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Clifford.

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D'ARCY - THE - DETECTIVE!

A Magnificent Long Complete School Story of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and the Chums of St. Jim's.

By

Martin Clifford.

CHAPTER I. Six for Trimble

"OH!" Crash!
Mr. Railton, Housemaster of the School House at St. Jim's, fairly jumped.

He had opened his study door and stepped out, just in time to see Levison of the Fourth smite Baggy Trimble with a terrific smite. Baggy spun along, roaring, and collapsed at the Housemaster's feet.

He sprawled there and roared.
Mr. Railton stopped just in time; he very nearly trod upon Trimble.

"Oh!" roared Baggy. "Ow! Wow! Whoop!"
"Levison!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.
"Oh! Ow—wow!"
"Silence, Trimble—"
"Ow! I'm hurt! I'm injured!" roared Baggy. "Ow—wow!"

Levison's brow was dark with anger, and his eyes were glinting. He was following up the sprawling Baggy, apparently with the intention of inflicting still further damages upon that hapless youth; but he stopped at the sight of the Housemaster.

His cheeks flushed a deep red.
"Levison!" Mr. Railton's voice was deep with wrath.
"How dare you? How dare you strike another boy in such a manner, and in your Housemaster's presence?"

"I—I didn't see you, sir—" stammered Levison. "I didn't know—"

Undoubtedly Ernest Levison was deeply exasperated; but certainly he would not have smitten Baggy Trimble just then, had he known that Mr. Railton was about to step out of his study. Nevertheless he had smitten him hard, right under the Housemaster's eyes.

"Trimble!"
"Yaroooh!"
"Get up at once, Trimble!"
"Ow! I'm hurt! I can't get up!" howled Trimble.
From Baggy's point of view, it was fortunate that Mr. Railton had stepped on the scene. And the fat Baggy obviously intended to make the most of his injuries such as they were.

"Nonsense, Trimble! Rise at once!" rapped out the Housemaster.

"Ow! I can't! I—I'm stunned!" gasped Trimble.
"What?"
"I—I mean, fractured—"

Mr. Railton stooped, grasped Baggy Trimble by the collar, and lifted him to his feet. Injured as he was, Baggy found that he could stand. The look in Mr. Railton's eye warned him that he had better not pile it on too thick.

"Now, Levison, come into my study! You also, Trimble!"

Mr. Railton stepped back into his study, and the two Fourth-Formers followed him in.

Baggy Trimble gave Levison a malicious grin. He had had a terrific snack; but his impression was that Ernest Levison was going to get something a good deal more painful.

Mr. Railton picked up his cane.
Levison's face set doggedly. He fully expected a licking, after what had happened; and he was prepared to endure it with the cool hardihood that was a part of his nature.

"Now, Levison," said Mr. Railton sternly, "you will explain your conduct. I saw you strike Trimble in a way I can only describe as savage—a boy who is not physically your equal."

"He asked for it," muttered Levison.
"If you mean that Trimble provoked you, I am willing to hear what the provocation was; though nothing can excuse such a savage outbreak of temper," said the Housemaster.

Levison was silent.

"What have you to say, Levison?"

Levison's flush deepened.

"Nothing, sir."

"You have no excuse to offer?"

"No, sir."

"In that case, Levison, I shall punish you with the greatest severity," said Mr. Railton.

"Very well, sir," said Ernest Levison quietly.

There was a sound of whispering from the corridor, where several juniors had been witnesses of the scene. A voice, which could only have been that of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form, floated into the study.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Keep off the grass, you ass!"

"I wufuse to be called an ass, Blake. And I feel bound to chip in, heah."

"Look here, Gussy—"

"Weally, Hewwis—"

"Shurrup, you ass!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"I tell you—"

"Wats! I'm goin' in!"

There was a tap at the half-open door of the Housemaster's study, and the aristocratic face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked in.

"Pwax excuse me, Mr. Waitton—"

Mr. Railton fixed a severe look upon the swell of St. Jim's.

"D'Arcy—"

"Pwax excuse my buttin' in, sir," said Arthur Augustus.

"But I feel bound to mention to you, sir, that Trimble asked

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for it. Had he made the same remarks about my minah, I should have given him a fearful thwashin'."

"Get out, you ass!" whispered Levison.

D'Arcy looked at him.

"Weally, Levison—"

"Don't butt in!"

"I regard you as an ass, Levison," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "Mr. Wailton only desighs to set justice done, and in the circus—"

"Perfectly correct," said Mr. Railton. "You may leave my study, D'Arcy."

"Certainly, sir!" Arthur Augustus backed into the corridor again.

"Now, Levison, it appears from what D'Arcy says, that you struck Trimble for making some remark about your brother, Levison minor of the Third Form."

Levison set his lips. Evidently he did not desire to repeat to the Housemaster what Baggy Trimble had said; and did not feel in the least grateful to Arthur Augustus for having "buted" in.

Mr. Railton gazed at him, perplexed, and then turned his inquiring gaze upon the fat Baggy.

"Trimble, what did you say regarding Levison minor?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Trimble promptly.

"Kindly tell me the truth, Trimble, if you are capable of it!" exclaimed Mr. Railton sharply. "Now then, sir, at once!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Baggy. "I—I said—I only said—quite a harmless remark, sir! I—I suppose I can make a harmless remark about a fag of the Third if I like."

"What was the remark?"

"I—I forget, sir."

Mr. Railton made a motion with the cane. "I—I mean, I remember, sir!" exclaimed Baggy in a great hurry. "I only happened to remark, sir, that—that it was lucky for Levison that his minor had given up the banknote he bagged from Mr. Selby, sir—"

"What?"

Levison's face was burning. "I assure you, sir, that that was all!" exclaimed Trimble. "I was really congratulating Levison, sir. You see, sir, he was supposed to have bagged that banknote, and if it hadn't been found, where would he be now? I think it was jolly lucky for him that his minor decided not to keep it after all, and put it on the Head's table, sir—very lucky indeed—and— Here, you keep off, Levison!" yelled Trimble.

Levison had clenched his hands and made a step towards the fat junior, as if he would knock him down again, even in the Housemaster's study.

"Levison!"

The Fourth-Former stopped. "So that was what you said, Trimble?"

"Yes, sir; only that. And then that beast, Levison, hit out—when I was really congratulating him, sir—"

"You are aware, Trimble, that Levison minor has been adjudged by the headmaster quite innocent of any knowledge of Mr. Selby's banknote, which was, fortunately, found after all."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Trimble: "I know it was put on the table in the Head's study, and Dr. Holmes found it there, sir. Nobody knows who put it there, and the Head thinks it was only taken as a practical joke, sir."

"And you do not think so, Trimble?"

Trimble grinned. "Well, sir, lots of the fellows think that the thief got frightened when Levison was kicked out, and put it where it could be found. Of course, it was Levison minor all the time."

"That is a very uncharitable opinion to hold of another St. Jim's boy, Trimble."

"Well, sir, a fellow has a right to his opinion," said Trimble.

"Quite so; but no one has a right to state such opinions in public," said Mr. Railton. "You have in effect slandered a boy in a lower Form, who I am convinced is as honourable and stainless as any boy in the school. So that was why you struck Trimble, Levison?"

"Yes, sir," muttered Ernest Levison.

"And why did you not tell me so?"

Levison was silent.

"He didn't want you to know what the fellows think, sir," said Trimble, with a fat grin. "He doesn't like his precious minor being talked about. I dare say he's afraid the Head might take the matter up again if he knew what a lot the fellows are saying."

"Silence, Trimble! Levison, you had great provocation, but you should not have acted as you did. You will take two hundred lines, Levison. You may go."

"Very well, sir," Levison of the Fourth left the study.

"As for you, Trimble, you have uttered what amounts to a slander upon a perfectly upright and honourable lad," said Mr. Railton. "You must learn, Trimble, not to give

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expression to such opinions, if you are uncharitable enough to hold them. You will bend over that chair, Trimble!"

"But, sir—" stutered Baggy.

"At once, Trimble!"

"Oh, lor!"

Whack whack, whack! Whack, whack, whack!

It was "six"—and a rather severe six. The roaring of Baggy Trimble was like unto the roaring of the celebrated Bull of Bashan.

"Now you may go, Trimble."

"Yooop!"

"I trust that this will be a lesson to you."

"Yow ow-ow-ow!"

Trimble limped from the study. He blinked dolefully at the juniors in the corridor.

"Jevver hear of anything like this?" he moaned. "Call this justice? First that beast smacks a fellow's face, and then a fellow gets six—all for nothing! I've a jolly good mind to write to my father to take me away from this school."

"Good man! I'll lend you a stamp!" said Blake.

"Bai Jove! I'll stand your fare home, Twimble!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Yah!," grunted Trimble. And he called dolorously away, utterly unsympathised with in his uncommon wrongs and grievances.

CHAPTER 2.

Up to Gussy!

"I WEGARD this as wotten!" It was tea-time, and Study No. 6, in the Fourth, were at tea.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was wearing an expression of deep thought. Apparently his aristocratic brain was going at full pressure.

Blake and Herries and Dig did not, however, notice it specially. They had come in hungry after cricket practice, and their attention was devoted to refreshment liquid and solid.

"Wotten!" repeated D'Arcy, with emphasis. He paused over his tea, and pointed his remark, as it were, with his eggspoon.

Blake looked up.

"Rotten!" he repeated.

"Yaas, wath up!"

"Rats!" said Blake warmly.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Mine's all right, ar'how," said Blake, "and they're all the same lot."

"Eh?"

"Anything the matter with yours, Dig?"

"No; mine's all right."

"Yours, Herries!"

"Right as rain."

"Then yours is all right, too, Gussy," said Blake decidedly. "Tuck into it and don't grouse."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stared across the table at his chum, in a state of bewilderment.

"Will you tell me what you are talkin' about, Blake?" he inquired. "It weally sounds to me as if you are wandewin' in your mind."

"Didn't you say it was rotten?"

"Yaas."

"Well, it isn't."

"Weally, Blake—"

Jack Blake reached across and took D'Arcy's eggspoon. He sniffed thereat, and passed it back.

"You're dreaming!" he said. "It's absolutely new-laid!"

"You uttah ass!"

"There's an utter ass here," agreed Blake. "But his name's Gussy! Haven't you a nose?"

"Yaas, you dawlah!"

"Well, then, if you've a nose, use it and you'll see that that egg is one of the best."

"You fwabjous ass. I was not speakin' about the egg!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus heatedly. "I did not mean that the egg was wotten, you uttah duffah!"

"Well, that was what you said," remarked Blake. "Of course, a chap who knows you doesn't expect you to mean what you say, or even to mean anything at all."

"I was speakin' of Levison minor."

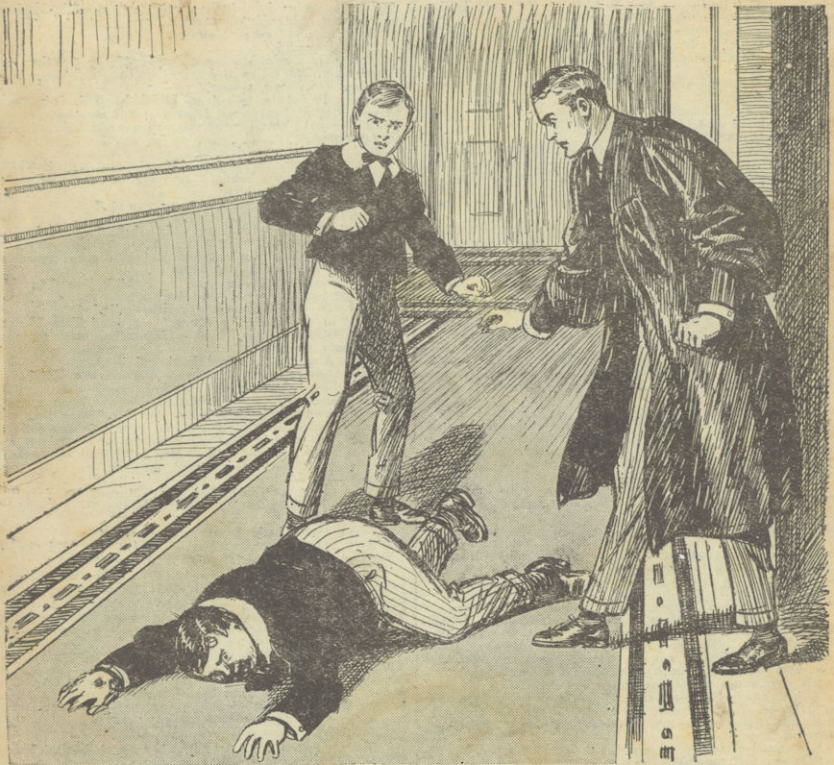
"Blow Levison minor! We have enough trouble in the study with your own minor. Levison can look after his minor himself. Besides, what is there rotten about Levison minor? He's a good little chap."

"You misunderstand me, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus. "I meant that I regard it as wotten—"

"Which? The egg or Levison minor?"

"Neither, you chump! I mean the whole circumstances of the case," said Arthur Augustus. "And I regard it as bein' up to me to set matters right."

"What matters?"



Crash! Mr. Railton opened his study door and stepped out,—just in time to see Levison of the Fourth smite Baggy Trimble with a terrific smite. Baggy spun along, roaring, and collapsed at the Housemaster's feet. "Oh!" he roared. "Ow! Wow! Whooop!" "Levison!" exclaimed Mr. Railton wrathfully. (See page 3.)

"About Levison minor. That feahful cad Trimble was sayin' some beastly wotten things about him, and Levison major smacked his howdid face, which served him wight. But as a mattah of fact, you know, that will only make him say it all the more."

"Well, Levison major can smack his face again, I suppose," remarked Herries.

"Yaas, but—"

"The more Trimble's smacked the better it is for him," said Digby. "Let's look for him after tea, and kick him."

"Good!" agreed Blake. "It's whole days since I've kicked Trimble. I dare say that's why he's getting his ears up."

"Yaas, kickin' Trimble is a wathah good ideah; but that won't make mattahs wight, you know."

"It will make Trimble black—in fact, black and blue!" said Blake. "Isn't that as good as making matters white?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! I said wight, not white, as you know vevy well. The fact is, Levison minor is undah a cloud," said D'Arcy. "Owin' to that beastly mysterioes affaih of Mr. Selby's banknote there is still suspision abwoad."

"Well, suspicions abwoad won't hurt anybody," said Blake. Foreigners are a suspicious lot, anyway."

"I do not mean abwoad in that sense, you ass!"

"You don't mean it in any sense, old chap! You haven't any sense," said Blake gently. "Pass the jam."

"There is still suspision abwoad on the subject of Mr. Selby's wotten banknote," said Arthur Augustus. "Trimble is a disgustin' cad and a footlin' ass—but othah fellows have the same opinion. Lots of the fellows, I feah, are not satis-

fied on the subject. My minor had a swollen nose this mornin'."

"If he'd had a swollen head it might only have been a family resemblance to his major. Sure it was his nose?"

"Ass! I asked young Wally what was the mattah with his nose, and it seems that he has been fightin' Piggott of the Third. Piggott had been sayin' somethin' about young Fwank Levison."

"Gussy, old man—"

"Pway let me finish, Blake!"

"Pass the jam before you finish, old man. I want it for tea, not for supper."

Herries and Dig chuckled, and Arthur Augustus drew a deep breath as he passed the jam.

"Thanks!" said Blake affably. "Now, about the cricket on—"

"Never mind the cricket now, Blake! I was speakin' about this affaih of Levison minor. My idea is that it ought to be investigated, and that the mystery ought to be brought to light. You see, somebody did bag that banknote, because it was bagged."

"Did you work that out in your head?" asked Blake, in great admiration. "How do you do these things, Gussy?"

"Wats! As it turns out, the banknote was placed in the Head's studay, to be found there by the silly practical jokah who bagged it. That was all vevy well; it cleahed the Levisons. But fellows are sayin' that young Fwank had it all the time, and coughed it up to save his bwotiah from bein' expelled as a thief."

"Blessed if it doesn't look a bit like it!" said Blake. "Only, knowing the chap as we do, there's nothing in it."

"Yaas, wathah. But othah fellows do not know him so well as we do. It is a fact that Levison minor is wathah undah a cloud. Smackin' Twimble and punchin' Piggott will not alah facts. My ideah is that that unknown practical jokah ought to be shown up, so as to cleah up the mattah entiahly."

"Good!" said Blake.

"You agree with me, deah boy?"

"I was speaking of the jam."

"You uttah ass! Now, I have decided to take the mattah up," said Arthur Augustus. "You fellows will admit that what is weiqah in this mattah is a fellow of tact and judgment—a bwainy chap, you know."

"Very likely," agreed Blake. "Not much good your touching it, though, in that case."

"Wats! Bein' a fellow of tact and judgment, and wathah keen and observant, you know—there is nothin' to grin at that I can see—I am goin' to take up the mattah and wowry out the facts. I have often thought that I have some of the natural gifts of a detective—keenness, you know, and a vawy observant eye, and so on—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And to come to the point—"

"Oh! You're coming to a point?" asked Blake in surprise.

"Yaas, you ass! To come to the point, I am goin' to act as a detective in this mysterious affiah, and elucidate the twuth, like Fewwahs Locke or Sherlock Holmes, you know."

"Great pip!"

"I may weiqah assistance," went on Arthur Augustus. "Of course, it is not likely that your fellows will be able to advise me—you have hardly the bwains for that. But you may be of some use—like Dr. Watson to Sherlock Holmes, you know, or Jack Dwake to Fewwahs Locke. Are you goin' to back me up and follow my lead?"

"It hasn't occurred to you that I have more brains in my little finger than you have in your silly head?" inquired Blake.

"Weally, Blake—"

"Still, we'll do our bit," said Blake. "If you're going to start as a detective it ought to be entertaining. We'll stand round and watch you instead of reading this week's 'St. Jim's News.' It will be just as funny, and cheaper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus. "When are you going to begin?" inquired Blake. "And how? Sherlock Holmes generally finds a clue in the cigarette-ash, I believe, and then Dr. Watson says 'Marvelvellous!' You'd better ask the Head whether he found any cigarette ash along with the banknote on his study-table?"

"If you cannot be serious, Blake—"

"Sober as a judge, old man. We know our parts already," said Blake. "We have to say 'Marvelvellous!' at the right moment. Of course, you must let us know the right moment."

"Tip us the wink, you know," said Dig.

"Or whistle," suggested Herries.

Arthur Augustus jammed his celebrated eyeglass into his eye and surveyed his chums with deep scorn. He rose from the tea-table.

"I am losin' time discussin' the mattah with you young asses!" he said.

"Losing time?" said Blake. "That doesn't matter—you can find it again, with your wonderful gifts as a detective."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus walked out of Study No. 6, and the door of that apartment closed behind him with a bang.

Blake chuckled.

"Dear old Gussy!" he said. "Dear old ass! Fancy us sitting round like three Dr. Watsons, saying 'Marvelvellous!' while old Gussy plays Sherlock Holmes. I can see us doing it, I don't think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, what about some cricket?"

"Cricket!" said Herries and Dig with one voice.

And the chums of Study No. 6 strolled down to Little Side, grinning over Gussy's new stunt and cheerfully leaving him to it.

CHAPTER 3.

Own Up!

LOOKIN' for you, deah boys!"

"Here we are, old pippin!" said Tom Merry cheerily.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were coming away from the cricket field. The Terrible Three of the Shelf looked very ruddy and cheery as they strolled towards their House in the setting sun. They stopped, as THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 909.

Arthur Augustus joined them with an unusually serious expression on his noble countenance.

"Anythin' up?" asked Manners.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Tell your Uncle Montague!" said Monty Lowther encouragingly. "We like nice little boys to tell us their little troubles. Go ahead, Gussy!"

"Pway do not be foolwallow, Lowthah. This is a vewy serious mattah!" explained D'Arcy. "It may lead to a lickin' for you. But I trust you will not mind that, in the circumstances."

Monty Lowther stared.

"Well, I can't imagine any giddy circumstances in which I should not mind a lickin'," he remarked. "Who's going to hand it out, and why?"

"The Head, I suppose, when you own up."

"Own up!" repeated Lowther.

"Yaas. In the circumstances, Lowthah, I considah that you ought to own up," said Arthur Augustus impressively. Lowther stared at him, and then he looked at his comrades and tapped his forehead significantly.

"Poor old Gussy!" he said. "I think I've seen this coming on for some time. Sad, isn't it?"

"Awful!" said Manners sympathetically.

"Runs in the family, perhaps," suggested Tom Merry. "Poor old Gussy! But I believe they make lunatic asylums very comfy nowadays."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard and deep.

"Pway listen to me, Lowthah! Fellows are sayin' unpleasant things about young Fwank Levison, on account of that affiah of Mr. Selby's banknote havin' been mimin' for a time. Pway you know that Mr. Selby had put it inside a book in his study, and young Fwank waded the book, not knowin' that the note was in it; it was his own 'Holiday Annual,' which Mr. Selby had confiscated. Well, the banknote disappeared, as you probably wemembah—"

"What about it?" said Tom. "It's turned up since."

"The giddy practical joker put it in the Head's study," said Manners.

"Yaas; but nobody knows who it was."

"Well, nobody wants to know," said Tom. "I'd almost forgotten about it. What does it matter?"

"It mattahs a lot, deah boy. Levison minor was accused of stealin' that banknote, and then Levison major owned up to stealin' it, to save him from bein' sacked. I do not approve of a fellow tellin' woppahs, even for a good object; still, it was vewy self-sacrificin' of Levison of the Fourth. He had to leave St. Jim's for that; and then the banknote was found by the Head, and Dr. Holmes fetched him back. The Head's belief is that some silly practical jokah was japin' Mr. Selby about his silly banknote, and let it be found when he saw what harm he had done. But some fellows are sayin' that Levison minor had it all the time, and only produced it to save his bwathah."

Tom Merry's brow darkened.

"That's a rotten thing for anybody to say," he exclaimed. "The Head's satisfied that it was only a jape on old Selby, and so is the Housemaster, so is everybody. Both the Levisons are quite clear of it."

"Yaas, but fellows are sayin' these wotten things, all the same. So my ideah is that the practical jokah ought to be found. He ought to own up in public, and clear up the mattah."

"Not a bad idea," agreed Tom. "But whoever it was will get a lickin' for playing the goat. Still, he ought to own up, if some cads are keeping it up about young Frank."

"Yaas, wathah! It's up to you, Lowthah."

"Eh?"

"You are a practical jokin' ass," said Arthur Augustus. "You are always playin' wotten practical jokes on fellows. You put Smith minah's white wabbit into my Sunday toppah once."

"You silly ass—"

"It's quite clear to me, Lowthah, that you are the chap," said Arthur Augustus sternly. "I have been lookin' into the mattah, and I am satisfied on that point."

"You burbling chump!" roared Monty Lowther.

"Pway do not wear at me, Lowthah! I dislike bein' wored at."

"You footlin' ass—"

"Oppwobvious epithets do not alah facts, Lowthah. I am prepared to state the clues."

"The what?" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"The clues, deah boy, that have led to this discovery. In the first place, the banknote was dropped somewah in the School House. So it must have been picked up by a School House chap. Lowthah is a School House chap."

"So are you, you footlin' chump!" hooted Lowther.

"That remark is quite beside the point, Lowthah. In the second place, the twick was played by a silly practical jokah. Lowthah is well known to be a silly practical jokah."



In the strong grasp of the three Shell fellows, Baggy Trimble had no choice about marching. He panted up the stairs he had descended so hurriedly. On the landing he halted, facing the stern eyes of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The swell of St. Jim's pointed an accusing finger at him. "Trimble!" he said. "You are guilty!" (See page 12.)

"Lowthor wouldn't play tricks with money, you ass," said Manners.

"My opinion is that a silly ass who would play twicks with a fellow's Sunday toppah would play twicks with anything," answered Arthur Augustus. "In the third place I—"

Apparently Arthur Augustus had further "clues" to the identity of the unknown person who had played tricks with Mr. Selby's banknote. But he was not given time to state them.

Monty Lowthor rushed at him, in a state of wrath and excitement which the amateur detective of St. Jim's did not seem to be expecting.

The next moment the Shell fellow and the Fourth-Former were waltzing—or looked, at least, as if they were.

"Bai Jove! You utrah ass, you wumplin' my collah!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You are disawwangin' my tie! I—you—awoooooh!"

Bump!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat heavily on the ground. He sat there and gasped for breath, in a state of bewilderment.

"Now, you footling chump!" yelled Lowthor. "You silly, frabjous ass, you burbling jabberwock—"

"Gwooooh!"

"I never knew anything about Selby's banknote, and never played any tricks with it, you burbling bandersnatch. Bump him!"

"Good egg!"

"Bump some sense into him!" hooted Lowthor. Bump! Bump! Bump!

Thrice the swell of the Fourth smote the hard, unsympathetic ground, in the grasp of the Terrible Three. There was a terrific yell from Arthur Augustus each time he smote.

"Yawwooh!" gasped Lowthor.

"There!" Gwooooh! I will give all you fellows a feahful thwashin'— Gwooooh! Ooooooh!"

A final smite squashed Arthur Augustus' hat on his noble head. Then the chums of the Shell walked on, leaving him gasping for breath and struggling with his hat, and disappeared into the School House. Arthur Augustus struggled dazedly to his feet.

"The feahful wuffians! Gwooooh! Fancy fellows cuttin' up wusty like that—gwooooh!—for nothin'. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Racke and Crooke, of the Shell, came sauntering by, and they stopped to stare at Arthur Augustus, with a howl of laughter. Certainly the Swell of St. Jim's did not look his usual natty and elegant self. At that moment no one would have taken him for the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the Lower School at St. Jim's.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Aubrey Racke. "Is that Gussy?"

"Gwooooh!"

"Have you been under the lawn mower?" chuckled Crooke.

"I have been tweated in a wotten and wuffianly way by Lowthor and Mannahs, and Tom Mewwy," he gasped.

Racke raised his eyebrows.

"That gang? You're generally as thick as thieves with them," he said. "Is there a rift in the giddy lute?"

"What on earth did those chumps rag you for?" asked Gerald Crooke in surprise.

"Simply because I advised Lowthor to own up about Mr. Selby's banknote—"

Aubrey Racke jumped.

"What?"

"You see, I had worked it out that he was the practical jokah who played twicks with that banknote," explained Arthur Augustus, "and for some reason he lost his tempah."

"You silly owl!"

"Weally, Wacke—"

"What the thump are you rakin' up the matter et all for?" demanded Racke angrily. "It's as good as forgotten now."

"I am takin' the mattah up as a detective!" said Arthur Augustus, with a great deal of dignity.

"What?" shrieked Racke.

"I am determined to get at the twuth of the mattah; and if it was not Lowthor I am not goin' to west till I discovahl who it weally was!"

"You frabjous ass!" gasped Racke. "Why can't you mind your own business?"

"I wogard this as my business, Wacke. I am goin' to sic the mattah thoroughly."

"Oh, bump him!" said Racke.
 "Bai Jove! Hands off, you uttah wottahs—yawoooh!" roared Arthur Augustus, in surprise and rage as he smote the quadrangle once more with his noble person.

Racke and Crooke walked away, leaving him sprawling, breathless.

Really, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's new career as an amateur detective did not seem to be making him popular in his Hguse.

CHAPTER 4.

Not Taken Seriously!

MR. SELBY, master of the Third Form, stared round with knitted brows.

It was evening, and the Third were at prep. Less fortunate that the upper Forms, the Third did their prep in the presence of their Form master. Certainly, out of his presence, it was probable that very little prep would have been done. Nevertheless, it was not nice, the Form master being Mr. Selby.

The Third tried Mr. Selby's temper—never very good. Also, Mr. Selby tried the temper of the Third. On most matters there was little agreement between Mr. Selby and his Form. But on one point they agreed—in disliking one another heartily.

Prep was over now—or should have been over. Master and pupils were equally glad when it was done with. But on this particular evening Mr. Selby was keeping his hapless Form ten minutes over the time. He was not satisfied with them; and they were still less satisfied with him. Wishing from the bottom of his heart to have done with his boys, and to retire to the seclusion and peace of his study, Mr. Selby felt himself to be a very meritorious master in keeping them beyond their time. It really was a sacrifice on his part, and he really believed that it was dictated by a sense of duty. Doubtless Mr. Selby was not the first man who has mistaken a desire to make himself unpleasant for a strict sense of duty.

Performing this disagreeable duty, in a very unamiable frame of mind, Mr. Selby naturally was annoyed when the Form-room door opened and a cheerful, aristocratic face, adorned by an eyeglass, looked in. The face and the eyeglass belonged to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and Arthur Augustus belonged to the Fourth Form, and, therefore, had no business in the territory of the Third—especially when prep was on. So Mr. Selby knitted his brows and glared.

"D'Arcy!" he snapped.
 "Aas, sir!" said Arthur Augustus politely.
 "How dare you interrupt preparation in my Form-room!"
 "Sowwy, sir—"
 "Retire at once!"
 "I was undah the impression, sir, that prep was ovah heah," said the swell of St. Jim's. "I came heah to speak to my young wothah, sir."

Wally of the Third winked at Reggie Manners. It was just like his major, the great Gussy, to stand there politely explaining to Mr. Selby, while Mr. Selby's hands were itching to box his noble ears.

"If I have intewupted, sir, I am sowwy!" said Arthur Augustus gracefully. "I will wotire at once, sir, and wait."

"Do so!" snapped Mr. Selby.
 "I wish also to speak to you, sir. May I come to your studay aftah you are finished heah?"
 "Nonsense! Leave this Form-room!"

"Weally, sir—"
 "I shall report this to your Form master, D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus retired. Apparently the Third Form master did not desire to be honoured by a visit from Gussy after he had finished with the Third. Apparently, also, the visit of that handsome and graceful youth to the Form-room had annoyed Mr. Selby, for he turned a frowning face on his class and rapped out:

"Levison minor!"
 "Yes, sir," said Frank Levison resignedly.

When Mr. Selby was annoyed it was always a sort of lottery as to which unfortunate head his wrath would fall upon. Frank was the unlucky one this time.

"You were whispering to D'Arcy minor, Levison."

"Oh, no, sir!"
 "Don't contradict me, Levison minor."

Frank was silent.
 "You will take fifty lines for whispering in class, and fifty more for contradiction," said Mr. Selby.

"Very well, sir."

"Manners minor!"
 "Yes, sir!" growled Reggie.

"What did you say to Hobbs?"
 "I—I—I said it was nearly half-past eight, sir."

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"Take fifty lines."

Reggie Manners made a grimace.
 Mr. Selby, feeling a little better now that he had made two members of his Form feel a little worse, proceeded to wind up preparation for that evening. A few minutes more, and he quitted the Third Form-room, greatly to the relief of the lags, and certainly to his own relief also.

He whisked away down the corridor, and almost ran into Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Pwasy excuse me, sir," said D'Arcy. "I desiah vevy much to speak to you, if you can spare a few minutes."

"What is it?" snapped Mr. Selby, halting.

"About that banknote of yours, sir, which was missin'."

Mr. Selby stared at him.
 "Do you know anything about that, D'Arcy? Are you the person who took it and hid it?"

"Bai Jove! No, sir!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.
 "Nothin' of the kind, sir! Certainly not!"

"Trick was played by some unprincipled and reckless boy!" snapped Mr. Selby. "I should not be surprised if it transpired, D'Arcy, that you were the person. If you have come to me to confess—"

"Nothin' of the sort, sir," said Arthur Augustus, in dismay. "The fact is, sir, that I think the mattah ought to be cleared up, and I am goin' to do it if I can. Some wathah wotten fellows think that there is still suspicion concernin' young Levison—"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Selby. "But if you know anything about the matter, D'Arcy, you may tell me. The person concerned should certainly be punished. Do you know who it was?"

"Not yet, sir."
 "Does that mean that you are able to find out?" asked Mr. Selby, much more amicably.

The Third Form master was very keen to discover the reckless individual who had played tricks with his banknote. For a time he had believed that it was stolen, and perhaps destroyed, and that he would never see it again. Now it was no longer his belief that a theft had been committed; the banknote had been restored. He believed, like most of the school, that the affair had been simply a foolish practical joke. But he was very keen indeed to get hold of the practical joker, and to make him suffer for his joking proclivities.

His impression was that D'Arcy was now playing the part of a spy and an informer, so he grew more amiable. Qualities of that kind appealed to Mr. Selby's peculiar nature.

"If you are able to discover the identity of the boy, D'Arcy, please do so," he said. "Doubtless you have even heard the wretched boy boasting of the annoyance and anxiety he had caused me. Is that so?"

D'Arcy looked at him.
 "You misappwehend me, sir," he said calmly. "If that were the case, I should certainly not think of mentionin' the mattah at all."

"What?"
 "I should wogard it as sneakin'. The posish is quite different. I am goin' to investigate this mattah, in ordah to clear Levison minor of any possible suspicion, actin' as a detective—"

"What?" roared Mr. Selby.
 "I shall not weport the offendah to the Housemestah at all—I shall try to induce him to own up, sir. If he wotefuses, he will get a waggin'—and all the fellows will know who he was, and that will set young Levison wight. But, of course, the mastahs will not be told anythin' about it by me."

"You impertinent young rascal!"
 "Weally, sir, I see nothin' in my remarks to call for that vevy oppwosicion remark. My object in speakin' to you, sir, was to learn a few details," said Arthur Augustus, in his best Sherlock Holmes manner. "If you would kindly give me the full details of the affaih, so fah as you know them, from start to finish, it would assist me vevy much in my investigations."

Arthur Augustus took a little Russia-leather-covered notebook and a gold pencil from his pocket with a very business-like air.

Mr. Selby gave him a look that was reminiscent of the faded Lillik.

D'Arcy was taking himself quite seriously in his new rôle as an amateur detective. Mr. Selby failed to take him seriously. Indeed, he seemed to take the view that the elegant junior's remarks were intended for impertinence and designed to annoy him.

"Now, sir," said Arthur Augustus, in happy ignorance of Mr. Selby's intense exasperation. "A few details, sir—Yawoooop!"

Mr. Selby did not give him a few details. He gave him a box on the ear.

Smack!

Arthur Augustus staggered against the wall, and the Third Form master whisked on down the corridor.

"Gweat Scott!"
 D'Arcy rubbed his ear quite dazedly and blinked after Mr. Selby. He was taken quite by surprise.
 "Bai Jove! The uttah wuffian! Oh deah!"
 Wrath gleamed from the eyes of the swell of St. Jim's. His dignity—a precious possession—was cruelly hurt. His ear was hurt, too, for that matter; but, of course, his ear did not matter so much as his dignity. For a few moments Arthur Augustus debated wildly in his mind whether he should rush down the corridor after Mr. Selby and administer a fearful thrashing to that gentleman, Form master as he was.
 Fortunately, he decided to treat Mr. Selby with the contempt he undoubtedly deserved.
 He rubbed his ear, picked up his notebook and pencil, and walked into the Third Form room. No details were to be had from Mr. Selby, that was clear; but without details an amateur Sherlock Holmes could not proceed. So he sought for them in the Third.

CHAPTER 5.

Going Strong!

"MY only Aunt Jane! Isn't he the giddy limit!"
 D'Arcy minor was referring to his Form master, now happily departed from the Form-room.
 "Isn't he?" said Frank Levison.
 "Frightful rotter!" said Reggie Manners. "He gave us lines just because your silly major butted in and bothered him, Wally."
 "Just like Gussy!" sighed Wally. "Always the wrong man in the wrong place. My hat! Here he is again!"
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sailed into the Form-room and came over to the three minors. Wally grinned at him cheerfully.
 "You've got us lines, Gussy," he said.
 "Bai Jove! I'm sowwy for that, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "How did I get you lines?"
 "Your face worrie! Selby!"
 "Weally, Wally—"
 "After all, it's nothing to be surprised at," commented Reggie Manners. "A face like that showing up suddenly in—"
 "Weally, Weggie—"
 "What did you want, old man?" asked Wally. "Have you had a remittance you want to whack out with me? If so, I don't mind your face."
 "Pway don't be an impertinent young sweep, Wally!" said Arthur Augustus severely. "I want a few details from you kids—"
 "A few what?"
 "I am takin' up the mattah 'e the missin' banknote."
 "But it isn't missing," said Levison minor.
 "It was missin', Fwank, and I undahstand that there is still some unpleasant talk on the subject," said Arthur Augustus.
 Levison minor coloured.
 "I am goin' to cleah up the mattah," said Arthur Augustus. "I am takin' it up as a detective—"
 "Ye gods!" said Wally.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It is not a laughin' mattah—I am quite sewious," said Arthur Augustus. "The banknote disappeared in a vewy mysterious way, and turned up in a still more mysterious way. Twimble has been sayin' unpleasant things, and Levison major punched him for it. I undahstand that Piggott has been doin' the same—"
 "Look at Piggy's nose!" said Wally.



GEORGE HERRIES.

A member of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form, which he shares with Jack Blake, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and Robert Digby. A big, burly fellow for his age, and probably the heaviest junior in his form. Commonly known as "he with the big feet." A really nice fellow and popular among his school chums. Is not really outstanding in any way. On the whole, he is rather slow, and does not show any great brilliancy either in the class-room or in the field of sport. Has a great affection for his pet bulldog, Towser. Herries is a very enthusiastic cornet player, and some of his school-fellows are apt to regret it at times.

Piggott of the Third scowled at them. Piggott's nose was decidedly enlarged and had a very unusual colour scheme.
 "Piggott hasn't said anything since he got that nose," said Wally. "He isn't going to. Are you, Piggy?"
 "Go and eat coke!" snarled Piggott.
 "Yaas, but it is necessary to cleah up the mattah," said D'Arcy. "Now, Levison minor, I will begin with you. You took the Holiday Annual away from Mr. Selby's study?"
 "Yes," grinned Frank.
 "He had vewy carelessly slipped the banknote into it, and it was in it when you took the book away. You van into Waacke of the Shell in the passage, and dropped the book?"
 "Yes."
 "That must have been when the banknote fell out," said Arthur Augustus. "You did not drop it again?"
 "No."
 "I undahstand that you three young sweeps—vewy weadin' the book togethah aftahwards in Tom Mewwy's study?"
 "You do?" exclaimed Wally.
 "Yaas."
 "Great pip!"
 "Isn't that the case, Wally?"
 "Oh, yes, it's the case. But what beats me is that you understand it! explained Wally. "You see, I've never expected you to understand anything."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Arthur Augustus frowned.
 "This is not a laughin' or jokin' mattah, Wally."
 "My mistake!" said D'Arcy minor bludly. "I thought it was."
 "You did not see anything of that beastly banknote while you were weadin' the book in Tom Mewwy's study?"
 "Nothing at all," said Manners minor. "Of course, a fellow might have used it, absent-mindedly, for a pipe-lighter."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 The three minors did not seem to be taking D'Arcy the Detective with anything like becoming seriousness. Arthur Augustus closed his notebook and put away his pencil. He seemed to be experiencing more difficulties than Sherlock Holmes in his quest of details.
 "You are three thoughtless young asses!" he said.
 "Howevah, I am goin' to cleah up the mattah. I have been thinkin' it out—"
 "With what?" inquired Wally.
 "I have been thinkin' it out, you cheeky young ass. Levison minor, did you see anybody hangin' about the cowdial when you butted into Waacke of the Shell that time?"
 "Not that I remember."
 "Piggott of the Third, for instance."
 "Eh! No."

"Vewy well. I will speak to Piggott, Piggott, deah boy, come heah."
 "Rats!" said Reuben Piggott.
 "Did you pick up Mr. Selby's banknote when Levison minor dropped it from the book?"
 "What?" yelled Piggott.
 "You need not wear at me, Piggott. I have an extreme dislike to bein' woreed at. I have been investigatin' this mystery, and suspicion has turned upon you."
 "You—you—you silly idiot—"
 "Abuse is not argument, Piggott," said D'Arcy calmly.
 "I shall be happy to hear your explanation of the circumstances which, at present, point to you as the guilty party."
 "My only Aunt Jane!" exclaimed Wally, greatly

interested now. "Why, we never thought of it, but Piggy's just the chap."

"Just!" agreed Manners minor.

There was a buzz in the Third Form-room. Nearly all the Third gathered round, and Arthur Augustus and Reuben Piggott were the centre of an excited crowd. Piggott's face was a picture of rage and apprehension; D'Arcy's face was severe, and lofty, and accusing.

"Piggott!" exclaimed Hobbs. "Why, it's more likely than not. Only, if Piggy bagged it it wasn't a joke. Piggy meant to keep it."

"Yes, rather!" said Frayne.

"That's Piggy all over!" agreed Curly Gibson.

"I never did!" shrieked Piggott. "I never knew anything about it till Selby kicked up a shindy. I never knew he had a banknote. I—I—I never—"

Piggott choked with rage.

"Go it, Gussy!" said Wally. "How do you know it was Piggy?"

"It wasn't!" yelled Piggott, in dire alarm.

"Shut up, Piggy!"

"Go it, Gussy!"

"You'll find it best, Piggott, to answer my questions truthfully," said the St. Jim's detective sternly. "In the first place, the banknote was picked up by somebody in the School House. That shows that it was a School House man."

"My hat! So are two-thirds of the Form," said Hobbs.

"That is only one point. In the second place, the person who picked it up was a practical jokin' wottah, and Piggott is always playin' wotten tricks."

"True as a die!" said Wally.

"Hear, hear!"

Arthur Augustus felt that he was getting on. Perhaps it did not occur to his powerful brain that he was now producing the same evidence against Reuben Piggott which had satisfied him a short time ago, that Lowther, of the Shell, had been the fellow concerned.

"In the third place," went on D'Arcy, with increasing sternness, "if a fellow bagged that banknote, and was afraid of bein' found out he might vevy likely try to sewen himself by throwin' suspicion on another fellow. Is it not a fact, Piggott, that you have been sayin' that Levison minor had the banknote all the time?"

"I—I—" gasped Piggott.

"So he has!" yelled Hobbs. "I've heard him."

"That's what I gave him that nose for!" exclaimed Wally, of the Third. "Right on the wicket!"

"You had better confess, Piggott."

"But I—I didn't. I never—I—I—" Piggott babbled almost incoherently. "I never did—I—"

"You picked up that banknote, Piggott?"

"No!" raved Piggott.

"You hid it somewhah—"

"No, no, no!" shrieked Piggott.

"And you got frightened when Levison major was sacked for it, and put it in the Head's study—"

"No!" roared Piggott.

"Looks jolly likely!" said Wally. "If you didn't do it, Piggy, why were you trying to make out that Levison minor did it?"

"I do not regard the evidence, at present, as conclusive," said Arthur Augustus. "But the circumstances look vevy suspicious. You must considah yourself, Piggott, as bein' undah vevy sevius suspicion, until I have completed my case."

"You silly owl!" yelled Piggott. "I never—"

"That is enough."

D'Arcy the detective walked out of the Third Form-room. Piggott stared wildly round at the buzzing fags.

"I swear I never—" he began.

"You're such a fibber, you know," said Wally. "Your word ain't worth anything. Besides, you've been trying to put it on Frank."

"Oh, it was really Piggy all right," said Manners minor.

"It wasn't!" gasped Piggott. "I swear I—I—"

"Well, it looks jolly black," said Wally. "You couldn't let it rest about Franky, could you? It's no good your saying anything; nobody can take your word, and you know it. You must be an awful rotter to talk about Frank when you did it all the time."

"But I didn't. I never—"

"Oh, rats!"

Wally & Co. left Piggott, and the young rascal of the Third was left in a most unenviable frame of mind. Probably no evil-speaker more deeply repented of evil-speaking than did Piggott, of the Third, at that moment.

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CHAPTER 6.

Cardew Takes a Hand!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW, of the Fourth, looked rather whimsically at Ernest Levison. Levison was frowning darkly as he sat at the study table in No. 9, and did not seem to be bestowing his usual careful attention upon his prep. Sidney Clive was working, in his quiet, methodical way, and did not observe Levison's dark looks; but Cardew, lounging in the study armchair instead of attending to his business, had ample leisure to observe. And he smiled.

"Penny for 'em, Ernest, old bean," he said suddenly. Levison started.

"Eh? What? What do you mean, Cardew?"

"Sorry you came back?" asked Cardew.

"Came back?" repeated Levison.

"Prep's a bore, as you seem to be findin'. You'd have been clear of prep if the jolly old Head hadn't fetched you back."

"Fathead!" said Levison.

"Wannar what's the merry misery?" asked Cardew. "You're lookin' as if you were goin' to your own funeral. You ought to be feelin' no end bucked."

"Ought I?" grunted Levison.

"My dear man, you ought. Isn't the giddy finger of admiration pointed at you on all sides?" argued Cardew. "In this study we think you're the real goods, don't we, Clive? In the House they look on you as a hero of sorts. The Head regards you with giddy benignity. The House-master has a jolly grin for you when he meets you. You're it, just for the present. Didn't you walk into the lion's den—I mean the Head's study—and own up to pinchin' jolly old Selby's banknote, and get bunked—all as a spook to get your minor through his little scrape? Wasn't it a giddy heroic stunt? What?"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"But it was, really, old bean," assured Cardew. "If the banknote hadn't been found you'd have been sacked for good; no more St. Jim's for you, no more of my light and genial conversation in the study of an evenin'—"

"Let it rest," said Levison gruffly.

That Levison, of the Fourth, had played up well in taking the blame on himself when his brother had been adjudged guilty of theft, all the House agreed. Such an act of self-sacrifice rather took the fellows' breath away, and when it was proved that Levison could not possibly have taken the banknote, and his real motive became known, he had loomed vevy prominently into the limelight. But the limelight, in such a matter, did not please him, and he disliked the mention of it. Cardew, however, was in a wilful mood, and he ran on cheerily:

"It's no joke to be bunked, old bean; I've been near it myself, and didn't like it a little bit. If I had a minor they could bunk him every week-end, and I shouldn't butt in on those lines. No wonder young Franky thinks his major is the giddy sally of the earth. You were an ass, you know—a silly ass. But—"

"Oh, do dry up, old chap!" said Levison impatiently.

"I'm curious," said Cardew. "Instead of feelin' and lookin' tremendously bucked you look like a moultin' owl. What's the matter with you now? I suppose Mr. Selby hasn't lost another banknote, has he, and accused your minor of bagging it? You're not thinkin' of buttin' in a second time on the self-sacrificin' stunt? Don't make a habit of it, old bean."

"It's rotten!" said Levison, knitting his brows. "I wonder who it was pinched that banknote? I want to know."

"What does it matter?" asked Clive, looking up. "It's turned out that it was a jape, and the japer put the note where it could be found."

"Some fellows think my minor really had it all the time, and only shelled it out to save my neck," grunted Levison. "Cads like Trimble—"

"The worm!" said Clive.

"It's rotten enough," said Levison. "I wish it could be cleared up who played that silly trick with the banknote."

"By gad!" said Cardew thoughtfully. "It's rotten, and so would you're scowlin' over it, old bean. Frank might have had the giddy article all the time of course."

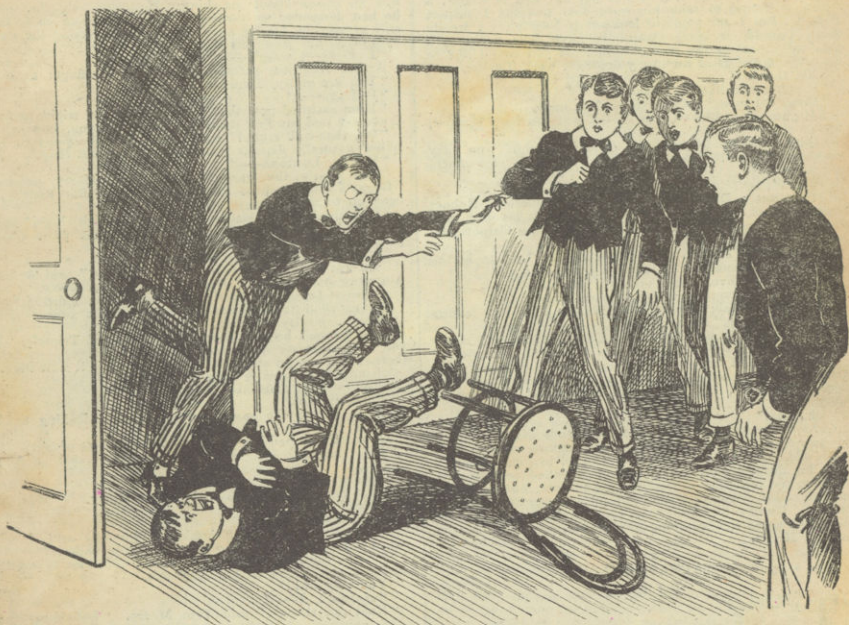
"What?" snapped Levison.

"I'm not sayin' he had, dear man—only sayin' that it looks as if he might have had. I don't think so myself."

"Thank you!" said Levison sardonically.

"Not at all, old bean. But you're right; it ought to be cleared up," said Cardew. "The fellow ought to be found out. I never believed it was a practical joke myself. The fellow bagged that banknote to keep it, and either changed his mind or got frightened."

"That makes it less likely that he will ever own up, if you're right," growled Levison.



There was a buzz of astonishment in the junior Common-room as Eggy Trimble came bolting into the room. He collided with a chair, rolled over, and sprawled on the floor, roaring. After him came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who, unable to stop himself in time, stumbled over the sprawling Trimble, and measured his aristocratic length on the floor. (See page 17.)

"Oh, he won't own up," said Cardew. "But he might be found out and shown up."
"Blessed if I see how."

Tap!
The door of Study No. 9 opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in. Cardew made a gesture of welcome. "Trot in, old bean! Only Clive workin'—and you're interruptin' him—and that's a jolly good thing. It makes me tired to see a fellow work."

"Bai Jove! I twust I am not intewwuptin' you, Clive."
"Oh, go ahead," said Clive. "I've had to work against Cardew's chin-wag; and yours won't be any worse, old man."
"The fact is, deah boys, it's wathah important," said Arthur Augustus. "I have called in here as a detective—"
"A what?"
"Great gad!"

Arthur Augustus smiled, rather pleased with the surprise he had caused in Study No. 9.
"A detective, deah boys. I have taken up the case of the mysterious banknote, and am goin' to find out who played twicks with it, with the object of cleavin' Levison minor, see?"

"Hear, hear!" said Cardew heartily. "Just what we want, old bean. If your fees are within our means, this study will engage you on the spot."

Clive laughed, and Levison of the Fourth grinned, in spite of the worry on his mind. In Study No. 9, as elsewhere, D'Arcy, the detective, did not seem to be taken with seriousness.

"Wats! It is not a question of fees, of course," said D'Arcy, "that is all wot. I am goin' to get at the twuth, and perhaps you fellows can give me some details. Blake and Hewwics and Dig have refused to back me up, you know, and Tom Mewwy seems to regard the mattah with what I can only describe as dewision. But I am goin' ahead."

"Bravo! Let me help!" said Cardew eagerly. "Just in my line to play Dr. Watson to your Sherlock Holmes, or Jack Blake to your Ferrers Locke. May I make a suggestion?"

"I am always pvepared to listen to suggestions, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus encouragingly.

"Then the first step will be to find out who last saw the missing banknote alive?" said Cardew, with great gravity.

"Eh?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Weally, Cardew, you are an ass; if you are goin' to make fivoolous wemarks, you may as well dwy up. Suspicion, at pwsent, wests on Piggott of the Third Form," said Arthur Augustus.

"Piggott!" repeated Levison. "What has he to do with it?"

Arthur Augustus smiled.
"You see, I have worked it out, hein' somethin' of a detective," he said. "Piggott has been makin' it up about young Fwank, twyin' to make the fags believe that Fwank had the wotten banknote all the time. I werged that as a suspicious circumstance—twyin' to throw suspicion off himself—see?"

"What rot!"
"Eh?"
"Piggott is a little beast, but he knows nothing about Selby's banknote," said Ernest Levison. "Trimble of the Fourth has been saying the same things, and so have three or four other worns."

"Bai Jove! I must put Twimble on my list, and investigate in that dircetion," said Arthur Augustus. "I have worked it out that the banknote must have dropped from the book when your minor dropped it, when he wan into Wacke of the Shell, you know."

"We all knew that."
"Oh! Did you?" said Arthur Augustus, a little nettled.
"Yes, ass; that was the only time Frank could have dropped the banknote out of the book without noticing it," grunted Levison. "But a dozen fellows may have passed along and seen it and picked it up—any fellow in the House, in fact."

"Only some practical jokin' ass would have played twicks with it, Levison. I werged it as bein' Lowthah of the

Shell at first, but he says it was not he; and of course, a fellow is bound to take his word. At present I suspect Piggott; but I am going to look after Twimble. I weally think Twimble is likely enough to have done it—he is a sneakin' wascal at the best of times. If you would like to come along and assist me in my detective work, Levison—"

"No, thanks!"
 "If you would like to, Clive—"
 "Prep, old man," said Clive, with a smile.
 "If you would like to, Cardew—if you can keep serious, I—"

"How could a fellow keep serious watchin' you play Sherlock Holmes?" asked Cardew. "It's askin' too much, old man!"

Still minus a Dr. Watson, the amateur Sherlock Holmes walked out of Study No. 9. Clive returned to his prep, and Levison reached for his books. Ralph Reckness Cardew had a rather thoughtful look.

"I wonder if I could chance it with Mr. Lathom in the mornin'?" he remarked. "Prep's a bore, isn't it?"

"Ass!" said Clive. "Get on with your prep!"
 Cardew rose from the armchair with a yawn.
 "I think I'll walk along and see Racke, while you fellows are sloppin' away," he remarked.

"Give Racke a miss!" growled Clive. "Nap and cigarettes in Racke's study won't do you any good, you sweep."
 "Dear man, it isn't nap and cigarettes this time," said Cardew, with a smile. "I want a little conversation with dear old Aubrey. He can be an entertainin' merchant at times."
 "Oh, rats!"

Cardew laughed and strolled out of Study No. 9, leaving his two chums at prep. His own prep remained undone, as it often did. Cardew was not unaccustomed to "chancing it" with his Form master. If he should be called upon to construe in the morning, it would mean trouble; but he might not be called upon; and sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. Cardew dismissed prep and Mr. Lathom both from his mind, as he strolled along to the Shell passage to call on Aubrey Racke.

CHAPTER 7. Got Him!

"TWIMBLE!"
 "Oh!"

It was a gasp of alarm from Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, coming along the Fourth Form passage, spotted the fat youth at the door of Study No. 6, and called to him. Instead of heeding the call, Baggy Trimble blinked in alarm at Arthur Augustus, and bolted down the passage towards the stairs.

"Twimble!" shouted Arthur Augustus.
 Baggy bolted on. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sped in pursuit. Baggy was on his list of "suspects," and his investigations required an interview with the fatuous Baggy. This sudden and alarmed flight looked, to D'Arcy the Detective, like the outcome of a guilty conscience—it was said of old that the wicked flee when no man pursueth—and why this flight, unless Baggy had guilt on his fat conscience, and feared the masterly investigations of the St. Jim's detective? It was quite clear to D'Arcy! He rushed after the fleeing Baggy, already making up his noble mind, as he ran, that the guilty party of whom he was in search was not, after all, Piggott of the Third, but Trimble of the Fourth.

In normal circumstances, Baggy Trimble would have stood no chance in a foot race with Arthur Augustus. He had too much weight to carry. But on this occasion, alarm spurred on the fat junior, and he kept his distance. He reached the stairs, and went plunging down them recklessly, two at a time.

"Stop!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Bai Jove! Stop him, you fellows! Hold him, Tom Mewwy!"

The Terrible Three were coming up the staircase, and had reached the next landing, just as Trimble came plunging down to it breathlessly. They closed up round Baggy and collared him.

"Leggo!" howled Baggy, struggling. "It's all right! I say, you leggo! I haven't got it! Honour bright!"

"Dear man," grinned Monty Lowther. "Your jolly old honour will want a little polishing before it's very bright!"

"Yow! Leggo!"
 "Thank you, dear boys! Bwing that fat villain up heah!"

"What's he done?" asked Tom Merry.
 "Leggo!" yelled Trimble.

"Pway bwing him up, and I will explain."
 "March!" said Manners.

With three Shell fellows grasping him, Baggy Trimble

had no choice about marching. He panted up the stairs he had descended so hurriedly. On the landing he halted, still grasped by his fat arms and his collar, facing the stern eyes of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I—I say—I wasn't—" gasped Trimble.
 Arthur Augustus pointed an accusing forefinger at him.
 "You are guilty, Twimble!"

"I—I say—"
 "I am satisfied now that I have found the wight partay. I wewget that my first suspicions wested on you, Lowthah."
 "Oh, that's all right!" said Monty Lowther genially. "A fellow naturally expects you to be an ass, old chap."

"Weally, Lowthah—"
 "But what's the game?" asked Tom Merry, puzzled.
 "Baggy's always up to something shady. But what's he been up to now?"

"Somethin' much worse than usual, dear boys," said Arthur Augustus. "He can't keep his fat paws from pickin' and stealin', you know."

"Look here—" howled Trimble.

"He has thrown suspicion on othah chaps," said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "Levison minor, you know. Then I suspected Lowthah, and then Piggott of the Third! Now I am satisfied that it was Twimble all the time. The evidence is pwetly complete."

"I—I haven't been in Study No. 6," gasped Trimble. "If you left any tarts in the cupboard, D'Arcy, they are still there. You can go and look if you like. I—I'll wait here."

"I am not alludin' to tarts, Twimble."
 "You're not?" ejaculated Trimble.

"Certainly not."
 "Then what's the row?" asked Trimble, looking much brighter.

Apparently he had been uneasy on the subject of tarts.

"You bagged Mr. Selby's banknote," said D'Arcy sternly.

"Wha-a-at?"
 "Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Was it Trimble?"

"Yaas, wathah!"
 "It wasn't!" shrieked Trimble. "You silly ass! I tell you it wasn't! I never had anything to do with it!"

"It is no use pweawicatin', Twimble. The case is pwetly complete now," said Arthur Augustus.

"You silly owl!"
 "Bai Jove! I—"

"Hold on, though," said Tom Merry. "Let's hear the giddy evidence. Nobody, so far, has supposed that Trimble had anything to do with it."

"Nobody happens to have any special gifts as a detective, Tom Mewwy; that is why. Now, I have taken up the case—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Weally, you fellows, it is not a laughin' mattah. I am goin' to make this fat scoundwel own up, and stop the talk about Levison minor."

"Trot out the giddy evidence," said Manners.
 "In the first place, dear boy, the banknote was dropped in the School House, so it must have been picked up by a School House chap. Twimble is a School House chap."

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Monty Lowther. "That's exactly how you worked out that it was poor little me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hee! That is only the first point," said Arthur Augustus, rather hastily. "In the second place, the trick must have been played by some fellow who plays wotten tricks—"

"Just what you said to Monty!" grinned Manners.

"That is only the second point. In the third place, Twimble has been sayin' wotten things about Levison minor keepin' up suspicion about him, you know. Thowwin' suspicion on anoathah chap, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Manners. "I've just heard from my minor that you've put it on Piggott of the Third for the same reason."

The St. Jim's detective coloured a little.

"That is only the third point," he said. "The fourth point is weally conclusive. Twimble knows that I have taken up the mattah as a detective, and as soon as I got on his track he bolted—you fellows saw him boltin'. That pweas a guilty conscience."

"Is that all?" asked Tom Merry blankly.

"That is all, dear boys, and I wewget it as sufficient. I consider that I have worked out this case in a wathah mastahly mannah."

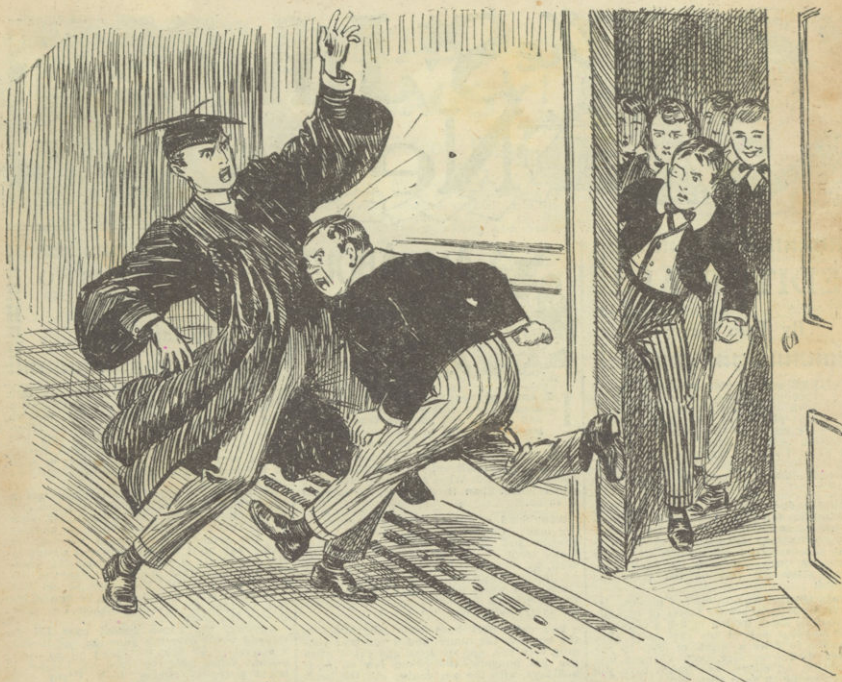
"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "You silly owl!" yelled Trimble.

"I warn you, Twimble, that anythin' you say will be used in evidence against you," said Detective D'Arcy severely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Weally, you fellows—"

"Perhaps Trimble can explain," chuckled Tom Merry.
 "Why did you bolt, Trimble?"

"It was a guilty conscience, Tom Mewwy."



Crash! Baggy Trimble reached the doorway. But he got no farther, for just as he was tearing through, the stalwart figure of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, appeared there from the corridor. There was a terrific collision. Baggy Trimble yelled and sat down, while Mr. Railton staggered against the door, gasping. (See page 17.)

"Yes; but Trimble has all sorts of guilt on his giddy conscience. What was it this time, Trimble?"

"Nothing!" said Trimble.

"The prisonah has nothin' to say," said Arthur Augustus. "Now, Twimble, will you own up befoah all the fellows in the Common-woom, and make the thing cleah to the whole House, or do you want me to take you to the Housemastah? That is your choice, you wascat!"

"I nerah—"

"Pway lend me a hand to bunk him to Mr. Waitton's studay, you fellows. If he will not own up, he must be handed ovah."

"You silly ass!" shrieked Trimble. "I don't mind telling you. I—I cut off because I thought that idiot knew—I mean, I thought he might think that I'd been in his study after the tarts."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Terrible Three.

"I haven't, you know," said Trimble hastily. "I just looked into the study to see if—if Blake was there. I never touched the tarts. If they're gone, I don't know anything about them."

"Do you know anything about that smear of jam on your chivvy?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"Eh?" Trimble hurriedly passed a fat hand over his fat face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think the case is pretty clear," chuckled Tom Merry. "You should have taken up the case of the mysterious disappearance of the jam-tarts, Gussy. Then you would have got the right man."

The Terrible Three roared. It was pretty clear now why Baggy Trimble had bolted at the sight of Arthur Augustus. But if it was clear to Tom Merry & Co., it was by no means clear to the St. Jim's detective. Arthur Augustus was satisfied that he had got his man.

"I regard this as invollevant, you fellows," he said. "I am quite satisfied that Twimble is the man, and I am

goin' to make him own up or take him to the Housemastah."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Terrible Three. "I'll own up about the tarts, if you like. I don't know anything about the banknote."

"Wats! Nevah mind the tarts now. I am goin' to take you to Mr. Waitton, unless— Hold 'im, deah boys."

But the Shell fellows were no longer holding Baggy Trimble. That fat youth suddenly darted away and sped down the stairs.

"Stop him!" shouted D'Arcy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You sillay asses!"

Arthur Augustus rushed down the stairs after Baggy Trimble, in hot pursuit. Pursued and pursuer vanished round the bend of the staircase, leaving the chums of the Shell howling with laughter.

CHAPTER 8.

Up to Aubrey!

AUBREY RACKE looked up with a scowl as Cardew of the Fourth stepped into his study. Racke was alone there—Crooke had finished his prep and had left the study. Racke, lounging in his armchair, was smoking a cigarette, with knitted brows, not apparently in a pleasant humour.

Cardew nodded brightly.

"Feelin' jolly this evenin'?" he asked. "You look it."

"What do you want?" growled Racke.

"Oh gad! Are you always as polite as that to a distinguished visitor?"

"Oh, don't give me any of your rot!" snarled Racke. "I

(Continued on page 16.)



EDITORIAL!

By Tom Merry.

THERE are few more pleasant ways of spending a fine, sunny half-holiday than in a picnic excursion, and there are plenty of St. Jim's fellows who'll back me up in that opinion. There's one sitting near my elbow even as I write these lines. I refer to Manners, who's always ready to join in a picnic on one condition: that he's allowed to take his camera with him.

Manners finds that a picnic gives him opportunities for photography, and when he goes out on an excursion of that kind there's scarce photography than picnic about it as far as he's concerned. He's liable to wander off on his own, and turn up again long enough after the last of the grub has vanished.

Monty Lotherin isn't so fond of picnics. He says that the cake always tastes of paraffin, and that he hates having to fish a drowning daddy-long-legs out of his cup every time he attempts to take a drink of tea, to say nothing of the sarvice that we get into the butter, no matter how much care you take in trying to keep them out.

There are many ways of setting out on a picnic. You can stroll a few hundred yards into the woods, or set off up the river, or get out your bikes and go even farther afield; or you can, if your pocket will stand it, and your inclinations are that way, hire some more rapid mode of conveyance, such as motor, and spin off in the next county, a la Ranke & Co.

Personally, I prefer the river picnic; but Manners isn't so keen on it, because there is always a certain amount of risk, in his opinion, in venturing near to the water with his precious camera. The boat might get upset, or something like that, though Manners is prepared to go to the bottom and come up none the worse for it, his camera isn't.

There are many beautiful retreats in the neighbourhood of St. Jim's that well repay a visit, and a picnic is about the jolliest way of spending a little time there, especially if you make up a party. Once you've arrived at your destination you can make a sort of camp, and then wander off, each on his own or with one or two pals, just as you prefer and how and where you like, returning to base tea at a stated time. The camera fends you off clicking their shutters at everything that takes their fancy, the bug-hunters can chase butterflies, the muck-rakers can dig around for roots and things like that, while the pond-paddlers fish for daddies and water-beetles in the nearest puddle. And the fellows who like to chip splinters off mountains with little hammers can peck away at the landscape, and so on.

Oh, yes, picnics can be done fun; and if you're thinking of going on any, you have my best wishes for a good time!



ALL ABOUT PIKNIK. By Wally D'Arcy.

IF any of you want to no anything about piknik, just you come to the 3rd and ask us, and you can take it from me we'll be abel to tell you, and a bit over a spechulize in that sort of thing. It's know use asking the Shell or the Fourth. They can't tell you anything worth noing. Crumbs! Why, we've forgotten more about piknik than those old fogeys no their is to no.

Any kind of piknik—on the river or on dry land! Curly Gibson and me and young Frayne and Manners mimer and Lewison mimer often go pikniking out in the woods. Well, we sometimes take Manners mimer with us, but not always, as he's a bit lazy at times, and won't do his share, and a fellow that shirks on an outing spoils everything for everybody else.

You can't harf have some jolly time in the woods in the summer, and if you take your grub with you, and sit down and eat it when you get hungry, it's prime fun on half-holidays, with the sun shining and the birds singing.

I like pikniks when you lite a fire and boll water and cook kippers on peaces of stick. They're prime done like that. Kippers that have been fryed over a camp-fire in the woods taste ever so different from when they've been done over the fire in the Common-room, thow Manners mimer said they taste the same to him, and he doesn't no what difference their, but that's only because he's sulky; and, besides, he doesn't no much, anyway, so we take no notice of him. He always sulks like that when we make a fire in the woods, an' we no why it is. He 'as to help gather sticks and peaces of trees, and he's funky of spiders and beetles, and he nos they like to hide under bits of trees and crawl out when they're picked up. And if one runs up peace of twig and gets on to Manners mimer and crawls on his hand, he yells out, and drops the stick, and won't help to gather any more wood. Curly Gibson says it's all my eye, and Manners mimer only does it because he doesn't want the trouble of helping to gather wood for the fire. Fancy a chap being funky of spiders! I no girls ate, but not chaps in the 3rd. I used to know a chap who was scared of frogs; but frogs are all right, and they can't crawl up your arm like beetles can. Manners mimer says beetles can get in a chap's ear and eat 'is brains, and that's why he's scared of them. But Curly Gibson told him he needn't be afraid of that happening to him, and if a beetle got into 'is ear to eat 'is brain, it woud die of starvashun.

Manners mimer didn't like that, and he threw the kettle at Curly, and it hit a tree and got dented, and there was a hole in it so that it wouldn't hold water just as we'd got the fire going to boll it. That was what some of taking Manners mimer on a piknik; and the next time we go we shall leave him out, and perhaps we shall have a pieceful time, and not have to here a lot of rot about beetles chewing peaces out of people, and having our kettles busted just when we want to make tea.

EXCHANGE IS NO ROBBERY!

By Jack Blake.

STUDY NO. 6 picnics are rather raro occurrences, because we don't get a lot of time for such things, but we sometimes manage to have an afternoon out now and again. We've only had one, for instance, so far this year, but it was a very enjoyable little outing, in spite of the fact that it didn't go off exactly as per programme.

It was one Wednesday afternoon, and a beautifully warm day, though not too hot for comfort, and we were fortunate, in view of the fact that we'd decided to go up-river for the spread. We thought we were in luck's way until Herrie, who was sitting in the stern with a steering-paddle, did something or other that upset the balance of the canoe. I don't quite know what he did, but I wouldn't mind guessing that he moved his feet so that they were both on the same side of the craft.

Anyway, the canoe heeled over till it shipped water over the gunwale, and it was a marvel to me that we didn't all go overboard. When we'd recovered our balance I heard a cry of dismay from Digby, and became aware of the fact that the basket, which had been resting across the planking of the prow, had slipped overboard. It was floating all right, and by the exercise of a little careful manipulation of the canoe we managed to recover it, but we weren't much better off even then. It was full of water, and the contents of that basket weren't of the type that can be classed as liable to improvement by immersion in water.

We drew over to the bank, and got out to see exactly how much damage had been done, and we'd just decided that the best thing we could do would be to go a little way farther, and then return to St. Jim's for an ordinary study tea, when we heard the sound of voices and saw a boat. There was somebody in the woods by the veraside, and it was barely possible that it might be another picnic-party. We crawled through the bushes until we could get a glimpse of them, and, to our unexpected joy, discovered that they were Grammarians. What's more, they were just unpacking a hamper.

Now, we wanted that hamper, and the question was—how were we to get it? Digby had a bright thought, and communicated it to me in a cautious whisper. I nodded agreement, and he slipped away among the bushes, working his way round to the other side of the Grammarians on the few seconds after the most hideous din broke out from that direction. There were yells and cries of "Help!" and the sound of crashing undergrowth. (Actually it was Digby lashing among the bushes with a canoe-paddle.)

The Grammarians jumped to their feet with startled exclamations, and then dashed off the other side of the bushes. It was a matter of moments for us to pile the grub back into the basket and hike the whole lot off towards the canoe, into which we dropped it just as Digby came panting up with the Grammarians on his trail. By the time Monk & Co. reached the bank we were in mid-stream, rearing our interrupted journey with their hamper in our midst. But as we'd left our water-logged one on the bank in exchange, they ought to have been satisfied. Anyway, we were—perfectly!

Tom Merry



Clues for BAGGY.

By Clifton Dane

SOMETHING OTHER!

AS a general rule, I never undertake to relate any incidents, especially in these columns, unless I'm in a position to personally vouch for the accuracy of the details. In other words, I prefer to confine my contributions to accounts of happenings of which I have actually been an eye-witness.

But the following yarn is, in my opinion, too good to remain untold, and as the only fellow who is in a position to write it up to the best advantage, as having the necessary journalistic ability and personal experience of the affair happens to be Cardew, you can judge what chance there is of the story ever finding its way into print unless somebody with a trifle more energy steps into the breach and does the job. So I'm making an exception from my general rule on this occasion.

By the way, I ought not to have said, to be strictly true, that Cardew knows all there is to know about the affair, because there's one fellow who knows even more, and possibly far more, than Cardew does. That's Baggy Trimble; but wild horses wouldn't drag the true story out of him, though he's quite ready to give his version of what happened, which, needless to say, is about as far removed from the truth as can be.

It all commenced with Crooke, Racke, and Serope, and one or two more of that choice little gang arranging to go out one afternoon for a picnic. Of course, an outing of that kind isn't the same sort of thing with them that it is with us, as far as they're concerned, the chief charm of a picnic consists of the opportunity it gives them to get right away from everywhere and everybody on their own, so that there's no likelihood of their card-playing and cigarette smoking being interrupted.

They asked Cardew to join them, and Cardew, chancing to be in that particular frame of mind at the moment, agreed to go. It didn't take them long to make their arrangements, elaborate though those were in a way.

They hired a car at the garage in Wayland, a huge, luxurious vehicle like a small drawing-room on wheels, with armchair seats and a little table and silver flower-vases, and all that sort of thing. The lunch-basket was especially put up for them at the Crown Hotel, and if it cost less than a fiver I've missed my guess rather badly.

Now, it's a mystery, and likely to remain so, how Baggy Trimble got wind of the affair. Of course, like Racke & Co., he has his own ways of doing things, and his methods, especially of obtaining information, are unquestionable and as far as they're aware, are theirs. He may have listened at a key-hole, or he may have seen Racke going towards Wayland, and inquisitively followed him, or he may have had the use of some spying machine or may not have occurred where Baggy Trimble is concerned? Suffice it to say that he did become aware of what was going forward, and decided that he might have some share in the proceedings—and the contents of the luncheon-basket.

He kept a close watch on Racke & Co., and when they left St. Jim's after dinner on the afternoon of the excursion, was close on their heels—but not so close that any of them, by glancing back casually, might have a chance to see him. Baggy can be cunning enough sometimes. So Cardew, Racke, Serope, Crooke, and Mellish—who had managed to insinuate himself into the party—reached the garage at Wayland without the slightest suspicion that they were being followed. The

car was ready for them, with the huge basket from the Crown on the front seat to the left of the chauffeur's place, and the select little crowd jumped inside, to loiter luxuriously amid the upholstery and ornate fittings of the interior.

But there was an upholstery for Baggy Trimble. His portion was the luggage-carrier at the back of the car, a by no means enviable abiding-place, but the only one he could command. And it wasn't easy for him to secure possession even of that. He had to wait until the car had been driven out of the garage, inside which he dared not venture for fear of detection, and then take advantage of the first opportunity for jumping on behind. And the opportunity only came his way in consequence of the car having to be turned in the narrow street into which the garage opened, during which manoeuvre he was enabled to clamber hastily on.

He congratulated himself on his success, no doubt, but he soon discovered that it wasn't altogether a matter for congratulation. The streets of Wayland aren't bad for a small town, but they're far from being in first-class condition, and the car swayed and bumped in a manner that was far from comfortable for the occupants of the well-sprung seats inside, let alone Baggy.

His original intention of accompanying Racke & Co. to their destination and suddenly appearing at their meeting when they started on the contents of the hamper began to give place in his mind to a desire to feel his feet on solid ground once more. Gladly would he have jumped off and let the car go without him, but he couldn't do so without running the risk of breaking his neck.

LEFT BEHIND!

It was far from being a joy-ride for poor old Baggy. And the fellows inside were comfortably occupied with cigarettes and a pack of cards, blissfully unconscious of the suffering of their uninvited fellow-passenger.

Racke had made arrangements to get as far away from St. Jim's as possible, and the car had gone thirty miles or so along the main road before it had reached a by-road, full of ruts and pot-holes. More bumps for Baggy! The speed wasn't what it had been on the main road, but even so the car was travelling too fast to make it safe for him to jump off, so he simply clung to the luggage-carrier in a state of nervous collapse.

His cap had gone, his collar had broken loose from the studs, his bags were torn with his friction in the carrier, and he and he was literally smothered with dust. He was whimpering pitifully, and the mixture of tears and dust on his face had grimed his face beyond recognition. He had the feel of his boots and the lower part of his legs had been hanging in the path of the exhaust, and they were streaked with soot and the grease of burnt oils.

They were passing a belt of woodland, and suddenly the car swung round and cut a wide pathway that cut through the middle of it. As might be expected, the car made heavy going of it, and the unfortunate Racke was obliged to get down from end to end and front to back of the carrier before he was finally flung off altogether—right into the middle of a bramble-bush. I expect he yelled blue murder; but if he did he was unheeded, for the car went on deeper into the woods, to stop a hundred yards or so farther on. Not because of Baggy, though. The party happened to have arrived at the spot just as dusk was upon them.

While they were fetching out the grub-bag and stretching themselves after the run, Baggy was crawling from the bush, and picking thorns out of himself. His clothes were a trifle torn and ragged by the time he'd wrenched himself clear, but when he saw that the car had stopped just there he cheered up a trifle. After all, he reflected,

Racke couldn't very well refuse him a mouthful of grub and a bottle of lemonade or ginger-beer after all he'd been through. He plodded on down the path, and there was an exclamation from Racke as he came into view.

"Here's a dashed tramp!" said Racke disgustedly. "Blowed if he isn't coming across to us! Hi, sheer off, Frowsy Freddie!" There was every excuse for Racke's not recognising Baggy, considering the state the fat Fourth-Former was in.

The hapless Baggy called out as he drew nearer—loud, so tried to, but his mouth was so full of dust for him to be able to do more than squeak. Anyway, none of them heard what he was saying, and he simply picked up a siphon of lemonade, with a grin.

"He looks as if he could do with a wash!" he smirked. "Let's see how he likes this!" Pointing the nozzle of the siphon at the approaching figure, he pressed down the lever.

Swis—sssss—sh!
The stream of lemonade squirted into Trimble's face, sluicing off the thick dust and revealing his features.

There was a combined yell of amazement. "Trimble! Well, of all the—"
"How did that fat rotter get here?"

CARDEW'S KINDNESS!

Well, from the general tone of the remarks it didn't seem that Trimble was any too welcome, and when Mellish had another shot at him with the siphon and filled his car with lemonade, he began to get the impression that he wasn't exactly wanted—which was perfectly accurate. He wasn't! What's more, Racke & Co. absolutely and flatly refused to have him, and they chivied him away with a plainly expressed warning of what would happen to him if he came back. Baggy appealed to Cardew, but the dandy of the Fourth shrugged his shoulders, and pointed out that he wasn't in charge of the party—was himself merely a guest, in fact.

In spite of that rebuff, Trimble hung round for a long while—he was about thirty miles or so away from St. Jim's, remember, and he'd got to get back before lock up, and had no means of conveyance at his disposal. But in some mysterious fashion a siphon of lemonade came his way, together with a portion of game-pie, handed surreptitiously by the chauffeur, and I'm inclined to suspect that it was Cardew who bribed the man to be false to his trust to that extent. It's



Pointing the nozzle of the siphon at the approaching Baggy Trimble, Mellish swiss—sssss—the lover.
Swis—sssss—sh!

certain Racke wouldn't have authorised him to do such a thing, and there was nobody else there except Cardew likely to bother about Baggy.

After he'd made short work of those scraps, Baggy limped back on to the road, in the hope of obtaining a lift from some passing lorry-driver, and, fortunately for him, he succeeded. Racke's car passed him half-way home, and, as Baggy knew they'd have left it to the last possible minute before starting back, he realised that he was likely to be late for lock up. And he was, with the result that he wound up a most enjoyable afternoon by taking a liking from Railton.

THE END.



D'ARCY THE DETECTIVE!

(Continued from
page 13.)

don't want to see you, and you know I don't, unless—"
His expression changed and he regarded Cardew hopefully.
"If you've altered your mind—about what I asked you—"

"Perhaps I have."
"Come in!" said Racke.

Cardew closed the door and sat down on the corner of the study table. Racke extended a box of cigarettes, but the dandy of the Fourth shook his head.

"Thanks, no!" I've dropped in for a little talk. Aubrey, old bean. You asked me yesterday to lend you ten pounds."

"And you refused?" grunted Racke.
"Quite so! I'm supposed to be a rather uncertain sort of a merchant, but anybody who asks me for ten pounds can always guess the answer in advance," said Cardew. "I'm a nice fellow, one of the best, but, really, not a philanthropic institution. Besides, it was rather hard to believe that you were hard up—you, rollin' in the giddy paternal War-profits."

Racke scowled.
"I told you I'd had rotten bad luck, and my father refused to stump up again!" he snarled. "I've fairly dunned him, but he seems to think I've had too much this term. I've had a lot, and that's a fact. I'm in a frightful hole! The Lodgey was away for a time, but he's come back, and he's dunnin' me for the money—threatenin' me, too. Crooke won't help me. He says he can't. It wouldn't hurt you to lend me a tenner for a week or two. You know it's safe."

"So I would if you were a friend of mine," said Cardew cheerfully. "As you're not a friend, but rather the reverse, I didn't see it. I don't now."

"Then what the thump have you come here for?" demanded Racke savagely. "There's the door."
"For a little talk, as I said. Do you know that fellows are still sayin' unpleasant things about Levison minor, over that affair of Mr. Selby's banknote?"

Racke started violently.
"What's that got to do with me?" he snapped.
"I wonder!"

Aubrey Racke fixed his eyes on Cardew with an almost venomous expression, trying in vain to conceal his uneasiness and alarm.

"Has Crooke—" he began—and checked himself at once.

"No, dear old Crooke hasn't said anything," chuckled Cardew. "Does Crooke know, then?"

"There's nothin' for him to know," muttered Aubrey Racke, biting his lip hard.

"Sure!" smiled Cardew.

"Yes, hang you! Get out of my study!"

"Not yet, old bean. I'm enjoyin' your genial manners too much. You've rather a good memory, Racke, I think. No doubt you can remember what all the fellows knew—that when Levison minor was bunkin' with that book which had the banknote in it he biffed into you in the corridor and dropped the book. Then Gussy—did you know that Gussy had had become a detective?—even Gussy works it out that that was when the banknote dropped and got itself lost. I remember you were asked if you'd seen anythin' of it, at the time."

Racke gritted his teeth.
"What are you hintin' at, you rotter?"

"I'm not hintin' at anythin', old thing. Just goin' into the matter, as if I were a giddy detective like Gussy!" said Cardew amiably. "Of course, it crossed my mind at the time that you might have picked up the banknote. But knowin' you to be the wealthiest fellow in the school—fairly reekin' with money—it seemed improbable. I don't fancy you're too good for such a thing if you were up against it, but it didn't seem worth your while—a fellow oozin' currency notes, and with a father handin' out money as fast as you could spend it."

"I'm glad you had sense enough to see that," said Racke.

"I'm afraid it showed less than my usual sense, old bean. I rather forgot that circumstances alter cases," said Cardew.

"Knowin' you to be fairly smellin' of money, I didn't think

you were the man to bag another chap's banknote. It didn't seem reasonable. I must say that I never should have thought of you as a possible bagger of banknotes but for what you told me yesterday."

Racke drew a hard breath.

"Yesterday you rather enlightened me," yawned Cardew. "You've been chuckin' your money away so fast this term, on your jolly old gee-ees, that you've gone stony and got into debt, and screwed so much out of your pater that he's put the stopper on. That esteemed and admirable sharper, Lodgey, has been dunnin' you for weeks, and even threatened to show you up at St. Jim's if you don't square—and you can't square. You've even gone to the length of askin' me for the money, and tellin' me the whole tale of woe to soften my hard heart. It had no effect whatever on my heart—but rather enlightened my head."

Cardew paused, with a cheery smile.

"Well, and what are you drivin' at?" muttered Racke between his set teeth. "You dare to suggest—"

"Quite! I never thought of you in connection with the vanishin' banknote because I thought you were up to the ears in money. You've told me that at that very time, as well as before and since, you've been desperate for money! That alters the case—and supplies the motive, as the police jinnies would say."

"You—you—"

"To come down to brass tacks," yawned Cardew, "it's quite clear that you picked up the banknote, Racke, and kept it to tide over your little difficulties."

"You—you rotter!" Racke panted.

"After—you'd spun me your doleful tale yesterday, I know," said Cardew. "I knew before you'd finished 'speakin'."

Racke glared at him.

"Then why didn't you say all this yesterday, instead of to-day?" he said huskily.

Cardew smiled.

"Because it was no business of mine—then."

"It's not your business now."

"That's your little error. It was no bizney of mine, because I thought the affair was over and done with. But it turns out that some fellows are still talkin' about Levison minor, makin' out that he had the banknote all along. Levison's told me so."

"Hang Levison!"

"You see, the old bean happens to be a pal of mine, and my game is to clear the horrid wrinkles of trouble from his baby brow," smiled Cardew. "So I want you to own up, Racke."

"What?" yelled Racke.

"Own up!"

"You—you fool!"

"Dear me! I don't mean that you're to go to the Head and say, 'Please sir, I'm a sneakin' thief. Expel me!'"

The Head's satisfied that the whole affair was a silly jape on Selby—so the whole school, for that matter. Let it go at that. I'm willin' to believe it myself, if you like. Willin' to believe any old thing, so long as you take the last rag of suspicion off Levison minor. You've got to do that."

"Got to?" hissed Racke.

Cardew nodded calmly.

"Got to!" he assented. "Put it anyhow you like—but let all the fellows know that it was you who handled Mr. Selby's banknote. That's the least you can do now!"

"That's the last thing I should think of doing!" snarled Racke.

"Think again, old bean. You don't want me to call on our Housemaster and talk to him about these little matters. And you want me to lend you ten pounds and to keep jolly old Lodgey from comin' up to the school and showin' you up and gettin' you bunked from St. Jim's. Play the game, and clear Levison minor, and you avoid what you don't want—and get what you want. See?"

Racke breathed hard.

"I wouldn't mind ownin' up to a jape. It means a lickin', but—but—" Racke licked his dry lips.

"You think Railton would believe it was—was only a jape on Selby, hidin' the banknote?"

"He believes that already. You needn't tell him that you meant to keep it, and got frightened and put it back."

"It wasn't that," said Racke huskily. "You can believe me or not—I put it back to save Levison of the Fourth. I—I couldn't stand a chap being sacked from the school for what I'd done. I'd have risked anythin' rather. Kot that I expect you to believe me."

Cardew's mocking face softened.

"But I do believe you, old man—I do," he said. "Every chap has his limit—even you, old bean. Look here, Iacke, do the decent thing. It's no bizney of mine how you do it, but do it, and clear that kid in the Third, and I'll see you clear with Lodgey. One good turn deserves another. Is it a go?"

Racke drew a deep breath.

"It's a go!" he said.
 "Good man!"
 Cardew strolled down to the junior Common-room with a smile on his face. Aubrey Racke, with a dogged brow, took his way to Mr. Railton's study.

CHAPTER 9.
 Not Trimble!

"GREAT Scott!"
 "What the thump—"
 "Trimble—"
 "Gussy—"
 "What the merry dickens—"
 There was a buzz of astonishment in the junior Common-room in the School House of St. Jim's.
 Baggy Trimble came bolting into the room like a fat rabbit into a burrow, breathless and panting. He collided with a chair, rolled over, and sprawled on the floor, roaring.

After him came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy at full speed. Unable to stop himself in time, Arthur Augustus stumbled over the sprawling Trimble, and measured his aristocratic length on the floor.

"Carooh!" roared Trimble. "Keep him off! I never did it! I wasn't— Help! Rescue! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Gwoogh! Oh dear!"
 Blake dragged up the breathless Gussy. A crowd of fellows gathered round. Arthur Augustus groped for his eyeglass, and jammed it into his eye.
 "I've got him, you chaps!" he gasped. "Don't let him get away!"

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther chuckled. Evidently D'Arcy the Detective was still on the trail of the hardy Trimble. Baggy, guilty of many things, was undoubtedly innocent on this occasion; but the St. Jim's detective was not to be denied.

"I—I say—" howled Trimble.
 "What's this game?" demanded Cardew.
 "Trimble is the guilty party!" explained Arthur Augustus breathlessly. "Havin' fixed it on him, you know, I was goin' to make him own up before all the fellows—and he has been dodgin' me up and down and wound about—"

"What has he done?" asked Levison of the Fourth.
 "He's the man!"
 "What man?" shrieked Blake.
 "The man that bagged Mr. Selby's banknote and hid it, you know! I have completed the case!" said Detective D'Arcy, with dignity.

Levison stared blankly. There was a roar of laughter from the other fellows. The amateur detective's dignified announcement ought to have impressed the juniors; it was really time for Blake and Herries and Digby to weigh in with "Marvellous!" in the well-known style of Dr. Watson. But they didn't. They yelled.

"Weally, you fellows—"
 "So it's Trimble now, is it?" shrieked Wally of the Third.

"Wasn't it Piggett?" yelled Reggie Manners.
 "Hem! No. Furthah investigation proves that it was Trimble," said the St. Jim's detective. "What are you givinn' at, Levison minor?"

"Was I grinning?" chuckled Frank.
 "Yaas, you young ass! I do not regard it as gwateful to gwin at a fellow who has been workin' hard at this case to clear you!"

"Thanks no end!" said Levison minor. "But—"
 "So Trimble's the jolly old criminal, is he?" chuckled Ralph Reckness Cardew. "This is rich—really rich! How do you make it out, Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I wasn't—I didn't—I never—" babbled Trimble.
 "Stop him!" yelled Arthur Augustus.
 Baggy Trimble was bolting for the door. But the juniors did not stop him; they opened to let him pass. Arthur Augustus rushed after him.

"Stop, you wottah!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Crash!

Baggy Trimble reached the doorway. But he got no farther. For just as he was tearing through, the stalwart figure of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster of the School House, appeared there from the corridor.

There was a terrific collision.
 Baggy Trimble yelled and sat down. Mr. Railton staggered against the door, gasping.

"Why—what—what—what—" he stuttered.
 "Bai Jove!"
 "Trimble! How dare you rush into me like that!" thundered the Housemaster.

"Ow-wow! That beast D'Arcy was after me!" howled Trimble. "I never, did it! I never touched old Selby's banknote—yaroooh!"

"What! D'Arcy! Have you accused Trimble?"
 "I did not mean to report it to you, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "But as Trimble has mentioned the matter, I have to inform you, sir, that I have investigated the case, and proved beyond doubt that it was Trimble who played a jape with Mr. Selby's banknote!"

"You absurd boy!"
 "Eh?"
 "Silence! My boys," said Mr. Railton, looking round.

"I came here to make a statement, which I desire to be known to the whole House, on this very subject. You all know that some boy picked up Mr. Selby's banknote, and kept it back for a time, and restored it in an anonymous manner. The foolish boy who played this foolish trick has now admitted it."

"Oh!"
 Levison's face brightened. Cardew smiled.
 "It was Racke of the Shell," went on Mr. Railton. "He came to my study of his own accord and confessed to having played that foolish trick."

"Racke!" murmured Tom Merry.
 "Bai Jove!"

"As Racke made a voluntary confession," said Mr. Railton, "I have not punished him; I think that the trouble he has caused will be a warning to him in the future. The matter is now quite cleared up. That is all."

And the Housemaster walked away, leaving the crowded room in a buzz.

"It was decent of Racke to own up," remarked Tom Merry.
 "Wasn't it?" smiled Cardew.

Levison of the Fourth looked very bright. He smiled cheerily as he met his minor's eyes.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's face was a study. His aristocratic cheeks were very pink. Even D'Arcy the Detective realised now that there was a screw loose somewhere in his masterly chain of reasoning. Baggy Trimble chortled.

"What have you got to say now, D'Arcy?" he hooted.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus had nothing to say. He faded out of the Common-room, to hide his blushes in the seclusion of Study No. 6. It was likely to be a long time before Arthur Augustus again exercised his wonderful gifts as a detective!

But everyone else was satisfied; even Aubrey Racke was kindly looked upon for having spoken up at last and cleared the last vestige of suspicion from Levison minor. The unfortunate affair of Mr. Selby's banknote was done with at last—though that happy conclusion was not due to D'Arcy the Detective!

THE END.

(There will be another topping tale of Tom Merry & Co. next week, entitled: "SAVING THE HEAD!" by Martin Clifford. Be sure you read this powerful yarn, chums—you will rate it one of the finest school stories you have ever read.)

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CHAPTER I.

A Brainy Idea!

"THE gov'nor ain't comin' aboard till the evenin' train arrives from Lunnon." Old Tom Sprigg added something unprintable about "they rheumatics" as he clambered over the little rail into his own dilapidated boat. "I got a telegram from 'im this mornin' sayin' as we wasn't ter git under way till 'e comes down this evenin'. Now, I gotter go an' see of old Bill Arper's finished that noo job as the gov'nor ordered."

As the old man rowed away from the side of the yacht Kenneth Cranmore turned to his heavy chum, whose circular face rose above the hatchway like the sun rising over the sea at dawn.

"Puggles, my lad," he said, "I shall sue my uncle for breach of promise when he does come aboard this evening. He expressly told me in his last letter, which I carefully read to you in our dormitory two nights ago, that he would arrive as soon as we did this morning, and that we should be under way for Burnham by lunch-time. Hearken unto the news that our worthy 'caretaker' friend has spoken, and behold, you'll see my avuncular relative has placed business before yachting. An unpardonable sin, my friend."

Puggles stirred his great form which completely filled the cabin door, while a grin slowly took possession of the whole of his rubeicund face, from his towled red hair to his second chin.

Puggles wasn't his name really. If you ever have a chance to examine his birth certificate you will see that he is a 1909 Model-de-Luxe, and has had bestowed upon him by adoring relatives the names—Algeron Dawson John Hillbright Protheroe. This is far too much for the short-winded fellows in Protheroe's House at St. Mark's, and they promptly christened their genial schoolmate "Puggles."

Puggles, of course, didn't take to the name at all at first, and suggested that they could, as a favour, call him Algy, as his people did at home. But the fellows only declared that if Puggles wouldn't do then he could choose Lo.

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tween Patty, Witty, and Barrel. On consideration, Puggles chose his name, and said that, now he came to think of it, he rather liked it. And so throughout the school he was the general favourite who good-naturedly answered to the name of Puggles.

"Well," he said, with a contented sigh, as he forced his bulk through the narrow doorway into the well, "it's very comfy lying on our moorings here, and we've got plenty to eat aboard, so what more do we want? You're forever eating, or wanting to eat." Kenneth put an arm over the lifeless tiller, and gazed across the water towards the little causeway behind which the village of Wiggleslea lay half asleep in the afternoon sunshine. "For my part, I'm sick of lying here doing nothing, with this nice breeze blowing to waste. Uncle won't be down till dark, and it's not yet four o'clock, and old Tom will be in the Laughing Oyster till the evening train crawls in. So I vote, my dear P, that we go for a sail while the wind holds, and be back before sunset."

The idea was so good that it didn't take the two inseparables long to act on it, and within ten minutes the old Heron was gliding out of Wiggleslea Creek, with her bowsprit pointing for the open sea.

The two boys knew the old yacht well, for they had joined Kenneth's uncle for a fortnight's cruise every summer vac. for several years, and there were not many little tricks of the trim little seven-tonner not known to them.

The time of high water had passed, and they carried a sluicing ebb under them, that hurried the vessel along in spite of the lightness of the breeze. With the wind off the land, the sea was comparatively smooth, and the hours slipped by unnoticed. They were several miles off shore before Ken noticed how the time was flying. The sun, a blood-red disc, was nearly kissing the distant horizon, and the breeze itself was imperceptibly dying away.

The Heron was put about in her own sluggish way, and began to tack back towards the distant shoreline against the ebb tide.

"It'll be a long beat back," murmured Ken, as he cast his eye once more aloft

where the barge fluttered lazily at the masthead. "If the wind only holds we ought to be able to make over this tide. I shall have to cut the Gunfleet pretty close to save going right round the sands."

The regular sound of molars steadily at work and the occasional clink of a knife on a plate were the only sounds that came from the cabin. The breeze could drop or do anything, so far as Puggles was concerned; the tea-table was his sole interest at present.

Suddenly a dull, rasping sound came from the yacht's keel, the dinghy came up and struck her counter, and the tiller at once felt "dead." Puggles looked up for a moment, with his mouth too full to ask what was the matter.

"We're aground!" his friend explained impatiently. "Tried to cut the Gunfleet too fine, and just hit the end of the sand."

With the tide falling rapidly, no effort with the long quant-pole could move the yacht an inch. She was on the sand, lard and fast. The sails were got down one by one, and furled neatly while the Heron gradually settled over on her bilge as the water left her and the sun sank below the horizon. Kenneth carried the anchor out across the hard yellow sand, and "planted" it in readiness for hauling off when the tide would float her in six hours' time.

Night closed in, and the two chums made themselves as comfortable as they could in a cabin at an angle of thirty degrees out of the horizontal. Puggles was steadily reducing the overall size of a bag of biscuits, while his chum made the disheartening discovery that they had forgotten to get matches in the village, and there was not one aboard.

The hours passed slowly.

Suddenly Ken sat bolt upright, listening.

"What was that?" he whispered.

Puggles' jaw stopped in the lowest position, and he also listened. The sound of men's voices, speaking in low tones, came faintly to the two chums.

Ken looked out through the open skylight. At first he could see nothing, but gradually his eyes could make out the dim, white form of another yacht which was barely moving in the faint



air perhaps a quarter of a mile away. Not a light showed on her, and no further sounds came from her. She might easily have been a mirage, so still and ghostly did she appear. Puggles was, however, essentially practical.

"They haven't seen us," he said blandly, "because of our black-painted sides. Why not hail them, or row out in the dinghy and ask them for a box of matches? We could make some hot coffee then. I'm dying for a hot drink."

"Yes, you appear to be wasting away, poor chap!" chuckled his companion. "But your idea, connected though it is with your eternal tummy, is sound. Are you coming, too?"

In a few minutes the two boys were rowing quietly towards the other vessel. Somehow, she looked almost sinister now, and the fact that her crew was so silent and she was breaking all rules by not carrying a light of any kind, not even her regulation red-and-green navigation lights, was strange.

As Ken sculled nearer, he could make out the yacht's outline better. She was a rakish kind of vessel, somewhat larger than the Heron, a fast, racing type, with a tall mast, setting a slim "Bermuda" mainsail. Somehow, as he looked intently at her, Ken felt that she was dimly familiar to him, but he could not at the moment "place" her. Even in this semi-darkness she was getting through the water at an uncanny rate, yet she had no motor running, for they would have heard it.

"Look! They're showing a light!" Ken ceased pulling, and turned again at Puggles' remark. A green light that kept up an incessant flashing was playing on the white mainsail, which appeared ghostly in the unnatural light.

"They seem to be signalling out to sea," muttered Ken. "I wonder why? It's not done in the best yachting circles, you know."

Sounds of gruff voices again came across the water, but neither of the chums could make out what was said. A puff of wind came, and the yacht, heeling slightly, forged ahead and drew away from the dinghy.

"We can't catch her up unless this breeze dies away," Ken said quietly. "But I'd like to know what's up. I wonder if— Look there!"

His attention had been riveted by a white light which had suddenly flashed out across the water from beyond the yacht. Someone had brought a white lantern on to the deck of the latter, and was waving it slowly.

"Listen!" Ken's quick ear had caught the steady throb-throb of a steamer's engines.

"That other light's on a steamer!" he whispered excitedly. "Now what can the game be? What does a steamer of all things want to be messing about amongst these sands and shoals for, and why is she also carrying no regulation lights? And what on earth has the yacht to do with her? We'll just look into this, me hearty!"

Puggles shifted uneasily on the hard seat.

"Can't we go back to the Heron and get something to eat first?" he asked plaintively. "I'm feeling faint with cold and hunger, and I'm sick of chasing a will-o'-the-wisp yacht about the ocean for a blessed box of matches."

Ken was too intent to answer his chum's remark. The two lights were drawing close together now, perhaps a mile away. Suddenly an engine-room telegraph clanged, and the slow throbbing ceased. Voices called from the steamer, and were answered from the

yacht, but again neither of the boys could make out what was said.

CHAPTER 2.

A Thrilling Encounter!

ON the eastern horizon the sky was paling slightly, and the first signs of the dawn were becoming apparent. Between the ever-lightening sky and themselves the chums could just make out the dim silhouette of a small steamer, with the mysterious white yacht rounding-up alongside. Astern of them the Heron was almost invisible in the gloom, and it was obvious that neither she nor the chums' dinghy had been seen by anyone on the other yacht. Presently the sounds of great activity, of guttural voices, and of boxes being handled on iron decks came across the still water from the direction of the two mysterious vessels.

"They're either loading something from the steamer on to the yacht," whispered Ken, as he began to pull towards them, "or vice versa. I wonder what it can be? It's something prearranged, for the steamer was obviously looking for the yacht here to-night. Let's try and get closer."

Puggles brightened up a little and shivered.

"Yes," he assented; "and don't forget to ask for those matches. I shall die of cold if I don't get some coffee soon."

The dinghy silently approached the two vessels from the unoccupied side of the little steamer. In the pale light they could see the yacht's tall mast standing up the other side to the level of the tramp's grimy funnel. All the crew were engaged on the other side of the steamer, handling heavy cases or boxes which, it was now apparent, they were lifting up from the yacht on to the steamer's deck.

Unnoticed, the two chums crept up under the stern of the rusty steam-

ship, and Ken peered up at the overhanging counter in the hope of making out her name and port of registry. But the strange letters defied solution.

"She's Russian!" he whispered excitedly. "That's the language they're talking!"

He sculled carefully up to the massive iron rudder. Then suddenly a look of intense excitement came into his face.

"I know where I've seen her before!" he hissed.

"What?" queried Puggles innocently. "This old tea-kettle?"

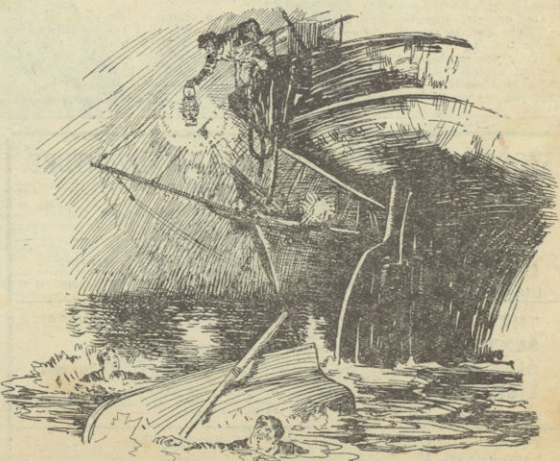
"No, the yacht. She's the new racing cutter that was built this year at Kiel for Sir Aubrey Molstone. He's the well-known yachtsman who keeps a big old place down the coast and owns three different boats. He's a member of half the yacht clubs on the East Coast!" Ken was whispering excitedly now. "Now, what on earth is the reason for one of Sir Aubrey Molstone's boats to arrange to meet this Russian tramp steamer within ten miles of the Essex Coast on a night like this? What's in the wind? I wonder if someone's stolen the yacht? If so, why the steamer? Hold on to the rudder a moment, Puggy!"

Puggles leaned forward to grasp the iron rudder, but his hand fell short. With a piercing yell, the stout youth pitched forward, the dinghy lurched under his weight, and in a trice the two lads found themselves in the water with their upturned dinghy floating beside them.

Immediately there was a shout, and then the dinghy from the white yacht came to their help, and in a few minutes they were standing on the iron deck of the Russian steamer, confronted by a number of her crew. One man, with glaring eyes and a black beard, stood out from the others, who respectfully made way for him. He glared first at one and then at the other of the two lads.

"Vers you come from, ha?"

Ken looked the man straight in the face before answering.



Leaning forward, Puggles tried to grasp the iron rudder of the mysterious steamer, but his hand fell short. With a piercing yell he pitched forward, and the dinghy lurching under his weight upturned, precipitating its crew into the water!

"We're out from Wigglesea, and ran aground on the Gum—"

"Pool! You lie! You no yacht-man! You spy on me, ha? I teach you spy on me, you English dogs!"

The Russian skipper waded excitedly towards the two boys, and barked out an order. Immediately some of the crew caught hold of the chums' arms and endeavoured to bind them. But they hadn't reckoned on Ken's fists until four of the ruffians had reeled back with heavy blows between the eyes.

The skipper stamped and raved and cursed them in Russian and English. But weight of numbers told in the end, and the boys were securely bound with their hands behind them.

"I say, skipper," wailed Puggles plaintively, "we didn't come to be trussed up like this. We only wanted some matches."

The skipper barked out another order, and the two lads felt themselves lifted up and carried along the deck. As they went a voice came from the yacht alongside that made Ken jump.

"There are four more machine-guns in parts to come," it drawled, "which makes, I believe, eight machine-guns, four cases of rifles, and twelve boxes of ammunition. That load ought to satisfy the Syndicate, and all that." Then it added something rapidly in a low, guttural voice. The last time Ken had heard that voice was at the Wigglesea Yacht Club's annual dinner, when the popular Rear-Commodore, Sir Aubrey Molstone, had made a much-applauded speech.

"Gun-running!" he hissed beneath his breath. "And that's what Sir Aubrey went across to Kiel to have a yacht built for!"

They were carried below and thrown down together on the floor of a dark cabin. The door closed behind them, and they were left alone.

"I wish I could have my hot coffee," murmured Puggles. "I shall die of cold in this draught with my clothes so wet. I'd have brought a towel if I'd known you wanted to swim after this blessed ship, and then—"

"Oh, dry up, Puggles, and listen to me!" cut in his friend. "I've got a scheme."

"Well, you're better off than me. I've got a chill!"

"Never mind that, Pug; it'll soon go. Now, you see what their little game is?"

That popular yachtsman, who is also rear-commander of our club, is a traitor! He's using at least one of his yachts, and probably all three, for gun-running. He's probably making a fortune out of it, and it's up to us to stop it!"

"If I can't have some coffee soon I shan't be alive to stop anything!" wailed Puggles dismally.

"Blow your hot coffee, Puggles!" said his chum. "This is serious, if you'd only realise it. Don't you see that, with this lot of machine-guns and rifles aboard, this Trotsky packet will be able to proceed to treat across the North Sea to some Russian port and there hand over the cargo to the revolutionaries?"

"Lor!"

"Now, what we've got to do is to seize this steamer and hand her over to the authorities."

"Oh, quite, and enclose return postage, in case they don't want her. Anything else while we're here? Do talk sense, Ken!"

The telegraph clanged suddenly, and the slow throb of the steamer's engines commenced again. Ken wormed his way alongside his chum, and held his bound wrists before that unhappy youth's face.

For once in his life Puggles practised molars were used for something other than food, and in a few minutes Ken's hands were free. It was now only the matter of a moment to free his legs and then his chum.

"Now for it!" he whispered.

"Follow me!"

The cabin door had been left unlocked. Stealthily they passed through into the dark passage. There was not a soul in sight, and the rhythmic throb and clatter of the engines drowned any noises they were likely to make.

Ken led the way up a short ladder to a door which led on to the deck. He peeped out and found no one in sight except the man on the bridge, who had his back turned. Behind the bridge was the chart-house, where voices could be heard distinctly.

The two chums crept along the exposed deck until they reached the chart-house. Through a porthole near the door they could see the skipper seated at the table with his chief officer. They were talking earnestly in Russian.

Ken put his hand on the door knob.

"When I open the door," he whispered "rush in and tackle the mate!"

But as he spoke footsteps sounded along the deck.

"Quick! Up here!" he hissed, and Puggles found himself dragged up on to the roof of the chart-house, where he lay flat beside the open skylight.

The second mate rounded the corner and knocked at the door, unaware that the two prisoners were within two feet of his head. When he had entered and joined the other two at the table, Ken nudged Puggles' arm, and pointed through the big skylight.

"Now for it!" he hissed. "Both together!"

Like an avalanche the two lads dropped together through the open skylight on to the table. The others were too astounded to shout. Ken's fist shot out twice, and the two mates reeled back heavily and fell to the floor.

Puggles, with the light of battle in his eye, fell upon the speechless skipper, and that mortal discovered that he could not stand up against fourteen-stone-odd of infuriated humanity in one solid mass. He also fell to the floor, where Puggles sat on him and effectively prevented him from moving or breathing sufficiently to shout.

Hurriedly Ken bound and gagged the two mates with ropes and flags out of the signal locker. Then he turned his attention to the skipper, who was looking somewhat crushed under Puggles' pressing invitation to remain still. When the three were all bound and gagged Ken searched the chart-room, and took from a drawer two loaded revolvers, one of which he handed to his chum.

"With these beauties safely tied up," he muttered grimly, "we can get command of the bridge and take the vessel back to the Thames or to Harwich."

As he spoke, footsteps sounded along the deck and stopped outside the door.

Ken had just time to pull his chum hastily behind the door as it opened. A seaman entered, caught sight of the three trussed-up forms and gasped. Instantly the butt of Ken's pistol descended on his head with a dull thud, and the man fell forward across the still form of the first mate.

"Come along! There's no time to lose!"

Ken dragged the bewildered Puggles outside and carefully locked the door behind them.

"That A.B. will recover consciousness before long and raise the alarm," he hissed. "So we must be pretty smart!"

As he turned, his eye caught sight of a steamer which was nearly hull down on the horizon, but obviously steaming in a direction which would result in her passing fairly close to the Russian vessel.

"I have it!" he cried. "We must disguise this boat in some way!"

He paused for a moment, then, with his mind made up, dashed along the deck towards the engine-room door.

CHAPTER 3.

A Sensational Capture!

THERE was nobody in sight on deck except the man at the wheel on the bridge, and the lookout right forward.

Ken stopped at the open doorway. Below him, in murky gloom, his fascinated eyes watched big ends and connecting-rods, crossheads, and eccentrics working together to a rhythmic clatter and hum of sound, while from the boiler-room bulkhead to the high-pressure steam chest, sinuous as a snake, ran the main steam-pipe. His eyes followed

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it along until they rested on a point where it made a sharp, right-angled turn.

His jaw set very hard, and he raised his revolver and took careful aim. There was a sharp report, and immediately a dull roar sounded throughout the ship, and hissing steam filled the engine-room like a scalding fog, while the engines slowly came to a standstill.

Breathlessly the two chums dashed behind one of the ship's lifeboats. Men were now running aft, shouting excitedly, and the whole ship was in uproar. The steam was still roaring from the fractured pipe and pouring out of the fiddley in long, ghostly wisps. Then suddenly there was silence. The engineer had turned steam off at the boilers. And almost simultaneously the chart-room door was burst open and four infuriated figures rushed out.

Ken gripped his friend's arm as they crouched behind the lifeboat.

"Quick! Up here! They'll search for us presently."

The two boys scrambled quietly up the clinker sides of the boat and, lifting part of the canvas cover that stretched over the whole of the boat, they crept inside. The rage of the skipper when he learnt what was the matter and realised what had caused this breakdown was colossal. He stormed and raved up and down the deck, cursing the lads in Russian until he had exhausted that language, when he said the rest in English. He bellowed several orders in Russian to the crew, and soon the boys could hear the men searching the ship for them.

"I wonder where that other steamer is?" muttered Ken. "She ought to be within a mile or so by now."

He would have peeped out from under the cover, but at that moment he heard the skipper and one of the mates talking close against the boat. If they made a sound they would be discovered like rats in a hole, he thought.

Suddenly Puggles sat up and drew in a deep breath.

"Atishoo!" Puggles had never yet learnt to suppress a sneeze, and this failing had got him into more than one scrape.

In a moment the cover of the boat had been torn off, and the lads were dragged out and bound hand and foot. The skipper's evil face was thrust into Ken's.

"Ha! You dirty English pigs!" He spat at them, waving his arms wildly. "I got you now! I show you sit on me!"

He barked out an order, and the two boys were carried down into the reeking engine-room, which was not yet quite clear of steam. Here the skipper directed them to be laid together on the floor close to the gaping rent in the steam pipe. Then he kicked them both.

"Ha, now we see who laugh last!" he grunted. "I have steam turn on, and you find it too hot, eh?"

With a leering grin, the brute turned away and left the boys alone on the floor of the engine-room. In a few minutes the engineer would turn on steam again, and the chums would be almost instantly scalded to death.

Fascinated by the awful fate that awaited them, the boys could not at first take their eyes off the gaping hole in the pipe within three feet of their faces. The engineer's hand might even at that moment be gripping the wheel that controlled the steam from the boilers.

Suddenly Ken's eye caught sight of a little auxiliary engine, which separate from the main engines and taking its steam by means of its own steam pipe, was still running, charging the electric



"Now for it!" cried Kenneth. "Both together!" Like an avalanche the two lads dropped together through the open skylight and on to the table around which sat the crew of the mysterious steamer.

light of the ship. Ken's eyes were fascinated by the flywheel as it purred round at twelve hundred revolutions per minute.

"I have it!" he cried excitedly.

Feverishly he wriggled his way across the greasy floor till he reached the engine. Then he put his hands towards it and reached backward until his wrists touched the rim of the wheel. The contact burnt his flesh, but he found a position in which the entire friction was taken by the cord that bound his wrists. Rapidly the rope was burnt through.

With his hands free he frantically freed his legs. There was not a second to be lost. Then he picked up his weighty chum, who was still bound hand and foot, and staggered up an iron ladder leading to a grating at the after-end of the engine-room. As he did so a sudden roar came from behind him, and the engine-room was immediately filled again with scalding steam.

His nostrils were scalded, his senses reeled, and his legs tottered beneath their double burden. Slowly he staggered up the last few steps through the suffocating steam, and at last lurched through a door into a passage. Here he sank down to the floor.

But the cold air soon revived him, and he set to and unbound his grateful comrade. Then, as his hand touched his pocket, he discovered that he still had the revolver there, which he had forgotten to use. Puggles had his, also, for he had stuffed it into his pocket, as he was afraid it might go off in his hand.

Looking through a porthole, Ken caught sight of the other steamer, which was barely a mile away. A string of flags fluttered from her mizen-mast, and slowly Ken made out the signal: "Do you want assistance?"

"Come on, Puggles!" he cried excitedly. "We must gain the bridge."

The two inseparables dashed out on to the deck. All the crew were afloat, waiting to go down to inspect their dastardly work in the engine-room as soon as the steam cleared, only the man at the wheel was forward of the engine-room.

In half a dozen bounds Ken raced up the companion and gained the bridge. He raised the revolver to the terrified man's face.

"Move and I'll shoot you!" he hissed.

Then he reached up for the whistle-cord, which swept by his head in a parabolic curve to the funnel, and the siren bellowed out the signal: "We want assistance!" Below the bridge, Puggles, his courage conquering his fear that the pistol might go off at any moment, was keeping the rest of the crew at bay.

In a quarter of an hour the other steamer's boat was alongside, and as the officer in charge climbed over the rail his look of amazement as he took in the situation turned to one of determination when Ken acquainted him with the facts.

In due course the other steamer, the English Rose, took charge of the disabled Russian, while the whole of her crew were placed under arrest, and towed her to the nearest English port.

During the sensational trial that ensued both Ken's and Puggles' names were suppressed by request, but their part in running to earth a German who for twenty years had masqueraded as an English gentleman and popular yachtsman, whose name was, in fact, Herr Schulman Kreissler, and not Sir Aubrey Molstone, as people believed, and who organised one of the biggest gun-running schemes ever known, was duly acknowledged by the Government.

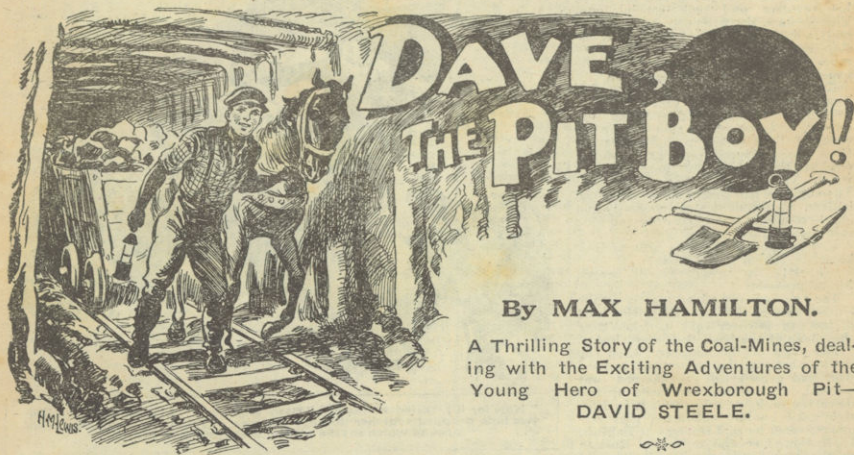
But more important still was the attitude adopted by Ken's uncle, when the coastguards who found the old Heron deserted and anchored close to the Gunfleet Sands, handed her over to her rightful owner, that benevolent man decided that he was really getting too old for yachting. He, therefore, made a present of the trim little seven-tonner to the two chums.

THE END.

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IN THE DOCK! Standing in the dock on a charge of murder, David Steele glances anxiously at the judge and jury on whom his fate depends!



By MAX HAMILTON.

A Thrilling Story of the Coal-Mines, dealing with the Exciting Adventures of the Young Hero of Wrexborough Pit—**DAVID STEELE.**

WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

LEAVING the little North-country village of Thorpe Western, **DAVID STEELE**, an ambitious young lad of fifteen, decided to try his fortune in Wrexborough.

With a few shillings in his pocket, and with a tramp of thirty to forty miles to his destination, the sturdy country lad sets off.

Utterly tired out at night, the lad sought a sheltered place, into which he crept. But hardly had he dropped off to slumber when he was aroused by hurried movements near at hand. He was alert almost on the instant, and, on making investigations, found, to his horror, the bound figure of a man lying on the permanent-way at the mercy of an express train which was at that moment due.

With great presence of mind, the lad dragged the inert form to safety just a fraction of a second before the great train rushed by.

David then learned that he had rescued Mr. Scott, the owner of the Wrexborough coal-mines. David was offered a job in the mine, and gratefully accepted.

Mr. Scott's manner was very strange after that; for not only did he ask Steele to keep the whole affair a secret, but he also found the lad accommodation with a man named Markham, his own assistant!

Markham had recognised Steele, too, and had made many unsuccessful attempts to get the lad out of the way.

Later, by a strange coincidence, Steele gets wise to another plot to capture Scott. But he is unable to warn the mine-owner, for he is caught spying and made prisoner.

He effects an escape, however, and finds that Scott has been chained to a wall in one of the disused pits by his brother George,

who has made an unavailing attempt to extort money from the wealthy mine-owner.

David brings a supply of food to the prisoner, and is attempting to get away again when he meets Markham, who, in trying to endanger the lad's life, gets hoist with his own petard.

Meanwhile, George Scott, having so far failed in his rascally mission, usurps his brother's place and brings his dastardly vengeance to bear upon the miners. Wrexborough is soon in a state of uproar; and George Scott's life is in jeopardy, when Dave makes a dramatic appearance in defence of his enemy.

Having escaped the power of the rioters, the crafty Scott turns again upon Dave, and takes from the lad's pocket a written confession he had signed a short time before. Then, leaving Dave a prisoner, he flees. The pitboy gains his freedom, and is fleeing from some of Markham's allies later, when he loses his way on the moor.

In the dead of night he hears a cry of pain, and, following the direction from whence it came, he finds himself outside a disused house, from which someone had just made a hurried exit. Pushing open the door, David enters, to find a long, curved knife lying on the stone steps. He picks it up, but, too dazed to think clearly, and feeling utterly exhausted, he seeks repose in a heap of hay, the knife still clasped tightly in his hand.

A sound of voices suddenly arouses him, however, and, to his horror, he finds himself surrounded by a posse of police, who, having found the body of a murdered man on the premises, accuse Dave of the murder.

He is being marched off to Wrexborough Gaol when the column is brought up by the sound of voices raised in fury.

"A row!" says the sergeant in charge. "Quick march, men!"

(Now read on.)

The Riot in the Square!

AS the little column of police—some thirty in number—swung hastily round the corner into the next street, it became evident that "row" was a very mild description of the tumult that was going on. As yet, nothing of it was visible; but shouts, shrieks, and now and then a stentorian word of command, could be heard blended into one furious whole.

"It's in the market-square!" exclaimed Wilmot. "Second to the right, and the end of the street."

Five minutes more and the market-square was before them—a tumultuous mass of seething, shouting humanity. In the centre of the square a solid mass of blue was wedged in and surrounded by an angry crowd that was pressing on it from all quarters and striving to bear it down. Against overwhelming numbers, the constables were defending themselves vigorously with their truncheons, but it seemed as if it would not be long before their resistance must be overcome.

From the street opposite to that by which David and his conductors had reached the scene of combat another batch of police were trying to cut a way through the crowd to their comrades. But the market-square was so thronged

with miners that even had the latter been peaceably inclined, it would have been no light matter to force a passage through them.

Over all the uproar one sound was clearly distinguishable, or, rather, two—shouts of "Stevens!" and "Rescue!" David, quivering with excitement, but helpless among his blue-coated guardians, guessed in an instant what had happened. Stevens had been arrested for his share in the riot of the day before, and the miners of Wrexborough had risen as one man, and were attempting to succour their champion on his way to the police-station.

The situation was a serious one, for each moment the crowd of rioters was, if possible, growing thicker. There were seven or eight streets leading to the market-square, and from all quarters, as the news spread through the town, men had rushed at full speed with cries of "Rescue!" and "Stevens!"

It did not take the sergeant a moment to issue his commands:

"Six of you take the prisoner and Mr. Scott into one of these houses. Don't stir out till this is over. The rest, draw your truncheons."

The weapons were quickly drawn in readiness for a charge upon the rear of the mob; but the first part of the order was not so easily obeyed. The inhabitants of the nearest house at whose door they tried to enter—a widow lady of exceeding nervousness, and her cook—had locked and bolted

themselves in as soon as the uproar began, and greeted the attempts of the police to enter with a series of piercing yells.

"Try the next," said the sergeant impatiently. But the next householder—a grocer—was apparently no less cautious. His door was fast and his shutters up.

"Try all the doors till you get in somewhere," said the exasperated sergeant. "If not in this street, then in the next; but see you aren't attacked. I can't wait any longer. Now then, men, charge!"

And at the double they charged—all save the half-dozen mounting guard over David and Scott.

Their attack was unexpected, and for the moment the crowd, taken in the rear, gave way with yells of fear and fury. But the thickness and solidity of the mass behind them made it impossible for them to give way for long. From sheer necessity they rallied and met the policemen's truncheons with sticks and fists.

Still the constables, keeping in a compact and wedgelike formation, began to gain ground and to surge forward, slowly enough, towards the centre of the square.

"They're gaining on 'em!" said one of the men who guarded David, watching the struggle with distended eyes. "Lor, what a lovely scum! Hard luck to be left out of it—oh?"

"We'd better get into shelter," said the comrade he addressed regretfully. "Here, Evans, try your hand on that knocker, will you?"

Evans tried it, with the result that a chorus of feminine shrieks arose from the interior of the building.

"Another lot o' ladies in highstrikes!" he said sarcastically. "I reckon this is a nervous street, and we'd better try another."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth than a new complexion was put on affairs, and the six policemen saw themselves on the point of being after all engaged in "the lovely scum," in which they had hitherto not been allowed to join.

It had seemed to David that every man in Wrexborough must be crowded into that market-square; but he was now provided with ocular proof that this was not the case.

At the opposite end of the street to the square—the end by which he and his escort had entered it—a small crowd of men, miners and roughs, wild with excitement, suddenly swung round the corner, yelling "Rescue!" and "Down with the police!" at the pitch of their voices.

These newcomers were about fifty or sixty strong, and it was easy to see that they were of the rougher and lower sort of the Wrexborough population. It did not take long for them to spy the little body of police that surrounded Scott and David, and to bear down upon it with threatening shouts.

The main body of constables, under Sergeant Watts, were now swallowed up by the crowd in the square, through which they were slowly and doggedly ploughing their way. Retreat upon them, even if the little squad had not been encumbered with the sick man's litter, was therefore an impossibility.

The situation was an ugly one. The six policemen had only just time to range themselves in order of battle by placing Scott and their prisoner against the wall of the nearest house and forming a semi-circle round them, before they were attacked by a mob that outnumbered them ten to one.

"Where are those blessed soldiers?" growled Constable Evans, not quite so enthusiastic for fighting now that he saw the odds against him, as he drew his truncheon and prepared to meet the charge of the advancing mob. "Sittin' and eatin' their fat heads off, I suppose, while we're havin' ours broke in!"

But Constable Evans wronged the Dragons. On the first alarm Captain Mowbray, the officer in command, had turned out his men and ridden hot-foot to the market-square only to find even more difficulty than the police had done in penetrating to the scene of the strife. Naturally, having cavalry under his command, he had taken the main street leading into the square, the others being chiefly narrow little lanes in which it would be impossible to properly manoeuvre mounted men.

Unfortunately for him, the crowd had got wind of his coming; and their experience of the previous evening had taught them the uselessness of defying a cavalry charge, and inspired some of them, at least, with the cunning to combat it in other ways.

That day should have been market-day in Wrexborough, and although the lock-out

and consequent scarcity had sadly shorn the market of its customary glories, a number of stalls had been erected—stalls which had been overturned when the riot began—and their contents ruthlessly scattered, despite the lamentations of their frightened owners.

When word was brought that the Dragons were leaving their quarters to disperse the mob, some military genius among the miners conceived the idea of placing a few of these overturned stalls across the High Street where it effectively, though not so effectively, barred the way to the square. The plan was hastily, but quite a barrier quite formidable enough to preclude any idea of riding over it.

Captain Mowbray saw at once that horses were no use against the barricade in front of him; so, sending off half his force in a couple of detachments to find—if they could—another and unobstructed entrance to the square, he dismounted the rest of his men and led them on foot against the obstacle, ordering them to use the butt-end of their carbines, not their swords, so as to avoid bloodshed.

It was soon evident that the Dragons were not to be allowed to gain possession of the barricade without a struggle. As they sped down the street towards it at the double they were met, not only by shouts of defiance, but by showers of apples, oranges and other vegetable ammunition, which the crowd had snatched up from the market stalls. Needless to say, it was the boys among the throng who were most active in this vegetable warfare—and one of the liveliest participants in it was Micky Jones.

That small person, who, like most of the youth of Wrexborough, had drifted on to the outskirts of the riot, was in a state of vague uncertainty as to what it was all about. But that did not prevent him from being keenly interested in a pit-boy who had climbed to the top of the barricade with a basket of oranges, which he was energetically hurling at the advancing Dragons.

In an instant Micky had scrambled up beside the enterprising warrior, and was helping himself from his ammunition basket.

"Golly! Got 'im!" he yelled, beside himself with delight, as a juicy Java orange flattened itself on the breast of one of the soldiers.

By this time the Dragons had reached the edge of the double row of overturned stalls which formed the barricade. The overturned legs and broken tables were not easy things to climb over; and it was at this point that the fire of the defenders was of necessity the most galling.

A big corporal, who was the first man to attempt to negotiate the obstacle, was sent staggering to the ground by a gigantic cabbage, delivered at short range; and the man who sprang over him to lead the advance was blinded for the moment by a well-aimed swede.

Shouts of triumph greeted each successful shot; and Micky's glory was complete when he succeeded in planting an over-ripe orange in the eye of Captain Mowbray himself. "Jim!" he shrieked. "Jim, I've wounded the general!"

His triumph was short-lived. In his excitement he overbalanced himself and fell to the ground behind the barricade.



Instinctively, David raised his shackled wrists above his head, and as the rioter went to deliver his stroke he brought them down with all his might.

Before he could struggle to his feet again there was a general backward surge as the defenders came leaping down from the improvised fortification, for, in spite of the heat of the fusillade, the soldiers had forced the rioters back, and were now reforming as well as they could, preparatory to pushing their way into the heart of the square.

For a few moments Micky was in actual danger of suffocation, as the crowd and the Dragoons alternately poured over him; but at last he succeeded in creeping out of the press and making his way into the High Street, with rather mingled feelings on the subject of engaging regular troops.

But it was only on that side of the square that resistance had been overcome; in other quarters it raged as fiercely as ever, and nowhere more fiercely than where the small ring of policemen surrounded David and Scott.

To David the worst part of the situation was the horrible helplessness. Handcuffed, and leaning against the wall, he watched with starting eyes the combat as it swayed and surged around him. The police stood up gallantly against the overwhelming attack, and using their truncheons scientifically, succeeded at first in making some impression upon the front ranks of the undisciplined mob. But sheer weight of numbers told before long, and it was evident that, unless help came, the unequal struggle could not long continue.

The uproar around him penetrated even to Scott's exhausted senses, and roused him from the half slumber, half stupor in which he had been lying. Dazed and astonished, he raised himself upon his litter and stared about him uncomprehendingly at the blue backs of the policemen that formed a hedge about him, at their swinging right arms, and at the shouting, yelling mob that fought and struggled around him.

His return to consciousness took place at an unfortunate moment. As he tried to rise to his feet some of the crowd caught sight of his face, and instantly their yells were redoubled.

"There he is—there he is! Scott—'t chap who's going to starve us!"

Like wildfire the shouts rang through the mob, and the fury of the attack increased.

A solid rush bore one of the policemen to the ground. The others were pressed up against the wall, and the rioters were almost within reach of their prey.

Scott himself, utterly bewildered by the outcry and struggle around him, and not yet understanding that he was the object of so much anger and hatred, looked helplessly about him, from the fierce faces of the crowd to the set, determined ones of his defenders.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in a faint voice.

David was the only one who caught the question; but he had no time to reply to it.

For at that moment Constable Evans, who was standing

directly in front of him and Scott, was violently attacked by three or four men at once, knocked down, and trampled under foot; while the assailants, with triumphant cries, poured through the breach thus created in the defending line. Those of the policemen who were still afoot were thrust on one side, still fighting desperately, and cut off from Scott and David, who were surrounded in an instant by a ring of threatening faces. Both were helpless, for Scott was too weak to raise a hand in his own defence.

"Stop!" shrieked the boy, as he saw a huge fist upraised to strike his employer down. "He's ill—he can't defend himself, you coward!"

His appeal—even if it were heard—was in vain. Scott went down before the blow like a ninepin, just at David's feet, and lay without moving, conscious, but too weak to struggle. One of the rioters, bending forward, swung a ragged stick above his head, with the intent to bring it down on the prostrate man's skull with a force that must have cracked it like an eggshell.

David, with his back against the wall, saw the blow coming. Instinctively he raised his shackled wrists above his head, and as the man went to deliver the stroke he brought them down with all his might upon the side of his head. The blow caught the rough fair and square, and he tumbled over and lay like a log across Scott's body.

But David's interference only had the effect of turning the ill-will of the crowd in his direction. There was a cry of rage, and then the boy felt himself almost whirled off his feet, as he was seized and dragged into the midst of the excited throng. Someone struck him a blow that made his head reel. He swayed to and fro and would have fallen but for the press of humanity around him that held him up. He was being squeezed, jammed, knocked about. All around him were shouts and roars, and a dreadful sense of suffocation was overcoming him.

Suddenly the cries rose yet louder; then the crowd around him surged and broke before the onrush of a line of khaki. The boy was dragged a few paces with it, then knocked over; and as he staggered to his knees a strong arm was thrown round him, and a voice exclaimed in his ear:

"Well done, my lad! Not much damaged, I hope?"

A Friend in Need!

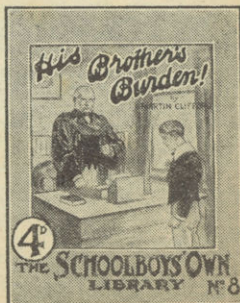
"NO, thanks!" gasped David, feeling as if all the breath had been knocked out of his body. He looked about him. The street was comparatively clear now. The rioters were beating a hurried retreat. Around him were no longer the frieze coats of the miners, but khaki uniforms. A charge of the

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Dragoons had rescued him in the nick of time from the infuriated mob.

For once he and his men had surmounted the barricade at the corner of the High Street, and gained a footing in the market-square. Captain Mowbray's task had been comparatively easy. Forming his company into a solid wedge, he had soon forced his way to the centre and reinforced the group of police who were defending their prisoner—Stevens—against the mob's attempt at rescue. Then, wheeling them round, he had charged the rioters again and again, until, melting before the onslaught of the soldiers, they took to flight in all directions.

One of these charges on the rear of the scattering crowd had brought him and his men close to David and Scott. The captain had seen the boy's defence of the fallen man, and plunging into the thick of the mob, which he had swept aside with well-directed blows, he succeeded in reaching David and dragging him to his feet.

"That's right!" he said heartily, in answer to David's assurance that he was not much hurt. "I was afraid they had mauled you. You're a plucky fellow to stand up to a crowd like that!"

David flushed with pleasure at the soldier's kindly praise. "Where's Mr. Scott?" he asked anxiously.

"The police are taking him into the house there till the streets are clear. I don't fancy he's hurt—thanks to you!" returned the young soldier, with a shade of contempt in his tone; for he had small sympathy with the cause he was obliged to champion against the rioters.

The next moment he started and stared at David.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

His eyes fell upon the handcuffs that encircled the boy's wrists.

Again David flushed, this time more hotly than before. But before his hesitating lips could frame an explanation a hand was laid upon his shoulder—a policeman's hand.

"Oh, there you are!" said the owner of the hand, in a tone of undiminished relief. "Thought you'd done a bolt!"

David looked up proudly.

"I don't want to bolt!" he replied.

"What is the charge against this lad?" asked Captain Mowbray abruptly.

"Murder, sir!"

The soldier stared incredulously.

"Murder!" he cried. "What murder? Who—?"

"The murder of George Scott, Mr. William Scott's brother—at least, we believe it's him, but the body hasn't been formally identified yet."

David had hung his head, overwhelmed by the shame of his position; and as the constable ceased speaking, he involuntarily darted an appealing look up at the young soldier's face.

Captain Mowbray, on his side met it with a keen, searching glance.

His mental comment as he looked into David Steele's frank eyes was: "That boy is a criminal, I'm the biggest fool living!"

"Aloud he said kindly:

"You needn't tell me you are innocent of this ridiculous charge, my lad. A plucky fellow like you isn't the sort of stuff you can make a criminal out of!"

At this point Sergeant Watts hurried up to assure himself of the safety of the prisoner.

"Now then," he exclaimed sharply, "what are you waiting for? The sooner we get to the station the better. Bring the boy along!"

The sergeant's appearance was hardly so dignified as it had been earlier in the day. His head-covering, smashed in by two or three blows, bore only a faint and distant resemblance to a helmet, and his coat had been torn down the back from neck to belt—a circumstance which had not improved his temper.

"Look here, my lad—" began Captain Mowbray, as the constables closed round David.

But Sergeant Watts interrupted him angrily:

"Can't allow any communication with the prisoner, sir—most irregular."

"I am perfectly ready to answer for any irregularity I may be guilty of," returned Captain Mowbray haughtily. "You know who I am—Captain Mowbray, of the Dragoons, quartered at Roxley."

And, in spite of the smothered indignation of the sergeant, he laid his hand upon David's shoulder, and went on kindly:

"If I can be of any assistance to you, let me know. If you are not discharged immediately—as I hope and believe will be the case—I will do what I can for you. I like pluck, and at least I can bear witness that if it had not been for yours to-day William Scott would have been as dead as I hear his brother is. Now, keep up a brave heart—and good-bye and good luck!"

He took the lad's fettered hands between his own in a hearty grip—a grip that conveyed confidence and encouragement.

"Curious," he muttered to himself, as he stepped aside and

watched the little band of police, with David in their midst, swing down the street towards the station—"curious! I never knew Scott had a brother!"

Then his duties claimed him, and for a time he had to turn his thoughts away from the lad to whom he had taken so sudden a liking.

As for David, the officer's words had given him that hope of which he was so sorely in need; and he was able to bear the ordeal that followed unmoved—at least, in outward semblance.

But when he sat in his little whitewashed cell, and, thinking of the charge against him, realised the full horror of it—when he thought of his mother's grief when she heard of the accusation against her son—for a time his courage gave way, and he was thankful that he was alone, and could yield to his grief unseen by prying eyes.

The Trial!

BEFORE darkness fell that day, wild rumours were flying round Wrexborough. The whole place was agog with a story that seemed too strange to be true—yet true it was!

Hardly anyone in the town had been aware that Scott had a brother; and Wrexborough was in a state of amazement when it realised the trick that had been played upon it—the trick that had now ended so tragically for the perpetrator.

For the body of the dead man was identified at the inquest by his brother as that of George Scott; and the coroner's jury having returned a verdict of "Wilful murder" against David Steele, the boy lay awaiting his trial in Wrexborough Gaol.

To the question of his guilt or innocence was the one absorbing topic of conversation in the town. His complete innocence, few people maintained, the evidence pointing so plainly to his having struck the fatal blow; but now that the whole story was known, it was generally believed that, if he had not actually killed George Scott in self-defence, he had at least received great provocation for the act.

In other respects, Wrexborough was settling down. With the return of the real William Scott, the back-out had, of course, come to an end, and the miners resumed work—needless to say, at their former wages. Even the proceedings begun against those who had been foremost in the riot—including Stevens—had been, chiefly owing to Scott's earnest request, allowed to drop.

Of these things David Steele heard while he lay in Wrexborough Gaol, a prisoner on remand, waiting till the day when the opening of the Assizes should decide his fate.

At first—in his more hopeful moments, at least—he had confidently believed that something must come to light, some fresh clue be discovered by the police, which would put his innocence beyond the shadow of a doubt. But as day after day went by, and such new evidence as was collected seemed—so far as he could gather—to point rather to his guilt than the other way, his heart sank lower and lower.

There were two people, however—including his mother, three—to whom his simple assertion that he was guiltless of the blood of the murdered man was quite sufficient; and those two people were William Scott and his new-found friend, Captain Mowbray.

The latter came over from Roxley to see the prisoner, and to offer whatever money might be needed to provide for his defence. Grateful though David was for his offer, it was not accepted; for his employer had already declared that the expense of proving the boy's innocence of the crime he was charged with must be borne by him alone.

Never for an instant did Scott's belief in David waver; and all that man could do to alleviate the misery and suspense of that awful time of waiting he did. It was he himself who broke the bad news to the boy's mother, and brought her to Wrexborough, where she was to await the trial.

Glad as he was to see her again, David could almost have wished that she were not there. She did her best, poor soul, to hide her distress when she visited the gaol; but her drawn face showed too plainly what she was suffering, and gave the lie to the assumed confidence with which she tried to cheer her son.

The day of the trial dawned at last—the eventful day that was either to clear David Steele's name, or to brand him as a murderer, and consign him to a murderer's doom. And, remembering what that was, David could not bring himself to believe that the trial would go against him—could not believe that justice could be so blind as not to discover that he was innocent of the crime.

Thus the beginning of the trial found him calmer and more hopeful than he had been for some time.

Yet, when he entered the dock, and, looking round him, saw the court crowded to suffocation—it might have been

filled ten times, so great was the excitement in the town about the case—when he saw, facing him, the judge and jury on whom his fate depended, a tremor ran through him, and the whole scene seemed to swim and dance before his dazzled eyes. The voice in his ears sounded like a buzzing a long way off; but at length he understood that the question was being put to him, "Guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," he answered clearly.

His plea entered the indictment of the prosecution followed; and as David listened to it his courage sank, so black did the opposing side make the case against him seem.

Scott, who was watching the boy's expression, gave him a reassuring glance, as if to say, "Wait, and hear our side!" But even his pale face grew a shade paler and more anxious as he heard how very strong the evidence against the lad was.

For it was not alone the fact of his having been found within a few paces of the murdered man with a bloodstained knife in his hand that told against him; other facts were elicited that not only apparently pointed to his guilt, but to a motive for the crime.

The last person who had seen George Scott alive was Thomas Reece, the butler at the Hall. In his evidence he deposed that on the night of the murder, being thoroughly upset and frightened by the attack of the rioters upon the house, he was unable to sleep. About half-past twelve he had heard someone descending the stairs, and, hurrying out into the hall to see what was the matter, he had found his master—as he then thought him—in the act of unbarring the door. In answer to counsel's questions, he stated that Mr. Scott wore his hat and overcoat, and carried in his hand a leather despatch-box, such as is used to contain papers or valuables. On this point he was positive.

He testified further, that Mr. Scott seemed exceedingly annoyed at being thus discovered in the act of leaving the house, and had peremptorily ordered him—the witness—to go back to his room. In spite of this, Reece had ventured to remonstrate with his master on the danger of going out alone after the murderer, attack from which he had just escaped; whereupon Mr. Scott had declared that he was not going into Wrexborough, but to walk over the moor to Roxley Station, and should therefore run no risk of meeting anyone.

He had added, when the butler expressed his surprise at this sudden departure, that he had been unexpectedly called away to London, and that the household were not to be alarmed if he did not return the next day.

Concerning the contents of the despatch-box which Reece was positive he had seen in his master's hand, it transpired that George Scott had, during the few days preceding his flight, realised in his brother's name securities amounting to nearly six thousand pounds; these, it was surmised, he must have been carrying with him. But the most painstaking search had hitherto failed to reveal a sign of the leather case, either in the place where the body had been found or anywhere on the moor.

The police theory, of course, was that David Steele, after murdering Scott, had stolen and concealed it; and this theory was borne out to a certain extent by the evidence of Job Skirling and his friend, Tom Fenwick. Both testified—as was the truth—that they had heard David say on the night of the murder that George Scott was about to make off with property belonging to his brother, and that he—David—intended to stop him. No one else, but David, so it seemed, could possibly have been aware that the wretched man had such a sum in his possession.

It was not until after the adjournment of the case for luncheon that the evidence for the defence was called; and a general stir pervaded the court as William Scott stepped into the witness-box.

The colliery-owner seemed to have aged considerably during the last few weeks. His handsome face was pale, not only from his recent illness, but from the shock of the terrible circumstances attending the death of the man who, unnatural as he had been, was, after all, his brother.

In a manly, straightforward way, though obviously under the stress of deep emotion, he gave his evidence. It contained no proof of David's innocence; but his reluctant account of his brother's villainy, and of his and the row vanished Markham's attempts upon the boy's life, went far to create an impression in the prisoner's favour, which was strengthened by Scott's account of the gallant way in which David had saved him from death on the night of their first meeting.

The witnesses for the defence, in fact, were chiefly witnesses as to character. Grafton was called, and spoke highly of the boy's bravery on the occasion of the subsidence in the

(Continued on page 25.)



Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

(If You Do Not Win a Prize This Week—You May Next!)

All Efforts in this Competition should be Addressed to: **The GEM LIBRARY, "My Readers' Own Corner," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4.**

A WIN FOR WALTON!

A GOOD HEAD!

A village schoolmaster and carpenter as hobbies. He had also arranged for small prizes to be given to those who brought him the best made articles. One day a lad produced a splendid model cabinet. "This is very nice," said the master. "Tell me, where did you obtain the pattern to work from?" "Please, sir," answered the boy, "I made it out of my head, and I've just enough wood left to make another!"—A Tuck Hamper, filled with delicious Tuck, has been awarded to W. Kidd, 7, County Road, Walton, Liverpool.

LOST A CUSTOMER!

"My missus was disgusted with that piece of meat you sent her yesterday," said Mary Ann to the butcher. "It was like leather." "Do you mean to say it was tough?" "Tough!" said Mary. "I should think it was! Why, the missus couldn't even get a fork into the gravy!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to J. Dennis, 51, The Promenade, Palmers Green, N. 13.

LOWTHER'S LATEST!

Monty Lowther: "How do you get down from an elephant?" Tom Merry: "You climb down." Lowther: "Wrong!" Merry: "You take a ladder and get down." Lowther: "Wrong!" Tom Merry: "You grease his sides and slide down." Lowther: "Wrong!" Merry: "Well, you take the trunk line down." Lowther: "No, not quite. You see, you don't get down off an elephant; you get it off a goose!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to F. Shaw, 61, Poutypridd Road, Porth, Rhondda, Glamorgan.

A FACER FOR FATHER!

Frenchman: "Ah, so zis is your little son! He look to be simlaire to you." Father: "Yes, there is a likeness." Frenchman: "Ah! He is—how you call it?—a chip of ze old blockhead, is eet not?"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Rabinovitch, 62, Ruskin Avenue, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

BY THE INCH!

Seth Woodbury was a tight-fisted, hard-hearted old farmer. His brother William died, and Seth drove into town to have a notice about his death inserted in the weekly paper. "There ain't no charge, be there!" he asked anxiously. "Oh, yes, indeed!" answered the clerk. "Our price is four shillings an inch." "Crums!" muttered the old man. "An' Bill is six-foot-two!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to George Williams, 161, St. Stephens Terrace, Copley, near Halifax, Yorks.

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X N N N D N T N B N

Your Editor Chats With His Readers.

Address all letters: The Editor, The "Gem" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Write me, you can be sure of an answer in return.

MY DEAR CHUMS,—Perhaps you may think when you read next week's St. Jim's yarn, called "Saving the Head!" that it is a rather painful position for the revered gentleman to find himself in. That may be the case. But I have yet to hear of the keen thinker who would resent being helped out of a dilemma by a subordinate. It is not really infra dig. to be helped. Anyhow, Dr. Holmes does get in a mess. How and why I will leave you to find out. It is a great story, and our old friend, Lumley-Lumley, has a lot to do in it. Next Wednesday we have a Cycling Edition of the "St. Jim's News." This is good to know, for we are in the middle of the best cycling season. The new number of the GEM, too, will contain "The Secret of the London Mail," a thrilling yarn of adventure on the mail express. I am glad to be able to announce also a tremendous instalment of "Dave, the Pitboy," by Max Hamilton. It is a drama of the mine which has never been surpassed for intensity and directness.

THE "SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY!"

This famous "Library" leaped into popularity, but, like the promising youngster we read about in the poem, it still has far to go—and is going it. It is the complement of the GEM and the other Companion Papers, for it faithfully carries on with the finest yarns of St. Jim's, Greyfriars, and Rookwood. But that is not the reason why the compliments pour in. They are paid because the "Schoolboys' Own Library" is the best out. The new issues are on sale everywhere, and you will find them much to your liking.

TROUBLED ABOUT HIS PAL!

"Jerry," of Portsmouth, sends me a long

letter about a chum of his. I am not one whit surprised my correspondent is worried, but it seems to me that a quiet talk will bring the fellow in question round to a straighter way of thinking. You know how it is when people talk about getting hold of the wrong end of the stick, or taking the wrong pig by the ear. "Jerry's" pal has been reading about some of the bad deeds of history, and his theory is that a certain notable character, who commissioned an underling to perform a hateful deed, was not really responsible for the crime, as it was not done by his own hand. I shall not mention names, as I do not like old scandals dished up. But I will say this—namely, that "Jerry's" friend is wrong. "Quod facti per alios, facti per se." You cannot get away from it. The man who gets a crime committed is really far more guilty than the understrapper who actually did the horrible work.

USING THE WRONG LANGUAGE!

It goes against the grain a bit with me to take any sort of notice of a letter to hand because the writer uses a lot of silly words out of their place. Still, as he asks me a certain question—namely, what he is to do about his freckles—I can but answer it. And the answer is—do nothing about them! Freckles do no harm. If he is very anxious, a solution of borax water, made thick, and applied to the face, might have some effect on brown freckles. But what's the odds? I suppose my chum with the strange way of expressing himself on paper does not act in the same silly, babyish way that he talks. He ought to know better! It is not unmanly to employ coarse terms. People just despise the offender in this way.

A CONCERT PARTY!

Three jolly spirited friends of mine have decided on what one might call a busman's holiday. They are employed in a warehouse, and they are all musically inclined. So, as their holidays come at the same time, they have started off as a musical trio. They intend visiting a number of seaside places, not the ultra-fashionable ones, and paying their expenses by giving little concerts on the sands. Good fortune go with them! If they have real talent, I expect this harmonious beginning will develop. They may become a regular star turn.

SLEEP!

C. M., of Norwich, tells me he cannot sleep at nights. As he admits he suffers from toothache, I should advise him to race off to the dentist and ask him to attend to the matter. Nobody can expect to get a good night's rest if troubled with neuralgia. As a rule, normal people are not troubled by insomnia. Of course, at times of excitement or overwork sleeplessness may be a worry, but in such cases a glass of hot water before turning in will usually meet the difficulty.

PUTTING HIS HEART INTO IT!

They do say that no man has ever yet done his very best. That may be so, but some have got jolly near to it, anyway. Of course, the idea is that there is always a better best to be striven for. Perfectly true. You never know how much you can do. There is always a bit more finish, something a touch nearer to perfection to be won. This paragraph seems to be running into philosophy, but it was inspired by a letter from a chum who has gone through bad times and won out. Good luck to him! He put his best into his job, and his employer one fine day turned round and made him sub-manager without as much as a by-your-leave. I am dead nuts on that kind of thing. It is encouragement, and that is what we all want. Put your best on your back into the business in hand, and you will win. Some fellows do not always know when they have won. That does not signify. The fact is there, all docketed and indexed.

Your Editor.

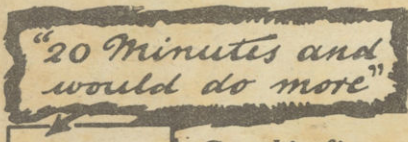
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