



A NEW SERIES FEATURING ARTHUR
AUGUSTUS D'ARCY, THE SWELL OF ST. JIM'S

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH



Martin Clifford

KEEPING IN THE SWIM LANDS
D'ARCY IN THE WATER

1/6

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

Martin Clifford



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Our Cover Picture

*(Portrayed by C. H. Chapman—
the famous "Billy Bunter" artist.)*

A sudden wrench sent the punt gliding from under D'Arcy's feet, and the swell of St. Jim's found himself clinging to the pole, suspended between the heavens and the earth.

Cardew lounging in the punt, stared at him and chuckled.

"Oh, gad! Good-bye Gussy!" he called out.

"Oh cwumbs! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the bank.

"Wescue!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy on the War-path

by Martin Clifford

Rivalry between houses at St. Jim's flares up when red ink is poured copiously into the shiny topper of the immaculate Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—with colourful results!

But the Swell of St. Jim's is not the man to let ruthless raggers get away with anything, and he quickly plans a devastating counter-attack on Figgins & Co. of the New House.

But D'Arcy's most enterprising schemes do not always go off as planned—and there are many thrills and loud laughs before the indignant D'Arcy reaches the end of his war-path.

By special arrangement with Frank Richards (Martin Clifford), also creator of Billy Bunter and the Chums of Greyfriars. Other titles in this series are :

- No. 1. TOM MERRY'S SECRET.
- No. 2. TOM MERRY'S RIVAL.
- No. 3. THE MAN FROM THE PAST.
- No. 4. WHO RAGGED RAILTON?
- No. 5. SKIMPOLE'S SNAPSHOT.
- No. 6. TROUBLE FOR TRIMBLE.
- No. 7. D'ARCY IN DANGER.
- No. 8. D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH.

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1

Cornered!

GEORGE FIGGINS jumped.

He was startled.

The sound of footsteps and voices in the Fourth-Form passage, in the School House at St. Jim's, would not have startled any fellow belonging to that House. But George Figgins of the Fourth did not belong to the School House. Figgins of the Fourth was a New House man: and no New House man had any business in Study No. 6 in the New House. Or, at all events, any business that he would have cared to explain to the inhabitants of that study.

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Figgins was standing at the study table.

On the table stood a hat-box, the property of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. It was open: and the shining topper it had contained was in George Figgins's left hand. In his right hand was a bottle of red ink. And Figgins was in the very act of dripping red ink from the bottle, under the lining inside the hat. No doubt the idea was that the next time Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sported that topper, the ink would ooze through, and decorate his aristocratic features.

That, in Figgy's opinion, was a harmless and necessary jape on the rival House. His pals, Kerr and Wynn, had agreed that it was. And having ascertained that Blake and Co. to whom the study belonged, were watching Sixth-Form men playing cricket on Big Side, Figgy had slipped into the School-House, dodged up to the junior studies, and there he was in No. 6.

It had really seemed as safe as houses for the playful Figgy. Nearly everybody seemed to be out of the House in the bright summer weather—not an eye had fallen on him, and No. 6 was the second study he had visited. But now—!

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Figgins.

Footsteps in the passage! That alone would not have been so alarming: they might have passed on. But a voice floated in. The door was ajar, and the aristocratic accents of Arthur Augustus came quite distinctly to Figgins's startled ears.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, rot!" came Blake's voice. "Kildare was going jolly strong, and I wanted to watch his innings—"

"My lines for Lathom have to be handed in befoah tea, Blake—"

"Blow your lines!" came Herries' voice.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Well, we told Gussy we'd lend a hand with the lines," came Digby's voice. "He won't get through on time unless we all lend a hand."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Br-r-r-r!" grunted Blake. "What did the silly ass want to get lines from Lathom for? Sticking in a study doing lines, instead of watching old Kildare at the wicket! Br-r-r-r!"

Figgins stood quite still in the study.

He was fairly caught.

What would happen to him, if the four School House juniors found a New House man ragging in their study, was not pleasant to anticipate. Instead of a rag on the School House fellows, there was going to be a rag on George Figgins: and he was likely to resemble the mere wreck of a New House junior by the time he escaped.

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Had Blake and Co. come directly into the study, Figgins infallibly would have been caught in the very act. But to his great relief, the footsteps and voices stopped, outside the door. Arthur Augustus, at the door, had turned round to face his three comrades, and they did not immediately enter. Arthur Augustus's noble voice ran on, in tones of considerable dignity.

"Pway do not bothah about my lines, you fellows, if you would wathah watch the cwicket! Wun away and leave me to it."

Figgins breathed again.

There was a chance!

Swiftly, he jammed the topper back into the hat-box and closed it. He jammed the hat-box back on the shelf from which he had taken it. And he jammed himself behind the high back of the armchair in the corner of the study. It was all the work of a few seconds. With a record ragging ahead if the chums of Study No. 6 found him there, George Figgins did not lose time.

"Don't be an ass, Gussy!" came back Blake's voice, outside the study.

"I wepeat, Blake, if you would wathah watch the cwicket—"

"Of course I would, fathead."

"Then pway wun away and watch it, and I will do my lines and chance it with Lathom!"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Oh, barge on!" hooted Blake. "We've come in to help you with your lines. We'd rather watch the cricket, but we're going to help you with your silly lines. Are you going into that study, or are you going to stand there till tea-time looking like a stuffed dummy?"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Have we come in to do the lines, or to listen to Gussy doing a chin solo?" sighed Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"Barge him into the study," said Herries. "He won't leave off talking—he never does—Barge him in."

"Weally, Hewwies—Oh, cwumbs! Stoppit! You wuff wuffians, if you wush into me like that, I will—woo! Ow! Wooogh!"

The door flew wide open, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tottered in, barged from behind by his comrades.

He staggered to the table, caught at it as his only visible means of support, and gasped for breath.

"Oooh! Weally, you fellows—wooh! You have thwown me into quite a fluttah. I have a vewy gweat mind to wefuse to let

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you help me with my lines now! Wooooh!"

"Oh, don't!" said Jack Blake, sarcastically. "Unsay those cruel words, Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, wats! Bai Jove, I have made my fingahs inkay on this beastly table. Which of you wuffians has been spillin' wed ink on the table?"

"Red ink!" repeated Blake. "By gum! Somebody's brought a bottle of red ink here, and spilt some of it!"

"I have inked my fingahs—"

"Never mind that," said Blake. "It might have been worse! I might have inked mine."

"Weally, you ass—"

"But who the dickens brought that here?" exclaimed Herries. "It doesn't belong to the study."

"Never seen it before," said Dig.

The chums of Study No. 6 stared at the half-empty bottle of red ink on the table. Arthur Augustus stared at his noble fingers. Inky fingers were not exactly uncommon at St. Jim's. But Arthur Augustus's aristocratic fingers were never, never inky. He gazed at them in dismay.

"Well, this beats it," said Blake. "Some smudge has brought a bottle of red ink here, and spilt it over the table. Somebody's idea of a lark, I suppose."

"That ass, Lowther—!" said Dig.

"Well, Lowther's a funny ass: but even Lowther isn't ass enough to think that that's funny," said Blake. "Might be Trimble—he's idiot enough for anything. Never mind now—we've got those lines to do—"

"My fingahs are inkay, Blake! I shall have to go and wash them befoah I begin on the lines."

"Blow your fingers!" hooted Blake.

"Weally, Blake, blowin' my fingahs would not wemove the ink! I shall have to scwub them with soap and hot watah."

"You howling ass—"

"Wats! I am vevy much obliged to you fellows for comin' in to help me with my lines, but I wefuse to be called a howlin' ass, Blake!"

"Sit down and get on!" roared Blake. "You've got to begin the impot. Even old Lathom would notice something, if it began in another fellow's fist."

"Yaas, wathah! Pway wait while I go and wash my hands—"

"Look here—!" hooted Herries.

"Yes, look here—!" exclaimed Dig.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not look there! He walked out of the study. Inky fingers required washing: to sit down with inky fingers was, for Gussy, not merely impossible, but unthinkable. He left three exasperated juniors glaring after him.

"Jolly good mind to chuck it, and go back to the cricket," growled Blake.

A New House junior, crumpled most uncomfortably behind the armchair, hoped that they would! It would have been a chance for George Figgins to escape. But Blake's remark was only in the nature of "hot air." Gussy had to be helped with the lines that Mr. Lathom expected before tea. His friends, it was true, were feeling more inclined to bump him on the floor of Study No. 6 than to help with the lines. Nevertheless, they were going to help with the lines.

"Where's Virgil?" grunted Herries. "Some silly ass lost Virgil? Anybody seen that rotten Æneid?"

"There it is on the shelf," said Blake. "Open it at the second book. Gussy's got to do two hundred from the second book. That will be fifty each all round. And if Lathom spots our fists, it will mean two hundred each all round, over and above. Br-r-r!"

"Lathom never spots anything," said Dig. "He ain't like old Linton in the Shell, with an eye like a hawk."

"No. Lathom's a good little ass," agreed Blake. "All the same, he will come down on Gussy if the lines ain't on time—they've been doubled once because the silly ass forgot them. If he's much longer washing his silly fingers, I'll go along the passage and duck his silly head in the sink. I wonder if old Kildare's out? That New House man Monteith was putting up some good bowling. Oh, my hat! How long have we got to wait for that prize idiot, Gussy?"

Blake threw himself into the armchair in the corner of the study, in his exasperation landing himself there with unusual force.

The result was unexpected.

Bumping heavily into the armchair made it roll back on its castors. It was standing a foot out from the junction of the walls. It crashed back right into the corner. And from that corner there came, from a New House junior almost pancaked between armchair and wall, an involuntary startled howl.

"Wow!"

2

Not So Dusty!

“**W**OW!” howled George Figgins, jammed painfully between chair and wall.

Blake fairly bounded.

“What—?” he ejaculated.

“Who—?” stuttered Dig.

“There’s somebody behind that chair!” gasped Herries.

Blake leaped out of the armchair! All three juniors were utterly amazed by that sudden anguished howl from the corner. Up to that moment, they had not dreamed that anyone else was in the study. The red ink on the table had shown them that somebody had been there: but it had not occurred to them for a moment that that somebody was there still! They stared blankly at the armchair, and Blake made a movement to grasp it and drag it out, and so reveal the hidden intruder.

It was well for George Figgins that he was quick on the uptake! Discovery was certain now—another moment, and he would be revealed: and the least he could expect was his own red ink poured down his neck. But Figgins acted promptly. Up jumped Figgins, grasping the back of the chair: and exerting all the force of his sinewy arms, he tilted it forward and hurled it at the three staring School House juniors. It tipped over on them, pitching them right and left.

Figgins had no more than a second—but he made the very best use of it. As Blake and Herries and Dig tottered from the impact of the armchair, Figgins bounded out of the corner and shot for the door.

He crossed Study No. 6 like a streak of lightning.

Outstretched hands grasped too late. They missed by inches. George Figgins hurtled out of the doorway, slamming the door after him.

"Figgins!" stuttered Blake.

"That New House bounder—"

"After him!"

Flying footsteps echoed down the passage. Figgins' long legs were covering space at lightning speed. He reached the study landing in a split second—and went down the stairs three at a time, bounding.

But Study No. 6 were not likely to let him escape unscathed if they could help it.

"After him!" yelled Blake.

And the three rushed to the door. Blake dragged it open, and the three hurtled headlong into the passage.

Crash!

Bump!

"Yawoooooooooh!"

Into whom they crashed, the three did not see for a moment. It was not Figgins. Figgins was gone: already at the foot of the staircase. They crashed into somebody about to enter the study. They hurled that somebody headlong with the shock, and staggered back from it themselves.

"Got him!" gasped Herries. "Collar him!"

"Hold on—that's not Figgins!" gasped Blake.

"Gussy!" ejaculated Dig.

It was the most elegant form at St. Jim's that was sprawling in the passage, spluttering for breath.

"Oh, cwiskey! Bai Jove! Wooooogh! Oh, cwumbs! I am quite out of bweath! Have you fellows gone cwackahs? Wushin' into a fellow like that—wow! ooh!"

"Oh, you ass!" gasped Blake. "You had to get in the way—"

"Weally, Blake—woooooh—!"

"Come on!" roared Herries.

Leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to sort himself out at his leisure, Blake and Herries and Dig rushed down the passage to the landing—hoping against hope, as it were, that there was still time to catch the elusive Figgins. They stared over the banisters. There was no sign of George Figgins to be seen. Three Shell fellows were coming up the staircase, and Blake shouted to them:

"Seen that New House tick Figgins?"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther looked up.

"Yes—he was cutting out of the House as we came in," answered Tom Merry. "Anything up?"

"Why didn't you stop him?" hooted Blake.

"My dear chap, he was doing about sixty M.P.H. What—?"

"Oh, rats!"

Blake and Co. returned to the Fourth-Form passage. Figgins was gone: the collision outside No. 6 had put paid to their last chance of capturing the intruder. Arthur Augustus was on his feet, gasping for breath. The shock had rather winded the swell of St. Jim's.

"You uttah asses—!" he began.

"Br-r-r-r!" growled Blake.

"I do not wegard that as eithah an intelligible or an intelligent wemark, Blake! Wushin' a fellow ovah—"

"Why didn't you stop him?" hooted Herries.

"Stop whom, Hewwies?"

"Figgins, you ass—"

"Figgins! Has that New House boundah been heah?" asked Arthur Augustus. "I have not seen him! Oh, now I come to think of it, somebody was wunnin' down the passage to the landin'—was that Figgins? I hardly saw him, he was goin' so fast. Is that why you wushed out of the study?"

"Think we did it specially to run into the biggest idiot at St. Jim's or anywhere else?" demanded Blake.

"Wats! Was Figgins in our study?" asked Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "Bai Jove! Then it must have been that New House boundah who bwrought that bottle of wed ink there, and spilled it ovah our table. A vewy sillay twick! But I did not see him in the study, Blake—"

"He was parked behind the armchair in the corner, ass, and nobody saw him till we found him, fathead—"

"But why did you let him get away?" asked Arthur Augustus. "He must have been there to play some twick on us with his silly wed ink. Why didn't you fellows collah him?"

"We should have got him, if a prize idiot hadn't been in the way when we got after him—"

"Bai Jove! I wish I had been in the study," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows weally ought to have collahed him. I don't want to wub it in, but weally, it was wathah cwass of you to let him get away. It was wathah widiculous to let that New House smudge get away, and wush into me, and knock me ovah, and make my twousahs all dusty—"

"You got in the way!" shrieked Blake.

"Wubbish! Fellows ought to look where they are goin'," said Arthur Augustus, severely. "Now Figgins has got away, aftah spillin' his wed ink about our study, and my twousahs are all dusty—"

"I'll dust them for you!" said Blake, ferociously.

"Bai Jove! Will you, deah boyl?" said Arthur Augustus, un-

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suspiciously. "That is vewy decent of you Blake! Come into the study and I will get a bwush."

Three juniors followed Arthur Augustus into the study. Herries and Dig were grinning: perhaps anticipating that the dusting of Arthur Augustus's trousers was not likely to proceed as Arthur Augustus anticipated. Jack Blake's look seemed to indicate that it would be an energetic dusting.

Arthur Augustus sorted out a clothes-brush, and handed it to Blake.

"Heah you are, deah boy."

"Haven't you got a bigger and heavier brush than this?" asked Blake.

"That one is wathah big and heavy, Blake."

"Oh, all right—I'll make it do," said Blake. "I can put some muscle into it. Stand steady!"

Arthur Augustus stood steady. His elegant trousers certainly were dusty, after a roll in the passage. Blake gripped the clothes-brush: not in the usual manner—he gripped it rather as if it had been a battle-axe.

Bang!

"Yawoooooh!" roared Arthur Augustus.

He bounded clear of the floor as the back of the clothes-brush landed on his trousers! His yell might have been heard at the end of the Fourth-Form passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Herries and Dig.

"Oh, cwikey! You mad ass—"

"Stand steady!" said Blake, flourishing the clothes-brush. "I've only just started! What are you dodging away for?"

"You dangewous lunatic!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "You banged me with the bwush instead of dustin' my twousahs—"

"That's all right," said Blake. "They're not so dusty now! A few more like that—"

"Keep off, you uttah ass!"

Cardew of the Fourth looked in at the door. He stared at the juniors in the study.

"What's the row?" he asked. "You fellows killin' a pig in here?"

"No: dusting a donkey," answered Blake.

"Uttah wuffian, Blake—"

"You'll have to stand steady, Gussy, if you want me to dust your trousers. Will you stand steady or not?"

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort!" howled Arthur Augustus. "And there is nothin' to laugh at, Cardew! If you stand there gwinnin' like a monkey I will punch your sillay head."

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Cardew chuckled, and went down the passage. Arthur Augustus jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and fixed it on Blake with a glare that might have withered him on the spot. Quite unwithered, Blake responded with an affable smile.

"Do you think that is the way to dust a fellow's twousahs, you wuffian?" hooted Arthur Augustus.

"Well, it's not so dusty," said Blake. "Neither are your bags, Gussy! Come on—if you want brushing—"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus sat down at the study table. One bang from the clothes-brush seemed all he wanted, and a little over. The chums of Study No. 6 got going on the lines at last: Arthur Augustus wriggling a little as he scribbled: quite unlikely ever again to accept an offer from Jack Blake to dust his trousers.

3

Surprise for Skimpole !

“SEEN my camera?”

Manners of the Shell asked that question in No. 10 Study.

He spoke quietly : very quietly : but it was a deadly quietness. It was more expressive than an excited shout. Manners' lips were compressed, and his eyes glistened. Harry Manners was probably the most placid and pacific fellow in the Shell at St. Jim's. But his camera was the darling of his heart. A lioness robbed of her cubs probably felt like Harry Manners when his precious camera was missing.

Tom Merry looked up from a cricket list. Monty Lowther for a moment ceased to concentrate upon a limerick. Both glanced inquiringly at Manners.

“Your camera?” repeated Tom, absently.

“Yes : my camera.”

“Isn't it on the shelf as usual?”

“If my camera were on the shelf as usual, I shouldn't be asking you if you'd seen it!” said Manners, with biting sarcasm. “I should be able to see it for myself, not being blind.”

“Oh!” said Tom. He jerked his mind out of cricket—not an easy matter, as he was conning over the list for the Greyfriars match. He realised that the usually placid Manners was feeling fierce.

Monty Lowther sighed. Good chums as they were in No. 10 in the Shell, loyal and faithful, Tom and Monty sometimes had just a trifle too much of Manners' camera, and rather wished that he had some other hobby. Monty was deep in his limerick, cudgelling his brains for a rhyme to “Cardew,” without being able to find one. But he realised that that limerick would have to remain unfinished, till Manners found his camera, if it was missing.

Tom Merry glanced at the shelf, where the camera generally reposed. The spot was vacant. No camera was to be seen.

"You put it somewhere else," he suggested.

"Don't be a goat, if you can help it!" suggested Manners, in his turn.

Tom coughed! Evidently, Harry Manners was "shirty."

"Well—!" he began.

"If I'd put it somewhere else, I should remember where I put it," explained Manners, in a patient tone, as if explaining to a child. "As I don't remember putting it anywhere else, I did not put it anywhere else. Have you got that clear? If not I'll try to put it into words of one syllable."

"Lent it to somebody?" suggested Lowther: a still more unhappy suggestion. Manners would lend anybody anything: except that camera!

"You can't talk sense?" inquired Manners, acidly.

"Oh, that camera!" sighed Lowther. "If it's not on the shelf, and you haven't put it somewhere else, and you haven't lent it, where the dickens is it?"

"I asked you fellows if you'd seen it."

"Not since you had it out yesterday," said Tom. "I think you put it on the shelf when we came in—haven't noticed it since."

"It was there an hour ago," said Manners. "You haven't shoved it somewhere, Tom, shifting it for some silly reason or other?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Not guilty," he answered.

"What about you, Lowther?" Manners eyed Monty Lowther rather suspiciously. Monty lived and moved and had his being in jesting and japing. You never could tell what Monty might be doing next.

Lowther shook his head.

"My dear chap," he said. "Don't I know that it's as much as a man's life is worth to lay a finger on that camera? If I'd touched it, I shouldn't dare to come into the study—I should be hiding in the coal-cellar."

Manners breathed hard.

"That means that somebody's borrowed it," he said. "Skimpole borrowed it a few weeks ago. If he's borrowed it again, I'll put him wise about borrowing a fellow's camera without leave."

Manners turned to the door.

Tom Merry and Monty Lowther exchanged a glance and both jumped up, as if moved by the same spring.

"Hold on, Manners—"

"Don't go off at the deep end—"

Unheeding, Manners marched out of No. 10. His camera was missing, and Manners did not intend to allow the grass to grow under his feet, in searching for that camera. A camera might easily be damaged in unskilful hands—it might even be dropped, by a careless fellow: at the best, the films in it might be used up, as it was only to be concluded, that the fellow who had taken it from the study, had done so in order to take photographs with it. Not a moment was to be lost, in the opinion of Harry Manners.

Tom and Monty hurried after him. A fellow who borrowed a camera without permission might deserve to be slanged, or even to have his head punched. But Manners looked as if he was going to strew the hungry churchyard with his bones when he found him. It was more than likely that Harry Manners might require a restraining hand if, and when, he tracked down the unknown borrower.

Manners, heedless of his anxious friends, pitched open the door of the next study, which belonged to Talbot, Gore and Skimpole. It was not a polite way of arriving in a study: but Manners, at the moment, was not feeling polite.

Three Shell fellows in the study looked round, one of them rather like an owl through a pair of extensive spectacles.

They were standing at the table. On the table were several photographs, which Skimpole was showing to his study-mates. His squeaky voice was audible as the door flew open.

"Not too bad, are they, my dear fellows, as I have not had much experience in using a camera—"

Manners' eyes gleamed. He suspected Skimpole, who had once before borrowed his camera without the formality of asking leave. Now, it seemed, Skimpole had been taking photographs. But Manners was a steady and reasonable fellow. He wanted it clear.

"Been taking photographs, Skimpole?" he asked, with that deadly quietness of voice which indicated volcanoes within.

Skimpole blinked at him through his spectacles.

"Yes, my dear Manners," he said. "Would you like to see them? You are interested in photography, I believe."

"A little!" said Manners. "I—"

"Lot of smudges!" said Gore. "Which is the clock-tower, and which is the gym, Skimmy?"

"My dear Gore—"

"Oh, they're not too bad," said Talbot, with a smile. "Skimmy's got a little to learn about over-exposure."

"I didn't know you had a camera, Skimpole," said Manners,

quietly. He was giving Skimpy every chance before he slew him. If Skimpole had acquired a camera, it was all right! If he hadn't—

"Not at all, my dear Manners," bleated Skimpole. "I borrowed the camera I used for these photographs—"

"You did, did you?" breathed Manners.

"Yes, my dear fellow, and—yarooooooh!" roared Skimpole, in surprise and anguish, as Manners rushed.

Skimpole went over on the floor. Manners, grasping him with both hands by his large ears, banged his head on the old oak.

Bang! Bang!

"Yaroooh!" roared Skimpole, struggling frantically. "Wow! Stop him! What is the matter, Manners? Yooo-hooooop!"

"Manners—!" exclaimed Tom Merry, at the doorway.

"Go easy, Manners," gasped Lowther.

Manners did not heed. Skimpole's ears were extensive, and gave a good hold. Gripping them, Manners banged and banged. The unfortunate Skimpy's frantic yells rang far and wide.

Talbot and Gore looked on blankly.

"Leggo!" shrieked Skimpole. "Will you leggo? Wow! Draggimoff, you fellows! Gore—Talbot—wow! wow!"

"Manners," exclaimed Talbot. "What—"

"Don't you fellows butt in," snapped Manners. He gave Skimpole's hapless head another bang. "Now, you bony freak—"

"Yarooohh!" roared Skimpole.

"Where's my camera?" roared Manners.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Whooooh! Oh, scissors! I—I don't know where your camera is," spluttered Skimpole. "How should I know? Yarooooop!"

"You've borrowed it—"

"Ow! wow! I haven't—wow!"

"Cut that out!" howled Manners. "You've been taking photographs with a borrowed camera—where is it? What have you done with the camera?"

"Wow! ow! I've given it back to Cardew—"

"Eh?"

"Cardew, in the Fourth—wow—!"

"What?"

"He lent me his camera—yow ow-ow!"

"Oh!" gasped Manners.

He was about to bang Skimpole's head again. But he stopped in time, and released the extensive ears! He stared blankly at the suffering Skimpole. Skimpy sat up dazedly, set his spectacles straight on his bony nose, and rubbed his head, looking like a bewildered owl.

"Wow! Ow! Wow! Wow!" gasped Skimpole.

"You—you—you borrowed Cardew's camera!" gasped Manners. He realised that he had taken a little too much for granted. There were, after all, other cameras in the School House, as well as Manners' precious one! "Oh! I—I—I thought—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gore.

"Manners, you ass!" exclaimed Talbot.

"Wow! wow! wow!" moaned Skimpole, rubbing his bony head. "Wow! ow! Have you gone mad, Manners? Why should I not borrow Cardew's camera? Wow!"

"I—I—I thought—!" stammered Manners. "My camera's missing from my study, and I—I—I thought—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gore.

"You dangerous ass," exclaimed Tom Merry, catching Manners by the arm, and dragging him out of the study.

"You benighted fathead!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, barging Manners into the passage.

"I—I—I thought—!" stammered Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came another yell from Gore.

"Ow! wow!" Skimpole's wail followed the Terrible Three into the passage. "Wow! I have a pain—indeed, I feel considerable anguish—wow! Do you fellows think that Manners has gone—wow!—mad? Why should he fly into a temper like that because I borrowed Cardew's camera?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry shut the study door, and gave Manners an expressive look.

"Now, you mad ass—"

"Look here, Manners—!" hooted Lowther.

Snort, from Manners.

"Shut up, the pair of you! Somebody's got my camera. I'm going to find him, and punch him right and left! I'll teach him to borrow my camera! Shut up."

Manners, implacable, marched off. Tom Merry and Monty Lowther followed him. Only too clearly Harry Manners required his friends to look after him, while he pursued his quest of the missing camera!

4

Quite Unexpected!

“PREP!” said Tom Merry.

“Prep!” said Monty Lowther.

“Blow prep!” said Manners.

It was quite unlike Manners of the Shell.

Sometimes, in No. 10 Study, a fellow might be a little careless with preparation. But that fellow was always Tom Merry or Monty Lowther. Manners was a most careful and steady-going fellow, at lessons, at prep, and at everything else. Mr. Linton, his Form-master, never had to give Manners the acid edge of his tongue, which few other fellows in the Shell escaped. Tom or Monty might occasionally “blow” prep, but when Harry Manners did so, it was almost time for the skies to fall!

But matters were not as usual in No. 10 in the Shell. The most placid member of the Terrible Three was like unto a bear with a sore head. Tom and Monty sat at the table with their books: Manners wandered round and round the room, with a knitted brow and a gleaming eye: heedless of prep, heedless of a possible “row” with Linton in the morning.

For the camera had not been found.

Tom Merry had been quite unable to give any further attention to the Greyfriars cricket list. Monty Lowther had had no chance of completing his limerick, and was as far as ever from discovering a rhyme to “Cardew.” Ever since Manners had missed his camera from the study, that camera, though invisible, had filled up the whole horizon.

Up and down and round about the House had Manners marched, in search of that camera: and of its borrower; and with him marched his friends, only too conscious that when Manners found

the culprit, he would need restraining from assault and battery, if not from manslaughter. But the camera was not found—the borrower was not trailed down. Now the juniors were in their studies at prep, and for the first time in history, Manners “blowed” prep! What was prep, when his camera was missing?

Almost every fellow in the House had been asked about that camera. Not only the Shell, but the Fourth and the Third, had heard all about it. Manners had kicked Baggy Trimble of the Fourth on the merest suspicion that the fat Baggy might have had a fat hand in the disappearance of the camera. He was kicked in his turn when he asked Cutts of the Fifth if he had had it—Cutts had dabbled in photography, and might have been the borrower, in Manners’ opinion at least. There was simply no clue to the missing article, and Manners by this time was in the state of a smouldering volcano on the verge of eruption. Where was his camera?

“Better get on to the prep, old man!” ventured Tom Merry. “The rotten thing will turn up—I—I—I mean the camera will turn up—”

“Whoever had it will trot it back to-morrow, old chap,” said Lowther.

Manners looked at them.

“It’s a bit thick for a fellow’s study-mates to be a pair of idiots,” he said. “If either of you had a spot of sense, it wouldn’t be so bad! I suppose it’s no use asking either of you to talk sense for once.”

“Well, you don’t want a row with Linton—!”

“Blow Linton!”

Manners roamed about the study like a lion in a cage. Tom Merry and Monty exchanged a hopeless look. Manners came to a sudden halt.

“What about that smudge Figgins?” he exclaimed.

“Figgins!” repeated Tom.

“That New House clot,” said Manners. “He was in the House this afternoon—playing some silly trick, spilling ink in Blake’s study, from what I’ve heard.”

“That was in Blake’s study—”

“He might have looked in here while he was in the House. That fathead’s as full of tricks as a monkey. If he’s snoopied my camera for one of his silly japes on this House—”

“But we saw him cutting off,” said Tom. “He hadn’t anything with him—certainly not a camera.”

“Oh!” said Manners.

He frowned and nodded. All three had seen Figgins "cutting off," and it was certain that he had gone empty-handed. Certainly he had not carried off Manners' precious camera to the New House. Manners had fancied for a moment that he had thought of a clue. But he had to realise that Figgins of the New House had not walked off with that camera.

He resumed his roaming.

Tom and Monty gave attention to prep. It really was not easy to settle down to work with the study resembling a cage with an excited lion pacing it. But prep was prep: and Linton in the morning had to be considered.

"But who's got it?" exclaimed Manners, coming to a halt again. "Somebody's borrowed it! Who?"

"*Per medio miscetque viris neque cernitur ulli,*" murmured Tom Merry.

"Shut up that rot!" hooted Manners.

"Well, there's Linton, you know—"

"You can tell Linton to go and eat coke."

"Oh, my hat!"

Monty Lowther shook his head.

"He wouldn't!" he said.

"What?"

"No use telling him to go and eat coke—he wouldn't!"

Manners glared.

"Are you going to be a funny ass, when my camera's lost!" he roared.

"But it isn't lost, old chap," said Tom, soothingly. "The fellow who borrowed it will trot it home—"

"Why hasn't he done so already, then?" howled Manners.

"Think he's out after lock-ups taking photographs?"

"Well, no: but—"

"I know why!" hissed Manners. "He's damaged it—dropped it and smashed the lens very likely—and he daren't bring it back! That's how it is."

Tom and Monty almost forget prep in their dismay at that suggestion. If Manners' camera had been damaged, life was not going to be very enjoyable in No. 10 in the Shell for a long time to come. Rachel weeping for her lost ones would simply not be in it with Manners mourning for his camera.

Manners roamed round the study again.

"I say, old chap—!" murmured Monty.

"Oh, don't worry!" snapped Manners, over his shoulder.

"Well, I think a fellow who's a whale at Latin might lend a fellow a hand when he's bottled," said Lowther, in an aggrieved tone.

"Oh!" Manners came back to the table. "If it's that—"

"This dashed stuff about *Æneas*—"

"All right—I'll give a hand."

Tom Merry tried not to smile. Monty Lowther had touched the right chord. Harry Manners was in fact a "whale" at Latin, and often helped his comrades over knotty points. Even with that awful spot of bother on his mind, Manners was not the man to let his friends down.

"*Mirabile dictu*—!" murmured Lowther.

"Wondrous to tell!" snapped Manners. "That's easy."

"Easy for you, old man," said Lowther. "Look out the next bit, will you? Tom's bottled over it, too."

"Oh, all right!"

Manners, at last, sat down at the table, and reached for his Virgil. As he opened it, a slip of paper fell out. Manners stared at it.

"You're losing your book-mark," said Tom.

"I never use a book-mark. What the dickens—!" Manners picked up the slip of paper, stared at it, and uttered a yell.

"That clot!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Tom.

"What—?" began Lowther.

"That smudge—that tick—that clot—that blot—that smear—that New House blighter!" roared Manners.

Tom and Monty could only gaze at him. Manners, with a crimson face of wrath, held up the slip of paper to their view. It was written upon, in a scrawl recognisable as the "fist" of George Figgins of the New House. And the writing ran:

Look in the coal-box

"Oh!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Lowther. "That New House boulder looked into this study before he went along to No. 6—"

"I—I—I'll smash him! I—I'll—" Manners became incoherent. He bounded to the coal-box. He dragged up the lid—almost dragged it off! He glared into the box.

"My camera!"

He whipped it out.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry and Lowther.

There was the camera! Manners had hunted high and low, all

over the House: he had banged Skimpole, he had kicked Trimble, he had been kicked himself by Cutts of the Fifth: he had been performing, so to speak, one continuous song and dance over that missing camera—and it was in his own study all the time! If he had chanced to lift the lid of the coal-box he would have seen it! But, of course, he had not chanced to do so. There were no fires in the studies in summer: the coal-box was there, but it was empty—until the playful Figgins had landed Manners' camera in it.

Had it occurred to Manners that his camera had not been borrowed at all, but hidden in his own study, he could have looked for it and found it easily enough. But that, naturally, had not occurred to him.

Had he started prep with his friends, he would have opened his Virgil long ago, and found the note Figgins had kindly left in it. But he hadn't!

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Monty Lowther. "That New House ass! Ha, ha, ha! In the study all the time—!"

"Here all the while!" gasped Tom Merry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Manners, you ass, if you'd only thought—"

"Only a jape after all, you fathead, just because those New House ticks know you're potty about your camera—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners did not heed. He stood with the camera in his hands, glaring at it. It was quite undamaged. Only the leather case was a little dusty. It had been quite safe in the coal-box: though undoubtedly it would have remained there, but for Figgy's note in the Virgil. It might, indeed, have remained missing for days, or weeks, had not Figgy kindly left that note.

To Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, it seemed funny. There was undoubtedly something a little comic in Manners raging all over the School House for a camera that was safe in his own study all the while.

But the comicality, if any, seemed quite lost on Harry Manners. He replaced that camera on the shelf, and with a fixed face of fury, started for the door. Tom and Monty jumped up and pulled him back just in time.

"Where are you going, in prep?" demanded Tom.

"Let go, you ass! I'm going over to the New House to smash Figgins for messing about with my camera!" roared Manners.

"Only a jape, old man—"

"I'll give him jape!"

"You can't go out in lock-ups—"

"I jolly well can—!"

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"Look here, Manners—!"

"Will you let go my arm?" roared Manners.

"No!" answered Tom. "You're sticking in this study, old man, and now you've found that dashed camera, you can cut in at prep. And for goodness sake shut up and give us a rest, or we'll jolly well bang your silly head on the door."

"Hard!" said Lowther.

Manners breathed hard, and he breathed deep. But he yielded the point. There was really no help for it: he was in fact very near, very near indeed, to having his head banged on the study door.

"All right!" he said. "Figgins will keep!"

And at last, long last, Manners sat down to prep. The camera had ceased from troubling, and the weary were at rest.

No Luck for Gussy!

“PLEASE, sir—”

“What? What is it, Figgins?”

“May I go to the post-box, sir?”

Mr. Lathom, the Master of the Fourth, blinked at Figgins over his glasses, and frowned. Every fellow in the Fourth stared at Figgins.

The Fourth were in form, and geography was the order of the day. It was a bright and sunny May morning: and there were few fellows in the form who would not have preferred the open sunny quad to the dusky old form-room and geography. Probably any fellow in the Fourth Form would have been glad to get out, had he been able to think up an adequate excuse.

But such a request as Figgins's did not seem very adequate. A fellow might spin a yarn about having left a tap running: or having forgotten a book. Lathom was, as Blake had remarked, a good little ass, and almost anything was good enough for him. But this was rather the limit.

Instead of giving permission, Mr. Lathom frowned at that member of his form.

“Bai Jove!” murmured Arthur Augustus to Blake. “That silly New House ass weally cannot expect to get away with that.”

“Hardly,” agreed Blake.

“Cheek!” murmured Herries.

“Certainly not, Figgins,” snapped Mr. Lathom. “You may do nothing of the kind during form, Figgins.”

“I've got a letter in my pocket, sir,” said Figgins, apologetically.

“It must remain there, Figgins.”

“It's Mr. Ratcliff's, sir—”

“What? What?”

“Mr. Ratcliff asked me to post the letter, sir, and it's still in

my pocket," said Figgins, meekly. "If I might cut across to the post-box, sir—"

Kerr winked at Fatty Wynn, who grinned. Figgins's chums were well aware that the House-master of the New House had given Figgins that letter to post. They were aware that it was still in Figgy's pocket. They were also aware that Figgy had left it there, as a new and workable excuse for getting out of the form-room during form.

"Oh!" said Mr. Lathom. "That is very careless, Figgins—very careless and forgetful. If your House-master gave you a letter to post, you should have posted it at once."

"Yes, sir," murmured Figgins, contritely. "I know, sir! But as the collection will be gone before we go out, sir—"

"You may go and post Mr. Ratcliff's letter, Figgins. Lose no time."

"Thank you, sir."

Figgins jumped up, and quitted the form-room. Mr. Lathom, pointer in hand, with a big map of Europe on the blackboard, resumed imparting geographical instruction to his form, minus George Figgins. But he did not receive from all the members of his form the attention that was a Form-master's due. Some of them, at least, were more interested in Figgins.

"What a neck!" murmured Cardew, to Levison and Clive. "Fancy spinning a yarn like that even to old Lathom! Suppose the old bean had asked to see the letter!"

"Rot!" grunted Clive. "Figgy had the letter all right! Think he'd tell lies?"

Cardew winked.

"Think he had any letter for Ratty?" he asked.

"I know he had, or he wouldn't have said so," grunted Levison. "I don't suppose he forgot to post it—but he had it to post."

"I don't think!" murmured Cardew.

Cardew, not very particular in such matters himself, was wont to judge others by his own measure. Levison and Clive had no doubt that Figgy had Mr. Ratcliff's letter in his pocket, as he had said, though they had also no doubt that he had kept it there for his own reasons.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow. His glance had followed Figgins very suspiciously to the door.

"What do you think Figgins is up to, you fellows?" he whispered to his friends.

"Snuff!" answered Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

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"He's gone to post a letter, hasn't he?" said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! But I have not the slightest doubt, Hewwies, that he kept the lettah in his pocket, to post duwin' form, as an excuse to get out."

"Shouldn't wonder," agreed Dig.

"And so the question awises, what is he up to?" continued Arthur Augustus. "He was playin' twicks in our study yestahdah—you fellows wemembah that I made my fingahs all inky in the wed ink he spilt ovah our study table. I have heard too that he was playin' tricks in Tom Mewwy's study—hidin' Mannahs' camewah in the coal-box, and makin' that ass Mannahs go wagin' all ovah the House for it. And I wathah think—"

Mr. Lathom, apparently becoming aware that whispering was going on in his form, glanced round.

"Is anyone talking?" he said. "You must not talk in class! Please give me your attention."

There was silence, and attention, for a few minutes. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was quite unable to concentrate his noble mind on geography. He could not forget those inky fingers: and he strongly suspected that Figgins of the New House was up to something. School House and New House at St. Jim's were generally in a state of more or less playful warfare: and Figgins had undoubtedly been up to something the previous day, in two studies in the School House. And if Figgy had some further jape in mind, the coast was clear for him while everybody else was in form.

"If that New House boundah has gone up to our study—!" whispered Arthur Augustus, as soon as Mr. Lathom was buried in geography again.

"We'll scalp him after form, if he has," said Blake.

"Yaas, but pvention is bettah than cure, deah boy. Scalpin' Figgins will not mop up the ink, if he has been spillin' it all ovah our study again. I wathah think that I had bettah go and see, and if Figgins is in our study, I will give him a feahful thwashin', which will be a warnin' to him to steeah cleah of School House studies."

Mr. Lathom glanced round again.

"Are you talking in class, D'Arcy?"

"Oh! I—I—I—Yaas, sir."

"You will kindly be silent and give attention, D'Arcy?"

"Oh! Yaas, sir."

Arthur Augustus sat silent, and perhaps gave attention. But his noble mind was following Figgy's probable movements out of form.

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Mr. Lathom, unsuspecting gentleman that he was, was the only person in the Fourth-Form room who supposed that Figgins had forgotten to post that letter for Mr. Ratcliff. Figgy certainly had not said so: but Lathom took it for granted. Nobody else in the form-room did so.

Arthur Augustus, at least, was convinced that Figgy was bent on a jape: and that Study No. 6 was the selected spot. He concentrated his noble intellect on thinking up an excuse for getting out and getting after Figgy. Being a little more particular than his relative, Ralph Reckness Cardew, he could not possibly descend to prevarication: so it required some thinking out. Mr. Lathom unconsciously came to the rescue:

"Now look at your maps," he said.

"Bai Jove! Where's my map, Blake?"

"Ask me another."

"Forgotten it, fathead?" asked Herries. "You can look at mine."

Arthur Augustus smiled. Here was his excuse, ready-made!

"If you please, sir—"

"What? Did you speak, D'Arcy?"

"May I go up to my study for my map, sir? I forgot to bring it in for the lesson, sir."

"You should not have forgotten, D'Arcy. You may look at Blake's map."

"Oh, cwikey!"

"What? What did you say, D'Arcy?"

"I—I mean, sir, I—I would wathah fetch my own map, sir, if—you don't mind, sir! If I may wun up to the study—"

"You may do nothing of the kind, D'Arcy."

"Weally, sir—"

"Silence, please."

"But weally, sir, if you don't mind—"

"If you speak again, D'Arcy, you will be kept in after class."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus was silent.

"Look at my map, fathead, and shut up," whispered Blake.

Arthur Augustus looked at Blake's map, and shut up. But his aristocratic intellect was still at work. He simply had no doubt that George Figgins, after cutting across to the post-box in the school wall to get rid of Mr. Ratcliff's letter, had cut up to the studies. He was not going to give Figgins his head, if he could help it. His deep cogitations produced results at last.

"If you please, sir—"

"Are you speaking again, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Lathom, in a rather ominous tone.

"Yaas, sir."

"Then be silent."

"Yaas, sir, but—"

"I have told you to be silent, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir, but I have spilled some ink on my fingahs, sir! May I go along and wash them, sir?"

And Arthur Augustus held up a hand that was undoubtedly inky! Six or seven fellows had seen him dip a finger into the inkpot on the desk, and wondered what he was up to. Now they knew!

Mr. Lathom gazed at those inky fingers. As pens were not being used in that lesson, no doubt he was surprised to see them. He frowned portentously.

"D'Arcy! Take fifty lines for inking your fingers!" he said.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"You will stay in the form-room after class and write them out."

"Weally, sir—"

"And you will now be silent," said Mr. Lathom. "If you speak again during this lesson, D'Arcy, unless in answer to me, I shall cane you."

Every fellow in the Fourth, with the exception of Arthur Augustus, was grinning. Baggy Trimble giggled, a fat giggle. But Arthur Augustus was not amused.

The form-room door opened, and George Figgins came in. Mr. Lathom glanced at him.

"Did you catch the collection with Mr. Ratcliff's letter, Figgins?"

"Yes, sir."

"You seem to have taken a great deal of time to go to the post-box and back, Figgins?"

"Oh! D-d-did I, sir? I—"

"You may go to your place, Figgins."

Figgins went to his place. He winked at Kerr and Fatty Wynn as he sat down. And catching a severe, indeed stern, stare, from Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, he winked cheerfully at him in his turn. Whether George Figgins had been up to something in Study No. 6 during his absence from the form-room, could not be ascertained till after class—and even then the ascertaining had to be left to Blake and Herries and Dig: the hapless Arthur Augustus was left in the form-room, sadly and sorrowfully grinding through fifty lines.

6

Shindy in Study No. 9!

“WHICH of you was it?”

Ralph Reckness Cardew asked that question, in No. 9 Study in the Fourth. He asked it as Levison and Clive came into the study.

There was a set expression on Cardew's face, and a glint in his eyes. Evidently he was very angry. Levison and Clive looked at him in surprise. They were more or less accustomed to the uncertainty of Cardew's temper: and generally more or less patient with it. But neither could guess what was the matter with him this time.

Cardew had gone up to his study after the Fourth was dismissed. He had been in his usual mood when he left his friends to go up. Something in the study, apparently, had roused his angry resentment. He looked quite prepared to quarrel with either or both of his friends.

“Which was what?” asked Levison.

“You know what I mean.”

“Not the foggiest! Do you know, Clive?”

“No—and don't care, either, if you come to that,” said Sidney Clive, tartly. “If Cardew's in one of his tantrums, let's get out.”

“Don't go yet,” said Cardew, stepping between them and the door. “I want to know which of you has been a cheeky fool.”

“The only cheeky fool here is named Cardew,” retorted Clive.

“Right on the wicket!” said Levison, with a nod.

Cardew gave them an almost evil look.

“I've had sermons from you fellows,” he said between his set lips. “You can't mind your own business. A chap can't put on a smoke, or look at a racing paper, without gettin' pi-jaw from one or the other of you. I'm fed up to the chin with it: but

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I've stood it. But when it comes to meddlin' with my things, that's the limit. Where are my cigarettes?"

"Wherever you left them, I suppose," said Levison, staring at him. "Do you think I would touch your filthy smokes?"

"Then it was you, Clive?"

"If I touched your filthy smokes, it would be to chuck them out of the window," snapped Clive.

"Is that what you've done with them?"

"Oh, go and eat coke."

"That means yes, I suppose," said Cardew. "And where's my *Sporting Tipster*? Have you chucked that out of the window too, you fool, for a prefect to pick up in the quad?"

"Don't be an ass!"

"Will you answer me?" asked Cardew.

"I've answered you—don't be an ass!"

"Do you think I'm goin' to stand this?" Cardew's angry voice rose. "Do you think you can meddle with my things in this study—"

"Railton would meddle with them fast enough, if he knew they were here—and give you six, over and above!" said Clive.

"Railton's a House-beak, and can do as he likes—you're not, and you can't! I want to know what you've done with my smokes and my racing paper."

Levison and Clive stared at him. Apparently the scapegrace of the Fourth had missed his supply of smokes and his racing paper. It was the first they had heard of it: but Cardew, evidently, did not think so.

"Has somebody shifted them?" asked Ernest Levison.

Cardew's lip curled bitterly.

"Somebody has!" he answered. "You or Clive! Or both! So long as you keep to pi-jaw, I don't mind if you run on—you amuse me! But that's the limit—that's where you stop! Hand over those smokes and that paper at once, or—"

"Or what?" asked Levison, coolly: while Sidney Clive's jaw jutted, and his eyes gleamed.

"Will you hand them over?" asked Cardew, breathing hard.

"Don't be a fool!" said Levison. "Neither of us knows anything about your silly muck. Come on, Clivey, let's get out, and leave the silly ass to look for his rubbish."

"That won't do!" said Cardew.

"'Fraid it will have to! Get out of the way," snapped Levison.

"Will you hand over the things you've been meddlin' with?"

"Oh, give us a rest."

Cardew stood looking at them, almost trembling with rage. He had heard a good deal of what he called "pi-jaw" in his study: neither Levison nor Clive ever concealed his opinion of Cardew's shady ways. He had no doubt now that they had gone a step further: and that his smokes and his racing paper had gone for good. He clenched his hands hard.

Levison and Clive moved towards the door, apparently having had quite enough of Cardew's company, in his present mood.

He did not stir out of the way.

"Will you—?" he began.

"Oh, shut up, and get out of the way," snapped Clive. "You're asking to have your cheeky head punched."

Cardew made a sudden stride forward, and before either Levison or Clive could divine his intention, grasped them, in either hand, by the collar, and brought their heads together with a sounding crack.

Crack!

"Oh!" roared Levison.

"Oh!" yelled Clive.

"Now tell me what you've done—"

Cardew got no further than that! Levison and Clive, taken by surprise, had had their heads knocked together. But the next moment, they were jumping at Cardew, and they grasped him together.

He spun over headlong in their grasp.

For the next two or three minutes Ralph Reckness Cardew was having the time of his life. He struggled frantically in the grasp of the two juniors, but he struggled in vain. His head was tapped—hard!—on the study table, once, twice, thrice, a fiendish yell following each tap. Then he was bumped on the floor, and his face rubbed in the carpet. Levison and Clive wound up by rolling him up in the carpet.

"There!" gasped Levison, breathlessly.

"That's for you!" gasped Clive.

Both of them were angry—but they grinned, as Cardew, sprawling on the floor, wriggled wildly in the rolled carpet. It was rather a dusty carpet, and Cardew was apparently absorbing the dust, for from the interior of the roll came suffocated gurgles.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Levison and Clive.

"Will you drag it off!" shrieked Cardew.

"No!" answered Levison. "Take your time: it will keep you out of mischief for a bit. Come on, Clivey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The two juniors walked out of the study, laughing.

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Cardew was left rolled up. He struggled frantically to get out of it, and succeeded in unrolling himself at last. A red and furious face emerged, and Cardew staggered to his feet, panting for breath, and smothered with dust from head to foot.

"I—I—I'll—" he gasped.

Undoubtedly there would have been assault and battery, had his friends been still present. But Levison and Clive had gone out into the quad by that time. Cardew made a stride towards the door: but paused. He did not want to show himself in public in his present dusty and dishevelled state. He stood in the study, breathing fury.

"The rotters!" he breathed. "The meddlin' rotters! I'm done with them, by gad! Meddlin' with my things, and then—" He gasped with rage. Really, Cardew could not have expected to get away with knocking his study-mates' heads together, without reprisals to follow. But that reflection was no comfort to him. He breathed fury as he brushed off dust. It was a long and laborious task, and the longer it lasted, the deeper grew Cardew's feelings.

Figgins' Find!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY frowned.

Three cheerful New House juniors were the objects of his frown.

Figgins and Co. were smiling.

George Figgins, Francis Kerr, and David Llewellyn Wynn seemed amused about something. Arthur Augustus was not amused. Having finished his fifty lines, Arthur Augustus had been able to get out at last: and his first visit had been to Study No. 6, to ascertain whether Figgins had been japing in that study during his absence from the form-room in third school. But Study No. 6 presented its usual aspect: there was no sign of the enemy having been there. Relieved on that score, Arthur Augustus went out to look for his friends: and found them in the quad.

"Nothin's happened in the study, you fellows," he said.

"Ancient history!" yawned Blake. "We looked as soon as we came out of form."

"Figgins was up to somethin'," said Arthur Augustus, with conviction. "Pewwaps he has been after Mannahs' camewah again!"

"Wrong!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake, how do you know?"

Blake made a gesture towards three Shell fellows in the quad. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were sauntering by the old elms. Manners had his accustomed placid aspect. The sun had gone down on Manners' wrath: but it had not risen on it: and he had quite abandoned the idea of going over to the New House to "smash" Figgins.

"See?" said Blake. "Manners' camera is all right, or he would

be doing a song and dance! He's quite quiet!"

Herries and Dig chuckled.

"Well, if it wasn't that, it was somethin' else," declared Arthur Augustus. "I am absolutely convinced that that New House boundah was up to somethin'. Bai Jove, heah the boundahs are!"

And Arthur Augustus frowned at Figgins and Co. as they came up. He was quite assured that Figgy had been japing in the School House, though this time he had not selected Study No. 6 as the scene of operations.

"Looking for you, Gussy!" said Figgins, amicably.

"Pway go and look for somebody else, then!" said Arthur Augustus, stiffly. "I wegard you as a japin' ass, Figgins. I believe you were japin' in our House when you went out to post that lettah in third school."

"Getting suspicious in your old age, Gussy?" asked Kerr, with a shake of the head.

"I twust I am not gettin' suspicious, Kerr, but that silly ass was in our study yestahday—spillin' ink about—"

"Let's bump him for it now," suggested Herries.

"Good egg!" said Dig. "Let's!"

"Hold on," said Fatty Wynn. "Pax, you know! Figgy has got something for you, Gussy."

"Here it is!" said Figgins, holding up a packet, wrapped in brown paper, and tied with string. "It belongs to that relation of yours, Gussy—Cardew, of your form."

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass on the packet, in surprise. Blake and Herries and Dig stared at it.

"Weally, Figgins, I do not quite compwehend," said Arthur Augustus. "If that packet, whatevah it is, belongs to my wrelative, Cardew—"

"It does—it do!" assured Figgins.

"Then I quite fail to see how it came into your hands, Figgins."

"I found it," said Figgins, blandly.

"That is very odd, Figgins. I weally do not see how you could have found a packet belongin' to a School House man—"

"Lots of things you don't see," remarked Figgins.

"Lots!" agreed Kerr.

"Lots and lots and lots!" grinned Fatty Wynn.

"Where did you find it, Figgins?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"What does that matter?" yawned Figgins. "I found it, and I'm handing it to you to take back to that relation of yours. Take it or leave it."

"As Cardew is my wrelative, Figgins, and as you say the packet belongs to him, I will take it," said Arthur Augustus. "I will wreturn it to him."

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"Here you are, then!"

Figgins and Co. strolled away, leaving the packet in D'Arcy's hand. The swell of St. Jim's looked at it, and looked at his friends.

"It was vewy careless of Cardew, if he dwopped this about the quad," he said. "But if it is his, I had bettah take it to him."

And Arthur Augustus proceeded to look for Ralph Reckness Cardew. That youth was not to be seen in the quadrangle, but Levison and Clive were in view, and Arthur Augustus bore down on them to inquire.

"Is Cardew about, deah boys?" he asked.

"Up in the study," answered Levison.

"Vewy well: I will go up to the study."

"I think I'd give Cardew a miss just at present," said Clive, with a grin. "You won't find him in a good temper."

Arthur Augustus raised his eyebrows. Cardew's temper was not likely to ruffle his noble serenity.

"Thank you, deah boy, but I am quite indiffewent to the state of Cardew's tempah," he answered, and he walked away to the School House.

With the packet in his hand, he ascended the stairs. On the study landing he was met by a fat grinning face.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Baggy Trimble. "I say, they've had a fearful row in No. 9. I say, they rolled Cardew up in the study carpet! He, he, he!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus walked up the Fourth-Form passage, leaving the fat Baggy cachinnating. He looked into No. 9 Study.

Cardew was still at work with the clothes-brush: tired, dusty, breathless, and simmering with fury. The carpet lay in a crumpled heap. He looked round at the elegant junior in the doorway, and scowled savagely.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Buzz off you dummy."

"I should certainly not twouble you with my pwesence, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity, "if I had not come beah for a particulah purpose. Pway keep your tempah, Cardew! I did not woll you up in that carpet you know!"

Cardew's eyes flashed.

"No! I'm going to handle the fellows who did!" he said, between his teeth. "But take your face away, and bury it somewhere. It's a worry."

"You uttably wude wottah—"

"Oh, push off."

"I will certainly push off, at the earliest possible moment," said Arthur Augustus. "I have come heah to weturn this to you, as it is your pwopahty. Figgins says he found it—"

"Figgins!" repeated Cardew.

"Yaas, wathah! And I have taken the twouble to come up the stairs to weturn it to you," said Arthur Augustus, with chilly dignity. "You must have dwopped it about somewhah—"

"Rubbish!" snapped Cardew. "Some silly joke, I suppose. It can't belong to me."

"Bai Jove! If you have not lost anythin'—"

"Oh!" Cardew gave a start. Certainly, he had "lost" something: his smokes and his racing paper! "Oh! Figgins—Oh! He was out of form—Oh!" Cardew snatched the packet from D'Arcy's hand, and tore it open.

"Oh, cwumbs!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in surprise, as the contents fell out on the study table.

The contents were a copy of the *Sporting Tipster*, and a packet of cigarettes. The sporting paper was drenched with ink. The packet of smokes dripped with water. Cardew stared at them with blazing eyes. Arthur Augustus gazed at them, and then jammed his eyeglass a little more firmly into his eye, and gazed again.

With the smokes and the sporting paper was a card, on which was written, in George Figgins' sprawling hand:

Rubbish returned, without thanks!

Quite harmless now.

G.F.

Cardew gritted his teeth. There was no doubt that George Figgins had made his "rubbish" quite "harmless!" The cigarettes were soaked with water. The sporting paper was so drenched in ink that hardly a word was decipherable. Cardew was not likely to smoke those cigarettes, or to spot winners—or losers!—in the columns of the *Sporting Tipster!*

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "So that was what Figgins was up to when he got out of form this mornin'!"

"Figgins!" breathed Cardew.

"It was a feahful cheek of a New House boundah to wag in this House! But it serves you wight, Cardew."

"You gabblin' ass—!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked away. Cardew was left staring at

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the "returned rubbish" on the study table.

He understood now. He had quarrelled with his friends, and they had rolled him up on the carpet: and he had been fully determined to call them to account, and force a "scrap" on both of them in turn! And now he knew that neither of them had had anything to do with the loss of his smokes and his precious racing paper—it was nothing more or less than a "House" rag! He had banged Clive's head against Levison's—and all the while it was Piggins who had been at work in No. 9 Study—that was how the playful Figgy had been occupied during his absence from form in third school!

"Oh!" breathed Cardew.

He was glad, at least, that this discovery had come in time, before he forced the quarrel with his friends further. For long, long minutes he stood, staring at the returned "rubbish": and then left the study. It was in rather a chastened mood that he went to look for Levison and Clive in the quad.

8

Cake!

GEORGE FIGGINS smiled.

Kerr smiled.

Fatty Wynn grinned a wide and extensive grin.

The three were in their study, in the New House and it was tea-time. All three seemed very pleased with themselves and things generally. Figgins and Kerr were discussing their latest "rag" on the rival House, which made them smile. Fatty Wynn's extensive grin, however, had quite another cause. Figgy had produced from the study cupboard a cake to wind up tea. It was a large cake. It was a very large cake. Fatty's eyes were fixed on it lovingly. It was a cake that rejoiced his plump heart. Fatty forgot all about House rags—even victorious rags on the enemy! What were House rags compared with plum cake?

"We've dished them all along the line!" said Figgins.

"We jolly well have!" agreed Kerr.

"Gussy hasn't sported his topper since I called in at his study! When he does—!" chuckled Figgins.

Kerr chuckled too.

"Poor old Manners raised the roof over that camera that was in his own coal-box—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I wish I could have seen Cardew's face, when he opened that packet and found his cigarettes in it!"

"Worth seeing!" chuckled Kerr.

"The fact is, the School House can't keep their end up with us," said Figgins, complacently. "We're cock-house of St. Jim's, and where are they?"

"Nowhere!" said Kerr.

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"That man Lowther in the Shell fancies himself some japer! Is he in it with us?"

"Not in the same street," agreed Kerr.

"We'll jolly well give them the kybosh all along the line," said Figgins. "They can't touch us! They're simply nowhere! They'd give us as good as they get, if they could. But could they get away with a jape in this House?"

"Not in their lifetimes."

"I rather expected that man Cardew to cut up rusty. He's not a sportsman like the rest—he can't take it!" said Figgins. "More likely to get vicious! Let him, if he likes! You know what his temper's like—"

"Jolly good!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Fine!" said Fatty, enthusiastically. "Couldn't be better, Figgy."

Figgins and Kerr stared at him.

"You fat ass!" said Figgins. "You think it's jolly good, do you?"

"Yes, rather," said Fatty. "Don't you?"

"No, I don't, and nobody else does," snapped Figgins. "Rotten, I call it."

"Rotten?" repeated Fatty Wynn, blankly. "Did you say rotten, Figgy?"

"Yes, I did, you fat duffer."

"Beastly," said Kerr.

"Oh, draw it mild," exclaimed Fatty. "I jolly well can't see anything rotten or beastly about it, I can tell you. It's ripping! Topping! If you fellows don't want any of it—"

"We certainly don't," said Figgins. "They're more than welcome to it in the School House."

"In the School House?" repeated Figgy. "I'll watch it! Why, just look at it—stacked with plums—"

"Plums!" ejaculated Figgins. "Plums? Are you off your rocker, Fatty? Have the sardines got into your head? What are you burbling about?"

"Eh? That cake—!"

"That cake?" repeated Figgins. "I was speaking about Cardew and his rotten temper—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kerr.

Evidently, there was a misunderstanding. Fatty Wynn's thoughts were so concentrated on the cake, that apparently he had not heard Figgy's remarks.

"Eh? What?" said Fatty. "Who's Cardew? Oh, that School House tick! Never mind him—I say, hand me that knife, Kerr, and I'll cut slices all round. That's a topping cake—look at the plums—"

Tap!

The study door opened. Figgins and Kerr glanced round: Fatty, intent on cake, remained intent on cake. It was Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth who appeared in the doorway.

"Oh! You!" said Figgins, with a grin.

"Little me!" assented Cardew.

Figgins and Kerr rose to their feet. They were wary at once. If Cardew had come over to the New House looking for trouble, they were prepared to hand it out in any quantity required.

As Figgy had said, Cardew was not quite a "sportsman" on the lines of Tom Merry and Co. School House and New House juniors at St. Jim's waged an unending warfare: but there was sportsmanship and good humour on both sides: and both sides knew how to "take it." But the supercilious dandy of the Fourth was not quite like the others in that respect. Figgy more than half anticipated trouble—which he was cheerfully prepared to meet.

But if Cardew was on the track of trouble, his face and manner did not betray the fact. He was quite calm and polite. Judging by his looks, the jape in No. 9 Study that morning had not ruffled him.

"Just a word from Tom Merry," he explained. "I was comin' over to see a man in this House, so I brought the message."

"Oh!" said Figgins, a little taken aback. "All right! Manners hasn't lost his camera again, I hope?"

Cardew laughed.

"Anybody missed smokes or anything?" asked Kerr.

Cardew laughed again.

"Don't rub it in," he said. "You score! It's about the Greyfriars match," Cardew went on. "Tom Merry would like to see the three of you about it—he's making up the list now, and wants to talk it over with you. That's all."

With that, and a nod, Cardew left the study, and shut the door after him.

"Good!" said Figgins. "Come on, you men! If Tommy wants some advice about making up the team, we're the fellows to hand it out. May be able to make him see sense, and put in a few more New House men. Old Redfern's better than any man they've got over there, excepting Talbot and Tom himself. What?"

"Quite!" agreed Kerr. "Come on, Fatty."

"I—I say—" Fatty Wynn's voice came muffled through cake. "We can't go over just yet, Figgy."

"Why not?" demanded Figgins.

"There's the cake—!"

"The cake?" repeated Figgins. "You fat hippopotamus, our cricket captain wants to consult us about the team, and you say—cake!"

"Well, let's finish the cake first," urged Fatty. "It's a topping cake, old chap! Tom Merry can wait while we finish the cake—"

"Come on, you cormorant!"

"Well, you fellows go, and tell me afterwards what Tom says—"

"Come on!" roared Figgins.

"But I say, the cake—I say—wow! Leggo my collar, will you?" roared Fatty Wynn. "Stop barging me, Kerr, you swob! 'I'm coming, ain't I?'"

And Fatty Wynn came. Such considerations as cake, or even House rags, faded into insignificance in comparison with cricket. If the junior cricket captain wanted to see the three New House men about the Greyfriars match, they were going without losing a minute: and as Fatty seemed reluctant to leave the cake, Figgins and Kerr grasped him, one by the collar and the other by the arm, and walked him out of the study. They marched him along to the stairs.

"I—I say—!" protested Fatty.

"Kim on!"

"Let a fellow get a slice of cake, at least—"

"Shove him along, Kerr."

"I—I mean to say—"

"Shut up and come on."

Fatty Wynn, willy-nilly, walked downstairs between his two chums. They walked him out of the House into the sunny quad. Fatty went protesting, but he went. True, he was as keen on cricket as any man at St. Jim's: deeply interested in the Greyfriars match: but cake was cake! Leaving that scrumptious cake unfinished was practically impossible for Fatty—if he had been a free agent. But with a grip on either arm, he had to walk out into the quad.

"Hold on a minute," he gasped.

"Oh, come on!"

"Let a fellow tie his shoe lace!" hooted Fatty.

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"Oh, all right! Buck up!"

Fatty was released to tie his shoe-lace. He stooped and tied it. Then, as he straightened up, he made a sudden jump out of reach of clutching hands, turned, and bolted back into the House.

"Fatty—!" shouted Figgins.

"Wynn, you ass—!" exclaimed Kerr.

David Llewellyn Wynn vanished into the House.

"By gum!" exclaimed Figgins. "The fat cormorant—I'll give him cake! I'll shove it down his neck! Come on!"

And Figgins and Kerr rushed back into the New House, in hot pursuit. Fatty was not likely to have many happy moments to devote to the cake!

9

Caught in the Act!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW smiled—not a pleasant smile.

He was standing in Figgins's study—now vacant, except for himself.

After he had left that study, his message delivered, Figgins and Co. had given him no further thought. But Cardew had given Figgins a great deal of thought! He had not gone very far! And a few moments after Figgins and Co. had scampered down the staircase, Cardew was in their study—and the expression on his face told that he was there with no good intent.

Figgins's estimate of Cardew was correct. He was not the man to "take" it, and keep his temper. That hasty temper had landed him in a "row" with his friends, which Figgy certainly could not have foreseen as a result of his jape. Cardew had himself to blame: and he chose to lay the blame on Figgy—and now he was going to retaliate, having tricked the New House Co. out of their study with a "message" from the junior cricket captain over in the School House.

How long he would have for his work in the study Cardew did not know—but he lost no time in beginning. Five minutes, at least: it would certainly take that much time for Figgins and Co. to arrive in the School House, learn that Tom Merry had sent them no message, and return—more likely ten! But five minutes would be enough for what Cardew planned.

He was going to "rag" that study: not a good-humoured rag with no great harm done: but a determined and vicious rag which would do real damage, and, he had no doubt, make Figgins wish that he had steered clear of No. 9 in the School House.

Figgins and Co. departing in haste, had left the tea-things on

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the table. Cardew cleared the table, by the simple process of up-ending it. Cups and saucers, plates and tea-pot, cake and dish, went crashing to the floor, every single article of crockery breaking into several pieces. The cake, splitting into two or three sections, lay amid the wreck.

Cardew chuckled.

That was only a beginning! He was going on as he had started: and five minutes, at that rate, would certainly have seen Figgins's study in a state of utter wreckage.

But, as it happened, he was not going on!

Figgins and Co. he had no doubt, were tramping across to the other House. He was quite unaware that the cake had drawn Fatty Wynn back like a magnet.

Cardew's next step was to fill his arms with books from the book-shelf, and fling them into a heap in the empty fire-grate. His next, was to grasp a cricket stump and rake down soot on the books. But just as he thrust the stump up the chimney, there was a patter of running feet in the passage, and the study door flew open.

Fatty Wynn tore in.

Fatty was in hot haste. He knew that his chums were close behind him. He had just time to cut in ahead, bolt into the study, slam the door, and lock it—keeping Figgins and Kerr out till he had dealt with the cake! He could hear their footsteps behind as he rushed into the study.

But the next moment, David Llewellyn Wynn forgot even the cake, at what he saw!

The table stood on one end: the crockery lay smashed and scattered: the cake was on the floor, split in pieces, among the ruins. For a single second Fatty stared at the scene of disaster, in blank amazement. Then he saw Cardew—stooping at the fireplace, stump in hand, in the very act of raking down soot on a pile of books! Fatty forgot cake—he forgot Figgins and Kerr—he forgot everything but the School House junior who was ragging the study! Cardew, turning in dismayed surprise as Fatty rushed in, had hardly time to realise what was happening, before Fatty was upon him. Fatty Wynn rushed right at him, and Cardew, staggering back under the rush, caught his feet in the fender, and went down with a crash in the hearth. Fatty Wynn sprawled over him, punching.

"You rotter!" panted Fatty.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Cardew. He struggled frantically under Fatty's weight. "Oh, crumbs! Oh!"

Thump! thump! thump!

Fatty was hitting out right and left, and there was plenty of force in his punches. Cardew struggled somehow to his feet, his face red with rage, and gave blow for blow. A moment more, and Figgins and Kerry rushed in.

"Fatty, you cormorant—"

"Collar him!"

"Why, what—what—what—"

"That tick Cardew—!"

"By gum!"

Figgins and Kerr stared, for one amazed moment. Then they rushed into the fray, and collared Ralph Reckness Cardew. They pinned him by the arms, and dragged him away from Fatty.

Cardew wrenched savagely.

His game was up. Figgins and Co., utterly unexpectedly, had returned to their study, instead of going over to the School House. The ragger was fairly in the hands of the Philistines. He wrenched in vain.

Fatty Wynn, panting and perspiring, rubbed his fat little nose, from which Cardew's knuckles had drawn a trickle of red.

"Look what he's done!" he gasped. "Smashed all the crocks—even the cake—the rotter! Look at those books in the grate—" Figgins's eyes glinted.

"We can see what he's done, old fat man," he said. "I think he's going to be sorry for it. Cardew, you rat—"

"Cardew, you worm—!" said Kerr.

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Cardew. "You ragged in my study—I've ragged in yours. And I'd have wrecked it right and left if that fat fool hadn't come back."

"This is what you call a rag, is it?" said Figgins. "And you were going to do more, were you? Lucky you came back after that cake, Fatty, after all—he would have got away with it all right."

Fatty Wynn stooped, and rescued the sections of the cake. He immediately proceeded to comfort himself with a large chunk of it. The crockery was beyond rescue: but the cake, after all, was what mattered, at the moment at least. Fatty Wynn masticated cake, and wrath faded out of his fat brow.

Figgins and Kerr, less interested in cake than their plump chum, gave their attention to Cardew. Their grip on his arms was not to be escaped, and Cardew ceased to wrench and struggle, standing in their grasp with a bitter and angry sneer on his face.

"This is your idea of a rag, is it?" said Figgins. "Smashing up fellows' crocks—"

"I'd have smashed everything else if I'd had time," said Car-

dew. "The clock was going next."

"And hooking down soot on books that fellows have to use in form!" said Kerr.

"You wouldn't have used those books again, if I'd had a few more minutes," retorted Cardew. "Nor anything else in the study, for that matter. If that fat fool hadn't interrupted me—"

"Well," said Figgins. "You've got your own ideas about a rag, Cardew, and you've no kick coming if you get as good as you give. Get those books out of the grate, Kerr, old man! I can handle this School House tick."

Figgins shifted his grip to the back of Cardew's collar, where it closed like a vice. As Kerr released him, Cardew began to struggle again. But he had no chance with the sinewy Figgins. He was safely held by the collar.

Kerr picked the books out of the grate, and stacked them back on the shelf. Figgins, with that iron grip on the back of Cardew's neck, propelled him to the grate, twisted him over, and pushed his head under the chimney. Guessing easily enough what was coming, Cardew struggled wildly, wrenching and punching and kicking. But Figgins held him fast.

"Take that stump, Kerr," he said. "He was going to rake down soot on our books. He's going to have some of his own medicine."

"Oh, my hat," said Kerr.

"Get going!"

"What-ho!"

Kerr picked up the stump, and raked in the chimney. There was a good deal of old soot in that chimney. It came down with a rush as Kerr raked.

Cardew yelled frantically.

"Let me go! Your rotters—you—you—Oooopgh! Grooogh! Ouch! Wooh! Gug-gug-gug-gug! Urrrrrggh!"

Cardew was a rather handsome fellow, in his normal state. But he did not look handsome now. Soot blackened his face till it was blacker than that of an inhabitant of Central Africa. It blackened his collar and tie, his jacket, it ran down his neck, it crammed into his ears, it oozed into his mouth. Black as the ace of spades, he struggled and gurgled and spluttered. Still the soot came down: and the dandy of the Fourth lived, and moved, and had his being, in soot! He emitted half-suffocated gurgles in a world of soot.

"Oh, gum," said Kerr. "Isn't that enough, Figgy?"

"Not if there's any more soot left! Give it another rake."

Kerr raked again, and again. More and more soot came down.

Figgins and Kerr caught a few flakes, and sneezed. But they chuckled while they sneezed. Fatty Wynn grinned as he devoured cake.

"Gum! He's not nice to touch," remarked Figgins. "I shall want a jolly good brush down after this! Think Cardew will?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better chuck him out before he makes everything mucky."

"Oh, crumbs! Is he going out into the quad like that?" gasped Kerr.

"He's not staying here, I know that! He can get back to his own House if he wants a wash!"

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Cardew. "You—groogh—rotters—I—I can't go out like this—urrrrggh—I—I—wurrgh—"

"Can't you?" said Figgins. "Seems to me you'll have to. Keep this in mind, you blot, next time you think of wrecking a fellow's study."

"I—I—I—grooogh—ooooch—wurrgh!"

"You've asked for this, you smudge," said Figgins. "Did Tom Merry send for us, or was that a trick to get us out of the study?"

"Gurrrrrrggh!"

"Well, if Tommy wants us, he can send another messenger," said Figgins. "We've got some tidying-up to do here! We've had enough of you, Cardew! You can cut."

"I—I—groooooogh—!" gurgled Cardew.

"Open that door, Fatty."

Fatty Wynn, grinning, set the door wide open. Figgins, with a swing of a sinewy arm, sent Cardew spinning into the passage. Fatty slammed the door on him. Figgins and Co. had some work to do, to set their study to rights again, and they were done with Cardew!

Black Man!

“GWEAT Scott!”

Arthur Augustus D’Arcy jumped almost clear of the quad. His eyes popped, one of them almost through his eyeglass!

He stared blankly.

Arthur Augustus had been sauntering gracefully, at ease, in the quadrangle under the westering sun, thinking chiefly of a recent visit to his tailor’s at Wayland, and of the delightful new trouserings that he had inspected there. But he forgot all about trouserings, as a strange and startling figure came dashing at top speed from the direction of the New House. At the sight of it, he could scarcely believe his eyes or his eyeglass.

Who it was, what it was, nobody at St. Jim’s could have guessed: though Figgins and Co. could have told them. The strange figure was black all over. His face, his hair, his collar, even his clothes. If he was white underneath, he had certainly, like Phœbus Apollo, made himself “like unto the Night.” His nearest and dearest friend could not have recognized him.

Fellows stared from all sides.

Kildare of the Sixth, who was walking in the quad with Darrel and Langton of that form, called out to him in startled tones. But the black figure did not heed the voice of the captain of St. Jim’s. He tore on.

Cardew, in fact, was in a hurry. He had cut out of the New House in haste, and was only anxious to get back to his own House, and cut in, and wallow in hot water in a bath with plenty of soap. He had to cross the quad to get back to the School House, there was no help for that: and to do so, he had to run

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the gauntlet of a sea of staring eyes. It was no wonder that he put on speed.

There was a shout, as Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came running, from the direction of the tuck-shop.

"Who's that?"

"What's that?"

"Who's that darkey?"

"Stop!" shouted Kildare, from the distance. "Stop! Do you hear? Who are you? What are you doing here? Stop!"

The black figure tore on.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, almost petrified with astonishment at the strange sight, stood staring, right in his way. The black figure reached him and dodged round him. Arthur Augustus stretched out a hand to grasp him by the shoulder—and received a sudden jolt on the chest, which caused him to sit down in the quad with a bump.

"Wow!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as he sat.

Cardew raced on. He had a hope, if a faint one, of escaping into the House, and getting out of sight, without his identity being discovered. He was very anxious not to cut a ridiculous figure in the public eye if he could help it. He careered on.

"Here, who's that?" shouted Jack Blake. "What's that nigger doing here?"

"Stop him!" said Herries.

"Who on earth is he?" exclaimed Dig. "How did he get into the school? Hallo, Cutts has got him."

Cutts of the Fifth grasped the racing black figure. But he had not quite "got" him! Cardew, in quite a desperate frame of mind, hit out, catching Cutts of the Fifth with a sudden upper-cut, which caused Gerald Cutts to stagger back. He grasped again the next moment, but the black figure was gone, racing on breathlessly.

Mr. Railton, House-master of the School House, leaned from his study window: his attention drawn by the excited shouts in the quad. His eyes popped at the black figure charging up to the doorway of the House.

"Who—what? what—stop that person, Knox!" he called out. Knox of the Sixth was near at hand, staring at the black figure. At the House-master's call, he ran to intercept Cardew.

The next moment Knox wished that he hadn't! Cardew did not stop—he charged full tilt into Knox, and sent the Sixth-former spinning. Knox rolled over, and Cardew leaped up the steps of the House, and vanished within.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Railton: and he left the win-

dow, and rushed out of his study to investigate.

He had a glimpse of a black figure bounding up the staircase. It was gone the next moment. Cardew, panting, reached the study landing.

A yell of alarm greeted him there. Baggy Trimble of the Fourth was leaning on the landing balustrade, and he fairly bounded as the black figure came leaping on the landing.

"Oh, crikey! Here, you keep off!" yelled Trimble.

Cardew did not heed him. He rushed on across the landing, leaving the fat Baggy gibbering with astonishment and alarm.

"I say, help!" yelled Trimble. "I say, there's a wild nigger here! Help!"

Cardew tore on, into the Fourth-form passage.

Ridd, the new boy in the Fourth, was coming out of his study. He came out at an unlucky moment for himself. Something—he hardly knew what—crashed into him, and sent him spinning back into his study.

Cardew reeled from the shock. But only for a moment. He recovered himself, dashed on, and shot into his own study, No. 9. He slammed the door, turned the key in the lock, and stood panting.

Two fellows seated at the study table at tea bounded to their feet, and stared at him with popping eyes.

"Who—?" gasped Levison.

"What—?" stuttered Clive.

Cardew panted and panted. He was quite winded, and for the moment could not speak. From a distance came a roar of voices.

"He came this way—"

"Seen him, Ridd?"

"He cut up the passage—"

"A nigger—"

"After him! Root him out."

"Yaas, wathah! He knocked me ovah—"

"After him!"

Cardew, leaning on the inside of the door in No. 9 Study, panted and panted for breath. Levison caught up a cricket bat—Clive a stump! Cardew's chums were aware that he had gone over to the New House on the trail of vengeance, and were expecting his return. But they were not expecting him to return like this, and they did not dream of recognizing him. That wild black figure bore no resemblance whatever to the dandy of the Fourth.

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Cardew, trying to speak.

"Here, you keep off, whoever you are!" exclaimed Levison. "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

"Urrggh! You fool—!"

"They're after him, whoever he is!" exclaimed Clive. There was a rush of footsteps past the door. "Keep your distance, or you'll get this stump! Who are you?"

"You idiot!"

"Stand away from that door!" exclaimed Levison, raising the cricket bat. "I'm going to unlock it! Stand aside."

"You—you—you goat!" panted Cardew. "Don't you know me, you blitherer? You burbling idiot—"

"How should I know you? I've never seen you before, that I know of? Who are you?"

"Oh, you fathead—you ass—you blithering dummy—"

"Call out and let them know he's here," said Clive.

"Shut up!" hissed Cardew. "You fools—idiots—dummies—I'm Cardew."

"WHAT!"

"I'm Cardew, you dummies! Think I'm a nigger, like that fool Trimble?" hissed Cardew. "Oh, you dummies! I'm Cardew—"

"Cardew!"

Levison and Clive stared at him blankly. The voice, at least, was familiar, and they realised that it was Cardew. They dropped the cricket bat and stump.

"You—you—you prize idiot!" gasped Levison. "What have you blacked yourself all over for like that?"

"Gone crackers?" exclaimed Clive.

Cardew panted with rage.

"You dummies! Figgins and his gang sooted me all over, in the New House—I had to cut across the quad like this—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

There was a rattle at the door-handle, and a bang on the door. Tom Merry's voice followed:

"This door's locked! Has he dodged in here?"

"Bai Jove, if he's in Cardew's study, we've got him! Don't be wuff with him, deah boys—the poor old niggah must be cwackahs, you know, wushin' about the place like that—"

Bang, bang, on the door.

"Anybody here?" called out Tom Merry. "Open the door."

Cardew gave his chums an imploring look. Levison and Clive were grinning now.

"Keep them out!" breathed Cardew, in a whisper. "Don't let that mob see me like this—"

Levison chuckled.

"Bai Jove! Somebody's there, you fellows—I can heah him!"

The niggah must have locked the door—”

“Here comes Railton!”

“Oh, crumbs!” murmured Clive. “The House beak’s coming!”

“We shall have to open the door,” whispered Levison. “Get behind it, Cardew, if you don’t want to be seen.”

“If!” hissed Cardew. “Idiot!”

He got behind the door. Levison turned back the key, and opened it. The door, wide open, hid Cardew from the fellows crowded at the doorway.

Tom Merry looked in, with a dozen fellows behind him. Arthur Augustus’s eyeglass gleamed over his shoulder.

“Oh! You fellows at home!” exclaimed Tom. “The black man can’t be here, I suppose. Seen anything of him?”

“A black man?” repeated Levison.

“A wathah wuffianly-lookin’ black man, Levison,” exclaimed Arthur Augustus. “Goodness knows how he got into the school! He wan up the stairs—”

“Ridd saw him in this passage,” said Monty Lowther.

“Must be potty, I should think,” said Blake. “Rushing about like a lunatic—a nigger, you know—”

“Seen anything of him?”

“We haven’t seen anything of a nigger,” answered Levison, shaking his head. “No niggers in this study.”

“Sure he was a nigger?” asked Clive.

“Yaas, wathah! Black as the ace of spades, deah boy—the blackest niggah I have evah seen—”

“Well, he’s not here,” said Tom. “Come on!”

“Have you seen him, boys?” It was Mr. Railton’s voice. “He must be found—he must be made to explain what he is doing here—has anyone seen him?”

“No, sir! He must have gone up the passage—”

“Search for him at once.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Yaas, wathah.”

The crowd moved on up the passage. Levison closed the door of No. 9 Study. Cardew was revealed, panting, close to the wall. Levison and Clive looked at him with grinning faces. He gave them a glare in return.

“So that’s how your rag on the New House worked out?” grinned Clive.

“Oh, shut up!”

“You look a pretty picture!” chuckled Levison. “By gum! The fellows would yell, if they knew—”

“Will you shut up?” breathed Cardew.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"Do you think this is funny?" hissed Cardew.

"Don't you?" chuckled Levison. "Ha, ha, ha! You'll have to lie low for a bit, old bean, if you don't want to be seen—and chased as a wild nigger—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Clive.

"If you don't stop cackling—"

"Look at yourself in the glass," said Clive. "You're enough to make a stone image cackle! Better keep behind the door, in case any fellow looks in—if you don't want to be seen! Ha, ha!"

"You'll be able to dodge away to a bath-room, and get clean, later," said Levison, laughing. "I'll get you a change of clothes. But you'd better stick here till the coast's clear."

"I know that! Shut up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison and Clive sat down to finish their tea. Cardew remained standing by the door, to keep in cover if it opened. Tea in No. 9 Study was punctuated by chuckles. There were two smiling faces at the table. But Cardew did not smile: he was feeling like that ancient king who never smiled again!

11

Red Ink !

“YOU won't want that!” said Blake, staring.

“Weally, Blake—”

“Playing cricket in a topper?” asked Herries, sarcastically.

“Weally, Hewwies—”

“Perhaps Gussy thinks he's back in the middle of the nineteenth century, when they played cricket in toppers,” suggested Dig.

“Weally, Dig—”

After tea, in Study No. 6, they were going down to the nets. There was still an excited discussion in the School House about the mysterious black man who had so strangely appeared, and still more strangely disappeared. However, Blake and Co. were thinking of cricket: and three members of the study stared, as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy lifted his hat-box to the table, opened it, and drew a gleaming topper from it.

He gave it a brush with a velvet pad. Arthur Augustus was always very particular about his topper.

It was, indeed, a thing of beauty: though after Figgins's attentions to it the previous day, it was not likely to remain a joy for ever.

But as yet Arthur Augustus was blissfully ignorant of Figgy's attentions to that topper. He was about to make the discovery.

“As a mattah of fact, deah boys,” remarked Arthur Augustus, thoughtfully, “I wegard that old custom of playin' cwicket in toppahs as not at all a bad ideah. Howevah, I am not thinkin' of takin' this toppah down to the nets. I am goin' ovah to Wayland to see my tailah, while you fellows are at cwicket.”

“Oh! Those trouserings!” sighed Blake.

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"You couldn't walk over to Wayland in a common or garden cap, like an ordinary mortal?" said Herries.

"I wegard it as necessawy for at least one membah of the study to keep up wespectable appeawances, Hewwies. You fellows are wathah wag-bags, if you don't mind my mentionin' it."

Arthur Augustus, having brushed the topper, put it on his noble head, and stepped to the glass. It did not occur to him to glance inside it.

He gave a nod of satisfaction, at his reflection therein.

It was, indeed, a very good-looking and elegant schoolboy that looked back at him. He nodded approval.

"If you fellows would give a little more attention to dwess—!" he remarked.

"Leave it to you partner," yawned Blake.

"You'll be cooked in that topper," said Dig. "It's jolly hot to-day."

"Wubbish!"

The warmth of the weather was not likely to make Arthur Augustus leave his topper at home. He was visiting his tailor: and a visit to his tailor was a not unimportant function, in Gussy's view. Arthur Augustus had his own manners and customs, to which he faithfully adhered: though he had given up hope of ever inducing his study-mates to climb to his own high sartorial standards.

"Bai Jove, though," he added, a moment later. "It is wathah warm—my forehead feels quite damp with perspiwation! That is vewy odd. I did not notice it till I put my hat on."

"Chuck it away and shove on a cap," suggested Herries.

"Wats!"

"Well, I'm going down to the cricket," said Blake. "Why—what—what's the matter, Gussy?"

"Gweat Scott!"

"What the dickens—?"

"Oh, cwiskey!"

Arthur Augustus, quite puzzled to find his forehead so damp in the hat, but attributing it to a spot of perspiration due to the sultriness of the weather, took off the hat, and wiped his noble brow with a handkerchief.

Then he stared blankly at that handkerchief.

It was red!

"Oh, bai Jove! Look at that, deah boys!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "Look! Is there a cut on my forehead, Blake? I was not awah that there was a cut—I have not felt it! But look—!"

Blake and Herries and Digby stared blankly at the handkerchief, for a moment. Then they stared at Gussy's noble brow. Then they yelled:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! It is not a laughin' mattah, you fellows, if I have a cut on my forehead and it is bleedin' like that!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the three.

"You cacklin' asses—!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "Look at it! Look in my hat! It is stained all ovah inside! I must be bleedin' feahfully! Yet I did not know I had a cut—I do not feel any pain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pewwaps I had a cut when that black chap knocked me ovah, and nevah noticed it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you stop cacklin'?" howled Arthur Augustus. "Cannot you see that this is sewious?"

Evidently Blake and Herries and Digby could not see that it was serious. They howled and yelled, almost doubled up with merriment. They could see—what Arthur Augustus could not—that it was red ink that caused those alarming manifestations.

"Oh, cwumbs! I had bettah wush down and see the matwon!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I cannot feel a cut anywhah, but it is stweamin' blood—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as uttahly unfeelin' wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Appawently you would wegard it as funnay to see a fellow bleed to death undah your eyes! I wegard you as bwutes!"

Arthur Augustus rushed across to the door. Jack Blake grabbed him by the arm, and swung him to a stop.

"It's all right!" he gasped. "Hold on—"

"Let go my arm, you sillay ass—"

"Hold on—"

"I wefuse to hold on! I must get that feahful wound attended to at once—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah asses, cannot you see how it is bleedin'—?"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Blake. "You're not bleeding red ink, Gussy! You've got blue blood in your veins, old man—not red ink!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Herries and Dig.

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"Wha-a-a-t?" stuttered Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wed ink! Did you say wed ink, Blake?"

"Sort of!" gasped Blake. "Just red ink, old bean! You've been spilling red ink in your topper—ha, ha, ha!"

"I have done nothin' of the sort, Blake! Do you think I am sillay ass enough to spill wed ink in my toppah?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Somebody has, if you haven't."

"If you are awah it is wed ink, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus looked into the hat again, this time with closer attention. He looked at the handkerchief with which he had mopped his damp brow. It dawned upon him that he was not streaming blood from some unknown and unsuspected wound. He realised that it was red ink!

That was a relief! But alarm changed to wrath on the spot! Arthur Augustus's eyes gleamed into the inky interior of that hat! Like the young man in the Alps, his brow was black, his eye beneath flashed like a falchion from its sheath. He had had the narrowest possible escape of walking out in that hat—with the ink dripping down his aristocratic countenance. Figgins, no doubt, had expected that he would! That awful calamity had been escaped! But his face was inky—the interior of his topper was inky—and as he gazed into it, Arthur Augustus's wrath rose to white-heat! The wrath of Achilles, to Greece the direful spring of woes unnumbered, hadn't a thing on the wrath of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as he gazed into that hat!

"Who did this?" Utterly forgetful of the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, Arthur Augustus fairly roared. "If it was you, Blake—"

"Not guilty, my lord!"

"Hewwies, you gwinnin' ass—?"

"Never touched it!" gurgled Herries.

"Dig, you cacklin' fathead—!"

"Not me, old man," chuckled Dig. "Somebody must have cut into the study and doctored your topper, old bean. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I cannot weah that toppah now—" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Look at it! Look at my face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You chortlin' asses—"

"Better have a wash before you go to your tailor's, Gussy!" gasped Blake. "That face would make them sit up and take notice in Wayland."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"If you fellows think this is funnay—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am goin' to find out who did this, and give him a feahful thwashin'. Vewy likely it was that ass Lowthah—he is always playin' twicks. Will you silly asses stop cacklin' or not?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gussy's noble countenance, streaked and smeared with red ink, seemed too much for his chums. Instead of stopping cackling, as requested, they yelled and yelled.

"You silly, cacklin' chortlin' fatheads—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not a laughin' mattah at all—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! If you blithewin' idiots are goin' to cackle and cackle and cackle—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus said no more. He jumped to a corner of the study, where stood a cricket bat. He grasped that bat and charged at his chums, and drove them, still yelling like hyenas, from the study.

12

Out of Sight!

“WYNN!”

“Urrrrggh.”

Mr. Lathom gave quite a start. That was an unexpected reply to receive from a member of his form in the Fourth-form room.

It was quite involuntary on Fatty Wynn's part.

Fatty had, at the moment, an impediment in his speech. That impediment was a large chunk of toffee.

It was rather a risky business to consume toffee in the form-room. Even good-tempered Mr. Lathom would not stand for that. But David Llewellyn Wynn, as it happened, had a packet of toffee in his possession. He had had time, in break, to consume only a portion thereof: and had intended to dispose of the remainder after third school. But while the other fellows were on “con,” that toffee lingered in Fatty's mind. He was tempted—and he fell!

It seemed safe! Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was on “con,” extracting weird and wonderful meanings from P. Vergilius Maro. Mr. Lathom, accustomed as he was to “howlers” from the most elegant member of his form, was looking a little “shirty,” and his attention was concentrated on Gussy. And Fatty Wynn, hoping that that concentration would continue, slipped a fat hand into a pocket, extracted a chunk of toffee, and jammed it into his mouth.

It was a large chunk. Fatty could not risk drawing attention to his proceedings by breaking it. It was all or nothing! It just slipped in, and there it was, filling Fatty's mouth to capacity. Quite a lot remained in the packet in his pocket: but Fatty felt that that chunk would see him through third school—if he got away with it.

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For some moments, Fatty Wynn enjoyed life. If only Mr. Lathom had continued concentrating on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Fatty would have continued to enjoy life. But Lathom seemed, a few moments later, to have had enough of Gussy's wild and weird renderings of Virgil's deathless verse.

"D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, sir."

"Your construe would disgrace a boy in the Third Form!"

"Weally, sir—"

"You must give more attention to your studies, D'Arcy! To encourage you to do so, you may take fifty lines!" said Mr. Lathom, grimly.

"Bai Jove!"

"You may sit down! You will go on, Wynn. Wynn!"

"Urrrggh!"

"Do you hear me, Wynn?"

"Wurrgh!"

"Go on at once, Wynn!"

"Oooogh!"

Fatty was willing to oblige. Indeed he tried to oblige. But speech would not come, with his mouth crammed full with a large chunk of toffee. It was too large to be swallowed in a hurry. He dared not eject it under Lathom's staring gaze. It needed time to melt away—a pleasant process, had Fatty been given time for it. But it was likely to be long minutes before that chunk melted away. In the meantime, Fatty was speechless. He made frantic efforts to chew that toffee and get rid of it. But that toffee was a tough proposition, and it refused to be got rid of.

Mr. Lathom stared at him quite blankly. He could see that there was something the matter with Wynn of the Fourth: but he could not, for the moment, see what the matter was.

Figgins and Kerr gave their chum rather anxious looks. But they could not help him. Fatty choked and gurgled.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "What is the matter, Wynn?"

"Gurrrgh!"

"The boy seems to be choking!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, in alarm. "Pat him on the back, Herries."

"Yes, sir," said Herries, quite willingly. He could see what was the matter with Wynn, if Mr. Lathom could not: and he was prepared to render first aid—with a quite energetic hand.

Bang!

Thumping a New House tick in the form room seemed quite an attractive idea to George Herries.

"Yaroooh!" roared Fatty Wynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang!

"Herries! Not quite so hard," exclaimed Mr. Lathom. "Now, Wynn—why, bless my soul—what—what—what—"

Fatty Wynn's mouth had opened, and a chunk of toffee shot out. Herries' hefty fist banging on his back was too much for Fatty. He roared, and the toffee shot out and landed on the floor—fairly under the eyes of his Form-master.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wynn!" Lathom thundered. "Wynn! Is that toffee! Are you eating toffee in form, Wynn? Upon my word! Wynn—!"

"I—I—I—I—" stuttered Fatty.

"Bai Jove! That New House boundah is scoffin' toffee!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Howwid bad form, deah boys."

"Wynn! Are you eating toffee?"

"Oh! Ow! No! Yes! Oh, crikey."

"Stand out before the form, Wynn."

"Oh, jiminy."

Fatty Wynn rolled out before the form. Mr. Lathom eyed him with a stern glance over his spectacles.

"You have been eating toffee in form, Wynn. Have you any more in your pockets?"

"I—I—I—I—"

"Answer me at once."

"I—I—I—yes, sir!" groaned Fatty.

"Place it on my desk."

Fatty Wynn could have groaned. From the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he had left that toffee till after third school. Slowly, sadly, sorrowfully, he extracted the packet, and placed it on his Form-master's desk. Mr. Lathom frowned at it. It was quite a large packet—and not in the least so attractive in Lathom's eyes as in Fatty Wynn's.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Lathom. "You have smuggled that huge packet into the form-room, Wynn, with the intention of eating it in class! That packet of toffee will be confiscated, Wynn."

"Oh, lor'!"

"And you will go into Extra School this afternoon."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Now go back to your place!" snapped Mr. Lathom.

Fatty Wynn almost crawled back to his place. He went on "con" with a dismal fat countenance. After his turn at "con" he was quite unable to give attention to the lesson. His eyes lingered on that packet on the Form-master's desk. It was a large—if not exactly "huge"—packet: there was immense enjoyment in that packet—chunk after chunk of sweet and sticky toffee! To lose it was an overwhelming disaster. Fatty even desperately resolved that if Lathom left it on his desk, he would contrive somehow to get back into the form-room after class, and recover it. The form-room window was wide open in the fine summer weather—there would be a chance.

But alas for Fatty!

When Mr. Lathom dismissed the form, he picked up the packet from his desk, and took it away with him! Fatty Wynn watched it go, with deep feelings. In the quad, he gave his chums, Figgins and Kerr, lugubrious looks.

"You fat ass," said Figgins. "Extra for you this afternoon, and no cricket."

"My toffee—!" mumbled Fatty.

"Two hours French with Mossoo!" said Kerr.

"But my toffee—!"

Fatty, it seemed, was not bothering about Extra School. It was the loss of the toffee that worried him. He looked round stealthily at Lathom's study window—open to the balmy summer breeze.

"Old Lathom's taken it to his study," he whispered. "I say, think a fellow could cut in at his window, and—"

"And drop into his arms!" said Figgins, sarcastically.

"He won't stay in his study," breathed Fatty. "He will be trotting along to Common Room! I say, you chaps keep cave, and I—I'll chance it—"

Fatty made a step towards his Form-master's window. Figgins and Kerr promptly grasped him by either arm. Climbing in at a Form-master's open window, with about fifty pairs of eyes in the quad to turn on him, seemed to Fatty's chums a much too perilous proposition.

"Come on, fathead!" said Figgins.

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"Come on, ass!" said Kerr.

"But my toffee—!" protested Fatty.

"Blow your toffee! Come on!"

"Look here, I'm jolly well going to chance it, and—leggo!" roared Fatty Wynn, indignantly.

"You've got Extra School—you're not going to get a licking too," said Figgins. "Come on!"

"I tell you—!"

"Come on!" said Kerr.

And Fatty Wynn came on! And that packet of toffee remained in Mr. Lathom's study, while Fatty's loyal chums marched him away to the New House—out of danger.

13

Gussy Takes the Lead

“FEED?” asked Monty Lowther.

“Not at all, deah boy.”

“Then what—?” asked Manners.

“Just a meetin’!” explained Arthur Augustus D’Arcy.

“What about?” asked Tom Merry, in his turn.

“A very important mattah, deah boy,” answered Arthur Augustus, impressively. “Pway come up to Study No. 6.”

“But—!” said the Terrible Three, together.

“Pway do not waste time makin’ idle wemarks, deah boys! I have told you that it is an important meetin’. It concerns the honah of the House! So pway come on.”

“Oh, all right!” said Tom.

And the chums of the Shell followed Arthur Augustus. It was after class—except for a few hapless delinquents, like David Llewellyn Wynn, who were booked for Extra School. The Terrible Three were more inclined for the open air and the open spaces, than for a meeting in a junior study. However, they were obliging fellows, so they obliged. Moreover, they were just a little curious to know how the “honour of the House” was concerned in a meeting in Study No. 6 in the Fourth. Certainly, they were as keen as any School House men on the honour of their House.

Blake and Herries and Dig were in the study. Jack Blake gave the Shell fellows a resigned look as they ambled in.

“Gussy roped you in?” he said. “Tough life, ain’t it?”

“Weally, Blake—”

“But what’s it all about?” asked Tom.

“Goodness knows—unless Gussy does! Gussy is going to wag

his chin, so far as I can make out, and we're going to listen-in."

"Not for long!" remarked Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Get it off your chest, Gussy, now we're all here, and let's get out," suggested Dig.

"Pewwaps we ought to gathah a few more fellows," said Arthur Augustus, thoughtfully. "Pewwaps we had bettah call old Talbot, and Levison's crowd, and old Kangawooh, and—"

"This study isn't elastic," said Blake. "It won't stretch wide enough to admit all the Fourth and the Shell."

"Get going, old chap," suggested Tom Merry. "There's enough of us here to take care of the honour of the jolly old House—if it's in danger."

"Go it, Gussy," said Monty Lowther.

"And cut it short," said Herries.

"I am afwaid that I cannot cut it vewy short, Hewwies, as it is a vewy important mattah," said Arthur Augustus, calmly. "I twust you fellows are all keen on keepin' up the honah of the House."

"Keen as mustard," agreed Blake. "Anything the matter with the House? I haven't noticed it."

"There is somethin' vewy much the mattah, Blake. Is this House cock-house of St. Jim's or not?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Yes, rather," agreed the whole company, with one voice. Nobody in the School House was likely to dispute that statement, at all events.

"Our wivals, ovah the way, claim that the New House is cock-house of St. Jim's! That is uttah wot!"

"Hear, hear!"

"But—!" said Arthur Augustus.

"No 'but' about that!" said Tom Merry. "We're cock-house of St. Jim's, and all other claimants are spurious! The New House is nowhere. Figgins and Co. are merely also rans! If that!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus. "But—"

"Still butting?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, let him get on with his billy-goat act!" sighed Blake. "We shall be here till prep at this rate."

"But—!" repeated Arthur Augustus, firmly. "But we have been gettin' the worst of it! The New House has been whoppin' us all along the line! Yestahday I found wed ink in my toppah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"And I have jollay well guessed who did it, as Figgins was in here with a bottle of wed ink the day befoah. I thought at first that it might have been Lowthah, as he is a pwactical jokin' ass—"

"Might have been, if I'd thought of it!" said Lowther, regretfully. "But I never did!"

"It was Figgins all wight! Then look at the twick he played on Mannahs' camewah—"

"The silly ass!" said Manners, frowning. "I had a jolly good mind to go over to the New House and punch his head for it."

"It may have been wathah funnay, Mannahs wagin' all ovah the House for a camewah that was in his study all the time—"

"Was it?" yapped Manners.

"Well, yes, Mannahs—it made us all laugh, you know—"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Idiot!"

"Bai Jove! If you are goin' to use such oppwobwious expwessions, Mannahs—"

"Get on with the agenda," suggested Tom Merry. "What's the next item?"

"Vewy well, deah boy. As I wemarked, it may have been funnay about Mannahs and his camewah, but it was a score for Figgins and Co. Then there was that trick they played in No. 9 Study—baggin' Cardew's cigawettes, and sending them back soaked in watah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course it served Cardew wight, for bein' a smoky ass, but it was a score for the New House! They have been scorin' all along the line. And yestahday there was that black man—"

"Cardew, as it turns out," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Yaas, wathah! It appeahs that he went ovah to the New House to wag, and got wagged," said Arthur Augustus. "I believe the beaks are still wonderin' who that black man was, and how he got in and got out again—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, wathah, it may be funnay—but I wepeat that it is a score for the New House. I wepeat that they have been scorin' all along the line, and this House appeahs to be nowhah. That will not do!" said Arthur Augustus, firmly. "That is why I have called this meetin', to uphold the honah of the House. We are goin' on the war-path, to put Figgins and Co. in their place: and make them sing small, and hide their diminished heads, and all that, you know."

"Oh!" said the assembled company.

"I shall take the lead—"

"Will you?" murmured Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! It will need a bwainy chap to put Figgins and Co. in their pwopah place," explained Arthur Augustus. "That is where I come in whathah ştwong."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I have been thinkin' it out, and have stwuck upon an extwemely bwight ideah—I may say bwilliant!" said Arthur Augustus, modestly. "I know pwecisely how to make those New House boundahs sit up and feel fwightfully sowwy for themselves! Aftah I have done with them, they won't be cacklin' quite so much ovah the way."

Arthur Augustus glanced round the assembly in Study No. 6, perhaps expecting them to look impressed. But they did not seem frightfully impressed. In fact, Jack Blake winked at the other fellows, and the other fellows grinned. It really looked as if the School House fellows, even Gussy's own familiar friends, lacked faith in his gifts as a leader, and set little store by his bright, or brilliant, ideas!

"Weally, you fellows, I should wathah like to know what you are gwinnin' at?" said Arthur Augustus, with some asperity.

"Oh, carry on, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "What's the bright idea? If you know how to give those New House bounders the kybosh, we'll back up."

"Look at this!" said Arthur Augustus. To the surprise of the assembly, he picked up, from the study shelf, a copy of the current issue of the *Wayland and Rylcombe Gazette*. He held it up to the general view.

"Look at that!" he said.

"What about it?" asked Tom Merry, puzzled. "Anything about our cricket matches this week—?"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, there are othah mattahs in the universe as well as cwicket matches," said Arthur Augustus.

"You won't get Tom to believe that!" said Monty Lowther, shaking his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway look at that advertisement!" said Arthur Augustus, and he indicated a paragraph in the advertisement column of the local paper, which was marked with pencil. "Wead it!"

In suprise, the juniors read it. It ran:

*Splendid young bulldog, name of Zip, for sale.
Fierce on tramps. Teeth like a shark.—Phone
Wayland 109.*

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"What the dickens—?" said Blake.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"I am goin' to phone to Wayland 109," he said, "and ask the man to bwing that bulldog heah."

"You think you're going to keep a bulldog in the study?" exclaimed Blake. "You had better forget it, Gussy."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Wash it right out," said Dig. "We had enough trouble when Herries wanted to keep Towser in the study—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"But what's that got to do with the New House, anyway?" asked Manners.

"If you will let a fellow explain, I will tell you! I am not goin' to ask them to bwing the bulldog to this House. I am goin' to land it on Figgins and Co. in the New House."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Phew!"

"I wathah think it will make them hop, when a man blows in with a fierce bulldog with teeth like a shark—" grinned Arthur Augustus. "I shall ask them particulahly to delivah it to Figgins in his study. Pewwaps it will amuse them on a half-holiday! Pewwaps it will keep them too busy to think of spillin' wed ink in a fellow's toppah, what?"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Blake.

"I am goin' to bowwow Lathom's phone," said Arthur Augustus. "Cardew has asked me to go on the wivah with him befoah tea, and I shall cut into Lathom's study and use his phone befoah I go out. Easy as fallin' off a form."

"But—!" said Tom Merry.

"But—!" said Jack Blake.

"But—!" said Dig.

It was quite a chorus of "buts." Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass from face to face, with a cold glance.

"You fellows don't seem feahfully enthusiastic!" he remarked, sarcastically.

"Might be a row—!" said Tom.

"Pretty certain to be a row," said Blake.

"I am not afwaid of a wow," said Arthur Augustus, calmly. "There might have been a wòw about Figgins and Co. blackin' Cardew—they wisked it! I am goin' to wisk it. It is a vewy favouwable opportunity this aftahnoon, as both House-masters will be out—Watcliff and Wailton are both goin' ovah to the lecture at Wayland Hall, and Lathom is goin' too. Most of the pwefects will be on Big Side, at cwicket. And I think—"

"You do!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, in surprise.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Might be quite a spot of trouble, if some tough character lands here with a bulldog, and finds that his leg's been pulled," he said. "Better wash it out, Gussy."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Much better," said Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"You want to know what we think of the idea?" asked Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Rotten!" said Blake.

"Mouldy!" said Dig.

"Putrid!" said Herries.

"Passed unanimously," said Tom Merry. "And now, who's coming down to cricket?"

"Weally, you fellows—"

Six fellows marched out of the study, bent on cricket. Arthur Augustus's eye, and eyeglass, followed them, more in sorrow than in anger. Arthur Augustus had concentrated his aristocratic intellect on thinking out this jape on the enemy in the New House: and he, at least, had no doubt that it was a winner. Only too clearly, that opinion was not shared by his comrades. Their faith in Arthur Augustus, as a leader on the war-path, amounted to absolutely nil.

But that did not deter Arthur Augustus. He had thought this thing out, and he was going ahead with it. He had faith in his own judgment, if nobody else had. He expressed his feelings by a sniff: and then left No. 6, to make his way to Mr. Lathom's study, and get on with it.

Fatty in a Fix!

FATTY WYNN smiled.

“Oh!” he murmured.

Fatty, up to that moment, had not been in cheery spirits. Two hours in Extra School, with Monsieur Morny and French irregular verbs, could hardly be expected, as a prospect, to make any fellow feel cheery. Added to that, Fatty's toffee was still in Lathom's study: and Figgins and Kerr had kept a watchful eye on their plump chum, taking care that he did not make any desperate attempt to recover possession of it. Now Fatty was crossing over to the School House, to join other delinquents in the detention-room: with a frown upon his usually cheerful plump countenance, and in the lowest spirits. But suddenly the clouds rolled away, as it were, and he smiled.

Nobody else smiled, at the sight of three gentlemen walking down to the gates. A good many fellows knew that Mr. Ratcliff, Mr. Railton, and Mr. Lathom, were going over to Wayland that afternoon, to an educational lecture at Wayland Town Hall. But nobody was particularly interested—except Fatty Wynn: and nobody else saw occasion to smile. Fatty did.

For as Mr. Lathom was walking down the gates with Railton and Ratcliff, it was absolutely certain that he would not be in his study in the School House. That apartment would be vacant.

Fatty Wynn had to go into the School House, where the detention-room was. He would only have to cut along to Masters' Studies, to retrieve that packet of toffee. He knew now that Lathom wouldn't be there, so that was all right. And the toffee would be a great comfort to him during Extra. Monsieur Morny was a very easy-going gentleman: when he took Extra, he was only too glad to get through without a rag: and quite unlikely to

spot a fellow with a packet of toffee under his desk, or to make a fuss about it if he did. There was little risk in chancing it with Mossou: and none at all, as it now appeared, in dodging into Lathom's study after that toffee.

Which was the reason why Fatty Wynn's plump face, hitherto overclouded, beamed in a cheery smile, like the sun coming out from the clouds.

He walked on quite briskly to the School House.

Within that building, he glanced round him rather cautiously. Then, instead of heading for the detention-room, he cut into the passage on which the masters' studies opened. Nobody was in that passage, and in a few moments he had opened Mr. Lathom's door, and shot in.

He shut the door after him, carefully, and cut across to the table. His fat face beamed. On the table, among Mr. Lathom's papers, lay a large packet—just as Lathom had laid it down, and, probably, forgotten it since.

"Oh, good!" gasped Fatty Wynn.

His plump hand clutched the packet. Fatty's best guess, with the packet in his hand, was to shoot out of the study as fast as he had shot into it. But the lure of the toffee was strong. He stayed to extract a chunk of toffee, and cram it into his mouth. He slipped the packet into his pocket, and chewed at the chunk ecstatically. Really, it was delicious. For a long, happy moment, Fatty Wynn enjoyed life to the full.

But, after one long delicious chew, he remembered that he was in forbidden precincts, and that it behoved him to travel. Still chewing, and still happy, though cautious, he stepped to the door, silently opened it an inch or two, and peered out, hoping to see it as deserted as it had been a couple of minutes ago.

But one peep into the passage was enough for Fatty, and his head popped back like that of a tortoise into its shell.

He had a glimpse of three figures in that passage so recently quite deserted.

One was that of an elegant junior, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form, standing by the window at the end of the passage, looking out—apparently interested in the scenery outside. Fatty had a glimpse of his back, which did not interest David Llewellyn Wynn in the least. But the other two figures were much more alarming. One was Mr. Linton, the Master of the Shell: the other Mr. Selby, the Master of the Third Form.

"Oh!" breathed Fatty. "Two beaks! Oh!"

The elegant junior at the window did not matter a bean. But Linton and Selby mattered a lot. If a "beak" saw Fatty in that

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"Oh!" breathed Fatty. "Two beaks! Oh!"

The elegant junior at the window did not matter a bean. But Linton and Selby mattered a lot. If a "beak" saw Fatty in that

study, he would certainly take note of the fact. He might even question him as to what he was doing there. At the very least, he would remember having seen him, which would be very awkward for Fatty if Lathom inquired later after a vanished packet of toffee! So very keen had Fatty been on recovering that toffee, that he had not quite realised how very serious a matter it was to raid a confiscated article from a master's study. He realised it now.

"Blow!" breathed Fatty.

He had to wait, at the risk of being late for Extra. The rather thin voice of Mr. Linton came to his ears.

"Has Mr. Lathom gone yet, do you know, Selby?"

"I am sure I don't know, Linton."

Fatty heard departing footsteps. Apparently Mr. Selby had gone on his way, after answering the Master of the Shell. That would have been a relief: but for the fact that Fatty also heard approaching footsteps! Selby was going—but Linton was coming up the passage—was he going to look into Lathom's study to see whether he was there? If he did, he would not see Lathom—but certainly he would see David Llewellyn Wynn!

"Oh!" gasped Fatty.

He was caught in that study—just as George Figgins had been caught in Study No. 6 a few days ago! But it was rather a more serious matter to be caught by a beak! Fatty remembered Figgy's dodge in Study No. 6, and cast a hurried glance round him for a hiding place.

The curtains at the window were drawn back, letting the summer sunlight stream in. Fatty crossed the study with a jump like a fat rabbit, and packed himself behind the curtain on one side of the window. The curtains were long and heavy, reaching to the floor: and Fatty was safe out of sight—unless the curtain was shifted!

The curtain was still agitated, from Fatty's hurried retreat behind it, when there came a tap at the door. It opened.

Fatty scarcely breathed.

"Mr. Lathom—!" It was Linton's voice at the doorway.

But the Master of the Shell did not continue. He saw at a glance that Mr. Lathom was not there: and evidently he did not suspect that anyone else was there, behind the curtain.

Fatty heard the door shut again, and then Mr. Linton's footsteps going up the passage. Faintly from the distance he heard the sound of another shutting door: Linton had gone into his own study—he was done with the Master of the Shell.

"Oh, crikey!" breathed Fatty.

He had had a narrow escape! Perspiring, he emerged from behind the curtain. The chunk of toffee, melting in his mouth, undoubtedly was delicious: but Fatty was beginning to think that even the toffee was not worth all this alarm.

He approached the door on tiptoe, to take another peep into the passage. But he stopped.

Footsteps were coming up the passage. It could not be Linton this time. Was it Selby? If he looked in, like Linton—!

Fatty Wynn backed behind the curtain again, nearly knocking over, in his haste, the little table by the window on which the telephone stood. Luckily, it did not quite go over.

Hidden once more, Fatty palpitated: listening with all his plump ears.

The footsteps stopped at the door. He was thankful that he was out of sight, as the door opened, without a tap this time.

"Oh, crumbs!" breathed Fatty, inaudibly.

He wondered whether Mr. Lathom had returned! Who else would enter Lathom's study without first tapping at the door?

Fatty trembled! If his Form-master, who had gone out with Ratcliff and Railton, had returned, his game was up. Figgins, when cornered in Study No. 6, had tipped over an armchair on the enemy and escaped: but Fatty Wynn certainly couldn't think of such measures with a Form-master. If it was Lathom—!

The door shut, quietly, and footsteps came across the study.

The thick curtain, which hid Fatty from sight, also cut off his view: he could not see who had entered. But whoever he was, he was coming directly towards the window—towards the alarmed Fatty.

Was it Lathom, and did he guess that somebody was there? Fatty Wynn felt the perspiration trickling down his face. A dozen packets of toffee would not have been worth this!

He barely repressed a squeak, as an elbow brushed the curtain. Was it about to be pulled aside, revealing a fat, perspiring, breathless New House junior to the eyes of a wrathful Form-master?

Fatty held his breath.

But apart from that brush from an elbow, the curtain did not stir. Fatty heard a sound—the sound of a receiver lifted from the hooks, followed by a whirring of a dial.

Then he understood, and breathed again.

Someone had come into the study to use Mr. Lathom's telephone and was dialling a number. That was why he had come across to the window—not because Fatty was there, but because the telephone was there. He—whoever he was—was not two feet from Fatty Wynn, as he stood at the instrument. Fatty breathed very softly!

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

He listened, hoping to discover from the voice, when he heard it, who the unknown was, and whether he was a master or not. He gave a start that almost shook the curtain, as a sound came. It was a chuckle!

The chuckle was followed by a murmuring voice:

"They will jollay well see whethah I am the man to jape those New House ticks or not! I wathah think they will sit up in Figgins's study when that bulldog awwives! Ha, ha!"

Another chuckle!

Fatty Wynn blinked.

He knew that voice! It was the unmistakable voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's. It was D'Arcy of the Fourth who had come into Lathom's study to use the telephone: and he was going to use it, evidently, for a jape on the New House, to make Figgins and Co. "sit up." The member of that Co. who was hidden behind the curtain, almost at D'Arcy's elbow, suppressed a chuckle. Fatty Wynn's alarm had vanished now. He was amused and interested. Grinning almost from ear to ear, Fatty Wynn listened-in.

15

A Talk on the Telephone!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS chuckled again.

He was in cheery mood.

His friends had not enthused over that jape on Figgins and Co. of the New House. They had not regarded it, as Gussy himself did, as a winner. They had indeed described it as rotten and mouldy. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not swayed by adverse opinions from lesser mortals.

Gussy, at least, was satisfied with his deep-laid scheme for discomfiting the New House enemy, and he was going to carry on, regardless.

And really everything seemed to be going his way. Mr. Lathom had gone out for the afternoon, leaving his study vacant and his telephone at the mercy of a borrower. Gussy had been checked, on arriving at Masters' Studies, by seeing Mr. Selby and Mr. Linton in the passage. But not for long. He had remained at the end window, with a careless assumption of looking out at the pigeons in the quad, till they were gone: and he had not long to wait. Selby had gone out of the House: Linton, after looking into Lathom's study, had gone to his own, gone in, and shut the door. The coast was clear—it could not have been clearer.

So all that Gussy had to do was to walk along to Mr. Lathom's study, walk in, and handle the telephone—and here he was, doing so, certainly without the remotest suspicion that the curtain at his elbow hid a New House junior!

Fatty Wynn made no move to betray his presence. He was grinning behind the curtain. His grin extended almost from ear to ear, as Arthur Augustus's cheery murmur ran on:

“Those New House wottahs have been scorin' all along the

line! They have been gwinnin' like anythin' ovah that ink in my hat! Bai Jove! I wathah think I am goin' to give them somethin' else to gwinn about—if they feel like gwinnin' with a bulldog in their study!”

And Arthur Augustus chuckled once more.

However, he ceased to chuckle, as a voice came through on the telephone. It was a deep and rather gruff voice. Fatty Wynn was standing so close to the instrument that he heard it as well as Arthur Augustus.

“'Allo!” came the voice.

“Is that Wayland one-O-nine?” inquired Arthur Augustus.

“That's ere all right! Name of Bunker.”

“Good-aftahnoon, Mr. Bunkah!”

“Oh, good-arternoon! Wot's wanted?”

“I have wung you up about your advertisement in the *Wylcombe Gazette*, Mr. Bunkah!”

“Oh! That?” Mr. Bunker's voice became a little less gruff.

“You arter that dorg Zip? Fine animal, sir! Where you speaking from?”

“St. Jim's—”

“Eh? Wot! Oh, the school. You a schoolboy?”

“Yaas, wathah! I am vewy intewested in the dog descwibed in your advertisement, Mr. Bunker, and I wathah think that he is exactly what is wequiahed. I pwesume that the descwiptioin is accuwate?”

“Jest that, sir,” said Mr. Bunker. “Fierce, that animal is, if what you want is a fierce 'un.”

“Pwecisely, Mr. Bunkah.”

“Then that 'ere Zip will suit you down to the ground. That dorg don't 'arf look at a bloke afore he pins 'im.”

“Bai Jove!”

“You jest want to see his teeth! Like a shark! Once them teeth is in a bloke, I'm sorry for his trousis.”

“Oh, cwumbs! Of course, I don't want anybody to be bitten, Mr. Bunkah,” exclaimed Arthur Augustus, hastily.

“That's all right sir,” answered Mr. Bunker, reassuringly. “He won't bite nobody unless he's told! Jest give the word, that's all. Gentle as a lamb with his master, that dorg is! He'd give a tramp the fright of his blinkin' life, but he wouldn't 'urt 'im unless told! That's Zip!”

“That's all sewene, then! I think that dog is all wight, Mr. Bunkah.”

“No, I can't say that, sir! He ain't all white—he's spotted—”

“Bai Jove! I mean he is all wight—”

"Dark spots on 'im, sir, if that matters—"

"I mean all wight—wight as wain—wight as a—"

"Oh, I get you, sir! Sure, that dorg's all right! If you'd walk in 'ere and take a squint at him, sir—"

"Pewwaps you could delivah him at the school, Mr. Bunkah."

"Pleased and 'appy, sir! I'd walk over with pleasure, if so be you want that dorg Zip, sir."

"Could you come this aftahnoon?"

"I could that, sir."

"About half-past five?"

"Right on the nail, sir! I got to drop in at the Peal o' Bells to see a friend, but arter that, bags of time to walk over to the school afore 'arf-past five."

"That will be tea-time, and they will be in their study—"

"Eh?"

"I—I—I mean, that will be quite all wight, Mr. Bunkah. Pewwaps you are awah that there are two Houses heah—"

"Never seed inside the place, sir."

"Well, there are two Houses, and the bulldog must be delivered at the New House. The portah will point it out to you."

"O.K., sir. I'll find it all right."

"Ask for George Figgins—pway get the name wight—Figgins—"

"I got it—Figgins—"

"And deliver the bulldog in his study. It is vevy particular for it to be delivahed in his study, on the second floor of the New House. Figgins's study—in the New House—you have that wight?"

"I got it all right, sir. Leave it to me."

"Thank you vevy much, Mr. Bunkah."

"Thank YOU, sir," said Mr. Bunker.

Arthur Augustus put up the receiver. He chuckled again over the telephone, and Fatty Wynn, behind the curtain, had to exercise considerable self-control not to echo his chuckle.

Mr. Bunker, at the other end, also chuckled. His schoolboy interlocutor had not even asked the price of the bulldog, apparently regarding that as a negligible detail. That was that sort of customer with whom Mr. Bunker liked to deal. He had no doubt that there were rich coveys at a school like St. Jim's who could afford to chuck money about: and he was more than willing, indeed, he was quite eager, to have some chucked in his direction.

"Bai Jove!" Still happily unaware of listening ears, Arthur Augustus communed with himself, "I wathah think that will make that New House boundahs sit up! I weally wondah what will happen when Mr. Bunkah awwives in Figgy's study with a bull-

dog! Pwobably somethin' wathah excitin'! I can just see those thwee New House boundahs jumpin' on the table to keep out of weach of his teeth! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus laughed.

Fatty Wynn, behind the curtain, very nearly did the same! But he was very careful to suppress any sound! Fatty's idea was to let the ineffable Gussy run on with this remarkable jape, in blissful ignorance of the fact that the enemy were wise to it! It would be quite easy, with another telephone call—from the New House—to cancel those instructions to Mr. Bunker: and leave Arthur Augustus on the look-out for a bulldog that would never arrive, and wondering what had gone wrong!

Chuckling, Arthur Augustus crossed the study to the door. Fatty Wynn heard him open it cautiously. Apparently the coast was clear, for he heard it shut again: Arthur Augustus was gone.

Grinning, Fatty emerged from behind the curtain.

In his turn, he peered out at the door. The passage was deserted: Arthur Augustus had gone up to Cardew's study, to tell him that he was ready to go on the river, never dreaming that he had left a fat New House junior behind him. Fatty Wynn crept quietly out of Lathom's study. He was already late for Extra—but that could not be helped: he had to warn Figgins of what was scheduled to happen that afternoon, and instead of heading for the detention-room, he headed for the quad to look for Figgins and Kerr.

Another Talk on the Telephone!

“FATTY, you ass!”

“Fatty, you duffer—”

“You’re late—”

“You’ll get reported to Railton, if Froggy’s shirty.”

That was how Figgins and Kerr greeted their plump chum. They had supposed him to be already in Extra: and were surprised to meet him in the quad. A bulge in a fat cheek hinted of toffee.

“That’s all right,” said Fatty Wynn. “I say—”

“You fat, frabjous fathead!” said Figgins, in measured tones.

“You’re scoffing toffee—”

“Yes, I know! I say—”

“You’ve cut Extra, and snooped that packet of toffee from Lathom’s study!” exclaimed Figgins. “Is that it?”

“Yes: but—”

“If Lathom misses it—!” said Kerr.

“Well, he forgets things, you know,” said Fatty Wynn. “I fancy it will be all right, as I wasn’t seen. But I say—”

“Cut into Extra, you ass! You’re late enough already.”

“I know that! But—”

“Hook it!”

“Will you let a fellow speak?” hooted Fatty Wynn. “I’m chancing it with Mossoo just to put you wise, Figgy. And I may jolly well get lines for it!” added Fatty, aggrieved. “Listen to a chap and don’t waste time! I say, D’Arcy came into Lathom’s study and phoned, while I was there, and it’s a jape on the New House—how’d you like a bulldog to be landed on you in our study?”

“What?” ejaculated Figgins.

“Which!” exclaimed Kerr.

Fatty Wynn proceeded to relate the occurrence in Mr. Lathom's study. Figgins and Kerr listened, in astonishment.

"Well, my hat!" said George Figgins, when Fatty had finished. "Who'd have thought the one and only was so jolly artful! Fancy old Gussy imagining that he can jape the New House!"

"Not in his lifetime!" said Kerr.

"He jolly well would have if I hadn't been there," said Fatty Wynn. "But you know now, Figgy! You can phone Bunker, Wayland 109, and put him off—and leave that School House ass wondering why he doesn't come. See?"

Figgins chuckled.

"I'll make it a bit richer than that," he said. "I've got ideas about landing bulldogs on fellows, as well as old Gussy! You cut off into Extra, Fatty, and leave it to us."

"Right-ho!"

Fatty Wynn rolled back to the School House. As he rolled in, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his relative, Cardew of the Fourth, were coming out. Cardew gave him a dark look, no doubt remembering the sooty incident in Figgins' study. Arthur Augustus smiled, thinking of the surprise that was going to happen in that same study later in the afternoon! Fatty Wynn grinned at both of them, and went on his way to the detention-room, while Arthur Augustus and Cardew went down to the river.

Monsieur Morny frowned at Fatty as he came in. The plump Fourth-former of the New House was twenty minutes late for Extra.

"You take feefty lines of ze Henriade, Wynn!" yapped Mossoo.

"Yes, sir!" said Fatty, meekly.

And he sat down in the detention class. The toffee was, perhaps, worth fifty lines of French: putting "paid" to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's deep-laid scheme certainly was. Moreover, Mossoo generally forgot to ask for the lines he imposed. Fatty Wynn was quite cheerful during that Extra School: comforted by toffee!

Figgins and Kerr strolled away to the New House: Figgins with a glimmer in his eyes, and a cheery grin on his rugged features.

"Topping," he remarked.

Kerr laughed.

"Dear old Gussy!" he said. "His wonderful jape won't come off!"

"Not as he's fixed it!" chuckled Figgins.

"Easy enough to borrow Ratty's phone. Better get through to that man Bunker and wash it out!" said Kerr, laughing.

"I'm going to get through to that man Bunker—but I jolly well ain't going to wash it out!" chuckled Figgins.

Kerr stared at him.

"My dear chap, we don't want that man and his giddy bow-wow landed in our study!" he exclaimed.

"Who's talking about our study?" asked Figgins.

"That's what D'Arcy's arranged, from what Fatty said—"

"And that's what I'm going to disarrange," said Figgins. "Come on—the sooner we get through the better, before Bunker goes out."

It was easy, as Kerr had said, to borrow Mr. Ratcliff's telephone: the House-master of the New House being a good mile away by that time. The two juniors slipped into their House-master's study, and Kerr closed the door.

Figgins picked up the receiver of Mr. Ratcliff's phone, and dialled 109 Wayland. Both juniors listened to the gruff voice that came back.

"Allo! Oo's speaking?"

"That Wayland one-O-nine?" asked Figgins, just like Arthur Augustus a quarter of an hour earlier in Mr. Lathom's study in the other House.

"You got it! Name of Bunker."

"About the bulldog—"

"My bulldog, Zip—?"

"That's it! Speaking from St. Jim's—"

"You ain't the same young gentleman what was speaking afore! I'd know his voice anywhere, I would! What about that 'ere bulldog?"

"There's been a little mistake—!"

"Wot? 'Ere, come orf it!" came back Mr. Bunker's voice, with rather a growl in it. "You can't waste a man's time like that 'ere! I been asked to bring that 'ere bulldog over to the school, at 'arf-past five, I 'ave—"

"Yes, that's right. But—"

"Now you tells me there's a mistake! What sort of a mistake, I'd like to know?" grunted Mr. Bunker.

"I'll explain! You're to bring the dog all right—"

"Oh!" Mr. Bunker's tone became more placable. "If that's all right, all right. A man don't like to be fooled about! When a bloke says as 'ow he wants a dorg, I 'spose he wants a dorg! What?"

"Quite!" agreed Figgins. "It's like this! You're to deliver the dog to a chap named D'Arcy—got that?—D'Arcy—"

"I got it! But the other young gent said name of Figgins."

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"That was a mistake! D'Arcy was going to let Figgins have the dog, but Figgins doesn't want a dog, so you're to deliver it to D'Arcy himself. Ask for Mr. D'Arcy, Study No. 6 in the School House, and deliver the dog there. You're to bring the dog just the same, at the time arranged, and deliver it to Mr. D'Arcy, who telephoned you. Is that clear?"

"Clear enough, sir. I'll be there."

"Right!"

Figgins put up the receiver, and grinned at Kerr. Kerr chuckled.

"Jolly good of old Gussy to arrange these little surprises for other fellows," remarked Figgins. "One good turn deserves another, what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't know exactly what Mr. Bunker's like, but I gather from his voice that he's a rather tough customer. He may get shirty with Gussy, if Gussy doesn't want that bulldog after phoning for it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Might have been quite a spot of bother, in our study, if Gussy had got away with this!" grinned Figgins. "The spot of bother will occur in No. 6 over in the School House instead! Let's hope Gussy will enjoy it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chuckling, the two juniors left Mr. Ratcliff's study. Arthur Augutsus D'Arcy, in a punt with Cardew on the Ryll, was thinking with happy anticipation of the arrival of Mr. Bunker and his bulldog at St. Jim's. Figgins and Kerr were also in a state of happy anticipation. So—as yet—both parties were pleased.

Wet!

“WEALLY, Cardew—”

Cardew yawned.

“Anythin’ the matter?” he asked, lazily.

“Yaas, wathah!” answered Arthur Augustus D’Arcy hotly. “There is somethin’ vewy much the mattah, Cardew!”

The punt was floating on the silvery Ryll. Two or three fellows on the towpath were glancing at it: among them Baggy Trimble, with a grin on his fat face.

Arthur Augustus was handling the punt-pole. Cardew, stretched lazily on cushions, cheerfully left him all the work to do.

To that Gussy had no great objection. Elegant and superb youth as he was, there was nothing of the slacker about him. He was content to pole while Cardew slacked. But when Ralph Reckness Cardew fumbled in his pocket, and drew a cigarette-case therefrom, Arthur Augustus took notice, and a frown gathered on his aristocratic brow.

That frown intensified, as Cardew, lolling on the cushions, scratched a match, and lighted a cigarette. Quite at his ease, the dandy of the Fourth reclined and smoked, apparently unconscious of the gathering wrath in the face of his noble relative.

“What’s bitin’ you?” he asked.

“You are smokin’, Cardew—”

“Quite!” agreed Cardew. “Look out for that bush, D’Arcy! Do you want to run the punt aground?”

Arthur Augustus poled clear of the bank. With his eyes fixed on Cardew, he had rather forgotten that he was poling, and the punt just grazed a projecting bush. For a minute or so, Cardew smoked his cigarette in peace, while D’Arcy poled, but clear of the bank and the bush, the swell of St. Jim’s turned his attention upon his relative again.

“Will you have the goodness to thwow that cigawette into the wivah, Cardew?” he asked, quietly.

“Hardly!”

"You are awah, Cardew, of the vewy stwict wules on the subject?"

"Quite!" assented Cardew.

"It may amuse you to bweak the wules, Cardew—"

"It does," said Cardew, with a nod.

"It does not amuse me, Cardew."

"But I'm not tryin' to amuse you!" Cardew pointed out. "You're amusin' me, with your antics with that pole: but I'm not out to amuse you."

"If a beak or a pwefect came along the tow-path, Cardew, you would get into a wow!"

"What's life without a row or two?" yawned Cardew.

"You are a wathah disweputable wottah, Cardew."

"How well you know me!" said Cardew. "Levison and Clive told me just the same. I've heard it from Tom Merry, too."

"I am sowwy that I came out in this punt with you!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"You'll be sorrier, if we run into that boat! Why not keep your eyes open, and give your chin a rest?" suggested Cardew.

"Here, look out in that punt!" came a call from a boat manned by Talbot and Kangaroo of the Shell. "Want a collision?"

"Oh, bai Jove!"

Once more Arthur Augustus's attention was diverted from Cardew, and he gave it to the work in hand. He poled out of the way and the boat pulled past. Kangaroo called out in passing:

"Better not let a pre see your smokes, you bounders."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face became scarlet. He rested on the punt-pole and fixed his eyes on Cardew.

"Did you heah that?" he demanded.

"I'm not deaf."

"You are givin' fellows the impwession that we are a paih of smoky asses, when it is only you who are a smoky ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, indignantly.

"Dear me!" said Cardew.

"I wegwet vewy much that I came out in this punt with you, Cardew. I had hoped," said Arthur Augustus, severely, "that the company of a decent fellow on a half-holiday would have an impwovin' effect on you, but it appeahs that I have wasted my time. I believe it would amuse you to make fellows think that I am a smoky wottah like yourself."

Cardew laughed.

"I say, D'Arcy," came a yell from Trimble, on the bank. "Mind a pre don't catch you smoking!"

"Bai Jove! Cardew, will you thwow away that smoke?"

"Not so's you'd notice it."

"I wegard you as a wottah, Cardew."

"Good!"

"And a wat!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Fine!"

"Bai Jove! It appeahs to be quite useless to talk to you, Cardew. I weally believe that you wejouce in the ewwah of your ways. Now I will tell you what I am goin' to do!" exclaimed the indignant Gussy. "If you do not thwow away that cigawette, I will pull in the punt-pole, and knock that wotten cigawette out of your silly mouth with it."

"Look out for that tree—!"

"Bothah that twee!" This time Arthur Augustus refused to have his attention diverted to the dangers of navigation. His wrathful eyes remained fixed on Ralph Reckness Cardew. "Now, you haeh what I say, Cardew? Unless you thwow that cigawette into the watah at once, I will immediately—Oh! Cwumbs! Whooh!"

Bump!

The punt, left to its own devices, bumped on a gnarled old root projecting from the bank. It rocked wildly, and Arthur Augustus tottered. He recovered himself in haste, and shoved with the pole to clear the bank. He shoved not wisely, but too well. The end of the pole went deep into thick mud under the rippling water, and remained stuck fast there.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Cardew. "Look out!"

"Oh, cwiskey!"

Arthur Augustus wrenched at the punt-pole, but it remained stuck in the mud. But that wrench sent the punt gliding on, and it glided from under Gussy's feet. In a moment, the swell of St. Jim's found himself clinging to the pole, suspended like Mahomet's coffin between the heavens and the earth, the punt-pole his only visible means of support, the punt gliding on and leaving him there.

Cardew, lounging in the punt, stared at him, and chuckled.

"Oh, gad! Good-bye, Gussy!" he called out.

"Oh, cwumbs! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the bank.

"Oh, cwiskey! Oh, scissahs! Woooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wescue!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Talbot! Kangawooh! Wescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cardew was chuckling at the remarkable sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy clinging to the punt-pole like a monkey on a stick.

Fellows on the bank were yelling. Talbot and Kangaroo, in their boat, swept round to the rescue, laughing as they came.

"Cardew, you wottah, bwing that punt back!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It would not have been easy for Cardew to bring the punt back without a pole. But he did not think of making the attempt. He lolled on the cushions and laughed.

"Cardew, you wat—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cwikey! Wescue, deah boys! My twousahs are gettin' wet—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The punt-pole, firmly embedded as it was, was swaying over under the unfortunate Gussy's weight. It swayed and tipped, and Arthur Augustus's legs washed in the Ryll.

"Hold on!" gasped Talbot. "We're coming! Buck up, Noble."

"Oh, cwikey! Wescue, deah boys! Help! Oh, cwumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boat came up with a rush. Talbot grasped Arthur Augustus and dragged him in. Arthur Augustus sat in the boat in a pool of water.

"Oh, cwumbs!" he gasped. "I am feahfully wet—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatevah to laugh at, Talbot!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, indignantly. "What are you laughin' at?"

"Oh! Of—of course not!" gasped Talbot. "You'd better cut in and get a change, Gussy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Talbot—"

"We'll pull you to the bank," grinned Kangaroo. "Pity Manners wasn't here with his camera, Gussy—you made a topping picture, on that pole—"

"Wats!"

The boat pulled to the bank. Arthur Augustus, with deep feelings and dripping trousers, jumped ashore. He gave Cardew, in the punt, one expressive look—to which Cardew responded with a chuckle and a cheery wave of the hand. Then, with wet trousers flapping round his noble legs, he started at a run for the school, realising that what he chiefly needed was a change of trousers.

18

Zip!

“MASTER D’ARCY—!”

“Yaas, Toby!”

There was quite a startled expression on the face of Toby, the House page, as he tapped at the door of Study No. 6 and looked in. Arthur Augustus was alone in the study—not in the cheeriest of moods or the best of tempers. The incident of the punt had considerably ruffled him. He was, in fact, considering whether to look for Cardew, when he came in, and bestow a fearful thrashing on that exasperating youth. A good many fellows along the river had seemed to find Arthur Augustus very entertaining, clinging to the punt-pole: but Arthur Augustus himself was not amused.

Blake and Co. had not yet come in from the cricket, and Arthur Augustus, as he was in earlier than he had intended, was preparing tea in the study, ready for his chums when they came in. He was frowning, but the frown vanished from his brow as he glanced round at Toby in the doorway, and he answered him with his usual politeness. Arthur Augustus was not the fellow to allow a ruffled temper to affect his polished manners.

“He’s come, sir!” said Toby, with quite a queer look at D’Arcy. “Praps you’ve got leave from Mr. Railton, sir?”

“Leave fwom Mr. Wailton?” repeated Arthur Augustus. “I don’t quite undahstand, Toby! Leave for what?”

“The dog, sir.”

“The dog.”

“I mean, a bulldog in the study, sir—if you ain’t asked leave from the House-master, sir—”

Toby was interrupted by a stocky man with a bull-neck, pushing

past him in the doorway. Arthur Augustus, already surprised by Toby's remarks, was further astonished by the sight of the bull-necked man. He had never seen Mr. Bunker before. He gazed at a stock man in gaiters, with a red-spotted muffler round a bull-neck, and a black pipe in the corner of a large mouth. Why such an individual was calling at Study No. 6, in the School House at St. Jim's, was quite a mystery to Arthur Augustus. Neither was he enlightened by the fact that the bull-necked man had a bull-pup under his arm.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "What—who—?"

"'Ere I am, sir," said the visitor.

Toby glanced at Arthur Augustus, and at Mr. Bunker, and rather nervously at the bull-pup, who was showing a very fine set of teeth, and departed. Mr. Bunker pushed into the study.

"'Ere I am," he repeated. "You Mr. D'Arcy?"

"Yaas, that is my name," said the astonished Gussy. "But who—what—?"

"Name of Bunker, sir. This 'ere is the dorg."

"Oh!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. He realised now that this was the dog-merchant at Wayland to whom he had telephoned earlier in the afternoon, and that the ferocious-looking bull-pup under his arm was Zip. But why Mr. Bunker had come to the School House instead of the New House was still a mystery.

"Fine dorg, sir!" said Mr. Bunker, enthusiastically. "Look at them teeth, sir! Bite through the leg of a table, that dorg would!"

"But—but—!" stammered Arthur Augustus, bewildered. "Why are you bwingin' him heah, Mr. Bunkah?"

"Eh?"

"You were to take him to Figgins, in the New House—"

"The other gentleman phoned me that that was a mistake, and that I was to bring 'im 'ere," said Mr. Bunker. "This 'ere is Study No. 6, ain't it?"

"Yaas, but—"

"And this 'ere building is the School 'Ouse, ain't it?"

"Oh! Yaas! But—"

"You're Mr. D'Arcy, ain't you?"

"Yaas. But—"

"Then that's all right!" said Mr. Bunker. "You're the young gent that phoned me in the fust place! I know your voice all right! I'd known it anywhere. Wasn't it you phoned me to bring the dorg to this 'ere school?"

"Oh, cwikey!"

"And 'ere I am, and 'ere he is," said Mr. Bunker, briskly. "Young gentleman says, on the phone, says he, that you was

getting the dorg for Mr. Figgins, he says, but Mr. Figgins don't want a dorg, he says, so I'm to bring him to you, what ordered him, and 'ere I am, and 'ere is Zip, sir."

"Oh, cwumbs!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at Mr. Bunker and the bull-pup, feeling as if his noble head was turning round.

Something, evidently, had gone wrong with that jape! That bulldog was to have been landed on Figgins, in his study in the New House! Instead of which, here was Mr. Bunker, landing him on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in Study No. 6 in the School House! Only too clearly, that jape was not working out according to plan!

Mr. Bunker had been quite good-humoured when he came in. But his rugged face was now assuming a less good-humoured expression. He, too, was conscious that something was wrong: and he had walked over from Wayland with that dog on a warm summer's afternoon. Mr. Bunker was not prepared to stand any nonsense on the subject of that dog.

"I said 'eres's the dog, sir," said Mr. Bunker. "Look at 'im! You won't see a better dorg than that 'ere, in a month of Sundays, you won't! You ain't going to tell me that you ain't satisfied with that dorg?"

"Eh? Oh! No! Yes! But—"

"If you ain't satisfied," said Mr. Bunker, with a further perceptible diminution of good-humour, "that's your look-out, Mr. D'Arcy! If you wanted to see that dorg afore you bought him, you could 'ave come over to Wayland and give him the once-over, you could. You orders 'im by telephone. Feller what buys a pig-in-a-poke ain't got no kick coming! That there's your dorg, sir."

A low growl from Zip emphasised Mr. Bunker's remarks. Zip seemed to realise that his master was getting annoyed, and to share his feelings.

"But—but—but—!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "There is a mistake, Mr. Bunkah—a weally vewy wemarkable mistake—"

"That's what the other young gentleman said on the phone!" grunted Mr. Bunker. "I ain't 'ere to 'ear about mistakes, sir!"

"But weally, there is a mistake!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "The—the bulldog is to be delivahed to Figgins in the New House—"

"You giving the dorg to that there Figgins what you mentions?"

"Oh! No!"

"Is that there Figgins goin' to pay eight guineas for 'im?"

"Oh, cwikey!"

"I asks you a question!" said Mr. Bunker. "Wot's all this, I'd like to know. You ordered that there dorg on the 'phone, didn't you? Think I don't know your voice? I'd know it among a hundred monkeys chattering in the Zoo, I would! I ain't never 'eard a voice like it, if you come to that, outside the Zoo."

"Weally, Mr. Bunkah—"

"Was it you rung me up on the 'phone about that dorg, or was it not?" demanded the merchant from Wayland.

"Oh! Yaas! But—"

"I knowed it was, all right! If that there Figgins what you mentions wants this 'ere dorg, and is prepared to pay for 'im, all right! Fetch him 'ere and I ain't got nothing more to say. But I'll tell you this, young gentleman—I ain't walked that dorg over from Wayland under me arm on a 'ot afternoon for nothing! You can lay to that."

Arthur Augustus fairly gasped.

"Where's that there Figgins?" demanded Mr. Bunker. "If he wants the dorg after all, he can speak for himself, and there's the dorg. You fetch that there Figgins 'ere and as I says, 'ere's the dorg. Wot I want is eight guineas for that 'ere dorg! And I may mention," added Mr. Bunker, with emphasis, "that I ain't leaving this 'ere room without it."

"Oh, cwumbs!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Bunker eyed him suspiciously, and surlily. It was clear to him that something was wrong, though he could not see exactly what. It dawned upon him that neither he nor his "dorg" was really wanted at St. Jim's. That was more than sufficient to rouse Mr. Bunker's ire. He had walked that dog over to the school expecting to collect eight guineas for him, from some wealthy young gentleman of St. Jim's, who had not taken the trouble to inquire the price. He had no idea whatever of walking him back, without the money. Mr. Bunker was not a man to be made a fool of! He was prepared to give quite a lot of trouble to any person seeking to make a fool of him.

"Well?" he rapped. "You 'ear me! I ain't traipsing all over this 'ere school looking for a bloke name of Figgins! You send that young covey in buttons in fetch him, if he's to 'ave the dorg! Wot?"

"Oh, deah!"

"Bunkum, is it?" asked Mr. Bunker. "Praps the 'ole thing is a lark of you schoolboys, wasting a man's time for nothing? Wot?"

"I—I—I—"

"My eye!" said Mr. Bunker, with a deep breath. "Is that it?"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

Phoning to a man to bring his dorg over to the school for a school-boy lark, what? Do you want that dorg or don't you?"

"Nunno—!"

"No?" said Mr. Bunker. "Does that there Figgins want that there dorg, and is he ready to say so, and pay for him?"

"Oh, cwikey! Nunno—"

"No!" repeated Mr. Bunker. "Nobody wants that dorg, what? You phones to a man to bring a dorg 'ere, and you don't want 'im, and nobody else wants him! Is that 'ow it stands? Wot?"

Arthur Augustus could only blink at him unhappily. That, in point of fact, was how it stood! Certainly nobody at St. Jim's wanted that dog, or his master either. The whole thing had been, as Mr. Bunker now suspected, a schoolboy joke: only it had worked in reverse, as it were, and come home to roost!

"Well!" said Mr. Bunker, breathing very hard. "Well! Larking with a man and pulling his leg and wasting of his time! Wot? All I got to say to you, young covey, is this 'ere! You orders that dorg, you does! 'Ere he is, delivered as per contract. Pay for him! Eight guineas is the sum!"

"I—I—I—I wegwet vevy much that your time has been wasted, Mr. Bunkah!" stammered Arthur Augustus. "I weally did not think of that, at the time—it was vevy wemiss of me, as I now wealise, but weally and twuly I did not think of that at all—I apologize most pwofoundly for havin' wasted your time—"

"'Pology accepted, if you pays up!" said Mr. Bunker.

"But I—I—I—"

"I said eight guineas."

"Weally, Mr. Bunkah, I do not want that dog!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "I doubt vevy much whethah my House-mastah would allow me to keep so vevy fewocious-lookin' an animal—"

"You should 'ave thought that one out, afore you phoned a man!" said Mr. Bunker. "Did you phone me to bring that there dorg 'ere or not?"

"Oh, deah! Yaas! It—it was a joke on Figgins!" gasped Arthur Augustus, feeling that the time had come to own up. "Only a joke, Mr. Bunkah—!"

"My eye! You and your jokes!" said Mr. Bunker. "Think a busy man has got time to traipse all over Sussex with a dorg under his arm, for your little jokes?"

"Nunno! I nevah thought—!"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"You look as if you never did!" admitted Mr. Bunker. "Never saw such an idjit in my born days, if you ask me."

"Weally, Mr. Bunkah—"

"You've 'ad your little joke," said Mr. Bunker. "Now's the time to pay up. That's your dorg, and I want eight guineas, down!"

"But—but I have only half-a-crown—!"

"What?" roared Mr. Bunker.

"Half-a-cwown—!"

"My eye! You orders a bull-pup, price eight guineas, when you got only arf-a-crown in your trousis pocket! That won't wash, young gentleman! You paying for that there dorg?"

"Weally, if you will take half-a-cwown. Bai Jove! Keep hold of that dog," exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Bunker did not keep hold of the dog. He dropped him on the floor of the study. Then he pointed to Arthur Augustus.

"Fix him, Zip!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"I don't get my money, don't I?" roared Mr. Bunker. "I got to walk that there dorg back to Wayland, 'ave I? Then I tell you this, you young idjit, that dorg will go with some of your trousis in his teeth, and a bit of your leg, too! He will that! Get him, Zip!"

Zip made a jump.

Arthur Augustus made a simultaneous jump, to the top of the study table: his only possible refuge.

Both jumps were swift.

Arthur Augustus was a second ahead of Zip! There was a tearing, rending sound, and a yell from Arthur Augustus. He landed on the study table, with cracking crockery all round him, and below him pranced Zip, with a section of trousering in his jaws!

"Oh, cwikey!" howled Arthur Augustus. "Call that bwute off!"

"I don't think!" jeered Mr. Bunker.

"Take that feahful bwute out of my study!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to be bitten by that howwid bulldog! Look at what he has done to my twousahs already!"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"That ain't a patch on what he's going to do to you, when he gets a 'old!" said Mr. Bunker.

"Oh, Chwistopher Columbus!"

"Get him, Zip!"

"Gr-r-r-r-r!" was Zip's remark: a low, hideous growl that made the blood almost curdle in the aristocratic veins of Arthur Augustus.

Zip, discarding the section of trousering, apparently desiring something more solid, pranced round the table. Arthur Augustus, standing in smashed crockery on the table, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage, gazed at him in horror. It was a most unexpected and unfortunate outcome of his jape on the heroes of the New House.

19

Not as per Programme !

TOM MERRY stared.

“What—?” he ejaculated.

“What—?” repeated Jack Blake.

“Gussy!” gasped Digby.

“Oh, my hat!”

Six juniors had come in after cricket. They had come in for tea, in Study No. 6. But as they headed for that apartment, in the Fourth-Form passage, strange sounds which greeted their ears apprised them that things were not quite as usual there. In surprise, they hurried up the passage, and looked in at the doorway: and almost fell down in astonishment at what they beheld.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood in the middle of the study table. That table had been laid for tea—and Arthur Augustus, jumping on it, had landed in the midst of crockery, with disastrous results to the crocks. Round the table pranced a particularly savage-looking bull-pup. Looking on, was a man in a spotted muffler, with a black pipe in the corner of his mouth—a stranger to their eyes: and certainly not the kind of visitor they would have expected to see in a St. Jim's study. Crowding round the doorway, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, Blake and Herries and Digby, gazed at that extraordinary scene with popping eyes.

“Keep that feahful beast away!” Arthur Augustus was howling, as Zip made a jump. “Will you keep that howwid beast off?”

“Not me!” said Mr. Bunker. “Your dorg, ain't he?”

“I wefuse to wegard that howwid bwute as my dog! He is your beastly dog! Take him away!” yelled Arthur Augustus.

“Get him, Zip!”

"Grrrrrrrrrr!" said Zip.

"Oh, cwumbs! Oh, deah! Oh, cwikey!"

Tom Merry and Co. gazed, amazed. They had been playing cricket, and had, as a matter of fact, forgotten that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was on the war-path, and planning a tremendous jape on Figgins and Co. that afternoon. But the sight of Zip in the study reminded them—though what Zip was doing in the School House instead of the New House they did not know. But there he was—and a rent in Arthur Augustus's elegant trousers, and a strip of trousering which lay on the floor, explained why Arthur Augustus was on the table.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Blake. "Is that the bulldog—?"

"Gussy, old man—"

"What—?"

"Oh!" Arthur Augustus looked round, at the crowd of faces at the door, in great relief. "You fellows—get that fwightful beast away, will you? He vewy neahly had me! The howwid bwute has no wespsect whatevah for a fellow's twousahs! Dwive him off!"

Mr. Bunker gave a snort.

"I wouldn't advise it!" he jeered. "You lay a 'and on Zip, and you'll want a noo one soon arter! He's a biter, that dorg is."

"But what—what is he doing here?" gasped Herries. "Did you ask that chap to bring him here, Gussy?"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Phones a man, asking 'im to bring that there dorg, along of the advertisement in the paper!" said Mr. Bunker. "Turns out to be a schoolboy lark—I'll lark 'im! I walks that there dorg over under my arm, and delivers him according to instructions, and that there young bilk says he ain't paying for 'im. Eight guineas is what I want for that there bull-pup."

"Oh, scissors!"

"But—but you were going to land him on Figgins, in the New House, Gussy!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah! But—but somethin' seems to have gone w'ong," groaned Arthur Augustus. "Somebody else seems to have phoned and told the man to bwing him to this study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—!"

"Figgins must have got wise to it, somehow," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I do not see how Figgins could have got wise to it, but somebody appeahs to have butted in, and landed that howwid bulldog on me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Gussy?" chuckled Blake. "What a schemer! What a jolly old plotter! He phones for a bull-pup to be landed on Figgins, and we find him dodging his teeth in this study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you fellows stop cacklin, and dwive that howwid bwute out of the study!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Look what he has done to my twousahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I cannot stand on this table for evah! Mr. Bunkah, will you take that fwightful beast away?"

"I'm waiting for my money," answered Mr. Bunker. "Think I've walked that there bull-pup over 'ere for nothing? Forget it!"

"I wepeat that I have only half-a-cwown!" wailed Arthur Augustus, "and I would not take that howwid dog 'at a gift, eithah."

"Orrid dorg, is he?" said Mr. Bunker. "Well, praps you'll think 'im 'orrider, when he gets 'old of you! Jump for him, Zip!"

"Wescue, you fellows!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as Zip jumped. "Pway get hold of bats or stumps or somethin' and dwive him away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors sympathised with Arthur Augustus in his painful predicament. But this unexpected outcome of his masterly jape on Figgins was really too much for them. They yelled. Somehow, that great jape had not worked out as per programme!

"Will you stop cacklin' and dwive him off?" howled Arthur Augustus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Gussy—what a schemer—!"

"What a jolly old plotter—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dear!" said Tom Merry, wiping his eyes. "You'll be the death of us some day, Gussy! You'd better keep off the war-path, old chap! It's not your line of country at all."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—!"

"We've got to get Gussy out of this somehow," said Blake. "Look here, Mr. Bunker—if your name's Bunker—"

"Name of Bunker! That's me! All I wants is to be paid for that there dorg, what I brings over under me arm according

to instructions. And I ain't going without it, neither."

The juniors looked at Mr. Bunker, and at one another. Arthur Augustus, in planning that great jape, had not looked at the matter from Mr. Bunker's point of view. He had been thinking wholly of the tremendous joke of landing the bulldog on Figgins and Co. in the New House: and had quite forgotten to consider Mr. Bunker. A fellow could not think of everything: and Arthur Augustus had not thought of that! But he realised now that Mr. Bunker had to be considered.

"Well, you did ask Mr. Bunker to bring the dog over, Gussy!" said Tom.

"I meant it for Figgins, Tom Mewwy. I had not the faintest ideah that the bwute would be landed heah—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Mr. Bunker," said Tom. "Nobody here would be allowed to keep that dog! Suppose we make it ten bob for wasting your time—"

Grunt, from Mr. Bunker.

"Making a fool of a covey!" he said. "I ain't walking that there dorg over 'ere on a 'ot day for ten bob, and you can lay to that."

"Make it a pound, deah boys, so long as he takes that howwid dog away!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "I will squah latah!"

"What about a pound, Mr. Bunker?" said Tom.

Another grunt from Mr. Bunker! But no doubt he realised by that time that he was not likely to collect eight guineas for Zip: and really a pound was not bad pay for a walk on a summer's afternoon.

"Okay!" he said. "Make it a quid! But that there silly young hass, wasting of a man's time with his schoolboy larks—!"

"Whip round," said Tom. "All hands on deck! Chuck over that half-crown, Gussy—we'll make it up somehow."

Contributions from all sides made up the pound. Mr. Bunker graciously consented to accept it, and stowed the variety of coins in his trousers pocket. Then he collected Zip under his arm, much to the relief of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

It really seemed almost too good to be true, to the swell of St. Jim's when Mr. Bunker turned to the door at last, with Zip under his arm. He gave a glare back at Arthur Augustus as he went.

"Young idjit!" he said.

"Weally, Mr. Bunkah—!"

"Young hass!" said Mr. Bunker. "Yah!"

And to the general relief, Mr. Bunker walked away with Zip. Arthur Augustus descended from the study table at last. He mopped a perspiring brow. Then he glanced down at his trousers.

"That howwid beast! I shall have to go and change my twousahs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"These twousahs are pwactically wuined—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cacklin' asses—!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, wats!" snapped Arthur Augustus. And he walked out of the study, with his noble nose in the air, to change his trousers for the second time that afternoon: leaving Tom Merry and Co. chortling.

Gussy's New Plan!

"No!" said Jack Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"No!" said Robert Digby.

"Weally Dig—"

"No!" said George Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Rats!" said all three together.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy screwed his celebrated monocle into his noble eye, and gazed at his friends. Like the elder Hamlet, he gazed at them more in sorrow than in anger.

It was the day following Arthur Augustus's wild adventure with Zip. That wild adventure had caused much merriment in both Houses. It was a score for Figgins and Co., but it made the School-House laugh almost as much as the New House. Arthur Augustus on the war-path seemed, in fact, destined to evoke nothing but mirth.

But was Arthur Augustus discouraged? He was not! Arthur Augustus was a sticker. He was going to make the rival House sing small: he was going to make Figgins and Co. hide their diminished heads. According to the proverb, he who laughs last, laughs best: and Arthur Augustus was going to have the last laugh.

On the part of his chums, however, there seemed a great lack of enthusiasm. They were good and loyal chums: but they seemed to have no faith whatever in Gussy's gifts as a leader on the war-path. When, in the quad after class, Arthur Augustus propounded a new scheme, the answers were in the negative, and they were all emphatic.

"Weally, you fellows, I think you might back a fellow up, for the honah of the House," said Arthur Augustus, severely. "Do you want those boundahs ovah the way to cwow?"

"Oh, we'll stop their crowing," said Blake. "You leave it alone, Gussy! You know what an ass you are!"

"You know what a fathead you are!" argued Herries.

"You know what a chump you are!" pointed out Dig.

"Wats!" said Arthur Augustus.

And he walked away, leaving Blake and Herries and Dig to talk cricket. But keen as he was on the summer game, Gussy was not, at the moment, interested in cricket. He was concentrated on the war-path.

"Tom Mewwy, deah boy—"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther smiled, as Arthur Augustus came up to them in the quad. Arthur Augustus frowned. Since the episode of Zip, fellows seemed unable to see Arthur Augustus without smiling. Gussy was getting a little tired of smiling faces.

"Weally, you fellows, there is nothin' to gwin at," he said, severely. "I have been thinkin'—"

"Gammon!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Well, if you've been thinking, what have you been doing it with?" asked Monty.

"I wefuse to weply to that widiculous question, Lowthah. I have been thinkin' out how to dish those New House boundahs," said Arthur Augustus, impressively.

"More bulldogs?" asked Manners.

"Weally, Mannahs—"

"Give it a miss, Gussy," said Tom Merry, laughing. "You'll come another cropper, you know."

"I shall not come a cwoppah this time, Tom Mewwy. I have thought it out very carefully, and I wathah think I have the bwains for it. I am going to give Figgins some of his own medicine. He seems to think it wathah funnay to put wed ink in a fellow's hat—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And to black a fellow's face like a niggah with soot. Pew-waps he will think it funnay to get a mixture of wed ink and soot himself! What?"

"Oh, my hat! Is that the latest?" ejaculated Tom.

"Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus chuckled. "That is the latest, Tom Mewwy, and I wathah think it will be a winnah. All I wequiah is a fellow to back me up, and Blake and Hewwies and Dig have cwied off—"

"Sensible chaps!" remarked Monty Lowther. "If you're going to mess about with red ink and soot, Gussy, you're a fellow to be kept at a safe distance. Run for your lives, you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—Tom Mewwy—Mannahs—Lowthah—weally, you know—oh, wats!"

Arthur Augustus gazed after three departing backs! The lack of enthusiasm in Study No. 6 was evidently shared by the Terrible Three.

The swell of St. Jim's frowned. With a masterly plan for discomforting the New House enemy all cut and dried, and only a helping hand required to carry it to triumphant success, this lack of support was really exasperating. Only too clearly, Arthur Augustus himself was the only fellow who had any real faith in his tact and judgment!

But discouragement did not deter him. Rather, it spurred him on. He was going to show the School House fellows, as well as the New House enemy, that he was the man for it. He went into the House to look for his relative, Cardew. He found him in No. 9 Study. Levison and Clive were at the nets: Cardew, in his study, was smoking a cigarette. He grinned over it, at the sight of Arthur Augustus.

"Comin' out in a punt again?" he asked.

"Weally, Cardew—" Arthur Augustus coughed. "Pway thwow away that wotten cigawette, Cardew! How would you like to give Figgins somethin' like he gave you the othah day?"

The grin faded from Cardew's face, and his eyes glinted. His expression showed that he would have liked very much to give George Figgins "some of the same."

"What's the big idea?" he asked.

"I have been plannin' it, and I have got it all cut and dwied," explained Arthur Augustus. "I wathah thought that you would back me up, Cardew, aftah the widiculous figah you cut the othah day, wunnin' acwoss the quad as black as a niggah—"

"Oh, cut that out," snapped Cardew. "If there's anythin' up against that booby Figgins, I'm on. Cough it up."

Arthur Augustus smiled. Here was support, at last! Cardew, certainly, had not forgotten the sooty episode, and was quite keen.

"Figgins put wed ink into my toppah,"—Cardew grinned—"and he smothahed you with soot."—Cardew scowled—"And my ideah is to give him a mixture of soot and ink—and pewwaps he will think that funnay, too," chuckled Arthur Augustus.

"Good—if you can get away with it."

"I can get away with it all wight," said Arthur Augustus, confidently. "All I wequiah is a fellow to back me up. I have been wakin' down soot into a big cardboard box in my study, and I have been collectin' bottles of ink to pour into it. It is all weady!

You stand behind the door in this study with the box in your hands, and when Figgins comes into the study—”

“When Figgins comes into the study?” repeated Cardew, blankly.

“Yaas, wathah.”

“Why the thump should that New House tick walk into a School House study?”

“I have thought that out,” chuckled Arthur Augustus. “I am goin’ to gwab his cap in the quad, and thwow it in at the open window.”

“Oh!” ejaculated Cardew.

“He will come up after it, of course,” went on Arthur Augustus. “He will wun up the stairs, and wun into the study, aftah his cap. The minute he appeahs, you slam the cardboard box ovah his head—what?”

“Oh, gad!”

“It will make wathah a muck on the floor, but you can tip Toby to clean it up aftahwards,” said Arthur Augustus. “The point is, that we get Figgins with a box-full of soot and ink on his nappah—ink fwom me, and soot fwom you, what?”

Cardew laughed.

“And he can cut acvoss the quad, in his turn, all inky and sooty!” chuckled Arthur Augustus. “Pewwaps he will be tired of ink and soot aftah that! What?”

Cardew jumped up.

“I’m on!” he said. “If you can get that New House smudge here, rely on me to give him the ink and the soot.”

“I shall get him heah all wight!”

“I’m your man.”

There was no doubt that Cardew was keen. Arthur Augustus, grinning, walked along to Study No. 6, and came back with the box. It was a large cardboard box that had once conveyed trousers from his tailor’s. But it did not contain trousers now. It contained soot, sticky with the ink Arthur Augustus had poured into it.

Cardew stared at the horrible mixture.

“Oh, gad!” he said. “A fellow who got that on his napper would be sorry for himself, I fancy.”

“Yaas, wathah!”

“Cut off, and if it works, Figgins gets that mixture,” said Cardew.

“Wight-ho!”

In cheery spirits, Arthur Augustus cut off, to look for Figgins and Co. in the quad. Cardew stood grinning at the box of inky

soot. Really, Arthur Augustus seemed to have planned well this time. A fellow whose cap was thrown in at a window would naturally go after it to retrieve it. A fellow standing behind the door, waiting for it to open, could slam that box of mixture over his head, as he came in, without let or hindrance. It would be Figgins's turn to cut a ridiculous figure under a sea of eyes—a prospect that was very pleasing to the fellow he had sooted in his study.

There was just one drawback, of which Arthur Augustus had not thought, but which now occurred to Cardew. Figgins, drenched with ink and smothered with soot, was likely—in fact pretty certain—to hurl himself upon the fellow who had inked and sooted him. Cardew was no funk, and he did not fear a fistical encounter: but he did fear having a considerable quantity of the ink and soot transferred to his own person from Figgins. The mere thought of being smeared with that horrible mixture made him shudder.

This was a spot of difficulty: but it did not take Cardew long to think that one out. He decided not to be on the spot when Figgins got the mixture. The further off he was from an inky, sooty, infuriated Figgins, the better! Cardew very soon thought out an improvement on Gussy's plan.

Instead of waiting behind the door, with the box to slam on Figgy's head when he entered, why not fix it over the door in the form of a booby-trap? Certainly, it was not easy to fix a booby-trap, from outside, over a door that opened inwards. But Cardew thought he could do it.

He lifted a chair into the passage, and, taking the cardboard box into his hands, stepped on the chair. He planted the box on top of the door, and then, with infinite care, holding the box in place with one hand, slowly but surely pulled the door towards him. Infinite care was needed, for a careless movement would have tipped over the box. But Cardew was very careful indeed, and the box did not tip.

The door remained a few inches open. One side of the box rested on the door-top, the other on the lintel over the doorway. It was quite safe there, till somebody pushed open the door.

Cardew, grinning, stepped down from the chair. He lifted it along the passage into the next study, to put it out of sight.

Then he strolled away, leaving the booby-trap all ready for Figgins when he came. With a smiling face, he walked out of the House, to join Levison and Clive on Little Side, and warn them to keep clear of No. 9 Study for a while.

21

Ghastly for Gussy!

FIGGINS gave a roar.

“My cap—!”

A dozen fellows stared, and exclaimed.

“Gussy—!”

“What the dickens—”

“You ass!”

“Well, this beats it!”

It was indeed a surprise. Any St. Jim's man, asked whether Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth Form, was capable of such a fag's trick as snatching off a fellow's cap, and cutting off with it, would have answered immediately in the negative. The thing was unthinkable!

Gussy's younger brother, Wally of the Third, might have played such a prank. But even in the Third Form it might have seemed rather an undignified sort of thing to do. Fellows in the Fourth and the Shell would have disdained to dream of it. And least likely of all to act in so faggish a manner was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy!

Yet it was D'Arcy who did it!

Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn, sauntering in the quadrangle, were taken off their guard, wary as they were. For they could never have dreamed for a wild moment that the swell of St. Jim's would perpetrate a trick so infantile. They smiled as Arthur Augustus came up to them, doubtless thinking of the bulldog in Study No. 6, which had caused so many fellows to smile. They had not the remotest suspicion of what he was going to do. They were taken quite by surprise. Indeed, they could scarcely believe their eyes, when Arthur Augustus, making a sudden snatch at Figgy's cap, hooked it from his head, and bolted across the quad

with it in the direction of the School House.

"My cap—!"

"D'Arcy, you ass—"

"Stop him!"

Arthur Augustus, waving the captured cap in triumph, raced on towards his own House, Figgins and Co. staring after him as he raced, too astounded for the moment to start in pursuit.

"Gussy, you ass—!" roared Blake, from one direction.

"D'Arcy, you goat!" shouted Tom Merry, from another.

Everybody stared.

Heedless of stares, heedless of shouts, Arthur Augustus sped on. After him came George Figgins, in high wrath. For a few moments, Figgins had just stared, in amazement; but when he started in pursuit, his long legs covered the ground at a great rate, leaving Kerr and Fatty Wynn far behind.

"Gimme my cap!" he roared.

Onward rushed Arthur Augustus, stared at on all sides, shouted at by a dozen astonished fellows.

"Is he off his rocker?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Looks like it!" said Manners.

"Mad as a hatter," said Tom Merry, in wonder. "Snatching off a fellow's cap like a silly fag—"

"Gussy, you ass, chuck it!" shouted Jack Blake, while Herries and Dig stared blankly.

Arthur Augustus charged on. Not a fellow guessed that he had any ulterior motive in snatching Figgy's cap. The fact that he was heading for the spot where the Fourth-Form study windows looked on the quad did not enlighten the onlookers. Nobody guessed that he was going to throw that cap into a Fourth-Form study, in pursuance of a deep-laid scheme for getting Figgins to rush up to that study after it. Quite unaware of that deep-laid scheme, the St. Jim's fellows could only wonder whether Arthur Augustus had taken leave of his senses.

Figgins charged after him at top speed. It was a fag's trick to snatch a fellow's cap and run off with it: still, Figgins wanted his cap. Nobody was going to bag Figgy's cap, if Figgy could stop him.

But Arthur Augustus had a start, and he made the most of it. Figgy's long legs whisked like lightning, but Gussy was ahead, and he kept ahead. With staring and amazed eyes on him from all sides, he raced on: and in a few moments more he would have been near enough to toss the captured cap in at the open window of No. 9 Study, high above. But as he almost reached the path under the study windows, a sharp voice rapped out:

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"D'Arcy! Stop!"

It was Mr. Railton's voice. The House-master was taking a walk in the quad after class: and he, like a crowd of others, had witnessed Arthur Augustus's extraordinary action with amazement.

Had Arthur Augustus taken any other direction in fleeing with the captured New House cap, Railton probably would not have heeded. But the direction Arthur Augustus was taking led him direct to the path under the study windows, where the House-master was walking. And Railton rapped out sharply.

"Oh, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, in dismay.

He had not noticed Railton before. He had to notice him now. He came to a dismayed halt, under the stern eyes of his House-master.

"D'Arcy, you ridiculous boy!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"Weally, sir—!" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"I can scarcely believe that you could act in so childish a manner, D'Arcy. Give Figgins his cap at once."

"Oh, cwiskey!"

"Do you hear me?" rapped Mr. Railton.

"Oh! Yaas, sir! But—"

"Hand Figgins his cap immediately."

"Oh, cwumbs!"

There was no help for it! That cap was not going to be tossed up into the open window of No. 9 Study! Arthur Augustus could not carry on with that programme now. With deep feelings, he handed the cap over to George Figgins.

"You are an absurd boy, D'Arcy," said the House-master, severely. "Such a foolish trick is unworthy of the smallest boy in the Third Form."

"Oh! Weally, sir—!"

"Do not play such tricks in the quadrangle again!" said Mr. Railton. "If you should do so, D'Arcy, I shall cane you."

"Oh! Yaas, sir! I—I mean, no, sir."

Mr. Railton, frowning, walked on. Figgins, grinning, jammed the cap on his head.

"You ass—!" he said.

"Weally, Figgins—"

"Kid's trick!" said Figgins. "Time you grew up a bit, D'Arcy! Think you're still nine years old?"

"Oh, wats!" snapped Arthur Augustus, crossly. "Go and eat coke, you New House boundah! Wats!"

Figgins, laughing, rejoined Kerr and Wynn. But a crowd of School House juniors surrounded Arthur Augustus, staring.

"You howling ass—!" said Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"You potty chump!" exclaimed Herries. "Snatching a fellow's cap—"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Think you're a kid of six?" hooted Dig. "Letting down the study, playing a kid's trick in the quad—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"What on earth did you do it for, Gussy?" asked Tom Merry. "Gone off your onion all of a sudden?"

"Was he ever on it?" murmured Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard and deep. His aristocratic face was very pink.

"Uttah asses!" he hooted. "I was goin' to thwow Figgins's cap into that window—No. 9 Study—"

"What on earth for?" asked Manners.

"To make that New House tick go after it, of course! Cardew is waitin' in that study with a box of soot to slam ovah his head when he goes in—"

"Oh!" exclaimed a dozen fellows at once. They realised that it was not, after all, a "kid's trick," as it had appeared—it was part and parcel of a deep-laid scheme for catching Figgins of the New House in a trap.

"It would have worked all wight, but for Wailton buttin' in!" said Arthur Augustus, crossly. "Figgins would have wushed up to the study for his cap, and Cardew would have been all weady to slam the mixture ovah his head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We were goin' to give him his ink and soot back again, with intewest! But it won't work now, owin' to Wailton buttin' in! I suppose I had bettah go and tell Cardew it is off!" snapped Arthur Augustus. "It is weally vewy exaspewatin' for Wailton to barge in like that, and spoil the whole thing."

Arthur Augustus's noble visage was set in a frown, as he walked into the House. Really, it had been quite a masterly scheme: and the New House fellow who had inked Gussy's topper, and sooted Cardew's face, would certainly have been sorry for himself, when ink and soot came home to roost, as it were, on his own head. But the game was up now: Figgins, certainly, was not going to rush up to No. 9 Study after his cap, and there was no need for Cardew to wait any longer for the victim who was not coming. In a state of considerable exasperation, Arthur Augustus went up to the Fourth-Form studies, to apprise Cardew that the jape was off.

Quite unaware of the improvement Cardew had made in the plan, he naturally supposed that Cardew was still in the study, waiting for Figgins, to slam the box of mixture over his head, as soon as he saw him. Not for a moment did Arthur Augustus dream that the box of mixture was no longer in Cardew's hands, but lodged on the top of the door, ready for the first comer.

Had Figgins arrived at that study, in pursuit of his cap, all would have been well—Cardew's improvement on the plan would have worked like a charm. But it was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who arrived.

Without a suspicion in his mind, he pushed open the door.

"Cardew—!" he began.

He got no further.

Swooooooosh!

Something descended from the top of the door. It landed on Arthur Augustus's noble head, fairly bonneting him. From within, came masses of soot drenched with ink.

Arthur Augustus bounded. For the moment he did not know what was happening. He spluttered wildly.

"Oooooooch!"

He grabbed at the thing on his head. He grabbed it off and hurled it away. He tottered in the doorway, with ink and soot streaming down him.

"Grooooooogh!"

A wildly-spluttering, gurgling, gasping, inky and sooty figure staggered into the passage. Baggy Trimble stared out of No. 2 Study, and burst into a yell.

"He, he, he! Is that D'Arcy? He, he, he!"

"Woooooooch!"

"He, he, he!"

"Gwoooogh! Oh, cwikey! Oh, cwumbs! Oh, scissahs! Gwoooogh."

Arthur Augustus gouged at soot and ink, in his eyes, in his ears, in his hair. He gurgled and gasped as he gouged. Blake and Co., coming up from the study landing, stared at him blankly.

"Who's that?" gasped Blake.

"What's that?" stuttered Herries.

"Gussy!" yelled Dig.

"Gwoooogh! I—I say—that ass Cardew—woooogh! I—I—I've got the howwid mixture we meant for Figgins—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cwikey! I am smóthahed with soot—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

D'ARCY ON THE WAR-PATH

"And dwenched with howwid ink—I"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gwoogh! Oooooogh! Ooooch!"

"Oh, Gussy!" gasped Blake. "You'll be the death of us! Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' to laugh at, you uttah ass—gwoooogh! Ooogh!" spluttered Arthur Augustus. "This isn't funnay—woooogh!"

"Isn't it?" gasped Blake. "What do you fellows think?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Herries and Dig.

"You want a bath, old chap," gurgled Blake. "You'd better get in, clothes and all, and turn on the hot water! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wooooooooooogh!"

Arthur Augustus rushed away, heading for the nearest bathroom, leaving a sooty, inky trail after him as he rushed: and his friends doubled up with merriment.

ONLY Arthur Augustus failed to see anything of a comic nature in that unexpected outcome of his latest enterprise. The School House yelled over it, and Figgins and Co., when they heard, yelled also. Both Houses, indeed, seemed to derive equal entertainment from the wild adventures of Arthur Augustus on the War-Path!

THE END

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