

"FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE!" and "CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP!"
GRIPPING SCHOOL STORIES WITHIN.

The **GEM** 2^D

**AFTER THE
FIGHT —
THE FEAST!**

*Read the Great
St. Jim's Yarn,
"LEVISON
MINOR!"*

—Inside.



SECOND PRIZE-GIVING THIS WEEK! CLAIM NOW!



STOP! This is the end of the September "Footer-Stamps Competition, and up to 300 more of the Free Footballs are now going to be given away to the readers who have scored the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" so far.

First of all, there are ten more stamps this week—five below and five more on Page 35—depicting six different actions on the football field. Cut them out and try to score another "goal" with them, or use the stamps to finish off any partly completed "goals" you may have.

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you have only to collect a complete set of the six stamps (numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL! (Note that the "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal.")

If you want to score some other quick "goals" to swell your total, remember that "Footer-Stamps" are also appearing in "Modera Boy" and "Magnet" each week.

Now when you have scored as many complete "goals" as possible with the stamps you have collected, write your total ("goals," NOT separate stamps) in the space provided on the coupon on Page 35.

Add your name and address to the coupon also, then cut it out whole and attach your sets of goal-scoring stamps only to it. Post in a properly stamped envelope to:

"GEM" "Footer-Stamps" (September),
1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.),

so as to reach there not later than **FRIDAY, September 30th, 1938.**

OVERSEAS READERS.—You are in this scheme also and special prizes are to be awarded for the best scores from pals outside the British Isles. In your case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to Monday, January 2nd, 1939.

Now when you have sent in your September "goals," keep any odd stamps you have in readiness for the October competition, which starts next week. More "Footer-Stamps" will be given, and still more of our Prize Footballs will be offered.

..... **FIVE "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—FIVE MORE ON PAGE 35!**



SEE PAGE 35 FOR THE ENTRY COUPON!

FRANK LEVISON JOINS UP AT ST. JIM'S—AND DISCOVERS THAT HIS BROTHER IS ONE OF THE BLACK SHEEP OF THE SCHOOL!



"Ernie!" Levison jumped. "What the thunder—!" he ejaculated, looking up with a start and dropping his cards. "Frank!" he exclaimed, as he saw his minor. "What are you doing here?"

CHAPTER 1.

Levison Makes Up His Mind!

"YOU'RE coming, Levison?"

Levison of the Fourth did not reply.

He was seated on the edge of the table in his study, with his hands driven deep into his pockets and his brows knitted.

Mellish of the Fourth and Piggott of the Third were looking in at the study doorway, and they regarded Levison curiously.

It was a half-holiday at St. Jim's, and most of the fellows were out of doors.

Tom Merry & Co. were already at footer practice, getting into form for the new season.

Levison and his friends, however, were not thinking of football. They had quite a different kind of occupation for their half-holidays.

"I can't come," said Levison, at last.

"Can't come?" repeated Mellish, in surprise. "You must be off your rocker! Racke's standing the whole thing. There won't be anything to pay. And there'll be a little game after the picnic, and smokes."

"I can't come!"

"Well, you're an ass!" said Mellish. "Racke will be annoyed. He doesn't expect to have his invitations refused."

"Hang Racke! I've had too much to do with Racke!" snapped Levison. "Hang him and his money! I've a jolly good mind to throw over Racke for good!"

"Mind he doesn't throw you over!" grinned Mellish. "He would, fast enough, if he heard that. You're coming?"

"I can't, I tell you. My minor's coming this afternoon."

"Your minor?" Mellish yawned. "Didn't know you had one."

"Let him come, too," suggested Piggott. "It will be ripping for him, his first day here. Racke won't mind—he's good-natured. If your minor's anything like you, Levison, he'll enjoy it."

Levison turned on Piggott with a savage look.

"You rotten young cad!"

"Eh? What's the matter?"

"Do you think my minor's a smoky, sneaking, disreputable cad like you?" exclaimed Levison fiercely.

Piggott stared at him in blank THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,537.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Just like his black sheep brother," it is supposed at St. Jim's when Frank Levison comes to the school. But Frank proves that he's as straight as Levison major is crooked!

astonishment. The sudden outburst from the black sheep of the Fourth astounded him.

"My hat!" he said, in a deep breath. "Is he some young prig, and are you afraid of his telling tales at home? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some giddy paragon?" chuckled Mellish. "Good little Georgie come to life again? Is he going to give you lectures on your naughty ways, Levison? He, he, he!"

Levison slipped from the table with his hands clenched. He looked so dangerous, for the moment that the juniors backed away in alarm.

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said Mellish. "If you won't come, you won't! I think you're a fool, that's all. Shall I tell Racke you're not coming?"

Levison's expression changed, and he hesitated. He wanted to go.

What was proposed for the afternoon was exactly to his taste. Racke of the Shell, whose father reeked with more money than was good for him, was standing a picnic in Rylcombe Wood—a picnic that was a good deal out of the common for St. Jim's juniors. There would be champagne, and cigarettes, and cards, and as Racke was a reckless gambler, a good opportunity for Levison to replenish his exchequer.

Levison had great skill in all games of chance, and he had done very well out of Racke since the latter had come to St. Jim's.

Mellish and Piggott turned away to the door, grinning.

Levison made a movement, and Mellish turned back.

"Don't be an ass. Come!" he said. "You can't afford to quarrel with Racke. Dash it all, he's worth keeping in with! He's been a regular windfall to the lot of us!"

"Confound Racke!" growled Levison. "I'm bound to go to the station and meet my minor!"

"What rot! He can find his way here. Have your people asked you to meet him?"

"Yes."
"Well, tell him you forgot the train, or forgot he was coming, or something, if you're afraid of his complaining at home."

"He isn't that sort."
"Then what is there to bother about? Come on, and don't be an ass! Racke and Clampe are nearly ready to start."

Levison hesitated.
"After all, there's no reason why I should go to the station," he said, arguing it out with himself. "The train isn't till four, too, and I should be wasting the afternoon. I shall see him when I get back."

"Of course you will, if you're set on seeing him. If I had a snivelling cad of a minor I should give him a wide berth," grinned Mellish.

"I—I might get another chap to go!" muttered Levison. "Somebody ought to meet the kid. He's expecting it."

"Let him expect!"
"Oh rats! Tell Racke I'm coming!" said Levison, making up his mind. "I'll try to get another fellow to go."

"All serene!"
Mellish and Piggott went their way, grinning. Levison's unexpected concern for his young brother amused them. They could not understand it, and would have set it down to humbug, only there was no reason why Levison should attempt to humbug fellows who knew him so well.

Levison remained in troubled thought for some

minutes. Then, with an angry gesture, as if dismissing reproachful reflections, he quitted the study.

CHAPTER 2.

Tom Merry Lends a Hand!

"SEEN Talbot?"
Levison asked that question as he met Tom Merry in the quadrangle.

Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther had come off the football ground, and were crossing over to the tuckshop for refreshments, in the shape of ginger-beer.

"Gone out," said Tom. "He's gone over to Abbotsford for the afternoon, to see his uncle."
"Oh, rotten!" growled Levison.

Talbot of the Shell was the only fellow Levison cared to ask to do him a favour. He had his own reasons for not wanting any member of his own particular set to meet his brother Frank.

The worried expression on his face struck the Terrible Three, and they looked at him curiously.

"Anything the matter?" asked Tom Merry good-naturedly.

"I—I suppose you won't be going down to the village?" asked Levison.

"No," said Tom. "We weren't going."

"Oh, never mind then. My minor's coming by the four train," added Levison. "I can't meet him, as it happens. I'm kept away. If a chap were going down to the village he might drop in at the station."

"Oh, your minor!" said Monty Lowther. "Nice boy like you, Levison?"

"Not much like me, as a matter of fact, if you want to know," said Levison, his lip curling.

"How lucky for him!" said Lowther cheerfully.

"What Form is your minor going into, Levison?" asked Tom.

"The Third, I expect."

"There's young Wally—ask him. He's going out."

D'Arcy minor of the Third, with Frayne and Jameson, was on his way to the gates.

Levison hesitated a moment, and then called to him.

"Hold on a minute, D'Arcy!"
Wally looked round.

"Hallo, cocky! What do you want?" he inquired.

"Are you going down to Rylcombe?"
"Yes."

"My minor's coming by the four train. He's going to be in your Form," said Levison. "If you'd care to drop in at the station—"

"Thanks, I wouldn't!" said Wally coolly. "I'm not bothering about your blessed minor. But if he's coming into the Third he'll have to mind his p's and q's. We're not keen on smoky rotters in the Third, Levison, I can tell you! We've thumped that kind of thing out of Manners minor, and—"

"What's that?" growled Manners.
Wally grinned at the Shell fellow.

"We've thumped it out of your minor, Manners. Young Reggie is quite decent now," he said coolly.

"But I fancy Levison's minor will be rather a tougher case. If he's anything like his major he will have a gorgeous time in the Third. You can give your minor the tip, Levison, that he's going to have a high old time!"

And Wally & Co. marched off.
Levison gritted his teeth.

"Look here, Levison," said Tom Merry, "if

you really can't get off to see your minor, and you want him looked after, I don't mind going."

"Footer!" said Manners and Lowther together. "Well, it's only practice, and there's a lot of time before four," said Tom. "A trot down to the village won't hurt us."

"But why can't Levison go?" said Manners. "It's his bisney if he wants his minor looked after."

"I tell you I'm kept away!" muttered Levison. "Oh, I know; Racke's got a little party on this afternoon!" said Manners disdainfully. "Mind you're not bowled out and sacked on the same day your minor comes. It might happen."

"Mind your own business, confound you!" said Levison angrily.

"Shush!" said Tom Merry. "It's all right, Levison; I'll fetch the kid from the station. The four train, you said?"

"Yes. I say, I—I'm awfully obliged, you know!"

"Bow-wow! A walk won't hurt me, and there's nothing special doing."

"Thanks, all the same! You'll go, then?"

"Yes."

And Levison walked away, evidently relieved in his mind.

Racke and Clampe and Mellish and Piggott came out of the School House, some of them carrying bags, and Levison joined them on their way to the gates.

"Well, you are a silly ass, Tommy!" commented Manners. "You can see what Levison's precious engagement is—he's going out blagging with that gang."

"Perhaps they're not going blagging," said Tom mildly. "I think I heard they were going on a picnic."

Manners sniffed.

"Dash it all, it won't hurt us!" said Tom. "You fellows needn't come if you don't want the walk."

"Rot!" said Lowther. "We'll come. Besides, we're going to see that you don't get into mischief. If Levison minor is anything like Levison major, one afternoon with him might do the business. They're both tarred with the same brush, I suppose. And we're going to keep you as respectable as possible."

"You silly chump!" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and have that ginger-pop and get back to the footer, if we've got to waste the afternoon prowling round after Levison minor. Blow Levison and blow his minor!" added Lowther.

The chums of the Shell proceeded to the tuck-shop, and disposed of the ginger-pop. They went back to the footer ground; but at twenty minutes to four Tom Merry came off and changed hurriedly. Manners and Lowther followed him.

And, having changed, the Terrible Three walked down to Rylcombe, wondering a little what Levison minor would turn out to be like.

CHAPTER 3.

Levison Minor!

"HERE comes the train," yawned Monty Lowther.

Lowther and Manners were not in a wholly good humour. It seemed rather absurd to them for Shell fellows to come down to the station specially to meet so utterly insignificant a person as a new fag for the Third Form—and more

especially a brother of Levison of the Fourth, whom they cordially disliked.

Tom Merry's good nature had planted the task on them, and they had come along with him without grumbling, but not quite pleased.

The train came in, and the Terrible Three looked among the passengers for Levison minor.

There was only one boy among them all, and the juniors concluded that this must be Master Frank Levison.

He was a lad of about thirteen, in Etons, with a pleasant face that was not unlike Levison's—though Ernest Levison's face could not be called exactly pleasant. There was a similarity of features, but the expression was very different.

The lad looked up and down the platform with rather a timid, hesitating manner, evidently expecting to be met there.

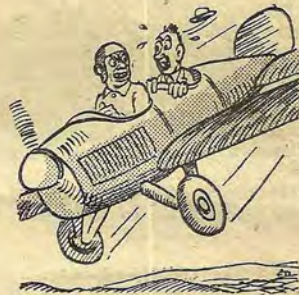
"That's the kid," grunted Manners. "Looks like a lost sheep."

"He looks a harmless little chap," said Tom Merry.

"Not much like his major if he's harmless," grunted Manners.

"Well, let's go and speak to him, anyway."

Tom Merry assumed a cheery smile as he walked



Pilot: "I wonder what they'll think at the asylum when they discover I've escaped!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to D. Vaughan, "Woodmade," The Parade, Sockets Heath, Grays, Essex.

up to the newcomer. Manners and Lowther continued to grin amiably.

"Are you young Levison?" asked Tom.

The new boy looked at him timidly.

"I am Frank Levison," he said. "I'm going to St. Jim's. Do you belong there?"

"Yes, rather. We've come to take you to the school."

"Thank you! Isn't my brother coming?"

"He's got an engagement," said Monty Lowther solemnly. "He was awfully keen on coming—a hem!—but he simply couldn't. We came instead."

"You are very kind," said Levison minor gratefully. "I—I thought Ernest would be here. But, of course, I know he'd have come if he could. Are you in his Form?"

"No fear! We're in the Shell," said Lowther. "Allow me to introduce our unworthy selves. Tom Merry, captain of the Shell and good-natured fathead, who can't say no to a measly bouncer. Manners, potty on photography. Myself, Montague Lowther, ornament of the Lower School and glass of fashion and mould of form in the Shell."

The new fag looked puzzled, as well he might. "I don't understand," he said. "What is the Shell? Is it a lower Form than the Fourth?"

"What!"

The question made Manners and Lowther glare. It seemed to indicate to their minds that Frank Levison was a born idiot. "No," said Tom, laughing. "It's the next Form above the Fourth. Come on, and we'll see about your box."

Instructions having been given regarding the box, the Terrible Three led the new junior from the station.

Levison minor looked a little down in the mouth, though he tried to smile and be cheerful.

Tom Merry could see that it was a disappointment to him that his brother had not met him, and that he had relied upon Ernest Levison to be his guide and helper from the outset. And being entirely new and strange to the school, he did not know what a tremendous concession it was for three Shell fellows to waste an afternoon on a fag of the Third!

"Buck up!" said Lowther, smacking the fag on the shoulder. "Keep smiling, you know. Are you hungry after your journey?"

"No; not much."

"Come in here and have some tarts," said Tom, as they were passing Mrs. Murphy's shop.

"I—I'd rather get on, if you don't mind. I want to see Ernest as soon as possible."

"Oh, I see!" It was difficult for Tom to understand why anybody should be anxious to see Ernest Levison. "Come on, then. We'll go through the wood; it's a short cut, and not so dusty."

It was a very pleasant walk through the wood, rich in autumn tints. Frank Levison brightened up a little as he walked on with the Shell fellows.

They were almost in the middle of the wood, when a sudden sharp sound came to their ears through the bushes.

Pop!

"What was that?" asked Levison minor.

The Terrible Three exchanged glances.

It was the popping of a cork, and it was not a ginger-beer cork, either.

"My hat!" murmured Lowther. "We're coming on the giddy picnic! Better keep off the grass, what?"

Tom Merry nodded quickly. If it was Levison's precious party they were coming upon, the less Levison minor saw of it the better. It was no business of the Terrible Three to enlighten a fag as to his major's character.

Tom turned off at once in a new direction, to avoid the party under the trees, as yet hidden from sight by clumps of thick bushes.

But as the juniors turned off, a voice came through the bushes:

"Better go easy with the cham, Mellish! You can't stand it as I do."

It was the voice of Levison of the Fourth.

Levison minor gave a start and stopped.

"That's my brother!" he exclaimed.

"Never mind; come on!" said Tom hurriedly.

"But my brother's there. I'd like to speak to him."

And Frank Levison turned back and ran through the bushes.

The Terrible Three looked at one another, and Manners shrugged his shoulders and Lowther grinned.

They followed the fag slowly.

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CHAPTER 4.

Major and Minor!

RACKE and his party were camped in a glade in the heart of the wood, and the picnickers had no fear of interruption or detection.

The solid portion of the picnic had been disposed of, and the young rascals were enjoying themselves after their own fashion.

Racke had stood the champagne, and there were several bottles, and there was a box of cigarettes open on the grass.

The juniors were seated or sprawled round a suitcase that was serving as a card-table, and they all had cards in their hands.

"Your lead, Levison," Racke was saying, as Levison minor came through the bushes.

"Ernie!"

Levison jumped.

"What the thunder——" he ejaculated.

He dropped the cards into the grass and the cigarette slipped from his mouth. He looked up.

"Frank!" he exclaimed, as he saw his minor. He jumped up hastily.

"What the dickens are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

"I—I heard you speak, Ernie, so——"

Levison's face was crimson with anger and shame.

Frank's startled eyes had lingered on the cards, the cigarettes, and the bottles.

Racke & Co. stared at the fag and grinned at one another.

"How the dickens did you come here?" asked Levison angrily. "This isn't the way from the station." He turned a furious look upon the Terrible Three as they appeared through the bushes. "You brought him here, did you?"

"Quite by accident," said Tom Merry. "I didn't know you were here, of course."

"That your minor, Levison?" yawned Racke. "Looks a spoony little prig, by gad! Never mind, he can join us. Sit down, young 'un, and help yourself to the smokes!"

"I—I don't smoke, thank you!" faltered Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Racke. "You've got a lot to teach your minor, Levison."

"Oh, shut up, you cad!" growled Levison. "You'd better get off, Franky; I'll see you later at the school."

Frank hesitated.

"Aren't you coming with me?" he asked.

"I can't come at present. Cut off!"

"What rot!" grinned Clampe. "Let the kid stay! We'll make a man of him. Sit down here, kid, and take a hand in the game."

"I—I'd rather not, thank you!"

"Oh, be a man!" squeaked Piggott. "It's great fun, you know."

Levison's face was pale now with rage and mortification.

"I've told you to go, Frank!" he said savagely.

"Won't you come?" asked his minor. "I—I say, Ernie, I don't know much about the school; but—but I know this can't be allowed there. You'll be getting into trouble."

Levison strode towards his minor.

"Get out of this!" he muttered.

"You won't come?"

"No, I tell you!"

Frank Levison turned away without another word and left the glade.

Levison, with a sullen brow, rejoined his associates.

The Terrible Three had looked on in silence. There was nothing for them to say or do. But as Levison minor walked away, they followed him. The fag's face was pale, and his brow clouded.

"Cheer up, young 'un!" said Tom Merry, attempting to comfort him as they walked on. "Keep cheery, you know!"

"That's why my brother couldn't come to meet me?" asked Frank, in a low voice.

"I—I suppose so."

"Surely there would be trouble for him if—if anyone found that out—a master, I mean?"

"Why, of course!"

"It's rotten of them!" said Frank passionately.

"It would serve them all right to tell the headmaster!"

"Eh? Whom?" asked Manners.

"Those rotten cads who have got Ernie into that!" exclaimed Levison minor. "He's not that kind of fellow at all. I know he's never done anything of the kind before. I suppose they've talked him over, somehow."

"Oh!" ejaculated Manners.

"You know he's not that sort, if you're friends of his—"

"Ahem! We're not exactly friends," said Lowther. "We don't chum up with the Fourth, you know," he said hastily. "The Forms generally keep to themselves."

Frank gave him a sharp look.

"But—but you know something about him; you must, as you came to meet me this afternoon. You haven't seen him doing anything of that kind before?"

It was rather an assertion than a question.

"We've never seen him at a cham picnic, if that's what you mean," said Lowther.

That was true enough. It was one of the varieties of Levison's blackguardism which the Shell fellows had not seen with their own eyes before.

"Yes, that's what I mean. I knew it!" said Frank. "Those rotters are to blame, of course!"

Tom Merry & Co. walked on in silence. That Levison was at least as bad as any other member of the party they knew; but it was not their business to tell his brother so. Frank had concluded, without doubt, that his brother had been led into temptation, that the champagne picnic was an unique experience for him, and the Shell fellows were quite willing to leave him his delusion, so long as he could keep it.

They reached St. Jim's and went on to the School House.

Blake of the Fourth met them in the doorway, glancing curiously at the fag.

"You slackers chucked the football for good?" he demanded. "What about getting into form for the House Match? Figgins & Co. are going it like old boots!"

"We're coming along now," said Tom Merry. "This kid is Levison minor. I'm going to take him to Selby."

"Well, buck up, and come along!"

"We'll come along now," said Lowther. "You can take the kid in, Tom."

"All serene!"

Manners and Lowther went with Jack Blake to the footer ground, and Tom Merry entered the School House with the fag. He led him to Mr. Selby's study, and tapped at the door.

"You're going to see your Form-master," he said—"Mr. Selby, you know! He's the master of the Third."

"Come in!" said Mr. Selby's disagreeable voice.



"Your major is the rottenest, rankest outsider in the House!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble. "No decent fellow ever speaks to him, and—Yaroooop!" Smack! To the fat Fourth Former's astonishment, Frank Levison's hand landed on his face with a crack like a whip.

Tom opened the door and ushered Levison minor in.

"The new boy, sir," he said. "Levison minor." Mr. Selby peered at the fag.

"Oh, very well! Leave him here!"

Tom Merry quitted the study and walked away down the passage. He had done all he could for the lonely fag. He felt that Levison major should have been there to take him in hand; but the black sheep of the Fourth was certain not to return much before calling-over.

Levison minor came out of Mr. Selby's study, and looked about him.

Mr. Selby was hardly a pleasant gentleman, and the interview had not given Frank a very cheery impression of the school and his prospects there.

He was feeling lonely and depressed, and he had an intense longing to see his brother—the only fellow he knew in the big, crowded place.

He had hoped that Ernest might have returned, and would be waiting for him in the passage. But there was no sign of Levison major.

Frank had been told to go to the House dame, and report his arrival, and he wondered where to find the House dame.

Fortunately, he met Toby, the page, who directed him.

Mrs. Mimms made a better impression on the fag, and she gave him a cup of tea and a piece of cake, which cheered him up immensely.

He was feeling better when he left Mrs. Mimms. He thought his brother might be in by this time, and he decided to go to his study.

He ascended the big staircase from the Hall and stopped in a broad passage with numbered doors. Most of the numbers were more or less obliterated;

but as Frank did not know the number of his brother's study, they were useless to him in any case. There was no one in the passage. Some of the study doors were open, but the rooms seemed to be deserted.

From one or two studies, however, a smell of cooking proceeded.

He passed a half-open door and caught sight of a junior within—a very elegantly clad junior, who was putting on a necktie before the mirror.

He paused and knocked at the door timidly.

The elegant youth looked round.

"Hallo! Come in, deah boy!" he said.

Frank came in.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy gave him a kindly look. The swell of St. Jim's was famous for his polished manners.

"New kid?" he asked.

"Yes," faltered Frank.

"And you've wandahed into the w'ong quairahs, what?"

"N-no. I'm looking for my brother's study," said Frank, much encouraged by Arthur Augustus' gracious manner.

"Is he in the Fourth?"

"Yes. His name's Levison."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"You know my brother?" asked Frank.

"Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus put his eye-glass into his eye, and looked Frank over very curiously. "I wemembah, now, Talbot mentionin' that Levison had a minah comin'. So you're young Levison?"

"Yes."

"I'll show you his study," said Arthur Augustus. And he conducted the fag to Levison's study.

No one could have suspected by D'Arcy's manner to the fag that he was on the worst of terms with Levison major. He tapped at the door, and opened it.

Trimble of the Fourth was in the study, his fat face looking disconsolate.

"Oh, so you've come in!" grumbled Trimble. "What about tea? Oh, it ain't Lumley-Lumley! Why doesn't that ass come in to tea?"

"This is Levison minah, Twimble."

"Blow Levison, and blow Levison minor!" growled Trimble. "The rotters went off without me this afternoon."

"This is your bwothah's study, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "He will pwobably be in vewy soon, as it is past tea-time. Anythin' more I can do for you?"

"No, thank you."

With a kindly nod, the swell of St. Jim's quitted the study.

Frank Levison was left alone with Baggie Trimble. He looked at Trimble, and Trimble looked at him.

CHAPTER 5.

Trimble Catches a Tartar!

"SO you're Levison's brother?"

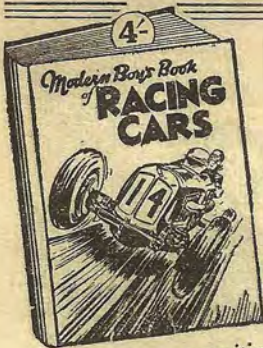
"Yes."

"You look as if you might be," said

Trimble.

The fag made no reply to that remark.

Trimble eyed him a good deal as if he were a strange dog. The fat Fourth Former was in a discontented mood. He was hard-up, as usual, and much exasperated at being left out of Racke's



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party. There was no tea in the study till Lumley-Lumley came in, and Trimble was hungry.

But a new thought came into Trimble's mind, and he adopted a more amiable manner.

"Glad you've come," he said. "Levison's my pal, you know—we're studymates, and great chums. I lent him five bob this afternoon."

"Did you?"

"Yes, my last five bob," said Trimble confidentially. "Rather thoughtless of me, but that's me all over. I never think of myself where a pal's concerned. As your brother hasn't come in, I dare say you could lend me the five bob, and he'll settle with you—"

"Don't do anything of the sort," said a cheery voice at the door, as Jernold Lumley-Lumley came in. "If you lend Trimble any money, young 'un, you won't see it again."

"You rotter, Lumley!" growled Trimble.

"Look here, I lent that kid's brother five bob—"

"I guess you didn't!" said Lumley-Lumley. "Cheese it, Trimble. You're not going to spoof a new kid—I won't let you."

"I tell you I did!" howled Trimble. "Levison was hard-up, and he had to stand some of the smokes."

"That's not true!" struck in Frank. "I don't believe you lent him anything, either!"

"Right on the wicket!" grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"You cheeky young cad, have you come here for a thick ear?" exclaimed Trimble. "I tell you I lent your rotten brother five bob to buy cigarettes."

"And I tell you it's a lie!" said Frank undauntedly. "My brother doesn't smoke—at least, not as a rule," he added, remembering what he had seen in the wood.

"Doesn't smoke!" ejaculated Trimble, in astonishment. "You'll say next that he doesn't play nap or bet on gee-gees!"

"I know he doesn't."

"Why, you silly young idiot, he's gone out this afternoon for that special purpose! My hat! You've got a lot to learn!" chuckled Trimble. "They'll tell you about Levison in your fag form—ask Piggott. If the Housemaster knew what we could tell him, Levison would be kicked out of St. Jim's before he could say ninencepence."

"That's not true," said Frank, "and you're not a friend of my brother's, as you said, or you wouldn't speak of him like that. And you wouldn't dare to do it if he were here, either!"

"Bravo!" chuckled Lumley-Lumley. "What a little bantam! You don't know much about your major, do you, kid?"

"Yes, I do!" said Frank. "I know that that fat fellow is lying about him."

"Lying," ejaculated Trimble, "well, my hat! Ask Lumley-Lumley; he will tell you."

"I guess he won't!" grinned Lumley-Lumley. "I'm not going to tell the kid anything. What do you want me to run a fellow down to his minor for, Trimble?"

"You know it's true!" howled Trimble.

"Shut up, all the same!"

"Do you think I'm going to have a cheeky fag coming here and calling me a liar?" exclaimed Trimble. "Why, I'll knock his cheeky head off! You young jackanapes, your major is the rottenest, smokiest, rankest outsider in the House. No decent fellow ever speaks to him, and—
Yarooooop!"

Smack!

To the Fourth Former's astonishment, he was

interrupted by the fag's open hand landing on his fat face with a crack like a whip.

Trimble staggered back, gasping.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Lumley-Lumley. "Go it, young 'un!"

"I'll smash him!" yelled Trimble.

Trimble of the Fourth was not a fighting-man as a rule. But even Trimble did not fear a fag of the Third—and a timid, new fag at that. He made a rush at Levison minor, his fat fists lashing out.

Lumley-Lumley looked on, roaring with laughter.

Trimble was much bigger than Frank, and twice as heavy; but the little fag stood up to him pluckily, and hit out with all his strength.

"By gum, he's a plucky kid!" exclaimed Lumley-Lumley. "Go it, kid! He's a funk! Pile in and whop him!"

"Groogh!" gasped Trimble, giving ground as he met with so fiery a resistance. "Oh my hat!



"I warned you not to take a bath up here!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to C. Stewart, 2, Manor Villas, Weston, Bath.

Get out of this study, you young villain, or I'll chuck you out!"

"Aren't you going to smash him?" chortled Lumley-Lumley.

Trimble rushed on again.

Lumley-Lumley's jeering laugh urged him on. But the fag stood his ground, and they were soon going hammer and tongs, and Frank certainly was not getting the worst of it.

"Hallo, a giddy scrimmage!" exclaimed Monty Lowther, as the Terrible Three passed the study on their way in to tea. "My hat! It's young Hopeful!"

"Fighting already!" grinned Manners.

"Let him alone, Trimble!" said Tom Merry, frowning.

"Better tell him to let Trimble alone!" chuckled Lumley-Lumley. "Trimble isn't exactly enjoying himself—are you, Baggy?"

"I'll smash him—"

"No, you won't!" said Tom Merry, pushing him back.

Trimble was not reluctant to be pushed back, as a matter of fact.

"Now, what's the row about?" asked Tom Merry.

"He was calling my brother names," panted Frank. "I told him he was a liar, and he is!"

"Biggest in the House!" said Monty Lowther.

"How the dickens did the kid know you so well at sight, Trimble?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you know, you fellows know all about Levison! Isn't he a smoky rotter, and isn't

he barred by all the decent chaps?" exclaimed Trimble. "That's all I said, and the cheeky young cub punched me—me, you know!"

"Serve you jolly well right! Why couldn't you hold your tongue?" said Tom Merry gruffly.

"But it's true, isn't it?"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" The captain of the Shell turned to Frank, who was still panting from his exertions. "Don't take any notice of what that cad says, kid—he's a regular worm!"

"Look here, Tom Merry—"

"Oh, dry up! Hallo, here's Levison! Your minor's here, Levison!"

And Tom went on to his study with his chums.

CHAPTER 6.

Under Levison's Wing!

LEVISON and Mellish came in together. Levison eyed his minor curiously.

Frank was dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. Trimble's fat fist had done some damage.

"What's the matter, Frank?"

"Oh, nothing!" said the fag.

Levison glared round the study.

"If anybody here's been bullying my minor—"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Lumley-Lumley cheerfully. "Baggy's been on the warpath, but he's got as good as he gave."

"I didn't want a row," stammered Trimble, backing round the table. "The young ass went for me, he did, really—"

"Did you, Franky?"

"Yes."

"What in thunder did you go for Trimble for?" exclaimed Levison. "Looking for trouble on your first day at school?"

"The young 'un was standing up for you," grinned Lumley-Lumley.

"For me?"

"Yes; defending the character of the absent." Lumley-Lumley yelled with laughter. "He didn't like Trimble saying you smoked."

Mellish burst into a yell.

Levison's face was a study for a moment.

"You—you punched Trimble for saying I smoked?" he ejaculated at last.

"Yes; and I'll do it again!" said Frank sturdily. "I knew he was lying!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Mellish.

"Shut up, you cackling monkey!" said Levison roughly. "You'd better not be quite so ready to punch a fellow's nose, Franky. You won't find many funks here like Trimble, and you may get mopped up next time. Have you had your tea?"

"No."

"Come along with me, then, and we'll do some shopping," said Levison. "I'm in funds to-day."

That observation brought a renewed yell from Mellish.

Levison gave him a threatening look as he left the study.

"Levison in funds!" said Lumley-Lumley. "He was hard up enough this afternoon, I guess. He wanted to stick me for a quid."

"He's done Racke out of a couple of quids this afternoon," grinned Mellish. "What is he humbugging his minor for?"

Lumley-Lumley shrugged his shoulders.

"Goodness knows! But there's no need to tell the kid anything!"

"He'll find it out pretty soon," said Mellish, laughing. "They'll tell him in the Third fast enough."

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"Well, no need for you to tell him, or Trimble, either. Might mean trouble at home for Levison if the kid blabbed!"

Levison and his minor attracted some curious glances as they went out. A good many of the fellows were curious to know what Levison minor was like, the general expectation being that he would be a second edition of his major.

Levison did not heed the glances cast at him. He led Frank to the tuckshop, and proceeded to make purchases there.

Frank's expression was very bright now. Few fellows who knew Levison would have expected him to be kind or attentive to a young brother planted on him at school. But there was much in Levison's curious nature that would have come as a surprise to those who knew him best.

They left the tuckshop with parcels in their hands, Frank trotting along beside his major with a very contented expression.

"Have you mentioned to anybody about—about seeing me this afternoon, Frank?" Levison asked, as they walked across the quad again.

The fag shook his head.

"Of course, I know what you were doing must be against the rules!"

Levison grinned.

"But—but you don't mind my speaking, Ernie—"

"Eh? Go ahead!"

"I—I wish you'd have nothing to do with those chaps, Ernie. I'm afraid of something happening to you. Those fellows must be awful cads to do as they were doing, and to lead you into it!"

"Lead me into it?"

"Yes; I know that's how it came about, because you're easy-going—"

"Easy-going!" murmured Levison. "Oh, my hat!"

"But fellows of that kind won't do you any good," said Frank earnestly. "I wouldn't think of giving you advice, Ernie. But—but it's rotten to think of a fellow like you mixing with cads like that! You see how it makes fellows talk about you, from what that fat chap Trimble said to me."

Levison gave his minor a very curious glance.

The simple faith of the fag in taking it for granted that he was not to blame in that shady picnic touched him strangely.

"You're not waxy?" mumbled Frank, looking at him anxiously.

Levison burst into a laugh.

"No," he said, "of course not. And you're right, kid. I'll think over what you've said. I didn't mean you to see me—I mean—well, never mind now! Let it drop. If fellows talk to you about me, don't believe all you hear. I've got some enemies, and fellows will talk!"

"Of course, I shouldn't believe a word against you!"

"Ahem! That's right! Well, here we are!"

They entered the School House, and went to the study.

Trimble's round eyes opened wide at the sight of the parcels. For that evening, at least, Levison's study was a land flowing with milk and honey, and Baggy Trimble assumed his most agreeable and ingratiating expression.

Tea in Levison's study was a cheery meal enough. Lumley-Lumley was very agreeable to the fag from sheer good-nature, and Baggy Trimble overflowed with amiability since he was allowed to share the feed. He seemed quite to have forgotten his fight with Levison minor.

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Schoolmasters generally know what they are talking about, states an authority. That's just where they have the advantage over us!

Why do they have fowls in football? Because they have ducks in cricket!

"Ghost Appears at Banquet but Disappears Immediately." No doubt it was unaccustomed to public "spooking."

I hear some stage artistes object to performing at prison concerts for fear their presence there should be misunderstood. It would certainly be awkward if it got round that they had been clapped in gaol!

A Rylcombe resident says he has had no burglars since he took to leaving his door unfastened at night. Evidently they think there must be a catch somewhere!

Remember, if you feel seedy, go to a friend in the country and plant yourself on him!

It takes two to make a quarrel, says the

old adage. But it never takes Grundy long to find the other one!

Third Form flash: "There are millions of square miles in Africa," said Mr. Selby, "where there are no schools. So for what should we save our money?" "To go to Africa!" piped up Curly Gibson.

The opening item in a pierrot show should be in the hands of an experienced performer, says a writer. The early turn so often gets the bird!

News: A Chicago gangster's flat has rubber walls. So when his rivals call on him he simply "rubs" them out.

According to Skimpole, there should be 860,000 minute bubbles of air in a pint of milk. Check it up with your milkman!

"Goat Invades Country Hostelry." Butting inn?

Heard in Rylcombe: "Well, Abel, your father is a miracle—ninety-two years old, and still able to plough!" "Ay, squire, but he's been complainin' the last few months." "I'm sorry to hear that—what's wrong?" "I dummo, squire. Sometimes I fears farmin' don't agree with him!"

The training of a parachutist is the most strenuous imaginable, states a writer. He keeps on until he is fit to drop!

Pat Reilly of the Fourth says he will make people open their mouths and look at him when he gets to London. He plans to become a dentist entirely.

Chin, chin, chaps!

Levison started as seven chimed out. "By Jove! It's time you were in your Form-room, kid!" he exclaimed. "Prep for the Third is at seven. Old Selby takes the Form in prep. Come along! Mind how you treat Selby; he's a Tartar. But he won't worry you much the first night. You'll only have to look round you, and do as the others do."

"Right you are!" said Frank cheerily.

Levison hurried him downstairs.

"I may see you later," he said. "You'll meet the Third at prep. Don't have much to say to Piggott if you can help it. Make yourself agreeable to D'Arcy minor when you find him out. He's a decent kid. Got any money?"

"Father gave me ten shillings."

"Here's another ten."

"Oh!"

"It's all right. I'm in funds to-day," said Levison, with a smile. "Look here, the Third often have feeds after prep. If there's anything of the kind stand your whack, and never mind how the money goes! If you pay your footing the fags will be more decent to you."

Levison pushed his minor into the Third Form Room and went his way.

His way led him to Racke's study, where he was soon deep in the mysteries of banker with Racke and Crooke of the Shell.

Frank Levison little dreamed how his major was engaged as he faced the ordeal of his first prep with the Third Form at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 7.

Trouble in the Third!

"HALLO! There's the new kid!"

"Levison minor, by Jove!"

Frank looked round the big Form-room, with its washed walls and array of desks and forms, and its crowd of fags.

Mr. Selby had not yet arrived to take the Third in evening preparation. The master was sometimes late, as the Third Form were not in their seats, but chattering in groups about the Form-room.

D'Arcy minor bestowed a stare upon the newcomer.

Several fags gathered round him curiously. A new boy in the Form naturally attracted some interest, and this new boy was a little out of the common as the younger brother of the black sheep of the School House.

"Rather a moony-faced booby!" said Manners minor.

"Yes, he looks it," agreed Jameson. "Not quite

what you'd expect of Levison's minor. Got any cigarettes about you, young 'un?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No," said Frank.

"Don't you smoke?"

"Certainly not!"

"Certainly not!" mimicked Jameson. "Not a chip of the old block, at any rate!"

"The kid doesn't look the kind of worm I expected!" said Wally, surveying Levison minor as if he were a zoological specimen. "His fingers aren't stained with baccy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"His teeth aren't brown with it like his major's!"

Frank flushed. He was feeling exceedingly uncomfortable under the inspection of the Third Formers, and the reference to his brother made him angry.

"Levison minor," said Wally, "I'm going to give you some advice for your own good."

"You needn't trouble!" said Frank testily.

"Cheeky cub!" said Jameson. "Punch his head, Wally!"

But Wally nobly forbore to punch the newcomer's head.

"We're down on blagging in this Form," went on Wally calmly. "I suppose you know what blagging is?"

"No."

"Being a blackguard, you know, like your major!" explained Wally.

"My major isn't a blackguard!" said Frank fiercely.

"Don't snort at me, young 'un!" said D'Arcy minor calmly. "I'm D'Arcy minor, captain of the Third!"

"D'Arcy minor!" repeated Frank.

He remembered that his brother had told him to be agreeable to D'Arcy minor, who was a decent kid.

"Now, kid, look here," said Wally. "We're down on blagging in the Third; that's a straight tip. We knocked it out of Manners minor, didn't we, young Manners?"

"Oh rats!" said Reggie crossly.

"Young Manners came here a regular blade," pursued Wally calmly—"smoking cigarettes and chumming with cads in higher Forms—fellows like Cutts. We didn't stand it. We ragged young Manners till he had some sense, didn't we, Reggie?"

"Fathead!" said Reggie.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you understand that you've got to toe the line," said Wally. "You can't help having Levison of the Fourth for your major, any more than I can help having Gussy. It isn't really against you, so far as that goes. But if you bring any of his tricks into the Form-room you'll get sat on so hard that you won't know what's happened to you! That's a straight tip! You'd better not have too much to do with him, either."

"I shall please myself about that!" said Frank, his voice trembling. "And you're a cad to talk about my brother like that!"

Wally started.

"Eh—what did you call me?"

"A cad!" said Frank fiercely. "A slandering cad, if you like that better!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jameson.

"Knock his silly 'ead off, Wally!" advised Joe Frayne.

Wally stared at the new junior. It had not

even occurred to him before that Levison minor did not know what his major was like.

"Well, my only Aunt Jane!" ejaculated Wally at last. "Do you mean to say, young 'un, that you don't know——"

"Doesn't know his major's giddy reputation!" grinned Jameson. "Oh, what a lark!"

Frank glared round at the grinning fags. He was quite prepared to stand up for his brother's good name, as he had done in Trimble's study.

"You've called me some pretty names, kid," said Wally quietly. "If you don't know anything about your brother, I'm sorry I spoke. But you'd better be careful how you call a chap names here, that's all."

Wally turned away with that, exhibiting really creditable self-control.

"Aren't you going to wallop him for his cheek?" demanded Jameson indignantly.

"No. Let the young ass alone."

"What rot! I suppose a new fag isn't coming in here to talk to us as he likes? Why, the cheeky little beast! Look here, D'Arcy minor, you're finking!"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass! I could knock the baby-faced little idiot out with one hand, and you know it!"

"Well, then, don't let him call you names!"

"I'll call anybody names who tells lies about my brother!" said Frank fiercely.

"Lies?" said Wally, swinging round.

"Yes, lies!"

"Now you're going to let him call you a liar, I suppose?" sneered Jameson. "Why, I'd make mincemeat of the cheeky little cub!"

Wally's eyes were gleaming now.

"Shut up, Jimmy! It isn't your bizney!" he said. "Levison minor, put up your hands! I'm going to teach you manners!"

Frank put up his hands willingly enough. But as Wally advanced upon him there was the sound of footsteps outside the door.

The fags knew that footsteps, and they bolted to their desks like rabbits into burrows. The new fag, in a state of great bewilderment, was left standing alone in the middle of the room.

The door opened, and Mr. Selby entered. He frowned at Levison minor.

"Why are you not in your place?" he said harshly. "Go to your place at once!"

"Yes, sir," said Frank, understanding now the cause of that sudden scamper on the part of the Third Formers.

He went towards the desks, wondering which was his seat. He paused and looked back at the Form-master.

"Have I not told you to go to your place?" snapped Mr. Selby.

"I—I don't know my place, sir," faltered Frank.

"You stupid boy, take the bottom place!"

Manners minor indicated the place, and Frank went to it, with burning cheeks, and sat down.

Then evening prep was commenced.

Levison minor did not find it such an ordeal as he had expected, but he was glad when it was over. He was wondering, too, what was going to happen afterwards. He was in trouble with D'Arcy minor, with whom his brother had recommended him to make friends; but he did not consider that he was to blame for that.

He wondered, too, why D'Arcy minor had spoken of his brother as he had done, for he was quite keen enough to see that Wally was a different sort of fellow from Trimble. Was it possible that his brother had a bad reputation throughout the Lower School? And if so—why?

Why did everyone seem to take it for granted that he would be a young reprobate simply because he was Levison's brother?

Ernest was evidently misjudged, perhaps because of one or two acts of recklessness, such as his joining Racke's picnic that afternoon.

Prep was over at last, and Mr. Selby, glad to have done, quitted the Form-room at once.

The fags were left to their own devices until bed-time.

Levison minor moved from his place, and was immediately surrounded by a dozen fags, with D'Arcy minor at their head.

"Now, young shaver!" said Wally.

dazedly at the ceiling of the Form-room, while the fags yelled with laughter.

"Well, that's soon done!" said Hobbs. "Now, about supper."

Frank sat up, blinking.

"Had enough?" asked Wally, quite good-naturedly.

"No!" panted Levison minor.

"Better chuck it," said Wally, in a friendly manner. "I could knock you out with one hand, you know."

"We'll see!"

Levison minor scrambled to his feet, and came on again pluckily.

"The kid's game," remarked Joe Frayne



Ernest Levison was waiting under the trees by the wall as his young brother dropped lightly into the quad. "Ernie!" exclaimed the fag. "Thank goodness you've got back safe!" said Levison. "Railton's in the village: he might have seen you!"

Frank faced him without fear.

"I'm ready for you," he said, "and ready for anybody who runs my brother down."

D'Arcy minor looked at him queerly.

"Rum young codger!" he commented. "I wouldn't have said anything about your major, but I supposed you knew all about him. But you can't call me a liar without being licked. Come on; put up your paws! I won't hurt you much," added Wally considerably.

He gave the new fag a tap on the nose by way of a start, and Levison minor came on willingly enough, returning the tap with interest. He was full of pluck, and he knew something about boxing; but he was no match for Wally, who was the most redoubtable fighting-man in the Third Form.

To Frank's surprise, he found himself lying on his back in less than two minutes, blinking up

approvingly. "Go it, Wally! I'll cook the kippers for supper while you're lickin' 'im!"

"I'll help you," said Curly Gibson. "Don't be all night, Wally!"

"Rats!" growled Wally. "The kid won't keep me a minute. You wait till I give him my left!"

Frank, thus forewarned, kept on his guard against Wally's left, which was quite famous in the Third. But his watchfulness did not avail him much.

The left caught him on the chin suddenly, like the kick of a mule, and he went down on the floor with a heavy bump.

Wally grinned down at him amiably.

"Chuck it!" he said. "Don't be a young ass, you know."

"Oh!" mumbled Frank.

"Yes, chuck it!" said Manners minor. "You're wasting time. Come on, Wally!"

Frayne and Curly were already busy at the fire-grate, and Wally joined them there, leaving Levison minor gasping on the floor.

Frank rose slowly to his feet. He was licked; there was no doubt about that. His head was singing, and his jaw felt quite numb. He was game to go on, but the fight was evidently over. Wally seemed to have forgotten his existence.

Levison minor limped to the nearest desk and sat down.

The Third Formers, oblivious of his existence, were busy, and no one even looked at him.

CHAPTER 8.

The Feast of the Gods!

"WHAT a thumping smother you're making, young Frayne!" growled Wally.

"If you can do better, D'Arcy minor—"

"If I couldn't make a better fire than that, I—I'd eat it!" said D'Arcy minor. "For goodness' sake chuck it, and leave it to me!"

"B-r-r-r-r!"

There was going to be a feast of the gods in the Form-room that evening. Money, unfortunately, was short; but Frayne had brought in four kippers which had to be cooked. Wally had brought a supply of butter from Kildare's study—he fagged for Kildare of the Sixth. Manners had begged a loaf from his major in the Shell, and Curly Gibson contributed a tin of sardines.

The feast was rather fishy. There were two courses—sardines and kippers. But it was the cooking of the kippers that presented difficulties.

The weather was still too warm for a fire in the Form-room, and there were no coals. Frayne was building a fire of old exercise-books, old impot paper, and the covers of school books recklessly torn off for the purpose. He succeeded in making a tremendous blaze, and scorched his hands and blackened his face, but he did not seem to produce much of a fire for cooking purposes.

There was a warm debate as to how the kippers should be cooked. Frying was out of the question, as there was no frying-pan.

Jameson maintained that they ought to be grilled, but he did not explain how they could be grilled at a wide, open grate with a fire of exercise-books. The first kipper, supported on a couple of pens, was beginning to frizzle and to burn in places. A strong smell already pervaded the Form-room.

Levison minor, as he recovered from his exertions, watched the scene with curious interest.

He was getting his first experience of the peculiar manners and customs of the Third Form.

He remembered his brother's sage advice, and he would willingly have contributed the abundant supply of cash in his pocket to increase the resources of the feasters. But he did not venture to chip in. He knew no one there, and the fags had seemed all against him when he was fighting with Wally. He felt as if he were alone among enemies. At the same time he felt a keen desire to join in the rough familiarity of the fags—to be taking a part in the life of the Form.

Voices were waxing loud and emphatic round the spluttering fire and the smelly kippers.

"That blessed fire won't keep in!" said Frayne, in despair. "We want some wood for it, you know."

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"Use your head," said Wally sarcastically.

"Can't you get some wood from your major, young Manners?"

"Nothing doing," said young Manners.

"Got any more books?" asked Wally, looking round. "There's that new kid. I suppose he's got some books. Hallo, young Levison!"

"Hallo!" said Frank, surprised at being hailed so familiarly by the junior he had been fighting ten minutes before.

"Got your books here?"

"Yes."

"Bring 'em over here."

Frank rose and obeyed. His nice new set of school books met with an approving glance from Wally's eye.

"I suppose I can have the cover of this grammar?" asked Wally.

"I suppose you can have it!" snorted Jameson. "Are you asking permission from a new kid, you ass?"

"Well, it's his," said Wally. "Of course, I'm going to have it, anyway, but there's such a thing as being civil, Jimmy—though you don't seem to have heard of it in the New House."

Wally had asked permission, but he was not waiting for it. He was already jerking off the cover of the Latin grammar.

"I—I say, are you allowed to use books like that?" said Frank, in dismay, as the stout cover gave quite a fillip to the fire.

"Of course not," said Wally. "School books have to be kept clean and neat. That's one of the rules. Still, accidents will happen. This is one of them."

And the fags chuckled at Wally's humour.

"Couldn't we get some wood?" said Frank. He uttered that "we" rather nervously, surprised to find himself already speaking as one of the Third.

"Do you know where to get any, fathead?"

"I'll ask my major if you like."

"Cut off and ask him, then."

"Bring a bit of coal in your pocket if you can," called out Frayne.

"Don't shove it under anybody's nose, bringing it here. I suppose you know we're not supposed to have a fire here?"

"All right," said Frank.

He hurried out of the Form-room, quite elated with his mission. Already he was feeling like one of them, and, to his astonishment, after his fight with D'Arcy minor he seemed to be getting on friendly terms with that lively young gentleman. He lost no time in getting to his brother's study.

Trimble and Mellish and Lumley-Lumley were there, doing their prep, but Ernest Levison was not present.

"Isn't my brother here?" said Frank, looking round.

"You'll find him in Crooke's study!" chuckled Mellish.

"Don't go there, young 'un," said Lumley-Lumley, with a frown at Mellish. "Levison doesn't want to be interrupted."

Mellish and Trimble cackled.

Frank nodded and left the study. He did not intend to interrupt his brother if his brother did not want to be interrupted. But he was unwilling to return to the Third Form Room with his mission unfulfilled.

As he hesitated in the passage a cheery voice hailed him:

"Hallo, kid! Looking for somebody?"

It was Tom Merry.



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 10.

The Missing Postcard!

TALBOT and Crooke had been invited by their uncle, Colonel Lyndon, to spend a few days with him, his idea being to encourage a better understanding between the two cousins—though, owing to Crooke's enmity, there was little likelihood of that. Talbot, being one of the best players in the St. Jim's Junior XI, had arranged to return in time for the match with the Gram-marians. He was to meet the team at Rylcombe. On the eve of the match, Talbot crouched his ankle. He scribbled a postcard to Tom Merry to say he couldn't play, and gave it to Colonel Lyndon's footman to post—but it was never delivered. Tom Merry & Co. waited at Rylcombe for Talbot, and were finally obliged to play a man short. They were lucky to draw 1-1. Later, Tom Merry sought "Detective" Kerr.

MERRY: Hallo, Kerr! Didn't know you were keen on collecting coins—the science of numismatics, isn't it?

KERR: Oh, I only dabble in it. I've an uncle who is very keen. For instance, many people don't know there were six different shillings issued during Queen Victoria's reign. Here's a Jubilee shilling—

MERRY: Very interesting, Kerr. But I really came to see you about Talbot.

KERR: You know, Talbot, fellows are saying you forgot all about the match with Gordon Gay & Co.—and that you made up the story about the postcard to cover it.

TALBOT: That's not true. As I've said, I slipped on the stairs and gave my ankle a nasty twist. It was obvious that I couldn't expect to do my best for St. Jim's the next day. It happened about nine in the evening. I wrote a card to Tom Merry, and asked the footman specially to go down to the village and catch the last collection. Tom Merry should have had it first post on the morning of the match.

"I wanted to see my brother," said Frank. "I want to borrow some wood."

Tom Merry grinned.

"Come here!" he said.

Frank followed him to his study, and was surprised and delighted with a present of two bundles of wood.

"Anything else you want?" asked Tom hospitably.

"M-m-may I take some coal?"

"Certainly!"

"Thanks awfully!"

"Is it a feast in the halls of the Third?" asked Monty Lowther, looking up from his prep. "Is

KERR: You're certain the footman went out with the card?

TALBOT: Not exactly. I went straight up to put some embrocation on. Now I think of it, the last thing I saw after the footman took the card was Crooke stopping to speak to him in the hall.

KERR: Did Crooke know you were to meet the team at Rylcombe?

TALBOT: Yes, he must have done.

KERR: I think I'll have a talk to him, then.

KERR: Oh, Crooke! What's this about your not posting Talbot's card to Tom Merry?

CROOKE: So Talbot is trying to land the blame on me, is he?

KERR: You spoke to the footman at your uncle's place after Talbot had given him the card to post.

CROOKE: Quite so. I may as well admit that as I was just going out for a stroll before turning in, I said to the footman I'd take Talbot's card and post it.

KERR: Was it stamped?

CROOKE: No. I got a penny stamp out of the machine by the village post-box.

KERR: Sure it was a penny stamp—not two ha'penny ones?

CROOKE: I remember distinctly it was a penny stamp, because though I had plenty of silver, I had only one penny.

KERR: Yet the card wasn't delivered to Tom Merry, though you say you posted it?

CROOKE: I can't help it if the Post Office makes a bungle once in a while, can I?

KERR: That penny you put in the machine—was it a thin one—an old Queen Victoria coin?

CROOKE: No, it wasn't. I glanced at it to make sure it wasn't a thin one—they sometimes slip through and you don't get a stamp.

KERR: Then it was a fairly new coin?

CROOKE: It was a 1924 penny, if you specially want to know, Detective Kerr! Now ask me why I happened to notice the date on it.

KERR: Well, why did you?

CROOKE: Sheer chance. I often look at the dates on coins. Anything else you'd like to know?

KERR: No. I think you've told me all that's necessary, Crooke. We'll see what Tom Merry thinks now.

(Is Crooke guilty? If so, how does Kerr prove it? See solution on page 33.)

the festive board spread in the magnificent mansion of the fags?" And Manners chuckled.

"We're having kippers for supper," said Frank simply. "We can't get the fire going."

"Mind old Selby doesn't smell the kippers!" chuckled Lowther. "Better put those bundles under your jacket and smuggle them in."

"Yes, I'm going to."

Frank left the study with his trousers pockets full of chips of coal and two bundles of wood under his jacket.

Thus equipped, he arrived in the Form-room.

Heated voices were arguing round the spluttering

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fire, but there was a chorus of approval as Frank turned out his prizes.

"Good egg!" said Wally heartily. "That kid's got some sense! You shall have one of the kippers, Levison minor."

Wally's skilled hands soon built a satisfactory fire, and the kippers were duly roasted.

It was true that they were underdone in places, but to make things even they were considerably overdone in other places.

Frank shared in the feast as cheerily as the rest, and he forgot the bump on his chin and the fact that his nose was swelling a little. He was feeling quite happy by the time he went up to the dormitory with the Third.

His earliest experiences had not been agreeable, but he was already feeling at home in the Third Form at St. Jim's, and finding, to his surprise, that the fellow he had fought with was the one he liked best.

CHAPTER 9.

The Parting of the Ways!

TOM MERRY spotted Levison minor in the quadrangle the next day and stopped to speak to him.

The captain of the Shell did not have much to do with fags of the Third as a rule, but he took a kindly interest in Levison minor.

There was a candid simplicity about the new fag which was quite taking, and the contrast between him and his brother, too, was odd.

"Getting on all right in the Third?" asked Tom cheerily.

The fag nodded and smiled.

"Yes, first rate!" he said brightly.

"Where did you get that nose?"

Frank laughed.

"I had a fight with D'Arcy minor," he said.

"But we're getting on all right now. D'Arcy minor is a brick!"

"So he is—quite a little brick," said Tom. "I suppose you were licked—what? You tackled the most terrific warrior in the Third."

"Yes, I got licked," confessed Frank. "D'Arcy minor hasn't said anything about my brother since, though." He flushed. "It was a misunderstanding, and he's really a ripping chap. He could lick me any time, I suppose, but he's shut up just as if I had licked him."

"You'd better not fly out when a chap speaks about your major," said Tom. "We don't stand on ceremony here, you know. Fellows say what they like."

"Yes, I know. Ernest told me the same," said Frank, his face clouding. "But—but it's queer that a lot of fellows seem to think like that about Ernie. Of course, he doesn't care what they think, and he's too proud to take any notice. But—but I wish they wouldn't. They don't know what a splendid chap he is!"

"Oh!" murmured Tom. It came as a surprise to him that anyone could possibly regard Levison as a splendid chap, but he liked the fag for it.

He walked away in a thoughtful mood, wondering whether there was really any good in the cad of the Fourth after all. There must surely be some reason why his young brother had so good an opinion of him!

He was surprised when, later, he passed Levison's study, and through the open doorway saw the brothers seated at the table at work.

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Levison was helping his minor with his lessons and putting him up to Form work.

Tom passed on, wondering still more.

Levison and his minor were still at work when Racke of the Shell came into the study.

Racke stared at them, and burst into a rude laugh.

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

"Don't interrupt," said Levison, without looking up.

"Got a fag?" asked Racke.

"No."

"Look here, I've run out of smokes," said Racke. "I'm dying for one."

"Go and die somewhere else then!"

"You mopped up enough of them last night, anyway," said Racke sulkily. "Look here, have you got a cigarette about the study, Levison?"

"No, I tell you!"

"I suppose your minor could go and get some?"

"No, he couldn't!"

"Why couldn't he?" said Racke warmly.

"Look here, young 'un, will you cut down to Rylcombe for me?"

Levison rose to his feet, his eyes glinting.

"Cut off, Franky!" he said. "We'll get on with this another time."

Frank gathered up his books and left the study without a word.

Levison closed the door and fixed his eyes on Racke.

"I've asked you not to jaw that kind of rot before my minor," said Levison.

Racke shrugged his shoulders.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"He doesn't understand it. It's not in his line. If you can't keep your mouth shut, you can keep out of my study!"

Racke laughed mockingly.

"What's the good of humbug with me?" he asked contemptuously. "Do you think I'm going to believe that your minor is a dear little innocent? That's rather too thick! I don't know why you're playing this silly game, but I can tell you that it won't work with me! Look here, I can't go down to Rylcombe myself for smokes—it's too jolly risky. Safe enough for a new kid. Send your minor. I'm paying."

"My minor's going to have nothing to do with you or your rotten tricks!" said Levison.

"Well, I'll ask him myself. I suppose he'll go for a bob?" sneered Racke. "If he's anything like you, he'll do anything for money."

"You won't ask him!" said Levison, between his teeth. "You won't speak to him on the subject again, Racke."

"Who's going to stop me?"

"I am! If you do, I'll hammer you!" said Levison, his eyes blazing. "Mind, I mean it! My minor's going to have nothing to do with you or your set."

Racke stared at him, his pasty face growing crimson with rage.

"Why, you confounded cheeky cad!" he exclaimed. "You've only stuck on to me for what you can get, and you know it! I've kept you in pocket-money ever since I've been here, you poverty-stricken outsider! And now you're getting your ears up to me! You think you can afford to quarrel with me, do you?"

Levison breathed hard. He could not afford to quarrel with Moneybags-minor, as Racke was called in the Shell. He made too good a thing out of the millionaire's son to wish to break with him.

his nose at me—and you, too! He'll be useful to us, with his baby face; and I'm going to teach him to be useful, and if you don't like it, you can lump it! Is that plain enough for you?"

Levison trembled with anger as he looked at the hard, cynical face of the young rascal, gloating over the evil he had done, and intended to do.

"You cad!" muttered Levison again. "I told you what I'd do if you didn't leave my minor alone. Put up your hands!"

Racke started back.

"Hands off!" he exclaimed savagely. "Don't be a fool, Levison!"

But Levison was advancing upon him, and he had to put up his hands, in mingled rage and astonishment. He had not dreamed that Levison would dare to quarrel with him—to break for good with the owner of the horn of plenty. Racke had a firm conviction that his money could buy anything, and although he had been undecieved a number of times since coming to St. Jim's, he still held to that opinion.

But he was destined to be undecieved once more. For Levison, the poverty-stricken bouncer—Levison, who made a good thing out of him, and could not afford to quarrel with him—was quarrelling now, with a vengeance. He was raining savage blows upon Racke, which the weedy, unfit slacker of the Shell found it hard to stop.

"Hang you!" panted Racke. "You rotter—you beggar—you sponger! Oh!"

Crash!

The Shell fellow went down on his back, laid there by a terrific drive full in the face.

Levison of the Fourth stood over him with blazing eyes.

"Get up, you cad! You haven't had enough yet! I'm going to thrash you till you can't stand!" muttered Levison thickly.

Racke sat up dizzily.

"Keep off, you rotter!" he screamed.

"Will you get up?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then I'll kick you till you do!"

Racke sprang up furiously as Levison carried out his threat. The hanger-on, the sponger, the weedy satellite, was not to be recognised at that moment. As soon as Racke was on his feet Levison's fists flashed out again, and the Shell fellow, defending himself weakly, was driven to the wall.

"Let me alone!" panted Racke hoarsely. "I'll yell for help!"

Levison did not reply. His fists lashed out incessantly, knocking down the Shell fellow's weak guard, and dashing savagely into his face.

Racke went down again, and lay groaning on the ground.

Levison gave him a bitter look as he lay and groaned.

"That's enough," he said. "That will do for this time. But look out, Aubrey Racke; you'll find that I mean business every time, you cad!"

Racke only groaned.

"Hallo! What's the trouble here?" asked a cheery voice.

It was Tom Merry's.

The Terrible Three were taking their evening sprint round the quadrangle, and they had come upon the scene.

"Nothing that concerns you," said Levison coolly, and he put his hands in his pockets and walked away.

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Levison started to his feet in anger at the sight of his minor's voice was sharp and shrill. "Come away at once!"

The chums of the Shell stared down at the groaning Racke. Tom Merry lent him a hand and helped him to his feet.

"Racke!" said Lowther, in surprise. "It's a case of rogues falling out! My only hat! You look a beauty, Racke!"

"Better do something to your face before you're seen," grinned Manners.

Racke groaned.

"I'll make him suffer for this!" he said thickly. "That sponging cad—that hard-up waster, who's been borrowing my money all the term—he's done this!"

"Must have been dotty," said Monty Lowther. "Or has the supply of cash run out, Racke?"

Racke did not reply. He staggered, rather than walked, away to the School House.

Tom Merry whistled.

"Well, that's a go!" he remarked. "Levison has always been jolly careful to keep in with that merchant. He won't get a cent of Racke's filthy lucre after this, I imagine."

"Perhaps Levison's turning over a new leaf," grinned Lowther. "It's about time he did. Only last night he was keeping it up in Racke's study. Come on, my infants, we've got prep to do yet."

The Terrible Three resumed their trot.

Racke, in the School House, was bathing his bruised face and muttering fierce threats of vengeance upon the fellow who had handled him. And Levison, in deep anxiety, was waiting for his brother to come in.

And he had cause for anxiety—more than he knew. For Racke, as he sponged his damaged face, was thinking of revenge upon his follower who had turned upon him, and a scheme was



Ernie's face looking in upon him. "Ernie!" Frank Levison's
I've come to tell you—Kildare's coming!"

working itself out in his cunning brain which, if it were successful, would more than pay his debts, and wipe out his bitter grudge.

CHAPTER 11.
Racke's Refusal.

"FRANK, is that you?"
The fag spun round in alarm as Levison spoke in suppressed tones.
The Fourth Former was waiting under the trees by the wall as Frank dropped lightly from the wall into the quad.
"Ernie!" exclaimed the fag.
"Thank goodness you've got back safe!" panted Levison. "Railton is in the village. He might have seen you."
"I saw him," said Frank.
"You've been to the Green Man?"
"Yes; I've got your packet."
"My packet?" repeated Levison.
"Yes; here it is."
"Did Railton see you?"
"No," muttered the fag. "I dodged out of sight. I—I knew he mustn't see me out of bounds, Ernie. What's the matter? I wouldn't have gone for anybody but you, of course."
"It wasn't for me," said Levison. "Racke was lying to you. I've got it out of him. It was a trick. Frank, you young ass, you might have been spotted!"
"I shouldn't have minded detention very much," said Frank.
"It wouldn't have been detention; it would

have been a flogging. You might have been sent back home."

The fag gave him a startled look.
"Not just for breaking bounds, Ernest?"
"For going to that place," said Levison.
"Don't you understand? It's out of bounds; it's a low hole. Any chap going there would get into awful trouble. Thank goodness you weren't seen! I never sent you. It was a lie of Racke's. Don't you know what's in that packet?"
"Oh!" said Frank "I—I thought it was for you. They knew your name there. The fat old man there asked me how you were, and whether you were coming on Saturday."

Levison gritted his teeth.
"What's in the packet, Ernie?"
"Never mind what's in it," said Levison.
"Throw it over the wall."
"But—but—but—"
"It's cigarettes, if you want to know. Joliffe gets them for Racke. He used my name to get you to go there and fetch them. It was a rotten trick! Mind you never do anything again that Racke tells you. He's a low hound! Never speak to him, if you can help it."
"But—but you speak to him, Ernie," faltered the fag. "I wish you wouldn't have anything to do with him."

Levison laughed harshly.
"That's all over," he said. "We shan't speak again; I've hammered him for sending you there. Give me that packet."

Frank handed over the packet in silence, and Levison tossed it over the school wall, careless of where it fell.

"Now you'd better cut off!" he said. "And mind, no more breaking bounds; you'll get into trouble."

"I thought it was for you," said Frank. "I wouldn't have done it for anybody else. But—but if that inn's such a rotten place, Ernie, why do you go there? That fat man, Joliffe, knew you. He asked after you, and another man—a man he called Lodgey. They both knew you. Lodgey said he expected you on Saturday afternoon, and so did Joliffe. You're not going there, Ernie?"

"Of—of course not!" muttered Levison.
"They're friends of Racke, really. I just happened to meet them. Don't worry about that. Cut off, or you'll be late, and old Selby will be down on you."

Frank obediently cut off, and Levison followed him more slowly to the School House.

In the upper passage he passed Racke, and grinned at the sight of his face.

Racke had a black eye, his nose seemed double its usual size, and there were dark bruises all over his face. He gave Levison a look that a demon might have envied, and went into his study.

Levison was not in a cheerful mood that evening. He did his prep sullenly in his study, and afterwards, when Mellish went along to Racke's study, Levison stayed behind.

Lumley-Lumley eyed him.
"Not joining the merry blades this evening?" he asked.

"Go and eat coke!" was Levison's polite reply.
"Been rowing with Racke?" asked Trimble.
"Racke's got a face as if he'd been through a mangle. I asked him who'd done it, and he punched my head, the beast!"

"Serve you right!" growled Levison.
He lounged discontentedly out of the study.

Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy were chatting in the passage, and they eyed him curiously. "I hear you've been hammering young Moneybags minor," said Blake.

"Case of wogues fallin' out, bai Jove!" chuckled Arthur Augustus. "Has he been swindlin' you, Levison, or have you been swindlin' him?"

"Ha, ka, ha!"

"Find out!" growled Levison, and he lounged on, leaving the chums of Study No. 6 laughing.

On Saturday afternoon it had been arranged for him to go with Racke to the Green Man for a merry afternoon. That arrangement, of course, would fall through now. And the loss of the millionaire's friendship was a serious matter to Levison, who had little money, and who had had a full share of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.

The next morning both Racke and Levison received lines for fighting, both being called before the Housemaster, as Racke's damaged features had attracted attention.

As they left the Housemaster's study, Levison tapped Racke on the arm.

"Like me to do your lines?" he asked.

Racke stared at him.

"Do you mean that you want to earn half-a-crown?" he sneered.

"No," said Levison, flushing, "I don't. But there's no need for us to row, you know. I don't bear malice, if you don't. I only want you to let my minor alone."

Racke looked at him with a bitter sneer.

"I knew you would come round," he said. "You're sorry now, and I'll make you sorrier before I've done with you!"

"Are you coming along on Saturday?"

"Not with you. I shan't come along if you do."

"Then you can stay away!" said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"So you're going?" asked Racke, with a peculiar glimmer in his eyes.

"Why not?"

Racke walked away with a sneer on his lips. Levison had been willing to eat humble-pie to placate the millionaire of the Shell; but that was not enough for Racke.

Frank Levison joined his brother as the latter stood with his hands driven deep into his pockets, staring out moodily into the quad.

Levison nodded to his minor, trying to clear his clouded brow.

"What about to-morrow?" asked Frank. "It's a half-holiday."

"You'd better pal on with some of the Third," said Levison.

The fag's face fell.

"I thought you might like to come up the river," he said.

Levison forced a laugh.

"It wouldn't do you any good to be chumming with Fourth Formers, even your own major," he said. "The fags won't like it. Go along with them, and come to my study for tea afterwards."

"Right you are!" said Frank, brightening up. "D'Arcy minor's asked me to go in his boat, but I thought—"

"That's right; young Wally is the chap I'd like you to be friends with!" said Levison. "Keep away from that young rotter Piggott."

"I don't speak to him—D'Arcy minor doesn't, either. Piggott isn't in our set!" said Frank, with some pride.

CHAPTER 12.

His Brother's Danger!

"KILDARE!"

Levison minor looked round involuntarily as Mr. Railton spoke.

It was Saturday afternoon. Football practice was on, and Levison minor was watching it, while he waited for D'Arcy minor.

Wally was detained in the Form-room at present, having been in hot water with Mr. Selby that morning.

Levison major had gone out some time before, and Frank was looking on at the senior practice to kill time while he waited.

Mr. Railton had come down to Big Side with a very grave expression on his face. He called to Kildare, who was just going on, and the captain of St. Jim's came at once. His tone was so grave that the fag could not help noticing it.

"Yes, sir!" said Kildare.

"I suppose you are rather busy, Kildare—"

"Only practice, sir," said the Sixth Former with a smile.

"It is a rather peculiar matter," said the Housemaster. "I have just received a telephonic call from the village, from whom I do not know, as I did not recognise the voice. Whoever it was tells me that he has seen a boy belonging to this school enter the Green Man, and he thinks it is his duty to acquaint me with the circumstances. It may, of course, be only some busybody, but if the information is correct, the matter should be seen into. I cannot get away this afternoon, and I was going to ask you—"

"Certainly, sir!" said the prefect at once. "I'll change at once, and run down there on my bike, if you like."

"I should be much obliged if you would, Kildare. I have had my suspicions turned in that quarter before, as you know, and it is my duty to see that this is looked into."

"Very well, sir; I'll go," said Kildare.

The Housemaster thanked him, and walked back. Neither of them had taken any notice of the little fag standing beside the ropes. But every word had been quite plain to Frank's ears as he stood rooted to the spot.

Frank's heart was beating like a hammer.

Well he remembered what Mr. Joliffe and Mr. Lodgey had said to him. They had expected Levison at the Green Man on Saturday afternoon. Levison had said that he was not going, and Frank had dismissed the matter from his mind.

But it returned now.

His brother had avoided his company that afternoon, and he had gone out alone. Was it possible—

Even while he asked himself the question, Frank knew that it was not only possible, but it was certain.

It was his brother who was at that low den—his brother who was to be caught in the act by the prefect.

He knew it.

The doubts that had been driven from his mind, the painful misgivings he had absolutely banished, all returned with redoubled force now.

It was not for nothing that his brother was spoken of as a black sheep; it was not merely that he was a dog with a bad name; but he had earned that bad name.

His mind seemed to become suddenly clear. At that moment he saw his brother as the other fellows saw him, as Wally saw him, as Tom Merry saw him. That champagne picnic with

Racke was not an isolated escapade. It was in keeping with Levison's real character—the character he had sought to conceal from his minor.

Frank knew it now. A hundred troublesome doubts had crystallised at once into a grim certainty.

A slap on the shoulder startled him out of his miserable reverie. He spun round and looked at Manners minor.

"Get a move on!" said Reggie cheerily. "Wally will be out in ten minutes, and he'll expect us to be ready. We're late now, owing to that fathead getting himself detained. Hallo! What are you looking like a boiled owl for?"

"I—I say!" Levison minor found his voice with an effort. "You—you've heard of a place called the Green Man, in Rylcombe, haven't you?"

"Yes. Rotten low hole," said Manners minor. "Suppose a chap went there, and was caught?" Manners minor grinned.

"He would be sacked jolly sharp!" he said. "Is that where your major's gone?"

"I—I——"
"Never mind. Your major's too jolly cute to be spotted," said Reggie. "You can't help what he does. But I forgot. Mustn't say a word about your major to you," Reggie chuckled. "Come on! We've got to get the boat out, you know. Where the merry thunder are you off to, Levison minor?"

Frank did not answer; he was hurrying away. Reggie Manners stared after him in bewilderment.

"Off his blessed rocker!" he ejaculated. Frank hurried down to the gates.

The sack! That word rang in his ears. Kildare had gone in to change. In a few minutes he would be riding down to Rylcombe. There was little time to lose.

For there was only one thought in the loyal mind of the little fag, and that was to warn his brother, and save him in time.

He did not think of the risk to himself—that it was almost as dangerous for him to be caught in those forbidden precincts as for his brother. That thought did not even cross his mind, and he would not have cared if it had. He ran out of the school gates, and there was a sharp exclamation as he ran into a group of juniors, who were about to mount their bicycles.

"Hallo! Where are you running to, you young ass?" roared Tom Merry.

Frank staggered back. "Sorry!" he gasped. "I'm in a hurry!" He ran on a pace or two, and then turned back. "Merry, lend me your bike, will you?"

"Well, I like that!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, in indignant astonishment. "We're just going out for a spin, young Levison."

"Hold on!" said Tom Merry, as he scanned the kid's white face. "Is anything the matter, kid?"

"Yes—yes! I—I can't tell you!" muttered Frank. "But do lend me your bike, there's a good chap! I'm in an awful hurry——"

"Where are you going?"
"To the—to—Rylcombe. Will you——"

"You couldn't ride it," said Tom. "It's too high for you. But I'll give you a lift to Rylcombe if you're in a hurry. You can hang on behind—what?"

"Yes, yes! Thank you!"

(Continued on the next page.)



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It was easy enough for Frank to stand on the footrest with his hands on the broad shoulders of the captain of the Shell.

Tom Merry pedalled away down the lane.

Manners gave an expressive grunt.

"Well, that takes the cake!" he remarked.

"The Third are getting a bit too cheeky, in my opinion. Come on!"

Manners and Lowther rode after their chum. Tom was pedalling at great speed, with Frank standing behind. The extra weight meant little to the athletic junior. The wind blew in Frank's fevered face as they raced down the lane. He would be in time yet.

"Stop!" he exclaimed suddenly, as the inn came in sight.

The Green Man lay on the outskirts of the village.

Tom slowed down, and the fag jumped off.

"Thanks!" he panted.

He was turning away, when the Shell fellow's hand fell on his shoulder and stopped him.

Tom's face was very grave.

"You're not going in there, kid," he said quietly.

Frank struggled almost hysterically.

"I must! Don't stop me! It will be too late! Let me go!"

He cast a terrified look along the lane, fearing to see Kildare in the distance. His fears were realised. Far down the dusty lane the figure of the captain of St. Jim's could be seen pedalling at a leisurely pace.

Tom Merry followed his glance. A sudden understanding flashed into his mind.

"You're going to see someone—to give him a tip?" he asked.

"Yes, yes!" panted Frank.

"Then I won't stop you."

He released the fag, who darted away at once.

"Pretty game this—what?" grunted Manners; and Monty Lowther gave a very expressive whistle.

The Terrible Three rode on through the village.

Frank stopped a moment undecided. His brother was there. But where? He shrank from entering the building; but he remembered where he had gone before, and he ran down the side path.

Farther down the garden, overlooking the river, was a summer-house, and in the doorway a squat form was standing—that of Mr. Lodgey, the billiards-sharper. He was lighting a cigarette.

Frank panted up to him.

"Is he here?"

Mr. Lodgey blinked at him.

"Eh? Who—what—"

But past the portly form of the sharper, Frank could see into the summer-house, and he saw his brother seated at a square table with two others.

There were cards on the table, and the summer-house was thick with smoke.

Levison of the Fourth started to his feet in anger at the sight of his minor's pale face looking in upon him.

"Frank, you young idiot, what are you doing here?"

"The young gent's welcome" smiled Mr. Lodgey. "No reason why he shouldn't take a 'and—"

"Ernie!"—Frank's voice was sharp and shrill—"come—come away at once! I've come to tell you—Kildare's coming—"

Mr. Lodgey whistled.

"Kildare!" exclaimed Levison. "Kildare!"

"He's coming on his bike!" panted Frank.

"He knows—"

"How does he know?" hissed Levison. "Who's given me away—"

"Somebody telephoned to Mr. Railton from the village; but—your name wasn't mentioned—he said a St. Jim's chap—"

"Racke!" muttered Levison between his teeth. "Racke—the hound! I'll make him sit up for this!"

"Will you come away?" exclaimed the fag. "Kildare will be here in a minute looking for you—he's on his bike—I saw him in the lane—"

"Better 'ook it," muttered Mr. Lodgey anxiously.

Levison brushed past him and left the summer-house. He grasped his brother by the arm.

"Come along."

"But—but you've got to get away!" gasped Frank, as his brother drew him farther down the garden.

"This way, you young fool; we mustn't be seen going out." Levison was quite cool again now. "There's a gate on to the towing-path."

They ran down the garden under the trees.

In a minute or less they were over the gate and on the towing-path. But they did not stop there. Side by side they ran on, till a quarter of a mile lay between them and the inn.

Then Levison of the Fourth halted.

"Tell me how you knew," he said curtly.

Frank explained breathlessly.

"I suppose it was Racke," muttered Levison.

"It must have been—he knew I was going there—that's why he stayed away, hang him! Nobody saw me going in, I know that. The cad! Hallo, what the dickens are you looking so miserable about? We're safe here. Kildare won't find anything out now."

The fag made no reply.

"It was jolly decent of you to come and tell me, Franky," said Levison. "I should have been caught like a rat in a trap. That's what Racke intended. Kildare will go back and tell Railton that it was only a practical joke of somebody." He grinned. "But if you hadn't come—"

"You would have been expelled, Ernie," said Frank in a low voice.

"I suppose so—the chopper would have come down, and no mistake—they've had an eye on me already, but I've fooled them," said Levison.

"I—I mean, of course—"

He broke off.

"I suppose you know all about it now, Franky," he muttered. "I didn't want you to know anything—"

"Oh, Ernie!"

"A fellow must have a flutter sometimes," muttered the black sheep of the Fourth. "You wouldn't understand, Franky—you're not like me. I'm sorry you've got to know anything about it, but it was bound to come out sooner or later. And—and you came for me all the same! Do you know that it would have meant a flogging for you at least if Kildare had found you there, too—and he might have."

"I never thought about that—I didn't care!"

"It's all right now," said Levison.

(Continued on page 36.)

"Smith would know your voice, and he would do as you tell him."

"He mightn't."

"It will be bad for you if he doesn't," said Drake grimly.

And he walked out of the study and slammed the door.

The bucks of St. Winifred's looked at one another. Daubeny lighted a cigarette with a trembling hand.

"What the thump am I goin' to do?" he muttered thickly.

"You ass!" said Egan. "What did you play this trick at all for? I told you it was too thick! Drake's an insolent cad; but getting a fellow sacked, it's too thick!"

"Lot of good tellin' me that now!" snarled Daubeny.

"Well, I told you before."

"Oh, shut up! I—I suppose I shall have to risk the phone."

Daubeny threw away his cigarette.

Egan took a pack of cards from the table drawer, where they had been hastily placed out of sight when the door opened.

"Going on?" he asked.

"Hang it! No!"

And Vernon Daubeny strode savagely from the study, leaving his chums to the delights of banker. Vernon Daubeny was not in a mood for banker just then.

Done in the Dark!

"BED-TIME!"

Lovelace of the Sixth looked into the Junior Common-room, amidships on the Benbow. And there was a general move to the dormitory.

Jack Drake noticed that Lovelace's glance lingered on him. After the juniors were in their hammocks the captain of St. Winifred's paused, with his hand on the switch of the electric light.

"Just a tip to you kids," he said. "There will be an eye kept on this dormitory. Any fellow trying to sneak out after lights out will get into trouble."

And with that warning Lovelace put out the light and retired. There was a buzz of voices among the hammocks when he was gone.

"Who's that meant for, I wonder?" said Raik. "Which of you riotous bounders is suspected of wanting to break bounds to-night?"

There was a fat chuckle from Tuckey Toodles. "Hallo! Toodles knows!" said Sawyer major.

"Who is it, Toodles?"

"That's telling!" said Tuckey. "I'm not going to mention names. There may be a fellow who might want to go and see Smith, and try to keep him away, and there may not. I'm not giving Drake away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Lovelace has his eye on you, Drake?" chuckled Pierce Raik.

"Find out!" growled Drake.

"No giddy excursions to-night," said Sawyer major. "It's all right, Drake. You'll see your friend Smith to-morrow. He's bound to come."

Jack Drake made no reply to that. He was quite well aware what the prefect's warning meant. He was under suspicion, and precautions were taken so that he did not communicate with Mr. Smith before that gentleman's next call.

But it mattered little. The next move was for Daubeny of the Shell to make, and the Shell was not under suspicion. Vernon Daubeny was free to act, if he had the nerve. Drake wondered whether Daub would find the nerve. It was to save his own skin, and Daub could not have had a more powerful motive than that.

In the Shell dormitory, Vernon Daubeny lay awake. He made up his mind to make the venture, lest worse should befall him. As he lay in his hammock, with the Shell fellows sleeping round him, Daubeny stared into the darkness and counted the minutes. He had been caught in his own toils, and it was not at all certain that he would escape from them. It was not the first time that Vernon Daubeny had had cause to anathematise his own cunning and duplicity.

The minutes passed on leaden wings. It was not till past midnight that Daubeny ventured to leave his hammock.

He dressed quietly in the darkness.

His heart was beating fast as he picked his way among the hammocks, and quitted the Shell dormitory.

The Benbow was plunged in darkness. The last light had been extinguished, the last door had closed.

Silently, in his socks, Daubeny groped and picked his way. Fortunately he knew every inch of the interior of the old warship. But it was some time before he stood in the passage outside the Head's study.

All was dark. He listened for a full minute, but no sound came to his ears, save the wash of the water against the hull of the old ship.

He ventured to turn the handle at last, and, as he did so, he was seized by a sudden fear that the door might be locked. But it was not locked, and he opened it softly.

The study was pitch dark.

Daubeny trod in softly, and closed the door behind him with hardly a sound. He stood on the thick carpet, trembling in every limb, and scarcely breathing. The Head's bed-room was the adjoining apartment, and there was only the bulkhead between. If Dr. Goring should hear—Suppose he were sleepless that night—suppose—

A thousand fears were in the craven heart of the hapless buck of St. Winifred's; but he screwed up courage at last, and groped his way across the study.

There was a sudden sound as his knee knocked on a chair in the darkness. He stopped, shaking from head to foot.

Silence!

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

Kerr, though only a dabbler in the science of numismatics, knew that no pennies were minted in 1924—a fact few fellows would be aware of. Croke certainly wasn't—hence his statement as to the date on the penny he was supposed to have bought the stamp with! The postcard, obviously, had never been posted—and Croke, under pressure, admitted as much. He said he "forgot" it—but Croke will not quickly forget the ragging he received from infuriated members of the Junior XI!

He moved on again at last, and with trembling fingers, felt for the telephone, in its accustomed place on the Head's desk. His fingers found it, and he sank into the chair before the instrument. His heart was thumping so hard that he could almost hear it beat. It was a full minute before he ventured to lift the receiver. But he lifted it at last, and placed it to his ear.

"Hallo!"

In the dead silence the voice along the wires seemed like a shout to the wretched junior. He gasped.

"Kingsford One-o-one!" he muttered into the transmitter.

"Eh?"

"Kingsford One-o-one!"

"I can't hear you—speak louder, please."

"Kingsford One-o-one," breathed Daubeny.

He was heard at last at the exchange, and he shivered as he thought that he might have been heard in the adjoining room also. But there was no sound.

He waited—it seemed an age that he waited. But a voice came at last—the voice of Mr. Tadger, the landlord of the Lobster Pot.

"Hallo!"

"Is that you, Mr. Tadger?"

"Hallo! That Master Daubeny?" Mr. Tadger's voice was surprised.

"Yes, yes! I want to speak to Smith. Is he there?"

"Yes; he's in his room with a little party. Is it important?"

"Yes, yes! Tell him to come to the phone at once."

"I'll tell him. Hold on."

Daubeny held on.

He was listening intently at the receiver; and still more intently for a sound from the adjoining room. But there was no sound. For two terrible minutes the junior waited, in growing terror. But the husky voice of Gentleman Smith came through at last.

"That you, Master Daub?"

"Yes, yes!"

"S'prised me to 'ear you was phoning at this hour," said Mr. Smith. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Yes. You're not to come to the ship, Smith."

"Hey?"

"It's all off!" breathed Daubeny. "Drake has found out that I put you up to comin' here, and he's threatened to give me away, too, if you come."

"Oh, my heye!"

"Keep away, for goodness' sake! You understand?"

"That's all very well," came Mr. Smith's voice, with an obstinate tone in it. "But I've been ducked and nearly drowned."

Daubeny ground his teeth.

"You're to keep away, I tell you!"

"Master Drake owes me five pun—"

"I'll see it is paid."

"Well, I've been nearly drowned, and—" Mr. Smith did not seem to be in an accommodating mood.

"You're to keep away!" panted Daubeny. "I'm ruined if you come here! I'll see you tomorrow somehow. I'll make it all right, Smith. You understand?"

"Oh, orlright! I'll do what you want. All the same—"

"That's right. Don't show up near the Benbow, that's all."

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"But look 'ere, I've spun the 'Ead the yarn on the phone to-day, and—"

"Oh, you fool!"

"He was torkin' about prosecuting a bloke for slander if I don't prove wot I told 'im about young Drake."

"You can palm off some yarn on him, then. If you come here, you'll never see me again."

"Oh, orlright, sir! I'm your man. But—"

Daubeny replaced the receiver on the hook. To his horror he heard the sound of a movement in the adjoining room. Had the Head awakened?

He groped his way frantically to the door and crept out into the passage. With a thumping heart, he fled into the darkness.

Five minutes later he was in his hammock in the Shell dormitory. But the dawn was glimmering on the Chadway before his eyes closed in slumber.

The Clouds Roll By!

CLANG! Clang!

The ship's bell was ringing, and the St. Winifred's fellows turned out. There were two among the juniors who were heavy-eyed—Drake of the Fourth and Daubeny of the Shell.

After breakfast Drake joined the Shell fellow coming from the dining-room.

"Well?" he said curtly.

"It's all right," muttered Daubeny.

"He's not coming?"

"No."

"Good!" said Drake.

He walked away cheerily and joined Rodney on the deck, leaving Vernon Daubeny gritting his teeth.

Drake had slept little the preceding night, and he was feeling rather heavy in the Form-room that morning. But otherwise he was in a cheerful mood. The danger had been averted—it seemed certain that it had been averted now.

During morning lessons the Head's valuable instructions in the Sixth Form Room were interrupted. The school page brought a message that a Mr. Smith was asking for him on the telephone.

Dr. Goring left his class and proceeded to his study, with a rather grim expression on his face. Gentleman Smith had not arrived, according to arrangement. That Drake had not left his dormitory was certain, and he could not have warded off the threatened visit. Was the whole story simply a concoction of a drunken rascal? The Head wondered. He took up the receiver.

"I am here. Is that you, Smith?"

"Yessir." Gentleman Smith's voice was very meek and civil, quite different from his tones of the preceding day.

"What have you to say?"

"I 'ope, sir, as you'll look hover wot I said to you yesterday, sir," said Mr. Smith meekly. "It was only a game, sir."

"What?"

"I was a bit riled, sir, at bein' bunged in the mud, and that's all, sir. I take it all back."

"Indeed! And why did you pay your visit here in the first place?"

"Oh, that was only a lark, sir!" mumbled Mr. Smith. "Young Master Drake had checked me, sir, and I come along to make things 'ot for 'im. P'r'aps I'd 'ad a little to drink, sir. No 'arm done."

"You are a rascal, Mr. Smith."

"Eh?"

Mr. Beauclerc was at home, and he was not alone. The sound of deep and gruff voices could be heard outside. Through the half-open door Vere could see the interior of the shack, and he saw his father and two companions.

He knew them by sight—Dave Dunn, a ruffianly character of Cedar Camp, and Poker Pete, of Thompson.

Poker Pete was a professional sportsman from California, a gentleman who had left his country for his country's good. He lived by playing poker and euchre with the cowboys and ranchers, winning their money by his superior skill with cards, perhaps sometimes assisting fortune by "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain."

That was the new trouble that had come into Vere's life—his father's friendship with these two. More than once Vere had found them at the shack on his return from school, sometimes playing poker, sometimes discussing some matter of which the schoolboy knew nothing.

"I guess it's a cinch!" Poker Pete was saying as the schoolboy came up to the door. "A real cinch!"

"Old Lawless is worth a good bit, I reckon," Dave Dunn remarked. "But we shall have to work careful—"

"Hist!" exclaimed Mr. Beauclerc hastily.

Vere stood in the doorway.

Poker Pete muttered an oath.

"Hang the kid! What are you hanging about here for?" he exclaimed violently. "How long have you been here?"

"I have just returned from school," said Vere quietly. "I have not been hanging about."

The "sport" gave him a dark and suspicious look.

"If that's the truth—" he began.

"That's enough!" interrupted the remittance man sharply. "My son does not tell lies!"

Poker Pete gave him a surly look.

"I guess it's time we vamoosed," said Dave Dunn, getting up from the tub he was sitting on. "Coming down to the Continental to-night, Beauclerc?"

"Yes, later."

Poker Pete and Dunn left the shack, tramping away in the gloom towards the camp. Mr. Beauclerc looked rather uneasily at his son. He assumed a cheerful manner that did not deceive the schoolboy.

"You're late, aren't you, Vere?" he said.

"Yes; I was detained."

"How are you getting on at the school?"

"Quite well."

"You like it there, my boy?"

"Yes, father, I like it."

"That's good! Well, it's time for supper," said Mr. Beauclerc, rising.

"Never mind supper for a minute, dad. I—I want to speak to you about something else," said Vere slowly.

"If it's money, my boy—"

"It's not."

"I know it's hard on you, Vere. You never have money in your pockets," said the remittance man, with a touch of remorse. "But things are looking round a bit. It's quite possible I may be making money shortly. I've got some plans on hand to clear us of debt and start fresh."

"Father, I must speak," said the boy. "I can't stand it any longer. What were those two men doing here—those two scoundrels? Why have you made friends with them?"

"That is no business of yours, Vere!" said his

father gruffly. "Ask me no questions and you'll hear no lies!"

"I must ask you, father! One of them was mentioning Mr. Lawless as I came up. I know they are trying to lead you into evil." Vere's face was white and strained. "Father, we've had disgrace enough. I've never complained; but—but—"

The remittance man's bearded face flushed with anger. He clenched his hand for a moment, but the white misery in Vere's face seemed to move him in spite of himself.

His hand unclenched and his expression changed. He sank down on the log stool from which he had risen, his face gloomy and troubled.

"Father, won't you tell me? We can stand poverty—we've stood it long enough—but there's worse things than that. Those men are well known to be scoundrels. What are they trying to lead you into, father?"

The remittance man did not reply for some minutes.

"You—you don't understand, Vere," he muttered at last. "Something must be done. We can't starve. And I'm in debt, my boy. I owe money at the Continental and the store, and we can't starve."

"But the remittance can't be delayed much longer, father."

Mr. Beauclerc started as if the schoolboy had struck him.

"Vere, the remittance came, and I've lost it!"

"Lost it!" said the boy blankly.

The remittance man flushed again, working himself into anger, the natural resource of a weak character.

"Hang it all! Don't worry me! I lost the whole amount the first day at poker, if you must know! There's nothing more for a month, and I'm piled up with debt! Unless I find money from somewhere, we shall starve! Do you understand?"

Vere was silent.

"Now you know!" snapped the remittance man irritably. "I've got to have money! Never mind how! That's not your business! If you want me to show Poker Pete the door, bring me fifty dollars in a lump, and I'll do it like a shot! Unless you can do that, hold your confounded tongue!"

The schoolboy did not speak again. That reply had effectually silenced him. His face was white as he went mechanically about the work of getting supper for himself and his father.

He did not eat; he had no appetite. And a little later his father left the shack and disappeared in the direction of the camp. Vere Beauclerc went into the inner room to his rough bed.

It was long before he slept.

His father had in effect confessed that the plans he had afoot with Poker Pete and Dave Dunn were dishonest. Vere had known it must be so. Honest work never came the way of those rascals.

He had feared that his father, from the stages of drunkenness and gambling, was sinking still deeper into crime. Now he knew it.

And he was helpless. Crime or famine—that was the choice, according to the remittance man.

Vere's choice could have been easily made, but his father did not possess his strength of character. There was no arguing with a man of weak principle, driven to desperation by the result of his own folly and vice.

There was one way that the remittance man

could be saved from that plunge into the lower depths. Money! But where was the penniless schoolboy of Cedar Creek to find money?

Beaulerc's Chance!

FRANK RICHARDS looked anxiously at his chum when they met at school on the following morning. But he had no time to speak, for Beaulerc arrived only just in time to enter the log school-room as the bell ceased ringing.

Beaulerc was always quiet and reserved, and he never talked about himself. But he seemed now frozen into deeper reserve than ever.

Miss Meadows gave him two or three curious glances during the morning. Beaulerc did his best during lessons, but his thoughts wandered sometimes, and Miss Meadows was very considerate towards him. The schoolmistress noticed that all was not well with the Cherub.

After morning lessons Frank and Bob joined Beaulerc in the school playground. They did not pass any remark on his looks, though they were both a little anxious.

Gunten, Hacke, and Dawson, and several other fellows were talking in a group of their visit to Thompson the previous day, and Frank Richards & Co. joined them.

Eben Hacke was full of admiration for the boxer, the Dakota Kid. According to Hacke, the boxing match had been "it."

It was a travelling boxing show that was visiting Thompson town, and it was doing good business, apparently.

"The store was fair crammed," said Hacke, as the chums came up. "Half Thompson was there, you fellows, and it was a stunning fight. Young Dawson stood up to the Kid, and was knocked out in four rounds."

"My brother," said Dick Dawson, with an air of pride—"he's a good man, too. The Kid was too much for him, though."

"There's fifty dollars for the man who can knock the Kid out," said Eben Hacke, "and that fifty dollars has been hawked up and down Fraser Valley and up and down Thompson River, and it ain't been claimed yet."

"And he's only a kid, too," remarked Lawrence—"not over eighteen at the most."

"But he's all there!" grinned Hacke.

"Well, we're going to see the wonderful man this evening," said Frank Richards. "I suppose he's boxing again to-day?"

"Yep. They're at Thompson till Saturday."

"What's that about fifty dollars?" broke in Vere Beaulerc. "How is there fifty dollars for beating the boxer?"

"I guess it's like this," said Hacke, eager to explain. "The Kid's boss, old Silas K. Spanner, puts up a purse of fifty dollars for any comer who can beat the Kid. Of course, it's an advertisement. The Kid boxes with a nigger in the show, but a real fight makes it more interesting. When a galoot takes on the Kid, every pilgrim in the place comes and pays his fifty cents to come in, you bet."

"Do they use gloves?" asked Frank Richards.

"Do they?" grinned Hacke. "No, they don't. It's a case of knuckles, and the hardest knuckles get there, I guess."

"Phew!"

"How big is the Kid?" asked Beaulerc.

The remittance man's son seemed to come out of his reserve all of a sudden. His eyes were bright and his handsome face animated.

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Frank and Bob looked at him in surprise. They could not understand his sudden interest in the American boxer. He had shown no interest in the matter before, and, indeed, had only consented to visit Thompson to see the show because Frank and Bob had fairly forced him to do so.

"About my size, I guess," said Hacke. "He's heavier and a bit more solid, and he's got a fist like a Texas cowpuncher. You thinking of tackling the Kid, Cherub?"

"I might," said Beaulerc coolly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hacke.

Beaulerc walked away in a thoughtful mood. His chums hurried after him, and Bob caught him by the shoulder.

"Cherub, you ass, you didn't mean that?" he exclaimed.

"I'm thinking of it."

"By gum! Why, that blessed prizefighter would smash you up!" exclaimed Bob.

Beaulerc smiled faintly.

"I'm not afraid of getting hurt. It doesn't matter if my beauty's spoiled a little."

"But you, a schoolboy!" exclaimed Frank.

"The Kid isn't much more than a schoolboy, from what Hacke says."

"Look here, Beau—"

"I can box," said Beaulerc quietly. "I'm as hard as nails; you know that. I'm thinking of taking it on. But we'll see when we get to Thompson this evening. There's the dinner-bell!"

Frank and Bob had plenty of food for thought that afternoon. They had never seen the Dakota Kid; but the bare idea of the slim, handsome Cherub standing up to him in a fight dismayed them, and they hoped he would think better of it when he saw the boxer at close quarters.

After school the three chums joined Gunten, whose home was in Thompson. Gunten regarded Beaulerc with an amused grin. But Frank and Bob were serious. The expression on Beaulerc's face was quiet and resolute, and they could not help thinking that his mind was already made up.

Schoolboy and Boxer!

GUNTEN'S STORE at Thompson was crowded. Frank and Bob left their ponies outside, with a crowd of others that were hitched to a tree, and joined the crowd pouring into the building. It was nearly time for the show.

The boxing match took place in a large room behind the store, which Mr. Gunten let for shows, meetings, and dances. The three schoolboys passed in with the rest.

Round the big room wooden seats were crowded together, and many of the seats were already filled. Space was left for the ring in the centre of the room.

Silas K. Spanner, a tall gentleman, with a good-tempered ruddy face and a big cigar, was in the room, chatting with the gathering crowd.

Billy Cook, the foreman of Lawless Ranch, was there on a front bench, and he called to Bob and his chums and made room for them. The chums sat down along with the ranchman and waited. More and more of the citizens of Thompson were coming in.

Shows of any kind were few and far between in the backwoods town, and Silas K. Spanner was doing good business with his boxers.

There was a buzz in the crowded room when the Kid entered. The schoolboys looked at him with great interest. He was a lithe, muscular

fellow, not much taller than themselves, but much heavier, and evidently in good condition.

His manner was somewhat swanky, and it was not difficult to see that the Kid had a good opinion of himself.

A big negro followed him in, a head taller than himself. This was the black boxer whom the Kid was accustomed to knock out in ten rounds, when no amateur was forthcoming to face his knuckles.

Silas K. Spanner removed his cigar and addressed the spectators:

"Gentlemen, hyar stands the Dakota Kid, the best man with his fists between the Rio Grande and the Yukon River. The Kid's offer, gents, is still open, and fifty dollars is still waiting

"Get back, kid!" he said. "You're in the way, hyar."

"I'm your man," said Beauclerc quietly.

"Wha-a-at?"

"And when the Kid's ready, I'm ready!"

"Jehoshaphat!" ejaculated Mr. Spanner, in astonishment.

The Dakota Kid grinned broadly.

"Go home, little boy!" he remarked. "Go home and find nursey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This hyar ain't a joke, my boy," said Mr. Spanner, at last. "You run away, sonny! Now, gents—"

"I claim the fifty dollars if the Kid refuses to stand up to me," said Vere Beauclerc coolly. "It's the forfeit if he backs out."



"Old Lawless is worth a bit, I reckon," Dave Dunn remarked. "But we shall have to work careful." "Hist!" exclaimed Mr. Beauclerc hastily. Vere stood in the doorway,

to be roped in by the lucky man. Any galoot who knocks the Dakota Kid out rakes in the jack-pot, and there's the greenbacks. Money talks!"

Silas K. Spanner held up a little bunch of ten-dollar notes.

There was a murmur in the crowd. Several fellows were being urged by their friends to make the attempt. But the defeat of the local champion the previous evening had discouraged the rest.

Vere Beauclerc stood up.

"Beau"—Frank Richards caught him arm—"Beau, old chap, don't be an ass!"

Beauclerc did not answer. He shook off Frank's detaining hand, and stepped into the open space before the crowded benches.

Mr. Spanner glanced at him, not understanding for a moment.

"Back out!" yelled the Kid. "Me back out! Waal, I swear!"

"Look here, laddie, if you mean it—" said Mr. Spanner, hesitating.

"I mean it!"

There was a shout of encouragement from the spectators. Nobody present believed that the handsome schoolboy had any chance against the Kid. But his pluck appealed to the crowd.

"Go it, young 'un! Bravo!"

"Give him his chance!"

"Gentlemen," said Silas K. Spanner, "if the youngster wants to commit suicide, I ain't standing in his way. Kid, there's your man!"

The Dakota Kid chuckled.

Vere Beauclerc glanced back at his chums.

"You'll second me, Frank?"

"What-ho!"

Frank Richards stepped into the ring. He

was apprehensive for his chum, but he was glad to back him up as well as he could.

"The young ass!" muttered Bob Lawless. "He'll get smashed up, Billy."

Billy Cook, the ranch foreman, nodded.

"The lad's got grit," he remarked. "But, of course, he'll get licked. Lucky I've got the buffy here. I'll take him home in it afterwards. He won't be able to walk home, I guess."

"Poor old Cherub!" muttered Bob.

But the Cherub did not seem to share his chum's dismal anticipation as to his fate. He stripped to his shirt, and tightened his belt a notch. He stripped well, too, and at sight of his arms and chest, Mr. Spanner looked a little less amused.

There was strength and muscular power there, young as he was, and it was pretty plain that there was plenty of pluck.

Mr. Spanner called on a gentleman in the crowd to keep time. Poker Pete came forward, watch in hand. The "sport" gave Beauclerc a very curious look.

The Kid lounged up to Beauclerc and gave him his hand, with a good-humoured grin. The professional boxer evidently regarded the contest as a little comedy. Beauclerc shook hands with him quietly.

No one there knew what was urging him on. None could guess that it was his father he was fighting for—that it was to save the remittance man from black ruin that he was facing the certainty of a terrific battering, whether he was successful or not.

"Time!" said Poker Pete.

There was a breathless hush in the room as the fight commenced. The Dakota Kid lounged through the first round with a grin on his face, making the mistake of underrating his schoolboy antagonist.

He was somewhat surprised to find that the schoolboy's guard was perfect, and that none of his careless lunges reached the mark. The Kid began to put a little more beef into it, but still Beauclerc's defence was too sound for him. He had not been touched when "Time!" was called.

"By Jehoshaphat!" murmured Mr. Spanner to the Kid. "There's something in that young guy. You'll have to go all out, Kid."

"Leave that to me," said the Kid.

Frank Richards drew his chum to the bench at the corner of the ring. He was surprised and relieved to see Beauclerc come through the first round so well. Beauclerc gave him a faint smile.

"Not licked yet," he remarked.

"Good man!" said Frank. "Good luck to you, old scout!"

"Time!"

Beauclerc, with a springy step, came up for the second round, and this time the Dakota Kid was going "all out." And there was a deep silence in the crowded room as it was seen that the boxer was forced to exert himself to the full, and that still the Canadian schoolboy was standing his ground.

The K.O. for the Kid!

"BRAVO!"

"Good man!"

It was a roar of surprise and delight in the crowded room behind Gunten's store.

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For the Dakota Kid was on his back on the planks, stretched there by an uppercut from the schoolboy boxer, and he sprawled dizzily, hardly knowing how he had got there.

Beauclerc stood panting, a little flushed, but cool.

Poker Pete was counting. The Kid lay sprawling, gasping for breath, but more astonished than hurt. But the call of "Time!" saved him, and Beauclerc retired to his corner.

Frank Richards squeezed his arm.

"Good old Beau! Who'd have thought it?"

He sponged the Cherub's heated face. There were several marks on it now. Beauclerc had not come through unscathed. But he was as cool as ice.

"Time!"

The Kid was looking somewhat ugly as he stepped up again. He had learned that the schoolboy was not to be despised, and that he had to do his best, and it was a very good best.

The round finished with Beauclerc on his back, gasping. Frank Richards picked him up and sponged his face. His nose was streaming crimson, and its handsome shape was altered.

But he stepped up undaunted for the fourth round. Hammer-and-tongs the boxers were going it now.

As no gloves were used the damage was considerable on both sides. Vere Beauclerc's handsome face was hardly recognisable. One eye was darkly circled, the other had a "mouse"; his nose was swollen and red, his lip cut, and bruises darkened his cheeks and forehead.

But the Dakota Kid was quite as severely marked. Any keen observers could see that the Kid was beginning to have bellows to mend.

As a matter of fact, the Kid was accustomed to easy victories, and he did not keep in training. Too many cigars and drinks at hospitable bars were telling on him, now that he needed every ounce of strength and his wind.

Beauclerc was younger and not so strong, but he was as sound as a whistle. And his skill in the boxer's art was a revelation to the Thompson crowd. They had never seen anything like it. Neither had the Dakota Kid, for that matter.

After six rounds it was strength against skill, and the Kid was sadly conscious of bellows under repair.

The seventh round ended with the man from Dakota on his back, and there was a roar of cheering from the onlookers.

"Holy smoke!" said Bob Lawless. "The Cherub will pull it off, Billy!"

Billy Cook grinned and nodded.

"Carry me home to die if he don't!" he replied.

"Time!"

Another round and another! Both boxers were looking very groggy, but it was quite clear that the Kid was the groggier of the two.

Silas K. Spanner was looking very blue. His fifty-dollar offer was a good advertisement, but it looked as if it would cost him fifty dollars this time.

Crash!

The Dakota Kid went down on his back, stretched there by a terrific right-hander that caught him on the point of the jaw.

Poker Pete counted. But the count was hardly wanted. The Dakota Kid lay gasping heavily, and he could not rise. Ninth round was the last.

"Oh, Jehoshaphat!" mumbled Mr. Spanner.

He glanced anxiously at the Kid.



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"I reckon I'm done!" gasped the Dakota Kid. Frank Richards caught Beauclerc by the arm. The Cherub was tottering. But he would have faced another round, if there had been another round left in the man from Dakota. But there was not.

"Good man!" whispered Frank.

Beauclerc tried to smile. He blinked at Frank with half-closed eyes.

"I'm pretty well done!" he muttered. "I—I couldn't have stuck it out, Frank; only—only—" He did not finish.

Frank bathed his bruised face and helped him on with his things. Vere had won the contest, but he had received a punishment more terrible than he had ever faced before.

Like one in a dream he heard Silas K. Spanner's nasal tones. The showman was not pleased, but he was taking the result like a sportsman.

"Gentlemen, the fifty dollars has been won," announced Mr. Spanner, "and hyer's the bills to prove it!"

"Bravo!"

"Young man, hyer you are!" said Mr. Spanner grandly.

He extended the bunch of notes to Beauclerc.

"Take them for me, Frank."

Frank Richards took the notes for his chum. Beauclerc was leaning heavily on his shoulder, hardly able to keep his feet. His hands were nerveless, his brain swimming.

Loud cheers followed Vere as Frank led him from the ring. The men of Thompson were exuberantly delighted by the defeat of the boxer, and they roared their appreciation.

Beauclerc hardly heard them. Bob Lawless took his other arm, and the two chums led him away.

Beauclerc recovered a little when the cool evening air blew upon his face outside. A faint smile played over his bruised face.

Billy Cook came up, leading a horse and buggy. "Hyer you are, sir," said the ranchman. "I'm driving you home. I guess you can't walk—hyer?"

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PEN PALS COUPON

24-9-38

"Thank you very much!" muttered Beauclerc. "You're very kind. I—I don't think I could walk."

"I reckon you couldn't!" chuckled the ranchman. "All O.K., I'll see you safe home, sonny. Up with you!"

The ranch foreman lifted Beauclerc in his powerful arms and placed him in the buggy and drew the buffalo-robe round him. Now that the exertion was over the Cherub was weak and sick with the reaction.

Frank and Bob mounted their ponies and rode with the trap to the fork in the trail. There they said good-night to their chum.

"How are you feeling now, Cherub?" asked Bob.

"Rotten!" said Beauclerc frankly.

"I guess you would. No school-to-morrow, I fancy."

"I think not."

"Good-night, old chap!" said Frank Richards, squeezing Beauclerc's hand.

And the cousins rode away for the ranch while Billy Cook drove on the buggy down the trail.

Vere Beauclerc sat wrapped in the buffalo-robe, conscious only of a dull ache all over him. He had been more hurt than he realised at the time. But he had nothing to regret.

The buggy stopped at last, a short distance from the old shack by the creek. A light was burning there. Billy Cook lifted the schoolboy to the ground, and Vere stood unsteadily upon his feet.

"Manage now?" asked the ranchman.

"Yes, thanks! Thank you for driving me home!" said Beauclerc gratefully.

"Not a bit! So-long, sonny!" And Billy Cook drove away in the buggy, and Vere Beauclerc limped to the shack.

His father was there, alone. He was seated at the log-table at his evening meal, with a clouded brow. He looked up with a scowl as the boy came in, but his expression changed at the sight of

(Continued on page 36.)

TO SAVE FROM EXPULSION THE FELLOW HE HATES—OR SHARE HIS FATE! JACK DRAKE'S ENEMY HAS TO CHOOSE!



"You've got to see Gentleman Smith and stop him coming here," said Drake steadily. "If you don't, Daubeny, you stand up to the Head with me to-morrow—we sink or swim together!"

Mr. Smith Speaks Out!

TUCKEY TODDLES stopped outside the door of the Head's study—the old captain's cabin on the Benbow. He raised a grubby hand to tap, and paused.

The expression on Tuckey's face was lugubrious. An invitation to visit the Head in his study was never attractive to the St. Winifred's juniors. It resembled too closely an invitation to visit a lion in his den. But it was not an invitation that could be declined.

Tuckey Toodles tapped at last.

Tap!

"Come in!"

The deep voice from within made Toodles jump. He opened the door and blinked into the study. He jumped again as he found Dr. Goring's stern glance fixed upon him.

"If—if you please, sir—" stammered Toodles.

"You may come in, Toodles!"

"It wasn't me, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I was below at the time, sir!" stammered Toodles. "I—I haven't been on the gangway to-day, sir!"

"Toodles, I saw you from my window distinctly! You rushed into Mr. Smith, and pushed him off the gangway into the water!" exclaimed the Head.

"Oh, if—if you saw me, that—that's another matter, sir!" gasped Tuckey. "I—I mean, it—it was only a joke, sir!"

The Head's brow grew sterner, and Tuckey groaned inwardly. At that moment he fervently wished that he had not thought of his brilliant scheme for keeping Gentleman Smith away from the Benbow. It had not occurred to Tuckey's

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CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP!

By Owen Conquest.

powerful brain that, as the Head was expecting a visit from Gentleman Smith, and as the gangway was in full view from his window, his brilliant stratagem was not likely to pass unnoticed.

"That—that bouncer, sir—" recommenced Tuckey.

"That what?"

"I—I mean, that man, sir, oughtn't to have come here. He's not a respectable man!" said Tuckey hopefully. "I—I thought I ought to biff him, sir—"

"Do what?"

"Biff him—I mean, bowl him over, sir! He's an awful character, sir!" said Toodles.

"Then you know him?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Tuckey, terrified at the bare idea of knowing Gentleman Smith, of the Lobster Pot. "Not at all, sir! I—I've never seen him before—never even heard of him!"

"Then how do you know he is a bad character?"

"I—I—"

Tuckey's voice trailed off.

"This man Smith was coming here to make a

Seeking revenge on Jack Drake, Vernon Daubeny finds himself caught in the toils of his own treacherous scheme!

statement regarding a certain boy in this school," said the Head. "No doubt the boy concerned thought of this device for keeping him away."

"Oh, no, sir! Drake never said a word."

"Oh, it was Drake, then?"

"Not at all, sir. He hadn't the faintest idea of my wheeze," said Tuckey. "I never told him."

"It was on Drake's account, then, that you prevented Mr. Smith from paying his visit here?"

Tuckey gasped. His intentions had really been good; he had meant to save Jack Drake from the exposure threatened by the sharper of the Lobster Pot. But somehow—Tuckey hardly knew how—the Head seemed to be getting hold of the whole story.

"Answer me, Toodles!" exclaimed the Head sternly.

"I—I— Yes, sir!" stammered Tuckey.

"Drake did not wish the man to come here!"

"N-no, sir. I—I suppose not."

"Why?"

"Because—because—"

"Well—"

"Because, sir," said Tuckey, with an inspiration, "he—he thought the fellow wasn't a suitable chap to call on you, sir."

"You utterly ridiculous boy——"

"Oh, sir!"

"Are you aware, Toodles, whether Drake has had any dealings with this man Smith?"

"I—I—— He—he——"

"Kindly answer me at once, Toodles, without thinking out any prevarications!"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Well, I am waiting for your answer!"

"I—I—I——"

Tuckey Toodles could get no further. He blinked helplessly at the Head. Jack Drake's former escapades in company with Daubeny & Co. were common talk in the Fourth Form, but even Tuckey Toodles realised that it would not do to retail them to the Head.

But his confusion was a sufficient answer.

"I will question you no further, Toodles!" said Dr. Goring sternly. "I will not punish you for your folly, as you appear to have acted from a mistaken sense of loyalty to your Form-fellow."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Tuckey, in great relief. "M-m-may I go now, sir?"

"You may go."

Tuckey Toodles expected to be told to send Drake to the study as he tottered to the door. But the Head did not speak, and Tuckey left the study in great relief.

Dr. Goring remained for some time in deep thought. His reflections were suddenly interrupted by the buzz of the telephone-bell.

The old gentleman took up the receiver.

"'Allo!" It was a hoarse and angry voice that came along the wires. "Is that the Benbow?"

"Yes."

"I want to speak to the 'eadmaster!"

"The headmaster is speaking."

"Oh! Orlright! I dessay you've 'eard of me— Gentleman Smith?"

"I have heard of you."

"I was speaking on this 'ere phone to one of your boys this afternoon—young Drake."

"I am aware of that."

"I was coming to see you, when I was bunged into the water!" went on Mr. Smith's furious voice. "It was young Drake's doing—I know that! I've been smothered with mud and nearly drowned! 'Ere I am dripping, and my clothes ruined! Think I'm going to stand that?"

"Really, Mr. Smith——"

"I was coming to the school to tell you about young Drake!" said Mr. Smith savagely. "He owes me money!"

The Head's lips tightened.

"How can a boy in this school possibly owe you money, Mr. Smith?" he inquired icily.

"Backing 'orses!"

"Oh!"

"Five pun that young Drake owes me," went on Gentleman Smith, "and he ain't dubbed up! I got his paper to show for it—a bit of writing, sir! Young swindler, he is! I'll show him! Ducking a man in the river!"

"I cannot place the least reliance upon your statements, Mr. Smith!"

"Wot!"

"On your own statement, you have gambled with a schoolboy! If you are capable of that, you are capable of anything!" said the Head coldly. "I shall not believe a word of yours against any boy in this school without the most complete proof!"

"Ho!"

"If you have any proof to offer I shall be happy to see it. You can call here——"

"And be chucked into the water ag'in, wot?" hissed Mr. Smith.

"I will take measures to see that you are not so treated. You can come here in perfect safety."

"P'raps and p'raps not!" snarled Mr. Smith.

"If you do not come and prove your statements I shall take legal action to punish you for uttering slanders concerning a boy belonging to this school."

"Oh!"

"You will take your choice, Mr. Smith," said the Head grimly.

There was a pause.

"You'll see me in the morning, then," said Gentleman Smith at last. "I'll bring the bit of writing with me."

"Very good."

And the Head put up the receiver. There was a wrinkle in his brow as he rose from the telephone. His suspicions had been awakened—more than awakened. But Gentleman Smith's visit would settle the matter, and the Head's decision was deferred till the following day. Tuckey Toodles' brilliant scheme had only postponed the evil hour.

Up to Daubeny!

"**A**LL serene, old top!" Tuckey Toodles made that cheering announcement as he came into Study No. 8 in the Fourth.

Jack Drake and Dick Rodney were there, both of them looking gloomy and troubled. And they did not brighten up at Tuckey's announcement, as the fat junior expected.

"Ass!" was Drake's curt reply.

Tuckey blinked at him reproachfully.

"Well, I like that!" he exclaimed warmly.

"After I've pulled you out of your scrape. I'll bet you Smith is sorry he came."

"He will come again, ass!"

Tuckey Toodles looked thoughtful for a moment.

"I'll biff him again if he does," he said.

"Fathead!"

"Have you spun the Head the whole yarn?" asked Dick Rodney.

"Not a syllable!" said Tuckey confidently. "He was trying to pump me, you know, but I never let on anything. Not so jolly easy to pump me, you know."

Jack Drake gave a grunt.

"I suppose that means that he's got the whole story," he said. "Well, it was bound to come out."

"If that's what you call gratitude, Drake——"

"Oh, give us a rest!" said Drake wearily. "I suppose you mean well, Tuckey, but you're a silly ass!"

Tuckey Toodles snorted.

"You can get out of your next scrape by yourself!" he said indignantly. "I think you're an ungrateful beast, Drake! What are we going to have for tea?"

"Bother tea!"

"I suppose we're going to have some tea? After what I've done some fellows would stand a jolly good spread."

"Dry up!" roared Drake.

"Do you mean to say there isn't going to be tea in the study?"

"No, bother you!"

"You—you silly ass!" gasped Tuckey. "Why couldn't you tell me that before? Might have been late for school tea."

And Tuckey Toodles fairly bolted from the study.

"Better come along and have tea, Drake," said Rodney, rising.

Jack shook his head.

"I don't want any tea. I—I'm done for at St. Winny's, Rodney. That rotter Smith will be savage over his ducking; he's bound to come again. He may pitch the yarn to the Head over the phone, too. And—and to think that I came back to St. Winny's this term to work—that I promised the mater—"

The junior's voice trembled.

"There's a chance yet," said Rodney quietly. "Smith can scarcely come here again this evening."

"He'll come to-morrow."

"Daubeny may be able to stop him."

"He can't see him."

"Daub's broken bounds at night before now for his rotten games. He can do the same again," said Rodney. "I believe that Daub has put Smith up to this. Anyhow, Smith wouldn't dare quarrel with him—he makes too much out of him. Daubeny can keep him off if he chooses, and you can make him choose. It's a chance, anyhow."

Drake nodded slowly.

"Tell Daub that if you go down he goes down with you," said Rodney. "No need to go easy on the cad. If you're going to sink or swim together, he will see that you swim."

"I'll try it," said Drake. "But—but if the rotter has phoned—"

"We shall have to wait and see about that."

"You're a good chap, Rodney," muttered Drake. "You're standing by me like a brick, and I know what you think of that kind of rot I was fool enough to get mixed up in. If—if only I get clear of this I'll be jolly careful there's nothing of the sort again. If I could only get clear this once, and get a chance to keep my promise to the mater—"

"There's a chance, anyway. Come along!"

Jack Drake followed his chum to the dining-room in time for tea, but he did not do justice to the tea. There was a weight on his mind that he could not throw off.

What had Gentleman Smith done? With the "bit of writing" in his possession it was in his power to ruin the schoolboy. At every moment Drake was expecting a summons to the Head's study. If the rascal had telephoned—

Would the Head believe him? Not without proof. But the proof was in Gentleman Smith's hands, and he had shown that he intended to use it.

That evening the chums of the Fourth worked at prep in Study No. 8 with clouded faces.

The dreaded summons to the Head's study had not come. As bed-time drew near Drake felt his heart grow lighter.

The blow had not fallen, and if it was to be postponed till the morrow there was a chance. To save his own skin Vernon Daubeny would intervene—he must intervene.

"Nine o'clock," said Rodney at last. "Nothing's going to happen to-night, Drake. You'd better see Daubeny before bed-time."

"I'll cut off to his study," answered Drake.

And he made his way to the Shell quarters.

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Daubeny's door was locked when the Fourth Former tapped on it.

"Cut along!" came Daubeny's voice from within. "No visitors wanted."

"Let me in, Daubeny!"

"Hallo, it's Drake!" came Egan's voice. "Don't you understand, dear boy, that you've out-lived your welcome in this study?"

"Will you let me in, Daub, or shall I shout?" asked Jack Drake. "If you want all the school to hear about Gentleman Smith—"

"Shut up, hang you! I'll open the door."

The key was turned back and the door swung open. There was a haze of cigarette smoke in the study as Drake entered.

Egan and Torrence looked at him curiously. Daubeny's brows were knitted in a savage scowl.

"Well, what is it?" he snapped.

"It's about Smith," said Jack quietly. "You know what happened this afternoon. That ass Toodles bumped him into the water and he cleared off. He'll come back unless he's stopped."

"Stop him, then, if you can."

"I can't; but you can, and you've got to," Daubeny gritted his teeth.

"How can I see him? I—"

"Suit yourself about that. You've got to see him, and you've got to stop him coming here," said Drake steadily. "If you don't you stand up to the Head with me to-morrow. We sink or swim together."

"Sneak!" said Egan.

Drake's eyes blazed. He made a stride towards Egan, who dodged round the study table.

"I'm taking this line because I'm certain that Daubeny has put Smith up to playing this game," said Drake.

"Rats! Daub had nothing to do with it," said Torrence uneasily.

"Well, that's what I think. Daubeny can stop him, if he chooses. And he knows what to expect if the man comes here."

"I tell you I can't!" hissed Daubeny. "I can't break bounds to-night. How am I to get ashore?"

"Please yourself. You've done it before."

"Only when a boat came from the Lobster Pot to fetch me. I can't get out by the gangway when the gates are locked. Do you think I'm going to swim the Chadway to please you?"

"It's impossible," muttered Egan. "You'll have to take your chance, Drake."

"Daubeny will take his chance along with me, then," said Drake, setting his lips. "You've done the mischief, Daubeny, and you can undo it the best you can. You know what to expect if you don't."

Drake turned to the door. His mind was made up, and there was no mistaking his look.

"Hold on!" muttered Daubeny. "I—I can't go! Suggest somethin', you rotter! I—I'll do anythin' I can!"

Drake paused.

"There's the telephone," he said.

"There's only one telephone on the ship—in the Head's study. I can't use that. The Head will be there."

"The Head goes to bed earlier than closing-time at the Lobster Pot."

"It's too risky. Suppose I was caught—"

"You'll be caught, anyway, if you don't keep Smith away from the Benbow."

"Oh, you rotter!" muttered Daubeny helplessly. "I—I daren't risk it—usin' the Head's telephone at night! Suppose—suppose—"

"Smith would know your voice, and he would do as you tell him."

"He mightn't."

"It will be bad for you if he doesn't," said Drake grimly.

And he walked out of the study and slammed the door.

The bucks of St. Winifred's looked at one another. Daubeny lighted a cigarette with a trembling hand.

"What the thump am I goin' to do?" he muttered thickly.

"You ass!" said Egan. "What did you play this trick at all for? I told you it was too thick! Drake's an insolent cad; but getting a fellow sacked, it's too thick!"

"Lot of good tellin' me that now!" snarled Daubeny.

"Well, I told you before."

"Oh, shut up! I—I suppose I shall have to risk the phone."

Daubeny threw away his cigarette.

Egan took a pack of cards from the table drawer, where they had been hastily placed out of sight when the door opened.

"Going on?" he asked.

"Hang it! No!"

And Vernon Daubeny strode savagely from the study, leaving his chums to the delights of banker. Vernon Daubeny was not in a mood for banker just then.

Done in the Dark!

"BED-TIME!"

Lovelace of the Sixth looked into the Junior Common-room, amidships on the Benbow. And there was a general move to the dormitory.

Jack Drake noticed that Lovelace's glance lingered on him. After the juniors were in their hammocks the captain of St. Winifred's paused, with his hand on the switch of the electric light.

"Just a tip to you kids," he said. "There will be an eye kept on this dormitory. Any fellow trying to sneak out after lights out will get into trouble."

And with that warning Lovelace put out the light and retired. There was a buzz of voices among the hammocks when he was gone.

"Who's that meant for, I wonder?" said Raik. "Which of you riotous bounders is suspected of wanting to break bounds to-night?"

There was a fat chuckle from Tuckey Toodles.

"Hallo! Toodles knows!" said Sawyer major.

"Who is it, Toodles?"

"That's telling!" said Tuckey. "I'm not going to mention names. There may be a fellow who might want to go and see Smith, and try to keep him away, and there may not. I'm not giving Drake away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Lovelace has his eye on you, Drake?" chuckled Pierce Raik.

"Find out!" growled Drake.

"No giddy excursions to-night," said Sawyer major. "It's all right, Drake. You'll see your friend Smith to-morrow. He's bound to come."

Jack Drake made no reply to that. He was quite well aware what the prefect's warning meant. He was under suspicion, and precautions were taken so that he did not communicate with Mr. Smith before that gentleman's next call.

But it mattered little. The next move was for Daubeny of the Shell to make, and the Shell was not under suspicion. Vernon Daubeny was free to act, if he had the nerve. Drake wondered whether Daub would find the nerve. It was to save his own skin, and Daub could not have had a more powerful motive than that.

In the Shell dormitory, Vernon Daubeny lay awake. He made up his mind to make the venture, lest worse should befall him. As he lay in his hammock, with the Shell fellows sleeping round him, Daubeny stared into the darkness and counted the minutes. He had been caught in his own toils, and it was not at all certain that he would escape from them. It was not the first time that Vernon Daubeny had had cause to anathematise his own cunning and duplicity.

The minutes passed on leaden wings. It was not till past midnight that Daubeny ventured to risk his hammock.

He dressed quietly in the darkness.

His heart was beating fast as he picked his way among the hammocks, and quitted the Shell dormitory.

The Benbow was plunged in darkness. The last light had been extinguished, the last door had closed.

Silently, in his socks, Daubeny groped and picked his way. Fortunately he knew every inch of the interior of the old warship. But it was some time before he stood in the passage outside the Head's study.

All was dark. He listened for a full minute, but no sound came to his ears, save the wash of the water against the hull of the old ship.

He ventured to turn the handle at last, and, as he did so, he was seized by a sudden fear that the door might be locked. But it was not locked, and he opened it softly.

The study was pitch dark.

Daubeny trod in softly, and closed the door behind him with hardly a sound. He stood on the thick carpet, trembling in every limb, and scarcely breathing. The Head's bed-room was the adjoining apartment, and there was only the bulkhead between. If Dr. Goring should hear—Suppose he were sleepless that night—suppose—

A thousand fears were in the craven heart of the hapless buck of St. Winifred's; but he screwed up courage at last, and groped his way across the study.

There was a sudden sound as his knee knocked on a chair in the darkness. He stopped, shaking from head to foot.

Silence!

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

Kerr, though only a dabbler in the science of numismatics, knew that no pennies were minted in 1924—a fact few fellows would be aware of. Crooke certainly wasn't—hence his statement as to the date on the penny he was supposed to have bought the stamp with! The postcard, obviously, had never been posted—and Crooke, under pressure, admitted as much. He said he "forgot" it—but Crooke will not quickly forget the ragging he received from infuriated members of the Junior XI!

He moved on again at last, and with trembling fingers, felt for the telephone, in its accustomed place on the Head's desk. His fingers found it, and he sank into the chair before the instrument. His heart was thumping so hard that he could almost hear it beat. It was a full minute before he ventured to lift the receiver. But he lifted it at last, and placed it to his ear.

"Hallo!"

In the dead silence the voice along the wires seemed like a shout to the wretched junior. He gasped.

"Kingsford One-o-one!" he muttered into the transmitter.

"Eh?"

"Kingsford One-o-one!"

"I can't hear you—speak louder, please."

"Kingsford One-o-one," breathed Daubeny.

He was heard at last at the exchange, and he shivered as he thought that he might have been heard in the adjoining room also. But there was no sound.

He waited—it seemed an age that he waited. But a voice came at last—the voice of Mr. Tadger, the landlord of the Lobster Pot.

"Hallo!"

"Is that you, Mr. Tadger?"

"Hallo! That Master Daubeny?" Mr. Tadger's voice was surprised.

"Yes, yes! I want to speak to Smith. Is he there?"

"Yes; he's in his room with a little party. Is it important?"

"Yes, yes! Tell him to come to the phone at once."

"I'll tell him. Hold on."

Daubeny held on.

He was listening intently at the receiver; and still more intently for a sound from the adjoining room. But there was no sound. For two terrible minutes the junior waited, in growing terror. But the husky voice of Gentleman Smith came through at last.

"That you, Master Daub?"

"Yes, yes!"

"S'prised me to 'ear you was phoning at this hower," said Mr. Smith. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Yes. You're not to come to the ship, Smith."

"Hey?"

"It's all off!" breathed Daubeny. "Drake has found out that I put you up to comin' here, and he's threatened to give me away, too, if you come."

"Oh, my heye!"

"Keep away, for goodness' sake! You understand?"

"That's all very well," came Mr. Smith's voice, with an obstinate tone in it. "But I've been ducked and nearly drowned."

Daubeny ground his teeth.

"You're to keep away, I tell you!"

"Master Drake owes me five pun—"

"I'll see it is paid."

"Well, I've been nearly drowned, and—" Mr. Smith did not seem to be in an accommodating mood.

"You're to keep away!" panted Daubeny.

"I'm ruined if you come here! I'll see you tomorrow somehow. I'll make it all right, Smith. You understand?"

"Oh, orlright! I'll do what you want. All the same—"

"That's right. Don't show up near the Benbow, that's all."

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"But look 'ere, I've spun the 'Ead the yarn on the phone to-day, and—"

"Oh, you fool!"

"He was torkin' about prosecuting a bloke for slander if I don't prove wot I told 'im about young Drake."

"You can palm off some yarn on him, then. If you come here, you'll never see me again."

"Oh, orlright, sir! I'm your man. But—"

Daubeny replaced the receiver on the hook. To his horror he heard the sound of a movement in the adjoining room. Had the Head awakened?

He groped his way frantically to the door and crept out into the passage. With a thumping heart, he fled into the darkness.

Five minutes later he was in his hammock in the Shell dormitory. But the dawn was glimmering on the Chadway before his eyes closed in slumber.

The Clouds Roll By!

CLANG! Clang!

The ship's bell was ringing, and the St. Winifred's fellows turned out. There were two among the juniors who were heavy-eyed—Drake of the Fourth and Daubeny of the Shell.

After breakfast Drake joined the Shell fellow coming from the dining-room.

"Well?" he said curtly.

"It's all right," muttered Daubeny.

"He's not coming?"

"No."

"Good!" said Drake.

He walked away cheerily and joined Rodney on the deck, leaving Vernon Daubeny gritting his teeth.

Drake had slept little the preceding night, and he was feeling rather heavy in the Form-room that morning. But otherwise he was in a cheerful mood. The danger had been averted—it seemed certain that it had been averted now.

During morning lessons the Head's valuable instructions in the Sixth Form Room were interrupted. The school page brought a message that a Mr. Smith was asking for him on the telephone.

Dr. Goring left his class and proceeded to his study, with a rather grim expression on his face. Gentleman Smith had not arrived, according to arrangement. That Drake had not left his dormitory was certain, and he could not have warded off the threatened visit. Was the whole story simply a concoction of a drunken rascal? The Head wondered. He took up the receiver.

"I am here. Is that you, Smith?"

"Yessir." Gentleman Smith's voice was very meek and civil, quite different from his tones of the preceding day.

"What have you to say?"

"I 'ope, sir, as you'll look hower wot I said to you yesterday, sir," said Mr. Smith meekly.

"It was only a game, sir."

"What?"

"I was a bit riled, sir, at bein' bunged in the mud, and that's all, sir. I take it all back."

"Indeed! And why did you pay your visit here in the first place?"

"Oh, that was only a lark, sir!" mumbled Mr. Smith. "Young Master Drake had checked me, sir, and I come along to make things 'ot for 'im. P'r'aps I'd 'ad a little to drink, sir. No 'arm done."

"You are a rascal, Mr. Smith."

"Eh?"

"FOOTER-STAMPS" CLAIMS WANTED!

This is the last week of the September "Footer-Stamps" contest. On page 2 you will find full details of how to make your claim for one of the splendid footballs being given away to the top "goal-scorers." The entry coupon here must be filled in according to the instructions given.

The five stamps below should be added to those on Page 2

RULES: Up to 300 Footballs will be awarded in the September Contest to the readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties.

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps," Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (given this week). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

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

..... The "Gem"

"FOOTER-STAMPS" (Sept.)

Write in bold figures the number of "goals" you have scored with "Footer-Stamps" and attach your goal-scoring stamps to this coupon.



I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

Address.....

N.B.—No responsibility taken for incorrect totals.



"I have no doubt whatever that it was the fear of prosecution that has made you withdraw your rascally accusation."

"Look 'ere—"
"That is enough."

The Head rang off. He returned to the Sixth Form Room, much relieved in his mind. And Mr. Smith, at the Lobster Pot, stood himself a drink by way of comfort for the hard words he had had to take meekly.

The Head was taking the air on the poop of the old Benbow when the Fourth came out after lessons. Jack Drake glanced at him rather uneasily, and he was surprised and relieved to receive a kindly smile. Evidently the affair of Gentleman Smith was at an end.

Rodney slipped his arm in Drake's as they walked away along the deck of the Benbow.

"All serene now!" he said.
Drake nodded, his face very bright.
"Looks like it. I don't quite catch on, but it's plain enough that Daub has done the trick and bottled up that rascal. I'll put up a notice to-day about selling my bike—and get the five quids and pay him—and get my paper back. Then I shall be clear."

"I say, Drake, old boy—"

"Hallo, Tuckey!" Jack Drake astonished the grubby, chubby Tuckey with a smack on the shoulder. "Hallo, my plump pippin! You worked the oracle after all!"

"Ow! Don't bust my collar-bone!" squeaked Tuckey. "I'm glad to see you're in a better temper to-day, anyhow. Didn't I tell you to rely on me, and not on that ass Rodney?"

"You did," said Rodney, smiling.

"That's my way—sticking to a pal through thick and thin, you know," said Tuckey, beaming. "Generous, you know—loyal and all that—that's me! Some fellows would stand a fellow a jolly good spread after a fellow had done a fellow such a thumping good turn. Of course, I'm not hinting."

"Ha, ha, ha! We'll kill the fatted calf in Study No. 8 to-day."

"Now you're talking!" said Tuckey Toodles.

And in Study No. 8 that day, after lessons, there was a "spread" that satisfied even Tuckey Toodles, in celebration of the happy fact that the clouds had rolled by at last.

(Next Week: "CAPTAIN AND SLACKER!")
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LEIVISON MINOR!

(Continued from page 22.)

"Ernie—why—why—" muttered the fag miserably.

Levison made a restless gesture.

"Why can't I be decent?" he said half sneeringly.

"It's rotten, Ernie, what you were doing—and it means awful trouble some day—you can't always get out of it," said Frank. "If—if you'd only—"

Levison's face cleared suddenly. He had made his resolution—a resolution that meant a grim uphill struggle for the black sheep of St. Jim's.

"I'm going to!" he said. "You needn't say any more, Franky—I'm going to do what you want. I'm going to try, anyway. It's a mug's game, after all—there's nothing in it."

And Levison of the Fourth meant what he said.

There was disappointment for Racke of the Shell that afternoon.

Kildare returned with a report that no St. Jim's fellow was to be found at the Green Man, and the telephone message was evidently a hoax.

Racke wondered, though he guessed something of the truth when he saw Levison major and minor come in together for calling-over.

That evening Racke had a second black eye, to match the one he already had. He waited for another opportunity of the same kind, but that opportunity did not come. The black sheep of the Fourth owed more than he knew to the influence of Levison minor.

(Next week: "THE RYLCOMBE RECRUIT!")

ROYAL NAVY

Boys may now enter between the ages of 15 and 17½ years. Full particulars are

contained in the illustrated booklet "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which may be obtained on application to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. and R.M., (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, or at any Post Office.

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FOR HIS FATHER'S SAKE!

(Continued from page 29.)

Vere's face. He sprang to his feet in alarm and consternation.

"Vere! What has happened?" he exclaimed. "What is the matter? My boy!"

A flush came into the schoolboy's bruised face. There was affection in that anxious cry, affection that the selfish remittance man seldom showed. It was enough to reward his son for what he had done.

"Only a fight, father," muttered Vere. "I—I took on the Dakota Kid at Thompson."

"Vere! You must have been mad! What induced you—"

"This!"

Beaulere fumbled in his pocket. His father started, incredulous, as the schoolboy handed him the bunch of notes.

"It—it's what you wanted, father. And—and now—that will see you through, won't it? And—and you won't need—"

He did not finish, but the remittance man understood.

"My boy!" There were tears in the wastrel's eyes. "And you've done this for me! I—I don't deserve it! I shan't forget this, Vere. And—and I'm done with Poker Pete and his rascally schemes, I swear it!"

And Vere Beaulere, bruised and aching, was happy that night. He had not done in vain what he had done for his father's sake.

(Next Wednesday: "THE SCHOOLBOY AUTHOR!")

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