

ALL-STAR PROGRAMME OF FICTION AND FUN—
AND 250 FOOTBALLS FOR READERS!

The **GEM**

2^D



THE COMING OF CARDEW'S COUSIN!

—A Humorous Incident in this Week's Powerful St. Jim's Yarn, "CARDEW MAKES AMENDS!"

GOING! GOING! But There's Still Time To Win A Grand Prize Here!

250 FREE FOOTBALLS



for Scoring Goals with FOOTER-STAMPS



HURRY UP! Hurry up! The final whistle for the November "Footer Stamps" Competition goes next week—we shall then want to know who has scored most "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" for the month.

Remember, winners are wanted for 250 FREE Footballs, so if you are collecting already (and haven't won a ball so far), keep at it and make big efforts to win one this time. If you're not collecting—well, look snappy, because there's just time for you to make a bid.

"Footer-Stamps" are appearing every week, and the object is simply to make up as many "goals" as you can with them. The stamps illustrate *six* different actions on the football field.

The six actions are: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL**, and every complete set of the six actions you collect scores a "goal." (The "goal" stamp by itself does not count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time.)

There are ten more stamps this week, five below and five more on Page 35, and you will find a complete "goal" among them. Then try to get as many more of the stamps as you can. Ask your friends for them, swap with them if you like, or even collect them together. The more you get, the more "goals" you'll score—and here's good news:

"FOOTER-STAMPS" making complete "goals" are also in other famous papers like **MODERN BOY** and **MAGNET**—get the stamps from these papers to help swell your score.

The 250 Prize Footballs in the November prize-giving will go to the collectors scoring the most "goals" for the month. No stamps to be sent in yet—wait until next week. So if you haven't won a football yet—keep at it and see what you can do!

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. There will be a special closing date for you, of course.

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



Some Junior's Booked for the "Sack"—Mr. Ratcliff's Been Sooted! Cardew Takes the Blame, But . . .



CARDEW MAKES AMENDS!

There was a buzz from the fellows in the Hall as Mr. Ratcliff and Cardew came in at the doorway. The New House master's appearance was extraordinary—he was smothered in soot from head to foot! "Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Whatevah has happened?"

CHAPTER 1.

Many Invitations!

"TROT in, Levison!" Levison of the Fourth grinned as he came into Tom Merry's study in response to Tom's cheery greeting.

It was not so very long since the sight of Levison's face in the doorway would have called forth quite a different greeting from the Terrible Three of the Shell. But by-gones were by-gones, and Levison of the Fourth was now on almost pally terms with Tom Merry & Co.

"You fellows coming?" asked Levison.

"That depends," said Tom Merry, with a smile. "Whither?"

"Prep!" said Manners.

Manners was a methodical youth, and was never late with his preparation.

"Oh, hang prep!" said Monty Lowther, who wasn't in the least a

methodical chap. "Prep can wait! What's on, Levison?"

"House-warming in Study No. 9," said Levison.

"Oh!" "It's Cardew's spread," said Levison. "You know Cardew—the new chap in the Fourth—he's in my study—"

"We've seen him," said Tom. "So he's giving a house-warming?"

A curious mixture of bad and good is Ralph Reckness Cardew. One moment he's a snobbish cad, the next he's facing a flogging to save another fellow from expulsion!

by

MARTIN CLIFFORD

"That's it. He's new here, and Clive and I have only just changed into Study No. 9, so we agreed that a house-warming was the proper caper. Cardew's standing the spread, and he's rolling in oof. Clive's doing the cooking, and I'm going round with the invitations."

"Equal division of labour," said Tom Merry, laughing. "We'll come with pleasure."

"Hear, hear!" said

Lowther heartily. "Count on us, dear boy. Anything to put off prep for a bit."

"We shall do justice to the spread," remarked Tom Merry. "What time?"

"Seven."

"We'll be there!"

"Right-ho!" said Levison cheerily, and he went his way.

"Not a bad idea of Cardew's," remarked Monty Lowther. "A house-warming is just the thing. Lucky bargains to have plenty of oof."

"Cardew's a bit of a snob," said Manners.

"My dear chap, you can overlook a few little imperfections in a chap who's got plenty of oof, anyway."

"Fathead!" said Manners. "I don't feel more than half-inclined to go. He was saying something rotten about Reddy of the New House the other day."

"What on earth for?" asked Tom Merry.

Manners sniffed.

"Because Redfern's at St. Jim's on a scholarship, of course! Reddy would have punched his nose if he'd heard him."

Tom Merry frowned a little.

"That's rotten!" he said. "I rather like the fellow's looks. Still, we don't want to be uncivil, and we've accepted the invitation now. You'll have to come, Manners."

Meanwhile, Levison of the Fourth went on his way. His next call was at Study No. 6 in the Fourth.

Blake, Herries, D'Arcy, and Digby were there. They were holding a discussion. Tea was late in Study No. 6—very late. It was owing to lack of funds. The chums of Study No. 6 had missed tea in Hall, as usual, intending to have it in the study. But when they came to compare notes in the study, the painful discovery was made that the study finances were at a low ebb. How to get tea for four for a moderate sum of threepence-halfpenny was a problem.

It was at this moment that Levison stepped in.

"You fellows coming?" he asked. "House-warming in Study No. 9. Rippling spread—"

Blake collared Levison before he could get further, and hugged him.

"Come to my heart!" he said affectionately. "Corn in Egypt! You're as welcome as the flowers in May!"

"Yow! Leggo!" gasped Levison. "Seven sharp, then!"

"Right-ho!"

Levison departed, leaving Study No. 6 quite merry and bright. Only Arthur Augustus was looking a little thoughtful.

"How jolly lucky!" said Dig. "That chap Cardew isn't a bad sort. I heard that he pitched into Cutts of the Fifth to stop him bullying Levison minor."

"What are you scowling at, Gussy?"

"I am not scowlin', Blake. I am thinkin'—"

"Well, don't. It doesn't suit your style of beauty. Besides, suppose something were to go bust?" said Blake seriously.

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake! The fact is, I weally do not wholly care about goin' to Cardew's house-warmin'. I don't like him vewy much."

Blake & Co. grinned at one another.

"Then the sooner you learn to like your relations, the better," said Blake. "This will be the first lesson. Anyhow, you're coming, if I have to march you in by the ear!"

"I should wufuse to be marched in by the yah, Blake! Howevah, as you fellows don't want to

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miss tea, and you have been vewy reckless with the funds, pewwaps we had bettah."

There were doubts in Study No. 6 evidently, as well as in Tom Merry's study.

Levison, quite unconscious of that fact, sauntered cheerily out into the quadrangle and crossed to the New House. He found Figgins & Co. chatting in the doorway of the House, and they nodded to him.

Levison stopped.

"House-warming in my study," he said. "You three coming?"

"Yes, rather!" said Fatty Wynn at once.

"Well, we've had tea," said Kerr.

"It wasn't much of a tea," said Fatty Wynn. "I had nothing but the saveloys and ham and bloater-paste, besides the cake and the apple-tart. We're coming, Levison, and thanks!"

"With pleasure!" said Figgins. "I haven't seen much of Cardew, but I'll come to the house-warming, as he's so kind as to ask me."

"Right-ho!" said Kerr, and he nodded.

But Kerr somehow seemed to be afflicted with doubts in the same way as Manners and D'Arcy.

Levison went on into the New House, and looked into Redfern's study. He found Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence there.

The three scholarship juniors were at work, but they stopped as Levison came in.

"Hallo, looking for a ragging?" asked Redfern genially.

Levison laughed.

"Pax!" he said. "House rags off. I've come to ask you to a house-warming in my study."

"My dear chap, we wouldn't rag you for your weight in gold!" said Lawrence. "Rely on us. When is it?"

"Seven sharp."

"We'll be there."

"Right you are!"

And Levison, his mission completed, strolled back to the School House.

CHAPTER 2.

The House-Warming!

STUDY No. 9 in the Fourth Form passage was looking decidedly merry and bright.

Sidney Clive, the South African junior, was very busy.

Clive was a great hand at cooking, and he turned out the sausages and poached eggs in a way that Fatty Wynn himself might have envied.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, the new fellow in the Fourth, had laid the table, and was watching Clive at work. Cardew could not cook. Perhaps, too, the elegant Cardew did not fancy the task, and did not like to soil his hands. That thought had not occurred to Clive, however.

Cardew looked very elegant, almost as elegant a picture as the great Arthur Augustus D'Arcy himself, who was the glass of fashion and mould of form in the Lower School. Cardew never forgot that he was the grandson of an earl, and there was a certain something in his manner which some of the fellows called swank. But he was on very good terms with his study-mates, who were not disposed to look for faults in him, especially Clive, who was very easy-going and good-natured.

In one or two matters, perhaps, Cardew had jarred a little. He had far more money than Clive and Levison together, and his money was somewhat in evidence—though he could not be

accused of being a purse-proud bounder like Racke of the Shell.

The spread in the study was a very expensive one, such as was seldom or never seen in junior studies, and Dame Taggles had opened her eyes wide when Cardew gave his orders at the tuck-shop. Besides the more solid comestibles there were boxes of preserved fruits, tangerines, oranges, and Turkish delight, which had run into more money than Clive spent in a whole term.

And Cardew had been somewhat dissatisfied with the scrappy crockery of Study No. 9, and he ordered a complete outfit from a stores in Wayland, at his own expense. There was also a new study-carpet, very handsome, and very expensive, from the same stores.

These were certainly improvements in the study, and Clive and Levison could not exactly object to a rich fellow making himself as comfortable as possible in his own quarters. Yet it put them somewhat in the position of subbing on their wealthy studymate, since they had as much use of the new things as Cardew had. They wished he would draw the line, but he made himself so agreeable at the same time that, as yet, at least, they did not care to say so.

Levison came back into the study with a cheery face. It was a pleasure to the one-time black sheep of St. Jim's to find that the best fellows in the Lower School were willing to come to the house-warming. But for the exigencies of space, he would have included Kangaroo & Co., and Julian and his friends, in the list; but, as it was, the study was likely to be taxed to its fullest extent.

Study No. 9 was one of the largest rooms in the Fourth Form passage; but thirteen guests were quite as many as it could accommodate.

Everything but the table and chairs had been taken out and stacked along the passage, to leave as much space as possible. And Clive having finished his task, the fire was allowed to die down.

"Well, how many are coming?" asked Cardew. "Thirteen," said Levison, laughing. "I thought I'd better stop there."

"Oh, we can get thirteen in!" said Clive. "It will be a bit of a squeeze, but we can manage."

"The more the merrier," said Cardew. "And there's tuck enough for thirty," said Levison.

"If there's anybody else you'd like to ask we can have an overflow meeting in the passage," grinned Cardew. "We can borrow some chairs, or tell the chaps to bring their own."

"Good egg!" said Levison. "I'll cut along and tell Kangaroo!"

Levison scuttled along the passage to the end study, where he found Harry Noble, Clifton Dane, and Bernard Glyn sitting down to tea. But the Cornstalk and his chums cheerfully left their own tea to join in the house-warming.

They promised to come, and Levison's next journey was to Study No. 5 in the Fourth, where he added Julian, Kerruish, Reilly, and Hammond to the list.

"It'll be a crowd, of course," he said. "You won't mind that. There's twenty guests in all, as well as three of us."

"My hat!" said Julian. "You're going great guns. We shall have to understudy the merry sardine in the tin. All serene!"

"Extra chairs in the passage," explained Levison. "Bring your own chairs."

"Ha, ha, ha! All right!"

Levison returned in great spirits to Study No. 9. It was a house-warming on a tremendous scale for a junior study. Levison would have liked to call

in his minor; but the fag was at prep with Mr. Selby in the Third Form Room at that hour. And the party certainly was numerous enough.

The first guests arrived along with Levison. They were Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther. Cardew greeted them very cordially, doing the honours with a grace worthy of Arthur Augustus at his best. Manners, who was not wholly pleased to find himself there, was quite disarmed by the new fellow's cordiality.

Study No. 6 arrived next.

The study was getting pretty full by this time. But the juniors were used to crowding on such occasions.

Arthur Augustus was a little graver than usual. Something about Cardew seemed to have jarred the sensitive nerves of the Honourable Arthur Augustus; but, finding himself there, he was the very model of urbanity.

"Here comes Figgins & Co.," said Lowther, looking from the study window.

The New House fellows were crossing the quad.



"His father has to play pirates with him to get him in the bath!"

Half-a-crown has been awarded to N. Dawtry, 967, Abbeydale Road, Millhouses, Sheffield 7.

"By gad, we shall want some more chairs!" said Cardew. "They can't bring chairs across the quad!"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!"

"We'll get them out of our study," said Tom Merry.

"Not at all, dear boy, I'll fetch them," said Cardew.

And he left the study, and went along to the Shell passage.

He was still absent when six New House juniors arrived.

"Come in!" said Clive, laughing. "Not much room, but a hearty welcome."

"Right as rain!" said Figgins. "Sorry Fatty takes room for two, that's all."

"Well, you don't take room for one, so that makes it even," retorted Fatty Wynn. "Don't shove a chap, Reddy!"

"Not at all!" said Reddy. "I'll go round you, Fatty. It's a bit of a walk, but it's good exercise."

"Look here, you ass—"

"Shush!" said Figgins. "Mustn't call a fellow by his proper name at a house-warming."

"Any more coming?" grinned Kerr.

"Yes; seven more."

"Oh, good!"

"Here's Cardew, the founder of the feast," said Levison.

Cardew came back into the study, laden with chairs. He set the chairs down and looked smilingly at his latest guests.

The smile faded from his face at the sight of Redfern & Co.

"Glad to see you, Figgins!" he said. "Same to

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you, Kerr, and you, Wynn! Awfully good of you to come!"

"Not at all," said Fatty, with his eyes on the festive board. "Awfully good of you to ask us!"

Fatty Wynn was thinking of the spread. But Cardew's words caused a cloud to come over every face in the study. He had deliberately ignored Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence.

That his action was intentional there could be no doubt, though how a fellow could be guilty of such unprovoked rudeness was a puzzle to the rest.

Redfern & Co., feeling decidedly uncomfortable, reddened and exchanged glances. It was a painful moment.

Arthur Augustus' eye began to burn behind his eyeglass. Clive and Levison turned crimson. Cardew was quite nonchalant.

"Here's a chair, Reddy!" said Clive, hurriedly breaking the silence that had fallen. "Sit down, old scout!"

"One moment!" said Cardew, in a cold, clear voice. "Isn't there some mistake?"

"Mistake?" repeated Redfern.

"Yes. Did Levison ask you here?"

Redfern's face was like fire.

Levison asked us here, or we shouldn't have come," he said.

"All serene, then. Let it go at that," said Cardew, turning away carelessly.

Redfern's eyes blazed.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said, and he walked out of the study, followed by Owen and Lawrence.

CHAPTER 3.

Trouble in Study No. 9!

THERE was a dead silence in Study No. 9.

Clive and Levison looked as if they would have given a good deal for the floor to open and swallow them up.

Cardew's manner had not changed. He was as nonchalant as ever, but evidently relieved to have got rid of the three guests whom, for reasons of his own, he did not regard as welcome.

"Sit down, dear boys!" he said cordially.

The dear boys remained standing. The cheery geniality of the party had gone.

"Just a minute before we sit down," said George Figgins, speaking very distinctly. "It seems that there was some mistake about Reddy coming here. You didn't intend to ask him?"

"Well, no," said Cardew. "Levison didn't tell me who he had asked, and I wasn't aware he had asked those chaps."

"You told me to ask who I liked!" said Levison savagely. "What do you mean by insulting Redfern—confound you?"

"I don't see that I've insulted him," said Cardew calmly. "He could have stopped if he liked."

"You didn't want him!" said Figgins. "May I ask why you didn't want him?"

"Hardly necessary to explain that," said Cardew. "I don't care for fellows of that sort in my quarters, that's all."

George Figgins' fists clenched, and he breathed hard; but he remembered that he had come there as a guest, and his fists unclenched again.

"Reddy's a friend of mine," he said.

Cardew raised his eyebrows.

"Indeed? I understood you were always at loggerheads with him."

"In a way, yes; but we're friends, all the same."

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If Reddy isn't good enough for this study, I'm not good enough," said Figgins. "Come on, Kerr! Come on, Wynn!"

Figgins stalked out of the study, breathing wrath; and Kerr went with him.

Fatty Wynn cast a lingering look at the gorgeous spread going from his gaze like a beautiful dream; but it was only for an instant, and then he followed Figgins and Kerr.

The Terrible Three exchanged a look and moved to the door. Study No. 6 were moving in the same direction.

At that moment the rest of the guests arrived—three of the Shell and four of the Fourth.

"Here we are!" said Kangaroo cheerfully. "Not late—what?"

"Hallo! Anything up?" asked Dick Julian, glancing in surprise at the red and discomfited faces of the party. "Not going now?"

"We find that we must do our prep, after all," said Manners grimly.

"Couldn't leave prep!" said Monty Lowther, with great seriousness. "Awfully sorry, Cardew! It's painful to tear oneself away from a chap whose manners are so unusually graceful and charming, but what must be must be. 'Come on, Tom!'"

The Terrible Three wedged through the crowd of new arrivals and departed.

Clive and Levison wore hopeless looks. They had not expected the fellows to remain after the insult to Redfern. They knew Tom Merry & Co. a little better than Cardew did. The house-warming in Study No. 9 was likely to be a ghastly failure, after all.

Cardew looked puzzled and angry.

"Pwaw allow a chap to pass, Kangaroo!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"But what the merry thunder!" exclaimed Noble in amazement. "I understood that this was a house-warming!"

"Yaas, I undahstood so when I came," said Arthur Augustus. "As I came here as a guest, I cannot express my true opinion of Cardew's conduct. I will not say how uttally I despise the howwid boundah for his disgustin' caddishness, as I feel I cannot vewy well do so in the cirms. Come on, Blake!"

Study No. 6, with grim faces, marched out in the wake of Tom Merry & Co.

"Well, my hat!" said Cardew.

"Did you expect any decent fellow to sit down with you after what you've done?" asked Clive with bitter contempt.

"Well, I must say this is a merry gathering!" said Kangaroo, astounded. "Has there been a row?"

"Oh, not at all!"

"Isn't the house-warming coming off?" asked Julian, puzzled. "Blessed if I can make you fellows out!"

"Blessed if I can make out what the trouble's about, either!" said Cardew angrily. "There seems to be a storm because I didn't want three rank outsiders in my study. I don't see that I'm called upon to get acquainted with every rowdy outsider in the school."

"He's talking about Redfern & Co.," said Levison, in explanation. "They came and—"

Kangaroo's face hardened.

"I think I understand," he said. "Well, as I'm not so choice as Gussy in my manners, I'll tell you what I think of you, Cardew. You're a silly snob and a rotten cad! Come away, you chaps! That silly rotter makes me ill!"

Kangaroo & Co. marched off, followed by Julian & Co.

Cardew burst into a bitter laugh.

"So there goes the house-warmin'!" he said. "I suppose you two fellows will be marchin' off next!"

"We can't march off, as it's our study," said Clive; "otherwise, I wouldn't breathe the same air with you another minute!"

"Do you say the same, Levison?"

"Yes, I do!"

"I seem to have put my foot in it," said Cardew coolly. "Is there anythin' special about those scholarship specimens to make them popular?"

Clive's lip curled.

"You wouldn't understand," he said. "Reddy is worth fifty of you, that's all! Do you think any fellows here treat them differently because their people are poor, and they had to work for the scholarships they came here on? Why, even Crooke or Racke isn't such a snobbish fool as that!"

"You're callin' me a snobbish fool?"

"I could call you lots of things as well as that," said Clive contemptuously; "only I suppose you're too dense to understand! You've acted in a way that Baggy Trimble would be ashamed of—like an ill-bred cad!"

"Better mind what you're sayin'!" said Cardew.

"Rot! You'll get plain English from me!" said Clive savagely. "If you had any decency you'd change out of the study after disgracing it as you've done!"

"So you fellows treat that chap Redfern as if he were one of you?"

"He is one of us, you fool!"

"Better language, please!"

"Oh, go and eat coke! Don't talk to me! You make me sick!"

Cardew's eyes glittered; his temper was rising, but he held it in control.

Levison did not speak. Ever since Cardew had stood up for his minor against the bully of the Fifth, Levison had felt bound to stand by the new fellow. The position for him now was decidedly awkward.

"This school is full of surprises for a new chap," said Cardew. "There's a high tone of morality here that rather beats me. Fellows are shocked at the sight of a cigarette or a sportin' paper! Dashed if I didn't think I'd got into a Sunday school by mistake at first! Now I'm expected to pal on with every Tom, Dick, and Harry from the slums, for all I know!"

"Don't be afraid of that," said Clive. "Redfern wouldn't pal with you at any price, and I shall be surprised if any fellow speaks to you after this!"

"All because I don't choose to be friendly with a set of low bounders!"

"I'm friendly with the chaps you're talking about, and if you say another word like that I'll knock it back down your throat!" exclaimed Clive, his eyes blazing.

"Low bounders!" said Cardew coolly.

That was enough for Clive. He made a spring at the new junior.

Cardew put up his hands at once.

Levison rushed between them.

"Hold on!"



"Isn't there some mistake?" said Cardew in a cold, clear voice. "Mistake?" repeated Redfern. "Yes. Did Levison ask you here?" went on Cardew. "Levison asked us here," said Redfern, his face like fire, "or we shouldn't have come!"

"Let me get at the cad!" snapped Clive.

"Let him come on!" said Cardew.

"You can have it out in the gym," said Levison, "not here. There's really nothing to fight about, either."

"The gym would be better," said Clive, dropping his hands. "It'll show all St. Jim's what we in this study think of you, Cardew. I want all the school to know that I had no hand in your rottenness! I'm going to the gym now, and I expect you to follow."

"You won't have to wait for me!" said Cardew disdainfully.

Clive left the study without another word, his face very grim.

Cardew gave Levison a mocking look.

"Are you against me, too, or are you goin' to be my second?" he asked.

There was a long pause.

"I'm down on you for what you did," said Levison at last, "but I haven't forgotten that you stood up for my minor, and that Cutts of the Fifth half-killed you for it. I'll be your second, if you like."

"But you don't want to?"

"No, I don't!"

"Then you can go and eat coke!" sneered Cardew.

And he strode out of the study.

Levison, after a moment's hesitation, followed him.

A few minutes later a fat face looked into the empty study. The unheeded feast was on the table, forgotten and neglected. Baggy Trimble's eyes glistened as they lighted upon it.

"My hat!" murmured Baggy.

He gave a cautious glance up and down the passage, and then slipped into the study.

Then, without troubling even to sit down, he started.

Perhaps Baggy did not believe in waste. Certainly so far as Baggy Trimble could help it, that magnificent feast would not be wasted.

CHAPTER 4.

Licked!

"GO it, Clive!"

It was a hearty chorus from the crowd of fellows gathered in a ring round Clive and Cardew, who faced each other in the centre, with gloves on.

The news had soon spread that there was a fight on in the gym, and many fellows had turned up to see it. Somehow or other, the story of what had happened in Cardew's study was getting known to all the fellows. There had been too many present for it to remain unknown. The looks of the juniors showed what they thought of the grandson of Lord Reckness, and on which side sympathy lay. That this uppish new fellow should have presumed to look down on old Reddy because Reddy's people weren't rich and Reddy had had to work his way to the school on a scholarship, put the juniors' backs up as nothing else could have done. Every fellow present hoped that Cardew was going to get the licking of his life.

"Ready?" asked Tom Merry.

Kangaroo took out his watch to time the fight.

"Yes."

"Time!" said Kangaroo.

"Go it, Clive!"

"Mop him up!"

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Not a voice was raised for Cardew. He had not even a second.

Levison of the Fourth had come in, and he stood quietly back to look on.

Unpopularity did not seem to affect Cardew. His manner was quite cool and self-possessed.

He soon showed, too, that he knew something about boxing, and that, whatever his faults were, want of pluck was not one of them. But the juniors knew that already. Cardew, on his second day at St. Jim's, had stood up to Cutts of the Fifth, and had been severely hurt. And he had not complained. He had kept Cutts' part in the affair secret, rather than bring the bully to punishment. Cad as he had proved himself to be in some respects, there were traits in his character that the juniors could not help admiring.

The first round was fought hard, and there was punishment for both. Clive's face was grimly set, and he put his beef into the combat. Cardew seemed equally determined, and his skill was equal to Clive's. But he did not possess the sturdy strength of the South African junior, and upon the whole he had the worst of the round.

"Time!" said Kangaroo.

Cardew was breathing hard as he stepped back. Clive looked as fresh as paint. His face was heated, and Tom Merry, who was acting as his second, fanned it. Cardew stood alone and unfriended. He did not seem to mind.

"Time!"

Cardew had to give ground now, but he fought well and hard. The second round ended with Cardew on his back.

But when time was called again he came up gamely.

"Two to one on Clive, in quids!" said Crooke of the Shell.

"Shut up!" growled Blake.

"By gum, Clive's licking him!" remarked Grundy of the Shell. "Serve the cad right! I was going to lick him myself. Swank in the Fourth ought to be put down, Wilkins."

"Hear, hear!" said Wilkins, with a grin. "No swank allowed anywhere but in the Shell—what?"

"Oh rats!" said Grundy.

"There goes Cardew!" said Gunn.

Bump!

Kangaroo began to count.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—"

Cardew was up again. He was looking groggy, but his teeth were set and his eyes gleamed with determination.

Clive stood back to give him a chance, and then the round went on.

At the call of time, Cardew was staggering in the ring.

Levison came forward then.

"Here's my knee, Cardew," he said curtly.

"Hang your knee—I don't want it!" muttered Cardew unsteadily.

Levison, without replying, made a knee for him and pulled him upon it.

Cardew could scarcely stand.

"Going on?" asked Kangaroo.

"Yes, hang you!"

At the call of time Cardew detached himself from Levison's knee and came forward, his face white and his eyes gleaming.

Clive gave him a hard look.

"I'm willing to chuck it now," he said.

"Come on!"

"You're not fit to go on."

"That's my business, not yours!"

"Give him his gruel till he's fed-up!" said Gore. The fourth round commenced, Cardew fighting

hard. He held his ground, but he was looking spent when the call of time came again.

Clive was showing signs of the fight now, but he was fresh enough.

Cardew sank, gasping, on Levison's knee.

"Better chuck it!" advised Levison.

"Oh, dry up!"

Levison shrugged his shoulders.

"Time!"

Cardew staggered into the ring. He was evidently licked, but he kept on, and the fellows who were most down on him could not help feeling admiration for his determination and pluck.

He began with a fierce attack, and Clive was driven back. But the Colonial junior recovered at once, and attacked in his turn.

Cardew's feeble guard was knocked aside, and Clive's right came full in his face. But for the glove, the blow would have been a terrible one. As it was, it was severe enough. Cardew went to the floor like a felled ox.

"One, two, three, four, five," counted Kangaroo, "six, seven, eight, nine—out!"

Cardew made a desperate effort to rise.

But he was done.

His head was swimming, he could not see clearly, and he sank back on the floor with a groan.

"Clive wins!" said Kangaroo, putting away his watch.

Levison picked Cardew up.

"I'm not finished yet," said Cardew thickly. "I'm goin' on. Hang your rotten countin'! I tell you I'm goin' on!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom Merry. "You couldn't stand up to a kid in the Third now. Take him away, Levison!"

Clive quietly peeled off the gloves. Tom Merry helped him on with his jacket.

Cardew stood leaning on Levison's arm, casting a savage glance round him. His unpopularity had not affected him, but the licking at the hands of his studymate had evidently stung him to the quick.

"Hang you!" he muttered. "You've got the best of me this time, Clive, but we'll try this again!"

"Whenever you like!" said Clive contemptuously.

He walked away with his friends.

Cardew, savagely rejecting Levison's helping hand, struggled into his jacket and strode unsteadily to the door.

"Let me alone!" he said fiercely, as Levison would have helped him.

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

And he turned away, leaving the sulky and savage junior to his own devices.

Cardew went unsteadily out of the gym into the dark quadrangle. His head was aching, his forehead burning. He walked groggily, and he turned under the old elms to recover himself a little before he went into the School House.

It was some little time later that Cardew came into Study No. 9. He had bathed his face, but the signs of the fight in the gym were very plainly to be seen. Clive and Levison were at work in the study, and they neither spoke nor looked up as their studymate came in.

The spread had been cleared away. Baggy

Trimble had not left very much to clear.

Cardew eyed his studymates savagely.

"Can't you speak?" he sneered.

Clive looked up then.

"I don't want to speak to you," he said. "We've

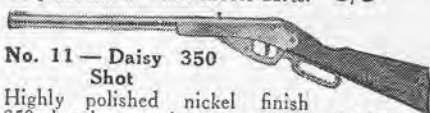
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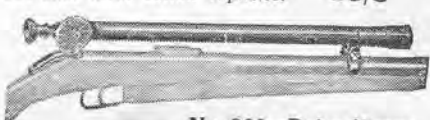
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had it out, and that can drop; but I want nothing to do with you."

"Because of Redfern?"

"Because you're a cad?"

"And you, Levison?"

Levison coloured uncomfortably.

"I don't go so far as that," he said; "but, as a matter of fact, I don't suppose you'll find any decent chap speaking to you, Cardew."

"That means that I'm goin' to be sent to Coventry—what?"

"Well, not exactly that; but the fellows will leave you alone. They don't want to know you."

Cardew set his teeth.

"They don't want to know me?" he repeated, as if he could scarcely believe his ears.

"Does that surprise you?"

"Yes, it does!"

"Well, I suppose you wouldn't understand," said Levison. "When you've been at St. Jim's a bit longer you'll see."

"You mean to say that any fellow who matters will put that poverty-stricken cad Redfern above me?" said Cardew.

"Miles above!" said Levison calmly. "What does it matter to us whether he's got any money or not? We don't want his money."

"It isn't only money, of course," said Cardew, "but other things. Where does the fellow come from?"

"Blessed if I know or care! Nobody else cares, either. So long as a fellow is all right himself, he goes down. I've not been on good terms with Reddy till lately, but I know he's one of the best, and I'd rather have his friendship than yours any day. So would anybody else here."

"Oh!" said Cardew.

"If you've come here to swank about belonging to a titled family, or about having banknotes in your pockets, you've come to the wrong shop," said Levison. "You've got a lot to learn yet, Cardew."

"I'm learnin' some things already," said Cardew, after a pause. "This is a bit different from my old school."

"Pity you didn't stay at your old school!"

Cardew did not reply to that, but he sat down to his preparation. Nothing more was said in the study till work was done, and then Levison and Clive went downstairs together.

Cardew remained in the study in deep thought, with a curious expression on his face. He had plenty of food for thought that evening.

CHAPTER 5.

Planning a Good Deed!

MONTY LOWTHER came into the study, two or three days later, with a twinkle in his eyes.

Tom Merry and Manners, as they glanced at him, did not need telling that a "wheeze" was working in the fertile brain of the humorist of the Shell.

"I've got it!" announced Lowther.

"Go and bury it!" yawned Tom Merry.

"Look here, ass—"

"Keep it for the comic column in the 'Weekly,'" suggested Manners.

"Fathead!" said Lowther. "It's about Cardew."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry, at once. "Leave Cardew out. We don't want to have anything to do with Cardew. I don't, anyway."

"Oh, you're an ass!" said Lowther warmly.

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"Cardew was born especially to have his silly leg pulled, in my opinion. Besides, as Scouts we're bound to do a good-deed every day. Giving a silly snob a lesson is a good deed, anyway."

"Clive gave him a lesson, and I don't see that it's done him much good," said Manners. "He hasn't apologised to Reddy, that I know of."

"I'm thinking of a different kind of lesson. You might back a fellow up when he's taken the trouble to think out the wheeze of the season," said Monty Lowther, in an aggrieved tone.

"Well, I'd rather cut Cardew out."

"It's hard cheese on Levison and Clive, having the cad in their study," said Tom. "Last term he might have got on with Levison; not this."

"Well, it will be all the better for Levison and Clive if we help to tame their snob," said Lowther. "I fancy Cardew's been allowed to do pretty much as he liked at home, and it's got into his head. I'm going to take a lot of trouble to help him on in the way he should go. The earth isn't quite good enough for him to walk on, it seems. His relations are titled people, and he hasn't any connections lower down than an Oxford don. Now, suppose some poor relation of his should turn up—"

"Oh! He's got poor relations, has he?" asked Manners.

"Not that I know of. But suppose one of them should turn up; some awfully low, seedy bounder—say, a cousin—some really out-and-out rotter, you know—poor and shabby, and dropping his h's!" Lowther's eyes glistened. "What a show-up for Cardew before all the fellows!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Yes, Cardew's the kind of fellow who'd be hard hit by a thing like that," he said. "But if he hasn't any such relation—"

"A good-natured fellow like me might provide him with one."

"Eh?"

"I've just been over to the New House," said Lowther. "The N.H.J.A.D.S. have been having a rehearsal. Kerr's got up as Herr Schneider for the play, and I didn't know him at first. The New House rotters jaw no end about Kerr and the way he makes up. I don't say he can't. But my idea is that a School House chap can do it as well as he can, especially a shining light of the School House Dramatic Society—Montague Lowther, for instance."

"Well, you're not quite up to Kerr's form in that line," said Tom. "But you can do it next best, I think. What's the giddy game?"

"It was really Kerr put it into my head with his making-up," said Lowther. "Kerr can make himself up as a fellow you know, and then take you in. Perhaps I can't do that. But I can make myself up as a fellow you don't know."

"I suppose anybody can do that," remarked Manners.

"Your supposer's out of gear, then! You couldn't. But I could, and I'm going to," said Lowther. "Wednesday's a half-holiday, and then the great scheme is coming off. Tumble?"

Tom Merry and Manners stared hard at their chum for a moment or two, wondering whether Monty was wandering in his mind. Then they understood.

"You couldn't do it!" said Manners.

"Rats!"

"It would be funny," said Tom, laughing.

"That silly snob ought to be taken down a peg, right enough. I could kick him for the way he treated Reddy! It's doing him too much honour to take any notice of him, though."

LAUGH THESE OFF!

—with Monty
Lowther.



Hallo, Everybody!

Skimpole tells me there are seven distinct types of face—oval, oblong, triangle, inverted triangle, round, diamond, and square. He has put a different complexion on things!

In reply to a reader, of course scenes on the stage are true to life. Haven't you noticed when the door is slammed, the whole house shakes?

"End of the Daschund in Sight," we read. Or at least, just around the corner!

I hear the best restaurant in Wayland now has thermometers for the waiters to test the soup. Thus displacing the old thumb-ometer method!

Third Form flash: "Why so late down to football?" queried Wally D'Arcy, of Jameson. "I was kept through sciatica," explained Jameson. "But you've no such complaint," objected Wally. "No," ex-

plained Jameson, "I couldn't spell it for old Setby!"

I see a motorist says he would like to spend a few weeks watching the rest of the world go by. He should borrow Mr. Rateliff's second-hand car!

SPECIAL: Spectator with the loudest voice in football is to leave Glasgow, his native city, and come to London. The amount of the transfer fee is not disclosed!

As we heard it: "It wasn't my fault I got a little into debt with one and the other," protested Baggy Trimble, at a meeting of his creditors in the Junior Common-room. "It was all owing to various people." And it still is!

Remember: If you speak without thinking you may perhaps say what you really think!

Story: "What do you mean, you're not surprised I was born on April 2nd?" demanded Grundy, of Crooke. "Late as usual!" smiled Crooke, hastily making off.

No, it doesn't pay to be mixed up in other people's quarrels—unless you happen to be a lawyer!

Next, please: "I was down in the dumps, so I bought myself a new suit," explained George Herries. "Weally?" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "I was wondewin' where you bought it!"

Signing off till next Wednesday, chums!

"Quite so. But you know how keen I am on doing good deeds," urged Lowther. "This is a chance too good to be lost. Besides, it will show the New House bounders that we've got a man who can beat Kerr in his special line."

"All serene!" said Tom. "It's a go!"

"Then we'll buzz down to old Wigg's and see about the things," said Monty Lowther. "Come and get out the bikes. We can hire the things from Wigg's; can't afford to buy them."

The Terrible Three left the study together, to make further arrangements for taking down a peg the snobbish Cardew.

CHAPTER 6.

Cardew's Cousin!

"GOAL!"

"Well kicked, Talbot!"

"Bravo!"

It was Wednesday afternoon, and a Form match on Little Side had just come to an end.

Talbot of the Shell had kicked the winning goal for his side almost on the stroke of time, and the Shell fellows shouted approval.

"Bai Joye! They've won!" remarked Arthur Augustus, in surprise, as the footballers came off.

"What did you expect, dear boy?" asked Kangaroo.

"Weally, Kangawoo—"

"Why didn't you play Lowther, Tommy?" asked Jack Blake. "We should have pulled it off, perhaps, if you'd played Lowther."

Tom Merry laughed.

"Lowther's gone out," he said. "I'm expecting him in every minute now, though."

Monty Lowther usually played for the Shell in a Form match, but he was not in the Shell eleven this time. He was otherwise engaged.

Cardew of the Fourth stood among the crowd watching the match. Racke and Crooke were with him. Of late Cardew had been a good deal in their company.

"Hallo! Who's that johnny?" exclaimed Crooke suddenly, as the players came off the field.

He fixed his eyes upon a curious figure that was coming on the football ground.

Strangers were admitted to the St. Jim's ground to see the matches, if they liked, but seldom or never had such a "merchant" as this been seen there.

He was a lad of about the juniors' own age; but his clothes were old, seedy, and dirty, his boots worn down at heel, his face reddened where it was not dirty, and his left eye was covered by a black patch. A frowsy cap was set on the back of his untidy head.

Racke giggled.

"Precious sort of waster to come here!" he said. "I wonder Taggles hasn't booted him out."

Many glances were turned on the newcomer as he stared round him at the crowd of well-dressed fellows.

Levison of the Fourth, with a strained ankle which kept him off the field, had been watching

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the game with his minor at some distance from Racke & Co.

Levison stepped towards the stranger.

"The game's over," he said. "You're a bit too late if you've come for that."

The stranger blinked at him with his one visible eye. The black patch—apparently worn to cover a damaged eye—was a large one, and it was a little difficult to imagine what his face looked like without it. Not that much of the uncovered part of his face could be seen, so dirty was it.

"I ain't come 'ere to see the game," said the stranger. "I come 'ere to speak to a bloke—name of Cardew."

"My hat! You want to see Cardew?" Levison said, in surprise.

"Yes, if e's 'ere. I understand e's been sent to this 'ere school," said the seedy youth. "E ain't answered my letter, an' I come to see 'im 'ere. Tell 'im Dick Cardew wants to speak to 'im."

"Is your name Cardew?" asked Levison, in astonishment.

"Ain't I said Dick Cardew? Tell 'im 'is Cousin Dick's 'ere, and means to see 'im, whether 'e likes it or not," said the stranger aggressively.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Levison.

Several fellows had heard the stranger's words, and grinning glances were exchanged among them. The awful outsider, who evidently hadn't had much close acquaintance with soap and water for a long time, was Cardew's cousin—cousin of a fellow who had looked down with lofty contempt upon Redfern & Co.

The news spread like wildfire among the crowd round the football ground, and they gathered on the spot, quite prepared to enjoy the situation. It was doubtful whether the snob of St. Jim's would enjoy it; but that was Cardew's look-out.

"Cardew," roared Gore of the Shell, "you're wanted!"

"Ha, ha, ha! This way, Cardew!" yelled Pratt of the New House.

Cardew was leaving the ground with Racke and Crooke, but he looked back as his name was shouted on all sides.

"What's wanted?" he asked curtly.

"You are," chuckled Gore. "You are, my noble duke! Your cousin's come to see you."

"Wha-a-at!"

"'Ere I am, Ralph, old chap!" said the dilapidated stranger.

Cardew stood rooted to the ground for some moments, staring blankly at the seedy youth.

"Who are you?" he gasped at last.

"Makin' out you don't know me," sneered Cousin Dick. "That's like you, Ralph, that there is!"

"How dare you call me Ralph!" shouted Cardew furiously.

"Well, you've always called me Dick, ain't you?"

"I've never seen you before in my life!"

"You won't get nobody to believe that," said Cousin Dick coolly. "Don't pile it on, Ralph!"

Cardew strode up to him, his fists clenching, and his eyes blazing.

"You dare to say you know me?" yelled Cardew.

"Course I knows you, Ralph!"

"If you call me by my Christian name again, I'll knock you down!" shouted Cardew fiercely.

"Look 'ere, Ralph—"

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Cardew sprang at him like a tiger. But a strong arm pushed him back with a strength he could not resist.

"No, you don't!" said Redfern of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 7.

D'Arcy Discovers a Relation!

CARDEW clenched his hands convulsively.

He glared at the dirty stranger, and at the thick crowd of mocking faces surrounding him.

The footballers, coming off in their coats and mufflers, had joined the crowd. Redfern had chipped in promptly to stop Cardew's attack on the ragged youth.

"Let me alone!" muttered Cardew thickly. "I—I'll smash him!"

"You won't touch him," said Redfern coolly.

"That you jolly well won't!" said Figgins, pushing forward. "Let the kid alone! What do you want to hit your own cousin for?"

"He's not my cousin!" shrieked Cardew.

"He says he is."

"He lies!"

"I don't see why a stranger should come here and say he's your cousin, if he isn't," said Figgins. "How does he know you at all, then, if you come to that?"

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus. "That's wathah a posah. How does the chap know you at all, Cardew?"

Cardew panted.

How did the fellow know him? How could a perfect stranger pick him out and claim him amidst the crowd of St. Jim's juniors? That circumstance alone was proof enough for most of the juniors.

Certainly nobody there would have liked to be claimed by such a relation before half the school. Any other fellow in such an unpleasant situation would have received a good deal of sympathy, as well as a good deal of mockery. But there was only mockery for Cardew.

Every fellow he had wounded by his consequential airs, every fellow who liked Redfern, and resented the insults that had been put upon Reddy, grinned merrily over this dreadful show-up for the snob of St. Jim's.

There was a ripple of chuckles on all sides. In his downfall the snob of the school was friendless.

Only Levison took pity on the wretched junior. Levison had not forgotten how Cardew had stood up for his minor against the bully of the Fifth.

"Suppose he is his cousin. There's no reason why the fellow should shove himself in here, if Cardew doesn't want him," he said. "You'd better get going, young shaver."

"Don't be 'ard on a cove," said Cousin Dick plaintively. "I've tramped 'ere to see my cousin, an' I'm 'ungry."

"Bai Jove! Are you weally hungwy?" asked Arthur Augustus, his noble heart touched at once.

"Hawful, sir!"

"Poor chap! You shall certainly not go away without something to eat. Weally, Cardew, I considah that you might offah your welenation a meal, at least."

"He is not my relative!" panted Cardew. "You know he isn't, D'Arcy!"

"I know nothin' of the sort!"

"You are related to me yourself!" shouted



Cardew stood leaning on Levison's arm, casting a savage glance round him. The licking at the hands of his studymate had evidently stung him to the quick. "Hang you!" he muttered. "You've got the best of me this time, Clive, but we'll try again!"

Cardew, "You know I haven't a relative like that!"

"Wubbish! I nevah saw you before you came here," said Arthur Augustus. "I know nothin' of you, exceptin' that you are a vevy distant connection of my family, and I am ashamed of the connection."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Gussy!" said Blake admiringly. "Go it! You'll astonish 'em in the House of Lords some day!"

"Weally, Blake——"

Cousin Dick looked round pathetically at the crowd, and rubbed his single visible eye with a dirty knuckle.

"No offence, young gents!" he said. "I never meant no 'arm in comin' 'ere. 'Tain't my fault if old Lord Reckness let 'is nephew go to the dogs, and 'ave 'is son brought up in the work-us, is it?"

"Not at all," said Blake. "It's jolly hard lines on you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"It's not true!" yelled Cardew. "My grandfather has no nephew."

"Look 'ere, Ralph——"

"You impertinent hound!"

"Here! Better language, please!" said Figgins. "My opinion is that your cousin's a bit more decent than you, anyway, Cardew."

"He's not my cousin."

"It's pretty plain that he is, and that you've treated him rottenly," said Figgins, with a curl of the lip. "I don't say he ought to have come here—but how's the poor kid to know any better? You're always swanking about with

your fivers. You might have spared a quid or two for your own cousin."

"I tell you——" Cardew choked with rage.

But for the interposing juniors, he would have sprung upon the visitor like a tiger.

Racke and Crooke had drawn away from him. Their looks were sneering as they glanced at him. Racke and Crooke had stood a good deal of swank from Cardew. They were not likely to stand any more.

Cardew's look was almost wild.

"I tell you," he said thickly, "that fellow is an impostor! I've never seen him before! I have no Cousin Dick!"

"How does he know you, then?" sneered Gore.

"I—I don't know. I suppose he's seen me somewhere."

"Yes, at 'ome," said Cousin Dick.

"It's a lie!"

"At 'ome, I tell you, though I wasn't never allowed to come in, in case the servants should see me," said Cousin Dick plaintively. "I've been turned away from your door, 'ungry."

"Shame!"

"It's a lie!" screamed Cardew.

"When I 'eard you was 'ere, Ralph, I says to myself I'll come and see you 'ere, and p'raps you wouldn't be so 'ard as you was at 'ome with the old bloke," said Cousin Dick. "But you're as 'ard as nails, I can see that. Well, I ain't goin' to ask you for nothin'. P'raps you thinks I want your money? I wouldn't touch your money at no price!"

If the juniors had needed convincing, this would have been a clincher. For if the fellow was an

impostor, what object could he have excepting to extort money? If he did not want money from Cardew, how could he be an impostor?

"Hon'ly I ain't goin' to be called a liar afore all these young gents," went on Cousin Dick, with dignity. "I'll prove what I says, and I'll go!"

"It's a lie! You can't prove it!"

"Some of you young gents may 'ave seen my Cousin Ralph when 'e 'adn't 'is jacket on," said Cousin Dick, looking round. "I asks you, 'as 'e or 'asn't 'e got a cut on the left elbow?"

Cardew almost staggered.

"Yes, rather!" roared Blake. "I noticed it the other day at swimming!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I saw it, too, in the swimming bath," said Clive, with a nod.

Levison stood dumbfounded. He, too, had noticed the scar of a cut on Cardew's left elbow. Cardew's arm was covered by his coat now. How did this disreputable stranger know the cut was there, unless the facts were as he represented them?

"I've seen that cut," said Manners. "You're bowled out, Cardew!"

"I—I—I—" Cardew choked. "I—I don't know how he knows that, but—"

"We do," said Kangaroo dryly.

"I tell you he's an impostor—he's a rotten impostor! He's not my cousin—"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Yaas, dwy up!" said Arthur Augustus, his eyes flashing scorn. "If this chap is your cousin, Cardew, he must be a distant wrelative of mine, as you are a distant wrelative of mine. I shall certainly not allow a wrelative of mine to go hungwy while I have a shillin' in my pocket! Come up to my study, deah boy, and we'll look aftah you!"

"Oh, Gussy!" gasped Blake.

D'Arcy looked at him.

"I twust, Blake, that you have no objection to my lookin' aftah my wrelative in the study?"



"Strike me, what a score—
hundred and
nineteen!"

Half-a-crown
has been a-
warded to P.
Martin, 337,
Camden Road,
Holloway,
London, N.7.

"N-no!" stuttered Blake. "Don't let the House-master see him, though. Railton might cut up rusty."

"I should explain to Wailton, Blake, that this poor chap is my wrelative, who has been fearfully neglected."

"Ha, ha, ha! Better not let Railton see him, all the same!"

"Wats! Come with me, deah boy!"

Arthur Augustus slid his noble arm through the dirty arm of the stranger and led him majestically to the School House.

The juniors stared after them and gasped. The contrast between Arthur Augustus' line of action

and Cardew's was striking, and the comparison was all in Gussy's favour. Certainly there was no snobbishness about him. His only thought was to provide for the wants of the unfortunate fellow whom he had suddenly discovered to be a distant relation.

"Bravo, Gussy!" roared Figgins.

"Good old Gussy!" gasped Tom Merry. "Oh, my hat!"

Loud cheers followed the swell of St. Jim's. And the crowd followed him, too, curious to see what was to happen when Cardew's cousin was introduced into the august precincts of the School House of St. Jim's.

CHAPTER 8.

A Surprising Revelation!

"TWOT along, deah boy!"

The seedy youth had no choice about trotting along, because Arthur Augustus had taken his arm. But he seemed to hesitate and linger.

Somehow, he did not seem to want to accept Arthur Augustus' noble hospitality.

"It's all wight," said D'Arcy reassuringly. "I am goin' to look aftah you, you know. Nothin' to be afwaid of."

"I—I—I—" stammered Cousin Dick.

"Pway don't be nervous! Our headmastah is a wegulah bwick!"

"But I—I—I—"

"It's all wight! Wely on me!"

And Arthur Augustus marched the seedy youth up the steps of the School House, with an interested crowd in his wake.

Cardew stood where he had been left, his lips tightly set, his face pale with rage and chagrin and humiliation. The public derision that had fallen upon him seemed almost to have overwhelmed him.

Arthur Augustus and his protegee had entered the School House, in spite of the evident unwillingness of Cousin Dick. D'Arcy was piloting his new friend to the staircase when Kildare bore down on him.

The prefect signed to them to stop. Kildare looked astonished, as well he might.

"What on earth does this mean, D'Arcy?" he exclaimed. "Who is this?"

"Cardew's cousin, Kildare."

"Nonsense!"

"Weally, you know—"

"It's all right, Kildare," chimed in Julian. "It's Cardew's cousin, right enough. A poor relation who's come here to see him. Cardew won't own him. We're going to see that he has a feed."

"Hold on!" said Kildare. "This is all rot! The kid can't be Cardew's cousin. Who are you, young shaver?"

"These 'ere young gents know who I am, sir," said Cousin Dick. "Which I never knowed as my cousin would cut up so rusty with me fer comin' 'ere. No offence, sir!"

"You are Cardew's cousin!" exclaimed Kildare, in amazement. "Even if you are, you should not have come here."

"I meant no 'arm, sir," said the seedy stranger humbly. "I'll go now, if you don't want me to come 'ere."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tightened his grip on the shabby arm.

"You will not go, deah boy!" he said. "Kildare, this chap is poor and hungwy, and I am goin' to stand him a feed, as Cardew wefuses to wecognise



Detective Kerr Investigates

No. 18.

The Accident Racketeers!

NOT long after Mr. Railton had returned to St. Jim's after a run in his car early one evening, a young man, accompanied by his brother, called to see him—a village youth from Rylcombe, Albert Burke; who displayed a muddled leg, and stated that Mr. Railton's car had knocked him into a ditch between Rylcombe and St. Jim's. The elder Burkes signified that his brother would overlook the matter for a consideration. "But this is blackmail! I am sure the mudguard of my car did not strike your brother!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. Whilst P.-c. Crump was being called in, "Detective" Kerr investigated.

KERR: You rode into Rylcombe on your bike immediately after tea, Kangaroo, I believe?

NOBLE: Yes, Kerr. I had a pass from Kildare.

KERR: You'd have passed Mr. Railton in his car, one way or the other, I should think?

NOBLE: He overtook me coming back, near the White Gate. It was about there that he is supposed to have bumped this kid into the ditch.

KERR: Was Railton driving excessively fast?

NOBLE: No; he was going very carefully, and crept past me, as the other side of the road is up for a good distance, as you know.

KERR: Thanks, Noble!

TRIMBLE: I say, Kerr, I saw Railton when he came in, and he looked jolly flustered to me.

KERR: What makes you say that, Trimble?

TRIMBLE: Well, he turned on me like a tiger and snapped: "Have you done those lines I set you, Trimble?" I said, "No, sir." And he snapped back: "Then they are doubled. See that I have them by to-morrow evening at latest, Trimble."

him. I twust, Kildare, that there is no objection to that?"

"I can't help thinking the fellow is an impostor," said the astonished captain of St. Jim's.

"He's proved that he isn't, Kildare!" sang out a dozen voices.

"I've proved it to these 'ere young gents, sir," said Cousin Dick meekly. "They knows. They ain't so 'ard on a bloke as my Cousin Ralph."

"Where's Cardew?" asked Kildare. "Call him in!"

Cardew was coming up the steps, and Kildare beckoned to him as he caught sight of him. The snob of the Fourth came forward with a furious look.

"Is this kid your cousin, Cardew?"

KERR: Not so surprising Railton should flare up. Isn't it nearly a week now since he first gave you those lines?

TRIMBLE: What if it is? That's no reason why Railton should be simply trembling as he got out of his car, is it?

KERR: Imagination will work wonders sometimes. Was Railton driving his runabout, or the roadster?

TRIMBLE: The runabout—the blue one.

KERR: I see. Wonder if I can catch this kid Burkes before he goes? I believe he is telling his tale to the Head at the moment—

KERR: Oh, Burkes, I seem to know your face! Weren't you in Grimes' football team once when we played at Rylcombe?

BURKES: Yes, I was.

KERR: Hope you weren't hurt badly by that car?

BURKES: Your Housemaster, Mr. Railton, might have killed me. My brother thinks—

KERR: You certainly ought to prosecute, if anybody was guilty of dangerous driving. By the way, what did Mr. Railton's car look like? He's just got a new one—a big yellow roadster—

BURKES: No, it was a little blue runabout. Number RL 147.

KERR: That's Mr. Railton's car right enough. You must have had time to take a good look at it to get the number, considering the light was fading.

BURKES: My brother took the number. I had no time to move before I was hit. I heard the car coming, and when I spun round there it was, careering from one side of the road to the other, as if the driver was mad. He kept over the other side of the road for a bit, then suddenly swerved right across, directly at me. He meant to finish me, I believe. I tried to jump into the hedge, but before I could do that, the mudguard caught me, and I crashed into the ditch. I tell you, I'm lucky to be alive!

KERR: I should think you are, after all that happening to you. You're positive that it all occurred exactly as you've said. There were one or two St. Jim's fellows near the school gates, but they didn't see anything.

BURKES: This happened farther up the lane, near the White Gate. My brother was just behind me, and he saw everything. He'll bear me out. It will cost your Housemaster a bit if he wants this kept dark.

(Burkes has made a serious slip. Did you spot it? Turn to Kerr's solution on page 33.)

"No."

"Who is he, then?"

"I don't know. I've never seen him before. He's an impostor!" shouted Cardew.

"Rats!"

"Dry up!"

"Shame!"

It was a regular roar from the crowd of juniors. Cardew cast a fierce glance round him, but he met only looks of contempt and mockery.

"This will have to be looked into," said Kildare abruptly. "If the boy is an impostor—"

"He isn't, Kildare."

"Right as rain, Kildare."

"He's proved it."

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"Remain here, D'Arcy, while I call Mr. Railton."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Cousin Dick, in dismay.

"Weally, Kildare—"

"Mr. Railton is here," said a deep voice. And there was a sudden hush on the crowd as the School House master came striding from the direction of his study.

Cousin Dick made a motion as if to bolt through the big doorway into the open quadrangle, but Arthur Augustus held firmly to his arm.

The swell of St. Jim's was prepared to see his protegee through.

Mr. Railton eyed the seedy youth with a keen glance. Cousin Dick seemed to have an inclination to get behind Arthur Augustus.

D'Arcy squeezed his arm encouragingly.

"It's all sewene, deah boy!" he whispered. "Wailton is a bwick. Nothin' to be afwaid of."

"Now, what's all this?" exclaimed the Housemaster. "Who is this boy?"

Twenty voices responded at once.

"Cardew's cousin, sir!"

"It's a lie!" roared Cardew. "He's not my cousin, Mr. Railton. I don't know him."

"This is an extraordinary affair," said Mr. Railton, frowning. "Come here, my boy. You need not be afraid, but come forward."

Cousin Dick reluctantly came forward.

"You claim to be Cardew's cousin, and Cardew denies it," said Mr. Railton. "Kindly tell me your name."

"His name's Cardew, sir—"

"Silence, please! Let the boy answer for himself. Speak up, my lad!" said the School House master, not at all unkindly.

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Cousin Dick hesitated.

"Speak up, deah boy!" murmured Arthur Augustus, with another encouraging squeeze.

"Tell the twuth, and it will be all wight."

"Answer me!" said Mr. Railton. "What is your name?"

Cousin Dick gasped and replied at last:

"Lowther, sir!"

CHAPTER 9.

Only Lowther!

"LOWTHER!"

The name was repeated in a yell by many voices.

Cardew stared stupefied at his "cousin."

Mr. Railton stood rooted to the floor. Whatever answer he might have expected, he certainly had not expected that. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy dropped the claimant's arm as if it had suddenly become red hot.

"Lowther!" gasped Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

"Lowther!" gasped Blake.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Cousin Dick" removed the black patch from over his left eye. Now that it was gone, a resemblance to Monty Lowther's features could be traced through the reddened complexion and the dirt.

The crowd of juniors simply gasped for breath. Cardew drew a deep breath of relief. It was only a jape after all, though a jape of such magnitude that no one would have dreamed of suspecting it.

Mr. Railton's brow grew very stern.

"So it is you, Lowther?"

"Yes, sir," said Lowther meekly.

"And what is the meaning of this ridiculous masquerade?" demanded Mr. Railton sternly.

"Ahem!"

"Bai Jove! You uttah spoofin' wottah, Lowthah!" stuttered Arthur Augustus.

"Silence! Answer me, Lowther! How dare you play a ridiculous trick like this, and cause so much disturbance?"

"I was doing Cardew a friendly turn, sir," said Lowther.

"What?"

"We were in it, too, sir," said Tom Merry, coming forward at once with Manners. Now that the jape had taken a serious turn, Monty Lowther's chums were quite ready to own up and take their share in what was to follow.

"Indeed! And what was your object, Merry, in playing this ridiculous trick?" the Housemaster inquired stormily.

"It was to give Cardew a lesson, sir," said Tom. "He's a silly snob and we thought it would do him good."

There was a chortle from the crowd of juniors, and Kildare grinned. Kildare had noticed some of Cardew's lofty ways.

Mr. Railton's face relaxed.

"No harm intended, sir," said Lowther cheerfully. "Of course, I didn't think you would be brought into it, sir, or, of course—ahem!—I shouldn't have thought of it at all. It was an act of kindness, sir, towards a schoolfellow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. "Merry, you will kindly explain to me the meaning of this nonsense."

"Ahem! It was for Cardew's good, sir, really," said Tom. "He's a bit of a snob and—and we

thought this might cure him. I—I'm sure it's done him good."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cardew's face was a study.

"You should have seen his face, sir, when he was claimed by his seedy cousin," ventured Manners.

Mr. Railton gave the juniors a very curious look.

Kildare slipped away quietly, to chuckle at his ease in his own study.

"A most absurd trick!" said Mr. Railton, at last. "You will—ahem!—take fifty lines, Lowther, and do not let anything of the kind occur again."

"Yes, sir."

And Mr. Railton retreated to his own study, and did not laugh till the door was safely closed.

"You—you spoofing boulder!" exclaimed Blake. "So it was a jape all along? I'd have known you without that patch over your eye."

"My dear chap, you wouldn't have known me in three years," said Lowther. "Cardew jolly nearly believed I was his cousin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! I wegard you as a feahful spoofah, Lowthah. Ha, ha, ha!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"Sorry to deprive you of the pleasure of seeing a relation, Cardew," said Monty Lowther affably. "I didn't intend to be brought into the House. Accidents will happen. I hope you've enjoyed it."

"You spoofing rotter!" shouted Cardew.

"That's gratitude!" said Monty Lowther. "I've taken all this trouble to give the silly snob a lesson, and that's how grateful he is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come and help me get these things off," said Monty Lowther. "I want a wash—badly. I feel rather soiled as Cardew's cousin."

And Tom Merry and Manners, chuckling, followed Lowther up the stairs, where "Cousin Dick" proceeded to change in the dormitory and resume his proper identity.

Cardew strode away, followed by shouts of laughter.

So well had Monty Lowther played his part that Cardew had almost begun to wonder whether he really had a Cousin Dick without knowing it. It was a relief to find that Cousin Dick was only Lowther of the Shell after all, exercising the skill he had acquired as a leading member of the School House Dramatic Society.

But the jape had brought more ridicule upon Cardew than if Cousin Dick had really been his cousin, and wherever he showed himself he was greeted with chuckles and inquiries about his slummy relation, till he was almost frantic with rage and chagrin.

He took refuge in his study at last, and found Levison and Sidney Clive there, both grinning. They burst into a laugh at the sight of him, and Cardew eyed them furiously.

"Funny, isn't it?" he said, between his teeth.

"Jolly funny!" roared Clive. "Ha, ha, ha! If you could only have seen your own face! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I call it rotten cheek!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Levison. "You shouldn't have played the giddy ox. Nothing to be ashamed of in having a poor relation. You'll be cackled to death for getting your wool off as you did, you know."

Cardew gave him a furious look and walked out of the study and slammed the door.

The laughter of his studymates followed him,



PROFESSOR SKIMPOLE'S HOROSCOPE

This Week :

Mr. HORACE RATCLIFF.

IT was no easy matter for me to discover Mr. Ratcliff's natal date. "Ratty," as the New House fellows call him, has a reputation for being short-tempered—and when I found his study empty, I was not altogether disappointed. Perhaps I should not have looked, but I noticed a small pocket diary on his desk, and it struck me Mr. Ratcliff might have marked his birthday in some way, though it was not very likely. I was in two minds whether to glance in the diary when Mr. Ratcliff himself came in unexpectedly.

"What do you want, Skimpole?" he barked. "You are a School House boy, and you have no right here whatsoever!" "I want to find out your birthday, sir," I gasped. "My birthday? Were you thinking of making me a present?" demanded Mr. Ratcliff, with heavy sarcasm. "If so, as my birthday happens to fall in early October, you are too late for this year, and too early for next!"

I made my escape as quickly as I could—but I had the exact date, which I needed. Mr. Ratcliff was mildly amused, but like the true seeker after solitude that he is, he was glad to see me go. Mr. Ratcliff is a Libra subject (September 23rd to October 23rd), over whom the planets Jupiter and Saturn hold sway. A saturnine nature is indicated, and Mr. Ratcliff's stars seem determined to involve him in constant disputes. He has considerable gifts in the realms of science, but never seems to settle down to develop them as he might. A more equable character of Mr. Ratcliff's type would undoubtedly make a great name for himself.

"Hallo, Cardew!" yelled a fog in the passage. "How's your cousin?"

Cardew made a rush for him and the fog vanished, yelling with laughter. With gleaming eyes Cardew strode away to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were there, Lowther having changed into his everyday attire by this time. The Shell fellows grinned as Cardew strode in savagely.

"Had any more of your relations to see you, dear boy?" said Lowther, in a most affable tone.

"You cheeky hound!"

"Eh?"

"Do you think I am goin' to stand this?" shouted Cardew.

"Yes, I rather think so."

"Then I'll show you."

Cardew made a spring at Lowther.

Tom Merry caught him by the shoulder and swung him back. Without ceremony, Tom grasped the struggling Fourth Former in his sturdy arms and pitched him out of the study.

Cardew landed there with a bump. He sprang up, his face flaming.

"Come out, Lowther, you coward!"

"My dear chap, I'll come out!" said Lowther cheerfully. "I dare say you'll wish I hadn't in a few minutes."

Lowther came out promptly. For five minutes there was a terrific scrap in the Shell passage. At the end of five minutes Cardew lay on the floor without an ounce of breath left in him, and Monty Lowther smiled down at him benevolently, mopping his injured nose carefully at the same time.

"You ought to learn to take a joke, dear boy," he said. "Try to develop a sense of humour. It

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will help to cure you of being such a snob. Trot away now. I want to be busy!"

Lowther went back into the study, and Cardew, when he had recovered his breath, limped away. He was licked, and there was nothing more to be done. Cardew was not a pleasant studymate in Study No. 9 that evening.

CHAPTER 10.

A Surprise for Redfern!

TOM MERRY & Co. had laughed heartily over the jape on the snob of St. Jim's, but, having laughed over it, they dismissed Cardew from their minds.

The Terrible Three wanted nothing to do with him, though they charitably hoped that his lesson had done him good. Study No. 6 steered clear of him; so did Julian & Co., and Kangaroo and his friends. As for the New House fellows, they made no secret of their dislike and contempt. Even in his own study, Clive avoided him, though they had not come to blows again.

But for Ernest Levison, Cardew would have felt very lonely indeed. He no longer had much to do with Racke and Crooke. Cardew had noticed the way they had shunned him when Cousin Dick had arrived, and he repulsed them with angry scorn.

He was sitting in the study one evening, with his hands driven deep in his pockets and a frown on his brow, when Levison came in.

Clive was behind Levison, but seeing Cardew in the study, he did not enter. Levison, however, came in. He sat down at the table and got out his books.

Cardew looked at him.

"Beginning prep already?" he asked.

"Yes, I've got to help my minor later."

"You take a lot of trouble about your minor," said Cardew.

"He's a good little chap."

"I'm getting fed up with St. Jim's," said Cardew, after a pause. "I seem to have made a bad break here."

"You have," assented Levison. "You'll live it down in time if you don't act the goat again. Why don't you apologise to Redfern?"

"I—apologise!"

"Why not?" said Levison, unmoved. "You're nobody in particular, are you?"

Cardew flushed angrily.

"I won't quarrel with you," he said.

"I shouldn't," agreed Levison. "You've quarrelled with enough fellows. No good adding to the list."

"I hardly know why you're stickin' to me," said Cardew, looking at him. "It isn't my money. You've shown that you don't want that. You don't want to join in any of the little plans I was layin' for havin' a good time at this school."

"I don't mind telling you," said Levison. "You stood up for my minor. And I've been down on my luck myself, and a fellow stood by me and helped me through. Why shouldn't I do as much for you? Last term I'd have entered into all your rot, and taken your money off you at nap and banker. I was more unpopular then than you are now. I know what it's like."

"You seem popular enough now."

"I get on with the fellows," said Levison. "I like the change, as a matter of fact. I'm going to play in the Rookwood match when it comes off, and that's a bit better than sneaking out after lights out to play nap at the Green Man with

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Lodgey and Banks. You seem to have got fed up with Racke & Co.—yourself."

"Rotters!" growled Cardew.

"Hear, hear!"

"I've been thinkin' over things," said Cardew. "I never meant to act like a snob. I've been a good bit flattered, and so on, and—and perhaps made rather a fool of. I haven't found things here as I expected."

Levison grinned.

"No; you expected to be a big panjandrum because your grandfather is a lord and your pocket-book full of notes," he said. "Well, you can be popular with fellows like Trimble and Mellish on that account, if you like. What the dickens do you think a chap like Tom Merry



"Answer me!" said Mr. Railton. "What is your 'Lowther!' The name was repeated in astonish-

would care about your dashed money? He doesn't want any of it."

"I'd like to set myself right with the fellows," said Cardew. "Not that I want to ask favours of anybody; but I don't like bein' looked on as a snob. I've got my faults, I suppose, but that's really not one of them. I—I suppose it was just swank."

"You're getting on," said Levison. "Well, put your princely pride in your princely pocket, and go and apologise to Redfern. He's a good-natured chap, and may look over it."

Cardew did not reply. He sat for a long time in silence, while Levison worked. He left the study at last and walked along to Study No. 5. He tapped at the door, and Dick Julian's voice called out:

"Come in!"

Cardew entered. Study No. 5 were at prep, but they left off work to glare at Cardew as he came in.

"There's the door!" said Kerruish.

"I've dropped in to speak to Hammond," said Cardew calmly.

"You needn't trouble," said Hammond. "Buzz off, before I buzz a dic at you!"

"We had a little disagreement the day I came here," said Cardew. "I was rather rude to you, Hammond. I really didn't mean it—only rot. I'm sorry!"

"Eh?" said Hammond.

"I apologise!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"That's all!" said Cardew, and he turned and



sin Dick gasped and replied: "Lowther, sir!" voices, and the School House master stood rooted

left the study, leaving the chums of Study No. 5 staring.

The new junior sauntered across the quadrangle to the New House. He went in, and ascended the staircase.

Figgins & Co. were chatting on the landing, and they frowned at the newcomer.

"If you're not looking for a thick ear, you'd better clear!" said George Figgins gruffly.

"I want to see Redfern. Would you mind tellin' me which is his study?"

"Oh!" said Figgins, taken aback. "Study No. 5."

"Thanks!"

Cardew walked on, and tapped at Redfern's door.

"Trot in!" called out Redfern's voice.

Cardew went in, to meet a deadly stare from Redfern, Owen, and Lawrence.

"You cheeky cad!" exclaimed Lawrence.

"What do you mean by coming here?"

"I've come to apologise," said Cardew calmly.

"Wha-a-at!"

"I acted rather like a cad the other day. I'm sorry!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Redfern.

"Anythin' else I can say?" asked Cardew.

"Nothing," said Redfern grimly. "If you can see what a sneaking worm you were, and are sorry for it, your apology's accepted. Shut the door after you."

Cardew hesitated a moment, and then left the study.

"The silly rotter seems to be learning manners," remarked Lawrence, in wonder. "I shouldn't have expected that of him."

"The biggest duffer gets sense knocked into his head in the long run," said Owen. "I don't suppose he has a very cheery time in his own House. Thank goodness he isn't in the New House."

"Yes, that's a bit of luck," agreed Redfern. "He might have been planted on us. Pass the Latin dic."

Redfern & Co. went on with their work, and forgot all about Cardew. The latter returned to the School House with a thoughtful brow.

Outside Study No. 6 the Terrible Three were chatting with Blake & Co. as he came in. Seven faces became elaborately unconscious in their expressions. But Cardew stopped.

"I've been over to the New House," he said.

"Have you weally?" said Arthur Augustus politely.

"Yes. I've apologised to Redfern."

"Bai Jove!"

"Time you did!" remarked Blake.

"Didn't Reddy kick you out?" growled Herries.

"No; he didn't kick me out!"

"More duffer Reddy! I should have!"

"Weally, Hewwies, an apology sets any mattah wight, you know," said Arthur Augustus reprovingly. "Cardew has done the wight thing. I wegard you as havin' acted in a wight and pwopah mannah, Cardew!"

"Thanks!" said Cardew. "If I'd had any doubts on the point, they would be set at rest now, of course!"

He walked on, leaving Arthur Augustus a little puzzled, and the other fellows grinning, over his last remark.

"Bai Jove!" said D'Arcy, after a pause. "The fellow is a wathah cheeky wottah aftah all! I cannot help suspectin' that he was pullin' my leg!"

"Go hon!" said Lowther.

Cardew went on to his study. Clive was there with Levison.

"I've done it," said Cardew, with a grin. "While I'm in the vein, Clive, I'll apologise to you, though you really owe me one for knockin' me out as you did. Do I owe you an apology, Levison?"

"No," said Levison, laughing.

Clive laughed, too. There was more good humour in Study No. 9 that evening, and later on, in the Common-room, Arthur Augustus came down off his pedestal, and favoured Cardew with a casual remark.

Monty Lowther was almost genial to him, convinced that his great jape had done Cardew good.

and feeling the satisfaction that comes of a good action that has had good results.

But whether Cardew had really repented of his fault, or whether he had merely taken the easiest way of getting out of the odium it had brought upon him, was a question which even Levison, keen as he was, found it difficult to answer.

CHAPTER 11.

Mr. Ratcliff's Little Mistake!

"YAH! Oh! Ah! Yurrrrrgh!"

Cardew of the Fourth jumped.

It was dark in the quadrangle, dark and misty, and Cardew was almost feeling his way towards the School House, when that sudden uproar burst upon his ears, coming from the path under the elms.

Cardew had been down to post a letter in the box in the school wall that bordered the road. As he halted and stared towards the black patch of trees, two figures came running suddenly out of the shadows, and crashed into him together.

"Oh!" gasped one of them.

"Groogh!" gurgled the other.

Cardew caught at one of them to steady himself.

"What the dickens—" he ejaculated.

"Leggo!" panted a voice he knew.

"Redfern!" exclaimed Cardew.

"Shush, you silly ass! Who is it, a School House chap?"

"I'm Cardew!"

"Come on, Reddy!" Cardew recognised the voice of Lawrence. "There'll be a crowd here soon!"

"Let go, Cardew!" said Redfern. "Keep this dark!"

"What have you done?"

"Biffed old Ratty!" said Redfern, with a breathless chuckle.

"Mr. Ratcliff! Your Housemaster!" exclaimed Cardew, aghast.

"Gurrrgh! Yurrrgggh!" came from under the trees.

"Why shouldn't we?" growled Lawrence. "He's been going for us for nothing! Figgy put gum in his slippers, and he caned us on suspicion, the rotter!"

"Keep it dark!" said Redfern anxiously.

"You silly asses!" said Cardew. "This means a flogging at least! Serve you jolly well right, too!"

"Mind your own business!" said Lawrence angrily. "Are you going to keep this dark, or are you a rotten sneak as well as a silly snob?"

Cardew flushed angrily in the darkness.

"Let him do as he likes," said Redfern. "I'm not asking any favours of that fellow. Come on! Let's get clear, anyway!"

The two New House juniors vanished into the darkness.

Cardew grinned. He had seen Mr. Ratcliff, the Housemaster of the New House, and had noticed that Ratty was not beloved in his House. Evidently the Housemaster's bad temper had exasperated Redfern & Co. beyond the limits of patience, and they had taken this extraordinary and risky method of getting their own back.

Mr. Ratcliff was still yelling and gurgling under the trees. From the loud howling, it might have been supposed that the Housemaster was seriously injured.

Cardew waited till the New House juniors were clear, and then ran towards the elms.

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In the darkness he ran into a dark form, and instantly a grasp of iron closed on him.

"Ha! I have caught you!" gasped the New House master. "You need not struggle, you infamous young rascal! I have caught you! Who are you?"

"Let me go!" exclaimed Cardew. "I—"

"You are not a boy of my House," said Mr. Ratcliff, peering at him. "Who are you? Give me your name at once!"

"I'm Cardew! I—"

"Come with me!"

Mr. Ratcliff started for the School House, fairly dragging the astonished and dismayed junior with him.

"I didn't touch you, Mr. Ratcliff!" gasped Cardew. "I heard you call out, and came to help!"

"Do not tell me absurd falsehoods!" ground out Mr. Ratcliff. "You shall answer to the Head for this, Cardew! Come!"

"But I tell you, sir—"

"Silence!"

Heedless of the junior's excited expostulations, the New House master marched him away, and up the steps into the School House.

There was a buzz from the fellows in the hall as they appeared in the light.

Mr. Ratcliff's appearance was extraordinary.

He was smothered in soot from head to foot. There was soot on his hat, soot on his overcoat, and soot still more thickly on his thin, acid face. The Housemaster was barely recognisable.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Whatevah has happened?"

"Follow me to the Head, Cardew!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff, releasing the junior at last.

"But I—I tell you, sir—"

"Follow me at once!"

Mr. Ratcliff whisked away towards the Head's study, shedding soot at every step. The excited juniors surrounded Cardew.

"What on earth have you been up to?" exclaimed Tom Merry.

"Nothin'. I—"

"Ratty looks as if he's been enjoying himself," declared Monty Lowther. "After the feast comes the reckoning, old scout! Go and pay up!"

"I never touched the old fool!" muttered Cardew. "I heard him yell, and went to help him, and he collared me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove! That was vewy unfortunate!"

"Awfully unfortunate!" grinned Lowther. "You shouldn't play the Good Samaritan, Cardew, where Ratty is concerned! He wasn't grateful the time I put a kipper in his Sunday topper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You must have been an ass, Cardew!" said Clive. "What did you want to go for Ratty for? You've nothing to do with him. He's a rotter, but—"

"But he's not our game," said Levison. "What did you do it for?"

"I didn't, I tell you!"

"Did you see who did?" grinned Lowther.

"Yes, but—"

Cardew paused. He realised that he was in a very serious scrape. Redfern and Lawrence, utterly ignorant of Mr. Ratcliff's unfortunate mistake with regard to Cardew, were safe in their own House.

"Follow me, Cardew!" thundered Mr. Ratcliff from the end of the passage.

And he disappeared into the Head's study, sooty as he was.

Cardew followed him reluctantly.

In the Head's study Mr. Ratcliff was standing trembling with rage, and dropping soot on all sides on the Head's carpet.

Dr. Holmes was on his feet, with a brow like thunder.

"This is the boy, sir!" panted the New House master. "Look at me, sir! Look at the state I am in! It was Cardew—"

"Cardew!" thundered the Head.

"I—I didn't touch Mr. Ratcliff, sir!"

"What?"

"It is false!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff. "I was suddenly attacked in the dark, Dr. Holmes, and a bag of soot was smashed upon my head. I seized this boy while still groping blindly!"

"I went to help Mr. Ratcliff, sir, as I heard him call out," said Cardew. "I thought he might be hurt or somethin'."

The Head looked sharply at him.

"You were close on the spot, it appears, Cardew?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see anyone else in the quadrangle?"

Cardew did not reply.

"Answer me, boy!" thundered the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Cardew slowly.

"Who was it?"

Silence!

"You declare, Cardew, that you did not assault Mr. Ratcliff, and that someone was there?" said the Head, in ominous tones. "I can scarcely credit your statement, but I am willing to give you every chance. Tell me who else was in the quadrangle, to your knowledge!"

Cardew did not speak.

"Enough!" exclaimed the Head sternly.

"Cardew, you have been guilty of a most wicked and disrespectful outrage upon a master of this school. If you were not a new boy here, I should expel you from the school!"

"Oh!" muttered Cardew.

"As it is," said the Head, "I shall administer a severe flogging—most severe! Mr. Ratcliff, you may leave this matter in my hands. You can accept my assurance that this wretched boy's punishment will be most exemplary. Kindly send someone for Taggles as you go!"

Mr. Ratcliff whisked out of the study, still shedding soot.

There were subdued grins on the faces of the fellows he passed in the Hall.

"Merry!" he rapped out savagely.

"Yes, sir?" said Tom.

"Go to Taggles' lodge at once, and inform him that the Head requires his presence immediately."

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Ratcliff scuttled away across the quadrangle to his own House. He would have been pleased to witness Cardew's exemplary punishment, but his most pressing need at this moment was a bath, with plenty of soap.

CHAPTER 12.

Facing the Music!

"**B**AI Jove! That means a floggin'!" said Arthur Augustus, in hushed tones.

Tom Merry had gone to fetch Taggles. The juniors did not need telling what that meant. Taggles was wanted to hoist the unfortunate junior, who was waiting in the Head's study.

"Well, he must have been a howling ass!" said Monty Lowther. "I'd like to see Ratty sooted every day of the week, but it's rather thick, sooting a Housemaster. Cardew shouldn't have stayed to be caught. It was—ahem!—injudicious!"

"It was feahfully weckless," said Arthur Augustus. "I cannot help wegardin' it as disrespectful!"

(Continued on next page.)

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"Cardew said he didn't do it," said Clive. "I don't see what he could have up against Ratty, either. He's not in the New House. More likely Figgy or Reddy, or one of those chaps."

"Ratty caught him," said Blake, shaking his head. "Anyway, if it wasn't Cardew, he's only got to say so."

"He mightn't care to sneak."

Blake grunted.

"I don't see why a howling snob shouldn't be a sneak, too. Snobbery and sneaking go together."

"Well, yes, but—"

Tom Merry came back into the House, followed by Taggles, grunting. Taggles did not like being disturbed in the evening.

The old porter went down the passage to the Head's study, and the juniors gathered in a hushed crowd.

Cardew had done his best to make himself unpopular while he had been at St. Jim's. But a flogging was a serious matter, and such an outrageous trick upon a Housemaster was certain to be punished by as severe a flogging as the Head could bring himself to administer.

There was a good deal of sympathy for the unfortunate junior who was awaiting his fate in the Head's study.

"It's wathah hard lines!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "I weally twust Watty was not makin' a mistake!"

"Cardew would soon set him right!" grunted Herries.

"Yaas, I suppose he would!"

"It's hard cheese, all the same!" said Tom Merry. "The Head's bound to lay it on for a trick like that!"

The juniors listened in painful suspense. It was, as Monty Lowther remarked, a fate that might have befallen any of them, so they were bound to be sympathetic. But the expected yells were not heard from the study.

As Taggles came in, Dr Holmes pointed to Cardew.

"Kindly take this boy up for a flogging, Taggles."

"Yes, sir," said Taggles, quite brightly.

Perhaps the pleasure of assisting in a flogging compensated Taggles for being dragged away from the comforts of an armchair, a pipe, and a glass of gin-and-water.

Cardew opened his lips as if to speak. His face was pale.

"Have you anything to say?" demanded the Head sternly.

Cardew breathed hard.

"You have said, sir, that if I were not a new boy, you would have expelled me?"

"Most certainly."

Cardew's eyes glimmered for a moment. The Head's reply left him in no doubt as to what would happen to Redfern if he spoke. Why should he suffer for a fellow he did not like—a fellow who had been the cause—the innocent cause certainly—of the unpopularity he had earned in his House? Then Cardew closed his lips tightly.

"I'm ready, sir!" he said quietly.

Taggles took up the junior.

The fellows in the passage did not hear a single cry from the study. But they heard the steady swish-swish of the birch.

"Poor old chap!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "He's goin' thwough it! He must be as hard as nails."

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"Good man!" said Levison. "I don't think I could stand that without a yelp."

Swish, swish, swish, swish, swish!

It seemed to the juniors that the sound would never end. And still there came no cry from the study.

Dr. Holmes paused at last.

"You may put Master Cardew down, Taggles," he said in a hard voice.

Cardew slid to the floor. His face was pale with pain, and his lips were trembling.

Taggles, at a sign from the Head, left the study.

"I have punished you severely, Cardew," said the Head. "The matter ends here. But if there should be any further outbreak of such reckless insubordination, you will be sent away from the school. You may go!"

Cardew left the study without a word.

He walked down the passage a little unsteadily, his face white. He looked at the crowd of juniors without speaking.

"Was it vewy bad, deah boy?" asked Arthur Augustus softly.

Cardew nodded.

"Lucky not to be sacked!" said Blake. "You've really got off pretty cheaply, Cardew."

Cardew's white lips curled in a cynical smile.

"The Head hasn't sacked me because I'm new here," he said. "He's givin' me another chance for that reason. Kind of him, isn't it?"

"Well, it really is kind of him," said Tom Merry. "For goodness' sake, don't be such a reckless ass again, Cardew! There's a limit, you know."

"You didn't try to put it on somebody else, after all?" asked Racke, with a grin. "It was all gas, what you said about another chap being there."

Cardew looked at him without replying.

"Was it gas?" asked Crooke. "You don't want us to believe that you've taken a flogging rather than give the right man away? Ha, ha, ha! That would be rather rich!"

"Yes, wouldn't it?" said Cardew. "It was gas, of course—I'm rather given to gassin', you know! Of course, if it had been another chap, and I'd known, I should have given him away at once—naturally. I shouldn't expect you to believe anything else, Crooke."

"I shouldn't believe anything else, anyway," said Crooke, with a grin.

Cardew went slowly and painfully up the staircase to Study No. 9.

That evening was a very painful one for Ralph Reckness Cardew of the Fourth.

CHAPTER 13.

A Surprise for the Juniors!

"FLOGGED!"

Redfern fairly howled out the word.

It was morning, and the juniors were out in the quadrangle before morning lessons.

The New House juniors had just learned what had happened the previous evening.

"Flogged!" echoed Lawrence.

"Cardew—flogged!"

"Nothing to be surprised at, considering what he did, surely," said Tom Merry.

"But he didn't!" shouted Redfern, in dismay.

"What?"

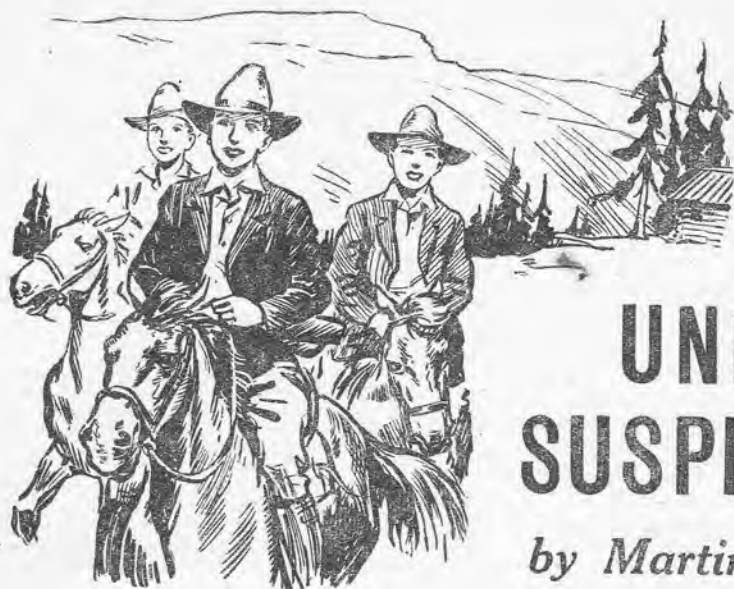
"I did it—Lawrence and I!"

"You?" yelled Tom Merry.

"Bai Jove!"

"You?" stuttered Jack Blake.

(Continued on page 36.)



Accused of a despicable trick on the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek, Frank Richards finds that he is unable to prove his innocence!

UNDER SUSPICION!

by Martin Clifford.

Trouble for Frank!

CHUNKY TODGERS met Frank Richards & Co. as they arrived at the gate of Cedar Creek School in the crisp winter morning. Chunky's usually humorous fat face was very serious.

"I guess you're in for it, Richards!" he remarked, shaking a fat forefinger at Frank.

"In for what, Chunky?"

"A jolly good scalping!" said Chunky impressively.

"Hallo! Who's going to scalp Franky?" inquired Bob Lawless.

"It's Miss Meadows. You've been up to something, Richards," said Chunky Todgers. "I'd never have thought it of you!"

"Look here, you fat duffer," exclaimed Frank Richards, "what are you driving at?"

"It was too bad!" said Chunky. "Just like one of Gunten's tricks, if you like. It was rotten, and I guess I don't mind telling you so. What did you do it for?"

"What have I done?" exclaimed Frank.

"Oh, come off! You know jolly well what you've done!" said Todgers warmly. "And it's a shame!"

"You're talking in riddles," said Frank in bewilderment. "Is Miss Meadows offended about something?"

"You bet she is! You should have seen her face!" said Chunky.

"If you're not potty, tell me what you mean!" exclaimed Frank in exasperation. "I've done nothing to offend Miss Meadows that I know of."

"Rats!" said Todgers. "Anyhow, you can tell Miss Meadows that. She's told me to send you in as soon as you came. She knows what you've done, and so do all the fellows; it's leaked out somehow."

"Miss Meadows wants to see me?" asked Frank quietly.

"Yes—and at once!"

"Well, I'll go."

Frank Richards left his chums and hurried

towards the schoolhouse. His face was troubled now—and his mind, too.

He had a great respect for Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek—as all the fellows had. It was news to him—and unpleasant news—that Miss Meadows had a serious complaint against him.

Two or three fellows were standing by the porch as he went in, and Eben Hacke called out:

"Shame!"

Frank Richards spun round.

"What do you mean by that, Hacke?" he exclaimed fiercely.

Hacke gave him a grim look.

"Oh, don't snort at me!" he said contemptuously. "You've played a dirty trick. I dare say you thought it was funny. Perhaps it was. But I calculate it was a dirty trick, all the same; and all the galoots will tell you so."

"Rotten, I call it!" chimed in Kern Gunten, the Swiss, with a sneering laugh.

And two or three fellows called out:

"Shame!"

Frank stood rooted to the ground. He had always been popular at the lumber school, and this unexpected reception astonished him more than it angered him.

"I haven't the faintest idea what I've supposed to have done!" he exclaimed. "I—I don't know what—"

Mr. Slimmey stepped out of the porch and touched Frank on the shoulder.

"Go in at once to Miss Meadows, Richards."

"Yes, sir," Frank looked at the young master. The kindly face of Paul Slimmey was hard now and unsmiling. There was wrath and scorn in the glance he gave Frank over his gold-rimmed spectacles. "Mr. Slimmey, what have I done?"

"You know very well," said Mr. Slimmey coldly. "Go in at once."

Frank Richards turned into the porch almost dazed.

He tapped at the door of Miss Meadows' study, opposite the school-room door in the passage.

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"Come in!"

Frank entered the room. Miss Meadows was seated at her desk, and she turned her eyes upon the flushed, dismayed schoolboy as he came in. The expression on her face struck Frank like a blow. There was no kindness there. She was a little pale, and her face was set, her lips compressed.

Frank looked at her speechlessly.

"Oh, you've come, Richards!"

"Yes, ma'am," gasped Frank.

"You know why I have sent for you?"

"No."

"The trick you played upon me has been discovered."

Frank only looked at her in bewilderment.

"Trick?" he repeated. "I've played no trick, Miss Meadows. What do you mean?"

The schoolmistress' lip curled.

"It is useless to discuss the matter, Richards, and it is a disagreeable subject to me. No doubt you would not hesitate to lie after what you have done. I could never have believed it of you; I had a good opinion of you. I know better now. I shall give you a letter to take to Mr. Lawless,



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to explain to him why you cannot remain in this school—and you will leave at once!"

Frank Richards staggered.

But indignation overcame his dismay. His eyes flashed, and he straightened up and met the schoolmistress' eyes fearlessly.

"I will not go! I will not take the letter to my uncle!" he exclaimed. "Tell me what I've done!"

The Accusation!

MISS MEADOWS compressed her lips. Whatever it was that was laid to Frank Richards' charge, it was evident that the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek fully believed in his guilt, and that the subject was distasteful to her.

But Frank Richards stood his ground firmly. He did not mean to be condemned unheard.

There was a long pause, but Miss Meadows spoke at last.

"You have a right to be heard, Richards, even if you are only speaking the most palpable falsehoods. I will hear you if you insist on it."

"You have no right to say that I'm speaking falsely!" exclaimed Frank passionately.

"Richards!"

"You've told me I'm to get out of the school, and you haven't even told me what I'm accused of!" went on Frank. "I'm only asking for fair play. Everybody has a right to that."

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"Very well. The other day I asked you to ride over to Thompson with a letter from me to the office of the 'Thompson Press.'"

"I did it," said Frank.

"In that letter an advertisement was enclosed for a handy man to help in the work here. You opened my letter on your way to Thompson and destroyed my advertisement and placed another in the envelope in its place."

"I did not!" shouted Frank.

"Silence! The new advertisement, written by you, was one calculated to bring me into contempt and derision!" Miss Meadows' face flushed as she spoke. "It was an advertisement for insertion in the matrimonial column of the 'Thompson Press.'"

"Oh!" gasped Frank.

"Mr. Penrose, the proprietor of the 'Thompson Press,' was surprised to receive such an advertisement from me; but, as it was accompanied by a letter in my handwriting—which he knows well—he took it as genuine and printed it."

"I—I saw it in the paper," muttered Frank.

"Everybody in the section has seen it, I think," said Miss Meadows bitterly. "It has become a standing joke in every bar-room in the Thompson Valley. What have I done, Richards, that you should hold my name up to scorn in this wicked way?"

"I—I did not!" Frank panted. "It's a trick! Miss Meadows, you can't believe that I would do such a thing!"

"You need not perjure yourself, Richards. My letter was in your hands—and your hands alone—until it was delivered to Mr. Penrose at the 'Press' office in Thompson; no one else could have touched it—without your connivance, at least. Mr. Penrose is about to publish a special edition of his paper to explain the wicked deception and do me what justice is now possible. It is all that can be done now; but your wicked prank has shamed me before everyone in the section."

"Miss Meadows, if I'd done that I should deserve to be kicked out of the school—and out of my uncle's house as well," said Frank. "And I should be if Mr. Lawless believed it. But—but it isn't true. I never knew the advertisement had been tampered with; I never even suspected it at the time. But I know who did it. Miss Meadows, your letter was taken away from me—"

"Come, come!"

"I was stopped in the timber on my way to Thompson that day!" exclaimed Frank. "Kern Gunten and Keller were waiting for me there, and Gunten lassoed me, and they tied me to a tree for an hour."

"What?"

"Gunten took your letter from me and said he would deliver it at the office in Thompson, and that he would leave me tied in the timber all night!" panted Frank. "He came back after an hour or so. I thought he had only taken the letter away to make me believe that he was really going to leave me there all night to give me a scare."

"Richards!"

"I don't know how he opened the letter; it didn't look as if it had been opened when he gave it back," continued Frank. "But he must have done it; and that's why he roped me in in the timber. While I was tied to the tree he was out of sight in the timber with Keller. I thought then that he was only trying to scare me. I know now—"

"You said nothing of all this at the time, Richards," said Miss Meadows, her eyes searching the schoolboy's flushed face.

"Of course I didn't!" exclaimed Frank. "I thought it was only a trick on me—and I'm not a sneak. I'd have jolly well licked Gunten for it, but he made me promise to let the matter drop before he untied me."

Miss Meadows was still scanning his face. There was sincerity in the boy's look and voice.

"You give me your word, Richards, that this is true?"

"My word of honour!" said Frank.

"I shall question Gunten, then—and Keller. One moment. Did you mention this occurrence to anyone at the time?"

"Yes. I told Lawless and Beaulere as soon as I got back. I had to explain why I had been so long."

"Wait here," said Miss Meadows.

She stepped to the door and spoke to Mr. Slimmey, who was still in the passage. Then she returned to her desk, and waited there in silence.

Frank Richards did not speak. He was eager to be confronted with the plotting Swiss.

In a few minutes Mr. Slimmey entered, followed by Gunten and Keller, and Bob Lawless and Beaulere.

Outside there was a buzz of excited voices in the passage.

Not Proven!

BOB and Vere Beaulere joined Frank at once. They had already learned from the other fellows what he was accused of. They left it in no doubt that they were standing by their chum.

Gunten and Keller stood together, their heavy faces expressing no emotion whatever.

"Gunten!"

"Yes, Miss Meadows?"

"Did you lasso Richards in the wood when he was riding to Thompson, and take a letter from him?"

Gunten raised his eyebrows.

"No, Miss Meadows."

"Did you assist Gunten in doing so, Keller?"

"Certainly not, ma'am!" said Keller calmly.

"They are lying!" exclaimed Frank.

Miss Meadows made a gesture for silence.

"Lawless and Beaulere, Richards says that he told you of this incident after his return from Thompson that day."

"I guess that's so, Miss Meadows," said Bob Lawless at once. "He was a jolly long time gone, and he told us Gunten had roped him in and tied him to a tree for an hour."

"He certainly told us so, Miss Meadows," said Beaulere. "And we knew that it was true, too."

"How could you know that, Beaulere?"

"Because we know Frank Richards, ma'am," said Beaulere calmly.

"You two boys only know what Richards told you about the matter?" asked Miss Meadows.

"Yes, ma'am. But his word's as good as gold, and we know that."

"Then you cannot give any evidence of value," said Miss Meadows, "excepting your faith in Richards, which I shall bear in mind. You may go, Lawless and Beaulere."

The chums reluctantly left the room.

Frank Richards was a little pale now, and his face was troubled. He had only been eager at first to be brought face to face with the scheming Swiss. But he realised now that the weight of

evidence was on the side of Gunten. There were two witnesses against one.

"The matter rests between you," said Miss Meadows, looking alternatively at the schoolboys. "Gunten, Richards declares that you tied him up in the wood, with the aid of Keller, and took my letter from him!"

"It's a lie, ma'am!" said Gunten calmly.

"Someone," said Miss Meadows, "opened my letter, took out the enclosure, and inserted another, and closed the envelope again, before it reached the newspaper office in Thompson. If you took the letter from Richards, Gunten, it was for this purpose!"

"I did not, ma'am!"

"Did you meet Richards at all on his way to Thompson that afternoon?"

"No, ma'am!"

"What have you to say now, Richards?"

Frank set his teeth.

"I have to say that I'm innocent, Miss Meadows; that Gunten lassoed me and tied me to a tree, and Keller helped him, and that Gunten took your letter and kept it for an hour or more!"

"And opened it?"

"Certainly!"

"Yet you did not observe that it had been opened when you received it back?"

"I—I never thought of looking!" stammered Frank.

Mr. Slimmey broke in.

"May I speak, Miss Meadows?"

"Yes, do, Mr. Slimmey!"

"It is certain," said the young man quietly,

(Continued on the next page.)



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"that the letter was opened on the way to Thompson, and closed again, without leaving a trace, because Mr. Penrose at Thompson did not observe that it had been opened before it reached his hands. It would be no more difficult for Gunten to do this than for Richards to do it. As Mr. Penrose did not detect that the letter had been opened, it is natural enough that Richards should not have detected it, if the matter is as he states."

Frank Richards gave the young master a grateful look.

Miss Meadows nodded.

"Quite so, Mr. Slimmey!"

"The letter," continued Mr. Slimmey, "must have been opened by steam in order to leave no trace. Someone must have heated water over a fire or a lantern for the purpose. It was difficult for Gunten to do so, but no less difficult for Richards to do so, in the timber. All the circumstances in connection with the letter prove no more against one than the other."

"You are quite right, Mr. Slimmey!"

"There is another thing, too!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "How do the fellows know anything about this affair? Miss Meadows can't have told them. It's been let out by somebody. Gunten spread the yarn round before I came in this morning!"

"What is this?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Do the other fellows know what you are accused of, Richards?"

"They started on me about it the minute I came," said Frank bitterly. "Gunten took care to get his yarn in first."

"It is very extraordinary that they should know. Neither Mr. Slimmey nor I have said a word in the hearing of the school. Gunten, if you spread the story, how did you know that I was about to accuse Richards of this?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, with a sharp look of suspicion at the Swiss.

"I did not spread the story, Miss Meadows," said Gunten calmly. "I think it got out through Richards bragging yesterday of the trick he had played on you!"

"Why, you hound——" shouted Frank.

"Silence, Richards!"

"But—but I——"

"Silence! I cannot decide between you," said Miss Meadows. "There is no other evidence, and I cannot decide yet. The matter must remain in abeyance for the present." The schoolmistress bit her lip. "I cannot risk committing an act of injustice. I shall reflect upon the matter. For the present you may go!"

And the schoolboys left the study, leaving the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek with a troubled brow.

The Benefit of the Doubt!

FRANK RICHARDS took his place in the class as usual that morning. The Cedar Creek fellows were surprised enough to see him doing it.

Frank's face was flushed and he did not meet the curious and scornful glances that were cast upon him from all sides. His schoolfellows condemned him; they had not heard his version of the story yet.

Gunten had had his innings first, though he had been very careful to allow the story to leak out without betraying that it came from him. It

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seemed impossible to nail the lies of the cunning Swiss.

At the best, it was to be Frank Richards' word against his and Keller's.

Miss Meadows took no special note of Frank when she took the class that morning. She had resolved to let the matter drop until some fresh evidence was forthcoming. It was all she could do.

Frank did not heed his schoolfellows' looks, but his chums did, and Bob and Vere gave angry looks in return.

After morning lessons the three chums left the school-room together, and there was a buzz in the school ground as they were surrounded by half Cedar Creek.

"So Miss Meadows has let you off, Richards!" exclaimed Eben Hacke.

"Shame!"

"I guess we're not going to let him off!" shouted Tom Lawrence. "Who's for riding him on a rail out of the school?"

"Hear, hear!"

"That's a cinch!"

"Collar him!"

Frank Richards clenched his hands.

"You thumping, silly galoots!" roared Bob Lawless. "Can't you listen to what a chap has to say first?"

"What's he got to say?" growled Dick Dawson. "Give 'im a chance!" said Hopkins, the Cockney. "I believe in givin' every cove a chance. Go it, Richards!"

Frank's eyes gleamed at the crowd. In a quiet voice he told his own version of the story, Gunten and Keller listening to him with sneering looks.

Frank's story made a good impression on the Cedar Creek fellows. They knew Gunten. More than one of them had had experience of his bitter malice.

"By hokey, that puts a different complexion on it, I calculate!" remarked Eben Hacke. "I dare say it was Gunten all the time!"

"It wasn't!" yelled Gunten furiously.

"Well, we know you're a liar, Gunten, and we don't know that Richards is," said Tom Lawrence.

"Ear, ear!" chimed in Harold Hopkins. "I know Richards came to lend us a 'and at the clearin' the day we came 'ere, and I thought 'e was a decent cove. And I know Gunten is a swindlin' 'ound!"

The Swiss strode away, his face furious.

There was no proof possible in the case, but public opinion was veering round in favour of Frank Richards. It was something to have a reputation for honourable and straight dealing, and Frank's good name stood him in good stead now.

The fellows, at all events, reserved their judgment, but upon the whole they were more inclined to be down on Gunten than upon Frank Richards, now that Frank had had a chance of putting his case.

"Silly duffers!" grunted Bob Lawless, when they went in to dinner. "They ought to know Gunten by this time!"

"I guess it's a clear case," said Dick Dawson, "for, after all, how did the story get out? Richards couldn't have put it round against himself. Must have come from Gunten. How did Gunten know?"

"Glad you're coming to your senses," growled Bob.

Frank Richards had a troubled look at dinner that day. The matter was in abeyance, and it



"I guess we're not going to let Richards off!" shouted Tom Lawrence. "Who's for riding him on a rail out of the school?" "Hear, hear!" "That's a cinch!" "Collar him!" exclaimed the Cedar Creek fellows.

looked as if it never could be decided. That was a far from satisfactory state of affairs.

Miss Meadows had been humiliated and persecuted by Gunten's cruel trick, and although Frank was not adjudged guilty, suspicion rested very strongly upon him.

He was trying to think of a way out of the impasse, but he could not. It seemed that there was nothing to be done, and that he must endure allowing that odious suspicion to cling to him.

His face was clouded when he came out with his chums after the school dinner.

"This is rotten, you chaps," he said dismally. "It looks as if the truth can never come out now."

"I guess I've been thinking a bit," said Bob Lawless.

"How do you mean?"

"You remember Sergeant Lasalle, who came down here to round up the rustler?"

"What about him?"

"He's still at Thompson," said Bob. "The Mounties are awfully keen chaps, you know. Suppose we saw Mr. Lasalle and asked him his opinion about it? He's a sort of detective, in a way, and he might hit on something to do."

"If he believed me," said Frank.

"Well, he knows you. We helped him round up the rustler," said Bob. "Anyhow, let's try him."

"It's a good idea," said Beauclerc. "It won't do any harm, at any rate."

Frank had brightened up a little. He remembered Sergeant Lasalle, and he had great faith in the sergeant's capacity. There was a chance, at all events, that the keen-witted French-Canadian sergeant might help.

Frank and Bob brought out their ponies and

started for Thompson. Beauclerc had no mount, and it was necessary to lose no time. They were likely to be late for afternoon lessons, in any case.

But luck was in their way, for a mile from the lumber school they caught sight of a scarlet coat on the trail ahead.

"The sergeant!" exclaimed Bob.

Sergeant Lasalle returned their salute cordially. He remembered the two boys. They wheeled their horses to join him.

"Sergeant, we're in trouble, and we want you to help!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "You'll do it?"

The big, bronzed sergeant smiled.

"Anything I can do, sonny. What's the trouble?"

"Tell him, Franky."

The schoolboys rode one on either side of the Mountie, while Frank Richards told him the story.

Sergeant Lasalle gave him several keen glances during his narration. His brows knitted a little.

"I've heard about this thing in Thompson," he said quietly. "It was a mean trick to play on a woman. If you did it, young Richards, you ought to be cowed till the skin came off."

"I should deserve it," said Frank. "But I didn't do it. Kern Gunten did it, only I can't prove it."

The sergeant nodded. He rode on for some time in thought.

They came in sight of the lumber school at last.

"I was calling on Miss Meadows before leaving for Kamloops," said the sergeant. "I shall look into this while I'm at the school. I believe your yarn, Richards; I guess I know a straight

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kid when I see one. But the matter can be put to the proof, I guess; and that's what I'm going to do."

Frank's heart bounded.

"You've thought of a way?" he exclaimed.

"I guess so!"

"Oh, good!"

They did not question the sergeant, but their faces were brighter when they rode up to the school.

The sergeant went on towards the schoolhouse and Vere Beauclerc joined his chums.

"I guess it's all O.K.," said Bob jubilantly.

"The sergeant's thought of a way, he says."

And the chums of Cedar Creek waited in keen anxiety outside the lumber schoolhouse.

The Sergeant's Way!

MISS MEADOWS greeted the sergeant, when Black Sally showed him in, with a somewhat troubled smile.

"I was coming to say good-bye, Miss Meadows, before I lit out for Kamloops," said Mr. Lasalle. "I met two of your boys on the way—Richards and Lawless."

Miss Meadows' brow clouded.

"They've spun me a yarn," continued the sergeant. "I guess that kid Richards is a straight guy, and I believe him. Would you object, Miss Meadows, to my taking a hand in this inquiry and getting at the facts?"

"I should be very much obliged if you would," said Miss Meadows. "I have thought over the matter very carefully, but I cannot decide what is to be done. I intended to ask you for your opinion concerning Richards and Gunten."

"I guess I've had some experience in sifting evidence," said the sergeant. "Whichever one is lying, I fancy I can spot him. With your permission, then, I'll try."

"By all means."

"Call in the two foreign boys, then."

Gunten and Keller were called into the room. The sergeant eyed them both with his keen eyes.

Gunten was cool and collected, but Keller showed some signs of uneasiness under the sergeant's steady scrutiny. He had not his confederate's nerve, and he was not nearly so thorough a rascal as Gunten. The sergeant's official uniform and his grim, bronzed face had a dismaying effect upon Keller.

"Your name?" asked the sergeant.

"Keller, sir."

"Then the other is Gunten? Very well. You may go, Gunten, for the present."

Gunten hesitated.

He did not want his confederate to be questioned separately, if he could help it. He was beginning to have a vague sense of alarm.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" rapped out the sergeant.

"I—I'm going," muttered Gunten.

He left the room, reluctantly closing the door.

Sergeant Lasalle rose quietly, stepped to the door, and threw it open again. Gunten started back in the passage with a crimson face.

"Listening?" said the sergeant grimly.

"I—I was not. I—"

"Vamoose!"

Gunten went down the passage, biting his lip.

The sergeant closed the door again and turned to Keller.

"Now, Keller, my lad, I want you to answer some questions," said the sergeant. "Don't be

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uneasy; you've nothing to fear if you tell the truth."

"Yes, sir!" muttered Keller.

"You deny having waited with Gunten on the Thompson trail for Frank Richards?"

"Certainly!"

"Did you go home with Gunten that night?"

"We always go home together, sir, as we both live in Thompson."

"Did you arrive home at the usual time?"

Keller paused.

"We—we were later home than usual," he said.

"Ha! Why?"

"We—we had a ride round," said Keller. "We do sometimes, sir, when the weather's fine."

The sergeant nodded.

"Where did you ride?"

Keller paused. It dawned upon him now why the sergeant was questioning him separately from his associate.

"We—we rode through the timber," he stammered.

"In which direction?"

Keller breathed hard.

"I—I don't quite remember."

"Try to remember, my lad!" said the sergeant grimly.

"We—we rode up the creek!" muttered the unhappy Swiss.

"Up the creek?" said the sergeant. "Back towards the school, then?"

"I—I mean, down the creek."

"Oh, you rode down the creek? Towards Cedar Camp?"

"Ye-es!"

"Did you reach the camp?"

"Nunno!"

"You must have ridden slowly, then. It is not a great distance to the camp, following the creek."

"We—we rode slowly," said Keller, licking his dry lips.

"You rode slowly down the creek, and turned back before you reached the camp, and then went home to Thompson?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very good," said the sergeant. "You will wait here. You are quite sure, Keller, that you and Gunten rode slowly?"

"Quite sure!" muttered Keller.

"You did not gallop at all?"

"No, sir!"

The sergeant went to the door and down the passage. He beckoned to Kern Gunten, who was standing in the porch.

The Swiss followed him back to Miss Meadows' room.

"Keller, you will not speak to Gunten," said Sergeant Lasalle. "You are forbidden to say a single word while I'm questioning Gunten. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Keller.

"Gunten, I have a few questions to put to you, your schoolmistress having placed this matter in my hands. You were late home on the evening that Richards took the letter to Thompson."

Gunten hesitated a brief second. But he knew that Keller must have admitted what could easily be proved, and he answered:

"Yes, sergeant."

"You went for a ride round with Keller?"

"Yes, I went for a ride with Keller," said Gunten desperately, hoping that it was the same yarn that Keller had told.

"Very well," said the sergeant, unmoved. "You need not fear to speak the truth, Gunten."



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PEN PALS COUPON

19-11-38

I want to know why you went for a gallop with Keller."

Miss Meadows started a little. This was not in accordance with Keller's statements. But the sergeant knew what he was doing.

"It—it was fine weather, sir!" muttered Gunten. "We—we sometimes do in fine weather, sir."

"In which direction did you go?"

Gunten's tongue clove to his teeth. He could not even see Keller's face, with the bulky sergeant interposing.

"I—I forget!" he stammered at last.

"Your memory is as bad as Keller's," smiled the sergeant. "That is a very curious coincidence. You galloped in a certain direction, but you do not remember in which direction?"

"No, I don't!" muttered Gunten.

"You were not going to any special destination, then?"

"No."

"Then why did you gallop?"

"I—I enjoy a gallop!" muttered Gunten. "I'm a good rider, and I'm fond of a gallop."

The sergeant nodded.

"Your statements are quite clear," he said.

"You cannot remember where you went; you can only remember that you and Keller galloped in some direction?"

"Yes. That's enough, I suppose?"

"Quite enough!" said the sergeant tersely. He turned to Miss Meadows. "These boys are the guilty parties, Miss Meadows, and Richards is innocent."

"I know it now, and I thank you for making the discovery," said the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek gratefully.

Gunten gave a kind of yell.

"It's not so—you fool! How dare you tell Miss Meadows so? I've admitted nothing, and Keller hasn't, I know that."

The sergeant smiled.

"Keller has stated that you rode slowly in the direction of Cedar Camp," he said quietly. "I purposely led you to suppose that he had stated that you had a gallop together, and you fell into the trap, Gunten. Both of you know perfectly well how you spent your time. If you went for a ride, it is impossible for Keller to believe that you rode slowly, and for you to believe that you galloped. You are both lying; and you are lying because you cannot account for the time you spent before you reached home that night. You are lying because you are guilty."

Gunten panted. He realised too late how the cute sergeant had "drawn" him. But he had been helpless. Not knowing what Keller had said, he could not make his story agree, in any case.

Even if the two rascals had foreseen this, and had prepared a story beforehand, the sergeant would have caught them upon some point of detail, by taking them separately.

The sergeant reached for his hat.

"I'm glad I've been of service to you, Miss Meadows," he said. "I leave them in your hands."

Miss Meadows accompanied the sergeant to the door.

"Richards!" she called out.

Frank came forward.

(Continued on page 36.)

The Fat Boy of the Benbow Makes a Splash in Refurnishing Study No. 8—Never Counting the Cost!



Jack Drake and Dick Rodney gave a yell of astonishment as they looked into their study. The room was crammed with brand-new furniture! "What did I tell you?" said Tuckey Toodles triumphantly.

Up to Toodles!

"I T'S up to me!" Tuckey Toodles made that remark. There was a sound of hammering in Study No. 8 in the Fourth Form quarters on board the Benbow.

Toodles' remark did not interrupt the hammering. It went on just the same. Jack Drake and his chum Rodney were busy, and had no time to waste on Master Toodles.

Study No. 8 was almost bare of furniture. The mystery of the ragging of that study had never been solved; the perpetrators had not been discovered. Daubeny of the Shell was suspected, but that was all.

For several days the chums of Study No. 8, wrecked out of house and home, as it were, had done their prep in the Form-room, and had tea in the other fellows' studies or in the dining-room. There was not even a table or a chair left in Study No. 8, and Jack Drake especially felt sorely the use of the study. It interrupted the work for the Founder's Scholarship, to which he had settled down steadily.

Now the chums were making an attempt to supply the deficiency. Money was "tight." New purchases were not to be thought of; but where there was a will there was a way. Two ancient chairs and a lame table had been sorted out of the lumber-room in the hold of the Benbow, and Drake and Rodney were trying their skill as carpenters.

Two chairs had been persuaded to stand, by dint of nailing in the most liberal manner. Anyone who sat on those chairs was likely to discover, in a painful manner, how liberal the nailing had

EASY TERMS!

By Owen Conquest.

been. Now the table was undergoing operation. Two of the legs were quite sound; the other two were being doctored.

Tuckey Toodles stood in the doorway and watched the two amateur carpenters at work, with a disdainful grin on his fat and grubby face.

"It's up to me!" he repeated.

Bang, bang, bang!

"I think that's enough, Drake," remarked Rodney.

"Well, better put in enough nails," said Drake sagely. "We've got plenty of nails, luckily. We don't want that wedge to come off and leave that leg loose again."

"But—"

"Well, one more—a good long one!"

"Oh, all right!"

Bang!

"Look here," recommenced Tuckey Toodles, "I tell you—"

Bang, bang!

Drake was plying the hammer with great energy, heedless of Tuckey's attempts to make himself heard.

The long nail was driven in to the hilt. Unfor-

"It's up to me to refurnish the study," says the impecunious Tuckey Toodles. And to the amazement of his study-mates he does it!

tunately that final nail was like unto the last straw which broke the camel's back. The wooden wedge, which was being fixed on so carefully, split down the centre, and fell to the floor in two pieces.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Drake in dismay.

"I was rather afraid another nail would do it, old chap!" murmured Dick Rodney.

"He, he, he!" came from Tuckey Toodles.

Drake turned a flushed and wrathful face upon the fat junior in the doorway.

"What's the cackle about, you clucking ass?" he demanded, with heat.

"He, he, he!"

"Buzz off, you fat ass! If you can't lend a hand, don't stand there cackling like a fat hen!"

"It's up to me to furnish the study, I can see that!" said Tuckey Toodles calmly. "If you fellows think I'm going to dig in a study with shaky old lumber like that in it, you're making a mistake! I shan't!"

"I hope you won't!" growled Drake. "Change

into another study—if you can find any fellow ass enough to take you in!”

“I’ve a jolly good munda to!” said Toodles warmly. “I’m not appreciated in this study. I never get enough to eat here. I really don’t know why I chum up with two hard-up bounders like you chaps. It’s just my good nature.”

“Then for goodness’ sake give up being good-natured!” said Rodney.

“If you mean that, you fellows——” said Toodles, with a great deal of dignity.

“Well, we do!”

“Yes, rather!”

“He, he, he! I don’t mind you fellows having a little joke,” said Tuckey Toodles. “He, he, he! But to come down to business, the study has got to be refurnished. I’ve tried raising a collection for it, but the fellows only put buttons and things in the collecting-tin——”

“You silly ass!”

“That’s not really very grateful, Drake, considering what I’m doing for you. You can let that lumber alone. I’m going to refurnish the study. As you fellows are stony, I’m going to find the money.”

Tuckey Toodles made that statement in a very lofty manner. Possibly he expected his generosity to be met by an outburst of gratitude and admiration on the part of his studymates.

But it wasn’t!

Instead of expressing admiration or gratitude, Drake only gave a scornful snort and Rodney a sniff.

“Don’t you catch on?” demanded Toodles. “I’m going to write to my pater for some money——”

“Oh, cheese it!”

“I think the furnishing can be done on about twenty pounds, with economy. I’m standing the whole sum.”

“You burbling ass!” exclaimed Drake. “Will you dry up? You can’t raise twenty dollars, let alone twenty pounds! Give us a rest!”

“It’s up to me,” answered Toodles calmly. “I’m going to do it! I’ve already been looking over some furniture at Chade. Perhaps, when they move the new furniture in, Drake, you’ll apologise.”

“Oh, yes, when they do!” grunted Drake. “Give us a rest till then. Let’s get on, Rodney, or we shan’t get this rotten thing to stand upright till prep.”

“Go it!” said Rodney cheerily.

“But look here, as I’m going to furnish the study——”

“Dry up!”

“As I’m going——”

Jack Drake spun round towards Toodles, whirling up the hammer. The hammer came down with a crash on the bulkhead a foot from Tuckey’s head, and the fat junior melted out of the doorway with a howl of alarm. His footsteps died away on the ladder, and Drake, with a chuckle, turned back to amateur carpentry.

Shopping in Style!

“GAD! What a merry knut!”

Daubeny of the Shell made that remark as Tuckey Toodles came on deck on Wednesday afternoon—a half-holiday at St. Winifred’s.

Not only Vernon Daubeny, but a good many other fellows, looked at Tuckey Toodles and grinned.

The fat youth was unusually resplendent.

As a rule, Tuckey Toodles was untidy, and he was always grubby. Now he looked newly swept and garnished, as it were.

His Etous had been brushed, his shoes were bright, his collar was clean, his necktie neatly tied, and a shining silk topper was set upon his round bullet head.

Evidently Toodles of the Fourth was engaged upon some excursion that afternoon of unusual importance, and had dressed for the occasion.

“My only hat!” exclaimed Raik of the Fourth. “He’s washed his neck!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“And there isn’t any ink on his collar!” ejaculated Sawyer major—not even a spot of grease!”

“Wonders will never cease!”

“What’s her name?” grinned Daubeny of the Shell.

“Eh? Whose name?” asked Tuckey, blinking at him.

“Aren’t you going to meet a girl?”

“You ass! Of course not!”

“Ha, ha, h.!” roared Sawyer major. “Tuckey’s going mashing in his old age! Ha, ha, ha!”

“I’m not!” roared Tuckey Toodles.

Rupert de Vere Toodles had his faults; in fact, their name was legion. But “mashing” certainly was not numbered among them.

There was a roar of laughter on the deck of the Benbow. Tuckey Toodles cast an indignant glance round.

“You silly asses!” he exclaimed warmly. “I’m going shopping.”

“Dressed in your best for shoppin’?” grinned Daubeny.

“He’s not dressed in his best,” chuckled Raik. “He’s dressed in somebody else’s best. I’ve seen that necktie on Drake.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“And that’s not Tuckey’s topper. Tuckey’s topper is like a busby. Whose topper is it, Tuckey?”

“I suppose I can borrow Rodney’s Sunday topper if I like, Raik?”

“Does Rodney know?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Gloves, too!” chortled Newson. “Whose gloves are they, Tuckey?”

“And where did he bag those gold cuff-links?”

Tuckey Toodles elevated his fat little nose and walked away haughtily towards the gangway to the shore. A chorus of chortles followed him.

Drake and Rodney came on deck, the latter with a football under his arm. The chums of the Fourth were going to footer practice that afternoon. Raik yelled to them.

“Look after your topper, Rodney!”

“Eh? What do you mean?” inquired Rodney, in astonishment.

He was wearing a St. Winifred’s cap, and did not catch on.

“Your topper’s going ashore for the afternoon,” explained Raik.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“What on earth——”

Tuckey Toodles quickened his steps across the gangway. His various borrowings had not been mentioned to the owners of the articles concerned, and Tuckey did not want to have an argument about the matter.

“Hallo! Tuckey’s looking unusually fine!” remarked Drake, catching a back view of Toodles as he hurried off.

“He’s got half the property of the Fourth on

him!" chuckled Raik. "Your necktie, and Rodney's topper."

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter as the two juniors ran on the gangway. Tuckey Toodles heard their footsteps in pursuit, and he started running. But the fat junior was not of much use as a sprinter. Drake and Rodney overtook him a dozen yards from the bank of the Chadway, as he pounded along the path towards Chade.

"Stop, you fat boulder!" exclaimed Dick Rodney, catching Tuckey by the shoulder.

"Leggo! I'm in a hurry!" gasped Toodles.

"Is that my topper?"

"Nunno!"

"Let me look at it, then."

"I—I mean, I've borrowed it!" stammered Tuckey. "Mine's a bit off colour, and I want to look well this afternoon."

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Rodney wrathfully. "My Sunday topper!"

"And my gold links!" exclaimed Drake.

"You fat burglar!"

Tuckey Toodles backed away from his wrathful studymates.

"Look here, you fellows—"

"Without even asking us!" said Rodney.

"Well, if I'd asked you for the things you might have said 'No,'" explained Tuckey Toodles. "It's all right. I'm only going shopping."

"Not in my topper!"

"Nor in my cuff-links!"

"But it's important," urged Tuckey Toodles. "The furniture man may give me better value if I look prosperous, you know. Chap ought always to be well dressed when he goes shopping. It makes the shopkeepers more respectful."

"Rot!"

"I'm doing it for your sakes, too, to furnish the study!" exclaimed Tuckey. "You might show a little gratitude."

"You're going to buy furniture?" howled Drake.

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"Certainly!"

"Gammon!"

"You'll see when the stuff comes in," answered Toodles loftily. "You leave me alone. It's up to me, and I'm going to do it. You fellows go and play footer—that's all you've got brains for. Ta-ta!"

Tuckey Toodles started up the road again, waving a fat hand to his astonished studymates.

Drake and Rodney exchanged a glance.

"He's only spoofing, of course," said Drake. "He hasn't any money, and his people haven't any—I know that."

"But what's his game, then?" asked Rodney, puzzled.

"Blessed if I know; but we'll give him a chance. I suppose there's one chance in a million that he's telling the truth. If the furniture doesn't turn up we'll give him a jolly good batting for annexing our things."

"Then he's booked for a batting," said Rodney, laughing.

And the chums of the Fourth went on to Little Side, Tuckey Toodles, in his borrowed plumes, being left to his own devices.

Astounding!

DRAKE and Rodney came in to tea at dusk, hungry and ruddy, and quite forgetful of the existence of Rupert de Vere Toodles. They were reminded of his unimportant existence, however, by his fat face beaming at them across the tea-table in the school dining-room.

Toodles seemed to be in high good humour.

To judge by his looks, his shopping excursion that afternoon had been a great success. He nodded and grinned to his studymates across the table, and when tea was over he joined them coming out of the dining-room.

"It's all right!" he announced. "The furniture's coming."

"What furniture?"

"For the study, of course."

"Gammon!"

"You'll see to-morrow," said Tuckey Toodles loftily. "I've arranged for the stuff to be delivered while we're at lessons to-morrow afternoon."

"What stuff?"

"The furniture!" howled Tuckey.

"Well, I'll believe it when I see it," yawned Drake. "Blessed if I know what you're telling such whoppers for!"

"Wait and see!" said Tuckey scornfully.

And that was all the chums of the Fourth could do, though they certainly did not expect to see the study furnished by Tuckey Toodles, however long they waited.

That evening there was some more carpentry in Study No. 8. A third chair, rescued from the lumber-room in the hold, was added to the supply. The mended table was a little uncertain on its legs, and required careful handling, and all three chairs had a slightly intoxicated appearance; but it was possible to do prep in the study now, and that was something.

Tuckey Toodles did not conceal his utter contempt for the makeshift furniture.

"That's the best you fellows can do!" he said, with a sniff. "You wait till my new furniture comes!"

Toodles was so persistent that his studymates almost began to believe that the furniture really was coming.

But that did not seem possible, for Toodles was

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the most hard-up fellow at St. Winifred's, and good furniture was expensive. Even the shiny rubbish at Mr. Goggs', in Chade, was not cheap.

The story of Toodles' furniture had spread in the Fourth, and most of the juniors treated it as a joke. Not a fellow in the Fourth expected to see it arrive. But there was a surprise in store for the juniors of St. Winifred's. For once, as they were to learn with amazement, Tuckey Toodles had stated the facts.

The next day Toodles was still sticking to his point, and when the Fourth went into the Form-room for afternoon classes Tuckey remarked airily to Drake that they would find the study furnished when they came out after lessons.

"Still keeping up that yarn, you fat duffer?" said Drake.

"You'll see. By the way, I've had to clear the study ready," said Tuckey. "That rubbish you've been nailing up can't stay there, of course! There won't be room for it."

"Rats!"

"So I've pitched it into the hold!" said Tuckey cheerily. "Most of it came to pieces. It doesn't matter, of course."

Drake gave a gasp. They were in the Form-room by that time, and Mr. Packe was present, otherwise summary vengeance would certainly have fallen upon Rupert de Vere Toodles. Drake gave his fat studymate a glare, and mentally promised him something to follow lessons.

But Tuckey Toodles seemed to have no apprehensions. He was very cheery and smiling that afternoon.

Half-way through lessons there was a sound of bumping on the deck of the Benbow, and Toodles whispered to Drake:

"That's the furniture coming on board!"

"Ass!"

"But it really is, you know!"

"Fathead!"

Tuckey Toodles gave it up.

There certainly was a movement of some kind going on on the deck of the old warship and a sound of heavy articles being moved about. But nobody in the Fourth believed that it was Tuckey's new furniture.

Tuckey Toodles waited impatiently for the dismissal of the Form. He was intensely relieved when Mr. Packe dismissed the juniors at last and they streamed out of the Form-room.

In the passage Jack Drake caught Tuckey by one fat ear.

"Now, you podgy dummy——"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"If you've busted up the things we mended——"

"My hat!" breathed Rodney sulphurously.

"We'll scalp him baldheaded if he has!"

"I tell you the new furniture's in the study!" roared Toodles.

"Rot!"

"Come along and see, then, you chumps!"

"Bring him to the study!" said Rodney.

"There isn't any furniture there but a fives-bat, and that's what he wants!"

"Good!"

To the surprise of his studymates, Tuckey Toodles offered no objection to being led to the study. He went, with a grinning face. The trio arrived at No. 8 in the Fourth, and Jack Drake threw open the door.

Then he gave a yell of astonishment.

Study No. 8 was crammed with furniture—brand-new furniture that glittered and glistened with cheap varnish, and reflected the sunset at the

window. Drake and Rodney stared blankly at it, utterly amazed. Tuckey Toodles burst into a triumphant chortle.

"What did I tell you?" he inquired.

His studymates did not reply. They were too astounded to speak.

The Climax!

"MUM-MUM-MY hat!" ejaculated Drake at last.

"He was telling the truth!" said Rodney, in wonder.

"My word!"

Tuckey Toodles chuckled.

"You lend me a hand getting my furniture to rights," he said. "You'll have to be rather careful with my new furniture. I don't mind you fellows using it—I'm a generous chap—but you'll have to be careful with it! I say, isn't it splendid?"

Drake laughed.

The furniture undoubtedly must have cost a good deal of money, but it could hardly be called splendid. It was very shiny and pretentious, but there was no article of good quality among it.

Such as it was, the new property was certainly very useful, and there was plenty of it.

There was a large table, stained to resemble mahogany. There were six chairs of the same colour, glittering with varnish. There was a square of carpet that rivalled Joseph's celebrated coat in its many colours—all of them striking. There were curtains of almost equally dazzling design. There was a bookcase with glass doors. There was a large armchair covered with chintz, with wonderful flowers on it. There was a gilt clock, and there were a pair of Japanese jars—which certainly had not come from Japan.

There were other articles, too, and, upon the whole, Study No. 8, from having been the barest room on board the Benbow, was now the most thoroughly filled. Indeed, the furniture was rather overdone. Tuckey had evidently been under the impression that it was impossible to have too much of a good thing.

Tuckey surveyed the new possessions with a beaming face of pride.

"What do you think of this little lot?" he demanded.

DETECTIVE KERR INVESTIGATES.

Solution:

KERR: Burkes and his elder brother had concocted a plausible story. They had waited in the lane till Mr. Railton went past in his car, taken the number, and then called at St. Jim's to attempt to obtain a financial "settlement." The one thing the "racketeers" overlooked was that in embellishing their story they had lost sight of facts. Burkes stated Mr. Railton's car was careering from one side of the road to the other, and that it kept on the wrong side for some distance, near the White Gate. Yet Kangaroo had reminded me that one side of the road was under repair at the White Gate, reducing all traffic to a crawl at that point. When I proved Burkes' story to be a frame-up before Mr. Railton, the brother racketeers were glad to leave, but not before a crowd of indignant Saints had sped them on their way—with their boots!

"Oh, ripping!"

"Topping, old fellow!"

"Look at these curtains! Smart, aren't they?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"And this looking-glass—tip-top, what?"

"Oh, rather!"

"Real Venetian gilt, you know," said Toodles.

"Mr. Goggs said so."

"Well, Mr. Goggs ought to know!" smiled Drake.

"Anyhow, the things will be jolly useful. But where on earth did you get the tin?"

Tuckey waved a fat hand.

"Oh, that's all right! My people are rich, you know—"

"Ahem!"

"What did that lot cost?" asked Rodney.

"Only twenty pounds," answered Toodles negligently.

Rodney jumped.

"Twenty pounds?"

"Yes; and cheap at the price."

"But you never had twenty pounds!" exclaimed Rodney.

"Do you mean to say that your father is paying twenty pounds for you?"

"My dear old chap," said Tuckey Toodles patronisingly, "you musn't think that everybody's people are as hard-up as yours! Twenty pounds is nothing to my folks!"

"Oh, all serene!" said Rodney. "As you've got the things, I suppose the money must have come from somewhere. But we can't pay our whack in a sum like that, Toodles. Drake and I couldn't possibly raise over six quid each."

"No fear!" said Drake.

"Don't mench!" said Toodles airily. "I'm furnishing the study. I said it was up to me, and I've done it. What's the good of being rich if a chap can't see his pals through their troubles?"



by Edwy Searles Brooks

What's happened to the popular old Head of St. Frank's? One moment he's his normal benevolent self—the next he's a brutal tyrant, the terror of the school! The sudden change in his character gets everyone guessing at St. Frank's, but Nelson Lee is determined to solve the mystery. Make sure you don't miss this great yarn.

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THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 1,605.

"Oh!" murmured Rodney.

"Just lend me a hand getting the study to rights!" said Tuckey briskly. "It will look smart when it's all in order, I can tell you!"

"Right-ho!"

The three juniors set to work cheerfully.

Drake and Rodney had not recovered from their surprise—and they were not likely to recover from it in a hurry. They had not believed for a moment in Tuckey's lavish promises, but there was the furniture—and seeing was believing.

A crowd of the Fourth came along to watch the study being set out. There was much amazement as the fellows looked in. That Tuckey Toodles, the most impecunious fellow at St. Winifred's, had spent twenty pounds on rigging up the study was too astounding a fact to be assimilated at once.

"Where did he get the tin?" Pierce Raik wanted to know. "Have you been burgling the Head's safe, Toodles?"

"Or backing a gee-gee?" asked Rawlings.

"Must be worth five or six pounds, that lot!" remarked Raik critically.

At that Tuckey Toodles gave him a glare.

"It cost twenty!" he snapped.

"I dare say it did; I was only alluding to what it was worth, old chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows might kick that sneering rotter out," said Tuckey Toodles reproachfully.

"Certainly!" answered Drake.

"Here, hands off—Yoop!" roared Raik, as he departed from Study No. 8 on his neck.

Raik did not look in again with any more disparaging remarks.

At tea-time Drake & Co. looked rather tired and dusty, but the study looked really resplendent.

Tuckey Toodles surveyed it with satisfaction that fairly bubbled over.

"Now that the place is furnished we ought to have a house-warming," he said.

"Hum!"

"You fellows can stand that, as I've stood the furniture," added Tuckey.

"Like a bird if there was any tin!" answered Drake. "But I'm afraid it won't run to house-warmings just now, old son."

"I'd stand it myself, only I've had a pound note blown away," said Tuckey. "I'm rather short of money, owing to that. It's up to you fellows."

"You see—"

"A real house-warming, with all the fellows the study will hold," said Tuckey. "That's the idea. You fellows ought to stand it."

"Can't be did."

"Well, if you stand me a jolly good spread, perhaps that will be just as good," said Toodles reflectively.

Drake laughed.

"Right as rain!" he answered. "It will run to that, and we'll do it with pleasure. Come along to the canteen, Rodney."

"Right-ho!"

Money was still "tight" in Study No. 8, resplendent as that apartment had become, but the chums felt that it was up to them to see that the first tea in the refurbished study was worthy of the occasion. There was an unusual expenditure in the school canteen amidstips; and Tuckey Toodles' fat face beamed over the festive board in Study No. 8 with great satisfaction.

During the following days Drake and Rodney

MORE "FOOTER-STAMPS" and the Rules!

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FIVE "FOOTER-STAMPS" HERE—Others on Page 2!



found their quarters a great deal more comfortable. Schoolboy usage soon deprived the new furniture of most of its aggressive shine and polish, so that it was more agreeable to the eye.

But on the Wednesday following the purchase of the new "sticks" Tuckey Toodles might have been observed wearing a very thoughtful expression on his fat countenance.

That day he surprised his studymates by the remark:

"I suppose you fellows couldn't lend me two pounds?"

"No fear!"

"Sure?" asked Tuckey anxiously.

"Quite!"

"Oh!" murmured Tuckey.

The next morning there was a letter for Tuckey Toodles. He took it down into the study to read, and carefully tore it up afterwards. An expression of deep gloom was noticeable on his face after the incident.

Once or twice, later in the week, Toodles repeated his inquiry to his studymates regarding the two pounds—a sum of which he seemed to be in urgent need. They could only repeat their assurance that they couldn't lend him that sum. But early the following week, when Tuckey referred to the subject again, the sum required had grown. It was four pounds that Master Toodles wanted now.

"Four pounds!" said Drake, looking up from his prep in Study No. 8, when Toodles propounded his query. "What on earth do you want four pounds for?"

"I—I happen to want it badly."

"Well, I'm sorry. I suppose fourpence wouldn't be any good?"

"Oh crumbs! What about you, Rodney?"

"Sixpence!" said Rodney, smiling.

"Oh dear!"

"What's the matter, Tuckey?"

Tuckey seemed plunged into deep and morose reflection. However, on second thoughts, he decided to take the fourpence and the sixpence, and

they were handed over. Tuckey Toodles expended that small sum in the canteen, but without the effect of alleviating the deep gloom.

On Wednesday that week there was another letter for R. de V. Toodles, with the local postmark of Chade.

Toodles took it down to the study to read it, as before, but this time he did not tear it up; he put it into his pocket when he went to the Form-room. At lessons that morning Tuckey Toodles' fat face was a picture of gloom.

Drake and Rodney were really quite concerned about him, and joined him when the Form was dismissed.

"Now, what's the matter, Tuckey?" asked Drake. "You did the decent thing over furnishing the study, and if there's anything the matter we'll help you if we can. Get it off your chest."

"I want four pounds to-day."

"Oh dear!"

"And two more pounds next week!" said Tuckey desperately. "I—I haven't had some remittances I was expecting. And two more pounds the week after. And—and—"

"What the thump—"

"L-look at this!" stammered Tuckey. He held out a letter, and Drake and Rodney looked at it; then they jumped. For the letter ran:

"Goggs' Furniture Repository,

"Chade.

"Dear sir,—As the weekly payments for the furniture supplied by us on our Easy Payment System have not been kept up, the whole sum becomes due, and we shall, therefore, be obliged by your prompt remittance of the sum of £20.

"Yours faithfully,

"Goggs & Co."

Next Week: "TUCKEY IN TROUBLE!"

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CARDEW MAKES AMENDS!

(Continued from page 22.)

"Silly ass!" gasped Lawrence. "How on earth did Ratty fix on him? We never dreamed of such a thing, of course. Why didn't he send us word? He must have known we'd own up!"

"Well, my hat!" said Tom Merry, with a deep breath. "I think I catch on now. The Head told him he'd sack him for it, if he wasn't a new kid. That is why he made it a flogging. You'd have been sacked, Reddy!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Redfern. "And—my scholarship lost—my hat! I was a howling ass to do it!"

"You were!" agreed Tom Merry. "But it's all serene! Cardew was mum—"

"That snob!" muttered Lawrence, in wonder.

"We can't let it go at that!" said Redfern resolutely. "If we'd had the least idea anybody was being accused of it we'd have come over, sack or no sack, and owned up! You fellows know that!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Tom caught Redfern by the arm.

"No good jawing now, Reddy. Cardew's had the flogging, and it's no good getting sacked into the bargain. Keep mum."

"Bai Jove! Here he is! Cardew, deah boy." There was a wonderful cordiality in Arthur Augustus' tone. "Cardew, it appears that it was Weddy all the time—"

"Just found it out?" yawned Cardew.

"Yaas. It was feashfully decent of you, Cardew! Old Weddy would have been sacked, and had his scholarship taken away."

"That's why I kept mum," said Cardew coolly. "A floggin' isn't so bad as the order of the boot, and I owed you somethin', Redfern. I treated you like a cad the other day, and told you afterwards I was sorry. If you like to call the account square now, there's my hand on it."

Redfern took willingly enough the hand that was frankly extended to him.

"You're a good sort," he said. "If you like, I'll go to the Head now and tell him how it was—"

"What rot! I paid your bill," said Cardew, laughing. "What's the good of payin' the same account twice?"

He sauntered away, whistling.

Perhaps he felt happier. Anyway, Shell and Fourth, School House and New House, alike felt differently about him. It was hard to size up the fellow; but, whatever he might be, he wasn't altogether the rank outsider they had thought him!

Next Week: "TOM MERRY'S SECRET ENEMY!"

UNDER SUSPICION!

(Continued from page 29.)

"Yes, Miss Meadows?"

"I am sorry, Richards, that I doubted you. Sergeant Lasalle has proved that that miserable trick was played by Gunten and Keller."

"Oh!" gasped Frank.

"Bravo!" roared Bob Lawless. "What did I tell you? Put your dollars on the Mountie every time!"

There was a cheer from the Cedar Creek fellows, as the big sergeant strode away to his horse.

Gunten and Keller came slinking out of the schoolhouse with pale faces. Miss Meadows stopped them.

"Gunten—Keller!"

"It was Gunten's fault!" groaned Keller wretchedly. "I was against it all the time, Miss Meadows, I swear it!"

"You coward—you coyote!" hissed Gunten. "You know it's true!" snarled Keller. "I was sorry I helped you. I didn't want to have a hand in it!"

"Keller, you will go back to my room. I shall cane you. I think you were led into this by Gunten. As for you, Gunten—"Miss Meadows' voice grew very stern—"you have not only played a dastardly trick upon your schoolmistress, but you have attempted to lay the blame upon an innocent boy. I shall call upon your father this evening, and tell him you cannot remain in this school. You may go!"

Gunten slunk away with downcast face.

"Kick him out!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Gunten fled, with half Cedar Creek whooping behind him.

Bob thumped his cousin on the back.

"All serene now, Franky!"

And Frank Richards laughed. His face was very bright.

His name was cleared, and stern justice was dealt out to the rogue of the school.

Next Wednesday: "THE OUTCAST OF CEDAR CREEK!"

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