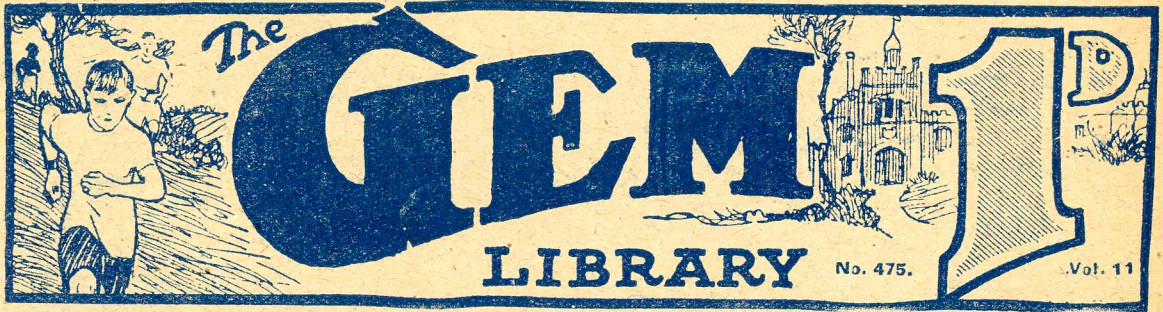


CARDEW OF THE FOURTH!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of Tom Merry & Co



ABOVE HIS WEIGHT!

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CARDEW OF THE FOURTH!

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER 1.

Noblesse Oblige.

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY came along the Fourth-Form passage, and stopped at No. 9. There was a very thoughtful frown upon Arthur Augustus' brow, as if a deep and weighty problem lay heavy upon his noble mind.

He tapped at the study door, and Sidney Clive's cheery voice rapped out: "Come in!"

Arthur Augustus entered.

Levison and Clive, who shared No. 9 Study, were both there. Levison was scribbling down lines from Virgil at a great rate, and Clive was sitting on the corner of the table, watching him. Levison did not look up; he was too busy. But Clive gave the swell of St. Jim's a genial nod.

"Busay, deah boys!" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Levison is," grinned Clive. "He's got to get a hundred done before the House match. I've offered to take his place in the team, but he doesn't seem to see it, somehow."

"Rats!" said Levison, without looking up.

"Bai Jove! You will have to buck up, Levison!"

"B-r-r-r!"

"What does that remark mean, Levison?"

"Shut up, ass!"

"If that is what you call good manners, Levison—"

"Do you want this inkpot?" rapped out Levison.

"Bai Jove! No."

"Then don't interrupt!"

"I weally do not mean to intewwupt you, Levison, if you are busay. I came heah to speak to Clive. I twust I shall not be intewwuptin' you by speakin' to Clive, Levison?"

Levison did not reply. It was difficult to hold a conversation and write out Virgil at express speed at the same time. That fact did not seem to dawn upon the powerful brain of the Honourable Arthur Augustus.

"I addressed a remark to you, Levison," said Arthur Augustus gently, as no reply was forthcoming.

Still no reply.

"Weally, Levison—"

"Will you dry up, ass?" yelled Levison.

"Bai Jove! I wufuse to address another word to you, Levison, as you persist in bein' unmannahly and Hunnish! I do not see anythin' watevah to gwin at, Clive. Howevah, to come to the point. I am booked to play in the House match this aftahnoon."

"Lucky bargee!" said Clive.

"I am goin' to wequest you to weplace me."

"Eh?"

"I wequest you— Bai Jove?"

Sidney Clive slid off the table, rushed at Arthur Augustus, clasped him like a long-lost brother, and waltzed him round the table.

"Bai Jove! Have you gone off your wookah?" gasped the astounded Gussy. "Welease me, you ass! You are wumplin' my waistcoat! You are disawangin' my tie! Gwooh! If you do not immediately—yawooh!—welease me,

I shall you!—punch your nose, you ass!"

Clive grinned, and plumped Arthur Augustus, breathless, into the armchair. The swell of St. Jim's sat and gasped.

"You uttah ass!"

"Will I replace you?" chuckled Clive. "Yes, rather! Gussy, old son, you are a boon and a blessing—you're corn in Egypt—you're a cherub! I'm your man!"

"Gwooh!"

"Have you told Tom Merry?" asked Clive, his eyes sparkling. Clive did not need asking twice to play in the House match.

"I wegard you as a wuff ass, Clive!" Arthur Augustus rose, and arranged his tie carefully before the study glass. "I have not yet spoken to Tom Mewwy on the subject. The fact is, it is watah a delicate mattah. Of course, we want to beat Figgins & Co., and I feah that the result may be watah doubtful if I stand out of the team—"

"Oh, that will be all right!" said Clive confidently. "Tommy can shove Lowther into the front line, and I can play half in his place. Right as rain!"

"I twust it will be wight as wain, Clive, but I cannot help havin' my doubts," said Arthur Augustus dubiously. "Howevah, it is a case of noblesse oblige."

"What on earth are you cutting the House match for, though?" asked Clive curiously. "Don't you feel fit?"

"Yes. But it is a case of noblesse oblige. There is a new chap comin' heah this aftahnoon—"

Clive nodded.

"Yes, I know. Mr. Railton told us the chap was coming into this study," he said. "You're not missing the match on his account, I suppose?"

"Yaas, watah!"

"Well, of all the asses—"

"Weally, Clive—"

"I—I mean, it's a jolly sensible thing to do," grinned Clive. "About the best idea you've had this term."

"You see, it is watah an awkward posish," explained Arthur Augustus. "This chap who is comin' is a sort of connection of mine—at least, his gwandfather, Lord Weckness, is a wrelation of my patah, so I suppose this chap is wrelaied to me somehow. I've nevah seen him, and don't know anythin' about him, but as he is a distant wrelaied I feel bound to take some notice of him. I felt that it would be only the wright thing to meet him at the station, and bwing him to the school, you know, undah the cires."

"Jolly good idea," agreed Clive.

As Arthur Augustus' idea had the effect of giving Clive a place in the House team, the Colonial junior was prepared to regard it as the very best idea that had ever come into Gussy's noble head.

"It's watah wotten in a way," said Arthur Augustus. "It's a wippin' aftahnoon for footah, and I feah that I shall be missed in the team. But the patah has asked me to see the chap when he comes, and, of course, a chap can't wufuse his patah anythin'. It's weally noblesse oblige, you know. The eleven will have to do the vevy best it can, undah the cires."

Clive chuckled. He thought that the School House Junior Eleven would probably give a good account of itself even without the assistance of Arthur Augustus. It was probable that Tom Merry, the junior skipper, would not be utterly overcome with dismay at the prospect.

"I did not know the chap was comin' into this study," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust you fellows will be decent to him, as he is my wrelaied."

"He shall be the apple of our eye!" assured Clive. "What's he like?"

"I weally don't know anythin' about him, Clive, exceptin' that he is vevy wick, and I have heard that he is watah a weckless chap."

"What's his name?" asked Clive.

"Railton didn't mention that to me."

"Walph Weckness Cardew."

"Ralph Reckness Cardew!" repeated Clive.

"Yes. He is a grandson of Lord Weckness. He has been to a school in the north of England befoah, I undahstand. I don't know why he left. And he will be at Wayland by the three twain. If it were not war-time, I should ordah a cah to meet him; but, undah the cires, that is imposs. The wovwy is, that vevy likely you fellows will get licked by the New House—"

"Done!" said Levison, jumping up and throwing down his pen. "I'll take this lot in to Railton, Clive, and join you on the ground."

"Right!"

Levison hurried from the study, with his scarcely-dry impot in his hand, and Arthur Augustus followed with the South African junior. The noble Gussy had quite made up his mind that he was bound to go to Wayland to meet his wrelaied, but he looked forward to the interview with Tom Merry with considerable doubt. He was uneasy as to how Tom might take the terrible loss which was to fall on his team.

CHAPTER 2.

Not a Calamity.

WHEREFORE that worried brow, O Gustavus?"

Thus Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther were chatting in the quadrangle, when Arthur Augustus came up with the smiling Clive.

Clive was smiling, but Arthur Augustus looked troubled, as was natural under the serious circumstances.

"Anything happened to your new topper, Gussy?" asked Manners, with much sympathy.

"Or doesn't the new waistcoat fit you like paper on the wall?" asked Tom Merry gravely.

"Wats! I have watah sewious news for you, Tom Mewwy!"

"Germans landed?" grinned Lowther.

"Wats! No."

"Are they going to issue silk-hat tickets as well as sugar tickets?"

"Pway, don't be a funny ass, Lowthah!"

"Well, they might!" said Lowther seriously. "We've got an efficient Government now, and when a Government starts being efficient you never know how it will end. When we have tickets for silk-hats, fancy waistcoats, and

lectics, it will mean an awful time for you, Gussy. Just imagine being limited to one new topper a fortnight!"

"Gussy will join the Stop-the-War party then!" grinned Manners.

"I should weseufe to joint the Stop-the-War partay, Mannahs, whatever, fearful sacwifices had to be made!" said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "I wish you fellows would be sewious. The fact is, Tom Mewwy—ahem!"

"Go ahead!" said Tom.

"I dare say you have noticed that Clive is a wathah good footballah?" began Arthur Augustus cautiously.

Tom Merry nodded.

"He plays half in a weally wippin' way, I considah!"

"Ripping!" said Tom. "What the dickens are you singing Clive's praises for, Gussy? Can't he sing 'em himself?"

"Lowthah genewally plays half, but he is a pweetty good forward!" said Arthur Augustus, unheeding.

"Right on the wicket!" said Monty Lowther admiringly. "This is where Gussy displays his well-known tact and judgment!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know Lowther can play forward!" said Tom, in wonder. "What on earth are you driving at, Gussy?"

"Suppose your best forward should be called away this aftahnoon, deah boy?"

"Can't be did! Nobody's going to call me away!" said Tom, laughing.

"Ahem! I wasn't alludin' to you, you know!"

"Do you mean Talbot?" Tom Merry looked more serious. "If Talbot tells me he's called away I'll punch his nose!"

"I did not mean Talbot, Tom Mewwy!"

"Nothing happened to Levison?" asked Tom. "He'll get through his impot before we're ready. He promised me. That's all right!"

"Yaas, Levison is all wight!"

"And Blake isn't going to scuttle off, I suppose? Blake, you ass, you're not thinking of standing out of the match, are you?" asked the captain of the Shell, as Jack Blake came along.

"No jolly fear!" said Blake emphatically.

"Then perhaps you can guess what Gussy's talking about? He makes his meaning about as clear as a politician in an epoch-making speech!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, I believe you are delibewately misundahstandin' me! I was alludin' to myself!"

"But you said my best forward!" said Tom innocently.

"Wats! Suppose I should be called away, Tom Mewwy?"

"I'd try to bear it!" said Tom heroically. "These awful things will happen, and a chap learns how to bear them with fortitude!"

"The fact is, Tom Mewwy, I shall be called away!"

Tom Merry leaned upon Monty Lowther for support.

"Anybody got my smelling-salts?" he asked, in a faint voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You uttah ass!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Why didn't you break it gently?" murmured Tom Merry, almost tearfully.

Arthur Augustus put his celebrated eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed the grinning juniors with a lofty stare.

"I see no cause watevah for this absurd mewwiment!" he said crushingly.

"The fact is, Tom Mewwy, a weliotion of mine is comin' to the school this aftahnoon, and I have to meet him at

the station. I wecommend you to play Clive. He is willin'!"

"Rather!" grinned Clive.

"You could put Lowthah in the fwoont line. Of course, he would not be quite up to my form, but—"

"I suggest a vote of thanks to Gussy!" said Monty Lowther solemnly. "Very likely he has saved the match for the School House by going to Wayland instead of playing in the front line!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Lowthah! Of course, Tom Mewwy, if you feel that you cannot let me off, I am bound to play!"

"Not at all!" said Tom Merry kindly. "I excuse you, Gussy! In fact, I was thinking of giving you a rest, anyway!"

"Eh?"

So everything in the garden is lovely!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"I'll put Lowther in your place, and Clive in Lowther's place!" said Tom, laughing. "And we'll do the best we can without our Gussy. I hope we shall wriggle a bit before the New House walks over us. We can but try!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wegard you as an ass, Tom Mewwy! I wegard you as another ass, Lowthah! I wegard you all as asses, in fact! And I do not see anythin' watevah to cackle at!"

Arthur Augustus marched into the School House to select his best topper, and to call Digby. Digby was going to Wayland with him. The House match was beginning by the time Arthur Augustus was ready to start for the market town. Arthur Augustus came out looking like a new pin from top to toe; but Robert Arthur Digby had seen no reason to polish himself because Ralph Reckness Cardew was coming to St. Jim's. In spite of strong hints from Arthur Augustus, Dig came out in a cap. And he glanced towards the footer-ground.

"Let's see the start!" he suggested.

"We have to walk to Wayland, Dig!"

"That's all right! We'll take the short cut!" said Dig.

"The short cut is wathah mudday, Dig!"

"Oh, never mind the mud!" said Dig.

And he sauntered away to Little Side, and Arthur Augustus had to follow.

The House match was already going strong. Figgins & Co., of the New House, were in great form. But Tom Merry's team held their ground well, though unassisted by the usual outside-left. Herries was in goal for the School House, and the rest of the team were: Hammond, Reilly; Julian, Manners, Clive; Talbot, Levison, Tom Merry, Blake, and Lowther. The School House side were attacking, and the forwards brought the ball fairly up to goal. It went in from Levison's foot, but Fatty Wynn drove it out with a fat grin and a hefty fist. Tom Merry sent it in again, and again Fatty drove it out, only to meet Levison's head, and come back like a pip from an orange. There was a roar:

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Levison!"

"Bwavo!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Good shot!" remarked Dig. "Let's wait a little longer!"

"Bai Jove! School House have a chance, aftah all!" said Arthur Augustus, with much satisfaction. "Levison is playin' up we markably well. I am vewy glad that I encouraged Levison in turnin' ovah a new leaf, Dig!"

"Go hon!" said Dig.

"You would hardly think that he used

to be a smokin', bettin' blackguard, to see him now!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am vewy glad I had a hand in weformin' him, Dig!"

"Did you?" yawned Dig.

"Yaas, wathah! I backed him up, you know! Come on, deah boy, or we shall be late at Wayland Junction!"

"Let's see 'em kick-off!"

"Weally, Dig—"

The New House kicked-off.

"Come on, Dig!"

"Wait a minute! There's going to be a rush!"

"Dig, you ass!"

"Go it, School House!" roared Dig.

"Weally, Dig, if you do not come I shall have to go without you!" said Arthur Augustus. "Cardew will awwive—"

"Oh, blow Cardew!" said Dig. "Look at old Levison! What a pace he has on him! Look at Racke & Co., too!" Dig chuckled. "They're enjoying it—I don't think!"

Racke and Crooke and Mellish, the black sheep of the School House, were looking on, in a surly group. They probably had bets depending on the result of the House match, or they would not have been there. But it was plain, from their expressions, that Levison's former associates did not enjoy his triumph in his new role.

"Are you comin', Dig, you duffah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, all right!" said Dig. "Rotten silly to miss a match and go to a station for a blessed new kid! Let's get off!"

And Digby tore himself away, and the two juniors started on the long walk through the wood to Wayland.

CHAPTER 3.

A Very Superior Person!

"WAYLAND JUNCTION!"

Ralph Reckness Cardew, the new junior bound for St. Jim's, threw aside a pink paper, pitched the stump of a cigarette out of the carriage window, and rose to his feet with a yawn.

The express stopped in Wayland Station, and Cardew stepped out on the platform.

He glanced up and down the platform, and beckoned to a porter.

"Change here for Rylcombe?" he asked.

"Yessir!"

"Where's the train?"

"Tother platform, sir, across the bridge; local goes at three-thirty."

"Oh, gad! That's half an hour to wait!"

"Yessir!"

"Can get a taxi here, I suppose?"

"Might be one outside, sir," said the porter. "Most of 'em gone since the war. The men 'ave been taken."

"Oh, gad!"

The handsome, well-dressed junior shrugged his shoulders impatiently. The grandson of Lord Reckness evidently regarded it as inconsiderate on the part of the authorities to take away the taxi-men when he wanted a taxi to St. Jim's.

"Well, bring that bag and rug along," he said ungraciously.

"Sorry, sir; got the luggage to look after."

Cardew stared at the porter. The latter did not even notice his stare. He scuttled along the platform.

"By gad!" said Cardew.

Wayland Junction, like every other railway-station, was short-handed. Porters did not rush for the bags of first-class passengers as of old. Passengers, first-class or any class, had to carry their own bags. With a frowning brow,

Cardew picked up his bag, threw the rug over his arm, and walked towards the exit.

"Over the bridge," said the ticket-collector, as Cardew handed out his ticket.

"I'm goin' out."

Cardew passed on, and came out into the High Street. Two years and a half of war had made a big difference to the country town. The usual line of taxicabs was no longer to be seen. Idlers, anxious to carry a bag for sixpence, were conspicuous by their absence. The only vehicle outside the station was an ancient hack, with an ancient horse, and an ancient driver half asleep on the box. Cardew glanced at it, and his lip curled. The horse looked as if it would fall down dead before it could cover half the distance to St. Jim's.

The old driver woke up and blinked at the junior.

"Ack, sir?"

"No, thanks!"

Cardew stood looking about him.

Two juniors came along the High Street, hurrying towards the station. One of them wore a cap, the other a shining topper. And the latter exclaimed:

"Bai Jove! That must be Cardew!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Robert Arthur Digby had arrived; somewhat late, owing to Dig's keen interest in the House match at St. Jim's.

It was against all Arthur Augustus' principles to hurry; he preferred to cultivate the repose which is held to stamp the caste of Vere de Vere. But he had been hurrying now; and he was a little breathless as he came up to the new junior. But he raised his silk topper in his most graceful manner.

"Excuse me," he said. "You are Cardew, I pwesume?"

"That's my name."

"The new chap for St. Jim's?"

"I'm goin' to St. Jim's, certainly."

Cardew's manner was cold and steely. Dig gave him a look, and closed his lips a little. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's expansive smile faded. It was not exactly gratifying to be treated like an obtrusive fellow who was shoving his acquaintance upon a stranger.

"I am D'Arcy," explained the swell of St. Jim's, with dignity. "I came heah to meet you, Cardew."

"Oh!"

"I am sowwy we did not awwive befoah the twain. It was owin' to Dig wastin' time ovah a football-match."

"Oh, you're D'Arcy?" said Cardew, his manner thawing a little. "Lord Eastwood's son?"

"Yaas!"

"Glad to meet you! Thanks for comin' to meet me. Perhaps you can tell me some way of gettin' out of this sleepy hollow without walkin'?"

"Yaas, wathah! We've come to see you to the school, you know. This is Digby—my study-mate."

Cardew gave Digby a cool nod, and Dig returned a still shorter nod. Cardew did not offer to shake hands even with Arthur Augustus, who, as a distant relation, might have been supposed to be entitled to that distinction. The swell of St. Jim's was already looking considerably chilled. But noblesse oblige, had brought him to Wayland to meet this distant connection of his family, and Arthur Augustus' noble manners were equal to any strain.

"There's a local twain to Wylcombe at three-thirty," he said. "Have you given up your ticket?"

"Yes."

"It's all wright. I'll explain to the man—he knows me. Come on!"

Cardew did not move.

"I suppose there's another way of gettin' to the school?" he asked. "I don't want to hang about for half an hour, an' wait for a crawlin' local train."

"Well, there's sometimes a taxi," said Arthur Augustus. "But most of them have gone since conscription came in. There doesn't seem to be one now. If you'd like to wait for one to turn up—pewwaps—"

Cardew gave an impatient shrug.

"I wouldn't," he said.

"There's the hack," said Digby sarcastically. "It would get to St. Jim's in about three hours, if the horse didn't fall down dead."

"I suppose there's a car to be got somewhere?" said Cardew, without taking any notice of Dig's remark.

"Suppose we walk?" suggested D'Arcy amicably. "It's a wippin' walk through the woods, and only a few miles, if you don't like the local twain."

"I'm not lookin' for a walk of a few miles, thanks! What about gettin' a car? There must be a garage somewhere even in this out-of-the-way hole."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Well, where is it?"

Arthur Augustus hesitated.

"The fact is, deah boy, it would make wathah a bad impresson at the school if you awwived in a cah," he remarked.

Cardew stared.

"What rot! Why?"

"You are pewwaps awaah that it is war-time?" said D'Arcy drily. "Takin' out a cah for pleasure is wegarded as bad form, undah the circs. Most of the fellows think that a cah ought not to be taken out, exceptin' to give the wounded soldiahs a wun. We do that sometimes. I am afwaid the House-mastah would be down on you. He was feahfully down on Wacke of the Shell, for havin' a cah out for pleasuah."

"What utter rot!" said Cardew.

Arthur Augustus' cheeks became slightly pink.

"We do not wegard it as wot, Cardew!"

"We think at St. Jim's that only a bounnder would take a car out for his own pleasure, in war-time," said Digby very distinctly.

"Really? Your Housemaster seems to me to be a meddlin' ass," said Cardew coolly. "I suppose any fellow can have a car if he pays for it. Let's get along to the garage, and see whether there's a car to be had."

Dig closed his lips tightly, and did not move. Arthur Augustus hesitated, much troubled between his regard for good form, and his desire to be civil to his relation.

"I feah, Cardew, that it would make a vevy bad start for you at the school," he said at last. "It would be wegarded as swank, and swank of a vevy wewehensible kind."

"You must be a set of little tin angels at St. Jim's," said Cardew, with a yawn. "I'm dashed if I know how I shall get on among so much goodness!"

"Oh, rats!" said Dig gruffly.

The three juniors looked at one another. Cardew evidently didn't intend to wait for the local train, and he didn't intend to walk. Dig was showing very visible signs of impatience. He was fed up with the grandson of Lord Reckness already. Dig felt that it was hard lines to have missed the House-match for this.

Cardew's face suddenly relaxed, and he laughed.

"All serene!" he said. "I've got an idea; I can fix it. I won't shock the high principles of St. Jim's; wouldn't dream of it. But I've got to have a car. I suppose there's a hospital here, as you said somethin' about wounded soldiahs—"

"Yaas; Wayland Hospital," said

D'Arcy. "It's full of poor fellows fwom the Somme."

"We'll give some of them a run."

"Eh?"

"Come on," said Cardew. "Show me the way to the garage. We'll call at the hospital for the Tommies, and take them along."

"Bai Jove!"

"But—but we haven't permission to take them to the school," said the astonished Digby.

"What rot! I suppose a patriotic schoolmaster will be glad to see them?"

"Yes; I suppose so. But—"

"We'll stand them a tea, and give 'em a good time," said Cardew.

"Bai Jove, it's wathah a good ideah!" said Arthur Augustus. "But a fellow is supposed to ask the Housemaster first."

"We'll ask him afterwards. He can't say anythin' against it, anyway."

"Our Housemastah is an old soldiah himself," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "Mr. Waitton was wounded at the Fwont, and he still has a wocky arm."

"Good man!" said Cardew. "That's all the more reason why he can't say anythin' against our bringin' Tommies to tea."

"Yaas; but I have taken some of the chaps out sometimes in a car, but we always telephone first and ask if it is convenient."

"Oh, that's all right! You needn't ask first. My aunt always sends her car round to a hospital when she's not usin' it, and there's always some chaps there ready for a run. It's the same here, I expect. Let's get along to the garage; we're wastin' time."

"Oh, all wright!"

And the juniors started.

CHAPTER 4.

Gussy Does the Trick!

CARDEW'S face was quite cheery and smiling as the juniors arrived at Wayland Garage. Arthur Augustus did not quite know what to make of him. Dig had taken a dislike to him at first, but he felt it melting away. Cardew was full of his idea of taking a carload of wounded Tommies to St. Jim's, and he chuckled over the surprise it would cause. But there was evidently good feeling as well as swank in his scheme; he was looking forward with genuine satisfaction to giving the Tommies a treat. Certainly no new boy had ever arrived at St. Jim's in such an extraordinary manner before, and D'Arcy and Dig had already discerned that Cardew had a taste for the limelight.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was well known at the garage. He had often had a car out to visit the hospital, and his noble pater had sometimes had the pleasure of drawing quite extensive cheques in consequence. Arthur Augustus was treated with the respect due to a youth who could order out a car at fifteenpence a mile, with a minimum charge of four guineas, but it was Ralph Reckness Cardew who took the lead on this occasion.

There was a car to be had—and it was a whacking one, too. Cardew engaged it without even asking the cost. The car was run out, and the three juniors entered it. There was comfortable room for eight.

"Wayland Hospital!" said Cardew.

"Yessir!"

The big car buzzed away.

"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

"What a lark!" said Cardew, grinning. "We can pack six chaps at least into this; somebody can sit outside with the driver."

"Yaas, if they let them come."

"Oh, they'll let them come!"

The car stopped at the hospital. Cardew jumped out. He did not ask either D'Arcy or Dig to accompany him, so they remained in the car.

"You had better ask for Lady Tompkins," said Arthur Augustus.

"Lady which?"

"Tompkins."

"Who the merry dickens is Lady Tompkins?" ejaculated Cardew.

"The wife of the Mayor of Wayland. She has charge of the department you want."

Cardew grinned.

"All serene! I'll ask for her merry ladyship. Not a duchess by any chance?"

"No," said Arthur Augustus. "The mayor was knighted last year, you know, and Mrs. Tompkins is Lady Tompkins now. If you ask for Mrs. Tompkins you will very likely give offence."

"Ha, ha! I'll be careful. Sure it's Lady Tompkins—not Lady Smith, or Lady Brown, or Lady Huggins?"

"It is Lady Tompkins, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus quietly.

"Right-ho!"

Cardew went up the steps and disappeared. Dig gave an expressive snort.

"That chap's a relation of yours, Gussy?" he asked.

"A very distant relation, Dig."

"The more distant the better, I should say!" grunted Digby.

"Weally, Dig—"

"If you want my opinion of him—"

"I don't, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus mildly.

"Cheeky snob!" said Dig, unheeding. "Why shouldn't anybody be Lady Tompkins? Tompkins is an older name than Cardew, anyway."

"Ewery chap has his little weakness, Dig."

"And his Lady Smith and Lady Brown!" grunted Dig. "He'd better make little jokes like that to Smith minor, or Brown of the Fifth. He'll jolly soon get his cheeky neck wrung, I can tell him."

And Dig grunted, and relapsed into silence.

Meanwhile, Cardew sauntered into the vestibule of the great building, with an air that seemed to indicate that Wayland Hospital was his own personal property. He inquired for Lady Tompkins, and was shown into a room furnished with a roll-top desk, a table, a telephone, two chairs, and a very stout and red-faced lady of uncertain age. The stout lady did not take the slightest notice of his entrance, however. She was talking, and her tones were very decided. Cardew could guess that this was Lady Tompkins, and that Lady Tompkins was a lady who prided herself upon being efficient. The stout lady was addressing her remarks to a thin young lady, who stood, with a tired and patient manner, to receive them.

"Certainly not!" Lady Tompkins was saying emphatically. "I say, certainly not! We simply cannot allow specials."

Cardew wondered whether the stout lady was referring to special constables, or what, otherwise, she might possibly mean. Certainly she was waxing wrath, and was very emphatic.

"It simply cannot be done!" continued the stout lady. "I refuse to allow specials, Miss Quinch!"

"But they say—" murmured Miss Quinch.

Lady Tompkins raised a fat forefinger commandingly.

"It is not of the least consequence what they say! There shall be no specials while I am in charge! Tell them so!"

"Yes, my lady!"

Miss Quinch turned to a typewriter on the table, which began to click. Evidently she was to inform somebody

by letter that there were to be no specials.

Then the stout lady condescended to become aware of Cardew's existence. She turned two little parrot-like brown eyes upon him sharply. Possibly something in Cardew's manner—which was not meek—annoyed the stout lady, for she raised her tortoiseshell glasses, and gave him a survey through them which ought to have crushed him on the spot. The St. Jim's junior did not turn a hair, however.

"Lady Tompkins?" he asked cheerfully.

"Yes!" snapped the knight's lady.

"I think I have to apply to you for wounded soldiers to take in a car—"

Lady Tompkins raised the fat forefinger again.

"No specials!" she said.

"Please excuse my ignorance," said Cardew politely. "May I inquire what specials are?"

Lady Tompkins gave vent to a sound which, in any person but a knight's lady, would have been described as a grunt.

"We are always glad," she said, "for kindly-disposed persons to call for wounded men in our charge, but specials are not allowed. Such men as are ready to be taken out may be taken out, but special persons cannot be selected."

"Oh, I understand!" assented Cardew.

"If you have a relation here—" continued Lady Tompkins.

"Not at all. I have a car outside, and I want half a dozen chaps to take for a run."

Lady Tompkins repeated the sound which resembled a grunt.

"We do not allow men out in the charge of a schoolboy."

"I have a car with an experienced chauffeur," said Cardew. "They will be quite safe, I assure you, your ladyship. I belong to St. Jim's."

"Have you a letter from your headmaster?"

"Ahem! No."

"Then the proposition cannot be entertained! Good-afternoon!"

Cardew bit his lip. It was a reply he might have expected, but it annoyed him. Lady Tompkins forgot his existence as the telephone-bell rang. She took up the receiver.

"Yes—yes? Lady Tompkins—yes! Certainly! We shall be glad. But I must point out that specials are no longer allowed," her ladyship confided to the transmitter.

Cardew left the office, his brows knitted. He crossed back to the car in the road.

"Are they comin'?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"The old donkey won't let them come, as she doesn't know me!" said Cardew angrily. "She knows you, I suppose?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Come in with me, then, and speak to the gorgon!"

"Weally, Cardew, I must request you not to allude to any lady in my presence as a gorgon!" said Arthur Augustus, quite sharply for him.

"All serene! She isn't a lady," said Cardew coolly.

"To a pwopably-constituted mind, Cardew, every woman is a lady," said Arthur Augustus, with great severity.

"Oh, my hat!" said Cardew. "Well, come on! We're wastin' time."

"If you'd taken Gussy in, in the first place, we shouldn't be wasting time," said Dig tartly.

Cardew appeared deaf to that remark. He re-entered the building with Arthur Augustus, who was received with a

gracious smile by Lady Tompkins. Lord Eastwood's son was well known at the hospital, and he had been allowed to take the patients out many times.

"Good-afternoon, madam!" said Arthur Augustus affably, in response to her ladyship's cordial greeting. "Pewwaps you will be kind enough to allow me to take half a dozen chaps for a wun, if I haven't come at an inconvenient time?"

"Certainly, Master D'Arcy. I will see to the matter personally."

The juniors returned to the car, while Lady Tompkins saw to the matter personally.

"Jolly polite to you, anyway!" said Cardew, with a shrug.

"Pewwaps because I do not wegard her as a gorgon, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus mildly.

"Queer how these old donkeys shove themselves into war-work, and fancy they're no end important," said Cardew.

"If you are alludin' to a lady as a donkey, Cardew, I can only request you not to do so!"

Cardew gave a sniff. Gussy's noble manners and customs did not seem quite to agree with him, somehow.

The men were very quickly brought out. One poor fellow, who had lost both legs, was carried out in the arms of a couple of orderlies, and it was touching to see the tenderness with which the two big soldiers handled their disabled comrade. A woman could not have been more tender with a child than they were with the brave lad who had given all but his life for his country.

Cardew stepped into the car to help, and he arranged his own rug round the lad, with a kindness that raised him very much in D'Arcy's estimation.

It was curious to see the happy cheerfulness of the soldier-lad whose activity was gone for ever. He had lost both legs at twenty; yet his face was placid and his eyes were merry.

"Warm enough, old chap?" asked Cardew. There was not a trace of insensibility in Cardew's manner now.

"Yes, thanks; I never suffer from cold feet now!" said the patient, with a chuckle.

The next man in was better off—he had one leg and a crutch. The third had one arm; another had lost an eye and an ear. But the whole party were in the best of spirits, and like schoolboys on a holiday.

Dig elected to take the seat by the driver, and Cardew and D'Arcy entered the car with the soldiers.

"Let her rip!" said Cardew to the chauffeur. "We've got to get back at six!"

"Yessir!"

The big car buzzed away. Cardew took out a silver cigarette-case, and passed it round to the Tommies.

"Bai Jove, that was awf'ly thoughtful of you, Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus.

"What was?" asked Cardew.

"To pwovide cigawettes, dear boy."

"I always carry them."

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus, considerably taken aback.

Cardew had impressed Dig, and even the easy-going Gussy, as a snob of the first water. But there was nothing snobbish in his manner now. He chatted to his companions in the car with the air of a man of the world, but with a kind friendliness which gained their confidence at once. And Arthur Augustus, after some thought, decided that he did not know what to make of his relation. But Gussy was not the only St. Jim's fellow who was destined to decide that he did not know what to make of Ralph Reckness Cardew!

CHAPTER 5.

The New Boy Arrives.

"SCHOOL HOUSE wins! Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

On Little Side the School House juniors were cheering. The House match was over, and Tom Merry & Co. had won by a goal to nil. It had been a hard-fought match from start to finish, and School House had been lucky to win.

The footballers came off the field looking very ruddy. Tom Merry clapped Clive on the shoulder.

"Quite a happy thought of Gussy's," he remarked. "I must tell Gussy that you're more use in the second line than he is in the front."

And Clive chuckled.

"But it's your match, Levison," added Tom. "You got the one and only goal."

"Luck!" said Levison.

"Luck and good play," said Tom. "You're a rod in pickle for the Rookwood chaps when we go over to Rookwood. Hallo! What the dickens—"

The School House players, with coats and mufflers on over their footer rig, were heading for the House. A tremendous car had turned in at the gates, and it came grinding up the drive in the clear winter sunlight. The car was open, and it was crammed with fellows in hospital blue.

Every eye was turned upon it.

"Gussy!" ejaculated Blake.

"My hat!"

"That must be the new chap!"

"And Tommies—"

"What the dickens—"

The car clanked to a halt before the School House, and the footballers gathered round, raising their caps to the Tommies.

Mr. Railton, who had spotted the car from his study window, came out of the great doorway, with surprise in his face.

Cardew stepped from the car.

He could see that this was a master, and that he was astonished; but he was quite cool and unconcerned.

"This is Cardew, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "It's Mr. Railton, our Housemaster, Cardew."

"Oh! You are Cardew?" said Mr. Railton.

"Yes, sir."

"You were expected this afternoon. But what—"

"I've brought some friends along to tea, sir," said Cardew, with perfect coolness. "I was sure you wouldn't mind."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tom Merry.

The juniors stared at Cardew. The new fellow did not seem to recognise in the least what an important person a Housemaster was—or perhaps he did not choose to recognise it.

Mr. Railton compressed his lips for one moment.

The cool cheek of the new junior stirred his ire; but he could not give expression to it at that moment, as Cardew was well aware.

Not for worlds would the Housemaster—an old soldier himself—have allowed the cheery party in the car to feel for an instant that their presence was unwelcome. It was far from unwelcome, as a matter of fact; Mr. Railton was glad to see them. It was Cardew's cool nerve in acting as he had done without asking permission that stirred his ire.

Mr. Railton stepped to the car without taking any further notice of Cardew for the present.

"I am glad to see you here," he said.

"I—"

"Old Railton, by gum!" said a voice from the car. "Hallo, sergeant!"

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"Bai Jove!" said Arthur Augustus.

Mr. Railton started, and then, leaning over the car, shook hands with the soldier lad who had left his legs in Flanders.

"How are you, old friend?" he said heartily.

"Right as rain—what's left of me!" grinned the Tommy. "One leg on the Somme and the other in hospital at Rouen, and the rest merry and bright!"

Mr. Railton laughed.

"I am glad to see you so well, Jim!"

"How's the fin, old scout?"

"I cannot use it yet," said Mr. Railton, with a glance down at his left arm. "But come— Kildare, Darrel, will you help Private Jones into the House?"

The two big Six-Formers came forward at once, and Private Jones was lifted out of the car in their strong arms.

Private Jones was quite convalescent now, and the loss of his legs did not seem to worry him in the least—in fact, he seemed to look upon it as rather a joke. Tom Merry & Co. gathered round to help the other fellows with great enthusiasm. Blake slapped Arthur Augustus on the back.

"Ripping idea of yours, Gussy!" he said.

"Pway don't bweak my backbone, deah boy! It was not my ideah—it was Cardew's," said Arthur Augustus.

"Good man!" said Blake.

"Yaas, he seems wathah a good sort, in a way."

"Yes, in a way," said Dig.

"We've got to entertain our guests, D'Arcy," said Cardew, coming up. "Where can they have tea?"

"They're bein' taken into the dinin'-room, deah boy. The House-dame will pwovide tea. We can get in extwas fwom the tuckshop."

"Good! Where's the tuckshop?"

"I will show you, deah boy."

Cardew hurried across the quad with Arthur Augustus, and Tom Merry & Co. looked after them very curiously.

"Rather a corker, that new chap," remarked Tom Merry. "Blessed if I ever heard of a new kid arriving in this way before!"

"It's rather a surprise," grinned Blake.

"But it's a good idea. Let's get changed and help to entertain the guests."

"Yes, rather!"

The footballers hurried away to the dormitory to change. Meanwhile, Cardew was giving orders in the tuckshop on a magnificent scale that made Arthur Augustus open his eyes. Arthur Augustus had never learned to be very careful with money; but he had never spent it as Cardew did. The grandson of Lord Reckness seemed to be remarkably well supplied with that very necessary article—cash.

"Bai Jove, how are you goin' to cawwy that cargo in?" asked Arthur Augustus, as the purchases piled up on the little counter.

"I suppose there's a man or something to carry parcels?" said Cardew.

"We genevally cawwy our things ourselves, Cardew."

"Well, we can't carry that lot. Call in somebody!"

"I'll call some of the fellahs."

Arthur Augustus proceeded to do so. Figgins & Co. of the New House came into the shop for supplies for tea, and they cheerfully lent a hand, and three or four more fellows joined in. And the good things were conveyed into the School House in boxes, bags, parcels, packets, in a kind of triumphal procession.

CHAPTER 6.

Tommies to Tea.

"BLESS my soul! What is all this?" Mr Railton met the procession in the hall.

There were eight or nine juniors, all heavily laden, and it was enough to make the Housemaster open his eyes wide.

"It's grub for the guests, sir," said Cardew.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Railton. "Very well, you may take it in." He gave Cardew a very curious look, and passed on.

Cardew and his companions marched into the big, oak-panelled dining-room of the School House. Tom Merry & Co. were already there, in cheery talk with the distinguished visitors. The guests were ranged round the Fourth Form table, and tea was already on the board. The new cargo was landed, and the juniors waited diligently on the guests. If the visitors had eaten a quarter of the good things that were pressed upon them they would certainly have booked themselves for a very prolonged stay in Wayland Hospital.

There was a merry buzz of talk in the room. The juniors were enjoying the visit, and so, evidently, were the men in blue.

Cardew was the object of much curiosity.

He had never even seen St. Jim's before, and new boys were generally expected to show some slight shyness, if not timidity. There was no sign of shyness or timidity about Cardew.

He had a coolness and self-possession that seemed more suitable to twenty-five than to fifteen.

Mr. Railton came in, and it was interesting to the juniors to see how the grave Housemaster unbent in the presence of the Tommies, once his fellow-soldiers in the trenches of Flanders.

The St. Jim's fellows knew that the big, athletic Housemaster had joined up early in the war, that he had served at the Front as a Tommy among Tommies, that he had become a sergeant when his wound disabled him and led to his discharge. It was difficult for them to imagine the grave Master of Arts as a Tommy in khaki and muddy putties, roughing it in the trenches with all sorts and conditions of men. They were proud of him—even prouder of Private Railton than they would have been of Colonel or General Railton. Now, for the moment, the Housemaster was a soldier again, chatting with the Tommies as if they were still in the trench, with the German shells whizzing overhead, or the billet. Cigarettes were passed round after tea, and the Tommies lighted up, and to the amazement and consternation of the juniors, Cardew also lighted a cigarette.

Arthur Augustus fixed his eyes upon the new junior, as if fascinated.

There were merry blades in the school who smoked cigarettes in the privacy of their studies, and regarded such proceedings as remarkably doggish and sporting. But for a junior to put a cigarette in his mouth in the presence of his Housemaster was amazing, almost unnerving. It was time for the skies to fall!

All eyes were turned upon Mr. Railton, and the juniors waited for the storm to burst.

But the storm did not burst. Mr. Railton certainly noted Cardew's action, but he did not appear to see it.

For a moment his lips were compressed, but that was all.

Cardew did not even look at him. Mr. Railton was talking to Private

Jones, his old comrade, and he continued as if nothing unusual were happening.

"My hat!" murmured Monty Lowther. "That's a cool merchant!"

"Cheeky cad, I think!" growled Manners.

Arthur Augustus nudged Cardew gently.

"Pway put that away, deah boy!" he whispered.

Cardew stared at him.

"Why?"

"Ahem! You are not allowed to smoke, you know."

"What rot!"

"Mr. Wailton will be vewy angwy."

"Let him!"

"Oh!" said Arthur Augustus.

Cardew was the cynosure of all eyes now. If the new fellow had meant to mark his arrival at St. Jim's with a sensation, he had certainly succeeded. The juniors knew why Mr. Railton was apparently blind; it was because he would not allow the wounded soldiers' visit to be marred by the slightest unpleasant incident. But it was pretty certain that Cardew would be called over the coals afterwards.

The Housemaster went after a time, leaving the juniors to entertain the visitors. They were doing that very heartily. Even Crooke and Racke felt some little enthusiasm for the occasion.

"My eye!" said Private Jones. "This is better than the trenches. A bit of a change after the hospital, too, though that's a bit of all right after Flanders."

"It must be wathah wuff in the trenches sometimes," remarked Arthur Augustus, in a thoughtful way.

"All in the day's work," said Private Jones philosophically. "You take the rough with the smooth. Everybody can't be a brass hat."

"A—a what?" ejaculated Arthur Augustus.

"I mean a staff officer," grinned Private Jones. "It ain't a bad life, 'specially now we've got the upper hand."

"Bai Jove! And we've weally got the uppah hand at last?" asked Arthur Augustus, with great interest.

"You bet your life!" said Private Jones, with emphasis. "Course, you feel a bit queer at first when the rush begins and your pals go over round you like skittles. But you don't have much time to think. And when you get fairly over, Fritz shoves up his paws and yells 'Kamerad!'—bless him! The Kamerads are comin' in by the hundred now, and glad to get into our lines. I've marched in a dozen at a time—when I had legs to march on. And anyway, I've got my bad corn cured for good."

And Private Jones chuckled.

"And you knew Mr. Railton out there?" said Tom Merry.

"Yes, and a good sort he was," said Private Jones. "Nobody'd have guessed that he was a schoolmaster then. University man, too, and never put on any side. But there's lots of them—all sorts in the trenches—cook's son, duke's son, as they say in the song. And now we'd better be goin', or Tin Ribs will be ratty."

Arthur Augustus could not help suspecting that it was Lady Tompkins who was alluded to as "Tin Ribs," but he did not inquire.

An army of St. Jim's fellows gathered round to escort the distinguished visitors to the waiting car.

The half-dozen heroes were safely disposed in the big car, looking very pleased and satisfied with their visit. Cardew

stepped in after them, and Arthur Augustus touched him on the arm.

"You won't be back for lockin' up, Cardew."

"Must see my guests home," said Cardew coolly.

"Bettah ask Wailton—"

"Bow-wow! Get on, chauffeur!"

The big car buzzed away to the gates. Mr. Railton waved his hand from his study window, and the juniors waved their caps and cheered. The car turned out at the gates amid a roar of cheering.

A little later the school was called over, and Mr. Railton, who took the roll-call, paused over Cardew's name, which was now on the list.

"Is not Cardew present?" the Housemaster asked, glancing over towards the Fourth.

"He has taken the soldiahs home, sir," said Arthur Augustus. "He felt it his duty to see them home, sir."

Mr. Railton nodded, and went on with the roll-call.

"That new kid is a cool merchant," Tom Merry remarked, as the juniors

CHAPTER 7.

Looking for Trouble.

"COME in!" Mr. Railton's door opened, and Cardew of the Fourth came in. The Housemaster's brows were knitted.

Cardew's manner was quite nonchalant and unconcerned.

He did not seem in the least dismayed by the frown of the School House master. In fact, he did not appear even to observe it.

"The porter told me I was to report myself, sir," he said casually.

"You have not yet reported yourself to me, Cardew. Your arrival at the School this afternoon was most extraordinary."

"Yes, sir?" said Cardew, in a tone of polite interest.

"You should not have acted as you did without asking permission first; but as it was a kindly action, and you are a new boy, I will say no more about that."



Cardew interviews Lady Tompkins.

(See Chapter 4.)

came out of Hall. "I fancy he'll soon get on Railton's wrong side."

"He is not a bad sort, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus very thoughtfully. "He does seem wathah checky. But pewayp it is only his way."

"And perhaps Railton will change his ways for him!" grinned Lowther.

Arthur Augustus waited rather anxiously for Cardew to come in. It was well past the hour of locking-up when the snort of a motor-car was heard on the road, and a peal was rung on the bell. Old Taggles went grunting down to the gates with his bunch of keys.

"Ho!" remarked Taggles. "You're the noo boy—wot? Well, you're to report yourself to Mr. Railton."

Cardew nodded, dismissed the car, and sauntered across the dusty quad to the School House. Taggles grunted again, very expressively, and went back to his lodge.

There is another more serious matter I must mention."

"I felt bound to go home with the soldiers, sir, as I brought them out," said Cardew.

"The chauffeur would have taken them back quite as well without your presence, Cardew; and, again, you should have asked permission."

Cardew was silent.

"But the other matter to which I have referred is more serious. You had the audacity to smoke in my presence!"

"Yes, sir."

"May I inquire whether you are in the habit of smoking?" demanded the Housemaster severely.

"Yes, sir," said Cardew calmly.

Mr. Railton breathed hard for a moment.

"You may be ignorant of School customs, Cardew. Smoking is strictly

forbidden, and if you err again in this way, your punishment will be severe."

"Indeed, sir?"

"But even if your training has been bad, Cardew, as it appears to have been, you must still be aware that it was disrespectful to smoke in the presence of your elders, and especially of your Housemaster. I am afraid, Cardew, that it was your intention to be impertinent, and to make a foolish display of independence at a moment when it was difficult for me to reprimand you."

"Not at all, sir," said Cardew calmly. "I am very far from satisfied with you, Cardew! I may mention that any repetition of this impertinence will be dealt with severely. I do not desire to be hard upon a new boy, and I will therefore say no more about the matter now. You may go to your Form-master now. Mr. Latham's study is the next along the passage."

"Thank you, sir."

Cardew left the study. The Housemaster's rebuke had not had the slightest effect upon his nonchalant manner, and Mr. Railton was strongly tempted to call him back and administer a caning there and then. He refrained, however, and Cardew proceeded to interview Mr. Latham.

About a quarter of an hour later he emerged from the Form-master's study, and he strolled down the passage with his hands in his pockets, evidently in the best of spirits.

He found Arthur Augustus waiting for him.

"Did you get on all right with Waitton?" asked D'Arcy.

"Oh, yes."

"Not liked?"

"No, only a sermon. Rather a grand-fatherly old merchant, your Housemaster," said Cardew.

"Mr. Waitton is one of the best," said Arthur Augustus severely.

"I dare say he is," agreed Cardew, with a yawn. "A bit of a bore, all the same. Has my box come, do you know?"

"It will not come from the station till to-morrow," Cardew. "You have your bag, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes. I'll get it unpacked if you'll show me where my quarters are."

"Certainly, dear boy."

Arthur Augustus led the way to the Fourth Form dormitory. There he left the new junior. Prep was waiting in Study No. 6.

Cardew followed him down a little later, and found his way to the Fourth Form passage. Mr. Latham had told him the number of his study; but it was not easy to find. Most of the numbers over the studies were half-obliterated, and Cardew did not know yet who were his new study-mates. Some new boys would have mooched about, helplessly wondering where they could get information; but Ralph Reckness Cardew was not that kind of new boy. He knocked at a half-open study door, and looked in. It happened to be Study No. 5, which belonged to Julian, Kerruish, Reilly, and Hammond of the Fourth. Harry Hammond was alone there, and he looked round good-naturedly at the new junior.

"'Allo," he said.

Cardew stared. He had never seen Harry Hammond before, and did not know that the Cockney schoolboy had manners and customs of his own, which were taken quite good-naturedly by the other fellows. Hammond was the heir of the great firm that sold Hammond's high-class hats, all one price, 3s. 9d.; but the elder Hammond had worked his way up from humble beginnings, and

Harry's early education had been sadly neglected. And the time he had spent at St. Jim's had not enabled Hammond to overcome his little differences with the aspirate.

"You the noo kid?" asked Hammond quite affably.

"I'm a new boy here," said Cardew. "Come in," said Hammond. "Don't 'ang about out there. I say, though, 'as Railton put you in this study?"

Cardew stared quite hard. "Do you belong to the School?" he asked.

It was Hammond's turn to stare.

"Course I does," he said.

"Well, my hat!"

Hammond flushed. He could see that his peculiar pronunciation had struck the new boy forcibly.

"I suppose this is the Fourth Form passage?" asked Cardew.

"Yes," said Hammond shortly; "and I 'ope you're not comin' into this 'ere study. We're four already."

"I hope not, I'm sure," said Cardew superciliously. "But it depends on the number. I'm lookin' for No. 9."

"Fourth door up," said Hammond.

And he turned to his work again, and took no further notice of Cardew.

The new boy looked at him curiously for some moments. Apparently the Cockney schoolboy interested him. Hammond looked up, and caught Cardew's amused eyes fixed on him.

"You ain't gone yet," he remarked.

"May a bloke inquire what you are staring at? I may as well tell you that if you've come 'ere to put on hairs, you'll soon find the trouble you're lookin' for."

"Hairs!" repeated Cardew, as if not understanding. "Ah! Perhaps you mean airs?"

"I mean hairs," said Hammond, jumping up from the table. "And I don't want any of your cheek, Master Cheeky Noo Boy! You can travel, and sharp."

Cardew's face hardened, and he did not stir.

"You 'ear me?" exclaimed Hammond.

"I hear you, if that is what you mean," said Cardew coolly. "And you belong to St. Jim's! By gad!"

"'Wot did you think I was, then?" demanded Hammond aggressively.

The cool, supercilious insolence of the new junior was more than enough to rouse his anger, good-tempered as he was.

"I should have supposed that you were the boot-boy, to judge by your language," said Cardew insolently.

Hammond drew a deep breath.

"Well, I ain't the boot-boy! But I shouldn't be ashamed of it if I was," he said. "I give you one minute to clear out, you worm!"

Cardew's eyes glittered, and he made a step further into the study. That was enough for Hammond. He rushed at the new junior, and grasped him. They went whirling through the doorway together.

There was a loud bump in the passage.

The door of the next study opened, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's eyeglasses glimmered out.

"'Bai Jove! What's the mattah? G'weat Scott!"

"'Hallo! The new kid scrapping already?" grinned Blake, looking out.

"Go it, both of you! Bravo!"

"P'way stop!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, rushing to separate the two angry juniors. "Hammond, dear boy, this chap is my relation!"

Hammond released Cardew at once, and stepped back.

"I didn't know that, Master Gussy,"

he said apologetically. "I'd 'ave stood his cheek if I'd knowed."

"What have you been quarrellin' with Hammond for, Cardew?"

Cardew laughed.

"His accent rather amused me, and he took it badly," he replied.

"'Weally, Cardew, that is a wotten, caddish remark!"

"'E's a cad, right 'enough," said Hammond. "I don't know 'ow you come to 'ave a relation like that, D'Arcy. But I won't 'urt 'im."

"You couldn't," said Cardew contemptuously.

Hammond breathed hard. But he controlled his feelings, went back into his study, and closed the door. Cardew laughed again.

"I suppose that fellow isn't a specimen of the Fourth, D'Arcy?" he asked. "Where on earth was he brought up?"

"Hammond was wathah unfortunate in his early days, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus. "He is a wippin' chap, and a particu'lar fwied of mine."

"Queer taste in friends, I must say! Do the other fellows speak to him?"

"Yaas, wathah! I am happy to say that there are vewy few wotten snobs at St. Jim's."

"That means that I'm a snob, I suppose?" said Cardew pleasantly.

"I feah, Cardew, that you are wathah a snob! I am sowwy to see it."

Jack Blake chuckled.

"Go it, Gussy!" he said.

Arthur Augustus went it. His noble indignation was aroused.

"I am sowwy to see you actin' in this way, Cardew," he continued, "and if you are guilty of furi'ah bad taste like this, I feah that fwieship between us will be imposs."

"Suppose you keep your fwieship till it's asked for!" said Cardew tartly.

And he went up the passage, leaving Arthur Augustus D'Arcy to digest that remark.

The swell of the School House breathed very hard.

"'Bai Jove!" he remarked at last.

And he went back into Study No. 6.

Cardew sauntered up the passage to the fourth door from No. 5, and opened it without knocking. There was a half-legible "9" on the door. The new boy had arrived in his quarters at last.

CHAPTER 8.

Not Kindred Spirits.

LEVISON and Sidney Clive were in the study, both hard at work on their preparation.

But they paused in their labours as the new junior came in.

"'Hallo!" said Clive cordially. "Trot in!"

"Don't trouble to knock at the door," said Levison sarcastically.

"This is my study, I think?" said Cardew.

"That's right enough," said Clive. "Mr. Railton told us you were coming in here. You're welcome!"

"Thanks!"

Both Levison and Clive regarded the new Fourth-Former with some interest.

They had witnessed his dramatic arrival at the school with the car-load of Tommies. It was easy to see that Cardew of the Fourth was a new fellow a little out of the common.

"You're a relation of D'Arcy's, I hear?" remarked Levison.

"A very distant relation," said Cardew carelessly. "Not much of a connection. My name's Cardew."

"Mine's Levison, and this is Clive."

"Levison!" repeated Cardew.

"Yes. We haven't met before, have we?" asked Levison, with a curious look at the new-comer.

"No; but I've heard of you. You used to be at Greyfriars, I believe?"

"Yes!" said Levison shortly.

"You had to get out?"

"I left," said Levison still more shortly. Levison did not like to be reminded of the circumstances in which he had left Greyfriars. "I heard you've been to school before. Were you at Greyfriars?"

"Oh, no—a school in the North." Cardew did not volunteer the name of the school, however.

"Then I don't know how you know anything about my having been at Greyfriars," said Levison, not very cordially.

"I knew a chap there," explained Cardew. "He's there still, I believe—chap named Skinner. I was with him one holiday, and he told me a lot about Greyfriars, and mentioned you, and that you'd changed your school. That's how I know."

"Skinner wasn't a friend of mine," said Levison drily.

"I understood that you had some good times together," said Cardew, with a smile. "You were a bit given to kicking over the traces."

"Perhaps I was," assented Levison. "I know I was an ass. I'll get on with my prep if you don't mind."

And he settled down to his work.

"Are you going to do any prep, Cardew?" asked Clive.

"Mr. Latham didn't mention it," said Cardew. "I'm not bound to, I suppose, the first evening?"

"I suppose not."

"Then I sha'n't! No good looking for work."

Cardew sat down in the armchair, and crossed his legs, and yawned, as the study-mates went on working. His eyes dwelt curiously on Ernest Levison several times. What he had heard from Skinner of Greyfriars on the subject of Ernest Levison had evidently interested him. He took out the silver cigarette-case, and selected a smoke. Clive looked up.

"We don't smoke here," he said.

"Really?"

"Yes, really!"

"We live and learn," said Cardew, laughing. "I seem to have dropped into a Sunday-school by mistake."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Clive gruffly. "You won't find anything goody-goody in this study; but we don't play the fool."

Cardew's eyes gleamed. He was by no means slow to quarrel, as his encounter with Harry Hammond had shown. But he checked the angry reply that rose to his lips. Perhaps he realised that it would be a bad beginning to start with a row in his own quarters.

"So you object to a fag in the study?" he said.

"Yes, we do."

"You, too, Levison?"

"Yes," said Levison, without looking up.

"You've changed a bit since you left Greyfriars, haven't you?" asked Cardew.

"Yes."

"Well, I suppose it goes by the majority," said Cardew, and he threw the cigarette into the fire. "I don't care twopence either way."

He sat and yawned, and regarded the two workers, till Clive, having finished his prep, rose. He left the study, and Levison worked on alone till he was finished. Then he yawned and sat back in his chair.

"Finished?" asked Cardew.

"Yes. Coming down to the Common-room?"

"No hurry. What sort of a chap is that—Clive, I think you called him?"

"First-rate. A Colonial," said Levison.

"You get on with him?"

"Certainly!"

"I suppose you were spoofing about the smokes?" asked Cardew. "It isn't like what I heard about you from Skinner."

"I've changed a bit in some ways since I knew Skinner," said Levison calmly. "I've chucked up smoking, and taken up footer, and some others things."

"You feel better for it?" asked Cardew, sarcastically.

"Heaps!"

"No accountin' for tastes. I was lookin' forward to makin' your acquaintance, Levison, when I came here."

"Thanks. Well, you've made it."

"I was goin' to try to get into the same study. I thought we should pull together."

"I don't see why we shouldn't," said Levison. "Hallo, come in!" he added, as a tap came at the door.

The door opened, and Levison minor of the Third came in, with a book under his arm. He hesitated, however, as he saw Cardew.

"Come in, Frank," said Levison. "This is Cardew, my new study-mate. My minor, Cardew! Did you get on all right with Selby at prep, Franky?"

"Not first-rate," said Frank ruefully. "If you'd like to give me a hand with Eutropius—"

"Like a bird," said Levison. "Sit down, kid!"

Cardew stared at them.

"Do you spend your spare time coaching fags?" he asked.

"Yes, when the fag happens to be my minor."

"My hat! I've dropped into a refuge for noble youths!" grunted Cardew. "I never knew St. Jim's was like this. I don't know how I shall stand the high moral atmosphere of this place, I'm dashed if I do!"

"Oh, you'll get used to it!" said Levison, laughing. "If you don't like it, get along to Racke's study—No. 7, in the Shell. You'll most likely find a game of bridge going on there."

Cardew opened his eyes.

"Oh! You're not all plaster saints, then?" he said.

"Ha, ha! No. Some of us are asking to be sacked, and only waiting to be found out. Better run along and see Racke, if you want to join the merry crowd!"

"What sort of a chap is this Racke?"

"A swanking bounder! His father rolls in war profits, and Racke's pockets bulge with 'em!"

"Is he in a good set here?"

Levison chuckled.

"No fear! He's the great chief of the merry blades—otherwise the shady blackguards! If you want to be in a good set you'll have to leave smoking and bridge alone, and take up footer and playing the game! That's a tip for you, as you're a new chap!"

"Oh!" said Cardew slowly. "I think I see! I don't think I'll trouble Racke. Ta-ta!"

He sauntered out of the study, and Levison and his minor worked at Eutropius uninterrupted. Cardew went down to the Common-room, where he was the recipient of a good many glances. New boys, as a rule, did not attract much attention; but all the School House fellows recognised that Cardew was not cast in the usual mould of new boys. Tom Merry & Co. had been rather favourably impressed by Cardew, upon the whole, and they made it a point to speak to him and be agreeable. But it was to be observed that Arthur Augustus did not seek after the society of his distant relation. It was possible that the fastidious swell of St. Jim's had begun to wish that his distant relation was a little more distant.

CHAPTER 9.

Cardew to the Rescue.

"YOW-OH!" Leggo, Cutts, you beast!"

Cardew looked round.

It was the following day, and lessons were over. Tom Merry & Co. had gone down to the footer-ground for a little practice before dark, and Levison and Clive were with them. Cardew had looked on for some minutes, without thinking of joining in, and then had strolled away across the quad. He was passing under the old elms when that sudden howl burst upon his ears.

It proceeded from Levison minor.

Cardew recognised the fag who had come to No. 9 Study the previous evenings. Frank was wriggling in the grasp of a big Fifth-former, who was pulling his ears. The Fifth-former was Cutts, quite a prominent personage at St. Jim's, though Cardew was not aware of it. The dandy of the Fifth was not a good-natured fellow; but he was not a bully, as a rule. But he had a special down on the two Levisons. Levison of the Fourth had been very useful to him at one time in the way of smuggling smokes into the school, and taking messages to places of shady repute; and since Levison's reformation he had had nothing to do with Gerald Cutts. Which was naturally annoying to the great man of the Fifth, who missed his services, and regarded his new attitude as sheer cheek. So Cutts seldom saw Levison minor without cuffing him, Levison major being rather a dangerous customer to cuff, though only a junior.

"Leggo!" howled Frank. "You rotter! I'll kick your shins!"

Cardew came up quickly.

"Let the kid alone!" he said.

Cutts stared at him.

"Oh, you're the new fag!" he said. "I've heard of you! Cut off before I kick you round the quad, you cheeky little beast!"

"Let the kid alone!" said Cardew coolly. "What are you bullying him for?"

Cutts did not reply, but he twisted the fag's ears again, and Frank gave a yell of anguish.

Cardew strode forward, grasped the Fifth-Former by the arms, and fairly dragged him away from the fag.

Cutts was so surprised by his action that he went unresistingly. Levison minor jerked himself away, and stood rubbing his ears, and blinking at the two. Then he caught Cardew by the arm.

"Hook it!" he said tersely.

Cardew did not move. He did not intend to hook it. He looked coolly at Cutts, who was panting with rage. The junior had laid hands on Cutts just as if Cutts were another junior like himself, and not a great man at all!

"You cheeky little sweep!" gasped Cutts at last. "Why, I—I'll smash you!"

"Hook it, you ass!" said Frank shrilly, dragging at Cardew's arm.

Cardew shook him off.

He put up his hands like lightning as Cutts sprang at him, and the Fifth-Former, to his astonishment, found himself stopped.

Cutts was a good head taller than the Fourth-Former, and he was an athletic fellow and a good boxer. Grundy of the Shell, who was a very powerful fellow, sometimes checked Cutts, but the other juniors generally gave him a wide berth. For a Fourth-Former to stand up to Cutts like this was amazing, but Cardew was doing it with perfect coolness.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Frank.

Cardew had to give ground under

Cutts' rush, but his guard was perfect. It was evident that he had nothing to learn about boxing. He was no match physically for the Fifth-Former, but he faced him with perfect coolness.

Cutts was far from intending anything so undignified as a fight with a junior of the Fourth Form. He had intended to administer a licking. But it was pretty clear that the licking could not be administered otherwise than by fighting.

He piled furiously in on Cardew, forgetting all caution in his rage, till a fist came lashing into his face, and Cutts staggered back. In an instant Cardew was springing forward; his right hand crashed on Cutts' chin, and his left followed it up instantly, landing in the Fifth-Former's eye. Cutts went with a crash to the ground.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Levison minor. Cutts, more astonished than hurt, lay gasping on the ground. He had been fairly knocked down by a Fourth-Former! Cutts really found some difficulty in realising it.

"Hook it, Cardew, before he gets up!" yelled Frank, catching at his champion's sleeve.

"Rats!"
"You can't fight him—a Fifth-Former!"

"I wouldn't run if he were a Sixth-Former!" said Cardew disdainfully. "Let go my arm, you young ass!"

"Look here! Don't be an ass, you know!" urged Frank, in alarm.

Cardew pushed him aside, and stood on his guard, his teeth set, his eyes gleaming, but his face quite calm. It was evident that the new junior had plenty of pluck. Cutts was scrambling to his feet, his face pale with rage and a deadly look in his eyes.

He did not speak a word, but he came on savagely, throwing all his strength and skill into the conflict now, fighting the junior as if Cardew were a fellow of his own weight.

Frank looked on in alarm. Cardew was putting up a great fight, but he was naturally no match for the senior, and he was being severely handled. Gerald Cutts hit with all his strength. There was a dark shade round Cutts' eye, and he knew that it was going to be discoloured—he could feel that. The bare idea of going about with a black eye—administered by a junior—made Cutts wild with rage. There was a crash as Cardew went to the ground, knocked spinning by a right-hander full in his flushed handsome face. "Now, you young scoundrel!" said Cutts, between his teeth.

He grasped the junior by the collar, dragged him up, and began to box his ears right and left. Frank Levison rushed valiantly into the fray, hammering at Cutts with his little fists, but a back-hander sent him spinning.

But Cardew was not finished yet. He was fighting hard again, and Cutts had to defend himself. The two had closed now, and Cardew's head went into Chancery. Cutts, forgetful of everything but his own fury, was hammering him with savage force. Cardew struggled with all his strength, but he could not

break loose, and Cutts hammered him till he was out of breath, and then pitched him to the ground.

Cardew lay where he fell, gasping weakly.

The Fifth-Former looked down at him savagely, and then turned and strode away. He disappeared through the trees. Frank ran to Cardew and knelt by his side.

"I—I say!" he stammered. He gazed at the junior's face in horror. Both Cardew's eyes were closing, his nose was swollen, his face was bruised and stained with blood. He blinked feebly at the fog.

"He's gone!" said Frank. "I—I say, let me help you up, old chap! It was ripping of you to stand up to him. But—but—"

"Oh, by gad!" muttered Cardew. "I feel pretty bad!"

"You shouldn't have fought him!" said Frank in distress. "But there's one thing jolly certain, Cutts will get sacked for this as soon as the Housemaster sees your face!"

Cardew sat up weakly. "Sacked!" he muttered. "What rot! Why should he be sacked?"

"You wait till Railton sees your chivvy and it comes out Cutts did it!" said Frank venomously. "He'll have Cutts up before the Head at once!"

He helped Cardew to his feet. The junior, weak, panting, almost sick with exhaustion, leaned against a tree.

"Let me help you in," said Frank. Cardew shook his head.

"You've got to have your face seen to," urged Frank. "My aunt! It will give Railton a fit when he sees it!"

Cardew blinked round him through his swollen eyes. The elms had hidden the scene from the house, and there was no one at hand. Most of the juniors were on the footer-ground, making the most of what daylight remained.

"So Cutts would be sacked, you think?" said Cardew.

"Sure to be," said Frank savagely; "and serve him right! The beast was going for you like a prizefighter!"

"Well, I asked for it," said Cardew, with a twisted grin. "I don't want to get the fellow into a row. You keep your mouth shut, young 'un!"

"But, I say—"
"Don't say a word about it!" said Cardew sharply.

"No need to say a word about it," said Frank, with a grin. "Do you think a chap is allowed to go about the school with a face like that? As soon as you're seen, there will be a fearful row. Cutts lost his temper, or he wouldn't have been fool enough to paste you like that. It will finish him here."

"As soon as I'm seen?" said Cardew. "Yes; and you can't keep out of sight, I suppose?"

Cardew did not reply. He remained silent for several minutes, dabbing at his streaming nose with his handkerchief.

Frank watched him curiously. "Hadn't you better come in?" he said at last.

"I suppose the fool lost his temper," said Cardew. "Still, I punched him. I'm not going to get him into a row. Go and see whether there's anybody near the gates, and come back and tell me."

"But—"
"Do as I tell you!" snapped Cardew.

An order in that tone would have roused the fag's ire at once on any other occasion. But Cardew had received a terrific licking on Frank's account, and Frank was grateful. He ran through the trees, and came back in a couple of minutes.

"Figgins & Co. are jawing at the

gates," he said. "Old Taggles is outside his lodge, too. What does it matter?"

"Then I can't get out that way."
"Get out?" repeated Frank.

Cardew looked round again. "Can I get over the wall without being seen?" he asked. "You know the lie of the land better than I do."

"Yes; but—"
"Show me the way, then."

"But, I say—"
"Buck up! I don't want to be spotted like this, you young fathead!"

"But I don't see—" said Frank, in wonder.

"No need for you to see," said Cardew coolly. "Come and give me a bunk-up, and keep your head shut!"

Levison minor led the way, and, keeping in the cover of the trees, they reached the school wall where it bordered the road. Frank was lost in astonishment, unable to guess what was in Cardew's mind.

"Bunk me up!" said the Fourth-Former.

"You're going out like that?"
"Yes. And mind you don't say a word about Cutts!"

"Oh, all right!"

Where the slanting oak shaded and hid the wall, the fag bunked up the Fourth-Former; and Cardew drew himself over the wall under the branches, and dropped into the road on the other side. Frank, in a state of amazement, took his way to the School House.

CHAPTER 10.

Pleasant for Cutts!

BAGGY TRIMBLE of the Fourth met Tom Merry & Co. as they came in in the dusk. Baggy was chuckling.

"You chaps seen Cutts?" he asked gleefully.

"Haven't seen him," said Tom Merry. "What's the matter with Cutts?"

"He's got a black eye!" chortled Trimble.

"Bai Jove! Cutts with a black eye!" ejaculated D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather!" Trimble exploded in a series of gleeful cacklings. "He, he, he! Cutts, you know! A giddy black eye! I heard him tell Railton he'd had a fall from his bike. Railton believed it, but I don't. He, he, he! Cutts has been fighting somebody! He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat! What a treat we've missed!" exclaimed Blake regretfully.

"Who was the happy man?"
Trimble shook his head.

"I don't know—must have been a senior."

"Pretty serious for seniors to get fighting, and to adorn one another with black eyes!" grinned Monty Lowther. "It means a painful interview with the Head. More likely Grundy has been cutting up rusty!"

"Yaas, wathah! More likely Gwunday," said Arthur Augustus.

"Bai Jove, heah he is! Have you been fightin' Cutts, Gwunday?"

Grundy of the Shell shook his head.

"No. I'm ready to, if it comes to that," he answered.

"Bai Jove! It wasn't Gwunday, then!"

"Let's go and see him, and sympathise," chuckled Monty Lowther. "If Cutts has got a black eye, he will be in need of sympathy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Wats! I veward such a pwoceedin' as beneath a fellow's dig, Lowthah! I wefuse to take any notice of Cutts!"

"Bow-wow!" said Lowther.

Monty Lowther was too much of a humorist to be troubled with considerations of dignity.

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ANSWERS

If you are not getting your right
PENSION

If Cutts had a black eye, Lowther meant to see that black eye. Cutts was very unpopular with the juniors, especially with Tom Merry & Co., with whom he had had many rubs. Quite a little crowd of juniors followed Lowther to the Fifth-Form passage to see Cutts' black eye, which was already growing celebrated.

"Mind, you're to sympathise with him. This is a visit of sympathy," said Monty Lowther, as they reached Cutts' door. "But be ready to dodge. Cutts mayn't like sympathy. He's rather an ungrateful beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lowther tapped at the door, and threw it open. The juniors crowded round the doorway, grinning, but they did not enter.

They were only too well aware that the dandy of the Fifth was not likely to show a due appreciation and gratitude for that sympathetic visit.

Cutts was in the study with St. Leger. His left eye was hidden by a huge bandage, which apparently enclosed a beefsteak. His aspect was somewhat peculiar.

What could be seen of his face was not agreeable to look at. A black eye was bad enough for the elegant, fastidious dandy of the Fifth, but that was far from being the worst of Cutts' troubles. He was cool again now, and he realised the seriousness of the tremendous thrashing he had bestowed upon the junior. For Cardew and his injuries he did not care a rap—excepting as regarded the consequences.

But the probable consequences made Cutts shiver. He knew that Cardew's face must be a mass of bruises, from the way he had hammered it in his fury. He could have kicked himself for his folly. What would happen when the Housemaster saw it, and learned that those injuries had been inflicted by a senior?

There was no excuse that Cutts could make—no explanation, excepting that he had lost his temper, and hammered the junior like a brutal hooligan. That kind of explanation would not serve him much with the Head. The least he had to expect was a severe flogging—he, Cutts of the Fifth, the dandy of St. Jim's, the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the school!

It was quite probable that the Head would not consider that a flogging would meet the case—would hold that the fellow who had acted so brutally should be expelled from the school. With such happy thoughts in his mind, Cutts was not exactly in a humour for Lowther's visit. He glared savagely with one eye at the crowd of juniors.

"What do you fags want?" he snarled.

"Only called to inquire after your health, my lord," said Monty Lowther meekly. "How is the eye getting on?"

"Is it black but comely?" asked Levison.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who handed it out?" inquired Dig. "Tell us who it was, Cutts, and we'll get up a testimonial for him."

"Get out!" roared Cutts.

Lowther looked pained.

"But we've come to sympathise," he explained. "Don't be ungrateful, Cutts! Won't you accept our condolences?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cutts jumped up, and caught up a ruler from the table, with a furious look out of one eye. The other was not available.

There was a sudden scampering of feet in the passage, and the juniors vanished with a yell of laughter.

Cutts kicked the door savagely shut.

"It's all over the House already!" he said, between his teeth.

"Well, it wasn't likely to be kept

dark," said St. Leger. "You've stuffed up Railton, and that's the chief thing!"

Cutts threw himself savagely into his chair. He had lied to the Housemaster, certainly; but what was the use of that after Cardew's face was seen? It was only a respite, leading to nothing.

"But who gave you that eye?" asked St. Leger. "You haven't been rowing with Kildare, surely?"

"No, ass!"

"A New House senior?" asked St. Leger. "You must have been an ass, to get mixed up in a House row like a fag!"

"Do you think I'm such an idiot?" snarled Cutts. "It was a junior."

"Oh, crumbs! You let a junior give you a black eye?" yelled St. Leger.

"I half killed him for it!" said Cutts, between his teeth.

St. Leger became suddenly grave.

"More fool you!" he said curtly. "Is

which was darkening. "I—I suppose he's come in. There was a fag with him."

"Do you mean to say it's so bad that he mayn't have been able to come in?" exclaimed St. Leger, aghast now.

"I—I never meant to hit so hard. I—I lost my temper."

"Must have lost your senses, too. I should say. This may mean the sack!"

"Do you think I don't know that?" snarled Cutts. "Don't jaw me! Get out and see whether the whelp has come in. Try to fix it with him to keep it dark, if you can. Promise him anything. I'll stand him a fiver if he likes—anything!"

"I'll try!" said St. Leger.

"And buck up!"

St. Leger left the study. He was absent about a quarter of an hour, and Cutts waited savagely and anxiously for his return. He came back at last.



Sympathising with Cutts.

(See Chapter 10.)

that what you're scowling about? Have you put your foot in it, with your beastly temper?"

"Yes, I have!" growled Cutts.

"Who was it?"

"That new kid, Cardew."

"He's a cheeky little beast; I've noticed him!" said St. Leger. "But—but you don't mean to say you've really hurt him, Cutts, you born idiot?"

"I—I lost my temper!" muttered Cutts. "Look at my eye! I—I rather hammered him; he stood up to me, and—and I fought him—"

"Fought a kid in the Fourth, and hurt him?" said St. Leger, with a curl of the lip. "Better not tell anybody outside this study."

"No need to tell anybody, when he's seen, and—and I suppose he's seen already!" muttered Cutts wretchedly.

"I—I was a fool; I lost my temper! His face must be a picture. Mine is nothing to it. I fairly smashed him!"

"You aes!" said St. Leger.

"I left him on the ground," said Cutts, glancing towards the window,

"Well?" said Cutts eagerly.

"He's not come in."

Cutts' face paled.

"Why hasn't he come in? Have you been to his study?"

"Yes. Levison and Clive haven't seen anything of him."

"Levison minor was with him; see if you can find him."

"The Third are at prep now in the Form-room."

"Hang it! After all, Cardew may have gone out."

"The gates were locked long ago."

Cutts gritted his teeth. There was silence in the study; and the thoughts of the hapless senior were not enviable.

CHAPTER 11.

Cardew in the Limelight.

"THAT new kid is looking for trouble again," Clive remarked.

Levison nodded.

Levison was not wholly pleased with THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 475.

the new-comer in No. 9 Study. In his reckless days he would have welcomed a fellow like Cardew with open arms; Cardew would have been a pal after his own heart. Levison had read his character well. Reckless, undisciplined, cool, and cynical; something of a black-guard in his way, but without the stingy meanness of Racke & Co., which had worried Levison's sensitive nerves even in his worst days, when he was hand-in-glove with Racke. But things had changed with Levison, and he was not looking for a companion who revelled in reckless escapades.

"He's missed call-over again, and it's only his second day here," said Clive. "Must be an ass. Railton was easy with him yesterday; but—"

He shrugged his shoulders. There was a knock at the study door, and Kildare of the Sixth looked in.

"Hasn't Cardew come in yet?" he asked.

"I haven't seen him," said Levison. "Do you know where he has gone?"

"Not an idea."

"He must be out of gates," said the prefect.

"I suppose so. I haven't seen him since he was looking on at the footer."

Kildare frowned, and went down the passage.

"The young ass will get a licking this time," said Clive uneasily. "He ought to know he can't play the giddy ox like this. St. Leger's been inquiring after him, and now Kildare."

"I don't quite see what St. Leger wanted with him," remarked Levison. "Nothing to do with the Fifth. Well, it's his own funeral!"

And Levison went on with his work.

Other fellows besides No. 9 Study were interested in Cardew's curious proceedings. To miss calling-over for the second time in his two days at St. Jim's was rather a remarkable proceeding. The new junior had already shown his careless disregard for authority; but this was getting near the limit.

Tom Merry & Co. were chatting in the hall—on the subject of Cardew—when the new Fourth-Former came in at last. All glances turned upon him, and there was a general exclamation.

"G'wreat Scott!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in horror.

"Cardew!" exclaimed Tom Merry. "What on earth's happened?"

Cardew's face was striking in its aspect.

Both his eyes were blackened, his nose was swollen, his lip was cut, and there were dark bruises on his face. The time that had elapsed since the hammering by Gerald Cutts had caused his injuries to swell and darken. His handsome face was almost unrecognisable.

He must have been suffering severe pain, that was evident; but his manner was as cool as usual as he nodded to the juniors.

"I'm rather late, I suppose?" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah! But what's happened, deah boy?" exclaimed D'Arcy.

"Have you been wun ovah?"

"Scrapping with a tramp?" asked Blake.

St. Leger was in the passage, and he hurried away to Cutts' Study. Cutts was there, in an anxious and despondent mood, not thinking of work.

"He's come in, Cutts," said St. Leger hurriedly.

Cutts started up.

"What—what does he look like?"

"Simply awful!"

"I—Pd better see him. Where can the young fool have been all this time? Try to get him to come here, St. Leger!"

"I don't suppose he'll come."

"Try—try, anyway! Before he's seen."

"Oh, I'll try!"

St. Leger hurried back to the hall, where Cardew was surrounded by the juniors, all concerned and eagerly inquiring. Cardew's appearance had caused a sensation. St. Leger hurriedly joined the group.

"Come with me, Cardew, will you?" he said.

Cardew blinked at him with his swollen eyes.

"I've got to report to Mr. Railton," he said.

"Cutts wants to speak to you first."

Cardew grinned.

"I'll come, if you like."

He followed St. Leger. The juniors exchanged glances.

"What on earth does Cutts want to see him for?" said Monty Lowther. "My hat! Cutts didn't have anything to do

with his chivvy getting like that, surely?"

"Cutts has a black eye," said Blake.

"But—but surely—"

"Bai Jove! If it was Cutts tweeked him like that, the wotiah ought to be kicked out of the school!" said Arthur Augustus wrathfully.

"He will be, if he did it," said Tom Merry drily. "But it seems rather too thick even for Cutts. Cardew hasn't mentioned him, anyway."

The juniors were left in a state of wonder and surprise. Cardew followed St. Leger to the study in the Fifth Form passage.

Cutts of the Fifth started at the sight of him. In his worst anticipations he had not supposed that the junior looked like this. At that moment Cutts felt something like remorse, as well as apprehension for himself.

"You wanted to see me?" said Cardew calmly. "Like to look at your handiwork, dear boy? Rather a corker, isn't it?"

"I—I never meant to paste you like that!" stammered Cutts.

"But you did, all the same!"

"Shut the door, St. Leger! Look here, Cardew, you—you provoked me; look at my eye!"

"Yes, I'm glad to see that," said Cardew, with a nod. "I wondered whether it would be black. It's a beauty!"

St. Leger grinned and Cutts gritted his teeth. The cool insolence of the junior was intensely exasperating to the Fifth-Former, but he could not venture to give rein to his anger at that moment. Cardew held the whip-hand now.

"There'll be a row when your face is seen," said Cutts. "I—I suppose you know that?"

"I suppose so. Your kind of hooliganism can't be allowed here," said Cardew. "But you can tell the Head that I gave you a black eye, you know. And tell him what I did it for—because you were ill-usin' a fag."

"I want you to keep this dark," muttered Cutts.

Cardew laughed.

"I've got to go in and report to Railton. Shall I put on a Guy Fawkes mask? Do you think he would notice it?"

"Don't be a young idiot!" snarled

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Cutts. "You can spin him some yarn"

"Why should I?"

"I—I'll make it worth your while."

Cardew seemed to reflect.

"What sort of a yarn shall I spin him?" he asked. "Give a chap some tips. I dare say you're more used to lying than I am."

"Tell him you've been out of gates, and—got into a fight with a bargee, or something—"

"How simple!" said Cardew. "Of course, a lie or two more or less doesn't matter. Were you born in Prussia, Cutts?"

"I'll make it worth your while. I'll stand you a quid, if you like," said Cutts.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cutts stared savagely at the junior as he burst into a hearty laugh.

"Look here, what do you say to a fiver?" said Cutts desperately. "I've got it here. I'll stand it if you'll stuff up Railton and let the matter drop." And Cutts took a five-pound note from his pocket.

Cardew glanced at it.

"Only one you've got?" he asked.

"Yes. That doesn't matter."

Cardew laughed again, and took out his pocket-book. He opened it, and displayed to the astonished eyes of the Fifth-Formers a roll of banknotes. There were three or four fivers and a wedge of currency notes.

"That's how much I want your fiver!" said Cardew contemptuously.

Cutts thrust his banknote back into his pocket. Bribery was evidently out of the question. The junior had half a dozen times as much money as Cutts of the Fifth, wealthy as he was.

"My hat!" said St. Leger, with some respect in his manner. "You're jolly well fixed for a Fourth Form kid, Cardew!"

Cardew smiled, and slid the pocket-book back into his pocket.

"Anythin' else to propose?" he asked.

"I—I'd be obliged if you'd keep it dark," muttered Cutts wretchedly. He had felt sure that a five-pound note would dazzle a junior of the Fourth. But it was nothing to Cardew, and Cutts had no resource left but to appeal to the junior's generosity. "It will be awfully serious for me if it comes out—you don't want to get a fellow sacked. I'm sorry—I've said so—"

"You'd be obliged if I'd go to Railton and tell him a bushel of lies?" asked Cardew satirically.

"You—you could spin him a yarn. Fellows often spin a Housemaster yarns. Almost any tale would do. He'd never suspect it was a St. Jim's chap handled you like that unless you tell him—"

"No; he wouldn't guess there was such a rotten hooligan in the school, I dare say," assented Cardew. "Sorry, but I'm not going to tell him any lies. I'm rather particular on some points, you know, and that's one of them."

"Look here, Cardew—"

"Besides, why shouldn't you be sacked?" said Cardew coolly. "It would be a good thing for the school, I should say. Your sweet temper might break out again any time. On the whole, Cutts, I think I shall like St. Jim's better without a fellow of your sort here! Ta-ta!"

"Cardew—" exclaimed Cutts appealingly. The dandy of the Fifth had thrown pride to the winds now. He would almost have gone upon his knees.

But the junior walked out of the study without a glance back. Cutts sank into his chair, pale and harassed.

"That means it's all up!" he muttered.

"What could you expect?" said St.

Leger, with a shrug. "The kid wants to get even with you for handling him like that; it stands to reason. And, dash it all, Cutts, I must say you don't deserve anything better!"

"Oh, shut up! Don't jaw me!" snarled Cutts. "I shall get enough of that from the Head."

St. Leger gave another shrug, and left the study. His opinion was that Cutts was booked for the order of the boot, and that Cutts fully deserved it.

CHAPTER 12.

Pals.

CARDEW grinned—a black and blue grin—as he came back along the passage. The news of his plight had spread, and there were a score of fellows in the hall, and all of them stared at Cardew. Once more the new junior was the centre of attraction, the cynosure of all eyes, and his peculiar taste for the limelight made him enjoy it, uncomfortable and painful as his condition was.

"What did Cutts want, Cardew?" asked Baggy Trimble inquisitively.

"The pleasure of a little talk with me," said Cardew calmly. "I'm rather an entertainin' chap."

"How did you get like that?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Fightin'."

"I can see that, fathead! But who with?"

"Oh, a chap!"

"A St. Jim's chap?" asked Blake.

"Now you're askin' questions," said Cardew. "I'm afraid I must tear myself away. Railton wants to see me. Rather a surprise for him, this chivvy—what?"

"Dashed if I can make him out!" said Blake. "He must be as hard as nails, anyway. Precious few fellows would be chortling, with a face like that."

"He will be a picture for weeks," said Talbot. "Don't you know anything about it, Levison? He's your study-mate."

Levison shook his head.

"I don't know, but I can guess. It was Cutts, I should say. Cutts has a black eye, and he wanted to see Cardew before Railton see him. It looks pretty clear to me."

"But Cardew's been out of gates," said Digby. "I heard the bell ring when Taggles let him in. Cutts was indoors."

"Yes, that's queer. If Cutts did it, he must have gone out after—with a chivvy like that!" said Levison.

"It's jolly odd, but I think it was Cutts."

Levison returned to his study to get on with his prep. He had to help his minor when his own work was done. The other fellows remained downstairs in excited discussion.

Meanwhile Cardew had tapped at Mr. Railton's door, and the Housemaster's voice bade him enter.

Mr. Railton had a cane lying handy on the table. Cardew's second escapade was not to pass off so easily as the first. But the Housemaster forgot all about his cane as he saw the junior's face.

He started to his feet, with an exclamation of horror.

"Cardew! What is the matter?" "Sorry I was late for call-over, sir," said Cardew calmly. "I've been out of gates, and I got back rather late."

"How did you get into that shocking condition, Cardew?" exclaimed Mr. Railton.

"It wasn't my fault, sir. I got into a fight with a chap much bigger than myself," explained Cardew.

"Who was it?"

"I'd never seen him before, sir."

"It must have been some utter ruffian, to treat you in that way!" the Housemaster exclaimed angrily. "This is a matter for the police. How did the quarrel arise?"

"I saw the rotter pitching into a kid, sir, and chipped in."

"Oh! That was quite a proper proceeding," said the Housemaster. "But it was somewhat reckless, Cardew. Can you give a description of the ruffian?" Mr. Railton little dreamed that the ruffian was a member of the Fifth Form at St. Jim's, and the affray had taken place within the walls of the school. Cardew had no intention of telling him that. His statement that he had been out of gates—true enough in itself—had given the Housemaster a false impression.

"Well, I'd never seen the fellow before to-day, sir," said Cardew—another statement that was strictly true. "I suppose I could describe him. He was about five feet nine, and a regular hooligan."

"Probably one of the loafers who frequent the Green Man," said Mr. Railton, knitting his brows.

Cardew was silent.

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"Your description is scarcely sufficient for the police to trace him, Cardew."

"I'm sorry, sir. I don't want to complain about it. I gave him as much as I could, though I didn't have much chance against him, of course."

The Housemaster frowned.

"Such a matter cannot be allowed to end here!" he exclaimed. "You must try to think, Cardew, whether you cannot give a more accurate description of the man. But no matter now. Go to the House-dame at once, and ask her to do what she can for your injuries. I will speak to you again to-morrow. You must be feeling very unwell."

"I've got rather a headache, sir," confessed Cardew.

"Go to Mrs. Mimms at once, my boy!"

"Yes, sir!"

Cardew left the study, leaving Mr. Railton frowning. His anger with the junior had quite evaporated; it was directed now towards the unknown hooligan who had hammered a St. Jim's boy in such a merciless manner. It did not cross Mr. Railton's mind for one moment how near to him that hooligan was.

Cardew did not go to the House-dame; he did not want to be fussed over, as he would have expressed it. He went up to the Fourth-Form dormitory to bathe his face. He was followed there by a crowd of juniors. They wanted information, but information was exactly what Cardew did not intend to give.

"What are you keeping it dark for, you fathead?" Blake asked. "Why can't you tell us whether it was a St. Jim's chap or not?"

"Least said, soonest mended!" said Cardew.

"Bai Jove, I weally think it must have been Cutts of the Fifth, aftah all!"

"Go hon!"

"Have you been fighting with Cutts, Cardew?"

"Better ask Cutts!"

"What did you tell Railton?"

"Better ask Railton!"

"Weally, Cardew——"

"Rats!"

"Blessed if I see anything to keep it dark for!" said Racke. "If Cutts handled me like that, I'd go straight to the Head!"

"I dare say you would," assented Cardew.

"Undah the cires, I should approve of such a pwoceedin'," said Arthur Augustus. "You do not owe Cutts any consideration, deah boy, if he has handled you in that wascally, wuffianly way."

"Bow-wow!"

"Perhaps Cardew asked for it," suggested Crooke, with a grin.

"Perhaps I did," assented Cardew coolly. "Anyway, I've got it, and I'm not goin' to sneak about the chap who did it, that's all."

"It would hardly be sneakin', undah the cires, Cardew."

"That's my view."

"Then I wegard you as an ass!"

"Same to you!"

"Howevah," said Arthur Augustus, after some reflection. "Pewwaps you are wright, deah boy. It would be wathah unplesant to be the cause of a fellow gettin' sacked from the school. Upon the whole, I approve!"

"After which, there's nothing more to be said," remarked Monty Lowther; "so we can go and get on with our prep."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah——"

The juniors returned to their studies; there was evidently nothing to be got out of Cardew. There was little doubt

in their minds that it was Cutts of the Fifth who was responsible for the new junior's injuries, and they could not help feeling a certain admiration for the fellow who had taken so terrible a punishment, and refused the easy opportunity of revenging himself upon his assailant. Cardew had only to speak out to crush his enemy. He refused to speak. But it was in accordance with his peculiar nature that, while he refrained from the vengeance that was within his power, he had left the wretched Cutts in a state of terror and apprehension.

In these same moments Gerald Cutts was pacing his study restlessly, in a frame of mind that was far from enviable, expecting every minute a summons into the presence of the Head to answer for his brutality. The summons did not come, but it was long before Cutts dared to allow himself to believe that the junior had not betrayed him, and that he had nothing to fear.

Cardew looked at his face in the glass after he had towelled it, and grinned at his reflection. He was likely to be a conspicuous object in the school for more than a week to come, at least.

His head was aching dully, and his eyes pained; his nose felt as though it had been shut in a door. But he was quite cool as he came into Study No. 9, where Levison and Clive had just finished their work.

They smiled as he came in. Cardew's face was very striking.

"I suppose I look rather a picture?" said Cardew.

"You do, rather," said Clive. "I hope it doesn't hurt very much?"

"It hurts like the merry dickens!"

"Why haven't you made Cutts sit up for it?" said Levison. "Whatever you did, he would be kicked out of the school for handling a junior like that."

"I haven't said it was Cutts."

"Oh, rats! I know it was!"

"I don't want to keep it secret in this study," said Cardew; "only don't jaw it outside—I'm not going to give the brute away. It's all in a day's work, as the Tommy said the other day. Railton doesn't suspect, and he's not going to. Let it drop. Besides, Cutts has a black eye, too."

"But did you fight with him—a Fifth-Former?" exclaimed Clive.

"Yes."

"More duffer you!" said Levison.

"You knew you weren't within a hundred miles of being a match for him."

"Yes, I knew that, of course."

"Yet you stood up to him?"

"Exactly!"

"Was he bullying you?" asked Clive.

"Oh, no!"

"You mean that you tackled a Fifth-Former of your own accord?"

"Just so."

"Well, I think you're an ass, then!"

"Thanks!"

"Same here!" said Levison.

"Thanks again!" said Cardew, unmoved. "I wonder whether Latham will excuse me if I don't do any prep? I think I'll chance it, anyway."

Clive left the study to go down to the Common-room. Levison sat on the corner of the table, waiting for his minor to come in. There was a tap at the door soon afterwards, and Frank Levison came in, with his books.

He gave a start at the sight of Cardew, and uttered an exclamation of horror.

"Oh, crumbs! I—I didn't know it was so bad as that, Cardew! I—I'm awfully sorry!"

"Oh, rats!" said Cardew. "Don't waste your sorrow on me! You've kept your head shut about it, I hope?"

"Yes, I did just as you asked me. But——"

Levison of the Fourth looked at his minor in amazement.

"Do you know anything about it, Frank?" he ejaculated.

"Yes; I was there, Ernie."

"And you saw that silly ass stand up to Cutts of the Fifth?" said Levison, with a grin.

"He wasn't a silly ass!" exclaimed Frank warmly. "Hasn't he told you? He stopped Cutts from bullying me; that's why Cutts pitched into him."

Levison jumped.

"My hat! So Cutts was ragging you?"

"Yes; he often does, the beast! And Cardew chipped in, like a real brick. And—and I'd like to go to the Head and get Cutts flogged or sacked. And I'd have done it, only Cardew asked me——"

"Oh, rot!" growled Cardew. "What's the good of telling tales and complaining? I can stand a punch or two, I suppose. I'm not made of butter!"

"You got handled like that standing up for my junior?" asked Levison, staring at the new junior.

"Well, I chipped in to stop Cutts ragging him," grunted Cardew—"not that it was any bizney of mine, if you come to that."

"It was jolly decent of you!" said Levison.

"Thanks!" said Cardew, yawning.

Levison was silent for a moment.

"You said something yesterday, when you came, about having wanted to know me," he said. "You wanted to be in the same study——"

"And pal with you?" said Cardew.

"Yes, that's so."

"Well, if you still feel the same, I'm your pal for as long as you like," said Levison.

"Done!" said Cardew at once.

He held out his hand, and Levison grasped it.

It was the beginning of a new friendship for Levison of the Fourth, but whether that friendship was to be for good or ill only the future could show.

THE END.

(Don't miss next Wednesday's Great Story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's—

—"A PUZZLE FOR ST. JIM'S!" by MARTIN CLIFFORD.)

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Several enquiries from "Gem" readers as to the order of appearance of the articles in this popular feature of our companion paper "The Magnet" have lately reached us. A list, with the number in which each appeared, is given hereunder—

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THE EDITOR'S CHAT.

For Next Wednesday:

"A PUZZLE FOR ST. JIM'S!"

By Martin Clifford.

Cardew of the Fourth is the puzzle, and a hard one he is! What are you to make of a fellow who has any amount of pluck and yet is a snob, who is open-handed in deed but ungenerous in mind, who sneers at what others respect and yet shows up well in a crisis where a better fellow might have failed? That is the sort Ralph Reckness Cardew is. Levison and Clive, who have the best chance of finding out his real nature, don't understand it; and to the rest it is a most complete enigma. Yet the very fellows who have the best reason to dislike Cardew for his arrogance find him behaving like a brick when trouble comes. And he does not brag about it!

THIS NEW SERIES.

The yarns in which was chronicled the reformation of Ernest Levison, with all its ups and downs, were very popular, as was evidenced by the many enthusiastic letters received, and by the surest of signs—the fact that there was a steady rise in circulation during their course. That means—and can only mean—that a good many of my loyal readers have been recommending the paper to their chums, and for this I want to thank them.

This sort of thing goes on all the time, I know; but, as is but natural, it is more marked when we have some particularly good yarns. All that appear are good, but it is inevitable that some should be better than others, and I feel sure that Mr. Clifford has done nothing superior to this series since he delighted us with those great stories of Talbot the Toff. In the new series there is added interest in the complex character of Cardew.

But when I talk of series, I don't mean that week after week we are going to have the same kind of story about the same kind of fellows. There will be breaks in the series, as when Parker made a brief appearance, and in the case of that fine yarn in which Monty Lowther was put to the test. You need not fear that your old friends will be thrust into the background. Tom Merry & Co., as of old, will figure prominently; Jack Blake & Co. will still be in the foreground, with Gussy showing tact, judgment, fancy waistcoats, and things; and the New House fellows will not be forgotten.

ANOTHER ATTRACTION.

For the last few weeks we have had "Greyfriars Herald" matter of the most varied kind in the "Magnet" in the place of the usual serial. The change has been a great success. But it cannot be continued indefinitely, as I have in hand a fine serial of adventure, which I am sure will be generally enjoyed; and I must consider the wishes of those readers who are keen on an adventure story as a change. By the way, if there are readers of this paper who like adventure yarns—as I know there must be—and who don't buy the "Magnet"—but I don't think there are many of these—they had better take my tip not to miss

"IN A LAND OF PERIL!"

By Beverley Kent,

the author of "Cornstalk Bob," which I feel sure you all liked. But I find I am getting away from my real subject, which is to announce that before begin-

ning another serial in the GEM I am going to treat you for a while to

EXTRACTS FROM THE "GREY-FRIARS HERALD" AND "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

These really start this week, as you will see. But next week there will be more in the way of variety. You may ask, why include the "Greyfriars Herald" matter? Well, it is a fair question, but I think it admits of an easy answer. If I had gone on longer with the extracts in the "Magnet," I should have included matter from "Tom Merry's Weekly." As I am transferring the feature to these pages, I am also giving the readers of the "Magnet," who are nearly all readers of the GEM, too, their chance; and I promise you that if I start a serial in the GEM, and go back to the "Magnet" with the extracts, "Tom Merry's Weekly" matter shall be included there. That's a square deal, I think?

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By Norman Kirkham, 18, Alington St., Cheetham Hill, Manchester—"Tom Merry & Co." (B.F. 3d. Lib.), "Gems" before Nov. 10 last; clean and in good condition.

By Sidney White, 28, Gregson St., Sacriston, Co. Durham—"Tom Merry's Barring-out," "Figgins' Fig-pudding."

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By John Whyley, 135, Lambeth Rd., Lambeth, S.E.—"The Hero of the Hour."

By Alec Dillon, Albert St., Daylesford, Victoria, Australia—"Gems"—"Figgins' Folly," "Caught Red-Handed"; "Magnets"; "Wun Lung's Secret"; "Wingate's Folly," "The Terrible Two"; "B.F. 3d. Lib."—"Tom Merry & Co." and "School and Sport."

By John T. Young, 100, North Frederick St., Glasgow—"Kildare for Ireland," "Tom Merry for England," "A Hero of Wales," "A Son of Scotland," "Drummed Out," "Loyal to the Last," and any story earlier than these in which either Talbot or Kerr figures prominently.

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HINTS FOR YOUNG HOUSE- WIVES.

(From the famous Comic Column in
"Tom Merry's Weekly!")

DON'T waste odds and ends of soap. Boil them down, and use them for frying fish in. This imparts a really unique flavour to cod, hake, etc., rather flavourless things in themselves.

Don't waste the fat you fry fish in. It can afterwards be used as a substitute for hair-oil. Glycerine, be it noted, is now unobtainable.

Don't waste the fish you think too high to fry. Send it along, addressed to Master W. D'Arcy, Third Form, St. James' School, Rylcombe, Sussex. The Third like 'em wangs—so 'tis said.

Don't waste the brown paper from the parcels. Leather may yet be all commanded by the War Office, and your fairy booties will need soleing. If you will look closely at some of them, I fancy you will realise that the boot-makers didn't waste brown-paper!

Anything can go into the soup, but some things don't improve it much. Personally, I should bar the scrapings of jam-pots, glue-pots, and the like. But this is very much a matter of taste. We always do say: "As liked," don't we, dear ladies?

RECIPE FOR DEVONPORT DUMPLINGS.
—Take a whack of oatmeal, a soupcon of Worcestershire sauce, half a kipper, and a handful of marmalade. Roll into a paste, cut into dollops, and boil—or fry—or bake—anything you like. It is uncertain which method of cooking will yield the least painful results; but none of the ingredients is rationable stuff, there's that to be said about this recipe.

THE BLACKMAILER.

A Story of St. Jim's, Told by CLIFTON DANE, and
Extracted from the Pages of "Tom Merry's Weekly" for the
Benefit of "Gem" Readers.

I.

GAWTREY was not long at St. Jim's—which was a precious good thing for St. Jim's—and a good many of the fellows have forgotten him by this time. He wasn't worth remembering, it is true; but I am jolly sure Wally D'Arcy and two or three more kids in the Third have not forgotten. It was through Wally and young Gibson that he came to get expelled, which served him right.

The story, as I tell it here, I got from several sources, but I give you my word I have not piled it on, or overcoloured anything. Chaps like Gawtreys do come along sometimes. It is all very well to say that fellows should have the moral courage to resist them, and no doubt that is quite true. But it takes some doing when you get in the toils.

Gawtreys was in the Shell, clever enough in class, and a big chap for his age, but no good at games, and a waster in every way.

He did not pal up with anyone, though there are one or two more in the Form—I need not name them—who are pretty much the same type of ruffian.

Wally D'Arcy and Curly Gibson were lying in ambush when Gawtreys came up and the story begins.

They were not waiting for Gawtreys, but for a certain Rylcombe yokel, with whom they had an account to settle. He had gone down the lane by the side of which they waited, concealed in the hedge. And, as they figured it out, he was bound to come up the lane, as it did not lead anywhere except to some fields by the river. But the yokel does not really matter, as he is not in the yarn.

Gawtreys came along. He didn't twig D'Arcy minor and Gibson. They saw him, but they didn't see why they should make their presence known.

The chap hung about, and it began to dawn upon the two kids that he was waiting for someone. But so were they, and they got there first.

"Oh, yes, Wilky, my friend! I rather think I've got you this time—eh, what?"

Both of them heard those words quite plainly. Gawtreys must be talking to himself they knew. Also it seemed that he was talking about Wilkins of the Shell.

"Dunno whether we ought to do a bunk," said Wally uneasily. "We could clear off without that rotter seeing us."

"I sha'n't shift, if you do," said Gibson.

That rather took D'Arcy minor aback, because he always expects young Curly to follow his lead. But he saw there was something behind it, so he was not severe on his henchman.

"Why not?" he asked.

"I've got a sort of a kind of a notion what the sweep means, and it's my bizney, too, in a way," answered Gibson.

"Long time coming!" muttered Gawtreys, with a scowl on his pimply face.

"But he'll come—you bet he'll come! I've got my thumb fairly on you this time, Wilky, and you'll squirm a bit when I get the screw on—eh, what?"

"Disgusting beast!" said Wally.

THE GEM LIBRARY.—No. 475.

"What's old Wilkins been doing? Nothing half as bad as heaps of things Gawtreys has done, I'll bet. Wilkins is straight enough."

These things, by the way, happened before the time when the great George Alfred Grundy came to us from Redclyffe. Old Grundy has his faults, and is divers kinds of an ass; but he wouldn't have given way to Gawtreys, and I don't fancy he would have let his pal Wilkins.

Now Wilkins came.

"I don't like this," said Wally. "I've a jolly good mind to cough, and let them know we're here!"

"Don't be such an ass!" said Curly.

So Wally wasn't. Not that I think he was much of an ass for objecting to listen to what was never intended for his ears. But Gibson had pretty good reason for not shifting, too, as you will see.

"It's blackmail, Gawtreys, nothing less!" said Wilkins. "And I'm not going to stand it!"

They had not caught the words Gawtreys said to Wilkins to start with. But that was Wilkins' answer.

"You'll have to stand it!" Gawtreys said, with that beastly smile of his.

"Oh, shall I? Suppose I defy you to do your worst, you rotter?"

It was no go. The kids realised that. There wasn't nearly enough backbone about Wilkins' defiant talk.

"Do you want me to let the Head know—"

"Oh, chuck it! Of course I don't. But you would never do that!"

"Wouldn't I, though!"

"You're the worst skunk I ever struck, Gawtreys!"

"That's where you made your mistake, Wilky—in striking me!"

"So this is your revenge for the licking I gave you last term?"

"You're improving, my friend! I don't suppose you ever before used what you call your brains to trace an effect back to its cause, did you? Yes, it's partly that—and partly the necessity for money. You follow me—eh, what?"

Wilkins is not a chap who has a great deal of pocket-money. But I take it all was fish that came to Gawtreys' net. Anyway he lifted half-a-sovereign—probably borrowed—off poor old Wilky, and went away muttering wild threats.

I don't know to this day what Wilky had been doing. I thought of asking him before I sat down to write this veracious chronicle, but I concluded that I would not. I don't believe it was anything very black; in fact, I am sure it was not. Wilky is not that sort. Most likely it was just one of those things which look blacker in a master's eyes than they really are.

Gawtreys slunk away, with that evil smile on his face; and the two fags came out of ambush. They weren't thinking any more about their Rylcombe foeman.

II.

"**W**HAT an idiot!" said Wally.

"What a beast!" said Curly.

Wally meant Wilkins, but Curly meant Gawtreys.

"Can't think why you were so blessed keen on staying, Curly, you young ass! It wasn't our fault we heard, for we were there before they came. But, all the same, I'd rather not have known anything about this."

"Well, you see, Wally, the fact is, you know—"

"Get it off your chest, kid!"

"I knew that Gawtreys was doing this sort of thing, Wally!"

"And never told me? I've a jolly good mind to say that I'll never speak to you again, Curly Gibson!"

"But—but, you see, Wally—"

"You don't mean to say that—Oh, Curly, old son, you'd never have been such an idiot!"

Gibson, crimson of face, nodded.

"The rotter! Look here, kid, I'm going to hear the whole silly yarn, so spout it out as quick as you like!"

"I—I—it's a bit private, you know, Wally!"

"What, to me? Rats!"

"It was that bizney last term—Hobbs' spread, you know."

"But there were ever so many of us in that, and it wasn't much, anyway."

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, you are an ass, Curly!"

"I dare say I am, a bit. It wasn't the feed, really. It was getting the stuff in—going out of bounds for it after we'd gone to bed."

Wally stared.

"You didn't go, fathead! Hobbs and I went."

"Yes, that's just it."

"I don't see—oh, yes, I do, though! That sweep played it up on you that I'd get in the very dickens of a row if he let on. Hobbs, too, of course."

"So you would have done, Wally! Don't you remember how down the Head and Carrington were on that sort of thing just then? No, I didn't shell out for Hobbs. I shouldn't have barred it, you know. But the beast made Hobbs pay, too. I can't think why he didn't go for you."

"I can!" said Wally grimly.

And so can I. Wally D'Arcy was a mere kid, of course; but there's lots of backbone in him, and Gawtreys would not have found him easy to handle.

Gibson is a different sort. Besides, he was got at through his dread of what might happen to his chum.

"Curly," said Wally, "you're a brick; but you really are an extra big size in donkeys!"

"Now you know why I wanted to hear. I felt sure from first off that the beast had got Wilky in his clutches. I dare say he's played the dirty game with lots of other fellows."

"Jolly sure he has—with everyone he could get a handle against and who was soft enough! But it's going to be stopped—it's simply got to be stopped!"

"Who's going to do it, though, Wally?"

"We are, ass! You ain't afraid of Gawtreys—not with me to back you up, I suppose?"

"Nun—no, Wally! And he couldn't

split about a thing that happened last term, could he?"

"Shouldn't care a scrap if he did!" replied the bold Wally.

"But how's it to be done?"

"By detective work, of course! Just my line, and I dare say you can help a bit with some of the easier parts. We won't tell any more of our lot; but we'll watch the rotter, and we'll try to remember what chaps in the Third we've seen him talking to— Ah, and in the other Forms, too! I wouldn't be surprised if he'd got half the Shell and the Fourth on his beastly list. There's my ass of a brother—he's soft enough for anything. But he doesn't often do things that the beaks are down on—I will say that for the the image! Oh, we'll find out, all serene, Curly!"

Gibson did not much think that fellows in the Shell and the Fourth would be likely to confide their weakness in giving way to Gawtreys to a Third Form fag. But he knew that Wally was a determined young beggar, and a bit of a favourite with the older chaps; and, anyway, he felt glad that he had got rid of his secret at last.

III.

Hobbs was naturally the first victim of Gawtreys' wiles—apart from Curly—whom Wally tackled.

There was not much for Hobbs to tell him about his own case, of course.

"It was half-a-sov he screwed out of me," Hobbs said. "The last coin I'd got left out of that whacking remittance I had. He made me swear I'd keep it dark, but now you know, it's different. No, I didn't know he'd got on to Curly. I thought the sweep had made you shell out."

Wally's indignant snort was answer enough to that.

"Have you twigged the rotter getting at anyone else in our Form?" inquired the amateur detective. "You'd be likelier to than me, being in the know about his games."

"There's Wrendle," replied Hobbs. "And young Bell. And that rotter Piggott—not that he matters."

"No, Piggy don't matter—at least, not much," said Wally. "But I'll talk to Wrendle and to Bell."

Piggott is not a nice kid at best, and he has never been a chum of Wally's. Wrendle, since removed to some school less strenuous in its ways than St. Jim's, was a weak, nervous sort of youngster, with an irritating giggle.

He was as wax in the hands of Wally. "Yes, it's true," he said. "I swore I wouldn't tell anyone, but you've found out. He, he, he!"

"What did you do it for?" asked Wally scornfully.

"He, he, he! How could I help it? You'd have done—"

"Unless you want a thick ear, kid, you'd better drop that! Now tell me the exact particulars—what it was for, and how that brute got to know about it, and what you paid him.

Wrendle told, giggling all the time. Then Wally tackled Bell.

Bell proved a tougher handful. The kid has pluck, and he is one of the sort that don't cotton to breaking promises—even promises wrung from them by a blackmailer.

But Wally prevailed with him also.

Proofs were piling up. Wally jotted everything down on paper. It puzzled him that the blackmailer should have found such easy victims. Some of the things he had been paid to keep dark were mere trifles in themselves—crimes that might have been atoned for by lines, or, at worst, a flogging.

Gawtreys must have spent no end of time, and taken no end of trouble over

finding out things that other chaps wanted kept secret. He was never known to spend money—not even in the tuckshop. It was a complete puzzle to Wally why he took so much pains to get hold of what seemed of so very little use to him.

But later on it was discovered—what had never even been suspected—that Gawtreys was a backer of "also rans." Very dark he kept that—oh, very dark indeed! And he had nerve, too. Through his dealings with the bookmaking sharks he found out what other fellows at St. Jim's were playing that game.

It was never proved that certain members of the Shell and even of the Fifth were among his victims. But I would not mind betting—not that betting is much in my line—that he had got at pretty nearly all the gay blades. I won't mention names, of course; it would not be the thing, and it really is not necessary!

Wally's next discovery was an accidental one. To him and Curly, poring together over the rough notes concerning Gawtreys, came Willis of their own Form, not looking too cheery.

"I say, you chaps," said Willis, "can you raise five bob between you? I want it badly!"

"Whaffor?" demanded Wally.

"I—well, Wally, old pal, I'd rather not tell you that. It's private."

"I'll lend you it," said Wally.

"Oh, thanks no end!"

"On condition that it don't go into that skunk Gawtreys' pockets!"

"Whew! How on earth did you twig?"

"I know a lot more than you fancy, young Willis, and I mean to put the giddy kybosh on Gawtreys before he's much older. Tell your uncle Wally all about it!"

Willis told. He had not yet been sworn to secrecy.

The next case was not accidental. Wally deserves some credit for the notion which brought it to his knowledge.

It was one of the days when footer was compulsory for the whole Lower School. Wally was off it, however, having a strained leg. But for that he would not have been away; it does not need compulsion to get Wally D'Arcy to the footer-ground.

"I'm going to have a squint at Gawtreys playing footer," he told Curly.

"Can't be did!" was the reply.

"Chump! I'm off it to-day. I musn't play."

"So is Gawtreys off it—he never does."

"But he has to."

"No; only pretend to."

"Same thing, ass!"

"Is it? That ain't what you say to Wrendle when he slacks."

"It's the same thing for my purpose. I want to find out more."

"You won't find it out by watching Gawtreys slack round with the other duffers of the Shell and the Fourth."

"That's all you know, Curly."

There were two games for the Shell and Fourth on compulsory days. The two Forms always played together. In the first game were the best twenty-two—which is to say, practically everybody who could really play. In the second figured the rest. They had more than eleven a side on these days; on others perhaps a dozen, who were duffers but still keen, tried to scratch up some sort of a game among them.

Several besides Gawtreys never did turn out except when they had to.

But Gawtreys was quite the most hopeless of the lot. Compared with him, absolute sitters, like Mellish, seemed shining lights.

He was helpless in goal. Back was

certainly not his place, for he could not kick twenty yards. He had not the pluck to tackle, and a half who will not do that is useless. He could not run, and he could neither take nor give a pass, so he was a mere obstruction in the forward line.

Mulvaney minor was skipper of the side which claimed Gawtreys' services. Mulvaney was one of the few in second game who would have been welcome in the first had there been room. He did play with us at times, and was keen and hardworking, if not clever.

He was also one of the many who did not like Gawtreys, and it must have been due to this that he assigned to the chap the really important post of centre-half.

Opposite Gawtreys, at centre-forward on his own side—it was on account of his being skipper that he played centre-forward—was Jones minor.

Jones was not much at shooting, and he wasn't exactly clever at passing, and his general knowledge of the game had a good many holes in it. But he could charge, and he liked charging—especially when he got someone opposite him who didn't like it!

IV.

NEVER saw such a mix-up of a game in all my life," Wally told Curly Gibson afterwards.

"You couldn't tell where a chap belonged. The chaps who were keen—there weren't a fat lot that way—were all over the giddy shop chasing the ball. And the chaps who weren't hadn't a notion where they ought to be, and wouldn't have been interested to hear. It wasn't because Gawtreys was chasing Jones all about the place that they came together so often, and it wasn't because one was centre-forward and the other centre-half against him, for Jones was a jolly sight oftener near the touchline than in the middle. I guess it must have been just luck! I saw Jones bundle Gawtreys over once, but I wasn't near enough to hear anything then—not that I expected anything in particular. But it happened again right close up to where I stood, and that time Gawtreys was winded. 'Member when I winded you, Curly? Hurts a bit, don't it?"

"It does," replied Curly feelingly.

"I'm waiting my chance to get my own back on you, Wally! But you don't mean to say that Gawtreys stood up to him?"

"Not likely! He was doing all he knew to dodge. It was just an accident. But you ought to have seen his face when he got up! And you ought to have seen Jones' face, too, when Gawtreys said no. I can't remember the exact words. But they told me what I wanted to know. Jones is another of 'em!"

"Another of who?"

"Your sort of silly asses, Curly! The dummies who let Gawtreys blackmail them!"

"I don't see how you can be sure of that, Wally."

"But I do! I saw his face. And he never barged Gawtreys once more all through the game!"

"What shall you do?"

"Tackle Jones about it. Bluff him a bit. Let him think I know the whole yarn. I'll work Jones all serene."

It must have seemed to Curly an audacious move; and really it was a bit off the rails for a kid in the Third to go for a Fourth-Former in that cheeky fashion. But Wally has a way with him when he likes, and he got Jones to tell him.

He tried Gussy next, but got no change there. Gussy was quite indignant that

anyone should imagine he would submit to blackmail.

"I considah it my dutay to weport the mattah to Tom Mewwy at once, Wally!" he said severely. "The atrocious black-mailin' wottah is in his Form, an' it is up to Tom Mewwy to deal with the case."

"You—you silly ass, Gus!" gasped Wally. "You empty-headed chump! You tell Tom Merry, that's all! I'll jolly well spifficate you, if you do!"

Blake and Herries and Dig came in just then. They are all fond of Wally, though I don't suppose they ever told him so; and they took his side against Gussy.

"Let the kid go on with it," said Blake. "He's been smart enough to tumble to something that we must have seen if we hadn't been going about with our eyes shut. I don't say he can handle it right up to the finish—"

"Why can't I?" howled Wally.

"Because it will be a junior House affair before it's settled up, and that's a bit above the mark of the Third. But get on with your 'tec work, my son. That will come in useful, anyway."

Wally went away, partly mollified, and Blake & Co. agreed to keep the thing dark for a bit. I guess they were on the watch after that, but they didn't let it leak out. Even Gussy kept his mouth shut about it—which was surprising.

Wales was the last item on Wally's list. The poor chap had a weak heart, and kept very much to himself. He was the youngest fellow in the Shell, but quite one of the cleverest. He has gone now, so there is no harm in saying that a blackmailer had a dead easy mark in Wales. He could easily be frightened.

But he was scarcely the kind of chap one would have fancied likely to drop into Gawtreys' clutches.

Wally and young Gibson had got so keen on their detective work by this time that they were acting on the theory that any dodge to find out things was decent—and, hang it all, I am not sure they were wrong in the case of such an utter Hun as Gawtreys!

In a secluded corner of the quadrangle they saw Gawtreys talking to Wales, and they moved near without making any row.

The curious blue tint of Wales' lips and the deathly pallor of his face struck them both. They didn't know what danger that meant. It was not to be supposed such kids should understand the signs of a heart attack. Probably Gawtreys did not either. But I have seen that sort of thing at home, and I know that Wales must have been in horrible danger at that moment.

"If you haven't got it, you'll have to write home for it."

That was all the two heard; but, with what they knew already, it was enough to justify them in putting Wales' name on their list.

V.

THAT list plays a very important part in this story.

It need hardly be said that when Wally and Curly made it out they had not the faintest notion that the august eyes of the Head would ever fall upon it, or even that Mr. Linton would see it. But so it turned out.

Supper was not obligatory, and the two young rascals did not mind missing

it that night, for there was to be a dormitory feed later.

They had the Third Form-room to themselves for a full hour after prep, and they secured themselves against intruders by putting a chair under the handle of the door so that it could not be opened without warning. Then, by the light of a single gas-jet, they got to work.

"Got a sheet of writing-paper, chump?" asked Wally.

"No."

"Nor yet me. Never mind. School ekker-paper will do all right."

These were the sheets served out every few days for prep work, or use in Form. Wally took one of them and headed it in big printed letters:

"GAWTREY—BLACKMAILER!"

"Looks fine, Curly—eh?"

"Not so bad for you, Wally. It's a rotten poor 'G,' and I don't believe there's an 'I' in 'blackmailer' by rights."

"Yes there is, fathead!"

Neither Wally nor Curly are very strong on spelling.

"I shall put your case first," said Wally.

"Oh, I say, I bar that! Shove Wales down there, or old ass Jones! They're in higher Forms than me," protested the modest Gibson.

"Am I doing this job, or are you?"

"You are. Hanged if I'd take so much blessed trouble!"

Wally wrote next:

"What we have found out."

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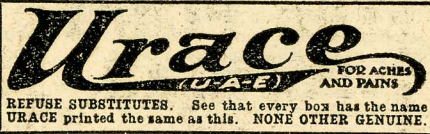


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"I don't think much of that," said Curly critically. "It don't look a bit legal. Anybody could understand it."

"Rats! I'm not making my will, fat-head! This has got to be so that anyone can understand."

"Well, it might be as well," agreed Curly.

Next Wally set down his chum's name, and after it he wrote the mystic letters "ASS."

"What do those letters after my name mean?" asked Curly innocently.

"Do a bit of thinking, old chump!"

"Got at him about me going out with Hobbs to get grub after lights-out for a feed. Paid Gawtreys five-and-six, and had to sell a bat to raise the funds. If it had been me I would have rung the cad's neck first."

So Wally wrote next.

"But it was you!" said Gibson. "That's where the sweep had me!"

"I know. Jolly decent of you, Curly, but no end assish. Let's get on with the washing. At this rate we'll never get done at all."

"George Wilkins, a bigger ASS," wrote Wally.

"Now I know what you mean!" cried Curly. "Well, I'm glad you think Wilky a bigger ass than me, anyway!"

"Older," said Wally. "Had more time to grow in. Don't keep on interrupting, Curly!"

He resumed his writing:

"Don't know what Wilkins did, but he pade—"

"You spelt it 'p-a-i-d' higher up, Wally."

"Did I? Well, one of 'em's right, anyhow. Shurrup!"

"Gawtreys half-a-sovereign to keep it dark. Herd this behind a hedge. Wilkins don't know we know."

Thus went on that wonderful screed. I wish I could give it all here; but there really is not room for it, and, besides, I should have to invent, for, though I heard it read out, I can't remember it all, and I don't like tampering with the truth of history.

It is enough to say that they all went down—Hobbs, the giggling Wrendle, round-faced, sturdy Bell, Willis, Jones minor, and poor old Wales. Jones had fallen from grace over a Greek crib at a time when severe measures were being taken against cribs. Wrendle had smashed three "pains"—Wally's spelling—in the Head's conservatory. Willis had merely broken bounds, and, stiffened by Wally and Curly, he had resisted the blackmailer. But of course he was put on the list. Wally was too proud of his detective abilities to leave out anybody or anything.

At the end Curly made the generous admission that his chum had "done it jolly well."

"Yes, I rather fancy so," said Wally. "Gawtreys mumbles to himself about making other fellows squirm, the rotter! He wouldn't half squirm if he saw this!"

"I say, Wally, I saw the door move!"

"Oh, rats!"

But Wally made a rush for the door, dragged it open, and was just in time to see a shadow on the wall of the passage—the shadow of someone who had a second before turned the corner into the better-lighted corridor beyond.

"Some sweep has been listening!" he said.

"Who do you think it was, Wally?"

Wally mentioned the name of a fellow in his own Form. It need not be given here, because the fag named was guilless—that time!

It was Gawtreys who had bolted from the door when the two youngsters moved.

And, after all, it was not very surprising that he should have got on to it,

and Wally and Curly may not always have been quite as discreet and secret in their detective work as they imagined themselves to be.

"Whoever it was, he can't have heard much," said Wally hopefully.

"I should say not. We were a long way from the door," Curly agreed.

But Gawtreys had heard quite enough. The paper was hidden between the pages of an English History in Curly's desk that night.

It found a safe enough place, but in the morning it had gone!

Some clever detective once said that the very smartest criminals make at times the most absurd blunders, and I suppose that is true. Gawtreys was pretty smart, and I reckon he was a criminal. But the blunder he made was such a ghastly silly one that it seems almost impossible, only that it was so simple as well as so silly.

And the old Latin proverb says that whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. Perhaps there was something of that kind, too, in Gawtreys's case.

It came upon us of the Shell like a bolt from the blue. Mind you, none of us liked Gawtreys. We knew him for a sly rotter. But with one or two exceptions none of us had the least idea of his blackmailing activities.

Gawtreys never explained. He never had the chance. But it seems as certain as anything can be that he himself handed up that weird screed of Wally's—signed by both the fag detectives—and that he handed it up in mistake for his Greek translation.

He could not have forgotten it. It was not the sort of thing a fellow could shove into his pocket and forget.

But it was on the school ekker-paper, just as the Greek translation was, and as I have said he was well up in Form.

A ghastly mistake for him, but a bit of luck for St. Jim's.

We filed up and laid our translations one by one on Mr. Linton's desk. Gawtreys was second, next to Talbot. I have said he was well up in form.

We were back in our seats. Mr. Linton opened Talbot's translation, glanced at it, laid it down, and took up the next paper.

He said something that we did not quite catch. Then he shouted in a voice of thunder:

"Gawtreys!"

The rotter stood up in his place, shivering with fear, though I don't believe he had any notion yet what had happened.

"Come here, Gawtreys!"

Gawtreys went, stumbling, slouching.

"Look at this!"

The scoundrel gave one glance, and reeled. He caught at the master's desk for support.

"Stand up!" snapped Mr. Linton. Then, in measured tones, he read out to us every word of what Wally had written.

It was all Gawtreys could do to keep his feet.

"Merry, will you oblige me by going to the Third Form-room and asking Mr. Selby whether he will allow D'Arcy minor and Gibson to come here at once?"

Tom went off. We waited in a silence so deep that you could have heard a pin drop.

The two fags looked pretty queer. But they were plucky about it, too.

"It's true, every word of it, sir," said Wally stoutly. "I—we didn't mean to let it out to a master, of course; but—"

"I attach no blame to you, my boy," said Mr. Linton, quite kindly. "I am not sure that you do not deserve praise. But, Gawtreys, come with me to the Head at once!"

The blackmailer said not a word. He went, trembling, his unpleasant face horrible to see. Wales swayed where he stood, then fell. That disclosure had hit him hard.

We did what we could for poor old Wales. It wasn't much. But Tom Merry rushed over to Rylcombe on his bike for the doctor, and he came and saw to Wales, who was in summy for a week afterwards.

The whole school was summoned to Big Hall. There the Head called out before him one by one the fellows whose names were in that screed—all but Wales, of course.

He did not say much to them at the time. He talked to them all later, but no one was even flogged.

"Is this true?" he asked each, after reading out Wally's statement concerning him.

And each said simply: "Yes, sir." Which was quite the best thing to say. Only Wrendle giggled nervously, and there was an awful frown on the Head's brow for a moment. But then he seemed to realise that the kid meant nothing by it, but was just a giggling ass.

Wally and Gibson didn't feel exactly heroic then. The Third made heroes of them later, naturally, and I won't say that the rest of us did not help to swell their heads.

Gawtreys was birched. Gawtreys howled for a dozen. An hour later he had gone from St. Jim's for ever.

(Note by Wally D'Arcy.—I don't see how Dane knows what Curly and I said to one another when there was no one else there. But it does not get far off the facts, though he makes me out to be a heap more of an ass than I am, and Curly rather less. Gawtreys was a beast, anyway; but we wouldn't ever have sneaked of him. Everybody knows that, and, except a few rotters, nobody ever accused us.)

THE END.

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