

A THOUSAND FOOTBALLS TO BE WON! SEE PAGE 2.

The **GEM** 2^D

**A Lively Incident
from "THE REBEL
CARAVANNER!" —
Inside.**



Sensational New Stamp-Collecting Offer!

BEGIN
NOW!



1000 FREE FOOTBALLS

for Scoring "Goals" with FOOTER-STAMPS

WIN a Super Football for the coming season by collecting our "Footer-Stamps"—that's the thrilling new prospect before you this week!

Each week in the GEM we are now printing "Footer-Stamps"—pictures of six different actions on the football field. The object of this great competition stamp-game is to score as many "goals" as possible by the end of August.

TO SCORE A "GOAL" you must collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6) made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.**

Easy, isn't it? The more stamps you collect the more "goals" you can score. (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a goal, you must get the set of stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

There are nine stamps to start with—five below and four more to page 35. Cut them out and try to "score a goal" with them then keep all your stamps until you get more "goal-scoring" stamps next week.

If you want to score some quick "goals," remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "MODERN BOY" and "MAGNET." There are more "goals" waiting in those papers.

"Footer-Stamps" are going to be all the rage—see that you're in it at the start, so that we can send you a football very soon, maybe! Up to 250 of the FREE footballs are going to be awarded in the August competition for the readers scoring the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month. In the next month, more of the footballs will be given, and so on.

Don't send any stamps yet; wait until we tell you how and where at the end of the month. There's nothing to pay, remember. The competition rules are on page 35.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "Magnet," "Modern Boy," "Boy's Cinema," "Detective Weekly," "Triumph," "Wild West Weekly," "Thriller," "Sports Budget," and "Champion.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best "scores" from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you, as well, of course!

FIVE "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—FOUR MORE ON PAGE 35



THE CARAVANNER WHO SENT ALL HIS CHUMS TO "COVENTRY"! OF COURSE, IT'S THE ONE-AND-ONLY GUSSY!

The REBEL CARAVANNER!



"If I receive a pwopah apology, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, "I am willin' to ovahlook your wotten conduct!" Blake shook his head. "Answah me, you silly ass!" snorted Gussy. Blake took a stump of chalk from his pocket and chalked on the caravan: "Can't speak—I'm in Coventry!"

CHAPTER 1.

A Painful Predicament!

"HALT!" sang out Tom Merry cheerily.

The red caravan was rolling along a sunny road in Sussex, with six juniors in straw hats tramping with it.

The seventh member of the party was looking out of the little window of the caravan. The eyeglass gleaming in his eye revealed him as Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form.

The sun was at the meridian, and summer heat streamed down on the road. It was high time to halt for the noonday rest, especially as this was the first day of the tour, and all the van-ners agreed that it was a good idea to take it easy the first day.

Tom Merry was leading the horse. He led him from the road across a grassy strip to the shadow of great trees on the edge of a wood. To the

perspiring caravanners the shade of the trees was grateful and comforting.

"Tom Mewwy!"

The voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy proceeded from the little window.

Tom looked round.

"Hallo, Gussy! Turn out and help us camp!" he called out.

"Yes, don't be a slacker, Gussy!" said Blake.

"You've been taking it easy all the morning, riding in the van, while we've been tramping," said Monty Lowther. "I think Gussy ought to get dinner."

"Yes, rather!"

"Turn out, Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus' eye was gleaming through his eyeglass, and his aristocratic face was pink with wrath.

"I cannot turn out without my twousahs!" he said warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I do not wegard it as a laughin' mattah, you fellows. I

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,590.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

No caravan was ever built that could accommodate with comfort Arthur Augustus' very extensive wardrobe—but it remains to be seen whether Tom Merry & Co. can get rid of Gussy's superfluous clobber!

have been kept a pwiseonah in this van all the mornin', while that howlin' ass Blake has been cawwyyin' my twousahs on his arm—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I do not regard this as playin' the game!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Blake induced me to hand out my twousahs on pwetence of bwushin' off the mud on them—"

"No pretence about it," answered Jack Blake. "I've brushed it off!"

"I undahstood, Blake, that you would hand me back my twousahs when you had bwushed off the mud."

"I am not responsible for what you understood, old chap."

"How was Blake to guess that you could understand anything, Gussy?" Monty Lowther inquired.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Once for all, Blake, will you hand me back my twousahs?" said Arthur Augustus, in concentrated tones.

The caravanners gathered under the window of the halted van. They were all smiling, apparently undismayed by the wrath in Gussy's noble countenance.

"Owin' to wewehensible twickewy, my baggage has been left behind at St. Jim's," continued Arthur Augustus. "I have no othah clobber to change into. I have already insisted upon goin' back to the school for my baggage."

"That's the trouble," grinned Blake. "As soon as you agree not to go back for your luggage, you can have your bags."

"That's a fair offer," said Tom Merry, laughing.

"I wewuse to agwee to anythin' of the kind," said the swell of St. Jim's hotly. "I have bwought simply nothin' with me. I had two twunks packed, and two hat-boxes, and some twavellin' bags—"

"And that's why we left them behind!" chuckled Digby.

"You see, there isn't room for your outfit in the caravan," explained Tom Merry. "If you could be satisfied with as much stuff as any other fellow—"

"It is necessawy for at least one chap to be decently dwessed to keep up the cwedit of the party, Tom Mewwy. I pwesume that you do not want us to be taken for a party of twamps?"

"I don't mind a bit."

"I mind a wreat deal, Tom Mewwy. Suppose me meet somebody we know, and there is not a single toppah in the caravan? There is such a thing as keepin' up respectable appeawences. However, I will agwee to bwing only one twunk and one hat-box."

"He's getting reasonable," remarked Herries. "As soon as he's been a few hours longer without his bags, he will agree to only one bag the same as the rest of us."

"Weally, Hewwies—"
Blake held up the elegant nether garment he had been carrying on his arm.

"Do you want this, Gussy?" he asked.
"Yaas, wathah!"

"Will you agree not to go back for the baggage?"

"Nevah!"

"Then you can go and eat coke, old top!"

"Give me my twousahs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"Bow-wow!"
Headless of the eloquent voice from the caravan window, Tom Merry & Co. proceeded to camp.

It was too warm for a camp-fire, and the spirit-stove was taken out and lighted and a kettle set on it.

There was bread and cheese and ham galore, to be washed down with coffee, it being agreed that it was better not to start cooking just yet, on the principle of taking it easy the first day.

Every time one of the fellows took anything from the caravan, he was exposed to the vehement eloquence of the imprisoned Gussy, of which he took no heed.

Gussy's baggage was too large an order for the caravanners to tackle; and his imprisonment was to last until he agreed to give up all idea of fetching it along.

His chums had offered to "whack out" their supplies with him, a garment here, and a handkerchief there, so to speak; and they considered that this was sufficient to meet the circumstances.

But the swell of St. Jim's was not likely to see eye to eye with them on that point.

While the caravanners ate their lunch in the shade of the trees, and the horse contentedly cropped the grass, Arthur Augustus ate a sandwich in the van, and made remarks from the window.

But his remarks were not heeded; the fiat had gone forth, and Arthur Augustus, like the flower that was born to blush unseen, wasted his sweetness on the desert air.

After lunch, Tom Merry & Co. stretched themselves in the grass to rest. It was very pleasant in the thick grass in the shade of the trees, watching the motors that buzzed by on the long white road.

"Ripping way of spending a vacation, caravanning!" Tom Merry remarked. "Simply ripping. If every day is like this—"

"Tom Mewwy—"
"Hallo! There goes Gussy again!"

"I demand my twousahs!"
"You know the peace terms," chuckled Blake.

"Are you going to agree?"
"Certainly not!"

"Time we got along," said Tom Merry, rising and stretching himself. "I think you ought to come out and harness the horse, Gussy!"

"I cannot come out without my twousahs, Tom Mewwy!" roared the indignant voice from the window.

"Are you going to sluck in the van all the afternoon?"

"I am not slackin', you wottah! I am waitin' for my clobber."

"Go on waiting, old top!" said Blake cheerily.

And the horse was put to, and the caravan rolled on in the sunny summer afternoon, to the accompaniment of the wrathful observations from the window.

CHAPTER 2.

Camping Out!

"THIS looks like a good place." The sun was sinking in the west in a blaze of crimson and gold.

Tom Merry & Co., as they marched, were looking out for a spot to camp for the night.

Away from the road a lane ran through a deep and shadowy wood, with big patches of grass here and there among the trees.

"Lots of room for the van under the trees, and lots of room to camp," said Tom. "It must be common land, as it's not enclosed, I should say, so we can't be turned off. Gee-up!"

The horse was led down the lane and into the trees. There a halt was made.

First the horse was unharnessed, and hobbled so that he could not wander away. He browsed contentedly under the trees, while the caravanners proceeded to make their camp.

All of them were hungry after the afternoon's progress, and there was plenty of wood for a fire, and Blake had undertaken to cook a stew that would be worth while.

Tom Merry, Lowther, and Manners gathered brushwood and lighted a fire, while Herries and Digby were peeling potatoes and scraping onions.

Blake opened a tin of beef which was to form the principal ingredient of his famous stew. There was no water at hand, but there was a keg in the caravan which was kept for such emergencies.

Jack Blake thoughtfully filled a big iron pot about half-full of water.

A tripod was set over the fire, and the pot slung to it.

Blake, as chief cook, assumed direction.

"We shall want a good fire if this stew is going to be worth eating," he said. "Keep it going, you Shell bounders!"

That kept the Terrible Three busy.

Blake sliced onions into the water in the pot with a still more thoughtful expression.

As a matter of fact, Blake had his doubts about how a stew was made, but nothing would induce him to admit as much.

"Isn't that rather a lot of water?" Tom Merry ventured to inquire, looking doubtfully into the iron pot.

Blake raised his eyebrows.

"Perhaps you know how to make Irish stew better than I do?" he suggested.

"Not at all, old chap; but it seems to me—"

"Plenty of water means plenty of gravy," explained Blake.

"Gravy?"

"I—I mean broth. It will be quite rich and thick when I've done with it. Hurry up with those spuds, Dig!"

"Ready, old top!"

"Pitch 'em in!"

"Don't you cut 'em up?" asked Manners.

"I don't," answered Blake laconically.

"I thought—"

"If you want to use your thinker, Manners, think about keeping a good fire. This stew has got to keep simmering."

"What on earth are you putting in now?" ejaculated Monty Lowther, a few minutes later.

"Radishes."

"Radishes in a stew?"

"This is an Irish stew," said Blake, in a tone of patient and laborious explanation. "Practically anything can be put into an Irish stew."

"Shove in a few pickles and some treacle!" suggested Lowther, apparently in a vein of sarcasm.

"I'm going to put in some pickles," answered Blake calmly.

"Oh, my hat!"

With a defiant eye Blake added the pickles. The stew still looked very thin, and it seemed to have taken on rather an odd colour.

Blake seemed satisfied with it, however, and he was cook.

The beef from the tin floated in the water in a solid chunk.

The Terrible Three laboured at keeping up a crackling fire under the pot, and the stew bubbled and steamed.

Blake jabbed a fork occasionally into a floating potato to see how it was getting on. The potatoes, for some reason, persisted in remaining hard.

"When will it be ready?" asked Herries, at last.

"When it's done!" answered Blake shortly.

"Well, when will it be done?"

"When it's finished!" snapped Blake.

Herries grunted.

"Perhaps we'd better begin on sardines," murmured Tom Merry.

Blake turned a ruddy and heated face from the stew.

"If you want to gorge on sardines, and waste this splendid stew—" he began warmly.

"Oh, all right! We'll wait!"

"It won't be long now," said Blake, more genially. "As soon as the taters are soft it's done."

Dig jabbed a potato with a fork.

"Hard as nails!" he said.

"For goodness' sake, Dig, don't interfere with



Absent-minded Burglar: "It's funny, Bill, I can't get Luxemburg."

Half-a-crown has been awarded to I. Cormack, 66, Eastwood Mains Road, Giffnock, Glasgow.

the cooking! It isn't an easy job cooking a stew with fellows shoving in all the time."

"Don't get excited, old scout!" murmured Manners.

"Who's getting excited?" roared Blake.

"Ahem!"

"There's such a thing as being worried by silly asses who don't know anything about cooking!" said Blake witheringly.

Jack Blake's temper seemed to be suffering a little, and the other caravanners were discreetly silent, and waited as patiently as they could.

But they were hungry, and they cast expressive glances towards Blake and the steaming iron pot.

The silence was broken by a voice from the caravan.

"Are you goin to give me my twousahs, Blake?"

"Bother your trousers!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Dry up!"

"I wufuse to dwy up, Blake, unless you hand me my twousahs!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Hallo, here he comes!" murmured Tom.

An elegant figure, wrapped in a raincoat, with suspenders and socks showing, emerged from the caravan.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had had enough of his imprisonment, and he was emerging minus his missing bags.

The weather was rather warm for a raincoat.

but that could not be helped. It was Blake's raincoat, and that could not be helped, either, as Arthur Augustus' things were still reposing at St. Jim's.

There was a warlike glitter in Arthur Augustus' eye as he approached the grinning caravanners.

"Blake——" he began.

"Rats!"

"Where have you put my twousahs?"

"Find out!"

"If that is what you call a civil wepely, Blake——"

"Shut up!"

"Bai Jove! I am beginnin' to be sowwy, Blake, that I evah undahtook to go cawavannin' with you!"

"Same here!" echoed Blake.

"Have you seen my twousahs, Tom Mewwy?"

"Certainly!"

"Where are they, then?"

"Out of sight, old chap!" said the captain of the Shell, laughing. "You look nobby in that coat, Gussy—stay in it!"

"I cannot go to St. Jim's for my baggage like this, Tom Mewwy."

"Quite so."

"I insist——"

"Done!" announced Blake. "Plates! Haven't you got the plates ready? Dash it all, I think you might have got the plates ready, instead of grumbling at waiting."

"Here they are, old top—quite ready!"

"Well, I couldn't see them. I'll serve straight from the pot—that will save washing up dishes."

"Ladle it out, Blake," said Tom Merry. "It smells all right."

"It will taste all right, too, I can tell you!"

"What's this?" inquired Monty Lowther, spearing a hard substance in his plate, and holding it up for inspection.

Snort from Blake.

"Don't you know a dumpling when you see one?" he inquired.

"Oh! It's a dumpling!"

"What did you think it was, fathead?"

"I thought it might be a paving-stone or something."

"You silly chump!" roared Blake.

"My mistake!" said Lowther blandly. "But how do you cut it? Or do you swallow it in one piece, like a pill? I'm only asking for information."

Blake did not afford Lowther the information he asked for. He snorted like a grampus instead, apparently annoyed.

Tom Merry had taken up a spoonful of the broth. There was quite a queer expression on his face as he tasted it, and he did not finish the spoonful.

"I—I think I'll stick to the solids!" he remarked.

"Same here!" murmured Manners.

"The solids are a bit too solid for me!" remarked Lowther. "Anybody got a chopper for this dumpling?"

Blake breathed hard.

"These blessed taters are as hard as when they started!" said Herries. "I can hardly get a fork into them!"

"Utter rot!" answered Blake.

"Try it yourself, then!" said Herries warmly.

"Bosh!"

The caravanners were looking very queerly at their plates of stew.

Arthur Augustus, who was hungry, had let the

burning question of his trousers drop for the time, and taken a plate of stew.

Blake cast a glance round at his comrades. All of them were well supplied with stew; but they did not seem to be getting on with it. Herries set the example by putting down his plate.

"Don't you like it?" demanded Blake.

"It's got a jolly queer taste," said Herries. "Have you been putting any of the methylated spirit into it by mistake?"

"No!" howled Blake.

"Perhaps it was the pickles. I don't believe people put pickles in stews," said Herries, shaking his head. "I'm not going to eat that stuff."

"What are you calling it?"

"Stuff!"

"Look here, Herries——"

"I'll look as long as you like, but I'm not going to eat it! Let's see you eat it yourself, if you come to that!" said Herries warmly.

"So you don't like the stew!" said Blake, looking round. "There's no satisfying some people! Here I've worked for an hour or more making a first-rate stew, and you turn your noses up at it! You can jolly well make the next stew for yourselves, I can tell you! Not that I care—there'll be all the more for me!"

"Lots for you, I should say!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Certainly there was plenty for Blake. Nobody else seemed to want any.

Jack Blake, with a defiant brow, helped himself to a huge plateful, and started with a spoon.

A sudden, pained expression came over his ruddy face, and the caravanners chuckled.

"Like it?" asked Tom Merry.

Blake gasped.

"Splendid!"

"What?"

"Simply ripping!" said Blake obstinately.

"Try the dumplings!" said Monty Lowther maliciously.

Blake eyed his dumpling, and tested it with a fork.

"I don't care for dumplings," he remarked carelessly. "They're all right, but I don't happen to care for them. The stew's splendid!"

He took a second spoonful.

"Go it!" said Manners admiringly. "Stick to it, old chap! Let's count his spoonfuls!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you think I don't like this stew?" demanded Blake hotly.

"Well, go ahead with it, if you like it!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chuckled Arthur Augustus.

Jack Blake made a sudden movement, and the plate slipped from his knees into the grass.

"Oh dear!" he exclaimed.

"Bai Jove! You did that on purpose, you boundah!"

"Don't be an ass!" snorted Blake.

"Lots more in the pot, Blake."

Blake did not seem to hear that remark. The other fellows were beginning on bread and cheese and sardines, and Blake, after a thoughtful pause, followed their example.

"It was the beef!" Blake said suddenly, when supper was over and the stew had been nearly forgotten by all but its hapless perpetrator.

"Eh? What was the beef?" inquired Tom Merry.

"In the stew, you know! I knew it was something!" said Blake. "That blessed tin of beef came from Chicago, and goodness only knows what it was made of. That was it, of course!"

And the caravanners suppressed their smiles, and mercifully let it go at that.

CHAPTER 3.

In the Dead of Night!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY was taking it quietly.

Once or twice, as the caravanners rested and chatted over the supper, the eye of Arthur Augustus lingered on them, and he smiled slightly.

That was all.

Possibly great thoughts were moving in Gussy's

was only momentary, and his eyes did not open.

"Asleep, Gussy?" asked Dig.

No answer.

"Well, it's time we were asleep, too!" yawned Blake.

And the chums of the Fourth turned in, and the light was extinguished.

The caravanners were tired with the day's tramp, and they slept soundly enough.

The door of the caravan was left wide open, to admit the air of the warm summer night.

Outside there was only the slight sound of the southing wind in the branches, and an occasional movement from the horse resting in the grass.



The caravanners looked very queer as they tasted their stew. Blake cast a glance round at his comrades. "Don't you like it?" he asked. "It's got a jolly queer taste," said Herries. "Have you put methylated spirit into it by mistake?"

mighty brain. If so, he did not confide them to his comrades.

The caravanners turned in early. They intended to be up again at dawn, and to start on the road soon after daylight. The tent was put up for four, three having room in the bunks in the van.

The Terrible Three and Herries shared the tent, and Blake, Dig, and Arthur Augustus the van.

Arthur Augustus turned in first, and was apparently fast asleep when Blake and Dig clambered in.

"Poor old Gussy!" murmured Blake, as he glanced at the swell of St. Jim's, in the lowest bunk, by the lamp-light. "Always playing the goat, and always having to be sat upon! Hallo! He's awake!"

Arthur Augustus made a movement. But it

Silence and slumber lay on the caravan camp. So it lay for an hour or more. Then there was a faint sound in the caravan.

The head of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy emerged from his bunk.

"You fellows asleep?" he whispered.

Only steady breathing from the bunks above answered him.

The swell of St. Jim's smiled in the darkness, and crept softly from his bunk.

With great caution he drew on his clothes—what he had of them.

The most important garment was still wanting; but it was for that reason that Arthur Augustus was moving so surreptitiously in the dead of night.

When Blake and Dig had observed him peacefully asleep, the elegant junior had been slumbering with one eye open, so to speak. In the dark he knew exactly where to find Jack Blake's trousers.

And he found them and slipped them on.

Taking collar and tie, hat, and boots in his hands, the swell of St. Jim's crept out of the caravan.

Silently as a spectre he crept away, and stopped out of possible hearing to finish dressing.

Having completed his attire to his satisfaction—or, at least, as well as it could be completed without the aid of a mirror—Arthur Augustus approached the horse cautiously.

Gussy had already made friends with the horse. The animal put up his head to be rubbed. Arthur Augustus whispered soothingly to him, and put on a halter, and the horse rose from the grass.

Quietly, cautiously, Arthur Augustus led him away.

He was making for the road; but he went some distance on the grass along the roadside, so that the sound of hoofbeats should not awaken his comrades.

At a safe distance he led the horse out upon the high road.

There was no sound from the sleeping camp.

Tom Merry & Co. slept on, utterly unaware of that surreptitious evasion of the junior who had been kept under duress.

Arthur Augustus chuckled softly as he climbed on the horse's back.

Gussy could ride bareback with ease.

There was a trot-trot of hoofs as the swell of St. Jim's and the caravan horse disappeared into the night.

THE SAVING OF SELBY!



Mr. Selby, tyrant of the Third, is one of the most unpopular masters at St. Jim's, but, disliked as he is, a junior doesn't hesitate to set out and help him when the Form-master finds himself under the thumb of a blackmailer! You'll enjoy this gripping yarn.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,590.

The caravan camp slept on.

It was not till dawn was breaking in the east that Tom Merry stirred in the tent and rubbed his eyes.

The caravanners had arranged to rise at dawn; and Tom, though he felt inclined for another doze, was not a slacker. He rubbed his eyes again, yawned, and turned out.

He gently stirred Manners, Lowther, and Herries with his foot, and they turned out, too. The air was fresh and keen and very invigorating as the four juniors came out of the tent.

"Those Fourth Form slackers still snoring!" said Manners, with a glance towards the caravan.

Herries looked in at the van, justly indignant at such slacking.

"Turn out, lazybones!" he roared.

"Hallo!" came a sleepy voice. "It isn't rising-bell!"

"Turn out!"

"Yaw-aw-aw!"

Herries plunged into the van, and whipped the bedclothes off Blake and Digby.

"Hallo! Gussy's up already!" he ejaculated.

"Gussy up!" exclaimed Blake, as he turned out quickly. "Looking for his trousers, I suppose. Hallo! Where are my bags?"

Blake looked wrathfully round the van. But his garment was not to be seen.

"That blessed image has collared my trucks!" he exclaimed, in great wrath.

"Lucky he didn't collar mine!" remarked Digby.

"Pity he didn't, you mean!" snorted Blake.

"I'll jolly well biff him on the nose! Where is he, Herries?"

"Haven't seen him."

"Oh, my hat! He can't have mizzled!"

Blake looked out of the van in alarm. Certainly there was no sign of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the dawning daylight.

"Seen Gussy, you Shell-fish?" shouted Blake.

"Eh? No! Isn't he there?"

"No. He's got out, in my trucks."

"Phew!"

"I'll scalp him!" roared Blake. "This is one of his little jokes, I suppose. Get me Gussy's old bags, Tommy. They're stuck in the middle of that may-bush!"

"Right you are!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

The much-disputed trousers of Arthur Augustus were dragged from their place of concealment, and Blake donned them and came out of the van.

Then the six juniors looked up and down the road for the swell of St. Jim's.

But no sign of him was to be found.

But, though they did not discover Arthur Augustus, they made another discovery.

"The horse!" exclaimed Blake suddenly. "It's gone!"

"Gone!"

"My only hat!"

"Wandered away!" exclaimed Herries. "You ought to have tied him, Blake!"

"I did tie him."

"Then who's untied him?"

"Gussy!" yelled Blake.

"Gussy? Oh crumbs!"

The juniors stared at one another. There was no doubting what had happened.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was gone, and the caravan horse was gone, and it could not be doubted that they had gone together.

Blake brandished a fist in the air.

"I'll scalp him!" he roared. "This is because of his thundering trucks! He's gone off, and taken the gee-gee—"

"He'll come back," said Tom Merry soothingly. "Gussy couldn't mean to leave us stranded. He'll come back all right!"

"I'll punch his head when he does!"

"We can't get on without a horse, that's a cert," remarked Monty Lowther. "Let's get breakfast. It's only a joke of the silly ass. He'll come back by the time we've done breakfast!"

With that hope, the caravanners rebuilt the camp-fire, and set about preparing breakfast.

But when breakfast was over and done with, there was still no sign of Arthur Augustus.

Blake climbed on top of the caravan and scanned the landscape for him in vain. He came down in a state of great wrath.

"He can't have gone back to St. Jim's for his blessed clobber, can he?" asked Manners.

"Oh, my hat!"

"If he has, he won't be back here soon; it's a good many miles," said Tom Merry.

Blake breathed hard through his nose.

"And we're stranded here till he turns up with the horse. Oh, I'll biff him when he does come!"

"You ought to have kept an eye on him."

"How could I keep an eye on him when I was asleep, fathead?"

"Bless him!" said Lowther. "We shall have to waste the morning, at this rate, and we've got to get somewhere to buy grub for lunch."

"Bother him!"

"Oh, the howling ass!"

"If we could move the van, I'd get on and leave him behind, blessed if I wouldn't!" said Blake. "But we can't move the dashed van without a dashed horse!"

"That's a cert!" said Tom Merry. "We've got to wait for Gussy!"

The previous day, the eloquence of the trouserless Gussy had been expended on his comrades at great length. Now, as they waited fuming in the sunny morning, their eloquence was expended upon him—but in vain.

The sun rose higher and higher, and still the missing swell of St. Jim's did not appear.

"We've lost the morning!" growled Blake, in great exasperation. "Could we get a new horse from somewhere?"

"There must be farms somewhere about."

"Not with horses to lend, I should think. Besides, we're responsible for that blessed horse, and we've got to pay for him!"

"Oh dear!"

"Oh, the villain!"

Peep-peep!

There was the sound of a motor-car on the road, but the juniors did not heed it.

Dozens of cars had passed their camp already. But this special car did not pass. To the surprise of the caravanners the car came whizzing along till it was abreast of the camp, then turned into the little lane that led into the wood where the caravanners were halted.

There was baggage stacked in the car and on top of it. And on the seat beside the chauffeur was a well-known figure.

And as the car halted there was a yell from all the caravanners at once.

"Gussy!"

Arthur Augustus had returned—with all his baggage!

CHAPTER 4.

Coming to Terms!

TOM MERRY & Co. ran towards the car.

Arthur Augustus jumped down to meet them with a smiling face.

The swell of St. Jim's was looking his best. Evidently he had changed his clothes during his absence, and he was neat as a new pin from head to foot.

"Good-mornin', deah boys!" he smiled.

"Gussy!" roared Blake.

"You cheeky ass!"

"Where's the horse?"

"We've wasted all the morning—"

"Pway don't all speak at once, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus cheerfully. "I have wasted the mornin', too, owin' to my leavin' my clobber behind in the school but I'm not gwousin'."

"You—you—you—" gasped Blake.

"I am sowwy if you were annoyed at bein' left stwanded," said Arthur Augustus. "But you



"You're right, John, it was the milkman we forgot to tell!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to L. Tatham, Spring Cottage, Owls-moor, Camberley, Surrey.

weally left me no othah wesource, you know. If I had left you the horse, you might have gone on without me, and I should have lost twack of you!"

"We jolly well should have!" hooted Herries.

"Where's the horse?" demanded Tom Merry.

Arthur Augustus smiled.

"The horse is all wight," he said. "I wode him as fah as Bunbuwy—that's the next village on this woad—and put him up—at pwsent I will not weveal where. Fortunately, I was able to get a local twain there to the junction, and catch the night express back to Wayland."

"You—you—you—"

"There is nothin' whatevah to get excited about, deah boys. You weally left me no-othah wesource, you know. Pwopahly speakin', I ought to make you pay my hotel bill at Wayland, where I had to put up for the wemaindah of the night."

"Oh, you ass! You—you—"

"It's all wight, I keep on tellin' you! I hired this car in Wayland, and dwove ovah to St. Jim's for my baggage. It was locked up in the study, but, fortunately, Taggles had a key that would fit. I ought to ask you fellows to settle the tip I had to give Taggles—it was wathah a heavy one."

"Oh, slaughter him!" gasped Blake.

"Howevah, I am not askin' you to settle it. I squared Taggles, and got my baggage. I stopped for nothin' but some bweakfast in Taggles' lodge, and to change my clothes. I didn't want to keep

you waitin', you know. I twust I am a considewate chap. And here I am, deah boys, and here's my luggage!"

Arthur Augustus waved a cheerful hand to the laden car.

The Wayland chauffeur in his seat was grinning. But Tom Merry & Co. were not grinning. They were looking volcanic.

"Collar him!" said Blake. "Give him the frog's march!"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Bump him!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"Make an example of him!" gasped Lowther. Arthur Augustus backed away.

"Pway allow me to wemind you that you haven't got a horse for the cawavan," he said.

"Unless you make it pax, and agreee to take my baggage on board, I shall not weveal where the horse is."

"Wha-a-at!"

"So you had bettah come to terms, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus genially.

Tom Merry & Co. blinked at the swell of St. Jim's. This was really an unexpected master-stroke from the great Gussy.

"The—the horse!" said Blake.

"The horse is in a safe place, deah boys, all weady when we want him. I will instwuct the chauffeur to take a message to the place when he leaves, and the horse will be bwrought here by a boy. I awwanged that. But I shall wefuse to do so unless you fellows do the wight thing."

"The right thing!" howled Blake.

"Yaas, wathah! I have taken all this twouble to get my baggage here, and it is goin' into the van."

"It's not going into the van!" yelled Blake.

"Then I'm afwaid, deah boy, that you will have to wait for the horse until it does!" said Arthur Augustus victoriously.

And Arthur Augustus polished his eyeglass, and calmly waited for the caravanners to make up their minds.

Tom Merry & Co. were silent, gazing expressively at the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus was in deadly earnest, there was no doubt about that. And he had the whip-hand.

The caravan could not stir from the spot without the horse, and only Arthur Augustus knew where the horse was.

"You utter, unlimited ass," said Tom Merry at last. "Where the thump do you think your baggage can be put if we take it aboard?"

"I have weduced it, Tom Mewwy, out of considewation for the limited space. I have left the biggest twunk at St. Jim's. On reflection, it occurred to me that it was too large to go in at the door of the cawavan. I have weally vewy little with me now."

"Little!" ejaculated the captain of the Shell, with a glance at the loaded car.

"Yaas, only one twunk—not much largah than a cabin twunk—and two hat-boxes and a couple of portmanteaux, and a small bag, as well as my wug and umbwellah and sleepin'-bag and watah-pwoof and gwound-sheet for campin' out, and a few odds and ends——"

"Is this a caravan tour, or a moving job?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"How many toppers have you brought with you?"

"Only two."

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"How many neckties?" asked Herries, with deep sarcasm.

"Not more than a dozen, deah boy. I weolved to be stwictly modewate, considewin' the confined space of a cawavan."

"Bump him!" said Manners.

"I wefuse to be bumped, Mannahs! I suggest that you fellows talk it ovah, and decide to do the wight thing."

Monty Lowther glanced at the luggage again, and his eyes glimmered.

That glimmer showed that the humorist of the Shell had an idea—an idea of a humorous nature. He nodded.

"Good idea!" he said. "Let's talk it over, while Gussy polishes his eyeglass. Come on!"

"I will wait for you with pleasuah, deah boys," said the swell of St. Jim's gracefully.

Tom Merry & Co. retired towards the caravan, leaving Arthur Augustus standing by the car.

"Well, what have you got in your noddle, Monty? I can see there's something."

"Better agree to Gussy's terms," said Lowther. Loud snort from Herries.

"We can't have the caravan stacked from end to end with his lumber, can we?" he demanded.

"It won't be for long."

"Eh? It will be all the time, I suppose? Gussy isn't likely to part with it if we let him keep it."

"The van won't even hold it, unless it's stacked over the floor, and in the bunks," said Dig.

"Gussy mayn't want to part with it," agreed Lowther. "But fellows have to do a lot of things in this world that they don't want to do. Gussy insists that we take it aboard, or he won't hand over the gee-gee. Let's take it aboard. I've got a wheeze——"

"I don't think much of Shell wheezes," grunted Blake.

"Not much good, in my opinion," remarked Herries, with a serious shake of the head.

"Fathead! Look here, caravanning is expensive sometimes," said Monty Lowther. "We can afford to pay our way, but extra cash will always come in handy, won't it?"

"Eh? I suppose so. What are you driving at?"

"Gussy's luggage. Let him shove it in the van. Later on we'll sort it over, and leave him what's necessary, and the rest——"

"Pitch it out into the road?" asked Herries.

"No; that would be waste. We'll try the cheapjack stunt——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"We'll halt in a market-place, and hold a sale——"

"A sale?" gasped Tom Merry.

"That's the wheeze!"

"Oh, Columbus!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't mind being auctioneer," said Lowther.

"I think I could make the sale go. If we're not very particular about prices, it stands to reason that we can sell the goods. Gussy's goods are all good quality, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a yell from the schoolboy caravanners.

Lowther's idea was very popular.

In fact, there was not much choice in the matter; for the caravanners had to have their horse, and there assuredly was not room in the

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

As Wilkins said to Grundy: "Pardon me for speaking when you interrupted!"

Figgins tells me the result of his labours on a small lawn at home during the vac looks like being a magnificent crop of buttercups!

They say people in Northern Siberia sleep three days at a time. So do some chaps in the Form-room, according to Mr. Linton!

Reflection: Silence is golden—or just plain yellow!

A fellow has a perfect right to his opinions, providing he talks about something else!

Grundy insisted on playing a part in the last amateur dramatic production the Shell undertook. In the frenzy of rehearsal, Grundy cried: "Rather than this, I would die a thousand deaths!" "Oh, don't bother," came a bored voice, "one would be enough!"

Short story: "Trimble, I have a bone to pick with you," said Grundy. "Oh, good!" said Baggly Trimble brightly. "What about having it in the tuckshop?"

If I had three stories about Grundy, that would be a hat-trick, if I had a hat!

A slacker is a chap who goes through a revolving door without pushing!

Then there was the fellow who speculated in Air Mail stamps because he was sure they would go up.

A regular reader asks me to be sure to send him a birthday card, but he doesn't tell me his birthday. Will it be O.K. if I send you a Christmas card next Easter, old fellow?

See you next week, chaps!

van for half of Arthur Augustus' ample luggage.

If it were taken aboard at all, it could only be with a view to unloading it later on, and Lowther's "stunt" for the unloading seemed quite good.

Arthur Augustus glanced across at the consultation. He was pleased to see the juniors in a merry humour. Being perfectly convinced of the justice of his cause, he was determined to have his own way, but he greatly preferred to have the point yielded gracefully and good-temperedly.

"Well, have you fellows decided?" he called out. "I weally hope that you are goin' to act reasonably, deah boys."

"We've decided, I think," murmured Tom Merry.

"Yes, rather!"

"Good!" said Tom.

The caravanners came back towards the car. Arthur Augustus' eyeglass gleamed at them with cheerful inquiry.

"Well, deah boys?" he asked affably. "Goin' to do the wight thing?"

"Yes," answered Tom Merry. "Gussy, old man, you're too much for us. Shove your rag-bags into the van!"

"Bai Jove! My baggage is not wag-bags, Tom Mewwy—"

"Whatever it is, shove it in, and let's get on!"

"Wight-ho!"

"And the sooner the quicker!" grunted Herries.

"I am vewy glad, deah boys, that you have made up your minds to do the wight thing. You can wely on me, you know, to point out the pwopah thing to do—"

"Give your chin a rest, Gussy, and let's get on."

Arthur Augustus turned to the chauffeur.

"Pewwaps you will be kind enough to assist with the twaps, Wobinson," he remarked.

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will be vewy careful with the hat-boxes, won't you? You chaps might lend the chauffeur a hand. Don't be slackahs, you know."

"What about you?" hooted Herries.

"I am givin' diwections, Hewwies."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"If you wegard that as an intelligent wemark, Hewwies—"

"Pile in!" said Tom Merry.

And the chauffeur and the caravanners piled in, and the transfer of Gussy's baggage from the car to the caravan commenced.

CHAPTER 5.

On the Road!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY looked on and gave directions.

The trunk, the hat-boxes, the bags and portmanteaux were bundled out of the car, and bundled into the van. The red caravan was unusually roomy for a caravan; but no caravan that ever was built would have accommodated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's baggage without showing signs of strain.

The floor was littered; there were bags in the little pantry, bags on each of the bunks. Even Arthur Augustus looked a little serious as he saw the final result of the stacking away of the baggage.

It was not easy to get in and out of the caravan when the task was done.

"Bai Jove! That's wathah a close fit!" Arthur Augustus remarked.

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"Like to send it home again?" asked Tom Merry.

"Imposs, deah boy! I was thinkin' it—"

"Thinking we should be crowded out of the van?"

"Bai Jove! I nevah thought of that! I was thinkin' it would be wathah difficult for me to get at my things when I want to change," observed Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "How-evah, we needn't use the bunks. We can all sleep in the tent."

"Seven of us in the tent!" breathed Blake.

"You must not mind wuffin' it a little, Blake, on a cawavan tour. I twust you are not goin' to be soft."

Blake murmured something under his breath.

"All the cookin' can be done in the open air, too," remarked Arthur Augustus, with an air of deep consideration.

"When it rains?" asked Monty Lowther.

"When it wains, deah boy, we can live on tinned stuff. We've got a supply of tinned stuff to fall back on. Of course, tinned stuff is not good for the inside, but we must be pwepared to wuff it a little on a cawavan tour."

But for the little scheme mooted by Monty Lowther, and adopted unanimously by the caravanners, Arthur Augustus would probably have been assaulted and battered on the spot.

The idea of roughing it, seven to a tent, and living on tinned stuff, so that the caravan could be stacked with toppers, ties, boots, trousers, and other unnecessary articles, would have been a little too much for the patience of Tom Merry & Co. But now they were very patient. The stacking of the caravan was strictly "pro tem," though Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was not yet aware of that important circumstance.

So the caravanners smiled sweetly, and allowed Arthur Augustus to chat. The stacking having been completed, Arthur Augustus paid the chauffeur for the hire of the motor-car, with instructions to call at the inn in Bunbury as he drove through and take a message about the horse.

The car buzzed off at last.

It was now time for the midday meal, so the caravanners partook of it while they were waiting for the horse to arrive.

Soon after dinner a lad from the inn arrived with the horse, and the caravanners were able to start.

The horse was harnessed and led down the little lane into the high road, and the journey was resumed.

Arthur Augustus remained in the van for some time, sorting out his belongings and packing them more carefully.

When he joined the juniors walking with the horse he announced that he had made quite a lot of room in the caravan, and that it would be possible for one bunk to be used for sleeping in.

"I think I will have it," Arthur Augustus remarked. "I shall be able to keep an eye on my clobber, you know. You fellows are vewy welcome to the tent."

Whereat the caravanners smiled.

Arthur Augustus walked on contentedly.

He had gained his point—a most important point. If any occasion arose on the journey for which a fellow would have to dress, Arthur Augustus was now prepared to dress for that occasion and keep up the credit of the party. If they were asked to dinner by some county magistrate, one member of the party at least would be

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able to turn up in beautiful evening clothes, which would shed a lustre of respectability over the whole band. If any important call had to be made on any important person, the caravanners would be able to send at least one representative in a silk hat.

Arthur Augustus felt that these were very important matters—and that it was up to him to see to them, as they were overlooked by careless youngsters like Tom Merry & Co.

So Arthur Augustus was feeling quite satisfied.

The other fellows were feeling satisfied, too, though for quite a different reason. If their little scheme was carried out there would be more than one bunk available for a sleeper that night. There would also be an extra supply of cash on hand, which would come in useful, in all probability; cash had a way of running out somehow.

Monty Lowther consulted a county map as they went on.

"We're a couple of miles off Stuckley," he said presently.

"Anything special about Stuckley?" asked Manners.

"Yes; it's market day there to-day, according to the guide-book."

"Oh!" said the caravanners.

"There'll be a crowd in the town, and a lot of buying and selling," smiled Lowther. "Probably a lot of pedlars and cheapjacks, you know."

"Bai Jove! It will be wathah a waste of time goin' through," remarked Arthur Augustus. "We shall have to go vewy slowly. Bettah go wound."

There was a sudden chuckle from the caravanners.

Arthur Augustus glanced at them in some surprise.

"I fail to see anythin' to cackle at in that wemark, deah boys," he said.

"The question is about camping," said Monty Lowther, unheeding Gussy's observation. "We can't camp in Stuckley; and, as Gussy says, we may be a good time getting through if there's a big market crowd."

"Bettah go wound."

"Going round means going a long way, by lanes and things—jolly rough going," said Lowther, shaking his head.

"Bai Jove! Then we had bettah keep on!"

"Oh, yes, we'll keep on!" smiled Blake.

"But I've got an idea," continued Monty Lowther. "We've kept one bike with the van, luckily, for just such an occasion. We may be a long time getting through Stuckley if there's a crowd; and, besides, we've got to do a lot of shopping—we're nearly out of grub. It will be jolly near time to camp when we're through."

"Quite time, most likely," grinned Dig.

"Well, suppose one fellow goes ahead on the bike and picks out a good camping ground on the other side of the town?" said Monty Lowther; "then he can meet the van on the road past Stuckley to guide us to it. Otherwise, we may get stranded for a camp."

"Jolly good idea!" said Tom Merry heartily.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Gussy couldn't do it for us," said Jack Blake solemnly. "I hardly think that Gussy could pick out a good camp—"

"Weally, Blake—"

Tom Merry chimed in.

"Now, I think you're wrong there, Blake. I



The car, with baggage stacked inside and on top of it, came to a halt. On the seat beside the chauffeur was a well-known figure. There was a yell from the caravanners at once. "Gussy!" Arthur Augustus had returned—with all his baggage!

should think that Gussy is just the man. Only it's a lot of trouble."

"Bai Jove! I don't mind the twouble, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly. "As a mattah of fact, I think the mattah had bettah be left to me. You fellows would most likely pitch on a vevy unsuitable spot."

"Well, if Gussy could do it——" said Lowther dubiously.

"Weally, Lowthah, I wathah think that I am the most capable fellow here to do it," said Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Well, let Gussy try, then," said Lowther. "We'll rely on Gussy. After all, we can't do better than rely on a fellow of tact and judgment. Gussy's told us that himself."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Done!" said Tom Merry. "Yank down the bike from the van, then. Pick a place a couple of miles past the town, Gussy, if you can; we don't want to be too near the town."

"Leave it to me, deah boys."

Arthur Augustus looked to the bike, found it in order, and mounted.

He waved his hand cheerily to his comrades and rode away ahead of the caravan.

And as he disappeared towards Stuckley town there was a good deal of chortling from the caravanners.

With Arthur Augustus busy a couple of miles beyond the market town, picking out a camping ground, his comrades were at liberty to halt in

the market-place and do business there—which, if Arthur Augustus had only known it, was the reason why he had gone ahead on the bike. Fortunately, Arthur Augustus did not know it.

CHAPTER 6.

Sale Now On!

"HERE we are!"

"Looks busy."

There was a rattling of wheels and hoofs, a buzz of voices, in the narrow street of the little country town.

The market-square, in the middle of the town, was crowded. There were carts and barrows and stalls; there were pedlars and cheapjacks; there were stacks of fruit and vegetables. And there were plenty of people. The St. Jim's caravan had to go slow through the narrow street among many other vehicles, and it halted in the market-square in the midst of a buzzing throng.

Tom Merry drew up in the square, cheek by jowl with a gipsy caravan, from which a lively sale of brooms and brushes and tin cans and paints was proceeding.

"My hat!" murmured Blake. "I—I suppose we can sell things as much as anybody else. But—but——"

"Of course we can!" answered Monty Lowther. "We shall have to put up a sign first."

"A—a sign!"

"Certainly! I can paint a sign. We've got a can of paint and a brush in the van."

"We shall want a board."

"You chaps sort out the rubbish, and I'll find a board," said Lowther.

"Right-ho!"

Monty Lowther disappeared among the market throng, and the Co. proceeded to bundle out the ample baggage belonging to the swell of St. Jim's.

A crowd, chiefly juvenile, began to gather round the van.

Tom Merry & Co. did not exactly look like itinerant merchants, and their proceedings excited some curiosity.

The juniors did not mind that, however. It was all the better for business.

"We must leave Gussy something!" said Tom Merry, with great consideration. "The sleeping-bag and ground-sheet are really useful. Let them be."

"And some of the clobber," said Dig. "Say, twice as much as he wants. That will be treating Gussy well."

"Oh, rather!"

"Keep all the shoes—some of us may run out of shoes, with so much tramping to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What about toppers?"

"Chuck them out!"

Blake reflected.

"No," he said, "we'll keep one topper. Gussy can never be really happy without a topper, and we want him to be happy. It can be slung under the van, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Here's Monty!"

Monty Lowther came back with a board under his arm. It was a rough board about seven feet long and a foot wide. Under his other arm were two sign-posts.

"I've borrowed this lot," he explained. "Awfully expensive to buy! But we can have the use of them for an hour or two for half-a-crown, and daub on as much paint as we like. Sort out the stock while I do the sign."

"We're doing it. Go ahead!"

Monty Lowther went ahead.

A professional sign-painter would probably have regarded Monty Lowther's handiwork with deep scorn; but Monty himself seemed quite satisfied with it. After all, it served the purpose, even if it lacked artistic finish.

And it was quickly done, too. The sign was daubed in, and then the posts were jammed in the ground, and the sign nailed across them. The result was quite imposing.

There were huge red letters on the sign, picked out with green, in a manner that was striking, if not exactly artistic to the eye.

**"SALE NOW ON!
ANY PRICE YOU LIKE!
NO OFFER REFUSED!"**

"That will fetch 'em, if anything will!" declared Lowther.

Lowther was right.

There were a good many bargain-hunters in the market-place, and the glaring sign caught their eyes, and drew them to the St. Jim's van.

Gussy's trunk having been emptied of its contents, Monty Lowther stood on it to begin the sale.

Lowther had nerve enough for a whole

battalion, and he was not in the least disconcerted by the crowd and the sea of eyes turned upon him.

"Walk up, gentlemen!" he shouted. "Sale now on! Any price you like! Latest fashionable London neckties, one shilling each! Walk up!"

There was a pressing forward at once.

As Arthur Augustus never gave less than seven-and-six for a necktie, Lowther's offer was a liberal one.

The least sophisticated of the inhabitants of the little Sussex town could see that those handsome neckties were tremendous bargains.

There was quite a rush on the neckties.

In three minutes the stock was cleared out.

"Who said I wasn't a born salesman?" demanded Monty Lowther triumphantly. "Why, I was born for the business! Hand up those socks!"

"Here you are!"

"Gentlemen, these splendid silk socks, all the colours of the rainbow, going at two bob a pair!"

There did not seem to be much demand for silk socks in the market-place. Natty silk socks, however valuable in themselves, were not much in the line of burly agricultural gentlemen. But a pedlar with an aquiline nose, who was looking on, promptly came forward and made an offer for the whole bunch.

Monty Lowther looked at him.

"In the business—what?" he asked.

"Neffor you mind, my friend," answered the pedlar. "I take all zose socks off your hands, I tink."

"You're welcome!"

The socks went in one lot. Silken socks certainly seemed rather superfluous on a caravan tour, and the Co. were quite of the opinion that Arthur Augustus was better without them.

The sale having once started, business was brisk.

There seemed a ready sale for everything belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—possibly because of the extremely reasonable prices the amateur salesman was asking.

If one of the inhabitants did not want the things, there was always a pedlar or some other merchant to snap them up—to be sold again, of course, at about four hundred per cent profit. But the St. Jim's salesman did not mind what profit his customers might make on the transactions, so long as he cleared his stock.

And he was doing that fast.

Reasonable as the prices were, money rolled in.

Manners stood with a silk hat to take the money—the topper that was generously being retained for the use of Gussy. Possibly that topper was not being improved by the usage, but that could not be helped.

Quite an excited crowd surrounded the St. Jim's caravan. Goods of such high quality, and at such low prices, had never before been offered for sale in the market-place of Stuckley.

Monty Lowther was quite enjoying himself. Monty had many gifts; but he had never shone as a salesman before. Now he was shining.

The great sale was almost over when there was a disturbance in the crowd, and loud exclamations.

"Keep back!"

"Keep that danged bike away from my legs!"

"Don't shove!"

"Pway let me pass!" came a familiar voice.

And Monty Lowther, with the last "lot" in his hands—a bunch of handkerchiefs—ejaculated:

"Oh, my hat! Gussy!"



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 3.

The Bicycle Mystery!

KILDARE, captain of St. Jim's, left his bicycle in the cloisters for a few minutes, and on going to fetch it discovered that both tyres had been deliberately punctured by pins stuck in them. As Kildare, full of wrath, came out of the cloisters, he caught sight of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who crimsoned, but when questioned had nothing to say. D'Arcy was due for a severe caning when "Detective" Kerr decided to investigate.

KERR: Excuse me, Kildare. Could I have a word with you?

KILDARE: Cut it short, kid.

KERR: I don't think D'Arcy punctured your bike, Kildare.

KILDARE: Have you any evidence to clear him? If so—

KERR: Not yet. But, frankly, Kildare, does Gussy strike you as the sort of chap to play a silly, mean trick like that?

KILDARE: Well, no. I've always had a high opinion of D'Arcy. I confess I was surprised when I found two pinholes in each tyre. But there was nobody else about—and when I questioned him, D'Arcy seemed confused and unable to speak.

KERR: Shielding somebody, perhaps?

KILDARE: I thought of that. But why should D'Arcy, if innocent, want to shield the type of fellow who would descend to a trick of that description?

KERR: It looks inexplicable, but I believe Gussy is innocent. Look here, Kildare, will you do me a favour?

KILDARE: Postpone D'Arcy's punishment while you investigate?

CHAPTER 7.

Wrathy!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY had found a camping ground.

It was quite a suitable spot, a couple of miles beyond the market-town.

It was just off the high road, on the common, with shady trees and a stream.

Having found it, and decided on it, Arthur Augustus returned to the high road to wait for the caravan.

He waited a good time.

But the caravan seemed a long time coming through Stuckley; and, after waiting nearly an hour, Arthur Augustus decided to go and look for it. So he remounted the bike and rode into the town.

He was looking out very carefully for the red caravan, and he almost fell off his bike when he spotted it drawn up in the market-square, with a

KERR: Yes.

KILDARE: All right. I'd like to give D'Arcy every chance. Go ahead, Kerr—and good luck.

D'ARCY: Weally, Kerr, I am afwaid I must take the full blame for Kildare's bike bein' punctured!

KERR: But I can't believe it was you stuck those pins in Kildare's bike. I suspect you saw the chap who did it, though.

D'ARCY: I wegwet I cannot answah you, Kerr.
KERR: Because you are shielding somebody. But who would play that sort of jape on Kildare? Only a fellow with a grudge against him—some mean rotter, like Mellish or Croke—some creeping cad—

D'ARCY: Bai Jove, Kerr, I cannot permit you to say that!

KERR: But wasn't the chap a sneaking, snooping skunk—

D'ARCY: No, indeed he wasn't. You forget that I—I am supposed to have done it myself.

KERR: So you really did stick one pin in each tyre of Kildare's bike?

D'ARCY: Yaas, that's wright. I am sowwy about it.

KERR: Now, Gussy, as man to man, is there anybody at St. Jim's whom to protect you would, if driven to it, actually depart from the truth? Think now.

D'ARCY: Nobody, Kerr. Well—unless pewwaps my minah, Wally.

KERR: So it was Wally!

D'ARCY: Whatevah gave you that idea, Kerr? I am takin' the blame—

KERR: I can't understand a decent kid like Wally allowing you to bear the brunt, though.

D'ARCY: But Wally is not aware that I saw him leavin' the scene of the cwime, or that I am bein' punished—

KERR: Thanks, Gussy. It's just like you. Maybe a chat with Wally will clear this up.

WALLY D'ARCY: That's the truth, Kerr. Gibson and I followed Piggott into the cloisters and saw him puncture Kildare's bike. Then we heard a footstep, and being afraid we might be implicated, we took to our heels—

(What was the slip Gussy made, so proving his innocence? Solution on page 33.)

hugo glaring sign close at hand—"Sale Now On." The crowd was too thick for riding, and Arthur Augustus jumped down and ran his bike towards the van.

He was too astonished for words.

What sale could be proceeding from the St. Jim's caravan was a deep mystery to him. The dreadful truth had not yet dawned upon his mind.

But as he came closer he suspected.

Some of the purchasers were handing about their purchases, and commenting upon them; and the sight of fashionable neckties and silk socks caused a glimmering of the truth to dawn upon the mind of the noble Gussy.

He shoved recklessly through the crowd, amid angry protests.

"Keep back!"

"Keep yer place!"

"Who are you shoving?"

Arthur Augustus did not heed. He got through and came breathlessly up to the red caravan.

He let the bike go, and it rolled against the van. Then he jumped towards the junior salesman.

"Lowtah!" he gasped.

Lowther looked down at him from the top of the big trunk.

"Hallo, Gussy! I'm afraid I can't take an offer from you for these hankies. I'm selling to the public."

"They are my handkerchiefs!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"The last dozen!" said Lowther. "Any offers?"

Arthur Augustus jumped at the salesman, and jerked the bunch of beautiful handkerchiefs from his hand.

"You uttah wottah!" he gasped.

"Don't interfere with the sale, Gussy!" said Blake chidingly.

Arthur Augustus gasped for breath.

"You feahful wottahs! You—you have been sellin' off my pwopahty!" he stuttered.

"Didn't you want it sold off?" asked Monty Lowther, in surprise.

"Certainly not, you wuffian!"

"Then what did you stack it in the van for?"

"I—I—I—"

Words failed Arthur Augustus.

"If Gussy wants to keep that last lot of hankies, let him," said Blake generously. "They'll come in handy for cleaning pots and pans and things, anyhow."

"Blake! You—you—"

"Then there's nothing but the bags and the trunks to sell," said Monty Lowther. "I'll offer the whole lot for a quid!"

"You howwid wuffian!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "That twunk alone cost twenty guineas."

"Then it's bound to fetch a quid, with the portmanteaux thrown in."

"I wufuse to allow you to sell my twunk!"

"Now, look here, Gussy—"

"Lowtah, I wegard you as a wascal!"

"You can regard me, old chap, in any character you choose to assume!" said Monty Lowther affably.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean you are a wascal—not me, you ass!"

"Never mind what you mean, Gussy! If you don't want me to sell off these trunks and things, you can book them for home at the railway station. Luckily, there's a station here, or we should have to leave them stranded."

"I—I—I—"

"Give him the dibs, Manners. The money's his," said Lowther. "I'm not asking a commission on the sale, Gussy; I've done that for nothing, out of friendship."

"Oh cwumbs!"

Manners handed him the silk hat.

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There was a heap in it of shillings and half-crowns and coppers—quite a sum of money.

"We kept back that topper for you, Gussy," said Tom Merry. "It looks a bit like a busby at present. But you can brush it."

"You awful wottah!"

"Eh?"

"You feahful wuffian—"

"Me?"

"Yaas, wathah—you! I wegard you with uttah despision—I mean contempt!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"This is what Gussy calls gratitude, I suppose," remarked Lowther.

"Gwatitude, you howwid wottah! I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin'!" shrieked Arthur Augustus.

"My dear chap, you'll get run in if you begin scrapping in the market-place," said Blake.

"There's a policeman over there to look after hooligans!"

"Order, Gussy! Don't disgrace us, you know."

"Keep its ickle temper!" murmured Lowther.

"Oh, you wottahs! You feahful wottahs! My toppabs—my clobbah—my ties! Where are my socks?"

"Sold!"

"Oh, you feahful beasts!"

"Gentlemen, the sale is now over!" called out Monty Lowther. "Now, you chaps, it's time we got moving! Did you find a good camping-ground, Gussy?"

"Wats! My clobbah—"

"Put the horse to," said Tom Merry.

"I wufuse to allow—"

"Come on," said Blake cheerily. "Time we got busy!"

"Oh, you awful wottahs!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

The swell of St. Jim's stood with the dishevelled topper in his hands, looking quite dazed.

But Tom Merry & Co. got busy at once, now that the sale was over.

Monty Lowther yanked down the sign, and carried back the pieces to their owner.

The Co. harnessed the horse. All was very soon ready for a start.

"Ready, Gussy?" called out Tom Merry.

"Wottah!"

"My dear chap—"

"Beast!"

"Anything happened to annoy you, Gussy?"

"You feahful wuffian!"

"What about those bags and trunks and things?" asked Jack Blake. "No good putting them back in the van now they're empty. Like us to help you to the railway station with them, Gussy? They can be labelled for home."

"Wottah!"

"Gussy's getting quite abusive. Anybody would think we hadn't done him a good turn!" exclaimed Blake warmly.

"You have sold my clobbah!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Well, it was that, or dropping it out of the van along the road. And that would have been a waste. Gussy, it's wrong to be wasteful."

"Oh, you wottah!"

"Start!" said Tom Merry, laughing.

"You—you—you feahful beasts!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "As the bags are now empty they may as well be put on the waylay. They are no use in the cawavan."

"Then we'll lend you a hand with them," said Blake graciously. "You don't deserve it, after

the shindy you've been kicking up. But we'll do it."

"Wottah!"
In the kindness of their hearts the juniors carried the empty bags and the trunk into the railway station, where Arthur Augustus, with a dark brow, saw them labelled for home. Then they returned to the caravan.

Arthur Augustus was silent and wrathful. He was all the more exasperated because his comrades persisted in taking the view that they had done him a good turn. As Monty Lowther remarked, there were pounds and pounds in cash, and there would have been nothing at all if the baggage had simply been dropped out of the van and left behind—the only other resource.

But Arthur Augustus did not see it. He tramped on with a set brow as the caravanners marched out of the town.

When Blake spoke to him, Arthur Augustus returned him a cold, steely stare, and did not answer.

His wrath was not to be appeased. True, he still had more baggage than any other member of the party; and he had the cash as the result of the sale. But he thought of his clobber that was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream; and, like Rachel of old, he mourned for that which was lost, and would not be comforted.

CHAPTER 8.

A Fearful Thrasing!

"WHERE'S the camp, Gussy?"
The caravan was well out of the town now, and the sun was low behind the hills.

Tom Merry asked the question, and Arthur Augustus gave him a grim look.

"I wufuse to answah you, Tom Mewwy!"

"But where's the camp?"

"I will point out the place when we awvive at it; but I wufuse to speak to a fellow who has tweated me with gwoss diswepsect!"

"Alas!" sighed Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther gave a gentle sob. Arthur Augustus' eye glittered at him, but he did not speak.

The caravan rolled on till it reached the common, and there Arthur Augustus condescended to point out the spot he had selected for camping.

The red caravan came to a halt on the grass.

"Jolly good place!" said Blake. "I knew we could rely on Gussy to find us a really good camp!"

"Tact and judgment, you know!" murmured Dig.

"Much obliged, Gussy!"

Snort!

The soft answer was not destined to turn away wrath in this instance.

Arthur Augustus' wrath was too deep-seated for that.

The caravanners proceeded to camp.

The oil cooking-stove was taken out of the van and set up; and the interesting discovery was made that the purchase of paraffin had been overlooked.

"Never mind—we'll have a camp-fire again," said Manners.

Arthur Augustus sat on a grassy knoll while the caravanners were camping. He did not offer to help. His noble brows were knitted, and his



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week:

GERALD KNOX (OF THE SIXTH).

KNOX of the Sixth, a prefect with a reputation as a bully, rather intrigued me as a subject for a horoscope. Before going to his study I consulted the stars, to see if it was a propitious day for a visit, and though it did not seem too favourable, I chanced it. I had no sooner opened the door than Knox, catching sight of my face, hurled a cushion at me, snarling: "I thought it was my fag. Tell young Gibson to come here at once—and make it snappy, Skimpole!" When I had recovered from the impact of the cushion, I obtained Knox's birth date from another prefect and cast Knox's horoscope.

Knox comes under the influence of Scorpio, the Scorpion, having been born between October 24th and November 22nd, and his ruling planet is Venus. The special degree of the hour of his birth denotes one whose passions are high and not easy to control. He tends to follow his desires, which may lead him to excess. He attempts to be an influential person, and thinks himself fitted to lead, but his particular pleasures hide danger.

Feeling that Knox should be warned of his unusual horoscope (which certainly does not apply to all those born under Scorpio) I called on him again. "My dear Knox," I began, "I should like first to point out that more than one of our greatest men, born under Scorpio, have succeeded in controlling their passions and made themselves figures respected by all—" "Get out!" shouted Knox—and hurled another cushion! I fear Knox will never learn to subdue his angry passions. What a pity!



eyes were gleaming. The destructive wrath of Achilles, so eloquently sung by Homer, seemed to have come to life again in the usually placid breast of the swell of St. Jim's.

It was not only that the ample supply of clobber was gone beyond recovery. There were other supplies upon which Gussy could have drawn. Moreover, an extensive round of shopping would have set the matter right.

But it was borne in upon Arthur Augustus' indignant mind that fresh supplies of clobber would suffer the same fate as the old supplies. If he renewed the stock, it only meant a series of cheap sales in all the market towns through which the St. Jim's caravan passed.

Which was intensely exasperating.

So Arthur Augustus glowered, while his chums were building the fire and getting supper in the gloaming.

"Supper's ready, Gussy!" called out Blake at last.

Arthur Augustus rose from the knoll and came towards his comrades.

He threw off his jacket, a proceeding that they regarded with raised eyebrows.

"Not going to bed yet?" asked Blake.

"I am not goin' to bed, Blake."

"Tuck in, old chap! These sosses are really good, though Blake cooked them!" said Tom Merry.

"I am goin' to thwash Lowthah!"

"Eh?"

"In the circs, I have no wresource but to give you fellows a feahful thwashin' all wound!"

"My hat!"

"I am beginnin' with Lowthah, because I

wegard him as the worst!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Are you weady, Lowthah?"

"Ready for supper? Yes, rather!"

"Weady to be thwashed, you wottah—"

"No! Not quite!"

"When will you be weady?"

Monty Lowther reflected.

"You really mean business, Gussy?" he asked sadly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You won't let me off?"

"Not in any circe whatevah!"

"Then I'm bound to accept your challenge," said Monty Lowther. "But as the challenged party, I have the right to choose time and place for the deadly combat!"

"I—I suppose so."

"Very well," said Lowther cheerily. "I'll fight you, Gussy—"

"Good!"

"The year after next—"

"Eh?"

"At the North Pole!"

"What?"

"And now we'll have supper," said Monty Lowther. "Pass the sosses, Blake!"

There was a chuckle from the caravanners.

But Arthur Augustus did not chuckle. He frowned portentously.

"Lowthah, you silly, jokin' ass, I insist upon your gettin' up and puttin' up your hands!" he exclaimed.

"I've chosen time and place—my right, as challenged party," answered Lowther. "I say, these sosses are good! Try them, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to twy them, Lowthah. I am goin' to thwash you!"

"Mercy!"

"I wefuse to show the slightest mercy to a wottah like you. I am goin' to give you a feahful thwashin', and then all these othah wottahs aftah you!"

"Begin on Blake," suggested Lowther, with his mouth full of sausages. "Blake's much worse than I am—he's a cheeky Fourth Form fag! Begin on him!"

"I wefuse to begin on him, Lowthah. If you do not wise immediately and put up your hands, I shall stwike you on the nose!"

Monty Lowther sighed.

"Won't you have mercy on my tender years, Gussy?" he pleaded. "Think of my poor old uncle! Do you want to bring down his pink whiskers in sorrow to the crematorium?"

"Wats! Get up at once!"

"Blessed if I ever knew Gussy was so ferocious!" said Lowther, in surprise. "Fancy quarrelling with a chap like this for doing him a good turn! Why, we're bound to do good turns as Scouts!"

"You have not done me a good turn, Lowthah—you have played me a wascally twick, and unless you stand up at once, I shall hit you!"

"My dear, dear old pal—"

"I do not wegard you as a pal, Lowthah. I wegard you as a wuffian, with no respect whatevah for a fellow's clobbah. If you do not put up your hands, I shall pull your nose!" roared Arthur Augustus in great wrath.

"Run away and play, old bean!"

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus reached for Lowther's nose, to carry out his dire threat.

The humorist of the Shell jumped up.

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Evidently the swell of St. Jim's was in deadly earnest, and was not to be denied.

"Now, then, you wottah!"

"Gussy!" exclaimed Blake.

"Pway dwy up, Blake! I am goin' to thwash you next!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Are you weady, Lowthah?"

"May I finish my sausage?" inquired Monty Lowther meekly. "In case of fatal results, it would be a satisfaction to have finished my soss!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus did not answer.

He pushed back his cuffs and rushed at the Shell fellow.

Monty Lowther promptly put up his hands, backing away from the rush.

The caravanners were all on their feet now; supper was interrupted.

Monty Lowther gave more and more ground, followed up by a terrific onslaught from the swell of the Fourth.

Crash!

One of Gussy's terrific thumps came home at last on Lowther's chest.

The Shell fellow rolled over on his back.

Arthur Augustus panted over him.

"Get up, you wottah! Get up and be thwashed!"

Groan!



"If I perish, don't let Gussy be hanged!" moaned Lowther. "let them hang Gussy. It will spoil his necktie!"

Lowther

"Do you heah me, Lowthah?" roared Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.
Deep groan.

"Are you hurt, Monty?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther did not reply. His limbs stretched out and a shudder ran through him, and he lay still.

CHAPTER 9. Awful!

"MONTY!"

"What's the matter?"

"Get up, old chap!"

"What have you done, Gussy?"

The caravanners surrounded the still form of Montague Lowther of the Shell with anxious faces. Arthur Augustus was pushed back.

Five juniors were kneeling round Monty Lowther with anxious exclamations.

Arthur Augustus ceased to brandish his fists. The ferocity died out of his noble face.

"Bai Jove!" gasped the swell of St. Jim's. "He can't be hurt, you know! It was only a thump on the chest!"

"Wait till I feel his heart!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Oh, deah!"

Tom Merry opened the fallen junior's jacket and groped for his heart.



"Say a donkey kicked me. Say anything; but don't ejaculated, Arthur Augustus. "I—I am afraid that hurt."

Then he gave a groan.

"Monty! Old pal! Poor old Monty!"

"Dead!" wailed Manners.

Arthur Augustus jumped.

"Wubbish!" he stuttered. "How could he possibly be dead when I only gave him a tap on the chest? Don't play the goat!"

"Look at him!" groaned Blake. "Oh, Gussy—Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Poor old Lowther!"

"He was a funny ass!" said Digby sorrowfully. "But I'm sorry for this. He will never make any more of his rotten jokes!"

"He'll never put any more chestnuts in the comic column of the 'Weekly'!" murmured Herries.

"Poor old Lowther—"

"What's going to become of Gussy?"

Arthur Augustus panted.

"I believe you are wottin'!" he stuttered. "There is nothin' the mattah with him. Let me see him!"

There was a deep groan from Monty Lowther as Gussy pushed his way through the juniors.

"He lives!" exclaimed Tom Merry dramatically.

"He lives!" echoed Blake.

"I was quite aware that he lives!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I knew you were wottin', you wottahs!"

Groan!

"Lowthah!"

"Send for a doctor!" moaned Lowther faintly.

"I feel that I am sinking! I forgive you, Gussy!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"If I perish, don't let Gussy be hanged! Say a donkey kicked me. Say anything; but don't let them hang Gussy! It will spoil his necktie!"

"Bai Jove!"

"Water!" murmured Lowther.

Arthur Augustus had succeeded in getting near the hapless victim at last. He started violently as he saw Lowther's cheeks were deadly white—as white as chalk.

"Oh, ewikey!" he ejaculated. "I—I am afraid that Lowthah is weally hurt—"

Groan!

"Do you feel vevy bad, old chap?"

Groan!

"Get him into the caravan and put him to bed," said Tom Merry anxiously. "You buzz off for a doctor on your bike, Blake."

"Right you are!" said Blake. "I suppose I can find a doctor in Stuckley. Give him some water, and look after him while I'm gone."

"We'll do our best."

"Gussy had better clear off, in case of fatal results."

"Oh, deah!"

"In case of fatal results Gussy had better keep clear. I suppose I'd better bring the police back with me. They'll have to know."

"Yes; buck up!"

Jack Blake jumped on his bike, and pedalled away towards the town at frantic speed. He vanished round a bend in the road.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy stood rooted to the ground, while Tom Merry & Co. lifted Lowther and bore him into the caravan. He was laid on one of the bunks.

Tom Merry held water to his lips, and Lowther sipped feebly.

D'Arcy peered into the van.

"How is he, deah boys?" he faltered.

"Look at his face!" answered Tom Merry in a hushed voice.

"White as chalk!" said Herries.

"Oh, deah! I did not weally mean to hit him so hard!" mumbled Arthur Augustus. "I suppose it was wathah a hard knock!"

"It was a fearful blow!" said Dig. "You know what you are when you get excited, Gussy!"

"Yaas, wathah! Oh, deah!"

There was a faint moan from the bed.

Tom Merry turned at once to the suffering patient.

"Has the doctor come?"

"Not yet, Monty!" said Tom. "Blake's riding like anything. He won't be long."

"Don't let Gussy be arrested. I'm sure that Gussy didn't mean to be guilty of manslaughter!"

"Gwoogh!"

"If I don't recover——"

"You will wecovah all wight, Lowthah!" said Arthur Augustus huskily.

"Gussy had better go. It's not safe for him to stay here if Blake is bringing the police. Gussy will have to become a wanderer on the face of the earth. I forgive him!"

"I shall not go, Lowthah! I shall wemain with you, deah boy! I am sowwy I gave you such a feahful blow!"

Groan!

"I am sure you will wecovah all wight," said Arthur Augustus, scanning the Shell fellow's anxious face. "Keep your peckah up, deah boy!"

Tom Merry buried his face in his hands. A sob was heard from Manners. They seemed deeply affected.

"Gussy!" moaned Lowther.

"Yaas, deah boy!"

"Before I expire——"

"Wow!"

"Before I expire, old chap, let's be friends," said Monty Lowther faintly. "I always thought well of you, Gussy!"

"I'm sure you did, old fellow!"

"I always admired your taste in ties!"

"Oh, cwikey!"

"I always thought you looked better in a silk topper than any fellow at St. Jim's."

Tom Merry made a choking sound under the hands clasped over his face.

Manners gasped spasmodically.

"And now I lie here," said Lowther feebly.

"You do!" murmured Manners.

"Now I am lying here, Gussy, felled by that terrible blow——"

"I weally did not mean to hit so hard, Lowthah, old chap. I am sowwy—more sowwy than I can weally say."

"Let us be friends," moaned Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Is it pax?" asked the Shell fellow feebly.

"Yaas! Oh, yaas!"

"If I should recover, D'Arcy——"

"You will wecovah, deah boy."

"If I should recover, you will be friends, and never row again, and never make a fuss about selling your clobber?" moaned Lowther.

"Honour bwight, deah boy!" assured Arthur Augustus.

"Keep your peckah up! Blake will be back with the doctah vevy soon!"

"You're sure, Gussy—sure you won't rag any more?"

"Quite sure, deah boy!"

"Then I may as well recover," said Monty Lowther, in quite a different voice, as he sat

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up cheerfully. "And now I'm recovered, I'll go and finish my supper!"

And Monty Lowther turned cheerily out of the bunk and jumped from the caravan, Arthur Augustus watching him with eyes almost starting from his head.

CHAPTER 10.

Sent to Coventry!

"H A, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus jumped from the caravan after Lowther.

Monty Lowther was wiping his face with a handkerchief. The handkerchief came away very white.

It was no wonder that Lowther had been white as chalk. It was chalk that was rubbed on his cheeks.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors, greatly entertained by the expression on Arthur Augustus' aristocratic face.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came an echo, and Jack Blake wheeled his bike from behind a fringe of may-bushes.

Evidently, he had not ridden very far in quest of a medical man.

D'Arcy glared at him.

"Blake! You—you did not go for a doctor, and——"

"My dear chap, we don't need a doctor to rub the chalk off Lowther's chivvy," said Blake, in surprise. "No good paying a medical man's fee for an easy job like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You spoofin' wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus. "Lowthah was not hurt at all."

"Go hon!"

"He was only pullin' my leg——"

"Got that already?"

"You all knew it, and you were all pullin' my leg!" yelled Arthur Augustus, in great wrath.

"He's tumbled to that," said Manners, in great admiration.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were chalkin' his silly face while you were suwoundin' him and keepin' me off——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard this as a wotten twick, and I'm goin' to thwash Lowthah, all the same!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"After making it pax?" asked Lowther, with a chuckle.

Arthur Augustus stopped suddenly.

"Oh, bai Jove! You twicked me into makin' it pax, you wottah!"

"Exactly!" said Monty Lowther, with a nod. "Now let's finish supper. As the gent says in the opera, the comedy is finished!"

And Monty Lowther sat down cheerfully to resume operations on the sausages and chips; and the chuckling caravanners followed his example.

Arthur Augustus looked at them with deep wrath and scorn.

"You uttah asses!" he exclaimed. "I wegard you as a set of silly chumps, playin' twicks like silly fags. I have a gweat mind to leave the party, and wefuse to go cawavannin' with you any more."

"Oh, Gussy!"

"I would certainly do so, but I am aware that you silly kids would land yourselves into some twouble without me, and I feel wesponsible for

you now that we have started!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus warmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall not abandon you to your own resources," said Arthur Augustus. "But I feel bound to impress upon your silly minds that you cannot play these silly twicks upon a chap with impunity. I am goin' to send you all to Coventry."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Which?"

"You need not argue with me," said Arthur Augustus firmly. "I am sowwy, but I feel it is time for a chap to put his foot down. I am goin' to send you all to Coventry for a week, and I twist it will be a lesson to you."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Tom Merry & Co.

"Pewwaps you will cackle in anotheah way when you have been in Coventry for a day or two!" said Arthur Augustus crushingly.

And he turned his back on the caravanners.

Tom Merry wiped his eyes.

"Good old Gussy!" he murmured. "How lucky we brought him along with us. Caravanning wouldn't really be a success without Gussy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The caravanners finished their supper in very cheery spirits, considering the crushing sentence that had been passed on them by the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus sat at a distance, on the step of the caravan, and ate bread and cheese in solitary state and dignity.

It had not yet apparently occurred to the mighty brain of Arthur Augustus that in sending the whole party to Coventry he was, in effect, sending himself to that undesirable residence.

Doubtless, that would dawn on him later.

The sun had disappeared, and there was a glimmer of starlight in the summer evening.

The caravanners prepared to turn in.

"Sleeping in the van, Gussy?" asked Blake affably.

No answer.

"Deaf, old chap?"

"I have told you, Blake, that you are in Coventry, and I wefuse to uttah a single syllable to you!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus gave a disdainful sniff. He took his sleeping-bag and ground sheet out of the caravan, and disposed himself for slumber in the grass.

That was a very pleasant way of passing a summer's night, with an air pillow and a muffler for the head.

The other caravanners put up the tent, and the party was soon sleeping the sleep of the just.

The rising sun was the signal for the rising of the caravanners in the morning.

The embers of the dead fire were raked together and lighted, and water boiled for coffee and eggs.

Arthur Augustus partook of coffee and eggs in grim silence. His comrades were in Coventry, and the swell of St. Jim's was resolved to keep up the sentence till they were in a proper state of repentance.

The caravanners, "cut dead" by their noble chum, chatted among themselves quite cheerily, however. They soon appeared to forget the existence of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Having addressed a few remarks to him which elicited no reply, they left him severely alone, and Arthur Augustus was left to enjoy silent dignity.

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HORNBY SPEED BOATS

After breakfast there was washing-up and packing, and then the red caravan took the road.

The horse tramped along cheerily, and the juniors tramped, too, in a cheery mood.

They talked to one another, but addressed no remarks to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—apparently remembering, at last, that they were in Coventry.

The expression on Gussy's lofty face became rather peculiar as the morning wore on.

His severe sentence did not seem to have a crushing effect upon his comrades; but it was having a rather discomfoting effect upon himself.

As a matter of fact, his wrath had died away; it was but seldom that the sun went down on the wrath of Arthur Augustus, and still more seldom that the sun rose upon it.

He was prepared to give directions and advice; but he was barred from doing so by the fact that he could not, by his own decree, speak to his companions.

The caravan arrived at a cross-road, and there was a pause for consultation.

Arthur Augustus did not take part in the consultation. His comrades seemed oblivious to his existence.

The road was decided on, and Tom Merry bade the horse "gee-up!" And then Arthur Augustus broke the silence at last.

"You fellows have not chosen the best road," he said.

Arthur Augustus' remark fell upon the desert air.

The caravan moved.

"I spoke to you, Tom Mewwy!" said the swell of St. Jim's warmly.

Tom Merry, apparently deaf, led on the horse.

"Blake——"

Jack Blake looked at Arthur Augustus in surprise, and did not speak.

The elegant Fourth Former breathed hard.

"If I weceive a pwopah apology, Blake, I am willin' to ovahlook your wotten conduct!" he said.

Blake shook his head.

"Answah me, you silly ass!"

Jack Blake took a stump of chalk from his waistcoat pocket and chalked on the caravan:

"Can't speak! I'm in Coventry!"

Arthur Augustus breathed harder than before and walked on.

CHAPTER 11.

Let Out!

TOM MERRY & Co. chatted cheerily as they marched with the caravan.

There was only one silent member of the party. That was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

He was not silent from choice. But his remarks, like the seed in the parable, fell upon stony places, and so he restrained them.

His comrades had evidently taken the sentence of "Coventry" with proper seriousness at last, and were keeping Arthur Augustus to it.

There was no noonday halt that day. After a marching consultation, the juniors decided on a bread-and-cheese lunch "on the hoof," as Blake called it, and an early halt in the evening.

Arthur Augustus did not approve, and he said as much. But he might as well have addressed the caravan itself as the caravanners.

"I wegard it as a much bettah ideah to west undah the trees for a while," he declared.

Silence!

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"I considah it widiculous to keep on without a west, Tom Mewwy!"

"Come up, old boy!" said Tom Merry; but his remark was addressed to the caravan horse, not to the swell of St. Jim's.

"I must say that you fellows don't know how to manage a cawavannin' tour," said Arthur Augustus heatedly. "Fellows who don't know should yield to the judgment of a fellow who does know."

"Not a bad road, is it?" remarked Lowther.

"Not at all," said Blake. "Too many dashed motors, but I suppose that can't be helped. Caravanners are always being worried by the idle rich."

"Bai Jove! You vewy often wide in a motor yourself, Blake."

"It's a jolly good horse, and we shall get through the day all right," said Blake. "Any more cheese, Dig?"

"There was some left. Somebody's bagged it!"

"I have taken the cheese, Dig. I pwesume that I am entitled to some lunch when I am hungwy."

"Well, if there isn't any more cheese, Dig, I'll have some bread-and-butter."

"There isn't any more butter."

"Oh, my hat! Hand out the marmalade, then."

"I will have the marmalade, too, Dig, deah boy!"

Dig handed Blake the marmalade.

"Aftah you, Blake."

Blake thoughtfully replaced the jar in the caravan.

Arthur Augustus' eye glittered behind his eyeglass. He was growing fed-up; yet he scarcely had a right to grumble, as he had passed the sentence of Coventry himself, and the other fellows were only obeying his lordly behest.

The caravan wound on through deep lanes, amid woods and fields, in the shining summer afternoon.

The juniors had consulted a map, and decided where to halt for the evening; but Arthur Augustus did not know. No remarks had been addressed to him on the subject.

During the afternoon he walked on in stately dignity. Presently he stepped into the caravan for a rest.

Then the walking caravanners exchanged a grin.

"Poor old Gussy!" murmured Blake. "He's sent us to Coventry for a week. I wonder if he will keep it up for a week?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He will burst his crop if it goes on for twenty-four hours, I think," grinned Monty Lowther.

And the caravanners chortled.

Arthur Augustus heard the chortle as he rested in the caravan, and he breathed hard with growing wrath.

The red sunset was glowing on hill and field and meadow when the caravan came to a halt at last.

Arthur Augustus jumped out of the vehicle.

"Well, I'm ready for a rest!" Jack Blake remarked. "We've done a jolly good day. Walking it, too—not slacking in the van!"

"If you imply that I have been slackin' in the cawavan, Blake——"

"We'll light up the stove," said Tom Merry. "Luckily we thought of laying in a can of oil to-day."

"I wetiached to the cawavan because I was fed-

(Continued on page 36.)

SOMETHING NEW IN VISITORS ARRIVES AT FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOL IN THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA!

A Grizzly at Cedar Creek!



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

When it comes to action in a crisis it's the tenderfoot of Cedar Creek School—Frank Richards—who shows up best!

"Bear!"

"BY gum!" Bob Lawless stopped suddenly as he uttered that exclamation.

Morning lessons were over at the log school on the bank of Cedar Creek. Frank Richards and his Cousin Bob were sauntering along the bank, chatting, when Bob halted, his startled eyes fixed on the grassy bank.

Frank Richards stopped, too, and looked inquiringly at his Canadian cousin.

"What's the row?" he asked.

Bob pointed to a heavy track in the soft earth. "Do you see that?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Haven't you ever seen a bear track?" Bob exclaimed.

"A bear!" Frank started and looked quickly about him.

He could not help feeling startled. The lumber school was miles from the nearest dwelling, and there were three or four dozen schoolboys and schoolgirls in it, or in the vicinity, waiting for the bell to summon them to afternoon lessons.

The only grown-up persons at hand were Miss Meadows, the headmistress, and Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, a negro man-of-all-work, and a Chinese cook—none of them the kind of person to tackle a savage beast.

"You are sure, Bob?" asked Frank Richards.

He remembered suddenly his cousin's propensity for practical jokes. But Bob's face was grave and alarmed.

He stood up and shouted:

"Look out, you fellows! Bear!"

Chunky Todgers, the fattest fellow at the lumber school, came tearing up the bank. Chunky's teeth were set in a chunk of maple sugar, and he could hardly speak, but he managed to stutter: "Bear! Run for it!"

There was a rush towards the log schoolhouse. Bob caught Frank Richards by the arm.

"You're the quickest!" he panted. "Out on and tell Slimmey to get his gun—quick, for goodness' sake!"

"Right-ho!" muttered Frank.

He dashed on ahead at top speed. In a couple

of minutes he reached the porch of the schoolhouse, and dashed breathlessly in.

In the big school-room he could see Mr. Slimmey, with his glasses and watery eyes, peering over a book. He dashed in and caught the young man by the arm.

"Quick!" he panted.

Mr. Slimmey started up, his book falling to the floor, and his glasses sliding down his thin nose.

"What! What!" he ejaculated. "Richards, what—"

"It's a bear, sir!" panted Frank. "Get your gun—quick, sir!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey.

Mr. Slimmey was from the Old Country, and savage bears were not in his line at all. He stood gasping helplessly, while Frank, in his excitement, dragged him by the arm.

"The gun!" he shouted. "Where is the gun? Quick, sir!"

"I—I think Miss Meadows has a shot-gun," stammered Mr. Slimmey, setting his glasses straight. "Bless my soul! I—I will—will attempt to protect the children!"

Mr. Slimmey looked round wildly for a weapon. Feeble young gentleman as he was, he had plenty of pluck, as he showed by catching up a pair of large compasses and rushing forth from the schoolhouse.

How he was going to tackle a bear with a pair of compasses Mr. Slimmey did not stop to think. It was his duty to interpose between his pupils and danger, and he rushed to do it, without thinking.

Frank Richards followed him out breathlessly. There was a shot-gun hanging in the hall, and the English boy took it down. It was not loaded, and it would not have been much use against a bear if it had been, but it was something.

Frank expected to find a scene of wild excitement and terror outside, and boys and girls rushing for shelter at top speed. But he did not find anything of the sort.

As the tutor with the compasses, and Frank with the shot-gun, rushed into the open air, there was a terrific yell of laughter.

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank stared round him in bewilderment.

"The—the bear!" he stuttered. "Bob, the—the bear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob.

"The bear!" shrieked Eben Hacke. "B'ars hyer. There isn't a b'ar within twenty miles, you young jay! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey feebly. "Richards, this is really most inexcusable! How dare you play such jokes!"

"I—I—I—"

"You are a bad boy!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey. "I shall report this to Miss Meadows."

And Mr. Slimmey dodged back into the school-house, trying to hide the compasses under his coat as he retreated.

Frank Richards stood rooted to the ground, shot-gun in his hand, his cheeks crimson. He had been the victim once more of his cousin's exuberant sense of humour, and evidently all his school-fellows were in the joke against the unsuspecting tenderfoot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The boys were yelling and the girls giggling. Frank Richards wished that the earth would open and swallow him up.

"Good gracious! What is all this?" Miss Meadows came out of the house. "Richards, what are you doing with that gun? You should not take firearms to play with."

"I—I—I—" stammered Frank.

"He reckoned there was a b'ar, marm!" roared Eben Hacke. "H* kim out with a shot-gun to kill a b'ar!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Meadows frowned and took the shot-gun. "You should not play these silly practical jokes on a new boy!" she said severely.

Frank Richards rushed to his cousin, who was still yelling with laughter. Bob's yell changed a little to crescendo as Frank grasped him by the ears.

"You silly ass!" shouted Frank. "You were taking me in!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bob, as Frank Richards pulled his ears. "Leggo!"

"Richards!" It was Miss Meadows' clear voice.

"Sorry, ma'am!" gasped Frank.

And he released Bob Lawless, who roared in quite a different way now. Bob looked very warlike for a moment. But he changed his mind and burst into a chuckle.

"Oh, you blessed tenderfoot!" he exclaimed.

"You cackling duffer!"

"Well, how can a chap help cackling when you were sprinting for cover after seeing a horse-track by the creek?" demanded Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Clang, clang, clang!

Never had the sound of the school bell been so welcome to Frank Richards. The school trooped in, still grinning, and Frank took his place at his desk with a crimson face.

From Jest to Earnest!

BOB LAWLESS nudged his cousin as he dropped into his seat beside him.

"Not mad?" he asked.

Frank's grim face relaxed. After all, he knew Bob well enough by this time to take him as he found him. Bob's sense of humour was liable to get out of hand at any time, in season and out of season.

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"No, I'm not waxy, you duffer!" said Frank. "I'm getting a bit tired of your fatheaded jokes, all the same."

"Well, you're so jolly well green, you know!" pleaded Bob. "When you know the ropes you'll take a hand in fooling new fellows, you know, just the same."

"I suppose there aren't any bears in this district?" Frank remarked.

"I guess not. Plenty of them left up in the Rockies, of course, and in the forests up north," said Bob.

"There was a bear here once," said Chunky Todgers, helping himself to maple sugar from under the desk. "It got away from the hunters up in the hills, and came down on the Sunset Ranch, and the cattlemen killed it."

"One might come here, then?" said Frank.

Bob chuckled.

"Well, it's possible," he said. "Ask Miss Meadows to shut the door when she comes in, Franky."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Rats!" growled Frank.

"If there should be a b'ar, Richards can be relied on to show him a clean pair of heels!" grinned Hacke.

There was a fresh outburst of chuckling, which ceased when Miss Meadows came in to take the class.

Miss Meadows gave her class a somewhat severe look, and afternoon lessons commenced. The girl "school-marm" ruled her class with quiet authority, and though the fellows were sometimes cheeky to Mr. Slimmey, they never ventured anything of the kind with the headmistress.

At the lower end of the big school-room Mr. Slimmey was busy with his class. He was a conscientious young man, and his scholastic attainments were far in excess of the requirements of the lumber school. But in other respects Mr. Slimmey was like a fish out of water in the Canadian backwoods school.

The boy pulled his leg without limit, though, upon the whole, they rather liked the good-natured and somewhat vacant young man.

His devotion to Miss Meadows, who kept him at a respectful distance, amused the whole school, though Mr. Slimmey was quite unaware that they had observed it.

The "b'ar" joke was soon forgotten as the school settled down to work. It was very pleasant in the great school-room. The big door stood open, letting in the breeze from the hills and the bright sunshine.

The class was travelling through Canadian history, and were "doing" the last meeting of Wolfe and Montcalm on the heights of Abraham, when a sudden horrified gasp from Chunky Todgers startled the class.

"Todgers!" said Miss Meadows warningly.

Chunky did not even look at her.

His eyes, round and saucer-like, were fixed in a stare of horror at the big, open doorway of the school-room. The rest followed his glance of wonder, and then there was a shriek.

Miss Meadows whirled round towards the door. Then her face went white.

For, framed in the open doorway, black against the sunshine beyond, stood the form of a gigantic grizzly bear, raised on his haunches, glaring into the school-room!

For a second horror held the whole school in its grip.

The bear, probably as surprised as the school,

stood reared on its haunches, as if uncertain, glaring in with red eyes and open jaws that showed a fearful array of white, sharp teeth.

Frank Richards was the first who moved. He acted upon impulse, without stopping to think. With a bound he was out of the class; with another he was at the door, dragging at it.

Slam!

The heavy door crashed shut right on the nose of the bear, and there was a terrified growl without.

Frank, with lightning quickness, slammed a bar in its place in the iron sockets. He was only just in time. The next second there was a heavy crash on the outside of the door, and it shook and groaned under the weight of the grizzly. But it held fast.

His hands shaking now a little, Frank Richards dropped the other two bars into place.

Crash!

Again the monster flung himself on the door, but the stout pinewood held fast. The thick pine bars did not yield. For the moment, at least, the terrible enemy was baffled.

Prisoners of the School-room!

THERE was a babel of voices in the school-room now. The younger children were shrieking and crying, and every face was white.

Mr. Slimmey stood as if rooted to the floor, his mouth wide open, his eyes staring behind his glasses.

Miss Meadows retained her calmness and presence of mind. It was a new experience for her, even in the wildest district she had known; but the Canadian girl did not lose her courage.

"Silence!" she exclaimed, and her voice came clearly through the din. "Calm yourselves! Close the windows at once!"

Some of the fellows were recovering themselves now. Several rushed to the school-room windows and closed them, and the shutters were fastened. Then the school gathered in a crowd in the middle of the great room. Miss Meadows succeeding in reducing them to silence at last.

The bear could be heard in the hall without, and there was a sound of crashing and tearing. Doubtless he was wreaking his temper on the hats and coats in the hall. But for Frank Richards' prompt action the fearful beast would have been in the school-room, with living bodies to wreak his fury upon.

Miss Meadows dropped her hand on Frank Richards' shoulder.

"You showed great presence of mind, Richards," she said quietly. "You have perhaps saved us all."

Frank coloured.

"Jerusalem crickets! What's going to be done?" muttered Hacke.

"Take your places!" said Miss Meadows calmly. "The bear cannot enter this room, and there is at present no danger."

Frank Richards peered from the slit between the shutters of a window. He knew that there was a negro and a Chinaman about the house, and he wondered where they were. And Sally, the negress, too. Where was she? In the school-room they were safe for the moment. But the others?

He approached Miss Meadows.

"What about Black Sam and Sally, ma'am?" said Frank. "And Chu Chung Chow?"

"I was thinking of them, my boy." Miss Meadows' brows were knitted. "We are quite helpless. I must think."

"There's the bear!" muttered Bob Lawless.

There was a rush to look.

A loud whinnying was audible in the distance. The ponies belonging to some of the fellows who came on horseback to school were loose in the field, and they had evidently scented the bear, or he had scented them.

Frank Richards heard a clattering of hoofs in the distance, and the huge form of the grizzly came in sight, lumbering across the field in pursuit, as the horses fled for the wood.

"He's gone!" muttered Chunky Todgers.

"I guess he'll come back," said Eben Hacke. "He won't catch them hosses. They're too spry for him."

Frank ran back to Miss Meadows.

"The bear's gone across the field, Miss



"Holy smoke! The whole world to land on, and I must land on this!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Burnett, Ransom Sanatorium, Rainworth, near Mansfield, Notts.

Meadows We can look for Black Sam and Sally now."

Miss Meadows nodded, and Frank began to remove the bars of the door.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Slimmey helplessly. "Perhaps—perhaps I had better go out, Miss Meadows—"

"Remain where you are, please!" said Miss Meadows sharply.

The door was opened, five or six fellows holding it ready to slam again at a sign of the bear, and others with the bars in their hands, ready to replace.

Frank Richards hurried out into the hall.

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

But Frank turned a deaf ear. He did not intend to leave that risky sortie to the school-mistress. He ran to the kitchen, of which the door was closed and barred. He hammered on it.

"Loramussy!" came the voice of Sally, in dire terror. "Dere is dat bear, Mr. Chow. Loramussy!"

"Me tinkee me deadee Chinee!" moaned Chu Chung Chow. "Me tinkee me never see Cantor no moree! Me deadee Chinee!"

"Let me in!" shouted Frank.

"Golly!"

The kitchen door was opened.

"Get into the school-room—quick!" rapped out Frank. "Sharp's the word!"

Chu Chung Chow and Sally streaked for the school-room and bolted in. It was the safest place. As Frank followed them, there was a rapid patter of footsteps, and Black Sam, the

stableman, burst in from the porch, quaking with terror. His ebony face was thick with perspiration, and his eyes rolled white.

Behind him there was a fearful shuffling sound. Frank Richards knew what that meant. He grasped the negro by the arm and rushed him to the school-room. Black Sam staggered in, and Frank Richards followed.

The door was slammed as soon as he was inside—none too soon. As the bars rattled into their places again, the prisoners of the school-room heard the terrible animal nosing over the outside of the door. There was a sound of scratching, and then a deep growl, and silence.

"My word!" murmured Bob Lawless.

"Thank Heaven everyone is safe!" said Miss Meadows quietly.

The grizzly had evidently failed to catch one of the horses. He had returned to the school-room for prey. The animal must have come down from the mountains, and had doubtless been driven by hunger. And hunger held him to the building where there was food—if he could get at it.

A Desperate Venture!

MISS MEADOWS stood pale but calm, her hand resting on a desk, trying to think. There was no help at hand.

Such a happening was utterly unlooked-for. It had never occurred before in the history of the school on Cedar Creek. What to do in such an emergency was a puzzle. The school, like most Canadian frontier schools, occupied the central spot of a large district, and there were no habitations near at hand. There had never been any thought of danger in the section since the far-off days of Indian risings.

Mr. Slimmey approached the schoolmistress, his eyes gleaming behind his glasses.

"Something must be done, Miss Meadows," he said.

"Undoubtedly."

"There is no rifle here?"

"There is only a shot-gun, and that is in the hall," said Miss Meadows. "It would be useless."

"The bear must be driven off," said Mr. Slimmey. "If—if I had a— a sword or something—"

He stopped helplessly.

Serious as the situation was, Miss Meadows could scarcely restrain a smile at the idea of Mr. Slimmey tackling a grizzly bear with a sword, if such a weapon was to be found in the backwoods of Canada.

Poor Mr. Slimmey's heart was in the right place, but his head was certainly unequal to the emergency. Such emergencies did not occur in the Old Country, where all Mr. Slimmey's ideas had been formed and fixed.

"Hark!" muttered Chunky Todgers.

There was a growling and scratching at one of the windows. The shutters shook and rattled. All eyes were fixed upon it in deep and painful anxiety.

There was little doubt that the bear, if it exerted its full strength, could smash in the pine-wood shutter. If the animal's intelligence was equal to directing his terrible strength, there was no doubt of the result.

Bob Lawless pressed Frank's arm. Frank looked at him.

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Even Bob's bold, reckless face was pale now. "If we could only get word to the ranch, or to Cedar Creek Camp!" muttered Bob.

"But we can't?"

"I guess not."

Crack!

"Good heavens!" muttered Chunky Todgers, with chattering teeth. "It's giving!"

A bar of bright sunlight streamed in at the cracked shutter. A hideous claw groped within.

Frank Richards seized the big compasses from the schoolmistress' desk and ran to the window with them open.

The horrible claw was feeling, groping within a foot of him. With all his strength Frank drove the sharp point of the open compasses into the paw. There was a terrific howl from the animal without, and the paw was whisked away, the compasses still sticking in it.

"Frank," panted Bob—"good man!"

For several minutes there was an incessant howling and roaring from the pain-stricken animal without. The bear was shuffling and rolling outside the window, the compasses still sticking in his paw.

The bellowing of the great brute died away at last into savage growling. But the claw did not come through the cracked shutter again.

"Oh!" said Mr. Slimmey, wiping his brow. "I—I feel that I ought to do something or— or other! Miss Meadows, can you suggest something that a fellow can do?"

"We must get help," said Miss Meadows quietly.

Mr. Slimmey brightened.

"You'd like me to dodge out and run for help!" he exclaimed. "Certainly! I—I think that's a good idea, you know."

"You could not do it," said Miss Meadows. "Sam!"

"It's here, mum."

"Sam, someone must go for help."

Black Sam shivered.

"I couldn't go out wid de b'ar dar, missy," he mumbled. "Dat black debble, he gobble up poor ole Sam!"

The schoolmistress compressed her lips. Black Sam was useless, Chiu Chung Chow more so, and Mr. Slimmey, though willing, was the least capable of the three.

Frank Richards came towards the schoolmistress. His face was a little pale, but quite calm, and there was a gleam in his eyes.

"Miss Meadows, let me go!"

"I cannot," said Miss Meadows, with a shake of the head. "You could not escape the bear. It is impossible."

"We must have help," said Frank quietly. "The brute will get in sooner or later, ma'am. Help must be fetched. I may be able to get a horse in the wood, or I could tramp it to the ranch—"

"But the bear, my boy—"

"Somebody's got to risk it."

"Not you, I guess," said Bob Lawless. "I guess I'm the one, if anybody goes."

"I cannot allow you to go," said Miss Meadows. "Leave me now; I must think."

Frank Richards exchanged a glance with his cousin, and they drew aside.

"What do you think, Bob?" Frank whispered.

"We've got to have help," said Bob decidedly.

"The horrible brute is hungry, and he will force a way in sooner or later. Some of the girls are called for after lessons to be taken home; but

their people won't know there's anything wrong here, and won't come armed. They might walk right on to the bear, too, before they see him. Are you really game, Franky, to risk it?"

"I'm game," said Frank quietly. "I meant what I said. Bob, I'm going!"

"Not alone," said Bob. "Two's safer than one. And—and if one gets chewed up, the other gets clear, Franky, and takes the alarm to the ranch."

Frank nodded, setting his lips.

"The horses are loose in the wood," he said. "We might get hold of one—"

"Better than that. If we can get clear down to the creek, we can get a canoe out. Hacke's canoe is moored there, and once we reach it—"

Frank's eyes gleamed.

"I hadn't thought of that. I—I'm not a good hand at paddling. But you—"

"That's where I live," said Bob. "The paddles are in the canoe, and once we get off we're all hunky."

Chunky Todgers came up to them.

"I—I say, have you fellows thought of anything?" he muttered.

"You bet!" said Bob cheerily. "Splendid idea!"

"What is it?" asked Chunky hopefully.

"We're going to chuck you out to the bear!"

"What!" yelled Chunky.

"You're the fattest chap here, you know; and if the bear's reasonable, he'll be satisfied with you," explained Bob. "Hallo! Where are you going, Chunky?"

Chunky was retreating to the protection of Miss Meadows. The chums followed him.

"Keep him off!" roared Chunky. "I'm not going to be chucked to the bear! I—I—"

"What ever is this?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Chunky's been dreaming," said Bob, with a grin. "Miss Meadows, we're going to run across to Hacke's canoe on the creek. You've got to let us go, ma'am; it's the only chance."

"But—"

"Milly Brown's popper is coming for her after school, and he may run right into the bear," said Bob. "We've got to chance it, and get rid of him, ma'am. Now, you see, we must go. Once we get into the canoe the beast can't touch us!"

Miss Meadows hesitated. The two brave lads were ready to take the risk; and, to save other lives, it was necessary to let them take it.

"A first-rate idea!" said Mr. Slimmey. "Of course, I must go."

"You can't handle a Canadian canoe, sir," said Bob bluntly.

"Bless my soul! I had forgotten that!" said poor Mr. Slimmey. "Indeed, that would be somewhat of a disadvantage, in the circumstances."

There was a scratching and growling at the window again. Mr. Slimmey, determined to do something, seized a pointer and lashed at the paw that came feeling its way through the slit. There was a fierce howl from the grizzly without.

Bob caught Frank's arm and rushed him to the window on the other side of the log school-house.

"Now's our chance!" he exclaimed. He tore open the shutter.

"My boys!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, torn between anxiety for the two lads and anxiety for the rest.

"It's all right, ma'am. While he's on that side we'll dodge round on this. Come on, Frank!"

"I cannot allow it! I cannot—"

But the chums did not heed. The window was



There was a shriek of alarm from the boys and girls. Miss Meadows whirled round, and then her face went white. For framed in the open doorway stood the form of a gigantic grizzly bear, raised on its haunches, glaring into the school-room!

open, and Frank Richards was already swinging himself out. He dropped nimbly to the ground. Bob Lawless followed him with a bound.

Miss Meadows' pale face looked after them. "Shut the window, ma'am—the shutters!" panted Bob.

"Heaven preserve you, my boys!" faltered Miss Meadows.

"Come on, Bob!"
The shutters closed.

Neck or Nothing!

FRANK RICHARDS felt his heart thumping. The two boys were in the open playing ground, and the log school between them and their terrible enemy. As yet the grizzly could not see them; but as soon as they started for the creek he was certain to see them, and then—

Frank drew a deep breath.

"Come on, Bob! It's neck or nothing!"

Side by side the two lads rushed for the bank of the creek, where Eben Hacke's canoe lay on the water, moored to a larch.

They had reached the gate in the fence surrounding the school grounds before the grizzly sighted them. A savage growl warned them that they were seen, and a heavy shuffling that came nearer and nearer.

They took one swift glance behind. Not twenty yards away the huge grizzly was lumbering on their track with eyes aflame. Huge and heavy as he was, his movements were swift and active.

With thumping hearts the boys ran for the creek. Behind them thundered the grizzly in hot pursuit.

The grizzly was gaining; they knew that. His panting breath came nearer and nearer behind, till it seemed as if they felt the terrible jaws snapping on them.

The creek at last!

Bob made a bound into the canoe, and it rocked and sent up a splash of water. Frank Richards was only a second after him.

"Cast off!" yelled Bob, as he groped for the paddles.

Frank tore at the cord that secured the canoe to the tree, but it was knotted. He took out his pocket-knife and opened it in a flash, hacking savagely at the cord.

The huge form of the grizzly loomed on the bank; the eyes seemed to flame as he closed in furiously on the schoolboys.

Snap!

The cord parted.

Bob drove a paddle against the tree, and the canoe danced out upon the water, rocking wildly.

Splash!

The huge weight of the bear, thrown at the canoe as it moved, just missed the little craft, and the grizzly splashed into the water behind. The grey, savage head went right under, and the water foamed and swirled as the grizzly struggled.

Bob had both paddles out and was paddling swiftly, and the canoe righted and shot farther out into the creek. He tossed a paddle to Frank, who caught it.

Frank looked back, to see the snout of the grizzly rise from the water behind, with furious eyes above it. He struck with the paddle with all his strength. The force of the blow smashed the paddle, and the grizzly's head went under the stream.

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Bob was paddling furiously.

Frank, with the stump of the paddle in his hand, looked back. To his intense relief, he saw the grizzly scramble to the bank and drag his huge bulk ashore. Dripping and snarling, the great brute loped back to the schoolhouse.

"He's gone, Bob!" said Frank.

"Gone back?"

"Yes."

"I hope to goodness he doesn't get into the schoolhouse!" muttered Bob.

Swift as the canoe was, it seemed slow to Frank. But the trees on the bank were racing by as if past an express train. There was a roar of waters ahead of them, and Frank gave his cousin a startled look.

"Bob!"

"The rapids!" said Bob, without pausing. "It's all serene!"

The canoe sped onwards in a racing current that swirled and tossed drift-logs amid its foam. As if by magic, the skilful paddler avoided every danger, and the canoe shot into the rapids.

Frank Richards sat tight. It seemed to the inexperienced eyes of the English lad that the frail cockleshell of a canoe must be capsized, or engulfed every moment.

But the Canadian lad knew what he was about. Bob Lawless had been "on the rapids" in large rivers, and the fall of the creek was nothing to him. The canoe shot onward, unharmed.

Frank drew a deep breath when they were past. Bob Lawless was still paddling away at top speed, and the canoe was shooting on like an arrow over the shining waters.

They passed a shack near the shore, the first building of Cedar Creek to come in sight. Five minutes later he sighted the log walls of the Hotel Continental through the clearings.

Cedar Creek town was in full sight now, and a number of cattlemen were staring towards the canoe from the veranda of the hotel. Two or three came running down to the creek. Among them was Rancher Lawless, who had business in the town that afternoon, but had little dreamed of seeing his son and nephew there.

Bob drove the canoe to the bank, and Frank Richards jumped ashore. Bob followed him more slowly; his strength was spent.

The rancher stared at them in blank amazement.

"You young rascals!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here? Why aren't you in school?"

"Dad," panted Bob, "we—we—"

He gasped for breath, and broke off. He was too exhausted with his efforts to speak.

The rancher caught Frank Richards by the arm.

"What has happened at the school, Frank?" he asked, in alarm.

Frank panted out an explanation. The rancher's tanned face grew suddenly pale.

"Good heavens!" he muttered.

The rancher turned away, shouting to the cattlemen. Rancher Lawless was a man of action. There was no time for words.

There was mounting in hot haste in Cedar Creek. In five minutes a dozen men were in the saddle, with rifles on their backs, riding like the wind for the lumber school, with the rancher at their head.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless, breathless but determined, were riding after them. The canoe, forgotten, was left on the creek. Faster



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PEN PALS COUPON

6-8-38

and faster they rode over rough prairie trail, and under the boughs of the forest trees, silent save for the panting of the horses and the ceaseless thud of the hoofs.

Faster and faster, till they came in sight of the lumber school, standing black against the sky reddened by the setting sun. Had they arrived in time?

There was a deathly silence in the log school-house. After the two boys had gone all had listened with tense hearts. But there had been no cry. They could only hope that the chums had got clear. And soon they heard the grizzly snuffing round the log walls again. The brute was hungry and savage.

"The boys are safe," said Mr. Slimmey at last. "They are safe, Miss Meadows."

The schoolmistress nodded. She could not speak.

Every nerve was on edge. The great beast, snuffing round the log walls, was restless and untiring. Sooner or later there was little doubt he must effect an entrance, and then—

It was hard to keep calm. But the quiet courage of the schoolmistress had its effect, and all were silent and patient.

Suddenly, after what seemed an age, hoof-beats came muffled from the distance—louder, nearer, the beat of many hoofs upon the earth. Then came a deafening burst of rifle-fire.

Crack-ack-ack-ack!

It rang and echoed, and there was a general intake of breath as the welcome sound was heard. Help had come at last.

It seemed as if pandemonium followed that sudden burst of firing. Growling, yelling, and savage howlings that woke every echo of the woods—the sounds of the fury of the great, savage animal surrounded by the hunters. Crack on crack from the rifles, till the howlings died away, and then silence once more.

A heavy knock sounded at the door.

"All safe now!" It was Mr. Lawless' voice. "You can open the door."

Miss Meadows removed the bars, her face white, but still calm. The door swung open, and the red sunset streamed into the log school-house. The rancher strode in, a smoking rifle in his hand.

"The boys?" said Miss Meadows.

"All serene, ma'am!" sang out Bob Lawless' cheery voice.

And Frank Richards' voice echoed:

"All right, Miss Meadows!"

"Thank Heaven!"

Mr. Slimmey took off his gold-rimmed spectacles and polished them, and jammed them on his nose again.

"Well done—well done, my lads!" he exclaimed. "But you shouldn't have cut off like that. You should have let me go."

Whereat Frank Richards and Bob Lawless grinned.

"And your canoe's at Cedar Creek, Hacke," grinned Bob. "You'll have to walk home to-night, my infant!"

Eben Hacke laughed.

"I guess I don't mind that," he said. "I reckon I never was so glad to see your cheeky face as I am now. Yep!"

The whole school crowded out, to gather in awe round the body of the grizzly, riddled with bullets, but terrible in death.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were the heroes of the hour. Mr. Slimmey congratulated them, Miss Meadows thanked them in sweet, quiet tones, and boys and girls gathered round them, till the fuss that was made of them made them glad to mount again, and ride home to the ranch in the sunset with Mr. Lawless.

(Next Wednesday: "THE SNOB OF CEDAR CREEK!")

JACK DRAKE LOSES THE FIRST ROUND IN HIS EFFORT TO MAKE GOOD ON BOARD THE SCHOOL-SHIP BENBOW!

The "SAP"
OF
ST. WINIFRED'S!
By OWEN CONQUEST.



The Fourth Formers crowded out of the study, leaving Drake helpless. Jack glared after them, wriggling in his bonds. "You rotters!" he howled. "Let me loose!" "Not till bed-time!" chortled Raik.

Tea in Daub's Study.

TUCKEY TOODLES put his head into Study No. 3 in the Shell quarters on board the old Benbow, and looked round him with a propitiatory grin. Toodles of the Fourth had a most expansive grin. His mouth was not small, and when he grinned it seemed to extend almost from one large ear to the other.

"Old Drake here?" he asked.

Jack Drake of the Fourth was seated in Vernon Daubeny's handsome and luxurious arm-chair, staring rather glumly out of the window upon the river. Torrence of the Shell was unpacking a big cake on the table.

Drake did not look round, but Torrence gave the cheerful Tuckey a stare and pointed to the door.

"Scat!" he said briefly.

Instead of "scatting," Tuckey Toodles came into the study.

"Drake, old chap——"

"What do you want?" grunted Drake.

"Dear old chap, I'm sure you're glad to see me after the vac," said Toodles affectionately. "You needn't glare at me, Torrence. I suppose I can speak to my own studymate if I like? I brought back some new curtains for the study, Drake."

"Oh, rot!"

"I've put them up," said Toodles. "Estcourt helped me. I say, they look awfully rejerky."

"Awfully what?" ejaculated Torrence.

"Rejerky."

"Oh, my hat! Do you mean recherche?"

"No, I don't," answered Toodles obstinately.

"I mean rejerky. You Shell fellows are pretty THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,590.

weak on French. Are you coming along to tea, Drake? There's been grub going in the dining-room, but——"

"No."

"Well, I'll stay and have tea here with you, if you like," said Toodles. "I'm so jolly glad to see you again, dear old boy. Where's old Daub?"

"Daub will be here in a minute, and you'll get old Daub's boot if you're still here," grunted Torrence.

"How's his nose?" asked Tuckey.

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Torrence. "What's happened to Daub's nose?"

"The new fellow punched it, you know," grinned Tuckey. "Haven't you seen him since young Rodney punched his nose? He's taking a jolly long time to bathe it. He, he, he!"

Jack Drake sat suddenly upright in his chair.

"Sapping" on the first night of term is unheard of at St. Winifred's—and Jack Drake finds himself the centre of an impromptu "concert" as a "reward" for his diligence!

"Has Daub been rowing with the new fellow?" he exclaimed.

"Didn't you know?" Tuckey Toodles swelled a little with importance as the bearer of startling news. "Yes, rather! Daub and Egan—they got the new fellow along the Form-room passage, you know, and started on him. He, he! And he knocked them out. You should have seen Daub's face when he sat up and rubbed his nose. Quite rejerky. He, he!"

Jack Drake frowned.

"What the thump did they want to quarrel with the new chap for?" he exclaimed. "Daub went to ask him to join us here. Rodney's a decent chap enough. He didn't look the quarrelling kind."

"He wears jolly old clothes," said Tuckey Toodles, with a shake of the head. "Raik says that his Etons are home-made. He, he!"

"Raik's a cad, and you're another!" growled Drake. "Shut up, you grinning image!"

The study door opened, and Vernon Daubeny, the head of the Shell, and the great and admired leader of the "Bucks" of St. Winifred's, came in. Egan followed him in, scowling.

Both Bucks looked as if they had been in the wars.

Daubeny had spent a considerable time attending to his nose after the encounter with Rodney of the Fourth. Daub was very particular about his personal appearance, and a swollen nose could not be supposed to add to any fellow's beauty. But his efforts had been of little avail. Daub's Greek nose was swollen red—fiery red. It was more Roman than Greek at the present moment, and the colour was striking. Tuckey Toodles burst into a most irritating laugh as he saw it.

Daubeny's eyes glittered at Toodles. He was not in a mood for Tuckey's cheery laughter.

He took Toodles by the collar and spun him to the door.

"Oh, I say!" howled Toodles. "I say, Daub, dear old boy—Oh crumbs!"

Toodles bumped on the deck outside.

Daub slammed the door after him. He was evidently in a vile temper, and Torrence suppressed his smile. Jack Drake sat and stared rather grimly at the great chief of the Bucks.

"Toodles says you've been rowing with the new kid," he said.

"Hang the new kid!"

"I told you I'd made friends with him."

"And I told you the fellow was a low cad, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself for makin' friends with him!" growled Daubeny.

Daub's usually graceful manner seemed to have suffered along with his Greek nose.

Drake rose to his feet.

"If that's the kind of talk I'm to hear in this study, I may as well travel," he remarked. "About time I looked at my own study, anyway."

"Sit where you are, old top!" said Torrence pacifically. "Don't mind old Daub; he's ratty!"

"Look at my nose!" hissed Daubeny, glancing at himself in the mirror. "Your precious new pal's done that."

"Well, it does look rather a prize-packet," said Drake, with a smile. "What did you row with the chap for? You said you were going to ask him to tea."

"He rowed with me."

"Because you asked him to tea?" said Drake incredulously.

"Because he's a low hound," said Daubeny—"a poverty-stricken cad who oughtn't to be admitted to St. Winifred's at all. I was civil enough to him, wasn't I, Egan?"

"Oh, quite!" said Egan.

"He didn't look to me like a quarrelsome chap," remarked Drake, rather perplexed.

"Well, you know him better now. Hang the fellow! No need to talk about him. Let's have tea."

Jack Drake hesitated, but he sat down again. He was, in point of fact, feeling a little remorseful about Rodney. He had made friends with the new fellow on the way down, and he intended to "see him through" his first day at St. Winifred's. But his old friends had claimed him; and perhaps he was glad to be claimed.

There was a very easy-going strain in Drake's nature. He was in the habit of taking the line of least resistance—in other words, of letting things slide if they seemed to offer a prospect of trouble. Certainly he had not found that that method led to less trouble in the long run; but it was his way.

The Bucks sat down to tea. It was a very festive tea, and Jack Drake felt his spirits rise. The sense of trouble he had brought with him from home was lifted; the painful consciousness that he was no longer a rich man's son, like his chums, was banished from his mind. The talk in Daubeny's study ran on the topics usually current there—chiefly horses—and Drake was soon feeling his old self again.

Daubeny rubbed his nose occasionally; it was still very painful, and Egan had to give some attention to his eye. Under the influence of his surroundings, Drake soon found himself feeling resentment against the new junior. What had the fellow quarrelled with his friends for, after all?

There were cigarettes after tea; but Drake declined an invitation to banker before calling-over. He left the study at last, and went along to the Fourth Form quarters, which were aft on the main deck of the Benbow.

A Secret to Keep!

"OLD clo'!"

Dick Rodney jumped.

That remark was addressed to him; there was no mistake about that. He was coming along the Fourth Form studies, looking about him for Study No. 8, which he had learned was Jack Drake's study.

In the open doorway of that study stood Tuckey Toodles. And it was Tuckey Toodles who made the remark that struck Rodney all of a sudden.

Tuckey grinned his expansive grin as Rodney stared at him.

"Where did you get them?" he inquired.

"Where did I get what?"

"Your clobber," said Toodles agreeably. "Did the mater make them out of the pater's old things? He, he, he!"

Rodney looked fixedly at the cheerful Tuckey. His clothes were not exactly in the finished style of St. Winifred's, but they were a good deal neater and cleaner than Tuckey's own.

"You cheeky little tubby rat!" said Rodney in measured tones. "Do you want me to shake you?"

"Oh, I say! Only a joke, you know," said Tuckey in alarm. He remembered the way he had seen the new fellow handle Daubeny and Egan, and he backed into the study promptly.

"Here, you sheer off!"

Rodney followed him in.

"You sheer off!" howled Tuckey. "I don't want anything to say to you."

"I'm not going to touch you, you young ass," said Rodney. "I was looking for this study. This is Study No. 8, isn't it?"

"Yes; my study," said Toodles.

"Oh, yours, is it?" said Rodney. "I understood it was Drake's."

"Drake's my studymate. We're great pals, dear old Drake and me," said Toodles loftily. "Inseparable, you know—like brothers."

"Queer taste of Drake's, if that's the case. Anyway, I'm coming into this study; I fixed it up with Drake coming down."

"Oh, come off!" said Toodles, winking. "Not too thick, you know. Drake wouldn't have anything to say to you."

"Why not?"

"Drake's one of the richest chaps at St. Winifred's. I heard what old Daub said to you."

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"You're trying to fasten on to Drake because he's rich. It won't work, my pippin," said Toodles, shaking his head with owl-like seriousness at Rodney. "It won't wash. Take my tip."

"I think I shall have to shake you, after all."

Toodles jumped away.

"Here, you keep off, you blessed old clo' merchant. Oh! Ah! Leggo!"

Rodney grasped the junior by the collar and shook him. He did not shake very hard, but Tuckey Toodles' voice rose like unto the voice of the Bull of Bashan.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Help! Rescue! Yah!"

There was a step in the passage, and Jack Drake appeared in the doorway. He glanced at the two juniors in the study in surprise, and his brows knitted.

"Well, what's the game?" he asked abruptly.

"Yow-wow! Dragginoff, Drake, old chap!" howled Toodles.

Rodney released Toodles, and turned to Drake with a rather flushed face.

"Only shaking the cheeky little cad," he said.

"He's not hurt."

"Yow-wow!"

"I don't see what you want to start shaking my studymate for."

"Well, he cheeked me."

"I only called him an old clo' merchant!" howled Toodles, taking refuge behind Drake.

"Oh, you did, did you, you sneaking little rotter!" said Drake. "Hand me that stump, Rodney—"

"Oh, I say!"

Toodles retreated from the doorway into the passage. Rodney laughed.

"Well, here I am, Drake," he remarked.

"So I see."

Rodney looked at him rather curiously. Drake's manner had changed very considerably since that friendly and confidential talk in the train.

The new junior coloured a little.

"We fixed it up for me to share your study," he said rather awkwardly.

"Oh, I forgot!"

"You forgot!" ejaculated Rodney.

"Ye-es. The fact is—" Drake hesitated.

"Look here, Rodney, you've started here by fighting with two of my best friends. Now I find you shaking my studymate. You seem to have rather a temper."

Rodney looked at him steadily.

"I was keeping to the arrangement we made coming down," he said. "But if you don't want me in this study, Drake, you've only to say so. I can apply for a study in the usual way. It doesn't matter to me."

Drake did not answer.

"To put it plain, so that there can't be any mistake, I shan't stay here unless you ask me to," said Dick Rodney very quietly.

"Oh!"

Rodney waited a few moments, and then, his flush deepening, turned to the door. Drake stood aside for him to pass. But he broke the silence the next moment.

"Hold on a minute, Rodney."

Rodney turned round.

His face had lighted a little, in the belief that Drake was about to ask him to share the study. But Drake's expression showed him at once that that was not his intention.

"I—I told you something in the train," muttered Drake, the crimson creeping into his cheeks, and his eyes on the floor.

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"You told me your father was ruined, and that you are now as poor as I am," answered Rodney. "We arranged to dig together, and to work hard together. You've changed your mind?"

"You haven't mentioned to—anyone—about—"

"About what you told me?"

"Yes," muttered Drake.

"I shouldn't be likely to. I haven't had much chance here yet of chattering, if I wanted to. And I shouldn't, anyway."

Drake drew a deep breath of relief.

"You haven't said a word?"

"Certainly not! Do you know that you're insulting me by asking?"

"I—I don't mean that. But—but I don't want you to say anything. I prefer nothing said."

Rodney watched his downcast, flushed face, and there was something very like scorn in his look.

"You mean you're sorry you told me—or anybody—and you want to keep it dark," he said. "That's your business. Of course, I shan't say a word. It's no business of mine, and I'm not a tattler."

"Thank you!"

"You've nothing to thank me for," said Rodney dryly.

He left the study with that. Jack Drake stood hesitating. He made a step as if to follow the new junior, but he stopped again. Rodney's footsteps died away down the passage.

Working Under Difficulties!

"DRAKE!"

There was a bang at the door of Study No. 8 in the Fourth, and Jack Drake gave a start.

Raik of the Fourth looked in.

"Gone to sleep?" he asked, laughing. "Don't you know it's call-over?"

"Oh, all right!" said Drake confusedly.

Pierce Raik looked at him curiously, and then at the table. There was an assortment of books on the table, and a sheaf of impot paper. Two of the books were open, and Drake had a pen in his hand.

"Not working?" ejaculated Raik.

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"Sapping—first evening of term!" exclaimed Raik incredulously. "Why, there's no prep to-night."

"No; I know. But—just looking over the books—" stammered Jack.

"Rather a new taste, isn't it?" grinned Raik.

"Well, why not, if I choose?" exclaimed Drake, so angrily that the junior in the doorway stared at him.

"Keep your wool on, old nut!" said Raik. "Please yourself. But it's call-over now, and you'd better tumble up. I'm going."

"I'm coming."

Drake closed his books and put down his pen, and followed Raik slowly. Call-over was on the old quarter-deck of the Benbow, and it was being taken by the Head in person.

As Jack Drake joined the rest of the Fourth, he became aware that curious glances were turned on him, and that some of the fellows were grinning. Raik had already imparted the startling news that Drake had been discovered "sapping" on the first day of term. It was no wonder that Drake's Form-fellows were surprised and amused.

"What's the game, Drake?" whispered Vane of the Fourth. "Going potty in your old age?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Drake gruffly.

"Raik says he found you sapping."

"Raik's an ass!"

"Oh, then it isn't so!" said Vane. "I thought he was pulling my leg. Raik's always pulling somebody's leg."

"Why shouldn't it be true?" growled Drake.

"We come here to work, don't we?"

"Eh?"

"What's the school for?"

Vane of the Fourth did not answer that question. He only stared blankly at Jack Drake, with astonishment in his face.

"Hear him?" murmured Raik.

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Tuckey Toodles.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" growled Drake.

"Silence there!" rapped out Lovelace of the Sixth, the captain of St. Winifred's.

The juniors were silent, but they were still grinning. The Head's deep voice was calling the names from the roll now, and attention had to be given to Dr. Goring. But the Fourth Form were in possession of a big joke, and it was all they could do to keep grave, even in the presence of the reverend Head.

After call-over, when the ranks broke up, Jack Drake went down at once to his study, and he was followed by a chorus of chortles.

"What's the matter with him?" asked Newson of the Fourth. "Drake sapping—and on the first evening of the term, too. What does it mean?"

"Must be some very deep joke," said Raik, with a shake of the head. "Why, even Estcourt won't be sapping this evening."

"Drake's setting us all a good example for the beginning of the new term," said Sawyer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Toodles! Where's Toodles? Toodles, you greasy image, you're Drake's studymate. What's the matter with him?"

"Balmly in the crumpet, I suppose," said Toodles. "Pulling our leg. Blessed if I know! Drake's changed. He hasn't even noticed the new curtains I've put up in the study. And they look awfully rejekry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We can't have this, you fellows!" said Raik, looking round. "Estcourt does enough sapping for the old Benbow. We can't have Drake going back on his principles like this."

"No fear!"

"Let's rout him out!"

"Hear, hear!"

A crowd of chuckling juniors swarmed round Study No. 8 in the Fourth. The door was closed. Pierce Raik approached the door, and held up his hand for silence. Breathless with curiosity and suppressed merriment, the juniors listened. There was a sound of a scratching pen from within the study.

Amazing as it was, it was evident that Jack Drake was already at work. Drake, the easy-going slacker, who had been an example of careless idleness to the Fourth, was actually sapping on the first night of term, when even hard-working fellows like Estcourt did not think of work. Unless it was some very deep joke, the Fourth could not understand it.

"He's going it," said Raik.

"Listen!"

Drake's voice came from the study.

"Oh, hang it! Blow it!"

The new sapper apparently did not find his

self-imposed task easy. There was a roar of laughter from the juniors as they heard him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Newson kicked the door open.

Drake was at the table, with books open before him, a pen in his right hand. There was an expression of desperate concentration on his face. Jack was keeping the promise he had made at home—struggling hard to keep it, at all events. And he was beginning at once.

He glared up irritably at the sight of a dozen grinning faces crowding round the doorway.

"What do you fellows want?" he snapped.

"Only to look on, old top!" said Raik affably.

"We've simply come to see the sights."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buzz off, there's good chaps!" said Drake. "I've got to work."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth Formers.

"Go it!" said Raik. "We won't interfere! Silence there! Order, you chaps, for the sapping! This is worth watching. Go it, Drake! Now, then! Arma virumque—got that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All Gaul was anciently divided into three parts," said Newson, in a chanting voice.

And there was another yell.

Drake jumped up.

"Clear off, you silly asses!" he exclaimed.

"How can a chap work with that thundering row going on?"

"Work? Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I mean it, you chumps! I'm going in for the Foundation Scholarship this term."

There was a shriek.

"Pile it on!" roared Raik. "Go it! Tell us something more!"

"Give us some more facts!" chirruped Vane.

"Facts are stranger than fiction, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jack Drake glared at the merry juniors. There was not one there who took him seriously—seriously as he was trying to take himself. It was, indeed, a rather sudden change for the easy-going slacker of the Fourth.

"Now, look here, you chaps!" began Drake helplessly.

"Don't play the goat, old fellow," said Vane.

"We're going to have a sing-song in the Common-room. Come on!"

"I can't come."

"Why not?"

"I'm working."

The reply almost sent the Fourth into convulsions. They howled.

Jack Drake jumped up and seized a cricket bat from a corner of the study. He made a rush at his tormentors.

"Now, then, out you go!"

"Oh, my hat!"

With vigorous lunges of the bat, Drake drove the juniors from the study, yelling like hyenas. He slammed the door after them, and settled

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down to P. Vergilius Maro—as well as he could. But it was not easy.

"Sap!"

BANG, bang, bang!

From the starlight on the upper deck the voice of Lovelace of the Sixth shouted down:

"Now, then, not so much row among you fags!"

"Only a celebration, Lovelace," said Tuckey Toodies. "First night of term, you know."

"First night, Lovelace!" shouted a dozen voices.

"Well, not too much of it, anyhow," answered Lovelace, and he walked away.

"First night" covered a multitude of sins at St. Winifred's. It was the right of the juniors, from time immemorial, to kick up a terrific shindy on first night, and the prefects did not intervene unless driven to it. After his remonstrance Lovelace walked off and closed his ears to the din that proceeded from the Fourth Form quarters.

"It's all right," chuckled Raik. "Keep it up."

"Go it! Where's that kettle?"

"I've got the kettle. You try the saucepan lids."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang! Crash! Crack! Bang!

It was an impromptu concert of the Fourth. Generally there was a celebration on the first night in the Common-room. But the astounding news that Drake was working on first night had run through the Form, and the juniors had

agreed heartily to hold the celebration, on unusually terrific lines, just outside Drake's study door.

Raik called it a concert. But stumps and bats, kettles and saucepan-lids produced a kind of music which could not possibly have gratified any ears but those of an extremely modern dance music composer.

Crash! Bang! Rattle! Crack! Bang!

An unfortunate youth, turning over a new leaf and settling down to serious work for the first time in his life, found himself rather handicapped by that concert outside the door.

But for a time Drake made no move. He hoped that the Fourth would get tired of their little game, and seek some other entertainment. But the Fourth showed no signs of getting tired. The din outside Study No. 8 became stunning to the ears.

The juniors were joyfully debating how long it would be before old Drake chucked it. They were determined that he should chuck it first.

The door flew open at last. Jack Drake's handsome, worried face appeared, and he was greeted by a roar of laughter.

"You thundering chumps!" began Drake.

"Enjoying the music, old top?"

"We're doing this for your sake, you know—cheering you up while you're sapping."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you clear off?" shouted Drake. "Look here, if you're not quiet I'll ask one of the prefects to chip in."

"Rats!"

"Go it!"

Crash! Bang! Rattle! Clang!

"You silly asses!"

"Come along to the Common-room, Drake! Don't be a goat!"

"I can't!"

"We're going to keep up this concert till you do, old nut."

Crash! Bang!

"Look here, I'm not going to stand this!" yelled Drake. "I'm serious!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you I mean it! Clear off or I shall go for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang! Bang! Bang! The concert started again.

Drake's eyes blazed. For the most part, the juniors were only acting in a spirit of thoughtless fun, but Drake had been through a good deal of worry that day, and his temper had suffered. He made a sudden rush out of the study, hitting out right and left.

The instrumental part of the concert ceased suddenly. But the vocal part was louder than ever. There were yells on all sides. Two or three fellows went spinning over.

"Now clear off!" panted Drake.

"Why, you cheeky cad!" howled Newson, sitting up and clasping his nose. "Collar him! Rag him! Mop him up!"

There was a rush back from the Fourth Formers, and they swept into the study, carrying Drake before them like a cork on the tide. The study seethed with excited juniors.

Drake struggled helplessly in the crowd.

"Rag him!" yelled Raik, rubbing his eye, where one of Drake's fists had landed. "The cheeky cad—cutting up rusty like that! Rag him!"

Jack Drake was collared on all sides. Some of the juniors were angry now, and all were in a mood for a "rag."

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Read all
about our
New Contest
on
Page 2

Raik, with one eye blinking painfully, directed the operations.

"Tuckey Toodles' new curtains were jerked down from the window—regardless of a howl of protest from Tuckey—and whipped into strips in a twinkling. Jack Drake was jammed into his chair, resisting vainly in the grasp of many hands, and the strips of curtain tied him there. His legs were secured to the legs of the chair, his hands to the back of it, and he sat motionless and helpless, glaring at the raggers.

Vane put a couple of pens behind his ears, amid howls of merriment, and Raik added a blotch of ink to his nose. P. Vergilius Maro was crammed down his back.

Then the Fourth Formers surveyed him in the electric light, roaring.

"There's a picture for you!" exclaimed Raik.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters!" gasped Drake.

"We'll label him," said Raik.

He daubed on a sheet of impot paper and pinned it on the hapless junior's chest. The Fourth Formers roared as they read in large letters:

"SAP!"

Then they crowded out of the study, to repair to the postponed celebration in the junior Common-room, without Drake's assistance. Jack glared after them, wriggling in his bonds.

"Let me loose!" he howled.

"Not till bed-time!" chortled Raik. "Perhaps you won't be so handy with your fists next time!"

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Drake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a bang as the study door closed on him. Drake was left alone in the study. For several minutes he wrestled with his bonds, but they were tied too carefully to come loose.

Shouting for help was an easy resource, but he did not shout. It was more likely to bring a prefect of the Sixth than anyone else, and, angry as he was, Drake did not want to land the raggers in trouble.

Footsteps passed the study several times, but no one entered. From a distance there was the sound of voices raised in a "sing-song." The junior celebration was going on. Fourth and Third, and most of the Shell, were gathered at the sing-song.

Daubeny & Co. certainly were not likely to join in a noisy and harmless celebration. They had no use for a sing-song. It was pretty certain that

they would find more congenial occupation in banker or bridge in their study.

Drake thought savagely that he might as well be with them, enjoying himself in the old study, as trussed up in his own room like a turkey, staring at his unused books.

Footsteps stopped at the door at last, and it opened, greatly to the junior's relief.

Three elegant figures appeared in view.

"By gad!" ejaculated Vernon Daubeny, staring blankly at Drake. "What the merry thunder—"

"Looks like a rag!" grinned Torrence.

"Oh, quite!" yawned Egan.

"Cut me loose, you chaps!" panted Drake.

"I'm getting cramped! I've been tied up for half an hour!"

"Oh, gad! A rag of the merry fags, what?" asked Daubeny.

"Yes. Get me loose."

"Certainly, dear boy."

Daubeny took out and opened a small pearl-handled penknife with leisurely movements that were exasperating to watch.

"Get a move on, for goodness' sake!" snapped Drake.

"Yes, old top. I'm hurryin', aren't I?"

Daubeny began to saw with the penknife across the twisted strips of curtain. "We called in for you, old fellow—a merry little party in my study, and you simply must come."

"I—I was working," said Drake haltingly.

"Sappin'!" grinned Daubeny. "Is that why they ragged you?"

"Yes, the silly fools!"

"Serve you right—sapping first night of term!" said Egan, indignantly. "By gad! We'd better leave you like this, if you're going to sap."

"He's not!" said Daubeny, pausing, however.

"You're comin' with us, Drake?"

"Yes, if you like. Hang the sapping!" growled Drake. "How can a chap work when he gets this kind of thing in the neck? I—I'll make a beginning to-morrow. That's soon enough, goodness knows."

A couple of minutes later he was in Daubeny's study, and all thoughts of "sapping" were banished from his mind. Sapping was not exactly compatible with banker, and it was the latter that occupied the irresolute fellow's attention for the remainder of that evening. Jack Drake had lost the first round.

Next Week: "THE FINAL FLUTTER."
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THE REBEL CARAVANNER!

(Continued from page 22.)

up with a wotten want of good manna's on the part of my companions," said Arthur Augustus. "Out with the stove!" said Herries.

"Who's going to fill it?"

"I will fill the stove for you if you like, deah boys. You fellows would pwobably make a mess of it."

"Oh, I'll do it!" said Blake, unheeding. "We'd better arrange to take that job in turns. That's fair play."

"Done!"

Blake lifted out the stove, and, paraffin having luckily been remembered that day, he filled it and lighted it. Oil-cooking was a great improvement on a camp-fire on a sultry evening.

Arthur Augustus watched Blake's proceedings with a knitted brow.

"What about an Irish stew?" asked Blake thoughtfully.

"Mercy!" ejaculated Lowther.

"Look here, you silly Shell-fish—"

"Boiled bacon and beans," said Tom Merry. "We bought a piece of boiling bacon at the last village, and we've got lots of beans."

"An Irish stew is a jolly good thing. It's filling, you know. You feel jolly satisfied after an Irish stew."

"We're too far from a town," said Lowther, shaking his head.

"What's a town got to do with it?"

"I mean if we wanted to call a doctor afterwards—"

"Look here—"

"Or an undertaker—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake sniffed, and did not try his hand at another Irish stew. Bacon and beans were boiled, and, with much satisfaction, and perhaps a little surprise, the caravanners found that the bacon was quite étable.

The beans turned out too hard to eat, the amateur cooks having unfortunately forgotten that they required to be soaked in water before cooking. But they couldn't expect to remember everything at once, as Tom Merry remarked with undiminished cheerfulness.

Arthur Augustus sat silent at the festive board. There was a cheery chat round the supper, but the swell of St. Jim's did not join in.

After supper he rose to his feet.

"I have the honah ot biddin' you fellows good-bye," he said, in his most stately manner. "I am goin' to wetiah fwom this party. I trust you will not land yourselves in twouble, though I have my doubts. Good-bye!"

And Arthur Augustus walked off.

He took only three steps, however; then all the caravanners jumped after him.

"Hold on, fathead!"

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Tom Mewwy."

"Only pulling your leg, old chap," said Blake. "Come and sit down and let your chin wag!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You sent us to Coventry, you know. What did you expect?"

Arthur Augustus paused. He could not walk off—that was certain, for all his cheery chums had hold of him, and did not intend to let him go. And as a matter of fact, Arthur Augustus did not want to walk off.

"If you fellows are goin' to behave yourselves—" he said, at last.

"The question is, are we let out of Coventry?" asked Monty Lowther.

"Oh! Ahem! Yaas!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, you fellows—"

"Sit down, old scout!" grinned Blake. "Let your deah old chin wag, Gussy, old man. We want you to think out the route for to-morrow. We're relying on your judgment, you know. Don't leave us in the lurch."

Arthur Augustus smiled genially.

And all was calm and bright.

(Next Wednesday: "THE UNINVITED CARAVANNER!")

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