

"THE BAD MAN FROM BANDO!" and "RIVALS OF THE RACE!"
THRILLING SCHOOL STORIES INSIDE.

The GEM 2^D



EXIT THE BLACK SHEEP!

—An Amusing Scene from "A LESSON
FOR LEVISON!"—the Gripping
St. Jim's Yarn Within.

THIRD PRIZE-GIVING THIS WEEK! CLAIM NOW!

500 FREE FOOTBALLS



STOP! If you are a "Footer-Stamps" collector and have not yet won a free football, here's another opportunity. 500 Free Footballs are waiting to be given away to the readers who score the highest number of "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" in the third month's competition.

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 at once, as there's another complete "goal" among them, and the odd stamps will, no doubt, fit in with others you may have left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests).

TO SCORE A "GOAL," remember you must collect a complete set of 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" also appear in other grand papers like **MODERN BOY** and **MAGNET** week by 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 in 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" (October), 1, Tallis House, London, E.C.4 (Comp.),
so as to reach there not later than **SATURDAY, November 5th, 1938,** the closing date.

OVERSEAS READERS—you are in this scheme also, and special prizes in cash are to be awarded for the best scores from readers outside the British Isles. In your case, send in as directed above, but note that the closing date is extended to **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1st, 1939.**

Now, when you have sent in your October "goals," be sure to keep any odd stamps by you until next week, when we are making yet another big offer of Free Footballs for "Footer-Stamps" collectors. So go on collecting still, just in case you don't pull it off this month.

***** 5 "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—5 MORE ON PAGE 35! *****



SEE PAGE 35 FOR ENTRY COUPON!

THE FAG WHO SEEKS TO RESCUE HIS BROTHER FROM THE DOWNWARD
PATH BY FOLLOWING IN HIS FOOTSTEPS!

A LESSON *for* LEVISON!



"Hand over those cigarettes!" growled Levison major. "I'll give you a hiding if you don't!" Frank Levison, with a show of reluctance, extracted two cigarettes from his pocket and handed them to his major.

CHAPTER 1.

Services Not Required!

"**A**RE we goin' to have a motah-coach?"

"Rats! No!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Economy, my son," explained Tom Merry.

"Coaches cost money."

"Yaas, I suppose they do," assented Arthur Augustus D'Arcy thoughtfully. "But if we don't have a coach this aftahnoon, deah boy, how are we goin' to get ovah to Abbotsford?"

"Bike it!"

"Bai Jove!"

"What's the matter with biking it, fathead?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"I wefuse to be called a fathead, Lowthah! I weally do not like the ideah of bikin' ovah to Abbotsford for a football match."

Tom Merry laughed.

"If you think you'll be fagged for the match, Gussy, I'll take Julian in your place, if you like."

"What's good enough for you is good enough for me!" says Frank Levison, copying his major's shady habits. But no one guesses that it's Franks supreme effort to compel his brother to turn over a new leaf.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD

"Pway don't be an ass, deah boy. I am no likely to get fagged by a bikewide. But I wathah think we shall get mudday."

"Awful!" said Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah! Upon the whole, Tom Mewwy, pewwaps we had bettah have a motah-coach, and economise on somethin' else."

"Bow-wow!" said Tom Merry cheerfully.

"I suppose you couldn't go in kilts?" suggested Monty Lowther, in a reflective sort of way.

"You uttah ass—"

"Or in a grass skirt?"

"If you are goin' to make wibald jokes, Lowthah, I wefuse to discuss the mattah any further! I will bike it, and I throw upon Tom Mewwy the whole wespensibility if my twousahs are wuined."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll try to stagger along under it," grinned Tom Merry. "It's about time we were getting off, too. Hallo!"

Levison of the Fourth

came out of the School House and joined the group of juniors who were chatting near the steps.

There was a certain hesitation in Levison's manner; but as he evidently wanted to speak, Tom Merry paused to hear what he had to say. "You're playing Abbotsford this afternoon?" said Levison.

Tom Merry nodded. "I hear that Figgins is standing out—crooked or something."

"Yes—gamey ankle," said Tom. "Then you'll want a new forward. Care to play me?"

Tom Merry knitted his brows. His answer was short and sharp.

"No!" "Why not?" asked Levison calmly. "I think you must know most of the reasons," said Tom Merry dryly. "No need to go over them all again."

"You offered me a place in the junior eleven a couple of weeks ago," said Levison. "I wasn't able to play then—"

"No; you went out with Racke & Co. instead!" said Monty Lowther, with a sniff of contempt. "Smoking and drinking."

"That was really due to a misunderstanding," said Levison, unmoved. "I've been sticking to footer practice—"

"You've given it a miss for a good fortnight," said Manners.

"I've taken it up again." "Dropping practice and taking it up again isn't the way to qualify for matches," said Tom Merry. "I don't think you're in form for the match. Anyway, I'm not going to play you. When I thought you were turning decent, I was quite willing to meet you half-way, and give

you every chance, and you know it. But you were spoofing all the time. It isn't my business to preach to you, and I'm not going to do it, but smokers and gamblers are not wanted in the junior eleven. They don't make good footballers."

"You won't play me, then?" "No, I won't!" "Straight from the shondah, bai Jove!" remarked Arthur Augustus. "I must say I quite approve, Tom Mewwy."

"As a matter of fact, Figgy's place is already filled," added Tom Merry. "Kerr is playing instead of Figgins."

"Is Kerr as good a forward as I am?" asked Levison.

"Better," said Tom. And he turned away and went into the House to get ready for his journey to Abbotsford, followed by his chums.

Levison remained standing where he was, with a dark look on his face.

The black sheep of St. Jim's had met with a sharp rebuff, and certainly it was no more than he deserved.

Perhaps Tom Merry was a little hard upon him without intending to be.

Levison had certainly made an effort to reform, and such a character was not to be changed in a day. His backslidings were numerous enough, and his last outbreak had filled with utter disgust every fellow who knew of it. For a St. Jim's fellow—a junior, too—to fall under the influence of liquor was unheard of—incredible, unimaginable, in fact. But even to that depth of degradation the black sheep of the Fourth had descended once.

Yet Levison, in his own way, was striving after better things. He had taken up football again with renewed keenness, and he had shown considerable form at the game; but, naturally, it was a long time before he could expect his last delinquency to be either forgotten or forgiven.

"Are you going, Ernie?" It was his minor's voice that interrupted Levison's moody reflections. Frank Levison of the Third joined him, with a bright face.

The Fourth Former shook his head. "They don't want me in the eleven," he said. Frank's face fell.

"I suppose it couldn't be expected," he said, after a pause.

"I suppose not," assented Levison grimly. "I could play a good game for the side, too. And—and I want St. Jim's to win—"

"Of course! We all do!" said Frank. Levison laughed.

"I mean, I've got special reasons for wanting them to win this afternoon."

His minor looked at him quickly, a troubled expression coming over his face.

"You haven't been betting on the match, Ernie?" he said, in a low voice.

Levison made an impatient gesture.

"Racke thinks Abbotsford will win," he said. "I've taken him on. Don't make a long face, kid. It's only a quid on the match."

"I—I wish you wouldn't—" muttered Frank. "How would you like a spin over to Abbotsford, kid, to see the match?"

"With you, Ernie?" asked the fag, his face brightening again. "I'd like it no end!"

"Then we'll go over with the crowd," said Levison cheerily. "There ought to be somebody on the ground to yell for St. Jim's. I don't think

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anybody's going with the team, only Julian as a reserve. Get your bike out."

Frank's face was quite cheerful again as he made his way to the bike-shed. So long as his major was with him, anyway, he was safe from the company of Racke and the other young rascals with whom he was pally.

Levison, with all his faults, was still, in the fag's eyes, the big brother whom he had always loved and admired, though what Frank saw in Levison to cause either affection or admiration was a puzzle to everybody else.

CHAPTER 2.

Blake's Bad Luck!

"FEARFULLY mudday, deah boys!"

Arthur Augustus made that remark as the footballers wheeled their machines out of the school gates.

The eleven were in cheery spirits. Fatty Wynn; Herries, Reilly; Redfern, Noble, Lowther; Talbot, Kerr, Tom Merry, Blake, and D'Arcy formed the team. Julian of the Fourth was going with them, hoping that he might be wanted.

Figgins, whose damaged ankle prevented him from playing, limped down to the gates to see the footballers off. Digby and Dane and Olive and Glyn and Owen and Lawrence and Manners, and a dozen other fellows, gave them a parting cheer. But nobody seemed keen on biking over with them to watch the game. They were content to leave that muddy ride to the footballers, and to hear all about it when the heroes returned. So there was considerable surprise when Levison and his minor wheeled their machines out and joined the dozen juniors in the road.

"Hallo! You coming over?" exclaimed Julian.

"Why not?" said Levison.

"It's a jolly long ride!"

"For a slacker like me, do you mean?" grinned Levison.

"Yes, if you like," said Julian, laughing.

"That was what was in my mind."

"You see, I'm specially keen to see D'Arcy scoring goals."

"You are vewy flattewin', Levison—"

"For Abbotsford," added Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!"

"I expect you'll crack up before we're half-way there," said Jack Blake.

"Two to one I beat you to Abbotsford, if you like," said Levison.

"I'll give you two to one in thick ears, if you like!" said Blake, with a snort of contempt; and he jumped on his machine and pedalled away.

The footballers, riding two and two, went pedalling down the road, and Levison and his minor brought up the rear.

There were few fellows in the party who expected Levison to keep the pace as far as Abbotsford. But, as a matter of fact, Levison was wiry and hardy, and he was quite capable of doing the ride at good speed. In spite of his many backslidings, his reform had made a difference to him. Less smoking had made his wind sounder, and healthy open-air exercise had made him much more fit than of old.

Levison kept level, apparently without an effort; but by the time the cyclists had passed Wayland, Levison's minor was beginning to slacken down. The little fag was not equal to the pace of the Fourth Form and Shell fellows.

Levison's brow contracted as he slowed down to

keep pace with his minor. His pride had been roused, and he wanted very much to get in at Abbotsford School ahead of the footballers; but he could not leave his minor on the road.

"Can't you keep up, Franky?" he asked curtly.

Frank panted.

"I—I can't! Don't wait for me!"

"Oh rot!" said Levison, and he slackened down.

The footballers drew ahead and vanished round a bend in the road.

Jack Blake looked back about ten minutes later and grinned. The road was clear behind. Levison of the Fourth was not in sight.

"Crooked already!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Perhaps he slowed down for his minor," suggested Talbot of the Shell.

Blake sniffed.

"Perhaps he has, and perhaps he's glad of the excuse," he said.

"Yaas. I hardly think Levison is equal to the pace, deah boy," remarked Arthur Augustus.



"Don't worry - the fire's out!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to B. Cooper, 1, Abbots Place, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent.

"Some of you fellows are wathah hard put to it to keep up with me."

Blake gave a snort.

"Keep up with you!" he ejaculated.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"You ass! I could walk away from you with one wheel!" yawned Blake.

"I wegard that statement as asinine, Blake. You could not walk on a wheel at all," said Arthur Augustus. "Pway don't push ahead, Blake. You will ovahtire yourself, and be no good for the footah."

"Fathead!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"I'll jolly well show you!" growled Blake.

And Jack Blake, determined to take the lofty Arthur Augustus down a peg, pushed ahead and put on speed.

The party were only a mile from Abbotsford at this point, and they turned into a lane that cut off half the distance.

The lane was narrow and reeking with mud, wet from late rains, and the surface was cut up by heavy cart-wheels.

It was a most unfortunate spot for Jack Blake to have selected for the purpose of taking the noble Gussy down a peg.

Half a dozen of the juniors were ahead of him, and Blake had to draw in to the side to pass them—into deep ruts and reeking mud.

"Pway be careful, deah boy!" called out Arthur Augustus. "You will go ovah at that wate. Bai Jove!"

Blake was over.

Julian, with whom Blake had drawn level, had skidded in a rut, and if Blake hadn't been just at his elbow Julian could have wobbled and righted. But, as it was, he crashed fairly into Blake.

There was a terrific clatter as both went down into the road.

Arthur Augustus jammed on his brakes just in time to avoid crashing into the fallen machines from behind.

"Gwreat Scott!" he ejaculated.

"Silly asses!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

The juniors rode clear, and jumped down to render assistance to the fallen ones.

The bikes—sadly damaged—were picked up. Blake and Julian lay gasping in the mud.

Tom Merry caught hold of Blake to raise him to his feet.

The Fourth Former gave a sudden yelp of pain.

"Yow!"

"Hurt?" asked Tom anxiously.

Blake suppressed a groan.

"Yow! I got the pedal, I think, right on my dashed ankle! Oh dear!"

Blake stood on one leg, leaning on Tom Merry. Julian rose without assistance, his face pale.

"You hurt, too, deah boy?"

"My knee!" muttered Julian, compressing his lips to keep back an exclamation of pain.

"Oh, bai Jove!"

"Crooked, by gum!" said Lowther.

Tom Merry's face was worried as the juniors examined their injuries. As a matter of fact, both of them had had a lucky escape, for the damage might have been much more serious.

But it was serious enough, from the football point of view.

There was a big bruise forming on Blake's ankle, and Julian's knee was getting blue. Neither of them could ride again; and as for the football, that was out of the question.

The two unfortunate juniors looked at one another, with feelings too deep for words.

Tom Merry almost tore his hair.

Julian, the reserve man, was crooked. Blake, a member of the eleven, was crooked, and there was no one to take his place.

"Well, of all the rotten luck!" said Tom, in dismay.

"All Gussy's fault!" said Blake savagely. "All through that ass gassing—"

"Weally, Blake, I wegard that wemark as uncalled for! I was goin' to say it was all through your showin' off, but I won't!"

"Fathead!"

"I wegard you as a fathead, Blake! Now you are cwooked, and we shall be a man short. How-eh, I shall be there!" added Arthur Augustus consolingly.

"Man short," growled Tom Merry, "against a team like Abbotsford! We may as well ask for a licking!"

"Can't be helped," said Kangaroo. "We'll all pile in like thunder. Gussy had better hand out those goals he's been promising us!"

"Wely on me, deah boys!"

"The game's up!" growled Blake. "I can't go on! I've got to get back somewhere on one leg and wheel that wreck! Ow!"

"Better pick up a cab somewhere," said Tom. "You can't walk far, either of you. We shall have to take our chance with the match."

He looked at his watch.

"We're due at Abbotsford now," he added. "No time to lose."

good thinking of wiring for somebody. We shall be late for the match before we get to the post office. We've got to chance it. Can't be helped!"

"If I may make a suggestion—" began Talbot.

"Go ahead!" said Tom at once.

"What about Levison?"

Tom Merry started. He had forgotten all about Levison of the Fourth.

"By gum!" he exclaimed. "I'd forgotten all about him. Levison will be there."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You'd better play Levison," said Blake, suppressing a groan. "No good giving the match away."

Tom Merry's face clouded.

Levison had offered to play in the match, and he had been refused with some exceedingly plain speaking. What sort of reception was the cad of the Fourth likely to give to a request to play, after all. It was not pleasant to have to make such a request, considering the way Tom had spoken to Levison.

Tom Merry looked back along the muddy lane. There was no sign of the Levisons.

"They'll be following the main road," said Talbot.

"Yes; I suppose so."

"We shall find them at Abbotsford before us, most likely, after this delay. Better get on, or the Abbotsford chaps will think we're never coming."

Tom Merry nodded.

The footballers remounted and rode on, leaving Blake and Julian to make their way home.

CHAPTER 3.

Levison Plays Up!

THE Abbotsford fellows were punting a ball about on the football ground when Tom Merry & Co. arrived, and Levison and his minor were watching, having kept to the main road.

It was already past the time for the kick-off, and the St. Jim's fellows had to change. Yorke, the Abbotsford skipper, took them to their dressing-room.

Levison did not go with them. He had come there to look on, and Tom Merry had not yet spoken to him about playing for St. Jim's.

"I suppose you're goin' to speak to Levison, Tom Mewwy?" said Arthur Augustus at last.

"I suppose I've got to!" growled Tom reluctantly.

"He will play a good game," said Talbot.

"It isn't pleasant to ask him, after the way I jumped on him when he offered to play," confessed Tom. "And he isn't an agreeable fellow to eat humble pie to."

"Yaas; it's an awkward posish, deah boy. But that's one of the pleasauals of a footah captain. You can't considah your own feelings, you know."

"I suppose I can't!" grunted Tom. "One of you ask him to come in here, and I'll get it over. Blessed worry there isn't any other St. Jim's chaps here! If only Manners or Clive had come, we—"

"Hallo! Here he is!"

Levison looked in. There was a peculiar grin on his face.

"Playing a man short?" he asked.

"Well, we are a man short," said Tom. "Blake and Julian had an accident on the way, and were both crooked."

"Like me to play?"



As Jack Blake drew level with Julian the latter skidded in a rut. There was no time for Blake to swerve away, and Julian crashed fairly into him. There was a yell and a clatter as both went down into the road.

"I was going to ask you."

"I'm your man!" said Levison cheerily, and without any sign of the derision Tom had expected. "Lucky I was here—what?"

Tom Merry's face cleared.

"Yes, very lucky," he said. "We've brought Blake's things, and I dare say you can make them do."

"Any old thing!" said Levison.

And he proceeded to change in great spirits. He seemed to have forgotten completely the curt way the football captain had refused his services earlier in the afternoon, and Tom felt a little repentant. After all, the fellow had his good points, he reflected.

The footballers came out. Among the Abbottsford fellows gathered round the ground Frank Levison was to be seen, his face very cheery. He was proud to see his brother in the ranks of the St. Jim's footballers.

Levison looked very fit and quite capable of upholding the St. Jim's colours.

Levison lined up with the team in Blake's place at inside-left. The kick-off fell to Tom Merry, and the ball rolled.

Abbottsford were in great form, and Tom Merry, who had lost two of his best players, was a little anxious. Kerr was a good player—Kerr was good at most things—but he was not quite up to the form of the great Figgins. And how Levison would turn out in Blake's place was a problem.

But on that score Tom Merry's doubts were soon relieved.

Levison lacked Blake's staying powers, but his pace was good, and he was as quick as lightning to see a chance and to make the most of it.

The St. Jim's players favoured the short-passing game, and were accustomed to work together like clockwork—their skipper kept them well up to the mark in that.

Levison dropped into their way as if he had practised with the team on every occasion for weeks past. He was adaptable. He knew what was wanted, and he did it. And before the game had been in progress a quarter of an hour Abbottsford were keeping a very special eye on the St. Jim's left wing.

The first goal came to Tom Merry from a centre by Levison, who fairly took the ball away from the foot of an Abbottsford half and sent it to his captain at the right moment.

"That was ripping, Levison!" Tom said, as they walked back to the centre of the field. "Keep it up!"

Levison nodded and smiled. The colour was in his cheeks now, and his eyes were bright. He did not look much like the slacker who was accustomed to mooch about idly with Racke & Co., to smoke cigarettes behind the woodshed, and pore over sporting papers in his study. Among the Abbottsford crowd Levison minor was yelling: "Goal! Hurrah!" with great energy. Levison

minor looked on that goal as his major's, as, indeed, it partly was.

Yorke and his men strove hard to equalise, but they did not succeed in the first half. When the whistle went for the interval St. Jim's was still one up.

The match had been hard and fast so far, and some of the players were showing the effect of it. Levison was breathing very hard. He was much more fit than of old; but his habits did not conduce to staying power, and the play was telling upon him.

Tom Merry glanced at Levison rather anxiously several times in the second half. Levison was playing up splendidly; but there was no doubt that he had bellows to mend. The flush had died out of his face, and his lips were compressed, showing the effort he was making to keep going. But determination triumphed over physical failing, and Levison played up grimly.

Abbotsford did not succeed in getting through till half-way through the second half. Then Fatty Wynn, in goal, was beaten at last by a shot from Yorke. Abbotsford had equalised.

The game went on ding-dong from that, till close upon time. It looked like a draw. Yorke and his men made a supreme effort, and there was a hot attack on the visitors' goal, but Fatty Wynn was more than equal to the test this time.

Reilly cleared at last, and Kangaroo sent the ball up the field. Then the forwards had the chance they were waiting for. The whole line got away in great style, passing the ball like clockwork, and beating the defence hollow, with a rush that brought them right up to the Abbotsford citadel.

There was a sharp struggle before goal.

The ball went in twice, only to be fisted out by the goalie, and then the right-back drove it away to the touch-line.

Arthur Augustus was on it in a flash, trapping it almost on the line, and sending it to the inside-left.

The back was rushing down on Levison as he captured the ball.

Tom Merry had been shouldered over, and was not there to take a pass, and there was not a second to lose.

Levison passed the ball to Arthur Augustus, and went down the next moment with the back sprawling over him. The way was clear for D'Arcy, and he rushed in and drove home the ball before the goalie knew it was coming.

Levison sat up dazedly as the back rolled off him. He was completely winded. But the ball was in the net.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy turned gracefully.

"Wathah good, what?" he said calmly.

Tom Merry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Jolly good, Gussy! Levison's a brick!"

"Levison! I was wefewin' to my goal, you ass!"

Tom laughed, and hurried to Levison to help him. He stood unsteadily upon his pins.

"Jolly good!" said Tom Merry. "Not hurt, I hope?"

"No!" gasped Levison. "Only a bit shaken. There goes the whistle!"

The game was over, with St. Jim's the victors by two to one. Levison was glad of it. He hadn't a trot left in him, and he was gasping as the players walked off the field.

He looked rather white in the dressing-room as he changed.

"Overdone it a bit?" asked Talbot.

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"Yes," said Levison, with a faint grin. "Feeling out of condition, you know. If I'd known I was going to play, I'd have been a bit more careful the last week or two."

"Levison's done jolly well," said Tom. "He had a hand in both the goals. Jolly lucky he was here."

And the team agreed that it was jolly lucky that Levison had been there, and when the footballers came out to ride home, Levison had the unusual and rather pleasant feeling that he was one of them; and he had to admit that he had enjoyed his afternoon a good deal more than if he had joined the sportive party who were smoking and playing banker in Racke's study at St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 4.

Gussy's Idea!

"I'VE been thinkin'."

Arthur Augustus made that statement in Study No. 6, where Tom Merry & Co. were gathered to a high—and rather late—tea, after their return from Abbotsford.

Jack Blake, with the assistance of Digby, had tea ready when they came in. Blake was still limping, but he had been cheered up considerably by the news that Abbotsford had been beaten on their own ground.

"Amazing!" said Monty Lowther.

"Weally, Lowthah! I have been thinkin' about Levison, deah boys."

"Pass the jam!" said Manners.

"Blow the jam! Aftah the wippin' way Levison played up to-day, I wathah think that the boundah ought to be let down lightly. Of course, he acted like a disgustin' blackguard, and there is no gettin' away from it. But there must be some good in a chap who plays up as he did this aftahnoon, and I am goin' to pwopose, deah boys, that we give Levison a chance. He has the makin' of a good footballah in him, and on several occasions he has shown twaces of decency. He looks aftah his minah vewy carefully, and I have noticed that, while he goes about with wottahs like Cwooke and Wacke himself, he is vewy careful to keep his minah fwom such wottahs. That shows a twace of good in the fellow, I considah."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners. "Pass the toast."

"Suppose, then, that we take the boundah up, and tweek him wathah well, and give him a chance," said Arthur Augustus. "I weally believe that he has twied to veform his wotten ways, but it's wathah a big job for a chap like Levison to gwow decent all at once—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But with pwopah encouwagement, pewwaps the good in him will come to the top," said Arthur Augustus. "As a pweliminaw step, I am thinkin' of asking him in here to tea. It would be wathah gwacious aftah the way he played up this aftahnoon. If no gentleman pwesent has no objection—"

"Oh, good!" said Lowther. "He will stand us smokes all round after tea. Ask him in, by all means!"

"Ahem!"

"Got any cards in the study?" asked Manners.

"Bai Jove! What do you want cards for, Mannahs?"

"Well, Levison will want a game of banker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, Levison will undahstand that his

wascally pwoceedings will not be tolewatod in this study. I have a theowty that if we tweek him as a decent chap, he is vewy likely to play up, you know. What do you think, Talbot? You have more sense than these kids."

Talbot laughed.

"I think it's a very good idea," he said.

"Then if nobody objects—"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Blake. "There's a rasher left, and some sardines. Tell Levison to buck up, or there won't be any jam, though."

"Wats!"

Arthur Augustus, full of his benevolent idea, quitted Study No. 6, and proceeded in search of Ernest Levison. He left his chums grinning. Only Talbot of the Shell seemed to take D'Arcy's idea at all seriously.

Levison was not in his study. Lumley-Lumley and Trimble and Mellish were at work there.

"Do you chaps know where Levison is?" asked Arthur Augustus, as he glanced in at the door.

"Try Racke's study," grinned Mellish.

"Bai Jove! Is he with Wacke?"

"I guess so," said Lumley-Lumley.

"Thank you, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus went on to the Shell passage, somewhat slowly. He did not like visiting Racke's quarters. Aubrey Racke, son of a millionaire, was not a fellow Arthur Augustus could pull with.

However, he arrived at the study and tapped at the door. It was locked.

"Who's there?" called Racke from within.

"It is I, deah boy."

"What do you want?"

"I want to speak to Levison."

"No prefects about?" called out Levison's voice.

"Pwefects? No."

"Right-ho!"

The door was unlocked, and Arthur Augustus entered.

The reason why Levison had inquired whether there were any prefects about was obvious enough. There was a blue haze of smoke in the study, and there were cards on the table. Crooke was shuffling the cards, and Racke was lighting a cigarette.

Levison had one between his lips as he opened the door.

Arthur Augustus coughed. The atmosphere of the study was not agreeable to his healthy lungs.

"Bai Jove!" he ejaculated.

"Come in," said Racke, with a grin to his friends. "You're just in time to take a hand."

"I do not wish to play. Pway leave the door open, Levison! This atmosphere is wathah thick. I am not going to wemain!"

Levison grinned, and closed the door.

"Won't you have a smoke?" asked Crooke.

"I wepudate the suggestion with feahful contempt, Crooke! I came here to speak to you, Levison."

"Well, go ahead!" yawned Levison. "You're interrupting the game, you know."

"I came to ask you to tea, Levison. We have wathah a spweed in Study No. 6."

Levison stared.

"Me!" he ejaculated.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"My dear chap, I should contaminate the holy precincts of Study No. 6. I should leave a stain upon the angelic youths who congregate there," said Levison. "And I couldn't play banker there, you know."

(Continued on next page.)

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"Weally, Levison! I am sowwy I came here, and I shall shake the dust of this study fwom my feet at once!"

Arthur Augustus closed the door behind him with a bang. He left the black sheep of the School House roaring with laughter.

D'Arcy's colour was a little heightened when he came back into Study No. 6.

Tom Merry & Co. gave him inquiring looks.

"Well, is Levison coming?" asked Blake.

"Shall I put the kettle on again?"

"Levison is not comin', Blake!"

"Then I'll have the other rasher," said Blake cheerfully.

And the tea-party in Study No. 6 heard no more of Arthur Augustus' noble idea for helping to reform the black sheep of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 5.

Awfully Deep!

"CHEER-HO, kid!" said Wally of the Third, slapping Levison minor on the back with a slap that made him yell.

It was a few days after the Abbotsford match—Saturday afternoon, to be precise.

As Saturday afternoon was a half-holiday, everything in the garden was lovely, from Wally D'Arcy's point of view, and he did not see why Frank Levison should be looking down in the mouth. Hence his vigorous greeting.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Wally.

"Eh? Nothing! Don't bust a chap's backbone!" grunted Levison minor.

"Bless your backbone!" said Wally. "You're looking like a bear with a sore head. What's biting you?"

"Nothing, fathead!"

"Well, cheer up! I suppose it's your blessed major!" growled Wally. "Blow your major! Look here, Manners minor has had a remittance, and we're going down to the tuckshop in Rylcombe. Come along!"

"I—I think I'd rather not, this afternoon," stammered Frank.

198 Overseas Readers Win Prizes for "Stamps."

The Editor is pleased to announce the result of the Overseas Section of our "Armaments" Contest No. 1, for which there was a special late closing date.

As stated in the competition offer, there were special prizes for good "scores" from overseas, and these have been awarded in cash form as follows:

FIRST PRIZE: £2, Gordon Emery, 22-277 Street, W., Saskatoon, Sask., Canada (whose stamp total was 1,050. Congratulations, Gordon!).

SECOND PRIZE: £1, Keith Murray, 6, Brighton Avenue, Preston, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (who came next with a "score" of 737).

For space reasons we are unable to print all the other winners' names here. All "scores" of 165 and over qualified for prizes, however—totals of 255 and over winning special consolation prizes of 5s. each, while totals of 254 down to 166 were awarded prizes of 2s. 6d. each. These prizes have all been posted.

Well done, winners! And those of you who haven't won, remember that there are still two other ARMAMENTS "Overseas" prize-givings to come; we hope you've sent in for them.

Also, ALL of you should have a crack at "Footer Stamps"—see page 2. There is also a special cash prize list for overseas readers each month!

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"Want to mooch about on your own?" demanded Wally sarcastically. "Oh, don't be an ass! Reggie told me to ask you."

"I—I'd rather not."

"Well, you're a silly duffer!" said Wally, and with that frank expression of opinion, he hurried off to join Manners minor and Hobbs and Joe Frayne, who were waiting for him at the gates with every visible sign of impatience.

Frank Levison drove his hands deep into his pockets, and mooched along under the leafless elms by himself.

He was in a downcast mood that afternoon.

He could not help it. Wally had been quite right in guessing that the fag was thinking of his major.

Frank was thinking about his brother, and his thoughts were gloomy. He had seen Levison leave the school with Racke and Crooke, and he knew they were bound for Wayland, and what Racke called "a good time." He knew that his major was on the downward path, and that his efforts to reform—efforts genuine enough, so far as they went—always seemed to end the same way.

Tom Merry & Co. were playing footer on Little Side, and on Big Side there was a senior House match—Kildare's team against Monteith's. But Frank did not feel inclined to watch the footballers. He was feeling lonely now that Wally & Co. had gone, yet he was not sorry he had not joined them. He was mooching under the elms when a kind voice fell upon his ears.

"All on your own, deah boy?"

It was Arthur Augustus of the Fourth.

Frank gave him a faint smile. He liked Arthur Augustus, as everybody did.

"Yes, just now," he said.

"I've got some chestnuts in my study," said D'Arcy. "I hear you are a wippin' hand at bakin' chestnuts. Will you help me?"

"If you like?" said Frank. "I thought you were playing footer."

"I have weseigned in Julian's favah this aftahnoon," said Arthur Augustus. "It was only a Form match, you know. Come on, deah boy!"

Frank followed the swell of St. Jim's to Study No. 6. He was tired of his own society and his gloomy thoughts, and he was glad to help D'Arcy bake the chestnuts and dispose of them internally.

"The fact is, I want to have a little chat with you," said Arthur Augustus, when the chestnuts were duly baked.

"Yes," said Frank, wondering a little.

It was a puzzle what the swell of the Fourth could want to chat with a fag of the Third about.

"About your majah," added Arthur Augustus.

The fag's face clouded.

"Your majah is a wippin' chap in some ways, and—"

Frank brightened up again wonderfully. He had not quite expected to hear a remark of that sort.

"And an awful wottah in othah ways—"

Frank rose to his feet.

"Sit down, deah boy. You haven't finished the chestnuts."

"I—I'd rather go," said Frank, "if you're goin' to speak about my brother!"

"Bai Joye! It's weally wemarkable how fellows misapprehend me!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pway sit down! Surely you do not think that I am goin' to wun down your bwotah to you, deah boy? I should wegard that as bad form."

Frank sat down again.

"I was goin' to wemark," went on Arthur

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Visitors to junior studies can be divided into two classes. Those who come after tea, and those who come after the tea!

Third Form flash: "What year did William the Conqueror land?" asked Mr. Selby. "Leap year, sir," replied Curly Gibson. "How do you know it was leap year, Gibson?" demanded Mr. Selby. "Well, sir," replied Gibson, "doesn't the history book say: 'William the Conqueror leaped ashore'?"

Sea story: The naval cadet was looking very fed up. "You look depressed, old chap," said a fellow cadet. "I annoyed the captain this morning," explained the first. "But I thought you never got up very early in the morning?" queried the second. "Yes," came the reply, "that's how I annoyed the captain!"

Augustus, with a touch of dignity, "that I take wathah an intwest in your majah. If he were an attah wottah, like Wacke or Cwooke, I should wefuse to wecognise his existence. But upon weflection, I have decided that he is nothin' of the sort."

"Indeed, he isn't, D'Arcy!" said the fag eagerly. "He's a splendid chap! You can't guess how kind he has been to me since I came! I should get into lots of rows with Selby if Ernie didn't help me with my lessons."

"Yaas, I have noticed that, and othah things," said D'Arcy, with a nod, "and I weally believe that if Levison had a swong motive he would throw up his wotten ways and give Wacke and Cwooke and their set the cold shouldah. And I have been thinkin' it out, deah boy, and I have thought of a way."

"Oh!" said Frank, more puzzled than before. "F'rinstance, your majah is vewy particulah not to let you get into his own ways," said D'Arcy. "I have observed that. He thrashed Wacke for twyin' to teach you to smoke, or smethin', and he has wowed with Cwooke about it. It would be wathah a shock for him if you took up smokin' and bettin' and playin' the wottah genewally."

Frank laughed.

"I'm not likely to give Ernie a shock like that," he said.

"That's the ideah!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Don't you see? Seein' you takin' up his wotten ways, Levison would think wathah sewiously about the mattah. He would wealise

The horned screamer, a South American bird, has a horn on its head and spurs on its feet. It has yet to learn to ride a horse.

"The £30 Television Set is Here," we read. The trouble is, I don't expect it is paid for!

I hear a messenger boy was arrested in Rylcombe village for acting strangely. Presumably he was hurrying!

"Who was King Henry VIII?" asked Mr. Selby. "The king who had six wives and always won the toss," replied Wally D'Arcy. "What do you mean, King Henry VIII always won the toss?" demanded Mr. Selby. "Well, sir," replied Wally, "he had most of his wives executed, and whenever he called 'Head!' it came off!"

Refreshments are now on sale. Ices, twopence and threepence; coffee, threepence a cup. Well, I must make this column pay somehow!

"Should a boy be caned on an empty stomach?" inquires a scholastic authority. Oh no, on the contrary!

A man's best friends are his hair and his teeth, states an authority. The worst of it is, the best of friends fall out!

Stop Press: What The Stars Foretell: It looks like keeping fine, if it doesn't rain!

Drying up now, chaps—till next Wednesday.

that he was settin' you a vewy bad example, and he could not be surprisid if you followed it. I wathah think that he would turn the mattah ovah in his mind and decide to set you a vewy good example instead," said Arthur Augustus sagely.

"My hat!" said Frank in astonishment.

"So my ideah is that you should play a little game," said Arthur Augustus, beaming. "Let Levison see you dwop a cigawette somewhere—"

"Oh!"

"And ask him to lend you a pack of cards—"

"Oh!" said Frank again.

"And wequest him to give you an intwoduction to the wottahs—I mean, the sportin' fellows—at the Gween Man. Of course, he won't do it, so there's no dangah. But it will make him think—what?"

And Arthur Augustus grinned with satisfaction.

Frank stared at him, quite flabbergasted at Arthur Augustus' deeply laid scheme. He would never have suspected the swell of St. Jim's of evolving such a plot out of his own unaided brain.

A grin broke over the fag's face. Surprising as the idea was, Frank was quick enough to see what its result was likely to be.

"It would be wathah spoofin'," said Arthur Augustus. "But it is quite wight to spoof a fellow for his own good. You may wely on me for that. And, moreovah, it may save your majah fwom gettin' sacked. He came awfully near it last week."

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Frank shivered a little. He knew how near it his major had come; he knew how near Levison was to it now, for that matter.

"Levison could weally be a cweedit to the school if he likes."

Those kind words banished any lingering doubts Frank might have had. He gave a nod of assent.

"I'll try!" he said.

"That's wight, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus with great satisfaction. "Wely upon it that I'm givin' you good advice. I am a fellow of gweat tact and judgment, you know. Now, wish into the chestnuts!"

And Levison "wired" into the chestnuts with a good will.

CHAPTER 6.

Levison Minor's Little Game!

"LEVISON!"

"Adsum!"

"Levison minor!"

No answer.

"Levison minor!" repeated Mr. Lathom, who was taking the roll-call.

Mr. Lathom blinked over his glasses and marked Levison minor down as absent. He went on with the list till he came to the P's.

"Parker!"

"Adsum!"

"Pegg!"

"Adsum!"

"Piggott!"

Silence.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Lathom. And Piggott of the Third was marked absent from calling-over as well as Frank Levison.

Levison of the Fourth knitted his brows. It was not particularly unusual for a fog to be late for call-over on a half-holiday, but Frank was generally very punctual. His absence and Piggott's absence together made Levison knit his brows. It looked as if they were out in company; and Piggott was not a fellow Levison wanted his minor to know. Piggott, though only a fog in the Third, was a member of the honourable society who followed Racke's noble example, and he was a pretty thorough little rascal.

When the Hall cleared Levison went to the door and looked out into the quadrangle. It was about ten minutes later that Frank Levison and Piggott came in, and they came in together.

"You're late, Franky," said Levison.

"Am I?" said Frank carelessly.

"Yes; roll-call's been taken."

"That means lines, I suppose," said Frank.

"Couldn't get back, could we, Piggy?"

"Imposs!" said Piggott. "I don't mind the lines—blow the lines!"

"Where have you been?"

"Oh, down to Rylcombe!"

"Don't ask questions!" grinned Piggott.

And the two fags went in to report themselves. Levison stared after them.

Levison had been enjoying himself that afternoon in his own fashion with Racke and Crooke and Clampe. He had supposed that his minor was with Wally D'Arcy, as usual. The fact that Frank's occupation might have been on the same lines as his own came as a shock to him.

As a rule Frank was only too pleased when Levison bestowed his company upon him; but

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that evening, for once, he was not on call. Levison looked for him up and down the House, but he did not find him. His brow was dark when he returned to his own study. Frank was avoiding him, evidently for the reason that he did not want to be questioned. Why?

Later in the evening Levison looked into the Third Form Room and found his minor there with the fags; he beckoned to him, and Frank came out.

"Anything wanted?" asked the fog.

"Yes, you young sweep!" growled Levison.

"Come here!"

"Wally's calling me!"

"Confound Wally!" said Levison savagely.

"Come with me!"

"Oh, all right!"

There was a change in Frank's manner towards his major which Levison did not fail to note. He drew the fog to the window-seat at the end of the passage.

"Now, I want you to tell me where you went with Piggott," he said.

"Only down to Rylcombe."

"Why weren't you with your friends?"

Frank did not answer.

"What have you taken up with that smoky little beast for?" asked Levison. "You don't like Piggott."

"Oh, he's all right in his way!"

"You know the little beast smokes, though he's only thirteen."

"Well, you smoke, and you're only fifteen."

Levison started.

"I! What's that got to do with it?"

"Well, you're older than Piggott," said Frank. "If it's wrong, you're more to blame than he is, aren't you?"

Levison stared at his minor without replying. This was quite a new tone for Frank to take with him.

"So you're making excuses for the little brute?" he asked at length.

Frank looked obstinate.

"Perhaps you have taken up his ways?" said Levison savagely. "Perhaps you were sneaking into some corner, smoking with him, when I couldn't find you this evening?"

"Perhaps," said Frank coolly.

"You admit it?" shouted Levison.

No answer.

"I want to know where you went in Rylcombe," said Levison, between his teeth.

"I don't think you ought to ask," said Frank.

"I haven't asked you where you've been, have I?"

"Where did you go?"

"We went to see a chap Piggott knows," said Frank sullenly.

"What for?"

"Well, you see—"

"Out with it, you young rascal!"

"Well, Piggy wanted some smokes," said Frank.

"Of course, the tobaccoist wouldn't have served him. So we—I mean he—got the other fellow to go and get them. He's older, you see."

Levison looked at him aghast.

"Don't you know that that's breaking the law?" he exclaimed.

"Is it really?"

"Yes, it is."

"I believe lots of fellows do it. Why, you do!" said Frank.

"Never mind what I do!" growled Levison,

taken aback. "You haven't come to St. Jim's to do as I do."

"Why not?"

Levison found it difficult to answer that question, and he did not attempt to do so. He was utterly disconcerted.

"So you went with Piggott to get smokes?" he asked.

"Yes."

"After the way I've warned you against that little beast, too!"

"He's no worse than Crooke or Mellish. He's not nearly so bad as Racke. You go about with them. Why shouldn't I know Piggott?"

"You can go to Wally, and be hanged!" snapped Levison, and he walked away.

Frank grinned as he went back to the Form-room. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's excellent scheme was evidently working well.

CHAPTER 7.

A Sunday Walk!

"COMING, Levison?"

Racke of the Shell asked that question the following morning—Sunday—after the morning service in the old chapel.



Levison passed the ball to Arthur Augustus, and went down the next moment with a back sprawling over him. The way was clear for Gussy, and he rushed in and drove home the ball before the goalie knew it was coming.

"You cheeky little rotter!" exclaimed Levison. "Blessed if I ever thought you'd turn out like this! Look here, it's got to stop at once!"

Frank made no answer, but looked obstinate.

"Did Piggott give you any of the smokes?"

"Yes; two."

"Give them to me!"

"What for?"

"Because I tell you!" growled Levison. "Because I'll give you a hiding if you don't! Hand them over at once!"

Frank, with a show of reluctance, extracted two cigarettes from his pocket and handed them to his major.

Levison twisted them to pieces in his fingers.

"Anything else?" asked the fag. "Wally's waiting for me."

Sunday walks were an institution at St. Jim's, and Racke & Co. generally went out together. They would stroll away from St. Jim's looking very innocent and mild; but their innocence and mildness did not last long after they were out of sight of the school. They generally slipped away to the Feathers, an inn up the river, where they spent their leisure hours in their own fashion.

Levison of the Fourth was generally one of the party. The click of billiards balls on Sunday morning was a sound not unknown to their ears.

But on this especial morning Levison hesitated. Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy had just come out, arrayed in Sunday toppers. D'Arcy

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had stopped to speak to Levison minor, within hearing of his major.

"Comin' for a twot with us, kid?" asked Arthur Augustus kindly.

Frank shook his head.

"Thanks, I'm going with Piggott," he said.

"All sewene!"

Arthur Augustus and his friends sauntered on. Levison's brow had darkened as he heard.

"Are you coming?" repeated Racke.

"No!" grunted Levison.

"Please yourself. What about a hundred up, though?"

"Hang the hundred up!"

"You're in a nice cheery temper this morning!" sneered Racke. "Are you afraid you'll lose one of the quids you got out of me yesterday?"

"Confound you and your quids, too!"

Racke laughed, and walked away to join Crooke and Clampe.

Levison was left on the steps of the School House, looking very morose.

Wally and Joe Frayne and Jameson of the Third came along and hailed Levison minor, who was evidently waiting for someone.

"Get a move on, young Levison! Come along!"

"Not coming!" called back Frank.

"Go and eat coke, then!" said Wally pointedly. And the fags walked away without their usual companion.

Levison major compressed his lips and went over to his minor.

Frank looked at him in a guarded way.

"Why haven't you gone out with D'Arcy minor?" asked Levison.

"I'm going with Piggott."

"What do you want to go with Piggott for?"

"He's going to show me some rat-catching," said Frank. "He knows a man on a farm who keeps dogs. He says it's great fun."

"You little beast!" said Levison, in angry surprise. "Is that the sort of amusement you've got for Sunday morning?"

"Not worse than playing billiards at the Feathers, is it?" asked Frank. "I'll come to the Feathers, if you like."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You can teach me to play billiards, if you like. I'd like to learn," said the fag. "Piggott will come, too. He plays. Piggott told me that the man at the Feathers lets you have the billiards-room to yourselves on Sunday morning."

Levison was at a loss for words.

Piggott came out of the School House and joined Frank.

Frank nodded to his major and moved away with Piggott.

Levison stared after them.

"Frank!"

"Hallo!"

"You're not going out with Piggott!"

"Look here, let your minor alone!" said Piggott angrily. "What's it got to do with you where he goes, Levison major?"

"You cut off!" growled Levison. "If I catch you speaking to my minor again, I'll give you a hiding, you little waster!"

"Well, I like that! I'm not the only waster here, anyway!" grinned Piggott. "What were you up to yesterday afternoon?"

"Mind your own business, you slimy little cad!"

"Well, you mind yours. Come on, Frank!"

"Look here, Ernie, I'm going with Piggott," said Frank. "I'm not stopping you from going with Racke."

"You're not going with Piggott!"

"You've no right to interfere with me. I haven't interfered with you!"

"I'm going to do it, whether I've a right or not! Cut off, Piggott!"

"Rats!"

Levison clenched his hand and raised it.

The black sheep of the Third looked at him with cool impudence.

"Better not!" he said. "You touch me once, you bullying cad, and I'll tell Kildare something about where you were yesterday—see if I don't!"

Levison's hand dropped to his side.

"Come on, Frank!" said Piggott victoriously. "We shall be late for ratting, if we don't buck up. Got your money with you?"

"Yes, rather!"

"You follow my tip and you'll make something," said Piggott. "There'll be a dozen fellows there and a lot of betting. Come on!"

Levison caught his minor by the shoulder as he was starting with the cheerful Piggott.

Frank resisted.

"Look here, Frank, I—I want you to come with me this morning," said Levison, at a loss how to deal with the situation.

"Wouldn't some other time do?"

"No, it wouldn't!"

"Frank's coming with me!" said Piggott angrily. "None of your humbug, Levison major! Why can't you get along to the Feathers as usual?"

"Will you come with me, Frank?"

Frank hesitated.

"Look here, you've got to come!" said Levison. And he put his arm through his minor's and led him away.

Piggott scowled after them. Piggott's company was not much sought after in the Third. He was deprived of his companion now.

The two brothers walked out of the gates together.

Frank's face was cheery enough; he did not seem to miss his excursion with Piggott very much, after all. But his major's brows were knitted darkly.

"I suppose you'd rather be with Piggott all the time!" growled Levison, after a long silence.

"Well, Piggy said it would be great fun at Griggs' farm."

"You always wanted Sunday walks with me, when I had somewhere else to go."

"Well, I'm not stopping you going somewhere else," said Frank. "You told me I wasn't to interfere with what you did. You're making me interfere now!"

Levison compressed his lips.

The new departure on his minor's part astonished him, and filled him with uneasiness. He ought not to have been surprised at it, as he realised very well. His own example was quite enough to bring about such a change in the long run, but it was dismaying to see such a change now.

What was it going to lead to? The thought of Frank joining the circle of black sheep, of his taking up Piggott's ways, of his joining in the shady amusements of Racke & Co., made Levison sick with disgust.

Levison had always prided himself upon being a hard case; but the prospect of his minor becoming a hard case, too, was dismaying. There was not much that was admirable in being a hard case, after all, when he came to think of it. Yet, if Frank learned to tolerate his own shady ways

Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 15.

The Riddle of the River!



AN enthusiastic rower, Eric Kildare, captain of St. Jim's, was putting in an early morning spell on the River Rhyl in a racing skiff. He had barely reached midstream when he discovered his skiff was leaking badly, and he had no choice but to take to the water and swim ashore. Even to a strong swimmer like Kildare it was an unpleasant experience, and when he found a hole carefully bored in the bottom of the skiff later, Kildare's anger seethed. Rather than report the matter to the Head, however, Kildare told the juniors that if the culprit would own up, he would deal with him privately. "Detective" Kerr unofficially investigated.

KERR: It boils down to roughly half a dozen fellows, any one of whom might have bored that hole in Kildare's skiff, Figgy.

FIGGINS: Well, who's first on the list of suspects?

KERR: You are, old chap.

FIGGINS: Me? Why, I was out for an early sprint. You know I'm training for the quarter-mile—

KERR: I know it, and Kildare knows it, too, Figgy. Kildare saw you on the towing-path, not far from the boathouse. You could easily have slipped inside and done the damage—

FIGGINS: Certainly I could, but I hope I should never be such an awful cad. Surely you don't suspect your own pal, Kerr?

KERR: I don't, even for a moment, Figgy. But we have to look at things as they appear to Kildare. Did you notice anybody entering or leaving the boathouse? Can you remember?

without comment, it was only natural that sooner or later the fag would take up the same ways himself.

Levison of the Fourth had very serious food for thought during that Sunday morning walk, and he was not a cheerful companion. He was silent almost all the time, and his brow was dark.

Frank did not seem to mind. When they came back they met Arthur Augustus and his friends at the gate. The swell of St. Jim's turned his eyeglass upon them.

"Had a nice walk, Fwanky?" he asked.

"Topping!" said Frank cheerily.

"That's wight. Nothin' w'ong, I hope, Levison?"

"No!" growled Levison.

FIGGINS: Yes; Tom Merry. Oh, and Racke and Crooke. Merry had dragged them down to early tubbing. A fine sight those two made, lugging at the oars, while Merry coached them. Then Gore showed up. I saw young Hobbs of the Third about, too.

MERRY: Glad to help clear this thing up, if I can, Kerr. No, I didn't see anybody tuckering with Kildare's skiff. But then, it didn't occur to me that anybody would. Racke and Crooke weren't the guilty parties. I had them under my eye the whole time. Oh, there were Gore and young Hobbs. Hobbs was down there when I arrived with Racke and Crooke.

KERR: Thanks, Merry! I'll see Gore next.

KERR: Sorry to bother you, Gore—

GORE: If you suspect me of holing Kildare's skiff, why not say so at once? I'm not sorry it was done, anyway. Kildare gave me a hundred lines for simply nothing yesterday, so if he catches a bad cold over it, I shan't sympathise, I can tell you!

KERR: The job wouldn't have taken a tick, and there was a brace and bit in the boathouse. Did you see anybody hanging around suspiciously?

GORE: Only young Hobbs. Oh, and Merry! He was down there with Racke and Crooke when I arrived.

KERR: Wait a tick, young Hobbs.

HOBBS: It wasn't me who bored that hole in Kildare's skiff. I know what you want me for.

KERR: You fag for Kildare occasionally, don't you?

HOBBS: Yes, I do. He's not a bad chap, actually. But he caught me smoking the other day. Honestly, it was the first time I've tried it. Piggott gave me the cigarette, and it made me feel sick; and Kildare caned me. I'm glad he got a wetting.

KERR: So is Gore. Look here, Hobbs! Did you, or did you not, make that hole in Kildare's skiff?

HOBBS: I did not. Besides, I hadn't time. I got down to the boathouse just after Gore, thinking somebody might want me to act as cox, and, finding they didn't, I went back to the school at once.

KERR: I see. Well, at any rate, I think that clears the matter up for all of us.

(Who bored the hole in Kildare's boat? See what Kerr says on page 35.)

"You are lookin' wathah down in the mouth, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus, with a chuckle.

"Oh rats!"

Levison strode away.

Arthur Augustus lingered behind with Levison minor.

"I wathah think it's workin', kid," remarked Arthur Augustus.

"I—I don't like it much," faltered the fag. "Ernie seems to be taking it to heart. It worries him."

"That wowwy is vewy good for him, deah boy. He doesn't seem to have gone out blaggin' with Wacke and Cwooke this mornin'."

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"No," said Frank, grinning. "He took me out instead."

"You have done him a good turn, dear boy. I advise you to keep it up. You can rely on my tact and judgment, you know!"

And Levison minor, though a little troubled in his mind, resolved to take Arthur Augustus' sage advice, and keep it up.

CHAPTER 8.

At the Cross-Roads!

TOM MERRY dropped in at Levison's study a day or two later, in the evening.

Levison was working at his prep, having left it late owing to certain occupations in Crooke's study. His studymates had long ago finished and gone down.

"I'll look in later, if you're busy," said Tom, seeing Levison was busy.

"Oh, I'll take a rest!" said Levison, rising.

"Hang prep! What is it? Want a new man in the eleven for the Greyfriars match?"

"Not exactly."

"You might do worse," said Levison. "I'd rather like to play against the Greyfriars team. I used to be at Greyfriars, you know, and I'd like to see Wharton's face when he found me in the eleven!"

"I'm afraid I can't give you another chap's place in the eleven, for the pleasure of seeing Wharton's face," said Tom, laughing. "It isn't footer this time. I was going to speak to you about your minor."

Levison's face clouded over at once.

"Well, what has my minor been doing?" he snapped.

"It isn't exactly my business," said Tom, colouring a little; "but Franky is such a good little chap, I don't like to see the way he's going. I don't pass any opinion of your ways, Levison. It's nothing to do with me. I've always understood that you didn't want your minor to go the same way. It would be rather a shame, for he was a thoroughly decent kid when he came here."

"Until he came under my corrupting influence, you mean?" sneered Levison.

"Well, to be quite candid, your example can't have done him any good," said Tom directly.

"I didn't expect it to."

"I believe you used to keep an eye on him," said Tom. "If he was my minor, I should interfere fast enough."

Levison made a restless movement.

"Well, what's he been doing?"

"Perhaps you haven't noticed it," said Tom quietly. "I thought I'd speak to you about it, after thinking it over. He has taken up with Racke and Crooke; and from your own experience, you know the kind of fellows they are, and how much good they're likely to do a little duffer of the Third."

"I—I don't see how I can stop him!" muttered Levison.

"Well, Frank always does what you tell him—lots of fellows have noticed that!"

Levison sniffed bitterly.

"He used to," he said. "He doesn't now. I've tried to break it off between him and Piggott, but it makes no difference. He doesn't do as I tell him!"

"Oh!" said Tom.

Tom Merry was nonplussed. He had taken an interest in Levison minor, and he was not pleased

(Continued on next page.)

A TRIP ROUND A FIREWORKS FACTORY.

MANY of our readers will be interested in fireworks at this time of the year, so we are taking you on an excursion round the factory of Messrs. James Pain & Sons, Ltd., who make the well-known "Pain's Fireworks."

We enter by the main gates, hand over our matches, and then proceed to a long room in which paper cases of all sizes and shapes are being rolled by hand, to contain the firework compositions.

The cases are rolled on "formers," some of which are round, square, or even conical, according to the shape of the fireworks required. The conical cases make the articles which you know as Mount Vesuvius, Mount Pelee, and Witch's Cauldrons.

Next we come to the "danger" buildings in which the work of "charging" and "finishing" the cases with explosive compositions is performed, and in which are stored the finished or partly finished fireworks.

The danger-buildings are quite small, consisting of not more than two compartments with a few workers in each. These buildings are separated from each other and screened by corrugated iron screens. Raised wooden plank tracks connect the buildings, and those working in them wear rubber shoes and special serge clothing with no pockets. Separate buildings are usually used for charging operations; i.e., the filling of the cases, and finishing the filled cases, which consists of covering them up to make them look attractive.

Let us look into a few of the "shops," as they are called. In one you will see burly men pounding rocket composition into large rockets with mallets; in another, a finishing shop this time, a girl is tacking the cardboard wings on to Schneider Planes, to balance them as they rise. In the next shop we see Roman Candles being charged with grain scooped in below each star to drive it into the air.

The "Cracker" shop is always a very interesting one. Here you can watch the cracker being filled, bent, tied, and bundled. In the "wheel" shop they are winding "Coloured Wheels" round a cardboard centre, and then touching the last coil with hot sealing wax to prevent it unravelling.

Next is a shop in which they are "funnelling up" small fireworks such as Dizzle Dazzles, Silver Rains, and Amber Electrolytes. Here the women hold funnels filled with composition above the case, and move a wire up and down through the funnel into the case, which draws down the composition and makes it firm in the case at the same time.

An elaborate system of fire hydrants covers the whole factory, and there is also a special Fire Brigade Squad who reckon on being able to get the hoses playing on to a building in under two minutes.

We hope that you have enjoyed your lightning trip and will enjoy still more your display on November 5th.

to see the cheery little fellow going the same way as his major. He knew that it would not please Levison, either, and he supposed that Levison, wrapped up in his own selfish interests, had observed nothing. It was a discovery to him that Levison knew it, and was powerless.

"I'd stop it if I could," said Levison moodily. "I can't understand Frank lately—he's got quite out of hand. I could lick him, of course, but I'm pretty sure that would only make matters worse."

"It wouldn't be likely to do much good, certainly."

"If you've got any advice to give me, I'm willing to hear it," said Levison. "It's been on my mind for some time."

Tom was silent.

He could have given advice, certainly, but it would not have been palatable, and Levison was not likely to follow it.

"You can't?" said Levison.

"Well, I could, if you want. I'd advise you to go a bit straighter yourself, and set the kid a good example. What's the good of telling him not to do things that you do yourself?"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I know you won't follow my advice," said Tom; "but it's the best I can think of. So long!"

The captain of the Shell quitted the study.

Levison did not resume his work.

He moved restlessly to and fro, a prey to troublesome thoughts. The good that was in him prevented him from saying—like Cain of old—"Am I my brother's keeper?" He knew that he was responsible.

He was still deep in reflection when Mellish looked into the study.

"Bed-time. Done your prep?"

"No!" growled Levison.

"You'll have to dodge Lathom in the morning, then," grinned Mellish. "I did mine before I went to Racke's little party. It's more sensible."

"Oh rats!"

"I say, your minor's coming on!" grinned Mellish. "The little beggar's coming to Racke's party to-morrow, Racke says."

"What rot!"

"It's a fact! Rather a change from what he was when he came here. You're improving him!" chuckled Mellish. "You remember what a pasty, little snivelling prig he was—"

Mellish left his remark unfinished and quitted the study.

Levison was looking dangerous.

Mellish chortled as he went down the passage. The unreasonable attitude Levison had taken up—that his own friends were not good enough for his minor—had, naturally, had an exasperating effect upon the blades of the School House. The progress of Levison minor was distinctly gratifying to those sportive young gentlemen, and they were ready to give him every encouragement. Levison's anger and dismay only amused them.

CHAPTER 9.

Figgins Puts His Foot Down!

THUMP!

Figgins of the Fourth brought down his fist upon the study table with a terrific concussion.

Kerr jumped. Kerr was doing algebra, and that sudden thump on the table made his exercise book more algebraic than ever.



PROFESSOR "SKIMPOLE'S" HOROSCOPE

This Week:

HARRY NOBLE
(KANGAROO).

I CHOSE an unfortunate moment to interview Harry Noble of the Shell, who hails from Queensland, Australia. "Kangaroo," as he is called, was lacing his football boots, preparatory to going down to Little Side. "Sorry, Skimmy," said Noble firmly, but not impolitely. "I'm due to turn out for St. Jim's against the Grammarians in five minutes' time—so I'm afraid the stars will have to wait till after the match. Do you think they'll mind?"

Before Noble went on the field, however, I elicited the information that he was born under Jupiter, the greatest of the planets, within the month (October 24th to November 22nd) of Scorpio, the Scorpion. The particular degree gave a clear indication of his character. Noble is essentially one born to triumph over difficulty, and he is possessed of considerable resource, enabling him to get out of tight corners. His thoughts are by nature free, and he seeks to give them expression. In any sort of struggle he is the type to strive for victory until the very end.

"Jolly well played, Kangaroo!" I heard the fellows shouting, as I went down to the football field after the match. It appeared that "Kangaroo" was instrumental in winning the game for his side—by scoring a goal right on time! "You know, Skimmy," confided Noble, "I believe there is something in having a lucky star." "Indeed there is," I assured him, with a smile.

Fatty Wynn, who was toasting cheese, turned a ruddy face round from the fire.

"You thundering ass!" howled Kerr.

"What the merry dickens—" said Wynn.

Thump!

For the second time George Figgins smote the table.

"I'm not standing it any longer."

"What aren't you standing?" howled Kerr.

"It's sickening," said Figgins. "This is where we put our foot down. We're top dogs in this House—"

"We are—we is!" agreed Kerr. "Reddy doesn't say so, but we are! But what are you burbling about?"

"I've seen 'em coming in," growled Figgins; "sneaking in, looking as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, in case a prefect noticed them."

"Who?" yelled Kerr.

"Those School House rotters!" snorted Figgins. "And I tell you I'm fed up, and it's got to stop! I hear that Railton, over the way, has been growing sharp lately, and keeping an eye on the gang—Levison and Crooke and Racke, and the rest. So they've taken to visiting Clampe over here, and carrying on their games in his study. The New House isn't a refuge for wasters and slackers and smoky rotters!"

"Oh, I see! It isn't our bisney, is it?"

"I've decided that it is. Suppose old Ratty gets after them; he's a good bit sharper than Railton. Nice bisney for this House! Besides, the New House is Cock House of the school. I suppose you admit that?"

"Hear, hear!" said Kerr and Wynn together.

"Well, then, it's time we chipped in. Clampe is a rotter, a regular waster—no better than those School House rotters! We can't help that. There's black sheep in every flock, and the House isn't proud of them. I've held his head under the

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tap myself for smoking. We're not going to allow Clampe to bring those cads over here and carry on the game they daren't carry on in their own House. It's not good enough!"

"Well, that's right enough!"

Figgins rose to his feet.

"Well, if you agree with me, let's chip in and give those School House cads a warning."

"What sort of warning?"

"Well, it's no good talking to them. I've talked to them already, and they've only sniggered. My idea is to wade into Clampe's study and make an example of the whole gang."

"Well, there's time before supper," remarked Fatty Wynn, with a glance at the clock. "We're not going to be late for supper, Figgy."

"Come on, then! We'll call Reddy in, in case they cut up rusty."

"I rather fancy they will, if we interrupt their little game," grinned Kerr.

"Let 'em!" said Figgins, with a warlike look.

He led the way from the study, and Kerr and Fatty Wynn followed.

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence were at prep in their study when Figgins & Co. looked in.

"Come on!" said Figgins.

"Whitber, O chief?" asked Redfern.

"Clampe's study!"

"Thanks! I'll stay where I am!" said Redfern dryly. "You won't catch me among that gang!"

"Fathead!"

"Same to you, and many of them!" said Redfern affably. "Shut the door after you, will you?"

"You silly ass!" roared Figgins. "I'm not asking you to join the smoking party. We're going to raid them and clear them out!"

"Oh!" Redfern jumped up with alacrity. "I tumble! I'm your man! It's about time the chopper came down, I think."

"Oh, we'll come!" said Lawrence. "Better not make a row, though; we don't want Ratty up."

"Ratty's gone out."

"Oh, good! Lead on, Macduff!"

Figgins led on, and Redfern & Co. followed with Kerr and Wynn. They went down the Shell passage to Clampe's study. In that apartment a buzz of voices could be heard. Clampe's little party had gathered there.

Through the door the newcomers could hear the sardonic, unpleasant voice of Aubrey Racke.

"Levison wouldn't come. He didn't like his minor being with us—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So I told him to go and eat coke. Why shouldn't his minor have his fling if he wants to?"

"Why not?" said Clampe. "Levison minor's quite welcome here, and his major can sulk on his own as long as he likes."

"What's the game?" This was Levison minor's voice. "Nap or banker?"

"Hark at 'em!" growled Figgins in utter disgust. Might fancy it was a pub or a tap-room instead of a study at St. Jim's. The silly dummies! Anybody might have come along and heard that!"

Figgins rapped sharply at the door, which was locked.

There was a startled exclamation in the study, and a sound of a quickly closed drawer. Something was being put away out of sight.

"Who's there?" called out Clampe.

"I'm here!"

"Oh, it's only Figgins." Clampe's voice had a

tone of relief. He had feared that it might be Monteith, or Baker, or another prefect. "What do you want, Figgins?"

"I want to come in!"

"Can't be done at present. Busy!"

"Would you rather I busted the door open?" asked Figgins pleasantly. "I give you one minute to open it before I get a hammer."

"Look here, you cheeky ass—"

"Oh, shut up! That minute's going!"

There was a buzz of whispering in the room, and then the door was unlocked and opened.

Clampe of the Shell knew that George Figgins was a man of his word.

Figgins & Co. strode into the study with determined looks, eyed very grimly by Clampe and his festive party.

CHAPTER 10.

Drastic Measures!

FIGGINS looked grimly round the study.

Racke and Crooke, Mellish and Levison minor were there, along with Clampe of the New House.

There was no sign of cards or smokes. Figgins remembered the hastily closed drawer.

"Well, what do you want now you've come in?" demanded Clampe savagely.

"Just a few words with you, to begin with," said Figgins. "These School House fellows are going straight back to their own House!"

"What?"

"You heard what I said."



Figgins & Co. halted outside Clampe's study. In party had gathered there. "What's the game?" can growled Fig

"What the dickens business is it of yours what visitors I have in my study?" exclaimed Clampe furiously.

"We know what they've come for, you see," said Redfern.

"We've come over for a little talk with Clampe," said Mellish, looking rather alarmed. He did not like the look of the New House fellows.

"Yes; and then what?" said Figgins. "You've taken to playing your rotten games in this House because your own Housemaster has his eye on you! We know!"

"We don't ask you to join in our little games!" sneered Racke. "Can't you mind your own business?"

"We're making this our business! It's got to stop!"

"You're going to interfere in my study?" ejaculated Clampe, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Exactly!"

"Look here, get out of my study!"

"After we've done what we've come to do!" said Figgins. "You can put up a fight, if you like, man to man! The others will see fair play."

"Depend on us!" said Kerr.

"I—I don't want to fight you!"

"We didn't come over here for a scrap!" growled Crooke. "We came for a friendly talk with Clampe. Let us alone, confound you!"

"Pull open that drawer, Fatty!"

"Let it alone!" yelled Clampe.

Fatty Wynn grinned, and jerked out the table drawer. A pack of cards and a box of cigarettes were disclosed. Figgins took them out.



ment a buzz of voices could be heard. Clampe's little minor's voice. "Nap or banker?" "Hark at 'em!" "or disgust."

"That's my property!" said Clampe, between his teeth.

"Well, there goes your property!"

Figgins jammed the cards and the cigarettes in the fire, and stamped them well in with his boot. Clampe eyed him, but did not venture to interfere. The Shell fellow was bigger and heavier than Figgins of the Fourth, but he would as soon have faced a wild bull as Figgins' hard knuckles.

"I—I think we may as well be going," murmured Mellish.

"You're going all right!" said Figgins. "But you're going to have a lesson before you clear as a warning not to come again!"

"Look here—"

"Line up there!" said Figgins, as Racke & Co. made a strategic movement towards the door.

Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence lined up in the doorway, grinning. Racke & Co. halted. They did not care to attempt to force a passage.

Figgins opened the study cupboard, and took therefrom a fives-bat.

"Clampe first!" he said.

"Let go!" roared Clampe, struggling fiercely as Kerr and Fatty Wynn laid hold of him.

"You can make it a fight, if you like, Clampe."

"I'm not going to fight you, you beast!"

"Over with him, then!"

Clampe was pitched face downwards on the table. Then Figgins got to work with the fives-bat.

He gave Clampe six of the best, amid wild howls and wriggings from the unfortunate blade.

Racke & Co. looked on sullenly. Their turn was coming, and they knew it. Frank Levison's expression was very peculiar.

It is an old saying that one is judged by the company one keeps, and Frank had been found in bad company. Figgins & Co. judged him like the rest. The fag did not speak.

"Racke next!" said Figgins.

"Come on, Racke!"

"If you touch me—" began Racke, between his teeth.

The Co. touched him before he could finish. Racke, resisting fiercely, was flung on the table, and the fives-bat went to work again.

Racke was gasping when he was tossed aside, and his face was white with rage.

Crooke came next, unresisting. Then Mellish had his share of the fives-bat, with an accompaniment of howls.

"As for you, you young rascal," said Figgins, glaring at Levison minor. "I advise you to keep clear of these rotters in future! If I were your major, I'd see that you kept clear of them, too, or else not leave a whole bone in you! I hope this lesson will do you good! Over with him!"

Levison minor was laid on the table. But Figgins was light on the fag, giving him only two. Frank took the punishment without a word. It came hard on him in the circumstances, for inwardly he was in full agreement with Figgins. But he had to suffer for the company he was keeping. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's awfully deep scheme had its drawbacks in some ways, it seemed.

"Is that all?" grinned Redfern.

Figgins was breathing rather deeply after his exercise with the fives-bat.

"Not quite. Get some soot out, Kerr!"

Kerr shovelled some soot from the chimney. Figgins took Clampe's handkerchief and dipped it in the soot, and proceeded to anoint the faces of the bold, bad blades. Racke-clenched his hands fiercely, but he did nothing more; and in a few

minutes Clampe and his visitors were transformed into very good imitations of seaside niggers.

"Now kick 'em out!" said Figgins.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We can't go back like this, you fool!" yelled Crooke.

"I rather think you can," said Figgins. "I jolly well know you're going to, anyway! Get moving before we start on you again."

Redfern & Co. drew aside at the doorway. The unhappy sportsmen of the School House passed out of the study. Figgins and Kerr thoughtfully armed themselves with some of Clampe's eggs, and as the sooty party went down the passage eggs began to burst on them. Sooty and egg, the "gay dogs" broke into a run and escaped down the stairs.

"Gone!" said Redfern. "Pity we can't send Clampe after them!"

"I think Clampe's had a lesson," said Figgins, glaring at the Shell fellow. "You'd better understand, Clampe, that this is only a taste of what you'll get if there's any more of it!"

"Groogh!" mumbled Clampe, savagely spitting out soot.

And the reformers of the New House went their way, quite satisfied that they deserved well of their House and of their country generally.

"I fancy that'll be the end of it," said Figgins, as he sat down to his prep in his study. "But if there's any more, we'll give them a second dose!"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co.

And Clampe of the Shell, as he furiously scrubbed his sooty face in the bath-room, was, in fact, making up his mind that he would think twice if not three times before he asked Racke & Co. over to the New House again for a little game.

CHAPTER 11.

Gussy is Quite Satisfied!

"**H**A, ha, ha!"

Julian of the Fourth came into the Common-room in the School House in an explosive state of merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared.

"Bai Jove! What's the joke, deah boy?"

Julian chortled joyfully.

"Come and look at 'em! Racke & Co. Come and look at 'em! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what's happened?" asked Tom Merry.

"They've been looking for trouble in the New House and finding it!" grinned Julian. "The whole merry gang—Racke and Crooke and Mellish and Levison minor—"

"My minor!" exclaimed Levison, jumping up.

"Ha, ha, ha! The whole merry family! They've come back sooty and egg—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They're in the Shell dorm, cleaning up!" chuckled Julian. "They came sneaking in on tiptoe, afraid of being spotted! They looked pictures!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of the juniors to the Shell dormitory to see Racke & Co.

Those disconsolate youths were seeking to clean themselves. They had their jackets and collars off, and were scrubbing away, with furious faces.

The juniors crowded into the dormitory, yelling with laughter at the sight. Racke & Co. did not

feel very merry. Only Frank Levison was taking it good-humouredly.

"How on earth did you get like that?" asked Tom Merry, laughing.

Racke snarled.

"Figgins and his gang, of course. They came on us in Clampe's study—a gang of them. We hadn't a chance."

"So you were there, Frank?" said Levison, eyeing his minor grimly.

Frank nodded cheerfully.

"What did you go for, Levison minor?" asked Kangaroo of the Shell.

"To play banker!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Banker!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated the Cornstalk, in astonishment. "You precious young rascal, you don't mind owning up!"

"Not a bit!"

The crowd of juniors went away, chuckling, leaving the unfortunate blades to finish the cleaning process. Only Levison waited for his minor.

Frank looked at him rather oddly as he left the dormitory, and Levison joined him, with lowering brows.

"Lucky you weren't with us, Ernie," ventured the fag. "You'd have been put through it just the same. Racke says you wouldn't come because I was there. Why?"

Levison set his teeth.

"You precious little rotter!" he said.

Frank gave him a look of surprise.

"Why, what have I done?" he exclaimed savagely.

"Done!" said Levison. "You know what you've done. This affair will be the talk of the school soon. Your name will be mixed up with those cads. Every fellow in the Lower School will know that you're one of them!"

"Well, what does that matter? You're one of them yourself, aren't you?"

"I—I—"

"What have I done that you wouldn't do?" asked Frank.

"You know you've done wrong."

"But I've heard you say that a fellow must have some excitement, and a short life and a merry one and the rest," said Frank. "I'm only doing as you do."

"I suppose it's no good talking to you!" said Levison savagely. "I've a jolly good mind to throw you over altogether and let you go to the dogs your own way!"

"Your own way, you mean!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You can't say I took up with Racke and his set for a long time. I stood out of that kind of thing until quite lately," said Frank. "But you've told me not to preach to you more than once. Well, what's good enough for you is good enough for me, I suppose?"

Levison bit his lip hard.

"I'll tell you what," said Frank, with a chuckle; "let's make a break to-night, and you can introduce me to your friends at the Green Man."

"The—the Green Man!" said Levison faintly.

"Yes; Banks and Lodgey and old Joliffe, you know. I saw Lodgey the other day in Rylcombe."

"Did he speak to you?" exclaimed Levison fiercely.

"Yes; he was very friendly. He asked me if I were your brother. He thought I was from the likeness, and he told me he'd be pleased to see me any time I could come in."

(Continued on page 22.)

Four.

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"The hound!"

"He seemed very friendly," said Frank calmly. "What are you calling him names for, your own friend?"

"Did you say you'd go and see him?" snapped Levison.

"I said I'd ask you to take me the next time you came to the Green Man," said Frank cheerfully. "What about making a break after lights-out to-night, Ernie?"

Levison major stared at the fag, aghast.

Was this his minor who was speaking, or a second edition of Piggott of the Third? Anger and dismay and disgust mingled in Levison's breast. Certainly Frank seemed to have made great progress since he had taken up with Racke & Co.

"Well?" said Frank, with a grin.

"Hold your tongue!" snapped Levison.

And he drove his hands deep into his pockets and strode away.

Frank looked after him with a curious expression on his face. Then he went down slowly to the Third Form Room.

He found some excitement there. The fags had the story by this time, and Levison minor was surrounded at once by Wally & Co., who wanted an explanation.

"You shady rotter!" said D'Arcy minor in measured tones. "Going to play banker with those cads—what?"

"No, I wasn't."

"Why, you said so!"

"I said I was there to play banker; but I wasn't going to play, all the same," said Frank. "Don't be an ass!"

"Then what were you doing with that gang?" demanded Frayne.

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Levison minor did not reply.

"I've been expecting this," said Wally, looking round. "Sooner or later Levison minor was sure to take after his major. Lucky for him he's got some pals to stop him. We're not going to let you be a rotter like your brother, young Levison. Collar him!"

"Look here——" began Frank, in alarm.

"Collar him!"

Levison minor was promptly collared. He could not very well explain to his chums in the Third, and Wally & Co., considering that Frank was getting into bad ways, felt that it was up to them to put a prompt stop to it. They did not want any more bold blades in the Third. Piggott was quite enough in that line. Levison minor was accordingly bumped thrice on the floor, and then given the frogmarch round the Form-room, as a warning of what he might expect if he did not mend his ways.

When his friends had finished Levison minor was in a very breathless and dishevelled state.

Jameson suggested anointing him with cinders, and Frank bolted from the Form-room in haste.

He ran into Arthur Augustus in the passage.

"Bai Jove! You look wathah untidy!" said Arthur Augustus. "What's the mattah?"

"I've been ragged!" gasped Frank.

"Bai Jove! What for?"

"Because they think——"

"Ha, ha, ha! I see, it is wathah a misundah-standin'. Nevah mind, deah boy, the little scheme is workin' first-rate."

Levison minor grunted.

The little scheme was doubtless working first-rate in some ways, but in others it had very decided drawbacks.

"Keep it up, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "It's workin'. I have just seen your majah, and he is lookin' fidgettily down in the mouth."

Frank felt a pang of remorse.

"Is he?" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, wathah! He has just had a wow with Wacke, too, and punched his nose in the Common-room," grinned Arthur Augustus. "He has kicked Mellish out of his study, too. Ha, ha, ha! It's workin', deah boy. He looks awfully wotten now."

"Oh!" said Frank.

"Bai Jove! Where are you goin', Levison minah?"

Frank did not reply. He was hurrying away, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the Form-room passage, somewhat ruffled, the fag hurried upstairs to the Fourth Form quarters.

He tapped at his brother's door and opened it. Ernest Levison was alone in the study.

He was seated in the armchair, his hands driven deep into his pockets, his brows contracted, his whole look one of dejection and deep trouble.

Frank's heart smote him.

"Ernie!" he exclaimed, coming into the study.

Levison started and looked up.

"Well?" he muttered.

"Ernie, I—I'm sorry! I didn't mean——"

"Oh, don't jaw!" growled Levison. "You've made me the most miserable rotter in the school, and you can be satisfied with that. It's my fault, I know that. I never thought it would come to this. I've asked for it, and now I've got it!"

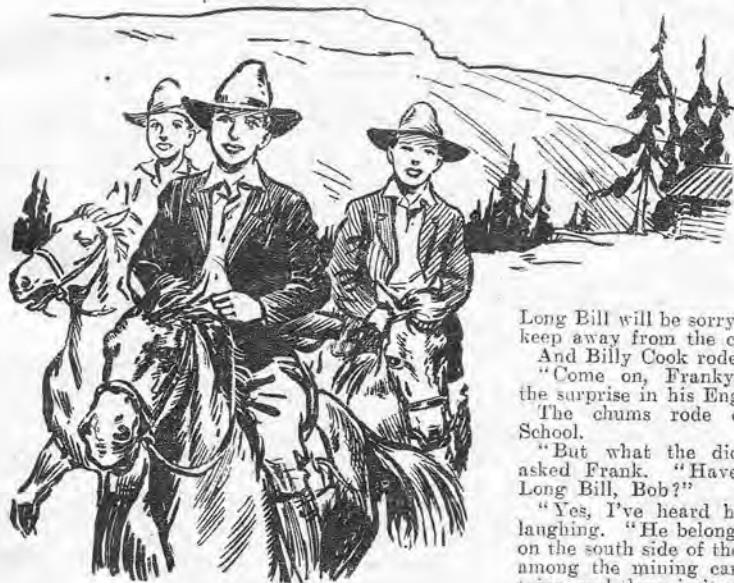
"Ernie! I——"

"I suppose it's no good talking to you?" said Levison bitterly. "It's a bit too late for that. It's no good telling you that if you'll chuck up

(Continued on page 36.)

The Bad Man from Bandog!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



"Shooting-up" a town-ship is Long Bill's idea of fun. But he doesn't find it half so funny when he tries the same game at Cedar Creek!

A Reckless Scheme!

BILLY COOK, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, pulled in his horse as Frank Richards and Bob Lawless came riding down the trail.

It was a sharp morning in the Canadian autumn—the "fall" as Frank Richards had already learned to call it. A keen wind came from the snowy slopes of the Rockies, far off on the horizon. But the two schoolboys looked ruddy and cheerful as they trotted along the trail.

"Hold on a minute, boys!" said Billy Cook, and the chums of Cedar Creek School halted on the trail.

"You're goin' to school now?" asked the ranchman.

"I guess so," said Bob. "Anything up?"

"Yep! Don't you go near Cedar Camp to-day. Long Bill's come to town!"

"And who the merry dickens is Long Bill?" asked Frank Richards in surprise. "And what does he matter to us, anyway?"

"You haven't heard of him?" asked Billy Cook. "He's a bad man—a border ruffian!"

"Well, however bad Long Bill may be, I suppose he wouldn't eat us if we dropped in at the camp to-day."

"Long Bill's been painting the town red last night," said the ranch foreman. "The boys say he's going to shoot-up the camp to-day."

"Shoot-up the camp?" ejaculated Frank in surprise.

"Yep. You don't want to stop any of the bullets, youngsters. He'll be rounded up soon. The sheriff of Thompson has been warned that Long Bill has come over the border on the war-path. He can't play his games here. I guess when the sheriff gets after him with his posse,

Long Bill will be sorry he left Bandog. Mind you keep away from the camp."

And Billy Cook rode on.

"Come on, Franky," said Bob, grinning at the surprise in his English cousin's face.

The chums rode on towards Cedar Creek School.

"But what the dickens does it all mean?" asked Frank. "Have you heard of this chap, Long Bill, Bob?"

"Yes, I've heard him spoken of," said Bob, laughing. "He belongs to a place called Bandog, on the south side of the border. It's a wild place, among the mining camps of the Cascade Mountains, and there isn't much law and order there—except lynch law."

"Oh!" said Frank.

"I shouldn't wonder if even Bandog has got too hot to hold him," grinned Bob. "The man's a regular brute, and he seems to fancy that he can play his tricks in Canada. If he tries shooting-up the camp at Cedar, he'll be brought to order so quick it will make his head swim."

"But what is shooting-up the camp?" asked the mystified Frank.

"It's a fool's game they play in some of the lawless mining camps down in the Cascade Mountains and Sierra Nevada. A man fills himself up to the chin with firewater and goes on the warpath. He chases up the street, firing right and left with six-shooters. If anybody gets in the way he is liable to get hurt. He smashes all the windows and riddles the cabins."

"My hat!"

"You see, in a lonely camp like Bandog, a ruffian like that terrorises the whole place," explained Bob. "There's no handling him unless all the boys get together on some fine day and lynch him."

"What a delightful state of affairs!" said Frank. "But surely this ruffian won't dare to act that way in a Canadian camp?"

"I shouldn't wonder. You see, he won't understand that his kind of game is barred in this section till the sheriff comes down on him. Then he will understand sharp enough."

"I say, Bob—" Frank hesitated.

"Well?"

"I've never seen a bad man," said Frank. "That kind of a bad man, I mean. What price trotting over to Cedar Camp after morning lessons? It would be no end of a lark."

"I guess I was just thinking of it myself," said Bob. "We won't say a word at the school. We'll

just cut over and get our dinner at the camp, instead of at the school."

"Good egg!"

"I dare say the Cherub will come," grinned Bob. "I've never seen a bad man on the rampage any more than you have, Frank. We don't grow 'em in Canada, you know. It will be no end of a stunt!"

And the chums rode on to the school, their minds made up on that reckless scheme. They were quite curious to see the bad man from Bandog on the rampage, and they hardly thought of the danger involved.

But when they joined their chum, Vere Beaulerc, at the school, and propounded the precious plan to him, Beaulerc looked rather grave.

"You'll be running a lot of risk," he said. "Bullets are no respecters of persons, you know. That man Long Bill is rather a scoundrel. He was fighting three or four chaps in the camp last night. My pater was there."

"Oh, let's go!" said Bob. "We can keep out of danger."

"Yes, let's," said Frank.

Beaulerc smiled.

"I'm game," he said. "I'll borrow Dick Dawson's horse and ride over with you."

And so it was settled.

Shooting-Up the Town!

MISS MEADOWS, when she took her class that morning, certainly had no suspicion of the reckless scheme concocted by three of her pupils.

Frank Richards & Co. had not said a word to the other fellows. They were quite well aware that if the schoolmistress got wind of the reckless scheme she would have forbidden them to go anywhere near Cedar Camp that day.

Long Bill's fame had already spread, and Cedar Creek fellows were talking of him that morning, and of the way he would be rounded up by the sheriff of Thompson if he started playing the fool in the Thompson Valley.

The chums were glad enough when morning lessons ended.

Frank and Bob brought round their ponies, as if going on a ride, and Dick Dawson willingly lent Vere Beaulerc his horse. The three schoolboys mounted and rode away down the trail through the timber. When they were out of sight of the lumber school, they broke into a gallop.

They passed the Hopkins' homestead, and the shack where Vere Beaulerc lived with his father, the remittance man, and a little later Cedar Camp came in sight.

The three schoolboys rode into the camp cheerily in the bright sunlight. They jumped down before the Hotel Continental, which, in spite of its grandiloquent title, was only a log building of two floors.

A Kootenay stableman took their horses away, and the chums entered the backwoods hotel.

A good many men of the Cedar Camp were there for their midday meal, and there was an excited discussion going on. Long Bill of Bandog was the subject.

Evidently the bad man had impressed himself on the minds of the men of Cedar Camp. There was angry indignation in most faces.

For the bad man to attempt to play his wild pranks there was an insult as well as an injury.

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and it was quite certain that Long Bill would soon find that he was in the wrong box.

"Hallo, Pete!" said Bob Lawless, with a nod to the red-shirted landlord of the Continental.

"Hallo, young Lawless!" said Pete. "What on airth are you doin' hyer?"

"I guess we've come to see your bad man."

"You'd better have stayed at home," said Pete seriously. "The sheriff hasn't come along yet. When he does, Long Bill is going to get a surprise. He's going to discover that this hyer town isn't Bandog, not by long chalks!"

"Where is he now?" asked Frank.

"He's at the Red Horse, filling himself up with tanglefoot," said Pete, with a snort of angry disgust. "He's been bragging that he's going to shoot up the camp, same game as he plays at home in Bandog. He ain't done it yet."

"We're in time for the show!" said Bob. "What about lunch? I'm hungry."

The three schoolboys went into the dining-room for lunch.

Long Bill and his threatened shoot-up did not have the effect of impairing their appetites. They made an excellent meal at a table crowded with gentlemen and lumbermen. The talk at the table ran entirely on Long Bill and his reckless threats.

Just as the meal was over a Chinese bartender came bundling into the dining-room, his almond eyes wide-open with terror. He plunged under the table and sat there quaking.

"Hallo! What's that game?" asked Frank Richards in astonishment.

There was a wail from the Celestial under the table.

"Bad Melican man come! Shootee! Poor Ching killee! Oh!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Hallo! He's at it!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Every man was on his feet at once. There was a rush into the outer room to look into the street.

From the long main street lined with cabins and buildings there came a loud, incessant rattle of shots.

Bang, bang, bang!

Warning shouts were heard on all sides.

"Look out!"

"Cover!"

"It's Long Bill on the rampage!"

And there was a rush to take cover.

Frank Richards, scarcely able to believe his eyes and ears, stared out of the window into the street. The bad man from Bandog was evidently fulfilling his threat.

Frank sighted him as he came up the street from the Red Horse Saloon. He was a huge, muscular ruffian, with a shaggy black beard and a red brick complexion.

Long Bill had a six-shooter in either hand as he charged up the centre of the street. With utter disregard of the damage he might do to property, and even to life, the ruffian fired right and left into the cabins. The street was deserted in the twinkling of an eye.

Crash! Crash!

The few buildings in Cedar Camp that boasted glass in the windows were quickly deprived of that luxury.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Cover!" yelled Bob Lawless, dragging Frank Richards to the floor.

Crash!

Right in the window where Frank had been standing a few moments before a bullet whizzed, crashing into the bottles behind the long bar.

There was a roar of wrath from Pete Hawkins as he saw his property demolished in that reckless style. Bottles crashed right and left.

Long Bill passed the hotel, charging recklessly up the street, firing his revolvers right and left as he went.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

And then he was gone.

An Unexpected Arrival!

FRANK RICHARDS rose to his feet, breathing hard. The ordeal had lasted scarcely longer than a minute, but it had been exciting enough while it lasted.

"My hat!" gasped Frank. "Oh, my hat!"

"A bit exciting, eh?" said Bob Lawless.

"Yes, by Jove!" breathed Frank.

"The reckless scoundrel!" said Vere Beauclerc.

"He's gone!"

There was still a sound of shooting in the distance. Long Bill was still holding the street, monarch of all he surveyed, and certainly there was none his right to dispute.

But the danger was past.

"Well, this beats Banagher!" said Bob Lawless. "The cheeky rascal, to play that game in a Canadian camp! Wait till the sheriff comes!"

The shooting died away. Frank Richards looked out into the street. Smashed windows and riddled doors met his gaze. A mule, grazed by a bullet, was galloping frantically down the street.

Frank drew a deep breath.

"By Jove, this beats everything!" he said. "The sooner that chap is put safe in choky the better it will be for him and everybody else."

"I guess it won't be long," said Bob.

It was time for the chums to start on their return to Cedar Creek School, to get there in time for the afternoon lessons; but they wisely decided to wait a little, lest the intoxicated ruffian should come charging back, as was quite possible.

But nothing more was seen of Long Bill for the next quarter of an hour, and so they called for their horses and started. They left the camp behind and rode rapidly down the trail.

"Hallo, here's the sheriff!" exclaimed Bob.

From the direction of Thompson a bunch of horsemen came in sight—the sheriff of Thompson and three of his men, with rifles under their arms.

The sheriff pulled in his horse as he came abreast of the schoolboys on the trail.

"Anything going on at Cedar?" he asked.

"I guess so, Mr. Henderson!" grinned Bob.

"Long Bill has been shooting-up the town."

The sheriff's lips closed grimly.

"I guess we'll look after Long Bill," he said.

He rode on with his men towards the camp, and the schoolboys resumed their way. They galloped back to the school, but afternoon lessons were proceeding when they arrived. The three chums came into the log school-room red and breathless.

Miss Meadows gave them a very severe look.

"Lawless, Richards, Beauclerc—you are late!"

"Very sorry, ma'am!" said Bob meekly.

"Where have you been?"

"H'm! We dropped in at Cedar Camp for lunch, ma'am!"

"You have been to Cedar Camp? You know that you should not have done so in the circumstances!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "I shall detain you for an hour after lessons. Go to your places!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

And the three delinquents, looking very meek and repentant, sat down. They had expected Miss Meadows to be "waxy." The schoolmistress' point of view was, naturally, rather different from their own.

There were excited whispers in class for some time. The news that the three had been to the camp made them the observed of all observers. The other fellows wanted to know whether they had seen the bad man from Bandog.

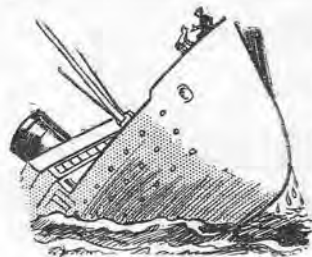
And there was a thrill in the class as Bob Lawless, in cautious whispers, described the "shooting-up" of Cedar Camp.

"I guess the sheriff will nail him!" said Eben Hacke. "I calculate Long Bill will be sorry he spoke—just a few!"

"You bet!" said Dawson.

"Silence in class!" rapped out Miss Meadows.

And the whispered discussion of Long Bill and his exploits had to cease.



"Didn't I tell you not to touch things!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to A. Burton, 1, Hawstead Road, Catford, London, S.E.6.

Miss Meadows was decidedly cross with the three young adventurers. When the school was dismissed she gave them a stern look.

"You will remain for one hour," she said. "You will write out the conjugations of a strong and weak verb."

"Yes, ma'am."

The early dusk was settling down as the three schoolboys were left alone in the big room. Outside the moon was rising over the woods, and in the log school-room it was necessary to light lamps.

Rather dismally the three settled down to their detention task by the light of the oil lamps.

Bob Lawless yawned lugubriously after a while.

"I say, this is rotten!" he remarked.

"Beastly!" said Beauclerc. "But Miss Meadows is right enough. We ought not to have gone really."

"Right as rain, Chernab! But I don't like verbs out of lesson hours—nor in them, for that matter. Everybody's gone now."

The school grounds outside were silent and deserted. The full, round moon, riding high in the clear Canadian sky, gleamed in at the windows of the school-room. Outside, it was almost as light as day.

The only sounds that came to their ears were the clinking and clanking of pans from the kitchen, where Sally, the black cook, was at work.

But suddenly in the evening silence there came the sharp, ringing report of a pistol.

Bob Lawless started to his feet.

"Hallo, who's playing with firearms?" he exclaimed.

"Hark!" said Beaulerc.

A loud, harsh voice rang outside.

"Hurroo! Hyer I am—the bad man from Bandog! Hyer I am! Hurroo!"

Crack! Crack!

"Long Bill!" panted Frank Richards, in alarm. Tramp! Heavy footsteps rang in the porch outside.

Then in at the doorway of the school-room strode a gigantic figure, a man with a shaggy beard, red face, and savage eyes, with a revolver in each hand.

"Hyer I am!" he roared. "Hyer's me, Long Bill of Bandog! Any galoot got anything to say? Hurroo!"

Crack! Crack!

Smash!

Cook of the Walk!

"LONG BILL!"

Frank Richards and his chums were on their feet in dismay. The fearsome ruffian strode towards the three schoolboys.

Plucky as they were, it required all their nerve to stand up and face the man as he advanced.

"Hallo, galoots!" roared Long Bill.

"Hallo!" said Bob Lawless, with a gasp.

The man was evidently the worse for drink, but he did not seem to be in a bad temper. The firing had simply been exuberance of spirits. It was a weakness of the bad man from Bandog to wish to inspire terror.

"Anybody at home in this hyer shebang?" demanded Long Bill, in his bull voice. "What do you call this hyer shanty, anyhow?"

"It's a school," said Frank Richards.

"Oh, it's a school, is it? Then where's the schoolmarm? I've looked in hyer for some supper. If I don't have thet supper quick there'll be blood on the face of the moon. You hear me yaup?"

"What is this?"

It was Miss Meadows' cool, quiet voice at the door. The Canadian girl started as she saw the huge ruffian, and her face paled a little, but she remained perfectly calm.

"Evening, marm!" said Long Bill.

"Who are you?"

"Long Bill of Bandog!"

"Oh!"

"Don't be scared, marm!" said Long Bill. "I ain't hurting you. I've dropped in for some supper. Glad to see me, hey?"

"I am not glad to see you," said Miss Meadows calmly. "But I will certainly give you some supper if you desire it."

"O.K.," said Long Bill. "Don't you mind a little shootin', marm; that's only my way. I've been on the blaze at the camp, miss, and they don't like my ways. I've woke 'em up!" He chuckled. "I'm trampin' up the valley, and I ain't lookin' for any hotel bills to pay. You hand me some supper, hot and plenty, and put me up for the night, an' you'll find me as gentle as a lamb."

"I am afraid I cannot put you up for the night," said Miss Meadows. "But you shall have some supper."

"I guess, marm, I'm stayin' here this night," said the bad man from Bandog. "I guess I'm not goin' farther on. You hear me yaup! And if there's word said agin it, I pity the pilgrim what says the word!"

"If you choose to stay here, I cannot prevent you, of course."

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"Now you're torkin' hoss-sense, marm," said Long Bill approvingly. "What I says goes, and don't you forget it!"

"I will order some supper for you," said Miss Meadows. "You boys may go now. Go home at once!"

Frank Richards and his chums left the school-room. They stopped in the porch.

"I guess we're not going," said Bob in a whisper. "We're not vamoosing the ranch and leaving Miss Meadows with that ruffian!"

"Certainly not!" said Beaulerc.

"No jolly fear!" exclaimed Frank emphatically. "The brute may get savage any minute."

Miss Meadows followed the boys into the porch.

"It is time you were gone," she said.

"We're not going, ma'am!" said Frank Richards. "We can't leave you alone with that beast!"

"You would not be able to help me, even if it were necessary," said the schoolmistress, with a slight smile. "Please go!"

"We can't, ma'am," said Beaulerc quietly.

"Let us stay, please. We—we'll help you give the brute his supper. He may begin shooting."

Miss Meadows hesitated. But it was quite clear that the boys would not go, and she nodded at last.

"Very well, you may stay at present," she said. "But keep out of the man's sight, and do not irritate him."

"Yes, marm!"

"Where's that supper?" roared Long Bill, striding out of the school-room. "I ain't waiting long!"

"Please step into the kitchen," said Miss Meadows, unruffled.

The ruffian's heavy boots went tramping into the kitchen. Sally, the black cook, fled with a shriek at the sight of him. Long Bill burst into a roar of laughter.

The sight of the terror his very looks inspired seemed to be very entertaining to the gentleman from Bandog.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Miss Meadows did not recall Sally. With quiet calmness, though her heart was beating fast, the girl set about waiting on the unwelcome guest and supplying his needs, which were not very moderate.

The three boys remained in the hall. If Long Bill's mood changed, and he became violent, as was only too probable, they meant to chip in, whatever the danger might be.

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards. "This does take the cake, Bob. Fancy that rotten brute coming here!"

"He's had to clear out of Cedar, I guess," said Bob. "With all his bounce, he lighted out as soon as he found the sheriff was after him."

There was a step outside, and Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, pale and agitated, came into the porch.

"What is it—what is going on?" exclaimed the young master, peering at the boys over his gold-rimmed glasses.

Frank pointed into the open doorway of the kitchen.

Mr. Slimmey became paler still but he did not tremble. Poor Mr. Slimmey was feeble in body, but he had the spirit of a lion. His eyes blinked away at a great rate behind his glasses.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured.

"He's quiet now, sir," said Bob. "We're hanging in case he cuts up rusty with Miss Meadows."

"You must not go into danger—I shall deal with him, in that case," said Mr. Slimmey nervously.

Bob Lawless grinned; he could not help it. Mr. Slimmey would not have made a mouthful for the gigantic ruffian.

Long Bill was eating voraciously. His exploits in Cedar Camp had apparently given him an appetite.

Miss Meadows waited on him with quiet calmness. The brave Canadian girl was making the best of a bad situation.

Long Bill caught sight of Mr. Slimmey in the porch and glared out at him.

"Hallo! Who's that galoot with the blinkers on? I allers wing galoots with blinkers on!"

Crack!

Bob Lawless dragged Mr. Slimmey aside.

the lumber school so long as the border ruffian was there.

They moved round the building to the open window of the kitchen, where the lamplight streamed out into the night.

Long Bill sat at the kitchen table, with his broad back to the window, and the schoolboys were within a few yards of him, unseen by the ruffian.

He crashed his pistol-butt impatiently on the plank table. Miss Meadows came back into the room.

"Anything to drink in this hyer shanty?" demanded Long Bill gruffly.

"I have no intoxicants here. Shall I make you some coffee?"

"Nix! Tanglefoot's my drink!"

"I have none here!"



In at the doorway of the school-room strode a gigantic figure, a man with a shaggy beard, red face, and savage eyes, with a six-gun in each hand. It was Long Bill, the bad man from Bandog!

The ruffian had fired recklessly, intending to "wing" the young master—not to take his life, but to injure him, that being the Bandog gentleman's idea of pleasantry.

He roared with laughter as poor Mr. Slimmey disappeared round the corner of the passage, dragged into cover by Bob Lawless.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Slimmey. "The ruffian was actually firing at me! Oh!"

Miss Meadows came quickly out of the kitchen.

"You boys go at once!" she said authoritatively. "You are in danger here."

"So are you, ma'am!" said Bob.

"Go, I tell you!" commanded Miss Meadows.

The three schoolboys looked rebellious, but they did not dare to disobey her. They went out into the moonlight. But they did not go far. Nothing would have induced them to leave the precincts of

"Mean to say you run a shanty without a drink in it?" demanded Long Bill incredulously. "Don't tork to me! I dare say blinkers has got some tanglefoot. Come hyer, Blinkers!"

Mr. Slimmey did not appear.

"Come hyer!" roared Long Bill. "Show yourself, you galoot, before I shoot the schoolmarm's ear off!"

He caught up the revolver. Paul Slimmey came hurriedly into the kitchen.

Hoping in a Ruffian!

LONG BILL chuckled. His savage threat to Miss Meadows had brought the young master on the scene at once.

"Oh, hyer you are!" snorted the ruffian. "Now, about that tanglefoot?"

"There is no liquor in this house," said Mr. Slimmey quietly. "And I warn you, my man, not to go too far. There is law and order in Canada."

"What! You tork to me, you—you slab-sided son of a greaser!" roared Long Bill.

"Do not anger him, Mr. Slimmey," whispered Miss Meadows hastily.

Long Bill waved his six-shooter at Mr. Slimmey. "You hike off and fetch in the licker!" he said.

"You hear me yaup! Get a move on!"

"I cannot give you what is not here," said Mr. Slimmey.

"I give you two minutes," said Long Bill. "If that licker ain't hyer in two minutes off goes the schoolmarm's ear!"

The ruffian levelled his six-shooter at Miss Meadows. Whether he would have carried out his atrocious threat Mr. Slimmey hardly knew. But he knew that he did not mean to risk it.

With a pale face, but quite composed, Mr. Slimmey stepped between the levelled revolver and the schoolmistress.

"Leave the room, Miss Meadows," he said hurriedly. "Leave him to me."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Long Bill. "Leave me to you, you howling coyote! Hyer I am for you, you galoot!"

He made a rush at the young man, clubbing his revolver. Mr. Slimmey, still keeping in front of the Canadian girl, faced him bravely. He struck once, full on the brutal, bearded face, and then the revolver-butt crashed down on his head, and he fell senseless to the floor.

Miss Meadows gave a sharp cry.

"You brute!"

"Enough chinwag!" shouted the ruffian. "Fur a Mexican red cent I'd serve you the same, and don't you forget it!"

Miss Meadows bent over the assistant master. Mr. Slimmey was quite unconscious, and a big blue bruise was forming on his pale forehead.

Long Bill sat down at the table again, and resumed his voracious meal.

"Now you hurry up with that licker," he said. "Mind you bring it along sharp, or I'll fill that carcass so full of bullet-holes you could use him for a colander! You hear me?"

"I tell you—"

"Aw, shucks! I want that licker!" said Long Bill. "Out you go, or I'll come to you!"

He half-rose from his seat threateningly, and Miss Meadows stepped back out of the kitchen. Long Bill sat down again, with a brutal laugh, and resumed his wolfish meal.

Outside, in the glimmering moonlight, Frank Richards and his comrades looked at one another with pale, set faces. They withdrew quietly to a distance from the window to speak. "We've got to chip in!" muttered Bob tensely.

Frank Richards nodded.

"There's no choice," he said. "He may kill poor Mr. Slimmey, and Miss Meadows, too, for that matter. There's no time to get help here."

"We've got to handle him!" said Beauclerc, clenching his hands.

"But—but how?" muttered Bob.

"You can handle a lariat, Bob?"

"You bet!"

"We can get a rope from the horses. One of your trail-ropes would do."

"Good man!" said Bob, under his breath. "I guess I'll try it. We shall be taking a big risk. That villain will shoot if he gets a chance."

"We shall chance it," said Frank. "It's Miss Meadows or us."

"That's so."

They hurried away. It did not take a minute to catch one of the ponies and take off the long trail-rope. Bob Lawless hastily ran a slip-noose at the end.

The rancher's son was an old hand with the lasso. Often enough he had lassoed cattle on the ranch when helping cattlemen with their work.

With the improvised lariat coiled in his hand, Bob Lawless crept back towards the open kitchen window. Frank Richards went with him, with a heavy billet of wood in his hand, the only weapon he could find.

Vere Beauclerc, also armed with a bludgeon, went to the front porch to attack the ruffian on the other side when he was "roped."

He crept quietly into the porch, ready to rush into the kitchen the moment Bob had made the lasso-cast from the window.

Frank and Bob stopped silently outside the window.

Long Bill was finishing his huge meal, sitting in the same place, with his back to the open window, quite unconscious of the schoolboys there. If he had known they were there, he would hardly have been on his guard against them.

The bad man from Bandog would certainly not have supposed that he was in any danger from schoolboys.

But the three were desperately determined. They were setting their lives upon a cast, and they knew it, but they did not falter.

Long Bill sat at the table, his revolver lying beside his plate. It was ready to his hand if he wanted it, though he did not suspect that he would need it.

Bob, with steady hands, though his face was pale, prepared for the cast. Frank Richards stood with his teeth clenched, his hand gripping his cudgel.

It was not easy to make the cast through the window, but the range, at least, was close. Bob Lawless swung the coiled rope and paused. He swung it again, and it flew.

Swish!

Long Bill started as he heard that sudden swish in the air. But before he could rise the loop was round him, settling down over his shoulders, and Bob was dragging madly on the rope outside.

The ruffian started up, with a terrible oath, and the drag on the rope pulled him off his feet, and he sprawled, with a crash, on the floor.

A string of furious oaths left Long Bill's lips as he rolled on the floor, struggling with the gripping, tightening noose.

One of his arms was pinned down to his side, but the other was torn free, and he had one hand at his service. He was out of reach of the six-shooter lying on the table, but there was another in his belt, and he groped for it furiously as he rolled over.

Had that revolver been drawn there would have been grim murder in the lumber school. But Frank Richards was clambering through the window as Bob dragged on the rope. Half-way through, he harled his bludgeon with good aim, and the heavy billet of wood crashed on the ruffian's arm.

Long Bill gave a howl of agony, and his right arm for a moment hung useless. The crashing blow had numbed it.

Still, he struggled to his feet, making ferocious efforts to throw off the gripping noose, which was tight round him now. But before he was fairly



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PEN PALS COUPON

29-10-38

on his feet, Vere Beauchere was dashing into the room from the porch.

The ruffian was facing the window now, as he struggled with the lasso. Beauchere struck at him, and his cudgel crashed on the back of the ruffian's head with stunning force.

Giant as he was, Long Bill reeled under the blow. As he staggered, Vere Beauchere struck again with all his strength, and the ruffian crashed full length to the floor.

Frank Richards was in the room now, and catching up his cudgel. It circled over Long Bill's head, and came down with a crash.

There was a deep groan from the ruffian as he lay inert on the floor. He was stunned.

Frank Richards panted:

"The rope—quick!"

Bob Lawless came scrambling through the window. The three schoolboys threw themselves upon the fallen giant, fearful lest he should recover before they secured him. The blows had stunned him, but already he was stirring.

The rope was knotted round his huge body and round his powerful arms. Coil after coil was wound round him, and then the end of the rope was knotted round his legs. He was secure at last—more than secure.

"My boys!" Miss Meadows was at the kitchen door. "My boys, you should not—"

Bob Lawless sprang up.

"I guess we've got that galeot cinched, Miss

Meadows," he said. "He won't shoot-up a town in Canada again in a hurry!"

"He's safe now, ma'am," said Frank.

Long Bill opened his eyes. He struggled and seemed amazed when he found that he could not move a limb. As he realised his position, a stream of furious curses poured from his lips.

"Hold your tongue, you blackguard!" exclaimed Vere Beauchere fiercely.

The torrent of oaths and threats did not cease. Beauchere picked up one of the ruffian's revolvers and thrust the muzzle into his open mouth.

"Silence!" he said.

And the bad man from Bandog gurgled into silence. He lay glaring at the schoolboys with speechless rage. The bad man had been roped in by schoolboys, and his wrath was unspeakable.

But Long Bill had to grin and bear it—or, at least, he had to bear it. The bad man from Bandog had reached the end of his tether.

Miss Meadows bent over Mr. Slimmey and bathed his face. The young master had recovered consciousness now, and he sat up. Frank Richards supporting him. He looked at the bound ruffian, and crimsoned as he turned his glance upon Miss Meadows.

"I—I did my best!" he muttered.

"You were very brave," said Miss Meadows

(Continued on page 36.)

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THREE HUNDRED YARDS FROM HOME JACK DRAKE HAS THE CROSS-COUNTRY RACE "IN HIS POCKET" . . . BUT HIS RIVAL STILL HAS A CARD UP HIS SLEEVE!



Drake suddenly stumbled as a small branch thrown from the wood caught between his legs. Next moment he tripped and crashed full-length to the ground.

A Chance for Toodles!

"I SAY, you fellows, have you—"
"Scat!"

Instead of "scatting," Tuckey Toodles came into Study No. 8 on board the Benbow, and banged a plump fist on the table. Jack Drake and Dick Rodney sprang to their feet as the ink spluttered out of the full inkpot between them.

"You fool, Toodles! Look what you've done to my prep!"

"Slaughter the fat ass!"

Rodney reached across the table, and Rupert de Vere Toodles staggered back in alarm.

"Look here, you half-pay rotter, Rodney!" said Tuckey. "I'm not afraid of you, so don't think I am! Yow! Keep off, you beasts!"

Toodles made a valiant effort to place the door between himself and the infuriated occupants of Study No. 8, but Drake and Rodney were too quick for him. They darted round the table, and dragged their interceptor to the floor.

"Bump him, Rodney!"

"Ow! Lemme go, you chaps, I say!"

Bump, bump!

"Yoop! Help!"

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooh! You're hurting me! Yow!"

At last, breathless with their heavy exercise, the chums of the Fourth released the unfortunate Toodles, and stood aside.

"Now beat it!" said Drake. "We're busy here. You don't want to do any prep yourself, so stay out till we've finished."

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RIVALS OF THE RACE!

By Owen Conquest.

Tuckey Toodles felt his plump person tenderly to see if any bones were broken.

"You ungrateful rotters!" he vociferated. "I've a jolly good mind not to tell you the news now."

"If you've got anything to get off your chest, Toodles, trot along here again later. At present we're busy."

Tuckey regarded Jack Drake more in sorrow than in anger.

"You're getting as bad as this half-pay bouncer Rodney here, Jack," he said. "You've always got your beastly nose to the grindstone. You take my tip and take things more easy. You can always rely on me, your best pal, to give you a hand if you get behind."

"You burbling chump!"

"Let's throw the fathead outside, Jack, and get on with prep."

Jack Drake's increasing popularity on the Benbow is a sore point with the junior skipper. And so Vernon Daubeny determines to make the school cross-country run an opportunity for regaining lost ground!

Toodles turned to Rodney with a ferocious expression on his plump features.

"Don't dare to lay hands on me again, Rodney," he said warningly. "I've been jolly lenient with you up to the present, I think."

Rodney smiled, in spite of himself.

"You certainly have been, Toodles," he murmured; "so fire off what you've got to say and depart, there's a good chap."

Tuckey Toodles smirked under this unusual mode of address, and helped himself to a seat in the best chair. When Toodles had news to tell, he was a general nuisance till he had got it off his chest.

"You'll be pleased to hear, you fellows," he began, "that St. Winn's still has a chance of having a decent junior captain shortly."

"What—has Daub resigned?"

"No. Unfortunately, my friend Vernon Daubeny seems to have gathered more supporters since nearly licking dear old Drake here."

Jack Drake flushed a little. He was beginning to suspect, as Rodney had suggested, that Vernon Daubeny, the knut of the Shell, had been playing a deep game with him. After the Highcliffe footer match the school had been ready to rag Egan, Torrence, and the other favourites of the junior captain who had composed the team; but Daub had cleverly turned the rag into a fight between himself and Jack Drake, which the latter had won.

Tuckey Toodles misinterpreted Drake's look.

"It's all right, Jack, old fellow," he said comfortingly. "Although you're not good enough to be captain yourself, the fellows will soon discover the one who is miles better than Daub."

"How?"

"Well, there's a notice on the board about a junior cross-country run for Saturday afternoon, and when the fellows see the winner romping home miles in front of everybody else, they'll know who's fit to be captain."

"And who is the dark horse?"

"Me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frabjous chump! You couldn't run ten yards without falling down!"

Toodles eyed the chums of the Fourth severely. "I know you're jealous of me, you chaps," he cried; "but I don't bear any malice. I'm going in for strict training."

"What on—jam puffs?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tuckey treated the question with scorn.

"It needn't prevent you fellows from entering, unless you like," he said magnanimously; "but, of course, you won't have a chance against me. However, it will be a nice country outing for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you fat ass!" howled Jack Drake. "Even if everyone else in the race had fits, and you won in ten hours thirty minutes, the chaps wouldn't have you captain for anything, except a pork-pie-eating team in a gorging contest."

"The fellows don't know my true worth," he said; "but when I knock spots off 'em on Saturday afternoon, they'll jolly well have to sit up and notice me!"

Dick Rodney made for the door.

"Come along to the notice-board, Jack," he said. "We'll do the swotting afterwards."

As there was no tuck in the study the two chums left Toodles lounging comfortably in the chair, and went off to see the particulars of the forthcoming race.

A crowd of juniors were gathered round the notice-board as the chums of the Fourth arrived on the scene.

"Hallo, Drake!" said Sawyer major. "Are you going to enter?"

Drake and Rodney tried to catch a glimpse of the announcement over the heads of their school fellows, but could not make out the terms of the run.

"What's the distance?" asked Drake.

"Five miles," said Sawyer; "and there's some jolly good prizes offered. The Head's putting up a special silver cup for the winner."

By using their shoulders the two chums of the Fourth at last obtained a view of the notice. The cross-country run was to start near the Benbow, and finish at the same spot, and the course mapped out was a circular one leading across fields, and over streams and hedges. The run was the Head's own idea, for he knew that the junior footer match for Saturday had been

scratched, and the race without long training would prove a good test of the natural stamina of the juniors.

"My name's going down, Dick," said Jack Drake. "Are you entering?"

"Rather!"

"Hallo! What's all this thumpin' row?"

It was Vernon Daubeny who, with his cronies, Egan and Torrence, had come up, attracted by the scuffle around the notice-board.

"A cross-country run for Saturday, Daub," said Chetwynd of the Fourth. "Going in for it?"

The knut of the Shell elbowed his way into view of the notice, and read the announcement.

"Who's entering?" he asked.

"A whole crowd of fellows," said Chilcott. "Shall I stick your name down, Daub?"

The great Daub was about to reply in the affirmative, when the junior in front of him turned round, and he found himself face to face with Jack Drake. Drake was trying hard to think well of the junior captain after his recent fight, and he spoke pleasantly enough.

"Good-evening, Daubeny!" he said. "You must have a shot at this. It'll be a great run, and the Head's put up a topping prize."

Vernon Daubeny drew himself up slightly.

"Indeed!" he said coldly.

And he turned to the two other bucks of the Shell.

"Let's be gettin' back to the study, you fellows."

Drake flushed under this cut, for he had hoped, having shaken hands with Daub after the recent fight, that old grievances would have been forgotten. But the buck of the Shell was not one to forgive and forget—as Jack was destined to discover.

Vernon Daubeny strode away, followed by Torrence and Egan.

Daub & Co. Break Bounds!

DAUBENY, Egan, and Torrence were sprawled in easy-chairs in their study in the Shell quarters of the old ship. The study was comfortably, almost luxuriously furnished, as befitted the wealthiest of juniors at St. Winifred's.

"You're an unforfeitin' sort of bounder, Daub!" said Torrence. "D'you mean to say you're not goin' in for the cross-country race just because Drake's stuck his name down?"

The great man of the Shell casually lighted a cigarette before replying.

"I'm goin' to lie low for a time," he said, puffing a cloud of smoke into the air. "I'm not givin' the rotter any more chances at present."

"Meanin' he may lick you again?" murmured Egan.

Daubeny turned on his follower with a scowl.

"What the thump do you mean?" he demanded.

"I'm not afraid of Drake, as I showed you when the fellows wanted to rag the footer team, and you were skulkin' here in the study. It's a question of policy with me."

"And jolly good policy, too, if I know anythin' about Drake's runnin'!" said Egan.

"Oh, dry up, you two!" exclaimed Torrence.

"What's the good of rowin' among ourselves? I dare say Drake won't win the beastly race, anyway. There are several chaps just as likely to pull the thing off, and one or two of the new

fellows, like Rodney, may be dark horses over the distance, for all we know. I'm thinkin' of enterin' myself."

Daub's lip curled contemptuously.

"Drake'll back out when he hears that, I expect!" he said sarcastically.

"If Torrence enters I shall, too," said Egan. "It's quite likely we'll be walkin' off with one of the prizes."

"You'll have to do some runnin', old man, if you want a prize," said Daub—"not walkin', like you did in the Highcliffe match!"

Egan bounced out of his chair, and stood, with clenched fists, facing the junior captain, who leaned back in his chair, calmly regarding him.

"Shut up about the Highcliffe match!" shouted Egan. "We agreed to forget it. Besides, you, as captain, were to blame for playin' such a rotten team! So give it a miss!"

"Like you did that open goal!" murmured Daubeny sweetly. "But, there, we won't quarrel. Soothe your poor, jaded nerves with one of these fags!"

With ill-grace, Egan accepted the proffered cigarette, and sank into his seat again.

"But, really, Daub, old man," said Torrence seriously, "you ought to have a shot at this race. You're a jolly good runner, and if you romp home first it will be another feather in your cap, and should go a long way to winnin' back to your side some of the chaps who've been influenced by those rotters, Drake and Rodney."

Vernon Daubeny puffed in silence for a few moments. He knew himself to be a good runner, and there was only one junior he did actually fear, and that was Jack Drake. But Daub did not want the race to evolve into another contest between himself and his one-time friend, with himself in second place again. He realised only too well that the number of cigarettes he had been smoking of late had not improved his wind, and tip-top stamina would be needed for the gruelling five miles run.

Drake would have an advantage in that respect, for the junior of Study No. 8 had entirely given up the pernicious habit.

Egan, under the soothing influence of his wealthy chum's finest Virginia, began to take a more sociable part in the conversation.

"I'm beginnin' to agree with Torrence," he said. "If you don't enter, Daub, the fellows will think you've got cold feet, especially after the way you refrained from puttin' your name on the list when you spotted Drake there."

This caused Vernon Daubeny to regard the matter in a new light. He knew only too well there were not lacking fellows at St. Winny's only too willing to accuse him of funkng the issue. Perhaps, after all, if he refrained from smoking for a few days till the time of the race and took plenty of exercise, he could wear off any ill-effects of his recent indulgences. As Torrence had said, it would indeed be a feather in his cap if he could prove himself Drake's superior by breasting the tape first.

"All serene! I'll enter, old tops!" he decided. "Slip along, Torrence, and stick our names down on the list, and when you come back we'll have a quiet little game of banker to pass the rest of the evenin'."

In less than five minutes Torrence had fulfilled his mission, and was back again in the study.

"Were Drake and Rodney still hangin' round the notice-board when you were puttin' our names down?" asked Egan.

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"No; the beastly outsiders had gone back to their study to swot, as usual, I suppose! But Sawyer and a good many of the other fellows were still there, discussin' the chances of the race."

"Did they say anythin' about me," asked Daubeny, drawing up to the table and shuffling a pack of cards, "or about Drake?"

"Most of 'em," said Torrence, "seem to think Drake could beat you hobbled. They reckon you've had too many late nights to be much good over the distance."

Vernon Daubeny gritted his teeth.

"Let's stow the cackle," he said, "and get on with the game!"

For some minutes the three bucks devoted their entire attention to banker, and Vernon Daubeny soon regained his temper as a little pile of his studymates' money began to accrue in front of him.

"By the way," he said, "what about goin' down to see Gentleman Smith at the Lobster Pot one night for a game of snooker? I can get a message down there to-morrow, and a boat can come up for us after lights out."

"Too risky now!" grunted Egan. "I'd have thought after the scare you got when Smith tried to get on board to give Drake away you'd have given up that little game. Besides, another late night before the cross-country run won't improve your chances of winnin'."

"Blow the cross-country run! D'you think I'm goin' to give up every other bit of sport on that account? Anyway, one evenin' won't do me any harm. What do you say, Torrence?"

Vernon Daubeny confidently looked for support from Torrence, for the latter was the keenest of the three bucks on snooker. And Daub was not disappointed.

"I'll come," said Torrence. "The Head isn't suspicious of us, and it's not likely we'll be caught. I think Gentleman Smith was surprised how expert I was gettin' with the cue last time. It would just suit my book at present to go down and take a few quids off the bouncer."

"That's the talk, old top!" said Daubeny, cutting the cards into three packs. "And Egan'll come, too. I'll fix it with Gentleman Smith for Thursday night."

In spite of Vernon Daubeny's decision to enter for the cross-country run, the knut of the Shell took care not to put himself to much inconvenience in preparation for the gruelling contest. He did not finish his banker with Torrence and Egan until nearly midnight; but on the following day he took two walks into the country, the first after morning lessons and the second before prep in the evening.

The latter, at any rate, afforded good exercise, for he walked as far as the Lobster Pot, which was well out of bounds, and left a note for Gentleman Smith, the rascally cardsharp, book-maker, and billiards-sharp, who had already fleeced the bucks of a good deal of money. In the note he requested Gentleman Smith to arrange for a rowboat to be outside the Shell study port, in the forward part of the Benbow, at eleven-thirty on Thursday night.

Daubeny knocked off entirely his habit of cigarette smoking on the quiet in his study, and even in a day or two he began to feel the benefit of this abstinence. Rodney and Drake, he noticed, let up slightly from swotting, and took plenty of light exercise in the playing fields and the countryside near the Benbow. The shortness of the time before the run forbade of any stringent system of training being carried out.

Late on the Thursday night before the race Vernon Daubeny, Egan, and Torrence waited in their study for the sound of oars beneath their port, which would inform them of the arrival of the rowboat.

Presently the swish of water against the side of the old warship and the creak of oars working in rowlocks told them that the hour of action had arrived.

"All serene!" whispered Vernon Daubeny, looking down through the square port. "I'll slip out first, and you two chaps can follow."

The length of rope which Daub & Co. used on these occasions was fastened ready for use, and down it swarmed the three bucks. Then, with muffled oars, the old boatman who had come for them rowed quietly away from the dark, towering side of the Benbow.

The knuts of the Shell landed opposite the Lobster Pot and made their way through the garden of the inn. At the threshold Gentleman Smith met them with an expansive grin on his broad face.

"Good-evenin', gents!" he greeted them. "I've been wonderin' when you was comin' down to see me again. You ain't got Master Drake with you this time, 'ave you?"

"My hat, no!" muttered Daubeny. "We don't have anythin' to do with that beastly outsider now. He's turned goody-goody, and spends all his time sappin'."

"E ponied up the quids 'e owed me all right," said Mr. Smith. "But it's a pity 'e don't 'ave a 'and at cards or a bit on a 'orse now and then to get 'is money back."

The rascally cardsharper led the three bucks into his private parlour, saw them settled in comfortable chairs, and pushed a box of cigarettes across the table. Torrence and Egan helped themselves; but Daubeny, sticking to his resolution, refused to smoke, in spite of Mr. Smith's repeated invitations.

"I say, Smith, you made rather a mess of things when you called that time at the school," murmured Daub easily. "How was it you let Toodles send you spinnin' into the river?"

A savage expression suffused Gentleman Smith's face, and he gritted his teeth.

"I'll get even with 'im yet!" he growled. "And with Drake, too, for I reckon 'e put the other one up to it."

"I expect 'e did," murmured Daub languidly. "But what about a little game of somethin', old chap?"

"What's it to be to-night, young gents?" asked Mr. Smith. "A quiet little game of poker, or a few frames at snooker?"

"Let's have some snooker, old chap," suggested Torrence, who fancied himself at the game. "I feel in form to-night."

"That's right, sir," said Mr. Smith. "But you was beginnin' to get too 'ot for me. Let's see, I only got 'ome by five points in the last game we played, if I remember right."

The three bucks rose and followed Gentleman Smith to the billiards-room, where a fire was blazing cheerily and the coloured balls ready set up in anticipation of their visit. It was indeed an enticing web that had been spun by the rascally sharper.

Torrence felt in fine fettle for getting back again some of the money he had left in the care of Mr. Smith on previous occasions.

"Let's have some decent stakes to-night, you fellows," he suggested. "No penny points for me!"

"A shillin' a point, if you like, sir," murmured Mr. Smith; "though I expects you young gents will clear my pockets out afore you've done with me."

Vernon Daubeny and Egan demurred, but finally agreed to play for threepence a point—which was high enough, indeed, for snooker.

For a while the three bucks did well, and Torrence was encouraged by winning a game by a few points. But soon their luck seemed to diminish curiously, and time and again Mr. Smith potted the high-coloured balls with easy dexterity.

"I'm 'aving a run of luck now," he remarked genially. "But it's bound to change with the next frame, I'm thinkin'."

But Mr. Smith's luck did not change, strange to say, and when Daubeny & Co. finally put their cues back in the rack they were each out of pocket to the tune of two or three pounds.

In the small hours of the morning they bade Gentleman Smith adieu and walked through the dark garden to the river, where the rowboat was waiting to take them back to the Benbow.

Suddenly Vernon Daubeny, with a muttered excuse that he had forgotten something, turned back and rejoined Mr. Smith, who had come out to see them off. For a few minutes he spoke in low tones to the rascally bookmaker, and when he turned away to follow the other bucks Mr. Smith had an evil grin on his face and a crisp five-pound note in the palm of his hand.

Money was no object to the great Daub!

The Race!

IT was Saturday afternoon, and the boys of St. Winifred's were gathered in an eager crowd near the Benbow to see the start of the junior cross-country run. Even masters and the great men of the Fifth and Sixth, with the exception of those posted at various points along the five-mile course, had condescended to honour the event with their presence at the starting point.

The general consensus of opinion among the juniors was that the race would afford another test between Jack Drake and Vernon Daubeny, for they still regarded the former as a strong rival for the junior captaincy.

Cheers broke out as Jack Drake, in white running shorts and singlet, appeared with Rodney, and the outburst was renewed as Vernon Daubeny joined the group of competitors. The buck of the Shell was looking cool and fit and more knutty even in an exquisite pair of pale blue shorts.

Lovelace of the Sixth was acting as starter.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: Both Hobbs of the Third and Gore of the Shell, had a motive—revenge on Kildare. But Hobbs was the one who was at the boathouse before any of the others—as witness Tom Merry's statement. Gore arrived after Tom Merry; and Hobbs gave himself away when he said he arrived after Gore. I took Hobbs along to Kildare, and Hobbs, with Figgins, Merry, Racke, Crooke, and Gore to say he was early at the boathouse, had no alternative but to confess. Kildare proved unexpectedly merciful; and Hobbs will carry away a happier impression of the captain of St. Jim's than he expected.

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He looked at his watch and turned to the runners.

"Now then, you fags," he said, "arrange yourselves at the starting post and keep this side of the white line."

A loud yell broke from the direction of the gangway of the Benbow.

"Oh, I say, hold on a minute, Lovelace! Wait for me!"

A great yell of laughter and some ironical cheers rose from the juniors. It was Tuckey Toodles, in white vest and bright red shorts, whose plump form was bounding down the gangway.

"Don't hurry, old sport! Let 'em go; you'll catch 'em up all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tuckey came panting up and took his place in the line.

Lovelace checked the names of the runners, and inserted a blank cartridge into his pistol.

"Ready, you fellows?"

Crack!

As though released by an invisible spring, the two lines of runners leaped into motion on the first stage of that gruelling race. With lengthening strides Vernon Daubeny, Conway, and Egan placed themselves at the head of the field. Drake, Rodney, and many others were quite content to allow them to set the pace, realising, as they did, that it would be the last mile which would furnish the real test.

Tuckey Toodles, plodding along with short strides, kept close beside the two chums of the Fourth, and this pace he kept for about three hundred yards along the pathway through the wood; then his face assumed the tint of a boiled beetroot, and his breath came and went in hoarse spurts, like the noise of a locomotive pulling a heavy train out of a station.

"I think I must be ill, you chaps!" he gasped. "I've got such a p-pain in the side. Phew! Wh-what rotten luck—eh?"

"Stick it, Toodles!" said Drake cheerfully. "And save some of your breath for the fifth mile, old top!"

"F-fifth m-mile!" stammered Tuckey. "I—I think I must have been poisoned with something I had at lunch! Don't stop, you chaps! Leave me to die alone! G-good-bye!"

And, with that agonising remark, Tuckey Toodles staggered off the path and flopped down on a fallen tree-trunk.

The field was well strung out as the runners reached the open country beyond the wood, and here the difficulties began. The first obstacle they encountered was a five-barred gate, and this Daubeny and some of the other leaders vaulted; but the majority were content to scramble over as best they could.

A low hedge, with a stream behind it, appeared a couple of hundred yards farther on, and by the time the last of the runners were across into the ploughed field beyond, more than half the juniors were dripping wet.

At the far corner of a twenty-three-acre field, two miles from home, where Mr. Packe, the master of the Fourth, was standing with a flag, Vernon Daubeny was still leading. Both Egan and Torrence were plodding along with the stragglers, by this time with "bellows to mend," as the consequence of their habitual indulgence in the fragrant weed.

Other members of Daub's ill-fated footer team

which had suffered so severely at the hands of Highlife were also revealing their lack of proper condition by lagging in the rear of the field. Between Daubeny and the two chums of the Fourth, who were about two hundred yards behind, came Conway, Estcourt, and Rawlings, pluckily hanging on to the heels of the leader.

"My hat!" muttered Drake. "Old Daub's setting a rattling pace! I wonder if he can last?"

"It'll be an eye-opener to me if he can raise a turn of speed for the last quarter-mile," returned Rodney.

After those remarks the two chums ran on in silence, knowing full well they would need every ounce of their breath later on.

The buck of the Shell had made up his mind to set the running all the way if he could. Once, after leaping two stiles in quick succession, he was distressed for a short period; but, still running steadily, he got his second wind, and began to feel fit for the supreme effort.

It was in an open field that Jack Drake decided to start his effort to wrest the leadership from Daubeny. Rodney did not respond to the same extent, for he intended to make his challenge in the last quarter-mile of the pathway through the wood leading to the Benbow.

There were no spectators to yell encouragement, but the Fourth Former steadily overhauled the buck of the Shell without the latter becoming aware of the fact.

Three hundred yards from the winning-post the leading runners came into view of the waiting crowd near the school.

A loud roar rent the air:

"Drake leads!"

Just after entering the wood the Fourth Former had shot by the Shell fellow and established a clear lead of five yards. The great Daub now came pounding along behind, with a fierce look disfiguring his aristocratic face as he strove to overtake his rival.

Suddenly another shout rose—this time a cry of chagrin from the majority of the school:

"Drake's finished!"

From running strongly, Drake stumbled and crashed full length on the ground!

Tuckey Toodles, now recovered from his indisposition, had seen something with his sharp eyes which had been indiscernible to most of those present.

"Poor old Drake's caught his foot in a branch or something!" he cried. "It sprang up from the ground and hit him!"

"Rot!" shouted one of Daub's supporters near by. "Drake's dead-beat, I tell you! Good old Daub!"

Drake tried to carry on, but he had twisted his foot slightly, and could not get up speed. With a smile on his face, the buck of the Shell sped past him.

But suddenly the cries of jubilation from the supporters of Daubeny changed to anxious exhortations. From fifteen yards in the rear of the junior captain came speeding another runner. It was Dick Rodney, and he had a set, purposeful look in his eyes.

Rodney had seen Drake stumble and fall over something, and now, for his chum's sake more than his own, he determined to overhaul Daubeny. He was feeling the effects of the gruelling run, but he quickened his stride and began to close the distance between himself and the buck of the Shell. One hundred yards from the tape he was but five yards behind.

"FOOTER-STAMPS" CLAIMS WANTED!

This is the last week of the October "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: 500 Footballs will be awarded in the October 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, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps," Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive—and 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: *Magnet, Modern Boy, Champion, Boy's Cinema, Detective Weekly, Thriller, Wild West Weekly, Triumph, and Sports Budget.*)

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I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

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"Rodney! Oh, well run, Rodney!"

Daubeny heard the fresh yells from the crowd and the pounding shoes behind him. He glanced round, and Rodney drew level.

"Come along, Daub!"

"Stick it, Rodney!"

Fifty yards from the tape, and the two were neck and neck.

"One more effort, Daub!"

Daubeny gave an agonised look at the magnetic strip of white tape stretched across the pathway that marked the winning-post. He tried to leap forward, but his tired legs refused to obey any further call. A sudden weakness came over him, and a red haze blotted out the white strip of tape, the faces of the cheering crowd, and the outlines of the old Benbow beyond. He swerved in his course and tumbled into the edge of the wood—run off his feet!

"Rodney wins!"

Two seconds later Rodney breasted the tape, the winner of the famous cross-country run.

A yelling crowd of his enthusiastic schoolfellows surged round him, and Turkey Toodles made a dash for him to sit on. Others rushed to assist Drake and Daubeny.

"Beast! Duck, old chap!" said Toodles. "I'm

jolly glad, as I was taken ill myself! The race still went to a giddy Fourth Former!"

Drake, who was limping slightly, pushed his way through the crush to congratulate his chum on his success. Afterwards, Rodney was carried shoulder high up the gangway to the Benbow.

When they had bathed and changed, Drake and Rodney adjourned to Study No. 8 and sank into chairs before the fire.

"What actually happened, Jack?" asked Rodney. "Did you trip over the root of a tree or something?"

Drake carefully shut the door and turned to his study-mate.

"It was a small branch," he said, "and it was thrown from the wood."

Rodney gave a low whistle.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "Did you see who did it?"

"No; and, as none of the other fellows saw anything, I'm going to keep mum about the affair. Some of 'em would only think I was trying to find an excuse for falling out."

"Anyway," murmured Rodney, "Daub didn't win!"

Next Week: "THE PERFECT ALIBI!"

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A LESSON FOR LEVISON!

(Continued from page 22.)

Racke & Co. I'll do the same, and we'll start fresh together. No good asking for that."

But as he spoke his eyes fixed eagerly upon the bag. Levison had made his resolution—if it was any use. But was it too late?

"Do you mean that, Ernie?"

"Yes, if it's any good."

"I—I've got something to tell you," muttered Frank, crimsoning. "I—I'm sorry now that I did it, Ernie; but—but I thought it was a good idea. I—I've been spoofing you, old chap!"

Levison stared blankly at his minor, hardly able to understand at first all that it meant. But he understood at last. A load seemed to have lifted from his heart.

"You've taken me in!" he exclaimed. "You've taken me in! You young sweep! And—and what did you do it for?"

"I'm sorry, Ernie," said Frank remorsefully.

"You wanted to give me a lesson, I suppose," said Levison. "By gad, you've given me one, you cheeky little beggar!"

"You—you're not waxy, Ernie?" said Frank timidly. "I—I won't do it again!"

Levison burst into a laugh.

"You won't need to do it again," he said. "Blessed if I should ever have thought anybody could take me in—you least of all! I'm jolly glad it's no worse than that." Levison drew a

deep breath. "No, I'm not waxy, and I meant what I said, too. We'll make a fresh start together, Frank, and—and we'll see what comes of it. Is it a go?"

"Done!" said Frank brightly.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked into the study a few minutes later.

Levison was stooping over the fire, stirring together in the embers a heap of cigarettes, a pack of cards, several racing papers, a bridge-marker, and a betting-book.

Frank Levison looked on with a very bright face.

Arthur Augustus did not speak. He withdrew silently, and walked away with a very thoughtful face to Study No. 5.

He found Tom Merry & Co. there discussing baked chestnuts.

"Just in time," said Blake. "Nearly all gone, fathead!"

"I think I have remarked to you fellows several times that I am wathah a chap of tact and judgment," he observed.

"About a hundred times," agreed Blake.

"Wats! Afiah what has happened, dear boys. I trust you will admit that I have grounds for my statement."

"Why, what has happened?" asked Talbot.

"Upon the whole I think I had better not confide the matter to you youngstahs, as Levison might not like it. But I trust that afiah this you fellows will have the sense to place well-ance upon a fellow's tact and judgment. I will have some of those chestnuts, Blake."

Next Week: "THE BOY WITH A BAD NAME!"

"And we'll wait till he comes," said Bob.

Miss Meadows did not dissent. The Chinese servant was dispatched on horseback at once, and the schoolboys waited, to keep guard over their prisoner.

They had their supper while they waited, and while they enjoyed it the bad man from Bandog glared at them from the floor in helpless rage, with which apprehension was now mingled.

There was a trampling of hoofs outside at last. The stalwart sheriff of Thompson strode in, and a look of great satisfaction overspread his face at the sight of Long Bill.

"Take him out!" he said to his men; and the border ruffian's legs were freed, and he was marched out, to be bound on a horse and taken to Thompson, to stand his trial, and later to depart for a very long period of repose in an institution which the Canadian Government maintained for the special benefit of bad men.

In that enforced seclusion Long Bill had plenty of time to reflect upon the chequered career of a professional bad man, and to regret that he had ever left the delightful town of Bandog to try his luck in Canada.

Next Wednesday: "ROGUE'S REVENGE!"

THE BAD MAN FROM BANDO!

(Continued from page 29.)

softly. "No one could have done more than you did in your place."

And Mr. Slimmey took comfort from that. Frank Richards and Miss Meadows helped him away to his cabin, while Bob and Vere watched the bound ruffian. With a pistol barrel between his jaws Long Bill could not speak, but his looks were eloquent.

"I guess the sheriff will be glad to see this pilgrim, Miss Meadows," Bob remarked, when the schoolmistress came back with Frank. "Wasn't it lucky you detained us after lessons to-day, ma'am?"

Miss Meadows smiled. She could smile now. She hardly dared to think how the matter would have ended but for the presence of the three schoolboys.

"It was very lucky," she said. "Now I will send Chu Ching-Chow over to Thompson at once for the sheriff."

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