

MEET "MUTTON-FISTED" BURKETT IN . . . "THE BULLY OF THE SHELL!" COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

THE GEM 2d

EVERY
WEDNESDAY.



EVER HEARD OF SUCH A CHAP AS "BULLY" BURKETT—

The BULLY of the

By
Martin Clifford

CHAPTER 1.

Cardew's Notice!

"I SAY, old chap! Lend me a bob!" Baggy Trimble of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's spoke in wheedling tones.

It was early on a Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday at St. Jim's.

Baggy Trimble wanted to spend the afternoon in the cinema at Wayland. Unfortunately, he had only a bent half-halfpenny, and a three-penny bit with a hole through it which he had found in the quad. An experiment with the three-penny bit, in Mrs. Faggles' little tuckshop, had shown Baggy that three-penny bits with holes in them were without purchasing value!

It was to Burkett of the Shell, who was crossing the Hall with his cronies, Crooke and Mellish, that Baggy made his eager request.

Burkett halted.

Frederick Burkett, the bully of the Shell, was a comparatively new arrival at St. Jim's.

A regular Samson in build, Burkett looked almost more like a Fifth-Former than a junior in the Shell. He was at least a head taller than any other fellow in the Lower School, and his burly frame fairly swelled with muscle. He was, further, at least several months older than anyone else in the Shell.

But Frederick Burkett, though something of a Triton among minnows in the Lower School, lacked the brains to take him into a higher Form. Thus the Head had not been able to put him in the Fifth, despite his age and size.

Even in the Shell Burkett was far from being one of the brightest members of the Form, as Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, had soon discovered.

"Burkett, old chap," smirked Baggy. "Lend me a bob!"

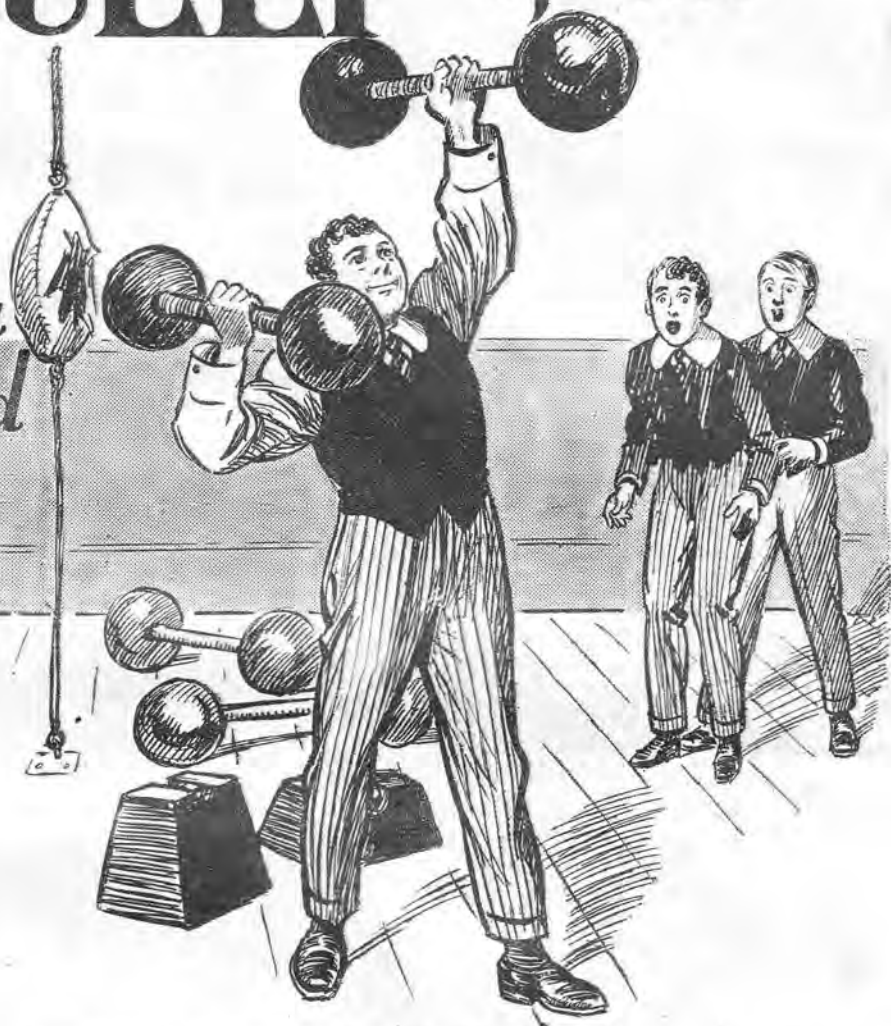
Burkett surveyed Baggy with a scowl.

"I don't think!" he growled.

"Oh, really, old chap!" Baggy looked injured. "I'm expecting a postal order from a—hem!—from a titled relation. It'll turn up to-morrow for certain—or Friday at the latest. I—"

"Rats!"

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Muscle? Muscle enough to turn a Samson green with envy! Tough? Tougher than the most jaw-breaking nut! Add a pile-driving, pulverising punch, and you've got "Bully" Burkett to a T!

"Oh, really, Burkett!" Baggy blinked at the muscular bully of the Shell persuasively. "As one pal to another, you know! I—I was saying only just now to a chap what a ripping fellow you are! I was jolly glad

you licked that ass Tom Merry the other day. He, he, he! He's still got a black eye! Jolly good job!"

Burkett's rugged countenance, with its beetling brows, lit up for a moment with a grin.

Burkett had licked a good many fellows since his arrival at St. Jim's. But his latest exploit—and the only one that had given him the slightest difficulty—had been to fight, and defeat, Tom Merry.

Tom Merry had been the champion boxer of the junior school until Burkett's arrival. But even Tom Merry had been licked, after a spectacular fight, at the hands of the gigantic bully.

Tom's defeat had been a disaster in the eyes of most of the juniors!

Ever since, Burkett had swaggered about as the undisputed cock of the walk. No one could lick him, and the truculence and insolence of Burkett and his cronies had been utterly unbearable.

Fellows who, in the past, had often kicked Mellish, the sneak of the Fourth, most deservedly, now meekly swallowed all sorts of indignities at his hands, rather than

—HE'S GIVING THE CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES!

SHELL!



risk the wrath of Frederick Burkett! Crooke, too, was having the time of his life under the guardian wing of his powerful study-mate.

Burkett had made himself objectionable enough before his fight with Tom Merry. But now he was worse than ever; and so were his cronies.

But though Baggy had certainly put Burkett into a good humour by reminding him of his victory over Tom Merry, the bully of the Shell had no intention of parting with a shilling for Baggy's benefit!

Burkett already knew that money lent to Baggy Trimble of the Fourth was gone for good.

"I'm not lending you anything, you fat porpoise," scowled Burkett. "Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Burkett, old chap—"

Baggy broke off with a wild howl.

Thud!

"Yarooooop!"

Burkett had reached out a huge hand and seized Baggy by the shoulder, spinning him round as though he had weighed no more than a feather. The next moment, Bur-

kett's boot had thudded against Baggy's shiny trouser-seat—and Baggy was lifted clean into the air.

Crash!

"Yow! Oh! Yooooop!"

Baggy landed on the linoleum with another bowl, and sat gasping and blinking dazedly. With a chuckle, Burkett strolled on, his grinning cronies on either side of him. The bully and his friends disappeared through the big doorway, and Baggy scrambled up with a furious snort.

"Oh! Yow! Burkett's a beast! Ow! He's a rotten bully! Oooch!"

Baggy rolled away disconsolately towards the stairs, and up to the Fourth Form passage.

It was possible that he might find somebody in one of the studies who would be willing to lend him a shilling—if only to get rid of him!

He tried Study No. 6 first. Blake & Co., the chums of Study No. 6, were good-natured fellows, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's, usually had plenty of money.

But Blake & Co. were away on Little Side, playing footer, and Baggy, after a disconsolate blink into the empty study, banged the door and turned away along the passage.

Outside the door of the end study, No. 12, he halted.

From within the study came the faint scrape of a pen on paper.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, the occupant of Study No. 12, was evidently at home.

Baggy tapped on the door and entered the study.

Cardew, the dandy and slacker of the Fourth, was seated at the table writing.

Until fairly recently, Cardew had shared Study No. 9 with Sidney Clive, the South African junior, and Ernest Levison. But there had been trouble between the three chums. After a bitter quarrel, Cardew had shaken the dust of No. 9 from his feet, and taken up his abode in the loneliness of Study No. 12. For the time being, Clive was alone in Study No. 9, in consequence; for Ernest Levison had been injured in a railway accident near Rylcombe, and was away from the school, recovering at a convalescent home.

Cardew glanced up as Baggy entered.

From the expression on his handsome face, it was clear that Cardew was not particularly pleased with the sight of his visitor. He reached for a ruler.

"Any objection to buzzin' off?" inquired Cardew pointedly.

"Oh, really, Cardew! I—I—" Baggy grinned feebly, and tried a little soft soap. "I—I say, you're jolly cosy in here! I don't blame you for clearing out of Study No. 9! You must be a lot more comfy in here by yourself, instead of with those asses Levison and Clive. If you ask me—"

Cardew's eyes glinted. His quarrel with his chums was a subject which he did not discuss with anyone, least of all Baggy Trimble.

"Seat!"

"Look here," said Baggy desperately, "will you lend me a bob? I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"From a titled relation?" inquired Cardew.

"Ahem! Yes."

"It'll arrive to-morrow, or by Friday at the latest?" drawled Cardew.

"Exactly!" exclaimed Baggy eagerly. "So I don't suppose you'd mind lending me a bob, would you? A bob's nothing to a rich chap like you," added Baggy, in an oily tone.

Cardew smiled ironically, and toyed thoughtfully with the ruler. Baggy watched him warily. But suddenly Cardew laid the ruler down.

"All right," he said. "I'll give you a bob—"

"You mean, lend me," put in Baggy, with a smirk.

"All the same, isn't it?"

"Oh, really, Cardew—"

"I'll let you have the shillin' if you'll do a job for me," went on Cardew. "I've just written out this notice, and I was thinkin' of goin' downstairs and stickin' it on the board. But it would be rather a fag, so you can do it for me."

"Oh, certainly!"

Baggy approached the table with a gleeful air, and held out a fat hand. Cardew handed him the sheet of paper on which he had been writing, and produced a shilling, which he tossed to the Falstaff of the Fourth. Baggy caught it greedily.

"Read that notice, and tell me what you think of it," drawled Cardew.

Baggy blinked at the sheet of paper in his hand. He jumped as he read what was written there, in Cardew's neat handwriting.

"NOTICE!"

A meeting will be held in the junior Common-room to-morrow evening at six o'clock sharp to discuss the advisability of a change in the captaincy of the junior school. R. R. Cardew will take the chair."

"M-my hat!" Baggy stared at Cardew in blank astonishment. "What does it mean?"

Cardew grinned.

"Clear enough, isn't it—what?" A flickering gleam came into his eyes. "I'm gettin' up this meetin' to discuss the interestin' question of the junior captaincy, and the possibility of havin' a change. Nothin' hard to understand about that, is there, even for a fellow of your sparklin' intelligence?"

"But—but Tom Merry's captain, isn't he?" ejaculated Baggy.

"That's just it!" drawled Cardew, with gleaming eyes.

Despite his coolly nonchalant air, there was something in the manners of the slacker of the Fourth that puzzled Baggy.

Baggy knew well enough that Cardew was "up against" Tom Merry. All the juniors knew that. The same cause which had resulted in the quarrel between Cardew and his two chums in Study No. 9, had also resulted in Tom Merry fighting Cardew, and Cardew getting badly thrashed.

The trouble had been in connection with the last match against St. Jim's old rivals, Greyfriars.

Cardew was a fine footballer, when he chose to exert himself. He had been put into the St. Jim's team against Greyfriars when Levison had been injured. But he had never arrived at the Greyfriars footer ground, with the result that Tom Merry's team, playing only ten men, had been badly defeated.

The subsequent discovery that Cardew had spent the afternoon playing billiards at the Duke of Bedford hotel in Wayland had made it seem clear enough that the slacker of the Fourth, once he had been able to tell his injured chum that he was playing in the Greyfriars match, had deliberately let his team down in order to keep his shady engagement. Cardew had not denied the truth of that supposition.

With his licking at Tom Merry's hands, the matter had more or less been blown over now. Tom Merry had been willing to forget.

But in Cardew's heart there had existed ever since a venomous bitterness.

Though no one but himself knew it, it had been through an unscrupulous plot of Cardew's that Tom Merry had been forced into a fight with Burkett, the bully of the Shell, the fight that had resulted in Tom's smashing defeat.

That had been Cardew's vengeance!

But even now he was not satisfied. He longed to bring about Tom Merry's complete downfall.

"That's just it, Baggy," repeated Cardew, propping his elegant figure against a corner of the chimney-piece. "Tom Merry has been captain rather too long, in my opinion. I fancy a good many of the other fellows agree with me, too. Anyway, there'll be this meetin' to-morrow evenin' to talk about it."

"My hat!" breathed Baggy. "Does Tom Merry know?"

"Thomas doesn't, but he soon will," grinned Cardew.

Baggy stared at Cardew wide-eyed, then he sniggered.

"He, he, he! Tom Merry's a beast! I asked him to lend me a bob just now, and the stingy rotter wouldn't! I'll be jolly glad if you get him kicked out of the captaincy, old chap!"

Cardew winced at the "old chap," but said nothing.

"Well, buzz along and stick up that notice," he murmured, dropping into a chair, and propping his head against a cushion, with a yawn.

Baggy scuttled from the study with a grinning countenance. The Hall was deserted as he pinned Cardew's coolly-worded notice to the board.

But that it would make a big sensation when the fellows returned to the School House from their half-holiday recreations there was no doubt—no possible doubt whatever!

CHAPTER 2.

Up Against Tom Merry!

"HALLO, hallo! What's the giddy excitement?" Monty Lowther gave that exclamation.

The Terrible Three had returned from Little Side in company with Blake & Co., of the Fourth, to find a large crowd gathered round the notice-board in the Hall.

Kerruish, of the Fourth, the junior from the Isle of Man, turned a grinning face towards the Terrible Three as he caught sight of them.

"Seen the notice?" he asked.

"What blessed notice?" asked Tom Merry.

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"About the captaincy!" grinned Kerruish.

Tom Merry stared at him.

"What the dickens do you mean?"

He pushed his way through the crowd towards the notice-board, followed by his chums. The juniors watched him with curious expressions as he read the notice pinned there, written in Cardew's hand.

A frown came into Tom's face as he finished reading. He shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing. But from Manners there broke an astonished, angry exclamation.

"Well, I'm blessed! Of all the giddy cheek!"

"Yaas, wathah, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, surveying the offending notice with a gleaming eye. "How-eh-ah, if Cardew likes to make a ridiculous ass of himself—"

Tom Merry smiled rather grimly.

He knew well enough that there had been a good deal of dissatisfaction among a large section of the juniors ever since the Greyfriars match. That unlucky match had been not only the cause of the trouble with Cardew. It had also caused feelings to run very high over the question of three substitutes, whom Tom had selected to play in the team in the places of Blake, Talbot, and Figgins, who had all been on the sick list, in addition to Ernest Levison.

Tom had put Manners, Glyn, and Clive into the team in their stead. But there were plenty of fellows who considered they had better claims to a place in the team, and they had been disgruntled ever since.

The fact that the team had suffered a disastrous defeat of four goals to one had provided the disgruntled ones with fresh fuel for their grievance! The fact that the criticised team had played a man short, owing to Cardew's absence, was apt to be forgotten, although the smashing defeat was very much remembered.

Even such fellows as Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior, and Kit Wildrake, and Kerruish, and others, who as a rule were supporters of Tom Merry, had been heard to declare that Tom could have had no eye for "form" to have selected Manners, Clive, and Glyn for the team and left them out!

"Cardew's a silly idiot!" grunted Jack Blake wrathfully.

Tom shrugged, and turned away from the board.

"Come on!" he said quietly. "I suppose Cardew can call a meeting if he likes—if the chaps will go to it?"

There was a sudden step in the doorway behind them.

Burkett had entered the Hall from the quad, with Mellish and Crooke.

Burkett & Co. turned towards the notice-board, as they saw that there was some apparently interesting announcement there, judging from the crowd. Most of the juniors fell aside hastily as Burkett swaggered up.

The bully of the Shell read the notice, and frowned thoughtfully.

He glanced round, and his eyes fell on Tom Merry. He grinned unpleasantly.

"So they're wanting a new captain, are they?" gibed Burkett. He gave a guffaw of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha! You'll be sorry for yourself, if they kick you out! Even sorrier for yourself than you felt the other day after I'd licked you!"

Tom Merry flushed. But he met Burkett's gaze coolly.

"I'll admit you've got a good deal of muscle, Burkett," he said quietly. "It's a pity you haven't an equal amount of good manners."

Burkett gasped, and went fiery red. He took a lurching step towards Tom, and thrust his rugged face down into Tom's own.

"You're asking for another licking, aren't you?" he growled truculently.

Tom's lips curled.

"If you're trying to frighten me into toadying to you, like you have other chaps, you're wasting your time, Burkett!"

Burkett glared ferociously, and clenched his big fists. Then he turned away with a scowl.

"Come on, Tom!" said Manners quietly.

Tom Merry's face was frowning as he accompanied his chums up to the Shell passage. Blake & Co. were having tea with the Terrible Three, but the meal in Study No. 10 was not as cheery as usual.

Despite himself, the knowledge that a good many of the fellows agreed with Cardew that a change in the captaincy would be a good thing, rankled with Tom.

He always tried to carry out his duties as junior skipper conscientiously. He neither asked for nor expected much gratitude from the juniors. But he could not help but feel a trifle bitter that so many of them were ready to turn against him the moment anything went wrong.

"Penny for your thoughts, Tommy"—grinned Blake cheerily—though he could guess well enough the cause for Tom Merry's frown.

Tom smiled, in rather a twisted way.

"I was only thinking that if the chaps want a new junior skipper, I'll be only too ready to oblige by resigning!"

"Oh, rats!" said Blake uneasily. "They don't! Only a few asses—"

"Don't take any notice of Cardew's rot!" grunted Manners.

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

"That giddy meeting will be a frightful frost!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"I'm not so sure about that!" answered Tom bitterly.

He realised better than his chums how high feelings had run among many of the juniors over their exclusion from the recent Greyfriars match. The disgruntled ones had only wanted a leader to organise them—and it looked as though they were going to find such a leader in Ralph Reckness Cardew!

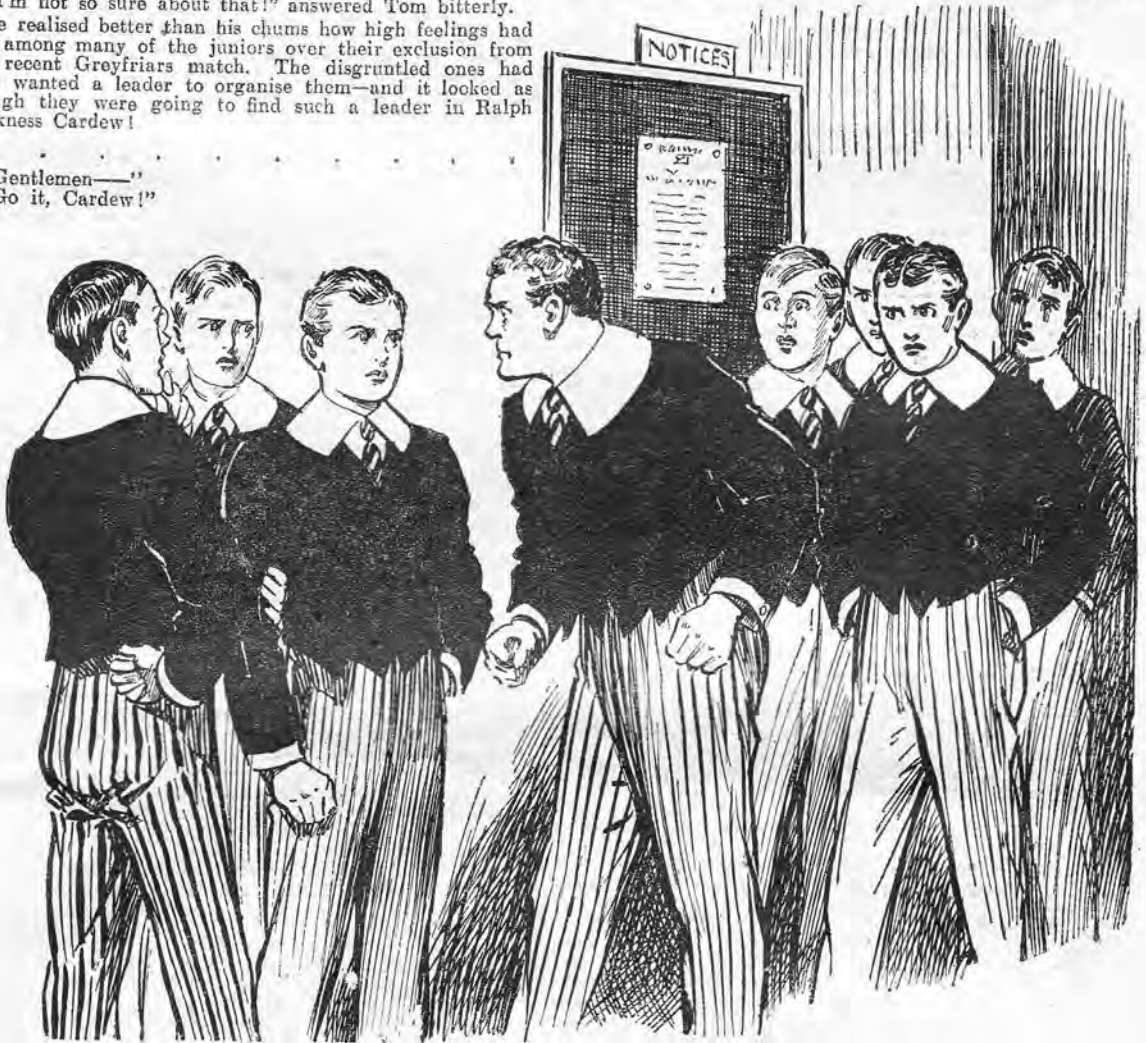
"Gentlemen—"

"Go it, Cardew!"

it had been for many a day! Had the walls been made of elastic, it could scarcely have had more fellows crammed into it.

Burkett was present, leaning against the wall, with Gerald Crooke and Mellish, a scowling grin on his big face. The fellows near were careful not to crowd against him!

There was a big sprinkling of New House fellows, and



Burkett took a step forward and thrust his face into Tom Merry's. "You're asking for another licking, aren't you?" he growled.

Conflicting cheers and groans greeted Cardew as he rose to his feet on a chair, in the junior Common-room the following evening, at six o'clock.

"Good old Cardew!"

"Rats! Br-r-r!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew smiled.

It was clear that the crowd was divided. Some were hostile towards him, others were friendly disposed. The meeting would probably be a stormy one!

But Cardew did not worry. He always had great confidence in himself, and he knew very well how his nimble tongue had the power of swaying fellows round to his way of thinking when he chose to exercise his gift. He had felt all along that if only the juniors would come to his meeting he would be able to influence them as he wished. The danger had been that the fellows might stay away.

But the juniors had come in force.

Not only were the malcontents there, in a body—such as Roylance, and Grundy, and Hammond, the Cockney junior, and Patrick Reilly—but even such staunch supporters of Tom Merry's regime as Blake & Co. and Reginald Talbot were at the meeting.

Curiosity had brought the latter section; but now that they were present they meant to make their voices heard!

Altogether, the Common-room was more crowded than

more than a few Third Form fags. The junior captaincy, the fags felt, was a matter that concerned them very particularly, and they did not mean to be left out of the "discussion" concerning the "advisability of a change in the captaincy of the junior school!" as Cardew's notice had worded it.

The only notable absentees were Tom Merry himself, and Manners and Lowther. But it had scarcely been expected that Tom would turn up.

"Gentlemen!"

Cardew's voice rang out in cool, confident tones above the hubbub. The buzz of talk died away.

"As chairman," continued Cardew, "I should like to remind all you chaps that the purpose of this meetin' is to discuss the advisability of a change in the junior captaincy, at present held by Tom Merry—"

"Shame!"

"Hurrah!"

"Go it, Cardew!"

"I have nothin' to say against Tom Merry," went on Cardew. His tone was ironical. "He is a most excellent individual in his way. Rather one of the ploddin' sort, perhaps—but no need to discuss that. The point is that in

the opinion of a good many of us, a change would be a good thing all round—"

"Hurrah! Rather!"

"Rats!"

"Utah wot, Cardew, deah boy!"

"Shut up, Gussy!" snapped Kerruish. "Go it, Cardew!"

"The question as to whether Tom Merry is a good skipper or a rotten bad one is not really very important," continued Cardew blandly. "The thing is, he's been skipper long enough. New blood is wanted. A change would freshen things up, put new life into things!"

"Well, I dare say there's something in that," nodded Glyn thoughtfully.

Bernard Glyn had come to the meeting a strong supporter of Tom Merry. He had expected to hear Tom Merry criticised, and slanged right and left, and he would have hotly resented such a thing. But Cardew, though he knew the malcontents would have liked to hear Tom Merry being slandered, realised that he had their support in any case, so that he had no need to pander to them. He had to use all his wiles to converting the "doubtfuls," and even Tom's supporters, to his way of thinking; and to do so, it was best, he knew, to employ the velvet glove.

"Blessed if there isn't some sense in what Cardew says, after all!" muttered Kangaroo, the Australian junior. "Tom's a good captain, but he's had a long run for his money, and the best of skippers is bound to get stale. A change might do good."

"For example," Cardew was continuing, his eyes roaming over the listening crowd, "in the matter of football, Tom Merry has got into a groove. Time after time he sticks the same fellows into the team. What's the result? Stale-ness! Look at the last Greyfriars match. I think it is generally agreed that in his selection of substitutes for the three chaps on the sick list Tom Merry showed a lamentable ignorance of the fellows' form!"

"Why, you silly ass—" began Blake hotly.

But his words were drowned in a deafening cheer from all the juniors who felt that they should have been selected. Cardew smiled.

Bernard Glyn went very red. He had been one of the three fellows selected to fill the vacant places in the eleven, and he by no means agreed that Tom's selection had been a bad one!

"Anyway," went on Cardew, "a new skipper would try fresh talent in the team, for a cert, and that's what is wanted, eh?"

"Hurrah!" yelled Roylance.

"Yes, rather!" exclaimed Clifton Dane quickly.

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

"Wata! Tom Mewwy plays the vewy best possible team—"

"Well, of course, Gussy is rather prejudiced," drawled Cardew. "As a member of the team, our dear friend Gussy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a chorus of derisive laughter at the expense of Arthur Augustus. The swell of St. Jim's went crimson.

"Look heah, you wottah. I considah that a caddish-remark!" Arthur Augustus glared at Cardew indignantly. "I considah—"

"Sit on Gussy's head somebody!" suggested Kit Wildrake.

"Look heah, Wildwake—"

Cardew held up his hand smilingly.

"I must apologise if I have offended our excellent friend D'Arcy!" he said, in an ironical tone. "But let's get on to business. I would like to propose a motion!"

There was a tense hush. The fellows could guess well enough what Cardew's motion was going to be.

"Namely," drawled Cardew, "that this meetin' considers that a change in the junior captaincy would be a good thing for St. Jim's, and that therefore Tom Merry is asked to resign!"

He glanced round.

"Anybody care to second that?"

"I will!" shouted Roylance.

"Good man!" grinned Cardew. "Anybody oppose it, or is the motion carried unan?"

Blake pushed his way forward. His face was flushed and indignant.

"I do!" he jumped up on to a chair, and glared round.

"There's a question I'd like to ask! Whom does Cardew propose to fill Tom Merry's place, if he resigns?"

"Hear, hear!" nodded Talbot.

There was a silence. It was rather a poser!

In their eagerness to see Tom Merry deposed, the malcontents had forgotten the necessity of finding someone to fill his place afterwards!

But Cardew smiled coolly.

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"That question scarcely arises until we have received Tom Merry's resignation," he put in quickly. "Anyway, it'll be easy enough to fill his place—"

"I don't think!" roared Herries.

"That's only your opinion," Cardew said, with an ironical smile. "I consider that Blake's question is beside the point."

"Hear, hear!" chorused a dozen juniors—only too eager to shelve a difficult question so easily.

"Look here, you asses—" began Blake, in an exasperated voice.

"Get down!" snorted Grundy.

"Shut up!"

"Dry up, Blake!"

Somebody gave Blake's chair a push, and Blake vanished with an angry yell.

"Hands up those chaps in favour of Tom Merry bein' asked to resign!" cried Cardew quickly.

A forest of hands was raised. Cardew's eyes gleamed.

"Hands up those fellows opposin' the motion!" he drawled.

Blake & Co., Talbot, Kangaroo, and a few fags led by Wally D'Arcy, alone raised their hands.

"I gather," murmured Cardew, with a flickering smile, "that the motion is carried!"

"Hurrah!"

"Rather!"

Tom Merry's handful of supporters said nothing. It was only too obvious that they were very much in the minority. To have demanded an exact count would have been ridiculous.

But there were angry looks on their faces.

They knew only too well that it was personal animosity that had led Cardew into organising the anti-Tom Merry crowd. And they were feeling bitter with such fellows as Clifton Dane, and Kit Wildrake, and others, for having allowed Cardew's facile tongue to sway them to his way of thinking.

"I propose, then," went on Cardew's cool tones, "that a deputation is elected at once to visit Tom Merry and demand his resignation! 1—"

Cardew's voice ceased abruptly.

The door of the Common-room had opened, and Tom Merry himself was framed in the doorway. Manners and Lowther could be seen behind him.

Tom Merry's face was set in an odd way.

He strode into the room, followed by his chums, and there was an utter silence as the fellows watched him enter. Some of them who had just voted for his resignation, carried away by Cardew's arguments, looked a trifle sheepish now, and avoided Tom's cool glance, as the captain of the Shell pushed his way through the throng towards the chair on which Cardew stood, smiling and nonchalant.

Tom halted in front of Cardew. His eyes met those of the slacker of the Fourth.

"Why, it's Thomas himself!" grinned Cardew. In his eyes there was a malicious gleam. "So you've come to our little meetin'—eh?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"Yes, I've come. I was just in time to hear your proposal that a deputation be elected to ask me to resign the captaincy. Well, I'll save you that trouble."

"Meanin'?" drawled Cardew.

"Meaning that, since the fellows seem to want my resignation, they can have it now! I've no wish to try to hang on against their wishes."

Tom's tone, despite himself, was bitter.

He had worked hard and well in the interests of the juniors during his long reign as captain of the Lower School. He had not spared himself. But his only reward was, it seemed, not only complete ingratitude on the part of most of the juniors, but definite animosity!

And they had even allowed themselves to be led by Ralph Reckness Cardew, the slacker of the Fourth, the fellow who had let St. Jim's down so badly in the recent Greyfriars match!

Only a short while ago, most of the fellows now in the Common-room had acclaimed joyfully the fact that he had licked Cardew for that affair. Yet now they were willing to follow under Cardew's leadership against him!

Tom's face hardened.

"I resign!" he exclaimed, and the bitterness of his voice could not be concealed. "I'll see Kildare this evening and tell him so. I'll even oblige you by asking him to arrange the election for my successor!"

In dead silence, Tom Merry pushed his way through the crowd back towards the door. He strode out of the Common room.

The silence was broken by a sudden guffaw of laughter from Frederick Burkett.

Cardew glanced at Burkett, and smiled to himself.

Blake & Co., Talbot, and Kangaroo followed Manners and Lowther from the Common-room, with darkened faces.

An echoing, triumphant cheer from the excited crowd followed them through the open door, and along the passage, and up the stairs.

CHAPTER 3. Cardew's Tool!

TAP!
"Come in!" growled Burkett.
Frederick Burkett was seated in his study, on the following evening, busy with his prep. Crooke was sitting at the opposite end of the table. They both glanced up as the door opened.

Burkett's scowling face broke into a grin.
"Hallo, Cardew!"
Cardew nodded to the bully of the Shell, ignoring Crooke, and closed the door behind him. He dropped into a chair.
"Interruptin' the prep, am I?" drawled Cardew.
"Oh, never mind!" said Burkett, in his growling voice.

The bully of the Shell had a very great admiration for Cardew in his heart. Cardew's cool elegance impressed him enormously, as did the slacker of the Fourth's cleverness, and his reputation for being the gayest of "gay dogs," when the whim took him to amuse himself with the shady crowd.

Despite the bluster and swagger with which Burkett behaved towards other juniors, the bully felt curiously flattered by Cardew's friendliness, though he could probably have licked Cardew with one hand tied behind him.

Not for a moment did Burkett suspect that in his heart Cardew despised him, considered him a dull-witted lout!

And Cardew was very careful that Burkett should not suspect that. Not because he feared Burkett's brawn, but because he wanted to use the muscular occupant of Study No. 7 as a tool.

"I wanted to see you about the captaincy," murmured Cardew, selecting a cigarette from a gold cigarette-case and lighting it. "Have a whiff?"

"Thanks!" grinned Burkett. "I say, what about the captaincy?" He gave a guffaw. "Ha, ha, ha! It was great, the way you persuaded the chaps to kick Tom Merry out!"

"He must be feeling pretty small to-day!" chuckled Crooke maliciously. "I've wanted to see him taken down a peg for a long while, hang him! It was fine when Burkett licked him the other day; but now, he'll have to eat humble-pie properly!"

"Yes, I fancy Thomas will be singin' pretty small in future!" yawned Cardew. A flickering gleam came into his eyes. "The thing is now, who's to take his place?"

"That ass Talbot has put up for it; I see," growled Burkett.

Cardew nodded.
Urged by Blake & Co., Manners and Lowther, and several others, Reginald Talbot had sent in his name to Kildare as a candidate for the vacant captaincy.

But Cardew had certainly no wish to see Talbot of the Shell in Tom Merry's shoes.

Talbot, as a close friend of Tom Merry's, would be sure to carry on with much the same regime as before.

Cardew wanted to complete his triumph by seeing an enemy of Tom Merry's take over the captaincy—someone who could be trusted to snub Tom Merry and his friends, instead of working with them.

He had been racking his brains to find a suitable fellow for his purpose. He had thought of Roylance; but Roylance was not an outstanding enough fellow to stand much chance of being elected in opposition to Talbot. And Cardew certainly did not intend to take on the arduous task of junior captain himself.

It would have been too much like work for Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"Yes, Talbot's puttin' up," nodded Cardew. "So far, there's no one against him. I thought Figgins might put up, but he doesn't seem to be thinkin' of doin' so. But I'm hanged if I want to see our friend Reginald takin' over dear Thomas' job!"

"Rather not," growled Burkett. "But who else is there?"

"What about you?"

Cardew's tone was cool. It was clear that he was not joking. Burkett jumped and Crooke stared at Cardew in astonishment.

"Me?" roared Burkett, in amazement.

"Why not?" grinned Cardew.

Burkett stared at him with open mouth. Then he rose slowly to his feet, and a flickering smile came upon his anything but handsome countenance. He swaggered across towards the fireplace, and stood, with his great legs thrust wide, watching Cardew thoughtfully.

"Well, hang it, why not?" he muttered.

"You are rather new here, of course," went on Cardew

laconically. "But what of that? Although you're a fairly new chap, you've made a big name for yourself already."

Burkett smirked, and threw his chest out boastfully.

"Yes, I fancy I'm cock of the walk here all right!" he growled. "I can lick the lot of 'em!"

"Then why not put up for the captaincy?" grinned Cardew.

Despite his swagger, Burkett could not help but feel a little doubtful about that.

"Well, you know," he said uneasily, "that's rather a tall order, isn't it? I still don't know half the chaps. I don't know much about the footer either. Of course," he added grandly, "I'd soon pick it up—"

"Of course you would!" interrupted Cardew, in a flattering tone. "You'd soon get the hang of things. And I'd help you run things at first, if you liked."

"You would?" exclaimed Burkett eagerly.

"Gad, yes!"

Burkett stared frowningly at Crooke. Crooke was grinning excitedly.

"I think it's a good idea!" chuckled Crooke.

"You do?" queried Burkett doubtfully.

"Rather! Then we could put Tom Merry & Co. in their place properly!"

"I'd do that all right!" boasted Burkett, with a guffaw. "Trust me! But it's not much good me putting up, is it, unless the chaps would vote for me?"

"I fancy they'd vote for you," grinned Cardew. "It would be up to you to see that they did, Burkett!"

"What do you mean, old chap?"

Cardew chuckled.

"Promise Roylance and all that lot that you'll give 'em places in the eleven, and they'll vote for you solid," he murmured. "They know Talbot won't play them any more than Tom Merry would."

"Are they enough to get me in, though, do you think?" asked Burkett eagerly.

Cardew shrugged.

"Well, you could persuade other chaps to vote for you as well. A few hidings, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Burkett gave a roar of laughter. "You mean I could scare a good many chaps into voting for me? You're right, Cardew! I'll bet I could!"

Cardew laughed. His suggestion that Burkett should

(Continued on next page.)

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bully nervous juniors into voting for him was an utterly unscrupulous one—but it appealed to Burkett enormously. "I'll do it!" roared Burkett, thumping the chimneypiece with his fist. "I'll jolly well do it!"

"Good!" breathed Cardew. He rose to his feet. "Come along and see Kildare right away! I'll go with you." An uneasy look came into Burkett's face.

"Have I got to see Kildare?" he growled. "The cad licked me last night—found me twisting D'Arcy minor's arm. The little cad had cheeked me, but Kildare—"

"Oh, never mind!" said Cardew impatiently. "Kildare can't refuse to let you put up for the captaincy, even if he doesn't like you. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Burkett. With lurching strides he followed the elegant figure of Ralph Reekness Cardew from the study.

There was a smile on Cardew's face. Though he knew very well that to put Burkett into the junior captaincy was about the worst thing for the junior school that could happen, he did not care.

He knew that by doing so he would drive home his triumph over Tom Merry to the hilt.

Cardew never did things by halves; and even in his hour of triumph he was as eager as ever to force Tom Merry & Co. to drink the cup of humiliation to its bitterest dregs. And he could accomplish that in no better way than by helping to set over them, as junior captain, Frederick Burkett, the bully of the Shell.

Though on the face of things it might seem that Burkett stood no chance of winning the election, Cardew believed that with judicious "canvassing"—of a violent nature where necessary—the juniors could be persuaded to vote for the bully in sufficient numbers to ensure his success.

And Cardew was right. The election took place on the following Wednesday. The result was one that staggered and dismayed Tom Merry and his friends. They had not believed that Burkett stood a chance.

But when the result was announced by Eric Kildare, the juniors learnt that Burkett had defeated Talbot by five votes.

Frederick Burkett was junior captain of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4. The New Captain!

"SEEN the board?" Monty Lowther rushed into Study No. 10 and fairly yelled that question.

Tom Merry and Manners were collecting their books for afternoon classes. It was the day following the election.

Tom shook his head.

"No. Why, what's up, Monty?"

Monty Lowther almost choked.

"Burkett's put up the team to play Abbotsford on Saturday!" he panted. "There's not a single one of the old team in it!"

"My hat!"

Manners stared at his chum in amazement.

"Not a single blessed one!" panted Monty Lowther.

"Burkett's dropped the lot!"

Tom Merry shrugged coolly.

"I'm not surprised," he said. "I certainly didn't expect he would play me, at any rate." A rather bitter smile appeared on his face. "Burkett bought votes by promising all sorts of chaps a place in the team, so I suppose he's going to keep his word. Anyway, he's captain. He can do as he likes."

"B-but it's the world's worst team!" spluttered Lowther excitedly. "Abbotsford will wipe the ground with us!"

Tom shrugged.

He was no longer captain. It was no business of his what team Burkett chose to select for an important match.

"Who's playing?" he asked.

"Roylance, and Kerruish, and Julian," said Lowther bitterly, "and chaps like that. Clifton Dane's in the team. He's about the best. He and Wildrake. Burkett's playing, and—who do you think?—Crooke!"

Monty Lowther almost choked again.

"Crooke!" he repeated. "Think of it!"

"Not Grundy as well?" inquired Tom dryly.

"No," admitted Lowther. "He's drawn the line there. Grundy'll be wild!" He grinned faintly. "I heard Burkett promising Grundy only yesterday morning that he'd give him a chance in the eleven!"

"Who's in goal?" asked Manners. "You don't mean to say Burkett's even dropped Fatty Wynn?"

"He has! Hammond's in goal."

"Hammond's not bad," said Tom quietly. "Not a patch on old Fatty, of course!"

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,153.

"Abbotsford'll thrash 'em!" groaned Monty Lowther. The bell for classes interrupted the chums of Study No. 10. Outside the Shell Form room, as they arrived downstairs, a number of Shell fellows were already gathered, waiting for Mr. Linton.

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn, were amongst them.

Wilkins and Gunn were looking very pleased with themselves. They were both down to play against Abbotsford in Burkett's team. But at sight of Tom Merry they both went a trifle pink.

Wilkins and Gunn were good chaps at heart, although they had allowed the bribe of a place in the team to induce them to join George Alfred Grundy in voting for the bully of the Shell, and they felt a little sheepish in the presence of Tom Merry.

But though Wilkins and Gunn were pleased about the eleven that the new captain had chosen to meet Abbotsford, the great George Alfred Grundy was just the reverse.

Grundy was holding forth excitedly.

"The blessed rotter!" boomed Grundy, glaring round at the assembled Shell fellows. "He promised to stick me in the team if I'd vote for him—and now he's left me out!"

Some of the Shell fellows chuckled. But Manners grunted.

"Serve you right for letting yourself be bribed, Grundy!" he snapped.

Grundy glared at him.

"Rats! I'm fed up with being kept in the background in junior footer! Think I'd vote for Talbot? Why, when I asked him if he'd play me, if he was elected, he told me he wouldn't even play me if he was elected headmaster!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyway, he was honest about it!" grinned Kangaroo.

"Well, you're right there!" admitted Grundy. "That rotter Burkett—"

"What's that?" bellowed a ferocious voice.

Fred Burkett had come swaggering up, just in time to hear Grundy's excited words.

Grundy turned on him. He was, at any rate, no coward, and he was not afraid of the gigantic bully.

"You rotter!" snorted Grundy. "You said you'd play me in the eleven against Abbotsford!"

Burkett grinned sourly.

"I changed my mind!" he scowled. "So shut up!"

"I'm blessed if I'll shut up!" roared Grundy. "You collared my vote under false pretences you blessed twister! If you weren't a blessed great loud, I'd wallop you! I—"

Grundy got no farther.

Burkett, his face dark, had reached out and seized Grundy by the tie, and jerked him forward, thrusting his own face into the crimson countenance of the great George Alfred.

"Do you want me to thrash you?" demanded Burkett, in a bullying tone. "I will, if you don't shut up!"

Grundy choked. But even in his present excited state, Grundy realised that discretion was the better part of valour. He knew only too well that Burkett could thrash him soundly if he wanted to. Though he was no coward, Grundy was not quite duffer enough to ask for a licking!

"Oh, all right!" growled Grundy. "Hands off, blow you!"

Burkett grinned, and released Grundy, pushing the great George Alfred from him as though he had been no more than a Third Form fag. Grundy toppled over backwards with a wild yell—just as Mr. Linton came rustling round the corner.

"Oh! Goodness gracious! Yoooff!"

Mr. Linton gave a startled yell as Grundy cannoned into him. Grundy, in a wild effort to save himself, clasped the master of the Shell round the neck, and he and Mr. Linton fell to the floor in a struggling heap.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows roared. They could not help it. The sight of Mr. Linton sitting there, with his books scattered about him, and his mortar-board tilted rakishly over one eye, was too much for them! Burkett joined in with a loud guffaw—but the laughter of all was hastily silenced as Mr. Linton staggered to his feet, glaring at the juniors fiercely.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Linton. "How—how dare you laugh? You will all take one hundred lines!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

There were exclamations of dismay among the Shell fellows. Mr. Linton turned a glittering eye upon Grundy as that hapless junior staggered up.

"Grundy!" thundered Mr. Linton.

"Y-yes, sir?" stammered Grundy.

"You will do me five hundred lines, for horseplay in the passage!" rasped Mr. Linton.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Grundy's dismayed glance turned towards Burkett. Tom Merry touched Burkett on the arm.

"Own up, you cad!" muttered Tom. "Tell Linton it was you that pushed Grundy!"

"Rats!" scowled Burkett.

He swung on his heel and strode into the class-room, at Mr. Linton's heels. Grundy hurried after him, and caught him by the coat.

"You rotter!" breathed Grundy. "Aren't you going to own up?"

"Go and eat coke!" grinned Burkett.

He took his place, and Grundy, after a wrathful snort, followed suit. The other Shell fellows surveyed Burkett indignantly.

"That's the sort of chap we've got for a skipper!" muttered Manners. "A rotter who won't own up when—"

"Manners! You were talking. Take another fifty lines!"

Manners gasped and relapsed into silence. Burkett grinned.

Already, it seemed, he was beginning to turn some of his followers against him. But he was safe in the captaincy now, and he did not care. He had bought the juniors'

—St. Jim's are in for a licking, unless a miracle happens! But we may as well see it, anyway."

"Yes, we may as well watch Burkett's rag-time team getting wiped up!" grunted Monty Lowther.

"Come on, then!" agreed Manners, picking up his cap.

Together with Talbot, the Terrible Three left the study and headed for the stairs. They looked in at Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage, and were joined by Blake & Co.



"Get down, Blake!" "Dry up!" Somebody in the crowd gave Jack Blake's chair a push, and he vanished with an angry yell.

votes and been elected junior captain; and he cared nothing now for the further good will of such fellows as George Alfred Grundy.

CHAPTER 5. The Abbotsford Match!

"GOING to watch the match?"

Reginald Talbot put his head in at the door of Study No. 10 with that question.

It was Saturday afternoon, after dinner, and the Terrible Three were in their study, looking rather at a loss.

For Tom Merry and Monty Lowther, at any rate, it was decidedly curious to know that there was a big match on that afternoon, and yet they had not to go and change into footer kit and take part in it!

But it looked as though they would have to get used to that now that Frederick Burkett was Junior Captain of St. Jim's.

Reginald Talbot, though usually a sunny-faced individual, was looking anything but his cheery self. He, too, felt keenly the fact that he was not wanted for the match that afternoon.

"Yes, I suppose we may as well watch it," said Tom Merry, with a nod. "I'm afraid it won't be very pleasant

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was looking very indignant about things as the friends of the Fourth and Shell left the School House and set off towards Little Side, where the Abbotsford match was due to begin in another few minutes.

"Fancay havin' the cheek to leave evey one of us out of the team, deah boys!" snorted Arthur Augustus. "I considah—"

"It's a deliberate slight, of course!" growled Blake.

"Yes," nodded Tom Merry. "And it's Cardew who's put him up to it, I feel sure. I realise now that Cardew has never forgiven me for the licking I gave him."

"Burkett ought to be scawgged!" declared the swell of St. Jim's, with a sniff.

"Yes—but who's going to scrag him?" grinned Monty Lowther ruefully. "If there's any scragging done, it's Burkett that always does it!"

"Yaas, that is the twouble!" admitted the swell of St. Jim's with a sigh, and a shake of his noble head. "At one time I had evey hope that Tom Mowwy would be able to thwash the wottah, despite Burkett's tewwific bwute stwength. But when Burkett wiped up the gwound with Tom, it wathah put the lid on things, don't you know."

Tom Merry coloured faintly.

"I trust you do not wesen my wofewwin' to your lickin', deah boy?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus hastily.

"Ass!" said Tom shortly.

"Shut up, Gussy!" snapped Manners. "Hallo, the game's started!"

They had arrived on Little Side to find the match already in progress.

It was by no means an ideal day for footer. There was a strong wind sweeping down the footer field, a wind with rain in it.

Burkett had evidently won the toss for his side, for the St. Jim's Eleven were playing with the wind.

Tom Merry and Co., Talbot, and Blake & Co., gathered in a group half-way down the touch-line, watching the game with curious eyes.

Fellows glanced at them covertly. The majority of Tom Merry's group were fellows who had always been certain of a place in the team under Tom Merry's regime. The other juniors wondered—some of them rather maliciously—what Tom and his friends were feeling like, now that they were out of it, the merest nobodies under Burkett's captaincy!

But Tom Merry & Co. did not notice the curious glances cast in their direction. They were too intent upon the game.

They realised almost at once that Abbotsford had sent over a far weaker team than usual.

"That's a bit of luck for Burkett," growled Blake.

Tom Merry nodded. He was watching with critical eyes as Burkett's forward line, consisting of Wildrake at centre, Roylance and Gunn on either side of him, and Kerruish and Wilkins out on the wings, attacked the Abbotsford defence.

Though Wildrake was playing good footer, and the others were backing him up fairly well, the play was certainly not up to the usual St. Jim's junior eleven standard! The old forward line, consisting of Tom Merry, Monty Lowther, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, Ernest Levison and Reginald Talbot could have made circles round Burkett's forwards.

But thanks chiefly to the blustering wind behind them, the St. Jim's attack was doing well enough against the unusually weak Abbotsford team.

Even as Tom Merry watched, Wildrake passed to Roylance, and a lucky kick from the latter's foot was caught by a gust of wind and borne past the Abbotsford goalkeeper into the net.

"My hat!" gasped Monty Lowther. "They've scored!"

It had certainly been a lucky goal, if ever there was one. But it was scarcely as lucky as the one which followed!

With the powerful advantage of the wind behind them, the St. Jim's eleven, five minutes later, succeeded in penetrating the Abbotsford defence again. A shot of Gunn's failed to get past the goalkeeper, however—but as the goalie kicked clear, the wind caught the ball again. It struck one of the Abbotsford backs, and rebounded into the net before the astonished goalkeeper had time to keep it out.

"B-bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus.

"Great pip!" ejaculated Herries feebly.

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Monty Lowther. "Did you ever see such luck?"

Roars of laughter were mingled with the cheering of the St. Jim's onlookers, as the disconsolate Abbotsford goalkeeper fished the ball out of the net.

There were determined expressions on the faces of the Abbotsford men, as they kicked off again.

But luck was against them.

The wind seemed to be increasing with every moment, and it brought with it a fine, stinging rain that beat into the faces of the visiting team. Consequently, the St. Jim's eleven were able to hold their own fairly easily, and Burkett, at right-back, had practically nothing to do. Hammond, in goal, did not even touch the ball.

The Abbotsford men were no doubt promising themselves revenge at half-time!

But when half-time came, the amazing bad luck that dogged their footsteps still continued. The wind fell a few minutes before the interval, and when the teams had changed ends for the second half it had dropped altogether.

But even though they had no wind to help them, the visiting team, now that they were no longer facing it, soon put a very different complexion on to things!

They attacked strongly, and though they were by no means up to the usual standard of Abbotsford teams, they forced nearly all the play into the St. Jim's half.

Hammond began to have a busy time!

Burkett himself was no footballer. But his great size and strength seemed rather to intimidate the visitors, and they gave him a wide berth. But for that fact, they must soon have scored. As it was, not till the second half had been in progress for half an hour did the Abbotsford inside-

right succeed in putting the ball past Hammond into the net.

During the remaining quarter of an hour, the visiting team struggled desperately to equalise. But their ill luck held. They had discovered that Burkett was by no means so formidable as a footballer as he looked, and the Abbotsford forwards were having things all their own way. But shot after shot missed the goal by inches, the ball flying just outside the posts, or hitting the crossbar.

When the final whistle went, St. Jim's were the victors by two goals to one—and on Burkett's mud-bespattered face there was a triumphant grin.

It had been anything but good football, and only the most amazing luck had brought victory to St. Jim's. But Burkett swaggered off the field with Crooke as though he had won the Cup Final.

Crooke, too, though he had played amazingly badly at right-half, strutted along with a very grand air indeed. The pair of them caught sight of Tom Merry & Co., and turned towards them.

"Well, what about that?" grinned Burkett boastfully. "We've licked them! No more four—one lickings for St. Jim's, like you had over at Greyfriars, now I'm captain!"

Tom Merry smiled. But it was an ironical smile. He said nothing. But Blake stepped forward with an angry snort.

"Why, you ass!" he said impatiently. "It was only by giddy luck that you won, as you'd know if you were anything of a footballer!"

"What?" roared Burkett. "Why, you—you—"

"Oh, come on," exclaimed Tom Merry, taking Blake by the arm. "Leave the giddy victor to his triumph, old chap!" He laughed. "Anyway, it's something to be pleased about that St. Jim's won!"

Tom Merry and his companions turned away towards the quad, leaving Burkett glaring after them.

There were great rejoicings that evening among Burkett's supporters.

The victory over Abbotsford was hailed as a great triumph for the new eleven, and definite proof of its sterling worth. Burkett and his followers made a point of comparing the day's result with the defeat Tom Merry's eleven had suffered at the hands of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars—the fact of the St. Jim's team on the latter occasion being a man short, and containing no less than three substitutes in its depleted ranks for fellows on the sick list, being tacitly ignored!

The result of the Abbotsford match had certainly been a surprise for Tom Merry & Co.

They were pleased, despite everything, that St. Jim's had beaten the visitors. But they knew only too well, that it had been the most amazing luck that alone had enabled Burkett and his merry men to win.

But one thing was very certain!

In future, Tom Merry & Co. would be deliberately kept in the background, so far as footer was concerned, by the new captain. Such fellows as Roylance and Kerruish and Wildrake would be the representatives of St. Jim's against rival schools.

The new regime had certainly started with a victory. But how long it would continue on victorious lines was a very doubtful problem in the opinion of the Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6.

CHAPTER 6.

Cardew Cools Off!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW yawned. He seemed tired.

Cardew was seated by the counter in Mrs. Taggles' little tuckshop under the elms. It was tea-time, and Cardew had felt too lazy to make tea for himself in Study No. 12. So he had sauntered out to the tuckshop, to enjoy it there.

Mrs. Taggles smiled at Cardew. The slacker of the Fourth, being a wealthy fellow, was a good customer, and to good customers Mrs. Taggles always made herself very pleasant, naturally enough.

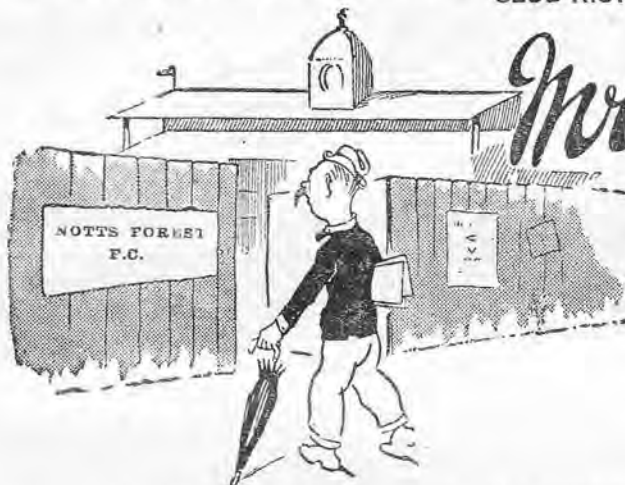
"Tired, Master Cardew?"

Cardew nodded.

"I am feelin' rather tired," he admitted. "I walked down to the river this afternoon. Must have covered nearly a quarter of a mile altogether, I suppose." He shuddered. "Frightful stretch!"

Mrs. Taggles smiled doubtfully. She never quite knew when Cardew was joking.

(Continued on page 12.)



Mr. Parker POPS IN

TO SEE
NOTTS FOREST.

Bold, Bad Foresters!

NOTTs FOREST are one of the football clubs I have always liked, mainly because there is a touch of novelty in the name under which they play. Anybody can think of adding the word Wanderers or Rovers, or United, but there is only one Football League team to-day with whom the word Forest is associated.

If you let your imagination run a little you can see bold, bad Foresters, lurking behind the trees, ready to pinch a couple of League points from any stranger who happens to pass, or who has such a spacious cloak that the English Cup itself might be hidden underneath without anybody suspecting same.

Of course, you know—or perhaps you don't—why this football club which the Editor sent me to visit is called Notts Forest. They play on the old Forest recreation ground and that recreation ground was once in the heart of Sherwood Forest, well known in history because of association with Robin Hood.

I can't quite remember whether Robin Hood was famous for doing the unexpected, but the Foresters of these days have done the unexpected this season. When the Cup-ties started they were a lowly Second Division side, even in danger of losing their place in that section. Nobody expected them to make any real progress in the Cup, but they just stuck it and stuck it while other more famous teams went out.

And so it was suggested to me when I got to what is now called the City ground at Nottingham—that the bold Reds of to-day have some of the fighting spirit of the old Foresters. They went to Sunderland for the Fifth Round of the Cup this season and early in the second half of the match were two goals down. The game was as good as lost, or so it seemed. But as the man they had put into the centre-forward position had not pinched the goals, as expected, a shuffle was made. Young Dickinson, a bonnie fighter in a football jersey, was brought from the wing to the centre, and he got two goals to save the match. These self-same Foresters also beat Sunderland in the replay by three goals to one, although they were a goal to the bad until about twenty minutes from the end.

Thirty Shillings a Game!

HAVING disposed of Sunderland in the Fifth Round, the Forest had Sheffield Wednesday as visitors in the Sixth Round, and Mr. Secretary Stanley Hardy forthwith delved into history the minute that game was mentioned.

He recalled—and I believe this is a fact—that Notts Forest and Sheffield Wednesday played in a Cup-tie in 1883. That was before players were allowed to be paid for playing. Forest won that match, but the Wednesday protested on the grounds that one of their men had been paid the handsome fee of thirty shillings for appearing in the game. And the protest was upheld.

As a matter of fact there is just about as much interesting history connected with the Forest club as any to be found in the length and breadth of the land. I was shown, when I went there the other day, a quaint old-time whistle. I was assured

ANOTHER FOOTER TEAM THAT LIVES ON A DIET OF GOALS FOR BREAKFAST!

that this whistle was the first ever used by a referee to control a football match. I cannot swear that the whistle I saw was the actual first used, but it is a fact that it was on the ground of Notts Forest, in 1878, that a referee's whistle was first heard.

With the present-day trainer, Dave Willis, who puts so much "pep" into the boys that they generally play their best during the last quarter of an hour of a match, I fell to discussing forward formations. And he in his turn told me that it is claimed for the Forest that they were the first club to adopt the three half-back formation. I don't know how long that is ago, but it was certainly before you were born, and probably before I was born either. So we will call these Foresters pioneers of the football world—explorers, adventurers, and experimenters.

Smiling Wallace!

THE trainer, who will have his little joke, then told me that he would introduce me to "Noah's Ark." I told him that I had had enough of history, and that I wanted to see the present-day players. He laughed at that, threw open the gymnasium door, and said: "There you are—Noah's Ark!"

The trainer had to dodge back quickly through the partly open door or he might have been hit by something which was held threateningly in the hands of a player. And that player, as I quickly discovered, was Noah Burton. Because Noah is there—because he has been there longer than any of the other players—they call the Forest fellows "Noah's Ark."

And as they passed out on to the practice pitch two by two, I found out something about them. They may not be the best footballers ever, these bold,

bad Foresters, but they are a very bright lot, full of life and sparkle, and when the referee says go—they go, and never stop running till a match is over. Mostly the players of to-day are Englishmen, and mostly they have been brought out by the Forest officials because there is not a lot of spare cash to be thrown about in the shape of big transfer fees.

I did discover an Irishman among the party—Bob Wallace, who plays at left-half, and who is the life and soul of the Ark. I believe that if it rained at Nottingham for forty days and forty nights, Wallace would keep on smiling, and keep on

telling the boys that the sun would be sure to shine on the following morning so that they could go out and enjoy a game of golf.

Dexterity in Defence!

GOLKKEEPER DEXTER is well named, and I was actually introduced to him as "Mr. Dexterity."

Now they know a good goalkeeper at the Forest when they see one, for they have had the great Sam Hardy on their staff in the past, and actually Dexter was the successor of perhaps the best keeper England has ever possessed.

Billy Thompson and his partner, Barrington, the full-backs, are very good in the art of positional play, and the former knows all the moves. He should do, because he is a draughtsman who fully mastered that job before he consented to sign on as a professional footballer.

Between the Irishisms of Wallace and the Scottish humour of right-half McKinlay I got a bit mixed up, but I discovered that they were the very best of friends, and that they love to play each other at the good old game of billiards. Loftus, the inside-left, assured me that the Irishman and the Scotsman never quarrel, but, with a twinkle in his eye, he added that they couldn't because neither could understand the other.

For the Love of the Game!

EARLIER in these notes I told you of a case of a Notts Forest player of olden days over whom the club got into trouble because they paid him for playing when payment was not allowed. The Notts Forest team to-day has in it one man who doesn't get paid for playing—Clive German. And I can assure you that the rest of the staff at the City ground are prepared to pay tribute to what this amateur inside-right has done for the side since he threw in his lot with them.

Clive German played for Oxford against Cambridge at soccer not long ago, and was largely instrumental in seeing the Dark Blues through to victory when everybody expected Cambridge to win. He is now in practice concerning legal matters at Nottingham. He just loves the sport of football, and the faster the game goes, the heavier the charging, the more German likes it. He is, indeed, one of the lads of the Forest in these days!

I was told that Notts had played Cup-ties in all the four countries of the British Isles. They have also played in the First Division, and will do so again in the future, because the real team spirit is there.

"Nosey."

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The Bully of the Shell!

(Continued from page 10.)

Cardew yawned again, politely concealing it behind his hand.

It was a Wednesday afternoon, nearly a fortnight after the Abbotsford match.

A shadow fell across the tuckshop doorway. Tom Merry entered, with Manners and Lowther. They glanced at Cardew, then ignored him. The Terrible Three were still "cutting" Cardew.

The chums of Study No. 10 were evidently laying in provisions for tea in their study. They left the little shop with their arms laden, and Cardew watched them go with a grin on his handsome face.

During the last fortnight the Terrible Three had been more or less nobodies at St. Jim's, and Cardew felt sure that they must be smarting at their ignominious position.

But for once Cardew was wrong in his estimate.

Tom Merry & Co. had taken the turn of the tide very philosophically. They were kept out of the football by the new captain, and they missed their footer, it was true. But Tom Merry, at any rate, had been relieved of a great deal of responsibility by the change in the captaincy, and he was determined to enjoy his new-found freedom from that arduous position.

Tom Merry and his friends were going their way without worrying about Burkett or Cardew or anyone!

Another shadow fell across the doorway.

Burkett entered the tuckshop. Cardew gave a muttered exclamation.

"Oh gad!" he sighed to himself wearily.

Burkett's face lit up a little at sight of the slacker of the Fourth.

"I've been looking for you!" he exclaimed growlingly. Cardew, who had spent all that day carefully avoiding Burkett, knew very well that Burkett had been looking for him. But he managed to look surprised.

"I wanted to see you this morning," complained Burkett.

"About the Wednesday practice game, you know—"

"Oh!" murmured Cardew. "Why?"

"I wanted you to help me arrange the teams," grumbled Burkett.

Cardew grinned inwardly.

"Oh! Why?" repeated Cardew languidly. "I mean to say, you're skipper, dear man—not me!"

"Yes, but—"

"What did you do, then?" yawned Cardew.

"Nothing," growled Burkett. "There wasn't any practice game. The chaps got a bit annoyed about it."

"Did they?" grinned Cardew. "Surprisin'!"

"I gave Wildrake a licking," scowled Burkett. "He got too cheeky."

Cardew smiled.

He had soon grown tired of the task of running the captaincy for Burkett, behind the scenes. At first he had helped Burkett in order to enable the bully to make a reasonable success of the captaincy, in order to make Tom Merry look all the smaller. But now that he had wearied of doing so, and was leaving Burkett to do the best he could by himself, the new captain's leadership was beginning to go to pieces.

There had been complaints already, Cardew knew. And Burkett's method of dealing with complaints was to lick the fellows who made them!

"Well, look here," went on Burkett, drawing up a stool beside Cardew's, "I want to talk to you about the match against the Grammar School on Saturday!"

"Oh gad!" groaned Cardew.

"Eh?"

"Nothin'!" said Cardew hastily.

"Clifton Dane won't be able to play," grunted Burkett. "Neither will Gunn. Gunn's crooked, and Dane's gone down with a bad chill, and he's in the sanny. And I'm hanged if I'll play Wildrake, after what he said to-day about there not being a practice game! I've finished with Wildrake."

Cardew yawned.

"Well?" he said impatiently. "What do you want me to do about it?"

"Tell me who to put in their places, of course," grunted Burkett.

"I should play Grundy, Wally D'Arcy, and Kildare, if I were you," drawled Cardew ironically, slipping from his stool.

"Eh?"

"Nothin'!" said Cardew hastily.

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Cardew yawned.

"Well?" he said impatiently. "What do you want me to do about it?"

"Eh?"

"Nothin'!" said Cardew hastily.

He sauntered out of the tuckshop, leaving Burkett staring after him with a blank expression on his rugged face.

"Grundy?" muttered Burkett. "Wally D'Arcy? And— and Kildare? Hang it, he must have been joking! The silly ass!"

A wrathful frown appeared on Burkett's countenance. With beetling brows he lurched quickly towards the door and stared out.

But Cardew had vanished.

He had no inclination towards discussing the Grammar School match with Burkett. Cardew did not care two pins about the Grammar School match.

Burkett searched for him, but he searched in vain. At last the Samson of the Shell retired to his study in a very bad temper.

Burkett enjoyed being captain. By nature a bullying tyrant, such a position appealed to him tremendously. But he was not a clever individual, and a certain amount of brains were needed for the task of junior skipper.

Where his own brains failed Burkett had relied upon Cardew's.

But it was beginning to seem, even to Frederick Burkett, that Cardew was tiring of being the brains behind the throne!

And the prospect of having to run the captaincy without Cardew's help was one that filled the bully of the Shell with a good deal of uneasiness.

He sallied forth after a while to search for Cardew again. The matter of the coming Grammar School match had to be settled, and he wanted Cardew's help in doing so.

But he could not find Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Not until the juniors were going upstairs to bed did Burkett again set eyes on the slacker of the Fourth. He joined him on the stairs, and seized him by the arm.

"I say," muttered Burkett eagerly, "do you really think Grundy would be any good? Against the Grammar School, you know—"

"Gad, yes!" nodded Cardew.

To himself he added:

"Good for the other side!"

"Then I'll play him," grunted Burkett. "Now, what about Gore? Or do you think a New House chap—"

"Ask me to-morrow," pleaded Cardew. "I'm feelin' too tired just now."

"But, look here—"

"Play anybody you like," sighed Cardew wearily. "I don't care!"

He disengaged his arm from Burkett's huge hand, and strolled away towards the Fourth Form dormitory.

Burkett glared after him speechlessly.

CHAPTER 7.

Good O'd Grundy!

GEORGE ALFRED GRUNDY smiled a satisfied smile.

He was standing before the glass in the changing-room surveying himself contentedly.

Grundy was clad in footer kit.

It was the following Saturday, the day of the match against Gordon Gay & Co. of the Grammar School. And Grundy was playing!

Grundy had arrived at the changing-room a good quarter of an hour before anyone else. He was already changed, though none of the other footballers had even put in an appearance as yet.

"Blessed slackers!" grunted Grundy, as he turned away at last from the glass.

Even as he spoke, however, three juniors appeared. They were Roylance, and his own two chums, Wilkins and Gunn. Gunn was walking with a limp. He was not playing in the match, for he had crooked his ankle during the week.

"Buck up, you dummies!" boomed Grundy. "Mustn't be late for the kick-off!"

Roylance stared at Grundy—not very amiably.

"Why, you ass, it's not kick-off till two o'clock!" he exclaimed. "It's only twenty minutes to now."

"I believe in being in plenty of time for an important match," said Grundy impressively.

Wilkins and Gunn grinned. Roylance sniffed as he began to change. He did not approve at all of the inclusion of Grundy in the team! Neither did any of the other members of the eleven, except Burkett. But Burkett had decided, for some inexplicable reason, that Grundy should play, and no one dared argue with the bully of the Shell.

"You know," said Grundy, "Burkett is a good skipper, after all! He's come round to see sense, in a way that Tom Merry never did."

"How's that?" inquired Wilkins, kicking off his boots.

"Why, in playing me, of course, you dummy!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What's that?" roared Grundy.

"Oh, nothing!" said Wilkins hastily. Grundy stared at him suspiciously. "You're not meaning you don't think I ought to be in the team, are you?" he demanded. "Because if you are I'll jolly well —" "Of course you ought to be in the team, old chap!" said Wilkins humbly.

"I should jolly well think I ought!" snorted Grundy. Other members of the team were entering the changing-room now. Gordon Gay & Co. had arrived, and before long the footballers were going out on to Little Side.

A big crowd had gathered to watch the match. Possibly the inclusion of Grundy in the team had attracted fellows to Little Side that afternoon. Even Fifth-Formers were standing on the touch-line. At sight of Burkett's team coming out—with Grundy well in the fore—there were lusty cheers.

Grundy grinned round at the onlookers kindly, mentally deciding to show the fellows a thing or two that afternoon! Ralph Rockness Cardew, watching the St. Jim's team and the Grammarians lining up, smiled.

He had suggested to Burkett that Grundy should be put in the team for a joke. But Burkett had taken him seriously! And Cardew had not bothered to explain to Burkett that he had been joking. He was tired of helping Burkett in his duties as junior captain.

But since Grundy was in the team, there looked like being some fun on Little Side that afternoon, and Cardew had strolled along to watch it!

He had not to wait long for his amusement. Grundy was playing at inside-left, between Wilkins and Roylance. The Grammarians kicked off, and instantly Grundy hurled himself at the ball.

Crash! George Alfred Grundy, Gordon Gay, the Grammarian leader, and Frank Monk, the Grammar School inside-right, went down in a heap, as a result of Grundy's terrific attack.

Gordon Gay gave a yell, as Grundy placed a boot on his face in struggling up again. But Grundy did not heed. He had seen the ball lying near him, and he was on it like a flash.

"I'll show 'em!" thought Grundy. He rushed away up the field with the ball. A figure loomed up before him, and Grundy charged it over, and swept on. Another footballer barred his way, and the second met the same fate as the first.

Grundy tore on! He was vaguely conscious of excited yells around him. The onlookers were evidently cheering him. A rugged smile appeared for a moment on Grundy's face. But he had no time to think of the sensation he was causing. On towards the goal he rushed.

Crash! One of the full-backs had tried to bar his progress, but in vain. The back went over with a gasp, and Grundy charged for the goal.

The goalkeeper was crouching. He was shouting to Grundy, and waving his arms excitedly. Grundy vaguely wondered at that. It did not seem usual for a goalkeeper to shout and wave his arms when an opposing forward was about to shoot.

But that was the goalkeeper's look-out, not Grundy's. Not till he had rushed almost across the goal-line did Grundy shoot. The goalie caught the ball against his chest desperately—but Grundy, unable to stop himself—hurtled on, and he and the goalkeeper went into the net in a wild heap. The ball went flying into the back of the net, and Grundy felt a wave of joy and triumph sweep over him as he struggled rather dazedly to his feet.

He had scored. He had shown them—already, in the first minute of the game, he had shown them!

"You—you hurbling bandersnatch!" Grundy jumped.

The goalkeeper was addressing him, in terms that were scarcely complimentary—and his voice seemed somehow familiar.

Grundy stared at the goalkeeper. The spluttering face of Harry Hammond, the St. Jim's goalkeeper, glared back at him.

"You—you silly lunatic!" shrieked Hammond. Grundy's jaw dropped, as the horrible truth dawned upon him.

In his excitement, he had run the wrong way. He had scored a goal—for the Grammarians.

"How did the match go?" Tom Merry asked that question.

The Terrible Three had been over to Spalding Hall, to have tea with Ethel Cleveland & Co., their girl chums. They had returned to St. Jim's with Blake & Co., after a very pleasant afternoon, and as they had strolled into the

quadrangle they had met George Figgins, the leader of the New House.

A very peculiar expression came into Figgy's face. "Grammar School won!" he said. "Oh, rotten!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What was the score?"

"Guess?" suggested Figgins. His voice, like his face, seemed rather peculiar to the chums of the School House. "Remember Grundy was playing."

"Four—nil!" growled Manners. Figgins shook his head. "My hat!" gasped Blake. "Six—nil!"

"More than that." "Wha-a-at?" yelled Tom Merry. "Eight—nil!" "Ten—nil?" groaned Figgins.

"G-g-great Scott!" stammered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Grundy scored the first goal for the Grammarians!" went on Figgins. "Gordon Gay got the next. Grundy got next—headed the wrong way off a corner-kick. Then Gay scored again. Then Frank Monk. Then they changed over at half-time, and Grundy got another goal—for the Grammar School, of course. He forgot the teams had changed ends, I believe. Then—"

"Spare us the rest!" begged Monty Lowther feebly. "How many did Grundy get after that?"

"No more! Three was enough, even for Grundy, I suppose."

"My hat!" Tom Merry stared at Figgins in dismay. "Those Grammar School bounders will never let us hear the last of this!"

"Rather not!" agreed Figgins gloomily. Suddenly he brightened. "There's one thing—there's the House match next week!" He chuckled. "My hat—New House are going to wipe up the ground with the School House this time!"

Tom Merry & Co. and Blake & Co. did not argue with that assertion, as they would have done in the old days. They knew only too well how likely it was that Figgy's claim would be more than justified, with Burkett selecting the School House Eleven.

"New House are going to be cock House in future, my lads!" chuckled Figgins. "All the way! We'll put the School House in its place now, see if we don't!"

He grinned, and strolled away. The chums of the School House glared after him. Then Tom Merry grinned ruefully.

"The New House bounders are sure to take advantage of the present state of things to get the better of the School House," he admitted gloomily. "And with Burkett as captain it won't be very hard for 'em to make themselves cock House!"

"Rotten!" growled Blake. It was with dismal faces that the chums went their way.

CHAPTER 8.

Lickings for all!

CRASH! Crash! Crash! "What the merry dickens—" Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther stared at one another as those mysterious crashes resounded in the Shell passage.

The Terrible Three were busy with their prep, in Study No. 10, later that evening.

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Manners, jumping up. "What on earth's happening?"

"Sounds like a Mexican revolution!" grinned Lowther.

Manners swung open the door and stepped out into the passage. Tom Merry and Lowther followed him. They all three gasped.

A little way along the passage, outside the open door of Study No. 7, the floor was littered with gasping juniors!

I'VE PACKED THIS WEEK'S ISSUE WITH SUCH A FINE FEAST OF READING that I've only left myself an ODD CORNER in which to tell you about next week's stories. However, I don't suppose that'll keep you awake many nights. Now about the programme for next week. There'll be the usual long complete dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's and that firebrand, "Bully" Burkett, who's been causing such a reign of terror at the school. Then, our trusty and tried friends, the Oracle and Mr. Parker, contribute their latest efforts, and lastly the final instalment of "The Valley of Fortune!" Next week, too, I shall make a full announcement about the serial which will follow. My corner's come to an end. Cheerio.—Ed.

Roylance was there, sitting on the linoleum, and massaging his jaw. He looked dazed. Hammond was there; both hands clasped to his nose, sitting breathlessly at the side of Roylance. Dick Julian was there, and so was Patrick Reilly, and so was Kerruish. All three of them, like Roylance and Hammond, were sitting on the linoleum, looking decidedly battered and breathless as they blinked dazedly at the open doorway before them.

Even as the Terrible Three stared in bewildered astonishment, a flying figure came hurtling out through the doorway into the passage, and collapsed among the others with a yell.

It was Wildrake this time! And Wildrake's nose was looking like a fresh tomato.

"My hat!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

A moment later the brawny figure of Frederick Burkett, his sleeves rolled up and his hair dishevelled, glared out of the doorway at the six battered juniors in the passage.

"Any more complaints?" bellowed Burkett.

"Yow! Nunno!" panted Reilly.

"Any more criticisms of me as skipper?" thundered Burkett.

"Ooooh! N-no!" groaned Wildrake.

"Anything more to say about me putting Grundy in the team?" yelled Burkett.

"N-not a w-w-word!" gasped Roylance.

Burkett retreated, and slammed the door. The six dishevelled juniors staggered to their feet with gasps and groans.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A yell of laughter from the Terrible Three caused the disconsolate six to turn their heads quickly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gasped Monty Lowther. "So you've been grumbling to the giddy captain about the footer this afternoon, have you? And he's chucked you out? Oh, what a scream!"

The Terrible Three shrieked, doubled up with mirth.

Burkett's way with fellows who had criticisms to make was evidently drastic!

"Oh, the beast!" groaned Dick Julian. "He's just about laughed us!"

"Grooooooh! The rotter!" moaned Hammond.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The six discomfited recipients of Burkett's wrath glared at the Terrible Three and limped painfully away.

They were not likely to venture to air any complaints to the junior captain again.

Tom Merry & Co. re-entered their study, still chuckling, to resume their prep.

But before they closed the door heavy footsteps came along the passage from the direction of the stairs. They belonged to George Alfred Grundy—and Grundy was looking as though he had been in a riot, or an earthquake, at least.

One eye was closed, his nose was swollen, and his right ear was trying successfully to imitate a cauliflower.

The Terrible Three stared at him.

"What's the matter with you?" gasped Manners.

Grundy snorted.

"Burkett!" he said savagely. "He licked me! I couldn't do a thing against the great lout!"

"What did he lick you for?" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Because of the match this afternoon," coughed Grundy.

"I—ahem—made one or two little slips—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at!" growled Grundy. "Anyone might have made the same mistake. I only—"

"Only kicked three goals against your own side, eh?" murmured Manners gravely. "Oh, anyone might make a little mistake like that, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy glared and snorted and stamped on towards his study, followed by the chuckles of the Terrible Three.

"Oh, my hat!" grinned Tom Merry. "Lickings all round. That's Burkett's way of running the captaincy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But though they laughed, they knew in their hearts that it was scarcely a laughing matter.

They did not know that it was because Ralph Reckness Cardew was withdrawing his aid that Burkett's captaincy was beginning to go to pieces—with the result that even the bully's own supporters were beginning to change their tune about him. But they did know that with Frederick Burkett in the seat of power the Lower School would soon find itself in a very bad way!

The Grammar School had thrashed the junior eleven by an unprecedented margin of goals for a beginning. Already the New House were putting on airs and reviving their claim to being cock House—a claim which would have soon been put in its place under Tom Merry's captaincy.

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There was a frown on Tom's face as he sat down to resume his interrupted prep.

It was not his own downfall that troubled him. It was the certain knowledge that under the captaincy of the bully of the Shell things would go from bad to worse—both for St. Jim's and for the School House!

CHAPTER 9.

A New House Jape!

FREDERICK BURKETT scowled.

Together with his two cronies, Crooke and Mellish, the bully of the Shell was standing at the top of the School House steps. It was about tea-time on the following Tuesday.

Burkett was not feeling quite so pleased with himself since the disastrous match against the Grammar School!

Though he had licked all the fellows who had dared to



"Ha, ha, ha!" The sight of Mr. Linton sitting dazedly on the stairs of the junior school.

criticise him, he knew well enough that a good many of his followers were beginning to wish they had Tom Merry back in the position of junior skipper, and that knowledge rankled.

He had overheard Lennox saying so in the Common-room that morning. He had licked Lennox; but that was not really very much consolation for his wounded vanity.

Though he meant to hang on to the captaincy for all he was worth, he had already discovered that it was not entirely a bed of roses.

Cardew, for one thing, had let him down.

He had relied on Cardew's brains almost as much as on his own muscles to see him through. Now that Cardew had tired of helping him run things Burkett was finding that he had to try to use his own brains instead—never a very easy or congenial task with Frederick Burkett!

In his first indignation against Cardew he had decided to lick Cardew. But he had not done so.

In his heart, Burkett was rather afraid of the stinging tongue of the slacker of the Fourth. He did not care to risk Cardew's enmity for that reason. He knew that, however much he licked Cardew, Cardew would always win

in the end, by the simple process of making him look a fool before other fellows, with his nimble wits!

"Blow Cardew!" growled Burkett. "I'll jolly well show him I can run the captaincy without him, anyway!"

"That's it," advised Crooke in an oily tone. "You can manage all right without Cardew!"

Burkett's sullen face lightened a trifle. He threw out his great chest.

"Of course I can!" he boasted. "I'll show 'em! And I'll lick anyone who says I can't!"

"He, he, he! Rather!" sniggered Mellish.

A step in the doorway behind them caused the trio to glance round. The elegant figure of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was approaching.

The swell of St. Jim's was on his way to Mrs. Taggles' little shop to buy provision for tea in Study No 6.

He sailed past Burkett & Co. without a word. But Burkett, with a wink at Crooke, stuck out a big boot, and the next moment Arthur Augustus tripped over it, and went flying down the steps with a yell.

Crash!

"Yawwoop!"

Arthur Augustus landed in the quad, and sat up dazedly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Burkett & Co. shrieked with merriment. Arthur Augustus, scrambling up painfully, jammed his monocle into his eye, and clenched his fists. He rushed up the steps towards Burkett.

Burkett's guffaws promptly died away. He clenched his big fists.

"Come on, Gussy!" he grinned scowlingly. "I'll smash you, if you want me to!"



oor, with his mortar-board tilted rakishly over one eye, made
oar.

Arthur Augustus came to a standstill half-way up the steps, and hesitated.

Though he had the heart of a lion, even the swell of St. Jim's realised suddenly that to tackle Burkett would be the next thing to suicide! He unclenched his fists reluctantly, and glared at the bully with scornful indignation.

"You wotah!" he panted. "I know I can't give you a thwashin', Burkett, so I won't try—"

"Jolly good of you," grinned Burkett, whilst Mellish sniggered gibingly.

"But I considah you a cad and an outsidah!" declared Arthur Augustus icily.

"What?" roared Burkett, glaring after the swell of St. Jim's, as the latter turned and sailed off towards the tuckshop. "Why, I—I've a good mind to go after the ass and smash him!"

"Go it!" urged Mellish maliciously. "Give him a licking!"

"I will, if he cheeks me again," growled Burkett. "I'm not going to put up with any sauce from that gang!"

The fact that despite his strength he could never awe Blake & Co. and Tom Merry & Co. into treating him with the nervous respect that most of the juniors accorded him,

always exasperated Burkett. Even his thrashing of Tom Merry had failed to frighten them into concealing their opinion of the bully of the Shell.

In the tuckshop, Arthur Augustus, still pink with wrath, gave his order.

There were several New House juniors hanging about outside the tuckshop doorway as he emerged again, carrying the provisions he had purchased.

He glanced at the New House fellows rather suspiciously. But their faces were perfectly grave. Redfern, in fact, was looking quite anxious as he tapped the swell of St. Jim's on the arm.

"Gussy, old chap, have you seen what they've done to your minor?" exclaimed Redfern, shaking his head very gravely.

Arthur Augustus gave an exclamation of alarm.

"Bai Jove! What's the mattah with Wallay, deah boy?"

"I—I scarcely like to say," murmured Redfern, with a sad shake of his head. "Better come and see the poor kid for yourself, Gussy!"

The unsuspecting swell of St. Jim's was looking really alarmed now. Hastily he hurried back into the tuckshop, and dumped down his provisions on one of the tables. Then he turned quickly to Redfern.

"Wedfern, deah boy—take me to Wallay at once!"

"This way," said Redfern.

He did not say that he would take Arthur Augustus to his minor—but the swell of the Fourth did not notice that little fact at the time. He was too filled with anxiety.

Someone, apparently, had been ragging Wally! Possibly Wally was hurt! In any case, the swell of St. Jim's meant to find out the worst.

"Wedfern, deah boy, I don't undalstand what—oh! B-bai Jove! Gwooooooh!"

Redfern had led the unsuspecting swell of St. Jim's round behind the tuckshop—and instantly the New House fellows had pounced upon Arthur Augustus with grinning countenances. Before he had time to gather his wits, Arthur Augustus felt a handkerchief jammed into his mouth, and he was being borne away, struggling, in the grip of the four athletic New House juniors.

Too late did Arthur Augustus realise that the enigmatical talk about his minor had been the bait to lure him out of sight of anyone in the quad!

He was borne swiftly round the corner of the chapel, and in at the side door of the gymnasium.

A big crowd of New House fellows were gathered in the gym, and there was an excited cheer as Arthur Augustus, still struggling, was carried in.

But what caused the swell of St. Jim's eyes to pop almost out of their sockets was the sight of five other School House juniors, bound and gagged, in the hands of the New House fellows!

"Gwooooooh! Uuuuurrrrrh! Oooooff!"

The swell of St. Jim's, spluttering feebly behind his gag, was dumped down with the other prisoners, and his arms and legs were roughly lashed together. The others glared at him wildly and dumbly, as effectively gagged as himself.

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn Kerruish and Harry Hammond, were Arthur Augustus' fellow prisoners.

It was evident that some New House rag was afoot. But what it could be was at present a mystery to them all!

George Figgins, the leader of the New House, chuckled.

"Good egg! That's six School House bounders—all we want. Fancy getting old Gussy! Ripping luck!"

He turned to Redfern.

"Reddy, old chap, we'll be all ready—'scuse the pun—in about a quarter of an hour. Get the School House chaps along here by then. Remember, you must let 'em think it's Gordon Gay & Co!"

"Good egg!"

Redfern chuckled, and departed. Figgins turned to the prisoners with a grinning face.

"Now to fix up these bounders! This is going to be a scream! We'll jolly well show the School House who's cock House!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Fatty Wynn.

"I'll get into my rigout, while you chaps fix up these School House bounders," exclaimed Figgins. "My hat! This is going to be the jape of the term!"

The six fuming, helpless prisoners, gurgling and gasping behind their gags, were not kept long in ignorance of their captors' intentions.

The New House fellows produced six rather moth-eaten lion-skins—ancient outfits that had evidently been used for theatrical purposes, and which Figgins & Co. had hired from the costumier's in Wayland.

One by one, the School House captives were released from their bonds and, still tightly gagged, were fastened up

despite their struggles, in the lion-skins. Fatty Wynn had a big needle and a quantity of strong thread, and once the raging prisoners had been sewn into their skins, it was quite useless for them to hope to escape from their enforced disguise until their captors should choose to free them.

They did not make very realistic-looking lions, perhaps! It was obvious enough that there were schoolboys inside the skins. But with the lion-heads, which were attached to the skins, hiding their own heads completely, the identity of the "lions" would be quite unknown to anyone seeing them.

When the last of the six had been clad in his ferocious-looking garb, the New House fellows drew back and watched the "lions" writhing and struggling in a vain effort to free themselves, and yelled with merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A shriek of laughter echoed round the gym.

Figgins appeared a moment later—transformed!

In addition to the lion-skins, the New House fellows had hired a lion-tamer's costume for their great jape. George Figgins, gorgeous in a scarlet jacket and breeches, with gold facings and epaulets, and high boots, and a huge black moustache adorning his grinning countenance, brought a fresh yell of laughter from the New House juniors.

But the six raging, helpless School House juniors did not join in the laughter!

For one thing, they could not, tightly gagged as they were, within the lions' heads. For another, they did not feel like laughing.

The jape that was to be played upon them was only too clear!

They glared round furiously through the eyeholes of the animal-heads, at the chortling New House juniors. The skins fitted them in such a way that it was impossible for them to stand upright, though they could move about freely enough on all fours.

"Oh, the rotters!" groaned Grundy, behind his gag, as he pranced round helplessly in the skin into which he had been fastened. "Oh, my hat!"

At one end of the gym a big circle had been fixed up with ropes—evidently for use as a "circus ring!"

The six "lions" were seized and carried to it, and dropped over the ropes into the ring by their chuckling captors.

"All ready for the circus!" grinned Lawrence, of the New House.

"Signor Figginsio's great lion-taming act will shortly begin!" chortled Owen. "Roll up, roll up, roll up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a chorus of breathless laughter.

Everything was ready for the great New House jape against the School House!

CHAPTER 10.

Figgins' Circus!

"COME in!"

Tom Merry called out that invitation, as there was a tap on the door of Study No. 10. The door opened to reveal the grinning face of Dick Redfern, of the New House.

It was risky for Redfern to venture alone into the rival house, but Reddy was taking that risk.

"Hallo, you New House boulder!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "What on earth are you doing here?"

"I say," chuckled Redfern, "you know Gordon Gay & Co?"

"Of course," responded Manners, staring at him.

"Well, Figgys fancied a real good jape against them might even things up a bit for the hecking they gave us at footer the other day," went on Redfern—truthfully enough, "A jape against the Grammar School!" exclaimed Tom Merry eagerly. "When? Where?"

"Buzz along to the gym if you want to see some fun," answered Redfern cryptically, and vanished from the study.

The Terrible Three jumped to their feet.

They were decidedly puzzled. It seemed to them—as Redfern had intended that it should seem—as though Gordon Gay & Co. had been collared, somehow or other, and taken to the gym. How the New House fellows had managed to do that in safety was rather bewildering; but if it were true, the gym was the place for them!

Tom Merry & Co. hurried from the study and down the stairs.

Evidently Redfern had spread the information. A big crowd of School House juniors were hurrying towards the gym as Tom Merry and his chums emerged into the quad.

Blake, Herries, and Digby were going, apparently forgetful in the excitement that Augustus D'Arcy had failed, for some reason, to return from his visit to the tuckshop. Glyn, Dane, and Kangaroo, the three chums of Study

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No. 11, were in the crowd. So were Burkett & Co., and many others.

Tom Merry & Co. crowded into the gym with the rest. It was already swarming with New House fellows, they noticed.

"I say, what's this about Gordon Gay & Co.?" cried Glyn, catching Fatty Wynn by the arm.

Fatty Wynn chuckled.

"Come and see the fun," he grinned. "This way!"

The School House fellows followed David Llewellyn Wynn across the gym, and the next instant astonished exclamations burst from their lips as they caught sight of the improvised "circus-ring" and the six "lions" within it.

For some moments the School House fellows stared in utter amazement; then a terrific yell of laughter rose.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake. "Ha, ha, ha! So that's Gordon Gay & Co.!"

Oh, what a scream!

A jostling, shrieking crowd surrounded the ring. The School House fellows roared with laughter. So did the New House fellows. Fatty Wynn held up his hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Signor Figginsio's stupendous and daring exhibition will now commence. The famous lion-tamer will enter the ring among those ferocious denizens of the African jungle, and put them through their paces!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Signor Figginsio!" announced Fatty Wynn, with a broad grin.

Figgins had remained out of sight till now. He stepped forward now, however, and there was a fresh yell of laughter at his appearance.

Figgins stepped into the ring.

He had a long whip in his hand, and the furious lions eyed it very uneasily.

Utterly powerless to escape from the skins into which they had been sewn, and with their identities hidden completely from their friends, the six gagged School House juniors were thoroughly at the mercy of the New House japers!

They had given up their vain attempts to free themselves from the skins now. But they made a wild effort to escape from the ring at Figgins' entry.

The ropes, however, were too close for them to squeeze through easily, and at any attempt on their part to do so the crowd surrounding the ring pushed them back, with merry chuckles.

Figgins bowed to the swarming spectators.

"I have much pleasure in exhibiting my wonderful trained lions to you chaps," observed Figgins airily. "Particularly to my friends of the School House!"

There were suppressed chuckles from the New House fellows, and the School House juniors looked a trifle puzzled. Figgins went on hastily:

"My famous collection of lions have been shown to all the crowned heads of Europe. They may be a little out of practice at the moment, but I'll soon put 'em through their paces for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, what a scream!" grinned Herries.

"They're a mangy-looking lot, anyway!" observed Burkett.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Figgins flicked his whip sternly.

"The Kings of the Jungle will now trot in procession round the ring!" he announced.

The "Kings of the Jungle" did not seem in the least anxious to obey that command, however.

Gurgling with rage, they stayed in a huddled, defiant group by the ropes, glaring at Figgins through the eyeholes in the lions' heads with true lionlike ferocity!

But Figgins was prepared for an attempt at defiance.

He got busy with his long whip, flicking his infuriated lions with it until they gave in, and scrambled hastily into line gurgling with mortification.

"Gee up!" grinned Figgins. "Round we go!"

A flick of the whip sent Wilkins, at the head of the raging procession, crawling round the ring, with the others in a miserable line behind him.

Raging, but helpless to resist, the six unhappy juniors had evidently decided that they had better make the best of a bad job.

There were yells of laughter from the onlookers as the lions scrambled round the ring; while Figgins, in the centre, kept a watchful eye upon them, and administered a warning flick of the whip to any of his charges that looked like rebelling.

"Poor old Gordon Gay!" chuckled Monty Lowther, wiping his streaming eyes. "I fancy this is a score for St. Jim's. Good old Figgys!"

Fatty Wynn appeared a few moment later with a large hoop. Figgins held it out in the path of the lions as they scrambled miserably round and round.

"The Kings of the Jungle will now jump through the hoop!" he sang out. "Up!"

Wilkins, the leader of the helpless procession, dared not disobey. He managed to jump through the hoop somehow, and Kerruish and Hammond and Gunn followed suit. Arthur Augustus appeared maitre d', but a flick of the lion-tamer's whip soon persuaded him, as it did George Alfred Grundy.

"Hoop-la!" grinned Signor Figginsio.

Half a dozen times the lions were made to jump through the big hoop. Then, shouting to make his voice heard above the roars of laughter, Figgins began to announce the next item on the programme.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the intelligent beasts will now, by crawling on each others backs, form the famous Pyramid of Lions, as shown before all the crowned heads of Eur—"

Figgins did not finish.

Within the lion's head covering his own, the gag that had silenced Arthur Augustus D'Arcy until now had worked loose. From within one of the skins came a pleading voice:

"Wescue! Gwooh! Help!"

"Listen!" yelled Tom Merry. "Gussy!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Figgins, in dismay.

The game was up, evidently. Already the School House juniors were tumbling to the truth.

"It's Gussy!" gasped Bernard Glyn. "It—it's not Gordon Gay & Co. at all!"

"Wescue, School House!"

There was no possibility of failing to recognise that voice, issuing from one of the lions. That particular skin, at any rate, contained not a Grammian but a School House junior!

"M-my giddy aunt!" stuttered Blake. "We've been had!"

"It's a New House rag!" howled Monty Lowther.

"Great Scott!" panted Burkett. "The rotters!"

There were yells of excited indignation.

In a moment pandemonium reigned in the gym.

But the New House fellows were in force. They outnumbered the School House considerably; and a few minutes later Figgins & Co. were trooping triumphantly from the gym, breathless with laughter, having "knocked the stuffing" out of the infuriated School House juniors who had tried to detain them.

The School House fellows, left in the gym with the realisation that they had been the victims of the jape of the term, began the thankless task of freeing Grundy & Co., Kerruish and Hammond and Arthur Augustus, from their skins.

"You burbling dummies!" hooted Grundy, as soon as he was freed. "Couldn't you guess it was us?"

"You—your fwabjous asses!" groaned Arthur Augustus. "Fancay bein' takin in by that yarn about Gordon Gay & Co.!"

"Oh, rats!" snorted Burkett, red with exasperation. "How could we know?"

Grundy turned to Burkett with a glare.

"Look here," he said truculently. "You're captain! It's your job to see School House gets its own back for this!"

"Oh, shut up!" snorted Burkett.

"I jolly well won't!" roared Grundy recklessly. "I tell you—"

Biff!

Burkett's leg-of-mutton fist landed on Grundy's nose, and Grundy sat down with a bump.

"Yow!" gasped Grundy.

"Anybody else got anything to say?" bellowed Burkett, glaring round.

Apparently nobody had. The bully of the Shell grinned sneeringly.

"You weak-kneed lot of funks!" he went on. "I'll show you what I'll do to anyone who gives me any cheek."

He strode across to a corner of the gym where a punch-ball was suspended. Drawing back a massive fist he let fly at the ball with a terrific drive that nearly wrenched it from its fastening. Then, as it rebounded, Burkett crashed his right into it with all his force.

There was a sound of escaping air, and the next moment the punch-ball sagged and hung limply. It had burst!

A gasp of amazement went up from the crowd of School House juniors. It was doubtful whether there were more than two or three fellows in the whole school who could have equalled Burkett's feat of strength.

"My only aunt!" muttered Monty Lowther in grudging admiration. "What a wallop!"

(Continued on next page.)

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But apparently Burkett had not finished yet. With a boastful grin on his face at the open-mouthed wonder of the onlookers, he slipped off his jacket and grabbed two huge pairs of dumb-bells. Lifting one of them would have been too hefty a task for many of the juniors, but Burkett handled the two with the utmost ease.

Then he proceeded to display his amazing strength, and for a couple of minutes his exhibition kept the watching crowd gaping. None of the massive iron weights in the gym gave him any difficulty.

Finally, he tossed the last one contemptuously on to the floor and put on his jacket.

"That's nothing to what I can do when I like!" he declared, a brutal scowl on his face. "So look out!"

With that Frederick Burkett stamped out of the gym and slammed the door behind him.

CHAPTER 11. Nothing Doing!

"IT'S rotten!"

Monty Lowther spoke in gloomy tones.

It was the following evening, and the Terrible Three were seated in their study. Manners had just cleared away the tea-things.

Tom Merry nodded.

"If you mean the way things are going under Burkett, you're right, Monty!"

"Burkett's the most hopeless blessed skipper——"

"We knew he'd be that from the day he was elected," put in Tom dryly.

Monty Lowther grunted.

The great New House jape had made the School House fellows look terribly small—but Burkett had done nothing towards avenging their humiliation, beyond attempting to lick Figgins in the quad.

That attempt had ended in a miserable failure, for a dozen of Figgys' supporters had come to their leader's rescue, and Burkett had been unceremoniously bumped by the New House fellows.

The tremendous airs that the New House juniors were now giving themselves were galling indeed to the School House!

Figgins & Co. boasted blatantly that they were cock House—and that afternoon, in the House match, they had thoroughly substantiated the claim by licking the School House team by the appalling score of seven—nil!

Neither Tom Merry nor any of his friends had played in the match, of course. Burkett, as usual, had filled the team with his own followers. With such fellows as Percy Melish representing the School House, it was scarcely surprising that Figgins & Co. had walked over them!

After the match, the New House juniors had gone so far as to march round the quad with a banner bearing the inscription:

"NEW HOUSE—COCK HOUSE!"

And with Burkett sulking in his study, like Achilles in his tent, there had been no one to organise the School House juniors in an attack upon the insulting banner, and its jubilant bearers.

Tom Merry had seen the procession from the School House steps—and had shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

It was not his business, he told himself, to organise the House against their rivals. That was the captain's job—Frederick Burkett's.

"The Grammar School licks us—the New House licks us!" groaned Monty Lowther. "It's the giddy limit!"

A sudden sound of tramping feet in the passage caused the Terrible Three to turn their heads. A heavy bang on the door followed a moment or two later.

"Come in!" called out Tom, in surprise.

The door crashed open, revealing a swarm of juniors in the passage, headed by Roylance. They marched into the study, and the Terrible Three jumped up.

"What the dickens——" ejaculated Manners.

"We're a deputation," said Roylance.

"Oh!" Tom Merry stared at him in astonishment.

"What on earth's the deputation about?"

"Can't you guess?" growled Dick Julian.

"Blowed if I can!" Tom confessed.

"It's about the captaincy!" said Roylance, in an abrupt tone.

"The—the captaincy?"

"Yes!" Roylance spoke with a faint note of defiance. "We've come to ask you to take on the captaincy again, if we can get Burkett to resign!"

There was a dead silence in Study No. 10 for a few moments. Tom looked as though he could scarcely believe his ears. Manners was looking thoroughly astonished, too.

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There was a sudden chuckle from Monty Lowther.

"Oh, my giddy aunt! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" roared Grundy, who was one of the deputation. He pushed his way forward. "It's nothing to cackle at! We're fed up with Burkett——"

"But—but you voted for him!" ejaculated Tom Merry.

"Hem! Yes!" Kit Wildrake, apparently one of the leaders of the deputation, coughed. "Ahem! Yes, we did vote for Burkett, like silly asses. We—we rather thought a change might do good, you know. Well, we've changed our minds——eh, you chaps?"

"Yes," grunted Roylance.

Roylance was looking decidedly sheepish.

He had been one of the leaders of the malcontents who had agitated for a change in the captaincy. He had honestly believed a change would be a good thing. But now he had changed his mind, like Wildrake, and being a good chap at heart, Roylance was willing to admit the fact.

Nevertheless, he was very red as he eyed Tom Merry squarely.

"I know what you're thinking," he said shortly. "We kicked you out—at least, it was through us that you resigned. We voted for Burkett because he promised us a chance in the Junior Eleven. We've found out that we aren't good enough for the Junior Eleven—I admit that now——"

"My hat!" said Manners dryly. "You do?"

"And we've found that Burkett's a blessed bullying tyrant! Things are going to pot with him as captain! And we want you to take on the captaincy again, Merry——"

"Will you?" cried Reilly. "Begorrah, Tommy, darlint, we can't stand Burkett any more!"

A queer expression came into Tom Merry's face.

"Well?" exclaimed Roylance eagerly.

Tom shook his head.

"No," he said. "I won't! Even if you could get Burkett to resign, which I doubt, I'm blessed if I'll take the job on again! I've had enough!"

Despite himself, there was a note of bitterness in Tom Merry's tone as he faced the crowd of juniors.

"You asked for Burkett, and you got him!" he went on quietly. "You've made your bed and you must lie on it!"

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Hammond in dismay.

"I didn't seem to give much satisfaction as captain," Tom said dryly. "I got a good deal more kicks than I gave, as you may remember, and I'm not asking for any more!"

"Oh!" muttered Roylance. "Is—is that final?"

"Quite," nodded Tom.

"But——"

"No good arguing about it," said Tom sharply.

Roylance seemed about to speak again, but he did not. His face was thoroughly disconsolate. So were the faces of the rest. In glum silence, the deputation tramped from the study, and Tom shut the door behind them.

A grim smile appeared on his face.

"I'm not surprised!" grinned Manners. "I thought they'd be along to you with their tails between their legs one of these days, though I'll admit I hadn't expected them so soon!"

Tom shrugged.

"Some chaps are never satisfied," he said grimly. "They wanted to get rid of me, and now they want me back! Well, it's too late!"

The footsteps of the deputation died away along the passage as Tom turned to the bookcase and took out his books for prep.

There were gloomy faces among Roylance & Co., as they tramped disconsolately down the stairs to the Common-room.

They had swallowed their pride in visiting Tom Merry at all with their request—and they had certainly not expected his curt refusal.

But, as Tom had pointed out, they had asked for Burkett; they had voted for him! And now that they had got him as their captain, it seemed fairly certain that they would have to put up with him, whether they still wanted him or not.

CHAPTER 12.

An Amazing Discovery!

"AFTERNOON, Sammy!"

"Afternoon, Master Merry!"

Sammy Thrupp, the porter at Spalding Hall School, touched his cap with a broad grin on his weather-beaten features. Mr Samuel Thrupp had been a sailor before entering port, so to speak, in the quiet retreat of Miss Hepziba Finch's school for young ladies.

It was Saturday afternoon, and the Terrible Three, Blake, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had cycled over from St. Jim's to visit Ethel Cleveland & Co.

Thrupp knew the chums of St. Jim's well, and allowed them to pass into the picturesque quad. As they entered it, Ethel & Co. appeared, crossing toward them with bright smiles.

"Hallo, everybody!" sang out Lady Peggy Brooke, the pretty, red-headed tomboy of Spalding Hall.

The St. Jim's juniors raised their caps—Arthur Augustus D'Arcy swept off his best topper with the gallantry of a cavalier of old.

"You'd like to leave your bicycles in the cycle-shed, I expect," suggested Doris Levison, the popular sister of Ernest Levison of the Fourth—the junior who had been injured in the recent railway accident near Rylcombe, and who was, at present, away from St. Jim's in consequence.

"Good egg!" nodded Tom Merry.

Five minutes later the St. Jim's juniors and their chums were strolling through the dry, sunny lanes towards Wayland. Arthur Augustus had tacked himself firmly to Ethel's side, for the swell of St. Jim's had a great admiration for his pretty cousin. Jack Blake was tacked equally firmly to the side of Lady Peggy, for Blake and the tomboy of Spalding Hall were great chums.

"Heard from Ernest lately, Doris?" asked Tom Merry.

Doris nodded brightly at mention of her brother.

"Yes! He's getting along splendidly. He hopes to be back at St. Jim's soon!"

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Manners. "That's great news!"

Doris' smile died away, to be replaced by a faint frown.

"I'm afraid things won't be so—so nice for Ernest when he gets back, as they might have been," she said. "If he hadn't quarrelled with Cardew, I mean. They used to be such great chums, didn't they?"

"Yes," said Tom, frowning. "I'm afraid poor old Ernest was a good deal upset about that rotten business."

"I think it was terrible, the way Cardew behaved," said Doris, her pretty lips tightening, and her eyes sparkling with indignation. "To tell Ernest he was going to play for St. Jim's against Greyfriars, and then to go off and do something else. You can't blame Ernest for feeling a little bitter, can you?"

"I should jolly well think not!" growled Monty Lowther.

"Cardew's a queer chap," said Tom Merry, with a shrug.

"A feckfully queeah chap," nodded Arthur Augustus, with a shake of his noble head. "I am afraid that quawwel with Levison and Olive will never be made up."

"And yet I—I can't help feeling that there is a lot of good in Cardew, under the surface," said Doris, colouring a trifle.

Doris had always had a secret admiration for her brother's handsome chum, despite his reputation for being the biggest slacker at St. Jim's. Since Cardew's behaviour in connection with the Greyfriars match, weeks ago now, she had never again wanted to see the slacker of the Fourth. But, as she now confessed, she still could not

Unable to stop himself, George Alfred Grundy hurtled on, and he and the goal-keeper went into the net in a wild heap!



help feeling that beneath his reckless, wayward nature, there was a good deal of good in Cardew.

"Well, don't let's spoil a ripping afternoon by discussing Cardew," said Tom Merry cheerfully.

The conversation turned to happier topics, as the Spalding Hall trio and their chums from St. Jim's entered the old-fashioned High Street.

They were on their way to the river, intending to walk along the tow-path to Merton Island. But as they walked briskly along the High Street, Blake gave a sudden exclamation.

A fellow wearing the St. Jim's cap had turned out of a side street ahead of them—a slim, elegant figure.

"Cardew!" breathed Blake.

Cardew had seen them, and for a moment he seemed to falter. Then he came on, a slight flush on his handsome face.

Cardew was not on friendly terms with Tom Merry & Co. And he knew very well what Doris Levison thought of him, after his quarrel with her brother. He knew that she despised him—and the knowledge brought that quick flush to his cheeks at finding himself face to face with the Spalding Hall trio and Tom Merry & Co.

Except for the slight flush, however, there was nothing in Cardew's cool, sauntering manner to indicate that he was in any way put out by the unexpected meeting.

A grim expression had come into the faces of the juniors, as they approached Cardew's elegantly-strolling figure.

The girls were looking anything but happy. Doris in particular, was looking straight in front of her, with set lips. Evidently she intended to "cut" Cardew dead.

"My hat!" ejaculated Lady Peggy under her breath. "It's that rotter Cardew!"

As they drew nearer, Cardew raised his cap with cool politeness. The juniors strode past Cardew without a word, and the slacker of the Fourth was clearly glad to have got the meeting over, as he strolled on, looking a trifle confused for once in a way.

And then, a few moments later, an excited cry in the voice of a little girl, somewhere behind them, caused the St. Jim's party to glance round quickly.

A little girl had emerged from a shop with a lady who was evidently her mother. The child was staring at Cardew with wide eyes.

"Mummy—it's him!"

The little girl's voice rose to a shriek of excitement, as she pointed at Ralph Reckness Cardew.

Cardew had stopped dead, staring at the little girl in a queer way, as if rooted to the spot.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"What can she mean?" breathed Ethel Cleveland, equally bewildered.

The whole St. Jim's party had stopped dead now, staring back at Cardew and the little girl.

The child had broken away from her startled mother, and had run up to Cardew, seizing the slacker of the Fourth by the hand, clinging to him, laughing up into his face.

Cardew had gone strangely pale. He made a movement as if to hurry on, raising his cap confusedly to the lady. But the child held his hand too tightly for him to get free without treating her roughly.

"Hallo!" said the little girl, with a shy smile.

Cardew grinned down at her almost sheepishly.

"Hallo!" he answered.

"Mummy!" The child had turned eagerly to her mother again. "It's him! You know—the man who came upstairs and took me away when the house was on fire! It's him!"

There was a breathless cry from the lady. The next moment she had hurried forward, and to Cardew's consternation kissed him effusively.

"Oh!" she breathed. "You brave, brave boy! So it was you who saved my little girl's life? We often wondered who it was, so much! We've always wanted to find out, so that we could thank you for what you did—"

Her voice broke. Cardew, scarlet to the roots of his hair, looked as though he would have been glad had the earth opened and swallowed him.

Tom Merry & Co. were staring at Cardew, and at one another, in utter amazement.

The lady, catching sight of their St. Jim's caps, turned eagerly towards them.

"Did you know?" she cried.

The juniors raised their caps, at finding themselves drawn into the scene. They moved back towards her.

"No, ma'am," said Arthur Augustus. "A fire, bai Jove? Whatevah—"

"I—I must be gettin' along, if you'll excuse me," stammered Cardew.

But the little girl still clung to him, drawing him back.

"Why," cried her mother—she seemed to be half laughing, half crying—"this school friend of yours saved my little girl's life, when our house was on fire! He went in in spite of the flames, and managed to get up to her, though the firemen had said it was impossible to reach her! It was a miracle he wasn't killed. That was weeks ago—on the seventh of last month—"

"The seventh?" echoed Tom Merry.

The seventh had been the day of the Greyfriars match. He turned to Cardew with a peculiar expression on his face.

"Good heavens," breathed Tom. "Cardew—was that why you missed the Greyfriars train?"

For a moment Cardew did not answer. His face hardened defiantly. Then suddenly his expression changed, all the bitterness vanished from it.

"Yes," he said in a low voice.

CHAPTER 13.

The End of the Feud!

"GWEAT Scott!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The St. Jim's juniors and the three Spalding Hall girls were surveying Ralph Reckness Cardew with wondering eyes.

Cardew, at risk of his life, had saved the life of a little girl, entering a burning house heedless of all danger to rescue her. In consequence, he had missed the train that had borne the rest of the football team to Greyfriars. But he had said nothing of his heroism—and he had been an outcast, a pariah, in the eyes of his schoolfellows!

Cardew smiled. It was not a very happy smile.

"I—I think I'll be gettin' along," he said quietly.

But Tom Merry caught his arm.

"Think we're going to let you go, you old ass?" he cried huskily. "Cardew—will you shake hands?"

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Tom held out a hand. With a twisted smile, Cardew took it.

"Why—why did you let us think—well, the worst?" breathed Tom.

"You fellows all thought the worst of me, at once, when I missed the match," explained Cardew in an even tone. "I suppose I was an ass to let my pride get the better of my sense; but—"

He broke off. Tom nodded. He understood.

Knowing Cardew's proud, wayward nature, Tom Merry realised, now he knew the truth, just how Cardew had felt. Cardew would sooner have cut off his right hand than have told the real reason of his having missed the Greyfriars train, once the juniors had misjudged him and exhibited their scorn.

It was just like Cardew, to have bitterly and deliberately allowed the fellows to think the worst, making no attempt to defend himself, rather than swallow his pride and explain everything.

"But—but you said you had played bil—"

Manners broke off, remembering that the girls knew nothing of Cardew's notorious game of billiards at the Duke of Bedford Hotel on the afternoon of the Greyfriars match. But he had said enough for Cardew to understand.

"Yes, I did do that," he said. "Afterwards, when I'd already missed the train, though. There didn't seem any reason why I shouldn't, then, when it was too late for me to get to Greyfriars."

"I see!" breathed Manners.

Though the other juniors could scarcely approve of that visit to the Duke of Bedford in any circumstances, they could at any rate forgive it now.

Doris had been looking utterly bewildered. But she stepped suddenly forward, and held out her hand. Cardew took it very readily. Doris smiled. Her eyes were misty.

"I—I'm sorry that I misjudged you, too," said the girl softly. "I can't tell you how sorry I am. But why did you let us? Why did you let even Ernest think the worst?"

Cardew went crimson.

"I was a fool—that's why," he answered, almost roughly.

"Cardew, dear boy!" Arthur Augustus sailed forward, with gleaming monocle, and held out his hand. "I will be proud if you will shake hands, Cardew! I twost, furthah, that you will forgive us for havin' tweeked you wathah badly—though I must admit that it was weally partly your own fault, dear boy! Howevah—"

Cardew laughed, and shook the swell of St. Jim's extended hand.

There was a very happy look on Cardew's face.

The brooding, bitter look that it had worn so much during the last few weeks had vanished utterly. Cardew had put the dark days behind him, the days of embittered pride and burning resentment. He had long been tired, in his heart, of being a pariah in the eyes of Tom Merry & Co., and he was ready enough to end the feud now that the truth was out.

And in his heart, too, he was thinking, doubtless, of Levison and Clive.

His severance from his chums of Study No. 9 had been a deep wound, though he had hidden the fact that he cared well enough. But now he would be free to make up that mistaken quarrel and return to his old friendships.

Manners and Lowther and Blake pressed round him, to follow the example of Tom Merry and the swell of St. Jim's by gripping Cardew's hand. Ethel and Lady Peggy shook hands with him, too, and Cardew laughed happily.

The little girl was still clinging shyly to Cardew's left arm. Her mother, looking decidedly puzzled by the juniors' talk, suddenly opened her bag and took out a visiting-card.

"Will you take this?" she asked eagerly. "My husband will want to see you and thank you. You must come and see us. Will you?"

"Thank you, ma'am," said Cardew awkwardly. "I shall be very glad to."

"What is your name?"

"Cardew."

"Well, good-bye for the present, Cardew," smiled the lady. She took the little girl by the hand. "We shall be seeing you again soon!"

The juniors raised their caps as the two went their way. Cardew smiled whimsically.

"Oh gad!" he murmured. "Very charmin' of her, but it'll be rather frightful, goin' to get thanked by the kid's pater! I only did what any fellow would have done, don't you know—"

"Oh, rot, you old ass!" chuckled Tom. He turned to the girls. "Look here, what about changing our plans? Let's all go to St. Jim's, and stand a tea in old Cardew's giddy honour! Shall us?"

"I think that would be a wonderful idea!" laughed Cousin Ethel.

(Continued at foot of next page.)

ASK THE ORACLE!



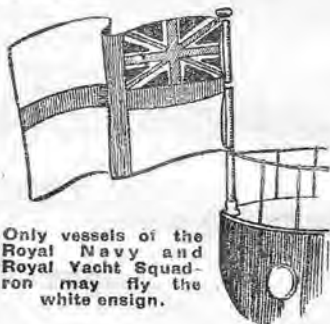
Hullo, chaps! I've got a rise this week. Yes, the old Ed. has given me a rise—to the top of the page. Not quite the sort of rise I asked him about the other day. Still, a rise is a

rise. And if I go on much more in the same way, I shall be occupying the front cover. No more than is my due, what?



Q.—What is the White Ensign?

A.—The White Ensign, Tom Matthews, of Okehampton, is one of the three ensigns that can be flown from British ships. The other two are red and blue. The White Ensign is a white flag with the Union Jack in the upper corner next to the staff. Very often you will see it with the red St. George's Cross quartered upon it. The only vessels permitted to fly the White Ensign are ships of the Royal Navy and vessels of the Royal Yacht Squadron. If a captain of any other kind of ship were to sail this flag, he would be liable to have his vessel boarded by an officer of His Majesty's service, the colours seized, and himself fined £500.



Only vessels of the Royal Navy and Royal Yacht Squadron may fly the white ensign.

Q.—How is Emery Paper made?

A.—"Thoughtful," of Thaxted, sends me this one. Well, "Thoughtful," I have not had to do much thinking to answer your query. Emery paper is made by sticking emery to paper with glue. To make it all quite clear I'll explain that emery is a mineral of a very hard quality, something like iron ore in appearance. It's found, among other places in the mountains round Smyrna and Ephesus and in the Isle of Naxos. It's extracted

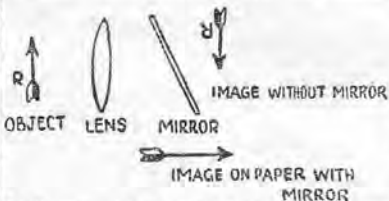
by blasting, broken up, ground and sifted. The fine powder obtained is used by plate-glass manufacturers and lapidaries.

Q.—What is a Camera Obscura?

A.—A reader who signs himself "Anxious to Learn" asks me this and wants to know how it works. As I am anxious to instruct, I will do my best to explain with a little diagram. Camera obscura means darkened chamber, but exactly the same principle is found in the periscope, used on submarines. This is the idea. If you take a magnifying lens, like a reading lens say, and hold it some way in front of any bright object, and then hold a sheet of paper in front of it, the bright object will be thrown on to the paper upside down and the wrong way round. Now hold an ordinary hand mirror between the lens and the paper at an angle of 45 degrees, and a sheet of paper underneath. You will then get your object thrown very clearly on to the flat piece of paper. This, in a rough-and-ready way, is the principle of both the camera obscura and the periscope. Actually a single piece of worked glass takes the place of the mirror and lens.

Q.—Are dogs bred from Wolves?

A.—Yes, J. Hinton, of Hastings, the Eskimos breed their dogs from wolves, and there are other breeds of dogs that resemble wolves very closely. In Florida



A diagram which explains the meaning of camera obscura.

there is a wolf-dog which is like the black wolf of those parts in appearance. Our sheep dogs are remotely descended from wolves, though they've pretty well lost the resemblance. A curious thing about the Eskimo's dog, by the way, is that it howls like a wolf, but never barks.

Q.—How can a chap learn to be a Detective?

A.—The reader who asks this conundrum signs himself "Sherlock Blake." Well, that's a good start, anyway. He says in his letter that he can use a gun, a revolver, a stock-whip, a lasso, a boomerang, and a butterfly-net. My dear chum, with these accomplishments you'd be wasted as a detective. You ought to be hunting the wild whortleberry on Wormwood Scrubs.



Having been coaxed into their tin by means of a Jazz band, the sardines lie warm and comfy, ready for transit.

Q.—How are Sardines packed?

A.—In tins, Buster Brown. I expect you want me to explain all that, chum, and draw a map. Well, I'll try and get our tame artist to draw you a nice life-size picture in oils of the oily Sarde seeking its home in the cosy confines of its tin complete with key. I'm told the young ones are a bit of a bother and lash out with their tails and snap viciously with their rapacious jaws while the Sardine trainers are coaxing them into the tins. But once inside they are quiet enough, waiting for the Fage to cut their fingers and spoil their suits getting them out. Yes, you should always fillet them, Buster, before serving, and save the oil. It comes in useful as a hair-dressing.

Q.—How often do I comb my whiskers?

A.—S. Klaff writes all the way from South Africa asking this. He cannot be a regular GEMITE or he would know that I gave up combing my whiskers myself thirty years ago. S. K. also asks why I don't resign and give my job to the office-boy. Well, chum, my office-boy has got plenty to do as it is. He's the chap that combs my whiskers for me.

(Continued from previous page.)

"Good egg!" declared Lady Peggy.

"Yes, I think so, too!" put in Doris quickly.

"Come on, Cardew!" grinned Tom, taking him by the arm.

And, despite his protests, Ralph Reckness Cardew was borne away, an arm linked in his own on either side of him.

Cardew's bitter feud with Tom Merry was certainly ended at last!

CHAPTER 14.

Cardew Owns Up!

"I'VE a confession to make!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew came out abruptly with that surprising remark.

It was later that evening. The tea in honour of the slacker of the Fourth had been a wonderful success. But the girls had been taken home to Spalding Hall at last, Cardew accompanying Tom Merry & Co. on that pleasant mission. They were all back at St. Jim's again now, in Study No. 9.

During Cardew's absence with the others after tea, Sidney

Clive, his face brighter than it had been for weeks, had busied himself, with the aid of Talbot and Kangaroo, in removing Cardew's belongings from Study No. 12 back into No. 9.

When Cardew had returned to the school from Spalding Hall he had found his belongings safely installed in his old study. He had said nothing, but he had grinned happily.

Tom Merry & Co., Blake & Co., Talbot, Kangaroo, and Sidney Clive, who were all squeezed somehow or other into Study No. 9 at that moment, stared at Cardew in surprise.

"A confession, old scout?" exclaimed Clive.

Cardew nodded.

"I always dislike confessin' things," he admitted, with a whimsical smile. "But in the cirs, I feel it's due. About Burkett."

"Burkett?" echoed Tom Merry, astonished.

"Yes," said Cardew, looking at Tom very squarely. "I don't believe you chaps know that it was I who was ass enough to persuade Burkett to put up for the captaincy!"

That his confession came as a sensation was clear. He went on steadily:

"The fact is, I was feelin' pretty bitter against you, Tom

Merry, for that lickin' you gave me—though I realise now that you were right, in a way, to lick me. Anyway," he went on quickly, as he saw Tom colour up, "I was dead keen to give you a fall. You know that, of course. But so as to rub it in properly, after you'd resigned, I wanted to see an enemy of yours take over the captaincy—some chap who would keep you in the background. I'm bein' frank about it—"

"Bai Jove! So that was why Burkett put up?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus thoughtfully.

"Afraid so," nodded Cardew in a repentant tone. "I'm sorry now. But p'r'aps it's not too late, even yet. I've been thinkin'—"

He broke off, as there came a tap on the door. Toby, the School House page, grinned into the study.

"Master Cardew wanted on the phone," he announced. "I fancy it's Master Levison! In Mr. Railton's study!"

Toby departed, and Cardew jumped to his feet with shining eyes, and hurried out after him.

He was away for several minutes. When he came back his eyes were very bright. He glanced at Clive.

"So you phoned to old Ernest while I was out after tea?" he grinned. "Thanks, old chap!"

Clive nodded. He had explained to Levison the whole truth about their chum. And though no one but Cardew knew what conversation had taken place between himself and his absent chum, it was clear from his face that everything was well!

When Levison returned to St. Jim's, as he was expected soon to do, Study No. 9 would be itself again, the rift in the lute a thing utterly of the past.

"What were you saying about Burkett and the captaincy?" asked Blake. "You said something about it not being too late, perhaps—"

"I was only meanin'," said Cardew thoughtfully, "that



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I might be able to persuade Burkett to resign the captaincy. I find I have the knack of influencin' him—"

"My hat! If only you could!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. Cardew glanced at Tom Merry.

"It wouldn't be much use my doin' that, though, if Tom Merry still declines to take it on again!" he said, with a slight smile.

Tom did not answer for a moment. Manners took him by the arm.

"Won't you, Tom?" he said quietly. "It's for the school, you know—"

"All right," said Tom, as if suddenly making up his mind. "If you can get Burkett to resign I'll put up for re-election."

"Huwah!" cried Arthur Augustus, his gleaming monocle turned joyfully upon Tom Merry. "Oh, wippin'!"

"In that case," grinned Cardew, "I'll trot along now and see if I can't undo the harm I've done! Burkett will take a good deal of persuadin', I fancy, but I'll do my best, what?"

"Good man!" exclaimed Clive eagerly.

The faces of the juniors in Study No. 9 were all as eager as Sidney Clive's.

The possibility of finding themselves free of the iron heel of Burkett's bungling tyranny as captain of the Junior School was a wonderful prospect!

"I'll be back in a bit," murmured Cardew.

He opened the door and sauntered out into the passage, and turned towards the stairs on his way to the Shell passage.

The juniors watched him go with gleaming eyes.

No one but Cardew would ever be able, they felt sure, to persuade Burkett to resign the captaincy. And however much they loathed that captaincy, Kildare, they knew, would never sanction another election unless Burkett handed in his resignation—not, at any rate, for a long time.

Kildare would argue that since Burkett had been properly elected, the juniors, having made their bed, must lie on it.

But if Burkett resigned, it would be a different matter altogether!

There would have to be another election then.

And Ralph Reckness Cardew was the fellow to persuade Frederick Burkett, if anyone could!

CHAPTER 15.

In the Lion's Den!

FREDERICK BURKETT was seated by the fire in Study No. 7 of the Shell passage when Cardew arrived there.

Crooke was also in the room, seated on the less comfortable of the two chairs by the fireplace—for Crooke always gave up the best chair to his muscular study-mate.

There would have been trouble had he not!

At sight of Cardew strolling coolly into the study, in answer to Burkett's growling invitation, the bully of the Shell and his cronies stared in astonishment.

"Cardew!" exclaimed Burkett, with a heavy frown.

"Yes," drawled Cardew, closing the door. "It's little me!"

"What do you want?" snarled Crooke.

"I want a word with you, Burkett, dear man," murmured Cardew, ignoring Crooke.

Burkett surveyed Cardew with a suspicious scowl.

Cardew's visit to the study had taken him very much by surprise.

Ever since Cardew had withdrawn the guiding hand from the new captain of the Junior School, Burkett, angry and resentful, had scarcely exchanged a word with the slacker of the Fourth. He had certainly not expected a visit from that junior.

"How's the captaincy, Burkett?" inquired Cardew coolly. "Goin' strong—what?"

"Yes," growled Burkett. "Some of the chaps are sore about that New House rag—keep worryin' me to organise a counter rag, for revenge—"

"What are you doin' about it?" inquired Cardew curiously.

"Nothing!" scowled Burkett. "Except lick the asses who worry me about it. Blow the New House!"

Cardew smiled.

The New House claim to be cock House was undoubtedly justifiable at present, unless Burkett acted drastically. But he was scarcely surprised that Burkett did not intend to act at all.

With Cardew's cleverness to help him, Burkett would no doubt have been hot to avenge the School House's humiliation at the hands of their rivals, if only for his own credit's sake. But without Cardew to think out some plan for him, Burkett was helpless. His own rather dull brains could not cope with Figgins & Co.



"Mummy!" Eagerly the little girl seized Cardew by the hand. "Mummy! It's him—the man who saved me when the house was all on fire!"

"What do you want, anyway?" he demanded in a churlish tone.

"Just dropped in to have a word about the captaincy, old top," explained Cardew. "May I sit down?"

Burkett's scowling face cleared. He suddenly grinned.

It looked as though Cardew was returning to his banner, so to speak! If so, Burkett was only too ready to welcome him, despite his recent resentment.

"Look here, Cardew," he said eagerly, in his gruff, growling voice, "if you'll volunteer to help me I'll jolly well do something about those New House cads. It's rotten the way they're swanking round saying they're cock House—"

"It is," assented Cardew, seating himself.

"Well, what can we do? Can you suggest something?" pleaded Burkett.

"Half a minute!" said Cardew. "I didn't come about that. I've been thinkin'—"

Burkett stared at him, as Cardew paused. The slacker of the Fourth was wondering how best to put his suggestion to the bully of the Shell.

"Seems to me, Burkett," went on Cardew evenly, "that you're wastin' your time a bit—absolutely wastin' it!"

"What do you mean?" asked Burkett, frowning.

"Why, muckin' about with this giddy captaincy!" smiled Cardew.

"Oh!"

"It's a frightful fag, isn't it?" suggested Cardew.

"Well, yes. But—"

"You've had your fun!" went on Cardew, with a dry smile. "You've put Tom Merry & Co. in their place—"

"I'll say I have!" grinned Burkett scowlingly.

"You've made a record, I should think, for bein' captain so soon after turnin' up at St. Jim's, too."

"I dare say I have!" boasted Burkett.

"Well, after the feast comes the reckonin'!" murmured Cardew. "You've had your fun, as I say! Now you've got all the responsibility an' the fag, an' all that. See what I mean?"

"Y-e-es; but—"

"Well, why not get out of it?" grinned Cardew.

Crooke suddenly realised what Burkett's dull wits had failed to understand—Cardew's meaning. He gave an angry snort.

"What are you getting at, Cardew?" exclaimed Crooke angrily. "You—"

"Shut up, Crooke!" roared Burkett. Crooke hastily re-

lapsed into silence. "I don't quite tumble to what you mean, Cardew—"

"I was only thinkin' of givin' you a bit of good advice, Burkett," said Cardew smoothly. "Take it or leave it!"

"Well, what is your advice?" demanded Burkett.

"To chuck up the captaincy!"

Cardew's drawing words were followed by a dead silence in Study No. 7.

Burkett stared at Cardew's coolly smiling face as though he was still puzzling his brain to understand.

"Eh?" said Burkett.

"Chuck the captaincy!" repeated Cardew smoothly.

"Why not?"

Burkett continued to stare at him. He rose slowly from his chair, towering over Cardew's carelessly-lounging figure, huge and muscular. His eyes began to gleam. His beetling brows contracted to a black frown, and a red flush appeared on his rugged face. He seemed to be breathing with difficulty.

"You—you—you—" Burkett struggled for words. "You rotten cad!" His voice, when he found it, echoed round the study in a bellowing roar. "So that's what you've come to advise me, is it? You've turned against me! I ought to have known it, by George! You rotten turncoat! First you help me bag the captaincy—now you want to chuck me out of it! I—I—I'll smash you!"

Cardew sprang quickly to his feet.

Though his face was cool, inwardly he was filled with utter dismay.

Cardew had not really doubted for a moment his ability to persuade Burkett to give up the captaincy. He had always found the dull-witted bully clay in his hands before.

But now, it seemed, he had lost that influence!

He had put Burkett into power—but he was as powerless as anyone else to get him out of it!

Cardew realised that in a flash—knew that he had created a Frankenstein monster which even he himself could not now destroy.

"Oh, gad!" breathed Cardew to himself.

"I—I'll smash you!" roared Burkett, pushing back his sleeves and revealing his great forearms. "Want me to resign the captaincy, do you? I'll never resign! I'm captain, and I'm staying captain! I've got the captaincy, and I won't let go of it!"

He made a rush at Cardew

(Continued on page 21.)

GREAT SCOTT, BOYS! TAKE A LOOK INTO—

THE VALLEY OF FORTUNE!

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your hero this week! He's in
a real tight corner!

By JOHN SYLVESTER.



A Cunning Plan!

LOPEZ raised his eyebrows. He swore under his breath. Still, it was hardly a very serious matter. "Has he gone alone?"

"With six others—six of our best fighting men."

"What of it?" Lopez shrugged. "Six men cannot fight six hundred."

"But the king was well beloved. If it came to be known that we tried to poison him there might be trouble. When he is missed it may be thought we have killed him and that he has been secretly buried. The people will demand his safe return, though not as their king, of course. But their belief in your power will be shaken if you cannot bring him back."

"Carajo!" Lopez stood up and flung away his cigarette. "They might as well doubt my powers because I do not bring back the two other white men."

"They will."

Lopez stared, frowned savagely, but suddenly his expression changed.

"I have it. We will say that the king was killed by the white devils. And we will bring them back to be sacrificed with the others. Won't that be enough to appease the people?"

"Undoubtedly. But how will you capture the two white men? Haven't we already tried?"

"Listen! I have an idea. We will make use of the fact that the king is at enmity with us. We will send a few trusted men into the forest. They will go unarmed, and they are sure to attract notice. They will pretend to be the followers of the king, expelled from the tribe. That is a plausible story. They will also say that we have taken a white prisoner, who is to be killed. They will offer to conduct the gringos back to a place from which rescue can be effected. If I am not much mistaken the trap will succeed."

Lopez expected criticism, though he was confident about his plan. He was agreeably surprised to be instantly rewarded by grunts of approval.

"Have I made myself clear? The two whites in the forest will be decoyed by pretended followers of the king. We can easily arrange for a place where they can be unexpectedly surrounded and overpowered."

"You have spoken wisely," was the reply. "But this must be done without delay. The sacrifice must take place to-night."

"Why to-night?" protested Lopez, somewhat taken aback.

"Before the king is missed. We can then announce his death at the same time as we pass judgment on those we will accuse of the crime."

Lopez tried to urge postponement, in case the decoying party did not meet with success, but he was overruled. The details were carefully discussed, and he went away to put the plan into operation.

He was not quite so elated as he had been, however. True, his piece of cunning had won instant appreciation by the professional wizards, who owed their power to cupidity. But this hitch caused by the king's disappearance annoyed him.

The awkward part of claiming supernatural power was that you might any moment be called upon to

IN A NUTSHELL, this is what has taken place!

Knowing that Pedro Lopez, a Brazilian adventurer, has stolen the map which holds the key to the whereabouts of a fortune in radium, Robert West, a scientist, and his companion, John Trent, together with a plucky youngster named Dick Blackwood, determine to follow the arch-villain to Brazil. After a number of thrilling encounters with Lopez, West and his companions, aided by a faithful Indian named Chica, succeed in gaining possession of the precious map. Following the directions thereon the adventurers eventually reach a jungle where, to their amazement, they

meet a strange tribe of savages in whose midst is Lopez receiving the homage of a god. Realising they can never achieve their purpose while their enemy remains in such a unique position, Dick and Chica disguise themselves and mingle with the natives in the hopes of capturing Lopez. The ruse fails, however, for they are trapped in a net prepared by the cunning Brazilian and made prisoners.

"You have done well," admits the chief of the witch-doctors, who are not in the least deceived by Lopez's claim to be a god, "but the king you have deposed has escaped, and while he lives you are in danger!"

(Now read on.)

demonstrate it. If only he could capture Trent and West by to-night he would secure a permanent triumph. But would they take the bait?

While all this was happening, and Dick and Chica were lying in the darkness of a hut, trussed up like sheep awaiting slaughter, West and Trent cautiously explored the forest.

They found a stream of moderately good drinking water, and although they dared not use their rifles for fear of attracting attention, Trent managed to kill a species of partridge with a stone, and they cooked it native fashion, supplementing the meal with some rather astringent fruit, which grew in abundance.

"If I wasn't literally famished, I don't think I could touch any food," said Trent half apologetically.

West glanced at him and nodded in sympathy.

"I feel the same. Dick is the pluckiest chap I've ever known. I hope to Heaven—"

He broke off, his sensitive ears detecting a strange sound. Automatically he reached for his rifle. Trent did the same, a purely reflex action.

"I thought it came from that tree opposite. The undergrowth is very thick. But it might only have been an animal attracted by the smell of food."

Trent shook his head. A second later he brought his gun to his shoulder.

"Indians!" he rapped.

He waited tensely, his finger on the trigger. But what he saw made his jaw drop in amazement. Indians they were, approaching in single file, but they were unarmed. Not only that, they held their hands above their heads.

He lowered his rifle, but he was determined to keep his eyes well open in case this was some kind of ruse. The men came on more boldly now, and the leader walked straight up to him. He was a fine-looking savage, tall and muscular, with curious tattooed markings on his chest. He began to speak.

Trent could only make out a word here and there, but West definitely recognised some of the expressions. He listened carefully, and turned to Trent.

"As far as I can gather, he says he's the king."

"You must have got the word wrong."

"I don't think so. But wait!"

It was difficult to piece what words they knew together and make sense. The speaker seemed to realise their difficulty, and he seemed to possess scraps of Huaranca and pidgin-Spanish. It formed a jumbled whole out of which, with great difficulty, they got an intelligent meaning.

"I believe I've got it!" exclaimed West, with an excitement rarely displayed. "These men have been turned out by the tribe. Now that Lopez is in full command, there's no room for a king as well. They want us to join them and help the king to regain his old position. They've gathered we are the enemies of Lopez, and they want to join forces."

"Sounds a bit too good to be true," remarked Trent. "It may be a trick to put us off our guard."

The self-styled king, however, began to jabber eagerly, and he kept pointing in the direction of the valley.

West started up in alarm.

"I can't be sure what he's saying, but he seems to know Dick's down there. I can't help thinking that's what he means."

"Thunder!" cried Trent, this time thoroughly roused. "If he knows that, Dick's disguise must have been discovered."

"And he must be a prisoner. I hope I'm wrong; but if it's true—"

Trent caught his breath. He controlled himself with an effort.

"We must wait until nightfall. If they don't come back, we'll have to trust these beggars even to the extent of arming them, and plan a rescue."

They had three hours to wait. In that time the natives settled down and seemed perfectly friendly. Trent's first suspicions were allayed.

But darkness came—and Dick and Chica did not return.

The Downfall of Lopez.

THE moon shone on a fantastic scene.

The narrow winding jungle gorge was ablaze with torches. Just as on the first night, Lopez rode on a litter, supported by magicians, who wore hideous masks with horns. Drums beat and reverberated, and there was the deeper and even weirder sound of bassoon-like instruments.

Dick had been brought out from the prison, and, to his astonishment, a suit of white drill had been given to him, with instructions to dress. Hardly knowing what to think of the idea, Dick obeyed. He did not know that this scheme of dressing him in white man's clothes—actually a spare suit of Lopez's—was his arch-enemy's idea of impressing the natives. They wanted a white prisoner. So, with Dick in white man's clothes again, and his face cleaned, he would satisfy their wants.

When he was ready, Dick's legs were freed, but his arms securely lashed. Behind him were guards with spears, watchful for any attempt to escape. Beside him walked Chica, who was too depressed even to utter a word.

It was not the fear of death that made Chica so cast down, but simply the fact that Lopez had triumphed, and that he would die without fulfilling his vow of vengeance. When he glanced at Dick his gaze was dumbly reproachful. He was thinking of the night when he had Lopez at his mercy, and Lopez had been set free.

Dick would now have freely admitted that they had made a terrible mistake. They should have taken justice into their own hands, and either compelled him to produce the map or risked finding it themselves.

"We were too mighty particular," he decided. "And yet—"

He couldn't quite describe the emotion that came over him. It was just that since he felt certain now that he was walking to his death, the recollection that he had played absolutely square made him feel better about things. After all, there were some actions a white man just couldn't do. One was to shoot an enemy in the back. Another was to break your word.

"Dash it!" he thought, sweepingly contradicting that other fleeting mood. "I nearly started thinking like old Chica. He's wrong—of course he's wrong! And why am I taking it for granted I won't get out of this? While there's life there's hope, isn't there?"

But not much, he had to admit. Confoundedly little hope, with his hands bound behind his back, and a tribe of peculiarly bloodthirsty savages, beating tom-toms and chanting gibberish, and leading him to the gruesome rock on which, from time immemorial, human sacrifices were offered.

An earthquake might save him, he reflected; or a meteor dropping from the sky and hitting Lopez off his perch might also alter matters. But the prospect of either of those events occurring at the right moment was, to say the least of it, remote.

"Still, I'm glad they haven't got Trent or West. That's something on the credit side."

The procession rounded the corner. In front of him, glistening in the moonlight, were tall pillars of rock. Whether they were some freak of geological formation,

(Continued on next page.)

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or whether they had been raised by human labour in a dim antiquity, he couldn't tell. It reminded him of Stonehenge, only it was on a bigger scale.

Torches flowed like rivers of fire between the avenues of rock. Lopez was lowered to the ground, and as the natives moved from his line of vision, and the chanting grew louder, Dick saw two slabs on the ground, and in the centre of each was an iron ring.

Then he noticed Lopez coming towards him.

"The moment has come," he began grimly. "I should have called it the last moment in your life except for the fact that death will be too lingering. You came here to find radium, and you have found it. The ground on which you are standing is the most richly radioactive in the world. Lest you don't appreciate what that means, I will tell you. Contact with radium scorches the skin. If we remained here ourselves for as long as an hour, the soles of our feet would be scorched. It penetrates steel. Hardly anything can withstand its deadly rays except lead. And we do not propose to put you on lead.

"You see those slabs. You will be chained to them. You may last for days. But although you will not be touched in any other way, the tissues of your body will be gradually destroyed. You will twist and scream in agony like many victims before you. But slowly—you will rot to death."

"You know, you talk too much," said Dick calmly, although he had gone white. "If you don't get on with the job something may happen."

With a snarl of rage, Lopez turned and shouted an order.

Instantly Dick was forced forward. His bonds were cut and he was laid on his back. A burly native rushed up with a red-hot piece of iron. Another approached, carrying a similar object with a pair of tongs on the opposite side.

An iron cuff was put roughly on each of Dick's wrists and the hot iron used to rivet this to the ring in the stone slab on each side. The hot iron touched his flesh. He bit his lip until it bled to prevent a cry.

Then, above the rumble of the drums and the wailing of the chant, the resounding blows of a hammer rang out.

Trent showed the native who described himself as the King how to use a rifle. He dared not risk letting him fire it, but he explained as well as he could, and demonstrated with the cartridges out.

"Intelligent blighter," he commented to West. "If he isn't a real king, he jolly well deserves to be."

West nodded absently.

"We haven't formed any plan yet," he pointed out.

"Not much use to. We don't know what we are up against. Plans have a way of tying you up when you ought to be free to act on your hunches."

West disagreed. His tidy mind preferred a perfectly definite line of action. However, he did not press the point.

"We must start right away," he urged. "I suppose we'd better leave the Indians to act as guides?"

"For a double reason," nodded Trent shrewdly. "I prefer to have 'em walking in front than behind."

This condition was conveyed, and the Indians seemed quite eager to get away. It was now pitch dark in the forest, but where the foliage was thinner the moonlight gleamed pallidly.

It was a marvel to Trent how the natives moved with such sureness and softness, although they might have been blindfolded for all they could see. He kept catching in thorns, tearing his arms, and grazing his shins. Several times he stumbled over great roots protruding from the ground. He heaved a sigh of relief when they left the jungle proper and followed a narrow path, with bamboos growing straight and thick on each side.

But they had not gone very far when he exchanged a quick glance with West. From the distance they could hear the muffled rumble of drums and the sound of chanting.

"What do you make of it?"

"I don't like it," admitted West uneasily.

"If Lopez is anywhere within range, I'll pepper him," muttered Trent. "I believe it would be plain sailing if he were dead. Meanwhile, it's Dick that worries me. I'm sure this infernal noise means they are up to mischief of some sort."

They walked on another half-mile. The vegetation ceased abruptly. Tropical luxuriance gave way to stark barrenness. The ground was rocky, and the boulders glistened in that blue light as though encrusted with tiny, translucent crystals. The chanting waxed louder. Drums and horns mingled in harsh dissonance. There was something utterly barbaric in that welter of sound, issuing as though from a pit; it seemed to charge the atmosphere with tension, with the fierce excitement of some nameless evil.

They were on high ground, and now it became clear that they were about to intersect the other end of the ravine, the end they had not explored. They could see the opposite side, silvery and phosphorescent. Not a hundred yards away was the dividing chasm.

Trent unslung his gun. The Indians who had gone on ahead were beckoning. Then, one by one, they disappeared over the brink of the cliff.

"I suppose we've got to follow, although it may be a trap after all."

It was not a trap, however. At the edge of the cliff Trent stood stock still in amazement. Below he could see a blur of torches, moving among tall hewn boulders; and in the centre was a group of men who, from their head-dress, he realised must be witch-doctors.

"What are they up to? Good heavens!"

An exclamation of horror burst from his lips. He started forward and slid for nearly fifty yards down the shaly slope. Fortunately the roar of the drums deadened the sound of the stones he had dislodged. He came to rest on a narrow ledge, but he was so dismayed by what he had seen that he hardly gave any

thought to the danger of his own position.

Trent's gaze was transfixed by that cluster of ju-ju men. They were standing around a figure stretched on the ground. Beside them was another prisoner, and he saw that it was Chic.

"They've got Dick!" Trent gasped, as West joined him. "I don't know what devilry they are up to. But there goes Lopez. He's bending down. Now they are all bending down."

"It must be Dick on the ground!" cried West, in alarm. "We've got to act at once!"

But Trent already had his rifle to his shoulder. He fired, and West also fired barely a second after.

Dick had virtually abandoned hope when those shots rang out. His hands were riveted to two stone slabs, and the witch-doctors were driving pegs into the ground, in order to fasten a sort of wooden collar across his throat, so that he would be unable to raise his head.

"I ought to get sunstroke before anything worse happens!" he consoled himself.

It was then the familiar crack of a rifle made the boy's heart leap, sent hope rushing through him, even though it was immediately transformed into a new anxiety.

"They are crazy!" the youngster almost groaned. "They'll only land themselves in the same plight."

Something crashed across Dick's legs. It was one of the witch-doctors. He gave a convulsive twitch and became

**CHICK CHANCE—
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an inert weight. Bullets were now coming thick and fast. Both Trent and West were firing and reloading breathlessly. Their native escort were also firing. Considering they had never handled a gun before, they managed remarkably well. Accurate shooting was not necessary. The crowd was so dense that it was impossible to pull the trigger and miss.

The crowd were first stupefied, and then panic-stricken. They had believed the white "demons" were powerless now they were under the protection of Lopez. But they had shown themselves to be very far from powerless.

They had suddenly appeared, with their thunder and lightning. They were angry and crying out for vengeance. One of the number was about to be sacrificed, and they had come to deliver him, armed with supernatural powers.

This was how the natives reasoned. Nothing could have convinced them that two men, as mortal as themselves, were creating such havoc. They imagined a host of demons sweeping down on the valley. They saw themselves trapped in that narrow gorge.

The howl of rage and despair that went up from their midst was a dreadful sound. Lopez listened to it, and blanched. It sounded the knell of his ambitions. Worse—

"We must fly!" cried a hoarse voice in his ear. It came from the hollow interior of a mask. He turned sharply to the witch-doctor who had spoken, and his lips twisted mirthlessly. It was no use talking of flight, surrounded by this now hostile mob.

The firing had abruptly stopped. But the natives nearest him were raising their spears and shouting in rage. If he were indeed a god, let him prove it, let him protect them.

For a second he hesitated. The temper of the crowd was so menacing that after a lightning calculation he decided he had at any rate nothing to lose by trying a final piece of bluff. He mounted a sort of rocky platform before anyone quite realised his intention, and raised both his hands.

"There is nothing to fear!" he shouted. Then abruptly he changed to English: "If another shot is fired, the boy will pay the penalty!"

The natives did not understand the latter sentence, and they took it to be some kind of magical incantation. Actually Lopez was trusting that his voice would reach Trent and West and prevent them from continuing the attack.

(For the concluding chapters of this popular adventure serial see next week's GEM.)

The Bully of the Shell!

(Continued from page 23.)

But Cardew was too quick for him. He put out a foot, and Burkett tripped over it, and crashed full length on the carpet. The study echoed to his fall. Cardew swung open the door and stepped quickly out into the passage, with the sound of Burkett's bull-like roar following him.

The door of Study No. 7 opened violently. But Burkett, charging out in pursuit of Cardew, caught sight of the captain of St. Jim's and the Housemaster, and hastily retreated, with a furious snort. Cardew grinned, and strolled away.

He was lucky, he knew, to have escaped from the bully's study without a thrashing, so filled with rage had Burkett become at his suggestion that he should resign the junior captaincy.

In Study No. 9, in the Fourth Form passage, Tom Merry & Co., Blake & Co., Talbot, Kangaroo, and Sidney Clive were waiting eagerly for Cardew's return.

"Any luck?" cried Clive, as Cardew entered the study.

Cardew shook his head.

"None. He won't resign. He went as mad as a hatter when I even suggested it."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Blake surveyed Cardew in dismay.

Cardew shrugged.

"Well," he said, "that's that! I'm afraid it's all my fault. I thought I could influence the lout. It seems I can't—not any more!"

"Oh, bai Jove!" breathed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Tom Merry gave a sudden dry laugh.

"Yes," he said, "that's that!"

Cardew, during his bitter animosity towards Tom, had recklessly set up Burkett in the seat of power, without bothering very much to weigh the results. And now, when he wanted to undo the harm he had done, Cardew found to his dismay that it was too late!

He was powerless to put things right now. The junior captaincy was securely held in the blundering, tyrannical hands of the bully of the Shell, the fellow whom Ralph Reekness Cardew had so recklessly used as a catspaw with which to bring about Tom Merry's downfall!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the thrilling climax to this grand series featuring "Bully" Burkett, the terror of the Lower School, entitled: "THE FALL OF THE TYRANT!" You'll rate it one of Martin Clifford's best yarns!)

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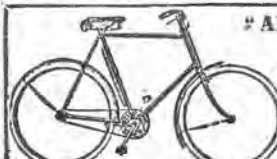
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