

"THE ROOKWOOD MAN-HUNT!" Grand New Series of JIMMY SILVER & Co. STARTS INSIDE!



An Amusing Incident from "THE COCKNEY TURNS UP TRUMPS!" This Week's Great St. Jim's Story.
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HE WAS ONLY PLAYED TO MAKE UP THE TEAM, BUT HE WON THE MATCH!—

The COCKNEY TURNS



Cutting in from the wing, Hammond bore down on the New House goal. Then he let drive. Thud! It seemed to Fatty Wynn that the ball passed him like a lightning flash. There was a yell from the spectators: "Goal! Bravo, Cockney!"

CHAPTER 1.

The Bethnal Green Left!

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

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

Henry Horace Hammond—or, 'Enry 'Orace 'Ammond, as he himself pronounced his name—was a new boy at St. Jim's, and quite out of the ordinary run of new boys.

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

"LOST!"

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

"My 'at!" said Hammond.

"There goes another!" chuckled Crooke of the Shell. "Did anybody hear anything drop?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't call this 'ere a joke!" said Hammond, looking round. "Why can't you leave my bloomin' h's alone?"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form came into the room. He looked

round through his famous monocle, and spotted Hammond.

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

"'Ere I am," said Hammond.

"Bai Jove! What is that wubbish?"

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the notice on the wall, and he frowned majestically. Arthur Augustus had not liked Hammond when he first came. He had confessed to Blake, Herries, and Digby, his chums in Study No. 6, that Hammond got on his nerves. And he had astonished all the School House later on by making friends with the "boulder" and chumming with him. And as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy never did anything by halves, he and Hammond had become great chums. And Arthur Augustus was therefore greatly indignant at any aspersion cast upon his Cockney pal.

"Levison, you wottah!" he exclaimed, with a wrathful look at the cad of the Fourth. "Is this your doing?"

Levison nodded.

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

"I wegard you as a wottah, Levison."

"Go hon!"

"And I should wecommend my friend Hammond to give you a feahful thwashin'."

Levison chuckled.

—ANOTHER GREAT YARN FEATURING HARRY HAMMOND, THE ST. JIM'S COCKNEY.

UP TRUMPS!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Levison promptly interposed and pushed him back.

"Hands off!" he said. "I mean, 'ands off! You keep your 'ands off that there piper!"

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

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

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

"Stand aside!"

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

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

"'Op it, Levison!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

Crack!

The back of Levison's head knocked on the wall, and he rolled over on the floor. He lay there dazed and gasping. "Oh!" he groaned. "Ow! You've cracked my skull!"

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

"I sye, I'm sorry!" he exclaimed. "I didn't mean to 'it so 'ard, and you

shouldn't have stood so close to the wall. I 'ope you ain't 'urt?"

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

"You rotter!" he muttered.

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

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

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

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

And Levison moved away unsteadily, his hand still to the back of his head. As a matter of fact, he was not sorry for an excuse not to continue the combat, after that single experience of the "Bethnal Green left."

Hammond stepped quietly to the

Harry Hammond came to St. Jim's a friendless Cockney, but his cheery pluck soon won him plenty of friends. One of the staunchest of them was the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and great was the grief of the Cockney schoolboy when the plotting of an enemy bade fair to wreck the friendship.

notice on the wall, took it down, tore it into half a dozen pieces, and threw them into the Common-room fire. Not a hand was raised to stop him.

"That's wight, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "Now we'll go for our little twot!"

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

CHAPTER 2.

D'Arcy's Little Party!

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

Blake and Digby of the Fourth were with him.

The juniors presented an unusually elegant aspect. Fellows who observed them could see that they had their Sunday toppers on, which showed that they were bound upon an expedition of unusual importance. As a matter of fact, they were going to tea at the vicarage.

Tea at the vicarage was a somewhat solemn function, and the juniors did not pearn for it.

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

Blake, Herries, and Digby were his study-mates; Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were his great friends. And it appeared, on this occasion, that Kangaroo of the Shell, and Reilly of the Fourth, and Kerruish, and Bates, and Smith minor, and quite a number of other fellows, looked upon themselves as D'Arcy's old pals.

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

But Arthur Augustus put his foot down firmly.

His own study-mates and the Terrible Three he could take, and he drew the line at all others. Figgins of the New House pointed out that he had always regarded Gussy as the apple of his eye; but Gussy was obdurate. So Figgins was left out in the cold.

But there was one fellow whom Arthur Augustus intended to take, in spite of certain uneasy looks he noticed on his chum's faces when he announced his intention, and that person was Henry Horace Hammond.

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

What Mrs. Hutton, prim and stately, would think of Henry Horace was a great question.

But D'Arcy disregarded friendly hints. Hammond was his friend. That was enough for the swell of St. Jim's. To be ashamed of his friend was impossible. It would have been bad form.

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

The Cockney schoolboy had risked his life in rescuing Cousin Ethel from the waters of the Rhyl—and that act of heroism had made Arthur Augustus feel ashamed of his prejudice against the new boy.

He had offered his friendship to the lonely lad; and Hammond, who had a deep and undying admiration for the noble Gussy, had jumped at it.

So they had become great pals.

And if Hammond was good enough for Gussy, he was good enough for anybody; that was how the swell of St. Jim's looked at it. Hammond's sterling qualities—a brave nature and a kind heart—surely outweighed any

little peculiarities of manner and speech. D'Arcy thought so; and, in his lofty way, he naturally expected everybody else to think so.

"All weady, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he came out with his arm linked in Hammond's.

"All ready!" said Tom Merry.

"Waiting for you," said Manners.

"Where's Herries?"

"Can't come," said Blake. "Towser's off his feed, and Herries is looking after him."

"Well, there will be enough of us," said Arthur Augustus. "Lowthah—"

"Here I am," said Monty Lowther, coming out of the School House. "Lead on, Macduff!"

The juniors glanced over Hammond with approval.

Arthur Augustus had prevailed upon him to discard the gorgeous pullover he had worn when he first came to St. Jim's. D'Arcy had also tactfully pointed out that a large diamond tiepin was not in good taste. So the Cockney schoolboy certainly looked more presentable now. Hammond, who was as keen as a razor, noted what they were thinking; but it did not comfort him. He had a wretched feeling that he was not good enough for D'Arcy's company—and he had a sensitive nature that few suspected.

He had come to St. Jim's as cool as a cucumber, and when he had had to deal with cads and snobs like Levison and Crooke he was full of confidence. He was a better fellow than they were, and he knew it.

Hostility did not hurt him. But kindness penetrated his armour, so to speak. His heart had leaped with gladness when Arthur Augustus had offered his friendship. But he had had time to think since then. D'Arcy's friendship was an invaluable boon for him; but what was his for D'Arcy?

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

There was a slight cloud upon Hammond's face as the party of juniors walked across the quadrangle towards the gates.

Figgins was lounging in the gateway. Figgy had his Sunday topper on, and elegant gloves on his hands, and his tie was tied quite straight.

"Starting—ch?" said Figgins.

"Yaas."

"Give my kind regards to Cousin Ethel, won't you?" said Figgins.

"Yaas, deah boy."

Tom Merry took pity upon the miserable Figgins. Figgy was the last person in the world to fish for an invitation; it was Cousin Ethel's presence at the vicarage that attracted him there. Tom Merry exchanged a wink with Lowther and Manners, and they nodded approval.

"Herries can't come on account of Towser," Tom Merry remarked. "I think we ought to take a New House chap with us. Cousin Ethel will expect to see one of them."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Be a sport, you know!"

Arthur Augustus made an effort.

"Figgy, deah boy, I shall be vewy pleased if you will join us," he said.

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

"Jolly glad to!" he said. "You're a brick, Gussy!"

"Vewy well, deah boy—twot along!"

And Figgins trotted along, his honest, rugged face becoming like a full moon.

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CHAPTER 3.

Hammond Distinguishes Himself!

BILLY HUTTON, the vicar's nephew, was in the vicarage garden when Tom Merry & Co. arrived. He was giving his bull pup a run.

D'Arcy eyed the bull pup nervously as he came up the path. Herries' bulldog, as D'Arcy often said, had no respect whatever for a fellow's trousers, and D'Arcy did not like bulldogs at close quarters for that reason. And he looked quite alarmed as the pup came sniffing about his feet.

"Pway call him off, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus; "it would uttably wuin my twousahs if he nipped them, you know!"

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

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

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

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

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

"Wot-o!" said Hammond. "I 'ad a bulldog myself at 'ome, and 'e was a terror. You should 'ave seen the way 'e fastened on a cove wot came in and sneaked a 'at one day!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"I useter 'ave 'im be'ind the counter," said Hammond; "and a cove 'iked in one day an' sneaked a 'at—one of our 'igh-class 'ats for three-and-nine. Teddy—that was my dorg's nime—'e made one jump, an' you should 'ave seen the bloke 'oppin' it, with Teddy 'oldin' on to 'is trousis!"

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

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

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

Hammond shook his head.

"Dorgs never snap at me," he said. "Dorgs know a feller wot likes dorgs. Look 'ere!"

He fondled the bull pup, and the dog turned over to be tickled.

Hutton looked on in surprise.

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

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

"Bai Jove!"

"Nearly—not quite!" chuckled Hutton. "But he generally bites. You try him, D'Arcy. I'll bet you he nips your hand!"

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

"You try him, Tom Merry!"

"Rats!" said Tom Merry politely.

The juniors went on into the house.

Billy Hutton looked rather curiously at Hammond as he went, and spoke to Monty Lowther, who was the last of the crowd.

"Who's that chap?" he asked.

"Henry Horace Hammond, son and heir of Hammond's High-class Hats!" replied Monty Lowther solemnly.

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

"True, O king!"

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

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

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

And Monty Lowther chuckled, and followed his friends.

Cousin Ethel was with Mrs. Hutton when the juniors came in. She greeted Hammond in a very friendly way. Never had the girl forgotten how the lad had held on to her in the bitter waters of the river when all hope seemed gone, and it had seemed that they must go down to death together. The fact that Hammond dropped his "h's" and turned his "a's" into "i's" was not likely to weigh much with the girl who owed her life to his courage and devotion.

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

But the vicar's lady could not help being astonished when Hammond spoke. "It wasn't nothin'," Hammond said, when the good lady complimented him upon what he had done on that celebrated occasion. "Any bloke would 'ave done it, mum. Couldn't very well stand by and see a lidy drowned."

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

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

Hammond felt rather left out of the cheery talk at tea.

He looked at Cousin Ethel with eyes full of honest admiration, and wished that he could talk to her as Figgins was doing.

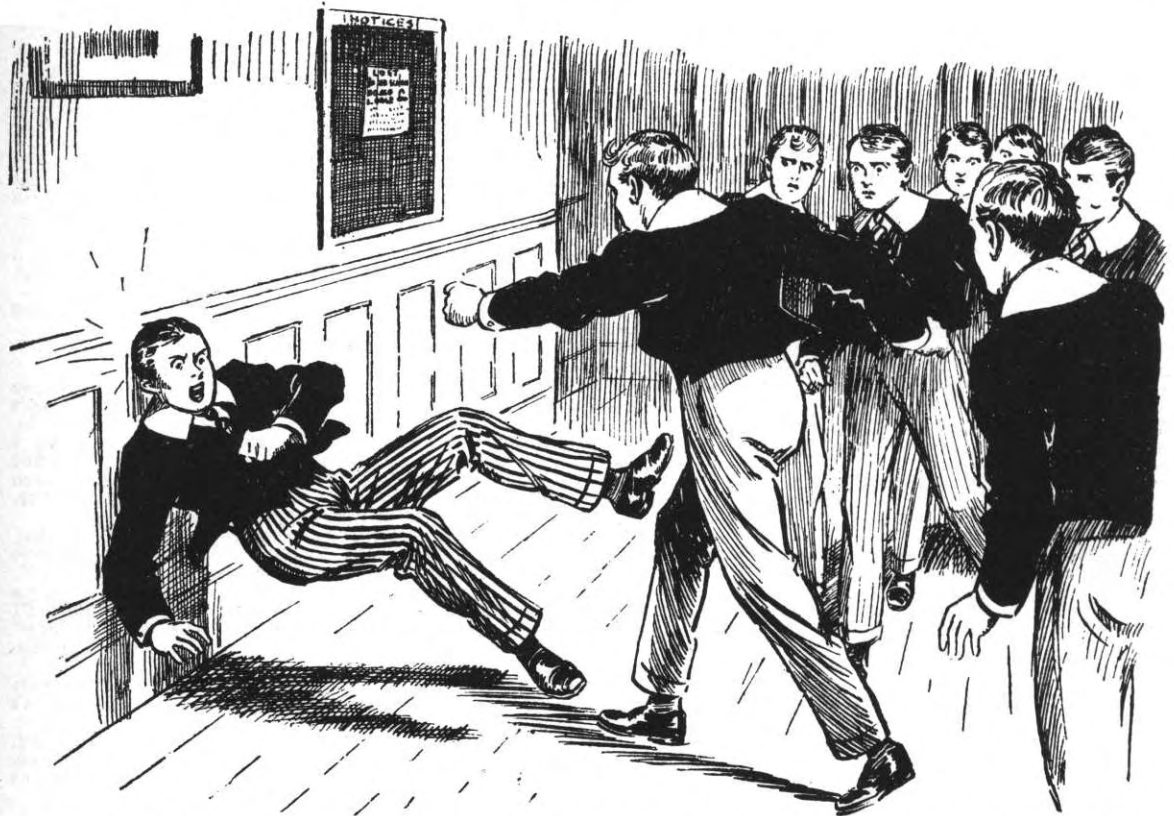
Ethel Cleveland seemed interested in everything that Figgins said, though really, as a matter of fact, Figgins was not a brilliant conversationalist. But Ethel was too kind and tactful to neglect one of her guests, and she made a point to speak sweetly and kindly to Hammond.

Hammond found the cake to his liking, and he had an original mode of eating it. He produced a large pocket-knife from his pocket—a wonderful knife, which contained any number of blades, and a corkscrew and a tin-opener, and several other useful things, and was altogether a most fearsome-looking implement. He opened the largest blade, chopped up his cake, and fed himself with chunks on the end of his pocket-knife.

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

But Arthur Augustus was a gentleman to the finger-tips. As he saw Billy Hutton's eyes turn upon Hammond's overflowing saucer, the swell of St. Jim's calmly and sedately poured his own tea into his saucer, following Hammond's example.

It was the very culmination of self-sacrifice.



As Hammond's left came with a crash on Levison's chin, the cad of the Fourth was fairly hurled off his feet and crashed against the wall behind him. Crack! His head cannoned on the wall, and he let out a roar of pain. "Ow! You've cracked my skull! Ow-ow!"

Cousin Ethel had seen immediately that Hammond felt a little awkward and out of place, and she had exerted herself at once to put him at his ease, with such success that the Cockney schoolboy was soon full of confidence. Hence the pocket-knife and the tea in the saucer.

As his courage rose, Hammond talked quite freely, and told stories of the hat-shop in Bethnal Green, and especially on his father's rise to fortune by means of Hammond's High-class Hats, all one price, three-and-nine, that made Mrs. Hutton open her eyes wide, and Billy Hutton almost choke in his endeavours to keep from breaking into a yell of laughter.

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

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

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

"Wot-o!" said Hammond. "'Course it's a bit quiet arter the Bethnal Green Road."

"The—the what?" murmured Mrs. Hutton.

"The Bethnal Green Road, mum. That was where we 'ad the shop."

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

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

"The what?"

"Hammond is wefewwin' to a public-house, ma'am, a place where intoxica-

tin' liquahs are sold," Arthur Augustus added, in explanation.

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

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

"It's bloomin' good fun, playin' pitch-and-toss," he was explaining. "Then we useter play shove-'apenny, too. Ever played shove-'apenny, mum?"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the vicar. That exclamation left his lips in spite of himself.

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

Hammond looked at him.

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

His face flushed crimson, and he fell suddenly silent. In his agitation the tea slopped over the saucer, and descended in a shower upon D'Arcy's knees, soaking through his beautiful trousers. His pocket-knife, with the chunk of cake on the end of it, remained half-raised to his mouth.

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

"This is Henry Hammond, my friend Hammond, sir," he said, "Hammond, deah boy, this is Mr. Hutton, the vicah."

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

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

But Arthur Augustus jammed his eye-glass into his eye, and turned it upon Blake with a withering look.

"If you have any desiah to cwiticise my friend Hammond, Blake, I twust you will not cwiticise him to me!" he said stiffly.

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

CHAPTER 4.

Levison Listens In!

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

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

Cutts looked at him curiously.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Headache," growled Levison. "I've got an awful bump on my head. That

filthy outsider, Hammond, pitched me on my head against the wall."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Same terms as usual," said Levison coolly.

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

"You'll settle now, or they won't be done," said Levison.

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Cutts scowled.

The black sheep of the Fifth had fully his match in the cad of the Fourth. He took a half-crown from his pocket and laid it on the table.

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

"That's all right," said Levison.

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

And Cutts quitted the room.

Levison drew a sheaf of impot paper towards him, dipped a pen in the ink, and began to write. What he wrote was not in his own hand, but in a close imitation of Cutts' clear, small writing. Levison had the dangerous gift of being able to imitate any hand, and he frequently earned a more or less honest penny by writing lines for other fellows, who were too idle to write their impositions themselves, and who could afford to pay him for his trouble.

He made quite a small income out of Cutts, who had plenty of money, and always had too many engagements to leave him time for lines.

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

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

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

"Not mine," said Levison.

Lumley-Lumley glanced at the sheet.

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

"Yes."

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

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

And Lumley-Lumley snorted, and said no more.

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

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

"What's the mattah, deah boy?"

D'Arcy's voice was very kind.

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

"Wubbish!"

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

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

"Wats!"

"Mr. Hutton was s'prised to see sich a cove there. You can't deny that, D'Arcy."

"My friend is good enough to go anywhere, deah boy!"

"And I don't know wot was wrong,

that's the wust of it. Goodness knows I'm tryin' to learn and do my best!"

"Well, as a mattah of fact, deah boy, if you don't mind my mentionin' it, it is not a custom to pour one's tea into a saucah!"

"It makes it cool to drink," said Hammond in surprise.

"Yaas; but—but it isn't done, you know. And fellows don't, as a wule, eat cake with a pocket-knife; it's wathah wotten to eat with a knife at all."

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

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

"You ain't ashamed of me?"

"Certainly not!"

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

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

"But I don't want you stickin' to me out of charity an' kindness, either. I don't want to be a burden on anybody."

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

"An' not only 'cause I pulled your cousin out of the water? That wasn't nothin', you know."

"It was a vewy gweat deal, Hammond, but that isn't the only reason. I think you are the wight sort—one of the best!"

"You really think so, D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And you're goin' to stick to me, arter I made hawful bloomers to-day and disgraced you?"

"Wats!"

"I ain't suspicious," said Hammond, "but—but when I first came here, Cutts took me up, and I thought 'e was a first-class toff; but I found that 'e only wanted to win my money at cards."

"The wotah!"

"Then Levison was very friendly, and it turned out that he wanted to borrow money. Mellish and some others was the same. I reckoned that I'd never get a pal 'ere, only bokes that wanted my money. 'Ang the money! I 'ad good pal in Bethnal Green Road afore I 'ad any money."

"You surely don't think I want your money, deah boy?"

"No, I know you don't," said Hammond. "I wish you did. I'd like to do somethin' for you, arter all you've done for me. But that's jest it. You're the only chap wot's been decent to me, and if you was to get disgusted with me and drop me, I think it would take all the 'eart out o' me, an', at the same time, I don't want to 'ang on to you if you don't want me."

"Hammond, deah boy, you are wathah a difficult chap to deal with. Don't talk any more about it, and don't wowwy. I'm your friend as long as you want me."

"Orlright," said Hammond. "I won't jaw no more, only I was feelin' so beastly miserable, an'—"

"Come out for a little wun in the quad, deah boy, and it will cheer you up," said Arthur Augustus.

"Right-o!"

Levison hurried down the passage. He did not want to be caught listening. His eyes were gleaming with a malicious light. As he heard Hammond's troubled voice a scheme had flashed into his

fertile brain—a scheme that would more than repay the Bethnal Green bouncer for that knock-down blow in the Common-room.

"My chance at last!" muttered Levison.

His face was quite bright as he entered Cutts' study with the imposition. The Fifth Former looked at him curiously.

"Somebody left you a fortune?" he asked.

Levison laughed.

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

And Cutts of the Fifth replied quite cordially:

"Good luck!"

**CHAPTER 5.
Man Wanted!**

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

It was Saturday afternoon. New House and School House were meeting in a House match that afternoon.

Tom Merry, as junior football skipper of the School House, had all the responsibilities of the House match on his shoulders. The rivalry between the two Houses of St. Jim's was keen, and in nothing so keen as in footer.

The senior House matches were very keenly contested, Kildare of the School House always straining every nerve to beat Monteith of the New House, and vice-versa. But it was even keener with the juniors. Tom Merry & Co. would have moved mountains to beat Figgins & Co., and Figgins & Co. would have attempted the wildest impossibilities in order to score off Tom Merry & Co.

And on this particular Saturday afternoon Tom Merry was in despair. The worst of bad luck had befallen him.

Figgins & Co. were at the top of their form, and the School House had to put a weak team in the field

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

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

Fiddling while Rome was burning wasn't in it with playing footer while Towser was sick. His friends had made many suggestions to meet the case. Blake proposed having the bulldog shot. Digby suggested having him drowned. Arthur Augustus declared that Towser would get on just as well while Herries was playing footer.

Herries replied only with scornful snorts.

Tom Merry asked him sarcastically whether he intended spending the afternoon sitting beside Towser and holding his paw, or whether he was going to

read to him. Whereat Herries only snorted more scornfully than ever. He was going to look after Towser, and he wasn't going to play footer, and that was the long and short of it.

And even that was not the sum of an unfortunate footer captain's misfortunes. Reilly had gone out on his bike with Lumley-Lumley. When Tom Merry thought of them, and went to look for them to tell them they would be wanted, they had gone.

And so the team was in rags and tatters, as Tom Merry said pathetically.

Bernard Glyn of the Shell was a good footballer when he liked to be; but he was busy upon one of his chemical experiments in the end study, and he had refused even to answer a persuasive voice through the keyhole.

"Nice sort of team we shall have to meet Figgins & Co. with," growled Tom Merry. "They will walk all over us."

"I mean to play up like anythin'!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy remarked.

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

"Weally, Blake—"

"How are you making up the team?" asked Kangaroo, otherwise Harry Noble of the Shell, the Cornstalk junior.

Tom Merry showed his list. Clifton Dane in goal, the Canadian junior being a first-rate goalkeeper. Kangaroo and Smith minor at back. Halves: Blake and Kerruish and Digby. Forwards: Tom Merry, D'Arcy, and three notes of interrogation.

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

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

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

"Yes."

"Might try Murphy; he's pretty good."

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

"What about Gore?"

"He's gone out."

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

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

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

"But you have hurt your silly foot," growled Tom Merry. "I really wish you'd put it off till to-morrow if you were bound to get yourself crocked. But these blessed things always come together!"

"Yaas, wathah! May I make a suggestion, Tom Mewwy?"

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

"Why not play my friend Hammond?"

"Yes; I knew it would be something like that," growled Blake. "Go and boil your friend Hammond, Gussy!"

"I wufuse to do anythin' of the sort! I weally wegard it as bein' up to Tom Mewwy to give my friend Hammond a chance."

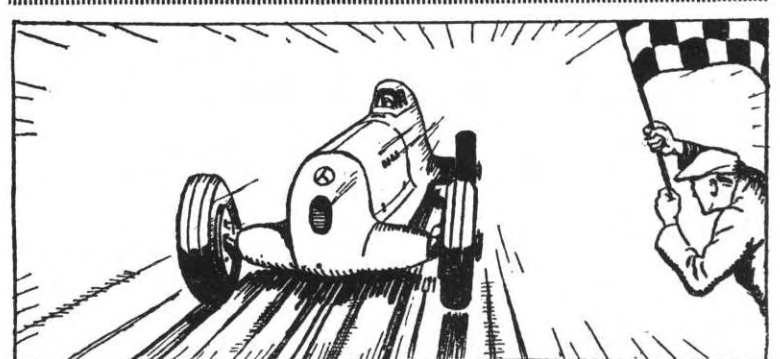
"He can't play," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! He plays all wight. I've seen him at pwactice."

"Of course, Gussy is a topping judge of a fellow's form at footer," said Digby, with heavy sarcasm.

"I twust that that is so, Dig, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "If you fellows took a pwopah intwest in my friend Hammond, you would have observed that he is a vevy good footballer."

"He hasn't been seen very much at



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practice," said Tom Merry. "If he's keen on the game, why does he keep away from it?"

"The othah wottahs are not pleased to see him there, deah boy. Hammond is a vevy sensitive chap, and he feels out of it. It is quite easy for a snobish wottah to hurt a chap's feelings."

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

"Hammond has told me that he played wegularly evewy Saturday aftahnoon for the Bethnal Gween Wamblahs, deah boy."

"I wonder what kind of footer they played?" said Manners, with a sniff.

"Give him a chance, Tom Mewwy," urged D'Arcy. "Anyway, you've got to shove somebody in, and you have only wank outsiders to choose ffrom now."

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

"Wats! I tell you he's a jolly good playah. He's vevy fast, too, and he's got a strong shot. Shall I tell Hammond you want him, Tom Mewwy?"

"Well, what do you chaps say?" asked Tom Merry, looking round at the other fellows.

"Might give him a chance if he can play," said Digby. "You haven't much to choose from, anyway. He couldn't be any worse than Mellish, for instance, if you played him, or Skimpole."

"That's quite so. Nearly everybody who's any good is out," said Tom. "Go and walk your friend in here, Gussy, and we'll talk to him like a family of Dutch uncles."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus joyfully.

And he rushed off in search of his Cockney chum.

CHAPTER 6.

The Cockney Scores!

HARRY HAMMOND came into the Common-room, where the footballers were discussing the sad state of affairs, with Arthur Augustus' arm linked in his as usual.

Hammond was looking a little excited. Many times had he looked on while the St. Jim's juniors were playing, and longed to make one of them. Even at practice he was not wanted. Fellows like Levison, Croke, and Mellish drove him away by their looks and remarks.

Much as he liked football, and well as he played it, Hammond had made up his mind to give up the game while he was at St. Jim's, and to keep clear even of practice, to avoid the scornful looks and sneers of the snobs of the school.

And so the message brought by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came to him as a surprise and a joy.

His eyes were gleaming, and his rugged face looked almost handsome as he came in, so changed was his expression.

"You want me, Merry?" he asked. "Gussy says—"

Tom Merry eyed him doubtfully. He was pretty well built, and he certainly was very strong, as he had proved by the terrible force with which he delivered the famous Bethnal Green left. He was sharp and keen as a razor, and very quick and active upon his feet.

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He looked like a fellow who could play if he knew how.

Tom Merry had not seen him play, so he was dubious. Figgins & Co. were at the top of their form. And the School House junior eleven that afternoon was ragged enough, without risking a totally untried player in its ranks.

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

"Yes. You can play footer?"

"Can a duck swim?" was Hammond's counter-question.

"Oh, then you're a giddy footballer—eh?"

"Wot-o!"

"Played a lot?" asked Jack Blake.

"Every chance I ever got," said Hammond.

"Well, that sounds better," said Tom Merry approvingly. "Of course, you wouldn't be up to Public school form, but if you do your best—"

Hammond chuckled involuntarily.

"What are you cackling at?" Tom Merry demanded.

"I reckon I'm up to your form 'ere, that's all. We've got blokes who plays in Bethnal Green wot could make rings round some of yer!"

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

"Right enuff!" said Hammond. "You'll see!"

"Plenty of gas, whether there's any footer or not," remarked Blake.

Hammond reddened.

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

Tom Merry laughed.

"Quite so," he said. "I beg your pardon, Hammond. We get into a way of looking on ourselves as the salt of the earth, you know. Only one of our little ways!"

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

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

"Like a bird."

"Where do you usually play?"

"Forward—inside or outside, jest as you like."

"Then I'll shove you in as outside-right," said Tom Merry. "That suit you?"

"Right-ho! I'm your man!"

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

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

He found the cad of the Fourth chatting with Croke and Mellish outside the tuckshop.

The three of them regarded Tom Merry with a far from loving gaze as he came up. But the captain of the Shell took no notice of their looks.

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

Levison looked astonished.

"I! You want me?"

"Yes."

"Somebody else crocked?" asked Levison, with a sneer.

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

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

"You're not in tip-top condition, certainly," said Tom Merry, eyeing him. "But you are clever enough, and you can play a good game when you choose. I'll put you in."

"Right-ho!"

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

It was a distinction worth gaining.

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

"Hammond will be down in a minute, deah boy," he remarked. "We're weady. Is Levison playin'?"

"Yes."

"Bettah wun in and get changed, Levison."

"Hold on!" said Levison, with a glitter in his eyes, speaking loudly as several fellows came along to join Tom Merry. "Did you say that Hammond is playing?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is that the fact, Tom Merry?"

"Haven't you heard Gussy say so?" demanded Tom Merry sharply.

"You are playing an East Ender in the House team?"

"Yes."

"Then I won't play," said Levison loftily. "I decline to play in the same team as that horrid outsider!"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed.

"Clear out, then!" he said tersely. "We don't want you!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus, his eyes flashing. "Cleah out, you wank outsider! And if you speak disrespectfully of my friend Hammond again, I'll knock you down, bai Jove!"

Levison walked away, with a sneer on his lips.

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

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

"I wouldn't play Levison now on any terms, not even if we had to play a man short," said Tom Merry promptly. "And it won't be so bad as that. I'll find somebody!"

Roland Ray of the Fourth was discovered after some search, to make up the team. He was glad enough to find himself there, as a matter of fact. The eleven being complete, Tom Merry & Co. made their way down to the footer ground.

Figgins and his men were already on Little Side, punting a ball about.

The School House team, owing to the series of misfortunes that had befallen them, were late.

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

"Been making changes in the team—eh?" said Kerr.

"Yes; we've had bad luck," said Tom Merry. "But we've raised a team to beat you, Figgy. We're ready now; sorry we're late."

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

It fell to the School House to kick off, and the sides lined up.

Fatty Wynn of the Fourth rolled into goal on the New House side. Fatty Wynn was a goalkeeper of great renown, and he was in great form today.

Figgins & Co. looked rather curiously at Hammond. They had little to do with the Hatter, as the fellows called him, as he was not in their House; but they heard a great deal about him, and they were rather surprised to see him in the House team. They did not think that he was likely to prove dangerous, however.

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

With some of Tom Merry's best men out of the team, the defence was not so good as usual, and the opposing forwards advanced right up to goal, and Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior, was called upon to save again and again.

But the Canadian defended splendidly, and the ball did not find the net. Kangaroo received it from him, and cleared at last, sending the leather out to mid-field with a tremendous kick.

The New House fellows fell back at once; but the School House forwards had a chance now, and one of them was upon the ball like a lightning flash.

There was a shout as the outside-right was seen with the ball, speeding down the touchline at a pace that left the New House fellows standing.

"Hammond!" gasped Tom Merry. "Bwavo!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

The forwards rushed on, ready to take a pass. The New House defence had fallen back to stop Hammond; but the halves were nowhere, and he beat the left-back cleverly. He gave a glance to centre; but Tom Merry was not up enough to take a pass, and Ray was far behind. There was nothing for him to do but to rush in and shoot, or miss the chance, and he decided at once.

He came down on the goal like lightning, and Fatty Wynn was ready to receive him; but he was not quite ready for a ball that passed him like a lightning flash.

"Thud!"
"Oh, my Aunt Jemima!" ejaculated Fatty Wynn.

There was a gasp from all the players:

"Goal!"
And then a shout:
"Bravo, Cockney!"

CHAPTER 7.

Something Like a Footballer!

TOM MERRY clapped Hammond on the shoulder enthusiastically.

"Ripping!" he exclaimed. "You bouncer, why didn't you tell us you were a giddy-International in disguise?"

"Yaas, wathah! Oh, good man!" Hammond grinned breathlessly.

"I 'ad luck," he said.
"Yes, that was a blessed fluke, wasn't it?" remarked Fatty Wynn, as he tossed the ball out.

"There's going to be some more flukes like that!" grinned Tom Merry. And he looked very elated as he walked back to the centre.

In spite of the fact that they were playing a mixed team, the School House had scored a goal in the first ten minutes of the match. And Hammond had done it—Hammond, the Cockney from Bethnal Green!

Tom Merry had doubted whether he was up to Public school form; but his eyes had been opened now. He had to acknowledge that there were very few junior players in the School House, or at St. Jim's, who could put on a pace like Hammond's, or shoot with such deadly accuracy.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was simply chirruping with joy.

His Cockney chum had not shown up to advantage at tea in the vicarage; there was no doubt about that; but he was more at home on the footer field, and he was likely to prove a credit to his House so far as the great winter game was concerned.

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

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

Hammond was not likely to have such a chance again, if Figgins & Co. could help it; but there was the first goal, at all events.

The game went on keenly, and Hammond showed no falling off in his form, though such a chance did not come his way again. He was like lightning on the ball when it came his way, and his pace was wonderful. His passing was as quick and accurate as his shooting for goal.

The news that a player of remarkable keenness was playing for the School House drew a good many spectators round the field, and there were many amazed remarks as the Cockney was watched at play.

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

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

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

"My hat, that chap can play!" Mellish remarked, noting the scowl on Levison's face, and having an amiable desire to rub it in. "They won't miss you, after all, Levison!"

"Beastly rot to play that outsider!" said Levison.

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

"Oh, rot! He'll crack up soon!"
"He doesn't look like cracking up," said Mellish, with a malicious grin. "My word, what a pace! Look at him now—just greased lightning!"

"And look at that pass!" said Crooke, joining Mellish in baiting Levison. "See, he's put it across to Tom Merry, and the New House chaps simply

(Continued on the next page.)



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A FRUITLESS PURSUIT.

"Happiness," said the lecturer, "is not so much the catching of something as the pursuit of that something, and—"

"Then, mister," came a voice, "you must have never chased the last bus on a rainy night!"

A football has been awarded to G. Vincent, 36, New Walk, Leicester.

UNREHEARSED.

Scene-shifter (taking part of sick actor): "The police 'ave found out all, me lord, and are breaking into the 'ouse."

Wicked Earl: "'Tis false, knave! 'Tis false!"

Scene-shifter (indignantly): "Orl-right, guv'nor, go an' ask the boss yer-self if yer don't believe me. 'E told me ter say it!"

A football has been awarded to T. Douns, 45, Richmond Avenue, Prestwich, Manchester.

LOST—A VOICE!

During a football match an enthusiastic fan had loudly urged the home team on to victory. Finally he became hoarse with shouting. Turning to his pal, he said:

"Lumme, Bill, I believe I've lost me voice."

"Don't worry," replied Bill, "you'll find it in my left ear'ole!"

A football has been awarded to B. Course, 356, Richmond Road, Twickenham, Middlesex.

WANTED A SAW!

Diner: "Waiter, what sort of bird is this?"

Waiter: "It's a wood pigeon, sir."

Diner: "I thought so. Get me a saw!"

A football has been awarded to F. Red-head, 54, Foston Grove, Preston Road, Hull.

BEHIND TIME.

History Master: "Glad to see you back, Jones, after your illness. But you'll have a lot to make up. How long have you been away?"

Jones: "Since William the Conqueror landed, sir!"

A football has been awarded to J. Rendell, 6, Franks Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.

NOW HE'S FOR IT!

Tough Guy: "You're the bloke what called me a 'ippopotamus last week, ain't yer?"

Timid One: "Y-yes; but you didn't seem to mind at the time."

Tough Guy: "Yeah—but I hadn't seen a 'ippo then!"

A football has been awarded to P. Campbell, 126, Lyndhurst Drive, Romford, Essex.

couldn't do anything. Merry will score!"

"Bravo!" chortled Mellish. Hammond had centred to Tom Merry, and the captain of the Shell had shot for goal; but this time Fatty Wynn saved. The ball came out from a fat fist, and Thompson of the Shell cleared, and the play went off to mid-field.

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

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

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

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

"Didn't I tell you he was a wippin' playah, Tom Mewwy, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he sucked a lemon.

Tom Merry nodded.

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

"Weally, you ass—"

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hammond grinned good-naturedly. He was happier at that moment than at any time since he had come to St. Jim's. It had surprised him to find that his good form in the footer was received with so much satisfaction by the rest of the team. And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's pleasure was a joy to him.

At last he had done something of which his friend could justly be proud, and that made their friendship a little less one-sided.

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

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

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

The score was level.

Then followed a stern tussle for the odd goal.

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

The minutes ticked away, and the struggle went on, without success to either side. Fatty Wynn was a giant in goal. And he stopped several shots that came near materialising; and at the other end Clifton Dane put up a splendid defence when he was called upon.

The game swayed up and down the field, and both goalkeepers were kept pretty busy in turn.

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

The School House were pressing home a hot attack when Fatty Wynn knocked the ball out, and Owen cleared off towards the touch-line. The ball would have gone into touch, but Hammond's eye was on the ball, and he raced for it.

Almost on the touch-line his foot interposed, and, with marvellous accuracy, the leather passed back into the centre.

Tom Merry had not expected it, but

he was ready, and he slammed it in before Fatty Wynn knew it was coming.

"Goal!"

The fellows round the ground roared out a cheer.

Tom Merry's task had been easy after that splendid pass. All the credit was due to Hammond, and Tom was the first to admit it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

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

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

And Tom Merry chuckled as he replied:

"We beat them by two to one."

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

"Hammond took the first, and I took the second from a pass he gave me. But it was really Hammond's goal."

"The Hatter!"

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

And Arthur Augustus chimed in cheerily:

"Yaas, wathah!"

CHAPTER 8.

The Sharpers!

"WELL stop here and have tea."

Arthur Augustus jumped off his bicycle outside the Hotel Royal in Wayland.

Hammond followed his example.

The two strangely assorted chums were cycling home after a long run through the country by themselves. It was just like Gussy to select the big, brand-new hotel in Wayland for tea. The charges of Mr. Pawker, the proprietor of the Hotel Royal, were high; but that did not matter to D'Arcy and Hammond, who were well provided with funds.

They handed their bicycles to the porter, and Arthur Augustus led the way through to a room overlooking the river, where there were nice little tables for tea.

"We shall be vewy comfy here," Arthur Augustus remarked. "This is a wathah nice place. I had a job here a little while ago."

Hammond opened his eyes.

"A job!" he repeated.

"Yaas. I wan away from school and

got a job here," said D'Arcy, with a grin. "I was interpwetah, you know, and it was an awful twouble twyin' to speak foweign languages to foweignahs. Somehow or othah they don't seem to speak the same kind of Fwench that we speak at St. Jim's. I don't know why."

"Somebody in the billiards-room," remarked Hammond, as the sound of the click of the ivory balls came from the adjoining apartment.

"You don't play billiards, deah boy?"

"Don't I, just!" grinned Hammond. "I 'ad a job once 'elping in a pub, an' I used to mark for 'em, an' I got a lot of practice. Shall we 'ave fifty up if there's a table?"

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

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

"The 'Ead wouldn't know," suggested Hammond.

"But we must play the game, deah boy, whethah he knows or not," said Arthur Augustus gently.

"Yes, I s'pose so," assented Hammond. "But where's the 'arm? I don't mean play for money. We don't want to do that. We could 'ave a gime, an' go 'arves in payin' for the table."

"I suppose there would be no harm," said D'Arcy thoughtfully. "Howevah, there is only one table here, and it seems to be engaged now."

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

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

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

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

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

"Done!"

"Cutts and Pwye of the Fifth," D'Arcy remarked. "They are playin' for money, the wottahs! Cutts is a good playah, I believe."

They heard the click of the balls as Cutts ran on. Their tea was nearly finished, and curiosity drew them to the door of the billiards-room, to see whether Cutts would make good his boast.

Prye was standing with a cue in his hand, looking on, and Cutts was carefully planning a difficult shot to pull off unless he potted the white. Prye gave a grunt as he saw Cutts carefully taking aim.

"If you play 'Whitechapel,' that doesn't count," he said.

Cutts laughed.

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

"Sixty."

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

"You won't do it."

"Double?"

"Yes."

"In quids?"

"Quids," said Prye.

"Right-ho!"

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

"Not dead yet," remarked Cutts.

"Fluke," said Prye.

"Rats!"

Cutts glanced round at the two juniors standing in the doorway, both of them looking on with interest. They knew

that Cutts was a reckless gambler, but they had hardly expected him to stake four pounds on the chance of getting his hundred in a single break, starting from forty-six. Cutts handled the cue like a professional, however, and he had a chance.

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

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

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

"Do you play?"

"Yes, a bit."

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

"You haven't scalped me yet!" growled Prye.

Cutts closed one eye at his companion, the eye that was away from the juniors. Prye understood, and he grinned.

The two juniors, both flush with money, had walked into the billiards-room like gulls into a trap.

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

Cutts went on with his break.

But as he paused to chalk his cue, he whispered to Prye:

"Our bet's off; better game on. Savvy?"

And Prye winked to imply that he did savvy.

That little bit of by-play quite escaped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was never on the look-out for duplicity

of any kind. But it did not escape the keen eyes of Harry Hammond, and Hammond was on his guard at once. He did not hear what was whispered, but he knew that there was some scheme on between the two rascals of the Fifth. He remembered very clearly the time when he had been inveigled into Gerald Cutts' study to play cards, and the Fifth Former had cut up rusty because he did not lose.

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

"Seventy!" said Prye. "You lose!"

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

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

Prye won the game, leaving Cutts at ninety.

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

"'Nother game, Prye?" asked Cutts. Prye shook his head.

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

"Care to play, D'Arcy?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not like Cutts, and he regarded him as a black sheep, and was disgusted with him accordingly. But he could not help

feeling a little flattered at being asked to play billiards. Gerald Cutts was a senior, and he was the arbiter of elegance in the Upper Forms at St. Jim's. Fellows in the Sixth were proud of knowing Cutts. He was undoubtedly a blackguard, but he was a very gentlemanly and distinguished blackguard. And billiards, after all, was a harmless game enough, so long as it was not accompanied by drinking, smoking, or betting.

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

"Don't be afraid. I won't corrupt your good morals," grinned Cutts.

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

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

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

"Oh, right you are!"

They began to play, Hammond looking on, and Prye lounging by the window, looking out on the river.

No one would have supposed that Prye had any personal interest in the game, unless his whisper "Halves!" had been heard. As a matter of fact, the arrangement was fully understood that Prye was to have half that Cutts succeeded in extracting from the juniors on the green table.

Arthur Augustus played a boyish game. When the balls were easy he scored, but Cutts could have walked round him if he had chosen.

But Cutts did not choose. He ran ahead of D'Arcy, and then dropped



Hammond's face went quite pale and he stopped dead as he heard what Levison and Mellish were discussing. "We all knew D'Arcy was spoofing in pretending to be friendly with Hammond," Levison was saying. "He can't stand the awful bounder. But to laugh at him behind his back—!" "It's rotten!" said Mellish.

behind, and kept steadily behind as the score ran up. He looked a little disappointed.

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

Arthur Augustus smiled with satisfaction.

"Yaas, I'm wathah a dab at billiards," he remarked.

Cutts concealed a smile.

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

The distinction of playing for money, and having a quid on the game was not very clear; but, according to Cutts, there was a difference.

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I'd wathah not, deah boy."

"If you've no money, I'll play you on tick," said Cutts.

"Wats! I have money, but—"

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

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

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

"Well, say half-a-quid," said Cutts—"just to make the game worth playing."

"It isn't the money. I'd wathah not."

Cutts yawned.

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

Arthur Augustus would have liked to explain that it was rotten bad form to play for money, but as Cutts and Prye had been playing for money his politeness restrained him. He hesitated.

It was said of old that he who hesitates is lost.

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

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

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

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

"Well, you've beaten me," he said, and he threw a pound note on the table.

"There you are!"

Arthur Augustus looked doubtfully at the note through his eyeglass.

"I'd wathah not take it, Cutts."

Cutts frowned.

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

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

"When I lose I pay. Take your pound."

Arthur Augustus reluctantly slipped the pound note into his pocket.

"Anyhow, D'Arcy's going to give you your revenge," said Prye.

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

D'Arcy had no choice about it. After winning Cutts' money he could scarcely

refuse to play a second game to give him a chance of winning.

But the second game ended like the first, D'Arcy winning even more easily. Another pound found its way into D'Arcy's pocket, and his trouble increased. He did not want Cutts' money, and he did not want to gamble, and in spite of that subtle distinction Cutts made, D'Arcy could not help feeling that it was gambling.

"I'll beat you this time," said Cutts. "You'd like to play again, deah boy?"

"Not pressed for time, are you?"

"Oh, no!"

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

"Weally, Cutts—"

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

"I wathah think you won't," said Arthur Augustus, whose opinion of his prowess on the billiards table had been greatly increased by his victories over Cutts.

"Bet you!" said Cutts.

"Oh, no!"

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

"Yaas, but—"

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

"Yaas!" said D'Arcy weakly.

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

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

"Yaas, that's all wight. It was a neah thing, though."

Arthur Augustus reproduced Cutts' two pounds, and three of his own, and handed them to the Fifth Former.

Cutts slipped them into his pocket carelessly.

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

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

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

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

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

"I won't take any start, but I'll twy you 'gain, if you like," said Arthur Augustus, resigning himself to his fate.

Cutts led steadily from the commencement this time.

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

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

"Is this for a fivah?" he faltered.

Cutts stared.

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

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

"Didn't you understand that it was for a fiver, Prye?" asked Cutts, appealing to his friend.

"Certainly!" said Prye.

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

"Wotto!" said Hammond,

"It's all wight, then," said D'Arcy.

Arthur Augustus played his hardest. He had plenty of money for a junior, but he could not very well afford to lose five pounds, after the three he had already lost. But his efforts were quite useless.

Cutts ran out easily ahead.

The swell of St. Jim's, unable to repress a somewhat dismayed look, produced his last solitary pound, and borrowed four of Hammond.

The two Fifth Formers looked curiously at Hammond. They knew that the heir of Hammond's High-class Hats had plenty of money, but they were surprised when they saw him take out a Russian-leather pocket-book and extract one fiver from a bunch of others.

The two rascals exchanged a hurried, greedy glance. They had done very well out of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, but Harry Hammond was evidently a more valuable pigeon to pluck.

"Nother game, D'Arcy?" asked Cutts.

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

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

"Bettah not, Hammond, deah boy," murmured Arthur Augustus, alarmed at the prospect of seeing Hammond's bank-notes pass over to Cutts. "Let it alone."

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

"But, weally—"

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

"All sewene."

And Hammond took a cue and chalked it with a businesslike air.

CHAPTER 9.

Too Sharp for the Sharpers!

CUTTS of the Fifth was in great spirits. He had a five-pound note and three pounds in his pocket that he had won and he felt that his afternoon in the billiards-room had turned out a most profitable one. True, he had to divide afterwards with Prye, but it meant a good thing for both of them already, and with Hammond he expected to do still better. His object was to make the junior stake recklessly upon the game.

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

"Anything you like," said Hammond. Cutts laughed.

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

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

"Suppose I say ten pounds?" grinned Cutts.

"Then I sye 'Done!'" said Hammond.

"Gammon!"

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

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

"I 'ope so."

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

"Old on!" said Hammond promptly. "D'Arcy can 'old the stakes."

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

Hammond looked at him steadily.

"I mean what I sye," he replied.

"You mean to say you can't trust me to hold the stakes?" the Fifth Former asked fiercely.

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

Cutts made a sign to his angry companion.

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

"And I can't?" demanded Prye. "Oh, bother!" said Cutts. "Here you are, D'Arcy. Take care of it."

"Yaas, wathah!"

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

Hammond was quite well aware that the Fifth Formers would not pay up if they lost. But Cutts, who was certain of winning, had no objection to D'Arcy holding the stakes. In case of a fluke, he would have preferred to place them in Prye's hands, but he did not think there was really any danger.

That the Cockney schoolboy could beat him in the game of which he was a master, Cutts did not dream for a single moment. True, he had had a lesson at the time when he and his friends had inveigled Hammond into a little game of nap, and Hammond had coolly cleaned them out. But billiards was a different matter.

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

Arthur Augustus watched that break with growing dismay.

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

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

But Hammond looked quite cool.

He chalked his cue carefully and scanned the position of the balls. Cutts had left him a difficult shot, and he fully expected the Fourth Former to muff it, and leave it to him to score again. Then Cutts intended to run out on a single break.

But Hammond did not muff it.

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

Hammond grinned.

"Not so dusty!" he remarked.

"Bai Jove, that was wippin'!" said D'Arcy. "Play up, deah boy!"

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

Hammond nodded.

"I ave!" he said simply.

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

"Yes, I s'pose I am rather an old 'and," said Hammond. "I used to mark for the gents at the Three Feathers, in the Bethnal Green Road, you see, an' they often took me on for a game. An' I got a lot o' practice when the tables wasn't bein' used."

"Oh!" said Cutts, rather blankly.

Click!

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

"Five, I reckon," said Hammond calmly.

JUST MY FUN



Monty Lowther Calling!

Hallo, everybody!

"There are two sides to every question," says Mr. Railton. Unless it is a triangle drama.

"The popularity of cycling is on the up-grade," says a writer. That's just where we get off!

Quick one: "Hallo, Jake! Haven't seen you for months! Where've you been?" asked his friend. "Oh, I've been working in a rubber factory." "How d'you mean—a rubber factory?" "Well, I've been doing a stretch!"

Kerr asks me to state that Scots are always good listeners. They don't mind "paying" attention?

Of course, we agree that the man who swallowed 10,000 nails must have had an iron constitution.

The oldest inhabitant of Rylcombe attributes his longevity to the fact that he has never done a stroke of work. Crooke seems to be trying to qualify in due course.

Smartly, now: What is the oldest chop house in London? The Tower.

"I think the referee is the most important man at a boxing match," says Figgins. Well, he is certainly the man who "counts."

Then there were the tandem cyclists who had a quarrel. "Tandem-onium"!

As the little girl said to the butcher: "I want a sheep's head, please, and will you cut it off as near the tail as possible!"

"Huwah, pile in, deah boy!"

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

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

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

"Six, bai Jove!"

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

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

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

"But it's orlright," said Hammond. "If I run out, I'll give you your revenge, Cutts, quite cheerful."

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

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

"Are there any leaders left?" asks Skimpole. The thing is, are there any right?

As a shop in Wayland advertised: "Finest Meat Pies—Our Own Make." Slight slip!

A Wayland jeweller complains of a slump. All that glitters is not sold.

"Never eat doughnuts on top of an egg," advises a doctor. They may slip off, for one thing.

Gore thinks 34,567 Christmas cards were lost in the post last year. That was the number he expected but didn't receive.

Must tell you: We played a village team which hasn't won a match, winning fairly easily. "The villagers were good losers," remarked Cussy. "Yes, but look at the practice they've had," said Blake.

"It's a funny thing," said P.-c. Crump, "but the man I'm chasing keeps just two steps ahead of me!" What about using the long arm of the law?

"What do you think of the 30 m.p.h. restriction?" asks a reader. Well, it's the limit.

Reflection: Though you can live for some time on a banana, you can't keep yourself on the skin of one for a split second!

"How can I cure a troublesome back?" writes a reader. Put him in the reserves for a week or two.

Story Dept. Now Open: "Why, the biggest miser in Scotland gives me a penny tip," grumbled the waiter. "Then shake hands with the new champion," said McTavish.

"Nother: "Where I come from they fight like lions!" said young Hobbs truculently. "Put up your hands, then!" challenged D'Arcy minor. "Oh, but I'm a long way from where I come from!" admitted Hobbs. Happy travelling, chaps!

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

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

Cutts and Prye exchanged furious looks. But they could not think of taking the stakes by force. That was impossible. The juniors would have resisted. Indeed, Hammond was keeping hold of his cue, evidently with the intention of using it as a weapon if anything of the kind was attempted. He had not forgotten his previous experience at the hands of Cutts & Co. And a row and a scuffle in the billiards-room of the Hotel Royal was not quite feasible.

"I didn't know you were a billiards-sharper, you young rotter!" Cutts growled.

"Weally, Cutts, you have no wight to imply such an expression to my friend Hammond—"

"You're a pair of sharpers, both of you!" said Cutts.

"You uttah wottah—"

Hammond chuckled.

"Let 'im run on," he said. "E sez 'e didn't know I was a sharper; but I jolly well knowed that 'e was one! 'E swindled you, D'Arcy—pretending to play rotten to lead you on!"

"Bai Jove!"

"And then I waded in to get your money back," said Hammond coolly. "I ain't goin' to keep it. You've lost eight quid—ere they are!"

"Weally, Hammond—"

"Cutts 'ave only lost two quid of 'is own money, an' he can 'ave 'em back if he likes," said Hammond, throwing two pound notes on the table. "If 'e don't like to take 'em, 'e can leave 'em for the marker!"

Cutts picked up the money.

"Get out of here!" he said, between his teeth.

"You bet! I don't enjye your kumpany!" said Hammond.

And he walked out with Arthur Augustus.

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

D'Arcy shook his head.

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

"You've got to tike it," said Hammond. "It's yours. I tell yer I only played to win your money back for you. I don't play fer money now—not since I've come to St. Jim's. I said I wouldn't—an' I won't!"

"But weally, Hammond—"

"He welsed you," Hammond explained. "He could 'ave beaten you as easily as I beat 'im, if 'e'd liked. Didn't you see 'ow well 'e pleyed when 'e was plyin' me?"

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

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

And Arthur Augustus consented at last to take his money back; and the two juniors mounted their bicycles and rode away from the Hotel Royal.

Cutts and Prye looked after them from the windows of the billiards-room with glances that were simply ferocious.

CHAPTER 10.

Levison Misses the Mark!

"IT'S rotten!" said Levison.

"Rotten!" agreed Mellish.

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

"Of course we don't!" echoed Mellish.

"But then I say so plainly," said Levison virtuously. "I don't make friends with a chap, and laugh at him behind his back. You wouldn't, either."

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

"Well," said Levison thoughtfully, "we all knew D'Arcy was spoofing in pretending to be friendly with him. He can't stand the awful bounder. Why, Hammond gets on all his nerves. But to talk about him—"

"Oh, it's rotten!" said Mellish.

Harry Hammond, as he came round the corner of the House, felt as if a dagger had been driven into his heart.

He could not help overhearing what the juniors were saying.

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

But they were talking about him and D'Arcy, he knew at once. And evidently, so it appeared to Hammond, they did not know that they were

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overheard by the junior they were discussing.

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

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

"I don't think it's playing the game," said Mellish.

"No, it jolly well isn't! Of course, Hammond must be a silly chump to think that a chap like D'Arcy could possibly chum with him, excepting to make fun of him—"

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

Levison and Mellish swung round. Both looked surprised. Levison assumed a scornful and contemptuous expression.

"Listening, eh, you Bethnal Green bounder?" he sneered.

"I couldn't 'elp 'earing wot you was syin'!" said Hammond. "You was speakin' loud enough for anybody to 'ear."

"Well, listeners never bear any good of themselves!" sniggered Mellish.

"Is it true?" asked Hammond.

"Is what true?"

"Wot you was syin'—that Master D'Arcy is only pullin' my leg, and ain't really pallin' with me at all?" said the Cockney miserably.

Levison gave a scoffing laugh.

"If you weren't a born idiot, you'd see it for yourself," he said. "What do you think a fellow like D'Arcy, a lord's son, too, can see in a rank outsider and bounder like you? Why, he shudders every time you stick your thumbs in the armpoles of your waistcoat!"

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

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

"You'd 'ave made friends with me once, if I'd 'ave lent you money," said Hammond. "An' don't you say a word agin' Master D'Arcy. Whether 'e's friendly with me or not, 'e's better'n you—you ain't better than the dust under 'is feet! You shut up!"

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

Levison chuckled.

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

"Looks like it," said the amiable Mellish.

And the two cads of the Fourth felt very satisfied with themselves.

Harry Hammond went into the School House, looking blackly depressed.

All the light had gone out of his face.

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

After all, how could a fellow like D'Arcy, fastidious to the finger-tips, feel anything like friendship for such a rank outsider as Hammond felt himself to be?

He remembered now—his perceptions sharpened by pain—that D'Arcy had sometimes had a queer look on his face when the Cockney schoolboy stood in his favourite attitude with his thumbs in his waistcoat armpoles.



Black and bitter doubts entered Hammond's mind as he understood it all now. D'Arcy had pulled with him.

It had never even occurred to Hammond that there was anything offensive in that. If such a trifle could get on the nerves of the swell of St. Jim's, how could he feel friendly towards the fellow who was full of far more serious faults of taste? It was impossible.

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

The mere thought was like a physical pain.

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

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

Arthur Augustus was greeting him as cheerily as ever. Was it possible that there was such a thing as duplicity behind that calm, friendly face?

In the early days of struggle, Hammond had only too thoroughly learned the lesson of distrust—and at St. Jim's his experience had not been much better.

Cutts had taken him up the first day he came, and Hammond had been inordinately grateful for his kindness,

"Thanks! I'm goin' to 'ave tea in my own study."

D'Arcy looked at him sharply then. "My fwriends are expectin' you," he said quietly.

"Your friends won't miss a Bethnal Green boulder very much," said Hammond bitterly. "I might put my thumbs into my waistcoat, you know."

"You wathah surpwise me, Hammond," said D'Arcy, after a pause. "I feah that somebody has been twyin' to make twouble."

Hammond was silent.

"Is that it, deah boy?"

"No."

"Then what's the mattah?"

"Nothin'!"

"Somethin' is the mattah," said D'Arcy firmly, "and I insist upon knowin' what it is. I wequest you to tell me at once, Hammond."

Hammond broke out passionately:

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

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

Arthur Augustus looked alarmed. Hammond was very near to "blubbing," and the swell of St. Jim's had a deep and inbred horror of a scene. And there were other fellows in the Hall who were glancing towards them already.

"Pwavy come with me, Hammond, deah boy," said D'Arcy very quietly; and he drew Hammond along the passage into one of the deep window recesses. "Now, deah boy, I insist upon knowin' what's the mattah. Somebody has been speakin' to you and twyin' to make mischief."

"No, they ain't!"

"But somethin' has happened?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

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

"I insist upon knowin' what you have heard!"

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

"Was it Levison?"

"E didn't say nothin' to me," said Hammond hastily.

"You don't think I'd listen to a cove like that if he run you down to me? But I appened to hear wot they was sayin', Levison and Mellish. They didn't know I was by. They said—"

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

Hammond started.

"Well, I don't know 'ow they could 'ave knowed," he said. "I was comin' round the corner of the 'Ouse, an' I 'eard them before I saw them."

"Listen to me, Hammond! Mellish once made awful twouble in the school by tellin' tales to the fellows about one anoathah. He made us all quawwel—

till we found him out. Levison is worse than Mellish. I wathah think they knew you were there, and talked for you to heah them!"

Hammond felt a load taken from his heart.

"I s'pose that's possible," he said. "And now tell me what they were sayin', deah boy."

"They—they was sayin' that you was only spoofin' me—that you make fun of me to your friends," said Hammond.

Arthur Augustus' eyes gleaned.

"And did you believe it?"

"I—I know as I'm not good enough for you," said Hammond humbly.

"You don't believe it now?"

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

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

"Wubbish! I'll go and look for Levison now, and give him a feahful thwashin'!"

Hammond caught his arm.

"Let 'im alone. 'E ain't fit for you to touch. There's no 'arm done—only, I was feelin' down in the mouth about it, that's all."

"The uttah wottah ought to be thwashed—"

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

"Vewy well, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, yielding to the point. "Pewwaps you're wight. But, wemembah, if anybody says anythin' again, you're not to believe it—at least, you are to come stwaight to me and tell me about it."

"Yes, D'Arcy!"

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

CHAPTER 11. The Schemer!

LUMLEY-LUMLEY came into the study in the Fourth Form passage a few days later, and as he did so, Levison passed his hand over a sheet before him upon the table.

Lumley-Lumley had run in suddenly for a bicycle pump he had forgotten, and Levison had not expected anyone to enter at that moment.

His sudden action caught Lumley's keen eye at once.

"Hallo! What's the little game?" he asked.

"Mind your own business!" said Levison sourly.

He slipped into his pocket the paper upon which he had been writing.

"More of your giddy forgeries?" asked Lumley-Lumley pleasantly.

"Whose hand are you practising now?"

"I'm making a poem for the 'Weekly,' if you wish to know," snarled Levison.

Lumley-Lumley laughed.

"Gammon!" he said coolly. "I guess that's too thin. Look here—"

He picked up a sheet of impot paper, upon which lines were closely written. It was part of an old imposition written out by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—a torn half-sheet, evidently rescued from some wastepaper-basket.

"Gussy's fist this time, what?" asked Lumley-Lumley, with a chuckle. "Are you going to do lines for Gussy, then?"

"Suppose I am?" said Levison savagely. "What business is it of yours? I suppose I can do D'Arcy's impot for him, if I like?"

"I didn't know you were on such

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and through the letter in the handwriting of Arthur Augustus. He was only a burden on his aristocratic friend!

until he found that Cutts had only wanted to cheat him at cards.

To all outward appearance, Cutts was as much a gentleman as D'Arcy was. If the one had proved to be false to the core, why not the other?

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

"Anythin' the mattah, deah boy?" he asked.

"No," said Hammond shortly.

"I've been lookin' for you. Tea's wedy in the study."

terms with him; but I suppose he's paying you for it, same as Cutts does," said Lumley-Lumley, a little scornfully. "Well, I guess it's one way of making pocket-money."

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

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

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

"I guess I don't care a Continental red cent what you do! I came in for my pump," said Lumley-Lumley. "But I guess you'll get bowled out some day with that game of yours of forging imposts. I'm surprised at D'Arcy letting you do it for him. But I guess it's his business, and I've no call to interfere. Go and eat coke!"

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

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

And Levison chuckled.

He drew the paper from his pocket again. It was not an impost he was writing, as Lumley-Lumley would have known if he had seen that paper.

But Levison was fated to be interrupted that afternoon.

He slipped the paper into his pocket again as the study door opened. Percy Mellish came in, holding his handkerchief to his nose. There was a stain of red on the handkerchief.

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

"Been running into a wall?" he asked.

"Ow!" groaned Mellish. "No; it was that beast Hammond!"

"Hammond again? What did he punch you for?"

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

"The Bethnal Green left!" grinned Levison.

"I think I shall leave him alone," said Mellish dolefully. "I hate the beast, but he's too tough for me!"

"And for me, when it comes to nose-punching," said Levison. "I've tried that, too, and I don't want any more of the Bethnal Green left. But there are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream!"

Mellish's eyes glittered.

"You've got a way?" he asked.

"I think so. You couldn't hit him harder than by making him quarrel with D'Arcy. I happen to have heard them talking one day, and I know how Hammond feels about that."

"But we've tried that."

"I'm going to try again, and in a way that D'Arcy won't be able to explain," said Levison, with a grin.

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"And what's the way?"

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

"Good enough," said Mellish. "I don't want to know the particulars, but I'll do anything I can to help you to make that cat sit up. The rotten East End bouncer, to punch a Public School chap's nose! The cheek of it!"

Then Mellish uttered an exclamation: "Hallo! What are you doing with D'Arcy's impost here?"

Levison caught up the tell-tale half-sheet, and threw it into the fire.

"That's finished with," he said.

Percy Mellish looked somewhat alarmed.

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

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

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

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

And Mellish "buzzed" off promptly, still holding his nose. He was hopeful for Levison's success; but he had a great dislike of being mixed up in the underhand scheme of the cad of the Fourth.

The best laid schemes go wrong sometimes, and Levison's schemes had not always been successful.

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

It was some time before he was finished.

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

CHAPTER 12.

A Bitter Blow!

SMITH MINOR and Bates were in Study No. 5 when Harry Hammond lounged in.

Both of them nodded to him quite civilly. There had been trouble in Study No. 5 when Hammond was first placed there. Smith minor and Bates did not like the Cockney being "planted" on them, as they expressed it. But their feelings had changed somewhat of late. Hammond's gallant rescue of Cousin Ethel had shown that he was the "right sort," at all events.

His good humour was unfeeling, too, and his plentiful flow of money made an abundant tea-table in Study No. 5. And then D'Arcy's steady friendship made the other fellows think better of Hammond.

If the swell of the Fourth made a pal of him, he was good enough for the rest. Upon the whole, Smith minor and Bates were inclined to tolerate the bouncer, especially as he was such a terrifically hard hitter that anything else was out of the question.

Bates still had an uncomfortable feeling in his nose when he thought of his first and only encounter with the Cockney. And though Hammond could have licked both of them with perfect ease, there was never a trace of "crowing" about him, and they had to admit that he was decent.

"Hallo!" said Smith minor, quite amiably. "How are the high-class hats getting on?"

"Still one price—three-and-nine?" asked Bates.

Hammond laughed. He did not mind being chipped about the high-class hats, all one price—three-and-nine. The elder Hammond, like a conjurer, had drawn a stream of gold from the high-class hats. And with all their little jokes about them, there were quite a number of St. Jim's fellows who would have been very glad to have a similar business in their family possession, producing a similar tremendous income.

"I'll tell you what," said Bates. "My Sunday topper is a bit off colour. It's never been the same since the day Herries' bulldog got at it. You might write to your pater and tell him your study-mates would appreciate a new high-class topper!"

"Good egg!" said Hammond. "I'll do it, if you like!"

"Not a three-and-niner, you know," said Bates.

"I'll ask dad to send you a special twenty-five-shilling topper—our special line," said Hammond.

"And one for me," said Smith minor. "I've just had a remittance of seven-and-six for a new topper, and if you can get me one from your pater we'll have a feed with the three half-crowns—what?"

"Done!" said Hammond.

"Looking for something?" asked Bates, quite genially, as the Cockney glanced round the study.

"Yes; the book D'Arcy lent me. Have you seen it?"

"What was it?"

"'Robinson Crusoe.'"

"Yes; it's on the floor," said Bates. "There, by the coal-scuttle."

"Thanks!"

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

"Don't forget the toppers," said Bates, as Hammond left the study.

"Right-ho!" said Hammond.

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

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

And the two juniors felt quite kindly towards the outsider.

Hammond strolled away with his book under his arm.

He was feeling very cheerful that afternoon.

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

Just now D'Arcy had gone out to ride over to the vicarage on his bicycle to see Cousin Ethel. He had asked Hammond to go with him, but Hammond had a terror of the vicarage

(Continued on page 18.)



Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HALLO, Chums! It has given me great pleasure during recent weeks to read your enthusiastic letters of praise for the free gifts presented in the GEM. It is quite evident that the water-squirt watch and the coloured pictures "made the bell ring"! What was equally pleasing to me, however, was the verdict of readers on our stories.

Many of them definitely state that the recent St. Jim's and Rookwood yarns are among the finest ever published in the old paper. That's praise indeed, and I fully appreciate it. The stories, after all, are the backbone of a paper, and if they are of a really high standard in quality, then that publication cannot fail to have a popular appeal. Personal recommendation, the best form of publicity, soon lifts the paper to the forefront. But only a continuance of first-class stories will keep it there.

That is why the GEM has proved so successful over twenty-nine years; that is why it has become famous all over the world. It has built up a reputation for unbeatable, clean and true-to-life school stories that no other paper can equal.

I had a letter recently from a London reader, who told me how he came to read the old paper. He had nothing to read one day, and was advised to get the GEM. His father had taken it when he was a boy, and had spent many happy hours reading its excellent stories. So this reader bought a copy, and has been buying it ever since. Not only that, his father has become a reader again! And he expressed the opinion that the stories today are better than when he read the GEM twenty years ago. That is proof enough that the GEM has not only kept up, but improved upon the high standard of quality it set many years ago.

"THEY FACED DISHONOUR!"

Disgrace for another or dishonour for themselves? Never have Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy been confronted with such a problem as this. To tell the truth will mean expulsion for Wally D'Arcy. To tell a lie will save

him. Such is the position into which a reckless escapade of Wally's leads his brother and Tom Merry. They are the only witnesses against the Third Form fag, and when they are called before the Head a vital question is put to them. Should they answer the truth or tell a lie? Read what happens at this dramatic moment—next Wednesday's powerful story of real human interest will have a big appeal for every reader.

"LOVELL'S WONDERFUL STUNT!"

Arthur Edward Lovell, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, is the man for wonderful ideas—at least, that's his own opinion. His chums have a more appropriate name for his stunts—hare-brained! But wonderful or hare-brained, his latest wheeze takes the whole giddy biscuit factory!

The Head having been robbed of his notecase, Lovell thinks he's the man to find out what the captured thief has done with it. In effect, it's a case of leave it to Lovell and everything will be all right! But will it? You will thoroughly enjoy this great story of Jimmy Silver & Co. which appears next week.

The "Jester" awards six more match footballs for the six best readers' jokes of the week, while Monty Lowther is eager again to tell you his latest wisecracks. I'll be "seeing" you in next Wednesday's GEM, chums!

A SURPRISE BITE!

He was not fishing, yet he got a bite, but it was not the sort he could boast about to his friends. It happened like this: A man in Sussex County, U.S.A., had a pet trout which lived in a stream near by his home. One day a workman, who was engaged in road repairing, felt thirsty, and decided to take a cooling drink from the stream. He put his lips to the water and started to drink. Just as he did so a dark shape glided

along the stream, and then darted suddenly to the surface. Next moment the workman jerked back his head with a yell as he felt a nip at his lip. Then he spotted the trout swimming away, and realised what had happened. Thinking probably that the man's lip was a dainty morsel of food, the fish had snapped at it. It was a bite for the man, but not the kind that anglers dream about!

THE K.O. FOR LEO!

A lion in the Herne Zoo, in Berlin, must be hanging his head in shame today, and all because he became too nosey. Leo's neighbour in the zoo was Bruin, the bear, and Leo had often eyed him through the bars as if to say: "I'd like to get to close quarters with you!" Well, it so happened that his chance came.

The door between the two cages was accidentally left open, and Leo was through it before you could say "bear." He sprang towards Bruin with hostile intentions, but soon found out he had taken on more than he could chew. The bear met Leo's attack, and began to maul him. The lion broke loose, and, undaunted, leaped in again. But as he attacked, Bruin countered his rush with a right swing. Leo caught it full on the jaw, and took the count. And it was just as well for him that keepers quickly came to his rescue. At any rate, Leo won't want anything more to do with a bear!

NOT SO SAFE!

A telephone directory is a queer place in which to hide money, but a poultry dealer in Chicago thought it was quite as safe as anywhere else. He was scared of bandits raiding his shop, so it was his practice to hide the takings in the telephone book. The time came when the old directories were being changed for new ones.

A man entered the shop, took the old directory and put down a new one. The poultry dealer was too busy to notice the exchange at the time, but later he discovered that the old telephone book had gone—and with it his day's takings! Off he went in haste to the police station, but it was too late. The directories, he was told, were all packed up on the train, ready to be conveyed to the pulp mills!

There were 25,000 of them, so what chance had he of finding his money? In any case, there wasn't time. So the poultry dealer gave it up as a bad job. But it will be a long time before he hides his money in a telephone book again!

TAILPIECE.

Tramp: "Can you spare me a piece of cake, ma'am? I ain't eaten for days."

Lady: "But wouldn't a piece of bread do?"

Tramp: "You see, ma'am, it's me birthday to-day!"

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS COUPON

8-2-36



A free feature which brings together readers all over the world for the purpose of exchanging topics of interest to each other. If you want a pen pal, post your notice, together with the coupon on this page, to the address given above.

Miss Cynthia Ellis, Conservative Club, Holmfirth, Yorks; girl correspondents; age 14-16; overseas; sports, French.

Reginald Arnsworth, Union of British Youth, 40, Earl's Court Square, London, S.W.5; more members wanted.

Ralph McGhee, 48, Princess Road, Moss Side, Manchester 14; age 9-12; sports, stamps, cigarette cards; British Empire.

Harold Davies, 68, Downhills Park Road, Tottenham, London, N.17; age 18-20.

Bernard Altman, 17, Austin Crescent, Toronto, 10, Ontario, Canada; age 18-20; post-cards, tram-tickets, sports.

Miss Beryl Gibson, Highcliffe, 8, Grange Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham; girl correspondents; a Guide in S. Africa; age 14-16.

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since his last visit there, and he excused himself on the ground that he wanted to read "Robinson Crusoe."

At the end of the Fourth Form passage in the winter term there was always a fire in the huge, old-fashioned grate, and it was a very comfortable corner to sit in with a book and read.

Most of the fellows were out of doors, and Hammond had that comfortable corner all to himself. He stirred the fire, and threw a fresh log on it, and settled himself down on the old oaken settee, polished by the trousers of generations of schoolboys.

He opened his book and settled down for an enjoyable read.

He had left a book-mark at the point he had reached in the book, and he started on from that point. He turned the leaves steadily, reading on till he came to a place where a sheet of paper had been placed in the book.

Apparently it was a torn fragment of an old letter, placed there as a book-mark by one of the fellows in Study No. 6.

He glanced at it rather carelessly. It was a half-sheet of notepaper, written upon apparently a portion of a letter which had not, after all, been sent. It was in the delicate caligraphy of Arthur Augustus. Hammond knew the hand of the swell of St. Jim's well enough.

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

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

Hammond's expression changed.

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

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

Who was there at St. Jim's to whom that description could possibly refer, but Harry Hammond?

Hammond knew that he ought not to read on. It was only a fragment of a letter, thrown carelessly away, but it was not intended for his eyes.

But he could not help it.

At the sight of those words, in the handwriting he knew so well, his blackest, bitterest doubts had returned. He remembered the talk he had heard between Levison and Mellish. He had been satisfied at the time that they had planned for him to overhear them. But—but was he mistaken in that, after all?

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

Cutts had turned out like that. Why not D'Arcy?

Hammond read all that was written upon the paper. It began and ended abruptly, as if continued from an earlier

sheet, and finished upon another that was lacking.

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

There it ended.

That was all. But it was enough.

Hammond understood it all.

It was, after all, only because he felt that he was bound to be grateful to the fellow who had saved his cousin's life, that D'Arcy was friendly to the "Bethnal Green bounder." That was like Gussy, to sacrifice himself on the altar of gratitude. And all the time that he palled with Hammond, his fastidious nerves were racked by the outsider's errors of speech and manners. How could it be otherwise? Considering his training, how could he stand Hammond? And his patience was giving way.

The wretched Cockney was a burden upon him, and he did not know how he could stand it any longer.

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

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

D'Arcy, of course, had not known that one of his study-mates had been using such a book-mark when he thoughtlessly lent the volume to Hammond.

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

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

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

D'Arcy did not want him or his friendship.

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

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

Hammond sat with the fragment of paper in his hand, with a look of utter dejection on his face.

It was the finish.

He felt inclined to go to D'Arcy—to reproach him—to ask him why he could not have spoken out plainly, instead of deceiving him, and concealing his distaste under an appearance of politeness and cordiality. But what was the use? After hearing the talk of Levison and Mellish, he had spoken to D'Arcy, and the swell of the Fourth had smoothed matters over. Doubtless he was sorry for the rank outsider; he had a kind heart, and he did not want to hurt Hammond's feelings. He was a fine fellow, after all—not so bad as Cutts. But his friendship was a delusion and a snare, just as Cutts' had been.

Hammond groaned under his breath.

It was all over now.

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

The book had fallen to the floor. Hammond stood up wearily; he was not inclined to read now. He seemed to have grown old, with heavy troubles upon his young shoulders. The sun had been blotted out for him. His friendship with D'Arcy had made so much difference to him. The fellow he admired most of all in St. Jim's.

But now it was as if the ground had been cut away from under his feet.

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

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

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

CHAPTER 13.

A Broken Friendship!

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

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

"Gettin' on with 'Wobinson Cwusoe'—what?" asked Arthur Augustus cheerily. "How is Man Fwiday gettin' on, old chap?"

The same cordial manners and cordial voice, contrasting strangely with the letter crumpled up in Hammond's pocket!

A sense of disgust and dislike surged up in Hammond's breast.

What was that false friendship worth—what was the value of gentle manners covering a false and fickle heart? Why should he be so humble about himself? He lacked D'Arcy's polish, but he had a truer heart and a

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manlier nature; he would never have acted as D'Arcy had acted!

He raised his head, and his eyes gleamed.

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

"Finished it, deah boy?"

"No."

"Don't you want to?"

"No."

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

"Somethin' wong, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy.

"No."

"Levison been sayin' things?"

"No."

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

Hammond was silent.

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

"Nothin'."

"Well, if nothin's the mattah, that's all wight," said D'Arcy amicably.

"Aren't you goin' to finish weadin' 'Wobinson Cwusoc'?"

"No."

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

"Yes, I could say 'eaps of things," said Hammond—"I could say 'eaps and 'eaps! But I ain't goin' to! I only got wot I deserved."

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

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

"Indeed!"

"I ain't good enough for you, you know," said Hammond, "an', to come to the facts, you ain't good enough for me! Understand that?"

D'Arcy reddened.

"I have nevah considahed that you were not good enough for me, Hammond. And I decidedly wefuse to admit that I am not good enough for you! I wegard myself as bein' good enough for anybody in this coll. If you have any faults to find with me, I wuquest that you will state them."

"I don't like liars!" said Hammond deliberately.

D'Arcy stood very still.

"I don't like 'umbugs!" said Hammond. "I don't like gammon!"

"Hammond!"

"I pulled your cousin out of the river," said Hammond. "That wasn't any great shakes. A bloke in the Bethnal Green Road would 'ave gone in for 'er—they wouldn't 'ave stood by to see a young lidy drowned. P'raps the fellows at St. Jim's would, an' that's w'y you make so much fuss of it. It wouldn't be thought so bloomin' much of where I come from!"

"P'raps you young gentlemen 'ud 'ave stood by an' watched 'er go under. I shouldn't be surprised. But I didn't see nothin' in it to make a song about. An' I don't want you to put up with me 'cause of that! See?"

"You have wovwied me considwably on th's mattah before, Hammond. It is wathah unpleasant to have to be always sweawin' fwriendship. It is bad form. Fellows can be great fwinds, but they nevah talk about it. That kind of thing isn't done."

"You see, I don't know your ways 'ere," said Hammond bitterly. "Where I come from, a chap 'as a pal, an' knows 'e can rely on 'im. 'Ere it's different. A fellow is all right to your face, and talks about you be'ind your back. Wot do you want to pretend for? You don't want any of my money—I know you ain't that sort. You're better'n Cutts, anyway. Why do you keep it up with a bloke wot grates on your nerves?"

"I have nevah said that you gwate on my nerves, Hammond."

"That isn't true!"

"What?"

"I know I don't speak good English," said Hammond, with bitter sarcasm. "I'm only a 'orrible outsider, an' I can't speak properly. But I 'oped as my meanin' was plain, if I can't pronounce my 'h's'!"

Arthur Augustus' lips set hard.

"You accused me of speakin' untwuthfully, Hammond!"

"Got that at last?" said Hammond.

"Do you mean it?"

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

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

"I've a good mind to give you a feahful thwashin'!" said Arthur Augustus, breathing hard. "But I feel sure somebody has been makin' mischief."

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

"I nevah said so."

"You did!"

"Somebody has told you so?"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"I do know," said Hammond.

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

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

But his hand unclosed again.

What was the use?

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

"You are mistaken, Hammond," said D'Arcy closely, "or you have been taken in. I give you a chance to take back what you have said. Othahwise, it will be impos for me evah to speak to you again!"

"I don't want you to!"

"Vewy well. That's enough."

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

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

CHAPTER 14.

Downhearted!

TOM MERRY opened his eyes wide.

It was morning, and the St. Jim's fellows were going into the Form-room.

The Shell and the Fourth came along the passage in a crowd, to separate into their respective rooms, and the Terrible Three stopped for a few moments to chat to Blake & Co.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sauntered down the passage as Harry Hammond came from the opposite direction.

They did not speak.

Neither did they look at one another.

Arthur Augustus' eyes turned on a stony, unseeing stare, and Hammond, less accustomed to conceal his feelings, averted his face, and walked into the Form-room.

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

Little tiffs and disputes between friendly fellows were not uncommon, of course, and naturally attracted little attention, as a rule. But the

(Continued on the next page.)

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friendship between Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Cockney had excited so much comment, and so many fellows speculated as to how long it would last, that their breaking off was a matter of general interest.

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

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

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

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

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

"Did you address me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did!" growled Levison.

"Then pway do not do so again!"

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

Gore of the Shell had no better luck with Hammond when he addressed his curious inquiries in that direction.

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

"Do you?" said Hammond.

"Yes. Have you quarrelled?"

"Find out!"

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

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

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

Hammond's eyes gleamed.

"Don't say a word agin D'Arcy to me, Gore, or you'll get a wipe across the dial!" he said savagely.

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

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

"What's wrong?" he demanded.

"Nothin'."

"Rats!" said Tom.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"You've quarrelled with Hammond?"

"We are no longah on speakin' terms," said Arthur Augustus loftily. "Pway don't intahfere in the mattah, deah boy."

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

"I have not dwopped him."

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

"I don't mean to say anythin'."

"Now, don't mount the high horse, Gussy," said Tom Merry imploringly.

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"Hammond is looking awfully down in the mouth. What have you done it for?"

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

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" said Tom incredulously.

"He has accused me of speakin' untruthfully."

"My hat!"

"For that weason it is impos for me to wegard him as a fwiend. I was gweatly tempted to give him a thwashin', but I wefwained. But it is quite impos to speak to him again."

"Did he say so?"

"Yaas."

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

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

"Cousin Ethel?" repeated D'Arcy.

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

"Of course I can't!"

"Ethel will ask after him."

Arthur Augustus looked worried.

"Yaas, I suppose so," he assented.

"It's wathah wotten. Ethel is vewy gwateful to the boundah for pullin' her out of the wivah, and she will be distwessed to know that we are no longah fwiends. But I can't help it. It is uttaly impos for me to have anythin' more to do with him. I am sowwy, but there it is, you know."

And Arthur Augustus went into the Form-room.

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

Arthur Augustus maintained an aristocratic calm, but Hammond was visibly distressed.

He was not an adept at concealing his feelings. His manners, in fact, lacked the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere. He was utterly miserable, and he could not make a secret of it, even though he noted the satisfaction which it afforded to Levison and a few others.

Mellish and Levison were distinctly pleased. The obnoxious Cockney had lost his only chum, and was put in his place at last. Fellows who had been civil to him because he was Gussy's friend would not take much trouble about him now. And if he continued to look as he looked at present, his woe-begone face would become a standing joke in the House. Levison, as he sat in his place, amused himself with drawing a distressed face, with exaggerated tears rolling down the cheeks, upon the page of his exercise book.

The fellows who saw it grinned and chuckled. Levison was clever at drawing, as at nearly everything else, and he hit off Hammond's likeness wonderfully, but with an exaggeration that made it comic.

The chuckles of the fellows near Levison drew Mr. Lathom's attention at

last, and he cast a severe look in Levison's direction.

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

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

"Then what is the cause of all that unseemly merriment in the Form-room?" Mr. Lathom demanded severely.

He came over towards Levison.

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

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

"What does this mean?" he asked.

"This is a very clever likeness. You would be a credit to your class, Levison, if you were not so incorrigibly idle and mischievous."

"Thank you, sir!" said Levison demurely.

"You turn your gifts to bad ends, Levison. This is a caricature of one of your Form-fellows."

"Oh, no, sir! Only a likeness."

"You have depicted Hammond crying."

"Yes, sir. He's rather given to blubbing, you know," said Levison calmly. "It's quite a joke in the Form, sir. That's why I've drawn him like that—out of sheer kindness, sir, as a hint to him."

Hammond turned a flaming face towards Levison.

"It's a lie!" he blurted out.

"Hammond!" said Mr. Lathom severely.

"It's a dirty lie!" shouted Hammond, quite forgetting where he was. "I ain't never blubbed, and I wouldn't go for to do it, 'E's a liar!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Blake.

"Now for the fireworks!"

"Hammond, that is not language to use in the presence of your Form-master," said Mr. Lathom sternly. "You must control yourself."

"Oh, I aip't got no manners," said Hammond bitterly. "I'm only an East End bounder, sir. But I don't tell lies like the young gentlemen 'ere, that's one thing."

"I shall punish you if you say another word, Hammond."

"I don't care. Arter wot I've 'ad, a little more don't matter," said Hammond. "I don't care if you cane me!"

Mr. Lathom looked at him sharply. He was greatly inclined to cane the boy, taking him at his word. But Mr. Lathom was a kind-hearted gentleman, and he could see the lines of pain and distress deeply graven in the lad's face, and his heart melted.

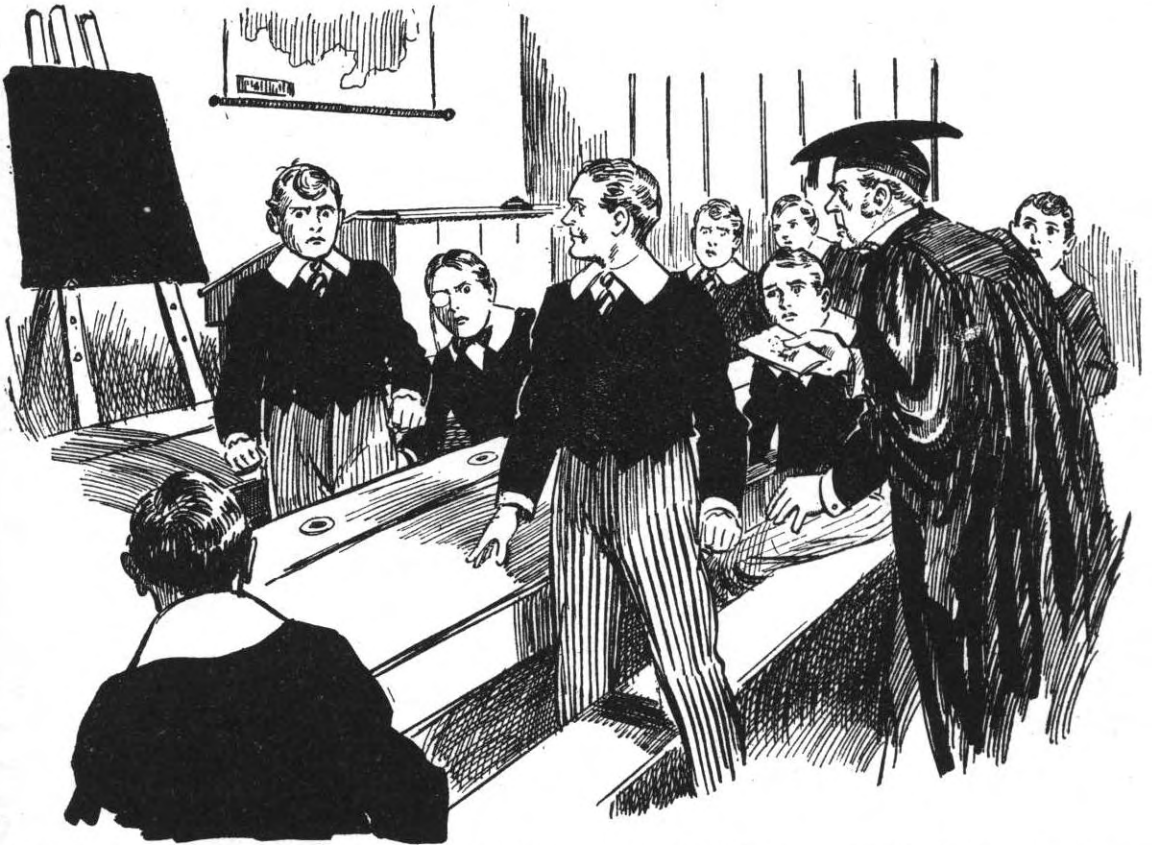
"I shall not cane you, Hammond," he said. "You will take a hundred lines, and please do not say any more. The Form-room is no place for such outbursts. As for you, Levison, you will be detained two hours after lessons for making this caricature in class. You should be ashamed of yourself."

"I'm sure I meant it kindly, sir," said Levison.

"I cannot quite believe that, Levison. Take it and throw it into the fire at once."

"Very well, sir."

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



"You have depicted Hammond crying," said Mr. Lathom. "Yes, sir," said Levison calmly. "He's rather given to blubbing!" "That's a dirty lie!" shouted Hammond, quite forgetting where he was. "I ain't never blubbed, and I wouldn't go for to do it. 'E's a liar!"

When lessons were over, and the Fourth Formers streamed out, there was no chum to join the Cockney in the passage.

Arthur Augustus walked away with a stony face, and Hammond cast a curious, pathetic glance after him. Then he walked away by himself.

CHAPTER 15.

Cousin Ethel Chips In!

"COMING out for a run, kid?" asked Lumley-Lumley kindly, when the Fourth came out after last lesson.

Hammond shook his head. He understood that Lumley-Lumley meant to be kind; but he did not want kindness just then.

"I got lines to do," he said dully, Lumley-Lumley laughed cheerily.

"That's all right, get Levison to do 'em," he said. "Levison will do them for a couple of bob a hundred—he does them for Cutts and lots of fellows."

Hammond shook his head and walked away. He went to his study—he wanted to be alone.

He was utterly wretched, and he was glad that Smith minor and Bates had gone out for a spin on their cycles, and left him the study for himself.

He began doing his lines wearily enough.

Lumley-Lumley looked into Study No. 6, where preparations for tea were going on on a rather unusual scale. Cousin Ethel was coming to tea, and half a dozen juniors were busy in making the study look nice and tidy. Tom

Merry had brought several bunches of flowers in, and they looked quite artistic, stuck in jam-jars on the mantelpiece and the shelf.

Lowther had kindly raided several studies for crockeryware, and Manners was commanding chairs on all sides. Blake was busy making the grate look as if it were not a receptacle for all kinds of refuse, and Digby was toiling to remove several tell-tale spots from the tablecloth. Arthur Augustus was superintending the arrangements through his famous monocle, but not looking so happy as usual.

"Pretty busy—eh?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Yaas. You can lend a hand if you like, deah boy."

"I guess I'm going out. I've tried to take Hammond out, but he's got the blues. What have you been doing to him, Gussy, your rascal?"

"Weally, Lumley—"

"He doesn't want my company," grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I've done my best. But I don't like to see him down in the mouth like that. He isn't a bad sort."

"If you fellows can finish this, I'll get my lines done," said Arthur Augustus. "I've got to hand them in to Mr. Lathom before tea."

"More lines?" said Lumley-Lumley. "You should bring your impot to my study. I've just advised Hammond to, but he won't."

"If you'd like to do them, deah boy—"

"Oh, I wouldn't," said Lumley-Lumley promptly. "Levison will. He does them at two bob a hundred—but

you know that as well as I do, as he does yours."

D'Arcy looked at him.

"I stwongly disapprove of that wotten twick of Levison's, and I should certainly not let him do my lines," he said. "It is all vewy well helpin' a chap with his lines out of fwiendship, but to imitate anothah fellow's hand as a practice is wotten."

"Well, I like that from you," said Lumley-Lumley. "Only yesterday Levison was doing an impot for you."

"Wats!"

"Look here," said Lumley-Lumley, a little testily, "don't gammon me. I'm not going to give you away, you ass!"

"I wepeat that Levison has not done any lines for me, and I should uttaly wefuse to allow him to do so," said D'Arcy stiffly.

"Gammon!"

"You uttah wottah!"

"Here, no rags now!" said Blake, interposing, as Arthur Augustus made a stride towards Lumley-Lumley. "You don't want a black eye to show Cousin Ethel."

"I wefuse to allow Lumley to cast doubt upon my word, Blake."

"You shut up, Lumley, old man!" urged Tom Merry. "If you want to be useful, lend a hand getting this blessed ink off the tablecloth."

"Well, what is Gussy denying plain facts for?" said Lumley-Lumley. "I tell you, I saw Levison practising his handwriting yesterday, and he said it was for an impot he was doing for Gussy."

"It was a wotten lie," said Arthur
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Augustus indignantly, "and if Levison was pwaactisin' my handw'itin', it was for some wotten twick."

Lumley-Lumley whistled.

"Oh, I never thought of that!" he confessed. "I didn't see why he should lie, as there didn't seem any reason for it. Sorry."

"It's all wight, deah boy," said D'Arcy, mollified at once. "An apology from one gentleman to anothah is enough. I'll speak to that wottah about it, though—I won't have him imitat' my hand. I wemembah a wotten twick he played on Bwooke like that."

"You can let Levison alone now," said Blake. "We've got to get ready for Cousin Ethel. Get your blessed lines done and wire in."

"Yaas, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus had his imposition finished, and taken in to Mr. Latham in time to go down to the gates and meet Cousin Ethel when she walked over from the vicarage.

Miss Cleveland was looking very sweet and graceful as she came up the road. Arthur Augustus raised his silk hat in his inimitable manner.

"All weady, deah gal," he said. "Come wight in."

Arthur Augustus escorted his fair cousin across the quadrangle under the envious eyes of a great many fellows. "Where is your friend Hammond?" asked Cousin Ethel.

D'Arcy flushed uncomfortably.

He had expected the question, but he hardly knew how to answer it.

"Ahem!" he said.

Ethel looked at him.

"You see—" stammered D'Arcy.

"Yes?"

"I twust you did not want to see Hammond, Ethel."

"Of course I want to see him," said Ethel, at once. "You don't think I have forgotten that he saved my life, do you?"

"Yaas—I mean no—but—ahem!—the fact is—"

"You have not been quarrelling with Hammond surely, Arthur," said Ethel severely. "You quarrelled once with Figgins, I remember, over nothing. Are you growing to be a quarrelsome boy?"

"Oh, weally, Ethel—"

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

"But—but I couldn't help it, Ethel."

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

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

Ethel looked very grave.

"But I'm sure it must be all a mistake."

"Pewwaps so; but he called me a liah, Ethel."

"Oh, Arthur!"

"He did, weally, Ethel."

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

"Yaas; I'm sowwy. But aftah that—"

"I am sure someone has been making

mischief. Arthur, let us go to Hammond and ask him. He will tell me."

"I'll do anythin' you like, of course," said D'Arcy reluctantly. "But, weally, as we are not on speakin' terms, I don't see how I can go to his study."

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

"Yaas; I nevah thought of that."

And, instead of going into Study No. 6, the cousins stopped at the door of Study No. 5, and Cousin Ethel knocked gently.

"Come in!"

Arthur Augustus opened the door. Hammond was there alone, and he rose from his seat at the table as they came in. His face was pale, and there was a line in his forehead.

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

Ethel held out her hand, and Hammond took it awkwardly.

"I've come here to speak to you," said Ethel.

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

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

"I'll do anythin' for yer, Miss Ethel," said Hammond, with deep feeling. "But I ain't goin' to say nothin' agin D'Arcy. I dessay 'e's been better to me than I deserve—"

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

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

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

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

"Written to me!" exclaimed Ethel, in astonishment.

"Yes. I s'pose he wrote it in another letter, arter chuckin' away the first one," said Hammond.

"Arthur has written nothing to me about you," said Ethel.

"I s'pose 'e thought better of it, then," said Hammond. "P'raps that's why he chucked the letter away."

"What letter?"

"Master D'Arcy knows."

"What letter was it, Arthur?"

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Hammond is talkin' in widdles, deah gal. I have nevah weferred to him at all in any lettah that I know of, whethah posted or not posted."

Hammond's eyes blazed.

"Ow can you stand there and say that—to Miss Cleveland, too?" he exclaimed, in a fierce heat of indignation. "I've seen the letter!"

"If you can pwoduce any lettah, Hammond, in which I have weferred to you—at all events, in a diswespectful mannah—I will admit that I am a cad and a wascal. Othahwise, I shall feel bound to give you a feahful thwashin' for makin' a lyin' statement."

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

"Yaas, deah gal—"

"Old on!" exclaimed Hammond fiercely. "Master D'Arcy says I'm lyin'! P'raps he'll deny 'is own 'and-writin', too! Look at that!"

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

Arthur Augustus picked it up quietly and smoothed it out. Cousin Ethel looked at it and gave a little cry.

"It is your writing, Arthur."

"It is my w'iting," he admitted.

"You admit you wrote it?" said Hammond.

"I nevah w'ote that!" said D'Arcy.

CHAPTER 16.

All Serene!

HAMMOND burst into a scornful laugh.

"It's your writin', but you never wrote it!" he exclaimed. "Pile it on! P'raps you'll say next as I wrote it—in your 'and!"

"No, deah boy, I shall not say that you w'ote it," said D'Arcy gently. "I have a vewy stwong suspish w'io w'ote it, howevah. I can ovahlook all the wotten things you have said, Hammond, as I can realise how that wotten letter must have hurt you if you believed that I w'ote it."

"But you did—you did!" shouted Hammond. "I s'pose there ain't a forger in this 'ere school, as well as liars and spongers and card-sharpers, is there?"

"Where did you get this letter, Hammond?"

"It was in the book you lent me—used as a bookmark, I s'pose."

"There was no bookmark in the book when I lent it to you, Hammond. I got it out of a box, where it had been for weeks. It hadn't been touched since you came to St. Jim's. The last time that book was wead you hadn't come to the school, so a bit of a lettah fewewwin' to you could not have been used as a bookmark."

"But—but—" stammered Hammond, bewildered.

"I pwesume you left the book in your study when you were not weadin' it?"

"Course I did."

"And anybody could have got at it who wanted to?"

"I s'pose so."

"Yaas, that's it. There is a wottah here who has twied to make twouble between us before, Hammond, deah boy, and it happens that he has the gift of imitat' any fellow's handw'itin'. He got Bwooks into awful twouble once by imitat' his hand, and was nearly sakked for it. And it happened that Lumley-Lumley saw him yestahday in his study, pwactisin' my handw'itin' Lumley-Lumley mentioned it to me."

"Oh!" said Hammond.

"Levison?" asked Ethel.

"Yaas, Levison."

Ethel's eyes flashed.

"The wicked boy! He must have written this, and placed it in the book for Hammond to find there."

"Yaas; he must have been eaves-dwoppin' to know what he had w'itten there. I suppose."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Hammond. "'Ow was I to guess? I'd never 'ave dreamed that there was such a chap in this 'ere school! 'Ow was I to know?"

"Of course you couldn't, deah boy, and for that weason I forgive you. I undahstand now why Levison was imitat' my handw'itin' yestahday. If you still doubt my assuance," added D'Arcy, with great dignity, "you can ask Lumley-Lumley; he saw him!"

(Continued on page 28.)

FIRST EXCITING YARN OF A GRAND NEW SERIES.

The ROOKWOOD MAN-HUNT!



Slog Poggers' only way of escape was by clambering from the window and down to the ground. But Jimmy Silver, in the quad below, spotted him and yelled, and dozens of fellows stared up. "There he is! Catch him if he comes down!" Mr. Poggers was trapped!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

On the Spot!

"THE Head!" whispered Jimmy Silver.
"Oh crumbs!" breathed Lovell.

Raby and Newcome were silent.

It was a moment when, however silvery speech might be, silence was undoubtedly golden.

The winter night had closed in on Rookwood School. The moon gleamed from a steely sky.

It was close on time for evening preparation, and, inside Rookwood, fellows were going to their studies.

Jimmy Silver & Co., rather unfortunately, were outside Rookwood. They were out of bounds after lock-up. Which was a very unfortunate time for falling in with their headmaster.

Not that the chums of the Classical Fourth had been doing any harm. They had been down to the Roke, to slide on the frozen stream under the gleam of the moon.

Tommy Dodd and his pals of the Modern Fourth had done it after lock-up, and dared the Classics to do the same. The end study never refused a challenge. So that was that!

They had dropped out, unseen, over Masters' gate; they had slid on the ice, and now they were coming back, to drop in as they had dropped out. And they had nearly reached the gate, when they spotted an imposing figure stopping at the gate and fumbling for a key. And they backed away as they recognised Dr. Chisholm, the headmaster of Rookwood.

Luckily, he was not looking round, and he had not seen them. They backed under the trees on the opposite side of the road, from which, coming up from the river, they had been about to emerge. In black shadow they waited and watched.

Their hearts were beating fast. It would have been bad enough to have been spotted out of bounds by their Form-master, Mr. Dalton, or by a prefect. But it would have been awful to have been spotted by the Big Beak himself!

"It's all right!" murmured Lovell. "He's not seen us—"

"Quiet!" hissed Jimmy.

"I tell you—"

"Shut up!" breathed Raby.

Lovell grunted and shut up.

The Head had glanced round. Did he know they were there? They hardly breathed.

Then a footfall came to their ears on the hard frosty road. Someone was

Slog Poggers thought he was on an easy thing in robbing the headmaster of Rookwood. But he was a little out in his calculations—thanks to Jimmy Silver & Co.!

coming along from Coombe—the way the headmaster had come.

The juniors breathed again. It was the footfall on the road that had caused Dr. Chisholm to glance round.

Under the branches by the roadside it was very dark. But on the open road the moon glimmered, and the juniors had a view of the man who came along from the village. He was a burly rough-looking man, with an unwashed face half hidden by straggling beard and moustache. Not the sort of man, on his looks, that anyone would have liked to meet on a dark road at a late hour.

His eyes, glinting in the moon-gleam, fixed on the schoolmaster at the gate, and he suddenly accelerated.

Dr. Chisholm threw the gate open, but instead of going in he faced the burly man.

"Stand back!" They heard their headmaster's icy voice. "What do you want?"

The burly man stopped only a few paces from him. Jimmy Silver & Co. stared across the moonlit road. It flashed into their minds at once that a footpad had followed the headmaster from the village.

"You had better take yourself off, my man!" Dr. Chisholm spoke in a calm, contemptuous tone. "I am quite aware that you have followed me—I have heard your footsteps several times."

The burly man did not speak. He stood with the moonlight glimmering on his shaggy, hairy face. He seemed to be at a loss.

No doubt he had been following that well-dressed elderly gentleman with the intention of closing in on him in some solitary spot. He was taken aback to see Dr. Chisholm at his destination—at the open gate in the school wall. That was not the spot that a footpad would have chosen for robbery with violence.

He was hesitating. And the juniors understood why Dr. Chisholm did not step in at the open gate. He did not want to turn his back on the ruffian while the man was so near.

"I have told you to go!" rapped Dr. Chisholm.

"No 'arm, guv'nor," said the man, with the shaggy face. "P'r'aps you could 'elp a cove on his way."

"If you do not go instantly I shall telephone to the police station, and you will be looked for, and taken into

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custody!" answered the headmaster of Rookwood coldly.

"Aw, chuck it, guv'nor! A quid wouldn't 'urt you," said the man. "I see you at the post office, back there, changing a note. You got 'eaps!"

"That will do! Are you going?" The man eyed him surlily and sulkily. He backed away a pace. His eyes, small and piggy, caught the gleam of the moon with an unpleasant glitter. But he seemed to have given up his designs on the headmaster of Rookwood. But it was only seeming!

With a sudden spring like a tiger he hurled himself at Dr. Chisholm, taking him off his guard. Dr. Chisholm gave a startled cry, and staggered through the gateway, in the powerful grasp of the footpad.

They disappeared from the sight of the juniors across the road, though not from their hearing.

"Old your row!" came the ruffian's surly, savage voice. "I'm 'aving that notecase of yours, if I 'ave to crack your nut to get it!"

"Help!" panted the Head, struggling.

The elderly schoolmaster was little use in such a brawny grip. He had gone over headlong, and was on the ground, the ruffian on him. But he was resisting. A thievish hand was already groping for the pocket where he had placed his notecase—under the greedy eyes that had watched him at the village post office. But Dr. Chisholm was not going to be robbed if he could help it.

He could not have helped it had not four juniors of the Classical Fourth been out of bounds—and on the spot. The school buildings were at some little distance, and at that hour no one was out of the Houses. His panting cry could not have been heard by anyone indoors.

But it was heard by the four juniors on the other side of the road. Already they were speeding across the road to the rescue.

"Back up!" panted Jimmy Silver. He dashed in at the gateway, his chums at his heels. In the darkness under the branches within he stumbled over the two struggling figures on the ground.

"Pile in!" yelled Lovell.

"Blow me pink!" gasped the footpad, astounded by that sudden rush of unseen figures. "Wot the blue blazes—"

"Help!" panted Dr. Chisholm. "He has robbed me of my notecase! Hold him!"

"Collar him!"

It was rather difficult to see one from another in the deep gloom under the trees. But the footpad, with a stolen notecase in his grasp, wrenched away and leaped for the gate. Jimmy Silver and Lovell grabbed him at the same moment, and brought him down with a bump. He struggled like a tiger.

"Shut the gate, you men!" yelled Jimmy.

The man was too strong for the juniors to hold him. But he was not going to get away if they could help it. Jimmy had him round the neck, Lovell had hold of his arm. But the man's struggles dragged them both off their feet.

Raby, groping to lend aid, stumbled over Dr. Chisholm, who was striving to rise. The Head collapsed, with Raby sprawling over him. But Newcome grabbed the gate and slammed it as he heard Jimmy's panting call.

The gate closed with a spring lock, and could only be opened with a key. It slammed, clicked, and fastened.

None too soon—for the thief, with a

desperate effort, hurled Jimmy Silver off, and dragged his arm free from Lovell. He leaped again at the gate.

Newcome, in his way, grabbed at him, and was knocked spinning by a sweep of a heavy arm. He stumbled over Raby, and went down. The next moment the footpad made a jump to catch the top of the gate, and clamber over into the road.

But Jimmy Silver & Co., breathless but full of beans, closed in on him. They grasped him as he jumped and dragged him back.

All five of them rolled over—the footpad and the four schoolboys—in a wild heap on the gravel path. Gravel flew up like spray as they struggled with a herculean effort. The footpad wrenched himself from the grasping hands, and leaped away.

Jimmy scrambled up.

"Stop him!" he yelled. "Stop thief!"

With a panting gasp, a pattering of rapid feet, the fleeing man vanished into the quad. And after him, yelling to alarm all Rookwood, dashed Jimmy Silver & Co.

A Little Liveliness!

TOMMY DODD of the Modern Fourth Form stepped to his study window in Manders' House and stared out into the quadrangle. Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle, who were getting out their books for prep, dropped those books and followed him. The three Tommies had just come up for prep—when a wild outbreak of uproar from the quad banished prep from their minds.

"Those Classical asses!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd, as he threw up the sash. "Spotted, of course!"

"Prefects after them," said Tommy Cook.

"Faith, and it's loike them!" remarked Tommy Doyle.

The three Tommies were aware that, that evening, the Fistical Four had played up to their challenge, and gone out after lock-up to slide on the ice. So their first impression was that the Fistical Four had been spotted getting back, and were being chased.

But that impression lasted only a few seconds. Prefects in chase of elusive juniors might have shouted to one another, but the juniors would not have shouted. And it was juniors who were shouting, and now that the window was open the three Tommies could hear them clearly.

"Stop him!"

"After him!"

"Stop thief!"

"Where is he?"

"That's Jimmy Silver's crowd," said Tommy Dodd, in utter wonder. "What the jolly old thump can have happened?"

"Hallo, there's Bulkeley!" exclaimed Doyle. The big door of the Head's house was open, light streaming out into the dusk of the quadrangle. The well-known voice of the captain of Rookwood shouted:

"What's up? What's that row?"

"This way, Bulkeley!" shouted back Jimmy Silver. "A footpad—"

"There he goes!" yelled Lovell. "He's robbed the Head, Bulkeley—he's got his notecase—"

Moonlight fell in pools in the quadrangle, barred by black shadows of trees and buildings. The Modern juniors at the study window spotted running figures, appearing in the patches of light, disappearing into the

shadows. They caught a glow of light from the opening door of old Mack's lodge, near the main gates. The school porter was alarmed, and coming out. From another direction the deep voice of Sergeant Kettle shouted.

"By gum!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "We're on this, you men! You heard what they said—the Head's been robbed!"

"How the dickens—" began Cook. "Never mind how—come on!" exclaimed Tommy. "Look—the Classics are out—we're not going to miss this!"

Across the quad a crowd of fellows were pouring out of the Head's House—the Classical quarters. The alarm was general now.

Tommy Dodd dashed across the study, tore open the door, and rushed to the stairs. If some footpad who had robbed the Head was scuttling about the quad, the Modern fellows were not going to be left out of the hunt. A little liveliness like that was too rare to be missed.

They rushed down the stairs. Fellows in the passages were already buzzing with excitement. The House door stood wide open, and in the doorway stood the tall, spare figure of Mr. Manders, Housemaster of the Modern side of Rookwood. He was staring out into the quad in surprise—and waving back some Modern fellows who sought to go out.

"Dodd! Cook! Doyle! Stand back at once!" snapped Mr. Manders, as the three Tommies would have passed him.

"But, sir—" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Stand back! No junior boy is to leave the House!" snapped Roger Manders. "How dare you!"

The three Tommies drew back, with deep feelings. Across the quad, Classical fellows were pouring out of their House in swarms to share in the excitement. But it was like Manders to keep his boys in. Manders was always stiff, always crusty, and always mistaking a desire to make himself unpleasant for a strict sense of duty.

Knowles, Catesby, and Frampton of the Modern Sixth passed him. As they were prefects, Mr. Manders allowed them to pass. Other fellows he angrily barred. Even Myers and Lister of the Modern Fifth were waved back. Only Sixth Form prefects were allowed out.

There was an angry and rebellious murmur behind Mr. Manders' bony back.

Mulberry of the Modern Shell shook a fist at the back of the Housemaster's head. He would have liked to land it there.

Manders, unfortunately, glanced round as he did so.

The hapless Mulberry strove, at the last moment, to turn his gesture into a less truculent one—affecting to be rubbing his nose. But it was too late! He was spotted.

"Mulberry!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" groaned the Shell man dismally.

"Go to my study, and wait for me there. I shall cane you!"

Mulberry trailed away sadly to Manders' study. Manders turned his back again, and stared into the quad—now seething with excited, shouting, running, and racing Classical fellows.

Tommy Dodd signed to his two chums, and they followed him. He led them down a back passage, where there was a window. That part of the House was absolutely deserted; everybody was gathered at the front to watch the scene in the quadrangle. Tommy switched off the passage light.

"That old ass isn't keeping us out of

this!" breathed Tommy Dodd. "We're on in this, you chaps. Come on!"

He pushed up the lower sash of the window and dropped out. Promptly after him dropped Cook and Doyle. It was a risky proceeding; perhaps, but they were not very likely to be spotted in the dark, and in the midst of an excited crowd. Anyhow, they were risking it, Manders or no Manders.

They left the window open for their return, and scrambled away through thick dark shrubberies at the side of the building. Emerging into the quadrangle, almost the first person they ran into was Jimmy Silver. Tommy Dodd grabbed him by the arm.

"What's up, Silver?"
 "Footpad—robbed the Head—just inside Masters' gate!" jerked out Jimmy. "We nearly got him!"

Jimmy rushed off again.
 "This way!" It was the voice of

ing crowd. A loud yell came from the dark archway that led from Big Quad into Little Quad. It drew the hunters in a new direction. In the darkness under the arch several running fellows stumbled over a prone form.

"Bulkeley!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, helping the captain of Rookwood to his feet.

Bulkeley gasped, and dabbed a reddened nose.

"I got hold of him, sir. He knocked me flying, and broke loose. He got back into Big Quad—"

"After him!" yelled Morny.

"This way!" roared Lovell.

There was another rush in a new direction. Bulkeley dabbed his nose with a handkerchief. Evidently there was some danger in running that desperate footpad down. But the Rookwooders gave no thought to that.

walls, with escape cut off, and more than a hundred fellows hunting him.

He had a breathing space, crouching in that dark corner—but well he knew that it was only a breathing space. He was out of the moonlight; but dozens of the fellows had electric flashlamps, flashing the light here, there, and everywhere. It was borne in upon the mind of the shaggy Mr. Poggers that the game was up.

Had Mr. Poggers foreseen all this dire trouble, he never would have bothered the headmaster of Rookwood at all. He was hard up—his last resources had been spent in support of the whisky trade. But the old gent's notecase was not worth all this.

Slog could have sworn that the road was clear when he tackled the old gent for his notecase. Nobody in sight—not a sound. Yet a whole bunch of coveys had suddenly rushed in at the



Under the amazed eyes of Jimmy Silver & Co. the man suddenly hurled himself at Dr. Chisholm. The Head gave a startled cry as he staggered back in the powerful grasp of the footpad. "Old your row!" exclaimed the ruffian. "I'll 'ave your notecase if I 'ave to crack your nut for it!"

Mornington of the Classical Fourth. "I saw him—this way!"

There was a shout and a rush. The three Tommies joined in it. It led them away from their House, and the watchful eyes of Mr. Manders in the doorway, which was all to the good.

Dr. Chisholm was standing in the moonlight, leaning on the arm of Mr. Dalton, the master of the Fourth. He was pale and gasping, and the knitting of his brows showed that he was angry. The Tommies caught his voice as they passed.

"He is certainly within the walls. One of the boys was thoughtful enough to close the gate. He ran into the quadrangle. Mack, I think, turned him back from the school gates. Pray leave me, Mr. Dalton! I require no help. Pray go and assist—"

"Certainly, sir!"

Richard Dalton sped after the shout-

They were enjoying the wild excitement of the chase. It was ever so much more enjoyable than prep.

Progress of Mr. Poggers!

"BLOW me pink!" breathed Slog Poggers.

The burly, hairy man was crouching in dark shrubberies under the shadow of a wall. He was a hard case.

Never, in all his long and lawless career as a snatcher-up of unconsidered trifles, had Mr. Poggers been in harder case.

He was breathless, tired, exhausted, in fact. He was hunted and harried—run off his legs. He had had some punches; he had stumbled and fallen a dozen times, at least; he had barged into trees in the dark. From head to foot he had a feeling of being damaged. And he was inside the school

gate and jumped on him. Who those coveys were, and where they had so suddenly sprung from, was a mystery to Slog Poggers.

It was from his slogging powers that he derived his nickname among his friends; but there had been too many of them for him to slog successfully. In fact, he would have been the sloggee, instead of the slogger, if he had not broken away and bolted for it.

Then a sort of hornet's nest had swarmed round him. He had fancied himself in the grounds of some private house—being a stranger in the neighbourhood, and quite unacquainted with Rookwood School. So it had simply amazed him to find scores of boys of all sizes pouring out after him. It dawned upon him that it must be a school that he had inadvertently barged into, and he felt that it was cruel luck.

He crouched and gasped for breath. Lights were approaching him; shouts sounded closer.

A notecase—a small but well-filled case of handsome Russia leather, stamped with a gold monogram—was grasped in his grubby hand. That was a solace, so far as it went. He still had his plunder—if he got away with it. But he realised dimly that he was not going to get away.

"He came this way, sir!" he heard a voice shout. It was Jimmy Silver addressing Mr. Dalton.

"Juniors keep back!" came Mr. Dalton's voice. "Bulkeley, Melville, Carthew, Scott, come with me!"

Slog could have groaned. They were after him. They had seen him dodge round that building.

He rose wearily from the shrubbery. The game was up; but he was going to run till he dropped, anyhow. Then he became aware of the fact that he was close by a window, and that it was open at the bottom.

Slog Poggers caught his breath. It seemed quite a miraculous chance to him. Certainly it was dangerous to enter one of the school buildings, where he would be hopelessly cornered if he was spotted. But it was a case of any port in a storm. If he could hide for a time, and steal forth later when the coast was clear—

It was that or capture, evidently. The pursuers were closing in on him, and escape was hopeless if he ran.

Finding a downstairs window open, and no light within, was an unexpected and wonderful stroke of luck. He owed it to Tommy Dodd, for it was the window by which the three 'Tommies had left Manders' House. Slog did not hesitate a moment.

He dragged himself in at the window, stood inside, slid down the sash, and secured the fastening. All was dark within; he knew that he was standing in a passage of some sort, but it was not lighted.

Lights flashed on the panes outside. Keeping well back from the window, Slog stood with pounding heart. He was invisible to the fellows outside; but in the flashing of a dozen electric torches he could see them. He could hear their voices.

Mr. Dalton stopped, on the very spot where Slog had been crouching hardly more than a minute ago.

"He was here!" exclaimed the Fourth Form master. "Look! The shrubbery has been crushed—broken!" "Someone's been here, sir!" said Bulkeley.

"Show a light! He cannot be far away! Yes, look! The shrubs have been trampled here! Follow me!"

Slog was glad to see the chase turn off from that spot. Nobody dreamed for a moment that the window had been open a minute ago. But he was rather surprised by the direction the chase was taking. If they were picking up "sign," it was not Slog's. As a matter of fact, Mr. Dalton and his companions were now following the path of the three Tommies through the shrubbery. That, of course, the Classical master and prefects did not know, any more than Slog Poggers did. Lights and voices and footsteps moved off in the direction of Big Quad. A few fellows lingered, but most of them had moved off.

"Blow me pink!" murmured Mr. Poggers, in great relief.

He was safe for the time, at least. Where he was he had not the faintest idea, except that he was in one of the

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school buildings. He had never heard of Mr. Manders or Manders' House, or, indeed, of Rookwood School at all.

He remained a few minutes to recover his breath, and to pack the Head's notecase safely away in a pocket. So far, it had remained clutched in his hand.

Then he peered about him, trying to discover where he was. At the end of the passage was a glimmer of light where it led into another. Three or four figures appeared at that end of the passage, against the glimmer, and Slog crouched back in alarm.

"What the dooce is the light out for here?" asked Towle of the Fourth. "I say, the light's out in the passage."

"Some ass turned it off!" said another voice.

Slog trembled.

He was not aware that the passage light had been turned off by a junior for his own good reasons. But he was aware that if it was switched on, it would reveal him there.

But his luck was in. A harsh voice came from someone unseen.

"Why are not you juniors at preparation? Go up to your studies at once!"

It was Mr. Manders speaking.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

The figures disappeared from Slog's view. He gasped with relief. He had a momentary glimpse of a tall, spare, angular figure passing the end of the passage. Then all was quiet again.

It had been a narrow escape. Slog realised that he could not remain where he was—someone else might come along and turn on the light. He glanced at the window by which he had entered. Lights were gleaming outside, reflected on the panes; five or six fellows were rooting through the shrubberies. There was no chance that way.

He groped along the dark passage. A glimmer of light from above caught his eyes. He was at the foot of a staircase—not the main staircase of the building, evidently—a small, back stair. But there was a light above, and it stopped him.

But the next moment he stepped quickly on to that staircase. Someone had entered the passage and switched on the light. He stepped out of sight barely in time.

It was neck or nothing now! Taking the chance of what might await him above—and ready to "slog" anyone who tried to stop him—Mr. Poggers ran swiftly up the stair.

Footsteps passed along the passage below as he did so. But he had passed a bend of the staircase, and was unseen.

But a creak of the stair behind him made his heart jump. Whoever it was that had come along the passage was coming up the stair!

Slog hurried on. With the certainty behind him of being spotted, he had to take the chance of what might be ahead.

He scuttled along a corridor, and found himself on a large landing, on which several doors opened. A shaded light burned there.

No one was in sight.

He could hear sounds from below. But he saw that he was now in the bedroom quarters of the building, whatever it was. He peered over banisters, into the well of a big staircase. He sighted the tops of several heads in the distance below, and popped back. One of those heads surmounted a tall, thin angular figure, which he had already glimpsed once. Mr. Manders was coming upstairs!

Slog gritted his teeth desperately. Slogging that bony old gent would do no good—with any number of people within call.

He backed to the nearest door, opened it softly, and stepped in. Just as softly he closed the door behind him, felt for the key, and turned it quietly in the lock.

The room in which he stood was a bed-room, dark, and evidently unoccupied. A glimmer of moonlight at the window gave him a glimpse of his surroundings.

There was a big wardrobe at one side, and Slog hurriedly calculated whether it was big enough to hide him as a last resource. But he had no time to finish that calculation, when the door-handle turned.

Slog jumped.

It was fortunate for him that he had locked that door when he entered. He had done it on the chance that that bony old gent might be coming to that very room. And that chance had materialised! For it was Mr. Manders' room—and he was coming to it!

There was a sudden, startled, and angry yelp outside the door.

Mr. Manders, naturally, expected his door to open when he turned the handle, and he naturally moved to follow the opening door as he pushed. As the door did not open, however, he was brought up suddenly, his long, sharp nose tapping on a panel.

"Wow!" came from Mr. Manders.

"Blow me pink!" breathed Slog.

"Upon my word! What is the matter with this door? It cannot be locked. Upon my word!"

The door-handle rattled and shook furiously. Mr. Manders, never very good-tempered, was extremely bad-tempered now. It was annoying to find his door somehow jammed when he was hurrying there to get his overcoat from the wardrobe—and still more annoying to tap his nose on it. He rattled, he shook, and he wrenched at the door.

"Is anything the matter, sir?"

It was the voice of Mr. Bull, the maths master, who had his rooms in Manders' House.

"Yes, certainly, Mr. Bull! My door—this door. It seems jammed in some extraordinary way! It cannot be locked—the key is inside—yet it will not open! Some trick—some prank!" The door-handle rattled again. "I require my coat. I must go to see the Head—I hear that he has been attacked by some ruffian or footpad. Mr. Bull, see if you can open this door!"

"Certainly, sir! Why—what—Good heavens!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Bull? What—?"

"Look, sir! There are muddy footmarks here—"

"Some young rascal—"

"They are not the marks of a boy's boots, sir. Look! They appear to come from the back stair—some man in muddy boots! Mr. Manders, that ruffian must have gained admittance to the House—they cannot find him anywhere outside. He must—"

"Good gracious, Mr. Bull! You really think—"

"Look, sir! Some man in extremely dirty boots—filthy, in fact! And—the marks lead to your door, sir—"

Mr. Manders let go the door-handle as if it had suddenly become red-hot.

"In my room—" he muttered.

"It would certainly appear so—"

"Good heavens! Help! Help!"

Slog Poggers groaned! The game was up now with a vengeance!

Caught!

JIMMY SILVER gave a yell.
 "There he is!"
 "Where?" panted Arthur
 Edward Lovell.
 "Look!"

Jimmy pointed upward.
 The hunt in the quad had been slackening down. Dr. Chisholm had gone into the House, very much upset and perturbed. Masters and prefects, assisted by a swarm of seniors and juniors, scoured and searched on every side; but the impression was growing that the footpad had, somehow, eluded so many hunters and escaped.

Either he was gone, or he was in hiding, and though the crowd still rooted about, it was with diminished hope. And then, suddenly, there was an outbreak of alarm from Manders' House—and the whole mob rushed in that direction.

Mr. Manders, again in the open doorway, was waving bony hands and shouting almost hysterically. Study windows were open, and fellows shouting from them.

The news spread that the fugitive footpad had somehow dodged into Manders' House—how, nobody knew, though there were three Modern juniors who thought that they could guess!

"Help, help!" Mr. Manders was shouting. "The man is here—the ruffian—the—the footpad—he is here! Help!"

Mr. Dalton rushed up.
 "Has he been seen?" he panted.
 "He is locked in a room—"

"Follow me, Bulkeley!"
 It was then that Jimmy Silver shouted—as he spotted an opening window upstairs in Manders' House—and a shaggy face peering out in the moonlight! That unshaven face, surmounted by a tattered dirty cap, could belong to no one but the hunted man—and Jimmy pointed and yelled. Dozens of fellows started up.

The man was clambering from the window.

Evidently he knew that his presence in the House was discovered, and was planning a desperate escape from the window by means of the thick ivy on the wall. But as Jimmy drew the general attention to him, he stopped and glared down at the up-staring crowd like a hunted animal.

"There he is!" went up a shout.
 "Catch him as he comes down!"
 "What-ho!"

The Rookwooders swarmed under the windows of Manders' House. Fifty fellows or more were ready to collar Mr. Poggers if he made the perilous descent. Instead of which Slog backed from the window and disappeared from sight.

"Got him cornered!" grinned Lovell.
 "Dicky Dalton will get him if he stays there. We'll bag him if he drops out."
 "What-ho!" chuckled Raby.

"He's got the Head's notecase!" said Newcombe. "He won't get away with it!"

"No jolly fear!"

Plenty of fellows were waiting for the footpad if he tried climbing down from the window. Others crowded into the House, to follow Mr. Dalton and the prefects up the stairs. Among the latter, Tommy Dodd, Cook, and Doyle crowded in, fortunately unnoticed by Mr. Manders. Something like an army marched up the stairs, to deal with the fugitive in his refuge.

Mr. Dalton thumped on the locked door of Mr. Manders' room.

"Open this door!" he called sharply.

"You are known to be here, and resistance is useless. Unlock the door!"

Slog Poggers did not heed the command.

He stood in the middle of the room, panting, like a hunted animal, the moonlight from the window glimmering on his desperate face.

He was hopelessly cornered! He had three months' hard labour to expect for his assault on the schoolmaster. But even that did not seem so bad to him as the loss of the prize that was within his grasp.

He had the headmaster's notecase—it was his for the moment! He had had no time to look into it, but he knew that it was well-filled with notes—bank-notes and currency notes. Thirty, forty, fifty pounds—perhaps more. Such a booty as had seldom, or never, fallen into his thieving hands before! And he was going to lose it again—and it seemed to him worse than the temporary loss of his liberty.

"Blow me pink!" groaned Mr. Poggers.

Knock! Knock! came at the door.

"Will you open this door?" rapped Mr. Dalton. "Otherwise it will be forced."

Slog did not trouble to reply. He gave a glare from the window—a sea of upturned faces. He gave a hunted glare round the room. He had thought of hiding in the big wardrobe, but that was futile now that it was known that he was there. He knew that it would have been futile, in any case, for he had heard the bony old gent say that he had come up for his overcoat—which, of course, would be hanging in the wardrobe. The bony old gent would have found him there!

Nevertheless, Slog stepped towards that wardrobe, and silently unlatched and opened its door.

In these thrilling moments Slog's brain, not naturally perhaps very bright, was working at double pressure.

Capture was certain now. But was there a remote chance of saving his plunder—of getting it back another time, when he came out of the "stone jug" after his "stretch"?

That was the idea in his brain now. Hiding the notecase in Mr. Manders' room was, of course, useless. He would never be able to get back there and recover it.

But Mr. Manders' mention of the overcoat had put the germ of an idea into his desperate mind.

He stared into the wardrobe. Several coats were hanging there. Among them was a large, thick, grey overcoat. Evidently that was the overcoat belonging to the "bony old gent" who had come up for it, with such unexpected results!

"Open this door!"

Slog, unheeding, groped at the big, heavy coat. It was thickly and warmly lined. His little piggy eyes gleamed. It was a chance—a good chance! He whipped a pocket-knife out, pulled out the lining of a pocket, and made a small slit.

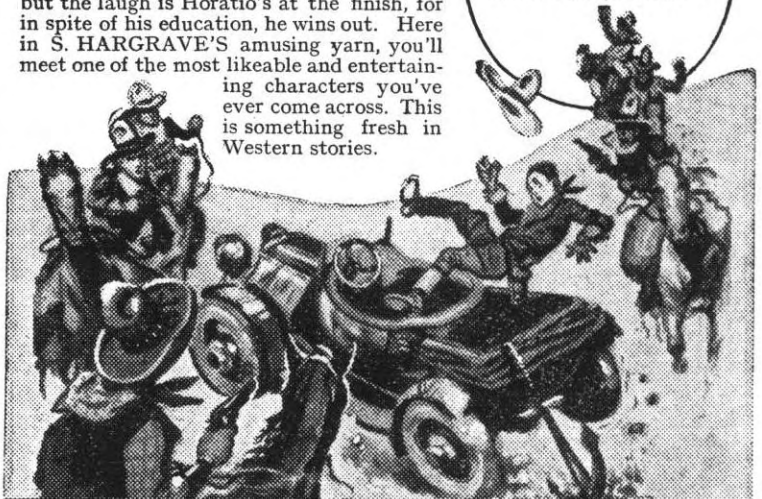
Through that slit he pushed the Head's notecase.

It slid down between the lining and the material of the coat. Its bulk was small, and the coat itself was thick and bulky. It would never be noticed there. But later on, when he was free to handle the matter again, it would be easy for Slog to watch for a bony old gent wearing that overcoat outside the school.

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That was the cunning rascal's scheme! Bang! Bang! came on the door. Somebody with a chopper in his hand was slogging at the lock!

Mr. Poggers rearranged the coat as he had found it, and softly closed the wardrobe door.

With luck, his booty was safe now, till he had an opportunity of seeking its recovery!

Bang! Bang! rang at the door. Slog Poggers crossed to the window again. He stared down at the faces staring up. But there was no escape that way. He thought for a moment, and gave up the idea.

Bang! Bang! Crash! The lock cracked; the door flew open. The light was switched on, flooding the room with illumination.

Mr. Dalton strode in. After him came Bulkeley and Neville, Classical prefects—Knowles and Catesby, Modern prefects. Outside, there was a swarm of seniors and juniors.

Slog swung round from the window with clenched hands, snarling. The man-hunt was over; he was cornered and caught.

"You had better—" began Mr. Dalton.

He got no further. The ruffian was on him with a tiger's spring. Perhaps Mr. Poggers still nourished a faint hope of slogging his way out to freedom. But in Dicky Dalton, master of the Fourth, he had to deal with a hefty young man

who was not only a Form-master, but a boxer. The prefects were ready to help, but Dicky did not need their help.

He met Slog with left and right. Mr. Poggers had done some slogging in his time, but he got some now that surprised him.

His savage blows were knocked aside as he leaped at the young master—and Dicky Dalton's right landed on his stubby chin, followed up by Dicky's left between his piggy eyes. Both landed like the kicks of a mule. Slog Poggers gasped, gurgled, and went backwards as if a tank had hit him. He landed on the floor with a terrific crash that made the furniture jump.

"Ooooh!" spluttered Slog. Mr. Dalton rubbed his knuckles. "Secure him!" he said.

It was quite easy to secure the foot-pad now. Indeed, he could not have got up without help. Bulkeley and Neville took an arm each, and lifted him. He tottered between them as they led him away.

"Take him to the Head's house," said Mr. Dalton. "He must be kept secure till a constable can be sent for to take him into custody. No doubt his plunder will be found on him. Take him away."

The prisoner was led away. A loud cheer greeted his appearance in the quad, walking dizzily between the two prefects, followed by Mr. Dalton. After them came Mr. Manders—now arrayed in a large, thick, heavy grey overcoat.

Round them marched the whole crowd of Classics, escorting them in triumph to the Head's house.

"Got him!" chuckled Arthur Edward Lovell. "Got the blighter! I say, the beak will have to let us off with a jaw, you know, after what we've done. But for us, that sportsman would have got away with his notecase. Lots of tin in it, I expect. Lucky for the Head we were out of bounds, what?"

"Let's hope the Head will see it in that light," remarked Jimmy Silver, rather doubtfully.

"Oh, bound to!" said Lovell confidently. "He will get his tin back, see? We've got the thief, and the loot's on him. We're all right!"

They had got the thief, there was no doubt about that. And the loot was not far away. But whether it would be found or not was quite another question. No one—least of all Roger Manders—suspected that it was hidden in the lining of the overcoat in which the Modern master was whisking across the quad. Mr. Manders would have been very much astonished had he known that he was carrying about with him the sum of forty-five pounds ten shillings in a Russia leather notecase belonging to his chief!

(Next week: "LOVELL'S WONDERFUL STUNT!" It was such a wonderful wheeze it landed Lovell well in the cart; Read all about it in this ripping yarn.)

THE COCKNEY TURNS UP TRUMPS!

(Continued from page 22.)

"I—I don't doubt you, D'Arcy," stammered Hammond. "Oh, the rotter! I—I never guessed—I couldn't guess—"

"But it's all cleared up now," said Ethel, with a happy smile. "I knew that there was some mistake. Arthur, you must forgive Hammond for his suspicions now; he had good reasons for them. He could not possibly know about Levison's wickedness."

Arthur Augustus nodded. "I forgive him," he said graciously. "However, I must ask for an apology for his wotten expressions used towards me!"

"I'm sorry!" said Hammond frankly. "You can kick me, if you like."

"Wats! I'm goin' to kick somebody else," said D'Arcy. "It's all wight now. I'm sowwy I was wathah wuff on you,

Hammond; but you weally made me quite watty, you know. Ethel, deah gal, tea's weady in Study No. 6!"

They left the study together, and D'Arcy opened the door of Study No. 6. There was a chorus of welcome for Ethel from Tom Merry & Co.

"Pwaj excuse nie a few minutes," said Arthur Augustus. "I've got to speak to a chap. Come on, Hammond!"

Ethel asked no questions. While Hammond and his reconciled chum were absent Ethel explained to the Co. how matters had gone, and Figgins—who was there, of course—said that it was just like Cousin Ethel, and all the other fellows agreed.

It was ten minutes later when D'Arcy came into the study with Hammond.

There was a cut on his lip, and a slight swelling upon his aristocratic nose, and one of his noble ears was perceptibly thickened. Also, his knuckles seemed to be somewhat red, from recent use.

The Co. asked no explanation, and Cousin Ethel appeared not to notice anything. But Hammond confided to the

fellows in turn, in deep whispers, that if they wanted to see a fellow who was simply knocked into a cocked hat, they need only step along the passage and glance into Levison's study.

Once more the cad of the Fourth had discovered that the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley; and he had made the additional discovery that the way of the transgressor is hard, with the further discovery that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's knuckles were very hard.

In Study No. 6 there was a joyous party.

Seldom had so merry a gathering come together in that famous apartment, and the happiest face of all was that of the Cockney schoolboy, who had turned up trumps.

(Next Wednesday: "THEY FACED DISHONOUR!"—a great yarn: telling of the sacrifice Gussy and Tom Merry were called upon to make to save Wally D'Arcy from the sack. A story of real human interest that you mustn't miss.)

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