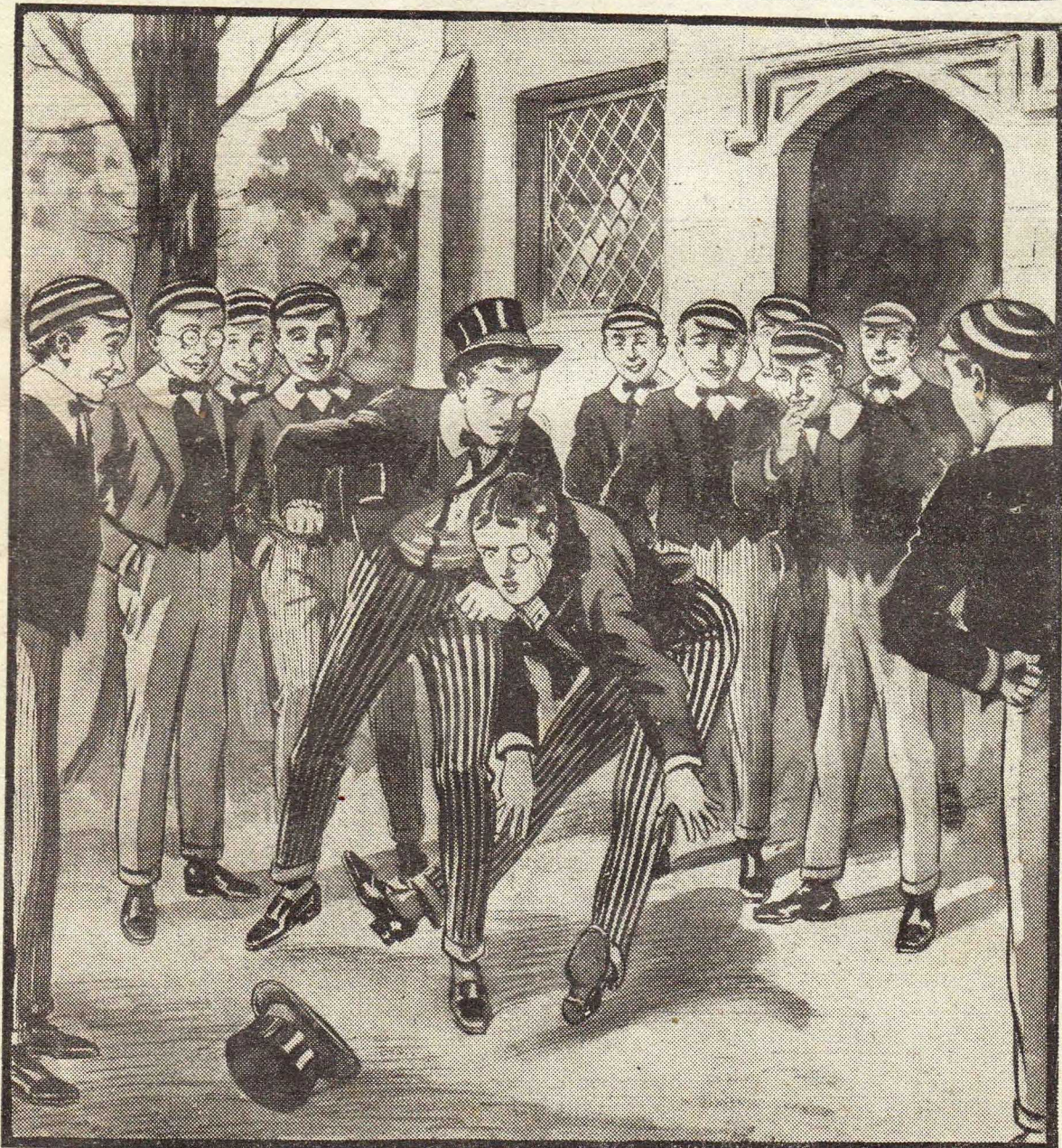


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A Grand New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.



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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



The porter's powerful grasp closed upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and he was whirled into the street before he knew what was happening. The unfortunate junior skidded along the pavement, and landed in the gutter with a splash. "Oh, gwoogh! You howwid wuffian!" gasped Gussy. (See Chapter 4.)

CHAPTER 1.

A Little Party for the Cinema.

"MORE rain!" Tom Merry made that remark in a tone of philosophical resignation.

The Terrible Three of the Shell were looking out of the doorway of the School House, into the quadrangle of St. Jim's. The old quad was very pleasant to the eye, in the green of spring. But the rain was falling again—and Tom Merry was "fed-up" with rain.

"The rain it raineth every day!" said Monty Lowther. "What are we going to do this afternoon, my sons?"

"Doesn't look much like going out with a camera," remarked Manners.

"That's an awful misfortune, of course," remarked Lowther. "Hallo, here's Gussy! Let's chip Gussy! It's the only thing to be done on a rainy afternoon."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, bore down upon the Shell fellows in the doorway.

There was an unusually serious expression upon D'Arcy's aristocratic countenance, a sure indication that great thoughts were stirring in his noble brain.

"Oh, heah you are, you fellahs!" remarked D'Arcy.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Lowther, in faithful imitation of D'Arcy's delightful accent. "What's the beastly pwogwamme for this wotten aftahnoon, deah boy?"

Tom Merry and Manners chuckled, and D'Arcy gave the humorist of the Shell a severe look.

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah," he said. "I've been

Next Wednesday:

"THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!" AND "THE PRIDE OF THE FILM!"

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lookin' for you fellahs. I want you this aftahnoon. Will you join my partay for Wayland Cinemah?"

"Come to my arms!" said Monty Lowther affectionately.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"There is no Adolphus but Algy, and Augustus is his prophet!" said Lowther enthusiastically. "Let me fold you to my bosom and weep—"

"You uttah ass! Welease me, you sc̄wamin' chump!"

But Monty Lowther insisted upon embracing the swell of the Fourth, and D'Arcy struggled vainly in his powerful embrace.

"You uttah ass, you are wumplin' my waistcoat!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You are twecadin' on my boots, you feahful ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you do not welease me, Lowthah, I shall stwike you —"

Monty Lowther released the swell of the Fourth, so suddenly that Arthur Augustus sat down unintentionally on the mat.

"To hear is to obey," said Lowther meekly. "Gussy, old man, you're the right man in the right place. When you're done resting, we'll start for the cinema."

Arthur Augustus picked himself up, and pushed back his spotless cuffs. His eye gleamed vengeance through his eyeglass.

"Lowthah, you wuffianly ass—"

"Ready?" asked Lowther calmly. "We've accepted your kind invitation, and we're ready to start for the cinema."

"I am goin' to thwash you—"

"Do you always thrash a chap when you invite him to join your little party?" asked Lowther innocently.

"Ahem! I shall thwash you if you play any more of your wuffianly twicks, Lowthah. I wegard you as a wuff ass. Tom Mewwy, deah boy, are you comin'?"

"What-ho!" said Tom Merry. "Any port in a storm!"

"Blake and Hewwies and Dig are comin', and Weilly and Hammond and Talbot," said Arthur Augustus. "I want to take all the fellahs that are willin' to come."

Tom Merry laughed.

"You'll find a good many willing, I should think," he said. "Footlights and a cinema is good enough for a rainy day."

"Yaas, I must I shall get a regular crowd to back me up," said D'Arcy. "You see, I am appealin' to their patriotism."

"Their which?" asked Manners.

"Patriotism!" said D'Arcy loftily. "Pway wait while I wun wound and gathah up some more fellahs, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus ambled away, leaving the Terrible Three looking considerably astonished. A visit to the picture-palace on a rainy afternoon struck them as a good idea; especially as the swell of St. Jim's was apparently standing treat. But they did not quite see where the patriotism came in. However, if Arthur Augustus regarded it as patriotic to join his party for the cinema, they were willing to shine as patriots.

Blake and Herries and Digby of the Fourth came down with their coats on, and joined the Shell fellows at the door. Hammond and Reilly and Talbot arrived, also with their coats and umbrellas, and then came Kangaroo of the Shell, and Clifton Dane, and George Gore, and Dick Julian.

"You chaps all belong to Gussy's party?" asked Tom Merry.

"Looks like it," said Blake. "Where's Gussy?"

"Gone to get some more."

"Must have come into a fortune intoirely," remarked Reilly. "Looks as if he's going to take half the house to the cinema." Kerruish and Ray came along, followed by Skimpole and Levison. Evidently they belonged to the little party. There were now seventeen fellows waiting for Arthur Augustus.

"My hat!" said Herries. "I think we're numerous enough to start. Gussy! I say, Gussy, we're waiting."

"Gussy!" shouted the party, with one voice. "Gussy! Gussy! Gus!"

"All sewene, deah boys," came a voice from the staircase.

"I'm goin' to fetch Glyn, and then pewwaps that will be enough."

"Glyn's busy!" called out Kangaroo. "He's mucking up the study with one of his blessed inventions!"

"Wats! He can chuck that, for a patwiotic weason like this!"

And Arthur Augustus hastened away to the end study in the Shell passage.

"What is he burbling about?" asked Lowther. "Anybody know how it's patwiotic to go to a cinema?"

"Give it up!" said Blake. "That's what he told me. I was going to do my story for the 'Weekly' this afternoon, but he told me I must be prepared to be patwiotic in war-time."

"Off his rocker!" said Gore. "But the cinema will be all right. They've got some new films of Chumpy Chiplin—awfully funny, Mellish says. He's seen it!"

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TUCK HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1D.

Arthur Augustus had reached the end study. He knocked at the door, and turned the handle. But the door did not open. It was locked inside. Bernard Glyn, the amateur inventor of the Shell, generally locked his door when he was busy with his experiments. Sometimes it led to trouble with his study-mates, Kangaroo and Dane. They did not always like being locked out of their study, and did not always enjoy the dreadful fumes of Glyn's weird chemicals. The schoolboy inventor's path was sometimes a thorny one.

A strange sound was proceeding from within the study. Whir-whir-whirrrrr! It sounded like machinery running down.

Knock!

Whirrrrr!

"Glyn, deah boy—"

"Go away!" came Bernard Glyn's voice from within. "Run off! I'm busy! You can't come in now."

"Weally, Glyn—"

"Buzz off! I'm making my model!"

"Pway leave that wubbish for this once, Glyn. I want you vewy particulably!"

"Oh! Is that you, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Good! You can come in."

The study door opened. Arthur Augustus looked in curiously. A queer-looking object lay on the table. It was something like a human skeleton in form, but made of wires and springs and levers. D'Arcy regarded it in astonishment.

"Bai Jove! Are you makin' a dwessmaker's model?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha! No! I wouldn't have opened the door for anybody else, Gussy," said Glyn impressively. "But I'd like you to help me. You're the only chap in the school who can help me with this model!"

"You are vewy flattewin', deah boy—"

"Not at all. First of all, I want some of your old clothes."

"Bai Jove!"

"There isn't a cut in St. Jim's like yours, Gussy, you know. Then—"

"But I'm goin' out now, Glyn, deah boy, and I want you to come with me—"

"Sorry; can't come!"

"It is for a patwiotic object, deah boy."

Glyn grimaced.

"No time for patriotism on half-holidays," he said. "I'm patwiotic in lesson-time. I shall want your photograph, too —"

"Bai Jove! What for?"

"Never mind what for—you'll see that later. Then—"

"That is weally a wemarkable object, Glyn. Does it work?"

"Of course it does, ass!"

"What does it do?"

"All sorts of things," said Glyn mysteriously. "It's the best model I've ever made. Don't touch it!" he yelled suddenly.

"That's all wight, deah boy; I won't hurt it. Bai Jove!"

There was a sudden whir from the peculiar-looking model as Arthur Augustus touched a handle. It curled up on the table, and slid off, and landed on the floor with a terrific crash. Arthur Augustus jumped back in alarm.

"Gweat Scott!"

Bernard Glyn uttered a shriek.

"Yow! You fathead! You've busted it! Why, I'll scalp you—"

"Bai Jove! Keep off! I— Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus went whirling through the doorway in the grasp of the enraged inventor.

"Gwoogh! Yow-ow! Wescue!" yelled D'Arcy.

"You ass!" yelled Glyn. "You frabious chump! You've mucked it up! You champion idiot! You burbling jabber-week!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Arthur Augustus' noble head bumped on the floor. His yells rang along the passage. But there was a rush of feet, and seventeen juniors dashed to the rescue. The whole cinema party arrived in a crowd.

"Yow-wow! Wescue! Gwoogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry and Talbot seized the infuriated Glyn, and dragged him off. Arthur Augustus sat up and gasped.

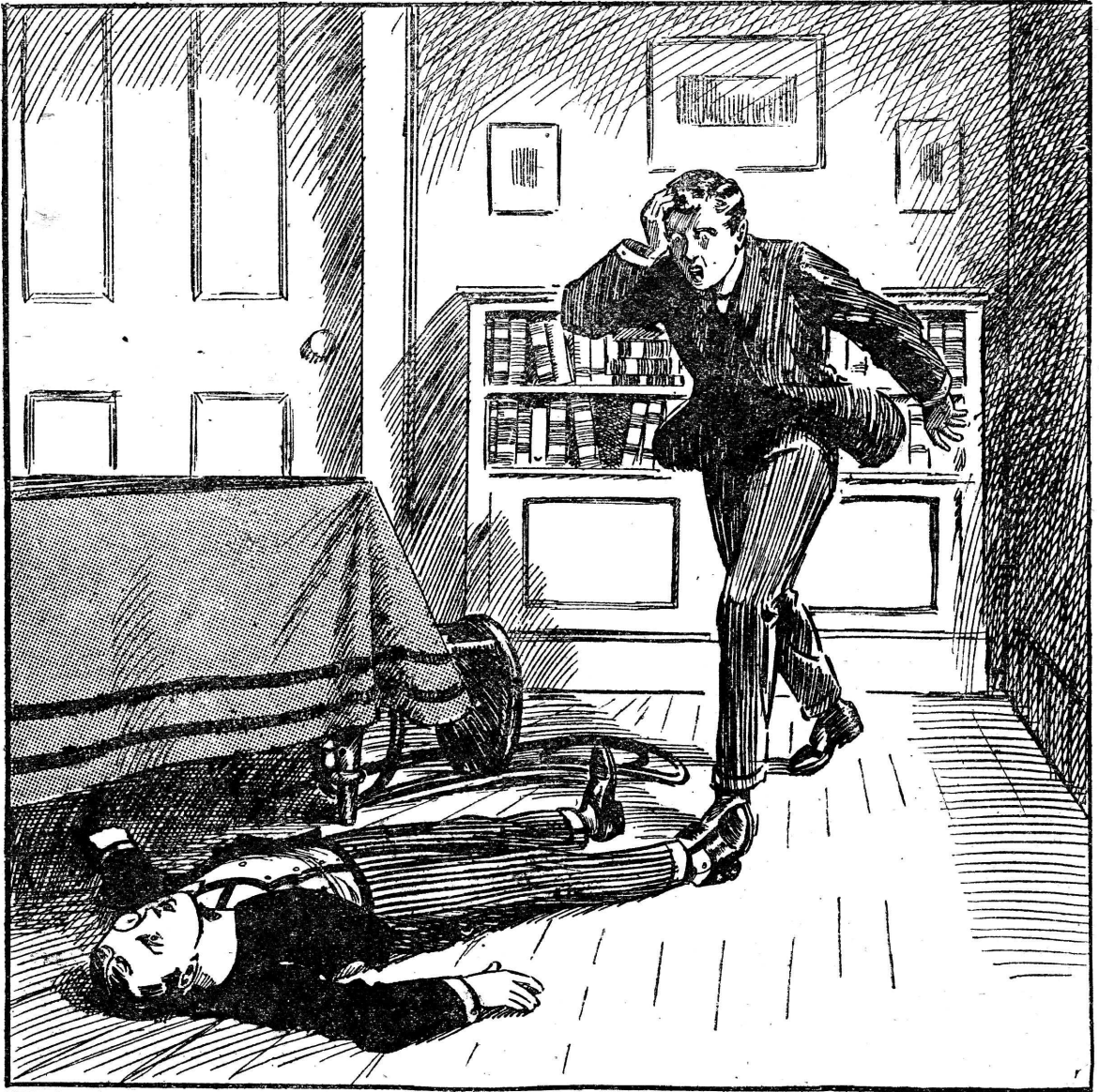
"Bai Jove! I will give him a feahful thwashin'. Where's my eyeglass? Gwooh!"

D'Arcy scrambled to his feet. Bernard Glyn shook himself free, and whipped back into his study, slammed the door, and turned the key. Arthur Augustus pounded furiously on the door.

"Let me in, you wottah! I am goin' to thwash you!"

Whirrrr!

"You uttah wottah, open this door, you feahful funk!"



The elegant form went reeling, and crashed to the floor—and lay there. Not a sound came from it, and not a movement. "Get up, you rat, and don't lie shamming there!" growled Knox. (See Chapter 8.)

"Come on, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to come on till I have thwashed Glyn! Ho has tweeked me with the gwossett diswespect. Glyn, you wottah—"

Whirrrrr!

"Look here, are we going to the cinema, or aren't we going to the cinema?" roared Blake.

"Yaas, wathah, but I am goin' to thwash Glyn—"

Blake seized D'Arcy's right arm, and Monty Lowther took his left. They marched him down the passage.

"You can thrash Glyn afterwards—or get a thrashing," remarked Blake. "We're not waiting any longer."

"Weally, Blake—"

"March!"

"I wefuse to march! I wefuse— Wow-wow! Hewwies, you beast, leave off kickin' me with your wotten heavy boots! You are spoilin' my twousahs!"

"Are you coming, then?"

"No, not until I have thwashed Glyn! Yawooh! Upon the whole, I will come now, and thwash Glyn pwesently!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the swell of St. Jim's went, followed by his little party.

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus' Great Wheeze!

"B AI Jove, it's wathah wet!"

"It often is, in rainy weather," remarked Monty Lowther seriously. "I've noticed it before."

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah! It will be wathah mudday walkin' ovah to Wayland. How-evah, it is for a good cause."

"Oh! We're walking, are we?" said Levison. The party had reached the school gates, and the weeping aspect of the road was not inviting.

"Yaas, wathah, Levison!"

"Then you can count me out," said Levison. "Why can't we go by train?"

"Wayway fares are a wotten waste of money in war-time, Levison."

"Bow-wow!" said Levison. And he walked back to the School House. Gore of the Shell indulged in a sniff, and followed him. The little party for the cinema was reduced by two.

The other fellows marched on with Arthur Augustus. Generally, the swell of St. Jim's did things in lavish style. As he had invited seventeen fellows to accompany him to the cinema, he might really have "gone the whole hog," so to

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speaking, and stood the railway tickets in addition to the cinema tickets—so Levison and Gore considered, at all events.

But Tom Merry & Co. did not mind a long walk, even in rainy weather. After all, there was a warm and comfortable cinema at the end of it. And something had to be done to kill that deplorable afternoon.

They tramped on down the road, and turned through the weeping wood towards Wayland. The spring green was showing in the woods, but every branch and bough was dripping with rain, and the footpath was muddy and squelchy. Ray and Skimpole dropped out at that point. They had had enough mud and enough rain, and on second thoughts they decided to walk home.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, turning his damp eyeglass upon the deserters. "Some fellahs seem to be wathah afraid of a little wain."

"And some fellows haven't sense enough to go in out of the rain," grunted Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

Squelch! Squelch! Squelch!

"By Jove!" said Talbot. "It would have been a bit wiser to take the train. This is rather thick—to save threepence!"

"Wats! If I can wuff it, surely you fellahs can," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "You must wemembah, Talbot, that this is a patwiotic expeditish."

"I'll take your word for it, Gussy," said Talbot, with a smile. "If it's patriotic to go to a cinema, the country is swarming with patriots."

"You do not quite compwehend, Talbot."

"No, I don't," agreed Talbot.

"Howevah, you will compwehend when we weach the Wayland Picture Palace."

The party trudged on. There were no more desertions, but they were damp and tired and considerably muddy when they came out into the Wayland Road. There the going was a little easier, and they walked on more cheerily into the town.

"Here we are again!" said Blake, as they stopped outside the Wayland Picture Palace. "Lead the way, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Buck up, and let's get out of the rain," said Kangaroo.

"I am afraid it is imposso to get out of the wain, deah boy. In war-time, and for patwiotic motives, you must not mind a little wain."

"Ain't we going in to the pictures?" demanded Herries.

"Not at all, deah boy."

"We're not!" shrieked Blake.

"Certainly not!"

The whole party glared at Arthur Augustus, under their umbrellas. Their expressions were positively Hunnish.

"What have you brought us here for, then?" asked Manners, in concentrated tones. "Was it for a mud-collecting expedition?"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"I understood that it was Gussy's treat," said Tom Merry.

"If it isn't, we can take our own tickets, I suppose. Come on!"

"Pway stop, Tom Mewwy. We are not goin' in to see the pictures. We are goin' to see the managah."

"What the merry thunder do you want to see the manager for?"

"To wemonstwate with him."

"Wha-a-at!"

"I have already wemarked, deah boys, that we have come here with a patwiotic object," said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"We are not here for frivolous amusement in war-time. Pway I might have explained more fully before we left the school, but it is all wight—I will pwoceed to explain at once."

"We'll get inside first," growled Digby. "I'm wet."

"Pway don't mind a little wain, Dig."

"Why, you spoofer, you're standing under shelter yourself!"

"Yaas, I have to think of my toppah. Now, listen to me, deah boys—"

The dear boys did not listen. They shoved past Arthur Augustus into the spacious vestibule of the picture palace, and the dripping umbrellas were lowered. Tom Merry went towards the cash-desk, but D'Arcy caught him by the arm and pulled him back.

"We shall not wequiah tickets, Tom Mewwy."

"Can't bilk them," said Lowther, with a shake of the head.

"The porter's got his eye on us already."

"You uttah ass, Lowthah! You know vewy well I am not wpoosin' to bilk them. We are not goin' to see the pictures. Pway listen to me."

"Is the burbling ass right off his rocker?" asked Reilly, in amazement. "Shure, what have we come for, then, intirely?"

"I will pwoceed to explain. Gentlemen—"

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TUCK HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1^o.

"Blessed if he isn't going to make a speech!" ejaculated Blake.

"Gentlemen—"

"Cheese it!"

"I wefuse to cheese it! Gentlemen, I have a few wemarks to make."

The big porter in gold lace was staring curiously at the group of juniors. The young lady in the cash-desk was looking on. A diminutive youth with a chocolate tray paused to observe the proceedings. Several members of the public, coming in to take tickets for the cinema, stopped to look on. Arthur Augustus was attracting general attention. But he never flinched.

"Gentlemen, pway give me your attention!"

"Bow-wow!"

"At the pwesent moment, we are at war with Germany!"

"Go hon!"

"It's a giddy war lecture!" said Kerruish. "Fairly daff, and no mistake. Better get a muzzle for him."

"Pway dwy up, Kewwuish! We are at pwesent at war with a barbarow wace of savages, and it is a vewy sewious mattah—much more sewious than our politicians wealish. It is necessary for ewevy chap to be economical, and, above all, to wefuse to buy foweign goods, especially goods that come fwom wotten neutwals. A neutwal is a wathah despiceable sort of animal, and thinks only of makin' money out of us while we are in difficulties with the war. It is the duty of ewevy patwiotic Bwitoin to fwustwate their knavish twicks!"

"Right enough," said Monty Lowther heartily. "I'm not going to buy any Yankee motor-cars this term!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ewvwy chap who buys American motor-cahs, or Swedish matches, or Dutch bulbs, or Norwegian sardines, is helpin' the enemy," said Arthur Augustus. "Such a chap is sendin' Bwitish money out of Bwitain at a time when Bwitain needs ewevy shillin' to pay for the war. The disgustin' neutwals are pilin' up wealth at our expense, while we are fightin' their battles for them, for they all know vewy well that, if the Huns beat us, the neutwals would be cwushed next. The Huns are vewy watty about the Yankee bluff they've been gettin' lately, and they would be vewy pleased to mop up the Yankees, if they could get wid of us first. I wpeat that ewevy man who supports neutwal industwies is stwikin' a blow against his own countwy."

"All vewy true," agreed Tom Merry. "But couldn't you have told us these striking truths at St. Jim's?"

"Pway don't intewwupt, Tom Mewwy. Ewvwy shillin' that goes out of the countwy for neutwal goods is a shillin' less towards winnin' the war. It is bettah to pay a little more for English matches than to buy Swedish wubbish. It is more honourable to walk than to wide in a Yankee motah-cah. It is bettah to have a garden like a desert than to plant Dutch bulbs in it. And now we come to the cinemah!"

"Good. Let's go in!"

"We are not goin' in. I shall wegard ewevy fellah who goes in as a twaitor!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"You are awah, deah boys, that first-class cinemah films are manufactured in Bwitain. It is a gwowin' industwy, and adds to the wesources of the nation. But at the pwesent time great sums are paid for Yankee films—which are not so good, and are in many cases of a disweputable nature. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are sent abwoad ewevy year for American films by unpatriotic persons, and the public support them in this unpatriotic attitude by goin' to see the pictures. Gentlemen it is time that this was stopped."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You are going to issue an Order in Council prohibiting it?" asked Monty Lowther innocently.

"It is not in my powah to do so, Lowthah, or I should certainly do so," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "The pwesent state of affairs is a disgwace to the countwy. We have shared in the disgwace unthinkin'ly. We are not going to share in it any more, and we are goin' to do our best to stop it. That is why we have come heah. We are goin' to wquest the managah of the Wayland Picture Palace to cease showin' Yankee films, undah penalty of nevah seein' us in the cinemah again. I twust our example will be widely followed. Ewvwy fellah who pays money to see a Yankee film is, pwactically speakin', twadin' with the enemy."

"Oh!"

Tom Merry & Co. stared blankly at the swell of St. Jim's. It was out at last, and the cinema party understood what they had come to the cinema for!

ANSWERS

CHAPTER 3. Not a Success!

F ATHEAD!"

"Duffer!"

"Ass!"

"Frabjous chump!"

Such were the expressions of opinion that followed the telling speech of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

As a matter of fact, there was great reason in what the swell of St. Jim's had said, but the juniors were exasperated. A long tramp through mud and rain, to find a speech instead of an entertainment at the end of it, was not gratifying.

But Arthur Augustus never turned a hair. He jammed his monocle a little more tightly into his noble eye, and regarded the little party unmoved.

"I trust that, upon reflection, you will agree with me, dear boys."

"I'm jolly well going in," growled Clifton Dane.

"Pway don't do anythin' of the sort, Dane. As a Canadian, you are called upon to show an example of patriotism."

"Look here, some of the pictures are British," said Dane.

"Yaas, but not all of them. Unless all the pictures are British or Fwrench, it is unpatwiotic to go in."

"What about Chumpy Chiplin?" demanded Blake. "You can't see that funny merchant at all excepting on Yankee films."

"Then we had better never see him at all, Blake."

"But he's so jolly funny," said Digby.

"That makes no difference. Ewevy chap who goes to see Chumpy Chiplin in a Yankee film is undescrivin' of the name of British."

"Oh, let's get out," said Tom Merry. "Gussy's right, but he might have sprung this on us before we walked miles in the rain."

"You have come over heah with a patwiotic object, Tom Mewwy!"

"You are alluding to yourself?" asked Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am alludin' to our object in comin' heah, you uttah ass. We are goin' to see the managah and wemonstwato with him."

"Oh, great pip!"

"I wely on you fellahs to back me up."

The resplendent porter was bearing down on the group. Quite a crowd was gathering in the vestibule now, and Arthur Augustus' remarks had been heard by all of them. The porter tapped D'Arcy on the shoulder.

"Are you goin' in, sir?" he inquired grimly.

Arthur Augustus jerked his shoulder away, and turned his eyeglass loftily upon the porter.

"No. I am not goin' in," he replied.

"Then please step houtside!"

"I decline to step outside!"

"People ain't allowed to 'ang about 'ere," said the porter.

"If you ain't got no business 'ere, you get out!"

"I am here to see the managah. I wequest you to call Mr. Pipkin."

"Mr. Pipkin's busy."

"I will wait till he is not busy!"

"Gussy—" murmured Blake.

"Wats! I am heah to see the managah, and I wufese to go until I have een the managah."

"Ear, ear!" said a diminutive youth in the crowd that was collecting. "Go it, you with the glass eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The porter was nonplussed. He might have ejected D'Arcy, but he could not eject a dozen sturdy juniors. And, though doubtful of the wisdom of Gussy's patriotic campaign, and considerably disappointed at not seeing the pictures, Tom Merry & Co. were quite prepared to stand by the swell of St. Jim's.

"Look 'ere, you'd better go!"

"Pway acquaint the managah with my desiah to see him!" said D'Arcy calmly.

The porter hesitated, and finally sent the chocolate-boy with a message. Arthur Augustus waited the result with stately calm, the juniors with curiosity, and the crowd with grins. There were twenty or thirty people gathered round in the wide vestibule by this time, and most of them seemed to be amused, and perhaps not so much impressed as the ought to have been by Arthur Augustus' patriotic speech. The popularity of Chumpy Chiplin on the films outweighed patriotic considerations.

A little fat gentleman, with an enormous watch-chain and a glittering diamond came out into view, with a frown on his fat face. It was Mr. Pipkin, the manager of the Wayland Picture Palace. To Mr. Pipkin, business was business, and patriotism was simply an "also ran."

"What's all this, by gad?" he exclaimed. "Now, then, young shaver—"

"I decline to be addressed as a young shavah, Mr. Pipkin."

"What do you want here?" demanded Mr. Pipkin.

"I am heah to wemonstwato with you, sir. At the pwesent moment, you are showin' Amewican films in your cinemah. In the pwesent state of affaihs, it is unpatwiotic to support Amewican films, especially as the Yankees charge a vewy heavy tawiff on Bwedish films to pwesent their importation into Amewicah. We, wewpwesentin' the fellahs of St. Jim's, wequest you wespwctfully to cease showin' Amewican films, as othahwise we shall be unable to visit you cinemah any more."

Mr. Pipkin gasped.

"Pway don't be watty," said Arthur Augustus. "I am simply pointin' out your duty at a patwiotic citizen."

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared Mr. Pipkin. "Thompson, show this person out!"

"I will go without bein' shown," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "Now I have pointed out to you your duty as a patwiotic citizen, I will wetaiah. So long as you show Yankee films in this buildin', my fwriends and I intend to boycott the place. Good-aftahnoon!"

And Arthur Augustus marched out with his noble nose high in the air, leaving Mr. Pipkin almost speechless. Tom Merry & Co. followed him grinning.

CHAPTER 4.

Peaceful Picketing!

O UTSIDE the cinema the rain was falling. Tom Merry & Co. put up their umbrellas amid the dripping and spattering.

"Well, where now?" asked Blake. "We've done our patriotic duty, and set a good example to the Government. What next?"

"Shure, I'm going home by train," said Reilly, "and the next time Gussy asks me to join a party, faith, I'll take him into a corner and suffocate him intirely."

"Pway don't go, Weilly! We are not finished heah yet."

"What's the little game?" asked Tom Merry resignedly.

"A deputation to the Prime Minister next, to suggest cuttin' down Ministerial salaries?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't wot, dear boy. We're goin' to do some picketin'."

"Some whatting?"

"Picketin'," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "You know how Twade Union stwikers do, you know—they picket a place to keep blacklegs fwom goin' in and gettin' their jobs. Peaceful picketin', you know. We are goin' to stand wound heah, and interview the public as they come in, and explain to them that it would be unpatwiotic to entah a place where Yankee films are shown."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"For goodness' sake draw a line, Gussy!" exclaimed Talbot, laughing. "We don't want to make a row with half Wayland. And what would the Head say?"

"We are goin' to do peaceful picketin', Talbot."

"Peaceful picketing often leads to black eyes and thick ears."

"That is nothin'—the fellahs in the twenches are wisikin' more than that. Where are you goin', Weilly?"

"I'm going to the railway-station."

"But the picketin'—"

"I'll do my picketing in my study, thanks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Same here," said Kangaroo. "You should choose a fine afternoon for playing the giddy ox, Gussy!"

"Weally, Noble—"

"Come on, Dane! There's just time to catch the local for Rylcombe."

Arthur Augustus glowered with indignation as the party marched off. The Terrible Three lingered a few moments after the rest, but they followed. Blake and Herries and Dig remained with their chum, but it was to persuade him.

"Come on!" urged Blake. "If we miss the local we have an hour to wait for the next."

"I am not goin', Blake!"

"We shall go without you, fathead," said Digby.

"I have my duty to do."

"Ass!"

"I wufese to be called an ass. I am goin' to do my duty, and you can desert me at the post of honah if you like."

"Oh, dear!"

"Let's get out of the rain, for goodness' sake!" granted Herries.

The three juniors were loth to leave their devoted chum. But picketing the cinema in the rain was rather too much. They departed—but they stopped in the shelter of a doorway at a little distance to watch.

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"We'll give him his head," said Blake. "As soon as he gets into a row, we'll rescue him and yank him away." And his chums agreed.

Arthur Augustus, thus left on his "lonely own," stood in a dignified attitude outside the cinema, determined upon peaceful picketing. The big porter glowered out at him, but did not come out. Arthur Augustus was in deadly earnest, and he had no doubt of the effect of his eloquence upon the public. The rain swished round him as he stood under his umbrella, watching and waiting.

A young man came along and turned towards the entrance of the picture-palace. D'Arcy hurried to intercept him.

"Pway, stop a minute, deah sir!" he exclaimed.

"Eh?"

"You are goin' into the cinema?"

"Yes."

"May I respectfully point out to you that as American films are— Bai Jove, how uttably wude of that fellah to walk away while I am talkin' to him."

The young man had gone in—perhaps not liking the rain. Arthur Augustus sniffed, and waited for the next victim. A few minutes later a man with a nose like a hawk's beak, and features resembling in general outline a hatchet, came up, and made for the cinema. Arthur Augustus jumped in the way—in such haste that he nearly bored a hole in the stranger's face with his umbrella.

"Gee-whiz!" ejaculated the stranger.

"Pway stop a minute, deah boy—"

"Eh? What's the racket?"

"You are goin' into the cinema—"

"I guess so."

"Pway allow me to point out that this cinemah displays Yankee films, and therefore does not deserve the support of a twoo Bwitisher."

"Waal, I guess I'm not a Britisher," remarked the stranger. His accent ought really to have revealed that fact to Arthur Augustus at once. "And I reckon you're a cheeky young monkey. Gerout!"

"Oh, if you are a Yankee, I have nothin' more to say!" said Arthur Augustus, with lofty contempt.

The hawk-faced man passed him, and contrived to shove him in passing; and Arthur Augustus, unprepared for the shove, slipped on the slippery pavement and sat down. He sat on his umbrella, and there was a crunch. The Yankee gentleman chuckled and went into the cinema.

"Oh, bai Jove! Gwooh! Oh, cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus scrambled up, his eyes gleaming. He made a bound into the picture-palace in pursuit of the rude stranger. That gentleman had disappeared into the darkened hall; but the porter was ready for the swell of St. Jim's. A powerful grasp closed upon Arthur Augustus, and he was whirled into the street before he knew what was happening.

The unfortunate junior skidded along the pavement, and landed in the gutter, which was flowing with rain. There was a terrific splash, and a yell of horror from Arthur Augustus. The red-faced porter roared with laughter.

"Oh, gwoogh! You howwid wuffian!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Haw, haw, haw! You clear off!"

"Bai Jove! I will give you a feahful thwashin'!"

Exactly how he was to thrash a man six feet high was a question Arthur Augustus might have found it difficult to answer. He did not think of it for the moment. He charged back across the pavement like a lion in wrath. Fortunately for him, three juniors rushed up in time, and he was seized in the grasp of Blake and Herries and Digby.

"Kim on!" said Blake, chuckling. "I've got your hat, Dig's got your umbrella, and there's time to catch the train."

"Welease me—"

"This way to the station—"

"I am goin' to thwash that wuffianly portah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you do not welease me, you utiah asses—"

"March!" said Blake.

And Arthur Augustus had to march, in the grasp of his chums. His peaceful picketing was over. In spite of wild expostulations, Blake and Herries and Dig marched him forcibly on to the railway-station.

"I wefuse to go into the twain till I have thwashed that wuffian!" howled Arthur Augustus, as he was marched in.

"Take his feet, Herries!"

"Ha, ha! Right-ho!"

"I wefuse to be cawwied in this widiculous way, you duffahs. Welease me at once. I—I will go quietly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Study No. 6 hurried on the platform in time for the train. The rest of the party were waiting there, and there was a howl at the sight of Arthur Augustus. He was smothered with mud from head to foot, his hat was battered, and his umbrella was a wreck.

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"Was the picketing a success?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I have been tweated in a wuffianly mannah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to cackle at, you duffahs! I shall come back another time to picket that beastly cinemah. Gwooh!"

Arthur Augustus sat in the train with an expression of lofty dignity, which was somewhat marred by the mud that plastered his aristocratic countenance. But the rest of the party grinned and chuckled all the way home to St. Jim's. And when they arrived, Monty Lowther suggested a vote of thanks to Gussy for a very entertaining afternoon—which was passed unanimously. Arthur Augustus' only acknowledgment was a sniff.

CHAPTER 5.

Towser Causes Trouble.

BERNARD GLYN, of the Shell, was waiting for Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, when the Fourth came out of their Form-room the following day.

He hurried up to the swell of St. Jim's at once, but was met by a freezing stare.

"Gussy, old man!"

"Pway do not address me, Glyn."

"Hallo, what's biting you?" asked Glyn cheerily.

"Nothin' is bitin' me, Glyn."

"Then what's the matter?"

"I wegard you as a wuff idiot, Glyn. You tweated me with the gwossett diswpect in your studay yestahday—"

"Did I?" asked Glyn, making an effort to remember. When the schoolboy-inventor was engaged upon one of his experiments, smaller matters vanished from his mind, and he had quite forgotte his tussle with the swell of the Fourth.

"Yaas, you did, and if my twiends had not been in such a hurwy, I should have given you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Oh, I remember!" said Glyn indignantly. "You mucked up my model. Why, it would have served you right if I'd brained you with a cricket-stump!"

"I should uttably wefuse to be bwained with a cwicket-stump!"

"You promised to help me, Gussy," said Glyn reproachfully.

"I should have been willin' to help you, Glyn, but undah the cires I wefuse to do so. I wegard you as a wuffianly ass!"

"Now, look here, Gussy—" said Glyn persuasively.

"Pway say no more. Besides, I disappwove of your wotten inventions!" said Arthur Augustus. "I wemembah vevy well that once you made a mechanical figah to weseemble Skimpole, and covahed Skimmay with widicule. I wegard that as bein' bad form!"

Glyn grinned.

"I want you to come to my study, Gussy," he urged. "You won't have to do anything, only just sit and watch me, and cheer me up with some of your splendid conversation while I do some working in wax."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus was deaf to the voice of the charmer. He walked away with his nose elevated, and Glyn grunted with dissatisfaction. The Terrible Three, who had heard that little colloquy, regarded the schoolboy-inventor with astonishment.

"What are you pulling Gussy's leg for?" demanded Tom Merry.

"I want to make use of him!" growled Glyn.

"But what good will he do sitting in your study and talking?"

"I want to watch his face."

"Great Scott! What for?"

Glyn did not reply to the question. He hurried away to intercept Dick Julian, who was going down the passage.

"I say, Julian!"

Julian stopped, with a nod.

"I want you to lend me a hand," said Glyn eagerly. "Got your camera?"

"It's in my study," said Julian. "Want me to take your photograph? The weather's cleared up, and there's a good sun now, if you like."

"Not mine; Gussy's."

"What the dickens for?"

Glyn hesitated.

"I'm making an invention," he said. "It's a real ripper! Look here, I'll tell you the secret if you like, only keep it dark."

Dick Julian yawned portentously. Glyn's inventions did not possess such a thrilling interest for other fellows as they did for himself.

"Confide it to Talbot," suggested Julian.

"Blow Talbot!"

"Or to Tom Merry, or Gore——"

"Blow Tom Merry and Gore!" howled Bernard Glyn. "I want you to help me, now Gussy's gone off on his dignity. I want photographs of Gussy under every aspect—seen from north, south, east, and west—sitting and standing—talking and grinning—yawning and burbling, and—and everything! I'll stand the films."

Dick Julian gave a whistle of astonishment.

"Look here, I'll tell you," said Glyn. "Cut off and get your camera. You can take better photographs than I can."

"Oh, all right!"

Julian went to his study for his camera, and rejoined Glyn in the doorway. They went out into the quadrangle together, Glyn speaking in a low, eager voice. Dick Julian listened to his explanations at first with an incredulous stare, and then he burst into a laugh.

"I've heard about the mechanical Skimpole," he said. "That was before I came here, but I've heard about it. But——"

"This will be ever so much better—I've thought of a lot of improvements," said Glyn eagerly. "I want Gussy to help me—unconsciously, of course——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But he won't, and photographs are the next best thing to work from. Only keep it dark; he would most likely get ratty."

"Ha, ha, ha! I should say he would. I'm your man," said Julian.

Arthur Augustus was pacing loftily under the elms when the two juniors bore down on him. D'Arcy was reflecting upon the next step in his cinema campaign. To his surprise and annoyance, most of the fellows had not regarded his campaign at all seriously. It really looked as if he would not be able to induce all St. Jim's to boycott the picture-palaces that showed American films. But Arthur Augustus was a stickler, and he did not intend to give in. There was no doubt that he was quite in the right; but youth is thoughtless, and the fellows seemed to have agreed to take Gussy's patriotic campaign in a humorous spirit.

He frowned a little as Glyn came up with Julian. But Glyn was wearing his most agreeable smile.

"Busy, Gussy?" he asked.

"I have already requested you not to address me, Glyn."

"I apologise."

"Eh?"

"Most humbly," said Glyn blandly. "Would you like me to go down on my knees, Gussy?"

"Certainly not, Glyn. From one gentleman to another an apology is quite sufficient. I restore to you my friendship."

"Thanks, awfully," said Glyn gratefully. "Julian wants to photograph you, Gussy. We want to make a set of pictures of a really well-dressed fellow, to—show what St. Jim's can really produce, you know, when at its very best."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, considerably flattered. "I weally have no objection, deah boy. Pewwaps I had beftah wun in and put on a toppah?"

"Just as you are," said Glyn. "The sun's all right at present. We want a whole set, you know, and every picture a gem."

"Vewy well, deah boy. Go ahead!"

"I've got twelve films in," said Julian. "I'll take the lot. Stand beside that tree, Gussy. A little more to the left. Now raise your chin a little. Smile!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hallo! What's the little game?" asked Tom Merry, coming up as D'Arcy posed in a graceful attitude beside the tree.

"Gerrout of the light, fathead!"

Snap!

"Good egg!" said Julian. "Now for a profile."

"I'll tell you what, Julian," said Herries. "You can take my bulldog Towser if you like. Shall I fetch him?"

"Br-r-r-r! Hold up your head, D'Arcy. That's right."

Herries of the Fourth scudded away for his bulldog Towser. There could not, to Herries' mind, possibly be a better subject for a photograph than his celebrated bulldog. Meanwhile, Julian continued to take Arthur Augustus from every point of view—full-face, side-face, profile, half-profile, smiling, serious, and, in fact, in every variety. He had taken eleven films by the time Herries returned with Towser.

"Here you are, Julian," said Herries.

"Take that wotten beast away!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I have remarked befoah, Hewwies, that he has no respect for a fellah's twousahs."

"Oh, rats! Where shall I stand him, Julian?"

"Take him away!" roared Glyn. "His face is enough to bust the camera!"

"Why, you silly ass——"

"Gerrout of the light!" said Julian. "One more, Gussy. Laugh this time; I want to take you laughing."

"By Jove! What shall I laugh at, deah boy?"

"Oh, anything! Look at Herries feet; they'll make you laugh——"

"What's the matter with my feet?" roared Herries.

"Or his face," said Julian; "or think of something else that's funny!"

Herries, with a wrathful look, made a stride towards the amateur photographer. There was a clink as Towser dragged his chain away, and a yell from Arthur Augustus.

"Keep that bwute away, Hewwies!"

Herries made a jump for the chain, and Towser made a jump for Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's whipped round the tree. Towser whipped after him. Perhaps Towser thought he was entitled to a free bite after being on the chain so long, or perhaps there was something attractive in Gussy's really elegant "bags" which made him anxious to sample them. Arthur Augustus dodged wildly round the big elm, with Towser on his track.

Snap! Julian, grinning, snapped the merry chase round the tree. Then he strolled away with his camera, followed by the chuckling Glyn.

"Wescue!" yelled Arthur Augustus, dodging Towser. "Hewwies, you uttah ass, dwag that wotten dog away!"

"I—I can't catch the chain!" gasped Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Merry. "Here we go round the mulberry-bush! Keep it up, Gussy!"

"Gwooh-wooh! Dwaggimoff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gr-r-r-rh!" came from Towser.

Arthur Augustus made a wild break for the School House. Towser dashed in pursuit. After him went Herries in hot chase. With Towser about a yard behind, Arthur Augustus bounded into the School House. Before Towser could follow him in, Herries got his foot on the trailing chain, and Towser came to a sudden stop with a jerk.

"Got him!" panted Herries. "Come on, Towsy, old boy! Where's Julian? He hasn't taken his photograph yet."

Dick Julian was conspicuous by his absence. He had no desire to interview Towser at close quarters. Herries, with a grunt, dragged Towser away. Tom Merry went in, laughing, and found Arthur Augustus sitting on the stairs in a state of collapse.

"Splendid!" said Tom enthusiastically.

"Gwooh-hoo! What do you mean, you ass?"

"Your sprinting," said Tom. "Next time you're on the cinder-path, you should get Herries to set Towser after you. You'd win hands down."

"Gwooh! I have been thown into a feahful fluttah. That feahful beast ought to be shot! Gwooh! I might have been feahfully bitten——"

Tom shook his head.

"Towser wouldn't bite you, Gussy—it was only your bags he was after. Herries says he seldom, if ever, draws blood."

"The uttah beast!"

Arthur Augustus was still gasping on the stairs when Herries came in, looking morose.

"Hewwies, you ass," said D'Arcy. "I insist upon your sendin' that wotten bulldog away!"

"Fathead! You must have looked at him," said Herries. "Towser wouldn't have gone for you if you hadn't looked at him. And a sudden burst like that doesn't do Towser any good, either. I've a jolly good mind to mop up the floor with you."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Tain't good for Towser to get excited like that," said Herries warmly. "Mind you don't do it again, that's all."

And Herries marched off wrathfully, leaving the swell of the Fourth absolutely speechless.

CHAPTER 6.

Bernard Glyn is Busy.

BERNARD GLYN was extremely absent-minded in class that afternoon.

His chums noticed it, and they knew what it meant. The schoolboy inventor's mind was occupied with one of his weird inventions, and such trifles as lessons did not weigh much in the balance.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, did not see eye to eye with Glyn in that matter. In the history class, Glyn informed him that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was caused by a central spring set in motion by pressing a button; an answer which showed that Glyn's mind was certainly wandering to

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mechanical matters. That answer earned Glyn a hundred lines, and he endeavoured to collect his thoughts.

But it was in vain. Every now and then he smiled, and then he would knit his brows in deep thought—and once or twice he chuckled. His latest invention simply insisted upon occupying his thoughts. It was a great relief to Glyn when lessons were over for the day.

Immediately the Shell were released from the Form-room, Glyn rushed off to his study and locked himself in. About ten minutes later Harry Noble tried the door, and then proceeded to kick it vigorously.

"Let me in, you silly ass. I want my 'Chuckles.'"

"Go away!"

"Open the door, you burbling jabberwock!"

"Can't—I'm busy."

"What are you doing, you frabjous dummy?"

"Working in wax."

"If you don't let me in, I shall be working in whacks, when I get at you," howled Kangaroo. "I want my 'Chuckles.'"

"Go and read the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' instead."

"You—you—"

"You can get it in the library."

"You shrieking ass!" roared the Cornstalk. "Will you open the door?"

"Presently. I'm busy."

Kangaroo bestowed a final terrific kick on the door, and retired in great wrath; but not to seek the "Encyclopædia Britannica." He did not regard that great work as a satisfactory substitute for "Chuckles."

Clifton Dane, who also had the doubtful pleasure of sharing the end study with Glyn, came along a little later. Dane wanted his football. But there was no football to be had. The Canadian junior breathed blood-curdling threats through the keyhole, but Bernard Glyn was too busy even to reply. Clifton Dane also kicked the door and departed in great wrath.

Glyn, unmoved, worked on steadily. His study-mates would have been surprised if they could have seen him. On the study table nearly a dozen photographs were set up, under his eyes. They were the photographs of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, which Dick Julian had developed and printed before afternoon lessons. Most of them had come out very well, and they pictured the swell of St. Jim's under every aspect. Glyn was modelling in wax, and studying the photographs with great care as he worked. Glyn was skilled in such work, and he was producing a wax model of the aristocratic countenance of Arthur Augustus, with great success.

At tea-time, Kangaroo and Dane arrived together, and commenced a regular assault and battery on the door. Glyn did not heed.

"We want tea!" Kangaroo roared through the keyhole.

"I've no time for tea."

"But I have, fathead!"

"Go and feed with Tom Merry."

"He's gone over to tea with Figgins in the New House."

"Go after him, then."

"Silly ass!"

"Well, go and eat coke!"

"Let us in!" bawled Dane.

"Can't! I've got the table covered with things, and you'd disturb them."

"We jolly well would, you frabjous ass! We want tea!"

"Go and sponge on Study No. 6 for once."

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

Bang! Bang! Thump! Kick!

The two exasperated Shell fellows had to go. There was no impression to be made upon a locked door, and an enthusiastic inventor. Fortunately, they found hospitality in Study No. 6.

It was not till an hour later that the door of the end study opened, and Bernard Glyn came out, looking tired but satisfied. He made his way to Study No. 6, where he found Arthur Augustus D'Arcy alone busily engaged with pen and paper.

"You're the chap I want to see," said Glyn.

Arthur Augustus looked up.

"I am wathah busy, Glyn."

"Sorry to interrupt. But—"

"I am w'itin' a little speech," said D'Arcy. "I am thinkin' of addressin' the fellahs at a meetin' in the Form-woom, on the subject of cinemahs and wotten Yankee films."

"Hear, hear!" said Glyn. "What a ripping idea! Only you would think of ideas like that, Gussy."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed D'Arcy. "A fellah with my bwin powahs does get ideas, you know. The great sums that are spent on Yankee films would support a great Bwedish industry, you know, if kept at home. It is the duty of evewy Bwedish boy to boycott cinemahs where Yankee films are shown."

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"Exactly. I want you—"

"The savin' would be immense, and would help considerably to win the war. The Yankees are makin' plenty of money out of us in othah ways."

"Certainly. I've looked in to—"

"If evewy Bwedish boy made up his mind nevah to go to a cinemah where Yankee films were shown—"

"I want—"

"You want to back me up? Vewy good, Glyn, I will take your name down. I am makin' a list of patwiotic chaps who are goin' to insist upon seein' only twue Bwedish films."

"I want some of your old clothes, Gussy."

"Bai Jove!"

"You've got lots, as you have a new suit every other day—"

"Weally, Glyn, I don't have anythin' of the sort. Howevah, I certainly have a good many old garments, which I intended to bestow on poor persons."

"I want one suit—not too shabby. It's for a chap who's badly in need of it," explained Glyn. "He simply can't do without it."

"In that case, deah boy, I will pwesent it to you with pleasure."

"I'll square for it if you like, Gussy; in fact, I'd rather."

"Wats! I do not sell old clothes."

"But really—"

"Weally, Glyn, if you wish to insult me—"

"Oh, all right!" said Glyn, "I'll take 'em as a gift!"

"Pway come to the dorm, deah boy!"

Bernard Glyn followed D'Arcy to the Fourth-Form dormitory. A suit of Etons was produced, in very good condition—not quite natty enough for the best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's to continue wearing, but quite good enough for Bernard Glyn's purpose, whatever that was.

"Ripping!" said Glyn. "And one of your beautiful fancy waistcoats—the brighter the colours the better."

"I don't suppose I shall evah weah this one again. That ass Blake squirted ink on it. This one with yellow spots and cwimson babs—"

"Topping!"

"You are vewy welcome, deah boy, if the things are for a chap in need of some decent clobber. I did not know you were a philanthropist, Glyn."

"I'm awfully philanthropic in some things. And the chap I'm speaking of simply couldn't do without this clobber. He's got nothing else to wear, in fact."

"Bai Jove! Then you are vewy welcome."

"What about the necktie—this blue and purple and pink one—would do."

"Pway take it."

"Thanks awfully, Gussy!"

"Not at all, deah boy. You are vewy welcome. I trust you will come to the meetin' in the Form-woom, Glyn, when it comes off. I am goin' to speak—"

"Any old thing," said Glyn. "Better go and get that speech done, Gussy. We shall—ahem!—expect a really ripping speech from you."

And Glyn rushed off with his new possessions, and locked himself in his study with them. And when Clifton Dane and Kangaroo came up to do their preparation, the door of the end study was still locked.

CHAPTER 7.

Arthur Augustus Means Business.

KNOCK, knock, knock!

"Open this door, you frabjous ass!"

"If you don't open this door, I'll get a coke-hammer and bust it in! We've got to do our prep, you frabjous duffer!"

Somewhat to the surprise of the applicants for admission, the study door was unlocked at once. They would not really have been astonished if the inventor of the School House had kept them locked out all the evening.

"All serene," said Glyn cheerily.

His study-mates glared at him.

"You silly chump!" said Kangaroo. "I've a jolly good mind to scalp you! What have you been up to?"

"I've been busy."

"It isn't chemicals this time," said Dane sniffing. "What is it, you fathead?"

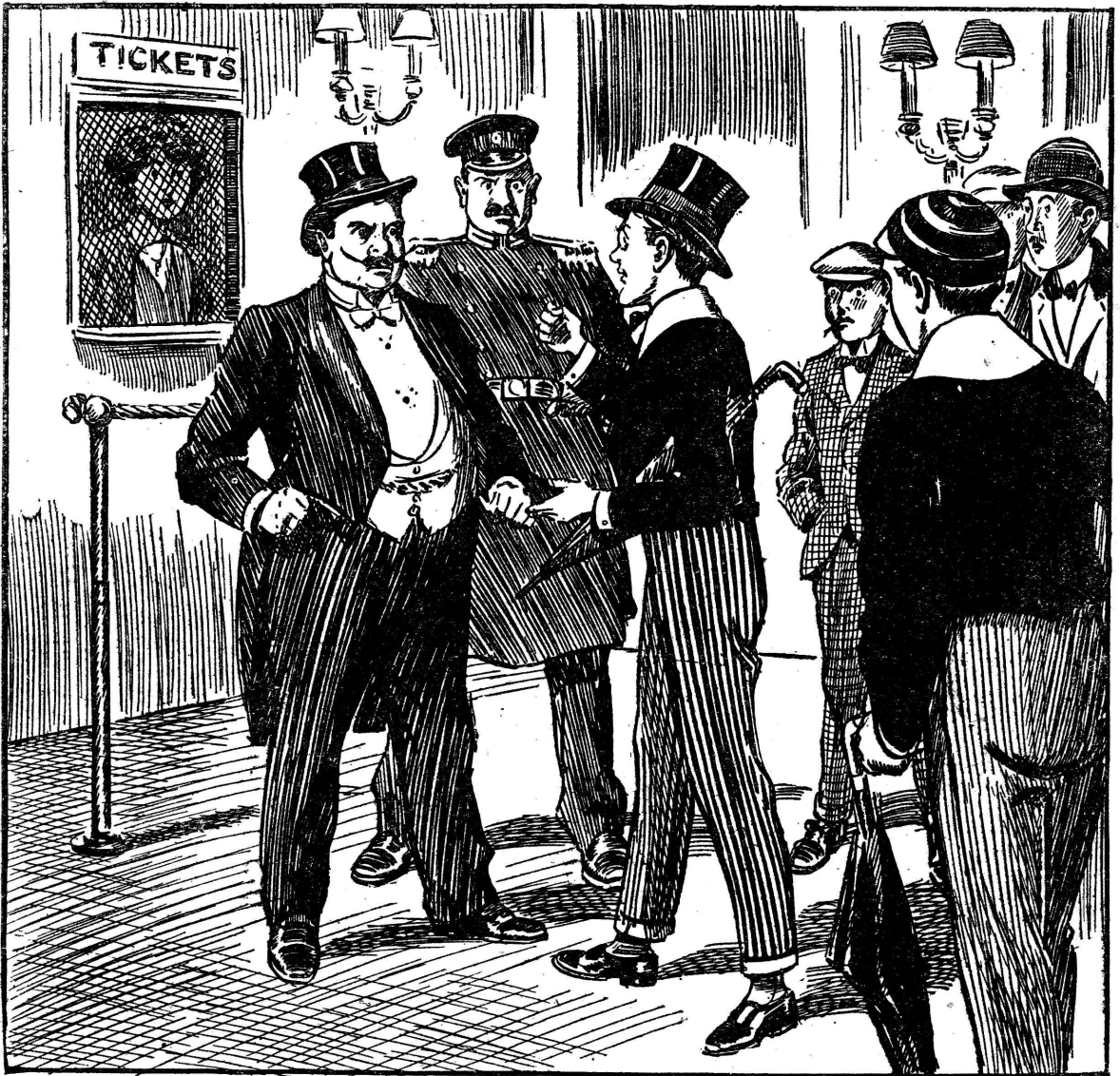
"Time for prep."

"Oh, bump him!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Glyn, dodging round the table. "I really couldn't let you in before—I've been awfully busy! Hands off, you fatheads!"

Bump, bump, bump! Bernard Glyn smote the floor thrice forcibly. He roared.

"Leggo! Stoppit! Yarooop!"



A little fat gentleman, with an enormous watch-chain and a glittering diamond, came out into view, with a frown on his fat face. It was Mr. Pipkin, the manager of the Wayland Picture Palace. "What's all this, by gad!" he exclaimed. "Now, then, young shaver—" "I decline to be addressed as a young shavah, Mr. Pipkin," said D'Arcy indignantly. (See Chapter 3.)

"Give him another!" panted Kangaroo. "He's got to have a lesson about locking chaps out of their study!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Stoppit! I'll tell you what I've been doing, if you like—"

"Rats! Give him another!"

Bump, bump!

Bernard Glyn sat on the floor, gasping, when his exasperated study-mates had done with him. He sat there, and called them names, for about five minutes, what time Kangaroo and Dane cheerfully started their work at the table. Then he picked himself up somewhat limply. He shifted very uncomfortably in his chair while he did his preparation.

Glyn did not linger over his prep. that evening. Having done barely enough to elude the wrath of Mr. Linton in the morning, he quitted the study, leaving Kangaroo and Dane still at work. His steps turned in the direction of Study No. 6. He found Blake and Herries and Dig and D'Arcy doing their prep. there.

"Busy, D'Arcy?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah! I've got my pwep. to do. Have you taken that clobbah to that fellah you were speakin' of, Glyn?"

"Yes; it fits him like the paper on the wall," said Glyn. "Awfully obliged, Gussy. But I want you when you've done your prep. Hallo, what the dickens—"

Knox of the Sixth strode into the study, with a paper in his hand. Blake & Co. rose to their feet at once. A visit from the bully of the Sixth generally meant trouble to that cheery study.

Knox held up the paper.

"Is this your handiwork, D'Arcy?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus calmly.

"What do you mean by sticking such nonsense on the notice-board?" demanded the prefect.

"Weally, Knox—"

The juniors looked at the notice, which was written in D'Arcy's elegant handwriting. They grinned as they read it. It ran:

"Notice to St. Jim's!

"A great meeting will be held in the Fourth Form-room on Saturday afternoon. The subject to be discussed will be the proposed boycott of Yankee films. Chair will be taken by A. A. D'Arcy, at three o'clock precisely. All patriotic chaps are requested to roll up. Seniors admitted.

"Signed, A. A. D'Arcy, Chairman."

"My hat!" said Glyn. "What the merry dickens—"

"What do you mean by it, D'Arcy?" exclaimed Knox.

"I mean what that papah says, Knox," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "A meetin' will be held in the Form-room—"

"You young ass—"

"I wefuse to be called a young ass, Knox! I wegard that subject as vewy important. Hundwerts of thousands of pounds are wasted evewy yeah in importin' films fwom wotten neutwals—"

"You silly young duffer!" Knox tore the paper into four, and tossed the pieces on the carpet. "Take a hundred lines! If you stick such rubbish on the notice-board again, you will be caned!"

Arthur Augustus' eyes gleamed.

"I have a wight to put a notice on the board if I like, Knox. I wefuse to take any notice of your pwohibition."

"What!"

"Shurrup!" murmured Blake.

"I decline to shut up, Blake. We are not Pwussians, and I wefuse to be bullied like a beastly Pwussian."

"Mind what I say, that's all," said Knox; and he swung out of the study.

"I wegard that as uttably caddish of Knox," said D'Arcy, looking round. "I shall have the twouble now of witin' out that notice ovah again."

"Chuck it!" growled Herries. "No good arguing with Knox. He's a prefect."

"I wefuse to yield my wights even to a pwefect."

"You'll get a licking, ass!" said Digby.

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus took a sheet of impot paper, and proceeded to draw up the notice over again. The swell of St. Jim's could be as firm as a rock, as he called it, as obstinate as a mule, as his chums called it. Fellows had, within certain limits, a right to put notices on the board. True, a prefect was a person having authority, and a junior was supposed to "toe the line" when a prefect gave him a command. But Arthur Augustus had his own ideas about that.

"Better chuck it," urged Glyn. "Besides, I want you to come and help me, Gussy. I'm going to make some records—"

"I'm afwaid I must attend to this mattah first, Glyn."

"Chuck it, ass!" said Blake.

"Wubbish!"

Arthur Augustus marched out of the study with his new notice in his hand, and descended the stairs. With perfect calmness he pinned the paper on the board in the hall, and returned to his study. Then he went on with his prep, as if nothing had happened. Bernard Glyn sat in the armchair and waited for him to finish. But as D'Arcy rose after finishing his work, Dick Julian put his head in at the doorway.

"D'Arcy here?"

"Yaas, heah I am, Julian, deah boy!"

"Better clear," said Julian. "Knox is after you. He's found your paper on the board again, and he's ratty."

"I wegard Knox with contempt."

"Well, he's gone to his study for his cane," said Julian.

"I thought I'd give you the tip."

"Thank you vewy much."

Julian nodded and went his way. Arthur Augustus stood on the hearthrug, serene and calm, somewhat in the attitude of Ajax defying the lightning. He maintained that lofty attitude for about three seconds; then he was seized by Blake and Herries and Digby, and rushed out of the study.

"You duffahs!" gasped D'Arcy. "Wharrer you at? Let go! Wefuse me—"

"Come on!" said Blake cheerfully. "You're not stopping to see Knox. We'll go and pay Figgins & Co. a visit."

"I wefuse—"

D'Arcy's refusal did not make much difference. He went down the stairs at great speed, and the four juniors disappeared into the dusky quadrangle, Arthur Augustus still expostulating.

Bernard Glyn rose to his feet, a sudden glimmer coming into his eyes. He hurried back to the end study. Kangaroo and Dane had finished their preparation, and gone down.

Glyn was busy in the end study for about three minutes; then he strolled back along the passage. Knox of the Sixth was standing in the open doorway of No. 6, a cane in his hand, a frown on his face. He had come there for D'Arcy, and he had found that the bird had flown.

"Looking for somebody, Knox?" asked Glyn.

"Have you seen D'Arcy of the Fourth?"

"Gussy! Lemme see! Do you want him?"

"Yes, you young ass!" growled Knox.

"Look in my study."

Glyn walked on, whistling, and Knox of the Sixth started for the end study, gripping his cane hard. He had no doubt that the swell of the Fourth was dodging him on purpose, and he intended to make the punishment more severe on account of it.

Knox's expression showed that Arthur Augustus had a very uncomfortable time in store when the prefect had run him down.

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The gas was burning in the end study, and the door was ajar. Knox kicked it open, and uttered an exclamation as he looked in.

"So I've found you, you young hound! Hold out your hand!"

CHAPTER 8.

A Terrible Tragedy!

KNOX of the Sixth grinned with the satisfaction of a Hun. Knox was a first-class bully, and he had a special "down" on Study No. 6. His authority as a prefect enabled him to cane D'Arcy for an act of disobedience; but, at the same time, he was glad to catch the elegant junior alone. Blake and Herries and Digby might have forgotten discipline, remembered only their old feud with Knox, and pitched him out of the study.

But here was the swell of St. Jim's all alone.

The elegant form stood on the other side of the study table. The yellow spots and crimson bars of the waistcoat glimmered in the light, as did the purple and pink of the necktie.

An eyeglass was tightly screwed in the right eye, and both eyes were fixed on Knox. There was a peculiar stillness about the junior, which Knox did not observe for the moment.

"D'Arcy, hold out your hand!"

No reply.

The well-cut lips moved a little, but no word came forth. The eyes also were slightly in motion; but the junior stood otherwise motionless. It really looked as if he were overcome with terror.

Knox grinned, and came round the table, gripping his cane.

"You cheeky young scoundrel! I found your cheeky notice of the board again! I'll teach you discipline, or I'll know the reason why! Why don't you speak, you rat?"

No answer.

"So you're still cheeky—what!" said Knox, his eyes gleaming. "For the last time, D'Arcy, hold out your hand!"

Not a movement!

Knox waited no longer. This sheer disobedience and the contemptuous silence of the junior were the last straw.

He gripped the spotless collar with his left hand, and swung the junior round, and in his right the cane rose and fell.

Whack—whack—whack!

They were hard, cruel blows, across the shoulders of the elegant Eton jacket. Knox expected the junior to yell wildly under the infliction.

But not a sound came from him.

"I'll make you yelp, you cheeky imp!" growled Knox, between his teeth; and he struck harder.

Slash—slash—slash—slash!

Then he released the junior, pitching him violently away.

Crash!

The elegant form went reeling, and crashed to the floor, and lay there. Not a sound, came from it, and not a movement.

"Get up, you rat, and don't lie shamming there!" growled Knox.

He crossed to the door. There he paused. The junior had not moved, and Knox felt a vague sense of alarm. He remembered now that there had been a curious stillness about the junior from the start. Was it possible that D'Arcy was subject to fits?

"Will you get up, you shamming young cad?" snarled Knox.

No answer; but there was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and Bernard Glyn looked in, with an expression of alarm on his face.

"What are you doing to D'Arcy? Good heavens! Have you killed him?"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" hissed Knox, his face blanching, for the words of alarm found an echo in his own heart. "I've caned him—only a flick or two. He's shamming!"

"You've killed him!"

"Shut up, or I'll—"

Glyn ran into the study, pushing past Knox, and knelt by the fallen figure. His hand glided over the face as he did so, and there was something in his hand, but the prefect did not observe it, as Glyn was between him and the fallen junior.

"Blood!" gasped Glyn, in horrified tones.

Knox gave a cry.

"Blood! What do you mean?"

"Look!" panted Glyn.

Knox started forward, pale as death.

The face of the fallen junior was streaming crimson!

"I—I did not touch him there!" gasped Knox. "I caned him over the shoulders, because he would not hold out his hand! He—he must have cut his face in falling!"

"Murderer!"

"Hold your tongue!" screamed Knox, almost beside himself. "He's not dead; you know he's not dead!"

"Look at him!" said Glyn. "Feel his heart!"

"I—I won't touch him!"

"Look at him!"

Glyn laid the body gently down on its back. Knox bent forward, his eyes almost starting from his head with terror. From the bottom of his heart, the bully of the Sixth wished that he had not handled the junior so brutally. But how could he have guessed that this would result?

He could see now that the elegant Fourth-Former was not breathing. Trembling, he stretched out his hand, and placed it shudderingly upon the waistcoat. There was not the slightest pulsation within! No heart was beating under that handsome waistcoat!

"Dead!" groaned Glyn. "You'll be hanged for this, Knox!"

Knox staggered against the wall.

"He—he must have been in a fit!" he gasped. "He—he sprang at me——"

"What!"

"He sprang at me," said Knox desperately, "and—and I pushed him off. Then he fell and knocked his head on the floor. You—you unfeeling young scoundrel, you're laughing!"

Bernard Glyn choked.

"I—I—— You say he sprang at you?"

"Yes, like a—like a tiger. He was in a fit, I should say!"

Glyn gazed sorrowfully at the elegant form, stretched so silently on the carpet. He took out his handkerchief and rubbed his eyes.

"I—I say, Knox, this is awful! I—I suppose you didn't really mean to kill him?"

"I—I didn't. It was an accident!"

"Are you going to give yourself up to the police?"

"The—the police!" stammered Knox.

"It would be better. You'd get off more lightly."

Knox pressed his hand to his throbbing brow.

The awful thing had completely unnerved him. What was he to do? A hundred times he had bullied and licked juniors, and no harm had come of it. And now——

Would it be believed that it had been an accident? Even so, the charge would be manslaughter—a term of imprisonment—utter ruin for him! He groaned aloud at the thought.

"Glyn," he muttered huskily. "I—I say, you—you might hold your tongue about this! Nobody else saw anything——"

"I must tell the police what I know."

"You—you needn't! Think—think of the disgrace to the school!" stammered Knox. "I—I swear I never touched him till he sprang at me, and—and then I gave him a slight push—that was all. I'm sorry. I'd do anything—anything! But—but he's dead! I—I can't face it! For the sake of the school, Glyn——"

"What do you want me to do?"

"Keep it dark. Clear out of here, and let somebody else find him!" groaned Knox. "Don't say a word!"

"You're asking me to become an accessory within the meaning of the Act!" said Glyn sternly.

"I—I—I'll stand you five quid, Glyn!"

"Keep your rotten money!"

"Glyn, think of the disgrace to the school!"

"I'll keep it dark," said Glyn shortly. "Better clear off, Knox, and I'll do the same!"

Knox drew a deep, deep breath of relief.

"That's all right, Glyn. Keep it dark. If—if he's found here, they'll think he had a fit and fell down——"

"Never mind what they think. Get out!" said Glyn.

Knox almost staggered from the study. Bully as he was, he was not quite without a conscience, and he would have given all he possessed to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy safe and sound again. But repentance came too late. He went unsteadily down the passage, his face white as death.

Glyn, left alone in the study, shut the door carefully. Then he burst into a prolonged chuckle. His next action would have astonished Knox, if Knox had been there to see it. He took a wet cloth and wiped the face of the fallen junior, and tossed an empty red-ink bottle into the waste-paper basket. Then he picked up the body, and placed it in a large chest under the window, locked the chest, and put the key in his pocket. Then he strolled out of the study, not looking in the least as if he had been hiding a body.

CHAPTER 9.

Very Much Alive!

KNOX! What's the matter?" Tom Merry uttered that exclamation as Knox of the Sixth came downstairs. The prefect's face was ghastly white, and he moved unsteadily. Tom did not like Knox—few St. Jim's fellows did—but he was alarmed. Lowther and Manners hurried forward, for the prefect looked as if he were fainting.

Knox pulled himself together with an effort. It was borne in upon his terrified mind that he must keep up appearances, and give no ground for suspicion.

"Are you ill?" exclaimed Tom.

"No. Let me alone."

"You look pretty sick," said Monty Lowther.

"Mind your own business!"

Knox moved away, leaving the Terrible Three staring after him. He did not go to his study. He did not want solitude at that moment. In solitude he felt, with a shudder, that he would see before him incessantly that still face streaming with red.

"There's something jolly wrong with Knox," said Manners. "He looks as if he's had an awful shock of some sort. Hallo, Glyn!" Bernard Glyn came downstairs. "Have you seen Knoxeey up there?"

Glyn nodded.

"What's the matter with him?"

"Guilty conscience," said Glyn cheerily.

"Great Scott! What's he been doing?"

Glyn shook his head.

"I'm keeping it dark," he said. "I—— Hallo, Knox!"

The prefect, in dire terror as he saw Glyn entering into talk with the chums of the Shell, hurried up. He had heard Glyn's words.

"It's all right, Knox," went on Glyn calmly. "I'm keeping it dark."

Knox's very lips were white. If this was the way Glyn was going to keep it dark, the dread secret was not very safe.

"You young fool!" muttered Knox. "Come with me!"

"No fear!" said Glyn promptly. "You ain't safe, Knox! I'm going to keep what you've done secret, but I'm not trusting myself with you."

Knox's knees knocked together.

"Glyn!" he muttered.

"What on earth is it all about?" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in amazement. "What has Knox done?"

"I—I've done nothing," said Knox. "It—it's a joke of Glyn's, that's all."

"Not much of a joking matter, I should say," said Glyn.

"By Jove! I ought to have washed my hands!" He held up his hands, showing the fingers stained with red. "I ought really to have washed these tell-tale stains away!"

"What the dickens——"

"I can't tell you any more. It's Knox's secret," said Glyn calmly. "In fact, I'm an accessory after the fact, ain't I, Knox?"

Knox's lips writhed. The Terrible Three were looking astounded, as well they might. The bully of the Sixth held to the banisters, looking as if he were about to faint. His eyes had a deadly glare as they were fixed on Glyn.

"I suppose you haven't seen Gussy lately?" asked Glyn.

"I think he's gone over to the New House," said Tom Merry.

"Time he was back, too," said Manners. "The house will be locked up soon. Have you been swamping red ink over your paws, Glyn?"

"Knox knows," said Glyn mysteriously.

"I—I don't know anything!" panted Knox. "How—how should I know?"

"Don't be afraid, Knox. I'm going to keep it dark," said Glyn. "It would be an awful disgrace for St. Jim's if a prefect were hanged."

"Hanged!" yelled Tom Merry.

Knox staggered.

He gave Glyn a deadly look, and limped away. Tom Merry caught the Liverpool junior by the shoulder and shook him.

"You silly ass, what does all this mean?" he demanded.

Glyn grinned.

"It means that Knox is in a blue funk, and he's feeling sorry that he's such a beastly bully," he replied. "That's all. Can't tell you any more without giving away my giddy invention."

"Your invention?"

"Yes. Ta-ta!"

Bernard Glyn strolled away, his hands in his pockets, smiling serenely.

"He's been japing Knox somehow," said Lowther, in wonder. "Knox looks as if he's afraid of his own shadow. What a giddy mystery!"

But as Bernard Glyn evidently did not mean to explain, the

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Terrible Three had to give the mystery up as insoluble. Knox had gone to the prefect's room in a state of apprehension that was simply terrible. The next hour was a sufficient punishment to him for all his career as a bully. He waited in miserable fear for the inevitable discovery to be made. If Dane or Noble went to the end study, the discovery must come; and then—

Silence might save him. Only Glyn knew what he had done. But the way Glyn was "keeping it dark" was not reassuring. Still, the discovery did not come, and at half-past nine Knox remembered that it was his duty that evening to see lights out for the Fourth.

He made his way with dragging steps to the Fourth Form dormitory.

The discovery must come now! If Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not turn up at bed-time he would be missed, and a search for him would follow. Then—

He had to keep up appearances, at all events. He strove to pull himself together as he went unsteadily to the dormitory.

As he approached the dormitory he gave a sudden start. A voice from within fell upon his ears:

"Bai Jove, Knox is wathah late comin' to put the light out, deah boys!"

Knox staggered against the wall.

It was D'Arcy's voice.

For some moments he was overcome. Then he ran forward into the dormitory. It dawned upon his mind at last that he had been tricked somehow.

The Fourth-Formers were in bed—Knox was late. Knox's eyes turned at once to D'Arcy's bed. The swell of St. Jim's was there, looking his usual self.

Knox strode towards the bed. His apprehension was gone now, and savage rage had taken its place. Evidently he had been spoofed.

"D'Arcy!" he panted, almost choking with rage.

Arthur Augustus looked at him calmly.

"Yaas, Knox? I twust you are not goin' to cut up wusty about that notice on the board? I warn you that I shall complain to Mr. Waiton if you do."

"So you were fooling me!" shouted Knox.

"I do not quite compwehend."

"You—you young hound! You were only pretending all the time!"

"What?"

"Shamming, you young scoundrel!"

"I wefuse to be called a young scoundwel!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "And I have not the faintest ideah what you are talkin' about, Knox. It weally appeals to me that you are off your wockah."

"You were spoofing me in Glyn's study!" said Knox, gritting his teeth. "I'll make you smart for it!"

"I weally do not compwehend. I have not been in Glyn's studay this evenin'," said Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "I have been visitin' Figgins."

"You lying young hound!"

"I wegard you as a wude beast, Knox."

Knox made a spring at the swell of the Fourth. His hand rose and fell, and Arthur Augustus wriggled and roared under a series of terrific spansks.

"Yawooh! Help! Wescue!"

Gwooh! He's mad! Yawooh!"

A bolster whizzed through the air from Blake's bed and crashed in Knox's face, hurling him backwards. Arthur Augustus, crimson with wrath, sprang out of bed, grasping his pillow. Before Knox could rise, the pillow was swiping at him.

"Buck up, deah boys!" panted D'Arcy.

"What-ho!"

"Pile in!"

Half the Fourth turned out promptly. Knox sprang to his feet, staggering under a shower of swipes. He fairly fled for the door, pursued as far as the passage by the indignant juniors. Kildare, the captain of St. Jim's, came hurrying along the passage.

"What the dickens— Why, you cheeky young rascals—"

The juniors retreated. Knox panted for breath in the passage.

"What does this mean, Blake?" exclaimed Kildare sternly.

"That uttah wuffian assaulted me," said Arthur Augustus. "He attacked me in the most unpwo-

voked mannah, like a wagin' lunatic. I wefuse to be spanked for nothin'!"

Knox opened his lips, but closed them again. He did not want to tell the head prefect of what had happened in the end study, and his bargain with Glyn to keep the "manslaughter" a secret. The less that was said about that the better. He strode away down the passage without a word.

Kildare looked after him, puzzled.

"Get to bed!" he said abruptly.

The juniors turned in again, and Kildare put out the light.

"Bai Jove, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, "I weally think Knox must be wathah pottay. He was talkin' vevy swangely, and he attacked me like a howwid Hum for nothin' at all. I weally wegard Knox as quite off his wockah."

CHAPTER 10.

D'Arcy Helps.

"WOTTEN!"

That was Arthur Augustus' verdict.

It was Saturday afternoon, the date of the great meeting called by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, to air his invaluable views on the subject of Yankee cinema films and British patriotism.

Arthur Augustus was prompt to time.

But he found the Form-room empty.

The weather was fine, there was a football-match going on, and not a fellow in the School House had come to the meeting. D'Arcy was fully prepared with the notes for an ample speech, reviewing the matter under all aspects, clear as Euclid, convincing as frozen logic; but there was no one to hear. The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

"Wotten! Disgustin'! Unpatwiotic!"

Arthur Augustus' eyeglass glittered with wrath into the deserted Form-room. From the distant football-field there were shouts. The quad was bright and fresh in the spring sunshine. In spite of Gussy's noble motives, and the great importance of the subject, perhaps it was not surprising that thoughtless youths preferred the open air that afternoon. Indeed, sad to relate, Gore and Levison had gone to the cinema, to see Chumpy Chiplin, regardless of the fact that the Chumpy Chiplin films were of Yankee manufacture. It could not be helped. No British cinema-actor could make himself look so hopeless an idiot on the film as Chumpy Chiplin could, and perfect idiocy is a kind of humour that appeals to quite a large section of the public.

Gore and Levison, regardless of the fact that they were helping money-grabbing neutrals to make money out of the Old Country in war-time, had gone to the cinema—and all the other fellows had gone out, somewhere or other—and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left alone with his voluminous notes in the deserted Form-room, disgusted.

Really, there seemed no encouragement for a patriotic chap who was willing to set a shining example to the school, the country generally, and the sleepy old Government.

But as D'Arcy was turning away, Bernard Glyn looked in.

"Just looking for you!" he remarked cheerily.

It was really surprising how fond Bernard Glyn had become of D'Arcy's company during the past week. As a rule, they

came little in contact, one being in the Fourth and the other in the Shell, and their tastes being dissimilar. But Glyn had been cultivating D'Arcy of late.

"I've been looking for you on the footer-ground," said Glyn. "Tom Merry says you're not playing this afternoon."

"I am holdin' my meetin' this aftahnoon, Glyn."

"Oh! Of—of course," said Glyn. He had forgotten the meeting. "Where is it, Gussy?"

"As a mattah of fact, it has not turned up."

"Hard cheese!" Glyn said sympathetically.

"Yaas, it's wotten! I—I suppose I could not vevy well delivah my speech with only you heah to heah it," said Arthur Augustus doubtfully.

"Nunno; that wouldn't do!" exclaimed Glyn hurriedly. "It—it would be a sheer waste; wasting your sweetness on the desert air, you know. Come and help me make some phonographic records. I've asked you a lot of times already."

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FOR READERS OF

THE

BOYS' FRIEND

ONE PENNY.

OUT TO-DAY!



D'Arcy's double walked right on, and Towser's teeth closed on his leg. Herries gave a yell of alarm. "Towser! Towser! Let go! Good doggie! Gussy, you ass!" (See Chapter 13.)

"I feah I have no time, Glyn. I am goin' to scout wound and get some fellahs to come to the meetin'."

"They won't come, on a sunny afternoon," said Glyn. "You'll find 'em more patriotic on a wet day. It's a ripping idea of yours, Gussy—simply spiffing! Of course, Yankee films ought to be barred in war-time, especially as the Yankees are trying to muck up our blockade by smuggling food into Germany. Now, I've got a ripping wheeze. Come and help me make some records."

"Weally, Glyn—"
"You can make a little speech into the phonograph—see? And I'll make records of it, and then we can turn it on, on the gramophone whenever we like, and fairly drive it into the fellows' heads."

"Bai Jove! That's a wippin' ideah!"
"Isn't it?" said Glyn enthusiastically. "With that record ready to go off any minute, you know, we'll fairly drive the idea home like a nail, and fellows will have to boycott Yankee films in self-defence. Come on!"

The schoolboy-inventor marched Arthur Augustus off to his study. The swell of St. Jim's felt a little flattered. While Glyn was preparing his apparatus, Arthur Augustus consulted his notes. He was prepared to pour the whole of that telling speech into the receiver. But that was not exactly Glyn's intention.

"Just a few sentences," said Glyn ruthlessly. "Not more

than a couple of hundred words or so, or it will be too much for the record."

"Bai Jove! Can't you make a big wecord?"

"Ahem! I'm making a small record to fit the space—"

"Eh! What space?"

"I—I mean, I'm making a small record," stammered Glyn, "May make some bigger ones later, perhaps. You see, I've got a small home-made phonograph here—I made that myself—and I want the records to fit it."

"Bai Jove! That is wathah a queeah-lookin' phono-gwaph!"

"Yes; it's adapted to the purpose."

"Eh! What purpose?"

"The—the purpose," said Glyn vaguely. "I'll go over your speech, and cut it down a bit to fit the record."

"Oh, all wight!"

Glyn went over the speech with a merciless hand. Arthur Augustus' face grew a little long when he found what an exceedingly small portion of that excellent speech he was to be allowed to make. However, he made it, feeling that half a loaf was better than no bread, so to speak.

"In the pwsent state of affaih," spoke Arthur Augustus, in ringing tones, "it is wotten to welflect that Bwitian boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs. I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films!"

That was the speech—about a fifteenth part of what Arthur Augustus had nobly intended to deliver.

"You are suah that is enough, Glyn?"

"Just fills the record," said Glyn.

"Oh, all wight!"

"Wait a bit, and I'll reel it off, and you can hear it," said Glyn.

Arthur Augustus waited, and had the pleasure of hearing his own voice and beautiful accent upon the phonograph.

"Bai Jove! That's wathah good," he remarked. "We can spwing that on the chaps at any time, and dwive patwiotism into their heads, you know."

Glyn chuckled.

"Exactly!"

"Can I help you any furthah, deah boy?"

"Thanks, no!"

"Then I think I will stwoll ovah to Wayland and do some peaceful picketin' at the cinemah. Would you like to come with me?"

"I—I'd like to awfully, but I've got something to do this afternoon—awfully important. Best of luck, old chap!" said Glyn affectionately. "If you come home in an ambulance, Miss Marie will nurse you round."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus quitted the study. Glyn chuckled, and opened the big chest under the window; and for some time afterwards the schoolboy-inventor was very busy.

CHAPTER 11.

Amazing!

TOM MERRY & Co came into the School House after the football-match, ruddy and cheery and hungry. The Terrible Three were going to tea with Talbot. Blake and Herries and Digby headed for their own study. As Arthur Augustus had not played in the match, they expected that he would have tea ready for them.

"Hallo! Here you are, Gussy!" said Blake, as he came in. "You, too, Glyn! You might have got the table laid."

The elegant form of the swell of St. Jim's was reclining in the armchair. Bernard Glyn was behind the chair, leaning on the high back.

"Did you beat the New House?" asked Glyn.

"Of course we did," said Blake. "Lucky you stood out of the match, Gussy; made it a regular walk-over for us."

That remark, at any other time, would have drawn an extremely indignant reply from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. On the present occasion, the elegant junior did not speak, and did not even turn his head.

"Hallo! Gone to sleep!" exclaimed Blake.

No answer.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Blake.

Bernard Glyn tapped the elegant junior on the back of the head. Then the well-known voice spoke.

"In the pwesent state of affairs, it is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs."

"What!"

"I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films."

Blake stared.

"Blessed if he doesn't reel it off like a phonograph!" he exclaimed. "For goodness' sake, Gussy, get off that subject! I'll never go and see a Yankee film again as long as I live if you'll only let the subject drop!"

"Same here!" said Herries. "Give us a rest, Gussy!"

"Mercy!" said Dig pathetically.

"In the pwesent state of affairs——" began the voice again.

"What!"

"It is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys——"

"Ring off!" howled Blake.

"Are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films——"

"Shut up!"

"At the cinemahs! I call upon all twue Bwitons——"

"Cheese it!"

"To wally wound and boycott Yankee films!"

"You blessed parrot, will you dry up?" shrieked Blake. "Blessed if he doesn't repeat the very same words over and over again! Have you been drinking too much ginger-beer, you duffer?"

"Queer, isn't it?" said Glyn.

"Off his chump!" growled Herries. "He's got Yankee films on the brain! If you begin again, Gussy, I'll warm you!"

"Yes, chuck it, Gussy!" said Glyn, tapping the elegant figure on the back of the head.

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"In the pwesent state of affairs——"

"Dry up!" roared Herries.

"It is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys——"

Herries made a rush at his elegant chum, and yanked him out of the armchair. He went to the hearthrug with a bump, and lay face downwards. But, amazing to relate, without making a movement, he went on with his speech:

"Are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs! I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound, and boycott Yankee films!"

There was a slight whirring sound, and silence. Blake and Herries and Digby looked at the prostrate form in amazement and some alarm.

"Get up!" roared Blake. "What are you sprawling on the rug for?"

Bernard Glyn dragged the elegant junior to his feet. His eyeglass was still firmly fixed in his eyes. He started walking to the door, Glyn holding his arm.

"Aren't you going to have tea?" demanded Blake.

The elegant Fourth-Former walked out without replying, accompanied by Bernard Glyn.

Blake snorted.

"More blessed dig!" he said. "Well, we're going to have tea. You'll find all the sosses gone when you come back, Gussy."

No reply. Glyn and his companion walked along the passage, Glyn chuckling spasmodically. Kangaroo and Clifton Dane met them in the passage.

"Tea's ready," said Kangaroo.

"So am I!" said Glyn cheerily. "Gussy's coming to tea."

"All right!" said Kangaroo. "Come on, Gussy! But for goodness' sake don't tell us anything more about Yankee films and cinemahs! We're fed-up on that!"

"In the pwesent state of affairs, it is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs!"

"Yes, I dare say it is; but do cheese it!"

"I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films!"

"Is he wound up?" demanded the Cornstalk.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, Glyn?"

"Gussy, of course! Come on, Gussy!"

Glyn and his companion followed Kangaroo down the passage to the end study. Blake and Herries and Digby were busy in No. 6, and there was a cheerful smell of frying sausages and chips. Tea was just beginning, when the door opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in. D'Arcy was looking somewhat dusty, and was apparently fatigued.

"Oh, you've altered your mind!" grinned Blake. "Well, you're just in time for the sosses!"

"I don't quite compwehend, Blake. Pway pass me a clothes-brwush. I have been tweated in a wathah wuffianly mannah."

"Been rowing with Glyn?"

"Glyn? Certainly not! I've been picketin' at Wayland Picture Palace, and several wuff persons pitched into me when I pointed out to them that their conduct was the wewerse of patwiotic. Undah the cires, I weally do not think I shall do any more picketin'."

Blake and Herries and Digby stared steadily at Arthur Augustus as he brushed down his clothes. His statement had taken their breath away.

"Picketin' at Wayland!"

"When did you come back, then?"

"I have only just arwived."

"You—have—only—just—arwived?"

"Yaas! What are you lookin' at me in that extwemely peculiar mannah for, Blake?"

"I want to know whether you're mad or whether you're working off an idiotic joke!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"What do you mean by saying that you've only just returned from Wayland, when you were in this study a quarter of an hour ago?" demanded Blake.

"You are dweamin', deah boy! I have only just got in."

"You were here with Glyn when we came in after the footer!"

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake!"

"Where were you a quarter of an hour ago?" shouted Herries.

"A quartah of an hour ago, Hewwies, I was gettin' over the stile in Wylcombe Lane on my way home."

"Good heavens!" muttered Blake.

He was aghast. D'Arcy's face and manner were quite serious and earnest; he evidently believed what he said. Yet with their own eyes the three chums had seen the elegant junior in the study. They were not likely to believe that he had been getting over the stile at Rylcombe Lane at the very

moment when they had seen him seated in the armchair in study No. 6.

The three juniors exchanged anxious glances. There was only one possible conclusion for them to come to—that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was wandering in his mind.

"Bai Jove! I shall have to go and change my boots!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am feahfully mudday! Pway don't wait tea for me!"

He quitted the study.

"You heard what he said?" muttered Blake. "He's fairly off his rocker! Do you remember, the other night, Knox said something about Gussy being in the end study, and Gussy said he hadn't been there? He's losing his wits!"

"Poor old Gussy!" said Herries, in a tone of deep feeling. "It's brooding on that cinema bosh, perhaps," said Dig, in a hushed voice. "It's what the medical johnnies call an obsession—a fixed idea! Perhaps he'll come round."

"Poor old Gussy!"

Blake & Co. were hungry after the footer match. But under the harrowing circumstances they merely toyed with their tea. They were filled with alarm and anxiety for their elegant chum.

CHAPTER 12.

A Surprise for Kangaroo.

CLIFTON DANE lifted a big dish of toast from the fender as Bernard Glyn came in with his companion. Kangaroo followed them into the end study.

"Gussy's come to tea!" remarked Glyn. "Sit down here, Gussy!"

He pushed his companion into a chair.

The elegant junior sat down rather stiffly without a word.

"Toast, Gussy?" asked Dane.

No reply.

"And sprats," said Kangaroo.

"In the pwesent state of affairs——"

"What!"

"It is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs!"

"Give him a chunk of toast and make him dry up!" urged Kangaroo.

"I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound, and boycott Yankee films!"

"Oh, dear! You're eating nothing, Gussy!"

The three Shell fellows began their tea, but the guest in the study made no motion to do so. He sat stiff and silent.

"Anything the matter, Gussy?" asked Kangaroo.

No answer.

"Don't you like the sprats?"

Silence.

"Gussy! Getting deaf?"

Still the guest in the end study did not speak. Glyn smiled, but Kangaroo and Clifton Dane looked surprised and a little annoyed. This was not at all like the Chesterfieldian manners of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"What the dickens is the matter with him?" demanded the Cornstalk. "Does he take this for a Quaker meeting?"

"Perhaps he's thinking," suggested Glyn. "Here, wake up, Gussy!"

He gave his companion a playful tap on the back of the head. Immediately the beautiful accent of the swell of St. Jim's was heard:

"It the pwesent state of affairs, it is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs!"

"Great Scott!"

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"For goodness' sake, ring off, Gussy! We're fed up on Yankee films and Yankees generally!"

"I call upon all true Bwitons——"

"Dry up!"

"To wally wound and boycott Yankee films."

"Help!"

Then the guest was silent again, but he did not eat. His arms hung somewhat stiffly at his sides. His eyes and his lips moved a little; that was all.

Kangaroo and Dane were growing more and more astonished.

There was something curious and unnatural about the swell of the Fourth—something that struck them as almost uncanny.

"Aren't you going to eat anything, Gussy?" asked the Canadian junior persuasively. "I can recommend these sprats, and the toast is really good."

"Why the dickens don't he speak?" asked Kangaroo.

Glyn tapped the guest on the head again. Then he spoke: but it was only to repeat that set speech in relation to Yankee films and cinemas.

Kangaroo tapped his forehead significantly. As the guest declined either to eat or to speak, the Shell fellows finished their tea, D'Arcy's helping remaining untouched, and his tea growing cold. Then the Shell fellows arose.

Kangaroo gave the guest a very curious look, and strolled out of the study. He walked along to Study No. 6 in a puzzled and somewhat uneasy frame of mind. He found Blake and Herries and Digby there, looking glum.

"Is there anything the matter with Gussy?" asked Kangaroo.

Blake started.

"You've noticed it!" he asked.

"Well, I couldn't help noticing it. He came to tea!"

"He said he was going to the dorm to change his boots," said Digby.

"Well, he came into our study to tea," said Kangaroo; "but he hasn't eaten anything, and he won't speak a word, excepting some rot about Yankee films. Looks to me as if he's going off his rocker."

"I can't understand him," said Blake, deeply worried.

"He-hallo, here he is!"

Arthur Augustus entered the study. He was as neat and clean as a new pin now.

"I thought I'd have a complete change while I was about it," he remarked. "I was vewy dustay. Bai Jove, I'm hungry!"

"Oh, you've learned to speak!" said Kangaroo. "And if you're hungry why didn't you eat anything in my study?"

"For the simple weason that I have not been in your studay, Kangy."

"What!" yelled Kangaroo.

"I have been in the dorm changin' my clobber, deah boy."

"Do you mean to say that you didn't come to tea in my study, and that you weren't there five minutes ago?" howled Kangaroo.

"Weally, Noble, I wish you wouldn't waise your voice like that; it throws me into quite a fluttah when a fellah woars at me! Certainly I have not been to tea in your study."

"You were there with me five minutes ago."

"Pway don't be funny, deah boy!"

"Do you mean to say you were not?" howled Kangaroo.

"Certainly I do."

Arthur Augustus sat down at the table, and started on the sausages and chips. He certainly seemed hungry. Blake and Herries and Dig looked at Kangaroo hopelessly. The Cornstalk junior fairly gasped.

"I'll fetch Glyn and Dane here, and they'll tell you!" he exclaimed.

He rushed out of the study and ran along the passage. He ran breathlessly into the end study.

"Glyn! Dane! I want you—why—what—my hat!"

Kangaroo staggered back.

His eyes almost started from his head. For there, still seated at the table, was the figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, whom he had left having his tea in Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 13.

And a Surprise for Towser!

KANGAROO turned quite pale.

There was the swell of St. Jim's, seated silent at the table, and only a few seconds before he had left him in the Fourth-Form study.

"What—what!" said Kangaroo, quite feebly.

"What's the matter?" asked Dane.

Kangaroo sprang forward and seized the guest by the shoulder, and dragged him out of the chair. There was a

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crash as the elegant junior went to the floor. He lay on the carpet still and silent, and did not move. Only from somewhere within him came a faint whir, as of disordered machinery.

"Mind what you're doing!" roared Glyn. "You'll bust him."

"What is it?" shrieked Kangaroo. "Gussy's in No. 6! What—whose this?"

"Gussy in No. 6?" ejaculated Clifton Dane. "Then, what—what—"

Glyn chuckled.

"Don't yell it out, you duffers!" he exclaimed, as he picked the figure up carefully from the floor. "It's my model, you asses!"

"Your—your what?"

"Don't you remember Skimpole II.?" grinned the school-boy inventor. "This is D'Arcy II."

"D'Arcy II.?"

"Yes, rather."

Kangaroo and Clifton Dane stared blankly at the guest in the study. It was the exact reproduction of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy from head to foot. The face was D'Arcy to the life, and the clothes were D'Arcy's; the voice when it spoke was D'Arcy's!

Kangaroo caught hold of the figure and pinched it. Even now he was not quite convinced that it was not alive.

"Well, my hat!" he said at last.

Glyn chuckled gleefully.

"This is better than my old mechanical Skimpole," he said. "You've had him to tea with you—ha, ha, ha!"

"Wha-a-at's he made of?" gasped Kangaroo.

"Steel frame and springs, and wool padding," said Glyn. "The head is waxwork. I made it up from Gussy's photographs, and I think it's a good likeness—what?"

"But—but it talks!"

"That's a little phonograph inside the head," chuckled Glyn. "I got Gussy to make a record for me. It winds up at the back, and goes off half a dozen times when this button at the back of the head is pressed. I use a Pathe needle, you see; so it doesn't want changing. Listen to him now!"

Kangaroo and Dane gazed almost in awe at the life-like figure. Glyn pressed the concealed button in the back of the head. Immediately the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was heard.

"In the present state of affairs, it is wotten to weflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs. I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films."

"Gussy to the life!" gasped Kangaroo, "and—and I never guessed while he was sitting at the same table! You spoofing ass!"

"Blake didn't guess when he saw him in his study!" grinned Glyn. "Keep it dark, and we'll have a lot of fun with D'Arcy II. Knox has had some fun with him already. He thrashed him in this study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And thought he had killed him, and swore me to secrecy as an accessory after the fact."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, what's the little joke?" asked Tom Merry, looking into the study. "Hallo, Gussy, how did you get on this afternoon? I hear you've been picketing again."

"In the present state of affairs it is wotten to weflect—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Tom Merry, stopping his ears. "I've heard all that before!"

"That Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs!"

"Stop it!"

"I call upon all twue Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films!"

"Wound up, I suppose!" said Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha! Exactly. Come for a walk, Gussy?"

Glyn passed his arm through that of the figure, and they walked out of the study. Kangaroo and Dane watched it in wonder. The limbs moved easily and gracefully in obedience to the hidden mechanism within. It was a triumph of the schoolboy inventor's genius. When they came to the stairs Glyn piloted his weird companion down carefully, the figure setting his feet on the stairs stiffly but precisely. They passed out into the quadrangle. Kangaroo and Dane followed, wondered what would happen. Herries met them in the quad, and he stared in some surprise at D'Arcy II.

"Hallo, Gussy! I thought you were still in the study!" he said. "I left you there finishing your tea!"

"In the present state of affairs it is wotten to weflect—"

"Oh, ring off!"

Glyn touched his companion, and he ceased to speak with a slight whir.

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"Going to feed Towser?" asked Glyn. "We'll come with you."

Herries nodded, and they followed him to the kennels. Towser was on his chain, but he looked rather restive at the sight of Arthur Augustus' double. Towser always displayed a predilection for Gussy's handsome trousers, for reason best known to his own doggy self.

"Better keep out of his reach, Gussy!" said Herries. "You're looking at him, and you know Towser doesn't like that."

D'Arcy II. did not reply, but he walked straight on towards the bulldog, and came close to him.

Towser stood quite still for a moment in astonishment. Then, as he realised that the junior was within reach, he made a jump.

"Get back!" shouted Herries.

D'Arcy II. walked right on, and met Towser half-way. Towser's teeth closed on his leg. It was not the trousers Towser was biting now; it was the leg within. Towser was annoyed. Herries gave a yell of alarm.

"Towser! Towser! Let go! Good doggie! Gussy, you ass!"

D'Arcy II. stood it like a Spartan. Not a sound escaped his lips, and he did not seem to mind the bulldog's bite. Herries dragged at the chain, but Towser had a good hold, and he refused to let go.

"Towser! Towser! Towser!"

"He doesn't seem to be hurting Gussy," remarked Glyn.

"Towser, come off! Get away, Gussy! Why don't you move, you ass?"

"In the present state of affairs, it is wotten to weflect—"

"Great Scott!"

Herries wondered whether his head was turning. Arthur Augustus, with Towser's teeth fast in his leg, was reeling off that well-known speech. Herries dragged hard at the chain, and Towser let go at last, doubtless feeling very unsatisfied with the bite. He blinked at D'Arcy II. in a surprised and almost scared manner. It was the first leg of that kind he had ever bitten.

"Come on, Gussy," said Glyn.

He walked away with D'Arcy II., leaving Herries wondering whether he was on his head or his heels.

CHAPTER 14.

D'Arcy's Double!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was finishing his late tea when Herries came into the study. Herries was looking anxious.

"Are you hurt, old chap?" he asked.

"Hurt! Not at all," said D'Arcy. "I was wathah wuffly tweated by some wathah wuff beasts while I was picketin' at the picture palace, but it is all wight!"

"I mean by Towser, fathead!"

"Towsah! Certainly not. I have not seen Towsah!"

"You utter .ss!" shouted Herries. "Did Towser hurt you when he bit you? You'd better see a doctor about it!"

"Towsah has not bitten me. I should wefuse to let that wotten bulldog bite me!"

"Oh, he's potty!" gasped Herries. "You chaps, something will have to be done. Towser bit him in the leg five minutes ago, and it was a jolly deep bite."

"Five minutes ago!" echoed Blake and Digby together.

"Yes."

"You're dreaming" said Blake. "Gussy hasn't left the study since he started tea."

Herries jumped.

"Hasn't left the study!"

"No. We've been here with him."

"What are you getting at?" demanded Herries. "Gussy came with Glyn to see me feed Towser, and he walked right on him, and Towser bit him."

"Bai Jove! You must be off your wockah, Hewwies!"

"You're dreaming," said Digby, puzzled. "I tell you Gussy hasn't been out of the study for half an hour."

"If this is a joke, I don't see the point," said Herries gruffly. "I suppose I can believe my own eyes, and I know Gussy by sight. Look at his leg and you'll see he's been bitten—the right leg. Towser tore a hole in the bags with his teeth."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass curiously upon Herries. In silence, he elevated his right leg. There was no sign of a tear upon the beautiful trousers. Herries stared at them blankly.

"You've changed them," he exclaimed. "You've changed your waistcoat, too. You were wearing a red and yellow waistcoat when you came down to the kennels."

"I have not worn a wed and yellow waistcoat for weeks, Hewwies."

TUCK HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 14.



A bolster whizzed through the air from Blake's bed, and crashed into Knox's face, hurling him backwards. Arthur Augustus, crimson with wrath, sprang out of bed, grasping his pillow, and before Knox could rise, the pillow was swiping at him. "Buck up, deah boys!" panted D'Arcy. (See Chapter 9.)

"Look here——"
 "I weward you as an ass, Hewwics. "If this is a joke——"
 "You silly, frabjous ass!"
 "Weally, Hewwics——"
 "You were at the kennels five minutes ago."
 "I have not been out of this study."
 "Silly ass! I tell you——"
 "You fwabjous duffah; I tell you——"
 "Great Christopher Columbus!" exclaimed a voice at the door, as Tom Merry looked in with an expression of great astonishment. "Gussy here!"
 "Yaas, wathah, Tom Mewwy. Why should I not be heah?"
 "But—but you were walking in the quad with Glyn, and—and I've only just come up!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell in bewilderment. "Did you climb in at the window?"
 "Weally, Tom Mewwy——"
 "What the thunder does this mean?" exclaimed Blake.
 "Are you as dotty as Herries? Gussy hasn't been out of this room for nearly half an hour!"
 "He was at the kennels five minutes ago!"
 "He was in the quad with Glyn half a minute ago!"
 "My hat! Has Gussy got a giddy double?" exclaimed Blake, bewildered. "He was in the study when we came in, and he said he was out-of-doors at the time."
 "I was out-of-doors at the time, Blake, deah boy!"
 "You were sitting in that arm-chair!" shouted Digby.
 "Wats!"
 "There's some giddy mistake here," said Tom Merry.

"Have you got a twin-brother we've never heard of, Gussy?"
 "Certainly not. I have no twin bwothah."
 "Then you've got a double."
 "Wats!"
 Blake uttered an exclamation.
 "It's Kerr—one of Kerr's tricks. He's always impersonating somebody. He's made himself up as Gussy, and taken us in."
 "Yaas, that's vewy possible."
 "Ha, ha!" roared Herries. "If that's so, Kerr's got Towser's bite!"
 "We'll jolly soon see," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Let's get over to the New House and see Figgins & Co."
 Tom Merry and Blake and Herries and Dig ran out of the study. Arthur Augustus sedately went on with his tea. He had not finished yet.
 The four School House juniors dashed across the quadrangle and entered the New House, and ran up to Figgins' study. Unless it was one of Kerr's playful impersonations, they did not know what to make of the mystery. As they came up to Figgins' study they heard a voice within:
 "In the present state of affairs, it is wotten to wect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs."
 "Gussy's voice!" gasped Blake.
 They rushed into the study. Figgins and Fatty Wynn were there, but Kerr was not to be seen. Bernard Glyn and D'Arcy

II. were there also, and D'Arcy II. was reeling off his set speech.

"I call upon all true Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films."

Figgins was yawning.

"For goodness' sake, ring off, Gussy!" he exclaimed.

"Take him away, Glyn, and tell him to put on a new record."

"Kerr!" yelled Tom Merry.

Here was D'Arcy's double, as large as life. The School House juniors had no further doubt that this was one of Kerr's little tricks.

"Hallo!" said Figgins. "Kerr's downstairs!"

"No, he jolly well isn't!" said Blake. "Here he is, the spoofing bouncer. Own up, you worm. We know you're not Gussy."

"In the pwsent state of affairs——"

"What's the matter?" asked Bernard Glyn calmly.

"It is wotten to welfect——"

"Shut up!" roared Blake. "We know you're not Gussy."

"Eh! What?" said Figgins in astonishment. "That's Gussy."

"It's Kerr made up, you spoofer. Bump him!"

"Here, hands off!" exclaimed Glyn, in alarm.

He had brought D'Arcy II. there to pull the leg of Figgins & Co., and he had not anticipated this.

But Tom Merry & Co. did not heed. They seized D'Arcy II. and whirled him off the floor. To their utter amazement, instead of resisting, he went on with his speech.

"That Bwtish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films at the cinemahs——"

Bump!

Whirrrrr!

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Kerr of the Fourth, coming into the study.

"Kerr!" shrieked Blake.

The School House juniors stared at Kerr. It was certainly Kerr of the Fourth.

"Then—then who's that?" yelled Blake, pointing to the figure sitting on the floor—motionless, but whirring slightly.

"D'Arcy, isn't it?" said Kerr in surprise.

"D'Arcy's in the School House."

"What rot! That's D'Arcy."

"I tell you it isn't!" shouted Tom Merry. "It's his double. But we'll jolly well make him tell us who he is. Bump him hard!"

"Hands off!" yelled Glyn. "You'll break him!"

Bump! Bump! To the amazement of the juniors, the shock of the bumping started D'Arcy II. upon his speech again.

"In the pwsent state of affairs, it is wotten to welfect——whirrrrr!"

"Tain't alive!" roared Herries, making that startling discovery suddenly, and jumping back in surprise and horror.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Tain't alive! Great Scott! Wha-a-at is it?"

"I call upon all true Bwitons to wally wound and boycott Yankee films!" went on D'Arcy II., as he lay on the floor.

"What is it?" gasped Figgins.

"You asses! You might have busted it!" gasped Glyn.

"Can't you see, you frabjous chumps? It's my invention—D'Arcy II."

The juniors gasped. For some moments they could not realise it. Then, as the truth dawned upon them, they rushed with one accord upon the Liverpool lad, and seized him and bumped him on the carpet. Their excited feelings found expression in bumping him, and he was bumped hard. Glyn roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-woop! Leggo! Wharrer you at? Cheese it! Only a jape, you silly duffers! Yarooop!"

"You funny ass!" gasped Blake. "Bump him again! Give him another! He's too jolly funny for anything! Give him another!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Oh! Ah! Yah! Help!"

Bernard Glyn sat on the floor and stuttered, when the wrathful juniors had done with him. That was the reward of his inventive genius!

CHAPTER 15.

A Rank Impostor!

"WELL, this beats the band!" said Tom Merry at last, gazing at D'Arcy II., who had been picked up and set on his feet. "Come to think of it, it's jolly clever. Beats Skimpole II. hollow!"

"We might have guessed!" growled Blake. "That's what the silly ass wanted Gussy's old clobber for, and his photographs, and made him jaw into a talking-machine."

"Let's take him to see Gussy!" suggested Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bernard Glyn groaned dismally.

"Ow! Oh! You dummies! I'm hurt! Yow-ow-woop! Oh, you duffers!"

"Serve you jolly well right," said Tom Merry. "It's one thing to jape Gussy, and quite another to take us in. Bring him along to see Gussy."

Glyn grinned faintly, and took his invention by the arm. They walked out of the study, followed by the whole crowd of juniors. All were keen to see the meeting between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his double.

D'Arcy II. walked out of the New House beside Glyn in a stately way. Monty Lowther and Manners met them in the quadrangle.

"What the thunder!" exclaimed Lowther, staring at D'Arcy II. "Am I beginning to see double in my old age? I've just left Gussy in the School House. Didn't you see him there, in the hall, Manners?"

"Yes, I did," said Manners, puzzled. "Is that his twin?"

"Exactly," said Glyn. "Hear him talk!" He pressed the button.

"In the pwsent state of affairs, it is wotten to welfect that Bwtish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see Yankee films." Whirrrr!

"Oh, ring off that!" said Lowther. "That's the real Gussy, right enough. Then who's that fellow in the School House? I didn't know Gussy had a twin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And what are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha! This is D'Arcy II.," chuckled Tom Merry.

"Glyn's giddy invention."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And we're taking him to see Gussy."

"I'll bring Gussy to see him," said Figgins. And he ran off towards the School House. He returned in a couple of minutes with the swell of St. Jim's.

There was a very lofty expression upon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face. The discovery that there was a fellow exactly like himself at the school was not pleasing—in fact, Arthur Augustus regarded it as the fellow's fearful cheek.

"Here he is," said Figgins. "Now, which is which?"

Arthur Augustus screwed his monocle into his eye, and stared blankly at his double.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Who's that?"

"What do you mean by that ridiculous question, Blake? You know vewy well who I am."

"You know my name!" ejaculated Blake.

"Of course I know your name, you ass!"

"Please do not call me names!" said Blake severely. "I don't allow strangers to call me an ass, young fellow!"

"You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "What do you mean by callin' me a stwngah?"

"I don't know you," said Blake, with a shake of the head, while the other juniors stood round with solemn faces.

"You're very like D'Arcy——"

"You know I am D'Arcy, you duffah!"

"Rot! D'Arcy's here!"

"That is not me, you fathead!"

"I know it isn't you. It's my old pal Gussy," said Blake, patting D'Arcy II. affectionately on the shoulder. "You're his double. You're really very like him, young fellow, but—well, not quite so gentlemanly."

"I wefuse to be called a young fellah! As for that person, I have no idea at all who he is; but if he calls himself by my name, he is a wank impostah!"

Blake shook his head.

"The fellah is wathah like me in some wespects," said Arthur Augustus, fixing his eyeglass upon his double. "Bai Jove! He is wearin' my old clothes! Glyn, you ass, is this the fellah you gave my old clobber to?"

Glyn shook his head.

"This is D'Arcy of the Fourth," he said. "Who are you?"

"Who are you?" echoed the juniors solemnly.

Arthur Augustus was crimson with excitement—a striking contrast to his double, who remained perfectly calm.

"You uttah asses!" shrieked the swell of St. Jim's. "I am D'Arcy!"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"You know me well enough, Blake. Let that uttah wotfah speak, and if he says he is me, I will give him a feahful thwashin'!" yelled the swell of St. Jim's.

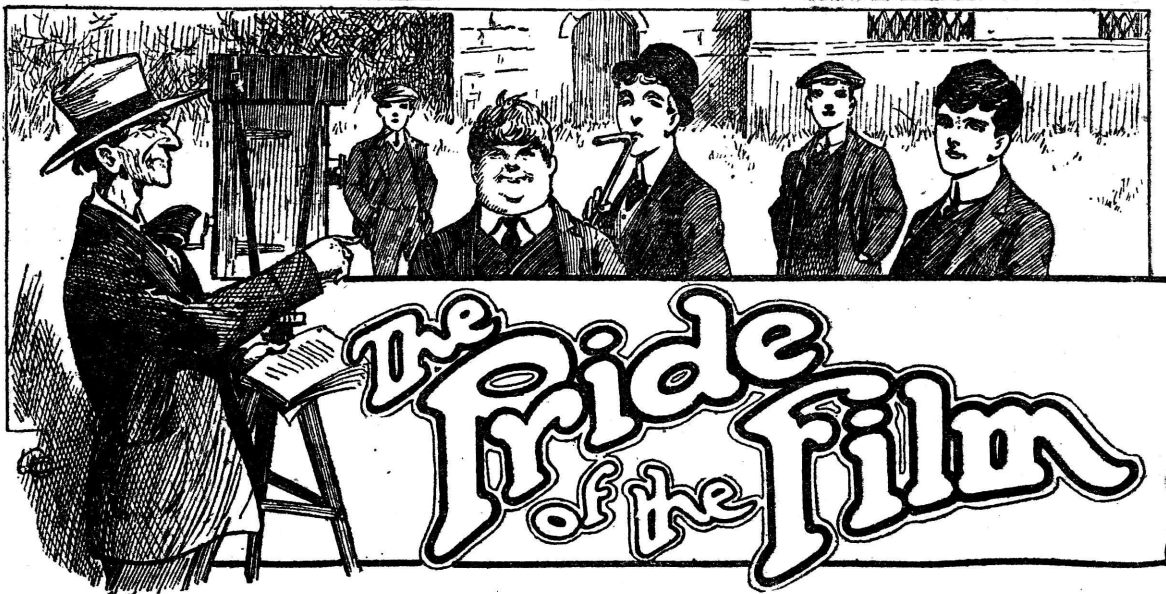
"Speak up, Gussy," said Glyn, tapping his companion on the back of the head. And D'Arcy II. spoke up.

"In the pwsent state of affairs——"

(Continued on cover, page iii, col. 2.)

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TUCK HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1st.

START OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY TO-DAY!

The Opening Chapters of a Magnificent New Adventure Story.
By VICTOR CROMWELL.

The First Instalments.

REGGIE WHITE, an orphan, is befriended by MR. ANTHONY DELL, a millionaire film-producer, and given a position as actor in his company.

Among others in the company, Reggie makes the acquaintance of RICHARD TURNEY, a boy whom he likes; HUBERT NIXON, a snobbish youth, whom he dislikes; and WILLIE BURR, a jovial fat boy.

SAMSON SKEWES sells Mr. Dell a picture plot, which shows how a man was wronged by a certain MR. RANKIN, and afterwards admits that it is true, and he is the wronged person.

MR. STARTLEFIELD, a neighbour of Mr. Dell's, calls to see him, and Skewes, being present at the interview, asserts that Startlefield is Mr Rankin, which he denies.

Later, as Skewes is passing Startlefield's garden, a bomb bursts near him, and he is slightly injured. Mr. Nixon, an eccentric under-gardener, admits that he placed the bomb in the garden.

Reggie sees Mr. Startlefield, and tells him about his under-gardener's confession.

Glancing through the window, he sees a man, lying beneath a bush in the garden, apparently injured.

"It's Sprace, my head-gardener!" exclaims Startlefield. "Fly for the doctor!"

(Now read on.)

The Two Gardeners.

Reggie was not long in finding a doctor and bringing him to Mr. Startlefield's house. In the meantime the luckless gardener had been brought indoors, and made as comfortable as a limited knowledge of first-aid conventions could render possible.

He was not so badly damaged, after all, though he was stunned and dazed, and had one or two severe cuts.

There could be no doubt about the cause of his wounds—a cause which both Mr. Startlefield and Reggie guessed at the moment they discovered him.

In a little while, either as a consequence of the doctor's skill, or the warming influence of a cosy room, or the cheer of a stimulating draught, or of all these aids, Edward Sprace was sufficiently recovered to tell his story.

He explained that he had been angry with his assistant that morning. The under-gardener, he declared, in language of a homely and highly personal nature, had displayed

indolence and ineptitude "enough to make a bloomin' saint turn dotty!"

"You should 'a' seen his tool-cupboard!" he declared, with warmth and bitterness. "I hope I may never live to clear up such another blithering old mess of a show!"

And then, after much circumlocution, in which the under-gardener and all his works were dealt with faithfully, and with amazing scorn, he went on:

"I was turning away, when I saw some more of his 'rapsallioness'!" He paused as if in doubt about this word, but, finding no better one, passed dreamily on: "That was a rotten ole meat-tin, what he had left on the grass. I suppose I must 'a' bin angry, but, anyway, I ups and pitches the blamed thing over the wall into the road, and then came a big bang and bust."

Here was the explanation. Even the most suspicious crime-hunter could no longer attempt to fasten the blame of the explosion on Mr. Startlefield were he to hear, as Reggie had heard, two such convincing stories, so admirably dovetailing into each other as the stories told by the two gardeners.

Besides, men recovering from illness in which consciousness has been impaired rarely deceive with intention. They may tell falsehoods or garble the truth, but it is usually a consequence of their illness when they do.

Clearly Mr. Startlefield was innocent of the apparent attempt on Samson Skewes' life. At least, such was Reggie's conclusion.

The gardener told how there was a "mighty, big bang," and that something hit him—presumably from the wall—and that he crawled away.

After this recital Startlefield took Reggie into another room. He had changed in manner very considerably as he heard Sprace's story. Not that he had become blustering or overbearing, but rather that his timidity had forsaken him.

"I'm going to see that detective again," he said; "and I may want you to see him with me. The whole position of things is altered now. I don't care if the whole of Mitcham saw me running in that lane. I have a right to run."

"Certainly," said the boy.
 "But you must have told the story as if you thought I hadn't," persisted Startlefield, "or else that detective got some of his own nasty mind into the way he repeated your words. It isn't a nice thing to be suspected of trying to blow a fellow-creature into jelly. I felt really alarmed when I grasped what your story meant. I'm feeling angry now."

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NEXT
WEDNESDAY:

"THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!"

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN-CLIFFORD.

Just then there was a knock at the door, and the under-gardener entered. He seemed more awkward than ever in the daintily-furnished room, and he had a truculent and overbearing manner.

"I'm chucking your job, Mr. Startlefield," he said. "I've got hold of something better."

"It doesn't distress me to hear it," replied Startlefield carelessly. "But I am busy now, and you can tell me another time." Here he seemed to recollect something he had forgotten, for he hurried on: "But stay a moment. Did I understand that you were over at Mr. Dell's to-day about—"

His words tailed off, and he was looking from Reggie White to Augustus Nivon, as if trying to recollect precisely what Reggie had said about the under-gardener. Then, suddenly:

"I suppose Mr. Dell is your new employer?"

"Yes, sir. It will be better than—"

"That will do," declared Startlefield, suddenly quite fierce in manner. "I am getting to know just where I stand. I have nothing more to say to either of you. If I wish to communicate anything further, I will do it through my solicitor, or"—here he paused for additional emphasis—"or—through the police!"

The threat was unexpected, and, to Reggie particularly, it was annoying. The fact was, he had been feeling a certain degree of sympathy for Mr. Startlefield, as he had suspected him, without actual proof, of a most iniquitous act, and had felt real satisfaction in seeing all the evidence against the man gradually melt away.

But Reggie had no need to express his feelings for the under-gardener, rather more than expressed them for him.

"Don't you go sending no policemen arter me!" he cried fiercely. "It's been bad enough all this while working for an ignorant old pig like you, without any threats! It's made no fair riled to think that me—me what has brains and brain-power—should be under-gardener to you, what simply rolls in money, and does nuffink for it! It's fair sickening, I calls it!"

And with that he stamped out.

But Reggie stayed a moment.

"I'm sure you misjudge Mr. Dell, Mr. Startlefield," he said. "I believe you think, from what I said just now, that Mr. Dell has been planning some plot against—"

"I don't want to discuss it!" retorted Startlefield angrily. "I know Mr. Dell, and believe he is capable of any meanness."

"No! I won't have that!" cried Reggie angrily. "There isn't a better-hearted man in London than he is; and you'd believe it, too, if you knew how he stuck to you when others thought that you had thrown that bomb."

Startlefield seemed impressed.

"Do you mean that?" he asked.

"Yes," said Reggie.

"Well, I'll believe it, too, then," he said. "And I am glad to hear it."

He actually held out his hand.

Later he saw Reggie to the door, and as the boy passed down the drive he suddenly called after him:

"Boy!"

Reggie returned.

"I've been thinking about the way you stuck up for your employer," he said. "I saw your look just now when I abused Mr. Dell, and I must say that you looked dangerous. You seem to have a high opinion of him. Why?"

"He deserves it," said Reggie simply. "He's the best man I ever met."

"And he's confounded lucky to have a champion like you. Now, let me tell you something. Mr. Dell is a very rich man, and so am I. With some lucky deals I have made lately I have multiplied my fortune to ten times what it was two years ago. I used to be poor once—very poor—poorer than you, I expect, and I thought then that if I got money I should have everything. I've got the money, but, by jingo, I'd give almost half of it to have someone stand up for me as you did for Mr. Dell!"

Reggie detected a real note of sadness in the man's voice, and he felt sorry for him. But, for the life of him, he could not think what to say.

"People don't take to me," said Startlefield bitterly, "and I have no friends. I suppose it is something in myself, but it is not pleasant to feel quite alone in the world."

It was strange that Reggie should attract a man's confidences in this way. Yet the boy thought little of this fact, because similar things had happened to him before.

"But surely you must have some friends in the world?" he said.

Startlefield shook his head.

"None," he replied. "I had one once, and I played

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ducks and drakes with that friendship. I suppose what has followed is the natural punishment. Good-bye!"

Mr. Startlefield turned abruptly into the house.

"What a queer man!" thought Reggie.

An Awkward Rescue.

About a week after this, Reggie and the other youngsters of the company were engaged in making a comic picture called "The Stolen Bride." The only actor in the part who could not be called a boy was the late under-gardener, Augustus Nivon.

Reggie was taking the part of the bride, and Augustus the part of chief villain.

One of the acts had to be performed out of doors, and a suitable part of Mitcham Common was selected for the purpose.

This situation was the actual stealing of the bride. It had been played twice before, but Mr. Dell, who was very hard to please at times, had objected to each result, chiefly because Augustus hadn't acted the villain with sufficient "vim" and vigour.

So now the boys were making their third attempt. They were all arrayed for their parts in costumes that gave them a ludicrous appearance. A motor-car was part of the properties, and Richard Turney, as chauffeur, did his part well.

Reggie, as the "bride," came tripping along, culling flowers, and looking dreamily happy.

Up dashed the motor-car, and stopped.

Out jumped Augustus, in a black beard and a black patch over his left eye. He was followed by Willie Burr, the fat boy, who made a surprisingly effective rogue by the aid of a false moustache and a huge bludgeon.

These two, followed by two other youngsters, similarly arrayed, pounced upon the unlucky "bride."

Now all this was done very effectively, and in quite the proper way, so much so, that Silas Shock, operating his camera under the friendly cover of a bush, kept muttering approval in a kind of monotonous ecstasy. Silas took his work keenly to heart, and anything like a good bit of play made him beam with delight, just as any acting not quite up to his ideal, filled him with inexpressible sadness.

And so far, the play had gone off remarkably well. A good film was being made. But it was just at the critical moment when the luckless bride was being seized, that the unexpected happened.

A man, riding up on horseback, had seen the villains hover round the lady, and hadn't liked their looks.

As they seized her—and she did struggle most excellently—he spurred up his horse and dashed to her rescue.

Without asking why or wherefore, and what was the meaning of it all, he lifted his riding-whip, and brought down the thick handle-end on the head of Augustus.

The late under-gardener went down like a log. Silas Shock left his camera with a shriek and rushed forward.

"You spoil the picture!" he yelled.

And then, as he recognised the man:

"Oh, Mr. Startlefield! Why did you rush in? It was a splendid picture!"

"Picture!" gasped Startlefield, as he stared around. "Good glory! It's that confounded Tony Dell's gang. How was I to know?"

Then his eye met Reggie's.

"You!" he said.

But Reggie was stooping over the unlucky Augustus. He was really afraid that the blow had been a dangerous one, for the chief villain was unconscious.

"Lift him in the car," said Shock.

But Augustus opened his eyes.

"Something fell on me," he said. "Was it a Zep?"

He seemed pretty badly hurt. To help him Reggie removed the black patch and false beard. The effect on Mr. Startlefield was surprising, for he stared at his late employee in an absolutely frightened manner, and spoke in a querulous, irritated manner.

"So he must crop up again."

It was not a remark that seemed to have any particular meaning, and it was quickly forgotten, for Mr. Startlefield was quickly busy trying to do his best for the unfortunate young man.

"Better get him into the car," he said, after a careful examination; "but drive slowly. It looks to me like a bad fracture of the head. Make for the nearest doctor!"

At the doctor's they were re-assured. The villain's skull was not fractured, and Mr. Startlefield became himself again.

"I thought I had killed him," he said to Reggie, who had got rid of his feminine costume. "I don't know why I am

always getting these shocks, but really I made sure that I had done so. That was the man who made the bomb."

"But what has the bomb got to do with it?" asked Reggie.
 "Nothing, I suppose," replied Startlefield. "Yet somehow I find everything in life, work out in strange coincidences that I can never understand. You see, that young man made a bomb that led to my being suspected of a crime. After that he left my employ, and I might easily suppose I had finished with him. But no. Here, a few days later, I give that same young man a blow that might easily mean my being charged with manslaughter. It hasn't been the only case of the same kind in my life."

This was said outside the doctor's house, and Startlefield was just about to mount his horse again.

But he stopped as if an idea had struck him.

"Look here, my boy," he said. "There is something about you I like, and I want a talk with you. Can you call in to see me this afternoon?"

"I should like to," said Reggie. "I am free after four to-day."

"Make it half-past four— Oh, that man again!"

He jumped on his horse and rode off, while Reggie, surprised at his last words, looked to see what man he referred to.

It was Samson Skewes, the author, who was coming away from Dell's buildings. He looked angrily after the retreating Mr. Startlefield before he spoke to Reggie.

"You seem to be getting quite thick with that old rogue," he said bitterly.

"There was an accident to one of our chaps," explained Reggie, "and he rendered him first aid."

There are pretty sure to be accidents when you get a thief like that about," commented Skewes. "Look at me. I ought to be riding on that horse, and living in that grand house. He does all that magnificence out of the money he robbed from me, the old villain!"

"But are you sure?" asked Reggie. "I've seen a good deal of Startlefield, and I don't think he is quite such a rogue as you make out!"

"He stole the money."

"But are you certain that Startlefield is the same man as that guardian of yours—I've forgotten his name."

"Rankin!" said Skewes. "Benjamin Rankin. Yes. He is the same. Supposing you had known a man all your life, would you be deceived and not know him when you met him?"

"But if he's the same man, the detective—"

Skewes became quite agitated.

"I've just seen the detective," he said. "And he's given up the job. He says there is no trace of Rankin to be found anywhere. He did something Mr. Dell didn't quite approve."

"What was that?"

"Approached the search from the other end. He got into Mr. Startlefield's house, by making out to be sent on some job, and managed to ransack all his papers while he was away. He says that there is no trace of any connection between the two."

Skewes was in a particularly gloomy frame of mind.

"I'm sure I don't know what more we can do," he went on. "Mr. Dell has been very generous and must have a big bill to pay that detective now. I believe he would gladly let him go on with his search if I asked it. But I can't very well do so, and detectives are expensive luxuries for poor people."

Skewes did not dwell upon his misfortune long. He was naturally of a happy disposition, and had a way of throwing off his cares, especially when he was in company.

"Besides," he went on, "I've got to like my new work, and Mr. Dell is a brick. I've just brought him one of his own ideas worked into a story. It is for your fat friend particularly."

"Willie Burr?"

"Yes. Law, isn't that boy thick, though?"

Startlefield Gets Confidential.

At half-past four, Reggie called on Mr. Startlefield, as he had promised. He was surprised to find a nice little tea spread out in the dainty apartment that was called the smoking-room.

Mr. Startlefield received him in a surprisingly cordial manner.

"Have some tea, my boy," he said. "I have a little story to tell you when we have finished."

During the tea, Mr. Startlefield talked in a very fascinating manner about a number of places he had been to. Especially interesting was his description of the districts in Europe where the war had been raging most violently.

After the refreshments, came the story that he had romised.

"I dare say you were puzzled a good deal over that accident," he began, "and why I took such an alarming view of my late under-gardener's wound. I've got good reason."

He got up from his seat, and went over to an ornamental looking coal-box by the side of the fire.

"I have had a detective here during the last few days," he went on. "He made some excuse to the servants, and managed to search through most of my papers while I was away. I found traces of him."

Reggie made no reply to this. He could not quite see where it was leading.

"But he never searched my coal-box," said Mr. Startlefield.

"I don't understand, sir," said Reggie.

Mr. Startlefield turned the box around—it seemed to move in any direction quite easily—and touched a spring in some hidden corner of the carving. A small drawer slid out. From this he took a small leather case, and, opening it, revealed a number of papers.

"This little lot might have helped Mr. Dell's detective," he said quietly. "On the other hand, it might not. Some men are so clever that they miss the obvious."

Here he selected a newspaper-cutting.

"This is the account," he said, "of an incident that occurred years ago, which changed my whole life and greatly embittered me. I am sure I don't know why I tell it to you, but I feel I must do so. I sha'n't show you the cutting because it contains things that I don't want you to see."

"It is the story of a man, charged before the magistrates for drowning his wife. The case was dismissed before it went any farther. There was everything against the man. He and his wife had quarrelled, his wife had left him for a whole year, she had met him by accident. They were seen going along a walk beside the river, quarrelling. A little later the woman was found drowned in the river."

Reggie found himself getting intensely interested in the narrative, for although it was told in a brief, jerky fashion, it was clear that Startlefield was not telling a casual story in which he had no interest.

"I was the man," he went on, "and one solicitor wanted a remand, and another wanted me to say nothing, and the magistrates said something about it being a serious case, but a man in the court, spoilt all the efforts at delay. He had seen all that had happened, and insisted on telling his story."

"I suppose it was quite irregular, but the magistrates let him speak, and he disposed of the charge. I won't say there and then, but he gave such evidence that when I was brought to the court the next day, the charge was withdrawn."

"My wife and I had parted near the river. I am glad to say it was not in anger, for we had agreed to join together again and restart our home."

She had promised to wait for me on a rustic bridge that crossed a branch of the stream to a little island, while I walked on to a hotel and ordered tea.

"The witness, who would speak in the court, had seen us part, and had seen my wife lean against the railings of the bridge, and he had seen the railing break and fling her into the water."

"He had run to the rescue and called other people to help him, but when my wife was picked out of the water she was dead. It had never occurred to the man that his evidence might be important. He had simply walked away to the station, for he lived in another town. He only heard of my arrest by accident, but came right across to tell his story. The evidence of the broken rail which was found in the water, and the fact that I had ordered tea for two at the hotel, broke up the whole case, and proved that the charge never ought to have been brought."

"So I should think, sir," said Reggie.

"But I spent two nights in custody, thinking out all sorts of evidence they could use against me," said Startlefield, "and I saw myself being hanged."

The memory seemed to affect Mr. Startlefield very deeply. "It wasn't only the disgrace," he went on. "It was the tragic end to my married life. My wife and I didn't get on very well. But she was a good woman—the best I ever met. Her only fault was her sense of duty."

Then suddenly he seemed to act on an impulse, for he put the cutting into Reggie's hand.

"Perhaps you would like to read the name on the top," he said.

Reggie read the headline:

"Benjamin Rankin Found Innocent!"

Startlefield was looking at him as if he were expecting him to speak, so the boy blundered into speech in almost awkward haste.

"So you really are Mr. Skewes' guardian?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"Mr. Skewes says that you took all his money. Is that true?"

"Partly true," said Startlefield, "and partly not true. Anyhow I am not going into the subject. I want you to tell Mr. Skewes that all his money now stands in his name, or will do so as soon as my bankers and brokers have carried out certain instructions that I have given them."

Reggie jumped up quite excitedly. It was on his lips to say some generous sentence, but before he could frame a word the wonder flashed into his mind, as to why this man should have behaved as he had done.

Mr. Startlefield was looking at him with remarkable interest, as if there were some noteworthy point in Reggie's face and manner that had caught his whole attention.

"Just a moment!" he cried. "Try to keep like that for a few seconds. Good heavens, boy, you are the exact image of someone I once knew! Have you any relations called Henty?"

"I never heard of any," said Reggie.

"Well, I'll vow you must have!" said Startlefield, looking closely at him. "You're one of the Henty stock, I'll bet any money. Poor they were, and proud, and they had the sort of look that—that you've got. I hated the whole tribe except one."

Really, Mr. Startlefield was a remarkable man. Reggie could not make out what to think of him. He raced on so, changing his subjects so abruptly and giving confidences that wealthy City men do not usually give to juveniles a third of their age.

"You can tell your friend," he went on, "that I don't pass over his fortune to him out of love or regard to him. Tell him that I did it on your account."

"On mine?" said Reggie.

"Yes!" replied Startlefield. "But for you I don't suppose he would have got a brass cent, as my plans were too really well-laid for any detective to have seen through them, and proved that I was Rankin. It wasn't on his account I surrender the money, as I have too firm a faith in the doctrine of visiting the sins of the fathers on the children."

Mr. Startlefield was speaking with great bitterness.

"That was all my money that his father left him. I made it all," he went on. "My partner cheated me out of it, and got it all into his own name, and left it to his son. But old Rankin forgot one thing—that when he was poor and I well off, he made a will appointing me his executor. I used that power to treat Samson Skewes as his father had treated me. I planned that the blow should fall on his son at the very time when it would shock him most."

"That was very wrong," said Reggie, with sudden emphasis.

"There you go again," cried Startlefield, "just like—like—well, like someone I once knew. Don't do it. I'm trying to do the right thing now, at all events."

"I am sure you are, sir," said Reggie. "I am sorry—"

"And don't call me 'sir,'" added Startlefield irritably.

"Listen!" he went on. "I am not a superstitious man, but I meet with some things that puzzle me. Someone—it doesn't matter who—once said to me: 'If you do a wrong thing you will get punished.' Do you believe that?"

"Yes," said Reggie, "I do."

"I do, too. But listen—that wasn't all. The rest of the words were almost prophetic: 'If you do a wrong thing that can never be found out, you are sure of punishment, even if it is never found out. But in that case you will probably get the punishment for what you didn't do.'"

"I don't understand," said Reggie.

"I'll explain," said Startlefield. "Young Skewes was badly treated by me. That was a wrong act on my part, though I am sure I cheat him so carefully my fault would never have been found out. But just mark. I have been under arrest for the murder of the woman I loved. Only a few days ago, it was nearly proved that I attempted to kill young Skewes with a bomb, and this very morning I might have been arrested for manslaughter, for a blow which might easily have killed my late under-gardener. All these were sins I did not commit, but I might easily have been punished for any of them."

Reggie was deeply impressed.

"It is like a fate that hangs over me," went on Startlefield, "to be proved guilty of what I haven't done, just to balance the bad things I have done that couldn't be proved against me."

"But," said Reggie, "if all this money was yours, and didn't belong to Skewes at all, why—"

"I won't go into it," said Startlefield. "I let the young man grow up thinking it was his. I proved his father's will and thus endorsed the lie. That's the end of the subject."

Then he added:

"You had better pack off now, and go and tell your friend. You won't have far to go, as I fancy he has moved down near here, judging by the way he haunts me. And tell him

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when he comes out not to be aggressive, or he may whistle for his money."

By-and-by, when Reggie had gone, the strange man went to that secret drawer once more and took out a faded photograph.

A long time he looked at it, and as he looked the hard lines of his face gradually softened, and a new look came into his eyes.

"That boy is the image of her," he muttered. "Strange—very strange!"

Mrs. Horace Takes a Hand.

As Reggie passed the picture-studio Ben Wheeler came out. He pointed his thumb over his shoulder.

"She's in there!" he said.

"You mean Mrs. Horace Dell?" asked Reggie, guessing whom he meant by his manner.

"Yes," said Ben sarcastically. "She's raising the old man's hair. All about that picture plot of hers. She's got the boss fair cornered this time."

"What picture plot?"

Ben stood for a moment on his longest leg, an action which made a startling difference in his height. It was a little trick of his when he wanted to be unusually majestic in explaining anything.

"She fancies she's a bit of an author, you know," he said: "and she wrote a play, that she's been trying to get the old man to produce, only he's been sitting on it a week or two. Of course, I don't know, but I should guess it to be the blindest old tommyrot of a play that a cross-eyed kangaroo and a Patagonian cheese-blender could hatch out of a second-hand volume of Shakespeare."

Reggie knew about the ancient quarrel that Ben had with Mrs. Dell, and made due allowance. It was interesting, however, to think that she had taken a hand at picture-making.

That evening Reggie informed Samson Skewes of the change that was to take place in his fortune, and that he was to call on Mr. Startlefield.

"But don't take him fighting," he reasoned. "It is bad sense to look a gift horse in the mouth. But it is no sense at all to look a gift mule in the hind legs."

"I'll remember," replied Skewes.

Mrs. Horace Dell's plot was to be made into a picture, after all, though her brother-in-law was very unwilling.

"There's nothing in the plot," he had declared to Silas Shock, whose opinion was generally good. "Read it, Silas."

And Silas had read it.

"Bally rot, I call it," had been his verdict, "unless the boys do it and guy the thing."

"She'll never agree to such a plan," had been Tony Dell's answer. "I'll put the plot away and forget it."

But Mrs. Dell did not forget it. She had actually hired an empty house at Wandsworth, as it had struck her as a suitable scene for the play.

But she agreed to all the actors being boys, except Dolly.

At eleven o'clock the next day they were all at the wonderful house which Mrs. Dell had hired.

It was a very old and dilapidated place, surrounded with a high wall. Never in all his life had Reggie seen a dwelling place in a more tumble-down condition. The house had not been occupied for three years, and an imperfect roof had allowed a deluge of water to get in, so that what woodwork was not ruined by dry rot was damaged by the rain.

"This is impossible, Agnes!" declared Tony Dell, when he saw the place. "The rooms are so small and dark that Silas Shock wouldn't be able to work his camera, leave alone swing a cat in any of them. Besides, we can get far better effects in a proper studio."

"You hire a house sometimes, Tony," declared Mrs. Dell.

"But not a doll's house," said Mr. Dell. "Let's go in!"

They entered the house.

"Musty!" was Tony Dell's verdict.

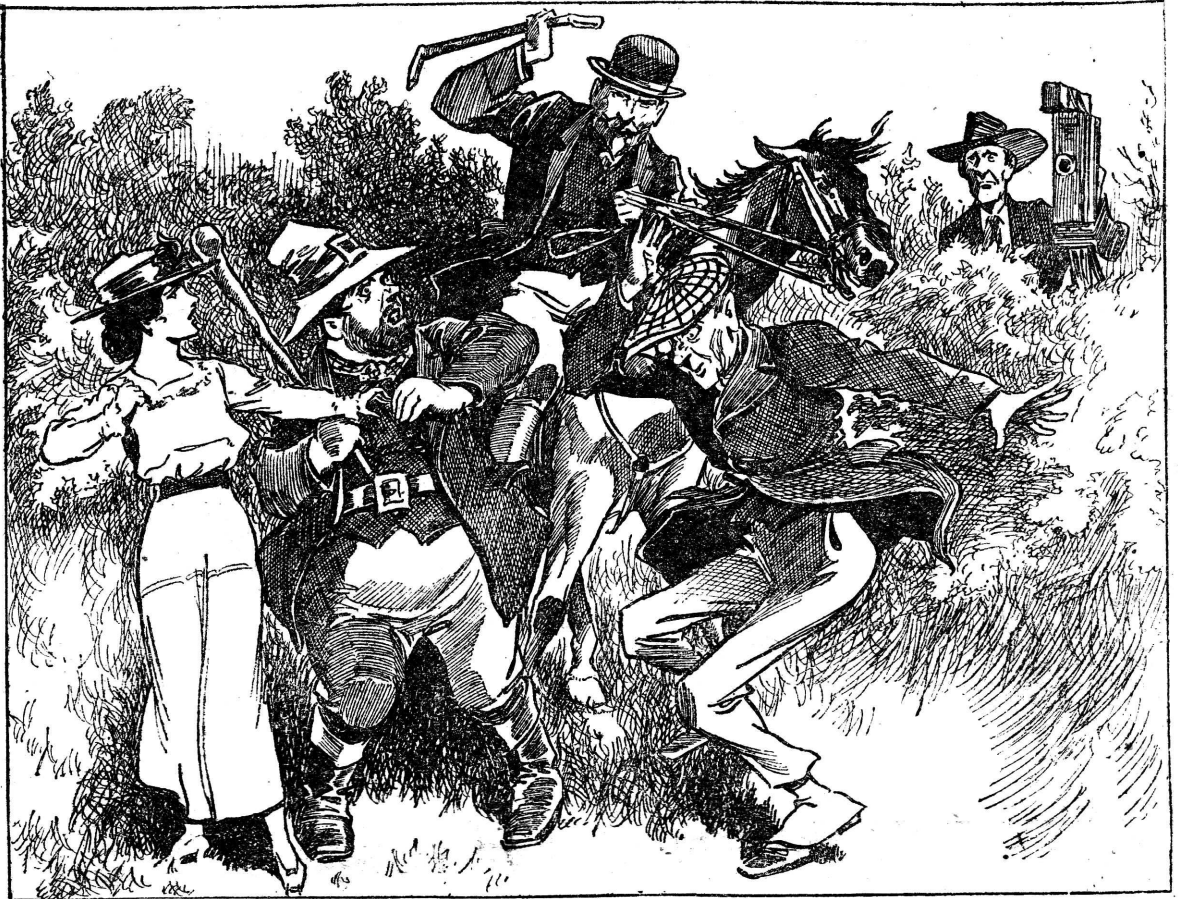
But Ben Wheeler described the odour of the place more faithfully:

"It smells like faded onions!"

The very floors of the house creaked beneath one's feet. Tony Dell noted this fact with grave doubt.

"Here, keep that boy out!" he cried, as Reggie and Willie Burr, the fat youngster, were about to enter. "This floor wasn't built for the hundred-ton style of beauty!"

It was decided that there was little chance of using any part of the inside of the house, as the rooms were too small; but some of the scenes could very well be played in the garden, or yard—for it was little more—that surrounded it.



A man riding on horseback had seen the villains hover round the lady. As they seized her he spurred up his horse and dashed to the rescue, bringing his riding-whip down on the head of Augustus. (See page 20.)

In particular, a window on the first floor was voted excellent for one part of the play.

"But we shall have to build up a stage for you and your camera, Silas," remarked Tony Dell. "You've got nothing high enough here."

"What about this shed?" asked Silas Shock, pointing to a small outbuilding immediately opposite the window that had taken Dell's fancy. "If I stand on the roof I shall be high enough."

"Try!" said Dell.

The eager and enthusiastic photographer managed to get up on the top of the shed. In this he was greatly assisted by Ben Wheeler and one or two of the others who gave him the necessary "leg-up."

The shed had an almost flat roof, sloping away just sufficiently to carry off the rain-water. Silas found this slight slope rather awkward when his camera had been passed up to him, but he managed to get the implement fairly steady after a little contrivance and coaxing.

"Just right for that window!" he said. "Now, if one or two will get up in the room we can plan out the scene."

But Mr. Dell was not quite satisfied.

"Strikes me, Silas," he said, "that that whole shed looks rather rotten; it is certainly swaying a bit."

"It feels solid enough," replied Silas; "that's what I go by, sir. Just watch me stamp on it."

They watched him.

It was the most unlucky bit of stamping that Silas Shock had done for many a long month.

"Ow—ee—ow!" he yelled. "My foot has gone through, and I can't pull it out."

"Let me help!" cried Ben Wheeler, clambering up on the roof with him.

"Now, take care!" shouted Mr. Dell. "That roof wasn't made for fancy weights!"

As if to prove the truth of his words, the roof gave utterance—or seemed to give utterance—to a ripping, tearing shriek,

and then collapsed. The last seen just then of the two heroes were seven legs that disappeared last of all into a yawning chasm. Of these seven, four were human, and the remaining three belonged to Silas Shock's portable camera.

However, the heroes were not badly hurt. A moment later they emerged through the door of the shed, Silas complaining that he feared a lens was broken.

The shed had at one time been a sort of workshop, or tool-cupboard, and it had an even more musty smell than the house.

The queer fact they noticed about the roof was that it had not fallen to the ground, but on one side still adhered to the top of the building, hanging like a leaden curtain.

At a touch it collapsed on the floor, the lead top falling underneath.

"Why, what on earth is this?" said Tony Dell, pointing to a long leather case that suddenly lay exposed. "The roof has been used as a hiding-place evidently."

He lifted the case. It was so rotten that it broke in his hand, and with a clatter and rattle something fell on the ground.

"A six-shooter!" said Dell, lifting it up. "Here's a queer find! And it is in pretty good condition, too. Why, it must have reeked of oil!"

Then he had another dip into the case.

"A pocket-book this time!" he said. "Now I come to doubts about my right—to search further. I hate interfering with anything private."

"Don't be a fool, Tony!" put in Mrs. Horace Dell, who was standing behind him. "Let me look!"

She took the book from him and opened it.

It was literally stuffed with banknotes!

(Another long instalment of this splendid new serial story next Wednesday. Order your copy early.)

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NEXT WEDNESDAY: "THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!" A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



THIS WEEK'S CHAT



Whom to Write to —
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 OUR · · THREE · · COMPANION · · PAPERS!
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 EVERY MONDAY ; EVERY FRIDAY ; EVERY SATURDAY.

For Next Wednesday:

"THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!"

By **Martin Clifford.**

In this fine story the great George Alfred Grundy plays a prominent part, and, although taken in by his schoolmates, earns no little real credit among them by his genuine desire to enlist and share the perils and privations of the troops in Flanders. Very different is the attitude of Mr. Selby, the harsh and unsympathetic master of the Third Form. This gentleman has been agitating strongly for an extension of the military age limits to seventeen at one end, and forty-five at the other. But when, through a clever trick played upon him by Wally D'Arcy and some of the other fags, he is induced to believe that an extension to fifty-one has been made, he takes a very different view of the matter, for that would bring him in! On the other hand, Mr. Linton, who would also be affected, receives the news like a patriotic sportsman, and makes no effort whatever to get out of his supposed obligation. Grundy's attempt to enlist is screamingly funny, but the story has a more serious side in the marked contrast presented by Messrs. Linton and Selby.

"THE CONSCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S!"

THE PAPER SHORTAGE.

Will all readers please note that in future I should be glad to have their full addresses when they write to me? The absolute necessity of paper economy will entail the cutting down of the space lately devoted to "Replies in Brief," and unless I am given the chance to answer my correspondents through the post they may not get a reply at all. And don't forget what I have been telling you for the last few weeks about ordering your paper in advance!

CYRUS P. CRAKE.

I have received several letters from other Americans who think I have gone a little too far in my comments on the epistle of the Yankee bouncer, Crake; and also letters in scorns from readers who are not Americans, and whose general opinion seems to be that anything short of capital punishment is letting Crake off much too lightly. On the principle of giving both sides a fair hearing, I am extracting from the letter of one of my American readers a few sentences. It is so reasonable, temperate, and civil a communication that if space permitted I should be glad to print it in full, but this is quite impossible.

"Old Glory" writes:

"I wholeheartedly condemn Crake's creed as the action of a cad, but I do take exception to your note that he is 'typical of his precious sit-tight-and-do-nothing race.' I admit that my country has not shown up very well so far as regards the Great War; but in England people are much influenced by what the papers put before them, and as the said papers usually quote the President's opinion to the exclusion of those of other prominent Americans, British people are somewhat misled. President Wilson has said a lot of things about being too proud to fight, and even in the States his eternal Notes are held up to ridicule. But if you should look through an American newspaper you will find that public opinion is on the Allies' side, and if we could only get quit of two or three men at the top things would soon begin to hum. American munition factories are turning out material for the Allies

as fast as they can be made, and American ships are keeping the flag of commerce flying."

My correspondent is gravely wrong in one particular at least. It is certainly not correct that there has been any lack of publicity in our papers for the opinions of other prominent Americans. We all know what Colonel Roosevelt thinks of Mr. Wilson's policy! But a nation is judged, not by what its private citizens think or say, but by the words of its elected head and by its own deeds.

"RIVALS AND CHUMS!"

Don't forget that this great 3d. book is still on sale! And don't forget, either, that it may not be on sale much longer, for it is selling out fast!

NOTICES.

Will some Durham reader be kind enough to let Harry Dyson, of 14, Calverley Lane, Rodley, near Leeds, have a picture-postcard or postcards of Durham Cathedral, to send to a sailor chum who is particularly keen on getting it (or them)?

Trumpeter S. Jackson, R.F.A., sends his hearty thanks to readers of the "Gem" for their generous response to his appeal for papers.

Selwyn F.C. (juniors) want players. Secretary: E. Jones, 71, Selwyn Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool.

H. F. Clarke, 31, Fairfield South, Kingston-on-Thames, has formed a "Gem" Club, and will be very glad to hear from readers in that locality who would like to join.

Gunner G. Barnes, 85777, Royal Artillery, W Company, Concentration Camp, Rouen, France, would be glad to receive back numbers of the companion papers, and would also like to correspond with a London girl reader (age 17-19).

Merville F.C. second eleven (average age 17) want home and away matches for rest of season. Write to Jack Law, Longwood Crescent, Whitehouse, Co. Antrim.

Private E. Harding, 2nd Batt. The Buffs, c.o. D.C.F.C., Boulogne, France, would like to correspond with a few "Gem" readers. So would Private Harry Reeves, A Attie, A Company, South Barracks, R.M.L.I., Deal.

Eskdale F.C. (average age 15) want fixtures near Crosshill, Glasgow. The club has vacancies for good players in the right-back and left-half positions. Hon. Sec., T. Porter, 366, Allison Street, Crosshill, Glasgow.

James Calderhead, 8, Cedar Place, Glasgow, has a very special reason for desiring to hear from A. B. (Leamington Spa), to whom a reply on this page was lately addressed.

Signaller W. T. Powell, 23539, A Company, 12th Batt. South Wales Borderers, Murne Barracks, Blackdown Camp, via Farnborough, Hants, would be much obliged if any reader could spare him a mouth-organ, or any other instrument of that type.

Private E. Abendroth, S 12118, A Company, 3rd Batt. Black Watch, Hut 55, Nigg Camp, Ross-shire, would like to correspond with a girl reader (age 16-17). This reader is an Australian, without any friends in Great Britain, and is stationed five miles from the nearest town.

J. Cooper, Rosedene, 61, King Edward Road, Maidstone, would be glad if any reader would be kind enough to send him the back number of the "Gem" containing the story entitled "The Outsider's Choice."

Henry Reid, c.o. Post Office, Bank Street, Alloa, wishes to start a Companion Papers League, and would be glad to

(Continued on page iii. of the cover.)

NOTICES—continued.

hear from readers in any part of the British Isles interested in the project. As he has a notion of an amateur magazine in connection with the league he would be particularly pleased to get into touch with the young lady at Hull who was replied to in the "Gem" of February 12th under the name of "A Girl 'Gem' Admirer," and who has evidently literary aspirations. Will readers writing to our friend Reid be good enough to enclose stamped, addressed envelopes for reply.

Gunner A. Buttery, R.F.A., Briscoe Ward, 3rd Southern General Hospital, Oxford, would be grateful to any reader who could spare him a pair of second-hand, soft leather boots, size 9. Buttery has been invalided home from France, and finds his Army boots painful to wear.

If Alec Butler, Roach Road, Sheffield, happens to see this, will he drop a line to his old friend Vincent Hill, at 21, Hanover Street, Swansea.

Victor J. Pedley, 115, Wednesbury Road, Walsall, wants to join a football club in his neighbourhood (average age 15-17). Played for his school's first eleven two years, and is best at right-back.

James Hickey, Benekerry Cottage, Co. Carlow, Ireland, would like to hear from any readers in Ireland generally, and Co. Carlow particularly, who would care to join a "Gem" and "Magnet" League.

C. H. King, 10, Churton Place, Pimlico, wants to form a "Gem" and "Magnet" League for both boy and girl readers. He will be glad to see anyone wishing to join between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Thursdays at the address given.

Private George Jackson, 387, C Company, 9 Platoon, 7 Reserves, B5 Lines, R.N.D. Camp, Blandford, Dorset, would be glad of back numbers of any of the companion papers.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"A New Gemite" (Holderness).—You are hereby welcomed as requested. Herr Schneider is still at St. Jim's.

Ellen H. (Dumbarton).—Very pleased to hear from you. Cannot remember who are the fags of the seniors you mention.

"Staunch Reader" (Outwood).—We get many letters every week from girl readers. Impossible to correspond with the young lady mentioned, because she only exists on paper.

G. L. (Lucknow).—Your letter reached me, though it was addressed to "The Editor, London, England"! You will find a reply in the "Magnet," but possibly at a later date than this.

H. R. (Wakefield).—We do not stock back numbers more than three months or so. Never mind about pencil; it was easy to read. So, though under age, you have already been in the trenches, and come back with frostbite to be discharged? Evidently you were determined to do your bit!

Rifleman C. Ellison, 3882, "B" Coy., 3/6 K.L. Regt., 25, Blundell Street, Blackpool, would be glad to have letters from any "Gem" or "Magnet" readers.

"Brimstone" (Liverpool).—Tom Merry, Talbot, Bob Cherry, and Vernon-Smith are all such rattling good sportsmen that I should not care to try picking out the best of the four. Make your own choice, please.

H. A. wants me to make the "Gem" yarns more interesting, if you please. Well, that's Mr. Clifford's job, and my opinion is that he does it.

H. Rumjaha (Shanghai).—Very pleased to hear from so far away as China, and to know that the companion papers are appreciated there.

"Reg." (West Bridgford).—Bob Cherry.

"A Loyal Reader" (Ireland).—Glad you like "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays."

Betty G. (Craigavad).—Lowther is just a trifle ahead of Manners. Thanks for all the nice things you say.

"Boxer."—The Correspondence Exchange was for putting readers into communication by post with one another.

Audrey E. (Birkenhead).—I wish you luck in the Tuck-Hamper quest.

"Loyal Reader of all the Companion Papers."—You need not have felt shy about writing. Very pleased to hear from you. Changes will only be made in the "Penny Pop." if a majority of readers favours them.

Eileen Alannah says, she is a girl, but can back up the companion papers as well as any boy, and will! I don't doubt it. Our girl readers are very keen.

C. J. M. B. (Bury Island).—No mistake. Once in a way, an exceptionally clever fellow gets to the top quickly.

"Lindimac" (Toronto).—Sorry the Toronto newsagents did not sell the "Herald." If you will send your name, I shall be pleased to send you two or three copies.

SPOOFING THE SWELL!

(Continued from page 18.)

"Gweat Scott!"

"It is wotten to welflect that Bwitish boys are supportin' foweign industwies by goin' to see——"

"Bai Jove!"

"Yankee films at the cinemahs! I call upon all twue Bwitons——"

"Oh, deah!"

"To wally wound and boycott Yankee films!"

Whir!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood speechless. For a moment he was quite overcome. His double possessed his looks, his voice, and apparently his views on the subject of cinemas and American films. And this fellow—this unknown person who resembled him—was apparently claiming to be himself! The swell of St. Jim's was simply staggered.

Arthur Augustus found his voice at last.

"I have no twin!" he gasped. "That fellah is a wank impostah!"

"Which is Gussy?" howled Kerruish.

"I am D'Arcy!" shrieked the swell of St. Jim's frantically. "That wotten boundah is an impostah, and I am goin' to give him a feahful thwashin'."

Arthur Augustus made an infuriated rush at his double.

Before he could be stopped, he had D'Arcy II. round the neck, and had his head in chancery, and was pounding away at his waxwork features.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Gussy!"

"Dragimoff!" yelled Glyn. "He'll bust him! He'll muck it up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Several pairs of hands dragged the schoolboy inventor back.

Arthur Augustus pounded away furiously, and then hurled the impostor from him. The impostor went with a crash to the ground.

"There!" panted Arthur Augustus. "Now, if that wottah wepeats his impudent claim to be me——"

"My hat! Look at his face!" gasped Julian.

"Howly mother av Moses!"

"Look!"

The juniors stared in horror at the face of D'Arcy II. Waxwork was not designed to stand such handling as Arthur Augustus had bestowed upon it. The features of the impostor had disappeared, and his face no longer bore any resemblance to that of D'Arcy or any other human being. It was a mass of shapeless wax.

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in bewilderment and horror. "Wha-at's the mattah with his face? I— I did not weally mean to hit the poor chap so hard——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" yelled Bernard Glyn wrathfully. "You've mucked up my model!"

"Your—your model?"

"Tare an ouns!" shouted Reilly. "It isn't aloive at all! Shure, it's a dummy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus understood at last. He made a rush at Bernard Glyn.

"You feahfully impertinent wottah! There is nothin' to cackle at, you duffahs! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin' Glyn."

Tom Merry & Co. closed round Arthur Augustus, and dragged him back. They were laughing hysterically.

"Welease me, you wottahs! I am goin'——"

"Yes, you're going home," said Blake cheerfully. "Dash it all, you don't want two fights in one afternoon, Gussy. You've licked the impostor, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass, Blake! I insist——"

Arthur Augustus was still insisting as he was marched away by his chums. Bernard Glyn gathered up his wrecked figure sorrowfully. He had been very funny while he lasted, but his day was done. D'Arcy II. was not likely to recover from the fearful thrashing he had received from D'Arcy I.

THE END.

Next Wednesday, "THE COASCRIPTS OF ST. JIM'S."
By Martin Clifford. Order THE GEM in advance
Price 1d.

Your Editor

Cash Prize for Every Contributor to this Page.



Our Weekly Prize Page.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR WINNING STORYETTE.

ECONOMY.

Sandy (at pay office of public baths): "How much for a bath, mon?"

Attendant: "One shilling, sir."

Sandy: "Aye, mon, that's a wee too much. Can ye no charge saxpence, and put in half the usual amount of water?"
—Sent in by J. V. Wilcox, Preston.

LION-HEARTED.

Several Jack Tars, being on leave, visited a circus, and secured seats in the front row.

During the performance, a charming young lady lion-tamer, who had got into the lions' cage, beckoned to a savage-looking beast, which came forward and took a piece of sugar from her mouth.

"Why, I could do that trick!" exclaimed one of the sailors.

"Oh!" stammered the fair tamer. "Could you really?"

"You bet your sweet life," calmly answered the sailor. "Just as well as the lion."—Sent in by Francis Carr, Leicester.

A BUSINESS TRANSACTION.

"What's the matter, Raggars?" said Smith to his friend, who was looking particularly gloomy.

"Matter?" echoed Raggars. "Oh, a little joke I played—just a funny joke."

"What was it?"

"Well, you know Jones? I lent him ten shillings about a year ago, and I simply could not get him to pay it back. Then last week I heard that he had started a debt-collecting agency, so I thought it would be a good joke to write and ask him to collect the half-sovereign he owed me."

"Well?"

"I've just had a letter from him to say that the ten shillings he owes me has been collected, and his fee is a guinea."—Sent in by C. Hardman, Hobden Bridge.

TOMMY'S RESPONSIBILITY.

The small boy had applied for a job at a certain factory. Knowing that the lad's three elder brothers were on active service, the manager determined to give him a start.

"How's your brother Frank getting on?" he asked.

"Oh, he's at the Front, sir," said the boy proudly.

"Good! And Albert?"

Albert's out with Frank in the same regiment?"

"And your eldest brother, Tom? I suppose he's in France, too?"

The lad shook his head, looking prouder than ever.

"Oh, no, sir!" he said.

"Our Tom hasn't gone to France. He's minding India!"—Sent in by Oliver Abbott, Attercliffe, Sheffield.

ALL AT SEA.

A burly Jack Tar was escorting his best girl across the tram-lines, when a car came bowling round the corner and and nearly ran into them.

"Hi, there, you blind land-lubber!" yelled Jack to the conductor. "Can't you see where you are going?"

"Who are you talking to?" cried the conductor. "I ain't driving, am I?"

"No!" roared the indignant sailor. "But you're jolly well steering, ain't yer?"—Sent in by R. Bergman, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

D

SAVED!

In the market-place of a little country town a travelling auctioneer was trying to dispose of his "bargains," but the townspeople were very slow to purchase.

"Just look here!" shouted the salesman in desperation. "Here's a real bargain—twenty-five postcards for one penny. Who'll have them?"

A young fellow in the front row eyed the tempting bait eagerly, and then began fumbling in his pocket; but, before he could withdraw the necessary coin, his mother laid a restraining hand on his shoulder and whispered:

"No, no, Jim; it's another fraud! I've seen 'em, and they haven't got stamps on."—Sent in by W. Scott, E.C.

THE SERGEANT'S SARCASM.

Time was when he had been an officer in a crack regiment. But he had fallen on evil days, and had been compelled to resign his commission and enlist in another regiment as a private.

However, he found it very hard to forget his former position, and on being asked by the sergeant to hold his horse, he remarked:

"Er—er—you—er—forget, sergeant, that I once held his Majesty's commission!"

The sergeant looked at him in the cold and critical way that is typical of his kind.

"Did you, my son?" he asked. "Well, you can just hold one of his Majesty's horses now."—Sent in by W. O'Shanassy, Melbourne, Australia.

CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE.

Tommy arrived home from school an hour late one day with a nice new golf-ball in his pocket. Delighted with his find, he proceeded to show it to each member of the family in turn.

His father, however, looked at the ball suspiciously.

"Are you quite sure, Tommy," he asked, "that it was really lost?"

"Yes, dad; of course! Why, I saw the golfer and his caddie looking for it."—Sent in by T. Baggs, Huddersfield, Yorks.

ANOTHER "HEIR" RAID.

Poor Willie was in trouble again. First, he got into difficulties over tying a can to a dog's tail; then he broke one of his mother's best cups; and now, alas, she was calling him again!

"Willie, you naughty boy, come here at once!"

Willie came.

"Do you want me, mother?" he asked.

"Yes, I do! Where are all those tarts I left in the pantry?"

"I don't know, mother," said Willie timidly. "They seem to have vanished into the empty 'heir.'"—Sent in by C. Haynes, New Ferry, Cheshire.

EASILY EARNED.

"Do you know where Teddy Brown lives, my boy?" asked a kindly old lady of the diminutive youth.

"Yes. He ain't at home, though. If you'll give me a penny, ma'am, I'll find him for you," replied the youngster.

"All right, here's a penny. Run off and find him!"

"Thank you, ma'am! I'm him."—Sent in by Martin Mitchell, Kirkburton, Yorks.

As the "GEM" Storyette Competition has proved so popular, it has been decided to run this novel feature in conjunction with our new Companion Paper,

THE BOYS' FRIEND, 1d.,

Published every Monday,

in order to give more of our readers a chance of winning one of our useful Money Prizes. If you know a really funny joke, or a short, interesting paragraph, send it along (on a post-card) before you forget it, and address it to: The Editor, THE BOYS' FRIEND and GEM, Gough House, Gough Square, Fleet Street, E.C. Look out for YOUR Prize Storyette in next week's GEM or BOYS' FRIEND.