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# The GEM 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub><sup>D</sup>

No. 792  
Vol. XXII

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September 16th, 1922.



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# The Outcast of the School!



A Long Complete Tale of St. Jim's, telling how Ernest Levison is Barred by the School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

## CHAPTER 1.

### A Shindy at the Station.

"IT'S a wotten posish!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, made that remark for about the tenth time.

"Go hon!" murmured Blake.

"Weally, Blake, it is vewy wrotten!"

"We almost know it, by this time, Gussy," remarked Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy——"

"The train's signalled," remarked Figgins.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy took off his eyeglass, polished it slowly and carefully, and replaced it in his eye. There was a deep cloud upon his aristocratic brow.

"For the first time that I can memembah," he said seriously, "I am sowwy to see cousin Ethel's twain couin' in."

There was quite a little army of St. Jim's juniors waiting on the platform at Rylcombe Station. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther represented the Shell. Blake and Herries, Digby and D'Arcy, represented the Fourth. And Figgins & Co. of the New House, were there also—the last thing in the world that George Figgins would have missed was a chance of seeing cousin Ethel.

Farther along the platform stood Levison of the Fourth, and his minor, Frank of the Third. They were looking down the line, carefully ignoring the other St. Jim's party.

Tom Merry & Co. were just as carefully ignoring the two Levisons.

Indeed, the two parties might have been the completest strangers to each other, judging by their looks.

Only Frank Levison occasionally stole a glance towards the other party—a glance sad and wistful. And once Arthur Augustus, catching the fag's eye, gave him an encouraging nod, to assure him that he did not share in the rigid sentences of exclusion that had been passed on his brother. But that nod was not received with gratitude by Levison minor. He understood what it meant, and he flushed, and gave Arthur Augustus a fierce look in response. Frank Levison did not want friendliness from fellows who were not prepared to be friendly towards his brother Ernest.

The train from Wayland Junction came in sight, far down the line. Frank tapped his brother's arm.

"Coming, Ernie."

"I can see it," answered Levison of the Fourth moodily. "They'll be in the same carriage, Ernie—Doris and Ethel," said Frank, in a low voice.

"Of course they will, as they're coming together."

"For goodness' sake, Ernie, try not to let Doris see what's up!" whispered Frank. "She—she mayn't notice—if you're careful——"

"I'll do my best."

"If you'd been civil to D'Arcy——"

"Hang D'Arcy!"

Frank Levison sighed, and held his peace. In his brother's present obstinate, bitter mood, he knew that it was useless to reason with him. His heart was heavy. Doris Levison was arriving with D'Arcy's cousin Ethel. The Levisons were to meet Doris, and Tom Merry & Co. were to meet Ethel. The two girls were friends—and, so far as they knew, Levison and Tom Merry & Co. were still friends. Instead of which, as it happened, there was a breach between Levison and the Co. that could not possibly have been wider; and they were not even on speaking terms.

The meeting was certain to be a very awkward one. But it could not be helped.

Indeed, even Figgins, though Ethel's devout worshipper, almost wished that something had happened to prevent her visit—at least, in company with Doris Levison. And Frank, fond as he was of his sister, would have been glad if Doris had been kept away somehow, so that there would be no danger of her learning her brother's disgrace. But the two girls were coming together; two parties, bitterly divided, were there to meet them, and it was certain that both girls would see at a glance that something was wrong. The visit could scarcely be a success in the curious circumstances.

The local train from Wayland Junction came rumbling into the station. All the juniors watched the windows keenly for a glimpse of cousin Ethel and Doris Levison.

They did not see either of them; but a girl's hat showed at the window of one carriage, and towards that carriage Frank Levison ran. Figgins ran in the same direction at the same moment. Both wanted to get the door open as the train stopped.

"Rylcombe!" sang out the old porter.

The train clattered to a halt. Figgins and Frank Levison reached the carriage door together. Figgy, gently but firmly, pushed Frank aside to open the door.

Levison of the Fourth saw the action, and he made a spring forward. His grasp fell on Figgins' shoulder, and the New House junior was jerked back from the carriage, so suddenly and unexpectedly, that he went sprawling on his back on the platform.

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Figgins sat up dazedly.

"Why—what—what——" he stammered.

Frank Levison had the carriage door open. But his face was disappointed—Doris was not in the carriage. The hat he had seen belonged to quite another young lady.

He stepped back, and looked along the train. Figgins was on his feet again, and he gave Levison of the Fourth a very expressive look. But a look was all that he gave him—fisticuffs were not to be thought of when cousin Ethel was in the train, probably looking out.

Levison met his look with a sneer.

"Bai Jove! You uttah wotah, Levison!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, in a tone of suppressed wrath. "Are you lookin' for a wov when your sistah is on the twain——"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Levison.

As a matter of fact, Levison's eyes—the keenest there—had seen that neither Doris Levison nor cousin Ethel was in the train at all. He was puzzled; but he was sure of it. They were not there, though this undoubtedly was the train by which they should have arrived. And as his sister was not, after all, there, Levison saw no reason for controlling the evil temper that surged up within him—an evil temper long kept in check, but which his recent experiences had brought out, more evil than in the worst of Levison's old bad days.

"Levison," gasped Arthur Augustus, "I—I will not touch you now, Levison, as my cousin is able to see us; but, latak on, I will give you a feahful thwashin'."

"You've tried once, and it wasn't a success!" sneered Levison. "Try again!"

"I wufuse—— Ooooooh!" roared Arthur Augustus, as Levison gave him a tap on his aristocratic nose.

It was rather a hard tap, and it made the swell of St. Jim's stagger. The next moment, heedless of the passengers alighting

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from the train, forgetful even of cousin Ethel, Arthur Augustus rushed at his enemy.

Leivison of the Fourth met him half-way.

"Chuck that!" roared Tom Merry.

"Ethel——" panted Figgins. "Gussy—— Drag that cad away from him, you fellows."

The juniors gathered round, with some vague idea of screening the fight from the eyes of the girls as they alighted from the train. But they did not alight. The train had disgorged its passengers, and was moving on again from the station.

"They—they've not come!" exclaimed Figgins blankly.

Tom Merry drew a breath of relief.

"Thank goodness—in the circumstances!" he said.

"Well, yes; but——" Figgins broke off.

Even he could not be sorry that cousin Ethel had not arrived with Doris, to see her cousin fighting on the platform with Doris' brother.

The porter was hurrying up to the scene; but there was no need for him to interfere. Tom Merry & Co. laid hands on the two combatants and dragged them apart by main force.

"Weally, you fellahs——" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Chuck it!" said Blake. "You can't fight here. Ethel will——"

"Bai Jove! What will Ethel think?" groaned Arthur Augustus.

"Where is Ethel?"

"She hasn't come!"

"Gwast Scott!"

"Will you let me go?" asked Leivison, in a low, passionate voice, trembling with rage. Three or four of the juniors had hold of him, none too gently.

"No!" said Figgins curtly. "If you're ruffian enough to kick up a shindy under Ethel's eyes——"

"You fool!" hissed Leivison. "I saw that they were not in the train!"

"Oh! I said Figgins.

"Bai Jove! I suppose even that wottah wouldn't have kicked up a wov, if the ladies had been pvesent!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Let him go," said Tom Merry. "Keep your distance, Leivison!"

Leivison shrugged his shoulders, and moved away. Frank rejoined him, with a troubled face. He was passionately loyal to his brother's cause. But Leivison, even if wronged, as Frank believed, by the general condemnation of the St. Jim's juniors, was putting himself in the wrong now. It seemed as if he were taking a delight in malicious unpleasantness for its own sake.

Arthur Augustus retired to the waiting-room to put himself to rights after the struggle on the platform. After that, he carefully kept at a distance from the Leivisons. The juniors had decided to wait for the next train—concluding that Ethel and Doris had lost the connection at Wayland Junction. Leivison, apparently, had come to the same decision, for he remained on the platform with Frank.

There was three-quarters of an hour to wait for the next train; and when it came in there was another disappointment. The girls had not arrived by it.

"Can't be coming!" said Tom Merry. "Something's turned up to stop them."

"But Ethel would have let us know, deah boy!"

"May be a telegram for us at the school now!"

"Yaas, wathah—that's poss."

"No good waiting for any more trains!" said Blake. "They can't be coming. Can't say I'm sorry, on the whole—as Ethel had Doris with her. It would have been horribly awkward on all sides."

Figgins nodded, though his rugged face was clouded.

"I dare say it's best," he said. "But—but I hope nothing's happened to them——"

"Rot! What could have happened?" grunted Blake.

"Well, nothing, I suppose!" confessed Figgins.

"It's odd," said Tom. "But it's no good staying here. Let's cut!"

And the army of juniors marched off the platform. Leivison was left there, with Frank, his brow moody and thoughtful.

"They've gone straight on to Lexham, to Aunt Catherine's, Ernest," said the fag, at last.

"I can't understand it," said Leivison, wrinkling his brows.

"Doris said positively she would come by the three train with Ethel Cleveland—and Ethel must have told D'Arcy the same, as that crew were here for the train. Something must have happened."

Frank caught his breath.

"Ernie—an accident——"

"No; that's not likely. But something—I can't catch on to it." Leivison gave an impatient shrug of the shoulders.

"Well, it's all for the best. I'll manage somehow that Doris doesn't come in company with D'Arcy's cousin next time. We may as well get off."

And the Leivisons, major and minor, left the station, and walked back to St. Jim's in the wake of Tom Merry & Co.

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Both parties expected to find a telegram there. But there was no telegram. And Tom Merry & Co., and the Leivisons, could only wonder what had happened—with a growing uneasiness.

## CHAPTER 2.

Arthur Augustus is Wrathful.

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW of the Fourth Form sauntered across the quadrangle at St. Jim's towards the School House, humming a tune. The shadows of the old elms were lengthening in the quad; the gates were locked. Sidney Clive, from the steps of the School House, called to his study-mate.

"Do you want to miss call-over, Cardew?"

"Not specially!" yawned Cardew.

"Get a move on, then, you slacker!"

Cardew joined his study-mate on the steps, and they went into the School House together. The dandy of the Fourth had returned just in time for evening call-over. There was a general movement of fellows towards Big Hall, where Mr. Railton was to take the roll. Cardew went with Clive—glancing round for his other study-mate, Leivison. Up to a very short time ago, the three chums of Study No. 9 had been inseparable—different as they were in most things. But Leivison of the Fourth did not join Clive and Cardew now—he did not even seem to see them as he went into the hall—quite alone, though in the midst of a crowd.

Blake & Co. came in together, and they passed close by Leivison without becoming aware of his existence. The Terrible Three, going to the ranks of the Shell, were conscious of a bitter glance from Leivison of the Fourth, without heeding it, or taking note of it in any way whatever. Leivison was in the midst of the Fourth, quite alone there—even Baggy Trimble did not favour him with a sign of recognition. And a fellow who was beneath Baggy's notice must have been down very deep indeed. Only from the Third Form, Frank glanced across at his brother, pale and troubled. Leivison's disgrace seemed to hit his minor harder than himself. Leivison of the Fourth, like Pharaoh of old, hardened his heart; but Frank showed plainly enough in his face what he felt.

"Cheer up, old bean!" Wally of the Third whispered in Frank's ear.

"Keep a stiff upper-lip, you know," advised Manners minor.

"Eh! What do you mean?" muttered Frank.

Wally chuckled.

"My dear old nut, you've got a face as long as a fiddle," he said. "Hasn't he, Reggie?"

"Longer!" said Manners minor.

"Never mind your jolly old major," continued Wally D'Arcy. "Dash it all, I don't pull a long face when my major is up against it! Haven't we got troubles enough of our own in the Third?"

"Plenty!" assented Reggie Manners.

Frank Leivison did not heed. His eyes were fixed on his brother in the distance, and his heart was heavy—too heavy for his fag chums to be able to give him comfort.

Mr. Railton was calling the roll, and the St. Jim's fellows answered to their names one by one. Ralph Reckness Cardew, as he stood with the Fourth, glanced lazily about him, with a smile lurking on his lips. There was worry to be read in the noble brow of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; Cardew knew what he was thinking of. There was no news from Ethel, and Arthur Augustus was beginning to think that there must have been some accident. It was not like Ethel to break an engagement in this way, unless for a very strong reason indeed.

When roll-call was finished, and the St. Jim's fellows streamed out of hall, Cardew joined Study No. 6, and tapped Arthur Augustus on the elbow.

"It seems that the young ladies did not arrive," he murmured.

"Yaas, that is so!" said Arthur Augustus. "I am gettin' wathah anxious, Cardew, as there is no telegram or anything."

"It's all right!"

"Eh! How do you know it's all right, Cardew?"

"Miss Cleveland and Miss Doris went right on to Lexham," said Cardew.

"Impos!" said Arthur Augustus. "My cousin avwanged to call in at St. Jim's, and she would not disappoint me for nothin'!"

"How do you know, Cardew?" broke in Jack Blake.

"I met the ladies in Wayland," said Cardew.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Herries

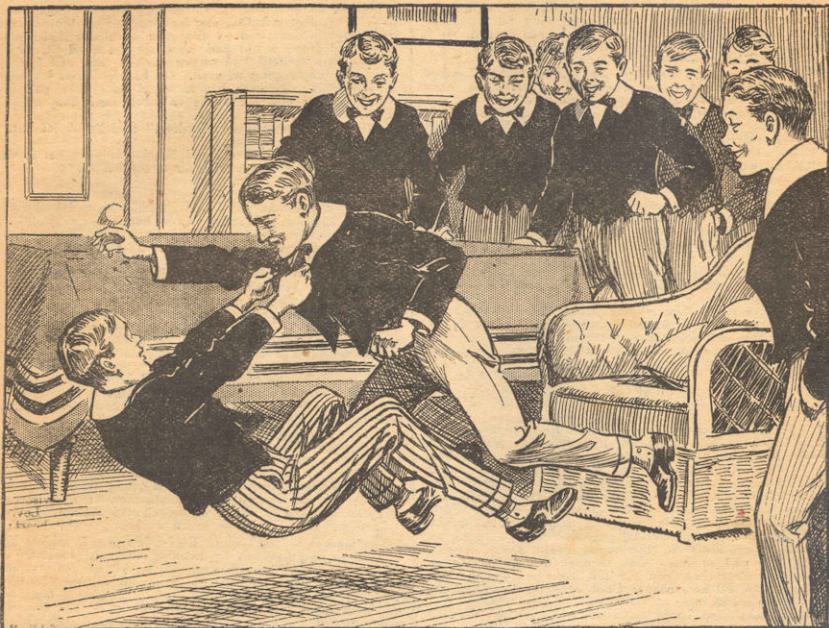
"You did!"

"Little me!"

"Oh! So that's where you've been!" said Digby.

"That's!" assented Cardew.

"Weally, I do not quite catch on. Do you mean that my cousin told you she was goin' wight on to Lexham?" asked Arthur Augustus.



The swell of St. Jim's made a jump at Cardew and grasped him by the shoulders. "Now come out of that chair, you wotah!" he gasped. Cardew sat tight. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy pulled at him, exerting all his strength. Then suddenly Cardew yielded, and the two went sprawling on the carpet. (See page 8.)

"I'll tell you exactly how it happened, dear man," said Cardew, in his easy drawl. "There was a car—"

"A cah?" repeated D'Arcy.  
 "Yes—a car! Buttin' into the affair in my usual tactless way, I prevailed upon the ladies to come from Wayland by car, instead of takin' the local train."

Arthur Augustus knitted his brows.  
 "You were awah that we were waitin' at Wylcombe for them to come by the local train, Cardew?"

"Quite."  
 "You must have deceived Miss Cleveland somehow, or she would nevah have left us waitin' there for nothin'."

"Isn't that a rather strong expression?" murmured Cardew.  
 "Miss Cleveland may have inferred from my remarks that the car was a new arrangement in the place of the old. In that case, naturally, she would not suppose that you were waitin' at Rylcombe."

"Bai Jove! You interfewin' wotahh—"  
 "Hold on," said Blake quietly. "Supposing that Cardew butted in with a car, that's no reason why cousin Ethel shouldn't get here. A car would be quicker than the local train. Why didn't they arrive, Cardew? What rotten jape have you been playing?"

Cardew looked pained.  
 "Jape!" he repeated. "Do you really think me capable of japin' young ladies, Blake?"

"It looks like it!" grunted Herries.  
 "Bai Jove! I hardly think Cardew would be guilty of such extremely woprehensible conduct as that, deah boys. But pway explain, Cardew—"

"The chauffeur took the wrong road," said Cardew gravely.  
 "That wouldn't account," said Blake grimly. "He would have found the right road again."

"Yaas, wotahh!"  
 "There was a breakdown—"  
 "The car broke down?" asked Dig.

"Yes."  
 "Bai Jove! That was fwightfully unluckay," said Arthur Augustus unsuspectingly; while Blake and Herries and Dig

looked at Cardew with very strong suspicion indeed. "So that—"

"It was somethin' to do with a magneto or somethin', accordin' to the chauffeur," drawled Cardew. "Wasted a lot of time. Left us just time enough to run straight on to Lexham, and land cousin Ethel and Doris at Aunt Catherine's. They both sent messages of regret; it was a great disappointment to them."

"Yaas, I suppose so. Of course, the bweakdown couldn't be helped," said Arthur Augustus. "I have been stwanded like that myself. Howevah, thank goodness there has not been an accidant, as I had begun to feah! Nobody was hurt when the cah broke down, Cardew?"

"Oh, no; only a stoppage!"  
 "Then they're at Lexham now?" asked Blake.

Cardew nodded.  
 "Under the hospitable wing of Aunt Catherine," he said. "I left them safe and sound at Lexham, and scooted back here as fast as the car could go, to let you fellows know it was all right."

"That is all vovy well," said Arthur Augustus warmly.  
 "But it would not have happened if you had not butted in, Cardew?"

"True, O king!"  
 "You had no right wotavevah to butt in, and lead Ethel to suppose that a new awgment had been made—"

"I know!"  
 "You have uttally mucked up the aftahnoon for erewybody—"

"Alas!" sighed Cardew.  
 "It was a feahful cheek on your part, Cardew, to interfere at all!" said D'Arcy hotly.

"Ask any fellow who knows me," said Cardew, "and he will tell you that a leadin' trait in my character is fearful cheek. Neck, in fact."

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.  
 "Do you think, Cardew, that you will be allowed to play a wotten twick like this, without bein' called to account?" he asked.

"Not at all! Here I am," said Cardew negligently, "fame's the music with, I trust, equanimity an' fortitude. Name the giddy punishment, and I'll try to bear it. Is it bolts in oil?"

"Well, Cardew—"

"Or ar'y you goin' to crush me with a glance?" asked Cardew. "Give it a name, dear man, so that I can screw up my courage to the stickin' point to face it."

"You cheeky wotah!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I am goin' to give you a fealful thwashin' for buttin' into my bizney in this wotten way!"

"Hear, hear!" said Herries.

"When will it be convenient to you to meet me in the gym, Cardew?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"Never!"

"If you wufuse, you howwid wotah—"

"Not at all; I only remarked that it wouldn't be convenient," explained Cardew. "Name the hour of execution, an' I'll turn up; I ask only a short interval to make my will first."

"If you are not in the gym at eight o'clock, Cardew, I shall come to your studay, and thwash you there!" said Arthur Augustus.

"Will you really take all that trouble? What energy! This is what some of stickin' to games and things, in the strenuous way you do. It's a go!" said Cardew. And he nodded cheerily to the chums of Study No. 6, and walked away.

### CHAPTER 3. A Mystery.

LEIVISON of the Fourth was in his study, with his minor, when Ralph Reckness Cardew strolled in. Sidney Clive was not to be seen. Since the trouble had arisen in Study No. 9, Clive had fallen into a habit of doing his prep in some other fellow's study. The South African junior was popular with all the Fourth, and he was welcome in any room along the Fourth Form passage. Leivison was standing with a moody scowl on his face; Frank was troubled and unquiet. Cardew could see that they were discussing the non-arrival of Doris Leivison. Frank was full of fears that there had been a railway accident. Ernest Leivison did not think so, but he was worried. He did not look at Cardew as the dandy of the Fourth strolled in.

"I've got some news for you, Leivison!" drawled Cardew.

"Keep it!" snapped Leivison.

But Frank turned his eyes at once on Cardew.

"About Doris," he asked.

"Oh!" said Leivison of the Fourth. "Is that it, Cardew?"

"Yes. I had the honour and pleasure of escortin' the two young ladies to Aunt Catherine's at Lexham."

"You did!" shouted Frank.

"My unworthy self!" assented Cardew.

Leivison of the Fourth gave him a grim look.

"What trick have you been playing now?" he asked.

"Dear man, don't get your rag out!" said Cardew. "I'm booked for a scrap with Gussy already, for buttin' in. I butted in with a car; led the dear girls to suppose that it was arranged for them to come across to St. Jim's by road instead of rail, an' bagged them," explained Cardew. "The arrangement was a genuine one—I made it myself! But I didn't explain to them that it was entirely my own brilliant idea. They wouldn't have agreed to leave so many affectionate relatives and friends hangin' up at Rylcombe, if I had."

"You cheeky sweep!" exclaimed Frank indignantly.

"Can it, dear boy—can it!" implored Cardew. "I've had all that from the great Gussy! After we left Wayland Junction, there was a chapter of giddy accidents. Nobody hurt—that's all right! First of all the chauffeur took the wrong road—"

"On your instructions!" snapped Leivison.

"Dear man, you ought to be a lawyer!" said Cardew admiringly. "Gussy never thought of guessin' that. Then there was a breakdown, eight miles from anywhere—"

"You squared the chauffeur?"

"Did I?" said Cardew reflectively. "Well, it's barely possible that there's somethin' in it. He said somethin' about a magnet. I don't know what a magneto is, but I let it go at that. The delay was considerable; car got goin' again just in time to take the ladies on to Lexham, without comin' to St. Jim's at all. They sent no end of regrets. I sent my best to hear them, but I am afraid they were bored. Waitin' in the car wasn't half so excitin' as what they'd have seen at St. Jim's; frinstance, say, a fight between Doris' brother and Ethel's cousin, or somethin' of the kind of an exhilaratin' nature."

"Oh!" said Frank.

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Leivison stared grimly at Cardew. He understood it all now. Tom Merry & Co., and Leivison and his brother, had been equally distressed by the state of affairs that cousin Ethel and Doris would find when they reached St. Jim's. Cardew had "butted" in to prevent the visit, and Leivison could not help feeling relieved. He had hardened his heart to endure his disgrace; but it would have been gall and wormwood to him for Doris to have seen how matters stood.

"It was like your cheek, Cardew!" said Frank, at last.

"I know it, dear youth!"

"You're sure that Doris and Ethel didn't suspect it was a spoof breakdown, and catch on to something?"

Cardew smiled.

"Quite."

"Well, it's just as well," said Frank, with a deep breath.

"It was like Cardew's cheek, Ernest, but—but I'm glad."

"Time you got into the Third Form room if you don't want Mr. Selby after you, Frank," said Leivison.

"Right-ho!"

Leivison minor quitted the study, his face much more cheerful now. He understood Cardew's motives, and he was glad that that painful meeting had not taken place, after all. Cardew, the slacker of the Fourth, had put in a whole afternoon—not to mention the expense of a car—to save Doris Leivison from learning that her brother was an outcast in the school. It was like Cardew; he was always doing what was most unexpected.

The dandy of the Fourth stretched himself in the arm-chair, and crossed one elegant leg over the other. Leivison stood looking at him with a moody brow, and Cardew returned his gaze with a lazy, whimsical smile.

Leivison understood as well as his minor did; and he was glad—deeply relieved—that Doris had not come. But he was not in a mood to feel grateful to anybody.

Cardew wondered with quite undisturbed tranquillity whether Ernest Leivison was going to cut up rusty. Perhaps Leivison was not certain for some minutes. But he turned away at last, and sat down at the table to work.

Cardew watched him idly as he worked.

The black look was still on Leivison's face. It seldom left him now. Neither was he working with the keenness of old. Since his reform, Leivison of the Fourth had become one of Mr. Lathom's best pupils. But during the past week or so, Mr. Lathom had had very serious faults to find with Leivison—careless and slovenly work, and impertinence in the Form-room. Since the date of the Greyfriars match, when Leivison had played up so splendidly for St. Jim's, the unhappy boy had been on the down-grade, and every day seemed to make a fresh difference. More and more Ernest Leivison was reverting to his old self—the "old Leivison" who had been the blackest among the black sheep of the school.

Cardew watched him, and wondered.

Every fellow in the Lower School, excepting Frank, was down on Leivison of the Fourth. He was an utter outcast now.

Even Cardew, who would have remained his friend, had not believed him innocent of what was laid to his charge, and Leivison had repelled his friendship with scorn.

To most of the fellows the evil that Leivison was now showing came as no great surprise. The old Leivison was showing again, that was all.

But Cardew, with all his careless ways, was a keen observer. While Leivison's guilt seemed beyond a shadow of a doubt, Cardew's doubts were growing stronger and stronger.

Leivison shut up his books suddenly.

"Not finished?" asked Cardew.

"Yes."

"That won't satisfy Lathom in the mornin'."

"Hang Lathom!" said Leivison briefly.

"Aren't you goin' to help me with my prep?"

"No."

"You used to be quite keen on it. Now you let me slack about an' never urge me to do my giddy duty."

Leivison looked at him.

"I've asked you before not to speak to me, Cardew," he said.

"I remember."

"Well, don't do it."

"Dear man, you know how talkative I am," urged Cardew.

"Must hear the music of my own dulcet tones. I'm not doin' any prep. I shall have trouble with the Lathom-bird to-morrow. We'll go through it together, will it?"

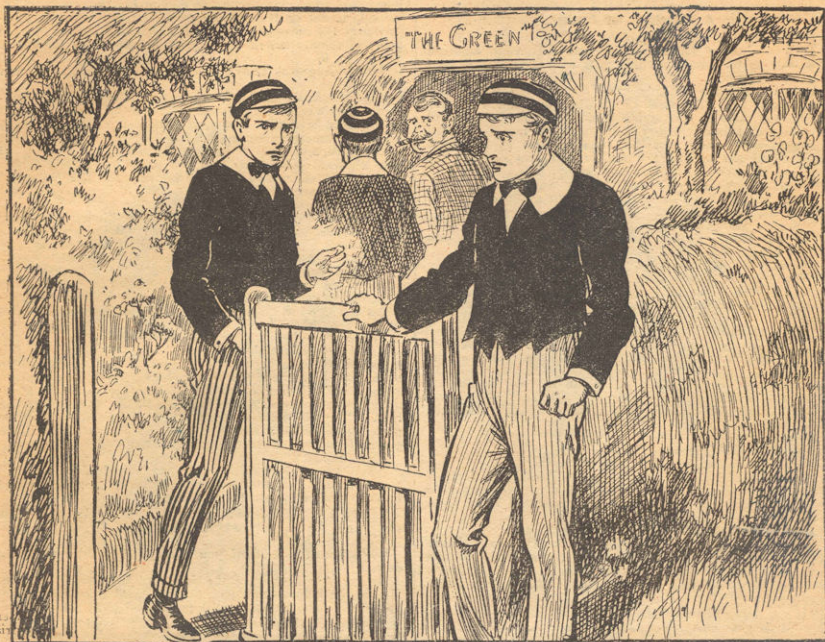
Leivison did not answer. He turned to the door.

"Hold on a minute, old bean," said Cardew lazily. "I've got somethin' to say."

"I don't want to hear it."

"Lend me your giddy ears, all the same. You've never told me why you had to leave Greyfriars, Leivison."

"And I don't intend to."



Mr. Joseph Banks was quite glad to see the three pigeons arrive to be plucked. "Come on, Levison," said Racke, staring at the moody Fourth-Former leaning on the gate. "Go and get on with your little game," said Levison. "I'm not coming in. Leave me alone!" (See page 13.)

"Why not?"

"Because I don't choose."

"Good man! Never satisfy idle curiosity," assented Cardew. "But I don't believe what Trimble got from Bunter when the Greyfriars fellows were over here."

Levison turned on him.

"You don't believe it?" he asked bitterly. "You don't believe that I was kicked out of Greyfriars for robbing the headmaster?"

"No," said Cardew.

"Why not?" sneered Levison. "Everybody else believes it. Bunter told Trimble, and they're both such truthful chaps, both of them."

"Nobody would have taken Bunter's word, or Trimble's, either," said Cardew. "You've only got yourself to thank, Levison. It's easy enough to get the truth out if you like, and you won't do it. If you let the case go by default, naturally you're considered guilty."

"I know that."

"You've got some reason." "Has that only just occurred to you?" asked Levison bitterly.

"And you won't say what it is?"

"No," said Levison, "I won't."

"Not even to your old pal?" asked Cardew lightly. But though his manner was light, his eyes were earnest.

"I've got no pals," said Levison coolly.

"And you could explain if you liked?"

"Yes. And I won't say a word," said Levison, between his teeth. "Not a syllable! I had a reason for not putting Trimble's yarn to the test—a good reason. But it wasn't a reason that I could shout all over the school. It was my own business, anyhow. I didn't choose to leave St. Jim's."

"Leave St. Jim's!" echoed Cardew, with a start.

"It might have come to that; it would have come to that. I thought my friends had faith enough in me to stand by me, even if I didn't disprove that fat rascal's yarn. They hadn't. I don't know that I blame them." Levison shrugged

his shoulders. "Before you came here I was a pretty hard case. I reckoned I had lived it down; but that turns out to be a mistake. Give a dog a bad name and hang him. It hasn't been so jolly easy to keep straight after what I was. I dare say it's not in me to keep it up, anyway. Perhaps they're all right. Perhaps I'm a rotter past praying for, as they all think. Well, I may as well have the game as the name. Anyhow, I'm not going to be turned out of St. Jim's to please anybody. I'm holding on."

"But—but I don't understand!"

"I know you don't."

"You're accused of having been sacked from your old school for theft. Disproving it couldn't harm you here."

"It could, and would."

"But how?"

Levison looked at him mockingly.

"And you're a keen chap—one of the keenest," he said, "and you don't see! Perhaps I'm pulling your leg—lying, you know. Any chap here will tell you what a liar Levison of the Fourth used to be. It's just breaking out again. Same old Levison, sick of humbugging. That's how it is. Can't you understand that?"

"No," said Cardew, "that's not it. But if you'd tell me—"

"Well, I won't!"

And with that Ernest Levison left the study. Cardew remained in the armchair, his brows wrinkled in thought, thinking deeply, forgetful of prep and of his appointment with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the gym. It was not often that Ralph Reckness Cardew, who had a keenness far beyond his years, was puzzled; but he was puzzled now. But through all his doubts and perplexity one thing was clear now to his mind. Bunter's story, repeated by Trimble, was false; for whatever reason Levison had left his old school, it was not for a crime. Cardew was sure of that now; sure that Levison could prove it if he chose.

But why did he not choose?

CHAPTER 4.  
A Thrashing for Cardew.

"HAVE you slain the jabberwock?"  
Monty Lowther asked that humorous question as he came into the gym with Tom Merry and Manners.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was there, with Blake and Herries and Dig. The swell of St. Jim's was still wrathful; and he was there to give Ralph Reckness Cardew the fearful thrashing that interfering youth so richly merited. But although it was long past the time of the appointment, Cardew had not arrived; so Arthur Augustus had not yet slain the jabberwock, as Lowther expressed it.

"Weally, Lowthah—" said Arthur Augustus.  
"Does he still live?" asked Manners in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Weally, Mannahs—"  
"Or has Gussy slain him in his wrath, and have you fellows hidden the body?" inquired Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"  
"That's all very well," said Blake. "But Cardew's got to toe the line. It's pretty plain that he played a rotten trick, and kept cousin Ethel away from St. Jim's this afternoon."  
"Yaas, wathah."

"Plain as anything," said Figgins of the New House. All the fellows who had waited for cousin Ethel at the station knew now what had happened. "It was an awful cheek to butt in like that. Looks to me as if Cardew meant to diddle us all!"

"Of course, he couldn't help a break-down," remarked Fatty Wynn.

Kerr gave a sniff.  
"He fixed that, of course," said Kerr.  
"Why should he, though?" asked Figgins.

"Well, he did, and it's plain enough," said the Scottish junior. "I dare say Ethel and Miss Levison never suspected it. But he did. It was a jape to keep them away from St. Jim's."

"The cheeky wotah!" said Arthur Augustus.  
"It was a cheek!" admitted Kerr. "But Cardew probably had a good reason. You fellows must all admit that it was lucky they never came. We all wanted to see D'Arcy's cousin—and we all like Doris Levison. But in the giddy circumstances—"

"It was lucky!" said Tom Merry, with a nod. "I suppose Cardew thought it out, and did it to save an awkward situation."

"Well," said Figgins, "I can't say I'm sorry that Ethel didn't arrive to see Gussy fighting Levison at the station—"

"Bai Jove! That would have been wathah howwid!"  
"Like Cardew's cheek to butt in, all the same," grunted Herries. "Who's Cardew, to take control?"

"Yaas, wathah."  
"It was a cheek," admitted Tom. "But it's all to the good, really. I think you'd better call off your scrap with Cardew, Gussy."

"Wats!"  
"Anyhow, he hasn't turned up," said Talbot of the Shell. "Let it drop, Gussy. There's nothing to scrap about."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy assumed his most dignified manner.

"I refuse to let it drop, Talbot. Cardew's intentions may have been good, and certainly it was wathah lucky that Ethel and Dows did not arrive at so very awkward a time; but I cannot allow Cardew to butt into my bizney in this way. It is up to me to thrash Cardew."

"But really, old chap—" urged the pacific Talbot.  
"Wats!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Blake. "Cardew hasn't come! Let it drop."  
"Wubbish! I told Cardew that if he did not come, I should go and thrash him in his studay. I am goin'!"

And Arthur Augustus D'Arcy marched out of the gym, with his noble nose high in the air. His chums followed him.

"This way," called out Monty Lowther. "Don't miss this, you fellows."

"What's on?" called out Wildrake of the Fourth.  
"Gussy is going to slay the jabberwock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Weally, Lowthah, you ass—"

"March on!" said Lowther. "We all want to be in at the death. Clive— This way, Clive! Call yourself a pal, and not turn up to hear Cardew's last sigh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was frowning, but the rest of the army were grinning as they marched into the School House.

With great dignity, and his noble nose elevated, Arthur Augustus led the way to the Fourth Form passage. The

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effect was a little spoiled by the playful Lowther, who walked behind, imitating Gussy's determined stride, with his playful nose still more elevated. In a chortling procession, the army of juniors marched along the Fourth Form passage to Study No. 9.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy knocked at the door, and threw it open.

Ralph Reckness Cardew was revealed, lounging in the arm-chair. He was looking thoughtful; but he smiled cheerily at the sight of Arthur Augustus' wrathful countenance, as if he found something entertaining in it.

"What an old bean!" he said hospitably. "Trot in, all you fellows! Somebody told you there was a feed in this study? If so, you've been misinformed. But come in! Always a pleasure to see you."

"Weally, Cardew—"  
"So kind of you to give me a look in, Gussy, and bring your friends," said Cardew affably. "We're only distant relations, so I take this very kindly indeed. Sit down."

"I have not come heah to sit down, Cardew."

"Prefer standin'!" asked Cardew. "Suit yourself, old bean—I will leave more chairs for the others. If I'd known I was to be honoured like this, I'd have borrowed some chairs along the passage. You fellows mind squattin' on the table or the coal-looker?"

"Cardew—"

"And now, anythin' special on?" asked Cardew. "Is this a testimonial from the School House? If so, and there is to be a gift, let it take the form of cash, if I may make a suggestion? I've been rather blowin' my cash this afternoon, on motor-cars, and bribin' chauffeurs, and things like that. Any testimonial from an admirin' House will be gratefully received; but if it takes the form of cash, the gratitude will be increased in proportion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know very well why we are heah, Cardew!" roared Arthur Augustus, in great wrath. "You have failed to keep your appointment with me."

"Have I? Did I have an appointment with you, dear old bean? So you've come here to keep it?"

"Yaas, wathah."  
"That's awfully kind of you, Gussy! Sure you won't sit down!"

Arthur Augustus gave the dandy of the Fourth a glare. He did not believe for a moment that Cardew really had forgotten the appointment in the gym.

"Will you put up your hands, Cardew?" he demanded.  
"Certainly."

Cardew elevated his hands above his head.

"What's this game?" he asked. "Is Gussy practising a Wild West stunt? Or is he gettin' into form for holdin' up a bank, or what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"You uttah ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "I mean that you are to put up your hands—"

"They're up."

"I refuse to believe that you are misunderstandin' me, Cardew. You are twyin' to pull my leg."

"Dear old Gussy!" said Cardew. "It's dawned on him! What a brain!"

"I have come heah to give you a feahful thrashin', Cardew."

"Poor little me! And have all you fellows come here to see it?" asked Cardew reproachfully. "Are you goin' to rejoice in my downfall, or shed tears of sympathy?"

"Get out of that chair, Cardew."  
"What for?"

"So that I can thrash you, you wotah!"  
"Can't you thrash me sittin' down? I'm very comfy in this chair."

"You uttah sweep! If you do not wise immediately, I will pull you out of that chair!"

"That will save me the trouble of risin'. Go it!"  
Arthur Augustus breathed hard. There was a loud chortle from the fellows crowding the doorway; they did not seem to take the affair so seriously as—in Gussy's opinion—ought to have been taken. The swell of St. Jim's made a jump at Cardew, and grasped him by the shoulders.

"Now come out of that chair, you wotah!" he gasped.  
Cardew sat tight. Arthur Augustus pulled at him, exerting all his strength. And then, all of a sudden, Cardew yielded—so suddenly that Arthur Augustus flew backwards, and sprawled on the carpet, with Cardew sprawling over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Oh cwumbs!"

Cardew was on his feet again in a second. Arthur Augustus sat up dazedly, gasping for breath. Cardew glanced at him.

"Changed your mind?" he asked genially. "You said you wouldn't sit down, you know. If you've changed your mind, why not try the armchair—the carpet's rather dusty."

"Gwoooogh!"



"But please yourself, old bean—make yourself at home. Good-bye!"

"Stop!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Cardew, you wotten funk, I am goin' to thrash you! Stop the wottah, deah boys!"

But the dear boys, yelling with laughter, opened for Cardew to pass through, and closed again in the doorway as Arthur Augustus staggered off, still intent on vengeance. Tom Merry waved his hand at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Ring off now, Gussy. You've done your funny turn, you know."

"You silly ass!" roared Arthur Augustus.

"You've said your piece!" urged Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me pass, you uttah wottahs. I am goin' to give Cardew a fearful thrashing!"

And Arthur Augustus, in lowering wrath, shoved his way out of the study through the yelling juniors, and glared round through his eyeglass for Cardew. But Ralph Reckness Cardew had vanished from sight.

#### CHAPTER 5. Levison's Reply.

**T**OM MERRY knitted his brows, and a troubled look came over his sunny face. It was Saturday afternoon, and Tom was standing on the steps of the School House, looking out into the quad. At a little distance, Racke and Crooke of the Shell were talking to Ernest Levison.

The three seemed quite friendly.

The two outsiders of the Shell had openly rejoiced in Levison's disgrace when it had happened. They had made no secret of their satisfaction, and with great joy they had joined better fellows in turning Levison down.

Once—it was not so very long ago—Levison had been hand in glove with Racke and Crooke and Mollish and the other black sheep. They had bitterly resented his turning his back on them. For long—so long, indeed, as Levison was able to hold up his head in the House—he had kept his distance from the shady set. And so his downfall had brought satisfaction to his one-time associates—they had gone out of their way to "rub it in." Not that Levison had cared much; it was not the opinion of Racke & Co. that was likely to worry him.

Now there was a change. Levison, apparently, had made it up with his former friends. Even if he had been expelled from his old school for stealing, Racke & Co. were willing to know him for their own purposes, and after they had "rubbed in" his disgrace and the satisfaction it afforded them. Levison had more brains than the whole flock of black sheep put together; in his shady days he had been very useful to them. Now, apparently, he was gathered into the fold again. Tom Merry could see that the three juniors were planning some excursion for the afternoon, and he did not need telling that it was a questionable one.

It worried Tom.

He had never chummed with Levison, certainly, but he had liked him well enough, after his reform. If the fellow was a thief—and it seemed that he was—Tom certainly wanted nothing to do with him, but he could not help feeling that it was hard for the past to rise up like this against a fellow who, whatever he had been, had turned over a new leaf. Tom did not want to come into contact with him, but he was sorry to see him going deeper down. There was good in Levison, whatever he was and whatever he had done. Tom knew that. At St. Jim's he would never be able to hold up his head again, but that was no reason why he should throw in his lot with the black sheep of the school, and sink lower still.

Levison left the other two juniors and came towards the steps.

"I'll be back in a tick!" he called out as he left them, and he came up the steps and almost ran into Tom Merry. He gave the captain of the Shell a look of quick dislike, and stepped aside to pass him. And Tom, moved by a kind impulse, called to him.

"Hold on, Levison, a minute."

Levison stared round at him as he picked up his cap.

"Hallo! What the thump do you want? I'm going out."

"Only a word or two," said Tom mildly.

"You forget," said Levison with ironic seriousness. "You contaminate yourself by speaking to me!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom good-humouredly.

"You're not in a hurry for a few minutes, I suppose?"

"Not at all! Are you going to read me a lecture on the commandment 'Thou shalt not steal'?" asked Levison mockingly.

"No," said Tom. "But—" He drew Levison into the window recess in the hall. "Look here, Levison, you've come down with a crash, and it can't be helped, I suppose. But my belief is that you've been doing your best, and playing the game for a good time past. I know some fellows

think that you've been humbugging all the time, but I'm certain that it isn't so."

"Thank you!"

"I know that you've chucked up your old rotten ways ever since young Frank has been here," said Tom. "All your friends were glad of it. Levison, it's no good talking about being friends now, for that's impossible, but I'm very sorry to see you taking up with Racke and Crooke again. I know what that means."

Levison smiled—his old evil smile.

"Pub-haunting, and all that," said Tom.

"Quite so!"

"Is it good enough, Levison?" said Tom earnestly.

"Isn't it good enough for me?" asked Levison, with sarcastic surprise. "I should have thought it was rather good of Racke to be willing to speak to a thief! Even Racke isn't quite so bad as that, you know. He has a moral superiority over me, and he waives it and offers to be friendly. Naturally I jump at the chance."

Tom Merry set his lips a little.

"If you're only going to mock, it's not much use my speaking," he said. "You've come a mucker, now it's come out why you had to leave Greyfriars—"

"Has it come out?"

"What's the good of beating about the bush?" said Tom a little irritably. "When a fellow's accused of being a thief, and doesn't defend himself, that settles the matter for any straightforward chap."

"I suppose so!" said Levison, with a nod. "Well, as the matter's settled to your satisfaction, why not let it rest? After a fellow's stolen, he can't fall much farther."

"I—I suppose that's so, in a way," said Tom, hesitating. "But—but you're too good for Racke's kind of game, all the same, Levison. What's the good of playing the shady goat, and risking getting the sack? There can't be much pleasure in it for a fellow of your intelligence. Racke is a fool as well as a blackguard, but you're no fool."

"I see!" said Levison mockingly. "You'd like my company this afternoon?"

"Well, no!" said Tom.

"Dear man! You're sorry to see me with Racke going downhill a little farther than I've got already. You advise me to chuck up Racke's friendship, such as it is—"

"Yes," said Tom.

"Without offering me your own in exchange?"

Tom was silent.

He felt the force of what Levison said, but there was no help for it. If Levison had been expelled from Greyfriars for theft, Tom Merry did not want to have anything to do with him.

Levison burst into a laugh.

"Well, I'm going out with Racke this afternoon," he said.

"I'm going down as deep as Racke, or deeper. I'm going to have the game as well as the name. I used to be considered a hard case—in the merry old days. I'm going to be a harder case still. And if the fault rests on anybody's shoulders, Tom Merry, it's on yours."

"Mine!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yours," said Levison. "It's too late now, I'm fed up. But you could have helped me. You see, the yarn that Bunter spun to Trimble was all lies—lies from beginning to end. Bunter lies as naturally as he breathes, and Trimble's the same. I've no doubt he put trimmings on what Bunter told him. You chose to believe the lies!"

"I didn't choose," said Tom. "I never believed a word of it at first. You refused to put the matter to the test."

"For reasons of my own."

"What reasons?"

Levison's lip curled.

"If you'd asked me that at the time I might have told you—I don't know. Certainly I don't intend to tell you anything now. I'm not going to place myself at any fellow's mercy—after my late experiences."

Tom stared at him.

"How? What do you mean? At a fellow's mercy?"

"You don't understand?"

"No, I don't."

Levison laughed.

"You wouldn't!" he said. "Well, if you've finished I'll get off. My pals are waiting for me—my dear pals!" He laughed again, a laugh that was not good to hear. "Thanks no end for your kind advice. So kind of you to try to save me from going to the merry bow-woos—trying to save me with one hand, and giving me a shove off with the other, by gad! I'm going to give you something in return for your kindness."

"What do you mean?"

"That!" said Levison.

Smack!

Levison's open hand came with a crash across Tom Merry's face, and the Shell fellow staggered back and fell in the window-seat. Levison laughed, and ran lightly out of the house.

(Continued on page 12.)

# The STIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

## In Aid of Charity.

### SUCCESSFUL GARDEN FETE.

LAST week the greater part of the fellows were present at a garden-party held in the grounds of a house just outside Rylcombe, in aid of local charities. Masters, seniors, juniors, and fags were there, and everybody enjoyed himself to the uttermost. Such of the sisters and cousins of the fellows who could possibly attend turned up. Including cousin Ethel, Joyce Digby, Phyllis Macdonald, and Edith Glyn, and, of course, this fact added greatly to the attractions of the function.

There were all sorts of side-shows, some of which were in charge of St. Jim's fellows, and among which mention must be made of the St. Jim's Pierot Troupe, which gave two entertainments during the afternoon. It appears that there had been a professional party engaged, but they, unfortunately, got "hung up" in consequence of missing a connection, and were not able to arrive until after tea. Upon hearing of this, Monty Lowther at once undertook to fill the breach, and, sending up to the school for costumes, a party was hastily gathered from among the juniors. There were Monty Lowther, Manners, at the piano, Gussy who sang four solos, Blake, who did clog-dances and thereby nearly wrecked the improvised stage, and Kerr, who recited, and gave impressions of leading actors.

Later on Manners assisted the fund by taking photographs and selling them. Tom Merry and Herries were in charge of a coconut-shy, at which Fatty Wynn did remarkably well, securing four nuts with six balls. He was thereupon disqualified from again throwing, as his skill at bowling made him an unprofitable customer. Grundy, however, compensated for this success, as the Shell fellow had some fifty attempts to knock down a nut, and only succeeded in breaking a clay pipe that was set up on a rifle-range twenty yards away.

He would doubtless have continued his efforts, but in throwing his hand to pitch a ball he released it, with the result that it fell a considerable distance to his rear, fortunately without hitting anyone, narrowly missed Monteith, however, and the New House prefect at once came up, and gave orders that Grundy was not to be allowed to throw another ball for the rest of the day.

There were two clock-golf tournaments, senior and junior. The former, which was also open to masters, was won by Mr. Raitton, while Glyn gained first place in the junior event, with Kerr as runner-up.

There was some selling tent on the ground, and most of the fellows patronised it, in spite of the fact that Skimpole spent a good deal of time earnestly explaining to all and sundry that fortune-telling has no scientific authority, and is, in fact, severely condemned and its fraudulent nature exposed by the great Professor Balmynumpet in one of his monumental works.

Gussy was persuaded to consult the oracle, and, upon entering the tent in company with a crowd of fellows, was confronted by a venerable figure with a long white beard, dressed in what appeared to be a dressing-gown covered with mystic symbols. The fortune-teller, amid chuckles, proceeded to accuse Gussy of being a gay philanderer for whom many feminine hearts were sighing, among whom were those of Mary, the housemaid, and a young lady at a certain

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confectionery establishment near by. Gussy blushed a vivid scarlet, and there was a great deal of laughter from the juniors who surrounded him, which increased when the beard fell off and revealed the well-known features of Ralph Reckness Cardew, who had taken the place of the fortune-teller for the purpose of pulling Gussy's leg.

Of course, Trimble spent the most of his time in the vicinity of the refreshment-tent, while Wally D'Arcy & Co. resorted there pretty frequently in order to purchase ice-cream.

Skimpole entered two competitions—one for guessing the weight of a cake and the other for estimating the number of peas in a bottle. In both cases he entered into an abstruse scientific calculation that was infallible and gave him the correct result; but, unfortunately, there must have been something wrong in his calculations, as he judged the cake to weigh exactly 2 lbs. 4.9875 ozs., whereas the unmathematical-minded individual who weighed it insisted that it was a trifle over 10 lbs. Skimpole undertook to prove that the scales were faulty, but the owner somewhat impolitely refused his kind offer. The bottle of peas contained 12,485 instead of the 257,973 that Skimpole's calculations proved it to contain.

In the evening there was dancing on the lawn and fireworks, the latter under the direction of Glyn, whose father had provided them. There were some pretty and effective set-pieces and plenty of showy rockets. The humorously inclined Lowther secured possession of a large repeating-cracker, which he hooked on to the back of Gussy's blazer and ignited.

There was a considerable shortage of pocket-money in the Lower School for the remainder of the week—and, indeed, it is ascertained that the majority of the Fifth and Sixth were not over flush during that period—but it is gratifying to record that the proceeds of the garden-party were such as to exceed the most sanguine expectations, and the charities benefited considerably as a result.

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## STUDY No. 6.

### Blake's Latest Enterprise.

Staff Contribution.

JACK BLAKE, the leader of Study No. 6 in the Fourth Form passage, has been busily occupied of late in the school carpenter's shop. His ambition was to make a complete set of furniture for the study, the chef d'œuvre of which was to be a combination bookcase and bagatelle-table. Unfortunately, he discovered, when half-way through the job, that while the article in question was in use as a bagatelle-table, it would not be capable of holding books, and there was no place in the study in which to keep them while the game was being played, quite apart from the fact that the labour of transferring them to and from the shelves would take up about as much time as they would be able to devote to the game. So he reluctantly abandoned the enterprise, and offered to convert the attempt into a new kennel for Towser. But Herries, who has had some experience of the "carpentering"—if one may so put it—of his leader, hastily declined the offer. He privately confided to Digby that he had no desire to visit his pet and discover that the roof had fallen on him and crushed him to death during the night. Needless to say, he did not acquaint Blake with this reason for refusing the kindly-meant offer, but contented himself with explaining that, much as he would like to accept it, he was afraid that Towser had become so accustomed to his present habitation that he would in all probability not take kindly to another, even though it should be far superior to the old one.

In no wise daunted, Blake has now commenced upon a set of chairs. His study-mates, however, have insisted that before these are taken into the study they shall be subjected to a test—that of evidencing themselves as being capable of supporting the weight of at least one junior—and those who know anything concerning Blake's skill at joinery prophesy that there is little likelihood of any of his creations satisfying such conditions. Blake himself has no doubts upon the matter, as he is making certain of success by employing an extra quantity of nails and screws, driving them in wherever it is possible to put them—and even where it would seem impossible and unnecessary that they should be put. By the time the furniture is complete, if ever it seems more than probable that there will be far more metal than wood about it, a circumstance which might prove unpleasant to the unfortunate junior who has the task of testing it, should the structure collapse and deposit him upon the business ends of any of the ironmongery.

Monty Lowther has ventured the statement that Blake's woodwork would be all right if it only would work, and has earnestly inquired whether the amateur carpenter is making the chairs "out of his own head."

ANSWERS  
EVERY MONDAY. PRICE 2.

**EDITORIAL CHAT.**

The Editor would like to hear from his reader chums. Address all letters to Editor, "The Gem Library," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

My Dear Chums,—

Next week's GEM will carry on the thrilling story of Ernest Levison. The title of the yarn is "Down and Out!" and that fairly well explains the pitch of despondency which Levison has reached. I know these tales are appreciated, and, with each week, the interest increases. The whole subject leaves one something to think about afterwards. You find yourself putting that useful question: What would you do in similar circumstances? It is a sound and useful query. Some people are pretty generous in their condemnation of a fellow who seems to have made a hopeless mess of things, but in all probability they would be less free with the censure if they made the business a personal matter. Are they so jolly sure they would have acted differently, or even made as good a job of things as the chap whom they disparage, or treat to what they are pleased to call sympathy?

There is a special feature in next Wednesday's "St. Jim's News" in the shape of a contribution from Mr. Ephraim Taggles, the worthy porter at St. Jim's. Taggles has played many parts, and he is generally funny, especially when he is engaged in wordy warfare with Gussy. The episode is hilarious, and Taggles shines once more as a pillar of the old school.

I have not much more to say this week concerning the yarns, though I should like to run in a word about Duncan Stern's splendid serial, "All On His Own!" It is a fine piece of work, and brimful of incident and drama.

Our Competitions are winning more and more popularity. Nobody can fail to be interested in Silhouettes, while the Tuck Hamper department of the famous Wednesday weekly is going strong.

Here's a reminder to all and sundry—the "Holiday Annual," is on sale, but don't leave it too long and stand a chance of missing your copy.

I am sure you will all be interested in the new feature which will shortly appear in the "Magnet." This is the Greyfriars Parliament. Our Companion Paper is starting a weekly debate on sports, pastimes, hobbies, and subjects of general interest, and all readers can take part. There will be special money prizes given for all ideas used. But you will see all about the matter in a week or two if you watch "Magnet" Chat.

This very morning I opened a rather indignant letter from a reader up North who roundly condemned me because, as he put it, I said nothing of general interest in Chat. The answer to this complaint is simple: there is no room as a rule for taking over scores of things.

YOUR EDITOR.

**OUR COMPANION PAPERS.**

- "THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
- "THE MAGNET" Every Monday
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- "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday
- "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

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**WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.**

Here is a splendid opportunity for you to win one of these generous prizes.

On this page you will find six silhouettes, each showing a person doing something, and what you have to do is to write in the space under the picture the exact action portrayed. All the actions can be described in one or two words, but not more than two words.

When you have solved this week's picture puzzles, keep them by you in some safe place. There will be six sets in all, and when the final set appears you will be told where, and when, to send your efforts. The first set appeared last week.

You may send as many complete sets of efforts as you please.

The FIRST PRIZE OF £25 will be

awarded to the reader who succeeds in submitting a set of solutions exactly the same as, or nearest to, the set of solutions in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. No competitor will be awarded more than one share of the prizes.

This competition is run in conjunction with the "Boy's Friend," "Popular," and the "Magnet," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

It must be distinctly understood that the decision of the Editor is final and binding.

## "THE OUTCAST OF THE SCHOOL."

(Continued from page 9.)

### CHAPTER 6.

#### Looking For Levison.

**T**OM MERRY staggered up. His cheek was burning where Levison of the Fourth had struck him, and he put his hand dazedly to his face. He was more surprised than angry, but he was angry enough.

"By Jove! The— the rotten cad!" panted Tom. "I'll smash him!"

He hurried to the door.

But Levison was already gone. Racke and Crooke had gone down to the gates while Levison was getting his hat, and Levison joined them there. He came up rather breathlessly.

"Let's get!" he said laconically.

"Any hurry?" asked Crooke.

"Yes," Levison grinned. "I've just smacked Tom Merry's face, and I'd rather get out without a fight on my hands. It will do when we come in."

"You're fighting Tom Merry?" exclaimed Racke.

"Why not?"

"My hat! You'll find him rather hefty."

"Not too hefty for me, I think," said Levison coolly. "But let's get on! I don't want to handle him now."

And the three young rascals started up the road at a good pace, and turned into the path through the wood. They were out of sight when Tom Merry arrived at the school gates and looked out.

"It will keep!" said Tom between his teeth, and he turned back into the quad.

"But Jove, you look wathah excited, deah boy!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he met Tom in the quadrangle.

"Anythin' happened?"

"Only a row with Levison," said Tom, calming down. "I'm going to punch his head when he comes in."

"Punch it hard, deah boy. It will do him good," said Arthur Augustus cheerily. "Speakin' of punchin' heads, I have not thwashed Cardew for that wotten tick he played the othah day. Blake and Hewwics and Dig keep on tellin' me to let the matzah drop. I really think Cardew's intentions were good, you know, and I have been thinkin' that I might let him off. What do you think, deah boy?"

"I think I should," said Tom, with a smile. "It was like his cheek, but I think he did everybody a good turn by butting in as he did."

Arthur Augustus nodded. Evidently he had been turning the matter over in his powerful brain.

"Pewwaps you are wight, deah boy," he assented. "I wathah think I will let the cheeky boundah off."

"I breathe again!" said a cheery voice at Arthur Augustus' elbow, and the swell of St. Jim's turned, to see Cardew.

Cardew nodded pleasantly.

"So glad you're goin' to let me off, Gussy, old bean," he said. "I've been living for days in fear, an' tremblin'—"

"Weally, Cardew!"

"I know now how those giddy old Greeks felt when Achilles got wathy," said Cardew gravely. "Not, of course, that I mean to compare Achilles' wrath to yours. Compared with that, it was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine."

"Weally, you ass."

"Ever since the evenin' you sat on the carpet in my study," continued Cardew, "I've felt like that jolly old classical johnny under the sword of Damocles. The anxiety has nearly turned my hair grey. As jolly old Goethe says somewhere, 'Nur mit Entsetzen wach' ich Morgens auf—'"

"Pway do not quote beastly German at me, Cardew."

"I look in the glass every mornin', dreadin' to see the crows' feet comin'," went on Cardew. "The anxiety has been fearful!"

"I wufuse to listen to your uttah wot, Cardew!" snapped Arthur Augustus, and he walked away with great dignity.

Cardew chuckled.

"Dear man!" he said. "What should we do without our Gussy? In the most troublous time, you can always depend on Gussy for a little comic relief. Seen anythin' of Levison, Tommy?"

"Yes," grunted Tom.

"I seem to have missed him," said Cardew. "I've been talkin' to Clive. Never knew before what an obstinate beggar Clive could be. He won't extend the right hand of fellowship to our pal Levison unless he clears himself."

"I should think not."

"You would!" agreed Cardew, with a nod. "From your irreproachable moral plane, that is the judgment I should expect. Not being an irreproachable moral character myself,

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I can make allowances for a fellow. Besides, a chap's innocence ought to count in his favour, oughtn't it?"

"His innocence!" said Tom.

"Just that!" Cardew yawned. "I believe it's all lies that that fat Greyfriars boulder told Trimble, and that Levison could prove it if he liked. What's your opinion?"

Tom gave an angry and impatient shrug of the shoulders.

"If he could, why doesn't he?"

"Ask me another," said Cardew. "But I believe it's so. Of course, I haven't the powerful intellect of you fellows in the Shell."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Tom crossly. "If it lies about Levison, a word from Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, would clear him. Gussy offered to run him across to Greyfriars in his father's car, and see the Head there with him, and get the facts. Levison refused! After that, there doesn't seem to be much more to be said."

"Things are not always what they seem," said Cardew. "You remember what jolly old Hamlet said to Horatio—there are more things somewhere-or-other, old top, than are dreamt of in your what-do-you-call-it? Anyhow, I'm backin' up Levison."

"More fool you!" said Tom gruffly.

"What a nice way you have of puttin' things," said Cardew admiringly. "This is what comes of bein' brought up carefully by a nice old lady like Miss Priscilla. But if you've seen Levison, where was it? I'm lookin' for him, you know."

"I think he's gone out with Racke and Crooke. I dare say you can guess their destination," said Tom, his lip curling contemptuously.

Cardew started a little, and his face became grave.

"So it's come to that!" he muttered. "Poor old Levison! And—and if he's innocent, after all—"

"He isn't," said Tom. "But if you come across him, Cardew, you can tell him that I expect to see him as soon as he comes in—with or without gloves, as he pleases."

"Oh gad!"

Tom Merry turned away, to join Manners and Lowther, who had come out of the School House. Cardew looked at him very thoughtfully and walked down to the gates, his hands driven deep into his pockets. He stood looking out into the road, thinking, with a wrinkled brow. Frank Levison joined him as he stood there.

"Do you know where Ernest is?" the fag asked in a low voice.

"Haven't seen him," answered Cardew diplomatically. He could read the fag's thoughts in his troubled face.

"I—I believe he's with Racke," muttered Frank miserably. "He—he's beginning that again! It's not his fault! They've driven him into it!" Frank clenched his hands. "They're all down on him, even his own chums—you and Clive, who ought to stand by him!"

"Leave me out, kid!" said Cardew. "I'm not down on him. I'm sticking to him like glue. And don't you worry about your brother. He's not ass enough to let Racke drag him into his rotten games—too much hoss-sense for that!"

Frank brightened a little.

"You—you think so?" he faltered. "I—I was afraid—"

Cardew smiled cheerily.

"Put it right out of your head, kid!" he said.

"I—I will," said Frank hesitatingly. "But he's changed so much lately. It's because they're all so unjust to him. Poor old Ernie; one of the best fellows breathing!" His voice quivered, and he moved away, leaving Cardew staring out gloomily into the road with puckered brows.

Cardew moved at last. He sauntered out, and took the road to the village. He was looking for Levison, and, in spite of his assurances to Frank, it was in shady company that he expected to find him.

### CHAPTER 7.

#### At the Cross-Roads.

**B**IT of a change for you, old top!" Racke grinned as he spoke.

The three young rascals had reached the towing-path behind the Green Man, and stopped at the inn gate. Crooke opened the gate, like one familiar with the surroundings, as indeed he was. It was no new thing for Racke and Crooke to pay surreptitious visits to that reputable quarter on a half-holiday, strictly under the rose. But it was a long time since Ernest Levison had shared in their dingy pursuits.

"Yes," said Levison, "it's a change."

He stopped at the gate, and stood leaning upon it.

In the inn garden a fat and loudly-dressed man waved a cigar at the juniors with a welcoming gesture. It was Mr. Joseph Banks, who was quite glad to see three pigeons arrive to be plucked.

"Come on!" said Crooke, and he went up the garden path.

"Come on, Levison!" said Racke, staring at the moody Fourth-Former leaning on the gate.

Levison did not answer.



Mr. Lathom sat down and turned his spectacles upon Levison, standing quietly before him. His look was severe, but not unkind. "For some time now, Levison," he began, "there has been a change in you. You have chosen to slack, to neglect your work. There must be some reason for this. What is it?" Levison did not answer. (See page 15.)

He had come out with the two black sheep of the School House, fully intending to join them in smoking and playing bankey in the back parlour of the Green Man, in his old dingy way. His mind was made up, bitterly, savagely made up. He had done his best. He had atoned for the past as well as it could be atoned for, and it was all useless. The past was not to be lived down. It had risen against him once more, and this time there was no hope. He was condemned by the school. He was barred by all the fellows he liked and respected. Why should he not indemnify himself as he could, and take, at least, what was going?

That was how he had looked at it in his bitter despondency and anger. But now, as he stood on the verge of the last and lowest plunge, he knew that he could not do it.

His reform had gone deeper than he had been aware himself. The old life of dingy blackguardism had lost its appeal to him.

The reeking, smoky atmosphere of the Green Man parlour, the greedy face of Joe Banks, the greasy cards, the feverish excitement of gambling, the thought of it all filled him with disgust, almost with sickness. There was no solace in that. He knew it now. As he leaned on the gate he was conscious of nothing but black depression. It seemed as if there was no sun in the sky for him.

Racke stared at him. He was far from understanding the thoughts that passed through a mind like Levison's.

"Aren't you coming in?" he asked.

"No."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" said Levison sullenly.

Aubrey Racke sneered.

"Cold feet?" he asked. "What rot! It's safe enough."

"I'm not thinking of that."

"Then what the thump do you mean?" demanded Racke. "Aren't we here for a little game? I've told Banks you're comin', and he's expectin' you, glad to give you a welcome. Come in!"

"Go and get your little game," said Levison. "I'm not coming in. Leave me alone!"

"I'll leave you alone fast enough!" sneered Racke angrily. "Nobody's very anxious for your society, if you come to that. You ought to be jolly grateful for being taken up at all, if you ask me."

"Let it go at that," said Levison quietly. "I don't want to quarrel with you, Racke. Only let me alone."

"I'm not a fellow to be played fast and loose with!" growled Racke. "If you back out now I'm done with you!"

"You're done with me, anyhow," said Levison, in the same quiet tone. "I've been a fool. I can see that. If you'd take a tip from me, Racke, you'd chuck it up before you have to suffer for playing the goat. It's not good enough."

"Keep your advice till I ask for it," said Racke savagely.

"Why, you cheeky cad! To think that you can take me up and drop me again just as you like; you, a fellow that nobody will speak to; you, who were kicked out of your last school for stealing!"

"That's enough!" said Levison, his eyes burning.

"Another word of that, Racke, and you'll be sorry for it."

"I'll give you more than another word!" exclaimed Racke.

"All St. Jim's knows now that you were sacked from Greyfriars for theft. Oh, you rotter!"

Racke reeled back from a blow full in the face, and collapsed on the garden path.

He rolled there dazedly.

Levison stood looking down on him with gleaming eyes.

"Do you want any more?" he asked. "I'm ready to give it you; just in the humour for it! Come on if you like, you cad!"

Aubrey Racke scrambled up. He was not a fighting man, as a rule. But he was furious now. He rushed at Levison like a tiger, and the next moment they were fighting furiously.

"Hallo! What's the row?" shouted Crooke, coming back down the garden path. "What the thump—"

"My hey!" ejaculated Mr. Banks.

Crash!

Racke went down again, gasping. Levison of the Fourth stood over him, breathing hard.

"Look here—" exclaimed Crooke.

Levison turned on him savagely.

"Do you want any?" he snapped.

Gerald Crooke backed away promptly. In Levison's present savage mood, most certainly Crooke of the Shell didn't want any.

"You dashed hooligan—" he began.

"Oh, shut up!"

Racke was still gasping on the ground. Levison gave him a look of contempt and swung away.

He strode down the towing-path with his hands driven deep into his pockets. There was a black satisfaction in his face. Racke was not likely to forgive him in a hurry for that licking, and Levison was shut off from Racke & Co.'s society—if he changed his mind again. Perhaps it had been his intention to burn his boats behind him. Certainly he had done so very effectually.

Levison strode along the sunny river-bank, his brows knitted in gloomy thought. Never had he felt so "down and out" as he felt that sunny afternoon.

He threw himself into the thick grass by the river at last to rest, tired by his tramping and by the emotions in his breast. He lay in the grass and stared away across the shining river.

A boat came into sight. He heard a cheery voice calling:

"Put it on, you fellows!"

It was Figgins' voice. Figgins was steering. Fatty Wynn, Kerr, Redfern, and Owen were rowing. The New House juniors looked ruddy and cheery, enjoying their half-holiday. Levison watched the boat pass, with a gloomy brow. The juniors did not glance towards the figure stretched in the grass on the bank. He watched the boat out of sight, his brow growing blacker and blacker.

It was only trouble and misery in his face. The evil was not there. What had he done to deserve what had happened to him? Once, certainly, he had done enough to deserve heavy punishment, even punishment as heavy as he was receiving now. But that was long past. He had done his best to make up for that. He could say, with a clear conscience, that he had done his best. And now—

He remembered bitterly how he had looked forward to the day of the Greyfriars match, when he was to play in Tom Merry's eleven against the team from his old school. How little he had dreamed of what that day had in store for him then? How contemptuous he had been towards Trimble's spying and prying. He had even refused Cardew's offer to keep the prying Baggy at a distance from the Greyfriars fellows. He had not cared; he had not known that he had anything to fear. Who could have foreseen this? It was so long since he had left Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. had visited St. Jim's many times since. He had never dreamed that that old trouble at Greyfriars could rise up against him at St. Jim's. And Bunter, for no reason that he could think of, but the love of lying—Bunter had lied. And he could not prove that the lie was a lie because his tongue was tied, and the lie was believed. And the fellows did not even understand why his tongue was tied, why he could not, dared not, call on the headmaster of Greyfriars to prove that Bunter and Trimble had lied.

It seemed so easy to Tom Merry & Co. for a fellow whose honour was in question to place the matter before the Housemaster and demand inquiry. Easy enough for a fellow like Tom Merry, or Blake, or Figgins, or D'Arcy. Not easy for Ernest Levison. His tongue was tied—and he wondered that the fellows did not guess why. Yet not even Cardew guessed. He wondered, as he lay in the grass, whether it would not be better to risk all—clear himself, at least, of the accusation against him, and leave St. Jim's; for he did not doubt that it would come to that. He would go; but he would leave the fellows he respected respecting him. He wondered.

There was a step on the towing-path, and he started as he saw Ralph Reckness Cardew. Cardew saw him at the same moment.

"Found you, old bean!" he said. He did not say, and his face did not betray, how glad he was to find Levison there, and not with Racke & Co. "Been lookin' for you."

He sat in the grass beside Levison.

"Improvise the thimmin' hour by puttin' in some thinkin'—what?" he asked lazily.

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"Yes."

"Any results?" smiled Cardew.

"Yes. I'm going to stick it out," said Levison. "I won't be driven away from St. Jim's! I'm not doing Frank much good now, but he would miss me. And Doris—" He broke off. "I'm sticking it out. But it's going to be hard."

And he did not speak again, and lay in the grass, silent, thinking—thinking till the gathering dusk warned him that it was time to return to the school. And Cardew, equally silent, walked back with him to St. Jim's, perplexed, wondering, scarcely understanding his friend's mood, but realising that Levison's evil angel had left him at last—that the fellow who walked silently by his side was once more the Levison he had known.

## CHAPTER 8.

### To Fight, or not to Fight?

TOM MERRY & CO. were waiting for Levison to come in.

Quite an army of fellows, in fact, were waiting. It was known that there was to be a fight between Tom Merry and Levison of the Fourth—and that was a very interesting circumstance in itself. Tom Merry was a great fighting-man; and Levison, though scarcely the match of the Shell fellow, was hard as nails, and known to have plenty of "luck" and "nerve. That little "mill" was likely to be worth watching, and all the fellows who had heard the news booked themselves for front seats, so to speak. And, needless to say, all the sympathy and good wishes were on Tom Merry's side. Tom was popular, and Levison of the Fourth was at the very nadir of unpopularity. Manners and Lowther knew why the fight was taking place; the other fellows only knew that it was taking place, but they were satisfied that the fault was on Levison's side—as, indeed, it was. Tom was not a fellow to quarrel without adequate cause.

So much an outcast now was Ernest Levison that it was doubtful whether among all the crowd of St. Jim's fellows he would find a second, unless he called on the services of his minor in the Third Form, Baggy Trimble, who never could mind his own business, made it a point to ask Sidney Clive whether he was seconding Levison, and Clive did not even trouble to answer the inquisitive Baggy. But when Blake asked him the South African junior replied briefly in the negative.

Whereupon Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the Fourth, assumed a very thoughtful expression.

"It's a bit wotten!" he said. "Levison ought to have somebody to throw up the sponge for him when he's licked."

"There's Cardew," remarked Blake.

"Is Cardew stickin' to him?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Blake. "Nobody ever knows what Cardew may or may not do! It would be just like him to stick to Levison because everybody is down on him—just out of contrary piqueheadedness!"

"Cardew is a wathin' unwelcome fellah for anybody to depend on," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully. "If he does not back up Levison, I think I will second the chap, dear boys."

"What utter rot!" grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewies—"

"Piffle!" said Digby.

"If you characterize my remarks as piffle, Dig—"

"Still a bosh!" said Blake. "This study isn't backing up a chap who was kicked out of his old school for stealing! Forget it, Gussy!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"You begin seconding Levison and we'll snatch you bald-headed!" growled Herries.

"Wats!"

"He doesn't seem in a hurry to come in, though," remarked Dig.

Blake chuckled.

"I dare say by this time he's sorry he got Tommy's back up. Tommy can punch. Not like this study; but he can punch! Levison's for it as soon as he gets in front of Tommy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Nobody expected Levison to come out best in the impending combat; but everybody expected him to put up a determined fight, and that Tom Merry would have to go "all out." Tom was aware of that himself, and he was in a determined mood. Levison's smack on his face still seemed to burn when he thought of it. He felt that it would have been wiser perhaps to leave the black sheep to go on the road to ruin his own way; but his intervention had been well meant, at least. There was no excuse whatever for Levison's insolent rejoinder, so far as Tom could see.

In Study No. 10 after tea Tom had the gloves on with Monty Lowther for a few rounds, and he was quite satisfied with the form he was in.

The chums of the Shell were putting away the gloves after those few rounds when the study door opened, and Baggy Trimble looked in, with a grin on his fat face.

"He's coming!" announced Baggy.

"Who's coming?" snapped Tom.

"Levison!"

"Coming here?" asked Manners.

"Oh, no! Just coming in at the gates," said Baggy.

"Cardew's with him. I say, Cardew ought to be sent to Coventry for sticking to him! Don't you fellows think so?"

"Oh, get out, Trimble!" growled Tom. "All the trouble was caused by your nosing and prying, you fat rotter!"

"I found him out!" said Baggy loftily. "It's a fellow's duty to—"

"Get out!" roared Tom Merry. "Duty" from Baggy Trimble was a little too much for him.

And Baggy sniffed and departed.

"Going down?" asked Lowther.

"Too late now before call-over," said Tom. "I'll speak to Levison when we come out after roll-call—or, rather, you can speak to him, as you're my second, Monty."

"Right-ho!"

And the Terrible Three remained in their study, loftily indifferent to the news Baggy had officiously brought them.

But other fellows were not indifferent. Levison, as he came in at the gates with Cardew, was the eyefore of a very large number of eyes. Some of the juniors wondered whether he had stayed out so long intentionally to avoid the conflict.

Levison's face was very grave and his manner very quiet. He did not seem to observe the interest he excited. He came up the School House steps with Cardew and entered the House. He went up the staircase by himself, Cardew remaining downstairs. He, if not Levison, had observed the general excitement.

"Anythin' on you fellows?" he asked, addressing Blake & Co.

"Yaas, wathah!" smiled Arthur Augustus. "Are you secondin' Levison, Cardew?"

"Shut up!" growled Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies—"

"Secondin' him?" repeated Cardew. "I don't catch on!"

Is Levison goin' on the giddy war-path?"

"Yaas, wathah! Tom Mewwy, you know—"

"Oh, I remember now! Tommy mentioned it," said Cardew, with a nod. "By gad, I believe Levison's forgotten!"

"Forgotten!" yelled Study No. 6 with one voice.

"Just that!" said Cardew carelessly.

"He'll get reminded, then!" said Blake grimly.

"I'll remind him," assented Cardew. "Yes, Gussy, I'm goin' to second him if there's goin' to be a scrap. You fellows needn't rush in claimin' the job—it's booked!"

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Thanks, all the same, in Levison's name," said Cardew gravely. "I'll tell him how keen Study No. 6 are to back him up."

"You silly ass!" roared Blake. "We wouldn't—"

But Cardew was going up the stairs, deaf to any rejoinder.

He looked into Study No. 9 in the Fourth, where he found Levison. Levison gave him a glance as he entered.

"You've forgotten somethin', old bean," said Cardew lightly.

"I shouldn't wonder. I've had a lot to think of," said Levison. "What's the matter?"

"You're booked for a fight with Tom Merry."

Levison started.

As a matter of fact, the whole thing had slipped from his mind. That afternoon he had been thinking of other things—after leaving Racker & Co. He had been through a stress of mind that left little room for trifles. He had stood at the cross-roads, as it were, and made his choice between the downward path and the hard, uphill road, where he would have to fight every inch of his way. It was the latter that he had chosen, and his mood, when he returned to St. Jim's, was very different from the mood in which he had left. In those quiet hours by the river bank he had fought with and quelled the evil spirit. He was himself again, like a fellow emerging from an evil dream.

Cardew's words came as a shock to him.

"A fight with Tom Merry!" he repeated. "Oh, yes; I remember! I—I suppose I've got to go through with it, all the same."

He paused, and wrinkled his brows in thought. Cardew watched him curiously. He could not understand Levison to-day, but he certainly found him what he would have called an "interestin' study." Levison shook his head at last.

"I'm not going to fight Tom Merry!" he said quietly.

## CHAPTER 9.

### A Surprise for Tom Merry.

THE School House fellows came out of Big Hall, after roll-call, and Tom Merry & Co. looked round for Levison. Mr. Lathom, the master of the Fourth, came out, blinked round through his spectacles, and signed to Levison of the Fourth, and the junior walked away with him. The Terrible Three exchanged glances.

"Unavoidably postponed!" murmured Monty Lowther.

"It will keep," said Tom.

"Looks as if Levison is in for a row," remarked Manners.

"I hear that he has been doing rotten work, and checking Lathom in the Form-room lately. Seems to be going to the bad altogether."

The Terrible Three went into the Common-room. Levison followed Mr. Lathom to his study. He could see that he was booked for a lecture, at least. He rather wondered that it had not come before. Mr. Lathom sat down, and turned his spectacles upon the junior, standing quiet before him. His look was severe, but not unkind.

"Probably you know what I am about to refer to, Levison," he said.

"I think so, sir," said the junior.

"For some time now, Levison, there has been a change in you," said the Fourth Form master. "You, who were one of my best pupils, have become one of the worst. You are one of the cleverest boys in my Form. You could do the Form credit, if you chose. You have chosen to slack, to neglect your work. What work you have done has been slovenly and discreditible. There must be some reason for this."

Levison was silent.

"It will be my duty to place the matter before the headmaster, if this state of affairs continues," said Mr. Lathom. "But I am loth to take such a step. I would rather make an appeal to you, Levison, and urge you to take yourself in hand while there is still time."

"You are very kind, sir," said Levison, in a low voice.

It was not the answer he would have made the day before. But since that Levison had fought out the battle with himself and won it. Mr. Lathom, who had probably expected a reply full of half-veiled insolence, looked at him very curiously.

"May I take it, Levison, that you intend to do your best, and to make amends?" he asked.

Levison raised his eyes from the carpet.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I'm sorry. I—I was cheeky in the Form-room the other day. I'm sorry for it! I've been slacking; I know that, sir! I—I've been thinking things over to-day, sir, and—and I'm going to do my best."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Levison," said the Fourth Form master kindly. "I shall trust you! You may go, Levison."

And Mr. Lathom did not even glance towards the cane on his table, which had apparently been placed there ready for use. Levison left the study, and as he came down the corridor Jack Blake tapped him on the arm.

"Ready?" he asked.

Levison looked at him.

"For what?"

"Tom Merry's in the Common-room, waiting for you," said Blake. "You seem to be suffering from lapse of memory, old bean; I'm reminding you."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Thank you!" said Levison coolly; and he walked away to the junior Common-room, with a crowd of fellows in his wake.

Tom Merry & Co. had another crowd with them in the Common-room. There was a general movement of interest as Levison of the Fourth entered, and came up to the Terrible Three.

"Here he is!" chortled Baggy Trimble.

Tom Merry fixed his eyes on Levison. Levison met them calmly.

"Well, are you ready, Levison?" asked the captain of the Shell.

"We've been waiting," hinted Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Ernest Levison drew a deep breath.

"I'm not going to fight you, Tom Merry," he said, in a quiet, calm voice, though the colour was creeping back into his cheeks.

Tom stared at him.

"You're not?"

"I'd rather not."

"It's not a matter of choice now," said Tom Merry grimly. "You can't tell a fellow you're not going to fight him after punching his face, Levison."

"Wathah not!"

"I'm sorry!" said Levison.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I know you meant kindly enough when you spoke to me this afternoon," went on Levison, in a low voice. "I was in an evil temper, and I'm sorry for what I did. That's all. If you want to scrap I'm ready. But I was bound to say that."

Tom Merry gave him a very puzzled look. There was a derisive murmur from some of the juniors.

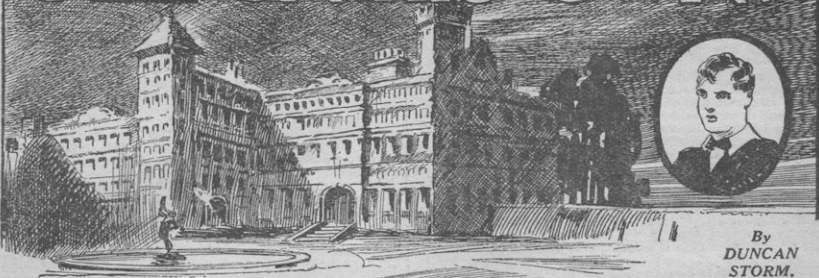
"Cold feet!" remarked Crooke very audibly.

"Funk!" gushed Trimble.

Levison's flush deepened, but his manner was still calm.

(Continued on page 19.)

# ALL ON HIS OWN!



## A Story of a Lad's Uphill Fight for Fame and Fortune!

### THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

JIM READY, a sturdy lad of fourteen, having seen his last friend laid to rest, is left all alone in the great world. He is leaving the cemetery gates, when he butts up against

A KINDLY STRANGER (John Lincoln), the principal governor of the great school of St. Beowulf's, who had been watching him at the funeral.

The two walk along the road together, and the stranger tells Jim it is education he needs first. He then withdraws a piece of parchment from his pocket, and, after signing it, hands it to Jim. It is a free pass into the great school. Jim is to take his chance as a Lincoln scholar at St. Beowulf's.

He finds a friend in Wobbygoon, a plucky lad from Australia, and the master of a pet kangaroo, Nobby.

Nobby bolts one night, but the boys give chase and capture him. On their return to St. Beowulf's they find that burglars have broken into the school. The ruffians are captured. Wobby commandsers their car, and hides it in the Haunted Barn.

Learning of the scoundrels' intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country, Wobby plans to capture the plunders. At the dead of night he and his pals steal out of the school. Boarding the commandeered car, they are soon hot on the trail.

They are only just in time to rescue the colonel from further members of the gang, two of whom they capture. Mr. Travers, of Scotland Yard, who is also after the gang, appears on the scene. Two of the burglars escape in a motor-cycle and sidicar to the marshes, where they are followed by the boys. The latter drive to Whitechurch Castle, where they find the plunder hidden in a well. Suddenly they are attacked by the two burglars. "So we've caught you!" cries one. "On the contrary," replies Wobby, "we've caught you!"

(Now read on.)

### John Lincoln Again.

THE man laughed harshly. "We'll see who's the catcher!" he snarled. "You are the kids who are messing about in our game!" "Yes," answered Wobby, putting his head up very carefully. "You and your gang are the ten little niggers, and we've put paid to five of you up to now. If you don't beat it while the going is good, it will be seven of you in the old County Gaol!"

Bang! The ruffian fired from his pocket without raising his arm, and the bullet whistled close to Wobby's head.

"Miss!" signalled Wobby, undaunted.

"Rush them, Ted!" snarled the man.

"Ready, boys!" muttered Wobby. "Let 'em have it as they come up the slope!"

Crack! went the two pistols almost simultaneously as the boys' heads showed

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above the ridge of the bank, and the walls of the old ruin re-echoed to the shots.

"Whang, whang, whang!" The catapults answered the fire, and with a groan, one of the ruffians dropped his pistol and clapped his fist in his mouth.

"Come on, Ted, you fool!" yelled his companion.

"Concentrate fire on Ted!" ordered Wobby.

The catlets twanged like harpstrings. Ted, who had stooped to pick up his pistol, was hit by a stone on the forehead, whilst another stone hit him in the ribs with a dead, sounding thud, which betrayed the quality of Wobby's homemade catapults.

He snatched up his revolver, and, despite the orders of his companion, turned tail, and ran down the bank, unable to stand the fire of stones which whizzed about his ears.

The pistol of the other ruffian cracked twice, but Ted's panic, and the stones from Jim's catty which pelted about him, upset his aim.

A stinging blow on the funnybone from one of Jim's shots finished his attempt to rally the more faint-hearted Ted, and both ran together beyond the range of the catapults.

"Good shot, Jim!" called Wobby approvingly. "If we go on like this we can keep it going till dawn. Someone is sure to hear the shots on the marshes and come to see about it. There's coastguards on one side and keepers on the other."

A brisk altercation was now going on between Ted and his companion.

The boys could not hear much of it, but it foretold a fresh attack.

"You white-livered 'ond, you!" snarled Ted's leader. "Goin' to let us be done out of a fortune 'cause you're afraid to stick up to a parcel of schoolboys! The young devils have found the stuff, I tell you, or they'd never stand up to us like this. They'd have cut and run!"

"Parcel of schoolboys!" snarled the discomfited Ted. "Parcel of young demons! They've got more up there than catapults, or they'd 'op it!"

"It's got to be done!" said his companion fiercely. "With this firm we'll stir up the whole coast. It's everything or go! to us, and if you don't show fight—"

There was a threatening pause which decided the lagging Ted to the attack again.

The dash was quick and sudden. Up they came with a run.

"It's business this time, boys!" said Wobby. "Somebody's got to get hurt!"

Regardless of a shot, he rose, boomerang in hand, and, with that queer twist of his arm which no boy in the school could imitate, he sent the boomerang flying out into the night.

He did not aim directly at his object, which was not Ted, but his stouter-hearted companion.

"That's for the king pin of the bunch!" he muttered as the boomerang soared away into the gloom.

It was a marvellous shot which few but an Australian native black could have taken, for the boomerang was thrown to take the enemy in the rear.

An old white owl, disturbed by the firing from its perch, dodged in the air as something that seemed like a strange and fearful bird flittered by.

With a shout of menace, Ted's companion rushed up the slope.

Wobby had dropped on his hands and knees. He was waiting for his wooden bird to come home.

"Got you!" yelled the ruffian in triumph, as he reared up the bank to the spot where Wobby was kneeling.

He was almost on top of Wobby as the heavy boomerang came home.

Plunk!

It hit the ruffian just at the back of the head, arriving with tremendous force, and sent him toppling over on his face, so that he almost fell on Wobby's back.

"Got you, I think, mister!" said Wobby, as he snatched up the pistol which fell from his assailant's hand.

He sent a shot whistling close past Ted's ear.

Ted stood paralysed.

"He that Ted" called Wobby affably. "Take care, or you won't hear the next one!"

With a yell of dismay, Ted, as he saw his leader fall thus mysteriously as though bit by a thunderbolt, turned and ran, making for the gateway as hard as he could.

"After him, boys!" called Wobby, with a

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glance at his prostrate foe. "After him! We've got to rope him in, or he'll blow the gaff to his pals!"

The boys leaped up. But even the greatest of cowards are courageous when desperate.

Ted turned on them, threatening them with his pistol as he fell back on the archway. He was hoping to hold them at bay till he could get to the opening in the gate, and then away to the motor-cycle which had been left on the road.

Wobby's boomerang was useless here, for the narrow of the ruins towards the gateway impeded its flight.

He could have shot the rascal easily, but there was something in Wobby which forbade him to risk the chance of taking a human life.

Bang!

Wobby gasped as Jim Ready ducked and seemed to fall, and in that second the burglar's life hung on a hair trigger.

"Hit Jim!" called Wobby.

"No," replied Jim. "It was a close shave, though."

"Fire again, Ted, and I'll shoot you!" said Wobby.

But the retreating burglar had no time to fire again.

Across the single flats outside the gate of the old ruin there came the rush and roar of a powerful engine.

Two blinding headlights flared in at the entrance way, lighting the white scene with the white glare of a star-shell.

For a second Wobby saw the great bars of black shadow cast by the remnants of the battens gate lying in long lines across the courtyard.

Then there was a crash of timber, and the gate flew into splinters as the bonnet of a large Rolls-Royce car, crowded with men, broke into the courtyard, sending the retreating burglar flying as the mudguard caught him.

Before he could get up again the men in the car leaped out on him, and nailed him as a pack of hounds nail a fox.

Then they turned and stared in wonderment at the sight which showed in the white glare of the lamplight.

Five schoolboys and a kangaroo, in open order, were closing on the gate. High up on the grassy mound of the ruined keep lay a figure prostrate, face downwards on the ground.

"Watch that fellow who's laid out on the keep!" cried an authoritative voice.

"Police!" thought Wobby to himself.

But the policemen were dressed in velvet and in the orthodox pot-hats of the gamekeeper.

Suddenly a bearded man, dressed in shabby tweeds, stepped down from the great car. He was the man who had given the order to watch the man laid out by Wobby's boomerang.

He laughed as he saw the rather scared group spread fan-wise before the car.

Nobby, dazzled by the lights of the car, had stood up on his hind legs, and propped up by his fat tail, was getting ready to defend himself and his chums against this strange creature with the fiery eyes.

"What's all this battle going on here, you gentlemen?" demanded the bearded man, his lips parting and showing a row of white, even teeth.

"Burglars, sir," replied Wobby. "They were attacking us in the castle keep."

"What for?"

"Treason, sir," replied Wobby. "We were defending Lord Tantivy's golden dishes and a barrowload of Lord Bradbury's silver."

Wobby spoke in a low tone. He did not want that curious crowd of gamekeepers to hear what he had to say.

The bearded man looked at Jim Ready, and nodded amiably.

"I see you are some of my family," he said pleasantly. "There is my Benjamin, Jim Ready, with you, I notice."

Jim's heart had gone into his boots.

"Your family, sir?" asked Wobby in faltering tones.

"Yes," replied the stranger; "I see that you are all Lincoln scholars. I am John Lincoln!"

Wobby looked up helplessly into that kindly, bearded face.

"Oh crumbs!" he ejaculated. "It's the Gold Knob himself. We'll be sent to the pack, sure!"

### Mr. Lincoln is Interested.

FOR once in his life the resourceful Wobby was caught out. He stood staring helplessly at Mr. John Lincoln, patron and overlord of all St. Beowulf's School.

How was he to explain to this great man why he and his companions were knocking about the country with a motor-car borrowed from a gang of burglars, and conducting a small battle against two armed men with no better ally than a dissipated kangaroo, and no better weapons than a boomerang and five catapults?

"First of all," said Mr. Lincoln, "we'll examine the gentleman who lies so quiet on yonder bank."

Two gamekeepers were holding the luckless Ted, who had tried to escape through the gateway of the ruined castle. Two others had run to the other burglar, and were lifting him to his feet.

"He's all right, sir," said one. "He's only stunned. Caught a nasty crack on the head from this thing."

John Lincoln nodded.

"Hold him tight," he replied. "I'll attend to him in the magistrate's room when we get him home."

The gamekeeper looked suspiciously at the boomerang.

"Nice sort of thing to have about, with pheasants in the woods!" he muttered, casting a suspicious glance at Wobby as, with his companion, he led the dazed burglar to the waiting car.

"Now, boys," asked John Lincoln, "what's all this about Lord Tantivy's and the Bradbury plate? And what are you doing out here at this hour with that car? St. Beowulf's boys don't keep cars, and I suppose Dr. Brackenbury would be rather surprised if he knew that five of his young gentlemen and a kangaroo were making a night of it in this fashion."

The boys were silent.

"Speak up, my boys," said John Lincoln.

"Rest assured, I won't give you away. It seems to me that we are all in the same game. I have come out to-night in response to a police telephone message asking me to warn my gamekeepers to keep a good look-out for two men with a cycle and side-car. There is also a Ford car belonging to a burglar gang fitting mysteriously about the country."

"That's us, sir!" replied Wobby promptly. "We annexed that car from the burglars!"

John Lincoln looked amazed,

"Where have you kept it hidden?" he asked.

"In the old Haunted Barn, sir," replied Wobby promptly.

John Lincoln laughed long and loud.

"You young rascals!" he said. "Do you know that the police have been searching far and wide for that car? Do you mean to say that you are working against the police?"

"No, sir!" replied Wobby eagerly. "We are working for the police. But we are ahead of them all the time, that's all. They could not find out where Lord Tantivy's plate and the stuff from Lord Bradbury's was hidden away. But we have run it to earth. We know where Lady Castlewold's jewels are stowed away as well, and we have helped the police to lay hands on seven out of the gang of ten who are working the district!"

John Lincoln laughed.

"But you don't want them to lay hands on the stuff that has already been stolen?" he said.

"That's the size of it, sir," answered Wobby.

"Look here, boys," said John Lincoln suddenly. "It's all very well, your playing at little policemen against one of the smartest hands of Scotland Yard. But it is a dangerous game, and from what the police tell me, this is an international gang, who are getting all the more dangerous as they grow fewer in numbers, like the ten little niggers. I want you to confide the whole lot to me. In fact, as a county magistrate, I have the right to be told all about it."

"Old Pepper is a county magistrate, too, sir," replied Wobby; "but we found him to-night tied up in his chair, with a couple of lugs getting ready to put a red-hot poker round the soles of his feet. We rescued him all right, and handed the two lads who wanted to fry his feet—Flash Desky and Punch Baker—over to a friendly policeman from Scotland Yard called Travers, who had been chasing us with a car full of men in blue. We only dodged them by driving our old Ford down the slope of the Smugglers' Punchbowl—and it's a good thing we came down all right, or there might have been a row up at Scotland Yard!"

John Lincoln stared at the little group with something like respect in his eyes.

"You young rips!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to tell me that you took a car down the Smugglers' Punchbowl on a night like this?"

"We had to, sir!" replied Wobby. "Then



THE GREAT CRASH!

There was a crash of timber, and the gate flew into splinters as the bonnet of the large car, crowded with men, broke into the courtyard, sending the retreating burglar flying.

we drove across the Downs, and stumbled into old Pepper's back garden with it, just as Punch Baker and Flash Dossky were getting to work with the red-hot poker on his corns, trying to make him tell where he had got his collection of jewels stowed away!

"Silly old ass!" muttered John Lincoln. "He might have known that he was inviting a gang like this, living alone as he does. Everyone knows that he's got the collection in the house. I've warned him of it a dozen times. He is a hot-headed man, old Pepper!"

"He was very near being a hot-footed man to-night, sir!" answered Wobby. "But Mr. Travers was a sport, sir. He knows our lark, and he won't give us away at the school."

"Mr. Travers is in a different position to myself," replied John Lincoln. "You are Lincoln scholars—you are practically boys adopted by me. By my deed of gift Jo St. Beowulf's I take upon myself what are practically the responsibilities of a parent and guardian to all you Lincoln scholars. I shall not be fulfilling my duty by you or by the school if I allow you to go cutting round the country, playing tough with as dangerous a gang as exists out of gaol."

Wobby thought for a moment. He was evidently making up his mind if he should give his whole confidence to John Lincoln. His cunning introduction of the sportsman-ship of the Scotland Yard detective had gone down in the light of this new relationship. "Then, in a sense, you are our old pot, sir?" he suggested.

"Old pot?" queried John Lincoln, mystified by Wobby's Australianism.

"Old pot-and-pan—our old man!" explained Wobby.

"Sure!" answered John Lincoln, his eyes twinkling.

"And you won't give us away up at the school?" asked Wobby.

"Of course I won't give away anything that you give me in confidence," answered John Lincoln. "I am very much impressed by what you boys have done already. As a matter of fact, the whole of you deserve a jolly good hiding for breaking school and getting into a business that does not concern you. But you have shown courage and resource, which makes me think that I can find you some other work more exciting and more entertaining than chasing criminals round a quiet country."

"That's the ribuck talk, sir!" answered

Wobby. "Man to man—an' square, an' all! When we are through with this job you can show us up if it is your duty, and Dr. Brackenbury can give us the whole programme with his hickory. Here's the whole story. We nab a burglar up at the school. I fetch him a cosh on the block with my boomerang. He's my burglar, isn't he?"

"Certainly!" answered John Lincoln. "He's a captive of your bow and spear—and boomerang!"

"Right-ho, sir!" continued Wobby, well pleased to find that he had made his point. "I will find the red-hot poker and the white. John Lincoln opened the sacks and drew forth a specimen of Lord Tantivy's massive gold plate.

"I give you best, young gentlemen!" he said. "You have done exceedingly well. But, all the same, I am beginning to think that I want you boys for another enterprise, and I am not going to have you shot or drowned, saving other folks' property for them in a country where the police are paid for the duty. If you are going on with this, you will have to take me into your—er—gang—me and my man Stubbs. I will supply the secret, and you will be guided by the laws of the gang, and I will vouch for Stubbs. Stubbs was with me in my march through Africa. He and I have been in many a tight place, and he has never found Stubbs fail me. He has the great merit of being a silent man, and he won't blab the secrets of our—gang!"

The boys thrilled with delight. They saw that their adventure had captured this man who had been in many adventures, and they were stirred by his mysterious allusions to his enterprise.

"There is my hand on it," said John Lincoln, holding forth his hand.

"We'll take you in, sir," said Wobby cordially. "You and your man Stubbs. As a matter of fact, sir, I was beginning to get a bit worried as to how we were going to tackle that fishing-boat, because I knew the coast outside is dangerous and the entrance to Barham Harbour difficult!"

"I know all that," said John Lincoln. "I have sailed on this coast boy and man. So has Stubbs. Stubbs is a first-class seaman."

"That's that settled," said Wobby comfortably. Then a thought struck him. "How are we going to meet on Saturday night, sir?" he asked.

"How do you boys manage to get out of the school?" asked John Lincoln.

"Well, we get out of the chimney this time, sir," explained Wobby.

John Lincoln thought for a moment.

"You will receive an invitation to spend the week-end at my place," he said. "There will be nothing out of the way in that, or when I am at home, it is my custom to invite a few of the Lincoln scholars to High March Castle so that I can find out for myself what progress they are making, what are their inclinations for their future lives, and, generally, what sort of boys they are. I don't think I shall want to be told what sort of boys you are, but you may see my collections of weapons and curios, and we shall be able to have our adventure unmolested. And to give the whole affair an official atmosphere, I want to ask one other guest to join us."

"Who is that?" asked Wobby.

"Mr. Travers, of Scotland Yard."

Wobby thought for a moment.

"That's all right, sir," he said. "Mr. Travers has treated us very well, and, if you think he'd enjoy the trip, by all means ask him."

John Lincoln nodded. "The immediate business is to get you back to the school before daybreak, and there is not too much time to accomplish this. As likely as not your old car will let you down after the way you have handled it. Not many cars would stand the buffeting you have given it. Have you any more use for it?"

"No, sir," replied Wobby. "I was going to try the gentleman's Castlewood wheels on foot, and, as for the other bits of stuff that are scattered round the country, the police can get them for all I care, when we've had our lark. The plums are here."

(There will be another splendid instalment of this magnificent serial next week.)



"Have a look at these sacks, sir," said Wobby. "You will find the gold and silver." John Lincoln opened the sacks, and drew forth a specimen of Lord Tantivy's massive plate.

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## "THE OUTCAST OF THE SCHOOL."

(Continued from page 13.)

"Well," said Tom, after a pause, "if you're sorry, I—I suppose that ends it. Let it drop."

Levison of the Fourth looked round. There was no trace in his looks of the evil, the bitterness that had been so strongly marked there of late. But his face was determined, and there was a gleam in his eyes.

"I've apologised to Tom Merry," he said. "But any fellow here who calls me a funk can put it to the test on the spot. I'm ready."

Crooke backed out of the crowd, and Baggy Trimble made himself as small as possible. Grundy of the Shell broke the silence.

"Suppose I call you a funk?" he demanded.

Levison made a step towards the burly Grundy.

"Do so, if you like," he said. "I'll knock it back between your teeth as soon as you've said it!"

"Will you, by gum!" said Grundy warmly. "I'll give you a chance. Funk!"

The next moment George Alfred Grundy laid to put up his hands, and only just in time. Blake hurriedly closed the Common-room door, and for the next ten minutes the scene in the room was exciting. At the end of the ten minutes Grundy of the Shell confessed—from the carpet—that he had had enough. And Cardew led Levison away to bathe his nose and his eyes, which were sorely in need of attention.

Tom Merry went to his study in a thoughtful mood. He could not understand Levison, and he was doubtful and perplexed. So long as the St. Jim's outcast kept up his attitude of mocking defiance and insolence, Tom knew how to deal with him; but this was a new Levison. There was a quiet dignity in the ostracised junior that troubled Tom. The thought came into his mind, and haunted him, that perhaps, somehow, impossible as it seemed, injustice had been done—that, somehow, Levison of the Fourth had not had fair play. "I wonder—" said Tom, after a long silence.

He did not finish. And, oddly enough, in Study No. 6, about the same time, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked up from the entrancing pages of Milton, which he was "mugging" for the morrow, and remarked thoughtfully:

And he shook his noble head and returned to Milton.

THE END.

(Will Levison ever be able to prove his innocence and clear his name, without having to leave St. Jim's? On no account must you miss "Down and Out!" next week's grand story!)

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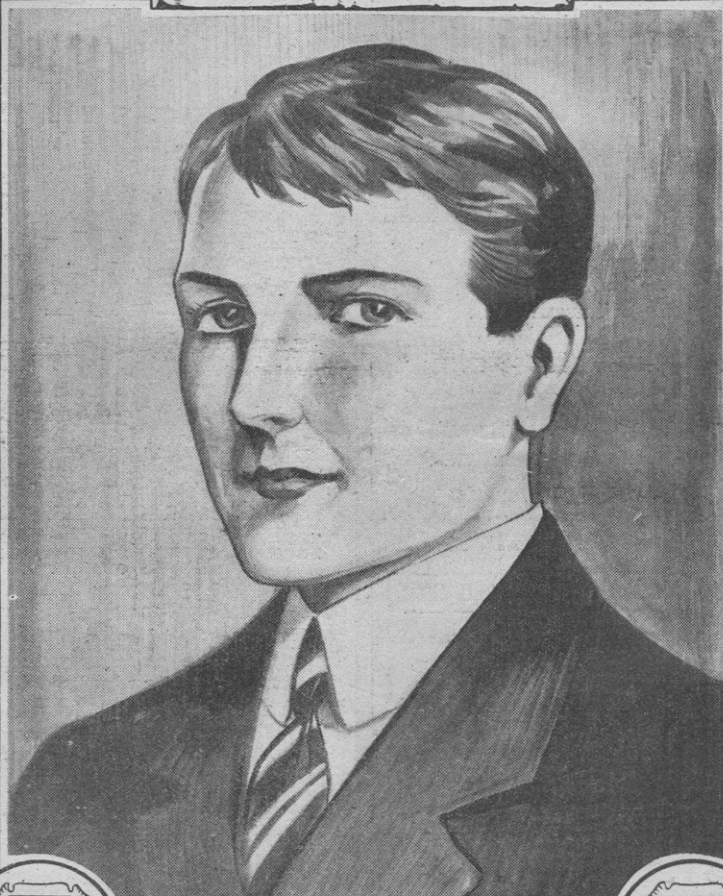
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