel looked at it, and gave a little cry.

"It is your writing, Arthur?"

"It is my w'riting," he admitted.

"You admit you wrote it?" cried Hammond.

"I nrvah w'rote that!" D'Arcy said.

CHAPTER 16.

All Serious!

HAMMOND burst into a scornful laugh.
"It's your writin', but you never wrote it!" he exclaimed. "Go on! File it on! P'raps you'll say next as I wrote it—in your 'sail!"

"No, dear boy, I shall not say that you wrote it," said D'Arcy gently. "I have a very strong suspicion who w'rote it, however. I can overlook all the wrong things you have said, Hammond, as I can w'elver know that w'ritten letter must have hurt you if you believed that I w'rote it!"

"But you did, you did!" shouted Hammond.

"I suppose there ain't a forgery in this 'ere school, as well as liars and spongers and curdsharpers, is there?"

"Where did you get this letter, Hammond?"

"It was in the book you left me—used as a bookmark, I s'pose."

"There was no bookmark in the book when I lent it to you, Hammond. I got it out of a box, where it had been for weeks. It hadn't been touched since you came to St. Jack's. The last time that book was used, you hadn't come to the school, so a lot of a letter w'elver in 's pose could not have been used as a bookmark."

"But—but—" stammered Hammond, bewildered.

"I presume you left the book in your study when you were not w'ardin' it?"

"Of course I did."

"And anybody could have got at it who wanted to?"

"I s'pose so."

"Yes, that's it. There is a w'etish book who has tried to make trouble between us before, Hammond, dear boy."

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and it happens that he has the gift of ipseities' any fellow's handwriting. He got Swobole into awful trouble once by imitating his hand, and was nearly hanged for it. And it happens that Lemley-Lemley saw his yostahday in his study, peevishly at my handwriting'. Lemley-Lemley mentioned it to me."

"Oh!" said Hammond.
"Lemley?" asked Ethel.
"Yes, Lemley."
Ethel's eyes flashed.

"The wicked, wicked boy! He must have written this, and placed it in the book for Hammond to find there!"

"Yes; he must have been screwing up to know what he had written there, I suppose."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Hammond. "Or was I to guess? I'd never have dreamed that there was such a chap in this 'ere school! 'Or could I know?"

"Of course you couldn't, dear boy, and for that reason I forgive you. I understand now why Lemley was imitating my writing yesterday. If you still doubt my answer, I asked D'Arcy, with great dignity, "you can ask Lemley-Lemley; he'll show him."

"I—I don't doubt you, Master D'Arcy," stammered Hammond. "Oh, the cotten! I—I never guessed—I couldn't guess—"

"But it is all cleared up now," said Ethel, with a happy smile. "I knew that there was some mistake. Arthur, you must forgive Hammond for his suspicions now; he had good reason for them. He could not possibly know about Lemley's wickedness."

Arthur Augustus nodded.
"I forgive him," he said graciously. "However, I must ask for an apology for his wotton expressions used towards me."

Hammond's eyes were wet.
"I'll apologise," he said. "I'll ask your pardon as my knees if you like, D'Arcy. I ought to 'ave knowned that you wouldn't do a thing like that; only—only there it was in your own 'and, so you see—"

Hammond's voice broke.
"It's all right, dear boy," said D'Arcy, holding out his hand frankly. "As apology is quite sufficient from one gentleman to another. Give me your fist, and we'll say no more about it—excepting to Lemley!"

Hammond grasped his hand with a grip that made Arthur Augustus wince.

"I'm sorry," he murmured. "You can kick me if you like, Master D'Arcy."

"Wait! I'm going to kick somebody else," said D'Arcy. "It's all right now. I'm sorry I was wotah wuff on you, Hammond; but you really made me quite watty, you know. Ethel, dear girl, tea's ready in No. 3!"

They left the study together, and D'Arcy opened the door of No. 3. There was a chorus of welcome for Ethel from Tom Merry & Co.

"Praw excuse me a few minutes," said Arthur Augustus. "I've got to speak to a chap. Come on, Hammond!"

Ethel asked no questions.

While Hammond and his reconciled chums were absent, Ethel explained to the Co. how matters had gone; and Piggins—who was there, of course—said that it was just like Cousin Ethel, and all the other fellows agreed.

It was ten minutes later when D'Arcy came into the study with Hammond.

There was a cut on his lip, and a slight swelling upon his epistomatic nose, and one of his noble ears was perceptibly thickened. Also, his knuckles seemed to be somewhat red from recent use.

The Co. asked an explanation, and Cousin Ethel appeared not to notice anything. But Hammond confided to the fellows in turn, in deep whispers, that if they wanted to see a fellow who was simply knocked into a cocked hat, they need only step along the passage and glance into Lemley's study.

Once upon the end of the Fourth had discovered that the back-laid schemes of trick and men gone all a-gley; and he had made the additional discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard, with the further discovery that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's knuckles were very hard.

In Lemley's study the end of the Fourth was gazing over the parchment of his sins, convinced at last that his peevish gifts were far from being a blessing.

But in Study No. 3 there was a joyous party.

Seldom had so merry a gathering come together in that famous apartment, and the happiest day of all was that of the Cockney schoolboy—Gussy's chum!

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THE CORINTHIAN

(Concluding Chapters.)

By BRIAN KINGSTON.

There were those among the ringide crowd who professed the making of trouble did the battle, when renewed, follow the same lines as the rough already fought. Something was wrong, and queer stories of previous incidents in Billy Power's career freely exchanged.

"Mr. Jackson, will you do me a favour?" cried Sir Patrick Beran, leaving Vavasour for a moment and entering the ring, which was being taken down. "There is something wrong with my eyes. I cannot say what, I am entirely ignorant; but the scoundrel is fighting as though he wished to lose. To ensure he does not run away between here and Hayes Common, will you take him in your own carriage? If you will do this for me, there will be assurance I am in no way implicated."

"No one would suppose it, Sir Patrick," Jackson replied. "But you have voiced the opinion of other gentlemen, and it is mine also. With pleasure will I take Power with me!"

And this he did, thus preventing Power from obtaining a much desired communication with Sir Vincent Brookes, whom he believed quite capable of forgetting to pay him the balance of the wager which he had said himself.

Nor did Sir Patrick accompany Brookes on the drive to Hayes Common. He went in a barouche, with the referee, Sir Blue Bryson, and D'Arcy Vavasour. The conduct of his man had aroused his suspicions; he remembered Power's curious question outside the Woodman, and he frankly declared it as his opinion that Power had no intention of fighting fairly.

"So much do I feel this to be correct," he said warmly, "that I am willing to agree now to pay Mr. Bryson the amount of my wager. If, gentlemen, any disquietful influence is at work, this proposal should assure you, as I intend, that I have no knowledge of it."

They hastened to assure him of their entire confidence, but Mr. Cresson insisted the fight should be continued. And Mr. Bryson refused fully to accept the wager until, as he said, "his man had earned it." Between the astounding discovery of his son, and the commencement of the interrupted fight, Sir Patrick had listened much to D'Arcy Vavasour, and all that the dandy Corinthian had had to tell him concerning Hil, gave him food for thought. For once Vavasour had broken through his rule to limit his interest wholly to his own affairs; he had withheld nothing. From the reason for Hil's first entry into the prize-ring to the noble notice attaching his determination to defeat Billy Power, Sir Patrick knew all and beneath his calm, indifferent exterior, the father had a heart torn with emotion.

But equalling the remorse felt for his own conduct, was the pain that he felt for Hil. This was a son of whose to be justly proud.

Many a startling excitement had the prize-ring afforded, but never anything approaching that which marked the resumption of the fight between Ned Harley and Power.

Secure against interception, old Bill Gibbons re-entered the ring, and again the two contestants faced each other at the scratch. And quickly it was made evident to the crowd only too willing now to be angered, that Billy Power means playing the game that had previously disgusted and annoyed them. To the moment notice it was plain that he had no intention of fighting to win.

Amazed, the spectators saw Sir Patrick Beran approach the referee, and quickly regarding the man whom he had backed at his thousand guineas. And Mr. Craven announced that in those circumstances he could no longer retain his post.

In the midst of sudden anger and confusion, the time-keeper announced the termination of the half-minute's rest, and again the fighters approached the scratch. And from a light blow, Power went down amidst howls of execration.

Picked up by his furious seconds, he pretended to collapse, and failed to answer the call of "Time."

Ten seconds later he was on his feet, grinning in the face of those who were furiously attempting to break into the ring. The yell of "Cross! Fool! play it now! Goodness! With matches off! Victory," he admitted the yell was right.

"Yes! Ned Harley's father," he shouted, pointing at Sir Patrick, "and I have been paid so that his son shouldn't lose."

(To be concluded next Wednesday.)

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NOTE!

The author has, for obvious reasons, to conceal his real identity under the pen-name of Agent "No. 55." Concerning his position, I am allowed to say no more than this; that if his real name were revealed it would cause something like consternation in Diplomatic and Secret Service circles.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

A Scene in the German War Office.

"YOU are not satisfied, Herr von Marcken?" The speaker looked across at his companion with an expression almost challenging in his blue eyes. He was a man bearing middle age, fresh-coloured, with several scars, relics of his student days, marking the smooth surface of his plump, good-humoured, and somewhat vacant-looking face. "Harmless" would have been a good word to describe his general appearance, and, no doubt, it would have pleased him.

Actually, he was chief of the German Secret Intelligence Department, and the extent of his knowledge of what they believed to be their own private secrets, naval and military, would have considerably astonished the governments and rulers of other European nations. He held the rank of general, and his name was Carl von Zepfel.

His companion in the plainly-furnished room—the private chamber of the German Minister of War—made no answer to the question. Majestically, elderly, with a massive head and lined, hawk-looking face, he sat staring absently at the vast lines of papers, prominent among which was a large white military map of England, scattered about the table at which he sat.

The question was repeated, and Herr von Marcken, German War Minister, looked up slowly, staring at Zepfel from under his bushy eyebrows.

"The scheme is most excellent," he said slowly. "The Kaiser himself has most heartily approved," he added, after a short pause, and a pleased expression came into the benign features of his companion.

The latter sat up, smiling faintly, patting his bristly fair moustache with a large white hand.

"Then it is of the man I have suggested to carry it into operation of whom you do not approve?" he asked absently.

"I am not certain. You know him, Herr Zepfel, better than do I," the War Minister replied.

The chief of the Secret Intelligence Department promptly rejoined:

"I know him perfectly; he is my best man. The only man to whom I would care to entrust an enterprise of so great importance. Consider his record, Herr Kriegsminister. It is one of the greatest success. He it was who obtained us the plans of England's latest super-Dreadnought. Why, to Krug it is that we owe the revelation of those last treacherous schemes of our enemy across the North Sea which are for our Fatherland's humiliation and defeat. He himself even suggested the outline of this, to which our Kaiser has agreed, whereby the English—"

"It is of the danger I think," interrupted Von Marcken. "This man Zepfel laughed aloud, but greatly."

"Danger! Why, Herr Minister, Krug is one who laughs at danger. In danger for long years he has lived. But his brain is cool, his soul—"

Again the War Minister interrupted sharply.

"It is not Herr Krug's danger of which I thought," he cried, frowning, "but of danger to Germany. If this man had, if our plans be discovered, if it became known to England what is the work this man has to do, what of our country, then! What will be said? What of the honour of our country, of the Kaiser himself?"

"Rest easy," and Zepfel, with a superior smile, leaned forward, and laid a plump hand on the minister's arm.

"Rest easy, Herr von Marcken. Krug does not fail. To him is failure unknown. But if, in spite of all, an accident—no may not control Destiny—Germany is safe. Our good Krug, among other things, is a Socialist."

"Lieber Gott!" And the minister was so astonished that he half rose from the chair. "And yet he—"

Zepfel nodded. Very deliberately he actually winked at the man who, after the Kaiser, was the greatest power in all the German Empire. He was a vulgar fellow, this Zepfel, originally a policeman, and inclined to familiarity. Mercenary was in his fat face as he closed his eye, but behind the veil was the suggestion of something sinister and horrible.

"Aah, yes!" he said softly. "A Socialist it Krug. Nay, an Anarchist even, therefore a hater of all governments, a hater of all wars. So that if it should be that his—his treachery; shall we say, of our good neighbour's very

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military arrangements for Germany's benefit should become known, then, may I say, to whom shall go the blame? Is it to our great country and our glorious Kaiser? Nihil! I say, my Krug is most clever!"

Herr von Marcken understood. A swift change came into his face. He sighed as one relieved.

"We will see Herr Krug," he said.

General Zaphel stretched out his arm, touched a bell, and two seconds later one of the three doors leading into the War Minister's room noiselessly opened.

"Direct the gentleman in the private waiting-rooms to come here immediately, please," said Zaphel to the clerk who appeared in the doorway. As the door closed he turned to the minister.

"Do you see that whatever misfortunes befall England, whatever unexpected accidents take place in her dockyards, barracks, or elsewhere, still something is bound to happen to the good Krug the Assessor? Will certainly be to blame," he said, in a low voice. "And Krug is a man who never speaks more or less than he should. Of Krug I am proud. But be assured, mein Herr, nothing will happen. He is too clever. These English folk will never suspect. Ah! But it would be good to see the faces of their Cabinet did they know that Krug has told me what he has; that their grand secrets are secret no longer; that we, too, know how to prepare some little surprises for our good friends. Himmel, how amusing to the English!"

He was still smiling when one of the doors opened, and the individual whose praise General Zaphel gave so loudly was shown into the room.

"Herr Krugmeister, the best of my good assistants!" exclaimed Zaphel, smiling benevolently, and waving a hand in the direction of Krug.

Von Marcken eyed the man attentively, for he had not seen him before. Krug seemed a man about thirty years of age, and the first impression of the War Minister was his intelligence. Not that Krug was small and mean-looking. On the contrary he was about middle height, well built, and broad-shouldered, somewhat stiff in his movements, blue eyes, and fair of hair and complexion. But there was absolutely nothing about the man that called for a second glance. Hundreds of similar to him could be seen during a ten-minute stroll along the Friedrichstrasse, scores very little different walk about London's busy streets, and may be found loitering or dining in Apperndorf's shops.

A strong point in the man's favour, thought Von Marcken. Krug was dressed in an ordinary business man's blue serge suit, had no gloves, and carried a Homburg hat in one hand. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles. Having bowed profoundly he sat down.

Without any preliminaries the Minister of War plunged into the matter that brought the three men together.

"Your secret report of the disguised preparations England is making against the possible invasion of an enemy has been brought to me by General Zaphel," he began, speaking very rapidly. "If the aggression of England should at any time drive our country into conflict with her you are of opinion these secret preparations would be to our serious disadvantage?"

"That is so, Herr Minister," Krug answered.

"And General Zaphel reports also a scheme by which this advantage of our enemy would be reduced," went on Von Marcken, in a business-like manner.

He knew to what he had agreed. He was perfectly well aware that he was entering his agent to accomplish an act which in war time, would have been an cowardly as it was terrible, and, the nation being at peace, as yet, was nothing better than a dastardly outrage upon honour, good faith, and common humanity, set by words of the minister as coolly as though ordering his breakfast. For Von Marcken was of the school of Bismarck, and held that in war as in life, that to gain the desired end—success of one's country—any means are to be used.

True, Germany and England were not at war. But no man could say when the long-threatening war clouds might burst, and that day, awaited by Germany's army and navy with so great longing, should arrive. And Germany should win—must win. To that end were the long years of preparation and organizing. Why should not Germany make success an absolute certainty, using any means in its power? It would be foolish of the Fatherland not to do so.

So argued hard Von Marcken, Minister of War. And in Germany were thousands of men who thought as he.

As an individual Von Marcken was a man of the strictest honour; make no mistake about that. As Germany's War Minister it was his duty to place his country in such a position that, so far as humanity may command success, success was assured.

Deutschland, Deutschland, aber alles! Germany on top of all!

That was Von Marcken's religion. And the end justified the means.

The German Empire first—somehow. By fair means or foul!

In that sentence was crystallized the patriotism of the bulk of the great German nation.

Such was the spirit that sent Ludwig Krug from his two hours' interview with the German War Minister with sanction to carry through a project that should indeed "stagger humanity."

Self-possessed, in a way excited, in no hurry, he strolled along Unter den Linden, that fine thoroughfare, tree-lined, of which the people of Berlin have every right to feel proud. A man of extraordinary pliant temperament, the interview just terminated, and the mission before him had made no impression upon him. He was entirely self-possessed.

With short eyes behind his "specs," seeming to be interested in nothing, but missing nothing within range of vision, he had reached a narrow street, the last before the Friedrichstrasse crosses the Linden, when he caught sight of a man walking upon the opposite side of the road.

Krug slightly quickened his pace. The man whom he had seen was one whom he knew—who knew him, and who he desired to remain in ignorance of his—Krug's—presence in Berlin.

His eyes on this person, Krug stepped off the curb to cross the narrow street, thus failing to see a large motor-car that was backing from it into Unter den Linden. The chauffeur did not see Krug. Krug's fast was midway between kerb-stone and ground when the hind wheel of the car struck his leg. The shock was not a severe one, but the man was off his balance. Suddenly he spun round, his arms jerked into the air, and, with a half-turn, he came down heavily upon the pavement.

CHAPTER 2. A Strange Meeting.

As Krug hit the pavement, from the chauffeur of the still moving car came a low cry of alarm. Not until he saw the prone figure did the man realize the accident he had caused. A woman who had been walking ten yards in the rear of Krug screamed shrilly. Two men sitting in the back of the car suddenly sprang to their feet, shouting, and wildly waving their arms. The car came to a standstill.

Not half a dozen persons had witnessed the accident; those who had, seemed paralysed with dismay. Then a couple ran towards the fallen man, at whom the crying chauffeur sat staring vacantly.

But the first to reach Krug was a tall lad who had been interestedly viewing the exhibits behind the glass front of a motor-car company's show-rooms adjoining the narrow street. Hearing the scream of the frightened woman, he swung about hastily, saw the fallen Krug, and at once rushed to his in kindly assistance.

Brushing the prone figure, the lad stooped, grabbed it by the shoulders, and turned it gently upon the back. As the face came into view, a shout escaped the Good Samaritan.

"Great Scotland Yard!" he gasped.

And good enough reason, too, had Jerry Osborne for feeling surprised, for he was looking upon the face of his own employer, the "boss" of the office of Queen Victoria Street, where he appeared regularly six days every week at nine o'clock, but from which he was now absent, taking a well-earned annual holiday.

"Mr. Muller! Well, I'm blessed!" he ejaculated.

Then he knelted down, lifting the insensible man and resting his head upon his knee.

"Water! Got some water! Oh, confound it!" he cried, looking up to the scared faces of the three or four persons who had gathered round. "Why the deuce can't they speak English! Bring me six beer-wasps—and brandy!" he added, his scanty acquaintance with the German language falling him.

"Wasser—wasser, Braunwein!" shouted a podgy, middle-aged German, but making no effort to get the stimulants himself.

One of the men in the car descended and hurried to the group.

"The poor fellow!" he said in English, although obviously a German. "But it was an accident. Do you know him, sir?"

"Yes, very well. Where's that water!" Jerry cried impatiently.

A couple of water was brought by someone from a beer-hall near at hand, and a white-towered, spike-helmeted policeman arrived simultaneously. Bending down, the official began to question Jerry.

"Don't speak your blessed lingo!" rejoined the lad, who had gabbled at the offered water can, and was pouring some of the contents upon the unconscious man's forehead, upon which a dull pink bloom was already rising.

"Schwahnah!" the policeman muttered to himself; and Jerry Osborne heard him, but took no notice of the uncomplimentary epithet—retaliation for the Englishman's contemptuous reference to the Teutonic language.

"The gentleman is English," struck in the man from the car.

"That to me already is known!" growled the police-officer in very fair English.

"And he is acquainted with the gentleman here," continued the other.

"Ach, good!"

And then the officer straightened himself, and issued a peremptory order to the gathering crowd, directing them to keep back.

"You to me what has happened will tell," he went on, again addressing Osborne, who had got down the water-bank, and was getting to work with a glass of brandy which some person who had not lost his head had procured. "What was your name?" And he prodded Jerry's arm.

"Oh, go to Jovials!"

He wasn't giving the official any attention, so failed to see whether his report was entered in the notebook the policeman had produced as any part of his memorabilia. He was doing his best to bring Muller back to sensibility, and was rewarded for his efforts by a spasmodic twitching of the eyelid. With the head he restrained the man's lips, and applied some of the spirit to the temples and behind the ears.

Muller—by no other name did Jerry Osborne know him—was looking pretty bad, his face the colour of raw dough. The fall had been a severe one, he having evidently dropped flat upon his forehead, without any chance of putting out his hands to save himself. His spectacles had fallen off, the fragments lying on the pavement. Jerry had noticed them, and the sight somewhat surprised him. He had been quite assured his employer's sight was in any way affected.

Of the crowd, none was lending Jerry any assistance, their attention being taken up by the police-officer, who, having signalled for assistance, was busily engaged in collecting evidence of the accident, evidently postponing the cross-examination of the Englishman until later.

At length a shiver ran through the injured man; his eyes opened and shot spasmodically. His lips moved, and, believing he was trying to say something, Jerry brought an ear to his mouth.

"But it was only an incomprehensible gibberish that issued in a weak whisper from the pallid, hardly-moving lips."

"Eltos—Eltos—must be the first—November, Zoffel!" This—or words that seemed to sound much the same—was what Jerry seemed to catch from the syncopated whistlings.

Mechanically the lad repeated them, as well as other proper names the semi-conscious Muller seemed trying to pronounce; but he could make neither head nor tail of the faint, mumbled sounds.

By this time a second police-officer had appeared on the scene, and the original officer thought it time to turn his attention to the second principal actor.

"I shouldn't not trouble you," he told Jerry, pointing at Muller and shaking his head. "You to me will what you know tell."

"This isn't much," Jerry replied quickly, surrendering Muller into the care of the second officer. "I was standing looking in powder window, when I heard a scream, and saw this man lying on the pavement. That's all I can tell you."

"But no. What you do?"

"Why, I saw that he appeared to be hurt, and so I went to pick him up."

"And how came he—what you say?—how he fell down?" demanded the officer, peering round one neck.

"What was it knocked him down? Didn't see. Might have been the motor-car that was close by."

"You say, Englishman, that the motor-car the man knock down?"

"Didn't say anything of the sort!" rejoined Jerry promptly. "I said it looked as though it might have been the motor that knocked him over. I repeat, I saw nothing until he was actually on the ground. The car—Hello! The car's gone!"

It had vanished while he was attending to Muller, and the occupant who had spoken to him in English had evidently gone away in it.

"Should have thought they'd have kept him," the lad said to himself. "And then to the officer." "Well, there's no more. I can tell you, so I'll be going."

"Ach, but one moment, Jürgling!" interposed the police-

man, speaking so sharply that the impulse came to Jerry to knock him down. "You the man hurt had said you know—oh?"

"Yes, I do know him," Jerry replied shortly.

And he was turning away, when he felt the officer's grip on his sleeve.

"You too last was, Jürgling," said the man. "You will see will come to the police-office—the police-office, you say. You a witness of the great importance."

"But you let the chap who caused the accident go, and yet want me—!" began Jerry indignantly.

"Kommen sei!" the policeman said sternly.

And Jerry Osborne, well aware that of all the silly things it is possible for a foreigner in Germany to do the silliest is to get into a row with the police, followed—in a bad temper—the conductor to the nearest police-station, whether Muller was already being carried upon an ambulance.

"Better!" Jerry told himself disgustedly. "Almost wish I'd left Muller alone."

It was anything but pleasant, this interruption to his holiday. He had arrived in Berlin only the evening before, and there seemed a fair prospect of his holiday—the first part, anyway—being spoiled just because it had happened that he was acquainted with a man who had been unlucky enough to meet with an accident.

And then he fell to going over in his mind the disconnected words Muller had jerkily breathed. They might have been double Dutch, for all the sense he could make of them.

At the police-station Jerry was further cross-examined. The statements he had made to the policeman were read over to him, corrections and additions made; he signed the form on which all was written out, and then he hoped he was through.

Not a bit of it! He had to give his name, age, and other personal information; when he had arrived in Berlin, how long he meant staying, and the name and address of the hotel where he was staying; from where he had come, and to where he was going after leaving Berlin. The official was polite enough, but the information had to be given, and Jerry gave it, although with a bad grace.

Finally, when he supposed the whole business was finished, he was informed that he was liable not to be wanted at any time; that, in consequence, he must not leave Berlin on any consideration; that every time he left his hotel he was to inform the proprietor where he might be found in the event of the police requiring him.

To assist him to remember these provisions, the official thoughtfully expounded him with the various pains and penalties awaiting those who failed to give required assistance to the police in the performance of their duty.

Jerry went back into the street feeling extremely rebellious, and with the determination to give no more assistance while on German soil to anybody, no matter what might happen.

CHAPTER 3.

Back to England.

Jerry Osborne had thought his encounter with the Berlin police merely annoying; he was to find it more than that.

Two days after the accident an officer came to his hotel and informed him he was wanted at the police-station. There he was seen by an official of some rank and a bearded gentleman whom he learned to be a surgeon.

"Here Osborne," said the former, speaking in very good English, "there is something important we have to ask you to do. It is of the man who was injured by the motor-car. He gets no better. He can talk again, but his mind is not all right."

"An injury to the brain," put in the other gentleman.

"You say you know him, Herr Osborne?"

"Well, I should," Jerry answered. "To tell the truth, it is in his office in London where I am employed."

"Yes; Herr W. Muller, 69, Queen Victoria Street, London," said the police official. "That is right. We find a card on him, but no other papers. Most strange! Did you know where he stay in Berlin?"

"No notion he was in Berlin. When I left on my holiday five days ago, Mr. Muller was supposed to be gone to the North of England."

"Ach, so! And his business—the way he got a being?"

"He is an agent for various engines—the Danne, Wizard, Leconte's, and a few others."

"So. And you know, Herr Osborne—where in London he lives?"

"I could soon find out," said Jerry, wondering what on earth all this questioning meant.

He did not have to wait long. The surgeon began to speak to him, and it appeared that nothing less was wanted of Jerry than that he should take charge of Mr. Muller, and see him safely back to his home in London.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 225.

Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Two Merry & Co. at St. John's, Order Books

NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE GHOST HUNTERS I."

"There is no fear, Herr Osborne," the sergeant assured him. "Herr Muller is not dangerous at all, though it is his brain that is hurt by the accident. He is quite well, but his memory is affected. He recalls nothing—his name, his business in Berlin. He cannot say where he is—he just smiles and smiles, and always remains. No doubt he is a stranger in Berlin. But in London, some place he knows well, that his memory will come back again, and he will be all right in a short time. I will give you names of a medical man in London to whom you report the case, if you will be so good. But have no fear, Herr Osborne—the unfortunate gentleman is not troublesome. Will you, as one knowing him, take him home?"

What else could Jerry do but say yes! The sergeant and the police official overhauled him with thanks.

That afternoon Jerry met his employer at the Friedrichstrasse station in charge of a police-officer and put him in one of the seats reserved for them in a first-class carriage of the Flaming train.

To the eye, save for the bruise on his forehead, nothing was the matter with Muller. But he acted just as a very dazed and obedient child. Whatever Jerry suggested to him he obeyed readily enough, but without speaking a word. Jerry he treated as an absolute stranger. It was very plain that in some way his brain had been affected by the fall. He volunteered no remarks, made no replies when spoken to, though he understood what was said to him, and with hands limp on his knees, remained staring straight in front of him. Occasionally he muttered to himself in German.

It was no gay business for Jerry, and some time once he thought regretfully of his spoiled hobby.

Returning to the compartment from a stroll along the corridor, Jerry found one of the train attendants heading over Muller. At Jerry's command the man turned sweetly to him, a queer look in his eyes.

"You are the Herr Englisher travelling with a friend?" he asked glibly. "I tell your friend something is a-woo. Will you go now! It is already said for."

Jerry took his charge into the "eating wagon," where he found arrangements had already been made—by the Berlin police—for their meal. Muller ate and drank heartily, but said not a word.

When they returned to their seats, he sat as before, still munching. "Jerry began to pay attention. Presently he noticed some English words.

"Eton—yes. He will be the first—the first—November—not later—write Zoffel," Muller repeated, in a low voice again and again, just as a parrot repeating words learned, staring vacantly in front of him.

"Why that's the rot he was talking before," said Jerry to himself. "What on earth does he mean! Eton—Eton! Now where the dickens have I heard the name before! Seems familiar."

But he couldn't place the name; nor, listening intently to his companion's mutterings, could he hear anything that enlightened him.

Again and again the momentaneous agitation went on until the sound of the low, tender voice got on Jerry's nerves.

At last a change was necessary, and an official found Jerry when the other train came in, and showed him to reserved seats. As odd things happened.

Getting out to purchase some fruit, Jerry saw the attendant he had found heading over Muller talking to an attendant on the other train. Then he saw the fellow turn and indicate the compartment where Muller and he were located.

"Police keeping an eye on us all through," he told himself. It seemed a likely suggestion.

Again at the Dutch frontier, Jerry took his charge into dinner. Muller gave up muttering in himself, staring soulfully enough, but without the slightest interest, the remarks made to him, but otherwise remaining silent.

When they returned to their compartment, Muller went to sleep in one corner, and Jerry, strolling into the corridor, got into conversation with a foreign-looking individual, who seemed anxious for information as to the sea passage from Flushing.

He was thus engaged for nearly half an hour, during which a man, looking very like a heavy-weight professional pugilist, must have entered the corridor from the other end and installed himself in Jerry's compartment. He was sitting close to Muller, who was as long asleep, a pained expression on his heavy face, apparently feeling Muller's pulse and talking the while in a low, intense voice. He moved apart, seating at Jerry as he entered.

"Here, what's the matter!" the English lad demanded, alert and suspicious at once.

(A long instalment of this splendid New Serial next Wednesday, when some startling developments will be made, the reader, who as a result of Jerry Osborne's strange story.)

THE GEM LIBRARY, No. 305. "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, Every Monday.

A NEW FREE CORRESPONDENCE EXCHANGE.

The only names and addresses which can be printed in these columns are those of readers living in any of our Colonies who desire Correspondents in Great Britain and Ireland.

Colonists sending in their names and addresses for insertion in the columns of this popular story-book must state what kind of correspondent is required—boy or girl; English, Scotch, Welsh, or Irish.

Would-be correspondents must send with each notice two coupons, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Coupons will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not containing these two coupons will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertising agent. No correspondence with advertisers can be undertaken through the medium of this office.

All advertisements for insertion in this Free Exchange should be addressed: "The Editor, 'The Gem' Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4."

H. A. Law, Box 332, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15-17.

A. V. Schofield, 3, Costler Street, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a reader living in Canada or South Africa, age 17-18, with a view to exchanging stamps.

B. Lavery, 27, Beach Street, Hartford, Conn., New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcards.

J. Booker and A. Hall, 502, Marine Avenue, Fort Rouge, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, wish to correspond with girl readers over the age of 20 years.

E. Dwyer, 15, Knox Avenue, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with an English girl reader, age 17-18.

F. Sykes, 172, Lippincott Street, Toronto, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers in Malta, Gibraltar, and the Falkland Islands.

Miss S. Strenley, care of Mr. W. Monaghan, Perth Road, Alberton, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in U.S.A. or England, age 14-16.

L. C. Fairlie, Swanton Street, Terang, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in England, age 16-17.

G. Gibbs, "Cliffside," Calvert Street, Marrickville, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in England or Wales, age 11-14.

Miss B. Hardie, 1311 Street, Mount Clarence, Albany, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, age 15-17.

W. Gensberg, 14, Minghsong Road, Shanghai, China, wishes to correspond with girl readers, age 15-17.

A. E. Cox, Lobs, Manly, Queensland, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcards.

R. M., 28, Marjoribanks Street, Wellington, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 17-18.

H. J. Blossie, 2154, Queen West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with girl readers, age 15-18.

H. Beissie, 102, North Water Street, Galt, Ontario, Canada, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in Australia interested in postcards, age 16-18.

M. Tostevin, Windfall Villa, New Road, Vale, Glamorgan, Central Island, wishes to correspond with readers.

A. Bragg, 4, Hart Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps and postcards, age 16-18.

G. Filson, St. Leonard's, Tevonia, Cantebury, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with boy readers living in Shanghai, age 14-15.

R. F. Hamilton, 54, Charles Street, Kingston, Jamaica, R.W.I., wishes to correspond with a girl reader.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

GRAND NEW SERIES OF FOOTBALL ARTICLES!



WHEN anybody asks for advice as to how to become a good referee, I always feel strongly tempted to say "Don't." The fellow who takes to refereeing a football match has indeed chosen a thankless sort of task at best. I have had some, and I know.

I have tried to impress the correctness of my decisions on a crowd of players, and also on a crowd of partisan supporters, many of whom can only see what is done by one side. The onlookers are excited, and if the match is of any importance the players are by no means calm. For everything which happens the poor referee is blamed. If one side loses they scarcely ever do so because they deserved to lose on the run of the game; they lost because they had to play the other side and the referee as well. That is the story.

It is all in the game, I suppose, and abuse certainly comes with the lot of the referee, no matter how good he may be. Still, in spite of all my warning, there are still some people who will want to know what they must do to become referees and what is the best way to go about making themselves efficient for the task.

I have always considered that referees are born, and not made. By that I mean that temperamentally some people are fitted for successful refereeing, while others—no matter how well they know the rules—would never prove good referees. Let me explain further. The one great essential in a referee is that he should have that peculiar faculty which inspires the confidence of others. We have referees to-day who give decisions in such a way that, however correct they may be, there is sure to be somebody who never feels quite certain about them.

On the other hand, we have fellows who are refereeing our big matches, who give even wrong decisions with such an air of confidence, that in spite of themselves the players and the onlookers feel that the referee is right. Yes, the first essential in a referee is a "personality"—a personality which inspires confidence—that knows how to treat other fellows—who is best with a double share of what we call tact.

Besides now, there are big teams to-day whose players simply model their methods according to the particular official in charge. If they know the referee is a lenient sort of individual, they just take liberties, and as a result, there is a good deal of the shady side of the game indulged in than there is when a strong referee is on duty—a man who will stand up husky-pusky, but who puts his foot down firmly on any attempt at questionable tactics.

Enough of the temperamental side of the referee, however—although, as I said, I am convinced that many of our referees are failing, not because they do not know the rules, but because they are absolutely unfitted to have control over

men who are excited and often highly strong. You may have the right temperament, however. In that case go full steam ahead—the crying need in football to-day is for efficient referees. Some of those in the very first class to-day are only "put up with," because better men cannot be found.

The first step is to learn the rules—referees' charts, and all that sort of thing may be had for the asking—or for a copper or two—at any of the offices of the County Football Associations. Knotty problems will be found in these, and the charts give all sorts of ideas as to how the rules of the game are meant to be interpreted by the law-makers.

Examinations are, of course, held periodically, but I can assure the reader that it is as good as going to one of these referees' examinations unless he knows something about football. I have seen some of the papers, and the questions are such that they cannot possibly be modified through. Moreover, in addition to the written questions which have to be answered, there are others which are sprung on the candidate by the examiner which he has to answer on the spur of the moment.

Still, a thorough knowledge of the rules of Association football is not difficult to obtain—they are, after all, fairly simple and straightforward. It will be realized that advance has to be made step by step what he has passed the examination. Junior games will be given to the young referee for a start, and on the way he handles these will depend as to whether the more serious and bigger contests come his way.

We will suppose that you have got to your first match stage—how are you to act? The best advice which can be given in a general way is tendered by a weather-beaten referee who said: "Don't try to please everybody—or anybody—but yourself." That is his own only chance of success. Give a conscientious opinion on everything you see—never mind how the players argue or what the mass in the crowd say. You are the judge of what happens on the field of play and no one else.

In the big matches the referee has a couple of neutral line-men to whom he can appeal on points which he does not see clearly, but in junior games neutral line-men are a luxury—and consequently, when he is on trial, the young referee will have nobody to depend on but himself. Don't take a high hand with the players; but on the other extreme don't argue with them. There is no reason why you should not tell them what a free kick or that sort of thing is given for, but if you begin to argue you are lost as sure as fate.

And when you are in possession of the whistle don't jump to the conclusion that the spectators have come to hear you sound it—they have come to see the football, and the referee is only a sort of unnecessary evil. My warning will be quite clear to those who know football at all. The sin of the referee should be to keep the game going—there must be no unnecessary blowing of the whistle for quite technical offences which mean neither advantage nor disadvantage for either side. I could go on for a long time yet, on this referee's subject, but my space is gone.

A last word—whatever else you do, don't lose your head—keep cool. It is the secret of success in a referee.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 505,

Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at 6d. per Vol. Order Early.

NEXT WEDNESDAY:

"THE GHOST HUNTERS!"

Another Splendid Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at 6d. per Vol. Order Early.

OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



THIS WEEK'S CHAT

WHOM TO WRITE TO :
EDITOR,
"THE GEM" LIBRARY
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OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE MAGNET LIBRARY,"
 EVERY MONDAY
"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

For Next Wednesday.

"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"

By Martin Clifford.

In the splendid, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. for next week, entitled as above, quite an epidemic of "ghost" sets in at the old school. After Tom Merry has dealt with a "speed" one in characteristic fashion, Morfy Leather, on the same tack, pass into serious trouble. After that a regular "ghost scare" sets in, while mysterious raids on private property take place.

Tom Merry & Co., assisted by Hammersed, the Cockney schoolboy, take up the matter in earnest at last. Ultimately an astounding capture is made by

"THE GHOST-HUNTERS!"

which results in the "ghost" disappearing from the scene of action altogether.

FROM A FULHAM READER.

In the following letter, a Fulham chum asks for the co-operation of fellow-readers to form a "Gem," "Magnet," and "Penny Popular" club in his district:

"190, Lillie Road,
Fulham, S.W."

"Dear Editor,—Reading a good deal on the 'Readers' Page' relating to the 'Invincible Trio' by readers themselves, I thought I would take the liberty of writing to you about them. I have read nearly all the numbers published, and hope to be able to enjoy many more. My father reads them as well, and he says he fully endorses the praise other parents give them. I always pass my copies on to non-readers in the hope of gaining new readers, and find it often works well.

"I should very much like to join a 'Gem' or 'Magnet' Club in this district. Should there not be one at the present moment, would any of your readers read how who are thinking the same kindly write to me and arrange meetings in order to discuss the question? It may not seem a favourable time to start a club, but we have the footer season, with us, and in the club evenings members could meet and discuss their favourites, play games, etc. In the brighter months we could have cricket, rowing, etc.

"I hope you will agree with me that the forming of such a club will do much to spread the fame of the Trio in every way, as one of the club's aims will be that of obtaining new readers and members.

"Trusting I have not taken up too much of your valuable time, I remain, yours truly,

"G. A. WHITE."

Thanks for your letter. I am particularly pleased, Master White, to hear of the approval with which your father looks on "The Invincible Trio," for I would never advise a chum to read them or any other papers against his father's wish. I think your idea of forming a Fulham League an excellent one, and wish you every success.

ANIMAL CINEMA ACTORS.—No. 5.

Paul J. Rainey's Adventurous Journey.

Only a few years ago hunters of big game in Central Africa and other countries were wroth to describe their adventures and experiences by writing books or giving verbal explana-

tions. Now, however, no big game hunting expeditions are made unless a cinema camera man accompanies it, for the purpose of taking films of the expedition. Paul J. Rainey is a well-known hunter of big game, and when he was ready for this great expedition there were plenty of camera men willing to risk life and limb to secure such fascinating films as he promised them. The cost of fitting out the expedition was enormous. In addition to the band of white hunters, the camera man, and an assistant, large bands of native guides had to be hired out from time to time to carry the baggage and equipment of the party.

The hunter took with him two packs of dogs, one of which were called "Trailing" and the other "Fighting" dogs—I will describe how they are used later. Apart from the opposition "fought" the party by having to hack a way through the dense tropical foliage, they found, as they ventured farther and farther from the dominions of the white man into parts where no European has ever set foot before, the natives were strongly antagonistic to the introduction of the cinematograph camera. They could not understand it, and so they looted it. After months of arduous travelling the party had advanced 300 miles beyond civilisation, and were deep in the jungle. Then they began to get to work.

Organised hunts took place daily, and the camera man, mounted on horseback, with his camera camera upon the saddle before him, was never far away from the operations. During a lion hunt, after a long and tiring trail, the beast was at last brought to bay, and was seen to collapse, as if from many wounds. The camera man, thinking the beast was dying, jumped from the saddle, and, camera in hand, walked up to the lion, desiring to secure a film of him at close quarters before life expired. When he was within about eight feet of the lion the operator commenced turning the handle.

Suddenly, without any sign or warning, the lion gave a low growl, and the next instant gave a leap and landed but a couple of feet from the cinema camera man, and prepared for another spring. Just as the spring was closing off, however, one of the hunters levelled his rifle, and, with splendid marksmanship, shot the lion clean through the forehead, undoubtedly saving the operator's life.

Mr. Rainey relied very much upon his wonderfully-trained hunting dogs. One pack of these were trained for trailing down wild animals, whilst the other was of the true fighting breed, and would, as a matter of fact, tackle anything that ever roamed the jungles. In one lion-hunt the lion got away, but the trailing dogs tracked it right down to its lair. When they had done this work, they quietly stood aside and allowed the fighting dogs to attack the lion. Then ensued a very fierce and awful fight. The lion fought bravely, but the dogs were so quick he rarely got a bite in with his powerful jaws, whereas the dogs were fastening their teeth in every part of his body. After a long fight the dogs succeeded in killing the lion.

The camera man filmed the whole incident, but if you saw the film, you would actually be shown very little from this fight. It was decided that much of it must be cut out of the pictures, as it was too gruesome for exhibition at picture palaces. In all, I believe, they took some 25,000 feet of film, which would take about eight hours to show, but in the end the picture was cut down to about 3,000 feet of film.

(Another interesting
Cinema article next
Wednesday.)

The Editor



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE!

POOR CAT!

Little Boy (to lady): "Please, ma'am, may I have my arrow? It has gone in your garden."

Old Lady: "Why, certainly, my little man! Whereabouts is it?"

Little Boy: "I—I—I think it is sticking in your cat!"—Sent in by R. L. Snell, Great Yarmouth.

STILL CURIOUS.

Little Willie was a source of great worry to his nurse. To put it in a nutshell, he was curiosity itself.

"You had better keep quiet, or something will happen to you," said his nurse one night, after having answered endless questions. "Curiosity once killed a cat."

This made a deep impression on little Willie, and, remarkable to relate, he was actually quiet for the space of five minutes! Then, with a thoughtful frown on his manly brow, he turned to his nurse.

"I say, nurse, what was it the cat wanted to know?"—Sent in by W. Phillips, Hendy.

WHATHO!

"Johnny, you have been a naughty boy all day! You can just go off to bed without any supper!"

"Well, mother, what about that medicine I've got to take after meals?"—Sent in by P. Heys, Bolton, Lancs.

NOT GROWN UP YET.

It is told of a certain bishop that while dining at the house of one of his friends he was pleased to observe that he was the object of marked attention of the son of his host, whose eyes were firmly riveted on him.

After dinner the bishop took the opportunity of having a few words with the lad.

"Well, my lad, you seem to be interested in me."

"Yes, sir," answered the lad, with a glance at the bishop's knee-breeches. "But won't your mamma let you wear trousers yet?"—Sent in by D. J. Meredith, Victoria, Mon.

IF—?

Having recounted her parcels for the seventeenth time, and reassured herself for the twenty-second time that she had her ticket all safe in her reticule, the old lady in the black-beaded bonnet thrust her head out of the window of the carriage.

"Porter!" she called.

The passing trunk-tugger paused politely.

"Porter," repeated the old lady, "does this train stop at Waterloo?"

"Well, mum," he mused, "if it don't, you jest look out for the biggest bump you ever had in yer life!"—Sent in by Miss Ivy Hobden, Sussex.

HIS IDEA.

Some Americans were visiting a school in Wales, and the teacher invited them to question the scholars. One of them accepted the invitation.

"Little boy," he said to the rosy-checked lad, "can you tell me who George Washington was?"

"Yes, sir. He was an American general!"

"Quite right!" exclaimed the visitor, highly pleased. "But can you tell me anything remarkable about that man?"

The little boy thought hard for a moment.

"Yes, sir!" he said proudly. "He was remarkable because he was an American, and he told the truth!"—Sent in by G. McGregor, Edinburgh.

STILL PUZZLED.

As the celebrated soprano began to sing, little Johnnie became greatly excited over the gesticulations of the orchestra conductor.

"What's that man shaking his stick at her for?" he demanded of his father.

"Sh-h! He's not shaking his stick at her."

"Then what in thunder's name is she hollering for?"—Sent in by H. North, Carnarvon.

CLEAR DEFENCE.

Magistrate: "You are found guilty of knocking down the plaintiff and robbing him of everything except a gold watch. What have you to say?"

Prisoner: "Had he a gold watch?"

Magistrate: "Certainly."

Prisoner: "Then I put in a plea of insanity!"—Sent in by W. G. Harnett, Portsmouth.

VERY FISHY.

She was a fisherman's daughter, and wore her hair in a net. The city youth came round to court her, and here are a few things he said:

"My love, you hold first 'plaice' in my heart. Although I 'flounder' about in expressing myself, my 'sole' wish is that you will save me from becoming a 'crabbed' old bachelor. I shall stick to you closer than a 'limpet,' and from you a 'wink'll' be the rod to guide. Together we'll 'skate' o'er life's rough rocks, and when I look at your hand I shall say, 'Fortune smiled upon me when I put "her-ryng" there."

And the lady dropped her eyes and sweetly murmured:

"You giddy kipper!"—Sent in by J. Hunter, Yorks.

Farmer (at the National Gallery): "Why, these are the same pictures I saw last year!"

Attendant: "Quite likely, sir."

Farmer (indignantly): "Then it's a swindle! They told me that the pictures were changed twice a week at all the leading picture-houses!"—Sent in by G. Green, Manor Park.

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

"If you please, mamma," said Clarence, aged ten years, "will you kindly lend me a pencil?"

"But," exclaimed mamma, "I left a pen and ink for you to do your lessons with on the nursery table! Why don't you use that, instead of pencil?"

Clarence hesitated.

"Don't you think that the GEM is rather a good paper?" he said at length.

"Of course I do!" replied mamma. "But——"

"Well, you see," the lad explained, "I want a pencil to write and ask the Editor how to remove ink-stains from a carpet."—Sent in by T. Alker, Wigan.

NOT THIS TIME.

In a small country church, not long ago, a little child was brought forward to be baptised. The young minister, taking the little one in his arms, spoke as follows:

"Beloved hearers, no one can tell the future of this child. He may grow up to be a great astronomer like Sir Isaac Newton, or a great labour leader like John Burns, and it is possible that he might become Prime Minister of England. Now"—turning to the mother of the child—"what is the name of this child?" he inquired.

"Mary Ann," was the timid reply.—Sent in by J. Buglass, Berwick-on-Tweed.

MONEY PRIZES OFFERED!

Readers are invited to send ON A POSTCARD Storyettes or Short, Interesting Paragraphs for this page. For every contribution used the senders will receive a Money Prize.

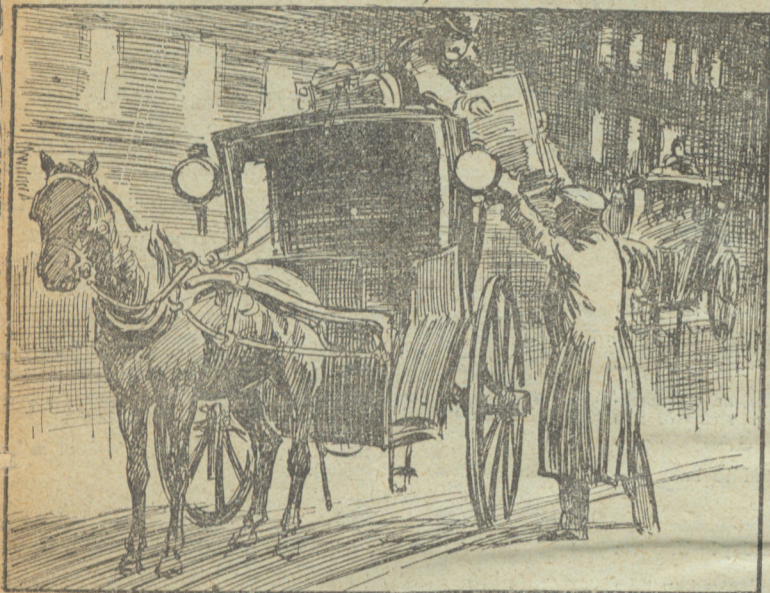
ALL POSTCARDS MUST BE ADDRESSED The Editor, "The Gem" Library, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

THIS OFFER IS OPEN TO READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

No correspondence can be entered into with regard to this Competition, and all contributions enclosed in letters, or sent in otherwise than on postcards, will be disregarded.

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SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.



The man swiftly passed a big gladstone bag to the driver of the waiting hansom, sprang in, and was quickly driven away. Sexton Blake, whose cab was not thirty yards away, gave an exclamation of satisfaction. "We are in luck!" he said. "That is Gordon Falconer's house, and that man was his valet, Shakerly."

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The Shell fellows dragged the amateur poet into the room, and landed him, gasping, on the floor. A closer view of his face sent them almost into convulsions. "Black, but comely!" grinned Monty Lowther.