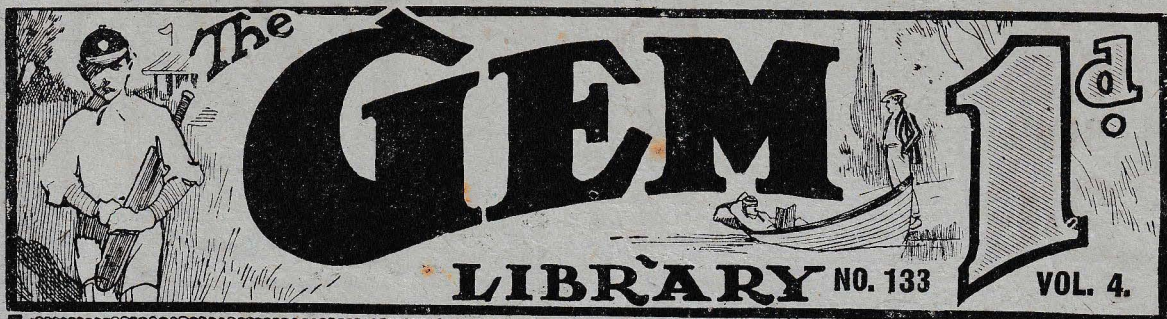


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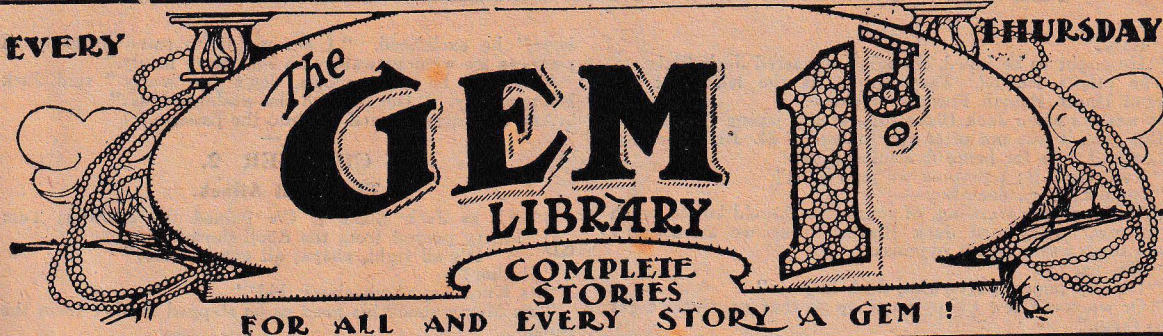
NEXT
WEEK:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

A Splendid Tale of
Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

EVERY

THURSDAY



THE FORM-MASTER'S MISTAKE



A Tale of
The Chums of
St. Jim's,

— BY —

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Jack Blake & Co. on the Warpath.

"KNOX ought to be boiled in oil!"

Jack Blake, chief of Study No. 6, spoke in a warlike voice. He sat down on his bed in the

Fourth Form dormitory and stared gloomily at Herries.

Herries stared gloomily back.

"Any other pre. would have been a sportsman and wouldn't have seen us."

"We were only five minutes late."

"Rotten!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the School House of St. Jim's, screwed his monocle in his eye with deliberate stateliness.

"Undah the circs, I must wemark that I considah it wotten myself—wotten in the extweme, as a mattah of fact—"

"Oh, you do, do you?"

"Yaas, wathah, Hewwies, deah boy—"

"Then what did you want to keep us jawing in the study for, ass?"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"It was your fault, duffer!"

"Bai Jove, Digbay, deah boy—"

"You're always landing us in a beastly fix."

"Gweat Scott, Blake—"

Jack Blake waved his hand loftily.

"Oh, don't start cackling again, ass; you've done enough damage for one night," he said wearily. "A hundred lines each!"

"And foah bein' five minutes late, bai Jove!"

"No one in the coll. would have given more than twenty-

five lines, not even Mr. Selby in one of his rocky moods!" exclaimed Digby wrathfully. "It's a beastly shame!"

"Yaas, wathah; I must say I considah it wathah a shame myself, deah boy," agreed Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, we can soon wattle off a hundwed lines—"

"Rats!"

"Weally—"

"More rats!" growled Jack Blake. "Where shall we find the time to rattle them off, duffer, with the paper-chase down for Saturday afternoon?"

"And the Fourth-Form examinations down for Thursday!"

"And all the arrangements to make for the paper-chase."

"And cricket to-morrow afternoon."

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that, deah boys—"

"You're talking through your hat, Gussy," said Herries severely. "I am surprised at you at your age. Oh, bother it all, chaps!"

The four chums of Study No. 6 of the School House viewed each other in dismay.

A hundred lines, written in the manner Knox would expect them written, was not such a very light task. But it was not that part of the imposition which troubled them the most.

A hundred lines for being something less than five minutes late for the dormitory! That was a line for every three seconds.

Digby had worked it out.

"It's too rotten for words, Blakey," he exclaimed. "I've a jolly good mind not to do them!"

"You'll have to, kid!"

"Yaas, wathah. Knox is your eldah, deah boy; you nevah thought of that, did you, Digbay?"

A DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE OF TOM MERRY NEXT THURSDAY.

No. 133 (New Series.)

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"Rats!"

"He ought to be japed, though," muttered Jack Blake.

The others started. They stared at the leader of the School House Fourth Form in surprise.

It was not often Jack Blake suggested "japing" a prefect. But then it was not often the juniors of St. Jim's received a hundred lines for being five minutes late.

"Yes, that's it; I propose we jape him!"

"Imposs., Dig., deah boy——"

"Nothing very startling, of course, or there'd be too much of a row," exclaimed Jack Blake. "Say we accidentally upset some water on his pyjamas."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Utahly imposs., Hewwies, deah boy——"

"Or we could sew his pyjamas up so that he couldn't get into them."

"Yes, anything like that—just to show him he can't goat about with Study No. 6 fellows as he likes."

"Weally, Jack Blake, I must wequest you to pay attention to what I am sayin', deah boy," shouted Arthur Augustus. "I am twyin' to make a wemark——"

"Eh?"

"I must wequest you——"

"Oh, I expect we heard that part, ass!" grinned Jack Blake. "What was it you were saying, kid?"

"I was wemarkin' that it is utahly imposs., deah boy!"

Jack Blake stared.

"Off your rocker again, Gussy?"

"Pway don't wot, as I considah this is a vewy serious mattah——"

"Oh, I don't know! You might get all right as you get older—outgrow it or something!"

"Weally Blake—— Howevah, I see that you are only waggin'," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "I wepeat, it is utahly imposs."

"What is utahly imposs., ass?"

"Gweat Scott! that we can wag Knox, deah boy!"

Jack Blake grinned.

"Get on with the washing, kid."

"Yaas, wathah, and I am glad you undahstand the circo.," answered the swell of St. Jim's. "Knox is not only a pwefect, but he is our eldah. It would be wank bad form to wag a pwefect and an eldah."

"My hat, it wasn't bad form for him to line us, I suppose?"

"Yaas, wathah; I gwant that, deah boy, but——"

"But two bad forms don't make a summer," said Digby thoughtfully.

The effort was greeted with chilly silence. Digby went rather pink.

"Anyway, let's hear what you are raving about, Gussy," he said hastily. "What's your idea?"

"That we wemonstwate with Knox instead, deah boy."

"Go hon!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"A fine lot of good it would be to remonstrat with him, wouldn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah, pwovided a fellow of tact and judgment did the wemonstwatin'. What I pwopose is——"

"Piffle of the first water," said Jack Blake cheerily. "Of course, that goes without saying—— Ready, chaps?"

"Right-ho!"

"Get on with the washing!"

Jack Blake, Herries and Digby jumped to their feet. There were determined expressions in their eyes.

Arthur Augustus looked at them in amazement.

"Weally, Blake, I twust you are not going to wag Knox aftah what I have just said about it being bad form——"

"Rats to bad form!"

"Gweat Scott——"

"There's no bad form about it; we're simply going to jape him."

"Bai Jove, but don't you realise that it is imposs. to wag a pwefect and an eldah——"

"It's going to be poss. enough to jape Knox, anyway."

Arthur Augustus sat down on the bed again.

"I wegwet to say I shall be unable to come with you, deah boys," he said decidedly. "It will be vewy rotten foah me havin' to remain behind, but it is a mattah of dig——"

"Rats!"

"Pway don't say 'wats' to me, Hewwies! If you were goin' to wemonstwate with Knox——"

"Well, we are, aren't we?" grinned Jack Blake.

"Bai Jove, then I will come!"

"A remonstrat can take the form of a jolly good japing, can't it ass?"

"Gweat Scott——"

"And a japing is the only sort of remonstrat Knox would understand, Gussy."

Arthur Augustus looked relieved.

"Bai Jove! Do you know, I nevah thought of that, deah The Gem LIBRARY.—No. 133.

boys," he exclaimed. "I am weady to come instantly. I pwopose we wemonstwate with him vewy firmly."

"Oh, it'll be firm enough, don't you worry," said Jack Blake grimly. "Get on with the washing, kids!"

And the party hurried out into the passage.

CHAPTER 2.

The Night Attack.

JUST as Jack Blake & Co. gained the corridor, Tom Merry peered from the Shell dormitory.

"It's all right, chaps; all got bolsters?"

"Rather!"

"Is Knox anywhere about, kid?"

Tom Merry shook his head as he stepped further from the room.

"Not a sign of him, Manners," he said in a low voice.

"He'll be down in Selby's room."

"My hat, yes, helping the Selby bird with the exam. questions for the Fourth Form examination."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"Rather, and a jolly fine set of questions young Blake will get if Selby and Knox work them out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther chuckled loudly.

The hero of the Shell was a few months older than Jack Blake, and seldom allowed the others to forget the fact.

Manners, Lowther, and a small crowd of other Shell juniors followed Tom Merry from the dormitory.

They looked quite as grim as Jack Blake & Co. had.

All were armed with bolsters or pillows, and the corridor they took led towards the Fourth Form dormitory.

They crept along in silence for a moment or two, then Tom Merry's voice rang out in a low whisper.

"Dry up, kids!"

"What's the matter? My hat!"

There was someone moving at the end of the passage.

Tom Merry only caught a momentary glimpse of the form.

"Some young Fourth Form ass out on the prowl, Monty."

Lowther grinned.

"Or Fatty Wynn come across from the New House for food," he suggested. "What's the programme, Tom Merry?"

"Creep up to their door and burst in upon them, kid."

"Rotten!"

Tom Merry stared.

"Suppose they are waiting for us?"

Tom Merry shook his head.

"They won't be doing that, kid," he whispered. "They're too full of their rotten paper-chase wheeze—tearing up paper and all the rest of it, I expect!"

"And they'll get torn up themselves," muttered Lowther.

"Like young Blake's cheek to get up a School House paper-chase without coming to us!"

"Awful cheek!"

"The whole thing will be a fearful hash!"

"And fancy them sending us an invitation to run in the pack," exclaimed Tom Merry. "As if we couldn't run Jack Blake and his kids off their feet!"

"Rather. My hat!"

Manners stopped dead.

"There's some kids down there, Tom Merry."

Tom Merry put up his hand to stop the others. The Shell juniors had gained the end of their corridor by now, and were peering round the corner, down the passage which ran at right angles to their own.

There were certainly some moving figures near the window.

"Four of them," whispered Lowther.

"Jack Blake & Co.!"

"My hat!"

Tom Merry uttered the exclamation half aloud. The slowly moving figures appeared to be making for one of the prefect's rooms.

"Look there, kids!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Right at the extreme end of the corridor, another group of juniors appeared. There must have been half a dozen of them, and the foremost appeared to be quite twice the width of any of the others.

"Fatty Wynn, kids!"

"So it is——"

"What can the New House kids be doing in our House?"

There could only be one answer to that question. A House raid was about to take place.

Manners started forward.

"Let's go and bump them——"

Again Tom Merry held up his hand.

"Dry up, ass!"

"But——"

"Ring off!" whispered the hero of the Shell. "Can't you see what Figgins & Co. are up to?"

Manners looked again and chuckled.



"Gweat Scott! You uttah wottah! O-oh!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. Something heavy but soft had caught the swell of St. Jim's in the chest and he was driven backwards. (See page 4.)

The New House juniors were obviously following Jack Blake & Co.

"And they are armed with bolsters, too."

"Rather!"

"And run to odds of six to four," whispered Monty Lowther. "What's to be done, Tommy?"

Tom Merry hesitated, then he stepped back hastily with a chuckle.

"Blakey has spotted the enemy, kids."

"My hat, yes—"

"They are scudding along here—"

Tom Merry chuckled again.

"It's the only thing they can do," he exclaimed, "and when they get just about where that door is, we'll snatch them baldheaded."

"But—"

"And when we've bumped them for their awful cheek, we'll join them and help bump Figgins & Co. for being in our House."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ring off!"

The Shell juniors crouched down and waited.

On came the Study No. 6 fellows, running as hard as they could. They had seen Figgins & Co., but they had a good start.

Arthur Augustus was leading the way.

"Pway huwwy up, deah boys! Spwint like anythin'—"

"Get on with the washing, then, ass!"

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus stopped dead.

Jack Blake, who was next in the running, bumped into him with a thud. Herries bumped into Jack Blake, and Digby thudded against Herries.

"Ass!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Duffer!"

"All together, chaps!" whispered Tom Merry. "Hurrah!"

And the Shell fellows dashed ahead. At the same moment Figgins & Co. came pelting up, led by Fatty Wynn.

"Now we have them—"

"Altogether!"

Figgins and Tom Merry's voices rang out together, although the tones were subdued. Arthur Augustus tried to turn round.

"Pway get out of the way, Blake, deah boy, as some wottahs are about to attack us. Oh! Wow!"

The attack had commenced.

"Is that how you like it done, Gussy?" chuckled Lowther, as the bolster came down with a thud.

At the same moment, Figgins, the long-limbed leader of the New House, swung a heavy pillow round.

"I've caught one of the hares, anyway."

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Blake & Co. gasped.

They were in one of the darkest stretches of the whole corridor, and coming from the lighter patch near the window, they could see nothing.

It seemed to Arthur Augustus as if the wall had suddenly attacked him with a bolster.

"Gweat Scott! You uttah wottah! O-oh!"

Something heavy but soft had caught him in the chest, and the swell of St. Jim's was driven backwards. He flung his arms wildly round the object that had struck him.

"Ass!" choked Manners. "Let go of the pillow! Leggo!"

Arthur Augustus did nothing of the sort. He clung all the tighter, dragging Manners back with him.

Manners thought he saw a promising opportunity.

He let go the pillow himself.

"Bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"

And Arthur Augustus sat down with a thud. Jack Blake stumbled over his legs.

"Ass! Duffer!"

"Bai Jove! Look out, deah boy!"

It was kindly advice on the part of Arthur Augustus, but he had not considered the result of Jack Blake following it. Kerr, the wiry Scots junior from the New House, was swinging a bolster.

He was aiming deliberately for Jack Blake's head.

The chief of Study No. 6 heard Arthur Augustus' words of warning, and promptly ducked. Kerr had no time to stop; the bolster completed its swing, then Arthur Augustus gave vent to a yell.

"Ring off, ass!"

"You'll have the prefects along, duffer!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

The fellows who were near enough, gasped in amazement. Arthur Augustus had disappeared; all that could be distinguished in the darkness was a heap of feathers.

Kerr gazed blankly at his empty bolster case.

"My—my hat!"

"Atishoo!" came a choking gasp. "You uttah wottah—atishoo!"

"At them, kids!" cried Tom Merry. "Get on with the washing!"

"Don't make a row, though—"

"Atish—atishoo—"

"Hallo, young Blake!"

"Hallo, young ass!" breathed Jack Blake through his nose. "Is that how you Shell-fish like it done?"

And he wrested Fatty Wynn's bolster from him and swung it round. Tom Merry gasped, but he did not give ground.

The two great rivals of the School House thumped away at one another with a will.

"Bai Jove! Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus was still struggling to free himself from the feathers. He had almost succeeded when another bolster gave way.

"What-ho!" chuckled Monty Lowther. "If only we had some giddy tar!"

It appeared as if every one of the feathers from his bolster flew directly towards Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's began sneezing violently again.

"You uttah wuffian, Lowthah! You uttah—atishoo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry glanced round, then rushed past Jack Blake. "School House," he chuckled; "altogether—School House—"

"Atishoo—bai—atish—Jove! Gweat Scott!"

"Yes, altogether!" cried Jack Blake, ever ready to sink differences with Tom Merry & Co., when the enemy from the New House were present. "On the ball, chaps!"

"Bai Jove—"

"Get out of the way, Gussy!"

"You weckless wuffian, Digby—atishoo!"

Then quite a different sort of cry rang out. It came from a group of grinning Third-Formers, who had been watching from their dormitory doorway.

D'Arcy minor's voice was easily recognisable.

"Cave, you old fogeys!"

Digby heard, and so did Kerr; but the others went on struggling. They were even struggling when footsteps scudded along the corridor.

"Look out, asses!"

"The Selby bird."

Digby seized Jack Blake by the arm. The junior from the broad acres thought it was an attack in the rear by Figgins or Fatty Wynn, and neatly swung his bolster over his shoulder.

It caught Digby on the top of his head, and he sprawled over Arthur Augustus.

Arthur Augustus lay where he was, sneezing.

"Altogether, chaps—"

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"On the ball, New House!"

Then a stern voice drowned their voices.

"Boys, what is the meaning of this?"

Almost instantly there was a blank silence. The juniors stood and stared at one another.

Arthur Augustus broke the pause by chance.

He sneezed violently.

"Pway excuse me, sir; but—atishoo—as a mattah of fact—atish—"

Then he gave way to quite a paroxysm of sneezing.

Mr. Selby, the Third Form-master, came closer.

"Boys, how—how dare you?" he gasped. "Merry, light the gas."

The hero of the Shell obeyed.

The spectacle which met his eyes the moment he had done so, dismayed him.

CHAPTER 3.

The Misfortunes of Study No. 6.

"MY hat!"
Tom Merry and Jack Blake gave vent to the exclamation together. Figgins was glaring at an extraordinary-looking object on the passage floor which was sneezing violently.

It was Arthur Augustus seated on a heap of feathers with feathers all over him.

They were sticking in his usually perfectly parted hair; there were feathers down his neck, and he was even taking them out of his mouth.

He was sneezing all the time on account of the fluff.

Tom Merry gasped.

"Dry up, Gussy!" he choked. "Dry up, you frabjeous ass!"

Then he burst into roars of laughter. Figgins instantly joined him, and Jack Blake began to roll about.

Mr. Selby recovered himself to some extent.

"Good gracious! Who—who is it?"

"Atishoo!" answered Arthur Augustus. "I wegwet the occurence, sir; but—atish— Bai Jove!"

The Third Form-master did not appear unduly enlightened. He stepped up to Arthur Augustus and brushed some feathers from his head.

"The plucking of Gussy," choked Lowther. "My—my only Aunt Jane."

But the juniors were beginning to sober down now. Funny as Arthur Augustus looked, there was nothing particularly conducive to mirth in the light in Mr. Selby's eyes.

The Third Form-master looked just about as stern and angry as Tom Merry had ever seen him look.

And there was a pink flush on his face, too. That was a danger-signal to all who knew the Third Form-master. It was a warning that trouble was in store for someone.

"D'Arcy," thundered Mr. Selby, "am I to understand that you are doing this on purpose?"

To the swell of St. Jim's, no question could have been more absurd. It passed his comprehension that anyone could imagine he could have willingly placed himself in such a ridiculous position.

He tried to protest, but more down brought a fresh paroxysm of sneezing on.

Mr. Selby wheeled round.

"Is this some trick you have played on D'Arcy, Merry?"

"Bai Jove—atishoo—no; wathah not, sir. As a matter of fact—"

"Then you have done this yourself, D'Arcy?"

"Gweat Scott, no, sir. That is to say—atishoo—"

Mr. Selby looked bewildered as well as angry.

"But who brought these feathers into the college?" he thundered. "Answer me, boy! Is that a bolster?"

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It was not, as it happened, but it had been once. Mr. Selby snatched it from Lowther and glared at the remains.

He understood, then, where the feathers had come from. "Boys, how—how dare you?" exclaimed Mr. Selby, the pink flush becoming deeper. "D'Arcy, get up!"

Arthur Augustus got up and scattered feathers all over the corridor. Tom Merry & Co. commenced to sneeze.

"Stop that noise instantly!" thundered the Third Form-master. "Instantly, I said, Merry—a-tishoo!"

Mr. Selby concluded his remark with a violent sneeze. At any other time, nothing would have prevented the juniors from chuckling.

As it was, Lowther was the only one who succumbed. He made a curious noise in the throat that might have been almost anything.

Lowther, of the Shell, would have found some humorous point in being tied to a stake.

Mr. Selby looked very grim now. "Of course, you understand that this is a serious matter," he exclaimed; "one that Dr. Holmes will have to deal with."

Tom Merry & Co. looked relieved instead of the reverse. There were a good many things they would rather the Head dealt with than Mr. Selby.

"You will all report yourselves to Dr. Holmes the first thing after breakfast to-morrow," went on the Third Form-master. "Give me your names."

"Atishoo! Pway, Mr. Selbay, is theah any need foah us to give our names?" asked Arthur Augustus politely. "I wathah fancy none of us pwesent would be guilthey of such bad form as not to put in an appeahance—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"Certainly, sir; but—"

"Silence, boy!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir; but I should like to wemark—"

Mr. Selby wheeled round.

"D'Arcy, did Knox have to punish you for being out of the dormitory earlier this evening?"

Mr. Selby had suddenly remembered a report made by the prefect. Arthur Augustus looked very blank.

"Yes, sir; foah being late—"

"Ah! And you, Blake, Digby and Herries were with him, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah, only we weren't five minutes late, Mr. Selbay—"

"Silence!" snapped the Third Form-master. "This makes it still more serious for you four lads. Now give me your names!"

As Tom Merry and Figgins & Co. gave their names, Jack Blake, Herries, and Digby glared at Arthur Augustus.

"Utter ass, Gussy!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"Frabjous duffer!" muttered Herries.

"Bai Jove!"

"Silly burler!" growled Digby. "What did you want to cackle for? He'd forgotten all about the other affair until you started cackling."

Arthur Augustus slowly replaced his monocle in his eye. There was a feather adhering to the monocle, but he failed to notice that.

"Pway, pardon me, deah boys! Bothah these wotten feathahs!"

Then he sneezed violently.

Jack Blake rammed his hands in his pockets.

"This is the second fix you've got us into to-night, Gussy!" he said severely. "I don't want it to come to a collar and chain, but—"

"I should uttally wufese to wear— Pway don't be so widic, deah boy!"

"Names!" snapped Mr. Selby.

The Fourth-Formers of the School House gave their names and waited while they were being written down in the neat little black book Mr. Selby always carried for the purpose.

The juniors gave their names confidently enough. The affair was going before Dr. Holmes, so the punishment would only fit the crime.

Had Mr. Selby elected to attend to the affair himself the punishment might have more than fitted it.

They all waited for their dismissal.

It came abruptly.

"You Shell boys go back to your dormitory at once!" said Mr. Selby. "Figgins, also retire! A moment, Blake!"

The Study No. 6 juniors stopped.

Mr. Selby waited a moment or two while he put his little black book away in his pocket.

"I regret to say, Blake, that you four boys will have to stay in next Saturday," he said, in a voice which did not thrill with regret to any noticeable extent. "D'Arcy has been impertinent—"

"Bai Jove, sir—"

"Silence, boy! Blake, I trust you realise that your act of leaving your dormitory, after Knox had sent you there, is a serious matter?"

Jack Blake & Co. did not answer.

From Mr. Selby's point of view, it must appear rather serious. Jack Blake admitted that to himself.

The master's next question was still more puzzling.

"Why did you four boys leave the dormitory?"

The four exchanged glances. It would scarcely do to tell Mr. Selby they had ventured out in order to jape Knox.

Knox was rather a favourite with Mr. Selby.

The Third Form-master looked from one to the other sternly.

"Ah, you are afraid to tell me why you left the room!" he snapped. "You understand, you four boys are detained for Saturday afternoon!"

"Oh, sir!"

"Mr. Selbay—"

"Don't interrupt me!" exclaimed the master. "You four boys are detained for Saturday, but that is not in punishment for the disgraceful scene I witnessed in the corridor just now. The doctor will deal with that. Your punishment is for leaving the dormitory and for impertinence. Go to your room at once!"

"Yaas, wathah, sir; but—"

"Go to your room, D'Arcy!"

"Yaas, certainly, sir; but about bein' impertinent—"

"Go to your room!" thundered Mr. Selby.

And Jack Blake and Digby caught Arthur Augustus by his arms.

"Come along, ass!"

"You'll get us into another fix in a minute! Yank the young burler along!"

And Arthur Augustus was dragged away.

Mr. Selby turned on his heel and went down the other staircase.

CHAPTER 4.

In Mr. Selby's Room.

"MY hat, what a sell!"

Jack Blake uttered the exclamation in disgust. It was the first time any of them had spoken since leaving Mr. Selby.

Digby nodded.

"It knocks the paper-chase on the head, anyway."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that! We ought to have explained to Mr. Selbay, deah boys."

"Fine lot of good that would have done—I don't think!"

Arthur Augustus shook his head.

"You nevah know, Digbay, deah boy."

"Don't I, dear ass? I can make a jolly good guess, though. Tom Merry ought to be boiled in oil!"

"And Figgins, too!"

"What did the young rotters want to attack us for?" went on Herries indignantly. "The silly young burlers ought to have known Selby would hear a rumpus."

"Yaas, wathah! I considah Tom Mewwy and Figgay have both acted in a mannah boardahin' on wank bad form, bai Jove! As a mattah of fact—"

"Oh, Tom Merry isn't to blame!"

"No; perhaps not to blame!" growled Digby. "Still, he ought to have been more careful."

"We've had rows in the corridors before this, kid, and they've passed off all right," said Jack Blake, with a short laugh.

"Not when the Selby bird was working out our exam. papers in a room beneath."

"I don't see how Tom Merry or old Figgy can have known that, Dig."

"They ought to have known it," said Digby.

Jack Blake laughed again.

He was as upset as any of them over the detention, but his anger was directed against their bad luck. So would Digby's be before many minutes.

At the present moment, though, Digby looked very blank.

"It will make us show up as a first-rate set of asses, Blakey, and no mistake!" he exclaimed. "We've piled it on about the paper-chase—put a notice on the board, sent a casual sort of invitation to Tom Merry and Figgins, and now we've got to squash the whole thing."

"Rotten!"

"Wotten in the extweme, as a mattah of fact—"

"And it's all your fault, Gussy!"

"Wats—uttah wats, Hewwies, deah boy!"

"So it is!"

"Weally, Hewwies—"

Jack Blake pushed on ahead.

"No good grousing about it," he said wearily. "We've

run up against an attack of bad luck, that's all. I'll admit Gussy will have to have that collar and chain, though."

"Weally, Blake, I twust you do not wish me to considah you in the light of a widiculous ass?"

"Hallo!"

Herries' voice broke in sharply. He stopped dead.

"There's someone along there, kids!"

Jack Blake peered along the gloomy corridor. There certainly was someone there, and it looked very much like someone the four had particular reasons for not wishing to meet.

"It's Knox all wight, deah boys!"

"All wrong, you mean," whispered Jack Blake. "Who is with him?"

"Hendon, isn't it?"

"Yaas, wathah, and they're coming fwom Mr. Selbay's woom, bai Jove!"

Jack Blake nodded.

"Yes; it'll be Hendon and Knox. I know they are helping the Selby bird set us questions."

The Fourth-Formers stood back in a recess, anxiously watching the two seniors. If Knox came their way there might be some more trouble.

"Bai Jove! It's all wight, deah boys."

"He's gone the other way, Blakey, and Hendon's gone with him."

Jack Blake grinned.

"Good egg! Get a move on!"

"Wight-ho!"

The four hurried on in silence. No one spoke until they were passing Mr. Selby's room.

Jack Blake stopped in surprise.

"My hat! Knox has left the door open!"

"Yaas, wathah, and— Bai Jove, Selbay has a fire!"

"My hat!"

The idea of any having a fire in August astounded the Fourth-Formers. It was a chilly night for the time of the year, certainly; but a fire in August!

"It's that what makes him so jolly bad-tempered," said Jack Blake, peering into the room.

It was only a small fire, certainly, but it happened to be blazing up at that moment. It was lighting up the little room almost as well as the gas could have done.

It showed the juniors a table littered with sheets of foolscap.

"The exam. papers, bai Jove!"

Herries grinned.

"Yes; they'll be our questions. Say when and where the Battle of Hastings was fought, and give your reasons for considering electric light better than candles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors chuckled, with the exception of Jack Blake. He glanced towards the sheets of foolscap.

The table upon which they lay was very near the door.

He turned to the others.

"I say, it would be easy enough for anyone to slip in and have a glance at the questions, wouldn't it?" he exclaimed. "You'd only have to just step inside the room."

The others stared at him in amazement. Arthur Augustus rammed his monocle in his eye with unusual jerkiness.

"Weally, Jack Blake—"

"I mean—"

"My hat, Blakey!"

"Ass—that is to say—"

"Gweat Scott!"

"You utter asses!" exclaimed the chief of Study No. 6. "You don't think I meant that we might look at them, do you?"

"No; of course not, deah boy, but—"

"You're all asking for thick ears," growled Jack Blake, "and you'll jolly well get them! I mean, the door ought to be shut."

"Weally, I fail to see any reason—"

"Ass! Suppose someone came along and—and a sort of temptation— None of our fellows would, of course, but—"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that!"

Digby and Herries nodded.

They understood Jack Blake's confusion. It was not a nice thing to even think there could be Fourth-Formers who would fall to the temptation. Still, there were one or two juniors they could have named who would be the better for not having such a temptation to withstand.

"Yes; better shut the door," said Herries.

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove! What about that newspapah in the fendah, deah boys?"

The others looked towards the fender. Somehow a newspaper had fallen dangerously near the fire.

"I wathah fancay it would be wiskey to shut the doah with that papah there, deah boys."

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"Rather!"

"Let's go and shift it!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Wight-ho, deah boy!"

The chums of Study No. 6 stepped into the room. They at once turned their backs on the table, and marched towards the fire.

Digby picked up the paper, and dropped it on the chair.

"It'll be all right now, kids."

Arthur Augustus nodded.

"Bai Jove! I considah it wathah luckay we saw it, Digby, deah boy! Pway get a move on!"

And the four left the room, their backs still turned towards the table. Herries pulled the door to, then they walked on.

They had forgotten all about the incident before the dormitory was gained.

CHAPTER 5.

The Visit to the Head.

"I PWOPPOSE we wethah to the study and talk it ovah, deah boys," exclaimed Arthur Augustus, the following morning. "There is nothing like talkin' a knottay point ovah—"

Jack Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"Ass, what's the good of talking it over?"

"Weally Blake—"

"There's nothing to talk over, anyway," growled the chief of Study No. 6. "There's only one thing to do."

Digby nodded wearily.

"Postpone the paper-chase—"

"Yaas, wathah—postpone it until the followin' Saturday, deah boys."

"Ass!"

"Footer practice will have started then."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that," said Arthur Augustus. "I pwopose we postpone the affair until some latah date—that will look wathah well on the notice-board, deah boys—until some latah date—"

"Humph!"

Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries, did not feel very enthusiastic.

All had slept well, of course, in spite of the fact that they had a visit to the doctor's room hanging over their heads, but now that they were dressed and waiting for the breakfast-gong, there was a suspicion of gloominess in the air.

It had more to do with the falling through of the paper-chase than the forthcoming visit to the Head's room, though.

Arthur Augustus seemed to view the matter with the least concern.

"It only wequires a fellow of tact and judgment to handle the affair, deah boys," he said confidently. "If you will leave it entiahly in my hands, I wathah fancay our dig. will not suffah."

"We shall look asses, whoever handles it, Gussy."

"Pway don't be widic., deah boy—the papah-chase is postponed—I shall give no weasons!"

"My hat!"

"Pway what is the mattah, deah boy. Bai Jove—"

Arthur Augustus started.

Some one was coming towards them wearing a gown. It looked very much like Dr. Holmes, the Head of St. Jim's.

"Bai Jove, it is the doctah, deah boys!"

"And he's coming here, too!"

"Yaas, wathah—"

Arthur Augustus did not conclude his remark. There was something in the expression on the Head's face which commanded silence.

He came along the corridor with a stern sort of stride.

"Blake, were you out of the dormitory last night?"

The chief of Study No. 6 started.

"Yes, sir—"

"Go to my room, please, and remain there. Were you other boys also out of the dormitory?"

"Yes, sir—"

"Yaas, wathah, sir, and we were just comin' to your woom to weport ourselves—"

"Go to my room, now!" said the doctor, and he walked on.

The Fourth-Formers looked ruefully at one another, then turned up the stairs again. Jack Blake put his hands in his pockets wearily.

"We're not going to get off so easily after all, kids!"

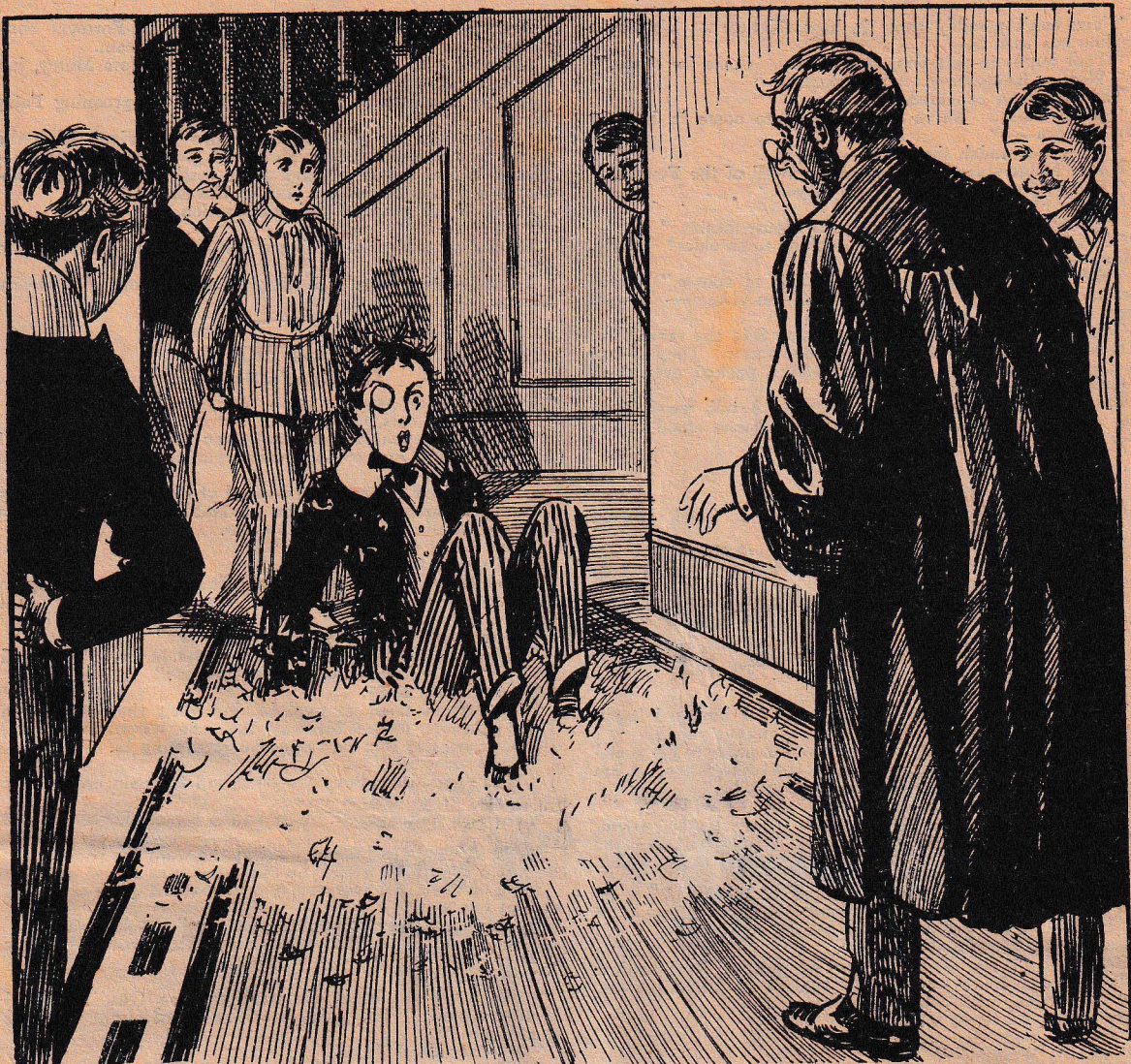
"Rather not!"

"Didn't he look put out?"

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and flicked a speck of dust from his sleeve.

"Howevah, it will be all wight, deah boys. You leave the mattah entiahly in my hands. Pway let's huwwy!"

They hurried, gaining the door of the Head's private study just as Tom Merry & Co. sauntered up.



"D'Arcy," thundered Mr. Selby, looking just about as stern and angry as the juniors had ever seen him look. "Am I to understand that you are doing this on purpose?" (See page 4.)

There was a puzzled light in Tom Merry's eyes.

"What's up, Blakey?"

"Yes, what's happened, you chaps?"

Jack Blake looked at the Terrible Three in surprise.

"Nothing's happened. At least, we've been sent along by the doctor because of the row last night—"

"Yes, Selby hasn't wasted much time," said Digby.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"There's something more than that," he said. "Let's go in."

"Yaas, wathah! Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus had pushed open the door.

He now stood in the doorway, staring in blank astonishment into the room.

"What's the matter, ass! My aunt!"

The Head's private room was full of juniors. There were six of them sitting on the sofa, and three on the one easy chair Dr. Holmes allowed himself.

The little room looked packed.

The Study No. 6 juniors gasped.

"My hat!"

"Gweat Scott! Bai Jove, is that you, Weilly?"

The junior from Belfast laughed cheerily.

"Shure, an' I believe it is," he said, getting down from the window-ledge. "Come in, my boys!"

"Bai Jove, what a cwowd—"

Jack Blake chuckled.

"Ha, ha, ha! We shall have to go in, though; doctor's orders!"

And he pushed his way into the room.

The others followed his example; there were groans from the juniors near the fireplace.

"Look out, asses!"

"Fatty Wynn ought to stand outside—"

"Get outside, Fatty."

The Falstaff of St. Jim's ignored the suggestion. He sat down on a stool and took some sandwiches from his pocket.

Fatty Wynn did not know what lay before him in the nature of punishment, and he was a firm believer in a sound foundation.

"My hat, what a crush!"

"Get outside, some of you—"

"Talk about sardines—"

There was a tap at the door, then the door itself was pushed open. The knob of it caught Arthur Augustus on the elbow.

"Oh!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "You wough wottah—wow!"

"What's up now, kid?"

"Some wottah has caught me on the funny-bone—"

"Why don't you laugh, then," suggested Lowther. "My hat!"

Three more juniors stood framed in the doorway.

They were Harry Noble, Bernard Glyn, and Clifton Dane, Cornstalk & Co. The expressions on their faces were very blank.

"Great Cæsar!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Fatty Wynn got up and protested.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"You can't possibly come in here, Kangaroo; it's like a sardine box as it is—"

"That ought to suit you, then, Fatty. Come in, chaps."

"Weally, Kangahwoo, it is imposs.—"

The Cornstalk chuckled.

"Rats, Gussy! We've been ordered to come in here by Mr. Railton—"

"Yaas, but undah the cires.—"

Harry Noble stared severely at the swell of the Fourth.

"Really, Gussy, I am surprised at you."

"Awful!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Fancy advising us to disobey the House-master!"

"Trying to make us act disrespectfully to an elder? Really, Gussy—"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that, of course," panted Arthur Augustus. "Howevah, undah the cires.—" Gweat Scott!"

Cornstalk & Co. had pushed their way into the room.

It was impossible for anyone to sit down now. They all had to stand up, and they were fearfully closely packed, even then.

Fatty Wynn was groaning loudly.

Then the door was flung open again. A tall, weedy-looking junior, with a bumpy forehead and glasses stood in the doorway this time.

"Dear me—"

"It's Skimmy—"

"Pway wetiah, Skimmy, deah boy—"

Herbert Skimpole, the brainy man of the Shell, blinked at the crowd of juniors in surprise.

"Dear me, what are you all doing in here, Merry?"

"It's what do you want here, more likely," panted Tom Merry.

"Take your elbow out of my ribs, Digby. What do you want, Skimmy?"

"I do not want anything," said the amateur Socialist of St. Jim's; "did I require anything, I should have the perfect right to take it—"

"Ass—"

"I have been sent here by Mr. Selby for having left my dormitory last night," said Skimpole blinking rapidly. "I tried to explain that I only left the room in order to get something for toothache, but Mr. Selby refused to listen. I am afraid his temper is not as even as it might be."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gweat Scott! You aren't goin' to entah the woom, Skimmy? I uttably wefuse to allow anyone to entah the woom as my clothes are becomin' wumpled already. Skimmy, wetiah instantly—"

"But I have been ordered to retire to the Head's room and remain there—as a Socialist I cannot refuse to oblige—"

"But undah the cires.—" Bai Jove!"

And Skimpole entered the room.

He did so by the simple method of pushing hard against Clifton Dane. Dane was crushed against Arthur Augustus, and Arthur Augustus had to sit down.

He did so, on Reilly's knees.

"Get up, ass!"

"Weally, Weilly—"

"Get up, me bhoys, if you don't want a thick ear—Spalpeens and banshees!"

Someone else was sitting on Arthur Augustus's knees now. It was Fatty Wynn.

The Falstaff of St. Jim's was groaning.

"I'm sorry, D'Arcy," he apologised. "but I am afraid I cannot move—am I crushing you at all?"

"Oh!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "O-oh-wow—"

Fatty Wynn was the heaviest junior in St. Jim's.

Tom Merry gasped.

"Open the door, some one. It will give more room—My hat!"

The door would not open. The juniors pressed against it rendered that impossible.

Then, suddenly, there came another tap.

"It's the doctor, chaps!"

"Stand back, asses!"

"Off the ball," whispered Monty Lowther. "My only Aunt Jane!"

They had succeeded in opening the door about a couple of feet, but it was not the doctor who came in.

It was D'Arcy minor, the scamp of the Third.

Arthur Augustus looked at the inky, pleasant face of his brother in dismay.

"Leave the woom instantly, Wally! I uttably wefuse—"

"Rats!"

"Waltah, as your majah—Waltah, I uttably wefuse to allow you to entah the woom—"

"Oh, don't you begin, Gus—My only Aunt Jane, what are all you old fogeys doing in here, anyway?"

"Wally, wetiah instantly—"

"More rats, Gus—Ha, ha, ha! Come in kids; awful rag, Curly—Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

And to Arthur Augustus's horror, Third-Formers commenced pouring into the room in a steady stream.

However they managed to get in, amazed Tom Merry, but the fags were succeeding somehow.

Arthur Augustus struggled to dislodge the groaning Fatty Wynn.

"I give you my permish to wemove my minah from the woom," he gasped. "Tom Mewwy, I give you my permish—Fattay Wynn, unless you get up, I shall have no othah wsource but to administiah a feaful thwashin'!"

Fatty Wynn grunted with satisfaction.

"Ah!"

He had succeeded in getting a bun from his pocket in spite of the crush.

Third-Formers were still filing into the room in a steady stream.

CHAPTER 6.

The Head's Surprise.

"YOU uttah young wascal, Wally—"

"Oh, rats, Gus!"

"I wepeat my wemark—you uttah young wascal! As your majah and eldah I order you to wetiah fwom the woom—"

D'Arcy minor grinned and winked at Curly Gibson. Curly Gibson was breathing hard on account of the press, but he managed to dig Jameson in the ribs.

"Just listen to him, Curly!"

"Isn't it awful?"

"And he's Wally's major, too. Fancy a major trying to make his younger brother break his word to Kildare!" said Curly Gibson severely.

"Who would have thought it of Gussy?"

"We gave our solemn words to come in here," grinned Wally, "and we've come. Where is Gus?"

No one quite knew.

Fatty Wynn tried to explain, but then the last of the Third-Formers forced his way into the room. It seemed almost a miracle that he succeeded in getting in.

"Good old Dud!"

"That's right, Dudley; we promised to come here. My only Aunt Jane, what a crowd!"

The crush had carried Wally to the table. He clambered up on it.

Curly Gibson was pressed against the wall, his back to the juniors. Try as he would, he could not turn round again.

None of them had ever seen a room packed quite as tightly as that one was.

"And there's a crowd waiting outside," chuckled Wally.

"Bai Jove! I wegard you as an uttah wottah, Fattay Wynn!"

"Ring off, ass!"

"Yes, don't you begin wherever you are, Gus," chuckled D'Arcy minor. "The giddy corridor is full of chaps trying to get here."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"What can it mean, Blakey?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Jack Blake shook his head.

Just at that moment he did not care very much what it could mean. All he was longing for was a breath of fresh air.

"Can't—can't you open the window, Reilly?"

"Faith, and I haven't room to sneeze in, me bhoys. Hallo!"

The door was being pushed open again. Someone else was attempting to enter the room.

"Don't let him in!" gasped Digby. "I'm nearly in the fireplace as it is. Keep the door shut!"

"Put your weight into it, chaps."

"No room for any more, kids!"

"No, wathah, not. Fattay Wynn, I ordah you foah the last time to waise yourself!"

Fatty Wynn did his best to oblige.

He even succeeded in getting up, but the crush was too much for him. He had to sit down again rather suddenly.

Arthur Augustus gave vent to a shriek.

"You wough wottah—you uttah—"

"Ring off, ass!"

"Dry up, chaps!"

The fellows nearest the door were gasping. There were expressions of wildest consternation on their faces.

"The doctor, kids!"

Harry Noble breathed the words hastily. Instantly the voices began to die away.

"Open the door, boys—boys, open the door, instantly!"

Dr. Holmes's voice cut through the air sharply. The juniors who could looked at one another in dismay.

Tom Merry became desperate.

"He'll think it's a jape, chaps."

"Boys, open the door instantly!"

"Get under the table, someone, and make room for the door to open."

"Yes; that's it. Get under the table."

"And on the chairs."

There was a painful scramble, then Harry Noble and Curly Gibson succeeded in getting the door open. The next instant the stern, angry form of the Head stood in the doorway.

But it was only for an instant the stern, angry expression was to be seen on his face.

As soon as the door was really open, nothing but amazement showed in his eyes.

"Good gracious! Bless my soul!"

Tom Merry & Co. went pink. Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries were a deep red.

The only juniors who seemed to appreciate the situation were the Third-Formers, and they were just a little too young to have quite the same respect for the Head of St. Jim's the older juniors had.

Dr. Holmes recovered rapidly.

"Boys, what is the meaning of this? How dare you be in my room?"

Then a chorus of voices rang out:

"Please, sir, we were sent—"

"But—but—"

The Head looked at them blankly. He certainly had asked the prefects and the masters he had met to send all boys who admitted being out of their dormitories the previous evening, to his room. But he had not expected more than half a dozen at the most.

And there must have been well over thirty juniors in his usually neat little study.

It took the Head quite a long time to recover.

"Am I to understand, from your appearance here, that you were all out of the dormitories last night?"

There was another chorus.

It was rather deafening, coming after the previous silence.

Before the doctor could utter another word, Mr. Selby joined him in the doorway.

"Good gracious!"

The Third Form-master started. Dr. Holmes hastened to explain.

"It appears that—that all these boys have been sent here by the masters and the prefects. Dear me! I sent half a dozen here myself!"

A low chuckle greeted the remark.

D'Arcy minor did his utmost to convert it into a cough at the last moment, but he was not altogether successful. And his laugh had rather a startling effect on the Head.

The stern, almost pained expression came back into his face.

"Boys, follow me into Mr. Selby's class-room!"

He turned abruptly on his heel, and walked away with the Third Form-master. Jack Blake and Tom Merry exchanged glances.

The Shell junior looked a good deal disturbed.

"There's more in this than we thought, Blakey."

The chief of Study No. 6 nodded.

"Of course, the Head may only be going to give us a lecture on discipline or something, but—"

Tom Merry shook his head.

He did not think that was it. He did not know what to think.

The Head would scarcely have looked so grave if he had nothing more serious in store for them than a lecture on leaving the dormitory after lights out.

CHAPTER 7.

The Missing Exam. Questions.

"SILENCE!"

It was Mr. Selby who rapped out the word. He did so the moment the juniors were all in the class-room.

Now they came to look at him, there was a very grave expression on the Third Form-master's face as well.

Dr. Holmes turned to them quietly.

"All boys not belonging to the School House Fourth Form stand up."

The juniors stood up at once. There was not one of them who did not look very blank.

"Merry, why were you three boys out of your dormitory last evening?"

"To jape—to play a trick on some other fellows, sir," answered the Shell junior.

"Did you say you saw Merry, Mr. Selby?"

"Yes, and I sent him back to his room," answered the Third Form-master. "I also sent Figgins and some more New House lads, and Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy back to their respective rooms. I have all the names."

"Did all you boys mentioned go straight back to your dormitories?"

"Yaas, wathah, sir—"

"Yes, sir."

Jack Blake & Co. answered promptly. The others were not far behind them.

Then the Head seemed to change his plan.

"Boys," he said, "something of a very serious nature happened, last evening, between the time Mr. Selby left his study and—I suppose until this morning, Mr. Selby?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

The juniors waited breathlessly.

Even D'Arcy minor was subdued.

The Head went on calmly.

"Some boy, or boys, went into Mr. Selby's room last night," he said, "and took away the whole list of questions prepared for the School House Fourth Form examination."

It was out now. The juniors had expected something serious, but not quite like this.

It rather took their breath away for the moment.

"Bai Jove—"

"Silence, D'Arcy!"

"But—Gwheat Scott!"

The Head put up his hand.

"Silence!" he cried sternly, for he knew Arthur Augustus of old. "My only hope is that it was a trick—that the boy who went into Mr. Selby's room last night—"

"Bai Jove, doctah, I was in Mr. Selbay's woom last night!"

The words rang out clearly across the class-room. Everyone turned to stare at Arthur Augustus, everyone except Jack Blake, Digby, and Herries.

They had jumped to their feet.

The three were a little pale. Jack Blake glanced at his chums, but there was no need to do that.

"Yes, sir, we four went into Mr. Selby's room last night," he exclaimed. "I had forgotten all about it."

"Yes, sir, so had I."

Digby and Herries spoke together.

The doctor looked towards them inquiringly, but the change which had flashed across Mr. Selby's face made D'Arcy minor, his Form-pupil, anxious.

"Look out for squalls, Gus," he whispered. "The Selby bird is getting up on his perch."

"Weally, Wally! Pway let me explain, Jack Blake, deah boy."

"Yes, please explain, D'Arcy."

Arthur Augustus appeared rather at a loss for words for a moment or two.

"It is weally wathah difficult to start, sir," he began. "All four of us went into Mr. Selbay's woom in ordah to shut the doah—"

"Went—went into my room to shut the door!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"No, perhaps it would be more cowwect to say that we went into your woom to wemove a newspapah fwom the fendah, and then we shut the doah."

"Remove a newspaper from the fender! Whatever is the boy talking about?"

"About our goin' into your woom, sir—"

"When was it you went into my study?"

"Diwectly aftah our intahview with you in the cowwidah sir."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir," added Jack Blake. "As we were going back." The Head looked more puzzled than ever. Mr. Selby was trying to catch his glance.

Jack Blake pulled Arthur Augustus down on the form again.

"Ring off, ass!"

"Weally, Blakay—"

"Yes, sir," added Jack Blake aloud. "We were hurry-ing back to the dormitory when I noticed Mr. Selby's door was open."

"Yes, Blake," said the Head.

The chief of Study No. 6 had paused. The next few words were not going to be easy ones to utter, with all the juniors looking at him.

"Go on, Blake!"

"Yes, doctor. Well, we thought it would be better if the door were closed—"

"Why?"

Jack Blake went red.

"Well, we knew Mr. Selby had been preparing our examination questions, and—and—"

"Ah, you knew that then, Blake?"

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By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

ANSWERS

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

"Yes, sir," said the chief of Study No. 6, looking at the Third Form-master in surprise. "All the Form knew it."

"The Shell knew it as well," put in Tom Merry quietly. "Pray go on, Blake!" exclaimed the Head, looking as puzzled as ever. "You have not yet told me why you were anxious to close the door."

"The table was near the door, sir, and we thought——"

"We thought——" said Digby.

"We thought someone might be tempted to—to have a look at the papers, sir!"

Jack Blake had blurted it out. He was dismayed at his own bluntness, while Arthur Augustus was horrified. On the whole, the doctor rather liked it.

"I see," he said quietly.

The Study No. 6 chums stood where they were. They were all a deep crimson.

It was one thing to speak about the open study door being a temptation to some fellows, amongst themselves, but to have to stand up and blurt it out before a dozen or so of their own Form was quite another matter.

There were momentarily flashes of indignation on the faces of Reilly, Hancock, and one or two of the others.

"Oh, I say, Blake!"

"Of all the caddish things to think——"

That was Mellish's voice. Mellish himself was known as the cad of the Fourth.

Jack Blake glanced towards him.

The chief of Study No. 6 had not thought of anyone in particular at the time of suggesting that the door should be closed; but if he had, Mellish would have been that one.

The Head looked a trifle relieved.

"This is a very surprising coincidence, Blake. You entered the room as well as closed the door, I understand?"

"Yaas, wathah! To wemove a papah fwom the fendah——"

"Remove a paper——"

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed Jack Blake desperately. "Somehow a newspaper had fallen down in the grate, and we thought it wouldn't be safe to shut the door on account of the fire."

"The fire was nearly out!" cried Mr. Selby. "It was dying down when I left the room."

"It had burnt up again then, sir?"

"And all four of you went into the room?"

"Yes, doctor!"

The four stood side by side rather stiffly.

They badly wanted it to be known to the doctor that they had turned their backs on the table all the time they were in the room, but somehow they did not want to raise the point.

In some vague way, Jack Blake felt that the doctor would know they had done that without being told.

And perhaps the Head did know. His next few words almost suggested that he did.

"Were the papers—the sheets of questions—on the table when you were in the room, Blake?"

"I don't know, sir; we didn't look."

"No, of course not——"

"Surely, Dr. Holmes, you cannot believe—— The papers were on my table when I left the room, Knox and Hendon were looking over them, and they were gone this morning!"

"You discovered the loss yourself, Mr. Selby?"

"Yes!"

"Are you quite certain the questions have not been mislaid?" asked the Head. "You did not put them away yourself, I suppose?"

"No; Knox and Hendon had them after I had left the room."

"Yes, of course."

"And Blake saw them on my table."

Jack Blake started.

The Third Form-master's remark almost sounded like an attempt to trap him in some way.

"No, sir, I did not see the questions on your table," he said quietly.

"No, wathah not."

"I thought you wished me to believe that your reason for shutting my door was that the questions were on the table?"

"We saw a lot of papers on the table——"

"Yaas, wathah; and it stwuck us that the questions would be amongst them!"

Mr. Selby laughed shortly.

It was not a pleasant laugh, and it caused the chums of Study No. 6 to colour again.

There could be no ignoring the fact now, Mr. Selby did not believe their story.

Arthur Augustus rammed his monocle in his eye.

"I twust, sir, you do not doubt our word of honah——"

"I have nothing to say to you, D'Arcy."

"No, sir; but——"

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"Silence, please! What is it, Skimpole?"

The brainy man of the Shell was on his feet now. Every one looked towards his weedy, familiar form.

The amateur Socialist, detective, and amateur everything else of St. Jim's, was fixing a steady stare on Jack Blake.

"Dear me! I do not think Blake took the questions, sir!" he exclaimed. "I cannot prove as yet that he did not take them, but there is a flaw in the theory that he did take them. I will even go as far as to say——"

"Pray sit down, Skimpole!" said the doctor impatiently.

"Yes, sir; but what I have to say may influence this case very considerably."

The Head frowned. He did not like Skimpole's use of the word "case."

"Well, please say what you have to say as quickly as possible!"

"Certainly, sir!" went on the genius of St. Jim's. "I wish to point out that there was no need for Blake to take the questions. He was in the room, he had plenty of time to look at the questions, why should he trouble to take them away?"

Skimpole's absurd manner somewhat suggested a lecturer discussing his favourite thesis, but his words were not wasted.

Curiously enough, that side of the question had not presented itself to the Head.

He was not relieved, because he had already accepted Jack Blake's word; but, still, he was rather glad Skimpole had raised the point.

He glanced towards Mr. Selby.

There was no noticeable change in the expression on the Third Form-master's face.

"There were a good many questions; it would have taken a long time to copy them out," he said.

Skimpole answered so coolly that the juniors gasped. They never could quite realise how completely the brainy man of the Shell lost himself in his own theories.

"I do not agree with you, sir," he said; and Mr. Selby went pink. "There was no need to copy the questions out—a single glance at them would be sufficient. No, sir; I consider it far more likely that Reilly or Hancock——"

"What's that——?"

"Look here, Skimpy——"

"Please do not interrupt me, Hancock," went on Skimpole. "What could have been easier for Hancock or Reilly, say, to hurry along the corridor and slip into Mr. Selby's room——"

"What's that——?"

"Dear me, Skimpole——"

"One moment, please, doctor. I repeat, what could have been easier for Reilly or Hancock to visit Mr. Selby's room? They did not know where Mr. Selby was—he might have returned any moment for all they knew, so they would have a motive in taking the questions bodily. In the case of Blake, he knew where Mr. Selby was, so——"

"Silence, 'Skimpole!' ordered the doctor.

"We will suppose that Hancock has the questions," continued Skimpole, without hearing. "He wishes to return it—he finds the door is shut, and he is frightened——"

"You utter ass, Skimpy!" breathed Tom Merry.

"All right, Skimpy——"

"Shure and if——"

The Head stepped away from his desk, much to Skimpole's surprise.

"Boys, dismiss!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes. "Silently, please!"

And the juniors filed from the class-room.

CHAPTER 8.

Friends in Need.

"W HERE'S Skimpy——"

"Don't let Skimpy get away——"

Hancock and Reilly spoke together. There was the same warlike note in their voices, too.

Skimpole noticed that.

"Really, Reilly, I trust——"

"Shure, an' bump the young spalpeen!" panted the junior from Belfast. "Of all the young asses——"

"There he is."

"Dear me, Hancock; if you will consider for a moment——"

"Now we have him——"

"Shure, an' on the ball, me bhoy!"

Skimpole's alarm increased. He commenced to look about him in case retreat became necessary.

"Really, Hancock, in using your name, I merely did so as a means of illustration!" he exclaimed. "I do not consider I proved to the doctor that either you or Reilly is guilty, although——"

"Shure, an' we'll bump the breath out of him!" panted Reilly.

"Of all the howling, shrieking——"



"Fattay Wynn," exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I ordah you foah the last time to waise yourself!"
(See page 8.)

Hancock was very red. Skimpole noticed that. He also noticed the determined manner in which the two juniors were forcing their way through the crowd of juniors.

"Dear me! I almost believe they contemplate assaulting me!" he gasped. "I am certain of it."

And he wheeled round.

The next instant the brainy man of the Shell was pelting along the corridor, his thin, weedy legs carrying him over the ground in surprising style.

Reilly and Hancock followed grimly.

The Terrible Three, and Figgins & Co., of the New House, were watching, but they were not thinking much about Skimpole and his troubles.

The six had very similar thoughts as it happened.

Tom Merry was the first to break the pause.

"Where—where did old Blake go?" he asked.

"To their study, I expect—"

Figgins nodded.

"Yes, they went along there. Come on, Kerr and Wynn!"

"Come on Manners and Lowther—"

Figgins and Tom Merry spoke together. They glanced at one another as they began to move in the same direction.

It almost looked as if they had the same object in view.

In separate groups the six marched along the corridor, the Terrible Three leading the way.

Tom Merry stopped at the closed door of Study No. 6; Figgins & Co. also stopped. Manners knocked loudly.

"What is it?"

The answer came in Jack Blake's voice. It was rather abrupt:

"Can we come in, kid?"

There was a pause, then the key was turned.

"What is it, Tom Merry?"

The Shell juniors grinned a little. Figgins nodded cheerily, the long-limbed leader of the New House juniors couldn't think of anything else to do at the moment.

Jack Blake stared at them.

"Do you chaps want anything?"

"Yes," said Tom Merry, "we want to come in."

"Rather!"

Jack Blake stepped aside. The six walked into the room, and there was another pause.

There was a good deal of embarrassment in the air for a moment or two.

Suddenly Tom Merry's handsome face lightened up with one of his cheery smiles, and he stepped up to Jack Blake.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

"I don't know what Figgy is here for," he said, "but we've come to say we're beastly sorry about what happened last night—"

"Bai Jove! What do you mean, Tom Mewwy—"

"I mean, we're beastly sorry we arranged that bolster attack—"

"My hat, that's what we've come for, too, and—"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Thought it was that, Figgy. Look here, Blakey, it was a good deal our fault, in a way. I wish to goodness we'd never arranged to jape you."

"That hadn't anything to do with it, Tom Merry."

"Well, it got you chaps gated for Saturday, anyway."

"Yaas, wathah, only that is not a vewy gweat mattah, aftah all," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust we shall discover that the papahs have been taken for a wag."

"Y-yes—you chaps are in a fix."

Jack Blake wheeled round.

"Not a bit of it," he said shortly. "The Head takes our words."

"My hat!"

"You utter ass, Blake!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Old Figgy didn't mean about your going into Selby's room, duffer!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"Of course, I didn't. Every one knows you hadn't anything to do with it."

"You are an ass, Blake."

The chief of Study No. 6 went rather red, but he was grinning pleasantly enough.

"It's jolly decent of you kids to say so."

"Rats!"

"What I was thinking of," said Figgins, "is the reputation of your School House Fourth Form asses."

"Yes, that's it."

"You know, some one must have taken the papers, Blake," said Tom Merry, "and the most likely chap, of course, is a School House Fourth-Former."

"Of course. The questions wouldn't be any use to any one else."

Tom Merry nodded.

"That's what I was thinking. What are you going to do about it, kid?"

"There's only one thing to do."

"What's that?"

"Why, do our best to find the chap who took the questions," said Jack Blake grimly. "We four are all out to do that, you can be sure."

"We were talking it ovah when you came in, as a matter of fact."

"And we're going to find the young rotter whatever it snows," said Digby.

"Hear, hear!"

Tom Merry jumped down from the table.

"And that's the real reason we three are here!" he exclaimed, "to see if you kids want any help."

"My hat, we came to see if we could be of any use, too!" said Figgins.

The Study No. 6 chums faced their great rivals, and grinned. Arthur Augustus was the only one of them all who had anything to say.

He turned to Tom Merry, his monocle sparkling as the sun through the open window caught it.

"Bai Jove, deah boys," he said coolly, "I must say I wegard that as wathah wippin' of—yaas, weally!"

And that was all that was said by either party.

The Terrible Three and Figgins & Co. had not been long in coming to offer their services to the rivals, and, of course, Jack Blake and his chums were grateful. But they would have done the same if the positions had been reversed.

Both Tom Merry and Figgins knew that well enough.

And Jack Blake & Co. knew that they knew it.

CHAPTER 9.

Mr. Selby's Visitors.

M R. SELBY, the Third-Form master, went to his room and sat down.

It was inconceivable to him that the Head could remain unconvinced.

To Mr. Selby's mind, the matter was as plain as if there had been an eye witness to report the details.

"The young rascals were passing my room," he muttered, half aloud; "they saw the paper of questions, and went in to look at them, or, perhaps, they took them away in the first place, fearing interruption, as Skimpole suggested, and they were afraid to return them. It is perfectly ridiculous of the doctor."

Mr. Selby was so certain that he had left the Head's private

room in a very ruffled state of mind at what he considered the obstinacy of the other masters.

He sat by his table, a frown on his face.

Tap!

Mr. Selby failed to hear the gentle knock at his door.

Tap!

The knock was repeated, a much louder tap this time.

"Come in—come in!" said Mr. Selby irritably. "What is it, Merry?"

The hero of the Shell came in, followed by Manners and Lowther.

"Please, sir—"

"Please, sir—"

"Explain, Merry, or leave my room!" snapped Mr. Selby.

Tom Merry coughed.

"We've just been to the Head, sir, and he has given us permission to try and find the junior who took the questions last night."

"Humph! That ought not to take you long."

"No, we hope it won't, sir," said Tom Merry. "The Head said no doubt you would let us search this room, as we are not quite sure that the papers really were taken at all."

"What nonsense!"

"May we search the room, sir?" The doctor said you would be only too pleased."

Mr. Selby frowned.

"You mustn't make a noise, then. I trust you do not wish to make a long search."

The Third Form-master took up a book and commenced reading. The juniors began to turn things over.

They went about their work systematically, and made as thorough a search of the room as was possible in the circumstances.

There was not a sign of the missing questions to be seen.

Mr. Selby looked up as the three stopped their search.

"Well, have you found them, Merry?"

"N-no, sir."

"Humph! Well, go and look in Study No. 6. Your efforts may be better rewarded there. Shut the door, please."

The door was closed, with rather a bang.

Manners had done the closing, and the Third Form-master's words had ruffled the Shell junior.

Mr. Selby did not notice the unnecessary noise, and went on reading.

He had read nearly half a page when there was another tap at the door.

The next instant it was pushed open, and Figgins & Co. stood framed in the doorway.

Mr. Selby rose to his feet.

"What do you want, boy?" he said irritably. "I no sooner open my book than— What is it, Figgins?"

"Please, sir, may we search your room?"

Mr. Selby put his book down on the table with a thud.

"No, you may not!"

"All right, sir," said Figgins, turning to the door again.

"The Head said you would be only too pleased to help us in the search, as we are trying to discover who took the questions. Still, perhaps another time, sir."

Figgins was not without the tact and judgment by which Arthur Augustus laid such great store. He was moving towards the door all the time.

"Come here, Figgins."

The New House junior turned.

"Yes, sir."

"It is perfectly ridiculous you lads searching my room!" he exclaimed snappishly. "Knox and I have already done so, and Merry has turned everything inside out."

"Merry—oh, it's very likely he will have missed seeing the questions, sir."

"Nonsense. I will allow you five minutes."

"Thank you, sir," said Figgins crisply. "Get on with the washing, chaps."

Kerr and Fatty Wynn nodded. Fatty Wynn's eye had caught a biscuit tin, and it rather made him long for the breakfast bell.

But he joined in the search as heartily as any of them.

"Only I wish I had brought some sandwiches," he whispered. "You don't know how hungry I get in this August weather. I sometimes feel as if I can't drag one leg behind the other."

"Well, try pushing that chair behind the sofa instead," muttered Figgins. "I believe there's something there."

But it was a false alarm.

Search as they would, they met with no greater success than the Terrible Three.

Figgins looked rather disappointed as he walked from the room.

"Shut the door!" snapped Mr. Selby, without looking up, and once again he was left in peace.

The peace lasted exactly three minutes. It was broken just as the previous pauses had been terminated.

A brisk tap at the door brought Mr. Selby to his feet again. He did not wait for the door to be opened this time; he seized the knob, and wrenched it open himself.

Jack Blake, Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus stood in the passage.

"Please, sir——"

"Pway, Mr. Selbay——"

"Blake, how dare you! This is impertinence. It is a plot!"

The master fired off his remarks in rapid succession. The Fourth-Formers stared at him blankly.

"Bai Jove!"

Jack Blake faced the master steadily.

"We have come to know whether you will allow us to search your room, sir," he asked quietly. "The Head said he could promise that you would give us all the aid you could."

Mr. Selby was gasping.

He knew Jack Blake was speaking the truth. That was just the sort of thing Dr. Holmes would have said in the circumstances. Holding the opinions he did on the subject of the missing questions, the Third Form-master regarded Jack Blake's visit as adding insult to injury.

"You astound me, Blake!" he exclaimed furiously. "Your effrontery. You dare to say you wish to search my room?"

"Yes, sir."

Jack Blake was still facing the master, and his open, pleasant face ought to have warned Mr. Selby he might be making a mistake.

But Mr. Selby never took warnings like that when he had made up his mind on a subject. He always considered the matter was settled when once his mind was made up.

He looked from one junior to the other sternly.

"Search my room," he said; "search every corner of it!"

The juniors did not thank him for the permission. There was nothing to thank him for.

His tone of voice was as unpleasant as Mr. Selby could well make it.

Quietly the juniors went about their work, going over the same ground Figgins and Tom Merry had been over just before.

The result was the same.

Jack Blake led the way to the door again, but Mr. Selby was barring the way. The danger signal of a pink flush was on his face.

"Blake," he said grimly, "would you be as ready to allow me to search your room?"

"Will you come and search it now, sir?"

"You are impertinent, D'Arcy!"

"Weally, sir, I twust I am not in the habit of bein' impertinent to mastahs!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's. "Fwom your mannah, I watah thought you meant to cast a slur on our honah. I twied to explain that we had nothin' to feah."

Arthur Augustus's manner was so quiet that scarcely any other master in the college could have taken exception. Still, Mr. Selby considered there was something impertinent in the words.

His reply was scathing.

"I should have thought, D'Arcy, that a lad of your upbringing would have endeavoured to have kept his honour unstained while still at school," he said. "When this affair is thoroughly sifted, Lord Eastwood will receive a blow he will never recover from."

Arthur Augustus started violently, then he replaced his monocle and looked at Mr. Selby steadily through it.

"My patah is a sportsman, sir," he said quietly. "He will accept my word of honah until there is pwoof."

The Third Form-master's face flushed with anger. He stepped up to the junior, and his voice shook.

"Leave the room, D'Arcy—leave the room instantly!"

"Certainly, sir!"

And the swell of St. Jim's stepped out into the passage, followed by the others.

Arthur Augustus was a trifle pale.

CHAPTER 10.

Trouble in the Third.

"SILENCE!"

Mr. Selby rapped out the word the moment he was through the doorway of his class-room that morning. The buzz of voices were at once lowered.

Curly Gibson grinned ruefully.

"We're in for it, Dud."

"Looks like it."

The Third Formers hurried away from D'Arcy minor's desk.

As a rule, Mr. Selby demanded silence when he was half-way towards the blackboard; that he had done so this morning almost before he was in the class-room was as good a danger signal as the pink flush on his face.

But there were rather defiant expressions in the Third-Formers' eyes, in spite of that.

Curly Gibson took his seat by the open casement window rather grimly.

"The Selby bird always does put his foot in it if there's half a chance, Jameson."

"Yes, he's rather an ass, sometimes."

"Fancy thinking old Wally's brother could have boned his rotten old exam. questions!"

"Awful rot, isn't it?"

However much public opinion may have been divided in the Fourth Form, the fog Form was of one mind.

Arthur Augustus was D'Arcy minor's brother. It was ridiculous to think D'Arcy minor's brother could have done anything dishonourable. Somehow the fags felt they wanted to do something to show Wally what they thought about it all.

They glanced towards Wally with pleasant grins, but the scamp of the Third did not notice them.

He looked rather white, and his eyes were sparkling a little.

"Silence!"

This time the buzz of voices died away altogether.

The juniors opened their books, and first school started. It was maths, so they had to work away from their books while Mr. Selby stated some problems on the blackboard for the second half of the class.

For about ten minutes there was a dead silence. Then suddenly an exclamation rang out.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Everyone turned in his seat. The exclamation came from Curly Gibson.

Curly Gibson went pink.

Mr. Selby looked at him in astonishment.

"Gibson, did you make that ridiculous observation?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have twenty-five lines, then, Gibson."

Curly Gibson went from pink to a deep red.

"Shoo! Lie down! Go home, old chap!"

"My only old hat!"

Mr. Selby's astonishment increased.

"Jameson, how dare you make that ridiculous exclamation? It was you?"

"Y-yes, sir."

"Then take twenty-five lines."

"Shoo!" gasped Jameson. "Shoo! Go home!"

"Gibson, leave the window alone."

Curly Gibson stared blankly at Jameson. Jameson stared back.

"Please, sir, may—may we have the window closed?"

"No, you may not. Dudley, sit up properly to your desk."

Dudley had slipped down, and was sticking his leg out as far as possible in front on his desk. Mr. Selby saw his leg, and was astounded.

"How dare you, boys!" he fumed. "Gibson, I told you not to touch the window. You three will stay in on Saturday if I have any more nonsense."

"Shoo!" muttered Curly Gibson desperately.

"Go home, old chap!"

"Lie down! My hat!"

It was too late now. Even closing the window would have been useless.

A small, shaggy object had jumped into the room. It was Pongo, D'Arcy minor's dog.

"Good gracious! How dare you bring that dog into class, Gibson? I—I—Go away, you brute!"

Pongo was a very pronounced mongrel, but he had thoroughbred sentiments. He was friendly with almost everyone, but he fully realised that D'Arcy minor was his master, and so it was towards the scamp of the Third he now made.

His way led past Mr. Selby's desk.

"Turn the animal out of the room!" cried the Third Form-master, bringing his pointer down on the desk.

"Good gracious!"

In running past Mr. Selby Pongo had stopped to growl. Mr. Selby was a nervous man. His fondness for stuffy rooms and fires was the cause of that. He started back.

"Whose dog is it?" he thundered.

"Mine, sir. Come here, Pongo!"

"Yours, D'Arcy? Then how dare you! Catch the animal and take him out of the room instantly."

Wally made a grab at his pet, and Pongo at once commenced to dodge. He was under the impression it was a game.

"Catch him, Dud!"

"Look out, Curly!"

The juniors jumped to their feet and tried to surround Pongo. Pongo refused to be surrounded.

He dived between Mr. Selby's legs just as Jameson was about to grab him by the collar.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Mr. Selby gasped. He thought it was an attack.

"It's all right, sir; Pongo won't bite."

Mr. Selby flushed. He was a sensitive man, and possessed an intense hatred of being laughed at.

He felt that his class must be laughing in their hearts at his fear of Pongo.

Suddenly the Third Form-master's embarrassment changed to very different feelings. D'Arcy minor gasped.

"My hat!"

"Collar him!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Pongo had dashed for Mr. Selby's desk. He made a clever spring in the air, and neatly snatched Mr. Selby's mortar-board, which had been reposing on the chair.

The next instant D'Arcy minor's dog was careering round the room, the mortar-board in his mouth.

"Catch him!" cried Mr. Selby. "D'Arcy minor, I order you to catch him instantly."

"Y-yes, sir. Come here, Pongo! Come here!"

Pongo went under the forms instead. Curly Gibson made a dash for him, but he was not quick enough.

"There he is!"

"Now you have him, sir!"

But it was a false alarm. Mr. Selby had not caught Pongo. He stooped down and said "Shoo!" loudly, then Pongo dashed through his legs again.

The instant following there was a loud crash.

"The blackboard!"

"Look out, sir! My hat!"

Pongo had knocked the blackboard from its easel. It was coming down on Mr. Selby.

The Third Form-master saw it, and sprang aside; then his voice rang out in a shout of pain.

"O-oh! My foot! Oh!"

The corner of the blackboard had caught Mr. Selby on the foot. The juniors in the front row of desks saw that, and dismay flashed across their faces.

No one laughed.

Mr. Selby was not the man to laugh at when in pain. D'Arcy minor & Co. made strenuous efforts to capture Pongo.

"Come here, Pongo! Come here, old boy!"

D'Arcy minor suddenly dived under a bench, and gave vent to a cry of triumph.

"I've got him, chaps!"

"Good egg! My hat, look at the Selby bird!"

Mr. Selby was walking round in a small circle. The juniors half expected him to pick up the injured foot and hop about on the other, but Mr. Selby did not do that.

The pain was lessening, and his anger was increasing. He faced his class furiously.

"Gibson, how dared you bring that dog into my room?"

"Please, sir, I didn't bring him in; he came in of his own accord."

"You enticed him in; I saw you doing it."

"No, sir. I tried to keep him out, only you wouldn't let me close the window."

"Silence, boy! Ah, you have caught the—the dog, D'Arcy!"

"Yes, sir. Pongo's all right now, sir."

"Have you thrashed the animal?" snapped Mr. Selby.

"He is to be thrashed."

Wally looked up.

There was a grim, set expression about his mouth. He looked very determined at that moment.

He had never thrashed Pongo in his life.

"Please, sir, I don't think the dog was to blame."

"The animal shall be thrashed!"

D'Arcy minor's mouth set grimly.

"He couldn't help knocking over the blackboard, and we were all chivving him, sir."

Mr. Selby stepped forward. He had a pointer in his hand, and for a moment Wally thought he was going to do the thrashing himself.

He met the master's eyes quietly.

Mr. Selby looked back at his most unruly pupil and hesitated.

It would be a very simple matter for Wally to let go of his dog's collar, and the Third Form-master did not want that to happen while Pongo was still in the room.

And besides, Mr. Selby was cooling down.

There was nothing the least bit cruel in his nature. A good many men in the same circumstances would have liked to see the dog punished. Still, perhaps it would be better not to insist upon the thrashing.

"Gibson, turn the dog out of the window."

"Yes, sir," answered Gibson quickly. "Out you go, Pongo!"

And Pongo went.

The fags waited then. They rather expected huge impositions in the way of lines.

But Mr. Selby rather surprised them. It was only Wally he spoke to.

"I must say, D'Arcy minor," he exclaimed snappishly, "that it is unseemly of you to behave as you have just behaved in the circumstances."

Wally looked very blank. As far as he could see, he had done nothing except his best to obey Mr. Selby's orders to catch the dog.

He did not quite know how to answer.

"The Head knows I have Pongo, sir."

"I was not referring to your ownership of the dog. I firmly believe you could have caught him if you had wished to do so."

"No, really, sir."

"Don't interrupt me, boy. I say, I consider it unseemly of you to take part in a trick of that nature when your brother is suspected—I might almost say—"

"My brother isn't suspected of anything, sir," said Wally quickly.

"D'Arcy!"

"There isn't anyone in the school who suspects Arthur."

"On the contrary. But you are impertinent!"

The scamp of the Third did not contradict the last statement. He did not care very much whether he were impertinent or not.

All he cared about was that no one was going to say anything against his brother while he was present.

The situation was becoming acute.

Mr. Selby knew his unruly pupil well enough to realise that he was not easily controlled. And perhaps Mr. Selby also realised he himself might be going a little too far.

"Your loyalty certainly does you credit, D'Arcy," he said coldly. "I am afraid it is misplaced, though."

"The Head doesn't believe Arthur did it, sir."

There was a pause for a moment or two, then Mr. Selby replaced the blackboard.

"Continue your work, please!"

And the juniors obeyed, grinning delightedly.

They felt the chief scamp of the Third had not come out of his passage-at-arms so badly, after all.

They wondered what would have happened if the incident had not stopped there.

CHAPTER 11

The Head in Study No. 6.

"BAI Jove, deah boys—"

"Oh, do ring off, Gussy!" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"The point is, can you chaps think of anything to be done to clear up the mystery?"

Digby shook his head.

"Blest if I can, anyway. The questions were taken all right—"

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of it befoah, but—"

The other three juniors stopped talking, and stared at the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus was looking out of the study window, across the quadrangle. A rather startled expression had flashed across his face.

"Bai Jove, it has only just stwuck me—"

"Frabjous ass!"

"What has just struck you?"

"Gweat Scott!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Jack Blake, deah boy, I ask you as one gentleman to anothah, what was your candid opinion about the intahview we had with Mr. Selbay in his woom befoah class?"

"It fizzled out, of course."

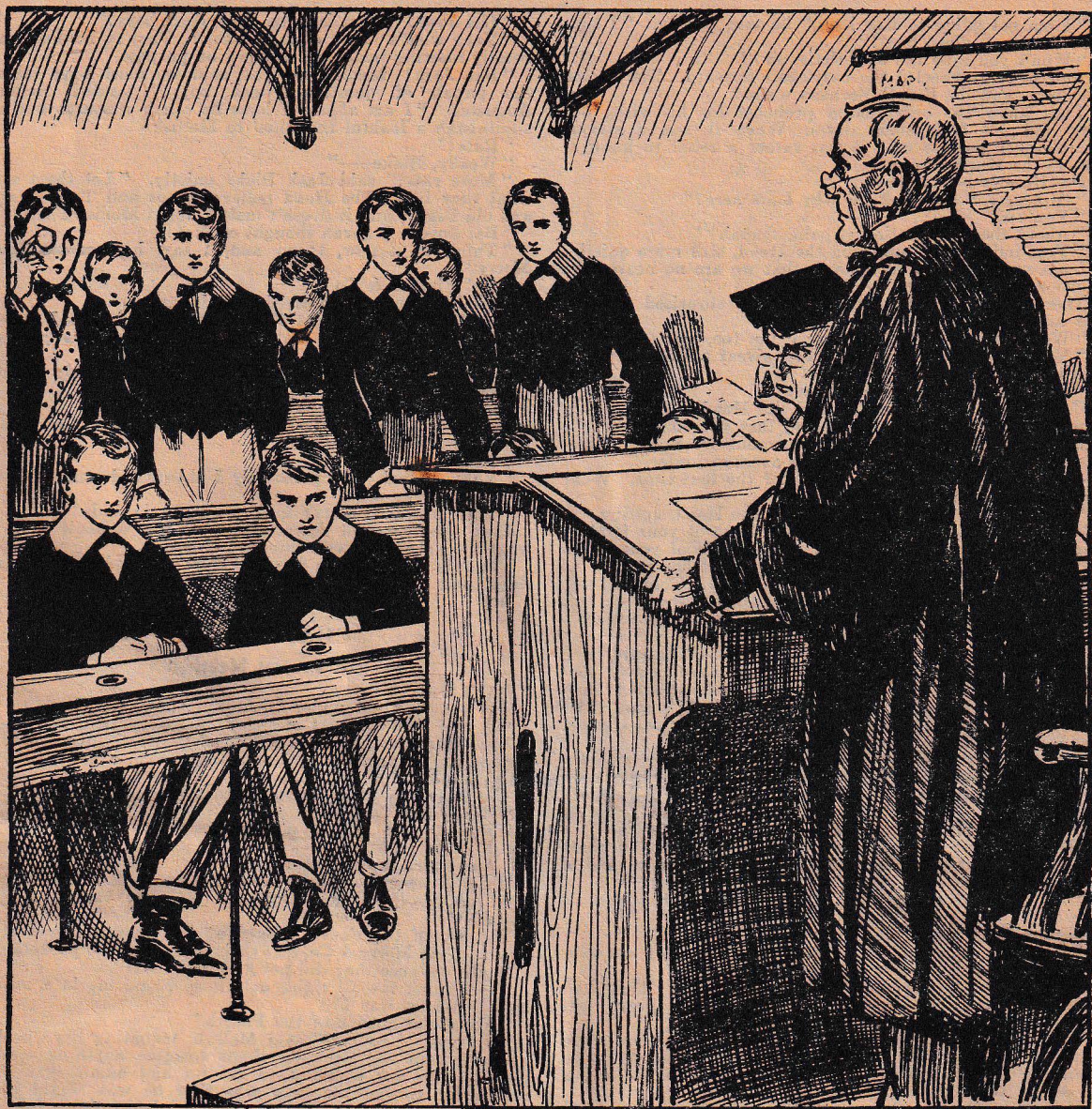
"The exam. questions weren't in the room."

"No, wathah not; but I wasn't wefewwin' to that, deah

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"Pray go on, Blake!" exclaimed the Head, looking as puzzled as ever. "You have not yet told me why you were anxious to close the door of Mr. Selby's room." (See page 70.)

boys—I was wefewwin' to the few wemarks I exchanged with Mr. Selbay."

Blake grinned a little.

"You mean about your pater being a sportsman, and all the rest of it?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, they were all right, kid!"

"Good! I was wathah afwaid——"

"Oh, you went for him in fine style!"

"Rather!"

"Didn't think you had it in you, Gussy."

Arthur Augustus' dismay returned. He let his monocle fall from his eye unheedingly.

"Bai Jove, I twust he could not have thought me wude!"

"My hat!"

"Anyway, it served him right!" growled Jack Blake.

"It isn't sporting to make up your mind a fellow is guilty when there isn't any proof. If you hadn't stood up to him, I should have done so."

"Gweat Scott! But don't you wealise that he is our eldah?"

"I realise he let us see pretty plainly he thought we had taken the papers," said Jack Blake shortly.

"But he is an eldah and a mastah. I sincerely twust my words were not wude. I was all in a fluttah at the time."

"That's all right, ass!"

"I am glad to heah you say so, deah boy; but I wathah fancay I ought to go and explain that I was all in a fluttah at the time."

"Explain to Selby! Apologise to him!"

"Well, explain that I was all in a fluttah, deah boy."

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake, pway do not say 'wats' to me!"

"Rabbits, then!" growled the chief of Study No. 6. "If anyone has any apologising to do, it's Mr. Selby."

"Bai Jove, he won't do that, deah boy!"

"Well, don't you do, either!"

"We'll boil you in oil if you do, Gussy!"

"Weally, Hewwies, I should uttably wefuse! Pway don't be so widic! Bai Jove, there's someone knocking at our doah!"

"Come in!"

The door was pushed open in response to Digby's invitation, and the doctor stood in the doorway. The juniors jumped to their feet at once.

"Bai Jove, we did not know it was you, sir!"

Dr. Holmes smiled and came into the room.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 133.

"I am not going to stay long," he said quietly. "I suppose I may sit down here?"

"Won't you take the easy-chair, sir?"

And Herries wheeled the easy-chair forward. The doctor sat down, and the Fourth-Formers waited.

They knew the only reason probable for his visit, but they did not feel much alarm. When it was a serious trouble such as this was, it was rather a relief to know it was in the Head's hands.

Dr. Holmes began slowly.

"Of course, you boys know why I am here?"

"Yes, sir."

"About the examination papahs, doctah?"

"Yes—indirectly," answered the Head, still more quietly.

"I am sorry to have to tell you that we are no nearer the solution of the mystery."

The juniors waited. Jack Blake felt surprised that he did not feel uncomfortable.

"We have been trying to clear it up, too, sir."

"Yaas, wathah; but without any great success as yet, I wegwet to say."

"Without any success at all, sir."

"Ah, no; I suppose not!" said the Head. "On looking through my detention books, I find that you four, with the exception of D'Arcy—have been in trouble with your Form-master quite as many times as the average junior."

Jack Blake & Co. looked blank for the first time. What could be coming?

"As I said, I regret this," went on the Head, getting up, "but I am pleased to remember that none of your faults—and they are many, Blake, very many—none of your faults have ever been questionable in the matter of honour."

The chums of the Fourth went pink now. They did not feel actually uncomfortable, but they rather wished they had not figured quite so often in the detention-book that term.

The Head was moving towards the door.

"And now for the real reason of my visit," he said. "I want you all to understand fully that I have perfect confidence in you. I should like you to realise that I have accepted your story of your visit to Mr. Selby's study last evening, not because there is no proof that it was untrue, but because I think I know Jack Blake & Co."

And the Head left the room.

For an instant the juniors stood where they were in silence. They had always liked the Head, they had always admired him, but now they felt as if they wanted to do something for him.

He had come to their room, he had spoken to them quietly, and what he had said thrilled them through and through.

"My hat!" muttered Jack Blake. "My hat! Isn't he great?"

Arthur Augustus felt for his monocle.

"Bai Jove, I am all in a fluttah, deah boys—I am in a most feahful fluttah, as a mattah of fact."

Digby and Herries did not say anything. They had nothing to say, but they would have given a great deal to be able to do something.

Voices came through the open window from juniors in the quadrangle below, indignant voices, accompanied by more than one hiss, but it was a moment or two before the chums of Study No. 6 noticed them.

Even then, it was only because Jack Blake's name sounded loudly through the window that they heard.

The chief of Study No. 6 moved quietly across his little room. He glanced out of the window.

"My hat! I'm glad the Head went when he did, chaps."

"Bai Jove! Yaas, wathah!"

Digby and Herries also hurried to the window.

A number of Fourth-Formers had collected in a group in the quadrangle below their window. They were about a dozen in all.

Mellish was the cause of the attraction, and that fact caused Jack Blake to scrutinise the others.

Nearly all the black sheep of the School House Fourth Form were there. All the twelve were not black sheep, of course, but the black sheep were amongst the loudest speakers.

It was a protest meeting.

Jack Blake & Co. had only to catch a few words before they understood the object of the meeting. The juniors were protesting against the slur cast upon the whole Form by the fellows who had taken the exam. questions.

And it was pretty obvious whom they considered had taken them.

"Bai Jove! What wottahs!"

Jack Blake nodded.

He was glad to see the black sheep in such force at the meeting. It would have been a different matter if the decent fellows of the Form had been present.

Arthur Augustus went red as the words came up to him.

The Gem Library.—No. 133.

NEXT THURSDAY: "LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Bai Jove! What is to be done, deah boys?"

"Yes; what's to be done, Blakey? They're holding the beastly meeting under our window on purpose."

"Bai Jove! Mellish has just said we must have taken the papah of questions, deah boys!" panted Arthur Augustus. "I am afraid I have no othah wescource but to administah a feahful thwashin' to Mellish!"

"Rats!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"More rats!" said Jack Blake quietly. "Let them say what they like. The Head believes in us and Tom Merry and old Figgys, and it doesn't matter about Mellish's sort!"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that!"

"Think of it now, then; and, I say, here comes Tom Merry."

"An' Figgins & Co."

Jack Blake peered across the quadrangle.

The Terrible Three and Figgins & Co. had joined forces for once. They were making a bee-line for the protest meeting.

A single glance at their set faces told the Study No. 6 juniors what their object was.

Jack Blake turned round a little.

"Anyway, chaps, this business has shown us who our friends are, and no mistake."

"That's so."

"Yaas, wathah; but personally I always did considah the doctah as a friend."

"What are Tom Merry & Co. going to do, kids?"

Jack Blake looked down again. It was difficult to say what their staunch rivals intended doing.

The only thing certain was that they intended doing something, and that before many minutes.

CHAPTER 12.

A Protest Meeting.

"MY hat!"

"Right under Blake's window, too!"

"What a set of cads!"

Tom Merry and Figgins & Co. spoke wrathfully. They walked on towards the protest meeting with a grim, determined stride.

The protest meeting glanced nervously towards them.

"Here come Tom Merry & Co., Mellish!"

"Y-yes," said Mellish doubtfully. "But there are only six of them."

"And there are twelve of us!"

"Y-yes," agreed someone else in a not altogether convinced tone of voice. "Shall we—we postpone the meeting, Mellish?"

The cad of the Fourth looked at the approaching party again. Tom Merry & Co. had their hands in their pockets.

In the distance they did not look very warlike.

"I—I think it's all right, only keep round me in a solid body! Where was I?"

"About the honour of the Fourth."

"Oh, yes, of course!" said Mellish, mounting the wheelbarrow again. "Can you chaps imagine anything more caddish than for a fellow to get up and admit that his reason for closing the door was that he was afraid the temptation might prove too much for some of his own Form-fellows? If that isn't about the most caddish thing a fellow could do—I believe Tom Merry is coming here!"

"Y-yes!"

"Keep close round me. I say, Study No. 6 fellows ought to be sent to Coventry by the whole school. What do you want, Merry?"

Tom Merry did not answer. None of his party even looked at Mellish.

Now that they were at close quarters, the cad of the Fourth was rather upset to see that the six had formed a solid-looking square.

They were marching in step, too.

If all six of them had not had their hands in their pockets Mellish would have been alarmed. As it was, he did not feel quite comfortable.

"What do you want here, Tom Merry?"

Again there was no answer. Mellish & Co. felt their uneasiness grow, then there was a slight thud.

The six had walked into the protest meeting.

Fatty Wynn was in the centre of the front line, and the Falstaff of St. Jim's was anything but a light weight. He deliberately walked into one of the protesters and pushed him along in front of him.

Tom Merry and Figgins were acting in exactly the same manner.

Kerr, Manners, and Lowther were backing them up in great style.

Mellish gasped.

He tried to get down from the wheelbarrow, but the crush was too great for him.

"All right, Tom Merry——"

"Asses!"

"Look out there!"

Tom Merry & Co. came on without a word. Their faces were as blank as if they had been walking in their sleep. Then they commenced to run.

The protest meeting endeavoured to make a stand.

It was useless. They were twelve to six in numbers, but the six had all won places in the junior eleven of St. Jim's at cricket and football.

There was not one of the twelve who could compare with any of Tom Merry & Co. for strength of limbs and hardness of muscles.

A passage was forced through the centre of the meeting, and the wheelbarrow was gained.

Mellish gasped.

"Don't be an ass, Merry. We've a perfect right—— O-oh! Wow!"

Tom Merry had taken his hands out of his pockets for the first time.

The next moment he had caught one of the handles of the wheelbarrow and had tipped it up.

Mellish gave vent to a yell.

"Rotters! Ow!"

He fell out of the wheelbarrow and flung his arms round the nearest junior's neck. The nearest junior sat down with a thud.

"Ass!"

"Look out!"

"All right, Tom Merry——"

But Tom Merry & Co. were going their way. They were almost through the small crowd now, and they had not lost their solid formation.

They walked on, and the meeting collected itself mechanically.

"Cads!"

"Frabjous idiots! My hat!"

Tom Merry & Co. had suddenly wheeled round. They were coming back at scout's pace, and there was no time for Mellish and his side to scatter.

They tried to do so, but only succeeded in getting in each other's way.

Then Mellish thought he saw a chance.

He was slipping away when he caught sight of a hose. A hasty glance along the pipe told him it was fastened to the tap in the wall.

The only point was whether the tap in the wall was turned on.

Mellish snatched up the hose and looked at the nozzle.

There was a second tap there. The cad of the Fourth gave it a quick turn.

"O-oh—ow!"

Mellish yelled. A stream of water had shot up into his face.

But Mellish did not mind that initial drenching very much.

He turned the tap off with a gasp, then directed the nozzle towards Tom Merry.

A stream of water streaked for the Shell junior, but Tom Merry was too quick.

He sprang aside just in time.

"Ass—duffer! All right, Mellish!"

It was one of Mellish's boon companions who was suffering.

"I'm sorry!" gasped Mellish. "Get out of the way, old chap!"

That was exactly what the boon companion was trying to do. He succeeded at last, then another boon companion received the full benefit of the shower.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, how wemarkably funnay, deah boys——"

The chuckles from Study No. 6 window came down to Mellish. He tried to elevate the nozzle towards the window, when he staggered backwards.

Someone had seized the hosepipe and given it a violent tug.

Kerr, the Scots chum from the New House, was responsible for the tug, but Mellish did not know that. He was too surprised at the result.

He still had the brass nozzle in his hand, but it did not weigh a fraction of what it had weighed before. And there was no water coming from it.

The next instant Mellish understood.

The nozzle and the hosepipe had parted company.

The cad of the Fourth knew that must be the case, because a stream of water had suddenly caught him at the back of the neck.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well played, Kerr!"

"Is that how you like it done, Mellish?"

The cad of the Fourth yelled loudly. Dodge as he would he could not escape the well-directed stream of water.

"You beast! Look at my clothes! Yah!"

Kerr growled.

"Fine lot you thought of our togs, didn't you, Mellish?"

Mellish made a wild dash.

He did not know where he was going, he did not care much so long as he got away from Kerr and the hosepipe.

Tom Merry & Co. were chuckling loudly.

"May as well let the rest of them have a taste."

"Rather!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Scots chum swung the hose round a little, and instantly there was a stampede. The protest meeting was scattering in all directions.

Kerr chuckled loudly, and hurried away to turn off the tap in the wall. Tom Merry picked up the brass nozzle.

"And no harm done, kids," he grinned. "The nozzle only slipped out of the pipe. It's all right again now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a jape! Mellish looked like a drowned rat!"

Tom Merry nodded grimly.

"And serve him right, too!" he exclaimed. "No one but a cad would go and get up a meeting just under old Blake's window. Suppose old Blake had been there?"

"My hat, yes!"

"He'd have thought it was the general opinion that he had—had done what we know he wouldn't do," went on the hero of the Shell.

"That's so."

"As it is, it's only a few of the cads like Mellish who are ready to suspect anything rotten of a chap. Jolly good job you drenched him, Kerr."

Kerr nodded, and they walked off chuckling.

None of the party had glanced up at the window, and somehow, Jack Blake & Co. had not wanted to attract their attention.

There had been no time to join in the dispute at the beginning, so the Study No. 6 juniors had watched from the window.

The rapid manner in which their rivals had rallied round made, made them feel rather silent.

And then Jack Blake thought of the Head's visit again. He gritted his teeth.

If only they could think of something to do to clear up the mystery. All four wanted to do that more than anything else.

If only they could show their friends they had not been unworthy of the confidence placed in them.

CHAPTER 13.

The St. Jim's Detective.

"WE haven't done so much after all, chaps!"

Tom Merry gave vent to the observation as he sat down on his bed. Manners nodded gloomily.

"We haven't done anything, as far as I can see."

"I don't believe it ever will be cleared up."

Monty Lowther spoke pessimistically, and as a rule his disposition was a cheery one.

But there was an excuse for pessimism that evening.

All through the day Tom Merry & Co. had been racking their brains for a solution to the mystery, and he had not succeeded. It was the same with the others, and Figgins & Co.

Nothing at all had transpired to throw the faintest light upon the affair.

Tom Merry commenced to undress.

"There's one bit of satisfaction, anyway, chaps."

Manners looked up.

"I mean, the cad who took the papers won't gain so much from them," explained the hero of the Shell. "Selby, Knox, and Hendon have been at work all the evening on a fresh list of questions."

"Yes, they have finished them by now. My hat!"

A bony hand caught Monty Lowther by the top button of his waistcoat.

"Leggo, ass!"

"Dear me, don't shout, Lowther!" exclaimed Skimpole's voice, in surprise. "I merely want to ask you a question."

"Can't you do it without pulling a button off, ass?"

"Dear me, how absurd you are, Lowther! You made a remark just now——"

"I shall make some more if you don't let go of my waistcoat, duffer!"

Skimpole relinquished his hold of the button. He went on quietly.

"You said just now that Mr. Selby had finished preparing the list of questions. How do you know that?"

"Heard him tell Kildare, ass!"

"Ah!"

And Skimpole went and sat down on his bed. Then he did something the brainy man of the Shell had not often done in his life before. He put his pyjamas on over his ordinary clothes and got into bed.

Tom Merry stared at him.
"Suffer from the cold, Skimmy?"
"Don't be frivolous, Merry. I may mention I have some work to do."

Tom Merry grunted.
It was not unusual for Skimpole to have work to do. Work was his great pleasure in life.

There was not much conversation that night as the Shell juniors undressed. There could be only one topic to discuss, and they had already discussed that over and over again.

All of them were in bed when Knox looked into the room. He glanced round suspiciously on account of the unusual silence.

"You are not asleep, Merry?"

"Of course I'm not—"
"Well, we don't want a repetition of last night's nonsense," snapped the prefect. "Let Blake's misfortunes be a lesson to you youngsters."

And he shut the door.
The moment he had done so, Skimpole jumped out of bed.

"Merry," he said—"Merry, if Knox returns, tell him I had some important work to do."

He left the room before Tom Merry could answer, and made his way downstairs.

There was no one about, the lights were out or very low, but the brainy man of the Shell did not seem to mind that.

And he was not making for his study; he had taken the corridor which led to Mr. Selby's room.

Then the genius of the Shell behaved in a manner which would have astounded Tom Merry & Co.

He cautiously tried the door of Mr. Selby's room. The door was unlocked.

"Good!" muttered Skimpole. "Excellent!"

And he turned on his heel. Then he slipped into the recess which was nearly opposite the Third Form-master's room, and crouched down.

It was intensely dark in the recess and by no means comfortable. After about ten minutes' crouching, Skimpole shifted his position and sat down. Then he waited in dead silence.

The minutes dragged by slowly. The college clock struck ten, then the half-hour, and still Skimpole sat there.

Taggles, the porter, came along and put out all the gas-lights, and the passage became darker. Skimpole had his eyes fixed on Mr. Selby's door all the time.

"I feel certain I shall meet with success," he mused. "A fellow of my undoubted ability. Dear me, I believe I must have caught a cold in the eyes; they will insist upon closing!"

Skimpole pulled himself up. He felt an intense desire to doze, and his eyes were aching painfully.

"Really, there can be no reason why I should keep my eyes open," he thought drowsily. "I am certain I have caught a cold in them. It will be really better if I close my eyes."

And he did close them.

Three minutes later he was breathing steadily, and his glasses had fallen to the tip of his nose.

How long he slept Skimpole never knew, but he remembered waking up with a start.

Something had happened.

For an instant Skimpole could not think what; then it flashed upon him that he had heard footsteps or had dreamt he had heard them. Skimpole adjusted his glasses, and got up.

"Dear me, I believe my trying wait is to have its reward. I—"

Skimpole's thoughts received an abrupt shock. There was someone moving about in Mr. Selby's room.

The Shell junior had distinctly heard a chair being knocked against the table or something.

Skimpole felt a thrill run down his back. In a very few moments now he would be able to prove to the whole school what his powers as an amateur detective really were. He would stagger St. Jim's.

He crept silently from the recess and crossed the passage. Then he listened at Mr. Selby's room.

He could hear the rustle of papers.

Someone was in there, and that someone had left the door ajar. The gas had not been lighted.

These facts flashed through Skimpole's brain like lightning. He felt he held the situation in the grasp of one hand.

The next instant he pulled the door to with a thud, and turned the key.

Then he scudded along the corridor as hard as he could run.

CHAPTER 14.

The Capture.

THE School House Fourth Form dormitory was the nearest room Skimpole knew to be occupied. He sent the door flying open, and burst into the huge room.

"Blake," he gasped—"Blake, I have him!"
At that particular moment the chief of Study No. 6 was dreaming of the paper-chase which was not to come off, so he woke up with rather confused ideas.

He realised that someone had him by the collar of his pyjamas, and was shaking him. He acted in the most natural manner possible. He hit that someone on the tip of his pointed nose.

"Oh!" yelled Skimpole. "O-oh—wow!"

"My hat! What's up, chaps?"
Digby's voice rang out excitedly. He was out of bed in a flash.

"Burglars, chaps!"

"O-oh, my nose! Dear me!"

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Jack Blake tumbled out of bed in excitement. He caught the amateur detective of St. Jim's by the arm.

"My hat, it's Skimmy!"

"Yes, of course it is I," gasped Skimpole. "Dear me, I am afraid my nose is permanently damaged!"

Jack Blake looked concerned.

"I'm sorry, kid. I hadn't any idea it was you."

"What are you doing in here, ass?"

"Anything the matter in the Shell dormitory?"

Skimpole recovered quickly.

"No, nothing is the matter in the Shell-room; but I have found him—he is discovered!"

Jack Blake & Co. peered through the darkness in amazement.

"Found him?"

"Found what, ass?"

"Found the Shell dormitory?"

"Pray don't be so absurd! D'Arcy, the mystery is solved!"

Arthur Augustus jumped out of bed then. He searched for his monocle in great excitement.

"Bai Jove! Are you wewfewwin' to the exam. mystewy, deash boy?"

"Dear me, of course I am. I have caught the junior who took the papers, and have locked him in Mr. Selby's room."

"Gweat Scott!"

Jack Blake seized Skimpole by the arm.

"Who is it, Skimmy?"

"I don't know yet; I couldn't see him, but he's locked in Mr. Selby's room."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"Bai Jove, let's go and capture the wank outsiders!"

Jack Blake was already half-way towards the door. The rest of the dormitory pressed after him.

They were all out in the passage in less than half a minute.

"As hard as you can," breathed Jack Blake. "I— My hat!"

The figure of a master still wearing his gown loomed up before them in the darkness. It was the Head.

"Boys—Blake, what are you doing out of your room?"

Jack Blake gasped.

"Please, sir, Skimpole says he has locked the fellow who took the exam. papers in Mr. Selby's room."

"Locked him in Mr. Selby's room?"

"Yaas, wathah; I am all in a fluttah myself, doctah."

"Yes, but I do not understand. Is the boy still in Mr. Selby's room?"

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Skimpole. "Will you come with us, doctor?"

The Head did not answer. He was already leading the way towards the Third Form-master's study.

As they neared the room, the sound of a door being rattled violently caught their ears. Whoever it was Skimpole had captured, he was making a great effort to get out again.

"Shall I light the gas, sir?"

"Yes—yes, light the gas, by all means, Skimpole. Bless my soul!"

The noise in the Third Form-master's room was becoming deafening. The prisoner had commenced to thump on the door-panels.

The Head started forward. The juniors crowded round him, Skimpole in front.

Jack Blake & Co. were intensely excited.

The next instant Dr. Holmes had turned the key.

"Good gracious!"

The Head gasped, Jack Blake & Co. gasped; everyone gasped except the prisoner.

He was fuming with excusable anger.

It was Mr. Selby himself.

Skimpole blinked at him through his large glasses; then he peered into the room.

"Dear me, I cannot make this out," exclaimed the amateur detective of St. Jim's. "Have you allowed my prisoner to escape, sir?"

"Prisoner—prisoner!" breathed Mr. Selby, almost inarticulate with indignation. "Dr. Holmes, I was locked in my room! Some boy dared to lock me in my own room!"

The Head looked bewildered.

Arthur Augustus sought his monocle with a vague, uncertain touch.

"Bai Jove, I am afraid there has been a mistake, Mr. Selby!"

The Third Form-master wheeled round and faced the swell of the School House. He had not noticed who the juniors were until that moment.

"Ah! This is a trick on the part of you four boys of Study No. 6. Dr. Holmes, D'Arcy has dared to lock me in my own room!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"I heard you turn the key. I—I—"

"Bai Jove, sir," gasped Arthur Augustus, "I twust I am not in the habit of locking my eldahs in their own wooms!"

"Dear me!"

"Silence, Skimpole!" cried Mr. Selby. "Dr. Holmes, I say this is a plot on the part of D'Arcy and these boys. It is an act of revenge."

The Head recovered from his bewilderment then, and hastened to smooth the troubled waters.

"There certainly has been a grave mistake, Mr. Selby," he exclaimed, "but I think you will find that it is only a mistake."

"I am afraid I cannot agree with you, sir."

"It was you who locked Mr. Selby in his room, Skimpole?"

Skimpole looked puzzled.

"If Mr. Selby has not allowed the culprit to escape through the window, I suppose it was I, sir," he said, looking keenly at the Third Form-master.

"Of course, no one has escaped through the window, Skimpole."

"Then I regret to say, sir, it must have been I who locked you in, but I was under the impression you were a junior."

"You were acting at D'Arcy's instigation?"

"I was acting on behalf of D'Arcy, of course, sir, but—"

"There!" cried Mr. Selby, in triumph. "What did I say, Dr. Holmes?"

The Head looked bewildered again, and so did Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's was staring blankly at Skimpole.

"You uttah— Bai Jove, you must be off your wockah—that is to say— Gweat Scott—"

"Really, D'Arcy, you must know I have taken over the case in your interest?"

A dawning light flashed across the doctor's face. He knew a good deal about every junior in the college, and he had heard something about Skimpole's fondness for grappling with mysteries.

"I think I understand, Skimpole," he exclaimed. "You mean you were doing your best to solve the strange affair of the examination questions?"

"Yes, sir."

"You were waiting in that recess, you say, watching Mr. Selby's room?"

"Yes, sir; it had occurred to me that the criminal—the culprit—might attempt to repeat his crime of last night and try to obtain possession of the fresh list of questions. Professor Loosetop, as you will know, doctor, says, in his work on criminals, that—"

"H'm! We will not consult the professor, Skimpole. Blake and these other juniors knew nothing about your intention of watching Mr. Selby's room, I suppose?"

"Certainly not, sir! I do not consider that Blake and his friends have proved their innocence; and until they have done that, in my eyes they are guilty."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Holmes.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

Skimpole blinked rapidly.

"Professor Loosetop points out over and over again—"

But the Head did not appear to be anxious to hear what the learned professor was so keen on pointing out. He seemed far more anxious to conciliate Mr. Selby.

"This is a very regrettable affair," he said; "but as the motive was far from bad—"

"I do not consider it was far from bad. In fact— But I am afraid you are prejudiced, Dr. Holmes. I am afraid your kindness of heart prevents you seeing things as they are for the moment."

Mr. Selby said this in a lowered voice.

The juniors did not hear him, and the Head did not answer. It flashed across his mind that he could very well

have retorted that Mr. Selby himself, on the face of it, was not altogether free from bias.

But it was the Head's aim to smooth the troubled waters; not to make them more troubled.

"Still, you must admit, Selby, that this has nothing whatever to do with Blake."

"I do not admit that—"

"There is not a vestige of proof to the contrary; I found all four lads in a great state of excitement."

"There is no proof, perhaps, but—"

"Then they are innocent in spite of Skimpole's extraordinary contention to the contrary," smiled Dr. Holmes.

"Will you come to my room and have coffee, Selby? Boys, go back to your dormitories. Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

And the five turned up the corridor again.

They walked on in silence for a moment or two, then Arthur Augustus broke the pause.

"Weally, Skimmay, deah boy, I wegwet to say that I have no othah wesource but to considah you in the light of an uttah duffah!"

"Dear me, D'Arcy—"

"A raving maniac!"

"Dear me, Blake, if you will listen for a moment—"

"A shrieking ass!"

"Really, Digby, pray consider my point of view in the matter—"

"A frabjous burlber," added Herries. "You must admit that you are a frabjous burlber yourself, Skimmay!"

And as their ways parted at that point, the Fourth-Formers walked off before the genius of the Shell could answer.

The four went on quietly, then Jack Blake laughed shortly.

"Of all the young asses—"

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "He must have been waiting in the wecess foah evah so long, deah boys!"

"My hat, wasn't it ripping of him?"

"Bai Jove, when you come to think of it, wippin' in the extreme, as a mattah of fact."

"Oh, Skimmay's a brick!" said Jack Blake. "A silly ass, of course, but a regular brick."

And that was the opinion of all the Study No. 6 chums.

CHAPTER 15.

The Prefect's Discovery.

"BLAKE, your notice about the Fourth-form paper-chase is still on the board."

Hendon made the remark as he met the Study No. 6 juniors in the corridor the following morning.

Jack Blake & Co. started. They had forgotten all about their notice.

There had been other more pressing things to think about since their trouble with Mr. Selby in the corridor.

"I'll go and take it down at once, Hendon."

"All right. When is the run to come off?"

"We don't quite know," answered the chief of the School House Fourth Form. "It mayn't come off at all now."

Hendon frowned.

"Nonsense!" he exclaimed. "Put up another notice that it will take place the first blank half-holiday. Oh, and I say, you Fourth-Form boys are to be in your class-room ten minutes earlier than usual on account of the examination."

Jack Blake & Co. grinned ruefully as the prefect walked on.

Still, it was rather nice of the senior to come and speak about the notice. He could have only done so in order to let them see he did not agree with Mr. Selby in the master's opinion about the examination questions.

No one knew very much about Hendon.

He was a quiet fellow who kept himself very much to himself, and was supposed to be a great worker.

He had quite his share of keenness, though, but not a great deal of self-confidence. Provided someone gave him a lead he would go on steadily enough, but he never seemed to believe in himself in the way that Knox and most of the other prefects did, without the lead.

Most of his fellow Sixth-Formers thought him weak, and looked upon him as something of a nonentity.

He walked along with a nervous sort of stride, starting a little as Mr. Lathom, the Fourth Form-master, stopped him.

"Have you the examination questions, Hendon?"

"I am just going to Mr. Selby's room for them, sir."

"Humph! Well, bring them to my study," answered the little master. "There is not much time to spare."

Hendon hurried on.

He pushed open the study door. There was no one there, but that did not matter. Mr. Selby had given him the keys of his bureau.

"Selby said I should find the list in the bureau," mused Hendon. "I—I—"

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

The prefect commenced picking up the papers and putting them down again. He could not see the list.

"He must have meant one of these pigeon-holes," he thought.

There were a whole row of pigeon-holes, each packed closely with papers, almost any of which might be the list of questions.

Hendon pulled out the first bundle from the compartment. They were not there.

"The few minutes will be half an hour if I have to go through this pile. I—I—"

Once again the prefect's thoughts received an abrupt shock. There was something at the back of the pigeon-hole—something that must have fallen down from above.

It looked like a few sheets of foolscap pinned together.

Hendon's face flushed nervously. He wrenched the sheets of foolscap from their hiding-place.

The door opened at that moment, and Knox looked into the room.

"It's all right, Hendon; I have the questions."

Hendon did not answer. He was staring blankly at the papers he held in his hand.

Knox came into the room in surprise.

"It's all right, I tell you, Hendon; I came for the questions half an hour ago—the Head wanted to have a last look through them. Is anything the matter?"

Hendon's face had gone rather white.

He was a highly-strung fellow, perhaps he worked a little too hard, and his face had a trick of betraying him.

"Look, Knox!" he gasped.

Knox looked.

"What's the matter with you, old man—"

"Don't you see what these are? Good gracious, Knox!"

The other prefect almost snatched the papers. A single glance was enough.

"By Jove, these are the missing questions—the first lot Selby worked out!"

"I know they are. I—I—"

"Where on earth did you find them?" exclaimed Knox, in amazement. "Pull yourself together, man; anyone would think— Did you find these in the bureau?"

"Yes, down behind the pigeon-holes, and—and I put them there."

Knox's amazement increased a hundredfold.

"You put them there! What are you talking about?"

"Don't you remember?" exclaimed Hendon desperately.

"The questions were lying on the table that evening, and you said something about putting the previous term's questions away—"

"Yes, and you did."

"No; I must have taken up the wrong lot," said Hendon. "I remember pushing the things on top of the pigeon-holes because they were full, and—and I suppose they must have fallen down behind."

"By Jove!"

Knox began to look rather blank now.

There had been some trouble with Mr. Selby on account of the door being left unlocked on the night of the trouble, and there was likely to be a good deal more trouble over this.

Knox saw that as well as Hendon.

"What ever are we to do?"

Knox shrugged his shoulders.

"Grin and bear it, I suppose," he growled. "You must have been an idiot not to remember."

"Yes, I know. I say, Selby will be furious."

"Oh, he'll rave for weeks about this!" snapped the other prefect. "Look how he has compromised himself in his opinion it was Blake who took them? He'll bless you to his dying day for the chance you have given him of making an ass of himself, Hendon."

"No one but an idiot ought to have suspected Blake—"

"I'm not saying Selby isn't an idiot! Oh, hang it, Hendon, you have put us both in a nice old fix!"

Hendon admitted it. Whatever Knox thought of him, it could not be more severe than what he thought of himself at that moment.

He saw a picture of himself standing up before the whole school, explaining what had happened. It was not such an awe-inspiring picture after all to the average senior, but it was to Hendon.

His nerves were far from good, and he had the same weakness which Mr. Selby allowed himself. His fear of ridicule was very great.

"Knox, can't we do anything to smooth it over? I mean—"

"Yes, that's it—what on earth do you mean?" snapped Knox.

"Couldn't we leave the papers in the bureau—"

"Push them back where you found them?" said the other prefect, looking up. "Yes, we could do that, of course, but

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what about those young sweeps from Study No. 5? Selby suspects them, you know, Hendon."

"Yes, but no one else does. The Head has taken their words that they know nothing about it; anyone except an idiot must know Blake had nothing to do with it."

"There's the slur on the whole Fourth Form to be thought of."

"Y-yes, but that wouldn't last long."

"How do you mean—wouldn't last long?"

"Why, Selby himself would find the papers before long," exclaimed Hendon. "You know he tidies out his bureau every week. He'd just discover the missing questions and wonder how they got there."

Knox hesitated.

After all, no one would suffer, and it would save no end of a bother. Mr. Selby was just the type of master to make as much fuss as possible over Hendon's mistake; he would do his utmost to make the two prefects appear ridiculous in the eyes of the doctor.

There really seemed no reason why the affair should be explained now. It would do just as well a week or two later when things had blown over a little, and the Third Form-master was beginning to forget.

Still, the Study No. 6 juniors were suspected by Mr. Selby. It wasn't quite the game.

"I don't quite like it, Hendon."

"N-no, neither do I, old man, but you know what Selby is," answered the other prefect in greater concern than the occasion seemed to warrant. "He'll rave, and, after all, it won't be for the good of the school if he has to climb down from the high horse he is riding with young Blake just now. I mean, the Third-Formers will take all possible advantage of it."

"There is that, of course."

"And it's only a matter of a week or so—perhaps a few days. All that happens is that Selby finds the papers himself instead of us, and I think everyone gains in the end."

Knox shrugged his shoulders.

Hendon was rather exasperating when he allowed his weakness of character to come to the fore in this manner. As Knox looked at it, it was only a trivial matter.

"Oh, do as you like, Hendon!" he growled. "I don't care. Hurry up, though; someone is coming."

Hendon started.

He could hear footsteps in the passage outside.

The next instant the prefect had thrust the list of questions behind the pigeon-holes again. He had not been a moment too soon.

The footsteps were stopping before the half-closed door.

CHAPTER 16.

Hendon Makes Up His Mind.

"T'S Selby," muttered Hendon.

The words were scarcely uttered when the Third Form-master came into the room.

"Ah, you here, Knox? It appears Mr. Lathom sent you for the questions, Hendon."

"Yes, sir."

"And I suppose Knox has explained that he already has them?" said Mr. Selby. "Er—I rather want to speak to you two prefects for a moment."

Knox and Hendon waited.

Mr. Selby fussed about the room for a moment or two, took the keys from Hendon, and locked his bureau. Hendon noticed that he put the keys into his pocket.

The Third Form-master coughed.

"In the course of your duties, Hendon, do you come in contact with Blake and the boys who share Study No. 6 with him a great deal?"

"Not a very great deal, sir."

"But I see they are often in trouble."

"Yes, sir, principally for playing tricks upon one another and for causing disturbances in the dormitories, and things like that."

"Perhaps you come in contact with them more, Knox?"

"Well, perhaps I do, sir," growled the prefect. "They are amongst the most noisy juniors in this House, with the exception, perhaps, of Merry and his companions. I should think, on an average, I line one of the seven every day of the term."

"Ah!"

"They are the most troublesome Fourth-Formers in the school, I should say."

"Indeed! Knox do you consider they act as an unwholesome influence on the other boys?"

Knox started.

He was rather disliked amongst the juniors in the School House, which was not to be wondered at. He was fearfully strict, had rather an unfortunate temper, and refused to shut his eyes to the mildest misdoing.

Still, he had his good points.

"Oh, no, I don't think that for a moment—not in a dishonourable way, I mean."

"No, perhaps not dishonourably, but in the matter of discipline. Do you consider the fact of Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy being associated together in one study tends to make it more difficult for you prefects to maintain discipline?"

Knox thought for a moment or two.

"Yes, I dare say it does, sir."

"Ah, you think it would be better if they were separated?"

Knox answered without hesitation.

"We should have much less noise, sir."

Mr. Selby appeared pleased with the answer. He turned to the other prefect.

"Is that also your opinion, Hendon?"

"I—I think it would be a pity to separate them, sir. They are great chums—"

"But do you consider that it would make discipline easier to maintain and lessen the noise in these corridors?"

"Yes, perhaps, sir, but—"

"Then that would be good for the School House," said the Third Form-master; "and what is good for the School House is also good for the boys lodged in it, including the four lads themselves. I will lay the matter before Dr. Holmes at once."

He stepped from the room, and Knox went with him. Hendon stayed behind a moment or two.

He knew why Mr. Selby had been anxious to separate the chums of Study No. 6. It was over the missing examination questions.

Hendon had heard nothing about Skimpole's capture the previous evening, so did not know that the Third Form-master more than half suspected Jack Blake & Co. of this second outrage.

Hendon thought it was all due to the lost questions.

The prefect bit his lip in a moment of unpleasant hesitation. He wished now he had not put the papers back behind the pigeon-holes.

It hadn't been the right thing, but he had thought at the time that there could be no ill effects.

But one had come very quickly upon his act. The chums from Study No. 6 were to be separated.

That would be a big blow to the juniors.

"I—I wish I hadn't done it," muttered the prefect. "It was a caddish thing to think of."

He looked at the bureau again.

Mr. Selby had taken the keys with him.

If he wished to clear up the matter he would have to go to Mr. Selby and explain that he had found the paper of questions, but had decided not to tell in the first place. That would look ten times worse than if he had taken the papers up to the master the moment he had found them.

But if Mr. Selby meant to do his best to have the Study No. 6 juniors separated it was quite likely he would do his best in other things of a similar nature. Hendon had not realised until that moment to what extent the Fourth-Formers were suspected by Mr. Selby.

Hendon hesitated a few moments longer; then he bit his lip, and walked from the room.

He knew where Mr. Selby was to be found. It was almost certain he would be in the masters'-room.

The prefect made his way there.

A few minutes later he entered the room in response to Mr. Selby's invitation.

Hendon's face was rather white, but he did not hesitate now.

He stepped up to the Third Form-master, and drew him on one side.

CHAPTER 17.

Mr. Selby's Mistake.

"BAI JOVE!"

Arthur Augustus took his magnificent watch from his pocket and looked at it in surprise.

"Bai Jove! What time do you make it, deah boys?"

"Ten past nine—"

"A quarter-past nine—"

"Ten o'clock, but I'm half an hour fast," said Digby.

Jack Blake laughed.

"Anyway, it's after nine," he chuckled. "And we were to be in the class-room ten minutes earlier than usual, too."

"Bai Jove! Isn't it funnay, deah boys?"

The Fourth-Formers of the School House were all seated at their desks. They had fitted fresh nibs to their pens, and piles of foolscap lay before them.

They were only waiting for Mr. Lathom and the examination questions.

But there was not a sign of the Fourth Form-master to be seen.

After another five minutes, Arthur Augustus got up from his desk.

"Shall I have a look along the passage, deah boys?"

"Yes. See if anyone's there, Gussy."

"Get on with the washing, kid."

"Wight-ho, deah boys! I twust Mr. Lathom will not see me, bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus stepped across the room silently. He caught hold of the door knob and turned it gently; then the door seemed to rush at him.

It had been opened from the outside.

"Oh!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "My nose— Oh!"

"Good gracious! What is the matter, D'Arcy?"

The smell of St. Jim's gasped. The Head was standing in the doorway.

Arthur Augustus tried to recover himself.

"It is nothin', weally, sir," he groaned. "I was about to open the doah, and it appears that you opened it at the same moment. I twust my nose is not bleedin', sir."

"I trust it is not also, D'Arcy; but you should not have been out of your place."

"No; wathah not! I will wetiah instantly to my desk."

And Arthur Augustus slipped back to his place, staring loftily at the chuckling juniors.

But the chuckles were not very prolonged ones.

There was something about the doctor's face which warned them this was not merely an ordinary visit. Mr. Lathom was with him, too, and—what was still more surprising—Mr. Selby.

The Third Form-master was a deep red.

Jack Blake shrugged his shoulders.

"More trouble, kids."

"Bai Jove! I twust Skimmay hasn't been playin' any more twicks, deah boys."

Herries grinned rather gloomily.

"It looks to me more as if Selby is going to give an exhibition on how to get really ratty," he said.

"No, Selby doesn't look ratty. He—he doesn't quite look like Selby," muttered Jack Blake. "Ring off, kids!"

The Head had stepped to Mr. Lathom's desk.

"Boys," he began, "I have some excellent news to tell you. I have to tell you that the mystery of the missing examination questions is now solved."

Jack Blake & Co. stared.

It was as much as the chief of Study No. 6 could do to prevent himself jumping to his feet.

"It appears that the questions were never removed from Mr. Selby's study at all," continued the Head. "They were behind the pigeon-holes in Mr. Selby's study all the time."

The juniors took a moment or two to grasp what this meant; then a cheer went up. Everyone was looking at Jack Blake & Co.

"Bai Jove—"

"I am very pleased to be able to tell you this, boys," went on the Head—"more pleased than you can imagine. Silence for a moment, please."

The juniors were quiet again.

Arthur Augustus found his monocle nervously.

"Bai Jove! Is somethin' else comin', deah boys?"

"Ring off, ass!"

"Mr. Selby wishes me to say that he has cancelled the detentions against the names of Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy," exclaimed the doctor, "and he hopes the paper-chase you four boys have arranged will take place."

"Hurrah!"

"Yaas, wathah! Huwvah! Bai Jove—"

"Selby's going to make a speech, kids."

"Bai Jove, so he is—"

"Ring off!"

The juniors watched Mr. Selby and the Head whispering together; then they saw the Third Form-master exchange places with the doctor.

There was no one in the room who could guess how Mr. Selby would get through what must be to him a very great ordeal. That he would have to climb down was obvious to all, but how he would manage the climbing was beyond even the Head himself.

Mr. Selby was still very red.

"Blake," he said, in his snappy, irritable voice, "I have just discovered that I have made a mistake in suspecting you four boys. I am sorry, and I apologise to you."

The Third Form-master paused for a moment, but not a sound greeted his words. The juniors were looking blankly before them.

They did not quite know how to receive the apology.

The uncertain nature of Mr. Selby's temper was known to others besides Third-Formers.

However, they were not given long in which to puzzle the matter over.

The Third Form-master coughed irritably.

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By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

"Blake, are you four boys still determined to hold your paper-chase run?"

"Yes, sir——"

"Have you any prize to run for?"

"No, sir; but that doesn't matter——"

"Humph! I should like to present a cup for the run, Blake," said Mr. Selby. "If you will accept one, I shall be content to leave the framing of the rules entirely in your hands."

"It's awfully good of you, sir——"

"Nonsense! I made a grave mistake. I should like to give some proof that I regret it. You accept the cup?"

"Yes, sir; thanks——"

It was a long time since the chief of Study No. 6 felt so uncomfortable when there was no apparent cause. But perhaps he realised a little what it must have caused the Third Form-master to have to apologise in the way he had.

Then suddenly the embarrassment came to an end, and Jack Blake found himself cheering with the others at the top of his voice.

The cheers must have been heard all over the School House.

The juniors in the other rooms wondered what it could mean. No one thought of Mr. Selby being the recipient.

The Third Form-master was not in the habit of receiving cheers.

But that morning was the exception to the rule, for the shouts were still sounding in the Fourth Form classroom when Mr. Selby had left it. The Third Form-master could hear them even when he gained his study.

He did not shut his door. The unusual sounds were not altogether displeasing to one of the sternest masters in the college.

Then he took a sports catalogue from his bureau, and turned to the prize cup pages.

Mr. Selby astonished himself with the amount of pleasure it gave him to search for a suitable cup.

CHAPTER 18.

Jack Blake's Idea.

"BAI Jove, deah boys, I'm still all in a fluttah!"

Arthur Augustus gave vent to the exclamation the moment the dismissal bell sounded. The examination was over at last, and the four juniors of Study No. 6 were at liberty to talk over the one thing that had been uppermost in their minds since Mr. Selby's appearance in the Fourth Form classroom.

Digby and Herries joined the other pair in great excitement.

"Fancy old Selby apologising to us."

"And actually giving us a cup. I believe we shall wake up in a minute."

"Wats!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "Uttah wats, deah boys! Bai Jove, I wish I could get wid of this fluttah!"

Jack Blake's face showed the pleasure he was feeling.

"Wasn't it great of him to come and say what he did, chaps?"

"Bai Jove, wathah!"

"Fairly climbed down."

Jack Blake nodded.

"And, mind you, things must have looked a bit black against us from his point of view," he said quietly. "I don't know that we can altogether blame him for not accepting our story about shutting his door, and the rest of it. It must have sounded a wee bit thin."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of that! I am afwaid you will have to excuse me, deah boys."

The other three turned to look at the swell of the Fourth.

"What's the wheeze now, Gussy?"

"I'm going to return Mr. Selby's compliment, deah boys," answered Arthur Augustus hastily. "He apologised to us, and I'm going to apologise to him foah what I said in his study. You wemembah?"

"About your pater being a sportsman? Rather!"

Arthur Augustus nodded, but he could not leave them at that moment.

A grinning junior, followed by two other grinning juniors, came up and banged him on the shoulder.

"Congrats, Gussy!"

"Bai Jove. You young wottah, you will wumple my coat!"

"Bother your coat! Jolly glad, kids!" grinned Tom Merry. "We thought we'd slip along and see you young asses."

"Thanks, young duffers!" chuckled Jack Blake.

"How did you hear about it, Tom Merry?"

"Oh, the Head had told the whole school, of course. Pretty decent of Selby, wasn't it?"

"Wippin'!" said Arthur Augustus. "Wippin' in the extweme!"

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Tom Merry nodded cheerily.

"Well, mind you youngsters take care of yourself in future," he said. "You are always getting into some scrape or other. You'd better come to me when there's a row next time."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, deah boy——"

"Oh, ring off, Gussy! What's this wheeze about Selby giving a cup for a paper-chase, or something?"

"Bai Jove, yaas, that is all wight, Mannahs! It is goin' to be known as the 'Selby Cup.'"

"Rather!"

Tom Merry & Co. looked puzzled. Before any of them could speak Figgins & Co. came up.

Figgins banged Arthur Augustus on the same shoulder Tom Merry had used.

"Congrats, Gussy!"

"You wottah! You uttah wottah!"

"Go hon!"

"What's this about a cup, kids?" asked Kerr.

Jack Blake grinned.

"We were just going to explain to these Shell asses," he said. "The cup has been presented to us for the purpose of the paper-chase we are getting up."

"What's that?"

"The paper-chase you are getting up."

"Much better leave it in our hands," said Tom Merry.

"In ours, you mean!" exclaimed Figgins.

"Wats, deah boys—uttah wats!"

Jack Blake laughed.

"You chaps can go and eat coke!" he grinned. "The cup has been presented to us, the paper-chase is our wheeze, and we are going to frame the rules."

"Rather!"

"As a mattah of fact, we have already fwamed them, deah boys."

The Terrible Three and Figgins & Co. waited expectantly. Arthur Augustus pulled a slip of paper from his pocket.

"We pwopose that the papah-chase is wun foah by thwee separate gwoups of juniors," he began—"School House Fourth Form group, Shell group, and New House Fourth Form group."

"Of course, ass!"

"We didn't think it was going to be a race between the First Form infants and the prefects, duffer."

"Weally, Lowthah—— However, to get on with the washin', we pwopose that theah are thwee hares instead of two, one fwom each gwoup of juniors."

"Humph!"

"Not as rotten as I thought."

"Pway don't intewwupt me, Mannahs! We have already chosen our hare, foah Jack Blake is to wun foah us."

"Then you can bet Tom Merry will run for us," said Lowther.

"And Figgins for us," grinned Kerr.

"What about the hounds?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"Yaas, wathah! Well, the hounds are formed of an equal numbah fwom each gwoup of juniahs, deah boys," explained Arthur Augustus, "but each section of hounds has to capture a special hare."

"My hat!"

Manners looked surprised.

"You don't mean that we shall have to catch Tom Merry, and you Jack Blake?"

"No, wathah not, Mannahs. Our idea is that the New House hounds have to catch the Shell hare, the Shell hounds are to wun aftah the School House Fourth hare, and the School House Fourth aftah the New House hare."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

"What's he raving about, Blakey?"

Jack Blake laughed.

"Oh, it's quite simple, really!" he chuckled. "No set of hounds has anything to do with his own hare, that's all."

"Bai Jove, I nevah thought of puttin' it like that, deah boy!"

Tom Merry's eyes sparkled quickly.

"My hat, that's not so bad for Fourth Form asses!"

"But how do we go on about winning the cup?"

"Yes; how are points scored?"

Arthur Augustus consulted his slip of paper again.

"Quite a simple mattah, deah boys," he exclaimed. "Whichever hare gets home wins the cup for his side."

"I see!"

"Wait a minute!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Say our hounds caught their special hare in the first mile, they would have a perfect right to go after the other rival hare, so as to give me a better chance of getting home first."

"Ripping!"

"My hat, rather!"

The praise of the rivals, for once in a way was unstinted, in the excitement of the moment.

Tom Merry banged Arthur Augustus on the shoulder again.

"I see the wheeze! Absolutely great—for a Fourth Form ass, I mean!" the hero of the Shell added hastily.

"Are you sure you thought this out yourself, young Blake?"

"Yes, young Merry."

"What do you think about it, Figgy?"

"Oh, not so bad, Dig!" grinned Figgins. "Have you worked out the route and all that yet?"

"No; we thought we'd have a meeting now."

"Good egg!"

"Yaas, wathah! And as the mattah will wequiah all the attention of a fellow of tact and judgment, I pwopose—"

"That I take the chair," said Tom Merry promptly.

"Right-ho, kid!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Oh, don't say any more about it, Gussy; I'm willing."

"Bai Jove, deah boy—"

"Don't apologise, kid," grinned the hero of the Shell.

"I don't mind much."

And he led the way into his own study.

CHAPTER 19.

Arthur Augustus Apologises.

"BAI Jove, deah boys—"

"Oh, do ring off, Gussy!"

"I uttably wefuse to wing off!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I am not in the habit of wingin' off."

"No; you're right there, ass," said Digby. "You'd better let me do the talking."

"Rats!"

"Yaas, wats, Digbay, deah boy!"

"Much better let me speak, kids."

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and stared at Herries. Herries winked solemnly.

"Weally, Hewwies—Howevah, you can only be waggin', as the mattah only concerns me. Of course I shall do the talkin'."

Jack Blake grinned.

"Right-ho, kid! Let's get on with the washing, although it would be better to leave things as they are."

The four were walking towards Mr. Selby's study.

It was Saturday morning, the day after Mr. Selby's offer of a cup, and it was the first opportunity the chums of Study No. 6 had of visiting the Third Form-master alone.

Arthur Augustus was particularly anxious to see Mr. Selby, and now that he knew he was in his room alone, was leading the way there with a hurried stride.

"I shall only say a few words, deah boys," he said musingly. "I shall just explain that I was all in a fluttah at the time."

"Mind you don't get a thick ear for cheek, then."

"Foah cheek! Bai Jove, Digbay—Howevah, I see you are only waggin' again," exclaimed the swell of the Fourth. "There is no risk of unpleasantness, because I considah that Mr. Selby is an entiahly altahed man."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Rats!"

Before Arthur Augustus could retort in a fitting manner the door of Mr. Selby's room was gained.

Jack Blake tapped gently.

"Come in!"

The words were uttered in Mr. Selby's voice. They were rather harshly spoken, with an irritable ring about them.

Jack Blake glanced at Arthur Augustus and grinned.

"Note any alteration, ass?"

"Bai Jove! Howevah, it is pwob. he doesn't know who it is."

"Are you coming in?" snapped Mr. Selby's voice.

"What do you boys want?"

Jack Blake had opened the door.

The four stood in the doorway. There was the danger signal of a pink flush on Mr. Selby's face again.

He had been working hard at his bureau, and the Third Form-master hated being interrupted above all things.

Arthur Augustus felt for his monocle. He was always conscious of greater self-confidence when his monocle was in its place.

"I twust you are not bizzay, sir."

"I am very busy indeed."

Mr. Selby's voice was more snappy than ever. Arthur Augustus nudged Jack Blake in the ribs.

Jack Blake nudged him back again.

"I don't think, Gussy!" he whispered. "You insisted on being spokesman, so get on with the washing."

"Yaas, wathah! Mr. Selbay, I wegwet to say that I was all in a fluttah yesterday."

The Third Form-master looked up again.

"Do you mean you have caught cold?"

"Bai Jove, no, I did not mean that! I—I wish to explain that when I wemarked that my patah was a sportsman, I was w'ong."

"Ass!"

Jack Blake gasped. Mr. Selby turned on the juniors in surprise.

"Nonsense, D'Arcy! Lord Eastwood is an excellent sportsman."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Then why—what are you here for, D'Arcy? If this is a trick—"

"Bai Jove, sir, it is nothin' of the sort!" panted Arthur Augustus desperately. "In sayin' that my patah was a sportsman, I wathah fancay I—I wathah fancay the wemark was not made in good form. As a mattah of fact, it was wank bad form."

Mr. Selby's pink flush became pinker. It exasperated him a great deal to be reminded of his mistake.

Jack Blake groaned inwardly.

"I said you were an ass to come here, Gussy," he whispered. "Why couldn't you leave well alone?"

"No, weally—Mr. Selbay, I wish to apologise for what may have appeahed as a wude obsahvation. The only excuse I have to offah is that I was all in a fluttah at the time."

"I consider your remark was justified, D'Arcy!" snapped Mr. Selbay. "I—"

"Weally, sir, I scarcely considah wudeness to an eldah is ever justified."

"Don't interrupt me, boy! I repeat, your remark was justified. I have already said I regret the mistake I made. Now, go!"

Arthur Augustus gasped.

His apology had not been a success. Instead of being allowed to express his own regret, his words had forced Mr. Selby to repeat his acknowledgment of his mistake.

That was about the last thing the swell of St. Jim's and his chums had wished to do.

They had ruffled the Third Form-master. All of them could see that, and now they were ordered to go.

"You utter ass, Gussy!"

"Frabjous lunatic!"

Then Jack Blake took a risky plunge.

"Please, sir, Merry & Figgins have given us an invitation to tea this evening after the cross-country run!" he exclaimed desperately. "Your cup is going to be presented to the winning side, then."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, only—only we haven't any one to present the cup. I was wondering whether you would present it, sir. The chaps—the juniors would be awfully pleased."

Arthur Augustus, Herries, and Digby gasped with admiration. It would never have occurred to them to ask the Third Form-master to present the prize.

They wanted to thump the chief of Study No. 6 out of pure joy.

Mr. Selby looked up again.

"Won't Kildare present it for you?"

"We would rather you did, sir."

"Well, what time?"

"The tea is to commence at six-thirty. If you will preside, sir—"

"No, I won't do that. I—I will come to Merry's room at seven-thirty and present the cup. Shut the door."

And Mr. Selby turned to his desk again.

The juniors hurried from the room, and Digby and Herries at once fell upon Jack Blake.

"Ripping!"

"Good old ass!"

Arthur Augustus allowed his monocle to slip down to the end of its string in enthusiasm.

"Weally, Blake, I must say I wegard you in the light of—"

"Good!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Excellent!"

"But—"

"Not to say great!" grinned Jack Blake. "I knew old Figgy and Merry wouldn't mind my invitin' the Selby bird, and we had to get out of the beastly fix Gussy had landed us in."

"Rather!"

"Besides, it is a ripping idea having old Selby in."

Jack Blake chuckled.

"Yes, I thought you kids would see it like that. Suppose we go and change for the run now."

And three of the four pelted away for Study No. 6.

The fourth—Arthur Augustus—went at a more stately pace, as being more in keeping with the demeanour which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

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NEXT
THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 20.

The Start.

"BAI Jove, what a cwowd, deah boys!"
Arthur Augustus looked surprised. It appeared as if the whole school had turned out to watch the start of the paper-chase.

And most of the junior school had turned out, too. They were present in such force as a sort of appreciation of the fact that the examination questions mystery had been solved.

Those who were to run were changed already.

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgins stood waiting with two huge satchels of "scent" each.

"Mind it's a good trail, kids."

"Rather. How long start are we to have, Blakey?"

"Kildare thinks the usual ten minutes."

"Good egg!" grinned Tom Merry. "I will wait for you others in the study."

Jack Blake and Figgins breathed through their noses. The "hounds" gritted their teeth.

Each meant to do his best to capture a rival "hare," whatever happened. Kildare took his watch from his pocket.

"Ready?"

"Right-ho!"

"Rather!"

Tom Merry, Jack Blake, and Figgins spoke together. The next instant Kildare had given the signal.

The "hares" were off at a dash.

The "hounds" watched them scud round the corner by the gymnasium in suppressed excitement.

Then everyone turned to look at Kildare.

The juniors had never thought ten minutes could seem so long. Manners became incredulous.

"Surely the time's up, Kildare?"

"No it isn't."

Digby turned to Skimpole.

"What time do you make it, Skimmy?"

The genius of the Shell pulled out his watch.

"A quarter-past five, but I am four hours fast."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me, I see no cause for laughter, Lowther."

"Ass! How long is it since the other kids started?"

Skimpole blinked in surprise.

"Dear me, how do I know, Lowther? I did not look at the time."

"Go!"

Kildare rapped out the word briskly. The "hounds" were away in a pack.

Herries, Manners, and Kerr were leading. Digby, Fatty Wynn, and Lowther were not far behind.

The others were all in a bunch.

Arthur Augustus began to push to the front.

"Pway, don't let's fatigue ourselves at the start, deah boys!" he panted. "We may have to wace foah it when we see the 'hares.'"

Digby grinned.

He was leading now, and he saw no reason why the pace should not be as warm as possible.

Fatty Wynn began to pant loudly. He was losing his first wind, but when the second came, as it would before long, the Welsh junior would scud along at a steady pace, and nothing short of lost scent would cause him to alter it.

But the scent was splendid. It ran like a ribbon right along the high-road as far as the church, then turned at right angles.

"Bai Jove, they have gone across the field, deah boys!"

But Digby and Manners were already over the fence. They had vaulted it in fine style.

Herries came pounding on.

"Look out for the ditch, kids."

"Right-ho! My hat, there goes Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus had forgotten about his advice of not overdoing it at the start. He flashed ahead, his monocle flying at the end of its string, streamer fashion.

"Gussy!"

"Wats!"

"Look out, ass!"

"Wabbits, deah boys!"

And the swell of the Fourth dashed for the second hedge. The next moment he had cleared it at a flying leap.

"My only Aunt Jane!"

Manners, Herries, and Kerr knew what must have happened before they heard Arthur Augustus' yell.

"He's in the ditch, kids."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"O-oh!" yelled Arthur Augustus. "Gweat Scott—Digbay—Digbay, deah boy, come and help me out of the wotten watah!"

Digby flashed on.

"Sorry, kid."

"Weally, Hewwies—Hewwies, you wuffian!"

"No time, Gussy!"

"Gweat Scott, Lowtah—Lowtah, you uttah wottah, come and help me out of the w'etched watah!"

"Can't now, ass!" grinned the humorist of the Shell. "Come for you as we come back, if you like."

"My only Aunt Jane!"

The juniors glanced over their shoulders. Arthur Augustus had managed to scramble from the ditch in spite of their refusals to help.

He stood on the bank, his hands held out far from him on each side.

"You wank outsidahs! You w'etched boundahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you in the light of waggin' wuffians!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chuckles were becoming fainter. The distance between the drenched form of Arthur Augustus and the rest of the pack was increasing every second.

Arthur Augustus realised that.

"Bai Jove!" he panted, and dashed on.

He was covered with mud, his running clothes clung to him unpleasantly, but he forgot about that. There were rival "hares" to be captured.

Unless Tom Merry and Figgins were caught, Jack Blake might not get home first, after all.

The scent was lost for a moment or two, the breeze having carried the pieces of paper away. The pack was not left long in doubt, but long enough for Arthur Augustus to come panting up.

"I no longah wegard you as a fwiend, Digbay! Hewwies, I considah you in the light of an uttah—"

"Tally-ho!"

Fatty Wynn had found the trail again.

He scudded on, the others after him. It had been set down in the rules that a recovered scent was to be made public knowledge the instant it was found.

But the finder had a slight start, which was as it should be. The New House juniors were leading now, and running splendidly. But then, so were the others.

There was very little to choose between any of them until Arthur Augustus dashed to the front again.

"Pway, huwwy, deah boys; wun like anythin'!"

"Ass, you'll pump yourself!"

"Wats, Digbay, deah boy! Wace up!"

Digby and Herries gritted their teeth. Arthur Augustus was setting a cracking pace.

The rival juniors hung on. It would have needed a lot to induce Manners and Lowther or Fatty Wynn and Kerr to let the Study No. 6 chums show them a clean pair of heels.

Stragglers began to drop behind now.

Pratt of the New House, and Reilly of the School House, were showing signs of distress. French had already fallen behind a little.

It looked as if the seven were going to capture the "hares," if any one did.

Half a mile after mile of road and field was covered at a splendid pace, and the elbows were still up. Even Arthur Augustus was not talking now, but he was showing no signs of real distress.

Still, time must be getting on.

The trail had already curved a little, and they were almost started on the return journey. A glance ahead told Lowther the direction taken by the hares.

The way led right through the village.

The humorist of the Shell snatched a straw from a passing hay-cart and rammed it in his mouth. They would want all their breath when they came to Rylcombe.

Whatever happened, they must be going in good style as they ran through the village. Pilcher, Craggs, and Grimes, their Rylcombe rivals, would be certain to be on the look-out for them.

Then suddenly Manners gave vent to a gasp.

"There they are, chaps!"

"Bai Jove! Where, deah boy? Gweat Scott!"

Arthur Augustus had caught sight of the "hares" as well now. They seemed to be miles ahead.

All three of them were together on the skyline at the top of the hill.

Digby tried to gauge the distance.

They had not gained on the "hares," as far as he could tell. They had lost a little by the look of it.

All seven gritted their teeth again, and the pace quickened. Then the hares vanished.

They must be on the road leading to the village now.

CHAPTER 21.

The Finish!

"THEY'VE seen us, chaps!"
 "Yes; go easy with the scent!"

Tom Merry breathed the advice quickly. Those two remarks were the first any of the three had uttered since crossing the corner of the common, three miles behind.

It was to be the last remark until the St. Jim's quadrangle was gained.

Figgins was leading; he had been leading for several miles now, his long legs carrying him over the ground in splendid style.

Jack Blake was next, but Tom Merry was pressing him very closely, and half a mile before the village was reached the order was changed abruptly.

Tom Merry flashed to the front, and Jack Blake found himself behind. But there was plenty of time yet.

The quaint, pretty, little town of Rylcombe loomed up before them. It seemed miles ahead.

But the three went on. At that point they did not think they were capable of quickening, and all the time they were doing so.

The first house of the village was gained, then they flashed on past the church.

A hail greeted them. They recognised the voice instantly, but there was no breath to be spared to answer it.

"Cheer-ho!"

Grimes, their friendly rival amongst the village youths, broke into a run by their side. Pilcher and Craggs were following.

"Look out when you round the bend, Master Merry; the road's up, and if you get on the flints in your running-shoes, you'll know it."

Tom Merry nodded. Grimes would understand why he was not answered.

Pilcher grinned encouragingly.

"Keep it up, Master Blake!"

"I'll tell the 'hounds' about the road, Master Figgins," panted Craggs; and the three dropped behind.

Fresh as they had been, they were pumped in the hundred yards or so they had run with the three.

And the three had two miles to go yet.

Tom Merry was losing his lead now, for he and Figgins were running level, with Jack Blake a few yards to the rear. But presently the School House Fourth-Former commenced to pull up.

At the cross-roads all three of them were as level as possible; Tom Merry and Jack Blake were even running in step.

Then Figgins forged ahead again, but it was only for a moment. He could not shake the others off.

Step for step the three ran. They were beginning to move their legs mechanically, when suddenly the college came in sight.

Less than half a mile now separated them from the quadrangle—from the gymnasium doorway, which would end the race.

Everything seemed to recede in the most extraordinary way to Tom Merry. It appeared as if Figgins was miles away and as if he were almost too small to see.

Figgins was conscious of nothing except that he was trying to run. He knew he was moving his legs; but they were quivering beneath him, and a vague sort of idea that he was standing still in spite of his efforts, possessed him.

But he struggled on, and regained the lead.

Then Jack Blake tried to get level again. With every ounce of strength he had left, he thudded along, but his elbows were dropping. He was very nearly done.

The grey old spire of St. Jim's came nearer.

A blur before the gates might have been juniors waiting to see the finish, but the chief of Study No. 6 could not be certain. Then Tom Merry scudded past him.

Jack Blake nearly gave up then.

Everything went red before his eyes. He longed to drop down on the road just where he was. He did not care what happened if only he could stop.

But there was the honour of the School House Fourth-Form to be thought of. Whatever happened, he must not stop.

An instant later, the three passed the blurred mass Jack Blake had seen. It was the fellows all right.

And they were cheering and shouting at the top of their voices. The chief of Study No. 6 knew they would be doing that, but the voices themselves sounded as if they were miles away.

"Blake!"

"Tom Merry!"

"Figgy! Oh, run up, Figgy!"

The juniors who had met them at the gates were racing along by the rivals' sides. Even Skimpole was running in wild excitement, and as a rule the genius of St. Jim's did not care for sports.

"Come on, Blakey! Oh, do come on!"

That was Hancock's voice. Jack Blake was certain of it, though he could not think why Hancock appeared to be whispering in the lowest possible whisper.

Suddenly they were round the bend. There was only the quadrangle to be crossed now.

Kildare, Monteith, and all the other seniors were in front in two lines leading to the gymnasium doorway.

And Figgins had the lead once more. Tom Merry was next, scarcely a yard to the bad, with Jack Blake feet behind him.

The chief of Study No. 6 thought those feet must be miles. Then, suddenly, his elbows went up again.

With an effort he had never thought himself capable of since the village was passed, he spurted.

He was drawing up to Tom Merry by inches. The shouts were becoming deafening.

"Jack Blake wins!"

"No; Figgy!"

"Jack Blake, I tell you! My hat!"

Jack Blake was past Tom Merry. How he got past him he never knew, but he was a step to the good. That was all that mattered.

There was only Figgins now, and the New House junior's long legs were less steady than ever.

Another roar went up.

The School House junior was coming on at a great pace, but there were not many more yards.

The first of the line of seniors was gained.

But there was just time enough. Jack Blake did not know that; but he knew St. Jim's—School House and New House alike—expected him to do his best. He did it without a thought of sparing himself.

He was done; he was quite conscious of that, but his best must be forthcoming.

Then, when the gymnasium was almost gained, he flung himself forward.

He stumbled through the doorway, and went down in a heap on the mattress by the parallel bars.

There was no one in front of him!

"Oh, well run, youngster!"

"Look out for Tom Merry!"

"And Figgins—collar Figgins!"

But there was no time to follow the advice. Figgins's long legs had given out at last. They doubled up beneath him, and Figgins sat down. He grinned, with his eyes shut.

"Blake has won," cried Kildare, "by less than a yard. I never saw anything like it."

"Great," panted Lefevre—"absolutely great! That's what I say."

And seniors and juniors alike crowded round Tom Merry, Blake, and Figgins.

CHAPTER 22.

The Presentation.

"HOOORAY!"

"Well, run, Blakey!"

"Wasn't it ripping, chaps?"

The cheers and counter-cheers rang out all round the gymnasium. There was scarcely a fellow there who was not glad that the chief of Study No. 6 had won.

New House juniors had, of course, cheered wildly for Figgins, but the affair of the examination questions was not forgotten yet.

It was rather a fitting end to it all that Jack Blake should win the cup presented by Mr. Selby.

Tom Merry's supporters were amongst the first to realise that. But the first pair of all to see things in that light were Tom Merry and Figgins themselves.

They hurried up to Jack Blake in great glee.

"Congrats, Blakey! Jolly glad you won!"

"Rather!"

Jack Blake understood. He did not say much, because the other two understood as well. He just grinned and shook hands with his staunch rivals.

"But what about the giddy 'hounds,' kids?" he chuckled. "I wonder how many of them have stuck the pace Gussy will have set?"

"The pace Kerr will have set, you mean," said Figgins.

"Manners he's referring to, asses!" grinned Tom Merry.

"My hat, here they come!"

But whoever had set the pace, all seven of them finished in grand style, and Reilly, the junior from Belfast, was not so far behind after all.

Arthur Augustus sat down on the same wheelbarrow Mellish had used for his protest meeting, and panted.

"Howevah, there is nothin' to get in a fluttah ovah, dear boys," he gasped. "I knew we should win all the time."

"Yes; I don't think."

"Weally, Wynn—"

"Rats!" breathed the Falstaff of the New House. "I—I say, what is the time?"

"A quarter past six," grinned Hancock; and Fatty Wynn was up on his feet again.

"I must go and see to the feed, Tom Merry," he whispered. "It will never do to leave it entirely to Dame Taggles. My hat, I am almost fainting with hunger! It must be this August weather."

He hurried away, while the other juniors made for the bath-rooms.

A tepid bath would be very welcome after that punishing run.

But the baths did not take long, for it was not much after the half-hour when Jack Blake & Co. put in an appearance at Tom Merry's study. They found Tom Merry and Figgins waiting for them.

"The others won't be a minute, kids."

"And Fatty Wynn has only gone to get some more cream buns. He says he is dying for cream buns," laughed Figgins.

As they came into the neat little room, the four could not help seeing what was on the table. The spread which met their eyes rather took their breath away.

"My hat!"

"Bai—bai Jove!"

There was everything on the table that even Fatty Wynn could think of. Special creations in the form of French pastry, such as the heart of Fatty Wynn loved, were there galore. They had been made specially to the Welsh junior's order.

And the spread was being given in honour of the Study No. 6 juniors.

Jack Blake & Co. were not likely to forget that.

In a moment or two the others arrived, and tea commenced. As Digby said afterwards, it was the tea of the term.

But, like everything else, it came to an end at last, for as half-past seven struck, even Fatty Wynn decided to stop. He made that decision just as there was a tap at the door.

"Come in!"

The door was pushed open, and Mr. Selby entered the study. The juniors got up.

The Third Form-master had a finely carved silver cup under his arm.

"I was afraid it might not have arrived in time," he said. "However, it has done so, and—and I understand you have won it, Blake?"

"Well, the School House Fourth Form have won it, sir."

"But the cup becomes your property, surely?" exclaimed Mr. Selby, looking puzzled. "You won the race; you should have the cup."

"Yes, of course, sir," said Digby.

"Rather, sir!" agreed Herries.

Jack Blake went pink, but his embarrassment soon passed away.

"May I do what I like with the cup, sir?" he asked.

"Certainly."

"Thank you, sir. I—I should like to present it to St. Jim's, to be run for each year just as it has been run for to-day. May it be called the 'Selby Cup,' sir?"

"Er—yes—yes; certainly. I—I think that is all, boys. Mind, there is to be no noise."

The last words were uttered in the snappish voice they all knew so well, but for once the juniors did not mind.

Perhaps some of them did not hear it, for Fatty Wynn had started a famous old refrain, and the Welsh junior had a voice no one need have been ashamed of.

The old refrain was taken up instantly on all sides.

The juniors were giving Mr. Selby musical honours.

THE END.

NEXT THURSDAY!

**"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S
LUCK,"**

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WHEN AUNTIE SLEPT

By F. ST. MARS.

HE ought to have been asleep, curled up in his basket in front of the fire, but he wasn't.

He ought to have been purring round Aunt Tabitha's black skirt as she ran round the garden with a candle, calling him by name, but he wasn't.

He was crawling, belly-flat, across the moonlit sward three fields away, his eyeballs of green-yellow flame, his ears flat, his muscles taut as telegraph-wires, and just the end of his tail twitching as the man-eating tiger's tail twitches in the burnt jungle-grass as he lurks beside the hill-road, and sees his prey in sight.

By these tokens you will see that he was a cat, a "Tom" tabby cat, and an old maid's pet at that. Wherefore—having snatched off the blue ribbon that annoyed his neck in a ditch—he was creeping up to one of the most strictly-preserved pheasant covers in England.

It was very dark inside the wood as he drifted into it like a grey ghost. Also, it was very silent, but it was a silence accentuated by tiny sounds, made up of tiny sounds, which the cat's instinct must have given him the hang of—I'll swear Aunt Tabitha hadn't.

There were things in the place, live things, and they ran about making microscopical noises which filtered through the stillness, but they never said who they were, nor what they did for. If you stand still beside a wood at night you will hear just what the cat heard, only the cat knew the meanings of what he heard, and you—unless you were a gamekeeper's son—wouldn't.

First, there came a thing crooning all to its little self among the faded harebells and the moss. The cat subsided flat as a flounder, "froze," in fact. Then he stiffened, vibrated, and sprang. He landed upon the crooning thing, which revealed itself into a short-tailed field-mouse, and was revealed by the cat into a meal—the first course of a rather amazing supper.

A little while later, and a little further on, a pair of tiny, tiny pin-points of light drifted through the darkness in front. The cat lay flat. His eyes told him very little, but his nose said "Rats." More lights followed, and still more, and always in pairs, till there may have been half a hundred passing before the feline hunter. These were the eyes of rats. The rats themselves were invisible because of the pit-like darkness.

No rock could have remained more still than that cat in the next minute. Rats he had seen before singly, but not a whole legion of the whiskered fiends. What, he wondered, was the new villainy they were up to? And the answer came swiftly.

There was a scuffle, a beating of wings, a screaming of chicks, a piteous cheeping, a fluttering, and a confusion all mixed up with the hurried patter of rats' feet, and the horrid squealing which rats make when excited.

They had found a hen-pheasant with her brood of chicks under her. One of their scouts had brought them word of her, I think. Anyway, they had organised a foray in force against her—had fallen upon her as she crouched asleep under a brier-bush.

Then the cat arrived.

He gave no warning as to his coming. He said no word at all. He just came, whirling through the air, and he landed clean in the middle of that mix-up of pheasant and rats and dead and dying pheasant chicks.

What he did during the next ten seconds may be known to himself. It was impossible to watch. He seemed to be possessed of a dual personality, of being in quite six places at once, and the air appeared to be alive with rending claws, and he must have had at least four pairs of jaws—at least, that is how it seemed from the rats' point of view. They are untrustworthy witnesses, anyway, however, for they went at once, or a bit sooner—at least, some of them went. Four stayed behind because they had to—the cat had killed them—and three were trying to go, but they were so badly wounded that they had to stay also, and in the end the cat killed them as well.

The pheasant and what was left of her brood had already removed.

Then silence—the rustling, whispering silence of the woods—shut down once more, and pussy ate the second course of his supper. (No; he did not eat all the rats. He only ate the fattest, youngest one.)

Passing from this banquet in the dark, Aunt Tabitha's

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THURSDAY:

"LUMLEY-LUMLEY'S LUCK."

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

darling came, by way of devious windings among tree-trunks and hazel roots, to a tiny stream. Here was a rabbit run, a regular high-road, which led across a bridge over a stream in the form of a fallen tree-trunk. He was just about to cross this, when, without saying "By your leave," a rabbit came hammering down that path, barged full-tilt into him, knocked all the wind out of him, rolled clean over his back, picked itself up in a hurry, and without a word, and was gone ere he could spring upon it.

Next instant he was round upon himself with that quickness which only a cat can accomplish, had bunched himself into the form of a pin-cushion charged with electric sparks, and was ready to face anything. Anything, in this case, was a swift drumming which he had heard coming along hard on the rabbit's trail. He knew the sound well. It was, if he mistook not, the fearsome patter of a dog hunting. He was a big, an exceptionally big, Tom-cat, however, so big that he had officially won prizes at cat shows, and unofficially won more prizes as a garden and roof fighter when his mistress was asleep.

He turned, as was said, to face not a dog, but a smallish, reddish, longish, grinning, leering beast, with yellow eyes and lolling tongue, and the finest bushy tail that ever you saw, came streaking along the rabbit-run. This was no ordinary dog, however—one completely different from any the cat had met before.

He became aware of the cat just a twentieth part of a second before he would have fallen over the same, yet in that fractional time, and without having had any warning, he doubled on his tracks, dodged the lightning-like slash from pussy's claws, and was standing a yard away, regarding this new adversary. Now, no dog that the cat had ever met in all his long experience of backyard warfare could have accomplished that miracle of acrobatics, therefore the cat took a good look at him.

Certainly he was a dog, yet, again, certainly he was not. Then what, in the name of milk-and-rice, was he?

He was, as a matter of fact, a big old, lean old, cunning old dog-fox.

Then the fox, who had never before been challenged in his path by any creature, save man, in all those woods, made a beautiful blunder. He tried to rush that cat and catch the rabbit. He darted forward, dodged, and bored, with head down, past puss.

There followed a cataclysm of spitting and swearing, a vision of a bristling, ghostly thing, with eyes a-flame, jumping every way at once, and the fox suddenly discovered that this was not going to be any matter of a joke, but real earnest. He had, as a matter of fact, cornered the cat. To leave the rabbit-run right or left was impossible, because of impenetrable thorn-bushes. To go on down the path was equally impossible, because a man could be seen far along it in the moonlight, and he was approaching. The fox had not seen the man; the cat had, hence the trouble.

They fought for three minutes, at the end of which time the cat was about as red as the fox had been naturally, and the fox was redder than he had ever been in all his life. Then puss jumped the fox clean, landed on a low limb of beech-tree, rebounded from that, crashing in a shower of blossom into the bosom of an age-old hawthorn, and rebounding again, reached the bank of the stream ten yards further up. Here he vanished.

The fox—what was left of him—turned to go. He was too late. A report like thunder burst with appalling suddenness upon the scene, smashing all the silence up into a thousand little shouting echoes, and the fox jumped straight up in the air about three feet. When he came down again it was on his back, for he was dead.

It was the man, whom the cat had seen approaching, that had fired the gun. He was a gamekeeper, and he had witnessed the fight.

"Thanks, pussy!" he said, as he stooped and picked up the fox by the tail. "I shouldn't ha' got this varmint if it hadn't bin for you."

But pussy was six hundred yards away, gliding through the twisted stems on his stomach.

Later the keeper came upon the pheasant's nest. He noted the dead rats lying round it, and the scene of battle.

"H'm!" quoth he. "That's another debt I owe you, puss. I'm thinking you're too useful to shoot. That's why I waited till ye was clear 'fore I did for that varmint."

As for the cat, he was streaking straight for home with his tail flying like a windmill, and every hair on him on end. He had never heard a gun fired at close quarters before, and he thought the floor of the world had fallen in, I think. He spent all that day asleep in front of the fire, but, catlike, he never told anyone how he had spent the night. He let it be inferred that a bad, wicked man had tried to steal him, for which he was petted and fed and cried over by his owner for two hours—the old ruffian!

(Another of these wonderful little stories next Thursday).

A Splendid Old-time Sea Story.

In the Service of the King.

By LIEUTENANT LEFEVRE.

Read this First.

Oswald Yorke, one-time knight of the road, joins the Navy as a midshipman under the name of John Smith. His first ship, the Catapult, is wrecked under peculiar circumstances, and Oswald is one of the few survivors. A naval court is held at Jamaica to inquire into the loss of the frigate, and Captain Burgoyne, the Catapult's scoundrelly commander, is called upon to give evidence.

(Now go on with the story.)

Captain Burgoyne's Evidence.

"We sailed from Portsmouth on such and such a date," began Burgoyne "my instructions being to waylay, and if possible engage with, the French line-of-battle-ship Amadee, then in possession of the East Indiaman the Bombay Castle, which was being taken to Havre as her prize."

"We were fortunate enough to sight the Amadee and her prize, and, according to instructions, I immediately engaged with her."

"The Catapult, gentlemen, was a small frigate; her adversary was a line-of-battle-ship—one of the heaviest and best-armed in the French service. I will do my crew the credit of saying that they fought with great bravery; but, against such odds as were opposed to us, the issue of the battle was never in doubt from the commencement. At last, in order to preserve the lives of my crew and save the Catapult from falling into the hands of the foe, I thought it advisable to withdraw, and did so, leaving the Amadee in a crippled condition."

"My instructions then were to proceed to this port, and acting on them I had such repairs as were necessary done to the Catapult, and shaped my course to this island."

"Some days after parting company with the Amadee, we sighted and stood in chase of a privateer, which ran for safety under a shore battery. I immediately dropped anchor and stood off from the shore out of range of the battery's guns, and sent three boats inshore to cut out the privateer."

"From under the battery's guns?" asked Captain Turnbull.

"Yes, sir."

"And you accompanied the cutting-out expedition?" asked Captain Maher.

"No, he did not," muttered the other captain, in a low but perfectly audible voice.

A sudden flush suffused Burgoyne's face, and he turned to the admiral.

"I protest against such utterances as these—they are only made to belittle me, and cast reflections on my courage!" he said hotly.

The admiral bowed his head, and said a few words in an undertone to Captain Turnbull, who bowed without replying.

"I may say," resumed Captain Burgoyne, "that prior to this I had noticed certain signs of dissatisfaction among my crew—and not only among the crew, I am sorry to say, but among certain of the officers of the Catapult."

"Can you suggest any reason for this dissatisfaction of which you speak?" asked the admiral, looking straight into Burgoyne's face.

"I can, sir," replied Burgoyne. "Two words will explain my meaning—disappointed ambitions."

"They do not explain your meaning—at least, not clearly."

Dr. Telford rose, but remained silent till the admiral turned towards him.

"You wish to say something at this point?" he asked.

"I do, sir. I wish to say that Captain Burgoyne's statement is absolutely correct. The primary reason for the mutiny on board the Catapult was, as he says, disappointed ambition."

"You will probably explain your meaning afterwards, sir?" said the admiral.

"I shall be pleased to do so, sir," said the surgeon, reseating himself with a bow.

"The dissatisfaction among the crew had been gaining ground for some time," resumed Captain Burgoyne. "Two officers—one in a high position and one in a subordinate one—were primarily responsible for it. It is scarcely to be wondered at, gentlemen, that a crew becomes unruly and prone to mutiny when it has the support of one of the principal officers of the ship. That man, who, I will admit, had hitherto borne a high character in the Service, and in whom I myself would have trusted implicitly, sowed the seeds of discord among the men. He led them into excesses—he made

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himself a popular favourite with them by allowing them extra quantities of spirits—until, to a man, they were ready to rise and throw in their lot with him."

"Still, I cannot understand what gain this officer had in view," said the admiral.

"Nor I," said Captain Turnbull.

"I confess that I myself was at a loss for some time to see what he could gain by inciting the crew to mutiny against my control, but it is now as clear as daylight to me. He wished to bring discredit upon me in order that he might supersede me in the command of the Catapult."

There was a moment's pause after this statement, for although, in accordance with the admiral's directions, Captain Burgoyne had so far mentioned no names, there was no doubt now in the minds of his hearers that he had been referring to Mr. Fryer all through, as Mr. Fryer, being the first lieutenant, would be the one to replace the captain in command.

"You have come to a point now," said the admiral, "when an explicit and definite statement is required of you. You are bringing one of the most serious charges against a man. If that man is living, and you can prove your charges, he will be required to defend his life against your accusations. If he is not living, the defence of his reputation and memory must lay in the hands of his friends. I now call upon you, Captain Burgoyne, to make your accusation."

There was a pause for some seconds, during which Captain Burgoyne reached out his hand for a glass of water. He moistened his lips with a few drops, and then spoke again:

"You ask me to make a direct charge, gentlemen. I will do so. I charge two officers of the Catapult with having incited the crew of the vessel to mutiny against my authority. The names of those two officers are Mr. Fryer, my late first lieutenant—I would that I could make this accusation to his face—the other, Mr. Smith, a midshipman, who was Mr. Fryer's confederate and go-between between him and the crew!"

For a moment Oswald, hearing his feigned name, did not realise that it was himself that Captain Burgoyne accused. Then it dawned upon him, and a look of incredulous horror came into his eyes.

"And this is the man whose life I have twice saved!" he muttered; and, though he knew it not, his words were distinctly audible to everyone in the room.

The admiral glanced quickly in the direction of Oswald, then turned towards Captain Burgoyne again.

"I presume that you have not brought this charge against the dead and the living without due consideration, sir?" he said coldly. "I need not ask one in your position if you are aware of the gravity of it."

"I am here to speak the truth, and nothing more or less than the truth, sir," said Burgoyne. "I have proof of what I say. I can call witnesses to bear out my statements."

"Witnesses?" asked the admiral quickly.

"A witness," replied Burgoyne.

"Ah!" It was almost a sigh of relief that the admiral uttered as he turned and shot a keen glance at Brabazon, whose face was white as death, and whose lips were twitching with nervousness.

"Continue," said the admiral briefly.

"We found it impossible to cut out the privateer, so we burned her out of the water under the enemy's guns," said Captain Burgoyne.

"We?"

"My crew," said Burgoyne, changing colour.

"Under whose directions?" he said.

Captain Burgoyne hesitated for a moment.

"Under my directions," he said.

"It's a lie!" burst out old Fid.

"Silence! How dare you?" said the admiral, turning round on the old man.

Fid Speaks Up— Oswald Accused.

"I beg pardon, sir, most humbly," said Fid, "but flesh and blood couldn't stand it. When I hear him taking all the credit of—"

"Silence!" said the admiral again.

Fid relapsed into silence.

"In that man's interruption you see the result of the seeds that Mr. Fryer sowed among my crew," said Captain Burgoyne.

"Keep to the subject," said the admiral sternly.

"Mr. Fryer was one of the cutting-out party," resumed Captain Burgoyne.

"Was one of them? Was he not in command?" asked Captain Turnbull.

"Yes," said Burgoyne briefly.

"Sir, you are evidently trying to mislead this court of inquiry," said the admiral sternly.

Captain Burgoyne changed colour. For the first time he lost his nerve and hesitated.

"Mr. Fryer returned wounded. Several of the men of the boat's crew were lost, several wounded. Crippled and short of men, I decided, the following day, to avoid engaging with a French ship of far greater strength than our own. I hold, sirs, that discretion is the better part of valour, and that it would be but flying in the face of Providence to attempt to do more than one's strength will allow. I therefore preferred not to risk losing my ship than to engage with an enemy of double my strength."

"You evidently exercised very great care," said the admiral drily.

"I hold that it was my duty to do so, sir," said Captain Burgoyne.

"That same night the entire crew, with the exception of a couple of seamen, rose in mutiny against my authority whilst I lay asleep in my cabin. Fortunately, some of the officers had received notice of this attempt on the part of the crew to gain possession of the ship, so that the mutineers were met with a strong resistance—"

"And where were you during this, sir?"

"I was asleep in my cabin. I knew nothing about it. When I came on to the deck the mutineers had been driven back, and the quarter-deck was in the hands of the officers."

"You are a sound sleeper?" said the admiral.

"I sleep soundly—yes. No one came to awaken me. When I came on to deck I found that several of the mutineers had been shot down, and the rest had taken refuge in the fore-castle. While we were in this state of insurrection, a furious storm broke. I was on deck during the whole of the storm, doing my utmost to save the ship, but it was hopeless from the start. A huge wave swept the deck, clearing away the fore-castle, in which the mutineers had taken shelter. They were swept overboard and drowned to a man. Many of the officers and the crew also perished, and the few survivors put off in a small boat from the Catapult as she was on the point of sinking."

"And you have no more to tell regarding the loss of the Catapult, sir?"

"No more. But what I have said is the truth. Mr. Brabazon, my second lieutenant, will verify all that I have said."

"I see here," said the admiral, "besides the second lieutenant of the Catapult, the surgeon, the master, and a midshipman and seaman, all of the Catapult. Can you not call upon them to verify your statements, too, sir?"

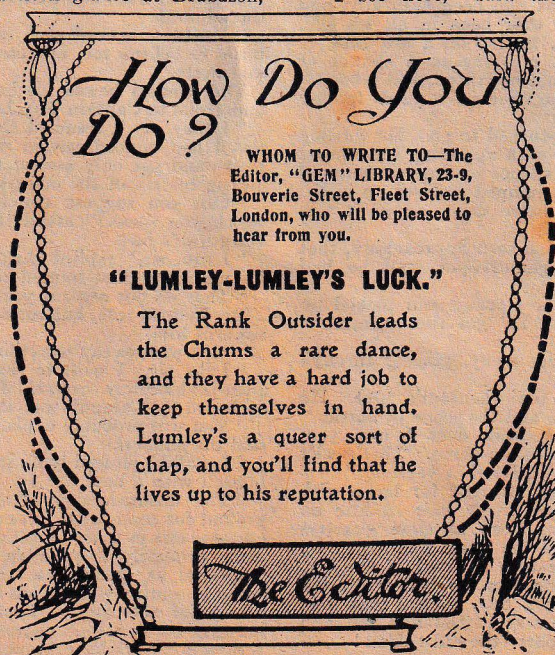
"I cannot," he said, in a low voice. "I may say that they are sympathisers with the mutiny, with the man who originated it; in fact, they were inclined to be disaffected themselves, though I cannot bring a direct charge against them."

He sat down, leaving behind him a feeling utter disbelief, which Captain Maher, for one, made no attempt to conceal.

"Before we go further, gentlemen," said the admiral, "we must deal with this very serious charge which Captain Burgoyne has brought against two persons. One is dead, the other is living—and here."

He touched a bell that stood upon the table beside him, and the door opened, to admit a sergeant of Marines and a couple of privates.

(To be continued in our next issue.)



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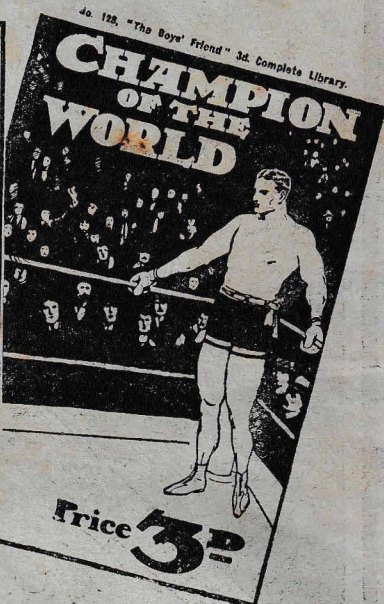
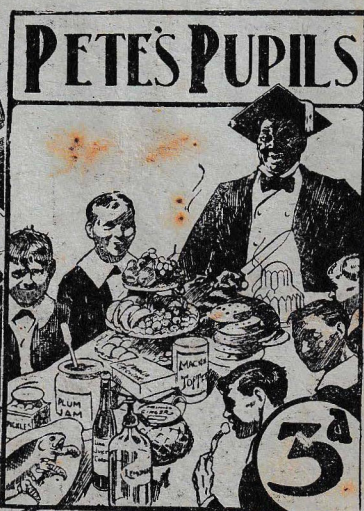
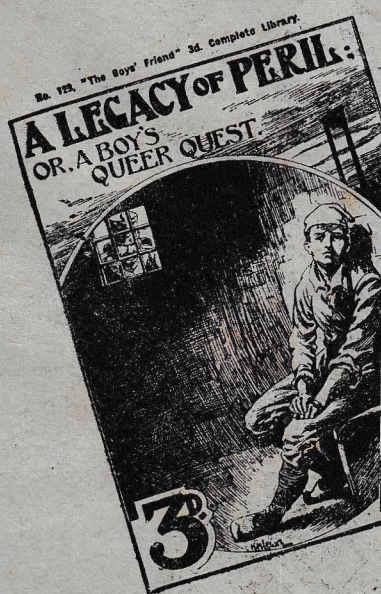
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