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ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY MAKES A SLIP!

(An Amazing Incident in "Earning His Living"—the Long, Complete, School Story in this Issue.)

EARNING HIS LIVING!

A Grand, New, Long, Complete Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy adjusted his eyeglass in his eye, and surveyed the line of youths outside the bootshop in great surprise. "But how? I wonder what that crowd has collected for?" he murmured. He did not realize that they were applicants for the situation that he himself had walked from Kilmacbe for! (See Chapter 1.)

CHAPTER 1. Very Severe.

"It's a wotten posiah, for a chap!"
Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.
D'Arcy had been quite silent for full five minutes—a very unusual thing for D'Arcy. He was leaning gracefully on the balustrade of the School House steps at St. Jim's, with a thoughtful wrinkle in his youthful brow.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lortch were there, leaning themselves on the steps. They had been watching Arthur Augustus with covert glee, wondering what was the cause of his unusually profound meditations.

"A woddly wotten posiah!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically.

He polished his eyeglass thoughtfully, jugged it into his eye, and regarded the Tomble Three with a distasteful look.

"What's the trouble?" asked Monty Lowther sympathetically. "Has the girl in the tobaccos's refused you?"

"Pray don't be an ass, Lortch!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "It's the patch. He's not 'plavin' the game!"

"Oh, these patches!" said Tom Merry, with a nod. "Chap should be very careful how he brings up his patch." said Monty Lowther solemnly. "He should look after his carefully in his earliest youth, and guide his every foot-step in the way they should go—"

"I wish you would be serious, Lortch. This is a serious matter. I've had a lottah fuss on my patch."

"Well, that has happened before, and so have looked," said Manners. "I've known lots of chaps who've had letters from their patchers—"

"The patch says I am extravagant. He has written three pages of advice on the subject of cross-square, and looks 'fush money, and things—and he hasn't sent me the Irish I asked him for. I wouldn't have minded the advice as much if he'd put in the Irish, you know. I believe as a chap bettin' his patch run on. But he hasn't sent me the necessaries—and I'm stoney broke!"

"Bored!"
"And that's not all!" said Arthur Augustus, greatly aggrieved. "The patch says I've reckoned my allowance so much, that he isn't going to send me any more money for

Next Wednesday.

"MAKING THINGS HUM!" AND "SECRET SERVICE!"

two whole weeks. That's why I wogged it as a wotten pouch. A chap must have money, you know. You can't pay for things without money.

"Oh, how wozwotted Tom Merry."
"You can't?" said Arthur Augustus, as if he had only lately realized that somewhat-important fact. "But that isn't all, either. The pouch has been quite wrode. What do you think he has called me?"

The Terrible Three assumed very thoughtful expressions.

"Silly ass!" asked Lother.
"Frabjous thump!" suggested Manners.
"Burbbling cackles!" inquired Tom Merry.

"Woeily, you fellows, I wesk you do not wreally think that Lord Eastwood could make use of such exceedingly slangey expressions as these. Certainly not. He says I am a wackless young duffin, and that a fellow who will wesk be able to make money should not wesk it!"

"You wesk to be quite a sensible chap!" said Lother admiringly.

"Woe! I do not wregard it as wessin' money to spend it. When I wrode a new waistcoat, it's for the good of trade, isn't it?"

"Is that what you do it for?" grieved Lother.

"Well, no; that isn't exactly what I do it for," admitted Arthur Augustus. "But it is for the good of trade, all the same. And if I have more new silk joppas than the other fellows, it looks up the hatful's business, doesn't it?"

As a matter of fact, I ought wreally to be wregarded as a phewer-throat. And it wreally isn't quite fair of the pouch to throw it in my face that I can't make money. He wouldn't wreally like it if I left St. Jim's and looked for a job. I could do it, you know. In fact," said Arthur Augustus wvantly, "I've a wvery great mind to do it, just to show the pouch, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I had to see any cause for laughin' in that wvornak, dash boys. I suppose I am as capable of earnin' my livin', if I chose, as any other fellow. Look at Howcks of the Fourth—he supports himself by his wvork; I've helped him sometimes. There's young Gwines, the grocerak's boy—do you think I couldn't take struttin' up and down, and carry a basket on my own pair of legs as well as Gwines does? It would be a jolly wvreat deal wvess than wvaidin' Latin in the classroom."

"Oh, my hat!" cried Manners. "I should like to see you carryin' Gwines's basket!"

"And, as a matter of fact, I've made up my mind," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "You see, I've been borrowin' money from some of the chaps, and I was goin' to settle out of this friv—wveth the friv hasn't come. I can't wvessin in debt for a fortnight. It's impoon. I shall wv'e a wvorkin' wvreck lettin' to the pouch—"

"Poor old pouch!" murmured Tom.

"I don't want to be wvell so big, of course; but, wvolly, this is the limit, you know. I feel bound to wv'e a wvorkin' wvreck lettin'—and I shall tell him plainly that unless he wvessin his wvorkin, and sends me a friv by wvorkin, I shall have no wvessin left to say and earn some money, wvessin. I am wvond'rin' upon that. And I'm jolly well goin' to wv'e the pouch now!" said Arthur Augustus determinedly.

"Heav, heav! We'll come and help you!" said Monty Lother cordially. "File it on hot and strong. These blessed pouches want puttin' in their places sometimes, you know."

"Yes, that's just what I think!"

The Terrible Three grinned gleefully as they followed Arthur Augustus into the common-room, where the wvroll of St. Jim's sat down with pen and ink and paper before him. D'Arcy churred the handle of the pen meditatively.

"I shall be glad of your assistance, dash boys; if you can help me," he said, after a little pause. "I wvant to be wvorkin, you know, wvithout wvessin. A chap ought to be wvorkin wvessin' to his pouch, even when he is a wvorkin. I think I will begin 'Dear Patah,' as usual!"

And Arthur Augustus dipped the pen in the ink and wrote "Dear Patah."

The Shell fellows exchanged winks. Arthur Augustus was in the dearest earnest; but the Terrible Three persisted in taking the matter humorously.

"Something like this," suggested Lother: "Dear Patah, —I quite agree with you that I am a burbling ass—"

"Woeily, Lother!"

"But I cannot help it, being born so—"

Lother.

"You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "If you are goin' to talk wvot wvay get out. Have you any suggestions to make, Tom Merry?"

"Yes, rather!" said Tom promptly. "Begin like this: 'Dear Patah—'"

"Yess! I've got that!"

"I am sorry you have only too much reason to regard me as a silly cackoo!" went on Tom Merry solemnly.

"But I don't wvogard you as a silly cackoo, Tom Merry," said D'Arcy, in surprise. "I think you are wvorkin an ass sometimes, but silly cackoo is too wvrong."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners and Lother.

Tom Merry turned red.

"You fathead! That's what you're wvorkin to wvrite!" he roared. "But I'm not wvittin' about you, Tom Merry—"

"You—you—you ass—"

"Put it in the third person," suggested Manners. "That's always effective. Something in this style: 'Lord Eastwood's letter has been received, and in reply Arthur Augustus D'Arcy begs to state that his lordship is quite right in regarding the said Arthur Augustus as a frabjous thump—'"

D'Arcy snarled up.

"You silly ass! Clear out!" he exclaimed wvathfully.

"If you cannot take a serious matter seriously, I will wvite the lottah without your assistance. I have a wvory great mind to give you a lottah thrashin' all wvord!"

"All three of us!" grinned Lother.

"Yess, and if you don't clear out, I shall check you out!" said Arthur Augustus wvreatfully. "I give you one minute to get outside that door."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Othavivic! I shall wash upon you and eject you with violence, you twaddle-ass!"

Arthur Augustus never ceased add. He pushed back his curls, apparently without having wvorked it out in his aristocratic mind, how he was to eject three fellows all bigger than himself. The Terrible Three stood in a grinning row, waiting to be ejected.

"Now, are you goin'?" demanded D'Arcy.

"No—we're comin'!" grinned Lother.

They came, and Arthur Augustus suddenly found himself poked up off the floor, and struggling in the grasp of the Terrible Three.

"Or! Wekase me, you wvottahs—"

Haup!

The wvroll of St. Jim's was seated violently upon the writing-table, and Manners pushed the note-paper down the back of his neck, and Lother gently assisted him with the ink.

Then the Terrible Three sat a hurried retreat, laughing, leaving Arthur Augustus sprawling upon the writing-table and gasping for breath.

"Ow! Oat Jove! The uttah wvottahs! Oh, dash! Gwossoon!"

Jack Blake of the Fourth looked in at the doorway.

"Hallo, what's the row here?" He broke into a roar as he caught sight of Arthur Augustus's red and excited face, with little streams of ink rippling down it. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothin' to laugh at, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake.

"Those Shell wvottahs have been wvaggin' me, the frabjous duffin!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove, I've give them a frabjous thrashin'! Gwost, boys! My hat's all ink! I shall have to go and wash it off! I shan't be able to wvite to my pouch now! Bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus rushed out of the common-room, leaving Blake shrieking. It was not till he had spent a good half hour in obligations that the wvroll of St. Jim's sat down again to write that letter to his noble pouch; and then, owing to the perturbed state of his feelings, the letter was, perhaps, a little more severe than it would otherwise have been.

"Dear Patah,—I was surprised and shocked by your letter. I do not really regard this as playing the game. I see hard up. Unless you send me a friv by return of post, I shall have no recourse but to find some means of earning money myself. Write reply."
ARTHUR AUGUSTUS.

And that letter was addressed to Lord Eastwood at Eastwood House, and promptly posted. Arthur Augustus carefully calculated the time it would reach Eastwood House, and

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(See column 2, page 26 of this issue.)



"Clear off, will yer!" roared the butcher, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went whirling across the pavement. "You strike worthin'!" he gasped. "I shall refuse to take your wretched job now if you offish it to me!" (See Chapter 4.)

he told Blake that he expected the wire in reply about six o'clock. And soon after six the telegrams arrived.

Arthur Augustus smiled scornfully as he opened it. Several fellows waited to hear what was in it. D'Arcy had told his chums—Blake and Herries and Digby—of that severe letter to his pastor, and they were curious to know the result.

"Very decent of the patch to wire back," said Arthur Augustus. "I trust I was not too soft on him in my letter. He is really a very decent sort, you know. Now we'll see what he says."

"Good! Let's see!" chuckled Blake.

Arthur Augustus opened the telegram. He looked at it, then he pressed his famous eyes into his eye and looked again.

"Then he ejaculated:

"Bad Jove!"

"Well, what's the news?" chorused Blake.

"Weally, this is wathah wathah. Look at that!"

Blake looked.

The telegram was short, if not sweet. There were only two words in addition to the address. It ran:

"NONSENSE!—EASTWOOD."

Arthur Augustus looked at his chums, and they looked at him. Then they roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus crumpled the telegram into his pocket, and walked slowly and sadly away. And Blake and Herries and Digby yelled in chorus:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus Means Business!

"BOY WANTED!"

Those words, in capital letters, caught Arthur Augustus's eye as he opened the "Ryckonbe Gazette" at the advertisements page.

"Good!" said Arthur Augustus.

He was seated by the window in the common-room in the School House. Morning lessons were over on the day following the receipt of that terse telegram from Lord Eastwood. That morning Arthur Augustus had been very thoughtful, and his noble face had worn an expression of great determination. He was, as he had explained to the grinning Blake, "a very woadate chap" when he made up his mind. And his mind was made up now. He was going to show his superior pater the kind of stuff he was made of.

"The patch thinks I'm a nohow an, you know," he said indignantly to his chums of the Fourth. "He weally doan't think I can do wathah' wathah' chouse wathah' and silk topshah. I'm goin' to show him."

"What are you going to show him?" Blake had inquired.

"Wathah'?"

"Or silk topshah?" asked Digby.

"I'm goin' to show him the kind of stuff I'm made of," said D'Arcy firmly. "I'm goin' to work for my bet's for a bit, and show that I can do it. Dahn! I try it once before, and dahn! I show what I could do!"

"You jeh!" chuckled Blake. "You showed the stuff you were made of, the same stuff that they make hoofing some of."

"Woads, Blake—"

"How are you going to run a job along with leasoo?" demanded Blake. "Are you going to get the Head to give you leave while you carry a grocer's basket?"

"I shall ask the patch to wogooze the Head to give me leave as soon as it is necessary. It will be up to him to do that, at least."

"Oh, woads!"

"But, of course, I shall have to get the job first. That may not be very easy."

"Probably not," grinned Blake.

"I beah that there, an a faithful lot of unemployeh," said D'Arcy. "But I think that a woadate chap ought to be able to get a job if he tries. The promish way to get a job

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A. Magdalen, New, Lond. Complete School Two of. Ten Nerry & Co. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

is to read advertisements in papers. You look out a job that will suit you, and you go to the man, and he takes you on. It's quite simple.

"Yes, it seems quite simple," Blake agreed. "I'm going to read the advertisements in the 'Wokeable Gazette,' and pick out a job I can do," explained D'Arcy. "I'll jolly well show the man that I'm not such a mule as he seems to think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"And I fall to see anything to cackle at," said Arthur Augustus, with an air of offended dignity.

But Blake & Co. did, and they cackled.

And as it came to pass that Arthur Augustus was summoned in the window-seat in the common-room with the local paper, looking for a job. As it was a half-holiday that afternoon D'Arcy would have time to look for the job—of a friend. And there was quite a long list in the paper. It seemed extraordinarily that there were any unemployed at all, considering the number of persons wanted.

"BOY WANTED!"
The very title of the column was encouraging. Boys were wanted—all sorts and conditions of boys. Apparently Arthur Augustus had only to pick and choose the job he would take.

Brothers and helpers and messengers and hairdressers wanted boys in Ryebush and Wargand and Abbotford, and other places quite near St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus read the column carefully from top to bottom, marking the advertisements that met with his approval with a pencil, and adding with satisfaction over them.

"Hal Jove! There are half a dozen that will suit me down to the ground!" he murmured. "Mr. Linsedage, the butcher—thank's own, and Mr. Pipah, the newsagent—that's wippin'. I'd jolly well take woveen papers out of school hours. I could win that job and my lessons both at the same time. I shall try for that. I'll try the butcher first, as it's better wages."

And Arthur Augustus rose from his contemplation of the local paper, and folded it and put it into his pocket with considerable satisfaction.

He walked out of the common-room with an air of elation. It gave him a new feeling of independence to realize that he was not useless after all, and that he had the grit and the ability to take his share in the battle of life it called upon to do so.

"Hallo, I've been looking for you!" exclaimed Tom Merry as Arthur Augustus came out into the quad. "We're wanted this afternoon."

"Yes; I trust I shall be wanted," said D'Arcy, with a smile.

"The footer, I mean."
"Oh, how the footer!"
"What! Don't you want to play in the House match?"

exclaimed Tom Merry, in surprise.
"I am afraid I shall have to put off football matters like that when there is important business to be seen to, dear boy."

"My hat! What's on now?"
"I don't mind telling you. My palsh has out of my pocket-money, and he's wedded to me quite wuddly when I told him that I should have my woveen hat to get a job. So I am to go in to get a job—just to show him, you know."

"A—a—what?" gasped Tom Merry.
"A job, dear boy."
"Oh, great Scott!"

"There are quite a lot of boys wanted," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm going to try what a job this afternoon—if possible, one that can be won out of school hours. However small the wages are, it will be a beginning, won't it?"

"Oh! said Tom Merry faintly. "Then—then you won't be able to play footer!"
"Sowwy, dear boy; but that's how it is. I hope I am going to get a job this afternoon."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Tom Merry staggered away. He was almost overcome. Arthur Augustus looked after him through his eyes, and smiled. He intended to show Tom Merry, as well as Lord Enderwood and the world generally, that he could get a job if he liked, and earn his bread quite as well as Gritton, the greasy boy, could.

After dinner Blake linked his arm in D'Arcy's as they came out of the dining-room.

"We're going to beat the New House to-day," he remarked. "You'll have to play up, Gassy. Figgins & Co. are the best team."

Arthur Augustus shook his head.
"Sowwy, Blake; I shall be out this afternoon. Important engagement."

"Yes, I've heard about that," said Blake pleasantly. "We're not going to let you play the giddy goat."
"Wolly, Blake—"

"You see, the Head wouldn't allow anything of the sort—even if your pater would—and we're not going to have the New House chaps chipping at about having a bonus in our House," Blake explained. "You're going to play footer."

"I refuse to play footer!"
"Mind," said Blake darkly, "if you try to get out of gates this afternoon, we'll seize you by force, and if you don't come down to the footie-ground, you'll be carried."

"Wata!"
And Arthur Augustus looked his eyes away and walked off. Blake gave him an unconcerned look. When Arthur Augustus came got an idea into his head, it was exceedingly difficult for anybody to get it out again. Indeed, opposition only had the effect of making the steel of St. Jim's more determined. But Blake could be as determined as his closest chum. He did not mean to let the swell of the Fourth play the giddy goat, as he expressed it.

And so when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walked down to the school gates a little later he found Blake and Horrie and Digby there—waiting.

"They drew up in a line across the path."
"Whither bound?" asked Blake aggressively.
"I'm going to Wokeable."

"Your mistake; you're going to play footer!" said Blake.
"Now, it's time to change. Come on!"
"Fwy let me pass, dear boy?"

"Are you going to play footer?" roared Blake.
"Certainly not!"
"Will you come and change?"
"No, I won't!"

"Collar him!" said Blake, exasperated.
"Wolly, Blake—betch off, you wotwats! Check it. Dig! Horrie, you beat! Hal Jove! Over-or! You stink wotwats, wotwats no!"

But the Fourth-Formers did not behave like that. Arthur Augustus stepped off his feet, and carried kicking and struggling in the direction of the football-ground, his arms and legs flourishing wildly in the air.

CHAPTER 3. A Quick Change.

"HALLO!"
"What's the row?"
"What's the matter with Gassy?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Most of the junior players were on Little Side, ready for the match, when Blake and his comrades rushed up to the pavilion with the struggling swell of the School House in their grasp. A roll of laughter greeted the appearance of Arthur Augustus.

"Gassy says he isn't going to play!" Tom Merry remarked.
"He's going to play all right," said Blake—"that's his little mistake. We're going to help him change!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You foolish wotwats!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I refuse to play—I have business to attend to this afternoon—most important business. I commanded you to release me. I will give you a finished swartwats all around. I—w—w—w—w!"

With a last struggle and a yell, Arthur Augustus disappeared into the dressing-room, borne in the arms of his devoted chums, leaving the fellows outside roaring with laughter.
"Bump!"
D'Arcy descended on the dressing-room floor. He sat there and gaped, in a very disbelieving state. The Terrible Three had followed the Fourth-Formers in, to lead a hand if required. They stood with their backs to the door, to cut off the escape of the exasperated swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus scrambled to his feet, crimson with rage.

"Now, are you going to change?" inquired Blake. "We've brought your things here. Here they are, Gassy!"
"I refuse to change!" bawled D'Arcy.

"Then we'll jolly soon change you!"
Arthur Augustus made a wild rush at the door. But the Terrible Three blocked the way, snoring. Arthur Augustus lurched hither and thither, and he was seized and gruffly hoisted on the floor.

"No en!" said Tom Merry pleasantly.
"You wotwats—no!" roared Arthur Augustus.
"Take your bags off, Gassy!"

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ANSWERS

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"I refuse to take my bags off!"

"Hold him, kids, and I'll soon have 'em off!" said Blake.

"Oh, you faithful wottahs—oo—oo—"

Herrie and Digby, grinning, collared the unfortunate wretch of St. Joe's. His jacket and waistcoat were ripped off in a second or two, and his shirt and collar followed. Then Blake untanned his braces by the simple process of yanking at them until the buttons burst.

"Now, take his shoulders, and hold him while I pull!" said Blake, breathing hard.

"Good egg!"

"Welcome me—oo—you are exemplar' my trowah, you ally ass—oo—oo!"

The juniors did not heed. Herrie and Digby grasped Arthur Augustus by the shoulders and held him fast, while Blake grasped his trousers and pulled. The trousers came off like a flash; so suddenly that Blake staggered back into the arms of the Terrible Three.

"Good!" gasped Blake. "Now, there's your footer-things, Gussy—"

"I refuse—"

"Take his crotcher out, Dig. If he doesn't put on his footer-things, he'll have to go about the rest of the afternoon dressed like a Hottentot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'Arcy made a rush at Digby as he marched off with the clothes. But five juniors closed up in his path and yanked him back. Digby, shrieking, disappeared out of the dressing-rooms with D'Arcy's clothes crumpled up under his arm. Arthur Augustus stood up in his elegant underclothing and boots, and gasped loudly.

"Oh, you wottahs—you awful wottahs—"

"Will you get into your things!" demanded Blake.

"No, I won't!"

Blake took out his watch.

"I give you three minutes," he said. "If you're not dressed by then, you'll come out as you are!"

"I refuse to dress!"

"Right—ho! If you don't mind, I don't. But if anybody should see you like that, there may be trouble. Especially if any ladies should happen—"

"Oh, you wottah—"

"One minute gone!" said Blake sternly.

"You—you, you, you, can't take me out without any clothes!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"You'll see in two minutes' time!" said Blake grimly.

"You're coming out into the footer-field, clothes or no clothes. Take your choice!"

Arthur Augustus cast a wild glance toward the dressing-rooms. But there was no escape. The Terrible Three were at the door, and Herrie was at the window, and Blake was watching him. And escape means his clothes—that was hardly possible!

"Only one minute left!" said Blake grimly.

"You—you, awful beast! I refuse to regard you as a friend at all, Blake."

"My dear son, I'm your best friend! I'm going to prevent you from playing the rickety ex!" explained Blake. "Now, then, only thirty seconds! Open the door, Tom Merry!"

Tom Merry grinned and opened the door.

"Come on, Gussy—will you walk or be carried?"

"You—you wottah! If you are really serious, I will put on those things, wotah then outrage the laws of decency?"

"Back up, then—only twenty seconds left!"

Arthur Augustus fairly jumped into the football clothes. He was quickly dressed.

"Good!" said Blake approvingly. "Now, come on. Figgins & Co. are waiting for us, and it's time to kick off!"

"I refuse—"

"Come on!"

The other fellows were already in their football rig. They threw off their coats in the dressing-rooms, and Arthur Augustus was marched out between Blake and Herrie. All eyes were turned upon him as he emerged, with crimson face and gleaming eyes.

Arthur Augustus was in a most terrific rage, but his cheeks seemed unconscious of it. They were in great good-humour themselves, and seemed to feel that they were doing very well for their chum, and looking after him in a really friendly manner.

"You fellows ready?" asked Figgins of the Fourth, the captain of the New House junior eleven.

"I've, only had to wait for Gussy!" said Blake cheerily.

"We've been having him changed. Quite ready!"

"Quite!" said Tom Merry.

Figgins and Tom Merry looked for choice of arch. Figgins was the traw, and elected to give the School House the wind to kick off against. The teams lined up, Arthur Augustus still with Blake's grip tight on his arm.

"Now, they're just going to blow," said Blake. "I can't

hold you while we play, Gussy. I suppose you're going to play the game—what?"

"Wah!"

Floopy went the whistle, and the ball rolled from Tom Merry's foot. Blake had to let go Arthur Augustus then. The School House forwards followed up the kick-off with a rush, and the ball went skimming up towards the New House goal. Arthur Augustus ran with the rest—but he recovered off towards touch, and made a spring over the ropes, and fled.

"Come back!" roared Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gussy, you villain—"

"After him!"

"On the ball!" shouted Tom Merry. "Never mind Gussy!"

"I—I—I'll hold him in all!" gasped Blake.

"Come back!" roared Herrie.

"Come back, you snit!" shrieked Kangaroo of the Shell. The play had stopped. Figgins was almost in convulsions with laughter. Only Tom Merry's voice called the Fourth-Formers back from chasing after the fleeing forward, who was making a wild break across the quadrangle.

"You'd better put another man in," gurgled Figgins. "You hadn't really started. Put a fresh man in, and begin again!"

"Oh, I'll squash him!" said Blake emphatically. "I—I'll substitute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus was fairly green. Tom Merry called on one of the School House reserves, and the game restarted. The captain of the Shell was willing to do anything he could to oblige Study No. 5; but, as he explained, they couldn't walk all the afternoon while Blake was arguing it out with Gussy. And Blake, breathing dire threats of what he would do to his aristocratic chum later in the day, gave it up. The match went on, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left to his own course.

CHAPTER 4.

Mr. Liveridge is not Taking Any!

"**B**All Jove! The wottahs!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had fled at top speed across the quadrangle, and rushed into the School House. He rushed up the stairs, and bolted into the Fourth-Form dormitory, and slammed the door and locked it. Then he sank upon a bed, gasping.

He expected to hear boisterous footsteps in the passage, and hammering at the door; but no such sounds came to his ears. He had not been pursued.

As soon as he recovered his breath, he stepped on a chair at the dormitory window, and looked away towards the playing-field.

He could see the footballers in the distance, and he saw with satisfaction that the match was going on. The juniors had no time to trouble about him now.

"That's all right," said Arthur Augustus, greatly relieved. "I'll change and get out before half-time—wotah! It would be just like those wottahs to look for me then!"

And Arthur Augustus, drawing upon his single wardrobe for clothes to replace those taken away from him, soon changed into Etonia again.

He dressed himself very carefully, being desirous of making a good impression upon his future employer when he interviewed him.

When he had finished, and surveyed himself with complete satisfaction in the glass, he unlocked the dormitory door, and peered out cautiously into the passage.

The coast was clear!

Arthur Augustus scudded along the passage, down the stairs, and out of the School House. He heard a shout from the direction of the footer-field.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Tom Merry!"

But he did not listen; football had no charms for him that afternoon. He hurried down to the school gates, and breathed more freely when he was once safely outside them.

"All right now?"

And Arthur Augustus started to walk to Rycomb, in completely restored good-humour.

The coast was clear for him to carry out his great idea. He was going to show Lord Eastwood and Tom Merry and Blake—and, in fact, everybody!

He passed Mr. Burd's grocer-shop as he walked into Rycomb. Grimes was outside, putting tickets upon boxes of eggs, and he grinned slyly at D'Arcy. It occurred to the wretch of St. Joe's that he could get a little useful information from Grimes.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 111.

A HAKELINE, N.Y. LANE, CORNER SCHOOL TATE OF

TOM MERRY & CO. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT WEDNESDAY—

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

"Good-afternoon, Grimes!" he said, stopping.
 "Afternoon, Master D'Arcy!" said Grimes.
 "Do you happen to know where Liveredge's, the butcher's, is, Grimes?"

Grimes stared.
 "Yes," he said. "Goin' to buy a bookstak, Master D'Arcy? Ho, ho! That ain't the St. Jim's butcher, you know?"

"I am awah of that, Grimes. I am not goin' to buy anything. I am goin' to answer an advertisement," explained Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Liveredge is in want of a boy, and I am goin' afiah the job!"

Grimes almost fell into the box of eggs.
 "Oh, my boys!" he said.

"I do not happen to know where the place is," said D'Arcy.
 "Purwaise you would have the great kindness to direct me, Grimes?"

"Cert'ly, sir," said Grimes faintly. "It's the little butcher's shop in River Lane. Oh Liveredge is rather a Tartar. I-I shouldn't recommend you to look for a job there, Master D'Arcy. He might look as 'ow you was joking, and 'ave you best!"

"I shall try, Grimes. Thank you for your information."
 "Not or fall?" said Grimes politely. "Oh, my boys!" he added, as D'Arcy's elegant figure went down the village street. "Oh, wot! You boys! Which they ought to be let 'im look without a kopper!"

Unconscious of Grimes's opinion, Arthur Augustus strolled on elegantly. He turned into River Lane—a narrow and crooked old street, that led down to the Mill. At the extreme end of the street the river could be seen, with a barge moored there, and a couple of barges were leaving against posts and smoking black pipes.

A dozen fat-faced children played in the street. There were several shops, all of a very poor description, and the most bright-looking of all was a little corner butcher's shop.

The colour that came from that establishment made D'Arcy feel a little queasy as he passed outside. Good English meat was evidently not Mr. Liveredge's leading line. On the window-board were chunks of queer-looking meat, and, in spite of the cold weather, flies were buzzing about it.

Arthur Augustus felt strongly inclined to cut and run; but he nerved himself heroically for his task. It was not like a D'Arcy to give in without a fight. His ancestor in olden times had been first on the walls of Acanon, and the blood of Sir Brian D'Arcy was in the veins of Arthur Augustus.

The storming of Acanon and the slaying of Saracen was certainly a more passionate affair than getting a job in a butcher's shop, but the spirit of the thing was the same. It was up to Arthur Augustus to go in and win.

And he went in, at all events.
 Three or four workmen had gathered round the shop to stare at him. An elegantly clad youth as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy seldom showed himself in the precincts of River Lane.

Some personal remarks about his silk topper and his high collar followed him into the establishment of Mr. Liveredge.

Arthur Augustus thrust his monocle a little tighter into his eye, and surveyed the small, low-ceiled, ill-ventilated shop. A fat, red-faced man in a butcher's smock came from somewhere in the room beyond.

"What can I do for you?" asked Mr. Liveredge, very politely.

"No look D'Arcy for a customer, and he had never had to cheat a customer before. He was all politeness.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyes back upon him.
 "You are Mr. Liveredge, I presume?" he asked.

"That's me, sir."
 "You are advertisin' for a boy?"

"Yes," said Mr. Liveredge, to surprise.
 "I have come in answer to that advertisement, my good man."

Arthur Augustus was not, of course, experienced in looking for a job, but he would never have addressed his prospective employer as "my good man." It really was not the most tactful thing to do.

Mr. Liveredge glanced at him. As D'Arcy was evidently not a customer, there was no need to waste politeness on him. And Mr. Liveredge's idea was that the young fellow had come there to make fun of him—a permissible mistake under the circumstances.

"You—you've come for wot?" demanded the butcher.
 "I'm lookin' for employment," explained Arthur Augustus.

"I understand that you are offerin' five shillin's a week and board and lodgin' for a boy. I should be very glad to take the place."

THE GLEN LIBRARY.—No. 311.
 OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," &c. Every Monday, &c.

"Wot, you—you—?" spluttered Mr. Liveredge. "Gett' out!"

"What?"
 "Gett' out!"

Arthur Augustus thrust his monocle a little more firmly into his eye, regarding the butcher with astonishment.

"But I have come to take the job, my good fellow," he explained. "I want to crush your employment, don't you know?"

"You cheeky young blimp!" exclaimed Mr. Liveredge. "Don't you come 'ere making fun of me! You clear off!"

"But I'm not makin' fun, dear boy," protested Arthur Augustus. "I assure you that I will make myself useful. I will do anything in reason. For instance, you can rely on me to keep the shop clean?"

"It is wathah dirty now," said Arthur Augustus, sweeping round an elegantly-gloved hand to point out to Mr. Liveredge the uncleanly state of his establishment. "You can rely on me to stink all that. It is really not healthy, you know. People must feel wathah it when they come into your shop in its present state, don't you think?"

Mr. Liveredge did not state what he thought on that subject. He seemed to be at a loss for words. But he was ready for action, though words failed him.

He raised at Arthur Augustus, and seized him with very gross hands, and whirled him through the shop door.

Arthur Augustus, astonished and indignant, struggled.

"Bai Jove! My good man, wadly, I don't comprehend—I— Oh, dear!"

Whirl! He went across the pavement, in the midst of a little crowd of onlookers, who yelled with joy at the sight. His hat had fallen off in the tussle, and Mr. Liveredge picked it up and headed it after him. Arthur Augustus saved himself from falling by clatching at a lamp-post, and then he faced round indignantly.

"You wathah wathah! I shall refuse to take your wretched job now if you stink it to me," he exclaimed. "I wadly got up at a healthy will yet!"

"Clear off, will yer?" roared Mr. Liveredge.
 "You have made my jacket quite greasy and dirty. You are a wretched beast!"

Arthur Augustus made a dive for his hat, and recovered it, and jammed it on his head. The butcher had caught up a fragment of ancient smock from the block, and was talking aim. Arthur Augustus had just opened his mouth to deliver a further opinion upon the brutal conduct of Mr. Liveredge, when the fragment came whirling, and it caught him right in the mouth.

"Gwooooh! Ugh! Oh! Gwooooh!"

"Gwooooh!" roared Mr. Liveredge. "And now clear off, or I'll come out to yer!"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

And Arthur Augustus cleared off.

He had had quite enough of Mr. Liveredge, and it was evident that that job at five shillings a week, with board and lodging, was not for him. A chorus of hoars and jeers from the street within followed him till he escaped from River Lane. He came out, gasping, into Mycombe High Street.

"Bai Jove! What an awful frock! That man is a wretched wadler, and I am jolly glad I'm not gwin' to have myself to do with him. Bai Jove, my jacket is quite greasy from his horrid hands! Bai Jove!"

CHAPTER 5.

One of the Unemployed.

IT was some little time before Arthur Augustus fully recovered from his encounter with the pugacious Mr. Liveredge. He sat on a bench under the old oak tree in the village street, and scanned the advertisement columns of the "Rykesho Gasetto" once more. He considered carefully the advertisements he had marked in pencil. Mr. Fensop, the bootmaker in Wayland, was advertising for a boy. All applications to be made personally between four and half-past that afternoon at his shop in Wayland-side-door. Arthur Augustus consulted his watch—the beautiful gold fobber that was a somewhat extraordinary adornment for a youth seeking a situation at five shillings a week.

—Just time to stroll over to Wayland, and get there by four," mused Arthur Augustus. "It's a wippit' afternoon for a walk, and I shall get there quite early, and purwaise I shall get taken on befoah the others come, if there are any others."

And Arthur Augustus walked over to Wayland.

Wayland was the market town of the district, and quite an important centre. There was an Empire, a picture-palace, a first-class hotel, and people were beginning to talk of electric trams. The High Street was quite bare. Mr. Fensop's

shop was the only one open.

Arthur Augustus walked up to the door of the shop, and looked in. The shop was empty.

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headshop was a square building, with big plate-glass windows fronting the High Street, exhibiting a splendid array of boots and shoes. The side door in the side-street was where the applicants for the job had to present themselves. As four was only just striking Arthur Augustus deemed himself in good time. He had not had much experience in such matters.

He was surprised to see a long line of boys of all ages in the side street.

The line began at the door, and extended a great distance down the street, as far as the next turning.

There were big boys and little boys, well-dressed boys and shabby boys, and tattered boys. Boys of all complexions, sizes, and ages.

But there was no boy like Arthur Augustus D'Arry.

He was unique.

The swell of St. Jim's passed and adjusted his eyes, and looked at the array of youths in great surprise.

"Bai Jove, I wonder what that swart's collected for?" he remarked. "It can't be such an extraordinary thing for Mr. Fwung to take on a new boy. I wouidly wonder what all these chaps are here for. There must be thirty at least."

However, that was not the immediate business in hand. It was time to apply for the job, and Arthur Augustus came up to the side door. A big, raggedly-dressed lad of about seventeen was the first in the line, and he looked suspiciously at D'Arry.

"Whatcher want?" he inquired.

Arthur Augustus looked at him mildly.

"I am goin' to apply for a job here," he explained. "I believe this is the wright door."

The big youth smiled.

"You arter the job—you swell?" he exclaimed.

"Yess."

"Gawson?" said the other incredulously.

"I swartch you it is the fact, my dear fellow," said Arthur Augustus. "If we will have the extreme kindness to step aside I shall be glad to enter."

"You ain't gawson?" asked the big youth. "You're really arter the job?"

"Yess, certainly."

"Then you'll take your turn."

"My turn!" repeated Arthur Augustus, puffed. "I don't quite comprehend."

The big youth pointed down the line.

"We was all here afore you," he said friendly. "I think you're swell" at the last instant to shove yourself in front of all of us. Not 'at!"

"Gives him a job on the job, Mike," said the second in the line.

Mike seemed very much inclined to take that advice. Having been stationed outside Mr. Fwung's side door for a good two hours he was naturally indignant at a young swell calmly walking in ahead of him. Arthur Augustus was acting in sheer ignorance of the situation, but the other boys were not aware of this.

Mike doubled up a big fat, and sneaked at Arthur Augustus.

"You join to clear off?" he asked.

"But I don't quite comprehend. Do you mean to say that all you fellows are bush lookin' for the same job?" asked D'Arry.

"Think we're 'ere for our 'valth'?" jeered Mike.

"Bai Jove! I wouidly bug your pardon," said D'Arry, quite distressed. "I had no ideah whatevah of takin' an unfair advantage. Of course, I want to play the game. I will take my turn with pleasure."

"Oh, get off!" growled Mike.

Arthur Augustus walked down the line.

An elegantly-clad youth, with an eyeglass in his eye, snatching gracefully along that tanned and anxious line, naturally crossed hostility.

To Arthur Augustus it was an adventure, but to most of the boys there it was deadly and serious earnest. Jove and growls greeted Arthur Augustus as he passed along. He did not reply to them, but reached the end of the line, and took up his stand there, the thirty-fifth in order.

"Oh, for, wot a swell!"

"My heys! Look at the toff!"

"Eyeglass, too!"

"Does yer mammy know yer out?"

"Oh, ain't he a toff!"

Arthur Augustus grew a little pink. The remarks were quite unpleasant, and the fellows were beginning to pressure him. The last dozen in the line, not having really much hope of getting into Mr. Fwung's establishment when the door was opened, broke up, and gathered in a little crowd round Arthur Augustus. They were only too glad to break the monotony of the waiting by ragging the young swell.

"Knock 'is 'at off, Jim!"

Arthur Augustus backed against the wall.

"Fwag don't be wuff boss, deah boys!" he said mildly.

"I got back to look after this job, the same as you are."

"Yah!"

"Get off!"

"You don't want a job?"

"Shish him out!"

A dirty hand came up and knocked D'Arry's hat sideways.

He caught it just in time, and set it straight upon his head, and turned angrily upon the boy who had knocked it. His eyes were gleaming now.

"Look here," he exclaimed sharply. "I have no much sight to be here as you have, and I refuse to be bullied. If you intahk with me I shall switee you."

There was a yell of laughter. A big, hulking fellow, with a freckled face lurched forward, and thrust a bulging jaw within a couple of inches of D'Arry's face. There was an encouraging howl from the other young rascals.

"Pitch into him, 'Erbert!"

"Wipe 'im round the mouth!"

"Knock 'is 'at off!"

Arthur Augustus backed away as far as he could from 'Erbert's' bulging jaw. 'Erbert was a head taller than D'Arry, and a very powerful-looking fellow. And Arthur Augustus did not want a row in the street.

"Fwag, keep your distance, deah boy!" he said. "Fah play, you know."

"Fair play!" asserted 'Erbert. "I'll give yer fair play. Come on."

"But I wouidly don't want to fight you, deah boy!"

"Then get out," said 'Erbert. "We don't want your sort 'ere."

"I refuse to get out!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I'm looking for a job."

"Then I'll jolly soon put you out," said 'Erbert.

"Wouidly, you know."

"Bai!" Arthur Augustus's silk hat went flying under a swipe from 'Erbert's' hand. It fell on the pavement, and there was a rush of the boys for it. In a moment it was being kicked down the street like a football. In ten seconds it was a shapeless wreck. Arthur Augustus uttered a cry of dismay.

"Bai Jove! My hat! My topknot! You beauty! Great Scott! I'll give you a fresh thousand!"

And he rushed at the obscenous 'Erbert, hitting out right and left. 'Erbert was nothing loth. He stood up to D'Arry, and they were quickly going it hammer and tongs.

The boys gathered round in an eager crowd to watch the fight. And the crowd soon grew larger. A customer man called, with his well-moulded ears, to watch; a teacher's boy came along and stopped, and two or three public-house loafers lounged up. Arthur Augustus and 'Erbert struggled and pommelled, and fought in the midst of a growing throng of all sorts and conditions of persons.

"Go 'is 'Erbert!"

"Nail 'im!"

"Knock the stuffer out of 'im!"

"Spillmate him!"

All the cries were for 'Erbert; there was no sympathy whatever for the "swell." It was natural enough. The well-dressed public-school boy was an intruder, a stranger, he had nothing in common with the other fellows there, and all their sympathy was naturally with the redoubtable 'Erbert.

But 'Erbert, in spite of the encouragement of his friends, was getting the worst of it.

In the first onset, his size and strength gave him an advantage, and D'Arry was badly pommelled—but as soon as he recovered his coolness, Arthur Augustus brought his knowledge of boxing into play.

'Erbert had plenty of strength, and plenty of pluck, but he had no science, and the swell of St. Jim's began to knock him right and left.

Thump, thump, thump! came D'Arry's fists on 'Erbert's face and chin and broad chest, and 'Erbert strove in vain to get through his head and close with him.

Finally, a terrific uppercut stretched 'Erbert on his back on the ground, and Arthur Augustus stood over him, panting.

"Oh, huzney!" greeted 'Erbert, putting his hand to his nose, which was streaming red. "Oh, my eye! Oh, cozney!"

"I trust you have had enough," said Arthur Augustus, gasping for breath. "I am very sorry to handle you in this way, but you gave me no choice, you know."

'Erbert sat up dazedly.

"Oh, huzney!" he repeated.

"Go for 'im!" sang out a voice. "Rush 'im!"

Arthur Augustus backed against the wall in alarm. He had not expected that. 'Erbert struggled painfully to his feet.

"Let me alone," he growled. "He's kicked me fair and square. Let 'em alone!"

"But Jerry!" said Arthur Augustus. "You are a sportsman, aren't you?"

"Erbert growled again. He was feeling a very badly-used and done-up sportsman. There was a movement in the line near the door, and Mike disappeared into the doorway. The applicants for the job were being admitted at last.

In a moment the fracas was forgotten. The boys rushed to take their places in the line, with a great deal of pushing and shoving and disputing. Several men had arrived during the fight, but they all remained in front of Arthur Augustus, who found himself still at the end of the line. The swell of St. Jim's was in a troubled state of mind. His hat was gone—and his clothes were very dirty and discoloured after that struggle with Erbert. He certainly did not look much like the elegant swell of St. Jim's now. And his nose was swollen, and there was a trickle of red from it, and there was a bruise on his cheekbone.

He was tempted to give up the business altogether, as he realised how unkind he was to present himself before a respectable bootmaker. But he stuck to his guns. He was determined to have a job by the time he returned to St. Jim's.

Mike came out of the side door, scowling. It was evident that he had not been taken on by Mr. Framp. The line moved up a little as the next boy went in. Then a man came out and spoke a few words, and went in and shut the door. The line of applicants broke up and dispersed.

Arthur Augustus moved up towards the door as the other fellows moved away, wondering why they went. The whole crowd of them were dispersing, and Arthur Augustus found his way to the door quite unimpeded. Some of them looked at him and grinned as they went away.

D'Arcy was puzzled. It struck him as curious that, after waiting so long, the boys should give it up all of a sudden and clear off. Still, doubtless they knew their own business best; and they had left the fold clear for him.

He knocked at the door.

It was opened, and a man stared at him indignantly from within.

"What is it?" he asked sharply.

"Can I see Mr. Framp?" asked D'Arcy politely.

The man stared at him. Hatless, dusty, unshaven, and with a swollen nose, Arthur Augustus did not make an usual excellent impression.

"What do you want?" said the man.

"I am here to apply for a situation, in answer to an advertisement—"

"It's too late!" growled the man. "You're too late! Be off!"

"But I've been waiting here some time—"

"Didn't you see me come out and say Mr. Framp was wanted?" snapped the man.

"No; I'm awfully sorry—I didn't—"

"Well, be off. The job's took!"

And the door was slammed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face.

"Oh, but Jerry!" said D'Arcy. He understood now why the crowd dispersed so suddenly. He understood now why the door had closed off; the second applicant had obtained the situation, and the rest were not wanted. Arthur Augustus rubbed his swollen nose, and walked away in a very thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER 6.

Taken on!

MR. PIPER, the newsagent of Rylcombe, was the next name on D'Arcy's list. But the swell of St. Jim's felt that he was somewhat in need of repairs before he presented himself to Mr. Piper. Being unfortunately short of money, he could not purchase a new silk topcoat to replace the one he had lost; and he was reduced to the awful strain of buying a cap for a shilling at a ready-made clothes shop. The clothes kindly lent him a brush, and he brushed himself down; but he was feeling far from elegant or comfortable as he left the shop, with the shilling cap upon his noble head.

He walked slowly and meditatively back to Rylcombe. His hopes had been considerably dashed by the events of the afternoon. Getting a job was evidently not so easy as it had appeared at first sight.

He had secured very simple to select the advertisement that suited him best, apply for the job, and take it. But it was not so simple when it came to be done.

But Arthur Augustus was still determined. When he returned to St. Jim's he wanted to be able to tell his unbelieving chums that he had secured a situation. He wanted to be able to write to his father, explaining that he had taken a job, and was able to provide himself with pocket-money, by

his own labours, in the future. As he reflected over the matter, during his walk to Rylcombe, it seemed to him that the newsagent's place would really suit him best of all, which they

He knew that many boys had jobs—as at which they worked before and after school hours; and why shouldn't he do the same as fellows at the County Council School? His education at St. Jim's was first-class and expensive, and it was absurd that it should be a hindrance instead of a help to him. What was the good of a public school, anyway, if a public-school chap was handicapped instead of helped by the fact that he belonged to a public school?

"It will be as tight as wain," Arthur Augustus told himself. "I can get up very early, before seven o'clock, and beat down to Rylcombe on my bike, and take the papers out, and get back early in time for breakfast. I can do the evening work, if there is one, after school hours. It will really be a healthy existence, and I shall get paid for it. I'm quite as clever as a County Council School chap. I believe, and I don't see why I shouldn't be able to do what they do."

And with renewed hopes, he presented himself at Mr. Piper's.

The village newsagent was not crowded with applicants, as the bootmaker in Weyland town had been.

Arthur Augustus found no one in the shop when he presented himself. A bell began to tinkle when he opened the door, and he nearly fell down a step into the little old-fashioned shop. The bell remained tinkling while the door was open, and Arthur Augustus saw it. A little swarthy man, with a smoking-cap on his head, came out of the little, stuffy back-parlour behind the shop.

Arthur Augustus had seen Mr. Piper before, and Mr. Piper had probably seen him, but if he had, he did not recognise him now. The swarthy man, which did not fit quite changed D'Arcy's look—added to the swollen nose.

"Mr. Piper!" said D'Arcy politely.

"Yes?" said Mr. Piper.

"If you please, I understand that you want a boy?"

"A boy!" said Mr. Piper, looking at him with much attention. "Yes!"

"To work out of school hours, Mr. Piper?"

"Yes?"

"I should be very pleased to take the place, sir," said Arthur Augustus modestly.

Mr. Piper scanned him.

"What's your name?" he inquired.

"D'Arcy."

"Oh! Are you at school?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall want you to get here at six in the morning," said Mr. Piper. "You'll take down the shutters, sweep out the shop, and put things in order. Then you'll go round with the papers."

"Yes, sir."

"Then you'll come again after school in the afternoon—at five o'clock," said Mr. Piper. "You can make yourself useful for a couple of hours then."

"Quite so, sir."

"Are you willing to work?"

"Certainly, Mr. Piper. As a matter of fact, I am most anxious to work."

"Well, that's all right," said Mr. Piper, a little doubtfully. "I hope you're not a quarrelsome boy, getting into fights with other lads."

D'Arcy's hand went to his nose.

"Oh, no, sir! I am a very peaceful chap. I am sorry to present myself in this state; I was attacked by a young woman."

"Very well. I'll take you on," said Mr. Piper.

Arthur Augustus brightened up wonderfully. He was taken on. It was a job at last.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Piper!" he said. "I will do my very best to give you satisfaction. Now about salary—"

"Salary!" said Piper. "Oh, wages! How much do you want?"

"I should not expect very much to begin with, Mr. Piper. Suppose we were to say a pound a week to start?"

The newsagent almost fell down.

"A—a—a what?" he stammered.

"If you think that is too much, sir—"

"Too much!" gasped Mr. Piper. "Where was you born?"

Are you an idiot?"

"I trust not," Mr. Piper," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am inexperienced in these matters."

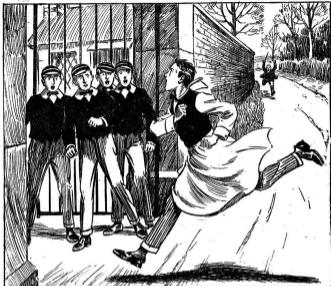
"You must be!" said Mr. Piper.

"I should be satisfied with ten shillings to start with—"

"Make it two pounds!" said Mr. Piper facetiously.

"Is it two shillings too much, sir?"

"Four times too much!" said Mr. Piper.



Tom Merry & Co. gave a shout as a wild and haggard figure dashed into the gateway of St. Jim's. "Shut the gates, deah boys!" panted D'Arcy. "There's a man aften me—a woguish howlin' lunatic. He's chased me all down the street!" (See Chapter 15.)

"Oh, hai Jere!"

"I pay half-a-crown a week—and good pay, too!" said Mr. Piper. "You can take it or leave it!"

Arthur Augustus was very much inclined to leave it. But he remembered that it was too late that day to look for another job. It was that or nothing. So he decided to take it.

"Very well, sir," he said, after a few moments' pause;

"I will take it, and thank you!"

"Charactah!" said Mr. Piper.

"Ha!"

"I suppose you've got a character?"

"Yess; certainly! I trowt I have a vevy good character."

"I mean, have you got a character from your last employer?" snapp'd Mr. Piper, beginning to get a little impatient.

"Oh, no! I have neevah worked at this business befoah. But I assure you that I am a vevy respectable chab."

Mr. Piper smiled.

"Well, you'll do," he said. "It's a risk, but I'll take you. To-morrow morning at six sharp, sivil. You'll ring the side door bell."

"Yess, sir."

Mr. Piper went back into the little parlour. Arthur Augustus left the newspaper's shop with a feeling of elation. The salary was not high. But it was a job. He had made a start. And it was a job that could be run in conjunction with his work at school. His work for Mr. Piper could be done before and after school hours. True, he would not have the satisfaction at first of feeling that he was earning his bread. Half-a-crown a week would not quite run to that.

But it was a beginning—a first step on the road to independence. After all, Brooks of the Fourth, the day-boy at St. Jim's, earned his bread by his own labour, and why shouldn't D'Arcy? Why not, indeed?

He might rise in the business; get a rise in wages; or, later on, find another job that paid better. Lots of things might happen now that he had once made a start.

The earlier disappointments of the afternoon were forgotten now. Arthur Augustus felt as if he were walking on air as he made his way home to St. Jim's in the dusk. He had something to tell his class now.

CHAPTER 7.

Arthur Augustus Causes Surprise.

"HERE he is!"

"Here's the silly one!"

Many voices greeted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he came into the School House at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry & Co. surrounded him in a moment. Arthur Augustus bestowed an amiable smile upon them.

"Hallo, deah boys! How did the match go?" he asked cheerfully.

"We beat the New House," said Jack Blake. "If we'd not we'd have sloughed you!"

"Well, I'm glad you beat them, deah boy!" said D'Arcy amicably. "That's all right. I was afraid you would get licked as I wasn't playin'. But it's all right."

"You saved the match for us, Gassy," said Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the Shell fellow in astonishment.

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A Halfpenny, New, Large, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

"I did, Lowthah!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, rather!"

"I fail to see how——"

"By running off and not playing," explained Lowthah.

"Oh, you wish so!"

"Whose have you been?" demanded Blake. "What have you been up to? If you've been to the tobacconist's again——"

"How is Miss Charr?" chuckled several voices.

Arthur Augustus turned pink. He had fallen in love with Miss Charr, the young lady at the tobacconist's, a short time before. It had lasted only a short time; but it had been awfully serious while it lasted, and Arthur Augustus had spent quite a small fortune in buying things at the tobacconist's, as an excuse for calling in there and seeing Miss Charr. It was, indeed, his regardfulness of expense at that time which had led to the present trouble with his peer. Arthur Augustus had purchased expensive cigars, and meerschaum pipes, and all kinds of things, and the money had flowed like water, and it was not surprising that Lord Eastwood had "kicked" at last. Arthur Augustus was reaping now the reward of his extravagance on that occasion. He was also reaping many jokes and much chipping on the part of——

"Behold! Ho bluddeh!" said Mosey Lowther. "Oh, Gummy!"

"You uttah daffah!" said D'Arcy. "I have wet been to the tobacconist's! I have been lookin' for a job!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I have already explained to you that my gawwah has cut off my allowance, and that I am goin' to earn money myself!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Broods does it, why shouldn't I? We're in the same boat now."

"The same boat, but different kind of shells," murmured Mosey Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I trust I have as much brains as Broods——"

"What a trusting chap you are, Gummy!" said Blake effusively.

"And have you found a job?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Yess!"

"What?"

It was a yell of surprise from all the fellows. Arthur Augustus looking for a job was funny enough. But they were not prepared to hear that he had found one.

Arthur Augustus found credit upon their astonished faces with great justice. He was feeling to the full his triumph.

"You've found a job!" howled Blake.

"Yess, watah!"

"Oh! Great Christopher Columbus!"

"My hat!"

"What kind of a job?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"A newswaper's," said D'Arcy. "I am goin' to take the shattahs round for Mr. Piper, and take the papahs down—I mean, I am goin' to take the shattahs down and take the papahs down——"

"Rot!"

"Gawwah!"

"I swear it, dear boys, that it is the fact. Mr. Pipah advertised for a boy to work out of school hours——"

"Oh, crumh! He wasn't advertising for a public school chap, though!" shrieked Blake.

"I don't see that that makes any difference. I don't see why a chap should be supposed to be a useless son simply because he belongs to a public school."

"Do you mean to say that he's taken you on?" exclaimed Kargoree breathlessly.

"Yess, watah!"

"Does he know you belong to St. Jim's?"

"No! I didn't mention that. He knows that I'm at school. I suppose it makes no difference what school I belong to!"

"Oh, watah!"

"The Head won't allow you!" yelled Digby.

"Watah?"

"Your pater——"

"I'm goin' to write to my pater and explain that I've started in a job. It was really up to me to do it, atahk his wish to me, and I shall ask him to mention it to the Head and explain that it's all right."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatsoever to laugh at. I am quite willing to work, and I trust that I have brains enough. As a matter of fact, there is a great deal of satisfaction in being a useful chap, instead of an idle daffah like you fellows——"

"What?"

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OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE WAGNET" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," 12.

Every Monday.

Every Friday.

Every Saturday.

"Lots and lots of chaps work for their livin'," said Arthur Augustus, with an air of knowledge. "I've seen 'em doin' it. Why shouldn't I? It will be a very valuable experience."

"Oh, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you see!"

"You frajupon see!"

"Oh, watah!" said Arthur Augustus. "I'm goin' to begin to-morrow mornin'. Go and eat coke!"

And Arthur Augustus walked away, leaving the juniors about in hysterics.

"Well, this takes the giddy biscuit!" exclaimed Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "Gummy is almost too funny to live!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I expect he'll get fed up on the first day—if one of the masters doesn't spot him playing the giddy goat and stop him at the start," remarked Smith miser.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's, came along the passage, and he glanced at the crowd of hilarious juniors.

"What's on now?" he asked.

"Oh, it's Gummy!" said Mosey Lowther. "Gummy, old man, tall Kildare, your nabby raw wahoo!"

Arthur Augustus was going upstairs, but he passed and glanced down over the banisters.

"I have no objection to tellin' Kildare," he said.

"Well, what is it?" asked the Sixth-Former, puzzled.

"I've taken a job with Mr. Piper, to deliver papahs for him on the mornin' before school!" said Arthur Augustus.

Kildare staggered.

"You—you've done what?" he gasped. "Are you daffy?"

"I trust not!"

"You young son!" roared Kildare.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyes back indignantly upon the captain of St. Jim's.

"Really, Kildare, I fail to comprehend you. I trust there is no objection to my takin' a job! Lots of fellows in the County Council Schools do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kildare. "No, there's no objection that I know of. Ha, ha, ha!" And Kildare walked away, still roaring.

"I wonder you all as a set of asses!" said Arthur Augustus, with a disdainful glance down upon the laughing juniors.

"Watah to you!"

And he marched upstairs with great dignity.

He maintained a very dignified attitude for the rest of that evening. Before bedtime the story was all over the House, and all the fellows yelled over it. Arthur Augustus was chipped without mercy; but he maintained a lofty dignity. When the Fourth-Form went up to bed, D'Arcy requested Reilly to lend him his alarm-clock.

"Pshaw do you want it for?" Reilly wanted to know.

"To wake me in the mornin' deal boy. I have to wate at half-past five."

"Oh, howly mother ay Mosey!" said Reilly.

"I shall buy one out of my first week's wages," said Arthur Augustus. "Until then, I shall be very much obliged if you will lend me yours, Wolly!"

"Take it and welcome!" said Reilly, with a chuckle.

"But if you wake me up with it at half-past five I'll sting a fellow at you!"

"Watah!" said Arthur Augustus.

And when he turned in the alarm-clock was at the head of his bed, with the alarm set for half-past five.

CHAPTER 8.

Early Rising.

B UZZZZZZ!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stirred uneasily in his sleep.

Buzz-buzz!

He awakes.

"Bai Jove, what a dreadful noise! What the deuce——!" The alarm-clock was buzzing in his ears. Arthur Augustus turned over and raised himself upon his elbow. It was quite dark in the dormitory.

"Gross Scott! It's that beauty clock, goin' off at the wrong time!" murmured Arthur Augustus sleepily. "It can't be anythin' new, mornin' yet. Nerah mind, the beauty thing will soon wate down."

Buzzzz! It was a very powerful alarm-clock, and it shovred no signs whatever of running down. A sleepy voice came from another bed. The sound of the alarm-clock seemed to fill the whole dormitory.

"Stop that row, will you, you silly son!"

D'Arcy settled himself to repose calmly.

"Will you stop that creak?" came Jack Blake's voice, full of unconcealed leniency.

"Shurrup!"

"Wha!"

A pillow came hurtling through the air, and Arthur Augustus gave a yelp as it descended upon his feet. He sat up wrathfully.

"Blake, you wretch—"

"Stop that now!"

"Burrup!" ran on the alarm-clock.

"Bai Jove, something's awkin'!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

It was the half-hour that was striking from the clock-tower. The alarm-clock was still bunting away merrily. Arthur Augustus dragged his watch from under his pillow, and struck a match and looked at it.

"Greatest Scott! Half-past five!"

"Stop that now!" shrieked five or six voices.

"All right, you fellows, I'm getting up now."

Arthur Augustus tossed the bookkeeper undoubtedly. The watch had gone out, leaving him in darkness. There was not a suspicion of a glimmer of sun on the dormitory window. It was half-past five, but not yet dawn.

It was very warm and comfortable in bed; and it was very cold and dismal out of bed. Arthur Augustus woodened whether it was really such a ripping idea after all, to get a job which made it necessary for him to rise an hour and a half before rising-bed.

Perhaps, after all, he might have another ten minutes, then he would get his kico out and scorch down to Elycote the morning.

"Burrup!"

A boot came through the air, and Arthur Augustus roared as it caught him on the side of the head.

"Ow! Yawook!"

"Faith, did that hit you?" came Reilly's stumped voice.

"Ow—yes."

"Good shot! I didn't think it would. I hoped it would, but I couldn't see you! Faith, I'll try with the pillow now!"

"Weally, Weally—"

"Burrup—pooop!" With a sort of expiring gurgle, the alarm-clock ceased its performance. Blasted silence reigned in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House.

Arthur Augustus rubbed the side of his head rascally. He no longer felt sleepy. After all, perhaps it was better to turn out.

He stretched out of bed.

"Now be quiet!" growled Blake. "If you don't let me go to sleep, I'll get up and slaughter you!"

"Waui! You get up, too!"

"Faithed!"

"Early to bed and early to rise is the way to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, dear boy!"

"Shurrup!"

"My dear chap, there's nothin' like gettin' up early!" urged Arthur Augustus. Having done made the effort and earned out of bed, he felt decidedly vigorous, and he wished the other fellows to share his meritoriousness. "Don't be wacky stochak, Blake. Get up!"

"It's not sleepin' but yet, you say?"

"No need to wait for wack-bell. Up in the mornin's finest light, you know?"

"Lot of splendid light there is now, you unsholy bawdies!"

"Well, I've gear' to light a candle, you know. Follow my example, and get up!"

"And what am I to do as half-past five in the mornin' in the dark, you say?"

"Well, you could take a nice little walk, you know on—or any old thing, you know. Don't be a stochak!"

"Shut up!"

Arthur Augustus lighted a candle. The light flickered over the white beds and the dark walls, and the furious faces of a dozen awakened gnomes.

Arthur Augustus began to dress. He was shivering with cold, and he washed with more streams in icy water. The candle flickered on his wristband. From various beds came observations that were more personal than polite.

"But that light out, you silly idiot!"

"Don't make a row."

"Go back to bed!"

"Stop playing the giddy on!"

"I'll come and slaughter you if you keep me awake!"

To all of which Arthur Augustus made no reply. He dressed serenely, blinking rather deeply as he did so. Some of the jokers went off to sleep again. They all tried to, but Arthur Augustus was hammering a tune to make himself cheerful, and that hammering disturbed the would-be sleepers.

"Here, and will you shut your silly head!" said Reilly indignantly.

"Weally, you know—"

"Why don't you go back to bed, you frajgon man?" snorted Herries.

"I'm gear' to work!"

"Oh, you say—your shirt—you joser!"

"I wotter to be called a joser, Herries. I regard you as an ass. But Jove, my boots are not back!"

"Shurrup!"

"I can't go without my boots. I meant to tell you to leave them back. I woudah if your boots would fit me, Blake!"

Jack Blake made no reply. He was already in the land of dream again.

"I see that you have a pair of boots back, Blake. Would you mind my wearin' them for once?"

Only deep breathing came from Blake.

Arthur Augustus took the boots, and tried them on, and found that they were a little large. But he felt that he could make them do. Only to take them without the owner's permission would never do. It was necessary to wake up Jack Blake and ask his leave. The swell of St. Jim's stepped to Blake's bed and shook him gently by the shoulder.

"Blake, dear boy—"

Blake's eyes opened.

"Can I have your boots, old chap—your own?"

Blake did not reply—he just hit out. His fat caught D'Arcy on the point of the chin, as he leaned over the bed. Arthur Augustus went backwards as if he had been shot, and sat down violently on the floor.

"Ow—ow—ow! Great Scott! Blake, you best?"

Jack Blake closed his eyes again, with a screeching smile.

"Blake, you wretch—you frightful ass—you beast! I've a jolly good mind to give you a fearful thrashing, only it would make me late for my work. I shall take the boots now without asking your permash."

"Snore!"

"I regard you as an unshly beast, Blake!"

"Snore!"

Arthur Augustus picked himself up painfully, and cast a wretched look at his chest. Blake was apparently asleep again.

D'Arcy rubbed his chin. It felt jered. But he postponed vengeance, and blew out the candle, and made his way towards the door in the dark. There was still no gleam of light on the windows.

As he opened the door he passed, and turned back.

"I say, Dig, my dear, are you awake?"

No reply from Dig.

"Dig, dear boy, if I'm inquisited afish before I come back pray explain that I've gone down to the village. You see, I may be suspected of breakin' bounds ethalvase. Do you seeh me, Dig?"

Dig certainly didn't hear. He was fast asleep. Arthur Augustus felt that he must leave that message behind, and he groped his way in the dark towards Dig's bed. He bumped on Reilly's bed in the gloom, and there was a sniporous ejaculation from the Bedlam janitor.

"Snore, you silly cannibase, you blithering latherakite!"

"Snore, dear boy. You squashin' speekers—"

"You kashin' up? You squashin' speekers—"

"Dig, dear boy," Arthur Augustus found a bed he supposed to be Dig's—he could not be sure in the dark—and shook a sleeper by the shoulder. "I say, Dig, Yawook!"

"I guess I've not Dig," said Lumsley-Lumsley's voice, as he hit out in the darkness. "Glad I've got you," he added, as his fist collided with something. "What was that I hit!"

"Grook! My ass! You beast—"

"Come near again!" said Lumsley-Lumsley, sitting up in bed.

Arthur Augustus did not come near again. He groped away in the night bed, and found Dig's, and shook him.

"Dig, dear boy—"

"Wait a tick!" said Dig's, in a concentrated voice. He sat up in bed, grasping his pillow with both hands. "Where are you?"

"Heeh I am, dear boy!"

"Just a second. Three?"

"Bis! The pillow, wielded with all the force of Dig's two strong arms, smote the swell of St. Jim's, and he rolled over on the floor with a howl.

"Yawook! Dig, you say, what did you do that for! Ow!"

"Come here again!" said Dig's.

"I refuse to do anything of the sort. I regard you as a wretch! Ow!"

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Arthur Augustus groped away furiously for the door. He went out of the dormitory, and closed the door behind him with a slam that woke up every fellow in the room.

"Oh!" breathed Blake. "I shall slaughter him some day. I know I shall! He's too fat to die!"

And the Fourth Formers, breathing sleepy threats of vengeance, settled down to another again, while Arthur Augustus made his way downstairs.

CHAPTER 9.

Arthur Augustus Goes to Work!

THE house was very dark and silent. Just a glimmer of dawn was visible on the windows now, but only a glimmer. Arthur Augustus felt a creepy sensation as he went down through the silent, sleepy house.

The School House door was locked and chained. Arthur Augustus could have removed the chain easily enough, but he could not possibly have negotiated the lock, the key being in the possession of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster.

He jammed his eyes into his eye, and surveyed the door doubtfully.

"But Jove, what a frightful lot of difficulties there are in the way of a chap who wants to turn an honest penny!" he murmured. "I'll bet those chaps at the Council Schools who go to work in the morning don't have all these wretched difficulties. I'm frightfully handicapped by being a St. Jim's chap. It really isn't quite fair."

There was evidently no egress by means of the door. The earliest housemaid was not down yet, so no other door could be opened. There was nothing for it but to try a window, and Arthur Augustus made his way into the Form-room, and succeeded in opening a window, and dropped into the quadrangle outside.

"That's done!" he murmured, with satisfaction, as he breathed the fresh keen air in the quadrangle.

There was a grogginess in the eastern sky that told of coming dawn. Arthur Augustus hurried round the School House to the bicycle shed.

There, however, fresh difficulties awaited him. The door of the bike shed was fastened with a padlock, and Taggles, the porter, had the key of that padlock. Arthur Augustus had forgotten that little circumstance.

He looked at his watch. It was already turned ten minutes to six. There was evidently no time to walk to Hylcombe, unless he was to be late on the very first morning of his new employment. And that, of course, would never do.

Taggles had to be accused, and the key obtained, and the bicycle got out. Arthur Augustus hurried across the dim quadrangle, and reached the porter's lodge.

The lodge was dark and silent. Taggles did not rise till a few minutes before the time for sounding the morning-bell. But he had to be awakened now, and Arthur Augustus rang at the lodge bell vigorously.

For several minutes the bell rang in the lodge unheeded. Arthur Augustus kept it up without ceasing, only too keenly aware how the minutes were passing. There was a movement in the lodge at last, and a window was thrown up, and a nightgowned head was thrust furiously out. Taggles glared down upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"What are you meaning of that there bell for?" he demanded. "Is there a blooming fire?"

"No, Taggles."

"Is that Mister D'Arcy?"

"Yess; I want the key of the bike shed."

"What?"

"I want my bike out very early this mornin', Taggles—a most important matter," Arthur Augustus explained. "I am terribly sorry to disturb you, but I must really have my bike. I will not trouble you to come and unlock the shed. Just throw down the key."

"I'll report yer!" roared Taggles.

"Wot? Taggles—I say, Taggles—"

Slam! The window closed down with violence, and the nightgowned head disappeared.

Arthur Augustus looked up at the window in surprise and concern.

"But Jove, he doesn't seem to understand!" he murmured. "Taggles is rather a silly old dog! I am sure I explained plainly enough. I shall have to wrap him up again."

And Arthur Augustus recommenced his yell on the bell.

To a couple of minutes the window-nook was flung up as violently as it had been slammed down. Taggles's illuminated face reappeared.

"Will you go away?" he roared.

"I want the key of the bike shed, Taggles."

"You ain't allowed here at the hourer, and well you know it. I'll report yer. Go away!"

"I am sorry, Taggles, but it is quite impos- for me to go
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away without the key of the bike shed," said D'Arcy firmly. "I suppose very much better to disturb you, but, what's all, it would be a very good idea to get up now, Taggles. Early to bed and early to rise—"

"Will you speak hell, you young hump!" roared the exasperated and justly indignant Taggles.

"Certainly not, without the key!"

"I'll report yer!"

"Peay throw down the key from the window! You need not trouble to come downstairs. I would do just what to bother you, Taggles."

(Clank.) The key descended upon the ground, among D'Arcy's head by an inch. Perhaps Taggles had not meant it to miss so all. The window slammed down.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stooped and picked up the key with a great deal of satisfaction.

"Some people are awfully duffers!" he murmured. "Now, why couldn't he have thrown the key down without making noise, when a chap's anxious to get to work! But Jove, these dogs are! I shall be late."

His window was striking!

"It's wotly too bad—the first mornin', too! Wotter?"

Arthur Augustus flew across the quad again. He unlocked the bicycle shed, and dragged his machine off the stand, and rushed it down to the gates.

At the gates he halted!

He could not get out without the gates being opened. By himself he could have climbed over the wall, but he could not lift the bike over. It was a fresh difficulty. There seemed to be endless difficulties in the way of an industrious youth who was only anxious to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow.

"But Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in dismay. "I never thought of that. Taggles will have to come down and unlock the gates. Alack alack, it will do him good to wise early. I don't suppose of dadkin."

He leaned his bike against the gate, and returned to Taggles's lodge, and tapped at the bell again. The clang of the bell rebounded loudly through the silent house. It clanged on for some minutes without evoking a reply from Taggles. Then the bed-room window was raised once more, and Taggles looked out with an expression on his face that would have done credit to a Corcoran in the act of concealing a specially deadly venal.

"You—you—you hump!" said Taggles. "Wot do you want?"

"I'm afraid I can't get my bike out without the gates being opened, Taggles. I'm really sorry to disturb you, but if you'll throw the key down—"

"And wot the gates left—open, arter yer!" roared Taggles.

"Then I fear you will have to come down, Taggles."

"I'll—I'll—"

"Peay, don't waste any more time, Taggles. I am late already."

"Will you go away?" demanded Taggles, in a concentrated voice.

"Certainly not!"

"I'll report yer!"

"Peay throw down, and don't waste any more time. Mr. Pipah will be very dissatisfied with me if I am any late."

said Arthur Augustus anxiously. "You are really pleasin' me in a very awkward posish, Taggles. Peay hurry up!"

"You—you—"

"You are wotter time, Taggles."

Slam! The window closed again. Arthur Augustus, burning with indignation, rang and rang at the bell. But there was no further sign from Taggles. Evidently he had decided to ignore the ringing.

"Oh, the wotter!" the howling wotter!" muttered Arthur Augustus, as he desisted at last from his bell solo. "How am I late, say, I to get the bike out without the gates being opened? I shall be frightfully late if I walk."

But there was evidently nothing else to be done. The bike could not be got over the school wall by the swell of St. Jim's outside. And there was no means of opening the gate.

In great wrath, Arthur Augustus turned away from the lodge, and, leaving his bike leaning against the gate, he climbed over the wall and dropped into the road, and set off at a run for Hylcombe.

CHAPTER 10.

The First Round.

SEVEN o'clock was striking when Arthur Augustus, heartless and panting, reached the establishment of Mr. Piper.

The shop door was open, and Mr. Piper could be seen there, with a necktie round his neck and a frock upon his face.

He looked grimly at the breathless junior.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday.

"CHUCKLES," Every Saturday

"Call this six o'clock!" he exclaimed.

"No, I'm awfully! It's just gone seven, Mr. Pipah," said Arthur Augustus apologetically. "I'm awfully sorry! I was delayed by a silly ass."

"If this 'appears again—"

"It won't happen again, my dear sir," said Arthur Augustus earnestly. "I shall be very careful indeed to-morrow mornin'."

"It'll be the sack if you ain't!" growled Mr. Pipah.

Evidently he was not pleased. Arthur Augustus, with a great effort, refrained from argument. Mr. Pipah's expression hinted that he was in no mood to be argued with.

"Pshaw, what can I do now, sir?" asked D'Arcy sweetly.

"You can sweep out the shop, and put things tidy while I go up to the station for the papers," said Mr. Pipah abruptly.

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Pipah put his coat and hat on.

"Where shall I find the broom, sir," asked Arthur Augustus, "and an apron? I suppose an apron will be necessary to protect my tweedie frock dress!"

"Never mind your frock," said Mr. Pipah. "And as for the broom, you look for it till you find it, and learn to use your eyes."

"But surely it would save time if you told me—"

But Mr. Pipah was already striding up the village street towards the railway station.

Arthur Augustus looked round him in some dismay. It was past seven o'clock now, and he had to be at St. Jim's at eight for breakfast. At that early hour there were few people about in the village. Early labourers going to their work passed the shop, and a few children could be seen going to the village pump with pails and cans. Further up the street Gimes appeared, taking down the shutters of Mr. Sand's grocer-shop, and whistling cheerfully and shrilly as he did so. Arthur Augustus surveyed the shutters of Mr. Pipah's shop doubtfully. He had never taken down shutters before, and he hardly knew how to set about it.

He had taken his jacket off, and rolled his sleeves back. He was standing on the pavement in his shirt-sleeves, surveying the shutters, when Gimes spotted him. Gimes was naturally interested in Mr. Pipah's new boy, and he came along to exchange a cheery word of greeting.

"Hallo, master! Why—my eye—oh, lor! Is it you, Master D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Yes, Gimesy."

Gimes stared at him like a fellow in a dream.

"You, Master D'Arcy! What are you doin' 'ere?"

"I'm Mr. Pipah's new boy."

"Wo-o-o!"

"I'm workin' out of school hours, to earn some mowey," Arthur Augustus explained. "Mr. Pipah is givin' to pay me half-a-crown a week. Of course, it ain't very much, but it is a beginnin', isn't it?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Pshaw, you could give me a tip how to handle these beastly shutters, Gimesy, dear boy, as you're an old hand at the blumny?"

"I'll lead you a 'ead," said Gimes.

"Thanks, awfully!"

With Gimes's assistance, the shutters were taken down. Gimes was still looking like a fellow in a dream. He returned to his own work as Mr. Sand's looked out of his shop with a severe frown. Arthur Augustus went inside Mr. Pipah's small establishment, and found the broom, and set to work. In a few minutes there was a most terrific dust floating in the messenger's shop as Arthur Augustus swept the broom to and fro over the floor with great energy.

"An unkind notion in at the door while he was so engaged."

"Please 'ave you got the 'Daily Mail' yet?"

D'Arcy passed in his labours, and panted, and shook his head.

"Sowwy, dear boy! The papers haven't come yet. Mr. Pipah has gone to the station for them. Would last week's 'Weyland Gazette' do? We have that."

"No; it wouldn't!" said the boy.

"Sowwy!" Arthur Augustus felt that it was his duty to his employer to sell something if he could, and he had hoped that it was a salacious business to get a customer to take something else if the article required was not in stock.

"Pshaw, you would like the 'Weyland Times'? We have that."

The boy stared at him.

"Father wants this mornin's paper," he said.

"I am awfully! Your father will have to wait a little, my dear lad. It is very unfortunate, but there is a twiffin' delay this mornin'. Is there anything else that would do instead? We have the county paper for last week—"

"That ain't no good!"

"Pshaw, you would care to take one of our penny Motters!"

"Well!"

"Or a—a fountain-pen!" said Arthur Augustus. "We have here some very excellent fountain-pens at one shillin'!"

The boy stared at him blankly, and murmured "Doty!" and went out.

"Cheeky little wretch!" murmured Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I was only tryin' to supply him with something. They look to me very good fountain-pens."

And he went on sweeping out the shop.

Mr. Pipah returned with an enormous bundle of papers, to find his shop newly swept and garished, so to speak, and Arthur Augustus leaning on his broom like Hercules resting after his twelve labours.

Mr. Pipah sniffed as he came into the shop. Perhaps he thought there was a little too much dust. However, he opened the bundle on the counter.

"Now you get round with the papers," he said. "I s'pose you know your way round this district pretty well!"

"Yes, sir."

Arthur Augustus dusted himself down and put on his jacket.

Mr. Pipah was scribbling addresses on the top corners of the papers, in the manner of newspapermen, and when they were ready Arthur Augustus took them.

There were fifteen morning papers that had come down by the early train, and they had to be delivered to fifteen different addresses.

As it was nearly half-past seven now, Arthur Augustus was conscious of a feeling of dismay.

He had to be back at St. Jim's by eight o'clock. He could not miss breakfast and morning chapel, and above all, he could not be late in the Form-room. The only thing was to hurry as fast as he could.

"This 'Daily Mail' is for St. Jim's," said Mr. Pipah. "The 'Times' comes later in the day. After you've made your round, you can get off, and get here at five o'clock this afternoon." Understood!

"Yes, sir."

Arthur Augustus resolved to finish up at St. Jim's with the "Daily Mail" for the Head. He looked over the scribbled addresses on the papers, and started. The first had to be delivered to Mr. Sands, and Mr. Sands received it in his shop. The village grocer knew D'Arcy very well by sight, and he stared at him blankly as he came in with the bundle of papers and handed one over the counter.

"Your papah, sir," said Arthur Augustus.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Sands.

Arthur Augustus said good-mornin', and hurried out of the shop, leaving the village grocer in a state of great astonishment.

The next address was Dr. Short's, the doctor. Arthur Augustus arrived at Dr. Short's house, and rang the bell. A parlourmaid opened the door and looked at him.

"The 'Daily Mail,' if you please," said Arthur Augustus, raising his cap politely.

The maid stared at him.

"Why didn't you put it in without ringin' the bell?" she demanded.

"Bai Jove! I'm awfully! I didn't know that was the rule," said Arthur Augustus. "Pshaw, excuse me!"

And he wiped his cap again and retreated, leaving the parlourmaid in a state of astonishment equal to Mr. Sand's.

The next place was Mr. Mopps's, the village barber. Mr. Mopps's shop was already open.

D'Arcy remembered that Mr. Mopps was advertising for a boy in the local paper, and he wondered whether he was under way. There no sign of a boy about the place, so the probability was that Mr. Mopps was not suited yet. Mr. Mopps himself was shaving a labourer as Arthur Augustus pushed open the glass door and came in. He turned his head.

"Your 'Daily Mail,' sir," said Arthur Augustus politely. "Well, put it down," said Mr. Mopps, going on shaving.

"Yes, sir."

Arthur Augustus put it down and retired. After Mr. Mopps, he had to walk up to Glyn House with the next paper.

Glyn House belonged to the "people" of Bernard Glyn of the Shell at St. Jim's, and as D'Arcy sometimes went home with Glyn of the Shell, he was well known there.

The footman to whom he handed the paper stared at him blankly, and remained staring till Arthur Augustus disappeared again. Eight o'clock was striking as Arthur Augustus came out into the village street again. And he had a dozen more papers to deliver.

He paused in the road, in a thoughtful mood.

"I can't possibly be late for school!" he murmured. "I would wish the people would mind very much if I left the Gem Library—No. 511, Ten Nerry & Co. by Mr. MARTIN CLIFPORN."

their papahs till aftah dinnah to-day? I can get out on my bike, and make the wound very quicky. Some of themy addressen are quite a long vey. I shall not have finished them by nine or half-past. Of course, Mr. Pipahk doesn't know it's a beauty public school. Aftah all, it can't make very much difference whether they have their papahs at eight in the mornin' or at half-past twelve. And it's wathah an unhealthy habit wudin' oveh breakfast. I think I'd better leave it to good gettin' into a vove at St. Jiv's."

And with the remaining papers in a bundle under his arm, Arthur Augustus started for the school. He found the school gates open, and Taggles greeted him with a fervent glare as he came in. Arthur Augustus frowned at him.

"Taggles, you placed me in a vevy awkward passh, this mornin' by wathahin to come down and open the gates," he said severely.

"Taggles assented. "I'll report yee!" he said.

Arthur Augustus walked on to the School House, and rapped Toby the page by handing him the paper for the Head. Toby blinked at it.

"Wha's this?" he asked.

"Dr. Holmer's 'Daily Mail,' deah boy! I've brought it from Mr. Pipahk's."

"My eye!" said Toby. "It's Mr. Pipahk's very boy, you know."

"Oh, crony!" said Toby. And Arthur Augustus, having placed the remaining papers in Study No. 6 for safety, hurried to the dining-room, where he arrived just as breakfast was finished.

CHAPTER 11.
Lewison's Little Joke.

M R. LATHOM, the master of the Fourth, was at the head of the Fresh-Four breakfast-table. He was about to give the signal for the boys to rise when Arthur Augustus came in, pink and glowing and lanky from his early morning walking.

"Ah! Is that you, D'Arcy?" said Mr. Lathom, blinking at him over his glasses.

"Yess, sir."

"Where have you been?"

"I have been out early, sir. I am vevy soowey that I sit late for breakfast, sir. It was owing to stress, oveh which I had no control."

"Had you leave to go out before the gates were opened, D'Arcy?"

"Ahem! I trust there was no harm in it, sir."

"Taggles had reported that you disturbed him to come down at an extraordinarily early hour in the mornin'."

"Taggles is a wathah lary fellow, sir."

"Ahem! I approve of early rising, D'Arcy, but you must not carry it too far. And you must not disturb Taggles before his usual hour of rising."

"Very well, sir."

"You will take fifty lines for being late at breakfast."

"Oh, but Jove—J—J mean, all right, sir!"

Mr. Lathom rose from the table.

Arthur Augustus had the pleasure of marching out of the dining-room with the other fellows, without any breakfast.

"Bai Jove!" he remarked.

"I'm hungry, you know! I shall have to go and get a snack in the canteen."

"Where have you been?" demanded Blake.

"I've been to work, deah boy."

"Oh, you are!" said Blake, he remarked toot.

"Wendy, Blake—"

"Tag Giv Library—No. 211."

"Take the papers read!" asked Tom Merry, with a chuckle.

"I did not have time to take them all wesead, deah boy. I have nearly a dozen left," explained Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to take them wesead aftah dinnah, when I shall be free again."

Tom Merry burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Does Mr. Pipahk know?"

"No. I have not seen him since I left his shop with the papahs. I hadn't time to go back and mention the matter to him. What are you chucking at?"

"So you're keeping Mr. Pipahk's capsumen waiting for their mornin' papers until midday!" roared Tom Merry.

"I do not see that it matters vevy much. However, I shall apologise for the delay when I deliver the papahs."

"No, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any cause for excitement, deah boy."

"No, ha, ha!"

The jokers simply yelled. Arthur Augustus surveyed them dispassionately through his eyeglasses for a moment, and then walked away, with his aristocratic nose elevated just the air.

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Blake. "I fancy Pipahk will hear from some of his customers during the mornin'!"

"No, ha, ha!"

And Taggles will hear from his next time he trots into the shop," chuckled Munty Lethbridge.

"I fancy so. No, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus, however, did not seem to be worried. He did not see that it mattered vevy much whether the papers were delivered at eight o'clock or at half-past twelve, so long as they were faithfully delivered sooner or later. He had a look of perfect satisfaction during morning lessons.

There had been hitches, of course, but that was only to be expected on the very first day of his new venture. Upon the whole, he had been successful, and he had done something towards earning his first week's wages.

During morning lessons, Lewison of the Fourth found an excuse for leaving the Form-room, and when he came back there was a satisfied grin upon his face. But Arthur Augustus had no eyes for Lewison of the Fourth.

He was very glad when lessons were over for the mornin'. He wanted to get the rest of the papers delivered, to have the satisfied feeling of duty well done.

When the Fourth were dismissed from their class-room, Blake pounced upon the scroll of St. Jiv's immediately.

"Footer practice!" he said. D'Arcy shook his head.

"Nawwy, Blake. I've got the rest of my papahs to deliver."

"Do you want to be left out of the House Eleven for good, you foolhead?" demanded Blake.

"I am afraid I cannot let football interfere with work, Blake. The services thereof of life must come first."

"Oh, you—you—"

"Peay excuse me, deah boy. I must be off!"

"Oh!" said Blake. "Yes, I think you must be off—right off—fairly off your rocker, you lummy are?"

"Wots!"

Arthur Augustus hurried up to Study No. 6 for the bundle of papers. He had left them on the study table. They were still there, but they were not exactly as he had left them. They were stuck together in a mass, some postcard jokers having emptied a bottle of gum over them, and added a bottle of ink.

Arthur Augustus surveyed the damage in great dismay.

"Oh, the wotsh!" he gaped.

"The papahs are wained—and now I sha'n't be able to take them wesead. The feah-

NEXT WEDNESDAY:

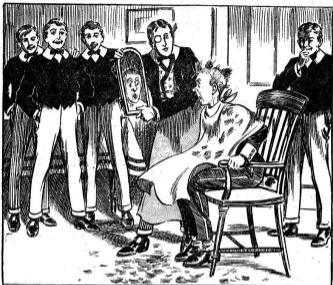
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"Oh! You—you—villin!" howled Toby, as he saw his reflection in the mirror. "Very good cut, sir. Don't you think so, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus, with some pride. "Oh, you—you—idjit!" roared Toby. "Look wot you've made me look like! I don't answer the bill until my hair grows again." (See Chapter 11.)

fel wotah! This will be frightfully awkward to explain to Mr. Pops!"

Brothing wrath, the swell of St. Jim's railed out of the study.

Blake and Herries and Dig were in the quadrangle when D'Arcy came up to them, the picture of vengeful wrath.

"You wotahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

The chums of the Fourth stared at him.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "What's hitting you now?"

"You feightful outside!"

"What!"

"You—you beastly change!"

"Dooty!" said Herries, with a shake of the head.

"My papahs are wided!" howled Arthur Augustus. "I shall get into a wot with my emploah. I may get the sack. Which of you upset the gam and the ink oveh my papahs, you feightful bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Gam and ink! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus's blood was up. He rushed at his chum and clasped him, and they waltzed round in a doddly straggle.

Arthur Augustus had quite lost the repose that stamps the cast of Vere de Vere now. It was too bad that his efforts to earn an honest living should be interfered with in this way.

He was resolved to thrash somebody, and Blake's hilarity made him fix upon Blake as the culprit.

"Oh, you wotah!" he panted. "I'll thrash you like—like anythin'! I—O—O!"

Blake fastened a grip like iron upon the swell of St. Jim's, and Arthur Augustus found himself suddenly swept off his feet, and bumped down on the ground.

"You an!" roared Blake, rubbing his nose. "I've a jolly good mind to lick you."

"You—you wotah, you've smacked up my papahs!"

"I haven't, you feightful change!"

"Oh!" Arthur Augustus sat up. "Do you mean to say that it wasn't you, Blake?"

"Of course it wasn't, you billy duffer!" growled Blake.

"Well, you shouldn't have coddled, then," said D'Arcy, picking himself up, still wotahful. "Some silly an has done it. Was it you, Herries?"

"No, great chum!" grinned Herries.

"Was it you, Dig?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" checked Digby.

"Then it was one of those Shall wotahs, I suppose."

Arthur Augustus looked round, and spotted the Terrible Three walking towards the football-ground, and raged after them.

"You Mowah, Marrah, Lowrah—you wotahs!"

The Shell fellows heard round.

"Hallo!" said Tom Merry grinsly.

"Did you pour ink and gam oveh my papahs, you wotah!"

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

"I an gon' to thrash the wotah that did it. I want to know which of you bean it was?" howled Arthur Augustus.

"Perhaps you'd better thrash the whole House, and make sure!" suggested Mooty Lowther. "You can begin with us."

"Have you been in my study?" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Yes."

"Then I'm gon' to thrash you!"

And Arthur Augustus ran at Lowther, hitting out. Three pairs of hands grasped him at once, and he descended upon the ground with force and swiftness.

"Vawooh!"

Blake and Herries and Digby came up, grinsly. The

The Gem Library.—No. 111.

Terrible Three had placed their right feet upon the swell of St. Joe's, planning to do down.

"He's dangerous!" Moony Lowther explained. "Come for me like a wild bull because I went into his study yesterday to borrow Babo's Latin dictionary."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You're no match!" howled D'Arcy. "I asked you if you'd been in my study—"

"So I have."
"I meant this morning."
"You should say what you mean, you know," said Lowther calmly. "I haven't been in there this morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You—you weaken me, you wretch. If it was not you, of course I'm not going to threaten you! Weaken me at once!"

"I fancy you're not going to threaten us, anyway," chuckled Tom Merry. "But please it wasn't me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Augustus was allowed to rise to his feet. He was considerably dazed, and he was very much out of temper.

"The pupils are warned now!" he exclaimed. "I sha'n't be able to take them word, of course. I suppose it was one of you silly asses did it for a wotten joke. Mr. Piper's customers will be very much annoyed if they don't get their papers. Mr. Piper may receive complaints."

"Ha, ha, ha! I shouldn't wonder."
"He may give me the sack when I go to work this evening!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"There is nothin' whatevah to cackle at—"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus stalked away wrathfully.

CHAPTER 12.

The Order of the Boot!

AFTER knowing that day Arthur Augustus wheeled out his bicycle.

Quite a little crowd of juniors assembled to see him off.

Arthur Augustus's new occupation was known to all the fellows now, and they took a deep interest in it.

Figgins & Co. of the New House came to see him off at the gates, as well as a crowd of School House fellows.

They made encouraging remarks, as he wheeled his machine out of the gateway, and crowded without cessation. Arthur Augustus maintained an attitude of dignified reserve. He was the cynosure of all eyes, and the St. Jim's fellows persisted in looking upon his new occupation as something entirely humorous, and not serious at all. The fact that he was to receive two shillings and sixpence in current coin of the realm, for his week's labour, did not impress them at all.

"Go it, Gussy!" said Figgins encouragingly. "Make hay while the sun shines. As soon as your Housemaster knows you're playing the giddy old he'll stop you. Fit up the hall-covers while you've got a chance."

"I should refuse to be stopped," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "I suppose a St. Jim's chap has the same rights as a County Council School chap. It's a free country, for such as well as poor, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I regard you as a set of delvers," said Arthur Augustus disdainfully. "It would be better for all of you if you found honest work to do, instead of idling your time away. I despise slackness!"

And Arthur Augustus rode away down the lane, followed by a yell of laughter.

His brow was a little creased as he cried into Elysian. He wondered whether Mr. Piper would be very angry. The papers, instead of being delivered late, had not been delivered at all. That made a difference. It was quite possible that some customer or customers had complained—indeed, it was more than possible—it was highly probable. It was really a most unfortunate thing to happen on D'Arcy's first day in his new situation.

He reached Mr. Piper's shop, and leaned his bicycle outside, and went in.

The shop bell tinkled away, and Mr. Piper came out of the little back parlour. Mr. Piper's brow was very grim. It was evident that he was angry.

"Good afternoon," said Arthur Augustus, with rather tremulous affability. "I found I am quite early this time."

The avenged glared at him.

"How many papers did you take round this morning?" he demanded. "Didn't I give you fifteen of 'em?"

"Yes."
"And 'ow many did you deliver?"

Arthur Augustus reflected.

"Five, sir. I am sorry that I had no time to deliver the rest, and I took them to school with me to be delivered there."

Mr. Piper looked at him as if he could eat him.

"Delivered later!" he snorted.

"Yass. I suppose it makes no difference what time they get their papers, sir."

"What!"

"Unfortunately the papers have been destroyed, and I was unable to deliver them at all; but I am willing for the price of them to be delivered to your wages."

"Wages!" roared Mr. Piper. "Do you think you are going to get any wages out of me, you silly, stupid young man!"

"Pwey don't call me names, my deah sir—"

"You—you young idiot—"

"Really, Mr. Piper—"

"Don't you think customers want their papers in the morning?" roared Mr. Piper. "Hose comes in Mr. Grams, and says, 'I ain't had my paper this morning.' I tell him it was sent out. Then comes Mr. Pymme, the chemist, saying he ain't had his papers. Then sort a dozen more of 'em. Not had their papers! You—you idiot! What do you think took order papers for if they don't want 'em?"

"It's nothin' an unhealthy habit, sir, weadin' ova books," ventured Arthur Augustus meekly.

"You—you—you—"

"I really do not see that it makes much difference whatevah they have their papers in the mornin' or at midday, sir."

"You—you—"

"However, as they seem to be particular about such a twife, I will make it a point to deliver them in future—"

"In future!" howled Mr. Piper. "Do you think I'm going to keep such a silly idiot here longer than it takes me to kick him out of the shop?"

Arthur Augustus backed away. Mr. Piper was in such a towering rage that he looked quite inclined to sail his actions to his words.

"Really, my deah sir—"

"Get out!"

"But I've come to work."

"You're sacked!" roared Mr. Piper. "Do you 'ear? Sacked! Get off with you!"

"But really—"

Mr. Piper pointed to the door.

"Yes, get out," he said. "If you ain't gone in one or two minutes I look you out. Get some coughs to understand that! What!"

"If you decline to keep me in your employ any longer, of course you are your own master," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I consider that the law is yours; but there is the question of salary to be considered."

"What!"

"I demand a week's salary in lieu of notice," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I believe that is the allowable rule. I am quite willing to work, and if you sack me without notice you are bound to pay my wages."

Mr. Piper looked as if he were on the verge of an attack of apoplexy.

"Wages!" he stammered. "When you've lost me three or four year's customers! You—you idiot! You rascal! You dunce!"

"I refuse to be called a dunce. I demand my rights," said Arthur Augustus, with all the blood of the D'Arcy's boiling in his veins. "I regard you as a most unreasonable man, and I consider that your customers are very unreasonable, too. I don't see that it makes any difference at all whatevah they get their papers in the mornin' or at mid-day. It is all well. However, if you discharge me, I must have a week's wages. I do not particularly want the half-crown, but I am standin' up for my rights—the rights of lahab."

"You—you—"

Words failed Mr. Piper. He had been through a trying morning with exasperated customers, and his temper had suffered. "Get out!" he gasped.

"I'm waitin' for my salary."

"By George!—L—!"

"I am bound to stand up for my rights. As a member of the order of the workin' classes, I have to consider the rights of lahab," Arthur Augustus was very firm. "You must either give me a week's notice or a week's wages. You can give me which you like."

"I know what I'll give you!" gasped Mr. Piper. "I'll give you a 'iding'!"

"Pwey be calm! Keep off, you ass! Oh, hal Jora!"

Mr. Piper did not keep calm, and he did not keep off. He rushed at his employe, and grasped him by the collar, and swung him to the shop door. Arthur Augustus struggled in vain in the grasp of the irascible purveyor. At the door Mr. Piper sawed him round, and raised his feet, and planted it behind Arthur Augustus with such force that the swell of St. Jim's shot right across the pavement and stambled into the road.

"Oh, bad Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as he sat down in the gutter.

"Mr. Piper beatished a fat from the shop door.

"Now you cross back, and see what you'll get!" he roared.

Arthur Augustus picked himself up. He was straining with rage. He gazed for his eyes' sake and jammed it into his eye. He hoped for a moment at the excited onslaught in the shop doorway, and decided at once that it was useless to carry the aggression further just then.

A grinning crowd was already gathering round.

Arthur Augustus dragged his body out into the road, and returned, and peddled away. Mr. Piper still shaking his fist after him from the shop doorway.

It was the end of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's first job.

CHAPTER 13.

A New Job.

GREAT SCOT! What's happened to your bags!"

"Been under a steam-roller, Guss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's state, when he wheeled his bike in, attracted general attention. It was evident that the swell of St. Jim's had had a fall in a costly road.

"Nice accident!" Tom Merry asked sympathetically.

"No, dear boy."

"What's happened?"

"Oh, wot's'it' mach."

And Arthur Augustus, declining to answer questions, wheeled his machine away to the shed and put it up, and went into the School House to change his bags.

The jokers grinned joyfully. They guessed that those had been troubles with Mr. Piper over those papers that had unfortunately not been delivered. But the swell of St. Jim's kept his own counsel, and declined to enlighten them as to precisely what had happened.

"Sure, you hasn't waded up the alarm-clock, D'Arcy

pleased if I succeed," said D'Arcy, with a shake of the head. "He seems to think that it is quite impos., somehow."

"Go on!" said Blake, with a chuckle.

"Well, I admit it is difficult," said Arthur Augustus. "The problem of the unemployed is a wotsh serious matter. And a chap is handicapped by belongin' to a public school. But I am not givin' to give in."

"Like us to make a suggestion about a berth!" asked Monty Lowther.

"Yess, dear boy, if you can think of a situation that would suit me."

"Try Colney Heath," Lowther suggested. "They might take you on, you know, as being in full sympathy with the masses—being the same sort of chap—"

"If you must make wotsh jokes, Lowther!"

"But I'm not joking," said Lowther, in surprise. "It's just the place for you. You'd find each sympathy and fellow-feeling among all the people there—"

Arthur Augustus stalked away.

"I wonder what the next job will be like!" grinned Blake. "Poor old Guss! I know he will be the death of me some day!"

After dinner Arthur Augustus was ruminating. His chances looked that he had gone to look for further employment. He had been seen crossing over the advertisement columns of the "Rylooshe Gazette." They avoided the result with interest. Arthur Augustus came in just in time for afternoon-school.

He was a little breathless, but he was looking quite elated. Tom Merry saw him in the Form-room passage, and noted his uplifted looks.

"Get it!" he asked cheerfully.

"Yess, wotsh!"

"New job?" chuckled Kangaroo.

"Yess. And wotsh an improvvment this time."

"Good egg! What are you going to do? Is it company

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daring!" Reilly remarked, when the Fourth went to bed that night.

"I shall not require it again, Wells, thank you!"

"Faith, and aren't you gettin' up early in the morning, intirely!"

"Not to-morrow."

"Not going to Piper's!" yelled Blake.

"No," said Arthur Augustus, driven to the admission at last. "I am not givin' to Piper's. I waded Mr. Piper as a swell and downpatable swell. I am not givin'."

"Order of the boot!" said Lowther-Lumley.

"D'Arcy did not reply. He turned in.

He rose at the usual hour on the following morning, when the rising-bell was clanging out over St. Jim's. There was a letter from his father that morning, and Arthur Augustus opened it with some eagerness. If Lord Eastwood had released, Arthur Augustus felt that he could retreat without disgrace from the position he had taken up. Perhaps, secretly, the swell of St. Jim's was giving a tiffle fed up with the difficulties of earning his living. If the noble earl had surrendered, probably Arthur Augustus would have been pleased to go back to a more normal course of life.

But there was no surrender in Lord Eastwood's letter. It was in reply to a severe note from Arthur Augustus, and his lordship was quite untouched.

"Well, what does his note say?" demanded Blake, who had been watching Arthur Augustus's face with interest during the perusal of the letter.

Arthur Augustus frowned.

"Wotsh, Blake, that is a wotsh disrespectful way of alludin' to my parish!"

"I mean his royal note," asserted Blake. "What does he say? Has he climbed down from his noble perch and sent you every'er or tenners?"

"I am sorry to say not. He says that I can try to earn money if I like, and that he will be very surprised and

promoting, or pushing a track!" asked the Cornstalk humorously.

"I have been taken on by Mr. Mopps."

"Mopps!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "The barber!"

"The hairwotsh, dear boy!" corrected Arthur Augustus.

"Tennorsal artist!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what on earth are you going to do for Mopps?" asked Tom Merry, in amazement. "I suppose he won't trust you to shave his customers? There will be some casualties if you do."

"Why not?" said Lowther. "D'Arcy is an enterprising young shaver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I refuse to be characterized as a young shaver, Lowther!"

"But that's what you're going to be if you shave Mr. Mopps's customers," grinned Lowther. "Or, perhaps, barber would be a better term—or butcher."

"I think probably Mr. Mopps will not give me shavin' to do at first, until I've had some practice," said Arthur Augustus. "I don't know whom I shall practice on, but if any of you fellows would like your hair cut free gratis and for nothing—"

"No, thanks!" said all the fellows promptly.

"I would cut your hair for nothing," you know," said Arthur Augustus. "I should make no charge, as I should be gettin' the practice."

"And we should be getting the shavers," grinned Lowther. "I've got only two ears, and I want to keep 'em."

"Well, as a matter of fact, you could spare a little off each without missin' it," said Arthur Augustus, eyeing Lowther.

Monty Lowther turned red with wrath. He did not like little jokes against himself—like so many humorists.

"You let my ears alone, you see!" he said wrathfully. "I am going for a hair-cut on Tuesday." said Arthur Augustus, overlooking Lewberry. "That will be to-morrow—Saturday afternoon—at six o'clock—half-past-four. If I give satisfaction, Mr. Mopps is going to take me on regularly, and I shall request my patch to make it all right with the Head."

"Yes; I can see him doing it!" grinned Blake.
 "That's all right. My patch says he'll be surprised and pleased if I can succeed in earning any money. I am going to surprise and please him. To-morrow afternoon I shall be working for Mr. Mopps, and residing in the shop, and lathering the customers ready to be shaved. I shall have to learn to handle a razor. I believe a wash is a wash, dangerous instrument in an inexperienced hand."

"Yes; I believe it is," roared Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha! I pity a poor chap who gets under your razor while you're learning."

"Sweeney Todd the Second?" chuckled Lewberry.
 "The Demon Barber of Fleet Street!" howled Blake.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it will turn out all right. I have explained to Mr. Mopps what if I got the job I shall be able to cope perfectly. I really want to give satisfaction to-morrow afternoon. I shouldn't be able to play football, Tom Mewsey. You must get another chap in the team in my place."

"I've done that already, my son," said Tom Merry coolly. Arthur Augustus looked a little settled.

"Oh, have you really?" he enquired. "I don't know that I quite approve of your being in such a hurry as all that."

"Then I shall have to manage to worry along somehow without your approval," said Tom Merry, with great ferocity. "You, not playing a chap who can't be depended on. You won't play for the School House again till you've given up looking for jobs."

"Really, Tom Mewsey, I consider—"

But the bell for classes cut short Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's considerations. The juniors went checking into the Form-rooms. Of all Arthur Augustus's noble ideas, the idea of being a barber's boy was certainly the noblest. Arthur Augustus, however, failed to see anything funny in it. He was plying with satisfaction at having secured the job, and having thus escaped once more from the ranks of the unemployed.

CHAPTER 14.

Hair Cut!

"TRUST you fellows are going to help me a bit!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that statement in Study No. 6, where Blake and Herries and Digby had set down to work. The wall of St. Jim's had just come into the study, and a large pair of scissors gleamed in his hand.

"The class of the Fourth started at the school."

"What's the game now?" demanded Blake.
 "As I am going to work for Mr. Mopps to-morrow, I feel that I ought to have a little practice. I should be obliged if you would let me cut your hair. Of course, I shan't charge you."

"I shall jolly well charge you, if you bring those wiscons near me," said Blake, with emphasis, "and the Charge of the Light Brigade will be a job to it!"

"Will you have your hair cut, Herries?"

"No, I won't," said Herries, who was famous for direction of speech.

"Ahem! Dig, old man, would you like your hair trimmed?"

"No," said Dig. "I wouldn't."

"Blake, dear boy, may I let me trim your hair. It's a wash and you know—there's a boy at the back like a war's tail. I'll have it off in a jiffy—"

"You come within hitting distance, that's all!" said Jack Blake rapturously.

"Really, I think a fellow might expect to be backed up in his own study. However, I will look elsewhere!"

And Arthur Augustus walked out of the study with a great deal of dignity.

"You're ready, you see!" howled Blake.
 "I have no time for tea now, dear boy. I am bound to get some practice as a hair-dresser before to-morrow."

D'Arcy tapped at the door of the next study, and looked in. Bally and Keerwah and Roy were having tea there.

"You fellows like your hair cut?" asked Arthur Augustus politely. "I'll do it for nothing. Your hair needs cutting, really. It looks very ragged."

"Are you looking for a tack cut?" asked Bally.
 "Certainly not!"

"The Gen Lassard—No. 111.

"Well, you'll find me if you don't hop out of this study—sharp!"

Arthur Augustus snuffed and left the study. His next call was paid upon the Terrible Three, in the Shell passage. Tom Merry and Mopps and Lewberry heard his offer of a free hair-cut with interest.

"I've been ordered three shakies from Mrs. Mizzum," said Arthur Augustus. "They are very sharp, and I'll have your hair off in a jiffy, you know."

"To say nothing of our scalps!" grinned Mopps.
 "I should be very careful, of course. Accidents will happen when a barber is inexperienced, but I should really do my best not to hurt you."

"Not good enough. Try next door."

"I really think you might help me out—"

"Why, so we will," said Tom Merry heartily. And the Terrible Three, with one accord, grasped Arthur Augustus and helped him out—into the passage.

"You stink ones!" shouted D'Arcy. "I did not mean that way—"

"But we do!" grinned Tom Merry.

And the door slammed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was sitting on the hoodlum and peeping like a scurrying fish. Toby, the page, came along the passage, and he kindly passed to give Arthur Augustus a hand up.

The wall of St. Jim's pointed as he gained his feet.

"Bai Jove! I'd wish on and give them a fearful chawin' all round. Thank you very much, Toby!" His eyes turned with quite a professional look upon Toby's shock head.

"I say, Toby, dear boy, how often do you have your hair cut?"

"Once a month, Master D'Arcy."

"I suppose you pay for it—what?"

"Well, I don't get it cut for nothing, sir," said Toby, surprised at the question. "Mr. Mopps does it for me for threepence."

"Would you like to have it done for nothing?"

"Hum!" said Toby, puzzled.

"The last time I'm taking on a job in Mr. Mopps's hair-dressing establishment," Arthur Augustus explained, "I want some practice. I should be very pleased to cut your hair for nothing, Toby."

"I—thank you, Master D'Arcy," stammered Toby. "I ain't taking any—I mean, my 'air don't need cuttin' just yet—"

"It is worth a long, and comes down over your eyes," said Arthur Augustus, scanning him. "You had really better have it cut, Toby."

"Thank you, Master D'Arcy, but— I think Mr. Mizzum's a better man!"

"I did not mean for Toby. Now, look here, I should really like to cut your hair. You have a very wavy, thick head, and there is plenty of room for practice on it. And your hair needs cutting, too. Look back, Toby, I'll show you some practice. I should be very pleased to cut your hair for nothing, Toby."

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"Thank you, Master D'Arcy, but— I think Mr. Mizzum's a better man!"

supply of towels—All was ready when Toby got a rather nervous and uneasy face into the study.

"Come in, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I'm ready."

"Here comes the giddy lark to the slaughter," remarked Blake. "Which one are you going to have off, Toby?"

Toby looked alarmed.

"Peay shut up, Blake!" said Arthur Augustus, with asperity. "If you must loaf around in my salon, I must request you not to talk silly wot to my customers. Peay take a seat, sir!"

Toby jumped. He had never been called "sir" before. But Arthur Augustus was only trying to get into the mode of address suitable for Mr. Mopps's establishment. Blake slipped out of the study, and returned with Tom Merry and Missus and Lowther. He had generously resolved that the Terrible Three should not miss a good thing like this. Arthur Augustus frowned as they came in.

"Do you require my professional services?" he demanded.

"Ahem! Not exactly!" murmured Tom Merry. "As Shakespeare remarks," said Lowther blandly, "we are simply lookers-on in Vienna!"

"We want to see the wheels go round," Missus explained.

"If you are going to remain head you must be quiet. Peawage when you see what a wiggle's job I make of Toby, you would like me to cut your hair."

"Perhaps!" said Tom Merry. "A large-sized perhaps—but perhaps!"

"Hair-cut or shave, sir?" asked D'Arcy, turning his attention to Toby, who was now in the study armchair, with a towel lashed round his neck.

Toby stared.

"If I ain't got nothin' to be shaved, 'ave I!" he asked.

"Merely a professional question, my dear sir," explained

Toby's hair fell like the famous leaves in Valdeyros. It remained thick in a few places, but to compensate for that, in other spots he was quite bald.

"Shut enough, sir!" asked Arthur Augustus, holding a hand-glass before his victim's face in the professional manner.

Toby looked into the glass. As he saw the reflection of his head a look of horror came over his face. His hair was nearly all gone, only a peculiar-looking crop of tufts being left to show that his skull was not a billiard-ball of unusual size.

"Oh, hussy!" said Toby faintly. "Is—is that my 'ead'?"

"Very good cut, sir, don't you think so?" said Arthur Augustus, with some pride.

"Oh, you—you villain!" howled Toby. Arthur Augustus jumped.

"What—what—what's the matter?"

Toby jumped out of the chair, and tore off the towel, and fairly danced with rage.

"Look wot you've made me look like!" he roared. "Wot will the 'ouse-dares say! Wot will anybody say who sees me! I don't answer the bell till my 'air grows again. Oh, you—you silly 'ell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peay don't make you fellows. There's nothin' what-so-ever funny in Toby's wud's wunwuds. Toby, dash hey!"

"You—you howler! murmur!" shrieked Toby, and for a moment it looked as if the page would haul himself upon the steamer figure. "Oh, you—you— I shall 'ave to wear a wig! Oh—oh—oh!"

Toby rushed from the study. Arthur Augustus stood with the scissors in his hand, in some dismay. He regarded the shivering patient sadly.

"Toby doesn't seem to be quite satisfied!" he observed. "Go home!" growled Blake. "Oh, you—you pilse-packet! You barbling one!"

"If any of you fellows would care for a free hair-cut—"

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ONE HALFPENNY.

EVERY SATURDAY.

Arthur Augustus. "Will you have a shampoo afterwards?"

"My eye! Can you shampoo 'ere!" asked Toby.

"Of course I can't," said Arthur Augustus irritably. "You have to ask those questions in a barber's—I mean a hair-dresser's shop. I can merely pronounce. Now, a little more to the right, please. How do you like it done?"

"Oh, fairly short, please!" said Toby doubtfully.

"Yes, sir! Fairly 'short' says as it is now, I presume? Now, please keep your head still in that position. That's right!"

And Arthur Augustus clicked the scissors, and snipped. As he had never cut hair before, certainly his hand was inexperienced. But he was liberal with the scissors. With a very few clips he gashed nearly all the hair off one side of Toby's head. Fortunately—or unfortunately—Toby could not see how it was going on. His hair was somewhat thick—but D'Arcy was trimming it nervously. It fell round Toby's shoulders in showers.

"Wiggle! wiggle! how do you like that, sir?" said D'Arcy, in the professional manner of a hair-dresser.

"'Ave we!" said Toby. "Seems to me we've 'ad a lot of rain."

"Very good for the crops, sir."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Toby.

"Well, there's one crop that's being ruined," remarked Muzzy Lowther.

"Indeed! What is that, my dear sir?" asked Arthur Augustus.

Lowther pointed to the page's head.

"Toby's crop!" he explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus frowned at the fusion.

"I must insist upon silence in my salon!" he exclaimed.

"Now, will you turn your head?" Ende to the left, sir?

That's right. I shall polish you in 10 minutes, sir."

"Good old Newbery Todd!" murmured Lowther.

Gosh, gosh, gosh! Click, click, click! I went the sharp scissors.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Toby staggered hysterically out of the study. Arthur Augustus was left alone in the salon, in the midst of Toby's lost hair. However, the absent bald-headed page was the centre of great hilarity in the kitchen; and, like Rachel, he mourned for that which he had lost, and would not be comforted.

CHAPTER 18. The Barber's Boy.

ON Saturday afternoon, while the other fellows were preparing for a football match, Arthur Augustus

He was busy at Mr. Mopps's hair-dressing establishment at half-past two. And it was with a feeling of importance and elation that he walked down the road to Rylcombe, leaving Tom Merry & Co. to wait with football

Saturday afternoon was a busy time with Mr. Mopps, and he required an assistant, which was doubtless the reason why he was giving Arthur Augustus a trial. And Arthur Augustus certainly was an acquisition in any hair-dressing establishment. His elegant attire and elegant manners were beautifully tested for that profession.

Mr. Mopps was shaving a customer when the arrival of St. Jim's possessed himself. He gave D'Arcy a kindly nod. Mr. Mopps was a very loyal and good-tempered little man.

Arthur Augustus deposited his silk hat in the inner room, and prepared for business.

Another customer in search of a shave having taken his place in the operating chair, so to speak, Mr. Mopps signed to D'Arcy to watch how he lathered the customer, so that he could perform the same operation on the next occupant. Arthur Augustus watched him with keen attention. It seemed to him quite easy and simple. He was anxious to get to work with a razor, but Mr. Mopps wisely did not intend to let him do anything of the sort.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 111

A. H. BARNETT, Nos. 1 and 2, Cornhill Street, Finsbury, London, E.C. 2.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
WEDNESDAY—

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

The lathering finished, Mr. Mopps began to shave his man. Another man came in, and Mr. Mopps requested him to take a seat in the second chair.

"Lather!" he said.
"Yess, sir," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. He was anxious to get to work.

He took the brush, and loaded it with lather, and started on the customer's chin. The customer was a quack cartier, with a big blue chin that had not been shaved for three days, at least. Arthur Augustus lathered away manfully, and there was a satisfied snort from the customer.

"Anythin' the matter, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus anxiously.

"Keep that brush over me nose you silly young idiot!" said the customer, in emphatic tones.

"Sowwy, sir! Shave's over again, sir."

"Yaroch!" snarled the customer, a minute later, as D'Arcy jolled the lathering-brush into his eye.

"Oh, owl! You young villain! Yah!"

"Gweed Scott!"

Mr. Mopps looked round sharply.

The customer had jumped up, and he was gouging the soap out of one eye with his knuckles, and with the other he was glaring about indignantly at the dismayed barber's boy.

"Bal Jore!" he really think you must have razored your head, Arthur Augustus.

"I'm really very sowwy!" he stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I really think you must have razored your head, Arthur Augustus."

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heavily engaged when a customer came in—a lad with a threepenny place in his hand.

"I'vey what can I do for you, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus politely.

"Threepenny shaving-stick for favour?" said the customer.

"Verry good. We have some fah bettah oom at eighteenpence," said Arthur Augustus.

"Pawwage your patch would prefer to try one of these, my dear sir?"

"Only get threepenny," said the customer.

"Oh, that is wakkah unfortunat. Of course, we can supply a threepenny shavin'-stick if you vovvly pawwage it; but I should recommend the eighteenpenny one. Pawwage you wouldn't mind wazzin' home, and askin' yoss fatnah whiribah he would like to try it?"

"Are you goin' to gimme that threepenny shaving-stick, or ain't you?" demanded the customer, showing signs of impatience.

"Oh, certainly, if you put it like that, sir!"

And the threepenny shaving-stick was handed over, and the customer departed. Arthur Augustus dropped the threepenny with much pride into his till.

It was the last cash he had taken for his employer. He wished it had been eighteenpence; but, after all, it was cash—real cash takings.

The next customer was a lady of uncertain age, with a red face, and an inspired mousethump upon her upper lip. Arthur Augustus bowed to her most politely.

"I'vey what can I do for you, ma'am?"

"Do you keep Snook's soap?" inquired the lady.

"I am, sowwy we do not, madam. But we have Rooker's soap, which is really vevy much bettah—verry much bettah indeed."

"Oh, much?" asked the lady.

"Ninapence a tablet, ma'am."

The lady smiled.

"I want it at fourpence a box," she replied.

"Ah! I am afraid we cannot do it at that price. But I am sure you that Rooker's soap is much bettah than Snook's. You see, it is verry much more expensive, and, therefore, it is bound to be bettah. I should recommend you to try Rooker's."

"Well, I ain't going to!" said the lady.

"I am really sowwy. Pawwage there is somethin' else you need?" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy eagerly.

"I can recommend yoss wazzah."

"What?" queried the lady. She was about to leave the shop, but she turned back, frow, and glared at Arthur Augustus as if she would bite him.

"Ovver wazzah, ma'am," said Arthur Augustus innocently.

"We have a splendid wash at five shillings and a safety-wash at seven-and-sixpence that I can recommend."

"You impudent young villain!"

"Weddly, ma'am, ovver wazzah—"

Smack! The lady's broad red hand descended upon Arthur Augustus's ear, and he staggered back, and set down violently in the operating chair. The lady scoured out of the shop and slammed the door.

Arthur Augustus put his hand to his ear, and rubbed it dully.

"Bal Jore!" he swarored. "What an exceedingly ill-tempered woman! I suppose she must be a Redwaggonette. Why should she be angry at my recommendin' her to buy a wash for her husband, if she has one. It is really most surprisin'."

It did not occur to Arthur Augustus that the lady had supposed him to be making an impertinent allusion to his private adroitness on her upper lip. But certainly his recommendation of a razor to a mousethumped lady was rather unfortunate.

Arthur Augustus was still rubbing his ear, when a gentleman came in for a bottle of eau-de-Cologne.

Arthur Augustus sorted it out with dexterity.

"Anythin' else we can do for you to-day, sir?" he asked.

"Givver's soap, essent, wazzah, hair restorah! We have a splendid hair restorah, sir, at six shillings a bottle. You wash it on your head before goin' to bed, and in the mornin'—"

The customer turned pink.

"Are you Mr. Mopps's new boy?" he asked.

"Yess, sir."

"Will you give him a message from me?"

"Certainly, sir. With pleasure, sir."

"Verry well. Tell him he'd better get another boy."

And the customer walked out.

"Bal Jore, sir! I say, you haven't taken your eau-de-Cologne."

"Naw!"

"Bal Jore!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in astonishment.

"The man must be pottery! I could see verry well that he was bald, and I was recommendin' hair restorah out of pure



THE REMOVITES INVADE THE RIVAL SCHOOL!

(An incident from "Trouble With Highlife!" the grand long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. of Grosvenor, which is contained in this week's issue of "THE MAGNET" Library. Now on sale. Price One Penny.)

kindness. He looked as if he were offended. I wonder why? I'm afraid there are a lot of things to learn in this business." And Arthur Augustus rather audly put the bottle of essence-Cologne back in its place.

CHAPTER 16. A Close Shave!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS had a rest for some time. Custom for the day appeared to be over. Mr. Moggs did not return from the Red Cow. Apparently his business there was being prolonged. Arthur Augustus basted himself about the shop, and prepared stropping case of Mr. Moggs's razors. He had several narrow escapes of sniping his fingers, but fortunately escaped with a few small cuts. He had quite got into the way of stropping the razor by the time a customer came in again.

Arthur Augustus welcomed him with a beaming smile. The customer was a fat man with a stabbly chin, and looked like a farmer.

"P'ray be seated, my dear sir. Shave or hair cut, sir?"

"Shave," said the fat gentleman.

"Yess, sir, Mr. Moggs is out for the moment, but he will return shortly."

The fat gentleman sat down.

"Like to see the paper, sir?" said Arthur Augustus politely.

"Ain't got much time to spare," said the fat gentleman.

"Why ain't the barber 'ere attending to his business, say?"

"He will be back very shortly, sir. P'rraps you would care to see some of these splendid wazaks, six-five shillings."

"I wouldn't."

"You might care for our special scented soap at tenpence."

"Nonsense!"

The customer was restive. When five minutes had passed he rose to his feet. Arthur Augustus felt himself to be in a difficulty. He did not want Mr. Moggs to lose a customer, but, on the other hand, was the occasion important enough for Mr. Moggs to be called from his passing business at the Red Cow? Mr. Moggs had impressed upon him that he was not to call him unless it was really important, in fact unavoidable.

"P'ray take a chair, sir," said Arthur Augustus at last.

THE GEM LIBRARY—No. 311.
A Strandfont, New, Lond, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Unless you specially want Mr. Moppe's personal attention, sir, I can shave you."
 "I don't care who shaves me, so long as it's done," said the fat gentleman. "I can't wash 'em all day and all the evening."

The fat gentleman sat down in the operating chair, and Arthur Augustus tucked a towel about his neck. Then he began to lather.

He had lathered by this time to lather without jabbing the tooth into his victim's eye. He laid on plenty of lather. The fat gentleman's fat face almost disappeared under it. He was lathered up to the eyes.

Then Arthur Augustus stopped the razor.
 He was testing, as a matter of fact, a little nerve. And the fat gentleman would certainly have felt more than a little nervous if he had known that the youthful barber had never handled a razor before.

Fortunately for his peace of mind he did not know it.
 "A chap must begin some time, you know," Arthur Augustus reassured to himself. "How am I ever to learn shavin' if I don't shave people? Accidents will happen to beginnars; but that can't be helped. I suppose I shall cut a few of 'em at first, but I shall gradually get more expert. Nobody can be learned without practice."

"Don't be all right," said the fat gentleman.
 "Yea, sir. A little more to the left, please. That's right. We are famous for our easy shavin', sir."

And Arthur Augustus began to scrape.
 He was very, very careful.

It was probably owing to his extreme carefulness that he did not take the fat gentleman's ear off.

As it was, he simply made a cut along the fat cheek, and the white lather was immediately cut off with red.

The fat gentleman wince, and gave a howl.
 "You young idiot! You've cut me!"

"Worry a scratch, sir, I scratch you. Pray keep still. It's all right. I think you moved your head a trifle. Pray keep still."

The gentleman glared at him over the lather. He had to keep still, because D'Arcy had the razor on his chin, and he was in danger of being decapitated if he struggled. But his eyes spoke volumes.

"It's all right, sir. Quite easy, I scratch you. What do you think of the latest news from the Balkans, sir?"

"Grooooooh!"
 "Pray keep your chin still. Hal Jove! I'm extremely sorry."

That unfortunate razor had slipped again.
 The fat gentleman gave a roar like a wounded buffalo, and Arthur Augustus started back. The fat gentleman bounded off his chair.

It was quite a deep cut on his chin this time, and the "clack" was swelling and mingling with the lather.

The fat gentleman looked at his reflection in the glass, and his face was convulsed with fury.
 "You—you—you— Look at my chin!"

"Yea; it is withal unfortunate, sir, I admit. But if you will allow me to finish, I hope to make a really good job of it. I shall probably not cut you more than once or twice again, and—"

"I'll finish you!" roared the fat gentleman.
 He made a rush at Arthur Augustus.

Crash! They bumped into a chair, and sent it flying. Then they staggered against a shelf, and a crowd of bottles came to the floor with a terrific crash. They tumbled in the air, Arthur Augustus struggling to escape, and the damaged customer bent upon thrashing him within an inch of his life. The din was terrific. In the midst of the wild struggle the shop door opened, and Mr. Moppe came in.

The hairdresser halted in amazement and horror at the sight of what was going on in his saloon.
 "Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "What—what— Has there been an accident? What—what—"

"Yavoo! Help!" yelled D'Arcy.
 "My dear sir—"
 "Help! Woooo!"

"What has happened—what—"
 "Look at my chin!" howled the customer. "That young scoundrel has been trying to murder me! I'll smash him—"

"Yavoo! Woooo! Oh, ooooo! Draggined!"

Arthur Augustus took himself loose at last, and bolted to the end of the shop, panting. The fat gentleman leaped on a table, gasping for breath. Mr. Moppe gazed at him in horror, and then turned a furious look upon D'Arcy.

"Have you been trying to shave this gentleman?" he scolded.
 "Yea, sir. I—"
 "You—you youngascal—you cannot shave—"
 "I was trying to lather, sir," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "The Gem Lather—No. 311."

"Yavoo! Woooo! Oh, ooooo! Draggined!"

Arthur Augustus took himself loose at last, and bolted to the end of the shop, panting. The fat gentleman leaped on a table, gasping for breath. Mr. Moppe gazed at him in horror, and then turned a furious look upon D'Arcy.

"Have you been trying to shave this gentleman?" he scolded.
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narity. "I suppose every beginnars has to learn, hasn't he? I did not cut him on purpose. Of course, accidents will happen to a beginnars!"

"Get out of my shop!" roared Mr. Moppe.
 "What! Woooo, sir—"

The fat gentleman, having got his second wind, made another rush at Arthur Augustus. Apparently his longing for vengeance was not satisfied yet. Mr. Moppe was greatly inclined to "go for" his youthful scoundrel himself, but he did not want his saloon wrecked. He threw himself before the fat gentleman, endeavoring to pacify him. But the fat gentleman was not to be pacified. He hurled Mr. Moppe aside, and the hairdresser went spinning into a corner with a gasping howl, and then the fat gentleman chased Arthur Augustus round the shop again.

His look was furious, and he had caught up a leather strap. That strap came behind Arthur Augustus as he ran and dodged, and the junior roared with pain.

Slash, slash, slash!

Arthur Augustus turned in desperation, and faced the furious parson. He hit out blindly, and fortuitously caught the fat gentleman on the chin, and he went down. Mr. Moppe staggered up, and grabbed hold of Arthur Augustus, and whirled him to the door.

"Get out! Go! You're sacked! I'll have you arrested!"
 "Leave me get at him!" shrieked the damaged fat gentleman, scrambling up.

Arthur Augustus jumped through the doorway.
 "Yea, woooo! Mr. Moppe, I am surprised at you. It is your duty to back up an employer against an unreasonable customer. I refuse to remain in your service. I decline to have anything more to do with you. I consider—"

The fat gentleman was making a ferocious rush, and Arthur Augustus, on second thoughts, did not stay to state what he considered. He fled.

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Tom Merry & Co. gave a shout as a wild and hatless figure dashed into the gateway of St. Jim's.

"That the gnat, drab boys?" gasped Arthur Augustus.
 "There's a rash old one—a regular howler!" lazar—he chased me all down the village street—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Just because I cut his chin in shavin' him—a most unreasonable wretch. Pray get the gnat shot. He's come up the road!"

"Oh, crabs!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry & Co. simply howled. They were laughing too much to be able to close the gates. Arthur Augustus looked out into the road. In the distance a furious figure could be seen, hallooing with a lathered chin, panting along. Arthur Augustus made a wild run for the School House, dashed in, and in a few seconds had locked himself up in Study No. 6.

The janitor, almost in convulsions, slammed the gates at last. The fat gentleman came pounding by, and passed the closed gates, evidently without a suspicion that a barber's boy could have taken refuge in a public school. He disappeared in the distance.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "This is getting richer and richer! There'll be a warrant out for Geary soon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 They streamed into the School House to look for Arthur Augustus. The door of Study No. 6 was locked, and Blake thumped upon it.

"What the—?" came a quavering voice from within.
 "Ha, ha, ha! It's all right—ha's gone!"

The door was unlocked. Arthur Augustus stood peering and gapping in the study.
 "Hal Jove! I've had a narrow escape!" he exclaimed. "The man was simply furious, for some reason. I explained to him that a beginnars was bound to cut a rash a bit—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "He was stably unreasonable. I have been treated with gross disrespect. I have been assaulted with a wash-sweep—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Is Mr. Moppe satisfied?" roared Master Lewtice.
 "I have refused to remain in Mr. Moppe's service. He was an unreasonable as the fat boundak. As a matter of fact, I am fed-up with this," said Arthur Augustus. "I am going to refuse to work any more. A chap doesn't get any encouragement for tryin' to earn his bread. I am goin' on strike. I am goin' to write to my papa and tell him that I stably refuse to do any more work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 And Arthur Augustus fled.

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THE END.

"Who is he? That rascally fellow who tried to get the Chief at Berlin. One of his clerks, the Chief said. A friend of that cursed Kohn. Where he came from I do not know; but I was waiting at Liverpool Street Station, according to orders, and he came out of the train. I know him at once. The Chief did not come; he was not sure which way he would return. But I would not miss this young man. The cab was waiting; he got into it, and I also. And then—the handkerchief; you know the trick, Zam—and he came with me so quietly!"

"And now, what are you going to do with him?"

"My friend, if you asked lower questions you would hear fewer lies!" Hendricks answered testily. "We must keep him, I suppose, until the Chief returns, and he will decide. But if I have my way—Tcha!" He put his hand up to his throat with a thrilling movement more expressive than his many words. "That's what I would do, and without being any less. He is dangerous, the Englishman, though he does not look it, and dead men can do no more harm!"

"Yes, my friend, but the Chief will decide," the fair man said calmly. "And it does not do well to act without his orders. Where shall we put him until the Chief returns? And when will that be?"

"More questions! Ah! We will put him somewhere safe. But the Chief—who can say? He does not tell us everything. He had said he might return to-night, and he has not. Get food, Zam; I have hunger!"

They set down to eat, continuing their conversation, but to no profit for Jerry's sake it was in their own tongue. Jerry sat in a chair immediately upon entering the room, and, securely fastened to it by a long rope, listened, but it was only here and there he caught a word of which he knew the meaning. He wished—now for the first time—that he had found the time to acquire German.

But even so scarce as was his knowledge of the German tongue, it was to prove useful. As Hendricks and Zam ate they talked, the former answering grudgingly the other's persistent questions. Presently Zam made a remark, and Jerry became very much alert. His ear had caught the word "saboteur," and he knew the English meaning of it to be "search."

The man without a coat was suggesting to his companion the advisability of searching the prisoner, and if that happened his possession of the papers Kohn had sent him would be revealed.

Jerry grew hot, then a cold chill ran along his spine. The secret papers must never be seen from the ruffian's hands. Mechanically he strove to loosen the cord that bound him.

In two minutes he knew that his fear was correct. Zam leisurely subdued him from the chair, and Hendricks ordered him to stand up. Clenching his big fist, the German held it before Jerry's eyes.

"If you was tight, mit di I smash you!" he cried menacingly. And he stood by ready to carry out the threat while Zam slipped his hands into Jerry's outside pockets.

The search revealed little, Jerry offering no resistance. But when Zam's hand was three inches below his coat and from the inner pocket drew out the pocket-book which was stored the precious slips of thin paper, he made a movement that took the two wholly by surprise. His wrists were still bound together, but limited use of his arms remained. With both hands he snatched at the pocket-book as the German drew it forth, and got it between his fingers. With a swinging side-ways blow he struck Hendricks aside before the latter could grasp what was coming, and a bound took him to the fireplace. Into the heart of the fire went the pocket-book, and, settling his boot upon it, Jerry pressed it deeper still.

The following moment he was plucked away by Hendricks and sent sprawling, and the room was full of the disagreeable smell of burnt leather and singed cloth. But the papers were saved, or, rather, concealed. Zam seized a pair of tongs and tried to lift the book out of the fire, but the flames had gained from him, and the captured pocket dropped into ash as it was brought away.

Followed a confused storm of angry German, and Hendricks vented his anger in kicks and blows upon Jerry's defenceless body until Zam intervened. Roughly Jerry was forced from the room, up three flights of stairs, bundled into an empty room, and left alone.

"In one—two—three days we guess mit di kill you. You have time to think it over!" cried Hendricks brutally as he slammed the door, tossing the key.

The Bitterness of Captivity.

Only those who have experienced captivity can realize the punishment it is to a person in sound health to remain shut up in a room day after day, cut off from the entire world, devoid of all occupation, and with only one's thoughts for company. When there are bitter ones the severity is increased.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 311.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY, "THE PENNY POPULAR," "CHUCKLES," &c.

Every Monday.

Every Friday.

Every Saturday.

And those of Jerry Osborne were bitter enough. He had no doubt in what fashion his imprisonment would end—could he not escape, and that seemed beyond all hope. When Muller returned and learned when his Lieutenant had captured, for his own safety's sake it was imperative that Jerry should not remain alive.

Then there was Kohn's death. Jerry could not keep his memory apart from that last awful scene of the man whom he had come to love as a brother lying white and still among the corpse gear. In addition there was his failure to carry out Kohn's wishes to depose, although he could hardly be justly blamed for that.

To betray him still further was the knowledge of Muller's triumph, the knowledge that the spy was still at large. He might be even then engaged in carrying out his diabolical schemes of murder and destruction.

Compared with such misery, the discomforts of cold, insufficient food, sleeping on the bare wooden floor and less of liberty were slight.

Where in London he was—if indeed in London at all—Jerry had not the faintest notion. He was confined on the top floor of the house, so he judged by the outlook obtainable from a small and strongly-barred window over a fair-sized, tree-circled garden above which showed the tops of the houses of a parallel row.

Four days passed then, the only intermission being the entry of the man Zam with a scanty supply of food, or an occasional visit from Hendricks that the prisoner could have very well done without. On the fifth morning, however, Jerry saw a fresh face. The man had on the floor a glass of beer and a plate of bread and cheese, and was going out when Jerry, who had been looking hard at him stepped at him.

"Aren't you the driver of the taxi that brought me here?" he asked, and the fellow nodded.

"You look like an Englishman. Aren't you one?"

"Yes," the man said gruffly, a wary expression crossing his face. "What if I am?"

"You're an Englishman, and yet you're in the employ of wretched foreigners who are spies and wicked men who are at work to spy and carry out and wicked means to destroy the country to which you belong," cried Jerry indignantly. "I wonder you aren't ashamed of yourself."

"And what's it matter to you?" demanded the man angrily.

"Because I, too, am ashamed to think that a fellow Englishman can be such a traitor to his country. You know, or ought to know, what sort of a crew for whom you're working."

The man's face flushed, but he waited to hear no more, slamming the door viciously behind him as he went out. But, late in the evening, he came again, bearing a second allowance of food—a novelty to the prisoner.

"They won't know," he said, in a shamefaced manner, jerking his head downwards.

And then Jerry went to him suddenly.

"Help me get away from here, and I'll see to it that you are properly rewarded," he said, looking straight into the man's face.

"But the man couldn't meet his eyes. "He's downstairs—I doesn't," he muttered thickly. "He's downstairs—Hendricks—and it's more than my life's worth. He'd kill me!"

"Is he the only one in the house? You? Then, if you'll see these men, we'll be two against one."

But the man shook his head. It was evident that Hendricks occupied a very lying influence over him.

"I doesn't," he repeated. "He carries a pistol always in his pocket, and he'd shoot me first. I'm afraid. I'm sorry for you, truly I am, sir; but I can't face that German devil. He's worse than 'older one, who ain't come back yet. He'd kill me, an'—his voice became hoarse—"an' I got a wife an' child here. No, sir, I can't do nothing."

And then he told Jerry how he had come to get into his employment. He had been a motor-taxi driver, and because of his taking the lead in a strike, had been discharged. Then he had been privately engaged, but as the result of an accident—he admitted he was to blame—his horse had been taken from him, and he had been unable to find other employment.

"There was the misis an' kids starvin', sir; an' when come along this chance of employment an' good wages offered, I took it. Course, I found out after a time things wasn't all on th' square, Mary's th' queer job I done, sir; but what with the good wages an' the thuman that devil 'Endricks—' 'Oh, here's a comes, sir!'"

And, with an expression that proved his terror of the German was no fiction, the man hurried down the stairs. Presently the door was again unlocked, and Hendricks entered.

"Here, pig-dog Englisher, here is for you something to read. You'll enjoy it." And, flinging a newspaper at Jerry, he went on.

It was an evening edition he had left behind, and on the first page Jerry looked at he saw a column with black, large type headlines, one glance at which caused him to gasp.

Terrible Dockyard Explosion. Great Loss of Life. Forty Bodies Recovered. A Mass of Blazing Ruins.

"That bend, Muller!" ejaculated Jerry, against and angry. And he feverishly read down the column.

Of course, it was Muller's work, although the newspaper declared that the cause of the diabolical explosion was unknown, and referred to the catastrophe as an accident. Not Muller had suffered, as had been Jerry's first thought, but the new dockyard constructed at the naval base recently established by the Government, on the Fifeshire coast. Following a violent explosion in the ordnance section, fire had become rampant, and in a very short time the entire range of store-sheds and shops was blazing beyond all hope of preservation. The damage was estimated at not less than a million pounds, but worse than that was the loss of life, or the workmen slain without warning or hope of escape while performing their daily work. Forty poor fellows were known to be missing, and the death of a larger number feared.

The dockyard might be rebuilt, but the human sacrifice it was impossible to make good.

"And for all this the Kaiser is responsible," Jerry muttered. "I pray that one day he may have the fact brought home to him."

And this was only a beginning—the first fruits of the diabolical work Muller had undertaken, work that he would be able to carry through unobscured, for none suspected him for what he really was, save Elton and Jerry, and Elton was dead now, and Jerry a prisoner.

The thought was maddening, and the memory of Elton's horrible murder awoke in Jerry such a feeling of wrath, that, harkened to, would have inspired the bravest Handrick, ready pistol included. The idea of escaping that he had given up as hopeless returned to him with stirring force. Do something he must. He would get his hands free, and break out of the room somehow. If it came to a fight with Handricks, and he got the worst of it, why, better to be shot down while making a fight than allow himself to be murdered without making a struggle.

Handricks had left a bit of burning candle behind him to enable his prisoner to read the paper, and though it was but a mere stump, Jerry saw in it a possible means for the freeing of his hands.

These had been fastened at the wrists, giving him the use of his fingers in feeding himself, and now, straining on the cords to force the wrists as far apart as possible, Jerry held his hands over the candle flame, so that it acted upon his forewings.

It was exquisite torture. The flame was actually touching the inside skin of his wrists, and the agony of the scorching flesh was not to be borne for more than a few seconds at a time. With clenched and teeth he endured the pain as long as possible, then withdrew his hands to blow coolly upon the blistered skin before returning for a further effort. The cords were thick and close woven, and with all his resolution Jerry could not bear contact with the flame for many seconds. With each return the pain seemed to become more acute. And presently the last of the tallow was reached, and the flame grew feeble and steadily. It could not live much longer.

"For England—and Elton!" growled Jerry, and once more he held out his wrists over the expiring flame.

With a sudden flicker the light went out. The cords still held, and it seemed as though the fierce battle between Jerry's fortitude and steel he endured the pain as long as possible, then withdrew his hands to blow coolly upon the blistered skin before returning for a further effort. The cords were thick and close woven, and with all his resolution Jerry could not bear contact with the flame for many seconds. With each return the pain seemed to become more acute. And presently the last of the tallow was reached, and the flame grew feeble and steadily. It could not live much longer.

Suddenly the partly charred strands snapped, and a cry of thankfulness broke from Jerry.

A brief rest, and he was at work again. Small use to have his hands free while he was still locked in his room. But he had thought of a means of overcoming the lock. He approached the window, and tried one by one the iron bars that crossed it. One was less firm than the rest—or so he fancied—and, gripping it with both hands, he strove to loosen and wrench away the screws fastening it to the woodwork. The foot of one bent leg pressed against the wall to increase the power of his effort.

For how long Jerry struggled with that bar he could not tell. Hours must have passed. The skin was rasped from the inside of his hands, and his face streamed with sweat. Spells of violent tearing and straining alternated with periods during which he rested upon the floor, aching all over, the agony of his scorched wrists intolerable, and despair in his heart.

But the bar moved at last. The bottom screw parted first, and encouraged, Jerry, with renewed vigor, twisted at the upper end. When that gave way he was provided with a formidable crowbar.

A rest to recuperate, and he attacked the door. It was still tight, the voice quite dark, but the sense of touch was sufficient. His hope was to open the door slightly, to insert his own knife he made. It could not be done quietly anyway. Shoving his head against the lower part of the door, he forced it outward far enough to enable him to insert the end of his improvised tool, working it as near the lock as he could. Then he removed his head, gripped the bar with his torn hands, and jacked it violently towards him.

A sharp cracking sound resulted. Something had given, and, with frantic haste, Jerry replaced the crowbar for a further effort. This time the noise was greater, but Jerry was overjoyed to find that, though the lock still held there was a crack between the door edge and the jamb wide enough to admit the whole thickness of the bar. Another attempt, and the door swung open. He was free, standing on the landing outside, listening intently.

Midnight Visitors.

He had been heard. He had not expected otherwise. How to make his escape from the house was a problem Jerry had to leave to circumstances to solve.

He heard a door open in the darkness somewhere below. He caught the echo of a man's voice as, one hand on the banisters, the other holding fast to his weapon, he went down the stairway. And then sounded a dull rattling as of bare feet rapidly moving. Another door opened.

"Go up, Harris, and see!" called a hoarse, overbearing voice; and Jerry, halting where the stairs took a turn, recognised it as that of Handricks.

He had awakened the chauffeur, and was sending him to see what the noise meant.

Followed a big stout eager mounting of the stairs—Harris, the English servant of the noble, sought Jerry; and he was uncertain whether to strike, when the man clanked

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. XII.

A. Macdonald, New, Lond. Compares Nelson Tale of
John Barry & Co. By MARSHALL CLIFFORD, P. 12

J. O. Jones



You'll enjoy all the stories in "J. O. Jones" without exception. "J. O. Jones" is but one of many fine ones.

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"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

NEXT WEDNESDAY

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 copies, one taken from "The Gem," and one from the same week's issue of its companion paper, "The Magnet" Library. Copies will always be found on page 2 of both papers, and requests for correspondents not retaining these two copies will be absolutely disregarded.

Readers wishing to reply to advertisements appearing in this column must write to the advertisers direct. 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 Footway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C."

S. A. Langman, 55, Finsbury Street, Leamington, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the United Kingdom, age 15-16.

Miss O. Kirk, Havelock Road, Battery Point, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with reader, age 17-18.

Miss M. Ward, 25, Gadd Street, Crookton, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers living in the British Isles or America, age 15-16.

F. Richardson, 70, Ross Street, Forest Lodge, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader interested in postcards, and living in or near Preston, Lancashire, of the age 15-16.

H. B. Booth, 127, Drummond Street, Carlton, Victoria, Australia, wishes to correspond with an Irish or English girl reader, age 22-23.

J. Kerridge, Barrington Street, Spreydon, Christchurch, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in England, age 17.

T. H. Brown, P.O. Box 132, Hastings, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles, age 16-17. Miss Mary Brown, of the same address, wishes to correspond with a girl reader, age 15-16, living in Scotland or Ireland. Miss E. Brown, of the same address, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in the British Isles or Canada, age 15-16.

J. V. Goodgeorge, Latham House, Hanly, New South Wales, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in England or America, age 15.

V. Beedham, care of Finlay Isles Co., Ltd., Queen's Street, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, Canada, Borneo, Straits Settlements, Egypt and Hong-Kong, China, etc., interested in stamp collecting, age 16.

A. J. Franko, Johnston Street, Collier, Western Australia, wishes to correspond with a girl reader in the British Isles, age 14-15.

Troop Leader E. H. Merrick, 1st Beaconsfield Troop, 120, Main Road, Beaconsfield, Kimberley, South Africa, wishes to correspond with a college boy interested in the Boy Scouts, age 15-16.

E. Langford, 1, Fishery Road, South End, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Isles.

J. Lawrence, care of J. Taylor, Scandia Street, Palmerston North, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with a girl reader living in Scotland, age 14-15.

I. Wild, P.O. Swindon Road, via Bendigo, Australia, wishes correspondence with a boy reader living in England, age 14, interested in stamps.

The Editor specially requests Colonial Readers to kindly bring the Free Correspondence Exchange to the notice of their friends.

to which youth of his own race. Him by the darkness and the gloom of the stairs, Hendricks was waiting on the landing below.

Heard came the swivelling steps. They stopped. From the floor a whisper reached the climber, bringing him to a cowed standstill.

"Stay there. Are you and Hendricks alone?"
Those was no answer. The man, his nerves already on edge, and in his fright probably forgetting all about Jerry, let out a gasping cry, made a movement to step down, but his feeting, and slipped down three or four of the stairs with a bang.

"Hissen! Dummkopf, was ist? Vat vas dei matter!" cried an angry voice from below.

Two seconds of silence, and then Hendricks called again by the kitchen chaffeur, asking, in the name of ten thousand francs, what he was doing.

"I come up weizelst, foot, eoward; undt if you—" And, growling threats, the German with noisy rapidity mounted the stairs.

Jerry could see absolutely nothing; only his ears could tell him when his enemy came within striking distance, and, coming down a step, he held himself ready for a blow when the German should get within striking distance. He heard a stumble, a quick cry of pain, the man Hendricks had fallen into, perhaps tripping upon, the man Hendricks.

"Out of it!" he heard Hendricks grunt reproachfully, and then he arose from the iron bar downwards from right to left.

The stroke was misjudged. The wall resounded sharply at the swinging iron struck against it, and, carried away by the swing, Jerry dropped a stair lower in the effort to remain his balance. An oak of suspicion was cast out by Hendricks.

"Dummkopf!" he roared, in fury.

He had run into Jerry's elbow-point, the young man's forearm lying across nose and eyes, and the quick, pushing movement made as Jerry tried to recover himself was sufficient to overcome the German's balance. He went alighting and scattering down the stairs a good deal quicker than he had come up.

"Der Engländer!" he shouted, greivous the situation, and picking himself up, ran up the stairs.

"The light—the light! Turn it on, Dummkopf!" he cried as he went.

But Harris failed to obey the order. Frightened, he stood on the landing, a miserable creature, terror of his master obscuring his natural sympathy for the Englishman.

A fierce jab caught Hendricks in the upper part of the chest, but it did not stop him, and the next moment Jerry had grappled with him, and the pair engaged in a furious wrestling match. A sideways movement proved for such a moment, and Jerry, borne backward, quickly lost his foot. He slipped down, dragging Hendricks with him, and the two slid and bumped the length of the stairs. They reached the bottom with a bump, the German clenching at his antagonist's throat, Jerry gripping his wrist with one hand and strapping— he had dropped the iron bar—blindly at his face with his clenched fist.

Here and there they rolled about the landing by their struggle, Jerry scarcely looting the pain of his wounded wrists in the excitement. Finding a little finger, he bent it back, forcing the German to loose his grip. Now one, now the other, was apparent. The fight was scarce. But while Hendricks stood up his breath in furious words, the Englishman battled silently. Once Hendricks, on top, got his knee on Jerry's chest, but with a deft wriggle Jerry upset him. Again, Hendricks lost a blind grip of his opponent's burned wrist, and the agonising pain brought a cry from the victim and a spasmodic drive with the other hand. Jerry felt his knuckles strike against hard bone, and Hendricks gouted at through the connection had lost.

Suddenly a flood of light illuminated the landing. Harris had switched the electric light switch, perhaps in his confusion of mind believing light would be to Jerry's benefit.

"Ha!" exclaimed Hendricks.

And at once, as though acting by mutual consent, the fighters drew apart and stood upright. Jerry had a glimpse of the German's crimson and battered face, his furious, scowling eyes, and saw his right hand shoot to the pocket of the jacket he had slipped on over his pyjamas.

"It's all up now," thought Jerry.

They were not eight feet apart; to rise was impossible.

And then the landing was abruptly enveloped in utter darkness again. Harris, white faced and trembling at the switch, must have realised the Englishman's danger, and turned off the light.

"Schwin!" roared Hendricks' hoarse voice passionately.

And he kned at where he perceived Jerry to be standing.

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand new serial next Wednesday. Please order your copy in advance.)

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OUR SPECIAL WEEKLY FEATURE



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For Next Wednesday.

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"
 By Martin Clifford.

In this grand, long, complete story of the famous chess of St. Jim's, a new character is introduced into the Shell Fern in the person of Mulvaney minor, a "wild Irishman," who proves to be the greatest trouble of his major's life at St. Jim's. Micky Mulvaney is always in hot water, and his pranks are generally of the most reckless description; but, at the same time, he knows how to take care of himself, as more than one of the juniors discover to their cost. Mulvaney minor, with his cheery temper and wild ways, adds considerably to the gaiety of St. Jim's, and succeeds—just as his worried elder brother prophesied he would—in

"MAKING THINGS HUM!"

YOUR VERDICT.

At the time these lines appear in print, No. 2 of "Checkles"—the great new halfpenny companion paper that all my classes ask for—will be in all the newsagents' windows and on all the bookstalls. Every one of my "Gem" friends will have read it, and formed an opinion on it, and, I hope, have written to me to tell me what that opinion is. That is what I want. I am determined to give my class-

EXACTLY WHAT THEY WANT.

and if they will only tell me straight out what that is, the rest is easy. It is your verdict on our latest new paper, "Checkles," that will count with me. For the rest, I will only say that No. 2 of "Checkles," for brightness, fun, and general interest, is

BETTER THAN EVER!

AN IDEA FOR "GEM" LEAGUERS.

A girl reader, signing herself "Roma V.," recently wrote me a long and interesting letter, in which she describes an excellent idea adopted by the "Gem and Magnet" League, of which she is a member—an idea which a good many "Leaguers" will, no doubt, be ready to adopt—in part, at least. I will let my girl class explain it herself.

"Dear Editor.—This is the very first time I have written to you, and will probably be the last. I have read the 'Gem' and 'Magnet' for years, and the 'Penny Poplar' ever since it came out. I wonder if any of the members use our method in their Leagues—namely, each of the members being known during such meetings by the name of some character from the 'Invisible Trio.' The president is usually known as 'Tom Harris' or 'Harry Wharton,' though occasionally 'Kildare' or 'Wingate' occupy the post of honour. The most elegant member is, of course, A. A. D'Arty.

A good plan for these gatherings is to have a story, previously composed by some member, read aloud. One frequently introduces 'Gem' and 'Magnet' characters, and it is great fun, as all contributions must be as nearly as possible original. We have had some splendid stories written and read, although our League is merely a 'home' one, consisting of six members.

I may state that your three papers are the only ones we are allowed to take in. At first mamma forbade us to read

them; but one day I plucked up courage to read one aloud to her, and now she admits that, far from being harmful, they are entertaining and elevating. We all enjoy reading the letters on 'Reader's Page,' so long may they continue. I forgot to state I'm Glavin, and attend the High School. Best wishes for the success of the 'Invisible Trio' from
 "Roma V."

Many thanks for a very interesting letter. "Roma V." I am sorry I had not room to print the whole of your long letter, but I have duly noted the various suggestions you make. I hope this letter of yours will be by no means the last I receive from you.

HOUSEHOLD PETS—No. 3.

By Dr. Gordon Stables, R.N.

Fancy Mice.

You must beware of overfeeding. Perfect cleanliness and sunny cage, quiet, and good food—breadstuffs, with milk and without, grains, and carrot-see. Do not in-and-out-keep too much. Fancy mice are of all colours, and those bred from should be large, bright-eyed, happy-looking, and with nice, sleek, shining coats. They make very nice pets, and when one has time to study them and teach them, they can be taught quite a lot of pretty tricks. The best colours are white, plain-coloured, tortoiseshell, tortoiseshell-and-white, etc.

The Japanese walking mouse, which whirls round and round after its tail like a topstone, is a great pet with some children.

Fancy Rats.

See most cleanly, sweet, and winning in all their ways, and their tricks and manners, if encouraged and well taught, are something marvellous. The cage should be large and airy. If given a tower with a spiral staircase, they will run up and land down the flag, etc. Place the cage on the table every day, that they may get out for exercise and play. The latter is often of the most fantastic nature. Rats are second only to dogs in intelligence. Even the wild rat leads a life that is truly marvellous. Buy a pair of young ones, white or goldish. Don't have a wire-mesh cage; it is cruel. A dark room, and good hay for a bed. Spread the floor of the cage room with a piece of clean paper every morning. Keep very clean, and feed regularly—grains, crusts, milk-and-bread soup, and fruit, such as apples, etc., but give no sort of greasy food.

The Aquarion.

Before you attempt to keep an aquarion, either salt or fresh, you must get a book on the subject. Upcott Gil's publisher, London, has books on all kinds of household pets. The bottom of the aquarion is made of specially prepared loam, with artistic rocks, etc.

But you can purchase an aquarion ready made, with plant growing in it, from any naturalist, and he will stock it 6/6 for you also.

The plan of keeping a few goldfish in a large glass globe is, in my opinion, much to be deprecated. They are forgotten, disregarded, and seldom fed. The water of a globe you must have changed twice or thrice a week. What so-called ornamental eggs make the best food for goldfish—about 2 to each every day. Never throw bread-crumbs or sugar; that will decay into the bowl.

(A splendid series of articles on "Rabbit-Keeping" will commence on this page next Wednesday.)

The Editor

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