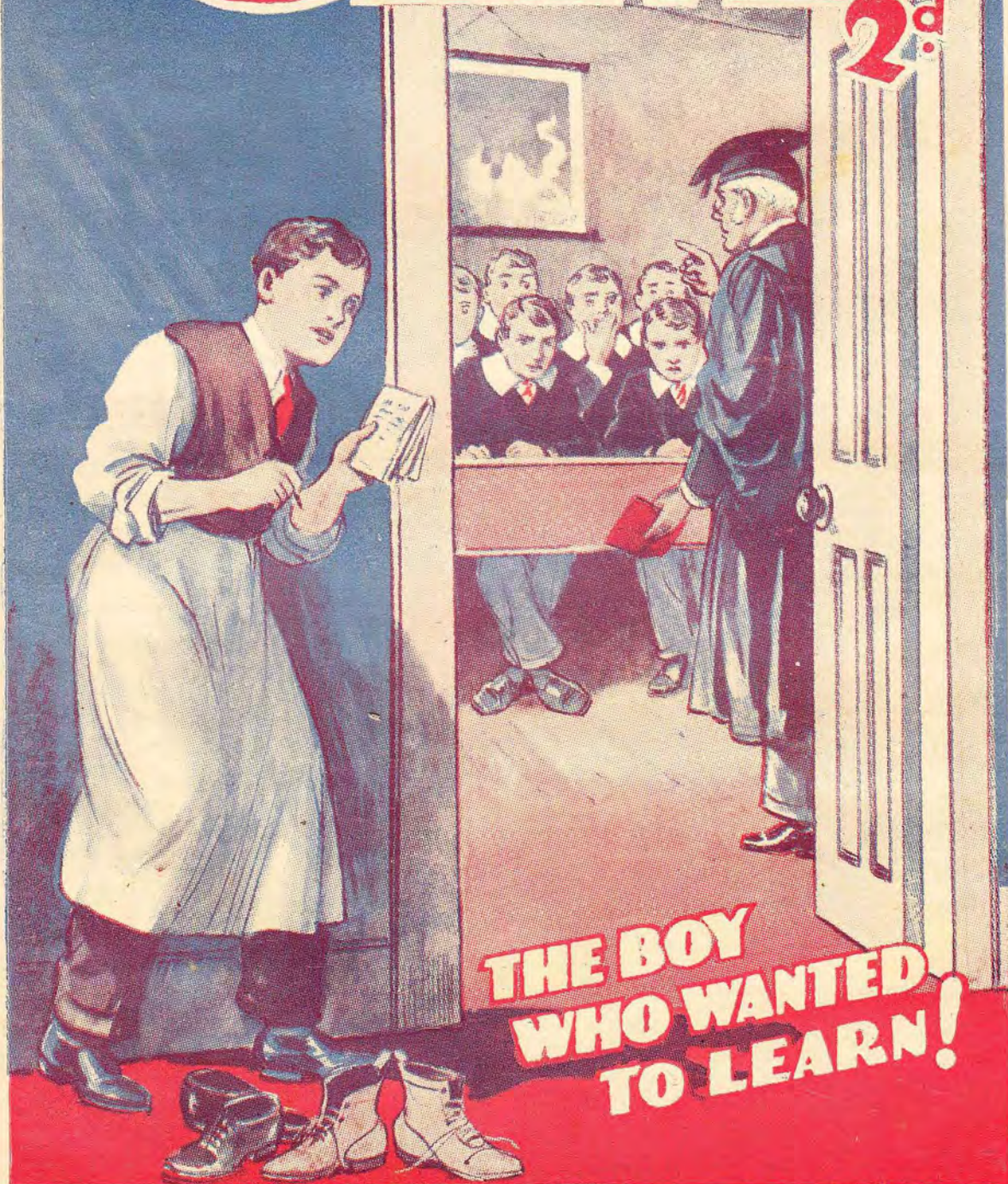


“LYNN’S LUCK!” and “THE STONY FIVE!” —GRAND YARNS OF ST. JIM’S
AND GREYFRIARS—INSIDE.

The GEM

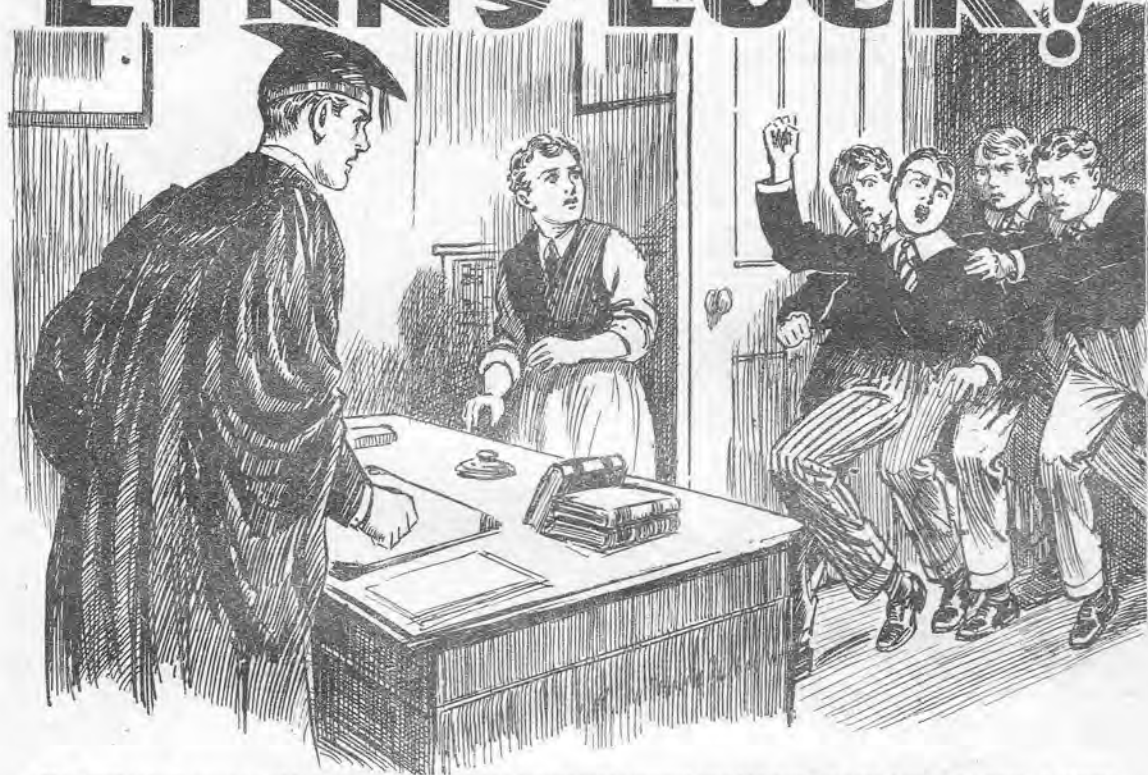
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THE BOY
WHO WANTED
TO LEARN!

HELPLESS AGAINST THE PERSECUTION OF HIS ENEMY, TOM LYNN FINDS HIMSELF ON THE VERGE OF THE SACK!

LYNN'S LUCK!



Mr. Railton's door was suddenly thrown open, and Levison was whirled into the study by the Terrible Three. "Merry, Manners, Lowther!" exclaimed the School House master. "How dare you scuffle into my study in this unseemly manner?"

CHAPTER 1. Football Boots!

"WHAT the deuce——"
"Who the dickens——"
"My hat!"

Those exclamations were not uttered aloud, but murmured under the breath in the Fourth Form Room at St. Jim's.

Mr. Lathom was taking the Fourth Form, as usual, that morning. The little Form-master was explaining, with deep earnestness, some difficult point in Latin syntax to his bored class.

Mr. Lathom was a very dutiful Form-master—too dutiful to suit the tastes of the Fourth. If a junior did not understand a thing, Mr. Lathom would never leave off hammering at it till he did understand. And now, as Jack Blake observed in an anguished whisper, he had mounted the ablative absolute, and refused to dismount.

Naturally, the attention of the Fourth Formers wandered a little.

The Form-room door stood open, and there was a view of part of the broad, flagged passage outside. From the high windows in the passage came a flood of morning sunshine, falling brightly into the less-lighted Form-room.

And across that bar of light in the doorway a shadow had suddenly fallen. Someone had stopped in the passage outside, keeping out of sight of anyone in the Form-room.

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Blake's murmured exclamation, as he glanced towards the Form-room door, drew the attention of the other fellows to the phenomenon.

Nearly all the Fourth looked round at the shadow on the floor in the doorway.

What could anybody have concealed himself just outside the Form-room door for in the name of all that was idiotic? Nobody could be supposed to want to listen to Mr. Lathom expounding the mysteries of the ablative absolute.

If it had not been lesson-time, there would have been no mystery about it. It might have been some member of Tom Merry & Co. of the Shell, waiting to bonnet the Fourth Formers as they came out. But at that hour the Shell were in their Form-room hard at work.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I wegard this as vearly mystewious! I wondah who the deuce it is?"

"Blessed eavesdropper!" sniffed Levison.

"Well, you needn't talk about eaves-dropping!" said Blake. "It's your favourite amusement! And there's no harm in the fellow listening to old Lathom if he wants to. But why should he want to? That beats me!"

"Yaas, wathah!"
"Old Lathom will spot him as soon as he wakes up!" murmured Figgins of the New House.

There was a chuckle. Mr. Lathom was not asleep; that was only Figgins'

humorous way of putting it. Mr. Lathom was neck-deep in the ablative absolute, and had no eyes for the shadow at the door, and no ears for the murmurs of his Form. He did not notice the wandering of the juniors' attention.

"Hallo! It's moving!" murmured Digby.

The shadow in the doorway moved. The arms—curiously elongated in the shadows—were in motion, and from that motion the juniors could see that the unknown person outside the Form-room was writing.

"There's a chiel among us taking notes!" chuckled Kerr.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Mr. Lathom woke up at last. He ceased his expounding, and cast a very severe glance at the Form over his spectacles.

"Pray keep a little better order, my boys!" he said. "I do not see anything amusing in the ablative absolute, and I fail to see any cause for laughter."

Mr. Lathom could see that his Form were restless, and he sought the reason. Then he caught sight of the shadow in the doorway.

He gazed at it in amazement.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Lathom frowned. There was evidently someone standing concealed just outside the doorway, and Mr. Lathom was annoyed. He concluded at once that it was a boy from one of the other Forms, and suspected that he had an understanding with the fellows inside

ANOTHER GREAT STORY FEATURING THE BOOT-BOY OF ST. JIM'S AGAINST THE SNOBS OF THE SCHOOL.

By **MARTIN CLIFFORD**

the Form-room. He might even have been making disrespectful gestures behind the Form-master's back. Such things were not unknown.

Mr. Lathom strode towards the door, his gown rustling as he strode.

Then the shadow moved.

The unseen boy had evidently heard the Form-master's exclamation and his approaching footsteps, and knew that his presence was discovered. The shadow disappeared.

There was a sound of hurrying feet as the unseen listener fled.

Mr. Lathom quickened his pace, and reached the Form-room door and looked out.

He caught a second's glimpse of a figure vanishing round the nearest corner, but it was gone before he could recognise it. He knew that it was a boy, and that was all.

But the unknown had left traces behind him. On the passage floor at Mr. Lathom's feet were two football boots!

The little Form-master adjusted his spectacles and gazed down at the football boots in surprise.

"Bless my soul!"

He was utterly amazed.

That a fellow should lurk outside the doorway of the Form-room and fly when he was discovered, leaving a pair of football boots behind, was simply astounding. It was evidently some jape that had been interrupted by the discovery of the intruder, Mr. Lathom concluded. Japes were quite out of place in lesson-time.

Mr. Lathom was determined that he would discover the owner of those boots, and impress upon him that there were proper times and seasons for japes. The impression would be made by means of a cane applied to the palm of the hand—the most efficacious mode of impressing the junior mind.

Mr. Lathom picked up the football boots and carried them into the Form-room. The Fourth Formers simply gasped at the sight of the Form-master with a pair of boots in his hand.

"This is a most annoying and ridiculous occurrence!" said Mr. Lathom, frowning. "I must ask you to tell me if you know anything about it. Some boy has crept to the Form-room door, apparently carrying these football boots in his hands, and he departed so hastily that he left the boots there. Does any boy here know who it was?"

There was a general shaking of heads. The Fourth Formers hadn't the faintest idea who it was—not that they would have given him away even if they had known.

"It is extraordinary!" said Mr. Lathom. "Whoever the boy is, he should be in his Form-room at this moment. Apparently he has left it on some excuse, in order to tiptoe here, doubtless to play some trick which has been frustrated by my discovering him. However, some of you may recognise his boots. Pray look at them, and tell me if you know to whom they belong."

Mr. Lathom placed the football boots upon his desk, and the juniors marched out of their places and looked at them in turn.

"If you please, sir," said Levison, "they belong to Merry of the Shell."

The other fellows looked daggers at Levison. Some of them had recognised Tom Merry's football boots, but they

had held their tongues. They couldn't imagine what Tom Merry had been doing in the passage, but they did not want to betray him.

But Levison had no scruples on that point. He was "up against" Tom Merry all the time, especially since Tom Merry had befriended Lynn, the new boot-boy, for whom the cad of the Fourth had a special dislike.

"Indeed, Levison," said Mr. Lathom, "boots are very much alike. How do you know that these boots belong to Merry of the Shell?"

"I noticed him with them on this morning before lessons, sir," said Levison. "They have his initials 'T. M.' inside them, sir."

"You rotten cad!" murmured Blake.

"Hold your tongue!"

"Did you speak, Blake?"

"Ahem!"

"You may go back to your places."

Mr. Lathom, with a frowning brow, picked up the boots and walked out of the Form-room with them. He was evidently bound for the Shell Form Room, to confront Tom Merry with his boots, and to ask for an explanation. And as he left the Form-room there was an indignant murmur from the Fourth.

"Levison, you cad!"

"Sneak!"

"Rotter!"

"Utah outsidah!"

Levison turned a little pale. He had "sneaked" in the hope of getting Tom Merry into trouble, but from the expression of his Form-fellows it looked as if he had got himself into trouble, too.

"Oh, hold on!" he said. "I didn't sneak. Lathom was bound to find out

When Tom Lynn's opportunity

came to make good, it also gave

his enemy the chance to pursue,

with malicious hatred, his

treacherous scheme for getting the

Drudge sacked from St. Jim's!

that they were Tom Merry's boots; and

I really spoke without thinking. I'm

sure I didn't meant to sneak."

"Wats!"

"Rotter!"

"You've been up against Tom Merry ever since he chipped in to stop your ragging young Lynn, the boots," said Blake savagely, "if not before! You rotter! You've sneaked, and disgraced the Form. Gentlemen of the Fourth, what do we do to a sneak who disgraces the Form?"

"Bump him!"

All the Fourth replied at once. Mr. Lathom could not really have left the Form-room at a more opportune moment, from the Fourth Formers' point of view.

"Look here!" yelled Levison. "Hands off, I say! I'll complain to Mr. Lathom when he comes back! Ow! Yaroooh! Yowp!"

Bump, bump, bump!

CHAPTER 2.

Seeking the Culprit!

TOM MERRY & CO. were in their places in the Shell when Mr. Lathom came in. All the Form stared at Mr. Lathom as he stalked in with a pair of football boots

in his hand and a frown upon his brow. Mr. Linton, the master of the Shell, was as astonished as the juniors, and gazed at Mr. Lathom blankly.

"Pray excuse my interrupting you, Mr. Linton," said the Fourth Form master.

"Oh, certainly!" said the Shell master, gazing at the footer boots, and wondering whether Mr. Lathom had taken leave of his senses.

"One of the boys of this Form has played an absurd trick," said Mr. Lathom. "I am sorry to complain, but it is really intolerable that lessons should be interrupted by foolish pranks."

"I quite agree with you there," said Mr. Linton. "If any boy in my Form has been playing pranks in lesson-time, you may be sure that he will be duly punished. May I ask the name of the boy?"

"Merry!"

Tom Merry jumped.

He had recognised his footer boots in Mr. Linton's hand, and had wondered what on earth that gentleman was bringing them to the Shell-room for.

Mr. Linton's gaze turned upon him frowningly.

"Merry, come out here, please!"

"Yes, sir."

Tom Merry came out before the Form.

"These are your boots?" demanded Mr. Lathom.

"Yes, sir; they are mine."

"And why," said Mr. Lathom sternly, "why did you come to the doorway of the Form-room and lurk outside, and run away when I came out, leaving your boots behind you?"

"But I—I—I didn't!" stuttered Tom Merry, in astonishment.

"Come, Merry! You have admitted that these are your boots. I suppose you were about to play some absurd trick when I discovered you. Was it not so?"

"But—I—wasn't! I—I didn't! I—I—" Tom Merry could only stammer.

"Pray, when did this occur, Mr. Lathom?" asked the master of the Shell.

"Not more than five minutes ago."

"Indeed! Then it was certainly not Merry," said the Shell master.

"My dear sir—"

"Merry has been in his place since the commencement of morning lessons," said Mr. Linton.

"Oh! He has not left the Form-room?"

"No, Mr. Lathom."

"Dear me! Then it is extraordinary," said the Fourth Form-master.

"When did you wear these boots last, Merry?"

"Footer practice before brekker, sir."

"And where did you leave them?"

"In my study, sir."

"It is very strange," said Mr. Lathom.

"Your assurance, Mr. Linton, shows that it was certainly not Merry. But someone has taken Merry's football boots from his study, and brought them down to my Form-room and left them there. Is it most extraordinary?"

"Most extraordinary!" said Mr. Linton, compressing his lips. "It is apparently a joke, and I quite fail to see the humour of it. I should recommend finding the person who was so humorous, and reducing him to a state of gravity."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Lathom. "It must have been someone who was out of his Form-room, so it should be easy to discover him. Pray excuse my interrupting you."

And Mr. Lathom marched out of the Shell-room with the football boots in his hand, leaving the Shell fellows grinning.

As he emerged into the Form-room passage he heard a sound of uproar from his own Form-room. There was a sound of bumping and a loud voice raised in anguish.

Bump, bump, bump!
"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom, and he hurried towards the Fourth Form Room in alarm.

Quite an excited scene burst upon his gaze as he looked in at the doorway.

Levison, in the grasp of five or six indignant juniors, was being bumped on the Form-room floor without mercy, amid an accompaniment of shouts.

"Bump him!"
"Wag the wottah!"
"Sneak!"
"Cad!"
"Yaroooh! Help! Ow! Yah! Leggo!"

Bump, bump!
"Cease this riot at once!" shrieked Mr. Lathom, rushing into the room with his gown flying behind him. "Boys, have you taken leave of your senses? Cease this at once! I shall punish the whole Form!"

The Fourth Formers were fairly caught in the act. They released Levison, who staggered to his feet, stuttering with rage.

"Explain the cause of this uproar!" exclaimed Mr. Lathom sternly.

"It's all wight, sir," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We were only bumping Levison, sir, for bein' an uttah wottah!"

"Ow!" groaned Levison. "I appeal to you for protection, sir! Ow!"

"Boys, this unprecedented riot really—"

"Sorry, sir!" said Blake. "We—didn't mean you to see us, sir."

Mr. Lathom could not help smiling. He did not need telling that the juniors had not intended him to see them bumping Levison.

"He sneaked about Tom Merry, sir," Figgins explained.

Mr. Lathom frowned.

"Levison answered my questions," he said. "As it turns out, it was not Tom Merry who was lurking outside the door ten minutes ago. I do not know who it was. You should not have touched Levison. You will take a hundred lines each. The whole Form, with the exception of Levison and Mellish, who I see has kept his place. Now take your seats."

"Well, it was worth a hundred lines," murmured Blake as he sat down. "Levison won't sneak about anything again in a hurry."

"Wathah not, deah boy!"

"Silence! The lesson will now proceed."

And leaving the investigation of the mysterious circumstance of the football boots till later, Mr. Lathom remounted the ablativ absolute, and rode it to death. But he did not forget his determination to discover the person who had been the cause of the interruption of morning lessons, and when the Fourth were dismissed, Mr. Lathom pursued his inquiries.

Tom Merry came down the passage with his chums, Manners and Lowther, and the three were immediately stopped by Blake & Co. There was a great deal of curiosity upon the subject of Tom Merry's football boots.

"Found out who was playing tricks with your boots, Tommy?" Blake asked.

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Tom Merry shook his head.
"No; I left them in my study."
"It's vewy remarkable," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I cannot guess why any chap should bring your boots to the Form-room passage and plant them outside our door, deah boy."

"He might have been going to play some trick, when Lathom spotted him," Digby remarked. "But what did he want the boots for?"

"It's a giddy mystery."

"Lathom's waxy about it," Blake remarked ruefully. "When he came back to the Form-room he found us bumping Levison for having given away whom the boots belonged to. We've got a hundred lines each."

"Too bad!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "Still, I'm glad you bumped Levison. It must have been some fag out of his Form-room who brought the boots there, though why he should do it, unless he's off his rocker, I'm blessed if I know! Are the Third out yet?"

"Not yet. Lathom's gone in to inquire of Selby!" grinned Blake.

"Let's look!"

The door of the Third Form Room was open, and the chums of the School House could look into the room. It was past the hour for dismissal, but the Third were still in their places, showing visible signs of impatience.

Mr. Lathom was standing near the Form-master's desk, speaking to Mr. Selby, the master of the Third. He was evidently inquiring if any member of that Form had been outside his Form-room during morning lessons. The juniors in the passage heard Mr. Selby's harsh, acid voice replying:

"D'Arcy minor was out for five or ten minutes. I remember sending him to put on a clean collar, as he was in the Form-room in a more slovenly state than usual, if possible."

"Oh, bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Wally's in for it again!"

"Shush!" said Tom Merry.

"D'Arcy minor, come here!" called out Mr. Selby. And the juniors outside the door saw Wally rise from his place and come out before the Form, with an expression of wonder on his face. "D'Arcy minor, I sent you away from the Form-room this morning to change your collar."

"Yes, sir," said Wally. "I changed it."

"Did you go near the Fourth Form Room?"

"I passed the door coming back, sir."

"Did you bring a pair of Tom Merry's boots and place them there, and did you lurk outside the door for some time with the intention of playing some trick, which was frustrated by Mr. Lathom's discovering you?"

Wally's expression of astonishment was almost idiotic in its intensity.

"No, sir!" he gasped.

"I am afraid I cannot believe you, D'Arcy minor. You appear to be the only boy who was out of the Form-room this morning," said Mr. Selby sternly.

"But I—I—"

"I leave him in your hands, Mr. Lathom," said Mr. Selby. "My belief is that you have found the right person. Dismiss, excepting D'Arcy minor!"

And Mr. Selby walked out of the Form-room, and the Third dismissed, leaving Wally alone with the master of the Fourth.

Mr. Lathom picked up the Form-master's cane from the desk.

"I hope you will confess the truth, D'Arcy minor," he said quietly.

"But I've told you the truth, sir." "Yaas, wathah, sir!" broke in D'Arcy major from the passage. "You can wely on the word of a D'Arcy, sir, I assuah you!"

Mr. Lathom turned a frowning glance upon the juniors in the passage, and, without replying to Arthur Augustus' remark, he closed the door in their faces.

"Bai Jove, I wegard that as wathah wude of Mr. Lathom!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Ass!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Please, Master Merry—"

The juniors turned round. Lynn, the boot-boy of the School House, whom Levison had nicknamed the Drudge, had come along the passage.

Tom Merry gave him a kindly nod.

"Hallo, kid!" he said cheerily.

"May I have your footer boots, sir?" said Lynn. "That is, if you know where they are. I was going to clean them this morning, but—"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, but somebody walked them off," he said. "I know all about it. Some silly ass brought them down from my study, and planted them outside the Fourth Form Room door. It seems to have been D'Arcy minor. He's going to be licked for it."

"Licked, sir!" exclaimed Lynn.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, my minah has denied that it was he who collared the wotten boots, and I wufuse to admit for a moment that he might have pwevawicated. It was some othah silly ass!"

"Where is he now, sir?" asked Lynn hurriedly.

Tom Merry looked surprised. He did not understand the Drudge's interest in the matter at all, but he answered:

"In the Third Form Room here. Mr. Lathom is going—"

Lynn did not wait for him to finish.

He went to the door of the Third Form Room, opened it, and entered, leaving the juniors staring after him in astonishment.

"Well, bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Is that young person off his wockah?"

CHAPTER 3.

A Queer Confession!

MR. LATHOM looked round sharply as Lynn ran in. He was very cross.

He was pretty certain that D'Arcy minor was the individual he wanted to find; but Wally denied it stoutly, and Mr. Lathom did not like to cane him without absolute proof.

It looked as if the mystery of the boots would have to be given up as insoluble, and that did not please Mr. Lathom at all.

The sudden and unceremonious interruption by so insignificant a person as a boot-boy gave a new direction to Mr. Lathom's wrath. He fixed an angry glance upon Lynn.

"Lynn, how dare you burst into a Form-room in this way?"

The Drudge panted.

"I'm sorry, sir. I—I thought you might be going to cane Master Wally, sir."

"And what business is that of yours, Lynn?"

Lynn turned crimson.

"It wasn't Master Wally, sir."

"Oh, you are aware of the person who placed those boots outside my Form-room door this morning?" said Mr. Lathom. "You know who it was?"

"Yes, sir."

"And it was not D'Arcy minor?"

"No, sir."
"Then you did quite right in coming to tell me, my boy," said Mr. Lathom more kindly. "If you have prevented an injustice being done, I am obliged to you. Who was it, then, if it was not D'Arcy minor?"

"It was I, sir!"
"What?"
"I—I did it, sir," stammered Lynn. Mr. Lathom glared again.
"You, Lynn! You, a servant in this House, have dared to play a prank here, and during lessons, too!"

"I had fetched the boots down from Master Merry's study to clean them, sir," said Lynn. "I knew he had made them muddy in football practice this morning. I had a little time to spare, so I thought I would get his football boots and clean them."

"That was quite right, Lynn. But—"

"I came back through the Form-room passage, sir, and—"

"And you lurked outside the door of the Fourth Form Room," said Mr. Lathom sternly. "I have reason to believe that you were there quite a little time."

"I—I'm afraid so, sir."
"You intended to play some foolish prank, or, rather, you were perhaps making signs to boys in the Form-room. They were very restless for some time before I discovered you there by your shadow."

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Lynn hurriedly. "Nothing of the kind, sir. I assure you that I meant no harm or disrespect in any way, sir."

"Then what was your object?"
"I—I—I—" Lynn's face was scarlet, and his manner was full of confusion. "I—in fact, sir, I—I—"

"Well," said Mr. Lathom grimly, "I'm waiting for your explanation, Lynn."

"I—I was listening, sir."

"What?"
"There—there was no harm in listening to what you were saying, as far as that goes, sir. It was meant to be listened to by the young gentlemen in the Form-room!" said Lynn, with an involuntary bitterness in his tone.

"Certainly there was no harm in listening to a lesson," said Mr. Lathom. "That would not constitute eavesdropping. Do you mean to tell me that you stayed outside my Form-room door to listen to the lesson?"

"Yes, sir. I—I know it was impertinence on my part, sir, because—because I'm a boot-boy, and I suppose I ought not to take any interest in the young gentlemen's lessons; but—but I couldn't help it, sir. I was not really neglecting my work, as Mrs. Mimms had told me there was nothing to do for a quarter of an hour."

There was a short silence. Mr. Lathom was scrutinising the face of the boot-boy with a curious interest. He made a sign to D'Arcy minor.

"You may go, D'Arcy minor."

And Wally went—with pleasure.
"Now, Lynn," said Mr. Lathom, as the door closed behind D'Arcy minor, "I desire to know more about this. Why did you listen to me this morning?"

"I—I wanted to know, sir."

"What was I talking of at the time?"

"The Latin grammar, sir—the ablative absolute."

"In the name of all that is extraordinary," asked Mr. Lathom in amazement, "what do you, a boot-boy, know of the Latin grammar and the ablative absolute?"

"I—I know something, sir," said Lynn. "I had to leave school early to



Quite an excited scene burst upon Mr. Lathom's gaze as he looked in at the doorway. Levison, in the grasp of five or six indignant juniors, was being bumped on the Form-room floor without mercy, to an accompaniment of shouts, "Bump him!" "Wag the wottah!" "Sneak!" "Cad!"

go to work, but I've always tried to learn in my spare time from books. Since I have been employed here Master D'Arcy and Master Merry have taught me a great deal."

"They have taught you!" Mr. Lathom repeated in wonder.

"Yes, sir; they were very kind. They don't think it a cheek of a boot-boy to want to learn Latin, as some of the young gents do, sir."

"It is not a cheek, as you call it; it is very meritorious," said Mr. Lathom. "So you were listening to the explanation of the ablative absolute, were you?"

"Yes, sir. And—and when I heard you coming to the door, sir, I thought you would be angry at finding me there, and I ran off. I—I had put the boots down while I was making notes, and I forgot them in my hurry. That was how I came to leave them there."

"You were making notes?"

"Yes, sir."

"I wish the boys in my Form were quite as interested in the Latin grammar as you appear to be, Lynn," said Mr. Lathom, with a slight smile. "My work as a Form-master would be considerably easier. Have you those notes with you now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Show them to me, please."

Lynn, with a trembling hand, drew a little cheap notebook from his pocket and handed it opened to the Form-master. Mr. Lathom glanced at it with interest. The writing was a large, intelligent round hand, but the notes were written sensibly and concisely.

"Example in Horace, Carmen VII, verse 27," Mr. Lathom read out. "It is true that I gave that example to my Form this morning, Lynn, and told them where to find it in Horace, but few

of them, I fear, will have the curiosity to look it out. Is it possible that you read Horace?"

Lynn smiled ruefully.

"I do my best, sir."
Mr. Lathom pursed his lips thoughtfully. All his anger had vanished long before this. He was a kind-hearted little gentleman, and he was greatly moved.

"I—I hope you are not angry with me, sir," muttered Lynn, to whom the Form-master's expression seemed severe. "I will never do it again, sir."

"I am not angry with you, Lynn. I was thinking. To what use do you intend to put this unusual education, if you succeed in pursuing it?"

"I don't know, sir," said Lynn frankly. "I want to learn because—because I want to, sir."

"Well, Lynn, you have surprised me very much"—with a smile. "I did not suspect this before. If it were possible, I should be very glad to allow you to share the Latin lessons with my Form. I should be glad to have so keen a pupil. That, however, is not practicable. But if you are seriously in earnest, I will help you."

"Oh, sir!"

"If, without neglect of your duties, you can find a half-hour each evening, you may come to my study, and I will undertake your instruction in Latin," said Mr. Lathom kindly.

"I—I—I don't know how to thank you, sir," stammered Lynn. "I haven't done anything to deserve your kindness."

"My dear boy," said Mr. Lathom gently, "if you feel a keen desire for knowledge, it is everyone's duty to help you. It will be a real pleasure to me. Now, go to your duties, and I shall

expect you in my study this evening—in fact, I will speak to Mrs. Mimms and see if I can make the arrangements for you."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

Lynn left the Form-room, looking as if he were walking on air.

CHAPTER 4.

Gussy's Great Idea!

"**B**AI Jove, you know, I've got it!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy made that announcement in excited tones.

He had rushed suddenly into Study No. 6, considerably startling a cheerful little tea-party gathered there.

Blake, Herries, Digby, Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, and Kangaroo of the Shell were gathered round the hospitable board.

They had been wondering why the swell of St. Jim's did not come in, when he dashed into the study, his aristocratic repose quite gone, and his manner full of excitement that was not at all according to the traditions of Vere de Vere.

"I've got it, deah boys!"

"Well, that's all right," said Blake.

"Put it on the table."

"Eh?"

"And open it."

"Weally, Blake—"

"Why, you haven't got it!" exclaimed Blake, noting that the hands of the elegant Fourth Former were empty. "Haven't you been to the tuckshop for the jam?"

"Blow the jam!"

"What do you mean by saying you've got it if you haven't got it, you champion ass?" demanded Herries.

"I was not alludin' to the jam, Hewies."

"Then what have you got?" asked Manners.

"The ideah!"

"What ideah?"

"The gweat ideah—the ideah of the season!" said Arthur Augustus proudly. "A weglah wippin' wheeze, deah boys! When I went down, there was a lot of fellows weadin' somethin' on the

notice-board in the Hall. I looked at it. And it was a notice ffrom the Head, and it announced that this is the last day for entewin' the exam for the servitorship."

"Blessed if I see anything to get excited about in that!" yawned Blake. "I suppose we're not entering exams for a blessed servitorship, are we?"

"Shut up; and have tea before the sardines are all gone!" said Digby.

"I'm not thinkin' of tea, deah boy! I'm thinkin' of Lynn."

"Lynn!" said the juniors all together.

"Yaas. The Dwudge, you know, as that wottah Levison named him."

"Not in trouble, is he?" yawned Blake. "He's a good little kid, Gussy; but we can just possibly get fed-up on him, you know."

"I take a gweat intwest in the Dwudge," said Arthur Augustus with dignity. "I wegard him as a vewy deservin' chap. I think it is quite wight and pwopah of Mr. Lathom to take him into his study for coachin' of an evenin', as he's been doin' for the past few days."

"Lathom's a good little ass!" said Blake.

"It's a stroke of luck for Lynn," said Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah! I quite approve of Mr. Lathom's conduct."

"That would make him happy if he heard it," Blake remarked gravely. "You ought to tell him that, Gussy. He may be anxious about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wats! But to come back to my ideah! What about a servitorship for Lynn?"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gazed triumphantly at his astonished chums.

The fellows knew all about the servitorship, though they did not take much interest in it. It was, in point of fact, a survival of ancient times—of the days when St. Jim's had sheltered many more poor scholars than rich ones, and Public schools were run upon a more rough-and-ready footing.

In the early days of the old school, in the reigns of the Tudors, when the

scholars ate from wooden platters, and everything was on a more primitive footing, the servitorships had been founded.

Scholars too poor to pay the school fees, could compete for the servitorships, which enabled them to share the lessons of more fortunate boys, on condition of performing the menial work of the school.

In lesson hours they were pupils; out of class hours they were servants, with wooden platters to wash, rooms to sweep, boots to clean, and so forth.

But, with the change of manners and customs, there had been a change in those scholarships, and at this time of day only one survived in its original form.

That one, founded by an Old Boy in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, had been so hedged about by conditions that it was impossible to change it. So it survived.

But of late, though the servitorship still existed, no schoolboy menial had ever taken it. When it was won in the exam the value of it was deducted from the fees payable by the winner, so that it had a cash value, and was worth winning by boys whose parents were not in affluent circumstances.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and looked round upon the astonished faces of his friends. He had expected an outburst of surprise and admiration at his tremendous idea.

The outburst came, but it was not of admiration.

"You ass!" said Blake.

"Chump!" said Digby.

"Fathead!" remarked Herries.

"Jabberwock!" said the Terrible Three together.

"Weally, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus mildly, "I was thinkin' that you would have sufficient intelligence to see what a weally wippin' ideah this is! Young Lynn could pass the exam all wight—especially as nobody else has entahed. He will only have to get a certain numbah of marks—and he could get them on his head."

"Ass!" roared Blake. "What's the good of it to him? What's it worth?"

"Twenty pounds, I believe."

"Brooke got it last year," said Tom Merry. "It meant twenty pounds off his fees, and it was useful to him. Can't hold it two years running, though."

"No; that's the wule," said D'Arcy. "That old chap, John Davis, was a sensible old chap when he founded that servitorship. And I don't see why young Lynn shouldn't take it. I'll coach him for the exam."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boy—"

"How's he going to get time for working for an exam when he's got boots and knives and things to clean, and bells to answer, and so on?" demanded Manners.

"He's got lots of gwit. He'd contrive it somehow."

"But what would be the use of it to him?" asked Tom Merry. "The money value would be allowed off the fees of the fellow who won it. But I suppose Lynn hasn't any chance of raising the rest of the fees. Twenty quid a year isn't much towards the expenses of a fellow here."

"I'm not thinkin' of it like that," said D'Arcy calmly. "That scholarship is generally used to weducer a fellow's fees, I know, but that isn't what it was founded for. And the old conditions are still in force, if any chap liked to take advantage of them."

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"Eh?"

"What?"

"There used to be servitahs; and there was one here as late as the weign of George the Fourth," said D'Arcy. "Why shouldn't there be anothah one in this weign—what?"

"A—a servitor?" gasped Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus nodded calmly.

"Yaas. A servitahship entitled him to share all the lessons of the Form he's put in, and at othah times he's a servitah—that is to say, a servant. That would suit young Lynn down to the groud."

"It's impossible!"

"Rats!"

"Go home!"

Arthur Augustus listened to that outburst of opinion quite unmoved. He was evidently greatly taken up with his idea of helping the Drudge of the School House.

"I insist that it is a wippin' ideah, my deah fellows. It is quite tyme that there isn't any genuine servitah here—but there's no weason why there shouldn't be one."

"The Head wouldn't allow it."

"He'd have to," said D'Arcy, with a chuckle. "Any winnah of that servitorship can claim to hold it on the old terms if he chooses."

"Nobody ever chooses."

"No—because their pawents can pay their fees. Lynn's pawents can't. Therefore, he can claim to hold the servitorship on the original terms."

Tom Merry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"I suppose that's quite true," he said slowly. "Any chap winning that scholarship can claim his rights as a servitor—lessons and employment by the school. But it's unheard of in our time. How would the other fellows treat a servitor—a boot-boy who came into the Form-room for lessons?"

"I fancy they must always have had a pretty wuff time of it," said D'Arcy. "There were always snobs in the countwy, I suppose, even in the great days of Queen Bess. But no decent chap would ever look down on a chap because he worked for his livin'."

"Lynn's life wouldn't be worth living," said Blake. "He would be ragged to death by fellows who didn't like having a boot-boy in the class. Gussy, old man, you're offside, and you'd better chuck up the idea."

"I wufuse to chuck up the ideah—and I want you fellows to back me up!" said Arthur Augustus firmly. "We're going to persuade Lynn to entah for the servitorship, and help him win it—and then give him a welcome into our own ranks."

"You're a first-class, gilt-edged, little idiot," said Blake. "After all, perhaps there's something in it—if the Head will let him enter, and if he can get the marks. We'll think about it—"

"Bai Jove! What's that?"

"That" was a sudden uproar in the passage outside; and the chums of the School House rushed to the door to see what it was.

CHAPTER 5.

Sooty!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"Who is it? What is it?"

"It's black but comely,"

grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yelling crowd in the passage. They were gathered round a youth who was quite unrecognisable.



He was smothered with soot from top to toe, and his very features and clothes had vanished under the sooty covering. From the sooty figure came gasps and gurgles. Some of the soot had evidently got into the mouth of the unknown.

"Who is it?" roared Tom Merry.

"Who are you, darkie?"

"Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a blessed chimney-sweep?" asked Blake. "What is he doing here?"

"Groogh! Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's Lynn," said Levison of the Fourth, with a grin. "Horribly dirty state, even for a boot-boy?"

"Bai Jove! Is that you, Lynn?"

"Groogh!"

"Look here! This is a rotten trick, anyway!" said Tom Merry, knitting his brows. "Who's been smothering Lynn with soot? This is the time he goes to Lathom's study for his Latin lesson."

"The dear boy will have to miss it this evening," chuckled Levison, "unless he goes in that state. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh!"

"How did it happen, Lynn?" asked Tom.

The boot-boy grunted and gasped.

"It—it fell on me. Groogh! I think it was a booby-trap!" he spluttered.

"Groogh! There was a bag of soot over the box-room door. Somebody must have put it there when I was in there. It fell on me as I came out. Groogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, it was a rotten jape," said Tom Merry. "I suppose it was you, Levison?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see why you should suppose me," he said, with a sneer. "Lots of fellows in the house are fed-up with that low boulder's cheek."

"Yes, rather!" said Mellish of the Fourth. "I think boot-boys ought to be kept in their place—and the boot-room is their place."

"Quite so!" said Gore of the Shell.

"Oh, rats!" said Tom Merry. "It was rotten to treat him like this when he's nearly due in Lathom's study. Lathom won't like it if he doesn't come."

"I shall pwoceed to Mr. Lathom's

study and explain," said Arthur Augustus, "and if I were certain which wotah had played this twick, I would give him a feahful thwashin'. Was it you, Levison?"

"Find out!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Kangaroo of the Shell, coming along the passage. "Ha, ha, ha! Who's the nigger?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Is that what you wanted the soot for, Levison?"

"So it was Levison?" said Tom Merry, with a glint in his eyes.

Levison backed away.

"Well, Levison got some soot from the sweep who did the kitchen chimney to-day," said Kangaroo. "I saw him."

"The rotter!"

"I suppose I can lay a booby-trap, if I like?" said Levison defiantly.

"That's your little mistake; you can't!" said Tom Merry. "You can jape us, or any other St. Jim's chap, but japing Lynn is another matter. You've ruined his clothes."

"Yaas, wathah, deah boy. But don't hurwy away. Bwing Levison here, deah boy. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gaudah, you know!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison made a spring to escape, but the grasp of half a dozen juniors closed upon him, and he was dragged back, struggling and kicking furiously.

"Leggo, you rotters!" he howled.

"It's soot for you," grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Quite a soot-able punishment," said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison was dragged towards the soot-covered boot-boy. He struggled wildly, but he struggled in vain.

"Now, Lynn, collar him!" ordered Tom Merry. "Embrace him! Roll him over! Give him as much as you can! It will be a tip to him not to be quite so liberal with booby-traps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared with laughter as Lynn, nothing loth, laid both hands upon Levison. The cad of the Fourth struggled in his grasp, but Lynn was the stronger of the two. Locked in a tight embrace, they reeled about the passage, and fell, and rolled on the floor. Clouds of soot arose, and the juniors backed away, sneezing and coughing. Levison was coughing and gasping and gurgling now as well as Lynn. A good half of the soot was transferred to his person in the struggle.

"Ow, ow! Leggo, you beast! Groogh! You rotter! Yah! Groogh! Grer—rrrrrrrr!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kildare of the Sixth came up the stairs, with a cane in his hands.

"What's this row?" he asked. "Why, what—what—" He stared blankly at the two sooty figures rolling on the floor.

"It's all wight," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Levison has laid a booby-trap, and he has caught two instead of one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison tore himself loose at last and leaped to his feet. He turned a sooty and furious face towards Kildare.

"That cad has smothered me with soot!" he yelled. "He's Lynn, the boot-boy! He ought to be sacked! The rotten cad—"

"Hold on!" said Kildare quietly. "Who brought the soot into the house in the first place?"

"I—I—"

"It was you, Levison?"

"I—I—"

"And Lynn is giving you some of it back—is that it? You can clear off, Lynn."

"Yes, sir," said Lynn, and he cleared off.

Kildare fixed his eyes sternly upon Levison.

"You have no right to play such a trick on a boy employed in the School House, Levison. It would have been bad enough on one of your school-fellows. I'm afraid you did this because you know Lynn can't very well complain, because of his position as a servant here. That is cowardly and mean."

"Groogh!"

"You have been caught persecuting that kid before, though he seems to be a very civil and inoffensive little chap," said Kildare. "I have warned you once to let him alone. You require dusting, Levison. I will dust you."

"Yarooooh! Ow, ow!" roared Levison, as clouds of soot rose from him under the vigorous application of the prefect's cane. "Yarooooh! Ow! Leave off! It was only a j-j-joke. Yow! Ow!"

"Don't play any more jokes of that kind," said Kildare. "Now go and clean yourself, you young rascal!"

Kildare walked away. Levison shook his fist after the prefect and staggered away, blind with rage and soot. But he did not get any sympathy from the juniors. A yell of laughter followed the sooty cad of the Fourth as he disappeared in the direction of the dormitory. In the dorm, Levison cleaned himself and changed his clothes.

"The rotter! The low bouncer! I'll make him suffer for it, somehow!" he muttered again and again. And the object of his wrath was Tom Lynn, the Drudge of the School House. "I'll put a spoke in his wheel, somehow!"

And though Levison did not know it just then, the opportunity was at hand for him to put a spoke in the wheel of the Drudge.

CHAPTER 6.

Startling News!

"A SERVITOR!"

"What rot!"

"Piffle!"

"A boot-boy in the Form! Oh, draw it mild!"

Those remarks greeted the ears of Levison when he came down to the Junior Common-room some time later. Levison was looking clean again—newly-swept and garnished, so to speak—and he was in a state of suppressed fury that was positively dangerous, if he could have found some helpless victim upon whom to pour the vials of his wrath.

He pricked up his ears as he came into the Common-room and caught the loud remarks of an excited group of juniors. He knew that they were talking about Tom Lynn, though for the moment he did not catch their drift.

"Look here! It isn't true!" exclaimed Gore of the Shell. "It can't be! It would be a disgrace to the House."

"I should jolly well say so!" said Mellish. "The New House fellows would chip us to death over it if it came off."

"I weally don't see why they should," said Arthur Augustus calmly. "I considah it as a weally good ideah."

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A BAD BITE!



"Just my luck! When I need boots I get a fish!"

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"Oh, you would!" sneered Gore.

"So do I," said Tom Merry. "As for its being a disgrace to the House, that's all silly piffle, and you ought to know it, Gore!"

"What!" roared Gore. "Why, the horrid bouncer might be put in the Shell!"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"A boot-boy in the Shell? Oh, crumbs!"

"It's too thick!"

"It's rotten!"

"The Head ought to put his foot down on it!"

Feeling evidently ran high—among some of the fellows at all events. Levison, his curiosity keenly aroused, joined the excited group.

"What's it all about?" he asked.

"It's about that blessed boot-cleaner—that giddy knife-grinder, who's mugging up Latin instead of sticking to his knife-machine!" said Gore. "Going to join the school. My hat! Coming into the school as a servitor! Oh, crumbs! Entering for the John Davis Scholarship, and going to run it on the old lines—knife-grinding and boot-cleaning, and taking lessons with his Form."

"My hat!" said Levison.

"Awful cheek!" said Mellish. "The Head oughtn't to allow it!"

"Perhaps he won't!" suggested Levison.

"But he has!" said Tom Merry.

"Rats!"

"It's a fact!" said Arthur Augustus calmly. "And it's a wippin' good thing!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"How the chap could have had the cheek to think of entering, I'm blessed if I know," said Gore. "It beats me!"

"He didn't think of it," said D'Arcy cheerfully. "I suggested it to him."

"You?"

"Yaas, wathah! And I persuaded him to speak to Lathom about it."

"You—you dummy!"

"If you apply appwobvious epithets to me, Gore, I shall have no wesource but to administah a feahful thwashin'."

"And what did Lathom say?" asked Levison.

"Mr. Lathom thought it a good idea. He takes a gweat intewest in Lynn. He

went to the Head himself to explain, and to put Lynn's name down."

"And the Head has agreed?"

"Yaas, wathah! He couldn't do anything else—the terms of the scholarship are binding."

"He could sack that cheeky boot-boy."

"Pewwaps the Head is not such a wotten snob as you are, Gore," suggested Arthur Augustus.

"Shouldn't wonder," grinned Monty Lowther.

"Gore's aristocratic prejudices get on my nerves. This is what comes of being son and heir to a grocer—"

"My father isn't a grocer, you rotter!"

"Well, he might be worse. What's the matter with a grocer?" asked Tom Merry.

"Perhaps he's only a gross," said Lowther thoughtfully, "and in that case, Gore is only a grosser!"

"Oh, keep that for the comic column in the 'Weekly'!" growled Gore. "I think Lathom might have minded his own business. I think the Head ought to sack that cheeky boot-boy. I think it's disgraceful. I think—"

"You're doing a lot of thinking," remarked Manners. "Look out—it has a bad effect on heads not used to it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The worst of it is," pursued Gore savagely, "that there are no other entrants, and so the awful cad has only got to get a certain number of marks—and he'll get in—and we shall have a boot-boy planted on us as a St. Jim's fellow."

"Shame!"

"Rotten!"

Levison's eyes glinted.

"No other entrants, of course," he remarked. "What a chance for the giddy boot-boy."

"And he'll get in," said Mellish scornfully. "Trust that sort! He'll swot over his books, and turn his hair grey, if necessary, but he'll get in!"

"I wegard you chaps as snobs and wottahs!" said Arthur Augustus sternly. "I wefuse to discuss the mattah with you, Gore. You are a snob!"

"You—you tailor's dummy!"

"You wottah!"

"I've a jolly good mind to lick you for suggesting the idea to the cad, you silly chump!" roared Gore, shaking a big fist in the aristocratic face of the swell of St. Jim's.

D'Arcy's eyes flashed behind his eyeglasses.

"Bai Jove! Hold my jacket, Blake, deah boy. Hold my eyeglass, Tom Mewwy! Now, come on, you wottah!"

And Arthur Augustus pranced up to the bully of the Shell.

Gore was nothing loath to come on.

He came on, hitting out like a steam-hammer. But the swell of the Fourth, slim and elegant as he was, was a fighting-man to the finger-tips. He was not so big as Gore, and not so strong, but he knew all about boxing, and he was all pluck.

He sailed into the burly Shell fellow in great style, and Gore, to his astonishment, found himself lying on his back on the floor of the Common-room, with Arthur Augustus calling upon him to get up and be "thwashed."

"Ow!" groaned Gore, clapping his nose and reddening his fingers as he did so. "Ow! I'll smash you! I'll pulverise you! I'll—"

"Come on, you wottah!" shouted Arthur Augustus excitedly.

Hammer and tongs again, and again Gore went down with a heavy bump. The ring of juniors cheered Arthur Augustus loudly.

"Pile in!"
"Get up, Gore, and take your medicine!"

Gore got up, but apparently he had taken enough medicine, for he tramped out of the Common-room clapping his nose. Arthur Augustus panted and turned to Mellish.

"Now, Mellish, you wottah, if you want some of the same—"

Mellish didn't, and he said so promptly.

"Where's Levison? I may as well thrash Levison while I am about it."

But Levison was gone, and Arthur Augustus allowed himself to be persuaded at last to put on his jacket without thrashing anybody else. Levison was gone, and if Arthur Augustus had guessed the purpose for which he had gone, he would have been extremely sorry that he had not given Levison a fearful thrashing, too.

CHAPTER 7.

A Spoke in the Wheel!

DR. HOLMES, the Head of St. Jim's, was alone in his study when a tap came at the door.

The Head was thinking.

Mr. Lathom had left him, after putting to him the case of the boot-boy in eloquent words.

Mr. Lathom was keenly interested in the boy who was striving to get himself a good education in the face of tremendous difficulties. He warmly pressed Lynn's claim to be allowed to put down his name for the John Davis Scholarship. The fact that the servitorship had fallen into abeyance mattered nothing—the terms of it still held, and there was no just reason why Lynn should not be given his chance.

And the Head had agreed.

He was very doubtful, but he was impressed by Mr. Lathom's kind advocacy of the boot-boy; and to his objection that the other boys would despise and perhaps rag such a newcomer, Mr. Lathom had the reply ready that several fellows in the Fourth and the Shell had already actually been helping Lynn in his studies.

And so the Head's consent had been given, and Tom Lynn's name had been taken down—the only name down for the examination. As there was no competitor, if Lynn succeeded in getting the minimum of marks, he would get the servitorship, and, from Mr. Lathom's account of his proficiency, there was little doubt of that.

The Head wished well to the ambitious boot-boy, certainly, but he could not help being troubled in his mind.

He started out of a not very cheerful reverie as a tap came at his study door. "Come in!" said the Head.

Levison of the Fourth entered. The Head gave him an inquiring glance.

Levison was looking very serious, and his manner was very respectful.

"If you please, sir, I want you to take my name," he said. "I understand that to-day is the last day for entering for the John Davis?"

The Head looked at him very curiously. It was the last day certainly, and the Head had come to think that there would be no entrants at all—till Mr. Lathom had brought him the name of Tom Lynn. Now, here was another—a St. Jim's fellow, too, and one who had the reputation of being clever, but a hopeless and incorrigible slacker.

"So you wish to enter for the servitorship, Levison?"

"Yes, sir, if I may."

"You may, certainly," said the Head. "But from what I have seen of you, and heard from your Form-master, I am surprised that you should wish to enter for the exam."

Levison looked penitent.

"I know I've been a bit of a slacker,"

(Continued on the next page.)

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sir," he said—"I've wasted a lot of time—but I can work when I try, and I'm going to now. The fact is, sir, my father isn't so well off as he used to be, and I want to help him. If I win the John Davis, it will save him money in my next term."

The Head looked greatly pleased.

"I am very glad to hear you say this, Levison," he said. "You could not have a worthier object than the desire to help your father."

"Thank you, sir!"

"I am glad, too, that you are taking up more industrious habits," said the Head. "I wish you every success, Levison! I shall certainly put your name down."

"You are very kind, sir!"

And Levison left the study. He went down the passage, grinning in a way that was neither pleasant nor amiable.

"I can beat the cad, hands down!" he muttered. "I shan't have to slog very hard—I could beat him on my head! And the pater will stand me a fiver if I save him twenty quid. It's rotten to have to swot, but I shall be putting a spoke in the wheel of that rotten boot-boy—hang him! I think I shall make him properly sorry for himself this time!"

And Levison chuckled gleefully.

He went up to his study to do his preparation, and found his study-mates there—Blenkinsop, Mellish, and Lumley-Lumley. The latter glanced at him curiously. He knew Levison, so he knew that the satisfaction in Levison's face boded ill to somebody.

"Anybody ill?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Not that I know of," said Levison, with a stare.

"I guess it's a licking for somebody, then?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Then what are you looking so happy about?" demanded Lumley-Lumley.

Blenkinsop and Mellish chuckled, and Levison scowled angrily.

"I guess it's bad luck for somebody when you look so jolly cheerful!" Lumley-Lumley remarked.

"If you want to know," said Levison loftily, "I'm doing a jolly decent thing."

"Draw it mild!"

"It's a fact!" said Levison. "You know, my father had some bad luck in business a little time back. I had to leave St. Jim's for a bit."

"I thought he'd got over that?" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Well, yes; but, at the same time, I want to save his money if I can. That's why I've entered for the John Davis Scholarship."

There was a shout from the three juniors at once.

"You've entered?"

Levison nodded coolly.

"Yes. Why not?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

"Why, I never thought of that, you know! What a ripping idea! The boot-cleaning cad won't have a chance against you!"

Lumley-Lumley frowned.

"I suppose you've told the Head that yarn about wanting to help your father?" he asked.

"Certainly!"

"Well, you can tell it to the Head—or tell it to the Marines—but I guess it cuts no ice with me! I don't believe a word of it! You've entered for the exam simply to cut out that poor devil Lynn!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"You can think what you like!" he remarked.

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"I guess it's a low-down game to play!" said Lumley-Lumley. "You don't really need the money, and it would be a big thing for Lynn to get it."

"We don't want boot-boys in the Fourth!" said Levison, with a grin. "Lynn is welcome to get it—if he can beat me in the exam!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Mellish again.

Lumley-Lumley left the study. He looked into Tom Merry's study a little later, where the Terrible Three and the juniors of Study No. 6 were chatting cheerfully. They were discussing Tom Lynn's chance for the John Davis Scholarship, with hearty good wishes for his success.

"Heard the latest?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"What is it, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Come in and get your news off your chest!" said Tom hospitably.

"Levison's entered for the John Davis!"

"What!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Great Scott!"

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"The awful cad! I never even thought of that! Only a cad like Levison would do it; but he can't be stopped."

"Then I suggest that we wag him, and make him get out again!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, excitedly and indignantly. "I refuse to allow him to wob the poor old Dwudge of the chance of a lifetime!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I don't know about ragging him," said Tom Merry, with a shake of the head. "He's within his rights. But we might remonstrate with him, and point out to him that he's not doing the decent thing."

"Lot of good that will be with Levison!" sniffed Blake.

"I am quite willin' to wemonstrate with the wotah; but if wemonstwatn' isn't any good, then I insist upon waggin' him! Come along, deah boys, and back me up! I refuse to allow the old Dwudge to be wobbed!"

And Arthur Augustus marched off in a white heat of indignation to Levison's study, with the Co. at his heel.

CHAPTER 8.

No Go!

LEVISON was expecting that visit. But he showed no sign of that as Tom Merry & Co. crowded into the study.

He was sitting at the table at work, with Mellish and Blenkinsop, and he did not look up as the Co. came in with Jerrold Lumley-Lumley. Apparently, he was too deeply engrossed in his work to notice that they had entered.

"Levison, you wotah—" began Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Shush!" said Tom Merry chidingly. "Gussy, old man, you've forgotten your nice little manners! Leave it to me. Levison, my honoured and esteemed schoolfellow, may I have the honour of a few minutes' polite conversation with you?"

"Eh—did you speak?" said Levison, looking up. "Hallo! What do you fellows want? I really think, Lumley, you might leave crowding the study with your friends till after work's finished! I've got a lot to do, as well as my prep!"

"We've come to see you," said Monty Lowther.

"That's very kind of you, but I'm busy!"

"Taken up work, by way of a change?" Jack Blake asked sarcastically.

"Exactly!"

"We won't keep you long," said Tom Merry. "It's about the John Davis."

"It's that that makes me so busy," said Levison calmly. "You see, I've entered for that, and it will mean a good bit of swotting."

"Look here, Levison," said the captain of the Shell, "we know why you've entered for the John Davis. You don't want it. You've simply entered just to give the Drudge one in the eye by beating him in the exam."

"The Drudge," said Levison, with an air of reflection. "By Jove! Yes, I remember now hearing that he had entered. Like his cheek, I think, to compete for a scholarship against a gentleman!"

"He isn't doing that," said Lowther. "The only other competitor beside the Drudge is yourself, as I understand."

The juniors chuckled, and Levison scowled. He did not speak, but bent over his work again. Tom Merry made his chum a warning sign. This was not a time for Monty Lowther's little jokes.

"Listen to us, Levison!" urged Tom. "We all think that the John Davis ought to be left to Lynn. He needs it more than you do. You don't need it at all, in fact. Don't you think you might do the handsome thing and step out?"

"Blessed ass if he did!" remarked Percy Mellish.

"You shut up!" growled Blake. "Nobody asked for your rotten opinion!"

"Are you finished yet, you chaps?" asked Levison calmly. "I've remarked that I've got a lot of work to do. You're interrupting me."

"Not quite finished yet," said Tom Merry. "Look here, the whole House will know what you've entered for, Levison."

"Really?"

"You pretend that you despise the Drudge because he's a menial, and yet you chip in with him for the servitorship."

"As a matter of fact, I regard it as a duty to keep that low boulder out of the school if I can," said Levison. "I think a lot of fellows ought to enter for the exam before it's too late, so as to make sure of keeping him out."

"You utter—"

"Shush!"

"Nobody else is likely to enter," went on Tom Merry. "It will be between you and the Drudge. Of course, you have every chance of beating him, as he can only mug up the work in his spare time, and you have heaps of time for it. I suppose there isn't much doubt that you will beat him—but all the fellows here think you ought not to try."

"All the fellows here can go and eat coke!"

"You uttah—"

"Shush!"

"I refuse to 'shush! I wegard Levison as an uttah wotah, and I insist upon explainin' to him how I wegard him. Levison, you are an uttah wotah!"

"Thanks!"

"If you had a wag of decency in your wotten nature you would withdraw from the exam and leave it to the Dwudge."

"Go hon!"

"I put it to you, in the name of the Fourth Form, to which you are a howth disgwace," said Arthur Augustus excitedly. "I put it to you whethah

you will withdraw from the exam or not."

"No fear!"

"Then we shall take measures to stop your twicks."

"Will you?" Levison's eyes glittered unpleasantly. "You mean you'll interfere with me in my work for the exam?"

"Yaas."

"Very well. I call all you fellows to witness that D'Arcy threatens to interfere in my work for the exam," said Levison icily. "We shall see what the Housemaster has to say about threats of that kind."

"Bai Jove!"

"Shut up, Gussy, old man!" implored Blake. "You are putting your silly foot deeper and deeper into it every time."

"I decline to shut up! Levison can speak to the Housemaster if he likes. He is used to wotten sneakin', anyway. I refuse to shut up. I am goin' to tell Levison what I think of him. He is twyin' to wob the Dwudge, and I won't allow it."

"Would you mind getting out of my study?" asked Levison. "I've got a lot to do, and I can't work while you're gassing."

"So you are going on with this?" asked Tom Merry.

"I am certainly!"

"Then there's no more to be said. You're a cad and a rotter. Everybody else in the House will think the same."

"They're welcome!"

"Oh, let's get out! He makes me ill!" growled Herries.

"Get out as soon as you like," said Levison agreeably. "The sooner the better. Shut the door after you, won't you?"

"Come on, Gussy."

"I decline to come on. I shall not leave this study until Levison has agreed to stop his wotten twicks, and leave the poor old Dwudge alone."

Levison rose to his feet.

"You'll get out of my study and let me work, or I shall complain to a prefect," he said. "I am fed-up with this. Get out!"

"I guess you'd better travel, Gussy," remarked Lumley-Lumley. "It's no good talking to Levison. He can't help being a mean cuss."

"I am goin' to thwash him, unless he agrees to stand out of the exam and act like an honest person for once."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"I refuse to do anythin' of the sort—I mean I weguard you as a wottah, a wank outside! Will you drop this wotten scheme, once and for all?"

"Rats!"

"Bai Jove! You can all see that the wottah is askin' for a lickin', deah boys. I'm goin' to give him one!"

"Hold on!" roared Blake, catching the excited junior's arm as he made a rush towards Levison and swinging him back. "Keep off, you chump! What do you think Railton will say if he hears you've hammered Levison for refusing to chuck the exam?"

"I don't care a wap!"

"You can't do it!" said Tom Merry. "Levison is a rotter; but he's within his rights, and he can't be interfered with."

"Wats! I am goin' to thwash him!"

"Lend a hand here, you chaps," said Blake.

"Welease me!"

Arthur Augustus made a terrific effort, and broke loose from Blake. He rushed round the table at Levison, and in another moment the cad of the Fourth would have been very roughly handled; but, fortunately, Tom Merry grasped the excited junior in time. He dragged Arthur Augustus back with an arm round his neck.

"Ow! Gwoooogh! Welease me, you wottah!"

"Lend me a hand!" gasped Tom Merry.

"Ow! You wottahs—yah!"

The juniors grasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on all sides, and he was carried, kicking and struggling, from the study. All the way down the passage his voice could be heard, insisting upon immediate release so that he could return and thrash Levison.

But he did not return—his chums saw to that. They did not intend that D'Arcy should place himself hopelessly in the wrong by an attack upon a fellow for the reason that he had entered for the John Davis Exam. In Study No. 6 they talked to D'Arcy like a whole family of Dutch uncles, as Lowther put it—and they did not release him until he saw reason.

Meanwhile, Levison worked away cheerfully in his study. He did not like hard work, certainly—but the knowledge that he was doing one of the meanest things in his whole career gave it a zest now.

CHAPTER 9.

Trouble Below Stairs!

TOBY, the page of the School House, grunted as he came into the boot-room.

Lynn was there—at work.

Piles of boots surrounded him. It was a marvel how Tom Lynn contrived to clean so many pairs of boots—and they were always well cleaned, too. The boot-boy's face was bright and cheerful—and as he worked he was murmuring to himself, his eyes glancing up every now and then at a paper pinned on the wall.

Toby glanced at the paper—and grunted. The paper contained a list of Latin irregular verbs, and Lynn was memorising them and their irregularities, while he worked on the boots. Toby's grunt was very expressive.



Locked in a tight embrace, Lynn and Levison reeled about the passage and fell and rolled on the floor. Clouds of soot arose, and the juniors, roaring with laughter, kept clear. A good half of the soot was transferred from the boot-boy to Levison, and it was a lesson to the cad of the Fourth not to be so liberal with booby-traps!

The boot-boy was under Toby in position. Toby had treated him very kindly—especially after Levison had begun to persecute him. Toby himself had suffered from Levison's malicious tricks. It was one of Levison's little ways to make himself unpleasant to any persons who were not in a position to retaliate.

But Toby was not in a good temper now. His manner had changed when he learned that Tom Lynn had entered for the John Davis servitorship, and in the days that had elapsed since he had become more and more morose towards the boot-boy. Toby regarded it as swank upon the part of the boot-boy—and Levison had contrived to "rub it in." He asked Toby sometimes how he liked the idea of having Lynn set over his head as a St. Jim's fellow. Toby did not like the idea at all.

"Look 'ere, young Lynn," said Toby gruffly, "this ain't work!"

"What isn't?" asked Lynn.

Toby pointed a grimy finger at the paper pinned on the wall.

"That ain't!"

"What's the matter with it?" asked Lynn mildly. "No harm in my learning a few verbs while I clean the boots, is there?"

Toby snorted.

"You ain't paid to learn verbs," he said. "You stick to your work, young shaver, and learn your blessed verbs afterwards."

"I don't have very much time afterwards," said Lynn.

"Well, 'tain't the business of a boot-boy to learn verbs, and enter fer schollyships and things," said Toby. "It don't leave you time to do your work. And if you think that you're goin' to shove it off on me, you're mistaken, young feller-me-lad!"

"But I don't think so," said Lynn. "I haven't asked you to do anything for me, have I?"

"Look 'ere, you oughter know your place," said Toby, without replying to the question. "You're a boot-boy, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you be a boot-boy," said Toby. "Don't you try to be like your betters. You chuck up all this 'ere rot and stick to your own trade. Swankin' round as a schoolboy over my 'ead!"

"But I'm not a schoolboy yet," said Lynn. "I haven't really half a chance, especially as Master Levison's entered—and most likely it will come to nothing."

"Then you're wasting your time."

"Oh, no! What I learn I shall remember, and it will be so much to the good."

Another snort from Toby.

"Saw you the other day reading a book on Lating," said Toby. "Mean to tell me that you like doin' that?"

"Yes."

"Rot!" said Toby decisively. "Nobody could like doin' that. The young gentlemen does it because they 'as to; they don't like it. You don't like it, either. You are only swankin', that's what it is!"

Lynn made no reply to that. He did not want to quarrel with Toby. He went on polishing boots, and for the moment left off murmuring irregular verbs.

"Master Levison says you will soon be givin' me orders!" went on Toby savagely. "It'll be Toby 'ere and Toby there! Hey?"

"I certainly shouldn't think of giving you orders, Toby. If I get that servitor-

ship, I shall be a servant all the time out of school hours."

"Arf an' 'arf!" sneered Toby.

"And you really shouldn't listen to Master Levison, Toby. He doesn't talk to you for any good motive. I think he would like to make trouble below stairs, as well as everywhere else, if he could."

That was, as a matter of fact, exactly Toby's opinion of Master Levison; but he did not choose to admit it for the moment.

"Don't you critticeise yer betters, young shaver," he said sternly. "'Tain't for a kid in a boot-room to tork about Master Levison."

"Very well; I won't then."

"You stick to boot-cleanin' and knife-cleanin', and let Lating verbs alone," said Toby. "Don't you forget your place!"

"Well, I won't."

Lynn knew that trouble in the boot-room was bound to follow Levison's malicious interference, but he did not see how he was to stop it. Toby had a simple nature that was easily played upon by the cad of the Fourth.

Toby looked round the room, so evidently in search of something to grumble at that Lynn could not help smiling as he saw it. If Lynn had neglected his duties for the sake of study, Toby would have had just cause for complaint. But that was a thing the boot-boy never did. His work was always well done, and he was always willing to do anything that was asked of him, over and above his regular duties—a trait in his character that made him very popular below stairs.

Toby halted at the knife-machine and uttered a loud exclamation.

"Well, you clumsy hass!"

"What's the matter now?" asked Lynn.

"Breakin' the knives in the machine!" exclaimed Toby excitedly. "Why, I never breaks a knife in that machine when I cleans 'em. One, three, five, six knives broke. You'll 'ave to pay for 'em out of your screw, young feller-me-lad."

"I haven't broken any knives."

"Mean to say that I did it?" bellowed Toby.

"No. You don't use the machine now," said Lynn. "But there aren't any knives broken, Toby. I—"

"Mean to say I'm blind or drunk, hey?" roared Toby. "Look at them knives, and say whether they're broken or not."

Lynn hurried over to the knife-machine, and gave a gasp of dismay. There were a heap of knives beside it, and six of them, certainly, were broken.

"My hat!" said Lynn.

"Breakin' knives in the machine and tellin' lies about it," said Toby scornfully. "Is that wot you learn along with the Lating, Lynn?"

"But I didn't break them," said Lynn, in distress. "I don't understand it. I cleaned half the knives this evening—I was going to finish presently. And when I left them there, there wasn't a single one broken. I haven't broken a knife in that machine since I've been here. It's a good machine."

"Either you or me broke them knives," said Toby, "and I don't use the machine now. If you say it was me, you're a liar."

"I didn't say it was you," said Lynn.

"Then it was you?"

"It wasn't!"

"I suppose as 'ow the knives broke themselves, then?" said Toby sarcastically. "Put themselves into the machine, I desay, and broke—huh!"

"Somebody else has been here, if you didn't do it, Toby," said Lynn quietly. "Nobody else comes to this 'ere boot-room," said Toby. "I s'pose you don't think the 'Ouse dame come in 'ere and broke your knives?"

"No, of course not!"

"Or one of the 'ousemaids—what?"

"No, no; but somebody did."

"'Oo, then?" demanded Toby.

Lynn shook his head. He knew that someone must have slipped into the boot-room when his duties called him elsewhere, and deliberately broke the knives in the machine; and he guessed that it was done in order to get him into trouble.

Who had done it? Levison—Mellish—Gore—Crooke—No; Crooke was laid up in the school hospital. Levison, in all probability. But Lynn knew that it was useless to state such a suspicion without a particle of truth. One of the snobs at St. Jim's, who was irritated by his entry for the John Davis Scholarship, had played a trick on him. Lynn was pretty certain of that. But he was helpless. If he said so, it would only be regarded as an absurd fabrication, in excuse of his own clumsiness and laziness.

Truly the way of the ambitious boot-boy was set with thorns. Not only had he his own hard work to do for long hours—and hard study in his leisure moments—but he had the opposition of the fellows who did not want to see him come into one of the lower Forms of St. Jim's, and that opposition was evidently taking an active form.

"I'll 'ave to tell this to Mrs. Mimms," said Toby. "The value of them knives will be stopped out of your salary. I reckermend yer to chuck up Lating verbs, and stick to your business, young Lynn. It'll be better for you."

And Toby stamped out of the boot-room.

Lynn went on mechanically cleaning boots. But he glanced no longer at the list of irregular verbs pinned on the wall. He hadn't the heart for that now. He had a miserable feeling that Toby was right, and that he would do better to throw up his ambitions, and stick to the blacking-brushes and knife-machine.

CHAPTER 10. In Disgrace

GORE of the Shell uttered an angry snort.

He was sitting on the side of his bed in the early morning with his boots in his hand. He had been about to put his boots on, but he stopped, and was regarding them with a scowl.

"This is what comes of encouraging boot-boys in Latin and examinations and things!" he explained savagely. "Look at my boots!"

"And look at mine!" growled another fellow, holding up a pair of very dirty boots for inspection. "This is getting too thick."

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Tom Merry. He had put on a boot, and he drew it off again hurriedly, with a chunk of blacking sticking to his sock. His expression was a little queer. The most careless of bootblacks ought to have known better than to leave a chunk of blacking inside a boot.

Gore burst into a mocking and triumphant laugh.

"Getting fed-up yourself, eh?" he said. "I'm jolly glad you've got it, too. Look at my boots—smothered inside with blacking and outside with mud."

"Do you think I'm going to wear

boots in that state, because the giddy boot-boy wants to work for an exam? You're mistaken, then, I can tell you."

"I dare say the kid has lots to do," said Tom Merry. "No good grumbling over a little thing like that."

"I don't call it a little thing. That chap is paid to clean boots, and if he doesn't clean them properly he's a swindler."

"Oh, rats!"

"I know I'm not going to wear boots in that state!" snorted Gore. "I'm going to take them to the Housemaster."

"You don't want to get Lynn into a row," said Tom Merry, who was busy changing his blackened sock. "Let the poor kid alone."

"Blow the poor kid! You may like blacking on your socks, but I don't!"

"I must say it's a bit thick," remarked Kangaroo. "My boots are simply filthy. Old Linton will notice it if I go into the Form-room in them like this. I think we'd better give Lynn the tip to be a bit more careful."

"That's all right, Kangy," said Tom Merry. "But you don't want to complain of the kid and get him into trouble."

"Of course not," said the Cornstalk at once. "I can quite understand that he's been going a bit too strong on the Latin, and a bit too easy on the boots. Just a word to him will be enough."

"Quite so!" remarked Monty Lowther. "My boots are pretty dirty, too. Looks as if he had been rolling 'em about the floor instead of cleaning them. But I can give them a rub myself."

"Same here!" remarked Manners.

"You chaps may like cleaning boots," growled Gore. "I don't. I don't think I'm called upon to clean my boots when there's a chap employed for that purpose. I'm not going to clean my boots. I'll shove 'em on as they are, and if there's any remark on them, Lynn can explain what he's done it for."

"Might as well give 'em a rub," said Tom Merry, glancing at Gore's boots. The boots were certainly in a very dirty state, and Tom Merry was well aware how particular Mr. Linton was about the neat and clean appearance of boys in his Form. Gore had been sent out of the Form-room only a few days before to comb his hair.

"I'm not going to give 'em any rub," said Gore.

Tom Merry hesitated.

"Look here, Gore, it's the first time the kid's done it. Go easy!"

"Rats!"

"Well, I'll give 'em a rub along with my own, if you like," said Tom Merry, with an effort.

He didn't like the idea of cleaning Gore's boots, but he was very unwilling that Lynn should get into trouble for his carelessness.

But Gore was obdurate. It was a chance of "getting one in" at the obnoxious boot-boy who aspired to become a St. Jim's fellow, and Gore did not mean to let the chance go by.

"I'm going down in these boots just as they are!" he declared.

"You want to get the kid into a row!" growled Manners.

"Rats to you!"

"Look here, Gore—"

"Rot!" And George Gore settled the matter by walking out of the dormitory in his boots just as they were.

Tom Merry looked troubled.

He was concerned for Lynn, and he was beginning to wonder, too, whether he and the others had been quite wise in encouraging the Drudge to enter for the servitorship. To work up for a difficult exam required time and

JUST MY FUN



Monty Lowther Calling!

Hallo, everybody! Sea-bathing improves our mental powers, we read. The way to get a brine wave!

"Come on—hand over five hundred quid!" snapped the bank bandit.

"Sorry," replied the clerk, "you can only have small amounts on demand."

"That," said the artist proudly, "is a picture of a well-known peer."

"Really," exclaimed the visitor: "is it Brighton or Bournemouth?"

"And what do we call a man who goes on talking and talking when everybody wishes he would be quiet?" asked Mr. Selby.

"Please, sir," piped young Gibson, "a teacher!"

Buck Finn says his family have a marvellous family tree. But every tree has its sap!

Football story: "Who called the referee a chump?" demanded one spectator.

"Who called that chump a referee?" retorted another spectator.

Here's how to make a cigar box a cigar lighter: Take a cigar out of the box, and it will be a cigar lighter.

"My only stock-in-trade is

brains," boasted the self-made man. "Well," commented one of his listeners, "you've got a funny-looking sample-case!"

You should always run your eye over a lawn now and again, warns a gardening manual. A roller is even better, of course!

A novelist writes: "The next time I met my old friend I didn't know him—he was a hanged man." He had been given too much "rope," perhaps?

Story: "I want to buy a house which is at least a mile from its nearest neighbour," said the prospective buyer. "I see," said the estate agent, "you want to practise the simple life?" "No; the saxophone!" replied the buyer.

Then there was the romantic swain who loved an airwoman, and simply worshipped the ground she flew over.

"Man Riddles Tax Collector With Bullets," reads a headline. Ventilating his grievances.

I hear an American has spent \$500 trying to stop hiccupps. But we thought Americans liked putting a "jerk" into things.

Harry Noble said his digs weren't too comfortable at the seaside. He had more board than bed.

A reader says he has a chum at school who selects everything they do together. He even picks the quarrels.

Keep smiling, chaps!

thought, and they might have guessed that it would interfere with his duties.

Somehow they had supposed that Lynn would be too careful for that. But evidently he had acted as might have been expected—he was giving all his attention to the exam, and neglecting his duty. That was certain to get him into trouble below stairs, and it would be a sorry ending to his ambitions if he were discharged as an incapable servant, instead of winning the servitorship.

When the juniors went into the School House dining-room to breakfast the state of Gore's boots caught the eye of Mr. Linton at once. Mr. Linton was almost fastidiously particular in such matters, and as Gore was generally slovenly, he had had more than one passage-at-arms with his Form-master. So Mr. Linton's voice was very sharp as he called George Gore's attention to the state of his boots.

"How dare you come in with your boots in that condition, Gore?" the master of the Shell exclaimed acidly. "Is it quite impossible for you to learn habits of cleanliness, and, indeed, of common decency?"

"I'm sorry, sir!"

"You will take fifty lines—"

"If you please, sir, it isn't my fault," said Gore. "I couldn't help it. The boots are just as they were brought to the dormitory this morning. They weren't cleaned overnight, sir."

"What!"

"I'm sorry, sir, but I suppose I'm not called upon to clean my own boots before I come down in the morning," said Gore sulkily.

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Linton, with a frown. "If what you state is the case, Gore, I shall excuse you, and speak to the housekeeper about it. But

I am sorry to say that you are not always a truthful boy."

"The other fellows saw it, too," said Gore sulkily. "Tom Merry had to clean his own boots before he came down, so did Lowther and Manners and Noble."

"Is that the case?" asked Mr. Linton, glancing at Tom Merry.

He knew that he would get the truth from the captain of the Shell, if he got any information at all.

Tom Merry flushed uncomfortably. He could not possibly refuse to answer the Form-master's question, of course, much as he wished to screen Lynn's carelessness.

"Well, yes, sir," he said, "the boots weren't quite up to the mark, but it was nothing. I didn't mind giving them a bit of a rub."

"Not at all, sir," said Kangaroo. "We're not so lily-fingered as all that, sir. We're not such delicate little dears as Gore, sir."

"It was very improper for the boots to be taken to the dormitory in a dirty state," said Mr. Linton, frowning. "I shall certainly see to the matter! In the circumstances, Gore, I shall excuse you, but immediately after breakfast go to the boot-room and ask the boot-boy to clean your boots."

After breakfast Gore presented himself in the boot-room. Toby and Lynn were there, and Toby was growling—as usual. More knives had been broken in the machine, and some spoons had been lost, and Toby was getting fed-up.

"Here, young shaver, clean my boots!" exclaimed Gore, striding in. "And if you send them back dirty again you'll get the sack!"

Lynn looked at him in surprise.

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"I cleaned your boots last night, Master Gore."

"Yes; and brought them back in that state!" sneered Gore. "Look at 'em! Do you call that a fit state to send a fellow's boots back in?"

"No," said Lynn quietly; "and I did not take them back in that state. They were bright and clean when I left them."

"And they walked about and made themselves dirty afterwards, I suppose," said Toby, in a vein of heavy sarcasm. "I'm sorry for this, Master Gore. It's all through young feller-med taking up Latin and things, instead of attendin' to his dooties!"

"I know that very well," snorted Gore. "If I were the Housemaster I'd sack him! How long are you going to be, Lynn? If you make me late for chapel, you'll hear about it!"

Lynn, without a word, and with a heavy heart, took his brushes, and Gore put his feet one after the other on a bench, and the boots were freshly cleaned. While the cleaning was going on Gore favoured Lynn with his opinion of him at some length. The boot-boy did not answer a single word.

Gore stamped away at last, leaving Lynn still silent, but quite as miserable as even Levison could have wished.

Then Toby started on his unfortunate victim.

"It's got to stop!" he said. "Breakin' knives in the machine, losin' spoons, and now takin' dirty boots for the young gentlemen to their dormitory. I wonder you ain't ashamed of yourself, I do really!"

"The boots were quite clean when I left them," said Lynn, in a low voice. "Someone has deliberately soiled them since."

"Oh, don't tell me blessed lies!" said Toby. "You're the biggest liar I've ever struck in my natural! You roll 'em out all day long. Who'd take the trouble to make the boots dirty, I'd like to know! Me, p'r'aps?"

"Not you, Toby."

"Then 'oo?" demanded Toby angrily. "How can I know? It must have been done after I left them."

"One of the young gentlemen, p'r'aps, jabin' you?" sneered Toby. "As if they'd descend to play jokes on a boot-boy. You'll 'ear of this, young feller-me-lad! I warn you!"

Lynn did hear of it. During the morning he was called into the House dame's room, and Mrs. Mimms gave him a piece of her mind.

Mrs. Mimms was a kind old lady, and she had taken a liking to the quiet, respectful lad, who was always industrious and obliging. But she had shaken her head when she learned of his entry for the scholarship, and she had warned Lynn in very plain terms that he was expected not to neglect his work for the sake of his new-fangled ideas.

But now it looked as if her forebodings had been realised with a vengeance. For several days the good dame had been growing more and more annoyed, with complaints from Toby, and breakages in the boot-room. Now she had received a visit from Mr. Linton, and some very sharp remarks, which she passed on to Lynn with interest.

Tom Lynn listened in silence.

It was impossible for him to defend himself, to say that he had not done what he was supposed to have done. Such a plea would have been brushed aside with contempt. Even Toby, who knew Levison's malicious nature, did

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not believe Lynn's contention. Mrs. Mimms was certain not to believe him. Indeed, she would probably regard it as a lie and a slander, and might report it to the headmaster. Lynn could not help smiling to himself that what he had to say would sound merely like a clumsy excuse for his own laziness.

So he did not speak. Mrs. Mimms ran on at considerable length, annoyed, too, by the boy's silence.

"If this goes on," she wound up, "you will have to go. You were a good servant before you took up this scholarship business, and if you like to be a good servant again, well and good. If not, I shall ask Mr. Railton to discharge you. Now you may go, and don't let me hear any more complaints about you."

And Lynn went in down-hearted silence.

CHAPTER 11.

Under a Cloud!

M R. LATHOM looked very grave when Lynn presented himself in the Form-master's study that evening for his usual coaching.

The complaints of Lynn had reached Mr. Lathom's ears, and, indeed, he had been greatly inclined to make complaints himself. For it was not only in the Shell that the boots had failed to reach the proper standard of cleanliness that day.

Levison and Mellish had appeared in class with extremely dirty boots, and in excuse had averred that they came to the dormitory in that condition, and upon inquiry, Mr. Lathom elicited the fact that Blake and D'Arcy and several other fellows had had to reclean their boots before they came down. Mr. Lathom was shocked.

It was no small thing for the Form-master to devote half an hour or an hour every evening to Lynn, and he had undertaken the task in the hope of improving the boy's chances in life; but if it resulted in making him neglect the work he was paid to do, evidently Mr. Lathom would have to reconsider the position.

Lynn read his expression easily enough when he came in, and his heart sank. He put his books on the table in silence.

"Before we commence, Lynn, I must say a few words to you," said Mr. Lathom, looking at Lynn over his glasses very kindly but very firmly. "I am pleased to see you so enthusiastic in your studies, and glad to help you in every way. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir, and I thank you," said the Drudge.

"But it appears that you have been neglecting your duties for the sake of your studies. Since you have so keen a desire for knowledge, it is unfortunate that you are not able to devote your whole time to study. Certainly such keenness would be very admirable in a member of my Form. But you must remember, Lynn, that you are employed to perform certain duties in this House."

"I do remember it, sir."

"You must not allow study to take

your attention from your work, which must always come first."

"I do my best, sir."

It was upon Lynn's lips to make an explanation—to tell Mr. Lathom the truth. But he held back the words.

What was the use?

He had no proof to offer. He could not even say for certain that he suspected Levison. There were half a dozen other fellows who might have served him this ill turn, and he could not point to any of them.

What was the use of making a vague statement that was certain to be disbelieved? He would simply be regarded as a liar. He knew it, and yet—

"Well, I hope you will always do your best, Lynn," said Mr. Lathom. "You



"Warrior marrer?" murmured Blake, as Arthur lay out," whispered D'Arcy. "Get up and come along with you."

have neglected to clean the boots, however. Boot-cleaning is as honourable an occupation as any other; and like all things that are worthy to be done, it should be done well."

"I always do it well, sir," Lynn broke out. "I've never left a boot in a dirty state after it's been in my hands."

Mr. Lathom elevated his eyebrows. "To judge by some of the boys in my Form this morning, Lynn, you are mistaken," he said dryly. "I may mention that even my own boots were in a far from satisfactory condition."

"I left them outside your door quite clean, sir."

"Come, Lynn!"

"Someone must have interfered with them afterwards, sir," said Lynn, feeling that he must speak, whatever the result. It was too bitter to be regarded as lazy and ungrateful by the man who had been kindness itself to him.

Mr. Lathom frowned.

"I can hardly believe that anyone

would have done such a foolish thing," he said. "I have heard that there are complaints of you below stairs—that you lose articles given you to be cleaned!"

"I have never lost anything, sir!"

"But the articles—spoons and forks and so forth—have disappeared."

"I know it, sir."

"If an article disappears while in your charge, Lynn, the natural inference is that you have lost it by carelessness."

Lynn was silent. What was the use of going on? Even as he made his denials he knew that they sounded like the vague and rambling statements of a servant caught in the act of carelessness and ready to say anything!

Mr. Lathom turned to the books.

"We will not say anything more

be found dirty again; more knives would be broken in the machine; more accidents would happen in the boot-room. Even now, while he was working with Mr. Lathom in the seclusion of the Form-master's study, it was quite probable that his enemy was at work somewhere doing him injury.

With those thoughts in his mind, the unhappy boy could not give his usual attention to the work, and Livy was difficult.

More than once his attention wandered, and he showed an unusual drowsiness, and once or twice he saw Mr Lathom's lips compress.

The Fourth Form master was beginning to think that he had overrated Lynn's abilities, and his character, too; that he had taken up the boot-boy under a mistake, when he was not in earnest.

That was a humiliating thought for the Form-master. He did not like to think that his judgment had been at fault, and he had been deceived in Lynn. But he was very nearly convinced that such was the case by the time the lesson had finished.

Instead of going on, as he often did, longer than the stipulated time, Mr. Lathom closed his book sharply at the end of the half hour.

"I think that will do, Lynn," he said coldly.

"Yes, sir, thank you," faltered Lynn.

He left the Form-master's study with his heart very full. Mr. Lathom shook his head gravely as the door closed behind the Drudge.

Lynn went downstairs with a heavy heart. Toby's voice, loud and angry, greeted him as he came into the boot-room.

"Oh! You've come back. 'ave you? Finished your Lating, hey, and ready to bust some more of the knives. And p'raps you will give me a 'int what I'm to say to Mrs. Mimms about that there cruet!"

And Toby held up the cruet for inspection. It was a handsome silver cruet, and it had been left in Lynn's hands to be cleaned and polished. Lynn had left it in the boot-room shining like a new pin. Now it was dirty and daubed with blacking, and twisted, as if it had fallen heavily on the floor, and perhaps been trodden on.

Lynn looked at it. His surmises had not been unfounded; while he was in the Form-master's study, his enemy had not forgotten him.

"I think that puts the lid on!" said Toby, with righteous indignation. "Do you know that there cruet is worth a couple of quid, young shaver, and 'ere I find it on the floor where you've been treadin' on it."

"I left it on the table," said Lynn heavily.

Toby sniffed.

"Don't tell me no more of your lies!" he said savagely.

"I'm goin' to take this 'ere cruet to Mrs. Mimms jest-as it is, and show 'er. I ain't goin' to 'ave 'er supposin'

as I've done it. And look out fer the sack, - young feller-me-lad! There won't be no scholarships fer you, there'll be the boot, sharp! Put that in yer pipe and smoke it!" And Toby marched off with the cruet, leaving Lynn utterly miserable and dejected.

CHAPTER 12.

Tom Merry & Co. Take a Hand!

"YOU fellows comin'?"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy asked the question, and he addressed the Terrible Three.

"That's according," said Tom Merry. "If it's the tuckshop, we'll come with pleasure. If it's a visit to your tailor we've got another engagement."

"Wats! I've been thinkin'—"

"Oh, draw it mild!" remonstrated Lowther.

"Pway don't be an ass, Lowthah, deah boy," said D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass severely upon the humorist of the Shell. "I've been thinkin' that we'd better give young Lynn a tip."

"He won't take tips," said Manners solemnly. "Cutis of the Fifth offered him a tip and he refused it."

"I am not wefewwin' to that kind of tip, you duffah. I should not dweam of insultin' Lynn by offerin' him a gwatuity, as you know vewy well. I mean a tip about his conduct. I think it's up to us to warn him not to neglect his duty for the sake of the exam, you know. I'm afraid he'll get into twouble, and that will muck up the scholaship. I am sowwy to see him gwowin' weekless, and pewwaps a word in season, you know, may buck him up."

"Well, it's not a bad idea," said Tom Merry thoughtfully. "I don't want to interfere in his affairs, but there have been a lot of complaints about him lately, and perhaps a word of advice would be useful to him."

"That's wight. As a mattah of fact," D'Arcy went on confidentially, "I don't like doin' it, but it seems to me to be necessary. I should like you fellows to come."

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Monty Lowther.

"Pway wemembah it is a sewious mattah, Lowthah, and don't make any of your wotten jokes," said Arthur Augustus warningly.

"I shall be as serious as a Dutch uncle, and as solemn as a boiled owl!" Monty Lowther assured him.

And the four juniors descended into the regions below the School House, and made their way to the boot-room.

Arthur Augustus had just raised his hand to tap at the boot-room door, in his usual courteous way, when he stopped, a very queer expression on his face.

"Bai Jove!" he murmured.

"What's the matter now, Gussy?"

"Listen, deah boys!"

The Shell fellows heard it, then; it was the sound of a sob in the boot-room.

"Oh!" murmured Tom Merry.

"I wondah whethah we'd bettah in-twude, in the cires?" D'Arcy murmured hurriedly. "Pewwaps the poor kid has been wagged by the house-keepah already."

"Or by Gore or Levison," said Lowther. "Better look into it, and if those cads have been worryin' him, we can put in ten minutes walloping them."

"Yaas, wathah; that's a good ideah!"

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ke him up. "That wottah Levison has just gone We shall find him in the boot-woom playin' his

about it, Lynn," he said gently. "I have only spoken as a warning to you. If you neglect your duties, you cannot expect to rise, that should be evident to any thoughtful boy. Now let us drop the subject. Let me see, where were we? You have brought your Livy?"

"Here it is, sir."

"Book xx, The Carthaginian War," said Mr. Lathom.

And they plunged into those ancient campaigns of Hannibal, and the supposed delinquencies of the boot-boy were dismissed from discussion.

But Lynn could not fix his attention upon his work as usual.

He felt that it was all up; his enemies had been too much for him. If nothing more happened, certainly things would go on as well as before. But he knew that more would happen. His secret persecutor was not finished yet. Tomorrow, the next day, the boots would

Tap!

There was the sound of a hurried movement in the boot-room, and then Lynn opened the door. There were very evident traces of tears in his face. His books lay on the table, where he had laid them after returning from Mr. Lathom's study. He was trying to control his emotion and to conceal the fact that he had been crying, but without much success. The chums of the School House made an elaborate pretence of not noticing the obvious signs of his face.

"May we come in, deah boy?" asked D'Arcy politely.

"Yes, please, sir," said Lynn.

The juniors, feeling decidedly awkward and uncomfortable, walked into the boot-room. Arthur Augustus coughed uneasily. It was plainly not a propitious moment for the kindly little lecture he had intended to deliver to the Drudge.

"Pway cawwy on, Tom Mewwy!" murmured the swell of St. Jim's, after an awkward pause.

"Ahem! We came here with you, Gussy."

"Not at all, deah boy! You've got somethin' to say to Lynn."

"You mean you have."

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Go it, Gussy!" murmured Lowther.

"Ahem! You see, deah boy, you were goin' to say, Tom Mewwy—"

"That I jolly well wasn't!" said Tom Merry promptly. "You were."

"Ahem!"

Then there was a pause. Lynn, gaining better control of himself, looked at them inquiringly. He did not speak; he could not trust his voice yet.

"Ahem!" murmured D'Arcy again.

"The—the fact, Lynn, deah boy, we've looked in to see how you're gettin' on, you know. How are you gettin' on?"

"Right as rain, eh?" said Manners.

"I—I was coming to see you, sir," said Lynn abruptly. "I—I've got something to say to you young gentlemen. I hope you won't think me ungrateful."

"Wats!" said D'Arcy. "You don't owe any of us gwatitude, so we could hardly regard you as ungrateful, deah boy. But what's the mattah, Lynn?"

"Pile in!"

"I must give up the scholarship exam."

"Bai Jove!"

"That's what I wanted to tell you, sir," said Lynn heavily. "It won't do. It won't work. I know you'll understand how sorry I am. But I can see now that it won't work."

"You mean that you can't win the study along with your duties, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus compassionately. "Is that it?"

Lynn shook his head.

"Get it off your chest, Lynn," said Tom Merry encouragingly. "We're your friends, you know, and we want to back you up. I suppose you've been getting into a row over the boots, isn't that it? Well, one swallow doesn't make a summer. You won't put your foot in it again like that. You won't do it again."

Lynn smiled miserably.

"I haven't done it at all, Master Merry," he said. "I suppose you won't believe me—"

"I shall believe whatever you tell me," said Tom Merry quietly. "I know you're as straight as a die!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I cleaned the boots all right," said Lynn. "They were meddled with after I'd left them. Somebody is making trouble for me, and, of course, I know

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why it is. It's to prevent my entering for the John Davis examination. I—I can't keep my end up, sir. Somebody—I don't know who—sneaks into the boot-room when there's nobody here, and breaks knives in the knife-machine, and—and loses things, and—and now there's a valuable cruet damaged, and Toby has taken it to Mrs. Mimms. It will very likely mean the sack for me. I can't keep my end up against that kind of thing. If I withdraw from the examination the fellow may leave me alone; otherwise, it means discharge."

The juniors looked at him in silence.

"I—I don't dare to get the sack," went on Lynn miserably. "The wages here are—are more to me than the scholarship or anything else. You young gentlemen don't understand how it is. My family is poor, and—and they need all the money I can spare. I can see now that I oughtn't to have



entered for the examination. I felt at the time that such a thing was too good to come true."

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus, after a long pause. "I—I didn't know anythin' about this, deah boys! I—I say, you know, that's a vewy queeah stow!"

"You don't believe me!" said Lynn bitterly. "Of course you don't! You can't believe that a St. Jim's fellow would be mean enough to try to ruin a poor drudge of the kitchen like me. But it's true. I tried to explain to Mr. Lathom, but he wouldn't even listen. Toby doesn't believe me. It's no good. I've got to withdraw from the examination, or be sacked!"

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry. "Honour bright, Lynn, this is the truth?"

"Yes, sir."

"I—I mean," said Tom hesitatingly, "you haven't got fed-up with the swotting for the exam? You don't merely want to get out of it?"

"I've told you the truth, Master Merry," said Lynn heavily. "I don't expect to be believed."

"But I believe you, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It's that

wottah Levison again. This is just one of his wotten tricks!"

"Have you seen Levison about the boot-room, Lynn?" asked Tom Merry.

"He wouldn't be likely to let me see him," said Lynn, with bitterness. "The cruet was damaged while I was with Mr. Lathom this evening."

"Then you think it's Levison?"

"I don't know, sir. Master Levison hates me—I don't know why. I'm sure I've never given him cause, but he does."

"I don't think even Mellish would be mean enough to do a thing like that," said Manners. "It's Levison, or nobody."

"Yaas, wathah! Let's go and find the wotten cad and bump him!"

"No good doing that," said Tom Merry. "He would deny knowing anything about it, and Lynn would be called a liar by the whole House."

"Oh, it's wotten!"

"We'll keep this dark, and look into the matter," said Tom. "If it is Levison, he's got to be caught in the act, and shown up. The miserable cad! He's played tricks on all of us, but nothing quite so beastly mean as this. It's Levison, if it's anybody, and we've got to catch him in the act, or there'll be no proof. It's no good making accusations that can be set down as slanderous."

"Yaas, that's so. Wely on us, Lynn, deah boy. We'll see you through, somehow."

"And don't say anything about giving up that scholarship, Lynn," said Monty Lowther. "You are going on with it. If Levison is playing these rotten tricks on you, we'll soon stop him."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I—I'm afraid it's gone too far, sir. There will be a row about the cruet, and—"

Lynn broke off as the door of the boot-room was thrown open. Mrs. Mimms came in with a red and angry face, the cruet in her hand. It was seldom that the majestic House dame paid a visit to the boot-room, but this time she had come with a purpose. The presence of Tom Merry & Co. somewhat disconcerted her, and she turned on them sharply.

"I shall be glad if you young gentlemen will not come here, keeping Lynn away from his work, and putting foolish ideas into his head!" she exclaimed, with asperity.

"Weally, Mrs. Mimms—"

"He is the worst servant in the House already. I am going to ask Mr. Raiton to discharge him."

"Bai Jove!"

"You needn't do that, Mrs. Mimms," said Lynn wretchedly. "I'll go if you want me to."

The boy's white, wretched face struck the House dame, and she relented a little. She was a kindly woman at heart, but she had a temper.

"You young gentlemen had better go," she said; and the young gentlemen accordingly went, feeling very much concerned for poor Lynn. "Now, Lynn, look at that cruet! You know it is valuable, and you have treated it as if it were so much dirt, out of sheer laziness and carelessness. I wonder you can face me afterwards."

"I didn't damage it, ma'am," Lynn faltered.

"Then who did?" asked Mrs. Mimms sharply. "Was it Toby?"

"I don't think so, ma'am."

"Then it was you—and it's disgraceful! Scholarships and nonsense—that's the cause of it," said Mrs. Mimms.

"Once and for all, you must put that stuff out of your foolish head! What is this paper pinned up here?"

"A—a—a list of verbs," muttered the Drudge.

"Take it down at once! Never let me see such a thing here again! Now, Lynn, you have one more chance, and I expect you to do better. Mind, the very next fault you commit you will be discharged! The very next!" said Mrs. Mimms, with great emphasis.

And she flounced away.

In the upper regions of the School House Tom Merry & Co. were discussing the matter with very grave faces. That even Levison would descend to such baseness it required an effort to believe—and yet they could not doubt the Drudge.

"It's this limit," said Tom Merry, setting his teeth. "It's the limit, even for Levison! If he isn't found out and stopped the Drudge will get the sack, and that will be the end for him. We've got to stop him."

"Yaas, wathah! The awful waseal!"

"We'll take a hand in the little game," Jack Blake remarked. "The cad is in our dorm, and we can keep an eye on him. And if we find him out—"

"No 'if' about it!" said Tom Merry decisively. "We've got to find him out. But keep it dark! Mum's the word!"

And that evening the Co. gave the matter a great deal of thought. Only their aid stood between the Drudge and dismissal. And they realised very clearly that so cunning a rascal as the cad of the Fourth would not be caught so easily. It was a task that was likely to tax all the faculties of Tom Merry & Co.

CHAPTER 13.

Gussy on the Watch!

AFTER lights out that night, there was one fellow in the Fourth Form dormitory in the School House who resolved to remain awake. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who made that heroic resolve.

It had been agreed that a watch had to be kept on Levison, so that he could be spotted in his next attempt to injure the victim of his persecution.

Then came the consideration that Levison would probably play his next trick that night, which was extremely probable, or, as D'Arcy put it, "extremely pwob."

To remain awake for the purpose of keeping a wide-open eye on the cad of the Fourth was rather a large order. The Shell fellows, of course, could not undertake it, as they were in a different dormitory. It was up to the Fourth Formers, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy nobly undertook the duty. How he would succeed in carrying it out was another question.

Not a word had been said to Levison on the subject. It was useless to put the cad of the Fourth on his guard. And that, of course, would have been the only result of speaking to him on the matter. An appeal to his better feelings was not likely to have any results, for the simple reason that Levison did not appear to have any better feelings.

But Arthur Augustus, although he regarded himself as being a perfectly secure depository for the most valuable secret, was perhaps not really the person most fitted to keep one.

He did not say a word to Levison about what the boot-boy had revealed, certainly, but his ferocious glance the next time he encountered Levison was so striking that Levison could hardly help noticing it. He asked the swell of the Fourth what was biting him—a disrespectful inquiry to which D'Arcy vouchsafed no reply. He left Levison with his aristocratic nose very high in the air, and Levison chuckled, and Percy Mellish, who was with him, looked puzzled.

"What's the matter with the ass now?" Mellish asked.

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"He was down in the boot-room this evening," said Mellish. "Perhaps Lynn has been pitching him some yarn. Only you've been letting Lynn alone lately. It was time, I must say. You were too rough on the poor beast."

"Do you want a boot-cleaner in the Fourth?" asked Levison, with a curl of the lip.

"No, I don't. Still, it's a bit below a fellow's dignity to keep on ragging a servant," said Mellish loftily. "Besides, he seems to be looking for the sack now without your help. They won't stand much more of his latest little ways, I fancy."

"That's so."

"By the way, you're not swotting much over the exam, Levison," Mellish remarked. "It's not so very far off now, and the Drudge is mugging away. You don't want to be beaten by the boot-boy?"

"Probably he won't be at the exam at all."

"Why shouldn't he?"

"Well, if he gets the sack, for instance."

(Continued on the next page.)



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"That's so; but I wouldn't leave too much to chance. Some of the fellows are very keen on egging him on. It would be a bit rotten if one of us got beaten by a filthy kitchen cad in an exam!"

"No chance of that. I shall get the servitorship all right," said Levison carelessly. "I could beat him hands down, anyway. And I'm not going to waste time swotting when there's easier ways of beating him."

"What easier ways?" asked Mellish, in surprise.

But Levison did not reply to that question.

He strolled away by himself, thinking. It was very likely that Lynn had confided his troubles to D'Arcy, and that D'Arcy suspected Levison of being the author of them—indeed, now he thought about it, Levison was pretty certain that such was the case. And so it behoved him to be very careful. He knew what treatment he had to expect at the hands of the Co. if he should be discovered.

While Arthur Augustus was keeping an eye on Levison, therefore, it appeared that Levison was keeping an eye on D'Arcy.

When the Fourth Form went to bed, D'Arcy did not remove his clothes. Levison did not appear to be observing him and D'Arcy considered it was better to keep something on in case he had to turn out suddenly to watch Levison. The October nights were cold.

Levison did not look once in his direction, but there was a grin on the face of the cad of the Fourth as he turned in.

Kildare saw lights out in the dormitory, and then Arthur Augustus set himself to his task of keeping awake.

The murmur of voices died away in the dorm, and silence reigned, and the swell of the Fourth found himself dropping into slumber.

"Bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy. "This weally won't do. I weally must not go to sleep."

He propped himself up in his bed on his pillows and bolster, and, with great fortitude, kept his eyes open.

Half-past ten struck from the clock-tower.

D'Arcy, in spite of himself, was nodding. But as the half-hour chimed out, he awoke again, and blinked in the darkness.

Then he gave a start.

Farther along the dormitory, in the direction of Levison's bed, there was the sound of someone getting up.

D'Arcy listened acutely.

Yes, there was no doubt about it. One of the fellows was getting up, and there was not the slightest doubt that it was Levison. D'Arcy was wide awake now, and all his senses were on the alert. In the darkness he could see nothing, but he could hear distinctly, and his ears were strained to listen.

Cautious footfalls crossed the dormitory to the door. The door opened and shut again.

Then there was deep silence.

Arthur Augustus was out of bed in a moment, dragging on his trousers. His heart was beating with excitement, and his eyes gleamed. He jerked Jack Blake by the shoulder, and startled him out of a dream in which he was kicking an impossible total of goals in a match with the New House.

"Groo-hoo!" murmured Blake.

"Warrrr marrer!"

"Wake up, deah boy!"

"Grooh!"

"That wottah Levison has just gone

out!" whispered D'Arcy—a whisper thrilling with excitement. "Get up and come along with me!"

"Sure?" asked Blake, sitting up in bed.

"Yaas, wathah! I was on the watch, you know!" chuckled D'Arcy. "We've caught the wottah this time! We shall find him in the boot-room playin' his wotten twicks."

"Good egg!"

It was not pleasant to turn out of a warm and comfortable bed in the cold and darkness of an October night; but Blake turned out manfully, and hurried on his clothes. The two juniors groped towards the door in the darkness, and went out into the passage, closing the door softly behind them.

The passage was dark, but from the stairs came a glimmer of light. At that hour there were many still up in the House.

"I suppose he's gone down to the boot-room," muttered Blake, with a shiver.

"Let's look there first, deah boy."

"Some of the servants are still up," said Blake. "We shall be seen."

"We must wisk that, for the sake of the Dwudge, old fellow."

"Oh, all right!"

By devious paths the two juniors gained the regions below, and reached the boot-room. Toby and Lynn were gone to bed, but in the kitchen the cook and a housemaid were chatting together. The two juniors moved quietly. They did not want to be seen out of the dormitory at that hour.

Blake cautiously opened the door of the boot-room. The interior was in darkness.

"The wottah's skulkin' in the dark!" murmured D'Arcy. "Stwike a match, deah boy."

"Haven't one!" growled Blake.

"Bai Jove! And I haven't, eithah, deah boy. It was wathah thoughtless of you, Blake—"

"Rats! Why didn't you bring a box of matches?" asked Blake crossly.

"I nevah thought of it. Pewwaps there are some here. I'm sure the wottah is here and can healh us speakin'. Levison, you skulkin' scoundwel, show yourself!"

There was the sound of a movement in the darkness of the boot-room.

"Bai Jove! There he is!"

D'Arcy sprang in the direction of the sound, collided with a chair, and stumbled, uttering a fearful yell.

"Ow—ow! Bai Jove! Yow!"

"Shut up, you ass! You'll wake the House!"

"Ow! I've barked my beastly shin! Ow!"

"It's a cat!" exclaimed Blake, as a dark form with gleaming green eyes shot past him in the darkness, and there was a shrill miaow. "My hat! Cooky's heard, you know! Cut!"

"Ow! My shin—"

"Cut, you dummy!" said Blake, in a fierce whisper.

"I wufese to be called a dummay—"

Blake grasped his chum by the arm, and dragged him out of the boot-room. He rushed D'Arcy along the passage just as the cook and the housemaid came along.

"It was only the cat!" they heard the cook say, as they fled.

Blake and D'Arcy did not linger. It was impossible to pursue any further investigations in the boot-room.

"Better get back to the dorm!" growled Blake. "If Levison's there, cooky will find him—and, anyway, we don't know where the beast is."

"Ow! My shin!"

"Blow your shin!" said Blake unsympathetically.

"It wasn't the cat!" came a voice from the distance. "The cat couldn't knock a chair over, Jane. Someone has been here."

"Buck up!" whispered Blake.

"My shin—"

"Do you want to be caught, fathead? It will be a licking for being out of the dorm if we're spotted. You can groan over your shin in the dorm."

"Weally, Blake, you unsympathitic beast!"

"Oh, come on!"

They reached the dormitory undiscovered, and were glad to get inside and shut the door. There D'Arcy sat down on his bed to rub his shin.

"We'll catch the cad as he comes back," said Blake, setting his teeth. "We'll collar him when he comes in, and make him explain where he's been."

"Yaas, that's a good ideah. I shall thwash him. My shin is weally vewy painful. It was weally quite idiotic of you to forget the matches, Blake!"

"Oh, rats!"

They waited for Levison—shivering in the cold. Two or three of the fellows had awakened, and they wanted to know what the row was about; but Blake replied only with grunts. He was not in a good temper.

Still no one entered the dormitory, and eleven o'clock struck. Blake was amazed. After the alarm below stairs, surely Levison could not have gone on with his nefarious work, whatever it was! Why did he not come back?

"What are you silly asses doing out of bed?" asked Lumley-Lumley, waking up. "Trying to catch cold?"

"We're waiting for Levison to come back, deah boy."

"Levison? Has he gone out?"

"Yaas."

"Then who's in his bed?" asked Lumley-Lumley.

"Nobody, deah boy. His bed must be empty, as he's out of the dorm."

Jerrold Lumley-Lumley chuckled.

"Then the pillow must be breathing exactly like a chap," he said. "There's certainly somebody in the bed next to mine, and that's Levison's."

"Gweat Scott!"

"Oh, you—your image!" said Jack Blake, between his teeth. "You've led me a dance for nothing, and the cad is in bed all the time!"

He groped about the dormitory for matches. As usual, in such cases, matches were difficult to find; but Blake discovered some at last. He groped towards Levison's bed, and struck a match and looked.

Levison was in bed, his eyes closed as if in slumber. His clothes were all neatly folded upon a chair, and showed no signs of having been disturbed. It was pretty evident that the cad of the Fourth had not been out of the dormitory that night.

"Are you asleep, Levison?" asked Blake grimly.

Levison breathed steadily.

"Put the match on his nose, deah boy. He's only pwetendin'."

"Good egg!"

Levison opened his eyes.

"Hallo!" he said sleepily. "What's the matter? What are you up for? Did you hear somebody, too?"

"Hear somebody?" repeated Blake.

"Yes; I woke up, and heard someone groping about the passage some time back," said Levison calmly. "I thought it might be some of the Shell chaps come to raid us, so I got up and

looked out into the passage. I couldn't see anybody, so I got back into bed."

Arthur Augustus' face was a study. He did not believe Levison's explanation; but it was clear enough that Levison had done as he said. Knowing that D'Arcy was watching for him, he had got out of bed, opened and shut the door of the dormitory, and gone back to bed again. The feelings of the swell of St. Jim's were too deep for words.

The match went out. Jack Blake deliberated for some moments whether he should commit assault and battery upon Levison on the spot, or go back to bed. He decided to go back to bed. He paused by D'Arcy's bed to give the swell of St. Jim's his opinion of him. That opinion took three or four minutes to deliver, and was couched in expressive language. Then Blake turned in.

"I will ovahlook your wemarks, Blake, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, from his bed. "I twust that you will apologise for them to-morrow. In the cires—"

"Are you going to shut up and let me have some sleep to-night, you burbling jabberwock?" came Blake's voice in sulphurous tones.

"I wefuse to be called a burblin' jabberwock. Levison has taken us in, and I must wemark that it was wathah silly of you not to guess that he was in the dorm all the time. You might have thought of lookin' at his bed before goin' off on a wild-goose chase!" said Arthur Augustus severely.

"You—you—"
"Pway let that be a lesson to you for the futuah, deah boy," said D'Arcy, with kindly fatherliness of manner. "Pway learn not to be in a huvw. More haste, less speed, you know—festina lente!"

"Will you dry up?"
"I have not finished yet. I was goin' to say—Ow! Ow! Yawoooh!"

Arthur Augustus was not really going to say that; but he said it because a pillow whirled through the air, and bowled him clean over.

"Now dry up, and let's get some sleep!" howled Blake.

"Ow! You uttah wottah! I wefuse to address a single word to you again!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I wegard you as a beast!"

And Arthur Augustus laid his head upon the pillow, and was soon in the land of dreams.

minah, Tom Mewwy, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Blow your minor!" said Tom Merry politely. "I'll put in Reilly, that will be all right. But Manners oughtn't to have wandered off like that, the ass!"

Monty Lowther drew Tom Merry aside as they walked down to the junior football ground.

"I fancy there's method in his madness, my son," Lowther remarked in a low voice. "He said something about being on the watch this afternoon."

"For Levison, do you mean?"
"Yes. And the Drudge."

"The Drudge has gone out," said Tom Merry. "I saw him go. Mr. Railton has sent him over to the vicarage with a message."

All thoughts of the Drudge and Levison were soon banished from the minds of the juniors. The School House juniors were playing Figgins & Co. of the New House, and the match was a very keen one.

Levison of the Fourth strolled down to the ground with Gore and Mellish to watch the game. After a time, however, he left his two friends, and sauntered away. Levison had other work on that afternoon.

"Hallo! Going in?" Mellish called out.

"Swotting for the exam!" Levison called back.

"Well, time you did!" remarked Gore.

Levison sauntered into the School House. But he did not go to his study.



By the knife-machine lay a heap of knives ready to be cleaned. Levison started on them with great industry. One after another he broke them in the machine. But the cad of the Fourth little knew that his treacherous act was being photographed by Manners!

CHAPTER 14.

Manners Does the Trick!

"WHERE'S Manners?"
"Where's that chump Manners?"

To which polite questions there was no reply. Manners had vanished into thin air, or at all events, seemed to have done so. And as Tom Merry & Co. were playing football that afternoon, and Manners was wanted in the team, there were inquiries for him right and left.

"I saw the ass go out with his camera soon after dinner," Kangaroo remarked.

Tom Merry grunted. If Manners had gone out with his camera on a fine afternoon, he was not likely to return till all his films were exposed. The enthusiastic amateur photographer of the School House placed his camera even before the great game of football.

"Lots of chaps you can put in," said Blake. "After all, Manners is only a Shell chap."

"Yaas, wathah! Why not play my

"All the more chance for Levison to play his rotten tricks."

"Well," said Tom Merry doubtfully, "he seems to have dropped that. It's days since he did it, and since he discovered that he was being watched, he has chucked it. Gussy gave the show away in the Fourth Form dormitory the other night, but it was good enough. It stopped Levison. He hasn't dared to play any tricks since."

"I know; but he might be only waiting for a chance. I don't trust him," said Lowther. "We know jolly well that he means to win the exam, and yet he isn't swotting for it. He can't beat the Drudge without working for it, unless he beats him by foul means."

Tom Merry nodded.

"Well, that's all right. I hope Manners will spot him if he tries the game again. If he does we'll overlook his standing out of the footer."

The House was deserted upon the fine half-holiday. There were three footer matches in progress among the various Forms, and the fellows who were not playing were watching the games. Levison looked for Toby, and spoke to him in a very friendly way.

"Busy, Toby?" he asked.

"Not very, Master Levison," said Toby, more civilly than of old. Levison had been in the habit of baiting Toby, but since the coming of the Drudge, it had suited his plans to be kind to the page.

"If you've got nothing special to do, you might do something for me," said Levison. "I've upset a bottle of ink in my study. I will stand you a tanner if you will see to it."

"Suttingly, Master Levison."

Toby went upstairs. Levison smiled softly; the page was occupied now for the next ten minutes. Lynn, he knew,

had gone out, and not likely to be back for some time. Levison cast a careless glance round him, and plunged into the regions below stairs.

He reached the boot-room unobserved.

The room was empty, and Levison stepped in quickly and closed the door behind him. If he was heard there from the kitchen, it would only be supposed that Toby or Lynn was there. And he did not intend to remain long.

The boot-room was well lighted by a window looking out upon a green patch of garden. There was a large rhododendron clump near the window, which was open. Levison cast a careless glance out of the window, and saw no one in sight. He did not waste a moment. He was quickly at work on the knife-machine.

He noticed that the position of the machine had been changed a little, bringing it directly in line with the open window, and full in the light; but he attached no importance to that circumstance.

By the machine lay a heap of knives ready to be cleaned. Levison started upon them with great industry. One after another broke in the machine, and the cad of the Fourth grinned as he laid the broken knives among the others.

He was only occupied five minutes at the most, and then he left the boot-room as cautiously as he had entered it.

He sauntered up into the School House, and made his way to his study. Toby was cleaning up the ink which Levison had purposely spilt for him, and when he had finished Levison handed over the promised sixpence. It was worth the small sum of sixpence to get his rival for the John Davis Scholarship sent away from St. Jim's, he thought.

Levison settled down to swot—in his way. He did not open his books. He took a yellow-backed novel from his desk, and lighted a cigarette, and sat down to smoke and read trash. That was Levison's method of swotting.

He yawned, and looked up as Lumley-Lumley came into the study, with a flushed face and gleeful manner.

"Beaten 'em!" said Lumley-Lumley.

"Eh?"

"We've beaten the New House," said Lumley-Lumley—"two goals to one!"

"Oh, the football!"

"Slacker!" growled Lumley-Lumley.

"Ass!" retorted Levison.

"Better have been watching the match than smoking filthy cigarettes!" said the other. "You've made the study whiff like a blessed tap-room! Grooh!"

"You used to be fond of a fag enough yourself!" Levison sneered.

"Before I became sensible and chucked it!" said Lumley-Lumley. "If you had the sense of a mouse, you'd go and do likewise! Are you going to smoke your way through the exam? Blessed if I ever see you doing any work!"

"Oh, I can beat a kitchen drudge easily enough!"

"I guess I wouldn't bet on that! Lynn has been grinding jolly hard, and the exam is pretty near now. It's a case of the hare and the tortoise; you'll wake up too late to win the race, I guess!"

"Oh, rot!" said Levison.

Tom Merry & Co. came in very cheerfully after the football match. They had beaten Figgins & Co., and it was another point in favour of the School House in their never-ending contest with Figgins & Co. Manners was in the study when Tom Merry and Lowther came in. There was a satisfied smile

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"I say, guv'nor, when you go down, have a look for my knife. It's got two blades and a corkscrew!"

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on Manners' face as he looked at his chums.

"Oh, so you've turned up again!" said Tom Merry.

"Large as life!" said Manners.

"How did the match go?"

"We've won: two—one!"

"Good egg!"

"Well, you didn't help," said Tom.

"What have you been doing?"

"Taking snapshots."

"Oh! Photographing the match?"

asked Tom Merry, with interest. "Did you get me when I scored the goal?"

"I haven't been snapping any old footer match. I've been doing interiors."

"Interiors—of what?"

"The boot-room."

Tom Merry and Lowther gazed at Manners in amazement. Manners was certainly a very enthusiastic photographer, and he took pictures of all sorts of places, and there were few corners at St. Jim's that he had not photographed, inside and out. But to take an "interior" of so commonplace an apartment as the boot-room seemed extraordinary.

"Off your rocker?" asked Lowther at last.

"Not quite. Will you come and see me develop my film? Latham's letting me use his dark-room."

"Rats! I'm hungry!"

"Let's have tea," said Tom Merry.

"You might have got it ready, as you've got nothing to do."

"Come and see me develop the films," urged Manners. "I've left it till you came in, because I thought you would be interested."

"Something wrong with your thinker, then!" sniffed Lowther. "I am chiefly interested in toast and eggs at the moment!"

"Better come!" said Manners.

There was something mysterious and impressive in Manners' tone, and the chums of the Shell gave him inquiring looks. They read the satisfaction in his eyes, the triumphant look on his face, and understood that there was something "on."

"Look here, what's the little game?" asked Tom. "What have you been photographing?"

"Interior of the boot-room, taken

from the clump of rhododendrons outside the window," said Manners cheerfully.

"Oh!" A light broke upon Tom Merry. "Anybody in the boot-room?"

"Yes; one person, using a knife-machine."

"And you were out of sight, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

Tom Merry gave Manners a thump on the shoulder that made him stagger.

"Bravo! Come on! Let's see 'em developed!"

"Ow! You needn't dislocate my shoulder, fathead!" gasped Manners.

"Buck up!"

Manners proudly led the way. The Terrible Three entered Mr. Latham's dark-room, of which Manners was allowed a key. Tom Merry and Lowther looked on keenly while their chum set to work. They understood now why Manners had missed the football match, and the clever trap he had laid for the cad of the Fourth, and they could only hope fervently that he had succeeded. They were intensely eager to see the negative.

They watched Manners keenly as he immersed the film. In the glow of the red lamp their faces were tense, and their eyes gleamed. There was an exclamation from all three as the figures on the film came into sight in the developer.

The interior of the boot-room was easily recognisable, and the knife-machine, and the figure bending over it, with a clear-cut profile.

In the negative, of course, the darks were lights and the lights dark; but, in spite of that, the juniors recognised the figure. The cad of the Fourth had a well-marked profile, with a prominent nose and a somewhat pointed chin, and the juniors would have known it anywhere. And there were three pictures, taken within a few seconds of one another, and each of them clearly showed Levison at the knife-machine.

"My hat!" gasped Lowther. "This beats it!"

"Oh, ripping!" murmured Tom Merry.

Manners removed the film from the developer.

"I've got to fix this," he remarked.

"It's too late to-day to take any prints, but anybody could recognise Levison from the negative. And if Lynn gets into a row to-day, it's up to us to reveal the giddy truth—what?"

"Hear, hear!"

The Terrible Three left the dark-room in great spirits. It was no business of theirs to give Levison away unless he had done something that was to be laid to the charge of the Drudge, as they were pretty certain he had.

They knew well the conditions Mrs. Mimms had imposed upon Lynn—at the very next fault he was to be discharged. Levison knew it, too, and, with heartless unscrupulousness, he had laid his miserable plans.

"But there will be a spoke in the wheel this journey!" said Tom Merry, as the Terrible Three sat down to tea in their study. "We'll keep an eye open, and if young Lynn is called over the coals, that is where we chip in!"

And Manners and Lowther said "Hear, hear!"

CHAPTER 15.

The Way of the Transgressor!

"LYNN, you young idgit!"

Toby's voice was sharp and raucous. Lynn turned towards him warily. He was polishing silver in the boot-room, with a clouded

face and a heavy heart. He had found the broken knives when he came in, and he knew what that meant. His enemy had been at work again, taking advantage of his absence, and of Tom Merry & Co. being occupied with the football match. And it was the end!

"Well?" said the Drudge.

"You're to go to Mr. Railton's study," said Toby. "I may as well tell you it's the sack. Mrs. Mimms was simply wild when she found you'd broken five more knives in the machine. This 'ere is wot comes of Lating verbs!"

"I did not break them," said Lynn.

Toby sniffed.

"Better tell that to Mr. Railton, or to the Marines," he said. "Mrs. Mimms has asked him to sack you. I may as well tell yer. And he's going to. You're to go to his study and get the boot."

"Very well!"

"Better 'ave stuck to business and let Lating verbs and scholarships alone," said Toby. "I'm sorry for yer, but you'll 'ave to go!"

Lynn made no reply. He left the boot-room. In the passage, as he went to the Housemaster's study, he encountered the Terrible Three. They were cheerful and smiling.

"Hallo! Why that worried brow, young 'un?" asked Tom Merry.

"I'm sacked, Master Merry!"

"So bad as that?"

"Yes. Mrs. Mimms has asked Mr. Railton to sack me, and I'm going to him now for it," said Lynn drearily. "They've found knives broken in the machine. It was done while I had gone out. But it's no good saying so; they don't believe me."

The chums of the Shell exchanged a joyous grin. Manners tapped the pocket where a little roll of films reposed.

"Buck up!" said Tom Merry. "They'll believe you this time. Rely on us. We'll see you through. We can prove what you say this time."

Lynn started.

"Oh, Master Merry!"

"We told you we'd take a hand in the matter," grinned Manners. "We've been doing it. Go to Mr. Railton and tell him the facts, and we'll back you up. Rely on us. It's all serene."

Lynn's face brightened up.

"I'll do as you say, sir," he replied. And he went on to Mr. Railton's study with a lighter heart.

Mr. Railton's face was very grave when Lynn presented himself. He was sorry for the boy, and he had been interested in him; but he had no choice but to accede to the request Mrs. Mimms had made. However deserving the boot-boy might be in other respects, if he was a careless and unsatisfactory servant, he could not remain in his situation.

"You know why I have sent for you, Lynn," said the Housemaster not unkindly. "Mrs. Mimms has complained of you again, and she wishes you to leave. I have no recourse but to discharge you. I am afraid you have allowed your ambitions to interfere with your duties. It is very unfortunate."

"But I haven't, sir!" said Lynn.

Mr. Railton made a gesture.

"I am afraid that I cannot listen to anything against Mrs. Mimms' statement, Lynn. These matters are entirely in the hands of the housekeeper."

"But Mrs. Mimms is mistaken, sir," said Lynn eagerly, "and if she knew it, she would not wish me to be discharged! Will you allow me to explain, sir? It won't take me many minutes; and—and this means a lot to me, sir!"

"I suppose it does," said Mr. Railton. "I am sorry for you, as I said. You may explain, if you like, but I cannot interfere with the House dame's decision."

Lynn burst out eagerly, passionately. Mr. Railton listened, with a face growing sterner and sterner, and interrupted the boy with a sharp gesture at last.

"I cannot listen to this, Lynn. I cannot credit for a single instant that a boy belonging to this school could be base enough to play such tricks upon a lad in your position; neither can I see what object he could have in doing so. You make this reckless statement without a particle of proof! I cannot believe you. I—"

Mr. Railton was interrupted. There was a sound of scuffling and bumping in the passage, and then the door was thrown open, and four juniors came whirling in. Levison of the Fourth was dragged into the study in the grasp of the Terrible Three.

Mr. Railton's brow darkened like a thundercloud.

"Merry, Manners, Lowther! How dare you! How dare you scuffle into my study in this unseemly manner! I—"

(Continued on page 28.)



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ADDRESS

WHO SAID THE AGE OF MIRACLES WAS PAST? BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER COMES AT LAST!

Wharton Is Not Pleased!

HARRY WHARTON of the Greyfriars Remove sat in his study with a letter in his hand and a cloud on his brow. Twice he had read through that letter, and at each reading his brow had become darker. It was not a long letter; being, in fact, written with military brevity. Other eyes than Harry's might not have seen anything to look troubled about in the epistle. But it evidently weighed upon the mind of Harry Wharton.

His hand, with the letter in it, rested on his knee, and he had fallen into a reverie, when he was startled by the sudden opening of the door of the study. A cheerful, sunny-looking junior came in.

"You here, Harry?"

It was Nugent of the Remove, Harry Wharton's best chum since the day he had come to Greyfriars.

Harry looked up hastily. Nugent's face grew concerned as he read his chum's expression. He came over quickly towards Harry.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What's the trouble? Can I help you?"

"I—I don't know. Read that letter."

Nugent, with some curiosity, glanced over the letter. It was written in a stiff, military hand, and ran as follows:

"My Dear Nephew,—I am coming down to Greyfriars to-morrow to see you. You have not written to me since you have been at school, but I am glad to say that I have received excellent accounts of you from Dr. Locke. I hope to find you quite reconciled to your life at Greyfriars.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"JAMES WHARTON."

Nugent glanced from the letter to the gloomy, troubled face of his chum.

"Blessed if I see what there is to worry about in that letter," he said. "Most of the fellows are glad to have a relation to come down to see them. It usually means tips, and sometimes a holiday."

Harry's face did not relax.

"I don't want either tips or a holiday through my Uncle James."

Nugent gave a whistle of comprehension.

"I see; you're on bad terms with him."

Wharton nodded.

"The letter doesn't sound ill-natured," said Nugent, glancing at it again. "He seems really to take an interest in you, and I shouldn't wonder if he were hurt at your not having written to him since you came to Greyfriars."

Harry Wharton compressed his lips.

"There was no need to write."

"Well, a chap sometimes does things that aren't really needed out of politeness," Nugent remarked.

Wharton looked at him quickly; but if Nugent was speaking ironically there was no sign of it in his face. He was perfectly grave.

"What sort of chap is your uncle?" went on Nugent.

"He is an Army officer from India. He seems to believe in ruling at home as if he regarded it as a native regiment. He was happy enough at home till he came."

"Ah, yes, I remember your telling me

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THE STONY FIVE!

By Frank Richards.

(Author of the grand long yarns of Greyfriars appearing every Saturday in our companion paper, the "Magnet.")

that Miss Wharton looked after you, and your uncle thought you were spoiled."

"He said so."

"Well, as a matter of absolute fact, Harry, you weren't the nicest sort of chap in the world when you first came to Greyfriars," said Nugent in his frank way.

Harry Wharton coloured. He was quite aware of that. He had had many faults when he first came to Greyfriars, and he had a good many of them still. More than once of late an uneasy suspicion had crossed his mind that, in those old, bitter disputes with his uncle, the fault had not been wholly on the side of Colonel Wharton.

With Harry Wharton & Co. stony broke, and the cupboard bare, Billy Bunter uses his own original method of raising the wind—a method that proves expensive for others!

"He hopes you're reconciled to your life at Greyfriars," Nugent continued. "You didn't want to come to the school in the first place, I believe."

"I was sent here against my will."

"And you cut up rough with the Remove," said Nugent, with a smile. "and you naturally had a rough time of it. But the Form have taken to you kindly enough now. You are cricket captain and looked up to as a leader. You can't say things aren't pleasant enough at Greyfriars now."

"Oh, I'm quite happy here!"

"Well, then," said the practical Nugent, "you see, your uncle was right in sending you here. You're glad to be here, and it has done you good. If he's an unpleasant rotter—"

Wharton flushed.

"Oh, he's nothing so bad as that, Nugent!"

"It seems to me, then, that you're

bothering about nothing," said Nugent. "Perhaps you've been a bit unjust to him."

Wharton did not reply. The same thought was in his own mind; and it was not a pleasant one. He had nourished his ill-feeling towards his uncle, thinking that he was in the right to do so. Now his ideas were insensibly changing; but it was not agreeable to feel that he had been unreasonable and unjust.

"Anyway, he's coming down," said Nugent. "You'll have to make the best of it."

"I don't see what he wants to come down for!" exclaimed Harry. "Why can't he let me alone? We parted on ill-terms, and we have nothing to speak about—why can't he let me alone?"

"Perhaps it worries him a bit to have parted with his nephew on ill-terms."

"Oh, rot!"

"Thanks!"

"I mean—"

"Oh, never mind! But really, Harry, you had better make the best of the matter, and not meet the old fellow with a scowl on your face. If he means well he ought to be encouraged, you know."

Wharton smiled slightly.

"Well, if he's civil I suppose I may as well be," he said. "But if he starts any paternal lecturing, or any crowing over me—"

"Give him a chance till he does," suggested Nugent. "Take the old chap under your wing and be nice to him. Take him round the school and stand him a feed."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I can't imagine anybody standing Colonel Wharton a feed. He is an old soldier and a regular martinet."

"Well, martinets have tummies, the same as the rest of us," said Nugent sagely. "and you may catch him hungry. Besides, he's an old Greyfriars boy, isn't he?"

"Yes, he was at this school about thirty years ago."

"Good! An 'old boy' is always easy to get on with. Cheer up, Harry, and we'll give the colonel a good time and you'll part the best of friends."

Harry shook his head.

"Is there anything else besides your little tips at home?" asked Nugent anxiously.

"Yes."

"Well, get it off your chest. What is it?"

Harry Wharton's face went scarlet.

"The colonel sent me some money at the beginning of the week to get some new cricket things—a bat and pads and gloves—"

"I know he did, and it was decent of him."

"Oh, it's my own money!" said Harry testily. "He's my guardian, you know."

"Well, go on. You've parted with your old bat, and you went out one afternoon by yourself and spent the money," said Nugent. "I have a pretty clear idea of what it was for, too. You got Hazeldene out of his difficulty with the moneylender."

"Never mind Hazeldene," said Wharton hastily. "The fact is that the money is gone, and I haven't got the things. Of course, I was at liberty to do as I liked with the money—it's not a question of that—but the colonel will probably want to see my new bat, and he will wonder. And then I—I—"

"What else?"

ANOTHER RIPPING YARN OF THE EARLY SCHOOLDAYS OF THE POPULAR CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS.



As Bunter looked at the postal order, his jaw dropped, and he gave a gasp like an expiring fish. "Look!" he said faintly. He held the postal order out to view. The chums of the Remove looked, and then burst into a roar of laughter. It was worth only a shilling!

"I haven't any watch now," said Harry uncomfortably.

"You pawned it at Dale on Wednesday?"

"Well, yes."

"My hat! Your uncle may get his back up over that, if he spots it," Nugent agreed. "It's considered absolutely rotten form for a chap to go into a pawnshop, of course, and it would mean a flogging if it were discovered by the Head."

"I had no other chance. It wasn't for myself that I wanted the money."

"I know. But it looks bad. If it had been in another week or two we could have raised the tin and tided it over," said Nugent. "It's rather unlucky the colonel coming down like this so suddenly, while we're still all of us broke. The only thing is, one of us will have to lend you a watch, and—"

Harry shook his head.

"I don't want to use any device to get into his good books. If he rows me I can stand it."

"Rats!"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, that you're a confounded ass!" said Nugent coolly. "There would be no harm whatever in keeping the circumstances from his knowledge, as you've done no wrong, and the matter need not concern him, anyway. But in allowing him to form a wrong opinion, and then refusing to explain, you act like a fool!"

"If that's all you have to say to me—"

"That's about all."

"Well, I—"

Harry Wharton was about to speak hot words, but he was interrupted. The door was kicked open and Bob Cherry, Billy Bunter, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, came into the study.

Cash Wanted!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring at Harry Wharton and Nugent. "What are you two duffers arguing about? We heard your voices in the passage."

"The loudfulness of the honourable voices was terrific," remarked Hurree Singh in the peculiar English he had learned before he came to Greyfriars. "Is it possible that the peacefulness of the study has been invaded by the ghost of discord?"

"By the what? Oh, the spirit of discord!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Well, it sounded like it to me. Wherefore the argument, chaps?"

"Oh, it was nothing!" said Nugent hastily.

Harry Wharton was silent, with knitted brows.

"I expect they're hungry," said Billy Bunter. "Fellows always start ragging one another when they're hungry. It's past tea-time and we haven't had tea."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"I shouldn't wonder. Wharton looks as if he's hungry for something—trouble perhaps. However, don't argue now; there's a serious question to discuss."

"What's the matter?" asked Wharton.

"We haven't anything for tea."

Harry made an impatient gesture, which Bob Cherry affected not to notice. He went on, looking at Nugent and Hurree Singh with a solemn visage.

"What's to be done? We can't do our prep unless we have grub; and we can't have tea in Hall. Wharton, having got us into this fearful position, how are we to get out of it?"

"I—how did I get you into it?"

"You had thirty bob from your uncle the other day, and you didn't

spend it on the cricket things, so, therefore you ought to be in funds," said Bob Cherry. "You are not in funds, therefore you are the cause of the present distressing scarcity in the study."

"The reasonableness of our Cherryful chum is terrific!" remarked Hurree Ram Singh. "What has our worthy chum to say?"

"Oh rats!"

"The ratfulness of our esteemed friend's reply is only equalled by the pigfulness of his manners!" purred the nabob.

Bob Cherry and Nugent chuckled, and Harry Wharton turned red.

"Oh hang!" he exclaimed. "I'm bothered about a letter from my uncle. That's what's the matter! Don't mind me!"

"Oh, that's all right! We don't mind you. It's not always pleasant to hear from your uncle," said Bob Cherry. "Does he hint that the ticket is up?"

"Eh?"

"And that the watch is going to be put among the unredeemed pledges if you don't buck up?"

"I was referring to my guardian, Colonel Wharton."

"Oh, I naturally thought you were referring to the uncle in Dale, who has taken charge of your watch."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

Harry Wharton, with a red face, quitted the study.

"The excitableness of our chum's honourable anger is great," the nabob remarked. "But the pressing business of the moment is how to raise sufficiently the breeze to purchase the grubfulness we require for teaful refreshment."

"And that's a jolly serious matter," said Billy Bunter, blinking solemnly.

at the chums through his big spectacles.

"I'm hungry."

"You always are, Bunter!"

"My postal order hasn't arrived."

"Go hon!"

"I was expecting it to-day for certain. It will probably arrive by the evening's post, but that will be too late for tea."

"I expect it will be too late for tea when it comes," agreed Bob Cherry. "It may be in time for a feed on your twenty-first birthday!"

"Ha, ha!"

"I really don't see anything to cackle at in that. I wrote to my cousin to-day in the city," said Bunter. "He gives me tips sometimes, and I thought he ought to stand something, as I haven't borrowed anything at all of him since the last holidays. I told him, if he sent me ten shillings, to mark it 'Urgent,' as we were practically in a state of famine."

"But he hasn't done it?"

"Well, there's been some delay."

"The question is, what's going to be done?" said Bob Cherry seriously. "We shall have tin again on Saturday. But we shall want a lot of it to wipe off the accounts we've run up at the tuckshop. They won't give us any more tick there. Are we going without tea?"

"Impossible!" said Bunter hastily. "I'm surprised at you suggesting such a thing, Cherry."

"Well, can you suggest anything?"

"I think it's up to you fellows to suggest something. I always do the cooking in this study, and you fellows provide the grub. It's an equal division. I'm ready to keep my part of the bargain. You fellows will have to find something for me to cook. I can't starve, you know."

"You never know what you can do till you try!" Bob Cherry remarked.

"I'm jolly sure I'm not going to try. Look here, Bulstrode has a good deal of money, and he often lent me little sums when he was in this study, before Cherry came. Can't you borrow something of Bulstrode?"

"Yes, we're likely to borrow of that cad!"

"I don't see that his being a cad has anything to do with it. That's his own look-out. What I want is something to eat."

"You'd better go and look for that postal order of yours, then," said Bob Cherry. "I knew there had been a letter for Wharton, and I was in hopes that there might have been something in it."

"His uncle is coming down to-morrow," said Nugent.

"Good! Is he the kind of individual one can touch for a feed?"

Nugent laughed.

"I don't think so, from Wharton's description."

"Still, you never know."

"We can't wait till to-morrow for our tea," said Billy Bunter. "Are you chaps going to raise the wind somehow?"

"We'll try," said Bob Cherry. "Come on, chaps, let's go round on a borrowing expedition, and see what we can do."

"The goodness of the wheezy idea is great. It is quite probable that we shall be able to perform the borrowfulness of the necessary cash."

"We'll try, anyway," said Nugent, not very hopefully.

And the chums left the study on the forlorn hope. Billy Bunter remained alone, with a serious wrinking on his

brow. But he could think of no means of raising the wind except borrowing of Bulstrode. And he had a painful feeling that that might mean a licking from the chums of Study No. 1, who were on bad terms with the bully of the Remove.

"But I'm not going to starve to please them!" grunted Bunter at last. "I'm jolly well going to Bulstrode's study, and chance it!"

And he went.

Bully Bulstrode!

"I SAY, Bulstrode—"

Bulstrode was sitting in his study working, when Billy Bunter's big spectacles glimmered in at the door. Hazeldene, who shared the study with the bully of the Remove, was looking out of the window, with his hands in his pockets. There was not much love lost between the study-mates, especially since Hazeldene had become on better terms with the chums of Study No. 1.

Bulstrode looked up irritably. "Hallo, Bunter! What are you bothering about?"

"I haven't had my tea."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Now, don't be a cad, Bulstrode. You used to lend me sums when you were in our study."

"It's a bad habit I've got out of," said Bulstrode. "Go and borrow of Bob Cherry or your inky friend from India."

"They're stony."

"Do they know you've come cadging to me?" asked Bulstrode curiously.

"I don't see why you should call it cadging."

"Do they know you have come?"

"Oh, no! They might lick me if they did, and I depend on you not to tell them that you are going to lend me ten shillings."

Bulstrode grinned.

"I certainly shan't tell them I'm going to lend you ten shillings, you Owl, when I'm going to do nothing of the sort!"

"Well, if you're short of cash, I could make five shillings do."

"Oh, scat! Get out!"

"Well, if you can't spare five shillings, suppose you make it one?"

"Clear! I've got my work to do!"

"Look here, Bulstrode! I'm expecting a postal order by the evening's post, and—"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"It will be for ten shillings. If you like to spring eight now, you can have the whole postal order when it comes."

"Rats! Get out, you young ass, or I'll lam you!"

"I think you're very selfish. I say, Vaseline, have you got any money to lend?"

"No!" snapped Hazeldene.

"I suppose you have given all of it to that Sheeny moneylender I saw you with the other day," said Billy Bunter.

"Fellows are so selfish. I wish you were back in our study again, Bulstrode. I always had enough to eat then. If you can't stand me any cash, have you got a pie or anything just for a snack?"

"I've got a ruler here," said Bulstrode, taking it up, "and I shall lay it about you if you don't clear out and leave me alone!"

"Don't be hasty, Bulstrode. I want to do a trade with you."

"In what way?" asked Bulstrode suspiciously. "Have you got something to sell? I heard that Skinner got a bargain off you in cricket bats the other day."

"Yes, I sold him a bat for five bob that was worth nine or ten," said Bunter. "It was knocked about, but it was a splendid bat, and Wharton had knocked up a lot of runs with it, I can tell you."

"Was it Wharton's bat?"

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha! If I'd been Wharton, I'd have collared the bat back from Skinner."

"Oh, Wharton wouldn't do a mean thing like that! Owl! What's the matter? Let go my ear—you're hurting me!"

"Am I?" said Bulstrode, giving the fat Removeite's ear a twist that made him wriggle. "I shall hurt you some more if I have any more of your cheek, you young porpoise!"

"Oh, please don't, Bulstrode! I say, I want to trade with you—"

"Are you selling Wharton's new bat?"

"He hasn't got his new bat yet. I've got a pocket-knife here I want to dispose of. It's got three blades, a corkscrew, a tin-opener, a file, and a gimlet in it, and I know for a fact that it cost ten-and-six!"

"Is it yours?"

"I've got it to sell," said Bunter evasively. "It would be a bargain for anybody at five bob, Bulstrode."

"I dare say it would," said Bulstrode, looking at the knife. "I'll spring three-and-six for it, if you like."

"Oh, don't be mean, Bulstrode! Owl! Let go my ear! If you won't go the five bob, I'll take three-and-six for it. Hand it over!"

Bulstrode grinned and handed over the three shillings and sixpence, and pocketed the knife.

"That knife belongs to Bob Cherry, Bunter," said Hazeldene. "You had no right to sell it."

"I have to raise funds for feeding in the study," explained Bunter. "Of course, I shall tell Cherry; otherwise it would not be perfectly honest to sell his knife."

"You ought to have told him first."

"Oh, no! He would have been bound to raise some objection. It's more satisfactory in every way to tell him afterwards."

"You young rascal!"

"I wish you wouldn't call me names, Vaseline. I don't like it. Besides, you are a rotter yourself, you know, and you've no right to start preaching at people."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bulstrode, laughing. "He has you there."

Hazeldene gave a mirthless laugh.

"I suppose he has," he said. "I haven't any right to preach, that's certain. All the same, you oughtn't to have bought it, Bulstrode."

"Looking for a thick ear?" inquired Bulstrode.

Hazeldene quitted the study without replying. Billy Bunter followed and took his way towards the school shop. This little establishment, within the walls of Greyfriars, was kept by Mrs. Mimbble, the wife of the Head's gardener.

Billy Bunter was one of Mrs. Mimbble's most extensive customers, though he had a rather irritating little way of running up accounts and never settling them. Mrs. Mimbble had of late shown herself rather sharp on that point, and she had warned Billy Bunter that it was no use his showing himself in the shop again till he was prepared to settle several outstanding accounts.

But Bunter had great faith in the efficacy of a persuasive tongue and the sight of ready money. He entered the school shop with the money jingling in

his pocket. Mrs. Mimble looked at him rather distrustfully.

"I've got nothing for you, Master Bunter," she said.

Billy Bunter clapped down the three-and-six on the counter.

"I've got ready money to pay for what I have now, Mrs. Mimble," he said. "The old account can stand over till my postal order comes."

"I don't believe your postal order will ever come."

"Oh, really, Mrs. Mimble!"

"What do you want now?" asked the good dame.

"I'll look over the things. If I pay three-and-six you won't mind my having seven shillings' worth, will you, and let the rest stand over till to-morrow?"

"Yes, I will!" said Mrs. Mimble with emphasis. "What are you doing now? You are eating my jam tarts, you greedy boy!"

"I'm sorry," said Bunter, his mouth full of tart. "If I'm going to have the trouble of selling people's pocket-knives to raise the wind, I've a right to fill some of this emptiness before I get tea, I think. You wouldn't like me to fall down dead in your shop, would you, Mrs. Mimble?"

"You might if you eat so quickly."

"Perhaps you're right, and I shouldn't start with jam tarts," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully. "I'll have a rabbit pie to begin with and some of those pork pies."

The rabbit pie disappeared in a few minutes, the pork pies followed; and then Billy Bunter, with the keen edge off his appetite, looked longingly at the jam tarts. He took one just to taste, and another because the first was so nice, and a third absent-mindedly; a fourth and a fifth followed almost unconsciously. Then Mrs. Mimble's hand rose warningly.

"You must not take any more, Master Bunter."

"No," said Bunter, with a heavy sigh, "I suppose not, Mrs. Mimble. I must get something for the other fellows. Will you give me the change out of the three-and-six in bread and cheese, please?"

"There isn't any change. What you have had comes to four shillings and threepence," said Mrs. Mimble severely.

Billy Bunter gasped.

"You're joking!"

"I am not. You have been eating ever since you came into the shop. You owe me ninepence, and you must pay it."

"It will have to go down on the account," said Bunter. "I haven't any cash, and I don't suppose I shall be able to raise any until my postal order comes."

And Billy Bunter drifted out of the tuckshop.

"Hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Nugent, slapping him on the shoulder. "We've been looking for you, Bunter. What have you been doing in Mrs. Mimble's shop?"

"Gorging!" said Bob Cherry. "You can see that by the look of him."

"The tracefulness of the jam on the honourable big mouth of our worthy chum is distinctly clearful," remarked Hurree Singh.

Nugent shook the Owl.

"Where did you get the cash from, Bunter?"

"I wish you wouldn't shake me like that, Nugent. I don't feel like being shaken after eating rabbit and pork pies and jam tarts."

"Rabbit and pork pies and jam tarts!" howled Bob Cherry. "Has your postal order really come at last, you young cannibal, and you've blued it all on yourself?"



"You've sold my pocket-knife!" roared Bob Cherry; and he seized Billy Bunter by the shoulders and shook him violently. "Ow—ow!" gasped the Owl. "Stop it, Cherry! It makes me feel uncomfortable inside!"

"No, it hasn't come yet, Cherry—though I'm really expecting it by every post," said Bunter. "I sold a pocket-knife to Bulstrode for three-and-six."

"Whose pocket-knife?" asked Bob Cherry suspiciously.

"You see, Cherry it was up to me to get something for tea—"

"You've sold my pocket-knife!" roared Bob Cherry, seizing the fat junior by the shoulder and shaking him violently.

"Ow, ow!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Stop it, Cherry! It makes me feel very uncomfortable inside!"

"You young villain!" said Bob Cherry. "How much did you get for the knife?"

"I told you—three-and-six."

"And it cost my uncle ten-and-six! Why, I—"

"Well, I had to raise the wind somehow to get tea," said Bunter in an aggrieved tone. "I never expect thanks from you fellows, but I think you might be civil."

"You—you—you—"

"Oh, never mind!" said Nugent, laughing. "When we're in funds we'll get the knife back. I'm famished now, and if Bunter has got tea we'll forgive him. Let's go and feed."

"The goodness of the wheeze is great."

"Oh, well, come along!" said Bob Cherry. "Where is the grub, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter turned red.

"You see, I was so hungry I thought I ought to have just a little snack before getting tea, to keep up my strength—"

"Well, no harm in that. But where's the grub?"

"I—I— You see, you fellows, I was fearfully hungry, and it ran up almost without my noticing it. And—and, as a matter of fact—"

"Where's the grub?"

"There isn't any!"

"Isn't any?" shouted three voices together.

"No. It's—it's all gone. You see, I was so famished, I really didn't notice—"

"You young cormorant!"

"I owe Mrs. Mimble ninepence, too," said Bunter. "The things came to four-and-threepence. The worst of it is that I'm still hungry."

What the chums of the Remove would have said will never be known, for just then there was an interruption. Skinner of the Remove dashed up excitedly.

"Bunter, there's a post office messenger asking for you."

"What?"

"It's your postal order at last, Bunter."

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It's come!"

Billy Bunter glowed with satisfaction.

"I knew my cousin would turn up trumps!" he exclaimed. "He's rather a practical joker, you know, and he thought it funny, I dare say, to keep me waiting."

"Can't understand that sort of fun," said Bob Cherry. "But I suppose his heart has softened, as he has sent the thing down by messenger."

"Yes, rather! Now, you chaps, you'll see that I keep my word. I'll stand the most ripping feed we've ever had in Study No. 1!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Come along!"

And the Removites hurried down to the gates, where a lad in uniform was waiting.

The Postal Order!

"M. R. BUNTER!"
 "Here I am!" beamed Billy Bunter. "You have an express letter? Hand it over at once, please!"

"Yes, sir. One-and-six to pay, please."

"But there can't be anything to pay, you know. That letter is from my cousin, and he wouldn't leave it to me to pay for."

The lad in uniform grinned.

"One-and-six to pay, please," he said again.

"Oh, hang it!" said Bob Cherry. "If there's a postal order for ten shillings in the letter, you needn't grudge eighteenpence, Bunter."

"I don't, Cherry; but, you see, I haven't it. Have you got any money, you fellows?"

"Not a penny," said Bob Cherry.

"Not a red cent," said Nugent.

"The brokefulness of myself is terrific," said the nabob sadly.

"Oh, I say, that's too bad!"

"One-and-six to pay, please!"

"You're quite sure there isn't a mistake, my lad?"

"Yes, sir. I've had to bring this over from Dale."

"It was careless of my cousin; but I suppose I oughtn't to grumble at a chap who is sending me ten shillings," said Billy Bunter.

"Are you going to take the letter, sir?"

"Yes, of course! It's for me!"

"One-and-six to pay, please!"

"Well, hand it over, then. I'll open it and change the postal order, and then I can square with you."

The messenger-boy shook his head.

"Can't hand it over, sir, without the money."

"Look here! Don't be a young ass! There's a postal order in that letter for me valued ten bob, and as soon as I change it—"

"Not allowed, sir!"

"Look here—"

"Are you going to take the letter, sir?"

"Of course I am!"

"I've got to get back to Dale Post Office, and—"

Bunter ran his fingers through his hair in despair. What was to be done? It was a really desperate situation. There was the envelope containing the postal order, and here he was, broke to the world, unable to lay hand on the prize for want of a paltry eighteenpence.

To allow the letter to go back to Dale Post Office was not to be thought of. But there really seemed to be no alternative.

"My hat!" groaned Bunter. "What can we do? Don't be in a hurry,

messenger. You've got lots of time to get back to Dale Post Office. This is a serious matter."

He went through his pockets again. He took out a little penknife with a silver blade, and turned it over in his fingers.

"Yates offered me eighteenpence for this the other day," he said. "It's worth double, but for the sake of the ten bob—"

"There's Yates," said Bob Cherry, with a nod towards a junior who was passing with his cricket bat under his arm. "Now's your chance, Bunter!"

"Hi, Yates—hi! Come here, will you?"

The Remove came towards them.

"What do you want, Bunter?"

"Will you give me two bob for my knife?"

"No, I won't!" said Yates promptly.

"Then I'll take the one-and-six you offered me the other day," said Bunter.

"This kid has a letter for me, and he won't give it up unless I pay first."

"Knows you, perhaps," suggested Yates.

"Oh, I say, Yates! Have you got that eighteenpence?"

"Yes; here it is. Hand over the knife first."

"Here it is! Thank you! It's worth double!"

But Yates was already gone, and Bunter was left with a shilling and sixpence in his palm.

"That's rather rotten, you fellows, selling a penknife for half its value."

"Yes; it happens to be your own knife," Bob Cherry remarked.

"Still, it's worth it. Hand over that letter, young 'un!"

"One-and-sixpence to pay, please!"

"Here you are. Now let me have the letter, for goodness' sake!"

The money was paid over, and the letter given up. The messenger-boy went down the road whistling. Billy Bunter turned the letter over in his hands gloatingly. His plump, spectacled countenance was glowing with satisfaction.

"Well, aren't you going to open it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes; but I say—"

"Don't say anything, old chap. Open the letter."

"But I say, you fellows have made a lot of jokes about my postal order. You've always been hinting that it would never come. Well, here it is."

"The exactfulness of the statement is terrific," said the nabob. "But the factfulness remains that we have not yet beheld the actuality of the postal order. The letterful communication might contain otherfulness."

"I'll jolly soon show you that!" said the Owl of the Remove.

He slit open the envelope. There was no letter inside, but there certainly was a postal order. It was folded, with the face inside, but the colour could be seen through the flimsy paper.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It really is a postal order. What bounder was it who said that the age of miracles is past?"

Billy Bunter opened out the postal order. Then a change came over his gleeful face.

His grin disappeared, his jaw dropped, and he gave a gasp like an expiring fish.

"Oh!"

"What's the matter?"

"Look!" said Bunter faintly.

He held the postal order out to view.

The chums of the Remove looked and stared, and then burst into a roar of irresistible laughter, for upon the postal order was printed, plain to every eye, "One Shilling."

Hazeldene to the Rescue!

"ONE shilling!" Billy Bunter was staring at the words.

"One shilling!" gasped Bob Cherry, roaring with laughter. "My only hat!"

"And it cost Bunter eighteenpence!" gasped Nugent.

"My solitary turban!" ejaculated Hurree Singh. "The disappointfulness is great, but the jokefulness is terrific. Ha, ha, ha!"

"One shilling!" murmured Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The rotter! If it isn't a mistake it's a rotten joke! I don't know what you fellows are cackling at. There's nothing funny in this to me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You said your cousin was a practical joker. If this is a sample of his practical joking I'm glad he's your cousin and not mine."

"By Jove, yes!" said Nugent. "If I had a practical joker like that in the family I should get rid of him regardless of funeral expenses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was still staring ruefully at the postal order. The little joke of his humorous cousin did not appeal to his sense of what was funny in the least.

"Well, this is a sell!" he grunted at last. "Where's that messenger kid? Has the young rotter gone? I'm going to have my money back!"

"Ha, ha! You can't, especially now you've opened the letter."

"It's a swindle. Yates ought to give me back my knife; but he's a selfish chap. I think it's rotten all round. I don't even get any sympathy from you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't like cackling over a fellow's misfortunes. I'm hungry. I suppose I can get Mrs. Mumble to change this order. A shilling is better than nothing."

"It will get bread-and-butter and cheese," said Bob Cherry. "We'll go with him and change it, you chaps, and see that he doesn't scoff it up!"

"I say, you fellows, I think you might trust me—"

"Yes, we're sure to, after your scoffing up my pocket knife," said Bob Cherry. "Take his other arm, Frank."

"Right ho!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry and Nugent affectionately took an arm each of Billy Bunter and walked him off towards the tuckshop.

"There is no arm for me to take," Hurree Singh remarked, "but I shall be pleased to help our esteemed friend along footfully."

"Ow!" grunted Billy Bunter. "Keep your great hoofs off my trousers, you inky beast!"

"Then you had better assume the hurryfulness," suggested the nabob. "So long as you are nearfully reached with my boot you are in danger of experiencing the kickfulness."

"Chuck it! I'm going!"

And Billy Bunter kept on the run to

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the tuckshop. Mrs. Mimble greeted the sight of her best customers with an expansive smile. The smile grew a little less expansive when she learned that they had only a shilling postal order to change.

"Is this your postal order, Master Bunter?"

"Yes; not really the one I was expecting, but another," said Bunter. "Will you change it for me, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Certainly."

Mrs. Mimble put the postal order away in a drawer and pushed threepence over the counter towards Bunter.

"What is that for, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Your change, Master Bunter."

"But it was a postal order for a shilling. What do you mean by giving me threepence for a shilling postal order?"

"You remember the ninepence a little while ago, Master Bunter? You promised it when your postal order came."

"My—my only hat! But I meant another postal order—not this one."

"There is your change, Master Bunter," said the dame, with evident determination in her face. "And when you get another postal order please do not forget that you owe me ten shillings."

"But really, Mrs. Mimble—" stammered the dismayed Owl.

"Can I get you anything, young gentleman?"

"Rather!" said Bob Cherry. "If you don't mind chalking it up over Saturday, Mrs. Mimble."

The dame shook her head.

"Well, we'd better get all we can for threepence," said Bunter. "Are those new cream puffs you've got there, Mrs. Mimble?"

"Yes; I made them to-day. They're a penny each."

"H'm! I'll taste one!"

Bunter tasted one, and it disappeared in a moment. Almost before the chums of the Remove knew what he was doing he had bolted a couple more.

"Come along, you chaps!" he said. "They're nice, but three wouldn't go round, so I know you don't mind. Mrs. Mimble has acted meanly, and in future I shall transfer my custom to the tuckshop in the village. Let's get out."

"You young cormorant!"

"It's no good calling me names, Bob Cherry. It doesn't improve matters in the least. Hasn't any bounder here been able to raise any tin?"

"Not a sniff of it."

"Where's Wharton? Perhaps he's had better luck."

"Oh, he went off in a huff! He's not thinking about tea," said Bob Cherry.

"Never mind, here he is," said Billy Bunter, spotting Harry crossing the Close with his head bowed a little in thought, and his hands in his trousers pockets. "Let's see whether he's managed it, anyhow. I say, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton stopped for them to come up. There was still a shade on the brow of the captain of the Remove.

"Hallo, Wharton! Have you had any luck?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, have you been able to raise any tin?"

"I haven't been trying to."

Billy Bunter stared at him in surprise and indignation.

"You haven't been trying to—when you know it's nearly an hour past tea-time, and there's nothing in the larder. Are you off your onion?"

"Oh, bother!" said Harry.

"I suppose Cherry was right when he said you had gone off in the sulks."

Harry flushed crimson and darted a quick glance towards Bob Cherry. The latter turned red, too.

"You young idiot!" exclaimed Bob. "I didn't say anything of the kind. I said Wharton had gone off in a huff."

"Well, I don't see much difference myself. Here we've been hunting high and low for some tin and Wharton hasn't even thought about it. What have you done for your own tea, Wharton?"

"I haven't had any."

"Well, you want some, I suppose?"

"I suppose so. It doesn't matter."

"When I hear a fellow say a meal doesn't matter I can't help feeling that there's something very wrong with him somewhere," said Bunter. "However, if you haven't any tin, it's no good talking. Let's get over to the Hall, you chaps; it's better to have the school tea than nothing."

"Tea's over by this time," said Nugent.

"Oh, I never thought of that! We may be in time to get something, though."

Bunter cut off at top speed. The chums of the Remove followed more slowly, Harry Wharton joining them after a rather doubtful glance at Bob Cherry. Bob, however, seemed to be quite unconscious that there had been any friction.

They reached the door of the dining-hall, to find that Nugent's words were correct. Tea was over and the tables cleared. Billy Bunter was standing in the doorway, the picture of dismay.

"We're done," he said hopelessly.

"Well, you've had a big gorge not

much over an hour ago," said Bob Cherry. "You haven't anything to grumble at. But we—"

"You don't get as hungry as I do."

"Hallo, you chaps!" It was Hazeldene's voice. The junior who had always been called the cad of the Remove came towards them. "Anything the matter? Have you had your tea?"

"No," said Bob Cherry, with a grimace.

"Good! I—"

"You may call it good, Vaseline," said Billy Bunter. "I don't call it anything of the kind. I'm famished."

"I was going to ask you fellows if you would come to tea with me," said Hazeldene. "I've had a remittance from my governor, and I want to stand a feed, if you'll accept. What do you say?"

Bob Cherry hugged him round the neck so suddenly that he staggered.

"Here, I say!"

"Corn in Egypt!" exclaimed Nugent. "Will we have tea with you? Well, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"We'll be jolly glad to come," said Harry Wharton, with a curious look at Hazeldene.

"And we'll help you with the shopping, if it isn't over yet," said Bob Cherry. "And Billy Bunter will attend to the cooking department."

"I'll be jolly glad to," said Bunter. "Of course, you don't mind if I have a snack first, to keep me up while I'm doing the cooking?"

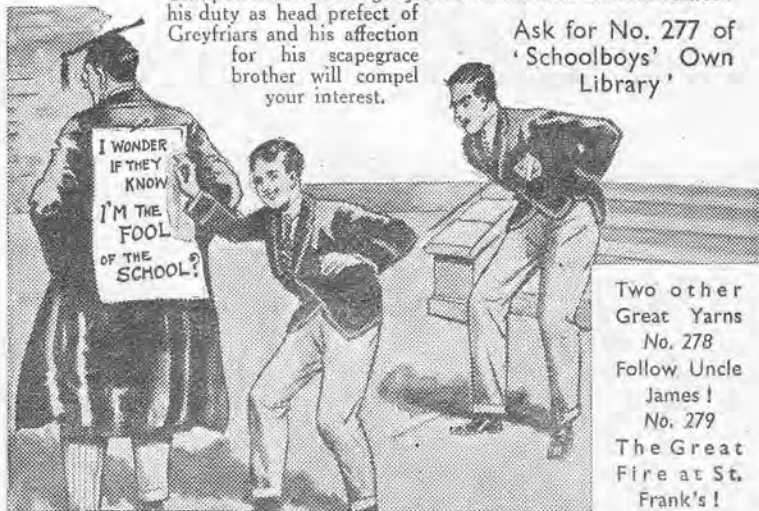
Hazeldene laughed.

"Certainly not, Bunter. You chaps won't mind having the feed in your

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study instead of mine, will you? But—strode, is a boast, and—

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry. "You shall stand the feed where you like—on top of the clock tower if you please. The chief thing is to stand it quickly."

"Come on, then, and we'll do the shopping," laughed Hazeldene.

And the chums of the Remote, greatly relieved in their minds, followed Hazeldene to Mrs. Mimbles's shop; and though the good lady looked glum when they entered, she soon melted at the sight of five-shillings in Hazeldene's hand. Ten minutes later the sorely tried, hungry Removises were feasting.

Hazeldene Inquires!

HAZELDENE "did" that tea in really great style. "With five shillings to expend, with Bob Cherry to help him expend it in the most judicious manner, and Billy Bunter to act the part of chef, and all the juniors as hungry as hunters, the feed was bound to be a success."

"Well, this is all right," said Bob Cherry, as he filled up his cup with tea for the fourth time. "Hazeldene, you are a friend in need, and here's to you!"

"Yes, ratherfully!" exclaimed Harry Japset Ram Singh, lifting his teacup. "Here is to your honourable self, my worthy and esteemed chum. We were famishing for want of this foodful refreshment, when you nobly came to the rescue."

Hazeldene laughed.

"It hasn't been a bad feed," said

Billy Bunter, with the air of a critic. "I've seen better and I've seen worse. But what is Wharton looking down in the mouth for?"

Harry Wharton started.

"Oh! I'm not looking down in the mouth," he said.

"Oh, aren't you? I dare say I was mistaken, and you were only thinking about your uncle coming down to-morrow."

Hazeldene glanced quickly at Harry.

"Your uncle is coming down to-morrow?" he asked.

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"Yes."

"That will be jolly for you!"

"Ye-es."

Hazeldene said no more. But when tea was over, and the juniors separated, he followed Billy Bunter down the passage and drew him into a quiet corner.

at the photographs and judge for myself."

Manners handed out the roll of films. "It was too late to-day to take prints, sir, but I can get prints to-morrow."

Mr. Railton gazed steadily at the pictures on the film against the light. It was quite easy to recognise Levison's strongly marked profile on the films.

"There is no need to wait for the prints," he said. "The negative is quite clear. Levison, this is a photograph of you at the knife-machine in the boot-rooms. You have just assured me that you have never on any occasion used the knife-machine in the boot-rooms. What have you to say now?"

What had Levison to say? He would have lied if it had been any use, but no he was of any use to him now. He could only stand silent, dismayed, terrified, his face sickly white, and wait for his sentence.

"You admit what Manners says?" said Mr. Railton grimly.

"I—I—" Levison's stammer died away.

"Very well!" said the Housemaster, compressing his lips. "Manners, I am very much obliged to you. You have prevented a very serious injustice from being done. Lynn, I am sorry to say that you have been the victim of a miserable scheme. I shall explain the matter to Mrs. Mimms, and she will be as sorry as I am that injustice has been done."

Lynn stammered out his thanks, and left the study with the Terrible Three. Mr. Railton selected his stoutest cane.

"I will not say how disgusted I am with your duplicity and treachery, Levison," said the Housemaster. "I fear you are too hardened for words."

"What's that about Wharton's uncle coming down to-morrow?" he asked impatiently. "Why should he be down in the mouth over that?"

"Oh, didn't you know?"

"Know what?" asked Hazeldene.

"Wharton has parted with his watch," said Bunter. "Sold it or pawned it, you know. I don't know what for, because he's been stony ever since, and he certainly didn't bring the money back to Greyfriars. It looks suspicious."

"You young— I mean, is that why Wharton was depressed?"

"I suppose so. And there were the cricket things, you know. He was to have spent thirty bob on them, and the colonel will expect to see them."

"I see," said Hazeldene, with a strange expression on his face.

"He thinks the colonel will inquire about it. Of course, he will— I would, if I were a chap's guardian, and he pawned his watch," said Bunter. "It isn't as if he did it to stand a feed or anything of that kind."

Hazeldene did not reply. He walked away with a dark shade of thought on his brow. Billy Bunter stared after him in surprise.

"Well, I call that rude!" he ejaculated. "Fancy walking away while a fellow's talking to you! I wonder if all those fellows are out of the study yet? If they are, I may as well get back and finish the cake!"

(There's a surprise for Harry Wharton when he meets his uncle— and a surprise for Colonel Wharton, too. Look out for next week's magnificent story of the early days of Greyfriars.)

There is only one way of appealing to your feelings, and that way I shall adopt. I am going to give you a very severe flogging."

Levison moistened his dry lips.

"There is one other matter," pursued the Housemaster with emphasis. "You have entered for the John Davis Scholarship. There is a proviso in the terms of that foundation that only boys of a good character are allowed to enter for it. You have not a good character, Levison. You have a very bad character! I shall report this matter in full to Dr. Holmes and your name will be struck out. You will not be allowed to compete for the scholarship at all."

For some minutes after that sounds of anguish were heard proceeding from Mr. Railton's study. Levison was going through it, reaping his well-deserved punishment, and learning once more that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Lynn was not "sacked."

When Mrs. Mimms learned the facts from the Housemaster she was kind enough to the boot-boy, and even Toby came round.

Troubled no longer by the persecution of the cad of the Fourth, who had learned to leave him very severely alone, Lynn worked hard for the scholarship, and on the day when the news came that he had won it there was a tremendous celebration in Tom Merry's study in honour of Lynn's luck.

(Meet Micky Mulvaney, young brother of the Sixth Form prefect, in next week's long, complete story. Micky sets out to make St. Jim's sit up—and he succeeds with a vengeance. Don't miss it! MICKY MAKES THINGS HUM!)

LYNN'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 21.)

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Tom Merry. "But Levison wouldn't come, sir, and we had to bring him!"

"What? I—"

"Levison can explain about Lynn, sir. He wouldn't come!" panted Lowther.

"I don't know anything about it, sir, of course!" said Levison. "These fellows have dragged me here. I haven't the faintest idea what for."

"Levison did it!" shouted Manners. "We suspected him, sir, and I was outside the window of the boot-room to-day and saw him at the knife-machine."

"It's a lie!" said Levison promptly.

"Manners, be guarded in what you say!" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"I have never used the knife-machine in my life, sir," said Levison.

"But I've got the proof, sir!" shouted Manners.

"Indeed! And in what does this proof consist? You can hardly expect me to believe such an accusation on your bare word."

"I photographed Levison in the room, working the knife-machine, sir, and I've got the photographs!" chorled Manners.

Mr. Railton's manner changed. He glanced at Levison. The cad of the Fourth had become white and sickly to look upon.

"Indeed!" said Mr. Railton. "That alters the case, certainly. I will look