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THE SON OF A SAILOR!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co.

AUBREY THE WAITER!

17-8-18

A MAGNIFICENT, NEW, LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY OF TOM MERRY & CO. AT ST. JIM'S.

THE SON OF A SAILOR!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.
Rough on Racke.

"I WEGARD that as caddish!"

Tom Merry heard that remark in the well-known tones of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth as he came into the Common-room.

"I wegard it as wotten!" continued Arthur Augustus with emphasis. "And just like Wacke!"

"Beastly trick!" chimed in Jack Blake.

Tom Merry looked round.

A group of juniors were looking at a paper pinned in a prominent position on the wall of the Common-room.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was regarding it through his eyeglass, and behind his celebrated monocle his eye gleamed with wrath.

"Hallo! What's the trouble?" asked Tom, joining the group.

"That wottah Wacke up to his twicks again!" answered D'Arcy. "Look at that papah, deah boy! It's in Wacke's fist."

Tom Merry glanced at the paper, and his brow darkened.

The handwriting of Aubrey Racke of the Shell was easily recognisable. It was a large, sprawling, and ungraceful fist. The notice ran:

"NOTICE TO HUNS!

"Boches are barred at St. Jim's.

"GO BACK TO DEUTSCHLAND."

"I suppose that's meant for Laurenz of the Fourth?" said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Racke was lounging in an armchair at a little distance, looking on with a sarcastic grin.

Tom Merry turned towards him.

"What have you stuck that rubbish up there for, Racke?" he asked.

"Don't you agree with it?" sneered Racke.

"No, I don't!"

"You like Huns?" asked Racke.

Tom knitted his brows.

"I don't like Huns," he answered. "My uncle's in Flanders killing Huns at this minute. But Laurenz isn't a Hun, and it's caddish to twit the chap."

"Wotten!" said D'Arcy with emphasis.

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I can't stand Germans, if you can," he answered. "I don't like 'em! Hunland is the proper place for a Hun, not St. Jim's. I don't call it patriotic of you to back up a Boche, Tom Merry."

Racke evidently felt that he had the advantage there.

Naturally, nobody at St. Jim's liked Huns; and though Laurenz of the Fourth, the new junior, had shown that he was a decent fellow in every way, the fellows could not quite forget that he was of German origin. But there were many points in Paul Laurenz's favour. Never was there a fellow more utterly unlike a German; and the juniors had agreed that his origin was his misfortune, not his fault.

Racke, at all events, was not the fellow to take up a specially patriotic line. He rolled in money derived from the war-profits of Messrs. Racke & Hacke. He was a food-hog, and several other unpleasant things. It was for his good qualities, and not for any bad ones he might have had, that Racke disliked the new Fourth-Former.

But Tom Merry stood in some perplexity. He did not want to adopt the line of "backing up Boches." Arthur Augustus chimed in, however.

"Lauwenz is not a Hun, Wacke, though he had the howwid misfortune to be of Boche owigin. I know perfectly well why you are persecutin' him. It is because he chipped in when thwee of you were waggin' Cardew the othah day, and mopped you up."

"A Hun should learn not to lay his paws on a white man," said Racke.

"Hallo, here's Laurenz!" murmured Levison of the Fourth.

There was a slight hush as the new junior came in.

Paul Laurenz glanced at the suddenly-silent juniors. His handsome face, thoroughly English in feature, was grave and quiet, as it usually was. His "Boche" origin did not make Paul Laurenz happy.

His eyes fell on the notice upon the wall next moment. He looked at it and read it, and the juniors watched him, wondering what he would do. Racke watched him, with a grin that was not quite easy. For Laurenz was a very hefty fellow with his fists, if it came to that. Racke had learned as much from painful experience already. Racke did not want it to come to that if he could help it.

But Laurenz did nothing.

After reading the paper, he turned his back on it and moved away. He sat down at a distance, and opened a book. Apparently he did not consider Racke's precious notice as calling for action on his part. Arthur Augustus stretched his hand towards the paper, but drew it back again. If Laurenz chose to leave it there, it was nobody else's business to remove it.

It was then that Cardew of the Fourth sauntered in with Clive.

"Hallo! Anythin' up?" he asked, observing at once something unusual in the atmosphere of the Common-room.

"Only Wacke bein' a cad again!" said D'Arcy.

"By gad! What's that?"

Ralph Reckness Cardew's eyes glittered as he read the paper. He was the only fellow at St. Jim's who had chummed with Laurenz, though most of the fellows liked him.

"By gad!" he repeated. "Racke's gettin' humorous. Are you so awfully down on Huns, Racke?"

"I hope I'm patriotic enough not to like Germans!" sneered Racke.

"What about your own pater?"

Racke started.

"My father's not a German, you fool!" he snapped.

"But he's a war-profiteer," said Cardew coolly. "That's the next thing to a Hun, isn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled D'Arcy.

"Hear, hear!" came from Monty Lowther.

"But for the war, Sir James Racke would still be drivin' a cab, wouldn't he?" continued Cardew.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke started to his feet, scowling.

"You rotter, you know my father wasn't a cab-driver!" he yelled furiously.

"No?" said Cardew in surprise. "What was he, then? One of those dear men who go round to the area doors sellin' cheap jewellery to the maids on the instalment plan?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas, now I come to think of it, that's it," said Cardew. "He was never anythin' so honest as a cabby. He must have regarded the war as a boon an' a blessin'. He's made a big fortune out of his country owin' to the war, Racke, an' you ought to feel obliged to the Huns. If they hadn't started the war your pater would still be goin' round to area doors——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, delighted at the expression on Aubrey Racke's face.

"And you'd still be Peter Racke, as you used to be," continued Cardew. "Accordin' to Trimble, who knew you before you came here, you were Peter once, an' became Aubrey after the war-profits rolled in. Racke, old man, but for the Boches you wouldn't be Aubrey at this blessed minute! You have to thank the Huns for that noble an' aristocratic name. You ought to pass a vote of thanks to the Huns, by gad!"

Racke's face was crimson with fury. A howl of laughter swept the Common-room. Possibly by that time Racke regretted that he had put up his notice on the wall, and brought upon himself the bitter tongue of Paul Laurenz's chum.

"An' just think!" went on Cardew. "The Huns caused the war-profits, an' it's the war-profits that give you the chance of food-hoggin'. That man I saw you with the other day—your new valet, you know—the chap who bags grub for you to devour in secret—he's paid out of the war-profits, all due to the Huns. Yet you dislike Huns! I call that ungrateful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Aubrey Racke clenched his hands hard. For a moment he looked as if he would rush at Cardew of the Fourth. But he did not. He strode out of the Common-room instead, his face crimson and his eyes glittering.

Cardew glanced at him lazily.

"Don't hurry away, Racke!" he called. "I was goin' to ask you how much your pater paid out of the war-profits for his baronetcy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Racke was gone.

"By gad, I seem to have offended Racke!" remarked Cardew. "He looked quite ratty! I wonder why?" The dandy of the Fourth jerked down the notice from the wall, tore it methodically

into small pieces, and pitched them into the grate. "But it's too funny Racke settin' up as a Hun-hater, when he owes so much to them. There's such a thing as common gratitude, isn't there?"

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Cardew strolled across the room and dropped into a chair beside Laurenz. Paul gave him a grateful glance.

"Why didn't you punch that cad's head, kid?" asked Cardew.

"Not worth it!" said Paul shortly. "What's the good, either? What he says about me is true, I suppose. And—and if he doesn't like Germans, he's right!"

"That's a rather queer thing for a German to say."

Paul Laurenz flushed.

"I—I suppose it's wrong of me," he said. "A chap ought to stick to his own country, of course. But I don't feel German."

Cardew looked at him curiously.

"Are you German?" he asked.

"I suppose so."

"You don't look it, you don't feel it, and you don't even speak German well," said Cardew. "Grundy of the Shell says you can't be a German, because you stood up to him so well in a scrap."

Paul smiled.

"Suppose," said Cardew slowly—"suppose you weren't a German after all——"

"But I am."

"Suppose you weren't?" persisted Cardew. "Would you like that?"

"Of course! But what's the good of talking of what's impossible?"

"Impossible?" said Cardew reflectively. "Nothin's impossible. You remember what jolly old Shakespeare remarks. 'There's more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in thy philosophy.' You haven't forgotten that when my uncle, Commander Durrance, was here the other day he took to you no end, and was specially struck by your likeness to me?"

"I remember."

"So do I," said Cardew. "I've been thinkin' it over. I'm a rather brainy chap, you know, an' I've been thinkin' no end. You're awfully like me to look at, only not so good-lookin'—ahem!—an' I don't like a chap goin' about with my features an' bein' a German. So I'm goin' to have a big think an' see if I can't make you English."

Ralph Reckness Cardew arose and sauntered away, having made that remark. Paul Laurenz looked after him in blank amazement. Cardew was a whimsical fellow, and had a peculiar sense of humour. But if his observations in this case were humorous, Paul Laurenz quite failed to see the joke.

CHAPTER 2.
Tom Merry's Warning.

"WHO'S comin'?" asked Crooke.

It was the following morning, and a half-holiday. Tom Merry & Co. were going to be busy on the cricket-ground, there being a junior House match fixed for the afternoon. But Racke & Co. were not thinking of cricket. In Racke's study Crooke and Scrope had joined the heir of the war-profiteers. The black sheep were planning a little excursion for that afternoon, shady, like most of their excursions.

"Only us three," answered Racke. "No good havin' Trimble an' Mellish—spongin' cads. The spread's for us three."

"There's really a spread?" asked Scrope.

"You bet! My man's seen to that!"

"Unlucky that Cardew saw the man the other day," remarked Crooke. "The fellows know all about your new man now, Racke, an' it makes them ratty."

"Let it!" said Racke indifferently.

"I mean, they may cut up rusty, as they did before."

"Oh, rats! If you're funky, you needn't come!" sneered Racke.

"Well, I don't know that I'm specially keen on seein' that man of yours!" said Scrope tartly. "Accordin' to Cardew, his uncle saw the man in the lane, an' recognised him as an old gaol-bird named Luke Clancy. He's given his name to you as Scaife. Fishy sort of rotter!"

"I wasn't lookin' for a paragon of virtue to help me in dodgin' the grub rules."

"I suppose not; but there's a limit. If the man's really an old gaol-bird, it may be risky havin' anythin' to do with him."

"He was recommended to me. Besides, old Durrance is an old fool!" snapped Racke. "He doesn't know the man. Look here, if you don't want to come——"

"Oh, I'll come!"

"Let's get off, then!"

The black sheep of the Shell quitted the study, and strolled out of the School House.

Outside, the Terrible Three were chatting, in flannels, ready for the match.

As Racke & Co. came out, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther moved towards them, looking a trifle grim.

"You're going out?" asked Tom.

"I don't see that it matters to you!" said Racke insolently. "But we're goin' out, if you want to know."

"Food-hogging?"

"Find out!"

Tom Merry's eyes gleamed.

"That's what I'm going to speak to you about, Racke!" he said.

"Sorry; not time to listen!" yawned Racke. "Come on, you chaps!"

Tom Merry let his bat slide down into his hand, and took a grip on the cane handle.

"Wait a minute!" he said.

It was so clear that Racke & Co. would get the benefit of the bat, if they did not wait a minute, that they decided at once to do so.

"Listen to me," said the captain of the Shell quietly. "You had a man in Rylcombe before, Racke, who used to supply you with grub over the rations, by some trickery or other. We cleared that man out."

"Like your confounded cheek!" said Racke savagely. "Why can't you mind your own business?"

"It's every chap's business to put a stop to food-hogging. Now it seems that you've got a new man to play the same old game. Well, it's not going to be allowed!"

"That's the order of the day!" remarked Manners.

"Can't allow you to disgrace the Shell, you know!" explained Monty Lowther. "You disgrace it enough by belonging to it, Racke. That's the limit!"

"An' what are you goin' to do?" sneered Racke.

"If you've got a new man playing that caddish game, we're going to clear him off, as we cleared off the other rotter, and give him a Form ragging into the bargain!" exclaimed Tom Merry, his eyes flashing. "Ripping for St. Jim's, if it all came out, and there was a prosecution! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Go hon!"

"Well, that's a straight tip!" said Tom. "Go ahead; but, if you're bowled out, look out for squalls, that's all!"

"Quite enough, too!" said Racke. "Would you mind gettin' out of the way, if you've finished your sermon?"

"Time, you slackers!" shouted Figgins of the New House, coming along with Kerr and Fatty Wynn.

The Terrible Three joined the New House fellows, and walked away to Little Side. They had no further time to waste on Racke & Co. just then.

"Come on!" grunted Racke.

Crooke and Scrope were not looking wholly easy in their minds as they followed their chum to the gates. If the affair had been a dead secret they would have had no objection to food-hogging excursions; but now that suspicion was excited the game was less attractive. But they accompanied Racke.

Cardew of the Fourth was just leaving the gates with Paul Laurenz when they arrived there. Cardew's study-mates, Clive and Levison, were both playing for the School House that afternoon, and Cardew was left to his own devices. But he seemed quite contented to join his new chum.

Racke glanced at him with a sneer as he passed.

"Still chummin' with the Boche, Cardew?" he yelled.

"Still rakin' in the war-profits, Racke?" was Cardew's retort. "I say, look out for Mr. Crump!"

"Crump! What's the village bobby got to do with it?" demanded Racke.

"He runs in food-hogs," explained Cardew.

"Go and eat coke!"

Racke & Co. walked away towards Rylcombe. Ralph Reckless Cardew looked at Laurenz with a smile.

"We're goin' to do a walk around, ain't we?" he remarked.

Paul nodded.

"Do you mind where we go?" asked Cardew.

"Not at all."

"You'll follow my lead?"

"Yes; you know this district, and I don't."

"Right-ho, then! Come on!"

The two Fourth-Formers walked down the lane towards Rylcombe in the wake of Racke & Co.

At the stile in the lane the Shell fellows turned off into the fields. Cardew did the same, and Laurenz followed him. They crossed the field a dozen yards behind Racke & Co.

On the farther side Racke glanced back, and scowled as he saw the Fourth-Formers. He hurried his footsteps, his companions following his example.

"Buck up a bit, Laurenz!" drawled Cardew.

"Right you are."

The two kept pace with the three. Wherever the three turned the two followed, always keeping Racke & Co. about a dozen yards ahead.

Paul Laurenz glanced rather curiously at his companion. He had no desire whatever to have anything to do with Racke & Co., but he could not help seeing that Cardew was deliberately dogging them.

The same notion soon came into Racke's mind. On the border of Rylcombe Wood he halted, and waited for the two to come up.

"What are you following me for, Cardew?" he exclaimed as soon as they arrived.

Cardew raised his eyebrows.

"Followin' you?" he repeated. "Let me see! Because you were in front, of course."

"Well, get on your way!"

"Come on, Cardew!" said Laurenz.

But Cardew leaned gracefully against a tree, and seemed disposed to wait.

The three Shell fellows glared at him, but glares had no effect whatever upon the dandy of the Fourth.

"Are you staying here?" hissed Racke at last.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" yawned Cardew.

With a black brow, Racke started on through the wood, Crooke and Scrope

following. Cardew detached himself from the tree.

"Come on, Laurenz!"

Paul hesitated.

"I—I say, Cardew——"

"Well, old bean?"

"We don't want to follow those fellows."

"If they keep in front we're bound to follow them if they go in the same direction," remarked Cardew. "That's as clear as anythin' in Euclid."

"But—but let's go in another direction."

"Didn't you agree to follow my lead?"

"Ye-es."

"Well, I hold you to that," said Cardew calmly. "This way, dear old onion!"

Cardew walked on, and Laurenz, with a rather troubled brow, followed him. It was evidently Cardew's intention to dog Racke's steps, and worry the food-hog of the Shell, and it was evident, too, that he was doing it because Racke was pleased to be down on his chum Laurenz. It was rather an absurd trick, which Paul's graver nature did not quite appreciate, but it was very like the whimsical Cardew; and it was plain that he meant to have his way, and Paul had no choice but to let him have it. So they followed on.

CHAPTER 3.
The Procession.

"I DO not wish to detwact from Tom Mewwy's abilities as a cwicket captain," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully, "but I feah that he has been guilty of a vewy sewious ewwah this aftahnoon."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that remark to Herries and Digby.

The three chums of Study No. 6 were strolling through the leafy, scented wood. The fourth of the famous Co., Jack Blake, was playing cricket on Little Side.

"Well, if Tommy had put me in——" remarked Dig.

"Or me," said Herries meditatively. "Still, it's a good team."

"Weally, you fellows——"

"Still, Roylance was bound to have a show," said Dig generously. "That New Zealand chap is a good man."

"Yaas, I quite agwee; but leavin' me out seems a wathah weckless pwoceedin'," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I uttahly fail to see anythin' to cackle at in that wemark, deah boys!"

"Hallo! Here come the food-hogs!" remarked Herries. "Jolly good mind to set Towser on them. Come here, Towsy, old man!"

As Herries was not wanted in the junior team that afternoon, he was taking his bulldog for a run, and D'Arcy and Dig accompanied him. Towser, as Herries explained, liked a run in the woods, and how could a half-holiday be better spent than in giving Towser what he liked?

Towser, indeed, required special consideration in these days of rations, when his daily fare was growing more and more of a problem.

Herries, of course, would willingly have shared his own rations with his dog, but that was not permitted. For some reason incomprehensible to George Herries even worms like Trimble and Mellish were regarded as being of more importance than Towser, which, of course, was absurd.

Racke and Crooke and Scrope passed the chums of the Fourth, walking very fast, with angry faces. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned his eyeglass on them as they passed, in mild surprise.

"Those wottahs look wathah watty!" he remarked.

"I'll tell you what," said Herries. "Let's set Towser on them, and give them a chase. They'd run like billy-ho!"

"You uttah ass!"

"Look here——"

"Hallo! Here's Cardew and Fritz!" said Dig.

Cardew and Paul Laurenz came up. Cardew nodded smilingly to the three juniors.

"You fellows goin' anywhere special?" he asked.

"No, deah boy; just stwollin' wound."

"Join up, then!"

"Anything on?" asked Herries.

"Yes, rather! I'm stalkin' Racke."

"What on earth for?" exclaimed Digby, in surprise.

"They're goin' food-hoggin'," explained Cardew. "At least, I'm pretty certain they are. I'm keepin' them in sight so as to worry them—see? Quite a game. The expression on Racke's face whenever he looks round is an entertainment in itself, an' worth a guinea a box."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That's wathah a joke on Wacke!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Follow on, deah boys!"

The chums of Study No. 6 entered into the joke with great zest. Five of the Fourth were now following in the tracks of Racke & Co.

Just keeping pace with the Shell fellows ahead, the Fourth-Formers walked on, and came out of the wood a dozen yards behind Racke & Co.

Again Aubrey Racke halted, with a scowling face.

"Will you clear off?" he shouted.

"Bai Jove! Why should we cleah off, Wacke?"

"You spyin' cad!"

"If you chawactewise me as a spyin' cad, Wacke, I shall have no wesource but to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Seize him, Towser!" shouted Herries.

Racke & Co. started again in a hurry. They crossed two or three fields in the hope of shaking off the pursuers, but instead of the pursuers diminishing, they increased in number.

Dick Julian and Reilly of the Fourth were sitting on a stile by the way, and they also joined the procession, chuckling gleefully.

A little later Wally D'Arcy, Frank Levison, and Reggie Manners were encountered, and readily joined up.

As Racke & Co. came out on Wayland Moor they looked back, and found that the followers were now ten in number. Most of them were grinning. The humour of the situation had dawned even upon the somewhat serious Laurenz, and he was smiling.

With ten juniors of St. Jim's in close pursuit it did not look as if the food-hogging could be kept very secret.

"Bai Jove! Wacke looks quite watty!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "This is weally vewy amusin'. A vewy good ideah of yours, Cardew!"

"Topping!" chuckled Dig.

"What on earth are we goin' to do, Racke?" muttered Gerald Crooke. "Dash it all, they'll be pickin' up a lot more fellows round about! We shall have a regular army after us soon!"

"Better chuck it, perhaps!" muttered Scrope.

"You can if you like; I'm not goin' to!" said Racke savagely. "Scaife's got everythin' ready at the bungalow. I've had hardly any dinner. I went easy on the muck on purpose."

"So did we," said Scrope dismally.

"Come on! They'll get tired of this dashed silly game soon!"

The troubled three tramped on across the moor, but the pursuers showed no signs of getting tired. Instead of that, they increased in numbers, as Hammond and Kerruish of the Fourth were discovered on the moor, and joined up, with shouts of laughter, as soon as they learned what was on. There were now a round dozen of fellows on the trail of the food-hogs.

Racke gritted his teeth with rage. The bungalow which was his destination was now visible in the distance, but he did not want to arrive there with twelve St. Jim's fellows behind him. The position was becoming troublesome as well as ridiculous.

"Look here, we can't keep on!" muttered Scrope. "I'm chuckin' it, Racke!"

"Chuck it, an' be hanged!" snarled Aubrey.

Scrope walked away towards Wayland, leaving his two companions to themselves. Crooke seemed inclined to follow him, but decided to stick to Racke, and they went on together.

"By gad! There's one chucked it!" remarked Cardew.

"Yaas, wathah! We are keepin' the wottahs fwom makin' hogs of themselves," grinned Arthur Augustus. "We can put this down as our good turn for the day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke and Crooke tramped on. They did not immediately approach the bungalow, but tramped round it, in the hope of shaking off their pursuers. But the hope was vain; and the tramping over the rough moorland, in the heat of the sun, told on the two weedy slackers. Crooke was fed up at last. Without troubling to utter a word of excuse to Racke, he suddenly left his companion and took the footpath for Wayland.

Aubrey Racke stared after him with a black scowl, and then shook his fist at the grinning procession in the rear. Cardew kissed his hand to him in response, and Arthur Augustus waved his eyeglass. Racke, with clenched fists and scowling brows, started for the bungalow. He was too fatigued to think of leading the pursuers a dance any longer.

"By gad, that's the merry destination!" grinned Cardew, as Racke entered the garden surrounding the bungalow.

"We've wun the wottah down!" said Arthur Augustus.

"His new man's there, you bet," said Wally of the Third.

"Bai Jove! Pway do not use such expwessions as 'you bet', Wally!" said his major severely.

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus!" implored D'Arcy minor.

"Weally, Wally——"

"Come on!" said Cardew.

"Where now?" asked Dig.

"It's jolly near tea-time—we've had a long walk. What price callin' on Racke to tea? He's got lots of tommy."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

And with one accord the whole dozen marched on the bungalow. Racke of the Shell was to have guests that afternoon!

CHAPTER 4.
The Founder of the Feast.

"SCAIFE!"

"Yes, sir?"

Racke scowled at the smooth-mannered, smooth-faced man. Scaife's manner was all respect, even humility. He appeared quite to understand what a very important person the son of the war-profit millionaire was.

With deft hands he removed Racke's Eton jacket, and brought him a light alpaca coat. Then Racke sat down, and the man removed his boots, and placed light slippers on his feet. That done, he brought a lemon-squash, and Racke sat in the easy cane chair in the open doorway,

sucking it through a straw, and looking out on the green moor—with a rather less ill-tempered expression.

"You can get on, Scaife," he said. "I'm hungry."

"Yes, sir."

"You're alone here, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And everything's gone all right?"

"Oh, quite, sir."

"Good!"

Scaife disappeared into the kitchen, whence an appetising scent proceeded. Among his other qualities, Racke's man apparently counted that of a chef. He was certainly a priceless servant for a food-hog well supplied with money.

Racke had "gone easy," as he expressed it, on the plain dinner at the school, with the intention of indemnifying himself with a gorgeous spread at the bungalow on the moor. That bungalow had been taken by Scaife, who apparently had his own methods of accumulating a supply of food there. The money had come from Sir James Racke, who did not believe in denying his hopeful son—or himself—anything that money would buy. Self-abnegation is not, naturally, a distinguishing virtue of a war-profiteer.

Aubrey Racke was feeling more contented as he sucked his lemon-squash and waited for his appetising dinner. Crooke and Scrope had missed that dinner, but Racke had no intention of missing it. It did not occur to him, for the moment, that Cardew & Co. would venture to follow him into private ground.

But his satisfaction was dashed at the sight of the procession arriving at the garden gate. He jumped up hastily, spilling his lemon-squash, and called to his man.

"Scaife!"

The man with the glass eye reappeared from the kitchen.

Scaife's left eye was of glass, but his right was as sharp and restless as a rat's.

"Sir?"

"There's a gang of fellows from my school at the gate——"

"Your friends, sir?"

"No!" growled Racke. "My friends cleared off. These rotters are worrying me. Go out and clear them off, Scaife!"

"Yes, sir."

Scaife left the bungalow, and went down the garden path to the gate. Cardew & Co. had stopped there.

"Hallo! Here's Racke's man!" chortled Hammond.

"Bai Jove! Is that the fellow?"

"That's the fellow!" grinned Cardew. "I remember his phiz and his glass eye. That's the man my uncle said was an old gaol-bird."

"He may be a new gaol-bird soon, if he doesn't look out!" remarked Levison minor.

Scaife came down to the gate, rather perplexed. It was his game to obey Racke in every particular, for he was making a remarkably good thing out of his employment. Whether he had any respect for his master was quite another matter. But how to deal with a dozen schoolboys was rather a puzzle to Scaife.

"What do you want, gentlemen?" he asked smoothly, by way of a beginning.

"We've called to see Racke."

"Racke?" repeated Scaife. "Nobody of that name here, sir."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "Why, we saw him go in!"

Scaife shook his head.

"Quite a mistake, sir. I have no visitors here."

"Wats!"

"Cut it out, my man!" said Cardew. "You remember me, perhaps—I was with Commander Durrance the other evening when he recognised you, and you bunked. I know you're Racke's man!"

Towser On Guard!
(See Chapter 4.)

Scaife's single eye glittered at Ralph Reckness Cardew.

He was about to speak again when his eye fell upon Paul Laurenz, just behind the grandson of Lord Reckness.

Scaife started violently at the sight of Laurenz.

Unheeding Cardew, he stared blankly at the German junior. Laurenz caught his surprised stare, and returned it, without understanding why the man was so startled.

"Bai Jove! Do you know this man, Lauwenz?" asked D'Arcy.

"Never seen him before that I know of," answered Paul.

"Laurenz!" repeated Scaife. "Is that the young gentleman's name—Laurenz?"

"That is my name, said Paul, staring at him in astonishment. "You seem to know me!"

"Know you!" said Scaife, with a curious grin. "Oh, yes, sir, I know you! After all these years, too. Laurenz—and your name's Laurenz! You are a German, I suppose, sir, by the name?"

"Yes," said Paul shortly.

"After all these years!" repeated Scaife, apparently forgetting that others were present in his intense interest in the German junior. "And you don't remember me, sir?"

"I've never seen you before."

Scaife laughed.

"Is this a little comedy?" asked Cardew, in wonder. "Are you makin' out you know my pal Laurenz, my man? It's a rotten libel. He doesn't know your sort!"

Cardew's words recalled the man to himself. His eye still lingered on Paul Laurenz's handsome face, but he answered Cardew.

"You cannot enter here, young gentlemen. Will you kindly pass on your way?"

"Our way lies up that path," answered Cardew coolly. "Open the gate."

"I refuse! I——"

"Well, I know how to open a gate," remarked Cardew.

He pushed it open. Scaife grabbed at it to keep it shut, and all the juniors threw their weight on it, and it flew open, knocking Scaife over on the gravel path.

The procession swarmed in, and marched up to the house. Scaife, red and breathless, picked himself up and followed them.

"Where are you, Racke?" shouted Cardew, as he entered the wide hall of the bungalow. "Show a leg, there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Aubrey Racke's face, pale and convulsed with rage, looked out of the dining-room.

"Bai Jove! There is the wottah!"

"How dare you come in here?" shouted Racke. "Get out, the gang of you!"

"We've come to tea!" roared Reggie Manners joyfully.

"Now, then, be polite to your guests, Racke," grinned Wally of the Third. "Put a smile on."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You—you rotters!" panted Racke. "I won't have you to tea! I—I——"

"Follow your leader!" said Cardew.

He walked into the dining-room, pushing Aubrey Racke before him. The rest of the crowd swarmed in.

It was a spacious dining-room, with windows looking over the moor. Mr. Scaife's bungalow was a very desirable summer residence The table was laid for three, and though two of the expected three were missing, there were a dozen new-comers to supply their place, with interest.

"Rather jolly, this!" remarked Cardew. "Call your man in, Racke! Herries, old man, don't leave your bulldog outside."

"I don't mean to," said Herries.

"Keep that brute out of here!" yelled Racke.

Towser came sedately in.

"My idea," continued Cardew, "is to eat Racke's dinner for him; but, so that he won't be idle, he can wait on us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Towser can watch the door, in case he tries to dodge out. I suppose you can rely on your tripe-hound to do that, Herries?"

"What-ho!" grinned Herries. "But Towsy's no tripe-hound, lemmo tell you, Cardew!"

Towser was stationed at the door of the drawing-room, on guard. Racke did not venture to approach the door. He had too much respect for Towser's teeth.

"Now call in your man, Racke, an' tell him to serve dinner," drawled Cardew.

"I won't!"

"You've got a nobby little cane with you, D'Arcy. Will you lend it to me?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cardew took the cane, and approached Racke. The latter dodged round the table in alarm.

"You dare to touch me!" he panted.

"I'm goin' to thrash you if the dinner isn't served pretty sharp," answered Cardew coolly. "Call in your man!"

"I—I——"

"Lick him!" roared Wally. "Lick the food-hog!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Racke of the Shell roared as the cane came across his shoulders. With all his cool nonchalance Cardew was in deadly earnest. There was a roar of laughter from the merry company. The idea of depriving the food-hog of his feast, and making him act as a waiter while it was devoured by others, seemed excellent to the St. Jim's juniors, especially as they were hungry after their long tramp. Racke did not deserve any mercy, and he did not receive any.

"Stoppit, you fiend!" shrieked Racke. "I—I'll do as you want! Oh, hang you!"

"Get a move on, then!"

"Scaife!" called out Racke, choking with rage.

Scaife's startled face was looking in at the doorway.

"Yes, sir?"

"Serve the dinner!" stuttered Racke.

"Three plates won't be enough," said Cardew. "Lay the table, Scaife."

Scaife looked at Racke, who nodded, consumed with fury. Keeping a rather uneasy eye on Towser as he passed to and fro, Scaife laid the table for twelve, and brought in extra chairs. Then the dinner was served.

"Quite a useful man you've got there, Racke," said Cardew agreeably. "Good cook, too, I should say! By gad, you're doing things in real food-hog style! This is good soup!"

"Wippin', bai Jove!"

"Spiffing!" said Wally.

"Weally, Wally, spiffin' is not a vewy elegant expwession——"

"I'll have some more of that, bedad!" said Reilly. "Buck up, Racke!"

"Do you think I'm going to wait on you?" hissed Racke.

"You'll get some more cane if you don't!" said Cardew grimly. "If I get up to you, Racke, you'll be sorry. Put a napkin over your arm—proper style—and wait at table!"

"I—I won't! I—I—I mean, I will!" gasped Racke, as Cardew rose and grasped the cane.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke's face was a study in Hunnishness as he waited at table with a serviette over his arm. Even Mr. Scaife had a lurking grin. The soup was certainly excellent, and only Arthur Augustus obeyed the unwritten law on the subject—once only to soup. All the others made Racke serve them twice. And the rest of that famous dinner was on a par. There were five courses, and each excellent.

How Mr. Scaife obtained the food was a secret known only to himself. Undoubtedly a lavish expenditure of Sir Jonas Racke's ill-gotten money was necessary.

Racke was perfectly helpless. The raid on the bungalow was in too great force to be resisted, and there were no consequences he could visit on the heads of the raiders, for the food-hogging was illegal, and he was bound to keep the matter secret to save his own skin.

Racke was hungry, and he bitterly regretted now that he had "gone easy" on the school dinner. For it was evidently Cardew's intention not to allow him a single morsel of his illegal spread. That was the food-hog's punishment, and a just one.

It was tea-time at the school; but it might have been a very late dinner-time by the way Racke's unwelcome guests tucked into Racke's spread. And the fact that there was plenty for all showed how thoroughly Scaife had laid in supplies.

All through the meal Racke was kept busy, and when he was tempted to dodge out of the door a deep growl from Towser warned him off.

"Clean plate here, Racke!"

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Bai Jove, where's that dashed waitah?"

"Pass the cheese, Racke."

"Now then, clumsy! Call yourself a waiter!"

This it ran on all the time, and Racke was red and perspiring and almost exhausted by the time dinner was over. The guests were in a very merry mood; but Aubrey Racke was feeling homicidal.

Fruits, rich and rare, which must have cost a small fortune, finished the repast, and the juniors did not spare them. Scaife was kept busy bringing in supplies, and a few oranges and nuts were pitched at him to keep him lively.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus at last. "I must wemark that this is quite a wippin' wepast, and not much like wartime. I feel that we ought to pass a vote of thanks to the foundah of the feast."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Many thanks, Racke!" said Cardew. "And, now we know where you feed, we'll take care that you always have guests when you come here for a spread."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

Racke looked like a demon.

"Well, the best of things must end," said Cardew, with a sigh. "May as well be gettin' back to St. Jim's. You ready, Racke?"

"I'm not comin' with you!" said Racke, in a suffocating voice.

"Your mistake. You are," said Cardew coolly. "I'm afraid you might get food-hoggin' after we're gone. You fellows ready? Lend Racke a hand."

Herries and Cardew took Racke by either arm. The juniors trooped out of the bungalow, taking the heir of warprofits with them. Cheerily they marched off, and Scaife looked after them from the doorway with a very peculiar expression on his face. It was a long walk back to St. Jim's, but the juniors arrived there in great spirits—with one exception. Racke of the Shell was decidedly dismal.

CHAPTER 5.
"To Let!"

TOM MERRY & Co. were still at cricket when the merry juniors came in, and most of them walked down to Little Side to see how the match was getting on. Racke did not trouble about the match. He crawled away wearily to his study, hungry and tired and furious. Never had a food-hog spent an unhappier afternoon.

Dusk was drawing on when the match finished in a draw. Tom Merry & Co. came off the field with ruddy faces. Talbot of the Shell had scored a century, and scoring all round had been high.

"Bai Jove, you've been stickin' it out, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Wathah a mistake to leave out your best man, Tom Mewwy. I twust that you see that now."

"Bow-wow!" was Tom Merry's reply.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I twust you do not think it would have been a draw if I had been playin' for the side?"

"No fear!" assented Tom. "It would have been a win for the other team, old chap!"

"Weally, you ass——"

"What about tea?" said Jack Blake. "It's jolly late for tea, and I'm famished. You had anything, Gussy?"

"Yaas, wathah; a sneakin'-lookin'——"

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

"Hallo! What's the joke?"

The joke was explained, and Tom Merry & Co. roared over the story of the raid on the food-hog.

"My hat! What a ripping idea!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "I couldn't have thought of anything better myself. Lucky for you, though, the bobbies didn't come along while you were raiding Racke. You'd all have been jugged as food-hogs."

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that."

"It was really Cardew's idea," said Dig. "We thought it ripping. We didn't let Racke have any, as a punishment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then it's true about Racke's new man?" exclaimed Tom Merry, knitting his brows.

"Yaas, wathah; a sneakin'-lookin' wottah with a glass eye," said Arthur Augustus. "He's called Scaife; but Cardew says his Uncle Duwwance recognised him as an old gaolbird with anothah name—I forget what. He can certainly make vewy good soup, though, and the entwees were wemarkably good."

"Well, as you've had a feed, I'll bag all your rations for tea," said Blake. And he walked away to carry out that excellent idea.

The Terrible Three went to their study. They passed Crooke and Scrope in the Shell passage, coming out of Racke's study with grins on their faces.

"You fellows heard?" grinned Crooke. "I say, Racke's awfully ratty. He's swearing vengeance."

"Cursin' like a Hun!" chuckled Scrope. "What a lark! I'm not sorry I didn't go, after all. I wasn't cut out for a waiter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crooke.

Racke's chums walked away, laughing. Apparently they did not deplore the sad fate of the food-hog. Their chumminess did not go very deep.

Tom Merry & Co. had a much more frugal meal in their study than that enjoyed by Cardew & Co. at the bungalow. Tom Merry was thinking very seriously over tea.

"It's certain now about Racke's man, you fellows," he said. "It's all very well larking with him, but the man's got to go."

"What-ho!" said Manners.

"I'll tell Racke."

After tea Tom Merry looked in at Racke's study. He found the black sheep of the Shell alone, smoking a cigarette, and scowling savagely through the smoke. Aubrey's temper had not recovered yet.

"I've heard what happened this afternoon, Racke," said Tom Merry

bluntly. "You've got a new man. He's got to go!"

"Oh, shut up!" howled Racke.

"To-morrow afternoon," continued Tom Merry calmly, "I shall take a party of fellows to the bungalow on the moor, and your man Scaife will be taken out, ducked in the pond, and kicked out. We shall search the bungalow, and if there's any unrationed grub there the police will be informed at once. That's a straight tip! Do what you like about it."

And with that Tom Merry walked out, leaving Racke breathing fury.

But fury was not of much use to the food-hog. He knew that the captain of the Shell meant every word he said; and that evening Racke wrote a letter, addressed to Mr. Scaife, at Moorside Bungalow, near Wayland.

Tom Merry said nothing further on the subject, but he had not forgotten.

The next day, after lessons, the Terrible Three left St. Jim's, with Talbot, Gore, Kangaroo, Dane, Glyn, and several more Shell fellows. Racke saw them go, and looked after them with a sour scowl.

"Interferin' cads!" he muttered aloud, as the party of Shell fellows turned out at the gates and disappeared.

"More trouble—what?"

It was Cardew's voice at his elbow, and Racke turned on him with a savage scowl.

"You meddlin' rotter!" he said between his teeth. "I'll make you pay for what you've done, Cardew!"

"Are you askin' me to step into the gym?" queried Cardew, with a smile. "With or without gloves, dear man?"

"I'm not goin' into the gym with you," said Racke. "I know a trick worth two of that. You've made a chum of that German hound——"

"What?"

"I don't know why you've done it," said Racke, gritting his teeth. "Just to be unlike other fellows, I suppose; that's your style. Well, I'm goin' to make your Boche pal sit up!"

"And how are you goin' to do that, old bean?" inquired Cardew smilingly.

Racke gave a sneering laugh.

"Do you think I haven't noticed how jolly sensitive he is about bein' a German?" he said. "I'm goin' to rub it in! I won't let him forget it, or anybody else forget it. I'll make him think of it all day long, an' everybody else think of it. You'll see! I'll make the Boche cad sorry he ever came to St. Jim's!"

Cardew yawned.

"What a nice chap you are, Racke!" he remarked. "What a chucker-out for a pub you'd have made, if your parent hadn't bagged war-profits, and you'd been brought up in a slum after all! By the way, you never told me how much Sir Jonas gave for his baronetcy."

Aubrey Racke swung away with a muttered oath. Cardew's face was quite thoughtful as he turned away and joined Paul Laurenz in the quadrangle.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry & Co. were tramping to the moor. They were quite ready to carry out the programme Tom had sketched to Aubrey Racke. If Scaife was still at the bungalow, Scaife was booked for a very bad time.

"Here's the place," said Monty Lowther, as they came in sight of the lonely building. "Looks rather deserted."

"By gum, it is deserted!" said Manners.

The juniors stopped outside the gate.

Racke's man had evidently lost no time after receiving Aubrey's letter. The bungalow was closed, the windows shuttered. In the garden was a signboard bearing the familiar inscription:

"TO LET."

"To let!" said Tom Merry, with a whistle.

"Stole away!" grinned Kangaroo.

"Nothing doing," said Talbot, with a smile. "Racke's taken warning, and sent his man away, Tom. All the better, I think."

"If he's really gone," said Tom grimly. "He's cleared out of here because the place is known. I shouldn't be surprised if he's hanging about in some other quarter in the neighbourhood. Still, there's nothing doing here, that's certain."

And the Shell fellows returned to St. Jim's. Racke's man was gone, but whether he was gone for good only the future could tell.

CHAPTER 6.
A Strange Meeting.

"EXCUSE me, sir!"

Paul Laurenz stopped.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the new junior of St. Jim's was sauntering along Rylcombe Lane alone. Levison of the Fourth had gone over to Lexham, to visit his sister Doris, who was staying with an aunt there. He had taken his chums, Clive and Cardew, with him. Paul missed Cardew a good deal that afternoon. Whimsical fellow as Cardew was, and though Paul did not wholly understand him, he liked him, and was glad to have him for a friend. Cardew would gladly have taken his new chum on the excursion to Lexham, and neither Levison nor Clive would have objected; but Paul had avoided that. His German name and his German origin lay like a shadow on the boy, and made him reserved and diffident. Almost everybody he came in contact with at St. Jim's was friendly enough, but Paul could not forget the shadow that lay upon him, and about which he was, perhaps, over-sensitive.

He was deep in thought, hardly pleasant thought, as he walked slowly along the leafy lane, and the sudden address brought him out of his reverie with a start. He looked up quickly, and saw the fellow Scaife standing before him.

"Excuse me!" said Scaife again.

"I wish you would not speak to me," said Paul curtly.

"No offence, sir," said Scaife civilly. "If you don't mind, sir, I should like a few words with you. I may be able to do you a service."

"I want no service from you. You are Racke's valet, I understand. You could be imprisoned for what you were doing for Racke," said Paul scornfully. "Do you think I want any service of that sort?"

"I don't mean that sort of service, sir," said Scaife, with a smile. His live eye was restlessly on the junior's face, contrasting with the still lifelessness of the other, and the effect was odd. "I was surprised to see you the other day, sir."

"I don't see why. You don't know me."

"I think I do know you, Master Laurenz. You would not remember me; you were a little child when you saw me."

Paul stared at him.

"I saw you when I was a child?" he said wonderingly.

"Yes, if you are the boy I believe you to be," said Scaife. "Perhaps you have noticed that you are very like Master Cardew in appearance?"

"Everyone has noticed that."

"So like that anyone would think you were a relation," said Scaife.

"How could I be a relations of Cardew's?" exclaimed Paul in astonishment.

But the man had gained his point. He had succeeded in interesting the junior, and Paul had stopped now to hear him.

"After seeing you the other day, sir, I asked Master Racke some questions about you," said Scaife. "Master Racke does not seem to like you."

"No."

"I heard from him about Commander Durrance. He made a great deal of fuss about you the day he was at the school, and Cardew was annoyed, I believe."

"I don't intend to discuss Cardew with you."

"Quite so, sir—quite so," said Scaife deprecatingly. "Excuse me. I merely wished to know the fact."

The junior made a movement to pass on, and Scaife went on hurriedly:

"One moment more, sir. If you would answer me one question, I could be of great service to you."

"Well?" said Paul, pausing again.

"Is there a tattooed mark upon your arm?"

Scaife watched the junior keenly as he asked that strange question.

Paul started violently.

"How did you know?" he exclaimed.

"Then it is so?"

"Yes."

"A tattooed anchor between the elbow and the shoulder?"

"Yes," said Paul, in wonder. "It was there when I was a child—before I can remember."

He stared at the man in amazement. St. Jim's fellows had seen that mark, and Paul had been asked about it. Scaife's knowledge of it bore out his claim that he had known the junior in his infancy.

The man's one working eye glittered.

"I knew it," he muttered. "One question more, sir, if you do not mind. You are in charge of your uncle, Mr. Laurenz, of London, I believe?"

"That is so."

"Is he the same Mr. Laurenz who is a partner in the firm of Messrs. Racke & Hacke, the contractors?"

"I do not know—I know nothing of my uncle's business," said Paul. "He has never spoken of it to me. He——" The junior paused.

"He is not a kind uncle to you?" said Scaife.

"I should not be likely to discuss that with you," replied Paul.

"Excuse me, sir; I did not mean to take a liberty," said Scaife smoothly.

"I do not know; but I hope my uncle has no connection with such people," said Paul, reddening. "But, after all, it is not your business. Why are you asking me these questions?"

Scaife did not reply.

His glance passed Paul, and fell upon four juniors who were coming up the road. They were Blake & Co. of Study No. 6.

They had caught sight of him and were hurrying on, evidently not with friendly intentions.

Scaife plunged through the hedge into the field.

"Stop him, Laurenz!" shouted Jack Blake.

"Collah the wottah, Laurenz!"

Paul looked round, startled. Scaife was already running across the field. The Fourth-Formers came up breathlessly.

"Why didn't you stop him?" demanded Herries wrathfully.

"Stop him?" repeated Paul confusedly.

"That's that rotter Scaife!" said Digby. "That one-eyed bounder—Racke's man, you know. He hasn't cleared off, after all."

"Yes; I—I know!"

"Lauwenz," said Arthur Augustus, in his most magisterial manner, "you were conversin' with that wottah!"

"He—he spoke to me!" stammered Paul.

"I am weally surpwised at you, Lauwenz, for allowin' such a bad chawactah to speak to you!" said D'Arcy severely. "You should have knocked him down!"

"Why didn't you give him one in the eye?" demanded Dig.

"I—I never thought of it," said Paul. "He—he spoke to me, you know. Perhaps I shouldn't have talked to him. He seems to know something about me—I can't understand it. He knows about the anchor tattooed on my arm, that you fellows have noticed in the dorm. And he says there's a Mr. Laurenz in the firm of Racke & Hacke, and asked me if it's my uncle. I don't believe it is."

"Bai Jove! The wottah seems to know a gweat deal," said Arthur Augustus. "It is wathah mystewious."

"All the same, you should have hit him in the eye!" growled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I will next time," said Paul, with a smile.

He left the four juniors, and sauntered across a field—not in the direction taken by Scaife. He was in a surprised and disturbed frame of mind. Blake & Co. went on towards the village.

"Wathah wotten for Lauwenz if his uncle is one of that howwid gang of warpwofiteers," remarked Arthur Augustus, with a shake of the head.

"I shouldn't wonder!" grunted Herries. "Just what a rotten naturalised German would be!".

"Wacke has nevah mentioned it."

"I don't suppose Racke knows much about the family burglary business," said Blake. "Laurenz's uncle is a worm—we've seen him, haven't we? Still, Laurenz is a decent chap—tons better than Racke, anyway!"

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

Paul Laurenz walked a good many miles that afternoon in the woods and the fields, and he did not seek for company. Scaife's words remained in his mind, and troubled him strangely. He was anxious to see Cardew again, and tell him what had occurred, and get his opinion. To the lonely lad Cardew's friendship was a boon, and more than ever so now.

He returned to St. Jim's in time for calling-over, and found that Levison & Co. had just come in. After call-over Cardew joined him.

"Had a good time?" asked Paul, with a smile.

"Oh, yaas!" drawled Cardew. "Toppin'! Levison's sister is quite an angel. What have you been doin'? You're lookin' rather down in the mouth!"

Paul explained.

Cardew listened with more interest than Paul had expected.

"By gad!" said Cardew. "So Scaife knows you, and my uncle knows Scaife! I shouldn't wonder—I shouldn't wonder ——" He paused.

"You wouldn't wonder what?"

"Nothin', old bean! Your Uncle Laurenz is rather an old rotter, isn't he? No offence, you know," added Cardew, as Laurenz coloured. "I want to know."

"He has never been very kind to me," said Paul in a low voice. "In—in fact, I am afraid he dislikes me. I—I don't know why. He sometimes calls me a little Englander—because—because I am so unlike most Germans, I suppose."

"Does he, the dear man?" said Cardew, with a smile. "What a lark if you turned out to be a little Englander, kid!"

"How could I?" said Paul, in astonishment.

"Leave it to me," smiled Cardew. "Didn't I tell you I was going to make you English?"

"That was a joke, I suppose."

"My dear man, life's too serious for jokin'. But I say, this is news about your nunky bein' in the merry old firm of Racke & Hacke. Racke can't know that."

"I hope it isn't true."

"Easy enough to find out," said Cardew. "Books of reference in the library, you know—only got to look at a company list. Come along with me, and we'll see!"

Paul hesitated. He felt that he hardly cared to make sure. But Cardew had his way, and led him off to the school library, where, for the first time since he had been at St. Jim's, Cardew consulted a work of reference. Ten minutes later the two juniors were in possession of the undoubted fact that Paul's uncle was a partner of Messrs. Racke & Hacke, the war-profiteers.

The information was displeasing enough to Paul. But Cardew smiled over it. It was a curious coincidence, in view of Racke's amiable intentions towards the new junior. Cardew was still smiling when he sauntered into the Common-room.

CHAPTER 7.
A Facer for Racke.

"WACKE!"

"Hallo?" growled Racke.

Aubrey Racke was lolling in an armchair in the Common-room when Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stopped before him, his noble eye gleaming behind his eyeglass.

"Wacke, I am sowwy to find that your wotten valet, Scaife, is still in this neighbourhood!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"Is he?" said Racke. An' are you? Shouldn't trouble to trouble if I were you!"

"Yaas, wathah! I have seen him this aftahnoon."

"Did he see you?" inquired Racke.

"Yaas."

"Then he'll clear off, I should think," said Racke. "He wouldn't risk seeing your phiz a second time. He's not very strong!"

"You cheeky wottah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus wrathfully.

"So that man's still hanging about here, is he?" exclaimed Tom Merry, looking round.

"Blessed if I know!" yawned Racke. "I haven't seen him. I gave him marchin' orders."

"Oh!" said Tom. "Is that so?"

"Naturally," sneered Racke, "I can't afford to feed every hungry cad in the school. "One dinner-party is enough for me, thanks!"

"If you allude to me as a hungwy cad, Wacke——"

"Oh, give us a rest!" said Racke. "Can't you inflict your conversation on your friends, who have to put up with it?"

Arthur Augustus clenched his fist for a moment. Then he turned his back on the cad of the Shell with crushing contempt. Laurenz came in with Cardew, Clive, and Levison, and Racke's glance turned savagely upon him.

"Hallo, here comes the Boche!" he said, loud enough for the new junior to hear. "Isn't it queer they don't intern these dashed Huns?"

"Shut up!" growled Grundy.

"You like Huns?" smiled Racke.

"If you say I like Huns I'll jolly well mop up the floor with you!" roared Grundy, in great wrath.

"What's that about Huns?" asked Cardew, with a smile. "Racke on Huns again! What about the claims of gratitude, Racke?"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Racke.

"But Racke ought to know all about Huns," continued Cardew, smiling. "Did you fellows know that there was a German in the merry old Racke business?"

"That's a lie!" said Racke fiercely.

"If it's a lie, old scout, you'd better advise your pater to prosecute the people who publish the company lists," said Cardew. "It's a libel, you know. Those naughty people have put down Mr. Laurenz as a director of Racke & Hacke!"

"My hat! Is that so?" exclaimed Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove!"

"It's not true!" shouted Racke.

"My dear man, it's so!" grinned Cardew. "Nothin' to be surprised about! War-profiteerin' is just the game for a German. Yes, gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, our friend Laurenz's uncle is a partner of Racke's esteemed pater, and they're hand in glove!"

Racke panted with fury.

He had not been aware of the fact. But he knew that Cardew would not make a statement that could be so easily disproved if it was not true.

There was a chuckle from the juniors. After Racke's lofty attitude towards Huns, it was extremely entertaining to find that his father's partner was a Hun.

"By gad, Racke," murmured Crooke, "you'd have done better to leave that subject alone, old man!"

"Oh, cheese it!" hissed Racke. "I don't believe it."

Crooke shrugged his shoulders.

"Any fellow who doubts the statement can find works of reference in the library," said Cardew airily.

"I'll jolly well look!" chuckled Trimble.

"Same here!" said Mellish.

And they rushed off to make the investigation, two or three more fellows going with them.

Aubrey Racke sat with a scowling brow.

Trimble and his companions returned, grinning. They had ascertained that the statement was correct.

"Nothin' surprisin' in it," said Cardew. "War-profiteerin' is really a Hun game. What's surprising is that Racke is down on Huns. His pater doesn't share his prejudices!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke stamped out of the Common-room. He left the juniors laughing. Cardew had completely discomfited the cad of the Shell. It was scarcely possible for Racke to keep up his persecution of the supposed Boche schoolboy after that unexpected revelation.

Cardew, perhaps unwittingly, had also discomfited his chum. Laurenz left the Common-room quietly while the discussion was going on, his handsome face pale and set.

"Rather a facer for Racke—what?" smiled Cardew, as he rejoined Levison and Clive.

"You ass!" said Levison, while Clive frowned.

"Eh? What's the row?"

"Do you think Laurenz likes you showing up his uncle as one of that profiteering gang?" asked Levison.

"Mea culpa!" said Cardew, with a sigh. "Always doin' somethin' wrong! Where's my Boche pal gone?"

"He's gone off somewhere. He looked pretty rotten," growled Clive. "You really might have thought before speaking, Cardew!"

"I never think, dear man—too much brain fag," answered Cardew calmly. "But it doesn't matter. I'm goin' to make Laurenz disown that uncle of his."

"What?" exclaimed Levison and Clive, together.

"Does that surprise you, old nuts? Go on bein' surprised, then." And Cardew strolled out of the room to look for Laurenz.

He found the German junior in the deserted passage, staring out of the window into the night.

Paul started as Cardew touched him lightly on the arm.

"Not ratty?" murmured Cardew.

Paul gave him rather a grim look.

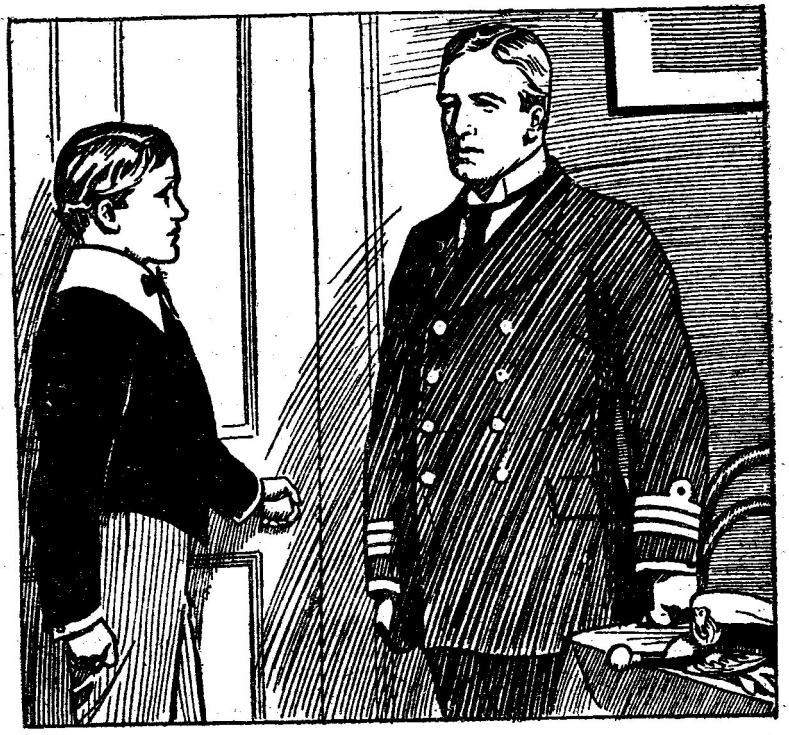
"It was my uncle you were speaking of in the Common-room, Cardew," he said quietly.

"But you don't like him."

"No. But——"

"And he doesn't like you?"

"No. Still——"



Father and Son Face to Face.
(See Chapter 12.)

"It was a beautiful way of shuttin' up Racke," urged Cardew. "He can't talk about Huns any more, can he, after that?"

"I suppose you meant well," said Paul.

"I always mean well, old bean—it's one of my failin's. But I wouldn't allude to your uncle disrespectfully for anythin'."

"But you did!" exclaimed Paul.

"Not at all. I was simply alludin' to Mr. Laurenz, the merry old partner in the robbery business of Racke & Hacke."

"But he is my uncle!"

"You're goin' to give him the sack, kid," said Cardew. "He doesn't deserve to have a nephew like you, an' I'm goin' to deprive him of it."

"I suppose you are joking?" said Paul blankly.

"Not in the least. I'm going to chuck away ten thousand pounds," answered Cardew. "I'm goin' to do that for the sake of doin' a good deed. Now, there's a puzzle for you to work out, if you want some mental exercise."

Cardew walked away after making that astounding statement, leaving Paul rooted to the floor, staring. He was beginning to wonder whether Ralph Reckness Cardew was quite in his right senses.

CHAPTER 8.

Cardew is Mysterious!

TOM MERRY tapped Laurenz of the Fourth on the arm as the juniors came out after lessons on Monday.

"Coming down to cricket, kid?" he asked.

"I'd like to!" said Paul.

"Come on, then!" said the captain of the Shell, cheerily.

"I've got to go to Rylcombe," said Paul reluctantly. "My uncle's coming down, and I'm to meet him at the station."

"Coming here?"

"No; I think not—only to Rylcombe," said Paul. "I had a wire from him today, to meet him at the station."

"Well, you'll have to go, then," said Tom Merry. "Give us a look in when you come back, if you're in before dark."

"I will," said Paul.

Tom Merry & Co. went off cheerily to Little Side and cricket, and Paul looked for Cardew. Levison and Clive were going down to Little Side, but Cardew had declined to join them. He was going with Laurenz.

"Here I am," said Cardew, coming out of the School House. "Not waitin' for me, old nut? I've put on a brand-new necktie in honour of your nunky. You don't mind my comin' with you?"

"No," said Paul. "Not if you want to."

"I'm keen to see the old sport," explained Cardew. "Let's hoof it."

The two Fourth-Formers left the school together. Little was said as they walked down to Rylcombe. Cardew was in high good-humour; but his companion was troubled. He had told his friend of the telegram, and Cardew had proposed at once to accompany him to the station. But Paul would rather have gone alone, though he did not care to say so. If Cardew observed his reluctance he made no remark on it, and he went, all the same.

The two juniors waited on the platform for the down train. Cardew glanced very curiously at the German gentleman who alighted from it among the other passengers, and whom Paul greeted as his uncle. By naturalisation, Mr. Laurenz was British; but his naturalisation papers had not changed his looks. He was quite German in appearance; and he looked a very bad-tempered German at the present moment.

Paul had no opportunity of introducing his chum. Mr. Laurenz gave Cardew a

cold, careless glance, and then drew his nephew aside. Cardew smiled into space. He did not seem to mind.

"My friend is here, uncle!" began Paul uncomfortably.

"You should have come alone," said Mr. Laurenz harshly. "Listen to me. I have no time to waste. Have you met a man named Scaife since you have been at school?"

Paul started.

"Yes, uncle."

"Did you tell him anything?"

"He asked me about the anchor tattooed on my arm——"

Mr. Laurenz interrupted him with a savage German oath that made the boy start back.

"You young fool! And you told him——"

"He knew already."

"Dummkopf! Keep your mouth closed, then!" said Mr. Laurenz. "Do not tell others of that mark."

"Many of the fellows have seen it, in the dormitory and in the swimming-bath. I could not help it. But why——"

"Don't ask me questions! I understand now!" muttered Mr. Laurenz. "That man again, after all these years!"

After all these years! The words struck Paul familiarly. He remembered that they had been uttered by Scaife at the bungalow on the moor.

"Uncle, do you know the man——"

"Ask me no questions, I tell you!" said Mr. Laurenz angrily. He was silent for a moment, and then went on, in a calmer tone: "I suppose you have learned your way about this neighbourhood? Do you know the quickest way to a place called Pepper's Villa?"

"Yes," answered Paul. "It's a cottage near Rylcombe; it belongs to Mr. Pepper, who is rather a miser. He lets it to visitors for the summer."

"You can guide me there, then?"

"Yes; easily."

"Come, then."

"My friend——"

"Confound him! Come with me!"

Paul crimsoned, and he gave Cardew a hopeless look. Mr. Laurenz was already striding away, and Paul had to follow. Cardew followed them from the station, and strolled in the same direction.

Mr. Laurenz had no eyes for his nephew's chum. He did not even notice that Cardew was keeping them in sight.

He strode on, with knitted brow, so fast that Paul had to break into a trot to keep pace. They left the village, and turned into a lane, where Paul became the guide. In ten minutes more they reached Pepper's Villa—a cottage standing in its own grounds a short distance from Rylcombe. Paul stopped at the gate.

"I think the place is empty, uncle," he said. "It was not let last week."

"It is let now!" snapped Mr. Laurenz. "That will do. You can go back to the school. I shall not see you again before I leave."

"Very well, uncle."

Mr. Laurenz opened the gate, and strode up the garden path. Cardew joined Paul at the fence.

"I—I'm sorry, Cardew," murmured Paul apologetically.

"Not at all, old chap!" said Cardew. "Nunky is rather ratty; and no wonder, if it's as I suspect!"

Cardew was watching the German gentleman, who was knocking angrily at the cottage door.

The door was opened by a man one of whose eyes was bright and glittering, the other strangely lifeless.

"Scaife!" murmured Cardew.

"Scaife!" repeated Paul, in wonder.

"Come on, old bean! Nunky will be waxy if he thinks we are watchin' him," smiled Cardew.

The two juniors walked away, Paul lost in wonder. Evidently Mr. Laurenz had come down specially to see Racke's man, though why he should do so was a mystery to Paul.

"I—I'm sorry my uncle was rude to you, Cardew," muttered Paul, as they walked away. "He—he has rather an uncertain temper."

"My dear man, it doesn't matter! I didn't expect him to be good-tempered," smiled Cardew. "He asked you about Scaife at the station, didn't he?"

"Yes. How can you guess that? You didn't hear."

"Oh, I'm a thought-reader, you know. Your uncle's rich, I believe?"

"I think so."

"What a catch for Scaife!" grinned Cardew. "Paul, dear man, your uncle is goin' to be shorn of some of his riches."

"I can't understand what you mean, Cardew."

"Of course you can't! Still, it's clear enough. Scaife recognised you at the bungalow. He asked you about the tattooed mark to make sure. He made sure where he could find your merry old uncle," said Cardew. "The next step was to get into touch with nunky. Scaife's taken Pepper's Villa, since he had to hop out of the bungalow. Racke comes here to feed now, I suppose. He's made your esteemed nunky visit him here."

"Made him?" exclaimed Paul.

"Made him, my son! Scaife's a pretty thorough rogue. I suppose he swindles Racke right and left, and he's adding blackmail to his other accomplishments, I fancy."

"Blackmail!"

"Looks like it to me. Scaife's rather a downy bird—extremely downy!" grinned Cardew. "But there's a still more downy bird at hand—little me! Wait till I set my sailorman uncle on his track!"

"Your uncle—Commander Durrance?" exclaimed Paul, utterly mystified.

"That very identical old bird!" answered Cardew. "Guess why I came with you to-day, kid? Just to track out Scaife, and find where he could be nailed. Deep of me, wasn't it?"

"You—you knew my uncle was coming to see Scaife?"

"I guessed it, after what you told me Scaife asked you the other day," said Cardew coolly. "I'm mystifyin' you—what? But I can't explain yet in case I'm on the wrong tack, though I don't think I am. Whoever it was tattooed that anchor on your arm, kid, did you a good turn. It struck me when I first noticed it in the dorm, and the fellows mentioned how like you were to me. Yet I never thought much about it till after old Durrance came the other day. After that I did some stiff thinkin'. And that stiff thinkin', old man, is goin' to cost me ten thousand solid quids!"

"How—in what way?" exclaimed Paul blankly.

"Because that's the sum I expected to inherit from my breezy old nunky, Durrance," said Cardew. "I'm down in his will for that. I happen to know it. But he won't let that stand, will he, if a closer claimant turns up?"

"But how——"

"An' here I go nosin' out another claimant to cut me out!" sighed Cardew. "What do you think of that for a silly ass? Still, I sha'n't starve. Lucky for you I've got tons of rich relations, without countin' old Durrance."

"Lucky for me?"

"Yaas. Otherwise, I might not do the good deed I'm thinkin' of."

Paul stopped, and looked at his companion.

"I'm beginning to think that you're out of your senses, Cardew!" he exclaimed.

Cardew nodded.

"It must look a bit like that to you," he admitted. "But I'm as right as a trivet, old bean—only a bit of an ass, goin' about doin' good deeds without bein' asked. Let's stop here for a bit."

"Why?" asked Paul, as his companion drew him into the wood beside the lane.

"To see your uncle's face when he goes back to the station. He won't be long."

"How do you know he won't be long?"

"His business can't take long. First, Scaife's goin' to point out to him that it's worth his while to pay him to keep his mouth shut. Second, your uncle's goin' to pitch German curses at him, I fancy. Third, he's goin' to pay up. Fourth, he's comin' away in a tearin' rage."

"Oh, you must be out of your senses!" exclaimed Paul.

"Wait an' see!" grinned Cardew.

Paul flung himself down in the leaves, and Cardew leaned against a tree. But they had not long to wait. A quarter of an hour later a tramp of heavy footsteps sounded in the lane, and Mr. Laurenz passed, striding towards the village, his face pale and his brows knitted blackly. There was no doubt that he was in a tearing rage, as Cardew had expressed it. He disappeared from sight, and the two juniors came out into the road again.

Paul did not speak on the way back to St. Jim's. He was utterly mystified by Cardew's uncanny knowledge. Cardew gave him a whimsical look as they went into the School House.

"Cheero, old scout!" he said. "You're goin' to see my merry old uncle on Wednesday; and you like him, don't you?"

"Yes," said Paul, brightening. "Is Commander Durrance coming here again so soon?"

"He is—he are! I've asked him to very specially," said Cardew; "chiefly on your account."

"You're very good!" said Paul, in surprise.

"One of the best!" answered Cardew, with a grin. "Queer how my uncle took to you when he was here, wasn't it?"

"I suppose so."

"And you took to him?"

"Very much."

"Nature's a queer old bird," said Cardew reflectively.

"I don't see——"

"Of course you don't! Hallo, you strenuous youths!" exclaimed Cardew, as the Terrible Three came in, ruddy from the cricket. "Been enjoyin' yourselves?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry. "And you, slacking about as usual?"

"No. I've been exertin' myself tremendously!"

"You look it!" said Manners.

"But I have, you know—simply tremendously!"

"What have you been doing, then?" asked Tom Merry, laughing.

"A good deed!"

"You!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Fan me, somebody!"

"No wonder you're surprised!" agreed Cardew. "It's a surprisin' thing! In fact, it's a surprisin' world! But come on, Cousin George. It's time we got in to tea."

Paul Laurenz blinked at him.

"What did you call me?" he exclaimed, fairly convinced at last that Cardew was wandering in his mind.

"Can't I call you what I like?" asked Cardew. "Come on, or Levison and Clive will have wolfed all the sardines."

Tom Merry & Co. looked after Cardew as he went up the big staircase with Paul.

"Is that chap potty?" asked Tom, in

wonder. "Did you hear what he called Laurenz?"

"Must be off his rocker!" said Lowther.

"Fairly off it!" agreed Manners.

And really it did look like it.

CHAPTER 9.
A Leaf From the Past.

"BAI Jove! Heah's the mewwy old commandah!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy raised his natty straw hat very respectfully as the stalwart figure of Commander Durrance was sighted in the quad.

His chums followed his example.

It was Wednesday afternoon, and Cardew's sailor uncle had arrived. Tom Merry & Co. were thinking chiefly of cricket that sunny afternoon. Racke & Co. were thinking chiefly of an unrationed feed at Pepper's Villa, where the useful Mr. Scaife had set up his tent. Aubrey Racke was not aware that two of the St. Jim's juniors knew of Mr. Scaife's new quarters. Laurenz and Cardew had not said a word on that topic.

Racke & Co. were starting out when the commander came in. The naval gentleman returned the salute of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his companions with a kind smile. Ralph Reckness Cardew was lounging in the doorway with Paul Laurenz.

Commander Durrance shook hands with his nephew and with Paul. He was evidently glad to see the German junior again.

"Well, Ralph?" he said.

"Will you come up to my study, sir?" said Cardew. "Levison an' Clive are goin' cricketin', and we'll have it to ourselves."

"You told me in your letter that you wanted my counsel on a very important matter," said the commander, with a rather puzzled look.

"Exactly, sir. Very kind of you to come," said Cardew. "Laurenz, old man, you can run away and play cricket; but don't go out of gates. My uncle would like to see you presently."

"Certainly," said the commander.

"Very well," answered Paul.

He followed the cricketers, and Cardew led his uncle to Study No. 9 in the Fourth.

He selected the most comfortable armchair in the study for the commander, who sat down with a slightly knitted brow.

"I have come down, Ralph, as you were so very urgent in your letter," he said. "I take it that you have got into trouble of some kind?"

"Not at all, uncle."

"Then I cannot quite see what it is you so particularly desired to see me about. Please explain yourself."

The airy carelessness of Cardew's manner deserted him now. His face became very serious, and a little troubled.

"I'm going to speak to you about family matters, uncle," he said. "It is a serious business, as I told you in my letter. You put it into my head when you were here the other day."

"Well?"

"You'll excuse me, uncle, if I mention a rather painful topic," said Cardew. "I'm not goin' to do it without a good reason."

"Go on, my boy!"

"You were greatly taken with my friend Laurenz when you were here before, uncle," said Cardew. "Goin' to the station, you told me it was because he was so like me that he reminded you ——" He paused as a dark cloud came over the bronzed face of the sailorman.

"He reminded me of my own son, whom I lost so many years ago," said Commander Durrance quietly. "That is so, Ralph. If my boy had lived, he would be of your age now, and Laurenz is so strangely like you I could not help taking to the boy, and I am glad he is your friend."

"We're great chums now," said Cardew. "Of course, uncle, I'd heard all about my cousin, who was drowned at sea when he was a little chap. It was your talkin' to Laurenz as you did, and tellin' me the reason, that made me think about it a lot lately. Uncle, was it—was it absolutely certain that—that——"

"That what, Ralph?"

"That my cousin, your son, was drowned?"

The commander looked at him hard.

"That is a very strange question to ask, Ralph," he answered quietly. "You seem to have guessed one of my inmost thoughts. Although I know it to be impossible, I have never given up a faint hope that my boy might have survived, because the body was never found, I suppose."

"It was never found!" repeated Cardew. "Yes, that was what I had heard, uncle. I've heard the matter talked about at home, of course. There was some German mixed up in the business."

"Yes; a German named Kleinberg," said the commander. "Nothing could be proved, but I suspected him. But why do you mention this, Ralph? I am sure you would not touch idly upon such a subject."

"You can be sure of that, sir," said Cardew earnestly. "I've got a reason that I'm going to tell you, but—but I want to make sure before I say anythin'. Will you tell me what happened at that time? I've only heard a bit of the story from talk at home when I was a kid."

Through the open window of the study floated a shout from the cricket-ground.

"Well hit, Laurenz!"

"Good old Fritz!"

The commander glanced out of the window. He could see the distant cricket-ground. Paul Laurenz and Tom Merry were at the wickets, and Paul had just driven hard away a ball from Fatty Wynn. The commander's eyes lingered on the handsome junior for a moment or two, and then he turned back to his nephew.

"I think I can guess what is in your mind, Ralph," he said with a slight tremble in his voice. "My dear boy, I fear you have dreamed of an impossible thing! But I will tell you what you ask."

"Thank you, uncle!"

"The German I have spoken of, Kleinberg, was a spy long before the war," said Commander Durrance. "He was one of the rascals employed by the rogues in Berlin to spy out British naval secrets. I was a young lieuenant then. It was I who exposed the rascal, and brought him to punishment—a term of penal servitude, and the ruin, of course, of all his business connections in England. He was also discarded by his employers. They had no use for a man who had failed. He was a ruined man, and naturally revengeful. I believe it was in the convict prison that he laid the plot against me, with Luke Clancy, who had been concerned with him in his treachery."

"That's the man who calls himself Scaife now?" said Cardew. "The man you saw with Racke the night you left here?"

"Ay, ay! It was shortly after their term of imprisonment had expired that the blow fell upon me," said the commander quietly. "My little boy, then nearly three years old, was taken away from his nurse; but, fortunately, the girl summoned help in time, and he was rescued, and Luke Clancy, who had taken him, was arrested. He confessed that Kleinberg had hired him to kidnap the child, with the intention of revenging himself upon me. He intended to bring the boy up as a German, to hate the English, and to fight against them when war came—a scheme of vengeance that could only have occurred to a Prussian mind. Clancy was sent to prison, but his employer was not found."

"And then?"

"Then, in case of a second attempt, which might be more successful, I tattooed a mark upon my boy's arm," said the commander. "It was a mark that could not be mistaken, and would lead to his identification at any time."

Cardew's eyes gleamed.

"An anchor?" he said.

"Yes."

"I knew about that," said Cardew with a nod. "I'd almost forgotten, but after what you said the other day—— But go on, uncle."

"But the kidnapper, baffled once, was less merciful the next time," said the commander, with a moody brow. "It was several months later that my son disappeared from the garden in our house near the sea. His hat and sash were thrown up by the tide the next morning, and one of his shoes was found in the sand. From that day to this nothing more was heard of him. For a long time I hoped; but I had to realise at last that he had been drowned. I could not even prove that it was Kleinberg's work—he had disappeared. Years later I heard news of him—he had died in Germany. That is all, Ralph."

"Do you know whether Kleinberg had any relations in England, uncle?"

"I believe so, but I do not know their name."

"Suppose, after all, he had done as he intended at first—kidnapped the child to bring him up as a German," said Car-

Cadet Notes.

Among the most successful of the Cadet organisations are the various brigades which are now officially recognised as Cadet Corps.

These include the Boys' Brigade, which is now more than thirty years old, the Church Lads' Brigade, and some other similar bodies.

The present strength of these brigades is about 120,000. It is estimated that at the present time no fewer than 663,000 members and exmembrs of brigades are serving with the Colours. Among them, these old boys of the brigades have gained more than 900 distinctions during the past three years of the war, including no fewer than 22 Victoria Crosses, 122 Military Crosses, 55 D.S.O.'s, also a large number of other distinctions, including various French, Belgian, Russian, Italian, Serbian, etc.

This is a record, of course, showing only one aspect of the brigades' work, but that reflects very much honour on the organisation and those belonging to it.

Our readers who are not already members of Cadet Corps, and who happen to reside in towns where no ordinary Cadet Corps is yet in existence, often find that a detachment of one of these brigades is formed in their locality, and they will do well to join it and take part in this work.

They can obtain full particulars and information about the brigades, with addresses of local companies, etc., on application to the C.A.V.R., Judges' Quadrangle, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, W.C. 2.

dew slowly. "He might have made it look as if the little chap was drowned to save himself—it would be safer for him. For if you'd believed the lad was still living, the hunt for him would never have stopped. Uncle, I believe it was so."

"Why do you say that, Ralph?"

"Because"—Cardew spoke very slowly—"because, uncle, that chap, Paul Laurenz—the chap who is so like me that he might be a relation—has an anchor tattooed on his arm—tattooed there from his infancy, before he could remember!"

"Ralph!"

Commander Durrance started to his feet.

His bronzed face was pale, and there were beads of perspiration on his brow.

"Ralph!" he repeated. "My boy—you—you are sure of this?"

"I've seen it—lots of the fellows have. There was some talk about it—it looked queer. And he's so like me, uncle."

"Good heavens!" muttered the commander huskily.

He stared from the window. In the distance Paul Laurenz was to be seen. He was still at the wickets. On Little Side there was no lad who looked more thoroughly, healthily English than Paul Laurenz.

"But this boy!" muttered the commander. "His people are known, surely——"

"I will tell you about that," said Cardew quietly. "The man you call Clancy—he's called Scaife here—spoke to Laurenz the other day—he recognised him, and asked him if there was an anchor tattooed on his arm. He asked him where to find his uncle—he wanted to see him, you see. I figured it out, uncle, that Scaife knew who Paul really was—his questions could only mean that, and he wanted to be sure. If that was so, Scaife knew that Mr. Laurenz was keeping your son in ignorance of his real name and nationality—that he was a confederate of the kidnapper of many years ago. Scaife is a scoundrel. You know that."

"I know."

"Well, no doubt he helped when your son was taken away, all those years ago, but Kleinberg shook him off after that. When he first saw Paul, he recognised him, and he said, 'After all these years!' I reckoned that, having found this out, he would blackmail Mr. Laurenz. You see, it's in his power to give that man away as a confederate in kidnapping. Well, Mr. Laurenz has been down here to see Scaife, and I am sure Scaife stuck him for money—he was as mad as a hatter. Even before Scaife met Laurenz, I was sure how matters stood, but I was trying to think how to prove the thing. I didn't want to disturb you, uncle, with suggesting what might turn out to be a mare's-nest."

"I understand, Ralph."

"I believe that Laurenz is your son—my cousin George," said Cardew. "And I am sure Scaife knows it. I know where to find Scaife. You can make the rascal tell you what he knows."

The commander's eyes gleamed.

"He shall tell me!" he said. "But—but this lad—has he no relations but the uncle you speak of?"

"None," said Cardew. "And that uncle, I am certain, has been blackmailed by Scaife, after he had learned of the mark on Paul's arm. Doesn't that make it a cert?"

"Call the boy in, Ralph! I—I must question him."

"Yes, uncle."

Ralph Reckness Cardew quitted the study. Commander Durrance sank into his chair again, his brows knitted in deep thought, his lips set, but a new light gleaming in his eyes.

CHAPTER 10.
The Son of a Sailor.

"WELL bowled, Talbot!"

Cardew heard that shout as he came down to Little Side. Paul Laurenz's wicket was down at last. There were cheers for "Fritz" as he came off the pitch. It was only a practice game, but the new junior had shown up remarkably well. Tom Merry clapped him on the shoulder as he came off.

"Good man!" said Tom heartily. "Keep on like that, and you'll be playing for your House soon, kid!"

Paul flushed with pleasure.

"Hallo! I'm lookin' for you, old nut!" drawled Cardew. "Will you hop into my study an' speak to my cheery old nunky? He wants you."

"Certainly!" said Paul.

Cardew remained with his hands in his pockets, lazily watching the cricket, while Paul walked away to the School House.

He tapped at the door of No. 9 in the Fourth, and entered.

Commander Durrance rose as he came in.

His eyes were fastened upon the boy, with a keen, eager look that somewhat startled Paul.

"Sit down, my boy," said the commander. "I want to speak to you."

"Yes, sir," said Paul, wondering at the half-suppressed emotion in the naval man's manner.

The commander was silent for a minute, while the junior watched him without speaking, his surprise increasing.

Commander Durrance's voice was not quite steady when he broke the silence at last.

"My boy, I want you to tell me about yourself. I have a reason. Will you answer my questions?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Paul, in wonder.

"There is an anchor tattooed upon your arm. My nephew has told me so. Let me see it."

In great amazement, Paul rolled back the sleeves of his blazer and thin shirt, and showed the tattooed mark.

The commander's eyes fixed intently upon it.

"Good heavens!" he said. "There is no doubt—no doubt! There can be no doubt! You do not know how that mark came there, lad?"

"No, sir. It has been there ever since I can remember."

"Have you always lived with your—with Mr. Laurenz?" asked the commander. "Tell me about your childhood."

"There isn't much to tell, sir," answered Paul. "I don't know anything about my people, excepting my uncle, Mr. Laurenz. I have been in his charge since I was seven. I have not lived much with him—he—he——" The boy coloured. "He did not like me much, and I was placed in a family for some years, and brought up by them. He did not like me about him."

"And before you came to your uncle?" asked the commander.

"I remember very little. I was in charge of some German people, living in Yorkshire," said Paul. "They were not relations. My father had left me with them, and paid for my keep."

"Did you ever see your father?"

"I do not remember him. I understand he was a busy man, with all his interests abroad—he travelled about the world, I believe. When I was seven, I heard that he was dead, and I was sent to my uncle, Mr. Laurenz. He kept me in his house for about a year, but—but he did not like me—I had learned English ways, and he called me 'little Englander.' He placed me with a family who took entire charge of me. They were partly German, but very kind to me, but—but I was not happy there. I suppose it was wrong of me, being a German; but I had English ways of thinking, and—and——" He broke off. "That was before the war. After the war broke out, my uncle broke off all his connections with Germans—I think because he felt he had to be careful, so much prejudice existing against naturalised Germans in this country. I was then placed in an English home for a time; afterwards, I returned to my uncle's house. But he did not like me there, and he sent me to this school at last——" Paul paused, and coloured again. "I was glad to come here. I—I think Mr. Laurenz felt that, to ward off suspicion, it would be best for him to have his nephew brought up in the English way. I know he was very nervous and uneasy about being suspected of German sympathies. That is the reason, I think, why he sent me to St. Jim's."

The commander listened in silence.

His eyes never left the handsome, flushed face of the junior.

"Did it ever occur to you, my lad, that you had English blood in your veins?" he asked.

"I—I thought of that, sir—sometimes I hoped it was so. I had never known my mother; but when I asked Mr. Laurenz he was so harsh that I never dared mention the subject again. Circumstances forced him to let me be brought up in the English way; but he disliked me for it."

"It was Providence," said the commander, in a low voice. "Providence that prevented the scoundrel's plan from being carried out."

The junior looked at him.

"Come with me, my boy," said the commander. "You are free this afternoon?"

"Quite, sir."

"Then come."

The wondering junior followed the naval officer from the study.

Ralph Reckness Cardew was in the doorway below.

"You will take me to Scaife, Ralph," said the commander. "Laurenz will come with us."

"Right-ho!" said Cardew.

"We—we are going to see Scaife?" exclaimed Paul, in amazement.

"Yes, my old nut, we are—we is!" grinned Cardew. "You'll know the reason soon, old bean. Hop it!"

Lost in wonder, Paul left the school with Commander Durrance and his nephew. The commander spoke no word during the walk to Pepper's Villa, and Paul was equally silent.

Cardew seemed to be in great spirits.

They arrived at the villa, and the commander knocked loudly at the door. A startled face looked out of a window.

"Racke!" exclaimed Paul.

Cardew chuckled.

"Dear old Racke—merry old Racke!" he said. "It's a merry feed goin' on, old nut—the food-hogs are here in force."

The commander knocked again, more loudly; but the door was not opened. There was a sound of scurrying within the villa. Racke & Co., scared by the sight of the commander, were escaping as fast as they could by the back way. Cardew made a sign to Paul to follow him, and ran round the buildings.

Rack and Crooke, Scrope and Clampe, were fleeing down the back garden in hot haste. Scaife was following them breathlessly. Evidently he, too, had seen the stern-faced naval man at the door, and had no desire to meet him.

"Collar him!" whispered Cardew.

He rushed after Scaife, and leaped upon him. They went with a crash to the ground together.

Scaife struggled furiously.

But Paul came up at once, and the two juniors were too much for the angry

man. Scaife was secured, with Cardew's knee on his chest. His single eye glittered up at the Fourth-Formers of St. Jim's.

"Let me go!" he panted. "Hang you, let me go!"

"Any hurry?" yawned Cardew.

"Hang you! I——"

"Here he is, uncle!"

Commander Durrance came striding round the cottage, and Scaife was allowed to rise to his feet.

Within reach of the powerful arm of the commander, Scaife stood, pale and uneasy, his one eye glittering like a cornered rat's. The two juniors kept hold of his arms, to prevent any attempt at bolting.

Commander Durrance fixed his eyes upon the uneasy rascal.

"We meet once more, Luke Clancy," he said, in a deep voice.

"My name is Scaife."

"As much as it is Clancy, probably," said the commander. "But that is the name I knew you by when you were sent to prison for kidnapping my son."

Scaife compressed his lips.

"Well, if it is so, I served my sentence, and you have no hold on me," he said sullenly. "What do you want here?"

"The truth, my man!" said the commander grimly. "You know who this boy is. Tell me the truth."

Scaife started violently.

"Own up, old nut!" said Cardew lightly. "You've stuck old Laurenz for somethin' to keep it dark; you're that much in pocket. Shall I go to the police-station, uncle? A bobby is what he wants to make him converse."

"Unless he confesses everything at once, certainly," said the commander.

Scaife's lips twitched.

"I—I—I've no reason to keep it secret," he muttered. "I knew the boy as soon as I saw him. He was so like you, sir, when you were as I knew you first. I—I asked him about that tattoo, to make sure. I had no hand in the kidnapping. After the first time—that failed—Kleinberg had no use for me. But—but when I heard afterwards that your son had been taken away, and was supposed to be drowned, I knew it was Kleinberg's work, of course. I never saw him again. I never saw the boy again till the other day. I tell you I had no hand in it."

"That may be true," said the commander quietly. "I believe you helped Kleinberg on the second occasion, as on the first; but let it pass."

"You could not prove it," muttered Scaife. "Kleinberg is dead, too. I knew he had taken the boy. I wondered what had become of him after Kleinberg died. I—I knew Kleinberg had a brother, who changed his name when he settled in England and became naturalised, and called himself Laurenz. I thought the boy might have been placed with him, and—and made some inquiry; but there was no boy in his House—I learned that. Afterwards the matter went out of my mind, till I met the lad the other day. Then I knew, of course, that Mr. Laurenz had taken charge of him on his brother's death."

Paul Laurenz was listening like a fellow in a dream.

He wondered whether he really was dreaming.

"And then," said the commander sternly, "knowing that my son was in the hands of a German, believing that he was a German himself, instead of doing what was right, what did you do? I can guess—you blackmailed Mr. Laurenz with the threat of exposing him as the accomplice of a kidnapper!"

"There's no proof of that," said Scaife, with more assurance. "Judges and juries require proof——"

The commander interrupted him with a gesture.

"Let the man go," he said. "The sight of him sickens me. I know the truth now, and that is enough."

Cardew released Scaife's arm.

"Cut!" he said.

Scaife tramped away down the garden, and disappeared. Commander Durrance turned to Paul, who was looking dazed.

He held out his arms to him.

"My boy," he said, "you understand now?"

"I—I——" Paul stammered helplessly.

"You are my son—my boy whom I have mourned as dead!" said the commander, in a moved voice. "My boy we owe this to Ralph—your cousin Ralph!"

"I—I——"

"Now you know why I called you Cousin George, old bean," grinned Cardew. "What do you think of me as a merry detective—what?"

"But—but is it possible?" stammered Paul dazedly. "I—I am English, then, as I always longed to be—I am not German?"

"No more German than I am, old nut," said Cardew. "You're my Cousin George, old chap, and nunky is your pater. And old Laurenz is a dashed old Hun, who's going to have a terrific horse-whippin'—isn't he, uncle?"

Paul's eyes filled with tears as the commander grasped both his hands.

"Father!" he muttered.

Ralph Reckness Cardew walked away, leaving father and son together. He sauntered back to St. Jim's by himself, smiling.

Levison and Clive met him at the gates.

"Well, what have you been up to?" asked Levison.

"Chuckin' away ten thousand pounds, old bean," answered Cardew. "Makin' a merry old sailorman as happy as a prince, and unearthin' my Cousin George, an' generally frustratin' knavish tricks. Doin' good deeds. I'm thinkin' of applyin' for a medal for good conduct somewhere. Do you know where they make 'em?"

And Cardew sauntered on, leaving his chum staring.

* * * * * *

It was a nine days' wonder at St. Jim's when the truth was known in the school.

For certainly it was an amazing story.

But there was proof of it. There could be no lingering doubt.

For Paul Laurenz's name was changed on the school books. He was entered there, now, as George Durrance, his real name.

And it was learned that Mr. Laurenz, his supposed uncle, had disappeared. Commander Durrance had called to see him, provided with a horsewhip, and found him gone. Probably Scaife had sent him warning in time. The naturalised Hun had changed his name before changing his nationality, and it was known that he had carried on the rascally scheme of his brother after the latter's death, and for that he was wanted by the law. He had bought Scaife's silence in vain—though it would not have been in vain but for the intervention of Cardew of the Fourth.

It was Cardew, the slacker and dandy of the Fourth, who had done it all—Cardew from beginning to end!

Surely No. 9 felt proud of Cardew just then.

As for Paul Laurenz—or, to give him his real name, George Durrance—he could not express his gratitude enough.

For a long time it seemed almost a dream to the lad.

The hateful taint that had weighed upon him so long was gone. He was an English lad, and there was no drop of German blood in his veins.

He owed it to Cardew, and he was not likely to forget it. And Cardew was his cousin—his blood-relation.

"I understand now," he said to Cardew. "You made me think you were wandering in your mind—the things you said, you know. And you knew——"

"Didn't I tell you I was going to make you English?" grinned Cardew. "I only wanted to make sure before springin' it on you, dear boy. I suppose you're glad of the change—what?"

"Glad!" repeated Durrance. "You can't imagine how glad! And my father—oh, it's splendid, Ralph! My father!" He repeated the word softly. "I never knew what it was to have a father. And—and you've done it all for me. I hope I may be able to show some day what I feel about it."

"What rot!" yawned Cardew. "I suppose I was bound to do it, anyway. I dare say we shall be quarrellin' soon. Cousins generally do, I believe."

Durrance laughed happily. He was not likely to quarrel with Cardew.

Tom Merry & Co. congratulated Durrance with great heartiness. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was quite brimming with delight at his good fortune. And Grundy of the Shell said "I told you so!"

"You saw how the chap stood up to me in a scrap," said the great Grundy. "Didn't I tell you then that he couldn't be a Hun? Wasn't I right? Come to that, ain't I always right?"

And Tom Merry & Co. admitted that, amazing as it was, Grundy had been right for once!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's —"LOOKING AFTER LEVISON!" —by Martin Clifford.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"LOOKING AFTER LEVISON!"
By Martin Clifford.

It is Grundy who does the looking after Levison, and, knowing Grundy as we do, we can all feel sure from the outset that Levison does not need his guardianship, if he needs anyone's, and that blunder will accumulate upon blunder in the course of Grundy's efforts to play guardian angel.

Levison's chum, Clive, gets a bit worried, and Levison's other chum, Cardew, plays a freakish and whimsical part in the course of events. It is dead easy to pull Grundy's leg, and Cardew pulls it. Knox, of the Sixth, is also involved, and he and Grundy come into violent collision.

'Nuff said! A good, rousing story, this.

TILL NEXT WEEK.

The list of Tom Merry stories which have appeared in the GEM cannot be continued this week for want of space. But I hope to continue, and complete, it in the next issue.

Yours Editor

THE ST. JIM'S GALLERY.

No. 17.—Monty Lowther.

THE other two members of the brotherhood, known to St. Jim's as the Terrible Three, have been dealt with earlier in the series; and Lowther might well have had a place before this, on his merits, so to speak. But it is not really a question of relative importance; it would be a mistake to work off all the most interesting character to start with.

Montague Lowther—to give him his full name, which is seldom seen—is not at all like his chums, except in the qualities which one expects to find in every decent fellow. He is not the athlete Tom Merry is, though Lowther is no duffer, by any means. He lacks the sunny temper of Tom, though he is not bad tempered. Between him and Manners there are still more points of difference; they are, indeed, as unlike as any two fellows in the Shell in many of their tastes and ways. Manners, though he can relish a jape, is much the more serious of the two. He talks comparatively little; the tongue of Monty is as the brook, which runs on for ever. Manners has very little appreciation of Lowther's humour; Lowther appreciates it as no one else ever seems to. Manners takes class-work far more in earnest than his chum. There are a few subjects which appeal to Lowther; but outside these few he is far from being keen. Manners is devoted to chess and the camera; literature and the stage are the things for which Lowther cares.

But difference of tastes, or even of character, are no bar to friendship. A more thoroughly united trio than the Terrible Three it would be hard to find anywhere. And it would be quite impossible to say with certainty which of them ranks first with any of the others. One might fancy that Tom Merry occupied the first place in the affections of both Manners and Lowther; but it would be only fancy. It is unlikely that even they know. And it is certain that no one knows—not even Tom himself—whether Manners or Lowther counts most to him. In any case, it does not matter. This sort of thing cannot be weighed up or measured out.

Harry Manners and Monty Lowther were chums before Tom Merry came to Clavering in his little blue velveteen suit. They were his first friends there; they have been his best friends ever since; though in these days Reginald Talbot ranks only just behind them, if behind them at all in reality.

They came to St. Jim's with Mr. Railton, and with Tom and the other fellows who migrated when Clavering was shut down. At their new school they soon came to be known as the Terrible Three, and soon found themselves up against Study No. 6 in the Fourth and the New House firm of Figgins & Co. But Blake and his chums and Figgy and his were never enemies in anything but the sporting sense. The real enemies of the Terrible Three have been such as Gore and Levison—both changed into friends now, though not into close chums—Crooke and Racke and their like. And they have stuck together through fair weather and foul; and very seldom indeed has there been any rift in the lute.

Monty Lowther had not been long at St. Jim's when his uncle took him away, thinking the school too rough for him. He had a private tutor; but he did not like it a bit. Then he was left in the charge of Miss Priscilla Fawcett—Tom Merry's guardian—while his uncle went away for a few weeks; and he managed to persuade the worthy old lady to let him go back to St. Jim's in disguise.

He appeared there as James Edward Jessop, with a red complexion and blue glasses; and he aroused the wrath of Tom and Manners at once by saying nasty things about himself—that is, about Monty Lowther, not about J. E. Jessop, of course. He had been put into their study, and they did not want him there—they wanted Lowther back.

Monty Lowther had promised Miss Priscilla that Tom should take his medicine regularly; and J. E. Jessop carried out the promise. But the grub provided for a picnic was not improved by the addition of "Dr. Bones' Green Globules for Pining Patients" and "Dr. Bones' Special Mixture." Lowther seemed also to have overlooked the fact that others besides Tom would get the doubtful benefit of sharing the physic with the food—or, possibly, he thought that did not matter, as he was not invited. After all, neither Tom nor Manners, nor Blake & Co., who were with them, got any of it; for the provisions were raided by the New House juniors. Then J. E. Jessop chortled, and Figgins & Co. ducked J. E. J., and when he came out of the water he had lost his red complexion and his blue glasses, and was revealed as Monty Lowther!

He stayed on. Miss Fawcett wrote to the Head about the trick that had been played with her consent, and told him that Lowther's uncle would be abroad for some time, and that he had consented to Monty's staying on at St. Jim's; and the Head forgave the trick, and allowed him to stay. So

the Terrible Three were reunited, and ready for the war-path against any rivals.

It is out of the question to deal in these brief articles with all that had happened to personages so prominent in the stories as the Terrible Three. Only the more striking things—those which have a very direct bearing upon character, for the most part—can be mentioned; and one does not guarantee that all of them will be. There are many of such happenings in Lowther's case, for he has the artistic temperament, and because of that he has made more mistakes than the better-balanced Tom Merry or than Manners, though the peculiar temper of Manners has led him astray more than once, as in the matter of Roylance.

Very like that affair, in some respects, was Lowther's feud with Dick Julian of the Fourth. But there was less excuse for Lowther than for his chum. Manners was misled by appearances in the case of Roylance; Lowther went out of his way to annoy Julian.

He chose to assume that because Dick Julian was a Jew he would be mean—a most grossly unfair assumption. He planned to meet Julian at the station, and start in at once on a campaign of chipping, although he knew nothing against the new boy except that he was the nephew of Mr. Moses, the moneylender, of Wayland. Tom Merry and Manners refused to bear a hand; but Crooke and Mellish were not so scrupulous. Lowther must have felt that he was in the wrong when his own chums disapproved so strongly while cads like Crooke and Mellish approved. The dodge was to make Julian spend money, which Lowther fancied would hurt a Jew no end. It did not appear to hurt Julian at all; he had plenty of money, and seemed quite ready to stand his whack in everything. In fact, he took Lowther and Mellish farther than they had meant to go—Mellish came along free of charge, so to speak—and in the upshot Monty had to borrow money from the new boy to settle up his share. Monty was furious. As a humorist, he should have been able to see the joke against himself; but he refused to see it as a joke at all. He forced Julian to fight him, and he was licked. He would not shake hands after that; he kept up his resentment until Julian had saved his life in the mill-race. Then all feud was at an end, of course; and the two have been on the best of terms ever since.

Then there was the time when Lowther, badly stage-struck, ran away from school and joined a travelling theatrical company. It was then that he first met the great Mr. Horatio Curll, now so well known to the juniors of St. Jim's. Later, he managed to get permission from his uncle to leave St. Jim's for a time and go away for a short holiday with a friend. He did not tell his uncle that the friend was Mr. Curll, or that his intention was to join a cinema company. He did not tell the Head so. He did not even tell Tom and Manners. He left that until later; when he came back.

Lowther was relief pianist, and he did not find the job by any means a bed of roses. Mr. Curll did not help to make it so. Mr. Curll had—and has—an unfortunate propensity for looking upon the wine when it is red, and he did that once too often, with the result that the cinema manager offered Monty Mr. Curll's post, which meant promotion to principal pianist. Mr. Curll, believing himself betrayed, called Lowther a viper and a scorpion, and several other things not quite complimentary. But when he knew the truth he wanted Monty to come to his arms and be hugged. Monty dodged that. It was impossible for him to supplant the man who had got him his job; but to be hugged by Mr. Curll for doing the decent thing was hardly what he wanted. He went back to St. Jim's with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had got upon his tracks at Abbotsford; and, of course, Gussy took all the credit of bringing him back, and fully believed that he deserved it.

Once Lowther played the giddy ox in the betting line. Levison had one of those sure things to give away—those sure things which somehow never come off! Lowther's uncle had stopped his pocket-money, and Lowther was short of both cash and temper in consequence. He said silly things to Tom Merry and Manners about Erics and Good Little Georgies, and quarrelled with them. He started with Cutts and some others for the

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races. But he did not get there. Tom and Manners, Digby and Lumley-Lumley, Dane and Glyn, chased on bicycles the trap in which they were going, and took Lowther out of it by force. And at the races Herr Schneider spotted the St. Jim's fellows, and when they were carpeted Levison gave Lowther away, and, though he had never got to the racecourse, Monty had to face the music with the rest. He owned up frankly, and escaped with a caning; and he has never felt any temptation to indulge in that form of amusement since.

And once at least Lowther fell in love. The lady was Fraulein Erlen, niece of Herr Schneider; and Monty was really very much gone indeed. But he cooked his own goose very completely. Under pretence of being exceptionally keen on German he had induced the Herr to give him extra tuition out of school hours. Herr Schneider read German poetry, and spouted about it, what time Lowther studied the Herr with the greatest care—because he was making him his model for the part of Colonel Potsdam, in the great drama of "Catching the Colonel," written by Montague Lowther, Esq., and to be performed by the Junior Amateur Dramatic Society, with Montague Lowther, Esq., in the star part. The advent of Marichen Erlen made Lowther reconsider the question of how the part should be played; it seemed just a little too thick to take off the peculiarities of Marichen's uncle before her eyes. But when the critical moment came Lowther's keenness overcame his spooniness, and the consequence was that the Fraulein left St. Jim's without ever speaking to him again, so annoyed was she. Lowther got over it, but not at once or easily.

As an impersonator Lowther may fall a trifle short of Kerr; and neither is quite the equal of that dramatic genius Wibley, of Greyfriars. But Lowther has real ability, and has in his time played many parts, with rather a preference for the broad comedy ones of the bearded and boozy type. It would be merely waste of space to describe those parts, for they in themselves do not matter, and there is certainly not time or room to tell of the circumstances which led up to his adoption of them. Most readers will remember some, at least; one that sticks in my mind is that of the broker's man, whose coming to St. Jim's convinced the impulsive Gussy that buying furniture on the hire-purchase system was rather a mistake for a schoolboy.

But we sometimes have Lowther in a more serious light; and the best examples of the stories thus depicting him which I can recall is "Down on His Luck!" In spite of all his japing, his puns, and his absurd quotations, Monty Lowther can be serious, even morose, at times. It was through Racke, whom he has so often chipped about war profits, that he was persuaded to believe that his uncle, who is also his guardian, was a war-profiteer. He made up his mind at once that he would not accept another penny of his uncle's money, and he entered his name for the Craven Scholarship in the hope of being able to maintain himself at the school by the proceeds of it. Manners was to help him in cramming mathematics, and Tom Merry would also give what aid he could, which was less than that of Manners, unfortunately. But then Lowther quarrelled with both his chums. The secret leaked out, and who but they—or one of them—could have told it, since he had confided in no one else? He was in a horribly morbid and depressed state, and Manners' temper was roused, and Tom could not make peace between the two, but was dragged into the quarrel.

It all came right at last, and Racke's cunning plotting was shown up, and the three were better chums than ever, and Lowther gave the Craven the go-by—very glad to do it, too! Swotting is not in the genial Monty's line.

But that is not because he lacks brains. He has a distinct literary bent, and though he may waste it to some extent on comic piffle he is capable of far better things. Some day he may be a famous writer—that is more likely than his becoming a renowned actor, I fancy. In any case, he will always be a good fellow and a good chum!

THE TWINS FROM TASMANIA.

FOR NEW READERS.

The twins are Philip Derwent, of Highcliffe, and his sister Philippa, of Cliff House. They have a cockatoo, named Cocky, which has been until recently with Flip (Philip) at Highcliffe, but is now at Cliff House. Flip has made an enemy of Gadsby, who is plotting against him with Vavasour. His best chums, Merton and Tunstall, are away from the school for a time, owing to a serious accident to one of Merton's eyes in a fight with Ponsonby. In their absence Flip gets too friendly with Pon and the rest of the nuts, and, without any real taste for it at the outset, takes to gambling. He goes with the nuts to a gambling den at Courtfield, quarrels with Pon, and is knocked senseless just as the warning "Police!" is heard. Flip comes to himself in a cellar, bound hand and foot. He is let out, however. He makes up his mind that the only thing for him to do is to run away, as returning to Highcliffe means certain expulsion. Then he meets Peter Hazeldene, who has run away from Greyfriars. Goggs of Franklingham comes to Highcliffe. Flip and Hazel go to London, and after many exciting adventures make for Wayland. They tramp for some time, and eventually lose their way. Suddenly Hazel disappears from view, and Flip, moving forward, pulls himself up in the nick of time on the edge of a steep downfall. By a trick Pon, Gadsby, and Vavasour are sent to the Head, and Vavasour confesses. Flip and Hazel are found, in an exhausted state, by St. Jim's fellows. Ponsonby stops Flap and Marjorie, and is insulting. Goggs fights and thrashes Pon before the girls and several Highcliffe and Greyfriars juniors.

Two to Sanny (continued).

Flip still slept when they reached St. Jim's. It was with real tenderness that the four lifted him out, and carried him into the sanatorium. Hazel lacked no care that they could give; but they had not the same feeling about Hazel that they had about the partner of his wanderings.

Within half an hour of their arrival the story of those wanderings was current talk through all St. Jim's, and the hitherto unknown name of Philip Derwent was on many lips.

But Flip, watched by Marie Rivers, tossed feverishly in his bed, with aching head and flushed face and uneasy breathing; and the doctor had looked very grave, and had talked of exposure and fatigue, and the danger of pneumonia.

"Fortunately, he has a first-class physique, and is obviously organically sound," he said.

And Marie Rivers understood from those words that Flip was in real danger, though the chances of recovery might be greater than those of death.

Highcliffe Hears the News.

"SO that's done!" said Bob Cherry, as Cecil Ponsonby was counted out.

"It is of a certainty accomplishfully performed," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I desire to offer extremefully my congratulations to the honourable Goggs."

"I thank you," said Goggs gravely.

He was scarcely marked, and seemed not at all breathed. Squiff offered him his jacket, but the Caterpillar took it from Squiff's hands and held it for Goggs to don.

It was Rupert de Courcy's way of showing honour to the victor, and Goggs might be trusted to understand it.

Monson helped Pon up. Pon had sworn fiercely at Tom Brown when Tom offered aid, and the New Zealander had promptly turned his back upon the fellow he had seconded. He had done his best to carry out a disagreeable task, and he was glad to be through with it.

With the possible exception of Monson, and the certain one of Marjorie Hazeldene, no one there felt any pity for the vanquished. It was by no means certain that Monson felt any; he was not of the melting sort. But in the gentle heart of Marjorie there was always pity for a fallen enemy. She would not have wished the thrashing undone, but she could feel sorry for Pon's battered face and wounded pride, in spite of his savage sullenness.

"Goggs, old top," said Tunstall fervently, "you're a nailer—a rightdown, regular nailer, by Jupiter!"

A murmur of hearty agreement rose from the Greyfriars crowd.

"It was as neat as anything I ever saw," said the Bounder. "Do you often do this sort of thing?"

"Very seldom," replied Goggs. "It is, fortunately, very seldom that I find it necessary."

"You'll let us see you home, Marjorie?" asked Harry Wharton, in low tones.

"Not all of you, Harry. There's such a crowd. Just you and Bob; the rest won't mind. And, of course, Goggs will come."

"Of course!" said Flap, with decision.

Monson was already leading away the groaning Pon. No one envied Monson his task. But they were glad he had turned up, for Ponsonby was so battered that he could hardly have been left to crawl back alone, and not one there wanted to give him aid. Frank Courtenay would have done it in the event, probably; but Courtenay would have done it without relish, and purely from a sense of duty.

The skipper of the Highcliffe Fourth stepped forward now, and raised his cap again as he spoke to the girls.

"I hope you won't hold anything that fellow has been guilty of against Highcliffe," he said.

It was a simple enough speech, but it was spoken manfully, and it said the right thing. Both of the girls saw that, and De Courcy and Tunstall were glad Frank had thought to speak thus. It came best from him.

"Oh, no," murmured Marjorie.

"We shouldn't think of it," added Flap. "Besides, Highcliffe's Flip's school, you know, Courtenay—unless they expel him. They haven't done that yet, have they?"

"No, they haven't done that, Miss Derwent, and I don't think it will be done now, if he comes back."

Through the gloom the speaker could discern a change in the girl's face.

"He won't do that unless he has to," said Flap, with a sigh. "I almost wish something would happen to make him. Something did happen to him less than half an hour ago, I know; I was horribly afraid. But it's all right now—better, anyway; the feeling has passed."

Courtenay did not quite understand that, but he was too polite to ask questions. He drew back. The Caterpillar and Tunstall said good-night to the girls. Then Tunstall said:

"Comin', Goggs?"

Goggs glanced towards Flap, then shook his head slightly. Bad though the light was, he had read in her eyes permission to see her home.

"That query, Tunstall," remarked the Caterpillar, as the three went, "was a dashed blunder."

"Was it, by Jupiter? I don't quite see why. But I dare say you think you know better than I do."

"Sure of it, dear boy! Goggs fought as Miss Derwent's chosen champion. Has he not earned the right to see her home?"

"True enough," rejoined Tunstall. "An' it ain't so dashed funny, after all, a girl takin' to Goggs. He's all right, an' all there."

"She's a very nice girl," said Frank Courtenay meditatively.

"She is another's, Franky," replied the Caterpillar solemnly.

"Oh, rats, Rupert! You know I didn't mean it that way."

Meanwhile, the Greyfriars crowd was dispersing.

"You and I had better see them home, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "See you again soon, you fellows. We sha'n't be long."

There was no audible murmuring. Everyone there would have been glad of the privilege Harry and Bob were given, but all knew that those two were Marjorie's closest boy chums. For her sake Harry had endured much from Peter Hazeldene, and Bob never attempted to disguise his dog-like devotion to Hazel's sister.

Johnny Bull growled in his throat as they turned after saying good-night; and Delarey said: "Lucky bargees!" But Vernon-Smith showed no sign of disappointment, though he

may have felt it. The Bounder was not much in the way of showing his feelings.

While the girls and their escort of three moved through the dusk towards Cliff House—while the other Removites trotted off for Greyfriars—while Courtenay and De Courcy and Tunstall talked as they went—Ponsonby and Monson walked in sullen silence.

Pon needed help, and Monson gave it to him. But Monson knew now what the fight had been about, and he was by no means proud of the part Pon had played. There were remnants of decency in Monson.

They had all but reached Highcliffe when they met Mr. Mobbs, flurried and bad-tempered.

"Ponsonby," he ejaculated shrilly, "how could you be so foolish—so mad? At the very hour when I was doing all in my power to induce Dr. Voysey to take a lenient view of your conduct——"

"I never asked you to do anythin' of the kind, by gad!" snarled Pon.

"That is a very strange tone to adopt, Ponsonby," replied the Fourth Form master. "What I have done I have done as your friend, not as a mere pedagogue. I have represented to our venerated Head that ebullitions of animal spirits must not be too severely reprehended when committed by members of the Upper Ten—that what would be fair cause for the expulsion of a mere plebeian may be treated more mercifully when—— Good gracious, me! Ponsonby, my dear boy, what is the matter with your face?"

Pon might have replied that his state was due to an aristocratic ebullition of animal spirits, such as Mr. Mobbs found it easy to overlook.

But Pon did not; he did not reply at all.

It was Monson who said, with coarse brevity:

"Goggs, sir."

"What? Do you mean to tell me that that objectionable youth inflicted these terrible injuries? And alone? Surely——"

"He didn't have anyone to help him that I saw, sir," said Monson stolidly.

"Dear me! I am simply astounded. But I must urge haste upon you, Ponsonby. The Head knows nothing as yet of your breaking detention. I have been searching for you in all directions, in the hope that I might get you back before he becomes aware of the offence. It will be difficult, however, to explain the state of your—er—physiognomy."

"Might say Vav did it," suggested Monson, with a grin. "Vav's in detention, too, so that will sound all right."

Rumours that Vavasour had played the informer's part were already current at Highcliffe, as Monson's speech showed.

"Er—I deprecate untruthfulness, but, in the circumstances—— Perhaps, however, it will be possible to contrive that the Head should not see Ponsonby to-night."

"If you could make it so that he didn't see Pon for a week or two, sir, it would be a bit more useful," remarked Monson, grinning again.

Both Mr. Mobbs and Pon scowled at Monson, who appeared to them to be treating a serious affair very lightly.

But Monson did not in the least believe that Pon would be expelled. He was not quick; but Mr. Mobbs' manner had conveyed to him what it had failed to convey to the much more acute mind of Pon—possibly dulled by the hammering Goggs had administered to his head.

Monson felt certain that if Pon, Vav, and Gaddy were to be sacked, Mr. Mobbs would not take so much trouble on Pon's account. It was not pure, disinterested friendship that moved the snobbish little master. He still hoped for something from Pon. But Pon's expulsion would put an end to all such hopes.

Therefore, argued Monson, the Head and Mobby had fixed it up between them, and Pon & Co. were not to be kicked out.

He was only partly right. The fate of Pon & Co. was not yet decided. But Dr. Voysey had begun to waver, and with him that usually meant giving way; while Mr. Mobbs, with unusual boldness, was working for all he was worth to save his pets from the guillotine of expulsion.

And before prep was over that evening came news which was bound to have an effect one way or the other.

It came in the shape of a telegram from Rylcombe, which told that Derwent was found and at St. Jim's, and that messengers were being sent to explain matters fully.

A similar telegram, telling of Hazel, reached Greyfriars about the same time.

There was excitement at both schools when the news was told. Time-tables were consulted, and the general opinion was that no messengers could possibly get through that night. Nevertheless, no one wanted to go to bed when the time came.

At Greyfriars the Famous Five and about a dozen others in the Remove got leave from Mr. Quelch to sit up for an hour or two.

At Highcliffe Goggs, the Caterpillar, and Tunstall sat up without asking for leave; Monson asked, and was given it readily; Courtenay asked, and got a grudging assent; Smithson & Co. asked, and received a sharp refusal.

It was Tom Merry who had suggested to Mr. Railton—Dr. Holmes chancing to be away—that messengers should be sent to explain the circumstances of the finding of the two fugitives at both Greyfriars and Highcliffe.

The Housemaster shook his head at first. He quite agreed that there would be many at both schools anxious to know more than a telegram could tell them. But it was impossible for anyone to get through that night, he said. The journey was a slow one, of the cross-country type.

But Tom pointed out that, with luck and the use of bicycles, Courtfield could be reached by an unusual route, including half an hour's hard riding between two stations on different lines. At the more easterly station an express might thus be caught.

Mr. Railton examined the evidence Tom offered, saw that the plan was possible, and sent for Kildare.

The skipper of St. Jim's was more than willing to go. The journey, with its spice of adventure and doubt, appealed to him. But Tom's face fell when he heard Kildare's assent.

"Oh, I did not mean to cut you out, Merry!" said the Housemaster. "The plan is yours, and Kildare will be glad of your company, I feel sure."

"Of course I shall, sir!" Kildare said heartily.

"Can one or two more——" began Tom.

"One more only," said Mr. Railton, smiling.

Manners or Lowther? Tom could not make the choice, so he compromised on it by asking Talbot to go. Manners and Lowther were wild, but neither quite as wild as the one left would have been had the other been taken.

"If you are hung up, you must find a lodging for the night," said Mr. Railton. "That I trust to you, Kildare. Should you get through, as I hope you may, I would prefer your asking the hospitality of Greyfriars to that of Highcliffe. The Greyfriars people are old friends of St. Jim's, and will, I am sure, readily accede."

"Right-ho, sir!" said Kildare.

The journey had its excitements. The local train was late; they had to rush their bicycles out, and ride for all they were worth through the frosty night, under the canopy of stars. Kildare, though he put in all he knew, and would have gone on without them had it been needful, found that the two athletic juniors refused to be left behind.

It was practically a dead heat to the junction, and the rumble of the express was already to be heard in the distance as they rushed their bikes on to the platform. Kildare darted for the ticket-window; Tom and Talbot got the bikes labelled and ready for the train; and they bundled in just in time.

At Courtfield they landed in a dimly-lighted station almost devoid of life, and took the road again. Farther on they parted. Kildare went straight to Greyfriars. The two Shell fellows made for Highcliffe, with instructions not to stay too long.

The gates were shut, and a sleepy porter grumbled at opening them. The quad looked empty under the stars. But as the two St. Jim's juniors moved towards the big school buildings a voice hailed them softly:

"Who goes there?"

Tom and Talbot halted.

"We're from St. Jim's, with news," said Tom.

"Good! I'm De Courcy. You'll remember me, perhaps? I know your voice, by gad! You're Merry, though I don't know who's with you."

"Of course I remember you!" answered Tom. "And you know the fellow with me—it's Talbot."

"Good, again—dashed good! Here's somebody else you know, dear boys. I have learned that he once shed the light of his countenance upon your classic precincts."

De Courcy came forward, and with him was Goggs, whom Tom and Talbot had supposed to be at Franklingham.

Then Tunstall came up, and behind him Frank Courtenay; and behind Courtenay came Smithson and Yates and Benson, who had defied the edict of Mr. Mobbs, and stayed up to await the messenger.

"We ought to go to the Head first," said Tom, after he and Talbot had greeted them all.

"The old bird can wait, dear boy," said the Caterpillar blandly. "Mobby can also wait. They're not a hundredth part as anxious about Derwent as we are. We've been hangin' around on watch, turn an' turn about, to make sure of seein' the messengers, whoever they were."

"Information at third-hand wasn't quite what we wanted," added Frank Courtenay.

"How's old Flip?" asked Tunstall anxiously.

The wire had prepared Highcliffe to hear that the fugitives had not been found in the best of cases.

"Bad," answered Tom Merry.

"You don't mean—— Oh, by gad——"

"The doctor fears pneumonia—pretty certain of it, in fact," said Tom.

"But there can't be any real danger. Old Flippy's so strong an' fit," Tunstall said, in a shaken voice.

"There's danger. But everyone hopes and trusts he'll pull through," said Talbot.

A hush fell upon those who heard. This was worse than they had imagined. Flip Derwent in danger of his life—it seemed impossible! But it could not be doubted, for all that. The tones in which the St. Jim's fellows spoke showed how serious they were.

"We'd better go to your Head," said Tom. "See you chaps again afterwards, if they'll let us."

Off to St. Jim's.

"MY hat! If it isn't Merton!" gasped Smithson.

Benson and Yates gasped, too. No one had expected Merton back so soon. Tunstall had given them to understand that it might be a week or more before he came along. That was what he himself had been led to believe.

Yates darted off to find Tunstall, which was really rather nice and thoughtful of Yates. Smithson and Benson shook hands with Merton warmly. He was somewhat surprised that their greeting should be so hearty, for in the past he and Tunstall had had little to do with their neighbours in the next study.

But during the short time which had elapsed since Tunstall's return it had become evident that henceforth he and Merton were to be counted in the Courtenay brigade, and no longer among the nuts. Goggs had had something to do with that, no doubt; but in any case the two chums would never have returned to the Ponsonby fold.

"Well, you knew I was still in the land of the livin', I suppose?" said Merton, smiling genially.

"Yes; but we didn't think you'd turn up yet, and with your eyes all right, too," replied Smithson. "I'm jolly glad, really, old chap!"

"So am I!" said Benson.

"We're all jolly glad, then!" Merton said lightly. "I assure you I didn't like the notion of bein' in the dark for the rest of my time here. They're not quite all right yet, by the way. I'm to go easy on study. Quite a change for me—what? But, doin' that, I sha'n't be in any danger. Anythin' happened since yesterday? The day before, I mean. It was then that Tun wrote."

"Lots!" said Smithson excitedly. And he proceeded to recount what had happened—how Goggs had thrashed Pon, how the message about Flip and Hazeldene had been received, and how the special messengers sent to tell the story in more detail had arrived later.

He was still talking when Tunstall and Yates came up together.

There was a veil of mist before Tunstall's eyes as he gripped his chum's hand; and Merton, because he could not speak lightly, would not speak at all. These two, who had always got along well together in a careless sort of way, had cemented a friendship now that only death could break. And it was because that friendship necessarily included Flip Derwent that both felt a strain of emotion in this meeting.

Poor old Flip, lying at St. Jim's between life and death, after many wanderings and much endurance of hard trials! The story which Tom Merry had told at Highcliffe the night before had been one long praise of Flip, Hazel, self-convicted as weak and selfish and querulous through it all, only showed up Flip in brighter colours.

(To be continued.)