

THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE SCHOOL STORY PAPER!



"THE TYRANT TAMERS!" & "THE DANDY'S PROFESSION!"



A SURPRISE FOR THE TYRANT OF THE THIRD!

(An Astonishing Incident in this week's Grand School Story.)



NOTE.—Half-a-crown will be awarded to the sender of every paragraph published on this page.

September in Australia.

Beautiful September shows Australia at its best. The many bushland flowers look like gleaming stars on the earth. You see the graceful wild clematis, with its pale pink blossom, and the hardenbergia, with its dainty royal coat of purple. Farther in the bush you see the dainty purple blossoms of the sarsaparilla, and the yellow, pea-like flower of the dillwynia, and the pale pink, starry blooms of the boronia. The birds are here, too, after many months of absence. The honeyeater, with its cosy little home, carefully made of fibres, and lined warmly with the soft brown velvet of the banksia. You see the yellow bob sitting on her nest. The bird will look at you, and if you do not go too near she will remain; but if frightened she flies away, leaving her little green-apple eggs, which are spotted with red. It is a wonderful chorus of the birds, led by little Jack Winter, with his "Peter, Peter, Peter!"—Miss J. Lonsdale, Henry Street, Five Dock, New South Wales, Australia.

Early Printing.

Printing was first used by the Chinese. There are now in the American Museum of Natural History specimens of movable metal type which are definitely known to have been used in 1403, fifty years before printing was invented in Europe. These types came from Korea, and are in Chinese characters. Printing was done from them much as a modern printer pulls a proof. The type faces were inked with a brush, the paper being pressed down on them with a felt pad.—A. Craig, 12, Florist Street, off Crown Street, Liverpool.

Politeness.

Being polite to everybody is the ideal to be aimed at. The fellow who does not show courtesy to his family will be failing in the display of the quality when he is mixing in the world. The thing is to be polite in spirit. Surface civility is all very well in its way, but it is not the real thing. It is the natural feeling of wanting to play the game that matters, and this sense is not just put on so as to make a good impression, but is there because it is the individual's real character.—A. E. Bramwell, 41, Rupert Street, Birmingham.

Mary's Plant.

Mary had a little plant,
She wanted it to grow,
And so she dug it up each day,
Because it was so slow!
—E. Bardsley, 3, Sandown Road, Cleadale Heath, Stockport, Cheshire.

Whimsical.

Can February March? No; but April May. Look here, young man, you are out of (tune) June. Don't July about it! It is not often one gets the better of your August personage. Ah, now you have me Noctober!—F. Goodson, 26, Park Road, Tring, Herts.

Falling in.

Pat was getting drill instruction for the first time. The company went up the side of a river bank in the country. Pat's attention was taken up watching a man fishing. The sergeant saw this, and roared: "Fall in!" Pat immediately jumped into the water. "Two deep!" yelled the non-com. "Begorra! Why didn't you tell me that before I went in?" cried Pat.—Alex McGurk, 69, Eddlewood, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, N.B.

Film Making.

The audience at a picture-show nowadays is a very critical one, and are not slow in picking out effects that are probably obtained by trick photography. But, at the same time, there is a lot to be said in favour of trick photography. It is very interesting to note how some of these trick effects are obtained. Take, for instance, a scene something like this. A gang of ruffians lie in wait for the hero of the piece, capture him, and carry him to the edge of a steep cliff, where he is thrown right over the edge. Now, if there is deep sea down below, there are some actors who would be quite prepared to be thrown over into the water. But this is not always in the plot, and that is where the trick effect is a necessity. The villain and his men carry the real actor right to the edge of the cliff, but at this point, at a word from the director, the camera ceases to work, and the actors stand quite still. The actor is lowered to the ground, and the dummy is substituted, and at a word from the director again the "body" is thrown over the cliff and the camera

begins to register again.—Fred G. Lidstone, 1, Park House, Chaucer Road, Herne Hill, S.E.24.

An Example.

Teacher: "What is an anecdote, Tommy?" Tommy: "A funny short tale." Teacher: "That's right. Give me an example." Tommy: "A pig has four legs and an anecdote."—A. E. Sporton, 63, Oxford Road, Halifax Road, Islington, N.1.

The Raft Spider.

A curious insect is the raft spider. It receives its name from the fact that it constructs a raft of any leaves and rubbish, united by threads of silk, and in this way pursues its prey on water. This spider is one of the most ingenious of all its wonderful race, though anyone who takes the trouble to observe the methods of the spider which we all know will see how clever and resourceful it is. The manner in which it makes its web, its system of repair, its unlimited patience, all make the spider well worthy of close study.—Vincent S. Burrows, Miner's Arms, Chesterton, Staffs.

Some Batting.

The highest score ever made in school cricket was 999 not out by W. G. Bunter, of Greyfriars. He would have made his 1,000 runs, only, unfortunately, he happened to wake up!—T. Bell, 45, Kingswood Road, Brixton Hill, S.W.

To the Point.

This was the conversation heard between two country fellows as they spoke of a gentleman who happened to be passing. First Rustic: "U C, E B A O.B.E." Second Rustic: "O, E B, B E?" First Rustic: "R! E B." Second Rustic: "Y B E?" First Rustic: "Y, E B A M.P., U C." Second Rustic: "O, I C!"—D. Gray, 2, Crescent Road, New Barnet, Herts.

The Mystery.

Guide (to sightseer looking over ancient castle): "This castle was built by King Richard the First, sir." Sightseer: "H'm! I wonder what made him build it so far from the railway-station."—A. Terry, 191, Aldboro' Road, Seven Kings, Essex.

Contributions are invited from readers of the "GEM" for publication on this page. Anything will do, so long as it is interesting, short, and concise—a good joke, a description of a holiday, a bright idea for increasing the popularity of the "Gem," a good anecdote. "Pars" should not be more than three hundred words long—the shorter the better. They can be sent in on a postcard. Address all contributions to The Editor, The "Gem" Library, Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and mark them "Readers' Own Corner."

THE TYRANT TAMERS!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete
Story of Tom Merry & Co. and
Wally D'Arcy of St. Jim's.

By Martin Clifford.



CHAPTER I.

Pane-ful for Selby!

"P LAY!"

Tom Merry uttered that warning, took a little run, and then sent the cricket-ball whizzing down towards the wicket in front of him.

Wally D'Arcy, the enterprising hero of the Third Form of St. Jim's, watched the ball coming, stepped out, and cheerfully swiped it away for two.

A loud chorus of cheers arose from the boundaries, where a crowd of juniors were watching the match between the Third Form Eleven and the School House Junior Eleven.

Tom Merry & Co. had good-naturedly assented to playing Wally D'Arcy and his fellow-fag cricketers that afternoon. The boys of the Shell and Fourth did not often play the Third—not that a game with the fags was beneath them, but generally they had other engagements to fulfil.

But this afternoon Tom Merry was giving his men a rest, and had mustered an eleven from members of the cricket club not in the regular eleven in order to give them a "show."

D'Arcy's minor—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his aristocratic major, was in the Fourth—had put his best men on the field, fully determined to make a good bid for victory. Tom Merry & Co. did not under-estimate the worth of the Third Form team. Wally D'Arcy was the leader, of a tough set of youngsters, who in their way were mighty men of valour and foemen worthy of their steel.

They were playing up like Trojans this afternoon.

Wally had been wielding his willow ever since the commencement of the game, and, like the celebrated Johnny Walker, was still going strong. Four wickets had fallen, but the captain of the Third Form team was on his mettle, and stood up to Tom Merry & Co.'s bowling in a manner that won him great applause and admiration from everybody on Little Side.

"Play up, Wally!" trilled Joe Frayne, the Cockney schoolboy. "Make a hundred, and we'll be 'appy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally took his guard again, and Tom Merry sent down a "yorker." The Third Form champion ran out at it and swiped.

Click! The leather went sailing high over the heads of the spectators, and all eyes eagerly followed its flight.

A gasp of amazement arose when it was seen that the ball, passing over the boundaries, was making for the school gates.

Little Side was to the left of the Close, not a very great distance from the gates.

Crash! There was an ominous tinkle of glass, a clatter, and a roar of rage from Taggles, the old school porter.

The cricket-ball had crashed into the side of the large lamp on the archway spanning the buttresses of the gates, and smashed a pane of glass to smithereens!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wally D'Arcy, blinking at the distant lamp in deep dismay and consternation. "That's done it!"

The Third Form team looked at each other glumly.

They left the field and went over to the gates in order to view the extent of the damage.

Taggles' face was red with wrath, and he seemed to be in a most enraged mood.

"You young rips!" he hooted, as Wally D'Arcy & Co. came up. "Look wot you've done—the lamp busted! Which glass costs money, and I ain't goin' to repair it. Wot I says is this 'ere. I'm goin' to report this to yer master. Young rascals! All boys ought to be drowned at birth, and—"

"Oh, dry up, Taggy!" snapped Wally D'Arcy. "It was an accident, you know."

Taggles snorted indignantly. "Haccident or no haccident," he said, "I'm a-goin' to report it to Mr. Selby. Which all you young rips ought to be punished, and I'll see that you are! Hugh! I'll leave that 'ere broken glass for Mr. Selby to see—mark my words!"

The Third-Formers looked grimly at Taggles. Tom Merry stepped forward, frowning.

"Look here, Taggles," he said curtly. "D'Arcy's minor couldn't help it, and

there's no need for you to sneak and make unnecessary trouble over it. Just sweep up the broken glass, there's a good chap, and say no more about it. We'll give you a bob for your trouble."

Taggles waved a grimy hand in dramatic gesture.

"Which I hain't to be bribed 'an' corrupted!" he said flatly. "I've 'ad enough of these goin's 'on! The young rips 'ave given me trouble afore, and this decides it. I'm a-goin' to tell Mr. Selby about it. Which I'm gettin' old and weak, an' can't climb ladders, mend-in' lamps at that 'eight. Br-r-r!"

And Taggles, bestowing a choleric look upon the assembled juniors, strode angrily into his lodge.

Wally D'Arcy & Co. gazed at the wreckage, and then at each other, with doleful countenances.

"Well, Taggles ought to be scragged!" said Jack Blake vehemently.

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sympathetically.

"Taggy's an awful wottah and a sneak, bai Jove! He ought to be boiled in oil!"

The Third-Formers felt decidedly glum.

"We're in for it!" moaned Carly Gibson, turning to Tom Merry. "Selby's been more down on us than ever lately, and when Taggles tells him about this—well, his mad will be up, and no mistake! Won't it, chaps?"

The Third Form fags nodded gloomily.

Mr. Selby was their Form-master, and decidedly not a popular one. He was afflicted with a very bad temper, and his long-suffering Form often squirmed beneath the brunt of his testiness.

Of late the Third Form master had become more than ever tyrannical towards Wally D'Arcy & Co. He appeared to be "down" on them simply because they were healthy, lively lads, fond of fun—more fond of fun, perhaps, than of work.

He regarded all games as unnecessary and wanton waste of time; which was very unreasonable.

Wally D'Arcy gave a sudden chuckle, which caused his chums to gaze at him in some astonishment.

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"I've got it!" chuckled Wally.

"Got what?" inquired Jameson gruffly. "If it's the hump, Wally, I've got that, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, old sons, it's not the hump, but a carking wheeze!" said Wally D'Arcy cheerfully. "I know where there's some glass and some putty—in the gardener's shed. I'll burgle a pane of glass, and mend the lamp myself before Selby comes back. He's gone over to a meeting at Wayland, you know. Taggles reckons on sneaking to him when he returns. But if we clear up this mess and mend the lamp Taggles won't have much to complain about, will he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The faces of the Third-Formers brightened considerably.

"My word!" breathed Carly Gibson. "Do you think you could work it, Wally?"

"Trust your old uncle!" grinned the hero of the Third. "Half a tick, chaps! I'm going to get the glass and the putty. Sha'n't be long! We'll go on with the match-to-morrow, you chaps."

As Wally scampered off the juniors round the gates looked at each other and burst into mirthful chuckles.

"That's a putty good idea of young Wally's!" remarked Monty Lowther, who could not resist the temptation to make a pun, however bad. "He's taking panes to avoid trouble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Soon Wally returned, bearing a large pane of glass under his arm. In his pocket bulged a huge chunk of soft putty.

"You've got enough glass, kid," remarked Jack Blake. "You'll have to cut that."

"Oh, I thought of that!" replied Wally airily, extracting a glass-cutter from his pocket. "I found this among the gardener's tools, and borrowed it. I'll just shin up the gatepost and take measurements before I cut the glass!"

"Go it, Wally!"

Wally, nimble as a monkey, clambered up the buttress of the gates and swarmed along the stone archway until he reached the damaged lamp. He scraped away the old putty and the fragments of glass still remaining with his penknife, and then took measurements with a sheet of paper and pencil. Then Jack Blake, who was a handy man in his way, good-naturedly cut the glass for him.

Wally reached down for the glass, extracted the putty from his pocket, and commenced to fix the pane of glass into the empty aperture.

Perched upon the archway, Wally was quite comfortable, and whistled cheerily while he worked.

The boys below looked up at him and grinned. Their grins died away, however, when a sour-visaged gentleman, arrayed in top-hat and frock-coat, strode in at the gates, and halted in amazement at the scene before him.

It was Mr. Selby, the Third Form master.

"Oh corks!" ejaculated Tom Merry under his breath. "Poor old Wally! He's in for it now!"

Mr. Selby gazed at Wally perched on the archway, and his eyes seemed to glint.

"D'Arcy minor!" he rapped. "What are you doing, boy?"

Wally gave a violent start, and nearly fell off the archway.

"My only sainted Aunt Maria!" he muttered on seeing Mr. Selby. "It's Selby! The old bird's caught me!"

The irate Form-master stood under the archway, directly beneath Wally, and looked up, his face suffused with scowls.

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"Come down this instant, D'Arcy minor!" he cried. "How dare you tamper with the lamp! I—Ooooooh! Yarooooogh!"

He broke off as Wally thrust his leg downward and kicked his top-hat off his head. Mr. Selby's headgear went rolling to the ground, and came to rest a few yards away, with a huge dent showing in its side.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wally, gazing down with a look of seraphic innocence on his face. "Was that your hat, sir? I'm awfully sorry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the onlookers. Mr. Selby fairly danced. The sun shone brightly on his bald pate, and the St. Jim's juniors laughed heartily.

Wally D'Arcy made an elaborate show of scrambling over the archway, and in this operation he dropped the putty. It fell, with a resounding smack, full on Mr. Selby's bald head.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry & Co.

Mr. Selby clawed frantically at the clammy stuff on his cranium, gurgling incoherently. Wally D'Arcy scrambled down from the archway and stood before the Third-Form master, a look of shocked surprise on his visage.

"So sorry, sir!" he said penitently. "I had to drop it, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tom Merry & Co., tickled at the funny sight Mr. Selby presented.

If looks could kill, the basilisk glare that Mr. Selby bestowed upon Wally would have stretched that cheery youth lifeless on the ground in an instant.

"Boy!" grated Mr. Selby, his hands full of putty. "How dare you! How dare you, I say!"

"Dunno, sir," replied Wally innocently.

The spectators chuckled, and Mr. Selby choked.

"What were you doing up there, D'Arcy?" he demanded, controlling his passion with an effort.

"Mending the lamp, sir," replied Wally readily. "You see, it got broken accidentally with a cricket-ball, and in order to save old Taggles the trouble of mending it, I—I thought I'd mend it myself. I dare say I should have had the job finished by now if you hadn't come in, sir."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked warningly at his minor, for it was apparent that Mr. Selby's ire was rising.

"Who—who broke the lamp, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Selby between his teeth.

"Ahem!" coughed Wally. "I did, sir."

Mr. Selby's eyes glinted, and Wally began to feel a vague uneasiness steal over him.

"So you are the main cause of all this disturbance, D'Arcy minor!" grated the Third-Form master. "I have never been more insulted, or suffered such indignity, in all my life! Follow me indoors, D'Arcy minor. I shall chastise you severely for your conduct!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wally, his face lengthening.

His fellow-fags looked at their leader. Mr. Selby, still clawing at the putty, and leaving his battered topper where it was, strode away.

"Come with me, D'Arcy minor!" he rapped. "If you do not follow immediately I shall take you!"

Wally shrugged his shoulders and walked after his irate master.

"Hard cheese, kid!" remarked Tom Merry sympathetically, walking along with Wally. "You need not have been so cheeky, you know, but—"

"Oh, rats!" replied Wally. "The old tyrant would have given me a good lick-

ing anyhow. In for a penny in for a pound, is my motto. I've had plenty of hidings lately, so I can stand it."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy went up to Mr. Selby and tapped him on the arm.

"Excuse me, Mr. Selby," said Gussy politely. "P'way allow me to explain. My minah—"

"Be quiet, D'Arcy major!" snapped Mr. Selby, increasing his stride. "I will brook no interference!"

"But, my dear sir—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

Mr. Selby wrenched his arm free and strode away. Gussy would have followed farther, but Jack Blake dragged him back.

"Chuck it, you ass!" he said gruffly. "Don't you see you'll only make it worse for the kid? Selby's on the high horse now."

"Weally, Blake—"

"It's no use your chipping in, Gus," said Wally, looking back. "I'm going to take my gruel, and I don't care much. Didn't that putty go smack on Selby's bald patch? No wonder he's waxy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally, with an heroic effort, grinned as he walked up the steps and followed Mr. Selby to his study.

But when he came out again his face was white, his eyes shining, and his lips drawn with pain.

Wally was a tough youngster, and could stand a good deal of gruel, but the punishment that Mr. Selby had meted out to him had tried his powers of endurance to the full.

A crowd of boys met Wally outside, and they uttered expressions of alarm when they saw him.

"My hat! Look at young Wally's face!" exclaimed Blake, in consternation.

"Did he lay it on thick, kid?"

Wally raised an arm, clenched his burning palm, and shook his fist at the direction of Mr. Selby's door.

"The cad—the rotter!" he panted.

"He—he laid into me like a slave-driver! Oh, I'll pay him out for this!"

Curly Gibson strode forward and placed his arm round his chum.

"How many?" he asked.

"Eight!" gasped Wally brokenly.

"Don't make a fuss of me, Curly. I—I couldn't stand it!"

And D'Arcy minor staggered away, biting his lip so hard that it almost bled.

The juniors in the passage murmured angrily against Mr. Selby. D'Arcy major essayed to enter the Third Form master's room and expostulate with him, but Tom Merry & Co. restrained him.

"It's no use, Gussy," said Tom Merry quietly. "You'll only make the cad more down on Wally than ever. I—I don't see how we can do much for him, worse luck. Oh, it—it's rotten!"

And the juniors, Shell fellows, Fourth-Formers, and fags as well, agreed that Mr. Selby was a tyrant.

CHAPTER 2.

Baggy Takes the Biscuit!

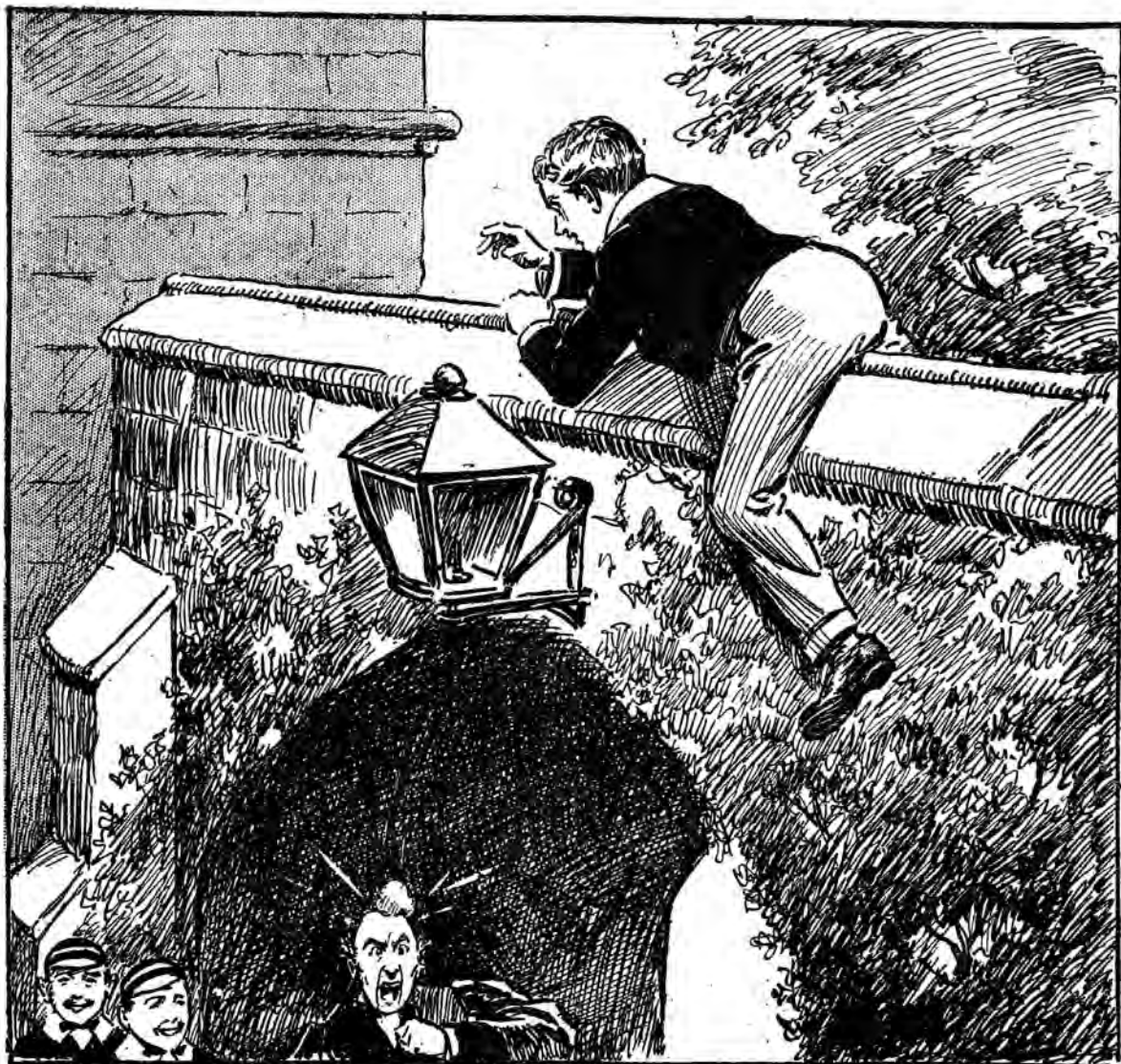
DOZEN doughnuts, please!"

Baggy Trimble of the Fourth pricked up his ears, and blinked into the interior of the tuckshop.

Dame Taggles was behind her counter, and before her stood a short, plump youth, whom Baggy immediately recognised as Teddy, his minor, belonging to the Third.

Teddy had a large cricket-bag before him, and a pile of luscious tuck stood upon the counter.

Evidently Teddy was making huge purchases, and the eyes of Baggy Trimble gleamed.



Wally D'Arcy made an elaborate show of scrambling over the archway, and in this operation he dropped the large lump of putty. It fell, with a resounding smack, full on Mr. Selby's bald head. (See chapter 1.)

He rolled into the tuckshop, an affable smile upon his podgy features.

Baggy, as usual, was in a state of bankruptcy, but, like a hungry hawk, he had come over to the tuckshop to seek what he might devour.

He tapped Teddy on the arm.

"Hallo, Teddy!" he said affably.

"Buying up the tuckshop?"

Teddy Trimble looked round, and glared frigidly at his major.

"Cut off, Baggy!" he snapped.

"Oh, really, Teddy—"

"Don't bother!" said Teddy. "I'm busy. Two dozen jam-tarts, please, Mrs. Taggles—strawberry jam!"

Baggy Trimble's mouth watered.

There was not much love lost between the Trimble brothers. Although much alike in appearance and rotundity, morally they were as different as chalk and cheese.

Teddy had not been at St. Jim's long, but he had already demonstrated that he was made of different stuff to his major in the Fourth. Baggy Trimble was notorious as a toady and a cadger, and the tiniest fag could "cheek" him with impunity. Not so Teddy. He was a handy fellow with his fists, and no fag

dare ruffle him. Indeed, he was looked upon as quite a mighty man of valour, and Wally D'Arcy had chummed with him from the first.

Baggy Trimble glowered at his minor, and he looked enviously at the jam-tarts which Dame Taggles placed with the tuck that Teddy had already purchased.

"I—I say, Teddy," he said. "I—"

"A dozen meringues, please, ma'am!"

"Teddy, old chap—"

"A dozen cream-buns!"

"Look here, you rotter—"

"Buzz off, Baggy! Two Madeira cakes, Mrs. Taggles!"

Baggy Trimble simply choked with wrath.

To be treated thus was certainly not brotherlike. And Baggy's heart was quite warm towards Teddy this afternoon!

"Teddy, old fellow, listen to me—" he began pathetically.

"Shurrup, Baggy!" snapped Teddy, looking severely at him. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Yes, I can!" said Baggy peevishly.

"Look here, Teddy; you're in funds, aren't you? Halves, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you selfish little beast!" expostulated Baggy Trimble wrathfully.

"Oh, do be quiet, Baggy!" chuckled Trimble minor. "If you think you're going to sponge on me for some tommy you're jolly well mistaken. There's nothing for you, so you can go and eat coke!"

"Oh, really—"

"A plum cake and a sultana cake, please, ma'am!"

Baggy Trimble grew desperate. He was hungry, and the mention of such luscious edibles stirred the smouldering fires of envy within him. He took Teddy by the arm and pulled him.

"Teddy, old chap," he said, "don't be mean, you know. Let me have a snack. Just a few jam-tarts and one or two of those cream-buns, a couple or so doughnuts, and—"

"Rats!" retorted Teddy cheerfully. "Run away and play marbles, Baggy! What I have I hold, as the giddy brigand once remarked. Mrs. Taggles, have you any of that spiffing currant wine?"

"Yes, Master Trimble," said the good dame. "Ginger wine, too!"

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"Oh, good!" said Teddy. "Trot out three bottles of each, will you?"

Baggy Trimble looked on with glistening eyes as Dame Taggles "trotted" them out.

"Lemme see!" said Teddy thoughtfully. We must have some jam. A pot of strawberry and a pot of black-currant."

"Yes, Master Trimble."

"And a couple of tins of pineapple!"

"I say, Teddy, you know—"

"Ring off, Baggy! How much will that be altogether, ma'am?"

Dame Taggles made a calculation.

"Four pounds ten and a penny, Master Trimble," she said.

Teddy withdrew five rustling pound notes from his trousers-pocket, and laid them with a grubby paw upon the counter.

Whilst Mrs. Taggles went in search of change, Teddy proceeded to pack the good things he had purchased into the cricket-bag.

His plump major looked on enviously. Baggy Trimble felt much aggrieved at this unbrotherly treatment!

"Look here, Teddy! I'm not going to be left out of this!" he spluttered. "I don't know where you got your money from, but, anyway, I'm going halves! Give me some of that tuck, you mean beast!"

"Rats!" retorted Teddy. "Run away and fry your chivvy, old scout! Blessed if I know what a chap's major is for, anyway! He's always bothering!"

"Br-r-r-r!" growled Baggy.

The cricket-bag was packed almost to overflowing when Dame Taggles returned with Teddy's change. Teddy placed the money into the depths of his capacious pockets, and lifted the cricket-bag.

"Whew!" he gasped. "It's jolly heavy, and no mistake!"

"Serves you right!" grunted Baggy Trimble unsympathetically.

Teddy hoisted the bag, with much difficulty, upon his shoulder, and staggered from the tuckshop.

Baggy Trimble trotted after him, a disgruntled expression upon his fat face.

As he saw his minor staggering under the load of the well-filled cricket-bag a gleam of inspiration entered Baggy's eye, and he quickened his pace.

"Let me carry that bag for you," urged Baggy Trimble eagerly. "I'll do it if you give me something out of it!"

Teddy Trimble paused, and thought awhile. Then he smiled.

"All serene, Baggy!" he said. "If you carry the bag across the quad for me I'll give you something out of it!"

"Oh, good!" grunted Baggy.

He hoisted up the heavily-laden bag, and Teddy helped to place it on his shoulder. Then, bent almost double under the weight of the bag, Trimble staggered forward.

"Grooooooh!" gasped Baggy Trimble.

He found the bag heavier than he had imagined. He went onward, however, gasping and panting like a pair of very old bellows.

Fellows stopped to grin at the unusual spectacle of Baggy Trimble staggering across the quadrangle under the weight of a well-filled cricket-bag.

Encouraging shouts arose, and he was urged to "stick it."

Baggy, by dint of superhuman efforts, did "stick it," and at last dumped the bag down on the School House steps, gasping.

His face was red, and he puffed like a grampus.

"Well done, porpoise!" grinned Monty

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Lowther, who strolled up with Tom Merry and Manners. "What are you doing that for, a wager?"

"Grooooooh!" gurgled Baggy breathlessly. "I've carried that across here for Teddy. He's going to give me something out of that bag. It's full of tuck!"

"Great pip!"

Teddy Trimble bent down and undid the fastenings of the bag. He inserted a fat hand, and drew forth something which he extended to Baggy.

It was a solitary biscuit.

"There you are, Baggy!" he grinned. "Don't make a hog of yourself, will you?"

Baggy Trimble blinked speechlessly at the biscuit for some moments.

"Oh crumbs!" he managed to articulate at last. "You rotter, Teddy! That's no good to me. I want my whack!"

"There's your whack!" grinned Teddy cheerfully. "I told you I'd give you something out of the bag, and here it is. Do you want this biscuit, Baggy? You can take it or leave it!"

"I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the fellows who had gathered round.

Mechanically, and like one in a dream, Baggy Trimble accepted the biscuit from his minor's hand.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Monty Lowther. "Poor old Baggy! He's taken the biscuit!"

"You cackling rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble breathed hard through his snub nose, and blinked wrathfully at his minor, who had by now fastened up the bag again.

"You—you spoofer, Teddy!" he spluttered. "You've diddled me! D'you think I'm going to be palmed off with a mouldy biscuit? Why, I—I'll give you a licking, you young sweep!"

Teddy Trimble pushed back his cuffs.

"Come on then, old son!" he said.

"I'm willing to take any licking you can give me! Pile in!"

Baggy Trimble hesitated.

"Ahem!" he coughed. "On second thoughts, I won't bully you, Teddy. You're my minor, and I shouldn't like the chaps to think I knocked you about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll knock you about in a minute, Baggy!" growled Teddy Trimble. "Then the chaps can think what they like. You're a fat cadger, and I've taught you a lesson you badly needed. Let me tell you this tuck isn't mine at all. All we chaps in the Third have subscribed for it, and we're going to hold a picnic to-morrow afternoon. So, you see, Baggy, there's nothing doing. Good-bye-eee!"

And Teddy, hoisting up the cricket-bag, walked indoors, leaving his major blinking wrathfully after him.

"Hard cheese, Baggy, old sport!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Teddy's done you this time properly!"

Baggy Trimble vouchsafed no reply, but rolled away, the biscuit still clutched in his fat hand.

"Beasts!" he muttered. "Teddy's a beast, and they're all beasts! Done me out of my whack of that tuck, has he? Never mind, I'll get at it somehow! I'll show the beasts—Br-r-r-r!"

And Baggy bad-temperedly nibbled the biscuit.

CHAPTER 3.

Laying for Baggy!

LATER that afternoon, Wally D'Arcy & Co. were congregated in the Third Form-room discussing their plans for the picnic on the morrow.

Tea was over, and the last traces of kippers and muffins had been cleared away—delicacies which, although banned by the powers that be, were pleasing to the palates of the St. Jim's fags.

"Well, chaps," said Wally D'Arcy, who had quite recovered from the effects of his severe caning, "we've got the tommy, and the question is, how shall we hide it? If Selby smelt it out there'd be ructions, and we'd lose the merry lot. Other chaps, too, might be after it—that precious major of yours, for instance, young Trimble!"

"Quite likely," responded Teddy Trimble, with a grin.

"Hide it up the chimney, Wally," suggested Curly Gibson.

"Thanks, but I don't want to be eating soot at the picnic," said Wally, sniffing disparagingly. "No, chaps, I think the best place to hide it is in the cupboard over there. Covered over with books, nobody would notice it—not even Selby, if he went to the cupboard."

"Good wheeze, Wally!"

The cricket-bag containing the tuck that Teddy Trimble had purchased was taken from behind Wally's desk and conveyed over to a large cupboard in the corner of the Form-room.

At the bottom of the cupboard were heaped a huge pile of books. The fags set to work diligently, and removed these until there was room enough for the cricket-bag.

This was consigned into the cupboard, and afterwards covered over by the books.

"Selby would never twig that four quids' worth of tuck was hidden under that merry lot!" chuckled Wally D'Arcy in great satisfaction. "It's quite safe there till to-morrow, I reckon!"

Teddy Trimble had been looking towards the door, and a grim look settled on his features. His quick eyes had caught an almost imperceptible movement of the door.

"Shus-sh!" whispered Teddy, in an undertone, making a warning gesture to his chums. "There's somebody at the door. Don't make a noise, and I'll catch the spy, whoever he is!"

Teddy crept towards the Form-room door, and opened it suddenly.

He peered forth into the passage, but nobody was there.

The fag looked down the passage, and was just in time to catch a glimpse of a fat figure retiring hastily round the corner.

"Baggy, by hokey!" breathed Teddy. "Oh, the spying little toad!"

"Who was it, Teddy?" asked Wally D'Arcy, from the cupboard.

"My major!" replied Trimble minor, frowning, and stepping back into the Form-room. "He's hounding that tuck, by the look of it, and he's discovered where we've hidden it. Oh crumbs! If I hadn't spotted him he'd have come back later on, when the Form-room was empty, and boned the lot!"

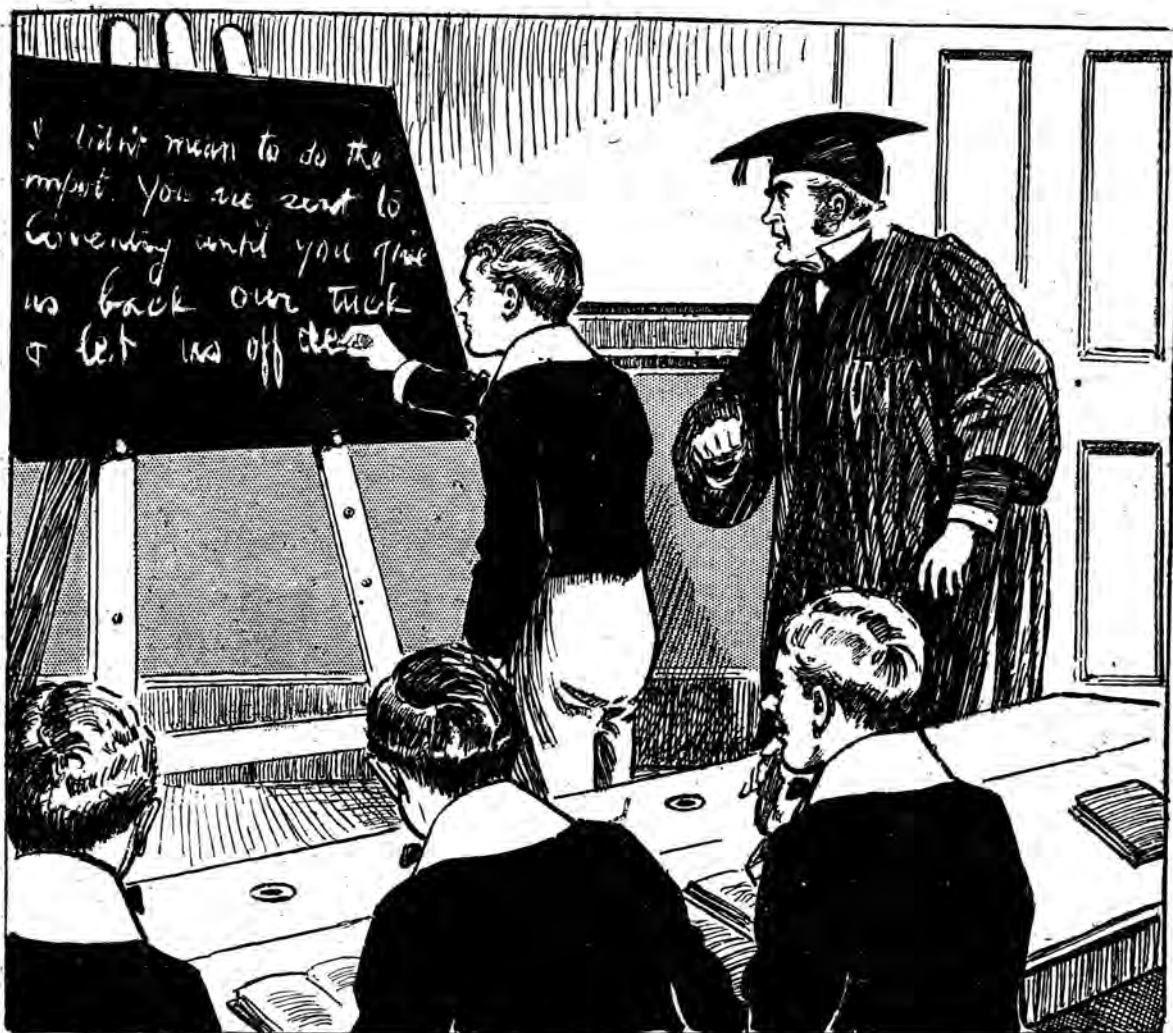
"The worm!"

Wally D'Arcy looked worried.

"That's knocked this wheeze in the eye properly," he said. "Oh, your rotten major ought to be boiled in oil, young Trimble! Why, if Gussy played me up like that I—I'd make catsmeat of him!"

"Sorry, kids, but it's not my fault," said Trimble, rather dolefully. "I've often licked Baggy, but he's got a skin as thick as an elephant's. The only thing we can do now is to hide that tuck somewhere else—up the chimney is about the only place!"

"Ye-es," said Wally thoughtfully. "But your rotten major is going to be



"Have you lost your tongue, boy?" stuttered Mr. Selby. Wally D'Arcy did not reply, but, picking up a piece of chalk, he went over to the blackboard and scrawled an amazing sentence upon it (See Chapter 6.)

taught a lesson, Trimble. By gum, I've got a spanking wheeze!"

"What is it, Wally?" asked many eager fag voices.

"I'll rig up a trap in that cupboard," said the enterprising young hero of the Third. "Old Taggles has some large springs in the wood-shed, and a couple of those will work the trick fine. That punch-ball on the top shelf of this cupboard is all else I shall require. I'm going to fix that merry punch-ball up in this cupboard, so that as soon as the door is opened the ball will fly out and thump whoever opens the door in the chivvy. See?"

"My hat!"

"How's it to be done, Wally?"

"Easy as rolling off a form!" proceeded Wally D'Arcy impressively. "Those springs will keep the punch-ball in, but as soon as the cupboard door is opened the springs will be released, and the fellow who opens the door will catch a packet right in the dial. And that chap, of course, will be Baggy Trimble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a ripping wheeze!"

The Third-Formers voted Wally's wheeze an excellent one.

"Joe Frayne," said Wally, turning to his Cockney chum, "just run down to the wood-shed and borrow a couple of

those springs, will you? Buck up over the job, too!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Joe Frayne, and he hastened from the Form-room.

The Third-Formers chuckled hugely, and Wally, climbing upon the first shelf of the cupboard, pulled down an old punch-ball from above.

"This is the thing that will do the punching, chaps," he said. "Lemme see, it wouldn't be a bad idea to wrap it in some old dusters soaked with ink, so that when the ball strikes old Baggy's chivvy it will leave its mark!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Acting upon this second brilliant idea, Wally unearthed some old dusters from a box at the top of the cupboard, and took from another shelf a jar of ink.

Joe Frayne returned, bearing two large steel springs beneath his jacket.

"Oh, good!" said Wally. "Now watch me, you chaps, and you'll see how these things are done!"

So saying, the cheery young leader of the Third Form fags proceeded to affix his trap inside the cupboard.

His fellow fags watched him curiously, and mirthful and admiring chuckles arose as it dawned upon them how Wally's idea was to work.

The springs were affixed to the punch-ball, which was then wrapped up in the dusters, and soaked with black ink.

Then, having removed the tuck from its hiding-place below, Wally, with some little difficulty, pushed back the punch-ball and the springs inside the cupboard, and closed the door.

"There!" said Wally mirthfully. "As soon as that door is opened that merry punch-ball will fly out, and the fellow who opens the door will receive a jar."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, chaps," said Wally, "we'd better hide the tommy up the chimney, and then clear out. That will give old Baggy Trimble time to work his little trick! He'll be in here as soon as we clear out—you see!"

The cricket-bag was wrapped up securely in paper, and stuffed up the Form-room chimney. Much soot came down into the fireplace, but Wally D'Arcy & Co. soon cleared it up. Then, chuckling over the neat trap that had been set for the prowling Baggy, they went out of the Form-room and into the Common-room.

CHAPTER 4.

Selby Catches It!

FIVE minutes after the fags had vacated their Form-room the door was opened stealthily and a fat face peered within.

"Oh, good! They're all gone!"

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muttered Baggy Trimble, with great satisfaction. "I'll pay young Teddy out now! If I confiscate all that grub, it will only serve him right for the shabby trick he played on me this afternoon—the beast! I can't help it if the others do ruck! It will—ahem!—be all Teddy's fault—not mine! It's a major's place to make an example of a cheeky minor! And I'm going to have that grub!"

Thus soliloquising, Baggy Trimble rolled into the Third Form-room and made towards the cupboard.

"They don't know I was watching them hide it in the cupboard! He, he, he!" giggled the youth of the Fourth mirthfully. "Oh, I'm deep, I am, and— Oh crumbs!"

Baggy stopped short and wheeled round suddenly as the Form-room door was opened and a gowned figure entered.

Baggy Trimble's startled eyes beheld Mr. Selby, the irate master of the Third. Mr. Selby fixed Baggy with a stern eye.

"Trimble major!" he rumbled. "What are you doing in this room?"

Baggy Trimble's brain worked swiftly.

"Ahem!" he coughed. "I—I came in here to find my minor, sir."

Mr. Selby looked hard at Baggy.

It was apparent that the Third Form master was still in an irascible mood. His nose was quite red, which was an infallible sign that he was afflicted with that distressing malady which Wally D'Arcy & Co. call "the rats."

"You came in here to find your minor?" said Mr. Selby snappishly. "I do not believe you, Trimble major. It is apparent that the room is empty, yet I discover you prowling about in the vicinity of the cupboard. Do not resort to subterfuge, Trimble major. For what purpose are you in this Form-room?"

Baggy Trimble looked pained and aggrieved.

"I—I'm looking for something, sir," he said.

"Oh!" said Mr. Selby, raising his eyebrows. "For what are you searching, Trimble major, and why do you search in this Form-room? Is it possible that you have come to search for something which your minor has concealed in here?"

"That's it, sir!" said Baggy Trimble eagerly. "I'm keeping an eye on my brother, you know. It's a chap's duty to look after his minor, and see that he doesn't get into mischief, and—"

"Do not prevaricate, Trimble major!" snapped Mr. Selby irritably. "What is it that you have come to look for?"

"A cricket-bag, filled with tuck, sir," replied Baggy Trimble. "The young rotters—ahem!—I mean, your pupils have hidden it in the cupboard, sir. My minor got it, and I consider it my duty to confiscate it. They hid the bag in the cupboard so that you shouldn't spot it—"

"Ah!" said Mr. Selby, his eyes glinting. "The incorrigible young rascals! So they have concealed a bag of indigestible comestibles in the cupboard in defiance of my strict orders that eatables of every kind were prohibited in the Form-room."

"Yes, it's really too thick, isn't it, sir?" said Baggy eagerly. "Lemme take that bag away, and—"

"Trimble major, come back!" cried Mr. Selby, as Baggy made towards the cupboard. "I forbid you to touch that cupboard door! I shall personally take charge of that bag. Kindly allow me to open the cupboard door."

Baggy Trimble, with a peevish look, stepped aside, and Mr. Selby strode up to the cupboard.

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He grasped the handle, turned it, and pulled the door open.

Whiz! Thud!

"Yaroooooogh!" shrieked Mr. Selby, as a hard, wet, clammy article whizzed out of the cupboard and thudded upon his classic features. "Good heavens! Yah-hooooogh! Oh dear! Yah!"

"My hat!" gasped Baggy Trimble in wonder.

A punch-ball, wrapped in inky dusters, wobbled out of the cupboard door affixed to two large springs. This was the article that had smitten Mr. Selby with such well-timed precision. Indeed, the blow had been so sure and certain that the renowned Joe Beckett might have gone green with envy had he seen it.

"Yooooogh! Gerrugh!" moaned the Third Form master, dabbing at his injured face, which was streaming with black ink. "I am the victim of a brutal attack! Who is the ruffian concealed within that cupboard who has assaulted me?"

"He, he, he!" giggled Baggy Trimble, unable to conceal his mirth, for Mr. Selby presented such a funny spectacle. "There's no hidden ruffian, sir—it's only a punch-ball on springs!"

Mr. Selby jumped, and wiped the ink out of his eyes.

He gazed upon the punch-ball dangling gracefully upon its springs, and an incoherent gurgle escaped his lips.

"Gug-good heavens!" he stuttered, blinking dazedly at the ball. "It is—gerrugh!—a prearranged trap, set by those young reprobates in my Form! Yooooogh! Oh dear! I have never been more outraged in all my life! Trimble, cease your asinine laughter! There is nothing to giggle at!"

"Nunno, sir!" said Baggy, with a superhuman effort to control his mirth. "It's jolly serious, isn't it—he, he, he!"

"You insolent young rascal!" hooted the enraged Mr. Selby. "Am I to be laughed at by a junior when I have already been made the victim of an unprecedented trick by my own pupils? It is intolerable! I—I—"

"He, he, he!"

Baggy Trimble's mirthful giggles goaded Mr. Selby to fury. The incensed master made a dash at Baggy, evidently contemplating assault and battery.

But the fat youth of the Fourth dodged and scuttled out of the Form-room.

Mr. Selby paused at the door, and, choking with wrath, he thought better of giving chase to Baggy in his present condition, and he strode back into the Form-room.

Mr. Selby's feelings can better be imagined than described. He took out his handkerchief and mopped ink from his whiskers, his nose, and eyes and ears and mouth.

He was still thus engaged when the tramp of many footsteps sounded on the passage outside, and Wally D'Arcy & Co. returned in full force ready for prep.

They fell back with gasps of horror when they beheld the state of Mr. Selby's features, and saw the punch-ball dangling out of the cupboard, seeming to mock them.

"Mum-my only sainted Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally D'Arcy. "Selby's copped it!"

"Oh lor!"

"Now we're in for it!"

Mr. Selby glared furiously at his pupils.

"Boys," he said tremblingly, "take your seats!"

Wally D'Arcy & Co., with grave forebodings, took their seats.

Curly Gibson saw the funny side of the affair, and emitted a chuckle.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Selby. "Gib-

son, take five hundred lines! Trimble minor, stand up!"

Teddy Trimble stood up.

Mr. Selby pointed a trembling forefinger towards the cupboard, and glared at Teddy.

"What is the meaning of that—that abominable contraption, Trimble! A consignment of eatables was concealed accents."

Teddy Trimble shifted uneasily.

"Ahem! It—it was a trap set for—er—somebody, sir," he replied. "I—I—"

"Set for me!" howled Mr. Selby, his feelings getting the better of him, and now literally dancing with rage. "A consignment of eatables was concealed within that cupboard, and a trap laid for me in the event of my opening the cupboard to investigate! I know what it was placed there for. You unmitigated young scoundrels—"

"Here, hold on, sir!" cried Wally D'Arcy, jumping to his feet and looking at the master with flashing eyes.

"You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, sir! That trap wasn't laid for you at all. We—we did hide some tuck in there, but we took it out again, as we found out that a rotten thief was after it. So we laid that trap for him—at least, I laid the trap. It was my idea. But it wasn't meant for you, sir, really!"

"Fah!" snorted Mr. Selby. "Don't tell falsehoods, boy! That trap was set deliberately for me. Prevarication and subterfuge will not avail you, you little rascal!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Wally. "I'm not a liar, sir, although you think I am. I'm not in the habit of telling whoppers, and—"

"Ear, ear!" yelled Joe Frayne spiritedly. "Wally's told the truth, sir. That trap was laid for someone else, and we didn't dream of you openin' the cupboard!"

Mr. Selby choked.

"I don't believe you!" he hooted. "You are seeking to evade the punishment you deserve. But you shall be punished—every one of you. D'Arcy minor, you ought to be expelled!"

"Rats!" retorted Wally. "You've got your rag out because that punch-ball hit in you in the chivvy, sir. I'm awfully sorry, but it wasn't intended for you! Another rotter was after our tuck—"

"D'Arcy minor!"

"That's the truth, sir," said Wally grimly. "We didn't dream that you'd nose into the cupboard."

"D'Arcy minor, your insolent young scamp!" raged Mr. Selby. "Do not seek to propitiate me. Where is the foodstuff that you have hidden? I am going to appropriate it."

Wally bit his lip, and did not reply.

"Answer me, boy, this instant!" thundered Mr. Selby. "Where have you concealed the foodstuff? I demand to know!"

"Up the chimney, sir," replied Wally reluctantly.

Mr. Selby strode over to the fireplace, bent down, and inserted his arm up the chimney.

He dragged down the cricket-bag—also a few pounds of soot, which made him in rather a mess.

Mr. Selby, breathing hard through his nose, dumped the cricket-bag down beside his desk, and then faced the Form, his eyes glinting fiercely.

"For what purpose did you obtain the contents of this bag, D'Arcy minor?" he demanded. "Did you intend holding a disgusting orgy in the dormitory to-night?"

"No, sir," replied Wally.

"I don't believe you!" said Mr. Selby.

“I am of the opinion that you intended holding a nocturnal feast in the dormitory!”

“You’re wrong again, sir,” replied Wally, making desperate efforts to keep back his rising wrath. “We bought it so that we could have a picnic in the woods to-morrow afternoon.”

“Ah!” grated Mr. Selby, smiling sardonically beneath the ink which adorned his visage. “So that was your intention? Well, as a means of frustrating you, I shall confiscate this bag of foodstuffs, and every boy in this Form will be detained to-morrow afternoon!”

“Waa-a-a!”

“The whole Form will forfeit the half-holiday to-morrow afternoon,” said Mr. Selby, viewing the dismayed countenances of the Third-Formers with deep satisfaction. “And now I shall proceed to administer more tangible punishment to you unruly youngsters. D’Arcy minor, kindly step this way!”

Wally hesitated at first; but when he caught the warning glint in Mr. Selby’s eye he thought better of his former intention of disobeying the master, and he reluctantly walked to the front of the Form-room.

Mr. Selby selected a stout cane, and faced Wally with a grim, unpleasant countenance.

“Hold out your hand, D’Arcy minor!” he rasped.

Wally raised his hand.

Thwack!

“Yoooooo!”

“Now the other hand!”

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

Wally received three more stinging cuts, and by that time, tough as the fag was, he fairly wriggle.

Biting his lip very hard to keep himself from “blubbing,” Wally strode back to his place.

Teddy Trimble was the next called to the front.

Teddy also received four lashes with the cane, but he bore his ordeal with a stiff upper lip.

Then every boy in the Form followed in turn, and was treated in a like manner.

By the time the chastisement of the Third was ended the Form-room resounded with various and mingled howls and yelps and moans and groans.

“Yow-ow-ow-ow!”

“Oh, the beast!”

Mr. Selby laid down his cane at last, and surveyed his squirming Form with glinting eyes.

“Let that be a lesson to you not to lay traps for your master!” he said coldly. “Cease those ridiculous noises immediately, and take up your books!”

The Third-Formers were perforce to suffer in silence, and undergo the further ordeal of preparation.

This lasted for nearly an hour, and throughout the length of that period the Third-Formers writhed under their Form-master’s spleen.

D’Arcy minor suffered tortures untold, for he had already had two canings from Mr. Selby that day, and when this third one took place his palms were still sore and tender.

His heart was heavy, and he vowed bitter vengeance upon the head of his unpleasant and tyrannical Form-master.

Verily, the Honourable Walter Adolphus D’Arcy seemed born to trouble as the sparks fly upward!

CHAPTER 5. D’Arcy Protests!

“WE won’t stand it!”

“Never!”

“It’s too thick!”

“Positively unbearable!”

“And we’re not going to knuckle under to Selby any longer!”

“No fear!”

These were a few of the observations, uttered in excited and determined tones, that proceeded from the junior Common-room at St. Jim’s that evening.

Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, Blake, Herries, and Digby, of the Fourth Form, who had come up the passage outside, halted outside the door wondering.

“Sounds as though Wally’s in trouble again!” observed Blake.

“The fags are holding a meeting of some sort,” said Digby. “They’ve been in hot water with Selby again, I expect.”

“Poor little beggars!” said Herries. “Selby does go for them, doesn’t he?”

The monocle in the eye of Arthur Augustus D’Arcy glimmered.

“The wottah!” he exclaimed. “Let’s go in and see what the wow is about!”

The chums of the Fourth entered the Common-room, and saw Wally D’Arcy mounted upon a chair addressing a noisy assembly of fags.

Wally’s hair was dishevelled, his face was wildly excited, and as he held forth he waved his arms in the manner of windmill-sails.

“Bai Jove!” exclaimed Arthur Augustus. “Wally, dear boy, what’s the wow?”

D’Arcy minor ceased to wave his arms, and looked down at his major.

“Hallo, Gus!” he said. “We’re holding a meeting of protest against Selby’s rotten ways. The old bird’s been going for us again this evening, and we’ve all been licked. Look at my paws!”

He held forth the palms of his hands for inspection, and a gasp of horror arose from the Fourth-Formers when they saw them red and swollen with blisters.

“Selby did that!” said Wally. “I’ve had a dozen strokes so far to-day, and I reckon I’ve beaten my record!”

“Gweat Scott!” exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in horror. “The awful wuffian! What did he cane you for, Wally?”

Wally explained.

The Fourth-Formers chuckled over the episode of the punch-ball arrangement in the Form-room cupboard, but when it came to the Form-licking their brows grew grim.

“My hat!” said Blake. “The horrid cad! Selby ought to be boiled in oil!”

“Hear, hear!” said Herries and Digby.

“Bai Jove!” said Arthur Augustus D’Arcy, his eyes gleaming. “I wogahd Selby as a perfect beast! He’s a tywannical wottah, and ought to be shown up! I’m goin’ to pwotest!”

Wally D’Arcy & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. looked quickly at Gussy.

“You—you’re going to protest?” said Blake faintly.

Arthur Augustus nodded.

“Yaas!” he said. “I’m not goin’ to have my minah tweekt in this bwutal and unweasonable mannah. He’s already been caned most cwelly, and the whole Form have been deprived of their tuck and their half-holiday. It’s time a pwotest was made, and, undah the cires, I considah it my dutay to pwotest to Mr. Selby!”

Blake and Herries and Digby looked at each other speechlessly. As for Wally D’Arcy and his fellow-fags, their breath was quite taken away.

“You ass, Gus!” said Wally. “You’d get your head blown off!”

“Wats!” said Arthur Augustus. “I should wufuse to have my head blown off! I’m goin’ to see Mr. Selby now, and pwotest against his harsh and bwutal tweatment of my minah in particulah, and the Third Form in general!”

And Gussy, feeling himself called upon to champion the oppressed, marched from the Common-room.

“My only Aunt Jane!” gasped Wally. “After him, boys! We can’t let old Gus

walk head-first into trouble! Don’t let him see the Selby bird!”

Jack Blake led the way out of the Common-room.

“Gussy!” he called, seeing the form of his aristocratic chum in the passage outside. “Gussy, you ass, come back! You mustn’t beard old Selby, you know!”

“Wats!” retorted Gussy, quickening his step. “I wufuse to see these young-stahs tweekt in this way, and I’m goin’ to pwotest!”

“Keep off the grass, Gussy, old chap!” called Wally, hastening after his major. “You can’t do any good, and—”

“I’m goin’ to see Mr. Selby!”

Gussy saw the others hastening after him, and his pace increased. Then, when Blake and Wally made a simultaneous dash at him, Arthur Augustus ran for it, and tore at top speed up the passage towards Mr. Selby’s study door.

He reached it quite breathless, with his pursuers a good fifty yards behind.

“Gussy, you chump!” yelled Wally. “You’ll get it in the neck!”

“Wats!” responded Gussy, and as his minor made another dash at him he opened Mr. Selby’s study door and entered rather hastily.

Mr. Selby, who had been writing, jumped up from his chair in amazement. His thin, hard face became pink with anger when he saw the noble swell of St. Jim’s confronting him.

The noble blood of all the D’Arcys was boiling in Gussy’s veins, and his eyes were gleaming with wrath.

“D’Arcy, what do you want here?” exclaimed Mr. Selby. “How dare you intrude into my study, even without the preliminary ceremony of knocking?”

“I’ve come to pwotest.”

“What?”

“I finrly pwotest against this excessive punishment of my minah, and of the whole Third Form!” said Arthur Augustus majestically. “I demand that their provisions shall be returned to them, and their detention for to-morrow afternoon wescinded!”

Mr. Selby stood rooted to the floor. For the moment he could not believe his ears. For a junior of the Fourth Form to march into his den, as it were, like a new Daniel into the lion’s den, and protest against his proceedings, was so astonishing that it quite took Mr. Selby’s breath away.

In the doorway Blake and Herries and Digby and Wally looked at each other speechlessly. They were also breathless, for Gussy had taken away what breath they had left after chasing him.

“D’Arcy!” gasped Mr. Selby at last.

“Boy, are you out of your senses? Leave this room at once!”

“You ass, Gus!” muttered Wally under his breath. “Hook it!”

Arthur Augustus did not heed either of them. He stood his ground, like a Paladin of old, his eyeglass gleaming in his eye.

“Do you hear me, D’Arcy?” shouted Mr. Selby.

“I heah you, sir,” replied Gussy. “I wufuse to allow my minah to be tweekt in such a tywannical mannah! I wufuse to allow him to be detained to-morrow, and I wufuse to see your pupils suffah in the same mannah!”

“You—you refuse!” spluttered Mr. Selby. “You—you refuse! You must be mad, D’Arcy! This astounding insolence—”

“I weapat my words, Mr. Selby!”

Mr. Selby laid a hand on a cane and picked it up, and looked at Gussy menacingly.

“Leave this room, D’Arcy!”

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"Will you rescind the detention, and return the confiscated tuck?"

"I shall certainly do nothing of the sort. Obey me! Go!"

"Undah the cires, I wefuse to go!"

"Gussy!" came Jack Blake's appealing voice from the doorway. "Gussy, old man!"

D'Arcy did not even hear.

"For the last time, D'Arcy," said Mr. Selby, grating his teeth, "will you obey me, and leave this room?"

"I feel bound to wefuse to do so, Mr. Selby!"

Lash!

Mr. Selby's cane came down across the shoulder of the Honourable Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and the swell of St. Jim's uttered a sudden yelp of pain.

"Yow! Ow! You wottah!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoooop!"

The cane rose and fell, and Arthur Augustus staggered back.

"Yawwoogh! Yow! Ow! How dare you cane me!" roared Gussy. "You are not my Form-mastah. Yooop! You feahful wuffan!"

Blake signalled to Herries and Digby.

"Nab the chump!" he muttered.

"He'll go for Selby if we don't!"

Indeed, Gussy was in the act of pushing back his cuffs when his chums grasped him from the rear and whirled him back through the doorway.

"Yawwoogh! You fwahjous chumps!"

"Welease me!" shouted Gussy, struggling. "I'm goin' to administah a feahful thwashin' to that howwid tywant!"

"You're going home to simmer down, old sport!" said Blake grimly. "Haul him along, chaps!"

And, despite the noble Gussy's violent struggles and protests, he was hauled along, away from Mr. Selby's room, and round the corner of the passage.

Mr. Selby stood in his doorway, the cane in his hand, panting with wrath.

Wally D'Arcy was still in the passage, but when Mr. Selby's eye bore upon him the fag thrust his hands into his pockets and turned away.

"D'Arcy minor!" rapped Mr. Selby.

Wally did not reply.

"D'Arcy minor," shouted Mr. Selby, "take a hundred lines for insolence!"

No reply.

Mr. Selby strode out of the study doorway, his face quite green. But Wally, without a word, and without even turning, swung round the corner, and left the chagrined Form-master in the passage.

Mr. Selby seemed to choke; then he turned into his study and slammed the door.

In the Common-room Wally found his aristocratic major in the grasp of Jack Blake & Co., surrounded by a crowd of fags and other juniors.

"You awful asses!" Gussy was saying furiously. "Welease me, and I will return to Mr. Selby and administah a feahful thwashin'!"

"Hold your row, Gus!" said Wally curtly. "Don't you put your spoke in any more. You're a well-meaning ass, but you are an ass, and you'll only make matters ten times worse. I've sent Selby to Coventry!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"I've sent Selby to Coventry, and I expect all the chaps in the Third to do the same," said Wally grimly. "Selby can go and eat coke, and we're not going to speak to him until he lets us off the detention and gives us back our grub. That's flat. What do you say, chaps?"

"Hear, hear!" yelled Curly Gibson enthusiastically. "We'll all send Selby

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to Coventry! We'll make the cad sit up!"

"What-ho!"

"We'll do it, Wally!" chorused the fags, as with one voice.

"Good egg!" said Wally, more brightly. "Henceforth, Selby's in Coventry; and if he doesn't give way by to-morrow midday we'll bunk out of the Form-room and have our holiday, and he can go and chop chips!"

CHAPTER 6.

Sent to Coventry!

MR. SELBY whisked into the Third Form-room next morning, and bestowed a choleric look upon the assembled Form.

Wally D'Arcy & Co. had been conversing noisily before the master had come in.

Now an oppressive silence settled upon the Form-room.

There was a spiteful gleam in Mr. Selby's eye as he regarded the Third Form.

"D'Arcy minor!" he rapped.

Wally looked up.

"D'Arcy minor, stand up!"

Wally stood up, a look of settled calm upon his face.

"Where is that imposition I gave you yesterday?"

Wally did not reply.

Mr. Selby breathed hard through his nose.

"Answer me, boy!" he exclaimed. "Have you disobeyed me, and not done it?"

Wally nodded his head.

Mr. Selby went quite pink, and the Third-Formers shuffled uneasily in their seats.

D'Arcy minor, however, faced Mr. Selby coolly, and did not turn a hair.

"Boy," stuttered the enraged master, "how dare you! How dare you disobey me! Why have you not done your imposition?"

Wally shook his head, but not a word escaped his lips.

The Form-master trembled with rage, and he took a step forward. He halted, however, and looked furiously at Wally.

"Have you lost your tongue, boy? Answer me this instant! Why did you disobey me?"

Wally did not reply. He walked out of his place towards the front, followed by the curious glances of his Form-fellows.

With calm deliberation Wally took up a piece of chalk, and, standing before the blackboard, he scrawled a sentence upon it:

"I didn't mean to do the impot. You are sent to Coventry until you give us back our tuck and let us off detention this afternoon."

Mr. Selby stood rooted to the floor when he read this amazing sentence.

Wally set down the chalk and walked calmly back to his seat.

For a moment Mr. Selby stood there speechlessly, quite overcome. His face took on a purple hue, and he seemed to tremble like an aspen-leaf.

"Good heavens!" he stuttered, like one in a dream. "Can it be possible that I am being treated in this incredibly insolent manner? D'Arcy minor, come here at once!"

Wally left his seat again and came to the front.

Mr. Selby pointed, with a trembling forefinger, to the message that Wally had chalked upon the blackboard.

"What—what does that mean, boy?" he stuttered.

Wally pointed also to the blackboard. Then he again picked up the chalk, and underlined the words: "You are sent to Coventry."

A low murmur arose from the Third Form, and anxious looks were cast at Mr. Selby.

That gentleman seemed on the verge of apoplexy.

"You insolent young scamp!" he stuttered, quivering with rage. "You must be mad—mad! It is incredible—unbelievable—that you refuse to speak to me, your Form-master! D'Arcy minor, do you dare to persist in this—this unprecedented affairs?"

Wally nodded grimly.

"Answer me verbally, boy!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "Will you speak to me?"

A shake of the head from Wally.

"Speak to me! Do you you hear, boy?" shouted Mr. Selby, beside himself with rage.

Wally bit his lip, and remained silent.

Mr. Selby's thin, hard face worked spasmodically. His baleful glance wandered round the assembled Form, but everywhere he met grim looks or averted eyes.

Mr. Selby stood speechless from sheer astonishment at this astounding turn of events. It dawned upon him that the Third Form were in bitter earnest, and that they meant to retaliate for his brutal treatment of them by refusing to speak to him until he "climbed down."

It was an unheard-of predicament for a master to be in. He—Mr. Henry Selby, master of the Third Form of St. Jim's—was sent to Coventry by his own pupils!

"Gug-good heavens!" stuttered Mr. Selby at last. "This is a joke—an absurd practical joke! Gibson, are you adopting the same course as this—this wretched youth?"

Curly Gibson nodded solemnly, and stared the master full in the face.

"Manners, Levison minor, Frayne, Hobbs, Jameson, do you refuse to speak to me?"

The fags thus addressed nodded, and maintained utter silence.

Mr. Selby almost tore his hair.

Wally D'Arcy went over to the blackboard, and underneath his first message he chalked these words:

"Will you do as we ask? We'll carry on with the lesson if you agree."

Mr. Selby clenched his fists hard, and emitted a snort like that of an infuriated bull.

"No, I won't!" he shouted. "I've never heard of such an affair in all my life! You defy me, you—you—you—"

Mr. Selby's voice trailed away. He was so overcome with emotion that his feelings were too deep for words.

Wally D'Arcy calmly walked back to his seat, and sat there in silence.

The silence of the Form-room was broken at last by an incoherent gurgle of fury from Mr. Selby.

"Do you boys still defy me, and refuse to converse with me?" he demanded in concentrated accents, facing the Form.

All the boys nodded their heads.

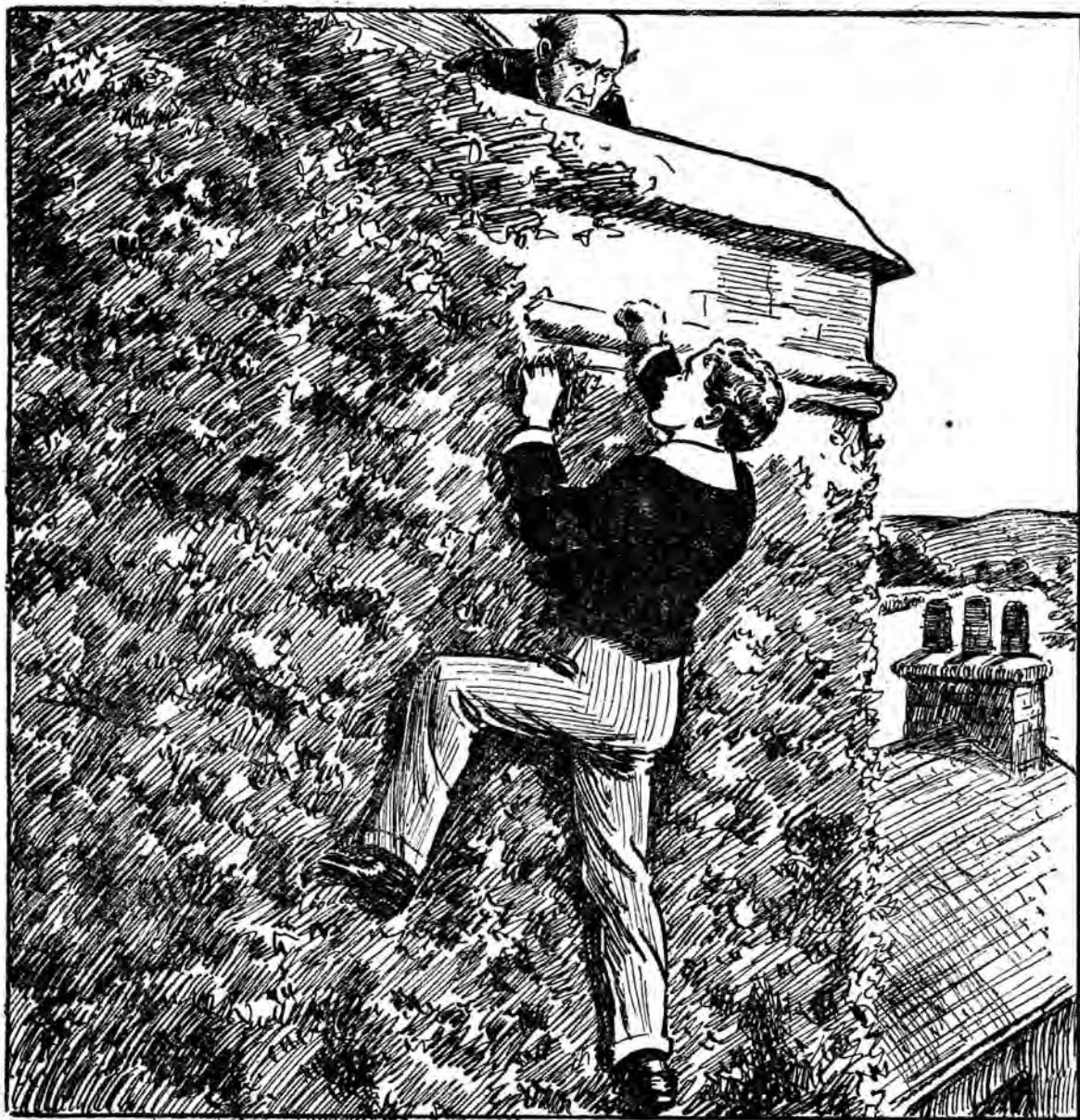
"Very well," said Mr. Selby, biting his lip so hard that the blood came. "I will bring Mr. Railton here and place the matter before him."

And, his face black with rage, Mr. Selby turned and whisked savagely from the Form-room.

Wally D'Arcy & Co. looked at each other when the master had gone.

"Well, here's a giddy go!" said Wally, with a chuckle. "Old Selby's properly got his mad up now, hasn't he? Poor old Selby! He can call Railton here, but we won't give in until Selby does. Mind, chaps, not a syllable to the old rotter, whatever happens. He will be fed up with it before dinner-time."

Jameson shook his head.



"D'Arcy, go back this instant, you reckless young rascal!" said the Third Form master. "I shall not permit you to clamber up here!" (See Chapter 7.)

"I don't know so much, Wally," he said. "Selby's an obstinate beast, you know, especially when he's in a temper. And we've played him on the G-string properly this morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The fags animatedly discussed their campaign of silence against their tyrannical Form-master until hasty steps sounded in the passage outside, and Mr. Selby strode in again, followed by Mr. Railton, the Housemaster.

Mr. Selby's face was purple, and Mr. Railton was frowning.

"Here are the young scoundrels!" said Mr. Selby, in a quivering voice. "They refuse to answer my questions, or to speak to me at all. See what D'Arcy minor has had the impudence to chalk upon the blackboard!"

Mr. Railton read the epistle upon the board, and then he turned, with a worried frown, to the fags.

"D'Arcy minor," he said, "stand up

and tell me the meaning of this unheard-of affair."

"Certainly, sir!" said Wally cheerfully. "Mr. Selby has treated us like a beast and a tyrant, and—"

"D'Arcy minor!" "That's a fact, sir," said Wally stoutly. "He's ground us down, and caned us, and given us impots, and confiscated our tuck, and detained us—all on petty excuses."

"The boy speaks falsehoods!" shouted Mr. Selby furiously. "I have acted justly and properly. I can scarcely allow the boys under my charge to defy my authority with impunity!"

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Railton dryly. "D'Arcy, I am afraid you have taken a drastic and unwarranted course. You must surely realise that you are acting very wrongly in treating Mr. Selby thus."

"Not at all, sir," replied Wally. "I'll

tell you, honour bright, exactly what happened yesterday, and then you can judge for yourself whether Mr. Selby has treated us fairly or not."

And Wally proceeded to narrate the incidents which had lead up to the Third Form sending Mr. Selby to Coventry.

Mr. Railton's frown deepened as he heard, and when Mr. Selby ventured to interrupt he curtly requested the master to be silent and allow D'Arcy to proceed.

"So you see, sir," concluded Wally, "we feel quite justified in acting as we are. We don't mean to speak to Mr. Selby unless he does as we ask."

"You impertinent young scoundrel!" shrieked Mr. Selby. "You are telling falsehoods—"

"Rats!" shouted Hobbs. "Wally's told the truth, hasn't he, chaps?"

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"Hear, hear!" chorused the Third in unison.

"Mr. Railton, I appeal—I beg—" began Mr. Selby. "Do not listen to these perverted youths—"

"Really, Mr. Selby, I am fully satisfied that what D'Arcy minor has told me is perfectly correct," said Mr. Railton coldly. "It appears that you have acted somewhat harshly towards these lads, and in my opinion you were not justified in confiscating their provisions and depriving them of a half-holiday this afternoon."

Mr. Selby's face went livid.

"What—what!" he choked. "Mr. Railton, you—you criticise my rulings, and encourage these young scamps to defy me and flaunt my authority—"

"I do not encourage them to defy your authority at all, Mr. Selby," retorted the Housemaster sternly. "I have merely stated my opinion that you have administered excessive punishment, which I recommend should be modified at once!"

"Really?" snarled Mr. Selby. "I am much obliged for your opinion, Mr. Railton, but please allow me to assure you that I shall deal with my Form as I think fit! I most certainly refuse to give in to them! If they persist in defying me, I shall take stringent measures to bend them to my will."

"Very well, Mr. Selby," said Mr. Railton, bowing. "I leave that entirely in your hands, and shall not feel called upon to interfere unless a disturbance is created in this House. In that event, you may safely be assured that I shall then place the matter before Dr. Holmes."

With these words Mr. Railton swept from the room, leaving Mr. Selby staring speechlessly after him.

The Form-master seemed to gulp, and then recover himself. He turned to the Form, his thin face hard and grim.

"You unmitigated young rascals!" he said tremblingly. "Do you still persist in refusing to speak to me?"

Many heads were nodded, but not a word was uttered by any boy.

"I do not wish to create a disturbance," said Mr. Selby passionately, "but I am determined that the punishments which I meted out to you yesterday shall be fulfilled. Take up your books and commence to study. I shall deal further with you at the end of the lesson."

The Third-Formers looked at each other, and inquiring glances were cast at Wally.

"Carry on with the lesson, chaps," said Wally aloud. "We can mug up the lesson from our text-books without speaking to Mr. Selby. Let's wait till the end of the lesson, and see what he does."

Mr. Selby's face as he heard these words was really remarkable to behold. He seemed, as Teddy Trimble confided to Curly Gibson, about to have a fit. But he uttered not a word, and the lesson proceeded in complete silence.

When the bell rang, indicating that lessons were over, Mr. Selby left his desk and went towards the door, where he paused and faced the Third Form.

"You little rascals will not leave the Form-room at all this afternoon," he said. "I am going now, and shall lock the door. Dinner will be sent up to you, and you will remain in here until I care to release you. I am, you perceive, fully determined not to give in."

Mr. Selby then swept from the room, slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock outside.

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CHAPTER 7.

Wally's Predicament!

"My only Aunt Jane!" gasped Wally.

"Locked in, by gum!" murmured Teddy Trimble in a faint voice.

The Third-Formers stared at each other in deep consternation as the door closed behind Mr. Selby and the lock clicked.

Immediately there was a buzz of excited voices, and every boy jumped to his feet.

"Selby's done us!" bleated Piggott. "Oh, you chump, D'Arcy minor, we're in a worse hole now than ever we were!"

"Gag him!" snapped Wally. "We're going to have no crying off now. Selby's locked us in so that we sha'n't leave the Form-room all the afternoon. Well, chaps, it's up to us to see if we can't diddle the rotter. Get a form, and batter the giddy door down! We won't be done in a hurry!"

"No fear!"

Willingly hands seized a stout form and bore it over to the Form-room door.

They used it in the manner of a battering-ram to try and smash the lock. Crash! Thud! Biff!

The windows in the Form-room fairly rattled, but the form made no impression on the lock. The door was a stout one, built of solid oak, and reinforced with iron bars and bolts, and it withstood the attack of Wally D'Arcy & Co. despite their determined onslaughts.

Even the enterprising Wally had to admit at last that he was baffled.

"It's no good, chaps!" he said dolefully. "The door's as firm as a rock. Oh, if old Selby came in here now, I—I'd scrag him!"

"Hear, hear!"

Wally looked round desperately for another avenue of escape, and his eyes sought the window.

He opened the window and looked out. Sixty feet below was the quadrangle, and the school wall intervening was covered with ivy.

"H'm!" said Wally. "I wonder if the ivy just here would stand my weight? It's pretty thin, worse luck. If it would bear me I'd climb to the ground, and nip into Mr. Railton's study and pinch a key to that door, and let the rest of you out. I—I think I'll chance it."

Curly Gibson and Jameson looked worriedly at their leader.

"It's a risk, Wally," said Curly. "Why not have some rope tied round you, so that we could hold it as you climbed down, and pull you up if you fell?"

"Good wheeze," said Wally, "if you can find the rope!"

"Use the rope off the window-blinds, Wally," suggested Hobbs. "There's plenty of cord in the cupboard, too. Besides, we could cut off all the cord from the maps and use it!"

"Good egg!" chuckled Wally.

Penknives were produced, and every available bit of rope and cord in the room were requisitioned. Every map was bereft of its cord, the ropes were taken from the window-blinds, and even the pictures were taken from the walls and deprived of their cords.

In this manner an improvised rope was made. Handkerchiefs, knotted together, served to make it longer.

"That will be long enough to enable me to reach the window below," said Wally, climbing out on to the window-sill. "Hold on tight to the rope, chaps. So-long!"

"Good luck, Wally!"

Wally sought foot and hand hold on the ivy clinging to the walls, and climbed downwards. His position was precarious, but he held on grimly.

He had almost gained the window

below when it was thrust open, and the head of Mr. Selby himself protruded.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wally, halting in dismay and blinking down at the master.

"D'Arcy!" hooted Mr. Selby, glaring up at the fag. "Go back, you young scamp! Do not attempt to pass here, or I shall seize you! And if you reach the ground by another route I shall have you apprehended immediately. Go back, I say!"

Wally groaned, and, seeing that it was useless to attempt to reach the ground, he commenced to climb back again.

His chums at the window-sill of the Form-room received him dolefully.

"No go, boys!" said Wally despondently. "The old bird's got us in a cleft stick properly. Oh, if his face had been near enough just now I'd have kicked his blessed nose off!"

The fags looked at each other and at their leader gloomily.

Suddenly Wally's face brightened again.

"Why, I know chaps!" he cried exultantly. "I'll try the roof!"

"What?"

"I'll climb up to the roof—it's not far!" said Wally. "Then I can get through the trapdoor and bunk downstairs. I can pinch Railton's key and get this door unlocked before anybody has time to twig!"

"Oh, bravo, Wally!"

Once more the hero of the Third climbed out upon the ivy, but this time he climbed upward towards the roof.

So intent was he that he did not see Mr. Selby look up from the window below and immediately withdraw his head.

"All serene, chaps!" called Wally, when he had ascended a little way. "The ivy's much thicker and stronger here. I'll be up in half a jiffy!"

"Go it, Wally!"

Wally climbed up and up until he almost gained the parapet of the roof.

Progress had been but certain, for it was by no means an easy task that Wally had set himself.

He hauled himself higher, and grasped the parapet. Then a fierce voice broke upon his ears.

"Ah, so here you are again, you reckless young rascal! Go back this instant!"

It was Mr. Selby's voice, and next instant the thin, spiteful visage of the bad-tempered Form-master appeared over the parapet.

"My only Aunt Jane!" muttered Wally. "The rotter spotted me, and got up here first!"

Mr. Selby bent over the parapet and waved an arm furiously at the fag just below.

"Go back! Return to the Form-room immediately, D'Arcy minor!" he cried. "I shall not permit you to clamber up here!"

Wally, hanging on the ivy at that dizzy height, set his teeth hard. If he looked down his nerve might fail him, and to fall from the roof would mean instant death.

So Wally, grimly determined to gain the roof, ignored Mr. Selby's threats and clambered up.

Mr. Selby's face went pink with anger, and he strode forward.

Wally flung an arm over the parapet and commenced to draw himself up.

"You—you dare disobey me!" stuttered the enraged master, overwhelmed with passion. "Go back! I command you!"

Acting on a sudden furious impulse, and quite forgetting himself, the infuriated master wrenched at Wally's arm, which was over the parapet.

The grip of the arm relaxed, and a

shrill cry of terror arose from the fag, for he had lost his grip, and was falling backwards.

Wally's cry seemed to arouse Mr. Selby to realisation of what he had done.

“Good heavens!” he gasped. “What have I done? I—Oh, Heaven!”

He peered over the parapet, and saw Wally falling, feet foremost, from the wall.

Mr. Selby clutched at his face, and staggered away pale with fear.

“I have killed him!” he cried miserably. “I have sent the boy to his death!”

And Mr. Selby dashed away wildly, terrified at the deed he had committed in a fit of blind passion.

CHAPTER 8. Wally's Spoof!

WALLY, in losing his grip of the ivy, had fallen a yard or so.

The fag's presence of mind saved him in the moment of peril. He clutched desperately at a thick, protruding branch of ivy, and by great good fortune it held.

Wally's fall was arrested, and he was able to hold on, and at last find a resting-place for his feet.

“Whew!” gasped Wally. “That was a close shave!”

The fag was trembling slightly. Wally prided himself upon being as tough as nails, but his momentary peril had quite unnerved him.

He regained his composure very quickly, however, and gave an encouraging shout to his scared Form-fellows below.

Then he commenced to climb down again.

He was assisted through the window and into the Form-room by many willing hands, and a score of voices asked whether he was hurt.

“Only a bit shaken—that's all!” said Wally, smiling. “But I reckon old Selby's had the fright of his life. I caught a glimpse of his chivvy as I went overboard, and he looked scared out of his wits. The maniac tried to stop me climbing on to the roof, and I lost my hold and fell. Goodness knows what would have happened if that ivy hadn't been there!”

The fags shuddered.

“Hark!” said Wally suddenly. “I hear familiar footsteps approaching. It's Selby, or I'm a Dutchman. He's come to let you all out now, I expect. My word, I'll give him a scare!”

So saying, Wally took up a piece of chalk and rubbed it over his face. In quite a short space of time Wally's visage looked quite deathly white.

Then Wally grasped the red ink-well from Mr. Selby's desk and poured the red fluid liberally over his forehead.

“My hat!” gasped Frank Levison.

“What's the game, Wally?”

“Shush-sh!” hissed Wally. “Selby's almost here. I'm going to spoof that I'm terribly injured, and will be unconscious when Selby comes in. You chaps must keep the game up, and look scared to death. Tell Selby you saved me from a ghastly doom by hauling me in at the window in the nick of time. You know how to pile on the agony, don't you?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Rather!”

“Rely on us, Wally!”

“Not a word!” murmured Wally, lying down by the window. “Stop grinning, you fellows, and look as if you're at a funeral. Watch me!”

And Wally, lying in a huddled heap on the Form-room floor, closed his eyes, and put upon his chalk-white face such

an expression of agonised suffering that the Third-Formers had great difficulty in keeping from bursting out into roars of laughter.

They managed to look serious, though, as the Form-room door opened and Mr. Selby strode in, his face ashen pale, his lips drawn and haggard.

He fell back at the sight of Wally lying motionless on the floor.

“Good heavens!” ejaculated Mr. Selby, staggering forward. “The poor lad—he is here! You pulled him in?”

Jameson nodded solemnly.

“Yes, sir,” he said. “I suppose we'd better put you out of Coventry now—now that this terrible thing has happened to Wally. We only saved him in the nick of time, too. Look at his chivvy—I—I mean, his poor face!”

Several fags commenced to laugh, but hastily changed their laughs into hollow-sounding groans.

“Thank Heaven he is saved!” gasped Mr. Selby. “But is he—he is dead?”

“Dunno, sir,” replied Jameson. “I'll feel his pulse—I mean, his heart!”

And Jameson, bending down beside Wally, inserted a grubby paw into Wally's waistcoat, and placed it over that part of his chum's anatomy where he fondly imagined his heart to be.

Mr. Selby did not perceive the sly wink that was exchanged between Wally and Jameson.

“His heart is beating, sir!” announced Jameson, at length. “He is still alive!”

“Thank Heaven!” said Mr. Selby fervently, heaving a deep sigh of relief. “The poor lad is wounded and unconscious—”

“Groooooooh!” moaned Wally, in a

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WILL INTEREST YOU!

heart-rending manner, and allowing his eyes to flicker open. “Wh-where am I? What has happened?”

“My poor lad!” cried Mr. Selby, falling on his knees beside Wally and taking his hand. “You are safe now—have no fear, for the danger is past! How do you feel?”

Wally passed a hand dazedly to his forehead, and smeared it with the red ink. Mr. Selby shuddered, for in his heightened state of imagination he thought Wally's blood had been spilled.

“Oh, my head—my head!” moaned Wally. “I'm dying—I know I'm dying!”

“Bear up, my poor boy, I entreat you!” said Mr. Selby imploringly. “You are not dying—all is well!”

“Who are you?” asked Wally, blinking absently at the master. “I seem to know that face somewhere. Who are you?”

“Don't you know me—Mr. Selby, your Form-master?” said Mr. Selby, in trembling tones. “D'Arcy minor, my poor, dear lad! Don't you know me?”

“Mr. Selby—my Form-master!” gasped Wally, recoiling in well-feigned terror. “Oh, I know you now, you tyrant! Had it not been for you and your unjust punishment—”

“Yes, yes, I know it was my fault!” said Mr. Selby, in deep distress. “I'm sorry, my poor boy! If there is anything I can do to make you better—”

“I shall never get better until I know that my Form-fellows have been for-

given,” said Wally, shaking his head solemnly. “If I die, Mr. Selby, my death will lie at your door!”

“Hush, hush, my poor boy!” said Mr. Selby imploringly. “All will be forgiven, I assure you. Your Form-fellows shall have their canteles back, and the detention shall be rescinded. Won't that make you feel better?”

“I feel better already, sir!” said Wally, sitting up. “Oh dear, I do feel a wreck! But I—I'm getting better!”

“That's right, my lad!” said Mr. Selby, his pallid face brightening now that he saw Wally was “recovering.” “You are not seriously hurt, and will be better soon. Go up to the bath-room and bathe your head. I will ask the matron to give you a dose of physic.”

“Groooh!” gasped Wally. “Don't bother about the physic, sir; I'm all right! My strength is returning every minute now. The news that you've let us off the detention and will return our tuck to us has bucked me up no end. I'll be better by dinner-time, sir!”

“I sincerely hope so, D'Arcy,” said Mr. Selby, now quite sobered. “Ahem! I—I'm sorry that this dreadful calamity has befallen you, my lad, but I am pleased to see that nothing terrible has happened. May I—ahem!—rely upon you not carrying this matter further?”

“Oh, yes, sir!” said Wally cheerfully. “So long as we have our picnic this afternoon we don't mind!”

“Very well, my lads!” said Mr. Selby. And, with a haggard look at Wally, he retired from the Form-room.

When Mr. Selby was safely out of the way, the Third-Formers gave vent to their feelings by falling on each other's necks and emitting loud chorales of mirth.

“Oh, Wally, you are a coughdrop!” sobbed Curly Gibson, fairly hugging his enterprising leader. “Old Selby was spoofed properly, wasn't he? Ha, ha, ha! He never had a bigger fright in all his natural!”

“And didn't he climb down a treat!” chorled Hobbs. “Wally, old son, you're a giddy marvel!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Great was the rejoicing in the ranks of the Third Form fags.

Wally made quite a speedy recovery—indeed, had Mr. Selby been in the bath-room and seen the chalk and red ink that Wally washed from his visage, he would verily have been amazed!

Wally was quite his usual cheery self at dinner-time, and Mr. Selby, at the head of the Third Form table, watched Wally's healthy appetite as he made inroads into the steak pie, and breathed more freely.

After dinner, Jameson, Hobbs, and Curly Gibson called at Mr. Selby's study, and were presented with the bag of confiscated tuck.

The Third-Formers held their picnic that afternoon, and it was a roaring success.

Tom Merry & Co. and Jack Blake & Co. chuckled hugely when Wally confided in them the game of “spoof” which he had “worked” so successfully on Mr. Selby. And they agreed that Wally & Co. had established their right to the title of “The Tyrant Tamers!”

THE END.

(Another grand, long, story of Tom Merry & Co., next week, entitled: “BEATEN HOLLOW!” by Martin Clifford. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy EARLY.)

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THE EDITOR'S CHAT.

The Programme for Next Week :

"BEATEN HOLLOW!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next week's magnificent, long complete story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, entitled as above, is one that is bound to prove popular with every Gemite. The story deals chiefly with an amazing challenge which reaches the St. Jim's Junior Cricket Eleven, and of the match which follows. Gordon Gay, of the Grammar School, figures very prominently in a deep plot against the Saints, and, as may be expected, it contains many amusing incidents. In the end Tom Merry & Co. have to admit, for once in a way, that they are

"BEATEN HOLLOW!"

In the next story of the chums at St. Katics', entitled:

"THE DETECTIVE'S DILEMMA!"

By Michael Poole,

Dicky Dexter plays an important part as protector of a curious new friend, whom he met under extraordinary circumstances. This yarn is surely one of the best of the series up to now, and that's saying something indeed. Don't miss

"THE DETECTIVE'S DILEMMA!"

Another splendid instalment of the adventures of

"A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA!"

By "Cooee,"

and a page of bright, and breezy contributions from keen Gemites, paid for at the rate of half-a-crown each, in

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

Without the slightest hesitation I can say that our number for next Wednesday is a real bumper one, and I am sure that you will enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed preparing it for you. So "get going," and give your order to your newsagent to-day, and be sure of securing a copy of next week's GEM Library.

THANKS!

My budget of letters includes one from Fred G. Bissenden, 36, Nightingale Road, Dover. As president of the Wide World Correspondence Club he has decided to suspend operations owing to the rise of prices.—Correspondence is wanted by E. A. Hankinson, 41, Liverpool Road, St. Helen's; Miss Gertrude Farrall, 47, Kimberley Terrace, Parliament Street, Port Elizabeth; Frank Young Box 17, G.P.O., Adelaide; D. G. Eystein, Slang River, P.O., Heidelberg, Cape, South Africa.—Best thanks, too, for cheery letters to Herbert Elliott for his note. He buys two "Magnets," to give one away. "All the boys of the British Empire owe a great deal to you," he writes. I hope to write to this correspondent one day at 24, Fotheringham Street, Marrickville, Sydney.—Competitions are wanted by Miss Nessie Reed, Leumeah, Wpods Avenue, Woolahra, Sydney.—John R. Bates, 841, Broughton Street, Victoria, B.C., Canada, says he is going to live at Los Angeles, where the big films are made. He drops into French about the C.P.'s, and writes them down "Tres bien."

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THE UNION OF AMATEURS.

Mr. Fredk. G. Harrold, 7, Grosvenor Mansions, Goldharbour Lane, Brixton, S.W. 9, tells me that a congress will be held in August to discuss the generalities of amateur journalism. This will be most interesting. Those keen on the subject should communicate with this correspondent.

MR. DUNCAN STORM AND STAMPS.

Is Mr. J. Robertson right in his assumption that the famous author collects stamps? I do not know. I never asked him. I should say most likely it is so, since Mr. Storm is a man of parts, and seems to know most things about everything. Mr. Robertson edits the "Union Philatelist," an excellent stamp paper, so to speak, and his address for mail purposes is P.O. Box 5826, Johannesburg.

THE ENGLISH SUMMER.

It is always the case that folks grumble at the English summer. When the rain holds off for a month—which is seldom—then individuals worry about the drought. As the poet said:

"In meek despondency they eye
The shrunken pools, the rainless sky."

Then, when the refreshing rain does descend, and turns the whole country into something beautiful to behold, the farmer gets crabby, and says his corn or his taters are ruined. So there you are!

DEADWOOD DICK.

A valued correspondent up North continues to urge me to publish yarns about Deadwood Dick and his like, but I am inclined to think that the estimable hero has had his innings. Lo, the noble Red Indian, is not half as popular as he was. These characters come in cycles. For the moment the champion in his blanket, and armed with a spear, is "off," like oysters in midsummer. Of course, the day may come. One never knows. But the pulse of the reading public, old or young, is a curious business, and there is no fighting against the tendencies of the time.

JOURNALISM.

I was talking the other day to an old-time journalist, and, of course, he deplored many of the changes that have come to pass in the newspaper world. It was always like that. When he looks back at the journalism of thirty or forty years since he thinks he sees something stationary, but the fact remains that when he was young journalism was changing pretty much as now. There was a lot that was plaguy dull in the old style, and a great deal that was superlatively good. But people were more tied to conventions then than is the case now. The old newspaper man thinks of old world Fleet Street as a sort of cavern of romance, but who says it is not as excellent and interesting now? But change is part of the game. There is more keenness in these days, and the young fellows are thinking hard. The prosy old lines run:

"Tis education forms the youthful mind.

And as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined."

And there are indications enough that the twig is bent the right way, so that there need be no worry as to the present or the future being in safe hands.

THE BOURBONS.

A correspondent who is keen about French history asked me the other day a question concerning the French Royal Family—that is to say, the race of Bourbon, which was said to learn nothing and forget nothing. Possibly this was a slander; but the Bourbons, who reigned in France from the last years of the sixteenth century to the Great Revolution, and then returned for a short spell after the final fall of Bonaparte, erred by magnifying their office. The first Bourbon king was a genial Democrat. Some of those who followed him forgot the duties of their position in aimless merry-making, and so forth. My chum will find many an engrossing chapter on this period of history.

WHAT CLUBS CAN DO.

A lot of useful work is being put in at various club centres for both boys and girls in the way of carrying on with supplementary studies likely to be of immediate service. There are classes for subjects which are a bit outside the usual school curriculum, such as shorthand, and attention is being given to grammar in a wider sense than obtains at some establishments. It is not the fault of the school that many scholars are left somewhat "in the air" as regards the practical application of what they have learned. It is here that a class of earnest workers comes in. The subject can be carried farther than would be possible at school, and with much advantage all round.

THE FAIR.

If you are lucky enough to be away in the country at this season of the year it is more than possible you will come upon the old, original kind of fair. There is nothing to equal it. It is a good show, and the more old-fashioned it is the better people appreciate the charm of it all. If the fair were brought up to date it would lose half its attractiveness.

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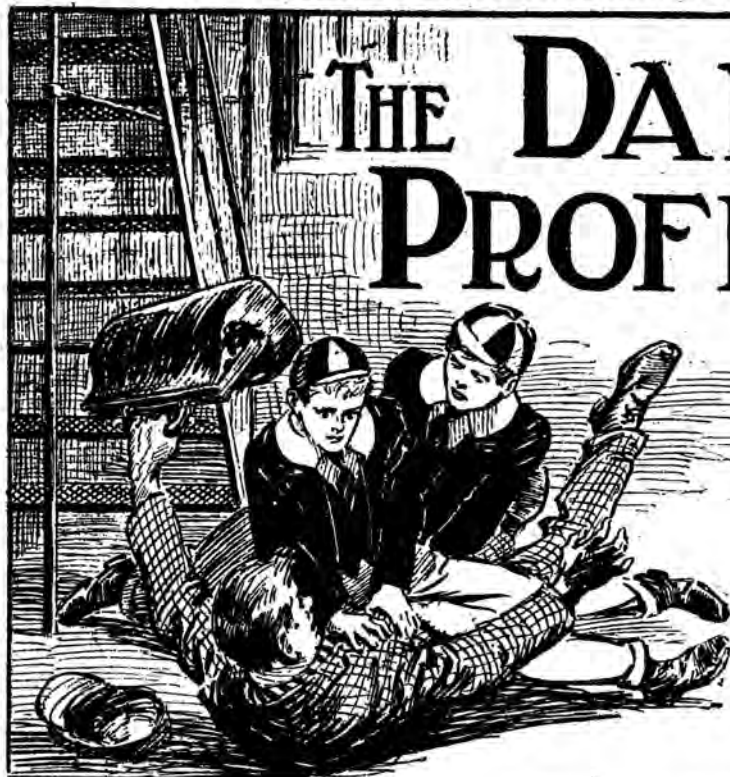
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THE DANDY'S PROFESSION.

A Splendid Long
Tale of Dickie
Dexter and Co., the
Popular Chums of
St. Katie's,

by

MICHAEL POOLE

CHAPTER 1.

Dulchester's Big Blot!

DOBBIN had won the Oliver Photographic Prize. His name was up on the notice-board, and there was no deception about it. Underneath the announcement it said that a copy of the judges' report was now in the library, and could be obtained on application to the librarian, but it was not to be taken away.

Half a dozen photographic enthusiasts glued on to that report at the earliest possible moment.

"My word, my word, my word!" remarked Densom of the Fifth, who had got the third prize and was kindly mentioned by the judges. "They're fairly putting the treacle on you, Dobbie! That's the stuff to give 'em!"

For the judges bubbled over with pleasant words about Dobbin's prints. They were all out for "pictures of life and movement," and threw out lots of suggestions for the camera artists at Katie's.

"Interesting phases of life in a city such as Dulchester are of more importance than fine studies of its architectural beauties, though these certainly have their place. But the object of the Oliver Prize is to encourage boys to make living records—" and so on for quite a long time.

They pointed out that the first prize winner, J. A. Dobbin, had done that, and you can guess that old Dobbie felt tremendously bucked about it all.

You want to grip that idea, because it explains a lot of things that happened afterwards. It's queer how far an idea of that sort will carry you. For a time, at all events, old Dobbie cut out the business of getting photographs of "A Woodland Dell," and "Summer-time in Marshall's Woods." Instead, he wandered round Dulchester getting photographs of real life.

The new idea got an extra spurt on it

one day. Dobbie was in Study No. 10, reading the "Dulchester Star and Record," which was the youngest of the three weeklies which Dulchester boasted. "Read that, Kid!" he said suddenly, and handed over the paper.

"What is it?" demanded the Kid. "The 'Record'! They've always got some giddy excitement, but nobody takes any notice of what they say!" "Best paper in Dulchester!" retorted Dobbie. "But you read that thing about 'The Criminals' Haunts.' It just shows you!"

Dexter read the article, but for the life of him he couldn't see anything that "just showed" him. It was one of the "Record's" usual hot-air attacks on the council, the police, the property-owners, and everybody else.

They asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the Marple Lane district in Dulchester was a disgrace to a civilised city. Burglars, pickpockets, house-breakers, forgers, and dog-thieves made it their home. They demanded that the police should make wholesale arrests of all known burglars, while the council had the whole place demolished, and bright new villas erected immediately. Thus, and thus only, would the Big Blot on Dulchester be removed.

"Well, what about it?" demanded the Kid, when he had absorbed the message to the people. "What's it got to do with us?"

"We're going there, Kid!" Dobbie cried. "Think of it! Years hence there won't be any living records of the haunts of crime in Dulchester—except those that I'll have! 'A Burglar's Home in Dulchester—Anno Domini 1920'; 'The Forger's Children at Play.' Oh, and heaps of others! We're going!"

Usually the Kid was pretty quick to grasp a new stunt, but it took him quite a long time to grip the idea that was buzzing round in old Dobbie's head-piece.

But he did get it in the end, and Dobbie convinced him that they would probably have some real adventures if only the Kid would accompany him on his next photographic expedition.

All of which merely shows you how it came about that on a certain very warm and sleepy afternoon Richard Dexter and his chum Dobbie were strolling down the dirtiest and most dilapidated back-streets of Dulchester.

And, mind you, the "Star and Record" wasn't altogether wrong when it described this particular quarter of the ancient city as the Big Blot. In the days of King Charles the district had been quite an important one, but somehow the repair-merchants had rather overlooked it since then.

"You're an ass, Dobbie!" said the Kid. "You're a burbling idiot of the first water! What d'you want to drag me into a hole like this for? You'll get some prize snaps down here, won't you? My giddy aunt! Let me get home!"

"Shut up!" said Dobbie. "We're only just beginning. What about that queer-looking place over there? Come on!"

To be quite truthful, Dobbie himself wasn't particularly impressed with the possibilities of this district, but he kept hopeful. The Kid followed him across the narrow street and down a dark alley.

They emerged into an even narrower street, which didn't seem to lead anywhere. At the far end, lounging against a blank wall, were four men who seemed to be too tired to move.

"I'll bet they are burglars, or something!" Dobbie whispered to the Kid. "Look at them! You can tell!"

They were a queer assortment. There was one great big chap who seemed to possess any amount of strength, if ever he used it; there was an elderly, whiskery man, who was drawing very

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energetically at the stub end of a cigar, and there were two younger and slimmer fellows, with caps pulled well down over their eyes.

All of them were attired in the most desperately dilapidated sort of clothing, which somehow seemed to be in keeping with the meanness and grime of the street. And they looked "bad men"—so horribly and terrifically bad that there was a sort of fascination about them.

Whether Dobbie had an idea of photographing them or not, I don't know, because he's never been quite certain on the point himself. But he strolled along on the opposite side of the road to that on which the men were lounging. The Kid was a little way behind him.

The men had suddenly become aware of his presence, and were eying them suspiciously. Both the Kid and Dobbie were quite conscious of the fact, but—You know how you would feel? You wouldn't jolly well turn back because four men were staring at you!

Dobbie had his camera slung round his neck, so that it hung in just the right position against his chest. You've heard about Dobbie's wonderful reflex, focal-plane camera before, and it really was a beauty. The men on the other side saw it too, and began to take an interest in it.

The big man whispered to one of his companions, and very slowly the four of them removed their backs from the wall and began to drift across the narrow road. The big man reached the other side just in nice time to compel Dobbie to step on one side.

"You don't want none of them things round 'ere!" the man said, and gripped Dobbie.

The next moment one of the younger men made a grab with both hands at the camera. Fortunately, the strap was a pretty good one, and it did not break.

"Quick!" said the big man. "Give it up! Don't you split, or we'll—"

The smaller fellow had whipped out a jack-knife and slashed away at the strap. The camera was in his hands before Dobbie or the Kid had quite grasped the idea behind this performance.

Instantly Dobbie made a swift grab at his precious camera, and he did it so swiftly and energetically that he had it in his hands before you could have winked an eyelid.

Both he and the Kid turned then, with the idea of making a bolt for it. There wasn't any sense in staying to argue the point with four men.

Probably the Kid would have got away quite easily, but he hung round for a moment to see that Dobbie got ahead of him. In that space the big man and the two younger men had surrounded Dobbie, and you could see Katie's prize photographer struggling like a wild cat.

That was good enough for Dickie Dexter! He buffed the elderly, whiskery man out of the way, and went into the crowd like a flying torpedo.

"Break away, Dobbie! Cut!" he yelled, and lashed out furiously.

For about five seconds after that it was just a mad mix-up. It was four men to one and a half boys, because Dobbie clung to his camera grimly, and that rather weakened his fighting capacity.

But the Kid made up for him. They tried to collar him, but it was useless, and he got home one or two quite scientific punches somewhere in the neighbourhood of the fifth rib.

The big man had jumped back and quickly unloosed the heavy leather belt round his waist. Then he charged into the fray again, and brought the buckle end down on Dexter's head with all his force.

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Dobbie was still having a rough time. The elderly man and one of the younger fellows had now turned to devote their full attention to him, and they had him bent nearly two double in an effort to wrest the camera from his grip.

Slash! came the buckle-end of the belt on to the Kid's head again, and in the moment's dizziness that followed the younger man managed to get in a nasty knock which sent the Kid sprawling to the ground.

He was up again, and tried once more to dash in and give old Dobbie a hand. Just for an instant he had a glimpse of another figure dashing into the group, and then one of the younger men went flying backwards.

"Gr-rh! You kid-snatchers!" The newcomer was much smaller than the big man, but he had whipped the belt out of his hand, and was laying about him in fine style.

"Gimme my belt!" yelled the big chap. "Wotter you buttin' in for, Dandy? This is our—"

"Ger-rome!" cried the rescuer. "Op it—quick! It's kid-sneaks like you as gives the place a bad name! Ger-rome! Out of it! Robbin' a kid of his money-box! 'Op it, yer coppers' narks!"

He flung the belt at the big man, who caught it adroitly and dived into the nearest entry. The elderly man had already gone, and the two younger ones hesitated only a moment or two.

In that moment they whined out some threats, but just what they were the Kid didn't quite understand. Both he and Dobbie stood together now, panting a little, and feeling dazed and dizzy, for the scrap had been pretty strenuous while it lasted.

Yet they grasped the fact that their rescuer was smaller than any of the other four men, and that he was dressed differently. You wouldn't have said he was attired in the height of fashion, inasmuch as he had a muffer, carefully knotted, about his neck, and the Norfolk jacket he wore had seen better days in the long ago.

"Kennel!" He waved his hand in the manner of a dog-tamer to the two men, who still seemed inclined to argue the matter. "Ger-rome! War-ough! Blinking pocket - 'ankerchief - snatchers! Vamoose!"

They went swiftly! Just disappeared down the nearest available opening, and made no further retort.

The Kid was quite observant by this stage. He was impressed with the superior and autocratic manner of their rescuer, by the neatness and comparative cleanliness of his attire, and by the little air of dapper consequentiality which distinguished his movements.

"You're a brick!" the Kid began. "It was jolly good of you to come to the rescue—"

"Cut it right out!" said the man, in a tired voice. "Hurt? Yer pal all right?"

He put his hand on the Kid's head and removed his cap.

"Rah! Big Mike copped you one then!"

The Kid could feel him playing about with the very tender and sore place on his head.

"Come in here!" the dapper man commanded. "You, too!"

This latter was to Dobbie, who was already examining his camera.

He put his arm through the Kid's, and Dobbie followed obediently into a queer sort of shop or warehouse, the door of which the little man opened without troubling to knock.

He led them through one or two dark and dismal rooms to a more comfortably

furnished place at the back, where he commanded both of them to sit down.

Just as they sat down an elderly, weird-looking man shuffled into the place.

"Gemme some hot water, uncle," said Dandy, "bit o' sticking-plaster an' stuff. Big Mike's nearly done a job o' work, the chicken-hearted—"

He went on for nearly two minutes giving a character sketch of Big Mike and his friends. It was a fine piece of descriptive oratory, and it cheered the Kid and Dobbie up considerably to think that there was someone in the world who could describe the big, hulking brute so accurately and well.

CHAPTER 2.

Why Everybody Wondered.

IT was quite a pleasant afternoon, Dobbie didn't get any photographs, but, after the little excitement in the street, the quietness of the sitting-room had a curious charm.

The Dandy patched up the bruise on the kid's head in expert fashion. Then he ordered his "uncle" to bring tea and biscuits, and the tea was jolly good and the biscuits were ripping.

The question of the cut strap on Dobbie's camera was not overlooked even. From somewhere the Dandy produced two or three very similar straps and took out the damaged one, filling its place with the one Dobbie selected.

Over the tea and the biscuits they talked, and at last Dobbie ventured to ask a question which had been puzzling him.

"Were they—Big Mike and the others—were they burglars?" Dobbie asked.

"Them?" gasped the Dandy, and for a moment they thought he was going to smash something. "Them gutter-snipes burglars? Rah! They're scum! They'd be afraid o' their lives to tackle a decent job! Snatching pennies from kids' 'ands, 'ittin' little schoolboys like you, and 'sneaking silk 'ankerchiefs from blind men! Rah! Burglars! I should smile!"

"I only wondered," said Dobbie, "because I read in the papers about burglars living in this part of Dulchester."

Again the Dandy got a trifle excited. It was, he said, such miserable, cowardly, crawling, and contemptible reptiles as Big Mike and his pals who were giving the district a bad name. In reality it was a highly respectable quarter, occupied chiefly by quiet, inoffensive citizens, who paid their rent and rates quite regularly.

He himself had lived here all his life almost without a break, except when business took him away. He was a sort of advance advertisement agent for an insurance company. It was a very complicated business, and they were too young yet to understand it. What he did was to bring home to the people he called upon the advantages of insuring their property with a sound company.

"There's thousands of chaps would be out of work if it wasn't for me and the likes of me," said the Dandy.

"But them reptiles, Big Mike and his pals—rah! If I was a judge, and I got one of them up before me, I'd jug 'im for life! That's what they want. Dishonest, thieving 'ankerchief-snatchers, that's what they are! Let's forget 'em! Cut 'em right out! Have some more of this tea? Now, you tell me about your school. Don't suppose it's quite such a swell place as my old school. I remember when I was a boy—"

Now, up to this stage the Kid and Dobbie had been very much impressed by the Dandy. But when he began to talk about his old school they knew he was pulling their legs—not gently and

quietly, but in an overwhelming sort of way.

It was a school where most of the boys were millionaires, and where the masters wore gold rings and gold breast-pins, and had silver plates. Everybody, in fact, oozed gold and silver and wallowed in it.

“But schools will be different now,” sighed the Dandy. “I don’t suppose you’ve got any millionaires at your school? No silver-plate and joolry knocking round?”

It may be that the Dandy would beat the Kid easily as an insurance advertisement agent, but when it came to leg-pulling he was up against a world’s expert in Richard Dexter. It was a natural talent with the Kid, and he couldn’t let the Dandy have it all his own way.

“We’re rather short of millionaires at present,” the Kid admitted sadly. “I don’t suppose there’ll be more than a dozen or fifteen in the whole school, and even they have to keep to the rule about not wearing more than two gold watches. Of course, my friend Dobbie and I are what are called ‘Poverty Boys,’ because our parents don’t allow us more than two pounds a week pocket-money. Mind you, the headmaster doesn’t encourage too much show. One of the fellows bought a bicycle a week or two ago, and had his name set in diamonds on the frame, just like the Shah of Persia; but the Head made him take it back, and exchange it for a pearl necklace to give to his little sister when he went home. A great believer in kindness is our revered Head!”

The Dandy smiled feebly and looked fixedly at the Kid.

“You’re pulling my leg!” he said gently.

The Kid’s blue eyes opened wider than ever, and he looked back in wonder at the Dandy.

“No, really!” he asserted. “I wasn’t touching you! Tell us some more about your old school, Mr. Dandy. I suppose they had gold plates every day?”

“Oh, yes!” the Dandy said, and there was a hint of sarcasm in his voice. “And never ate anything but goldfish!”

“My goodness!” gasped the Kid. “We don’t do anything like that! Why, we only have silver plate on Sunday, though some of the dukes in the Sixth have their own outfit from the family collection. Worth hundreds and hundreds of pounds, of course, but it’s nothing to what the masters have. I always think it’s a bit unfair that the masters should use the old gold plate of the ancient monastery of St. Katherine’s. Lots of fellows think the same, and say it ought to be melted down and given to the Bank of England, because they’re very hard up for gold, you know.”

“Yes,” agreed the Dandy slowly, and still kept his eyes fixed on the Kid. “An’ they still keep all that boo—that gold stuff up there? S’pose you have a special strong-room for it?”

“No,” said the Kid, quite calmly. “It’s locked up in the glass case, of course, but I’ve often thought—I mean, if a chap like Big Mike knew about it? My hat!”

“Big Mike!” The Dandy smiled in hopeless scorn. “Him? He’d faint! Now— But you were telling me about them masters?”

The conversation went on. The Dandy had entertained them pleasantly, and it was only fair for the Kid to entertain him in turn. With what he invented himself, and what he read about the Tower of London, and what he had been taught about ancient monasteries, he was able to give the Dandy quite an interest-

ing dream of what St. Katie’s might be like—if the Shah of Persia and the Queen of Sheba were running it!

But they had to go at last, and the Dandy offered to accompany them a little way, in case Big Mike and his friends were lurking around.

They reached a more respectable neighbourhood, and here the Dandy was bidding them good-bye, when up strolled a sturdily-built gentleman in a blue serge suit, and stood for a moment or two eyeing them over.

Then he stepped forward, and nodded pleasantly to the Dandy.

“Hello, Dandy!” he said abruptly. “What’s the game now? Not come down to the confidence tale to children, have you?”

“I beg your pardon!” said the Dandy, with quiet dignity. “I’ve just met two of my old college chums, and was able to render them some slight assistance. You’re too clever this time, Mr. Blooming Smithers! Search me! You make me tired! Good-afternoon!”

He waved his hand to indicate that the blue-suited gentleman could retire. For a moment Mr. Smithers hesitated, then turned to Dobbie.

“You’re all right?” he asked quietly. “Lost nothing? No complaints?”

It was the Kid who answered him quickly.

“Of course we’re all right!” he said. “We’re doing the sights of Dulchester, and Mr. Dandy very kindly assisted my young friend when his camera strap broke.”

“Right!” Mr. Smithers jerked. “Bye-bye, Dandy! I’m looking after you!”

The Dandy put his hand in his pocket, took out a penny, and heaved it gently after Mr. Smithers.

“Go and buy yourself some chewing-gum!” he said kindly. “And don’t go over-working yourself this hot weather!”

Mr. Smithers ignored the coin and the remark, and passed on.

“He’s quite a nice chap, really,” explained the Dandy to his two new friends. “A bit simple, perhaps, but quite harmless. Me and a few friends have got him a nice soft job, and he’s quite happy. Well, I’ll leave you now. Look me up at uncle’s any time you’re round this way. So-long!”

They thanked him again for his kindness, and bade him farewell. At the end of the street Mr. Smithers stood and smiled upon them. He also took their photographs mentally, for future use. One never could tell!

“I wonder,” remarked Dobbie, as they tramped back to Katie’s—“I wonder if the Dandy really does help that chap to keep his job? I mean, it’s queer, isn’t it?”

“I’m wondering, too,” said the Kid, quite seriously. “I’m wondering—it didn’t really strike me before—but I’m wondering if we really have seen any burglars this afternoon? It’s a funny world, Dobbie, and when you come to think about it—a sort of advance agent for an insurance company, Dandy said he was—it makes you begin to wonder, doesn’t it?”

Somewhere behind them Detective Smithers was staring hard at nothing.

“I wonder,” he said to himself—“I wonder what on earth the Dandy wanted with two schoolboys? What’s his lay this time?”

Strolling back to his own home, the Dandy was also wondering.

“That kid was pullin’ my leg a bit!” he decided. “But I wonder—shouldn’t be surprised if one of these posh schools was worth tackling. I’ll go and see Slim James this very night!”

CHAPTER 3.

The End of a Perfect Night.

A LONG with many other mild adventures, the affair of the trip to Marple Lane was duly buried and forgotten.

Other things happened. Dobbie got interested in Marshall’s Wood again. The Kid developed quite a number of new interests in life. Amongst them was an entirely secret and well-hidden admiration for J. E. Duff, otherwise the Duffer, the bottom boy of the Transitus.

With the Duffer he had been on a long night joy-ride, and not a soul in the school even suspected it. When, therefore, the Duffer came along one bright day, a week or more after the thrilling episode of the night trip to London, and hinted that he was going for another short ride, the Kid jumped at the chance.

As before, everything went according to plan. The two got out of the school and down to the garage without any fuss whatever.

To-night it was a joy-ride pure and simple, and hadn’t any mysterious adventure tacked on to it. They had put the car back in the garage, and were wandering back to Katie’s again before two o’clock.

Their talk on the way back was about the joyfulness of life, and what a lot those poor fellows missed who wasted so much time in sleep.

And that’s rather queer when you think about it, because two other fellows were under the same impression at that precise moment. Mr. Jeff Dinnock, popularly known to a wide circle as “The Dandy,” was doing a little bit of his insurance advertising business with his colleague, Mr. James Crickham, commonly called “Slim James.”

They had discussed the subject carefully, and come to the conclusion that while as business men they must not be led astray by the boastfulness of infants, there might be quite a lot of useful articles knocking round St. Katherine’s School.

For more than a week they had prepared for this evening. Discreet inquiry revealed the fact that after midnight everybody in the school would be peacefully asleep.

Slim James had purposely paid a visit to the school, and had pointed out to the Recorder the advantages of insuring against burglary and fire with the company he represented, and the Recorder had informed him that they were already fully protected, and that they had proper fire-escapes, and so on.

It was these methods that had earned for James the title of “Slim.” A little window on the first floor of the building could be reached with comparative ease from the fire-escape, and this was the way the Dandy and Slim Jim gained entrance to Katie’s.

They began their business on the ground-floor, but didn’t find any gold or silver plate. Nevertheless, a few trifles were collected, and they proceeded elsewhere.

There was no hurry, you understand, nor did they take just anything and everything that happened to come to hand. What they required were the smaller articles, as far as possible, and they collected these very slowly and carefully.

So slowly, indeed, that after more than an hour the “bag” was a very paltry affair.

They wandered on, and presently began on the more delicate and dangerous side of their profession. It had not really been their intention to

enter rooms where anyone lay asleep, but in view of the fact that the yield was so poor it became necessary to take this step.

"That kid slipped it across me fairly!" thought the Dandy, as he crept cautiously into a bed-room. "Gold plate and gold watches! What's here?"

Just for an instant he allowed his electric-light to flash across the dressing-table of the room he was in. It revealed a gun-metal, illuminated watch, set upright, so that the sleeper on the bed might catch a glimpse of it when he waked, and an assortment of studs and cuff-links neatly and carefully arranged. Quietly the Dandy proceeded to gather them together. He made no more noise than a well-brought up mouse would have done.

But— Did the eagle eye of Jolly Roger really close when he slept? It was Jolly Roger's little collection of ornaments that the Dandy was in the act of snaffling!

And Roger's eagle eye opened swiftly and silently, just in time to catch the tail-end of the flash from the Dandy's lamp.

For two and a quarter seconds Roger's brain rotated. He had every detail in his mind before he moved his eyelids again or stirred a finger. He knew all about the position of the door and the prospect of a sudden descent upon the man, and he decided upon his course—all in two and a quarter seconds!

"Hands up! Don't move!"

Roger jumped up and out even before his icy-cold command had been finished.

Roger's voice at times, as any fellow in the *Transitus* will tell you, got a note in it which went like a steel dagger into your brain, and left you petrified and paralysed. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have put their hands up instantly and gasped for mercy when they heard Roger's voice.

But the Dandy was the hundredth man. He realised in the fiftieth part of a second, having been up against similar problems before, that his one and only chance was to bolt.

"On being surprised at your work, quit—and quit quickly!" was one of the Dandy's mottoes.

He quitted to-night. With a hop, skip, and a jump he had closed his bag, reached the door, slithered through, and banged the door behind him.

A sharp little cry, properly and carefully controlled, left his lips the moment he was outside. It was a warning to his comrade, Slim James, to act upon the above-mentioned motto at once.

Slim James, in a room farther down the corridor, heard the warning, and obeyed instantly. Coming out of the room, he was just in time to avoid dashing into Jolly Roger, who had switched on the light in his room, opened the door, and jumped into the corridor, where he emitted a fearsome yell calculated to waken everybody in St. Katie's.

Roger was between Slim James and the already vanished figure of the Dandy. Turning round at the sound of someone near him, Roger made a swift attempt to close with Slim James.

It was James' desire to get out by the same way he had come. Moreover, it may not be generally known, but it is a strict rule among the higher classes in James' profession that wrestler-matches, shooting-competitions, and all forms of fighting, should be strictly prohibited during business hours.

He had no desire to fight Jolly Roger. But Roger had every intention not only of fighting, but of knocking every ounce of wind out of Slim James' body.

Roger jumped. One hand gripped James' free arm. Instantly James brought his other arm round, and in this hand he held the fairly heavy glad-stone-bag which contained all takings to date.

His swift action did two things. It knocked Roger's arm off, and it jerked the bag out of his own hand. Slim James jumped backward; Roger jumped forward again, but slipped over the bag on the floor for a moment.

That gave Slim James his chance, and he dashed madly away—not in the direction the Dandy had gone, but the opposite way. James didn't know, of course, but the stairs which he came to presently led down to the now-deserted servants' quarters, which meant that Slim James got a non-stop flight to the tradesmen's entrance.

Slim James manipulated the locks and bolts dexterously and swiftly, and passed out into the night. He passes out of this story at the same moment.

Quite a long time before that, however, Jolly Roger had communicated the news to many others, who had been alarmed by his shout. In the dormitories, in the masters' rooms, and in the servants' rooms, lights were being switched on.

You have the picture of Roger, now hastily attired in a dressing-gown, giving swift instructions, and himself leading the way for the front door, because he had caught a glimpse of the Dandy going that way.

Could the limelight have been turned just a little farther round you would have beheld the Dandy, still clinging to his bag, clambering through the little window at the end of the corridor on the first floor.

It would also have shown, almost in the same circle of light, two youths, one of whom was tall and broad, and one quite small, standing half paralysed about a yard away from the bottom step of the fire-escape.

Imagine the feelings of the Duffer and the Kid when they saw lights coming on in all the upper windows! Try and grasp what they felt like when through these same open windows floated the sound of voices, shouting and calling out excitedly!

"My hat!" gasped the Kid. "We're done, Duffy! They've spotted—"

"Sh-rup!" said the Duffer. "Whas-sat?"

They peered anxiously about them. From somewhere quite near at hand came a shuffling sound, and in the very dim light the Kid suddenly caught sight of a figure which seemed to be coming from underneath the emergency stairs and clambering through the ironwork on to the steps.

"Somebody—" he whispered to the Duffer, and Duff squeezed his arm gently.

"Not us!" whispered Duff. "Burglars! Sudden alarm! We'll nab him!"

This just shows you that Roger's brain-brightening exercises had done them both good. Their minds revolved swiftly, and the Duffer's kept perfect pace with the Kid's, so that they knew without really whispering another word what each expected the other to do.

They also realised that if they captured the burglar they might very easily escape particular notice in the excitement.

The Dandy, once he felt himself quite

safe on the iron steps of the emergency escape, jumped lightly and surely down the remainder of the steps. He reached the bottom and—

He got a really first-rate shock! The Kid and Duff didn't give him an earthly chance! Down he went before the two of them, and they were on his chest before you could say "Boo!"

But you've already appreciated the fact that the Dandy was a cool customer. He also had a brain that would have pleased Roger, and the moment he realised that he was on the floor and that two fellows were on top of him, he remembered quite a lot of little tricks for use on such occasions.

"Who are you? Don't you try to run away!" a small voice whispered, and the Dandy moaned—very gently. They could feel him become utterly limp and helpless in their grip.

"He's gone off, Kid!" Duff whispered. "Try and get him to sit up! Steady!"

They raised him slowly, for the Dandy hung limply and heavily.

"Hold the light!" whispered the Duffer, and handed the Kid his pocket-lamp, which he always brought on these joy-rides of his.

The Kid released his hold after he had taken the light. For a moment he switched it full on to the face of the "unconscious" man.

"My hat!" the Kid gasped out, in a queer little whisper. "It's Dandy—the chap, Dobbie— Ah!"

For at that precise moment the Dandy had decided that this was the critical moment to show his hand. He had heard the Kid's voice and recognised him, and knew that the Kid had recognised him in turn! It was time to practise his motto again—quit, and quit quickly!

With a quick lurch he sent the Duffer sprawling, then grabbed the bag, hopped to his feet, and sped away!

Into the Kid's mind jumped three or four clear ideas. He remembered quite vividly that afternoon with the Dandy, and he had a quick, clear-out sort of feeling that it was his gentle yarns which had brought the Dandy here. And now the Dandy was off—carrying a bag!

At times, when it was really necessary, the Kid had quite a good turn of speed. The Dandy had about three yards start, but in the first hundred Dexter had reduced it to about one and a half.

The Dandy was heading straight for the playing-fields, beyond which lay the copse leading down to the river.

It wasn't exactly the time to debate the proper and correct method of attack. The Dandy stumbled a little, and, as he recovered again Dexter, now practically up to him, pushed his foot forward, and tripped him up.

It is doubtful if the Dandy had another fifty yards running in him, and the fall knocked out what little wind he still had. The Kid, being in fair training, was comparatively fit and fresh when he jumped on to the burglar man.

"Silly idiot, Dandy!" he gasped out. "There isn't any gold plate. What have you got? Give it up! We'll cry pax!"

He grabbed the bag which the prostrate Dandy still held.

"We'll cry quits now, Dandy!" The Kid jerked his words out in an excited whisper. "You haven't got anything else? I'll take this, and you bolt. That's fair all round! You were jolly decent! Quick, Dandy!"

From the school came a mingled

chorus. For a time it was uncertain and querulous, but before the Dandy had really stirred, it took on a new note.

The Duffer had watched his chance and joined in with the crowd. Not until then did he give any hint of the direction in which things were happening.

“Over there, sir!” he called out to Jolly Roger. “I saw them—came down with Dexter. The man knocked me down. Dexter’s chasing him, sir!”

In a couple of seconds Roger had given his commands. They made a bee-line for the playing-fields, spreading out fan-wise as they went in order to cover as much ground as possible.

Dexter realised vaguely what was happening, and now he implored the Dandy to get away.

“Run for it, Dandy!” he begged. “Quick, man! I’ll call for help. Go—”

“You’re a good kid,” the Dandy said quickly as he began to understand the position. “See you again some day! Good-bye!”

He made no attempt to take the bag, but just darted swiftly and silently away into the darkness.

A couple of minutes later the slowly-moving scouting brigade were actually beyond the spot where Richard Dexter lay. He was grabbing the bag very firmly with both hands.

“Help! Help!” he cried feebly, and in the twinkling of an eye a shout went up. The fan closed in, and about fifty boys were around him. Jolly Roger, still in his dressing-gown, also appeared, and took supreme command.

“He’s got the burglar’s bag, sir!” they cried. “Good old Dexter!”

The Kid sat up and blinked beneath the rays from Roger’s light.

“I’m all right, sir,” he said weakly.

“I—I got the bag!”

“Good man!” said Roger. “Help him in, boys! Give me the bag!”

They helped him in and up the stairs to the dormitory, where Dexter slipped off some of his clothes with surprising quickness, while he explained something of what had happened.

He had been one of the first to get the alarm, and he and the Duffer got out together—through a window on the first floor because that was the way the burglar went.

The Duffer confirmed every detail, but, of course, the excitement was too intense to worry overmuch about odd items. Jolly Roger had taken the bag and put it with the other one, and was now explaining to the Head and one or two other masters just what had happened.

“We have been very fortunate,” the Head said. “I had better telephone to the police at once, and they may take whatever action they wish. It is only right that they should know. And the boy, Dexter? I will get the doctor along—”

“I don’t think it is necessary, sir,” said Roger. “He will be quite all right after a good night’s rest. A very plucky boy!”

“He is, most certainly!” the Head agreed. “Tell the boys to get back to bed, Blunt. You and I will go into the matter together!”

An hour later every boy in Katie’s was presumably sound asleep, and only in the Head’s room was a light burning. The police were coming to make inquiries in the morning, for Mr. Bird had reported that apparently the burglars had taken nothing with them.

“I think the matter can now be regarded as closed,” said Roger to the

Head when they had done everything necessary, even to examining the burglar’s haul in the two bags. “We can sort these things out to-morrow. I don’t suppose the police will do much in the matter. I hope they won’t worry young Dexter too much with questions. He never really saw the man. You might mention that to them, sir?”

“Certainly!” said Mr. Bird. “I agree with you, Blunt. After all, we have suffered no loss, and, so far as we are con-

But had Roger’s eagle eye noted nothing?

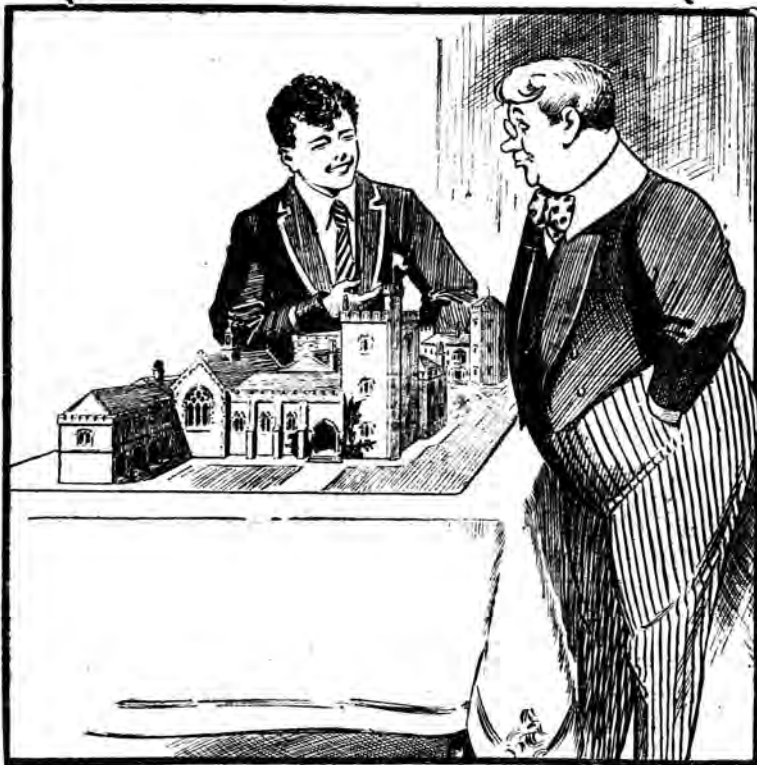
Alas! Roger had observed things! He was puzzled. Why was Dexter in full attire, even to his boots? And the Duffer? Jolly Roger felt that it had nothing to do with the burglary, and he didn’t want the police butting in on a job which concerned Roger Blunt alone.

Dickie Dexter and the Duffer smiled gladly to themselves. Everything had passed off beautifully!

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Billy Bunter: “Oh really, Wharton! That’s a ripping wheel! Where have they shoved the Tuckshop?”

Readers of the “GEM” are advised to order “CHUCKLES” to-day without fail. There will be an unprecedented demand for this Friday’s issue.

cerned, the sooner the whole matter is forgotten the better it will be!”

And that was the end of the burglary at Katie’s. Everybody felt very pleased about the way it had all turned out. Mr. Blunt himself saw the sergeant of police who came in the morning, and Dexter wasn’t even called upon.

But Roger was still alert and watchful, and, being a man of infinite patience, he was prepared to bide his time. He would learn things presently.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Dickie Dexter & Co. next week. Make a point of ordering your copy EARLY!)

A NEW CHUM IN AUSTRALIA!

By "COOEE."

ONE very hot afternoon, when the thermometer showed 106 in the shade, Jack and his uncle stepped on board the turbine steamer *Loongana* at Melbourne, and, after a pleasant four hours' run down Port Philip harbour, found themselves crossing Bass Strait on the way to Tasmania. They were both good sailors, so Mr. Thornton was able to point out to Jack the islands which provide the proof that, although Tasmania is now separated from Australia's mainland by a stretch of sea measuring one hundred and forty miles, it was formerly connected with Australia.

"What's the size of Tasmania?" Jack asked.

"Oh, about two hundred miles from north to south, and two hundred and forty-five miles from east to west."

"Are there any savages there?" Jack inquired rather eagerly.

"No; the last Tasmanian made native died in 1869, and the last female in 1876. They were a most cruel and degraded race."

Next morning they were up very early to see Low Head, and enjoy the view as the steamer swung into the River Tamar and followed its beautiful windings right up to the city of Launceston. A few hours by train brought them to the farm of Mr. Pantion, an intimate friend of Mr. Thornton, since they had come to Australia together.

When they were shown into the dining-room, Jack was astonished to see hopping about, or, rather, waddling about, a huge creature like a rabbit the size of a young

bear. The children laughed when he stopped short, and Mr. Thornton explained that Jack was a new chum.

One of the biggest boys told Jack this was a Tasmanian wombat, and was quite harmless, except that it could give a sharp bite if it was angry. Bob Pantion then took the great ungainly creature, put his arms round it, and sat down with it on his knees as if it had been a baby.

"Hold on a minute," said Bob to Jack, "and we'll show you a bit of fun."

He carried the furry animal outside to a corner of the stable, laid him in a box where there was some straw, and, pressing him gently down, threw a bit of old blanket over him.

"Lie down, Tommy, lie down, go to sleep!" he said to the wombat; and to Jack's intense surprise and amusement Tommy lay down and, catching the edge of the blanket, drew it up to his neck.

"Why," said Jack, "that's what I saw Molly, the chimpanzee, do with a sack in her cage in the Melbourne Zoo."

"Very likely," said Bob, "but it did not take long for Tommy to learn how to make himself comfortable."

They had scarcely finished dinner when Tommy appeared again in the stable-yard, and Jack had time to examine him more closely, and to ask questions about his habits; and Bob was quite eager to give full information.

"The wombat is a marsupial, like the kangaroo, and, although a full-grown one may weigh sixty or seventy pounds, he is a great burrower, as you may see by his claws."

Lifting up a fore paw then a hind paw, Bob showed that Tommy had eighteen curved claws. Then he took an inch-tape and measured him roughly from nose to his short tail—thirty-four inches. Some grow bigger than this a good bit.

"Can he jump or climb?"

"No; he's too clumsy. If he is frightened, he just runs into his hole, and it's surprising what a small hole he can

run into. Sometimes several families live in the same burrow."

"What do they eat?"

"Oh, just grass and roots."

"Is the fur worth anything?"

"No; but the skin is."

"What about its flesh?"

"No use. The early convicts ate it, and said it tasted like pork, but we never think of touching it."

"Do children generally make pets of them?"

"Sometimes, and the wombats get wonderfully attached to the home. A farmer up our way was tired of the one the children had, took it away to a distance to get rid of it, but the creature soon found his way back. He took him away farther the second time, but back he came again. At last he took him across the Derwent River when there was no bridge, but in a day or two there was the wombat again. He had found his way across on a fallen tree. Of course, they had not the heart to send him away again."

While the family were round the tea-table, Mr. Pantion said to Mr. Thornton that he had just come in good time for a bit of sport. A tiger had been among the sheep last night, and they must shoot him at once. It was moonlight to-night, and if Mr. Thornton and Jack cared they could join the hunt. The two men had each a gun, and Bob and Jack followed them carrying good, heavy sticks. Round the face of the bush at the edge of the clear land, a strange whine, not unlike that of a puppy, was heard, and instantly Mr. Pantion stopped and beckoned to them to be quiet. A ghost-like kangaroo hopped past at a distance, and not far behind it a weird form with the paces of a wolf, but more slender-looking. Mr. Pantion fired in a hurry, but seemed to miss, and both kangaroo and its pursuer soon got out of sight.

(More about the New Chum's Australian experiences next week.)

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