

BIG CASH PRIZES FOR READERS! (See our Great New
Competition on p. 11 inside.)

The GEM 1¹/₂^D

No. 161.
Vol. XXII.

LIBRARY

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

September 9th, 1922.



CARDEW PLAYS A PART!

(Ralph Reckness Cardew averts the meeting of Doris Levison and her brother Ernest, who is despised by all at St. Jim's.)

EDITORIAL CHAT.

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums,—

"The Outcast of the School!" is the title of next week's gripping yarn of Levison. I have no hesitation in saying that this series of tales has achieved a record success. Mr. Martin Clifford has invested them all with so much genuine feeling. We see Ernest Levison plunged in the depths of despair, though he hides his real feelings. In the new story he is on the verge of setting the seal on his bad fortune, but through the dark hours of anger and perplexity there is always the suggestion of something better, shedding a light in the gloom, like the little candle mentioned by Shakespeare.

It would be a real pleasure to say a lot more concerning these stories, but space forbids. We see Levison crushed beneath a well-nigh overwhelming burden, and we get a glimpse of the grand spirit of the fellow, of the uphill fight he sustains against tremendous odds.

Then, as the stories have been unfolded, there have been pictures of what can be possible in the sacred cause of

friendship—we see that in the car episode—and there have been sidelights on the touching loyalty of Doris for her brother, likewise the grit of Cardew, the chap who keeps his sarcasm on ice, but who has hidden fires of sympathy and comradeship, to be guessed at, never fully understood.

Some fellows possess tact, diplomacy, and good feeling, and they have a way of performing acts of generosity which you think about afterwards, and feel the better for having known. This GEM series, and the yarn next week go better than anything yet.

I may tell you that future numbers of the GEM will be found full of fine stuff. Mr. Martin Clifford has some splendid surprises in store. He shows us week by week something of what friendship means; also the loyalty to be found in the least expected places; but he has some hilariously spirited stories coming later, for he is just as good a laughter-maker as he is a master of dramatic effect.

The GEM is scoring as usual with its competitions. There have been whole battalions of entries for the "Head 'Em" test, and the judges are getting through their lengthy labours as swiftly as may be. Results will be published in due course. Watch the GEM.

Our new competition, "Silhouettes," is a splendid affair with plenty of novelty about it. As autumn creeps up, there is a demand for something which will pro-

vide amusement of an evening, and prevent one getting the hump because the summer is over. The new feature is the best possible in this special line, and it has a strong appeal to all those fellows who have a sense of humour well developed. That is only another way of saying all GEM readers. Nobody can get along without a sense of humour. It is one of the soundest and most helpful things in life. There has been lots of fun before over the engaging silhouette (it is a bit of a handful as a word), but there will be more yet now that the fresh competition has taken the place of honour in the GEM.

"All On His Own!" continues to draw—Mr. Duncan Storm has surpassed himself in this gripping serial.

Tuck Hampers still reach GEM readers who have sent in witty paragraphs. Heaps of bivouac parties have derived substantial benefit this season from the presence on the al fresco menu of one of these admirable hampers. Don't forget that the Tuck Hamper feature is still going as strong as ever.

Remember that the "Holiday Annual" is on sale, and that now is the time to secure a copy. The splendid book is a treat, and should not be missed. Of course, the rush is tremendous, and that is why I am urging my chums to hurry up and make sure of the "Annual" before the Publisher turns round and says that he has sold out.

YOUR EDITOR.

"MY READERS' OWN CORNER."

A Splendid Tuck Hamper filled with delicious Tuck is awarded to the sender of what the Editor considers the most interesting paragraph. Half-a-crown is awarded for each other contribution accepted.

(If your name is not here this week it may be next.)

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper.

It was the night of the grand concert, and approaching the hour at which it had been advertised to begin. Blobs and Blabbs had engaged a large hall, and expected to make a profit of many hundreds of pounds. At seven o'clock the money-takers, ticket-takers, ushers, and attendants were assembled. "Money-takers all ready?" asked Blabbs. "Yes, sir." "Ticket-takers all ready?" "Yes, sir." "Ushers and attendants stand by the door!" "Right, sir!" "Now open the doors!" The iron doors crashed open. Two small boys entered. "Please, Mister," said a tiny voice, "can we both come in with this free pass?"

A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to:

Arthur Stewart, 4, Dorrington Street, Hulme, Manchester.

"EEL FARE."

The eel is among the mysteries of freshwater life, and even now we have much to learn concerning it. The common eel is born somewhere in the depths of the ocean, and towards the end of winter the great shoals of young eels set out across the seas towards our isle and else.

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where. Their numbers pass all belief, as a single eel mother may have children to the tune of ten million or more, and there are millions of eel mothers. In May or June they reach our coasts and begin to voyage up our rivers. In some rivers, such as the Severn, their numbers are so great that they mount the shallow waters in a solid mass, the time of their arrival being known as the "Eel Fare." Vast flocks of gulls follow the eels inland, and the villagers at the water's edge scoop out sackfuls of the tiny "fishes." The eels return to the sea in the breeding season.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. Freeman, 1. Clausentum Road, St. Cross, Winchester, Hants.

THOUGHTLESSNESS CHECKED.

"Out after hours again, eh?" said the angry father. "Only ten minutes

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late," replied the son. "Well, go at once to your room, sir, lock yourself in, and bring me the key. This thoughtlessness must be checked."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Miss Eveline Hanvey, Khanewal Junction, Multan District, Punjab, India.

THE DISOBLIGING HORSE.

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn hired a horse and trap for a half-holiday's outing in the country. When they reached their destination the horse was unhitched and allowed peacefully to graze whilst they enjoyed some excellent fishing. When the time came to go home, the trio found themselves in a predicament, for none of them knew how to harness the horse. They made many efforts, but with the same result each time. Their chief difficulty was adjusting the bit, the horse making not the least response to their overtures.

"Well," exclaimed George Alfred Grundy, sitting down with a discouraged expression, "there's only one thing to do—wait!" "Wait for what?" asked Wilkins. "Wait for the silly animal to yawn!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to W. D. Reid, 161, Church Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

THE PROBLEM.

Pat was hard at work digging a post-hole when the boss strolled up. "Well, Pat," he said, "do you think you will be able to get all that dirt back into the hole again?" Pat looked doubtfully at the heap of earth, then at the hole, and scratched his head thoughtfully. "No, sir," he replied. "Sure, I don't think I've dug the hole deep enough."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to John Macnab, P.O. 672, Orillia, Ontario, Canada.

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IN DEEP DISGRACE!

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1. The Shadow of Shame.

"FRANK!"

"Trot in, kid!"

"Welcome as the flowers in May!"

Tom Merry and Manners and Monty Lowther spoke with great heartiness, as Frank Levison of the Third Form appeared in their study doorway.

Their heartiness was so great, in fact, that it even seemed a little forced.

The Terrible Three of the Shell evidently wanted Frank to understand that they were feeling very kind and cordial towards him. They wanted to leave no doubt upon that point.

Levison minor came very slowly into the study.

His face, usually one of the cheeriest in the Third, was pale and troubled.

The Terrible Three felt—and looked—uncomfortable. But they summoned up their most hospitable smiles.

Monty Lowther even rose, and pulled out the armchair for Frank—an unheard-of concession from a Shell fellow to a mere fag.

But Levison minor did not sit down. He stood by the table, resting one hand on it, and looking at the chums of the Shell with a troubled yet steady gaze that made them feel more than ever uncomfortable.

"I want to speak to you fellows," he said.

"Go it!" murmured Tom Merry.

"About my major."

Still more uncomfortable looked the Terrible Three. Levison major was about the last subject they desired to discuss with Levison minor. Levison of the Fourth was in disgrace with his House; and the Shell fellows could not see that talking about it would improve the matter—especially with his young brother.

But Frank was obviously determined.

"Are you fellows up against Ernest, like all the rest?" he asked.

"Hem!"

"Only a few days ago you were friendly enough," said Frank bitterly. "You were saying that Ernie won the match against Greyfriars—"

"That's so," said Tom, glad to find one topic, at least, upon which he could say something in favour of Ernest Levison. "He played a wonderful game, and did more than any other chap to help us beat Greyfriars."

"Well, then—"

"But—"

"But what?"

"Nothing!"

"Put it plain," said Frank bitterly. "You're down on Ernie, because of a rotten yarn Trimble has spread about him."

"It isn't that!" said Manners. "Nobody would take the word of Trimble of the Fourth. I wouldn't hang the Kaiser on his evidence."

"No fear!" said Lowther.

"Nobody else has anything to say against him, only Trimble!" persisted Frank.

"It isn't that," muttered Tom. "I'd rather not speak about it, Frank. Whatever we may think about your major, it doesn't apply to you. Nobody is likely to think you're tarred with the same brush."

Frank's face flamed crimson.

"Then you believe it all?" he burst out passionately.

Tom Merry shifted in his chair with great discomfort. He was sorry for Frank—sorry from the very bottom of his heart. He knew what a blow this was to the fag who almost idolised his elder brother. But it could not be helped. He could not pretend to think what he did not think, even for the unhappy fag's sake.

"Do you believe it?" demanded Frank.

"What's a fellow to believe?" demanded Tom, in his turn. "Don't be a young ass, Frank! Do you know what Trimble's accusation is?"

"Yes. Lies!"

"Lies or not, he's put it plain," said Tom. "If—if you still believe in Levison of the Fourth—"

"If!" said Frank scornfully.

"Well, you do, I suppose," said Tom. "I'm glad you do—if it's any comfort to you, kid. But if you do, you can't expect other fellows to do the same simply because he's your brother. Be a bit reasonable."

Manners and Lowther nodded assent to that remark.

"And you're going back on Ernest, because of a slander—ing cad like Baggy Trimble!" said Frank Levison contemptuously.

"Nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Tom, beginning to lose patience a little. "Trimble's only repeated what he heard from a Greyfriars fellow—"

"Bunter of Greyfriars," said Frank; "another rotter like Trimble himself!"

"Well, I don't think much of Billy Bunter, from what I've seen of him," admitted Tom Merry. "But he was at Greyfriars when Levison was in the Lower Fourth there, and I suppose he knows why your major left. Your major knows himself, I suppose, anyhow. If Bunter has told lies—"

"He has!"

"Well, then, all your brother has to do is to prove it, and everybody will be glad to believe him."

There was a short silence.

"You see, kid," said Manners kindly. "Nobody was glad to hear this about your major. Everybody was sorry, and shocked. Everybody thought it was a rotten yarn that he would knock on the head at once. But he hasn't knocked it on the head."

"How could he?" muttered Frank. "He's denied it."

"Yes, we know he's denied that he robbed the headmaster of Greyfriars, and was expelled for it," said Manners. "But a mere denial isn't enough for an accusation like that. Trimble has offered to repeat his words before the Housemaster. All Levison has to do is to go with him to Mr. Railton, and ask for an inquiry. Any other fellow would do it at once. He has a right for the truth to be known, and a word from the Greyfriars headmaster would be enough. I suppose you know that Dr. Locke of Greyfriars would tell the truth about it, if he were asked."

"Of course!" muttered Frank.

"Let him be asked, then," said Manners. "Why doesn't Levison tell the matter he referred to him? He knows, and would tell the truth."

Frank Levison stood silent.

"Ernie won't!" he said at last. "He doesn't want to, I suppose."

Manners shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want to shake your faith in your brother, kid," began Tom Merry.

"You couldn't!" said Frank disdainfully.

"All the better," said Tom, kindly and patiently. "But other fellows haven't your faith in him. How can they have? A fellow is accused of something rotten enough to make a fellow's flesh creep—stealing! He doesn't choose to take the easy and straightforward method of clearing himself. Dash it all, kid, what do you expect fellows to believe?"

"Speak to your brother, not us," said Lowther. "Get him to do the sensible thing. If he's only being an obstinate ass, get him to see reason. But don't ask us to believe that a fellow would let himself be supposed a thief, because he didn't choose to knock the accusation on the head. That's all rot!"

"That's all we can say," said Tom. "If Levison clears

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himself of this, nobody will be more pleased than I should be. But—

Frank Levison turned and went to the door. He did not speak another word.

The chums of the Shell looked at one another in great discomfort. They knew why Frank had turned away without speaking.

He could not trust himself to speak, lest his voice should break, and he should begin to "blub."

The door closed behind Levison minor.

"Rotten!" growled Manners.

"Beastly!" said Tom Merry. "Dash it all! I like to see the poor kid keep faith in his brother. But—"

"But what a rotter his brother must be to bring this on him!" said Manners, knitting his brows. "Of course, it's true about Levison. If he could clear himself he would do so for Frank's sake, at least. He's fond of Frank."

"Of course he would."

"Poor old Frank!"

And with that, the uncomfortable subject dropped in Study No. 10 in the Shell.

CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus Means Well.

"COME on, Gussy!"

"I will wejoin you, deah boys."

"Come on, I tell you, fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You're not going to speak to that outsider!" growled Blake.

The four chums of Study No. 6, in the Fourth, were in the quadrangle after lessons. Levison of the Fourth was coming up the path towards them, and Blake & Co. made a movement to avoid him.

Study No. 6 did not want specially to be unpleasant to Levison of the Fourth. But they wanted to keep out of his way.

The accusation that hung over Levison like a black cloud of shame had to be cleared off before Study No. 6 wanted to have anything to do with him.

But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy hesitated and turned back. Blake and Herries and Digby called to him.

But the swell of St. Jim's apparently had determined to speak to the fellow who, so popular a few days ago, was rapidly becoming an outcast in the school.

"Leave him alone, Gussy!" snapped Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Look here, Gussy—" began Digby hotly.

"No harm in speakin' civilly to a fellah, deah boy."

"I've got no civility to waste on a thief!" growled Blake.

"Thieves ought to be kicked, not spoken to civilly!"

"Yaas, walhah! But—"

"But what, ass?"

"I wufuse to be called an ass."

"Are you coming away?" howled Blake.

"I do not wegard the mattah as pwoved, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am goin' to give Levison the benefit of the doubt. I am goin' to speak to him, and give him some advice—"

"Rats!"

"It is possible, at least, that he might have somethin' to say for himself," urged Arthur Augustus.

"Then why hasn't he said it?"

"I weally do not know, Blake. Pewwaps he is sorely in need of advice fwom a fellah of tact and judgment."

"Fathead!" said Blake and Herries and Digby together. And they walked off, leaving Arthur Augustus to speak to Levison if he chose. They certainly did not choose to do so.

D'Arcy halted in the middle of the path, and met Levison face to face as the outcast came up. Levison would have passed round him, but the swell of St. Jim's held up his hand.

"Pway, hold on a minute, deah boy!" he said, in his politest tones.

Ernest Levison paused, and eyed him rather uncertainly. It was only a few days since the visit of the Greyfriars fellows, when Bunter had told Trimble what he knew of Levison's past—or perhaps what he did not know. But in those few days Ernest Levison had got used to being avoided. He was quite accustomed, by this time, to seeing fellows turn away when he approached.

It was like old times to Ernest Levison, for he had known once what it was like to meet dislike and scorn on all sides. It was not so very long since he had been the black sheep of his House. That was all over and done with. The one-time black sheep had redeemed himself. He had won golden opinions from the best fellows in the school. His old reputation was not easy to live down, but Levison of the Fourth had lived it down. He had been a dog with a bad name; but the bad name had been almost forgotten, till this latest occurrence. Fellows could not help remembering.

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when they were told that Levison had been sacked from his old school for theft, that he had come near being expelled from St. Jim's more than once before his reform.

Levison looked at Arthur Augustus uncertainly and sourly. Whether the accusation against him was true or false, it was undoubtedly having an evil effect upon his disposition and temper. The sulky, sullen strain in his nature was coming to the surface again.

"Not in a huwwy, old chap?" said Arthur Augustus, determined not to notice Levison's unpleasant look.

"Not specially!" grunted Levison.

"Vewy good. I want to say a word or two—"

"Your pals don't!" sneered Levison.

"I twust, Levison, that my fwriends are undah a misapprehension, which you will be able to cleah away."

"Not worth the trouble."

"Eh?"

"Getting deaf?" asked Levison.

"Bai Jove! Weally, Levison—"

"Well, is that all?" inquired Levison of the Fourth.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard. He came very near to losing his noble temper, but he contrived to keep his lofty serenity.

"No, deah boy, that is not all," he said, with resolute courtesy. "I suppose you are awah, Levison, that you are wathah undah a cloud at the pwsent time?"

"Quite."

"It is wathah wotten, isn't it?"

"Very."

"But if you are innocent—"

"If?" said Levison.

"Yaas. If you are, the soonah this is cleahed up the better. It is wotten for you, and vewy hard on your young bwothah Fwank."

Levison's hard face twitched for a moment.

"Morewah," continued Arthur Augustus, "there is Dowis."

"Doris!" repeated Levison, with a start.

"Your sistah," said Arthur Augustus. "I have a vewy gweat wespsect for Miss Dowis, Levison. Any hint of this howwid affaih weachin' her yahs would suahly give her vewy gweat pain. For these weasons, Levison, I advise you to cleah the mattah up, if you can."

"If again!" repeated Levison.

"Now, let us go into it, as fwriends," said Arthur Augustus encouragingly. "That fat boundah, Buntah, told that othah fat boundah, Twimble, that you were expelled fwom Greyfwiahs before you came heah. He declares that it was for wobbin' the headmastah. I cannot weally believe it."

"Thanks!"

"It is not twue, is it, Levison?"

"No."

"Vewy good! For some weason you will not fake the mattah befoah the Housemastah, as any othah fellah would. Will you tell me the weason why, Levison?"

"I won't."

Arthur Augustus coughed.

"You must be awah, Levison, that your wefusal to do so looks vewy suspicious."

"Have you finished?" asked Levison.

"H'm! Not quite!"

"Wound up, I suppose?"

"Weally, Levison, that is wathah ungwacious when I am speakin' to you as a fwend, and twyin' to help you out."

"I haven't asked you to."

"H'm! Now, Levison, lots of the fellows think that you are guilt'y, because they wemembah what a wottah you used to be—"

"What!"

"You wemembah what a feahful wottah you were at one time, Levison?" asked Arthur Augustus innocently. "You were a chawactah I would not have touched with a barge-pole at that time!"

"You silly ass!" roared Levison.

"Bai Jove! There is nothin' to get watty about. I am simply statin' well-known facts," said Arthur Augustus, in surprise. "Pway keep your tempah, deah boy. Now, I was goin' to wemark that I am convinced that you are not anythin' like the wottah you used to be—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"And for that weason," said Arthur Augustus calmly, "I am standin' by you, and I have thought of a dodge for cleavin' you."

"Oh!"

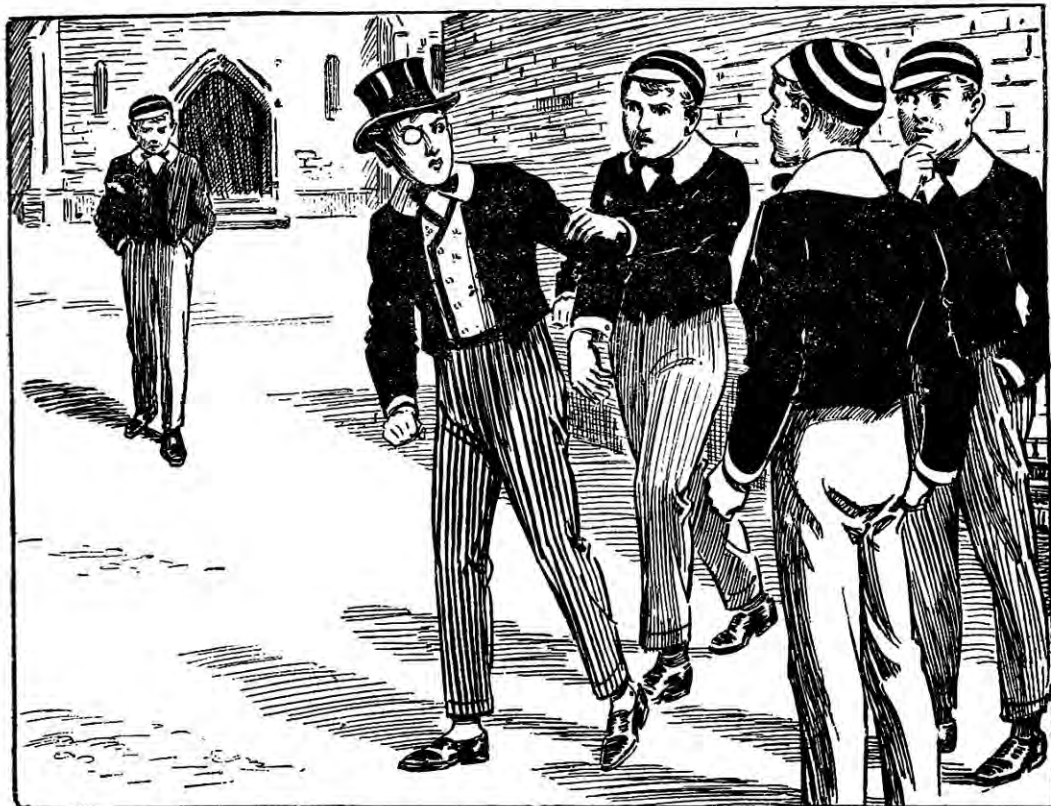
"That intewests you—what?" smiled Arthur Augustus.

"What are you drivin' at?" asked Levison impatiently.

"I am goin' to bowwow the patah's cah next half-holiday," said Arthur Augustus. "We are goin' ovah to Greyfwiahs in it—"

"What?"

"You and I, and a fellow fwom each House as witness—"



D'Arcy halted in the middle of the path and met Levison as the outcast came up. "Come on, Gussy!" growled Blake. "You're not going to speak to that thief!" "I do not regard the mattah as pwoved, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I am goin' to give Levison the benefit of the doubt. I am goin' to speak to him and give him some advice." (See page 4.)

say, Tom Mewwy of the School House, and Figgins of the New House. We are going to call on the Head of Gweyfwiah.

"Great Scott!"

"And ask him for the facts," said Arthur Augustus. "He is bound to cleah you—if you can be cleahed, as I hope and believe. The evidence of Tom Mewwy, Figgins, and myself will be good enough for the whole school. Wathah a wippin' wheeze, old chap—what?"

And Arthur Augustus beamed on Levison of the Fourth, evidently expecting an outburst of grateful surprise.

But Levison did not look grateful. He only knitted his brows.

"You see, an interview with your old headmaster will cleah the mattah wight up," said Arthur Augustus. "It will pwove that you are not afraid to face him and ask for the truth. See?"

"I see."

"Shall we fix it for Wednesday, then?"

"No!"

"Satahday?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"No!"

"Then when, deah boy?"

"Not at all!"

"Eh?"

"Deaf again?" asked Levison unpleasantly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed Levison of the Fourth quietly and steadily. His noble countenance was growing very stern.

"Do you wefuse my offah, Levison?" he asked very quietly.

"Yes."

"May I ask why?"

"You may ask if you like."

"Will you tell me why?"

"No!"

"That is enough!" said the swell of St. Jim's; and there was no friendliness in his face now. His tone was cold and

cutting. "I shall know what to think of you now, Levison. I am sowwy I spoke."

Arthur Augustus turned on his heel. He would have walked away without another word; but Levison spoke, with a bitter sneer on his face.

"You know what to think!" he said. "And what do you think?"

"I would wathah not say," said Arthur Augustus, looking back at Levison, his eyes gleaming with scorn.

"Do you mean that you are afraid to say?"

"Bai Jove! I will show you whethah I mean anythin' of the sort. I weguard you as guilty, Levison, and I considah you an uttah wascal and wottah for shovin' yourself into a decent school, considewin' what you are! I twust that is plain enough for you!"

"Quite!" said Levison. "And I hope this is plain enough for you?"

Smack!

Arthur Augustus gave a gasp, and reeled back, as Levison's open hand struck him across the face.

"B-b-b-bai Jove!" he gasped.

For a moment the noble Gussy seemed unable to realise what had happened. He rubbed his aristocratic cheek, which reddened and tingled under the blow.

"Bai Jove! You uttah cad! I will give you a feahful thwashin'!" he roared.

And with that, Arthur Augustus dropped his eyeglass, and rushed upon Levison of the Fourth, his hands up, and his eyes glinting with the light of battle.

CHAPTER 3. Hand to Hand.

"A FIGHT!" yelled Wally of the Third. "Come on!" D'Arcy minor—otherwise, Wally of the Third—caught his two companions by the arm, and started with them at a run. One of them, Manners, was as interested as Wally. The other, Levison minor, hung back.

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"Chuck it!" he snapped.

"Come on, fathead! My major's in a scrap!" exclaimed Wally.

"Blow your major!"

"Let your major, too, Frank!" exclaimed Reggie Manners.

"What?"

"They're going it!"

"Come on!" exclaimed Frank Levison hastily. He was as keen as Wally now, if not keener.

And the three minors rushed to the spot. A dozen other fellows had already gathered. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Ernest Levison of the Fourth were fighting fiercely—without gloves, and with bitter wrath on both sides.

Blake and Herries and Digby were first on the scene—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther only a few seconds after them. Figgins & Co. of the New House rushed up—and Talbot of the Shell and Kangaroo and Cardew and Clive. From all directions other fellows came speeding to that quiet spot under the elms where the unexpected fight had started. The spot was not quiet now.

"Go it, Gussy!" roared Wally, elbowing his reckless way through the crowd. "File in, Gus!"

"He—he's fighting with my brother!" panted Frank.

"Why not?" grinned Wally. "I say, Frank, I'll back my major against your major!"

"My major could lick either of them!" remarked Reggie Manners.

"Rot, young Manners!"

"Stop it, you duffers!" called out Talbot of the Shell.

"What are you up to? Chuck it, Gussy!"

"Chuck it, Levison!" exclaimed Clive.

Neither of the combatants heeded.

Levison was in a bitter, angry, unreasonable mood. What he had gone through during the past few days, in trouble and stress of mind, had told upon him—told upon his nerves and his temper. He seemed to find some solace in the fight. And Arthur Augustus, who had had his noble face smacked, was out for vengeance.

"What on earth is it about, Blake?" asked Tom Merry.

Jack Blake shook his head.

"Blessed if I know! Gussy would speak to the cad, though we wanted to cut him. But he was friendly."

"Whom are you calling a cad, you rotter?" panted the angry voice of Levison minor, at Blake's elbow.

Blake looked round at him.

A hot and scornful answer was on his lips, but he restrained it. The sins of the guilty were not to be visited upon the innocent. Blake was not as a rule very patient, but he contrived to be patient with Levison minor. He turned away again without answering.

"Let's separate them," said Talbot of the Shell, looking round appealingly at the other fellows.

"Rot!" roared Wally of the Third. "My major's going to lick him! Isn't he, Frank?"

"Not in his lifetime!" snapped Frank.

"Anyhow, it's a jolly good scrap!" said Manners minor.

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"Let 'em get on! I say, Frank, that was a corker on your major's nose!"

"Go it, Gussy!" roared Wally, in great delight.

Ernest Levison staggered back from a powerful drive that had taken effect on his nose. But he came on again like a tiger, and Arthur Augustus was driven back under a shower of rapid blows.

But he rallied and attacked in his turn. The juniors looked on breathlessly.

With the exception of Frank Levison, every fellow there was in favour of Arthur Augustus. He was popular with the whole school, and Levison's popularity was at its very lowest ebb.

And Levison was under a cloud—a cloud of black shame. Even Cardew and Clive, his study-mates, his chums, could not wish him luck, for the expression on Levison's face just then was wholly evil. It seemed that it was the old Levison—the black sheep of St. Jim's—who was there, fighting with Arthur Augustus—not the quiet, steady fellow whom Cardew and Clive had known.

Even Frank was startled by the look on his major's face—the change that seemed to have been worked in his brother. It brought back the memory of what Levison had been when the flag had first come to St. Jim's. Frank had found out very slowly then what Levison of the Fourth was like; in what estimation the rest of the Lower School held him. Ernest had changed; Talbot's influence, and that of his young brother, had helped to change him. But it seemed now that he was the old Levison again—hard, bitter, cynical, ruthless—the Ishmael of his school.

He was pushing D'Arcy hard now, with a bitter and determined attack. Arthur Augustus had mountains of pluck, and he was a good boxer, and a sturdy fellow in spite of his dandified ways. He was putting up a great fight, and it never occurred to his noble mind that perhaps he was a little outclassed. But Levison looked like getting the best of it; and Blake and Herries and Digby frowned as they saw it, and their feelings were shared by most of the other fellows present.

Frank was glad to see his major winning; but his heart was heavy, almost sick.

What was the good of a victory over D'Arcy—one of the best fellows at St. Jim's; a fellow no chap would quarrel with unless there was something wrong about the chap himself? Such a victory was worse than a defeat in a better cause.

"Back up, Gussy!" called out Wally of the Third anxiously.

"Play up, old man!" said Blake. "Give the rotter something hard!"

"Pitch into the rotten outsider, Gussy!"

"Give the cad beans!"

"Don't let that sneaking rotter lick you, D'Arcy! Give him gip!"

If encouragement could do anything, D'Arcy had plenty of that. The feeling was all on his side. Frank did not speak as he heard the expressions that were applied to his brother. What was the use? Every fellow there thought the same. The hapless fag could not fight the whole lower school in defence of a fellow condemned on all sides.

But that general condemnation had a peculiar effect on Levison of the Fourth. It seemed to "buck" him. His look grew harder and more bitter; heedless of the punishment he was receiving, he pressed harder and harder, seeming not to feel the blows that landed on his face. All the evil that was in Levison's nature—and once there had been much evil—came to the fore again now.

"Do chuck it, you fellows!" appealed Talbot of the Shell.

"You'll have a prefect here in a minute."

He was not heeded.

It was a fight to a finish, without gloves and without rounds.

But there was a sudden warning from Figgins of the Fourth.

"Cave! Here comes Kildare!"

Kildare of the Sixth was approaching, with rapid strides, and an angry face. A dozen warnings were shouted to the combatants.

"Look out!"

"Cave!"

"Chuck it!"

But the fight went on fiercely. The crowd of juniors fell back as Kildare of the Sixth strode up. The captain of St. Jim's, with a wrathful glare at the fighting juniors, gripped them each by a collar, and, with a swing of his sinewy arms, dragged them apart.

"Let me alone!" yelled Levison savagely.

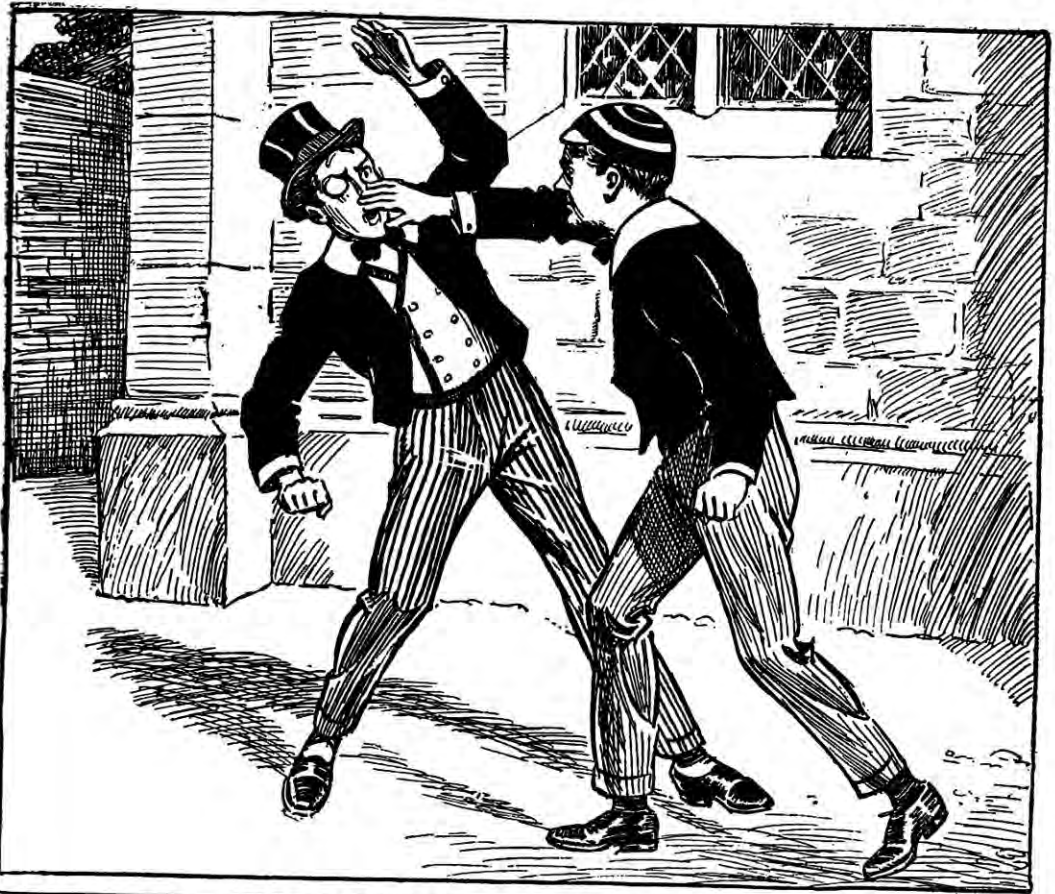
"Bai Jove!"

Kildare stood between them. His brow was dark.

"Now, you young sweeps!" he exclaimed. "What's all this about?"

"Find out!" snapped Levison.

"What?" roared Kildare.



Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave a gasp and reeled back as Levison's open hand struck him across the face. "B-b-bai Jove!" he gasped, rubbing his aristocratic cheek, which reddened and tingled under the blow. "You uttah cad! I will give you a fearful thwashin'!" Arthur Augustus dropped his eyeglass and rushed upon Levison of the Fourth. (See page 6.)

"Find out!"

There was a buzz among the juniors. It was the "old Levison" again, that was unmistakable. And Kildare, with a brow of thunder, dropped his hand on Levison's shoulder.

"Come!" he said briefly.

And Levison of the Fourth was marched away to the School House, and the crowd of St Jim's juniors broke up in a buzz of excited discussion.

CHAPTER 4. Parted Chums.

"W HAT a go!" murmured Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Sidney Clive gave him a glum look.

Levison's two study-mates had met in the Sixth Form passage. Kildare had taken Ernest Cardew to his study for obvious reasons. He had not had benefit of the asphalt in the quad. Levison was to have the benefit of the asphalt in the study.

"Levison's for it!" remarked Cardew.

Clive nodded without speaking.

"What the thump did he cheek Kildare for, Clive?"

"I've heard that that used to be one of his ways, before we came here—checking the prefects," said Clive. "He wasn't always as we've known him, from what I hear."

"He had a juicy old reputation, I know that," murmured Cardew. "I heard of it when I came. I expected to go paintin' the town red with the dear boy. An' I found him a reformed character!" Cardew grinned. "Since then he's almost reformed me! And now—"

Clive made a gesture. There was a sound of severe swishing in the captain's study. Kildare's door was half open.

Swish! Swish!

"That will do, Levison," said Kildare. "You can cut."

"Thanks!" came Levison's answer, in tones of cool, ironic mockery. "Sure you've done?"

"Yes, you young ass! Hold on a minute, though!" Kildare looked curiously at the flushed, sneering face of the junior before him. "I don't quite catch on to this, Levison."

"No? Is there something even you don't catch on to, Kildare? Who'd have thought it?"

"Don't be cheeky again, Levison," said the Sixth-Former quietly. "I know you used to be a cheeky young rotter, but the last term or so I thought you'd changed, rather. I don't quite understand. What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"What were you fighting with D'Arcy about?"

"Ask D'Arcy."

"I'm asking you," said Kildare.

"He didn't like my smacking his face," said Levison coolly.

"You smacked D'Arcy's face?"

"Yes."

"And why?"

"Because I chose."

Cardew and Clive looked at one another. They would never have dreamed of hearing their chum, Levison, answer the captain of the school in that way. It was not as if Kildare had been a bully, like Knox of the Sixth. Kildare was a first-class fellow—popular with all the Forms at St. Jim's. He wielded his authority as head prefect with kindness and consideration; no decent fellow would have thought of "cheeking" him. Levison would not have thought of

it till now. It was not like the Levison they knew. But it was very like the old Levison of whom they had heard.

They wondered what Kildare would say—what he would do. They fully expected him to take Levison by the collar, and give him the thrashing of his life. Perhaps Levison expected it, too.

But Kildare of the Sixth only looked at him quietly, scrutinisingly. When he spoke, it was with calmness, even kindness.

"Is that a proper way to answer a prefect, do you think, Levison?" he asked.

"Near enough," said Levison.

"I will let it pass," said the captain of St. Jim's. "You're asking for a hiding, and you know it, Levison. But let it pass. I don't know what's the matter with you now, but I'd like to give you a chance. Cut off!"

Levison paused.

In his anger and bitterness, he would have liked to feel the prefects, as well as the juniors, "down" upon him, to feel that he was wronged on all sides. It would have justified him in the new bitterness that he was feeling; the bitter, sulky resentment that was growing stronger in him every day, and which he was hugging to himself as though it were something to be nourished.

But the prefect's kindness disarmed him in spite of himself; it made him ashamed. He paused, and blurted out:

"I'm sorry, Kildare! I—I shouldn't have said that, I know. I'm really sorry!"

Kildare smiled.

"Right-ho, young 'un!" he said. "Never mind! But take a tip from me, Levison. You've got a rather peculiar temper, and if you let it rip it won't be good for you. Sulks are not good for anybody. Grievances are about the worst thing a kid can have, if he wants to keep healthy. That's all. Cut off!"

Levison left the study, and the door closed after him.

He started a little at the sight of Cardew and Clive in the passage. He stopped, and looked at them sourly.

"Come and bathe your eye, old bean," said Cardew lightly.

"It needs it, you know,"

Levison's lip curled.

"What are you fellows waiting here for?" he asked.

"You!" said Cardew.

Clive did not speak; he coloured uncomfortably.

There was a rift in Study No. 9—deeper trouble than had ever occurred there before. But, deep as the rift was, Levison's chums had been anxious when he was marched into Kildare's study for punishment. The old friendship had had a severe shock; but it was not dead.

"I think I've asked you not to speak to me again," said Levison coolly. "You've taken sides against me, and that's enough."

"If you won't clear yourself—" said Clive.

"I won't!"

"Can you blame a fellow, then, for thinking that it's because you can't?" exclaimed Clive angrily.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Who's blaming you?" he answered. "I only want you to let me alone. That's not much to ask, is it?"

Clive compressed his lips.

"If that's what you want, you shall have it, without asking twice," he said; and he turned his back and walked away.

"Same to me?" asked Cardew, with a rather curious look at Levison of the Fourth.

"Just the same."

Cardew laughed.

"How lucky that I'm not so sensitive as dear old Clivey!" he remarked. "Come and get your eye bathed, dear boy, or it will be black. You don't want to show Doris a black eye, do you?"

Levison started.

"Doris?" he repeated.

"Isn't Doris comin' along soon?" yawned Cardew. "You told me last week, before all this merry trouble clouded our happy youthful days—"

"It's not fixed," muttered Levison. "I—I hope Doris won't come now. She's got a friend staying with her now, and that may make her put it off. But it's no business of yours, Cardew."

"Quite so; that's why I'm interested. Come and bathe your eye."

Levison walked away, and Cardew followed him. He made his way to a bath-room, where he bathed his eye, and washed, as far as he could, the signs of combat from his face. Cardew handed him a towel with a whimsical smile.

Levison did not speak. When he had finished he went to his study, No. 9 in the Fourth. Cardew strolled after him.

Levison gave him almost an evil look.

"What do you want?" he muttered.

"Nothin'." A fellow may stroll into his own study, I suppose?" drawled Cardew.

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"No doubt. But if you're going to be in the study I'll take my work down to the Port-a-room."

"Why, dear boy?"

"Because I don't want your company."

Cardew sighed.

"Do I bore you, old bean?" he asked. "Is that it? Everybody bores me, and I suppose I'm as heavy a bore as everybody else. What a life!"

"You know quite well what I mean," said Levison bitterly. "You've taken Trimble's yarn as true. That's enough for me."

"If it isn't true, why not disprove it?"

"That's my business."

"Do you think that's really good enough, Levison?" asked Cardew, more seriously than he had spoken before.

"It will have to be good enough. I want no friend who can't take my word that I'm not a thief."

"You haven't so many friends left, old bean, that you can afford to throw 'em away," said Cardew tartly.

Levison had picked up a couple of books and a bundle of papers, and turned to the door. He turned back in the doorway, and fixed his eyes on Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"So you'd stick to me?" he said.

"Dear man, like glue!"

"And you believe I was kicked out of Greyfriars for theft?"

Cardew was silent.

"You believe it, and you'd stick to me," said Levison. "Well, that may be your idea of friendship. It's not mine. Friendship stops when a chap isn't decent. A fellow who would stick to a thief isn't much better than a thief himself. A fellow who would chum with a thief isn't the fellow I'd care to chum with personally. So keep your distance!"

He walked out of the study, leaving Ralph Reckness Cardew staring after him. Cardew drew a deep, deep breath. A fat face grinned in at the doorway after Levison's steps had died down the passage.

"So that's that!" chuckled Baggy Trimble.

Cardew looked at Trimble.

"So you were listenin', Baggy, old bean!" he said.

"I was just passing—"

"Dear man!" said Cardew. "It was your nosin' and spyin' that started all the trouble, wasn't it? You couldn't let sleepin' dogs lie, could you? Couldn't mind your own bizness—what?"

"It's a fellow's duty to show up a rotter like Levison," said Baggy Trimble virtuously. "You ought to be glad I've shown him up. He was taking you in as well as the rest."

"You're such a chap for duty!" said Cardew admiringly. "You're prepared to suffer for doin' your duty, ain't you, old fat bean?"

"Certainly!" said Baggy Trimble loftily.

"How lucky!" said Cardew. "Because you're goin' to suffer now, my old pippin—suffer rather hard!"

And with that Ralph Reckness Cardew caught up a cricket-stump and made a jump at Trimble. Trimble made a jump to escape—too late! Cardew's grip was on his collar, and the cricket-stump rose and fell with terrific swipes on Baggy's fat person. And by the time Baggy Trimble tore himself away, and fled for his life, he had certainly suffered for doing his duty—suffered severely.

CHAPTER 5.

Very Awkward Indeed.

"GREAT Scott!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that exclamation in tones of dismay. His noble face—which bore here and there a mark of his encounter with Levison of the Fourth—was full of consternation.

He had a letter in his hand, and it was evidently that letter which had caused his consternation. Blake and Herries and Digby, Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther had gathered round Gussy as he opened the letter. For they had seen the handwriting on the envelope, and recognised the hand of Ethel Cleveland—Gussy's cousin Ethel—and any epistle from cousin Ethel had an unfailing interest for the heroes of the School House.

"Anything up?" asked Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Bad news?" exclaimed Blake.

"Twilightful!"

"Ethel isn't ill, is she?" exclaimed Digby.

"Not that I am awash of, Dig."

"Good! Isn't she coming, after all?"

"Yaas, she is comin'."

"Then what on earth's the row?" demanded Blake testily. "What are you looking like a boiled owl for?"

"I was rot awash that I bore the wemotest resemblance to a boiled owl, Blake."

"Cough it up, Gussy!" said Monty Lowther. "What's the trouble?"

"It is weally feahful!" said Arthur Augustus. "Ethel is comin' down to-morrow aftahnoon—"

"Good!"

"Is that what you're grouching about?" demanded Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, you're a nice, affectionate sort of cousin. I don't think," commented Blake. "Ethel would be pleased to hear this."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Don't you worry about Ethel," said Tom Merry. "We'll look after Ethel for you, Gussy. I dare say Figgins of the New House will help."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pway don't cackle, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus, in great distress. "I weally do not know what is to be done. It's a frightfully awkward, posish. You see, Ethel has been stayin' with a friend—"

"What about it, ass?"

"Her friend is goin' on a visit to her aunt at Lexham, and—"

"Why shouldn't she?"

"There is no reason why she shouldn't, Blake, that I am awah of. In fact, I think it will probably be vewy nice for her aunt. But as she is passin' through Wayland she is goin' to call in at St. Jim's for an hour in the aftahnoon, and Ethel is comin' with her."

"Well?" said the juniors together.

"Then they are goin' on to Lexham togethah by twain," said Arthur Augustus. "You see how feahfully awkward it is."

"Blest if I do!" said Manners. "I suppose Ethel's friend doesn't bite, does she?"

"Eh? Of course not."

"If she's Ethel's friend I suppose she's quite nice?"

"Yaas, wathah! Awfly nice! I have a vewy gweat respect for her."

"Well, then, you frabjous jabberwock, what's the trouble?" demanded Blake. "We're not short of funds. We can stand a decent tea in the study if they'll come to it. If these Shell bounders want to see Ethel they can come to tea, and whack out in standing the spread."

"Hear, hear!" said the Terrible Three heartily.

"Yaas; but it's frightfully awkward," said the distressed swell of St. Jim's. "It is simply feahful, you know."

"How?" yelled Blake.

"I mean, considervin' the terms we are on with Levison."

"Levison?"

"Yaas, that uttah wottah Levison." Arthur Augustus rubbed his noble nose reminiscently. "The wottah can put up a good fight, but he is a wottah and a wank outsidah. How can we have him to tea?"

"We can't!" said Blake.

"And we jolly well won't!" said Herries, with a grunt. "That doesn't matter. Ethel won't want to see him."

"Well, we were jolly friendly with Levison when Ethel was here before," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "But Ethel needn't be told anything. Everybody can't come to tea, anyhow. She won't be surprised not to see Levison. We weren't so awfully pally as all that."

"Of course not!" said Blake. "Gussy's simply talking out of the back of his neck."

"But Levison will have to come somehow," said Arthur Augustus.

"What utter rot!"

"I tell you Ethel won't notice whether he's there or not!" roared Jack Blake.

"Probably not, Blake, but his sister is bound to notice."

The juniors jumped.

"His sister?"

"Yaas. Dowis, you know."

"Doris?" said Tom Merry & Co. blankly.

A light dawned upon their minds. Jack Blake took the swell of St. Jim's by the collar and shook him.

"You crass ass—"

"Gwooooh!"

"You said that Ethel had been staying with a friend. Is the friend Doris Levison?"

"Ow! Wow! Leggo! You are cwampin' my collah!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"Is it Doris Levison who's coming down with Ethel?" shrieked Blake.

"You are disawwagin' my necktie!"

"You crass dummy, answer!"

"I wufese to say a word while you are artin' like a wuffian, Blake! Wefese my rollah at once!"

Jack Blake released his noble chum's collar. With wonderful self-restraint he refrained from planting his knuckles full upon his chum's noble nose.

"Is it Doris Levison?" he hissed.

"Yaas," gasped Arthur Augustus.

"My only summer chapeau!" said Tom Merry. "Doris now!"

"Of course, Gussy couldn't tell us that at first," said Blake. "He had to keep that for the finish."

"Weally, Blake—"

"What on earth's going to be done?" said Monty Lowther. "If Doris Levison comes here she can't be allowed to know a word about—about what we've all learned of her brother. She can't know! I don't suppose she even knows he was expelled from Greyfriars, let alone what he was sacked for. I don't care what her brother is; she's a thumping nice girl—"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I wouldn't let her get a hint of it for worlds," said Tom Merry hastily. "But—"

"But how's it to be avoided?" said Blake.

"Goodness knows!"

"It is weally a frightfully awkward posish," said Arthur Augustus distressfully. "Dowis would be feahfully hurt. She might cwy." Arthur Augustus' noble face became more distressed than ever at the bare idea of tears in Doris Levison's pretty eyes. "It's weally awful, you know. I would wathah swallow Levison, stealin' an' all, than make a gal cwy."

"I—I suppose we can't make it up with Levison—for one occasion only?" murmured Manners.

"We can't touch Levison with a ten-foot pole!" growled Herries. "I know I'm not going to be civil to a thief."

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Goodness knows what's to be done!" said Tom Merry, with a worried brow. "Anything is better than hurting Doris' feelings."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"But—but—" Tom rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "I suppose it's too late to put off the visit, Gussy?"

"It is not exactly a visit, deah boy. They are callin' in for an houah or two on the way to Lexham. I suppose I could not send a telegram, tellin' them not to call in?"

"Great Scott! No."

"But—but if they come together—" stammered Blake. "Oh, that rotter Levison! If he wasn't such a shady rotter we shouldn't be landed in this. Fancy a chap with a sister like Doris being such a rascal! He wants a thundering good hiding!"

"We could give him a hiding!" suggested Herries.

"What good would that do, Hewwies?"

"Well, it would serve him right."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I don't think we shall improve matters by giving Levison a black eye to show his sister to-morrow," he said. "We seem to be fairly landed in a rotten scrape. Confound Levison!"

"Yaas, wathah! Blow him!"

It was a distressful problem for Tom Merry & Co. to solve. The trouble was that they simply couldn't solve it. Doris Levison was coming—in innocent unsuspectingness of what had happened at St. Jim's. Her last visit had shown her Ernest Levison on the most cordial terms with Tom Merry & Co. Now he was cut by all the juniors, barred by every fellow in the House, excepting, perhaps, Cardew, turned down even by rotters like Racke and Crooke. If Doris had been coming alone to see her brother, Tom Merry & Co. could have arranged engagements elsewhere for the occasion. But she was coming with cousin Ethel, so engagements elsewhere were out of the question.

The two girls, naturally, would be together during the visit. And it was scarcely feasible for Tom Merry & Co. to look after Ethel, and Levison to look after his sister, without speaking to one another. The rift in the lute would be apparent at once.

Doris would ask Ernest or Frank what the trouble was. She would learn the facts; they could scarcely be hidden. And then—

Somehow, anyhow, the knowledge of what her brother was had to be kept dark somehow. But how? That was the problem to which Tom Merry & Co. could find no answer.

And, with that worry on their minds, the chums of the School House could not help their feelings towards Levison growing more and more bitter. Even in the old days, when Levison of the Fourth had been the black sheep of his House, he had never been quite so obnoxious to Tom Merry & Co. Somehow Doris was to be spared. But every member of the Co. felt a deep and almost overpowering desire to lay violent hands on Levison of the Fourth, and give him the hiding of his life.

(Continued on page 12.)

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

St. Jim's Parliament.

AN UNPOPULAR BILL.

A MEETING of the St. Jim's Parliament was held on Thursday evening in Pepper's Barn. In consequence of the disturbance at the last meeting, special measures had been adopted by the Speaker upon this occasion.

Every member had to submit to being searched before passing through the doors, and all or any weapons of offence, such as pea-shooters, water-pistols, catapults, and the like, together with blotting-paper and bottles of ink for the preparation of ink-balls—overripe fruit, eggs, bags of flour, and all articles designed or suitable for use as missiles were confiscated. The Speaker was taking no chances on this occasion.

By the time the members had satisfied the searchers and taken their seats there was a goodly collection of these articles in a box in charge of the Speaker, and he took his place with a more than usual assurance and peace of mind.

In accordance with custom, the cellars of the barn were also searched, a proceeding which has been instituted since, and by reason of, Grundy's attempt to disconcert the assembly by means of a pyrotechnic display last Fifth of November. The Shell fellow is to the St. Jim's Parliament what Quay Fawkes was to the Mother of Parliaments—a menace!

Gusny had given notice that he was going to bring forward a Bill giving power to juniors of the Fourth and Shell to inflict punishment upon members of the Third Form for any breach of sartorial etiquette, and compelling them to change their collars more frequently. The hon. member had prepared a speech for this purpose, and he produced some sixty sheets of foolscap covered with writing, which, he explained, were merely the rough notes of his proposed and intended discourse.

He was allowed to get about thirty seconds' worth of it off his chest, and then he was stopped, and voting took place, with the result that the Bill was thrown out. There was no discussion—at least, if one excepts that of the mover of the measure, for Gusny's indignation at this summary treatment was such that he made a spirited protest couched in terms that were extremely derogatory to the rest of the members, and almost resulted in his sharing the fate of his rejected—and ejected—Bill.

Order was, however, eventually restored, the members of Study No. 6 undertaking to keep the Hon. Augustus on the lead, and business was resumed.

The Parliament seems fated to be the storm centre of a perpetual disturbance, however, for shortly afterwards the Speaker was assailed by a volley of well-directed peas. He rose in wrath, concluding that either the searchers had been inefficient or that some of the searched had been unexpectedly cunning, only to discover that the rest of the assembly were raising an outcry in consequence of their participating in the outrage.

The marksmen were not within the building, either, for the sound of chuckles was heard to come from the direction of the windows, and it transpired that the peas

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were being directed from the same coign of vantage. It seems that the Third-Formers had somehow got wind of Gusny's proposed Bill, and had turned up in full force to investigate the matter. Finding the Parliament assembled, they came to the conclusion that the Bill was being discussed, probably in a favourable manner, and decided that it was time their views upon the matter were brought before the notice of the members. Their method of doing this was characteristic—and effective.

In consequence of the Speaker's precautionary measures, the assembly were unarmed, and there was a wild scramble for the door, which proved to be secured on the outside. The members then turned their attention to the box containing their appropriated weapons and ammunition, but it was a case of "more haste, less speed," for the eager hands that were dipping into it were impeding each other, and all the while the deadly artillery of the fags was at work.

By the time the imprisoned juniors had retrieved their armoury the fags had expended their ammunition, with the maximum of effect, and they retired in good order leaving the Parliament raging furiously, but impotent.

In fact, it was not until a member had negotiated the window—no easy task, but one that they are becoming used to—and removed the obstruction that the besiegers had erected against the door that they were able to get out of the barn at all, and by that time the attacking party had gained security in their own Common-room.

Needless to say, poor old Gusny, as the originator of the Bill that had provoked the trouble, came in for the blame.

Scouts' Field-Day.

RYLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL TROOP DEFEATED.

LAST Saturday the St. Jim's Scouts were engaged in a field-day against the troop attached to Rylcombe Grammar School.

The Saints were under the command of Troop-leader Tom Merry, and the Grammarians under Troop-leader Gordon Day. The St. Jim's troop were numerically the stronger, six patrols of six turning out against four of the Grammarians. The advantage of superior numbers is not so great, however, in scouting games as it would be in military manoeuvres, as there is more scope for individuality and strategy.

Three flags were placed in the ground, in a clearing of some bushes, about two hundred yards from each other, and the Saints surrounded this in a wide circle, so St. Jim's scout being allowed to approach within four hundred yards of them. The Grammarians were required to obtain possession of the flags, by working their way unobserved through the St. Jim's cordon and back to their own headquarters a mile or so away.

The capturing of two of the flags would ensure victory for them, and they had two hours in which to accomplish the task.

Cardew b-d brought his motor-cycle and acted as orderly to the troop, assisted by half a dozen more Saints on ordinary machines. These fellows carried messengers from one patrol to the other in addition to patrolling the open roads on the watch for Grammarians.

The only flag to be captured was taken away by Frank Monk, the leader of the Grammarian "Beaver" patrol, within half an hour of the start of the game, but he was unable to get clear with it, and so the score did not count.

When the "Cease Fire" sounded on a bugle, the Grammarians had not gained possession of one of the trophies, and eleven of their scouts had been captured by the St. Jim's outposts. Seven of the School Troop had been put out of action by the other side, and the result was therefore a decisive victory for the Saints.

After the game the two troops made camp-fires and settled down to a meal. Each scout boiled the water for his own tea by means of the small camp-stoves, so that he carried at the bottom of his haversack, and a few of the more clumsy managed to upset their water over the fire, causing clouds of unpleasant black smoke to arise to the great disgust of the other users of those particular fires.

After tea the fires were gathered together into one big blaze, round which the troops gathered for a sing-song before marching back to their respective schools.

The Grammarian Troop, rather snarling under their defeat, have issued a further challenge to the Saints, and Tom Merry is arranging for another field-day to take place in the near future, when the School Troop hope to repeat their success.

Jack Blake, the leader of the "Owl" patrol, is writing an account of the game, describing how Monk's attempt at capturing the flag was frustrated at the last moment by the woodcraft of Wildrake, to whose efforts the victory of the Saints is largely due, and this article will appear in the "News" later.

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Cricket!

ST. JIM'S v. RYLCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

A NARROW VICTORY.

By the Sporting Editor.

THE match between St. Jim's and Rylcombe Grammar School provided some thrills, and was, indeed, one of the most closely-contested games that has taken place on Little Side for a considerable time.

St. Jim's were within an ace of being defeated, and it is safe to say that it was Tom Merry and Fatty Wynn who pulled the game out of the fire for the Saints. Fatty Wynn is entitled to the greater amount of the credit, perhaps, as, in addition to a fine performance with the leather, he put up quite a good show in his innings. It was the wagging of the Saints' tail that saved the day.

The Grammar School went in first—it was a single-innings match—and Gordon Gay opened with Frank Monk, Wynn and Noble were bowling, but the Grammarians were at the top of their form, and they actually succeeded in knocking up three boundaries off the first two overs.

They settled down to play in earnest, and although both bowlers sent down of their best, the Grammarians notched forty-four without giving them any chances. The St. Jim's fellows were beginning to look jolly glum when a lightning delivery from Fatty Wynn whipped Monk's middle stump out of the ground. In the next over Fatty disposed of Gay, but the rest of the Grammarians put up a stubborn fight, and their innings closed for the respectable total of 157.

After a short interval the Saints went out, Tom Merry and Blake opening the innings. In the first over Tom Merry narrowly escaped disaster, being missed by Lane at cover-point. It was the only chance he gave, however, and after that he could do nothing wrong. The partnership came to an early termination, for, with only four to his credit, Blake was clean bowled by Frank Monk. Talbot took his place, but at 17 he was run out, owing to a misunderstanding. Then came Figgins, Kerr, and Noble, in a succession that only yielded 26 runs, and when Lowther came to the wicket the score was 93 for five, of which Tom Merry had notched a level 50.

Then came disaster. Johnny Goggs was bowling in magnificent style, and wrecked Lowther's wicket with the first ball. To the dismay of the Saints, he repeated the performance with D'Arcy, and there were loud demands from the Grammar School spectators for the "Hat Trick."

Goggs did not succeed in this, but he came very near to it, for Digby, the next batsman, only stood up for two balls, the second of which took his middle stump. From the first he had gained a two.

Eight wickets for 95. No wonder the Saints began to look blue. Tom set his teeth as Redden came out to join him. Reddy knew what was expected of him, and he set himself to stonewall, and gave Tom the batting. When he had to face the bowling, he endeavoured to snick the ball away for a single, in order to change ends with Tom, and give the bowling to his skipper. In this manner he piled up five before he was finally bowled out, while Tom had added another 24.

Nine for 124; 34 wanted to win. Fatty walked out to the wicket, amid a dead silence. He had the batting, but he stonewalled to perfection. Then came Tom's chance. He hit out at everything almost recklessly, and finished the over with another 17 runs added to his score. Moreover, by running a single, for what was a safe two, off the last ball of the over, he was again facing the bowling. But he had no opportunity for repeating the manoeuvre at the end of that over, which brought him another 6, and Fatty Wynn had to make the best of it.

And Fatty made such a "best" that he actually got clever off the bowling, and thus scored the winning hit. It is needless to say that at the tea which followed, Fatty was given the freedom of the table.

"SILHOUETTES"

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WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Here is a splendid opportunity for you to win one of these generous prizes.

On this page you will find six silhouettes, each showing a person doing something, and what you have to do is to write in the space under the picture the exact action portrayed. Thus, No. 1 is obviously "SAWING." All the actions can be described in one or two words, but not more than two words.

When you have solved this week's picture puzzles, keep them by you in some safe place. There will be six sets in all, and when the final set appears you will be told where, and when, to send your efforts.

You may send as many complete sets of efforts as you please.

The FIRST PRIZE OF £25 will be awarded to the reader who succeeds in submitting a set of solutions exactly the same as, or nearest to, the set of solutions in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. No competitor will be awarded more than one share of the prizes.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boys' Friend," the "Magnet," and the "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

It must be distinctly understood that the decision of the Editor is final and binding.

"IN DEEP DISGRACE."

(Continued from page 9.)

CHAPTER 6.**"Old Levison" Again.**

LEVISON of the Fourth had a thoughtful frown upon his face when he came into the Form-room the following morning.

He did not exchange a word or a glance with any other fellow in the Fourth.

Cardew glanced at him, but he was careful not to meet Cardew's eyes, and the dandy of the Fourth shrugged his shoulders.

It was not his ostracism that Levison was thinking about. He had hardened his heart on that subject; he seemed, indeed, to derive some sort of a dark, sulky satisfaction from his outcast position. But the thought of his sister Doris touched him more nearly.

He had expected that Doris would call at St. Jim's on her way to Lexham when the date was fixed for her visit to Aunt Catherine. He had not, of course, foreseen that she would do so in company with Ethel Cleveland. That was unexpected, and he had learned of it by the same post that brought Ethel's letter to Arthur Augustus.

He had had plenty of food for thought since then. He had only mentioned to Frank that Doris was coming, and cautioned him to say no word that would enlighten the girl as to the new state of affairs. Not that Frank needed the warning. He was not likely to utter a syllable to let Doris know that all the school believed her brother to be a thief, expelled from his old school for a despicable crime.

Mr. Latham found serious fault with Levison in class that morning.

It inspired that he had done no preparation the previous evening; and, added to that, he was absent-minded, careless, and—as soon as he was found fault with—impertinent.

All the Fourth noted that he was the "old Levison" once more—cool, cynical, reckless of consequences. Some of them surmised that his reform had been, after all, a cunning piece of camouflage, and that Levison had never really changed at heart; or that he had grown tired of decent ways, and was glad to drop back into his old manners and customs.

Of late, Mr. Latham had found Levison an excellent pupil. He had great powers, if he chose to exert them—and of late he had chosen. Now he seemed to have dropped back all at once into his very worst ways. The little Form-master was patient at first, but he lost patience when Levison yawned in his face.

He blinked at Levison over his glasses and picked up a cane from his desk.

"You will stand out before the class, Levison!" he said curtly.

Levison rose and lounged out before the desks, with his hands in his pockets and a sneer on his lips.

The Fourth-Formers watched him almost breathlessly.

It was the old Levison—at his worst. Mr. Latham's brows contracted with anger as he observed the insolence of the junior's manner.

"Hold out your hand, Levison!" he said.

"Oh, certainly!" yawned Levison.

"Do not answer me in that manner, Levison."

"What manner, sir?"

"That insolent manner, Levison!" thundered Mr. Latham.

"Another example of this insolence, and I will take you to the Head, and request Dr. Holmes to administer a flogging."

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Levison had four cuts—an almost unexampled severity in Mr. Latham's class. His hard face did not even twitch;

Levison's stoicism was almost that of a Red Indian.

"Finished, sir?" he asked, with perfect coolness.

Mr. Latham almost choked.

"Levison, what does this mean? Go back to your place, boy! Any more of this, and you will be detained for the afternoon."

Levison started, and he went back to his place quietly enough. He could endure the caning, and he would not have shrunk from a Head's flogging; but detention for the afternoon was more serious to him, as his sister was to be at St. Jim's. He did not want Doris to find him under detention. If he was indifferent to the opinion of St. Jim's, he was not indifferent to Doris' opinion.

For the remainder of morning lessons, therefore, Ernest Levison was extremely circumspect.

Mr. Latham was glad to see that severe punishment had brought the boy to his senses. As a matter of fact, the punishment had been totally without effect, except to harden Levison's heart, if the Form-master had only known it.

After classes Levison left the Form-room with the rest—

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unconscious, apparently, of their existence, without a word or a glance for any of the Fourth.

Cardew, however, was not to be ignored. He joined Levison in the corridor with a cheery, smiling face, and walked by his side.

"You played the goat in the Form-room, old bean!" he remarked.

No answer.

"What on earth did you want to get Mr. Latham's rag out for?"

Levison did not answer or look at him. He walked on, and Cardew, with a whimsical grin, walked with him. Sidney Clive made no motion towards his old chum. He was more than fed up with Levison's new peculiar mood. But Cardew, somehow, was displaying a patience that few would have suspected him of possessing. He was seeing Levison as he had never seen him before—he was making acquaintance, as it were, with the "old Levison," and he found the "old Levison" distinctly interesting. This, he knew, was what Ernest Levison had been like in the older days, before Cardew had come to St. Jim's. And, strangely enough, he found himself more attracted to Levison now than he had ever been before, though perhaps it was not strange with a fellow of Cardew's erratic nature.

Cardew, with all his outward mask of nonchalant indifference, was as sensitive as any fellow at St. Jim's. But he was taking ruthless rebuffs from Levison with smiling patience.

"I understand that Miss Doris is comin' this afternoon, old bean," he said, as they went into the quadrangle.

"No business of yours, that I can see!" said Levison, breaking his grim silence at last.

"That's why I'm buttin' in. My little way, you know," said Cardew cheerily. "Won't it be rather awkward—considerin'?"

"Yes."

"Can I do anythin' to help?"

"No."

"Dear man!" said Cardew, as Levison, with that curt reply, turned and walked away from him.

He looked round for Tom Merry & Co. The Shell were not yet out, but he spotted Blake & Co. in the quad and bore down on them. They did not regard him very kindly—Blake and Herries and Dig, at all events. His persistent cordiality towards the barred junior irritated them. But Cardew seemed impervious to grim looks.

"There's goin' to be a giddy visitor this afternoon," he remarked casually.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Would you mind keeping all your conversation for Levison, Cardew?" asked Jack Blake.

"Do I bore you?" sighed Cardew.

"If you talk to that fellow you ought to keep clear of other fellows who don't care for thieves."

"Yes, rather!" said Herries.

"Pwaj hold on, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus mildly. "Cardew is Levison's chum, and pawwaps he believes in him. If he does, it is vawy fatehead; but, at the same time, vawy much to his credit."

"Oh, rot!" said Blake crossly. "One can make allowances for young Frank, but Cardew knows the facts as well as we do."

"Better, perhaps," yawned Cardew.

"Do you believe that Levison was not sacked from Greyfriars for theft?" demanded Blake.

"Do I believe anythin'?" said Cardew. "What's the good of arguin'? But about the giddy visitor, I suppose you agree with me that Miss Levison oughtn't to hear anythin' of this little trouble?"

"Of course. She won't hear anything from us," grunted Blake.

"Good! If you fellows find it possible to stoop a little off your high moral perch for one occasion only, you might try to keep Miss Doris from seein' that there is anythin' on."

"Yaas, certainly; but as Ethel is comin' with her—"

"What?" ejaculated Cardew.

"Cousin Ethel and Miss Dowis are comin' togethah. It is a twighfully awkward posiah."

"Great Scott!" Cardew drew a deep breath. "Then you fellows will have to take Levison up for this afternoon, at least."

"We can't!" said Blake.

Cardew's sleepy eyes woke up with a glitter.

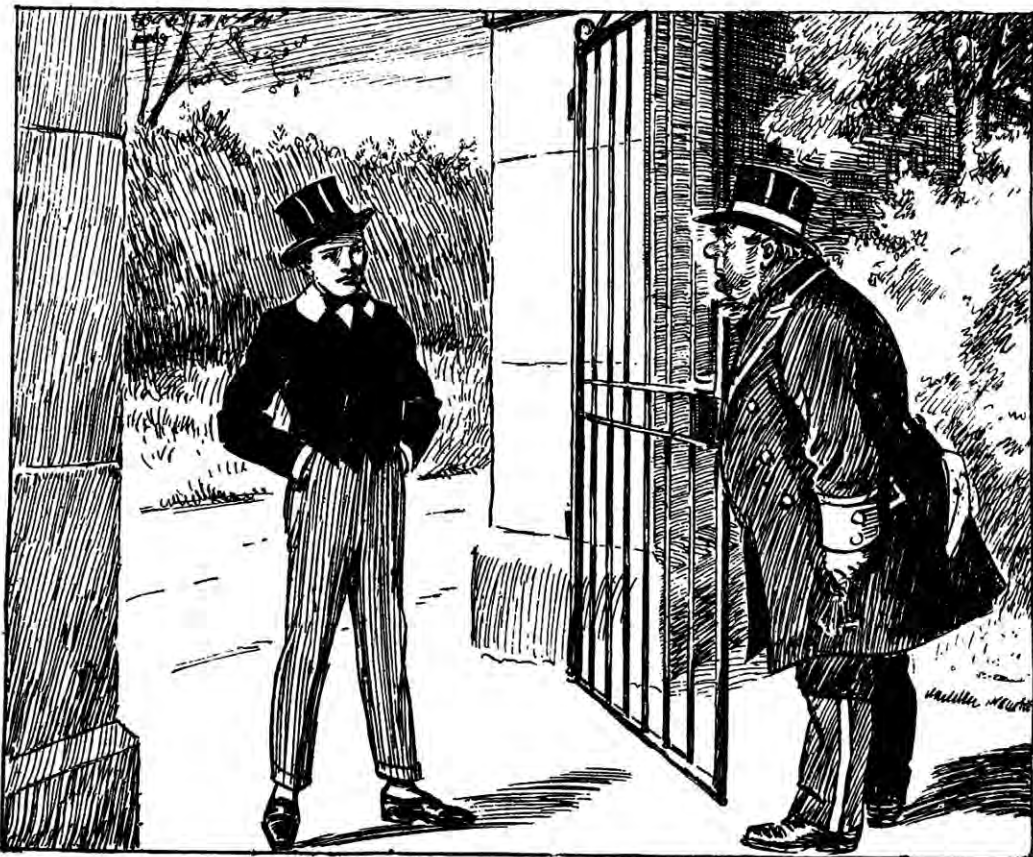
"Are you goin' to let Doris Levison see her brother an outcast?"

"It's his own fault!"

"It's not her fault!"

"I know that," said Blake savagely; "and we're bothered enough about it, without you chipping in, Cardew. What the dickens do you care, anyhow? You don't care for anything but your precious self."

"Right on the wicked, deav old bean! My best friend is named Ralph, and he's a chap I like immensely," said Cardew urbanely. "Still, there's such a thing as courtesy,



Cardew halted in the gateway and looked at the old school porter. "Dear old Taggles," he said. "It's a pleasure to see you again. Has Levison come in, old top?" "Huh! Yes!" "And Tom Merry?" "Yes," answered Taggles. "Will you step out of the way of the gate, Master Cardew?" "Yes," said Cardew. "When I've finished questionin' you!" (See page 19.)

You can't let Miss Doris see you scowlin' at her brother. You can't tell her the facts. If she's with Ethel, you can't help bein' with her, an' Levison will be with her. What a jolly party!"

"Oh, dry up!"

Cardew shrugged his shoulders, and walked away. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther came out of the School House, and there was a discussion between the Terrible Three and Study No. 6. But the problem remained unsolved when the juniors went in to dinner.

CHAPTER 7. Bitter Blood!

"**E**RNIE!"

Levison of the Fourth made an irritable gesture. He had gone to his study after dinner—perhaps to think out the curious problem that was also worrying Tom Merry & Co. He did not seem pleased to see his minor when Frank came timidly into the study.

"Well?" he rapped.

"About Doris, Ernie. She will be at Rylcombe at three."

"Well?"

"Hadh't we better meet her there, and make some excuse for not bringing her to the school?" faltered Frank.

Levison gave a grunt.

"D'Arcy's cousin is coming with her," he said reluctantly.

"Oh," said Frank, and the troubled look on his young face deepened, "you—you didn't tell me that!"

"Well, I've told you now."

Levison drummed moodily on the table. Frank watched his lowering face, his lips quivering. Was this his brother Ernest—the fellow who had never failed in kindness to him since he had been at St. Jim's? Frank knew—though he

never referred to it—that it was his coming, as much as anything else, that had turned Ernest from his old rotten ways. Now he seemed to have lost all his influence over his brother.

"It's rotten," grunted Levison, at last. "If Doris were coming alone, we could manage. But a crowd of those fellows will be at Rylcombe to meet the train, as Ethel Cleveland's coming. You could be there." Levison's lip curled. "They still honour you with recognition. I can't be there with them."

He drummed savagely on the table again.

"Doris mustn't know—" began Frank hastily.

"I know that."

"She's bound to see you, Ernie. And—and if Ethel is with her—" Frank faltered. "You'll have to be with the other fellows."

"And I can't!" said Levison.

"Perhaps—perhaps they'd stretch a point—"

Frank's voice failed him as his brother gave him a fierce, moody look. There was a tap on the open door, and Levison looked round with a scowl as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came in.

The swell of St. Jim's came in with his most stately manner. He was calm and courteous, but icily distant.

"I am sorry to intrude, Levison—" he said.

"You can soon alter that by getting out."

"Weally, Levison—"

"There's the door!"

A faint pink came into Gussy's cheeks. But he maintained his lofty calmness.

"A vewy awkward posish has awisen," he said. "It appears that your sistah is comin' to St. Jim's with my cousin."

"I know that."

"Quite so. It would be wathah wotten for my cousin Ethel to heah anythin' of—of our little twoubles heah. But it would be vewy wotten indeed for Miss Levison to heah anythin'. For that weason, Levison, I have come heah to make a suggestion."

"You can save yourself the trouble," said Levison grimly. "Ernie!" whispered Frank.

"Pway heah the suggestion, Levison. I have persuaded some of my friends to play up. There is no need for all of them to be pwesent, but that will not mattah. Tom Mewwy, and Blake, and Lowthah, and Figgins of the New House have agreed to back me up, and to cawwy on this aftahnnoon as if nothin' had happened, for the sake of the gals."

Frank Levison's face brightened up. But on his brother's face there was nothing but a sneer.

"It is undahstood, of course, that we wegard you as you are already awah that we wegard you," said Arthur Augustus. "But we are willin' to play up—for this afternoon—for the sake of savin' your sistah's feelin's. She will find us all on appawntly good terms with one anothah. Her stay will be bwief, and we can stand it."

Levison gave him a bitter look.

"You and your precious friends are willing to take me up for a couple of hours—"

"Yaas!"

"And then drop me again like a hot potato—"

"Natuwally!"

"And you think I'll take it on?"

"Yaas, Levison, I trust so, for your sistah's sake."

Levison's lip curled ironically.

"If you can humbug to that extent, D'Arcy, I can't. And I won't! If you and your friends choose to apologise for the way you've treated me—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Then I'll get back to the old footing. Not otherwise."

Arthur Augustus gave him a contemptuous look. Cardew strolled into the study, but he did not join in the talk. He stretched his elegant limbs in the armchair, and took up a book. As he held it upside-down, however, it was probable that he was not deeply interested in it.

"We are not likely to allow you to wesume the old footin', Levison, now that we know—" Arthur Augustus paused.

Levison of the Fourth pushed back his cuffs, and came round the table, with a glitter in his eyes.

"You know—what?" he said, between his teeth.

"Ernie!" muttered Frank miserably. His brother did not even glance at him. His eyes were fixed on D'Arcy, with a threatening challenge in them. It was obvious that he was prepared for a quarrel and a fight on the spot.

But the swell of St. Jim's declined to be drawn. He stepped back to the door with lofty dignity.

"I refuse to wow with you, Levison, when I am expectin' lady visitahs in a bwief time," he said calmly. "Aftah my cousin has gone, I shall be at your service as much as you like. May I inquiah whethah you are willin' to act on my suggestion?"

"You may get out of my study," answered Levison. "Otherwise, I shall throw you out on your neck!"

"Vewy good. I have done my best."

With that, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy retired gracefully. Levison cast a bitter look after him, and threw himself into his chair again. Cardew gave him a very curious glance. Was this Levison—the quiet, steady fellow who had often restrained him from wild escapades—who had been guide, philosopher, and friend to his young brother in the thorny first term at school—who, only a few days ago, had been carried shoulder-high by the St. Jim's juniors after a glorious cricket-match? What was the change that had come over him? Had this bitterness, this sheer evil, always been hidden under Levison's quiet exterior, or was it something new? Could it be caused, if it was a new growth, by anything but a bitter and oppressive sense of wrong? Was Levison wronged? Could there be some reason—some powerful reason that nobody suspected—why Levison did not choose to take the obvious method of clearing his name from dishonour?

Cardew wondered.

Frank stood waiting for his brother to speak; but Levison did not speak. The fog broke the silence at last, with a tremble in his voice that hinted that he was not far from tears.

"Ernie, what's going to be done?"

"I don't know."

"But Doris will be here—"

Levison did not speak; but Cardew's silky tones came from the armchair.

"When does your sister get here, Frank?"

"Three o'clock, at Rylcombe," said the fog, without turning his head.

"That means changin' at Wayland Junction for the two-thirds local?"

"Yes."

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"There'll be a crowd to meet the young ladies at Rylcombe, I suppose?" yawned Cardew.

"I suppose so," muttered Frank. "Ernie, old man, something's got to be done."

Levison knitted his brows savagely.

"We're going to the station to meet Doris," he said. "We must do that. We're bringing her on to the school."

"The other fellows will be there, to meet Ethel, and they will bring her to the school. Doris and Ethel will keep together, of course. We shall all be in the same party."

"Looks like it."

"I—I wish you'd accepted D'Arcy's offer. Doris will see something at once—now."

"It can't be helped."

Ralph Reckness Cardew rose to his feet, yawned, and set his tie straight before the glass. Then he looked round at the brothers with a smile.

"No good aakin' you chaps to come for a motor-run this afternoon?" he inquired.

"No!" growled Levison.

"Can't," said Frank. "Thanks, all the same."

Cardew nodded, and strolled out of the study. In the passage he paused to glance at his watch. Then he strolled out of the School House. He smiled as he sighted Tom Merry & Co. in a group, with clouded faces. They did not heed Ralph Reckness Cardew as he sauntered away towards the gates.

It was an hour later that the Terrible Three, Study No. 6, and Figgins & Co. started, in a body, for the village. Levison and his minor came out of the gates at the same time, and followed the same direction. The two parties entered Rylcombe almost at the same moment—without a glance or a word from one to the other. They walked into the little railway-station, and made their way to the platform, to wait there for the local train to come in from Wayland Junction—the train that was to bear cousin Ethel and sister Doris. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy polished his eyeglass uneasily as he stood on the platform and looked down the line.

"Weally, you fellows, it won't do!" he murmured. "Both the gals will see at once that we are at dagghs dwawn!"

Tom Merry bit his lip.

"What can we do?" he said.

"Nothin', I suppose. But—but considewation for the gals comes befoah everythin' else," said Arthur Augustus manfully. "I will diswagard my dignity, and wequest Levison as a personal favah to play up."

Arthur Augustus moved along the platform. The train was signalled. Levison, with his younger brother by his side, was standing watching the line.

"Levison—" began D'Arcy.

Levison of the Fourth gave him one look turned his back, and walked along the platform.

For a moment Arthur Augustus stood quite still. Then, with a crimson flush in his cheeks, he rejoined his friends.

CHAPTER 8.

Cardew Takes Control!

"WAYLAND JUNCTION!"

"Our station, Doris."

"Yes, Ethel."

The two girls rose, as the train came to a halt at Wayland. Cousin Ethel glanced at her little wrist-watch.

"Half-past two! Plenty of time for the local," she said. "It doesn't leave for ten minutes."

"Lots of time," said Doris Levison cheerfully. "No need to see about the luggage—that goes right on to Lexham."

"Why—" began Ethel, in surprise.

She had glanced out of the carriage window, and was about to open the door, when it was opened from outside, and a handsome and very elegant junior, holding the door with one hand, raised a shining silk-hat with the other. It was Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

Ethel knew him well enough—Doris knew him better—as the very special chum of her brother Ernest—the chum who had stood by Ernest at a time when he needed friendship badly. Doris gave Cardew a very sweet smile. She was glad to see him.

"Allow me," said Cardew.

He gracefully assisted the two girls to alight. Ethel glanced along the platform, half-expecting to see cousin Arthur and his friends, as one St. Jim's fellow was there. But there were no other "Saints" in sight.

"Pray excuse my buttin' in like this," said Cardew politely.

"Arthur was to meet us at Rylcombe," said Ethel, a little puzzled. "We are taking the local train to there."

"Change in the programme," explained Cardew. "There's a car waitin' outside for you. You didn't really want the local, did you? Awful slow train—stoppin' everywhere and moonin', you know."

Cousin Ethel laughed.

"Of course, a car is ever so much nicer than the slow local train," she answered. "But I wish Arthur would not be so extravagant."

"Arthur's not guilty this time," explained Cardew. "It's a friend's car, and lent for the occasion."

"Oh, I see!" said Ethel; though, as a matter of fact, she did not quite see.

Ralph Reckness Cardew walked the two girls along to the exit and out of the station.

A handsome car was waiting, with a chauffeur standing by it. He started the engine as Cardew appeared. Ethel cast a perplexed look round. It was kind of Cardew, perhaps, to come over to Wayland Junction to meet the travellers, and to save them from the rather slow run in the local train; but she naturally expected to see her own friends—at least, her cousin. But Cardew was evidently the only St. Jim's fellow on the spot.

He handed the girls into the car, and followed them in. The car started, the chauffeur apparently having had his instructions beforehand.

"Now we shan't be long, you know," remarked Cardew. "Arthur did not come to Wayland with you?" asked the perplexed Ethel.

"No—couldn't. He was unable to come," said Cardew. "Such things will happen—fellow isn't quite his own master at school."

"Oh!" said Ethel.

She concluded that Arthur Augustus had been detained by his Form-master. Cardew had not exactly said so; but she could scarcely draw any other conclusion.

"My brothers—" began Doris.

She was surprised that neither Ernest nor Frank had turned up—little dreaming that both of them were in utter ignorance of Cardew's exploit, and were still expecting to meet her at Rylcombe.

"They're expectin' you at the school, Miss Doris," said Cardew. "I hope I shan't bore you too much on the way. It isn't a very long run, so I have hopes."

"What nonsense!" said Doris, laughing. "Do you know, Ernest hasn't written to tell me the result of the Greyfriars match. How did it go?"

"How could it go, with Levison playin' for us?" smiled Cardew. "We beat the merry visitors, and Levison put in the 'winnin' catch."

"How good!" exclaimed Doris, in delight.

"And my cousin—" said Ethel.

"Covered himself with glory," said Cardew. "It was a great occasion. A very strenuous time for us all."

"You played, then?" asked Doris.

"N-no; I didn't play. I was watchin'," said Cardew. "But I was watchin' no end. And I had a ramble with Trimble, too—I found that rather more exhaustin' than cricket. But your brother looked as fresh as paint after practically winnin' the match for our side. Strenuous chap, Ernest. By the way, is it a fact that you are goin' on to Lexham this afternoon?"

"Why, of course," said Ethel, in surprise. "We have to catch the six o'clock train."

"Aunt Catherine is expecting us," explained Doris. "Ethel is going to stay with me till to-morrow."

"Is it very particular to catch that train?" asked Cardew.

"Very," said Doris. "Aunt Catherine would be alarmed if we were late. She doesn't quite like our making a railway journey by ourselves, anyway. I shouldn't dare to be a minute late. Besides, the trap will be at the station waiting for us at seven precisely."

"Then you won't have a very long stay at St. Jim's."

"Well, it will be all the longer for saving time, using this car instead of the local train," said Doris, smiling. "There will be time for tea in the study. I suppose Ernest is making preparations."

"And Arthur," said Ethel, with a laugh. "But which study is it going to be—Arthur's study or Ernest's study?"

"I believe that point is unsettled as yet," said Cardew gravely. "Arthur and Ernest were havin' quite an argument yesterday—really gettin' quite excited. Almost thought there would be damage done."

The two girls laughed, little dreaming of the nature of that argument to which Cardew alluded.

The car ran on at a good speed. Cousin Ethel glanced once or twice from the window curiously.

"Your driver knows the way, I suppose?" she said presently.

"Oh! I suppose so," said Cardew.

"I don't seem to recognise the road."

"Takin' a short cut, perhaps. Or the road may be up," said Cardew. "Jeyver calculate how much money the local

councils spend on gettin' the roads up, and leavin' 'em up, with nice sharp stones lyin' around for cyclist? Must be an enormous amount. By gad, though, we're gettin' along, aren't we?"

The car was covering the ground in great style. Wayland was far behind, and Wayland Wood was not to be seen. A dusty, white country road stretched ahead, with green fields on either side. Suddenly there was a heavy, jarring sound, and the car came to a halt, shaking. Cardew uttered an exclamation and put his head out of the window.

"What's the matter, Higden?"

"Nothing serious, I hope, sir," answered the chauffeur. "I'll tell you better in a minute."

"Buck up!" said Cardew. "We're rather pressed for time."

The chauffeur opened the bonnet and became deeply engrossed. Cardew watched him with an air of impatience. "This is simply rotten!" he said. "This car was supposed to save time! If we get hung up here—"

"Oh dear!" said Ethel, in dismay.

"How far are we from St. Jim's?" asked Doris. "If there is going to be much delay we had better walk."

"Can't be more than half a mile, surely!" said Ethel.

Cardew's eyes glimmered curiously for a moment.

"I'll ask the chauffeur!" he said.

He stepped out of the car. He was in talk with the chauffeur for some minutes, and then he came back to the door.

"I don't know how to apologise," he said.

"What is the matter?"

"Somethin' gone wrong. I can't catch on to what," said Cardew. "But we shall be hung up for half an hour."

"We had better walk the rest!" said cousin Ethel decidedly; and Doris Levison nodded assent.

"That isn't the worst," groaned Cardew. "I could kick myself! You'll never forgive me for bein' such an ass. How was I to guess that a man from the Wayland Garage would take the wrong road?"

"The wrong road!" exclaimed Ethel.

"That's what the champion ass has done!"

"And where are we now?" asked Doris, catching her breath.

"Eight miles out of Wayland—on the wrong side."

"Oh dear!"

The two girls looked utterly dismayed. Walking eight miles to Wayland and then another three to St. Jim's was not a feasible proposition. Cardew looked remorseful.

"All my fault!" he groaned. "It was my idea to have the car; Ernest and Arthur wouldn't have thought of it. They really had to let me have my way; and now I've fairly done it. I can't say how sorry I am. I'd like somebody to kick me!"

Cardew looked so utterly dismayed that the two girls, dismayed as they were themselves, could not help taking pity on him.

"Never mind!" said Doris as brightly as she could. "It can't be helped."

"We shall have to wait," said Ethel. "We can hardly walk the distance; indeed, it would be time to catch our train when we arrived if we did. It cannot be helped; we must be patient."

"All my fault!" persisted Cardew.

"No, no! Not at all!"

The two girls and Cardew waited, while the chauffeur, with the car drawn up to the roadside, busied himself with implements. He seemed to be working away very industriously; but when half an hour had elapsed and Cardew turned to him he shook his head.

"It's that magnet, sir," he said.

"How long are you going to be?"

"I'm doing my best, sir."

Cardew gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders. He did not seem to mind the waiting himself; his concern was for the two girls. They were patient, and they were sorry for Cardew in his dismay, but undoubtedly they were feeling very much put out. Their short time at St. Jim's was growing shorter and shorter. Indeed, as the long minutes ticked away they began to wonder whether they would see St. Jim's at all that day. Cousin Ethel gave a quick start when she looked at her watch and found that it was five o'clock.

She compressed her lips a little.

It was still another half-hour before the chauffeur announced that the car was ready. Cardew looked at the two girls doubtfully.

"You're really bound to get to Lexham at seven?" he murmured.

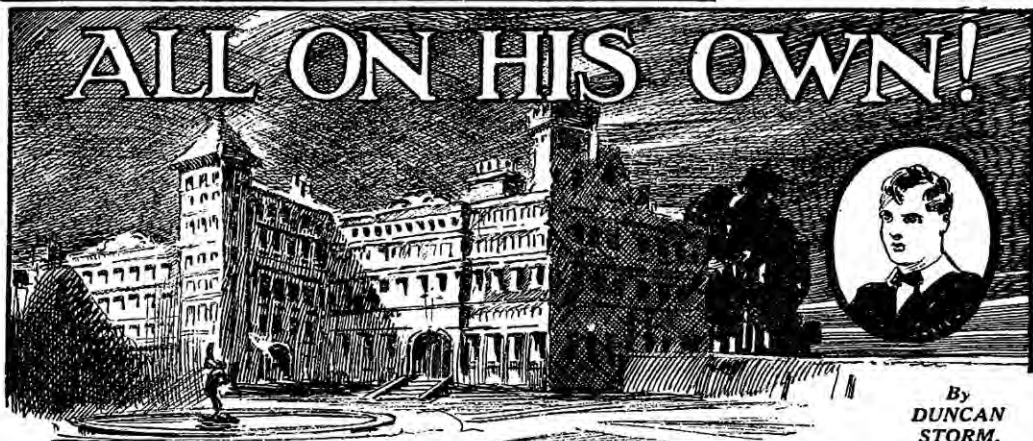
"Yes, yes!"

"Then it's awfully rotten; but if we go on to St. Jim's now, you won't catch your train for Lexham."

Ethel nodded. She was already aware of that.

(Continued on page 18.)

OUR GRAND SERIAL OF SCHOOL LIFE AND ADVENTURE!



By
**DUNCAN
STORM.**

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts up against

A KINDLY STRANGER (John Lincoln), the principal governor of the great school of St. Beowulf's, who had been watching him at the funeral.

The two walk along the road together, and the stranger tells Jim it is education he needs first. He then withdraws a piece of parchment from his pocket, and, after signing it, hands it to Jim. It is a free pass into the great school. Jim is to take his chance as a Lincoln scholar at St. Beowulf's.

Jim gets a warm reception from the bullies of the school, but the decent fellows welcome him.

He finds a friend in Wobbygong, a plucky lad from Australia, and the master of a pet kangaroo, Nobby.

One night, and Nobby, but the boys give chase and capture him. On their return to St. Beowulf's they find that burglars have broken into the school. The ruffians are captured. School commanders their car, and hides it in the Haunted Barn.

Learning of the scoundrels' intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country, Wobby plans to capture the plunder. At the dead of night he and his pals steal out of the school. Boarding the commandeered car, they are soon hot on the trail. Reaching Goodman's Hanger, they hear strange noises coming from the house of Colonel Pepper.

They are only just in time to rescue the colonel from further members of the gang, two of whom they capture. Mr. Travers, of Scotland Yn d, who is also after the gang, appears on the scene. Two of the burglars are escaping in a motor-cycle and side-car when the machine breaks down on the marshes. The boys follow, and watch them from behind a stack of reeds.

(Now read on.)

Capturing the Treasure!

THE hearts of the boys beat thick and fast as they crouched behind their shelter of reeds, watching their pursuers as they tinkered at the motor-cycle.

The words of the ruffians left no doubt in their minds that they were armed, and would not scruple to use their arms against boy or man. And against the automatons of these two desperadoes they had only Wobby's boomerang, if the slender camouflage of the motor-car as a reed-stack were penetrated.

Jim Ready felt himself go hot all over, and Stickjaw felt that his nose was tickling.

"If I don't sneeze, I shall die!" he thought to himself. "And if I do sneeze, we shall all die!"

He conquered the sneeze, however.

Lung ran his hand down the side of his leg. Lung was not Chinese for nothing.

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Against his calf, strapped there by a carefully-folded puttee, was a lacquer sheath, and in that lacquer sheath was a short sword, which the Japanese call the "Sword of Honour," a razor-like blade, so sharp that it would cut through a bit of tissue-paper. This sword Lung was prepared to whip out of its sheath if the two ruffians came for them across the dyke.

Wobby had his left hand on the kangaroo's muzzle to keep him motionless, and Nobby understood that he was to remain absolutely still and not to give his chums away.

Three minutes passed, which seemed like three hours. Then the burglars' cycle got on the move, and off they went down the rough marsh road heading for the old lighthouse.

They had not even suspected that the innocent stack of reeds hid their quarry.

Wobby gave a sigh of relief as the rattle of the motor died down in the distance.

"Spare me days!" said he. "I thought we were in for the cold meat stakes that time! Those are the real bad boys of Badville, and if they catch us they will shoot, and won't worry if they hurt us. Did you hear them, boys? Ten in the gang—five of them plucked, and five to share the treasure! That will make 'em red-hot on our trail. We are playing for big stakes."

He threw down the masking of reed from the car.

"Now we are for Whitechurch Castle—across the marshes!" he continued. "In you get, boys. These planks will help us to cross any dykes that cut up the marsh."

Away they went again, the car lurching and rolling over the marshes, making for the sea.

Hares scuttled away before them, and curlews piped dimly as they were startled from their feeding by the strange machine that rattled and banged over the rough marshland.

There was a snorting and a puffing in front of them, and Wobby switched on his lights and slowed down, nearly colliding with the head of a large bull, which appeared surrounded by a halo of mist.

The bull swung round and stampeded off, not without a jolt from the bonnet of the car to help him on the road.

There was a thundering and stampeding of hoofs on the marsh, and they saw the shadows of the half-wild steers circling round them.

"Mustn't hit any of those beasts, or we are done!" muttered Wobby, as he drove more carefully.

He pulled up suddenly as a sudden chill and the smell of water in the air told him that he was at the edge of one of the

dykes that was filling the air with the sheltering fog.

"Plunks, nugis!" he ordered.

In a few seconds the planks were in place, and the car was driven over the dyke into the next marsh, taking up her bridge after her.

Five marshes they crossed in this fashion. Then they came upon a rough path into a country of gates.

Here were the sheep-marshes, and six gates were passed, till, at last, they found themselves upon shingle.

They touched the fringe of the great Whitechurch beaches, which stretched for miles to the sea, and over these Wobby drove recklessly, the wheels skidding as they sent the stones flying, or ploughed through low-growing clumps of dwarf sloes.

They were getting near the sea now, for they could smell the salt tang in the air. When Wobby at last stopped the car, almost touching a great shape of ruin that rose from the shingle, they could hear the regular beat and rattle of the waves on the yet distant shores of the great shingle banks.

Whitechurch Castle! announced Wobby as though he were driving a bus. "Now we've got to do a bit of 'be quick,' boys before those two pels get round the old lighthouse and come on here! Can you all use cutties?"

"Rather!" replied Jim.

"Well, there's plenty of stones here," said Wobby, "so we won't be short of ammunition. Here you are, boys!"

Diving into the corner of the driving-seat, he brought forth four catapults, which he served out to his followers.

"They are some cutties, boys!" he announced. "Made 'em myself, I did. The prongs are of stringy bark, and the rubbers are the best made in the world! If those tugs turn up here with their guns we are nearly as good as they are. A stone from one of those little weps will make a nigger howl at a hundred and fifty yards."

These were indeed magnificent specimens of that primitive weapon the catapult that Wobby handed round. The boys tried them, and four large pebbles whistled away through the air, in a style that made them feel that they had never handled a catapult before.

These weapons gave them new confidence in themselves.

"Now, boys," said Wobby, "we've got the weapons, and we've got the castle. We are doing all right. Let us find the way in."

He led them round the wall of the great edifice.

"There ought to be some sort of a gate," he said, looking round.

"I believe it is round here," said Jim Ready. "I once came here when I was a little chap, but I don't remember much about it, and it's so thick that I seem to remember less now the place is before me. I am sure though there was a big castle gate left amongst the ruins and a sort of wooden gate built into it, to keep the cattle out."

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Wobby. "Why do

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2:

they want to keep the cattle out of a fossilised old ruin like this?"

"Why," replied Jim, "there are all sorts of corners inside the walls, and wells, where a cow might fall down and break herself up!"

"Pardon my ignorance, old coluber," replied Wobby, with great satisfaction. "We don't have any castles in Australia. We haven't been long enough there to build any. It's a well that I am looking for, though. Lead on, my right trusty knight, and if we jump the joint, and get a mortgage on the hidden boodle, despite the maladvised machinations of these snake-headed tugs who would queer our pitch, I warrant thee, fair sir, that thou shalt be rewarded right kindly for thy guidance, and preadventure have the chance of putting the stonch on one of these scurvy and recreant knaves who would back their barrier into our fair premises!"

The boys could not help laughing at Wobby's mixture of the oldest of the old and the newest of the new in the English language.

The mist seemed to lift now, for a sea-wind was blowing. Jim guided his party round the crumbling walls of the old castle, racking his brain for a memory of the old gatehouse—a childish memory, which seemed to evade him like a dream.

The great moat of the castle had long since been filled by the drifting shingle, and they had to follow a high wall which seemed blank of all gateways.

"See whizz," muttered Wobby, in admiration. "We've got nothing like this in our country! I wonder who had the nerve to build such a crib?"

"It was Henry the Third," answered Jim. "Good old Hen!" said Wobby approvingly. "He was a master builder! We've walked round the old castle three times already, and there isn't a gate to the place at all. Maybe, when I wanted to get into his old castle, he was hoisted in on a rope!"

Wobby's speculations were cut short by the loom of a vast archway in the mist.

"Here is the gate!" said Jim.

The boys strode up to the archway over the shingle. Sure enough, as Jim had remembered, here were gates of light, tarred battens, put there to close the castle against the cattle which sometimes strayed from the marshes to seek the short, fine grass which grew amongst the ruins.

Nothing but a button secured these gates, and Jim opened them readily.

"That's the jolly talk!" exclaimed Wobby joyfully. "The old chateau ain't such a stiff prop as it looked! Wait here, and hold Nobby whilst I bring the bus round to this stately portal."

He darted off over the shingle, and soon the boys heard the car tyres grinding over the pebbles.

"In we go, boys!" said Wobby, steering the car under the great gateway. "Any more gates to this old house?"

"I don't remember," answered Jim.

"Right-ho! We'll close this one, at any rate!" replied Wobby, as he brought the car to a standstill in a vast courtyard, where rose the great mound which was once the stately keep of this ancient fortress. "Now, Jimmo, rack your head, and try to remember where you saw a well in this little old ruin last time you were here."

Jim could remember only a deep hole down which he had watched the boys dropping stones when he was ever such a little chap. He could remember the childish fear of the dark depths of the well and of the hollow splash of the stones as they fell into the water far below.

His common-sense told him that, if the keep were the inner fortress of this ancient stronghold, it was likely that this well, which he had seen so many years ago, had been the main water supply of the castle.

"This way, boys!" he said.

He led his chums up the great ramp of earth-covered stone which showed where the massive keep had been razed to the ground during the wars of the Roses.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed the irrepressible Wobby, as they climbed the huge mound. "If this be part of the fair castle of Henry III., some of his dukes, earls, and other gaudies must have sored on him and got in the dirty left on his property. It's more like a coal dump than a castle!"

The boys gained the top of the rampart, which hollowed like a cup or crater, and down this they slid, coming to a stop at a well kerb of masonry, still furnished with a small wooden hoist and winding drum.

Jim picked up a stone and dropped it into the well. He heard the splash, not so very far below, as it had seemed in his childish days.

"This is the well, Wobby!" he said.

Wobby drew from his pocket his electric torch and the notebook which he had taken from the pocket of the captured burglar. In this he carefully studied a detailed plan and notes.

"Get across the soft ground to the stone," he read. "Mark the hole in the wrapping of the parcel. Two hundred and fifty paces, and Pussy's in the—"

"What does that all mean?" asked Stick-jaw.

"Nothing to you, my gentle boy," replied Wobby, with a grin, "but a lot to us who make our own Nancy Palurni as we go along. It is disguised words, same as they use in the agony column of the newspapers. Let me translate it. 'To get across the soft ground to the stone' means to cross the marshes to the shingle beach. The 'hole in the wrapping of the parcel' means the gate in the wall of the castle, if it means anything. 'Two hundred and fifty paces and Pussy's in the' means two hundred and fifty paces S.S.E. from the gate and we come on the spot where the Tantivy plate and Lord Bradbury's stuff is hidden, till there is a chance of shipping it out of the country. Pussy is in the well!"

"How are we going to get down into the well?" asked Stickjaw. "There's no rope or bucket."

"The drum is sound," replied Wobby, "and Jim is a feather-weight. His name is Ready, and I suppose he is ready to go down into the well and get wet!"

"Rather!" replied Jim, eager to take his part in the adventure.

"I've got the rope," replied Wobby, "and we must be quick about it."

He ran up the bank of the keep to the car, which had been backed into the deep shadow of the ruins. Soon he was back with a coil of strong rope, which he threw over the drum. He then slipped a bowline into the rope.

"Now, Jimmo," he said, "I have a notion that you will find the old well nearly dry. You have got to remember that thousands of people have visited this old castle and that everyone throws a stone into the well to see how deep it is. In the course of years it doesn't take long to fill a big hole in

this fashion, and this well is not so very wide. We'll lower you down, and you can whistle when you find yourself swimming."

Jim slipped into the bight of the rope and swung himself into the narrow mouth of the well. He had Wobby's electric torch, and he switched it on as he swung over the abyss.

The boys lowered him slowly and carefully. Jim saw the dripping masonry of the walls, covered with thick moss, slowly rising. Now and then he bumped against the side of the well. He had Wobby's electric torch, and he switched it on as he swung over the abyss.

"What's up?" called Wobby from above.

"Nothing," replied Jim. "I wanted to have a look at the wall of the well here, that's all. Someone has been lowering a parcel or case down here; there is a big graze and scraping on the moss of the wall."

"That's the ticket!" called Wobby encouragingly. "Down you go!"

There was not far to travel. Jim was lowered another six feet, when his feet touched water. Then they crunched on a bed of pebbles, and his knee struck against a large and bulky parcel.

It was a huge canvas sack, and it lay against a couple of heavy boxes. Behind it lay another canvas sack, which bulged with the shapes of a very solid contents.

There was not a foot of water in the old well. As Wobby had foretold, it was half full of pebbles, thrown into it by countless generations of visitors.

Jim whistled again.

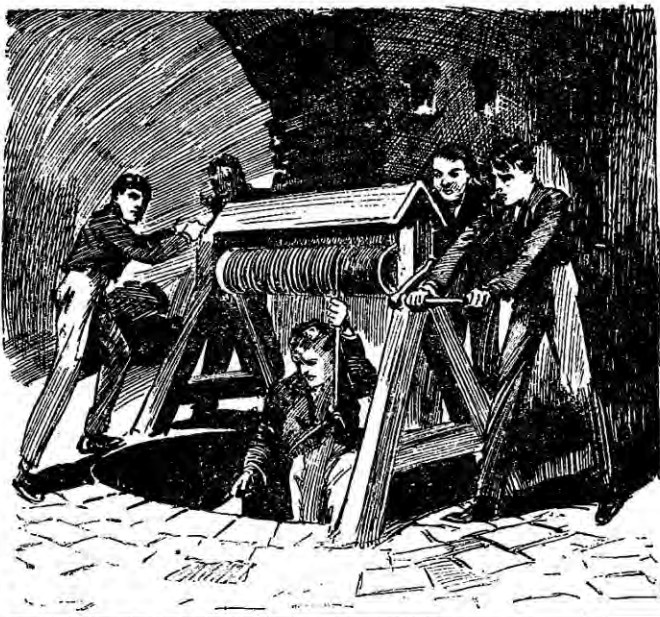
"Hallo!" answered Wobby. "I'm on the floor of the well!" said Jim in excited tones. "I say, Wobby! There are two canvas sacks and two boxes down here!"

"Ha, ha!" exclaimed Wobby. "We've found the catiffs' treasure! Can you climb the rope, Jim, when you have made it fast to the top bundle?"

"Why do you want me to climb the rope?" asked Jim.

"Why, gentle youth," responded Wobby, his voice sounding hollow in the narrow shaft, "those bags and boxes down there are heavy, and we want your help to hike 'em out. If the rope broke, and you got old Tantivy's plate on your head, you wouldn't want your breakfast in the morning, I'll bet!"

Jim realised the foresight of Wobby's words, though he could not help laughing at Wobby's care for his neck after that



Jim slipped into the bight of the rope and swung himself into the narrow mouth of the well. He switched on his electric torch as his chums lowered him carefully.

desperate breakneck dash into the Smugglers' Puncture!

He further realised Wobby's common-sense when he tried to shift the first bag to get the rope under it, for he found the weight far beyond his strength.

The bag was strangled heavily with leather, and on each side were handles of dressed hemp rope, so Jim contented himself with running the rope round the bag through these handles, and making it fast.

Then he climbed up to the drum and swung himself on to the kerb.

"All fast down below, Jimmo?" asked Wobby.

"As good as I can make it!" answered Jim.

"Heave up, then, boys!" ordered their leader.

The drum creaked and groaned under the weight of the bag the boys were hoisting, and it needed all their strength to recover the rope and to prevent the bag of treasure from getting away with them and dumping to the bottom of the well again.

With a mighty heave, the great, weighty sack was brought to the well kerb and toppled on to the ground with soft, metallic crunching, which told well enough what the contents were.

"I should say from the weight and the sound of that packet that it is old Tantivy's gold dinner service, the one that he said out when Royalty dined with him!" hissed Wobby. "Fancy! A gold dinner service, boys! It would serve him right to lose it, putting on such dorg. Now the rest!"

The operation was repeated, and Jim went thrice more down the well, making the rope fast, and climbing up again.

The whole of the treasure was soon on the ground.

Wobby unfastened the neck of the big sack, which was secured by a strong lashing of cord.

He took just one peep into it, flashing the electric-torch into fold after fold of washed-leather bags, which, being opened, showed the dull rich sheen of gold.

"It is the huddle all right, nugs!" he said. "Next thing is to split some of it up into our bags. We can't leave this big sack about. It's beyond our strength."

Suddenly he lifted his head from the sack, and, listening intently, sniffed the air like a dog.

"Got to fight for it first, though, I think," he added, in a matter of fact tone. "Here he that brace of tugs who talk so easily of switching off our lights. They have been

round the old lighthouse, and now they are dead on our trail!"

At a distance the boys could hear the coughing of the motor-cycle and side-car as it struggled across the lonely shingle beach towards the castle.

"I don't like the police!" said Wobby thoughtfully. "But I would give a year's pocket-money for the sight of a good fat policeman coming over the top of the bank now. There's no one to help us out here. We've got to hold the fort on our own. Fill your pockets with nice-sized pebbles, boys; those catties will throw a good-sized bullet. Then to the top of the bank!"

The Attack!

THE boys scrambled to the top of the bank of the old keep, listening breathlessly for the rattle of the engine of the motor-cycle.

They caught its rattle along the rough road which led towards the old lighthouse, and which ended in a bank of shingle some three hundred yards from the castle ruins. Presently the engine stopped.

"They've hit the pebbles," whispered Wobby. "Now they are advancing on foot to the castle."

"The mist is clearing," muttered Jim.

This was true enough. The mist-banks from the sea were dispersing under a fresh wind that was working its way from the west up-Channel. And the wind was driving back the mist from the marshes.

It seemed to draw aside from the castle ruins like a curtain, and, lying on the top of the bank, the boys had a clear view through the dark arch of the old gateway.

Presently they saw two dark figures show against the bars.

"Here they are!" whispered Wobby, crouching low, with his arm round the kangaroo's neck.

They heard the two men shaking the battened gate in the archway, which Wobby had deftly secured with a couple of three-inch screws.

It was plain that the very fact that the gate was closed aroused their suspicions, for they moved round cautiously behind the bars of the gate, looking like two caged wild beasts as they strove to pick up tracks in the shingle.

These they soon found, for the gallant old Rolls-Ford had dropped a dab of spent oil from the engine on the stones.

In a few seconds the two rascals were at work upon the gate.

To two old and practised hands, such a barrier offered no more resistance than a sheet of tissue-paper. Out came finely-tempered pocket-saws, and out came a couple of bars of the gate in a few seconds.

"Wish we'd left the boodie in the well," muttered Wobby. "But it's no good talking now. These lads have got us proper!"

The two men stepped through the hole in the gate, and turned to examine the fastenings. Those two bright screw-heads, newly driven and untrussed by the damps of the night, told their tale.

They turned swiftly in the gateway, looking from side to side as they advanced towards the keep, gun in hand.

Strange to say, they did not seem to notice the car which Wobby had driven well into the shadow of a great, buttressed chamber in the ruins. The ivy hung here in great masses and shrouded the car.

"Come along, Ted!" they heard one of the ruffians call to the other. "Those young devils are here. How they got here is a mystery. But they are here all right."

He advanced straight on the bank of the ruined keep.

"Game's up, boys!" said Wobby. "No good hiding. We start the fight. In case anything happens, I'll give them fair warning." He put up his head cautiously.

"Ho!" he called. The two sinister figures came to a standstill at the bottom of the bank in the moonlight.

"Who's that?" demanded the man.

"The Pebs of Pebbly Beach!" replied Wobby. "We know all about you and your little games. You are the two lads whose machine broke down by the old reedstack on the marshes a while since."

"And what about that?" demanded the man.

"Well, we were the reedstack!" replied Wobby boldly. "And we heard you threaten to murder us. So you had better stop where you are, before we jump the joint and start murdering you."

There was a dead silence.

It was plain that the two ruffians were taken aback by Wobby's bold announcement. The man who had not yet spoken took a hand in the game.

"So, my lads, we've caught you!" he said, in a harsh, grating voice.

"On the contrary," replied Wobby coolly, "we've caught you!"

(There will be another splendid long instalment of this magnificent Serial next week!)

"IN DEEP DISGRACE!"

(Continued from page 15.)

"It's frightfully unfortunate," said Cardew. "Of course, I can explain to Arthur and Ernest. But who could have foreseen this?"

"Nobody could," said Doris bravely. "Don't blame yourself. But we shall have to go on to Lexham; we'd better drive back to Wayland now. You will tell Ernest and Frank how it happened."

"Of course! But it's rotten! Nothing else to be done, I suppose," Cardew looked at his watch. "By Jove, we shall hardly catch the train at Wayland either! Better run on to Lexham in the car and make sure. It is quite reliable now, Higden?"

"Perfectly, sir!" said the chauffeur, with the faintest ghost of a grin.

"We can get to Lexham Station, and you can get Aunt Catherine's trap there just as if you'd come by train," said Cardew. "We shall do it easily by seven. I—I think that's best now."

"It seems to me the only thing to be done," said Ethel. Doris nodded, and Ralph Reckness Cardew stepped back into the car.

"Lexham Station!" he said to the chauffeur. And the car buzzed off rapidly, smoothly, quite as if there were nothing at all wrong with it. It was a pleasant enough drive, and Cardew was entertaining company when he exerted himself—as he did now. The two girls were only troubled by the thought of their friends' disappointment at St. Jim's.

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When Lexham Station was reached, at seven o'clock, and the two girls had been handed into the waiting trap, and Cardew had said good-bye, the dandy of the Fourth leaned back on the car cushions as Higden started for St. Jim's. He smiled, but he was in a thoughtful mood. It was a long run without a stop, and the car covered the miles in great style without a hint of a breakdown. When it stopped at the gates of St. Jim's, Cardew alighted and smiled pensively as he met the chauffeur's eye.

"Do you ever read Shakespeare, Higden?" he asked. The driver blinked.

"Ad 'im at school, sir," he answered.

"Then no doubt you remember some lines from 'Hamlet.' Was it 'Hamlet'? I think it was 'Hamlet.' The dear old Johnny remarked, 'I must be cruel, only to be kind.'"

"Did he, sir?"

"He did, Higden. Let me see! Will a five-pound note cover our little run?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Will there be any change?"

"Yes, sir—"

"Will you oblige me by keepin' it, Higden? Good-evenin'!"

"Good-evening, sir!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew sauntered in at the school gates. He murmured those Shakespearean lines as he sauntered:

"I must be cruel, only to be kind! Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind."

"Poor little me!" murmured Cardew. "I've been cruel only to be kind, and now I've got to face the worse that remains behind! What a life!"

"Just in time, Master Cardew!" said Taggles grimly, rattling his keys as he came down to the gates.

Cardew stopped and looked at the old porter.

"Dear old Taggles!" he said. "It's a pleasure to see you again. I'm awfully sorry to deprive you of the pleasure of reporting me late, Taggles—I know it's hard. But it may comfort you to know that I'm booked for trouble anyhow, dear old bean."

"Huh!" grunted Taggles.

"Has Levison come in, old top?"

"Huh! Yes."

"And Tom Merry?"

"Yes. You're in the way of the gate, Master Cardew."

"Am I?" said Cardew, without moving. "Yes, I see I am. Did the fellows look at all cross when they came in, Taggles?"

"Never noticed," said Taggles. "Will you step out of the way, Master Cardew?"

"When I've finished enjoyin' your conversation, Taggles. Have you ever been cruel only to be kind, Taggles?" asked Cardew, with great gravity.

"Lor, Master Cardew!"

"It's no end of a worry, Taggles. I'm expectin' to have my head punched by at least two or three fellows—Levison, first; then Gussy, and perhaps young Frank."

"Will you let me close this 'ere gate? Or shall I 'ave to bung it into you, Master Cardew?" asked Taggles in a sulphurous voice.

"On reflection, I will let you close it, Taggles," Cardew stepped aside and glanced at his watch. "Taggles, you are two minutes late in closin' the gates. That is a serious dereliction of duty, Taggles. It will be my painful duty to report you."

And Cardew walked on into the quad, leaving Taggles blinking. He knew that there was trouble to come; but he had saved Doris from the bitter pain of learning her brother's disgrace, and for that purpose Ralph Reckness Cardew would have faced much more serious trouble than awaited him now.

THE END.

(What will Levison and Gussy say when they know of Cardew's plot? Don't miss next week's splendid yarn!)

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