

The Wandering Schoolboy

by
Martin Clifford.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Looking for Gussy.

"D'ARCY!"

"Gussy!"

"Where's that duffer?"

Half a dozen fellows or more were asking that question up and down the School House at St. Jim's.

They were asking it in wrathful tones, and no answer was forthcoming.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form, was wanted, but Arthur Augustus was not to be found.

"Where's that duffer?"

"Where's that ass?"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were seeking him in the studies. Blake and Herries and Digby, of the Fourth, hunted for him in the passages and the Form-rooms.

A Splendid Complete Story of
School Life and Adventure.



Cardew and Clive and Levison sought for him in the quad.

"Anybody seen D'Arcy?"

"Where has that howling duffer got to?"

"Just as we're going to start!" exclaimed Jack Blake wrathfully. "Isn't it just like him? Gone to see his tailor, very likely."

"Or trying on a new silk topper!" growled Herries.

"Or a necktie!" snorted Dig.

"Anybody seen Gussy?"

Three search-parties met at last, in the big doorway of the School House, to compare notes.

"Found him?"

"No!"

"The ass!"

"We haven't looked in the dormitories," remarked Tom Merry.

Blake snorted.

"He can't have gone to bed, can he?"

"Ha, ha! No. But we've looked everywhere else. Let's try the dorm,

and if he's there we'll bump him for giving us all this trouble.

"Why not start without him?" suggested Manners. "After all, he won't be much use in a scrap with the New House bounders."

"Good idea!" assented Lowther.

But Blake and Co. did not seem to think it a good idea. They glared at the Shell fellows.

"Rot!" said Blake, with great decision. "We're not going without Gussy. As for being of use in a scrap, any chap in Study No. 6 is more use than any Shell bounder I've ever seen."

"Hear, hear!" said Herries and Dig.

"Bosh!"

"Look here, Lowther——"

"Peace, my infants!" said Tom Merry soothingly. "Peace! Let's look in the dorm, and if Gussy's there we'll bump him; and if he isn't there we'll give him up, and start. Hallo, Talbot, have you seen Gussy?"

Talbot of the Shell came in from the quad. He shook his head.

"Not since classes," he answered.

"Oh, let's look in the dorm!" exclaimed Levison. "We can't spend what's left of the afternoon hanging around for Gussy. Come on!"

A crowd of juniors marched for the stairs, most of them in a rather exasperated frame of mind. It was really exasperating of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to vanish in this way when a very important expedition was about to start.

Blake and Co. were wrathful; but they declined to entertain for a moment the idea of starting without Arthur Augustus. Study No. 6 in the Fourth were inseparable.

Tom Merry hurled open the door of the Forth-Form dormitory. And then there was a general exclamation.

"There he is!"

There, undoubtedly, he was!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was there, and he was busy. On his bed five or six very handsome waistcoats were spread out, with a number of ties that were things of beauty and joys for ever. Arthur Augustus was in his shirt-sleeves. He was trying on a waistcoat before the glass, and his noble brow was very serious

—as was natural when the matter in hand was of so serious a nature. With his celebrated eyeglass screwed into his eye, Arthur Augustus surveyed the reflection of his noble person, and turned slowly to right and left to catch the effect of the waistcoat from every possible angle.

"Gussy!" roared Blake.

Arthur Augustus started, and glanced round.

"Bai Jove, what do you fellows want?" he asked.

"Ass!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"We're waiting for you!" shouted Monty Lowther.

"I have no objection to your waiting for me, Lowthah, deah boy. What do you think of this waistcoat, Blake?"

"You—you—you——" gasped Blake.

"I weally think it is wathah nobbay!" remarked Arthur Augustus, with a satisfied glance into the glass. "I wathah think I shall wear this waistcoat to-mowwow. The colour scheme is wathah suitable for wearin' with a toppah—wathah an important point for a well-dwessed fellow to considah. I have seen fellows wearin' waistcoats with a toppah that were only suitable for wearin' with a stwaw hat. I know it sounds howwid, but it's twue."

And the swell of St. Jim's shook his head seriously.

"You—you—you——" stuttered Tom Merry. "We've been hunting you high and low, and you've been up here playing the goat all the time!"

"I have not been playin' the goat, Tom Mewwy. I have been selectin' the clobbah to wear to-mowwow aftahnoon. As we are goin' to meet our fwiends ffrom Gweyfwiahs, and they are goin' to bwing ladies with them, I wegard it as bein' up to me to be decently dwessed. One well-dwessed fellow at least is required to keep up the ccredit of the school."

"Oh, bump him!" exclaimed Cardew.

"Weally, Cardew——"

"Have you forgotten that we're going on the war-path?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Don't you know we've got to catch Figgins and Co. on the island?"

Arthur Augustus started.

"Bai Jove," he ejaculated. "I feah the mat'ah entiahly slipped my memowy, deah boy. I was thinkin' about meetin' Miss Marjowie to-mowwow——"

"Ass!"

"I wefuse to be chawactewised as an ass, Tom Mewwy. Pewwaps you had bettah wait anothah half-hour or so. I have not twied all the waistcoats yet!"

"Let's go without the silly chump!" growled Levison.

"I feah, Levison, that I could not consent to your goin' without me. You fellows would be bound to make a mess of the affaih if I were not with you."

"Why, you—you——"

"Bump him!" howled Blake.

"Weally, you know—oh—ah—wefease me!" yelled Arthur Augustus, in great wrath.

But Tom Merry and Co. did not heed. They collared the ornament of the Fourth Form, and bumped him forcibly on the dormitory floor. It was a welcome relief to their exasperated feelings. As he smote the hard, unsympathetic floor, the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere was quite lost by the swell of the Fourth, and he struggled and roared.

"Yawooh! Wefease me, you wottahs! Oh, cwikey! Ow!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

On the War-path.

BUMP! Bump!
"Yawooh!" wailed Arthur Augustus. "You feahful wuffians, you are wuinin' my twousahs! You are wumplin' my waistcoat! Ow!"

"There!" gasped Jack Blake. "Now are you ready to start?"

"Ow! Certainly not! I——"

Bump!

"Are you ready now?"

"Oh, cwumbs! Yaas! Yaas, wathah!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Oh, yaas! Quite!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then come on!" growled Blake.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy scrambled to his feet. His noble face was pink with wrath.

"You uttah wuffians!" he gasped.

"Are you coming?"

"I wegard you——"

"Give him another!" grinned Monty Lowther.

Arthur Augustus jumped back.

"Keep your distance, you howwid boundahs. I will come as soon as I get this waistcoat off——"

"You'll come as you are," said Herries.

"Yank him along!"

"I must put a jacket on!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I cannot appeah in public in my shirt-sleeves, you uttah asses!"

"I'll bring your jacket," grinned Tom Merry. "You can put it on going down."

"I wefuse——"

"Then come without it!" chuckled Blake.

Arthur Augustus was marched out of the dormitory, the captain of the Shell following with his jacket. Arthur Augustus discovered that he could put on his jacket on going downstairs. The dreadful alternative was appearing in public in his shirt-sleeves, so there was really no choice in the matter.

"I wegard you——" he began, as they reached the bottom of the staircase.

"Ring off, old chap," said Blake. "No time to waste while you exercise your chin. We may be late already!"

Tom Merry and Co. started for the gates. There were ten juniors in the party, and Talbot and Kangaroo joined them in the quad, and Julian and Reilly and Kerruish at the gates. So the party numbered fifteen when the school was left behind.

It was a very important expedition from the point of view of the School House juniors. Figgins and Co., of the New House, were picnicking on the island in the river. Warfare was perennial between the juniors of the rival Houses at St. Jim's, and such an opportunity of scoring over their old rivals was not to be lost by the heroes of the School House. While the New House fellows peacefully picnicked, their rivals of the School House were called to arms, so to speak, for a raid. The raid was a little late, owing to the

exasperating proceedings of D'Arcy of the Fourth.

"Buck up with the boat!" said Tom Merry, as they came out on the bank of the Ryll.

"I suppose Figgins and Co. have started?" asked Dig.

"Yes; D'Arcy minor saw them start. They've been gone half an hour or more."

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus, "we ought to have been aftah them befoah this, you know. If Fatty Wynn has had half an hour at the gwub, there won't be much plundah left."

"Whose fault is that?" grunted the captain of the Shell.

"Yours, pwobably, as you are leadah, deah boy."

"Why, you silly ass, we've been——"

"Pway excuse my intewwuptin' you, Tom Mewwy, but hadn't we bettah start? You can continue your wemarks in the boat, you know."

Tom Merry suppressed his feelings. The biggest boat available was run out from the raft, and the juniors crowded into it. It was pretty well filled when they were all aboard.

Six oars plunged into the water, and the School House fellows pulled up the stream. Arthur Augustus sat in the stern, and occupied himself with putting his tie straight. There was a rather worried frown on his brow. He was thinking of the elegant "clobber" that remained spread out on his bed in the Fourth Form dormitory. He wondered whether it was quite safe from damage.

"They're there!" remarked Talbot, pointing to a thin column of smoke that rose among the trees on the island ahead.

"Quiet!" said Tom Merry, as the boat bumped into the rushes on the island. "We are going to take the bounders by surprise!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pewwaps I had bettah take the lead, Tom Mewwy——"

"Ring off!"

"My only desiah is to make a success of the mattah," said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

"Bow-wow!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Dry up, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus gave utterance to a sound suspiciously resembling a sniff, and dried up.

But he shook his head doubtfully. His offer of leadership had been declined, and he had his doubts about the success of the expedition now.

There was a smaller boat already secured to a stump on the bank of the island—evidently the craft belonging to the New House party. Tom Merry tied on to the same stump, and the School House crowd poured ashore. Thick trees and bushes hid the picnickers from their sight; but they were not far away, and a murmur of voices reached the ears of the raiders.

"Mum!" murmured Tom Merry, as he led the way cautiously through the trees.

"Yaas, wathah! Don't talk, you fellows."

"Shurrup!" whispered Tom ferociously.

"I am only warnin' the chaps not to talk, Tom Mewwy——"

"Will you dry up?" hissed Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"Brain him, somebody!" murmured Lowther.

"Wats!"

The School House raiders pushed on with great caution. They came through the trees to the border of the little glade where the enemy were camped. And a fat, satisfied voice reached their ears—the voice of David Llewellyn Wynn, of the New House.

"The spuds are done!"

There was a camp-fire in the glade; and Fatty Wynn, with a crimson face, was busy with a frying-pan. George Figgins was stoking the fire. Kerr was opening a tin of milk. Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence were looking on, their services not being required.

The six New House fellows had all their attention fixed on the cooking, and they had no suspicion of the foe at hand. Tom Merry and Co. grinned at them, unseen, from the thickets.

"Done to a turn!" continued Fatty Wynn, with a beatific smile of satisfaction upon his plump, good-humoured face. "Sosses and spuds—done to a turn. You can make the coffee, Reddy."

"Right-ho!" said Redfern cheerily.

"Ripping idea to have a feed out here, instead of tea in the study," remarked Kerr. "Quite a bright idea of yours, Figgy."

“Ready?” he whispered.
 “Yaas, wathah!”
 “Charge!”
 And the School House
 charged.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A House “Rag.”

“Go it, School House!”
 “Give ‘em socks!”
 “Pile in, deah boys!”
 “Hurray!”

There was a shout from Fig-
 gins and Co. of surprise and
 wrath. The attack took the
 New House quite by surprise.

Fatty Wynn sat down, and
 Figgins rolled over. Kerr put
 up his hands, and was hotly
 engaged. Redfern, Owen, and



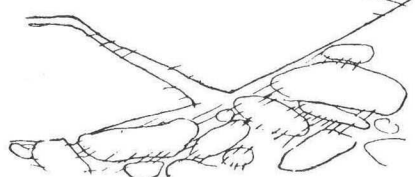
“What-ho!” assented
 Figgins. “Topping, I call it.”
 “You’ve brought the
 plates?” asked Fatty Wynn.

“They’re in the basket.”

“Trot ‘em out! Ready for serving now.”

“Good!”

Tom Merry, under the trees, glanced back
 at his followers.



“You’ve run away from
 school!” said Billy Bun-
 ter, pointing a fat fore-
 finger accusingly at the
 swell of St. Jim’s. “You’ve
 hooked it!” (See p. 129.)

Lawrence were swept back by the rush, across
 the glade. But they rallied there and resisted.

Tom Merry, like a good general, had gathered
 sufficient forces to make resistance hopeless on

the part of the enemy. But, though resistance was hopeless, the New House crowd resisted all the same.

"Back up!" roared Figgins, scrambling to his feet.

"Yah! School House rotters!"

"Stand up to them!"

"Down with the New House!"

"Surrender!" roared Tom Merry. "You're done, Figgy. Give in."

"Rats!" was George Figgins's answer to that.

And the battle raged.

It was six against fifteen, and Figgins and Co. had not the ghost of a chance. But they put up a gallant fight. For several minutes there was scrapping in the glade on the island, at a great rate. There were yells, and howls, and gasps; and there was bloodshed—though only from the nose.

Tom Merry and Co. showed signs of severe damage by the time the resistance of the enemy was overcome. The offensive had been successful, but there had been casualties.

Six gasping and furious New House juniors lay on their backs at last in the grass, with six School House fellows sitting on them to keep them there.

"Victory!" chuckled Tom Merry, as he mopped his nose.

"Yaas, wathah! Where's my eyeglass?"

"Hurrah for us!"

"Yah! Let us up, you rotters!" roared Fatty Wynn. "Gerroff my neck, Cardew, you silly beast! Ow!"

"I'm quite comfy, thanks," answered Cardew.

"Yow-ow!"

Fatty Wynn, apparently, was not "comfy." But it was impossible for everybody to be satisfied, in the circumstances.

"I think this is our picnic," remarked Tom Merry.

"It's ours!" shrieked Fatty Wynn.

"But we've raided it, and that makes it ours, according to the laws of war," grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Still, we'll grant terms of peace in the proper way," said Tom Merry. "Having beaten the Huns——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll give 'em a peace treaty. We annex this picnic——"

"We do—we does."

"Not annex it," said Cardew, with a shake of the head. "Annexation is not the thing. Annexation belongs to the old barbarous times. We don't annex it. We give ourselves a mandate to administer it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"That sounds better, and it comes to the same thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you willing, Figgins, for us to administer this picnic?"

"No!" roared Figgins.

"You don't recognise our mandate?"

"No, you ass!"

"Then we'll bump you till you do."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bump! Bump! Bump!"

"Is this our picnic now, Figgy?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Grooogh! Ooooch!" spluttered the hapless Figgins.

"Speak in English, Figgy. German is barred."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow-wow-ow! Yes, it's yours, you beasts!" gasped Figgins. "Anything you like! Oh, my hat! Grooogh!"

"Good! Now the picnic's ours, we'll turn those Huns out. Pitch 'em into their boat."

"Yaas, wathah! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bring 'em along."

The New House crowd attempted another struggle as they were yanked to their feet. But the odds were too great. Two or three of the victors grasped each of the vanquished, and they were bundled down through the thickets to the New House boat.

Bump!

Figgins landed first in the boat—and it rocked.

Then his hapless comrades bumped in after him, one after another, till six breathless and dishevelled juniors sprawled in the rocking craft.

"Cast off!" said Tom Merry.

Talbot gave the New House boat a shove, and it rocked away on the water. Figgins scrambled up and took an oar to steady it.

Tom Merry and Co. waved their hands in farewell.

“ Good-bye, deah boys ! ”

“ Good-by-ee ! ”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”

The School House boat was dragged up on the bank into safety, and then the victorious raiders returned to the picnic. Most of them bore signs of damage, but they were smiling in great good-humour. They counted another victory in the unending warfare between the rival Houses of St. Jim’s, and that was enough to discount any damages sustained in conflict.

“ Bai Jove—the gwub has been upset ! ” remarked Arthur Augustus. “ Those sosses look wathah dustay.”

“ Rub them clean on your jacket,” suggested Monty Lowther.

“ Bai Jove, I wefuse to do anythin’ of the sort, Lowthah. I wegard the suggestion as howwid.”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”

While Figgins’s boat drifted away downstream, Tom Merry and Co. set to work with the picnic. The New House party had laid in plenty of supplies—Fatty Wynn had seen to that. There was not more than enough for fifteen fellows, certainly ; but there was enough, and enough, as Blake sapiently remarked, was as good as a feast.

Tom Merry and Co. enjoyed their picnic.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Ratcliff Disapproves.

“ FIGGINS ! What—what—— ”
“ Oh, my hat ! ” murmured Figgins, in dismay.

Six dusty and untidy juniors had entered the school gates, not in great spirits. It was the return of the New House picnicers. Figgins and Co. were wrathful, but they had accepted their reverse in a philosophical spirit ; it was only the swing of the pendulum, as Kerr observed. They had defeated the School House often enough, and they would defeat them again. But they were rather anxious to slip quietly into the New House, and make themselves a little more tidy before they were noticed by masters or prefects.

They passed Monteith and Baker of the Sixth, two New House prefects, near the gates, but the two Sixth-Formers looked another way, much to the relief of the dishevelled juniors. But as they came into the quadrangle, Mr. Ratcliff, the house-master of the New House, loomed up before them, and his sharp voice called on them to stop.

Mr. Ratcliff had been speaking to Mr. Railton, the house-master of the School House, in the quad., but at the sight of the dusty six he quitted his colleague and came towards them. Mr. Railton glanced at them, perhaps with a little sympathy ; he knew the sharp temper and sharp methods of the New House master. However, it was no business of his, and he walked away to the School House.

Mr. Ratcliff’s sharp eyes glittered at the woeful half-dozen. Certainly, they did not look a credit to any school just then. They had put up a great fight on the island—in fact, they had fought not wisely but too well.

Figgins had a crimson and swollen nose ; Kerr’s nose was still oozing red ; Owen and Redfern had dark shades round their eyes. And all of them were dusty, and a little torn, and decidedly untidy.

It was no wonder that the house-master’s glance was disapproving.

“ Figgins ! Redfern ! Stop, all of you ! ”

The juniors stopped.

There was despondency in their looks. Mr. Ratcliff was the very last person they had wished to meet just then.

“ What does this mean ? ” exclaimed the New House master harshly. “ How dare you appear in public in this disgraceful state ? ”

“ Ahem ! ”

“ You have been fighting ? ”

“ Ye-e-es.”

“ With whom ? ”

“ Some—some School House chaps, sir ! ” stammered Figgins.

“ Where have you been ? ”

“ On the island, sir ! ”

“ You went there to quarrel with the School House boys ? ”

“ Oh, no, sir ; we went there to picnic.”

“ And you found them there ? ”

“ Nun-no—they—they came after—— ”

“ Who began the quarrel ? ”

Figgins set his lips.

"There wasn't any quarrel, sir," he answered. "It was simply a House rag. We—we don't mind——"

"Not at all, sir," said Kerr.

"You may not mind," said Mr. Ratcliff acidly, "but I mind very much seeing boys of my House in this disgraceful state. I very strongly disapprove of these incessant bickerings——"

"We don't bicker, sir."

"Nothing of the sort, sir," said Redfern. "It's really only fun."

"Incessant bickerings!" repeated Mr. Ratcliff harshly. "Don't contradict me, Figgins. I disapprove strongly of them. Did you commence the dispute with the School House boys?"

"Nun-no! We—we——"

"Then they commenced it?"

Figgins did not answer. He did not intend to be drawn into making an accusation against the School House fellows.

"Do you hear me, Figgins?"

"I hear you, sir."

"I take it that the School House boys were the assailants. Very well! Kindly give me their names."

There was no answer to that; but all the juniors looked very dogged. Mr. Ratcliff might seek to turn a House rag into a serious quarrel, if he liked, but Figgins and Co. did not intend to help him. The New House master's ill-humoured glance rested on them angrily.

"I shall inquire into this," he said, after a pause. "You may go to your House now, and make yourselves tidy. I shall certainly not allow this disgraceful affair to pass; and I shall see that justice is done."

Figgins and Co., with feelings too deep for words, tramped on to their house.

Mr. Ratcliff glanced after them with great disfavour, and then resumed his walk in the quadrangle.

But he did not go far from the gates.

He guessed, probably, the identity of most of the School House juniors with whom Figgins and Co. had "scrapped"; he was aware that Tom Merry and his chums were the leaders in such affrays on the School House side. But

he wanted to make sure. Mr. Railton would have passed over the affair unnoticed, as a harmless ebullition of youthful spirits; but that was not Mr. Ratcliff's way. Mr. Ratcliff did not approve of youthful spirits; indeed, he did not quite approve of youth at all.

He kept a sharp eye on the gates.

It was close on locking-up when a cheery crowd came along and turned in at the gates of St. Jim's. Tom Merry and Co. had arrived; and as Mr. Ratcliff's sharp eyes scanned them, he noticed swollen noses and other signs of damage among the party.

He stopped in their path to the School House and held up his hand.

"Kindly stop!" he said acidly.

The School House party halted, in surprise.

"Yes, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"You have been on the island in the river?"

"Yes, sir."

"You made an attack there on certain boys of my house."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom.

The juniors exchanged glances. They guessed that Mr. Ratcliff had seen the return of the New House six; and that, in his usual way of making a mountain out of a molehill, he was going to make a fuss.

"Answer me, Merry!"

"We had a bit of a scrap, sir," said the captain of the Shell. "No harm done on either side. Only a rag."

"Merely a wag, sir!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, cheerily. "I assuah you, sir, that it is all wight."

"Silence, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, sir, but there is nothin' what-evah——"

"Silence!"

"Oh, vewy well!"

"I am determined that this kind of thing shall cease," said Mr. Ratcliff. "The New House boys do not seem to blame in the matter. If, however, you accuse them of——"

"We certainly don't accuse them of anything," said Tom Merry coldly. "and I know perfectly well that they haven't accused us, or made any complaint."

"Yaas, wathah."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Blake.



"We've been hunting you high and low, and you've been up here playing the goat all the time!" cried Tom Merry. "I have not been playin' the goat, Tom Mewwy," replied D'Arcy. "I have been selectin' the clobbah to wear tomowwow aftahnoon." (See page 100.)

"Do not speak to me in that tone, Merry. It is impertinent. This matter will be dealt with——"

"We are ready to go before our house-

master, if you choose, sir," answered Tom Merry.

"Quite weady, Mr. Watchliff."

Mr. Ratchliff's thin lip curled. He had more

than a suspicion that Mr. Railton would pooh-pooh the whole affair; and he did not want the whole affair pooh-poohed. He wanted punishment administered.

"I shall take you before the Head!" he snapped. "Follow me!"

"Bai Jove!"

Mr. Ratcliff whisked away towards the School House, and the juniors followed him, rather dismayed. The matter became serious if the Head was brought into it. But there was no help for it now.

"Perhaps—perhaps it was rather too much of a rag!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"But——"

"Oh, Ratty's always looking for trouble!" growled Tom Merry, "Let him rip! I don't suppose the Head will bother much about it."

"I twust not, deah boy."

Mr. Ratcliff whisked into the School House, and the juniors followed him more slowly. They were looking very restive, as they marched in the wake of the house-master to the Head's study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Gated!

DR. HOLMES glanced inquiringly at Mr. Ratcliff, and the procession of discomfited juniors that followed him in. He laid down Sophocles with a sigh. The Head had been spending the interval before dinner in company with that ancient and interesting gentleman; but Sophocles had to give place to Mr. Ratcliff.

"Well, Mr. Ratcliff?" murmured the Head.

"Dr. Holmes, I have brought these juniors to you!" said Mr. Ratcliff, "A very serious affair has occurred—an assault upon boys of my house by this crowd of School House boys."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"Judging by the appearance of my boys, they have been attacked in the most ruffianly manner," said Mr. Ratcliff, who was evidently in his happiest vein. "My boys went to the island in the river for a picnic. Merry and his companions followed them there and assailed them. Considerable injuries were done to some of the boys of my House."

"Dear me!"

Tom Merry and Co. blinked at one another. Listening to Mr. Ratcliff, they wondered whether they really were the heroes of the exploit he referred to. It was really remarkable how an affair could be misrepresented, without any actual untruth being told.

Dr. Holmes regarded the juniors severely.

"Have you anything to say, Merry?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir."

"Yaas, wathah, sir."

"Merry may speak——"

"Weally, sir——"

"Kindly be silent, D'Arcy. Merry can explain," said the Head. "It appears, Merry, that you and your friends followed the New House boys to the island?"

"Yes, sir; but——"

"And assailed them?"

"We rushed them, sir—but——"

"And there was fighting?" asked the Head, his glance lingering upon certain damages visible on the various countenances before him.

"Lots, sir—I mean——"

"Your words bear out Mr. Ratcliff's statement entirely."

"Quite so, sir, but there was no harm done—I mean—it—it was—what we call a rag!" stammered Tom Merry.

"Simply a wag, sir."

Dr. Holmes nodded.

"I daresay, Merry, it seemed to you what you call a rag, as you say; but, Mr. Ratcliff, whose boys have been injured, takes a more serious view of the matter. I shall not cane you——"

The juniors brightened up, and Mr. Ratcliff frowned. Mr. Ratcliff had come there to witness a perfect orgy of caning.

"I shall punish you by detention," said the Head mildly. "As you probably did not realise that your actions were very blame-worthy, I should be sorry to administer severe punishment. You will all be detained within gates to-morrow afternoon. Now you may go."

The Head made a gesture of dismissal.

It was not really a severe punishment. Being "gated" allowed the juniors the run of the school and the playing fields; it only cut off any outside excursions during the half-

holiday. The Head undoubtedly intended to be lenient, while acceding to a certain extent to Mr. Ratcliff's desire to see punishment inflicted.

The juniors were very much relieved, and all the more pleased because they noted the darkening of the New House master's brow. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not turn to the door with the rest.

"Pway excuse me, Doctah Holmes," he began.

"You may go, D'Arcy."

"Thank you, sir. But if I may be allowed to make a wemark——"

"Come on, Gussy," came a stage whisper from Herries.

"Pway do not intewwupt me, Hewwies, when I am speaking to Dr. Holmes. The fact is, sir——"

"I have told you, D'Arcy, that you may go," said Dr. Holmes.

"You are vewy kind, sir. But it happens that to-morrow aftahnoon I particulahly desiah to——"

"Do you wish me to cane you, D'Arcy?"

"Bai Jove! No, sir."

"Then leave my study at once!" rapped out the Head.

"Yaas; but—leggo my arm, Blake."

Instead of letting go Gussy's arm, Jack Blake fairly yanked him out of the study. Mr. Ratcliff followed them out, and with a rather bitter look at the juniors, passed on. Ratty was far from satisfied with the extremely mild punishment inflicted upon the delinquents, but he could not venture to attempt to gainsay the Head.

Arthur Augustus turned a rather excited face upon his comrades in the corridor.

"Welease me, Blake!" he gasped.

"Rats! Get a move on."

"I had bettah speak to the Head——"

"Take his ither arm, Dig."

"You fellows seem to forget that we have an important engagement for to-morrow aftahnoon," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Wharton and his fwriends and the girls are coming to Abbotsford."

"Can't be helped."

"We were goin' ovah to see them there."

"That's off now, fathead."

"Wats! I considah that if I explain fully to the Head——"

"You howling ass!" roared Blake. "Do you want a caning as well as detention? That's what you'll get."

"I shall wefuse to be detained undah the circs, Blake."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And I insist upon explainin' to the Head."

"Yank him along," said Cardew.

"I pwotest—I—I—oh, dear, you feahful wuffians! Oh, cwumbs!"

In the grasp of many hands, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched along to the end of the corridor. There, as the grasp of his friends relaxed, the swell of St. Jim's jerked himself away, turned, and ran back towards the Head's door.

"Gussy!" roared Tom Merry.

"Stop, you ass!"

"Stop, you duffer!"

"After him!"

Tom Merry and Co. rushed in pursuit. Arthur Augustus put on speed, quite determined to explain to the Head about that very important engagement for Wednesday afternoon.

Whether the Head was likely to listen, or to regard the engagement as so very important if he did, were questions Arthur Augustus did not pause to consider at the moment.

He ran hard, and his pursuers ran hard. But Arthur Augustus had the start, and he was an easy winner. He came up to the Head's study with a breathless rush, just as the door of that sacred apartment opened, and the doctor stepped forth majestically.

Arthur Augustus had not counted on that.

As he said afterwards, how was a fellow to know that the Head was coming out of his study at that particular moment? It was simply an unfortunate accident.

But it was very unfortunate—very unfortunate—there was no mistake about that; no mistake whatever.

Crash!

Full upon the majestic, portly figure of the Head-master of St. Jim's came Arthur Augustus in dreadful collision.



Reading from left to right: Koumi Rao, Dick Redfern, Ralph Cardew, Clifton Dane, Mulvaney (minor), Wally D'Arcy, Dick Julian, Tom Merry, Cousin Ethel, Levison (minor).

Tom Merry and Co. halted—frozen to the floor with horror.

Dr. Holmes staggered.

“Oh!” gasped Arthur.

There was a rushing of feet. For one moment Tom Merry and Co. had stood rooted. Then they fled. Before the Head had gasped twice, fourteen juniors vanished round various corners like ghosts at cock-crow.

But Arthur Augustus did not flee. He could not. Dr. Holmes’s hand dropped on his shoulder as he stood gasping.

“Boy!” The Head’s voice was almost inarticulate. “D’Arcy! Boy!”

“Oh, sir!”

“BOY!”

“I—I am sowwy—weally sowwy—quite an accident, sir—a feahful accident!” stuttered Arthur Augustus. “I—I was simply comin’ back, sir, to—to mention——”

“Go into my study, D’Arcy!” said the Head, in a voice of thunder.

“Yaas, sir.”

Arthur Augustus went in. The Head, gasping, followed him in. He picked up a cane from his desk.

“Hold out your hand, D’Arcy.”

“Weally, sir——”

“Obey me!”

The Head’s tone did not admit of argument; Arthur Augustus held out his hand.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Dr. Holmes pointed to the door with his cane. Arthur Augustus D’Arcy limped from the study—no longer thinking of attempting an explanation of the very important engagement fixed for the morrow afternoon. He limped away down the passage, squeezing his hands under his arms, and looking as if he were trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife.

“Had it bad?” asked Tom Merry, as he met him—at a safe distance from the Head’s study.

“Ow! wow! Yaas.”

“Well, you asked for it, old scout,” said Tom comfortingly.

“Yow-wow-ow!”

And Arthur Augustus limped on, feeling—for the next quarter of an hour—that life on this troublesome planet was hardly worth living.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Up to Gussy.

THAT evening there were shades of thought upon the aristocratic brow of Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, of the Fourth Form.

The licking had worn off; but more serious matters occupied the noble mind of the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

All the School-House fellows who had been on the island that day were gated for the morrow. Most of them took it quite cheerfully. It was, as Tom Merry said, all in the day’s work, and it couldn’t be helped—and he added his usual philosophic reflection:

“Why grouse?”

Arthur Augustus was not exactly grouching. But he was very thoughtful, and very serious.

On the morrow afternoon, Harry Wharton and some of his friends of Greyfriars School were to be at Abbotsford. Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara, and Barbara, of Cliff House School, were to be with them. It was a little excursion to see Abbotsford Castle, and to pass a pleasant half-holiday. As Abbotsford was within reach of St. Jim’s, Wharton had mentioned the matter in writing to Tom Merry a few days before; he would have been glad to see some of the St. Jim’s fellows there, if they cared to join the party.

Naturally, some of the juniors had decided to go. They liked the Greyfriars fellows, and they liked Marjorie. Five or six of the juniors had decided to spend the half-holiday at Abbotsford.

Among them, of course, was Arthur Augustus D’Arcy.

Now they were detained for the afternoon, and couldn’t go. They were sorry, but did not allow it to dash their spirits. There were plenty of other ways of spending the half-holiday—in fact, Tom Merry was already arranging an extra match with the New House juniors. The little scrap on the island did not prevent him from meeting Figgins and Co. on the cheeriest terms the same evening.

But Arthur Augustus wasn’t satisfied.

Arthur Augustus was punctilious.

The Greyfriars fellows having been told that some of the St. Jim’s chaps would be there, would expect to see them. To fail to

turn up was not in accordance with the Chesterfieldian code of politeness to which Arthur Augustus was accustomed.

It was in vain that Blake assured him that it would make no difference to the Greyfriars party whether they turned up or not. D'Arcy's reply to that assurance was simply "Wats!"

"You see, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus seriously, "there are ladies in the case."

"Marjorie won't expect to see us if we're detained," said Tom Merry.

"But she will not know we are detained."

"Oh, she'll guess," yawned Tom. "I don't suppose she'll care twopence either way."

"You do not appeal to wegard the mattah as sewious, Tom Mewwy," said Arthur Augustus, with severity.

"Well, is it?" asked Tom.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Bow-wow! I don't see it."

"I do, however. Without bein' a conceited chap, I think I may wemark that in a case of doubt, you can wely on me to tell you the wight and pwopah thing to do, deah boy."

"Will you be playing to-morrow, old scout?"

"I shall not be playin' to-mowwow, Tom Mewwy. Havin' weflected on the mattah, I feel that I am bound to turn up at Abbotsford, accordin' to awwangement."

"What about detention?" howled Blake.

"Undah the cires, I feel bound to disweward detention."

"Oh, you ass!"

"I have wemarked befoah, Blake, that I wefuse to be called an ass," said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

"Fathead, then!"

"Ow, wats!"

Kildare of the Sixth looked into the common-room to shepherd the juniors off to their dormitory, and the discussion ceased. Arthur Augustus's chums hoped that he would have thought better of it by the morning.

By the morning, however, Arthur Augustus had not thought better of it. Having reflected on the matter, he decided that it was up to him as the pink of politeness to keep the appointment at Abbotsford. Gussy had made up his mind; and when Gussy had made up his mind, there was an end of it.

On such occasions he was wont to display the firmness of a rock; though his chums preferred to describe it as the obstinacy of a mule.

Whether Arthur Augustus was as firm as a rock, or as obstinate as a mule, it came to the same thing—he was going to Abbotsford that afternoon.

Breaking detention meant a caning; but in the cause of Chesterfieldian courtesy, Arthur Augustus was fully prepared to risk a caning.

It was, as he expressed it, the weally wight and pwopah thing to do.

He wore the same thoughtful expression during morning lessons; though, as Mr. Lathom discovered, his thoughtfulness was not all bestowed upon form work.

At dinner there was a reflective wrinkle in his noble brow, as some of the juniors observed with a grin.

After dinner Blake joined his noble chum.

"Still thinking of playing the goat?" he inquired.

"I am not thinkin' of playin' the goat, Blake."

"Are you going out of bounds?"

"Yaas."

"Now, look here, Gussy——"

"I wegard it as bein' up to me, Blake; besides, I do not like the ideah of old Watty scorin' ovah us," said Arthur Augustus seriously. "Upon weflection, I do not think it would be diswepsectful to the Head, as Watty miswepresented the mattah to him, and he does not weally know how the mattah stands. Aftah the unfortunate incident in his doorway yestahday, I do not feel that it is any use goin' to him to explain furthah——"

"Ha, ha! I should say not."

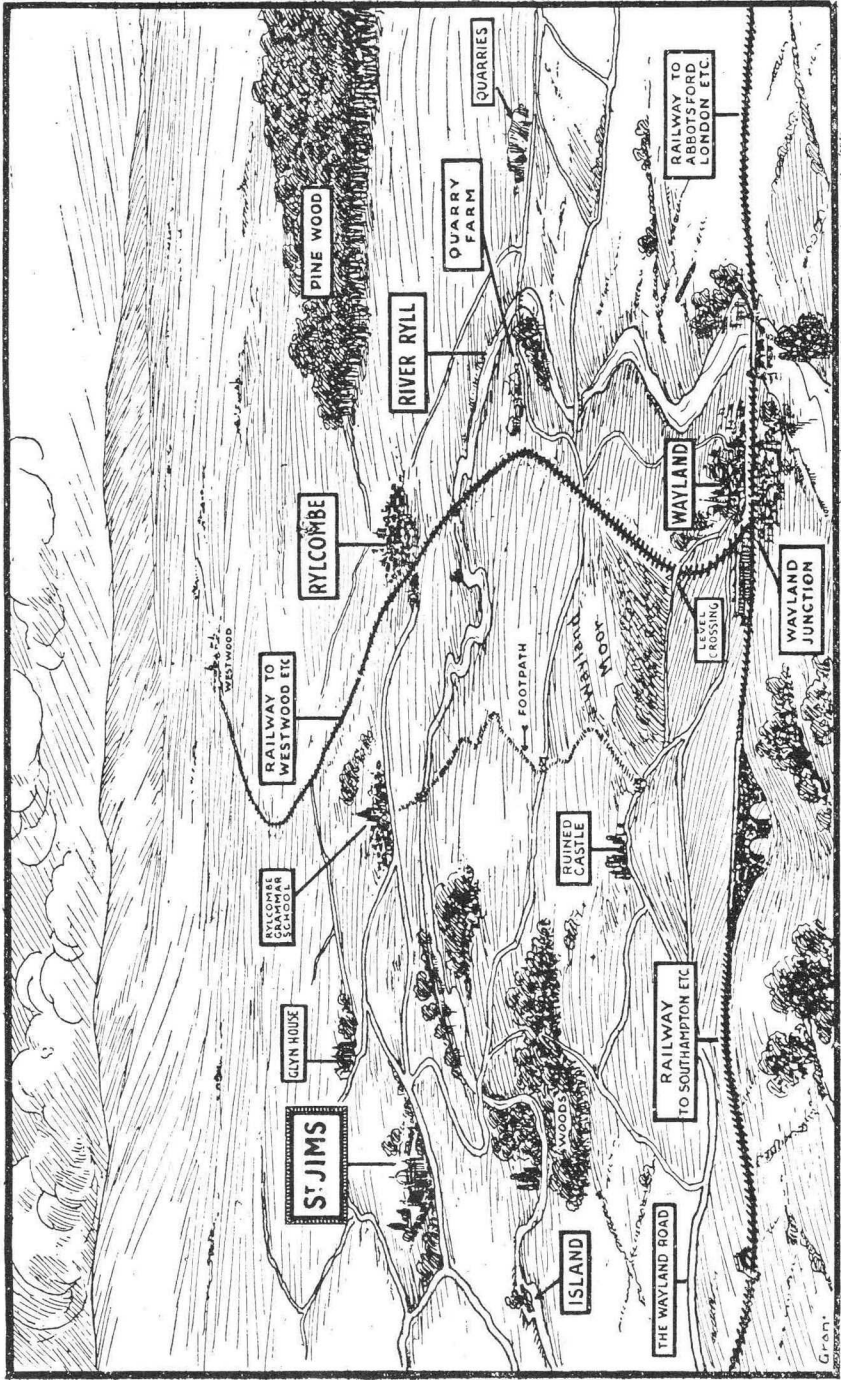
"Gussy, old man——" began Tom Merry.

"Pway do not argue, Tom Mewwy; my mind is made up," said Arthur Augustus, and he retired to the dormitory for the extremely necessary preliminary of selecting the "clobbah" for the great occasion.

When Arthur Augustus reappeared in public it was evident that the time spent in selecting his clobber had not been spent in vain.

From the crown of his head to the toes of his elegant boots, Arthur Augustus was a picture.

ST. JAMES' COLLEGE, SUSSEX.



A GENERAL PLAN OF SURROUNDING DISTRICT.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Reckless Resolve.

As Monty Lowther remarked in great admiration, Solomon in all his glory was simply not in the same street with him.

Any other fellows going out of bounds for the afternoon would have dropped quietly over the wall in some secluded spot. But that was not possible in the case of Arthur Augustus. His spotless clobber would not have stood a climb over the school wall.

He walked down to the gates.

His friends, having argued with him in vain, did the next best thing—they formed a crowd round him to screen him from general view, and blocked the gateway when he departed, so that his departure should not be observed, especially by old Taggles, the porter.

Having seen Arthur Augustus off in that friendly way, Tom Merry and Co. returned into the quadrangle to attend to their own occupations for the afternoon.

Arthur Augustus walked down the lane briskly.

It was no time for a reposeful saunter; he had to get out of sight of the school as quickly as possible.

“Hullo, Gussy!”

At the first turning in the lane, Fatty Wynn hailed him. David Llewellyn Wynn had a book under his arm, and an apple in his fat hand. He grinned cheerily at the swell of the School House. His bike was standing against the hedge.

“Hullo, deah boy!”

“Ain’t you detained?”

“Yaas.”

“Hooking it?” asked Fatty with interest.

“Yaas, wathah. I am bound to go to Abbotsford this aftahnoon.”

“My hat! Look out, then,” said Fatty Wynn. “Old Ratty’s out of gates——”

“Bai Jove!”

“Phew! There he is!”

As Fatty Wynn spoke, the angular figure of Mr. Ratcliff came round the turning into the lane.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

He was not a hundred yards from the gates of St. Jim’s—and he was face to face with Mr. Ratcliff! It was not a happy beginning!

“D’ARCY!”

Arthur Augustus raised his shining topper to Mr. Ratcliff. He was dismayed by the meeting; but no amount of dismay could have robbed Arthur Augustus of his good manners.

“Good-aftahnoon, sir!” he faltered.

Fatty Wynn, with a commiserating glance at the swell of the School House, wheeled his bike towards Rylcombe. He had been “scrapping” with Arthur Augustus the day before; but that was nothing. He was so concerned for the elegant Gussy now that he even forgot to bite his apple.

Gladly enough would the swell of St. Jim’s have followed him. But Mr. Ratcliff stood before him, a lion in the path, frowning darkly.

“D’Arcy! You are detained this afternoon by the Head,” he snapped. “Yet I find you out of gates.”

“I have a wathah important appointment, sir——”

“What?”

“A vewy important appointment——”

Mr. Ratcliff raised his hand.

“Return to the school at once!” he exclaimed harshly.

Arthur Augustus did not move. His eye gleamed behind his eyeglass. Either the firmness of a rock, or the obstinacy of a mule upheld him, and he remained where he was.

“I shall take you to the Head,” snapped Mr. Ratcliff. “As you cannot be trusted to obey Dr. Holmes’s injunctions, I shall see that you are confined in the punishment-room, D’Arcy. Come with me.”

Mr. Ratcliff dropped his hand on D’Arcy’s shoulder—and then, his bitter temper gaining the upper hand, he changed that for the junior’s ear. Arthur Augustus gave a little surprised squeak as a sharp finger and thumb closed on his ear. His face was flooded with crimson.

“Mr. Watchiff!” he gasped.

“Come with me.”

“Welease my yah, sir!” said Arthur Augustus, in a voice trembling with wrath and indignation.

Mr. Ratcliff compressed his grip, and pulled the junior round towards the school.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

To be marched into the school, across the quad, under a hundred pairs of eyes, with a finger and thumb compressing his ear, was too great an indignity for the swell of St. Jim's to endure. A fag of the Third Form would have been indignant; Gussy's feelings were simply indescribable.

"I wepeat, sir," he gasped, "welease my yah."

A sharp jerk at his noble ear was the only answer.

"I wefuse, Mr. Watchliff," said Arthur Augustus; "I wefuse absolutely to be led along in this undignified mannaah."

"Silence!"

"I wepeat—yawooooooh!"

Mr. Ratcliff jerked at his ear again.

Two Sixth-formers of the School House, Kildare and Darrel, were coming along from the gates, and they stopped, in surprise, at the peculiar scene. Kildare frowned angrily. He was head prefect of the School House and had a hearty dislike for the New House master's interfering ways. But a house-master was, after all, a house-master, and he hesitated to intervene.

"Come with me at once, D'Arcy!" snapped Mr. Ratcliff.

"I wefuse!"

"Boy!"

"If you do not welease my yah at once, sir, I shall stwike your hand away!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"You impertinent young rascal! I—oh!"
Smack!

The noble blood of Arthur Augustus was at boiling point now. He raised his walking-cane, and struck Mr. Ratcliff's wrist a smart rap.

There was a howl from Mr. Ratcliff of surprise and pain, and he let go D'Arcy's ear fast enough then.

The moment he was released, Arthur Augustus scudded away.

"Come back!" shrieked Mr. Ratcliff.

Arthur Augustus did not heed. The house-master stood in the road, clasping his wrist with the other hand, gasping with pain and

wrath; and Arthur Augustus vanished round the bend in the lane. He almost ran into Fatty Wynn, who was watching the scene from the corner.

"Oh, Gussy!" gasped the New House junior.

Arthur Augustus pulled up.

"Will you give me a lift on your bike, deah boy?"

"Yes, but——"

"Before Watty can spot you, old chap—quick!"

"All right."

Fatty Wynn mounted his machine, and D'Arcy jumped on the foot-rests behind. The fat Fourth-former bent over the handle-bars and scorched.

The bicycle whizzed down the leafy lane.

A couple of minutes later Mr. Ratcliff came trotting furiously round the bend, but the double-loaded machine was out of sight. The New House master, with bitter wrath in his acid face, stalked away towards the school to lay his complaint before the Head. He passed—with a frown—Kildare and Darrel, and whisked on furiously.

Fatty Wynn drove at the pedals, not knowing whether the house-master was behind or not. He was more than willing to help Arthur Augustus, but he naturally did not want his house-master to see him so engaged; it would have meant trouble to come.

Arthur Augustus stood on the foot-rests, with his left hand holding on to Wynn's shoulder, and his right hand clutching his handsome silk topper, to save it from being blown off. With a rush, the bike came into the narrow old High Street of Rylcombe, and there Fatty Wynn slacked down, and Gussy jumped off.

"Thank you vevy much, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus breathlessly.

"I say, there'll be an awful row, old chap," said Fatty Wynn. "Old Ratty will go to the Head with a yarn that you struck him."

"I stwuck his w'ist, deah boy."

"Well, Ratty's wrist is part of Ratty, isn't it?"

Arthur Augustus smiled faintly.

"Yaas," he assented. "I felt that under the cires, that exceedingly unpleasant person

left me no othah wesource. But I hardly think that the Head will agwee with me."

"I'm afraid it means a flogging," said Fatty, dismally. "I'm awfully sorry, old fellow."

Arthur Augustus knitted his brows.

"I shall wefuse to be flogged for havin' acted within my wights," he said quietly.

"You can't refuse the Head."

"I should be vevy sowwy, Wynn, to appeah diswespectful to the Head, but I certainly cannot submit to be flogged for havin' acted within my wights. I feah there is only one wesource."

Fatty Wynn eyed the swell of St. Jim's anxiously. Arthur Augustus's ideas were rather what the more prosaic fellows regarded as "high-faluting," and there was really no telling what Gussy might do next.

"What are you going to do, old boy?" murmured Fatty uneasily. There was an expression of resolution on D'Arcy's face that alarmed him.

"Undah the cires, Wynn, I shall not return to St. Jim's."

"Wh-a-a-at?"

"I feel that that is the only wesource," said Arthur Augustus. "A floggin' is out of the question, and the Head would not wegard my statement that Watty is a bullyin' and disagweeable old boundah. I wefuse to submit to a disgwaceful punishment, and the only alternative is to wemain away ffrom the school, at least for the pwesent."

"But—but if you go home——"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"I cannot vevy well go home, Wynn; my governah would most likely be waxy."

"I should jolly well think he would!" murmured Fatty Wynn.

"I shall have to considah," said Arthur Augustus. "Meanwhile, I have my appointment to keep at Abbotsford. Pewwaps the Gweyfriars fellows may offah me their hospitality for a time——"

"What!" gasped Fatty.

"Pway excuse me, deah boy; I have only time to catch my twain."

"But—but——"

"An wevoir. You might tell Blake I will w'ite."

Arthur Augustus scudded into the station, leaving the fat Fourth-former rooted to the ground. Like one in a dream, Fatty Wynn stared after him. He could scarcely believe his ears. But as he realised that the reckless junior was actually thinking of running away from school, Fatty Wynn woke to life, as it were, and rushed into the station after the swell of St. Jim's.

He was in time to see a carriage door slam after the elegant figure of Arthur Augustus. Before he could reach the platform, the train was steaming out of the station. Fatty Wynn went back to his bike, with a worried brow. He leaned on his machine, and munched his apple, in deep thought.

After long cogitation, Fatty Wynn mounted his bicycle and rode away; but he did not ride towards St. Jim's. His bike was turned in the direction of Abbotsford.

It was a long, long way to Abbotsford, but Fatty had made up his mind to it, in the hope of catching Arthur Augustus before he carried out his reckless resolve, and persuading him to return to St. Jim's. And with red cheeks and perspiration streaming down his fat face, the Falstaff of the New House bent over his handle-bars and drove at the pedals.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fatty Wynn is Too Late.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

It was Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, who uttered that exclamation.

The red sunset glowed on the old country town of Abbotsford, and on the old castle outside the town. On the ancient grass-grown ramparts a merry party of picnickers were finishing tea.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh—the Famous Five of Greyfriars—looked remarkably cheery. And their fair companions—Marjorie and Co. of Cliff House School—were smiling sweetly.

The chums of Greyfriars had enjoyed their half-holiday.

It was a long run from Greyfriars, but the chums agreed that a half-holiday couldn't be better spent than in taking a long run, and



Marjorie, Clara, and Barbara agreed. They had arrived early at Abbotsford, and looked out at the station for St. Jim's fellows—half expecting to meet Tom Merry or some of his friends there; as certainly they would have done, but for Mr. Ratcliff's fussy interference.

But not one was there, and the Greyfriars party rambled over the town and the historic old castle, and finally camped for tea on the ramparts. Tea was nearly over when an elegant figure dawned upon them.

Bob Cherry waved a welcoming hand.

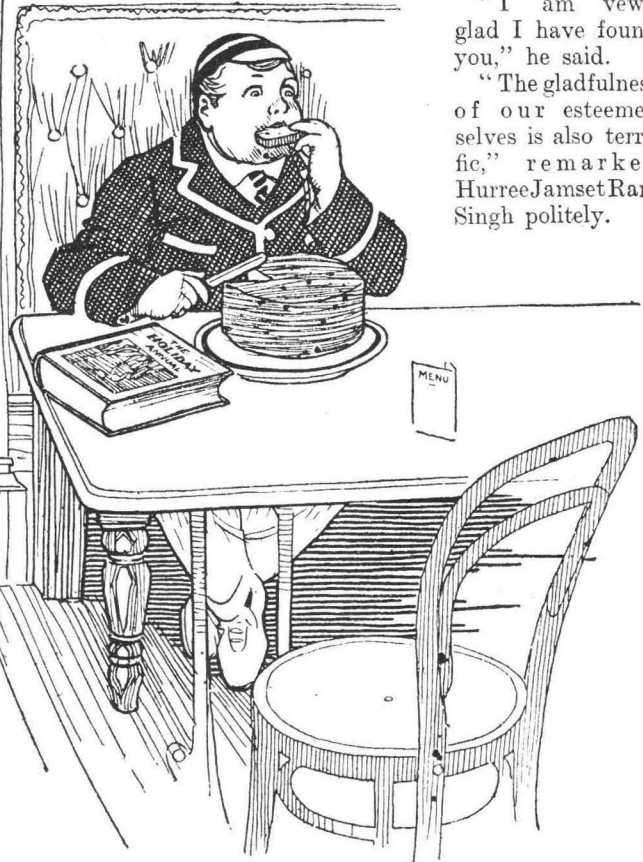
"This way, D'Arcy!"

"Trot along!" called out Harry Wharton.

Arthur Augustus came up, raising his shining topper with his own inimitable grace to the ladies, who smiled a welcome.

"I am vevy glad I have found you," he said.

"The gladfulness of our esteemed selves is also terrific," remarked HurreeJamset Ram Singh politely.



Fatty Wynn was busy. His book lay upon the table—and before him was a large cake, upon which the fat Fourth-former was beginning operations. (See page 120.)

"Simply terrific!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"I was goin' to meet you at the station, when you awwived," explained Arthur Augustus. "In fact, quite a cwovd of us were comin' ovah, but the othah fellows are detained. Leavin' in wathah a huwvy, I omitted to ask Tom Mewwy the twain you were comin' by."

"Too bad!" said Harry, with a smile.

"Yaas, wathah! Howevah, I was suah I should find you all wight," said Arthur Augustus,

"I looked in at the station, and then started lookin' for you. And heah I am."

"Just in time for tea," said Miss Clara, with a smile. "Pile in."

"Thank you vevy much."

"Make D'Arcy some fresh tea, Babs."

"Just going to," said Barbara.

"Here's a camp-stool for you, D'Arcy," said Johnny Bull. "Don't mind me—I prefer these old stones."

"Bai Jove! You are vevy good."

SPORTSMEN THREE AND SPORTSMEN TRUE!



Tom Merry



George Figgins



Eric Kildare

Arthur Augustus sat down in great contentment.

Having missed the Greyfriars party at the station, and having found them again, all was serene—for the present. Circumstances at St. Jim's might be troublesome; but his present surroundings were delightful; and Arthur Augustus determined to think of the present and allow the future to take care of itself.

He was quite ready for tea—and there was quite a handsome spread. And the three girls smilingly looked after his wants.

In the presence of so much good-humour and hospitality, it was scarcely possible to be otherwise than cheerful; and Arthur Augustus was very cheerful indeed.

Not a word passed his lips as to the trouble he was booked for at his school. He knew the Greyfriars fellows would have been concerned about him; and he would not dash the merry spirits of the excursionists.

"What twain are you fellows catchin'?" he asked, as he finished his third cup of tea.

"Five," said Wharton. "It's a long run home, you know—we've come rather far afield."

Arthur Augustus paused a moment and coughed.

"Some time ago, you fellows asked me to visit you at Gweyfwiahs," he remarked.

"Always glad to see you there, old scout."

"Yes, rather," said the whole party heartily.

Another pause.

"I am goin' to ask you wathah a favah, deah boys. Pway do not mind speakin' quite candidly in weply—"

"Go ahead," said Harry Wharton, in some surprise.

"The fact is, I am goin' to be away from school for—a time—pewwaps a few days—pewwaps longah—"

"Lucky bargee!" said Johnny Bull. "I'd like a few days away from school. I wonder what Quelchy would say if I asked him!"

"The snapfulness would be terrific."

"Would it be poss. for you fellows to obtain permish for me to wemain at Gweyfwiahs for a time—"

"Quite easy!" said Harry Wharton at once.

"Bunter had his cousin staying with him for days on end and he came into class with us. There wouldn't be any difficulty at all, if you liked."

"I feel that I am wathaw makin' a vewy extwaordinawy wequest—"

"Not at all; we'd be delighted," said Harry Wharton, cordial though puzzled. "I could arrange it quite easily. You could have a bed in our dormitory. That's been done before."

"If you are suah—"

"Quite sure."

"You see, though I am stayin' away ffrom St. Jim's for a time, I do not want to slack," explained Arthur Augustus. "I should be vewy glad to attend lessons with you fellows, for a time, if your form-mastah had no objection."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"That would make Mr. Quelch love you like a long-lost grandson!" he answered. "He was quite taken with Bunter's cousin because the chap wanted to come in to lessons. We can fix it quite easily; though I must say that attending classes is rather a new way of spending a holiday."

"I'd rather go to the seaside," remarked Miss Clara.

"Well, Greyfriars is at the seaside," said Marjorie with a smile.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time we got a move on," said Bob Cherry, looking at his watch. "If we lose our train—"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Miss Clara.

There was activity at once. The teathings were packed, and the excursion party came down from the grassy ramparts—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy walking between Marjorie and Clara, falling, as it were, into his natural place.

The party headed for the railway station.

Outside that building, when they reached it, stood a dusty bicycle, leaning against the wall.

Arthur Augustus started as he saw it.

The bike had evidently come a long way; and it seemed to Arthur Augustus that he recognised the machine. He had seen it before—that afternoon. He paused to turn his eye-glass carefully upon it, and murmured:

“ Fatty Wynn, bai Jove ! ”

It was Fatty Wynn’s “ jigger.” Arthur Augustus gave a quick look round, but the fat Fourth-former of St. Jim’s was not in sight. His brow was thoughtful as he accompanied the Greyfriars’ party into the station.

He could guess what had happened. Fatty Wynn had followed him to Abbotsford, to dissuade him from his reckless intention. Arthur Augustus had not the slightest intention of being dissuaded; the matter was settled. But he did not want the peculiar circumstances to come out before the merry party—especially the girls. Afterwards, he intended to explain quietly to Wharton—but the present moment was not propitious.

He could guess that Fatty Wynn had stopped at the station to wait for him there; and he looked round anxiously as the party entered the platform for the Courtfield train. Fatty Wynn would know, of course, that the Greyfriars fellows would leave by that train, though he would not know the time; and it was easy to divine that he would station himself on that platform to keep watch for Gussy.

But he was not visible on the platform.

Arthur Augustus glanced towards a doorway over which was a large sign bearing the magic word “ BUFFET ” !

He could guess where Fatty Wynn was.

Fatty had probably been some time at the station; and he was not likely to remain long outside the buffet, if he had to wait there.

Arthur Augustus stole a glance into the buffet as the party walked along the platform.

He caught a glimpse of a plump figure, seated at a little table.

Fatty Wynn was busy.

His book lay on the table, and before him was a large cake, upon which the fat Fourth-former was beginning operations.

Arthur Augustus walked on hastily.

“ Lots of time,” remarked Bob Cherry cheerily. “ Five minutes to wait yet.”

Those five minutes seemed long ones to Arthur Augustus D’Arcy.

He wondered whether Fatty, engrossed by the cake, would think of looking out on the platform. Probably he had seen more than one Courtfield train leave already during his wait.

“ Train ! ” said Johnny Bull.

It came rolling in, and stopped. Arthur Augustus’s heart beat. As the party rushed for their seats, he fully expected to hear the voice of Fatty Wynn behind. But he did not hear it.

Slam !

The doors were closing.

“ Hallo, hallo, hallo ! ” ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly. “ There’s a St. Jim’s chap.”

“ Bai Jove ! ”

Arthur Augustus backed away from the carriage window.

In the doorway of the buffet stood a fat form. Fatty Wynn had been awakened at last by the rustle on the platform. His book was under his arm, and the cake was in his hand, as he looked out.

“ Is that a Courtfield train ? ” he called to a porter.

“ Yessir.”

“ Oh, my hat ! ”

Fatty Wynn ran out of the buffet.

“ Hallo, hallo, hallo ! ” hailed Bob Cherry.

Fatty Wynn looked at the train, and at the familiar faces in the carriage windows. The last door had been slammed.

“ Stop ! ” yelled Fatty Wynn.

“ Stand back there ! ”

“ D’Arcy— ”

“ All serene—D’Arcy’s with us ! ” shouted back Bob Cherry as the train moved.

“ Oh, crikey ! D’Arcy—Gussy— ”

Fatty Wynn rushed on. He was prepared to take the train too, and get out at the next station—with Gussy ! But he was too late.

The train was gathering speed now.

“ Stand back ! ”

“ Stop—oh, my hat—oh, dear— ”

Harry Wharton and Co. looked in astonishment from the carriage windows. The last they saw of Fatty Wynn was the plump junior wriggling in the grasp of an alarmed porter. Then Fatty, and the porter, and the platform vanished from their sight, as the train rushed on.

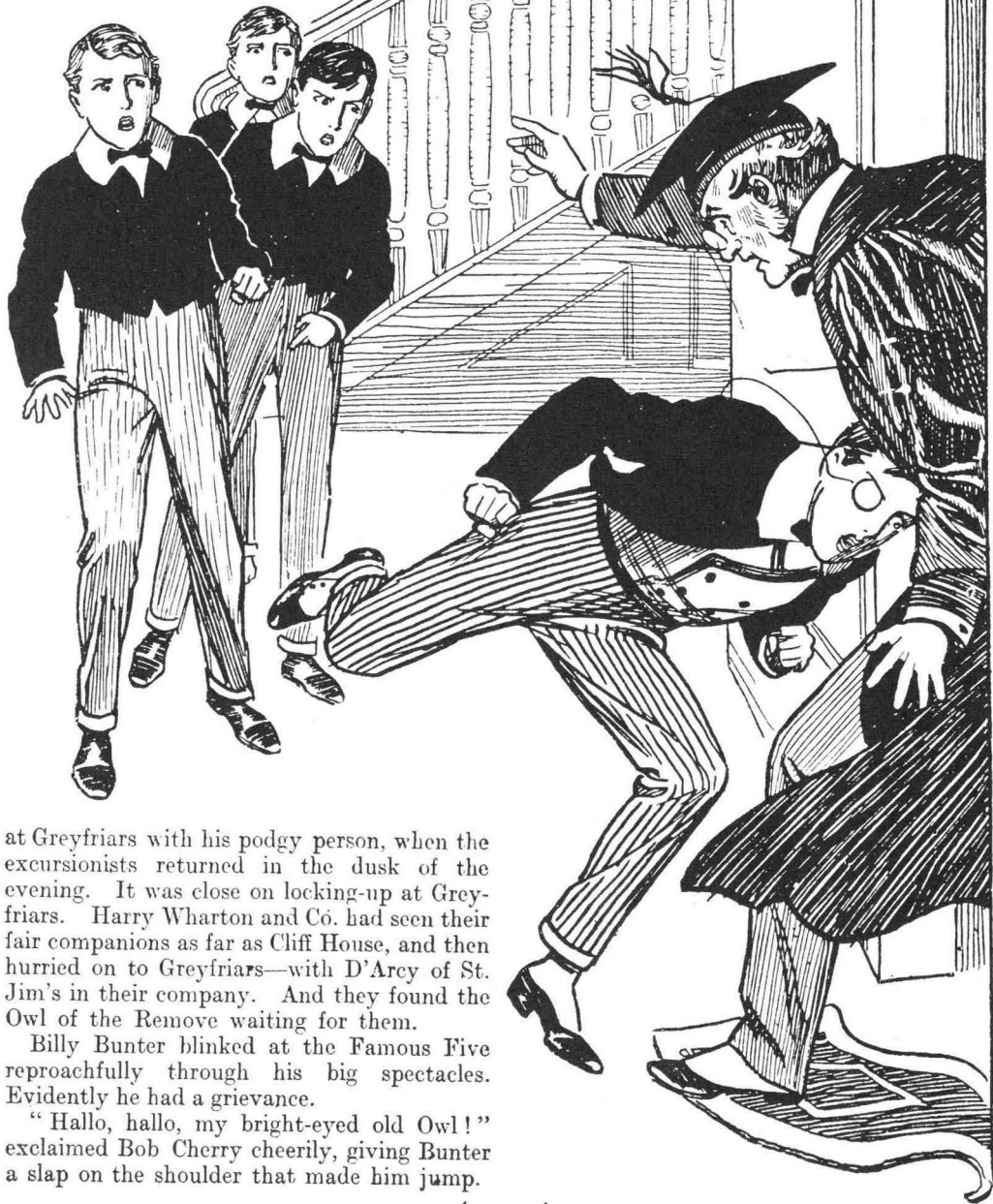
THE NINTH CHAPTER.

At Greyfriars.

“ I SAY, you fellows ! ”

Billy Bunter was adorning the gateway

Full upon the majestic, portly figure of the Headmaster of St. Jim's came Arthur Augustus, in dreadful collision. Tom Merry and Co. halted—frozen to the floor with horror. (See page 109.)



at Greyfriars with his podgy person, when the excursionists returned in the dusk of the evening. It was close on locking-up at Greyfriars. Harry Wharton and Co. had seen their fair companions as far as Cliff House, and then hurried on to Greyfriars—with D'Arcy of St. Jim's in their company. And they found the Owl of the Remove waiting for them.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five reproachfully through his big spectacles. Evidently he had a grievance.

"Hallo, hallo, my bright-eyed old Owl!" exclaimed Bob Cherry cheerily, giving Bunter a slap on the shoulder that made him jump.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter, "you've jolly nearly broken my shoulder! Ow! ow! wow!"

"Pain in one shoulder?" asked Bob.

"You-wow! Yes."

"Never mind—I'll make the other match it. Stand steady."

Bob Cherry raised his hand; but William George Bunter did not stand steady. He backed away in haste.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Come along," said Wharton, "we're only just in time for last roll-call."

"I say, you fellows, you left me behind, you know," said Billy Bunter reproachfully. "I was waiting at the gate to join you when you started——"

"That's why we went out the other way, old top."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"The esteemed Marjorie would not have enjoyed the company of the excellent and disgusting Bunter," explained Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "In fact, the fair and elegant damsels would have been infuriated."

"Oh, really, Inky—I—I say, who's this! Why, my old pal Gussy!" exclaimed the short-sighted Owl of the Remove, perceiving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy for the first time.

"How do you do, Buntah?" said Arthur Augustus politely.

"My dear old chap!" exclaimed Bunter. "Put it there!"

He held out a fat hand.

Bunter's hand was not exactly the hand Arthur Augustus was eager to shake; for it was not only podgy and warm, but it was rather jammy, and rather ginger-poppy, and rather grubby. Moreover, Arthur Augustus was blissfully ignorant of the fact that he was Bunter's old pal at all. But the fat junior was so full of enthusiasm at seeing his old pal that it was impossible to rebuff him. Once more Gussy's Chesterfieldian politeness came out strong. He shook the podgy, sticky hand, and manfully repulsed a shiver at the contact.

"How jolly glad I am to see you, Gussy!" said Bunter.

"You are vewy kind, deah boy."

"Fancy seeing you here!" continued Bunter. "What a surprise."

"Wharton has kindly asked me to stay a few days, Buntah."

"My dear man, consider yourself my guest," said Bunter. "I can arrange it with the Head—I've got rather a lot of influence with the Head."

"Bai Jove! Have you weally?"

"Yes, rather. You leave it to me. I'll see you through," said Bunter confidentially.

The Owl of the Remove linked arms with Arthur Augustus as they walked towards the school-house. As Arthur Augustus was a good deal taller than the fat Removite, it was not very easy for them to walk with linked arms—but Bunter did not mind, whatever might have been Gussy's feelings on the subject. He hooked on, and hung on.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, glancing round, "you can't carry Bunter in, D'Arcy. He's not a featherweight, you know."

"He's not carrying me, you ass!" roared Bunter.

"If you're tired, Bunter, I'll lend a hand," said Bob, unheeding. "D'Arcy simply couldn't negotiate your weight on his own."

"I tell you—leggo!"

"Here you are, my fat tulip."

Bob Cherry grasped Bunter's other arm. The fat junior was propelled forward at a good rate, gasping.

He was jerked away from Arthur Augustus, as Bob probably intended. The swell of St. Jim's smiled slightly.

"You silly ass, Bob Cherry!" gasped Bunter as he arrived breathless in the house. "You—you—you crass idiot."

"Is that how you thank a chap for helping you home, Bunter?"

"You—you—you silly fathead! Ow!"

Billy Bunter blinked round for D'Arcy, through his big spectacles. The swell of St. Jim's came in with the Co.—a good many fellows glancing at him rather curiously. Arthur Augustus was well enough known at Greyfriars; but it was rather surprising to see him there at so late an hour in the day. But he received cordial greetings on all sides.

Harry Wharton went to Mr. Quelch's study



Mr. Ratcliff was the very last person the despondent juniors wished to meet just then. "What does this mean?" exclaimed the New House master harshly. "How dare you appear in public in this disgraceful state?" (See page 105.)

at once to obtain the Remove master's permission for Arthur Augustus to remain as a guest of the Remove. Mr. Quelch was a little surprised, but he assented, taking it for granted that Arthur Augustus was on leave from his school — as indeed Harry Wharton was taking it for granted.

The captain of the Remove rejoined Arthur Augustus to inform him that it was "all serene."

"Thank you very much, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus gratefully. "I weally feel that I am wathah plantin' myself on you, you know——"

"Not a bit of it," said Harry cheerily. "We're jolly glad to see you here."

"The gladfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous D'Arcy."

"I say, Gussy, old fellow——"

"Buzz off, Bunter," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull!" exclaimed Billy Bunter warmly. "If you think you're going to shove in between me and my old pal——"

"Roll away!" growled Johnny Bull; and at that point he introduced a large-sized boot into the conversation. William George Bunter rolled away in haste.

When the chums of the Remove marched into Hall for roll-call, Arthur Augustus accompanied them—receiving a good many glances. Then he was walked off to No. 1 Study in the Remove for supper. There was no doubt about the hearty hospitality of the Greyfriars fellows, and Arthur Augustus was soon feeling quite at home.

As he had arrived at Greyfriars without baggage of any kind, it was necessary for the Famous Five to provide for his wants in some respects—which was easily and hospitably done. Bob Cherry borrowed a beautiful set of silk pyjamas from Lord Mauleverer—without bothering about consulting Mauly on the subject. And at bedtime, a bed was ready for Arthur Augustus in the Remove dormitory; and he turned in there, tired but contented, and slept the sleep of the just.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

D'Arcy of the Remove.

CLANG! Clang! The familiar sound of the rising-bell awakened Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the early sunshine glimmered in at the dormitory windows.

He opened his eyes and looked about him.

For a moment he expected to find himself in the familiar surroundings of the Fourth-form dormitory, in the School House at St. Jim's. He gave a start as he realised where he was.

Clang! clang!

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus, as he sat up and rubbed his eyes.

Billy Bunter sat up in bed and bestowed a friendly blink upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"Good morning, Gussy!" he chortled.

"Good mornin', deah boy."

"I hope you've slept well, old chap," said Bunter, with great solicitude.

"Yaas, wathah! Like a top."

"Good! We'll have a run in the quad before breaker," said Bunter.

"Oh, yaas."

The effusive friendliness of Billy Bunter was not to be gainsaid. It was evident that Arthur Augustus was going to be Bunter's old pal, whether he liked it or not.

Billy Bunter, for once in his life, was one of the first out of bed. Arthur Augustus bathed and dressed, in a thoughtful mood. His departure from St. Jim's had been so hurried that he had brought nothing with him but what he stood in—and one of the first necessities, therefore, was shopping. That matter was so important that it had the effect of putting less pressing matters into the background, and Gussy did not think very much about the state of affairs at St. Jim's.

He went down from the dormitory with the Famous Five—Bunter rolling after him. It was bright and sunny in the quadrangle, and Arthur Augustus was in good spirits.

"Would it be poss. for me to use the telephone heah, deah boys?" he asked, as he walked into the quad.

"Oh, yes," said Wharton. "Anything special?"

"I should like to let them know at St. Jim's that I am—am all wight. Pewwaps I could wun down to the post-office befoah bwekker——"

"There's a telephone in the prefect's room," said Harry. "I'll ask Wingate, and he's sure to let you use it, under the circs."

"If it won't be a feahful twouble——"

"Not at all."

Wingate of the Sixth gave the required permission, cheerily enough; and Arthur Augustus rang up the exchange and asked for a trunk call to St. Jim's. Arthur Augustus was considerate, as he always was, and he did not want Dr. Holmes to be alarmed about him. Fatty Wynn was certain to tell his friends where he was, but, of course, he would not give him away to the school authorities; his friends would not

be alarmed, but it was possible that the Head might be.

He went cheerily in to breakfast with the Removites; and, after brekker, Trotter the page brought him the news that he was "through" to St. Jim's. He returned to the prefect's room, which was empty at that hour in the morning—much to his satisfaction. He did not want his talk on the telephone to be heard.

"Hallo! Is that St. Jim's?" he inquired of the transmitter.

"Yes."

"Bai Jove! Is that Mr. Wailton's voice?"

"It is Mr. Railton speaking. Is that D'Arcy? I think I recognise your voice," came the severe tones of the School House master at St. Jim's.

"Yass, sir!"

"D'Arcy! You have stayed away for the night, without leave——"

"Undah the circs, sir, I had no choice in the mattah. It is not my intention to weturn to St. Jim's for the pwsent."

"What!"

"I twust, sir, that you were not alarmed by my wathah huwwied departure."

"Your unexplained absence caused very much uncasiness, D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove! I am sowwy for that, sir! I am weally vevy much distwessed."

"D'Arcy! What does this extraordinary conduct mean?" demanded Mr. Railton. "Are you out of your senses?"

"Not at all, sir. I had no wesource but to wemain away fwom school, as I could not possibly submit to a floggin' on Watty's account—I mean Mr. Watcliff."

"What?"

"I was tweated, sir, with uttah indignity," said Arthur Augustus, his voice thrilling with indignation. "Mr. Watcliff seized me my the yah, sir. It was quite imposs for me to submit to be led into the school by the yah, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Undah the circs, sir, I had no wesource but to make Mr. Watcliff welease my yah, sir, by stwikin' his w'ist."

"D'Arcy!"

"I am awah, sir, that the Héd will wegard

it as a vevy sewious mattah; and undah the circs, I decided to wemain away fwom school. Howevah, sir, I assuah you that I am not wastin' my time or slackin'. I have not yet quite decided what I am goin' to do finally, as I am in wathah a difficult posish, but I am goin' to attend lessons as usual."

"Are you at some other school, D'Arcy?"

"I twust you will excuse me, sir, if I do not weply to that question. I do not wish to weveal my whereabouts."

"D'Arcy! I command you——"

"Pway do not do anythin' of the sort, sir, as I am wesolved not to weveal my whereabouts. I assuah you, howevah, that I am not goin' to slack; and you may inform my governah so, sir, if you communicate with him. I am goin' in to lessons as usual this mornin'."

"Then you are at a school?"

"I would wathah not answah that, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"I wish you, sir, and the Head, to wealise that my action was not intended to be in any way diswepctful. I should be vevy distwessed if the Head supposed that I was wantin' in wespect. But a floggin——"

"D'Arcy, you must return to the school at once. Kindly tell me, immediately, where you are at this moment."

"Imposs, sir. I am with some vevy good fwriends. But my whereabouts must wemain a secwet, sir."

"Upon my word!"

"Do you wish to take another call?" came an inquiry in feminine tones from the exchange.

"Thank you, no, miss."

Arthur Augustus put up the receiver. As he turned away from the telephone, a fat face and a pair of large spectacles glimmered in at the doorway.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Bai Jove! Buntah!"

"You've hooked it!" grinned Bunter.

"Weally, Buntah——"

The Owl of the Remove gave him a fat wink.

"Rely on me, old fellow," he said reassuringly. "I'll keep it dark."

"I twust, Buntah, that you will not wepeat

anythin' you may have heard me say on the telephone," said Arthur Augustus coldly.

"Certainly not, old chap. I'm your pal, ain't I?"

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Come along with ine, old sport," said Bunter, and he hooked on to the slim St. Jim's junior again, and walked him out of the prefects' room. "I've been waiting for a chance to speak to you, Gussy, without those beasts chipping in."

"If you are alludin' to my fwiends, Buntah——"

"In fact, it's jolly lucky you're happening along like this," remarked Bunter affectionately. "You haven't forgotten how rippingly we got on when I was at St. Jim's, Gussy——"

"Bai Jove! Did we?"

"Yes, rather! Don't you remember?"

"I'm wathah afwaid I don't, Buntah."

"Ahem! By the way, Gussy, I'm in a bit of a fix."

"I am sowwy to hear it."

"I'll tell you how the matter stands," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I'm expecting a postal order——"

"Oh!"

"It's coming this afternoon," explained Bunter. "It's from a titled relation of mine. I expect it will be for a pound. My titled relations shell out rather liberally, you know."

"That is wathah nice of them."

"Yes, isn't it? But the fact is, Gussy, I'm rather short of tin at the present moment. I suppose you could cash that postal order for me?"

"Yaa-a-s, I suppose so."

"It would be all the same to you, I suppose, if you cashed it now, and I handed you the postal order when it came?"

"Ya-a-s, I pwesume so," said Arthur Augustus, rather doubtfully.

It was a long time since he had seen Billy Bunter; but he had a rather distinct recollection of Bunter's postal-order. He had an idea that that postal-order did not arrive quite so often as it was expected.

"Done, then," said Bunter briskly, holding out a fat hand. "Remind me when the post

comes in this afternoon, won't you? I might forget. It's rather a bore for a wealthy fellow to remember these small sums."

"Oh!"

"A pound, I said," hinted Bunter, as Arthur Augustus seemed to hesitate.

There was a pause; and then Arthur Augustus placed a currency note in the fat paw. It disappeared like magic into Bunter's pocket.

"Thanks, old chap," he said carelessly. "This afternoon, you know. If there should be any delay in the post, I suppose you wouldn't mind waiting for this till to-morrow morning?"

"Weally, Buntah——"

"Or to-morrow afternoon at the latest—the very latest. Ta-ta for the present, old bean. I shall have to hurry. Lessons, soon."

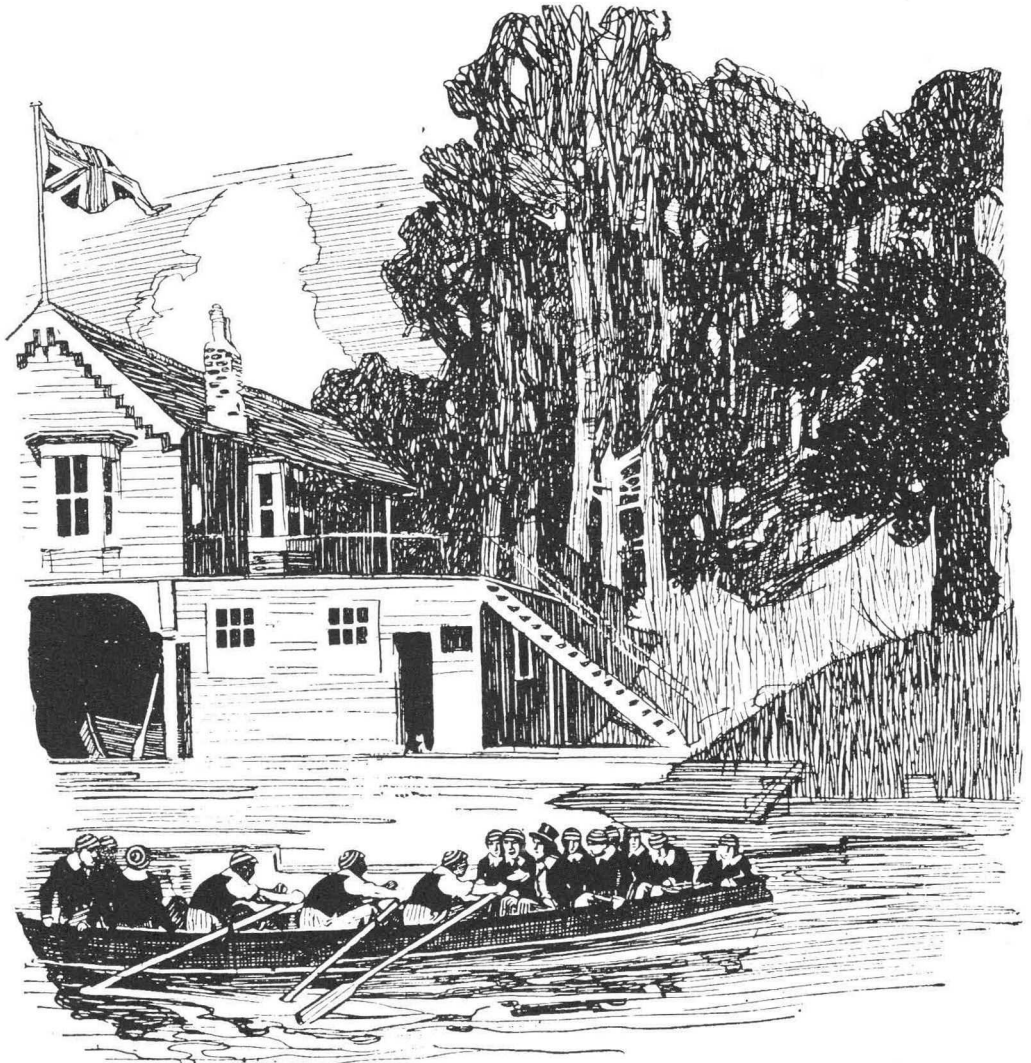
Billy Bunter scuttled off, his fat little legs going like clockwork. He headed for the school shop. Arthur Augustus gazed after him, with a very thoughtful expression on his noble brow. Fortunately, he was in funds; but it was pretty certain that he would not long remain in funds if there were more postal-orders to cash for William George Bunter. Arthur Augustus was an easy-going fellow; but he decided, on the spot, that the first postal-order should also be the last.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business.

BILLY BUNTER had a happy smile and a smear of jam on his fat face when he came into the form-room with the Remove that morning. Whether he had expended the whole pound on tuck, Arthur Augustus did not know; but certainly the fat junior looked as if he had been enjoying life, in his own way, and he was breathing very hard.

Mr. Quelch spoke a few words of kindly greeting to Arthur Augustus in the form-room. The Remove master was a little puzzled by D'Arcy's visit to the school, but it did not occur to his mind for a moment that the St. Jim's junior was absent without leave. Arthur Augustus's desire to attend classes while he was staying with his Grey-



Six oars plunged into the water, and the School House fellows pulled up-stream. (See page 102.)

frirs friends was a desire of which the Remove master cordially approved.

As he worked with the Remove that morning Arthur Augustus could not help thinking about St. Jim's, and Tom Merry and Co. there.

His trunk call had relieved any possible anxiety on his account, and he felt that he had done all he could.

As for returning, that was out of the question.

His future plans were vague; there was only one point upon which he was determined, and that was that he would not return to St. Jim's and undergo a flogging for having, as he regarded it, checked the fearful impertinence of the New House master.

It was really impossible to decide about

the future ; but so long as no one was caused anxiety on his account, Arthur Augustus felt that he could safely leave the future to take care of itself.

Meanwhile, he was quite comfortable at Greyfriars.

After morning lessons he came out of the form-room with the Removites in very cheery spirits. Billy Bunter kindly gave him a rest till dinner, but at dinner he grinned effusively at Gussy, and after dinner he joined him coming out. As the Owl was about to hook on, however, Bob Cherry chipped in, having a pretty clear idea as to how much Arthur Augustus enjoyed Bunter's society.

"Coming for a trot in the quad, Bunter?" asked Bob.

"Not just now."

"Wouldn't you like a little walk with me?" asked Bob, in a pained tone.

"No, I wouldn't," snapped Bunter. "Leggo my arm, you beast!"

"My dear fat tulip, it's your own fault for being such a fascinating chap," said Bob, as he tightened his grasp and marched the unwilling Owl into the quad. "I'm going to enjoy your society."

"Look here, you rotter—!" howled Bunter.

"I'm going to revel in it."

"Beast!"

"This way, old tulip."

William George Bunter was marched on, willy-nilly, with a fat furious face. He had to let Bob enjoy his society for a good ten minutes, much against his will.

Arthur Augustus, with a smile, sauntered into the quad. He sat down on one of the benches under the elms, having a little problem to think out. After lessons, shopping in Courtfield was to be the order of the day, and Arthur Augustus desired to know what were his exact financial resources. With his handsome little Russia-leather purse on his knee, the swell of St. Jim's made a calculation.

"Bai Jove, that's wathah good!" he murmured. "It was vevy fortunate that the governah stood me a fivah this week, and that Aunt Adelinah turned up twumps at the same time. Now let me see—there's the fivah, and thwee cuwwency notes—that's

eight pounds. Two ten bobbahs—that's nine. And some silvah—quite a lot of silvah, by Jove—not countin' the coppahs! That boundah Buntah has annexed a pound, but it doesn't mattah—this will see me thwough."

"Gussy, old chap!"

"Oh, deah?"

It was Bunter again.

Arthur Augustus hastily slipped the purse into his inside pocket. But Billy Bunter had seen the cash, and his little round eyes were glistening behind his spectacles. Never had he felt so friendly—in fact, affectionate—towards any fellow, as he did towards Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at that moment.

He sat down beside the swell of St. Jim's, beaming.

"I say, Gussy, I'm sorry to say that my postal order hasn't come," he remarked.

"Delay in the post, you know."

"It doesn't mattah, Buntah."

"Well, really, it's a matter of very little consequence, as it happens," said Bunter. "I'm getting a rather large remittance to-day—a cheque, in fact."

"I'm glad to heah it, Buntah."

"My pater, you know," said Bunter carelessly. "He frequently sends me a cheque for a tenner. In fact, I get tenners from my pater as often as I get handsome postal orders from my titled relations."

"I have no doubt you do, Buntah."

"Exactly," said Bunter, with a rather suspicious blink at D'Arcy. "Now, I'm expecting that cheque this evening, Gussy."

"I twust you will weceive it, Buntah."

"No doubt about that—none whatever. If it didn't come," said Bunter, loftily, "I should ring up my pater at Bunter Court, and ask him what the thump he meant by it. But it will come all right. Now, what I was going to say is this—don't go away yet, Gussy."

"I am goin' to speak to Wharton."

"I've not finished yet. What I was going to say is this; it's a bit difficult to cash a cheque here. Could you cash it for me?"

"I will see whether I can, Buntah, when it comes."

"Ahem! It's coming by the evening post, you know; but as the matter stands, I'm

rather short of tin till it does come. I suppose it would make no difference to you if you lent me, say, five pounds, to be returned out of the cheque this evening?"

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

"It would make a vewy considewable difference, Buntah."

"Oh, really, Gussy——"

"I feah, Buntah, that I shall be unable to lend you any more money, as I wequiah all I have."

Arthur Augustus rose again.

"Hold on, old chap," said Bunter. "Perhaps I could do with a pound till my postal order—I mean my cheque—comes."

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

The friendly grin faded from Billy Bunter's fat face. His little round eyes were gleaming through his spectacles now.

"That won't do, D'Arcy!" he said.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the fat junior.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"When I am doing a fellow a favour," said Bunter warmly, "I expect him to treat me as a pal."

"I was not awah, Buntah, that you were doin' me anythin' in the nature of a favah. I should certainly be vewy sowwy to accept a favah at your hands," said Arthur Augustus.

"I'm keeping your secrets for you, ain't I?" demanded the Owl of the Remove indignantly.

Arthur Augustus started.

"You've run away from school!" said Billy Bunter, pointing a fat forefinger accusingly at the swell of St. Jim's. "You've hooked it!"

"That is my biznai, Buntah."

"You can't deny it—you've hooked it from school, and I know all about it," grinned Bunter. "I think I'm doing you a jolly big favour by keeping it dark."

"You have become awah of the circs, Buntah, in a vewy suwweptitious mannah, and it is up to you not to wepeat what you learned by eavesdwoopin'!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly.

"I happened to hear you at the telephone—quite by chance, of course——"

"Wats!"

"Now, look here, Gussy, if you're not going to be friendly——"

"I am certainly not goin' to be fwiedly with you, Buntah. I wegard you——" Arthur Augustus paused, remembering that he was a guest at Greyfriars.

"Oh, very well," said Bunter loftily. "I was willing to treat you as a pal. You refuse?"

"I certainly wefuse."

"In that case you can't expect me to keep your shady secrets, D'Arcy."

"My secwets are not shady, you fat wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in wrath. "If I were not a guest heah, Buntah, I should give you a feahful thwashin'."

Billy Bunter dodged away hastily.

"Keep your wool on!" he gasped. "Look here, I could do with a pound till my cheque comes——"

"I do not believe you are expectin' a cheque, Buntah, or a postal-ordah eithah, and I wefuse to hand you any money."

"Why, you—you——" spluttered Bunter, indignantly. "You—you cheeky rotter! Do you think I want your blessed money? I refuse to accept a loan from you, D'Arcy—no you can ring off, it's no good offering it now——"

"I was not goin' to offah it."

"I refuse to accept it. As for your shady secrets——"

"Bai Jove! I——"

"I sha'n't give you away," said Bunter, blinking at him wrathfully. "I hope I'm not a sneak. But I'm not satisfied with allowing you to remain here in this syrupstidious manner——"

"This—this what?"

"Syrupstidious manner," said Bunter scornfully.

"Bai Jove! If you mean suwweptitious, you fat boundah——"

"I despise syrupstidious proceedings. Being frank and manly myself, and open as the day, I expect the same in others. I'm not satisfied with this—in fact, I'm shocked at you, D'Arcy. I can't help despising you. Under the circumstances, I feel that I'm bound to consult my form-master, and ask his advice on the matter."

"If you intend to betway me, Buntah——"
"Nothing of the kind. I'm not a sneak, I hope. But I feel it my duty to ask Mr. Quelch's advice on the subject."

"You uttah wottah——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The Famous Five came along through the elms, and Bob Cherry's grasp closed on the back of Billy Bunter's collar; and there was a howl from the fat Removite.

"Yaroooh!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Sudden Exit.

SHAKE! shake! shake!

"Yow-ow-wow!"

Shake!

"Yooop!"

"You fat bounder!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully. "What game are you up to now?"

"Yow-ow! Leggo!" hooted Bunter.

"Are you sticking D'Arcy for cash, you owl?" demanded Harry Wharton angrily. "I hope you haven't lent him any, old scout. You'll never see it again if you have."

"It's all wight, deah boy."

"He's run away from school!" howled Bunter. "Yah! I'm going to tell Quelchy—yow-ow—leggo; s-s-stop shaking me, you beast——"

"Run away from school!" ejaculated Harry Wharton blankly.

"My only hat!"

"D'Arcy——"

"My esteemed and ludicrous friend——"

Arthur Augustus stood with a crimson face. It was out now, with a vengeance. The Famous Five stared at him, as if transfixed. They had been surprised by D'Arcy's sudden visit, certainly; but that he had run away from school had not even occurred to their minds.

Billy Bunter's furious yell had been heard by other ears, too. Bolsover major and Ogilvy, Squiff and Fisher T. Fish, Lord Maulverer and Wibley, and several more of the Remove looked round, and came up. Temple, Dabney and Co., of the Fourth, who were sauntering under the elms, paused to look

on in wonder. The St. Jim's junior was the centre of quite a crowd.

His crimson face showed that Bunter's statement, startling as it was, was well-founded.

"I—I—I——" stammered Arthur Augustus.

"Run away from school, by gad!" said Temple of the Fourth. "What next? Hold on to Bunter, Cherry——"

"I'm holding on," grunted Bob.

"Yaroo! Leggo! I'm going to tell—yooop! I mean I'm not going to tell anybody!" wailed Bunter. "I wouldn't, you know."

"D'Arcy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Surely——"

"Pway allow me to explain, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, with quiet dignity, though his cheeks were red, "I intended to acquaint you with the facts, Wharton, in confidence, but I have not had an opportunity yet. Buntah listened to me speakin' on the telephone this mornin', but he has not got the facts quite wight. I have not exactly wun away from school."

"He has!" shrieked Bunter. "He's hooked it—he—yaroooh! Leave off shaking me, you beast!"

"Keep that fat rotter quiet. Go on, D'Arcy."

"I have not wun away from school—I should weward such a pwoceedin' as wantin' in dignity. I have wretired from St. Jim's for-a time."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

Some of the juniors grinned. Evidently there was a distinction in Gussy's noble mind between running away from school and retiring for a time without leave.

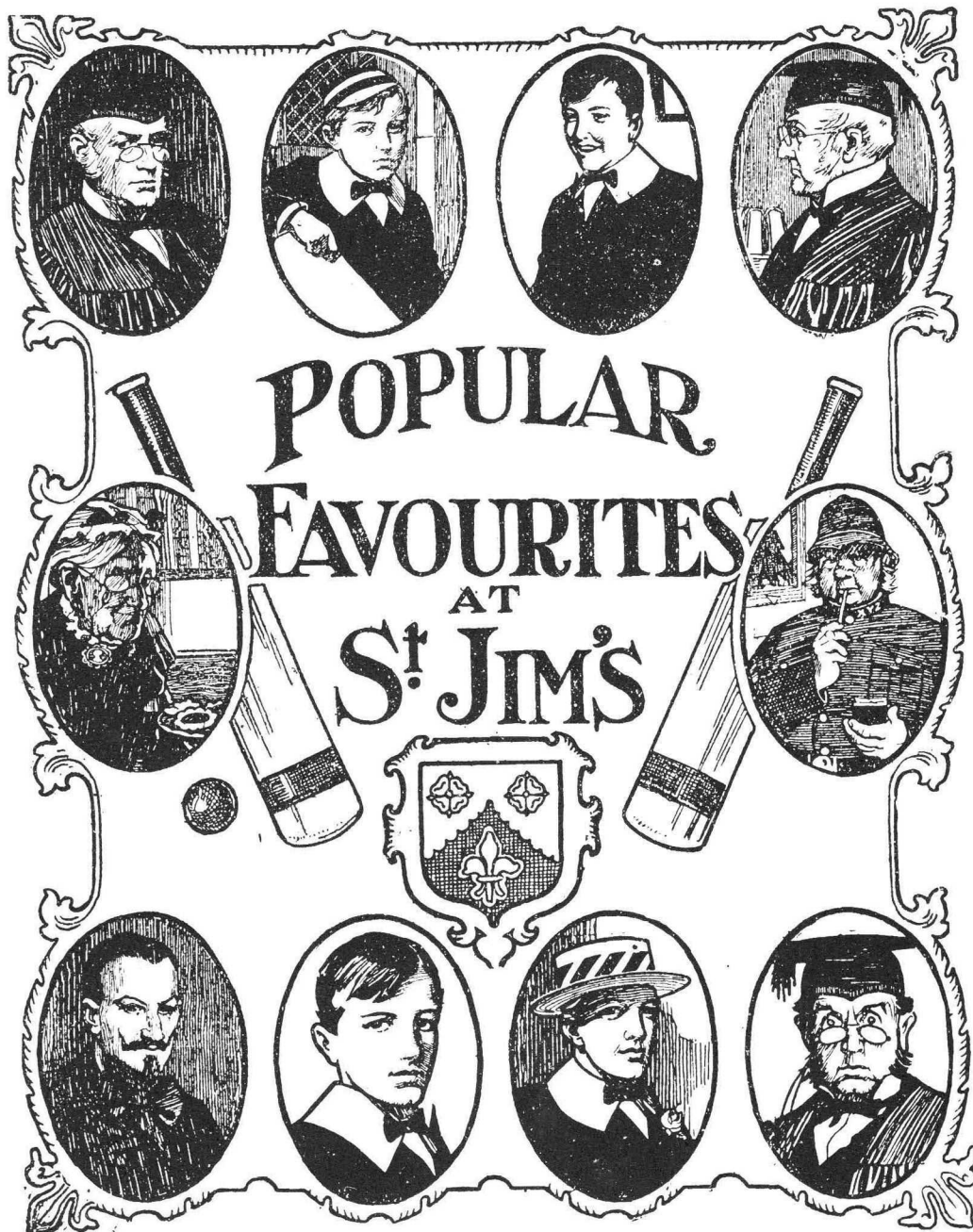
"It was a vewy unfortunate concuwvence of circumstances. I was tweated with gross diswespect by a house-mastah——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I was compelled to use wathah wuff measures towards that house-mastah——"

"Rather rough measures towards a house-master!" murmured Frank Nugent. "Oh, dear!"

"As the Head was not likely to see the mattah from my point of view, it was pwetty



Reading from left to right: Dr. Holmes (the Head), Reggie Manners, George Herries, Mr. Lathom, Dame Taggles (the old lady of the tuck shop), P.C. Crump, Mossuo, Levison (major), Bernard Glyn, Mr. Selby.

certain that he would have administahed a floggin' to me for hittin' a house-mastah——”

“Great Scott!”

“So I felt that I had no wesource but to wetiah fwom the school—for a time, at least. As you had been so kind as to ask me heah, Wharton, I decided to avail myself of your hospitality for a few days.”

“My dear chap, you're as welcome as the flowers in May, now or any other time,” said Harry. “But if the Head knew—or Mr. Quelch——”

“I am awah that they could hardly allow me to wemain, without the permish of my own head-mastah,” assented Arthur Augustus. “Now that the mattah is made public, I shall leave at once.”

“If—if your head-master knew you were here——” stammered Johnny Bull.

“He would send a mastah or a pwefect to fetch me, of course,” said Arthur Augustus. “I should nevah submit to being taken back to St. Jim's in disgwace. My personal dig would not allow it.”

“Oh!”

“But—but—if Quelchy hears this, he's bound to telephone to your school at once,” said Harry.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

“Yaas, wathah! Now that the mattah is out, I shall leave Gweyfwiahs immediately. I sincerely twust that you will not be blamed in any way for my comin' heah——”

“Not at all. I didn't know you'd taken French leave,” said Harry, laughing. “If I'd known it—ahem!—I should get into a row; but I should have asked you here all the same, old chap, and chanced it.”

“Stay here now,” said Temple of the Fourth. “It's all right—all these fellows will keep it dark; and we'll bottle up Bunter somehow.”

“Yow-ow-ow! Leggo my neck, Bob Cherry, you beast!”

“Stick to us, D'Arcy!” exclaimed several voices.

Arthur Augustus smiled slightly.

There were more than a dozen fellows within hearing, and others were coming along, attracted by the gathering of the crowd. It was pretty certain that in a quarter of an hour all the Lower School of Greyfriars would be

buzzing with the startling news—and that it would spread further. Even if Billy Bunter was “bottled up,” as Temple suggested; it was quite clear that Gussy's escapade could not possibly be kept a secret.

“Stay here and chance it,” said Bob Cherry. “As for Bunter, we'll slaughter him if he says one word.”

“Yaroooh!”

The swell of St. Jim's shook his head. He would gladly have stayed; but he realised very clearly that it would not do.

“Thank you vevy much, deah boys,” he answered. “You are vevy kind. But now the mattah is known, I shall have to twavel. If Mr. Quelch knew he would detain me here till I was fetched back to St. Jim's.”

“I—I suppose he would. But——”

“I am vevy gwateful for your kind hospitality, deah boys. But I shall have to go I think——”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell for classes!”

“Leggo, Bob Cherry! I won't tell Quelchy—I won't tell anybody!” wailed Bunter. “I was only jug-jug-joking—yow-ow-ow!”

“I had bettah not come into classes, deah boys,” said Arthur Augustus quietly, as some of the juniors moved off towards the school-house. “Pewwaps you will be kind enough, Wharton, to make my excuses to Mr. Quelch.”

“Certainly, old chap. But——”

“Good-bye, deah boys!”

Arthur Augustus shook hands with the Famous Five. He was in a hurry to get out of the gates of Greyfriars—there was danger of detention any moment now. Billy Bunter had spoiled his sojourn at Greyfriars; and the wandering schoolboy had to look for fresh quarters—and the sooner the better, that was clear.

“We'll see you to the gates, anyhow,” said Harry. “I—I wish——”

“It's all wight, old scout.”

Arthur Augustus was seen to the gates by the Famous Five—and Billy Bunter. Bunter went because Bob Cherry's iron grasp was on his fat neck, and he couldn't help it.

“Good-bye, Gussy; and good luck!”

“Good-bye, deah boys!”

Arthur Augustus started for Courtfield.

He glanced back and waved his hand. His last view of Greyfriars was the old grey stone gateway—and the Famous Five in the gateway, bumping Billy Bunter.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Faintly from the distance floated the howl of the fat junior.

“Yaroo! Yow-wowooop! Beasts! Oh, yah, yah! Yooop!”

The anguished tones of the Owl of the Remove died away behind, as Arthur Augustus walked on—with the world before him once more.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Adolphus Smythe is too Funny.

“COOMBE!”

“Bai Jove! That’s my station!”

Arthur Augustus D’Arcy detached himself from a comfortable seat in the corner of a first-class carriage, as the train stopped. He jammed his celebrated monocle into his eye, and took down his silk topper from the rack above, and disposed it carefully upon his noble head.

Then he stepped down to the platform.

The little rural station of Coombe looked very sleepy and very rural in the light of the setting sun. There were banks of flowers past the platform, scarlet geraniums predominating. An old porter trundled a trolley along in a leisurely manner. Three passengers alighted—one of them being the wandering junior from St. Jim’s. Coombe was not a busy station.

Arthur Augustus glanced about him; and the porter spotted him, and woke up to something like life. He abandoned the trolley, and came along, touching his cap.

“For Rookwood, sir?” he asked.

“Yaas.”

“Noo young gentleman, sir?” asked the porter, wary for tips.

“Bai Jove! No. Simply a visitah!”

“Oh!” said the porter.

His interest evaporated at once, and he returned to his trolley, and resumed propelling it up the platform, at the rate of about a mile in a couple of years.

Arthur Augustus walked slowly to the exit,

and gave up his ticket, and strolled out into the ancient High Street of Coombe.

There he looked about him. Having had to leave Greyfriars in a hurry, and being as resolved as ever not to return to St. Jim’s while the question of a flogging was in doubt, Arthur Augustus had made up his mind to look in on his old friends, Jimmy Silver and Co., at Rookwood School.

More than once, when Jimmy Silver had been at St. Jim’s for a match, he had impressed upon Arthur Augustus that he would be glad to see him at Rookwood, if he ever found himself in that quarter. Jimmy Silver’s kind invitation was useful to remember now.

Arthur Augustus glanced about the old High Street, thinking that possibly he might see some of his Rookwood friends in the village. It was past the hour when the Fourth Form was dismissed at Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver and Co. were not to be seen in Coombe, however, and Arthur Augustus walked down the street from the station. He paused as he was passing Mrs. Wicks’s little shop. He remembered having had refreshment at that establishment on a previous visit, and he was in need of refreshment now—it was past tea-time.

As it happened, there were several Rookwood fellows in the tuck-shop. Smythe, of the Shell at Rookwood, was entertaining several of his friends there—Tracy and Howard and Gilbey of the Shell, and Townsend and Topham of the Fourth. Smythe and Co. were the “nuts” of Rookwood, and it was the firm persuasion of Adolphus Smythe that he was the last word in elegance. Expensive Adolphus certainly was, but he looked more loud than elegant when Arthur Augustus D’Arcy stood near him.

Smythe and Co. stared at the St. Jim’s junior as he came up to the little counter. It was not elegant to stare, certainly, but the manners of the Rookwood nuts sometimes left a little to be desired.

Arthur Augustus raised his shining topper politely to Mrs. Wicks and gave his modest order. Adolphus Smythe extracted an eyeglass from his waistcoat pocket and screwed it into his eye, and surveyed the St. Jim’s junior at his leisure.

"By gad, I've seen that fellah before," Adolphus remarked to his companions in a voice that reached D'Arcy's ears.

"I remember him," yawned Tracy. "He came over with the St. Jim's cricketers, I believe."

"Oh, yaas," said Howard.

Arthur Augustus sat on a stool at the counter, unheeding. He remembered Smythe and Co., and that nutty crowd remembered him perfectly well. For, on one occasion of a match at Rookwood, Adolphus had generously invited Lord Eastwood's son up to his study for a game at banker, and had been very much offended by Gussy's curt refusal.

Adolphus remembered that circumstance very keenly.

He came along the counter towards Arthur Augustus, and his friends watched him with suppressed grins. They could see that Adolphus was going to have a little fun with the newcomer.

"D'Arcy, I believe?" drawled Smythe.

"Yaas," said Arthur Augustus. "Thank you, madam." He took his plate of cake and began to dissect it elegantly.

"Goin' to Rookwood, what?"

"Yaas."

"Visitin' us, hey?"

"I am visitin' Silvah of the Fourth," said Arthur Augustus. "Pewwaps you can tell me whethah Silvah or Lovell is in Coombe this aftahnoon."

"I'm afraid I don't know much about the movements of Fourth Form fags!" yawned Adolphus. "Sorry, you know."

"It does not mattah."

"Would you mind reachin' me a bottle of ginger-pop, yonder?" asked Smythe, with great civility. "I can't quite reach without pushin' past you——"

"Certainly."

Arthur Augustus's feet were on the rail of the high stool he was sitting on. He rose, and extended his hand across the counter to the ginger-beer bottle. As he did so, Adolphus Smythe's hand came from behind him, and he laid a fat and juicy jam tart on the seat of the stool. That action being performed behind D'Arcy's back, the swell of St. Jim's was quite unaware of it.

There was a suppressed chortle from the Rookwood nuts. They waited, in breathless expectation, for the St. Jim's junior to sit down.

"There is the bottle, Smythe."

"Thanks so much!" murmured Adolphus.

"Not at all."

Arthur Augustus sat down.

Squelch!

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Rookwood nuts in chorus.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Wicks. "What—what——"

"Gweat Scott!"

For a dreadful second, Arthur Augustus sat as if glued to the stool. In point of fact, he was very nearly glued to it.

Then he jumped off.

On the seat remained the squashed fragments of the jam tart. Most of the jam was adhering to Arthur Augustus's beautiful trousers.

"Deah me!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in horror.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Smythe.

"You uttah wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "You feahful cad! You placed that howwid tart for me to sit in——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, my bags are all jammy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rookwood nuts shrieked with merriment. Adolphus Smythe almost doubled up in an excess of mirth.

But his mirth was short-lived.

Arthur Augustus was a good-tempered fellow. He could forgive most injuries—he could have forgiven even Mr. Ratcliff if that unpleasant individual had apologised as one gentleman to another. But there were limits. Wilful damage to his elegant clobber was past the limit—far beyond it.

Wrath gleamed behind Gussy's eyeglass.

As Smythe doubled up, gasping with merriment, Arthur Augustus rushed upon him.

The next moment Adolphus was in his grasp, and the Shell fellow's head was in chancery.

Thump, thump, thump!

"You uttah wottah! Take that—and that—and that——"



Smythe and Co. were ingloriously driven into a corner of the tuck shop, where they yelled for quarter.
(See page 137.)

“Yooooop!”

Adolphus Smythe was still yelling, but it was not with merriment now. His yells were the yells of anguish as he spun round the wrathful swell of St. Jim's, struggling frantically, his head in chancery, and Arthur Augustus's fist beating time on his nose.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Washed Out.

“YAH! Oh! Ow! Rescue! Help!” shrieked Smythe.
“You uttah wuffian—”
“Help!”
“Back up, dear boys!” called out Townsend.

The Rookwood nuts had stood staring for a minute or more, taken quite by surprise. Perhaps Smythe might have been expected to help himself, as he was considerably bigger than the Fourth-former of St. Jim's. But it was pretty clear that he couldn't.

The nuts rushed to the rescue at last.

Hands were laid on Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on all sides.

“Welease me, you wottahs!” shouted Arthur Augustus. “Faih play! I am goin' to give this wuffian a feahful thwashin'!”

“Collar him!”

“Rag him!”

“Bump him!”

The nuts of Rookwood crowded to the attack, strong in numbers. Arthur Augustus was dragged off Adolphus, who staggered away, roaring.

“Yow-ow-ow-ow! Oh, my nose! Oh, dear! Oh, gad! Ow, ow, ow!”

“Down him!” yelled Tracy.

Arthur Augustus fought furiously. His noble blood was at boiling-point now, and though the enemy were six to one, he gave a good account of himself.

Tracy went down before a drive from the shoulder, and Gilbey rolled over him with a howl.

But the odds were too great. Arthur Augustus was borne to the floor, and five or six angry fellows scrambled over him.

“Gentlemen—gentlemen!” exclaimed Mrs. Wicks, in horror.

But the gentlemen did not heed.

“Smash him!” howled Adolphus Smythe. “Spificate him! Look at my nose! Ow, wow! Jump on him!”

“You uttah wottahs!” panted Arthur Augustus. “I will thwash any two of you! Oh, deah! Gerroff!”

Tracy snatched a syphon of soda-water from the counter.

“Stand clear while I bathe him!” he shouted.

“Good egg!”

“Bai Jove, you feahful wottahs!”

“Pulverise him!” howled Smythe.

There was a tramping of feet in the doer-way, and four juniors of Rookwood came on the scene.

“Hallo, what's the rumpus!” exclaimed the cheery voice of Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth.

“Smythe and Co. on the war-path!” grinned Arthur Edward Lovell.

“Wescue!”

“D'Arcy!” shouted Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

“Stand back, you rotters!” exclaimed Tracy. “You're not going to chip in here!”

“Ain't we just!” retorted Jimmy Silver. “Six to one isn't Rookwood style. Give 'em socks!”

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Raby, and Newcome rushed into the fray.

The Fistical Four of the Fourth were probably not sorry for a “row” with the nuts of Rookwood; indeed, Arthur Edward Lovell had often confessed that he never saw Adolphus Smythe's nose without wanting to punch it.

And there was good reason for chipping in now, that was clear.

Jimmy Silver jerked the soda-syphon away from Tracy in time, and as he seized it with his right, he let Tracy have his left.

Tracy sat down with a jar.

“Mop 'em up!” roared Lovell. “This is for your nose, Smythey.”

“Oh, gad! Yooooop!”

“Oh, dear, dear, dear, young gentlemen!” wailed Mrs. Wicks.

But Mrs. Wicks was not heeded. The Fistical Four were warming to their work,

and the fact that the enemy numbered six against four did not worry them in the least. Besides, as soon as Arthur Augustus was released by the nuts—under the necessity of defending themselves—he scrambled up and joined in the fray at once.

And the swell of St. Jim's was certainly equal to any two of the nuts.

Smythe and Co. were ingloriously driven into a corner, where they yelled for quarter.

"Stoppit!" shrieked Tracy. "We give you best, don't we? Stop it, you villains! Oh, my eye!"

"Chuck it! We give in!"

"Hands off!"

"Help!"

"Kick 'em out!" roared Lovell.

"Gentlemen—gentlemen!" beseeched Mrs. Wicks.

"It's all right, ma'am; we're only going to kick these hooligans out of your shop."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But Master Smythe hasn't paid."

"Oh! Ha, ha! I see. Pay up, Smythey."

"Oh, gad! Ow! By dose! Ooooooch!" Leggo!" howled Adolphus as Arthur Edward Lovell grasped him by the neck and marched him up to the counter.

"Pay up, my pippin, and smile."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Adolphus Smythe paid up, gasping, though he certainly did not smile. He was feeling more like weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth than smiling. But he paid up, and Lovell released his hapless neck.

Jimmy Silver stood by the doorway, the soda-syphon in his hand.

"Out you go!" he said.

"Look here," began Tracy, with an uneasy eye on the syphon.

"Kick them out!"

"This isn't a kick-out—it's a wash-out," said Jimmy Silver. "All serene, Mrs. Wicks. I'm going to pay for the soda. I'm standing these chaps a soda. Are you going, Smythey?"

"You—you—if you dare!" gasped Adolphus.

"Start him with your boot, Lovell."

"What-ho!"

"Yah! Oh!" roared Adolphus, as Lovell started him with his boot. He did not wait to be restarted. He bolted for the door.

"Sizzz! squish!"

Adolphus caught the stream, fair and square, as he fled. He rolled out of the doorway, drenched and gasping and spluttering.

"Bai Jove!" grinned Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Go it, Silvah, deah boy. I wegard that as bein' the weally wight and pwopah thing to do."

"Start those fellows—one at a time."

But Tracy and Co. did not want to be started one at a time. They preferred to try their luck with a rush, and they sped for the door in a crowd. The doorway was not built for a crowd. There was a jamb in it, and on the jambed juniors the soda-water played merrily.

Squish! Sizzz! Sloooosh! Splash!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The jamb in the doorway broke, and the nuts rolled out helplessly, gasping and sputtering. There was a squeaky fizz as the last remnant of the soda-water followed them.

"Wait while I get another syphon!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Smythe and Co. did not wait. They ran for their lives.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Arthur Augustus Arrives at Rookwood.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY smiled genially at Jimmy Silver and Co. Those cheery youths had arrived in the nick of time, and Arthur Augustus was duly grateful.

"Thank you so much for chippin' in, deah boys," he said, as the howls of Smythe and Co. died away.

"Not at all, old scout—it's a pleasure to handle Adolphus at any time," answered Jimmy, laughing. "What are you doing in this part of the planet?"

"I was comin' to see you, Silvah."

"Good man!"

"Jolly glad to see you," said Arthur Edward Lovell, with great cordiality, though he was perplexed. Rookwood was a good

distance from St. Jim's, and it was rather curious for a St. Jim's fellow to arrive on a visit so very late in the afternoon. Certainly he had no time to return before locking-up. Lovell did not yet know that Gassy was not returning.

"You're looking a bit dusty, old chap," said Raby, "Mrs. Wicks will let us use her kitchen for a wash and brush up, if you like."

"I should be vevy gwateful. That howwid boundah Smythe put a jam tart on my stool."

"Ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I do not wegard his action as funnay. My twousahs are all jammay."

"Too bad!" said Jimmy Silver, sympathetically. "Come along and we'll get the jam off."

In Mrs. Wicks' kitchen, there was washing and brushing—which all the juniors needed after the "scrap" with Smythe and Co. Then they came back into the shop for the interrupted spread.

"We came in for ginger-pop, after a trot, but we'll have tea here, as you're here, D'Arcy," said Jimmy Silver. "Our spread, you know. You must be hungry after your journey."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jimmy Silver gave liberal orders, and there was quite a spread on a little table in a corner of the tuck-shop. Arthur Augustus did full justice to it, much to the satisfaction of his hospitable entertainers.

He beamed with smiles across the little table, as the spread was disposed of, much relieved by the hearty welcome the Fistical Four had given him.

But his aristocratic visage became grave as the spread was finished.

"I feah I am goin' to make wathah a peculiah wequest, you fellows," he began, colouring.

"Any old thing," said Jimmy.

"Could you put me up at Wookwood to-night?"

"I was thinking you'd be pretty late back," remarked Lovell. "We can put you up easily enough, old scout."

"Certainly," said Jimmy. "Mr. Bootles knows you, and he will consent like a shot."

"I am goin' to be quite fwank with you, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "I have left St. Jim's—"

"Left St. Jim's!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"For a time," explained Arthur Augustus hastily. "I twust the mattah will blow ovah, and I may be able to weturn. But, for the pwsent, I am not goin' back to school."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Newcome.

"Pway do not think that I have done anythin' wong," said Arthur Augustus. "I was tweated with gwoss diswpect by a house-mastah—"

"Eh?"

"And I wefused to stand it. It was imposs for me to allow old Watty to take me by the yah."

"Oh!"

"For that weason, I have wetired from St. Jim's for a time, and I do not think it would be judicious to go home. The govannah would pwobably fail to undahstand. Owin' to Buntah's vevy disagreeable conduct, I have had to cleah out of Gweyfwhahs."

"Oh!"

"But I have a very stwong objection to slackin' while I am away fwom St. Jim's. I should not like to be suspected of clearin' off to dodge lessons, you know."

"My hat!" murmured Lovell.

"Now, as you fellows were kind enough to ask me to visit you, I should be vevy glad to do so now, if it would not place you in an awkward posish. In that case, pway do nct wefwain fwom tellin' me, deah boys."

Jimmy Silver and Co. blinked at the swell of St. Jim's.

They did not reply for some moments. Arthur Augustus had almost taken their breath away.

Arthur Augustus regarded them anxiously.

He was very anxious not to impose upon the hospitality of his friends. At the same time, he would have been very glad to find a temporary refuge at Rookwood.

"Well!" said Jimmy Silver, at last, "I needn't ask you if you've cleared off without leave—you have, of course. What will happen if you go back?"

"A floggin', I feah."

"Don't go back, then," said Arthur Edward



"I hear, Kildare," said Mr. Railton kindly, "that you and Darrell were witnesses of the serious occurrence yesterday between D'Arcy of the Fourth and Mr. Ratcliff. (See page 142.)

Lovell, at once. "Look here, we can manage it. You come to Rookwood as our guest, and we'll fix it up with Bootles somehow for you to stay—for a time, anyhow."

"What a lark!" said Raby, with a grin.

Arthur Augustus was relieved.

"Thank you vevy much!" he said gratefully.

Lovell chuckled.

"It's no end of a lark," he said. "We'll jolly well keep you at Rookwood, safe and sound. Won't we, Jimmy?"

"We'll jolly well do our best, anyway," said Jimmy Silver, heartily. "I suppose your friends know you're safe, D'Arcy?"

"That's all wight—I telephoned to Mr. Wailton fwm Gweyfwiahs this mornin'."

Jimmy Silver rose.

"Then we'll try it on at Rookwood," he said. "Come on."

Jimmy Silver settled the bill at the counter, and the five juniors left the tuck-shop, and started for Rookwood. Loveil and Raby and Newcome were grinning, greatly tickled by D'Arcy's escapade. Jimmy Silver was a little more serious. He was all hospitality and good-nature; but he wondered what was to come of the queer affair. He did not think it likely that Arthur Augustus would be able to remain in his new refuge for long.

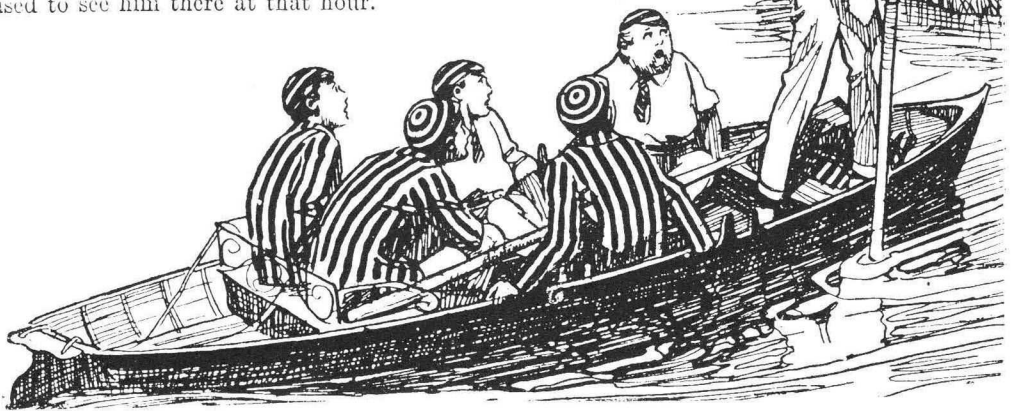
"Hallo! Is that D'Arcy?"

Mornington and Erroll met the juniors at the gates of the school. They greeted Arthur Augustus cheerily, though naturally surprised to see him there at that hour.

doesn't much matter, either, you inquisitive duffer."

"Well, it's queer, you know," said Tubby Muffin. "The Head has been on the telephone, I heard the bell buzzing. I say, Jimmy

But Jimmy Silver was going on with Arthur Augustus, and Tubby was left to con-



"Yes, he's come to stay with us for a bit," said Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, good!" said Morny.

Arthur Augustus walked across towards the School House with the Fistical Four. Tubby Muffin met them in the doorway, and gave the St. Jim's junior a fat and friendly grin.

"Is Bootles in, Tubby?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, and there's something up," said Muffin. "Bootles has been to see the Head, and he came back looking quite bottled. I was taking in my lines, you know, and old Bootles was saying 'Absurd!' 'Extraordinary!' What do you think is up, Jimmy?"

"Blessed if I know," said Jimmy. "It

continue his remarks to the Co. Jimmy led his guest to Mr. Bootles' door.

"I think it will be all right," he said. "Mr. Bootles knows you, and there's no reason why he should guess that you've taken French leave. Put on your nicest smile, old chap."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Jimmy tapped at the door.

"Come in!" came Mr. Bootles' voice.

Jimmy marched into the study with Arthur Augustus. Mr. Bootles was seated at his table, and he blinked at Jimmy over his glasses. Then his eyes fixed upon the swell of St. Jim's. What happened next was amazing.

Mr. Bootles jumped to his feet, blinking at Arthur Augustus as if the latter had been a spectre.



Talbot gave the New House boat a shove, and it rocked away on the water. Tom Merry and Co. waved their hands in farewell. "Good-bye, dear boys! Good-bye-ee!" (See page 105.)

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Ratcliff Climbs Down.

"D'Arcy!" he gasped.

"Yaas, sir," said Arthur Augustus, in amazement.

"Bless my soul! D'Arcy! Upon my word!"

"D'Arcy's come to see us, sir," began Jimmy Silver.

"Goodness gracious! The—the boy has—has actually come to Rookwood!" stammered Mr. Bootles. "Bless my soul! Close the door, Silver. D'Arcy, remain here! You will be detained here——"

"Bai Jove!"

"Silver, see that D'Arcy does not leave this study while I speak to the Head."

Mr. Bootles, in great excitement, whisked out of the room. He left Jimmy Silver and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rooted to the floor, staring at one another in blank astonishment.

"MERRY!"

"Yes, Kildare!"

"Mr. Railton wishes to speak to you. Go to his study."

"Oh! Right-ho."

Lessons were over for the day at St. Jim's. The Terrible Three were sauntering in the quadrangle, discussing the escapade of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

D'Arcy's chums were not anxious about him, so far as his personal safety was concerned. Fatty Wynn had imparted the information that Gussy had gone home to Greyfriars with Harry Wharton and Co. But they were very anxious about what was to happen to him as a result of the escapade.

However Arthur Augustus might look at the matter himself, the fact actually was that

he had run away from school, and that was a very serious matter indeed.

"Railton wants to know if you know anything, Tommy," remarked Monty Lowther, as Kildare turned away. "Keep it dark, of course."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Mum's the word," agreed Manners. "Gussy has played the ox, but it's up to us to stand by him. I—I suppose it would be better for him to be fetched home."

"No doubt about that. But we can't give him away," said Tom. "And old Ratty has made it pretty bad for him when he does come back."

Tom Merry went into the School House to his house-master's study. He found Mr. Railton with a grave brow.

"I have sent for you, Merry," said Mr. Railton very seriously, "to ask you whether you can enlighten me as to D'Arcy's present whereabouts."

Tom coloured.

"From a telephone message I received from him this morning, I am aware that he is at some other school," continued the house-master. "I have questioned Blake, and I believe Blake is aware of D'Arcy's hiding-place. He has not revealed it to me, however."

"Oh!" murmured Tom.

"I quite understand the sense of loyalty you boys feel in this matter," said Mr. Railton kindly. "But the case is very serious. D'Arcy must be found and brought home, or his parents must be communicated with, causing them unnecessary alarm. As head boy in the Lower School, Merry, you have some responsibility, and you must help me."

"I—I—" stammered Tom. "You—you see, sir—"

"Well?"

"I—I suppose D'Arcy is going to be punished, sir?"

"That is unavoidable, Merry. Mr. Ratcliff has laid a very serious complaint against him."

"Mr. Ratcliff was to blame, sir," exclaimed Tom. "Wynn says that both Kildare and Darrell saw what happened, and they could tell you—"

"The matter will be fully inquired into, Merry. But D'Arcy must return at once. He is at some school now—apparently with the idea of continuing his lessons, although he is absent from here. It can only be some school where he is known and has friends. Doubtless you know the place."

Tom was silent.

"I have already telephoned to Rylcombe Grammar School," said Mr. Railton. "He is not there. I have also inquired at Abbotsford School, but nothing has been heard of him. He has apparently gone further afield. I believe, Merry, that you and your friends are on specially friendly terms with some boys at Greyfriars School, in Kent, and at Rookwood School."

"Ye-es, sir!" stammered Tom.

"Are you aware whether D'Arcy has gone to either place?"

Tom Merry did not answer.

"Very well, Merry; you may go," said Mr. Railton, after a pause.

Tom Merry was glad to get out of the study.

He was glad, too, that he had had to deal with Mr. Railton, and not with Mr. Ratcliff, of the New House. "Ratty" would certainly not have been so lenient.

Mr. Railton remained for some minutes in thought, and then he left the study, and looked in at Kildare's room. The captain of St. Jim's was sitting down to tea with his chum, Darrell. The two Sixth-formers rose respectfully as the house-master looked in.

"Don't let me disturb you," said Mr. Railton kindly. "I hear, Kildare, that you and Darrell were witnesses of the serious occurrence yesterday between D'Arcy, of the Fourth, and Mr. Ratcliff."

"That is so, sir," said Kildare.

"Will you kindly tell me exactly what happened?"

"Certainly, sir."

Kildare described the scene in the lane, Darrell putting in a corroborating word or two. Mr. Railton listened very attentively, and then took his leave. He left the School House, with a grave brow, and walked across the quad to the New House.

"Come in!" rasped the acid voice of Mr. Ratcliff, as a tap came at his study door.

Mr. Ratcliff looked up surprised, as the School House master entered.

He grunted out an ungracious request to Mr. Railton to be seated. Mr. Railton sat down.

"There is news of D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Ratcliff, peering at him. "The young rascal has been found?"

"D'Arcy has not yet been found," said the School House master, quietly. "I think, however, that I have an idea where he may be found."

"That is good."

Mr. Ratcliff rubbed his thin hands. He was evidently looking forward to Arthur Augustus's return, and the flogging that was to follow.

"That is why I have come to speak to you, Mr. Ratcliff," pursued the School House master, in the same quiet tone. "You have laid a very serious complaint before the Head in regard to D'Arcy—that he struck you—"

"Precisely."

"I have now heard a somewhat different account of the matter."

"Indeed!"

"It appears from two witnesses, that you seized this boy, belonging to my house, and over whom you have no authority, sir, by the ear—to drag him into the school in a most ignominious manner," exclaimed Mr. Railton, his voice rising a little.

"I certainly intended to compel the boy to come into the school as he was out of gates without permission."

"You have informed the Head that he struck you. I learn that what he actually did was to rap your wrist to make you let go his ear."

"Do you justify such an action on the part of a junior?" asked Mr. Ratcliff, with a sneer.

"Certainly not. But the matter is very much less serious than the Head has been led to suppose."

"Mr. Railton!"

"I am speaking plainly, sir; it seems to be necessary. This is not the first time that trouble has been caused by your interference with boys of my house."

Mr. Ratcliff bit his thin lip hard.

"D'Arcy was out of bounds——" he began.

"That was a matter you could have reported to me, as his house-master. You had no right whatever to lay hands upon the boy, especially in such a humiliating manner."

"Sir!"

"The result was that the boy acted recklessly in a moment of excitement; and then becoming alarmed, he has run away from school. All this might have been avoided, Mr. Ratcliff, if you had cared to remember that your authority does not extend over the boys of my house."

"I decline to hear more of this, Mr. Railton."

"You may decline, if you wish, sir—but Dr. Holmes will not decline to hear my statement of the affair, and my resolve that this interference in my province shall cease," said the School House master, quietly. He rose to his feet. "I shall now place the matter before the Head, Mr. Ratcliff, and request him very seriously to see that your activities, in future, are confined to your own house."

"Stay!" muttered the New House master, as Mr. Railton turned to the door.

"Well, sir?"

"I—I have no desire for an—an unseemly dispute to be taken before the Head!" gasped Mr. Ratcliff. "It—it is true that I—I omitted certain details in—in my description of the occurrence, owing to—to excitement at the moment. On—on calmer reflection, I am prepared to admit that D'Arcy's action was not—not quite so serious as it appeared at first. I—I shall not insist upon the boy being flogged."

Mr. Railton paused.

"I certainly have no desire for anything like an unseemly dispute," he said at last. "But I cannot allow injustice to be done to a boy in my house. D'Arcy acted recklessly, but he was very much provoked. If you care to explain to the Head in such a way that——"

Mr. Ratcliff forced a laugh, though he was feeling more like grinding his teeth. It was not the first time that the interfering house-master had been brought up sharply.

"The fact is, Mr. Railton, that I was very much exasperated, and—and perhaps the matter was unduly stressed," he said. "I trust I am not a vindictive man. I am willing

to let the matter pass. I can say no more than that, I suppose."

"That, certainly, is quite satisfactory—you will doubtless inform the Head that on reflection the matter appears trifling, and that you desire to let it drop."

Mr. Ratcliff snapped his teeth.

"Certainly!" he gasped.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Ratcliff."

The two house masters walked across to the School House together. Mr. Ratcliff went to the Head's study—where his halting explanation was listened to by Dr. Holmes with some surprise, but much relief. Mr. Railton went to his own study, where he was busy on the telephone for a considerable time.

He had two trunk calls to make. The first that came through was Greyfriars; and from Mr. Quelch, at Greyfriars, he learned that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had certainly been there, and had attended classes with the Remove that morning—but had suddenly left after dinner.

A little later he was "through" to Rookwood School. But from Rookwood there was no news. Dr. Chisholm, at Rookwood, was surprised at his inquiry, and assured him that no St. Jim's boy had been at Rookwood that day—but promised to inform him if anything was heard there of the runaway. And with that, the School House master had to be content for the present.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

On Parole!

"EXTWAORDINAWY!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark in tones of the greatest astonishment.

He blinked at Jimmy Silver; and Jimmy Silver blinked at him.

"My only hat!" was all Jimmy could say.

"Mr. Bootles appeahs wathah excited."

"He do—he does!" gasped Jimmy.

"If your form-mastah was not such an extremely respectable old gentleman, Silvah, I should weally suspect that he had been dwinkin'. He has told you not to let me leave this studay."

"He has!"

"But why, deah boy?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Jimmy Silver. "It beats me—hollow."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rubbed his noble nose, in deep thought. Mr. Bootles' conduct seemed quite inexplicable.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated D'Arcy suddenly. "Is it poss that Mr. Bootles suspects that I have wun away fwom school, Silvah?"

"I don't see how he could."

"No; but—weally—it is very extwaordinawy."

The study door opened, and Bulkeley, of the Sixth Form, looked in. He smiled a little as he saw D'Arcy.

"Come along, young shaver!" he said.

"Are you addressin' me?" inquired Arthur Augustus.

"Yes."

"Then you must allow me to wemark, deah boy, that I object to bein' addressed as a young shavah."

Bulkeley laughed.

"You're wanted in the Head's study," he explained. "I'm to take you there, and see that you don't bolt. See?"

"Bai Jove!"

"Get a move on," said the captain of Rookwood impatiently.

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"Does the Head know?" he began.

"He knows you've bolted from your school, you young ass! He's heard from St. Jim's on the telephone. Come on."

"Oh! I—I—I see."

All was clear now.

"The game's up!" murmured Jimmy Silver, in dismay.

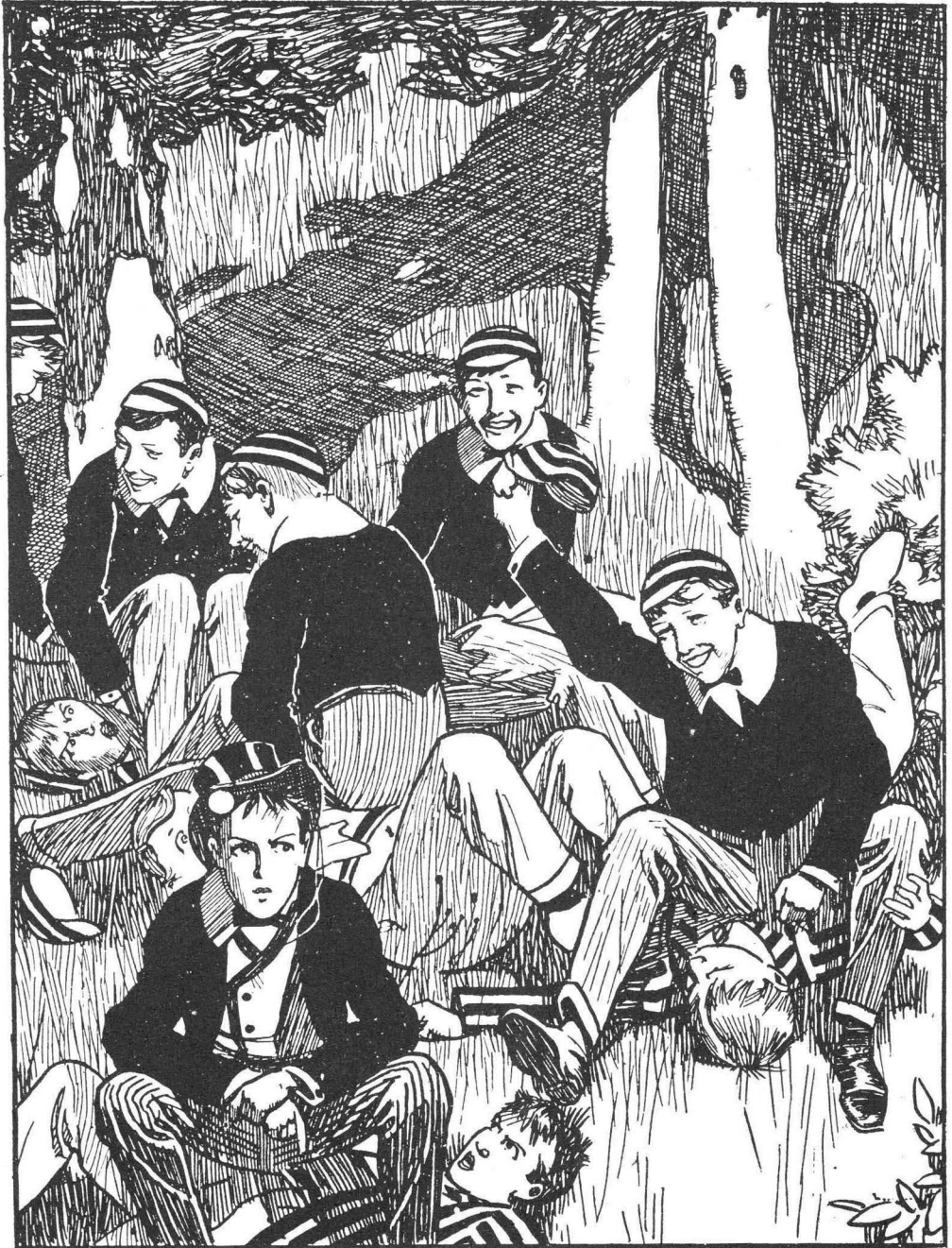
"Bai Jove, the game does appeah to be up, so fah as Wookwood is concerned. Bulkeley, deah boy, I am sowwy I cannot come with you."

"What?" ejaculated Bulkeley.

"Undah the cires, I think I had bettah cleah off without delay. You see——"

"I see that I'm going to take you to the Head," answered Bulkeley, with a grin. "Sharp's the word—I'm waiting."

"Pway express my wegweets to Dr. Chisholm," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I wish him to undahstand that my wathah sudden departure does not imply anythin'



Six gasping and furious New House juniors lay on their backs, at last, in the grass, with six School House fellows sitting on them to keep them there. "Victory!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Hurrah for us!"
(See page 104)

THE ST. JIM'S JUNIOR FOOTBALL XI.



Reading from left to right (standing): H. Manners, D. Wyrin, P. Reilly. (Seated): R. Talbot, H. Noble, J. Blake, Tom Merry (Captain), M. Lowther, R. H. Redfern. (In foreground): G. Figgins, G. Kerr.

like disrespects to him personally. Now kindly allow me to pass."

Bulkeley chuckled.

Instead of kindly allowing Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to pass, he kindly took him by the shoulder.

"This way!" he remarked.

"Weally, Bulkeley——"

"Move on."

"Oh, deah!"

Bulkeley was smiling and good-natured; but his grip on the junior's shoulder was like iron. Arthur Augustus wished to head for the big doorway, where Lovell and Co. stood looking on in dismayed surprise. But he did head for Dr. Chisholm's study—constrained by that iron grasp on his shoulder.

"Look heah!" he gasped.

"Come on, you young ass!"

"I wefuse to be called an ass. And I desiah my fweedom——"

"Bosh!"

"Weally, Bulkeley——"

"Dry up, you young ass," said the captain of Rookwood, impatiently.

"I desiah to point out——"

"Cheese it!"

"That you are wumplin' my jacket!" said Arthur Augustus with dignity.

Bulkeley laughed, and marched the swell of St. Jim's onward, with a reckless disregard for his rumpled jacket. He tapped at the door of Dr. Chisholm's study, and marched the delinquent into that awe-inspiring apartment.

Mr. Bootles was there, in a state of

fluttering excitement. Dr. Chisholm, calm and grave, peered at Arthur Augustus over his spectacles.

"This is the boy?" he asked.

"That is D'Arcy, sir!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Dear me! D'Arcy, it appears that you have run away from school——"

"Not at all, sir. I should regard such a pwoceedin' as undignified."

"Wha—at?"

"I have wetired fwom St. Jim's for a time, sir, owin' to havin' been tweeked with gwoss disrespect by a house-mastah."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Bootles blinked, and Bulkeley suppressed a grin. But Arthur Augustus was as grave and serious as the Head of Rookwood himself. He did not see anything to grin at, personally.

"And now, sir, I should be obliged if you would instwuct this wathah wuff person to welease me," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Chisholm.

"This is a—a—a rather extraordinary boy. D'Arcy, I have been requested by your house-master to detain you, if you should come here. You will be detained at Rookwood until you are sent for."

"Oh, deah!"

"I shall telephone to Mr. Railton, informing him that you are here," said the Head of Rookwood. "You will stay the night and be taken away in the morning, I presume. Mr. Bootles, you will see that this boy does not leave the precincts of the school."

"Certainly, sir."

Dr. Chisholm turned to the telephone. Arthur Augustus was led from the study with Bulkeley's hand on his shoulder. He was very palpably looking out for a chance of escape.

The hapless wanderer was taken back to Mr. Bootles' study, where Jimmy Silver was still waiting, wondering in dismay how the affair was going to end. There Bulkeley left him with the form-master, and walked away smiling. Arthur Augustus smoothed his rumped jacket.

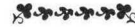
"D'Arcy!" said Mr. Bootles, blinking at him. "You appear to be a—a—a somewhat extraordinary boy."

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY IN VERSE

By Dick Penfold



No. 4: Gerald Loder.



Who makes us sh-sh-shake with fright,
Whene'er he c-c-comes in sight?
(Or thinks he does, the silly kite!)

Why, LODER!

Who wields an ashplant might and main,
And makes us cry, in tones of pain:
"Pup-please I'll never do it again?"

Why, LODER!

Who, when the stars begin to peep,
And nice young boys are all asleep,
Towards the village starts to creep?

Why, LODER!

Who plays the game with skill and zest,
(He fancies nap and poker best),
Who finds us in bed—fully dressed?

Why, LODER!

Who built a mansion in the sun?
Who thought the captaincy he'd won?
And then was diddled, dished, and done?

Why, LODER!

Who, when he reads this gentle verse,
Will give a none too gentle curse?
Who'll never change—except for worse?

Why, LODER!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well.

"Weally, Mr. Bootles——"

"I have no desire to use rough measures," said the mild little gentleman. "Silver, you are well acquainted with D'Arcy, I believe——"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Jimmy.

"Can you answer for it that if the boy gives his word not to leave Rookwood, he can be relied upon to keep it?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Jimmy Silver at once.

"Very good; I certainly have that impression of him. D'Arcy, will you give me your word to remain in the school until you are sent for?"

"I am sowwy, sir, that I feel bound to wefuse."

"Otherwise, it will be necessary to lock you in a room by yourself——"

"Bai Jove!"

"I should be very sorry indeed, D'Arcy, to have to take such measurès," said Mr. Bootles kindly.

Arthur Augustus was silent for a few moments. But he rose to the occasion with all the dignity that was natural to the swell of St. Jim's.

"Undah the cires, sir, I will give my pawole," he said.

"Your——your what?"

"I will give my word not to leave Wookwood, wathah than be detained in a humilia-tin' mannah, sir."

"Very good; I accept your word, D'Arcy. A bed shall be prepared for you in the Fourth-form dormitory to-night. Silver, you will doubtless see that your friend has anything he requires this evening——"

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"Very well; you may go."

And Jimmy Silver left the study with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy——landed at last after his wanderings. Stone walls do not a prison make; but Arthur Augustus's word was his bond.

But, dismayed as he was, the swell of St. Jim's slept soundly enough that night in the dormitory of the classical Fourth——leaving the morrow to take care of itself; which was really all he could do, under the peculiar circumstances.

"THEY'RE coming!"

There was keen excitement at St. Jim's. Morning lessons were over at the old school, and it was known that Kildare had not appeared in the Sixth-form room that morning. Trimble of the Fourth, who knew everything, declared that the prefect had gone to fetch D'Arcy from somewhere——and Tom Merry ventured to inquire of his house-master.

Then all St. Jim's knew.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had been located at Rookwood School, and Kildare was gone for him by an early train; and was expected back to dinner. Tom Merry and Co. did not give much thought to dinner. Even Fatty Wynn, for once in his career, forgot a meal-time. A crowd of juniors gathered round the gates to see Arthur Augustus when he arrived.

There was a buzz as Figgins, out in the road, announced that they were coming!

"There he is——with Kildare!" said Blake.

"Poor old Gussy!"

"Poor old Gus!" said D'Arcy minor, of the Third. "Always looking for trouble, and always finding it. Just like Gussy!"

"Is that what you call brotherly sympathy in the Third?" inquired Blake.

Wally grinned.

"Oh, Gussy's all right!" he answered.

"Gussy rolls out of a scrape as fast as he rolls into one. Besides, Ratty's let the matter drop——Kildare said so——"

"Here they come!"

Kildare of the Sixth came striding up to the gates, with Arthur Augustus walking by his side. There was a calm and lefty repose in the manner of Arthur Augustus. If he was alarmed, he was certainly not allowing any signs of it to appear upon his aristocratic countenance.

"Welcome home, Gussy!" sang out Wally of the Third.

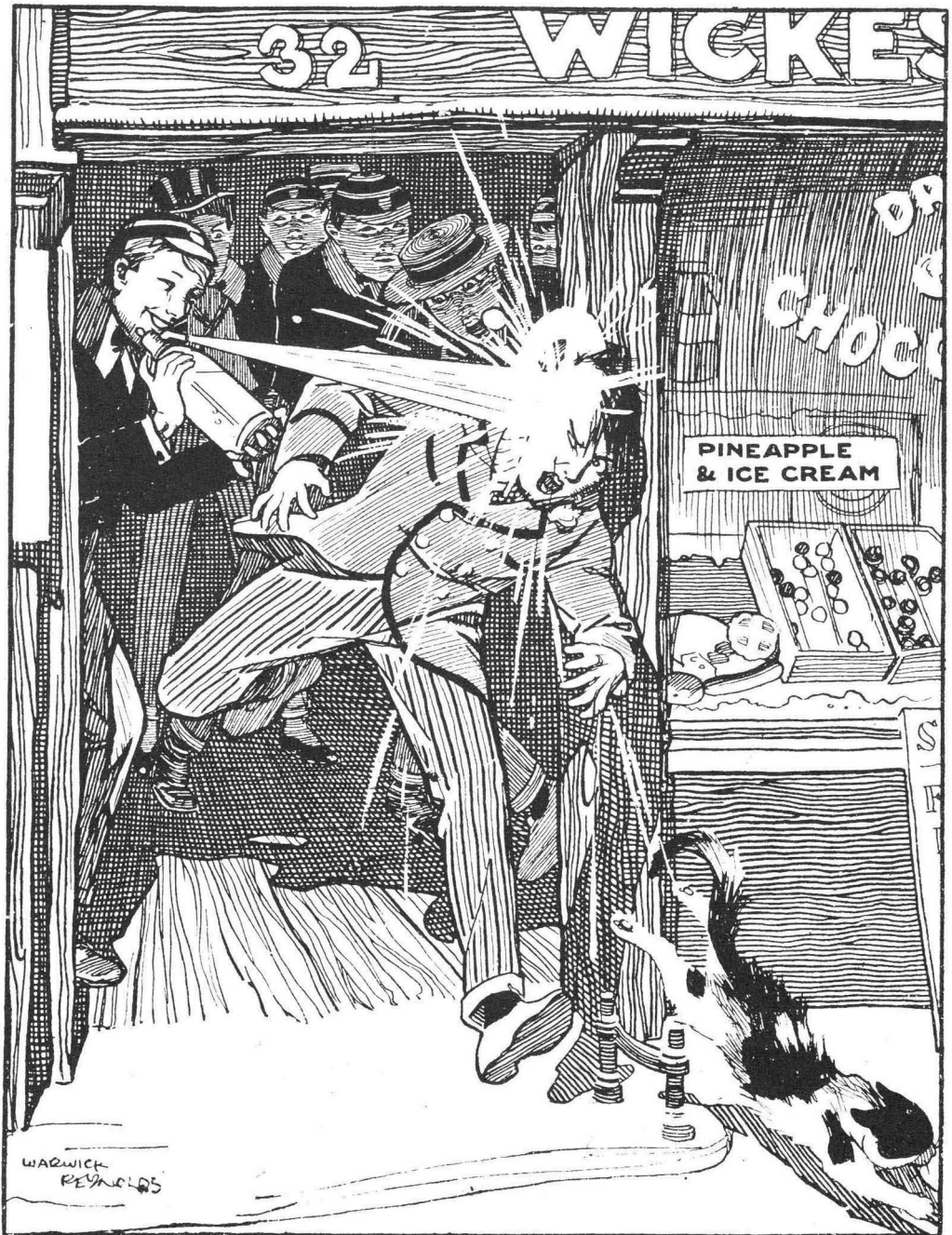
"Thank you, deah boy."

"Feeling a bit funky, what?" inquired Grundy of the Shell.

"Weally, Gwunday——"

"Where did they catch you?" asked Dig.

"That is hardly the way to descwibe it,



Adolphus caught the stream, fair and square, as he fled. He rolled out of the tuck-shop doorway, drenched and gasping and spluttering. (See page 137.)

Dig. Kildare called for me at Wookwood this mornin', and requested me to accompany him. As I have a vewy gweat respect for Kildare, I felt that I could not vewy well wefuse his request."

"Oh, my hat!"

Kildare grinned. He had certainly requested Arthur Augustus to accompany him back to St. Jim's, being prepared to take him by the collar if he refused. Fortunately, Arthur Augustus had not refused.

"Come on, kid," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Certainly, deah boy."

"Best of luck, old chap," said Kerr.

"Thank you vewy much, Kerr," Arthur Augustus paused. "Wynn, I twust you did not ovah-exert yourself the othah day at Abbotsford. You looked wathah wed and lweathless when I saw you last, deah boy."

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"It's all right," he said. "I jolly nearly dropped my cake, and if that ass of a porter had trodden on it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I just saved it," said Fatty Wynn. "So it was all right."

Tom Merry and Co. walked on to the School House with the returned wanderer. Mr. Ratcliff glanced at the procession from his study window, in the New House, and frowned. Mr. Railton glanced at it from his window, and smiled. Quite an army marched into the School House with the swell of St. Jim's, as far as the corridor of the Head's study. There they had to stop; while Kildare conducted the delinquent into the presence of Dr. Holmes.

"D'Arcy, sir!" said Kildare.

And he retired, leaving the ornament of the Fourth Form to face the music. At the nearer corner in the passage without, Tom Merry and Co. waited in an anxious crowd.

"Did the Head look waxy, Kildare?" Tom Merry ventured to ask, as the captain of St. Jim's came back.

"Not very!" said Kildare, with a smile.

"Good!"

And the juniors waited—a good deal more anxious for Arthur Augustus than that placid youth was for himself. Dr. Holmes had

fixed a severe glance upon the returned wanderer, which Arthur Augustus met firmly but respectfully. As Arthur Augustus could not see that he was to blame in any way, he naturally had the support of a good conscience.

"Well!" said the Head at last. "So you have returned, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, sir."

"You do not seem aware, D'Arcy, that you have committed a very serious fault in running away from school!" exclaimed the Head sternly.

"I did not wun away, sir!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I should wegard wunnin' away fwom school, sir, as undignified, and also as wantin' in wespect to you, sir, as head-mastah. I wetired fwom St. Jim's for a time. I wegard that as quite a different mattah."

"I do not quite see the difference," said the Head. "You have been absent from school without leave——"

"I assuah you, sir, that I have not been slackin'. I attended classes at Gweyfwiahs, and should have continued to do so, but for that vewy unpleasant person Buntah——"

"Really, D'Arcy——"

"I was goin' to ask permish to attend classes at Wookwood, sir, if I had wemained there. I weally twust, sir, that you will not wegard me as havin' any desiah to slack."

"I accept your assurance on that point, D'Arcy, but——"

"As for my weason for clearin' off, sir, I wegard myself as havin' no othah wesource. Watty——"

"What?"

"I—I mean Mr. Watcliff, sir, tweated me with gwoss diswespect——"

"It was my intention, D'Arcy, to administer a flogging for your conduct towards Mr. Ratcliff——"

"That is why I decided to wetire from the school for a time, sir," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "I twusted that you would be appwised, in the long wun, of the actual facts, and then it would be poss for me to weturn in honah, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Holmes, regarding the swell of the Fourth very curiously over his glasses. "As it happens, D'Arcy,

POLICE-COURT NEWS AT GREYFRIARS

With Profuse Apologies to the
Daily Papers.

By Our Special Representative.

A SENSATIONAL SCENE!

The Court was in a turmoil when Percy Bolsover, prize bully, was brought into the dock by twenty constables. He was formally charged with ill-treating Percival Spencer Paget on the 14th instant by laying into him with a cricket-stump.

Magistrate: "Words cannot express my contempt for your conduct, you hulking lout!"

At this juncture, prisoner caught up an ebony ruler, and hurled it with all his might at the magistrate. His worship ducked, and the missile merely struck Mr. Skinner, K.C., on the nose.

Magistrate: "I will call no witnesses. It would be a superfluous proceeding. Prisoner will be made to run the gauntlet six times over!"

The barristers formed up in two rows, took off their wigs, and severely lashed prisoner with them. Bolsover was conveyed to the sanatorium in a critical condition.

A FOOTBALLER'S FAILURE.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, a dusky youth of Oriental extraction, was charged with deliberately miffing an open goal in the recent match with Highcliffe, thereby causing the Greyfriars Remove to lose.

The magistrate, in tones vibrant with emotion, said it cut him to the heart to see such an old pal in the dock. Prisoner had borne a good character for many hours, and now it was to be forfeited as the result of a moment's folly.

Mr. H. Vernon-Smith, giving evidence, said that in the last five minutes of the fatal game he lobbed the leather across to Hurree Singh, but the latter, left with an open goal at his mercy, simply sat down on the ball, and stayed there until an opposing back cleared.

Prisoner: "It was done accidentally, your esteemed worship. I tripply skidded on a ludicrous puddle, and sat down bumpfully!"

The magistrate, after consulting several eminent lawyers, dismissed the case, stating that unless prisoner performed the hat-trick in the next match, he would be subjected to a severe bumping.

Mr. Ratcliff has withdrawn his complaint against you, and requested me to allow the matter to pass. I have acceded to his request."

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"As that matter is now at an end, it is unnecessary to inquire into it further. But your action in running away from school——"

"Weally, sir——"

"In absenting yourself without leave, at least, is very serious, and I shall punish you accordingly, D'Arcy."

Dr. Holmes picked up his cane.

"Vewy well, sir," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "If you considah that I am deservin' of punishment, I am bound to accept your judgment, as my head-mastah, sir."

"You must be aware, D'Arcy, that you have been guilty of disrespect to me, in acting as you have done."

Arthur Augustus looked distressed.

"Bai Jove! I certainly nevah looked at the mattah in that light, sir. I should be vewy sowwy if you thought me lackin' in wrespect to my head-mastah. I should wegard that as vewy bad form."

Dr. Holmes coughed.

"Really——!" he said.

"I do not mind a lickin', sir," said Arthur Augustus. "I am quite weady. But I weally twust, sir, that you will not continue to wegard me as havin' acted in a diswespectful mannah. That is vewy distwessin' indeed to me."

Dr. Holmes looked at Arthur Augustus long and hard. He laid down the cane at last.

"If you assure me, D'Arcy, that you will not act again in this foolish and reckless mannet——" he said.

"Certainly, sir, if you wish."

"Then, as you assure me that you did not intend to act disrespectfully——"

"I assuah you, sir, as one gentleman to anothah!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"You may go, D'Arcy!" said the Head hastily.

"Thank you, sir."

And Arthur Augustus left the study. As he closed the door, he heard a faint sound

from within, and started—but it was impossible to suspect the Head of laughing, and he dismissed the idea from his mind.

He walked down the passage with his noble head held high. At the corner, twenty fellows surrounded him.

“Well, you duffer?”

“Well, you ass?”

“Licked?”

“Flogged?”

“What’s happened?”

“Bai Jove!” Arthur Augustus arranged his eyeglass carefully in his eye, and surveyed Tom Merry and Co. calmly. “Pway don’t all speak at once, deah boys. I am happay to inform you that I have not been licked. There was nothin’ for me to be licked for. I explained the mattah to the Head.”

“Oh!”

“I was wathah distwessed to find that he wegarded me as havin’ acted diswespectfully, but I have fortunately wemoved that unfounded ideah fwom his mind. The Head is wathah an old sport, deah boys.”

“And you’re not licked!” ejaculated Tom Merry.

“Not at all.”

“Well, my hat!”

“It’s duffer’s luck!” said Blake.

“Weally, Blake——”

“Duffer’s luck, and no mistake,” agreed Tom Merry.

“Weally, Tom Mewwy——!”

“As the Head hasn’t licked him, I think we ought to lick him for worrying his old pals and turning their hair grey,” said Blake.

“Hear, hear!”

“Wats!” said Arthur Augustus cheerily.

“Gentlemen, I am vewy pleased to be back again. The Head is a bwick. I wequest you all to accompany me to the tuck-shop, and dwink the Head’s health in gingah-pop.”

“Bravo!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I twust that all my fwriends will come,” said Arthur Augustus.

And they did! And there was quite a cram in Dame Taggles’ little shop when Arthur Augustus arrived there, accompanied by all his friends, who were only too happy to celebrate the safe return of “The Wandering School-boy!”

