

ASK FOR THE GREATLY ENLARGED "CHUCKLES"!

The GEM LIBRARY 1^D₂

No. 764.
Vol. XXII.

20 Pages.

Every Wednesday.

September 30th, 1922.



"STOP! - YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!"

Frank Levison's call for assistance for his brother, who has been felled by a blow whilst attempting to rescue Mr. Selby from the clutches of a rascally ruffian.

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,—

There is no doubt about it. Baggy Trimble is an amazing fellow. He belongs to the honourable brigade of borrowers, scorning the sage advice of Shakespeare on this point. Baggy will wear another fellow's waistcoat without asking leave when he wants to do the grand. He likes to be paid for when he goes to the cinema, and as for his performances at the tuckshop—well, perhaps the less said about that part, the better.

Baggy figures in next week's amusing story in the GEM, and on Wednesday next, if an extra loud burst of laughter is heard coming over the wireless waves, it will be all on account of "Tricky Trimble."

It is a great story, dry and whimsical, one of the funniest Mr. Martin Clifford has ever written. Of course, you may not like Baggy Trimble. You may feel that he is not the most gallant and chivalrous fellow, and at the back of the mind there is possibly lurking the idea that the fat fellow is as stodgy as he is mean. But he can raise a laugh. Then

he never intends to do wrong; that is the impression he tries to convey. You remember about that wad of banknotes he discovered in the old tree. If Cardew had not come to his rescue, Baggy stood a chance of suffering considerably for his dishonesty. Yet he was only half aware that he was being dishonest with the spurious notes, and he never realised they were counterfeit, not until Cardew told him. Without giving away the story I may point out that Trimble sees an advertisement in the paper. This advertisement gives him what he imagines is a brilliant notion. Talk about brain waves!

We can indulge ourselves with the generous belief that Baggy has a brain. There are all kinds of brains. Baggy must have been supplied with a second-best, shop-soiled set. Anyhow, look out for next week's first-rate tale. It will make you smile. Some people think that Mr. Martin Clifford is best when he deals with very serious matters; then those critics read a yarn full of amusing comedy, with Baggy at his greediest, inviting himself to study spreads when he is not wanted (nobody ever really wants Trimble, unless it is Aubrey Racke when he is busy on a heroic stunt), and they alter their opinion, and declare that Mr. Clifford is really at the top of his form when he turns out a funny story.

Next Wednesday the fifth set of pictures in the Silhouette Competition will be found in the GEM. The entries have been huge. Everybody, really, is a

silhouetteist these days, and I hope you will all take this chance of getting a prize.

Any reference to next week's splendid number would be incomplete without a tribute to Duncan Storm's notable serial, "All On His Own!" Many of my friends know this writer chiefly on account of his Bombay Castle yarns in the "Boys' Friend," but after reading the story now running in the GEM, they will think of him as well in connection with this very dramatic and appealing story.

Letters reach me from all over the country and from overseas about the Portrait Gallery. This feature steadily gains in popularity. Next week's likeness will be that of a very celebrated member of the famous school. I shall not give his name, but he is much liked.

On Thursday the greatly enlarged number of "Chuckles" will be published, price 2d.

A grand Magic Painting Card will be presented FREE, and £50 IN PRIZES offered, to every reader!

Our famous Tuck Hamper department remains as usual—a distinctive feature of the GEM. I have several rare sparklers sent in by readers for next week's number.

The "Holiday Annual" is booming. It has a special claim on all GEM readers, for it contains much information regarding St. Jim's—just those little facts which often have to be crowded out of the stories through lack of space.

YOUR EDITOR.

"My Readers' Own Corner."

Tuck Hampers and Money Prizes Awarded for Interesting Paragraphs.

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

This Wins Our Tuck Hamper! FIVE-FIFTEEN.

It was the fourth time that day that little Bill had asked the old fisherman what time the tide came in, and for the fourth time the old man had answered. But when the fifth time came the fisherman protested. "I have told you four times," he said, "that the tide comes in at five-fifteen. Why do you keep on asking me?" "Because," said little Bill, "I like to see your whiskers wobble when you say 'five-fifteen.'"—A Tuck Hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to E. Scott, 2, Polygon Street, off Brunswick Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester.

REALISM.

In a play the actor, having drunk the poisoned wine, exclaimed: "Ah, me! What is this? The awful darkness is

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stealing over me! Darker and darker it grows—darker yet it grows, and—"Voice from the gallery: "P'raps it wants another penny in the meter, gov'nor!"—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Kay, care of Mrs. Jones, Glan-Avon, Rhiw Road, Colwyn Bay, North Wales.

NO DANGER.

"This seems a very dangerous place," said the tourist. "I wonder why they have not put up a warning notice?" "Ah, yes," replied the guide, "it is dangerous! They kept a board up for two years, but as no one fell over, it was taken down."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. J. Mayers, 2, Oakfield Grove, Gorton, Manchester.

THE LOCOMOTIVE WHISTLE.

The locomotive whistle owes its origin to the destruction of a load of eggs. When the country roads were, for the most part, crossed at grades, the engine-driver had no way of giving warning of approach except by blowing a tin horn. One day, in the year 1833, a farmer was crossing the railroad-track at one of the country roads with a great load of eggs and butter. Just as he came out upon the track a train approached. The engineman blew his horn lustily, but the farmer did not hear it.

Eighty dozen eggs and fifty pounds of butter were smashed into an indistinguishable mass. The railroad company had to pay the farmer the value of the butter, eggs, horse, and wagon. A

director of the company, Ashland Baxter by name, went to Alton Grange, where George Stephenson lived, to see if he could invent something that would give a warning more likely to be heard. Stephenson went to work, and the next day constructed a contrivance which, when attached to the engine-boiler and the steam turned on, gave out a shrill, discordant sound. The railroad directors, greatly delighted, ordered similar contrivances to be attached to all their locomotives. From this the locomotive-whistle, as it is known to-day, has developed.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to John Fitzpatrick, 820, Springburn Road, Glasgow.

RATHER UNCOMMON.

The golf tournament was in progress on the village links, and most of the villagers had come to witness the game. All went well until a peppery old general took his place on the tee and prepared for a mighty stroke. He braced himself for the effort, and let fly. Something hit the club-house roof, but it wasn't the ball. It was a huge chunk of the common. "Extraordinary!" grunted the general. "Yes, it did seem a bit out of the common," replied his sarcastic rival.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Sofaer, 54, Radha Bazaar Street, Calcutta, India.

TUCK HAMPER COUPON

The GEM LIBRARY.

No attempt will be considered unless accompanied by one of these Coupons.



A Grand Long, Complete School Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, telling of the courage displayed by Ernest Levison, which leads to his being reinstated once again in his old place at the famous school.

CHAPTER 1. Nothing Doing!

"HOLD on!"
"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"
"Hold on, I tell you! Selby's there!"
"Bai Jove!"

Quite a little army of juniors had arrived at the door of the Head's study at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry, the captain of the Shell, was in the lead, with Manners and Lowther. After them came Blake, Herries, Digby and D'Arcy of the Fourth. Then came Talbot and Kangaroo of the Shell, Cardew and Clive of the Fourth, and Figgins & Co. of the New House. Three or four other fellows brought up the rear.

Tom Merry was about to tap at the Head's door, which was half-open, when he heard the voice of Mr. Selby in the study. Mr. Selby, the master of the Third Form, was there, speaking to the Head. And Tom signed to his followers to halt.

Tom Merry & Co. had important business with the Head; but Tom considered it judicious to let Mr. Selby get through first. The somewhat acid and unpleasant voice of the Third Form master was audible to the juniors in the passage as they stopped.

"Levison minor, of my Form, is absent from the school, Dr. Holmes. He has not only missed calling-over, but has failed to appear for evening preparation."

"Then the boy has not returned yet?" said the Head.

"No, sir! I considered it my duty to acquaint you with the fact before taking my class in preparation. It appears that Levison minor has been absent the whole afternoon; and he is obviously out of school bounds."

"Quite so, Mr. Selby."

"Oh! You were aware of it, sir?"

"Yes. His brother has informed me that Levison minor has gone to Greyfriars to-day."

"To—to Greyfriars!" ejaculated Mr. Selby. "So great a distance; he has ventured—"

"Certainly he should not have done so, Mr. Selby. A very foolish and reckless proceeding," said the Head. "I think it is unlikely that he will be back in time for preparation, as the distance is so great. But there is no occasion for alarm on his account."

Mr. Selby coughed. He was not feeling alarmed for the absent fag; he was only feeling very angry and annoyed.

"Very good, sir!" he answered.

And he quitted the study—and nearly ran into the army of juniors as he emerged into the corridor. Mr. Selby stopped, and stared at Tom Merry & Co. in great surprise and disavour.

"What does this mean?" he snapped. "What are all you boys doing here, outside your headmaster's study?"

"We've come to speak to the Head, sir," said Tom Merry.

"Nonsense!"

"Weally, Mr. Selby—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You had better go away at once!" snapped Mr. Selby.

The juniors looked at him—and stood their ground. They were all of the Fourth and the Shell; and Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, had no authority over them. Tom Merry & Co. were not in the least disposed to depart at the behest of the irritable Third Form master.

"Go at once!" said Mr. Selby.

"Excuse me, sir," said Tom Merry, quietly but firmly, "we want to speak to the Head."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus emphatically.

Mr. Selby's eyes glittered at Tom Merry; but he gave up the point. He made an angry and contemptuous gesture and walked on past the juniors down the passage. Some of the juniors grinned as he went.

"Dear old bird!" murmured Monty Lowther.

BY

Martin Clifford.

"I wegard Mr. Selby as bein' impertinent!" said Arthur Augustus. "He has no wight to intahfere with us."

"Get going, Tommy!" said Figgins.

"Come on!" said Tom Merry; and he tapped at the door of the Head's study.

"Come in!" said the deep voice of Dr. Holmes.

Tom Merry opened the door and marched in, followed by his army. Dr. Holmes was seated at his writing-table. He looked up and raised his eyebrows as the juniors swarmed in.

The Terrible Three halted before the table, with their followers clustered behind them; the procession reaching from the table to the door. Under the Head's surprised stare the juniors coloured and looked rather uncomfortable.

"Well?" said the Head. "What does this invasion of my study imply?"

Tom Merry gave a little cough.

"If you please, sir—"

"Yaas, wathah, sir. We—"

"One at a time, please," said Dr. Holmes, raising his hand. "You will explain, Merry—if there is anything to explain. Why have you come here?"

"It's about Levison, sir!" blurted out Tom Merry.

"Levison of the Fourth, sir," said Talbot.

Dr. Holmes frowned.

"Well?" he said.

"We've heard that Levison's got to leave St. Jim's, sir—"

"That is the case."

"And we—we thought—" stammered Tom.

"Yaas, wathah, sir! We thought—"

The Head's frown grew more stern. He raised his hand again.

"Is it possible, Merry, that you have come here to make an appeal for Levison of the Fourth Form?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom. "I—I hope you'll let me speak, sir. It turns out that when Levison left Greyfriars, he had to go—there was something against him. We know it oughtn't to have been kept dark when he came to St. Jim's; but—since then, sir—"

"We can all ansawah for Levison now, sir," said D'Arcy. "We wegard him as a weally straight and decent chap."

"We think him one of the best, sir!" said Sidney Clive.

"We don't excise him for not letting you know, sir, how it was he had to leave Greyfriars," resumed Tom Merry, "but—but since he's been here, sir, he's turned out a jolly good fellow."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you'd be so kind as to give him another chance, sir—," said Talbot of the Shell.

"We'd all be ever so much obliged," said Blake. "We think it hard lines on Levison, sir."

Dr. Holmes looked fixedly at the juniors as they were speaking. He was no longer frowning. His glance was kind enough, but there was no sign of wavering on his face. The keener among the juniors could see that their appeal had had no effect whatever on the Head's decision.

"That will do," said Dr. Holmes. "It appears to be your opinion, my boys, that a boy who is turned out of another school for bad conduct may expect to be admitted to this school."

"Oh, no, sir," said Tom Merry, rather taken aback. "We—we don't mean that."

"Wathah not!"

"Not at all, sir. We—we mean—"

"If you do not mean that, I fail to see any meaning in your appeal for Levison," said the Head coldly. "In any case, my decision is made, and I have no intention whatever of changing it. I am certainly sorry, but I have my duty to do. You may go."

"But, weally, sir—"

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"You may go!" said the Head, raising his voice a little. And the deputation of juniors, exchanging hopeless glances, backed away and filed dismally out of the Head's study. Tom Merry closed the door, with a gloomy face.

"Nothing doing!" said Monty Lowther.

"It's wotten, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dismally. "Weally, I am wathah disappointed in the Head."

And Tom Merry & Co. dispersed. They had done their best; but there was no hope for Levison of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 2.

A Blow for Levison Minor.

TING-A-LING-A-LING!

Taggles grunted.

It was long past lock-up when the bell rang in the porter's lodge at St. Jim's.

"That's young Levison!" grunted Taggles. "Drat him!" Taggles' movements were leisurely. He did not see any reason to hurry himself to let in a fag of the Third Form who had stayed out of gates more than an hour after lock-up.

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

The fag who was waiting at the gates seemed to be in a greater hurry than Taggles.

The old porter emerged from his lodge at last, and blinked through the bars of the gate at the fag who stood without.

"Nice goings hon, Master Levison!" he remarked.

"Let me in, Taggles."

"In a 'urry arter staying out late?" asked Taggles sarcastically. "Fetching a man out of his armchair! Huh!"

"Bow-wow!" said Levison minor cheerfully.

Another grunt from Taggles. He unlocked the gate at last, and the Third Form fag came in. Levison minor was looking tired, but cheerful.

"Which you're to report to your 'Ousemaster," said Taggles surlily. "Mr. Railton says to me you're to report at once, he says. 'Send that young rip in to me as soon as he comes 'ome, Taggles,' Mr. Railton says."

Levison minor grinned.

"I fancy I can hear Mr. Railton saying that. I don't think!" he remarked.

"Huh!"

Leaving the ancient Taggles still grunting, Levison minor started across the dusky quad. He had long missed calling-over. He knew that, and he expected trouble. But he did not mind. Lines, or even a licking, did not matter very much to Frank Levison now, in the circumstances. His face was bright as he came into the School House.

"Here he is!"

It was Tom Merry's voice, in the Hall. The Terrible Three of the Shell were there, and they gave Levison minor rather peculiar looks.

"Here I am!" said Frank cheerfully. "I suppose the Third are at prep?"

"Yes," said Tom. "You've missed prep, young 'un."

"I know. Couldn't be helped. I shall have to explain to Mr. Selby somehow. I suppose my brother's in his study?"

"Yes," said Tom. "I—I think so."

Frank turned towards the staircase.

"Haven't you got to report to Railton, kid?" asked Monty Lowther.

"After I've seen Ernest," said the fag. And he went up the stairs.

Tom Merry & Co. glanced after him, and looked at one another. There was black news waiting for Levison minor, but the Terrible Three did not feel disposed to impart it to him.

"Poor little beggar!" said Manners. "He will know soon enough!"

"It's rotten!" muttered Tom.

Levison minor went cheerfully up the stairs. On the landing he passed Trimble of the Fourth, and Baggy Trimble gave a fat chuckle.

"He, he, he! Heard the news, young Levison?"

Frank paused a moment.

"News?" he repeated.

"He, he, he! Then you haven't heard that— Yaroooh!" yelled Trimble, as a hand fell on his collar. Jack Blake of the Fourth had come out of his study, and he had collared Baggy Trimble just in time. Blake proceeded to shake the fat junior a good deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

"Groogh!" gasped Trimble. "Leggo! Oh! Ow!"

"What's up, Blake?" asked Levison minor, with a rather startled look. "Anything happened while I've been over at Greyfriars?"

"Your brother's in his study," said Blake, without answering the question. "Better cut along."

Frank looked at him, and looked at Trimble. Trimble was wriggling and gasping in Blake's powerful grasp, and not in a state to impart his news, whatever it was.

The fag hurried on through the Fourth Form passage. At

the doorway of Study No. 6 an eyeglass glimmered out at him. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave him a kind and sympathetic smile.

"Awfly sowwy, kid!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"It's all right," said Frank. "I shall get into a row with Mr. Selby. But that doesn't matter now. I can stand that."

"Yaas, wathah! But—"

"But what?" asked the fag uneasily.

"Oh, nothin'! Your bwothah's in his study," said Arthur Augustus. And he stepped back rather hastily into No. 6.

Frank Levison went on his way to No. 9 in the Fourth. He tapped at the door, and entered. Levison, Clive, and Cardew, the chums of No. 9, were all there at prep. They were not giving much attention to prep, however. Clive was working, in a very desultory way, with a gloomy brow. Ralph Reckness Cardew was stretched in the armchair, unusually silent and serious. Ernest Levison was sorting out books from a bookshelf, and stacking them in a little heap on the corner of the table. It looked as if Levison of the Fourth was making preparations for a move of some kind.

The three Fourth-Formers looked at Frank as he entered. They had expected him; yet the sight of him seemed to startle them. Cardew coughed, and Clive looked greatly discomfited, and dropped his eyes to his work again. Levison of the Fourth stood with a book in his hand, and the colour coming into his rather pale face.

Frank looked from one to another.

"Surprised to see me?" he asked, with a rather tremulous smile.

"N-no," said Ernest Levison, with a catch in his voice.

"So—so you've got back from Greyfriars?"

"Yes. You knew—"

"D'Arcy told us you had gone."

"It's all right, Ernie."

"Is it?" said Levison of the Fourth grimly.

"Quite all right," said Frank eagerly. "I've seen Dr. Locke at Greyfriars. He's given me a letter for Dr. Holmes here. And—"

Clive and Cardew exchanged a glance, and left the study. The door closed after them, and the brothers were left alone. The brightness died out of Frank Levison's face. He looked at his brother uneasily.

"Is—is anything wrong, Ernie?" he faltered.

"Ye-es. I suppose you've got to know," said Levison.

"You—you haven't heard anything since you came in?"

"No. Trimble was going to tell me something, but Blake stopped him." The fag was beginning to look alarmed.

"I—I don't catch on, Ernie. Has there been a row about my missing call-over and prep? That's nothing!"

Levison shook his head.

Frank had to know, and Ernest Levison had to tell him.

But he shrank from the task.

"How did you get on at Greyfriars?" he asked.

Frank brightened again a little.

"First-rate!" he answered. "I saw the Head—your old headmaster, Ernie. I—I told him the whole story—about what Bunter told Trimble the day the Greyfriars crowd were over here for the match. He said—as I knew he would—that it was all false. Bunter was lying when he told Trimble that you were turned out of Greyfriars for theft. He called Bunter up, and made him own up. He's written a letter for me to give our Head, telling him the exact facts about your leaving Greyfriars. What—what are you looking at me like that for, Ernie?"

Levison did not answer.

"You—you're not wild with me for going?" pleaded Frank.

"I know you didn't want me to, but—but, Ernie, old man, it had to be done. You couldn't let all the fellows here go on believing such a thing against you. You couldn't. Just a word from your old headmaster was enough to clear you. You wouldn't let him be asked—"

"I had my reasons," muttered Levison heavily.

"But there was nothing else for it," urged Frank. "And I tell you it's all right now. Dr. Locke has knocked that yarn of Trimble's right on the head. I've got his letter saying so. Dr. Holmes will let all the school know the facts, and you'll be cleared. Now it's done, Ernie, you can see that it was for the best."

"I know you meant it for the best, kid," said Levison.

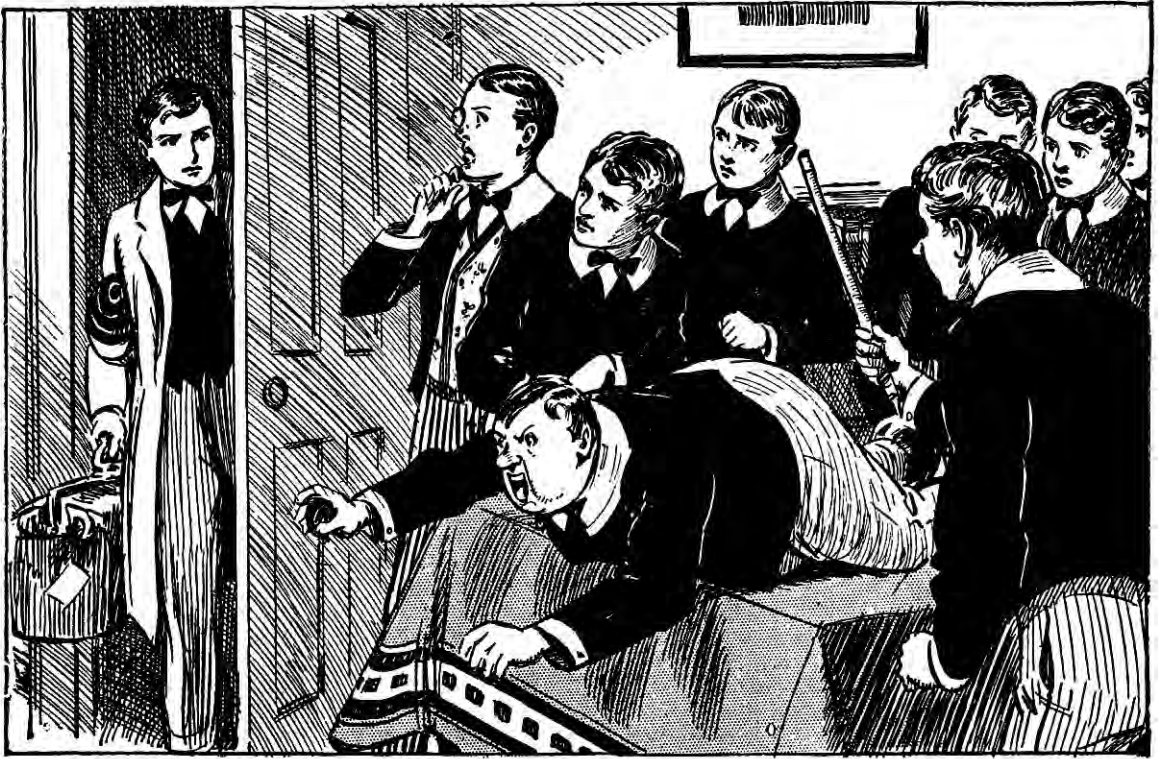
"I don't blame you. But it's the finish for me here."

"I tell you you're cleared now!"

"I know that. I can guess what's in my old headmaster's letter. I wasn't sacked from Greyfriars. I wasn't accused of theft. That's knocked on the head. But—"

"But what?"

"I'm cleared of all that," said Levison grimly. "But now the facts are out, and Dr. Holmes knows. Don't you see? I wasn't kicked out of Greyfriars as Bunter told Trimble. But I had to leave. There were a lot of things against me. I had to go. When I came to St. Jim's, all that was kept dark. You never even knew at home—you and Doris never knew."



"Hold the fat little beast!" said Blake, as he wielded the cricket stump. Whack! Whack! "Yaroor! Oh crumbs! Whoop!" roared Trimble. There was a sudden step in the passage, then the door opened and a junior in an overcoat, with a bag in his hand and a cap under his arm, looked in. It was Levison of the Fourth. "What are you doing to Trimble?" he asked. (See page 7.)

Only the pater knew. And—and he didn't tell Dr. Holmes when I came here. I never wanted you to know. But now—"

Levison broke off wretchedly.

A scared look came over Frank's face.

"Ernie!" he muttered.

"As soon as D'Arcy told me you'd started for Greyfriars," said Levison, "I came after you—to stop you. I was too late—you'd taken the express. Then I told the fellows—Tom Merry and the rest—the facts. They don't believe Trimble's yarn now—they know I never was a thief, or expelled from my old school. I've seen the Head. I've told him. And can't you guess the rest."

"Ernie!"

"I'm cleared of what the fellows believed against me," said Levison wearily. "I could have done that any time by calling Dr. Locke in. But as soon as he was called in, the Head was bound to know that I'd come here on what he considers false pretences. He ought to have been told why I left Greyfriars. If he'd been told, he would never have let me into St. Jim's at all. Now he knows—"

"Now—" breathed Frank.

"I've got to go."

"To—to go!" panted the fag.

"Yes. It can't be helped now. I didn't care what the fellows thought—at least, I could stand it! But as soon as the Head was called into the matter, the game was up. That's why I wouldn't get the proof from Greyfriars—it meant the sack for me here. You can see now."

"But—but—" stammered Frank.

"You shouldn't have butted in, kid. It can't be helped now."

"I—I never knew!" groaned Frank. "I knew you'd had some trouble at Greyfriars, and father decided to send you to another school. I—I never knew that—that—"

"It wasn't serious—not like Bunter made out. I was a rotter. The Head was right enough to send me home. I wasn't expelled; but I had to leave for bad conduct. Nothing that a fellow couldn't live down if he made up his mind to turn over a new leaf, but enough to keep him out of a school like this if it was known. Well, Dr. Holmes never knew—father never told him. Now he knows! I've told him, as soon as I knew there was no stopping you. The game's up now."

Frank's face was white.

"You—you're not leaving, Ernie?"

Levison nodded.

"Leaving St. Jim's!" said the fag blankly.

"The Head's going to let me leave quietly at the end of the week. No public fuss—not an expulsion," said Levison, with a bitter smile. "I'm just to drop out, that's all. It's letting me off easy—considering. After all, I dare say it's what I deserve."

"And I've done it!" groaned Frank.

"Don't worry, kid. It might have come to it, anyhow."

Frank leaned on the table, his face white, the tears rolling down his cheeks. He understood it all now; he knew why his brother had allowed the St. Jim's fellows to believe Trimble's slander, rather than take the only possible step to clear himself. Frank had taken that step, and his brother was cleared! And that step had been his ruin! In clearing his brother's name he had made it impossible for him to remain at St. Jim's. He understood now—too late.

"Frank, old chap, chuck it!" muttered Levison. "It can't be helped now. I—I say, I'm not blaming you. You didn't understand. You thought you were going to set matters right. I—I'm not sorry you chipped in. I've got to go, but I shall leave a good name behind me. It's all right."

Frank's only answer was a sob of utter misery. His brother was to go, and he was the cause of it. That was the result of his intervention—the outcome of his high hopes. It was too much for the fag, and the tears ran down his cheeks unchecked.

CHAPTER 3.

Levison's Resolve.

D'ARCY minor—Wally of the Third—came along the Fourth Form passage, and nodded in his cheeky way to Cardew and Clive, who were lounging near the door of Study No. 9. Both the Fourth-Formers looked glum enough, and Wally's cheeky, cheeky face was a contrast.

"Hallo, old tulips!" said the fag. "You're looking merry and bright. Seen young Levison? I hear he's come back."

Clive made a gesture towards the door of Study No. 9.

"Good!" said Wally. "I've got a message for him from Selby. The young ass has cut prep, you know—no end of a shine! Fancy the face of the Selby-bird, when he found that Frank didn't even come in late, but cut the whole show!" Wally chuckled. "Worth a guinea a box, what? I say, do

you fellows know what Franky has been playing the giddy ox for? He's going to get the chopper from Selby."

"You'll find him in the study," said Clive shortly.

"Right-ho, my mournful friend!" said Wally, with a grin, and he walked on to the door of Study No. 9, thumped on it, and kicked it open, in his cheerful and breezy manner.

He stared at the scene in the study.

"Frank!" he stuttered. "Blubbing! My only Aunt Jane!"

Levison of the Fourth frowned angrily. Frank made a tremendous effort to control himself, his pale cheeks flaming crimson. "Blubbing" was considered, in the Third, the last thing in "soppiness." It was not like Frank to blub. Mr. Selby's pointer had never caused it, in Mr. Selby's most severe moments; and Wally was astonished. In fact, he could scarcely believe his eyes.

"I—I—I'm not blubbing!" gasped Frank.

"Dear old bean, you're a regular giddy Niobe!" said Wally mercilessly. "My only Aunt Jane! Jolly old water-works!"

"Shut up, you cheeky young ass!" growled Levison.

"Bow-wow to you!" retorted D'Arcy minor. He became a little more serious. "I say, Frank, old man, what's the row?"

"N-n-nothing."

"Yes; you look as if there's nothing the matter," said Wally. "What has your blessed major been doing now to worry you?"

Frank turned his back to his Third Form chum, making hasty and desperate efforts to remove the signs of tears. Wally gave Levison major a resentful look. None of Frank's pals in the Third quite liked his devotion to his major; Wally and Reggie Manners fully agreed that what Frank could see in Levison major was a giddy mystery to them. If Levison of the Fourth was in trouble, Frank was bound to be looking glum; and Levison of the Fourth had been in bitter enough trouble of late; and Frank's friends had found his glumness rather a trial.

But a new thought came into Wally's mind as he looked from one to the other of the brothers.

"I—I say, I heard something from young Trimble," he said. "It isn't true that you're leaving, is it, Levison?"

"Yes," said Levison shortly.

"Oh, sorry!" said Wally. "Well, it can't be helped, Frank. If the Head's found out about——" He broke off.

Frank's eyes, very red on the lids, turned on Wally with a flash in them.

"You dummy, Wally—you ass——"

"Eh? What?"

"Ernie's innocence is proved now——"

"Oh! Is it?" said Wally. "Glad to hear it! Then what's he leaving for?" Frank's face quivered, and Wally went on hastily. "Never mind—never mind now. I say, Frank, Mr. Selby sent me to find you. He knows you've come back, and he wants to see you in his study. You've missed prep, you know."

Frank tried to pull himself together. His brother was under sentence to go; but the school life was going on just the same for Frank. He had missed evening preparation, which the Third took in their Form-master's presence in the Third Form room; and that delinquency had to be answered for.

"Buck up, kid!" said Levison. "You must go and see Selby. But you've got a letter for the Head."

"Yes," muttered Frank. "It's no good now."

"Deliver it all the same. The Head knows you've been to Greyfriars, and knows why. I've told him. I'm sure he will let you off in the circles, and if he does, that will see you through with Selby. Go to the Head first."

"Good stunt!" said Wally approvingly.

"I don't care!" groaned Frank. "Selby can cut me to pieces now, if he likes! I don't care for anything!"

"That's rot!" said Wally. "You just come along with me, and I'll take you to the Head. Selby's got his thickest came out, and he wants to give you jip. No end of a lark to disappoint him. Come on!"

Frank looked at his brother.

"Better go at once, Frank," said Levison, in a low voice.

"I suppose so," said Frank drearily.

He quitted the study with his chum, and Wally piloted him down the stairs, and along to the Head's study.

Left alone, Levison of the Fourth stood for some minutes in silence, a look of misery on his face. He had not blamed his brother—he had not uttered one word of reproach. Frank had acted for the best—so far as he could see at the time. It was of the fag, not of himself, that Levison was thinking, with a heavy heart. Frank would miss him—he knew how Frank would miss him. The Head had allowed him to remain for the rest of the week, and to leave quietly at the weekend.

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But those few days were no respite to Levison. He would see Frank every day, and the fag—and Levison himself—would feel the parting all the more. It was better to make a clean cut. The blow had fallen; there was no further hope; and the sooner he was gone the better. He felt that he could not bear another interview like that with Frank. Better go, before he saw his brother again.

The door opened, and Cardew and Clive came in. Levison's face cleared a little, and he glanced at them calmly. Even to his nearest chums he did not want to display how hard he was hit.

"You fellows had better get your prep done," he remarked.

"Hang prep!" said Cardew.

"I—I suppose there's no hope, Levison?" said Clive.

Levison shook his head.

"It's rotten for Frank," said Clive. "You—you'll feel it the next few days, Levison. I wish we could do something."

"There won't be any next few days," said Levison quietly.

"I'm clearing this evening. I've asked the Head. It's better to clear at once, now the chopper's down. I—I don't want to see Frank again. It's a bit too much for me."

For a moment his voice trembled.

"I'm getting the express at Wayland," he went on. "I've put a few things together. My box will be sent after me. If I've left anything about, you fellows can see to it."

"Yes, yes; of course!" said Clive.

"You're not going to say good-bye to Frank?" asked Cardew.

"I—I can't! The poor little beggar thinks it was all his fault," said Levison. "I had to tell him how it was. He—he came back from Greyfriars thinking it was all serene. He didn't understand how matters stood. When I'm gone he'll get over it, and the sooner the better. No good hanging it out. The Head thinks so, too. I—I'd rather not see Frank again before I go. I want to keep a stiff upper lip."

"I suppose it's better so," said Cardew. "But—but it's rotten that you're goin', old chap! I can hardly believe it now. I—I wish I'd been a better pal to you here."

"I wish I had!" muttered Clive. "I could kick myself for ever believing a word against you, old fellow. But—but——"

"You've nothing to blame yourself for," said Levison.

"You couldn't know why I didn't clear myself, and I couldn't tell you. On the whole, I'm not wholly sorry this has happened. I don't want to go, of course. But I don't know that I could have kept on long with everybody down on me—thinking I had been sacked from Greyfriars for theft. Anyhow, that's knocked on the head——"

He broke off.

"Well, it's time I made a move. I want to get clear before Frank looks for me again. You chaps might tell him I'm gone, and—and tell him I thought it better to clear at once."

"I suppose we can't come and see you off?" said Clive.

"You can come down to the gates, if you like, and see Taggles let me out," said Levison, with a faint smile.

"We'll do that," said Cardew. "Oh, it's rotten!"

Cardew and Clive stood in glum silence while Levison made his last preparations. He fastened his bag, and put on his coat, and took his cap, and the three juniors left Study No. 9 together.

CHAPTER 4. Levison's Farewell.

"TRIMBLE!"

"Here he is!"

The door of Study No. 2 in the Fourth was thrown open, and a crowd of juniors appeared in the doorway. Kit Wildrake and Mellish and Trimble were in the study, seated round the table at preparation. Wildrake nodded to the visitors, Mellish grinned. They guessed why Tom Merry & Co. had come; but the worthy Baggy seemed to be in the dark. He rose from the table with alacrity.

"You fellows want me?" he asked.

"Yes!" said Tom grimly.

"Is it a feed?"

"A—a feed! No, it isn't a feed!"

"Wathah not, you fat boundah!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Trimble gave a grunt, and sat down again.

"Then don't bother!" he snapped.

"Weally, Twimble——"

"It's about Levison," said Tom Merry quietly. "I suppose you know that Levison of the Fourth has got to get out of St. Jim's?"

Baggy grinned.

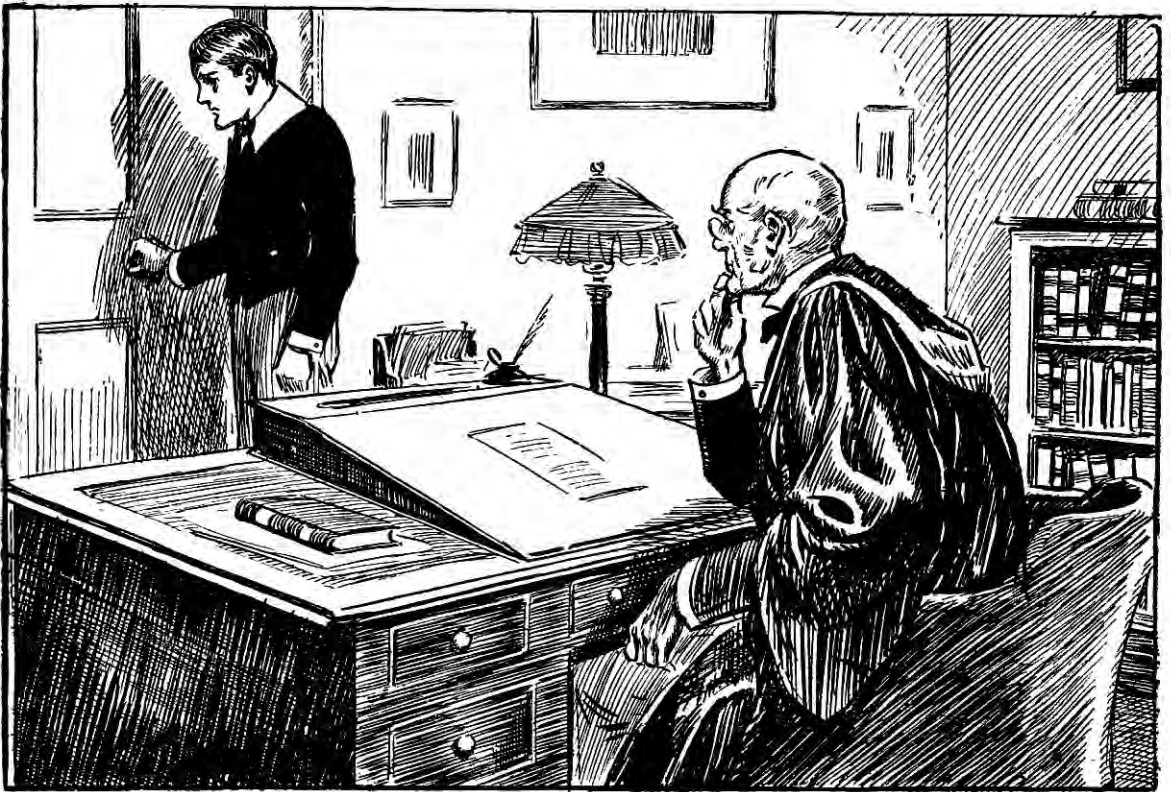
"Yes, rather! Jolly good thing, ain't it?"

"What?"

"It's all due to me," said Trimble, blinking at the juniors. "I got it all out of Bunter, you know! I showed the fellow up! He, he, he! If you've come here to thank me——"

"Thank you!" stuttered Manners.

"Yes. I think there ought to be a vote of thanks, or



"The fact that your brother was compelled to leave Greyfriars for bad conduct was concealed from my knowledge when he entered this school," said the Head. "A boy who has been turned out of another school cannot find a place here. That is all I can say, Levison minor. You may go." Without another word, but with drooping head, the lad turned to the door. (See page 8.)

something of that sort," said Trimble. "In fact, I think a testimonial wouldn't be out of place."

"Bai Jove!"

"I guess that fat galoot does take the whole cake!" said Wildrake, staring at the fatuous Baggy in wonder.

"If you fellows are thinking of a testimonial," said Baggy, "I say that I give my consent at once. I should prefer it to take the form of cash."

"C-c-cash!"

"Yes, cash! You see—"

"It isn't exactly a testimonial," said Tom Merry. "It's a ragging!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Yaas, wathah, you howwid, pwyin' little beast!" said Arthur Augustus hotly. "You are the cause of all the twouble. You took us all in!"

"Collar him!" growled Herries.

Baggy Trimble jumped up in alarm.

"I—I say—" he stammered.

"Why couldn't you mind your own business?" said Tom Merry savagely. "You got a yarn out of that fool Bunter—that was all lies from beginning to end. You spread it over the school. Nobody knew why Levison didn't call a witness from Greyfriars to clear him, and we believed the story. But for your prying and meddling young Levison wouldn't have gone over to Greyfriars to-day. Now it's all up with Levison major. He's proved innocent, and he's got to go. Why couldn't you mind your own business?"

"You—you see, I—I—"

"You couldn't help prying and tattling, is that it?" asked Monty Lowther. "What's bred in the bone—what?"

"Well, you've done for Levison here," said Digby. "Now you're going to get what you've asked for."

"Yaroooh! Keep off!" roared Trimble. "I—I say, I'm sorry, you know. I—I never really believed Bunter's yarn, you know! I—I always liked old Levison. I—I'm sorry he's going! Keep off, you beasts!" Trimble dodged round the study table. "I say, you keep off, and I'll tell you what I'll do. I—I'll go to the Head and use my influence with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass—"

"Collar him!" exclaimed Blake impatiently.

A dozen juniors crowded into the study. Baggy-Trimble was collared promptly.

"Yow-ow-ow! Lend me a hand, Wildrake!" he yelled.

"I guess not!" grinned Wildrake. "I reckon I'm taking a hand in the proceedings, my fat tulip."

"Yaroooh! Help!" roared Trimble.

"Three dozen with a stump to begin with," said Blake.

"Flop him over the table."

Whack! Whack!

"Yooop! Help! Yow-ow-ow!"

Baggy Trimble wriggled as he was "flopped" over the study table. Jack Blake handled the cricket-stump, which he had thoughtfully provided himself with.

"Hold the fat little beast!" he said.

"Help! Yooop!"

Whack!

"Yaroooh! Oh crumbs! Whooop!" roared Trimble.

Whack! Whack!

There was a step in the passage, and a junior in an overcoat, with a bag in his hand and a cap under his arm, looked in. It was Levison of the Fourth.

"Bai Jove! Levison—"

"Levison! Not going?" exclaimed Blake.

Levison nodded.

"Yes. What are you doing to Trimble?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Giving him his medicine," said Tom Merry. "He's wanted a lesson about prying and spying for a long time."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I say, Levison," howled Trimble. "Call a prefect, will you? Yell down the stairs for Kildare and Darrell, old chap. I say, it's all a mistake, you know. I never asked Bunter anything. I never said a word about you, old chap. I—I give you my word on that."

Levison laughed.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "Of all the feahful fabwicatahs—"

"Give him some more!" said Manners. "You can stay and see the execution, Levison."

Levison stepped into the study. His face was grave again now.

"I'm going," he said. "I—I believe you fellows all know now that I was innocent of—of what that fat rascal accused me."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Of course!" said Tom Merry. "We've been to the THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 764.

Head, Levison. It was no use. Now we're going to make Trimble sorry for himself. It's all that we can do."

"If—if you'd let me ask a last favour before I clear—"

said Levison hesitatingly.

"Anythin', old chap?"

"Give it a name!" said Tom, at once.

"Let Trimble off!" said Levison.

"Wha-a-a-!"

"Weally, Levison—"

The juniors stared at Levison of the Fourth. Even Baggy Trimble turned his eyes from the threatening stump to blink at him in astonishment. That was about the last request anyone had expected Ernest Levison to make.

"I'm going," said Levison quietly. "It won't do any good. Let the fat brute off. He can't help being a spying brute, I suppose, and—and he couldn't have done me any harm, if there'd been nothing against me at Greyfriars. That was my own fault. Let him off. I—I'd rather part friends even with Trimble."

"Rot!" grunted Jack Blake. But he lowered the stump.

The juniors released Trimble, and the fat junior rolled off the table. He backed to the door, gasping, and dodged round Levison and fled. Apparently Baggy did not consider it judicious to give Tom Merry & Co. a chance to change their minds again.

"You're an ass, Levison," said Tom. "But—but perhaps you're right. And you're really going?"

"At once!" said Levison. "The Head would let me hang on to the end of the week, but—but in the circumstances, I'd rather clear. So I've asked leave to take the evening train. Of course, I've got leave." He smiled a little bitterly. "I dare say the Head's better pleased to see the last of me at once. I—I couldn't stand it—with Frank, you know; he's awfully cut up, poor kid. I'd rather drop out at once. Good-bye, you fellows."

"Nothing we can do?" asked Tom Merry, with a clouded brow.

"Nothing, thanks! Unless—" Levison choked a moment, and then went on calmly. "Only if you could do anything for my minor after I'm gone. He'll miss me a bit at first."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus miserably. "I'm awfully sorry you're goin', Levison."

"That's all right."

Cardew and Clive were waiting in the passage. They were going down as far as the gates with their chum. Levison of the Fourth shook hands round with Tom Merry & Co., and then he was gone.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, with a deep breath.

"I—I nevah thought I should miss Levison vewy much if he went, deah boys, but—but I feel weally wotten you know. I am sorry we agreed to let Twimble off. It would be some comfort to wag the wottah."

And with gloomy faces the juniors left the study. Trimble was safe from punishment, owing to Levison's intervention, but Tom Merry & Co. gave little thought to Trimble. They were thinking of Levison, of his lonely homeward journey, of Doris Levison's dismay when she learned that her brother had had to leave St. Jim's, and of the little fag whose well-meant intervention had brought this to pass. They knew how Frank Levison would feel it, and their hearts were heavy for him. There had been a time when Ernest Levison's departure would have been viewed with indifference, if not with satisfaction, by Tom Merry & Co., but that time was past. Now they would have done anything in their power to keep him at St. Jim's. But there was nothing to be done. The gates of the old school were to close behind Levison of the Fourth—for ever.

CHAPTER 5. Gone!

"KEEP your pecker up, kid!"

Wally of the Third whispered encouragingly to Levison minor as he stopped at the door of the Head's study. Frank nodded, and passed into the dread apartment.

"So you have returned, Levison minor?" said the Head. But his tone was not severe; he could read the signs of suffering in the fag's pale face, and he pitied him, though his compassion for Frank only hardened his anger against Frank's brother.

"Yes, sir," faltered Frank.

"You have seen your brother, since your return?"

"Yes, sir. He told me that—that—" Frank's voice trembled.

"He is to leave the school," said the Head. "I am sorry for this, Levison minor, but there is no other course open to me. Please do not speak on the subject, I cannot hear you."

Frank's lip quivered. He had hard work to hold back his tears.

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"It seems that you have been to Greyfriars this afternoon," resumed the Head. "Under other circumstances, Levison minor, you would be punished severely for making such a journey without leave. As I am acquainted with your motive in this case, however, I shall pardon you, and I will speak to Mr. Selby on the subject."

"Dr. Locke gave me a letter for you, sir," muttered Frank.

"It—it clears my brother off—of what the fellows have been saying about him."

"You may give it to me."

Frank Levison handed over the letter he had brought from Greyfriars; the letter which he had fondly hoped would set everything right for his brother at St. Jim's. He watched Dr. Holmes as he read the letter, with a faint hope that he might yet relent; for he knew that Levison's old headmaster had spoken as much as possible in the hapless junior's favour. Dr. Holmes read the letter through without a change in his countenance, and laid it on his table.

"Very good!" he said. "You may go, Levison minor."

"But, sir," faltered Frank. "After—after what Dr. Locke has told you—"

The Head made an impatient gesture.

"It appears that, owing to some tattle of a Greyfriars boy, there was a belief here that your brother was expelled from his old school for theft," he said. "I heard this for the first time to-day. This letter disproves it. The boys, apparently, are already satisfied that it is disproved. I shall see that what Dr. Locke states is made generally known. That does not alter the fact that Levison was compelled to leave Greyfriars for bad conduct, and that this fact was concealed from my knowledge when he entered this school. That Levison has changed since, I am willing to believe. I have every hope that he may do well elsewhere. But a boy who has been turned out of another school cannot find a place here. That is all that can be said on the subject, Levison minor. You may go!"

The Head made a gesture towards the door. Without another word, but with drooping head, the fag turned to the door.

"One moment," said the Head. "You must report to your Form-master. I will give you a note to take to him, asking him to excuse your very serious delinquency to-day, Levison minor. Wait a moment."

Frank had turned back with a momentary flush of hope. But the Head's words dispelled it. He did not care for himself; it was pardon for his brother that he wanted. He stood silent while the Head wrote a note and handed it to him. Then he left the study.

Wally was waiting for him in the passage—and Manners minor was with him now.

"Going to Selby?" asked Reggie Manners.

Frank nodded.

"It's a licking, old chap."

"I wouldn't care if it was. But I've got a note from the Head; Selby won't pitch into me this time."

"Oh, good eggs!" said Reggie and Wally together.

And they walked away quite cheerfully, leaving Frank to repair to his Form-master's study. With dragging steps Frank Levison made his way to Mr. Selby's quarters. All his thoughts were with his brother, though he knew nothing so far of Levison's intention to leave the school that evening. Had he known that, certainly Frank would not have gone to Mr. Selby just then.

The Third Form master greeted him with a grim brow, and reached across his table for a cane.

"Levison minor, you have been out of school bounds!"

"Yes, sir. I—"

"You did not answer to your name at calling-over."

"No, sir."

"You did not appear at preparation in the Form-room!" said Mr. Selby, his voice growing deeper as he recited this list of Levison minor's sins.

"No, sir," said Frank dully. "I—"

"You understand, of course, that your punishment will be very severe," said Mr. Selby, rising, cane in hand.

"This note is from the Head, sir," said Frank, laying it on the table.

"Indeed!"

Mr. Selby glanced at the note. The frown upon his brow deepened into a black scowl. The Head's note was short—but not sweet, according to Mr. Selby's views. Dr. Holmes stated that in the circumstances he would request Mr. Selby to pass over Levison minor's delinquency, and leave him unpunished. Mr. Selby stared at the note and glared at Levison minor. His fingers closed almost convulsively on the cane.

For hours the irritable master had been looking forward to the punishment of Levison minor. He was a suspicious man, and he knew that he was not liked in his Form; and he attributed Frank Levison's conduct to intentional impertinence towards himself. As a matter of fact, Frank had wholly forgotten his Form-master's very existence that eventful day.

Mr. Selby was feeling at the present moment something like a tiger balked of his prey.

But a request from the Head was a command; and he laid down his cane with very bitter feelings indeed.

"Dr. Holmes asks me to excuse you, Levison minor," he said, compressing his lips.

"Yes, sir," said Frank.

"I shall accede to the request. I shall not cane you," said Mr. Selby. "I shall dismiss the matter from my mind."

"Thank you, sir," said Levison minor.

"At the same time," said Mr. Selby bitterly, "I cannot allow you to neglect your proper tasks, Levison minor. Dr. Holmes would certainly not wish that. I shall not punish you; but you will prepare your lessons for to-morrow. I will show you what you are to do, and you will take your books into the Form-room and prepare your lesson. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

That the boy was tired, and that he looked pale and miserable, did not matter to Mr. Selby. He frowned angrily when the fag left his study. Dr. Holmes' kindness to the fag he regarded as sheer weakness; and Mr. Selby did not intend to be guilty of any such weakness himself. He was going to keep an eye on Levison minor that evening, and see that he did not neglect his task. Mr. Selby regarded that as a bounden duty.

Levison minor, however, did not go to the Form-room at once. He had no intention of disobeying his Form-master, but he wanted to see Ernest first. He went up to the Fourth Form passage to Study No. 9. He found Cardew and Clive there, but there was no sign of Levison of the Fourth.

"Where is Ernest?" asked Frank.

Cardew and Clive exchanged uneasy glances. Ernest Levison was gone; the gates had closed behind him ten minutes ago. Frank's glance grew anxious as he noted their uneasiness.

"Tell me where Ernest is!" he exclaimed. "What—what has happened now?"

"He's gone, kid," said Cardew at last.

Frank almost staggered.

"Gone! Ernest gone!"

"Yes."

"But—but he was to stay until the end of the week!" stammered Frank.

"He thought it better to make a clean cut," said Clive. "It was no good hanging it out, Frank. It was wiser to clear at once—as he had to clear. He's getting the evening express at Wayland Junction."

"Gone!" said Frank faintly. "Without even saying goodbye!"

"It was better, kid," said Clive gently. "The poor chap's been through enough lately. I think he was pretty nearly at the end of his tether."

"He shouldn't have gone without seeing me," muttered Frank. "He—he thinks it was all my fault!"

"He doesn't blame you," said Cardew.

"I've got to see him!"

"You can't, Frank! He's gone! He's on the footpath to Wayland by this time!"

Frank Levison made no reply. He turned to the door.

"Frank!" called out Clive anxiously.

But Levison minor was gone.

CHAPTER 6.

Mr. Selby Looks for Trouble!

"CAVE!" murmured Wally of the Third.

Mr. Selby's lean figure and acid face appeared at the door of the Third Form room.

After evening prep the Third had that room to themselves; they preferred it to the junior Common-room. Most of the Third were there, and there was a buzz of voices when Mr. Selby looked in. Wally and Curly Gibson were playing single-stick with rulers in the middle of the room; Manners minor, Frayne, and Hobbs were deep in an argument which echoed from one end of the Form-room to the other. But there was silence when Mr. Selby looked in.

Mr. Selby was making sure that Levison minor did not neglect his task. He expected to see Frank at his desk. His brow knitted as he noted that Frank Levison was not in the Form-room at all.

"D'Arcy minor!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir," said Wally meekly.

"Where is Levison minor?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Has he not been here?"

"I—I haven't seen him, sir, since he went to your study."

"Very good!" said Mr. Selby, compressing his thin lips in a tight line.

He turned away from the Form-room, his eyes glittering. The fag, after his reckless disobedience during the day, had disobeyed his Form-master afresh, adding defiance to defiance, and insolence to insolence. That was how Mr. Selby looked

at it—never realising for a moment that Frank, in the stress of his own troubles, had forgotten his existence. The Head had pardoned him once; he should not be pardoned again! Mr. Selby proceeded to look for Levison minor with a most unpleasant expression on his face.

He looked for him in his major's study first. But neither Levison was visible when Mr. Selby put his acid face into the doorway of Study No. 9 in the Fourth.

Cardew and Clive, forgetful of prep, were talking in low tones, with gloomy faces. They glanced in surprise at the Third Form master, and rose to their feet.

"Has Levison minor been here?" asked Mr. Selby.

"Yes—about ten minutes ago, sir," said Clive.

"Where is he now?"

"I haven't seen him since."

"Doubtless he is with his brother," said Mr. Selby sourly.

"Where is Levison of the Fourth?"

"Levison's left, sir," said Cardew.

"Left!" exclaimed the Form-master.

"Yes; he's gone home."

"Levison minor has not gone with him, I presume?"

"We saw Levison off at the gates. His minor was not with him then, sir. It was ten minutes afterwards that he looked in here."

Mr. Selby tightened his lips.

"Do you know whether Levison minor has followed his brother out of gates?"

"We don't know anything about it, sir."

"Very good."

Mr. Selby left the study, his thin lips tighter than ever. It looked to him as if Levison minor had gone out of school bounds again—at that hour, nearly bed-time for the Third Form. But Mr. Selby could scarcely believe in such temerity, and he proceeded to make inquiries for the missing fag.

But no one was able to give him information. Levison minor certainly was not in the School House. Mr. Selby was unable to learn anything of his movements till he came upon Trimble of the Fourth. Trimble had something to tell him. He had seen Levison minor slip out of the house, and he had noticed that the fag had his cap in his hand. Mr. Selby looked grimmer than ever. With a black brow, he returned to Study No. 9 in the Fourth, to question Levison's study-mates.

Cardew and Clive were not in a happy mood, and they looked impatient when Mr. Selby came in again. But they could not refuse to answer the Form-master.

"You stated that Levison of the Fourth has left," said Mr. Selby.

"Yes, sir," grunted Clive. "He had the Head's permission to go home at once."

"What train is he taking?"

"The nine express at Wayland."

"There was no need for him to start so soon for that train," said Mr. Selby. "I presume that he is walking?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Levison minor appears to have gone out of bounds again," said Mr. Selby. "Do you know whether it was his intention to accompany his brother to the station—without leave?"

"He never told us so, sir."

"But you think it probable?" said Mr. Selby, watching the faces of the two juniors.

Clive's face set obstinately. Cardew gave a slight shrug of the shoulders. Mr. Selby waited for an answer, but it did not come.

He bit his lip, and turned away from the door. Cardew kicked the door shut after him.

"I suppose Frank's gone after Levison, Cardew!" Clive muttered.

"Looks like it."

"It means more trouble for him."

"Poor little kid!" said Cardew. "And I suppose Selby is going after him; he's got his rag out. Bother him! Anyhow, he won't get any information from this study."

But Mr. Selby had all the information he needed. He had not the slightest doubt that Frank had gone after his brother, to see him off at the station—an action of unparalleled insolence, in Mr. Selby's view. He had not asked his Form-master's leave—knowing, probably, that it would be refused. The task Mr. Selby had set him was thrown aside—indeed, if the fag had gone to Wayland he could not be back by bed-time. This was the result of the Head's clemency—fresh defiance, fresh insolence. Mr. Selby gritted his teeth with anger. To the fag's personal concerns he gave not a single thought. In Mr. Selby's eyes, Frank's action was a deliberate act of defiance directed towards his important self.

Mr. Selby put on his hat and coat and left the School House. He crossed to the masters' gate and left himself out. Why Levison had started so early for the nine train at Wayland he did not know, not knowing that the outcast junior had desired to avoid a painful interview with his minor. But

(Continued on page 12.)

The ST JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

"My Lucky Day."

By Ephraim Taggles.
(Gatekeeper at St. Jim's.)

"GOOD-MORNIN' to you, Mister Taggles!" wheezed old Pepper, in the manner he always adopts when he gets a trifle thirsty.

"Mornin'!" I returns—genial. "Will you step inside and take a little refreshment with me?"

Mr. Pepper stepped forward with alacrity. "Well, bust me!" he ejaculated, in surprise. And then adds hastily: "Yes, yes, bless yer kind heart! I'm on!"

We enters together. The scholars up to the school calls Mr. Pepper a crusty old man, and a miser. But twodent his crustiness that impressed me during the next half-hour—it was his thirst!

"I likes a glass, you know," remarked Mr. Pepper, as he fortified himself with his third. "What was the boss, Mr. Taggles?"

"It wasn't a boss," I sniffs, contemptuous. "It was Master Racke."

"Master Racke—hey?" echoed Pepper, opening his eyes. "Well, well, you're no end lucky these days, Mr. Taggles! I've had some dealings with Master Racke before now. A young spark he is, too. Heaps too much money for his age, and doesn't know 'ow to spend it fast enough. That he don't!"

At this junction I asks Mr. Joliffe to perdoce his best cigars.

"I've a werry special sort," replied the landlord, looking sly. "A kind which I keeps strictly for the gentry up to the college. Would you like to see 'em?"

"Show 'em hup!" I commands.

Mr. Joliffe showed 'em hup. He brought two boxes of Flor-de-Thingummy's, and planked 'em down on the counter for our inspection.

"These look rather neat," murmured Mr. Pepper, running his fingers over the top layer of one box, as if it were a pianer keyboard.

"You can 'ang on to that lot, if you're not above acceptin' 'em," I says.

"Bless your generous 'eart, not at all!" declared Mr. Pepper, lookin' pleased, and pocketin' the cigars meanwhile. "Which all I've got to say is, may you never live to want!"

Mr. Pepper Acts Wise.

He gives me a look of everlastin' gratitood, and then bade me farewell. Apparently, 'ow I settled hup for our refreshment didn't concern him. He didn't want to be in evidence when that unpleasant moment harried, anyhow.

"Seventeen-and-eightpence, if you please, Mr. Taggles," remarked Mr. Joliffe, in tactful, honeyed tones.

"All a mo'!" I says, and prepares to bust open the linin' of my waistcoat, so as to get at my fiver.

I soon split the cloth, and pulls it hout. "Take it from that there," I says, indifferent like, and tosses the folded hup note hen to the counter.

I turns my back on Joliffe, and leans agin the counter. Behind me I could 'ear the landlord hopenin' the note. But, strange to say, I never 'eard 'im gasp in astonishment and then hopen the till. He just seemed to stand still behind me and stare, though, of course, I couldn't see him staring.

A dread little suspicion started to hammer

hat my 'eart. But I shakes it hof, and waits for Joliffe to speak.

"I can take a joke with the best man on earth," chuckles Mr. Joliffe loudly; "but I should like you to settle hup!"

A Bombshell.

I swings round like a teetotum. "A joke!" I repeats, parrot fashion. "I don't quite get you! I've given you a fiver, Mr. Joliffe. I don't know whether you've hever seen one in your life before! If you 'aven't, there's four pun odd change to come!"

"If this 'ere thing were a fiver, there would be," corrects Mr. Joliffe.

"Wot?" I cried.

The landlord put my note down on the counter.

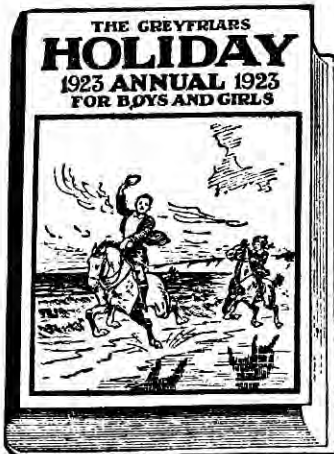
"But you don't get no four pun odd change from a bloomin' watch-guarantee at this hestabishment or hany hother, if they've got eyes in their 'eads!" roared Mr. J., with fiery emphasis.

"Watch-guarantee!" I stutters, grabbin' at the note that lay on the counter.

"Errors of 'errors, dear reader, so it was! A watch-warranty for a silver wrist watch, bought in Wayland by Master Racke. I turned stone cold for a moment at the thought of the seventeen-and-eightpence which I had run myself into. Mister Pepper had hopped a twig, and the cigars were in his pocket."

"Look 'ere, Mister Joliffe," I says, turning to him in an appealing fashion, "you're an Henglishman, with an Henglishman's common-sense of fairness. I've been done by this young rapscallion Master Racke, who give me this blinkin' slip of paper last night, in the place of wot I reckoned was a fiver! I caught him fair and square, and could have got him the boot as easy as winkin'—"

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"And, instead of doin' so, you let him go for what you took to be a fiver?" asked the landlord of the Green Man.

"Yus," I replies.

"Well," grinned Mr. Joliffe, "from what I can see of it, Master Racke is a clever young card, and he's fair 'ad you on toast! A case of the biter bit, if ever there was! Haw, haw, haw!"

"Will you 'elp a bloke hout hof 'is diff-culty?" I asks pathetically. "I ain't a-rollin' in the filthy lucre, like the young gents are, you know!"

Generous Joliffe.

"Yus," says Mr. Joliffe imejittly. "As you said, Hi ham an Henglishman hall through, and Hi can see you're fairly down the sink. Hi'll 'elp you out of it."

"Ow?" I asks, eager.

"By takin' back that box of cigars you 'ave in your pocket!" replied Mr. Joliffe, leaning forward hover the counter, and suitin' the action to the word. "That'll leave you ten shillings and tuppence to pay, please!"

I stares hard at 'im for the moment. "Ow kind you are!" I gulps, with a sarcasm which was hentirely lost on him.

"Yes, ain't I?" grinned Joliffe, with a smile. "Ten-and-tuppence, if you please!"

By rakin' every pocket, and emptyin' my purse, I just managed to perdoce the amount. It was every farthing I had, and as I ham honly paid by the month, I shall be on the cruel, rugged rocks for three weeks and four days now.

I staggered out of Mr. Joliffe's like one who had the biggest shock in all his natural. As I walked St. Jim's-wards, busted to the wide, I thinks of Master Racke, rollin' in luxury, and 'ow I can't say a word about him, 'cos the beaks wouldn't see the things quite from my point of view. Master Racke oughter been drowned at birth, that he did. I also thinks of Mr. Zedikier Bloomin' Pepper! There's a bloke with a fortnight in the bank, and over half the 'ouses in Ryl-combe to 'is name, now sittin' in his cottage, smokin' them lovely cigars, which I—poor old unlucky me—had dunned up for!

My lucky day! I don't think!

EPHRAIM TAGGLES.

The Feast of the Fags.

UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS

By Reginald Talbot.

THE fags had a beanfeast one day last week. At least, it was intended that the affair should be in the nature of a beanfeast, but unfortunately it finished up in an unexpected and far from amicable fashion.

The raison d'être of the stunt was Wally D'Arcy's remittance. Windfalls of this character do not so often come the way of the youngest scion of the House of Eastwood as they do to his elder brother, and what in Gussy's case is a "fiver" is usually limited to a couple of Treasury-notes where Wally is concerned. But, of course, the cost of living in the Third Form is not so high as it is in the Fourth, so that in proportion it works out to about the same thing. Anyway, Wally isn't quarrelling with the money when he gets it. Of course, there is never any question of what it is to be spent on. Trust the Third for that. Money and grub are

almost synonyms in the lexicon of the fags. They are also decidedly communistic in such matters. The chief features about a fags' feast are numbers and informality. As to the food, the only thing demanded is quantity. They are cheerfully indifferent as regards quality, being anything but epicureans and next door to omnivorous. As for cooking—well, it is very unusual to find it more than half-cooked, as a rule. Kippers are eaten in almost a raw state. It is all very well for Gussy to protest when reports of such matters come to his ears, and to designate it as "tawdry disgusting." The practice has all the sanctity of tradition, and Gussy's influence with his minor is not particularly noticeable.

This particular spread was fully in keeping with the usual run of such matters. Doughnuts were there in plenty, fully half of which had been purchased stale, having regard to the fact that this policy effects a considerable saving in money, which is thus enabled to be spent on other delicacies. Then kippers. These were bought in boxes. A few tins of fruit, bought rather for the sake of the fun of opening them than for any satisfaction that can be obtained from the consumption of their contents—tinned fruit being, for the most part, voted as something lacking in flavour. Then ginger-beer. Cases of it, bottled in thick stone bottles. Jam puffs and marzipan cakes, apples and toffee. A queer mixture, the more so considering the manner in which it is eaten.

There is no question of precedence in the courses. The order of eating these things depends solely upon one's luck in getting

possession of a share of them. Thus one may follow kippers with apples or jam puffs, according to which is within reach; but if the kipper is slow in cooking, one stays the pangs of hunger and lays a foundation by eating toffee in the meantime.

Lastly, of course, come candles. Not for personal consumption. Even the gastronomic capacity of fags falls short of that. The candles are for the purpose of cooking the kippers, and they are essential in the absence of a fire in the Common-room. The process is inclined to be protracted, admittedly, but it tends to maintain the amicable relations of the guests, as they are thus enabled to provide themselves with individual sources of heat instead of fighting for places at the grate. In the winter many a well-cooked and appetising meal is pushed off a fork into the flames by an over-eagerness on the part of some other cook to secure the coveted coign of vantage.

On this particular occasion things would doubtless have gone well but for the fact that Manners minor put his foot into a plate of jam-tarts that had been placed in a corner of the room until they were wanted. Curly Gibson, who has a particular fondness for jam-tarts, was tremendously indignant, and gave the delinquent his opinion of the accident in a few words that were the reverse of complimentary to the intelligence of Manners minor. That youth was not slow in resenting them—after all, it is not pleasant to have it suggested that one's time would be well occupied on the sands of a popular seaside resort, carrying trippers about for the sake of an occasional turnip—and, scorning

words as inadequate, he grappled with his traducer. Curly was not slow to respond in like fashion, and the next instant the combatants were reeling about the Common-room in an embrace that was certainly not the outcome of fraternal affection.

Manners was the more fortunate at the first encounter, and, bringing down his opponent, proceeded to rub his face in a box of kippers. There is something about kippers that render them particularly ill-adapted to the requirements of a complexion-cream, and Curly naturally struggled to avoid contact with them. When he succeeded in freeing himself there was no holding him, and the luckless Manners minor found his head being pressed into a dish of eclairs. The rest of the fags began to consider that the affair was becoming a trifle impersonal—and expensive—and endeavoured to part the combatants. The result was that within the next few moments the conflict had become a general one, and the Common-room was in an uproar. Missiles filled the air—dong'nuts, tarts, apples, cakes. The din was terrific, and the appearance of the fags, covered with the abused ingredients of the feast, if possible, was even worse than the noise. When order was finally restored, which was not for some time, everybody in the room had shared in the distribution of the grub, but not at all in the manner in which they had originally intended to do. The wash-basins were in great request for some time, and it is safe to say that the whole of the Third Form went to bed that night in a considerably cleaner state than usual. They had simply had to wash.

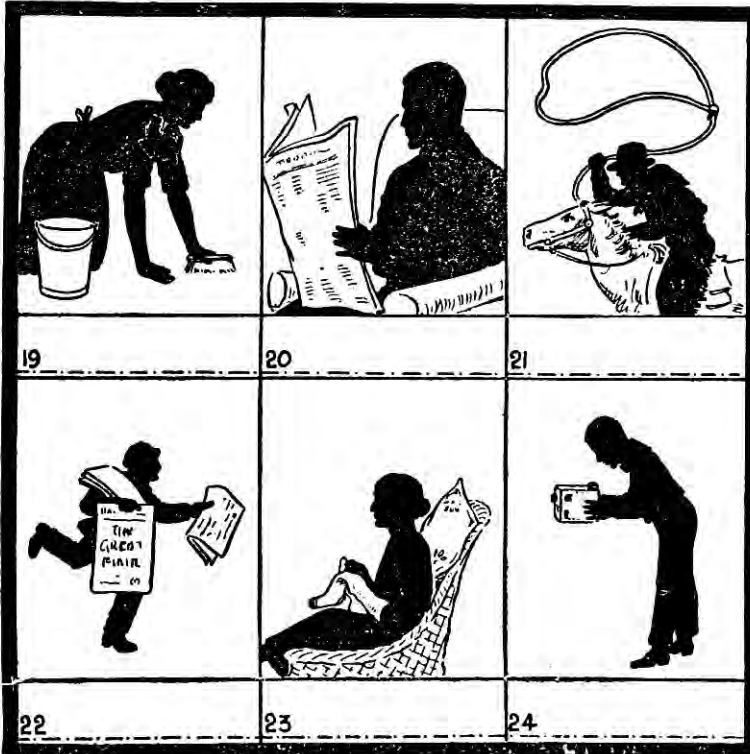
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This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boys' Friend," the "Magnet," and the "Popular," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

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.

"LEVISON'S CHANCE!"

(Continued from page 9.)

it was fortunate, for it gave Mr. Selby plenty of time to overtake the errant fag. Even if he had to follow Levison minor as far as the junction, he would catch him before the train went. Instead of seeing his brother off, Frank would be marched back to St. Jim's with a hand on his collar. His disrespectful and disobedient purpose would be defeated, as Mr. Selby said to himself with satisfaction.

The master of the Third walked quickly down Rylcombe Lane, and turned into the footpath through the wood.

It was dark under the trees—dark and lonely. Mr. Selby walked very quickly on that lonely path. It came into his mind—rather late—that that lonely path was not quite safe after dark. Only a few days ago a pedestrian had been robbed by a tramp there, at an earlier hour than this.

Mr. Selby was not cast in heroic mould. He was, in fact, rather a nervous gentleman, as well as an ill-tempered one. He glanced incessantly to right and left under the shadowy trees as he progressed, and more than once he half-abandoned his purpose of following the runaway fag to Wayland. But he would not turn back after having come so far; and perhaps he was ashamed, too, of his nervousness, and would not acknowledge to himself that he was fearful.

He hurried on, a little out of breath, his temper growing sharper and sharper as he hurried. Levison minor was booked for the thrashing of his life when Mr. Selby's hands fell upon him—indeed, the bitter-tempered master was considering whether, after all the disrespectful fag had done, Dr. Holmes might not be induced to send him away from St. Jim's, after his brother. Levison minor deserved that, and more, if only for the state of nerves that Mr. Selby was in at the present moment.

He hoped every minute to see or hear the juniors on the path ahead of him. Unless they were hurrying, he was bound to overtake them before they emerged into the Wayland road, and they had no occasion for hurry. The sound of a footstep on the path ahead made Mr. Selby's eyes glint, and he broke into a run.

"Oh! You are here!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

There was a moving shadow on the dark path, and Mr. Selby clutched at it, to prevent the truant fag from dodging away. His hand closed on the arm of a rough coat with a hard grip. The next moment a hand closed on Mr. Selby, gripping him by the throat.

He panted.

"Levison, you young scoundrel, release me! Oh!"

A hot breath of rum and foul tobacco came on Mr. Selby's face. A second hand grasped him. He realised, with a shock of terror, that it was not a schoolboy he had seized on the dark footpath under the trees. He was in the grasp of a man—a man more powerful than himself. He remembered the story of the tramp, and gave a cry of terror. In his panic he struck out wildly and savagely, and his bony fists crashed into a stubbly face.

There was a savage oath in the darkness.

"Ah, would yer!"

"Help!" shrieked Mr. Selby.

Crash! He went down to the ground helplessly in the grasp of the footpad, and a brawny knee was planted on his chest. Through the tree-tops came a silvery glimmer of the rising moon. Dimly over him Mr. Selby's starting eyes saw a rough, brutal face, and a threatening brawny fist, grasping a cudgel.

"Help!" he shrieked wildly.

CHAPTER 7.

In Danger!

FRANK LEVISON had lost no time after leaving Study No. 9.

His brother was gone—gone without seeing him, without even a farewell. Frank partly understood his motives; but he was passionately eager to see Ernest again before he left. He felt that he had to see him. It was his fault—his fault—that Ernest was going; it was he that had driven Levison of the Fourth from St. Jim's. He had to see him again; he could not bear that the parting should be thus. His task—Mr. Selby—everything, had quite disappeared from the fag's mind. He left the School House at once, and a minute later was climbing over the school wall. Already that day he had broken school bounds, and given deep offence, and he had been forgiven. He would not be forgiven a second time. He did not even think of that. Dropping from the wall, he started down the dusky lane at a breathless run.

He turned into the footpath through the wood and ran on. But in the darkness he stumbled and collided with the trees, and he had to drop into a walk. Somewhere on the path

ahead of him was the junior he sought. Dr. Holmes, doubtless, in giving Levison permission to leave that evening, had taken it for granted that the junior would take the local train from Rylcombe to the junction. But Levison had started too early for that, and he did not want a long wait at the village station. Frank knew that he had walked through the wood, and the dark shadows had no terrors for the fag as he followed.

His heart thumped as he heard a sound on the path ahead. A match flared out in the gloom.

"Ernest!" panted Frank.

Then for a second his heart stood still. In the flare of the match he caught sight of a stubbly, brutal face, with a cap pulled low down over beetling brows. The tramp or footpad, or whatever he was, was lighting a pipe as he leaned against the gnarled trunk of a tree, a rough cudgel under his arm.

He was waiting on the footpath, and Frank did not need telling that the stubbly ruffian was waiting in that lonely spot for no good purpose. His startled exclamation drew the man's eyes upon him.

The match went out.

"Old on!" came a rough voice in the darkness, and the startled fag heard the man tramping towards him.

For a second he was on the point of turning to flee. He knew that the man was a ruffian and a footpad; he knew that his intention was to rob, perhaps with violence. But his brother was ahead of him on the path. It was possible that Ernest had encountered this ruffian, that—Dreadful possibilities flashed into the fag's excited mind. Instead of running back the way he had come, he stood quite still, making no sound, tense, watchful.

In the darkness a black shadow loomed before him; a hand was groping to collar him.

Frank backed a pace, and dodged round the shadowy form, with the quickness of a startled deer. A grasping hand just missed his collar, and he heard an angry oath as he sped on up the path. He ran breathlessly, heedless of stumbles.

Another savage oath sounded more faintly in the distance behind. Frank ran on and on, and not till he was quite breathless did he drop into a walk again. Whether the man was following him or not, he did not know; his ears were on the alert as he tramped on with thumping heart.

In an open space of the wood ahead of him, a dim starlight fell, and he caught sight of a moving figure.

"Ernest!"

It was Levison of the Fourth.

Levison was walking slowly, the little bag in his hand, deep in black thoughts, and heedless of his surroundings.

The panting cry behind him startled him out of his deep reverie, and he swung round.

Frank came panting up.

"You!" exclaimed Levison. "Frank!"

"Thank goodness I've found you!" gasped Frank, as he joined his brother, his breath coming almost in sobs.

"Frank! You young ass! What have you followed me for?"

Frank Levison leaned against a tree, gasping for breath. He was utterly pumped, and for some minutes he could not speak.

Levison dropped his bag in the grass, and stood looking at his minor, in the dim starlight. Behind the fag, the footpath under the thick branches was like a black tunnel.

"Frank, you shouldn't have come out!" said Levison, at last.

"I—I had to see you, Ernie, before you went!" muttered Frank. "You—you never even said good-bye."

"What's the good?" said Levison. "I had to go, and—You young ass! You'll get into a fearful row for this!"

"I don't care!"

"I care!" said Levison. "Mr. Selby—"

"Hang Mr. Selby!" said Frank. "Do you think I care about Mr. Selby now? He can lick me if he likes! What does it matter? Oh, Ernie, it's my fault that you've got to go; I'm the cause of it all! I never knew; I couldn't guess! You know that, Ernie!"

Levison's face quivered.

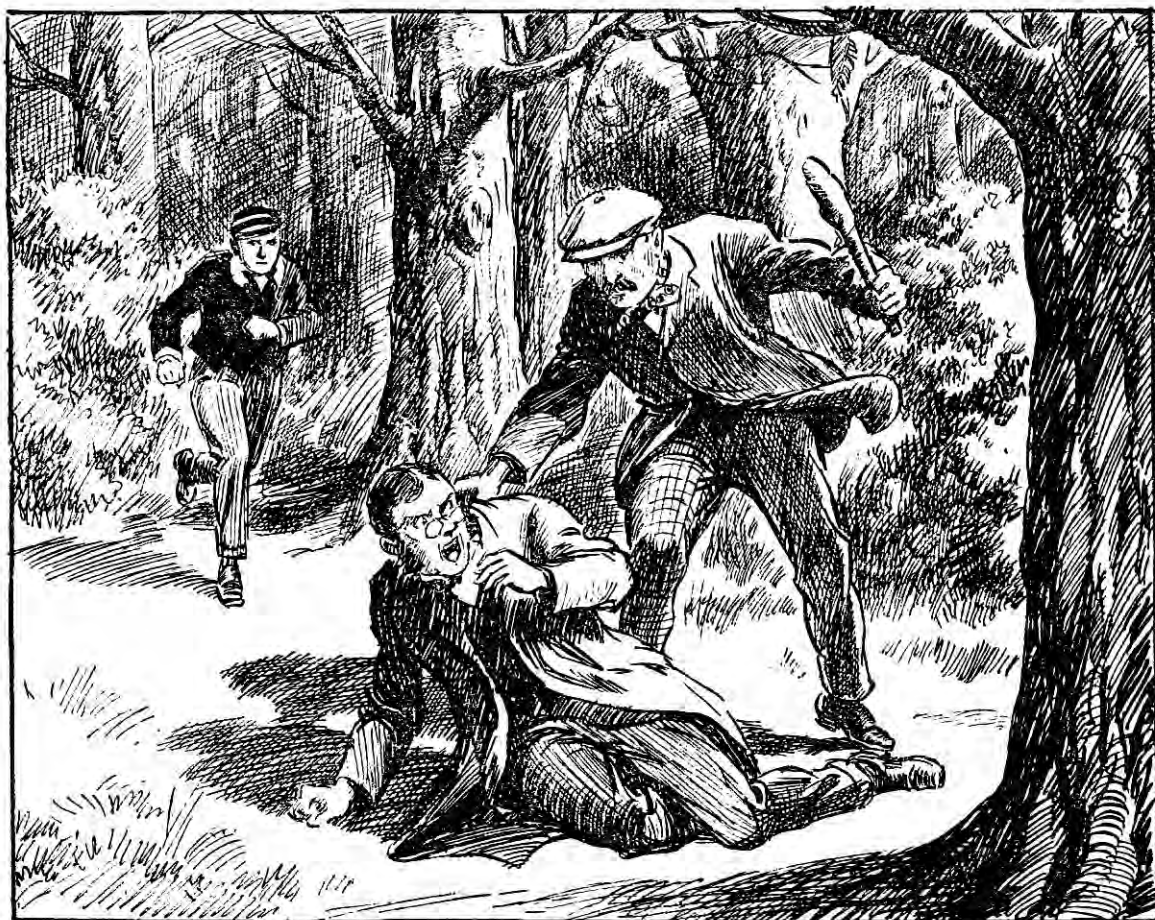
"Of course I know it, you young ass! I haven't blamed you, have I? It can't be helped."

"It's my fault!" groaned the fag.

"It's not your fault, kid," said Levison patiently. "It's mine. If I'd played the game when I was at Greyfriars this could never have happened. It's long past, but I've got to pay for it now. I'm not grumbling. I never dreamed that that old affair would rise up against me like this; but everything has to be paid for in the long run. If I'd had the sense to keep straight—" He checked himself.

"What are you going to say to the pater and Doris?" muttered Frank miserably.

"The pater will have to know. Doris is away from home now; I sha'n't have to tell her at once, anyhow. Frank, you must get back to the school."



There was a sound of rapid running feet on the footpath, and the ruffian paused and glared round with an oath. "Help!" yelled Mr. Selby. "This way! Help!" Levison of the Fourth came on the scene with a rush. "Stand back, you young fool!" shouted the footpad. And he swung the cudgel. Levison did not heed, but rushed at the ruffian. (See page 14.)

"I'm coming to the station with you, at least, Ernie. I—I'd like to come home with you."
"You young ass! One will be enough for the people at home. And you can't come to the station; you'll be late back for bed-time!"

"I must, Ernie—I will! Besides—" Frank remembered the tramp. "There's a footpad on the path. I barely dodged him, and got by—"

Levison uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, you young duffer! You might have—"

"It's all right, Ernie; he nearly had me, but I dodged. I—I was afraid you might have had trouble with him—"

Levison shook his head.

"Somebody called from the wood, and I put on a spurt," he said, with a smile. "I suppose it was your giddy tramp. Well, you'd better come on to Wayland, Frank, and take the last local back to Rykcombe; you can't go back through the wood now. You ought never to have come. You're booked for a fearful row at the school."

"I don't care!"

"Well, come on," said Levison, picking up his bag. "I'm glad of your company, kid. I—"

He broke off.

From the black tunnel of the footpath behind there came a wild echoing shriek, and then terrified shriek on shriek.

"Help! Help! Help!"

Frank started.

"That's Selby's voice—Mr. Selby! He's after me—"

"And he's dropped on your precious tramp!" said Levison grimly.

"Help!" came the desperate shriek from the dark path.

Levison of the Fourth did not hesitate longer. He plunged into the blackness of the path under the trees, and raced towards the spot. A glimmer of the rising moon came through the thick branches, but in the dimness he stumbled again and again over trailing roots; but picked himself up and rushed on desperately.

"Ernie!" gasped Frank.

He ran breathlessly after Levison. Heedless of the fog, Levison of the Fourth dashed furiously on, while from the shadows ahead came shriek after shriek for help.

CHAPTER 8. Struck Down!

"STOW it!"

"Help!"

"Will you shut up?" growled the ruffian savagely, and the cudgel circled over Mr. Selby's terrified head.

The glimmer of moonlight through the branches overhead showed Mr. Selby's face, white and stiff with terror. But his cries died down, as the threatening cudgel rose and circled over him. He trembled in every limb.

The footpad grinned down at him.

"Jest the bloke I was looking for!" he remarked. "I was a-thinking there was nothing doing, when you run into a cove, and 'ere you are! You'll oblige me by 'anding over your watch and your loose change, mister, and if you make a fuss, look out! I'd crack your 'ead for you as soon as a nut, you believe me!"

The ruffian was under the influence of liquor, though he was not intoxicated. The hapless Form-master was quite at his mercy. He ceased to struggle.

"I—I will hand you my money!" he panted. "I—I—"

"And it over, then, and not so much jaw!" growled the ruffian, and he removed his knee from the fallen man, and allowed him to rise.

Mr. Selby rose to his feet, trembling in every limb. He was almost too scared to know what he was doing. He backed away a pace from the footpad, and instead of handing over his valuables, he made a sudden spring and raced away, moved rather by terror of the ruffian, than by a desire to save his money.

The footpad uttered an angry oath, and sprang after him.

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Mr. Selby, rushing blindly, caught his foot in a root, and sprawled headlong. The next moment the ruffian was upon him, striking with the cudgel. In his haste, he missed the Form-master's head, and the cudgel crashed on the ground an inch from Mr. Selby's ear.

"Help! Help! Help!"
Shriek after shriek rang out from the terrified Form-master as the footpad grasped him again.

Another second or two, and the cudgel would have crashed on Mr. Selby's head, but there was a sound of rapid running feet on the footpath.

The ruffian paused, and glared round, with an oath.

"Help!" yelled Mr. Selby. "This way! Help!"

He would have given a year's salary at that moment to have seen a policeman's helmet.

But it was not a constable, it was a breathless schoolboy who dashed up.

Levison of the Fourth came on the scene with a rush.

"Stand back, you young fool!" shouted the footpad, and he swung up the cudgel.

Levison did not heed.

Right at the ruffian he dashed, his eyes gleaming, his face set. The cudgel swept down, but a rapid swerve saved Levison from the blow. It grazed his arm as he sprang upon the footpad.

With a spring like a tiger, he was on the ruffian, and the burly rascal went staggering backwards under the rush.

Crash!

The man was on his back, Levison on top, clutching at him desperately. The cudgel went into the grass as the man sprawled.

But he caught at Levison, and grasped him in his powerful hands.

"Help me, Mr. Selby!" panted Levison, as he struggled. Mr. Selby was reeling against a tree, overcome with terror and exhaustion. He did not seem to hear the junior's call. Frank Levison came tearing up.

The moonlight, growing stronger every moment, gleamed through the branches on a desperate scene.

Levison and the footpad, grasping each other desperately, were rolling over and over in the grass in desperate conflict.

It was boy against man, and the man was burly and muscular; but the boy was as hard as nails, and desperately determined. Frank halted, gasping, staring at the terrible scene with starting eyes. He saw the cudgel in the grass, and made a spring for it, and caught it in his hand.

"Help! Help!" Mr. Selby was yelling; but it did not come into his terrified mind to help himself.

Frank leaped towards the struggling combatants, grasping the cudgel, his eyes blazing. The footpad released one hand; his fist was clenched, and he dashed it with terrible force at the junior who was grasping him. The blow landed between Ernest Levison's eyes—a blow that was like the kick of a horse. A faint moan escaped Levison of the Fourth, and his hold on the ruffian relaxed, and he rolled helplessly in the grass, stunned by that terrible blow.

The footpad, panting, was staggering up, when Frank's blow reached him. With all his force the fag struck, and the cudgel crashed on the ruffian's head.

There was a yell from the footpad, and he collapsed in the grass. As he made a motion to rise, Frank struck again, exerting all his strength, and the ruffian lay still.

"Ernie!"

Frank Levison dropped the cudgel, and fell on his knees in the grass beside his brother.

"Ernie!" he panted.

Levison did not speak.

Frank raised his head; it hung like lead in the fag's hands. Ernest Levison's eyes were closed; there was blood on his face, and he was quite insensible.

Mr. Selby tried to pull himself together. The footpad lay moaning in the grass, almost unconscious, and quite incapable of further harm. Mr. Selby realised that the danger was over. He staggered away from the tree, and picked up the cudgel.

"Ernie! Ernie!" the fag was crying. The hot tears ran down his face, and dropped on the white, insensible face of his brother.

"Is—is that Levison? Is—is he hurt?" panted Mr. Selby huskily.

"Oh, heavens! He is killed!"

"Impossible!" gasped Mr. Selby.

"Ernie! Ernie! Can't you speak? Ernie!"

But no sound came from Levison of the Fourth. He lay in the damp grass like a log.

Mr. Selby, trying to collect his scattered wits, bent over him. His own face was ghastly white.

"He is not dead!" he breathed. "He is stunned! You—you must get help, Levison minor!"

There was a faint moan from Levison; but his eyes did not open. Frank dashed away his tears. His brother needed his help now; there was no time for grief or weakness.

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"We must get him to the school." It was the fag who gave orders, not the shaking Form-master. "Help me carry him, Mr. Selby. We've got to get him to a doctor at once. Quick! Quick!"

Mr. Selby gave an uneasy glance towards the footpad. But the man lay moaning helplessly; there was nothing more to be feared from him. Mr. Selby recovered something like calmness.

He lifted Levison's shoulders, and Frank took his feet; and between them the insensible junior was carried up the footpath, back towards Rylcombe Lane.

It seemed an age to Levison minor before they reached the stile, and his brother was lifted over into the lane. Mr. Selby leaned on the stile and panted for breath. There was a gleam of bright head-lights in the shadowy road; the whirl of a car. Frank Levison ran into the middle of the road, and held up his hand, and shouted.

The motor-car whirled to a halt.

"What—?"

"Help!" panted Frank. "My brother's hurt—dying perhaps! Give me a lift with him, for the love of Heaven!"

The motorist jumped down.

CHAPTER 9.

After Darkness, Light.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came into the junior Common-room in the School House, with a worried frown on his noble brow. It was getting towards bed-time, and most of the School House juniors were in the Common-room; and the one topic there was the departure of Levison of the Fourth.

It had cast a gloom over all the fellows. It was, indeed, hard for Tom Merry & Co. to realise that Levison of the Fourth was gone, and that they were not to see him again at St. Jim's.

Sidney Clive was sitting silent, with a black brow. Ralph Reckness Cardew seemed to have lost all his old cool nonchalance; he was unusually silent, though restless and irritable. When Trimble came into the Common-room, Cardew's eyes glittered, and he rose from his chair, took Baggy by the collar, and kicked him forcibly out into the passage. Baggy Trimble howled, and disappeared; taking the hint that his presence was not welcome.

"What's the trouble now?" grunted Blake, noting the worried look on Gussy's brow.

"It's wotten, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus. "That young ass Levison seems to have gone aftah his majah, and he's missed bed-time. The Third have gone to their dorm without him. He will get into a feahful wow. I heah that Mr. Selby has gone aftah him."

"Even Selby might go easy on that poor kid, just now!" growled Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah."

"Catch him!" said Blake, with a snort.

"The kid ought to be back by now," said Clive, breaking his silence at last. "I—I wish we'd stopped him—"

Baggy Trimble looked in at the doorway of the Common-room, with a wary eye open for Cardew.

"You fellows—" he began. "Keep off, Cardew, you rotter! I say, there's something up! They've brought Levison back."

"What?"

It was a shout from every corner of the room.

"Didn't you hear the car?" said Trimble.

"I heard a car in the quad," said Tom Merry. "But what— Are you trying to pull our legs, you fat rotter!"

"I tell you they've brought him back!" shouted Trimble, in great excitement. "I saw them lift him from the car. He's been killed, I think—"

"What?"

"Or injured, anyhow—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Let's go and see!" exclaimed Blake.

Cardew and Clive had already darted out of the Common-room. Tom Merry & Co. followed them fast, in a buzz of excitement.

There was a crowd in the hall of the School House. A buzz of voices. The great door was wide open; the tail-light of a car was disappearing in the darkness without. Mr. Selby, white and exhausted, was sitting dazedly on the old oak settee. There was no sign of either of the Levisons. But the Head was there, standing before Mr. Selby, with a startled look on his face.

"Kindly tell me what has happened, Mr. Selby. I am quite in the dark."

The juniors listened breathlessly for Mr. Selby's reply. He gasped before he spoke.

"I—I was attacked in the wood, sir, by a ruffianly footpad." He shuddered. "I—I had followed Levison minor, who had broken bounds again to go with his brother to the station—"

"But Levison—"

"Levison came to my aid, sir. He was stunned in the struggle with the ruffian. I—I hope he is not seriously hurt—"

"Where is Levison minor?"

"A passing motorist gave us a lift here, sir, and Levison minor ran into the village to call Dr. Short. The doctor will be here immediately."

"That is fortunate," said Dr. Holmes. "I am afraid Levison is seriously hurt. He was quite unconscious—"

Sidney Clive caught at the Head's gown.

"Dr. Holmes, where is Levison?"

The Head gave him an angry glance, but his brow cleared as he saw the white anxiety in Clive's face.

"Levison has been taken into the sanatorium, Clive," he answered quietly. "He is unconscious at present."

"May I—may I see him?"

"No one can see him at present," said Dr. Holmes, and he turned away. He stood in the great doorway, looking out anxiously into the quadrangle, praying for the speedy arrival of the doctor. The school gates stood wide open, ready for the medical gentleman's car to pass in as soon as he arrived.

The hoot of a motor-car came through the night—the most welcome of sounds to the ears of the anxious headmaster. Two gleaming lights came blazing up the drive.

Dr. Holmes descended the steps as the car halted. The stout school doctor alighted, followed by Frank Levison.

Dr. Holmes and the medical man hurried away together. Frank stood in the radius of light from the School House doorway, looking white and dazed. Tom Merry ran down the steps and caught him by the arm and drew him into the house.

"Where's my brother?" panted Frank.

"In sanny, old chap; you can't go to him now," said Tom gently. "You'll soon hear from the doctor."

Frank gave a groan.

"He was stunned!" he said. "That ruffian—" He broke off, struggling with a sob.

Mr. Selby's voice broke in:

"You had better go to your dormitory, Levison minor."

Frank did not even hear him. He was staring out into the shadows of the quadrangle.

"Buck up, deah boy!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Pewwaps it is all wight, you know."

Frank did not answer.

Mr. Selby staggered up from the settee and limped away to his room. He left Levison minor to his own devices. Perhaps even Mr. Selby's hard heart had been touched by the happenings of that wild night. Tom Merry & Co. crowded round Frank Levison in the doorway. Their anxiety to hear the doctor's report almost equalled that of the fag. Levison of the Fourth had returned—insensible, struck down in a struggle in defence of another. Had he returned to close his eyes for ever in the school from which he had been driven forth?

The stalwart figure of Mr. Railton loomed up in the gloom outside. He came up the steps with a grave face.

"Mr. Railton!" Frank panted. "My brother—what does the doctor say? Can I see him?"

"Courage, my boy!" said the Housemaster. "Levison has been hurt—seriously hurt—but he will recover. I fear that he will be ill for some time, but the doctor assures us that there is no ground for anxiety. You cannot see him now; he is in the hands of the nurse. Perhaps to-morrow—"

"He will—he will recover?" breathed Frank.

"That is certain."

"Good!" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath of relief, as the Housemaster passed on. "Oh, good!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Buck up, Frank, old chap!"

Arthur Augustus dropped his hand on the fag's shoulder. "It's all wight, deah boy," he said. "Levison is goin' to be ill; but he is goin' to be ill at St. Jim's, you know. When he wecovahs the Head can hardly turn him out—what? The whole school will wise and kick up a fearful wov if he does anythin' of the kind. I wathah think that old Levison is stickin' on, afah all."

Frank's face brightened.

"Oh! If—if only—" he breathed.

"Sure thing!" said Cardew. "If the Head wants to boot him after this we'll lynch the Head. But he won't!"

And as it turned out Cardew was right.

The following day all St. Jim's was buzzing with the story. Levison of the Fourth lay in the sanatorium, still unconscious. That day Mr. and Mrs. Levison and Doris came to the school to see him, and he did not know them. When Levison's parents departed Doris stayed on, the guest of the Head's wife, to help Miss Marie with the nursing. There was whispered talk at first of concussion, of serious complications; and for some days Frank Levison looked like a ghost, and wandered about the school like one; and even Mr. Selby

was very easy, for once, with an extremely inattentive pupil. But there was better news; it was known at last that Ernest Levison was on the mend.

In the meantime the police had secured the footpad, and that gentleman was safely disposed of in the county gaol before Levison was able to see visitors. Frank, of course, was the first admitted to see his brother; and it was a great day when Tom Merry & Co. were able to visit him.

They found Levison sitting up in bed, propped with pillows, his forehead still bandaged, and what could be seen of his face very pale. But he nodded and smiled cheerily enough to the visitors as Doris brought them to his bedside.

"Jolly glad to see you fellows!" he said. "My luck held good, after all, you see."

"Your luck?" said Tom Merry.

Levison grinned.

"Well, I'm still at St. Jim's!" he said.

"And—"

"And the Head's told me I'm to stay."

"Bwavo!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "That's ripping!"

"You're glad?" asked Levison.

"I think the whole school will be glad to hear that," said Tom, with a smile. "Buck up and get well, old chap! We want you for the football, you know!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Another week, the medical johnny says," said Levison. "All serene! I've got too hard a nut for it to be cracked easily! I say, it's simply ripping to be staying on, after all! And after this it will be all clear!"

And the following week Levison resumed his place in the Fourth Form, and received a hearty welcome there from his Form-fellows—and from all the Lower School for that matter.

There was a tremendous celebration in Tom Merry's study, graced by the presence of Doris Levison and cousin Ethel, and as many juniors as could cram themselves into the study—with a numerous overflow meeting in the passage. And the guest of honour was Levison of the Fourth—once the outcast of the school, and now one of the most popular fellows at St. Jim's—and there was hardly a fellow in School House and New House who did not rejoice at Levison's Luck!

THE END.

(There will be another splendid long complete story of the chums of St. Jim's, next week, entitled "TRICKY TRIMBLE!" by Martin Clifford. Make sure of reading this ripping yarn by ordering your "GEM" well in advance.)

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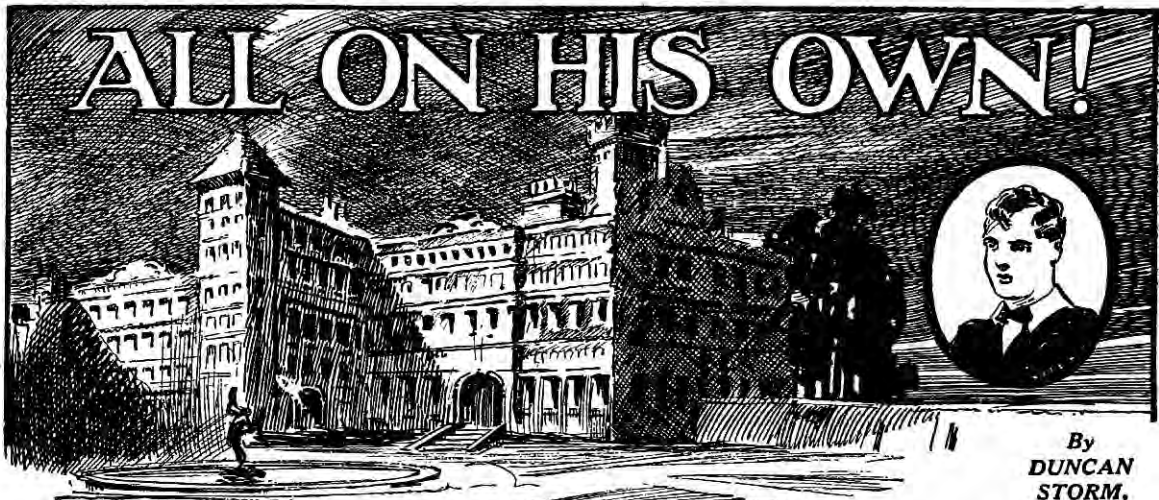
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STORM.****THE OPENING CHAPTERS.**

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.

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

Nobby bolts one night, 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. Wobby commandeers 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. They are only just in time to rescue the colonel from further members of the gang, two of whom they capture. The boys then drive to Whitchurch Castle, where they find some of the stolen plunder hidden in a well. They are shadowed and attacked by the two escaped burglars; but, by the timely arrival of John Lincoln and a party of men, the two scoundrels are captured. The founder of St. Beowulf's listens to the lads' exciting adventures, and asks to join their party. Promising to send for them later, the boys return to the school. The next day, Mr. Teach, one of the masters, organises a paper-chase. Wobby and his chums are detailed off as the hares. Wobby's interests are centred upon Lady Castlewood's jewels, so, to suit his purpose, he lays a stiff trail by entering the haunt of a fiery bull, in company with Nobby, to scatter his paper.

(Now read on.)

Squire Hardacres is Annoyed!

THE red bull was made furious by the crash of this strange animal which bounded into his lair amongst the bushes.

There was a roar and a crashing of branches as he made for Nobby, and Wobby came running back along the dyke wall.

"It's all right, boys," he cried—"it's all right! Old Nobby will play him whilst we lay the trail across the marsh. There's nothing that Nobby likes better than teasing a bit of beef. We trained him to that in the stockyards at home!"

Nobby was evidently playing with the big red bull amongst the cover of the alders and osier-thickets. The boys could hear crashings and bellowings.

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"Make a run for it; we shan't want the poles after this dyke!" said Wobby, and, with a run, he planted his pole in the deep mud of the dyke, and went flying over into the bull's marsh, followed by his chums.

They dropped their poles, and took to their heels, laying their trail of paper thick and fast across this dangerous ground.

Looking over their shoulders, they saw Nobby burst from the cover with the bull close at his tail.

It was the first time that the red bull had ever seen a kangaroo, and it was plain that he did not like the look of this trespasser on his sacred marsh. With his head lowered and his tail stiff, he chased Nobby hotly. But Nobby could run any bull or steer off his legs, and where the fine-drawn, half-wild steers of the Australian ranges had found him their master, this fat, grass-fed English bull did not stand a chance.

Wobby eased up as he ran to watch his pet.

"Look at the squashy old tub!" he exclaimed. "Don't stand a chance with Nobby!"

Nobby would leap ahead of the bull, looking something like a gigantic squirrel as he squatted, with drooping paws, waiting for his assailant.

The bull would charge down on him bellowing, and Nobby would stop for the last half-second of the fun. Then, as the mighty head went down, Nobby would jump with a bound like that of a frog.

"I wouldn't like to come through this marsh after Nobby's got that bull thoroughly

peevish!" said Wobby. "But look out, nobles, they are coming this way!"

This was true. Nobby had sighted his master, and was coming across the marsh in a straight line, hotly pursued by the red bull.

"This, nobles, is where we drop it and run!" said Wobby, doubling his speed, and making for the far side of the marsh, followed hot foot by his chums.

The bull was travelling now.

Thr-r-rump, thr-r-rump, thr-r-rump! They heard his great hoofs pounding over the marsh.

Wobby and his chums were running now for all they were worth, but Nobby was bringing the bull up at breakneck speed.

"Run, boys—run!" gasped Jim, taking the lead.

Then there was a thump behind him. Wobby had caught his foot in a tussock of the coarse marsh grass, and had gone sprawling.

He was up again in a second, but the bull was close upon him, whilst Nobby was circling round in great bounds.

Wobby did not stop to look behind him, but of a sudden the bull swerved as Nobby leaped at him sideways, thumping him in the ribs with a mighty kick of his huge legs.

Wobby flew across the dyke, safe and sound, and, turning, saw his pet leap right over the back of the angry brute, which, trying to turn to pin his agile adversary, went sprawling.

By the time the red bull had picked himself up again, bellowing like a foghorn, Nobby came flying across the last dyke, and squatted by his master, his mild brown eyes blinking as peacefully as if nothing particular had happened.

"Look at him!" said Wobby proudly. "Cool as a cucumber on ice! Ain't he a lad? Now, boys, to cover—quick!"

They raced up the slope beyond the marsh, and were soon hidden in the trees and undergrowth, and here Wobby squatted down on a felled log, and watched for the advance of the pack. They had covered nearly two miles of marshes, and it was not long before they saw the head of the pack dotting through the trees in little white specks. The specks bunched at the edge of the first dyke.

"That's all right!" said Wobby comfortably. "They don't like fifteen feet of mud and water. Come along!"

Away they went well pelt through the woods, and soon they found themselves at the edge of Squire Hardacres' park.

Squire Hardacres had the name of a rusty old curmudgeon, who hated anyone using the right-of-way which went close by his house. Over and over again he had fought to close this ancient footpath, which led right through the heart of his property, and over and over again the villagers, who hated the squire worse than poison, had upheld their rights over the path.

"Look out, Wobby!" said Stickjaw, as Wobby fetched up at a gate which announced that trespassers off the path would be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law.

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"We don't want to go through there; that's old Hardacres' place, and he's an awful rotter! The path goes right across his front garden."

"What can he do to us?" asked Wobby.
"Nothing, so long as we keep to the footpath!" replied Stickjaw; "but he's got some rotten dogs knocking about his place. If he hears of a bad-tempered mongrel anywhere in the country, he buys it, and turns it loose round his place. He's got some Egyptian goats as well, rotten brutes!"

"That's just where we want to lay our trail!" said Wobby, with a grin. "The more bulls and Egyptian goats and mongrel dogs that we leave behind us, the more trouble for the pack. I'd like to see an Egyptian goat chase old Froggy up a tree!"

He popped through the gate, and scampered on through Squire Hardacres' coverts, throwing a good trail of confetti right and left, to encourage the chasing pack.

For a mile or more the three raced on, Nobby keeping abreast with them, bounding through the coverts and the bushes at the side of the narrow footpath.

Suddenly the footpath opened on to wide lawns surrounding a large house. The house was surrounded by a terrace, and on the terrace stood a short, stumpy gentleman, with a very red face and white whiskers.

"Hi, hi!" yelled Squire Hardacres, maddened by the sight of the three hares scattering their paper right and left. "Hoy, you infernal boys! What do you mean by throwing paper about on my property?"

"He doesn't like us laying the trail," whispered Wobby, as they trotted along. "Look, he's running across the lawns, to cut us off farther down!"

This was quite true. The old gentleman had set off at a run, shouting:

"Todgers, Todgers, set the goats loose! Here are a lot of young ruffians from that rascally school chucking paper all over my property! I won't have paper chucked over my property! Anyone would think that my house was a dust-destructor! Todgers, you scoundrel, where are you just when you are wanted?"

But Todgers was within hearing. The boys saw a mean-looking keeper running towards a range of buildings by which the footpath skirted. He was drawing a key from his pocket as he ran, and Wobby noticed that as he threw open the door of one of the out-buildings he stayed behind it.

Neither Todgers nor his master had yet seen Nobby.

Nobby had stayed behind for a moment to nibble the top off a rhododendron bush.

Wobby was quick to see why Todgers had stayed behind the door of the outhouse. It was a goatshed, and out of it came pouring about as evil a looking lot of goats as it was possible for any man to collect. They were big goats, with a fine spread of horn, and dewlaps hanging under their chins. Their eyes were green and their aspect was sinister.

They looked round for Todgers. But Todgers kept behind the door of the shed. Todgers knew his goats.

There was one goat more evil-looking than the rest, and at the sight of the three boys running towards it, laden with their bags of paper, it lowered its head, squinted, and gave forth a malignant bleat.

"Crums!" muttered Stickjaw. "He's let those beastly goats loose for us! They are worse than the red bull!"

"Stop throwing that paper about, you boys!" yelled Squire Hardacres, as he came running across a paddock at the full stretch of his stumpy legs. "Stop throwing that rubbish on my property, or, by the Lord Harry, I'll commit you—"

But Wobby was not worrying about Squire Hardacres. He looked at the big goat which blocked his path, and he looked round for Nobby.

Nobby was not to be seen. It is not often that a kangaroo gets a taste of rhododendron, as this native of the Himalayas does not grow in the Australian bush.

"My hat!" muttered Wobby. "I don't like the look of that goat! Looks a regular tug! This is where we want Nobby!"

He put his fingers to his mouth and gave a shrill whistle.

At the same time the goat lowered its head.

"Maw!" it bleated, and it came charging down on the boys.

"Jump, boys!" cried Wobby.

With a sudden leap he showed the way

by jumping for the branch of a beech which overspread the path. His leap was a fine one, and his weight brought the branch within the reach of Jim and Stickjaw.

They jumped for dear life as the goat charged them, swinging up their legs just over his head.

"Saved!" gasped Wobby. "That beast is not the sort of heavy-weight to meet! I give him a pass!"

The goat raced on and turned suddenly, bewildered by the disappearance of the boys from its path. It was evidently not accustomed to see boys disappear into the air.

"Hoy, you young scoundrels!" yelled Squire Hardacres, purple with rage. "Come out of that tree!"

"Not me!" called Wobby. "Not me, old whisks! Not with that goat hanging about! And here come all its cobsers!"

The other goats, attracted by their leader's angry bleatings, came trotting along, and Todgers, seeing the coast clear, came out from behind the door of the goatshed.

"Todgers!" yelled the angry squire, flourishing his stick. "Todgers, pull those boys out of that tree at once!"

But Todgers showed no desire to go near the goats, who were now gathered under the branch where the three boys hung like ripe fruit.

"Look at the dirty tugs!" said Wobby, peering down upon the evil-eyed goats.

"They think that this is a boy-tree, and that we are going to drop off into their mouths! My word, old beaver-face ought to be prosecuted for keeping such animals about him!"

"Todgers!" yelled the squire. "Go and shake those young rascals out of that tree at once!"

"I wonder where Nobby's got to?" exclaimed Wobby; and, putting his fingers in his mouth, he gave a whistle that aroused all the echoes of Hardacres Hall, as the place was called.

"If you won't shake those boys down I'll come and shake them out myself!" roared the squire.

And, flourishing his stick, he came running down the footpath.

It was plain that the goats were more or less used to the squire. They allowed him to approach without menace, though Satan, the head-goat, looked at its master rather doubtfully.

"Now, then, you young scoundrels!" exclaimed the squire. "Come out of that!"
"Come out of what?" demanded Wobby.
"Come out of that tree!" exclaimed the squire, turning purple.

"This is a right-of-way!" urged Wobby, eager to gain time to allow the missing kangaroo to come up.

"It may be a right-of-way, but that does not allow you young ruffians to scatter your beastly sandwich-papers, your confetti, or spaghetti, or whatever the infernal stuff is called, all over my property for the gardeners to sweep up!" roared the squire, proceeding to shake the end of the branch to which the boys hung, as though he were trying to shake them down like apples.

He swung angrily to the branch, and the boys clung to it like grim death.

"Look here, old fortychuns!" said Wobby in his most reasonable tones, as the squire hung on the branch. "I'd like to argue the point with you. If this is a right-of-way and a public footpath you've no right to block it up with goats—ferocious goats. I once knew a chap who was killed by a goat!"

"Come out of that tree!" yelled the squire.

"Don't be so snake-headed about it, old clobber!" said Wobby peaceably. "We weren't doing your old footpath any harm. We don't want to dig it up and take it home with us!"

"Come out of that tree, you young scoundrel!" yelled the squire. "I won't have you in my trees!"

"You'll have us on your neck if you don't watch it!" retorted Wobby. And, putting his fingers again in his mouth, he gave another shrill whistle.

It was answered by the yelping and baying of dogs.

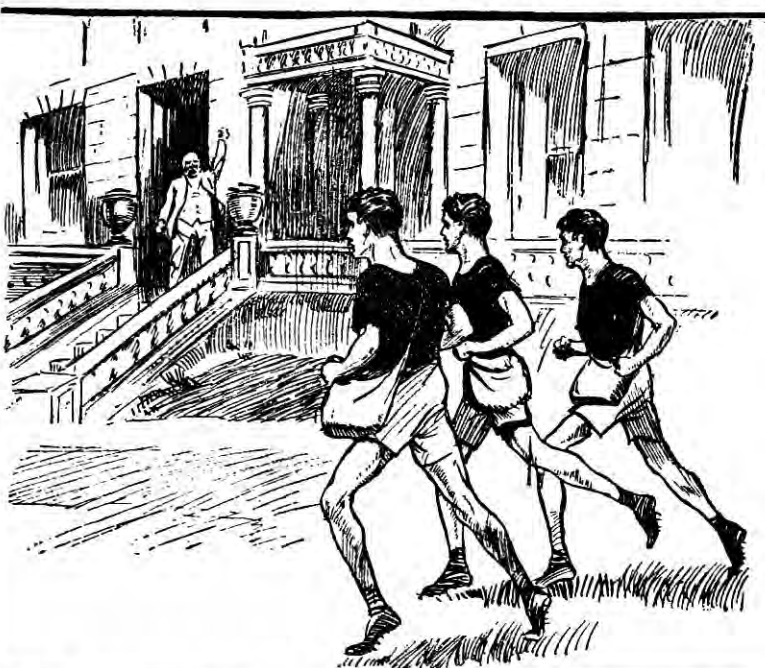
"Todgers!" roared the squire. "The dogs are loose!"

"Then Heaven help us, sir!" called Todgers, in answer. "If them dogs and the goats gets together there will be a nice old fight!"

"I told you to shut up the dogs!" yelled the squire.

"You didn't!" retorted Todgers, getting ready to climb on to the roof of a pigsty. "You told me to let loose the goats! You didn't give me no instructions about the dogs!"

The squire gave a shout, for along the footpath at full speed came Nobby, the kangaroo, travelling for all he was worth,



"Hi, hi!" yelled Squire Hardacres, maddened by the sight of the three hares scattering their paper right and left. "What do you mean by it?"
"He don't like us laying the trail," whispered Wobby, as they trotted along.



As the bulky mongrels charged upon Squire Hardacres, he swung the whole of his weight on the branch. There was a sudden crack and a rending, and the branch gave way!

whilst close at his heels came a pack of a dozen bulky mongrels, snapping and snarling.

"Hi! What's this? What's this in my park?" stammered the squire, hanging to the branch of the tree. "It's a deer! One of those confounded deer of Lord Bradbury's straying into my covert! I'll shoot the beast! I'll have the law on Bradbury—Oh, dash my buttons, it's not a deer! It's a—What the deuce is it?"

The squire did not wait to see what was coming at him. Nobby, bounding along in great thirty-foot jumps, was keeping ahead of the pack, and a kangaroo going full pelt looks like anything you care to make it.

The squire tried to haul himself up on the branch as the kangaroo flashed by, leading the pack of dogs on to the goats.

"Keep out of it, you old ass!" cried Wobby in warning tones. "The branch won't stand your fat corpus! It's over-weighted already!"

But the squire, in his fear, swung the whole of his weight on the branch.

There was a crack and a rending and a rush, and down the boys came with half a ton of timber.

They leaped to their feet, to find themselves in the midst of a furious battle. The squire's pack of mongrels had come into collision with his pack of goats, and the leader of the goats had just biffed a large yellow tripehound over the hedge, into a cucumber-frame that was on the other side.

The kangaroo had gone through the goats like a streak of greased lightning. One black-and-white goat, nearly as big as a donkey, who had had the nerve to tackle Nobby, was laying on its back with its legs sticking in the air, having taken a knock-out punch from Nobby's hard-kicking hind leg.

"Leg it!" called Jim as he scrambled to his feet. "Anyone hurt?"

"All quite well, thank you," chuckled Wobby. "This way. The goats are all busy."

The goat and dog fight was in full blast. The squire's pack of selected lurchers hated the goats like poison and had always been kept separated from them. So each goat had

a dog hanging to its ear, and when the goat got free, the dog got a boost in the ribs that rolled him over and over.

But there was a clear road through the fight and the boys dashed on.

Todgers was shouting and dancing and shaking his fist at them on the roof of a pigsty.

"We'll ha' the law on you, you young limbs!" yelled Todgers. But this was all he had time to yell, for, with a sudden crash, the pigsty roof let him through, amidst a dismal squealing of pigs.

"Todgers," said Wobby as he ran, "is now in his right place! And crumbs—look at the squire!"

The squire was running for the house as fast as his short legs would carry him, hotly pursued by the leader of the goat herd, which having demolished the big yellow dog, was looking for a fresh engagement.

The boys had a fine view of the race as they followed the path which ran round the edge of a fine woodland of beeches. The squire was running for his life, but the big goat had him outclassed. With a rush, it overtook its quarry, and boosted the squire over a bed of roses, butting him with the force of a battering-ram.

The squire picked himself up and ran again, shouting and making for the house. But the big goat, nothing daunted, chased him up to and into the front door.

From the interior of the house came shouts and screams. Then followed the report of a gun, and the goat burst out of a study window with a crash of glass and raced off, as puffs of smoke and a series of rattling reports from the window showed that the squire was trying to get a bit of his own back.

They saw him leaning out of the broken window firing wildly as they turned the corner of the wood.

"What a lark!" panted Wobby. "The pack will have a lively time when they come

to Hardacres Hall. And here's old Nobby waiting!"

A hundred yards ahead of them the kangaroo was sitting up waiting patiently for them. Then away they went, Nobby bounding peaceably by their sides as they laid the trail up the stiff slopes of Hardacres Down.

It was a stiff pull up to the top of the Down, but when they reached the top they were able to look back a great distance and even to get a peep into the distant marsh where they had left the red bull.

Wobby thrust his hand into the bottom of his paper sack and brought out a pair of powerful prism glasses with which he examined the landscape.

He could see the red bull raging on the marsh and a tiny long drawn out string of white dots, which showed that the whole pack had been forced to dodge round a circle that would put another two miles on to their course.

"We are doing all right," said Wobby, sitting down comfortably on a fallen log. "And I guess when that gang of two hundred pebs come raging through old Hardacres' shrubberies they'll find him worked up just about ready for them! Crumbs, old whisksers will want a new seat to his trousers!"

And Wobby threw back his head and laughed.

"Why are you in such a hurry to keep so far ahead of the pack, Wobby?" asked Stickjaw.

"Why, my dear simple boy, my mother's darling, my Simple Simon," replied Wobby. "Don't you yet catch on to the wheeze that we are out this afternoon to fish up the Countess of Castlewood's jewels from the place where they are hidden, and that we don't want the whole of the school gathering round us whilst we discover the shiners. Think of the talk it would make! Think of Blackbeard asking his twisty questions, and think of us being run before the Head to explain all that has been happening to us in the recent past! We might get our little trip with Mr. Lincoln queered. No, my son, we are going out with paper and we are coming back with our bags full of shiners, and if the remnants of the gang are hanging about seeking for hidden treasure, as I think they are, all they will be some innocent boys galloping past them in a paper-chase!"

"Oh!" said Stickjaw.

"And where are the jewels hidden?" asked Stickjaw.

"You shall see when we come to the place," replied Wobby. "I am not so certain of it myself as the burglar's notebook is just a little bit misty. But we'll have a little time to search when he gets there."

"When shall we get there?" asked Stickjaw.

"Goodness, Stickjaw," replied Wobby, "what a chap you are for asking questions! Wait and you will see. Now the sooner we get there, the sooner you will know."

He picked up the running again, and they laid the trail over the crest of the Down, through a chalk-pit and down into the deep Sleepy Valley beyond.

"We'll go over Shaky Bridge," said Wobby, and he made for a quaint bridge hung on ropes, over the river.

As soon as they were on this bridge it started to swing violently, and Nobby, refusing to follow them, leaped across the Giant's Stride, the great ruined series of stepping-stones below the bridge.

In a flood some of these had been washed out, and no human jumper could have leaped the great gaps between them.

But Nobby bounded across the gaps, landing on stone after stone with the greatest ease, for it was in this fashion that his Australian ancestors had always crossed their rivers.

And arrived on the far side he watched the boys coming across the perilous bridge.

The frail structure of rope and wire and planks got on the swing at once.

"Look out, Wobby, you ass!" cried Stickjaw. "We ought not to have got on this all at once. Three's too many on it! Crumbs! There goes old Jim!"

Jim, losing his balance, and his grip on the tiny bit of wire which had been worked into the handrail of the bridge, soused into the river, and swam across to the bank.

His fall set the bridge more on the swing, and Wobby fell through the slats that formed the footway.

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"My hat," he cried, "but this is a crook bridge! Hold on, Stickjaw!"

Stickjaw was holding on to the slats with hands and feet as it swung to and fro, whilst Wobby, struggling like a bluebottle in a spider's web, strove to free himself.

"How can I hold on while you are shaking the heavily thing?" cried Stickjaw.

"Hold off then, old clobber!" replied Wobby. And a loud splash in the water told that Stickjaw had followed Jim's example. He struck out for the shore, and reached it, where Jim was wringing the water out of his vest; and they watched Wobby as he carefully regained his equilibrium and reached the shore, walking like a tight-rope walker.

"No more high-wire acts for me!" said Wobby. "But that bridge will worry the

lads, and it's near a mile up to the mill. Run, boys; you will soon dry!"

They sped uphill again, crossing heavy ploughs where the mud caked on their feet in huge balls.

"This will put the crimps in the Lower School kids and those fat bullies!" said Wobby, making for a distant belt of woodland. "Now, boys, we've left seven miles behind us, and we are getting warm. You can empty that wet paper out of your bags; it's no more use for the trail, and we will start on Nobby's little bit!"

The change of bags was made. Wobby headed towards a gate, and swung over it into the fringe of woods.

He left the laying of the trail to his chums, and, plunging into the undergrowth, cast about like a questing hound.

This was distinctly Wobby's business. An expert bush tracker, he was looking for a trail that was a fortnight old, and no boy brought up in England could have found that trail. But Wobby had learned the art of tracking in the greatest school in the world—with the black trackers of the Australian Police. Keeping in touch with his companions, who were now moving at a walk, he found what he was looking for—the converging trails of birds and animals all heading towards one spot.

Here there was water. And it was with water that Wobby's business was concerned.

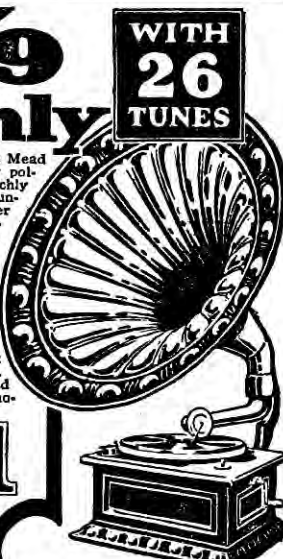
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