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THE CHUMS OF No. 5.

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



WILL TOWSER BITE ?

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THE CHUMS OF No. 5.

A Magnificent, New, Long,
Complete School Story
of Tom Merry & Co.
at St. Jim's.

By
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**

CHAPTER 1.

A Visitor to No. 5.

"**J**ULIAN, dear boy!" It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form of St. Jim's who spoke, showing his noble countenance and his celebrated monocle at the door of the study next to that which he and his chums—Blake, Digby, and Herries—occupied.

D'Arcy's study was No. 6. It was into No. 5 that he was looking.

No. 5 had also four occupants. There were Dick Julian, the handsome, kindly, and plucky junior of Jewish birth; Eric Kerruish, who hailed from the Isle of Man, and was proud of the fact; Patrick Reilly, from Ulster; and Harry Hammond, son of the man who had made "Ammond's 'Igh 'Ats" famous, who was a Cockney.

It is plain that the quartet in No. 5 were likely to differ widely one from another in their views. And they often did so. There seemed no particular reason why they should be specially chummy. But, in spite of these differences of opinion, they were so.

But this close feeling of comradeship had grown up by degrees. It had not brought them together at first; accident had done that. Now, however, it would have taken much to part them; and, though they might squabble among themselves, they were always ready to unite against a common foe.

To say that they looked upon the noble Arthur Augustus as a common foe would be saying altogether too much.

They all liked Gussy.

Every decent fellow at St. Jim's liked Gussy.

He might be very exasperating at times. He was so. He could be obstinate as a mule; and what he called his tact and judgment received many other names—never complimentary—from his schoolfellows.

But, in spite of his little failings, Gussy was recognised in No. 5 as one of the best.

Neither Julian nor Kerruish, neither Hammond nor Reilly, would have denied that Blake was also one of the best.

All four would have agreed that that compliment might also be extended to Herries and to Digby.

But, as a study, No. 5 was up against No. 6.

In the opinion of Julian & Co., No. 6 took altogether too much upon itself.

No. 6 did not merely pose as top study in the Fourth Form passage of the School House; it did more than that. It laughed to scorn any notion that any other study could begin to compete with it.

And there were really only two in the School House which could do so, though over the way, in the New House, Figgins & Co. had claims to be reckoned level.

There were only three members of the New House Co., however—Figgy himself, Keer, and Fatty Wynn.

Study No. 9 of the School House Fourth Form was also occupied by a trio—Levison, Clive, and Cardew.

So, in a sense, both No. 9 of the School House and No. 4 of the New House laboured under a difficulty which did not apply to No. 5, School House.

Both had, in the event of a raid, a rough-and-tumble combat, or a regular pitched battle, the disadvantage of odds.

"Julian, dear boy!" said D'Arcy again, a little more peremptorily and a little less condescendingly.

Dick Julian looked up from the lines he was doing.

"Well?" he said.

"I requish your attention for a brief space, dear boy. I cannot talk to a fellow who onlay shows me the back of his cranium."

"Berrr!" was Julian's answer to that. And he returned to his lines.

"Weilly, will you—"

"Sure, then, an' I will not, Gussy! I'm after having lines to do as well as Julian."

Arthur Augustus sniffed. No. 6 had somehow escaped the epidemic of lines which had been prevalent in the Fourth Form-room that afternoon. It was something like a miracle; but Gussy did not look upon it in that light, and it made him feel just a trifle more superior than usual—which was unnecessary.

"Kewwuish—"

"Oh, go away and play, Gussy!"

"Weally, Kewwuish, you are not too polite, I must say! You fellows should behave bettah in Form. I considah that it is a gwave wewpwoach to the Fourth that Mr. Lathom should—"

"Hang old Lathom! I suppose he needn't have given us the lines unless he liked, need he?" growled Kerruish.

"Three hundred each, and all for nothing!"

"Well, not quite for nothing, Eric," said Julian, smiling, without looking up or ceasing to make his pen fly over the paper.

"Next to nothing, anyway!" snapped Kerruish. "And then we have a blessed tailor's dummy—"

"You are insultin', Kewwuish!"

"Buttin' in an' chortlin' because he wasn't after gettin' any!" went on Reilly, taking up Kerruish's speech, and leaving the Manx junior free to wither Gussy up with a silent glare.

"Howly mother of Moses, what does he think he is? Wid a pane of glass in the eye of him, an' a waistcoat that gives any chap wid taste a pain in the stomach, an' a tie—"

"Fwom the most shockin'ly dressed wuffian in the Fourth, Weilly—"

"Sure, an' is it me you're after libellin'? Let me tell ye—"

"I do not wish you to tell me anythin' whatever, Weilly!" said Gussy frigidly. "I cannot imagine your havin' anythin' to say to which I could listen with patience! Hammond, dear boy!"

Perhaps Harry Hammond had been left until last because he was quite the easiest mark for Gussy. There was nothing meek about the little Cockney, and he had at least as much outspokenness as any of his chums. But it took a good deal from Arthur Augustus to put Hammond's back up.

"Yes, Gussy?"

"Pewwaps you will listen to me?"

"Well, I don't mind listenin'. But I'd be glad if you'd hurry up a bit! I've got lines to do, same as these chaps, you know."

"We are callin' a meetin'—"

"Who are we?" snapped Kerruish.

And both Julian and Reilly ceased scribbling and pricked up their ears.

"No. 6, of course, Kewwuish—the top study in the Form!"

"Oh! I thought No. 6 was an asylum for the feeble-minded!" said Kerruish.

"Sure, I thought it was a dog-kennel," said Reilly.

"And I know that it's not top study!" said Julian quietly.

Hammond said nothing, but he grinned.

"Will you be so vewy kind as to tell me what studay is entitled to that honourable title, Julian?" asked Gussy frigidly.

"No need to ask—No. 5, D'Arcy!"

"Little us!" added Kerruish.

"An' you needn't be after sniffin', Gussy!" said Reilly. "If it's a could in the head ye're havin'—"

"Well, there's room for it!" murmured Kerruish thoughtfully.

"What do you mean, Kerruish?"

"That shows I'm right, old bird, because if you had any brains there you wouldn't want to ask that silly question!"

"If Gussy had any brains 'e would know 'e adn't got any!" said Harry Hammond. "Well, you may be right, old scout, but I'm angled if I can work it out!"

"You shut up, you mad batten! We know you've got pro-Gussy tendencies, but you'd better keep them to yourself," said Kerruish.

"Gussy's all right," Harry Hammond said. "But No. 6 ain't top study—nothin' like it!"

"An' they won't catch us at their mouldy meeting!" said Reilly, with fine scorn.

"You have not yet inquired what is the object of the meetin', Weilly," returned Arthur Augustus, with another sniff.

"Oh, use your hunkys, do!" said Kerruish.

"He doesn't need to inquire," remarked Julian calmly.

"I fail to understand you, Julian!"

"Of course you do, not having any understandin'!" put in the Manx junior. "Shall I make it plain, D'Arcy?" said Dick Julian, with a twinkle in his fine eyes.

"If you please, Julian."

"Right-ho! You've asked for it, remember. You will be the object of the meeting. Who else could be, with you there?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I assure you, Julian, that the meetin' has nothin' whatever to do with me!" said Gussy, rather puzzled. "An' what these empty-headed fellows can see to cackle at I weally—"

"If it's nothing to do with you, what the merry dickens do you come worrying

us about it for when we've lines to do?" growled Kerruish.

"Think again, Gussy!" Julian said gently. "Think hard, old chap! It is a bit difficult for you to understand anything, I know, but—"

"You are vewy wude, Julian! I see now what you mean, an' I must say that I am disappointed in you. Hammond, are you comin' to our meetin'? I shall not pwess upon these othah thwee the mattah of comin'. We can get along vewy well without them, I am suah."

"You say 'our meeting,' Gussy. Whose does that mean?"

"Why, I mean No. 6, natchuwall—the top studay in the Fourth, deah boy!"

"But that's wrong," said Hammond.

"How so?"

"Because No. 6 ain't top study."

"What is, then, you young ass?"

Gussy was not quite as good-tempered as he had been at the outset, which was hardly to be wondered at.

"No. 9, of course!" said a voice behind him.

Arthur Augustus swung round.

"Wats, Levison!" he said sharply.

"That's the first remark of yours I've found myself agreeing with for a long time, D'Arcy!" said Julian.

"The others must have been below even Gussy's standard, if that's the wisest of them," returned Levison. "But I'm not going to quarrel with you chaps about it. Have you noticed one thing about No. 9?"

"Sure, I've noticed three silly-lookin' jijits about there, time an' time agin," said Reilly.

"Yes? Which of you four stayed at home when you came visiting us?" retorted Levison.

"What was it you expected us to notice, Levison?" inquired Julian.

"Oh, I didn't exactly expect you to. We don't expect much from you chaps, you know."

"Well, what was it you wanted us to notice? I'll put it that way if you like it better."

"Only this—we don't go about cackling that our studay's top study. We don't have any need to, you see. We simply are top study, beyond any argument, and there it is, you know!"

"My hat!" gasped Kerruish.

"Tare an' ouns!" roared Reilly.

"Were you after wantin' anything, Levison?"

"No, nothing at all from you. I only stopped because Gussy had his back to me as I passed, and I rather wanted to see what waistcoat he was wearing to-day."

"Sure, an' it's a thick ear I'd thought ye might be—"

"Not at all, Reilly! When I want that, I'll go to another shop. You chaps haven't any thick ears in stock for me. Oh, it's the green waistcoat with the chaste decorations in scarlet, purple, and yellow, is it, Gussy? Take care Cardew doesn't copy it, that's all! Ta-ta!"

"You cheeky boundah!" roared Gussy.

"You braggin' spalpeen!" hooted Reilly.

"Come along to the gym and have the gloves on with me!" yelled Kerruish.

But Levison passed on, grinning.

"Not going, are you, Gussy?" asked Dick Julian.

"Yaas, I wefuse uthahly to waste any move of my valuable time on you fellows," replied the noble scion of the House of D'Arcy frigidly.

"I don't mind coming to your meeting, Gussy," said Hammond good-naturedly. "But I ain't coming if you stick it out about No. 6 being top study, because that's all rot, you know."

"I do not know anythin' of the kind, Hammond, an' I do not caah in the vewy least whethah you come to the



Outside No. 6!
(See Chapter 8.)

meetin' or not! In fact, I am not at all suah that I shall not cancel the meetin' altogether!"

"Best thing you can do, old chap," said Julian soothingly. "It would be a sure and certain frost without us, you know. Shut the door, will you? We want quiet. These rotten lines have got—"

Slam!

Gussy had shut the door—hard!

CHAPTER 2.

Towser Is Not Friendly.

"THOSE boundahs say they are not comin'!" announced Arthur Augustus, entering No. 6.

"What are you burbling about now?" inquired Herries politely.

"What bounders say they are not coming, and where do they say they're not coming to?" asked Blake comprehensively.

"Did you fetch that bloater-paste, Gustavus?" was Dig's query.

"Julian an' that ewowd. They—"

"I don't see what you wanted to ask Julian & Co. to tea for, you chump!" snapped Herries. "If you haven't brought the—"

"I have not brought anythin' what-eva, Hewwies, an' I have not asked—"

"What, not the bloater-paste I told you to get?" howled Dig, setting the bread-trencher down on the table with a whack that jarred all the crockery.

"Blow the bloatah-paste, Dig! Who caahs for bloatah-paste? I am talkin' about my meetin'."

"Who cares for bloater-paste, you frabjous idiot? Why, I do, you silly chump! Blake does, you maniac! Herries does, you piffing imbecile! But we don't any of us care a row of pins about any blessed silly meeting!"

"Weally, Dig—"

"There's bread—we do get enough bread, that's one thing. But the butter we've got left ain't any good without a microscope, except that it smells larger

than it is. And if Gussy hasn't brought the bloater—"

"I have not bwrought anythin', Dig, I wepeat! I did not undahtake to bwing anythin', an' I did not intend to bwing anythin'."

"But I told you to, you silly fathead! Didn't I, Herries?"

"Yes; and I said if you could pick up a bone for old Towser anywhere he'd be glad of it, Gustavus. Have you found one?"

"Weally, Hewwies, I am suppwised at you. Can you imagine me pwowlin' wound affah bones for Towsah?"

"No; I can't imagine you doing anythin' half as useful. But you might have done it, all the same. The poor old boy's got to have some grub, I suppose?"

"So have we, and there'll be no getting that bloater-paste now," granted Dig.

"What meeting are you talking about, Gussy?" asked Blake.

Arthur Augustus turned away from Herries and Digby, and their obsession by the commissariat problem. He hailed Blake's question with relief, though it puzzled him why Blake should have to ask it.

"Why, my meetin' to discuss how the Fourth Form should celebrate the outbreak of peace, of course!" he said.

"First I've heard of it."

"Blake, deah boy, I feah your memowry must be in a vewy bad way! Why, I talked to you for half an houah about it only this aftahnoon!"

"Did you? I remember now that you did gas away about something or other. But I wasn't listening; I was thinking."

"You are weally worse than Hewwies an' Dig, Blake! I shall not hold that meetin' at all now, an' when peace comes it will find us completely unpwepahed!"

"Yes, without any giddy bloater-paste!" howled Dig.

The table did look rather lean. Herries contemplated it ruefully.

"I vote for tea in Hall," he said. "There can't be less butter there."

"But there might be less smell to it," replied Dig, grinning.

"Well, that would be an advantage. I won't eat any of that. Gussy can have it to grease his hair with."

"You are an insultin' boundah—"
"Oh, don't get your rag out, Gustavus!" said Dig. "If we can stand you and no bloater-paste through your silly-assiness, you ought to be able to stand anything we say to you. I'll give this bit of butter to old Towser, Herries."

"You won't do anything of the sort, fathead!" snapped Herries. "I'm not going to have old Towser poisoned!"

"Well, we ate some of it last night."
"That's a different thing altogether. Towser's got a delicate constitution, let me tell you."

Brrrrrr! came from under the table. Towser was there, though he should not have been, and, hearing his name mentioned by his master, he was signifying that he had heard.

Tom Merry, the skipper of the Shell, stuck his head in.

"You chaps coming to tea with us?" he asked.

"Oh, rather!" said three voices in chorus.

The fourth voice said:
"Yaas, wathah, deah boy!"

"Come along, then! Bring your rations, of course, though we've something a trifle better to add to them."

"As for butter—" began Dig doubtfully.

"We were just arguing as to whether we should poison Gussy or Towser with what we've got," finished Blake cheerily, if not quite truthfully.

"If it came to that there wouldn't be any argument!" growled Herries.

"I should wathah think not, Hewwies!"

"No; you'd have to go! Why, old Towser's got as much sense as I have, and—"

"That is vewy likely indeed—"

"And more feeling than all you chaps put together! Did you hear the old boy speak to me just now when he heard his name?"

"Is Towser here?" asked Tom.
The brindled bulldog walked out sedately from under the table, and fawned upon Tom's hand.

"Tain't allowed, you know, Herries," said Tom Merry, caressing the great, ugly head, while the brown, luminous eyes looked up at him with affection. Tom was one of the people of whom Towser approved unreservedly.

"What's the odds?" returned Herries. "I don't often have him up; but he isn't feeling very well to-day, and I couldn't refuse the old boy."

"Going to leave him here?" asked Blake.

"Yes. Any objection?" said Herries defiantly.

"None at all, ass! Better shut the door when you come out, that's all, or he'll be wandering up and down looking for you."

The five passed out, and Towser curled himself down under the table again. Towser had a good deal of appreciation of the warmth and comfort of a study.

"What have you got, Tommy?" asked Blake. "I know it's something special, and I must say it's decent of you to share it with the needy and distressed."

"There's a dozen kippers—"

"Bag the skins for Towser!" said Herries quickly.

"Right-ho! And there's a cake.

Louther says it's the fine flower of Huckleberry Green. I don't know how

he spells flower. But he seems to mean it for a joke."

"Oh, we can stand Lowther's jokes if we're going to get our whack of one of Miss Priscilla's cakes," Dig said. "There's only one thing better than the quality of them, and that's the size of them. Miss Priscilla makes cakes what is cakes, not mere overgrown buns!"

The four passed on to Study No. 10 on the Shell passage, where the Terrible Three—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther—kept together.

They had not been gone more than five minutes or so when Aubrey Racke tapped at the door of No. 6.

No answer came, of course—that is, no human answer. And the growl which Towser gave was too low for Racke to hear.

Racke tapped again. Then he turned the knob, and cautiously pushed open the door.

He was stealthy as well as cautious. The grin on his face seemed to suggest that he was not at all displeased to find Blake & Co. absent.

And he was not. He wanted to know something which they might or might not have told him—probably not, if they had tumbled to it how much he wanted to know it. For Blake, D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby did by no means love Racke of the Shell.

He stole inside, pushed the door to, and advanced towards the table.

But the table had on it only the bread, the fragmentary but powerful scrap of butter, the crockeryware, and a small tin of saccharin tablets.

Racke was not after saccharin. He could afford to buy that in any quantity he wished.

He wanted to know something, and he fancied that he might find out what he wanted to know if he could get hold of a letter Digby had received that morning. He had heard the four talking about the news told in that letter, and it concerned a person Racke knew well. But he had not managed to hear all that he wanted to know. Hence his visit to No. 6, where he had intended to make tactful inquiries.

But as he well knew that the result of tactful inquiries on his part would probably be to make Dig and Blake—if not Gussy, who was charitable, and Herries, who was somewhat slow—suspicious, he rather preferred to see the letter himself.

Racke had come to St. Jim's without any delicacy in the matter of other people's correspondence, and, so far, he had not acquired any sentiment of the kind. He would have regarded it as rather weak.

He stepped over to the couch, upon which there was a litter of books, papers, and other articles, shifted from the table before the cloth could be laid.

"Might be here!" he muttered.

"More likely to be in his jacket-pocket, though, perhaps. I'll look there first."

He moved again. On a row of pegs hung blazers, macintoshes, overcoats, and jackets. There was one among the latter which looked like Dig's, and Racke knew that Blake and Dig both often wore old blazers or Norfolk jackets in the study, preferring them to the regulation Etons.

But as Racke's picking fingers touched the jacket a low growl from behind almost petrified him.

He looked round in wild fear. Towser growled again, and proceeded to sample Racke's trousering.

"Yooocoo! Yarocoo!" howled Racke, all thoughts of caution forgotten in his fright.

He could not have yelled out more loudly if he had been actually bitten.

But Towser's strong teeth had not

touched his skin. He would have had something to yell for if they had.

"Yooop!" he howled again. "Help! Murder!"

CHAPTER 3.

Hot Words!

"SOMEbody's in trouble next door," remarked Julian coolly.

"Sure, an' what's that matter, at all, at all?" returned Reilly.

"It doesn't sound like any of them chaps," said Hammond. "Besides, I believe they've gone to tea with Tom Merry. Sounds to me a bit like Racke."

Racke gave another wild yell. Towser was tugging and trying to growl with his mouth full. The result was a poor thing in the way of growls; but it impressed Racke no end.

"I'll have a look," said Kerruish.

"If it's Racke, leave him to it," Julian said. "He's no right in there if those fellows are out, and I'm certain he's there for no good."

"Faith, I'm after thinkin' that they must have set a nice little man-trap for him," remarked Reilly.

"It's Towser, I guess," said Hammond.

But Kerruish did not hear that. He was already pushing open the door of No. 6.

"Hallo! What's the row, Racke?" he asked.

Only the light of the fire lit up the room, and the fire was rather low. Its light had been enough for Racke's purpose; but it was hardly enough for Kerruish to see Towser at a glance.

"Ow! This beastly dog's got me by the leg! Yow-ow!" panted Racke.

At that moment the fire flickered up, and Kerruish saw Towser. It certainly looked as though for once Racke was telling the truth.

There was not a particle of funk about Eric Kerruish. Nothing had ever happened to test his courage severely, but it was there.

He was not fond of Towser. The Fourth generally did not love Towser. But he was not afraid of him, or of any dog.

"Now then, old chap, just you leave go!" he said sharply, seizing Towser by the collar and pulling hard.

The bulldog gave a muffled, angry growl, and his little eyes gleamed up at Kerruish with a bloodshot gleam.

"Leave go, do you hear?" snapped the Manx junior.

Towser's only reply to that was another angry growl. He tugged hard. Kerruish also tugged. If Towser had nipped Racke's skin at the outset that tugging would have been very uncomfortable for Racke. As it was, it was merely bad for his trousers.

"You'll have to pull him off, dash him!" hooted Racke.

Julian and Reilly and Hammond appeared at the door just as Racke's trousering gave way. Kerruish fell back, with Towser on top of him, and Racke stumbled forward, with a great rent in the outer garment covering his right leg.

"Ow!" gasped Racke.

He thrust his way through the trio at the door, and bolted down the passage. He did not wait to thank Kerruish. Possibly he preferred to do that when Towser was not present.

One moment the bulldog struggled on his back upon the chest of Kerruish.

Then he heaved himself round, discarding from his mouth the trophy he had taken from the defeated Racke, and his great jaws were thrust close to the neck of Kerruish.

The dog's hot breath was upon Kerruish's throat, and it mattered little—in

one sense—whether Towser was fierce enough to take his prostrate attacker by the throat and worry him. In another sense it mattered a good deal. But it is certain that Kerruish believed he might do it.

And, believing that, he still thought of the safety of his chums before he thought of his own.

He had shown some pluck in going to the aid of Racke so unhesitatingly. He showed more now.

"Don't rush him, you chaps!" he cried. "He might turn on you."

As he spoke he managed to get his right arm up between Towser's muzzle and his own throat. If the traditional bulldog grip was to come into play, Kerruish thought it had better be fixed on his arm than his throat.

There was really no danger that Towser would grip either throat or arm. Towser knew better than that. He was not pleased with Kerruish, but he had no intention of hurting him.

"Good old Towser! Get off, you silly old maniac!" said Kerruish.

Towser gave a growl that sounded more savage than it really was.

Then Julian and Reilly grabbed his collar together, and Hammond caught him round the body.

Squirming and growling, he was forced off, and Kerruish scrambled up.

"The beast!" he said hotly. "I believe he meant to do me in! You'd better look out, you chaps, or—"

"Get out while you've the chance!" urged Julian.

"What are you—"

"We'll manage all right! Just you slin out!"

Kerruish cleared. The other three, still keeping their holds on Towser, moved towards the door, while the dog wriggled and used most unmistakable bad language.

"Now! Drop him all together!" said Julian; and the other two let go at the command.

They were out of the study like a flash, and the door banged behind them in Towser's fierce face.

Towser gave a long, savage howl. It is likely that the door had knocked him hard in passing. But the four never thought of that. They put down that howl to sheer ferocity.

"Sure, an' it's lucky we were to be after gettin' out of that wid our skins whole!" said Reilly.

"That brute isn't fit to be about!" snapped Kerruish.

"They ain't allowed to 'ave 'im in the study, anyway," remarked Hammond. "An' I don't think it ought to be did. My 'at, 'e is strong! An' 'e didn't 'alf wriggle, either!"

"Where's Racke?" demanded Kerruish, looking round with a frown on his forehead.

"Sure, an' he's gone—mizzled!" replied Reilly. "Ye wouldn't be after expectin' Racke to stop, would ye, Eric, darlint—nor unless he knew the danger was over, bedad!"

"I wonder what he was after in there?" said Julian.

"No good," answered Kerruish, with a shrug of the shoulders. "We know Racke well enough to be sure of that. But that ain't the thing. I'm going to talk very straight to those chaps about having a dangerous beast like that in their study."

"It's really Herries' affair," said Julian.

"Not a bit of it; no more than the rest! He couldn't have that dog fend there if the others objected."

"Well, they do object. I know that," remarked Hammond mildly. "Gussy

does, for one. 'E can't stand Towser at any price."

"Gussy he hanged! You can always find some excuse for him!" Kerruish said hotly.

The four went back to their interrupted tea. But the tea was nearly cold, and very bitter—bitterer than such weak tea had any right to be, at all, at all, as Reilly said—and the fragments of food left were not interesting enough to sweeten tempers.

A quarter of an hour or so later, while Reilly and Hammond were disputing as to whose turn it was to wash up, the tramp of feet was heard, and the sound of voices came from No. 6.

Kerruish moved at once towards the door.

Julian got up to come with him.

"You stay where you are, Dick!" said the Manx junior. "This is my bizney."

"Mine too, old scout!" replied Julian quietly. "That is, if we are really up against No. 6. If it's only Towser—"

He shrugged his shoulders expressively. "Well, 'tain't only Towser, if you come to that. It's the way those chaps think they can do as they jolly well like."

Julian followed him without further protest.

Kerruish pushed open the door of the next study without tapping at it first.

"Hallo!" said Blake. "Come in!"

"I'm coming, anyway!" replied Kerruish curtly.

"And going, too—jolly quick, if you're not civil!" growled Herries, scenting trouble. Possibly Towser's low growl had sounded from beneath the table when Towser heard the voice of Kerruish.

"Going when I choose!" Kerruish said. "I don't take orders from you, Herries, or from any other chap in this study!"

"What's bitten you, old scout?" asked Dig in surprise.

For, in spite of the rivalry, Nos. 5 and 6 were usually on quite amicable terms.

"That beastly dog of Herries'!" snorted Kerruish.

"Oh, weally, Kewwuish! Then this must belong to you, I pwesume?" said Arthur Augustus, picking up the sample of trousering left behind by Racke.

"No, it doesn't, you silly ass! Come to that, Towser didn't actually bite me; but that wasn't his fault. He would have done if the other chaps hadn't dragged him off!"

"Rats!" snapped Herries. "Old Towser doesn't—"

"What about that thing D'Arcy's—"

"You can have it back," said Blake, grinning. "I see you've had to change your breeks. We'll come and watch you do the repairs to the torn ones. But you know well enough Towser wouldn't bite you."

"He only bites us," added Dig. "And that's done in the most friendly spirit—ain't it, Towser, old dear? Just a hint that he doesn't like being walked over, that's all."

"I tell you that thing doesn't belong to me!" hooted Kerruish. "Stop your silly rot, and listen! I'm not talking through my hat. I mean what I say! That brute's got no right to be in this study at all!"

Hammond and Reilly had now joined Julian, and all three stood behind Kerruish, evidently in full support of him, physical as well as moral, if the need for physical support should arise.

Thus far only Kerruish and Herries had really lost their tempers.

But now Blake's face changed, and Dig's smile faded; and all three of Kerruish's chums showed signs of hostility. Gussy alone remained pacific.

"Weally, deah boys," he said, "I wathah think that this is a storm in a teacup, don'tcherknow. I—"

"Shut up!" snapped Herries. "Towser's got a heap more right in this study than you have, lemme tell you, Kerruish!"

"That's true enough," said Blake. "Come to that, what were you doing here while we were out?"

"Weally, Blake, deah boy, I am quite suah that Kewwuish—"

"Dry up! I don't want a testimonial of character from you, D'Arcy!" said Kerruish angrily. "You fellows know that I'm not likely to come sneaking into other chaps' quarters!"

"You may not be likely to," said Dig. "And we didn't think it of you. But on your own showing you did it, and if Towser went for you—"

"I didn't!" howled Kerruish. "And it wasn't for me he went, really. It was for—"

In another moment Racke's name would have been mentioned, which would have saved some later trouble. But Gussy chipped in at the wrong time, which was rather Gussy's way.

"Then this is not yours, Kewwuish?" he asked, holding up the scrap of cloth.

"No, you dummy!"

"Whose, then?" demanded Blake warmly. "Julian's, perhaps?"

"It doesn't belong to any of us! But you can jolly well find out for yourselves whose it is!" howled Kerruish. "The point is that I'm not going to have that beast of a savage dog up here!"

"We haven't asked you to have him!" retorted Blake. "But we're going to have him if we choose!"

"It's our affair, and you chaps can keep your long noses out of it!" said Herries impolitely.

"You're top study, aren't you, and can do as you like, in spite of all rules and regulations?" said Julian quietly, but with a sarcastic inflection.

"We're top study certainly," answered Dig. "And if we break rules that's our look-out. Unless sneaking's come into fashion, I don't see what you chaps can do about it."

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of our sneaking!" said Kerruish. "You know that. But take care of that wretched dog of yours, Herries, that's all!"

CHAPTER 4.

A Plot Against No. 6.

"YOU shouldn't have said that, Eric," said Julian, when the chums of No. 5 were back in their own study, having left Blake & Co. in anything but the best of tempers.

"What?"

"About Towser. It sounded as if you'd do the old beggar in if you got half a chance."

"Well, so I would!" said Kerruish warmly.

"No, you wouldn't, and you know jolly well you wouldn't!"

"He's a savage, dangerous brute!"

"I'm not so sure of that, I don't believe he'd have bitten you. He didn't bite Racke."

"Sure, an' those chaps admit that he bites them!" said Reilly.

"Not 'ard," said Hammond, shaking his head. "Just a nip, perhaps. It's on'y is way!"

"That's what I think," Julian said.

"Oh, you! You're soft as butter about animals!" snorted Kerruish.

"Sure, an' how's Bob this evenin'?" inquired Reilly.

A very pleasant smile played about the handsome face of Dick Julian as he crossed the room and fetched from a shelf a little cardboard box.

The box was lined with flannel, and inside it lay a robin with a broken leg.

All four clustered round when Julian laid the box upon the table, and the manner in which Kerruish touched ever so lightly with the tip of his forefinger the bird's tiny head did not suggest that he was exactly hard-hearted where the dumb creation was concerned.

"He's going to get better," said Julian.

"Faith, an' I believe ye, my son! But there isn't anyone else at St. Jim's who could have put his leg in splints the way ye were after doin' it!" answered Reilly.

Julian smiled.

"Yes, there is," he said. "Manners would have done; he's very deft with his fingers. Figgy would have. Did you ever see Figgy with old Spot when he was ill? Talbot would have; or Tom Merry. Herries, too, I fancy."

"Oh, Herries!" sniffed Kerruish.

"Herries ain't half a bad chap, you know."

"Don't let's argue about him, Dick," said Kerruish, who was not feeling very friendly disposed towards burly George Herries just then. "Bob!"

The robin gave a feeble little chirp.

"Knows 'is name?" said Hammond, in delight.

"Of course he knows his name!" snorted Kerruish. "Do you know yours, duffer?"

"Well, I've 'ad mine a bit longer than 'e 'as 'is," replied Harry Hammond, grinning.

As a matter of fact, Bob, the robin, had had his name only some three days or so. He was quite a young bird, which possibly accounted for his readiness to make himself at home in the flannel-lined box.

But a robin is the most companionable of birds, the most willing of all to be friendly with human beings. You may sometimes see a robin hopping about between the feet of a man digging, waiting eagerly for worms to be turned up.

A robin is also one of the most voracious of birds, and the task of getting enough food for this one had occupied all four of the chums of No. 5 at intervals since his adoption by Julian.

It was Julian who had picked up Bob in the quad, just in time to save him from the jaws of Mrs. Taggles' cat; and it was Julian who had performed the necessary surgical work upon Bob's broken leg.

So Bob was Julian's. But that did not hinder the other three from being really keen on him.

"Wonder whether he'll stay with us after his leg's all right?" said Kerruish.

"Wonder whether it will ever be all right?" Julian said. "I fancy it must always be a bit stiff."

"Sure, he'll stay," said Reilly, always an optimist. "He won't be able to find it in the heart of him to leave his kind uncles—eh, Bob, old man?"

The robin chirped, and looked up at the four with bright eyes that had no fear in them.

"We ain't any more right to 'ave 'im in the study than what old Herries 'as to 'ave Towser," remarked Hammond thoughtfully.

"Rats! There's a lot of difference between a tiny bird and a great, hulking bulldog!" said Kerruish.

"Faith, an' there's one difference—the dog's after being cleaner in his habits," said Reilly, with a grin.

That could not be denied.

"I don't mean I don't want to keep 'im," explained Hammond. "We couldn't turn 'im out now, poor little chap! But the 'Ead's order was against pets."

"Blow the order!" snapped Kerruish. "I've 'eard old Herries say that," returned Hammond.

"It's about time we did something to

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show those bounders that they ain't top study," said Kerruish, as Julian proceeded to feed Bob with bread-and-milk.

Young as he was, Bob preferred a meat diet; but the supply of worms had run short.

"What can we do?" asked Julian.

"Lots of things, bedad!" said Reilly.

"That's nothing—nothing but talk.

One thing we can really do is worth five hundred we think we can but don't know how to start on."

"I've thought of a dodge," Kerruish said. "'Tain't first-class for originality, perhaps; but if it's done well it's worth doing, and would make them no end wild!"

"Then it's certainly worth doing," Julian said, going on with the feeding operations.

With a morsel of soaked bread on the tip of his little finger he waited for Bob's mouth to gape, and then dropped as much of it as possible.

"Lock them out of their study. When they've asked someone to tea would be a good time. That would make them madder."

"Not much in it," Hammond said. "We might get 'old of the key. But they would jolly soon burst the door in! These locks ain't over an' above strong."

"I shouldn't do it with the key. I should screw it up from inside," said Kerruish.

"An' how would ye be after gettin' out when ye'd done it?" asked Reilly.

"There's the window, dummy!"

"Faith, an' isn't there the window for them to get in at, dummy to ye yerself, an' many of them!"

"Not after I've finished," said Kerruish, with a grim smile. "Glue and the sashes cut would about settle that, I fancy!"

"An' it's inside ye'd be, wid the door screwed up and the window glued!" Reilly objected.

"No, he wouldn't, Pat; he'd work from outside at the window," said Julian, putting Bob back on the shelf.

"Sure now, that's an idea, entirely! But how?"

"Easy enough to rig up something from that window to this—they're only a few feet apart, after all. Something like the house-painters use when they have to get at difficult places."

"You've got it!" said Kerruish. "It's a good thing some of us have brains, Dick!"

"'Ouse-painters don't 'ave masters an' prefects an' all that kind of thing looking after them," Hammond said.

The four hung together well; but when they split up into pairs, as happened at times, Julian and Kerruish were one pair, Hammond and Reilly the other. And in argument the little Cockney was always inclined to back up the lad from Belfast.

"There are difficulties, I know," admitted the Manx junior. "But I guess we can think round them. Question is whether it's worth doing if it can be did?"

"Oh, rather!"

"Faith, an' it is that, my son!"

"You bet!"

"Right-ho!" said Kerruish. "Leave the difficulties to your Uncle Eric. And now I fancy it might be worth while to do a trifle in the way of prep—if it's only for old Lathom's sake."

"I'm going to do it for my own," said Julian. "It doesn't pay to be in the old bird's black books. And it isn't as though he was really unreasonable. Just think what it would be like if we had old Selby to deal with!"

But the other three preferred even prep to the possibility!

CHAPTER 5.

Another Plot Against No. 6.

"I SHOULD like to poison that beastly dog, by gad!" snarled Racke.

"Well, why don't you?" yawned George Gerald Crooke.

"All very well to talk! You know dashed well—"

"You know dashed well the thing can be done easily enough, if you've only the pluck to do it!"

"Rats! There's getting the poison, and—"

"I shouldn't advise rat-poison, Aubrey. I ain't so sure Towser would take it, and there are lots of more effective kinds."

"I didn't say anythin' about rat-poison, you chump! The difficulty is gettin' hold of poison of any sort."

"Not much difficulty there, dear boy. Surely you know some little cad of a chemist who can be bribed to hand it over without your havin' to give yourself away by signin' a dashed book, or any flummery of that sort, that might come up in evidence against you later on?"

Racke winced. The hint as to what might happen did not please him.

"As it chances, I don't," he said sullenly.

"You surprise me! I thought you knew wrong 'uns of all sort an' conditions."

"No more than you do, Crooke."

"Well, p'raps not—I dare say not. Wrong 'uns are handy sometimes."

Crooke had no wish to discourage Racke. No more than his dear pal did Crooke love Towser, or Towser's master.

"Could you get any?" asked Racke eagerly.

"I might. But I'm not dashed well goin' to administer it, my boy! About half a mile is as near as I care to get to that fiend of a dog. He can't tear bits out of your bags at half a mile. Ha, ha!"

Racke contemplated ruefully a pair of trousers, completely done in, from his point of view. It was not to be expected that the wealthy son of the war-profiteer should wear patched trousers. The war might be over now; but Messrs. Racke & Hacke, though they would have prayed—had they thought it of any use to pray—for its longer continuance, had made enough in its course to be going on with quite nicely for a few generations.

"The brute!" muttered Racke. "I shall have to give these things away, I suppose."

"Gettin' charitable in your old age!" sneered Crooke. "Don't do that. They'll fetch a few bob, especially if you've got the piece that came out of them. Ha, ha!"

"I haven't. Look here, Crooke, this ain't so dashed funny as you seem to think it!"

"Towser's got it, I suppose? You'll have Herries round inquiren' for the bags it came out of before long!"

"If Herries shows his nose here—"

"If Towser shows his nose here I shall get on the table," struck in Crooke, grinning. "Towser is a heap worse than Herries; but I fancy a chap's pretty safe from him on the table. Herries thinks he's a bloodhound as well as a bulldog; but I don't fancy even Herries credits him with being quite as active as a greyhound."

"I wonder whether those cads know?" said Racke meditatively. "But I suppose Kerruish would be sure to tell them."

"Did you thank him nicely for comin' to the rescue?" asked Crooke.

"I didn't thank him at all; I hadn't time."

"Well, I should'n't go an' do it now.

The less talk there is about the bizney the better for you, Aubrey, old bean. What were you after in No. 6?"

"That's my affair, by gad!"

"Oh, keep it to yourself, if it suits you! I don't want to be mixed up with it! But see here, do you want that poi—"

Tap, tap!

Crooke broke off short, and Racke hurriedly thrust out of sight the incriminating trousers. It was quite possible that Kerraish had not let on about him. If inquiries were made, it would tend to show that the Manx junior had said nothing. And Racke did not mind lying—did not even greatly mind being caught out lying.

"Come in!" he called, in a voice that was not quite as steady as it might have been.

Jack Blake appeared, with Arthur Augustus behind him.

It was not Gussy's fault that he was in the rear, of course. That position was one which he never assumed willingly, in danger or in debate. He was only there because Blake had thrust him there.

"Wacke—" he began.

"Shurrup, Gussy!" snapped Blake.

"Weally, Blake, even with boundahs like these it is necessary to proceed with some tact an' judgment—"

"There's a fat lot of that in calling them bounders to start with. I don't think!" said Blake, grinning. "Not that—"

"That was an ewwah of taste wathah than of judgment," said D'Arcy. "Even if a fellow is a weally insufferable boundah it is not always the wight thing to call him so; an', on those gwounds, I apologise to Wacke an' Cwooke, while maintainin' my wight to wegard them with complete contempty—I mean, despiwsey—no, despiw!"

"When are you goin' to take that to Colney Hatch, Blake?" giped Crooke.

"Oh, about the time they march you two off to Holloway!" replied Blake cheerily. "Can I find an owner here for this?"

He held up a rag of trousering.

"That's only half of it," he explained.

"Herries and Digby are going round with the other half."

"What is it?" asked Crooke. "Looks like part of a mop."

"It's a tailor's pattern, only Towser hasn't learned to cut 'em quite nicely yet," Blake said deliberately.

And as he spoke his eyes wandered from the bags of Crooke to the ditto of Racke. He had no expectation of seeing the trousers from which Towser had rent that "tailor's sample," but it might well have come from something very like those either was wearing. Racke and Crooke favoured rather more marked styles than most of the Fourth and Shell.

"Towser?" yawned Crooke. "You'll get into trouble about that image in the shape of a dog before you've finished!"

"At any wate, we shall not ask you to help us out of it, Cwooke!" snapped Arthur Augustus.

"It wouldn't pay you to. I wouldn't stir my little finger to save the dashed gang of you, an' Towser in the bargain, from being buried alive!" replied Crooke amiably.

"Thanks!" snorted Blake. "I'd stir both hands and both feet in helping to bury you and Racke, and reckon I'd done good work for St. Jim's and the country! Is this yours?"

"It is not," replied Crooke coolly.

"Is it yours, Racke?" demanded Blake.

"No, it's dashed well not!" snapped Racke. "Are you goin'?"

"Yes. There's a whiff I don't like here," Blake said. "Tain't the tobacco exactly, though that's strong enough. It's a kind of prophetic prison whiff! Think of me when you're in quod, you two!"

"Blake," said Gussy, in the passage, "I am, as you are well awaah, chawitable in my thoughts, an' I trust, not unduly suspish at any time; but I must say that Wacke's silence was vewy—"

"I rather thought so myself," said Blake. "But I suppose I must be wrong, as you agree with me, Gustavus!"

"An' that Cwooke talked too much."

"Bless you, old top! I never knew your equal for liking to have it both ways."

Herries and Dig appeared just then. They reported no luck in their search.

Cardew had been sarcastic, and Grundy had threatened violence. Mellish and Trimble had offered to prove an alibi each.

They had not been to No. 5, and they were jolly well not going, Herries said. He wasn't going to ask favours of that bounder Kerraish. They would find out, without his help, whether he had a tail or not, as Digby remarked.

"It's Manx cats that don't have tails, ass!" said the literal Herries.

"But a Manx chap might have one to tell," rejoined Dig.

In the study which Blake and D'Arcy had left Crooke looked hard at Racke.

"Think anything a bit indigestible would be rather a dashed good gadget for Towser, old bean?" he asked cynically.

"Can you get it for me?"

"I fancy so. But you will have to shell out for it."

"How much?"

"A quid."

"Right-ho! It will be worth that."

Crooke rather fancied it would. He still had by him some poison procured long ago for a somewhat similar scheme, and selling it to his dear pal for a quid suited Crooke's book very well indeed.

CHAPTER 6.

Towser Is Not Well.

"I REALLY think you're overdoing it a bit, you know, Herries," remarked Jack Blake, after classes next day.

"Overdoing what?" growled Herries.

George Herries was not at all an unpleasant fellow; but he had rather a way of making it clear that he resented personal criticism even before he understood for what he was being criticised.

"Towser."

Snort!

"The old chap's pretty nearly living here. I don't mind; Dig doesn't mind; and it doesn't matter about Gustavus. But the Head—"

"Blow the Head!"

"I shouldn't, if I were you. He might not like it."

"Oh, rats! You know what I mean."

Towser isn't well."

"Hahn't noticed it."

"Well, I have. 'Tain't likely you would. You don't take a proper interest in the old fellow."

"What's the matter with him?" Blake asked sympathetically.

"Off his feed."

Dig came in at this moment.

"Gussy's off his feed?" he asked.

"Gussy? Oh, then he's in love again, that's all! Don't worry, Herries; he'll get over it. And in the meantime it helps out the rations."

Snort!

"No objection to Gussy's falling in love, I s'pose, Herries? If you have, you'd better talk to him like a good, kind uncle, and—"

"Fathead! I was talking about Towser."

"Well, this is the first I've heard of Towser being in love. Shouldn't have thought it of the old boy. But if it's cook, it's all right. The sly old beggar's

making up to her for the sake of the bones."

"I never heard such silly rot in all my life as you talk, Dig!"

"You've been lucky, then, old bean! Don't listen to yourself, evidently, or to Gussy."

"Towsy's off his feed," said Herries, in a very depressed tone.

"Hasn't he chewed up the carpet lately, or done in another pair of boots?"

"It's no use talking to you, Dig! You haven't a scrap of sense! Look here, Blake, if you were ill, you'd be taken to sanny, and have Miss Marie to nurse you—"

"That's more in Talbot's line than mine," struck in Blake, grinning.

"And lots of good things to eat—"

"Try Baggy with that argument—not that I despise it utterly."

"But poor old Towsy's got no sanny to go to—"

"No Miss Marie—only cook or Dame Taggles, who doesn't begin to be so nice," murmured Dig.

"Ass!—And nothing special to eat. Surely you don't grudge him a place by the fire, Blake?"

"I don't grudge him anything, old bean. It's only—"

"Well, then—"

"I thought we were going to Rylcombe before tea," put in Dig. "I know Gustavus is getting ready—trying on a few score neckties, and all that sort of thing."

"Come along, Herries! You can take—"

"He isn't well enough," said Herries mournfully.

Herries lifted the cloth and looked under the table.

"No," he said. "I say, Blake, I do hope he isn't lying down dying somewhere!"

"About as likely as your doing it. I should say."

"But he really isn't well."

"Oh, come along! We'll bespeak a funeral for him while we're there, if you really think it's as bad as that."

Herries snorted. But at this moment Arthur Augustus appeared, and the three started.

Hardly had they gone when the sound of pattering feet was heard in the passage—or might have been heard had anyone been listening.

Towser padded along to No. 6, thrust his blunt nose against the door, and pushed it open.

He sniffed rather disconsolately. He had expected to find his master there.

Not finding Herries, Towser padded out again, and went lumping downstairs.

Crooke passed him on the way, and glanced into No. 6 as he went along the Fourth passage.

"Now's your time, Racke!" he said, putting his head into his own study.

"The bounders are all out, an' that dashed cur Herries calls a bulldog has gone downstairs!"

Racke rose from the armchair, threw the end of a cigarette into the fire, snatched up a small newspaper-covered parcel from the ledge of the bookshelves, and thrust it into his pocket.

With a rather overdone air of elaborate unconcern he promenade the Fourth passage from end to end. No one looked out of a study door; no sound came from any of the studies.

He popped into No. 5. When he came out five seconds later there was only a smeared piece of newspaper in his pocket; the stuff it had held lay under the table in No. 6. And on Racke's return to No. 7 in the Shell passage the smeared scrap was at once committed to the flames.

Towser had ambled out into the quad.

But he could not see his master. According to Herries' theory, it would have been the easiest thing in the world for Towser to follow him to the village by scent. But perhaps Towser was lazy; or possibly it was a cold affecting his olfactory powers from which the poor fellow suffered.

Anyway, Towser gave it up, lumped upstairs again in his own ungainly way, passed into No. 6, and disappeared under the table.

The cold theory may be discounted on the grounds that Towser found at once the bit of meat Rucke had so obligingly left for him. Within two seconds of his finding it he had wolfed it; and within thirty seconds after that he really began to feel not quite well inside.

When, a few minutes later, Eric Kerruish stole into the study, Towser was lying under the table, scarcely breathing, and quite incapable of resenting the intrusion by as much as a growl.

Kerruish took it for granted Towser was not there, as he could not hear him; in fact, he gave Towser no more than a passing thought.

He had a good deal to do, and not much time to do it in.

Julian & Co. knew that the four chums of No. 6 had gone to Rylcombe. They were safely out of the way until tea-time.

But it was not only the four who mattered. Just now no one on the Fourth passage except the No. 5 quartet seemed to be at home. But dusk was already creeping on, and everyone was not likely to be out until right up to tea-time.

Kerruish had a long and stout board, a hammer, nails, a screwdriver, screws, a pot of glue, a brush, and a sharp knife.

He shut the door, placed the board across it about half-way up, drove in a nail or two at each end, and then, with it thus fixed, proceeded to use the screws in workmanlike fashion. When he had finished he gave himself five seconds or so for admiring contemplation of his own handiwork.

"I guess that will take some shifting," he murmured.

It was plain that he had barred his own way out by the door. But there was another way out—that by the window.

The window also constituted a way in—provided that it could be opened.

Kerruish found it slightly open—Blake & Co. liked fresh air, even in winter. But he proceeded at once to render it impossible—or, at best, difficult—for anyone else to open it.

He worked from the ledge, cramped up in a very uncomfortable and what seemed a very dangerous position.

But it was not really so very dangerous to Kerruish, whose nerves were not in the least troubled by the knowledge that he would be badly smashed up if he fell.

He had no fear of falling, and he had a rope to help him to keep his place on the ledge.

That was only a minor reason for the rope, however. Its major use was for getting back into No. 5 after No. 6 had been duly sealed up against its occupants.

A ladder was out of the question. It would have been sure to attract attention. The kind of painter's chair that Kerruish and his chums had talked of rigging up had been judged unnecessary. A rope, fastened above, which would enable the Manx junior to swing himself from one ledge to the other, was reckoned enough.

Fastening the rope was not difficult, as THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 557.

there was a box-room immediately over No. 6.

Kerruish first treated with glue the inside upper frame of the lower sash, so that when the two sashes were brought into contact on being shut up they must stick together. This was easily done with the upper sash well down and the lower sash slightly up.

He then carefully pushed the lower sash up a little more, and went on to give a good coating of glue to that part of the sill on which it rested.

After that he put both sashes into position, and pressed hard on the lower frame of the upper one to start it stick-

Cadet Notes.

During the last four and a half years the large majority of the men of this country have received military training. Besides the unprecedented number of the Regular Forces, thousands of men have trained with the Volunteers when they were a private organisation, and others were sent there by Tribunals as soon as the Force had been recognised by the War Office. As every boy reached military age he automatically became a soldier. However inconvenient this may have been, there is no doubt that the physical training received has had a very beneficial effect on the health of the nation. Now that the Military Service Acts have been suspended, the youth of the nation will be free to follow its ordinary occupation. We have no doubt there are many who will regret the opportunity to obtain a little military instruction and a lot of physical training. These boys, however, have their opportunity, if only they will take it.

All over the country there are Cadet Corps for boys between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. The majority of these corps give infantry instruction, but there are, in the London district, Engineering and Air Service Cadet Corps, and in a few places out of London there are Artillery Corps. In most cases the cost to the members is nominal. A corps requires attendance one or two evenings in the week, and usually on Saturday afternoons. Up-to-date corps provide organised sports and instruction of various kinds, quite apart from military matters. There is no doubt that these corps offer to all boys a great opportunity for amusement and improvement at a tiny cost. The large number of recruits every week shows the interest which boys take in the Movement, and we can only believe that the number of recruits would be very much larger if more boys only knew what they were missing. Any boy who wishes to know the name of his nearest corps should write, stating his age, to the C.A.V.R., Judges' Quadrangle, Law Courts, Strand, W.C. 2.

ing. He could not get at the latch, of course.

From the window of No. 5 Julian, Hammond, and Reilly watched their chum. Before getting out he had tied his hammer and screwdriver to the rope and had swung it within their reach, so that they might reclaim the tools.

Now he said coolly:

"I want that screwdriver back, Dick, and a couple of screws. It will be some time before the blessed glue sticks. May as well put in a screw or two to help it."

"Ere I say, Eric, don't you wait for that!" protested Harry Hammond.

"You've been long enough—"

"Rats! Except for the wind blowing jolly cold round my legs I shouldn't mind staying up here for hours."

"Can't be did, old top!" said Julian

regretfully. "There's someone coming down from the gates now. You'll be spotted if you stay longer."

Kerruish looked over his shoulder, and saw that it was even as Julian said. It was Baggy Trimble who came, and, as well as could be seen in the dusk, he seemed to be walking with downcast eyes.

But he might lift his eyes at any moment; and Baggy was really about the last person not concerned in this outrage whom Julian and Co. would have had know of it—except, of course, persons in authority.

"Stand clear, you chaps!" said Kerruish.

"Sure, it's careful ye'd better be—"

"Rats! I could step it all right—well, almost, anyway."

Standing on the ledge, Kerruish launched himself forward by giving the rope a swing. It was not really quite such an easy thing. Baggy could not have done it. But Kerruish was as hefty as most fellows in the Fourth at anything in the gymnastic line.

His feet touched the ledge of the window inside which his comrades stood, and Hammond and Reilly, in their zeal, grabbed at his legs with considerable force.

"Ow-yow!" he howled, as they dragged the lower part of his body into the study with a painful jerk.

There was nothing for it but to leave go of the rope, and to let the upper half follow.

Kerruish let go. His head bumped the sill; his body landed upon the floor with a mighty thwack; and Hammond and Reilly staggered back and sat down hard.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ouch! My 'at! That 'urt!"

"Tare an' 'ouns!"

"You silly chumps!"

"Well, Eric—"

"Chump yerself, ye omadhaun!"

Sure—

"That wasn't at all the way to do it, you chaps," said Dick Julian gravely.

CHAPTER 7.

Shut Out!

"WHAT are you thumping at that door for, Gustavus, you fat-head?" inquired Jack Blake politely.

Arthur Augustus, who was in a hurry about something, had reached No. 6 in advance of his chums, who had stopped on the staircase to speak to the Terrible Three and Talbot.

"To get in, of course, Blake! For what othah reason—"

"Wouldn't it be rather a good dodge to turn the knob?"

"Weally, Blake, I considah that your cwass stupidity—"

"Tain't really so stupid, Gustavus. It's quite an ordinary way of opening a door, though you have lived to fifteen and a bit without discovering the fact!"

"Vewy well, Blake! Pewwaps you would like to turn the knob yourself?" returned Gussy, with deceptive humility.

Blake tried. The knob turned, but the door did not open.

"It's stuck!" he said.

"Yaas, Blake, so it wathah seemed to me," replied Gussy.

Herries and Digby came up.

"What's wrong?" asked Herries.

"Door seems to have stuck," Blake said, pushing it hard.

"That's queer. The door never does stick," remarked Dig.

"Don't talk rot! It's stuck now," said Blake.

"Let me come!"

"One moment, Hewwies," said Arthur Augustus.

"It's has just ocmahed to me that pewwaps it is locked."

"Ass! How can it be locked?" snapped Blake.

"In the course of my fifteen—an' a bit—years on this earth, Blake, I have discovered that the usual way to lock a dooh is simply to turn the key."

"Ha, ha, ha! Our Gustavus is sarcastic," spoke the voice of Monty Lowther.

Herries bundled Blake aside and applied a substantial shoulder to the door with all his force.

"Groooh!" he said, rubbing his shoulder, next moment. "It is locked, you chaps. Oh, hang! That hurt."

The handsome face of Dick Julian appeared in the doorway of the next study.

"Can't you fellows get in?" asked Julian politely.

"No—blessed door's locked!" answered Blake, with rather less politeness.

"Now I come to consider the mattah," said Gussy thoughtfully, "it cannot weally be locked, for, as pewwaps you fellows may remember, I dropped the key behind the bookcase a week or so ago, an' we nevah got it out."

"Must have stuck," said George Alfred Grundy, appearing at this moment, with Wilkins and Gunn. "Let me have a shot. Come out of the way, you duffers! I'll show you!"

Quite a crowd was gathering. Kangaroo and Dane and Glyn came up. The Terrible Three were already upon the scene. Now Cardew and Clive and Levison arrived. Out of the door of No. 5, behind Julian, looked Reilly and Hammond and Kerruish.

Both Blake and Herries were beginning to get wrathly. Arthur Augustus was no more than mildly ruffled, and Dig still smiled.

They let Grundy come. Everybody grinned as he prepared to make an assault upon the door. Either it would resist him, and he would wish he hadn't tried, or it would open and he would burst headlong into No. 6—in which case he would equally wish he hadn't tried. In either event the spectators were quite ready to be pleased.

The great George Alfred stepped a pace or two backwards, and then hurled himself at the door like a human battering-ram.

"Groooh!" he howled, as he staggered back.

"Herries made a somewhat similar remark," said Lowther blandly. "Don't you want to try, Tommy? Perhaps you might manage to introduce some conversational variety."

"No, thank you," said Tom Merry. "Look here, Blake, strikes me that someone's been playing tricks here. If the key's lost—"

"Anyone's who's fastened up the door from inside must still be there," said Levison.

"Spoken like an oracle!" chirped Cardew.

"Oh, you dry up! I say—"

"I believe you rotters have done this!" It was Herries who howled that, turning upon Julian & Co.

"Sure now, Herries, an' ye'd never be after thinkin'—"

"We're all here," said Hammond. "If Levison's right—"

"Oh, I'm not so rooted in my notions that I shall contradict you if you say you did it," put in Levison.

"Did you do it, Julian?" snapped Blake.

"Shouldn't I have been inside if I had?"

"Did you, Kerruish?" hooted Herries.

"Ask me another!" returned Kerruish.

"Reilly, are you the guilty party?" demanded Dig.

"Faith, Digby, I haven't been inside your dog-kennel for—"

"I do weally believe they are guilty,"



Poor Old Towser!
(See Chapter 8.)

said Arthur Augustus. "There is a look of guilt upon all their faces—especially Kewwush's. I—"

"Did you do it?" roared Grundy. "If you did I'm jolly well going for you, let me tell you! I've hurt my shoulder." "Shouldn't butt in," answered Kerruish.

It was of little use asking the fellows in No. 5 to incriminate themselves. Few doubted that they had done it, and everyone but the rival quartet regarded it as a joke. Julian & Co. were known to be more or less up against Blake & Co., and there was nothing in this trick that was really off the rails.

"We'll jolly soon get in," said Blake determinedly. "Easy enough to get from the window of No. 5 to our window."

Julian & Co. grinned.

"Depends a bit upon whether No. 5 will let you through," remarked the Jewish junior.

"Why, you rotter, if you don't—"

"You may take it from me that talk of that sort won't induce us to, Herries!" Julian said.

"Rush 'em!" sang out Blake.

"No, no!" protested Tom Merry. "A ladder's the best dodge. You don't want a row here."

"They'd no right to stop us!"

"Shouldn't you think you'd a right to stop them if they wanted to come through your study and you didn't choose they should, Herries?" asked Tom.

"We'd jolly well see that they didn't!" said Herries hotly.

"There you are, then!"

Herries did not quite see it. The mind of George Herries was not eminently logical.

But Digby and Arthur Augustus wanted tea more than they wanted a rough-and-tumble fight, and they refused to back up Herries—for the present.

"I don't know whether you could manage it from our window," said Roylance, who shared No. 7 with Contarini and Smith minor.

"Not near enough," answered Blake.

"I'll see about borrowing Taggles' ladder. After all, if those bounders have done it we can get even with them later."

The four went off together, Herries in high dudgeon.

"Was it you fellows?" asked Clive.

"That's telling," replied Julian.

And all four grinned.

"He, he, he!" chortled Baggy Trimble, who had rolled up a minute or two earlier. "I could tell something if I liked."

"I've noticed that you always can tell somethin', Baggy—mostly that which is not," remarked Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"Oh, you think you're jolly clever, don't you, Cardew? But it wasn't you who spotted Reilly getting into No. 5 from the window of No. 6. He, he, he!"

"Nor you, Baggy!" said Julian.

"Oh, come, now, that's not good enough! I'm sure it was Reilly—"

"An' I'll swear by the bones of St. Patrick that ye never saw me doin' it!" hooted Reilly.

"Well, then, it was Julian," said Baggy.

He had seen something, though they had not thought it at the time. But Baggy was rather short-sighted, and he was sure of nothing more than that the fellow he had seen was not Hammond—even if he was quite certain of that. But Harry Hammond was distinctly shorter than any of his chums.

"It was not!" said Julian emphatically.

"Guess again, Baggibus, an' guess Hammond!" giped Cardew. "Then you'll get the right man at the fourth shot out of four, an' that's not so bad for a chap with your—er—mental endowments!"

"Was it you, Kerruish?" Tom asked.

"That's telling, old chap!"

"Oh, I don't mind. No need for me to rag you for it. Blake and the rest will see to that. Comin' down to the

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quad to watch operations on the window, you chaps?"

"I'm going to tea," said Manners.

"Right-ho! Someone ought to get it ready. Lay for four, Mary; Talbot's coming along."

"And see that the kettle boils before you make the tea, Jane Ann!" added Lowther.

"Rats to you, asses! You got anything to say, Talbot?"

"No, Emma Maria," replied Talbot. "I'm a visitor, you know; it would hardly be polite."

"You bouncer!" hooted Manners. But he went off to get tea.

Tom and Lowther and Talbot, Levison & Co., Noble & Co., and a dozen or so others, went hurrying downstairs. But the chums of No. 5 decided to watch proceedings from their window.

CHAPTER 8.

Towser Is Much Worse.

"HURRAH! The fire-brigade at work! Where's your helmet, Herries?" chuckled Cardew.

The four from No. 6 had just placed the ladder, obtained by grace of Taggles, with palm-oil to the amount of a couple of shillings, against the wall.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Herries, crowding Blake in his ascent.

"No good you coming up, Herries!" snapped Blake.

"No good anybody losing their little tempers," remarked Lowther blandly.

"You're a funny ass!" said Digby warmly.

Even Dig was getting a trifle morose.

"The blessed window's stuck!" hooted Blake, from the top of the ladder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd, all but three.

"Here, let me come!" snorted Herries.

Arthur Augustus had one of his elegant boots upon a rung of the ladder. Herries shoved him aside.

"Yawwooooh!" yelled Gussy, as he went over sideways. "You wuff boundah, Hewwies! You have ruined my bags!"

Herries paid no heed. He went up the ladder like a lamplighter.

"Gerrout, Blake!" he growled. "I'm stronger than you are."

"Rats! And where do you suppose I'm to get to, idiot?"

"Squeeze round behind me, fathead! I say, look out! You'll be pitching us both over!"

"Don't squabble, children!" said Julian reprovingly.

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite, but—"

"You can chuck that, Kerruish! I've a score against you now!" said Herries angrily.

"Shouldn't wonder if you have a bigger one presently," replied the Manx junior.

Blake had now got upon the ledge, and was trying to pull down the upper sash of the window. Herries, operating from behind, with his arms between the legs of his chum, pushed at the lower sash.

But both held firm, which was just as well. For if either had given way suddenly both Blake and Herries might have crashed down.

"You silly fat-heads!" said Hammond, beginning to get nervous. "That's rotten dangerous."

"Well, that's no concern of yours, is it?" snorted Herries.

But Hammond felt that it was; and his chums felt much the same, though their saying so seemed of little use.

"Look out, Herries! I believe this is coming," said Blake.

Herries shifted down a rung or two, and the upper sash began to move. There had not been time for the glue to set.

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"That's got it!" cried Blake. And he scrambled in through the half-open window.

"Hurrah!" yelled the crowd.

"Yoooop!" howled Blake, descending upon his head. He would have preferred to come down upon his feet.

"Encore!" shrieked Cardew.

"Look out. Her— Oh, you maniac!"

It did not hurt Herries as much as it had hurt Blake, for he was down on top of his chum. He got up at once, and grabbed the poker.

But he did not grab the poker to defend himself against Blake, only to deal with the lower sash. And before the head of Digby appeared at the window Herries had prised that up, and Dig was able to get in with less risk. He found Blake rubbing his head and looking things unutterable at Herries.

Gussy followed next moment. Cardew was about to mount the ladder behind him. But Blake seized the top of it.

"We don't want visitors, and they aren't coming in by this entrance!" he said grimly. "I'll tumble the blessed ladder on top of you if you don't get off it, Cardew!"

"Chuck it, Cardew!" said Levison, pulling the dandy of the Fourth back.

"Let's go round," said Gore.

Up the stairs again went the crowd.

But they found the door of No. 6 still shut.

"Aren't you going to open this door?" howled Dane.

"Oh, do cut, you chaps! Something serious has happened!" came Blake's voice from within.

"Sounds as if something had, too," said Levison. "Wonder what it can be?"

"Can't be anything in there," remarked Julian.

"Sure, then, it can't, Dick!"

Cardew looked from Julian to Reilly, and from Reilly to Kerruish and Hammond.

"Well, if anythin' has happened, I'm afraid there will be some circumstantial evidence against you chaps," he said lightly.

"Let's clear," said Tom Merry.

There was a pretty general clearance.

Inside No. 6 the four chums were in real trouble.

Towser lay on the carpet. He looked to them all to be dying. The poor old fellow's sides heaved painfully, and his breath came in irregular gasps.

Herries knelt by him. There were tears in the eyes of burly George Herries, and in his throat was a lump that would not let him speak.

Tears were not far from the eyes of Robert Digby, and Blake looked very grave and troubled. Gussy, gazing down at his old enemy through his monocle, was as sorrowful as Blake.

Arthur Augustus had never loved Towser. He had never felt towards him as Blake and Dig felt. They had at least a careless liking for the blundering old chap. Gussy had disliked him rather than otherwise, on account of the havoc he wrought with trousers.

But, though with all three sorrow for Herries was uppermost, all three felt a pang of regret for Towser, ebbing out his life there at their feet—as it seemed.

They knew that Herries would be almost broken-hearted if Towser died. And there did not appear to be one chance in a hundred that he should survive this.

But Herries was not broken-hearted yet.

As long as there was a chance—one in a hundred, a thousand, a million—Herries would cling to it.

He got up.

"Get a hamper, one of you!" he said

hoarsely. "I'm going to take him to the vet."

"It's no go, I'm afraid, old man," said Blake very gently.

"An' we can't get back before lockin'-up, Hewwies," objected Arthur Augustus.

"I'll get a hamper," said Dig.

But before he could get out the board had to be removed from the door. Luckily, a screwdriver was available; but the job took time.

Herries did not answer either Gussy or Blake. He took Towser up in his arms, and sat in the armchair with him. And first one big drop fell from the eyes of Herries on the great, ugly head, and then another, and then a whole stream.

Gussy turned his back, and almost choked. For once he knew his tact and judgment were useless. He never could say the right thing for Herries, and it was more than ever impossible at that moment. So Gussy turned his back—which was quite the best thing he could have done.

Blake and Digby worked together at the door, feeling very bitter against the japers unknown who had given them that task.

But as yet no one had thought of connecting the jape with Towser's condition.

The door was open at last. Dig rushed off to the box-room.

"We're all coming, old chap," said Blake. "I'll go and ask leave from Railton."

"I don't want you, and I don't care a scrap whether I have leave or not!" growled Herries.

Mr. Railton could not be found; but Blake got a pass from Kildare, who was quite sorry to hear about Towser, and much too good-natured to ask questions as to how he came to be in the study.

Blake and Gussy got out the bikes. Dig helped Herries with the hamper. Herries made no further protest against their coming. Perhaps, after all, he was glad to have them.

No one of the four had any tea that evening, or thought about tea. It was nearly an hour later when they got back from Rylcombe.

By that time the news had leaked out. Baggy Trimble had seen something and heard something—after Baggy's way. It was Baggy who was the first to suggest that Towser had been poisoned.

Tom Merry and Talbot came in together to inquire. Lowther had been coming; but he had stayed in No. 10 after being told by Tom that this was no time for cheap funniosities. His feelings were hurt. Tom ought to have known better than to think that he would jape about such a thing.

Manners would not go.

"I like old Herries," he said. "But I'm not dead sure that he likes me well enough to stand me just now. And, anyway, I hate to see a fellow going through it."

Tom left it to Talbot to speak. At times of emotional stress Tom always had a notion that Talbot was more likely to say the right thing than he was. Possibly he was right. But there was not much the matter with Tom Merry's methods of consolation, though they might be rather blunt than eloquent.

Talbot struck the right note this time, anyway. He did not pull a long face, and he did not treat the matter as if it were a light one.

"How goes it, Herries?" he said.

"There's a decent chance for the old boy, I hope?"

"There's a chance!" growled Herries.

"Oh, that's good!"

"It isn't much of a chance, though. Some rotter's poisoned him, and if I can

find out who did it I'll kill him!" cried Herries passionately.

"I don't think any fellow here could have—"

"Some fellow must have, Merry, so you needn't take that tone!"

"But it can't have been those fellows next door," said Blake uneasily.

"What did Kerruish mean by saying that I should have a bigger score against him presently?" asked Herries doggedly.

"I'm sure he didn't mean that," answered Talbot.

"It was Kerruish who played that trick on us. That proves he was in here," said Blake. "I don't like to think he'd do such a foul thing. I'd have said that all four of those fellows were as decent as—as any of us. But they—"

"There isn't one of them who would do such a thing, I'm sure!" Tom said. "Why, have you seen their robin?" Julian found it with a broken leg—

"I don't care about their blessed robin!" broke in Herries angrily. "That doesn't prove anything about—"

Towser's name fairly stuck in the throat of Herries. He laid his head upon his arm, and his shoulders shook. But he was not crying now. It was as much rage as grief that stirred him.

"But it does show," persisted Tom, turning to Blake. "We know what a gentle chap Julian is. I shouldn't say Kerruish or Reilly—or even Hammond, come to that—was quite like Julian about things. But they've all attended to that little bit of a bird—dug worms for him, and—"

"I've a dashed good mind to kill the rotten little beast if—if—"

"You couldn't do that, Herries, old fellow," said Talbot.

"I could, and I jolly well would! It's not Julian so much. Julian wouldn't have hurt—have hurt— Oh, I know it's not him! But if Kerruish cares twopence about the rotten bird—"

Herries broke off, and his head went down again.

Blake looked significantly at Tom, and the two Shell fellows cleared out. Blake went into the passage with them.

His face was hard and set.

"Tell you what, you chaps," he said. "If it turns out that it was Kerruish, I shall have to leave him to Herries. And Hammond's nowhere near my weight—more like Dig's. But I'm going for Julian and Reilly—they must have known something about it."

"Rot! Besides, Gussy won't let you take them both!" Tom said.

"Gussy won't have it that they could have done it."

"Then, in my opinion, Blake, D'Arcy's the only fellow among you who has a grain of sense!" snapped Talbot. And he walked off.

"That isn't like old Talbot," said Blake, looking after him.

"He feels sure you're wrong, and Talbot thinks a lot of Julian."

"So does Gussy of Hammond. Come to that, I've always reckoned Kerruish and Reilly as straight as fellows can be. But—"

"They are, old scout!" said Tom earnestly.

"I don't know! Wish I did! This thing's got to be thrashed out, Tom!"

CHAPTER 9.

War!

IT was not thrashed out that evening, for Herries was too worried about Towser for discussing the matter in the style he thought suitable. And that was quite as well, for the style Herries considered suitable was really as

far from being so as anything well could be.

War began in the Common-room after morning classes next day. There was a fog outside that might almost have been cut with a knife. Footer was dead off.

The fog was inside, too. It was barely possible to see the length of a passage. Noses smarted, and sneezes and coughs were frequent. Most of St. Jim's was in rather a bad mood.

Herries had got word that Towser was still alive. That was something. But it did not dispel his gloom, or his resolve to have it out with Kerruish. Blake said with Julian & Co.; and Gussy said that he was sure that there was really nothing they could be charged with; and Digby wavered between Blake's view and Gussy's.

But Herries was quite sure that Kerruish was the enemy. He had worked himself by this time into a belief that the Kaiser was merely a mild type of criminal compared with Eric Kerruish from the Isle of Man—hitherto reckoned by Herries, as by others, a very decent fellow indeed.

There were others besides Herries who now looked upon Kerruish with doubtful eyes, however.

Kerruish had taken a line that was not calculated to allay suspicion.

"Yes, I did shut those bounders out of their own study!" he had told a group of fellows in the Common-room just before the four came in.

"We did, you mean, Eric!" said Dick Julian quietly.

"Rats! I did it! It was my dodge, to start with, and you chaps only looked on. If I'm going to be blamed for things I won't drag you into it!"

"Sure, an' there's no question of that, Eric darlint!" said Patrick Reilly. "We're in it, up to the neck of us!"

"Oh, are you?" snapped Herries, entering at this moment with Blake. Dig was just behind them, but Arthur Augustus lagged farther in the rear, with a look of concern on his noble face.

"Faith, we are that!" replied Reilly.

"What do you think, 'Erries?" asked Harry Hammond.

"Oh, you be hanged! You, too, Reilly! And I don't want to drag Julian in, either. But I want a straight answer from you, Kerruish!"

"An answer to what?" demanded Kerruish.

"To this—did you poison my dog?"

Kerruish went pale, and then a fiery red.

"Herries, that's barely decent!" said Talbot warmly.

"I'm not talking to you, Talbot! Go an' eat coke!"

"Herries, old chap!"

"Shut up, Merry!"

"Don't be a cad, Herries!"

"I'll see you after I've done with Kerruish, Noble!"

Kerruish was almost too enraged to speak. He shook off the hand Dick Julian laid upon his arm.

He looked Herries straight in the face, and said, his voice trembling with anger:

"You want an answer to a rotten question like that, Herries?"

"I do, and I mean to have one!"

"Not from me!" snapped Kerruish.

"Look here, you know, Kerruish, it's easy to say 'Yes' or 'No,'" said Grundy, with more sense than he usually showed.

"And if you don't answer you may make other chaps think what Herries thinks," Gore said.

"I don't care a snap of the fingers what anybody thinks! There are three fellows here who know—"

"That's what I think!" said Blake hastily. And he looked hard at Julian.

"You want to quarrel with me, Blake?" said the Jewish junior coolly.

"Yes; you've guessed it in once!"

"I'm your man, then! I stand by Kerruish!"

"Sure, an' is there anybody here that's after wantin' to thread on the tail of my coat?" hooted Reilly.

Dig stepped forward.

"If you're backing up Kerruish—"

"Faith, an' there's never an 'if' to it at all, at all, me boy!"

Harry Hammond and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked hard at one another. There were fellows at St. Jim's who mattered more to Gussy than little Harry Hammond did; but there was no fellow there with whom Hammond would not rather have quarrelled than D'Arcy, not even his own special chums.

But his loyalty was called upon, and he held to it. One moment he waited for Arthur Augustus to speak. Then, as Gussy remained silent, he spoke.

"I s'pose it's you an' me, then, D'Arcy?"

There was a brief struggle in Gussy's breast, too.

"I—I suppose so, Hammond," he said haltingly. "But—"

"Oh, hang your 'buts'!" hooted Herries. "I don't want you! Besides, I'm not sure that Hammond had anything to do with it. I don't really think he had, come to that."

"Thank you for nothing, 'Erries!" snapped the little Cockney.

"Can't you answer, Kerruish?" asked Tom Merry, with a very troubled brow.

"Why should he, dash it all?" put in Racke. "I know I wouldn't, by gad!"

"But that isn't the same thing at all!" put in Cardew.

"An' why isn't it?" demanded Racke.

"Because you might have done it. My opinion, for the little it's worth, is that Kerruish simply couldn't have done it."

"Thanks, Cardew!" mumbled Kerruish.

He did not thank Racke.

Not many there were of Cardew's mind. Kerruish's refusal to reply had made a bad impression.

As Grundy had said, it was easy enough to say "Yes" or "No."

So most of them thought. Only a few saw that a fellow accused of a thing that he would never have dreamed of doing might be too proud to deny the accusation.

Kerruish's pride was up in arms. He was fairly certain that Herries could lick him. Well, let Herries! That would prove nothing.

"No good putting it off!" said Herries. "I suppose you're willing to come along to the gym now, Kerruish?"

"You suppose right—about that!" returned the Manx junior.

"Julian?" said Blake.

"Oh, certainly, Blake!" answered Julian civilly.

And somehow Blake felt that there would not be a lot of satisfaction out of a victory over Julian.

"Digby, will ye oblige?" asked Reilly.

"Oh, yes, hang you!" said Dig irritably.

There would still be less satisfaction to Dig in getting licked by Reilly; and it was on the cards that that might happen.

Again Hammond and Gussy looked at one another.

Then both nodded, and at the same time Gussy sighed heavily. Even less than Blake and Digby did Arthur Augustus like the task to which he was committed.

There was a general exodus to the gym. The fog was in there, too, and it was

none too cheery. But it suited well enough the mood of most of those present.

Only Herries was really worried about Towser—unless Tom Merry might be counted in. Tom was fonder of the old fellow than any of Herries' special chums.

But nearly everyone felt that something was badly wrong.

If Kerruish had done this thing it would remain a stain upon his record as long as he stayed at St. Jim's. If he had not done it this series of fights was unnecessary and foolish. The rival studies would never have fought over the barred study jape.

And if Kerruish had not done it someone else must have done, and Herries and his chums would have been far better employed searching for the guilty party than battering the physiognomies of Julian & Co.

In the gym were a dozen New House fellows—Figgins and Kerr and Paity Wynn, Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, Clarke, Koumi Rao, Thompson, French, Pratt, and Robinson minor.

The astonishment expressed by all of them, when they learned what was afoot, was a real testimony to Kerruish.

"Look here, Herries, don't be a raving maniac!" cried George Figgins bluntly. "The chap wouldn't have done it! He'd have cut his hand off first!"

"Let him say he didn't, then!" replied Herries. "I don't promise I'll believe him, but—"

"Can't you say so, dummy?" snorted Figg at Kerruish.

"I don't care about it," replied Kerruish, holding out his hands for Julian to adjust the gloves.

"It's no go, Figg," said Kerr. "Those two had better punch each other for a bit, I fancy. It's the only way they'll get their common-sense back."

"They never had any!" snapped Figgins.

"If any of you fellows wants a second," said Redfern, addressing Julian & Co., "I'm on."

"I'm seconding Kerruish!" said Julian.

"And I'm seconding Julian when his turn comes!" Cardew said, to everyone's surprise.

"Faith, an' ye're not, Cardew, for—"

"You'll be engaged at the time, Reilly," put in Levison.

For it had just been arranged that, after Herries and Kerruish had settled the issue between them, Blake v. Julian and Digby v. Reilly should be brought off at the same time.

Racke and Crooke had loitered behind the rest.

"Better come along an' see the slaughter, Aubrey," said Crooke, with a malevolent grin. "Whichever way the battles go, we score."

"Oh, rather!" replied Racke. "An' no one's twigged a thing, by gad! It's plain enough that Kerruish never said anythin' about Towser's goin' for me the other day."

"Lucky for you he didn't, dear boy—dashed lucky!" answered Crooke. "Not that he may not say somethin' yet."

"Did Towser go for you the other day, Racke?"

Racke swung round in wild alarm.

It was Baggy Trimble who had put that question. A wide and cunning smile irradiated the fat face of Baggy.

"No—er, that is, yes!" floundered Racke.

"It was nothin', really," said Crooke, cooler than his pal for once. "Racke kicked out in time, an' landed the brute on the jaw. But that ain't what killed him, so it's no odds."

"I'm jolly glad the brute's poisoned!"

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said Baggy. "I hated him! I won't say anything, Racke. You can trust me!"

And Baggy waddled off.

"How much did he hear?" asked Racke, in a worried way.

"Not enough to tell him anythin'," returned Crooke. "I think I worked off that yarn about your kickin' Towser rather well—what?"

"The fat fool will talk, I'm sure—dash him!"

"Oh, I don't think so! He'll forget all about it," said Crooke easily.

But Racke was more nearly right than Crooke.

Baggy had not yet made up his mind to talk. Baggy had a pretty definite notion that if silence was not literally golden in these days, yet there was often a connection between silence and the illustrious name of John Bradbury.

And while Racke and Crooke were watching Kerruish take his licking, Baggy was busy in the study those two sweet youths shared. When he came out he carried a shapeless brown-paper parcel!

CHAPTER 10.

Cardew Butts In.

FOR Eric Kerruish was licked.

He never had much chance. Herries overweighted him, and was his equal with the gloves.

The Manx junior was the more agile of the two; but it was only in the first two rounds that his activity helped him much. After a knock-down blow in the third he was always groggy on his pins; and, though he held out for five rounds after that, he ought to have given up long before.

But he would not have given up when he did had it been possible for him to go on. He was counted out while scarcely conscious.

As soon as the word "Out!" had fallen from the lips of Talbot, the Shell fellow turned to Herries, and said sharply:

"I can't congratulate you, Herries; but I give you credit for being man enough to shake hands and say you're sorry."

"I'm not sorry," replied Herries doggedly. "But I'll shake hands, and say no more about the affair, if Kerruish will give me his word that—"

"And you're to choose whether you'll take it or not!" panted Kerruish, propping himself up on one elbow, with heaving chest and face battered and bleeding. "Thanks; but that's not my line!"

"Kerruish doesn't like tellin' lies if he doesn't mind poisoning dogs!" sneered Scrope. "Here, what are you doin', Cardew, you rotter?"

Cardew's arm had gone back suddenly, and Cardew's knuckles had smitten Scrope full upon the mouth.

"Merely signifyin' politely that if a fifth scrap will add to the general entertainment I don't mind bein' one in it, with you for my—er—partner, dear boy!" drawled Cardew.

No one knew why Cardew had ranged himself so definitely on the side of No. 5—not even his chums, Levison and Clive, whose feelings in the matter was far less settled than his.

Levison hated the whole business. It brought back to his mind an incident of the old days in which he and Towser had figured—an incident he hated to remember. Honest, outspoken Clive did not know what to make of it all. Kerruish's refusal to speak out had shaken him.

But none knew better than Levison and Clive that there was no accounting for the whims of Ralph Reckness Cardew. If Clive or Levison or Levison's minor were in trouble Cardew could be counted upon for support. But it was the merest guesswork to attempt

to place him in a quarrel between any two fellows.

"I'm not goin' to fight you, you silly chump!" snarled Scrope.

"Then move out of my neighbourhood, or I may chance to stretch my arms again," answered Cardew. "I usually do it like this—see?"

And his fist went within half an inch of Scrope's nose.

Scrope wasted no time in shifting to a discreet distance.

Cardew walked over to Redfern.

"On second thoughts," he said. "I'll let you officiate for Julian. I've an engagement elsewhere, I find. Levison!"

Ernest Levison turned.

"Comin' with me, dear boy?"

"Where to?"

"That's my bizney! No, Clive, old bean, I don't require you, thanks all the same!"

"I wasn't coming, anyway," said Clive, turning to the ring again.

But Levison went.

"What are you after, Cardew?" inquired Levison.

"Baggy."

"What on earth for?"

"I saw him discoursin' affably to Racke an' Crooke just before they came in. Baggy turned back, with a smile upon his fat features which our dear friends failed to twig. Baggy loves fights—unless as an active figure in them. Not for nothin' did Baggy eschew the delights we are unselfishly leavin', old top!"

"You think—"

"Oh, no, I don't! Much too fatiguin', dear boy! I avoid thinkin', by jumping to conclusions!"

"Dashed silly ones!" growled Levison.

"Sometimes, be it admitted. But not this time, I—thi—er—fancy, I mean."

"Where are we going?"

"I rather like the idea of payin' a call upon No. 2—your old study, dear boy."

"Mellish is in the gym."

"All the better! I do not desire to interview Mellish."

"Don't you think that if Baggy knew anything he would have blurted it out?"

"Can't say. Times Baggy blurts—other times Baggy plays the naughty, fat blackmailer."

"I shouldn't wonder—"

"Don't say you wouldn't wonder if I was right, old gun! The compliment might be fatal! I'm not used to them from you, you know."

"Brrrrr!" said Levison.

"That sounds a little like the late lamented," remarked Cardew.

"Rot! Old Towser's not dead, or going to die!"

"I hope not," said Cardew. And he said it as if he meant it.

It was not that he cared for Towser, either; Levison knew that. It must have been on Herries' account. But he had backed up Kerruish against Herries.

They found Baggy at home. Baggy had just opened a brown-paper parcel. He made a frantic attempt to roll up its contents when he saw the two; but he was too late to prevent their seeing a pair of trousers of rather a loud pattern, with one leg badly torn.

"Hallo, Baggy—Baggy, the bags merchant!" said Cardew. "What's happened to the breeks?"

"It's no affair of yours, Cardew," said Baggy, rather tremulously. "In fact, I consider that it's like your cheek to come into a fellow's study without knocking—yours, too, Levison!"

"I always had plenty of cheek!" replied Levison grimly.

"An' I'm a terror for buttin' in!" remarked Cardew. "Taken to West End tailors, Baggy? I thought you patronised the local talent round about the Trimble Arms."

There was a tailor's tab inside the trousers, and Cardew and Levison had often heard Racke brag of going for his clobber to a man who could sport the Royal Arms. Perhaps that was what had made Cardew think of the Trimble Arms. But for once Baggy failed to rise to that old and well-worn taunt.

"I—I— The fact is," he stammered, "these ain't exactly mine."
"No. They're Racke's," said Levison coolly.

"Racke's taken to charity in his old age," Cardew said. "But you can never wear those bags, Baggybus, unless he can supply you with the bit that Towser took out of them. Even then it will take a smart tailor to patch them up. Chaps with a Royal Warrant don't—"

"Tain't likely I'm going to wear them!" spluttered Baggy. "And how do you know anything about Towser, and Racke kicking him?"

"Did Racke kick him?" asked Levison. "He, he, he! He says he did. But I don't think he's got pluck for that."

"Jolly plucky, I don't think!" Levison growled.

"Well, it's more than you dare do! I say, you fellows, I should think Racke wouldn't care much to have Herries see these things—eh?"

"Why not?" asked Cardew, with a well-acted yawn of indifference.

"Well, Herries might think—he did want to know—"

"Whether anyone had suffered damage in the bags. So he did. He came an' inquired of us. We thought it flatterin'."

"I didn't," said Baggy. "I told him to dashed well get out!"

"A split infinitive an' a confounded lie in one short sentence!" said Cardew. "You do go it, Baggybus!"

"What are we to do about this, Cardew?" asked Levison impatiently.

"Oh, I don't know! What did you think of doin', Trimble?"

Baggy did not know what a split infinitive was, and he really did not much mind being accused of lying; but he was sharp enough in some respects, and the change in Cardew's tone, the "Trimble" instead of the "Baggybus," made him careful.

"Well, I don't know, either," he said. "Of course, a fellow would like to do the straight thing."

"Oh, of course!" agreed Cardew.

"Especially when a fellow realises that he's going to get into the merry dickens of a mess if he tries the other thing," Levison said caustically.

"Herries would like to know about this. It does look a bit as if Racke tried to do Towser in, doesn't it?"

"What, by kickin' him?"

"Oh, that was only his yarn! I dare say you chaps have noticed what a liar Racke is."

"We have had a glimmerin' of a notion at times that he handled the truth carelessly," replied Cardew.

"Well, I think p'raps the best thing I could do would be to take these bags to Herries. He's got the bit that came out of them."

"Quite a good notion, Baggybus! Needn't mention us, y'know. Come along, Levison!"

"I suppose he'll do it," said Levison doubtfully, when they were outside.

"Oh, he'll do it all serene!" answered Cardew.

"He's got to explain how he got hold of the bags, you know."

"Yaaa! But he won't think of that till afterwards."

"Shall we go back to the gym?"

"May as well, old top."

But when they reached the gym the fellows were trooping out.

"What, everybody licked everybody else already?" inquired Cardew of Gore.

"Nobody's licked anybody, except Herries and Kerruish," Gore replied. "Just as well, I dare say. I didn't want to see the other chaps licked, though there's always a bit of interest in a scrap."

It might have been difficult for anyone to explain exactly how it happened; but somehow, after Kerruish's defeat, no one but Reilly had any keenness for further fighting. Blake and Digby and Julian were all willing to give up their combats; Gussy and Hammond were more than willing to forgo theirs.

So Kerruish's chums led off their sorely battered comrade; and Herries stalked out in a crowd of his own chums, thinking about Towser; and Racke and Crooke and the rest of the black sheep crew felt disgusted.

Racke was not quite easy in his mind; but he would have felt far more uneasy had he known of the effective manner in which Ralph Reckness Cardew had butted in.

CHAPTER 11.

Better Than Victory!

"I SAY, you fellows, what's this yarn about you and Towser?" asked Mellish of the Fourth, sticking his head into the smoke-laden atmosphere of the study which Racke and Crooke shared.

"Wha-a-a-at?"
Racke's coolness had deserted him entirely. He had completely given himself away to Mellish with a single word, taken with the pallor of his face and the trembling of his lips.

"Who's talkin' such rot as that?" growled Crooke, cooler because he fancied himself safer.

"Is it rot? It's all over the place," said Mellish. "I say, if it's a lie, and you can prove it, you'd better go and tackle Herries and that crowd at once. That's the safest plan."

Percy Mellish could advise boldness, though it was not in his line when he was in a tight place.

It was pretty good advice, too—so Crooke held. Of course, Racke could not prove that he was innocent. But it was unlikely that anyone could prove his guilt; and bluff might serve his turn.

"I s'pose that rotter Trimble's been talkin'," he said bitterly.

"More likely Kerruish," answered Crooke. "He hasn't made it up with Herries yet, but I've seen him jawin' with Blake an' Digby an' D'Arcy."

"Well, neither Kerruish nor Baggy can prove anythin'," said Racke.

But he did not say it too confidently.

"Take the bull by the horns," said Crooke. "Go straight to Herries an' say that Towser went for you, an' that he'd better look out for himself in future if he has the brute about the study passages. You needn't let on that you went into No. 6 at all."

"Towser won't come back, by gad!"

"Not so sure. He ain't dead yet. Shouldn't wonder if that stuff was a bit off. You never know with poisons."

"Shush, you idiot! Baggy might be listenin'—or Mellish."

Crooke looked out of the door.

"Neither of them," he said. "It's all serene. Go an' see Herries."

"Are you comin'?"

"Not dashed well likely! I'm not in this, really."

Racke went. The door of No. 6 was shut; but No. 5 stood open to inspection.

Only Kerruish was at home. Twenty-four hours had passed since he had been put through it in the gym; but he was still stiff and sore, and quite unfit for footer.

Blake & Co. would probably be at footer, Racke remembered. An impulse

stirred in him to speak to Kerruish—while his chums were away and he was hardly in condition to resent by force anything said to him.

As Racke stood hesitating, Julian's robin hopped from its box near the Manx junior's feet. The little thing was much more lively now. It had a comical limping gait, and would probably always have it; but it could move about. And its popularity had increased by leaps and bounds. The four all felt very much in the same way about it. Bob was their mascot, they said.

Bob's tiny bright eyes were looking up into Kerruish's face as Racke walked in.

"What do you want?" growled Kerruish.

"I want to know what lies you've been tellin' about me, by gad!"

"That's an easy one to answer—partly. None! In a day or two, when I'm fit, I'll put my fist against your nose for the rest of the answer!"

Bob hopped along the carpet and out into the passage. Neither junior noticed him. Kerruish, without rising, glared up into Racke's face, and Racke glared down into the face of Kerruish.

The cad of the Shell realised now that he had made a mistake. Kerruish had not told Blake & Co. of his visit to No. 6. It was queer that he had not, Racke thought. But it was not really so queer. At the outset the Manx junior had thought little about it; and later, when Towser's plight was known, he had been in no mood to explain anything. But he had not forgotten, and he believed Racke the culprit.

"Better do it now!" sneered Racke.

"You know I'm not fit, even for a funk like you!" flashed Kerruish.

Footsteps were heard in the passage. Racke, with a final glare at Kerruish, left No. 5. He did not want to encounter Julian or Reilly.

But it was Herries, and Herries went into No. 6 without a glance at Racke.

Bob was hopping along the passage. He turned his bright eyes up to Racke's face, but evidently did not see a friend in him. He hopped on.

Racke stooped and grabbed at him. There was a nasty strain of cruelty in the nature of Aubrey Racke, and he was feeling bitterly spiteful against Kerruish.

The little thing did not try to evade his clutch. Bob had grown used to being handled. He lay in Racke's hand, and the cad of the Shell could feel the fluttering of his tiny heart.

In another moment the harmless little life would have ceased. It needed hardly more a pressure of those cruel fingers.

But a big hand fell on Racke's shoulder, and a voice, in which there was hot anger and something like horror, cried:

"What are you doing, you rotter?"

"I'm goin' to kill this dashed bird!" breathed Racke, struggling fiercely.

He was swung off his feet; he went down with a mighty whack on the floor. He tried to carry out his threat even as he crashed down: but somehow the fellow who had seized him got the tiny bird from his fingers.

"You blackguard!" roared Kerruish from the door.

"You—you—"

George Herries could find no word bad enough for Racke. He kicked him as he lay. Kicking a fellow when he is down can seldom be excused; but there was excuse for it in this case.

Kerruish stood with one hand on the jamb of the door, with eyes almost as bright as Bob's shining from his battered face. It was at Herries he looked, not at Racke.

Racke got up and slunk away. Herries

(Continued on page 16.)

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 567.

THE ST. JIM'S GALLERY.

No. 28.—Dick Julian.

DICK JULIAN is not one of the most prominent of the characters who go to the making of Mr. Clifford's great stories; but he is one who probably has admirers out of all proportion to his prominence.

For he is a Jew, and a very fine specimen of that ancient race; and naturally our many thousands of Jewish readers put him first, just as most Scottish readers give Kerr first place.

In this week's story Julian plays a considerable, though not the chief part; and so it seems fitting to give him his turn in the Gallery this week. You see him on this page with Bob, the robin, on his finger; and you will know all about Bob by this time, for popular as I know the Gallery to be, I do not suppose one in a thousand of you reads it until every word of the story has been read.

The coming of Julian to St. Jim's was signalled by a very bad break on the part of Monty Lowther, a fellow of whom one would not have expected the unreasoning prejudice which he displayed.

Monty considers himself a humorist. But there never was a real humorist who was not broad-minded. It is possible to be witty while being intensely narrow, perhaps; but there is a difference between humour and wit, and the former demands a broad view. The best kind of humorist has a very soft heart, if his head be hard enough. Our own Dickens, America's Mark Twain—these are instances of what I mean. They could say hard things about cant and humbug, but they were full of charity and the milk of human kindness.

But Lowther is young yet; and he has brain enough and a good enough heart to learn lessons. He learned one from Dick Julian.

The story has already been told in the sketch of Lowther. But it must be told again, if but briefly, here.

Julian was met at Rylcombe Station by Lowther, Crooke, and Mellish. Their precious programme was to make Julian shell out, which process they assumed—on no better evidence than the fact that he was a Jew—would hurt his feelings horribly. They had no excuse—except that he was a Jew, if that can be considered one—for wanting to hurt his feelings.

But Julian has plenty of money, and does not mind spending it. There is no bigger mistake than to suppose a reluctance to spend to be at all an essential characteristic of his race. Its members often err in the opposite direction, indeed.

Julian had fivers where Crooke and Lowther had only shillings and Mellish only pence. Julian settled up for his share of everything without turning a hair. And in the long run Lowther had to borrow from the new boy to pay his own shot. Crooke and Mellish had backed out, leaving Monty to it; but, though he was playing an unpleasant game, Lowther did at least play it out to the end manfully. He did not cave in.

It was two-and-threepence he borrowed from Julian to make up the taxi fare. That he settled up by getting a loan from Talbot, to whom Manners explained that Monty needed it through having been too funny. But the chaff of his chums, the evident general feeling in the Shell and Fourth that he had been in the wrong, and had deserved his taking-down, made Lowther morose and spiteful; and Julian's frank acceptance of the whole affair as a joke, if not a joke in the best taste, did not propitiate him in the least.

The seats at the cinema had been paid for jointly—that is to say, Crooke had paid for his own, and Julian and Lowther, besides paying for theirs, had shared the cost of Mellish's between them. The three—Mellish was a deadhead throughout—had shared equally the cost of expensive chocolates. The taxi for a run round and then on to Wayland had

cost the three a sovereign each. The taxi from Wayland to St. Jim's cost Julian five shillings, Lowther four, and Crooke a shilling—the cad of the Shell turning it up at that point, though he was not in Lowther's plight. Lowther had one-and-ninety left, and it hurt his pride horribly to have to make up the balance by borrowing from the fellow who was to have been the victim of the great jape.

But there was the feed at Mrs. Murphy's at Rylcombe. Lowther had liberally invited three Grammar School fellows—Gordon Gay and the Wootton brothers—to share that; and the bill for the seven had come to over four pounds. Julian had settled it. Lowther reckoned that he owed Julian a guinea on that. Crooke and Mellish had no such high-frown notions. Crooke said that Julian would be offended if he were offered the cash. It



is not likely that Crooke would have minded offending the new boy, but he did not care to part with a guinea that he might keep.

Lowther wanted to offend Julian, and he succeeded. He had not only paid back the guinea—or offered it—but he also offered interest—cent. per cent., if Julian liked, he said. It was not an insult, he argued, because Julian was a Jew, and therefore a born usurer. Julian stood as much as he could, and then he smacked Lowther's face. Which was quite the right thing for him to do, as even Monty's best chums readily admitted.

They fought, and the Shell fellow was getting distinctly the worst of it when Kildare stopped the combat. Lowther refused to shake hands with his opponent. He meant to cherish the feud. And he did his best to cherish it. But what could he do after Julian had saved him from drowning in the weir? They made friends then, and they have been friends ever since.

There was nothing much in Julian's readiness to shell out. He had plenty of money, and he is not mean. But there was a great

deal to his credit in the manner in which he took the discreditable joke tried upon him. He had had the best of the deal, and that was good enough for him; he cherished no malice towards anyone. In going to Lowther's rescue he only did what many other fellows would have done. But not many other fellows would have said quietly, as he did: "Let bygones be bygones. If you don't like Jews you can't help it. It's a bit unreasonable, but nothing to worry about." That speech showed a breadth of mind out of the ordinary in a boy.

And that is one of Julian's chief traits. He thinks more than the average junior, and to better purpose.

He did a lot of hard thinking in the matter of Mr. Moses.

Mr. Moses was a moneylender at Wayland—not at all a nice type of moneylender, either, though for that matter it is doubtful whether there are any moneylenders of a nice type. Mr. Moses was also the uncle of Dick Julian, and it was he who had sent the boy to St. Jim's. Dick was the one person in the world for whom he cared; and it was for Dick he was piling up his riches.

And when Dick—through Ernest Levison, with whom Mr. Moses had done business at times—found out how Mr. Moses' money was made, he refused point-blank to accept anything more from his uncle's hands. He would not benefit from dirty money.

Julian was already in trouble. He had refused to play for the School House in a cricket match when his services were urgently wanted, and he could not deny that he had been to a moneylender—on some shady business, as the rest naturally supposed—when he might have been playing. The School House juniors had sent him to Coventry, though Monty Lowther refused to heed the sentence, and stood by him.

He had not explained before seeing his uncle. But after his interview with Mr. Moses, when, as he thought, his last day at St. Jim's had come, he went back and told the story manfully. He did not make himself out a hero; he did not cast blame upon his uncle, except the unavoidable blame conveyed by his resolution to touch no more of his money. The sympathy of every decent fellow was his, and the cads were soon made to shut up when they sneered at him.

The matter straightened itself out in an unexpected way. Mr. Moses was not by any means all bad, and Dick Julian was all he had to care for. The fact that he had contributed £500 to the Head's fund for Prisoners of War in Germany made a lot of difference to the opinion the St. Jim's juniors had of him; but that would not have sufficed to keep his nephew at St. Jim's. Mr. Moses did more than that. He left his business at once; he made restitution in all cases in which he knew that he had been hard upon his debtors, though it cost him a third of his fortune—which, by the way, would seem to show that he must have inflicted quite a lot of hardship in his time! And all this he did for Dick's sake.

Unnatural? You may think so. I do not. Look at it all round before you take that view. Mr. Moses undoubtedly cared very much for money; but he cared more for his nephew. It was for Dick he was amassing wealth. But he could not go on doing that: Dick would not touch it. Wealth is no small thing; but honour is a bigger thing. That was Julian's creed.

And the old man knew Dick's firmness and pluck. The boy would not give in. So he gave in.

To "The Jew of St. Jim's" and "The Honour of a Jew" there quickly succeeded another story of Julian—"Well Played, Julian!" That turned upon a photographic craze of St. Jim's. A weekly paper had offered a prize of £5 for the best snapshot, and the Shell and the Fourth were almost as one man in their eagerness to win that fiver.

Skimpole tried to borrow Manners' camera in order to compete. He did not get it; but his unsuccessful attempt set the ball rolling. Julian got a photo of Gussy being frog-marched by Blake, Herries, and Digby, which was considered so striking as to have a really good chance of the prize, though Arthur Augustus had natural strong objections to its being entered. But it was another photo taken by Julian which mattered most. Nothing very striking, this one—only Levison leaving Study No. 10. But the point was that Levison had denied having been there, and Manners was just about to be convicted of having taken a photo of Mr. Selby floundering in a ditch—after having got him into the ditch by trickery. All of that had been Levison's work. Levison had got a new camera exactly like that of Manners', and Manners had gone for Levison with a cricket-stump on suspicion of having bagged his cherished property. He was sorry when he found out his mistake, of course; but that was not good enough for Levison, who thought out a very crafty revenge, and would have succeeded in it but for the intervention of Julian.

Julian and Levison were not friends in those days, of course. It was through Levison that Julian was sent to Coventry, as already told of. But that was before Levison gave up his

crooked courses. He and Julian are good enough friends now. Each has his own chums, but the stronger ties of chumship do not hinder friendship outside it. And Dick Julian has many friends besides his three special chums, who have become his special chums by degrees, through sharing No. 5 with him. The Terrible Three and Talbot, Blake & Co., Figgins & Co., Levison & Co.,—all these and many more think well of the generous, thoughtful, courageous Jewish junior, so hard to raffle, so quick to respond to any call upon his sympathy, so loyal and so gentle, yet withal as full of fun as most, though he may take his fun less riotously than many.

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

THE GENEROSITY OF BUNTER. By Robert Donald Ogilvy.

"HALLO! What's the matter with you, Bunter? You're looking jolly pleased with yourself!"

I could not help asking the question of the Owl of the Remove as I turned the corner of the passage and ran slap into him, for he was grinning widely and rubbing his hands. As a rule I'm dead off Bunter, as most of the other Remove fellows are; but meeting him like that gave me quite a surprise.

He looked a bit confused at first, and he hesitated for a moment, which at once made me suspicious.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy," he answered, in his usual way, "there's nothing the matter at all! What makes you ask?"

"Well, as you were grinning like a Cheshire cat, and rubbing your hands together like a beastly old Scrooge," I replied, "I thought perhaps your postal-order had arrived, or something good had happened to you."

"Oh, no!" said Bunter, trying to look a bit sorrowful. "Unfortunately, my postal-order seems to have got delayed; in fact, Fortune has not smiled upon me for weeks past."

"But the fact is," he went on, "I'm beginning to realise, like some of those old gummies you read about, that adversity really has quite an uplifting effect, if one tries to be cheerful in the face of it."

"Quite so!" I answered.

"So, you see," he explained, "I'm cultivating the habit of keeping a smiling face, come what may!"

"Really?" I said. "Well, mind how you go! If I had a face like yours I shouldn't play about with it too much!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

But I didn't wait to hear any more of his rotten, hypocritical remarks. I knew the artful bounder was only inventing all that rot about keeping a smiling face, and I had a pretty shrewd idea that he had been prowling around somewhere where he ought not to have been. But it was no concern of mine, so I let it go at that for the time being.

Some time afterwards, however, I found out that he had been "tying his bootlace," which is another way of saying that he had been listening at the keyhole, outside Wharton's study.

And thereby hangs a tale! Of course, I didn't know all about the bizney as I am telling it to you until it was all finished up; then I got the complete yarn from old Nugent.

It so happened that at the time the Owl was tying his bootlace, Bob Cherry was reading to the other members of the Famous Five a letter he had received from his mater, in which she said she had sent on by rail a special hamper of Christmas fare.

He had gone on to suggest that they should go down to the station after classes that afternoon, get the hamper, and take it up to a disused shed in the wood.

He explained that his idea was that the next afternoon—the Wednesday half-holiday—they should all go up there at four o'clock, light a fire in the old shed, which has an earth floor, and all sit round, and have a good feed—kind of winter picnic, you know.

Of course, they were all very keen on the wheeze.

And this was what Bunter heard! No wonder he had looked so jolly pleased with himself, for, as you know, he never gets hold

of information like that without trying to make something out of it.

After I met him in the corridor he went straight to his own study in search of Alonzo. He had thought of a stunt already.

It's a funny thing about fellows like Bunter; they can never do anything in the way of a bit of hard thinking or study in classes, but they can work out all sorts of complicated and cunning schemes to do other fellows down.

Well, as I was saying, he went after Alonzo, and found him in the study.

"Ah, Lonzy!" he exclaimed cheerfully. "You're the very chap I'm looking for! I have some news that may interest you."

"Oh, yes!" said Alonzo, in his precise and innocent way. "I trust it is of the pleasant variety."

"For goodness' sake don't talk in that potty fashion," urged Bunter, "or you'll put me clean off!"

"But, my dear Bunter, I cannot allow my conversational powers to be limited by your inability—"

"Brrrr! Shut up, and listen to what I've got to tell you," broke in Bunter, "or I'll keep it to myself!"

"Proceed!"

"Well, the fact is," continued Bunter, in a confidential sort of way, "I've heard this afternoon that a hamper has been sent on to me by rail, and I am having it taken from the station this evening to that old shed up in the wood. You know the one I mean, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, I know it quite well!" answered Alonzo. "But why have you had it sent there?"

"Ah, that's just the point!" replied Bunter. "You see, there are such a lot of greedy bouders about here, and I thought that if I had it sent along here there'd be such a crowd of them clamouring round that I shouldn't get a look-in myself."

Just think of it! Imagine Bunter not getting a look-in! Fancy him talking about greedy bouders! Why, he's the greediest bounder at Greyfriars, bar none! The cheek of it!

But Alonzo, who, although good-natured and straight as a die, is as simple as they make them, took it all like a lamb.

"I quite see your idea," he said, "though I fear you are a little unjust in your estimate of the characters of most of the fellows—"

"Shut up!" snapped Bunter. "You're at it again!"

"In what possible manner can this business of your hamper concern me?" queried Alonzo, who was by this time getting a bit fed up with the Owl.

"Ah!" exclaimed Bunter, sitting back in his chair and grinning at Lonzy as though he was his best friend in the world. "This is where the news comes in—I mean, the good news for you. I want to invite you to come along with me to-morrow afternoon to the shed, and we'll light a nice fire, and sit round, and have a good feed together."

Now, if the Owl had made a suggestion like that to any other fellow but Alonzo he would at once have smelt a rat. But not so Lonzy. Certainly it surprised even him a little. But he's one of those fellows who has faith in everybody; and he thought that Bunter was anxious to be sociable and generous for once, though he must have known as well as I or any of the other chaps know that Bunter

never gives a thing away without some selfish reason.

"I shall be most delighted to join you!" beamed Alonzo. "And I must say that I appreciate most thoroughly the spirit of warm friendship which has prompted—"

"Brrrr! Shut up!" howled Bunter. "If you want to come, that's good enough, without a lot of jaw about spirits and things!"

"Very well, my dear Bunter!" said Alonzo. "What time do you start?"

"Oh, about a quarter-past two, I should say!" replied Bunter. "I don't want to be later than three starting the feed, because it gets dark so early now."

Alonzo thanked him again, and then turned once more to his book. Bunter strolled out of the study again. He's not keen on reading. As a matter of fact, he's not keen on anything except grub.

But there was one thing he had forgotten. He hadn't mentioned anything to Alonzo about keeping the bizney to himself. Or perhaps he hadn't forgotten, but had taken it for granted that Lonzy would have enough sense not to say anything to anyone about it.

But whatever else you do in regard to Alonzo, you should never take anything for granted. Alonzo is frank and open to the extent of being almost potty at times.

The result was that when Harry Wharton saw Alonzo later in the day looking miserably cold—Alonzo, being thin, feels the cold pretty badly, you see—and asked him what was the matter, Alonzo let the cat out of the bag.

"Indeed, my dear Wharton, there's nothing the matter!" he replied. "On the contrary, I have good reason to feel highly elated by the fact that I have received a most generous invitation from Bunter to share a feed with him to-morrow afternoon."

"You're pulling my leg!" exclaimed Wharton, in amazement.

"Not at all, my dear Wharton—not at all!" Alonzo assured him. "I will admit that it is a little unusual for Bunter to suggest sharing his good fortunes with anyone, but in this case I have no reason to suppose that he did so with any other motive than that of friendship."

"But where's the feed coming from?" asked Wharton, in puzzled tones.

"Oh, Bunter informs me that a hamper has been sent on to him by rail," replied Alonzo, "and he is having it sent to an old shed in the wood this evening. We are going there for the feed to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock. What's the matter?" he added, as Wharton gave a violent start.

"Oh, nothing!" said Wharton quickly. "Someone walking over my grave, I expect."

Of course, Wharton had tumbled to the whole wheeze at once, but he didn't tell Alonzo that he had. He decided to consult the rest of the Famous Five before taking any action.

So, as Alonzo strolled away, blissfully unconscious of the effect his words had had on Wharton, the leader of the Famous Five rushed off to the others and reported what he had heard.

"The thieving, fat porpoise!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, when he had finished the yarn. "The porpoisefulness is terrific!" purred Hurree Singh.

"What shall we do about the greedy rotter?" asked Nugent.

"Let him go up there with Alonzo and get everything ready, and then pounce on the beast!" suggested Harry Wharton. "Mind you, though, Alonzo isn't to blame over this, and he's not to be collared!"

"All serene!" said Bob Cherry. "But we mustn't be late in getting there, or the greedy beast will have wolfed up everything!"

II.

At about a quarter-past two the next day Bunter and Alonzo started off for the wood. As a matter of fact, I was about the only one who spotted them going. Bunter had waited till it was all clear, and the way he hurried Alonzo through the quad rather surprised him, I think. Of course, he couldn't see any reason for slinking out like a thief.

When they got to the shed Bunter stepped in before Alonzo, and quickly ripped the label off Bob Cherry's hamper, which was there all ready, "according to plan," as the Huns used to say.

"Now then, skip about, old fellow!" exclaimed Bunter briskly. "Get some sticks for a fire, and then I shall want you to get some water from somewhere for this kettle."

The kettle had been brought up the previous evening with the hamper.

Alonzo was soon trotting round after firewood, and when he returned Bunter suggested that he tried his hand at lighting the fire.

One of the reasons why Bunter had invited Alonzo to the feast was to make him do all the work. The other reason, and the chief one, was that the Owl never liked to risk a daring enterprise like this one on his own account. He much preferred company, so that if anything went wrong he had someone to fall back on for support.

If it hadn't been for these reasons Alonzo certainly wouldn't have received an invitation.

After a good deal of a struggle, during which Bunter looked on and abused Alonzo, the fire was lit. Then came the difficulty of water for the kettle. After some ten minutes Lonzy returned, and said that he couldn't find any means of supply anywhere.

"Well, you fathead, fill it up with snow, then!" snapped the Owl impatiently. "That'll do just as well. It'll melt, and be quite all right when it's boiled."

Alonzo didn't quite like the idea of this, but he did as he was told, and soon the kettle was on the fire.

While he had been engaged in filling it Bunter had been getting the things out of the hamper and preparing for the feast.

"Now we're all right," he said at last, dropping on to an old box which he had raked out for a seat. "What a spread!

It's as good as a tonic to me to look at it even!"

"It is indeed a goodly sight, my dear Bunter!" agreed Alonzo, as he looked at the Christmas pudding and the mince-pies, the sausage-rolls and the cakes, and numbers of other good things. "You are really a most fortunate fellow to have such a galaxy of delightful edibles!"

"Shut up, you doddering ass!" yelled Bunter. "If you start spouting out any more of your long strings of rot you sha'n't have a bite of anything! You are such a——"

Bunter broke off as the door was flung violently inwards. Alonzo, too, swung round.

"Collar the beast!" came the shout as the Famous Five dashed into the shed.

"Yarooogh! Ow!" burst from Bunter's lips before anyone was near enough to touch him.

"My dear fellows——" began the piping voice of Alonzo as he tried to push himself between Wharton & Co. and Bunter.

"Half a minute!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, shoving him aside. "We'll talk to you in a jiff."

As one man they were on Bunter, and he went to the door with a thump.

"Oooo! Yarooogh! Grrrr! You're breaking my spine!"

The Owl yelled like a maniac.

"You thieving young beast!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"What ever is the meaning of this violent intrusion?" faltered the trembling Alonzo above the row in the shed.

"This fat rotter has tried to steal the grub out of Cherry's hamper, and kid you that it was his!" answered Harry Wharton. "Keep out of the way while we deal with him!"

"Ow! Yaroooh! You brutes! Grrrr!"

"Stop that row, you miserable porpoise, or I'll stuff your mouth up with dirt!"

"Grrrr! Rotters! Beasts! Asses! Ow!"

"Bump the rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"If you do I'll——"

Bump!

"Ow-oo-oh!"

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooh! Ooooo!"

"And again!"

Bump, bump!

"Ow-wow! I'll tell——"

"Another for luck!"

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooh! Ooooo! Wow!"

For a grand finale the Famous Five lifted him about three yards from the floor and let him drop.

"Grrrrrr-ow!"

"That'll teach you to steal other fellows' things!" hissed Bob Cherry, looking as though he'd like to go for the Owl again.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" demanded Harry Wharton, pushing him to the floor again as he attempted to rise.

"Ow! I'd got to get grub from somewhere!" groaned Bunter. "I was on the verge of starvation——"

"You greedy rotter!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "You had a good dinner, like everyone else!"

"Pray let this painful scene be ended!" quavered Alonzo, who was wringing his hands and looking frightfully upset. "I am truly sorry that I have unwittingly been led to participate in a dishonest scheme. I trust that——"

"That's all right, Lonzy!" said Harry Wharton. "It wasn't your fault, and you needn't worry about this fat porpoise."

"Oh, dear me!" moaned Alonzo.

Bunter struggled to his feet, rubbing himself and grunting like a pig.

"Brrr! You rotter!" cried Bob Cherry, making a pretence at rushing at the Owl again.

"Please—please don't!" whined Alonzo. "None of the food has been touched, and everything is ready for you to have your feed."

"Go on! Clear off!" exclaimed Wharton, pushing Bunter towards the door.

The five of them gave him a good combined push, and he went spinning through the doorway, to tumble over and roll down the slope just outside.

When he had picked himself up again, some fifty yards from the shed, he turned round and began shouting abuse at them.

Alonzo hurried through the door to go and persuade Bunter to clear off before there was any more trouble, but Bob Cherry called him back.

"Here, Lonzy, we want you!" he shouted.

"Want me?" repeated Alonzo, turning round in surprise. "Surely you understand that I have not knowingly taken part in this——"

"Yes; we know all that!" laughed Bob Cherry. "But we want you to join us."

Alonzo looked as though he was going to burst into tears for a minute; then he recovered himself.

"Thank you very much, my dear fellows!" he murmured. "Your kindness, after what has happened, touches me deeply!"

"Let some of this Christmas pudding touch you deeply, then!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "You'll find it much better."

So Alonzo seated himself with the Famous Five, feeling happier and more highly honoured than he had ever done since he came to Greyfriars.

Bunter wasn't seen again that day till bed-time. But I shouldn't like to say that he hid himself for shame. I don't think there's much of that about the Owl. He'll be up to something else before long.

THE END.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Wednesday:

"DENOUNCED AS A COWARD!"

By Martin Clifford.

The fellow who is denounced as a coward is one who has never posed as a hero, and of whom I can recall no very heroic action as recorded. But I am sure George Wilkins is not a coward. His behaviour in the coming yarn shows that. The evidence against him is fairly strong; but it is not credited by everyone, and you may be sure that it is not credited by Grundy and Gunn.

Racke comes into this story as the villain of the piece. He has been making a good many appearances in that role of late. But then, Racke is a pretty complete outsider; and when he does the things which he should not do he is only doing after his kind.

HELD OVER!

The verses about the men of Mœuvres, to which I referred last week, were in type for this Chat, but were crowded out. I hope to find room for them next week, however.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE CHUMS OF No. 5.

(Continued from page 13.)

stretched out his hand, with Bob inside it.

"Here's your bird, Kerruish," he said.

"The brute hasn't really hurt him!"

Still Kerruish was silent as he took the fluttering little thing from the big, gentle hand.

"I—I—I'm sorry Kerruish!" blurted out Herries.

Then Kerruish found words.

"So am I," he answered. "I was a fool!"

"Not so bad as I was, for I knew you couldn't have done it, old chap, though I tried to make myself believe you had."

Their hands met.

"Towser is getting on all-right!" said Herries awkwardly. "I've just come back from seeing him. If he'd died I think I should have killed that brute Racke!"

"You know——"

"I only know what I saw just now," said Herries simply. "That was enough for me—for anybody, I should think!"

Then he turned away, and Kerruish told him no more at that time.

But he heard later, and if he could have had his way he would have left Racke in a far worse plight than Kerruish.

His chums restrained him. There was no direct evidence at all—not a scrap, they said. The only thing to do was to wait and watch on the chance of finding some. Herries growled, but gave way.

"I'll get old Kerr to look into it," he told them.

The feud between No. 5 and No. 6 was healed. But the question of which was cock study on the passage remained unsettled—according to No. 5. No. 6 recognised no such question. And No. 9 said that if it came to that—well, at the least there were other candidates!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—"DENOUNCED AS A COWARD!"—by Martin Clifford.)