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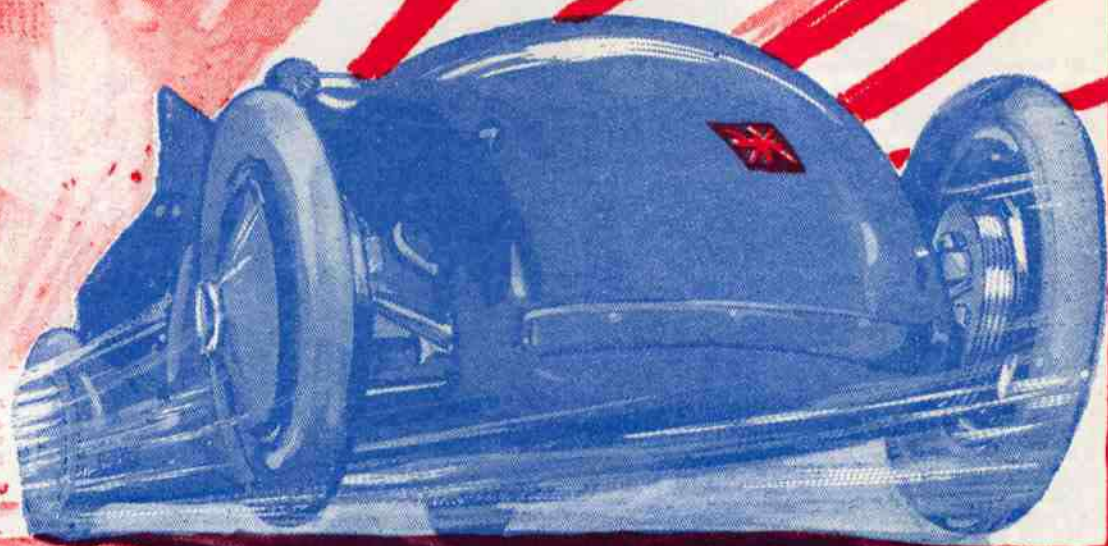
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EVERY
WEDNESDAY

*The Car That
Made History -*
**MALCOLM CAMPBELL'S
"BLUE-BIRD"**



FREE TOPPING COLOURED
METAL MODEL **INSIDE**

AN EXTRA-LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY OF ST. JIM'S—

Fool's Luck!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, can be as obstinate as a mule where his noble dignity is concerned. And this characteristic has landed him in trouble many a time and oft. Even his chums, however, are left gasping at Gussy's latest method of hunting for trouble, though they gasp still more at the way in which he gets out of it!



CHAPTER 1.

A Very Mysterious Message.

PRACTICALLY certain, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, spoke with confidence.

His confidence did not seem to be shared by his chums, Blake and Herries and Digby.

In fact, they looked very doubtful.

"That's all very well—" began Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!" assented Arthur Augustus. "Pwactically certain. I assuah you. The telegraph boy may be heah any minute now."

"Tea's on in Hall now," remarked Herries.

"That's all wight."

"I'm hungry!" observed Digby, in a tone of patient plautiveness.

"It's all wight."

The chums of Study No. 6 were standing in a group in the quadrangle at St. Jim's.

Cheery fellows passed them every moment, going into the House to tea.

Blake & Co., however, were not quite so cheerful as usual.

Tea in Study No. 6 in the School House was an institution—generally a very cheery and substantial institution. It was but seldom that Blake & Co. were reduced to that last resource of the impecunious junior—tea in Hall. If one member of Study No. 6 had cash in hand then all members of Study No. 6 had cash in hand. It happened very seldom that all four members of that celebrated study fell, like the seed in the parable, in a stony place.

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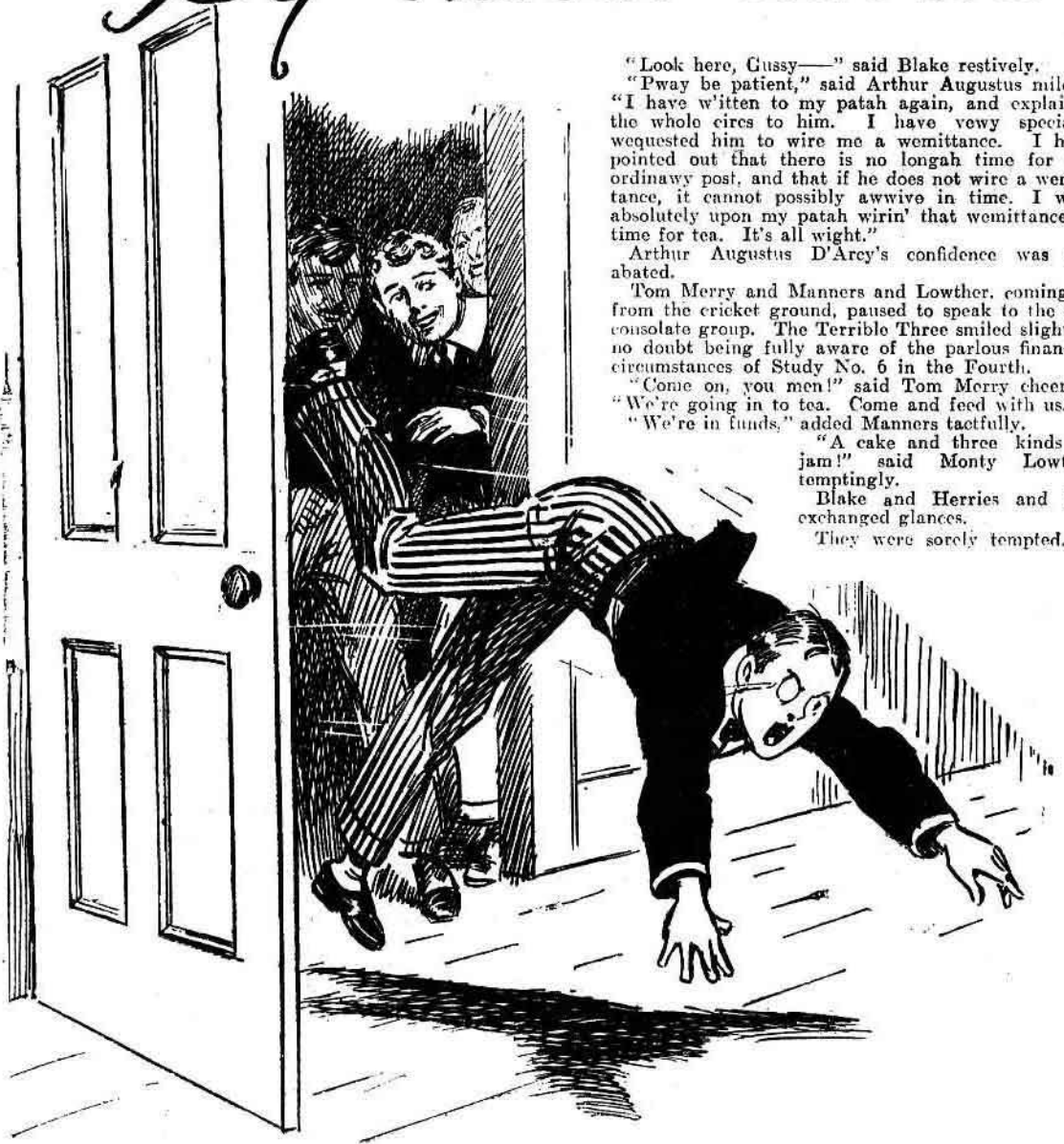
But it happened sometimes. It had happened now. For whole days there had been a dearth of cash in Study No. 6. As Jack Blake expressed it lugubriously: "I am stony, thou art stony, he is stony!"

Arthur Augustus had written to his noble pater, Lord Eastwood, twice, if not thrice. It was weeks since Arthur Augustus had had a fiver from his noble pater; and never could a fiver have come along more opportunely than now. But no fiver came. Not even a currency note came. Lord Eastwood seemed to have forgotten entirely that schoolboys were apt to overrun their allowances. Certainly, it was a long, long time since Lord Eastwood had been a school-boy. He might be excused for having forgotten the manners and customs of the Fourth Form. On the other hand, Gussy had reminded him twice, if not thrice. Still his lordship had not played up.

Fellows who were stony had many resources. If they

FEATURING ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY OF THE FOURTH!

by Martin Clifford



had friends—and Study No. 6 had heaps of friends—they could “tea” along the passage, and they could borrow little sums here and there, to be repaid when their ship came home.

Blake & Co. had exhausted these resources. They had tea’d with several fellows in the Fourth, singly or in twos, or all together. Twice had they tea’d with Tom Merry in the Shell. Once they had gone over to the New House to tea with Figgins & Co.

They had not worn out their welcome by any means. They had come, and were welcome again. But there was a limit in these things. Study No. 6 realised that they had reached the limit allowed by the fitness of things, and on this sunny afternoon—hungry after games practice—they were at the end of their tether. It was tea in Hall, or no tea at all; neck or nothing, so to speak. Unless—

“Stands to reason the old boy won’t telegraph a remittance,” said Dig. “Fellows’ paters never telegraph a remittance.”

“Never!” said Herries. “We shall miss tea in Hall while we’re waiting for the telegram that won’t come.”

“Look here, Gussy—” said Blake restively.

“Pway be patient,” said Arthur Augustus mildly. “I have w’ritten to my patah again, and explained the whole circs to him. I have vevy specially requested him to wire me a wemittance. I have pointed out that there is no longah time for the ordinaawy post, and that if he does not wire a wemittance, it cannot possibly awwive in time. I wely absolutely upon my patah wirin’ that wemittance in time for tea. It’s all wight.”

Arthur Augustus D’Arcy’s confidence was unabated.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, coming in from the cricket ground, paused to speak to the disconsolate group. The Terrible Three smiled slightly; no doubt being fully aware of the parlous financial circumstances of Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

“Come on, you men!” said Tom Merry cheerily. “We’re going in to tea. Come and feed with us.”

“We’re in funds,” added Manners tactfully.

“A cake and three kinds of jam!” said Monty Lowther temptingly.

Blake and Herries and Dig exchanged glances.

They were sorely tempted.

Hospitality was unbounded in No. 10 Study in the Shell, when funds ran to hospitality, as evidently they did now.

Twice had the stony quartette tea’d with the Terrible Three, and twice, they thought, was a proper limit.

But they began to wonder now whether they might not, after all, put in a third visit in No. 10.

That is to say, Blake and Herries and Dig wondered. But Arthur Augustus was reposing absolute confidence in the arrival of a remittance by telegraph from Eastwood House.

Before his comrades could think it out and reply, Arthur Augustus spoke, and knocked the whole thing on the head.

“Thanks aw’ly, deah boys, but we’re all wight again. Just waitin’ heah for the kid from the post-office. It’s all sewene.”

Blake & Co. could do nothing but back up their chum.

“Thanks all the same, old beans,” said Blake.

“Right-ho!” said Tom. “If anything happens—I mean, if anything doesn’t happen—drop in at No. 10.”

And the chums of the Shell went on into the School House.

Blake stared towards the gates.
 "He's not coming," he grunted.
 "He will come all wight."
 "If he doesn't—," growled Dig.
 "He will, deah boy."

Three fellows came sauntering along from Little Side-Levison and Cardew and Clive of the Fourth. They, too, paused to speak to the stony four, and they, too, smiled faintly.

"Lookin' for you men," said Cardew. "We're havin' rather a spread in our study, and we'd like you to come."

"Do!" said Clive.

"Welcome as the flowers in May," said Levison. "We'll be disappointed if you don't come."

Again Blake & Co. were tempted. Again Arthur Augustus was the first to speak.

"Thanks no end, deah boys, but we're all wight again now. It's weally vevy kind of you, but we're quite all wight."

And Levison & Co. went in.

Blake and Herries and Dig glared at their noble chum.

"You ass!" grunted Herries. "There goes our last chance! It's tea in Hall now—and we're late for that."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Look here, let's go down to the gates," said Blake.

"If the telegraph boy is in sight, we'll give Gussy a chance.

If he's not, we'll bag tea in Hall before it's all gone."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh rats!"

Blake & Co. started for the gates at a rapid walk. Arthur Augustus followed them in a more leisurely manner. Hurry was inconsistent with the repose that stamped the caste of Vere de Vere. Besides, Arthur Augustus was not anxious—not at all. He was absolutely assured that that remittance was coming, and that it had almost reached St. Jim's by this time.

Blake and Herries and Dig went out into the road. They were standing in the middle of the road, staring towards Rylcombe, when Arthur Augustus lounged elegantly through the gateway.

"By gum!" exclaimed Blake.

"Bai Jove! Is he in sight, deah boys?"

"Yes!"

Arthur Augustus smiled—the smile of superior wisdom.

"I'm not the sort of chap to say I told you so, deah boys," he remarked, "but you must admit, all the same, that I did tell you so, what?"

Blake & Co. did not reply to that. They could not deny that Gussy had told them so—in fact, he had told them many times. They stood and stared at the lad in uniform who was coming up from the direction of the village. It was the post-office boy, and in his hand he had a buff envelope—evidently a telegram. Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his noble eye, turned it upon the approaching youth, and smiled again.

"All sowene, what?" he murmured.

"Looks like it," admitted Blake.

Arthur Augustus stepped to meet the telegraph boy. It was obvious that the boy was coming to St. Jim's with the telegram; still, D'Arcy asked the question to make sure.

"For St. Jim's?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you—it's for me. I'll take it."

"Yes, sir."

The telegraph boy handed over the telegram, and Arthur Augustus slit open the buff envelope and unfolded the inner slip. Blake & Co. watched him eagerly—almost hungrily.

A strange expression came over Arthur Augustus' face. He read the telegram, and read it a second time; and stared at it, and stared again.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated at last.

The hopes of his comrades sank to zero.

"Not a remittance, after all?" moaned Digby.

"No."

"Oh, rotten!" groaned Herries.

"You frabjous ass!" hissed Blake. "Tea in Hall will be over, and—"

"Pway don't wot, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, in a very sober tone. "There is somethin' w'ong! Somethin' vevy w'ong indeed! I feah that my faihah is goin' out of his mind."

"What?"

"Wead the telegwam!"

Arthur Augustus held out the slip, and Blake & Co. read it together—reading the following surprising message:

"Victor in trouble. Come at once. Maurice."

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CHAPTER 2.

Not for Gussy!

"GREAT pip!"
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Phew!"

Blake & Co. gazed at the telegram, and gazed at the swell of St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus' face was grave.

"What do you fellows make of that?" he asked. "My faihah's name is not Maurice, yet the telegwam is signed Maurice. I don't know anybody named Victor—exceptin' our Housemastah, old Waitlon. My patah can't be wiwin' me that Mr. Waitlon is in twouble. Besides, old Waitlon is in the School House now—I saw him talkin' to Mr. Lathom. This is fighfully mystewious, you fellows."

"Inexplicable, I suppose, to a brain like yours!" hissed Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Can't you see, you frabjous owl, that you've opened a telegram sent to somebody else?" roared Blake.

"Bai Jove!"

That simple explanation of the mystery had not yet occurred to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. His noble intellect was not always quick on the uptake.

"You've done it now!" said Herries. "You burbling chump—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Didn't you look at the envelope before opening it, you ass?" shrieked Dig.

"You see, as I natuwallly supposed that the telegwam was for me, I did not think of lookin' at the address," confessed Arthur Augustus. "I suppose I ought weally to have looked at it befoah openin' the telegwam. But a fellow can't think of evewythin'."

"Some fellows can't think of anything."

"Weally, Dig—"

"Your name Railton, sir?" asked the post-office boy, touching Arthur Augustus on the arm.

"Waitlon? No. Why?"

"Then what do you mean by opening that telegram, sir? That telegram is sent to somebody named Railton at the school."

"Oh, cwikey!"

"Our Housemaster!" said Dig, in a hushed voice.

It was the last straw!

Had the telegram been for any St. Jim's fellow, matters would have been bad enough. But Arthur Augustus had opened a telegram addressed to his Housemaster, Mr. Victor Railton. What Mr. Railton would say—and do—was an interesting and thrilling problem.

"Well, my hat!" said Blake. He held the buff envelope which Arthur Augustus had dropped. The address was pencilled on it—Victor Railton, School House, St. James'. Had Arthur Augustus glanced at that pencilled address certainly he would never have dreamed of opening the telegram. But, as he had stated, a fellow could not think of everything. At all events, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could not.

"You give me that telegram, sir," said the post-office lad anxiously and indignantly. "I shall get into a row, that telegram being opened by the wrong bloke. You better come in with me, sir, and explain that you opened it."

"Certainly I shall do so," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "A fellow cannot help makin' a mistake, and I shall certainly explain the mattah to Mr. Waitlon."

And the swell of St. Jim's walked in with the post-office lad.

Blake & Co. looked at one another.

"Did you ever?" asked Blake despairingly.

Dig shook his head.

"Never!" he said.

"Opening a telegram without looking at the address outside! Of all the burbling idiots—"

"Of all the frabjous chumps—" said Herries.

"And no remittance, after all!" sighed Dig. "We might have known it! In fact, I did know it. Tea in Hall will be over now."

Blake grunted.

"Never mind tea now! Blow tea! Gussy is going to get a record licking from old Railton. Luckily, Railton knows he's the biggest idiot ever, so he will believe that he opened the telegram out of sheer idiocy, and not to pry into it like a fellow like Trimble."

Herries whistled.

"Railton won't like his private affairs known among the fellows, all the same," he remarked. "Some relation of his is in trouble, according to what the wire says—some relation the same name as himself—"

"He's got a brother named Maurice," said Blake. "I've heard of him—seen him, in fact. I remember he came down to the Old Boys' match last summer. He's older than Railton, I believe."

"But wao's the giddy Victor that's in trouble, I wonder?" said Dig. "Anyhow, let's go and see what happens to Gussy. We're dished for tea now."

And the three juniors trailed in disconsolately. Obviously Gussy's faith in his noble pater was ill-founded. In spite of the lengthy and explicit explanation of the parlous state of affairs contained in Gussy's last letter, Lord Eastwood had not telegraphed a remittance to St. Jim's. He had gone on his noble way regardless of the famine in Study No. 6.

But that was not the pressing matter now. Concern for their noble chum came before concern for their hungry selves; and Blake & Co. were not thinking of tea, but of

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Railton, staring at him, while Kildare smiled at the pigeons in the quad. "That is a very extraordinary statement, D'Arcy."

"Is it, sir?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently.

"Certainly it is!" rapped out Mr. Railton. "I advise you, D'Arcy, not to be so extremely careless on another occasion. You run the risk of being suspected of prying into private correspondence."

Arthur Augustus flushed crimson.

"Bai Jove! Weally, sir—"

"I am aware that you are a thoughtless and foolish boy—"

"I, sir!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in astonishment.



"Look out!" There was a yell from the crowd round the cricket ground as a mighty hit by Talbot sent the ball hurtling towards Mr. Lathom. Crash! The yell failed to put the master of the Fourth on his guard, and the next moment his hat flew from his head. "Yaroooh!" (See Chapter 7.)

Gussy and his egregious blunder, as they trailed in at the gates of St. Jim's—and not thinking at all of the unknown Victor.

Meanwhile the post-office boy, with Arthur Augustus walking calmly and stately by his side, had reached the School House. Mr. Railton, as it happened, was standing in the doorway looking out into the green old quad, and chatting with Kildare of the Sixth, the captain of St. Jim's. D'Arcy touched the telegraph boy on the shoulder.

"That's Mr. Wailton!" he said.

The boy touched his cap and presented the telegram—in its torn envelope—to the Housemaster of the School House.

"Mr. Railton, sir?"

"Yes, my boy," said Mr. Railton kindly. "For me?"

"Yes, sir. This young gent opened it by mistake, sir."

"Indeed!"

The post-office boy retired from the scene, and Mr. Railton, with the telegram in his hand, fixed a rather stern glance on the swell of the Fourth.

"I see that this telegram, addressed to me, has been opened, D'Arcy," he said. "Am I to understand that you opened it?"

"Yaas, sir."

"And how came you to make such a very inexplicable mistake?" asked the School Housemaster sharply. "My name is written on the envelope."

"I was expectin' a telegwam fwom my fathah, sir—"

"I presume, D'Arcy, that you look at the address upon an envelope before opening it?"

"Yaas, as a wule, sir. But bein' in wathah a huwya, and bein' absolutely certain that the telegwam was for me, I omitted to do so in the pwesent instance."

"Yes; and on that ground I excuse you. Kindly do not let anything of the sort occur again, however."

"Weally, sir—" said Arthur Augustus feebly.

"Have you read the telegram?" snapped Mr. Railton.

"Yaas, sir; befoah I knew that it was not for me. You see, sir, it was only by weadin' it that I knew it was for somebody else," explained Arthur Augustus. "I am vevy sowwy, sir. I wealise now that I have put my foot in it. Of course, sir, I shall not wepeat what that telegwam says. I shall not mention the name of Victor or of Mauwice to anyone, whoevah they may be, sir."

Five or six St. Jim's fellows were within hearing, and they looked at one another and grinned.

"You young ass!" breathed Kildare.

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Really, D'Arcy, I think you are the most obtuse boy at St. Jim's!" exclaimed the Housemaster crossly.

"I assuah you, sir, that I shall wepeat nothin' of what I wead in that telegwam; but you will allow me to wemark, sir, that I am sowwy if a wrelation of yours is in twouble, as that telegwam says—"

"What?"

"I assuah you, sir—"

"Silence!"

"Bai Jove!"

Mr. Railton gave Kildare a nod, and walked away to his study. Probably he was very keen, after what Arthur Augustus had said, to read his telegram; but he did not open it till the door of his study had closed behind him.

"You thumping young idiot!" said Kildare.

"Bai Jove! Weally, you know—"

Kildare walked away, leaving Arthur Augustus looking rather blank. Blake & Co. came in from the quad.

"What is it—a licking?" asked Blake.

"Certainly not, dear boy. Wailton has very naturally excused my mistake, as I explained to him that it was made quite inadvertently."

"Lucky for you he's a good-natured chap," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"So Railton's got a relation who's in trouble, has he?" asked Baggy Trimble of the Fourth, whose fat ears had not lost a word.

"I wefuse to tell you a word about Wailton's affaih, Twimble," answered Arthur Augustus haughtily.

"He, he, he!"

"Weally, you caeklin' ass—"

"Oh, come away, you chump!" said Blake, grasping his noble chum by the arm. "You'll be telling all St. Jim's at this rate!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come on, ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass, Blake. Pway welease my arm. And I want to caution you fellows," went on Arthur Augustus, apparently unconscious of a dozen pairs of ears close at hand. "Be very careful not to talk about what was in that telegwam. I don't know who Victor is, of course, but I suppose he is a relation of Wailton's; but whatever twouble he may be in, Wailton won't want it talked all ovah St. Jim's."

"Shut up, you frabjous ass!" hissed Blake.

"Victor!" chimed in Racke of the Shell. "That's Railton's front name. A nephew of his, perhaps."

"Weally, Waeke—"

"What sort of trouble is Railton's nephew in, Gussy?" chuckled Crooke of the Shell.

"Weally, Cwooke—"

"Come away, you burbling chump!" howled Blake. And he fairly dragged the swell of St. Jim's out of the House.

There was no tea for Blake & Co. that afternoon. Having the time on their hands, they filled it in by telling Arthur Augustus D'Arcy what they thought of him. They told him at great length and with considerable emphasis—in fact, they were still telling him when the bell rang for roll-call, and the St. Jim's fellows gathered in Hall.

CHAPTER 3.

Trouble!

"RAILTON'S not taking the roll!" remarked Tom Merry.

"It was going to be Railton!" Manners observed.

Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was taking roll-call in Big Hall that evening. Evidently the master of the Shell had taken Victor Railton's place for some reason.

"Railton's gone out!" remarked Talbot.

"He's got a lecture on this evening," said Monty Lowther. "I made a special note of the time, so as to be sure of missing it."

Talbot of the Shell smiled.

"I fancy the lecture's off," he said. "I saw Railton get going on his motor-bike soon after tea."

"Good!" said Tom Merry, with a grin. "I was going to the lecture, as it was Railton up—man ought to encourage his Housemaster. But I shan't be sorry to miss it."

"Silence!" called out Darrell of the Sixth.

Mr. Linton was calling the roll.

There were a good many comments on the absence of the Housemaster, in whispers, among the fellows.

Owing to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's remarkable methods of keeping things dark, it was known far and wide, in the School House, that Railton had had a telegram from his brother Maurice, and that the news was bad.

Most fellows were sorry to hear it.

Mr. Railton was a popular Housemaster. There were few fellows in his House, senior or junior, who did not like him and admire him. Indeed, he was more popular in the New House, too, than the Housemaster of that House. All St. Jim's was proud of Victor Railton—of his record in the War, of his record in games—and the fellows liked him as much as they respected him. If there was "trouble at home" for the popular Housemaster, all St. Jim's, with very few exceptions, regretted it. Carping fellows like Trimble and Mellish of the Fourth, and Racke and Crooke of the Shell, took a different view—the better a master was, the less they liked him. But fellows of that sort were few at St. Jim's.

After roll-call, the Terrible/Three went up to the Shell passage. There they came on a group of Shell fellows in discussion, and caught Railton's name as they came along.

"Must be a nephew of Railton's, I should say," Crooke was remarking. "Same front name, you know."

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"And in trouble," grinned Racke. "That's what's made Railton scoot off on his giddy motor-bike as if he was going in for a race."

"Never knew he had a nephew," remarked Gore. "The kid's never been here that I know of."

"Queer that he isn't a St. Jim's man if he's at school!" observed Kangaroo.

Racke laughed.

"Mightn't like to be at school with his uncle," he said. "No great catch having an uncle for a schoolmaster."

"An uncle like old Railton would be all right," said Kangaroo.

"Matter of taste!" sneered Racke. "I don't admire Railton so much as you do."

"You wouldn't!" agreed Kangaroo, as he walked away.

Racke bit his lip.

"Well, if there's trouble in the jolly old home, I hope it's serious enough to keep Railton away for a few days," he said, to his friends. "I can spare him for a few days, easily."

"What ho!" grinned Crooke.

"And I think—Yarooogh!" roared Racke, as Tom Merry stopped, in passing, and seized him by the collar.

With his other hand Tom grasped Crooke's collar.

Bang!

The heads of Racke and Crooke came together with a sounding concussion.

"Ow!"

"Yow!"

Tom Merry pitched them against the wall of the Shell passage, and his blue eyes blazed at them as they staggered there.

"You hope Railton's got trouble at home, do you, you worms?" exclaimed the captain of the Shell savagely. "Serious enough to keep him away from St. Jim's! My hat, I'll—"

Tom Merry's hands were clenched. And Racke and Crooke did not wait to see what he proposed to do with them in that state.

They faded away into their study with remarkable suddenness.

Tom Merry was frowning as he went on to No. 10.

"The rotters!" he muttered. "I've a jolly good mind to—"

"Easy does it, old bean!" grinned Lowther. "Racke and Crooke ain't worth licking."

"But what's this about Railton having trouble at home?" asked Manners. "First I've heard of it."

"Same here," said Tom. "Railton seems to have buzzed off all of a sudden. I hear he had a telegram. Those cads have fancied something or other about it. The wish father to the thought, I suppose."

"Nothing in it, I hope?" said Monty.

"Nothing, most likely."

It was unfortunate that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had opened that telegram by mistake. When the Terrible Three came down after prep they found a good many fellows commenting on the matter.

Mr. Railton had not returned to the school.

At bed-time he was still absent.

Apparently he was staying away the night. And that circumstance gave additional point and interest to the rumours that were current.

It was not a case of illness, as Aubrey Racke was careful to point out. The telegram had stated, not that "Victor" was ill, but that he was in trouble.

Who Victor might be was an interesting question. Obviously a near relation of Railton's—as the telegram announcing that he was in trouble had come from Railton's brother, and had caused the Housemaster to leave St. Jim's in a hurry. Certainly, Mr. Railton had had no previous intention of going away for that night; for he had been booked to take the roll in Hall, and after that to deliver an address in the lecture-room.

Something had happened. It had happened to Victor, who ever Victor was. A nephew of Railton's was the general theory. But what was the trouble he was in?

Kildare of the Sixth saw lights out that night in the Shell dormitory. Tom Merry called to him:

"Has Railton come in yet, Kildare?"

"No. He's staying away the night."

"Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"I hope not," answered Kildare.

And he put out the lights, and left the dormitory.

The next morning most of the St. Jim's fellows were keen to see Railton. But it was not till dinner in Hall that the school Housemaster appeared.

He walked into Hall and took his place at the Sixth Form table. All eyes were upon him.

His manner was absolutely as usual. If there was any trouble weighing upon Mr. Railton's mind, he did not allow his features to betray it. But Victor Railton had never been a man to wear his heart upon his sleeve.

Arthur Augustus glanced at him from the ranks of the Fourth.
 "Wailton looks all wight, you fellows," he remarked.
 "Why shouldn't he?" grunted Blake.
 "Well, that telegram said—"
 "Shut up, you ass!"
 "Weally, Blake—"
 "What did it say exactly, Gussy?" asked Baggy Trimble eagerly.

"Tell us something we don't know," suggested Manners.
 "Weally, Mannahs—"
 "Anything up, Gussy?" asked Tom, noting the deep cloud on the noble brow of Arthur Augustus.
 "Yaas, wathah!"
 "Give it a name, old bean," said Tom, smiling. "Don't tell us you're not fit. We're relyng on you to hand out whole centuries against the Grammarians."
 "I'm detained, deah boy!"
 "Fathead!"

"I wefuse to tell you, Twimble. I wegard you as an inquisitive fat boundah!"
 "Well, I like that!" jeered Trimble. "I didn't open a man's telegram and read it, anyhow!"

LOOK! This is a small reproduction of Next Week's Cover!

"Bai Jove! If you imply that I opened Wailton's telegram ffrom any inquisitive motive, Twimble—" gasped Arthur Augustus, breathless with wrath.



"Silence, please!" rapped out Mr. Lathom, blinking along the table over his spectacles.
 And the swell of St. Jim's had to swallow his wrath.

After dinner, when the fellows left Hall, Arthur Augustus paused near the door to wait for the House-master to emerge. He stepped forward as Mr. Railton appeared in the doorway.

"Pwax excuse me, sir—"
 "Well?" rapped out Mr. Railton.

His manner was not encouraging—possibly owing to the incident of the telegram the previous day.

"I twust, sir—"
 "Be brief!"

"Yaas, sir, certainly. I twust you found ewewythin' all wight at home, sir?" said Arthur Augustus innocently.

Mr. Railton gave him a fixed look.

"Indeed, D'Arcy!"
 "Yaas, sir. I have been quite wowwied about it, sir," said Arthur Augustus confidently.

"You are very kind to take such an interest in matters that do not concern you in the very least, D'Arcy," said Mr. Railton, in a very distinct voice.

"Oh, bai Jove!"
 "No doubt you mean well, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, wathah, sir! You see—"
 "But good intentions do not excuse impertinence, D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove!"
 "For that reason I shall give you detention for this afternoon, D'Arcy."

"Oh ewumbs!"
 "You will go into your Form-room for three hours, and I shall ask your Form master to set you a Latin task. You will then have something to occupy your mind, to the exclusion of affairs that do not concern you."

"Oh!"
 Mr. Railton walked on, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rooted to the floor.

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"It was not my fault, Tom Mewwy. I merely made a polite iniquity of Wailton about his little twouble at home, you know, and he came down on me in the most extraordinary mannah. He seemed to be quite watty, you know. I have no ideah why."

"Mightn't have liked you butting into his affairs," suggested Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
 "Well, if you're detained, that does it," said Tom. "I shall have to put in another man."

"Imposs, deah boy."
 "How's that?" inquired Tom. "Plonty of men to choose from."

"You want to beat the Gwammah School, I pwesume?" inquired Arthur Augustus stiffly.

Tom Merry smiled.
 "We'll beat them all right, old bean. I'll give young Wildrake a chance—he's coming on well in cricket."

"Wats!"
 "You may be winning the match for us by getting detained, old chap," said Monty Lowther consolingly. "We shall lose those centuries—hem—but on the other hand, we shall lose the duck's eggs."

"You uttah ass! If you think you can beat the Gwammah School without me, Tom Mewwy—"

"We'll try, old chap."
 "I am quite pwepared to take the wite of playin', and c'n a n'c in' it," explained Arthur Augustus. "Pwoobably, Wailton would not notice."

Tom Merry laughed.
 "I fancy it would rather muck up the game, old man, if a Housemaster blew along and hooked a man off the ground," he said. "Forget it."

"You see, I am not stayin' in the Form-woom, anyhow," said Arthur Augustus. "I wegard my detention as uttably unjust, and I am not goin' to stay in."

"Don't be an ass, Gussy," said Tom Merry seriously. "If you're detained, you're detained, and there's an end."
 "Nothin' of the sort. In the cires, I wefuse to be detained—"

"Fathead!"
 "Am I to undahstand, Tom Mewwy, that I am drowped ffrom the team for the Gwammah School match?"

"You are to understand exactly that, if you've got anything in your napper to understand it with," answered Tom. "I'm not playing a fellow under detention."

"I wegard you as an ass, Tom Mewwy. In any case, I shall wefuse to be detained—"
 "D'Arcy!"

Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth Form, called from the House doorway. Arthur Augustus glanced round.
 "Yaas, sir."

CHAPTER 4.

Beneath a Fellow's Dignity!

TOM MEWWY!

"Hallo, old bean!"
 "We're playin' the Gwammah School to-day!"

"We are!" agreed Tom Merry.

"We is!" assented Monty Lowther.

"Follow me to the Form-room."

D'Arcy did not stir.

Mr. Lathom, taking it for granted that Gussy was following, whisked away to the Fourth Form-room. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked expressively at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Time, Gussy!" said Manners.

"I am not goin' in," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "If you wufuse to play me in the cwicket match, Tom Mewwy, I am goin' out on my bike."

"Ass! Your Form master will be after you in a brace of shakes! Get into the House, and don't play the goat!"

"Wats!"

"Where are you going?" roared the captain of the Shell, as Arthur Augustus turned to walk away—not in the direction of the House.

"I am goin' for my bike!" answered D'Arcy, over his shoulder.

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances.

Arthur Augustus was evidently in the mood which he sometimes described as the firmness of a rock, and which his comrades likened to the obstinacy of a mule.

His detention being, in his view, unjust, Arthur Augustus was not going to be detained. That was fixed in his noble mind. As for the consequences, they did not matter in the least. When Arthur Augustus had made up his mind, and was feeling as firm as a rock—or as obstinate as a mule, as the case might be—consequences were trifles light as air.

But if Arthur Augustus was not concerned for himself, his friends were concerned for him. Flouting a Housemaster and a Form master was rather too big an order, in the opinion of the Terrible Three.

"Take him in!" said Tom.

"Let's!" agreed Lowther.

And the chums of the Shell rushed after Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, collared him unceremoniously, and rushed him headlong into the House.

Arthur Augustus did not go without protest. He struggled and roared as he went.

"You wuffians! Welease me! Yawwooh! I shall give you a fearful thwashin', Tom Mewwy! Yawwooop!"

"Hook him along!" grinned Manners.

"A long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together!" chuckled Lowther.

"This way, Gussy!"

"Yawwooh! I pwotest—yow-ow-ow! Leggo! Welease me!" shrieked Arthur Augustus wildly, as he went whirling into the Form-room corridor. "Wescue! Blake! Hewwies! Dig! Wescue!"

Blake & Co. were running up—they had sighted the scene from a little distance, and they came up on the warpath. Any fellows who ragged one member of Study No. 6, had all the members of that celebrated study to deal with.

"Wescue!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

Blake & Co. rushed to the attack.

There was no time for the Terrible Three to explain. Blake & Co. rushed on them, and smote them hip and thigh.

Six juniors—three of the Shell and three of the Fourth—went tramping and staggering around in wild combat—while Arthur Augustus, released from the hands that had grasped him, gasped for breath, and blinked at the exciting scene.

"Wag them, deah boys!" he gasped. "Woll them ovah! I'll help you as soon as I get my bweath! Wag the wottahs! They had the awful cheek, you know, to collah me because I wufused to come in to detention! Woll the wottahs ovah and wag them!"

It was rather unfortunate for Arthur Augustus that he thus explained. The Terrible Three were too busily occupied to explain.

"Hold on, you men!" gasped Blake, releasing Tom Merry all of a sudden. "Hold on! Chuck it!"

The combat ceased.

"What were you fellows ragging Gussy for?" panted Blake.

"You frabjous ass!" yelled Tom Merry, dabbing his nose. "We were taking him to the Form-room—ow, my nose! He refused to follow Lathom in—yow—and we were eaving him from a Head's flogging—ow!"

"Sorry!" gasped Blake. "Much obliged."

"Ow! Go and eat coke!" growled the captain of the Shell. "Let him get a flogging, and be blowed to him; and I hope you'll get one apiece, too."

And with that, Tom Merry walked away, dabbing his nose, and Manners and Lowther followed him, leaving Study No. 6 to themselves.

Blake & Co. looked at Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's beamed on them.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys," he said. "It was weally wippin' of you to wush to the wescue like that. Those

cheekay wottahs were actually westwainin' me fwom bweakin' detention, you know."

"Were they—actually?" gasped Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"So you're going to break detention?" demanded Herries. "Yaas, old chap. You see, I have been unjustly detained, merely for askin' Waitlon a civil and polite question. It would be beneath my dignity to submit to detention, in the circs."

"Beneath your dignity!" stuttered Dig.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Blake breathed hard. In the brief combat, all the juniors had collected some damages. Blake had a feeling in his nose as if that feature had shifted its natural position considerably. It looked as if it had a list to starboard, and it felt as if it were on its beam ends, so to speak. In the circumstances, Blake did not feel disposed to waste words on Gussy.

"Hook him along!" he said briefly.

"You bet!" grunted Herries.

"Weally, you fellows—yoooop!" roared Arthur Augustus, as he was grasped once more in three pairs of hands—which handled him even more unceremoniously than the previous three pairs.

With arms and legs flying, Arthur Augustus fairly flew to the Form-room. The door was open, and his comrades landed him in the room in a heap.

Mr. Lathom, wondering why D'Arcy had not arrived—when a nice Latin task lay on his desk all ready for him—was coming towards the Form-room doorway, to call him. He stopped suddenly, as the swell of St. Jim's entered—flying.

Bump!

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Lathom, starting back in astonishment.

Blake & Co. vanished. They stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once. Had they been Boojums, they could not have vanished more silently and suddenly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was left sprawling on the floor of the Form-room at the feet of his astonished Form master.

"Goodness gracious!" repeated Mr. Lathom, blinking at him over his glasses. "Who—what—D'Arcy! It is you, D'Arcy! What do you mean by this?"

"Gwoooogh!"

"Answer me, D'Arcy!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Get up at once, D'Arcy! How dare you rush into the Form-room in such a hurried, foolish, inconsiderate manner, and tumble over like an infant?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom crossly. "Get up at once! You are a foolish and absurd boy, D'Arcy—really, I think you should be in the Third Form, not in the Fourth, if you play such childish pranks as these."

"Oh cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet.

Mr. Lathom's misapprehension was a natural one, as he had not seen Blake & Co. hurl their chum bodily into the Form-room.

But it was the last straw to the indignant swell of St. Jim's.

Not only had his personal liberty been restrained, not only had he been taken—or rather, chucked—into detention, but his Form master supposed that he had been playing childish pranks, dashing into a room like a little unthinking boy, and falling over in consequence. It was insu' added to injury; Pelion piled on Ossa.

Arthur Augustus gazed at his Form master, speechless with indignation. It was perhaps fortunate that he was speechless.

Had he uttered his thoughts at that moment there would probably have happened a record caning in the Fourth Form-room.

Mr. Lathom frowned at him.

"I am ashamed of you, D'Arcy. Go to your desk at once! You will find your task there! I shall expect to find it completed when I return here at five o'clock!"

Mr. Lathom whisked out of the Form-room.

Arthur Augustus, breathing hard and deep, gazed after him. He did not go to his desk. He did not look at his task. Five minutes after Mr. Lathom had left the Form-room, Arthur Augustus also had left. The firmness of a rock, or the obstinacy of a mule, was completely in the ascendant now. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not going to be detained.

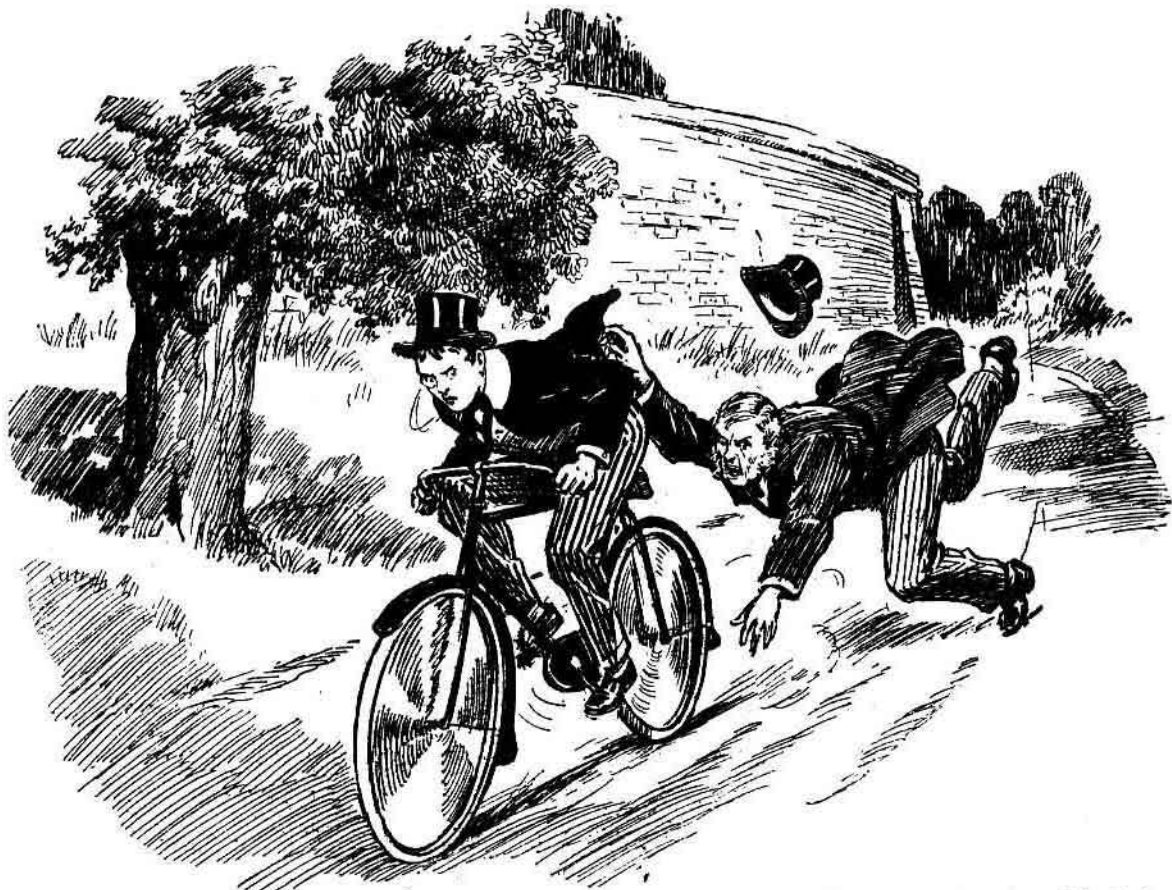
CHAPTER 5. The Truant!

"WALLY!"

It was a thrilling whisper.

It made Wally of the Third jump.

D'Arcy minor of the Third Form—more familiarly known as Wally—was leaning idly and gracefully



"D'Arcy! Stop!" Headless of Mr. Lathom's shout, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy drove hard at the pedals, just as the angry Form master made a grab at his collar. The bike shot forward, Mr. Lathom's downward clutch at the collar missed—and he fell on his hands and knees, his nose just missing the rear mudguard! (See Chapter 7.)

against the trunk of an old tree close by the House. The other Third Form men were standing before him—Reggie Manners and Levison minor. The three of them were arguing—which was not uncommon with the chums of the Third.

Wally was laying down the law, when that thrilling whisper from behind the broad tree-trunk startled him. It was agreed among the three minors that they were going to spend that half-holiday in company. Frank Levison wanted to watch the cricket match on Little Side, because his major, Levison of the Fourth, was playing for St. Jim's. Manners minor wanted to walk down to old Pepper's pond, and "muck about" with old Pepper's boat. His major, Manners of the Shell, was not playing in the cricket match, he pointed out, and it wouldn't have made any difference if he had been. D'Arcy minor was keen neither on the junior cricket match nor on "mucking about" with Pepper's boat on Pepper's pond; he favoured a visit to Wayland, where there was a fair. The argument was going strong, when it ceased all of a sudden at the sound of that thrilling whisper that trailed round the trunk of the big elm.

Wally stared round in amazement.

"That's my major's toot," he exclaimed. "I thought he'd gone down to the cricket! What the thump—"

"Wally!" came the thrilling whisper again; but the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not circumnavigate the elm. For some reason, best known to himself, Arthur Augustus was keeping in cover, in the rather narrow space between the tree and the ancient wall, shadowed by thick branches.

"Is that you, Gus?" gasped Wally of the Third.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Your major gone potty, D'Arcy?" asked Reggie Manners, with an air of friendly interest. "Does it run in your family?"

"You shut up, young Manners!" snapped Wally. "My major may be an ass—I don't say he isn't! But, look at your major! Rooting about on a half-holiday with a silly old camera! Rats!"

"Weally, Wally—" came round the tree.

"Is this a game?" asked Manners minor. "Is your major playing bo-peep, Wally, or hide-and-seek?"

"Shut up, I tell you! Gussy, you born idiot, what are

you playing this stunt for? Can't you come out of that corner?"

"No, deah boy!"

"Why not?" demanded Wally angrily. He was sensitive to jeers on the subject of his major in the Fourth.

"I have my weasons," answered Arthur Augustus mysteriously.

"Quite potty!" said Reggie Manners.

"Cheese it, old man!" said Frank Levison, laughing.

"Somebody's after Wally's major, I expect!"

"Is that it, Gussy?" demanded Wally, addressing his invisible relative.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"Well, why don't you stand up to him and punch him?" snapped Wally. "Getting funky in your old age?"

"I can scarcely punch a Form master or a Housemaster, Wally. It would be vewy bad form."

"My only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally.

Wally of the Third was a reckless young scamp; but certainly he would not have advised any fellow to punch a Form master or a Housemaster. It was undoubtedly bad form, as Gussy declared; but the badness of the form would not have troubled Wally so much as the badness of the consequences.

"Weally, deah boy, I want you to wun my bike out for me," said Arthur Augustus, still in cover behind the tree. "Take it out into the woad, and leave it for me at the first cornah, there's a good kid. You see, I should be spotted gettin' the bike out."

"Don't be an ass, Gus," advised Wally. "That is, don't be a bigger ass than you can help!"

"Weally, Wally—"

"Why aren't you playing cricket?" asked Levison minor.

"I am undah detention, deah boy!"

"Then you ought to be in the Form-room."

"Wats! Will you take my bike out for me, Wally?"

"Look here, I'm not going to help you get into a row," said D'Arcy minor. "You hook it back into the Form-room, Gussy, if you're detained. Don't play the giddy ox!"

"You are a diswespectful young wascal, Wally. Look heah, you get my bike for me, and I will do the letter home this week."

"That's all very well; but if you're detained—"

"I have cut detention, Wally, for vewy good reasons. Pway be a good kid and take my bike out for me. When you come back and tell me it is weady, I will cut wound the House and cleah."

"Hush!" breathed Levison minor. "Here comes Lathom."

"Oh ewikey!"

Arthur Augustus made himself as small as possible behind the tree. Mr. Lathom came whisking along, peering right and left, with a very indignant frown upon his brow. He paused as he saw the three fags.

"D'Arcy minor!"

"Yes, sir," answered Wally.

"Your brother is under detention, and I find that he has quitted the Form-room. Have you seen him?"

"No, sir!" answered Wally, with perfect truthfulness. Had Mr. Lathom asked him if he had heard his brother, Wally would have been bound to answer in the affirmative. But Mr. Lathom asked him if he had seen D'Arcy, and Wally certainly had not seen him. Only Gussy's thrilling whisper had reached him round the tree.

"You have not seen him?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"Not since dinner, sir."

Mr. Lathom blinked at the other two fags.

"Have you seen D'Arcy, of my Form, either of you?" he asked.

"No, sir!"

"Dear me! Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom irritably. "He cannot be far away—I am assured that he is not far away."

The three minors made no reply to that. They were even more assured than Mr. Lathom that the truant was not far away. But it was not their business to tell the Form master so.

Mr. Lathom whisked on his way, in further search for the elusive Gussy.

Wally & Co. looked at one another and grinned.

"Is he gone?" came an anxious whisper round the tree.

"Yes, ass!"

"Weally, young Mannahs—"

"You'd better get back to the Form-room, Gussy," said Wally uneasily. "Old Lathom looked awfully ratty."

"I am quite unconcerned by the wattiness of old Lathom, Wally, and I wufuse to get back to the Form-room. If you will not take out my bike for me, I will wun the wisk myself."

Wally of the Third gave a snort.

"Oh, I'll do it!" he growled. "But you're a silly owl! And a frabjous fathead! And a fooling chump!"

"You cheeky young wapsallion—"

"Oh, can it!" interrupted Wally. "I'll go and run out the jigger if you've made up your silly mind to play the ox! Mind, you're going to do the letter home!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"All serene, then."

Wally & Co. walked away.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remained in deep cover behind the elm. Minute followed minute, and the fags did not return. Wally & Co. were taking their time—as was the way of the Third. D'Arcy ventured to peep round the gnarled old trunk of the ancient tree and spotted Mr. Lathom at a distance in talk with the School Housemaster. Mr. Railton looked very cross—Gussy could guess on whose account. No doubt the Form master was acquainting him with the fact that D'Arcy had broken detention.

Arthur Augustus popped back behind the tree. It was five minutes before he ventured to take another peep; and then, to his great relief, the Housemaster and the Form master were gone. But within sight stood Kildare, Darrell, and Langton of the Sixth, in conversation in a cheery group. Obviously it was not safe to venture out of cover.

Had the coast been clear the swell of St. Jim's would have made a break without waiting for Wally & Co. to return with the word that the bike was ready for him. But with three Sixth Form prefects standing in full view between him and safety, evidently he could not venture to make a break. With what patience he could muster Arthur Augustus waited.

CHAPTER 6. Under Fire!

BAGGY TRIMBLE stared.

He was naturally surprised.

Baggy had opened the door of the Fourth Form-room and blinked in, naturally expecting to see Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sitting at his desk there.

D'Arcy being under detention in the Form-room, any fellow would have expected to find him there as a matter of course, and Trimble of the Fourth expected it.

But D'Arcy was not there.

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Trimble stared into the Form-room and stared round the Form-room, and then his fat face broke into a grin.

"Hooked it!" he murmured.

Trimble grinned, and then he frowned. It was a disappointment. Trimble had wanted to see Gussy. It was not because he yearned for the noble society of the swell of St. Jim's—not at all. But Trimble considered that any fellow shut up in the Form-room on a half-holiday would be jolly glad if any other fellow dropped in to chat with him for a few minutes. He would feel grateful to such a fellow, who ran the risk of being detained himself, for speaking to a chap under detention. In a mood of jolly gladness and gratitude combined, he could scarcely refuse a small loan to the fellow who visited him. It was a small loan, not the fascinating society of the great Gussy, that Baggy wanted. Gussy being gone, the chance of a loan also was gone.

Trimble gave a discontented grunt.

The Form-room window was wide open, to let in the balmy summer breezes. Obviously it was by the window that Gussy had left. Had he left by the door, he could scarcely have got out of the House undetected. Trimble rolled into the Form-room, closed the door behind him, and roffed across to the window. How long Gussy had been gone he did not know, but there was a chance that he was still at hand.

Trimble was surprised to see how near at hand he was as soon as the fat junior had mounted to the Form-room window.

Almost under the window an elegant figure was visible, close to the trunk of the ancient tree which grew near the wall and which in summer shaded the windows of the Fourth Form-room with its foliage.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Trimble.

Arthur Augustus looked round quickly.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated as he saw the fat and grinning face of Baggy Trimble at the Form-room window.

Trimble nodded to him cheerily.

"Hooked it, what?" he asked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I came to the Form-room to speak to you, old chap."

"Indeed!" said Arthur Augustus coldly. He did not like "old chap" from Trimble of the Fourth.

"Yes, old fellow," said Baggy. "I thought you'd like a chat for a few minutes, old bean."

"You are vewy good, Twimble," said Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy much obliged. But pway go away fwom that window—you may be seen fwom the quad."

"Oh, I don't mind being seen!" said Trimble cheerfully.

"I mean, you may atwact attention to this spot," said Arthur Augustus. "Can you see Kildare and Dawwell and Langton?"

"Yes; they're looking this way, too."

"Pway wetiah at once, Twimble. If those pwefects spot me heah I shall be bagged, you know."

Trimble did not retire. He leaned his fat elbows on the sill and grinned down at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Gussy, old fellow—"

"I weally wish you would go, Twimble. You are weally bwingin' dangah on me by stickin' there and talkin'."

"I was going to ask you if you could lend me five bob till Saturday," explained Trimble. "I'm hard-up—having lent Talbot of the Shell my last ten-shilling note, you know."

"Wubbish! Talbot would not bowwow of you, Twimble, any more than I would."

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"Pway wetiah fwom that window, Twimble."

"I'd like you to lend me five bob," persisted Trimble. "My uncle is sending me a pound note on Saturday, and I'll square then. See?"

"I am sowwy I cannot oblige you, Twimble."

"Make it half-a-crown," suggested Trimble. "I'm really hard-up this afternoon, Gussy. It's rather a new thing with me, but there it is."

"It can hardly be a new thing with you, Twimble, when you are twyin' to bowwow money of the fellows ewwy day wegularly."

"I don't want any cheek from you, D'Arcy!" snapped Trimble, giving up his hope of a small loan, and his friendly manner at the same time. Friendly manners were wasted on a fellow who was not good for a loan, in Trimble's opinion. "You ought to be jolly pleased at my speaking to you at all after what you've done—opening a man's telegram and all that."

"You wotten wascal!" breathed Arthur Augustus. "If I could weach you without showin' myself I would pull your wascally nose, Twimble!"

Trimble, perfectly aware that Arthur Augustus could not reach him at the window without revealing the whole of his noble person to the group of prefects, gave a mocking chuckle.

"You pull my nose!" he exclaimed derisively. "I'd like to see you do it! You're too jolly funky!"

"Bai Jove!"

"For two pins," continued Baggy, "I'd drop from this window now and give you the licking of your life! I could do it with one hand!"

Arthur Augustus breathed fury. He could scarcely resist the temptation to jump to the window, reach up at Trimble, and tweak his fat little nose. But he did resist it manfully, and turned his back on the fat junior.

Baggy Trimble grinned with enjoyment. Impudence was a leading characteristic in Baggy's charming nature; but Baggy's impudence had to be kept severely in check as a rule. Any fellow in the Fourth thought nothing of kicking Baggy if he was cheeky. Baggy liked to slang a fellow, but he hated being kicked. On the present occasion he could slang Arthur Augustus as much as he liked, and kicking was out of the question. So, leaning from the Form-room window, Trimble told Gussy what he had long thought of him.

Gussy's ears burned as he listened. This revelation of Trimble's thoughts concerning him was not flattering. It was the reverse of flattering. Trimble's opinion of D'Arcy, of his looks, of his manners and customs, of everything that was his, in fact, was extremely derogatory. And Trimble stated it at great length with great enjoyment.

Arthur Augustus gave no sign. He trembled with wrath; but he resolutely kept his back to Trimble and answered not.

Trimble's unmusical voice ceased at last. He had disappeared from the Form-room window.

But only for a few moments. A fat chuckle announced that he was there again. Arthur Augustus still disdained to look round.

"Ow!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus suddenly. Something wet and clammy smote him in the back of the neck, and slipped down inside his collar.

"Ow! Gwoooogh!"

It was an ink-ball. Trimble's brief absence from the window was explained now. Words having failed to stir Gussy, Baggy was proceeding to actions. A sheet of blotting-paper, and an inkpot provided him with missiles of a most unpleasant kind.

A second ink-ball grazed Gussy's ear. He spun round. "You feathful wottah!" he gasped.

A large and juicy ink-ball flew, and it landed on Gussy's nose. Ink streaked his aristocratic countenance.

"He, he, he!" chortled Trimble.

"Oh, cwikey! Bai Jove! I—I will give you a feathful thwashin' aftah lock-up, Twimble!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"You couldn't!" jeered Trimble.

Whiz! Squash!

"Oh, doah!"

Another and another ink-ball flew and landed. Trimble was enjoying himself immensely now. This was the chance of a lifetime, never likely to recur. Naturally, Baggy Trimble was bent on making the most of it.

"Twimble, you uttah wottah—"

"He, he, he!"

Inkball flew after inkball. Arthur Augustus dodged them desperately, but he could not dodge all of them. His noble countenance began to assume a zebra-like aspect, under its streaking of ink. The swell of St. Jim's fairly gasped with fury.

"All serene, Gue."

It was Wally's voice, as D'Arcy minor came round the elm. He stared at his major, and burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quiet, you young ass!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "You will bring those beastly pweffects heah."

"Eh! They're gone—I didn't come back till they'd cleared," answered Wally.

"Gone?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Yes."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy realised that he had been standing up to Trimble's fusillade unnecessarily for some minutes. Kildare and Darrell and Langton had walked away, and the coast was clear—if Gussy had only looked round the tree. But he hadn't.

The swell of St. Jim's drew a deep breath. His fiery eye glared at the Form-room window.

(Continued on next page.)



Our human reservoir of knowledge overflows again this week for the benefit of enquiring readers!

Q. What do the initials 'G.G.' mean in the new half-crowns?

A. Ronnie Parsons, of Wanstead, informs me he recently had a new half-crown given to him by his uncle, and noticed that on the "tail" of it there are the letters G.G. entwined on either side of the shield. The letter G, Ronnie, is, as you know, the initial of the King's name, and it is used twice on the new coins as was done originally when Charles II. was on the throne.

Q. Where can you catch a sloth?

A. This question has been put to me by a Donegal lad who signs himself "A Lover of Fishing." I am afraid, L. of F., that you won't be able to catch any sloths in the waters of Ould Ireland. This is not a fish, but a curious animal that is a native of South America and the West Indies.



This strange creature—a sloth—spends most of his time looking at the world upside-down. And he never gets a headache!

The ordinary sloth is about two feet in length and has very strong claws. Some have only two toes and another species has three. The creature spends most of its time hanging from the boughs of trees and looking through the foliage at the blue sky. Though it can move rapidly aloft, it is very awkward and slow if it has to come down and walk upon the ground. The young of the sloth ride about on the mother by clinging to her fur. There is a picture on this page of the creature in question, and so you see you'd have had a shock if you had ever found one on the end of your line!

Q. What makes a nettle sting?

A. Believe me, I can sympathise with you, Monty Samworth—I once sat on a bod of them myself during a picnic! Your pal, however, who told you that a nettle is painful merely because a lot of sharp, hooked points on the leaves break off when they are lightly touched, has only got half the fact. The stinging nettle does not merely break, it actually does sting. The reason is that the "hairs" are filled with an acid that finds its way into the human skin through the pricks made by the points of them. The particular acid is known as formic acid—*formis* being the Latin for ant—and the acid is so-called because it is also found in the bodies of ants.

Q. What is a visor?

A. In the old days, "Plantaganet,"

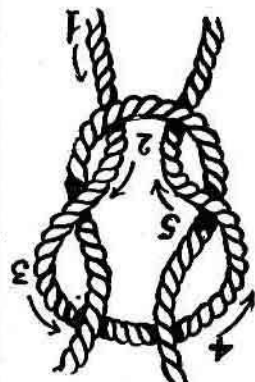
it was customary for the Knights to wear a metal helmet as a protection against the sword and battleaxe. To this helmet was attached a movable projecting part which could be lowered to form a cover for the face. This movable part was known as the visor.

Q. What is a coracle?

A. It is a small boat, the origin of which dates back to pre-historic days; certainly the Ancient Britons used this type of craft. In some parts of the West of England and Wales it is still used—a small craft made of wicker and bound about with leather, and light enough to be carried on the back of a fisherman.

Q. How does one tie a reef-knot?

A. I am very glad you put this question to me, Tom Hayward of Coventry, for, as it is the most useful knot of all, very many others of my readers will be glad to have it explained. Most commonly it is used in joining two ropes or two ends of a rope to another rope. First make a bight, or loop, with one of the pieces of rope, then pass the other rope through this loop in the way directed by the numbers and arrows in the picture given herewith of the knot.



A knotty problem solved for scouts and others. This is the right way of tying the much-used reef-knot.

It was vacant! Baggy Trimble had prudently retired from the scene—only in time to save his podgy nose from a vengeful grip.

"I say, Gussy, you want a wash!" chuckled Wally of the Third.

"Wats! You've put my bike at the cornah of the woad?"

"Safe as houses, old bean!"

"Wight-ho!"

Undoubtedly Gussy's noble face needed a wash. But there was neither time nor place for a wash at present. D'Arcy gave one cautious glance round the tree, and ascertained that the coast, at last, was quite clear. Then he scudded away, leaving Wally of the Third grinning.

Serious as the state of affairs was, from the lofty and dignified point of view of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his irreverent younger brother regarded the whole episode as more or less comic; and he was still grinning as he lounged away with his hands in his pockets to rejoin Levison minor and Reggie Manners.

CHAPTER 7.

No Luck for Mr. Lathom!

"MERRY!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom. "Yes, sir!"

The cricket match was going strong on Little Side.

St. Jim's were batting first, and Talbot of the Shell, and Figgins of the New House, had opened for the school. Tom Merry was standing watching them, thinking of anything but Form masters. The Grammarian fellows, in the field, were watchful for chances, and Gordon Gay, who was bowling to Figgins, was a bowler of renown. So Tom Merry's eye was just a trifle anxious as he watched his batsmen; and the voice of Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, fell upon his ears unexpected and unwelcome.

But he glanced round.

Mr. Lathom was not his Form master; but he was a Form master. Form masters had to be treated with respect, even when they were so excessively tactless as to butt in while a cricket match was in progress.

"Merry! I am sorry to interrupt you, if you are busy at the present moment," said little Mr. Lathom, peering at the captain of the Shell over his glasses.

"Not at all, sir," answered Tom politely; but with one eye on Mr. Lathom, and the other on Figgins, who was getting the bowling from Gordon Gay of the Grammar School.

"I understand that D'Arcy, of my Form, was to play in this game this afternoon, Merry."

"Yes, sir! Oh, yes!" said Tom. It is much to be feared that the junior captain of St. Jim's had forgotten the existence of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of Mr. Lathom's Form. A cricket captain could not afford to think of extraneous matters while a match was on. As D'Arcy was no longer in the team, he had ceased to exist, for all practical purposes.

"D'Arcy has been detained for impertinence to Mr. Railton," said the Fourth-Form master. "He has had the audacity to leave the Form-room."

"Bravo!" shouted Tom.

Both his eyes, for the moment, were on George Figgins of the New House.

Figgins of the Fourth had driven the ball far and wide, and he and Talbot were running.

That drive took all Tom Merry's thoughts away from Mr. Lathom, for the moment; and he shouted involuntarily. He had really feared that Gay, of the Grammar School, would put paid to Figgins. Instead of which, Figgins had driven him to the boundary for three at least.

Mr. Lathom stared at Tom.

"What?" he ejaculated. "Merry! What do you mean? Am I to understand that you approve of D'Arcy's conduct in breaking detention—and that you venture to express your approval in my presence, sir, in such a way?"

"Eh?" stammered Tom.

"How dare you, Merry?"

"I—I—what—" Tom Merry fairly dragged his gaze away from the running batsmen, and forced himself to attend to Mr. Lathom. "What—what did you say, sir? Yes! No! I mean—"

"I am surprised at this, Merry—surprised and shocked! You are junior captain of the school—head boy of the Shell—yet you dare to shout 'Bravo!' in my presence, on learning of D'Arcy's outrageous conduct—"

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean—I was cheering old Figgy, sir!" gasped Tom. "He's cut away that ball for three."

"What? What?"

Mr. Lathom blinked at the running batsmen. They were merely a moving glimmer of white to the short-sighted Form master.

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"Oh!" said Mr. Lathom, realising that there was a misapprehension. "I think I understand! Merry, kindly give me your attention for a few moments."

"Oh! Yes, sir! That's three!" exclaimed Tom. He simply could not help it. He was a cricketer on a cricket ground; and the voice of Mr. Lathom was like unto the drone of some troublesome insect in his ears. Really, Little Side was no place for a bothering Form master.

"Eh! What is three?" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"Three runs, sir! Talbot will get the bowling now," said Tom. "Not four—not four! Oh! All right! Talbot knows better, if Figgy doesn't! No chance for four! All serene! Bag 'em if you like!"—as the ball came in to the wicket keeper.

"Goodness gracious!" A dozen fellows standing round were grinning, and Mr. Lathom was annoyed. "Merry! Will you give me your attention!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"D'Arcy has left the Form-room. Is he here?"

"Here?" repeated Tom.

"Yes. If he has had the audacity to come here to play cricket, in spite of the fact that he is detained, he must leave the field at once, and I will take him back to the House."

Mr. Lathom was not a cricketer.

As Tom Merry was standing there talking to him, he might really have guessed that the St. Jim's side were not in the field.

But that did not seem to occur to him. He blinked inquiringly and crossly at the captain of the Shell.

"Oh, he's not here, sir!" gasped Tom, feeling deeply thankful that he had disregarded D'Arcy's desire to play in the match in spite of his order of detention.

"You are sure he is not here, Merry?"

"Oh, quite, sir!"

Mr. Lathom blinked at the fieldsmen. It dawned upon him, however, that these were the visiting cricketers, and he blinked at the batsmen. Neither of them were D'Arcy; and he blinked round at the other batsmen who were waiting, and at a score of fellows who were gathered round.

"If D'Arcy is not here, doubtless he has gone out of gates," said Mr. Lathom very crossly. "I'm very annoyed indeed. I—"

"Good old Talbot!"

"Bravo, Talbot!"

"Oh, good man!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Lathom, almost deafened by the roar that rose round him, as Talbot of the Shell drove the ball away, and the batsmen ran again. "Really! Goodness gracious! Oh dear!"

Mr. Lathom walked away.

He left a chuckling group of cricketers behind him.

He did not immediately leave the cricket field. He had a suspicion that the truant might be wedged somewhere among the crowd of fellows of both Houses who were watching the match. He peered this way, and he peered that way, and a sudden yell failed to put him on his guard.

"Look out!"

Crash!

"Yarooooh!" yelled Mr. Lathom, leaping clear of the ground.

Talbot of the Shell, of course, had intended nothing of the kind. Talbot was not the fellow to jape a Form master. Moreover, it was very doubtful whether even Talbot could have brought off that shot successfully if he had tried. It just happened. It was a mighty hit, and the ball would have gone far past the spot where Mr. Lathom stood, had not Mr. Lathom stood there. As it was, the ball smote Mr. Lathom's hat. Had Mr. Lathom been a tall gentleman, instead of a small gentleman, as he sometimes wished that he was, his head would have been that ball's billet, instead of his hat. It was fortunate for Mr. Lathom, in the circumstances, that he was not a tall gentleman.

His hat flew from his head, and Mr. Lathom staggered and lurched.

"Oh! Goodness gracious! What—"

What had happened was not clear to Mr. Lathom for the moment. His first impression was that some stunting aeroplane had nose-dived just over the spot and landed on him. But it was not so bad as that. Five or six fellows rushed forward. Julian of the Fourth brought him his hat—a rather damaged hat. Voices were yelling:

"Send in that ball!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Mr. Lathom. "Goodness gracious! Good gracious me! What—what—what has happened?"

"The ball tapped your tile, sir," said Redfern of the Fourth.

"What? What?"

"Where's that ball? Send in that ball!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Lathom, grabbing his hat. "Good gracious!" The master of the Fourth did not linger any longer to look for Arthur Augustus. He shook the dust

of the cricket ground from his feet in a very hurried manner.

"Well hit!" yelled Blake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lathom scuttled away breathlessly. He had no desire whatever to search the cricket-ground for Arthur Augustus any more. But he was more annoyed than ever. He had had a startling shock, and the state of his hat was annoying in itself. He walked out into the road to see whether there was any sign of the truant there.

"Good gracious!" he ejaculated.

Right under the eyes of the Form master, an elegant figure dropped from a wall, and scudded up the road.

It was the truant!

"D'Arcy!" shouted Mr. Lathom.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus glanced over his shoulder. Scarcely a dozen paces behind him was Mr. Lathom, in hot pursuit. Mr. Lathom had long passed the age when a foot-race was grateful and comforting. But he was sprinting now at quite a creditable speed.

"D'Arcy! Stop—stop at once!"

Arthur Augustus did not stop. He flew.

With a burst of speed, he came up to the corner where

he had instructed Wally of the Third to leave his bicycle. The machine was there, leaning against a roadside tree. Arthur Augustus grabbed it.

"D'Arcy I command you to stop!"

The swell of St. Jim's seemed deaf.

He put an elegantly trousered leg over the bike and drove at the pedals, just as Mr. Lathom came up, with a breathless rush.

The angry Form master put on a spurt. He grabbed at Gussy's collar just as Gussy got the bike in motion.

The bike flew away. Mr. Lathom's downward clutch at the collar missed, and as his sweeping hand met with no obstacle, he naturally pitched forward. His nose just missed the rear mudguard as he fell on his hands and knees!

The bike whizzed on.

Mr. Lathom, on his hands and knees, blinked after it in a dazed state. He was winded, he was breathless, and he was in a state of wrath to which words could never have done justice. Still on all fours, he blinked after the vanishing bike.

"My word! Look at that!" came a derisive voice.

Cutts of the Fifth came sauntering by with St. Leger and Gilmore of that Form. The three Fifth-Formers stared at Mr. Lathom in undisguised astonishment and amusement.

Mr. Lathom scrambled up. With a crimson face, he tottered away, leaving Cutts & Co. staring and chuckling. Mr. Lathom went in at the school gates with feelings that were absolutely inexpressible. He had given up the idea of recapturing the truant now. But his wrath, like wine, improved with keeping, growing more and more potent as he waited for lock-up and the return of the truant.

CHAPTER 8.

A Hot Chase!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was quite an active cyclist. But never had he been so active as now. For a couple of miles, after his narrow escape from Mr. Lathom, his wheels could hardly be seen for dust. Had Arthur Augustus been riding on the cycle-track he would have beaten all competitors. But he slacked down at last, breathing hard, as he breasted the rather steep, long hill on the road to Abbotsford.

Perspiration trickled down his noble forehead, mingling

harmoniously with the streaks of ink on his face, in a general colour scheme that was both original and striking. Except where the ink streaked it, his face was crimson with exertion—a study in red and black. In the excitement of the flight and chase, however, Arthur Augustus had forgotten the ink on his noble visage, and was quite unconscious of his startling aspect. Several cyclists who passed him on the road stared at him—perhaps never before having seen a rider who bore so startling a resemblance to a zebra; but Arthur Augustus did not heed them. He had plenty of other matters to think of.

In the first place, he had cut detention—an unjust detention to which it would have been beneath a fellow's dignity to submit.

In the second place, the consequences of having cut detention were certain to be very serious, and there was no doubt that a royal row awaited him when he returned to St. Jim's at lock-up.

In the third place, he could not fail to be aware that he had treated Mr. Lathom with a disrespect that was undoubtedly bad form—apart from its inevitable consequences.

This was a worry on the noble mind of Arthur Augustus, who was a very punctilious stickler for good form. He scorned fellows who were disrespectful to their elders; he

disapproved strongly of fellows like Cardew, who ragged in class; his manners to all those who were set in authority over him were irreproachable. Now he had been disrespectful to Mr. Lathom—a gentleman whom he really respected. It worried him. Still, it could not be helped. It was just one of those beastly things that did happen sometimes.

Meanwhile, he was free for the afternoon—a very pleasant summer's afternoon, when it was sheer joy to ride through the countryside, by leafy lane and grassy bridle-path.

He rode on towards Abbotsford at a more desperate speed, considering his plans for the afternoon.

Abbotsford was about ten miles from the school, and

there he was not likely to meet with any St. Jim's masters or prefects. So Abbotsford was his destination.

He pedalled on in quite a cheerful mood. A ride to Abbotsford, tea at the bunshop there, and a pleasant ride back by the country lanes. It was quite an agreeable way of spending a half-holiday. His detention had been unjust—he was sure of that. He was entitled, indeed bound, to refuse to be detained in those circumstances. His chief regret was that he could not figure in the cricket match. He sorely doubted whether Tom Merry & Co. would beat the Grammarians without his aid. But that was another thing that could not be helped.

Zug! Zug-chug!

Arthur Augustus heard, without heeding, the chugging of a motor-bike on the road behind him as he drew nearer to Abbotsford.

But he glanced round casually.

Then he jumped in his saddle.

Behind him on the road was a motor-cyclist who was well-known to him—no other than Mr. Railton, his House-master.

"Oh, cwumbs!" gasped D'Arcy, in dismay.

He bent over his handlebars and scorched.

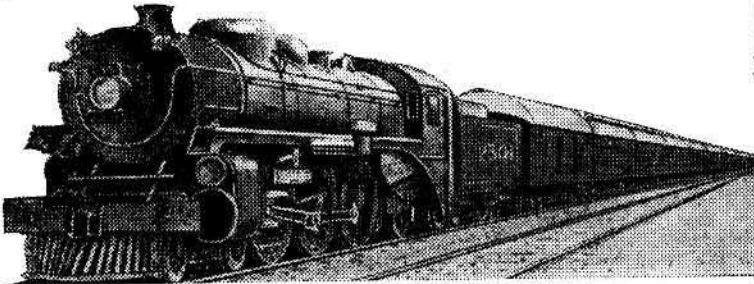
How Mr. Railton had known that he was going to Abbotsford was a mystery. It really seemed like magic.

But there he was chugging along on his motor-bike behind the truant, overhauling him hand-over-hand.

A push-bike had little chance in a race with a motor-bike; but Arthur Augustus had no idea of surrendering.

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He rode as if for his life.

That Mr. Railton might have some other business at Abbotsford that afternoon, totally unconnected with the truant swell of St. Jim's, and that he might not be in pursuit of D'Arcy at all, did not occur to him. That Mr. Railton, if he had business at Abbotsford, was not likely to throw it over in order to conduct a truant back to the school, did not occur to him, either. Railton was on his track, and Arthur Augustus fled wildly from capture. His bike flew.

Every ounce of beef that Arthur Augustus possessed he put into it. The wheels seemed scarcely to touch the ground.

At the top of a rise he looked back again.

The motor-bike was nearer, in spite of his speed, as he might have expected. He saw the motor-cyclist's eyes fasten on him, and recognition dawn in Mr. Railton's face. Hitherto the Housemaster had only noticed a schoolboy riding ahead of him at a reckless speed.

"D'Arcy!" shouted Mr. Railton.

Arthur Augustus did not answer.

A steep slope lay before him, and Arthur Augustus took that slope without dreaming of using a brake. Free-wheeling down the hillside, he flew at a pace that was breathless and almost unnerving.

It was fortunate that the road was clear.

Arthur Augustus' cap flew off, and was lost behind him. His head would have flown off after it, had it not been more securely attached to the rest of him.

D'Arcy did not venture to glance back. He held on like grim death as he careered down the hill. A mile flashed under him like lightning.

Chug-chug-zug-chug!

The chugging of the motor-bike came no nearer. D'Arcy was keeping his distance. He reached the bottom of the hill. The roofs of Abbotsford, the spire of the old abbey were in sight now. A steep rise was before him; but the momentum of the bike carried him up it at lightning speed. On either side were the open woods, penetrated by leafy paths that ran up from the road. Arthur Augustus glanced to right and left. The bike was slackening speed now, and D'Arcy knew that as soon as he had to pedal again he would be hopelessly "done," in competition with the motor-bike behind him. But he was not at the end of his tether yet. The masterly scheme was in his noble mind of turning suddenly from the road into one of the leafy paths up into the wood. On narrow, grassy paths, overhung by branches, a push-bike had the advantage over a motor-bike—the pursuer could not put on speed there in the winding ways of the wood. It was doubtful whether Mr. Railton would turn his motor-bike into the wood at all, in fact.

At the very worst Gussy would be able to abandon his machine, and take to the thickets.

He did not want to abandon his machine. But anything was better than being recaptured and marched back, an ignominious prisoner, to St. Jim's. To return and manfully face his punishment, of his own accord, was one matter; to be taken back like a recaptured truant was quite another. Arthur Augustus' noble blood was up.

A curve of the road hid him for the moment from the sight of the motor-cyclist behind. D'Arcy had his eyes open, and he knew it, without looking round. Now was his chance.

Rapidly he turned the still swift bicycle into a path that led up into the woods, and ground at the pedals as he turned. He shot off the road into the wood like an arrow.

The instant before he had been in the wide country road, now he had vanished from sight like a ghost at cock-crow.

The sudden change from the bright sunlight on the road to the deep shadow of the footpath, covered by interlacing boughs, blinded him for some seconds. He rode as it were in darkness.

Crash!

Yell!

What happened Gussy did not know. Obviously, it was a collision of some sort.

He found himself on his back in the grass, gazing upward blankly at thick branches. A voice was yelling. It sounded as if somebody had been hurt.

Chug-chug-chug!

From the road came the chugging of the motor-bike. Nearer and nearer, then fainter and fainter. It had passed. Mr. Railton, all unknowing, had swept by the path into which D'Arcy had vanished, and was chug-chugging on to Abbotsford. Breathless and dazed as he was, Gussy realised that he had successfully dodged the pursuer. The chug-chug died away in the distance. Mr. Railton and the motor-bike were gone.

Arthur Augustus sat up. At the same moment, something or somebody clutched him, and he rolled over again.

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Punch, punch, punch! Thump, thump, thump! Arthur Augustus rolled and roared and struggled, while the person or persons unknown fairly rained blows on him.

CHAPTER 9.

Something Like a Scrap!

THUMP, thump, thump!

Who was thumping him, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not know, and could not guess. But that somebody was thumping him, and thumping him hard, he knew, only too well. On that subject there was no room for doubt—not for a possible probable shadow of doubt.

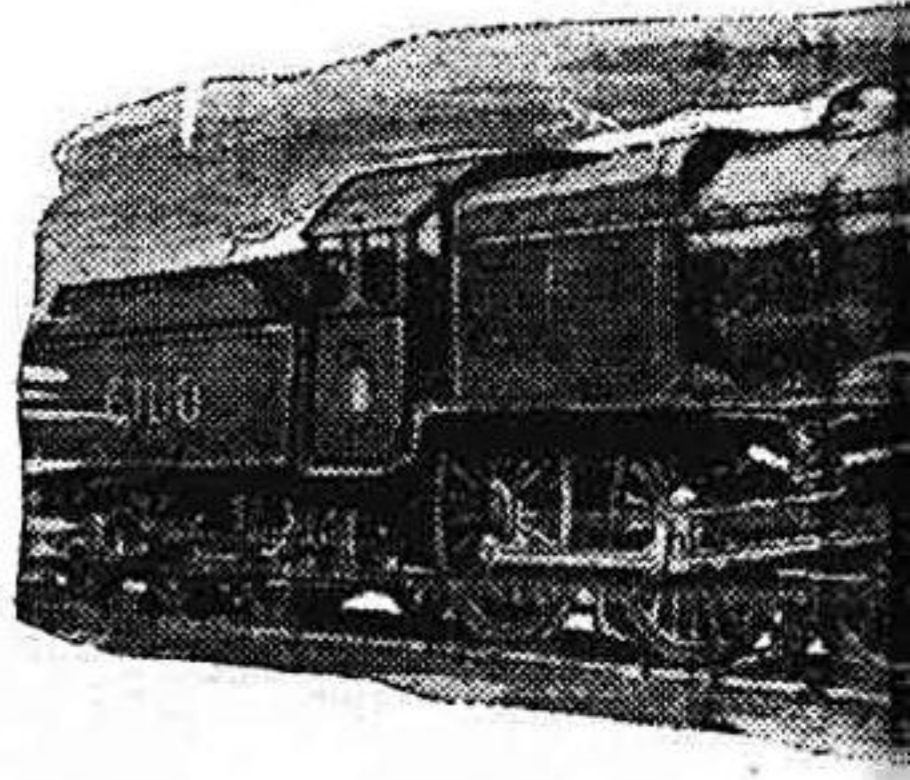
Thump! Punch! Pommel! Bang!

"Oh, cwumbs! Oh deah! Gowwoff!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Oh, my hat! Oh, cwikey!"

Taken by surprise as he was, still dazzled by the sudden

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change from bright sunlight to deep shadow, Arthur Augustus was at the mercy of his unknown and half-seen assailant.

In three or four minutes the swell of St. Jim's went through a punishment that more than equalled, probably, what his Form master had in store for him at St. Jim's.

But Arthur Augustus rallied at last.

Astonished and confused rolling dizzily in the grass with a shadowy figure sprawling over him and thumping furiously, Arthur Augustus managed at length to pull himself together, and he struggled away from his mysterious enemy, and jumped up.

"Oh, cwumbs! Keep off!" he gasped.

"You idiot!"

"Look heah—"

"I'll smash you!"

Arthur Augustus backed away, blinking wildly. His vision was clearing now, and he could see his infuriated enemy. Why the fellow was infuriated Gussy had no idea;

but the fact itself was indubitable. The fellow was simply raging.

He was a fellow a little older, and a little bigger than Arthur Augustus, dressed in well-cut, grey lounge clothes; his well-creased trousers, however, showing marks now of Gussy's bike tyres.

Evidently this youth had met Gussy in full career as he rushed his bike into the shadows of the footpath.

He was the cause of the collision, in fact. He was the object with which D'Arcy had collided.

No doubt he was hurt.

A fellow strolling peacefully along a woodland path, suddenly charged into by a wild-riding cyclist, was bound to feel hurt.

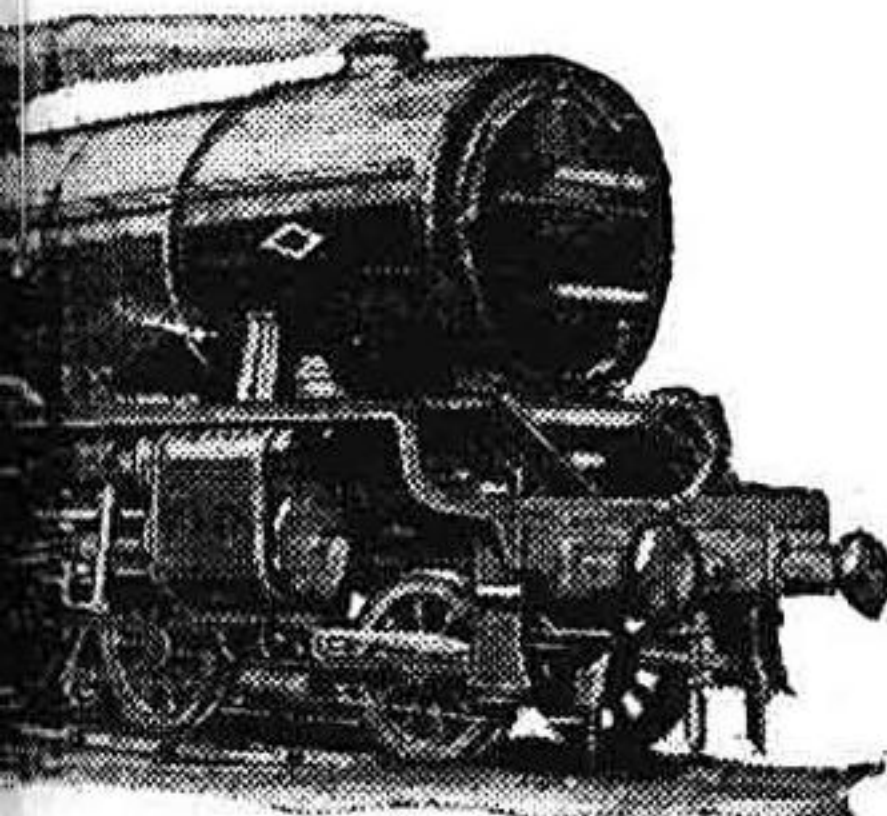
He had been knocked spinning; he was hurt, he was bruised, he was dusty, and he was most assuredly enraged.

He had taken a considerable toll of Gussy already. Now he rusted at him to take some more.

D'Arcy's hands went up.

He was pulling himself together, and his fighting blood

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was up. No fellow could punch and thump D'Arcy like that with impunity. Arthur Augustus was ready for him as he renewed the attack.

"You uttah wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"You clumsy fool!"

Thump! Punch! Thump!

The fight raged hot and strong.

But now that Gussy was on his feet, and on his guard, he was fully a match for his assailant.

The fellow in grey received at least as good as he gave, if not a little over.

"You clumsy idiot, rushing into a chap with a bike!" hissed the youth in grey, as he pressed the attack.

"You should not have got in the way!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "It was sillay and weckless to get in the way, and vewy inconsiderate, too."

"You dummy!"

"You wottah!"

"You've smashed my camera!" yelled the enemy.

"Bothah your camewah!"

"Take that, you idiot!"

"You take that, you worm!"

In a calmer moment, Arthur Augustus would have admitted that this fellow had some cause for annoyance. But he had been punched and pommelled and thumped, and the fellow was bent on continuing the process of punching and pommelling and thumping. There was nothing for Gussy to do but to stand up to it—and he stood up to it with vigour.

"Look out!" shrieked his enemy suddenly. "You're treading on it!"

Crunch!

Arthur Augustus, backing a few paces under a fierce attack, stepped on something. "It," evidently, was the fallen camera.

It had been damaged, it seemed, by the crash of the bike. It was still further damaged by Gussy's boot landing on it as it lay in the grass.

There was a horrid sound of crunching and cracking.

From the youth in grey came a roar of wrath, and he fairly hurled himself at the swell of St. Jim's.

Crash!

Arthur Augustus went down, his nose streaming crimson.

His enemy danced round him, brandishing clenched fists.

"Get up! Get up, you born idiot! Get up, you chump! I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life!"

Arthur Augustus jumped up like a jack-in-the-box. His eyes were gleaming, his teeth were set. He renewed the attack, with such vigour, that the fellow in grey was the next to go down, and he went down with a terrific bump.

"There, you wottah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, my hat! Ow!"

"Get up and have some more, you wotten outsiders!"

The stranger was rather slow in getting up. But he got up, and came on again. Hammer and tongs they went.

The fellow in grey jumped back at last, and dropped his hands.

"Oh, chuck it!" he snapped. "I've had enough, if you have."

Arthur Augustus panted.

He felt as if he had had enough, if not a little too much. But he was ready to go till he dropped. Still, the suggestion of a truce was not unwelcome.

"Vewy well," he gasped; "I have no objection. I am bound to say, howevah, that I wegard you as a cheekay wottah!"

"Oh, shut up!"

The youth in grey rubbed his face with his handkerchief. He was crimson with exertion, and wet with perspiration. And the damages on his face were many and various.

D'Arcy leaned against a bench and panted for breath.

For some minutes the two late combatants attended to casualties, and glared at one another, and panted for breath; while Gussy's bike and the damaged camera lay in the grassy footpath unheeded.

Both the combatants were tired, both of them were damaged; and both of them, probably, wished that they had been a little less strenuous in the combat. The youth in grey, at last, picked up his camera and looked at it.

"Ruined!" he grunted.

Arthur Augustus dabbed his nose. He was still incensed with this fellow who had attacked him; but he realised that the ruin of a camera, which looked like an expensive one, was a matter of some seriousness. It even dawned upon his noble mind that he had been just a little thoughtless, too, in suddenly cycling into a shady woodland path, regardless of any possible pedestrians on that path, and without even ringing his bell.

"Is it weally wuined?" he asked mildly.

"Smashed!" growled the other. "First, your idiotic bike jammed on it, and then your fatheaded hoof!"

"I am weally sowwy if it is wuined!" said Arthur Augustus, with an effort.

Snort from the other.

"Will your sorrow mend my camera?" he demanded.

"No, I suppose not."

"Then you can keep it!"

"Weally, you know—"

"Shut up!"

Arthur Augustus shut up, breathing hard. He resumed attending to his noble nose, which, in spite of all his sedulous attentions, persisted in oozing crimson. The other fellow examined the camera, and the dismay and concern in his face rather touched Gussy, angry as he was. Gussy was not keen on photography himself; indeed, he regarded photography as next door to bug-hunting; but he

remembered Manners of the Shell, and how Manners looked at any fellow who touched his camera. To fellows of this peculiar sort, Gussy realised, damaging a camera was a serious matter—they felt about it as he would have felt had anyone damaged his best silk hat. Of course, it was not so serious as that, really; but they thought it was, so it came to the same thing.

"I am weally sowwy!" he said.

"Oh, rats!"

Arthur Augustus compressed his lips.

"If the camewah is weally sewiously damaged, I will pay for it," he said stiffly.

The fellow looked at him.

"All right! Got seven guineas about you?" he jeered.

"Bai Jove! No."

"I suppose you thought it cost a pound!" sneered the other.

"Not at all; I supposed it cost about ten shillin's," answered Arthur Augustus innocently.

"You silly idiot!"

"Weally, you wude wottah—"

"For goodness sake, shut up!"

And Arthur Augustus, thus discouraged, shut up once more, and gave his whole attention to his nose—which really needed it.

CHAPTER 10.

Victor!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS moved across to his bicycle at last. It lay curled up in a thicket, and had a rather twisted look. It occurred to Arthur Augustus that his bike might have been damaged, as well as this unknown and unpleasant fellow's camera. If his bike was out of action, eight or nine miles from the school, Arthur Augustus was in rather a serious plight. His forebodings were justified; the bike was damaged. The handlebars were twisted; the front wheel had a list to port; the rear wheel had a list to starboard. There were minor damages also, which did not matter very much. But the major damages were very serious. Obviously, that machine required a considerable amount of repairing before it could be ridden again.

The prospect of a walk of eight or nine miles home, with a damaged bike to wheel all the way, was dismaying. The damage to the unknown fellow's camera faded into insignificance in comparison.

The fellow glanced at him.

"Your jigger crocked?" he asked.

"Yaas, wuthah!"

"Glad to hear it!"

"I wegard that as a wotten wemark," said Arthur Augustus scornfully. "I have expressed wegwet at the damage to your silly camewah."

"Idiot!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard and deep.

"I shall have to wheel this bike back to St. Jim's," he said. "I wegard you as bein' an uttah nuisance, gettin' in a fellow's way and upsettin' his jiggah. Go and eat coke!"

"You belong to St. Jim's?" exclaimed the other fellow, staring at Arthur Augustus curiously.

"Yaas."

"All the fellows there as big idiots as you?"

"Weally, you cheeky ass—"

"Do they ever wash at St. Jim's?" continued the unpleasant youth, staring hard at Gussy's face.

"I wufuse to take any notice of your offensive remarks."

"You offer to pay for this camera," jeered the other, "and you can't even afford the price of a cake of soap, judging by your looks!"

Arthur Augustus started. He remembered the ink-balls he had received from Trimble of the Fourth, and Wally's remarks thereon.

"Bai Jove! Is my face inkay?" he gasped.

"Is it?" jeered the other. "Looks as if it hasn't been washed for weeks!"

"That wottah Twimble! I remembah now a lot of fellows looked at me on the woad!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Must have thought you'd got out of the Zoo!"

"Oh, dwy up, you cheeky beast!"

"There's a pond in this wood, if you want a wash—that is, if St. Jim's fellows ever do wash!" sneered the other. "I'm going there—I shall have to clean up before I go back to my uncle's—especially as my other blessed uncle is coming to see me this afternoon. I'll show you the way if you like."

This was rather good-natured, after the previous conduct of the enraged owner of the camera.

"Thank you vewy much," said Arthur Augustus.

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The youth in grey put his camera under his arm. Arthur Augustus' eyes followed it.

"Is it weally vewy much damaged?" he asked.

"Oh, I daresay I can get it set right!" grunted the other. "It will cost something."

"I admit that it was my fault, if it comes to that," said Arthur Augustus. "I am quite willin' to pay for the damage."

"That's the second time you've said that," jeered the other. "I'm not asking you to pay for it, but if you mean it, I shan't refuse. It will cost two pounds at least. Shell out or shut up swanking."

"If you think I do not mean what I say, you wottah—"

"Well, if you do, shell out."

Arthur Augustus dived his hand into his pocket. Then a blank expression came over his face. He had forgotten the stony state of Study-No. 6. He had not a single coin, even a humble "brown," in his possession. The exciting events of that day had driven less important matters from his mind. So completely had he forgotten his unusual state of stoniness, that he had been intending to have tea at the bunshop in Abbotsford—oblivious of the fact that he had nothing about him wherewith to pay for that tea.

"Oh deah!" he ejaculated.

The other fellow gave a sneering laugh.

"Changed you mind?" he inquired.

"I forgot that I had no money about me," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, but very red in the face. "It had completely slipped my memow. There is nothin' to cackle at, you wottah! I shall certainly pay for the damage to your silly camewah. My name—"

"I don't want to know your name."

"My name is D'Arcy, and I am in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's," said Arthur Augustus unheeding. "You can send the bill to me there, and I shall pay it when I am in funds next week."

"Oh rats!"

"Or if you pwefer it, I will take your word that the wepair of your camewah will cost two pounds, and I will send you that sum as soon as I weceive it fwom my fathah, if you will give me your name and address."

The fellow eyed him disagreeably.

"I'll expect the remittance when I see it," he remarked.

D'Arcy breathed hard.

In all his career, he had never met so utterly unpleasant a fellow as this. Even Trimble of the Fourth, and Racke of the Shell, at St. Jim's, were not quite so unpleasant. Apart from the damages received in the combat, the fellow before him was a good-looking fellow, with a dark, handsome face—an unusually good-looking fellow. But his good looks were marred by an expression of discontent and sulkiness that seemed habitual. Judging by his appearance, he was in good circumstances, and well-placed in the world, with a full share of the world's good things, and he looked healthy and fit. But he looked, also, as if his habitual mood was one of deep discontent and quarrelsome ill-humour.

Arthur Augustus was conscious of a desire to renew the combat that had been dropped by mutual consent, and give the unpleasant fellow a few more damages to take home with him. But he controlled that impulse.

"I can only wepeat that I will send you the wemittance in a week's time," he said. "Give me your name and address for the purpose, and then the soonah I see the last of you, the bettah I shall like it."

"I'll give you a chance," sneered the other. "My name's Cleeve—Victor Cleeve, and I'm staying at Abbotsford at present. Your remittance will find me at Oak House, Abbotsford—if you send it."

"Victor Cleeve, Oak House, Abbotsford!" repeated Arthur Augustus. "I will make a note of it."

"If you want to know the way to that pond—"

"I wufuse to accept any favah at the hands of a fellow whom I wegard with contempt."

Cleeve flushed.

"You silly ass!" he exclaimed.

"You are a wotten outsideh, in my opinion," said Arthur Augustus. "I admit that I was to blame for the collision, but that is no excuse for your wuffianly conduct and bad manners. Go and eat coke!"

"I admit I lost my temper," said Cleeve. "It's no joke to be rushed into by a howling idiot on a bike and knocked over. You ought to have had more sense."

"Wats!"

"Oh, go and chop chips!" snapped Cleeve, and with his camera under his arm, he walked away into the wood.

Arthur Augustus leaned his bike against a tree. He had refused to allow that unpleasant fellow to guide him to the pond, but on the other hand, he realised that he very seriously needed a wash before he appeared in public again. Cleeve, evidently, was heading for the pond to wash the damages from his face as far as they could be washed off. After debating the matter in his mind for some

moments, Arthur Augustus left his machine where it was, and followed.

Cleeve looked round as he heard the St. Jim's junior's footsteps.

"Changed your mind again?" he jeered.

"I shall be obliged if you will wefwain fwom addressin' me," answered Arthur Augustus icily.

Cleeve laughed unpleasantly, and went on. A hundred yards deeper in the wood, there was a glistening of water through the trees.

Arthur Augustus followed on, and came out on the bank of the pond—a broad sheet of water, evidently deep. It filled a deep hollow in the glade among the old trees, and the bank was steep. Cleeve dropped on his knees at the edge of the water, dipped his handkerchief in, and began to bathe his face. Arthur Augustus looked at him.

"That is wathah a dangewous spot!" he felt called upon to remark.

There was no doubt that Gussy was right. Cleeve was kneeling, with utter carelessness, on the edge of a steep, sloping bank, over deep water, and when he reached down to wet his handkerchief, he looked like losing his balance every time and plunging headlong in.

But he did not seem grateful for Gussy's kindly warning.

He glanced round with his most unpleasant sneer.

"I think you asked me not to address you?" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then do me the same favour. Add to it by minding your own business."

Arthur Augustus' teeth came hard together. Taking no further notice of Cleeve, however, he moved along the pond, seeking a more suitable spot for bathing his noble countenance.

Splash!

Arthur Augustus started and spun round.

He was not a dozen paces from Cleeve when that sudden splash startled him. He stared round at the spot where Cleeve had been kneeling.

The fellow was no longer there.

"Oh, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Evidently the fellow had overbalanced himself and plunged into the pool. Arthur Augustus ran back to the spot. Deeply as he disliked the fellow, his only thought was to give him a helping hand out.

But no hand was stretched from the water for help. Cleeve had vanished from sight.

Arthur Augustus stared in horror at the widening circles on the deep pool under the shadow of the trees.

Cleeve had gone right under, and had not risen. It dawned on D'Arcy that the fellow could not swim.

"Oh, cwumbs!" he gasped.

The water was disturbed again, and a white face showed over the surface, a hand was thrown helplessly up into the air. It was for a moment only; then Victor Cleeve was under again, sinking down to death. But at the same moment Arthur Augustus tore off his jacket, threw his hands together, and plunged in.

CHAPTER 11.

For Life or Death!

A HAND clutched at Arthur Augustus under the water—a hand that closed on him with a wild, convulsive grasp.

The grasp of a drowning man is deadly dangerous. Arthur Augustus had dived for Victor Cleeve; but it was Cleeve who dragged the St. Jim's junior deeper under.

D'Arcy, with his teeth set and his lips tight shut, fought for his life in the darkness of the deep water.

That wild clutch showed that Cleeve was beyond reasoning; he was drowning, and catching at anything, wildly, convulsively, unreasoningly. And his clutch was like the clutch of steel. The fellow who, a few minutes before, had been cool, sneering, disdainful, was now reduced to the state of an unreasoning animal.

It seemed to D'Arcy that his lungs would burst, that he must open his mouth and breathe. He was dragged down to death. He got hold of Cleeve, but the fellow seemed to be winding on him like an octopus, dragging him down. It was rather by instinct than by thinking that D'Arcy did what only could save him and the other. He drove his fist at the clutching, drowning fellow, and though the water broke the force of the blow, it landed hard, and landed hard a second time, and the choking, dragging clutch was relaxed. D'Arcy tore himself free, and as he shot up to the surface his grasp was on Cleeve's thick hair. His head came out of the water, and he gasped spasmodically, almost fainting with suffocation.

Cleeve's head showed over the water at his side. He was almost unconscious, his face white as death.

Holding Cleeve with one hand, shifting his grasp to the fellow's collar, D'Arcy struck out with the other.

It was fortunate that the swell of St. Jim's, with all his elegant and dandified ways, was a good swimmer, and thoroughly fit. It was no easy task to get Cleeve to the bank, though the fellow was no longer clutching and struggling.

Had D'Arcy failed, both of them were doomed; for there was no help. The silent woods looked on, silent save for the twittering of the birds in the branches, lonely and deserted. There was no help; all depended on D'Arcy's own strength and determination. Fortunately, neither of them failed him.

He struggled to the bank, keeping Cleeve's face above the surface of the pool. The bank was steep, but he found a spot where he could crawl ashore, and he dragged himself out of the water, dragging Cleeve after him.

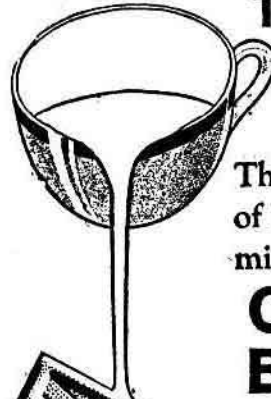
Then he sank down, utterly spent by the struggle he had been through, and those fearful moments under the dark water.

He lay in the grass, drenched, dripping, panting for breath, and Cleeve lay by his side, scarcely breathing as it seemed.

The hot sunshine, streaming down on the pool and its

(Continued on next page.)

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banks, was grateful to the swell of St. Jim's, chilled by the drenching water. Spent and exhausted, he lay with the water running from him into the grass.

It was Cleeve who was the first to stir. He sat up in the grass, passed his hand over his wet face, and stared dazedly at the St. Jim's junior.

He did not speak, and D'Arcy was silent.

Long minutes wassed, and neither spoke. Then Cleeve staggered up.

"I—I fell in!" he muttered dizzily.

"Yaas; you fell in."

"You got me out?"

"Yaas."

"I—I can't swim."

Arthur Augustus smiled faintly.

"I guessed that, deah boy," he answered. "Fellow ought to learn to swim, you know. Jolly good exercise, and awfully useful to a chap at times."

D'Arcy was recovering now. He stood up, and began to squeeze the water out of his clothes.

"Bai Jove! My clobber's in a fealful state!" he murmured. "Howevah, it can't be helped."

Cleeve passed his hand over his face again.

"I seem to have had a knock," he said.

"I am afraid I had to punch you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus gently. "You got hold of me undah the watah, and dwagged me down. I hope I did not hurt you vewy much."

"You did."

"Sowwy!"

Cleeve grunted. There was a dark bruise forming on his forehead, where one of D'Arcy's hurried blows had landed. D'Arcy, at the time, had been in no position to stand upon ceremony, but Cleeve did not seem to realise it.

"I suppose you've saved my life!" he grunted ungraciously.

"Nevah mind that, deah boy."

"It was your fault I pitched in."

"Was it?" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, it was. Nothing would have happened to me this afternoon at all if you hadn't come butting into the wood on your bike like a lunatic."

Arthur Augustus' eyes glinted.

"I do not wish to pwess the point that I have saved you from dwownin', Cleeve," he said, "but aftah I have wuined my clothes on your account, I weally think you might be civil, at least."

"Oh, cheese it!"

Cleeve picked up his camera from the bank, and moved away. Arthur Augustus' eyes glittered after him: but the wrathful glitter died away as he noted that Cleeve was walking unsteadily. The fellow had pulled himself together, but he was weak after his terrible experience.

D'Arcy paused a moment, and then hurried after him.

"Pway let me help you, deah boy! Take my arm."

"Don't be a fool!"

"Weally, you wottah—"

"I don't want any help!"

"You look as if you want help!" snapped D'Arcy. "You are almost tottewin', you ass!"

"Rubbish!"

"If you have fah to go—"

"I can pick up a taxi as soon as I get to Abbotsford," growled Cleeve. "You'd better look after yourself. You look like a drowned rat."

He lurched away unsteadily, and this time Arthur Augustus let him go. Cleeve disappeared by a path through the wood, and Arthur Augustus, after drying himself as much as he could, returned to the spot where he had left his bicycle.

He wheeled it out into the dusty road into the sunshine.

Arthur Augustus had intended to make an afternoon of it; but the crocking of his bicycle, not to mention the crocking of his noble self, forced him to alter his plans. He had to walk eight miles or more, wheeling his jigger, and he was tired and spent and a little dizzy. He was not likely to reach St. Jim's by lock-up even if he did not lose a moment.

In a far from happy frame of mind, the swell of St. Jim's started wheeling his bike up the long, dusty road.

Miles lay before him, and every mile seemed a league. Long before he was anywhere near St. Jim's, D'Arcy's feet were dragging heavily one after the other. He was hatless, and the hot sun beat down on his unprotected head. People who passed him on the road stared at the dusty, dragged figure, and some of them grinned. The keenest eye would never have detected in Arthur Augustus, just then, the best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's.

His pace grew slower and slower. The sun was setting; and it had set while Arthur Augustus was still dragging wearily along a road that seemed to stretch before him to infinity.

It was long, long after lock-up, when Arthur Augustus reached St. Jim's, and staggered against the gate.

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CHAPTER 12.

Anxious Chums!

JACK BLAKE breathed wrath, as he went into Big Hall for call-over.

"The ass!" he hissed.

"The chump!" agreed Digby.

"The footling owl!" contributed Herries.

Had Arthur Augustus D'Arcy been within reach of his loyal and exasperated chums just then, he would probably have been the victim of a serious case of assault and battery.

In their concern for Gussy, Blake & Co. were feeling like punching him right and left.

Really, as Blake said, there seemed no limit to the asinine fatheadedness of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. There were other silly asses at St. Jim's—such as Trimble of the Fourth, and Grundy of the Shell, and Skimpole. But really, in the intellectual line, Trimble and Grundy and Skimpole shone like bright particular stars, in comparison with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He had no limit.

First of all he opened Railton's telegram by mistake—a mistake nobody else could possibly have made, but which was, as Blake remarked, Gussy all over. Then he jabbered about what was in the telegram—unintentionally, of course; but want of intention did not alter the fact that he had spread all over the House the news that old Railton had a relative in trouble. As if that was not sufficient, he was bound to butt in and ask Railton himself about that troubled relative—getting detention in consequence—and missing the cricket match in consequence of the detention. Even then the cup of his fatuity was not full; he had to consider himself unjustly used, and to cut detention. As a climax, he was staying out of gates after lock-up, and cutting call-over.

The sum total of Gussy's offences was huge.

Blake & Co. would not have minded so much, but for the terrific consequences that hung over the noble head of Arthur Augustus, like the sword of Damocles of old.

His punishment was certain to be very severe—so severe, that it worried his devoted chums to think of it; and in that state of worry, they were naturally infuriated with the cause of it.

"If he wasn't going to get a Head's flogging, I'd jolly well mop up the House with him when he comes in!" breathed Blake, as he lined up with the Fourth in Hall.

"Think it will be a Head's flogging?" asked Dig anxiously.

"Or the sack!" said Blake darkly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Fellows have been bunked for less than what Gussy's done," said Blake. "He's asked for it! Luckily, the Head knows what a born idiot he is! He may let him off with a flogging on that account. But what I want to know is, why did they send him to St. Jim's, instead of to a home for idiots?"

"Echo answers why!" grunted Herries.

"Hasn't Gussy come in, you men?" came a whisper from Levison of the Fourth.

Blake glanced round.

"Of course he hasn't," he answered. "Isn't he the chap to make matters just as bad for himself as he possibly can? Is he likely to leave a stone unturned?"

"Poor old Gussy!" grinned Cardew. "Why did he cut detention?"

"He hadn't collected trouble enough, and he wanted some more," growled Blake. "He thought it was unjust—as if that mattered! But Housemasters mustn't be unjust to Gussy! He won't let them."

"Silence!" called out Kildare.

The captain of St. Jim's glanced along the Fourth.

"Where's D'Arcy, Blake?" he called out.

"I don't know, Kildare."

"He's specially wanted," said Kildare frowning. "Mean to say he hasn't come in for lock-up?"

"Haven't seen him, if he has."

"The young ass!"

Tom Merry glanced over inquiringly and anxiously from the Shell. Tom was in a very cheery mood. There had been a great game on Little Side, and the Grammarians had been well beaten. The junior cricket captain of St. Jim's was feeling, therefore, quite merry and bright. But he remembered Gussy, and was concerned about him.

Blake met his inquiring glance, and made a grimace in reply.

"My hat! 'Gussy hasn't come in,' said Tom. "This will mean a lot of trouble for him."

"Frightful handicap to a fellow, to be born a howling idiot!" remarked Monty Lowther.

"We did our best for him," said Manners. "I suppose he cleared off while the cricket was going on. Lathom looks a bit waxy."

"More than a bit!" grinned Lowther.



"Look out! You're treading on my camera!" yelled the stranger. As Arthur Augustus D'Arcy backed a few paces there was a horrid sound of crunching and crackling. With a roar of wrath, the youth in grey fairly hurled himself at the swell of St. Jim's. (See Chapter 9.)

Mr. Lathom was peering at the Fourth over his spectacles. Undoubtedly he had expected to see D'Arcy there with the Form. The discovery that the truant was still absent, brought a thunderous frown to the Fourth-Form master's brow.

Mr. Linton called the roll; the Housemaster was away. Many fellows knew that Mr. Railton had gone out for the afternoon, and had not yet returned, and wondered whether his absence was in connection with the "Victor" who was, according to the telegram, in trouble. When Mr. Linton came to D'Arcy's name, there was no voice to answer "adsum"; and the master of the Shell paused, and repeated it.

"D'Arcy!"

Blake cast a despairing glance towards the door, in the faint hope of seeing his chum dodge into Hall at the last moment.

But nobody dodged into Hall. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was still far from St. Jim's.

"That does it!" murmured Blake.

Mr. Linton marked D'Arcy as absent from roll-call, and proceeded with calling the names.

Jack Blake had a hopeless look. A fellow who cut detention, and added to his offence by staying out after lock-up, was asking for trouble of the most serious kind. The possibility of the "sack" loomed darkly on the horizon. The mere thought of the sack, in connection with a member of Study No. 6, was sufficient to send a shiver through the whole study.

After roll-call, Mr. Lathom called to Blake as he was going out with the Fourth.

"Stop a moment, Blake!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Blake. He knew what was coming.

"Do you know where D'Arcy is?"

"No, sir."

"He went out on his bicycle this afternoon," said Mr. Lathom.

"Did he, sir?" said Blake. "I didn't know. I was playing cricket."

"Then you know nothing of this rebellious boy's proceedings, Blake?" asked Mr. Lathom, blinking at him.

"Nunno, sir!"

"Very well; you may go, Blake."

Blake went. A group of juniors gathered outside Hall to discuss Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—now the one topic in the Lower School. Where he was, and what he might be doing, when he would come in, and what would happen to him when he did, interested the Lower School exceedingly. Baggy Trimble suggested that he had run away from school, and wasn't coming back at all. Blake promptly kicked Trimble for that suggestion—all the harder, because there was a lurking fear in his own breast that Baggy might be right. Really, there was no telling what Arthur Augustus D'Arcy might or might not do, when he was mounted on the high horse.

When the hour came for prep, D'Arcy had not come in.

Prep in Study No. 6 was never what could be termed an enjoyable function. On this occasion it was utterly dismal.

Blake & Co. were sorely worried about their chum.

It was quite dark now, and D'Arcy had not returned. Where was he? What had happened to him? Trimble's suggestion that he had run away from school weighed like lead on Blake's mind. He thought of going along to Baggy's study and kicking him again. But that, after all, would do no good. Blake & Co. threw over prep, at last, unfinished, and went downstairs. Prep, while the fate of their chum hung in the balance, seemed as frivolous as Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

"Gussy!" gasped Blake, as he reached the lower staircase.

Arthur Augustus had come in!

His chums stared at him.

The swell of St. Jim's looked dusty, draggled, and tired to the bone. His clothes had evidently been wet through; they were more or less dry now, but rumpled and crumpled and thick with dust. His hair was tousled, his collar a rag, his cap was missing. He seemed hardly able to drag one foot after another as he came in; and he sank down wearily on a seat, as if unable to support his own weight.

"Gussy!" gasped Blake again.

He flew down the stairs.

Evidently Arthur Augustus had not enjoyed his half-holiday, and might have done better to remain in the Form-room under detention. Never had his chums seen him in such a shocking state.

Mr. Lathom had arrived on the scene. He blinked angrily over his spectacles at the juniors on the staircase.

"Blake! Herries! Digby! Have you finished your preparation?"

"Nunno, sir! We—we—"

"Go back to your study at once, and take a hundred lines each."

"Oh!"

Blake & Co. trailed dismally back to Study No. 6, without having had a chance of a word with their chum.

Mr. Lathom fixed his eyes on the weary figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. He could see that the junior was tired out; and Mr. Lathom, as a rule, was a kind and considerate gentleman. But there was no kindness or consideration about him now. The disregard of his authority, the defiance of his commands—above all, that undignified tumble behind the truant's bike—made Mr. Lathom hard and implacable.

"D'Arcy!" he said icily.

"Yaas, sir?" mumbled Arthur Augustus.

"So you have returned!"

"Yaas, sir."

"I had begun to think, D'Arcy, that you had added to your outrageous conduct by running away from school."

"I should wegard it as bad form to wun away fwom school, sir."

"What! What! Follow me to my study at once, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir."

Mr. Lathom whisked away angrily; and the swell of St. Jim's dragged himself to his feet and dragged his weary limbs after Mr. Lathom to the Form-master's study.

CHAPTER 13.

The Return of the Prodigal!

MR. LATHOM fixed his eyes upon the junior standing before him in his study with angry disapproval.

Being a short-sighted and unobservant gentleman, Mr. Lathom did not always notice when members of his Form were not quite up to the mark in the matter of appearance. Baggy Trimble, for instance, often sported a soiled collar, and even a soiled neck, unproved. But the shortest sight and the least observant eye could not have failed to note that Arthur Augustus looked a disgrace to any self-respecting dust-heap at the present moment. Mr. Lathom was quite particular upon such points—when his attention was drawn to them. He almost sniffed with angry disgust at the swell of St. Jim's.

"D'Arcy, your appearance is disgraceful!" he snapped.

"Yaas, sir, I feah so."

"You are covered with dust and mud!"

"I am awah of it, sir."

"Is that a state, D'Arcy, in which to present yourself before your Form master?" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"You ordahed me to follow you heah, sir," said Arthur Augustus mildly. "I should have been vewy pleased to go and get a wash and a bwush-up, sir. And I will do so now if you will permit me."

"Do not be impertinent, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir, my intention was not to be impertinent. In fact—"

"Silence!"

"Vewy well, sir."

"You have broken detention this afternoon, D'Arcy, stayed out after lock-up, and returned to the school in a disgraceful state!" said Mr. Lathom harshly. "You deliberately disobeyed me this afternoon when I called on you to stop."

"I am extremely sowwy, sir," said Arthur Augustus earnestly. "I had no ideah of tweatin' you personally with diswpect. I have been vewy much wowwided ovah my conduct towards you, sir."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lathom sarcastically.

"Yaas, sir. But, you see, I was placed in a vewy awkward posish," explained Arthur Augustus. "Mr. Waitton detained me unjustly—"

"What?"

"Unjustly, sir. That bein' the case, I was wresolved not to be detained, and I am quite pywpared to face the consequences, sir. Your intervention in the mattah at all, sir, was vewy unfortunate."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Lathom, gazing at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Had I obeyed your ordah, sir, and gone in to detention, I should have been submittin' to injustice—not fwom you, sir, but fwom Mr. Waitton," explained Arthur Augustus.

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"That I was wresolved not to do. I twust I make myself cleah. So fah as you are concerned personally, sir, I am extremely sowwy for what has happened, and I express my most sincere wegwet."

"Am I to understand, D'Arcy, that you deliberately intended to treat your Housemaster with disrespect and disobedience, and that you feel no regret for having done so?"

"Exactly, sir. You take my meanin' pwecisely."

"Upon my word!"

"For you personally, sir, I have the greatest wrespect," explained Arthur Augustus. "For Mr. Waitton also, as a wjute; but in the present instance he tweated me with wank injustice."

"Do you take it upon yourself, D'Arcy, to judge the actions of your Housemaster?"

"Yaas, sir."

"That calm reply, which Arthur Augustus made in the innocence of his heart, seemed to have the same effect on Mr. Lathom as a red rag upon a bull.

He fairly glared at the swell of St. Jim's.

"You insolent boy!" he thundered.

"Weally, sir—"

"I had intended," said Mr. Lathom, "to cane you severely. Had you returned at lock-up I should have done so. You have stayed out after lock-up—no doubt with intentional impertinence. The matter is now too serious for me to deal with. I shall place it in the hands of your Headmaster."

"I am sowwy that Dr. Holmes should be twoubled in the mattah, sir; but, of course, you will do as you think best."

Mr. Lathom breathed hard.

"I shall see Dr. Holmes shortly, D'Arcy, and explain the matter to him. I shall request him to administer a severe flogging in the presence of the whole Form after preparation."

"Vewy well, sir."

"And now, you will explain to me how you came into this shocking, disgraceful state. You have been fighting."

"Yaas, sir."

"With whom?" snapped Mr. Lathom.

"A fellow I met over at Abbotsford, sir."

"A stranger?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "You have not only broken detention, but you have occupied your time in quarrelling and fighting with a stranger."

"The chap pitched into me, sir."

"Without provocation, I presume?" asked Mr. Lathom, with biting sarcasm.

"Well, no, sir; he was wathah watty because I wan into him on my bike and knocked him ovah and bwoke his camewah," said Arthur Augustus. "That certainly did not excuse his wuffianly conduct, but he may have wegarded it as pwovocation. He was a vewy bad-tempahed and ill-mannahed fellow in ewevy way."

"How dare you ride in such a reckless manner as to knock down a pedestrian!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"It was weally Mr. Waitton's fault, sir."

"What? What?"

"You see, sir, he was aftah me on his motor-bike, and I was gettin' away fwom him," explained D'Arcy. "That was how the accident happened."

"Goodness gracious! Do you offer it as an excuse, D'Arcy, that you were guilty of the insolence of running away from your Housemaster?"

"I do not wegard it as insolence, sir."

"I trust that a flogging from your Headmaster, D'Arcy, will assist you to take a different view of the matter. Your clothes appear to have been drenched with water. How did this occur?"

"I was in a pond, sir."

"You were in a pond," repeated the Form master blankly. "Do you mean to say that you fell into a pond?"

"No, sir. I jumped in."

"You jumped into a pond with your clothes on?" shrieked Mr. Lathom.

"Yaas, sir."

Mr. Lathom gazed at this hopeful member of his Form speechlessly for some moments. Arthur Augustus waited patiently.

"Go!" said Mr. Lathom, at last. "Go, and make yourself decent and presentable before your Headmaster sees you! You will be called to the Form-room when Dr. Holmes is prepared to deal with you! Go!"

"Vewy well, sir."

Arthur Augustus left the study.

He dragged his weary limbs up to the Fourth Form dormitory. All the lower school were at prep, and he met no one on the way. That was a relief; in his present state Arthur Augustus did not desire to meet the public eye of St. Jim's.

Having stripped off his dusty and muddy attire, Arthur Augustus draped himself gracefully in a bath towel and proceeded across the dormitory passage to a bath-room. He was tired out, he was feeling rather severely the effects of

his fight with Victor Cleeve; but what he needed most of all was a bath; and he revelled in steaming hot water. And he was feeling considerably bucked when he returned to the dormitory and dressed himself anew from top to toe. As clean as a new pin from head to foot, in garments that were spotless, Arthur Augustus felt much better—Richard was himself again, as it were.

In that newly swept and garnished state, Arthur Augustus arrived at last at Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

Blake & Co. had finished prep by this time. They fixed their eyes on Gussy as he came in.

"Well?" said Blake.

"Not a bean!" growled Blake. "Still stony!"

"Lots in our study," said Tom Merry. "Trot along to Study No. 10, Gussy, and we'll feed you up to the chin and get up your strength for seeing the Beak."

"Thank you vewy much, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus accompanied the Terrible Three to Study No. 10 in the Shell, Blake & Co. following. They came on Baggly Trimble in the passage; and at sight of Arthur Augustus, Baggly gave a startled blink and fled round the nearest corner. Arthur Augustus glanced after him.

"Bai Jove! That reminds me that I have to kick Twimble," he said. "Pway excuse me a few minutes while I go aftah that fat scoundwel—"

16. Mile after mile along the long dusty road Arthur Augustus D'Arcy wheeled his damaged bike. People who passed him stared at the dusty, dragged figure, and some of them grinned. The keenest eye would never have detected in Arthur Augustus, just then, the best-dressed fellow at St. Jim's! (See Chapter 11).



"Well, deah boy?" said Arthur Augustus mildly. "What sort of a howling idiot do you call yourself?" inquired Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"What sort of a burbling, babbling, blinking chump?" inquired Herries.

"Weally, Hewwics—"

"Licked?" demanded Dig.

"Not yet, deah boy. I am goin' to be flogged by the Head," answered Arthur Augustus calmly. "It is vewy unpleasant, but it is no use gwousin'."

"If you weren't going to be flogged, I'd jolly well mop up the study with you!" snorted Blake.

"Wats!"

"Oh, here he is!" The study door opened again, and Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked in. "You've got back, then, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Head's flogging," said Blake. "Pretty disgrace for this study! Not that Gussy cares! He likes it."

"Nothin' of the kind, Blake. But I do not wewwet, of course, havin' bwoken detention, as I was detained unjustly. I shall explain that to the Head, and pewwvans he may see weason, and wepwimand Wailton instead of floggin' me."

"Perhaps!" gasped Tom Merry.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific, as that Indian johnny at Greyfriars would say," remarked Monty Lowther.

"But what have you been up to?" demanded Blake. "You came in looking as if you'd just crawled out of an insanitary dustbin."

"I have had a vewy wuff time, deah boy. I don't mind tellin' you about it, but the fact is I am feahfully hungwy. I missed my tea. Anythin' in the study?"

"Feed first!" said Tom Merry laughing. "Trimble will keep."

"Vewy well, deah boy. As a mattah of fact, I am feahfully hungwy," confessed Arthur Augustus.

In Study No. 10 in the Shell, Arthur Augustus sat down to the study table, and the Terrible Three busied themselves in placing the best the study could provide before him.

Six juniors stood round and watched Arthur Augustus as he did full justice to that hospitable supper.

All the members of the Co. were anxious and concerned. A Head's flogging was a serious matter; calmly as Arthur Augustus was taking the prospect.

"Bai Jove, that makes a fellow feel bettah!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I weally think I needed a feed almost as much as a bath."

"Now tell us what sort of a silly idiot you have been making of yourself this afternoon!" grunted Blake.

"I will welate what has happened to me, if that is what you mean, Blake."

"Yes, that's what I mean, fathead!"

Arthur Augustus related the tale of his wild adventures. Somewhat to his surprise, the juniors grinned over the incident of Trimble and the ink-balls from the Form-room window. They seemed to see something funny in this, though Arthur Augustus had not supposed that it was a comic incident. But they looked grave enough when he told them of the chase by Mr. Railton, and the fight with the unknown fellow in the wood, and the ducking in the woodland pool.

"You had the cheek to lead Railton a dance when he was after you?" ejaculated Blake.

"There was no alternative, deah boy, as I was wesolved

not to be taken back to the school by Wailton," explained Arthur Augustus. "I weally do not compwehend how Wailton knew I was headin' for Abbotsford, of course."

"I've heard that he's got some relations staying at Abbotsford. Some chaps heard him telling Linton that he was going over to Abbotsford to see his brother."

"Bai Jove! But Wailton's bwothah does not live at Abbotsford, Mannahs."

"Visiting there, fathead; anyhow, he's there now. Railton happened on you just by chance, and you can bet he wouldn't have stopped to cart you back to St. Jim's!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Trust Gussy to do the wrong thing!" sighed Blake. "And who was the fellow you pitched into, Gussy?"

"I did not pitch into him, Blake—he pitched into me, in the most wuffianly mannah, simply because his camewah was smashed—"

"I hope he gave you a jolly good licking!" remarked Manners. Manners of the Shell could feel deeply for a fellow whose camera was smashed.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Like his cheek to pitch into a St. Jim's man!" said Herries warmly. "Blow his silly camera! I hope you licked him, Gussy. Who was he?"

"I don't know, except that his name was Cleeve. I'm goin' to send him two pounds to pay for the damage to his wotten camewah, when I get some money. He was a fwrightfully unpleasant beast!"

The door of Study No. 10 opened, and Levison of the Fourth glanced in.

"You fellows here? Order for the Fourth to assemble in the Form-room for a Head's flogging. You the giddy victim, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah."

"Sorry. Better come!" said Levison.

"I am quite weady."

With a firm step Arthur Augustus D'Arcy accompanied his friends to the Form-room. The Terrible Three, being Shell fellows, were not required at the execution. They followed as far as the Form-room passage in sympathy. From somewhere in the distance came a sound of the chug-chugging of a motor-bike.

"Railton's come in!" remarked Manners.

"Here comes the Head!" murmured Lowther.

Tom Merry & Co. faded away as Dr. Holmes came into the Form-room passage. Deeply concerned for the swell of the Fourth, the Shell fellows walked dismally away. They did not want to hear the sound of the castigation; that was a pleasure reserved for the Fourth.

The three were loafing dismally near the door of the House when Mr. Railton came in. He glanced round, and called to the captain of the Shell.

"Merry! I suppose D'Arcy has come in?"

"Yes, sir," answered Tom.

"Please tell him to come to my study."

"Oh, he's in the Form-room, sir!" said Tom hesitating.

"The Head's there, sir! Shall I tell him afterwards?"

"Afterwards? What do you mean?"

"It's a flogging, sir."

Mr. Railton started.

"A flogging, Merry? Who is to be flogged?"

"D'Arcy, sir."

"Good gad!" ejaculated Mr. Railton.

And he fairly ran in the direction of the Fourth Form-room, leaving the Shell fellows staring after him blankly.

CHAPTER 14.

Railton's Nephew!

THERE was a hush in the Fourth Form-room.

All the Fourth were in their places to the last man—Figgins & Co. having come over from the New House, wondering what was up.

It was an unaccustomed hour for the fellows to assemble in a Form-room; but it was an unaccustomed occasion. Head's floggings were rare and serious affairs. Very rarely indeed was there a public flogging in Big Hall, with the whole school assembled to witness the execution. Less rare, but still rare, was a flogging in a Form-room.

All eyes were turned on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; who, conscious of the general attention, carried his noble head high, and displayed to perfection the nonchalant repose of manner which was his distinguishing characteristic.

Mr. Lathom was frowning portentously. As a matter of fact, Mr. Lathom, a very kind-hearted gentleman, disliked a flogging extremely. He felt that nothing but a Head's flogging would meet this serious case; but now that it was on the point of happening Mr. Lathom felt very uncomfortable and concerned.

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Dr. Holmes entered.

There was a hush at once.

Taggles followed the Head in, carrying in the birch.

"D'Arcy!"

The Head's deep voice rolled impressively through the Form-room.

"D'Arcy, stand out!"

Arthur Augustus stood out.

He was quite calm. There was pride in his port, if not defiance in his eye. His manner was a masterly mingling of respect for his Headmaster, and regard for the dignity of his own noble self.

Dr. Holmes fixed a grim glance on him. Possibly Gussy's regard for his own dignity, in the circumstances, did not please the Head.

"D'Arcy, your Form master tells me that you were detained for the afternoon, by order of your Housemaster, and that you left the Form-room without leave."

"Yaas, sir."

"You absented yourself from the school, in spite of the fact that you were under detention."

"Yaas, sir."

"You stayed out after lock-up?"

"My bike was cwooked, sir, and I had to wheel it home."

"You returned in a dirty and disgraceful state, calculated to bring disgrace upon the school to which you belong."

Arthur Augustus winced. This was the unkindest cut of all. His noble face flushed scarlet.

"Yaas, sir; but—"

"You need say nothing, D'Arcy. You will be severely flogged. Taggles, take him up!"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

"If you will allow me to explain, sir—"

"There is nothing to explain, D'Arcy. Your conduct speaks for itself."

"A fellow has a wight to explain his conduct, sir, when he is goin' to be flogged by his Headmastah," said D'Arcy sturdily.

Dr. Holmes gave him a look.

"I will hear you," he said; "but be brief."

"I wegard Mr. Wailton's sentence as unjust, sir," explained D'Arcy.

The Head almost jumped.

"Bless my soul! Do you offer that as an excuse, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, sir."

"You venture to criticise the actions of your Housemaster to such an extent as to follow your own wilful way, regardless of discipline and authority?" exclaimed the Head.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus had not, in the weighty consideration he had given to the matter, put it like that to himself. In fact, it startled him a good deal to hear it put like that.

A doubt crept into his noble mind.

For the first time, it occurred to him that perhaps he had not been, after all, acting with his usual tact and judgment, upon which he justly prided himself.

His face was quite dismayed.

"Answer me!" thundered the Head.

"Oh! I—I— Not at all, sir," stammered Arthur Augustus. "I did not wegard it like that, sir! Pewwaps I was—was w'ong!"

"I am glad that you can see it!" said the Head grimly. "I trust that a flogging will make it still clearer to your mind. Take him up, Taggles!"

There was a hurried footstep in the Form-room passage. The door of the Form-room opened, and Mr. Railton stepped in hurriedly.

Dr. Holmes glanced at him. The Housemaster was almost breathless.

"Dr. Holmes!" exclaimed Mr. Railton hastily.

"I am about to administer a punishment, Mr. Railton," said the Head stiffly. "No doubt what you have to say to me can wait till I have finished here!"

The Housemaster coloured.

"I came here in great haste, sir, as soon as I learned that D'Arcy was to be punished," he said. "I have, of course, no desire to excuse his rebellious conduct or his outrageous disobedience; but I should like to say a word in his favour, if you will permit me."

Arthur Augustus blinked. The whole Fourth stared. This was quite unexpected.

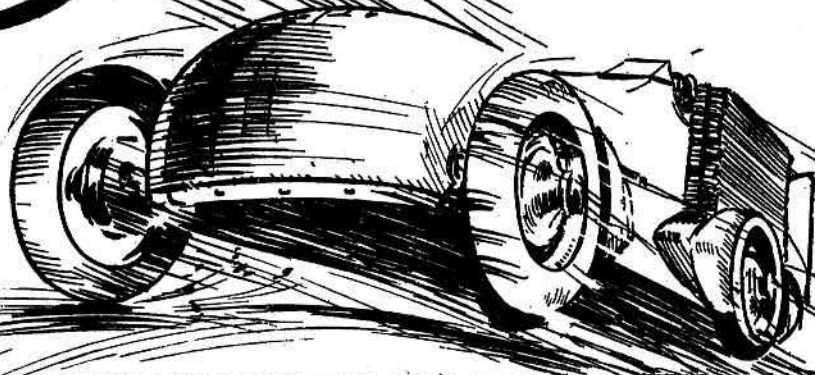
"Really, Mr. Railton," said the Head, still more stiffly, "I fail to see what can be said in favour of a boy who has broken detention, disregarded lock-up, and returned to school in a state that, I am assured by his Form master, was absolutely disgraceful."

"The latter, at least, sir, cannot be imputed to D'Arcy as a fault," said Mr. Railton. "I have no doubt he must have

(Continued on page 27.)

TRAVELLING SOME -- 100 YARDS A SECOND!

SPEED!



A VIVID DESCRIPTION OF THE MIGHTY POWER OF CAPTAIN MALCOLM CAMPBELL'S "BLUE BIRD," WHICH FORMS THE SUBJECT OF THIS WEEK'S GRAND FREE GIFT!

TRAVELLING at over two hundred miles an hour in a car that was out of control!

That was Captain Malcolm Campbell's heart-shaking experience when he was breaking the world's speed record at Daytona Beach in Florida, with his famous "Blue Bird" car.

Captain Campbell had just driven through the measured mile over the hard-packed sands when, with the machine moving at the limit of its speed, it struck a bump. The dare-devil driver was flung half out of his seat, and the screaming gale through which he moved blew his goggles down over his eyes so that he could not see.

For an instant he no longer had control of his monster machine, which was covering the ground at the stupendous rate of one hundred yards a second.

Uppermost in his mind in that moment was what might happen to the awed thousands of spectators who lined the course.

Captain Campbell tried to hold the car with one hand, while he jerked his goggles clear of his eyes; then he wrestled the car straight again, and the danger was over.

His highest speed during his record-breaking run was 214½ miles an hour. His average speed over the two runs of the course was just a fraction under 207 m.p.h., breaking the record which Major H. O. D. Segrave had set up with his 1,000 horse-power Sunbeam a year before, when his time was 203½ m.p.h.

Captain Campbell estimates that his Blue Bird car has cost him between £15,000 and £20,000 to build. He built it because there were two American speedmen out to capture Segrave's record, and he wanted to retain it for England. He played a lone hand throughout, and he accomplished what he set out to do.

The Blue Bird is a very well-known car in the motor-racing world, and its Daytona Beach effort was not its first successful attempt on records. It had already done big things on Pendine Sands, in Carmarthenshire, but for its journey to America Captain Campbell fitted a different engine.

This engine is exactly the same as the one with which Flight-Lieutenant Webster won the Schneider Cup at Venice last year, when he sent his seaplane splitting the air at over 281 miles an hour!

This engine is close upon six feet long—nearly half the length of a touring car. It uses petrol at the rate of a gallon a minute, eating in an hour what would drive an ordinary car hard and far for a whole week.

One of the most striking features about the Blue Bird is its "tail fin." This is a vertical fin mounted on the tail, and the idea was that it would steady the car when it was travelling at high speed. This was the first time the device had been used on a record-breaking machine, and it proved completely successful.

The car has no radiator at the front. Instead, a radiator is mounted on either side of the tail, where the cooling water will catch the air without lessening the car's speed.

Another unusual feature is the stream-lined "fairing" of the wheels—a smooth-shaped shielding which prevents them offering resistance to the air as they hurtle over the ground.

The Blue Bird's chief rival had stream-lined casing over all its wheels. This was the Black Hawk Stutz, a wonderful car which was driven by Frank Lockhart, America's speed champion.

The American's first attempt on the record was made an hour after Captain Campbell had broken it. It had rained in the meantime, and there were patches of mists on the sands.

At phenomenal speed the Black Hawk screamed down the course, ran into a patch of mist, and was next seen hurtling clear into the air and heading for the sea! It plunged into the breakers, its youthful driver—Frank Lockhart is one of the youngest of American speed men—pinned into his seat, and the side of the machine bashed in.

Dozens of spectators and officials waded into the sea and dragged the car out, when Lockhart was found to be not much hurt, and it was seen that a few days' work would repair the car.

Lockhart was as determined to secure the record for America as Captain Campbell had been to retain it for England, and the moment that the Black Hawk was ready Lockhart took it on the sands again—and this time came utter disaster.

Once again he thrashed his machine to tremendous speed, and then a rear tyre burst, sending him into a fierce skid which lasted for nearly two hundred yards. The machine went on in a series of terrific jumps. The first was 140 feet, the second 120 feet, and then it jumped 75 feet, and somersaulted into the air.

Frank Lockhart was flung from the car, pitching 51 feet from where the machine stopped, a tangled, smoking mass of wreckage. When he was picked up he was dead.

The wonderful Blue Bird, with its 875 horse-power engine, is now being made ready for still another attempt on the world's record. Captain Malcolm Campbell has found a stretch of desert sand where he can safely let the car out to its limit of speed. It takes five miles to get up speed, and another four to slow down.

When he does make his effort all England will wish him the good fortune which attended his previous speed burst.



THE STORY OF A THOUSAND BREATHLESS THRILLS!

The Dundonald hairpin, Ballyoran Corner—every danger-point on the Great Tourist Trophy course in Northern Ireland sees young Jack Kennedy wrestling with his bucking racing car! Not without reason does he earn, in this gruelling motor-race, the significant nickname of "SKID" Kennedy!



'SKID' KENNEDY- SPEED KING!

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF A BRILLIANT NEW SERIAL OF MOTOR-RACING ADVENTURE, INTRODUCING CAPTAIN MALCOLM CAMPBELL, AND STARRING JACK KENNEDY, A YOUNG SPEED MERCHANT.

ESPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE "GEM" BY

ALFRED EDGAR.

(The Motor-Racing Author.)

Wrecked!

WITH a shattering roar, the great Saxon car came hurtling down the wide road, rocking in its fierce speed as it thundered towards the railway bridge which spanned the highway ahead.

Tensed behind the wheel—teeth gritted, and clear eyes glinting through his goggles—Jack Kennedy watched the black shadow cast by the bridge, his hands clamped on the card-bound rim of the big steering-wheel.

The hedges on either side of the road seemed to be a blurred, green screen; the highway was like a greyish river that slid under the threshing tyres of the leaping machine.

"Steady, Jack—you can't go through this bridge at more than sixty!" A growling voice bellowed the words in his ear, as the man in the mechanic's seat leaned towards him. "You're doing ninety-five"—and the voice ended in a gasp.

The bridge was set on a curve, with its brickwork hemming the edge of the road. Its black mouth seemed to yawn at the machine as it stormed on, and the man at Jack's side gripped the edge of his seat, sudden alarm in his eyes, because it seemed impossible that the car could get through at that speed.

At the last possible moment, Jack rammied his foot on the brake pedal. The tearing scream of the brakes sounded above everything else, and the car slowed like magic. It skidded a little, then the brick piers of the bridge were echoing the Saxon's thunder as the machine slashed safely through to the sun-drenched roadway beyond.

"Thought you'd never do it, Jack!" Ben gasped. "That was good driving!"

This car was to run in the great Tourist Trophy race on the morrow, and Ben was going to drive it. The machine was on its last practice spin, and it was only as a great favour that Ben was allowing his young brother to drive the Saxon. For all that, Ken was a good driver, and already he had earned himself the nickname of "Skid" Kennedy, because of his skill.

The car was low-built, with tiny, flared mudguards above the wheels, and grim power in its every line. Jack knew the car from end to end, because he had helped Ben prepare it for the big race. Ben owned the car, and he had risked his every penny in buying it and entering it for the T.T. Until a month or so before, he and Jack had been employed by the Falcon Six Works. Ben had thrown up his job after a row with Philip Slade, their star racing driver, and Jack had left with him.

Ben's idea in riding in the race with this Saxon speedster was that if he could finish well up, or if he could win, the Saxon firm might offer him a job on their racing staff.

On along the wide road, Jack sent the machine, with his every nerve quivering to the thrill of the cracking pace as her speed crept above ninety miles an hour again. He had

been nominated as Ben's reserve driver, and that is why Ben allowed him to take the wheel now and again.

Abruptly, rooftops marking the Dundonald hairpin bend whipped up ahead, shining red through the branches of trees. At that moment, from the tail of his eye, Ben glimpsed a car roaring up behind them, gaining gradually.

It was one of the three machines entered by the Falcon Six Works; a lean, vicious-looking car, with a radiator that came almost to a wedge at the front. Behind the ever-shifting steering-wheel, his hard face set grimly, was a man whom Ben recognised as Philip Slade.

"Jack, there's a Falcon behind us; it's Slade's!" Ben roared. "Put your foot down; don't let him pass you!"

Jack fairly flung the car at the deadly hairpin turn. Brakes screaming wildly, Jack took it round, accelerating violently while he was yet in the heart of the curve and coming out of it to the straight beyond with the Falcon now almost on his tail.

"Give her all she'll take, young 'un!" he heard his brother shout. "Show Slade what we can do!"

Ben was big and brawny and brown-faced, with hefty, tool-scarred hands. He looked as though he had an iron nerve, and he had plenty of cleverness with it. He lived for cars, and he had done things to this Saxon which would make it a match for the fastest machines in the race.

Jack was nothing like so big. He was years younger to start with—no more than a boy; but he was wiry, and he had all his brother's nerve. He showed it by the way he kept ahead of the pursuing machine.

Down the road went the two cars, the Falcon a couple of lengths behind and Slade driving it all out. Jack could hear the fiendish scream of the machine, its exhaust snarling on a devilish note. He could guess that Slade was driving desperately in an effort to pass them. He was a bad-tempered brute, and he hated being beaten.

With spurts of dust slashing back from the whirring wheels, the machines ripped past the grand stands, both bucking on the road from their mad speed. Jack marked the broad sweep of Ballyoran Corner ahead of him, and the two cars roared at it with their engines booming a war song and their superchargers droning piercingly.

Jack saw the great bank which rose on the outside of the famous turn, one of the fastest on the course. He slowed a trifle as he jockeyed the car on the road, and in that instant the Falcon poked its radiator almost level.

Into the turn the two machines rushed, with the Falcon dead level, riding close. There was a limit to the speed at which this turn could be taken in safety, and Slade was driving his car beyond that limit in an effort to pass—and he skidded towards them!

Jack saw him come. Already the Saxon was riding on the inside of the turn, forced there by the Falcon. Desperately, Jack pulled in to avoid the rival car—then one front wheel hit a bump!

He felt the steering kick under his hands, and the Saxon started to skid outwards; the fraction of a second later she

was sliding broadside round the turn in a wild, uncontrollable, ninety-miles-an-hour skid!

The car slashed round, just missing the Falcon's tail as it hurtled ahead. Jack had a mad, whirling vision of the other machine as it got safely away; then the Saxon was mounting the bank and heeling over!

The steering-wheel was wrenched from his hands as the car pitched sideways, with the tail flinging high. He felt himself being hurled out; he had an instant's glimpse of a wheel buckling in a mass of torn tyre—then he hit the ground.

He went sliding on one shoulder, ears filled with the thunderous roar of clattering metal and the mad, staccato explosions of the Saxon's dying engine, then he slithered slowly to a stop and remained there, half-stunned.

When Jack sat up he found himself lying in some kind of dry ditch. The car lay on its side near the grass that edged the road, with dust rising around it and smoke belching from under the dented engine-cover. One front wheel was buckled, and the near side wings were crumpled like paper.

A little distance from it Ben was getting slowly to his feet, his left arm held limply before him. Men were running from every direction towards the scene of the crash. Some distance away Slade had stopped his Falcon Six and was looking back. A uniformed ambulance man leaped to Jack, slipping an arm about his shoulders as he peered anxiously into the boy's face.

"I'm all right," Jack told him, but his voice seemed to be curiously far away. He stepped towards the car, reeling a little until he got control of his numbed limbs. Ben was staggering towards the machine, and there was a rueful grin on his oil-grimed face as he said:

"It wasn't your fault, young 'un! Slade crowded you on the turn; you couldn't help it. Not hurt, are you?"

"No; only kind of—of groggy," Jack answered shakily. "Is the car—"

His words were drowned by the roar of the Falcon Six, as Slade turned his machine on the road and brought it back. He climbed out and came towards them, pushing his goggles off his eyes and up over his crash-helmet.

He was a pallid-faced man, with black brows which met over his nose, and dark eyes. His chin was short and square, and his lips were thin. His face was expressionless as he stared at the wrecked car.

Then Jack heard Ben saying:

"It might have been worse! She's got two broken wheels and a lot of dents, but I don't think anything's strained. She didn't actually hit anything; just skated on her side for about thirty yards and— Phew!"

He whistled softly as he tried to move his left arm, and his face twisted from the twinge of pain it gave him.

"Better let us have a look at that," an ambulance man said, as he pushed forward. He unfastened the wristband of Ben's overalls, then pulled the white sleeve back over the brawny arm.

He whistled softly as he surveyed the sunburnt forearm, and ran gentle fingers along it.

"It's fractured!" he gasped.

"What?" Ben stared at him, then looked at his arm. "Fractured? Broken, d'you mean? It doesn't feel like that."

"No. It's numbed at the moment; you'll feel that later on," the ambulance man said slowly. "Look here, we'll have to rush you to hospital with this. Bennett, whistle up the ambulance, will you?"

"But—but I've got to drive to-morrow!" Ben muttered, and his eyes were wide as he stared blankly from the man to Jack, and then to the car. "Fractured!" he muttered. "It can't be!"

"I'm sorry, but it is," said the ambulance man. "You won't touch a steering-wheel inside six or eight weeks."

Jack gasped as he heard the words; then to one side he saw Slade standing, watching, a thin smile on his ugly lips.

"Hurt yourself, eh, Kennedy?" he said to Ben. "That serves you darned well right for allowing a boy like that to drive!"

The injured speedman swung round on him at the sound of his voice, his eyes blazing now.

"He's a long sight better driver than you'll ever be, Slade!" he ripped. "It was your fault! You cut him on the bend and nearly skidded into us!"

"Nonsense! The boy couldn't control the car!" Slade snarled. "He doesn't know how to drive yet, and—"

"Don't I?" Jack stepped towards the man. "I'll show you to-morrow whether I can drive or not! I'm Ben's reserve driver, and now he's been clobbered I'll have to take his place in the race. If I don't do anything else, I'll jolly well put it across you and your Falcon Six!"

Meeting Captain Campbell!

THE Falcon speedman coolly eyed Jack over from head to heels, grinned in his sneering way, and then moved off, with the boy staring after him. When Jack turned to look at Ben he saw that the big fellow was slowly losing colour as the numbness passed from his fractured arm and the pain began to grip him.

At that moment the clanging gong of the ambulance sounded. It swished up, and Jack helped his brother into it.

"Leave the car to me, Ben," he said.

"All right," Ben nodded as he gasped the words, and he tried to smile through his hurt. "Report the accident, and ask for time to repair the machine; don't lay the blame on Slade, though. Wouldn't be sporting!"

The ambulance slid away, just as a boy in grimy overalls came thrusting his way through the crowd that had gathered about the machine. He was as lean as a lath, and he was white as a sheet, and he looked as though he usually washed in old oil instead of water.

"You're all right, Jack?" he gasped. "They said you'd been done in, an' that the car was scrap-iron! Was that Ben they took off in the ambulance?"

"Yes, he's got a broken arm, Fred," Jack answered. "He said that the car wasn't hurt a lot. We've got to get it repaired in time for the race—and I've got to drive it! You'll be my mechanic!"

"Gosh!" breathed Fred Bishop, and stood staring at Jack with his mouth open.

Fred had left the Falcon Works at the same time as Jack, prior to which the two had worked on the same bench. Fred had been sacked for leaving a drip-pan full of oil where Slade could trip and fall headlong into it. He had done that because he didn't like the Falcon racing driver, and Slade liked Fred about as much as he liked Jack.

Being out of a job, Fred had thrown in his lot with the two brothers, working for practically no wages and his keep. He was in charge of the arrangements at the replenishment pits, which were set not very far from the corner where the Saxon had been wrecked.

They forgot the crowd, and everything else as they examined the machine. So far as they could tell, Ben's estimate of the damage was correct; by the time they had decided this a breakdown van had come on the scene.

The crew helped to hoist the car on to the flat trolley then. While Fred superintended its conveyance to the old barn which did duty as a racing stable for the Saxon, Jack went off to acquaint the race officials with what had occurred.

All cars competing in the event were supposed to be handed over to the race authorities by eleven o'clock that morning, when the cars would be put under lock and key until an hour before the start. When Jack reported the accident, the officials willingly granted an extension of time to Jack.

For the remainder of the morning, the old barn rang to the clink of tools. The two boys worked deftly and unceasingly, and the repairs were half-finished when Ben returned, his left arm in splints and supported by a sling.

He nodded his approval at what they were doing, then stood handing tools to the boys with his undamaged fist and helping where he could. Not until the work was finished and everything made sound again was the car handed over to the race officials, ready to be taken over by the boys in the morning in trim for the race.

"D'you think you'll be able to make a show in the race, Jack?" Ben asked, when the three of them were tidying up the tools in the barn.

"Course he will!" Fred cut in. "Goin' to beat everythin' on wheels, ain't we, Jack? You leave it to us, Ben!"

The big fellow stood leaning against a bench, looking at them gravely: There are risks in motor-racing, big risks. Ben didn't mind taking risks himself, but he was wondering whether he ought to let the two boys take them. Jack was a good little driver, and he had plenty of cool nerve, but the



YOUNG JACK KENNEDY—the dare-devil hero of this magnificent new racing serial—whose motto is: "Never let a car get in front of you!" Read how he keeps up to this!

A MEETING WITH MALCOLM CAMPBELL—THE RACING KING!



"My brother," said Ben to the big, smiling man. Jack Kennedy jumped forward, his eyes alight as the famous racing driver turned and looked at him. Captain Malcolm Campbell extended his hand. "If you drive as well as your brother, then you'll do well!" he said. "Jolly good luck!" (See this page.)

terrific strain of a big race like this might be too much for him.

"Look here," he said slowly at last, "I think I ought to withdraw the car. It isn't fair to you, and it—"

The two jumped at him together, glanced at one another, and then Jack said:

"Give the car a chance, Ben! We won't let you down! You've been working on it for weeks, and we both know what it means to you for the car to do well. Fred an' me'll be all right, and I promise I won't take any chances, if that's what's worrying you."

"We'll just go fast enough to win, that's all," Fred grinned. "If Jack starts tryin' to do more'n a hundred an' twenty miles an hour, I'll tell him he musn't—see?" And he chuckled.

"All right," said Ben, with a smile. "I won't stop you now you've gone so far—and you're a couple of game youngsters, anyway!"

Cars stood in front of the replenishment pits below the great flag-decked grandstands, and the air throbbled with the excitement of the vast crowd gathered to watch the start of the great T.T. race.

The pits were wire enclosures roofed with corrugated iron, where cars could stop during the race for oil and petrol and repairs. In front of each one stood machines making ready for the start, which was yet half an hour away.

Now and again Jack glanced along the line of pits and at the famous cars which stood outside them, their drivers working busily. He saw a great Bentley, and a low, front-wheel-drive Alvis, with famous Major Harvey smiling cheerfully as he slipped his goggles round his neck.

He glimpsed an O.M. painted a blazing red, and he saw the white bulk of a super-charged Mercedes. Everywhere officials were scurrying, coloured brassards on their arms.

Jack was buttoning up his overalls, when his heart kicked suddenly. Just stopping in front of the pit was a very broad-shouldered man, with a bronzed face and keen eyes.

"That's Malcolm Campbell!" Jack whispered the words as he dug Fred in the ribs, and both watched Britain's speed king as he stepped towards the pit and nodded to Ben.

"Awfully sorry to hear about your smash!" he said. "Tough luck! Who's taking your car?"

"My brother," Ben answered. "There he is! Jack, just a minute!"

Jack jumped forward, his eyes alight as the famous racing driver turned and looked at him.

Malcolm Campbell smiled, then extended his hand.

"If you drive as well as your brother, then you'll do well!" he said. "Jolly good luck!" And with a nod he hurried on, the two boys looking after him, and Jack's fist tingling from the speedman's warm clasp.

"You get all the luck!" Fred grunted. "Fine chap, isn't he? Wonder if we'll pass him in the race?"

"More likely he'll snort past us," Jack grinned. "Anyway, they haven't said anything about stopping me driving," he went on, as he reached for his crash-helmet and goggles. "Thank goodness for that!"

"It's just the sort o' thing that perisher Slade would get up to!" Fred growled. "Goin' to the officials an' pitchin' 'em a yarn about you bein' only a kid an' not old enough to drive! Tryin' to get our car stopped, that's what he was after, the rotter! He's afraid of us!"

Jack grinned again. He knew that Slade had made an effort to stop them running, but apparently nothing had come of it.

"The officials won't say anything about it now," Ben growled from the pit. "It's too late—" He broke off.

Slade himself was strolling past the pit, dressed ready for the race. He stopped dead as Fred spotted him; the lean boy suddenly swung round and exclaimed:

"Didn't come off, did it, Master Sneaky Slade? Tried to get 'em to stop Jack from drivin', didn't you, eh? Well, he's still goin' to run, an' we'll make your Falcon Six look like a busted salmon tin on pram wheels before we've done with you!"

Slade glared at him, his thin lips tightening. He had never forgotten the header he had taken into the oil which Fred had so carefully put into position for him.

"If I have any impertinence from you," he began, "I'll—"

"First you bust up our car, then you try carryin' tales," Fred broke in. "Rattin' fine sportsman, ain't you? It's a—"

"Steady on, Fred—steady!" growled Ben from the pit behind them; he started scrambling over the pit plank as he saw Slade bunch his fists and step towards the boy.

"Go on, hit me!" grinned Fred. "Hit me, and then I'll plant another pan of—" He broke off and ducked like lightning as Slade suddenly lashed out at him, slipping aside with a swiftness which sent the man off his balance.

(This Slade merchant seems bent on looking for trouble, and you can bet your sweet lives he'll find it. Make certain of reading next week's grand instalment by ordering your GEM to-day—and DON'T FORGET THAT FREE GIFT!)

FOOL'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 22.)

been in a shocking state after plunging into the pool in Abbotsford Wood. But no doubt he had explained that circumstances?"

"He has explained nothing."

"Then it is for me to explain, sir," said the Housemaster. "D'Arcy dived into a deep and dangerous pool, in a place where no help was possible, in order to save the life of another lad."

"What? What?"

"He saved the boy's life, sir," said Mr. Railton. "The boy of whom I speak fell into deep water, and he cannot swim. He was going down like a stone when D'Arcy, most fortunately, plunged in and saved him."

"Upon my word!" ejaculated the Head.

He laid down the birch.

There was a buzz in the ranks of the Fourth.

Mr. Lathom blinked at D'Arcy over his spectacles. The Head gazed at him sternly.

"D'Arcy, why did you not explain this to your Form master when he questioned you?"

"I did, sir," answered Arthur Augustus innocently. "Mr. Lathom inquired how my clobber had become wet, sir, and I told him I had jumped into a pond."

"You did not mention that you had jumped in to save a drowning person, you ridiculous boy!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "But, weally, sir, I did not suppose that you would think I had jumped in for nothin'. Why, sir, it uttaly wuined my clothes!"

There was a hint of a giggle among the Fourth. It died away into deep silence under the Head's glance.

"This—this is most extraordinary!" said the Head. "May I ask how you became acquainted with these circumstances, Mr. Railton? I presume there is no doubt on the subject?"

"None, sir. It was my nephew whose life was saved by D'Arcy in Abbotsford Wood this afternoon."

"Bless my soul!"

There was a sensation in the Fourth. Even the Head's presence could not subdue the buzz of amazement and thrilling interest.

"As I mentioned to you, sir, I rode over to Abbotsford this afternoon, to visit my brother, who came there this morning to stay at the Oak House," said Mr. Railton. "Our nephew should have been there, but he had gone out. He came in, however, before I left; in a shocking state—similar, I have no doubt, to the state in which D'Arcy returned here. I learned from him what had happened. He seems to have quarrelled and fought with D'Arcy in the wood—in spite of which D'Arcy plunged into the pool after him, and saved him from drowning. Both the boys must have been in terrible danger."

Mr. Railton's voice was unsteady.

"I am aware, sir, that this does not excuse D'Arcy's disobedience. But in the circumstances—"

"In the circumstances, I shall certainly not administer a punishment—subject to Mr. Lathom's approval," added the Head, glancing at the master of the Fourth.

"Most certainly, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Had I learned from that utterly absurd boy the cause of his disgraceful state, I should certainly never have reported him to you."

"The matter is closed," said the Head majestically. "But any recurrence of this rebellious conduct, D'Arcy—"

"Nothin' of the kind will evah wecur, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I realise now that I was in the w'ong, sir, and I apologise to Mr. Wailton and expwess my deepest wegwet. I am weally awf'ly sowwy, sir! I feah that I have been wathah an ass, sir."

The lofty majesty of the Head's countenance was broken, for a moment, by something that resembled a smile.

"The Form is dismissed!" he said.

When the Fourth streamed out Blake and Herries and Digby closed round their noble chum, and marched him away to Study No. 6. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther joined them—greatly relieved to hear of the unexpected and happy termination of the affair. The whole House buzzed with the excitement of it, and the news that D'Arcy of the Fourth had met Mr. Railton's nephew—the Victor of the famous telegram—and scrapped with him, and saved his life from drowning. Congratulations poured on Gussy as he walked away with his friends; but the brow of Arthur Augustus was deeply thoughtful as he went into Study No. 6.

"There's such a thing as fool's luck," remarked Blake. "No doubt about that at all. Gussy's got off—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Manners. "The telegram said that Victor was in trouble, I remember. He seems to be a chap who hunts for trouble."

"It wathah stwuck me, his name bein' Victor," remarked Arthur Augustus. "But, of course, I never thought—"

"Do you ever?" asked Dig.

"If his name had been the same as his uncle's—his surname, I mean—I should have guessed at once that he was Wailton's nephew."

"Go hon!" said Blake incredulously.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass thoughtfully, seriously, upon his comrades.

"You fellows may be surprised to heah it," he said slowly. "But I have acted vewy thoughtlessly and wathah inconsiderately to-day."

"Fancy Gussy realising that he has played the giddy ox!" remarked Lowther. "That fellow Cleave must have jolted up his intellect, punching his head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't wot, deah boys! I was quite w'ong in backin' up against old Wailton," confessed Arthur Augustus. "He was wathah hasty, but a fellow was bound to take the wuff with the smooth, you know. I did not wealish that at the time. Howevah, I have apologised—and swom one gentleman to another that is all that is wequiahed. The mattah can dwop."

"Something else is going to drop," said Blake.

"Bai Jove! What is that, Blake?"

"You! Do you think you're going to worry your old pals, and turn their hair grey, and get away with it!" demanded Blake. "We let you off because you were bagging a Head's flogging! That's off now, so—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Bump him!"

"Weally, you sillay asses—leggo!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You wuffians—Yoooooop!"

Tom Merry & Co. were unanimously of opinion that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy deserved to be bumped; and they signified the same in the usual way.

(Now look out for the second yarn in this magnificent series, entitled: "A RANK OUTSIDER!" which will appear in next week's BUMPER FREE GIFT number of the GEM!)

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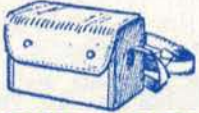
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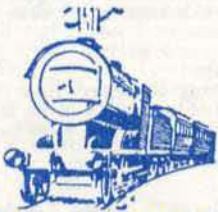
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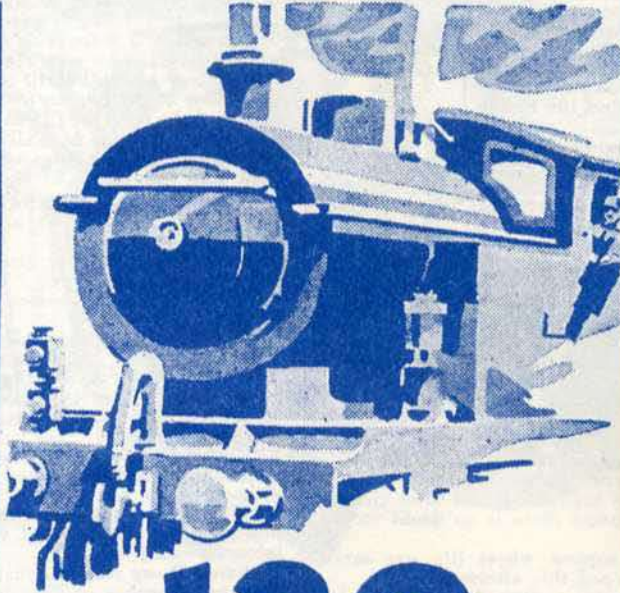
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