

An Enthralling and Dramatic
School Story of St. Jim's

"LEVISON'S LUCK!"

By Martin
Clifford.

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MR. SELBY SEEKS TROUBLE—AND FINDS IT!

Ernest Levison poised the ink-stand menacingly. "If you lay a finger on me, sir," he said coolly, "you must take the consequences!"

(A startling incident from the grand school story of St. Jim's, inside.)

TRUTH WILL OUT!

Ernest Levison's sacrifice saves his young brother—and luck saves Ernest Levison!



LEVISON'S LUCK!

A Powerful and Dramatic Long
Complete School Story of Popular
Ernest Levison and the Chums of St.
Jim's.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Frank Levison's Triumph!

"HURRAY!"

"Hip-pip!"

"Bravo!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's. "Is this a celebration? Or have those young asses gone off their wockahs?"

Really, the St. Jim's Third seemed to be in a state of high excitement.

A crowd of that rather unruly Form had emerged from the School House. In their midst was Levison minor, borne on the shoulders of Wally of the Third and Reggie Manners.

Levison minor's face was red, and he was a little breathless. But he was grinning cheerily, evidently in the greatest of spirits.

"Hurray!" roared Wally.

"Bravo!" chortled Reggie Manners.

"Shoulder high!" shouted Wally. "Trot him round the quad!"

"There's Kildare!" said Hobbs of the Third.

"Blow Kildare! Who cares for giddy prefects? Trot him round the quad, I tell you, and all of you jolly well cheer!"

"Hurray!"

Evidently, it was a celebration. Generally the Third Form, though noisy enough in their own quarters, did not loom largely in the public eye at St. Jim's. This, plainly, was an occasion of unusual importance and enthusiasm. Fellows gathered from far and near to stare at the procession of the fags.

"What does this mean, Wally?" demanded Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "What is all this dreadful wow about?"

"Hurray!"

"What's the game?" inquired Tom Merry.

"It's not a game, fathead—it's a giddy triumph!" explained D'Arcy minor. "Join up and cheer!"

"If you have cheers, prepare to shed them now!" suggested Monty Lowther.

"But what's it all about?" demanded Manners of the Shell.

"Hurray!"

"You see——" began Wally.

"Don't stand here wagging your chin, old chap," said Manners minor. "Let's get on! March!"

"Look here, young Manners——"

"Look here, young D'Arcy——"

"Hurray!" roared the Third.

"Put me down, you fellows," said Frank Levison. "Enough's as good as a feast, you know. And Kildare's coming over here."

"Rats! Bless Kildare!"

"Forward!" shouted Wally.

Levison minor swayed forward, on the shoulders of his supporters. Round them surged the Third, waving their caps and cheering. Apparently the idea was to march Levison minor right round the big quadrangle, in full view of all St. Jim's. But Kildare of the Sixth stepped in the way, and held up a commanding hand.

"Stop!"

"Look here, Kildare——" protested Wally.

"Stop—and stop that row," said the captain of St. Jim's. "Do you young sweeps think you can turn the quad into a bear-garden. Now, what's all this uproar about?"

The procession stopped. The captain of the school was not to be argued with. Wally of the Third proceeded to explain.

"You see, Kildare, old Franky's been in a row, and he's come through all right. He was going to be bunked—weren't you, Franky?"

"Looked like it," said Levison minor, keeping his position with some difficulty on the shoulders of D'Arcy minor and Reggie Manners, and grinning cheerfully at Kildare. "But it's all serene now. My brother pulled me through all right. I knew he would."

"Your brother?" repeated Kildare, eyeing the fag curiously.

"Yes; Ernie did it."

"Last I heard of you, you were in the punishment-room, accused of having taken Mr. Selby's banknote," said the prefect.

Frank Levison crimsoned.

"That's all right now," he said. "My brother chipped in, and he satisfied the Head that I hadn't had anything to do with it."

"Has the banknote been found?"

"I don't know."

"The Head's satisfied?"

"Yes; he said so."

"Is Mr. Selby satisfied?"

"I don't know, and don't care very much," answered Frank. "I know the Head told me I was clear, and that's enough for me."

"Well, I'm jolly glad to hear it," said the captain of St. Jim's cordially.

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I nevah believed a word of it, you know. I was wight, as usual."

"Fancy my major being right for once!" exclaimed Wally. "And some ass said that the age of miracles was past."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wally——"

"I'm glad it's turned out all right for you, Levison minor," said Kildare. "Though it's jolly odd if the bank-

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note hasn't been found yet. But I suppose the Head knows. I congratulate you; but you fags can't yell in the quad. You must do your war-dance in your own quarters."

"Look here, Kildare—" began Wally warmly.

"Stop it!" said Kildare briefly. "No more row in the quad! You can kick up a shindy in your own Form-room till Mr. Selby comes to you."

"Oh, all right!" retorted Wally independently. "Keep your old quad! Back into the House, you fellows! We'll march Franky round the Form-room."

"Hurrah!"

The procession wheeled round, and Levison minor was borne up the steps of the School House on the shoulders of his chums.

"Bai Jove! I'm jollay glad to heah this, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Weally, I feel wathah inclined to'cheeah myself."

"Jolly good news for Levison of the Fourth," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Where's Levison?" asked Cardew of the Fourth, glancing round. "Levison ought to be on in this jolly old scene."

"Anybody seen Levison?" called out Clive.

"Young Frank said he chipped in with the Head," remarked Tom Merry. "Perhaps he's with the Head now. Blessed if I understand how he's squared the matter, if the banknote hasn't turned up."

"Levison is a wathah deep chap, you know," said D'Arcy. "Besides, it was all wubbish to suppose that young Fwank stole Mr. Selby's banknote."

"There was a lot of evidence—"

"In such a case, deah boy, evidence is all wubbish."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Blake.

"Anyhow, it's jolly good news," said Tom Merry.

"What-ho!"

There was no doubt that the relief and satisfaction were general, at the news that Levison minor of the Third Form had been cleared of the terrible charge made against him by his Form master.

Meanwhile, Wally & Co. were marching Frank Levison along the Form-room passage, amid thunderous cheering and vociferous yelling. It was a great occasion, and the Third let themselves go.

They arrived at the Form-room door, and Hobbs hurled it wide open. Shoulder-high, Levison minor was marched in.

"What does this mean?"

"Oh, my only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally in dismay.

Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, was in the Form-room. As he stared angrily at the fags across his desk, the yelling died suddenly away. Frank Levison came slithering down from the shoulders of his comrades, and landed on the floor with a bump.

"Ow!" roared Frank.

Mr. Selby jumped up.

"What does this uproar mean? What are you doing here, Levison minor? The Head—"

"I've seen the Head, sir!" gasped Frank. "It's all right! He knows I never touched your banknote, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"You can ask him, sir," said Frank, picking himself up and eyeing his Form master rather defiantly.

"Have you restored the banknote?" demanded Mr. Selby harshly.

"I've told you that I never even saw it."

"Levison minor!"

"You can speak to the Head, sir," said Frank.

Mr. Selby stared at him, angry and nonplussed; then he whisked out of the Form-room. Wally burst into a chuckle.

"Selby seems pleased—I don't think!" he remarked.

"Selby can go and eat coke!" said Frank.

"Let him hear us yell!" said Reggie Manners.

"Good egg!"

And the Third burst into a roar.

"Hurrah! Hip-pip! Bravo, Levison minor! Hurrah!"

And that roar rang in Mr. Selby's ears and brought an angry frown to his sour face as he hurried on to the Head's study.

CHAPTER 2.

The Empty Chair!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW looked into Study No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage.

"Oh! You're here!" he said.

Levison of the Fourth was there.

Cardew entered the study and looked at him curiously. Considering that his young brother had been cleared of a terrible charge, that the shadow of expulsion that had hung over him was lifted, Levison of the Fourth might have been expected to look merry and bright. According to Frank,

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too, it was Levison of the Fourth who had somehow worked the oracle, and cleared his brother of suspicion—an additional cause for satisfaction. Yet Ernest Levison's face was darkly clouded—there was a deep wrinkle in his brow, and he looked pale and worn.

His face cleared, however, as Cardew's eyes fixed upon him inquiringly. He smiled faintly.

"Yes, I'm here," he said. "Been looking for me?"

"Yes," said Cardew. "You've heard the jolly old glorious news, of course?"

"What news?"

Levison's face for a second brightened and was eager. He took a quick step towards Cardew.

"Has Mr. Selby's banknote been found?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Not that I know of."

Levison's face fell again.

"Oh!" he said.

"I mean about your minor," said Cardew. "The Third are kicking up no end of a shindy. It seems that young Frank is cleared, and isn't going to be sacked from the school after all."

Levison nodded.

"I know," he said, in a low voice.

"Frank says that you did it for him, somehow."

"Does he?"

"It seems a giddy mystery," said Cardew. "I'm jolly glad, of course—but if the banknote hasn't been found, I don't quite see how you did the trick. The matter seems to me to stand where it did."

"I suppose so," assented Levison.

"You had something to tell the Head about it?"

"Yes."

"Then you know who pinched Selby's banknote—if it was pinched?"

Levison's lips set a little.

"I was able to convince the Head that my brother had nothing to do with it," he said evasively.

"Any secret about how you did it?" asked Cardew, eyeing him in surprise—mingled with uneasiness, he hardly knew why.

"Oh, the whole school will know about it soon," said Levison carelessly.

"You're jolly mysterious, Levison."

Levison made no answer to that. He turned to the book-case before which he had been standing when Cardew entered. Apparently he was sorting out some of his books.

"Packin'?" asked Cardew, still more mystified.

"I'm putting some books together."

"Don't you want to see your minor—and join in the giddy rejoicin's?"

Levison shook his head.

"Well, you're a queer fish, Ernest, old bean," said Cardew.

"While Frank was under the chopper, you looked no end worried and rotten; and now he's got clear, you don't seem to care a rap."

Ernest Levison smiled faintly.

"I'm glad, of course," he said.

"I expected to see you doin' a song and dance, at least."

Levison laughed.

"Hallo, here you are!" Sidney Clive came in. "What the thump are you doing in the study, Levison? I suppose you know your minor's out of the punishment-room, and isn't going to be bunked after all."

"Yes."

"You don't look so bucked as I should have thought," said Clive, staring at him.

"Oh, I'm feeling bucked, of course."

"Well, you don't look it!" drawled Cardew. "I suppose you're one of the chaps who take their pleasures sadly. Comin' out?"

Levison hesitated a moment.

"Yes," he said.

And leaving the books on the study table, he left Study No. 9 with his chums, and they went down the staircase together.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy met them at the foot of the stairs. He beamed on Levison of the Fourth; and slapped him on the shoulder—quite an unusual demonstration on the part of the swell of St. Jim's.

"Congwattahs, deah boy!" he exclaimed.

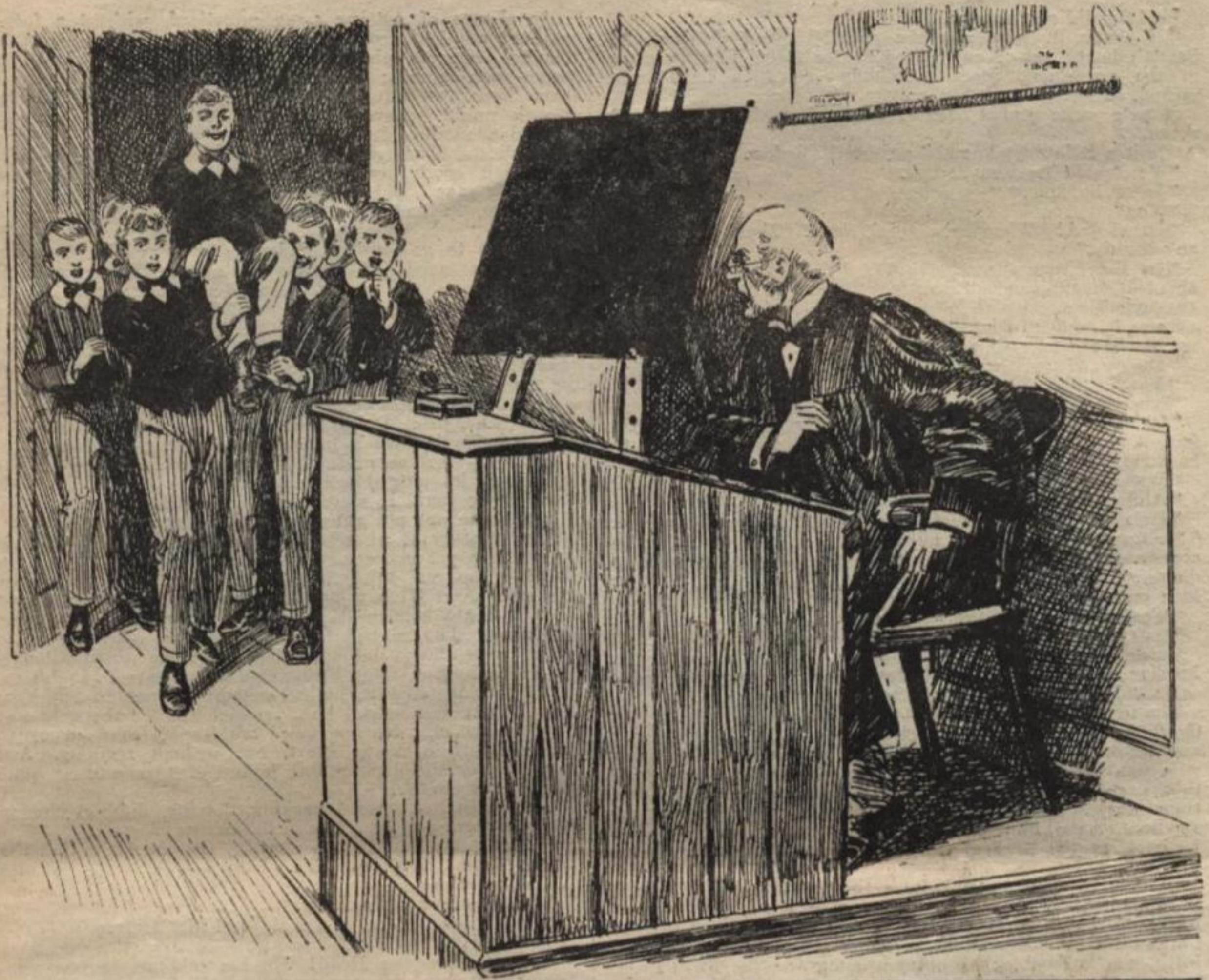
"Thanks!" said Levison.

"Weally, you know, I was quite suah that your minal was twue blue," said Arthur Augustus. "I know the evidence was that he had bagged Mr. Selby's wotten bank note; but as I remarked to Blake, evidence in such a mattah is all wubbish. I suppose you are feelin' feahfully bucked, Levison, at the affaih turnin' out like this?"

"Fearfully!" agreed Levison.

And he sauntered out of the School House with his chums. It was close on time for dinner now, and some of the fellows were coming into the House. Figgins, of the New House came sprinting across the quad as he sighted Levison from the distance.

"Jolly glad, Levison!" he said. "I've heard about it—"



Shoulder-high, Levison was marched into the Third Form-room. "What does this mean?" Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, was in the Form-room. As he stared angrily at the faces across his desk, the yelling died suddenly away. "Oh, my only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally in dismay. (See Page 4.)

that I ever believed anything about young Frank. It was too thick, you know. But I was jolly glad to hear that he was all right!"

"You're very good," said Levison.

"Feeling bucked—what?"

"Immensely!"

George Figgins glanced rather curiously after Levison of the Fourth, as he walked on with Cardew and Clive. He could not help thinking that if Ernest Levison felt immensely bucked, his looks belied him.

Levison, undoubtedly, looked worn, and in spite of his efforts to keep a smiling face, the cloud continually returned to his brow. Sidney Clive's honest face only expressed unsuspecting satisfaction; but Cardew glanced at Levison many times, with uneasiness and curiosity. It was quite plain to the observant Cardew that Levison was keeping something back; something serious—something so serious that it was like a crushing weight upon his mind and his spirits. Cardew wondered what it was with a growing uneasiness.

"Hallo, here's Racke!" said Clive.

Aubrey Racke, of the Shell, came running up. He stopped rather breathlessly before Levison & Co.

"Is it true?" he exclaimed, panting.

"Is what true?"

"About your brother, Levison—is it true that he's cleared—that he's not going to be sacked—"

"Quite!"

Racke, of the Shell, breathed deep.

"I'm glad!" he said. "We're not friends, Levison—but I'm glad—more glad than I can say! You remember, don't you, that I said all along that your brother had never touched Mr. Selby's banknote?"

"I remember," said Levison. "It was jolly decent of you, Racke. I'm sorry we haven't been better friends."

He nodded in a very friendly way to the black sheep of the Shell, and walked on. Cardew glanced very curiously

at Racke. All the St. Jim's fellows, of both Houses, had been glad to learn the good news. But really it was rather surprising to see Aubrey Racke looking so glad and relieved. He was on bad terms personally with Ernest Levison—he had never liked Frank. Yet he looked as if a weight had been taken from his mind—even Tom Merry and Gussy and Levison's own chums did not look so relieved.

Quite a number of fellows stopped Levison of the Fourth, to speak a cheery word or two, as he strolled round the quad with Clive and Cardew. Levison was not a fellow to talk much about his feelings; but everyone knew how terribly he had been hit by the accusation against his young brother. And now that the clouds had rolled by, most of the fellows were glad as much for Levison's sake as for Frank's. But most of them could not help noticing that he did not look like a fellow who had just heard the best of news.

"Look here, Levison," said Ralph Reckness Cardew, at last, "what's this game? Can't you speak out?"

"I don't quite follow."

"What are you keepin' back?"

"Keeping back!" repeated Levison.

"Is Levison keeping anything back?" asked Clive.

Cardew smiled.

"It's about as plain as the nose on his chivvy," he answered. "I can't make you out, Levison, but somehow you're makin' me feel uneasy. Can't you tell us how you squared it with the Head?"

"You'll know soon enough," answered Levison, in a low voice.

"Why can't you tell us?"

"There's a reason—you'll know soon."

"There was only one way of squarin' it with the Head," went on Cardew. "Either the missin' banknote was found—and it seems that it wasn't—or else you were able to point out the fellow who really had pinched it. Is that how it stands?"

Levison did not answer.

"If that's it, who was the chap?" asked Cardew. "I haven't heard yet of any happy victim takin' Frank's place in the punishment-room. Nobody seems to have been sacked, so far. I can't make it out."

A pale smile glided over Levison's face, but he did not speak.

"Is it a fellow we know?" persisted Cardew.

"Yes," said Levison at last.

"Is he bunked?"

"Yes."

"Great gad! When is he goin', then? There hasn't been any shindy."

"In the circumstances, the Head isn't making any fuss about it," said Levison quietly. "There isn't going to be any expulsion in style—fellows rounded up into Big Hall to witness it, and all that. Owing to the fellow having owned up, the Head is letting him clear quietly."

"He owned up?" exclaimed Clive.

"Yes."

"Then what had you to do with it?"

"Oh, I helped!" said Levison, with a strange smile. "In fact, it was I who made him realise there was nothing else to be done."

"But who's the fellow?"

"And when's he goin'?"

"He's going quietly, as I've told you," answered Levison. "No fuss—no shindy—the fellow will just drop out, and disappear. He will clear off by himself while the school is at dinner. No need for me to tell you anything—you'll know soon enough."

"That's so—there's the bell," said Cardew.

The chums of the Fourth walked back to the House.

Cardew and Clive went directly to the dining-room. Levison, as if he had forgotten something, ran up the stairs. He did not appear at the Fourth Form dining-table.

The fellows crowded in, and sat down in their places. At the Third Form table, Frank Levison's face was seen, merry and bright. Cardew glanced from table to table, wondering who was the unknown fellow whose place was to be empty that day—and to remain empty. Between him and Clive there was an empty chair; but that they were keeping for Levison of the Fourth. Levison was rather late; but Mr. Lathom, at the head of the table, made no remark on his absence.

Cardew glanced up and down the dining-hall; the Sixth were all in their places; but in any case, the culprit was not likely to be in that Form. The Fifth were all there; Cardew had wondered a little whether Gerald Cutts, of the Fifth, was in trouble; his opinion being that the Fifth Form sportsman would "come a mucker" sooner or later. But Cutts was there, cheery and debonair as usual. The Shell were there to a man—the culprit was not Racke, or Crooke, the black sheep to whom his suspicions naturally would have turned. It was borne in upon Cardew's mind that the fellow, whose name Levison knew, but had not mentioned, was in his own Form. Obviously, he was not in the cheery Third.

But the fellows in the Fourth, upon whom suspicion might have rested, were Mellish, the shady dabbler in shady pursuits, who seemed quite untroubled; Baggy Trimble, whose fat fingers it was difficult to keep from picking and stealing, was devoting his whole-hearted attention to his dinner, as usual. There was only one empty chair—Levison's.

Why did not Levison come in? Dinner was half over. It was odd that Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, did not notice his absence.

A sudden paleness came over Cardew's face.

He understood at last.

"Levison! Levison himself! Good gad!"

CHAPTER 3.

Levison Drops Out!

MR. SELBY, master of the Third, stood in the doorway of Study No. 9, and fixed a black look on Ernest Levison.

On the study table stood a pile of books, and a few other articles, which Levison had placed together. He was losing no time. He was anxious to be clear of the school before the fellows came out from dinner. That was his

only chance of getting away unnoticed, without a fuss—without inquiries from his chums; above all, without an interview from his minor. Frank would learn what had happened soon enough; but an interview with his brother would have been too bitterly painful. He almost wished that Frank would believe him guilty, rather than realise how fearful a sacrifice he had made.

Black and bitter were the thoughts of the St. Jim's junior who had coolly, calmly faced shame and ruin for his brother's sake. But he was cool and collected. What he had done, he had done, and there were no regrets in his breast.

He was to go—with a lifelong stigma on his name, but Frank was saved. His father and mother, he knew, would feel it bitterly, but less in his case than in Frank's. Neither of his parents had forgotten the time when Levison had a bad record at his school, when Mr. Levison had been warned that his elder son was on the road to expulsion. That time was past—Ernest Levison had changed, and they knew how he had changed. Nevertheless, this calamity would not be such a shock in his case as it would have been in Frank's. Even to his sister Doris, it would not be such a shock.

And he could bear it better than Frank could.

He was hard as nails. He was innocent, and he had chosen to be judged guilty to save Frank. But he could bear it—he could at least bear it better than Frank.

And hope was not quite dead in his breast.

The mystery of what had happened to Mr. Selby's banknote might yet be penetrated—the banknote itself might be found. The real thief, if thief there were, might be discovered. And if that should happen—and Levison prayed that it might happen—his name would be cleared; it would be known that he had taken this burden upon himself to save his brother; and with Frank safe, he would willingly let it be known. But Frank had to be saved. In his extremity, in his despair, he had called on Ernest to help him; and Ernest had helped him, rescued him, in the only way that was open. He had faced the terrible consequences to himself with a heavy heart, but without repining. And hope of a dawn to follow this darkest of hours had not quite died in his breast.

Busy with his hurried packing, Levison did not observe the lean form and sour face in the doorway.

It was not until Mr. Selby spoke, that he knew that the Third Form master was there.

"Levison!"

The junior turned quickly.

His pale face flushed at the sight of Mr. Selby.

"Yes, sir."

"I have seen the Head! He has told me of your confession! It was you who purloined the banknote from my study."

"If the Head has told you, sir, there is no need to question me," said Levison quietly.

"No insolence, boy—no insolence!" exclaimed the Third Form master furiously.

Levison shrugged his shoulders, and a mocking smile played over his face. He was going—the gates of St. Jim's were soon to close behind him; in a few minutes more the old school would know him no longer. Mr. Selby's wrath was a matter of very slight moment to him now.

"Have you anything to say to me, sir?" he asked. "I'm rather in a hurry."

"It was you—you!" exclaimed Mr. Selby. "You saw me slip that French banknote into the book on my table—you slipped into my study and purloined it; and when your young brother took the book away, it was no longer there—the banknote never was in Levison minor's possession. This is what you have confessed to the Head."

"Precisely."

"You young scoundrel—"

"Sorry to interrupt you, sir," said Levison. "But as I no longer belong to St. Jim's, I object to being slanged by a Form master here. Better language, please."

"What?" roared Mr. Selby.

"Better language, sir!" said Levison of the Fourth coolly.

Mr. Selby trembled with rage. For a moment or two it looked as if he would hurl himself upon the junior.

Levison eyed him coolly and disdainfully, and his hand dropped on a heavy inkstand on the table. It was very clear that he was prepared to defend himself if the Third Form master touched him. Levison, in a mood very near despair, was in no frame of mind to bear very much from the Third Form master.

Fortunately, Mr. Selby restrained himself.

"I did not come here to bandy words with you, Levison," he said, his voice shaking with rage. "You are too abandoned a young rascal for words to have any effect on you, I think."

"Why waste any, then?" said Levison coolly. "You say yourself it's a waste of time; and I certainly find it a bore."

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Mr. Lathom turned quickly, startled by the crash of his door and the white, excited face that stared in at him. "Olive what—" "Levison, sir!" panted Olive. "Has anything happened to Levison? I've heard—I mean, a fellow thinks—will you tell me, sir, if—if—if—" "Calm yourself, Olive," said the Fourth-form master gently. "Levison has confessed to the theft of Mr. Selby's banknote, and has been sent away from the school!" (See page 9.)

The Third Form master clenched his hands.

"You have confessed to the theft of the ten thousand franc note," he said, almost choking. "Before you leave the school, you must make restitution."

"I have told the Head—"

"You told the Head that you had destroyed the note," said Mr. Selby. "I do not believe that statement for one moment."

Levison laughed.

Mr. Selby was nearer the truth than he supposed. Certainly Levison never had destroyed the French banknote, which never had been in his hands. He had lied to the Head, to save his brother—to take the guilt upon his own shoulders. There had been a time when a lie would have cost Ernest Levison very little; that time was not now. Even in facing ruin and disgrace for his brother's sake, it had lain heavy on his conscience that he was deceiving the Head. But he had gone through with it. It was a falsehood; but then it was a falsehood, too, that Frank had taken the note—and one was no worse than the other. Yet it troubled Levison; it troubled him, and lingered painfully in his mind. But surely, he told himself, it was better to accuse himself falsely than to allow a false accusation to stand against his brother. Still, it troubled him.

Mr. Selby was very far from guessing the thoughts in his mind, as his next words showed.

"You did not destroy the banknote, Levison. You stole it—you kept it. Dr. Holmes believes that, in fear of discovery, you destroyed it. I do not believe so. I believe that you have hidden it somewhere; that it is your intention to take it away from the school with you. I believe that you intend to keep it and change it into English money at the first opportunity; you are well aware that it is worth more than a hundred pounds. I believe you are even willing to be expelled from the school, in order to obtain this plunder. I believe you totally disregard the stain of dishonour, and the shame and disgrace to your family, in your greed for money that is not your own."

The words came in a passionate torrent from Mr. Selby. Ernest Levison laughed again.

Mr. Selby amused him. With a despair in his heart that

was like the bitterness of death, he was not likely to be much concerned about the loss of Mr. Selby's hundred pounds. He would have given a hundred times the sum to save his name from dishonour, had it been possible. Mr. Selby's almost frantic anxiety about his money was amusing.

"You laugh—you have the impudence to laugh!" hissed Mr. Selby. "That is a confession of guilt. You have the banknote concealed about your person at this moment, I am assured of it."

"Really?" jeered Levison. There was some malicious solace in goading the angry master to fury. It was Mr. Selby, and his carelessness with the banknote, that had caused all this black trouble.

"I am assured of it!" gasped Mr. Selby. "Restore the banknote to me at once, you depraved young rascal!"

"I've nothing to add to what I told Dr. Holmes," said Levison, shrugging his shoulders.

Mr. Selby gasped.

"Listen to me, Levison! You fancy you will be able to pass that banknote—to obtain its equivalent in English money! It will prove impossible! No money-changer will take a banknote for so large an amount from a boy of your years. Besides, you must know that French banknotes are numbered, like English ones. Your detection will be certain if you attempt to pass it."

"I might get a holiday in France, and pass it there!" suggested Levison with grim humour.

Mr. Selby started almost convulsively.

"You—you—you depraved—"

"Oh, cut it out!" said Levison impatiently. "Look here. I've no more time to waste, Mr. Selby."

"You dare to speak to me in that manner—"

"Why not?" sneered Levison. "I'm not a St. Jim's fellow now; and you're no more to me than the next man in the street. When a fellow's sacked, he is at least free to say what he chooses. I intend to say what I choose, Mr. Selby, and you can like it or lump it. It serves you jolly well right to lose your ten thousand francs."

"What? What?"

"Do you think there's a single fellow in the school who doesn't know why you had it?" exclaimed Levison scornfully. "All St. Jim's knows that you've been speculating in the foreign exchanges, and burned your fingers, as you jolly well deserved."

"Levison!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"It serves you right! Speculating in exchange is first cousin to backing horses, and any St. Jim's fellow who was found out backing horses would be sacked," said Levison. "If I were headmaster, I'd sack you, Mr. Selby. Precious example to set to the school—gambling in the exchanges."

Mr. Selby glared at the junior, gasping for breath. He had heard some rather painfully plain remarks from Dr. Holmes on the subject of his hapless speculation in francs. But certainly he had not expected to be talked to like this by a junior of the Fourth Form.

He strode into the study, white with fury.

"Levison!" he said hoarsely. "You have my banknote upon you now—I am certain of it! Restore it to me, or I will search you and take it from you."

Levison laughed mockingly.

"Lay a finger on me, and take the consequences," he said coolly. He gripped the heavy inkstand, and lifted it as Mr. Selby closed in on him.

It was so plainly his intention to strike, that the Third Form master jumped back with almost ludicrous haste.

"Levison! You young ruffian—" he spluttered.

"Oh, can it!" exclaimed Levison. "I'm fed up! Leave me alone."

"Boy! I shall bring an action in the law courts against your father for the recovery of the money."

Levison started for a moment. In taking the guilt on himself, he had not considered possible consequences of that far-reaching kind. But the next moment he smiled mockingly.

"I think not, sir! I fancy the Head's pretty fed with you already; and if you dragged the name of the school through the law courts, it would be the boot for you here. Your post's worth more than a hundred pounds to you." He laughed. "That chicken won't fight, Mr. Selby."

Mr. Selby clenched his hands almost wildly. The expression on his enraged face told Levison that his shot had gone home. The Form master dared not carry out the threat he had uttered.

"Levison, for the last time——"

"For the last time, go and eat coke!" said Levison.

"What? What?"

"Get out of my study!"

It was the first time any St. Jim's fellow had talked to Mr. Selby in that fashion. But, as Levison had remarked, a fellow who had received the "sack" could say what he liked. And Levison, with nothing to fear, let himself go in addressing the master of the Third.

"Get out!" he repeated. "By gad, if you don't clear, Mr. Selby, I'll buzz this inkstand at your head!"

He swung back his arm. As a matter of fact, Levison was quite reckless now. Every minute was precious if he was to get away from the school before the fellows came out of the dining-room, and the delay was exasperating him. The fierce, almost savage, look on his face startled Mr. Selby, and rather scared him. He backed hurriedly into the passage.

"Levison, I shall go to the Head——"

"Go to Tophet, for all I care!"

Levison turned to his packing again as the hurried footsteps of the Third Form master died away down the passage. There was not a second to lose now. Dr. Holmes believed that the missing banknote had been destroyed; but Mr. Selby evidently intended to urge him to have Levison and his belongings searched before the expelled junior went. Levison had nothing to fear from a search—only the delay. He was almost feverishly anxious to be clear of St. Jim's before he was seen again by his friends and his brother.

He paused for a moment, in doubt and indecision, and then, leaving his books and other things where they were, on the study table, he hurried out of No. 9. By the time Mr. Selby reached the presence of the headmaster, Levison of the Fourth was passing out of the school gates, and leaving St. Jim's behind him—for ever!

CHAPTER 4.

The Last of Levison!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW sat at the Fourth Form table, with an almost stunned look on his face.

He had forgotten his dinner.

The empty chair by his side was eloquent. Strange as it was, amazing as it was, incredible as it was, Cardew knew now—it was Levison who was going. It was of himself he had been speaking in the quadrangle. He was not late for dinner; he was not coming in at all. Now that he knew, Cardew knew also why Mr. Lathom had not remarked on Levison's absence. Mr. Lathom, of course, knew how the

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 908.

matter stood. Now that he noticed it, Cardew could see that there was an unusually sombre shade on the brow of the Fourth Form master.

Levison!

Levison the thief! Levison the purloiner of the missing banknote! It was not true—it couldn't be true! But he had said that the fellow had confessed, and he had been speaking of himself! Confessed! Then it was true! Cardew's brain was in a whirl.

"Cardew, old man!" Clive had spoken three times and Cardew had not heard him. "Cardew, what's the row?"

"Eh? Nothin'!"

"You're not eating your dinner."

Cardew laughed.

"Jolly odd that Levison hasn't come in!" went on Clive.

"What can he be cutting tiffin for?"

"I wonder!" said Cardew.

Sidney Clive had no suspicion, so far. No one else had but least of all Frank Levison. Only in Mr. Lathom's cloudy face could Cardew read the knowledge. Cardew sat at work and thought, his brain in a whirl.

Could it be true? It must be true, if Levison had confessed as he had declared. Back into Cardew's mind came many things he had heard about Levison, the "old Levison" of the Fourth as he had been before Cardew came to St. Jim's. There had been a time when Levison had been perhaps, capable of this—or at least might reasonably have been suspected of such a thing. But—but—No, it was impossible! But if it was not true, how and why had he confessed? If he had confessed to the theft, it must be true. Cardew's dazed thoughts seemed to be revolving in a circle.

Was it true?

Even so, why had Levison confessed? No one had suspected him—no one had dreamed of suspecting him. It was believed by all that the French banknote had been in the "Holiday Annual" which Frank had raided from Mr. Selby's study, and the banknote had disappeared from the book when it was in Frank Levison's hands. No one had dreamed of connecting Levison of the Fourth with the theft, if theft it was! Why, then, had he confessed?

To save his brother! He was a thief, and vile enough, but he was a thief; but not vile enough to let his own brother suffer for his sin! That, then, was the explanation. If Frank had not been adjudged guilty, Levison of the Fourth would never have confessed to what he had done.

But Cardew's thoughts having gone so far, went further. Levison, guilty, might have confessed to save his brother; but Levison, guiltless, might have lied for the same reason. Well Cardew knew the deep attachment of Ernest Levison to his minor—well he knew that there was little or nothing a chum would not have done to help his brother out of a scrape. Was Levison fool enough—was he mad enough—to confess to what he had not done, to make so wild and unheard of sacrifice—to take upon his own shoulders the burden of another's guilt?

Was that the truth?

Sidney Clive caught Cardew by the arm. The dandy of the Fourth was still sitting plunged in a maze of conjecture, oblivious of his surroundings, when Mr. Lathom had risen, and his feet, and the Fourth were all preparing to march out.

"Cardew, old man?"

"Oh, right!"

Cardew jumped up.

"Bai Jove! Did you go to sleep ovah your dinnah, Cardew?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as the juniors went out.

"Not exactly! I was a little dazzled by your necktie, old bean. Merely that and nothin' more!" drawled Cardew.

"Weally, you ass——"

"Where's Levison?" asked Jack Blake. "Levison's cutting tiffin."

"Has he?" said Cardew.

"Didn't you notice, you ass, when he sits next to you?" said Blake. "Do you ever notice anything, you slackers?"

"Dear me! So he's cut tiffin," yawned Cardew. "Fantley. Levison cuttin' tiffin! I wonder why?"

And he lounged away with his hands in his pockets. "Wholly no one would have guessed, from Cardew's lazy, nonchalant manner, that his chum Levison was the subject of his thoughts, and that his mind was in a state of unusual stress and activity.

Sidney Clive followed Cardew into the quad, rather perplexed.

"Hadn't we better look for Levison?" he asked.

"Why?"

"Well, something must be up, surely!" said Clive. "There's jolly odd that Mr. Lathom never spoke about it. Chaps are allowed to cut tiffin."

"Not much good lookin' for him, I'm afraid," said Cardew.

"Why not?"

"Because we sha'n't find him, old bean."

Clive stared.

"Why shouldn't we find him? I suppose he's about the school somewhere?"

"I fancy not."

"Look here, Cardew, what are you driving at?" exclaimed Clive. "If this is a joke, it's too deep for me. What do you mean?"

Cardew came to a halt, and faced his chum. His face was grave now, grave and hard, and there was a glint in his eyes.

"I'll tell you what I mean. Levison's gone!"

"Gone!" repeated Clive blankly.

"Gone!" said Cardew. "He was tellin' us about it before dinner, but we didn't understand. He told us that the fellow who had confessed to the theft would be missin' from his seat at the jolly old dinner-table. Who was missin', Clive?"

Clive gave a violent start.

"Cardew, are you mad? Levison—"

Cardew nodded.

"You fool!" exclaimed Clive.

It was the first time the quiet, steady-going Clive had ever used such a word to his chum. It broke from him now savagely, angrily. Indeed, it looked for a moment as if he would have struck Cardew.

"Go it, old man," said Cardew softly. "If it's any relief to your feelin's, go it! I don't mind."

"You're mad!" said Clive hoarsely.

He turned his back on Cardew, and ran back to the House. He burst into the School House at a breathless run. Grundy of the Shell was in his way; and Grundy of the Shell was not likely to step aside for the sake of a Fourth Form fellow. On this occasion, however, George Alfred Grundy wished that he had. For a rough shove sent him spinning out of the way, and he sprawled, roaring, against the wall.

Clive, without even a look at him, dashed savagely on. His knuckles crashed on the door of Mr. Lathom's study.

He hurled the door open.

Mr. Lathom, master of the Fourth, was there, and he turned quickly, startled by the crash of his door, and the white, excited face that stared in on him.

"Clive—what—"

"Levison, sir!" panted Clive. "Has anything happened to Levison? I've heard—I mean, a fellow thinks— Will you tell me, sir, if—if—if—" Even as he was speaking, it came into Clive's mind that he believed it already; that Cardew's words had carried conviction, fiercely as he had repudiated them.

The look of commiseration on Mr. Lathom's kind face was enough to banish any doubt.

"Calm yourself, Clive," said the Fourth Form master gently. "Levison, I understand, was your friend; this will be a blow to you. But you must face the facts."

"What has happened, sir?" asked Clive huskily.

"Levison has confessed to the theft of Mr. Selby's bank-note, and has been sent away from the school," answered Mr. Lathom.

"Confessed?"

"Yes."

"It's impossible, sir—it's impossible! He never did it, so how could he have confessed?" panted Clive.

"He confessed to Dr. Holmes, Clive."

"Then he was forced—he was threatened— He couldn't

have—"
"He confessed entirely of his own accord, Clive; he was not even questioned," said Mr. Lathom quietly. "Calm yourself, my boy. This has been a very great shock to me;



BAGLEY TRIMBLE.

Dwells and has his being in Study No. 2 in the Fourth Form, together with Mellish and Kit Wildrake, the Canadian. Known throughout St. Jim's as "Baggy." Like his weight—his appetite is enormous. He is always ready to eat. Called "the Paul Pry of St. Jim's," because his ear can always be found close to the key-hole of some other fellow's study. Has no close chums at St. Jim's, even the sneaks refusing to tolerate him. Like Billy Bunter of Greyfriars his one ambition seems to be raiding other people's studies. Has a minor in the Second Form, a chip of the old block, although perhaps not quite so greedy—well, he's smaller, isn't he!

I had great faith in Levison, and great hopes for him. But the facts must be faced; and the school is well rid of him, I am sorry to say."

"Has he gone, sir?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" muttered Clive.

He left Mr. Lathom's study, his mind in a whirl. He went unsteadily down the corridor, and his white face drew glances on him on all sides. Grundy of the Shell bore down on him.

Tom Merry was near at hand, and he was looking at Clive, startled by the expression on his face. Tom caught Grundy by the shoulder, and unceremoniously shoved him away.

"Chuck that!" he said curtly. "Clive, what's the matter? What's the row, old man?"

Clive looked at him; he did not even notice the wrathful Grundy.

"Levison!" he muttered. "He's sacked—he's gone!"

"Levison—sacked!"

It was a general exclamation of amazement. A dozen fellows heard Sidney Clive's words.

"Sacked?" repeated Tom.

"Levison—why?"

"They say he bagged that confounded banknote—that he confessed to it! It's all rot—only he confessed!" groaned Clive. "And he's gone—gone already!"

"Impossible!"

"Great Scott!"

Clive went blindly out into the sunny quadrangle, and joined Cardew. In a few minutes the news was all over the House; soon afterwards, all over the school. Levison of the Fourth was expelled—Levison of the Fourth was gone! To all the St. Jim's fellows it came as amazing tidings; and to Levison minor of the Third it came as a thunderclap.

CHAPTER 5.

The Burden of Guilt!

"SACKED!"

Aubrey Racke of the Shell repeated the word, with a white face.

Crooke nodded and laughed.

Crooke of the Shell was strolling cheerfully under the elms, when he came on his study-mate, Racke. For some days past Racke had rather avoided the company of his usual associate; in the study, Crooke found him surly and unsocial, and out of the study Racke generally "mooched" away somewhere by himself. If there was something on Racke's mind, Crooke did not guess it. He thought he knew the reason of Aubrey's sulkiness, as he called it. Aubrey was "up against it" in money matters; he had had an awful bad run of luck on his favourite "geegees"; he owed money to Mr. Lodgey at the Green Man, and Lodgey was dunning him for it; and Crooke was unable, or professed to be unable, to lend him anything.

In these circumstances, Gerald Crooke was not surprised to find Racke sulky and stand-offish.

He expected him to remain so until his money troubles were over. Sooner or later, no doubt, there would be another generous remittance from Sir Jonas Racke, that distinguished war-profiteer who was rolling in wealth, and who generally allowed his hopeful son much more money than was good for him.

In the meantime, Crooke did not "see" standing Racke a big loan, which might or might not be repaid. He preferred to endure the stand-offishness of his pal during the lean period.

Coming on Racke now, Crooke smiled as he noted the clouded face of the blackguard of the Shell.

From Aubrey's looks, Crooke judged that the money trouble was not yet over. Sir Jonas, liberal as he was to the heir of his war-profits, had "kicked" of late under Aubrey's extensive demands, and declined to shell out to the extent required. And Racke looked as if his urgent letters home had not yet elicited the required answer.

Crooke would have walked on without speaking to his sulky chum, but he could not resist imparting the latest exciting item of news. The expulsion of Levison of the Fourth rather amused Crooke.

In the days when Levison had been a black sheep, little better than Racke or Crooke, he had escaped the chopper. Reformed, and on very distant terms with his former associates, Levison had got it "in the neck." It really seemed as if his luck, once regarded as phenomenal, had deserted him when he had deserted his old paths.

It quite entertained Crooke. He stopped to relate it to Racke as a screaming joke. If anything could cheer up old Aubrey—short of a loan—this ought to do it, Crooke considered.

He was startled by the effect of his communication.

Racke stared at him blankly, with a face like chalk, and almost a wild look in his eyes.

"Sacked!" he repeated. "Sacked! What do you mean, you dummy?"

"Just what I say—sacked for stealing old Selby's banknote," chuckled Crooke. "Levison's rather turned up his nose at us since he turned pi. But we haven't quite come down to stealing banknotes—what? Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke laughed, too; a bitter, hard, sardonic laugh that rang strangely.

"What silly fool has accused Levison of it, then?" he asked. "A few hours ago it was Levison minor."

"Well, it looked a cert for that fag," said Crooke. "Lucky for him it's come out that it was his brother all the time."

"What fool has accused him?"

"Himself."

"What?"

"He's confessed."

"Rot!"

"My dear man, it's official," said Crooke, staring in wonder at Aubrey Racke's excited face. "Any of the fellows will tell you. It's all over the school; you'd have heard it already if you hadn't been sulking here by yourself. I'm rather sorry for that kid Frank Levison; he looks like a ghost! Can't say I'm sorry Levison is gone, though. Are you?"

"What utter rot!" repeated Racke. "How could Levison confess, when he didn't touch the rotten banknote and never even saw it?"

Crooke laughed.

"Well, he says he did, and he ought to know," he answered. "He confessed to the Head, and it seems that he owned up to having burned the banknote when he was afraid of being spotted. Old Selby didn't believe that bit; a dozen fellows have heard him say that he believes that Levison has taken the giddy banknote away with him."

Again Racke laughed, that strange jarring laugh.

"The old scout is in no end of a bait," grinned Crooke. "It seems that he went to the Head, to demand that Levison should be searched before he left—and while he was putting it to the Old Man, Levison cleared out of the school. It was arranged, I hear, for him to go while the fellows were at dinner—perhaps he thought it would be a painful parting—ha, ha!"

"He's gone!"

"Oh, yes! Looks as if there might be something in what old Selby thinks—his clearing off like that looks as if he might have the giddy banknote in his clobber. What do you think, Aubrey?"

"You fool!"

"Thanks!" said Crooke dryly.

"The fools! The fools! The fools!" repeated Racke, with bitter emphasis. "Levison never did it—he never knew anything about it."

"Wanderin' in your mind?" asked Crooke pleasantly. "Is it so nice to be sacked, that Levison would claim to have done it, if he hadn't?"

"I suppose he thinks his brother had the banknote," muttered Racke. "That must be it."

Crooke stared.

"What? Do you think he'd own up to it if he hadn't done it?"

"I shouldn't have thought so—shouldn't have dreamed of it—but I know he did," snarled Racke. "He's a fool to do it, but that's what he's done! He's taken it off his brother and taken it on himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Crooke.

Racke gave him a fierce glare.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 908.

"What are you cackling at, you rotter?"

"Ha, ha! That's too rich!" chuckled Crooke. "I can see any fellow doing it—I don't think! I don't fancy I'd let myself be sacked from the school, to save all my giddy relations to the third and fourth generation! Would you, old scout?"

"I wouldn't, and you wouldn't; and Levison's a madman to do it," muttered Racke. "But that's what he's done."

"Tell that story in the Common-room, if you want to raise a laugh," said Crooke humorously. "It will set the House in a roar, believe me."

Racke leaned against the trunk of an elm. His face was pale, tortured in its expression.

"It won't do!" he muttered. "There's a limit—it won't do! I can't—I can't—I can't let this go on!"

"What the thump does it matter to you?" asked Crooke, really wondering a little whether his late money troubles had preyed on Aubrey's mind to the extent of upsetting his mental system a little. "You don't like Levison?"

"I know that."

"He turned you down, same as he did me, when he turned pi. Now he's turned out a thief, I can't say I've got any sympathy to waste on him. I can stand high-faluting from a fellow like Tom Merry—he'd cut his hand off rather than steal. But pi-jaw from a sneaking thief—pah!"

"Levison's not a thief."

"You ass, he's confessed that he is."

"He isn't, you fool! He's done this mad trick to save his brother."

Crooke laughed again.

But his laugh died away as he stared at Racke's tormented face. There was something in Racke's look that startled him.

"Racke!" he muttered.

He watched Racke's face as if fascinated.

"Good heavens, Racke! You—you know something about it? You ass, don't let the other fellows hear you talk like this! Good heavens! I remember now—Levison minor bumped into you when he was scudding away with the book that was supposed to have the banknote in it. He dropped the book. I remember Levison asking you if you'd seen anything of the banknote that time. Racke, you awful rotter!"

Racke's lips twisted in a bitter smile. He had given himself away to his shady associate pretty completely. But he had nothing to dread from Crooke; the two young rascals knew too many of one another's blackguardly secrets to fear one another's tongues. If it came to expulsion for Aubrey Racke, he knew enough about Crooke to assure the sack for that youth, too, if he chose. Crooke had penetrated his secret; but it was still a safe secret.

Racke did not care. Indeed, he was almost relieved to have a partner in guilt—an accessory after the fact, as it were.

He grinned with sardonic mockery at Crooke's scared face. Crooke was looking absolutely frightened. He knew now and he wished from the bottom of his heart that he knew nothing.

"You rotter!" he repeated. "You awful rotter!"

"Do you believe now that Levison did it?" sneered Racke.

"You!" breathed Crooke. "Good heavens! You—you beast! You can't let it go on—you can't! There's a limit. Why, you awful villain, Levison's branded for life as a thief if this goes on! There's a limit, Racke, even for you! I don't like the chap, but—but—good heavens, there's a limit!"

"Do you think I haven't done all I could?" muttered Racke. "I've stood up for Levison minor when he was accused. I—"

"What's the good of that? You've got to give it back," said Crooke. "Are you mad? I'm not a particular chap—might have done the same thing if I'd had my back to the wall. But not to this extent—not like this! I think I never be able to sleep quietly again if I'd got a chap expelled as a thief for something I'd done—a chap who, afterwards, has never done us any harm. If I hated the fellow, wouldn't do it. You can't let it go on, Racke! I can't let you, now I know. My hat! If you don't shell out Selby's banknote, I'll go to the Housemaster about it."

"Go!" sneered Racke. "I'll come with you! I'll tell him a few things, and we'll walk out of St. Jim's together."

Gerald Crooke's face blanched.

"You know I won't give you away," he breathed. "But—but it can't go on, Racke! Haven't you got a ragged conscience?"

"You fool!" muttered Racke. "I've done all I can. If I had the rotten thing in my hands, I'd shell it out for you—enough."

"You've parted with it?"

"You know I owe Lodgery money, and he's been threatening me. I never dreamed there would be all this fuss—never crossed my mind that a fellow would be accused of this!"



"Look here, Racke," said Crooke anxiously, "you can't let Levison suffer like this. If you don't shell out Selby's bank-note, I'll go to the Housemaster about it." "Go!" sneered Racke. "I'll come with you. I'll tell him a few things—and we'll walk out of St. Jim's together!" Gerald Crooke's face blanched. "You know I won't give you away," he breathed. "But it can't go on, Racke. Haven't you got a rag of conscience?" (See page 10.)

hadn't touched the thing. I got out of bounds the same night and posted it to Lodgey at the Green Man."

"You can get it back! Go to Lodgey, and tell him it was a stolen note—tell him the number's going to be advertised—he'll part with it fast enough then. He goes too jolly close to the edge of the law to want any trouble with the police."

"I've tried, you ass. But Lodgey's gone to Lincoln for the races, and his letters have been sent after him. I've been to the place and asked."

"Good heavens!" muttered Crooke blankly. "Then the banknote's gone, and can't be recovered?"

"That's it."

"And—and Levison—"

"He's gone, too," said Racke bitterly. "You say you wouldn't be able to sleep at night after such a thing. Do I look as if I'd been sleeping soundly?"

"Something's got to be done," said Crooke.

"I know."

"You can't let it go on."

"I know."

"Then what are you going to do?"

"I don't know—only I jolly well know I'm not going to follow Levison's example. I'm not going to be sacked," said Aubrey Racke, savagely.

"I can't keep this dark. How can I keep a thing like this dark?" muttered Crooke with dry lips. "Why, it's a crime!"

"Please yourself! If I go, you go with me!"

"Oh, you rotter!" breathed Crooke.

He turned his back on Racke, and walked away. From the bottom of his heart he wished that he had not stopped for that chat with Aubrey under the old elms. Racke gave him a scornful glance as he went. He knew that Crooke would be silent, for his own sake. In that direction he feared nothing; it was his own torturing conscience that he feared. He could not let this go on—blackguard, unscrupulous rascal, thief, as he was, he could not sink to this last and vilest depth—he could not. But what was he to do?

CHAPTER 6.

A Crushing Blow!

"FRANKY, old man!"

"Buck up, kid!"

Wally of the Third and Reggie Manners were worried and distressed.

Frank's white, horrified face almost frightened them. After the rejoicing that had followed the clearing of Levison minor, the sudden news of his major's fate had come on the fag as an overwhelming calamity.

Ernest gone—without a word of farewell even! Ernest sacked from St. Jim's! Ernest branded as a thief! It was too terrible to believe! For some minutes, indeed, Frank did not believe it. He was too stunned to get it fairly into his mind. When conviction forced itself upon him at last, it overwhelmed him.

His comrades of the Third tried to comfort him. Poor Frank was far beyond the reach of comfort.

"Keep your pecker up, kid," said D'Arcy minor. "You see, he had to own up, or you'd have got it in the neck."

"It's pretty awful, what he's done, but it was decent of him to own up and let you out, Frank," said Manners minor.

"You fools!" muttered Frank. "He never did it!"

"Oh, come off, you know!" said Wally. "He's confessed. It's all over the school that he's confessed."

"I know that! He's done it to get me off," said Frank brokenly. "He never did it! I know he never did!"

"Put it out of your head, kid," said Wally. "It's hard cheese, but it's no good thinking about it. Fellows in the Third won't think any the worse of you for what your brother's done."

"If they do, we'll jolly well punch them!" said Reggie Manners.

Frank laughed, a ghastly laugh.

"What do I care about the Third? What do I care about the whole school? I'm thinking of my brother!"

"That's all very well," said Reggie, rather nettled. "But

I can jolly well tell you that it's a bit thick, and it's rather decent of fellows to overlook what your brother's done."

"My brother's done nothing!"

"Oh, rot! You know what he's done—what he's owned up to!" said Manners minor angrily.

Frank looked at Reggie, and he looked at Wally. It was useless to quarrel with his friends; neither could he reasonably blame them for taking Levison of the Fourth at his word. He turned and walked away, with bowed head and aching heart.

"Franky!" called out Wally.

Levison minor did not heed.

"Franky!"

The unhappy fag walked on without turning his head. Reggie Manners gave a sniff.

"Sulky!" he commented.

"Well, of course he feels awfully cut up," said Wally considerably. "We'd feel pretty bad if our majors made a bad break like that, young Manners."

"My major wouldn't," said Reggie, with another sniff.

"Well, mine wouldn't, either. But Levison of the Fourth was always a bit of a doubtful card," said D'Arcy minor. "Better give old Franky time to pull round. We don't want a row with the chap. Leave him to himself for a bit. I say, I've got a bob! Let's have some ginger-pop!"

"Let's!" agreed Manners minor.

And they did.

Frank Levison walked dazedly across the quad. All the happiness he had felt that morning was gone now. His brother had saved him—but at what a cost! That Ernest really was guilty he did not and could not believe. His brother had made this sacrifice to save him. A thousand times rather he would have submitted to expulsion, to anything. But he had not known. He had never suspected! Was it too late?

Tom Merry dropped a kind hand on his shoulder.

"Buck up, kid! It's frightful hard cheese! But do your best to buck up, young 'un!" he said.

Frank looked at him.

"Do you believe that—about Ernest?" he asked, in a choking voice.

Tom looked puzzled, as well he might.

"I believe what he says himself," he answered. "What do you mean, Frank?"

"It's not true! Ernie never did it!"

"Poor old kid!" said Tom, with deep compassion. "He's confessed, you know."

"He did that for me!"

"For you?" repeated Tom.

"To get me clear! Can't you see?"

Tom Merry stared at the fag.

"What do you mean, Frank? That you did it, and your brother has taken it on himself? Rot!"

"No, no!" muttered Frank. "I never did! But Ernest has said that he did it to save me! Can't you see? They believed I had done it, and so—"

"Then who did it?" said Tom.

"I don't know! How could I know?"

"Poor kid!" said Tom softly.

"You believe it's true that—that Ernie—" Frank's voice broke.

"Poor old kid!" That was all Tom could say. Frank Levison looked at him almost wildly, but he choked back angry and bitter words that rose to his lips. What could he expect Tom to believe, when there was Ernest Levison's own confession known to all the school?

"I'm going to the Head!" he muttered.

"What's the good, kid?" said Tom kindly. "Your brother has confessed. Anything you say will make no difference!"

"I'm going to try!" said Frank desperately.

He went into the School House.

"Sowwy, old kid!" It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Fwightfully sowwy, old man! I nevah would have believed it of your majah!"

Frank went on without answering. It was useless to argue with all the fellows, one after another. And he had to see the Head.

He knocked at the door of Dr. Holmes' study. The Head was there, and his deep voice bade the fag enter.

A look of compassion came over his kind old face at the sight of Levison minor.

"Ah! It is you, Levison minor!" he said. "You did not see your brother before he left, I think?"

"No, sir," whispered Frank.

"It was better for him to go quietly and unnoticed," said the Head. "He requested it himself, and I willingly acceded. You must think very badly of him now, I know; but remember that he confessed his guilt in time to save you from an unjust condemnation. That is at least a point in the favour of the unhappy boy."

Frank looked at him. The Head was speaking kindly. He intended to be kind. It was borne in upon Frank's mind how

hopeless it was to attempt to remove from the headmaster's mind the fixed belief in the guilt of the self-accused junior.

But he would try. He would leave no stone unturned. He gasped a little as he spoke.

"Dr. Holmes, it's not true! Ernest never touched Mr. Selby's hateful banknote! He never did!"

"He told me so with his own lips, Levison minor."

"It wasn't true, sir! He did that for me—to save me!"

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, sir, if you knew Ernie as I know him, you'd know he—"

"Come—come, my boy," said the Head a little severely, but not unkindly. "I quite understand your grief and your concern for your brother, but you must not expect me to listen to this. You may go."

"Oh, sir—"

"There is nothing further to be said. Leave my study, my boy," said the Head.

Levison minor dragged himself from the room. It was useless. He had known, at the bottom of his heart, how futile it was. There was nothing he could say that would weigh against Ernest Levison's self-accusation. Levison of the Fourth had sacrificed himself to save his brother, and his brother was helpless to prevent the sacrifice, and he would have died to prevent it.

In the Third Form room that afternoon Frank Levison sat silent, still, with a stunned look on his face. He was hardly conscious of what went on around him. And even Mr. Selby, after a look at the haggard, tormented face, let the boy alone.

CHAPTER 7.

A Job For Cardew!

"TOO late!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew whistled.

He stood on the platform at Rylcombe railway-station, with his hands in his pockets, his manner nonchalant, as usual. Nonchalant as he looked, Cardew had lost no time in getting to Rylcombe, after Clive had brought him the definite news that Levison of the Fourth was gone.

But he was too late.

Levison had desired to avoid meeting any of his friends before he left; and he had been successful. At the railway-station, Cardew had learned easily enough that a St. Jim's junior had arrived there and taken a ticket, and had gone on the platform. In the faint hope that Levison might still be lingering there, Cardew had gone in and explored the platform from end to end. But there was nothing to be seen of Ernest Levison; evidently he had taken the first train that had left.

"Too late!"

Cardew strolled back to the platform exit. In the station vestibule Sidney Clive was waiting for him.

"Gone!" said Cardew lightly. "Let's get back."

They walked away down the village street, Clive with a darkly clouded face, Cardew looking very thoughtful.

"It's all up, then," said Clive, at last, as they turned out of the village street into the lane and came in sight of the Green Man, that shady resort where Racke of the Shell was accustomed to meeting his sporting friends. Once it had been a resort, too, of Levison of the Fourth, in the days when he had been the "hard case" of St. Jim's—days of which one of his chums, at least, preferred not to think.

"Not quite, perhaps," said Cardew. "It's all gammon, you know! Old Ernest never handled Selby's silly banknote, I know that."

"You really think—"

"I think he's a howling ass, and he's done this to get his dashed minor clear," said Cardew. "Confound his minor! If the young rascal had Selby's banknote he ought to be sacked."

"Levison believed in him."

"Yes; I suppose that's why he's done this. Or perhaps he knows the young sweep had it, and has done this all the same. You never know what a fellow like Levison may do," said Cardew moodily. "But if he was right, and Frank was innocent, the banknote may turn up yet, and that will let Levison out."

Clive shook his head dismally. He had little hope that the missing banknote would ever be heard of again at St. Jim's.

"You never know!" said Cardew. "The rotten thing may only be lost; I know it's unlikely, but there's a chance. Looks to me that that's all we've got to hope for, if we want to see Levison again! He might as well have gone on playing the giddy ox, if he was goin' to wind up like this." Cardew glanced at the shabby green shutters of the inn they were passing, and smiled rather bitterly and cynically. "Levison used to hang about that show before I came to the school. He might as well have kept it up; he



There was a rush of fellows to greet Levison of the Fourth. "Here he is!" "Levison!" "Welcome back, dear boy!" shouted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Hurrah!" Ernest Levison walked into the School House in front of the headmaster. His face was smiling. His minor rushed up to him, while the swarm of St. Jim's fellows cheered. (See page 18.)

couldn't have got more than the chopper. Might as well have the game as the name."

"Oh, rubbish!" said Clive.

"Look at Racke," growled Cardew. "We all know the kind of goat Racke is; and he's not sacked. Too jolly careful. Little me, too; I've kicked over the traces a little at times, and they haven't bunked me from the school. Now Levison plays the quixotic ass like this, and goes out on his neck! It isn't fair, by gad!"

Mr. Joliffe, the landlord of the Green Man, was standing in his doorway, and he looked at the two juniors as they were passing. He made a sign to Cardew that was unseen by Clive.

Cardew frowned and walked on. On his days of recklessness, Cardew had dropped into that shady resort, sometimes in company with Racke or Crooke or Mellish. He knew Mr. Joliffe well enough; but he had no desire to acknowledge the acquaintance while in Clive's company.

But the Green Man landlord seemed to want to speak to him, for as Cardew walked on, Mr. Joliffe came out of the inn and crossed quickly the patch of scrubby grass in front of the Green Man.

Clive observed him then, and looked a little dark.

"That man's going to speak to you, Cardew," he said.

"He isn't!" snapped Cardew, and he walked on more quickly.

But Mr. Joliffe hurried, too.

Cardew set his lips.

"Cut on, Clive; I'd better see what the man wants. It's barely possible that Levison may have left some message."

"Not with him," grunted Clive.

"Well, he seems very keen; I'd better speak to him."

Clive nodded and frowned, and walked on, leaving Cardew waiting for Mr. Joliffe to come up. Cardew stepped through a gap in the hedge of the field adjoining the Green

Man; he had no mind to be seen speaking to Mr. Joliffe by any chance passer-by. He was a little puzzled by the fat, bleary man's evident anxiety to speak; his acquaintance with Mr. Joliffe was of the most casual kind, and they had no business in common.

"Skuse-me, sir," said Mr. Joliffe, as he joined the dandy of the Fourth. "I was jest wondering how to get this 'ere letter sent on when I spotted you on the road."

"A letter!" repeated Cardew.

"For Master Racke."

"I'm not a postman!" said Cardew politely. "You'd better drop it into a letter-box, Mr. Joliffe. So-long."

"'Old on, sir," said Mr. Joliffe. "This 'ere is serious, sir. You're a friend of young Racke's—leastways, you've come 'ere with him sometimes. It won't 'urt you to 'and him this letter from Bill Lodgey."

Cardew made a gesture of angry repugnance.

This was one of the penalties for his reckless folly in mixing, sometimes, in questionable company. Certainly he had no desire to act as a go-between on the business of Aubrey Racke with Bill Lodgey, the bookmaker and billiards-sharper.

But it was difficult to refuse. Mr. Joliffe fumbled in a greasy pocket and extracted a letter. Cardew understood very well that such a letter could not be sent in the post to St. Jim's. Letters there were subject to inspection, and a communication from Bill Lodgey would have caused rather a commotion, had it come to the knowledge of Racke's Form master or the Head. Cardew grinned at the idea of the Head's face, if he chanced upon a letter from a bookmaker addressed to a fellow in the Shell.

"I wouldn't 'ave troubled you, sir," said Mr. Joliffe, apologetically. "But this 'ere is important, I reckon. Young Racke comes along to me yesterday, asking arter a letter

(Continued on page 16.)



LEVISON'S "LUCK!"

(Continued from
page 13.)

he's wrote to Bill Lodgey, and wanted back, he did—only you see, Lodgey being away at Lincoln races, I'd sent his letters on to him. That's 'ow it was."

Cardew shrugged his shoulders irritably. He was not in the slightest degree interested in Racke's shady transactions with Bill Lodgey.

"This 'ere, I reckon, is a answer to young Racke's letter," went on Mr. Lodgey. "It's marked 'Urgent; deliver immediately.' It was put in a letter from Bill to me personal, you see, and Bill, he leaves it to me to get it into Master Racke's 'ands as quick as may be. You see, sir? Otherwise I wouldn't 'ave spoke to you while you was with a friend."

Mr. Joliffe was being very civil and apologetic. Cardew nodded impatiently. He understood that the letter was important, from the point of view of Racke and his dingy associates; and that Mr. Joliffe had been rather perplexed how to get it to Racke, at St. Jim's, combining speed with safety.

"You catches on, sir?" said Mr. Joliffe. "That's 'ow it is! Lodgey trusts me to get this 'ere letter delivered sharp, and when I see you—"

"Yes, yes," said Cardew. "Hand it over; I'll see that Racke has it this afternoon. If he's backed a winner, he shall have the jolly tidings as soon as I see him."

Mr. Joliffe grinned.

"Thank you, sir; but I rather reckon it's something more serious than that. Master Racke, he was upset about that letter of his'n, I know. Well, 'ere you are, sir, and thank you agin."

And Mr. Joliffe touched his greasy hat and went; and Cardew, thrusting the letter into his pocket, hurried after Clive.

The South African junior asked him no questions when Cardew rejoined him. There were some of Ralph Reckness Cardew's manners and customs to which his chums closed their eyes.

"It's all serene, Clive," said Cardew lightly. "Only a jolly old note for Racke. Fellow must be obligin'."

Clive nodded, and they walked on to St. Jim's. It was near time for class when they came in; and Clive went in with some of the Fourth Form fellows. Cardew, anxious to get rid of the letter, looked about for Racke of the Shell. He found Gerald Crooke loafing about the Shell passage with his hands in his pockets and a black look on his face.

"Where's Racke?" asked Cardew.

Crooke scowled savagely.

"I don't know, and don't care," he answered. "How should I know?"

"Well, he's your jolly old pal, and you generally know," said Cardew, rather surprised by the Shell fellow's savage look.

"The less I see of him, the better I like it!" growled Crooke, and he went into his study and slammed the door.

Cardew shrugged his shoulders. Apparently there was trouble between the two black sheep of the Shell.

The Terrible Three were talking at the door of their study; from the overcast expressions on their faces, Cardew guessed that they were discussing the disaster that had so suddenly finished the career of Ernest Levison at St. Jim's. He called to them.

"Seen Racke?"

"Racke?" said Tom. "Yes, I saw him loafing under the elms a little while ago."

"Thanks?"

Cardew left the School House again, and looked round in the quadrangle for Aubrey Racke. Most of the fellows were going in now, and there was not much more time to find Racke before class. But Cardew did not want that rather dangerous letter in his pocket all the afternoon.

He found Racke at last, just as the bell was ringing for class. Aubrey Racke was standing under the trees, leaning on the trunk of an elm, his hands thrust deep into his

pockets, and a blacker look on his brow than Cardew had ever seen there before.

He scowled at Cardew as the Fourth Former came up. In his present frame of mind, tormented between conscience and fear, Racke was in a mood to scowl at anyone and everyone.

"You're lookin' jolly!" said Cardew pleasantly.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Dear man! Catch!"

Cardew tossed the letter to the Shell fellow.

Racke missed the catch, and it fell at his feet. He stared at it, and stared at Cardew.

"What's that? What do you mean?" he snarled.

"Jolly old Joliffe stopped me, to hand that giddy epistle over," explained Cardew. "It's from your estimable friend Lodgey, I understand. I hope you've been backin' winners, dear man, though, by gad, you look as if your horse had come in about eleventh!"

And Cardew walked away towards the House, just in time to dodge into the Fourth Form room for class. Racke had pounced on the letter with a cry; he tore it open, and he, at least, was not thinking of class. The bell ceased to ring. The St. Jim's fellows were all in their Form-rooms; but in the Shell room, Mr. Linton missed Racke from his place. Aubrey Racke had forgotten the existence of Mr. Linton.

CHAPTER 8.

Light at Last

"O H, gad!"

Racke scarcely breathed.

Heedless of anything else, heedless even of the possibility that eyes might have fallen on him, he tore open the letter from Bill Lodgey, and stared at the contents.

He was almost giddy with a revulsion of feeling.

For as he opened the dirty sheet of paper that was folded in the envelope, he saw an engraved slip of paper—a banknote. It was a French banknote for ten thousand francs.

It was the banknote which Racke had picked up in the corridor, when it had fallen from the "Holiday Annual" dropped by Levison minor! It was Mr. Selby's banknote, which Racke, in his desperation for money, had kept when he had found it, and posted the same night to Bill Lodgey, without giving himself time to think clearly of what he was doing.

Racke had hardly realised, at the time, that he was a thief in taking the banknote. The sharper's threats had scared him—he had failed to obtain money from his father; and somehow or other the fact the banknote was a foreign one, and that he had picked it up and had not actually taken it from the owner, had helped to blind him to what he was doing. And he had never even dreamed that anyone would be accused of the theft of the note. Since the accusation had been made, Racke had attempted to get the note back; but Bill Lodgey's absence had baffled him. And now—

Now it was in his hands!

It seemed almost miraculous to Aubrey Racke. He would have given anything in his power to recover that note, and undo the terrible mischief he had wrought. He had been prepared to quarrel with Lodgey—to threaten him that he would make known the fact that he had received a stolen note, if he did not return it. He had been prepared to take risks—risks that were serious enough to a fellow in his position. But Lodgey's absence had rendered him helpless.

And now—there was the stolen note in his fingers. He almost wondered whether he was dreaming. He turned to the dirty, misspelt scrawl in Bill Lodgey's handwriting, for an explanation.

"Dear old pal," it began. Mr. Lodgey was too cautious to use names. It would not have suited his book for his wealthy young friend, Aubrey Racke, to be found out and kicked out of St. Jim's. Such a mischance would have meant a heavy loss to Mr. Lodgey.

"Dear old pal,—I got your letter wich was sent on by J. I fair jumped when I saw what was in it. Now you look 'ere, sir. I want my money, as I've told you sevrul times, and I've told you there will be trouble if things ain't settled; but don't you play the goat. What was in your letter never belonged to you, and it ain't any good telling me it was yourn. You put it back where you found it, before there's a row. You take my tip, sir, and do it instanter. I can tell you I don't want you to change out of your school into a blinking reformatory, and I ain't thinkin', at present, of going to chokey as a receiver.

"Don't you be a fool, old covey! You put it back where you found it, and save us both trouble.—Yours,

"BILL."

Aubrey Racke read that letter through twice, and crumpled it in his hand. In his relief he could have laughed.

The caution habitual to the swindler had saved him. Very probably Bill Lodgey would have had no objection to getting rid of the stolen banknote, had he been assured that it was absolutely safe to do so. But clearly he looked on it as a wild and reckless action of a scared schoolboy, pretty certain to be followed by a searching inquiry and inevitable exposure.

Probably it had given Mr. Lodgey a twinge to part with a banknote worth more than a hundred pounds. But sharper and swindler as he was, he had no mind to face a prosecution as a receiver of stolen goods.

Had the affair come to light, Racke certainly would have suffered; but Mr. Lodgey would have been booked for penal servitude. That was not good enough for Mr. Lodgey.

The bell for class had long ceased to ring; but Racke had forgotten class. His relief grew and intensified every moment.

He realised, too, that his reckless action had startled Mr. Lodgey, and that the sharper, comprehending now the junior's desperate frame of mind, would not venture to press him so hard for his debt. Even on that point there was relief for him.

Racke fumbled in his pocket at last, and drew out a match-box. Keeping in the cover of the trees, he struck a match, and lighted Mr. Lodgey's letter at the corner. He held it while it burned, till only a fragment remained, and that he ground under his boot.

The banknote he slipped into his pocket.

He remembered class now. But he dared not go to the Form-room with the banknote in his possession.

Had some accident brought it to light, the result would have been inevitable; he would have been adjudged the thief—as, in fact, he was; and he would have taken Ernest Levison's place as an outcast from the school.

The banknote had to be restored—restored in some way that would conceal Racke's connection with the matter, burying it in deep oblivion.

Long Racke stood under the elms, thinking it out.

He moved off to the School House at last, his mind made up.

All the fellows were in the Form-rooms; there was no eye on Racke as he slipped quietly along the corridors.

He tapped softly at the door of the Head's study. He knew that the Head would be with the Sixth; but he was cautious. Some excuse could be made, if Dr. Holmes chanced to be in the study. But the Head was not there; and Racke entered the room quietly.

He laid the French banknote on the headmaster's writing-table, and placed a paper-weight on the corner of it.

There, it could not fail to meet Dr. Holmes' eyes when he came to the room.

Racke tiptoed out of the study.

The Bank of France note was there, to be found by the

headmaster, with no clue to the individual who had placed it there.

Any fellow might have dodged into the study while the Head was at lunch, or afterwards. What the Head would think, when he found the banknote, was a matter of indifference to Racke, so long as he did not think of Racke!

Doubtless it would be supposed that, after all, Mr. Selby's banknote had been taken by some practical joker with a grudge against the master of the Third; and there were many fellows, that was certain, with grudges against the sour and unpopular Form master. Or it might be supposed that the note had been stolen, and that the thief had become scared and given it up.

Racke did not care; all he cared for was to get rid of the banknote, and undo the fearful wrong he had done.

He tiptoed away from the study.

A few minutes more, and he entered the Shell Form-room. Mr. Linton gave him a very severe look.

"Racke, you are a quarter of an hour late."

"I'm sorry, sir," said Racke meekly. "I didn't hear the bell, and—"

"You will take two hundred lines, Racke!"

"Very well, sir."

Aubrey Racke went to his place, almost smiling. Two hundred lines, or two thousand for that matter, did not weigh very much then. Some of the Shell fellows noticed that Racke looked very cheerful for a fellow who had just been "lined" by his Form master. They little dreamed of the crushing weight that had been lifted from the mind of the black sheep of the Shell.

CHAPTER 9.

Welcome to Levison!

"AMAZIN'!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth pronounced that it was amazin'; and all the St. Jim's fellows agreed that it was amazing.

The news spread through the school after class that day; by tea-time all St. Jim's knew that Mr. Selby's banknote had been found; it was the one topic in all the studies.

And it was the Head who had found it; and, most amazing of all, he had found it on the table in his study, where, evidently, it had been placed intentionally for him to find.

Who had done it? Why had he done it? What did it all mean, anyhow?

Those questions were asked up and down St. Jim's; and nobody was able to find a satisfactory answer.

"It was a practical joke on Selby, all along!" Tom Merry declared. "Some silly ass bagged the banknote to frighten him, and meant all along to hand it back."


"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

(Continued on next page.)

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"The silly owl might have handed it back sooner," said Manners.

"Yaas! Was it you, Lowthah?"

"What?" yelled Monty Lowther.

"Well, you are a pwaetical jokin' ass, you know."

"You silly owl!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"You frabjous ass!"

"I wefuse to continue this discussion if you are goin' to indulge in wemarks of absolute wudeness, Lowthah."

Tom Merry laughed.

"It was some silly ass," he said.

"Yaas; that's why it occurred to me that it might be Lowthah— Yawwooh!" Arthur Augustus fled before the lunges of a fives bat.

To Study No. 9 the news brought relief and happiness. Sidney Clive's face was beaming; even the nonchalant Cardew allowed himself to look pleased and satisfied.

"But it's all gammon about a giddy practical joke," Cardew remarked. "That banknote was pinched, Clive; and the thief got scared and coughed it up again, what?"

"Well, I'd rather not think so," said Clive. "Anyhow, this clears Levison."

"Yes, rather!"

There was unending discussion on the subject. Every fellow had an opinion to offer; though in the circumstances no opinion could be verified. Racke of the Shell opined, in the junior Common-room, that it was a practical joke of some fag of the Third, and that opinion found favour; though it was listened to by Crooke with quite an extraordinary expression on his face. But Gerald Crooke kept his own counsel.

Anyhow, whatsoever the explanation might be, the banknote was there; and it was handed back to Mr. Selby, causing him to be in almost a good temper for the rest of the day. And all the school knew that Levison major's "confession" was what the juniors called "spoo" and "gammon." It was clear to all now that Levison had taken it upon himself to save his brother, and that both of them were innocent.

What the Head thought, when it became clear to him that the junior whom he had condemned had been guilty, not of a theft, but of an heroic act of self-sacrifice, the St. Jim's fellows did not know.

The Head could not blame himself for the condemnation. He had had no choice but to act on Levison's confession.

The Head was seen to leave the school after tea; and the rumour spread that he had gone in person—his own majestic person—to fetch Levison of the Fourth back.

Rumour, for once, proved to be well-founded.

That evening the news spread through the studies that Levison of the Fourth was back at St. Jim's; that he had come back with the Head. There was a rush of the fellows to greet him.

"Here he is!"

"Levison!"

"Welcome back, deah boy!" shouted Arthur Augustus.

"Hurray!"

Levison of the Fourth walked into the School House in front of the headmaster. His face was smiling. Frank rushed up to him. Wally of the Third and Reggie Manners yelled, and the swarm of St. Jim's fellows cheered; for once in the presence of their headmaster the fellows let themselves go, and the old House rang. And the Head smiled benignantly.

It was a tremendous ovation. And it was some time before Cardew and Clive could get Levison away, and march him off to Study No. 9 in the Fourth; and Frank went with him. In the study, Levison sat down in the old armchair and looked round him, and his face twitched a little. He had never expected to see that study again.

"You ass!" said Cardew.

"You brick!" said Clive.

"Oh, Ernie!" said Frank, almost in tears of happiness.

Racke of the Shell looked in.

"Congratters!" he said, with a curious look at Ernest Levison; and he walked away before the reinstated junior could reply.

"The whole giddy show's rejoicin'," said Cardew. "Even Racke's pleased; and I believe even old Selby isn't so venomous as usual. All the same, Levison, you're an ass—a prize ass!"

"Thanks!" said Levison, laughing. "What about supper?"

It was a joyful supper in Study No. 9 that night, and the sounds of merriment rang throughout the whole length of the corridor.

THE END.

(But still the mystery of Mr. Selby's banknote remained unsolved. Who was the culprit? Be sure you read next week's topping tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "D'ARCY THE DETECTIVE!" By Martin Clifford.

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SUCCESS AT LAST!

Percy was a bad shot, but he was very persistent, and decided that he would not give up his efforts until he had landed a bird. Day by day, he went out after partridges and pheasants, and day by day he came back with an empty bag. One memorable morning he returned early, beaming with joy. "Well, have you bagged something at last?" he was asked. "Yes, a pheasant and a rabbit, and both with one shot." "Nonsense!" "It's quite true," said the sportsman. "After I had shot the pheasant, I was so surprised that I sat down flat on the rabbit!"—A Tuck Hamper has been awarded to Eric Cross, 21, Bronson Road, Raynes Park, S.W. 20.

THE BETTER WAY!

The haughty damsel had been handed back her telegraph form with a stamp. "Must I stick it on myself?" she asked. "Not necessarily," said the pert young clerk. "If you stick it on the telegraph-form it will do!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Amor, 20, Fallow Court Avenue, near Finchley, N. 12.

IT "WOOD" NOT DO!

Scout Jones: "What we want is a wooden partition between us and the next patrol." Scout Bonds: "Well, Tom, if we put our heads together, we may manage it!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Maurice Smith, 21, Harle Street, Bow, E.3.

DRAW IT MILD!

P.-c. Crump: "Hi, don't you know that boys mustn't smoke under sixteen?" Cheeky Young Rip: "That's all right, officer; I'm half-way through my seventeenth already!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Hodge, 142 Rommany Road, West Norwood, London, S.E. 27.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE!

Mistress (to new maid): "You don't know what the geyser is? I thought my late maid explained to you your duties before she left." Well-meaning maid: "Well, mum, she said somethin' about the old geyser wanted polisin' up, but I thought as 'ow she was speakin' disrespectful to you-m!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Phyllis Wain, 30, Harley Road, Newtown, Great Yarmouth.

A BUSINESS PROPOSITION!

"But," said the customer, "surely you don't really sell these watches at five shillings each?" "Oh, yes, madam." "But they must cost that to make." "They do, madam." "Then how do you make your profit?" "Repairing them, madam!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to...

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