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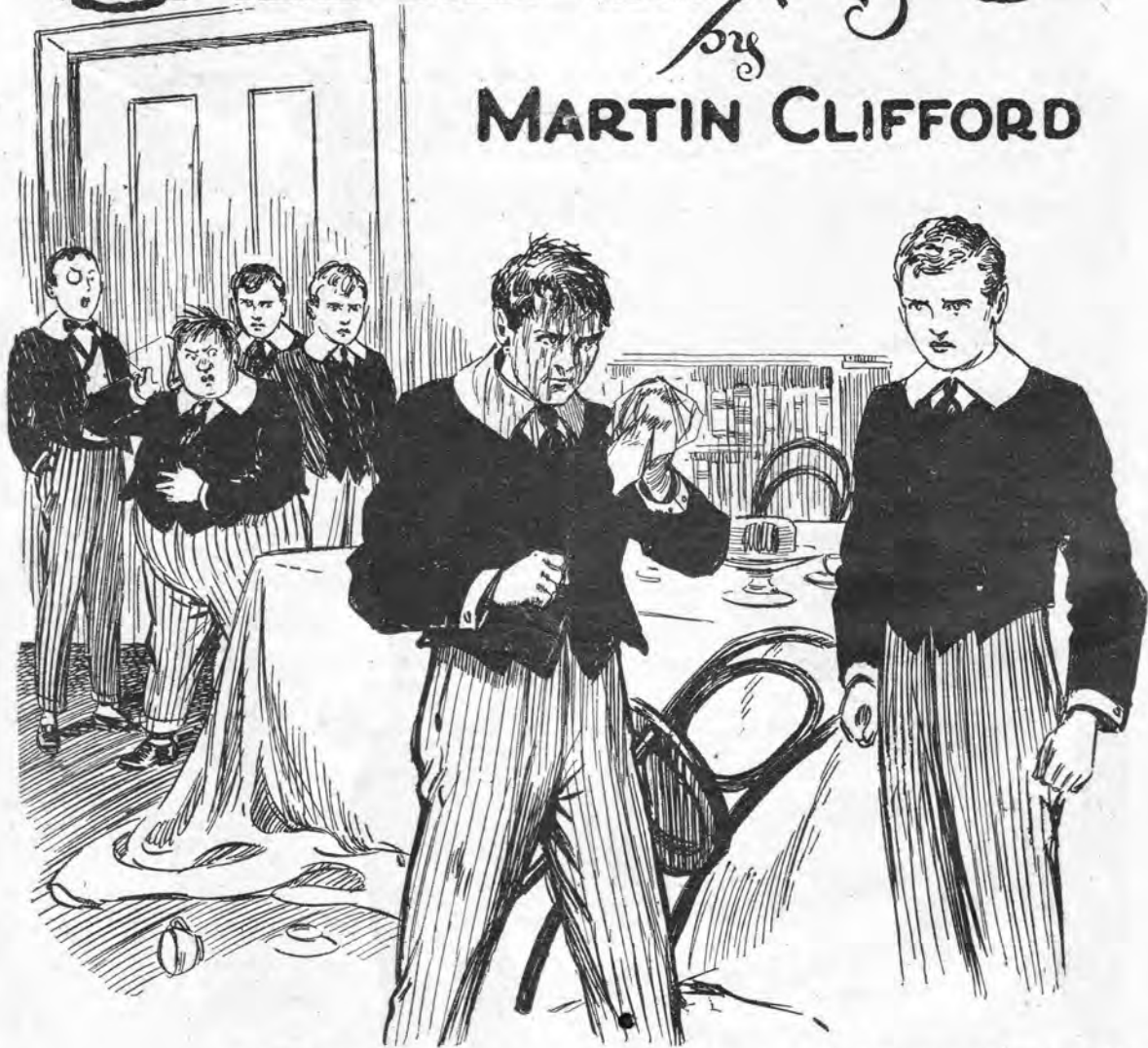
**SHOWN UP IN HIS
TRUE COLOURS!**

*(A lively incident in this week's
stirring school story of St. Jim's.)*

HERE'S A DRAMATIC LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN

CARDIEW'S

by
MARTIN CLIFFORD



CHAPTER 1. Sticking to it!

"WELL, ta-ta, Wrayson!"
The voice of Ralph Reckness Cardew reached his chums, Levison and Clive, through the door of Study No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage at St. Jim's.

A second later Cardew pushed open the door, with a glint of defiance in his eyes; for he knew that he would have arguments to meet. Clive might keep silence, but Levison would not.

The table was laid for tea. Cardew sat down, saying nothing.

"Wonder you didn't bring him in to tea!" remarked Levison snappishly.

"Eh? Who—or, rather, whom?" returned Cardew.

"That fellow Wrayson, of course!"

"I might have done, dear boy, only I was sure he wouldn't be made welcome here. As it was, I might have accepted his invitation to tea, but I really can't stand Mellish an' Trimble."

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"They're no worse than Wrayson; not half so bad, if you ask me!"

"I didn't ask you, Levison. I've tried to make it clear that you can keep your opinion in this matter to yourself."

There was a ring of hostility in Cardew's voice.

"What do you think, Clive?" asked Levison.

"I don't care to say what I think," answered Clive quietly. "It's not my business, I suppose."

"It's mine, though!"

"That, Levison, is just where you make a mistake," said Cardew, a sneering note in his voice.

"Is it? Will you stick to that when I say that it's my business only because you're my chum? You and Clive here and young Frank matter more to me than all the rest of St. Jim's put together."

Cardew knew that. But it was seldom Levison put his feelings into such plain words, and for a moment the cynical slacker of the Fourth was softened.

He knew that he could easily make Levison understand why he stood by Wrayson when nearly everyone in the Fourth and Shell was calling the fellow a rank outsider.

Just for that one moment he was tempted to explain. Then his natural obstinacy reasserted itself. Cardew had a

—FEATURING TOM MERRY & CO., THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!

BURIED!

Do Cardew a good turn and he'll never forget it. All the same for that he finds it mighty difficult to stand by the fellow who once saved his life, for that fellow is a waster of the worst sort—or, at least, he appears to be!

way of expecting his chums to take him on trust. He was not in the habit of asking them to explain themselves.

For that matter, Sidney Clive was as open as the day. There was no mystery about Clive. And nowadays there was seldom any about Levison.

"Pass the cake, will you, Sidney?" said Cardew. Levison made an impatient gesture.

"I say, you know, Cardew, I didn't mean that it was of no consequence to me," Clive said, as he pushed the cake-dish across. "I feel—well, pretty much as Ernest does. But I don't like interfering."

"Quite a right-minded attitude, Sidney! For my part, I don't like bein' interfered with. But if a little discussion will clear the air, may I ask what harm you two think I can possibly get from Wrayson?"

"It gives other fellows a wrong notion of you when they find you palling up with such a rotter," said Levison.

"Public opinion, dear boy, matters dashed little to me!"

"You behave as though it didn't matter at all! Wrayson played a caddish trick on Linton."

"Old Linton's no friend of mine. I'm not even in his Form. Let's pass that. I'm not defendin' what Wrayson did, you know."

"He got the whole Shell detained, and mucked up cricket for the afternoon," put in Clive.

"I should worry about the Shell!" returned Cardew. "As for the cricket, I'd no intention of playin', anyway."

"Shouldn't have thought you'd care to be seen about with a chap who had to run the gauntlet of the Shell for a thing like that," Levison said.

"Where's your logic? His punishment doesn't make matters worse. One might fairly say that it does somethin' to wipe out the crime, in a way."

Cardew's mind went back to the picture of Wrayson in the Shell Form-room, sobbing, his head buried in his hands—though rather with shame and anger than pain—after his punishment.

And then it went further back—back to a wintry scene; to an ice-covered pool and a sprinkling of skaters; to himself struggling in the water, the coldness of which bit into his very bones; to Wrayson risking his life to save him.

Because of that memory Cardew could not choose but stick by the fellow who was almost an outcast in his Form. But he wished he could like him even a little.

He could not like him. Wrayson might be a hero; but he was mean and evil-tempered, and he was not straight.

Both Levison and Clive saw the reasonableness of Cardew's plea for his pal. It was not the custom at St. Jim's to bring up against a fellow any misdeed for which he had been punished.

"If it wasn't for him you wouldn't be chummy with Racke and Crooke now," said Clive.

Having started to support Levison, Clive could not restrain that. Even more than Levison he hated to know that Cardew was again lowering himself to the level of the black sheep of the Shell.

"I did that sort of thing before Wrayson appeared on the scene, an' if he'd never appeared it might have happened again."

Levison got up from the table and turned his back.

"It's no good, Clive!" he said. "May as well chuck it! If Cardew prefers that bounder to us—well, let him!"

Clive gave Cardew an appealing glance. But Cardew's face was stony.

Then Clive also rose and crossed over to where Levison was standing by the window.

There was silence in the study for a minute or so. When Clive turned again Cardew had gone.

"This just about finishes it," said Levison hoarsely.



He did not guess that Cardew felt at least as miserable as he did.

From the bottom of his heart Cardew wished that Wrayson had never come to St. Jim's. But he could not shake from his shoulders the burden of the debt he owed Wrayson; and, in his stubborn pride, he could not bring himself to tell his chums about that debt.

Wrayson had asked him not to speak to anyone of it, and he had given his promise to be silent. But he guessed that he could quite easily get release from that promise.

He did not want it. He preferred that St. Jim's should think he was making a pal of a rotter through sheer perversity, rather than that St. Jim's should know of the debt.

Outside the study Cardew hesitated, hardly knowing where to go.

In the ordinary way he would have known himself a welcome visitor at any of a dozen or more studies in the Fourth and Shell.

But just now he was not in the best of odours. The fellows could not understand, and did not like his being so thick with Wrayson; and his recent visits to the study of Racke and Crooke were hardly likely to put him in a favourable light.

Then he ran against Racke.

"Hallo, Cardew!" said Racke. "When are you lookin' in for another little game with us an' Wrayson?"

"You're not droppin' Wrayson, then?"

"Why should we? Hang it! What does old Linton matter to us?"

"You shared in the execution, didn't you?"

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Pretended to, old top—that was all," he said. "If no one hurt Wrayson more than Crooke an' I did, he got off lightly."

Cardew did not half believe that. The black sheep of the Shell were ready to gamble with Wrayson, but they had their own scores against him. There was a little red mark on Racke's right cheek now that had been made by the new fellow—with a knuckleduster, Racke had averred at the time.

That quarrel had been patched up. But Cardew had more than a suspicion that Racke and Crooke would not have missed the chance of getting a stinging blow or two home on Wrayson.

"If Wrayson's on we'll look in after classes to-morrow an' stay to tea—providin' that suits you," said Cardew.

"Right-ho! Pleased to see you. Bring all your spare cash along. An', I say, Cardew, give Wrayson a hint that

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it isn't quite the thing to be in such a hurry to put his winnin's in his pocket. That sort of thing isn't done, y'know."

It was a little habit of Wrayson's that Cardew himself had noted with dislike. But Cardew answered Racke coldly. "Tell him yourself. I'm not givin' anyone hints on etiquette."

"Oh, don't get your wool off, Cardew! I suppose it doesn't really matter, after all. As long as he plays straight we don't mind!"

Wrayson accepted with readiness the invitation to another little flutter with the Shell fellows.

He needed money. Two of his study-mates, Percy Mellish and Baggy Trimble, who knew something about him which it would have given Cardew tremendous relief to know, were blackmailing him.

They had not got much as yet. But Baggy kept up a steady drain in trifling sums, and Mellish had lately given a hint or two which made Wrayson very uneasy.

Those two knew—as some other St. Jim's fellows did—that there was another Wrayson at Rylcombe Grammar School.

Cardew did not even know that as yet.

But Mellish and Trimble shared a secret that no one else in the school guessed at. They knew that the new boy there was not really Arnold Wrayson, though it was under that name he appeared on the roll, but his elder brother Claude.

It was Arnold Wrayson who had saved Cardew's life, and Arnold was a decent fellow—one of the best, in fact. But Claude had always been what he was now—a thorough-paced rotter.

He had persuaded his brother to let him go to St. Jim's while Arnold filled what should have been his place at the Grammar School. To work the change he had been obliged to dye his hair and eyebrows, Baggy and Mellish knew of that, and the knowledge was responsible for their hold over him.

"You'd better keep an eye on those two bouncers, though, Cardew," said Wrayson. "I don't think they're above trying some rotten tricks."

Cardew knew they were not, for he had told them so very plainly in Wrayson's hearing. Yet he did not like this warning from the new fellow. It stirred in his mind suspicions he hated.

He had not been present at the game which had led to a row between Racke and Crooke on the one side, and Wrayson on the other. He had entered the study to find Wrayson in the middle of a fast and furious fight with the other two; he had taken the part of the new fellow. He was well aware that the black sheep of the Shell were not above cheating when they had a chance, and had refused to believe their accusation of crooked play against Wrayson.

Afterwards he had not felt so sure. They were cheats, but it was they who had accused Wrayson, not he who had accused them. And it seemed to Cardew that if the accusation had been unjustified the new boy would hardly have been so ready to forget the quarrel.

Now it was Wrayson whom he watched.

Racke and Crooke were watching, too; he was sure of that. But for some time all their vigilance was in vain.

Wrayson had luck. A wonderful run of cards came his way—hardly ever a poor hand. He was winning quite a fair amount of cash without the necessity for cheating; and he was too wary to do it needlessly.

Always he tucked his winnings away at once. On the table at his side lay only a small silver coin or two and a few coppers.

Racke had quite a pile of silver by him. He also had done well. Cardew's change from a pound-note had dwindled to a shilling and a penny or two. Crooke had lost more heavily than Cardew. Nothing went right for Crooke, and he sat with a black look on his face.

Racke grinned, while Wrayson kept a face void of expression, and pocketed his winnings.

Then the tide turned.

Wrayson called mizaire, and lost unexpectedly. He called abundance, and only made seven tricks, instead of the necessary nine.

The little money he had had on the table dwindled, and he had to dive into his pocket for more.

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To all three it was evident how much he hated doing that. His face was no longer masklike. He showed plainly that he could not bear losing.

The other three had all profited by what he had lost, of course. Now it was Crooke who won, while Racke kept about level, and both Cardew and Wrayson lost on almost every hand.

It was Wrayson's deal. Racke got up to fetch a fresh supply of cigarettes from the study cupboard. Crooke was counting his money, reckoning how much more he would need to get level after his losses. Cardew sat with eyes half closed, as if bored by his constant ill-luck.

But those half closed eyes were watching Wrayson keenly. Cardew saw that four cards of the pack had somehow got on to Wrayson's knees as he sat. They were using a bridge indicator for determining trumps, and Racke had twisted it before getting up. Diamonds were trumps.

Under cover of the table Cardew picked up the cards from Wrayson's lap. An instant later they were back, without Wrayson's suspecting anything. He was busy flicking the cards across the table with a swiftness that told of plenty of practice, missing himself at times.

No one was likely to note how he dealt, he imagined.

Cardew had not actually seen him abstract those cards. He had merely seen what made him suspicious. Wrayson was smart, but not quite smart enough.

"Your call, Cardew!" said Wrayson.

"I'm not callin'!" replied Cardew. "You have the ace, king, queen, an' ten of trumps in your hand, Wrayson! This game's over!"

He rose from his chair. Racke and Crooke sat staring at him, at a loss for a moment as to what he could mean.

Then it dawned upon them, as Wrayson, white to the lips, stretched out a hand to sweep up the cards Crooke and Cardew had dropped on the table. Racke still held his; but the mixing of the rest of the cards would have been sufficient to render it impossible for Cardew to make good the charge that he had implied rather than spoken.

Cardew's right hand gripped Wrayson's wrist.

"No, you don't!" he rapped out. "Look at his cards, Crooke, an' say if I'm right!"

Crooke snatched Wrayson's cards from his hand.

"You're right!" he said. "The sweep meant to make certain of the next game. Dashed if I know how you got on to it, though! I didn't see anything."

"I have to apologise to you fellows," said Cardew. "The other day I wouldn't believe that Wrayson was cheatin'. I believe it now. I said that you were cheats, to my certain knowledge. I'm sorry I can't take that back. But I'm prepared to believe that you didn't cheat then, for I know you didn't to-day. You aren't likely to see me here again; but if I ever do come it won't be with Wrayson, I promise you!"

He walked out. Wrayson slunk after him.

"Well, I'm dashed!" said Racke.

They heard Wrayson call to Cardew. But they heard no answer.

Cardew hurried away. The slacker of the Fourth could not have spoken to Wrayson just then.

But he could not wash his hands of the fellow. He must still bear the burden, for the debt was still unpaid.

CHAPTER 2.

The Very Limit!

THE money Wrayson had won and carried off was enough to satisfy Baggy Trimble and Mellish for the time being.

He borrowed from his brother, too. It was not much he raised in this way; for Arnold, with a queer sense of chivalry, had refused to accept more pocket money than Claude had been allowed. His father had called him a young donkey. Claude, when he learned it, fully endorsed what his father had said.

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ALL TIME!

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"If you felt like that why didn't you take all you could get and then share it with me?" he asked scornfully.

Arnold did not try to explain. He knew that Claude would never have understood.

The cash went and once more Claude Wrayson found himself in dire straits, with Mellish and Baggy threatening him with exposure if more were not soon forthcoming.

For some days he and Cardew had not spoken to one another, and Wrayson felt that Cardew was treating him badly.

It was true that he had had nothing to do with saving Cardew's life. But Cardew believed he had. Cardew was an ungrateful bounder!

Cardew was reputed in the Fourth to have more money than he knew what to do with. The fellows said that he had only to drop a line to his grandfather, Lord Reckness, and a cheque came by return of post.

No mere postal-order, but a cheque. Surely a fellow who could get hold of money as easily as that could spare some of it to a pal!

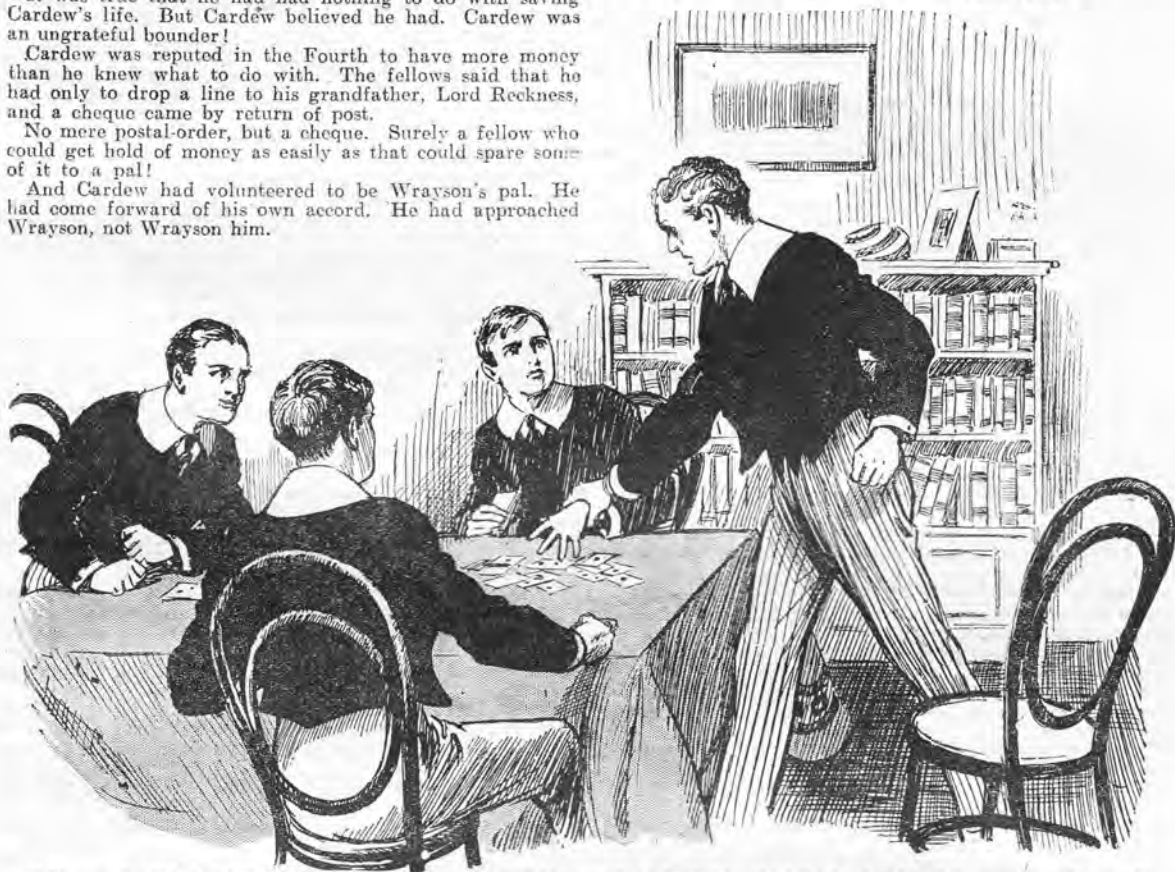
And Cardew had volunteered to be Wrayson's pal. He had come forward of his own accord. He had approached Wrayson, not Wrayson him.

He left his study, slipped into No. 9, and closed the door.

Most of the St. Jim's juniors had desks of some sort in their studies. A fellow needed something in which he could lock up his letters, his spare cash, and that sort of thing. There were three such desks in No. 9. Which was Cardew's?

One was plainly not, for the initials "S.C." were neatly cut in it.

Wrayson hesitated between the other two.



"No you don't!" Ralph Reckness Cardew rapped out the words as Wrayson stretched out a hand to sweep up the cards on the table. Cardew's right hand gripped Wrayson's wrist. "You've got the ace, king, queen, an' ten of trumps in your hand!" he rapped out. "The game's over!" (See Chapter 1.)

And now he was holding aloof, just because a fellow, in mere self-protection against two rotters whom Cardew knew as cheats, had wangled the cards a little! That was how Wrayson looked at it.

Racke and Crooke would never have noticed. It was Cardew who had twigged. He had played a rotten trick on a fellow who had saved his life, or as good as saved his life, since he did not know that it was really his brother who had played the hero.

Wrayson wished now that Levison and Clive had not been so stand-offish. He knew very little about their study, and it would have been useful to know more. But in face of Levison's blank refusal to have anything to do with him, and Clive's stiffness towards him, Cardew had not asked him in again.

Levison and Clive were outdoor fellows. They seldom missed cricket, and if they did it was because they were going somewhere.

But Cardew's movements were not to be anticipated. He might go to cricket with his chums, or he might absent himself for weeks together from Little Side, except on compulsory days. If he was not on the playing fields he might be out of gates, usually on his bike. But more often, especially when the weather was bad, he was to be found on the couch or in the armchair in No. 9, reading.

To be sure of Cardew's absence one had to keep a sharp look-out, and Wrayson started to watch.

He had not long to wait.

Clive and Levison went downstairs, their bats under their arms. Then Wrayson saw Cardew on his way to the bike shed.

This was a chance not to be missed!

He would have expected that Cardew would have had something in the way of desks much more valuable than Levison. But there was very little to choose between them.

He took from his trouser pocket a bunch of keys and sorted them over until he found the one he wanted. It was a skeleton key, the kind that may likely enough act upon any simple lock.

It opened Levison's desk quite easily. For Wrayson's luck was out; he had chosen the wrong one.

He did not waste much time on it. He saw a bundle of letters, the topmost one addressed to Levison in a girl's writing—it was from his sister Doris—and that was enough. Even if he had thought it worth while to search for cash among the belongings of a fellow who he knew was far from wealthy, he would have shied at the risk of making Levison even more hostile than he already was.

The key would not relock the desk. But Wrayson did not trouble about that. There was no sign of its use after he had extricated it, with some slight trouble, from the lock.

He tried it in the lock of the third desk, which was bound to be Cardew's.

It would not turn, and he gave vent to an exclamation of disgust.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, happening along the corridor at that moment, heard it. His hand was on the knob of the door at the moment.

He paused, listening intently.

He knew it was Wrayson's voice that he had heard, and he had very little doubt what Wrayson was about.

"Oh good!" came from within the study.

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Only a fellow with keen ears, standing close to the door, could have heard that. But Cardew heard.

His desk had not needed the key. It was unlocked as Wrayson had discovered when he had tried the lid.

Slowly, silently, the door was pushed open.

Wrayson looked up with a guilty start, and Cardew stood revealed.

The slacker of the Fourth came inside and closed the door, saying nothing.

Wrayson said nothing either. There really seemed nothing he could say.

So they stood face to face for perhaps a minute, though to both the time seemed far longer than that.

Then Cardew spoke, more in sorrow than in anger, though there was anger in him, too.

"I didn't think you'd come down to this, Wrayson, dashed if I did!" he said.

Still Wrayson found nothing to say. His face had gone a queer colour, and his half-veiled eyes seemed to have retreated into their sockets. He breathed hard, and waited.

"You can't deny that you were after my cash!" said Cardew. "You wouldn't have found it, y'know, because I carry it on me. But you were after it!"

"I—I—"

"You're hard up, of course! Oh, I'm not askin' why—no affair of mine, that. But, dash it all, you might have tried to tap me for a loan before you started in on a dirty game like this!"

Wrayson licked his dry lips with a tongue almost as dry. He had been badly taken aback. But now he thought he saw a gleam of hope.

"I—well, I didn't like to," he mumbled.

"You preferred this way, eh?"

"No, I didn't. Would anyone? But—"

"Were you afraid of bein' refused?"

"Something like that."

"Dash it all, man, what do you take me for? I owe you somethin'—somethin' pretty big. See here, how much do you want?"

Wrayson hesitated to answer.

The fear had gone out of his face, and now his eyes gleamed with greed.

Cardew read his mind, and felt sick—almost as sick as when he had been forced to apologise to Racke and Crooke, or had thought himself so forced. Not quite—for now there was no witness to Wrayson's shame and his own disgust.

"Don't say a quid if it's a fiver you mean!" snapped Cardew.

"Could you—would you lend me a fiver, then?"

"Yes. Here you are!"

Cardew took out a Russian leather wallet, and extracted from it a note that rustled.

"I'd rather have pound notes, if you can manage it," said Wrayson. "I might not easily get that changed."

The fiver was put back. Wrayson saw that it was not the only one in the wallet. He did not wonder that Cardew had not appeared to mind losing a pound or two at cards.

Four pound notes and two ten-shilling ones were handed over. The number of one of the smaller notes caught Cardew's eye, because it was all sixes and eights.

"I say, Cardew—"

"Don't say anythin'—unless you feel that you must say 'Thanks.' No need to say even that, really."

"I'll pay you back, you know," muttered Wrayson.

At that moment Levison came in.

He cast a glance of dislike and suspicion at Wrayson. Observant as he was, he would hardly have failed to notice in any case, even had it been another fellow concerned, that Wrayson stood with Cardew's desk in front of him and with its lid open.

He turned his back. When he faced round again the lid was shut. But in the mirror he had seen Wrayson close it, and thrust a small bundle of notes into his pocket. "That's all right," said Cardew carelessly.

Wrayson moved towards the door, and his movements quickened as Levison went to his desk. He remembered that the skeleton key which had unlocked Levison's desk would not lock again.

The door closed behind him.

"What's the matter, old top?" asked Cardew.

For Levison's face was full of wrath.

"That sweep's been at my desk!"

"Oh rot! I mean—surely you're mistaken!"

"Rot, is it, Cardew? Are you going to deny that he's been at yours?"

"I don't see why I should either deny or admit it, by gad! I rather think it's my bizney, not yours!"

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"Well, it's mine that he should be meddling with my belongings, I suppose?"

"Certainly—if he did! But what proof have you?"

"Proof enough! I swear I locked it. But it's open now."

"Has it been forced?"

"I can't see that it has. But that's nothing to go by. I guess the rotter has a skeleton key!"

"Has anythin' been taken?"

"No. There wasn't anything worth taking!"

"Seems to me, Levison, that you haven't such a dashed lot to worry about, then."

"Not so much as you have, perhaps. But, Cardew, I don't want to quarrel with you. I think you know that. But you call that fellow your pal. He's no pal of mine or of Clive's. We don't want him in here, and we won't have him. There'll be a row if he shows his nose again!"

"I hardly think he's likely to do that," replied Cardew, his tone curiously subdued.

No more than Levison did he want to quarrel. He had made up his mind that it would not come to that if he could help it.

For now he had come to see better than ever what good chums Clive and Levison were. One did not have to think about what one owed to them, or what one had done for them. There was no need to strike a balance. There was no burden to be shouldered. They were just pals—true pals!

"Can you deny that he was stealing from you?" demanded Levison.

"He didn't steal from me," returned Cardew, keeping within the truth, yet withholding practically everything.

But Levison was quick and subtle; his mind leaped to conclusions that would have been impossible to Sidney Clive. And he knew Cardew so well.

"Only because you came in time to stop him!" he flashed. "He was at your desk when you walked in. Can you deny it?"

"I'd prefer not to discuss the matter," Cardew said, his tone growing colder.

"But I mean to have it out with you! You lent him money; I saw him stowing it away! After he'd sneaked in here to steal, you lent him money! Ralph, I think I've a right to ask you what hold that sweep has over you! For he must have some hold. Nothing else could explain all this."

"An' I know that you haven't any such right, Levison! What's more, you won't get an answer!"

"Do you ask me to trust you without a word of explanation?"

"I don't ask anythin'! I don't care a hang whether you trust me or not!"

Cardew had tried to hold his temper in leash. It should not have been so very difficult, for at heart he knew that Levison was justified. But it had proved worse than difficult—impossible.

"Very well!" said Levison. "I told Clive, when we three started to thresh out the matter, and you wouldn't stop to thresh it out, that that about finished it. I've had hopes since that I was wrong. Now I see that I wasn't. You can't be friendly with that rotter and with us!"

"That's a pity, my dear fellow, because I'm not goin' to chuck Wrayson," answered Cardew.

"You'd better keep him out of here, anyway, or he'll get hurt!"

"If he comes in here again it won't be by my invitation."

"It wasn't this time, was it?" demanded Levison.

Cardew walked out without answering that; and Levison was sorry next moment for the sneer.

He was angry still; but his wrath could not kill his strong affection for the wayward Cardew.

"There's something wrong," he said to himself. "Looks to me as if the rotter's got a big hold over Ralph. And yet why should he try stealing if he could play the blackmailing game? He wouldn't be above that, I'm jolly sure!"

And Levison did all he could to strangle his old feeling for Cardew, to harden his heart against the fellow who would not trust the chums who had so often stood by him.

"I'm not going to quarrel with Cardew if I can help it. But I'm with you about Wrayson, old chap," said Clive, when he came in later.

A nasty knock with the ball had brought Levison in from cricket before the game was over. He would have gone on playing; but Tom Merry had persuaded him not to risk doing so. He almost wished now that he had gone on.

Cardew did not show up in the study before prep. Then he refrained from speaking to Levison, and had little to say to Clive.

Baggy Trimble had given him something to think about. Baggy had come to him after classes with a ten-shilling note.

"I say, Cardew, can you change this for me?" the fat junior had asked. "I know you've always got plenty of tin—he, he, he!"

Cardew might have told him to go elsewhere. But he saw the number of the note, and that number was all sixes and eights. Though it took all his loose silver, Cardew gave Baggy change.

The fat Fourth-Former hurried off to the tuckshop. He could have got the note changed there, but that Dame Taggles had a small score against him, and Baggy did not want to settle it at the moment. Baggy did not feel that he could spare the cash to do that.

Cardew looked at the note.

It was undoubtedly one of the two ten-shilling notes he had handed over to Wrayson.

How had Baggy come by it?

The natural conclusion in the case of almost any other fellow would have been that Wrayson had repaid a loan out of his borrowings.

But that inference could not be made in this case. Baggy never had any money to lend.

There was something mysterious about this!

Cardew put the note away. The impulse came to him of asking Wrayson what it meant. But he quickly gave up

the idea. He would not get the truth in any case. And he was not anxious to know any more to Wrayson's discredit than he already knew.

That was quite enough!

CHAPTER 3.

A Battle of the Clans!

"UNFURL the banner to the breeze!" commanded Gordon Gay.

In actual fact, there was no breeze. It was a clear, still day, dry underfoot and fine overhead.

Moreover, the banner was only a flag to replace a discarded one on the Grammar School cricket pavilion, and it did not need unfurling, since it was not furled. But it was of the school colours, and might therefore be looked upon as a banner; and no one was critical.

There was quite a crowd of the Grammar School juniors. Gordon Gay and Frank Monk had set out after dinner to fetch the flag from one of the village shops. Carboy, the Woolton twins, and Arnold Wrayson had followed, and something like a dozen more had trooped after them.

(Continued on next page.)



Our Office Oracle is as full of knowledge as a ripe coconut is full of milk. This week several more knowledge-thirsty readers tap him for information.

Q. What is a banket?

A. This question was sent to me by Wally Fripp, who lives near Potter's Bar. It seems that Wally heard a lecture on mining by a South African professor, and in the course of it the word "banket" was used, and, as Wally himself explains to me, he did not like to ask the meaning and show his ignorance before a lot of people. I am pleased to oblige, Wally. A banket is an auriferous conglomerate like pudding-stone found in parts of South Africa. By auriferous, I mean that it is a substance from which gold can be extracted.

Q. What is an Adam's Apple?

A. This is the popular name given to the protuberance in the front part of the neck—and to show that I really know what I am talking about—it is formed by the interior extremity of the thyroid cartilage of the larynx. It is so called from the old superstition that its presence in the human race was caused by a bit of the forbidden fruit which stuck in Adam's throat.



The arrow in the sketch indicates the Adam's Apple, about which the Oracle has a lot to say.

the forbidden fruit which stuck in Adam's throat.

Q. Why does a steel ship float?

A. This has puzzled many lads, George Bliss. The explanation, however, is simple. The reason is because of the shape of the ship itself, which, of course, is hollow and the space filled with air. The vessel, therefore, with its steel sides and partitions and great air spaces, is, as a whole, lighter than water, with the result that it floats.

Q. Who are the Doukhobors?

A. A young friend, P. S. S., of Peckham, has been informed by a cousin in Canada that there are a lot of these living in his neighbourhood. Our reader wants to know if they are a kind of prairie fox or merely a weed. As a matter of fact, P. S. S., the Doukhobors are members of a religious sect which migrated in large numbers from Russia to Canada before the War. In their own country they were much persecuted for refusing military service, and at times they have given trouble to the Canadian authorities by their strange actions, such as going for long treks with less on than you wear for bathing from Margate beach.

Q. What is a pistole?

A. A Spanish gold coin worth about eighteen shillings.

Q. How did men tell the time before clocks were invented?

A. One of the ways—there were many, Benny K.—was by means of a candle, such as is shown in the illustration, marked in equal sections in black and white. It was previously figured out that a section would take a given time to burn, and according to how many of the black and white spaces were consumed, the passing of the hours was judged with more or less accuracy. It is claimed that King Alfred the Great invented this way of measuring the time, and possibly he was turning the subject over in his mind when he allowed the cakes to burn.

Q. What is a Puffin?

A. A type of seabird with a coloured beak that looks too big for its body. Sometimes it is also known as the sea-parrot.

Q. What is a coffer?

A. Young Sylvester Mirthwaite has been

Not so effective as a watch—a time-telling candle of by-gone days.



reading a pirate story entitled: "Cap'n Dirtfinger's Doubloons," and he says there is some thing about coffers, and coffins, on almost every page. A coffer, Sylvester Mirth., etc., is a chest for holding money or treasure. No doubt some of the coffers you have been reading about are the receptacles for the captain's ill-gotten doubloons, or pieces of gold.

Q. Are the greatest gasworks in the world in London?

A. Recently, so Charlie Harker, of Wigan, informs me, he and his great pal, Tommy Row, came up, to see the sights o' London. Eh, loads, they did an' all! Well, at the Westminster end of Whitehall they saw a big building with a great clock tower, and Charlie said: "Goom Tommy, is that t' gasworks?" to which Tommy replied: "Aye, chum, it is, and don't you forget it an' all—t' gasworks of the whole British nation." And now Charlie wants to know if these gasworks are the biggest in the world. Pretty nearly, Charlie, I should think, for the building with the clock tower that you saw was the Houses of Parliament.

Q. Which British regiment is known as the Cherry Pickers?

A. The 11th Hussars. One of the explanations given for the nickname is that a detachment of this regiment was captured in a cherry orchard during the Peninsular War.



A sight that gladdened the eyes of treasure-seekers—a coffer full of gold!

Q. Who was Lord Strathcona?

A. One of the most famous men in the history of our great Dominion of Canada. He started life as a poor boy, plain Donald Smith, and emigrated from Scotland. His own personal enterprise was chiefly responsible for building that wonderful railway system across the Canadian continent known as the Canadian Pacific Railway. A high peak in the Rockies, Mount Sir Donald, was named after him, and eventually Sir Donald Smith himself became Lord Strathcona and held the exalted position of High Commissioner for Canada until shortly before his death at a very advanced age.

"Let's go back through the woods," suggested Monk. "You haven't been there yet, have you, Wrayson?" Arnold shook his head.

He was as popular at the Grammar School as his brother was unpopular at St. Jim's. Everybody liked him and thought well of him.

The little army turned out of Rylcombe Lane into one of the broad paths that intersected the green woods.

Ahead marched Gordon Gay, acknowledged leader of the Grammarian juniors. By his side strode Frank Monk, the Head's son. He carried the banner.

Behind them came the rest, in double file, Harry Wootton and Arnold Wrayson, Jack Wootton and Carboy, Mont Blanc and Tadpole, and the others.

Suddenly Gordon Gay signalled a halt.

Through the clear air and between the trees ahead came the sound of voices.

Not one or two voices only, but many. And among them some easy to recognise—Tom Merry's, the dulcet tones of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Figgins, the growl of Herries, and the chirpy voice of Kangaroo.

"St. Jim's on the warpath!" said Gordon Gay.

For the path along which the enemy came led from the St. Jim's end of the lane towards the Grammar School, and that by which the Grammarians were moving joined it only twenty or thirty yards ahead. At the place of joining there was one of the few open spaces in Rylcombe Woods—an ideal spot for a battle!

It was not a wild supposition on the part of Gay that the St. Jim's fellows were on the warpath.

It was, indeed, only to be expected that they would be so before long, for a week earlier ten of the Grammarians had encountered half their number of St. Jim's juniors in the village.

The five—Tom Merry, Lowther, Blake, Herries, and Digby—had put up the best fight they could against the odds, but had to beat a retreat.

Arnold had been in the thick of the fray, and it was then that the St. Jim's fellows had first become aware of the presence of a Wrayson at the rival school.

Claude might have joined in to help the outnumbered five. But he and Mellish and Baggy Trimble had slunk away.

Now, however, he was with the little army from St. Jim's.

It was hardly more than an accident that he was of their number. He had been loafing at the gates when they swarmed out, and someone had called to him, half in derision, to come along.

"Going to look for the Grammar School bounders!" he had been told. Something had stung him into joining up. Nobody really wanted him, he knew. But he found himself beside Cardew, and Cardew nodded civilly, and smiled.

Levison and Clive were among the crowd. But they and Cardew were not together.

Wrayson noted that, for the time being, the eternal feud between the School House and the New House seemed in abeyance. He was surprised. That feud was the kind of thing that a fellow of his type would not understand.

Figgins and Kerr and Fatty Wynn, Redfern and Owen and Lawrence, were at the same time the deadly foes and the very good friends of their School House rivals. When it came to meeting the Grammar School all private quarrels were forgotten, and both Houses united against the common foe.

No more than he understood this did Wrayson comprehend the nature of the feud between the juniors of the two schools.

There was no malice in that, either, though there was keen rivalry.

"Have they heard us?" asked Gordon Gay.

"They're coming back from the village!" said Tom Merry at that very moment.

A thick belt of firs concealed the rival armies from each other.

"Wrayson," said Gordon Gay, turning, "it's you for the scout! Push through those trees, and find out just where the enemy are, and if there's any chance of surprising them."

That was a real compliment for the new fellow, and he took it as such. The one member of the party who did not know the woods, he was chosen to locate the foe. But it was no mere empty compliment. Arnold Wrayson had joined the Grammar School Boy Scout troop, and had already shown that he was expert at this sort of thing.

"They could hardly help hearing us," said Tom Merry. "But they may not know just where we are."

He glanced round.

"Cardew," he said, "you might do a bit of scouting. They're behind the firs. I think they've halted. See if there's any chance of a surprise by taking them in the rear."

"Come on, Wrayson!" said Cardew.

In an ordinary way that invitation would not have

appealed to Claude Wrayson. He welcomed it now because he took it as a sign that Cardew was feeling friendly once more. He wanted to be chummy with Cardew. There were few fellows at St. Jim's who had fivers to lend. There was only one who would lend a fiver to Wrayson.

Now, where there are firs there is no undergrowth. And the stems of firs are seldom bulky enough to provide good cover. Cardew and Claude Wrayson, side by side, made their way among those stems, and were plain to the view of Arnold Wrayson while he was still hidden from them.

For Arnold, more skilful at scouting, had skirted the clump of firs, making his way under cover from bush to bush among the other trees, which gave the undergrowth a chance.

Wrayson of the Grammar School recognised Wrayson of St. Jim's with a real thrill of pleasure.

Arnold was glad to know that Claude was with the enemy. He took it as a good sign that Claude should be chosen to do scouting work, though he grinned at the very amateurish manner in which Claude and his comrade were doing it.

As yet he had not seen the face of the fellow with Claude. But on a sudden he got a glimpse of it.

Cardew!

The next moment Ralph Reckness Cardew had seen the Grammarian, for in his surprise Arnold Wrayson stood up, showing himself clearly. His surprise was not a tenth part as great as Cardew's.

For he had known that Cardew was at St. Jim's, whereas Cardew had had no notion that he was at the Grammar School.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Cardew.

Beside him was the fellow to whom he believed he owed his life. And over there, only fifteen yards or so away, was another fellow so like him that for the moment he seemed his double!

The other fellow wore a Grammar School cap. Cardew saw that before Arnold, remembering his duty to his comrades, dropped out of sight again.

"What is it, Cardew?" asked Claude Wrayson.

He had not seen his brother.

"Grammar School bounder!" answered Cardew. "He twiggled us. No chance of a surprise now. Let's get back."

Arnold Wrayson was already making his way back to his schoolfellows. The very fact that Tom Merry had sent out scouts was enough to show that the St. Jim's army would not be taken by surprise.

Cardew's brain was in a whirl.

Those two looked to him exactly alike. He could not understand it, if they were brothers, for he had a distinct recollection that the other Wrayson that day at Cleeve Manor—the fellow who had stood by in a blue funk while his brother went in to the rescue—had been fairer than his rescuer.

No good trying to think it out now! The puzzle must wait. But there was in Cardew's heart a vague hope that he could hardly have explained to anyone.

He and Claude Wrayson hurried back to their commander. But Arnold was with Gordon Gay before they reached Tom Merry.

"No use!" said Arnold. "They're on to us. They'd got scouts out, too."

He did not say who the scouts were. That was of no consequence to the Grammar School leader, much as it mattered to him.

Then, from beyond the clump of firs there pealed out the familiar battle-cry:

"St. Jim's! St. Jim's!"

"Grammar School!" yelled Gordon Gay.

And both bands made at top speed for the clearing where the collision was bound to happen.

Between the stems of the firs those of both parties saw their foes hurrying to be earliest on the field of battle.

It was a dead heat.

Gordon Gay, Frank Monk, waving the flag, Arnold Wrayson, and Harry Wootton reached the open space at the same second as Tom Merry, Jack Blake, George Figgins, and Reginald Talbot.

Behind Gordon Gay surged his followers. Behind Tom Merry there pushed to the fray Harry Noble and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Kerr and Redfern and Dane, Herries and Levison and Clive, Fatty Wynn and Digby and Gore. There were more to back them up, too—this was one of the biggest meetings of the clans for many a long day.

"Stick close round the flag!" ordered Gay.

At once he realised that the sight of that flag would make the enemy frantic to capture it. To lose it would be a heavy score against the Grammarians.

"Talbot, get half a dozen of our best and go for the flag!" Tom Merry commanded.

It was an enterprise after Talbot's own heart.

"Figgins—Blake—Levison—Dane—Redfern—Manners!" he rapped out, touching each on the arm, and whispering a

few short instructions. Talbot knew that he could count on his men.

They did not at once detach themselves from the main body. But, as the battle joined, they formed themselves into a wedge behind Talbot, Dane and Blake in his immediate rear, the other four in a line behind them.

Fast and furious waged the conflict.

The leaders met in full career, and Tom Merry staggered from a hefty punch in the chest. But over his shoulder Lowther's fist shot out, and Gay staggered, too.

Carboy and Herries renewed their feud that had started in the village High Street. Harry Wootton and D'Arcy were at it hammer and tongs. Gore seized the scraggy Tadpole by the back of his neck and the slack of his trousers, and slung him into the bushes. But Tadpole was up again in a moment and back in the fighting-line.

But to call it a fighting-line is to misname it. The battle had, quite naturally, become a succession of single combats,

Others came, but among them were not the doughtiest warriors of the Grammar School band. Gay and Carboy, the Woottons and Wrayson—they were all in the very thick of the melee.

And now Monk saw the danger.

Talbot pressed towards him. Behind Talbot, Blake and Dane showed eager faces. Talbot had chosen his men well. Others he might have had as good, perhaps, but, save Tom Merry himself, none better than any of those.

And to withstand their hot attack Monk had nothing to compare with them. They were between him and the champions of his side.

"Gay!" he yelled. "Back up! The flag—the flag's in danger!"

Gordon Gay swung round, and tried to fight his way to the rescue. He found Arnold Wrayson and Jack Wootton beside him—good men in a tight corner.

But Tom Merry had passed another word.



Fast and furious waged the conflict as Saints and Grammarians met. "Stick close round the flag!" ordered Gordon Gay. At once he had realised that the sight of that flag would make Tom Merry go all out to capture it. And he was right! (See page 8.)

and these shifted with the sudden changes of a kaleidoscope as the pressure of forty or more keen fighters swayed it.

Tom Merry and Gordon Gay had lost one another. Arnold Wrayson, in the midst of a hot encounter with Kerr, found himself facing his brother instead of the New House fellow, and dropped his hands and passed on. But Jack Wootton went for Claude Wrayson, and dealt him a punch that sent him to the ground.

That was enough for Claude. He crawled out of the fray. He did not admit to himself that he had no intention of doing any more fighting. But he was sure he needed a minute or two of rest before he was fit for any more.

Now it was Cardew whom Gordon Gay met, to find in him a worthy foe.

But through it all Talbot and his picked six, keeping their wedge formation, pressed towards the flag.

Frank Monk was badly handicapped. He could not grapple with an enemy, for he had the flag to guard. He could use only one fist. But the worst of it all was that the general order given by Gay to stick close round the flag, had not been taken by any of the Grammarians as applying to himself in particular.

The defenders of the flag came and went. On none of them could Monk count upon for aid at a moment's notice. Now they were in force sufficient for the purpose; then they had become mixed with the struggling crowd again.

Gordon Gay and his followers were opposed by Tom Merry and a second picked band.

Here were Lowther and Clive and Cardew, Herries and Kerr and Gore. And all of them knew the object of Talbot and his men, and all of them were grimly determined to hold back the Grammarian rescue-party.

Talbot and his six pressed on, while Tom Merry & Co., guarding their rear, held back Gay's forces. And all around this main battle there went on a skirmishing among those who had not yet grasped what had now become the main issue.

"Back up, Grammar School!" yelled Monk, again and yet again. "Don't let them get the flag!"

But nearer and nearer pressed the six Saints. No keener could they have been had the mimic battle been real, with life and honour hanging on the fight for the flag.

Cardew and Arnold Wrayson found themselves face to face again. But there was no time then to think of anything but the fray, and neither thought of anything else at that moment.

"Oh, good man, Wrayson!" cried Gordon Gay.

For Arnold had ducked under Cardew's arm, tumbled Clive over, and was gone with a rush to join Monk. He was by the side of the flag-bearer before Talbot and his men realised what was happening.

Claude heard Gordon Gay's cry, and looked with sulky resentment to discover what had caused it.

It made him angry that Arnold should win laurels in this mimic warfare.

"Catch hold!" cried Monk, thrusting the flag at Arnold as he came up, eluding Clifton Dane's low tackle.

"No fear!" answered Arnold, as the Canadian junior sprawled from his own impetus. "I want both hands!"

And he faced Talbot, for whom, with all his pluck, he was really no match.

Frank Monk wanted both hands, also. He was sick of using only one; of holding back lest his precious charge might be seized.

"Catch hold!" he said to young Turner; and Turner caught hold, proud to be thus distinguished.

Dane had scrambled to his feet, and Monk dashed at him.

But Arnold Wrayson was down. Talbot, using his fists as little as he could, had collared and thrown him.

"I'm coming, Frank!" yelled Gordon Gay.

And, with a gallant effort, he came, staggering Tom Merry once more, and charging Lowther aside.

But he was too late!

Dane had Frank Monk in deadly grip. Next moment Talbot had wrenched the flag from young Turner's grasp.

"To me!" roared Talbot. "Don't let them get it back!"

And to him they rallied, his own half-dozen, Tom Merry and his six, D'Arcy and Digby and Owen and Lawrence and Fatty Wynn, and more besides.

They presented to the broken ranks of the Grammarians a solid array. They had closed up round Talbot and the captured flag.

That did not end the fight. Again and again the Grammarians, led by Gordon Gay and Frank Monk, attacked hotly. But the attacks were too spasmodic. They lacked weight to break that solid phalanx.

Then Tom Merry gave the word of command, and the St. Jim's forces swung round and marched for home. In their midst was Talbot, bearing the captured flag; and in their rear were all the doughtiest of the St. Jim's fighting men, ready to turn and repulse any further attack.

Gordon Gay and Monk looked at one another, and each saw that any further attack was useless. Another day must retrieve their disaster, for a sheer disaster the battle of the wood had been, and there was no retrieving it to-day.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Frank Monk. "They've got the flag! It wasn't my fault, old chap!"

"You're right, Monkey. A jolly sight more mine, I should say!"

Then the voice of Tadpole piped from under the fir-trees.

"I've got a prisoner!"

CHAPTER 4.

The Grammarians' Capture!

TADPOLE'S prisoner was Claude Wrayson.

The Fourth-Former had not plunged into the fray again. There seemed no need for it. St. Jim's was getting along very well indeed without his help, and he had had as many hard knocks as he cared about.

So he sat there watching the winning of the flag, the closing-up of the St. Jim's ranks, the desperate assaults of Gay and his men.

It was interesting enough, and it did not occur to him that he might be safer in the ranks of his schoolfellows.

Tadpole, of little value for this sort of thing, had done his best all through. He had shared in all three of the attacks which had been made in vain. Out of the last he had been sent sprawling beside Wrayson.

Immediately he had seized the St. Jim's fellow round the neck, all but throttling him.

Here was something snatched out of the burning, as it were! If Tom Merry and his men had got off with the Grammar School flag, they had not made a prisoner!

Tadpole did not stop to think that in this kind of warfare the making of prisoners was pretty useless. And, of course, Tadpole did not know that of all the fellows who had fought for St. Jim's that day his prisoner was least valued. So little valued was he that no one but Cardew was at all likely to miss him. And Cardew could have borne to miss him for good and all without repining.

Like grim death Tadpole hung on to Wrayson. Now the others came flocking to where Wrayson writhed and the Grammarian clung.

"Why, it's your brother, Wrayson!" exclaimed Monk. "Let go of him! Do you hear, Tadpole? Let go of him at once!" exclaimed Arnold. "You'll choke him if you go on like that!"

"That's all right, now you fellows are here," answered Tadpole. He liked Arnold, who was less disposed to make rough fun of his eccentric ways than Carboy and some of

the rest. "But I wasn't going to let him get away—not likely!"

He released Claude.

In a white heat of rage, Wrayson struck him in the face. "Oh, I say, Claude!" protested Arnold.

Crimson streamed from the harmless Tadpole's nose. Gordon Gay seized Claude by the collar. This was altogether too thick. The fray was over, and Tadpole was not expecting that blow.

Claude wrenched himself free from Gordon Gay's grip, but Monk grabbed him.

Claude kicked savagely at the Grammarian leader's shins. He had lost all control of his temper, just as he had done on his first day at St. Jim's, when in a few minutes he had made the Terrible Three and Blake & Co. all set him down as a rank outsider.

His brother had seen him like this before, and knew that words were useless.

But Gay and Monk were not the fellows to waste words at such a time. Within five seconds Claude Wrayson was on his back, glaring up at those who had put him there.

"I say, Wrayson, is that brother of yours mad?" asked Harry Wootton uneasily.

Arnold shook his head. But he did not wonder that Wootton should have asked. With his lips drawn back from his teeth, with that wild gleam in his eyes, Claude hardly looked sane.

"If I were you I'd clear out, old chap," the Australian junior said kindly. "You can't do a thing for him, and we all know that it's not your fault you've got such a brother."

But Arnold would not go. He knew that if he did Claude would have accused him of desertion next time they met.

"Anybody got a few yards of string?" inquired Gay. "This wild beast wants tying up."

Most of the Grammarians could and did produce some string, and there was plenty of stout stuff among it.

While two fellows sat on the prisoner to keep him quiet, half a dozen knotted together some of the longest and stoutest pieces.

"That's enough," said Gay. "Tie him up! Hands behind his back, you know, and then round the legs, below the knees and above the ankles. Not too tight. We must give him a chance to get back to St. Jim's. But we needn't mind if he's late for dinner."

The orders of the Grammarian leader were obeyed. Wrayson's hands were forced behind his back, and his wrists tied tightly together. This ensured that he should not be able to get at the bonds which confined his legs. These bonds were so tied that he could shuffle along, but not step out.

He could get to St. Jim's thus—in time. But, as Gordon Gay had suggested, it was likely he might be late for dinner.

He writhed and struggled while the enemy were at work upon him. But when they had finished he sat still, glaring up at Gay with eyes so full of spite that they might have made some fellows feel quite nervous.

Gordon Gay, however, was not of the nervous type.

"There's something else wanted," he said. "I suppose nobody, by any chance, happens to have a box of paints, or a barrel of tar, or a bottle of ink in his pocket?"

Nobody had anything nearer what was required than an indelible pencil. Gay rejected this as too slow an instrument.

"I've got it!" said Frank Monk.

He took out a sheet of paper, borrowed Smith minor's indelible pencil, and wrote:

"BE CAREFUL! THIS ST. JIM'S CAD KICKS!"

"Front or back?" he queried.

"Oh, front," answered Gordon Gay.

"Pins, someone?"

Pins were produced. Monk stooped to fasten the scrap of paper to Claude Wrayson's waistcoat.

Next moment he straightened up with an exclamation. "Oh, hang him! Just look here!"

Claude Wrayson had snapped at him like a savage cur, and the marks of his teeth were plain to be seen on Monk's right wrist. In two places the skin was broken, and a slow drop of blood oozed from each.

Arnold Wrayson turned away then, and disappeared through the trees. He could stand no more. No one noted his going, for all eyes were on the biter and the bitten.

Then Monk surprised them all by laughing. He took the pencil again, and added to what he had written on the scrap of paper:

"AND HE BITES!"

The notice was fixed to Wrayson's chest, without further damage, and he was left writhing in fury.

The Grammarians hurried off. They had lost the battle. They had lost their flag.

But in another battle they might turn the tables. The flag might be—would have to be—won back. But they were not going to lose their dinner!

That meal was a quarter of an hour earlier at the Grammar School than at St. Jim's.

No one but Harry Wootton, who was Arnold Wrayson's chief chum, thought of Arnold at the moment; and it was some minutes before Gordon Gay noticed his absence.

"I think he cleared out," said Wootton, in answer to his leader's question. "Told him he'd better, you know. My word, it's rough luck on a chap like our man Wrayson to have a fiend of a brother like that!"

Everyone agreed. There was not a fellow among all the crowd who did not like Arnold.

"He's a jolly good man in a scrap," said Frank Monk. "Did you see how he dodged through to help me?"

But Arnold was not ahead, as they supposed. He had gone in among the firs; and now he lay full length on the ground, his head on his arms, his shoulders shaking with sobs.

It was very near a tragedy for Arnold. Better for him could he have cast his brother out of his heart utterly. But the old affection still held.

Arnold Wrayson had no rancour against his chums. What they had done to Claude was fully justified. They might have done worse, and he could not have felt that they were being unfair or brutal.

But his mind was made up that Claude should not go back to St. Jim's like that. Already he had made himself unpopular there. This would be just enough to spoil any slight chance there might still be for him.

Arnold got to his feet just as Ralph Reckness Cardew reached a bend in the grassy drive that gave him a full view of the scene of the recent battle.

He had missed Wrayson, though no one else had. So he had quietly dropped back, with no word to anyone. And no one but Levison had missed him; and Levison, with a heart almost as sore as Arnold's, had said nothing.

Cardew saw Claude scrambling up in ungainly fashion. Then he saw Arnold, and he knew that he was not needed.

The slacker of the Fourth was full of curiosity about that other Wrayson. But the present did not seem the time for gratifying that curiosity.

Because of what he believed that rank outsider had done for him he would not leave the outsider in the lurch. But he had ceased to care in the very least what the outsider thought of him.

Arnold did not speak as he cut through the string that bound his brother's arms and legs, and snatched the scrap of paper from his back and tore it into a hundred fragments.

"Well!" said Claude sulkily. It did not seem to occur to him to speak a word or two of thanks.

"You'd better cut!" said Arnold.

"St. Jim's is a beastly hole!" said Claude. "But you've got just as beastly rotters at the Grammar School as we have there!"

"They're not. They're decent chaps, all of them!"

"Look how they treated me!"

"You hit Tadpole on the nose when he wasn't expecting it! You kicked Gay's shins, and used your teeth on Monk! What could you expect after that?"

"They were twenty against one."

"Yes; but they'd have been decent to you if you'd been decent yourself. It's no use, Claude. You'll never get on with the fellows anywhere if you let your temper go as you do."

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it!" snarled his brother.

"I've noticed that you aren't slow about asking me for anything you want," replied Arnold, with an unwonted touch of sarcasm.

"Ten bob!" Claude sneered. "That's what I've had from you!"

But there were other things that he had had from his brother. Loyalty and patience that few fellows would have been capable of, and that were far more than Claude deserved.

Even now, Arnold was risking something for his brother.

He had no idea of trying to conceal from his comrades what he had done. It would not have been easy, for they were bound to miss him sooner or later, he supposed, and to guess the meaning of his absence. But, in any case, he would not have hidden it.

They would resent it, he was certain. But he did not fear that they would hold him a traitor. They would know that he had not acted without a struggle with himself, and perhaps they would understand why loyalty to his brother had won. He thought Harry Wootton would, anyway, and Gay and Monk, even if some of the rest did not.

"Well, I'm going!" said Claude, hunching up his shoulders and scowling blackly, though the scowl was not solely for Arnold's benefit, but for things in general.

"Best thing you can do!" answered Arnold.

Thus they parted.

It chanced that Claude caught up with Cardew, owing to the fact that Cardew found one of his bootlaces had broken, and was obliged to stop for repairs.

"Hallo!" said Claude ungraciously. "You've lost the rest, then?"

"Lace broke!" replied Cardew.

"Oh, I didn't suppose that you were coming back for me—not likely!"

"Doesn't look like it, does it? Face turned wrong way for that!"

But Claude was not so sure that Cardew had not left the others and lingered on his account. He did not feel grateful. It irritated him. At the back of his mind was constantly the thought of how Cardew would feel if he ever came to know the truth and, it may be, the dread of what Cardew might do about it.

"That was your brother among the Grammar School fellows, I suppose, Wrayson?" said Cardew, after a minute or two of silence.

"Yes."

"You never told me you'd a brother there."

"Didn't suppose it would interest you. We don't see much of one another. Can't hit it off, you know."

"That wasn't the fellow who was with you the day you came to my rescue at Cleve, was it?" asked Cardew. "I seem to remember him as much fairer than either of you."

"Wasn't a brother at all. A cousin of ours," replied Wrayson. "He's often been taken for our brother, though—at least, he used to be when he was alive. He's dead now."

It seemed to him that he had got out of the difficulty rather cleverly.

He did not guess that Ralph Reckness Cardew, his mind buzzing with questions, not yet full of suspicion, yet ready

(Continued on next page.)

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to be suspicious, felt sure that he was lying, and had no belief at all in the existence of the cousin reported deceased!

CHAPTER 5.

A Lost Stake!

ARNOLD WRAYSON arrived in Hall at the Grammar School some ten minutes after the other fellows had trooped in with hearty appetites to dinner.

He was given a word of reprimand and a slight imposition by Dr. Monk, but he had no questions about his lateness to answer.

At least, he was not questioned by the Head. And, though some of the other juniors did ask him what he had been after as they trooped out of Hall, they knew the query needless.

No one was more certain than Carboy.

"Don't ask the chap to tell lies!" said Carboy roughly. "We know jolly well what he was after!"

"Then you don't need to be told," answered Arnold, turning away.

Carboy caught him by the shoulder.

"What were you doing? Tell us that, unless you're afraid to!" he shouted.

"You said you knew. But if you want me to tell you, I don't mind. I stayed behind to let my brother loose. You can take your hand off me, Carboy. I'm not going to run away!"

"Hear that, you fellows?" roared Carboy. "Why, he's admitting he's a rotten traitor!"

"He's not!" said Harry Wootton sharply. "Hang it all, a fellow's brother is his brother, you know. I'm not saying that I'd have taken the trouble for mine—"

"Shouldn't want you to!" broke in Jack Wootton. "And I'm not a rotten sweep like that other Wrayson bouncer, so you needn't drag me into it, you silly ass!"

"Gay! Monk!" yelled Carboy. "Come here! What do you think this chap did?"

Gordon Gay and Frank Monk came up. They had just agreed that it was not worth while to make a fuss about what Arnold had done, since it was such a natural thing for him to do.

They were not too pleased with Carboy for taking up the matter in that overbearing way of his.

He had not suffered as they had. If they could overlook Arnold's undoing of their work, surely Carboy might.

But they saw trouble coming, and they could not very well turn their backs on it.

Quite a crowd had gathered round Arnold. In the centre of it he faced Jack Wootton, his face pale, his eyes angry. No one there had seen him look like that before. But there was nothing to suggest the wild beast savagery of Claude.

"You'd better keep your tongue between your teeth, Wootton!" said Arnold hotly. "Rotten sweep is a bit thick, and I'm not going to stand here and have my brother called names of that sort!"

"I haven't called him anything worse than he deserves!" persisted Jack Wootton. "You're decent yourself, and you can't deny that he is a rotten sweep!"

In quite friendly fashion Gordon Gay put the speaker aside and took his place fronting Arnold.

"It's not worth while to get your wool off, Wrayson," he said. "In fact, I don't think the whole bizney's worth talking about. Let's drop it!"

"Drop it?" exclaimed Carboy. "You can't know, then, that this bouncer let his brother loose and spoiled everything!"

"If I didn't know it, I guessed it," answered Gay.

"He's a traitor!" yelled Carboy.

"Oh, rot!" growled Frank Monk.

"Don't quarrel with Wootton, Wrayson," said Gordon Gay quietly.

"I shall quarrel with anyone who says the sort of things he's said about my brother!" flashed Arnold.

"Well, you know, old fellow, nasty things might be said about him without going an inch away outside the truth," replied Gay.

He stooped to put a hand to his aching shin as he spoke. Frank Monk looked down at his wrist, which had inflamed slightly. Tadpole caressed his nose. It had never been a well-shaped nose, and it looked worse than ever now that it was swollen.

But none of these three, who had most cause to bear a grudge against Claude Wrayson, wanted Arnold to suffer for what he had done. Even Jack Wootton did not want it, and most certainly Harry did not.

It was Carboy, always a warlike individual, who was making trouble. And he and Jack Wootton between them had roused in Arnold hot anger that would not easily subside.

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"Nobody's going to run him down in my hearing, anyway!" exclaimed Arnold. "You can call me a traitor if you like. I know I'm not. But keep your mouth shut about my brother!"

And he moved a foot or two nearer Gay, too full of wrath to see that the Grammarian leader was playing a friendly part.

"Don't see how you're going to stop us saying what we jolly well like," said Jack Wootton.

"You won't stop me, anyway!" added Carboy.

"How are you going to stop us, Wrayson?" asked another of the crowd.

"Yes, how? That's what we'd like to know!"

"Can't be done!"

Arnold faced the jeering crowd with gleaming eyes.

He was too angry to see that the fellows who mattered most to him took no part in it. All that Gordon Gay and Monk and Harry Wootton wanted was to make an end of the trouble.

"I'll fight the best man among you!" Arnold cried.

"What, Gay?" sneered Carboy.

"Or Monk?" suggested somebody else.

"Yes, Gay or Monk—anybody!"

And Arnold glared into Gordon Gay's face.

Some of the juniors were grinning, and that nettled him still more.

Gordon Gay was getting nettled, too—and small wonder! "Think it over, Wrayson," he said. "We can't scrap before classes. A couple of hours or so will give you a chance to cool down."

"But not back down!" retorted Arnold.

Then someone gave him a push, and he stumbled against Gay.

The Grammarian leader was unaware of that push. To him it seemed that Wrayson had thrust forward at him.

"All right," he said quietly. "We'll meet in the gym after classes. I didn't want this, but you've asked for a licking, and you'll get it!"

"We'll see about that!" answered Arnold.

The crowd began to disperse. As the fight was arranged, it was assumed that the present trouble was over.

But Harry Wootton caught Carboy by the arm.

"When Wrayson and Gay meet, you and I will have a little matter to settle, Carboy!" said the Australian junior.

"What the thump for?" asked Carboy, trying to look surprised.

"Because you gave Wrayson that push in the back."

"Why didn't you say so at the time? Then your pal might have got off his licking."

"He isn't licked yet. Most likely he will be. But most likely you will be, too. And I didn't say anything before the rest because I thought it would only make things worse. It was a rotten trick, Carboy!"

"I didn't think," mumbled Carboy. "At least, it seemed to me that if the bouncer was spoiling for a fight, he'd better have one. And I knew jolly well Gay wouldn't hit him if he could help it."

On reflection it did not appear to Carboy that what he had done was altogether praiseworthy. He did not want to fight Wootton, who was a good friend of his. But he would not climb down.

By the time the Form was dismissed Arnold Wrayson's anger had cooled.

No one had said a word about his brother that Claude did not deserve, he knew. The name Jack Wootton had given him was not a bit too strong. But Arnold could not bear to hear it, nevertheless.

He recognised now the fact that Gordon Gay had acted generously. But that did not alter his resolve to go through with the fight.

He would probably be licked, but that mattered little. He could take a licking in sporting spirit. He could have borne even to be licked by Carboy. But against Carboy he would have had a far better chance; and he wished it was Carboy he had to face. He was not in much doubt as to who had given him that push.

"Well, Wrayson," said the leader of the Grammarian juniors, as they came out of the Form-room, "have you made up your mind to let me off? There's no reason why you shouldn't, you know. I shan't care if they say I faked you."

"I'm going through with it!" replied Arnold, resolutely but without heat.

"Right-ho! Then I propose we fight for a stake. If you lose you'll have to do something I tell you to, but what it is you won't know till you've lost. You can trust me not to put anything unfair over on you, I think. And if I lose—"

"Then I shan't have to do it. That's good enough for me," broke in Arnold. "I agree."

No one but Harry Wootton heard that compact.

But when the gym was reached Harry Wootton, who had kept close to Arnold till then, left him.

Arnold looked round, taking it for granted that his best chum would act as his second. But Jack Wootton stood there.

"Harry asked me to second you," said Jack. "He's got a little dust-up of his own on. Don't mind, do you?"

And Arnold smiled and accepted, though it was his proposed second who had been one of the main causes of the trouble.

A chorus of questions arose when Harry Wootton and Carboy were seen to be putting on the gloves.

It was Carboy who explained.

"Wootton accuses me of pushing Wrayson against Gay," he said. "And he says he's going to lick me for it."

"Did you do it?" snapped Gay.

"Yes!"

"Then I hope he will lick you!"

Arnold was quite a decent boxer, and had plenty of pluck. But he was younger, slighter, and less strong than Gay; and he never had a real chance. Only a fluke could have given him victory.

Gay did not play with him. The fight lasted barely a minute and a half. Then Arnold was on his back, with a vague notion that the floor had risen and smitten him, and Mont Blong was counting him out.

Gay helped Arnold up, and stood beside him to watch Harry Wootton and Carboy hard at it.

Carboy was heavier than Wootton, and his muscular strength was greater. But the wiry Australian junior was more active and a better boxer.

He took most of the punishment at first, but showed no sign of minding it. And after a round or two Carboy was breathing hard, through trying to make the pace too hot.

Then Wootton waded in, and if his punches lacked the weight of his antagonist's, they came oftener and quicker. He was not yet on top; but he looked like being on top soon.

But before the fifth round could be started Carboy turned to Arnold and Gordon Gay.

"I'm sorry, you chaps!" he blurted out, his face reddening. "That push was a caddish trick."

Harry Wootton held out his right hand for his second to unlace the glove.

"That finishes it," he said. "You won't have the pleasure of licking me to-day, Carboy. We'll call it a draw."

"Suits me all right," answered Carboy. He had done the right thing by apologising, and none of the juniors in the gym were likely to put it down to funk.

"Now, what's the stake I've lost, Gay?" inquired Arnold.

"Look here, you fellows, we want a herald to go to St. Jim's and make it clear to those bounders that they aren't going to keep our flag, don't we?" asked Gordon Gay, raising his voice so that all present heard.

"Rather!"

"That's the style!"

"We'll have it back, you bet!"

"Who's the herald?"

"Wrayson!" said Gay.

Arnold gave a start.

The last thing he wanted was to go to St. Jim's. He did not want to see Claude among the fellows who despised him; and he most particularly did not want to meet Cardew. For he knew that Cardew believed Claude to be the fellow who had rescued him, and he saw that in such a meeting there was danger to his brother.

But he had given his word, and he could not back out. Even if it had been possible for him to make plain his objection he would not have backed out. But, of course, it was impossible.

"All right," he said. "When do you want me to go, Gay? Now?"

"No, old chap. To-morrow will do. You go with a giddy flag of truce, you know, and you'll look up Tom Merry, who's one of the best, really. Why, you ought to enjoy it!"

And Gordon Gay gave the shoulder of the fellow he had just licked the friendliest of squeezes.

Harmony was restored. Arnold was just as popular as ever, and Carboy's frank confession had saved him from being looked upon as a bit of a rotter. No one had any rancour against anyone else.

But Arnold's mind was far from being easy at the prospect of visiting St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 6.

Arnold at St. Jim's

"I'LL go with you if you like, old fellow."

It was Harry Wootton who made that offer after lessons the next morning, when Arnold Wrayson was due to set out on his mission to St. Jim's.

But Arnold shook his head.

He did not think Gay would mind Wootton's going. But if he must go to St. Jim's, with the possibility of meeting Claude, and perhaps even running up against Cardew, he would prefer not to have Wootton with him, good chum as he was.

"Ask any junior you see to fetch Tom Merry, or to take you to him," Gay said. "I needn't say, I know, that our message is to be delivered civilly. But they've got to be made to understand that it's a challenge, though it is civil."

"That's all right, Gay. I won't let you down."

It was not Tom Merry the herald minded meeting. He rather liked the notion of that. There were others among the enemy whom he wanted to meet again—Talbot, Blake, Figgins, and D'Arcy.

He did not forget that but for Claude these fellows would have been his comrades. He could have got along well with them, he was sure. As yet he had met them only on hostile terms. But he was certain they were the right sort.

But he did not regret the change of schools. He asked for no better chums than he had found at Rylcombe.

He went on foot. It was Wednesday, and that meant the St. Jim's juniors, having the afternoon for cricket, would not be playing between classes and dinner.

"If you meet any of them on the way you've only to say that you're on the herald job, and they won't pile on you," Gay had told him.

He met several. Levison and Clive passed him on their bikes and nodded and grinned, recognising him as one of the enemy of yesterday. Kangaroo and Dane hailed him cheerily.

"After your flag, Wrayson?" called Noble.

Near the gates two fellows whom he had seen before, but who had not been in the battle of Rylcombe Wood, cast curious glances at him. One was fat, with a pasty complexion; the other was lean, and his face did not have the healthy look that was on the faces of most of the St. Jim's juniors. He would not have been bad-looking, but for the fact that his eyes were too close together, and his expression was crafty.

Arnold did not know their names; but he recognised them as Claude's companions a few days before at Rylcombe when five of St. Jim's fellows had had to retreat before double their number of Grammarians, and his brother and these two had slunk away from the fray.

He did not return their glances. These two were not among the St. Jim's juniors in whom he felt a friendly interest.

At the gates were Blake, D'Arcy, and Figgins.

"I say, deah boys, heah comes Wrayson of the Gwammah School!" said Arthur Augustus, jamming his celebrated monocle into his eye.

"He's all right," returned Blake. "Don't suggest slaying him, Gussy, because I'm not on. Even a Grammarian has a right to live, you know."

"Weally, Blake, pway don't be so widic! In theowry, it is not to be denied Wrayson is an enemy; but he is to be treated as a decent an' respected enemy. His bwotth is a wotth, but I am suah this chap is not in the vwey least like him."

"He's a good deal like him to look at, though he doesn't scowl as your sweet specimen generally does," remarked Figgins. "Come with a flag of truce, or something like that, I guess."

Figgins leaned against one of the great stone pillars of

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AND IT IS, BOYS—COMING VERY SOON!

WHAT IS?

WHY, THE TREAT OF YOUR LIVES!

KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THIS TREAT, FOR IT WILL SET THE WORLD A-TALKING!

the gates. Blake stood with his hands in his trousers-pockets, while Arthur Augustus, having let drop his monocle, folded his arms in front of him in a Napoleonic manner and prepared to hold converse with the decent and respected enemy in a properly dignified manner.

Arnold Wrayson came up smiling. Here were three of the fellows who had made an impression on his mind of such a kind that he could not help feeling friendly to them.

Then, to the disgust of the swell of St. Jim's, Figgins spoke in a most informal and undignified fashion before he had had time to think out a suitable speech.

"Hallo, Wrayson! Flag of truce, or just asking for it?" said the leader of the New House juniors.

Arnold grinned cheerily. "I'm not asking for it," he replied. "You might call it a flag of truce. Gay says I'm a herald, and that I'm to see Tom Merry."

"Come along, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus. "I will conduct you to Tom Mewwy with pleasuah."

Arnold nodded to Blake and Figgins, and passed on into the quad with the swell of St. Jim's.

"Different sort from our boulder Wrayson," remarked Blake. "This is the brother we ought to have had, you know, Figgys."

"This one seems O.K.," agreed Figgins. "Up to the New House standard even."

"Why, you cheeky fathead!" exclaimed Blake wrathfully.

"Keep your wool on!" grinned the leader of the New House. "Seriously, though, your Wrayson is about the giddy limit, isn't he?"

"He isn't about it; he's the giddy limit itself," said Blake.

Arthur Augustus and his companion met the Terrible Three on their way downstairs.

"Wrayson is heah as a hewald, Tom Mewwy," announced D'Arcy. "I need scarcely say—"

"Needn't say another word, Gussy!" broke in the junior captain of St. Jim's. "We know how to treat a herald, I should hope. How d'you do, Wrayson?"

And Tom Merry held out his hand in the friendliest fashion.

Arnold gripped it, thinking how great a pity it was that Claude had not made friends of fellows such as these. Instead of palling up with a fat slacker like Trimble and the crafty-faced Mellish, and obtaining Cardew's friendship under false pretences.

But at no school to which the two had gone had Claude's cronies—they were hardly pals, any more than Racke and Crooke were his pals—belonged to the decent set. And because of that Arnold had never before had the chance to win the liking of others as he won it at the Grammar School. Claude had spoiled everything for him.

"Come along to our study," said Tom Merry. "We will receive the message of the enemy with all due solemnity. Hi, Talbot! Join up! Gay's sent Wrayson along to us."

Talbot shook hands with Arnold, and the party proceeded to Study No. 10. Then Manners, looking out of the window, saw Blake and Figgins in the Quad and beckoned to them.

Arnold would have enjoyed it all thoroughly but for the dread that at any moment Cardew might be added to the gathering. He felt that he was being treated as an envoy from the enemy should be—as the Grammarians would have treated anyone Tom Merry had sent.

Blake and Figgins, on their way up, were joined by Kerr, Fatty Wynn, Digby, and Herries.

Study No. 10, though it was bigger than some of the Shell studies, was quite crowded.

"None the worse for yesterday, then, Wrayson?" said Talbot.

"Not a bit, though I did go down with a thwack when you tumbled me over," replied Arnold, smiling.

"I don't think we need wait for anyone else," said Tom Merry. "Both Houses and both Forms are well represented. What's the message, Wrayson?"

Now the St. Jim's fellows had cleared to the sides of the study, leaving Tom Merry on one side of the table facing the Grammar School herald on the other.

There was no sign of nervousness about Arnold. He spoke out clearly and strongly.

"It's this," he said. "You licked us yesterday. We admit that. But that doesn't finish it. You took our flag, and we mean to have it back, though we have to come over the walls to fetch it! That's all."

There was a curious little hum among those who heard—something with a note of applause in it. They liked the way Arnold had spoken. They liked the speaker. Blake was not the only one there who felt that the wrong Wrayson had come to St. Jim's, though not yet were they to learn that twice Blake had spoken like one who knew the truth.

"That's good!" said Tom Merry. "My compliments to Gay—no; the compliments of the Shell and the Fourth of St. Jim's to all your fellows—and we shall be pleased to

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meet you again any time. Let us know when you think of coming to fetch the flag away, and we'll give you a fair chance—and see that you jolly well don't get it!"

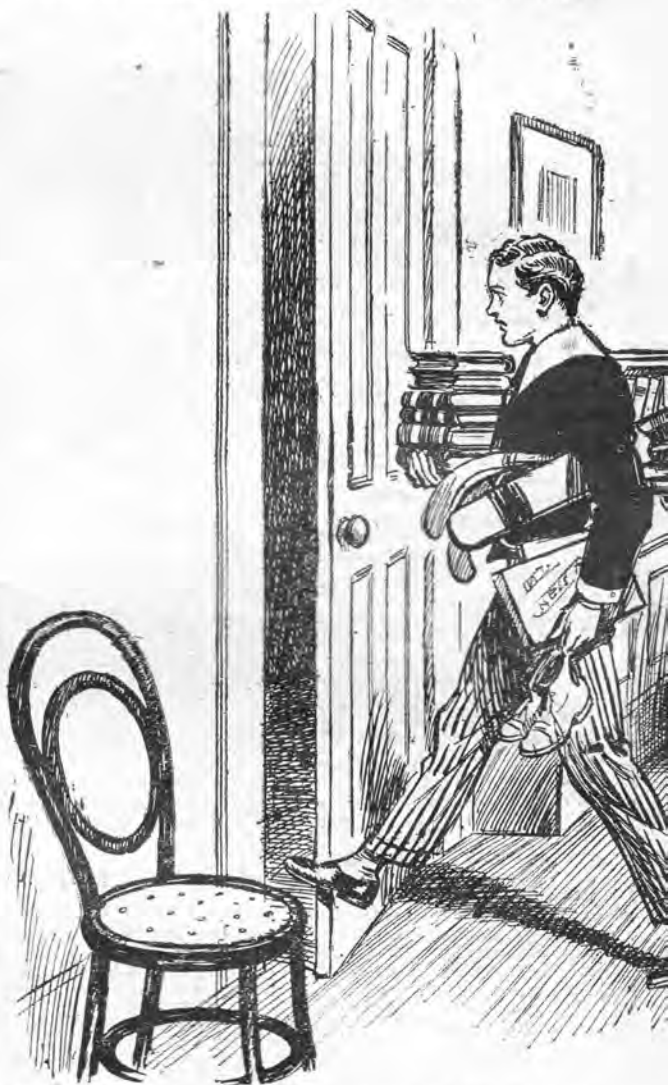
"Hear, hear, Tommy!" cried Lowther.

The small crowd began to melt away. But not one of them left without a friendly nod to Arnold.

Arthur Augustus hung back behind the rest. He felt that there was a question which should be put to Arnold Wrayson; and as circumstances made it rather a delicate question he considered himself the most fitting person to ask it.

"Wrayson, deah boy," he said, "now that you are heah you might like to see your bwothah?"

Lowther nudged the swell of St. Jim's with his elbow.



Manners hissed into his ear, "Silly ass!" Both Lowther and Manners felt that it was hardly the thing even to remind this fellow of his brother's existence.

Arnold had not seen the nudge, and he did not catch Manners' words. But he had no desire to see Claude. His mission successfully accomplished, he wanted to get away—before Cardew saw him.

"Thanks, but I won't stop for that!" he said. "They will be expecting me back, you know. I say, you fellows have been jolly decent to me!"

He felt that he could not go without saying that. And those who heard it understood. They would have been decent to anyone in his place, of course. But they had treated him with rather special friendliness, and they were glad it had pleased him.

Arthur Augustus escorted him to the gates. But for that Cardew might have missed seeing Arnold, for the Grammar School junior would have been gone sooner but for the fact that his escort showed a desire to keep him, pointing out various things of interest as they went.

By the time they parted at the gates, Cardew was on his way downstairs.

Out of the corner of an eye Arnold saw him emerge from the School House.

Hurriedly he shook hands with Arthur Augustus, who elevated his monocle in surprise next moment.

"Bai Jove!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's. "Wayson is in wathah a huwwy!"

Arthur Augustus still stood watching the herald legging it as hard as he could down the lane, when Cardew pushed his bike past, taking no notice of him, swung into the saddle, and drove hard at the pedals.

There was nothing within the knowledge of Arthur Augustus to connect those two. But it occurred to him that

that he might meet Cardew again, and that they might become friends. Cardew's courage on that day when he had so nearly drowned had made a big impression upon Arnold. The rescuer had fully as much admiration for the rescued as the rescued had for him.

But Claude had spoiled all that, as he seemed to spoil everything. For now Cardew believed that Claude was the fellow who had saved his life; and Arnold was determined that he should not learn the truth, yet hated the thought of lying to him.

Cardew was not as cool as usual. He could hardly justify to himself what he was doing.

Suspicious were working in him. But they had not yet taken definite form.

"Look here, I'm a sort of pal of your brother's," he began awkwardly.

"A sort of pal—I see," returned Arnold.

And there was that in his tone which irritated Cardew, seeming to imply that he was not exactly a real pal.

But Arnold was thinking bitterly that Claude was the kind of fellow who was more likely to have "a sort of pal" than a real chum.

Claude had bragged to his brother of the high esteem in which Cardew held him. Arnold had not believed him. If Cardew was at all the sort he had always reckoned him to be, he could not long continue to have any liking for Claude.

But according to Claude, this pal of his was a gambler and a smoker. And somehow Arnold did not think Claude had lied about that.

"What do you mean?" snapped Cardew.

"I only repeated your words. You can't very well object to that," answered Arnold.

His eyes were just like his brother's in colouring, a darkish hazel. But there was something very different in the manner in which they met another's eyes. Claude could not long endure any direct gaze. Arnold had never had cause to be ashamed to look anyone in the face.

"It's only natural that I should," said Cardew, almost as though he were apologising. "You know well enough that he saved my life."

Arnold did not answer. He would not give his brother away, and he would not lie.

"You know that," persisted Cardew, growing more and more nettled. "You saw him do it!"

Still no answer.

"Didn't you? Dash it all, Wrayson, you might be civil!"

"I was there," answered Arnold.

He spoke the words with an effort, and his face had grown pale. He loathed this. Claude's wrongdoing had given him many bad times, but hardly ever a worse time than this.

"I didn't see you. I only saw your brother and that cousin of yours—chap with fair hair—fairer hair than yours or your brother's, anyway."

So that was the lie Claude had told.

Cardew was getting warm. Arnold saw that, and was the more resolved not to divulge the truth. Claude had made things pretty bad for himself at St. Jim's, anyway.

If it came to be known there that he had accepted credit for saving Cardew's life when he had never as much as stretched out a hand to help, it would be just about all up with him!

Every decent fellow would despise him utterly. Thus far he had not, to Arnold's knowledge, been guilty of anything as black as some of his deeds elsewhere. He was unpopular; he had faked. So much Arnold knew. Probably his card-playing was known to Tom Merry and the rest, and counted against him. But all these were minor matters.

Arnold did not know that the supposed rescue of Cardew had been kept secret. He took it that St. Jim's had heard of it, and considered that in the eyes of St. Jim's it should be something to set against the offences of Claude.

Cardew saw Arnold's face change at the mention of the cousin. If he had been his usual cool self he would have read more in that change than he did.

As it was, he was irritated by Arnold's obstinacy. Confound the fellow, why should he take this attitude? No doubt his brother had hinted to him that Cardew was of his own type. But Ralph Reckness Cardew was not going to be judged and condemned by young Wrayson of the Grammar School!

"That cousin of yours—he's dead, isn't he?"

Another of Claude's lies! Was there ever to be an end to his weaving of the web of deceit?

"Dead, isn't he?" repeated Cardew, furious now at the silence of the fellow who faced him with those clear, honest eyes.

"I've nothing to say about him."

"Or about anythin', apparently. But why? You might tell me that, Wrayson!"

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Sidney Clive stared at his chum as Ralph Reckness Cardew moved to the door, a pile of his belongings in his arms. "Where are you going?" he demanded bluntly. "I'm clearing out!" Cardew opened the door with his foot as he spoke and left the study. (See Chapter 8.)



Cardew seemed to be in chase of Wrayson, and his noble brow was wrinkled in thought.

Arnold glanced round when he was a hundred yards or so down the lane. Cardew was almost upon him. To run was useless, and he halted.

CHAPTER 7.

Something To Be Sorry For!

CARDEW jumped from his bike.

"I want a word or two with you, Wrayson!" he said.

"So it seems," returned Arnold. "But I don't quite see why you should chase me like this. And I'm not at all sure that I want any talk with you."

He gave a queer smile as he thought of the difference between this and the meeting with Cardew of which he had often dreamed—waking dreams, they were.

Until the last week or two he had always nursed a hope

But nothing could be told unless all was told. And now Arnold was as angry as Cardew.

"You're right! I've nothing to say to you, Cardew. Isn't that enough for you?"

"By gad, no!"

Arnold turned away. Next moment Cardew caught him by the shoulder. Two pairs of angry eyes blazed into one another.

"Take your hand off me!"

"When you're ready to behave civilly!"

Arnold's arm shot up as he swung away from Cardew's grip, and his elbow smote Cardew in the face.

It was an unintentional blow, but Arnold would not have apologised even had time been given him to do so.

But there was no time for that. Cardew's fist shot out.

In a second the punch was returned. In five seconds they were hard at it, both furious.

This was something very different from Arnold's bout with Gordon Gay. Gloves had been used there, and there was no bitter feeling on either side. Moreover, the Grammar School leader had been overweight for the new boy, whom he had no desire to hurt more than was needful.

But Cardew and Arnold were a pretty even match, and each of them was doing his level best to damage his opponent.

Arnold got home on Cardew's nose, and Cardew landed a nasty one just under Arnold's right ear. The Grammarian staggered Cardew with a jolt to the chin, and Cardew, recovering quickly, got home both fists on his opponent's chest.

Backwards and forwards in the lane they went, with no advantage that lasted more than a second or two to either.

There had been rain in the night, and the surface of the road was greasy. Once Cardew all but slipped down, and if Arnold had struck then he might have gone down hard. But in the very act of punching the Grammarian drew back his arm, and the St. Jim's junior recovered his footing.

"My hat! Look there! Cardew fighting with Wrayson!" exclaimed Levison, as he and Clive rounded a bend of the lane on their bikes.

They pedalled faster.

Cardew's back was to them, and Arnold did not see their approach, being too busily engaged.

He had slipped, and Cardew had done as he had—held his hand. But as he recovered his footing Cardew punched again, and Arnold sprawled backwards, stumbling over Cardew's bike, which had been dropped to the grass by its owner.

His head struck something as he fell, and he lay still, with a thin stream of blood oozing from his hidden right temple upon the grass.

"My hat! You've done it now, Cardew!" exclaimed Levison, jumping from his bike.

But it did not need his words to make Cardew sorry and ashamed. The sight of the oozing blood had killed his anger on the instant.

The blame was his. He had forced the quarrel upon Wrayson.

And for what?

He put his hand to his head. It was as though his brain refused to work properly.

What folly had made him imagine that he could do any good by questioning Wrayson?

The burden he had to bear was getting badly on his nerves. But that was not sufficient excuse. It was not this fellow's fault that his brother should be a rank outsider.

Clive and Levison were attending to Arnold. His temple had struck a sharp-edged stone, which accounted for the blood. But it seemed that it was the shock of the fall which had caused him to lose consciousness, for the injury to the temple was too slight to account for that. It was not a great deal more than a scratch, though the blood made it seem worse than it really was.

Arnold breathed heavily, and his eyes opened.

"It's all right!" he said.

But he was not very steady on his legs when they helped him up.

"I'm sorry, Wrayson!" said Cardew.

And he meant it.

To ignore an apology was not like Arnold Wrayson. But Cardew had tried his temper badly. He did not feel that he could answer.

"I'll be getting on," was all he said.

Clive and Levison looked at one another. There was a question in Clive's eyes. Levison answered it by a nod.

"I'll go along with you if you like," said Clive.

"Thanks. I'd be glad," answered Arnold.

He was not at all sure he could get back alone. His head buzzed, and his knees were like water under him.

"You'll take my bike, Ernest?" Clive said.

Again Levison nodded, and Arnold and the South

African junior moved away together, with Clive holding the other fellow's arm.

Levison picked up the two machines, and started to wheel them towards St. Jim's. He seemed to have no word to say to Cardew.

But Cardew ranged up alongside him.

"See here, Levison. I know you think I've behaved like a rotter!" he said. "But you don't know everything."

"I know enough," replied Levison curtly.

"Practically you know nothing."

"Oh, don't I, then? I know that you've chosen to make a pal of one of the worst sweeps that have ever disgraced the school. I know that you picked a quarrel with his brother, who seems to be worth a few hundred of his sort. I don't know why. I'm not sure that I want to. But, anyway, you won't tell me, so that's no odds!"

"I can't explain. It isn't my secret," said Cardew, strangely subdued.

He was ashamed of what he had done; and the fact that the fellows who had come up were the two for whom he cared more than all the rest at St. Jim's added to his sense of shame.

"If it's Wrayson's I don't want to hear anything about it—not even that there is a secret," Levison said. "It would hardly be anything creditable, if he's in it."

"Can't you trust me, old fellow?"

Levison stared. There was a look of appeal in Cardew's face such as he had never seen there before.

Sheer misery had melted Cardew's pride. His bewilderment contributed to his misery. He seemed to be groping blindly for the clue to a puzzle, and to find himself continually eluded.

The keen wits of Ernest Levison might have helped him—if only he could have told Levison. But until he was released from his promise to Wrayson he could not tell; and now he felt far less sure that to get that release would be easy, for now he knew that Wrayson had something to hide.

Perhaps he ought to have guessed what it was Wrayson hid, especially after having seen and talked with Arnold. But as yet he did not guess.

Levison hardened his heart.

"I could trust you, if it was only you," he said. "But it's all mixed up with that cad Wrayson, and I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him! And this affair doesn't make things any better. A heap worse, I should say. You've got something to be sorry for now, Cardew. That Grammar School fellow is decent in every way! I can't help being sure of that, somehow. But you make a pal of his rotter of a brother, and then go and quarrel with him—on the other chap's account, I suppose. You needn't ask me to trust you after that!"

Cardew squared his shoulders, and summoned up his pride. He had enough and to spare of that for most occasions. It had failed him for a minute or two; but Levison's unrelenting attitude stiffened it again.

"All right!" he said. "I'll clear out of the study if I can; but I don't know who's likely to be willing to take me in. We've been good chums—you and I and Clive, Levison. He stands by you, of course, and no doubt he's right. But I'd like both him and you to understand that—that—oh, you know what I mean! It's no use sayin' it."

Levison did know, and his heart smote him. Cardew meant that for him the old bond still held the three chums together, though they two might count it broken.

Cardew quickened his pace and went ahead.

A moment Levison hesitated. Then he called after him: "If there's anything that's puzzling you about Wrayson, Cardew, take my tip, and find out what Baggy knows. I've noticed a thing or two; and I'm jolly sure the fat rotter knows something!"

Cardew did not answer. But that hint stuck in his mind.

CHAPTER 8.

Cardew Changes His Quarters.

"WHAT are you after, Cardew?"

Sidney Clive stared at his chum as he asked that question. He was getting tea in Study No. 9, while Levison stood moodily before the window.

Both had been playing for the Fourth against the Shell that afternoon, and Levison had given the worst display of cricket that had been seen from him since he had taken to the game seriously. He could do nothing right; and on that form his place in the junior eleven looked to be in jeopardy.

Clive seemed at a loss for words. Levison had told him what Cardew had said; but somehow the notion of No. 9 without Cardew had been an impossible one to Clive.

Levison looked up.

Cardew was getting together his belongings. Some of them, that is—his desk and his books, his bats and boots. He had no idea of removing the furniture that his money had bought, though that meant most of what was in the study beyond the absolutely necessary.

"What do you mean?" asked Clive at last.

"Only that I'm clearin' out."

"Where are you going?" Clive inquired bluntly.

"In other words, who can possibly have taken pity on me, eh? I'm not tellin' you. You'll know soon enough."

"Hold on, you silly fathead! Tell him we don't want him to go, Ernest!"

Clive's voice was full of trouble.

"There's no need for you to clear out, Cardew," said Levison.

"That's where our opinions differ, dear man."

And, so speaking, Cardew pulled the door open with his foot, and went out with a pile of things in his arms.

Levison sat still. But Clive, whose affections were far stronger than his pride, went to the door.

"Hanged if he isn't going to dig in with Baggy and Mellish and that chap Wrayson!" he said, in a tragic whisper.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"What else did you expect?" he asked. "He's made it plain that Wrayson matters more to him than we do. Let him go!"

"I'd stop him if I could. I don't like this, Ernest!"

Levison liked it as little as his chum. But he had spoken his last word of protest.

Which of the three was the most miserable it would be hard to say. Clive showed it most. Cardew had put on a mask of cheerfulness, and Levison one of indifference. But to Sidney Clive no mask was possible.

Cardew's proposition to move into No. 2 had been received in different ways by the three sharers of that study.

"There's not much room to spare. But if you really want to come I'm not kicking," said Mellish.

"Glad to have you," said Wrayson, though he hardly sounded glad.

"Oh, good egg!" exclaimed Baggy, with enthusiasm. "You're just the fellow we want here, Cardew, old chap!"

Baggy was thinking of Cardew's plentiful supply of cash. Study No. 2 was likely to be a land flowing with milk and honey when once the slacker of the Fourth had moved in. Wrayson was a trifle suspicious. He had something to hide, and felt that another in the study—especially when that other was the fellow from whom, more than anyone else, it must be hidden—would be a danger to him. Mellish, in his calculating way, had weighed the advantage of what Cardew might contribute against the disadvantage of Cardew's certain assumption of first place there, and could see little in it.

Before prep. was over all the Fourth and Shell knew that Cardew had deserted his old chums, and had gone to join the trio whom their Form held in lower esteem than anyone else in it.

All knew that Cardew had not been getting on too well with Levison and Clive of late. In spite of that surprise was general. And no one was pleased.

Some felt genuinely sorry. Among these was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. And, as Cardew's kinsman and a fellow of weight in the Form, Arthur Augustus conceived it his bounden duty to speak to Cardew about it.

He told his chums so.

"Better save your breath," said Blake bluntly. "You were puffing like a giddy grampus during the match to-day. It all comes from your eternal gassing."

"I uttably deny—"

"Don't ask us to be sorry for you if you come back with a thick ear, that's all," broke in Digby.

"I wathah fancy—"

"You always do," said Herries. "You fancy yourself no end. You'd advise Railton and the Head if they'd let you. I'd try them, if I were you. You'd get about as much change out of them as out of Cardew!"

"I shall do my duty!" said Arthur Augustus loftily.

"Cut along and do it, then!" snapped Blake.

"We'll attend the inquest, and subscribe towards a wreath," added Digby.

The swell of St. Jim's did not "cut along"—that would have been undignified. But he walked out of No. 6 with his chin up, and promenaded the passage for five minutes or so in the hope of meeting Cardew.

At the end of that brief period his hope was realised. Cardew's face might have warned him against butting in. The mask was off. Ralph Reckness Cardew looked as thoroughly gloomy as he felt.

A couple of hours in Study No. 2 had made him wonder how he was ever going to endure his life there. He did not

know which of the three with whom he had cast in his lot he barred most, though on the whole he fancied he barred Mellish least. His manners were at worst superior to Baggy's, and his temper was far better than Wrayson's.

"Cardew, deah boy!"

"Well?"

"Bai Jove, you needn't snap at me in that mannah! I only intend speakin' to you for your own good."

"You needn't!"

"But I feel it my duty to speak. We are relatives—"

"I can't help that. Don't remind me of my mis-

fortunes!"

"Weally, Cardew, you are not vewy polite."

"I don't feel like bein' polite. Will you dry up an' leave me alone?"

"I will not! I speak out of fwendship, Cardew. I am vewy sowwy to heah that you have left Numbah 9 to—"

"That's my affair," broke in Cardew. "I'm not prepared to argue the matter with you."

He would have brushed past. But Arthur Augustus gripped him by the sleeve.

"Leave go!" he said, in a voice that might have warned the swell of St. Jim's of danger.

But in the pursuit of his duty Arthur Augustus was heedless of danger.

(Continued on next page.)

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"I insist upon sayin'—"

"If you don't leave go I'll make you!"

But the blood of the D'Arcys was up. Arthur Augustus would not leave go.

"I'll give you one more chance! I don't want to have to hurt you; but I'm dashed if I'm goin' to stand your pokin' your nose into my affairs. Leave go, I tell you!"

"I wefuse, Cardew, I weally must speak my mind!"

"Rats! You haven't a mind to speak, you idiot! Leave go!"

But still D'Arcy held on.

Forced to take action, Cardew gripped him, thrust a leg out behind him, and threw him heavily.

Bump!

"Ow! Yooooop!"

Taken completely by surprise, Arthur Augustus let out a howl. Had Cardew merely punched he would have punched back. But this wrestling trick was utterly unexpected.

Several doors opened at once at the sound of Gussy's voice raised in anguish, among them those of No. 6 and No. 9.

"Serve you right, Gussy!" said Herries.

Blake and Digby did not echo him. They were not by any means sure that it did serve Arthur Augustus right. He had meant nothing but kindness, and it seemed to them that Cardew might have choked him off without being quite so rough.

And Cardew himself was not sure, either. He was sorry now for what he had done.

But he would not say so.

"Come in, Clive!" said Levison. "He's gone for Gussy now. His temper's getting too jolly thick for anything."

Clive came in, and the door of No. 9 closed. Cardew gave no sign that he had seen those two. But he had, and the closing of the door increased the dull misery he felt now that his rage had passed.

"Well, you know, Ernest, Gussy is a bit trying when he starts butting in," said Clive, always ready to make what excuse he might for anyone.

But Levison did not answer that.

Blake and Digby helped Arthur Augustus up. The fall had shaken him rather badly.

The three passed into Study No. 6. Herries remained.

"You're a cad, Cardew!" snapped Herries.

Cardew opened his eyes widely. He had not expected this from Herries.

"I understood you to say that it served him right," he answered coolly.

"So it does, for being such an ass as to think he could do any good by telling you you're an ass—see? But he meant well, and, hang it all, I've a jolly good mind to punch your head!"

"Punch away!" said Cardew off-handedly.

"If I don't, I suppose you'll think I funk you?"

"No; only that you consider me too low a cad to be worth it!"

And as it was evident that Herries did not mean to put his threat into execution—though it was not funk that held him back—Cardew passed on.

"Can't make him out!" muttered Herries, looking after him until he rounded the corner of the passage. "This isn't his real form! Comes of getting mixed up with a fellow like Wrayson, I reckon!"

Ten minutes later Cardew, returning to his new study, was just in time to see a curious little bit of pantomime on the part of Baggy Trimble.

Mellish sat opposite Wrayson, while Baggy was behind the new fellow.

Baggy made a motion as though pouring something into his right hand. Then he passed the hand over Wrayson's head, not touching it, but with a motion as of rubbing something into the hair.

Mellish grinned. Then he caught sight of Cardew at the door, and at once his grin changed to a frown.

Baggy glanced round, and gave a gasp. Cardew saw his fat face go the sickly yellow that told he was scared.

Wrayson remained quite unconscious of anything happening.

Cardew said nothing. But his thoughts went back at once to that hint of Levison's.

"Levison was an astute fellow. There was the making of a detective in him. He noticed things that few others did."

And at such a time he would not have spoken without a serious motive.

In clearing out of Study No. 9, Cardew had thought of little but relieving Levison and Clive of his unwelcome presence. But now he began to think that there might be a chance of discovering something in Study No. 2.

Long after everyone else in the Fourth Form dormitory was asleep he lay thinking hard.

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What had Levison meant?

After all, what could Baggy Trimble know of Wrayson that was worse than Cardew already knew?

Nothing, surely, that could help to take from Cardew's shoulders this intolerable burden of gratitude to a thorough-paced young scoundrel!

A sudden thought flashed into Cardew's mind, and he sat up in bed.

The fair Wrayson—what of him?

What had that pantomimic action of Baggy's meant?

Stuff poured from a bottle, rubbed on one's hair—dye!

Suppose—only suppose—that this was the fair fellow and that the Grammar School Wrayson was the real rescuer?

But that supposition involved all sorts of difficulties.

Why should the fellow dye his hair? It could not have been to deceive Cardew. Even if he had known that Cardew was at St. Jim's, the fact that his brother was at the Grammar School would surely have been enough to convince him that the dodge would not work for long.

Besides, what could he have hoped to get out of it?

The other Wrayson? But when Cardew came to think it over his refusal to say anything did not seem so strange.

He was straight. There could be no doubt about that.

If he were the real rescuer there was a good reason for his silence. He simply would not give his brother away, though he knew him to be a liar and worse.

And Cardew, who had stood by Claude Wrayson while also knowing that, could not blame him.

Cardew could not see through the mystery yet, but he had a queer feeling that his heavy burden was somehow lightened.

He lay down, turned over on his side, and slept at once.

He was far more like himself next morning. He did not speak to Clive or Levison. But he said "Mornin'!" to D'Arcy, and Arthur Augustus, always generous, accepted the curt greeting as some sort of apology, and replied to him genially.

During classes he thought hard. Mr. Lathom did not suspect him of inattention to work. His eyes were cast down all the time. But actually he read no word of the printed pages that should have occupied him.

He was not going to bribe Baggy to tell what he knew. Against that resource his pride revolted. If Baggy had a secret of Wrayson's, he was not keeping his fat mouth shut for nothing, and it would be like bidding in competition with Wrayson.

Mellish must be in it as well as Baggy. Perhaps that was why Mellish had not been keen on his coming into the study.

If those three got at loggerheads the secret might come out, and Cardew thought it ought not to be beyond his wits to find a way of getting them at loggerheads.

CHAPTER 9.

When Thieves Fall Out!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had made up his mind to stand by Cardew.

"Aftah all," he told his chums in Study No. 6, "the fellow is a wative, an' he is not weally a bad fellow at all! In his twue form he is quite decent! Yaas, wathah!"

"But we haven't seen much of his true form lately!" remarked Blake.

"You didn't feel that you loved him much when he put you on your back in the passage, did you, Gussy?" inquired Herries.

The swell of St. Jim's reddened.

"I cannot see that there is any need whatever to wifer to that, Hewwies!" he said. "Cardew lost his tempah. If I can ovahlook it I fail to see that it is any biznay of yours!"

He was prepared to argue the question further. But no one seemed disposed to argue with him. Herries only growled, and Blake and Digby said nothing.

They said nothing till D'Arcy had left the study. Then Digby spoke.

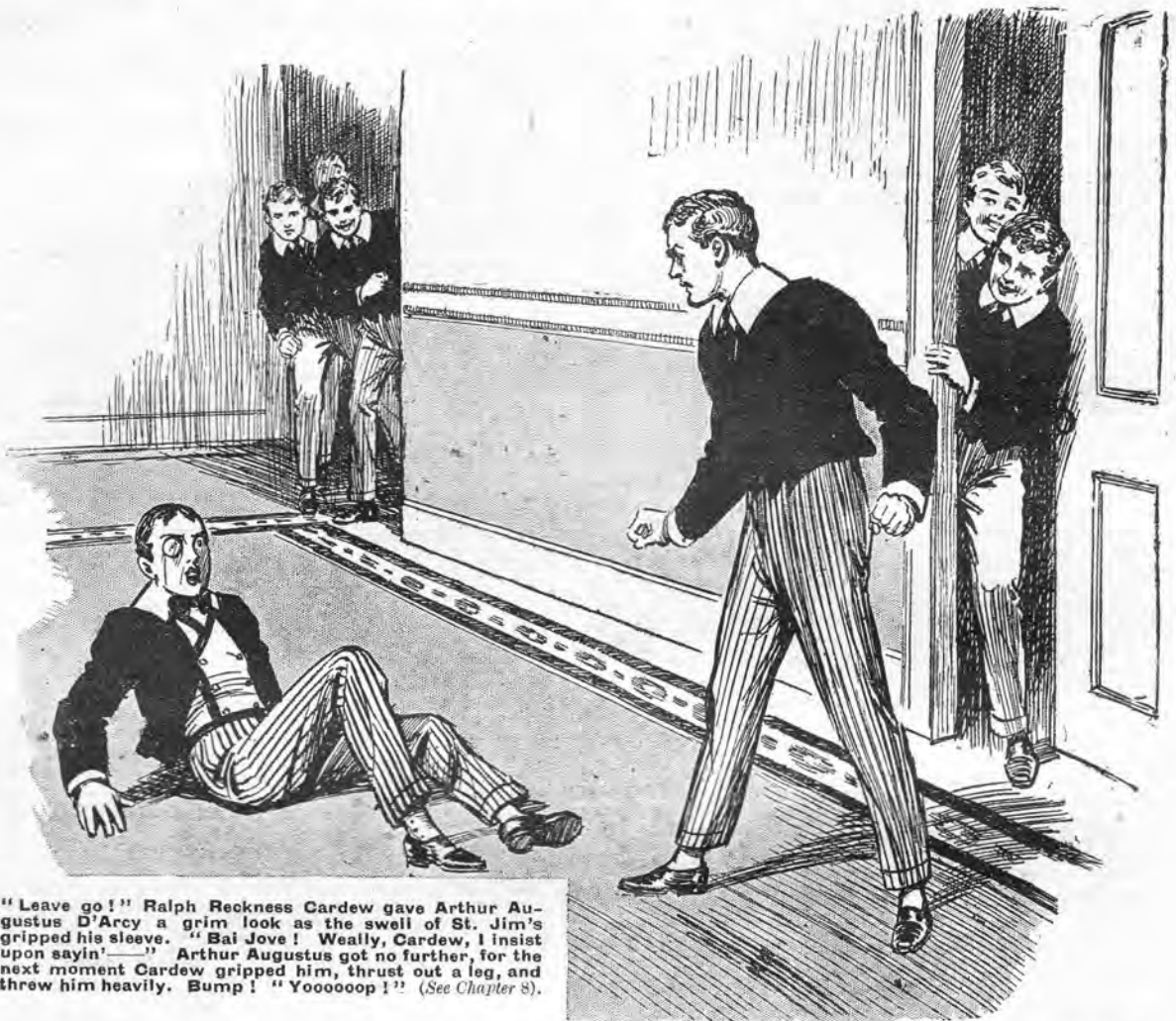
"Might as well leave him alone, Herries. He's quite right, you know. Cardew really isn't a bad chap. He seems to be getting a pretty thin time of it lately since he got mixed up with that boulder Wrayson. If it's any comfort to him to have Gussy's company we can spare it."

"Easily!" growled Herries.

Blake grinned.

"What's biting you?" Digby asked.

"I was wondering whether Cardew might so far unbend as to ask Gussy to tea in Study No. 2. It would be rather a lark, you know. He can't stand Mellish, and he bars Wrayson like fury; and when Baggy gets chummy, and calls him 'Gussy, old pal!' and all that sort of thing—oh, my hat!"



"Leave go!" Ralph Reckness Cardew gave Arthur Augustus D'Arcy a grim look as the swell of St. Jim's gripped his sleeve. "Bai Jove! Weally, Cardew, I insist upon sayin'——" Arthur Augustus got no further, for the next moment Cardew gripped him, thrust out a leg, and threw him heavily. Bump! "Yoooooop!" (See Chapter 8).

"Cardew won't ask him to tea," Herries said. "He'll get no change out of Cardew. And Gussy's such a good little ass—it seems a bit of a shame, I reckon!"

But Cardew behaved better than Herries gave him credit for being likely to behave.

When Cardew had shifted from Study No. 9 he had not been blind to the fact that he was deliberately cutting himself off from all that was best in his life at St. Jim's.

Nothing could compensate him for the loss of those two good chums.

But he had hardly guessed how he would miss them—how utterly miserable he would find himself without them.

Cardew appreciated being alone at times. He had enjoyed having Study No. 9 to himself for an hour or two, knowing that at the end of the period Clive and Levison would come in with cheery greetings, accusing him of being a slacker very likely, but ragging him all in the way of comradeship.

In Study No. 2 he was never alone. Mellish, Baggy, and Wrayson were all of the sort who frowst whenever they have the chance.

One of them would have been one too many for Cardew. Three were really more than he could endure.

For all his tendency to be a bit of a slacker, Cardew had no fear of the open air. He spent more time out of doors just then than he had done for a long time.

A drizzly rain was falling as he passed out of the gates between classes and dinner one morning, though it was not enough to stop walking.

Suddenly he found Arthur Augustus ranging alongside him.

"Goin' for a walk, Cardew?" inquired D'Arcy.

"That's the idea. Any objection?"

"Not in the vewy least. I should be pleased to go with you if you care for my company."

A refusal rose on Cardew's lips, but it was not spoken.

He felt that he owed the swell of St. Jim's something.

Arthur Augustus had been more than decent about his outbreak of temper.

Moreover, he fairly yearned for different society. Those three with whom he had cast in his lot were so mean and paltry. He and they had nothing in common.

"Come along!" he said. "That is, if you're sure you won't melt, an' think you can stand me for an hour or so. I dare say I may find your harmless prattle amusin', as long as you keep off my affairs."

At another time D'Arcy would have resented hotly having his conversation described as "harmless prattle." He did not like it now, but he said nothing.

And they got along together far better than either had expected. Cardew said little, and never once started a subject. But he listened, and put in a word now and then. And, by a great effort, Arthur Augustus refrained from saying a word about Wrayson or the move from Study No. 9.

When they parted Cardew had a queer feeling that the companionship of D'Arcy had done him good. Then he laughed at himself, for he realised that that was just precisely what Arthur Augustus had intended.

But there was nothing in the least malicious in Cardew's laugh, though there may have been a little gentle malice in the move he made a few hours later.

He looked in at No. 6. All four were there, for by this time the drizzle of the morning had become pouring rain.

All four gave him friendly enough nods.

"I looked in to ask if you'd care to come to tea in my study, D'Arcy," he said.

Arthur Augustus rose to the occasion.

"With pleasuah, deah boy!" he replied, though it was not quite true.

"Come, too, Blake?" Cardew asked, a mischievous gleam in his eyes.

"No, thanks. I can't stand Mellish."

"Digby?"

"Rather not, if you don't mind, Cardew. Wrayson and I have never been really on speaking terms."

"Herries?"

"I can't stand Mellish, or Wrayson, or Baggy. But I'll come if you want me. See here, I called you a cad the other day, Cardew. I'm sorry, and I take it back."

Cardew did not really want Herries, and was quite surprised that he should agree to come. But he appreciated the apology, though he only answered it with a smile.

No. 2 was close and stuffy. Cardew was the only one of the four sharing it who cared for fresh air.

Mellish was playing a game of patience. Wrayson sat sprawled out reading a book. Trimble, in the armchair, had almost dozed off; but he opened his eyes when Cardew and his guests came in.

"D'Arcy an' Herries have been good enough to accept my invitation to tea," said Cardew.

"There's nothing worth speaking of in the cupboard," said Mellish.

"That," answered Cardew, "is easily amended. Baggy!" Baggy was alert on the instant. Baggy beamed. He did not mind who was asked to tea if only it meant a spread.

Cardew handed over to him a pound note.

"Lay that out to the best advantage at the tuckshop, will you?" he said.

Baggy hastened away, still beaming.

But Mellish looked sour, and there was a black look on Wrayson's face.

Mellish thought that Cardew was taking too much on himself. Wrayson was full of suspicion. He had grown of late to suspect everything and everybody. He was like the dweller on the slope of an active volcano, who never knows when an eruption may take place.

Neither Mellish nor Wrayson took part in the conversation which followed.

But for Arthur Augustus that conversation would have languished badly. But when the swell of St. Jim's was given the run of his tongue, he could rattle on until further orders.

Even he, however, was giving signs of drying up when Baggy came back well laden.

At the sight of what he had brought Mellish and Herries looked more cheerful. But Wrayson was as sour as ever.

In most matters Baggy Trimble was not a reliable individual. But he could be trusted to choose good grub. For what Baggy liked was very much what other people liked. The main difference was that Baggy liked a lot more of it.

He handed over no change. He had spent every penny of the pound note. But there was good value for the money.

All six drew chairs to the table. Mellish, though he did it as though under protest, had made tea. He had found out that it was no use expecting Cardew to do it, for the slacker of the Fourth had always been content to leave that job to Sidney Clive.

They got on with it. But even now the party was not really cheerful.

Such talk as there was, Cardew and Herries and D'Arcy made, and Arthur Augustus made most of it.

Baggy was too busy to chat, and Wrayson and Mellish, while not too sulky to eat, were too sulky to be agreeable.

A good supply of Dame Taggles' steak-and-kidney pies was included in what Baggy had brought over. To these the three silent members of the party were still devoting themselves, while the other three had shifted to the less solid of the provender.

One pie was left. Trimble's greedy eyes were upon it. He quickly bolted all that remained on his plate, and stretched out his hand to grab it.

At the same moment both Wrayson and Mellish extended their hands.

Each felt that he had a better right to that pie than Baggy. Baggy had already had four pies, while they had disposed of only two each.

All three grabbed, and held on. But, because each wanted the whole pie, they did not tug, in case of accidents.

"Weally, deah boys!" protested Arthur Augustus.

There was no excessive formality at a spread in No. 6. But no one there would have behaved like this.

"Shut up!" snarled Wrayson. "It's no affair of yours."

Herries and Cardew grinned. Arthur Augustus might be shocked. They were not.

Baggy raised his left hand, still gripping the pie with his right, and rubbed it over the top of his head, his beady little eyes fixed threateningly on Wrayson.

"Yoop! Whose shins are you kicking, Mellish?" yelled Baggy next moment.

Herries and D'Arcy were hopelessly in the dark. But Cardew understood in a flash what the fat Fourth-Former's actions meant.

Baggy was using something he knew about Wrayson to force him to give way. Mellish knew of it, too, but did not approve of this use of it. As a blackmailer, Percy Mellish was far more efficient than Baggy Trimble, for Mellish had

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too much craft to use his knowledge in so slight a matter as this.

Mellish let go, but Wrayson still held on.

Baggy tugged; and the pie broke. A small portion of it remained in his hand. Wrayson had come off best in that tug-of-war.

Next moment the fragment which Baggy held smote Wrayson between the eyes, plastering his face with pastry.

Crash! Clatter! Crash!

The table was swept clear as Wrayson lunged at Trimble across it.

One of his half-mad fits of fury had seized him, and he made a jump for Baggy, his eyes blazing.

"Stand aside, and leave them to it!" grinned Herries.

There was no difficulty in getting either Mellish or Cardew to accept that advice. But Cardew had to hold back Arthur Augustus.

"Welease me, Cardew!" exclaimed the swell of St. Jim's.

"That wottah will damage Twimble severely!"

"Not likely!" said Herries. "Go it, ye cripples!"

Amid the wreck of the spread Wrayson and Baggy pumelled each other ferociously. They had gone down together in Wrayson's first rush. Now they rolled over one another on the floor.

Cream puffs and jam tarts clung lovingly to their faces and their garments. They wallowed and struggled amid several shillingworth of good provender.

For the moment Baggy was uppermost. But he could not stay there.

"Yarooogh!" he howled, as Wrayson brought up his knee, catching him full in the extensive region of his waistcoat.

Next moment Wrayson was on top, one knee planted upon Baggy's stomach. With both fists Wrayson rained a shower of blows upon the fat junior's face.

"Yoop! Ouch! Ow!" howled Baggy.

Cardew and Herries both thought it was about time to intervene. Arthur Augustus was sure it was.

The swell of St. Jim's jerked himself free and snatched up the kettle. Fortunately, it was not boiling, or anywhere near boiling. But even that possibility might not have deterred Arthur Augustus at that moment, for he was red-hot with indignation.

He tilted the kettle, and its contents shot over Wrayson's head in a stream.

Swoosh!

"Yoooooop!"

Some of the water reached Baggy, naturally. It did not scald him, yet Wrayson leaped up as though the deluge had been at boiling point.

The water trickled down his face. It left queer dark marks, as both Herries and Cardew saw. But while Cardew knew what those marks meant, Herries could not begin to guess.

Wrayson leaped like a tiger at D'Arcy, but two pairs of hands fastened upon him in a vicelike grip and held him back.

Baggy, groaning, rose to his feet. With one hand he caressed gingerly the lower part of his waistcoat, with the other he employed an exceedingly dingy handkerchief upon his face.

"You are an uttah wottah, W'ayson!" cried Arthur Augustus. He turned to Cardew and Herries. "You fellows may not think that I acted in a pwopah way, but I could not stand by an' see Twimble tweeked in that bwutal mannah!"

"Nobody's blaming you, fathead!" growled Herries. "You did the right thing for once. I say, Cardew, what are we to do with this murderous madman?"

"I don't think we need do anythin'," said Cardew. "He's finished now."

"Don't let him get at me again!" howled Baggy. "Don't you touch me again, Wrayson, or—"

Baggy broke off suddenly. Mellish had ranged alongside him, now that the danger was over, and had given him a warning nudge.

But it was too late for that warning. The blackmailers could keep their secret no longer.

Cardew knew.

As Wrayson stood glowering, wiping his face with a handkerchief that came away streaked with something dark, as well as with the debris of the fight, Cardew was convinced that this was not the fellow who had saved his life!

This was the fair Wrayson—the Wrayson who had stood by and done nothing!

Even now the whole mystery was not explained. But the rest of it was of minor importance compared to this one fact.

The burden was lifted.

Cardew owed a debt still, but he owed it to a decent fellow. It would not weigh upon him as it had weighed when he believed it owing to a fellow who was a cheat and a thief!

Herries and Arthur Augustus could not fathom why Cardew should suddenly become so cheerful. But Mellish



Claude Wrayson gave his companion a furtive glance as they tramped along the path in the woods. "Need we go any further?" he muttered. "If you've got anything against me, out with it!" "If!" returned Cardew contemptuously. "I know now that it was your brother, and not you, who saved my life!" (See Chapter 10.)

looked at him suspiciously, and then cast a glance of wrath in Baggy's direction.

For Mellish was certain Cardew had got on to something.

"Sorry, you fellows," said Cardew. "This hasn't been a very pleasant tea-party, I must admit. I'll try to make up for it another time."

"It wasn't your fault, old chap," said Herries.

"Wathah not!" agreed Arthur Augustus.

He and Herries cleared out. They could have eaten more, but what was left was not in an eatable condition. And, anyway, they had had a better tea than they could have had in Study No. 6.

When they had gone, Cardew stood looking at Wrayson as though he intended saying something to him. Wrayson tried to meet that look with defiance. But his eyes fell before the slacker of the Fourth's.

He slunk out, making for the bath-room. Cardew left the study almost on his heels, but did not follow him. His mind was not made up yet as to when and how he should tackle the swindler.

It would have been easy enough had only this fellow been concerned. But there was the other Wrayson, the good fellow who had made himself popular at the Grammar School—the fellow upon whom he had forced a quarrel. He must be considered.

CHAPTER 10.

Having It Out!

WHAT Ralph Reckness Cardew had thought to bring about by scheming had come about by accident.

He realised that he had Arthur Augustus to thank for it, in the second place. Levison in the first, for Levison had given him the hint that had gone far to open his eyes.

It was D'Arcy's generous acceptance of an invitation which he would far rather have refused which had brought about the unmasking of Wrayson. And it was D'Arcy who had used the kettle to such good effect.

At prep, Wrayson's hair looked the same as ever. But Cardew had purposely kept out of the study between

tea and prep, and Wrayson had had ample time to make use of the bottle of dye.

At prep the latest addition to the study said nothing to any of the other three. He kept his eyes on his book in a manner which would have given Mr. Lathom a pleasant surprise could he have seen it.

Mellish behaved as though nothing had happened. As far as Mellish was personally concerned, nothing had actually happened. If there was going to be trouble, Mellish proposed to remain outside it. That was his way.

And the manner of both Wrayson and Baggy showed that they expected trouble. It also showed that they were not prepared to meet it together.

Both stole sidelong looks at Cardew. But when they caught each other at this, both scowled.

Baggy had some hope. He fancied that Cardew might handle Wrayson without dragging him into it.

Wrayson had practically no hope. He was certain that Cardew had guessed the truth now. That lie about the fair cousin had been enough to cook his goose for him.

When prep was over Cardew rose, shut his book, and fixed his eyes upon Baggy Trimble.

"I want a word or two with you, Trimble," he said.

Mellish shot Baggy a warning glance. "Be careful!" it said, as plainly as words could have said it.

Wrayson kept his head sullenly lowered.

What did it matter how much Baggy told Cardew? Baggy could not tell him more than he already guessed. From the moment when Arthur Augustus had used the kettle, Wrayson knew that his imposture was at an end.

But he did not know yet how Cardew would take it.

Baggy, an uneasy expression on his fat face, followed Cardew out of the study.

Cardew led the way to the nearest bath-room.

"We can be alone here," he said, shooting the bolt.

"I— Oh, really, what do you want me for, Cardew?" spluttered Baggy.

"Because you're a fat lump of iniquity! Because you know that Wrayson's been playing a dashed deep game of his own, an' you've helped him to play it by keepin' dark!"

"I haven't done anything, Cardew—I swear I haven't! What do you mean about Wrayson?"

"Will you tell me you don't know that the rotter isn't really dark—that his hair is dyed?" snapped Cardew.

"Oh, I knew that! What's it matter? Chaps do dye their hair."

"Not for nothin'! Why has Wrayson dyed his?"

"Oh, really, Cardew, I don't know! How should I?"

This was no doubt true, though telling the truth was not much in Baggy's line.

Even Cardew, though he guessed much, was still puzzled about this aspect of the mystery. Wrayson could not have come to St. Jim's on purpose to meet him. Yet the dyeing did suggest that he was assuming his brother's place. Why?

That question could be left, however. There remained a minor matter.

"What's he paid you—an' Mellish, for I know Mellish is in it—to keep your mouths shut?" Cardew demanded.

"Look here, Cardew, I don't see why you should question me like this—" began Trimble, but the expression on Cardew's face stopped him. "Oh, well, he has stood treat now and then, you know."

"Nothin' in cash?"

Baggy shook his head. He perspired with fear, and his beady eyes goggled. Baggy always had the feeling that one never knew where one stood in dealing with Cardew, and that feeling made him less able to brazen out things.

"Think again! An' remember that I've still to hear Wrayson's side of the story. I don't know which of you is the worse liar. But I'm dashed sure you're lyin' now! Let's have the truth! How much?"

"Oh, well, he has made me a few small loans. I shall pay them back in due course."

"An' I suppose he's made Mellish a few small loans, too?"

"I believe Mellish has squeezed more out of him than I have!" said Baggy viciously.

Mellish need not expect to be shielded by him!

"Squeezed is the right word, I think," Cardew said. "You're a rotten blackmailer, Trimble, an' Mellish is another! But, apart from the fact that you've been battenin' on my money, I don't care a scrap about that. I won't even trouble to bring Mellish to account. But I'm goin' to have this out with Wrayson! You can clear off!"

He unbolted the door, and Baggy hurried out. Cardew was strongly tempted to speed him with his boot as he went, but resisted the temptation.

He did not return to the study. Instead, he looked in for half an hour or so at Study No. 6, where he surprised Blake and the rest by his geniality and high spirits.

"Cardew seems quite a different chap," said Herries, when he had gone.

Cardew was different. The burden was lifting!

But not yet could he see his way clearly. He had learned no more from Baggy than was already fairly evident since the warm water had made those dark streaks on Wrayson's face.

He had yet to deal with Wrayson. More than that, he had yet to put matters right with the other Wrayson. And about that there might be no little difficulty.

After classes next morning he spoke to Wrayson. He had made up his mind that there was no sort of sense in wasting time.

"I'm goin' to ask you to come out with me, Wrayson," he said quietly.

"I don't care about it!" was the answer.

"That's of no consequence. You're comin'!"

"Oh, am I? How do you think you can make me if I refuse?"

"Do you want to be shown up to the whole school for what you are, or would you rather have it out with me privately?"

Wrayson's eyes fell.

"I'll come!" he said sullenly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy saw them pass out of the gates together, and wondered. He had thought that, after last night's happenings, Cardew would hardly be on speaking terms with Wrayson.

For a moment he meditated following. But he realised that there is a limit to even the best-intentioned meddling. It was not always that Arthur Augustus realised that.

Not a word passed between the two until they had passed a little way down Rylcombe Lane, and had turned into one of the paths through the woods—that same path through which they had marched side by side when Tom Merry and his little army had set out to meet their friendly foes.

Wrayson gave his companion a furtive glance.

"Need we go any farther?" he asked. "I don't like those beastly woods. If you've anything against me, out with it!"

"If!" returned Cardew.

And into that one word he threw such contempt as made the fellow who heard it flinch, thick-skinned though he was.

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"Well, get on with it!" muttered Wrayson.

"You're no better than a swindler! You're worse, for you're a thief! I know now that it was your brother, not you, who saved my life!"

"Did I come and claim that I'd done it? You came to me!"

"You don't really think that makes it any better, do you? If you'd had the least spark of decency you'd have told me the truth at once."

"I couldn't. There were reasons. It was Arnold who pulled you out. Well, in the school roll I'm down as Arnold Wrayson—see? If I'd let on you'd have known a secret that I've sworn to keep."

It was a final wriggle. It could not deceive Cardew.

"I never knew more than the surname of the fellow who saved my life," he said. "You'd have known that if you'd been he."

"But I didn't know it, and I'd promised Arnold—"

"Oh, chuck that! It's no dashed use, Wrayson! A whole lot would be needed to convince me that your brother was anythin' but straight, an' nothin' on earth would convince me now that you're anythin' but crooked!"

"You offered to be my pal," muttered Wrayson.

"Have I stuck to what I offered, or have I not? I've parted with my best pals through you. I've had to apologise to bouncers I bar completely. I've put up with sweeps like Mellish an' Trimble. I've said nothing when you've tried to rob me, an' lent you money to keep those sweeps' mouths shut. Through it all I've been sick to think that I owed my life to such a rank outsider. But I tried to pay the debt."

"After all, if you don't owe it to me you do to my brother, and he'd do anything for me," answered Wrayson quietly.

"I'm sorry, I suppose I ought to have told you. But I can't see that there's really much harm done, Cardew. Let's make a fresh start. We needn't be pals. We can just part company. No one will think anything of it."

"You make me feel more sick than ever!" snapped Cardew, his lip curling.

At that moment there was a sound of footsteps on the path, and Claude Wrayson caught sight of his brother coming towards them, with the two Woottons.

He clutched at the slender chance that Arnold might put him right with Cardew as a drowning man is said to clutch at a straw.

What Cardew meant to do he did not know. But there was in every word Cardew spoke a remorselessness that scared him.

"Here comes Arnold!" he said. "He'll tell you that—that— Oh, well, you have a talk with him! Perhaps you'll understand better then."

"I hope so," rejoined Cardew, turning.

It was not unnatural that Arnold Wrayson, knowing what trouble might have arisen between those two, should guess that something out of the ordinary was in the air.

He spoke a word or two to his comrades, then came on alone. The Wootton brothers might wonder. But they were his good chums, and they took the hint he gave them now.

Before he had reached the two, Arnold knew that the deceit was at an end.

Cardew knew the truth! However he had come by it, he knew.

And once more Claude was up against the anger of a fellow who had come to know him for the rotter he was. To Arnold it seemed that this sort of thing had been always happening. Master or prefect or Form-fellow, someone was constantly finding Claude out, and Arnold had to suffer when the reckoning came—not because he was a sharer in Claude's misdeeds, but because, being Claude's brother, he must suffer.

Yet he came forward now with his chin up, and his eyes met Cardew's squarely and frankly.

There was a little cross of black plaster on his right temple. The heart of Ralph Reckness Cardew, which could be soft enough at times, smote him as he saw that.

He turned his back on Claude and faced Arnold.

"Wrayson," he said, with a little catch in his voice, "I know now that it was you who saved my life! Will you let bygones be bygones an' shake hands with me straight away, before we go any farther?"

Arnold's hand went out at once. This was something more like the Cardew of his waking dreams, the fellow he always wanted to meet again.

"There isn't anything between us that matters a scrap, Cardew," he said. "We lost our tempers and went for one another. Well, what about that?"

"I'm glad you can take it that way," replied Cardew gravely. "For there are other things it won't be so easy to settle. You wouldn't tell me anythin' the other day. I don't blame you for that. But since then I've found out a whole lot."

Arnold's eyes had reproach and misery in them as he turned them on Claude. Claude's could not meet them.

"I'm not goin' to bother you with a lot of things I've got against this fellow that aren't your fault anyway," went on Cardew. "But I do ask you to put me wise on one point. When your brother dyed his hair he took your name—he's admitted that. He did it so that he could take your name. But why?"

"Dr. Holmes had seen me," answered Arnold simply.

"But what could that matter when—"

Cardew pulled himself up short. Even in asking the question his brain, no longer muddled by worry, leaped to the answer.

"I see," he said. "It was you that ought to have come to St. Jim's!"

Arnold nodded.

"It's our loss an' the Grammar School's gain. I haven't a right to ask why you agreed to the change. I think I can guess. It wasn't what you wanted, but what this fellow did."

Again Arnold nodded.

Then he spoke, roused to speech by a sudden fear.

"Cardew, you won't give him away?" he asked pleadingly. "It will mean a bit of trouble for me, of course. I don't mind that much. But it will just about finish things for Claude!"

Cardew looked contemptuously at the elder Wrayson.

"An' it's just about time things were finished for him!" he replied.

But then his heart softened again, though not towards Claude. It was of Arnold only he thought.

"Do you ask me not to say anythin'?" he said.

"Yes. It's a lot to ask, I know."

Not a word of reminder as to how much Cardew owed him!

"I'll do it! But there are two fellows who must be told the truth. Nothin' short of that will put me right with them, an' I must put myself right."

"Levison and Clive will split!" said Claude hoarsely. "They hate me!"

"If they give me their word to keep the secret they'll keep it, whatever happens," answered Cardew coldly.

"I don't believe it. Still, I'm willing to take my chance," Claude said, as if making a concession.

"You willing! Why, you ought to go down on your knees to your brother for it! Not to me—I wouldn't spare you—it's for his sake. But you've to pay for the rotten things you've done! I'm goin' to give you the hidin' of your life!"

"If you can!" snarled Claude.

Arnold darted at Cardew a look of appeal.

"I can't give way about this," said Cardew. "He mustn't go scot-free. You're not goin' to hold it against me, old fellow?"

A moment Arnold hesitated. Then he saw the justice of Cardew's purpose.

"No," he answered.

He turned his back and walked away. Cardew could hardly expect him to stay and see his brother thrashed.

But then he swung round, remembering what Claude was capable of in a fight.

"I'd better stay," he said, with a gulp.

Cardew had drawn from his trousers a short riding switch, which had been easily concealed there.

"Oh, you clear out!" he said. "I'm not goin' to scrap with him. I'm just goin' to thrash him!"

He turned as Claude made a desperate rush, gripped him, and threw him headlong. Once again Claude Wrayson paid the penalty for his rascality.

Swish! Swish Swish!

The pliable switch rose and fell. Cardew had set his teeth, and the young rascal, squirming on the ground, howled in vain for mercy.

Claude Wrayson did not attempt to get up. He writhed and moaned and groaned. There was no fight in him.

Then Cardew looked up, and saw Arnold's face white as a sheet, his lower lip flecked with blood where he had bitten it.

Cardew flung the switch into the undergrowth.

"That's enough!" he said. "I won't ask you to shake hands with me again now, Wrayson, for I know you must think me a bit of a brute. But I hope you'll feel friendly when we meet again."

"You can count on that, Cardew," answered Arnold. "I don't say you were wrong. But—it hurts, you know."

Cardew nodded and strode away, not once looking back. What passed between the two brothers then he never knew. He did not even try to guess. He had done with Claude Wrayson once and for all.

Back at St. Jim's he walked straight into Study No. 9.

Levison and Clive were there.

"I've come back to the fold," he said.

Clive gaped in wonderment. But Levison's quicker mind jumped to his chum's meaning.

"Will you kill the fatted calf for me?" went on Cardew. "After due explanation, that is."

"Without that, if you really mean to come back, Ralph," said Levison.

"Hear, hear!" chimed in Clive.

"You don't even ask me to assure you that I've done with Wrayson? But I'm goin' to explain, an' you won't doubt it after I've done that."

They did not. They were inclined to blame themselves for failing to guess that there was more than sheer perversity behind their chum's seeming friendship for an utter rotter.

But the split in the study was a thing of the past, and, after all, what else mattered?

Claude Wrayson did not go up to the dormitory with the rest of the Fourth that night, and when the juniors went into the Form-room the next morning he was still missing.

Lessons received scant attention that morning. Mr. Lathom's grave face was noticed at once, and there was a continual buzz of talk as wild rumours went round.

It was not until some days later, however, when the excitement caused by Wrayson's disappearance had almost died down, that the truth leaked out. And when it was learned that Claude Wrayson had "bunked" home to his uncle, who was to take charge of him until his parents returned from abroad, there were many dry eyes at St. Jim's. The school had seen the last of a thoroughpaced rascal, and it echoed Jack Blake's opinion that it was a "jolly good riddance."

Perhaps Mellish and Trimble mourned the fact that the horn of plenty, if it had not exactly run dry, had disappeared from their gaze like a beautiful dream, but they realised that there were decided drawbacks to the presence of a fellow of Wrayson's uncertain temper in the study, and they did not mourn for long.

And Arnold Wrayson?

He had not been altogether unprepared for Claude's action, and after the first shock had gone his feeling was one of relief. He was free at last from the brother who had always been a millstone round his neck, and he could not pretend sorrow.

Needless to say, perhaps, the days that followed marked the beginning of a staunch friendship between Arnold Wrayson and Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Tom Merry & Co. would have been glad to welcome Arnold at St. Jim's. But he was too loyal to think of a change. The Grammar School suited him; and free from the baleful shadow of his evil-doing brother Arnold could look forward to the best of good times with his chums there.

THE END.

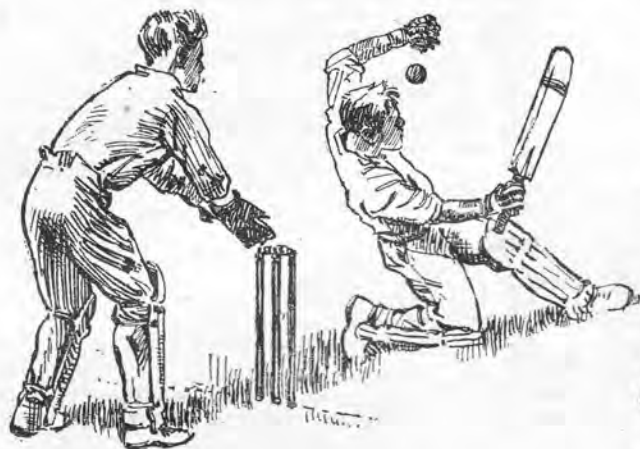
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Dirty Work!

"YOU mean—" began Urwine.

Blair nodded.

"Might be done," Urwine said, after a pause, during which Blair had mopped at his forehead, and stuck his fingers inside his collar, as though it pressed too hard upon his throat. "But you won't take it on, I know, and I'm dashed if I'm going to. I think I know the man for it, though. It must seem accidental, of course!"

"Who's your bird?" inquired Blair.

"Jonty Dunk. There's trouble hanging over him, and he'd be glad to skip out of the country with a hundred quid in his pockets."

"Don't know the gentleman."

Blair's acquaintance with the underworld was slighter than Urwine's.

"No misfortune. He isn't nice to know."

Even as a schoolboy at a famous school Urwine had always had a taste for low company. During the last year or two this had developed, till there was not a scoundrel in Manchester about whom he did not know something, though not all of them knew him for one of their own kidney.

"Ought to be all right," said Blair. "He'll hardly come back, I suppose?"

"Not likely! But I haven't the cash. You'll have to lend me it, Bertie. You'll get it back, with interest, when my big day comes."

"It's not convenient. But—yes, I'll do it. I'll draw the cash at once and hand it over. The rest is your share."

That night the man whom thousands of cricket enthusiasts all over the country regarded as a great sportsman—the public had not found out Urwine yet—talked with Jonty Dunk in his unsavoury den in one of the town's most unsavoury streets.

Next day Mr. Dunk attended the county match, though he had no interest whatever in the game.

The second day's play had seen the home side put themselves well on top. Mercer had had one brief spell of success, when three wickets had fallen to him in four overs near the middle of the innings. But before that Markshire had topped the Glamorgan total, Balkwill having scored 103, Reeve 52, and Dick 71; and after it there was some big hitting by Toplady, who made his first century for the county, and shared with Alan Edmead in a last-wicket stand of 111. Edmead's score was only 15; but he had played a really good defensive innings, and by manoeuvring to give his lusty partner the bowling had shown a cool head and praiseworthy unselfishness.

A total of 512 gave Glamorgan no chance of anything better than a draw, and to achieve that they needed to stay in all day.

The earlier batsmen put up a good fight. David Davies, with a crisp century, was the only man who topped 50; but Trevor Arnott, Bell, Bates, and Dyson all made useful scores; and when the fifth wicket fell the deficit had been wiped off.

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But then Balkwill got two wickets in an over; and a few minutes later Dick dismissed Hills, Sullivan, and Ryan in the course of five balls.

Armley and Edmead got the 20 or so needed for victory in a quarter of an hour.

Dick was in a hurry to get away. He and Andy had planned an evening on the river. As he went out of the gates the sinister figure of Jonty Dunk followed him. Mr. Dunk had nothing definite fixed up; he was waiting his chance.

But he had arrived at a plan of campaign before long.

On county match days the tram service was hard taxed. Now the crowd surged to get places on the trams that halted opposite the gates.

One heavy vehicle sheered off, loaded to capacity. Another came gliding up. The crowd pressed on. Dick was well in the front of it.

Then a foot smote him behind the right knee, staggering him, and someone lurched heavily into his back.

He pitched forward helplessly right in front of the moving tram, and shouts of dismay and horror came from those who saw.

Was It An Accident?

THE driver of the tram clapped on his brakes at once, but the space to be covered was so short—a matter of but a few feet—that this alone would not have saved Dick.

Someone sprang across the road in one mighty leap from the other side, where there was no crowd. Strong hands clutched Dick under the armpits and yanked him clear with a great jerk.

Then the tram stopped, with its fore part well over the spot where for an instant Dick had lain; and a half-hysterical cheer went up from those who had seen. And Dick saw that his rescuer was Balkwill.

Those who had pressed to get on to the coming tram were thrown into confusion. Mr. Jonty Dunk took advantage of the confusion to fade away. It was not difficult for him. No one had seen his foot go up; when people are so closely packed together that sort of thing is not likely to be seen. The man behind him had felt it; but one's shins do sometimes suffer in a crowd, and he did not connect the slight kick with Dick's tumble. As for the push Jonty had given, that was nothing where everyone was pushing.

So Jonty faded away, cursing his luck. It had so very nearly been a complete success; it would have been so, but for some meddling fool, about whom Mr. Dunk said lurid things to himself.

"How did that happen?" asked Balkwill sharply.

His suspicions were aroused on the instant.

"I say, if it hadn't been for you—" began Dick.

"Oh, cut that out! I'd have done it for anyone—unless it was that skunk Blair—and I risked nothing. The tram couldn't go over me. How did it happen?"

"Someone kicked me behind the knee. It made me stagger for a second, and before I'd recovered myself someone else barged right into my back."

"Sure it was someone else?" Balkwill snapped.

"You mean—"

"That if one man kicked you accidentally, and another pushed you, there may not be anything in it. But if the fellow that kicked was the same as the fellow who barged—oh, come along! We're getting a crowd round us. We can't talk here."

"Let me dust myself a bit first. I'm in the very deuce of a mess."

"Come on! You can dust yourself when you get home."

And Balkwill seized Dick's arm, and hurried him off. The crowd still surged about the trams on the other side of the road; but on their side was no crowd, for the line this way ran away from the town.

The crack led Dick towards the nearest stopping-place.

"But this is the wrong way," Dick said.

"It's my way, and you're coming home with me."

Dick did not argue that question. He was rather pleased by the invitation, if such it could be called. He did not think any of the other fellows had ever been asked to Balkwill's home. For his part, he had assumed that the crack lived in lodgings, since he was a bachelor.

Just short of the tram terminus, more than a mile from the county ground, they got off, and Balkwill turned into a side road. Some fifty yards down this he led the way through a little garden to the front door of a little house, bright and cheery in aspect.

"I'll give you a chance to get the dirt off before my mother sees you," said Balkwill, as he used his latch-key. As he entered he called:

"All right, mater! Be with you in a minute or two. I've brought a visitor home to tea."

Dick was almost startled by the difference between Balkwill's voice now and his usual tones. The cynical drawl was no longer there; his voice was soft and full of good feeling.

Balkwill used a brush vigorously on Dick's shirt and flannels. The dust came away without leaving them noticeably smudged. Then both washed, and Balkwill handed Dick a clean towel from the bath-room cupboard, and lent him a hairbrush and comb.

Not a word did he say about his mother. Yet somehow Dick got the notion she was an invalid before he saw her.

That notion was correct. He saw her in her invalid chair as Balkwill opened the door. Her hair was quite white; but, though very thin and lined with pain, her face looked too young for white hair. In fact, she was only just over fifty. But for years past she had been ill.

There was a garden-box in the window, and there were flowers all about the room. The tea-table was set in a way very different from the mode of Kingsland Street, or that of most bachelor diggings. The silver was bright, the cloth spotless; it was all—well, nice. That was the word Dick found for it. A girl would have called it dainty, perhaps.

Gregory Balkwill stooped and kissed his mother. Then, straightening himself up, he said:

"This is Dick Dare, mater. I've mentioned him to you, and I'm sure you'll like him. Dare, my mother."

Dick took the thin hand offered him.

"I'm very glad to see you, Mr. Dare," said Mrs. Balkwill. "Greg hardly ever brings anyone in. So I'm sure that you are here because he likes you, and that means I shall, too."

"I hope so," answered Dick, flushing.

Then, with a toast rack in one hand and a teapot in the other, there entered the room a woman who looked like a grenadier in a skirt.

"Here's my very oldest pal, Dare," said Balkwill whimsically. "She may not own me as a pal; but she's put up with me ever since I was born, so I think I'm justified in what I say. Sarah, Mr. Dare."

"How do, Mr. Dare?" said Sarah, in a voice like a man's. "You don't want to take too much notice of Master Greg's talk, you know. I understand him very well."

"I doubt it," Balkwill said. And for a moment there was a shadow on his dark, lean face.

Over the tea-table Dick learned that there were only

those three in the little house. Sarah Jell was both maid and nurse; did everything, and never found anything too much for her. When Balkwill's father had died, leaving very little to his widow, Balkwill had brought his mother and Sarah here.

Dick realised that to the invalid Gregory Balkwill was not the same person whom the world knew by that name. Little wonder! To most of those he met he showed only his hardest side. They were deceived about him; but—that was plain to Dick—so was his mother. She had no notion that her son went the pace with Leonard Urwine and his set.

More than ever was Balkwill a puzzle to the boy who was growing very fond of him.

They did not stay long after tea was over. But Mrs. Balkwill said she hoped Dick would come again, and Gregory nodded; and Sarah Jell came into the hall to say good-bye to him.

"You've scored, Dare," said Balkwill. "Sarah doesn't take to everyone."

Outside the house he began at once on the subject of the seeming accident.

"A put-up job, I think," he said.

"You mean that—that someone wanted to murder me?" gasped Dick.

"Just that, my boy! I wish I could remember where I've seen the face of the man I caught sight of behind you the moment before it happened! It showed just by your arm; he was short, and couldn't have looked over your shoulder. Oh, even if I knew him I shouldn't be able to prove anything; it might not have been he who tumbled you over; it might have been the accident it would seem. But I don't believe a bit that it was."

"But you can't think—"

"Don't name any names. You say I can't—I say I can, and I do! I've warned you already, Dare, but—"

"And saved my life after doing it!" put in Dick.

"Oh, rot! Nothing in that. But do look out for yourself. I'm turning back now. I wish I could remember where I've seen that face."

"Thank you for taking me home, Balkwill. I—I liked meeting your mother."

Again that shadow came upon Balkwill's face.

"She liked you. You must come again soon," he said.

Then he swung round and was off.

The Match at Hove!

MARKSHIRE had that week the three off days that are growing more and more rare for any county in these days of swollen programmes. On the Saturday they were due to face Sussex on the Hove ground. This meant leaving Marchester early in the afternoon of Friday. But Wednesday and Thursday were days on which the members of the team could take it easily.

Balkwill did not turn up at the ground on either day, and Dick saw no more of him till he joined the train for Euston.

The team was chosen on Wednesday. Dick's place in it could hardly be doubtful now; he had fairly won his spurs. Urwine got back to the leadership; Reeve could not play. Jenyns went as twelfth man.

On Thursday Dick was sent for to see Mr. Ainsley in his room.

The great man was kind. He spoke in terms of praise of what Dick had done thus far, and said he was sure that in the near future he would do even bigger things. But he made it quite clear that he was displeased with Dick, and he told him plainly why.

"I was right," said Dick to himself, as he left the pavilion. "He does think me a quarrelsome young bouncer. Well, I can't help it. I don't believe I am; but it's no good my making a vow that I'll never punch anyone again, for I'm jolly sure I shall have to do it!"

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Driven to rebellion by the tyranny of an over-bearing manager, young Dick Dare is sacked from his job in an insurance office and decides to apply at the Markshire County Cricket Club ground for a place on the staff. A born cricketer, Dick is engaged to play for his county by John Ainsley, the man who has brought Markshire to

the forefront of cricketing counties, and whose life Dick had saved a few days before. The youngster acquires himself well in his new job, but unfortunately falls foul of Leonard Urwine, the Markshire skipper, and a relative of Mr. Ainsley, for Dick's name is mentioned in John Ainsley's will. As a result of Urwine's plotting, Dick is waylaid by Slogger Batts, an ex-bruiser, and forced into a fight. During the melee Batts is knocked out, his head crashing against a kerb, and he is taken to hospital in a dangerous condition. Owing to a gross mistake Dick is arrested during the progress of Markshire's match with Lancashire on a charge of manslaughter, but is subsequently discharged. Fearing Dare might sooner or later cut him out entirely in the eyes of Mr. Ainsley, the rascally Urwine consults Herbert Blair, his chief crony. "There's only one thing for it," says Blair, "and that is to get Dare out of the way."

(Now read on.)



On the journey south Balkwill played solo whist for small stakes with Toplady and two of the other pros. He did not seem to take any great interest in the game, though he never made a mistake, and came out a winner. Dick had no talk with him; a nod was the only salutation Balkwill gave to the youngster he had taken home with him three days before. But Dick thought he understood. He was not far wrong. Gregory Balkwill's notion was that it would do the colt no good to have their friendship obvious to the rest.

On the Hove ground, to which a gentle south-east wind brought the smell of the sea, they found a full strength Sussex team ready to meet them—Arthur and Harold Gilligan the only amateurs, Ted Bowley, Maurice Tate, Tom Cook, cricketer and footballer, too, Wensley, Langridge, the brothers Parks, Cornford, and Hollingdale—a side that would take some beating.

But when Urwine won the toss most of the Markshire men reckoned the game more than half won.

By lunch-time they had begun to reconsider their views.

Five wickets were then down for 111. Balkwill had made only a single before Tate bowled him. Urwine had gone for a duck. He put one back to the England bowler—the easiest and simplest of catches, about which Tate made no mistake. Westland, with 47, had done something to redeem the situation. Dick had been sent in, out of his place in the written order, to play out the last ten minutes before the interval.

He knew that Urwine hoped he would get out before the break. If he stayed he would have to play himself in again. He made up his mind to take no risk at all.

In the ten minutes' batting he got most of the bowling, but did not even score a single.

"How long do you think this match is timed to last?" Urwine asked him sourly as he came in. "We're not playing Australia, you know!"

Dick made no answer. The sneer did not spoil his appetite for lunch in the least. But when he went out again with Walter Toplady, he told himself that he would soon let Urwine see whether he imagined the match had no time limit.

Toplady was no respecter of persons. His theory—which was not by any means necessarily correct—was that it didn't matter in the least who the bowler was; if you hit him hard enough he would go for four, or—if you hit a bit harder—for six. There was this to be said for the big fellow's faith; while a batsman of his type stays he adds to the joy of the game.

He began to slam again at once, and carried his 26 to 50 within a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile, Dick had scored a single and a 4, and was getting a good sight of the ball.

Then the younger batsman hit three fours in an over; and Bowley was punished by Toplady for a couple of sixes and a couple of fours in the next over. The spectators cheered. This was the sort of batting they liked, even though their own side's bowlers were catching it hot.

Bowley was taken off. Tate, who could not reproduce his form of the pre-lunch period, when his four wickets had cost only 31, was given a spell. Wensley could do no good, nor could the skipper. John Parks bowled, and Langridge, Harry Parks, and Hollingdale, but all without success.

No one could check these two. Toplady had been 50 when Dick had only scored 5; but when Toplady reached 80, Dick had passed his 50. His hitting was not so spectacular as his comrade's, but his placing was far better.

The changes were rung on all the bowlers. Tate came on again, but he could only check the pace for a while. Toplady, getting most of the bowling for a few overs, completed a sensational century with a hit for 6 on to the roof of the stand near the gates. The total was then 250.

Then, for a time, Dick had his turn. Of the next 50 runs he made 37, and with the total at 301, he thrilled to the sight of three figures against his number on the board for the first time in a county game.

Five minutes later both he and his big partner had left. They had added 217 for the sixth wicket.

Twenty minutes after that the innings was over. Bowley, unperturbed by the punishment he had received earlier, took the last four wickets at a cost of only 13 runs.

"Blow this stopping for tea!" grumbled Armley. "That's what did for us!"

"Ask Ted Bowley what his particular brand of tea is," gibed Balkwill. "It may be quite a useful thing for you to know to-morrow."

But the total of 339 was good enough to be going on with, and it was seldom the Markshire tail failed thus.

By drawing of stumps, Sussex had made 118 for two. Bowley was still in, with 58 to his credit.

"I'm glad the day's over," said Edmead. "My head aches horribly!"

Peter Nevern was not yet fit to resume his place in the team, and Edmead was playing again.

"Brighton ought to cure that," said Dick.

This was his first visit to "London-on-Sea," and he was full of keenness to see all that was to be seen.

"Bed may," answered his chum. "I'm going there as soon as we get back to the hotel. Good thing to-morrow's Sunday. I ought to be fit by Monday. Can't afford to be off colour. They do say that Peter's thinking of chucking it up and getting on the umpires' list for next season."

Dick was naturally disappointed. He had reckoned on Alan's company for the evening. Now, he supposed, he would have to knock around alone.

But that did not happen. As he stood in the hall of the hotel after dinner, Balkwill came up.

"At a loose end, Dare?" he said. "Better come along with me."

Dick accepted the invitation gladly. He knew that other men in the team who were interested in him would have thought Balkwill no good companion for him, though they would not have said so. He had no desire to go on the racket; he just wanted to see things. And he believed that—to-night, anyway—Gregory Balkwill had as little wish as he had for those things better left alone.

A Narrow Squeak!

HE was right. They paced the crowded parade side by side, from the eastern end to Hove Lawns. They looked in at the Academy, and saw a Chaplin film, and they went back to their hotel at eleven, very well satisfied with one another's company.

Neither talked much. Balkwill had never mentioned Urwine. It did occur to Dick to wonder whether the crack was not acting as a kind of bodyguard to him, but he thought it better to say nothing. If it were so, he was grateful to Balkwill and felt no inclination to resent the protection, though he reckoned he knew how to look after himself.

None of the other fellows showed up when they went in. They had a light supper, and went upstairs together. Balkwill, reaching the door of his bedroom, said:

"See you at breakfast, Dare."

"Half-past eight?" suggested Dick. "Bit early for you, won't it be? I want to get a boat, and have a long day on the sea."

"Oh, I'm quite capable of getting up at a decent time. If Edmead doesn't feel like voyaging I'll go with you."

"Come anyway," Dick answered. "We shall be jolly glad to have you."

Dick shared a double-bedded room with Edmead. The young wicket-keeper was asleep when he went in, and Dick was careful not to disturb him.

But in the morning Alan still felt unwell—worse than he had done the night before, he said. Quite sure he didn't need a doctor; sure, also, that he wanted nothing to eat; would just stay in bed. Dick was not to bother about him.

So Dick went down, to be joined almost directly by Balkwill. They sat at a table near a window which commanded a view of the sea and, though there was promise of a hot day, a slight breeze still stirred the air, and Dick sniffed at it and said something about ozone.

"Decaying seaweed," returned Balkwill, in his driest way. "The coffee smells better to me."

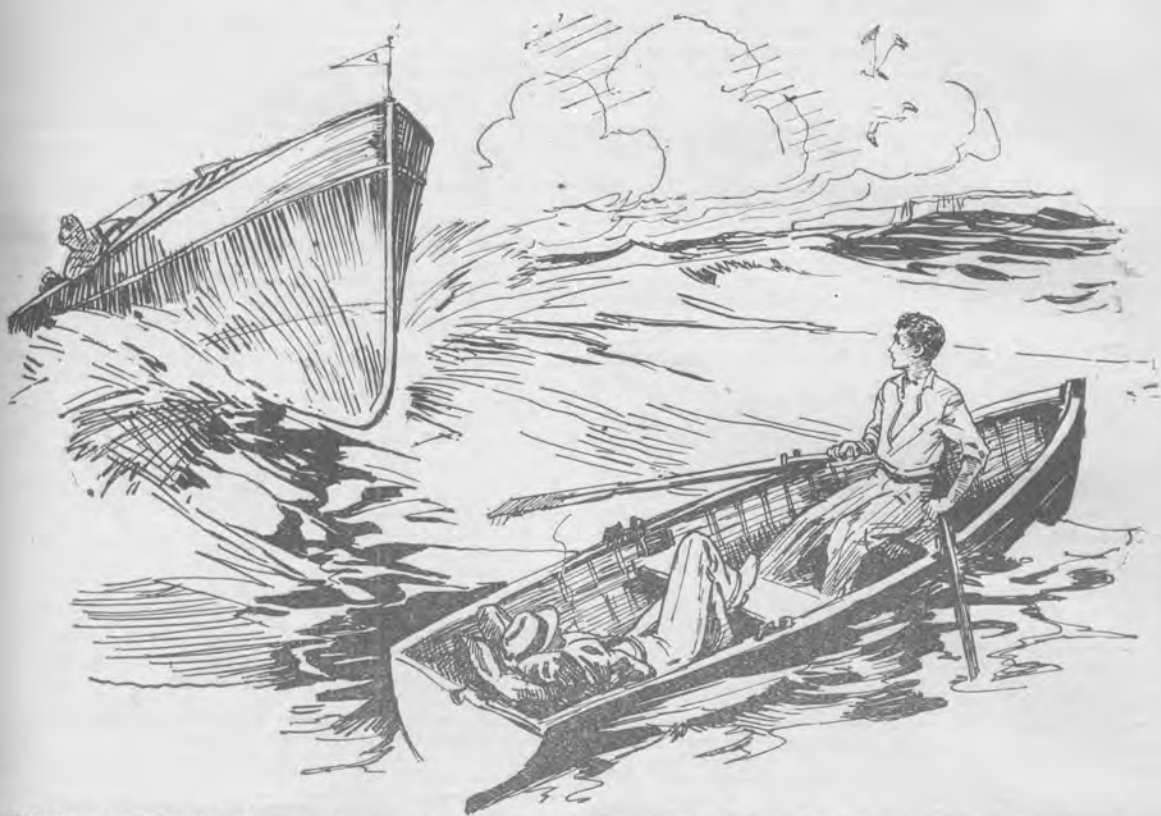
The coffee smelt good to Dick, too, as did the porridge, the fried sole, and the ham and eggs. They also tasted good.

"Getting in provisions for the day, young 'un?" asked Balkwill.

"You're not doing too badly yourself," Dick countered.

That was true, for Balkwill was enjoying his breakfast, which was not a usual thing for him. Until quite lately he had spent a good many of his evenings—which stretched themselves into the small hours—in the company of Urwine and Urwine's chosen pals. That sort of thing upset him for the following day. The wonder was that neither man's form had yet suffered greatly. But both were still young. If they went on in the same way loss of form must follow sooner or later.

"I'll get the people here to pack us up a good lunch," Balkwill said, lighting a cigarette. "Understand, I'm doing no rowing. That's not in my line. So, as you're the working partner, I stand the grub and the drinks."



Dick Dare saw the motor-launch swing round swiftly, and the next moment it was bearing right down on the small rowing-boat. Over the wheel of the oncoming launch crouched Urwine, his face twisted in a terrible grin. (See this page.)

"Right-ho!" replied Dick.

He carried the lunch-basket down to the beach. But Balkwill chose the boat.

"Got to be a long one," he said. "I don't know a lot about boats; but I do know that I find a bed now and then that isn't my length, and I want to sprawl and look up at the sky to-day."

"Right-ho!" said Dick again.

Balkwill had not even mentioned Edmead. Dick felt it almost disloyal to the chum he had left behind that he should prefer to have this lazy, cynical fellow as his comrade of the day. But he did prefer it. The mystery that seemed to hang about Balkwill, part of which mystery was that he should have taken to Dick—so Dick saw it—attracted him.

Dick pulled strongly. The other fellow lounged, smoking innumerable cigarettes. After a while Dick shipped oars, and let the boat drift with the tide, which was making inshore. When it took them too nearly in he did another spell of pulling.

Lunch was good—a plump chicken, roasted to a turn, ham, some pastry, cheese.

For a while after it Dick took matters easily. The sun shone from a sky with only a fleck of white cloud here and there. The long line of Brighton, Hove, Portslade, Shoreham showed white in the sun against the background of the downs. Here and there a boat bobbed lazily; here and there a motor-launch blugged its way through the water.

One of these drew near. Dick paid it no particular heed; Balkwill, though he heard it, did not see it. He had slid down into the bottom of the boat, and only the cigarette between his lips told that his closed eyes did not mean sleep.

But the man at the wheel of the motor-boat saw Dick, and murder leaped into his mind on the instant.

After Blair's story of the altered will—after the failure of Jonty Dunk—after Dick's century against Sussex—hate and jealousy had so worked upon Urwine that he was ready to take a risk he would not have taken a few days earlier.

Not so great a risk, either! The men with whom he had come out—one of them was the owner of the launch, the other one of those genial hangers-on who live mostly at the expense of others—were both dozing. Two smouldering cigars at their feet told the tale, and their attitudes confirmed that evidence.

Easy enough to put the blame on the oarsman! Easy enough to say that he had done all he knew how to avoid a collision! If the young upstart were drowned there would be no one to contradict him.

He made as though to give the boat plenty of sea-room, then twisted the wheel suddenly and bore right down on Dick's boat at top speed!

Before he recognised Urwine as the steersman, Dick, pulling shoreward at the moment, saw, and shouted; and just as the motor-launch crashed into the boat, Balkwill's long form upreared itself.

A sudden spasm of fear seized upon Urwine. Even in the second before the boat crumpled up and its occupants were submerged, he had time to think that he would never have risked this had he known Balkwill was with Dick. Not that he minded Balkwill's drowning. But Balkwill might not drown, and Urwine dreaded his acuteness, his knowledge of many things that the county captain wanted kept secret.

The two with Urwine sprang to their feet in alarm.

"Good gad, what have you done old chap?" cried the owner of the launch.

"By Jove, you've smashed something now! There they are, and one chap can't swim!" shouted the hanger-on.

"It wasn't my fault. The fellow ran right across our bows," Urwine answered.

The hanger-on was a waster, but a coward he was not. He plunged in at once.

Balkwill was the man who could not swim. But he did not get into the panic so often seen when the fear of drowning comes upon one helpless to save himself. He clutched at a board of the shivered boat as he came up, and hung on. It was but a slight support, but it served to keep his mouth above water, at worst.

"It's all right!" he spluttered, for he had swallowed some pints of sea water. "Don't worry, Dick! I can keep up!"

"Put one hand on my shoulder," said Dick, his brain cool, though his heart was hot with rage. "They'll have to take us aboard."

"Come back, Lewis!" yelled Urwine. "We can get them in all right, if you're on board to help. I can't leave the wheel."

With the aid of the launch's owner, the dripping Lewis scrambled aboard. Urwine steered towards the two in the water. Balkwill was hauled up first. Dick followed him, needing but little aid.

They were safe, but it had been a very narrow squeak. Had Balkwill not jumped up on the instant his legs must have been smashed. That both he and Dick had escaped contact with either the launch itself or the fragments of the shattered boat was something not far short of a miracle.

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"Give me the wheel, Urwine!" snapped the owner of the launch. "I don't care to trust you with it any longer. Dash it all, you must have been clumsy, even if it was partly the other chap's fault!"

"Which it wasn't!" said Dick holly.

But as to that, the two with Urwine and Balkwill were all alike unable to testify. It was Dick's word against Urwine's.

Balkwill had made up his mind, however. He said nothing before the two strangers; but when they were ashore he left Dick to thank them and motioned Urwine aside.

"You've gone too far this time, Urwine!" he said sternly. "You tried to kill that boy!"

"What? My good fellow, you must be mad to suggest that!"

"Mad, am I? We'll see!" retorted Balkwill.

"Remember, I hold you in the hollow of my hand, that I can—"

"You cur! Do your worst, confound you!"

Balkwill did not tell Dick what he had said to Urwine. He did not tell him anything. They went back to the hotel together almost without a word. The older man had given his name to the boat-owner, and had told him that he could be sure of being recompensed, though the money would not come from either of those who had gone out in the Rose of Brighton. The fellow did not seem altogether satisfied; but he admitted that he could not expect them to have the price of the boat upon them, and he promised to call at their hotel on Monday evening.

Plainly Balkwill meant that Urwine should pay. That was only fair. His heedlessness or clumsiness—if it was nothing worse—had caused the catastrophe. Had it resulted in tragedy as it so nearly had, he would have had to face a coroner's jury, and might have had worse to come after that.

But Dick did not believe Urwine would pay unless forced; and it was not quite clear to him what pressure Balkwill could put upon him.

The crack was in one of his worst moods. The threat

Urwine had made worried him greatly. Worried him, but did not cow him. Gregory Balkwill had come to the parting of the ways. If he yielded to Urwine now he would never again be his own man. But if Urwine were despicable enough to carry out his threat—and Balkwill put no limit to his mean malice—there would be the heaviest of trouble for Balkwill, and, which mattered far more, for one very dear to him.

The first half of that Sunday had been a jolly time for Dick. The second half was a miserable one.

Alan Edmead was no better. He was worse, indeed; and at length Dick persuaded him to send for a doctor. One was rung up, and when he called, he told Alan to stay in bed. He did not, however, say what was wrong with the boy. The medical man would call again early next morning. In the meantime the patient was to take nothing but beef extract and milk and soda.

Meanwhile Balkwill had disappeared, and was no more visible that day. He spent the greater part of it in a vain search for Leonard Urwine.

The other players had gone off together in a car, and did not return till late. Dick had nothing to do but to wander disconsolately from the bed-room where Edmead lay to the entrance-hall, where he hoped sooner or later to see Balkwill.

The blood went to his head whenever he thought of Urwine. He did not see what he had ever done to make the fellow his deadly enemy.

And he did not see what he could do to show him up. He could prove nothing. He must not even tell anyone that Slogger Batts had been "et upon high" by the county captain. The tram affair might have been an accident, and there was no particle of evidence that the running-down of the boat was anything else.

But on one score Dick Dare had made up his mind. Urwine should not drive him out of the team!

(That's a wise decision of Dick's, for in the near future, when things look mighty black for Markshire, Dick's the lad who is destined to help them out of trouble. You'll read all about it in next week's grand instalment, chums.)

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