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No. 788  
Vol. XXII

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October 28th, 1922.



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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

CHAPTER I.

Any Port in a Storm!

**R**ALPH RECKNESS CARDREW opened the door of Tom Merry's study in the Shell passage, stepped in quickly, and shut the door behind him.

It was done swiftly and silently.

Within the study, Cardew stood motionless, listening. He grinned as rapid footsteps approached the door, passed it, and died away up the passage. Voices, recognisable as those of Levison and Clive of the Fourth Form, faded into the distance.

"Sold!" murmured Cardew.

"Hallo!"

Cardew gave a start.

In stepping into the study without a knock, he had certainly supposed that the room was empty. Tom Merry certainly was at football practice, and Cardew had supposed that Manners and Lowther were with him. He looked round quickly as he was hailed.

Monty Lowther was seated at the study table. He was staring across it at Cardew in surprise.

"Hallo!" he repeated.

"Same to you, old bean!" said Cardew, with a pleasant nod. "Many of them, in fact."

"Do you usually butt into a study without knocking?" Monty inquired politely.

"Not as a rule," said Cardew, with great gravity. "But there are occasions when even politeness and polished manners yield to more urgent considerations. This is one." He strolled across to the table. "How is it I find you indoors, old bean? How can it be that you are not urgin' the flyin' ball with the strenuous Thomas? Surely this study has not taken to slackin' in its old age?"

Monty Lowther sniffed.

"We leave slacking to Study No. 9 in the Fourth!" he replied.

"A hit—a very palpable hit," said Cardew gravely. "Is it lines! Like me to help you with them?"

"It isn't lines," said Lowther, dipping his pen in the ink again. "And I hardly think you'd help if it were. Shut the door after you."

"My dear man, I mean it," said Cardew. "At the present moment I find your company so fascinatin' that I wouldn't have you for worlds. I'd rather help you ladle out merry old Vinag by the yard, or jolly old Horatius Flaccus by the fathom. Honest Injun! But if you're not busy on lines, what the thump are you so busy scribblin'?"

"Literary work," said Lowther.

"Oh gad! I—I mean—what?"

"I dare say you've heard of 'St. Jim's News'?" said Lowther sarcastically. "I'm doing the comic column."

"Oh! I—I thought you said literary work," said Cardew. Monty Lowther breathed hard. He did not deign to reply, but he pointed to the door with the handle of his pen.

Cardew did not take the hint. Obviously, he had reasons of his own for remaining in the study, whether Lowther's company was fascinating or not. He turned his ear to the door for a moment, to listen, and then gave his attention to the humorist of the Shell.

"Gettin' on with it?" he asked.

"Yes; and no better for being interrupted by a silly ass!" said Monty, without looking up.

"You'd rather I cleared, perhaps?"

"Just that."

"What I admire about this study," remarked Cardew, "is the way the chaps in it express their meanin' without any ambiguity, and untroubled and untrammelled by any silly considerations of politeness. Won't you read some of it out to me, Lowther? I'm awfully gone on real humour, and I know that this study is the place for the genuine article."

Lowther looked up at that. Everyone has his weakness, and Lowther was no exception to the rule. He had been known to lend Trimble of the Fourth hard cash when the slute Trimble, as a preliminary, had asked him to read out

something from his lucubrations for the "St. Jim's News." Cardew, who, for some mysterious reason, wanted to stay in the study just then, evidently knew which was the right chord to touch.

"I don't mind letting you hear it," said Lowther, yawning. "You really oughtn't to see it till the number comes out; still—"

"Somethin' awfully good—what?" asked Cardew, with great affability.

"Well, I think it will make 'em laugh," said Lowther genially. "I've got a story about a professor of grammar. When he was asked to buy things, he used to answer in German."

"Eh?"

"Instead of saying 'No,' he would always say 'Nein,'" explained Lowther.

"Nine!" asked Cardew. "I—I—I see! When they wanted to sell him one article, he used to buy nine of them."

"You silly ass!"

"Eh?"

"Nein—N-E-I-N—German for No!" hooted Lowther.

"Oh! I—I see. He was a German!" asked Cardew.

"Nothing of the kind."

"I—I see." It was pretty clear that Cardew didn't see. In fact, Monty Lowther's little jokes, as his chums often told him, required some seeing. "He wasn't a German, but he answered in German. Why did he do that, Lowther?"

"Because he was very strict on grammar."

"Which?"

"You see, his reason was—"

"Oh, he had a reason?"

"Yes, you ass!" roared Lowther. "Of course he had."

"Oh! Yes! Of course! My mistake! What was his reason?"

"His reason was, because you cannot decline the article in English," explained Lowther.

"I—I—I—I see! That—that's the joke!"

"That's it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cardew.

Lowther laughed, too. He was always prepared to derive enjoyment from his own little jokes.

"You see it?" he grinned. "Rather good—what?"

"Toppin'!" said Cardew. "How do you do these things, Lowther?"

"Oh, they come into a chap's head when he sits down to scribble, you know," said Lowther modestly. "You're fairly keen, Cardew. There are some fellows who don't see that joke."

"Yes; I'm one of them!"

"What?" ejaculated Lowther.

"I—I mean—"

"Oh, you wouldn't see it—a Fourth Form ass!" said Lowther crossly. "It's jolly good, all the same. You see, in German the article is declined—in grammar, I mean. I suppose you know what a declension is—der, die, das, and the rest of the rot?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well, you don't decline the article in English, do you?"

"That depends. I should if I didn't want the thing."

"I mean in grammar!" shrieked Lowther.

"Oh! In grammar. You mean, if a shopman was sellin' me a grammar—"

"No, I don't!" yelled the hapless humorist. "I mean that the article in the English language isn't declined at all. How are you going to decline the word 'the,' you thumping ass?"

"Nobody's ever offered it to me."

"You—you cross ass!"

"If anybody did, I should hardly know what he was drivin' at," said Cardew gravely. "I should think the chap was pullin' my leg, somehow. But this professor you were tellin' me about—a professor of rhetoric, did you say?"

"A professor of grammar!" roared Lowther.

"Does it matter which he was professor of?"

"Of course it does! It was because he was a strict grammarian that he wouldn't attempt to decline the article in English. That's where the joke comes in."

"Does it? Good! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you see it now!"

"Well, I'm willin' to take your word for it," said Cardew. "Dash it all, as a giddy humorist you ought to know whether a thing's funny or not! If you give me your word that it's funny, I'm satisfied. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You burbling chump!" roared Lowther.

"My dear old bean—"

"You crass, padding-headed dummy—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You frabjous ass—"

Footsteps sounded outside the study again. There was a knock at the door, and it opened, and Ernest Levison of the Fourth Form looked in.

"Have you seen Cardew? Oh, here you are, you slacker!"

"Take him away and bury him!" grunted Lowther. "You oughtn't to let such a born idiot go around loose!"

Sidney Clive looked in over Levison's shoulder, with a grin.

"Here you are! Come on!"

"I—I say!" murmured Cardew. "Let me off this time! I've been dodgin' you for half an hour, and—ah! I'm not equal to football this afternoon. I've had a most exhaustin' time."

"Rot! What have you been doing?"

"Listenin' to Lowther's wit and humour—"

Monty Lowther jumped up from the table. He made another jump towards the fender, and clutched up the poker. Ralph Reckness Cardew—with more haste than was often displayed by the elegant dandy of the Fourth—retreated into the passage. Levison slammed the door just in time.

"Now come down to footer practice, you slacking ass!" said Clive. "We're not letting you off. This way!"

Cardew groaned.

"To-morrow!" he suggested.

"Take his other arm, Levison."

"My dear chaps—"

"Better make up your mind to it," said Levison. "Study No. 9 is going to be distinguished in footer this season; and you're going to play in the House team, if not for the School, or perish in the attempt!"

"It will mean perishin', old bean!"

"We'll risk it!"

And the slacker of the Fourth was marched away between his two strenuous chums.

## CHAPTER 2. No Slacking!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. had gone down to Little Side after lessons for football practice. Now that the days were drawing in, the junior footballers were keen to make the most of what daylight there was. As Levison, Clive, and Cardew arrived on the ground, Tom called across to them.

"This way, you chaps—just in time!"

"You chaps are wanted!" murmured Cardew. "The hefty Thomas requires your services. I'll look on."

"You'll play!" grunted Levison.

"Bai Jove! I am glad to see you turnin' up to practice, Cardew!" remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "It is nevah too late to mend, you know."

"Three more wanted for Blake," said Tom Merry, who was picking up sides for a practice match. "You three will do. Try to put a little beef into it, Cardew."

"My dear old bean—"

"There are your men, Blake!" called out Tom Merry. "Come on," said Blake of the Fourth. "Why haven't you changed, Cardew?"

"I'll run in and change now," said Cardew.

"You won't!" grinned Levison. "Play as you are."

"How can I kick for goal without football-boots?" urged Cardew. "Be reasonable, old bean!"

"You had ample time to change," said Clive. "Now pile in, and don't play the goat!"

Jack Blake gave a sniff. Blake was a strenuous youth from the great county of Yorkshire, where—as Blake often said—they played football with the accent on "played." He had no sympathy with a slacker, and he did not understand—or want to understand—the peculiar little ways of Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"Blessed if I care to have that image in my lot!" he grunted. "Still, I want another man. Do your best, Cardew, and don't be a lacedassical ass if you can help it!"

"But I can't help it!" said Cardew agreeably. "Asses are born, not made—nascitur non fit, you know. Better let me buzz off and call some other chap—"

"Much better!" called Horries.

"Cardew's playing!" said Levison.

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"Well, if you're playing, line up, and stop rotting!" said Blake, eyeing his recruit far from favourably. "I know you can play if you take the trouble."

"But is it worth the trouble?" sighed Cardew. "Is anything in the jolly old universe worth the trouble? I need seem to see it."

"Oh, cheer it!" said Blake, not politely.

"Yaas, wathah! I wergard you as a slackin' ass, Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy severely.

Levison and Clive fairly dragged Cardew into the field. How much of Cardew's disinclination for footer was genuine and how much mere affectation, even his own chums did not know. Certainly he was a slacker of the first water, though on occasion he had played a remarkably good game. Study No. 9 had resolved that Cardew's slacking, whether real or assumed, or both, was going to stop, so far as footer was concerned. And Cardew had been solemnly warned that there would be trouble in the study unless he took his proper place in junior football.

The sides were formed, and Tom Merry and Blake proceeded to business at once. There were seven a side, and Levison & Co. had arrived just in time to make up Blake's number. However, it proved impossible for Cardew to play in Elton, so after a while it was decided that he should be allowed to change, Clive accompanying him to his study for that purpose.

They were not gone long.

"Put a move on!" cried Blake, as Cardew and Clive appeared on the field again. "We want to get going!"

Even in a practice match of seven a side, Jack Blake was keen to beat Tom Merry's crowd if he could; and he expected every man to play up as if he were competing for the Football Cup. The game started; but Blake was soon annoyed by the way Cardew played. The dandy of the Fourth kept his hands in his pockets, and lounged through the practice with a cheery smile on his face.

Evidently he looked upon it all as a bore, not to be taken seriously, but endured with cheerful patience till it was over. Blake's savage glares had no perceptible effect whatever upon him.

"Play up, you silly old!" Clive hissed in his ear.

"What's the matter now?"

"Take your silly paws out of your silly pockets!" snorted Clive.

"But it's rather cold weather—"

"Can't you keep warm by moving, you slacking ass?" roared Blake.

"Too much trouble, dear boy."

There was a rush of Tom Merry & Co., and the talk was interrupted suddenly by Cardew going spinning, under a charge from Manners of the Shell. The dandy of the Fourth sprawled on the ground; and as his hands were still in his pockets, he fell rather heavily.

He sat up rather dizzily as the rush of the footballers passed him, leaving him behind. "There was a shout of laughter."

"Oh gad!" gasped Cardew.

He struggled to his feet. Tom Merry & Co. had sent the ball into goal, and the sides came back to the centre of the field. Blake shook a set of knuckles under Cardew's nose.

"You can sneak off!" he roared. "We don't want you getting in the way here, you dummy!"

"Dear old bean, I'll go with pleasure!" yawned Cardew. "So glad to have been of service to you!"

"Weally, Cardew—" began D'Arcy hotly.

Levison clutched at Cardew as he was going.

"You're staying," he said. "Give him another chance, Blake! I promise that if he doesn't score a goal we'll give him a study ragging."

"That's a go!" said Clive, with a nod.

"Well, line up!" grunted Blake.

"You fellows are jokin', of course?" murmured Levison.

"You'll see, after the practice," said Levison grimly.

"How am I to bag a goal, against that gang of muscular Philistines?" groaned Cardew.

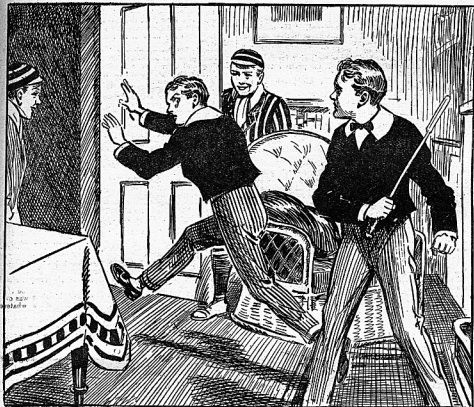
"Better try—or you'll get the ragging."

"Play up!" snorted Blake.

The game was resumed, Cardew loafing through it as before, with his hands in his pockets. But his study-mates' warning was not without effect. He knew very well that Levison and Clive would keep their word. And a study ragging was a more severe infliction than exertion in a game of football.

Cardew, when he chose, was a brilliant player, and he decided to choose now. All of a sudden the slacker seemed to wake up, as it were; and he woke up with a vengeance. The ball came to his feet, and, instead of fumbling with it, Cardew got away with the leather, with a sudden dash that left Tom Merry's forwards standing.

Kangaroo, at back, rushed at him, fully intending to send the slacker sprawling, but, to his surprise, Cardew would round him, and past him, and ran on for goal, with only Gore to beat. Gore dropped back into goal to defend



Levison and Clive pushed open the door of Monty Lowther's study and looked in. "Come on, Cardew!" cried Levison. "We want you, you slacker!" "I—I say," murmured Cardew, "let me off this time. I've had a most exhausting time listening to Lowther's wit and humour—". Lowther jumped up from the table, jumped towards the fender, and clutched up the poker. Cardew retreated hurriedly into the passage. (See page 4.)

his citadel, and sent the ball out with a heavy fist as Cardew drove it in, and grinned. But the grin died away the next second, as Cardew headed the leather back into goal, taking Gore quite by surprise. There was a gasp of astonishment from the footballers.

"Goal!"  
"Cardew! My hat!"  
"Bai Jove! The slackin' ass can play if he likes!"  
"Good man!" roared Levison, in great delight.  
"Good—what?" said Cardew imperturbably.  
"Jolly good!" said Tom Merry heartily.  
"Only on my side," said Cardew calmly. "You oughtn't to have let me through like that! Kangaroo oughtn't to have let me walk round him as I did, and Gore was an ass to let me score! Good-bye!"

And with that Ralph Reckness Cardew walked off the field, practice being over for him.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom.  
"Come back!" roared Clive.  
"Oh, call in another man!" said Tom Merry, laughing.  
And Blake, with a snort, called on Tompkins to take Cardew's place, and the practice went on to the finish, minus Ralph Reckness Cardew.

### CHAPTER 3.

#### The Strenuous Life!

**T**OM MERRY and Manners came into Study No. 10 in the Shell, ruddy and cheery after the football, in the autumn dusk. Monty Lowther was still busy with his "literary work," but he looked up as his chums came in.

"Hallo, here you are!" he exclaimed. "Just listen to this, you fellows—"

"My dear man, we'll listen to nothing till we've had tea!" said Tom Merry. "Famished, old chap!"

"You might have had the kettle on!" snorted Manners.

"Never thought of it," said Lowther. "When a chap's deep in literary work—"

"Literary rats! Whose's the kettle?"

"Blessed if I know! Just listen to this. 'There was a very strict old professor of grammar—'"

"Bless him and bless you! Chuck that rubbish off the table, Tom, and trot out the grub while I get the kettle boiling!"

"Right-ho!"

"Look here—" roared Lowther.

"Bow-wow!"

Two hungry footballers were not likely to take much interest in Monty's literary lucubrations. Lowther rescued his literary works just in time before they were swept off the table. The Terrible Three sat down to tea, and then Tom Merry and Manners allowed Monty to tell his story of the professor of grammar.

They laughed at it heartily, without stopping to elucidate the joke; it was the easiest way to dispose of it. Monty was a humorist, and humorists had to be humoured.

Levison of the Fourth looked into the study while the Terrible Three were at tea. He received welcoming looks.

"Take a pow, old top!" said Tom Merry cordially.

Levison took a "pow."

"I haven't come to tea," he said, with a smile. "I want to jaw about the football, Tom Merry."

"Go ahead!"

"There's a match with the Grammar School on Wednesday," said Levison.

Tom Merry smiled.

"You'll be down to play, if you like," he said.

"What about Clive?"

The captain of the Shell nodded.

"I was thinking of Clive," he answered. "He ought to have a chance in a match. I'm thinking of putting him in at back."

"Good! And what about Cardew?"

"Nothing about Cardew! Slackers can't play for School!"

"He showed up wonderfully well in practice to-day!" remarked Levison.

"You mean he loafed about with his hands in his pockets!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"He captured a goal."

"True enough! He can play when he likes," admitted Tom Merry. "The trouble is that he can't be depended on to like."

"He's going to stick to it," said Levison. "It would buck him no end to be called on to play for School. I don't say he's keen on it; but Cardew would never let a side down when once he was in the eleven and on the field."

"I dare say!"

"Well, give him a chance!" urged Levison.

"Dash it all, Levison!" said Tom. "If a fellow's going to be picked to play for his school, he might be keen on it, at least. Plenty of fellows are keen enough. And there are plenty as good as Cardew at his best. You can't expect me to pick a lay slacker. The committee would have something to say about it, too."

"Study No. 9 asks too much!" said Monty Lowther. "We know from Blake that matches can't be won without the assistance of Study No. 6, already! Blake is always alarmed if his whole study isn't put in! If Study No. 9 is going to make the same claim, we may as well leave footer entirely in the hands of the Fourth!"

"You might do worse!" said Levison coolly.

"Why, you cheeky ass—"

"Cardew's a good man!" urged Levison. "I'll answer for his turning up to regular practice, Tom Merry, and you can rely on him not to let the side down. We're going to make a footballer of him, and you might help!"

Tom Merry considered.

"Well, I'd help all I could to turn a dashed slacker into a footballer," he said. "Naturally, I want to give every good man a chance in turn. If Cardew would stop playing the goat, he's good enough to play the Grammar School. I'll think it over, Levison."

"Good!"

Ernest Levison left the study with that. Tom Merry had a thoughtful look. It was worth some trouble to bring Cardew's good qualities to the fore, and he wanted to oblige Levison if he could. But "the game" came before any other consideration.

Levison returned to Study No. 9 in the Fourth, where he found Clive beginning prep and Cardew lounging in the armchair.

"Good news!" he announced.

"What's the jolly tidings!" yawned Cardew. "All football matches scratched for the whole season?"

"You've got a chance to play for the School next Wednesday."

"Oh gad!"

"It depends on your sticking to practice, and showing great form," said Levison. "You can do it if you like, and you're going to!"

"I'm not!" roared Cardew.

"You are!" said Levison coolly. "The study will see to that! This study is fed up with your slacking, Cardew, and I warn you that life won't be worth living for you till you've played for the school!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Clive.

"And you fellows call yourselves pals!"

"Tom Merry will put you in the team next Wednesday to play the Grammar School, if you're worth your salt," said Levison, unheeding. "We're going to see that you're worth it, old scout! This study is going to make its mark in footer, and you're going to help!"

"Rats! I've got an engagement for next Wednesday!"

"You can cut it out, then! What's the engagement?"

"Oh, any old thing! Somethin' important that will keep me from playin' football, anyhow!"

"I thought as much! Well, you're playing, if our giddy skipper can be persuaded to put you in! No good arguing!"

And Levison sat down to his prep, and let the subject drop. Cardew did not turn to prep; he sat thinking. He spoke at last.

"I suppose you fellows mean to be friendly, in playin' the giddy ox like this?" he said.

"Certainly!"

"Friendship is a boon, but it can be purchased too dear," said Cardew. "I've decided to renounce your friendship. Will you be kind enough to exclude me from the list of your friends, from to-day on—"

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"Not at all."

"Look here, I'm fed up with the pair of you, and I'm not standin' any more! Is that plain enough?"

"Quite!" said Levison, with a nod.

"If there's any more of it, I'm goin' to change out of the study."

"Good; but dry up while we're doing prep."

When prep was over—Cardew's being seamed, as usual—Levison and Clive rose, and exchanged a glance.

"Ready, Cardew?" asked Levison.

"Ready for what?"

"Trot round the quad."

"I'm not trottin' round the quad, thanks."

"Keeps you in form for footer."

"I'm not goin' to play footer."

"Take his other arm, Clive."

"Look here——" yelled Cardew, as his study-mates grasped him by either arm. "Let go! I'll jolly well punch you!"

"Come on!"

With an iron grasp on either arm, Ralph Reckness Cardew was marched out of Study No. 8. On the staircase, the trio came upon the Terrible Three of the Shell, going down to the Common-room.

"Rescue, you fellows!" yelled Cardew.

"Hallo! Trouble in the family!" asked Tom Merry.

"These silly asses——"

"Cardew's going for a trot, to keep in form," explained Levison. "He thinks he doesn't want to; we're convincing him that he does. Come on, Cardew!"

"I won't!"

"Good for you," said Monty Lowther. "We'll help! I'll get a boot at your service, Cardew. Lead him on, you fellows, and I'll help from behind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop it!" roared Cardew, as Lowther helped, with considerable energy. "I'm goin', you rotters! Let's get out you chaps, before Lowther tells us any of his funny stories. Even footer's better than that."

And Cardew went out into the quad with his chums, leaving Lowther frowning, and Tom Merry and Manners smiling. For twenty minutes the slacker of the Fourth was kept on the trot; and when he came in, he was informed that on the morrow morning he was to rise half an hour before rising-bed, and take another trot with his affectionate chums. Cardew loudly protested that he would do nothing of the kind. But the following morning he was jerked out of bed, while the rest of the Fourth still slumbered, and Study No. 9 went out to trot together.

The next few days were strenuous ones for Cardew of the Fourth.

He did not miss a single practice; his chums saw to that. And he put in an amount of sprinting that would have satisfied the most strenuous footballer. There was no doubt that it did him good; and after a time Cardew ceased to protest, apparently resigning himself to his fate. And on Tuesday, when Tom Merry posted up the list for the Grammarian match, a name appeared in it that surprised a good many fellows, and delighted two members of Study No. 9—whatever effect it had upon the third member. The name was that of R. R. Cardew.

"You're playing, old chap!" said Sidney Clive, giving Cardew a congratulatory smack on the shoulder that made him stagger.

"Ow!"

"Your name's down, old fellow," said Levison. "It's all right."

"All right, is it?" gasped Cardew.

"Right as rain!"

"Glad to hear it! I had an idea that it wasn't all right! My mistake, no doubt."

And that was all Cardew said on the subject. But probably he thought the more.

#### CHAPTER 4.

#### Cardew's Way!

"WIPPIN' for footah, deah boys!"

It was—there was no doubt about that.

Wednesday afternoon was clear and cold, and the St. Jim's junior footballers looked forward to the match with the Grammarians with great keenness. After dinner Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked forth upon the universe from the doorway of the School House, and was satisfied with what he saw.

Ten members of the St. Jim's junior eleven were very keen. The eleventh member did not state his views upon the subject. Levison and Clive were in a state of great satisfaction, whether Cardew was or was not. For once, all three members of Study No. 9 were included in an eleven playing for "School"; and it was an honour and a glory that they fully appreciated—two of them at least.

Blake shook his head rather dubiously over the list. He was relieved to find that Tom Merry was playing only three New House chaps—Fatty Wynn in goal, Figgins in the front



"Take your silly paws out of your pockets, Cardew!" shouted Clive. "Too much trouble, dear boy," answered Cardew. Tom Merry & Co. made a sudden rush, and Cardew went spinning under a charge from Blanners of the Shell. The dandy of the Fourth sprawled on the ground; and as his hands were still in his pockets, he fell rather heavily. (See page 4.)

line, and Redfern. Talbot of the Shell was booked for that afternoon, and could not play; but in school matches, with both Houses to choose from, there was no dearth of players. Blake would have been pleased to see Study No. 6 played bodily, as it were—but there was not room for the four. Study No. 9 had that honour, and Blake was dubious as to the result.

"Clive's a jolly good back!" Blake remarked. "But it's rot to suppose he's quite up to Herries' form."

"Utter rot!" agreed Herries.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Still, a good man must have his turn," said Blake tolerantly. "Pass for Clive! But Cardew—hum!"

"Hem!" said Digby.

"The fellow can play," said Arthur Augustus. "But if he creaks up in the game—"

"We'll scrag him if he does!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"He's been sticking to practice pretty hard," remarked Kangaroo of the Shell.

"Because his chums yank him down to it by the scruff of the neck," grunted Blake. "If I were skipper, I shouldn't play Cardew."

"Dear man, how I wish you were skipper," said the drawing voice of the dandy of the Fourth, over Blake's shoulder.

Blake stared round at him.

"So you're not keen on it!" he snapped.

"Keeness is a bore, dear man, like everithin' else."

"Well, resign, and leave the place to Dig," said Blake hopefully.

"You bet!" said Robert Arthur Digby.

"Not a bad idea," remarked Cardew. "Here's Tom Merry, luckily. Merry, old bean, I resign my place in the team in favour of Digby."

"Don't be an ass!" said Tom Merry brusquely. "The Grammarians get here at half-past two, you fellows. You'll be ready!"

"Yaas, wathah!"

Cardew sighed. "This comes of bein' such a valuable recruit," he remarked.

"My honoured skipper won't accept my resignation."

"If you mean it—" began the captain of the Shell, knitting his brows. Tom found it hard to be patient with Cardew, sometimes.

"He doesn't mean it," said Levison, coming out of the house, with a coat on over his footer rig. "Only his foot jokes, Tom Merry."

"Let the slacker slack!" said Blake. "Dig will play up no end—and he's better than Cardew, anyway, at any time."

"I've a jolly good mind—" said Tom.

"Cardew will be ready," said Levison hurriedly. "Get in and change, Cardew. I'll come with you."

"Don't trouble, old bean," said Cardew. "I'll be changed in record time. Now I think of it, I'm awfully keen on this match—I hope to take six or seven wickets at least—"

"Wickets!" yelled Blake.

"I mean goals—my mistake," said Cardew gracefully.

And he sauntered into the house, leaving most of the footballers frowning. The dandy of the Fourth seemed to want to make it clear that he did not take the football match seriously; and football was a serious interest with Tom Merry & Co.

"You're coming down to the ground, Cardew!" called out Clive.

"Of course he is," said Levison. "Buck up, Cardew!"

"Give me three minutes!" called back Cardew.

"Right!"

Tom Merry & Co. strolled away towards Little Side to punt a ball about till Gordon Gay & Co. arrived from the Grammar School. Levison and Clive waited outside the School House for their chum.

Cardew went up slowly and thoughtfully to Study No. 3. There was a rather peculiar expression on his face.

In the School House there were a couple of dozen fellows,

at least, who would have jumped at the chance Cardew had that afternoon; and Cardew, so far as he was concerned, was quite willing to let them jump at it and have it. Levison and Clive had fairly driven him into football; but they had, perhaps, overlooked the ancient proverb that though you can take a horse to the water, you cannot make him drink. Cardew was down to play for the school that afternoon—and never had he felt less inclined for the exertion of a hard and fast football match. In spite of the drastic measures his chums had taken, he was unwilling to disappoint them, but he was unaccustomed to giving up his own whimsical way.

In Study No. 9, he sorted out a hat and cane—which certainly did not look like preparations for football.

Then he descended a back staircase which brought him into regions of the School House unvisited by the St. Jim's fellows. There he came on Toby, the page, who stared at him in surprise. Cardew gave him an affable nod.

"Fancy meetin' you!" he drawled. "All serene, Toby! I'm not thinkin' of burglin' the boot-room."

"Oh, Master Cardew!" said Toby.

"Just lookin' for a way out," explained Cardew. "May I, as a favour, use your mode of ingress and egress for once, my young friend!"

"What for, Master Cardew?" said Toby.

"You see, if I go out the other way, there is a lion in the path—or rather, two lions in the path—or, to be more correct, two asses," said Cardew gravely. "In me, Toby, you behold a hapless, hunted fugitive. I suppose you've heard of the ancient johnny who prayed to be saved from his friends?"

"Nunno, Master Cardew!"

"Well, I'm in the same boat as that respectable old gent," said Cardew. "Nobody will save me from my friends, so I'm savin' myself—what! Show me out by any old back way, Toby, however surreptitious and undignified, and I will remember you in my will. I will leave you, my young friend, my elegant football clobber, equal to new—in fact, never used, except when I couldn't help it."

Toby grinned, and showed Cardew out of the house by back door. The dandy of the Fourth quitted the school precincts by the gate used by the tradesmen, and sauntered away with his hat on the back of his head and his hands in his pockets. From a distance he sighted a crowded brake arriving at the school's gates, and smiled.

"The giddy Grammarians!" he murmured. "Kick off in five minutes or so, I suppose. I wonder what Levison and Clive will think—at least, I should wonder, if wonderin' wasn't a useless brain tag. Now for a happy afternoon's slack."

And Cardew sauntered away through brown autumn woods in a cheerful and contented frame of mind, putting off all considerations of trouble to come until it came. That was Cardew's usual way; a way that certainly did not save him trouble in the long run.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Left in the Lurch.

"WHERE'S Cardew?"

Levison and Clive were still waiting outside the School House in an impatient and irritated frame of mind. Blake came racing across to them. The Grammarians were on the field and all was ready—excepting Study No. 9.

"He hasn't come out yet," said Clive. "He's coming."

Blake gave a snort.

"Are we going to ask 'the Grammarians to wait while Cardew plays the goat?" he demanded. "You fellows come on, and if Cardew doesn't turn up, Dig can play."

"He's coming!" said Levison sharply. "I'll run in for him."

"Shirking, more likey!" said Blake scornfully.

"Oh, rats!"

Blake returned to the football ground more than ever convinced that Tom Merry was at ass for agreeing to give the slacker of the Fourth a chance in a school match. Levison and Clive hurried into the house to look for their errand chum. Tom Merry was not likely to wait long for him, he was getting fed up already with Cardew and his peculiar manners and customs.

The study and the dormitory were drawn blank, and there was no sign of Cardew in the passages. Levison and Clive looked at one another in great exasperation.

"He can't have cut off—cutting the match!" exclaimed the South African junior hotly.

"He wouldn't, surely," said Levison blankly.

But he did not feel sure. The only thing one could be certain of about Ralph Reckness Cardew was that he was an uncertain quantity and that there was never any telling what he might do. It came into Ernest Levison's

mind that it would be quite like Cardew to walk off just before the football match if the spirit moved him to do so.

He gritted his teeth at the thought. There was a limit to the patience of Cardew's friends, and Cardew looked like reaching the limit this time, and overstepping it.

The two juniors came downstairs with clouded brows. Levison spotted Toby in the passage and called out to ask him if he had seen Cardew.

"Gone out, sir," answered Toby.

"But we were waiting for him outside!" exclaimed Clive.

"He went the back way, sir."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He—he may have cut down to the footer ground, to pull our legs," muttered Levison.

"Let's go, anyway."

There was no more time to be lost. Tom Merry was not likely to keep the waiters waiting long. Levison and Clive started for Little Side at a rapid run. They found the footballers in the field, waiting with unconcealed impatience.

"Is Cardew here?" called out Levison.

"Here!" answered Tom Merry. "No! Hasn't he come with you?"

"N-n-no."

"Where is he, then?" said Levison, reddening.

"He—he seems to—have forgotten—"

"He hasn't forgotten!" said Blake savagely. "It's cheek; that's what it is. Just cheeky swank!"

"Yass, wathah! I cannot help wemarkin'—"

"Well, he's not here," said Tom Merry abruptly, his good-natured face clouded and dark. "Is Kerr about anywhere, Figgins?"

"Gone out for the afternoon," said Figgins.

"There's Dig," hinted Blake.

"Call Dig!" said Tom.

Robert Arthur Digby did not need calling. He turned up smiling in a moment.

"How long to get changed, Dig?" asked Tom Merry.

"Hundredth part of a second," said Dig.

Tom Merry laughed.

"I'll give you a whole second," he said.

Dig was not changed in a second, but he was very quick. He joined the footballers in a cheery mood in a very short time. Levison and Clive did not look so cheery.

They were bitterly disappointed. Their anxious glances round the field did not reveal any sign of Ralph Reckness Cardew. It was only too plain that Cardew had cleared off, and had no intention at all of playing in the football match.

The general impression in the eleven was that they were better off without the slacker. Dig, if not so brilliant as Cardew in the latter's best moments, was a good, keen, and reliable player, and much better liked personally. Tom Merry was annoyed, naturally, but he did not regret the loss of his precious new recruit.

There was no sign of Cardew when the game started. And the St. Jim's crowd soon forgot all about him—with the exception of his two chums. They forgot about him, too, in the stress of the game, though they were disappointed and exasperated; and it was certain that Cardew had trouble to expect in Study No. 9 later on.

## CHAPTER 6.

### A Dis grace to the Study!

RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW strolled in at the gates of St. Jim's as the autumn dusk was falling.

The football-match was long over, and Cardew had passed the Grammarian brake on the road, returning to the Grammar School. In the quadrangle he came on Blake and D'Arcy, both of whom gave him rather grim looks.

Cardew nodded to them very pleasantly. Apparently it did not even occur to him to ask how the match had gone.

"Toppin' weather—what!" he remarked.

"Weally, Cardew—"

"After such a beastly summer, the giddy weather is makin' it up in the autumn," remarked Cardew. "Jolly, ain't it?"

"You don't feel curious to know how the match went?" asked Jack Blake with crushing sarcasm.

"My dear man, I'm burnin' with eager curiosity. I was just goin' to implore you to tell me—"

"I regard you as a slackin' wotah, Cardew!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy with lofty scorn.

Cardew nodded.

"You see, you're a distant relation of mine, Gussy," he remarked. "That's how you come to know me so well."

"Bai Jove!"

"And how did it go?" asked Cardew, with a yawn. "Did Levison and Clive cover themselves with glory—and mud?"

"Levison bagged a goal," said Blake.



"Bravo! And Gussy bagged three or four, I suppose?"  
 "Owin' to circumstances, Cardew, I did not capchah any goals at all."  
 "Amazin'!"

"Yess, it was wathah surprisio'," agreed Arthur Augustus.  
 "But football is wathah an uncertain game, you know. I very neahly scored twice!"  
 "Within a mile or two!" observed Blake.

"Wessly, Blake—"  
 "Amazin' that you didn't quite score," said Cardew gravely. "Only one thing could be more amazin' than that—if you had scored—what?"

And Cardew strolled into the School House, leaving Arthur Augustus to digest that last remark at his leisure.  
 He came on Tom Merry in the Hall. He gave the captain of the Shell a pleasant sm.l.c. Tom stared at him.

"Why did you cut the match, Cardew?" he asked.  
 "Awf'ly sorry," murmured Cardew. "I was called away suddenly by a most important engagement."

"Without time to say a word before you went?"  
 "Exactly!"

"Do you expect me to believe that?" asked Tom, with a curl of the lip.

"N-n-no," said Cardew slowly and thoughtfully, "not quite. Gussy might swallow it, but I suppose you won't! Sorry, it's the best I can do."

"I think I was a fool to give you a chance in the team at all," said Tom Merry abruptly.

"Somethin' in that!" assented Cardew coolly. "Politeness restrained me from expressin' such an opinion; but I admit that I thought somethin' of the sort myself."

"It won't happen again!" said Tom.  
 "Good! I mean, sorry! Still, as you won the match—"  
 "It was a draw!" snapped Tom.

"Alas! I never thought you would miss me so much," sighed Cardew. "You think you would have won with my valuable assistance!"

"I don't think anything of the kind! I think you are a cheery ass, and the less you have to say to me the better I shall like it!" snapped Tom. And he turned his back on Cardew and walked away.

"Floored!" said Cardew pathetically to several juniors who were looking on at that little scene. "Squashed! Flattened! Thomas is wrathful! Thomas is ratty! Can anybody tell me how to placate the indignant Thomas without takin' any trouble? It wouldn't be worth takin' trouble!"

And Cardew walked on, leaving the juniors grinning. He went up to the Fourth Form passage, and strolled into Study No. 9. Levison and Clive were there, and they gave Cardew dark looks.

"No rags?" said Cardew as he came in.  
 "Oh, go and eat coke!" said Clive gruffly. "I'm finished with you! You can slack yourself into the sanatorium, for all I care!"

"Same here," said Levison. "Go your own way, or go and eat coke! You can keep clear of footer after this!"  
 Cardew eyed his chums rather dubiously. He had fully expected a study ragging for his desertion. Apparently that was not what he had to expect. Possibly, too, he would have preferred it to this new attitude of his comrades.

"I've been crushed by Gussy an' squashed by the indignant Thomas," he said. "Isn't there a welcome for a repentant prodigal in his own study?"  
 "If you've got a good reason to give—"

"Suppose I had a wire from my granddaddy," said Cardew softly. "You know old Lord Reckness is a giddy martyr to the goat, owin', I fear, to a riotous youth. Suppose I had just time to rush off and get my train without a second to spare?"

"If that's the truth—" said Clive.  
 "You're prepared to forgive me if it's the truth?"  
 "I— I suppose so."

"Then what a pity it isn't the truth!" sighed Cardew. "I wish it were. I like smilin', friendly faces in the study."  
 "You've let the study down," said Levison abruptly.

"You've disgraced this study. I fairly had to nag Tom Merry into giving you a chance in the eleven, and you threw it up for a silly whim. You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself!"

"So I am," said Cardew at once. "I'm blushin' for my zins—or should be if I had any blushes left. Consider me as clothed in shame as in a garment. Are you satisfied now?"

"It's no good talking to you!" growled Clive. "We were duffers to think we could ever get you to play up and play the game. I've done trying, for one."

"Didn't I warn you that I wasn't cut out for the strenuous life?"  
 "Oh, don't talk rot!"

"Can't talk anythin' else, old bean. Since I was landed in this study I've picked up the general tone of conversation here, an' now it's too late to change."

Sidney Clive turned away with a frowning brow. He was in no temper for Cardew's airy impertinence.

"Any tea goin'?" asked Cardew. "I haven't had my tea. I've really been to see my granddad, you fellows, and he was glad to see me—no accostin' for tastes, you know. I've blessed my last banknotes on a motor-car for the trip. That was nice of me, wasn't it?"

"Did you have leave from the Head to go out of bounds?"  
 "Forgot to ask for it. I'm not goin' to mention it to the Head. I say, are you fellows goin' to keep up sulkin'?" asked Cardew dismally.

"I suppose you don't expect us to be pleased?" growled Levison. "And I fancy you'll get something more than black looks from some of the fellows. They don't like school fixtures being treated with contempt."

"Not contempt, o'd fellow—sereely indifference," murmured Cardew. "Only my little way—pretty Fanny's way, you know."

"Oh rats!"  
 "So I'm in a scrape all round?" said Cardew.

"What did you expect?"  
 "Nothin'! I never expect anythin'. I suppose the indignant Thomas will not give me another chance to redeem my lost reputation! The Greyfriars match is comin' along soon—"

"If Tom Merry gave you a show in the Greyfriars match he would be booted out of the captaincy, and he would deserve it!"

"My opinion exactly," said Cardew calmly. "Then there's nothin' doin'. The repentant prodigal is to be left to his jolly old sockcloth n' ashes. What a life! Nevertheless, the wants of Nature must be regarded, so I think I'll have tea, all the same."

And Cardew sat down to tea quite cheerfully, though he looked a little more thoughtful than usual. Levison and Clive left the study. Probably the friendship in Study No. 9 would stand even this strain, but for the present Cardew's study-mates were angry and resentful, and they did not take the trouble to conceal the fact.

When Cardew came down after tea he found that Levison's prediction was well-founded. He had dark looks on all sides and cutting remarks; and when he came on Study No. 6 those youths collared him without ceremony and bumped him on the passage floor.

He went out into the quadrangle in the dusk in a still more thoughtful mood. There he came on Figgins & Co. of the New House sprinting round the quad for exercise after tea.

"Hallo! There's the slacker!" said Fatty Wynn.  
 "Bump him!"

The hapless dandy of the Fourth ran for it, and he just escaped into the School House, with Figgins & Co. at his heels.

He walked rather breathlessly into the Common-room. Grundy of the Shell greeted him with a big, knucky fist, brandished under the aristocratic nose of Lord Reckness' grandson.

"You slackin' rotter!" snorted Grundy.  
 "Thanks!"  
 "You put in, and me left out!" said Grundy; "and you left the team in the lurch! Yah!"

"Tom Merry's mistake, not mine!" said Cardew amiably. "If he'd asked my advice, I'd have urged him to put you in and leave me out, Grundy. Why shouldn't the Grammarians be allowed to win a match sometimes?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 Cardew walked away from Grundy. He went to the table and picked up a pen and drew a sheet of paper towards him.

For some minutes he was busy; and when he had finished writing he stuck the paper on the door of the Common-room. A number of fellows gathered round to look at it curiously.

There was a buzz of surprise.  
 For this is what the juniors read, in Cardew's elegant handwriting:

**"FOOTBALL NOTICE!**

"The Cardew Challenge Cup is offered for competition among junior football teams at St. Jim's. Further particulars to be obtained in Study No. 9, Fourth Form."

Ralph Reckness Cardew strolled out of the Common-room, leaving the juniors to stare at that surprising notice—and ere long there was a large crowd staring at it, reading it, and commenting upon it. And the general impression it produced was that Cardew of the Fourth, not content with what he had done already, was bent upon pulling the leg of the St. Jim's footballers—adding insult to injury, as it were.

And when Grundy of the Shell declared that what Cardew wanted was a House ragging there was not a dissentient voice.

(Continued on page 13.)

# The ST. JIM'S NEWS

Edited by TOM MERRY.

## OUR SHORT STORY.

### Cracking The Crib!

By H. Manners.

#### "T-O-NIGHT'S the night!"

Figins of the New House pricked up his ears as he heard those words spoken in the well-known voice of Jack Blake of the Fourth.

Figgy was standing with his chums, Kerr and Wynn, by an odd bedstead in the cloisters at St. Jim's. They had kept very, very still on hearing footsteps approaching.

"Yaas, wathah!" came Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's voice. "We haven't had a feed in the dormy for quite a long time, and I reckon we'll have a scumptious time to-night. Shall we invite Tom Mewwy & Co., dear boys?"

"We might as well," said Blake. "They had us to their dormy feed last week, so it's only noblesse oblige, as you would say, Gussy, to return the compliment. But, whatever we do, we musn't let those New House jessers get wind of it. If they knew we were going to have a feed in the dormitory to-night, they'd come over and muck it up!"

"What-ho!" said Diggs, "suggest we hide the tack in the dinged safe in the school library, so that we can fetch it after lights out!"

"Good egg!"

Jack Blake & Co. passed on towards the Second House, discussing their plans for the dormy feed, and Figins & Co. looked at each other, and indulged in sundry chuckles.

"My word!" breathed Fatty Wynn, his eyes glistening. "So they've laid in supplies of tack for a dormy feed! I—I say, Figgy, of course we're going to be after that tuck-what!"

"You bet!" chuckled Figins. "Kids, it's a sure cinch for us!"

Meanwhile, Dr. Holmes was gravely discussing with Mr. Ralston in his study in the School House a telephone conversation he had just had with Inspector Grimes, of Wayland.

"Grimes warns me that there is a clever and resourceful crackman at work in this neighbourhood, and he has already depredated several large houses at Wayland and Rylcombe," said the Head. "There is, therefore, every possibility that the rascal may turn his attention towards St. Jim's at any time now. Grimes has promised to have an extra police watch pat outside the school to-night, and warns me not to leave any valuables lying about."

Mr. Ralston nodded.

"I'm very, very anxious for him to pursue," he said. "I have heard of this mysterious crackman's doings from some of his victims, and the reports are by no means exaggerated. It is very high time that the police apprehended the daring rascal."

Figins & Co. made an attempt to get into the School House that afternoon, but they had to beat a hurried retreat when they saw Tom Merry & Co. coming in from the footer field.

The School House juniors, however, had no inkling of the purport of the New House fellows' visit. They fondly imagined that the dormy feed idea was a deep, dark secret between themselves!

The tack was purchased—three huge bars of it—and safely stowed away in an empty and disused iron safe in the school library. Jack Blake hid the key behind a book on a shelf near at hand, and he and his chums departed.

#### THE PLAN THAT FAILED.

Night fell upon St. Jim's, and when bed-time came there was excitement in the ranks of the Fourth and Tom Merry & Co. of the Shell, for they all looked forward to the dormy feed.

The vibrant notes of eleven had just sounded from the school clock-tower, when the door of the library in the School House was opened cautiously, and a voice said:

"Shush, dear boys!"

"Shush yourself, Gussy!" growled Jack Blake.

"Woally, Blake—"

"Oh, shurrup! Where's that beastly key? Next minute Herriss gave a gasp.

"Never mind the key, Blake; the—the giddy safe's open!"

"Bal Jove!"

The juniors blinked at the safe in the gloom of night. The door was open, and the life empty!

"Oh, Jiminy!" gurgled Blake, clutching his forehead in a dazed manner. "Who—who the merry dickens could have done this? The lock's been forced! I—I—Wow!"

Blake fell back as he gave vent to that ejaculatio, and his jaw dropped. His startled gaze went towards the other end of the library, and the other juniors looked, too. A chorus of gasps and horrified gurgles arose, as they saw an apparition in glimmering white moving slowly towards them, its arms outstretched.

"Go-er!"

"Whantist!"

The juniors' knees began to knock. They trembled violently, and they clutched each other for support. The ghostly figure moved slowly, noiselessly, towards them.

Tom Merry gritted his teeth. He was the first to summon his scattered wits, and it came to him that there were no such things as ghosts. He grasped a book off one of the shelves, and sent it whirling at the apparition.

Hi!

"Yaroooooogh!"

A wail, with a very human note in it, came from the white-clad apparition. It gave a jump, and tripped over its white shroud.

Blake gave a whoop.

"It's human! We've been tricked! Somebody's spooking! Nab him!"

But the "spook" was up again in an instant, and it dashed for the window even as the enraged juniors came down the library after it.

Figins lost no time in reaching that window. His little plan of scaring away his rivals had fizzled out! In desperation he gathered the white sheet about him, lest he again tripped up, and tore for the window.

"Hurry up, Figgy!" came Kerr's urgent voice from below.

Figgy hurried. He slithered down the drapings, and when Jack Blake & Co. and Tom Merry arrived at the window, they saw a weird, white apparition, accompanied by two darker forms, streaking nimbly across the darkened quad.

"New House eads!" moaned Herriss. "They've got our tack! After them!"

There was a hurried exodus from the library, via the window.

The Blake figure could still be seen. All of a sudden the night stillness was split by a wild, unearthly howl, coming from somewhere in the direction of the cloisters.

"Gug-great pip!" gurgled Blake, halting in his tracks, with the others. "Wh-what can that be?"

The moon came out from behind a bank of cloud, shedding its mellow radiance over St. Jim's, and the juniors in the quadrangle were amazed to see a dark form clambering over the school wall!

"A burglar!" exclaimed Tom Merry swiftly. "My hat! I wonder if—if it's that crackman the whole neighbourhood has been talking about? This way, kids!"

In the excitement of having to contend with a strange midnight marauder at their gates, the juniors forgot Figins & Co. and their tack. They dashed to the school wall.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy yelled out to his chums to "wun like anythin', dark boys!" and fairly streaked over into the darkness of the cloisters. The others lost him for a minute, but they soon heard where Guss was, for there came the sound of a terrific bump and a loud howl.

"Yavoooooogh! Oh crumbs! Ooooooh!"

"Gussy's up to something!" gasped Blake.

"Kim on!"

They discovered Arthur Augustus sprawled on the ground beside a large leather bag which was fitted with straps. It did not require much deduction to see that Gussy had tripped over the bag in the darkness and come a cropper!

"The chap's gone, whoever he was!" announced Tom Merry, running up as the others analysed Arthur Augustus to his feet. "My hat! But he's left his bag behind, though. Let's see what's in it!"

They soon had the bag open, and gasps of amazement arose. It contained money, and jewellery, and school plate, and other valuables! A fine haul for any crackman!

"My word!" breathed Blake. "Then the school's been robbed! And we've got the plunder! Well, carry me home to feed, somebody! Hallo! The school's awake!"

The juniors ran over to the School House, and explained what had happened. The Head and Mr. Ralston and the prefects and a host of juniors were soon down, clad in pyjamas and dressing-gowns.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Dr. Holmes, when Tom Merry and Blake presented the bag of plunder to him. "The contents of my safe! Bless my soul! Then the rascal, despite all our precautions, succeeded in his burglarious project! How grateful I am to you lads, who have been the means of restoring these valuables!"

The bag was taken back into Dr. Holmes' study. Tom Merry and Blake took it to Mr. Ralston switched on the light. Then, as their gaze went towards the safe, Tom Merry and Blake went quite limp.

"My hat!" stuttered Blake. "Our tack!"

There, sure enough, inside the safe, the door of which was open, was the tack, some of it opened, but apparently all there! This, now as affixed, which Tom Merry read aloud:

Sorry so late to return these "valuables" to the other safe. This is the first crib I've cracked where they keep their grub under lock and key. Thanks for the rest.

"SLIM SILVSTER."

"Great pip!" exclaimed Blake. "Then—that was it! Figins who loused our grub!"

"No!" grunted Tom Merry. "Slim Silvester, the crackman, must have got into the library first, and, seeing the safe, and thinking it contained valuables, he opened it. He carried the bundles in here, and then discovered the grub. Ha, ha, ha! What a giddy joke!"

Dr. Holmes and Mr. Ralston had to be let into the "joke," of course. But, under the circumstances, they could not find it in their hearts to be angry.

And when Figins & Co. heard the truth of the affair, they did not feel at all gratified, as they should have done, considering that it was really Figgy's ghostly get-up that had scared the crackman!

### 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,—

I have such wonderful news for this week that I should like to take up a couple of pages in telling you about it! If I did, however, one or other of our splendid stories would have to suffer, so I will "put you wise" in as few words as I can.

A new era is about to dawn for followers of the good old GEM Library! I have decided to do what thousands of my chums have, in their letters, continually urged—namely, permanently to enlarge the great old paper! What do you think of that? The issue after the next, therefore, will consist of 28 pages, and, more than that, the cover will be beautifully printed in two colours! An

extra-long story of St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford, will, of course, be a feature of the great new programme I am even now preparing for this bumper issue.

A new complete sporting story, a quick, snappy detective story, and a wonderful new adventure story by our favourite, Duncan Storm, will be other special features—and to some of you, the best news of all, I am giving away free with every copy something absolutely unique in Real Photo cards of famous footballers! These special photo cards will be a distinct advance on anything ever offered to boys and girls before; they will be treasured by all who are lucky enough to secure them, so every single reader should tell every one of his or her pals that these wonderful free gifts will be given away with every copy of the Bumper Number of the good old GEM the week after next.

Look out for the GEM in its new coloured cover. It will be better, brighter, and more popular than ever. The price will be twopenny, but the value offered by this great issue will be far better than ever. Longer stories, more stories, and, if possible, better stories! That is

the motto I am adopting for the GEM Library.

And now just let me have a word about next week's fine programme. You will find a rollicking fine football yarn by Mr. Martin Clifford in next Wednesday's GEM. It is called "Fighting For The Cup!"—the cup Cardew has offered is tussled for on the stricken field. It is an enlivening yarn, brimful of those pleasing little unexpected happenings which give seasoning and fibre to any story, while it has the real football spirit in from the first line to the last. Everybody is busy talking about footer these days, and there will be more talk than ever after Mr. Martin Clifford has had his say in the coming treat.

Meantime "All On His Own!" Duncan Storm's topping serial, swings along as merrily as Nobby, when he is taking jumping exercise in a paper-chase.

Tuck Hampers are going strong—just like the "Holiday Annual," while the Competition, complete each week, can be relied upon to furnish any amount of amusement for a long evening.

YOUR EDITOR.

# "HISTORIES"

## OUR GRAND NEW FOOTBALL COMPETITION!

**FIRST PRIZE £5**  
**SECOND PRIZE £2-10-0 & 10 PRIZES OF 5/- each.**

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Sheffield United Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears under the puzzle, stick it to your solution, and post it to "HISTORIES No. 2" Competition, GEM Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, November 2nd.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now 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. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide the value of all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

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

I enter "HISTORIES No. 2" Competition and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and binding.

Name.....

Address.....

G.....

## "THE CARDEW CUP!"

(Continued from page 9.)

### CHAPTER 7.

#### Not a Ragging!

TOM MERRY kicked open the door of Study No. 9 in the Fourth. He did not trouble to knock; a kick was good enough, in the circumstances. The captain of the Shell was looking angry—and, like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry. And there were grim faces among the crowd of juniors behind him. Levison and Clive were not there; they knew that it would have been futile to intervene, and they did not care to intervene. Cardew had done enough to exasperate the junior footballers, without adding this last prank; and now if he received what he had asked for, they charitably hoped that it would do him good.

Tom strode into the study, with Manners and Lowther. Blake & Co. followed him in; then came Kangaroo of the Shell, Reilly, Keruish, Talbot, Gora, and several more fellows. Outside the doorway two or three dozen more were crowded. And they all looked as if they meant business. Cardew was seated in the armchair, with his feet on the table, and a novel in his hand. He nodded to the visitors without rising.

"Trickle in, old beans!" he said hospitably. "Welcome as the flowers in May. Any who can't find chairs are welcome to sit on the table; and the coal-locker is at your service, likewise the window-sill. Perhaps the remnant will be content to sit on floor. It's quite a soft carpet."

"I suppose you know what we've come for, Cardew?" said Tom Merry grimly.

"About the football cup, I suppose—what?"

"You left the team in the lurch to-day," said Tom quietly. "Not that your absence mattered—but fellows are not supposed to treat junior football in that style. You don't seem to be satisfied with that. You appear to think that school footer is a proper subject for silly jokes and leg-pulling. The House is fed up with your cheek, Cardew; and now you're going to have a House ragging to bring you to your senses. Got that?"

"That's the programme!" said Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Give the silly ass jip!" growled Herriot. "What's the good of wasting time talking to the cheeky cad?"

"Have him out of that!" came in a roar from the passage.

Cardew looked a little perplexed. But he did not seem alarmed.

"Gentlemen, I am entirely at your service," he said gracefully. "But may the unfortunate object of your just displeasure be allowed a few words before the execution is proceeded with?"

"Have him out!" roared Grundy.

"If you've got anything to say, you can say it," said Tom Merry gruffly. "I warn you that if it's any more sneering cheek you'll be stopped pretty fast."

"Dear man, I'll be as sober as a judge, and as serious as Lowther's comic column in the 'News.' You seem to have an impression that my little notice in the Common-room is some sort of a joke!"

"Isn't it!" snapped Tom.

"Not in the least! A plain statement of sober fact," said Cardew. "My respected and gouty grandfather, a jolly old Peer of the Realm, is willin' to stand the necessary twenty-five guineas—"

"Bai Jove!"

"For the purchase of a handsome solid silver challenge cup, to be offered for competition among junior football teams at this ancient and celebrated scholastic foundation. The cup will be worth winnin'. The winners will be at liberty to keep it for future competitions—or to sell it, or pawn it, as the spirit moves them. It will make a splendid ornament to any gentleman's study," continued Cardew gravely, while the juniors stared at him. "As a last resource, a fellow can keep his coat in it."

"Gentlemen, the offer is bona fide, above board, and in good faith. In a few days the challenge cup will be on view in this study. Everybody can come and feast his eyes upon it, the only condition being that Baggy Trimble isn't allowed to steal it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" came the voice of Baggy Trimble from the passage.

Tom Merry looked at the dandy of the Fourth, considerably taken aback. He had not believed for a moment that the notice in the Common-room was meant seriously. Every fellow had taken it for one of Cardew's gibes. The captain of the Shell realised now that he had jumped to a conclusion rather hastily.

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"You're going to offer a challenge cup worth twenty-five guineas to junior teams!" said Tom at last.

"That's it."

"Honest Injun!" demanded Blake.

"On the honourable word of a slacker and a bounder," said Cardew gravely. "Honour bright!"

"Bai Jove! Undah the circa, deah boys, I wathah think that we ought not to wag Cardew."

"You talk like a picture book, Gussy!" said Cardew. "Generally I do not find myself in agreement with you. On this occasion I endorse your views with the greatest heartiness."

"Weally, Cardew—"

"Well, that rather alters the case," said Tom Merry slowly. "It's a bit queer for a slacker like you to think of such a stunt, Cardew."

"You see," explained Cardew, "under the influence of my strenuous pals, I'm yearnin' to distinguish myself in football. The spirit is willin', but the flesh is a little backward in comin' forward, if you get me. Not bein' able to rush into the heat of the fray an' cover myself with glory and mud, I've thought of this scheme for shinin' as a sportsman without exhaustin' efforts on my part."

The intended ragers looked at one another. They had come to Study No. 9 to give Ralph Reckness Cardew the timin' of his life, so to speak. They were fed up with him—right to the chin, as Blake expressed it. But Cardew's statement put quite a new complexion on the affair.

A twenty-five guinea silver challenge cup was certainly worth competing for. It would be a trophy worth winnin' and keepin', and the competition itself would be keen and interesting enough. Vacant dates could be found for the necessary ties, and every footballer in the Lower School was certain to be keen on the scheme.

Cardew smiled as he looked at the ragers.

It was evident now that the ragging was "off," at least.

"You see, I haven't been wastin' my time to-day, as you fellows supposed," he remarked negligently. "I called on my respected grandfather, you know. I'm sure that the House will appreciate my football cup more than my services as a footballer."

"Not much doubt about that!" grinned Blake.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I trust that some of my friends here present will consent to form a committee to draw up the rules of the competition," continued Cardew. "I suggest Tom Merry as chairman, D'Arcy as vice-chairman, Blake as vice-vice-chairman, Talbot as vice-vice-vice—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Blake. "It's a jolly good idea, and very decent of old Lord Reckness to offer us a challenge cup. We'll form a committee to arrange the competition."

"Certainly," said Tom Merry. "I suppose you suggested the idea to Lord Reckness, Cardew?"

"My idea from beginnin' to end, dear man."

"Ye'll call it the Reckness Cup—"

"Oz the Cardew Cup, as it's really through Cardew that it's offered," said Tom. "You'd better be on the committee, Cardew."

"Pleased!" murmured Cardew.

"Well," said Blake, "you're a queer beggar, Cardew, said a swanky ass; but if you chucked footer this afternoon to go and arrange with your grandfather to offer a football cup to St. Jim's, you put in your time better than in playing footer—your style."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And you can consider that Study No. 6 withdraws the bumping it gave you an hour or two ago," said Blake generously.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It will buck up the footer no end," said Tom Merry, his eyes brightening. "It's a great idea. The New House will be keen on it, and the School House can put up three or four elevenens."

"Yes, rather! Study No. 6 is going to bag that cup!"

"You'll hear from me!" bawled Grundy of the Shell from the passage. "I'm going to bag that cup. I shall form a eleven of my own."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll make a jolly big competition of it," said Tom. "I must say, Cardew, that this is playing up better than I expected of you. If I'd known how you were engaged this afternoon, I—I shouldn't have said some things I've said."

"Don't mench!" murmured Cardew. "Only too happy to help on the grand old game, you know; and I'm going to give every competing eleven my personal assistance—"

"Eh?"

"By keepin' out of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Merry, "we came here to rag Cardew. It was rather a mistake, as it turns out. He has played up like a sportsman, and I think we can say that he has deserved well of his House."



Cardew descended the back staircase and knocked into Toby, the page, who stared at him in surprise. Cardew gave him an affable nod. "Fancy meetin' you!" he drawled. "All serene, Toby! I'm not thinkin' of burglin' the boot-room. You see, if I go out the other way I shall be bounced upon by two silly asses who are waiting for me to play football." (See page 8.)

"Hear, hear!"

And the ragers gave Ralph Reckness Cardew a cheer before they departed.

### CHAPTER 8. Levison's Doubt!

THESE was one topic in the School House at St. Jim's that evening, and that topic was the Cardew Cup.

The news spread to the New House, and Figgins & Co. came over to hear all about it, and departed full of keenness.

It was clear that the scheme caught on, and that every junior footballer in the school was getting keen on it.

A committee was formed, and a meeting arranged in Tom Merry's study, to take place after prep, to draw up the preliminary draft of the rules of the contest. The cup, of course, was for competition among juniors; it would not have been much use for even Tom Merry's excellent eleven to take on the Sixth in a match. All Forms below the Fifth were entitled to compete—School eleven, House eleven, and any other eleven that could be formed by any fellow ambitious to shine as a football captain and the winner of a handsome silver cup.

In every study there was a buzz of talk on the subject. Study No. 6—four fellows to begin with—determined to find seven more recruits, and make up an independent eleven; and Grundy of the Shell told Wilkins and Gunn that he expected their support, with that of eight more fellows yet to be found. In the New House, Figgins & Co., of course, were "on"; and Redfern announced his intention of forming a Redfern team. Indeed, it seemed probable the football elevens would spring up all over St. Jim's, like mushrooms in a night.

Levison and Clive heard the news with great surprise. It seemed a topping idea to both of them, though Levison was

haunted by a secret doubt. The two juniors came to Study No. 9 to speak to Cardew about it at once. They found him writing a letter at the study table. He laid down his pen as they came in.

"Good for you, Cardew!" said Clive, in his hearty way. "You played the goat to-day, but you seem to have made up for it. It's simply a great scheme, and it will give this study a leg-up. We really ought to call it the Study No. 9 Football Cup!"

"Call it any old thing you like, dear man," answered Cardew.

"I think the committee will settle on the Cardew Cup," said Levison. "I—I—I suppose, Cardew—"

He hesitated.

"Go it, old bean!"

"I suppose it's straight goods!" said Levison abruptly. "If you're pulling the fellows' legs there will be awful trouble!"

Clive jumped.

"Levison! Cardew wouldn't; he couldn't be such a fool! Why, he would be kicked out of the school!"

"Would it come to that?" yawned Cardew.

"It jolly well would, and you'd find my boot as heavy as any!" said Clive hotly. "Cardew, if you—"

"Take it calmly, old bean. The offer is perfectly genuine," said Cardew. "My enthusiasm for the great winter game is well known—or perhaps it isn't, when I come to think of it. Anyhow, I'm offerin' the cup."

"To make your peace with the fellows?" asked Levison. "You're a giddy thought-reader!" said Cardew admiringly.

"Oh!" said Clive, his face clouding a little.

"More motives than that, really," said Cardew. "I want this study to be distinguished in footer, if I can contrive

it without undue exertion. Why, you fellows can make up an independent eleven, and win the cup—what?"

"You'll play?"

"Can't compete for my own cup. Bad form."

"Oh! Perhaps—"

Cardew grinned. In the circumstances, he was safe from being driven into the football competition by his strenuous chums.

"Well, it's jolly decent of you, Cardew," said Clive. "I wish I'd known you were fixing this up with Lord Reckness this afternoon."

"All serene, old top!"

Clive left the study in great spirits. Levison remained with Cardew, who had taken up his pen again.

"Were you fixing this up with Lord Reckness this afternoon, Cardew?" asked Levison quietly. "The fellows have a sort of general idea that you cut the footer to go and see your grandfather specially about this cup bizney. But—"

"But you don't believe it yourself?"

"No," said Levison.

"In that, dear man, you display your usual perspicacity," said Cardew. "Don't give me away. But, as a matter of absolute fact, confided only to your friendly bosom, Lord Reckness has never heard or dreamed of a football challenge cup. Neither had I, till I came home and found myself in a hornets' nest. I thought of it as a toppin' dodge for drawin' the fellows' teeth, if you get me. Catch on!"

"I thought so," said Levison. "And—and I suppose you're writing to Lord Reckness now to tell him?"

"Exactly!"

"You think he will play up?"

"My dear man, he will waste twenty-five guineas if I ask him."

"Sure of that?"

Cardew paused.

"Well, he's always shellin' out cash for me," he said. "My dear Uncle Lilburn doesn't approve, and it's true that he's stayin' with granddad now. But it will be all serene. The filthy lucre will be forthcoming, in the shape of a giddy challenge cup."

"But if it isn't?"

Cardew whistled softly. It was evident that his volatile mind had not even taken into consideration the possibility that his grandfather might refuse his request. True it was, that the old lord was extremely indulgent to his grandson; but twenty-five guineas was a large sum, even for Cardew to ask of Lord Reckness. And favourite as Cardew was with the old lord, he had more than one near relation who would have been glad to frustrate him, if possible, given the opportunity—and his uncle, Lord Lilburn, heir to the old earl, was certainly one of them. More than one member of the family regarded the old lord's fondness for his scapegrace grandson with an eye of grim disapproval and envy. Indeed, it was probably in the contemplation of his own family that Cardew had learned his cynicism.

He whistled, and whistled again. The possibility forced itself into his mind. Levison watched him in silence, and Cardew looked up with a smile and met his eyes.

"That would land me a giddy treat—what?" he drawled.

"Cardew—"

The dandy of the Fourth laughed lightly.

"It's all serene, I tell you. My grandfather never refuses me anything—he stooed me fifty in a lump last vac. What rot! Dear old man, the giddy guineas will be forthcomin', and in a few days the silver challenge cup will be standin' on our bookcase, here, on view, makin' the fellows' mouths water."

"But—"

"Old man, you're full of virtues; but you've got one fault—you understand a bully-goat too much. Leave off buttin'!"

And Levison let it drop at that. He was uneasy in his mind; but Ralph Reckness Cardew was quite cool and unconcerned as he walked down to the school letter-box to post the letter to Lord Reckness.

It was obvious that the dandy of the Fourth did not give another thought to the matter. He was accustomed to believing whatever he wanted to believe—it made life easier, according to his view. So he settled it in his mind that all was serene, and let it go at that. And during the next few days he entered into the talk on the subject of the Study No. 9 Football Cup, without reserve. With the exception of Levison of the Fourth, no one, naturally, had any doubt on the subject. The impression was that Cardew, in consultation with his grandfather, a wealthy peer of the realm, had arranged the offer of the Football Cup, and there was no reason to suppose that there was any doubt about it. A fellow like Cardew could not be suspected of "gas" in the style of Baggie Trimble. Cardew, indeed, had no doubt about it himself. Scarcely ever had his indulgent grandfather refused him a request, however expensive; and there was no reason why he should begin now. There was a possibility—but that possibility the dandy of the Fourth calmly dismissed from his mind, going on his way as if it did not exist.

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## CHAPTER 9.

### A Crushing Blow!

TOM MERRY & CO. were busy in these days. The cup competition had caught on—for days it was almost the only topic. The committee sat in Tom Merry's study several evenings in succession, discussing the rules for the competition, amending and mending the rules. They were always keen on football at St. Jim's, but never had there been so much keenness shown over the great winter game.

Cardew—if that was his object—had quite set himself right with the St. Jim's fellows. He was looked upon as a real sportsman—if he was not great as a player, at least he was the founder of a contest, with a valuable trophy that had in all the school in commotion. There was honour and glory for Study No. 9 in consequence, and Cardew's careless indifference in the affair of the Grammar School match was forgotten. Tom Merry, who never quite understood Cardew, at least decided that he was a good fellow at heart, if he found pleasure in encouraging the great game he was too lazy to play himself. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of Study No. 6 in the Fourth, was pleased to give Cardew his lofty approval.

Under the care of the committee, the rules grew, and were reduced to writing in good order. The thing turned out bigger than the juniors had anticipated at first. Even the fags of the Third were determined to have a go at the football cup. Wally & Co. discussed the matter in the Third Form room with great zest, and agreed among themselves that, somehow or other, the Cardew Cup had to find a fair resting-place in the Third. How the Third were going to beat Tom Merry's eleven, was a detail Wally & Co. left for later consideration.

In the Fourth and the Shell, at least five elevens were going to take the field. Study No. 6 were hard at work beating up recruits; and there were two junior elevens forming in the New House. Tom Merry's eleven—the official junior team of St. Jim's, was sadly depleted—the New House members of it elected to back up either Figgins or Redfern, while Blake, of course, was captaining the Study No. 6 army, when completed. So it was certain that Tom Merry's eleven would not be up to its usual strength in the Cardew Cup—without Blake, or Figgins, or Redfern, or Fatty Wynn, or D'Arcy, it would, as Blake remarked, require some serious repairs before it were fit to take the field at all.

That was all to the good in a way, as it gave the other competitors a fairer chance. But Tom Merry had plenty of food for thought, in filling up his depleted ranks. It was a matter to which the captain of the Shell gave his most careful consideration.

Study No. 9 was ambitious to bag the cup. Levison and Clive beat up the Fourth and Shell for recruits, Cardew contenting himself with wishing them luck. Then Grady of the Shell was quite determined that an eleven, under his masterly guidance, should capture the coveted trophy, and keep it, to adorn Study No. 3. Even Racks & Co., the slackers and black sheep, entertained the idea of making a bid for the cup, Trimble pointing out that its cash value was worth putting in for.

Then Kangaroo of the Shell had a scheme for making up a Colonial team of members from the overseas dominions. There weren't enough of them to make up a whole team, but the blanks could be filled with the home-grown article—obtainable, as Kangy decided.

In a word, there was a sudden and surprising crop of football captains, all a-growing and a-blowing, as it were, and it was absolutely certain that they would not all succeed in raising teams, for the simple reason that there weren't enough fellows to go round. Still, as all the ties would be played at once, it was possible for a recruit to be bagged more than once. Indeed, some very keen footballers began to work right through the ties to the final, under a succession of captains.

Fellows who were known to be great footballers, were the recipients of flattering attentions in these days from mid captains. Talbot of the Shell was fairly swamped with offers and requests; but Talbot announced that he was playing for Tom Merry, and declined to budge from that—not even thinking of raising an eleven on his own account, which probably he could have done more successfully than some of the ambitious skippers.

Never had football been so engrossing a topic at St. Jim's. Even the seniors were interested in the new department. Kildare, the captain of the school, consented to act as referee when required—a great concession from so great a man. It was hoped that Mr. Railton, or, perhaps, even the august Head himself, would present the cup, when won, to the winning team. Cutts of the Fifth even suggested to Cardew to make the Fifth Form eligible for the contest, having no doubt that a senior team would walk off with the cup quite easily, which would have been a great thing for Cutts, who had been losing money lately on his favourite geecees. But

Cardew politely declined to entertain the suggestion; thus depriving Cutts of a happy prospect of getting a twenty-five guinea cup to sell.

Rules were drawn up, and dates fixed for the ties, with a careful consideration of fixtures already arranged, which, of course, were going on as usual. Cardew was a member of the governing committee, but never attended the meetings. Without his assistance, the whole thing was arranged and settled. And by that time, possibly some of the fellows were beginning to wonder a little where was the football cup.

That celebrated cup was to be on view in Study No. 9; but so far it had not appeared there. Cardew showed no uneasiness at the delay in receiving a reply to his letter; he concluded that Lord Reckness' old enemy the gout, had assailed him again. At such times the old lord was blind and deaf to any consideration save his noble gouty leg.

It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy who thought of the great idea of a cup spread, to precede the cup-ties. Cardew, the founder of the competition, was to be the guest of honour at a great feed in Study No. 6.

"You see, dear boys," Arthur Augustus explained to his study-mates, "we have been wathah wuff on Cardew. He is a real sportsman, in his own way, and it is up to us to recognise the fact. It was awfully sportin' of him to wun off as he did and avwange this wippin' contest with old Lord Weckness, and in the circus, his leavin' the footah in the lurch was excusable. So my ideah is to stand a great cup tea—"

"A cup-tie!" asked Herries.  
 "No, Hewies—a cup tea."  
 "You want to stand Cardew a cup of tea?" asked Blake, with a perplexed look. "Might give him a bun with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Weally, Blake, I feah you are only pretwandin' to misundastand me," said the swell of St. Jim's severely. "I stand a cup tea, and I mean a cup tea. A sweat spread, you know, in honah of the cup and its founder."

"Hear, hear!" said Blake heartily. "A terrific spread, regardless of expense—what!"  
 "Yaas, wathah!"

"Here's twopence towards it," said Blake. "All I have, but gives with my whole heart."  
 "Wats! I am goin' to put in a five, and othah fellows can make what contributions they like."

"Bravo!"  
 Gussy's idea of a terrific spread in honour of the cup was received a little doubtfully till it was learned that Gussy's five was "going in." Then it received great support, especially from Baggy Trimble. And the spread was duly arranged in Study No. 6, specially selected guests were invited, and Study No. 9 came as specially distinguished ones. Study No. 6 was crowded for the occasion, and the function was an enthusiastic one. Arthur Augustus made a handsome speech, referring to the football cup and its generous donor, and drawing a comparison between St. Jim's Football Cup and the other similar article connected with the Football Association—in favour of the former.

"Hear, hear!" thundered the numerous and distinguished gathering.

Cardew had to reply to the speech, and Levison and Clive jerked him out of his chair to respond.

"Go it, dear boy!" said Arthur Augustus encouragingly.  
 "Gentlemen," said Cardew politely, "you do me proud! This distinguished gathering, bursting with enthusiasm for the good old game of cricket—"

"What?"  
 "I mean hockey—that is to say, football. This distinguished gathering does me proud. For a slacker like myself to find himself honoured by such a beffy and strenuous company is a little overwhelming. It gives me that tired feeling which you read about in the pink pill advertisements."

"Weally, Cardew."  
 "The satisfaction I feel at this testimony of the good opinion of my schoolfellows," continued Cardew, "could never be expressed in words. I will not, therefore, attempt to express it."

And Cardew sat down.  
 At that point the fat face and amply figure of Baggy Trimble appeared in the doorway. Blake, who was nearest the door, rose to kick him out.

"I say, letter for Cardew!" exclaimed Trimble. "I say, I've brought it up specially. There's a crest on it, Cardew."  
 "No binney of yours, you fat boulder!"

"Well, if it's something about the cup," said Trimble. "It's from Lord Reckness, you know. Thank you, Blake, if you're sure you don't mind my taking your seat."

Trimble sat down in the chair Blake had vacated. Cardew picked up the letter the fat junior tossed across to him. It was addressed in Lord Lilburn's hand, but evidently it came from Reckness Towers, in answer to his letter to the old lord.

"Will you fellows excuse me if I look at this?" asked Cardew. "It's about the cup, of course."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Go ahead, old scout."  
 Crash! Blake had hold of the back of his chair, and it came over backwards, rolling Baggy Trimble on the study carpet. There was a terrific roar from Trimble.

"Yooooooop!"  
 "I give you one second to do a fade-through!" said Blake.  
 "Yah! Rotter! Oooooop!"

Baggy Trimble departed from the study—and as he did not quite do it in the second, Blake assisted with a rather heavy boot. A loud yell floated back as Trimble disappeared.

Blake shut the door and sat down again with a cheery smile. There was a buzz of conversation round the crowded table while Cardew read his letter from home.

Only Levison looked at his chum a little uneasily. For a moment, as he glanced first at the letter, Cardew's lips had set, and a strange gleam had come into his eyes. The next instant, however, his face was calm and smiling as before, and he read the letter through with an air of carelessness.

Having finished his perusal he slipped it into his pocket. He smiled as he met Levison's eyes.

"All serene?" murmured Levison.  
 "Why not!"  
 "But—"

"As that Indian chap at Greyfriars would say, the serenity is terrific," said Cardew lightly.

"Glad to hear it!" said Tom Merry cordially.  
 "And the giddy old cup is coming along!" asked Kangaroo.

"Naturally."  
 "Right as rain," said Blake. "It will be on view in time for the first tie on Wedne day. The draw for the first tie takes place this evening, Cardew."

"Good!" said Cardew.  
 The feast in Study No. 6 continued in great style, everybody being in a merry and bright humour—and Cardew seemed the cheeriest of all. He chatted gaily, and was more humorous than the fellows had ever known him before.

But all things come to an end, and at length the merry company departed from Study No. 6. Cardew was sauntering away by himself, when Levison of the Fourth joined him.

Cardew gave a whimsical smile.  
 "Aren't you attending the jolly old draw for the cup-ties in Tom Merry's study?" he asked.

"Yes, but—"  
 "Don't let me detain you, old top!"

Levison gave him a rather uneasy look, and left him. There was no doubt that Ralph Reckness Cardew wanted to be alone just then. The dandy of the Fourth strolled away, humming a tune. But when he was alone in a quiet corner of the quad he drew the letter from his pocket and perused it again in the dusk. Little did the merry party in Study No. 6 dream what Cardew had been reading while he sat at the crowded table with a smiling face. The letter ran:

"Dear Ralph,—Your grandfather is still laid up with his gout, and I am attending to his affairs for him as usual when he is ill. I felt it my duty to let him see your letter, as I should not care to take it upon myself to interfere between my father and his grandson. It was my duty, however, to advise him, at the same time, not to encourage a foolish and reckless boy in such unheard-of extravagance. I am glad to say that your grandfather agrees with my views, and that he definitely declines to waste such a sum as twenty-five guineas on such a freak as you propose. Your allowance is very liberal, and in addition you have recently received substantial remittances from Lord Reckness. I must warn you that you cannot expect anything beyond your allowance during the present school term.

"Your affectionate uncle,  
 "LILBURN."

Cardew read the letter through carefully, with an unmoved face. Then he struck a match, lighted the paper at the corner, and held it till it burned away to a fragment, which he threw to the wind.

He strode back towards the School House with his hands in his pockets. His face was calm and serene, but his reflections were not pleasant.

"In these merry minutes the draw's takin' place for the first round in the cup-ties," he murmured, glancing up at the lighted window of Tom Merry's study. "And where's the cup? Ralph, my boy, you've landed yourself in a good many scrapes in your time, and you've got out of them better than you deserved. How are you goin' to get out of this one? I wonder."

And Cardew hummed a tune as he sauntered into the School House, looking as if he had not a care in the world.

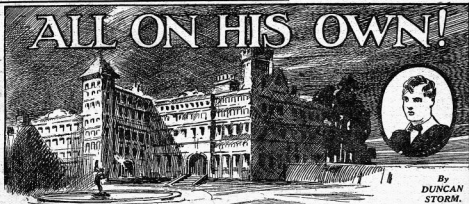
THE END.

(What will be Cardew's next move? You will learn all about it in next week's splendid story, entitled:

"FIGHTING FOR THE CUP!" by Martin Clifford.

Make sure of reading the ripping story by ordering next week's GEM early.)

MAKE SURE YOU READ THIS EXCITING INSTALMENT!

By  
DUNCAN  
STORM.**The Opening Chapters.**

John Wobby, commonly known as Wobby, together with James Ready, Sweet, and a Chinese named Lam, chums together in the great school of St. Beovull's, get on the track of one of the most expert gangs of burglars in the country.

Wobby, who is the master of a pet kangaroo, has in his possession a pocket-book belonging to one of the scoundrels. From this he learns of the gang's intentions of smuggling their ill-gotten gains out of the country. He plans to capture the plunder. At the dead of night he and his pals steal out of the school, and are soon hot on the trail. They are instrumental in capturing some of the gang, after which they drive to Whitchurch Castle, where they find some of the jewels hidden in a well. Here they are shadowed and attacked; but, by the timely arrival of John Lincoln, a governor of the school, and a party of men, their assailants are captured. Mr. Lincoln is interested in the lad's exciting adventures, and promises them an adventure even more exciting later on.

A few days later, during a paper-chase which is organized by one of the masters, Wobby gets on the track again, and finds some more of the plunder hidden beneath the surface of the water in the centre of a pool. Wobby, through Mr. Lincoln, restores them to their rightful owner, Lady Castletwood.

At the school that same evening, supper is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Lady Castletwood, accompanied by Dr. Cranbury, the Head. She thanks the lads, kissing them each in turn, much to the amusement of the other juniors at the school, and then invites them to Castletwood Manor to meet her nephew, Viscount Waffington.

There is great excitement in the dormitory that night, but quietness reigns supreme when Blackbear Teach, one of the masters, comes to see "Lights Out."

**Castletwood Manor!**

**B**EFORE the boys could enter into their adventure with Mr. Lincoln, they had to dispose of their social engagement.

The Countess of Castletwood, full of gratitude for the restoration of her stolen jewels, did not forget her intention of asking the three chums to spend the day with her nephew, Viscount Waffington.

Wobby was hoping that she would forget them. But punctually at ten o'clock in the morning a huge smash-running car, with a real powdered footman in the Castletwood livery, rolled up to the great entrance of the school. The boys gathered round the footman with great curiosity.

He was a proper old-fashioned footman, with white powdered hair, and a beautiful livery, which made Jorrocks, the school porter, look quite shabby.

"We've called for the three young gents," he announced to Jorrocks gleefully. "Ope they are all ready."

"Here we are, James!" said Wobby cheerfully. "All complete and Sir Garney, with our necks washed and good marks all round for naifs."

The footman grinned at Wobby. "You are a smart 'un, you are!" he said. "Where do you come from?"

"Somewhere down there," James, replied Wobby, pointing to the ground. "If you bored a hole through the earth just by old Jorrocks's flat feet, you'd come out about in our backyard at home."

"I've got a brother in Orstralia," said James.

"He'd like to see you in those swell clothes, old clobber," answered Wobby, with the easy geniality of a son of the Golden South. "But say, my top job, you must have been through a world of trouble to turn your head so white at your age. You are like the Prisoner of Chillon that we've been mugging up in class. What does he say?" My hair is grey, but not with years. Nor grew it white in a single night."

"You hop into the car, young fellow-mad!" replied James, growing rather red. "Half a mo', James!" replied Wobby. "We've got another passenger to go."

He dived into the porter's lodge, where he had chained up Kobby.

Nobby was as smart as the three boys. Wobby had brushed him and combed him with a fine tooth comb till his coat shone like a new shining. He had powdered a bottle of brillianina from the dressing-tables of the Dandy Fifth, and had rubbed it all over Nobby.

"A kangaroo!" exclaimed James, as Wobby

led out his pet. "We can't put a wild kangaroo in 'er ladyship's own car!"

"You can if it's under 'er ladyship's own orders, Bertie," replied Wobby. "Her ladyship told us to be sure and bring over the kangaroo to show to her nephew Viscount Waffington."

That settled it. James made no more objections, and the party entering into his luxurious car were whirled off to Castletwood Manor.

Wobby settled himself rather gloomily in the corner of the biscuit-lined limousine and looked round disdainfully on the silver fittings of the car.

"Huh!" he grunted. "We're in for a sin do along with this Fauntleroy kid Waffington. I know what he's like. He's like one of those horrid kids you see on the movies, and I suppose we'll have to sit in his nursery all day long and play bricks with him. Next time I find any woman's jewel about, I'll leave 'em where they are. Have you ever heard of the Hope Diamond, Sick jaw, old clobber?" he added.

"No," replied Stickjaw, who had never heard of anything.

"Why, the Hope Diamond is a big big diamond," said Wobby. "It's as famous as the Koh-i-noor. But wherever that diamond goes bad luck goes with it. It's a hoosie diamond, that's what it is. And I bet that there's some ju-ju stone like that amongst the coomless jewels. Look, they didn't bring any luck to the chaps who 'pinched 'em! They didn't bring us any luck."

"They've got the school a whole day holiday," said Jim.

"That's no luck for us," replied Wobby sourly. "We've got to spend the beautiful day in entertaining a Glaxo swell kid, Viscount Waffington. Dear Waff! Spare us days! But we've backed our barrier into a bonzer ditch, gettin' into a swell didd like this. We'll play with the kid, and then we'll have lunch, with footmen handing round the seran on silver plates. Look at this white-haired toff sitting on the foot seat of the car. Gets paid good money just for holding his hand out when the car goes round a corner. Crumbs! Here we are at the house!"

It wasn't the house, though. It was near the lodge gates. The car slowed, and a solemn-looking lodge keeper swung open the great bronze gates on which the Castletwood arms were displayed in high relief.

They spun through a park over gravelled drives that were as smooth as a billiard table. They passed green lawns and rose gardens, where gardeners in green bair aprons were working. Finally they swung round in front of a huge house of grey stone with wide steps and statues.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wobby, looking at the great stone front with awe. "It's like a swell workhouse! I feel as if we'd bet pinched and sent here on remand!"

A figure stripped down the great stairway and greeted them with open hands. It was the countess herself!

"My dear boys!" she exclaimed. "How good of you to come. Dear Waffington is so delighted that you are so kind as to spend the day with him. Poor little fellow! He

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be rather a cold, and I think that it is best that he stays in his pig-rook. He is so delicate that he cannot show you all over the park. How are you, Wobby dear boy, and you, Jim, and you, Stickjaw?"

And the boys, chilled by the sight of the grand house and the prospect of spending the day with Viscount Waffington, could not help remarking to each other that they had seen them all round, and they did not mind it so much as when she had kissed them last night in open Hall, before all the school.

"We are very glad to come, lady," said Wobby, throwing in spite of himself. "And what are the boys to do?"

"The footmen shall take you to his play-room in the west wing," replied the countess. "Is this the dear kangaroo? How charming—and what kind brown eyes."

Wobby evidently took to her ladyship, for he laid out his paws in his boxing-gloves in a most friendly way.

"Dear thing!" said the lady, patting him. "Now come into the house, boys, and bring the kangaroo. You must be hungry after your journey!"

### Viscount Waffington Proves His Mettle.

THEY had only finished breakfast about an hour; but in the room which opened out of the great hall, there was enough cake laid out to feed a regiment—cake and sweet biscuits, and pink drink, which was flavoured with raspberries.

There is no sense in refusing good cake when it is offered to you. They all managed to make a very fair second breakfast of cake as the hospitable countess buzzed around them, doing her best to put them at ease. It was plain to all that she had quite a pathetic desire that her lonely little nephew should mix with some nice, strong, healthy boys.

"There is dear Waff!" she said, producing a large and expensive photograph in a heavy silver frame. "Isn't it pretty?"

"Very nice, madam," said Wobby, lying valiantly as he looked at the photograph of a bun-faced boy, heavy-looking and sulky, with a lot of sausage-curls round his neck, and wearing a lace collar.

"That was taken a few years ago," said Lady Castleswood. "He has altered since then, but he is still the same boy, sensitive boy, so delicate that I often fear for him. Such a sensitive little fower. Now, boys, will you have any more cake?"

Wobby shook his head. He had severely punished a seed-cake, a plummy-cake with icing on it, a plate of sweet biscuits, and a German cake.

"Thank you, madam, we have done nicely," he said smilingly.

"The footman will show you the way to dear Waff's play-room," said the lady. "Dear Waff will be so charmed to see the kangaroo."

The footman seemed rather doubtful about leading Noboy up the great marble staircase of the hall. But as it soon became quite clear that he was to accompany the boys, he led the party on.

They climbed the great staircase, which was lined with tapestries and numerous portraits of Castleswoods and Waffingtons led departed.

He led the boys along a long corridor which was lined with fine statuary and armour, and tapers at last on a great mahogany door.

"Come in!" called a voice.

"The young gentlemen from the college, your lordship, and the kangaroo," announced the footman, throwing the door wide open.

Wobby gave quite a start of surprise as the door closed behind them, and from behind a big leather screen came a boy to meet them. He was a big, heavy boy, with a fat face and a friendly smile.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said, holding out a hand like a ham to the astonished Wobby.

"Excuse me, I am dear Wobby," said the young Viscount Waffington.

"I'm Waff, it's that's what you mean," replied the heavy youth in a deep and manly voice. "I expect auntie's been showing you my photograph in the lace collar, and telling you what a delicate little chap I am."

"Well, she did say something about it!" said Wobby, wincing as Viscount Waffington gripped his hand.

"She thinks I'm delicate," said Waffington. "She's a good old sport, but she always wants to wrap me up in cotton-wool, and I don't want to hurt her feelings, so I have to keep it up as long as you can. You're Wobby, aren't you? And you are Jim Ready? And you are Stickjaw?"

He shook hands all round.

"I am glad to see you chaps," he said. "I get the pip sometimes with auntie coddling me up so. I was jolly glad when I heard that you had saved her jewels for her. She said that she was going to ask you across to see me. I knew you would be sports, and she asks the most awful kids in to see me."

"I said," said Wobby, looking at their new friend in wonderment. "Are you delicate?"

"No," replied Waff. "Is that your kangaroo? What a lark—and he's got the gloves on and all."

"We thought you were a kid with curls!" said Wobby.

"I was," replied Waff. "But I cut 'em off. Auntie cried for a whole day about it. She still thinks I'm a kid. It's a way she's got. You see, you chaps," said their host rather sadly, "my mother was her only sister, and my mother died young, of consumption, and every time auntie hears me cough she thinks that I am going to die young, also!"

The boys nodded. They began to understand things now.

"But it's awful, the kids she brings home to play with me," continued Waff sorrowfully. "She gets little boys from miles around to come and play with me. She doesn't understand that I'm near fifteen, and grown up, and she asks kids of ten here—all the other chaps are at school!"

Waff sighed.

"I get the delicate boys and kids of ten. I wanted to come to your school, but I've got a tutor instead."

"Where's your tutor?" asked Wobby curiously.

"I've never seen a tutor."

"It's gone to bed," replied Waff, grinning.

"I got him on boxing with me, and I hit him through a bookcase and cut his head. It gave him a headache. He's a good chap, but he can't box for nuts."

"Can you box?" asked Wobby eagerly.

"Not much," replied Viscount Waffington modestly. "But I picked up a bit from one of the stable-lads, who was a bit of a pug—on the quiet, you know. Auntie didn't know!"

"Got any gloves?"

"Rather!" replied Waff, with enthusiasm.

"Going to one of the cupboards of the vast play-room, he produced a couple of pairs of very light gloves."

"My tutor has bled on 'em a great deal," he said with a smile. "But you don't mind that, do you? He always bleeds like anything when you tap him."

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Wobby. "Who bought you these gloves?"

"Why, it was Kid McCosh, the stable-boy," replied Waff. "He got 'em from a friend of his who had just retired from the ring."

"They are what the champions use," said

Wobby. "I'll try a round or two with you, cobber. I won't hit you hard!"

"All right!" said Waff pleasantly.

They shook hands, and sparred lightly.

"My word!" thought Wobby. "The kid's been taught to hold himself."

Smack!

Wobby staggered. Something like a lightning stroke had hit him on the nose. He blinked, and cleverly guarded a nasty left-hand hook. Waffington took a punch in the jaw that would have jerked a bullock, without as much as a wince. "The best thing that's happened about me was that he was first about the polished floor, feeling as if he had been hit by an earthquake. All the breath was out of him when he set up. Then he began to laugh."

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped.

"Not hurt, are you?" asked Waff anxiously.

"I didn't mean to give you one of the most!"

"No, I'm not hurt, old cobber," answered Wobby. "But that's the sort of sparring that the stable-boy taught you!"

"Not exactly," replied Waff; "but he used to bring a gentleman to meet me in the woods to practise, and we used to have some good boxing. His name was Conkey Walker."

Wobby choked.

"Conkey Walker, the Terror of Sydney!" he exclaimed. "Why, he was an old Australian champion! You'll do all right, Waff. Why don't you come to our school?"

"Because auntie thinks I'm too delicate!" answered Viscount Waffington, with a grin. "But I keep myself fit. Shall we go on?"

"I'm going to get some breath!" laughed Wobby. "Jim Ready will have a turn with you."

Jim could use his fists about a bit, but as soon as he met this pampered aristocrat's darling he found that Waff could eat him.

Waff played light with him, and knocked him out in a couple of rounds.

Then Stickjaw eagerly took on the champion; but he saw nothing but stars, being utterly outclassed.

Wobby asked for the pleasure again, and came out with a thickening ear, a split lip, and a blackening eye.

There were five black eyes between four of them, because Stickjaw had two by the time they had finished gambling together.

### A Slight Proposition.

W AFFINGTON then looked hungrily at Noboy, who had been sitting on his tail, looking at the fighting like a referee.

"Does your kangaroo box?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Wobby; "but you'd best not take him on."

"Why not?" asked Waff eagerly.

"He's a bit too thick; you know," said Wobby. "It takes a real champion to stand up to Noboy without getting fustified. You see, he's got four punches to your two, and the rest of his hind legs when he jumps at you is surprising. I calculate myself pretty good, but I don't play with Noboy that way very often. Last time we had a proper bout he broke one of my ribs, and dad said I must quit! Nob enjoys it so. He gets a bit round when he's excited!"

"Do let me have a go at him!" urged Waff.

"I won't hurt him!"

"I'm not thinking about you hurting him; I'm thinking about him hurting you!" answered Wobby. "It would be a nice thing for us with your aunt, the countess, if he made a grand job of you before lunch."

"That's all right!" urged Waff. "I'll be very careful!"

"All right!" said Wobby, rather reluctantly. "Come here, Nob!"

Nobby hopped up to his master, his brown eyes shining. He knew what was coming, and he loved a boxing-bout.

Wobby looked carefully to the fastenings of the gloves on his pet's paws and feet.

"If he got the gloves off, he might cut you up badly!" he explained to their new champion.

"Now let me get one of those big quarter-staffs, so I can catch him a crack on the head if he gets too busy. He leaves off then!"

Wobby armed himself with one of the heavy quarter-staffs, and stood ready, whilst the boxing kangaroo, according to his usual tactics, hopped down the long room.

He turned suddenly, and a crack at Waff like an express train travelling through the air in one enormous bound.

BIE!

The pampered Waff was ready for the marasul!

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The car pulled up in front of the large house. "My hat!" exclaimed Wobby, looking at the great stone front with awe. "It's like a swell workhouse." A figure tripped down the great stairway and greeted the boys with open hands. It was the Countess of Castlewood herself!

Nobby took a punch like a battering-ram as Waff side-stepped, and, flying head-over-head, he slid away into the far corner of the room, fetching up with a crash against the wainscot of carved wood.

The boys cheered. They were having a splendid morning of it.

Nobby, somewhat surprised, blinked his wild eyes, then, pulling himself together, he came at Waff again with a vicious kick. The kick went through thin air, and again Nobby was sent flying along the polished floor into a far corner.

"Canon off the crash into the top cock!" cried Wobby gleefully. "That's the stuff to give him, Waff! Tap him in the slats every time. He's never met a champagne like you before. Look out, Waff!"

Nobby, slightly stirred up, came at Waffington like a whirlwind. Waff's quick eyes were upon him. He dodged, and, with a tremendous punch, sent Nobby flying backwards towards the door.

There was a yell from the boys, and a yell from the door as Nobby went flying into the arms of the fat butler, Mr. Pursey, bearing him to the ground.

Mr. Pursey had not anticipated a full-sized boxing kangaroo flying into his arms like a football.

"Eip! Eip!" he yelled. "There's a wild animal attackin' is lor'ship!"

The boys turned cold with horror, for just behind the prostrate butler John Lincoln and Lady Castlewood stood aghast.

Wobby hurled himself on Nobby, who, finding that Waff was too much for him, was beginning to punch Mr. Pursey angrily. He dragged his pet off by his huge tail, and cuffed him.

"Stop, you tug!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know enough to behave yourself when you are amongst the quality?"

Nobby sat up and blinked.

"Waffington! Waffington!" cried Lady Castlewood. "My pet! My darling! What have you been doing? Did that dreadful animal attack you? Where did you get those awful gloves?"

"The kangaroo didn't go for me, auntie!" said Waff, grinning. "It was me that went for the kangaroo!"

"But your eye, dear boy—your eye! And these poor boys' eyes!" sighed her ladyship, horrified. "What have you been doing?"

"We've been playing kiss-in-the-ring, auntie!" explained Waff, with his engaging smile.

John Lincoln laughed.

"It is as I was telling you, my dear countess," he said. "You are caging this boy up like a sick tiger under the mistaken notion that he is delicate. He will become delicate under such treatment if you keep it up. He seems to have been staving off constitutional weakness by manly exercises. How did you find him, boys?"

"A proper tug!" replied Wobby, nursing his split lip. "He's more'n a double handful for me, Mr. Lincoln. He's no sissy-kid!"

John Lincoln smiled.

"I thought not," he answered.

"But, my darling," exclaimed Waff's aunt, "where did you learn all this?"

Waff hung his head.

"I just picked it up, auntie," he said. "I'd like to go in the ring some day!"

John Lincoln laughed aloud as he heard this naive ambition.

"Let me have him, Lady Castlewood," he said. "I'll find him a better ambition in life than in punching the wind out of his fellow-men. I'll take him with me this afternoon when I take the other boys, and we'll continue the lessons that he has started to-day." "I don't want any more lessons for the day, sir," replied Wobby, nursing his ear with a rueful grin. "I feel as if I'd done my homework."

"Now, boys," said John Lincoln. "I merely looked in to tell you that I am going to take you to my place this afternoon. You have got your leave from the school, and I'll take Master Waff along as well. He wants a little purely masculine society. In the meantime, I'll reassure Lady Castlewood."

The door was closed, and the boys were left alone.

Waff's eyes were shining.

"I say, you chaps," he said, "this is splendid! Aunt thinks no end of what Mr. Lincoln says! I knew he'd half talked her over."

"We'll have a splendid time!" said Wobby, his eyes shining. Then he looked at his chums doubtfully. "Shall I tell him?" he asked.

"He's coming along with us," said Jim.

"He ought to be in it!"

"I dare say we'll be able to persuade Mr. Lincoln to let him in," said Wobby.

Then, slowly and deliberately, he told their new friend the whole story of their dealings with the burglar gang, from the time that they surprised the housebreakers at the school to the recovery of his aunt's jewels.

"And to-morrow night, Waff," said Wobby, "we are on the finish of the lark, and Mr. Lincoln is in it. A foreign fishing-boat is coming into the Swale to take on board what they think is the hoodle and to take us on board, who they suppose to be part of the gang. He will take us to sea, and it's our lark to capture the boat and bring the whole lot into harbour, and then hand them over to an astonished police force."

"Crums, Wob!" cried Waff, his eyes shining. "It's splendid! I must come in."

It was late in the afternoon when John Lincoln's car was ready for them.

Waff, wild with delight, was ready before the car, delighted with the notion of sharing the great adventure of his new chums. It seemed to him that in a few hours he had leaped from childhood into manhood.

"You will take the greatest care of him, won't you, Mr. Lincoln?" pleaded his aunt, as she came down the great stairway to bid them farewell.

"You may rest assured of that, Lady Castlewood," answered Mr. Lincoln.

"It seems to me that these dear boys who restored me my jewels are taking away with them the most precious jewel of all!" said Waff's aunt sorrowfully.

The little party then whirled away in the car.

"She'll soon get used to being without me," said the hope of Waffington cheerfully, as he settled himself in the car.

"Hallo, I'm standing on the kangaroo's tail! Now, Mr. Lincoln," he added, "it's very good of you to get me out of my play-room, but I want you to do a bit more for me."

"And what may that be?" asked John Lincoln.

"I want you to let me go out with the boys to-morrow night," said Waff steadily.

"What do you mean?" asked John Lincoln quickly.

"We've told him all about it, sir," said Wobby.

John Lincoln shook his head.

"I don't know about that, Waff," he said. "It's a bit early in the game. I asked your aunt to lend you to me for a bit of hardening up."

"To-morrow night's excursion has a large element of risk in it. It is not my affair. It is the affair of these boys, and they have led me into it."

"I can take care of myself, Mr. Lincoln!" pleaded Waff, his eyes shining. "You've seen me use my fists, and I'm a good shot as well, though auntie doesn't know it."

"If your aunt knew half what you know her hair would turn grey," said John Lincoln. "I'll think it over."

(You will find next week's instalment even more exciting than this. Be sure you read it.)

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**THIS WINS OUR TUCK  
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SETTLING IT.**

Two ladies in a tramcar disputed concerning the window, and at last called the conductor as referee. They were both very angry. "If this window is open," one declared, "I shall catch cold, and will probably die." "If the window is shut," the other announced, "I shall certainly suffocate." The two glared at each other, and the conductor was at a loss. But he welcomed the words of a cynical old beholder who sat near at hand. "First open the window, conductor," he advised. "That will kill one of them. Next; shut it. That will kill the other. Then we can all have peace." A tuck hamper filled with delicious tuck has been awarded to Miss Anna Parker, Fair View, Clones, Co. Monaghan, Ireland.

**CLEVER MARY.**

Mary was a very bad girl, and she was smacking the cat. At last her mother said to her: "Mary, if you smack the cat I will smack you; if you pull its ears, I will pull yours." Mary thought for a moment, and then she said: "Mother, I think I will pull its tail."—Half-a-crown has been awarded to Edward Roberts, 7, Catherine Street, Liverpool.

**WHO LAUGHED LAST?**

A barrister, defending a man accused of housebreaking, said: "I submit that my client did not break into the house at all. He found the library window open, and, inserting his arm, removed a few trifling articles. Now, I fail to see how you can justly punish the whole individual for an offence committed by only one of his limbs." "That argument," agreed the judge, "is very well stated. Following it logically, I sentence the defendant's arm to six months' imprisonment. He can accompany it or not, just as he chooses." The defendant grinned, and, with the barrister's assistance, unscrewed his cork arm and handed it over. "I prefer to wait six months for it, my lord," he said as he left the court grinning.—Half-a-crown has been awarded to R. Hastings, 24, Metchley Lane, Harborne, Birmingham.

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