

"ST. JIM'S MISCHIEF-MAKER No. 1!" POWERFUL LONG YARN
OF TOM MERRY & CO. INSIDE.

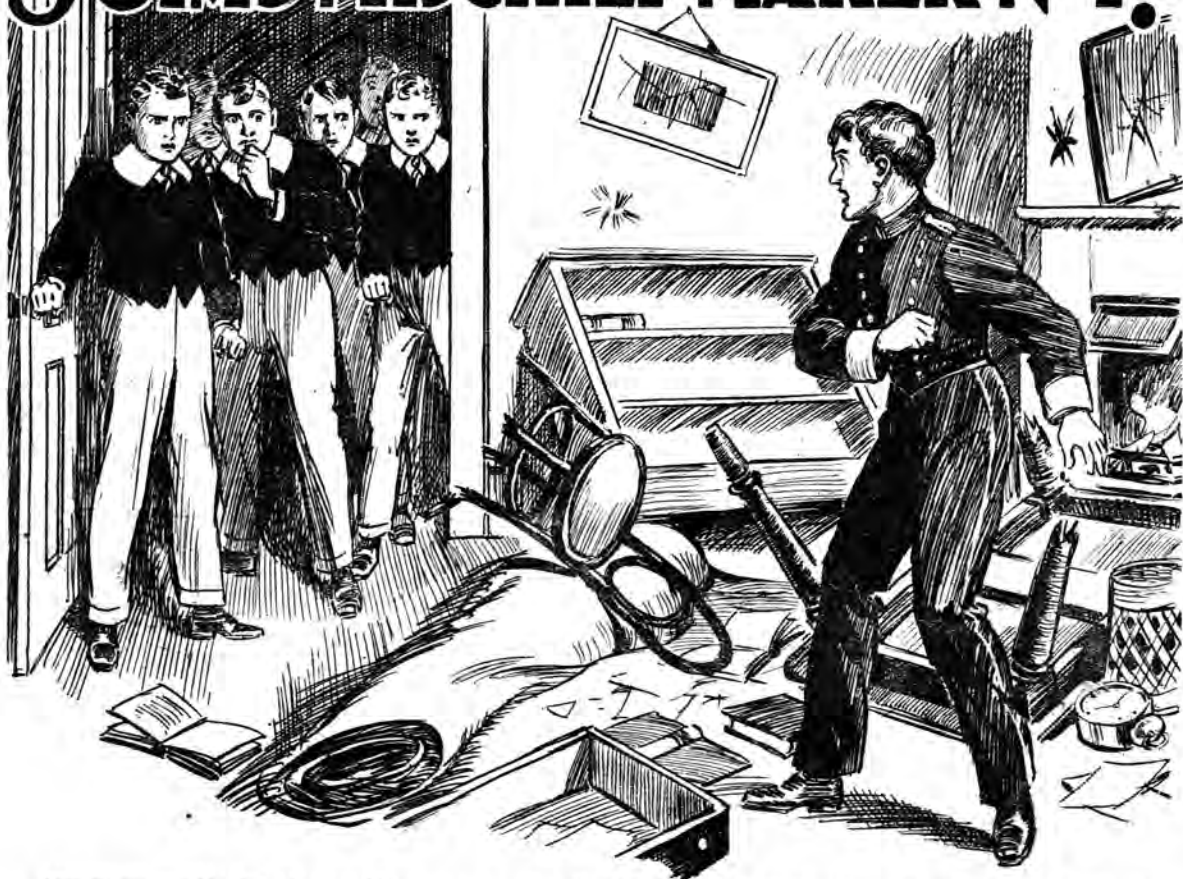
The GEM

2^d!



Unmasked!

ST. JIM'S MISCHIEF-MAKER N°1!



Glyn threw open the study door, and there was an exclamation from all the juniors at once. "Higgins!" The prisoner in the room was the red-headed boot-boy! And the study was in a state of terrific disorder.

CHAPTER 1.

A Lesson for Levison!

"O H, Gussy!"
 "Gussy, I'm shocked!"
 "Gussy, how could you?"
 Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's adjusted his eyeglass very carefully and stared at the juniors.

D'Arcy was standing in the Fourth Form passage, and he held in his hand a little green-and-gold packet, which he was examining very attentively as the juniors came along.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the Terrible Three of the Shell, were hurrying down the passage to go out for footer practice, but they stopped at the sight of Arthur Augustus with that suspicious-looking packet in his hand. Three exclamations of shocked surprise were uttered at the same moment.

"Cigarettes," said Monty Lowther, eyeing the little packet. "Oh, Gussy! Gussy has taken to smoking! Gussy, who has always been our model!"

"Shocking!" said Manners. "I'm surprised at Gussy! This awful thing is enough to corrupt the whole school!"

"You uttah asses—" began Arthur Augustus.

"Cigarettes," said Lowther. "Golden THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,465.

Hyacinth—ten for fourpence—warranted made from carefully selected sawdust and coffee-grounds."

"You fidgetful ass, Lowthah! If you mean to imply—"

"I'm disgusted with you, Gussy," said Tom Merry solemnly. "Gentlemen and chaps, we're in a hurry to get down to the footer, but we can spare a few minutes to bump Gussy back into the path of virtue."

"Yes, rather!" said Manners and Lowther heartily.

The swell of St. Jim's backed away in alarm.

"I wefuse to be bumped, you asses!" he said. "You do not seem to comprehend the circs—"

"We comprehend the cigarettes," said Lowther sternly. "Suppose a prefect caught you with them? What would Blake and Herries and Dig say? What an awful disgrace for Study No. 6! Gussy, I'm astonished that you should pick up vices like this in your old age!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Collar him!" said Tom Merry. "This is a serious matter, and must be dealt with at once. We can't see our one and only Gussy reeling on the road to ruin without putting out a hand to save him. Never shall it be said that we refused to scrag a pal in the hour of need."

"You feahful ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I am not weelin' wecklessly on the woad to wuin! I picked this up—"

"And now you've got to drop it again," said Tom Merry severely. "You can pick up anything you like, excepting the habit of smoking. That's barred."

"I picked it up—"

"Fancy Gussy picking up smoking!" said Lowther. "I can scarcely believe my eyes! Oh, Gussy, are you going to bring down your pals' pink whiskers with sorrow to the grave? Gussy—"

"You uttah wottahs! I picked this wotten packet of wubbish up in the passage!" shrieked Arthur Augustus wildly. "It does not belong to me. Levison dropped it as he went by, and I picked it up to give it to him, when I noticed that it was a packet of cigawettes. Then I weflected—"

"Oh, then, you haven't taken to smoking in your old age!" Monty Lowther exclaimed, looking astonished.

"You know vewy well that I have not, you wottah!"

"Oh, in that case we accept your apology," said Lowther blandly.

"I have not apologised, you uttah ass! I have explained that this wotten wubbish isn't mine. It belongs to

—THIS GREAT YARN IS FULL OF MYSTERY, FUN, AND EXCITEMENT.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD

Levison, and I was welectin' whethah I should weturn it to him or chuck it into the fire."

"Where is Levison?" asked Tom Merry.

"I think he has gone into the box-woom. He went in that diwection. I should wegard it as my duty to thwow this wubbish into the fire, but I have a gweat wespect for the wights of pwoperty. It belongs to Levison, you know."

"Are you fellows ever coming?" bawled Jack Blake of the Fourth from the staircase.

"Blake, old man, you're wanted. Awfully serious."

Blake came along the passage from the stairs. He, too, cast a look of great surprise at the packet in D'Arcy's hand.

"We've found Gussy in possession of cigarettes," explained Tom Merry.

"Why, the silly ass—" began Blake.

"Weally, Blake, I was debatin' in my mind whethah I should thwow this packet into the fire, or weturn it to Levison, and give him a feahful thwashin' for disgwacin' the Fourth."

"Oh, it belongs to Levison, does it?" said Blake. "Let's talk to Levison. I'm fed-up with his doggish ways."

"Yaas, wathah! I considah—"

"Hallo, here he is!" said Manners.

Levison of the Fourth came along the passage, looking about him as if for something he had lost. He cast a suspicious glance at the chums of the School House. Then he caught sight of the green-and-gold packet in D'Arcy's hand, and uttered an exclamation.

"That belongs to me!"

"You admit it?" demanded Tom Merry.

Levison shrugged his thin shoulders.

"Of course I do; it's mine. What is it to do with you, Tom Merry? You've not been made a prefect that I know of."

"I'm not a prefect," said Tom Merry.

"But I'm a decent chap, and I'm up against this kind of rot. If you were in the Shell I should serag you for it. As you're in the Fourth, I'm willing to lend Blake a hand."

"Yes, rather!" said Lowther. "What shall we do with him? Bump him, or frog's-march, or something lingering, with boiling oil in it?"

"Look here—" began Levison.

"It would serve him right to make him smoke the rubbish," said Tom Merry. "But we won't be too severe."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mind your own business," said Levison. "Give me my packet. I suppose D'Arcy isn't going to steal it?"

D'Arcy reddened.

"You fidgetful wottah, there is your wotten packet!"

And he tossed it to Levison, who caught it—with the end of his nose.

"Ow! You silly idiot!"

"I wufuse to be called a silly idiot!"

"You should break these truths gently to Gussy," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Tom Merry, "it is up to us to take Levison in hand, and teach him the error of his ways. Stop him!"

Lowther and Blake caught Levison as he was retreating, and pinioned his arms. The cad of the Fourth struggled angrily.

"Let me go, you beasts!"

"Not just yet," said Lowther agreeably. "If you wriggle like that I shall twist your arm. There, I told you so."

"Yow!"

"Bring him into his study," said Tom Merry.

Levison struggled again, but he was marched into the study. Lumley-Lumley of the Fourth, who had the doubtful honour of being Levison's study-mate, was there, and he jumped up in surprise.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" he asked.

"These silly fools are playing the giddy ox, as usual!" growled Levison.

"Levison is playing the rotten cad, as usual," said Tom Merry. "He's got a packet of cigarettes here, and he is going to burn them, and we're going to watch him."

"I'm not!" roared Levison.

"Your mistake, you are," said Tom Merry calmly. "I give you one minute to start."

The juniors had released the cad of the Fourth, but they stood between him and the door, and he had no chance to escape.

Lumley-Lumley grinned, and sat down again. He was not disposed to help his study-mate.

"Shove that packet of cigarettes on the fire," said Tom Merry.

"I—I won't!"

"Up-end him, Blake, old man, and I'll give him a taste of the poker," said Tom Merry.

"Hands off!" snarled Levison. "I—I—I'll burn them, if you like, you beasts! You're five to one."

Never was there so much trouble and bad feeling among the junior studies at St. Jim's—and it was all engineered by a secret enemy. Who is the mystery mischief-maker?

"Bai Jove! If you mean to imply that we could not tackle you one to one, Levison, I'm weady to pwove the contrary. If you care to put your wotten hands up—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Levison.

"I wefuse to do anythin' of the sort. I considah—"

"Are you going to burn those cigarettes, Levison?" asked Tom Merry, taking a businesslike grip upon the poker.

"Yes, hang you!"

Levison thrust the packet into the flames, and it flared up. Then he turned upon the juniors with a savage scowl.

"Now get out of my study, confound you!" he exclaimed.

"No hurry," said Tom Merry. "I fancy that isn't the only packet you've got. Turn out your pockets."

"I won't!" yelled Levison.

"Turn him upside-down, and shake them out of him, you fellows!"

Levison made a wild spring for the door. He was grasped by Blake and Lowther and dragged back, and then turned upside-down and shaken. Quite an interesting collection fell out of his pockets on to the floor—two more packets of cigarettes, a sporting paper, and a list of racing fixtures.

"Gurrgh!" gurgled Levison. "Lomme down, you rotters!"

Blake and Lowther released Levison, and he fell with a bump to the floor.

"My only hat!" said Blake. "This is getting thicker and thicker. I wonder what the Head would say if he saw this little lot."

"You're going the right way to get sacked, Levison," said Tom Merry. "You can't keep this sort of thing up long without getting bowled out. Shove all that rubbish into the fire, and then we'll bump you. We can't waste all the afternoon over you."

Levison's face was white with fury as he scrambled to his feet. But he saw that he had to obey, and he piled his precious possessions upon the fire and suddenly watched them burn away. When they were quite consumed, the chums of the School House collared Levison, and he descended upon the floor with a bump and a yell.

"Ow, ow!"

"Give him another bump to teach him not to smoke," said Lowther.

Bump!

"And another for his uncle, and one for his aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Then the juniors streamed out of the study, leaving Levison sitting on the floor, gasping with rage. He staggered up and scowled at Lumley-Lumley, who was chuckling.

"The rotten beasts! I'll make them sorry for that," said Levison, between his teeth.

Lumley-Lumley only chuckled.

CHAPTER 2.

The Unexpected Happens!

QUITE a little crowd were gathered on the steps of the School House an hour or two later, at the time when Blagg, the postman from Rylcombe, usually arrived.

There was a dearth of funds in some of the studies—as will sometimes happen in the best-regulated studies. The Terrible Three were ready for tea; but tea was not ready for them. They had kept up the footer till long after tea in Hall was over; so even that resource was not open to them.

Tom Merry was expecting a remittance from his old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett, and Monty Lowther had some vague hopes that his uncle might have remembered his existence. If a remittance did not come for somebody, the chums of the Shell would be reduced to looking into some other fellow's study with sweet smiles, till they found somebody at tea, with enough to go round.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy, the chums of Study No. 6, joined the Terrible Three at the door. They were in the same state of impecuniosity. Arthur Augustus was expecting a letter from his governor, which he hoped would contain a five-pound note as well as a considerable amount of kindly advice.

Blake, Herries, and Digby had nobly resolved to stand by him like true chums and help him spend the fiver—if it came.

"Money is wathah tight," Arthur Augustus remarked, as he polished his eyeglass. "The patah doesn't seem to shell out as a fellow would natuwallly expect, you know. I have w'tten him a wathah severe lettah, though, and I think he will come up smilin' this time."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry cheer-

fully. "I'm only expecting a quid, but if it comes I'll relieve the general distress; and if Gussy's fiver comes instead—"

"In that case, I shall have great pleasure in believin' the general distress, deah boy."

"And if they both come, we'll have a gorgeous feed, and ask Figgins & Co. over from the New House," said Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Hear, hear!"

Levison of the Fourth came out of the House and cast an anxious glance into the quad.

"Seen the postman?" he asked.

"Not arrived yet," said Herries.

"You expecting a remittance, too?"

"Yes, rather!" said Levison loftily.

"And a whacking good one, too, I shouldn't wonder if it's twenty quid."

"Twenty rats!" said Herries gruffly.

"Bai Jovel! It would be wippin' to have twenty pounds at once!" said Arthur Augustus.

"You will be wollin' in money, deah boy!"

Levison sniffed.

"I expect to be rolling in money, as a matter of fact," he said. "My father's engaged in a big thing now on the Stock Exchange, and he will most likely be a millionaire next week. It's a jolly sure thing, and he had inside information, and he is simply whacking in the money. Some fellows who have been against me will be jolly civil then, I expect."

Tom Merry's lip curled.

"You won't find any difference from me, for one," he said. "And you'll still get bumped if you're found with cigarettes in your pockets!"

Levison sneered.

"You'll change your tune, I expect, when it comes off!" he said.

"Oh, rats!"

"Levison's got pa's to stand by him, anyway," said Mellish of the Fourth, Levison's study-mate and crony.

"And he won't forget old friends when he's rolling in giddy riches, will you, Levison?"

"No fear!" said Levison. "But I shan't forget those who've been rotten to me!"

Blake uttered an exclamation of disgust.

"Look here, Levison, nobody here cares twopence whether your pater's a millionaire or not!" he exclaimed. "It won't make any difference to us. We wouldn't touch your money if you offered it to us by the fistful! And you haven't got it yet, either. You're such a giddy Ananias that I shan't believe in the quids, for one, till I've seen them!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll see them jolly soon," he said.

"Here comes the postman."

Blagg, the local postman, had heaved in sight. And there was a general shout from the juniors:

"This way, Blaggy!"

Blagg grinned, and came towards the School House steps.

Gore and Crooke of the Shell joined Levison. The news of Levison's expected wealth had spread—Levison had talked a great deal about it. Levison was not a fellow with many friends; some fellows had expressed wonder that even Mellish and Crooke could stand him. But human nature is human nature all the world over, in school and out of school; and Levison, as a millionaire's son, was likely to be much more popular than he had been of old.

"Letter for me, Blaggy?" asked Tom Merry.

"And for me, Blagg, deah boy?"

Blagg shook his head.

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"Nothing for you this time, Master Merry."

Tom Merry groaned.

"That gives our giddy tea-party the kybosh," he remarked. "It all depends on Gussy's fiver now. A registered letter for D'Arcy, Blagg?"

"No, Master Merry."

"Bai Jovel! I vegard this as weally remarkably careless on the patah's part. I wote to him specially to explain that I shall expect a fivah by this post!"

"These paters are so careless," grinned Lowther. "You can't have been very careful in bringing him up, Gussy. In his tender youth you should have impressed upon him the sin of forgetfulness—"

"Letter for Master Levison," said Blagg.

Levison grinned as he took the letter. Blagg shouldered his bag. Some of the juniors there gathered round Levison.

"From your pater?" asked Gore.

"Yes," said Levison.

"Oh, good!" said Mellish. "I hope it's twenty! But if it's only ten, we'll have a gorgeous celebration—what?"

"What-ho!" said Levison, as he slit the envelope.

Levison's friends hung round him as he unfolded the letter and began to read it. The Fourth Former's face changed suddenly.

"Hallo! There's nothing in the letter!" said Mellish. "Did your pater forget to put the cash in, Levison?"

Levison did not reply.

His face had gone suddenly white.

The hand that held the letter trembled. Levison was devouring the page with wild, startled eyes. And the juniors stared at him in amazement.

His expression was certainly not that of a fellow who had received news of great success and a liberal allowance. His face told as plainly as words could have done that he had received bad news.

"What's the matter, Levison?" asked Mellish uneasily. "Isn't your pater going to send you any cash, after all?"

Tom Merry & Co. were looking at Levison, too. They did not like Levison, but they would have felt sorry for any fellow who looked as Levison looked at that moment.

The cad of the Fourth was so white that his face seemed bloodless, and his eyes seemed to be starting from his head.

"What's the matter, old chap?" said Tom Merry. "Some of your people ill?"

Levison shook his head.

"Bad news, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy sympathetically.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Levison.

"My pater's ruined!"

"What?"

"The speculation hasn't turned out as he expected!" said Levison huskily. "He's lost all his money—instead of making a fortune—and—and I'm to go home!"

"Leave St. Jim's?"

"Yes."

"Well, any hat! The feed's off for a cert," said Mellish.

And he walked away.

Levison did not look at him. He crumpled the letter in his hand, and went slowly into the School House.

CHAPTER 3.

The Last of Levison!

LEVISON'S bad luck was soon known all over St. Jim's. He had been in a fair way to making quite a large number of

friends, when it was supposed that his father was about to become a million-

aire.

Matters were changed now with a vengeance.

Percy Mellish had declared that he thought there was something fishy about it all along; and Crooke of the Shell delivered the opinion that Levison had swanked a little too much. Gore said that it was a bad habit to count one's chickens before they were hatched.

Quite unexpectedly, as far as Levison was concerned, he received most sympathy from the fellows who, as he said, had always been against him.

Tom Merry & Co. were not likely to allow hard feelings to reign in their breasts at such a time of misfortune for the cad of the Fourth.

The fellow was a cad, that was undoubted; but he had had cruel luck. St. Jim's would be all the better off without him; but they were sorry for a chap who had to go. His prospects would be ruined—all things were at an end for him. For the rest of that evening Levison seemed stunned.

Mr. Levison had written to the Head by the same post, explaining that his son would have to leave St. Jim's, as he could no longer afford to keep him there. It would be necessary for Levison to work, and to share the fallen fortunes of the family. There was an opening for him to begin in an office, and he could afford to lose no time about it.

Dr. Holmes sent for Levison, and was very kind to him. He did not like the boy—Levison had given the Head more trouble than any other junior in the school. But Dr. Holmes was kindness itself now, and he said that he hoped matters would soon wear a brighter aspect, and Levison would be able to return to school.

He was to leave in the morning.

Levison left the Head's study after that interview, his hard heart not at all softened by Dr. Holmes' kindness and gentleness.

He was seething with rage and spite now, as he had had time to think over the matter, and over all that it meant to him. He went into the Junior Common-room, and Mellish and Crooke stared at him. They did not feel misfortunes very acutely unless the said misfortunes happened to themselves.

Tom Merry & Co. were in the room, and Tom came over to Levison.

"I'm awfully sorry about this, Levison, old man," he said softly. "If there's anything I can do—"

"Yaas, wathah, Levison, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "If there's anything any of us can do—"

Levison gave them a bitter look.

"Don't rot!" he said. "You're glad—you know you're glad."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned crimson.

"Weally, Levison, I twust you do not think I am wottah enough to feel glad at any chap bein' down on his luck?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, rot!"

Levison evidently was not a fellow to be sympathised with.

"I'm not glad, Levison," said Tom Merry quietly. "I don't think anybody's glad. I'm sorry you've had such bad luck."

"It's a lie!"

Tom Merry coloured.

"Well, I've said that," he replied. "I meant it, too; but—but now it's happened, I'm sorry. We often say things

without thinking much, Levison. I'm sorry."

"I don't believe you."

"I'd rather part friends, Levison, if you like."

Levison sneered.

"You and I couldn't be friends in a thousand years, Tom Merry."

Tom looked at him steadily.

"No, I suppose we couldn't," he said quietly. And he turned away. He did not speak to Levison again.

Levison gave a scoffing laugh, and threw himself into a chair. To his distorted mind it seemed that all the fellows were pleased at his misfortune, and glad that he had to leave St. Jim's. Tom Merry & Co. had dealt roughly with him sometimes, and he had deserved it more than once. They were not sorry that they had condemned his

"I haven't thought much about it," he said. "But if you're going, I suppose we shall see the last of you."

Levison gritted his teeth.

"Well, you're mistaken. I'm not leaving St. Jim's for long; I shall be coming back. You won't get rid of me so easily."

"I don't know that we want to get rid of you," said Digby uncomfortably. "And I'm sure I hope that your pater's affairs will look up."

"Whether they do or not, I shall come back," said Levison. "My father wants me to stick in an office and earn money to help the home. Help the home! Catch me! If I earn any money, I'm jolly well going to stick to it!"

"Bai Jove, Levison, I should think you'd be jolly glad of a chance to wally wound your patah, at a time like this."

When he rose in the morning his face was pale, and his eyes were burning.

Taggles, the porter, carried his box down. Toby, the School House page, lingered in the Hall as Levison came down to take his place in the cab to go to the station.

"Good-bye, Master Levison!" he said.

Levison looked at him with a sneer.

"Good-bye's no good," he said. "I'm stony broke now, and there won't be any tip."

Toby flushed to his ears.

"I wasn't thinking of a tip, Master Levison," he said indignantly. "I wouldn't take it if you offered it to me, seeing as you are down on your luck, sir."

"Oh, rats!" said Levison.

"The fellow's an utter cad," said Tom Merry, in a low voice, as Levison went



Helpless in the grasp of Blake and Lowther, Levison was turned upside-down and shaken. Quite an interesting collection fell out of his pockets—two more packets of cigarettes, a sporting paper, and a list of racing fixtures. "Gurrgh!" gurgled Levison. "Lemme down, you rotters!"

"rotten" ways. They were simply sorry that he had had bad luck.

But Levison could not understand that. He would have rejoiced in the misfortune of an enemy, and he could not understand a nobler nature than his own.

He hardly spoke a word for the rest of the evening. That night he packed his box. Percy Mellish helped him to pack, but Mellish did not waste much sympathy upon him. There was little comfort for Levison in Mellish's company. As a matter of fact, Mellish was not sorry to see him go. They had been "pals," but Levison had always had the upper hand, and when he was gone, too, there would be more room in the study.

Levison bestowed a bitter look on the chums of the Fourth when the juniors came to bed.

"You think you're going to see the last of me, I suppose?" he said.

Blake looked at him.

"My pater's served me a pretty rotten turn," said Levison bitterly. "He can look after himself; I've got to look after myself. And I can tell you fellows that you haven't seen the last of me. I'm not going home."

"Not going home?" said Blake.

"Going home—to see faces as long as fiddles, and to hear them all snivelling?" said Levison fiercely. "No fear!"

"If that's the way you look at it, your pater will be better off if you don't go home," said Herries.

"Better off or not, I shan't go."

"But where will you go, then?" asked Blake.

"That's my business."

"Oh, certainly! Only asking out of politeness, you know," Blake explained cheerfully.

Levison went to bed, but not to sleep.

Long hours he lay awake that night while the rest of the Fourth were sleeping the sleep of healthy youth.

out. "He knew very well that Toby wasn't asking for a tip."

"Jolly well rid of him, I think," said Herries.

And Tom Merry had to agree.

But were they rid of Levison? Tom Merry wondered as he saw the cab drive away, with Levison, Taggles, and his box in it.

Levison was a born schemer, and so long as he gained his ends, he was not at all particular as to whether his schemes were right or wrong.

CHAPTER 4.

Where is Levison?

"BAI JOVE, my patah's playin' up, afaah all!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Morning lessons were over, and the juniors had come out of the Form-rooms.

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Levison's place in the Fourth Form Room had been empty that morning, but no one seemed to have missed him. "Got a letter?" asked Blake, as D'Arcy uttered the exclamation.

"He's wiwin' me," said D'Arcy.

"Wiring you a fiver?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Oh, good!" said Blake. "But how do you know that your pater is wiring you a fiver?"

Arthur Augustus pointed into the quadrangle.

"There comes the telegraph-boy, deah boy!"

"How do you know the telegram is for you?" demanded Digby.

"I natuually conclude that it is," said Arthur Augustus. "That telegram for me, youngstah?" he added, as the telegraph-boy came up.

The "youngster," who was at least two years older than Arthur Augustus, grinned.

"You Dr. Holmes?" he asked seriously.

"Certainly not!"

"This telegram is for Dr. Holmes."

"Oh, you'd better take it in, then."

And the telegraph-boy grinned and took it in.

"The noble pater isn't playing the game, after all," Blake remarked.

"You'd better send him a wire to jog his memory, Gussy. Point out to him that four juniors are in danger of dying by inches, or famine—"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Dying by inches!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, joining them, with Tom Merry and Manners. "Then I should recommend you to get it over quickly. Instead of dying by inches, why not go round to the kennels and die by the yard?"

"Oh, suffocate him, somebody!"

"Weally, Lowthah, this is not a time for wotten puns," said Arthur Augustus severely. "My telegram turns out to be for the Head, and I am stony. I wegard the governah as weally havin' failed to play the game."

Toby, the page, came out hurriedly.

"Ead wants Master Kildare!" he exclaimed. "Something's up, young gentlemen!"

And the page ran away in search of Kildare. He returned in a few minutes with the captain of St. Jim's, who went into the Head's study.

Blake captured Toby as he passed.

"What's the row, Toby? Kildare's not in trouble, surely?"

"No, Master Blake; it's the telegram."

"Hallo, here's Kildare!"

Kildare had not been long with the Head. He came out hurriedly, to speak to the group of curious juniors on the School House steps.

"Do you kids know anything about Levison?" he asked.

"Levison!" repeated the juniors in surprise.

"I thought we were finished with him," growled Herries.

"Hasn't he gone home?" asked Tom Merry.

"No, that's the trouble. He certainly left by the early morning train; Taggles saw him off," said Kildare, with a worried look. "But his father has wired to the Head that he has not come home, and asks whether he has left St. Jim's."

"Bai Jove!"

Blake started. He remembered Levison's words of the previous night—reckless words, that he had taken no notice of at the time.

"Do any of you kids know whether Levison had any intention of not going

home?" Kildare asked. "The Head wants to know."

"He said something about it last night, in the dorm," said Blake. "I thought he was only gassing. He said he wasn't going home."

"The young ass!" said Kildare. "The Head was afraid there might have been some accident. What can the young duffer be staying away from home for? I should have thought he'd have gone home as quickly as he could, in the circumstances."

And Kildare returned to the Head. "Then he surely meant what he said last night," said Blake. "What an awful cad! It isn't a time for him to worry his father, if the old chap is ruined."

"Wathah not!"

"Rotten bad form, anyway," said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I am not surprised at it, howevah. And I must remark that I trust St. Jim's has seen the last of Levison."

The juniors were very keenly interested in the question of what had become of Levison.

More telegrams passed to and fro.

It was known that night that Levison had not gone home; his box had been taken out of the train at Wayland Junction, and Levison had left the train there, and had vanished.

Whatever had become of the cad of the Fourth, the school saw nothing of him. But it came out that his father had heard from him, so all fear of an accident to the junior was over.

Levison had left St. Jim's, and he was staying away from home of his own accord. And St. Jim's went on its usual way, and soon forgot about Levison.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, for one, had more to think about than the cad of the Fourth—something much more important. His pater had failed consistently to come up smiling, as D'Arcy expressed it, and the long-looked-for fiver had not arrived.

"It's weally vewy wemiss of the governah," Arthur Augustus remarked, as Blake looked into the cupboard at tea-time in the hope of discovering some comestible that had been overlooked in previous investigations.

Blake grunted.

"Nothing here. Your pater wants talking to, Gussy. And my pater is just as bad. He's written me a letter full of advice about working hard this term. Of course, I wouldn't mind that. Paters do such things, and a fellow expects it. But he might have put in a postal order."

"Yaas, wathah! I've a jolly good mind to earn some money, as I did once before. You wemembah the time I got a job as an interpwetah in an hotel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's nothin' to cackle at in that, deah boys. I wegard it as bein' up to evewy fellow to be able to earn his own livin', in case of accidents."

"There's a new boot-boy wanted in the House," Digby suggested. "The place is really going begging. If you asked the Head—"

"Weally, Dig—"

"Of course, you wouldn't be much of a hand at cleaning boots; but you could learn a lot with steady practice," said Dig wisely.

"I wegard you as an ass, Dig," said Arthur Augustus. "I should wequiah a salawy of at least twenty guineas a week if I worked. A chap with my bwains ought to be able to do somethin'. It's wathah humiliatin' to we-

flect that Toby can support himself, and a chap like me can't do it."

The study door flew open under the impetus of a kick, and Tom Merry looked into the study with a sunny face.

"It's come!" he announced.

"My wegistered letthah?"

"No; my quid!" said Tom Merry.

"All gentlemen present are invited to my study for a high tea. The adjective not referring to the sardines. Come on!"

"Corn in Egypt!" exclaimed Blake, with a gasp of relief. "Come on, kids!"

And the juniors gathered in Tom Merry's study round the festive board, and peace and contentment descended upon them, though Arthur Augustus remarked from time to time that it was really too bad of his governah.

CHAPTER 5.

The Ragers Ragged!

"MY hat! What a mop!" Gordon Gay of the Fourth Form at Rylcombe Grammar School uttered that exclamation.

Gay, Wootton, and Frank Monk were sauntering along Rylcombe Lane. They were not doing anything in particular, excepting keeping an eye open for St. Jim's fellows to relieve the monotony with a "rag," if the chance came their way. And they suddenly caught sight of a fellow turning out of the cross-road from Wayland, and Gordon Gay uttered that disrespectful ejaculation.

Wootton and Monk glanced at the stranger and grinned. He was a lad of about their own age, dressed very shabbily, with a face so dark as to suggest foreign blood. His hair, however, was of a specially aggressive shade of ginger, and his eyebrows, large and thick, were of the same hue. The effect, along with his swarthy face, was striking.

"What a giddy mop!" said Gordon Gay. "If ginger stands for pluck, that merchant must be hot stuff."

Gordon Gay did not intend the stranger to hear his remarks. Careless as he was, he would not willingly have given offence to a stranger. But the boy with the red hair seemed to have unusually keen ears, and, although he was still at a distance, the look on his face showed that he had heard.

He slackened his pace as he came nearer to the Grammar School juniors, and stared at them, with a peculiar glint in his eyes.

"Well, you'll know us again, kid," said Gordon Gay good humouredly.

"Not if you wash your face," said the red-haired youth.

Wootton major and Monk chuckled, and Gordon Gay turned pink.

"I suppose it is a face," went on the stranger, regarding Gordon Gay aggressively. "There is what appears to be a nose, unless it is a strawberry, and a mouth, unless I'm making a mistake, and it's a cupboard."

"Look here!" exclaimed Gordon Gay wrathfully, as Wootton and Monk chuckled again. "Don't you be so jolly free with your remarks, or you will get a thick ear!"

"Well, you started it," said the red-haired youth. "Why can't you let my hair alone?"

"Well, I wouldn't touch it for anything; might burn my fingers," said Gay. "I didn't know you could hear what I said. You've got jolly long ears. Still, I admit I oughtn't to have

remarked on your ginger topknot, and I apologise."

"Good thing for you," said the other. "I was just thinking of wiping up the ground with you!"

Gordon Gay looked warlike at once. "Better wire in, then!" he exclaimed. "I was rude and I've apologised, and that ends it; but if you're looking for trouble, I'm the very merchant you want."

The stranger backed away a little. "It's alright," he said. "Don't you worry. Perhaps you young gentlemen could tell me whether I'm on the right road for St. Jim's."

The three Grammarians stared at him. The youth had spoken in the first place like one of themselves, and he had suddenly dropped into a Cockney accent that was most pronounced.

"You're going to St. Jim's?" asked Gay, with a curious look at the boy's shabby clothes and patched boots.

"Yes, sir,"
"New fellow—eh?"
The stranger grinned.
"New boot-boy," he explained.
"Leastways, I'm trying to get the job, and I 'ope as 'ow I shall be able to."
"Oh, I see!" said Gay. "Well, you're on the right road; keep straight on, and you'll pass the gates of the school."

"Thank you, sir."
And the stranger touched his shabby cap and passed on.

Gordon Gay looked after him very curiously.

"That's a jolly queer merchant!" he said. "Did you notice how differently he spoke? Quite all right at first, and then dropped into a horrible twang. Some kid who's seen better days, perhaps. Sorry for him, if that's the case."

And the Grammarians walked on and soon forgot the existence of the red-haired youth who was going to St. Jim's to apply for the position of boot-boy there. The red-haired youth walked on in the direction of St. Jim's. Although he had asked the Grammarians the way, he seemed to know it very well. There was a sudden yell as he came in sight of the distant school gates.

"My hat! It's a fire!"
The red-haired youth looked round. He knew that it was another reference to the peculiar colour of his hair. Two St. Jim's fellows had stopped in the lane and were grinning at him. They were Crooke of the Shell and Mellish of the Fourth.

"Where did you get that mop?" asked Crooke.

"Why don't you put your head in the ditch and extinguish it?" asked Mellish. The red-haired youth showed no sign of anger.

"If you please, young gentlemen, is that St. Jim's?" he asked.

"Yes," said Crooke, with a stare. "What do you want at our school, Ginger?"

"Please, I'm the new boot-boy."
"Oh, you're the new boot-boy, are you?" said Crooke. "Dangerous to have you about the House, I should think, unless it's insured against fire."
"Ha, ha, ha!" cackled Mellish.

The cads of the School House advanced upon the red-haired boy. They felt quite safe in bullying him. They were two to one, for one thing; and then a boot-boy seemed to Crooke a proper object for ragging and bullying—as, of course, he could not take his own part against one of the fellows. The red-haired boy backed away and dodged them and ran for the school gates.

The sight of the victim escaping was

enough for Crooke. He was bravely itself when the other party was afraid.

"After him!" he exclaimed.

And they dashed after the red-haired boy. The latter reached the open gates just as an elegant form stepped into view. It was Arthur Augustus, taking a look down the road for the postman, the famous fiver not having arrived yet.

The red-haired lad ran right into him, whether by accident or not, and the swell of St. Jim's sat down in the dust with a yell.

"Ow! Bai Jove! You uttah ass!"
"Sorry, sir!" said the red-haired lad meekly. "Them young gentlemen is arter me, sir, and they're going to duck me in the ditch, sir."

D'Arcy struggled to his feet as Crooke and Mellish panted up.

"Lend a hand, D'Arcy!" said Crooke. "We're going to stick that flaming topknot in the ditch and put it out!"

"You uttah wottah, Cwooke! How dare you make vulgah remarks to a fellow concernin' his personal appeavance!"

"Why, you silly ass—"
"Let that young person alone at once!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus angrily. "How dare you lay a fingah on him!"

And D'Arcy stopped in between the ragers and their victim. In his anger at what he justly regarded as the cadishness of Crooke and Mellish, the swell of St. Jim's even forgot his dusty trousers.

"Look here," roared Crooke, "get out of the way! He's only a boot-boy!"

"Only a whelp come to help Toby with the boots and washing-up dishes," said Mellish.

D'Arcy's eyes gleamed.
"You awful cads!" he said. "There might be some excuse for vaggin' a chap who could strike out for himself, but to take advantage of a fellow bein' in employment here is cowardly as well as wotten. You are uttah outsiders!"
"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Crooke. "We're going to rag him if we like! Clear out!"

"I wefuse to cleah out!"

"Look here, if you don't shift, we'll jolly soon shift you!" roared Crooke, who was a powerful fellow, a head taller than Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

But D'Arcy never counted size or odds before he plunged into a combat.

"I decline to shift, and I uttably wefuse to be shifted! Oh! Ow! You wottahs! Cwooke, I shall give you a feahful—ow!—thwashin'! Yow!"
Arthur Augustus struggled furiously in the grasp of the two cads of the School House. The new boots glanced at the three struggling juniors, and walked calmly away, leaving D'Arcy in the grasp of his enemies.

"Bump the cheeky cad!" growled Crooke.

"He, he, he! Yes, rather!"
Arthur Augustus was a great fighting man. But he had no chance against two foes, one of whom was much bigger and heavier than himself.

Crooke and Mellish received several hard knocks, which increased their fury, and then D'Arcy was down. And it would have gone very hard with Arthur Augustus if help had not arrived in the shape of Figgins & Co. of the New House.

The three New House fellows bore down upon the struggling juniors, and laid violent hands upon Crooke and Mellish.

"Here, hold on; fair play's a jewel!" exclaimed Figgins, in disgust. "Not two to one, you rotters!"

"Let go, you New House cad!" yelled Crooke.

"New House what?" asked Figgins, collaring Crooke and dragging him off, and jamming him against the wall with a grasp of iron.

"Ow! Ow! Rotter!"
Figgins jammed harder. Crooke was no use in the powerful grip of Figgins. Crooke's head rubbed hard on the rough surface of the wall, and he yelled furiously. He felt as if he was being scalped, and the feeling was not pleasant.

"Now, what did you say?" asked Figgins pleasantly.

Kerr and Wynn had collared Mellish.



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But Mellish was not giving any trouble. He was not a fighting man—excepting when the odds were in his favour.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sat up on the ground and panted.

"Thank you vewy much, deah boys!" he gasped. "The awful wottahs! They have simply wuined my waistcoat, and my twousahs are feahfully dusty."

"It—it was only a joke!" muttered Mellish. "I—I'm sorry!"

"Bump him, deah boys!"

"Certainly!" said Kerr. "Anything to oblige."

And the Co. promptly bumped Mellish, who yelled, and wriggled out of their hands and fled.

Figgins was still scalping Crooke.

"You called me something, I think?" said Figgins sweetly. "I think you used the wrong word. Now, what was it?"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! You—you've rubbed the skin off my beastly head!" yelled Crooke.

"You called me something, I think, and—"

"Ow! I take it back!" groaned Crooke.

"You really meant, I suppose, that I'm a jolly nice chap, and that you respect me most highly?" suggested Figgins, still grinding Crooke's head against the rough wall.

"Ow! No—yes! Yes!"

"Good! Nothing like making these matters clear," said Figgins, releasing him. "Now, you can cut off, and mind you're very careful to say what you really mean the next time you honour yourself by speaking to me."

Crooke ground his teeth, and stamped away.

"What was the trouble about?" asked Figgins, grinning at the swell of St. Jim's, who was dusting down his elegant attire with a cambric handkerchief.

"The awful wottahs! They were waggin' a kid who's come here for a job—a boot-boy, or somethin'," said D'Arcy. "Chap with a wed head. I felt bound to give them a feahful thwashin', but—but—"

"But they were giving you one instead," chuckled Figgins. "These things do work out like that sometimes. Never mind, Gussy—always rely on the New House to look after you in times of trouble. What's the good of being Cock House of St. Jim's if we can't look after the School House kids sometimes?"

"Why, you uttah ass—" shouted Arthur Augustus.

Figgins & Co. strolled away, smiling. And Arthur Augustus, with a despairing glance at his rumpled waistcoat and his dusty trousers, hurried off to the School House for a clothes-brush.

CHAPTER 6.

The New Boot-boy.

TOBY, the page, looked at the new arrival, and grinned.

The red-haired youth favoured him with a stare in return.

"'Allo, Carrots!" said Toby.

"Hallo, Buttons!" replied the other.

"'T'pose you're the new boot-boy?" said Toby, with a disparaging glance at the red-haired youth.

"Wot to!"

"What's your name?"

"Jiggins!"

"Well, 'Jiggins," said Toby, "don't you know that a boot-boy ain't allowed to come into the 'Ouse by that door? You're to come in by the entrance at the back."

"I've come arter the job," explained Jiggins. "I want to see the 'Ead!"

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You show me to the 'Ead, and shut your mouth, Buttons!"

Toby snorted.

"You don't see the 'Ead," he replied.

"The 'Ead don't engage boot-boys. The 'Ousemaster engages all the servants for his own 'Ouse, you fathead! You'll 'ave to see Mr. Railton."

"Who's that?"

"Mr. Railton's the 'Ousemaster of the School 'Ouse—this 'Ouse!"

"Well, trot 'im out!" said Master Higgins.

Toby snorted again. Mr. Railton was a great and respected person in the House, and Toby did not like the way Master Higgins spoke of him.

"You'd better larn your manners if you want a job 'ere," said Toby warningly. "Boot-boys ain't allowed to be cheeky. An' you'll be hunder my horders, don't you forget that."

"Hunder your horders, hey?" said Jiggins. "Who are you, Buttons?"

"I'm Toby, the page!" replied Toby indignantly.

"Sounds more like a dog's name," commented Higgins.

"Look 'ere, don't you gimme any more of your lip!" said Toby, exasperated. "I'll take you to Mr. Railton, but I must say I 'ope he'll give you the boot!"

"Thanks awfully!"

Toby looked at the new boot-boy suspiciously. The change of accent in his voice was very surprising to hear. But the page led the way to Mr. Railton's study, and tapped respectfully at the door, and informed the Housemaster that the new boot-boy wished to see him; and Mr. Railton ordered Higgins to come in.

The red-haired youth showed a slight timidity as he entered the Housemaster's study.

"Ah! You are—er—Henry Higgins," said Mr. Railton, referring to a letter on his desk.

"Yes, sir."

"You are the applicant for a place vacant in this House, and I understand that you are recommended by Mr. Perkins, the manager of the Servants' Bureau, in Wayland?"

"Yes, sir. I'm a 'ard worker, sir, and I 'ope as I shall give satisfaction, sir."

Mr. Railton looked him over.

"Very well, you may report yourself to the housekeeper. Toby, take the boy to Mrs. Mimms."

"Yes, sir," said Toby.

"Thank you, sir," said Henry Higgins.

And he followed Toby out of the study. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had just come in from the quadrangle, and he paused to speak to the red-haired youth.

"I twust those wottahs did not hurt you?" he said kindly.

"No, sir, thank you," said Henry Higgins. "It was kind of you, sir, to 'elp me. It will be a great pleasure to clean your boots, sir."

"Vewy good! If any of the fellows should kick you at any time, my lad, you have only to let me know, and I will pwoteet you."

"I'm sure you are very kind, sir," said Henry Higgins. "It is such a pleasure for a boy in my station in life, sir, to meet with real kindness from a young gentleman like you."

"Vewy good, vewy good!" said D'Arcy, rather hastily, and he went on to the stairs.

D'Arcy liked civility; but servility was not at all to his taste, and the humility of the new boy smacked a little too much of the manners of the celebrated Uriah Heep.

Henry Higgins followed Toby to the housekeeper's room, where Mrs. Mimms subjected him to a rigid cross-examination. The things that a boot-boy in the School House was expected to do seemed endless. But Henry Higgins succeeded in satisfying the House dame, and he was engaged.

"Toby will show you your duties," said Mrs. Mimms, and Toby, still sniffing, led the new boot-boy away.

"I'm going to show you your duties," said Toby. "Your duties is to 'elp me in my work, and obey horders. You savvy?"

"Must I call you, sir?" asked Henry Higgins respectfully.

Toby gave him a sharp look. The humility the new boy had displayed towards Mr. Railton, D'Arcy, and Mrs. Mimms was complete. But Toby had an uneasy suspicion that it was all humbug, and that Master Higgins was, in point of fact, laughing in his sleeve at the various persons he was "spoofing."

"I suppose I ought to call you sir, as you're so superior to me!" Henry Higgins suggested.

"P'raps you'd better," said Toby, swelling with importance at the idea of being called sir by somebody. He had to call very many people sir, and why shouldn't he be called sir in turn by a fellow who was under him? Every dog has his day, according to the proverb. "Yes, you'd better call me sir, and I 'ope you'll learn your place, 'Enry 'iggins!"

"I 'ope so, I'm sure," said Henry Higgins meekly.

"This 'ere is the boot-room," said Toby.

"Oh, this 'ere is the boot-room, is it?" asked Henry Higgins, glancing round the apartment as he entered. "Or—right. I suppose as 'ow I does my work 'ere?"

"Yes," said Toby. "'Cept when you're wanted somewhere else. You 'ave to collect up all the boots of the young gentlemen, and bring 'em 'ere, and clean 'em—and mind you clean 'em proper, that's all. Master D'Arcy is very pertickler about his boots, but he 'ands out a good tip sometimes, and if you're civil, you'll make a good thing out of it. Reg'lar young gent, Master D'Arcy is—never looks at a 'arf-crown twice."

"Ow nice!" said Henry Higgins.

"Some of 'em," said Toby, "is bounders!"

"Some of the young gentlemen?" asked Henry Higgins.

"Yes," said Toby. "Some of them is real gents, like Master D'Arcy and Master Tom Merry—they's the real thing, you know. Always civil to a chap, whether he's a page or a boot-boy, or what you like. Some of 'em is bounders, as I said. Don't think that a page can 'ave any feelings, you know. There's Master Gore and Crooke, two of the worst. And there was a bloke who's left now—jolly good thing, too—a beast named Levison."

"He was a cad, if you like," said Toby reminiscently. "Always lying and telling tales and being a rotten beast. He's ragged me often and often, 'cause in my place I can't complain of what they do, you know. Feller like me 'as to grin and bear it, and Master Levison 'as a way of treatin' you like dirt. Fellers as isn't real gents always does that with servants, I've noticed."

"Look 'ere—"

"I've seen lots of 'em—'undreds and 'undreds," said Toby. "I know the real sort when I see 'em, you bet! Feller as is the real article is always civil to a servant, knowing as he can't answer

back because of his place. Feller as is a boulder and a spoofer, pretending to be a gentleman, looks on a servant as mere dirt under 'is feet—that's because he wants to make out that he's real class. But it ain't the way—the real nobs see through 'em, and so do the servants. That there Levison was a 'umbug all the way through. Lucky for you, you won't 'ave anything to do with 'im. There wasn't a servant in the 'Ouse who didn't 'ate the beast!"

"Oh!"

"And 'e's got it in the neck now," said Toby, with relish.

"What's happened to him?" asked the boot-boy, not dropping his h's this time.

"His father's ruined," said Toby. "Lost all his money on the Stock Exchange, you know. Some swindle, and he got the worst of it. Don't feel sorry for 'im. Somebody would have been done, if he'd made money—now he's been done, and somebody else 'as made the money, and he's got to give up stocks and shares and do honest work, and serve him right!"

"You rotten cad—"

"Eh?" stammered Toby, in amazement, staring at Henry Higgins. "What do you mean?"

"Er—nothing!" muttered Henry Higgins. "I—I—"

"Don't you call me names!" said Toby. "I'd wipe you 'round the heye, as soon as look at you! Lumme, the number of times I've wanted to wipe that beast Levison in the eye! He knew I daren't do it, 'cause of losing my job, and he'd have lied and lied about it, you know. He was an awful liar. I 'ope I shall meet 'im some day houtside the school, and then I'll show 'im something. The names he called me, because I couldn't answer back—but now he's not a St. Jim's boy I can tork to him. And if I get a chance I'll tork to him—rather! 'E was a regular beast!"

"If you ain't got anything else to tork about—" began Henry Higgins, who had been very restive for a long time.

"I'm going to show you your duties," said Toby. "Ere's six pairs of boots, now—they want cleaning. One pair of them belongs to Master D'Arcy, so take special care with them. These 'ere are Master Crooke's—you needn't be careful with them; he's a slovenly beast, anyway. Master Crooke will worry you to death about your 'air, and you can get your own back by chipping his boots. I'll show you 'ow to make little cuts in the leather that won't be seen, but they make a boot wear out very quick. I've done that on that beast Levison lots of times!"

"Oh, you have, have you?"

"Yes, I 'ave," said Toby, with much satisfaction. "Feller 'as to get 'is own back somehow, you know. Now you clean them boots!"

"Is that all, sir?"

"You'll have two 'undred to clean every morning, and odd pairs during the day," said Toby. "Always be willing and obliging, and you'll get on. I shall want you to clean my boots, too."

"Is that one of my duties?"

"You're hunder my horders, ain't you?"

"Yes, sir," said Henry Higgins meekly.

"Get on with them, then," said Toby. And he left the new boot-boy in the boot-room.

Henry Higgins closed the door after him, and then a peculiar change came over Henry Higgins. He executed a

kind of triumphal dance in the boot-room, and chuckled gleefully.

"Here I am!" he said. And his voice was not at all like Henry Higgins' now, and he did not drop his h's. "I told the rotters they wouldn't get rid of me from St. Jim's, and here I am! And I'll pay them all out for being up against me—I'll find a way somehow! I'll settle up with all of them, hang them! This is where I come in!"

If Tom Merry & Co. had heard those remarks from the new boot-boy they would have been very much astonished. For now that he was alone, and safe from being overheard, the voice of the new boot-boy was nothing like the voice of Henry Higgins—but it was very like indeed to the voice of Levison of the Fourth!

CHAPTER 7.

Tacks Collectors!

"OW!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy uttered that sudden and painful ejaculation, and the fellows in the Fourth Form dormitory turned round to look at him.

It was morning, and the rising-bell had clanged out, and the Fourth were dressing, when Arthur Augustus contributed that howl to the hum of conversation in the dormitory in the School House.

The swell of St. Jim's was sitting on the side of his bed, putting his boots on. He had one boot on, and was making frantic efforts to drag it off again.

"Ow! Bai Jove! Ow! Yow!"

"What's the matter?" asked Jack Blake.

"Ow! Ow!"

"I told him his new boots were tight!" growled Herries. "This is what comes of being a silly ass, Gussy. You must expect your boots to pinch you if they're too tight!"

"Ow! You fathead! They're not too tight!"

D'Arcy dragged off the boot, and dropped it.

"Then what's the matter?" demanded Digby.

"Faith, and if you're not hurt, what are ye howling about entirely?" asked Reilly.

"Ow! I'm hurt! Some awful wottah has been playin' tricks with my boots!" howled Arthur Augustus. "There is a tack or somethin' in my boot, and it has wun into my foot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There is nothin' whatever to laugh at, you wottahs! It hurts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frightful asses—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus picked up the boot and examined it. Inside where the heel rested, a tack had been fixed with the business end upwards. The head of the tack appeared to be glued in its place, and it had been done very carefully.

Arthur Augustus had jammed his heel down on the tack, with painful results.

"Well, that was a rotten trick to play!" said Blake, looking into the boot. "That's more than a joke—you might have been really hurt!"

"Ow! I am weally hurt, you fathead! Ow!"

"Just like one of Levison's tricks!" said Lumley-Lumley. "I guess I should

(Continued on next page.)



Make the Jester Smile and Win a MATCH FOOTBALL!

Send your Joke to The GEM Jester, 1, Tallis House, John Carpenter Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

TOO CLEVER!

Mother: "Well, Tommy, how are you getting on at school?"

Tommy: "Splendid, mother—even the master says he cannot teach me anything!"

A football has been awarded to G. Collins, 3, Railway Terrace, Nelson.

NOTHING NEW!

Binks: "Have you heard about the new machines that can detect when you are telling a lie?"

Jinks: "Heard about them? Why, I'm married to one!"

A football has been awarded to R. Gay, Kiln House, Hazelbeach, nr. Neyland, S. Wales.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT!

The tall thin man was quarrelling with the undersized little fellow.

"Yer lanky strip!" yelled the diminutive one. "If yer tied yerself in a knot yer wouldn't look fat!"

"And you," retorted the lengthy chap, "if you were to pull yer socks up you'd be blindfolded!"

A football has been awarded to G. Hale, Whiteacre, Old Cheltenham Road, Longlevens, nr. Gloucester.

STICKING TO FACTS!

"Now, you must be very careful how you answer," said the counsel, "and not say anything that is not strictly true. You drive a milk cart, don't you?"

"No, sir," said the witness.

"But I thought you did. What do you do for a living, then?"

"I drive the horse that pulls the cart!"

A football has been awarded to D. Anderson, 148, Whitmore Road, West Harrow, Middlesex.

SLOW SERVICE!

Waiter: "Did you order anything, sir?"

Fed-up Diner: "Yes, I asked for a portion of Christmas pudding, but that was so long ago you'd better get me some hot cross buns!"

A football has been awarded to R. Bifen, 1, Provident Place, Binglewater, Somerset.

LEAP YEAR LOSS!

"You look depressed, Mac," said Mac's friend. "What's wrong?"

"Surely ye ken it's leap year?"

"That's nothing to worry about."

"Mon," said Mac, "do ye no' realise we'll hae to work a day without pay?"

A football has been awarded to A. Moulton, 15, Evelyn Gardens, Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey.

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think it was Levison, if he was still here!"

"I suspect vewy stwongly that it was Mellish," said Arthur Augustus, with a glare at the cad of the Fourth. "He is as great a wottah as Levison!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Mellish.

"Did you put that tack in my boot, you beast?"

"He, he, he! No!"

"I do not take your word, Mellish," said Arthur Augustus, rising and putting his foot very gingerly on the floor. "It is just the kind of wotten twick you would play, and somebody here must have done it!"

"Well, I didn't; but it's funny," said Mellish. "He, he, he!"

"You cacklin' wottah—"

"He, he, he!"

Mellish sat down to put his boots on. He was still chuckling gleefully, but suddenly his chuckle changed to a howl.

"Ow! Ow! Yaroo!"

He leaped up from the bed, hopping on one foot, and dragging at the boot he had just slipped on. The juniors stared at him.

"Well, what's biting you?" demanded Blake.

"Ow! My foot! Yow! My heel! Groogh! What beast has been putting tacks in my boots?" shrieked Mellish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Blake. "Mellish has got it, too! Do you think it's just as funny now, Mellish?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mellish scraped the tack out of his boot with a furious look. The joke did not appeal to him now that his own heel had been punctured.

"The rotter who did that ought to be scragged!" he yelled. "Which of you was it? Own up, you rotter!"

"Bai Jove," said D'Arcy, in amazement. "It wasn't Mellish! Even Mellish wouldn't be idiot enough to play a twick on himself. But I weally don't think there is anybody else here caddish enough to do it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm jolly well going to look at my boots before I put them on," grinned Blake. "My hat, there's a tack in my boot, too!"

"And in mine!" yelled Lumley-Lumley.

"Faith, and in mine!" said Reilly.

"Some rotter has been doing this," growled Herries. "Some fellow from another dorm, I should say—unless the New House bounders managed it somehow."

"How could they have got at our boots, fathead?" said Blake. "Besides, Figgins & Co. wouldn't do a rotten thing like this."

"Well, it was somebody," said Herries. "Here's a tack in my boot, too. I wish I knew who had put it there. I'd pulverise him bald-headed!"

The Fourth were very much puzzled. It seemed impossible that their old rivals of the New House had been able to get at their boots over night. Mellish, the first fellow they would have suspected of such a trick, was evidently innocent, as he had suffered himself. The natural conclusion was that it was a raid from another dormitory, and when they went out to go down, Blake & Co. tackled the Shell fellows on the subject.

The Terrible Three were coming down the passage, and Lowther was limping slightly, and looking furious. Clifton Dane, the Canadian junior, was limping, too, and had an expression of anguish on his face.

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"Look here, you chaps—" began Blake.

"Look here—" Tom Merry started. "Somebody's been playing tricks with our boots—"

"Somebody's been playing tricks with our boots," said Tom Merry at the same moment.

"And I want to find him!" growled Monty Lowther. "I'm punctured! I want to get hold of the fellow who put a tack in my boot!"

"So do I!" groaned Clifton Dane. "I can't put my foot to the floor without it hurting. I got nearly half an inch of tack in my heel."

"You fellows have had it, too," said Blake. "We've had it. Gussy and Mellish are both punctured, and a lot of the fellows had tacks fixed in their boots."

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "We concluded that it was some wottah in the Shell—"

"We concluded that it was some rotter in the Fourth," grinned Tom Merry.

"I want to get hold of him!" gasped Lowther.

"I want to get within easy punching distance of his chivvy!" groaned Clifton Dane. "I'd teach him to put tacks in my boots!"

"Blessed if I can understand it!" said Manners. "It's just one of the tricks that Levison would have played—"

"Yaas, wathah; I made the same remark. But—"

"But Levison's gone."

"Who could have got at the boots?" asked Tom Merry. "It might have been some of the New House chaps—"

"Figgins & Co. wouldn't have played such a rotten trick."

"Some of the other New House fellows might. After all, it might have been easy enough for one of them to get into the boot-room over night, if he wanted to," said Tom Merry.

"Then Higgins would have found the tacks there when he cleaned the boots."

"Might have been done after they were cleaned. Chap might have got up very early in the morning to do it, you know, before the boots were brought up to the dorm. I'll speak to Higgins as we go down."

The red-haired lad was in the boot-room when the excited juniors arrived there. He was in his shirt-sleeves, with an apron on, and was polishing boots.

"Hullo, not finished the boots yet, kid?" said Tom Merry.

"These are Toby's, sir," said Henry Higgins.

"You clean Toby's boots?" asked Blake.

"Yes, sir. It's part of my duty, he tells me."

"Oh!"

"Some ass has been putting tacks in our boots," said Tom Merry. "Did any fellow get at the boots while they were here, that you know of, Higgins?"

"Oh dear!" said Henry Higgins. "That accounts for the window being left open, sir. I left it shut arter cleanin' the boots, and I found it open arterwards. I thought somebody had been 'ere, but I couldn't guess—"

"The window open," said Tom Merry. "That settles it, you chaps. It was the New House bounders, and they got in at the window."

"We'll go and see Figgins & Co. about it," growled Blake.

And Tom Merry and his comrades sallied out into the quadrangle.

Across the quad Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn were sauntering under the elms, enjoying the freshness of the morning

air. They started in surprise at the School House crowd as the latter bore down upon them.

"Hullo!" said Figgins. "What's the—Hullo! Ow! Leggo!"

"Bump them!"

"Look here—What—Hullo!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Figgins & Co., in the grasp of many hands, descended upon the ground with painful violence. They roared.

"There!" gasped Tom Merry. "Now you'll let our boots alone!"

"Boots!" roared Figgins. "Who's talking about boots? What do you mean, you silly chumps?"

"Somebody got into the boot-room window and put tacks in our boots!" yelled Blake.

"You chump! You fathead! I didn't do it!" said Figgins. "You silly, frabjous asses—"

"Well, it was some of you New House bounders, anyway, and you can pass the bumping on when you find out the right parties!" grinned Tom Merry.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the School House juniors walked away, leaving Figgins & Co. sitting on the ground and gasping for breath.

CHAPTER 8.

Trouble in the Family!

KANGAROO of the Shell—his name was Harry Noble, but he was called Kangaroo for the excellent reason that he came from Australia—looked into the Common-room that evening, with a countenance as bright as his native southern sun. There were glum faces among the juniors there.

Study No. 6 were down on their luck—broke to the wide. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had written again to his noble father, and had followed the letter up with a telegram, and the telegram with another and longer telegram; but Lord Eastwood was not "playing up." He had not wired five pounds; he had not even sent a fiver by post. D'Arcy was decidedly indignant, and Herries and Digby agreed that it shook their faith in Lord Eastwood. Blake, Herries, and Digby had also, like the seed in the parable, fallen upon stony places, and so Study No. 6 were really "up against it."

The Terrible Three were in the same state. Tom Merry's remittance from his old governess had been spent royally, and had relieved the general distress for a time. But there were so many of the chums in distress that a pound did not go far. Manners had had a remittance, but he had thoughtlessly expended it in new films for his camera—an act of reckless extravagance which his chums regarded more in sorrow than in anger. Monty Lowther had wild hopes of a remittance from his uncle, but his hopes had not materialised. As Lowther explained, his uncle was kindness itself—unremitting kindness.

But the sunny look on Kangaroo's face was reflected on other faces as the chums of the School House caught sight of him.

"Coo-ee!" said Kangaroo.

"Hullo, Kangy!" said Tom Merry. "Wherefore that joyous grin? Have you had any luck?"

Kangaroo grinned genially.

"I haven't had any, but Dane has, and it's all in the family," he said. "Clifton Dane has had a letter from Canada, and there's always something in his letters from Canada. We're blowing two quidlets on a gorgeous feed, and you're all to come!"



"Bad news, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy sympathetically. "My pater's ruined!" said Levison huskily, his face white, his eyes staring. "He's lost all his money instead of making a fortune—and—and I'm to go home!"

The juniors fell upon Kangaroo's neck and hugged him.

"Come to my arms, my lovely Kangaroo!"

"Let me fold thee to my bosom and weep!" gasped Monty Lowther.

"Here, cheese it!" roared the Cornstalk junior. "Don't play the giddy goat. Tea's at half-past six in the end study, and plenty of it. It will be rather a crowd, but that can't be helped. You'll have to hear Dane's parrot talk. But it's worth while for a feed, isn't it?"

"My dear chap, I'd hear D'Arcy talk at the present moment for a feed, let alone a parrot!" said Monty Lowther feelingly.

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Then be along in time," said Kangaroo. "Some of you can come with me to the tuckshop and help me carry in the things."

"What-ho!"

All the juniors were willing to lend a hand. The feed in the end study had come like corn in Egypt in one of the lean years. The end study belonged to Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn. The three Shell fellows were great chums, though there were sometimes rows—in all senses of the word—in the end study.

Bernard Glyn was an amateur inventor and engineer, and the weird contrivances he made sometimes caused great trouble in the School House. And every corner of the end study in the Shell passage was littered with wires and coils and bottles and boxes and cases and batteries, wet and dry.

Clifton Dane kept a parrot in the study, by special permission from the powers that were; pets, as a rule, not being allowed in the House. Polly was a remarkably clever parrot, and learned to say things in next to no time, and the Canadian junior was very proud of him; but Bernard Glyn sometimes objected that Polly's remarks inter-

rupted his abstruse meditations when he was busy upon his inventions. To which Dane would reply that his inventions could go to hang.

When Glyn was working on an invention, and Dane was teaching his parrot to talk at the same time, the unhappy Kangaroo was frequently constrained to take his work into some other fellow's study to do. Indeed, he had frequently uttered threats of hurling Dane's parrot and Glyn's paraphernalia out of the window together, and their owners afterwards.

But the end study presented an aspect of unusual tidiness as Tom Merry & Co. came in at half-past six.

Bernard Glyn's rubbish, as his study-mates politely called it, had been cleared away into cupboards and corners, and the table was laid for tea. Clifton Dane was talking to his parrot, in the cage swinging before the window. Glyn was making piles of toast, and Kangaroo was turning out heaps and heaps of poached eggs.

"Bai Jove! I must remark that this looks wippin'!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "You chaps are the wight fellows in the wight place!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Polly saying anything new, Dane, old chap?" asked Tom Merry, feeling that he was bound to take a polite interest in the pet belonging to the founder of the feast.

"What-ho!" said Dane proudly. "Polly's a giddy marvel! I tell you, he picks up a thing he's heard only once. I called Kangy a fathead this morning, and when I looked at Polly, he screeched out: 'You fathead! You fathead!'"

"Marvellous!" said Lowther. "How do you account for it? Had he just picked up the word or was he speaking from experience?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Dane, laughing. "You remember how pleased the Head

was when he heard Polly say: 'The Head's a brick!' And Polly hadn't been taught that; he'd just picked it up from hearing us speak of the Head."

"Hurrah!" said Polly. "You fat-head! Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chap ought to be jolly careful what he says before the giddy bird," said Monty Lowther. "If he had happened to say: 'The Head's a duffer—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah! The Head's a duffer! The Head's a duffer!" shrieked the parrot.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Clifton Dane.

"You've done it now! Polly will never get that out of his head!"

"My hat!"

"Hurrah!" shrieked Polly. "The Head's a duffer! You've done it now! Hurrah! My hat!"

The juniors laughed; they could not help it.

"Tea's ready!" said Bernard Glyn. "Sit down wherever you can find room."

And the juniors sat down wherever they could find room, and piled in.

Polly closed one eye and regarded the feasters solemnly.

"My hat, this is ripping!" said Blake.

"Pass the jam!"

"Pass the jam!" yelled Polly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've done it now! Pass the jam! That rotter Blake will scold the lot! Hurrah!"

Blake started.

He had not expected to hear those words from the parrot.

After what Dane had said about Polly picking up and repeating words that were uttered in the study, it was very curious, to say the least.

Blake turned very red, and a most uncomfortable silence fell upon the

juniors. Clifton Dane, Kangaroo, and Glyn stared blankly at the parrot.

"My hat!" said Dane, at last. "I never taught him to say that. He never heard any of us say that. I can't understand it!"

Blake was silent.

"Here's the jam," said Digby, shoving it towards Blake.

"Thanks!" said Blake; but he did not touch it.

Clifton Dane flushed.

"Look here, Blake," he said quickly, "You can't believe that I taught Polly to say that!"

"All right," said Blake.

"And he didn't hear one of us say it, either," said Clifton Dane. "So if that's what you're thinking, you can get it out of your head!"

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus uncomfortably. "I am sure our friend Dane would not have made a remark like that."

"Yaas, wathah!" shrieked the parrot. "Yaas, wathah! Hurrah! Here comes that idiot Gussy! How can they stand Gussy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus looked quite sickly.

"Shut up, Polly!" shouted Clifton Dane. "D'Arcy, I assure you that—that I've never said anything of the sort to him!"

"Tom Merry's a rotter—Tom Merry's a rotter! You've done it now! Hurrah!"

It was Tom Merry's turn to redden.

"The Head's a brick!" continued the parrot. "The Head's a duffer! Give him some sugar! Pull his whiskers! Look here, I can't stand that chap, Merry, and I shall tell him so! Hurrah! I won't have him in the study! You've done it now! Hurrah! Polly wants sugar!"

Tom Merry rose to his feet.

"I—I say, you chaps!" exclaimed Clifton Dane, in great distress. "I tell you I can't understand it! Polly hasn't been taught that!"

"He seems to have picked it up, then," said Tom Merry dryly.

"But I assure you—"

"You've explained to us how Polly repeats things he's heard said in the study," said Tom Merry bitterly. "He's proved you're right. You and your friends must have said that, for Polly to hear."

"I—I suppose it looks like that."

"It jolly well does!" croaked Polly, giving another unwelcome proof of his great faculty for picking up chance remarks. "You've done it now! The Head's a duffer! Here comes Monty Lowther! I'm not going to lend him any money! I'm not going to lend him any money! Hurrah!"

"Oh!" said Lowther.

Without another word the Terrible Three walked out of the study, leaving their unfinished tea on the table. The chums of Study No. 6 followed them. Kangaroo, Clifton Dane, and Glyn sat in grim silence. It was useless saying anything. It was quite impossible to explain away those unlucky remarks of the parrot.

"Well, my hat!" said Kangaroo at last. "Our tea-party is a giddy hash! Dane, you ass, what induced you to say those things, with that blessed parrot here, too?"

"It was rotten," said Glyn. "Can't wonder at the fellows getting their backs up!"

Clifton Dane stared at his chums.

"I tell you I didn't say anything of the kind!" he shouted.

"Must have been talking in your

sleep, I should think," grunted Noble.

"Polly must have heard somebody else say them, if you didn't—somebody in this study. And the chap wasn't me!"

"Nor I!" said the Liverpool junior.

"Somebody has taught him that to cause trouble, I suppose," said Clifton Dane helplessly. "I know I've never said anything of the sort. As if I should say such rotten, caddish things about fellows I'm on friendly terms with!"

"I'm afraid the friendly terms won't last much longer after this."

"Well, I can't help it."

"I can't help it!" shrieked Polly.

"Give him beans! He's an old sneak! Polly wants sugar! Hurrah!"

"Oh, shut up!" said Dane irritably.

Cornstalk & Co. finished their tea with moody faces. And when Clifton Dane met the Terrible Three downstairs again they did not look at him, and Study No. 6 were very standoffish, too. Polly had caused serious trouble; but it was not Polly's fault. The Canadian junior pondered on the matter, and could only come to the conclusion that some mischievous "rotter" had taught Polly those words, with the deliberate intention of causing a quarrel among friends. But who? Who could get into Dane's study without his knowledge to carry out such a trick?

When Dane was in the class-room all the other fellows were in the class-room, too, and when he was out he might come into his study at any moment, and it would not be safe for the japer to be there teaching the parrot a lesson of that sort.

The Canadian junior was utterly puzzled. It looked as if someone who was free during lesson-time had done it, for only in lesson-time would it be safe for the japer to play such a trick; at all other times the chums of the end study were either in the study or liable to come in at any time. But if it was done during lessons, it could only be some servant employed in the House who had visited Dane's study and given that peculiar instruction to the parrot.

And why should a servant in the School House do such a thing?

Clifton Dane felt that it would be very difficult to get the other fellows to entertain such a surmise. And yet he had not said those things himself, and he was sure that Kangaroo and Glyn had not done so.

The Canadian junior could only guess; but he resolved to keep a very sharp eye open, and when he discovered the author of that caddish trick it would go very hard with him.

CHAPTER 9.

More Than a Joke!

"**T**IME for prep!" said Tom Merry, in the Junior Common-room.

It was a couple of days after the incident in the study, and the relations were very strained between Cornstalk & Co. and the Terrible Three. They did not speak to one another when they met—a very painful result to that hospitable tea-party in the end study.

Lowther and Manners were playing chess in the Common-room, and Tom Merry had just finished reading, and he rose and yawned.

"Time for prep," he repeated. "You won't have time to finish that game, you fellows. Chuck the pieces back in the box."

"All right—I've got Manners mate in three," said Lowther.

Manners snorted.

"You wouldn't mate me in three centuries!" he hooted. "I've got you mate in five, you chump, only you can't see it!"

"Then the game's as good as finished," said Tom Merry. "Lowther's mate in five, and Manners is mate in three—so Lowther wins by two runs!"

"Oh, cheese it! How can I play chess when you're jawing?" said Manners crossly. "Now, Lowther, I'm waiting for you to move. Don't hurry. We're young yet, and have our whole lives before us. I'll make my next move when I'm sixty, if you like to take time to think."

"I'm jolly well not going to move in a hurry and spoil my mate," said Monty Lowther. "I've got you fixed in three."

"I've got you done in five!"

"In three!"

"In five!"

There was a sudden rush of feet in the passage, and a red-headed youth, in a tight-fitting costume, with prominent buttons, shot into the room. He dashed right into the chess-table and sent it flying.

Manners and Lowther jumped up with a simultaneous yell.

"Higgins, you silly ass!"

"You fathead! How dare you?"

"Please, I'm very sorry, sir," said Henry Higgins. "But Master Crooke and Mellish is arter me, sir, and—"

Crooke and Mellish rushed into the room. They stopped at the sight of the red-headed "boots" taking cover behind Tom Merry.

Lowther and Manners simply glared at the cads of the School House.

"Do you see what you've done?" roared Lowther. "You've sent that copper-topped idiot bumping into our chess table, and mucked up the game!"

"Well, you can play another game, I suppose?" said Crooke.

"I—I—I'll play you, you rotter!" gasped Manners; and he rushed at Crooke.

In a moment Manners and Crooke were mixing themselves up with the chessmen on the floor.

Lowther hurled himself upon Mellish, and got his head into chancery before the cad of the Fourth could escape.

"I'll give you upsetting a game of chess!" hooted Lowther. "Take that—and that—"

"Ow!" yelled Mellish. "Yaroo! Draggimoff!"

"And that—and that!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Crooke. "You're bumping my back on something hard—ow!—and it—yow!—hurts!"

"He's mating your king with his backbone, Manners!" grinned Page of the Fourth.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crooke and Mellish tore themselves away at last. They stood looking very dishevelled, and red and dusty, and furious.

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Tom Merry. "What were you ragging Higgins for? Why can't you let the kid alone?"

"Let him keep to his own quarters, then!" growled Crooke. "I found him mooching about the Shell passage, and I wasn't going to hurt him—only shove his head under the tap, to put the fire out!"

Some of the juniors laughed.

"I can't 'elp my 'air bein' red, young gentlemen," said Henry Higgins.

"I'm sure it's very rough on me to 'ave my 'ead put under the tap."
"They shan't do it," said Tom Merry. "If Crooke puts your head under the tap, I'll jolly soon put his under it!"

"You mind your own business!" said Crooke.

"It is my business to see that you don't rag a kid who's not in a position to rag you back," said Tom Merry scornfully. "Only a cad would do it!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And Crooke and Mellish swung out of the Common-room, without pushing matters any further with the Terrible Three.

Manners and Lowther picked up the chessmen, which had not been improved by Crooke rolling on them. One of the knights was in two pieces, and a queen had lost her head. The Shell fellows grunted as they packed them away.

"Never settle that rotten game now," growled Lowther. "Manners is an obstinate pig! He'll never admit that I had him mate in three."

Manners hooted.

"Not likely, ass, when I had you mate in five!"

"Call it a chess problem, and let it go at that," said Tom Merry. "And for goodness' sake let's go and get our prep done, or we shall have a row with Liaton in the morning!"

And the Terrible Three made their way to their study. The study was, of course, dark, but Tom Merry felt for the switch as he moved into the room.

There was a sudden yell and the sound of a fall.

"Hallo, what are you falling about for?" asked Lowther, still a little cross. "Can't you go into a study without falling over a chair? I think—Ow! Ow! Oh!"

Bump!

"Yarrah!" yelled Tom Merry, as Lowther fell on him. "Gerroff! Oh!"

"I caught my foot!"

"So did I, ass! Look out, Manners! There's a cord—My hat!"

Bump!

Manners had already found the cord—with his ankle—and he came sprawling over Tom Merry and Lowther.

Bump, bump! And a roar from all three.

Tom Merry struggled out from under his sprawling chums, and staggered up. His face was aflame with anger.

He fumbled for the switch, and turned on the light. Manners and Lowther picked themselves up, breathless and furious. And they were more furious still as they looked round the study in the light.

The room was a wreck.

The table had been overturned, and the books and papers belonging to the juniors had been crammed into the fireplace, and were partly burnt and still smouldering. Tea-things had been smashed and scattered on the floor, and the looking-glass over the mantelpiece had a huge star smashed in the centre. Every kind of property belonging to the three juniors had been dragged out, and either broken or strewn about.

The Terrible Three gazed at the scene with breathless rage. Study raids were common enough among the juniors, when they wanted to make things lively. Studies might be turned upside-down and wrecked, and things would naturally be broken sometimes in the process; but wanton destruction

JUST MY FUN

Monty Lowther
Calling!



Hallo, everybody!

Do you know how to keep your weight down? Don't eat anything. Gore says he has a clock which will go eight days without winding. He wants to know how long it will go if he does wind it.

A Wayland tailor advertises: "Come To Us And Have a Good Fit." No, thanks!

Seven juniors went out for a stroll without an umbrella between them but they didn't get wet. It wasn't, raining.

Story: "What was the boss like when you asked for a rise?" asked Jones. "He was like a lamb," said Smith. "What did he say?" asked Jones. "Baa!" said Smith.

"What is the most honest game?" asks Fatty Wynn. Chess—it's all "square" and "above board." Ow!

Thieves are no respecters of persons, we read. Well, they have only a "sneaking" regard.

Owls are deserting the Wayland Park. On account of the no "hoot-ing" at night order?

Story: "I can't eat this stew," complained the diner. "Send for the proprietor!" "That won't do any good," replied the waiter; "he won't eat it, either!"

Chap I know visited a lunatic asylum. An attendant came up to him and said: "Don't take any notice of that fellow over there—he thinks he's Napoleon." My friend nodded. "But he isn't," said the attendant firmly, "because I am!"

"How little masters understand boys," says a writer. "I didn't know little ones had any advantage over big ones."

"The crocodile is really a playful

was a thing the chums of the School House would never have thought of.

And the destruction of the Terrible Three's property had been reckless and wanton. The half-burned books in the grate had cost pounds, and the looking-glass was smashed beyond repair. It was by no means a study raid as the juniors understood such things. It was as if an enemy had raided the study, and done his utmost to ruin the possessions of the juniors. And he had succeeded very well, too.

Tom Merry simply gasped as he looked round the study.

"What rotten cad has done this?" he snorted.

"I'll smash him when I get hold of him!" roared Lowther, rubbing his leg.

All three juniors had been bruised by their sudden fall in the darkness upon the floor. A cord had been stretched across the room a few inches from the floor—a trap for the unwary in the dark, and a very dangerous trick—the kind of thing that did not enter at all into the raids and tussles of the St. Jim's juniors, as a rule.

"Look!" exclaimed Manners.

creature," says Skimpole. Yes, his favourite game is "Snap!"

"If you try to hinder a man from reaching his goal, you must take the consequences," says a scientist. Full backs, please note.

Then there was the chef who was had up for embezzlement. He "cooked" the books.

Mr. Ratcliff, the sour-tempered master of the New House, says he went "grousing" on the moors last August. Grousing is nothing new for "Ratty." "Why is a dentist's room called a 'dental parlour'?" asks Blake. Well, it's a "drawing" room, isn't it? A leading actor has just accepted a small role. A small roll is better than no bread.

"I cracked my head on a low door beam in going over an old-world cottage," said Gore. A "stunning" place?

News: Parachutes are to be dearer. The price of coming down is going up. Quick story: Policeman: "Hey, miss! Haven't you read the 'Highway Code'?" Young Lady: "No, is it exciting?"

From a reader: "One of our rooms has no roof." I know—a Scotch shower bath?

Crooke and Mellish had a row. Dust up; bust up!

"I need something strong to clear my head," says a reader. What about a vacuum cleaner?

Kerr says it is quite untrue that there was once a little Scots boy, and all he got on his birthday was a year older.

American gangsters, when caught, are bathed daily. To make them "come clean"?

Story: "Your Form-master says you are not trying enough," said Jameson's pater, looking at his school report. "But old Selby says I'm the most 'trying' pupil he has," answered Jameson.

"Nother: "Why don't you talk sense for two minutes?" demanded Redfern. "I wouldn't like to take an unfair advantage of you," retorted Figgins.

Chin, chin, chaps!

He pointed to the wall. On the wall-paper, traced in big, rough letters with a charred stick, were the words:

"WITH COMPLIMENTS FROM STUDY No. 6."

"Blake!" shouted Tom Merry. "The rotter! I'd never have believed that he'd do a thing like this! This isn't a joke; it's a rotten outrage! Come on, you chaps! We'll jolly soon make them sorry they came in here! We'll see how they like the same kind of thing in their own quarters."

"Yes, rather!" said Manners and Lowther together.

And with gleaming eyes the Terrible Three rushed down the passage on the warpath.

CHAPTER 10.

Not Guilty!

STUDY No. 6 was very quiet. Four juniors sat round the table, working at their preparation—Blake, Herries, Digby, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

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Blake looked up at last from his books with a yawn.

"That's done," he said. "Nough for old Lathom, anyway. When you chaps are finished, we'll have some supper. I've got some ham sandwiches. Gussy, old man, I don't think we shall ever get a real feed in this study again, unless your pater comes round and sends that fiver."

"I have w'tten to him again, Blake, deah boy."

"Then why doesn't he come up to the scratch?" said Blake. "I had ten bob yesterday, but it's nearly gone. Money does go."

"Yaas, wathah! Bai Jove! What's that feahful wow in the passage?" said Arthur Augustus, as a sudden rushing of feet penetrated the calm of Study No. 6.

"Sounds like a foot race in the giddy sorridor," yawned Blake. "I—"

Blake had not time to finish. The door of the study was flung violently open, and Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther rushed in.

They did not speak. There was no need for words, and they had not come there to talk.

Tom Merry and Manners seized the table by the edge, and turned it over, hurling D'Arcy, Herries, and Digby backwards over their chairs at the same time.

Books and papers were strewn upon the floor.

There was a roar in Study No. 6. Blake had jumped up; but Lowther had hurled himself upon him, and they were on the floor, and Monty Lowther was rubbing Blake's face in the fender.

"Groooh! What the—"

"Bai Jove!"

"Who the—how the—"

"What—what—"

"Rag 'em!" gasped Tom Merry. "Rag the bounders! Smash every-thing!"

"Yes, rather! Smash away!"

Crash, crash, crash!

An inkpot smashed on the wall; a chair crashed into the front of the bookcase. The carpet was dragged up with wrenches, and the chairs crashed on the floor, with terrible results to their legs.

Blake & Co. struggled up, and gazed in blank bewilderment at the Terrible Three, who seemed to be thinking of nothing but effecting the greatest possible amount of destruction in the shortest possible time.

"They're mad!" gasped Blake.

"Mad as hatters, bai Jove!"

"Mad or not, they're not going to wreck our study!" yelled Herries.

"Kick them out!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

The chums of Study No. 6 had been so utterly taken aback by the sudden attack that they were paralysed for some moments. But now they rushed to attack the invaders. There was a terrific crash as the clock was swept off the mantelpiece by a chair wielded by Monty Lowther.

Blake fastened on Lowther, and got his head into chancery, and pommelled at him furiously. Digby closed with Manners, and Herries with Tom Merry. Arthur Augustus groped wildly for his eyeglass.

The combat that followed was terrific. The fearful din from Study No. 6 brought a crowd along the passage, who gazed in upon the scene in blank amazement.

"Sure, is it dotty ye are, entoirely?" yelled Reilly of the Fourth. "Phwat's the matter?"

"Mad as hatters!" said Kangaroo.

"Go it!"

"Scrap away!"

"Ha, ha, ha! You'll have the pre-fects here in a minute!"

"But what's the matter?" shouted Lumley-Lumley. "You'll hurt one another if you keep on like that."

"Faith, and they look as if they're hurt already!" said Reilly.

"Cave!" shouted Wally D'Arcy of the Third Form from the staircase.

"Here comes Kildare!"

The captain of St. Jim's came striding along the passage. The crowd of juniors there made way for him.

Kildare simply glared in at the doorway of Study No. 6. The excited combatants separated at last, looking very much damaged. Kildare surveyed them, and their swollen noses and bruised eyes and ruffled hair, and looked round at the wrecked study.

"What's the cause of all this?" he demanded.

Blake gasped.

"Blessed if I know! I think they've gone mad. They're all rather dotty in the Shell, you know. They rushed in here—"

"Yaas, wathah, they wushed in—"

"Yes, we rushed in and wrecked the giddy study!" said Tom Merry, with great satisfaction. "I think this study is wrecked more than ours."

"What-ho!" chuckled Lowther and Manners.

"Bai Jove! Is your study w'cked, Tom Mewwy?"

"Of course, you don't know!" scoffed Lowther.

"How should I know, deah boy?"

"Because you fellows did it!" said Tom Merry hotly.

"And we've given you tit for tat. You won't get this study to rights in a hurry."

"This sort of row can't be allowed," said Kildare.

"If the kids here complained to the House-master of the way you've treated their study, Tom Merry, you would be caned."

"We're not going to do that!" said Blake promptly.

"Wathah not!"

"Then Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther will take two hundred lines from me," said the captain of St. Jim's: "and if there's any more of this rumpus I shall come along with a cane."

"Weally, Kildare—"

"And as you kids seem to have wrecked Merry's study, from what he says, you can take two hundred lines each as well," added Kildare.

"But we haven't!"

roared Blake.

"Certainly not!"

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Merry. "I shouldn't have expected you chaps to fib about it, anyway."

Blake glared at him.

"Are you asking for another thick ear, to match the one you've already got?" he demanded.

"Yes, if you can give it to me!" said Tom Merry.

"I'll jolly well—"

"Come on, then."

"Stop it!" shouted Kildare, as the combat

seemed about to recommence under his very eyes. "I'll lick you if you begin again!"

"Let him shut up, then!" grunted Blake.

"Let him own up, then!" said Tom Merry.

"Look here, Blake," said Kildare, "have you and your friends done any-thing to Tom Merry's study?"

"No, we haven't!"

"Wathah not!"

"You can take Blake's word, Merry," said Kildare.

Tom Merry looked amazed.

"But they've written it up on the wall!" he exclaimed. "They've left their signature to it on the giddy wall!"

"Let's see it!" said Kildare.

He followed the Terrible Three to their study. Blake & Co. followed, too, in great surprise.

The Fourth Formers grinned at the sight of the wrecked study; they stared in astonishment at the inscription on the wallpaper.

"Bai Jove! It's a wotten swindle!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"We nevah came here at all, and somebody else has w'tten that up there."

Tom Merry's jaw dropped. He understood now. Not for an instant had he doubted that the message written on the wall was genuine. But he saw clearly enough now that the unknown japer had written it there in order to cause a row between the Terrible Three and Study No. 6.

"You ought to have known that we wouldn't muck up a study like this!" growled Herries. "It's not a raid; it's a blessed hooligan that's been here!"



"You've done it now!" shrieked Polly. "Pass the jam!" He had not expected to hear those words after what Dana uttered in

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I was taken in!" gasped Tom Merry. "I never thought any fellow at St. Jim's would be cad enough to write that on the wall. I naturally thought that you fellows had done it, as that was written there."

"I suppose it was natuwal, in the cires," said Arthur Augustus. "But you might have inquired before you wushed in and w'ecked our studay, deah boy."

"Well, we were rather wild!"

"It was enough to make anybody watty, but I considah—"

"I suppose you don't know who did this?" asked Kildare.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"No. It must have been some awful cad to put that on the wall and make us go for Study No. 6! It wasn't a House raid, Kildare, if that's what you're thinking of. Figgins & Co. wouldn't have written that. They always play the game. The fellow who wrote that on the wall would forge a cheque."

"It was mean and rotten," said Kildare, frowning, "t'nough that's no excuse for your having played the giddy goat. You'd better stop to think next time. I shall make inquiries into this and report it to the Housemaster."

And Kildare left the study.

"I'm sorry, you chaps," said Tom Merry, looking penitently at the Fourth Formers; "we have been rather hasty."

"Yaas, wathah, you certainly have, you feahful duffahs—"

"We'll come and help you clear up," said Lowther; "though we want some clearing up ourselves, too. But who could have done this and written those

lies on the wall? There's only one chap I know mean enough, and he's gone away from the school."

"Levison?"

"Yes, if he were here—but he isn't."

"We'll find out who it was and bump him hard!" said Tom Merry. "I can take a joke, but this isn't a joke; it's hooliganism and rotten treachery. And we'll make him sit up for it when we find him."

But it did not prove easy to find the culprit. The chums of the School House were very busy that evening, clearing up the wreckage and setting their studies in order as best they could, with the result that their preparation was very much neglected, which led to painful explanations with their respective Form-masters in the morning. And nobody seemed to have any knowledge of the perpetrator of the outrage in Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three simply had to give it up.

CHAPTER 11.

Under the Boot-boy's Thumb!

"GOT him this time!"

Crooke of the Shell made that remark to Percy Mellish. The two cads of the School House had strolled round to the ruined chapel in a secluded part of the extensive school grounds. Crooke had a new packet of cigarettes to dispose of, and for little amusements of that kind they required privacy.

But the ruins were not untenanted. As Crooke and Mellish came in among the old masses of masonry they caught sight of a red-headed youth sitting there in a secluded corner, with a paper in his hand and a cigarette between his lips.

It was Henry Higgins, the new boots. The paper he held was of the sporting variety, and he was looking down lists of racehorses and smoking at the same time. Two or three cigarette-ends near him showed that he had been there quite a considerable time. Evidently Toby's instructions had not wholly impressed a sense of duty upon the mind of Henry Higgins.

Crooke and Mellish exchanged a glance of satisfaction. They had, as the cad of the Shell remarked, "got him" this time.

Not that Henry Higgins had specially offended them in any way. But they had started to rag him, and Tom Merry & Co. had stopped them, and that made the cads of the School House all the more determined. And they had him at a great disadvantage now; for he was neglecting his duties, and in such a way that if it had become known he would have been instantly discharged from his situation.

Crooke, indeed, felt virtuously indignant, forgetting for the moment that he had himself come there to smoke cigarettes, in contravention of the school laws.

"Hallo, Red-head!" said Mellish.

The boot-boy looked up quickly.

"Hallo, Face!" he replied.

Mellish turned red with anger.

"Why, you—you cheeky cad!" he exclaimed. "How dare you speak to me!"

"You spoke to me, didn't you?" demanded Henry Higgins.

"That's different. You're a servant," said Mellish.

"And a nice way you spend your time," said Crooke. "You've been sent on an errand, I suppose, and you've come here instead to smoke fags."

Henry Higgins nodded calmly.

"You've it it," he said.

"How would you like me to report this to Mrs. Mimms?" asked Crooke.

He had expected that that remark would terrify the boot-boy with the fear of being discharged. But Henry Higgins did not appear terrified.

"Oh, you boil your 'cad!' he replied.

Crooke jumped.

"What!" he shouted. "What did you say?"

"Boil your 'cad!' snapped the boot-boy. "Go and fry your features, cocky!"

"You impertinent whelp!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Henry Higgins. "Don't you start a-calling of me names. Wot are you, Frinistance? Beauty, you are, ain't you—I don't think!"

"My hat, I'll bump you till you see stars by the million!" said Crooke, advancing upon the boot-boy. "And then I'll mention to Mrs. Mimms that you were here smoking and reading racing papers instead of doing your work."

"And I'll mention something to somebody about the same time," remarked Henry Higgins. "You 'ad better keep your hands off me. S'pose, f'rinstance, I mentioned to Mr. Railton, quite permissus like, about seeing you in the Green Man pub?"

Crooke started back.

"It's a lie!" he exclaimed fiercely.

"You haven't seen me there!"

Henry Higgins chuckled.

"S'pose I mentioned about you and Master Mellish breaking bounds after lights out, to go and see the sporting gents at the Green Man?"

The two juniors turned quite pale. How Henry Higgins had learned of their little ways was a mystery, and a startling one. Their little plunges into "life," as they called it, were kept strictly secret; no one but themselves and their departed friend Levison knew about the matter, so far as they knew. The knowledge displayed by the boot-boy seemed almost uncanny.

"You've been spying on us, you cad!" said Crooke fiercely.

Henry Higgins chuckled.

"I knows you," he remarked. "Knows you like a book, cocky. You'd better not put your 'ands on me, Master Crooke. S'pose I was to mention to Master Kildare that you have a secret drawer in your desk, where you keep cigarettes?"

"How do you know that?" yelled Crooke.

The boot-boy chuckled again.

"I knows you, you see, Master Crooke. And if hever you 'tries to rag me agin, I goes strite to Master Kildare and tells 'im—you bet!"

Mellish and Crooke exchanged helpless glances. How the boot-boy had gained his knowledge they could not guess, but certainly he knew enough to get them expelled from the school, if he chose to give them away.

"You've been spying on us," repeated Crooke.

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"That rotter Blake will scoff the lot!" Blake started, had said about the parrot picking up and repeating words in the study!

CHAPTER 12.

Was It Levison?

"Master Kildare would be interested if he knew what I could tell 'im," Higgins remarked. "I don't know whether it ain't my dooty to do it."

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" "Why should I 'old my tongue?" said Henry Higgins coolly. "You ain't treated me very well, young gentlemen."

Crooke stammered. He did not think any longer of ragging a person who could ruin him if he chose.

"I—I'm sorry," said Crooke. "It was only a lark, you know. I don't really want to hurt you. I'm going to let you alone."

"Certainly," said Mellish; "and—and there's a bob for you."

"Make it 'alf a quid and I'll forget all about it," said Henry Higgins.

"You won't get half a quid out of me," said Crooke.

"Rot! You're the son of a millionaire—though he made his millions swindling on the Stock Exchange," said Henry Higgins. "And you made a lot of money out of the racing last week—Mr. Griggs, the bookie, paid up."

Crooke jumped.

"How do you know that?" he asked. "That was before you came to your job here."

"P'raps a little bird told me," said the boot-boy calmly. "Anyway, I think it's worth 'alf a quid, don't you?"

Crooke looked at him hard. There were beads of perspiration on the brow of the cad of the Shell. Dearly he would have liked to hurl himself upon the boot-boy and hammer him right and left. But he dared not. The young rascal knew too much.

Slowly and silently, Crooke extracted ten shillings from his pocket, and dropped it into the grimy hand of Henry Higgins.

Then Crooke and Mellish left the ruins in grim silence.

"How did he know?" said Mellish, at last.

Crooke shook his head.

"Blessed if I can tell! But he does know!"

"He could get 'is sacked," said Mellish nervously. "Once start the prefects on the track and they'd soon have proof enough, and then—"

"Wish we'd let the beast alone now," muttered Crooke. "How on earth did he find out? He can't be an ordinary boot-boy—boot-boys, as a rule, don't read sporting papers and know so much as that chap knows. Blessed if I can understand it. But I'm going to keep jolly clear of him in future."

"Same here!" said Mellish.

The boot-boy, left to himself, chuckled gleefully. He looked at the ten shillings and put it in his pocket.

"My hat!" he murmured aloud—and his voice was strangely unlike that of Henry Higgins now. "My hat, I shall be able to make a good thing out of this! Those rotters haven't the nerve of white rabbits, and I know all their secrets. Seems to me I shall be able to make this job pay!"

And Henry Higgins chuckled again.

Having finished his cigarette and his examination of the racing-list, he rose, and stuffed the paper into an inside pocket, and made his way cautiously out of the ruins and round to the back of the School-House. Mrs. Mimms, who had sent him on an errand, scolded him for having been so long gone, and the boot-boy bore it with meek patience, but with a gleam in his eyes. Had Mrs. Mimms known how he had been spending his time it is probable that she would not have contented herself with a scolding.

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"B AI Jove!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed into Study No. 6 with a startled face, and gasping for breath.

Blake, Herries, and Digby stared at him. Evidently something very unusual had happened, and the swell of the School House had completely forgotten, for the moment, the repose that stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

"What on earth's the matter?" demanded Blake.

"Levison!"

"What?"

"I've just seen Levison!"

The three juniors started to their feet.

"Levison—here?"

"Yaas."

"He's come back?" demanded Blake, in amazement.

"Yaas!"

"My hat!"

"That is to say, he must have come back," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I have seen the boundah. I have seen him in the School House."

"Oh, you're dreaming!" said Herries, sitting down again.

"What rot! If he had come back to St. Jim's, we should have heard something of it."

"Of course we should," said Digby.

"You're dreaming, Gussy."

"I've seen him, deah boys."

"Did you speak to him?"

"Yaas; but he bolted without welpin'."

"Tell us all about it," said Blake;

"where was it?"

"I have just been out in the quad for a little twot before goin' to bed," Arthur Augustus explained. "I was twottin' along when I saw somebody move near the wall—you know where the slantin' oak is—the place where fellows climb up when they want to bweak bounds, and—"

"Yes, I fancy I know it," he said. "I've been there myself. What about it?"

"Well, it stwuck me that pewwaps some weckless youngstah was goin' to bweak bounds," explained D'Arcy, "so I regarded it as my duty to speak to him, and warn him of the ewwah of his ways."

"Spoken like a Dutch uncle," said Blake heartily. "Gussy, you ought to have been born a grandfather. You're wasted here."

"Wats! I regarded it as a duty to save any weckless youngstah fwom makin' a silly ass of himself," said Arthur Augustus, "so I wan up and caught him by the arm, just as he was climbin' up the oak. I said: 'My deah boy, this won't do, you know!'—and he, said something—"

"What did he say?"

D'Arcy coloured.

"I will not repeat what he said. It was a personal reflection upon myself. But he looked down as he said it, and I saw his face—"

"Oh, he had a face?" asked Blake, with an air of a fellow who was extremely interested, and wanted to have all the points made clear.

"Yaas, you ass! I saw his face—"

"It would have been better to saw the tree," said Blake; "that would have brought him down again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pwaw don't be an ass, Blake, and leave those wotten puns to Monty Lowthah! I saw his face—"

"How often did you see it?"

"Once, of course, as he was off in a moment."

"You've told us three times," said Blake, with a shake of the head.

"I've told you thwee times that I saw it once!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"Oh, I say—I mean, I see. Well, after you had sawn his face—"

"I wecognised him at once. It was Levison—and I was so surprised—in fact, thwown into a fluttah—that I jumped back. I called out to him, but he whipped ovah the wall and disappeared in a flash."

"Then it wasn't dark at the time?"

"Of course it was, you ass—vewy dark!"

"But in the flash—I suppose you mean a lightning flash—"

"You uttah ass, that was a figure of speech. I mean to say that he disappeared vewy quickly."

"Oh, I see—I mean, I saw! I suppose he disappeared so quickly because he was afraid you were going to saw his face again," said Blake thoughtfully. "A chap might be wooden-headed, and yet he wouldn't like you to saw his face—"

"I wish you would be sewious, Blake. Do you not veward it as a vewy remarkable thing that Levison should be in the school, although he's gone away?"

"Yes; it's a very unusual gift, to be able to be in two places at once," agreed Blake.

"I don't mean that, you fathead! I mean, although he is supposed to have gone away. You wemembah what he said—that he wouldn't weally leave St. Jim's. He has kept his word—wathah a remarkable thing for Levison, when you think of it. He wasn't much of a fellow for keepin' his word. But in this case, you see, it causes twouble—and that is why he has kept it. The wottah has been hidden somewhere about the school all the time, and he nevah weally went away at all."

"Great Scott!"

"You wemembah we all know that he nevah awvived home. It came out that the Head had heard fwom his patah again, sayin' that Levison had witten that he'd got a job somewhere, and wasn't comin' home. But it was a whoppah, of course, like all Levison's statements—he was weally hidin' wound the school somewhere."

"Living on air, I suppose?" asked Digby.

"Well, that is wathah a difficult point, I know—still, you wemembah that he hid himself once, and played ghost, and laid in a supply of pwovisions somewhere," said Arthur Augustus.

"My dear chap," said Blake, "it was dark, and you were thwown into a fluttah, and you've made a little mistake. The chap you saw go over the wall will turn out to be Mellish or Crooke or Gore—"

"I suppose I know Levison's face, Blake?"

"Well, you'll know it again if you sawed it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass! I tell you it was Levison, and I saw his face distinctly!" shrieked Arthur Augustus excitedly.

"All right, we'll take your word for it," said Blake soothingly.

"Besides, don't you see," pursued D'Arcy, "that accounts for the weecent happenings that have wowwied us. It must have been Levison who wecked Tom Mewwy's study and w'ote on the wall that we had done it. Don't you see?"

Blake started. He had concluded that

(Continued on page 18.)



**Let the Editor be your pal. Write to him to-day, addressing your letters :
The Editor, The GEM, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.**

HALLO, chums! It has been said that no story is so good that it cannot be beaten, and while there's a good deal of truth in this statement, I think readers will have to go a long way to beat the great yarn of Tom Merry & Co. which appears next Wednesday. It is the type of story which always has a tremendous appeal, and I have only to mention the title of it to make readers eager for the next GEM to appear. It's called:

"RIVALS ON THE TREASURE TRAIL!"

The story deals with the finding of a remarkable document in the chapel crypt at St. Jim's. According to the legend on the document, there is a vast treasure of gold and silver hidden in the old ruined castle on Wayland Moor, concealed there by a monk years before. Naturally, when the parchment is found, there is great excitement among Tom Merry & Co. They organise a treasure-hunt among themselves, only to find that there is a rival in the field. It is not Figgins, for, curiously enough, he and the other New House juniors don't seem a bit interested in the startling discovery. The rival treasure-seeker is Knox, the unpopular prefect, into whose hands the parchment falls. Knowing that it belongs to Tom Merry & Co., the unscrupulous senior yet resolves to collar the treasure for himself. But never did Knox make a bigger mistake, and from the bottom of his heart he wishes that he had never allowed his greed to overcome his discretion. This ripping yarn is one that you will remember for many a day.

"MORNY ON THE WARPATH!"

Going from the treasure trail to the warpath, we find, in Owen Conquest's next lively Rookwood story, Valentine Mornington seeking to get his own back on Mr. Manders, the master of the Modern House. The reckless Morny is the wrong customer to upset, but when he goes on the warpath he little guesses how his vengeance on Manders is to be taken out of his hands by another playing for higher stakes!

The Jester and Monty Lowther will be on parade as usual, supplying all the best laughs of the week, and completing another tip-top issue. Don't forget that advance order to your news-agent.

POSTAL PROBLEMS.

Recently I had a letter from a Gold Coast reader, and it was merely addressed: "The GEM, London, England." That was an easy one for the Post Office people to solve, for the old paper is too well known for that letter to have gone astray. But it is not always so easy for the G.P.O. to fathom out the destination of insufficiently addressed letters. At the G.P.O. there is a special staff of experts, known as the "Blind Department," to deal with calligraphical and address problems. But sometimes humorous people give them real teasers to solve. For instance, what would you make of a letter addressed like this: "King David, Cole, Obanvidok, London." You'd give it up? Yes, so would I. But the G.P.O. solved it thus: "King David & Co., Ltd., Holborn Viaduct, London."

A bigger problem, however, was presented the experts years ago when a letter arrived bearing the words: "Wood, John, Hants"—the three words being written one on top of the other in the order given. Some brainy person hit on the solution, and the letter was sent to the right person: "John Underwood, Andover, Hants." See it? John under Wood and over Hants. Clever, eh? But not clever enough to catch the G.P.O. experts!

A DOG'S LIFE!

Firemen get called out on some queer jobs at times—not always is it a case of fighting a fire. Cats and dogs sometimes get into difficulties, and it's very

often the fire brigade's "privilege" to come to the rescue. A short time ago in Bavaria a dachshund wandered into a fox-hole which ran for twenty feet under the ground. The dog got the wind up in the dark and became too scared to move. The fire brigade were called to the spot, and for twenty-two hours they endeavoured to entice that dachshund to the surface, but met with no luck. They were puzzling what to do when one of them got a bright idea. A long pole was secured, and on the end of it was tied a sausage and a lighted torch. The pole was pushed down the hole, and the dog, who was by now ravenously hungry, plucked up enough courage to move towards the sausage. As it did so the pole was slowly withdrawn, and the dachshund followed it to the mouth of the hole, where an anxious master promptly grasped it. But for the fireman's wheeze the terrified dog would have died of starvation.

FISH DIET!

Such a fate, however, would never overtake a certain fish which lives in the Atlantic. In fact, the "swallow," as the fish is known, is more in danger of bursting from overeating. It will swallow a victim larger than itself! This strange creature has a happy knack of stretching, and that's why it can "accommodate" a meal bigger than its own body.

Fish are greedy customers, and when it comes to "parking" away an outside meal they want a bit of beating. When a trout was opened up not long ago, inside it were discovered forty-six small fish! And an eel was once found choked to death in trying to swallow a bird!

Some fish have queer appetites, too. An odd collection of articles were revealed in two ling—deep-sea fish—when they were opened. From their stomachs were taken a medicine bottle, a piece of string, some paper—and a flask containing whisky!

SELF-HEATING!

By the way, have you heard about the latest idea in canned foods? It's a tin which will heat the food it contains. To heat a tin of peas we now have to stand it in a saucepan of water over a gas. But this new tin does away with that. The food in it is heated by unslaked lime. The tin of peas or beans is contained in a larger tin, which has two separate compartments, one holding water, the other lime. All that is required to supply the heat is to make a hole to allow the water to mix with the unslaked lime, thus setting up chemical heat.

TAILPIECE.

Binks: "I hear McTavish has ceased to correspond with his brother. Have they had a row?"

Jinks: "No—the envelope has worn out!"

THE EDITOR.

PEN PALS COUPON
14-3-36



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D'Arcy was mistaken in thinking that he had seen Levison; but this certainly was a point to be considered.

"It's possible," he said. "Levison's an awful cad, and he's got nerve enough to do anything. We never found out who played those tricks with the tacks in the boots, either. That was very like Levison! My hat! I wonder—"

"I know it was Levison I saw—"
"Hallo! What's that about Levison?" asked Tom Merry, passing the open door at that moment with Manners and Lowther.

"Hop in!" said Blake. "Gussy has made a wonderful discovery—or thinks he has. Pitch it to them, Gussy, and we'll take their opinion."

D'Arcy explained breathlessly.

"I saw his face clearly, though it was dark," he said. "I saw him—"

"What kind of a saw did you use?" asked Monty Lowther, seeing his opportunity and seizing it. "A handsaw or a fretsaw—"

"Shut up!" roared Herries. "Blake's done that already! We've had that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I regard this as a serious mattah," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "If Levison is lurkin' round the place and playin' twicks, he ought to be nabbed."

"It would be like him," confessed Tom Merry. "But he can't have lived without grub for days, though there are plenty of corners he could hide in. He's been gone a week, now, and it's no good thinking that he could stay hidden for a week. Yes, I know he hid himself in a secret passage once, but that didn't last a week—it couldn't have! And we know he really left St. Jim's this time, because Taggy went to the station with him."

"But he never got home!" said Blake. "He must have got home by this time, though, I should say. Still, he might be staying in the neighbourhood, somewhere, and might have sneaked into the school to play rotten tricks on us," said Tom Merry. "He knows his way about the place as well as we do, and it would be like him. But—"

"But it sounds rather steep," said Manners.

"Sure you weren't mistaken about the chivvy, Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus sniffed.

"I am quite sure," he replied. "I am not in the habit of makin' mistakes—"

"Sorry, I thought you were!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Well, I've got a suggestion to make," said Monty Lowther. "If Levison's lurking about the place he ought to be caught."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"And as Gussy is the chap who makes these startling discoveries, and is, moreover, a fellow of well-known tact and judgment, I consider that it is up to Gussy to catch him."

"Yaas, I wegard that as bein' quite cowweet."

"Therefore, I suggest that Gussy sits on the school wall all night and watches for him," said Lowther blandly. "He can take an umbrella, in case it rains."

"Hear, hear!" said Tom Merry and Manners.

"You uttah asses—"

"It's up to you, Gussy," said Lowther. "I wegard you as a silly ass! I considah—"

"And if you catch him, bring him to our study, and we'll boil him in oil," said Lowther impressively.

And the Terrible Three chuckled and departed. Blake, Herries, and Digby chuckled too. Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon them witheringly.

"I am quite sure that it was Levison!"

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he said emphatically. "And it will come out, in time, that I was quite right."

And Arthur Augustus sat down to his preparation with an air of great dignity indeed.

CHAPTER 13.

The Unknown Again!

"POLLY wants sugar!" Kangaroo grunted as he came into the end study and the unmusical voice of the parrot fell upon his ears. Clifton Dane was seated there, with a very moody frown upon his brow. The Canadian junior had been very worried by the breach with the Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6.

The breach had not been healed, and it seemed likely to be permanent, and grow wider. Polly, the parrot, was the unfortunate cause of it, and Kangaroo and Bernard Glyn did not regard Polly with feelings of affection, though Dane was as fond of his troublesome pet as ever.

"Polly wants sugar!" said the parrot, with a screech. "Poor Polly—poor Polly! Here comes that beast, Blake! He's not going to scoff all the jam! Hurrah!"

Kangaroo snorted.

"Can't you make that beastly bird unlearn those things, Dane?" he asked. Clifton Dane looked distressed.

"He'll forget 'em in time if he doesn't hear them said any more," he said. "Blessed if I know how he picked them up! Some beastly cad must have sneaked into the study when we weren't here and taught him."

"Must have been a fellow with some nerve, then, to risk being caught doing it!" growled Kangaroo. "One or another of us is always here, excepting in class-time."

"I've been thinking about that," said the Canadian junior. "I think it must have been done during class, some time or other. It looks to me like a trick of some servant here, but I can't think which one could have done it. I'm sure Toby wouldn't play a trick like that, and it would be absurd to suspect one of the housemaids."

"There's that new boot-boy, Higgins—or 'Iggins,' as he calls himself."

"I've spoken to him," said Dane, "but it seems that he didn't even know that I had a parrot. Besides, why should he do it? I haven't bothered him. I chipped in once to stop Gore, who was going to chuck some water over his top-knot. I simply can't make the matter out at all. Mellish is mean enough to do it, but he wouldn't take the risk of being caught. He hasn't the pluck. I—"

"I'm going to smash these things!" shrieked the parrot.

"There he goes again!" said Kangaroo. "What is the beast talking about now?"

"I don't know. That's something new," said the Canadian junior, glancing in surprise at the parrot. "I've never heard Polly say that before."

"Smash the things—smash the things!" yelled Polly. "I'm fed-up with Glyn and his rubbish in this study! Give me some sugar! Hurrah!"

"Hallo! What's that?" asked Bernard Glyn, coming into the study. "Who's fed-up with me?"

"It's that blessed parrot!" said Kangaroo.

Glyn frowned. "He didn't think of that for himself," he said. "He's heard somebody say that."

"Well, he didn't hear me say it!" growled Kangaroo. "As a matter of fact, I am pretty well fed-up with your giddy inventions, but I didn't say so to Polly."

"Same here," said Clifton Dane. "Smash 'em—smash 'em! Smash the rubbish!" yelled Polly. "Oh, won't Glyn be pleased! I'm fed-up with him in my study!"

Glyn looked decidedly unpleasant. "If anybody has been smashing my things there will be trouble!" he exclaimed.

"Oh!" said Kangaroo. "Why should anybody smash your things?"

"Look here!" yelled Glyn.

"What's the matter?"

"Look! Who did this?"

Bernard Glyn had opened the lid of a case in which a great deal of his "rubbish" was kept. The rubbish was expensive rubbish, and could not have been purchased by anybody but a fellow whose father was a millionaire. But it was not worth very much now. The three Shell fellows stared blankly into the case.

The things had been damaged with a reckless hand. Wet batteries had been smashed, dry batteries ripped open. Coils of wire had been hacked into pieces with scissors. Bottles of chemicals had been broken, and their contents had run over the other contents of the case, mingling with spilt powders and torn scraps of paper that had contained notes relating to Glyn's valuable inventions.

The Liverpool lad looked at the havoc, and his face became quite pale. It was an act of utter and wicked vandalism, and the loss was very great; and Bernard Glyn's dismay was so intense that he forgot even to be angry.

"Who—who has done this?" he panted.

As if in answer to him, there came a fresh yell from the parrot:

"Smash 'em up—smash 'em! I'm fed-up with Glyn's rubbish in this study! Polly wants some sugar! Hurrah!"

Bernard Glyn started.

"You hear that?" he asked.

"Jolly well can't help hearing it!" said Kangaroo. "That blessed parrot ought to have its neck wrung!"

Glyn's eyes gleamed.

"Somebody has smashed up these things, and the parrot heard him say that it was because he was fed-up with having them in this study," he said. "I don't see that anybody outside this study should care whether they're here or not. Which of you fellows was it that smashed my property?"

"I didn't do it," said Kangaroo, "and I can't believe that Dane did it, either."

"I certainly did not," said Clifton Dane. "I did not know anything about it till you opened the case just now."

Bernard Glyn was silent. As a matter of course, he would have taken the word of his chums. But—there was a "but" in the case now—the parrot had undoubtedly heard the destroyer say that he was smashing the things because he was fed-up with having Glyn's rubbish in the study. To whom could that apply excepting Kangaroo and Clifton Dane? Glyn might have piled the study ceiling high with any kind of rubbish without affecting the comfort of anybody but his study-mates.

"It's a rotten trick of somebody," said Clifton Dane at last. "There's some mean rotter sneaks in here and teaches the parrot these things. That's the only way to account for it."

"He ought to have his neck wrung!" said Kangaroo.

"I'll wring his neck fast enough when I find him!"

"I mean the parrot!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I don't see why anybody should play a rotten trick like that," said Bernard Glyn coldly. "Who did it?"

"That's a rotten puzzle. I simply can't guess. If Levison were still here, I should suspect him at once."

"But he isn't!"

"No; and I don't know whom to suspect," said the Canadian junior, with a gleam in his eyes. "But I'll make him smart when I find him out. Look here, Glyn! You can't suspect Kangary or me of doing a rotten thing like that! You can't think that we should smash up your props."

"You can't, old man," said Kangaroo. Glyn was grimly silent.

"It's plain enough that it's a trick," said Dane, "the same as that one before that made trouble between us and Tom Merry and Blake. It's got the same object—to make us row with one another. I think we should be fools to fall into the trap."

"But who?" said Glyn.

"We've got to find out," said Clifton Dane. "It's somebody who sneaks into the study when we're at lessons. I feel sure of that. Nobody would risk being caught at it. I've been keeping a careful eye on the study, too, ever since that last trick, and I'll swear nobody could have got in out of lesson-time without my finding him out. It's been done during lessons, and the cad feels safe in doing it, as we can't keep watch when we're in the Form-room."

"I don't see how he's to be spotted, if that's the case," said Kangaroo.

"Look here, Glyn! You're a giddy inventor. Can't you plan some trap or other to catch him?" asked the Canadian.

Bernard Glyn brightened up. His instincts as an inventor were appealed to, and he was keen at once.

"Jolly good idea!" he exclaimed.

"If the chap comes again," said Kangaroo.

"He will, if we don't rag with one another," said Dane quietly. "You can see what his object is—to make us quarrel, as he's made us quarrel with Tom Merry and Blake. If we don't do it, he'll have another try."

"He must be a frightful rotter!"

"That's pretty clear, and I can't guess who it is. It may be some chap who makes an excuse to get away from lessons, to come sneaking here. It wouldn't be a Shell chap—in that case, we should have noticed; but it might be one of the Fourth—perhaps Mellish, after all. Whoever it is—one of the fellows, or a servant here—we've got to catch him and make him smart. How are you going to do it, Glyn?"

Glyn wrinkled his brows in thought. He was quite convinced now of the innocence of his study-mates, and he was very keen to get on the track of the real perpetrator.

"By George, I'll think it out!" he exclaimed. "An electric alarm-bell would be easy; but even if we heard it, we couldn't leave the Form-room to nail him. We must have some dodge for keeping him here if he once enters the study—some dodge for making the door fast, so that he can't get out again."

"My hat! That's ripping, if you could work it!"

"He couldn't get out of the window. It's a sheer forty feet, with nothing to catch hold of," said Glyn. "Once he was bottled up here, he'd have to stay till we came to let him out. I've got it!"

"Got the idea?"

"Yes; a new lock on the door—without a key," said Glyn, his eyes

gleaming; "a lock that shuts when the door's shut, and can't be opened without a key. I can do the business easily enough. I put a new lock on this door once, and I can do it again."

"But if it won't open without a key, the raider won't be able to get into the study when he comes."

"Ass!" said Glyn politely. "We shall leave the door open for him. The doors are left open often enough. We shall leave it ajar every time we leave the study; but when he's here doing his rotten trick, he's sure to close it, in case anybody should pass along the passage. Once he's closed it—"

"Good egg!" said Kangaroo and Clifton Dane together.

And there was a screech from the parrot:

"Good egg! Ha, ha, ha! Hurrah!"

CHAPTER 14.

Caught!

"BAI Jove! It's the Head!"

"Lecture, I suppose!" groaned Blake.

And the Fourth Formers assumed expressions of patient martyrdom.

The Fourth had gone into their Form-room that morning; but instead of Mr. Lathom taking the class as usual, the Head walked in. The Head did not often visit the junior Form-rooms, and the Fourth naturally expected a lecture on something that had either been done or not done. They prepared to listen patiently. As Figgins remarked in a whisper, it was up to them to give the Head a little run.

Mr. Lathom called for silence. The Head was looking very grave.

"My boys," he said, "I have something to say to you before lessons commence. You remember that about a week ago Levison of the Fourth left the school—"

The juniors stared. About the last thing they had expected the Head to mention was Levison. It was evidently not, after all, some delinquency of their own that Dr. Holmes had come there to deal with.

"I have heard from Levison's father again," said the Head. "Levison has not returned home. He wrote to his father from Wayland to inform him

that he had found employment, and would not be returning home. Since then his people have heard nothing from him. It happens that there is good news for him if he could be found. Mr. Levison informs me that there has been a favourable turn in his affairs, and matters are going so well with him that he is able to send his son back here. It unfortunately happens that he does not know where to find him."

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"It has occurred to me," said the Head, "that Levison may be staying somewhere in the

neighbourhood, and in that case he will doubtless have been in communication with some of his old acquaintances here. I therefore ask whether any of you know anything about his movements? If you can give me any information, it will be of service to the boy himself."

Arthur Augustus glanced at Blake.

The Head waited.

"I need not point out to you," added the Head, "that Levison will not be punished by me for having absented himself from home. That is entirely a matter for his father to deal with, and does not concern me in the least. You need not, therefore, have any hesitation in speaking. It is important for Levison's own sake that he should be found, and informed that he may return to St. Jim's."

"I think I ought to speak, sir," said D'Arcy.

The Head glanced at him.

"You know something of Levison's whereabouts, D'Arcy?"

"No, sir; but I have seen him."

"Indeed! Where?"

"In the quad, sir."

The Head looked surprised.

"Indeed! I was not aware that Levison had visited the school since leaving. He came here to see someone, I suppose—some member of his Form?"

"I think not, sir. I saw him last night, about nine o'clock, in the quadrangle, sir. He was away when I spoke to him."

"Ran away?" repeated the Head, in surprise.

"Yaas, sir. He bolted ova the school wall."

"Indeed! That is very odd. You are quite sure that it was Levison, D'Arcy?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"That proves, then, that he is in the neighbourhood still," said Dr. Holmes. "Doubtless he felt a desire to visit his old school. I can quite understand it, as I am sure he felt very deeply being compelled to leave. If any of you boys should hear anything further of him, please let me know at once, so that he can be found."

"Yes, certainly, sir," said the juniors. And the Head left the Form-room.

There was a good deal of whispering in the class that morning during lessons. The Head's information was not wholly pleasing. Levison would be coming back; and although the juniors had been sorry for him, they did not wholly

(Continued on the next page.)

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relish the prospects of the return of the cad of the Fourth. The fact that he was not at home, and that his father did not know his whereabouts, lent colour to the supposition that he was really staying somewhere in the neighbourhood of St. Jim's, and that D'Arcy had really seen him in the quad, as he declared. And that, again, made it only too probable that Levison was the author of the tricks that had been played in the School House.

"Just like the rotter!" Blake growled, under his breath. "If it turns out to be Levison who wrecked Tom Merry's study, he will have some trouble on his hands when he gets back here, that's all!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

When the Fourth Form were dismissed, the news spread to the Shell fellows. The Terrible Three stopped in the passage to discuss it with Blake & Co. The chums of the end study paused as they heard Levison's name.

"What's that about Levison?" asked Kangaroo, forgetting that he was on bad terms with the others for the moment. "Levison's been seen about St. Jim's?"

"Yaas, I saw him last night in the quad," said D'Arcy.

"My hat! What was he doing?"

"Gettin' ovah the wall into the wood!"

"Levison about St. Jim's!" said Clifton Dane, as the trio moved on. "My hat! I never thought of anything of the kind, you fellows. If Levison is hanging about the school, we needn't look any farther for the rotter who played tricks in our study!"

"Just what I was thinking," said Kangaroo.

"Please, Master Noble—"

"Hallo, Toby!" said the Cornstalk.

"What's the trouble?"

Toby was looking worried and exasperated.

"You haven't seen young 'Iggins, I s'pose, Master Noble?" he asked.

"The boot-boy? No!"

"E's disappeared!" growled Toby. "E's always going hoff somewhere and leaving me to do 'is work. Now he's been missing for more'n an hour, Master Noble, and Mrs. Mimms she's sent me round looking for 'im, and I can't find 'im nowhere!"

"Well, you ought to be able to see him at a distance!" grinned Kangaroo. "Look out for a pillar of fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll warm 'im when I find 'im!" said Toby. "I'm about fed-up with the cheek of 'Enry 'Iggins, I am!"

And Toby moved away discontentedly.

"Let's get down to the footer," said Kangaroo. "This is a bit rotten, being on scragging terms with Tom Merry. It makes it difficult about being in the team!"

"It will be all right when we've caught the rotter who played those tricks, and can prove it against him!" said Glyn.

"Yes, when!"

"Well, the lock's on the door all right, and if he goes to our study again he'll be nabbed, as sure as a gun!" said the Liverpool lad. "Might as well have a look at the study before we go to the footer."

He glanced up at the study window, high above, as he spoke. Then he gave a sudden start.

"My hat!"

"Hallo! What is it?"

"There's somebody in the study!" said the Liverpool lad excitedly. "I

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just saw somebody move at the window!"

"By Jove!"

The three Shell fellows stared up at the window. They could see nothing now but the glint of the sun on the panes. But Bernard Glyn was quite sure that he had seen someone move at the glass a moment before.

"Caught, by Jove!" said Glyn, with great satisfaction. "Whoever it is, he can't get out, that's a dead cert! And he must have gone in there during lessons; so he can't pretend that he just walked in by chance to see one of us. He's fairly caught!"

"Good egg!"

"Let's go and have him out," said Clifton Dane.

Kangaroo held up his hand.

"Go slow! We've got to have the other fellows on the spot when we nail him—Tom Merry and the rest. They've got to be witnesses, so that nobody can say we worked it up as an explanation. Nothing like making sure!"

"Right! Let's look for them."

Tom Merry & Co. had gone down to the footer ground. They were about to begin practice when the Cornstalk and his comrades arrived.

"We want you, Tom Merry—" began Clifton Dane.

"Then you can want!" said the captain of the Shell curtly. "I'm busy!" Dane flushed.

"This is important," he said. "Look here—listen to me! You fellows cut up rough the other day because of something my parrot said—"

"We don't want to talk about it."

"But I do," said Clifton Dane. "I said at the time that some cad must have been in my study teaching the parrot to say these things, to cause trouble—"

"Well, if that's the case, it's all right," said Tom Merry. "But you must admit for yourself that it's rather steep."

"Yaas, wathah!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I must remark that it is vewy steep indeed, deah boy!"

"I should want some proof, for one," said Blake bluntly.

"That's what we're going to give you," said the Canadian quietly.

"Oh!" said Tom Merry.

"Yesterday a lot of Glyn's things were smashed up in the study," said Clifton Dane, "and the parrot said things that made Glyn believe that Kangaroo and I had done it!"

"Bai Jove!"

"It was jolly clear, then, that some cad was playing tricks, and teaching the parrot to say things," said Clifton Dane, "and we laid a trap for him. Glyn put a new lock on the door that works with a spring, and can't be opened without the key when it's closed. We left the door ajar this morning when we went to the Form-room. Now there's somebody in the study; Glyn saw him at the window."

Tom Merry looked puzzled.

"Somebody's gone in during lessons?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then it can't be one of the fellows?" "I don't see how it could, without his being missed."

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus excitedly. "Levison!"

"Impossible!" said Blake. "He couldn't come here in broad daylight without being seen and recognised—and nobody's seen him!"

"He's cunning enough for anything,"

said Clifton Dane. "I don't know who it is—whether it's Levison or not; but, whoever it is, he's locked up in the study now, and can't get out till Glyn goes there and unlocks the door. We want you fellows to come with us to nail him, so that you can all be witnesses."

"Good!" said Tom Merry. "If that's it, we'll come with pleasure!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

And the whole crowd of juniors started towards the School House. They glanced at the high study window as they passed the House wall, and Blake uttered an exclamation:

"Look! There's somebody at the window! He's gone now!"

"Bai Jove! Did you recognise him, Blake?"

"No; only it wasn't Levison. Looked to me as if he had red hair."

"Wed hair! Bai Jove!"

"Couldn't be Higgins, surely?" said Kangaroo. "Toby just told us he was missing, and couldn't be found!"

"Jolly soon see!"

And the crowd of juniors hurried into the School House, and up the stairs, and ran down the passage to Bernard Glyn's study.

CHAPTER 15.

An Amazing Discovery!

THE study door was shut and locked.

Inside, the juniors could hear someone moving about. It was evident that the study was occupied, and that the trick had worked successfully.

The intruder had entered the study while the juniors were at class, and he had closed the door to secure himself from observation; and, in doing so, he had made himself a prisoner. Whatever damage he had done in the study would be a witness against him; and certainly he must have done some damage—he would not have gone there for nothing.

Bernard Glyn felt in his pocket for the key of the spring lock.

"Line up, you chaps!" he said. "The beggar may make a rush, and he's not to get away!"

"What-ho!"

"Yaas, wathah! I shall wefuse to let him get away, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus, pushing back his spotless cuffs.

Bernard Glyn inserted the key in the lock.

Click!

There was a muttered exclamation inside the study. The Liverpool lad threw the door open, and the juniors lined up to prevent a rush from the captured marauder.

They stared into the study. Then there was an exclamation from all at once:

"Higgins!"

It was the red-headed boot-boy!

And Higgins was not all they saw. The study was in a state of terrific disorder. Articles had been broken and scattered about. The looking-glass was smashed, and the glass doors of the bookcase shattered.

Polly, the parrot, was chattering away in the cage at a great rate. He gave a scream at the sight of his master.

"Polly wants sugar! Go it, Blake! Smash 'em up, Blake!"

"Blake, eh?" said Jack Blake grimly.

"Pile in, Blake! Smash the glasses! Hurrah! Polly wants sugar! Give poor Polly some sugar! Hurrah!"

"What are you doing here, Higgins?" asked Tom Merry quietly. The red-headed youth had cast a wild glance towards the doorway. But it was blocked with juniors, and there was no escape for him.

He backed away, his breath coming fast. Cool and ready-tongued as the young rascal was, he knew that he was in a situation now that it would be difficult to escape from.

"I—I—I—" he began.

"You've been wrecking this study!" said Bernard Glyn.

"Me, sir? Oh no, sir!"

"You've been teaching the parrot again—teaching him to say things to make us think that Blake wrecked the study!" said Kangaroo.

"Certainly not, sir!" said Henry Higgins. "I 'ope you don't believe as 'ow I would do such a thing, sir!"

"Yaas, wathah! Explain that, you wottah, before we bump you bald-headed!" said Arthur Augustus wrathfully.

The juniors gathered round Henry Higgins, with grim looks. The boot-boy was breathing hard and fast. But they gave him a chance to explain before they laid hands on him. If he had any explanation to make, they were willing to hear it.

"Got anything to say?" said Blake curtly.

"Ye-es, sir—ye-es, certainly, Master Blake!"

"Say it, then—quick!"

"I—I was passing down the passage, and I heard something breaking in here!" stammered Higgins. "I looked in, and a fellow went out—the fellow who had done all this damage!"

"What was the fellow's name?"

"Oh, sit on him, somebody!"

"I decline to be sat upon! I— Oh! Ow! Mind my waistcoat, you ass!"

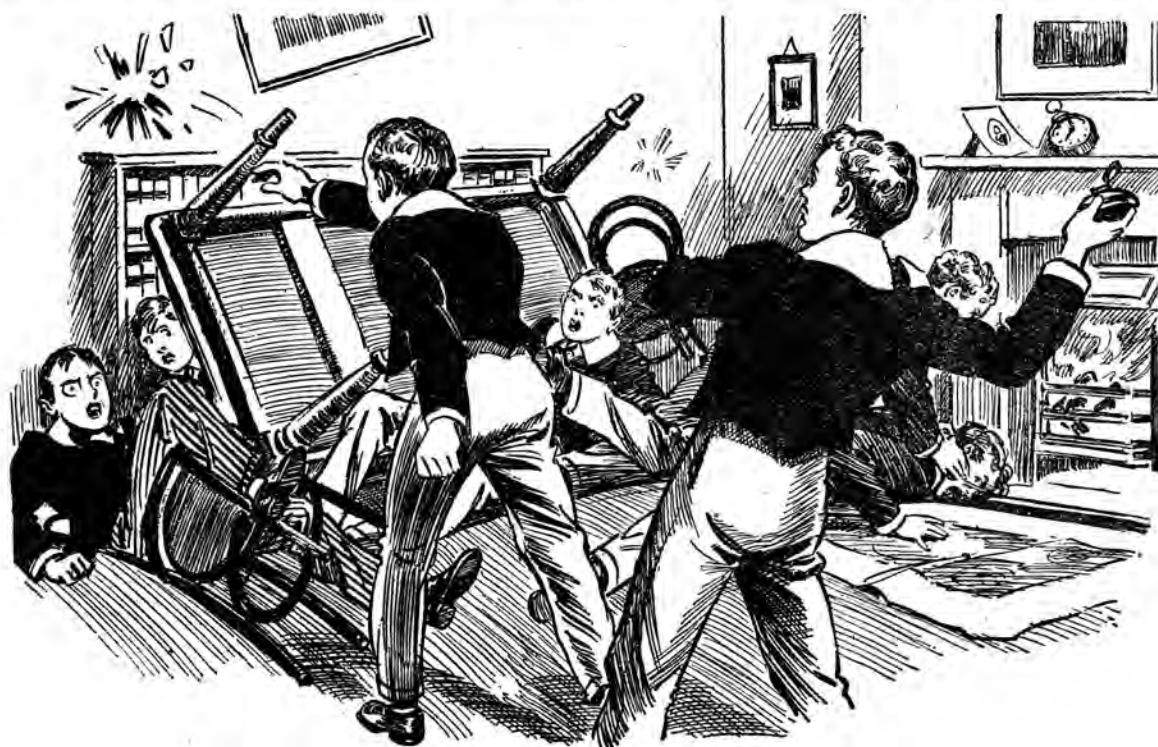
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We all know why he's made it a Third Form chap," said Tom Merry quietly. "If any fellow got out of class to come here and do this, we should know if it were a Fourth Form or a Shell chap. So he says it was one of the Third, because we can't be certain whether a fag got leave out of the Form-room!"

"Yaas, wathah; the slanderin' wottah—"

"It—it is true!" stammered Higgins. "I—I came into the study, then, to—to put the things in order, and the door closed, and—and—"

"And you were caught," said Bernard Glyn grimly. "You may be



"Rag the bouncers!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "Smash everything!" Blake & Co. stared in bewilderment at the Terrible Three, who seemed to be thinking of nothing but effecting the greatest possible damage in the shortest possible time!

"You smashed up my property yesterday," said Bernard Glyn, "and you taught the parrot to say things to make me believe that Noble and Dane had done it!"

"I ain't done nothin' of the sort, Master Glyn!"

"You taught the parrot to say things about Blake and Tom Merry before, so that when they came to tea here they thought we had been talking about them in a caddish way, and got their backs up," pursued the Liverpool lad grimly.

"Oh, no, sir! Never, sir!"

"You came here while we were at classes this morning, and did some more damage, and if we hadn't been up to the trick, we should have fancied that Blake had done it," said Bernard Glyn.

"I'm sure I don't hunderstand you, sir!" mumbled Higgins.

"Then what are you doing here?"

asked Tom Merry. "I don't believe a word of it; but we'll give you every chance! What was his name?"

The boot-boy hesitated.

"It was Master Wally D'Arcy, sir!" he said.

There was an angry exclamation from D'Arcy:

"My minah! You uttah lyin' wottah! Bai Jove, you fellows, I'm goin' to give him a feashful thwashin' for slanderin' my minah!"

"Hold on, Gussy—"

"I wefuse to hold on! I am not goin' to heah my minah slandered in this wotten way! Welease me, Blake, or I shall stwike you on the nose!"

Blake chuckled.

"Keep your wool on, Gussy! We don't believe a word the rotter has said, but we've got to give him a chance to clear himself, if he can! Let him run on!"

"I wefuse—"

interested to hear that I put that lock on the door specially to catch you next time you came, and you've walked into the trap beautifully."

Henry Higgins ground his teeth for a second. Then he was the humble and civil Henry Higgins once more, as he remembered himself.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry I came in, Master Glyn, as you don't like finding me here," he said meekly. "But I meant no 'arm. I was honly going to set the room to rights."

"How long have you been here?" demanded Glyn.

"Not very long, sir—perhaps twenty minutes."

"Then what have you been doing for the last hour? I've just heard from Toby that you've been missing for an hour, and he couldn't find you anywhere, though he was hunting for you."

"Ahem! I—I may be mistaken about the time."

"Yes; I fancy you are, and about some other things." The Liverpool lad glanced at the juniors. "I think it's pretty clear, you fellows."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite clear," said Tom Merry. "What I can't make out is why he has done it? No fellow here has done him any harm that I know of. Some of us have chipped in to save him from being ragged by Crooke and Mellish. He is an utterly ungrateful beast. It's pretty clear now that he wrecked my study, too, and put that writing on the wall to make us think that Blake had done it. The rotten cad must have been deliberately trying to cause trouble among friends."

"And he did it, too, successfully, so far as we were concerned," growled Kangaroo. "You silly idiots have had your backs up against us."

Tom Merry coloured.

"Sorry, Kangy! But how were we to guess that anything of this sort was going on—that a perfect stranger, and a kid we've been very decent to, would play such rotten cowardly tricks on us."

"Yaas, it's jolly queeah; but I apologise to you fellows most sincerely," said Arthur Augustus. "I realise now that that wed-headed wottah must have taught the pawwot to say those wotten things."

"And now he's going through it," said Kangaroo.

"Yes, rather!"

Henry Higgins dodged desperately round the table; but many hands were stretched out to collar him, and he was easily captured.

"Now, you cad," said Tom Merry, "you're going to have the hiding of your life! Not because you've spoiled our things, but because you've tried to make us quarrel with one another like a low-down rotter. Shove him over the table!"

"Yaas, wathah! Come here, you wottah! It's all right! I've got hold of his hair! Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus staggered back, with a shriek of astonishment.

He had caught hold of the boot-boy's mop of red-hair to hold him, as he was struggling savagely in the grasp of the juniors.

And the red hair had come off in his hand.

"Gweat Scott! Look here! What the—"

But D'Arcy's voice was drowned by a roar from the other fellows.

CHAPTER 16.

The Last of Henry Higgins!

"LEIVISON!"

"Gweat Scott!"

"Leivison!"

"The cad!"

"The mischief-maker!"

"So we have caught you at last, you worm!"

Leivison sprang back, panting.

He had made many skilful changes in his appearance. The dark complexion, the thick and bushy eyebrows, changed his looks very much, but the glaring red hair had been the chief disguise.

"Leivison," almost stuttered Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—"Leivison, you wottah! You have been lyin' again, and takin' us all in!"

"That accounts for the cad wrecking our studies, and making us quarrel with one another with his rotten

tricks!" said Clifton Dane. "I said that if Leivison had been still here, we shouldn't have had to look far for the rotter! And he is here all the time."

"Now we know who put the tacks in our boots," growled Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Leivison grinned.

The sudden discovery had taken him aback, but he was very quick to recover his coolness.

"I suppose the game's up now?" he said. "It couldn't go on for ever. I couldn't have stood the life—too much work, and too little pay. And it was risky getting out to have a little fun. I had to take these things off, and go out in my own character. And that fool D'Arcy spotted me doing it last night."

"Weat, Leivison—"

"I told you I wouldn't leave St. Jim's," continued Leivison, in the same cynical, sneering tone. "I was right, you see. You were all jolly glad to get rid of me, but I said I'd come back, and I came."

"As a boot-boy," said Digby.

"Well, I had to come somehow, and it gave me a chance of getting even with some of you," said Leivison, between his teeth. "And I tell you you're not done with me yet. You can give me away, if you like, but I'm not done with St. Jim's."

The juniors were grimly silent. They remembered the Head's communication of that morning.

It was only too true. Leivison was not done with St. Jim's. He did not know it yet, but he was free to return to the school, in his own character, whenever he liked!

"Now I'm going out of this study to—"

Kangaroo jumped into his way.

"Not till you've been licked for what you've done," he said. "Henry Higgins, or Leivison, or whatever you like to call yourself, you're going through it for the rotten tricks you've played us."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"If you want a fair fight you can fight any fellow here present," said Tom Merry. "We'll give you fair play—more than you want."

Leivison backed away.

"I'm not going to fight you—"

"No; I don't suppose you want to," said Tom Merry, with a curl of the lip. "You prefer to hit in the dark, like a coward and cad, as you are. But you've been bowled over this time, and you've got to face the music. Stand up to me, or take a licking with a cricket stump, whichever you like."

Leivison gritted his teeth.

"Of the two, I'd rather fight you," he said. "But—"

"Put up your hands, then!"

Leivison was cornered, and he had the courage of a rat in a corner. The furniture was moved back, and the two juniors faced each other in shirt-sleeves. And then was witnessed such a combat as the end study had certainly never witnessed before. There were no rounds. It was slogging from beginning to end. Leivison, knew something of boxing, and he was desperate. At first he lay still when he was knocked down, hoping the fight was at an end; but Kangaroo "touched him up" with a cricket stump till he was glad to get up and face his opponent again.

And then Leivison fought as hard as he could.

For ten minutes it lasted, and by that time Leivison was in a terrible state. It was the worst thrashing he had ever known. He went down at last, and lay on the floor, panting—and this time it

was evidently genuine. He could not get up.

Tom Merry put on his jacket.

"Bwavo, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, patting the captain of the Shell on the shoulder. "Well done!"

"Will you kindly explain what this means?" said a voice at the door; and the startled juniors looked round, to see Mr. Railton looking in.

The Housemaster's brow was very stern. He had seen the red wig lying on the table and Leivison lying on the floor. And he had recognised the cad of the Fourth.

Leivison staggered to his feet, gasping.

"Leivison!" said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir!" panted the junior.

"Am I to understand, Leivison, that you came here in disguise? That you were the boy known as Henry Higgins?"

"I—I wanted to come back, sir," whined Leivison. "I—I couldn't bear to leave the school, sir. I—I—"

"You had no right to play such a trick, and I fear that your motives were not so good as you would make me believe, Leivison," said the Housemaster coldly. "Your schoolfellows seem to have appraised them at their real valuation. You are, perhaps, not aware that your father has communicated with Dr. Holmes, to the effect that his affairs have taken a turn so much for the better that you need not leave the school."

Leivison started.

"I—I didn't know that, sir."

"You had better go and remove that disguise from your face, and change into your own clothes, and report yourself to Dr. Holmes," said Mr. Railton sternly.

"Ye-es, sir."

And Leivison departed. Mr. Railton strode away without another word to Tom Merry & Co., much to their relief. The Housemaster probably knew that Leivison had had only what he deserved, and probably not so much as he deserved.

"So that wottah's comin' back!" said D'Arcy, at last.

Toby, the page, looked into the study. "Registered letter for Master D'Arcy," he said.

"Bai Jove! It's my fivah at last!" And so it was!

Leivison succeeded in making good his explanation to Dr. Holmes, and he reappeared among the juniors of St. Jim's, who did not give him a hearty welcome, by any means—not that Leivison cared for a little thing like that!

But Tom Merry & Co. had no thoughts to waste upon Leivison now. The famous fiver had arrived, and the long period of stoniness was over. That evening there was a glorious feed in Study No. 6, with Arthur Augustus as the founder of the feast. And the chums of Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three and Kangaroo & Co. gathered there on the best of terms, all ill-feeling among them having been banished by the discovery that Leivison had been at the bottom of the trouble.

The next morning Leivison appeared in the Fourth Form Room, as usual. The mischief-maker had two black eyes, a swollen nose, and a decidedly thick ear, so he was by no means unpunished for his rascally schemes!

(Next Wednesday: "RIVALS ON THE TREASURE TRAIL!" You simply must read all about Tom Merry & Co.'s exciting treasure hunt. Order your GEM early to make sure of getting this grand yarn.)

MORE LIVELY FUN WITH JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD!

SAVING LOVELL'S BACON!



"I think you'll be safe for the afternoon," said Algy. "Urrrh!" gurgled Lovell. "You can keep that up!" grinned the fag. "Ta-ta!" The Third Formers crowded out of the shed, leaving Arthur Edward to wriggle and struggle in vain!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

To Go Or Not To Go!

"YOU can't!"
"I can!"
"I tell you," repeated Jimmy Silver, "that you can't!"
"And I tell you," repeated Arthur Edward Lovell calmly, "that I can!"
"Look here, Lovell!" said Raby and Newcome simultaneously.

"Don't you fellows jaw!" said Lovell. "Jimmy's talking rot enough. No need for you fellows to talk any." Argument was waxing warm among the Fistical Four of the Classical Fourth Form at Rookwood School.

Lovell's voice was raised—raised and emphatic. Lovell, as usual, knew best. It was irritating to Arthur Edward to be opposed by less intelligent fellows, who couldn't grasp the obvious fact that Lovell knew best. Any fellow thus irritated might have raised his voice.

But it annoyed Mr. Manders. Manders, the Modern master of Rookwood, was seated on one of the old oaken benches under one of the ancient Rookwood beeches, in break that morning.

It was a cold but bright and sunny spring morning. Plenty of fellows were, in the quad enjoying the sunshine.

Mr. Manders had an open notebook on his knee, and a pencil in his hand, and was deep in a mathematical problem. Manders enjoyed mathematics. Probably he was the only member of Manders' House who did.

He did not see the chums of the Fourth, because they were on the other side of the big beech-tree behind the bench.

It was very annoying to Mr. Manders to be interrupted by the voices of juniors, chattering behind his back. Still, even the acid-tempered Modern master could hardly raise objections to fellows talking in the quad in break; and he frowned, and tried to turn a deaf ear.

"Utter rot!" went on Lovell. "Absolute piffle! You needn't tell me I'm gated. I know I'm gated. But if you think I'm going to cut a football match because I'm gated, you've got another guess coming—see?"

"Now do be a sensible chap, Lovell!"

Against the wiser counsels of his chums Arthur Edward Lovell insisted on defying the Head. But there are more ways than one of saving an obstinate fellow from a flogging!

urged Jimmy Silver. "I'm sorry to leave you out of the team."

"You can keep your sorrow, and boil it!" interjected Lovell. "You're not leaving me out of the team, Jimmy Silver!"

"You can't come over to Bagshot!" almost shrieked Jimmy. "You're gated for the term by the Head. You jolly well asked for it, and you jolly well got it!"

"Think Dicky Dalton will be watching me all the afternoon?" jeered Lovell. "Or do you fancy that Dr. Chisholm's got nothing better to do

than to bother his head about me? I dare say he's forgotten by this time that he gated me at all."

"Oh, you ass!" said Jimmy. "Think you can get into the motor-coach without being spotted a dozen times over?"

"No. I needn't go in the coach. What's the matter with following you on my bike?"

"But I've told Flynn he'll be wanted," said Jimmy Silver.

"That doesn't matter. Lots of time to tell him he won't be."

"Precious ass I should look——"

"That can't be helped. What else are you to look?" demanded Lovell. "Chap can only look what he is."

"Uncle James" of Rookwood gazed fixedly at Lovell. He had an equable temper, which was rather necessary to a fellow who chummed with Arthur Edward Lovell. But that equable temper came near failing him now.

"Nobody'll know," said Lovell. "If they do, I don't care! I'm playing! And that's that! You fellows get off to Bagshot in the coach; I'll follow on."

"You will do nothing of the kind, Lovell!" came a sharp snap; and the Fistical Four stared round in startled surprise, to behold Mr. Manders emerging from the other side of the beech.

Manders was a Housemaster, but he was not their Housemaster. He had nothing to do with the Classical side.

It was not for him—in the opinion of Classical fellows—to barge in. But Manders had a way of barging in. Whether Roger Manders ever attended to his own affairs, nobody knew, but everybody knew that he gave a lot of attention to the affairs of others.

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"I heard every word you have said, Lovell," said the Modern master sternly.

Lovell's eyes gleamed.

"I didn't know you were listening, sir," he answered.

"What—what?" exclaimed Mr. Manders, his thin cheeks flushing with wrath. "How dare you say that? I was listening, Lovell!"

"I suppose you didn't hear without listening, sir," said Lovell.

"You—you impudent boy!" gasped Mr. Manders. "I could not avoid hearing you, as I was seated under this tree. How dare you, Lovell!"

Mr. Manders made a step towards Lovell, his hand raised. It looked as if he was about to box Lovell's ears.

Arthur Edward jumped back in a hurry. Out of reach of Mr. Manders, he gave the Modern master a glare of sulky defiance.

Mr. Manders breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

"I shall report your insolence to your Form-master, Lovell. I shall also acquaint him with your declared intention of breaking bounds this afternoon."

And Mr. Manders whisked away to the Head's House, evidently bound for Mr. Dalton's study there.

"Well, that settles it," said Raby.

"Does it?" snorted Lovell.

"I suppose even you aren't ass enough to think of cutting when Manders has just gone to put Dicky wise?" snapped Newcome.

"I'm going!" said Lovell. "And Manders can go and eat coke! And Dicky Dalton can go and eat coke along with him, so there!"

Evidently argument with Arthur Edward Lovell was a sheer waste of breath. If Lovell's going had been impossible before, it was doubly impossible now. And it was soon seen to be trebly impossible. For a few minutes later Jimmy Silver was called into his Form-master's study. He came back looking grim, and his friends looked at him inquiringly.

"Well?" said Lovell.

"Dicky's warned me that you're not to play at Bagshot," said Jimmy. "So that's that!"

"You can play me, all the same, and blow Dicky!"

"Ass, I can't, and won't!"

"All right, then," said Lovell, with a deep breath. "If you won't play me, you won't. I'll come over and watch the match."

With that Arthur Edward Lovell stalked away, with his nose in the air. His three chums stared after him as he went, and barely restrained themselves from rushing after him, collaring him, and bumping him in the quad.

The Only Way!

ALGY SILVER of the Third Form grinned. His Cousin Jimmy of the Fourth Form looked worried—which seemed to entertain Algy. Master Algy himself sometimes caused worried looks to cloud the brow of Uncle James, being an extremely troublesome and irresponsible young rascal. On the present occasion, however, it was clear that Algy was not the cause of the trouble. Jimmy waved him away as he came along to the end study after dinner; Algy, not to be waved away, stood grinning in the study doorway.

"Jimmy, old chap—" he began in the affectionate and persuasive tone

which, in Cousin Algy, was an unmistakable sign that he was on the make.

"Cut!" said Jimmy briefly.

"What's the row, old bean?" asked Algy. "Got a detention on Bagshot day?"

"No, Cut!"

"Look here, Jimmy," said the fag, "I want you to stand by me—"

"Hook it!"

"It's only speaking a word to Mrs. Kettle, at the tuckshop," said Algy. "Just drop in when you go out to the motor-coach—"

"Bless Mrs. Kettle! Bunk!"

Algy Silver did not bunk; he came into the study. Jimmy was sitting on a corner of the table plunged in deep worry. Algy squatted on another corner, swung his legs, and grinned cheerfully.

"What the dickens is the trouble?" he asked. "You look as if you were going to a funeral, instead of a football match."

"It's Lovell," grunted Jimmy. "Don't bother, there's a good kid! I've got to think it out somehow before I go, and we're starting soon."

"Oh, Lovell!" said Algy. "He's not going with you; he can't, as he's gated. What about Lovell?"

"The silly ass says he's coming over to Bagshot to see the game!" groaned Jimmy. "I can't play him, of course, and he's got his back up—and that's that. No good talking to him."

Algy whistled.

"I say, he will get into a fearful row if he does," he said. "The Head's fearfully sick with him for letting that pickpocket Poggers get away after pinching the old beak's notecase. They might have got it back if Lovell hadn't barged in and—"

"Think I don't know?" grunted Jimmy. "Lovell was lucky to get off with a gating. But he can't see it. And he means what he said. He'll go."

Algy chuckled.

"I heard that you fellows sat on his head when he wanted to go and jape Manders once," he remarked. "Can't you get somebody to sit on his head again?"

Jimmy Silver laughed, but he shook his head.

"Nearly all the fellows will be coming over with the team," he said. "I can't ask them to stay in and sit on Lovell's head. I— Jimmy Silver broke off, his clouded face lighting up.

"By gum! You!"

"Me," said Algy. "Yes, I can see myself sitting on Lovell's head! Why, you ass, he could handle three of me!"

"But not five or six!" said Jimmy eagerly. "Look here, you can get half a dozen young scoundrels in the Third to back you up. Lovell says he's coming after us on his bike; and Manders has tipped Dicky, so he's absolutely certain to be spotted. It means a flogging from the Head—"

"Serve the silly ass right!"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Jimmy sharply. "The Head's fed-up with him. That thief Poggers would be in chokey if Lovell hadn't made a fool of himself; and the wallet very likely recovered—and there was a lot of money in it. Dr. Chisholm will be down on him like a ton of bricks if he finds out that the silly ass has cut; and he's sure to now Manders has meddled. Look here, Lovell's got to be kept in gates somehow; that was what I was trying to think out. Suppose a mob of the Third waited for him when he went for his bike—"

Algy grinned.

"You hook him into Mack's shed and keep him there," said Jimmy—"keep

him for a couple of hours. See? Sit on him if you like!"

"Is that your idea of a pleasant half-holiday?" inquired Algy Silver sarcastically. "Might tie him to the garden roller or something, though."

"Well, so long as you keep him in gates till we come back from Bagshot, I don't care," said Jimmy Silver.

"Keep him safe, that's all."

"It's a go!" said Algy. "And I suppose you won't mind dropping in and speaking to Mrs. Kettle?"

"I'll speak to Mrs. Kettle if you like," said Jimmy. "But what the thump do you want me to speak to Mrs. Kettle for?"

"To tell her it's all right about the bill," explained Algy. "We're having a bit of a spread in the Third to-day, and it's up to me. Only I've run out of tin."

Jimmy Silver grunted. He seldom saw his cheerful cousin in the Third, except when that affectionate relative had run out of tin.

"How much?" he asked.

"Only seven-and-six."

"Only!" roared Uncle James.

"I'm going to square, of course," said Algy, with dignity. "Only I owe a bit at the shop already, and the old dame won't let me run any further. It's a bit awkward, as I've actually asked the fellows. I'll settle it next week—or perhaps the week after—"

"Or perhaps next term, or perhaps the term after!" snorted Jimmy. "But I'll do it, you young tick—if I can rely on you about Lovell."

"Safe as houses!" declared Algy. "That will be rather a lark! I'll get Wegg, Stacey, and young Pipkin and Lucas and Wyatt—and young Lovell, too. Teddy Lovell will be no end bucked to help mop up his major. Lovell's always jawing him. Leave it to me, old scout."

Evidently Algy was rather looking forward to the campaign.

Jimmy Silver smiled as he left the study.

He regretted the stern necessity of dealing with his chum on such drastic lines. But Lovell, who had already asked for more trouble than he could handle, had to be prevented from asking for more. That was a settled point; and if there was only one way, that way had to be taken.

Uncle James dropped in at the school shop and gave the necessary assurance to Mrs. Kettle on the subject of supplies for Algy; then, relieved in his mind, he made his preparations for the journey to Bagshot School, what time Algy of the Third was gathering his forces and laying an ambush in the vicinity of the bikeshed.

Looking After Lovell!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. packed into the motor-coach when the time came to start for Bagshot. Plenty of fellows watched them start—among the crowd Arthur Edward Lovell, with a sarcastic smile on his face.

All the footballers sympathised with Lovell. It was rough luck to be gated on the date of a Soccer match. Flynn of the Fourth, who was taking Lovell's place at right-half, gave him a word of condolence.

"It's hard lines, and so it is, old scout," said Flynn. "But, sure, I'll tell ye all about it when we come back!"

"You needn't trouble," said Lovell coolly. "I'm coming over to see the game."

Which declaration caused Jimmy, Raby, and Newcome to smile.



"I'm playing in the match at Bagshot," said Lovell, "and that's that! I don't care if I am gated. You fellows get off and I'll follow on." "You'll do nothing of the kind, Lovell!" came a sharp snap; and the Fistical Four stared round, to behold Mr. Manders emerging from the other side of the beech-tree.

"Better mind how you go," said Putty of the Fourth, with a chuckle. "Old Bulkeley's got an eye on you."

Lovell grunted. Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood, was standing near. Possibly he was there simply to see the junior footballers off. But it was very probable that Mr. Dalton had given him a hint to see that Lovell did not go in the coach.

But even Lovell, reckless as he was, had no idea of cramming into the coach under the eyes of all Rookwood. It drove away, and a number of the juniors, Classical and Modern, went for their bikes, to follow the team over to Bagshot. Arthur Edward started in the same direction—but now that his attention had been drawn to Bulkeley, he noticed that the Sixth Former strolled after him.

Breathing hard, Lovell changed his direction. Obviously, he could not get off with a prefect's eye on him.

He walked to the tuckshop, where he spent a little time disposing of a ginger. He smiled sourly as Bulkeley of the Sixth passed the door, and glanced in.

But a Sixth Form prefect was not likely to waste a lot of time on a junior. Having satisfied himself that Lovell was there, the Rookwood captain went away about his own affairs, dismissing the gated junior from his mind. When Lovell strolled out of the tuckshop ten minutes later, Bulkeley was not to be seen anywhere about.

By that time, everybody who was going had gone—except Lovell. Now it was time for Lovell to go, and the coast was clear.

With an elaborately careless air Lovell sauntered away to the bikeshed.

The side gate stood wide open—and unless he was watched, there was nothing to prevent Lovell from "cutting." He was not aware that a sharp eye from Mr. Manders' study

window followed him till he disappeared from sight. Probably he would not have cared if he had known—he was in a reckless mood.

He had almost reached the bicycle-shed when there was a sudden rush of feet, and Lovell, in great surprise, went whirling over, with five or six fags of the Third Form sprawling over him.

"Got him!" gasped Algy Silver.

"Sit on him!" grinned Teddy Lovell, setting an example by plumping on his elder brother's chest.

"Owvghh!" gurgled Arthur Edward, heaving furiously under the grinning fags. "Will you lemme gerrup? You mad young asses, what's this game? Teddy, you young scoundrel, I'll whop you for this!"

"Yah!" was Teddy's elegant reply.

"What are you up to?" shrieked Lovell. "Look here, leggo—do you hear? I've got to get out on my bike—"

To his surprise, that statement drew a howl of laughter from the fags.

"Hold him tight," said Algy. "He's a hefty brute! Now, yank him along—and mind you don't let him go!"

"What-ho!" grinned Teddy.

Scrambling and sprawling, spluttering with fury, Arthur Edward Lovell was "yanked" along. He passed the bicycle-shed, which he was destined not to enter that afternoon. At a little distance stood the shed where old Mack kept various gardening things. It was a small shed, in a secluded spot.

Lovell, more amazed than enraged at the extraordinary proceedings of the fags, was bundled into the shed. Algy & Co. plumped him down by the garden roller.

Then Algy produced a cord and, amid a chorus of chuckles, Lovell's wrists were tied to the garden roller. He resisted in vain; in a few minutes he was quite secure.

Sitting on the roller with his hands tied behind him to the handle, Lovell glared at the chuckling fags.

"That's all right!" said Algy. "That ass, Jimmy, fancied we might stay here and watch him—catch us doing it!"

"Did Jimmy Silver put you up to this?" roared Lovell.

"Think we're doing it for fun?" asked Algy. "It's better than getting the sack for defying the Head, isn't it?"

"I'll smash him!" gasped Lovell. "I'll smash the lot of them! I'll smash all you fags—I'll—I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Pipkin. "We've got to call in at the tuckshop—"

"Will you let me loose?" shrieked Lovell.

"Think we've taken all this trouble for nothing?" asked Algy.

"I'll yell till all Rookwood hears me if you leave me here!" roared Lovell.

"You'll all get licked for this."

Algy Silver whistled. Remote as the shed was, it was probable that Lovell would be heard if he carried out that threat. But Algy was equal to the occasion.

He jerked Lovell's handkerchief from his pocket.

"Hold his jaws open, you men!" said Algy.

"Gurrgh-urgh-wurrgh!" came from Lovell, as his jaws were held open and the handkerchief stuffed in.

"Got a bit of string, anybody?" asked Algy.

Pipkin had a bit of string. It was tied round the stuffed handkerchief in Lovell's open mouth, and round the back of his head, to keep the gag in place. Algy surveyed that piece of work with satisfaction.

"I don't think you'll yell now, old top!" he said. "And I think you'll be safe for the afternoon."

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"Urrrrgggh!"

"You can keep that up! Ta-ta!"

Grinning, the fags crowded out of the shed. Algy shut the door, looked it, and took away the key. Then the whole mob scampered off to the tuckshop. Arthur Edward Lovell was left to himself.

He wriggled and struggled and wrenched. It was in vain! And the only sound he could make was a gurgle!

Meddlesome Mr. Manders!

RICHARD DALTON, master of the Fourth Form, laid down his pen, suppressed a sigh, and rose to his feet. A tap at his study door had been followed by the entering of Mr. Roger Manders. With all his desire to be courteous to a colleague on Dr. Chisholm's staff, the master of the Fourth could not look as if he was glad to see Mr. Manders. He had seen him once that day already, and once was enough—if not once too often!

"I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Dalton," said the Modern master, in a slightly sarcastic tone. "But I presume you will be glad to learn that Lovell, of your Form, has gone out of bounds—"

"I should be very sorry to learn anything of the kind, Mr. Manders."

"I mean, sir, that you will be glad to learn of the circumstance, as Lovell has actually done so!" snapped Mr. Manders. "You will not, I presume, allow this defiance of the headmaster's authority to pass unchecked?"

"I have no reason to believe that Lovell has defied his headmaster, sir," said Mr. Dalton. "I spoke to Silver on the subject, and I am assured that he will allow Lovell to do nothing of the kind."

"Lovell is gone, sir!" rapped Mr. Manders.

"May I ask you how you know?" rapped Mr. Dalton, in return.

"Because, sir, from my study window I saw him go in the direction of the bicycle-house!" snapped Mr. Manders. "Because, sir, I suspected his intention, and looked for him! He certainly did not come back from the bicycle-house, or I should have seen him again—and he is not there, sir—and I have asked several boys, who tell me that they have not seen him. There is not the slightest doubt, Mr. Dalton, that he has carried out his declared intention of following his friends to Bagshot."

Richard Dalton breathed hard and deep. He could not help admitting that Mr. Manders was probably right. But it was very unwelcome news to him. And he deeply resented the interference of the Modern master.

As Mr. Dalton did not speak, the Housemaster went on:

"If you do not choose to act, sir, I shall do so. Lovell was punished by his headmaster for being the cause of the escape of the footpad, Poggers. That ruffian, sir, has waylaid me several times since—which he could not have done but for Lovell's reckless folly. On one occasion, sir, he robbed me of my overcoat—fortunately an old coat that I happened to be wearing at the time; none the less, sir, a serious loss to me. But for Lovell—"

"That is really immaterial, sir—"

"I do not consider it so, sir!" snapped Mr. Manders. "I repeat that I have ascertained, beyond doubt, that Lovell has gone to Bagshot, and I point out to you, sir, that it is your duty to proceed there at once, and take him away, sir, without allowing him to play in a football match, as he so impudently intends to do."

Mr. Dalton sat down again.

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"I shall do nothing of the kind, Mr. Manders! I shall not assume that Lovell has broken bounds at all, unless I receive proof. He is under no compulsion to be seen till calling-over. If he answers to his name at roll-call, sir, I shall be satisfied."

Mr. Manders' eyes almost flamed.

"You will allow this boy of your Form to disregard the headmaster—to defy his authority?" he ejaculated.

"I shall allow nothing of the kind, Mr. Manders; but I refuse to believe that Lovell has done so."

Mr. Dalton picked up the pen he had laid down.

"Then, sir," almost roared Mr. Manders, "I shall take the matter into my own hands, sir! I shall walk across to Bagshot—"

"I trust you will enjoy the walk, sir!" said Mr. Dalton politely. "It is a cold day, but quite delightful for a walk."

"I shall certainly find him there, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Manders. "I shall find him playing football."

"I think not, sir. But please do not let me detain you any longer." Richard Dalton dipped his pen into the ink.

Mr. Manders opened his lips—and closed them again. He stalked out of the study and closed the door after him with a bang. Mr. Dalton smiled faintly, and resumed work on a pile of Form papers.

The Modern master walked back to his own House, almost pale with anger. A few minutes later he emerged in overcoat and hat and gloves, and whisked away to the gates. Mack, the porter, glanced at him as he went out, and told Sergeant Kettle, later, that Old Bones looked in a "wusser" temper than usual. Heedless of Mack and his opinion, Manders strode away.

Arthur Edward Lovell, gurgling in the shed, was in a state of boiling wrath, to which no words—could he have uttered any—would have done anything like justice! But if Lovell could have seen Mr. Manders just then, starting for Bagshot, he might possibly have realised that it was just as well for him that he had not had his own wilful way.

An Old Acquaintance!

"**S**TRIKE me pink!" mumbled Slog Poggers.

Mr. Poggers was in a pessimistic mood.

Life was not smiling on Slog.

In the secluded shade of Latcham Wood, Mr. Poggers was going through some very peculiar antics. Anyone who had witnessed Slog's actions would have wondered whether it was a new form of physical jerks, or whether the piggy-eyed man was quite right in his head.

Slog was twisting round, trying to get a back view of himself. It was not an easy matter, and as he twisted and twined, he bore an odd and ludicrous resemblance to a kitten chasing its tail.

The fact was that Mr. Poggers had travelled from Giles' Farm to Latcham Wood with a bull-terrier following him a considerable part of the way. Mr. Poggers had called in at the farm to ask for work, if he was seen, and to pinch anything that came handy if he was not seen. "Pinching" was Mr. Poggers' way of business, but he often wondered, bitterly, whether honesty might not, after all, be the best policy. Sometimes it looked like it.

Slog had had no real luck since the time, a few weeks ago, when he had "pinched" a well-filled wallet from the headmaster of Rookwood. Even that stroke of luck had been brief—he hadn't got away with it. He haunted the neighbourhood in the hope of falling in

with the "bony old gent" who wore the overcoat in the lining of which he had hidden that notecase before he was seized in Manders' House at Rookwood. But he still had no luck, and he dared not be seen near Rookwood. Meanwhile, he had to live—and all round Rookwood School, of late, chickens had been missing and clothes had vanished from lines, and milk bottles from doors—all was grist that came to Mr. Poggers' mill.

But luck had turned him down in the cruellest way at Giles' Farm. Giles' bull-terrier had caught him—and Slog had departed at about 60 m.p.h. with the bull-terrier in chase. The snap of the terrier's teeth behind had made cold chills run down Mr. Poggers' back.

The bull-terrier had returned home triumphant, with a section of trousering in his jaws. Mr. Poggers had not stopped running till he was in Latcham Wood. Now, in pessimistic mood, he was trying to ascertain the extent of the damage—and, looking, in the process, like a kitten chasing its tail.

"Strike me pink and blue!" groaned Mr. Poggers. "It's a 'ard life! And a 'eap of notes 'idden in a bony old covey's coat, if a bloke could only get his 'ands on that bony old covey, and get that there coat off him!"

Mr. Poggers ceased to mumble, and straightened out, as he heard a footstep on the shady footpath through Latcham Wood.

Hope returned to his heart.

It was a lonely path, and Mr. Poggers was a footpad as well as a pickpocket when opportunity afforded.

Somebody was coming along, and if that somebody looked at all prosperous, Mr. Poggers was going to relieve him of a little of his prosperity. Hopefully, Slog looked towards the newcomer.

Then he jumped.

For a moment he could scarcely believe in his luck, for the tall, angular gentleman who was coming up was the identical "bony old covey" who wore the thick grey overcoat on which Mr. Poggers' hopes were fixed.

Mr. Manders stopped.

Sighting the shabby, tousled figure ahead under the trees, Mr. Manders eyed him suspiciously. He had not forgotten his encounters with Slog, and had a wary eye open for tramps of any description.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Manders.

He recognised the ruffian who had attacked him in Coombe Lane and stolen his overcoat—fortunately, his old coat. He had his new overcoat on now—the one, if he had only known it, that Slog wanted for reasons known only to Slog. Mr. Manders suspected that the man was a little wrong in the head; that was the only way he could account for Slog's extraordinary propensity to pinch overcoats.

Anyhow, he knew that the man was dangerous; and as Slog started running towards him, Roger Manders turned round and started running in the opposite direction.

He forgot Lovell, forgot Bagshot—forgot everything but that the man who had attacked him was evidently going to attack him again.

He flew. After him flew Slog.

From a previous experience, Manders knew that Slog was the better sprinter of the two.

He knew that he could not escape by flight. But he hoped to get out of the woodland path into the open Latcham road, where there were motor-cars and other vehicles and foot passengers—and help.

Puffing and panting, Mr. Manders ran his hardest, and behind him Slog

Poggers ran his hardest. Both of them went down the woodland path in great style, Slog overhauling the Modern master of Rookwood hand-over-hand, till his pounding footsteps sounded just behind the horrified Mr. Manders.

He was hardly a yard in the rear when the Modern master flew round the corner into the high road.

After him leaped Slog, like a tiger after his prey!

Honk, honk!

Mr. Manders stopped short, just in time to avoid charging into a car that was passing the end of the lane. He yelled wildly:

"Help, help!"

The car braked and came to a halt.

The motorist stared.

"What—" he began

"Help — tramp — ruffian — help —

oooh!" spluttered Mr. Manders, leaning on the halted car, and almost

crumpling up.

Mr. Poggers halted, turned, and

charged back into Latcham Wood. His

feelings were bitter.

Fortune had seemed to smile—only to

mock him. The bony old covey had

been almost in his grasp. But the game

was up. There were three or four

people in sight on the high road, as

well as the man in the car. A prompt

exit was Mr. Poggers' cue in these

unlucky circumstances

Latcham Wood swallowed Mr.

Poggers from sight again, and Mr.

Manders, leaning on the car, gasped

and gasped. It was a cold day, but he

was bedewed with perspiration after his

uncommon exertions

"That tramp after you, sir? He's

gone," said the motorist—a polite hint

that he was ready to be gone, too, when

Mr. Manders was finished leaning on his

car.

Mr. Manders detached himself from

the car. The motorist drove on. The

Housemaster tottered away.

No earthly consideration would have

induced him to enter Latcham Wood

again. He shuddered at the thought.

By road he could hardly have reached

Bagshot before the footballers left,

even had he been inclined to keep on,

which he was not. Mr. Manders' chief

desire was to get safe within walls and

doors just then.

Perspiring, breathless, apprehensive,

Mr. Manders walked back to Rookwood,

keeping to the road, and looking round

him continually. His mind was made

up to take no more walks abroad till

the police had secured that desperate

character. He gasped with relief when

he reached the school gates once more.

He had had a narrow escape. He

owed it to Arthur Edward Lovell. But

for that young rascal's rebellious rascality,

he would never have taken that

walk through Latcham Wood; he would

never have had that terrifying encounter

with that ruffian. He could not deal

with Slog Poggers—Slog was out of his

reach; but he could deal with Lovell—

and Arthur Edward Lovell was going

to be made to pay his own score and

Slog's, too!

Mr. Manders, when he felt a little

better, went to see the Head.

Lovell, crimson with fury as he

chewed his handkerchief in Mack's

shed, had reason to be thankful that

he had spent that half-holiday sitting

on Mack's garden roller, chewing his

handkerchief. But he did not feel

thankful. And when the footballers

came back from Bagshot, and Jimmy

Silver came to let him loose, he did not

look thankful, and his remarks did not

sound thankful. Thankfulness, indeed,

seemed to be the very last thing of

which Arthur Edward Lovell was

thinking.

Not Guilty!

"YOU rotters!"
"My dear chap—"
"You ticks!"
"But—"

"You beastly cads!" roared Lovell.

Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome

smiled. They did not, of course, expect

their cham to be pleased. No fellow

could have been pleased by Lovell's

experiences that afternoon. They

admitted that Lovell was entitled to

blow off steam to a reasonable extent.

Lovell blew it off.

"Rotten worms!" roared Lovell.

"I'm going to whop you, Jimmy Silver!

I'm going to serag that measly fag

cousin of yours! I'm going to whop all

three of you sniggering idiots! You

were all in it! I'm going—"

"Lovell"—Bulkeley of the Sixth

came up, interrupting the flow of

Arthur Edward's eloquence—"you're

wanted!"

"I say, Bulkeley, Lovell hasn't been

out of bounds!" exclaimed Jimmy

Silver.

Bulkeley shrugged his shoulders.

"The Head seems to think that he

has!" he retorted. "Anyhow, he's

wanted in Dr. Chisholm's study. Cut

off, Lovell!"

"Look here," began Lovell, "I

haven't—"

"Go in at once!" snapped Bulkeley.

And Arthur Edward, with a snort,

went into the House, the prefect follow-

ing him in.

Bulkeley tapped at the Head's door.

"Here is Lovell, sir!"

He pushed Arthur Edward into the

study, and drew the door shut.

Lovell suppressed a snort. He was

still angry and excited, by no means

having finished telling his chums what he thought of them. But he had to cool down in his headmaster's presence. He noticed that Mr. Manders was in the study, and he gave the Modern master a surly glance.

Dr. Chisholm fixed his eyes grimly on the junior.

"So you have come back, Lovell?" he

said. "I directed Bulkeley to send you

to me as soon as the boys returned from

Bagshot. No doubt you are prepared to

take the consequences of your action?"

Lovell blinked at him.

"Have I done anything?" he asked.

The Head's lips set hard. Mr.

Manders gave a sniff.

"You have disobeyed your head-

master, Lovell!" said Dr. Chisholm,

very distinctly. "The sentence passed

on you was a light one, considering your

crass folly and impertinence, and what

it led to. You have chosen to disregard

it! You will be flogged, Lovell, for

this offence!"

Arthur Edward caught his breath.

"You do not deny, I presume, that

you have been out of bounds this after-

noon?" said Dr. Chisholm icily.

Lovell gasped.

"Yes, sir!"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr.

Manders.

"You deny that you declared your

intention, in the hearing of Mr.

Manders, of following the junior foot-

ball team to Bagshot?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I said I would, but

—but I never did!" gasped Lovell. He

was beginning to feel thankful for that

afternoon in Mack's shed, after all.

"I—I never went out of bounds, sir!"

"A palpably false statement!" ex-

claimed Mr. Manders. "Had I reached

Bagshot School, as I intended, I should

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certainly have found Lovell there. He has been absent the whole time that the football team has been absent—

"Oh crikey!" breathed Lovell. He had forgotten Manders that afternoon. He had had plenty of other things to think about without bothering his head about Manders. But he realised now that Manders had not forgotten him.

He realised, too, that he had had a fearfully narrow escape. Manders had been on the trail all the time and had he carried out his reckless intention, there would have been a flogging in Hall to follow. On that point there was not a shadow of doubt.

"You deny that you have been out of bounds, Lovell?" inquired Dr. Chisholm grimly.

"Certainly, sir!"

"Then you did not carry out the intention you declared in the hearing of Mr. Manders?"

"No, sir!"

"I should certainly not take any notice of foolish and reckless words if not followed by foolish and reckless actions," said the Head. "But you will be required to prove, Lovell, that you have not been outside the school walls this afternoon."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Mr. Manders saw you going to the bicycle-house. After that you were not seen again till the football team had returned. I warn you, Lovell, to be careful in what you say; I warn you that Mr. Manders looked for you and inquired for you, and that you were not to be found anywhere within the walls of Rookwood."

Lovell suppressed a grin. He had not had the remotest idea that Manders was hunting for him. Manders, naturally, had not hunted in the sheds. "This is not a laughing matter, Lovell!" said Dr. Chisholm sternly.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"If you have been out of bounds, Lovell—"

"I haven't, sir."

"Then where have you been?" snapped Dr. Chisholm.

"In Mack's shed, sir!" said Lovell demurely.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Mack's shed, sir!"

That startling answer made both the masters stare at Lovell blankly. The Head's face expressed sheer astonishment; Manders, astonishment mingled with sneering contempt.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm. "What, pray, were you doing in the porter's shed for a whole afternoon?"

"Sitting on the garden-roller there, sir."

"On—on what?"

"The garden-roller, sir!"

"You will scarcely expect me to believe such an absurd statement, Lovell!" said the Head grimly.

"I can prove it, sir," said Lovell coolly. "Some silly asses—I mean, some fellows, sir, thought I was going

Mack's shed if he likes on a half-holiday. Every man in the Fourth knows that I was there, and will tell you, if you ask them, sir."

Dr. Chisholm's stern face relaxed. Something like a smile flickered over it for a moment.

"I—I think I understand," he said. "Your friends seem to have wiser heads than your own, Lovell. You may thank them for having saved you from a foolish action—and from its consequences. You may go, Lovell!"

Lovell went. The Head smiled as he went—Mr. Manders' look was rather like that of a tiger baulked of its prey! But Arthur Edward, in great spirits, did not care two hoots for Manders and his black looks. Arthur Edward seemed to be walking on air as he sauntered out into the quad.

"Well?" said Jimmy, Raby, and Newcome together.

Lovell chuckled.

"Dear old Manders!" he said. "It seems that he was watching for me this afternoon, and missed me—and he even started for Bagshot to bag me, only something seems to have turned him back! Ha, ha, ha!" Lovell roared. "He fancied I was gone, of course, as I couldn't be found! Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Edward seemed to have forgotten his intention of whopping his faithful chums. He roared with laughter, and the Co. roared, too. That afternoon on the garden-roller in Mack's shed had not been pleasant. But it was pleasanter than a Head's flogging! And Manders had been done right in the eye—which was best of all! "Hallo, here he comes!" murmured Raby.

Lovell grinned round at Mr. Manders as he came out and headed for his own House. Mr. Manders was looking in the worst temper ever.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lovell. He put full steam on, for Manders' benefit.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha ha, ha!" roared Jimmy Silver & Co.

Mr. Manders swept away like a thunderstorm. And the Fistful Four sent another merry roar after him as he swept, which rang pleasantly in the ears of Mr. Manders—perhaps!

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I'M FELIX—
SEE ME
EVERY WEEK
IN
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to break bounds, and they bunged me into Mack's shed. That's why I was there—and wasn't let out till ten minutes ago, when Jimmy Silver came for me. Silver will tell you so, sir, if you ask him—and so will half a dozen fellows who put me there! I was locked in Mack's shed till they came back from Bagshot."

Dr. Chisholm gazed at Lovell.

Mr. Manders glared at him.

"Mack's shed isn't out of bounds, sir," went on Lovell. "A fellow can sit in

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